



*community comes naturally*

LENT Township

# Comprehensive Plan

2013 - 2030



The Comprehensive Plan update process was lead by the Planning Commission of Lent Township. The following members participated in drafting the document:

**Planning Commission**

Don Bilunas

Phil Carlson

Conrad Christianson (chair)

Randy Koivisto

John Stewart (ret. 8.2012)

Mike Willcoxon

**Town Board Liasion**

Supervisor Mike Olson (ret. 3.2013)

**Consultant**

Jennifer Haskamp SHC, LLC

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	5 - 6
Chapter 1: Vision, Goals & Strategies	7 - 13
Chapter 2: Land Use & Growth	15 - 32
Chapter 3: Natural Resources, Parks & Open Space	33 - 43
Chapter 4: Transportation, Infrastructure & Facilities	45 - 54
Chapter 5: Implementation	55 - 57
APPENDIX A: Background Report	

# LENT TOWNSHIP

*executive summary*

## Executive Summary

Lent Township is a small community located on the I-35 corridor just outside the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area in Chisago County. Established in 1870 as a small agricultural community with rural roots you can still find many of the same families in the Township today, even with the changing demographics and landscape.

Over the past twenty years the Township has changed and evolved as growth pressure within the county has increased. The proximity and accessibility of Lent Township means that new residents will continue to come to the area, and the community is likely to change with those trends. In 2007 the Township took control of their future by taking over land use and zoning controls from the County. The purpose of taking over these functions was the hope of being able to better define the future of the Township, by having members of the community more directly involved in the planning process for the Township's future. Although a great responsibility, the goal continues to be to maintain a great community where people want to live, work and recreate.

The Township is committed to establishing a set of goals and aspirations that are supported by strong policies, and community support. The Township acknowledges the relationship of planning for the future of the community while continuing to work collaboratively with adjacent jurisdictions, and most importantly the County. It is the hope of the Township that these relationships will continue to foster, and that integration of this plan and subsequent policies will enhance the overall region.

The purpose of writing a Comprehensive Plan is to address, acknowledge and plan for changes in the community while maintaining the character of the Township for future residents and generations to come. Within the Township's borders there is a diversity of rural land uses including agricultural, residential, business and natural resource areas that

define the character of the community. Nearly a third of the land area within the Township is within the Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area and is protected by the State as a significant natural resource. Carlos Avery plays an integral role in defining the quality and character of the Township because it provides residents of the area, region, and state access to some of the most beautiful natural amenities Minnesota has to offer.

Building on the natural resource network therefore plays an important role to the future of the Township and greater Chisago County area. This plan utilizes the natural resources and rural quality of the Township as the underlying theme uniting past, present and future residents of the community.

The first chapter of the document is entitled "Vision, Goals & Strategies" and is the heart of the Comprehensive Plan. This chapter identifies and lays out the direction for the Township over the next decade. Many of the components and sections of this document are likely to change and evolve over the next decade, but the vision and goals chapter should remain largely unchanged. This chapter is the section that all decisions within the Township should reference, and decision-making should consistently address whether or not they support and enhance the vision and goals as established within this chapter.

Chapter 2 addresses land use and growth, and places specific importance in strategically planning and guiding growth within the Township. A key component of the plan is to preserve the rural quality, and the natural resource integrity within the Township through strategically guiding growth to key intersections and corridors within the community. As a guide, the plan includes two special area plans that address the Rural Transit Center (RTC) area, which is the land area surrounding the I-35 and CR-17 intersection, and the Forest Boulevard corridor that runs parallel to I-35. Both of these areas are best suited to

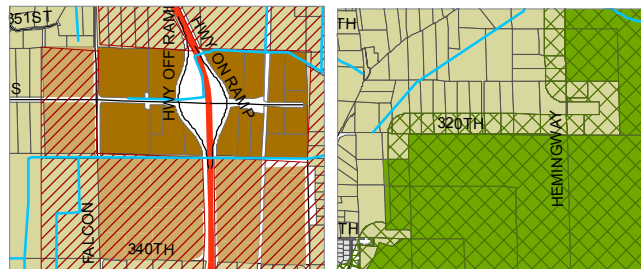
receive additional growth as pressure increases over the next decade for additional housing and business opportunities within the community.

Chapter 3 provides some greater detail regarding natural resources, open spaces and park lands within the Township. Carlos Avery is referenced throughout this document, but this chapter deals with more technical information about this area. Additionally, other natural systems within the Township are discussed in this chapter. Finally the parks and trails in the community, and future planning efforts for these systems are addressed.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to transportation and infrastructure that supports the overall land use pattern and plan for growth within the community. This chapter is integral in understanding how the land use plan was established, and how from an infrastructure perspective the goals for the future can be achieved. The chapter integrates plans from Chisago County, specifically related to the transportation network, to ensure that projected growth and proposed land use patterns can be supported by the transportation network.

Finally, Chapter 5 addresses implementation steps necessary to achieve the goals and aspirations stated within this plan. This chapter provides a general road map to begin addressing the future of the Township.

This plan simply builds upon the previously adopted 2005 Comprehensive Plan. It is not intended to change the vision of the community, as that has largely remained unchanged since the previous planning process. However, what this plan does do is expand on some of the previous information in an effort to better implement the vision for Lent Township. It is the intent that this document will be a living document - meaning it will change, expand, and likely be modified over time - in an effort to always support the goals, aspirations, and opportunities in the community. Lent Township acknowledges that because of the integrity of the area, and the beauty of the resources within the Township, that Lent will continue to grow and evolve. So, it becomes even more important that this document not just be placed on a shelf, but instead becomes a major component of daily business within the community.



# CHAPTER 1: VISION, GOALS & STRATEGIES

In 2005 Lent Township adopted its first Comprehensive Plan. The plan was created based on several public meetings that were focused on establishing a set of goals, strategies and implementation methods to achieve the goals and aspirations for the community. Many of the vision statements, goals and strategies remain relevant today and needed only to be restructured and action words established demonstrating the direction of the Township into the future. The implementation statements will be placed into the individual chapters as well as a summary implementation section will be included separately from this chapter and identified as Chapter 5.

The following vision, goals and strategies are provided as a road-map to anyone seeking direction in the Township with respect to how the community sees itself today, and in the future. This chapter is the heart of the Comprehensive Plan, as it explains, directs and communicates the overall objectives and thoughts of the community. While other components of this plan are fluid, the vision and goals are static and should be considered when making decisions in the Township.

## Township Vision

The Township Vision was developed utilizing the vision statements of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and integrating information obtained from Planning Commissioners, Town Board Members and comments from residents during the work sessions and open house. In 2005 the vision statements were intertwined within goal sections divided by topic. In an effort to “tell a story” with the vision, it now is consolidated and placed prominently up front. The vision statement is the over arching theme of the remainder of this chapter and describes the Township’s thoughts on what the community will look like in the future, who will be here, what types of uses will be present, and how implementation measures will be met.

## Vision Statement

### Lent Township shall...

*Maintain its independence through establishing a sustainable community focused on rural character, dark skies, and rural land use patterns. Residential large lot uses shall continue to dominate the landscape, with strategic areas guided for commercial, general business, and housing diversity. Preservation of natural resources and natural areas shall be of principle focus, and shall contribute and enhance the community. Connections to areas such as Carlos Avery shall be integrated into development and encouraged through visual corridors, trails, and other means to ensure that everyone has access. Cooperation and coordination with other public and private entities will encourage strategic and rational governance of the Township’s infrastructure including energy transmission, communication, transportation, water supply and wastewater management. Preservation and maintenance of these values will ensure that orderly growth, and protection of the rural character will continue for future generations.*





## Goals and Strategies

Listed below are the overall goals and strategies for Lent Township. In addition, more specific plan recommendations and development objectives are included within each chapter.

### Definitions:

The terms goals and strategy are subject to a wide range of interpretation and application. In order to provide a common frame of reference, the following definitions are included:

**Goal:** A general statement of community aspirations and desired objectives indicating broad social, economic or physical conditions to which the community officially agrees to try to achieve in various ways, one of which is the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Strategy:** An officially adopted course of action or position to implement the community goals.

Goals and strategies assign various roles and responsibilities to the Township. To better understand the Township's role for each goal and strategy, a number of key terms are defined below, along with the Township's corresponding responsibility:

**Create:** Bring about the desired goal, usually with Township representatives involved in all levels, from planning to implementation, and which may involve Township financial assistance.

**Continue:** Follow past and present procedures to maintain desired goal, usually with Township representatives involved in all levels from planning to implementation.

**Encourage:** Foster the desired goals through Township policies, which may involve financial assistance.

**Endorse:** Subscribe to the desired goal by adopting supportive Township policies.

**Enhance:** Improve the current goal through the use of policies, which may include financial support, and the involvement of Township representatives at all levels of planning.

**Explore:** Investigate the stated method of achieving the desired goal, which may involve Township representatives and financial resources to research and analyze such method.

**Identify:** Catalogue and confirm resource(s) or desired item(s) through the use of Township staff and actions.

**Maintain:** Preserve the desired state of affairs through the use of Township policies and staff. Financial assistance should be provided if needed.

**Prevent:** Stop described event through the use of appropriate Township policies, staff, action, and if needed, finances.

**Promote:** Advance the desired state through the use of Township policies and staff activity at all levels of planning.

**Protect:** Guard against a deterioration of the desired state through the use of Township policies, representatives, and if needed, financial assistance.

**Provide:** Take the lead role in supplying the needed financial and representative support to achieve the desired goal. The Township is typically involved in all aspects from planning to implementation to maintenance.

**Strengthen:** Improve and reinforce the desired goal through the use of Township policies, staff and financial assistance, if needed.

**Support:** Supply the needed staff support, policies and financial assistance at all levels to achieve the desired goals.

**Sustain:** Uphold the desired state through Township policies, financial resources and staff action to achieve the goal.

**Work:** Cooperate and act in a manner to create the desired goal through the use of Township staff, representatives, actions and policies.



## GOVERNANCE/COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

**Goal 1:** Promote and encourage communication and participation in all County and Regional planning efforts relating to infrastructure including transportation, facilities and urban services.

### Strategies:

1. Maintain the autonomy of the Township and its facilities while working jointly with other agencies and jurisdictions.
2. Prevent non-contiguous annexations and development plans in favor of planned growth that builds upon existing infrastructure.
3. Identify opportunities to share wastewater treatment and water supply facilities with a city or Township adjoining our area through a Joint Powers agreement.
4. Explore opportunities with all jurisdictions, agencies, and public organizations in the area to share services and resources to reduce or eliminate duplication and improve efficiency while still providing appropriate levels of service.
5. Continue to support existing joint governmental ventures in the delivery of services.

**Goal 2:** Maintain and protect the ‘dark skies’ that contribute to the overall character of the Township.

### Strategies:

6. Maintain dark skies by controlling outdoor lighting.
7. Establish through performance standards a policy which regulates lighting within key land use and zoning districts.
8. Create a transportation network that keeps traffic on key collectors and keeps residential areas quiet.
9. Provide opportunities for increased land use intensity at major intersections and roadways away from the rural residential neighborhoods.

**Goal 3:** Establish and maintain community buildings and facilities to house government offices, library, public health services, recreational activities, and alternative power generation.

### Strategies:

10. Encourage the use of feasibility studies before undertaking the planning and/or construction of all new Township facilities.
11. Continue to provide emergency services to residents, and enhance those services by exploring future potential expansion sites.
12. Identify the appropriate timing to enhance Rieger Olson Field to make it an up-to-date facility.
13. Maintain community facilities and identify areas of improvement via a capital improvement plan.

## INFRASTRUCTURE / TRANSPORTATION / UTILITIES

**Goal 1:** Encourage the most effective and efficient use of Township resources by determining future demand for Township resources and the Township’s ability to respond to those needs.

### Strategies:

14. Explore the cumulative costs of social and environmental effects when evaluating new development.
15. Identify the actual costs of infrastructure.
16. Identify funding mechanisms and sources necessary to cover the costs of infrastructure.
17. Support research and educational opportunities for the public concerning future growth and development as it pertains to planning and resource management.
18. Continue to improve and update the Township’s public service capabilities through the use of training, upgraded facilities and equipment, and improved management practices.

19. Identify public investment needs by accounting for the full environmental, social, and economic impacts of new development, including but not limited to infrastructure cost such as transportation, sewers and waste treatment, water supply, schools, recreation and open space.

**Goal 2:** Provide and maintain a public roadway system that provides safe and efficient mobility for persons and goods within and through Lent Township.

**Strategies:**

20. Provide an appropriate practical categorization of roadways to accommodate current and future access and mobility needs.
21. Provide sufficient capacity in the public roadway system to accommodate current and future travel demand.
22. Implement improvements that enhance and increase the safety and operational characteristics of the transportation system, and meet appropriate engineering standards.
23. Work to develop a transportation system that is consistent with the land use plan.

**Goal 3:** Provide a public roadway system that includes appropriate and functional connections to the County and Regional transportation system.

**Strategies:**

24. Identify the cumulative and immediate impacts of any improvements to the existing transportation system on current and future economic development and land use.
25. Promote increased vehicle occupancies whenever and wherever appropriate throughout the Township.
26. Promote alternative methods of transportation in the form of public and private mass transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, and services for persons who cannot, or choose not to, use automobiles.

27. Encourage and promote private sector participation in serving the transportation needs of the community.

28. Promote park and ride sites where appropriate throughout the Township.

**Goal 4:** Provide essential public utilities and allow private utilities that operate in a cost-effective manner that maximize public health, safety, and welfare.

**Strategies:**

29. Create public and private utility plans that are consistent with the County and Township's land use and development policies.
30. Prevent public facilities and public or private utilities from locating in areas designated for long-term rural protection, or areas with significant cultural, environmental or historic value.

**Goal 5:** Encourage the development of long-range plans for guiding the expansion and maintenance of power transmission, cable services, telecommunications, and public water supply and waste management facilities.

**Strategies:**

31. Explore the economic and environmental feasibility of providing or extending public or private utilities into existing rural residential areas.
32. Prevent the extension of public or private utilities into environmentally sensitive areas designated for special protection or preservation as established on the land use plan.

## NATURAL RESOURCES / OPEN SPACE

**Goal 1:** Protect Carlos Avery State Wildlife Management Area in perpetuity as the primary open space and natural resource area within the Township.

### Strategies:

33. Continue to protect all designated lands within Carlos Avery State Wildlife Management Area as permanent “no development” area, under the authority of any Township land use regulations.
34. Encourage communication and cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to maintain and preserve the Carlos Avery State Wildlife Management Area.
35. Identify natural resource corridors using Carlos Avery State Wildlife Management Area as a focal point.

**Goal 2:** Protect and preserve the quality and quantity of water resources within and flowing through the Township.

### Strategies:

36. Work to ensure that all waste treatment and water supply systems comply with all applicable County, State and Federal standards.

## HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL

**Goal 1:** Protect the history of Lent Township through collection of historical data, manuscripts, photographs, maps and other documents pertaining to Lent Township.

### Strategies:

37. Maintain and sustain, and when appropriate, publish the history of Lent Township.
38. Identify and preserve sites of historical significance.
39. Create and support a Township Historical Committee.

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND LAND USE REGULATION

**Goal 1:** Promote a diverse land use pattern that supports the long-term vision of the Township as an independent, sustainable community.

### Strategies:

40. Encourage and promote the continuation of agricultural uses within the Township so that land suited for agriculture remains available for production.
41. Protect the lands encompassed by the Carlos Avery State Wildlife Management Area to remain in an undeveloped and natural state in perpetuity.
42. Promote and encourage a variety of residential land uses, consistent with the exurban/rural character of the Township.
43. Protect existing areas of low-density residential use, agricultural use and open space use, and limit the encroachment of high-density residential uses, commercial and industrial uses.
44. Provide appropriate and centralized support facilities and services immediately adjacent to the Interstate-35/CR-17 highway interchange.
45. Encourage limited commercial and light industrial developments which do not need public sewer and water to locate in areas with adequate road service within Urban Growth areas or the Rural Transit Center.
46. Identify existing or potential areas for urban expansion where commercial and light industrial uses and high-density or multi-family residential uses can be supported by public infrastructure such as municipal sewage treatment and water supply systems.

**Goal 2:** Promote a balanced approach to growth and development that is consistent with the rural character of the community.

**Strategies:**

47. Create a growth management plan to prevent potential land use conflicts.
48. Identify appropriate areas for growth consistent with infrastructure plans including urban services and transportation.
49. Identify and preserve those areas with significant cultural, historic, natural resource and/or scenic value.
50. Manage growth through the Township's zoning and subdivision ordinances.
51. Prevent premature development of key areas within the Township through enforcement of the zoning and subdivision ordinances.

**Goal 3:** Establish and maintain the appropriate official controls to support the Township's Land Use Plan.

**Strategies:**

52. Maintain and endorse the Township's zoning ordinance consistent with the Land Use Plan as adopted within the Comprehensive Plan.
53. Protect and maintain the character of our community, and protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Lent Township through appropriate land use regulations.
54. Encourage compatible land uses along bordering jurisdictions.
55. Strengthen communication with the citizens of Lent Township in order to inform them of issues concerning community growth, land development, zoning regulations and resources management.

## Residential

**Goal 1:** Work to ensure availability of adequate and affordable housing for all Township residents.

**Strategies:**

56. Promote new development near existing high-density population areas.
57. Work to ensure adequate Senior Housing is available in the community.
58. Create land use regulations that guide small lot development near existing platted subdivisions.
59. Promote the use of "open space design" in order to enhance and take advantage of existing wild corridors and wetlands.
60. Maintain low development density and encourage larger residential lot sizes scattered away from urban centers.
61. Encourage architectural designs that reflect rural character and minimize environmental impact.

## Agriculture

**Goal 1:** Support agriculture as a lifestyle opportunity for the pursuit of small-scale agricultural business such as orchards and small fruits, vineyards, tree farms, specialty animals, apiaries, and hobby farms, as well as conventional crops and livestock.

**Strategies:**

62. Work to provide adequate and appropriate compensation for conservation efforts through lobbying efforts at the County, State and Federal government.
63. Identify and protect current farming practices related to crops, livestock, specialty interests, and feed lots and prepare for future growth and development trends.

64. Continue to participate in county feedlot criteria review, especially for small feedlot and other county agricultural initiatives

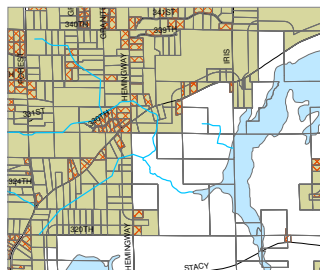
## Commercial/Business

**Goal 1:** Provide opportunities for retail, commercial and general businesses of varying scales and sizes throughout the Township.

### Strategies:

65. Protect existing low-density residential areas from heavy commercial, retail or light industrial uses.
66. Promote “quiet” commercial development near existing low-density uses.
67. Encourage the development of home based businesses within the Township that are consistent with the rural residential lifestyle.
68. Prevent high-traffic volume land uses within the rural residential areas of the Township.

69. Promote retail, manufacturing, industrial and high traffic business within appropriately guided areas.
70. Encourage the development of the Rural Transit Center with a mix of commercial, retail and general business uses.



# LENT TOWNSHIP

*chapter 2: land use & growth*



## CHAPTER 2: LAND USE & GROWTH

### Lent Township shall....

Promote a diverse land use pattern that supports the long-term vision of the Township as an independent, sustainable community.

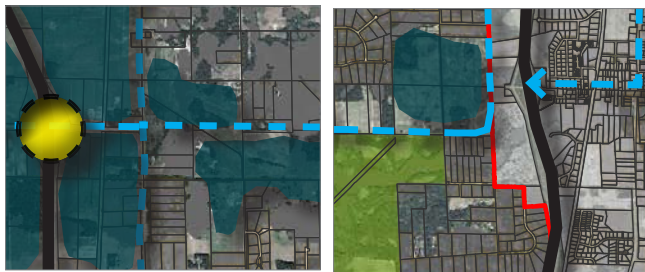
Promote a balanced approach to growth and development that is consistent with the rural character of the community.

Establish and maintain the appropriate official controls to support the Township's Land Use Plan.

Work to ensure availability of adequate and affordable housing for all Township residents.

Support agriculture as a lifestyle opportunity for the pursuit of small-scale agricultural business such as orchards and small fruits, vineyards, tree farms, specialty animals, apiaries, and hobby farms, as well as conventional crops and livestock.

Provide opportunities for retail, commercial and general businesses of varying scales and sizes throughout the Township.



## Introduction

Lent Township is a small, rural, growing community located in Chisago County. Located just beyond the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, the Township is near many job centers in the northeast suburbs, western Wisconsin and Minneapolis/Saint Paul. The Township is easily accessed by Interstate 35 (I-35), which is a primary regional north-south route bisecting the community.

The Township's accessibility, coupled with an abundance of natural resources makes it a desirable place for people to live and recreate. Over a third of the community is permanently protected by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area, and there are many connections to lakes, trails and natural areas throughout the region.

Over the years the Township has continued to maintain their independence and sense of rural identity. The community has grown steadily throughout the past several decades introducing new challenges and opportunities. At the forefront of the vision for the community is the desire to maintain the rural character while providing options and opportunities for strategic growth to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of the Township.

Because there are so many desirable characteristics found in the Township it is essential that land use and growth are properly planned and guided in the future. Creating a plan that promotes a balance of land uses will help strategically guide growth and ultimately result in a community that is desirable to live, recreate and work in the future.

The following chapter will begin by discussing current land use patterns to establish a baseline from which the future land use plan was developed. After existing conditions are defined, a guide plan for the future land use patterns in the community will be proposed. To supplement the future land use discussion, there are two focus discussions that are referred to as small area plans. The first small area plan provides additional discussion regarding the Rural Transit Center (RTC). The purpose of the RTC small area plan is to conceptually describe the types of uses and development patterns the community would like to see at this key intersection and surrounding land area in the future. The second small area plan describes specific opportunity areas for commercial or business opportunities within the community outside the RTC. Both small area plans are conceptual and support the goals and objectives introduced in this document.

### Existing Land Use and Zoning

The Township adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 2005. At that time the Township primarily used a one-to-one relationship between land use and zoning. The purpose of the existing land use plan is to identify the land uses currently in the Township. Figure 2-1 depicts the existing zoning and land uses within the community, and the following table provides a breakdown of the corresponding acreages in each designation. It should be noted that there is approximately 241 acres identified as Rural Transit Center (RTC) however, to date, there has been little development consistent with the future vision of this designation with some minor exceptions.

Table 2-1: Existing Land Use

Zoning District	Acres	%-Area
Rural Residential	15,147	68.87%
Natural Resource Preservation (NRP)	6,136	27.89%
Rural Transit Center (RTC)	241	1.10%
Urban Growth (UG)	160	0.73%
Rail ROW	61	0.28%
ROW	249	1.13%
Total	21,994	100%

source: Chisago County GIS, SHC

Map Created 1/30/2012

- 

Map created using Chisago County GIS  
Contents of this map may not be  
technically accurate, this information  
is provided as a planning guide only.

Also affecting the zoning and existing land uses are the overlay districts that are located within the Township. Over a quarter of the community is in a publicly protected Natural Resource Preservation (NRP) land use designation. The land within this area is owned by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and is known as Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area (WMA). In addition to the NRP land use and zoning designation, there is also an Overlay District which applies to the lands within the NRP designation, and also extends onto private properties that are adjacent to the Carlos Avery lands. (See Table 2-2)

Table 2-2: Overlay Districts

Overlay District	Acres	%-Area
Sunrise Overlay	1,091	4.96%
Carlos Avery WMA	9,313	42.34%
Total	10,404	47.31%

source: Chisago County GIS, SHC

The following definitions summarize the existing land use designations within the Township.

**Natural Resource Preservation (NRP):** The purpose of the NRP is to ensure that the lands encompassed by the Carlos Avery State Wildlife Management Area remain in an undeveloped and natural state in perpetuity. There are many public uses of the property and residents are encouraged to use and enjoy the natural area. A full management plan for Carlos Avery is maintained by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Approximately 6,136 acres of the Township is in the NRP.

**Rural Residential (RR):** The purpose of the Rural Residential designation is to provide areas to be utilized for low-density residential uses, agriculture and related rural land uses, and limits the encroachment of high-density residential uses and/or commercial and industrial uses. The primary use of all property within this land use designation is residential, with home based businesses spread throughout the Township. Approximately 15,147 Acres of the Township is in the Rural Residential land use designation.

**Rural Transit Center (RTC):** The purpose of the RTC is to provide appropriate and centralized support facilities, retail and service businesses on the land surrounding the Interstate 35 & County Road 17 highway interchange. Although there are existing single-family structures in the area these uses would be allowed only as non-conforming uses and are not a part of the overall vision for development of the area. As demonstrated in Table 2-4 the regulations of the Rural Residential zoning district were essentially applied to the RTC as a starting point. A list of permitted, conditional and interim uses is adopted as a part of the zoning ordinance. Approximately 240 Acres of land is zoned and guided RTC. The acreage surrounds

the I-35/CR-17 interchange, and is exclusive of the ROW at this intersection.

**Urban Growth (UG):** The purpose of the Urban Growth District is intended to provide

for existing and potential areas for urban expansion where commercial and light industrial uses and high-density or multi-family residential uses can be supported by public infrastructure such as municipal sewage treatment and water supply systems. Currently there is approximately 160 acres zoned and guided as Urban Growth. The land is adjacent to the City of Stacy municipal boundary.

## Zoning Districts

The official zoning map was adopted shortly after the 2005 Comprehensive Plan was approved by the Town Board. The zoning districts were essentially established to match the Comprehensive Plan land use designations on a one-to-one basis. So, for example, the Rural Residential land use designation had a corresponding and supporting Rural Residential zoning district within the town's Zoning Ordinance. Prior to adopting the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, the Township had zoning that was consistent with the County. The 2003 zoning map is attached as a supporting document to this plan because some of the zoning districts will be brought forward into this plan to better accommodate the goals and



objectives of the Township to maintain its rural character, specifically on larger residential lots. Within subsequent sections of this document, and specifically within the future land use plan section of this chapter, proposed supporting zoning will be established to better accommodate the types of development, growth and land uses that the town is proposing as a part of this Comprehensive Plan update. Once this plan is adopted by the Town Board, the zoning ordinance will need to be updated and revised to include subsequent zoning districts that support the long-term land use plan as established within this document.

## Existing Growth Patterns

The Township has experienced primarily rural residential growth over the past several decades with the development closely following the cycle of the housing market. Growth has been dispersed throughout the Township and has generally occurred as rural residential development with average lot sizes between five and ten acres. Additionally, there have been several platted subdivisions, some clustered, where lot sizes have been smaller than five acres, but lots historically have not been smaller than one acre in an effort to adequately support individual septic systems. The platted subdivisions are referred to as higher density areas within the Township, and there are currently no urban services (sewer and water) within the community.

Although there are no areas that have purely commercial uses within the Township, there has been significant growth of home-based businesses throughout the community. The businesses are throughout the Township and provide a variety of services to the local and regional area. These businesses actively promote

their services, and business signs can be found throughout the Township. Although small home based businesses today, in the future they may require an independent business location from their residential property. As demonstrated within the background report there are more than 50 residences that claim some type of business income from their property and it can be assumed that a significant proportion of those properties have a home based business of varying scale.

As previously identified, the land surrounding the I-35 and CR-17 intersection is guided and zoned as the Rural Transit Center (RTC). To date, the only significant business in this area is a convenience station, and the remaining land continues to be used for primarily agricultural and rural residential uses. This land was designated RTC during the 2005 Comprehensive Plan to respond to the new interchange from Interstate 35.

## Guide Plan

The Guide Plan as depicted in Figure 2-2 was developed using the existing land use plan, zoning map, and growth patterns as its foundation. The purpose of the Guide Plan is to demonstrate what the Township wants in the future with respect to growth and land use. However, it is critical for this plan to be tied to the realities of today, which is why it is imperative to begin with the existing land uses and existing growth patterns established within the Township. It is also critical to ensure that the future land use plan is directly tied to the goals and objectives of this plan, and that the plan is attainable.

The purpose of the Guide Plan is to clearly define areas for future growth and development that describe the goals and aspirations of the community. The intent is to provide areas that promote a balance of land uses within the Township including residential, commercial, light industrial and open spaces that will support a sustainable development and growth pattern for the future. In the previous section the existing land uses were defined based on the adopted 2005 Comprehensive Plan. In the following sections, some modifications and clarifications to those definitions are provided. A list of future land use designations is provided, and supporting zoning districts proposed (Table 2-4). The plan provides the policies, standards and principles to guide the future physical form and function

and serves as the basis for updating the zoning ordinance and other implementation measures that are enforceable under the Township's powers.

The future land use plan accomplishes the following objectives:

- a) It reflects existing development and the existing land use patterns.
- b) It addresses the need to plan for appropriate infrastructure in areas guided for increased intensity such as the RTC.
- c) It protects and emphasizes the importance of the natural environment, with specific attention to the area in, and surrounding, the Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area.

The recommendations contained in this plan provide for a balance between these components.

It is the intent of this plan to create a community where these elements exist:

- » Commercial and business opportunities that support the Township resident's ability to work, shop, and meet daily needs, all within their community.
- » A strong natural resources system that provides opportunities for residents of the Township, and greater region, to recreate and enjoy open spaces and recreational activities.
- » An efficient transportation system, that provides access to key areas such as the RTC

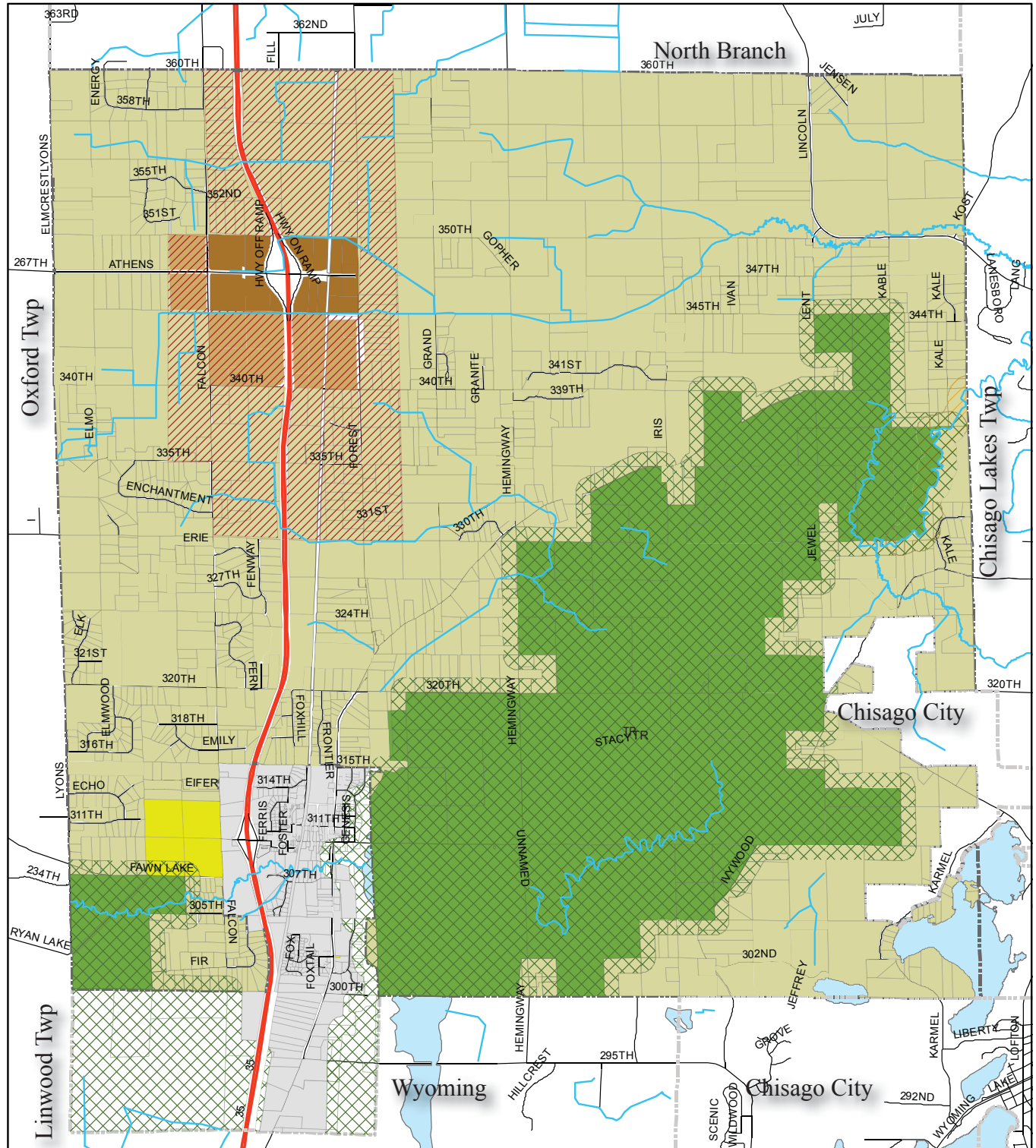
Table 2-3: Future Land Use

Zoning District	Acres	%-Area
Rural Residential	14,765	67.13%
Natural Resource Preservation (NRP)	6,136	27.89%
Rural Transit Center (RTC)	241	1.10%
Rural Transit Holding (RTCH)	382	1.74%
Urban Growth (UG)	160	0.73%
Rail ROW	61	0.28%
ROW	249	1.13%
Total	21,994	100%
<b>Overlays</b>		
Rural Business (RBO)	2,300	10.45%
Carlos Avery	9,313	42.34%
Sunrise Prairie	1,091	47.31%










source: Chisago County GIS, SHC



Figure 2-2: Future Land Use Plan



### Future Land Use

- |   |                              |   |                               |
|---|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
|  | Rural Residential            |  | Natural Resource Preservation |
|  | Urban Growth                 |  | Carlos Avery Overlay          |
|  | Rural Transit Center         |  | Sunrise Overlay               |
|  | Rural Transit Center Holding |  | City of Stacy                 |
|  | Rural Business Overlay       |   |                               |



rev. 10/19/2012

Contents of this map may not be technically accurate, this information is provided as a planning guide only.

Map created using Chisago County GIS, MnDNR

Table 2-4: Land Use & Zoning Districts

Land Use	Corresponding Future Zoning Districts
Rural Residential (RR): Large lot residential areas are guided RR, and are intended to remain in large lots for this planning period.	A* RR RR2*
Rural Business Overlay (RBO): Overlay district along key corridors to guide home based businesses along major local roads and at key transportation nodes.	RR - Overlay
Urban Growth (UG): Small area near Stacy that is positioned for urban services in the future.	RR
Rural Transit Center (RTC): Future mix of uses that includes commercial, general business and light industrial. May include higher-density housing such as senior housing.	RTC1
Rural Transit Center Holding (RTCH): Phase II of the RTC area. Also included within the RBO.	RR RTC2
Natural Resource Preservation (NRP)	NRP

\*Denotes new zoning district, not in current Township's adopted zoning ordinance. Zoning may exist at County, and in those cases should be incorporated and then revised into the Township's ordinance.

## Basic Planning Provisions

In addition to the goals and strategies, there are a number of basic principles that are important to implementing the land use plan. These are described below:

- » Establish a plan and process to zone land consistent with the land use plan.
- » Ensure the growth areas are well connected and supported by infrastructure including transportation, utilities and other community based services. (See Chapter 4 for road detail)
- » Guide future development to accessible locations, to help minimize infrastructure expenses.
- » Collaborate with surrounding jurisdictions in planning efforts, when appropriate.

## Physical Character

The physical character of the Township is defined by five major elements:

1. Development pattern (density – rural v. suburban, etc.)
2. Major road pattern
3. Neighborhood form
4. Future growth pattern of community facilities and open space (natural resources)
5. Location and nature of businesses and commercial development

The following guiding principles related to each of the elements were established through the Comprehensive Planning effort:

## Pattern of Development and Neighborhood Form

- » Promote smaller lot sizes in coordination with conservation development (i.e. clustering)
- » Guide density and development to areas near or within the Rural Transit Center
- » Encourage open space and natural resource conservation in all new developments

## Rural Transit Center/Commercial Areas

- » Concentrate commercial/retail development in the northwest quadrant of the RTC
- » Allow for a mix of uses within the RTC including retail, professional services, and light industrial land uses
- » Connect the RTC with trails to provide multi-modal access to the area
- » Provide higher density residential options adjacent to the RTC, such as senior housing, etc.
- » Promote master planning in each quadrant to ensure cohesive development of the RTC
- » Encourage green space and open space within the RTC, including access to the regional bike trail
- » Allow for alternative wastewater opportunities to encourage growth within the RTC and other commercially designated areas.
- » Encourage home-based businesses to locate on major roads and at key intersections to avoid conflicts with existing neighborhoods.

## Road Pattern

- » Encourage east-west and north-south connections throughout the Township to promote interconnected neighborhoods
- » Connect existing and future roads between neighborhoods
- » Ensure adequate connections and accesses are provided as the RTC, and other business area develop

## Open Space/Community Facilities

- » Connect future neighborhoods to Carlos Avery WMA through trail connections
- » Plan pedestrian and bike corridors that connect commercial areas, parks, and neighborhoods
- » Create an interconnected greenway through the promotion of conservation design and development
- » Continue to explore alternative infrastructure to service future development areas

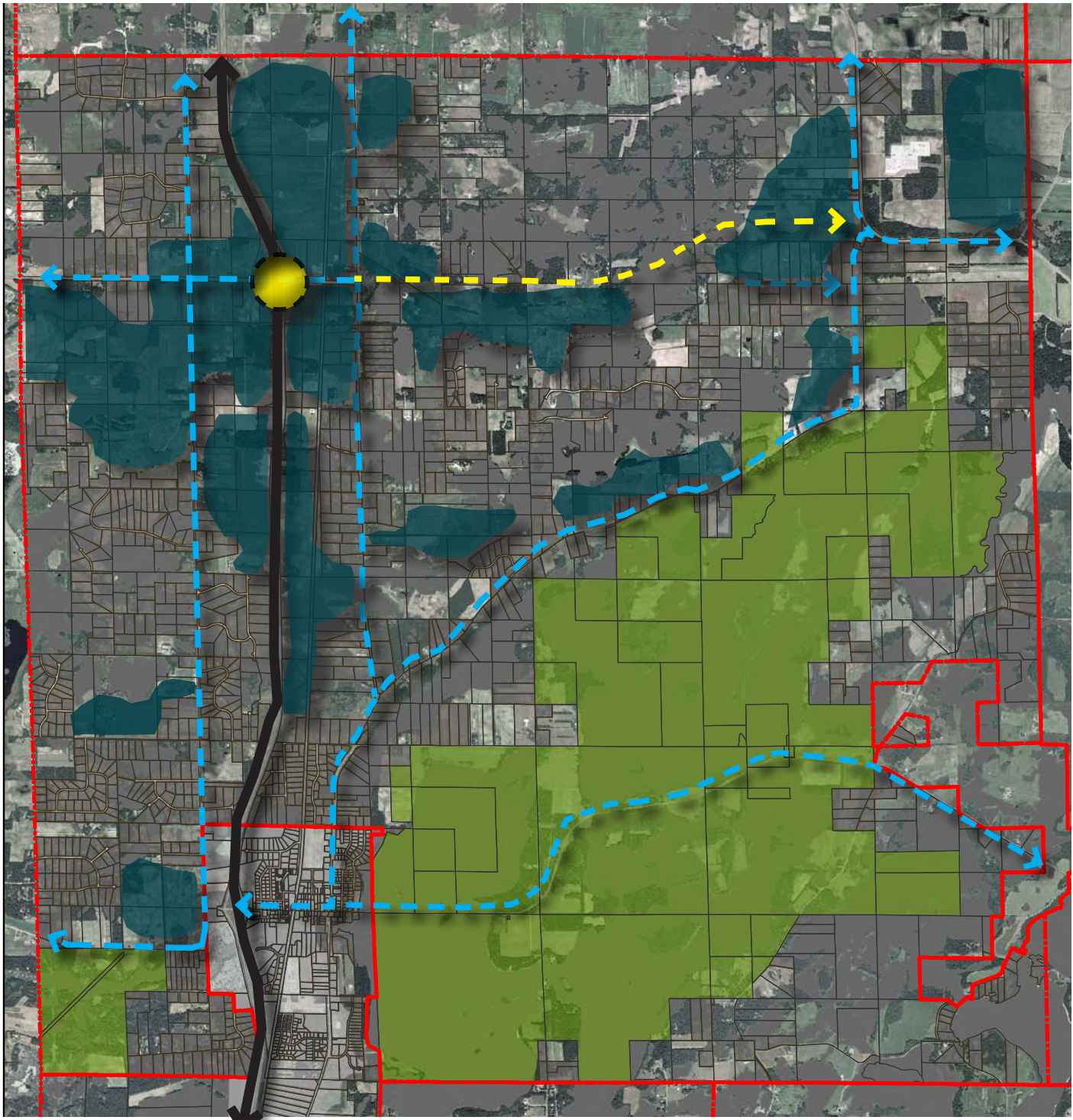
## Future Land Use & Zoning Designations

Although growth is inevitable in the Township, there continues to be a strong desire to maintain the rural quality of the community through large lots and open spaces. As a result, the Township will continue to guide and zone the majority of the lands consistent with this goal. The Township intends to guide land in key areas for higher intensity uses in an effort to balance the land uses. Uses such as commercial and light industrial will potentially increase the opportunity for residents to not only live and recreate in the community, but find work as well. The following table introduces the land uses found within the Guide Plan, and proposes corresponding zoning districts that would be developed and/or refined in the Town's Zoning Ordinance once this plan is adopted.



Figure 2-3: Conceptual Development Areas

chapter 2: land use & growth



Developable Area



Developable (non-wetland)



RTC - Commercial Node



I-35 (Regional Connection)



Primary Local Connections



Future Local Connections

rev.4/3/2013

## Developable Lands

Through the planning process it became relatively clear that the next decade has the potential to be critical to the long-term developability and sustainability of the Township. To establish the “developable” areas, a mapping analysis using GIS was completed using wetland data from the DNR and parcel information from Chisago County. The study isolated areas that are likely to be intrinsically unsuitable for further development due primarily to physical constraints. For example, wetlands are generally undevelopable. Although the data source used to calculate the wetland area may not be technically precise, it is suggestive of conceptually where the wetland areas are within the Township and can therefore be used to help identify areas that might not have the highest development potential. Then all parcels that were 5 acres or less were identified, because generally lots smaller than 5 acres are difficult to further subdivide due to the location of residences and accessory structures. Finally, platted subdivisions were also omitted from the developable areas. What remains is a conceptual picture of prime developable areas within the Township, which is depicted in Figure 2-3 and identified in the darker green.

This graphic is not intended to describe the detail of each property; rather it is intended as a thousand-foot overview of conceptually what is happening in the Township. Immediately

what stands out is that the development pattern of large-lot subdivisions currently defines the overall character of the Township. There also is a strong network of open spaces and wetland areas that structure the development pattern and guides road locations, residential locations and potential future development areas. Generally, it also helps describe the remaining desirable areas for future development. What is apparent from this mapping study is that the remaining areas that are suitable for development need to be carefully planned for to ensure the availability of lands for future diversification of land uses, thereby diversifying the future tax base resulting in a more balanced land use pattern within the community.

As demonstrated in the figure, the RTC Phase I area, and ultimately Phase II are critical areas to plan for the future of the Township because the area has the largest contiguous area of available developable land within the community. This area also has some of the highest visibility and accessibility of land area within the Township.

Based upon the developable areas analysis, the following two special areas are considered in more detail.

## Special Area - Rural Transit Center

The majority of the Township is well suited for rural residential development, with limited opportunity for larger scale commercial, light industrial, or retail development. As such, the Township recognizes the importance of the area around the Interstate 35 (I-35) and Athens Trail (CR-17) intersection which is guided as Rural Transit Center (RTC). This location is vital to the long term viability, sustainability, and independence of the Township. The Township's vision for this area of the community is a 'town center' that eventually will be the hub of the community. It is the intent that this section of graphics, maps and information will provide some direction with respect to conceptually how the RTC might grow and evolve over the next several years. Although the Township acknowledges that some flexibility will be necessary when considering how the RTC grows over the next several years, there are some concepts from a land use and development perspective that are prevalent in both concepts found in the following graphics. Figures 2-4.0 through 2-4.2 demonstrate the area conceptually with supporting graphics and maps. A summary of the key principles in both concepts are as follows:

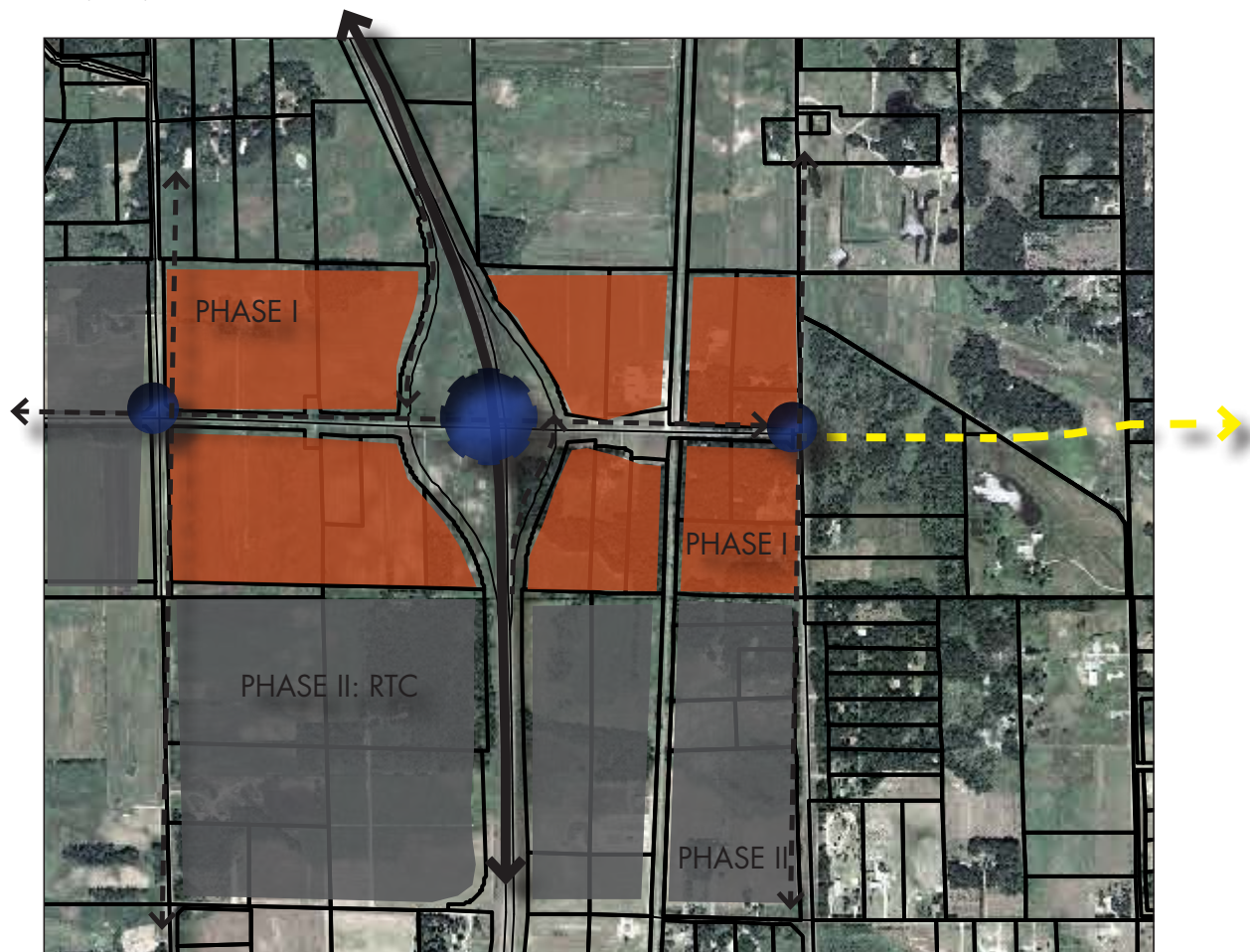
- » The northwest quadrant is the ideal location for commercial/retail use. This is the prime development quadrant, and the Township will not allow for less intense uses in this area without it being accompanied by a prime retailer/commercial user.
- » The Township understands that visibility is essential for commercial and retail users and therefore believes that the land adjacent to I-35 should be reserved for such land uses.
- » As the area develops, opportunities for mixed uses including light industrial and general business are better suited away from the prime corridors buffered with commercial/retail users along the prime frontage.
- » Designing the area to be cohesive is critical, and therefore, at time of development, master planning by developers and land owners should be done in each quadrant to demonstrate how potential users would be coordinated.







## Figure 2-4: RTC Study Area

### Rural Transit Center (RTC)

The Township considers the RTC to be a key intersection and future development area within the community. The area has high visibility and exceptional access from Interstate 35 making it one of the primary assets of the Township for the future. The following set of maps and images provides some guidance for future developers, businesses and community leaders with respect to how the RTC might develop. For purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, only concept plans for Phase I are considered, because it is likely to be the priority in terms of development, and will happen first. When Phase I is underway, the Township shall go through a planning effort similar to the small area plan provided here for Phase II lands.



### Key Traffic/Circulation

-  I-35 (Regional Connection)
-  Primary Local Connections
-  Future Local Connection
-  Major Node
-  Minor Node

## Figure 2-4.1: RTC Concept Plan

### Concept 1: Commercial/Retail Mixed-Use

In the first concept, the RTC would be dominated by a mix of retail, commercial and general business uses. Commercial/Retail development would be guided to the I-35 intersection to promote the highest visibility for potential retailers. For example, a big-box retailer that targets the outdoors and sportsmen could be a great fit in this location, optimizing north-bound vacationers.



#### Potential Users in the RTC



Commercial/Retail



General Business

#### Key Traffic/Circulation

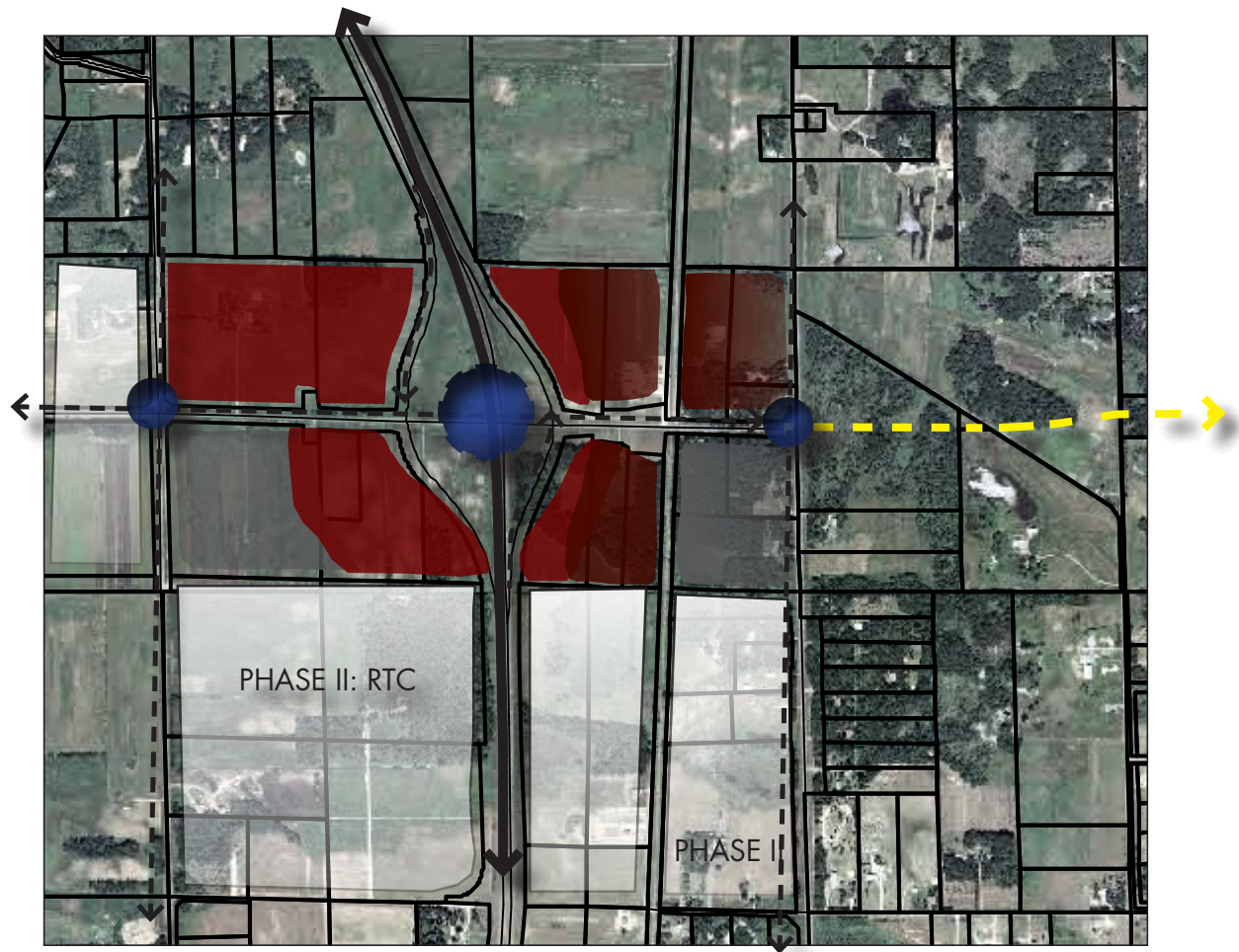
-  I-35 (Regional Connection)
-  Primary Local Connections
-  Future Local Connection
-  Major Node
-  Minor Node



## Figure 2-4.2: RTC Concept Plan


### Concept 2: Business/Industry Mixed-Use

The second concept for the RTC focuses on commercial, retail and light industrial users. Unlike in Concept 1, there are no residential areas proposed. It is likely that the highest and best use of the land surrounding key transportation nodes would be more intense, and better suited (and more cost effective) for businesses and retail. The Township understands that in both concepts, creative solutions for utilities and infrastructure may be necessary to accommodate the more intense land uses.



#### Potential Users in the RTC



 Commercial/Retail








 General Business



 Light Industrial

#### Key Traffic/Circulation

-  I-35 (Regional Connection)
-  Primary Local Connections
-  Future Local Connection
-  Major Node
-  Minor Node

## Special Area - Rural Business Corridor

As demonstrated in the existing land use plan, and in the background report, the Township is dominated by rural residential land uses. There are many small, home based businesses within the Township that provide opportunities to residents to work from their homes and provide a variety of services to the community. However, in recent years, a discussion has emerged about the best location for home-based businesses to operate. Many have no impact on the existing neighborhood pattern, but there are some that certainly have the potential to change the character of the rural residential neighborhoods in which they operate.

Although the Township has regulations relating to operations of a home-based business through the acquisition of an Interim Use Permit, there is little within the ordinance or existing Comprehensive Plan addressing these types of operations. As Lent Township grows the potential for land use conflicts continue, and as a result it is important to try and minimize potential issues. The Township believes it is important to provide opportunities for all different types of businesses and therefore has prepared this special area plan. The idea is that new residents, who know they would like to operate a more intense home based business, might focus their search within the Rural Business Overlay (RBO). The RBO is located along the major north-south corridors within the Township running parallel to I-35 along CR-30 and CR-78. The RBO district extends from 335th Street on the southern boundary, and 360th Street to the north. The idea is that long-term some of these businesses might grow and ultimately may look for a business location outside of their residence and may look to the RTC to build and grow. The RBO area has the potential to be an incubator for businesses within the community, and by centrally locating them it will reduce the potential for conflicts in the more rural residentially focused areas of the community.

Figure 2-5 demonstrates conceptually this idea. A summary of the key principles are as follows:

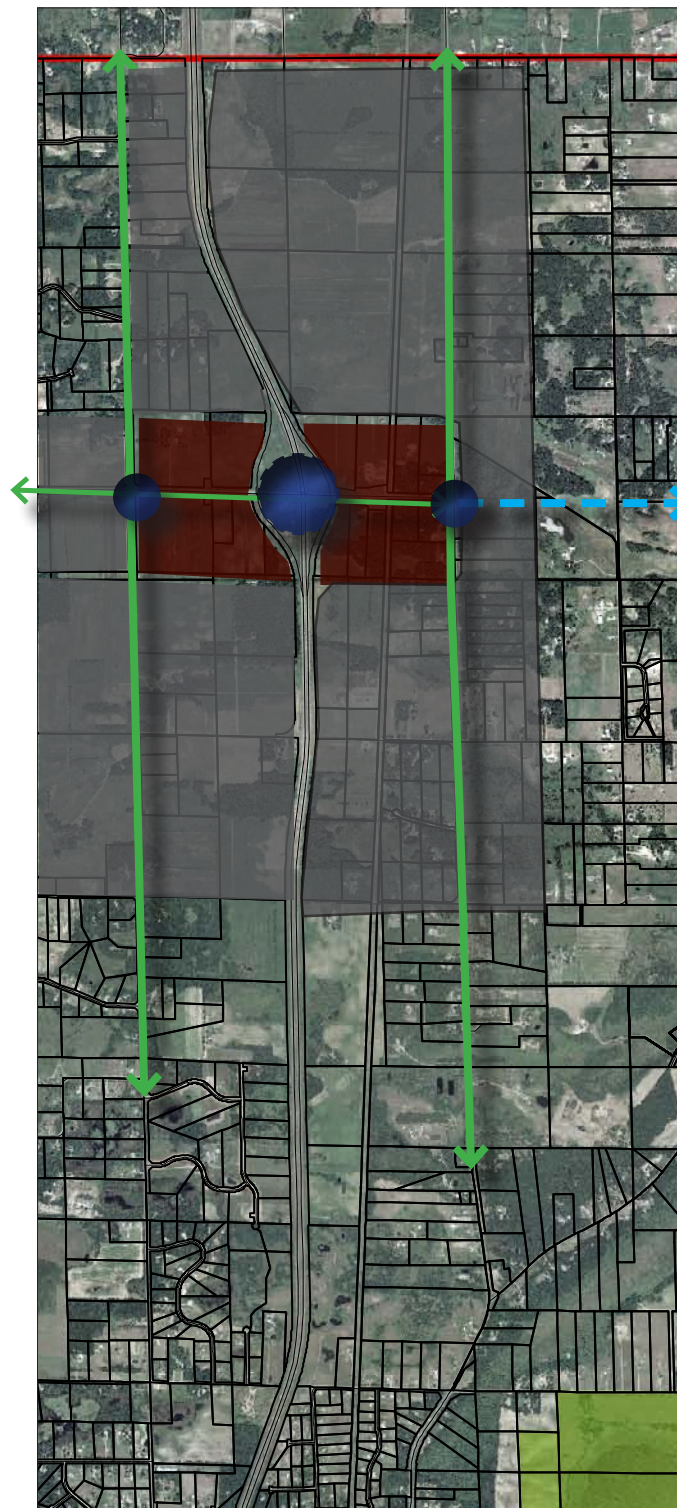
- » Concentrating home-based businesses, when possible, will help minimize potential land use conflicts in the more rural areas of the community.
- » The key transportation corridors create greater visibility for businesses, and therefore may serve as an incubator for the small home occupations.
- » Creating opportunities and diversity for residents will help create a more sustainable community long term.
- » Developing a set of performance standards for the RBO will be critical to ensure that the development of the home based businesses is done in a way that supports the overall goals and vision of the community.



## Figure 2-5: Rural Business Overlay (RBO)

### Concept: Concentrate small businesses along key corridors

As demonstrated in the previous concept plans, the Township has guided large commercial, retail and light industrial users to locate in the RTC district. However, the Township is generally supportive of smaller, start-up businesses provided they are consistent with neighborhood development patterns, and infrastructure capacity. As a result, the Township would encourage small businesses, specifically home occupations, to locate within the RBO. The RBO will apply to land with frontage or direct access onto a County Road within the shaded gray area (for example Forest Blvd.) The RBO will function as an overlay, and the corresponding zoning will support and guide the types of development which can occur within the area. The area, and corresponding business types are demonstrated in the concept below.



### Development Concepts



RTC



Rural Business Overlay

### Key Traffic/Circulation

-  I-35 (Regional Connection)
-  Primary Local Connections
-  Future Local Connection
-  Major Node
-  Minor Node

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Lent Township will continue to grow and diversify over the next several years, and this plan is intended as a guide to facilitate that growth. The Township is dedicated to maintaining the rural quality, while introducing new land uses that will contribute to the long-term sustainability and viability of the community. The following recommendations relating to the Guide Plan are provided:

- » In Rural Residential areas the integration of natural resource planning should be promoted. This includes clustering and providing access to open spaces and trails.
- » Commercial and retail areas should be carefully planned because the prime land suitable for this use is limited.
- » Establishing a set of performance standards in each supporting zoning district will help minimize potential land use conflicts in the future. Once this Comprehensive Plan is adopted, the Township should prepare and review the existing zoning ordinance to be consistent with this plan.
- » Higher intensity land uses should be focused at key transportation nodes and along primary transportation corridors.
- » The Township should be flexible and responsive to alternative methods of providing infrastructure and essential services to higher intensity areas. This will help encourage and promote users to develop in the areas of the community suitable for commercial, light industrial and multi-family uses.

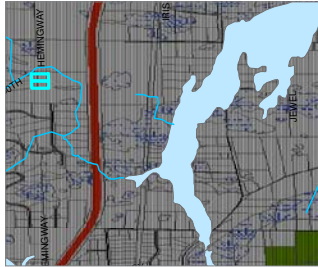


## CHAPTER 3: NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & OPEN SPACE

### Lent Township Shall...

Protect Carlos Avery State Wildlife Management Area in perpetuity as the primary open space and natural resource area within the Township.

Protect and preserve the quality and quantity of water resources within and flowing through the Township.



Although Lent Township has experienced consistent growth over the past several decades the community has worked hard to protect its natural resources and maintain the rural character that defines the Township. The existing natural resources and parks within the community continue to define the region, and play an integral role in past, present and future development.

The following sections provide some historical background about the natural resource system, current initiatives and inventorying that has occurred, and future plans of the Township and other regional/state agencies plan for protecting potentially important natural resource areas. In addition natural resources, open spaces and parks will be considered and planned for as a part of the overall land use network.

The integration of natural resources, parks, open space and future development will ensure that the character of Lent Township is maintained and protected into the future.

From a natural resource protection and planning perspective it is often valuable to understand what areas are intact and have been largely unaltered. These areas are oftentimes good places to start for identification of areas that might have the greatest ecological significance, or potential for restoration.

Recognizing these types of vegetative cover also helps when determining or establishing a plan for future restoration projects. Additionally, understanding the types of vegetation that are native to the area also may help indicate what types of plants and foliage might be most successful in the future.

This information can also be used to help guide landscaping and vegetative plans in future development areas. In addition to utilizing this information for future planning efforts, it also provides a great baseline from which to begin natural resource studies and inventories for various efforts throughout the Township, and greater Chisago County region.

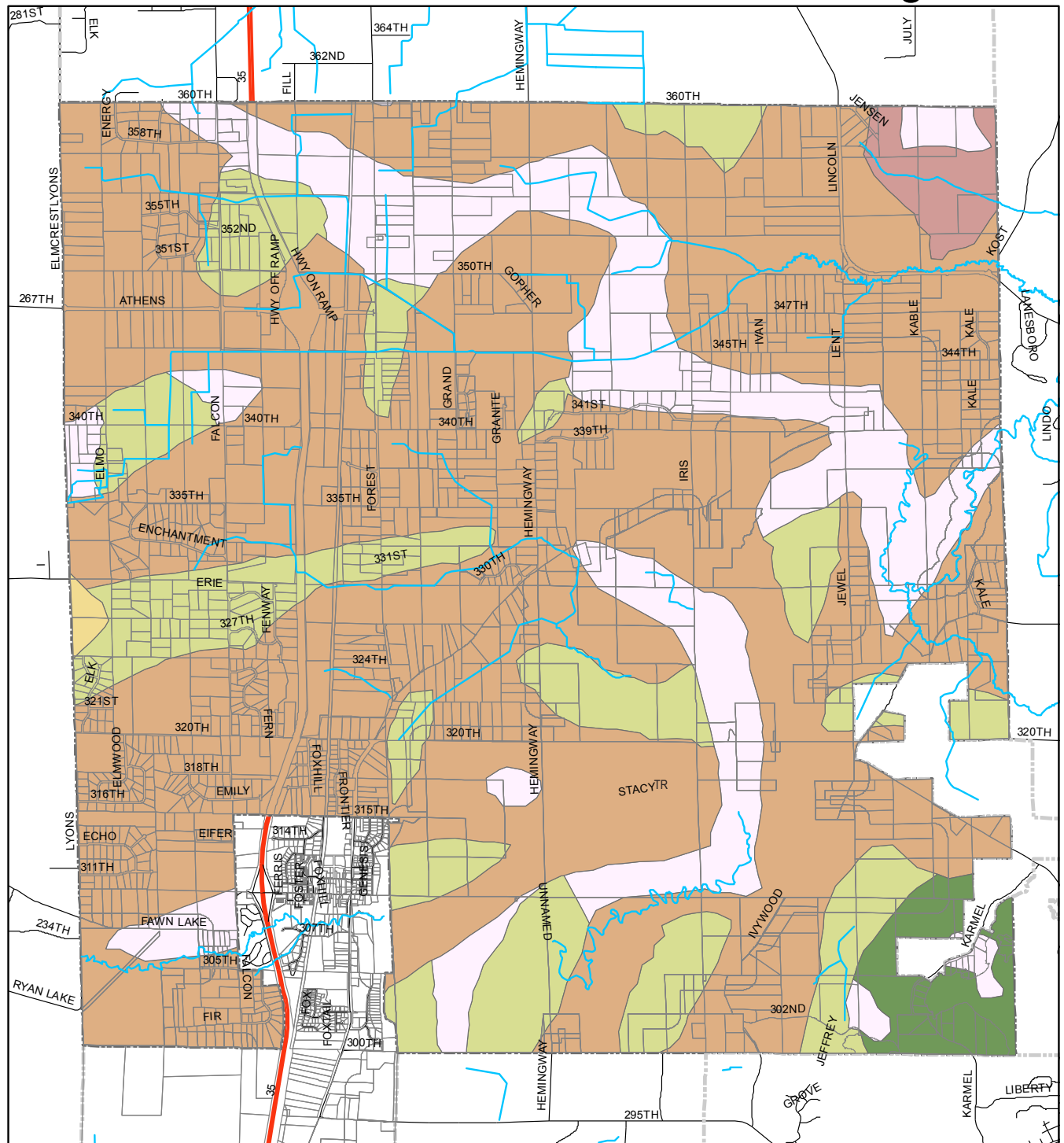
## Natural Resources

### Presettlement History

In order to establish a plan for future natural resource protection and restoration, it is important to understand the characteristics of the land that are native and those characteristics that have resulted over time and are tied to human settlement patterns (non-native).

Figure 3-1 is a compilation of historical data compiled by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR). The collected data demonstrates the types of land cover, and or vegetation, that was present in the Township prior to human settlement. You can see from the figure that over 75% of the land was covered with Oak, with openings and barrens, and interspersed wet prairies and conifer bogs and swamps.







## Presettlement Vegetation



## Presettlement Vegetation

10/19/2012

## Vegetation

-  Big Woods - Hardwoods (oak, maple, basswood, hickory)
-  Conifer Bogs and Swamps
-  Lakes (open water)
-  Oak openings and barrens
-  Prairie
-  Wet Prairie



Map created using Chisago County GIS, MnDNR  
Contents of this map may not be  
technically accurate, this information  
is provided as a planning guide only.

## Water and Watersheds

### Wetlands, Lakes & Public Lands

As demonstrated in Chapter 2 within the land use section, nearly 30-percent of Lent Township is managed through the MnDNR, and is identified as a state regional resource. The Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area (WMA) program comprises nearly all of the public land within the Township, and plays a significant role in the character and identity of the community.

Zoned as ‘Natural Resource Protection’ this area has been under protection for several decades and therefore has been successfully protected and restored, and much of the presettlement vegetative patterns as identified within the previous section are in tact.

#### Wetlands

The presettlement vegetative patterns suggest that a large area of the Township would have some type of wetlands present. In fact, according to the National Wetland Inventory (NWI), just over 33%, or approximately 7,420 acres, of the land area in the Township is some type of wetland. The NWI is compiled at the state level, and must be field verified, but it does provide guidance with respect to where wetlands might occur, and their relative size and type. Figure 3-2 depicts the generalized wetlands as established within the NWI.

Because the Carlos Avery WMA plays such a dominant role within the community, and specifically with respect to natural resources, the following summary of lakes and wetlands within the area is provided. As can be seen in Figure 3-2, the Sunrise Unit of the Carlos Avery WMA is predominantly wetlands with some upland and open water consisting of the North Pool, South Pool and Mud Lake. Additionally, a section of the Sunrise River meanders through the area providing critical connections between wetlands, uplands, and significant habitat. Due to the biodiversity within the area, and the significance of the surface water elements these areas have been inventoried in detail. A summary of that data, and discussion can be found in the subsequent MLCCS section of this chapter.

#### Lakes

In addition to the wetlands, the Township has approximately 1,375 acres of lakes (approximately

6% of the total land area) within the community. The vast majority of the lakes are within Carlos Avery as previously discussed, with a couple small lakes outside of the WMA area.

#### Sunrise River

Today, rivers like the Sunrise River are the major factors which continue to influence and change topography. The Sunrise River tributaries are scattered throughout the county. The Sunrise River has 4 branches; the West Branch, located near Stacy; the South Branch located near Wyoming; the North Branch in North Branch and Hay Creek located northeast of North Branch. (CCLWMP p 37)

The water most susceptible to contamination from land use in the county is water from the surficial aquifers, particularly those wells located in the Anoka Sand Plain region (CCLWMP p 37). More detail on these characteristics can be found in the Chisago County’s plan.

#### Floodplains

There are many properties within the Township in which a portion of the land lies within a FEMA designated floodplain. Although many of these areas are associated with a designated wetland, or within Carlos Avery, there are some private properties exclusive of these two conditions that should be considered when building and/or development is considered. In early 2013 the Township adopted their first Floodplain Ordinance that incorporates mapping which is available from the Township offices.

### Sunrise River Watershed

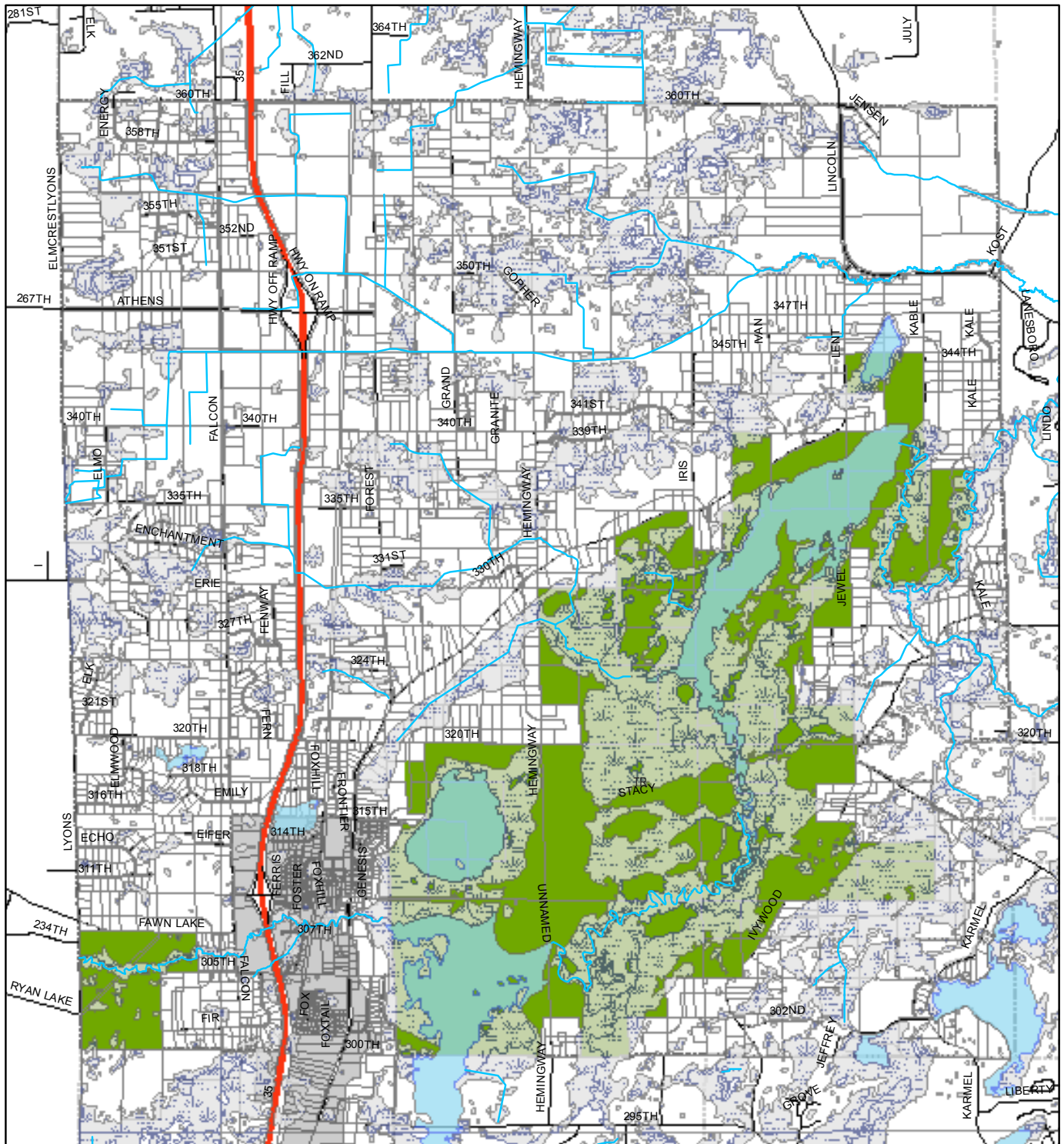
Though there are numerous minor watersheds, the Sunrise Watershed is the major watershed in Lent Township. As of now the citizens of Lent have not tied this watershed to an official association or district.

Therefore for permitting purposes, Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) inquiries, and other items of interest regarding surface waters are coordinated and directed to the Chisago County Conservation District and Chisago County.




Figure 3-2

# Lakes & Wetlands



## Wetlands & Lakes

10/19/2012

-  Lakes
-  Wetlands
-  rivers



Map created using Chisago County GIS  
 Contents of this map may not be  
 technically accurate, this information  
 is provided as a planning guide only.

## Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS)

Since the 1990s the MnDNR has been working in collaboration with various entities including counties, watershed districts, conservation agencies, and others to establish a uniform method for collecting land cover data. A standardized system has been adopted by the MnDNR and is called the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System or, simply the MLCCS. Much of the central region of the state has been inventoried, with ongoing efforts to complete the state. Several communities have initiated this effort with the assistance of grant money and other funding sources to have a completed MLCCS for geographic areas.

The system collects existing condition information on land cover and cross reference the information with historical data thereby establishing a database of land covers within a geographic area. The MLCCS inventory is created in GIS and compiles the data geographically. One of the stated goals of the MLCCS is be able to share this data between jurisdictions, agencies and the public in an effort to create and plan for the future of natural resources and natural resource protection in an area.

### MLCCS in Chisago County & Lent Township

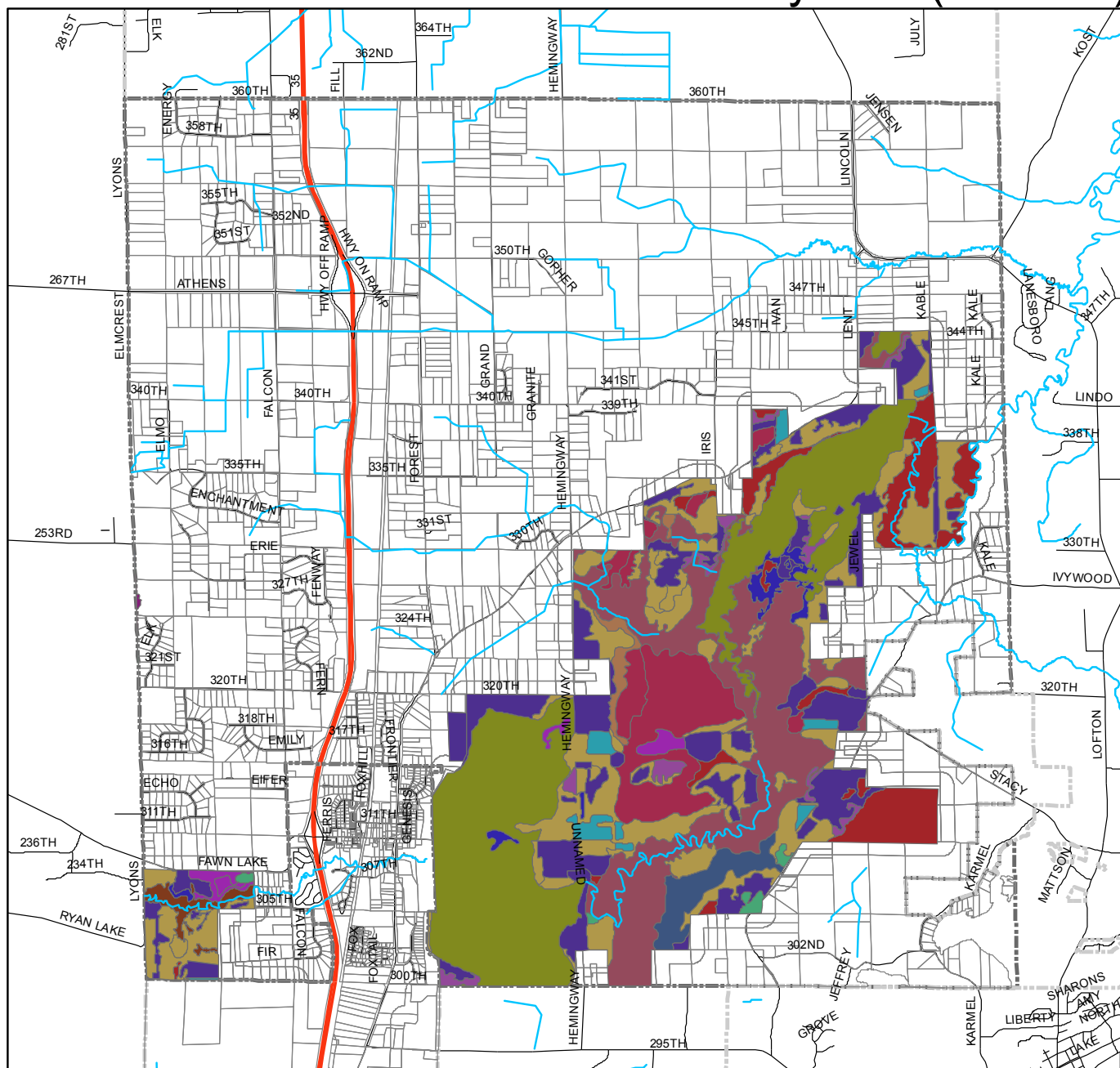
Several areas within Chisago County have been inventoried, but the most available MLCCS data is found for lands owned and managed by the MnDNR. In Lent Township the only area for which the MLCCS has been completed at the time of this plan was within Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area, and those areas within portions of the overlay.

Figure 3-3 shows the MLCCS that has been completed for the MnDNR lands within the Township.

As demonstrated by the figure, the MLCCS is very detailed in the types of information collected. While a large area of 'water' is identified within the WMA, also dominating the area is a 'Tamarack Swamp'. Also not seen on the map, behind the cover type, in a data base is a ranking system that identifies whether an area is native or non-native, if the site has been field verified, among several other characteristics. As the Township grows and develops, this type of detail, especially for areas identified within the MnDNR's areas of potential ecological significance might warrant an MLCCS study to truly understand the land cover characteristics.



# Figure 3-3 MN Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS)



## MLCCS

	Alder swamp		Oak forest
	Aspen forest		Oak forest dry subtype
	Aspen forest - saturated soils		Oak forest mesic subtype
	Birch bog, spiraea shrubland - seasonally flooded		Paper birch forest
	Cattail marsh - semipermanently flooded		Permanently flooded emergent vegetation
	Corn		Tamarack swamp
	Cultivated herbaceous vegetation		Water
	Medium-tall grassland		Wet meadow
	Mixed hardwood swamp		Wet meadow shrub subtype
	Northern hardwood forest		White pine forest
	Seasonally flooded altered/non-native dominated		undefined
	Red pine forest		



10/19/2012

Contents of this map may not be technically accurate, this information is provided as a planning guide only.

Map created using Chisago County GIS, MnDNR

## Ecologically Significant Areas

While the MLCCS has been completed for the MnDNR lands within the Township, it leaves over two-thirds of land within the Township without a land cover analysis completed. The Township is aware that there are many other areas within the community that potentially have ecological significance that contribute and enhance the overall quality of the Township.

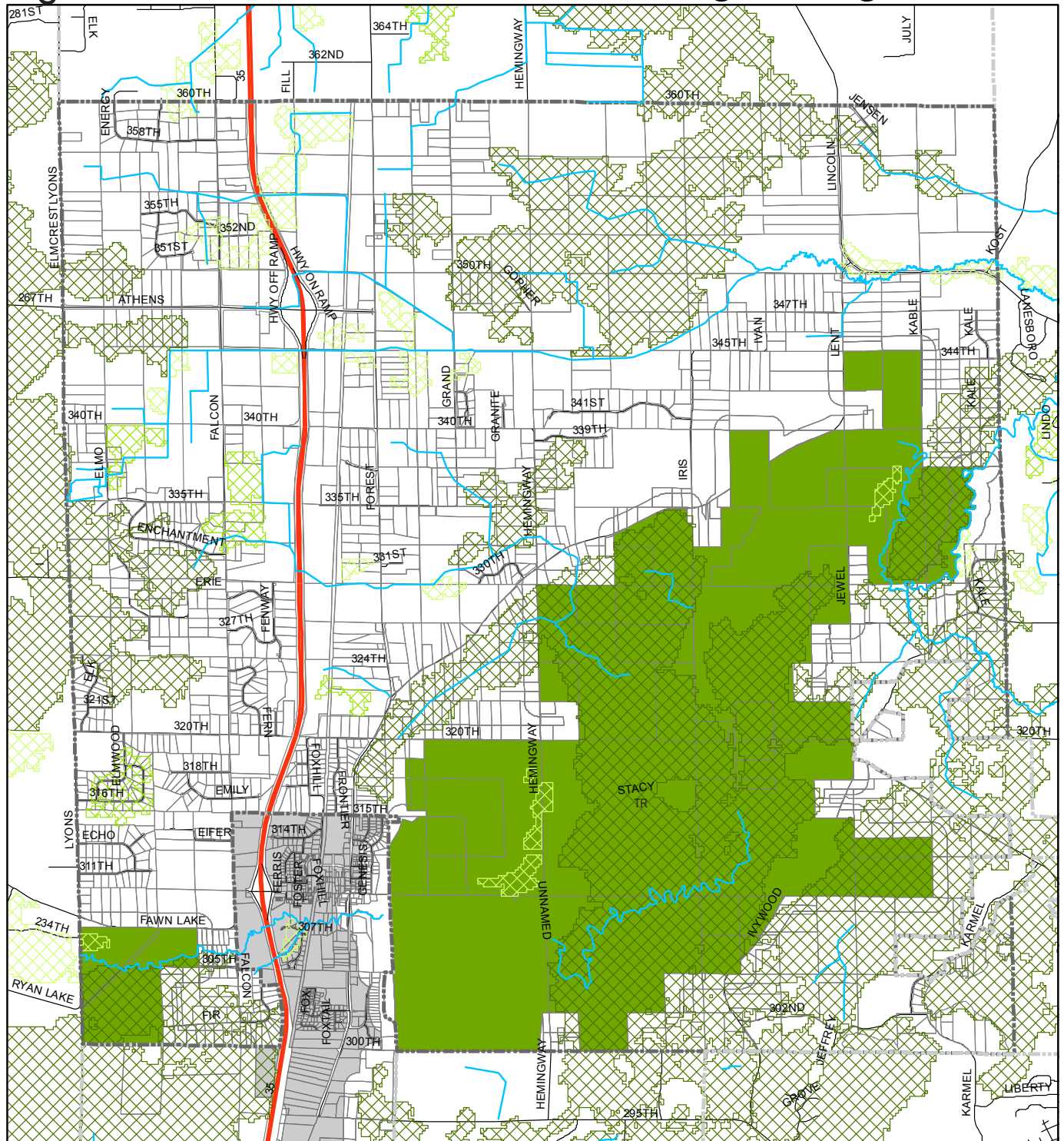
In an effort to help identify where some of those high quality natural resources might be in the Township, the MnDNR has completed a general analysis which identifies areas with potentially moderate, high or outstanding ecological quality. Figure 3-4 shows the lands identified by the MnDNR and shows the ecological score, or ranking, based upon aerials, site visits, farm records and other resources.

While this analysis would clearly need to be ground truthed, it does give a general idea of where there might be some opportunities for innovative approaches to land use and

development within the Township. While much of the area identified includes wetland areas, there could also be vegetative, habitat and ecological qualities that might be worth protecting or strategically integrating into a development plan.

The Township has generally been supportive of conservation based design, and understanding where these ecologic pockets are located may help in promoting clustering, and other types of development that might protect these sensitive areas as the Township grows.

# Figure 3-4 Areas of Potential Ecological Significance



## DNR Ecological Areas

10/19/2012

### SCORE

- Moderate
- High
- Outstanding



Map created using Chisago County GIS, MnDNR  
 Contents of this map may not be  
 technically accurate, this information  
 is provided as a planning guide only.

## Recreation/Parks

### Regional Natural Resource Area

Lent Township is very fortunate to include 5,136 of the 8,862 acres of the scenic Carlos Avery State Wildlife Management Area located within Chisago County. The Sunrise Unit of Carlos Avery WMA is a vast stretch of tamarack bog that borders the Sunrise River and provides an excellent opportunity to see aquatic birds. The upland areas are primarily old fields, grasslands, oak woodlands and food plots. Various opportunities to experience nature include fishing, canoeing, bird watching, hiking, and hunting. Public hunting is the primary recreational use of the WMA with deer, waterfowl, squirrel and turkey the most sought after species. The area is closed from 10:00 pm to 4:00 am each night. However this regional amenity provides access and opportunity to all residents within the community that is unparalleled to other areas of the State.

### Regional Trail

The Sunrise Prairie Bike Trail runs north-south through the community and runs largely parallel to Interstate 35 in the former BNSF ROW. The paved trail connects North Branch and the city of Hugo, and is approximately 23 miles in length total. Although not directly connected to Carlos Avery, the trail is within a short distance and easily connected by east-west roads throughout the Township.

### Active Parks - Township

Lent Township has two active park areas. The Reiger and Gladys Olson Memorial Recreation Area, located behind the fire station in Stacy, includes a softball field with bleachers for the adults and colorful playground equipment for the younger generation. In 2012 the Township also authorized the development of a 9-hole frisbee golf course near the recreational area that will be open to the public in 2013. Additionally, the Swanberg Park, located adjacent to the Lent Town hall, features a ball field for family and

team play. Currently, kids in the Township play on various leagues that have access to the fields previously described, and also use facilities in adjacent communities and at school facilities.

### The Plan

The presence of Carlos Avery WMA within the Township means that Township residents have extraordinary access to passive recreational opportunities. The Township's plan for these areas is to continue to support the efforts of the MnDNR for protection of these areas and to continue to promote it as an amenity for current and future residents.

Likewise, the access to the Sunrise Prairie Bike trail means residents have access to a major bike corridor throughout the region which provides active recreational opportunities to all residents.

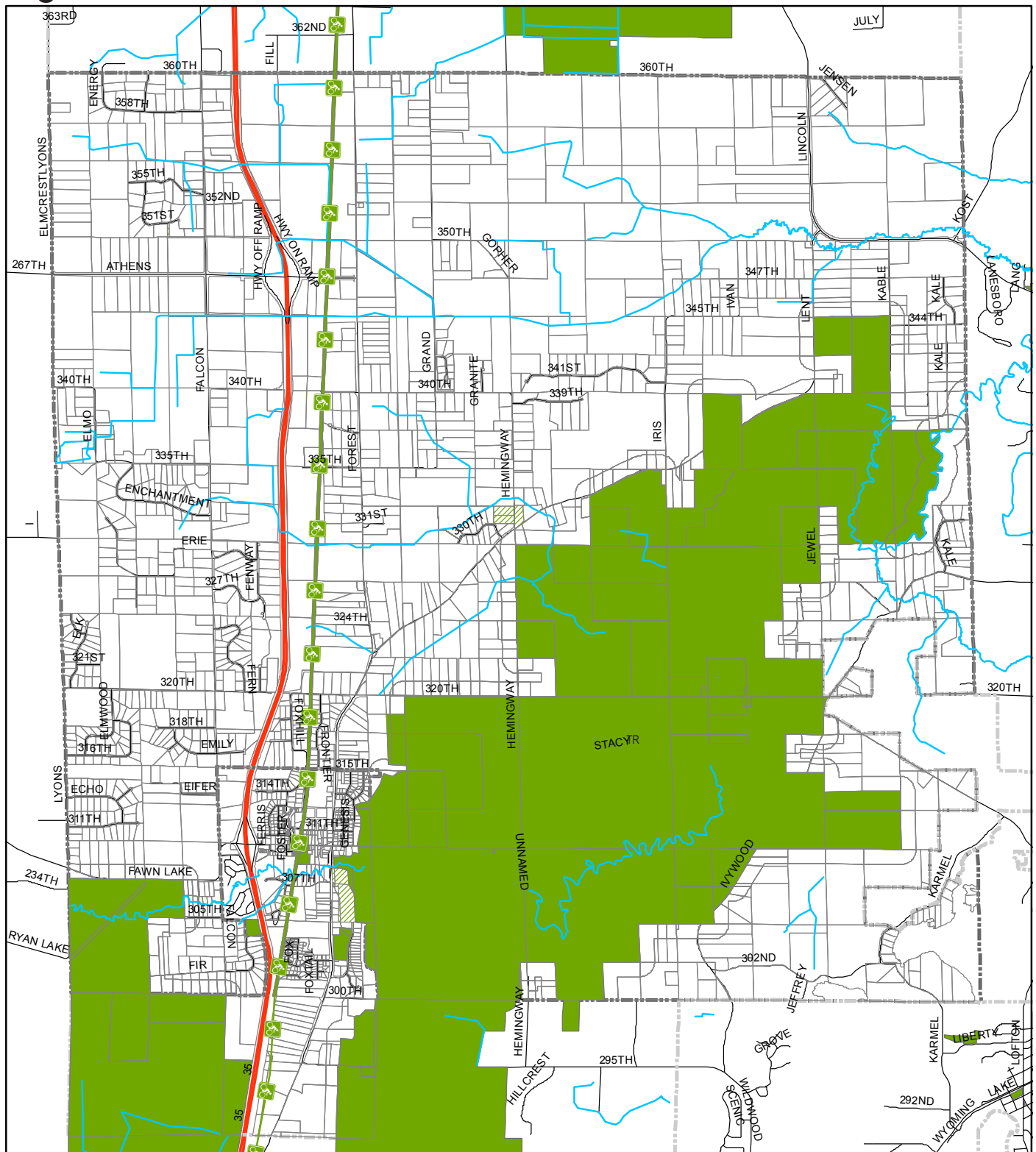
As the area develops it will be important to pay attention to proximity of future residential areas to the existing park system, and the potential future demands. At this time, planning for more active park areas is probably not necessary given current population and households trends within the Township. Currently residents have access to the two active parks within the Township and City of Stacy, as well as to some of the active parks in adjacent communities.

A more detailed park and trail plan may need to be addressed as the Township grows, and the Township has a Parks Commission in place to help guide that process and timing when necessary.



Figure 3-5

# Parks & Trails



## Parks & Trails

- NRP
- Pub
- bike\_trail



10/19/2012

Contents of this map may not be technically accurate, this information is provided as a planning guide only.

Map created using Chisago County GIS, MnDNR



# LENT

## chapter 4: transportation & facilities

# TOWNSHIP

## CHAPTER 4: TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

### Lent Township shall...

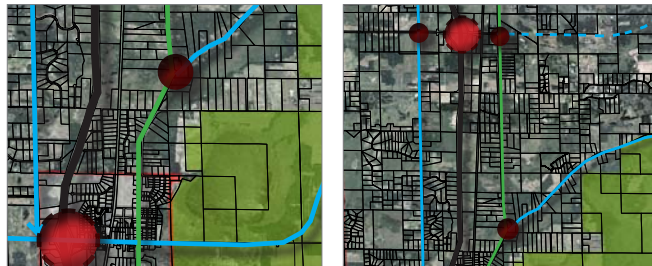
Encourage the most effective and efficient use of Township resources by determining future demand for Township resources and the Township's ability to respond to those needs.

Provide a transportation system for the efficient and effective movement of people, goods, and services.

Provide a public roadway system that includes appropriate and functional connections to the County and Regional transportation system.

Provide essential public utilities and allow private utilities that operate in a cost-effective manner that maximize public health, safety, and welfare.

Encourage the development of long-range plans for guiding the expansion and maintenance of power transmission, cable services, telecommunications, and public water supply and waste management facilities.



## Introduction

The Township's infrastructure is a key element to ensure that the community continues to be a place where residents want to live, work and recreate. It is essential that these systems remain in good repair and operations, and that proper planning is conducted to maintain the quality of life that currently is enjoyed within the Township. The following sections will address the 'public' responsibilities of the Township including the transportation system, utilities and community facilities. Each of these systems is integral to the successful operations of the Township and many of these systems are the joint responsibility of not just the Township, but other agencies including the County, State, and other regulatory bodies. As such, it is important to identify these systems, and establish a plan so that not only the residents, but other agencies, are aware of the Township's long-term goals and aspirations for each of these systems.

Each system is broken down into the following sections:

- » Existing Conditions: A documentation of the existing conditions of the system within the Township.
- » Regional System: How the regional system relates or is within the Township, and what services other agencies might provide within the Township.
- » The Plan: What goals and aspirations the Township has for the system in the future.

## Transportation

The Township's road network and management of local roads is one of the most significant pieces of infrastructure in the community and comprises a significant portion of the Township's budget. The following analysis and recommendations will provide a brief description regarding the existing roadway system and will be followed by a generalized transportation plan.

The Township has the most responsibility and

autonomy with respect to the local and Township Roads. All other roadways and associated plans must be managed and planned for collaboratively with the appropriate agency (County, State, Federal, etc.) The Transportation plan provided in this plan supports the Future Land Use Plan as depicted in Chapter 2, and also supports the plans within the Chisago County 2005 Comprehensive Plan. The transportation plan is based upon future population projections, location of proposed land uses and subsequent intensification. The transportation plan identifies key nodes and major improvement areas that should be considered if (and when) development occurs. Specifically the area around the Rural Transit Center (RTC) may need further transportation study as the area is master planned further. As land develops this plan should be evaluated for its effectiveness and updated to reflect significant changes that could alter the overall road network.

## Existing Conditions

Understanding the Township's road network and how residents and visitors travel throughout the Township is a critical foundation to planning for the future. The roadways allow people to navigate throughout the Township and the region, accessing major points of interest including businesses, schools, churches, neighborhoods and parks. The Township is easily accessed from major regional corridors, including Interstate 35 which provides easy and direct connections to the Minneapolis/St. Paul area to the south, and Duluth to the north. To understand the road network within the Township each road is classified according to the purpose and type of traffic served by the roadway. The following road classifications are located within the Township and are described as:

**Federal Interstate:** A federal interstate is a highway that is part of the federal network of major roads and serves the local area, and in most cases, connects more than one state. These roads generally have the highest travel speeds, and are free flowing without controlled intersections.

**Principal Arterial:** A principal arterial is a roadway that serves moderate to long trip lengths and provides a system to move traffic

through a region. Turning movements are often handled with channelized turn lanes or signal systems. The purpose of principal arterial is to move traffic with a certain degree of efficiency and speed and therefore are often characterized with larger land lane widths and shoulders.

**Minor Arterial:** A minor arterial generally augments the principal arterial system in more intensely developed areas (the closest Principal Arterial in the region is Highway 8, but is not located within the Township). The purpose of augmenting the principal arterial may be to reduce speeds or provide more direct access to some of the residential or business areas within the community. Generally, minor arterials provide service to over 3,000 cars per day, and should be directly accede only by Principal Arterials, other Minor Arterials, or Collectors.

**Collectors:** Collectors serve as connections between local streets and Minor Arterials. Their principal function is to carry short trip lengths and to serve adjacent land. These roads are generally capable of moving larger traffic volumes for limited distances. They may also carry traffic to and from dispersed major traffic generators. Access to Collectors includes other collectors, Minor Arterials, Local Streets, and direct access from/to abutting lands.

**Local Streets:** Residential streets that carry less than 100 vehicles per day and have average speeds of less than 30 MPH are the typical definition of Local Streets. They serve most exclusively the residents in the neighborhood and do not generally provide access for through traffic.

Nearly every road classification is present

**Table 4-1: Road Classifications**

Interstate	Arterials (Principal & Minor)	Collectors (Major & Minor)	Local Streets
I-35	30 - Proposed Minor (extension of 61)	30 - Major (current) 18 - Major 17 - Minor (proposed major w/expansion) 78 - Minor (proposed major)	Kale, Kable, 320th, 350th, Grand +

within, or connected to the Lent Township transportation system. As a Township the roads present a significant responsibility with respect to planning and the future, as the community is already responsible for over 50-miles of roadways. Therefore understanding the road classifications not only assists with future land use planning efforts, but also helps describe roles and responsibilities with respect to management and maintenance. Table 4-1 identifies some of the roads and their associated classifications.

## Regional Transportation

In 2005 Chisago County adopted a Transportation Plan that continues to guide transportation and regional transportation infrastructure today. Although this plan is scheduled for completion by 2015, the information contained within the plan still provides a great deal of information that is valuable to the Township and the current planning effort.

Although Lent Township is relatively rural and spread out, there continues to be discussion of future transit options throughout the County including some consideration for Lent Township. During the last planning period within the Township the Rural Transit Center (RTC) was identified as a potential park and ride location, which would support the County's plan for increased transit connects to the Minneapolis/ St. Paul CBD. In addition, the Plan identifies increased east-west connections within the Township with a proposed extension of CR-17 to the east(Athens Trail) to provide increased connectivity from the I-35 interchange. If this is constructed as planned, it will provide increased accessibility to this area of the Township, and provide more opportunities for growth in the RTC in the future.

## Bikeways and Pedestrian Trails

Lent Township does not have an extensive trail system, and largely relies on shoulders and other incidental corridors to provide bike and pedestrian opportunities. Many times you can find bicycle enthusiasts sharing the roadways with cars and other motorized vehicles.

Even though local and collector roads within the Township do not have trails or sidewalks, there is a significant effort by Chisago County and the greater region to connect the area with regional trails. Currently, the Sunrise Prairie Trail provides regional north-south access and is completed all the way to North Branch. The multi-purpose trail was constructed in the former BNSF railway ROW and parallels I-35. There are also several other proposed connections through the region to provide greater connections to the east and St. Croix River Valley. Lent Township and its residents have the opportunity to utilize the regional system, and to provide connections to the regional system in the future as the Township grows.

## Railroads

The former BNSF line ran north-south through the Township and was parallel to I-35. There is no longer an active train in the corridor and the rail has been removed. There are no active railroads in Lent Township today. There has been a great deal of discussion about this corridor at some time in the future being converted to a commuter rail corridor. At this time, those plans are not progressing quickly, but remains in the background for future discussion purposes.

## Air Service

The nearest international airport is the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport (MSP) located in St. Paul, Minnesota and is approximately 45 miles south of Lent Township.

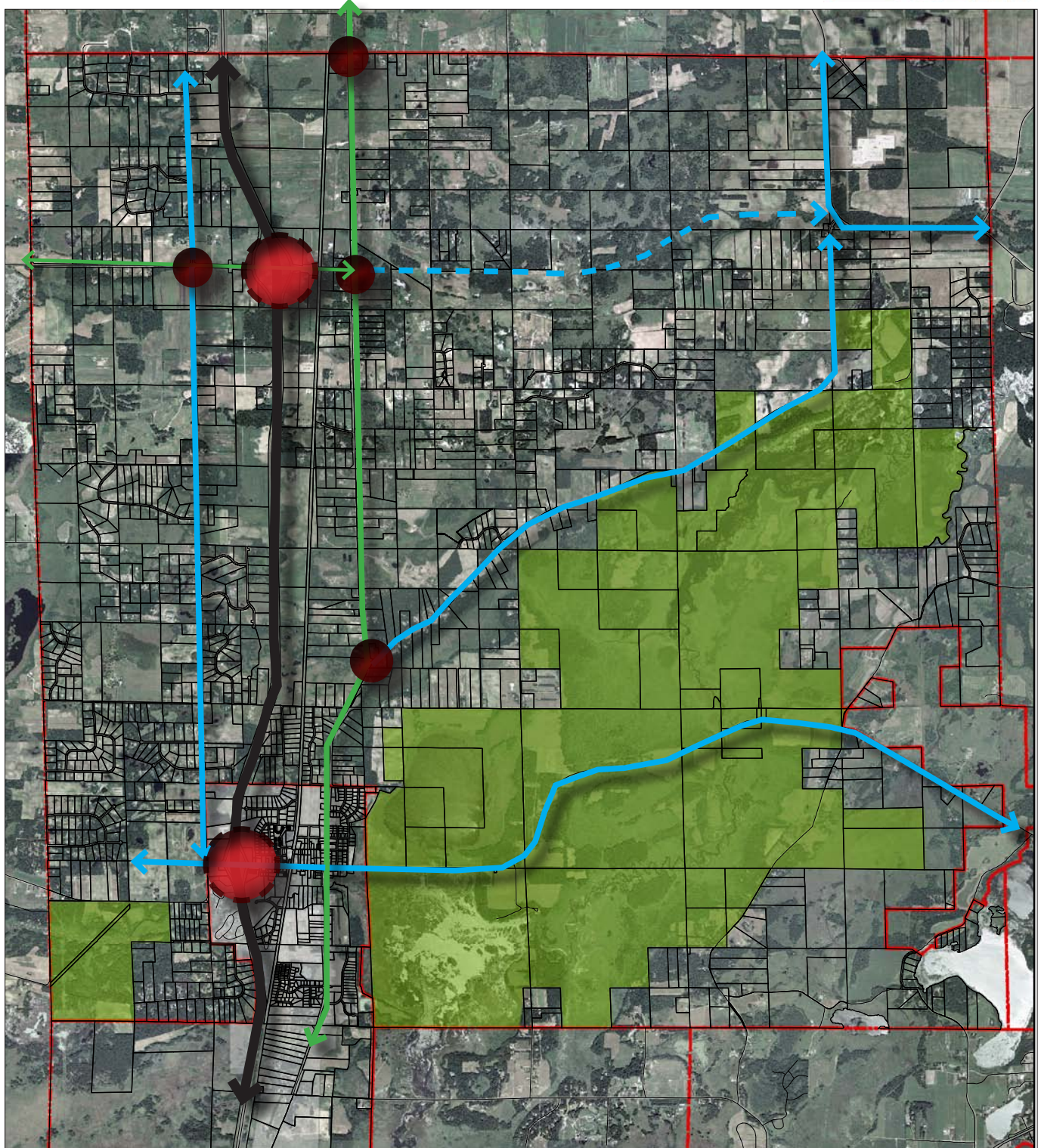
## Transportation Plan

To develop the transportation plan several components of this Comprehensive Plan were used to ensure the system will accomplish the future goals of the Township. Specifically, the information in the future land use plan and the demographics and future population and household projections were used to determine if improvements to the transportation plan may be necessary. The Future Land Use Plan was used to help identify where land uses may be intensified either by residents or businesses in the future, and to evaluate what types of transportation improvements may be necessary to ensure to safety of the road system, and accessibility were still provided. In addition to the natural environment including parks, open space and wetland areas were evaluated to help guide future road connections.





The most significant change in the plan is near the I-35 corridor, with specific interest at the I-35 and CR-17 (Athens Trail) intersection. Because this area is planned for the most significant changes, including intensification of land uses the roads have the potential to be impacted the most. Chisago County has identified this area within their plan as well, identifying a proposed expansion of the CR-17 corridor to the east providing greater east-west connection through this area. This would provide greater access to the RTC from the east, including greater access to the Chisago lakes area. In addition the County identified the Forest Boulevard corridor as accommodating a greater level of service, and would increase from a collector to an arterial through the region. This is consistent with the Township's goal of intensifying land uses within this corridor allowing for more home based businesses to be concentrated in an accessible and more visible location of the Township. Figure 4-1 identifies the Transportation Plan.





Figure 4-1: Transportation Plan



Key Traffic/Circulation

-  I-35 (Interstate)
-  Minor Arterial
-  Collector
-  Future Collector

 Major Node

 Minor Node

8/27/2012

## Objectives *(Trans. Cont'd)*

The following objectives support the Transportation Goals and Strategies identified in Chapter 1. These objectives relate to specific characteristics of the plan:

- » Work with developers in the RTC to ensure that proper connections, frontage roads, and accesses are provided and planned for as the area develops.
- » Work with the County to improve Forest Boulevard as necessary when transitioning from a Collector to an Arterial route through the Township.
- » Participate with the region to provide transit opportunities to the residents of Lent Township, and the greater Chisago County Region.
- » Protect rural residential neighborhoods from high-volume and busy roads through appropriate buffering.



## Utilities (Sewer & Water)

The following sections identify the Township's resources with respect to utilities (sewer and water as the principal systems) and their supporting infrastructure. This section briefly identifies water and sewer, and does not go into detail with respect to other utilities within the community. Electric, cable, and gas are all accounted for in the Background report which is attached to this Comprehensive Plan as an appendix. The Township does not own and operate these systems, but nevertheless the systems are an integral component of current and future development within the community.

### Existing Conditions

The Township does not currently provide any municipal services within the Township. All residents and businesses have independent water sources and individual septic systems which serve their properties. Each lot within the community is sized to adequately and safely provide sewer and water to the structures and uses on a property. This is referred to as a 'decentralized' system, and there are no centralized services. Decentralized infrastructure could include small group septic systems accommodating between 2 and 5 homes, however, there are currently no systems within the Township providing services to more than one lot. The Township refers to the County with respect to ordinance requirements for sewer and water, which must be in compliance with state statute.

### Regional Systems

Many of the adjacent communities provide centralized services to their residents and businesses including Chisago City, Stacy and North Branch. All three of these communities provide centralized sewer and water services and own and operate their system.

Since these communities are incorporated cities, and share borders with Lent Township it is important to understand their plans for their systems. It is also important when planning for how these areas can be protected as an integral

part of the Lent Township community. In the 2005 Chisago City Comprehensive Plan, a future sewer extension in the southeast quadrant of Lent Township is identified on their Future Land Use Plan. The Stacy Comprehensive Plan also identifies the Urban Reserve Land use within the Township as served by their system. Chisago County also identifies the area of the Township immediately north of the Stacy border as having urban services in the future. These centralized systems provide both opportunities, and threats as identified through this process. It is important to keep working collaboratively with the region and adjacent communities, while continuing to protect the character and quality of Lent Township.

### The Plan

Although the Township does not intend to provide a municipal sewer or water system to residents and businesses at this time, there is a general interest by the Township to allow for alternative solutions, rather than just individual systems. The Township would participate in an effort to study and explore small or moderately sized centralized systems that would contribute to and support the goals and objectives identified within the land use plan.

During this planning period the area with greatest potential for more intensified development is within the RTC, which the Township has guided for a mix of potential uses. As a result, water and sewer will be major factors in determining whether or not the area can grow in an economically feasible way. As a result the introduction of a centralized system in this area is a likely solution to allow for commercial and residential development at the RTC.

Even though the Township is willing to consider a centralized system, greater exploration and detail with respect to the management and maintenance of the system would be necessary to consider as users and development is proposed. The system would not necessarily need to be managed or owned by the Township, and a plan for these services would need to be worked out in collaboration with a potential developer.

The Township must be consistent with the County's most recent adopted septic ordinance, and the state (State Rule 7080), but generally supports alternative solutions provided they are consistent with these ordinances. The following alternatives/modification of both individual and group (community) septic systems are provided:

#### Pre-Treatment

- » Aerobic treatment units
- » Single pass and filters
- » Peat filters
- » Constructed (lined) wetlands
- » Textile/fabric filters
- » Re-circulating media filters
- Final Treatment/Dispersal
- » Drip dispersal
- » Constructed unlined wetland bed

#### Separation Technology

- » Composting toilet and tank with trench or aerobic treatment unit

*Source: University of Minnesota Extension Services*

With respect to water, in all likelihood water will continue to be served by individual wells. There are no current plans to introduce municipal water in the Township. Additionally, individual wells are likely more cost effective to potential users, with some minor exceptions. As previously stated, within the RTC there may be opportunities for a more centralized water system and the Township would be willing to explore options and opportunities with potential developers at time of development.

#### Objectives

The following objectives support and enhance the utilities/infrastructure goals identified in chapter 1 of this plan:

- » Continue to support the policies and ordinances as established by Chisago County and the State of Minnesota for septic systems.
- » Work with developers and land owners to identify creative solutions to provide greater land use options and intensity within the RTC.
- » Establish and prioritize areas where community/centralized services may benefit a more diverse land use pattern in the Township.
- » Continue to monitor adjacent community's plans for expansion of centralized utilities and systems.



## Community Facilities

As a small Township there are few community and public facilities located within the Township. However, there are some key local facilities that serve as central gathering spaces for residents and business owners. Additionally, there are many other community and public facilities that are not located within the Township, but provide key services and benefits to the residents of Lent Township.

### Existing Conditions

The Town Hall is perhaps the most visible and prevalent community facility in the Township. The Town Hall is where business is conducted, and where local officials can be contacted by residents and business owners. In addition the Town Hall has a large rental space that provides opportunities to residents, community groups and other organizations to meet and congregate.

Other key facilities include the public works facility and the fire hall that provides protection and safety to current residents. The Public Works Facility is located adjacent to the Town Hall, on Hemmingway Avenue, and the Stacy/Lent Fire Hall is located in the City of Stacy. All sites are depicted on Figure 4-2.

### Regional Facilities

Although there are no public schools located within the Township, the schools in adjacent communities serve the school age children in the Township. As a result, many of these facilities become gathering places for neighbors to get to know each other, and become an important part of the community. In addition to the public schools, there are several other agencies that have facilities and buildings throughout Chisago County, which provide key services and assistance to Lent Township. All of these facilities contribute to the community, regardless of their physical location.

## The Plan

The Land Use Plan prepared in Chapter 2 has the most direct impact on needed facilities within the community. For example, the projected number of new residents and children could have an effect on schools, and how many new students can be accommodated at the existing facilities. Although this Comprehensive Plan does not go into a full analysis with respect to systems not owned and managed by the Township, this information will be provided to those agencies and entities to ensure they have the information necessary to assist with their planning efforts.

As for the Township, based on the current population and future population projections, the number and location of community facilities appears to be adequate.

Of course it will be necessary to continue to improve and perform proper maintenance on these facilities to ensure their long-term functionality. No significant improvements or expansions are necessary at this time.

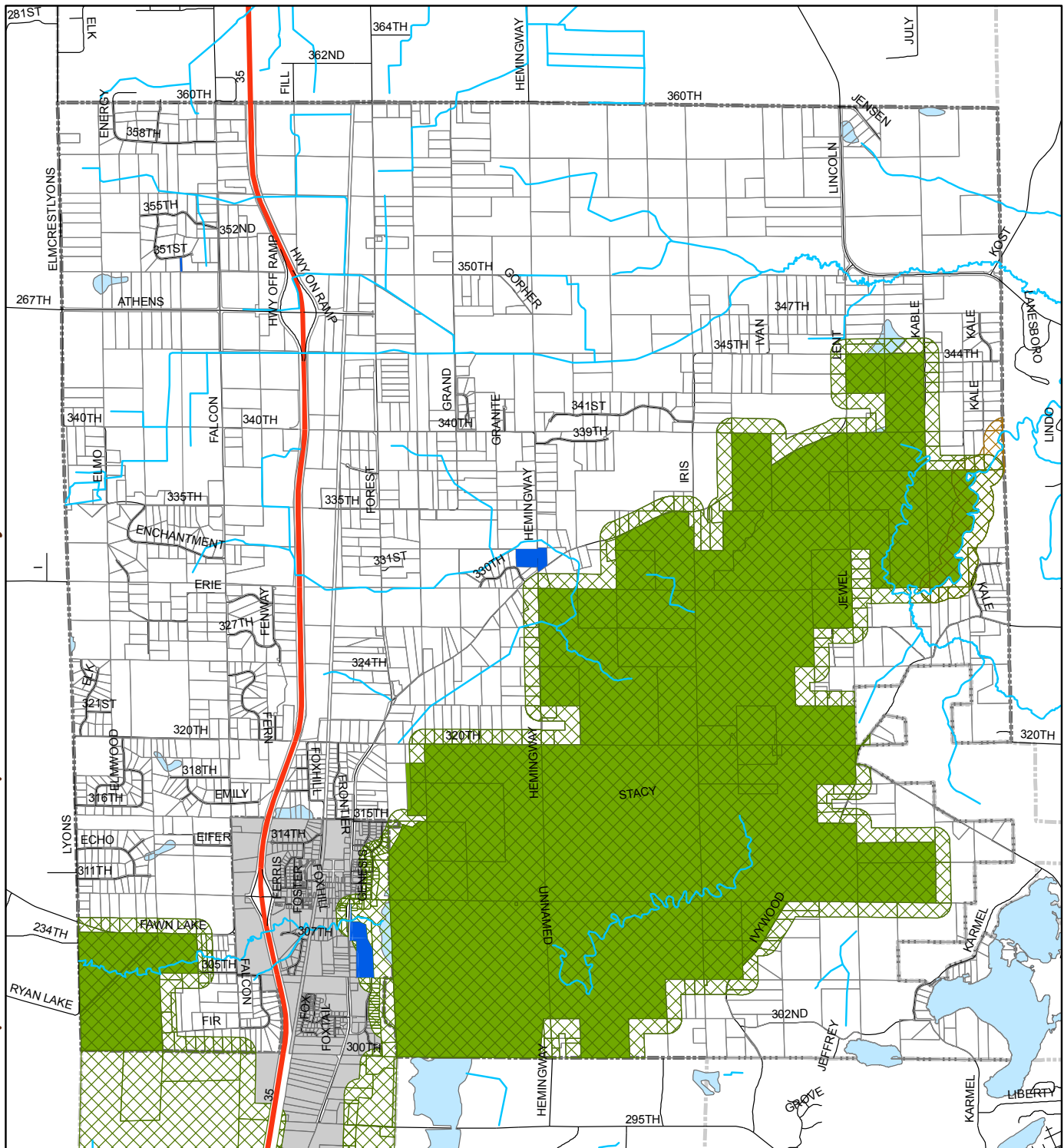
### Objectives

The following objectives support and enhance the utilities/infrastructure goals identified in chapter 1 of this plan:

- » Maintain and manage the existing facilities to maximize the life of each facility.
- » Monitor facility usage, and demographic changes to ensure that the facilities meet the needs of residents and businesses located within the Township.
- » Work collaboratively with other agencies which provide services and facilities to residents of the Township to ensure that a high level of service is provided to the community.

# Figure 4-2: Community Facilities

chapter 4: transportation & facilities



## Community Facilities/Public Land

DRAFT - Map Created 5/29/2012

- Community Facilities/Public
- Natural Resource Preservation
- Carlos Avery Overlay
- Sunrise Overlay
- City of Stacy



Map created using Chisago County GIS  
 Contents of this map may not be  
 technically accurate, this information  
 is provided as a planning guide only.

## CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION

### Implementation

The first step in the planning process is to adopt the Comprehensive Plan, and to maintain the plan into the future. The Comprehensive Plan and associated process is an important first step because it establishes the policy direction for the community, describing the vision, goals, and objectives, while proposing and identifying methods for achieving them. Without maintenance of this document, action to achieve the goals and strategies stated within, the Township's plan will have little lasting impact. The vision, goals, and strategies and other recommendations are woven throughout this Plan and are organized by topic. This chapter outlines continuing next steps to put this plan into action.

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is critical to ensure the residents continue involvement in the community. To further this effort, Lent Township will:

- » Review and revise official controls that support and enforce this Plan's goals and objectives, such as the zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance;
- » Work with Chisago County to ensure the goals, and strategies identified within this plan are consistent with future objectives of the County.
- » Work collaboratively with adjacent Townships, cities and agencies to further the objectives for growth in the community.
- » Foster positive relationships with residents and developers to preserve the natural resources in the community, and provide connections to the existing systems within the Township.
- » Actively involve residents, business owners, and community organizations in ongoing planning discussions and decision.
- » Review and update the Plan, as needed, to ensure the plan supports current and future goals of the Township.

Each of these items is discussed in greater detail in the following sections:

### Zoning Ordinance

In 2007 the Township took over planning and zoning control from Chisago County. Although the Township is responsible for enforcing its own zoning code, the Township's ordinance must be as restrictive as the County. As a result, it is critical for the Township to work closely with County staff when revising, updating or introducing new ordinances within the community. Equally important is the necessity of the zoning ordinance to directly support the goals and objectives as stated within the land use plan. The official zoning map should support the land uses within each district and permitted uses, lot sizes, setbacks, density standards, design standards, and property maintenance should all be addressed as part of this process.

### Implementation Steps

- » The official zoning map should be updated within 9 months of plan adoption to be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan as identified within this document.
- » Each zoning district should be reviewed against the goals and objectives of the plan and relevant updates completed.
- » The Comprehensive Plan introduces new concepts and land use designations. As a result additions, modifications and deletions from the adopted zoning ordinance may be necessary. A work program should be established to complete these updates along with a time schedule for completion.
- » The newly created Rural Business Overlay (RBO) will need immediate attention to ensure residents and developers understand the intent of this overlay district.
- » The Rural Transit Center (RTC) should be prioritized to ensure residents and developers understand the desired development, and opportunities associated with this key land area.

## Subdivision Ordinance

Although the Township, like most communities, has not experienced much growth or development over the past few years, there has been some noticeable changes in the economy recently that suggests development pressure may pick up in the near future. Chisago County projects that Lent Township will continue to see some of the highest growth rates in the county as a result of its accessibility. A key tool for ensuring that growth happens in a way that is consistent with the Township's goals and objectives is to have a subdivision ordinance in place that accurately reflects the types of standards expected within the Township.

### Implementation Steps

- » The subdivision ordinance must be reviewed with consideration given to the Rural Business Overlay (RBO) and the expanded Phase II opportunities for the Rural Transit Center (RTC).
- » A general review of the Subdivision Ordinance should be completed to ensure the ordinance supports the objects and standards as identified within the Comprehensive Plan.

## Coordination with County

Lent Township took over planning and zoning in 2007, and since has been working with the Planning Commission to enforce the ordinance but also pro-actively plan for the future of the community. A critical component of planning for the future is maintaining an open line of communication with the County to ensure that the goals, policies and ordinances put in place are supported by the County.

### Implementation Steps

- » Attend County meetings, including County Board and Planning Commission meetings when items on the agenda directly affect the Township and its policies.

- » Communicate with County Staff and elected/appointed officials about the current initiatives at the Township that may be of interest to the county.
- » Work with the county to establish a plan for working together to update the Township's zoning and subdivision ordinance as a part of this Comprehensive Planning process.

## Growth & Opportunity Areas

Although the primary objective of the Township is to maintain the rural character and quality of the neighborhoods, the Township has identified a couple key areas to concentrate future growth and land use diversity. The areas of interest are the Rural Transit Center (RTC) and the Rural Business Overlay (RBO) and it is the intent that these areas work together to help diversify land uses within the Township, and bring greater long-term sustainability and autonomy to the community. An integral piece to encouraging the development of these areas is the need to work collaboratively with adjacent municipalities, agencies, and the County to increase the viability of the development area.

### Implementation Steps

- » Establish a plan for utilities in the RTC that will make development of the area viable, while continuing to protect the Township as an independent community.
- » Explore opportunities for grants, services, or other partnerships to help promote the RTC and RBO areas.
- » Work jointly with other communities on establishing the standards for the RBO. Identify best practices, if available, and work to create an innovative, incubator environment for businesses in the Township.



## Citizen Involvement

An important part of maintaining this Comprehensive Plan is ensuring that the public continues to be engaged in planning efforts at the Township. The Comprehensive Plan is the general policy guide that should be used as a baseline from which to develop supporting documents. Therefore it is critical to keep residents, business owners, and other stakeholders engaged with Township business and planning efforts.

### Implementation Steps

- » Make sure the Comprehensive Plan, and supporting documents are available to the public in both hardcopy and electronic form. The plan should be accessible to all residents.
- » Maintain a transparent process for updating all planning documents, including when Comprehensive Plan updates or amendments are proposed, and zoning amendments are made.
- » Encourage members of the public to attend planning commission and Town Board meetings, particularly when policy issues are being discussed.

## Conclusion/ Recommendations

Finally, this Plan is meant to serve as a guide for the future of Lent Township. The community understands that things may change, and new opportunities may present themselves. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to policy makers, residents, business owners and stakeholders and provide a foundation from which to make decisions for the community. The majority of the information contained within this plan is not static, and should be considered and visited regularly to ensure the information continues to reflect the goals and objectives of the Township.

### Implementation Steps

- » Review the vision, goals, and objectives chapter on an annual basis to make sure the policy direction continues to be relevant.
- » Update the maps within the plan as needed to reflect any policy changes, or zoning changes that may affect their accuracy.
- » Continue to look for opportunities that will enhance the Township, and support the future of the community.