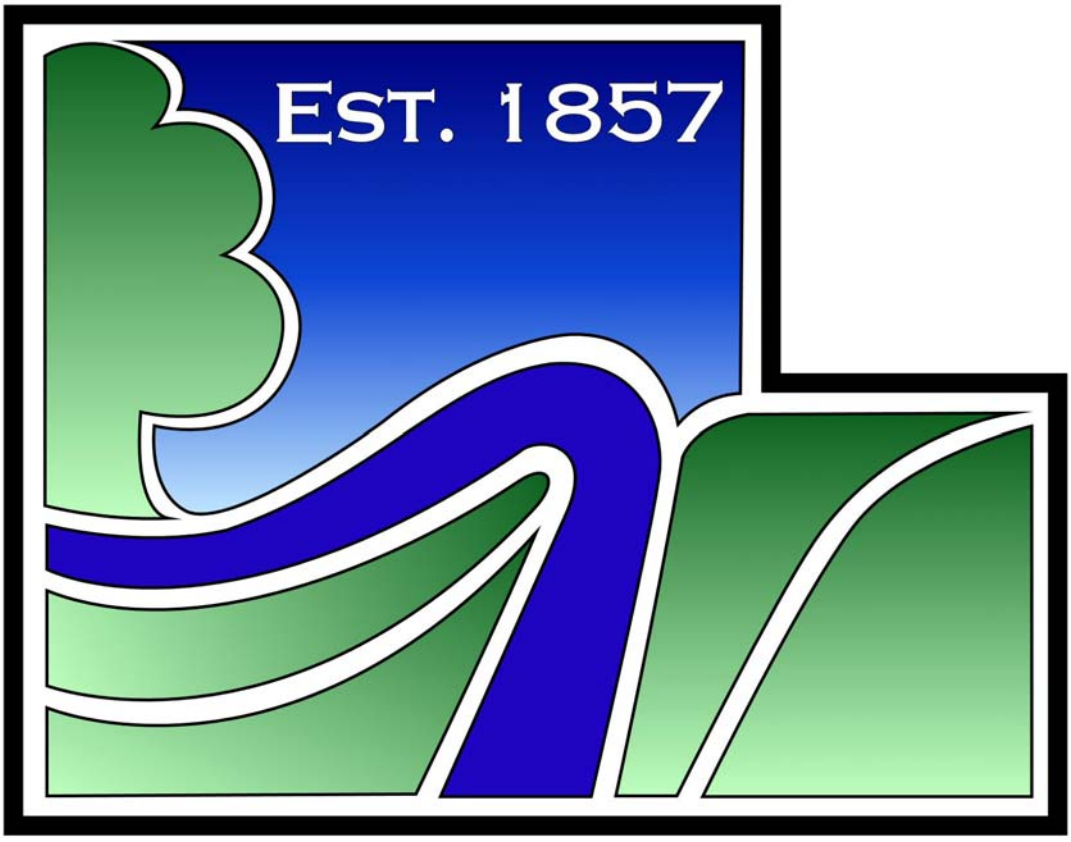
ISANTI COUNTY, MINNESOTA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ISANTI
EST. 1857
COUNTY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF MAPS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUMMARY

REASONS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN UPDATE

Isanti County's prior Comprehensive Plan was completed in 1998. Much has transpired since that date that affects everyday life in the County. Key among factors that stimulated the need for this Update are population changes and development pressure. The following list was consistently referenced during the preparation of this Plan.

1. Projected population increases.
2. Projected demographic changes that include increased senior populations.
3. An Agricultural District housing density of 2 dwellings units per 40 acres that has served the County well by preserving Ag lands and natural resource areas.
4. Internal development pressure that results from the County's current 2 dwelling units per 40 acres Agricultural District housing density, which is less dense than surrounding counties.
5. A desire on the part of a rural population to take advantage of land as a retirement asset.
6. County Planning Commissioners and County Staff have an increasingly difficult task interpreting development requests without necessary tools. These tools are policies, ordinances and technological advances that will shape the future vitality of the County in a positive manner.
7. An expanded need for communication and cooperation between the county, the cities and townships.
8. A need to direct future growth in a responsible, environmentally-respectful manner.
9. A public mandate to preserve the legacy of an agricultural heritage and diverse natural resource areas.

ISSUES TO ADDRESS

Several key issues are at the center of this Update. First and foremost is the rational for modifications to the Ag District housing density. This overarching issue extends to most actions recommended by this Update.

An increase in Ag District housing density has implications not only for the rural portions of the County but for adjacent counties and cities and townships within the County. Maintaining the current density places pressure on cities within the county to absorb more of the projected population increases. Maintaining the current density and current methods for Ag District development is unsustainable in terms of environmental effects, hampering agricultural efficiencies, population growth management and future infrastructure extension efficiencies. A consensus was reached that allows the current Ag District density of 2 dwelling units per quarter/quarter to remain as an alternative while recognizing the desires of land owners to be able to develop at a higher density of 4 dwelling units per quarter/quarter.

Increasing Ag District housing densities is not without consequences. An increased housing density brings with it a number of issues that will need resolution in order for the transition to a higher density to be accomplished through a fair and orderly process that respects the land and the desires of the people who own the land.

Density changes have the potential to affect land use. Land use changes can affect transportation systems and issues such as the high levels of peak hour congestion already present on major County road systems. Local system changes can affect regional systems. These and other Plan issues are also addressed in this Update.

THE CAC PROCESS

This Update was prepared through a public process with a committee comprised of 5 County Commissioners, 5 County Planning Commission members and 5 citizens selected from each of the 5 Commissioner Districts. This Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), lead by a member Chair, conducted the business of reviewing input, crafting alternatives and making final recommendations to the County Board. The CAC met monthly beginning in October 2006 and completed work in March 2008.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Key to any successful Comprehensive Plan is the ability to engage residents of the County. The public involvement process included six public meetings, one in each of the five Commissioner District, plus one county-wide meeting. Every CAC meeting was open to the public with comment periods designated at the beginning and end of each agenda.

Questionnaires were completed by residents and summarized to create a strong foundation for making recommendations that were grounded in public input.

PLAN COORDINATION

This Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update was prepared in conjunction, although not concurrent, with the preparation of the Isanti County Transportation Plan 2006-2030, the Isanti County Local Water Management Plan 2006-2015, the Isanti County Parks and Recreation Plan 2007, and the Isanti County Rail Industrial Park Study 2008. Coordination meetings were conducted with groups responsible for the preparation of these plans to ensure that land use decisions, which are addressed in the Update, could properly inform transportation, environmental, parks and economic development recommendations. These plans are considered part of this Update.

A vital point of coordination between Isanti County and county townships is the placement of new residential developments in the Ag District and potential impacts on township roads. County staff, township staff and developers are encouraged to work together to ensure the placement of new developments respects the ability of townships to maintain township roads that will be impacted by new developments. The length of township road subjected to new development traffic prior to connecting to the closest county road will be a consideration in reviewing and approving new developments.

DRAFT GOALS TO GUIDE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Goals were crafted through public input and CAC cooperation. These goals will guide future ordinance modifications.

1. Preserve green space and protect natural resources
2. Preserve agriculture and its practices
3. Respect landowner rights
4. Encourage business development
5. Preserve and enhance rural historic towns or service centers
6. Preserve and enhance county parks and trail systems
7. Promote transportation systems that are consistent with land use
8. Consider industrial parks along railroad corridors
9. Continue coordination and cooperation between the county and cities
10. Consider alternative land uses in Ag Districts
11. Adopt comprehensive growth management
12. Promote the development of a variety of housing types

PLAN ALTERNATIVES

Plan alternatives prepared for analysis during the planning process, represented various levels development intensities within each zoning district. The range of alternative intensities ran from no modifications in ordinance directions to levels of development consistent with surrounding communities.

Successful growth management tools like existing Urban Service Areas 1 & 2 were modified to reflect changes in operation of those Areas by both County and city practices.

Rural Service Center opportunities were expanded to reflect a desire to respond to changes in development patterns and desires, to decentralize the delivery of goods and services to county residents and to provide alternatives for lifestyle choices currently unavailable to residents.

Two business district classifications were consolidated to respond to the realities of a rural business marketplace and to respect concerted efforts by the Cities of Cambridge and Isanti to attract and maintain economically viable business centers. Business growth areas were identified to facilitate opportunities for business growth in the County in an orderly and planned manner.

Industrial growth alternatives were in response to efforts by the Cities of Cambridge and Isanti to attract and maintain viable industrial parks that already exist and are located favorably in relationship to infrastructure and transportation.

Shoreland Districts and the Rum River Districts were maintained in the present form due to established equal or higher levels of development restrictions in these environmentally sensitive areas.

RECOMMENDED PLAN DIRECITVES

The fundamental recommendation in this Update is to start a transitional change from 2 dwelling units per 40 acres to 4 dwelling units per 40 acres only after establishing new review and permitting procedures that incorporate new technologies and practices to ensure both economic viability of development, long-term sustainability of new development and the preservation of Ag lands and natural resources lands. A means to this end is the recommendation that the County adopt new Smart Growth and Transfer of Development Rights policies and ordinances that set in place practices to ensure both environmental and developmental sustainability.

ATHENS TOWNSHIP

Athens Township requested that the County Board adopt its recently completed Athens Township Comprehensive Plan 2004. Athens Township currently administers its own planning and zoning ordinances while maintaining adherence to County ordinances regarding density and land use designations.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Recommended changes in the Update will take time to implement. A recommended timeline for changes to practices and procedures was included to help structure the transition to new and sustainable directions for the County and to respect the financial and administrative planning needed to accomplish the recommended changes.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a document that provides a policy framework to guide land use planning and development activities, typically over a 20-year period. Unplanned development often results in conflicting, incompatible land uses and undesirable impacts on natural resources. A comprehensive plan, which is based on community-identified goals, objectives, and visions for the future, articulates policies that address issues such as: a) type of land use, b) location of land use, and c) intensity (amount) of land use that can be supported by natural systems and human-made infrastructure systems.

The Isanti County Comprehensive Plan reflects priorities and decisions made by citizens, residents, business owners, and other Isanti County stakeholders over a 12-month planning process. The Comprehensive Plan identifies a vision for how development and programs will shape Isanti County 20 years hence. One key goal is the modification of the Agricultural District housing density formulas. The goals are further defined by policies; intermediate steps that guide the day-to-day decisions of elected and appointed officials charged with overseeing programs, land use regulations, and management of public and private resources. Finally, the plan provides a series of recommended strategies with which County officials and staff can bring the vision closer to reality. The strategies identify the priority actions, programs, regulations, ordinances, and cooperative efforts that can be implemented to achieve the policies, goals, and the vision.

WHAT IS THE AUTHORITY OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Comprehensive Plan is the legal basis for land use controls. The State of Minnesota gives counties authority to adopt comprehensive plans under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 394. Counties exercise authority under this statute to promote the "health, safety, morals, and general welfare of a community." Counties may develop a comprehensive plan and implement the plan through a variety of means. This includes adopting official controls, such as zoning ordinances, an official zoning map, and other ordinances, as well as establishing incentive programs, educational programs, and changing spending priorities. Land use ordinances and programs must be consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan. The vision, goals, and policies included in the Isanti County Comprehensive Plan will be implemented through a variety of means. Many implementation tools, methods and techniques are included in the plan. These tools direct the changes in existing ordinances and the adoption of new ordinances and programs.

HOW SHOULD THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BE USED?

The Comprehensive Plan was developed over 12 months. Work on Isanti County's vision, goals, and policies do not, however, end with the plan. The plan is the foundation for the day-to-day activities of County officials and staff and should be a highly used reference, as it will provide justification for specific actions. Elected officials, appointed officials, and County staff should have easy access to the plan and should explicitly reference it in land use decisions. Yet, the plan must also live, adapt, and evolve. County officials should periodically review the plan's priorities and check in with residents, businesses, and stakeholders in order to keep the plan current. Reviews and updates should be conducted at regular intervals, assessing the County's progress toward the vision and the validity of the vision under unforeseen events and circumstances. Isanti County's Comprehensive Plan should continue to reflect the

community's priorities, to engage the vision of a wide range of stakeholders, and to provide a meaningful foundation for County actions.

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE PLAN

In preparing this update to the 1998 Isanti County Comprehensive Plan, a kick-off meeting was held with County Commissioners and staff. This meeting on August 29, 2006 set in motion the Comprehensive Plan process including the guidelines for the formation of a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC was to be comprised of Commissioners, Planning Commission members, citizen representatives from each commissioner district and County Staff. The first CAC meeting was held on October 24, 2006. Major issues included residential density in agricultural districts, the main reason for this Plan update and the options for public involvement. Another first step was conducting one-on-one interviews with County Commissioners.

The planning process consisted of three phases, Getting Started, Alternatives Development, and Refinement.

Phase 1, Getting Started included:

- Establishing a Steering Committee
- Collecting background data
- Conducting interviews with stakeholders
- Conducting a physical reconnaissance of the county
- Establishing a series of public meetings to learn first-hand those issues and concerns of county residents
- Facilitating five public meetings, one in each commissioner district, and one county-wide public meeting where planning issues were identified through a prepared questionnaire (the questionnaire summary is included as a appendix)

Phase 2, Alternatives Development, was conducted after background research was completed on the county's demography and socio-economics trends (population, household, and income data taken from the US Census), existing land use patterns, transportation system, park and open space systems, community facilities and infrastructure, and economic and business development trends. Findings from the research provided a foundation for the identification of goals and strategies for future County policies.

Phase 3, Refinement began with a review of land use and zoning alternatives presented during committee meetings beginning in May 2007. The Committee deliberated options for land use directions and impacts on the established 2 dwelling units per quarter/quarter. This housing density requirement has served the County and its residents well in terms of protecting open space and agricultural operations while still allowing growth to occur in planned zones including the USA Tier 1 and USA Tier 2 zones.

Comments from the Steering Committee's review influenced development of the draft comprehensive plan, which was made available for community review during the months of December 2008 and January 2009. A public hearing on the draft plan was held on January 26, 2009.

The final plan was presented to the County Board for adoption on _____, 2009.

APPROACH TO PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The approach that was followed to develop the Isanti County Comprehensive Plan was based on four key elements:

- The Earth and Its Systems
- The Built Environment and Economy
- The County's Demographic and Socio-Economic Trends and Forecasts
- Community-Identified Issues and Vision

The Earth

Respecting nature is an approach to planning and designing communities that has been recognized for many years. Within modern history, the concept of planning and designing with, not against, nature has best been articulated by Ian McHarg. In his seminal work, *Design With Nature,* McHarg explains how sustaining nature is the same as sustaining ourselves.

With its predominant rural character, it is easy to take nature for granted in Isanti County. Sometimes even those who work the land forget that agricultural fields are not the natural state, and that agricultural fields would be prairie with wetlands, sloughs, and prairie potholes were it not for drainage ditches.

The long term challenges for a credible plan that acknowledges the importance of nature are to address the "what, where, and how much" questions of human growth and development.

Specifically, the plan should ask and attempt to answer the following questions:

1) What is appropriate development for the county?
2) Where should human growth and development occur?
3) How much human growth and development can occur while doing as little damage as possible to the Earth?
4) How can human growth and development occur in a manner that sustains rather than drains the rural environment?
5) Over time, is it possible to remedy damage that has been done in the past?

Built Environment and the Economy

Another element in the approach to preparing the comprehensive plan is balancing respect for the natural environment with the realities of the built environment. Isanti County has changed from a county that relied heavily on agriculture for economic stability to a county with a wide range of economic engines and a diverse population that is linked to a major metropolitan area based on an approximate 70 to 80 % commuter rates

In addition to historic agricultural enterprises, the built environment consists of existing cities, community facilities, businesses, and infrastructure (including transportation) systems. These are essential to the health and prosperity of the county and its residents.

The plan's challenges are to determine how to:

1) Protect past investments in the built environment and
2) Use the existing built environment as a platform upon which future growth and development can be built.

Demographic and Socio-Economic Trends and Forecasts

Isanti County was listed in a recent survey as one of the top 20 counties in the nation for growth. Much growth has occurred as a result of recent housing booms especially around the cities of Cambridge and Isanti during the 1990s and early 2000s. A housing adjustment has occurred beginning in about 2004 – 2005. The result has been an increase in housing foreclosures and lack of a robust housing sales market.

Economic growth has paced housing growth with the addition of a few select services for new residents. Proximity to the Twin Cities metropolitan area and high percentages of commuters that obtain goods and services while commuting will remain a hindrance to strong economic growth.

On the challenging side, there are several issues to address. For one, youths in the community are deciding to leave the county, and strategies should be articulated in the plan to encourage them to stay in contradiction to the forecasted trend.

Agricultural district housing densities and life-cycle housing options are the premiere concern of residents. Modifications to agricultural district densities are at the core of this plan.

Finally, it is likely that newcomers, or a generational passing of agricultural businesses among family members, will not have the required financial resources to enter traditional agriculture where the costs of land, machinery, and equipment are prohibitive. Traditional agriculture will continue to lose ranking in the economic hierarchy of the county.

Community-Identified Issues and Vision

Issues to address in the plan and the vision to guide policies for growth and development in the county were developed with input from the community and the Citizen's Advisory Committee. The vision addresses each of the points that have been discussed; protecting the environment and ecology of the county, building on and sustaining the existing built environment, and determining how to ensure that the rural environment and lifestyle continue to offer opportunities for existing residents and newcomers to the county.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The earliest human inhabitants of Isanti County are evidenced today be the numerous mounds and artifacts found along the banks of the Rum River. Known by archeologists as the 'mound builders', it is believed that the indigenous people built the mounds as part of a religious ritual some 3,000 years ago.

The first Europeans to discover Isanti County were French explorers who, in the mid 17th century, recorded voyages on what is now known as the Rum River. At that time, the area was home to four tribes of the Sioux Indian nation known as the Isanyati or Isantees. In 1857, when Isanti County was set apart from Ramsey County, it was named after the Isanyati.

Following the French explorers were lumber men from the New England states, hence the English names of Towns and Townships like Cambridge, Athens, Stanford and Oxford. The lumbermen were not the settlers of the region; rather, when the land was laid bare, the lumbermen moved on making way for the Yankee farmer. Immigration to the County began in the late 1800's, but settlement of the County proceeded rather slowly. The first census in 1860 recorded only 284 inhabitants. By 1890, there were 7,607, and the 1940 census recorded a population of 12,950.

2.0 THE EARTH

OVERVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL LAND COVER

Agriculture is the dominant land use in the County. The following table outlines the extent and range of agricultural activities.

Table 2.1
Statistics from the Census of Agriculture from 1987 TO 2002

Category	1987	1992	1997	2002
Farms				
Number	817	682	858	952
Acreage	142,998	131,563	152,216	138,608
Average Size In Acres	175	193	177	146
Median Size In Acres	0	0	85	79
Average Market Value				
Land And Buildings	$139,999	219,093	272,696	361,948
Machinery And Equipment	$28,664	45,147	37,738	49,831
Cropland In Acres				
Total	101,753	95,251	99,017	97,435
Harvested	70,478	75,886	86,592	83,139
Irrigated	1,874	2,417	1,296	518
Market Value Of Farm Products Sold				
Total County Value ($1,000)	$19,334	19,670	25,883	25,597
Average Per Farm	$23,664	28,926	30,167	26,887
Net Cash Sales Return				
Average	$2,575	2,267	3,448	1,149
Livestock Inventory				
Cattle And Calves	11,318	8,960	8,527	9,256
Beef Cows	1,426	1,531	2,172	2,435
Milk Cows	3,892	2,155	1,499	1,933
Hogs And Pigs	14,756	11,509	7,975	5,022
Sheep And Lambs	2,145	2,441	1,040	1,366
Layer Chickens	2,081	1,792	870	1,969
Broiler Chickens Sold	543	1,158	717	1,697
Commodities Harvested in Acres				
Corn, Grain And Seed	30,292	39,057	40,166	32,303
Corn, Silage Or Greenchop	0	0	0	1,255
Wheat	490	467	1,324	780
Barley	92	0	0	0
Oats	3,195	1,354	746	961
Sunflower Seeds	0	0	8	0
Soybeans	16,297	22,719	26,952	30,375
Potatoes	0	0	0	6
Forage Land	17,051	11,003	13,887	15,021
Vegetables For Sale				
Number Of Farms	20	0	0	0
Acreage	117	0	0	0
Primary Operator's Occupation				
Farming	NA	NA	NA	465
Non-Farming	NA	NA	NA	487
Government Payment Program Participation				
Number Of Farms	NA	NA	NA	270
Percent Of Total	NA	NA	NA	28.36
Total Payments Received ($1,000)	NA	NA	$1,373	1,145
Average Payment Received Per Farm	NA	NA	$3,913	4,240

Source: USDA, NASS, 2002 Census of Agriculture

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Important County natural features include the Rum River, numerous lakes and streams, extensive wetlands, scattered woodlots and a transitional agricultural land use. Natural environment perception is critical to the understanding of the desire to preserve and protect this asset. Public input comments repeatedly named the natural environment as the key County asset that requires preservation and enhancement. The identification of what constitutes a natural environment is needed. Historically, this perception was based on a more pure definition of those combined elements that represent a natural environment. This includes a lack of made elements on the landscape. The landscape has changed. Increased development and the introduction of more extensive agricultural practices have modified natural areas that are not the same as those of historic Isanti County.

The current state of the natural environment is one of scattered remnants of the historic landscape, scattered green corridors, retained lakes, rivers and streams and numerous wetlands, agricultural land uses, and an increase of residential development that, due to its dispersed placement, has done more to impact the image of the natural environment than the change in the perception of what is natural for Isanti County.

This Plan will attempt to set in motion a set of guidelines and ordinances that will extend the desired image of the natural environment and preserve a larger portion of remaining natural lands.

GEOLOGY, SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY

Isanti County is dominated by glacial deposits. They include morainic hills, outwash sand plains, glacial lake beds and numerous marshes, lakes and streams. Two kinds of glacial drift of different age and composition have been deposited in the County. The older is the middle Wisconsin drift which advanced from the northeast, commonly called the red drift due to the color of the material which is coarse textured, stony and low in lime. The more recent drift was deposited by the Grantsburg sublobe of the Des Moines lobe as it advanced fro the northwest. This material is grey when unweathered and is derived mostly from limestone and calcareous shale. It is less stony that red drift and is normally fine textured. Grey drift is relatively high in lime.

Lake Grantsburg, a lake formed at the same time as the advancement of the latest sublobe, provided the origin for the fertile, silty soils found along the northern border of the County.

The Anoka Sand Plain which covers about 60% of the County was formed by the Mississippi River as it retreated from the Grantsburg sublobe. The sand plain is characterized by relatively smooth finger-like depressions, many small isolated marshes, and scattered dune-like knolls of wind-deposited materials. In most places, the sand overlays grey drift in thicknesses of sand that range from a few inches to many feet. The Zimmermann loamy fine sand and fine sands are the most common soils developed from these sandy glacial outwash deposits.

Several belts of morainic hills formed from material deposited during an early glacial period extend across the County. One of the most prominent is located in the southwestern corner of the County where crests of ridges rise abruptly to 100 feet or more. Another distinct ridge occurs in Maple Ridge Township. This crest of the ridge which is the highest point in the County is 1,150 feet above sea level. Areas of rolling topography also occur in Stanchfield, Springvale and Cambridge Townships. In Isanti and North Branch Townships the landscape is relatively smooth. Topography is

rolling and steep again near the Chisago County line and rises 40 to 70 feet above the lakes and marshes.

The lowest elevation in the County is 875 feet above sea level at a point where the North Branch of the Sunrise River crossed the eastern boundary of North Branch Township. The maximum elevation change is 275 feet.

MAJOR WATERSHEDS AND DRAINAGE BASINS

The Rum River enters Isanti County from its origin in Mille Lacs Lake at the north western edge of Spencer Brook Township. It flows eastward to a point about two miles north of Cambridge and then heads generally southward into Anoka County where it joins the Mississippi River. The river passes extensive marshes and backwaters throughout the County.

The Rum River is designated a Wild and Scenic Riverway by the Minnesota DNR. Isanti County has established management districts along the river. These districts extend to 700 feet from the normal high water level. Management districts around County lakes extend to 1000 feet from normal high water levels. Management districts along streams and creeks extend to 300 feet from normal high water levels. County ordinances regulate land use, setbacks, sewage disposal and vegetation removal.

Isanti County has 94 lakes that are considered protected waters by the Minnesota DNR. Green Lake in Wyanett Township is the largest lake in the County. Wetlands are considered protected waters. They are governed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

3.0 BUILT ENVIRONEMNT AND THE ECONOMY

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Under a separate contract, SRF Consulting, Inc. prepared the Isanti County Transportation Plan 2006 - 2030.

PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN 2007

Under a separate contract, the Center for Rural Design prepared the Parks and Recreation Plan 2007. The Mission of the Plan is to maintain, acquire and expand parks that preserve and protect natural areas, provide passive recreation opportunities, strive to maintain the rural character of the County and promote the health, well-being and quality of life for residents.

The Purpose of the Parks and Recreation Plan 2007 is to:

1. Inventory all of the outdoor recreational opportunities in the County that are now provided by Stat, County, City, Township and School District levels. Also, the Plan inventoried recreational opportunities within surrounding counties.
2. Continue the process of investigation and planning to meet the outdoor recreation and land preservation needs of future generations.
3. Define the types of outdoor recreational opportunities for which the County should be responsible in meeting the total outdoor recreational needs of County residents.
4. Establish a framework to guide decisions regarding future planning, acquisition, development and maintenance of the County's outdoor recreation.
5. Set short and long term goals for the County Recreation and Open Space System.
6. Prioritize recreation open space acquisition and development to meet the needs of present and future County residents.
7. Provide suggestions for implementation strategies.
8. Document the public participation process and utilize the public input in the Recreation and Open Space System Plan.
9. Coordinate with the Isanti County Comprehensive Plan and Isanti County Active Living by Design.

The Goals of the Parks and Recreation Plan 2007 are to:

1. To protect and enhance the quality of life for this generation and generations to come.
2. To preserve and restore unique or sensitive environments and resources for wildlife habitat, human enjoyment and environmental education while maintaining a balance between natural systems and human intrusion. To create habitat corridors wherever possible.
3. To protect essential hydrologic resources for use by present and future residents.
4. To preserve and protect the land adjacent to the Rum River.
5. To preserve and protect significant geological site which provide a link with our past.
6. To preserve and enhance significant cultural and historical resources that put our present habitation of the land in context with our heritage.

7. To provide areas and facilities that help meet the recreation needs of this generation and provide flexibility to meet the potential needs of generations that will follow.
8. To provide appropriate public use of water resources for use and enjoyment by the public.
9. To promote the health and well being of the citizens of the County by providing opportunities for active living and healthful recreation.
10. To work with the cities and townships within Isanti County to identify opportunities for collaboration in providing for the full range of recreational needs of the citizens of the County.
11. To work with the State and adjoining counties to identify opportunities for collaboration on a regional recreational system that meets the needs of the citizens of the region.
12. To provide walking, hiking and biking paths within the parks to encourage healthy recreation and active living.
13. To provide non-motorized linkages between the cities of Isanti County and from the cities to parks.
14. To seek out ways to connect safe biking and walking routes in Isanti County with trails and safe biking and walking routes in adjoining counties.
15. To provide attractive signage on trails and stopping points for education, interest and enjoyment.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The following Tables outline the economic characteristics of Isanti County.

Table 3.1
Employment Status in 2000

Category	Number	Percent
Population 16 Years And Over	23,535	100.0
In Labor Force:	17,120	72.7
Civilian Labor Force:	17,112	72.7
Employed	16,370	69.6
Unemployed	742	3.2
Armed Forces	8	0
Not In Labor Force	6,415	27.3
Females 16 Years And Over	11,846	100.0
In Labor Force:	7,935	67.0
Civilian Labor Force	7,935	67.0
Employed	7,663	64.7

Source: U.S Census

Table 3.2
Commuting to Work

Category	Number	Percent
Workers 16 years and over	16,085	100.0.80.0
Drove alone	12,868	13.1
Carpooled	2,101	0.5
Pubic transportation	81	1.8
Walked	292	0.7
Other means	115	3.9
Worked at home	628	
Mean travel time in minutes	32.6	

Source: U.S. Census

Table 3.3
Occupation

Category	Number	Percent
Workers 16 years and over	16,370	100.0
Management, professional and related	4,457	27.2
Service occupations	2,106	12.9
Sales and office occupations	3,815	23.3
Farming, fishing and forestry occupations	127	0.8
Construction, extraction and maintenance occupations	2,313	14.1
Production, transportation and material moving occupations	3,552	21.7

Source: U.S. Census

Table 3.4
Industry

Category	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	325	2.0
Construction	1,862	11.4
Manufacturing	3,542	21.6
Wholesale trade	446	2.7
Retail trade	1,830	11.2
Transportation and warehousing and utilities	796	4.9
Information	324	2.0
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	726	4.4
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management	887	5.4
Educational, health and social services	3,494	21.3
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food service	767	4.7
Other services	747	4.6
Pubic administration	624	3.8

Source: U.S. Census

Table 3.5
Class of Worker

Category	Number	Percent
Private wage and salary workers	13,024	79.6
Government workers	2,195	13.4
Self-employed workers	1,107	6.8
Unpaid family workers	44	0.3

Source: U.S. Census

Table 3.6
Income in 1999

Category	Number	Percent
Households	11,266	100.0
Less than $10,000	592	5.3
$10,000 to 14,999	502	4.5
$15,000 to 24,999	1,189	10.6
$25,000 to 34,999	1,338	11.9
$35,000 to 49,999	1,993	17.7
$50,000 to 74,999	3,176	28.2
$75,000 to 99,999	1,454	12.9
$100,000 to 149,999	759	6.7
$150,000 to 199,999	138	1.2
$200,000 or more	125	1.1
Median household income	$50127	
Families	8,487	100.0
Less than $10,000	216	2.5
$10,000 to 14,999	236	2.8
$15,000 to 24,999	699	8.2
$25,000 to 34,999	886	13.4
$35,000 to 49,999	1,498	17.7
$50,000 to 74,999	2,733	32.2
$75,000 to 99,999	1,300	15.3
$100,000 to 149,999	689	8.1
$150,000 to 199,999	131	1.5
$200,000 or more	99	1.2
Median family income	$55,996	
Per capita income	$20,348	
Male full-time, year-round workers	39,381	
Female full-time, year-round workers	26,427	

Source: U.S. Census

4.0 DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRENDS AND FORECASTS

POPULATION

General Population Data

Isanti County was recently listed as one of the top 20 counties in the nation for growth. Relatively inexpensive land with easy access close to a major metropolitan area places Isanti County in an area that will continue to experience growth in the coming years.

Table 4.1
Population Trends: Change for Isanti County and the State of Minnesota

	1970-1980		1980-1990		1990-2000	
	Change	Percent Change	Change	Percent Change	Change	Percent Change
Isanti County	6,112	49.6	7,481	40.6	5,366	20.7
State of Minnesota	270,999	7.1	299,129	7.3	544,380	12.4

Source: U.S. Census

Table 4.2
Population Trends: Urban vs. Rural for Isanti County

Population	1980	1990	Percent Change 1980-1990	2000	Percent Change 1990-2000
Urban	3,170	7,461	135.4	9,120	22.2
Rural	20,430	18,460	-10.0	22,167	20.1

Source: U.S. Census

Table 4.3
2000 Census: Isanti County
Population Profiles: Populations in 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000

	1970	1980	1990	2000	1990-2000 Change	
					Actual	Percent
Population	16,560	23,600	25,921	31,287	5,366	20.70
Land Area – Sq. Mi.	438.00	438.00	439.00	439.07	0.07	0.02
Density – Persons per Sq. Mi.	37.81	53.88	59.05	71.26	12.21	20.68
Housing Units	5,574	8,372	9,693	12,062	2,369	24.44
Households	-	7,503	8,810	11,236	2,426	27.54
Persons per Household	-	3.04	2.86	2.74	-0.12	-4.30
Persons in Group Quarters	-	825	698	470	-228	-32.66

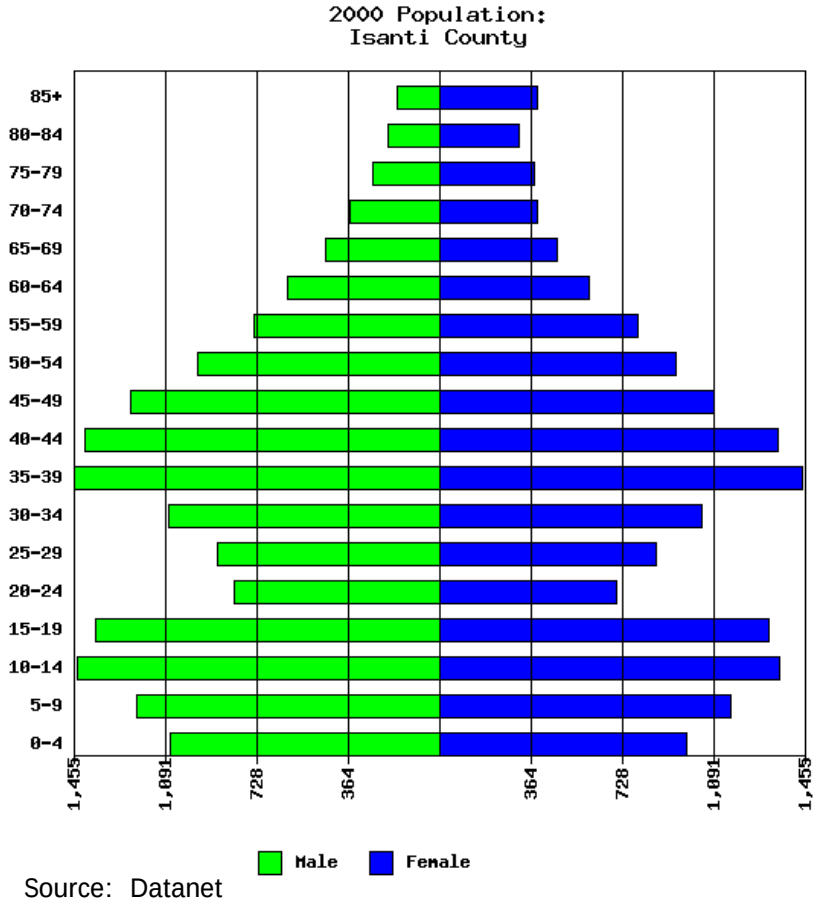
Source: Datanet

Table 4.4
Population Profiles: Population in 2000, 2001 and 2002

	2000	2001 Estimate	2002 Estimate	2000-2002 Change	
				Actual	Percent
Population	31,287	32,332	33,757	2,470	7.89
Households	11,236	11,636	12,236	1,000	8.90
Persons per Household	2.74	2.74	2.72	-0.02	-0.73
Persons in Group Quarters	470	496	459	-11	-2.34

Source: Datanet

Table 4.5
Population Profiles: 2000 Population Distribution by Age and Gender



Source: Datanet

Table 4.6
Population Profiles: Isanti County and Township Population Projections

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Isanti County	35,930	37,930	39,690	41,160	42,350
Athens	2,430	2,509	2,575	2,623	2,657
Bradford	3,849	4,109	4,346	4,552	4,728
Braham-city	1,357	1,403	1,441	1,470	1,478
Cambridge-city	6,114	6,333	6,516	6,656	6,756
Cambridge	2,628	2,776	2,910	3,027	3,126
Dalbo	688	703	713	720	722
Isanti-city	4,272	4,730	5,143	5,497	5,796
Isanti	2,652	2,840	3,012	3,162	3,290
Maple Ridge	814	854	885	911	931
North Branch	1,757	1,815	1,864	1,900	1,925
Oxford	905	963	1,015	1,060	1,099
Spencer Brook	1,639	1,735	1,822	1,893	1,962
Springvale	1,542	1,634	1,718	1,790	1,852
Stanchfield	1,179	1,204	1,222	1,233	1,238
Stanford	2,253	2,364	2,452	2,523	2,579
Wyanett	1,852	1,958	2,055	2,139	2,210

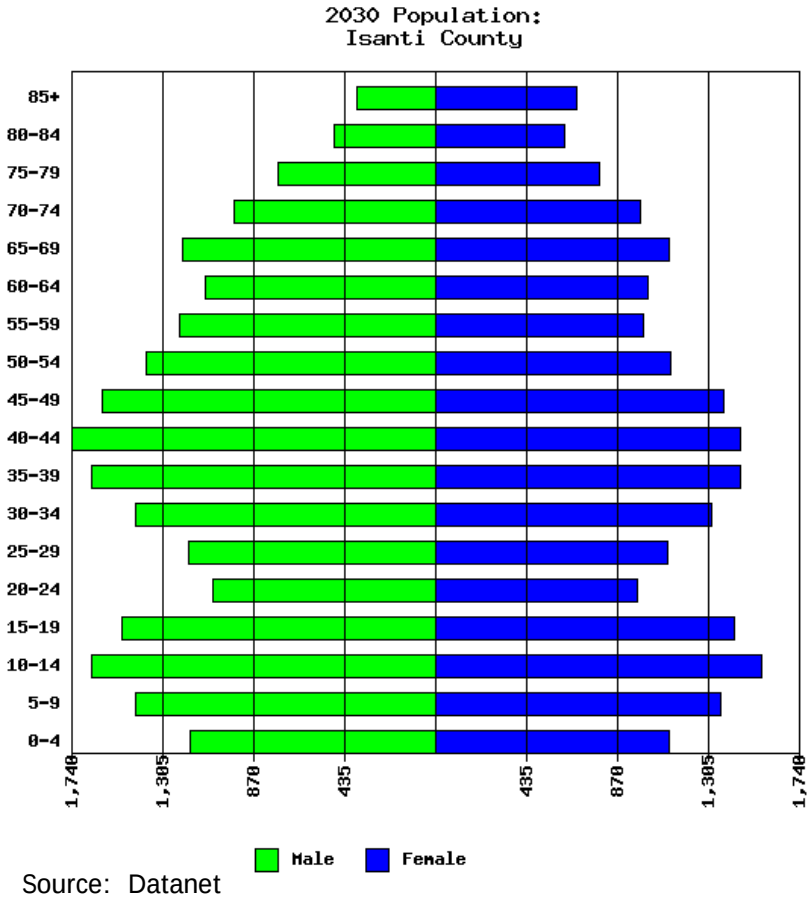
Source: U.S. Census

Table 4.7
Population Profiles: Isanti County Population Projections

Age Group	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2000-2030 % Change
0-4	2,058	1,930	2,130	2,270	2,340	2,330	2,290	11.3
5-9	2,366	2,570	2,450	2,620	2,760	2,810	2,800	18.3
10-14	2,795	2,850	2,970	2,860	3,010	3,130	3,200	14.5
15-19	2,679	2,700	2,730	2,790	2,700	2,810	2,930	9.4
20-24	1,519	2,030	2,030	2,020	2,020	1,960	2,030	33.6
25-29	1,743	2,000	2,440	2,430	2,390	2,330	2,290	31.4
30-34	2,125	2,270	2,500	2,910	2,900	2,840	2,750	29.4
35-39	2,901	2,480	2,550	2,760	3,150	3,140	3,100	6.9
40-44	2,755	3,040	2,610	2,640	2,820	3,200	3,200	16.2
45-49	2,322	2,640	2,860	2,460	2,460	2,630	2,970	27.9
50-54	1,904	2,280	2,580	2,770	2,380	2,360	2,510	31.8
55-59	1,526	1,810	2,160	2,440	2,600	2,240	2,220	45.5
60-64	1,202	1,450	1,720	2,040	2,310	2,450	2,120	76.4
65-69	917	1,130	1,360	1,650	1,960	2,210	2,330	154.1
70-74	749	790	970	1,190	1,440	1,720	1,940	159.0
75-79	645	660	710	860	1,050	1,280	1,540	138.8
80-84	521	530	550	590	720	890	1,100	111.1
85+	560	580	610	660	710	840	1050	87.5
Totals	31,287	33,740	35,930	37,960	39,720	41,170	42,370	35.4

Source: Datanet
Numbers rounded to the nearest 10.

Table 4.8
Population Profiles: 2030 Population Distribution by Age and Gender



Source: Datanet

Table 4.9
Census Data Comparison to Adjacent Counties in 2000

No.	County	Population	Housing Units	Total Area in Square Miles	Water Area in Square Miles	Land Area in Square Miles	Population per Square Mile	Housing Units per Square Mile
33	Isanti	31,287	12,062	451.87	12.81	439.07	71.3	27.5
4	Anoka	298,084	108,091	446.26	22.65	423.61	703.7	255.2
22	Chisago	41,101	15,533	442.49	24.86	417.63	98.4	37.2
43	Mille Lacs	22,330	10,467	681.77	107.30	574.47	38.9	18.2
58	Kanabec	14,996	6,846	533.38	8.45	524.93	28.6	13.0
38	Pine	26,530	15,353	1,434.57	23.52	1,411.04	18.8	10.9

No. refers to the numerical ranking by population from 1 to 87 as compared to all other counties in the State.
Source: U.S. Census

Table 4.10
Population Profiles: Isanti County Household Projections

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2000-2030 % Change
House-holds	11,236	12,360	13,520	145,610	15,570	16,410	17,140	52.5

Source: U.S. Census

TABLE 4.11
Population by Race in 2000

Race	Number	Percent
White	30,551	97.6
African American	80	0.3
American Indian or Alaska Native	182	0.6
Asian	120	0.4
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	7	0.0
Other Race	53	0.2
Two or more races	294	0.9
Hispanic or Latino	259	0.8

Source U.S. Census

EMPOYMENT AND INCOME

TABLE 4.12
Economic Character in 2000

Category	Number	Percent
Labor Force Population – 16 years or older	17,120	72.7
Mean travel time to work	32.6 min.	
Median household income	$50,127	
Median family income	$55,996	
Per capita income	$20,348	
Families below poverty level	341	4.0
Individuals below poverty level	1,753	5.7

Source U.S. Census

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

TABLE 4.13
Educational Attainment

Category	Number
Persons 25 years or older	15,856
Less than 9th grade	1,662
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	1,791
High school graduate	6,483
Some college, no degree	3,031
Associate degree	1,065
Bachelor's degree	1,345
Graduate or professional degree	479
Percent high school graduate or higher	78.2
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	11.5

Source U.S. Census

5.0 COMMUNITY IDENTIFED ISSUES AND VISION

KEY AREAS OF INPUT

Members of the community provided input throughout the planning process. Key areas of input were findings from the one-on-one County Commissioner's interviews conducted in October 2006 and identification of issues and visioning directions obtained from six public participation meetings held throughout the county in January 2007.

FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

The interviews were held to identify key issues and goals from those elected officials that will be responsible for implementing the Plan. Information discussed during the interviews was recorded and analyzed. Common themes were identified during the interviews to gauge how important various subjects are in the county.

Issues to address in the Comprehensive Plan:

- Housing density in the Agricultural (Ag) District at 2 dwelling units per quarter/quarter (2/QQ) has served the county well in terms of reducing housing sprawl and protecting agriculture and key natural resource areas.
- Housing density changes in the Ag District are of major concern to county to farmers and large property owners that are evaluating the importance of Ag in the near and long term and are looking at ways to use increasing land values as a means to transition to retirement.
- Density change pressure will be internal rather than from external development forces.
- There is a need to balance the demand for growth with the preservation of open space and natural resources.
- Quality transportation systems and the TH 65 corridor will continue to provide economic and development opportunities for the county.
- Intergovernmental cooperation between the county, cities and townships is vital to the success for all.
- The county is transitioning from an Ag community to a rural lifestyle community with associated issues and changes.
- Continue to provide park, trail, recreational and open space systems for the enjoyment of all county residents and visitors

Obstacles that Stand in the Way of Resolving Issues:

- Perceived versus real growth has not been evident in all parts of the county leading to a lack of concern about how to address growth management.
- Communication and cooperation between the county, cities and townships is improving but needs additional attention.
- Growth areas like Cambridge and Isanti have created annexation issues and concerns for surrounding townships

TH 65 Issues:

- TH 65 is the county's lifeline and continued cooperation with MnDOT is needed to ensure future viability.
- East-west connectors through the county will add to economic viability and growth potential
- Improvements to TH 47 have and will continue to offset increased travel demand on TH 65.

Agriculture Issues:

- A combination of fluctuating prices and generally poor Ag land in the county has combined to increase the decline of Ag as an economic engine.
- Current large lot development densities have created a difficult infrastructure service situation.

Urbanization Issues:

- The USA 1 & 2 Districts have served the county well.
- The USA 1 District has limited land area available for future development.
- The USA 2 District has in some instances been outdistanced by City Comprehensive Plans.
- Home foreclosures are at an all-time high in the county with concentrations occurring in cities of Cambridge and Isanti.
- There is a large supply of developable lots in urban areas.
- Rural Service Center areas have been the target of increased development interest.

Township Issues:

- Increased communication between the townships and the county needs attention.
- Athens and Bradford Townships are experiencing city-type issues given current population and growth trends.
- Townships on the southern edge of the county are receiving development pressure from Anoka County communities.

FINDINGS FROM THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETINGS

Six public input meetings were conducted in January 2007. One meeting was conducted in each Commissioner's District and one county-wide meeting was held. Seven yes-no questions and twelve fill-in-the-blank questions were asked. While not a scientific survey, the results clearly point to directions county residents wish for their future.

Responses to the yes-no questions are as follows:

1. Is growth and development important to you– Yes
2. Preserve open space – Yes
3. Concentrate commerce – Yes
4. Decentralize commerce – No
5. Maintain the Ag District 2/QQ density – Yes
6. Maintain shoreland standards – Yes
7. Promote the use of mass transit – Yes

The highest vote responses to the twelve fill-in-the-blank questions are as follows:

1. County assets for the future:
   - Natural resources and open space
   - Schools
   - Transportation
   - Health care
   - Rural lifestyle
   - Jobs
   - Proximity to the Metro area
2. Barriers to a successful future:
   - Poor development planning and zoning
   - Transportation and congestion
   - Lack of living-wage jobs
   - Unplanned, rapid development

- Urban sprawl

3. Rural/Ag assets and issues:
   Assets:
   - Preservation of land
   - Open space
   - Rural setting/lifestyle

   Issues:
   - Development infringing on Ag
   - Urban encroachment on Ag
   - Pollution
   - Wetland/aquifer recharge
4. Urban Issues and Assets:
   Assets:
   - Centralized goods and services
   - Parks and lakes
   - Schools
   - Medical facilities

   Issues:
   - Traffic congestion
   - Crime
   - Unplanned growth
5. Growth locations:
   - Around established cities
   - Along highway corridors
   - Well-planned in both urban and rural locations
6. Ag trends:
   - Housing development pressure
   - Transition to hobby farms
   - Organic farming
   - Renewable fuel sources
7. Type and location of job growth:
   - Manufacturing in industrial districts
   - Around cities
   - Living-wage jobs
   - High-tech jobs
   - Green industries
8. Recreational/tourist activities
   - Variety of trail systems
   - Additions to the county park system
   - Preservation of natural resources
   - Beaches
   - Community center
9. Options to retain youth and families:
   - Living-wage jobs
   - Better, diverse schools
   - Community centers
   - Affordable housing
   - Outdoor activities
10. Commerce near your home:
    - None
    - Convenience retail
    - Good restaurants
    - Farmer's markets
11. Reasons for living in the county:
    - Rural lifestyle

- Heritage and hometown
- Open space and privacy
- Proximity to the Metro area

12. Comprehensive Plan topics:
    - Protect and maintain natural resources
    - Transportation corridor plans
    - Increase Ag district housing density
    - Planned growth
    - Balance hosing growth with rural character

VISION FOR ISANTI COUNTY'S FUTURE

Input provided at all meetings was used to develop a vision for the county and to provide guidance in the development of the county's land use plan. Isanti County's vision for the future is presented below.

Vision Statement:
Isanti County is envisioned to be a community where both lifestyles and economies will largely be based on assets derived from rural environments in proximity to a major metropolitan area. It is envisioned that Isanti County will be a single community where both the "time-proven and traditional" and the "new, innovative, and advanced" are encouraged, facilitated, and allowed to flourish. This is relevant to lifestyles, recreation and relaxation, housing choices, and economic development including industrial development and agriculture.

Isanti County is envisioned to be a community where natural resources are cherished and valued and utilized in a sustainable manner to support a growing economy. Over the long-term, it is envisioned that some traditional approaches to economic development and the utilization of resources will give way to new, innovative approaches that are more conscious of waste streams, more harmonious with the environment, and more sustainable.

Recognizing the challenges it will face as traditional approaches are replaced with new, innovative approaches, it is envisioned that Isanti County will facilitate these shifts through the provision of:

- An incremental adaptation of the current Ag District housing density formulas
- Striking a balance between preserving Ag and open space lands with new residential, commercial and industrial development
- Increased cooperation at the county, city and township levels to ensure complementary development
- Facilitating a merger of county, city and township plans for growth areas especially where cities are proposing expanded growth and along highway corridors
- A major emphasis on blending environmental protection with growth trends and development areas
- Channel new growth to established cities and rural service centers
- Provide for the recreational, parks and trial needs of residents
- Empowerment of residents to engage in the oversight and governing process to help ensure a successful outcome of this plan.
- Foster cooperation at all levels of government and open forums of communication to ensure current and future decision-making processes achieve the highest level of understanding and acceptance.

6.0 LAND USE

EXISTING LAND USE

Land use in Isanti County is predominately agriculture and residential. While agriculture has declined in scope and range over recent time, the landscape is still reminiscent of the rich Ag heritage of the County. Current phenomenon like increased corn production for ethanol will have some but not wholesale impacts on County land use. Residential development in rural areas is increasing based on current development formulas. This Plan is proposing Ag District residential density changes that will have profound effects on the rural landscape without modifications to regulations that support natural resource protection and preservation. Crafting supportive ordinances is the critical next step to realizing a sustainable future.

Three urban areas, Cambridge, Isanti and Braham are located along TH 65 and concentrate goods and services in an efficient and planned manner. Growth of these urban areas is a result of general increased County population and a combination of County and City rules that govern locations for development. This Plan proposes changes that will retain the importance of County urban areas, will promote growth and development that is responsive to the efforts of city planning such as investments in commercial and industrial areas and will promote adjacent agricultural area development in manners respective of County and city planning and transportation efforts.

The role of Townships in County planning decisions is increasing given changes in local ordinance adoption and local planning. Future land use decisions in the County will be influenced by local planning directions and cooperative agreements between the County, Cities and Townships.

ZONING DISTRICT OVERVIEW

Nine land use districts currently exist. They are:

- Agricultural District
- Rural Service Center District
- USA 1 District
- USA 2 District
- B-1 Highway Service Business District
- B-2 General Business District
- Industrial District
- Shoreland District
- Rum River Scenic District

Minor category modifications are proposed by this Plan. Modifications with the greatest influence occur in the Agricultural District by proposing residential density changes.

LAND USE ISSUES TO ADDRESS IN THE PLAN

The primary reason to invest in this Updated Comprehensive Plan is to address residential densities changes in the Ag District. Internal pressures from landowners wishing to realize a return on land ownership investment lead to a reexamination of Ag District housing densities. External pressures from land developers wanting to respond to housing needs and densities in Isanti County that are similar to surrounding communities also contributed to this reexamination.

PROPOSED LAND USE

Seven land use districts have been redefined as policy areas for future ordinance revisions. They are:

- Agricultural District
- Rural Service Center District
- USA 1 District
- B-1 General Business District
- Industrial District
- Shoreland District
- Rum River Scenic District

Agricultural District

Two tables included in the Appendix to this Plan outline guidance for preparing modifications to current zoning ordinances to address Ag District densities. The two tables are the Ag District – Quarter/Quarter Subdivisions dated November 24, 2008 and the Ag District – Subdivision of Parcels from 1 to 39 (QQ) Acres dated November 24, 2008.

This Plan proposes to increase Ag District housing densities from a maximum of 2 dwelling units per 40 aces or quarter/quarter to a maximum of 4 dwelling units per quarter/quarter.

Incentives are being proposed that would allow landowners to increase development densities in return for permanently dedicating land to easement status. Incentive bonuses of up to two additional dwelling units per development are available. By selecting this development option, landowners will be required to define easement characteristics, access and trespass conditions, and maintenance and liability requirements.

Large commercial developments not currently allowed by ordinance in the Ag District would be considered by amending the Comprehensive Plan and zoning maps on a case by case basis. Small commercial developments in the Ag District would be considered by applying conditional use permits on a case by case basis.

Rural Service Center District

Existing rural service centers will retain current ordinance status and requirements.

USA 1 District

The USA 1 District will retain its current boundaries and regulatory status. The USA 2 District has been eliminated due to the consensus change to the optional 4 dwelling units per quarter/quarter (DU/QQ) in the Ag District. The 4 DU/QQ was the underlying difference between the proposed Ag and existing USA 2 Districts. With the consensus change there was no need to continue the USA 2 District.

B-1 General Business District

Commercial Districts, B-1 & B-2, were combined due to similarities in uses and requirements. Large commercial developments not currently allowed by ordinance in the B-1 District would be considered by amending the Comprehensive Plan and zoning maps on a case by case basis.

Industrial District

The existing Industrial District will retain current boundaries and regulatory status. Larger industrial developments not currently allowed by ordinance in the Industrial District or the Ag District would be allowed by amending the Comprehensive Plan and zoning maps on a case by case basis.

Shoreland District

The current Shoreland District is divided into 4 subdistricts. They are Special Protection, Residential, Water Oriented Commercial and General Use. This District will retain current boundaries and regulatory status with the exception of developing scale-appropriate building development guidelines for new house construction and remodeling.

The County will adopt new State Shoreland standards when County ordinances are revised and the County has had an opportunity to review the new standards. One additional change that will occur during ordinance revisions is to change non-riparian lots in the Natural Environmental Lakes category to the underlying district housing density, in most cases this will be an Ag District density.

Rum River Scenic District

The existing Rum River Scenic District will retain current boundaries and regulatory status.

The land use zones are illustrated on the Land Use Plan.

SMART GROWTH

Definition

Smart Growth is a planning and transportation theory that concentrates growth to avoid urban sprawl; and advocates compact, transit-oriented, walkable, bicycle-friendly land use, including mixed-use development with a range of housing choices.

Smart Growth values long-range, regional considerations of sustainability over a short term focus. Its goals are to achieve a unique sense of community and place; expand the range of transportation, employment and housing choices; equitably distribute the costs and benefits of development; preserve and enhance natural and cultural resources; and promote public health.

History

Transportation and community planners begin to promote the idea of compact cities and communities in the early 1970s. The cost and difficulty of acquiring land (particularly in historic and/or areas designated as conservancies) to build and widen highways caused some politicians to reconsider basing transportation planning on motor vehicles.

Government subsidies for infrastructure have disguised the true cost of sprawl. Examples include subsidies for highway building, fossil fuels, and electricity.

RATIONALE FOR SMART GROWTH

Smart growth is an alternative to sprawl, traffic congestion, disconnected neighborhoods, and urban decay. Its principles challenge old assumptions in planning, such as the value of detached houses and automobile use.

Economic
Big-city mayors, downtown business groups, and individual investors interested in gentrification see smart growth or regeneration as a useful tool to revitalize town centers or neglected neighborhoods. Rural politicians support it to deter in-migration and change to rural open spaces, although their constituents may work in towns and cities.

Locating people near each other, near jobs, and near shopping, reduces travel time and transportation infrastructure costs. Policy-makers sometimes try to provide financial incentives to developers to encourage different land use choices, often in combination with changing legal requirements.

Smart growth considers the total long-term economic costs of development decisions, rather than merely the short term profits. Planners often use life cycle cost analysis to evaluate trade-offs, while investors and proprietors may be more interested in the "bottom line" of profitability.

Environmental protection
Environmentalists promote smart growth by advocating urban-growth boundaries or green belts.

Public health
Transit-oriented development can improve the quality of life, and encourage a healthier, pedestrian-based lifestyle with less pollution. The United States Environmental Protection Agency suggests smart growth to reduce air pollution.

Changing Demographics Are Creating Markets for Smart Growth
One reason for the spread of low-density suburbs was the perception that they worked well for couples with children under 18 years of age. What people may not realize is that such couples represent less than a quarter of American households; in fact, there are more single-person households in the U.S. than couples with children. Moreover, the aging of the population will increase the number of 1- and 2-person households in the future. Of the families with children, about 30% are single-parent households and this portion is growing over time. These facts indicate that community planning should offer a mix of housing and commercial development types that provide options that address the varied needs of a diverse population.

Socio/economic Conditions Create Needs for Transportation Options
Some community members may dismiss non-automobile transportation as serving relatively small segments of the population. However, it is important to remember that, in 21st -century America, the lack of a car is as much a time-of-life issue as it is an income issue. The elderly and children of all income groups benefit from being able to walk, cycle or ride transit to the places they need to go to most often.

Development Density, Diversity, Design, and Destination Accessibility Affect Vehicle Trips and Vehicle Miles Per Capita
Instead of vague reference to development being “Smart Growth,” be specific in terms of visible characteristics such as the density of households and employment, the mix of uses, the design features that create walkability, and the accessibility of the development site to regional destinations. Experience has shown that communities possessing high levels of the “4D's” generate fewer

vehicle trips and miles per capita than does development with lower levels of density, diversity, design, and destination accessibility.

Benefits May Extend Well Beyond Transportation and Land Use
Smart Growth has a variety of potential effects, any one of which may be of interest to different constituencies. They include such benefits as reduced travel time, improved air quality, reduction in land needed for urban uses, decreased reliance on oil, livelier town centers, and more housing choices, as well as such impacts as localized traffic congestion.

There May Be Trade-Offs and Negative Consequences
The local consequences of Smart Growth can differ from the regional effects. The regional effects of dense, well-designed infill development are usually positive, including reductions in land consumption, infrastructure costs and vehicle miles per capita. However, local effects can be mixed or even negative. At the local scale, positive effects of dense, well-designed infill development can include increased property values and economic vitality, creation of more pleasant "place" environments, and improvement in an area's ability to support high-quality transit. Negative consequences, however, can include increased traffic generation and related impacts. For example, Smart Growth development at an infill location is likely to generate fewer trips and vehicle miles than the same development at a suburban or rural location, and doubling the density of an infill development may reduce its trip generation per capita by 20%. However, the localized net effect of doubling the density would be an increase from, say, 100 trips to 160 trips (20% fewer than simply doubling the number of trips to 200). As a result, the more dense Smart Growth development would still generate 60% more traffic and associated impacts than the less dense alternative.

Create Options Oriented Toward Individual Objectives Rather Than Conclusions Dictated by Positions
Smart Growth is not a universal solution. Smart Growth advocates who categorically denounce low-density suburbs and emphatically promote dense infill development as suitable for all locations and needs can undermine efforts to reach consensus-based conclusions. Individuals and communities have different preferences and needs, and want to openly consider a variety of different planning concepts and place types. The goal of most Smart Growth plans is not to throw up obstacles to suburban development, but rather to remove obstacles to Smart Growth to create a level playing field. These efforts may target: environmental reviews that are more onerous for infill projects than greenfield sites; land use regulations with maximum densities rather than minimum densities; general plan codes that inhibit mixed-used development; and transportation standards that favor the automobile.

Smart Growth is a Natural Evolutionary Step
Smart Growth can be inhibited by outmoded local regulations. Early twentieth century development codes that separated housing from employment and mandated reductions in housing density were sensible public policies when they were introduced. However, modern stores and offices do not resemble the dirty and dangerous old industrial sites the codes were trying to protect people from. Since the original rationale for this type of regulation is gone, governments should re-consider whether the regulations are still needed; at least in their original form.

Smart Growth is a Goal, Not a Compromise

Smart Growth should not be considered a second-best solution. While there are places for low-density suburbs, some of the most desirable communities in America, as measured by low vacancy rates and high housing price per square foot, involve Smart Growth. They usually have such Smart Growth characteristics as medium density, mixed land use types, highly walkable environments, and good access to transit.

ELEMENTS OF SMART GROWTH

Growth is "smart growth", to the extent that it includes the elements listed below.

Compact Neighborhoods
Compact, livable neighborhoods attract more people and business. Creating such neighborhoods is a critical element of reducing sprawl and protecting the environment. Such a tactic includes adopting development strategies and zoning policies that channel housing and job growth into centers and neighborhood business districts to create compact, walkable, bike and transit friendly hubs. This sometimes requires local government bodies to implement code changes that allow increased height and density and regulations that not only eliminate minimum parking requirements for new development, but establish a maximum number of allowed spaces. Other topics that fall under this concept include:

- mixed-use development
- inclusion of affordable housing
- restrictions or limitations on suburban design forms (e.g. detached houses on individual lots, strip malls and surface parking lots)
- inclusion of parks and recreation areas

Transit-Oriented Development
Transit-oriented development (TOD) is a residential or commercial area designed to maximize access to public transport, and mixed-use/compact neighborhoods tend to use transit at all times of the day. Many areas striving to implement better TOD strategies seek to secure funding to create new public transportation infrastructure and improve existing services. Other measures might include regional cooperation to increase efficiency and expand services, and moving buses and trains more frequently through high-use areas.

Pedestrian-Friendly and Bicycle-Friendly Design
Biking and walking instead of driving can reduce emissions, save money on fuel and maintenance, and foster a healthier population. Pedestrian-friendly and bicycle-friendly improvements include bike lanes on main streets, a bike trail system, bike parking, pedestrian crossings, and associated master plans.

Others

- preserving open space and critical habitat, reusing land, and protecting water supplies and air quality
- transparent, predictable, fair and cost-effective rules for development
- historic preservation
- Setting aside large areas where development is prohibited, nature is able to run its course, providing fresh air and clean water.
- Expansion around already existing areas allows public services to be located where people are living without taking away from the core city neighborhoods in urban areas.
- Developing around preexisting areas decreases the socioeconomic segregation allowing society to function more equitably, generating a tax base for housing, educational and employment programs.

POLICY TOOLS

Zoning Ordinances

The most widely used tool for achieving smart growth is the local zoning law. Through zoning, new development can be restricted to specific areas, and additional density incentives can be offered for adhering to smart growth policies. Zoning can be used to require set-asides for parks and other community amenities.

Environmental Impact Assessments

One popular approach to assist in smart growth in is for law-makers to require prospective developers to prepare environmental impact assessments of their plans as a condition for local governments to give them permission to build. These reports often indicate how significant impacts generated by the development will be mitigated, the cost of which is usually paid by the developer. These assessments are frequently controversial. Conservationists, neighborhood advocacy groups are often skeptical about such impact reports, even when they are prepared by independent agencies and subsequently approved by the decision makers rather than the promoters. Conversely, developers will sometimes strongly resist being required to implement the mitigation measures required by the local government as they may be quite costly.

A typical outcome in a community governed by those advocating smart growth is that developers will comply with the required measures, since building the community's trust over the long term through open dialogue is also in their long term interest and may help in recruiting and retaining staff, investors and perhaps customers with a genuine interest in social and environmental quality.

SMART GROWTH PRINCIPALS

1. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
2. Create walkable neighborhoods
3. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration
4. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
5. Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective
6. Mix land uses
7. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices
9. Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities
10. Take advantage of compact building design

7.0 IMPLEMENTATION

GENERAL LAND USE AND GROWTH POLICIES

General land use and growth policies will continue with the county being responsible for planning and plan implementation in unincorporated areas and cities being responsible for planning within their boundaries. Historically the townships have coordinated with the county and played an active role in the planning and implementation process. This plan is based on a continuation of this effort. The General Land Use and Growth Policies, which are outlined below, establish a framework for cooperative planning efforts among the county, cities and the townships.

GOALS TO GUIDE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Goals were crafted through public input and CAC cooperation. These goals guided the preparation of the following land use objectives and will be instrumental in shaping future ordinance modifications.

1. Preserve green space and protect natural resources
2. Preserve agriculture and its practices
3. Respect landowner rights
4. Encourage business development
5. Preserve and enhance rural historic towns or service centers
6. Preserve and enhance county parks and trail systems
7. Promote transportation systems that are consistent with land use
8. Consider industrial parks along railroad corridors
9. Continue coordination and cooperation between the county and cities
10. Consider alternative land uses in Ag Districts
11. Adopt comprehensive growth management
12. Promote the development of a variety of housing types

Policy 1: Policy Areas

Seven land use districts have been defined as policy areas. They are:

- The Agricultural District
- The Rural Service Center District
- The USA 1 District
- The B-1 General Business District
- The Industrial District
- The Shoreland District
- The Rum River Scenic District

These zones are illustrated and defined in the previous section, Land Use, of this plan.

Policy 2: Fundamental Development Position

The county's fundamental position on land use in the county is that urban development should occur within the municipalities and rural service centers of the county and that the area outside the municipalities should remain rural with rural residential, open space preservation and agriculture as the principal land uses.

In order to accommodate future growth, while minimizing the conversion of agricultural production land and sensitive open space land to urban uses, and to promote efficient provision of public services, most future growth, and associated public investment will be directed to the municipalities of the county.

In order to accommodate future growth, new residential densities in the Ag District will be incrementally adjusted to allow for increased development within a sliding scale of implementation and governed by thresholds that prescribe sound and environmentally sensitive land planning criteria to the review and approval processes.

Policy3: Organization for Planning

In Isanti County, land use planning is done by the cities within their corporate limits and by the county in the unincorporated area with active participation by the township governments. This plan and the County Zoning Ordinance provide for certain choices to be made by cities and townships, including but not limited to the delineation of protection districts that will surround the municipalities.

Policy 4: Service Level

The county will support growth that can be accommodated within existing or planned service capacities of the county, cities and townships. Growth beyond those service capacities has potential for adverse impacts. The county will cooperate with cities and townships whenever possible to ensure adequate levels of public services. The service levels should be maintained to adequately address resident needs.

Policy 5: Annexation

The county will support the annexation of land to a municipality if:

- The annexation is consistent with the municipal and township land use plans.
- The area to be annexed is a logical expansion of the municipality.
- Urbanization is about to occur.
- Municipal services (central sewer and water at a minimum), provided by the annexing municipality, will be available at the time of development.
- Planning for storm water run off and protection of natural resources will be completed prior to development.
- The annexation of additional land is necessary to accommodate development, and the supply of development land within the city is extremely limited.
- The annexation does not leave pockets of township land surrounded by cities.

Policy 6: Plan Coordination

The county will continue in its role of coordinating efforts between land use plans, water plans, transportation plans and parks and recreation plans. The development of recent updates to all four planning areas, produced in similar time-frame under differing authorship, is indicative of county efforts. This plan will address, with references to the other three plans, those key elements of all plans to ensure coordination of efforts through expanded policy and ordinance enactment.

Policy 7: Development Criteria

A set of development criteria is proposed to guide the review and approval process moving forward. These criteria will be modified and/or included in new zoning ordinances. Criteria include:

- Accessibility
- Build ability
- Access road improvements
- Site inventory and assessment
- Ghost platting
- Adjacent parcel planning
- Conservation easements

Accessibility and build ability are currently addressed in zoning ordinances. These criteria will be revised to ensure compliance with standards for road construction as

determined by individual townships and the county, and build ability according to environmental regulations.

Access road improvement standards are critical to ensure structural integrity of county and township roads. Townships are beginning to adopt standards that direct construction of new roads. The county will assist townships in developing standards that address public and private roads. Coordination is needed to ensure that a consistent set of standards are applied. It is recommended that the county oversees a process to review and adopt a standard set of road construction details for use throughout the county.

A consistent set of site review, site inventory and site assessment procedures, forms and tools needs to be adopted by the county to further ensure fair and orderly development review, evaluation and recommendations. This will require training and equipment to establish benchmarks and to ensure consistent and fair evaluations. Equipment will include computer software and hardware to present the latest and most detailed picture of existing conditions and to ensure consistent updates of changes within the county. Training will be needed to ensure county staff can fully utilize new and efficient tools. Training will also include the development of skill sets to fully inventory and make recommendations based on field reviews of new development sites.

Ghost platting is currently used to ensure future adaptability of new developments with future growth. This must be maintained and expanded where needed to adapt to changes in business practices.

Adjacent parcel planning is similar to ghost platting. Adjacent parcel planning takes into account planned or potential development of lands that abut the proposed development. It must be part of the review and approval process to ensure that decisions made on the subject parcel are complementary to anticipated development on adjacent parcels. The desire is to avoid denying easy access to development potential to adjacent parcels, to avoid long dead-end roads that could be aligned to form a future network of planned roads and to be respectful of future neighbors.

Conservation easements take many forms. The intent of conservation easements is to preserve unique, sensitive or rare natural communities or agricultural efficiencies. Development incentives are proposed in this Plan that would allow land owners to increase development densities by including conservation easements in development proposals. Underlying fee ownership of easement lands remains with the development proposer or land owner. This arrangement ensures that current and future ownership and maintenance responsibilities are preserved.

OBJECTIVES TO GUIDE LAND USE, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Objective No. 1: Protect the rural, agricultural character of Isanti County.

- Develop and implement revised growth management strategies that ensure the long-term viability of the rural economy and lifestyle.
- Maintain and enhance the value of agricultural, residential and commercial property.
- Implement and otherwise support economic, environmental and social programs that support rural development:
  - Develop and implement ordinance standards that support a revised Transfer of Development Rights (TDR).
  - Develop and implement revised standards for cluster and/or conservation development

- Develop and implement revised standards for the rural service district
- Review ordinances for recent changes in the state statutes and make appropriate changes

Mining and Excavation:

- Continue to allow mining and excavation operations to occur as a conditional use in the Ag District.
- Establish standards to ensure that as a condition of approval, mining and excavation operations will not negatively impact wildlife habitat and areas identified for tourism and future residential development.
- Establish standards to ensure that as a condition for approval, these operations will remediate impacts to county and township roads, which can be attributed to mining and excavation operations, and reclaim excavated land to meet standards that shall be set by the county.
- Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include language that requires surety bonds as part of the permitting process.
- Amend the zoning ordinance upwards from the 100 cubic yard minimum threshold for requiring a conditional use permit in the Ag District.
- Protect wetlands and DNR-designated waters.

Objective No. 2: Encourage ag-related commercial and non-traditional agricultural development.

- Encourage non-traditional ag-business, such as organic farming, vineyards, micro-breweries, food processing, and alternative energy production:
  - Develop and adopt ordinance standards that more broadly define agricultural uses to include organic farming, sale of produce, tree farms, etc.
  - Develop and adopt ordinance standards that define ag-related businesses to include non-traditional agricultural related uses, such as micro-breweries, food production, and alternative energy production. Determine if non-traditional ag-related businesses need to be regulated by conditional use permits. Regulations should also include performance standards for such businesses related to noise, odor, traffic, setbacks, etc.
  - Promote organic farming with field to market delivery systems.
  - Monitor trends and entrepreneurial ventures that hold promise for the County and offer incentives for testing trends and ventures in the County.
  - Encourage the research and development of alternative energy sources.

Objective No. 3: Retain the county's youth, its biggest asset.

- Encourage educational institutions to provide advance learning in high-tech fields.
- Participate with existing companies to provide advance training in needed fields.
- Work with social service agencies to promote activities for the County's youth.
- Establish park and recreation facilities and programs directed toward county youth.
- Work with schools to promote environmental awareness for the County's youth

Objective No. 4: Provide for quality, managed growth.

- Adopt planning directions that reinforce the Comprehensive Plan.
- Establish a process to ensure that land use and development decisions are made with the maximum advice of the County, cities and townships and with full opportunity for public participation.

- Encourage industrial development along major highway corridors.
- Cooperate with the development and recommendations of city and township comprehensive plans.
- Identify areas appropriate for residential development near existing municipalities.
- Determine areas appropriate for higher density residential development.
- In agriculture, update the zoning ordinance to assist in meeting this objective by:
  - Continue to enforce Minnesota State Building Codes to ensure healthy and safe building standards.
  - Reviewing and developing specific performance standards for mining operations.
  - Discouraging placement that has an adverse effect on environmental assets.
- In residential development, update the zoning ordinance to assist in meeting this objective by:
  - Encouraging development of a process where adjacent communities (cities and townships) can work together to develop annexation policies, procedures and agreements.
  - Developing standards for conservation and/or cluster development in rural areas.
- In commercial and Industrial development, update the zoning ordinance to assist in meeting this objective by:
  - Identifying and zoning areas that are along major transportation corridors to be designated for commercial/industrial development.
  - Developing standards that encourage compatibility between commercial and non-commercial land uses.
  - Requiring site planning and building design that results in adequate site buffering, screening, landscaping, traffic circulation, access, parking and traffic safety.
  - Regulating commercial signage so that is does not detract from the rural character of townships.
  - Encouraging commercial development that is locally based or compatible with local commercial needs.
  - Establishing planning directions that concentrate growth to reduce required services.
  - Ensuring that planned commercial areas can support future growth scenarios.
  - Encouraging development of eco-industrial sites.
  - Developing and adopting specific performance standards for junkyards, salvage yards, contractor's yards, recycling facilities, etc.
  - Limiting commercial/industrial development to areas that do not require premature expansion of urban services.
  - Investigating methods to reinforce the town centers of existing cities and rural service centers in the County.
  - Develop additional standards for commercial and industrial buildings.

Objective No. 5: Establish land use patterns that preserve and protect the natural qualities and existing rural character of the landscape.

- Encourage and explore land use options related to the preservation of unique landscapes.
- Encourage the clustering of residential uses to ensure the efficient use of natural resources and economic efficiency in the extension of public services.

- Enforce development standards that govern the permitting, design, installation, expansion, and maintenance of individual septic treatment systems.
- Develop a plan to identify failing septic systems and to assist property owners in upgrading such systems.
- Ensure and enforce development standards that require development to be suited to site-specific soil conditions and existing drainage patterns, in order to minimize runoff and maximize absorption of water.
- Promote natural erosion control over structural methods.
- Continue working to educate residents about best management practices for agricultural production, and the residential use of fertilizers, and water quality and quantity concerns.
- Require erosion and sediment control prior, during and after site construction.
- Protect the natural environment along the Rum River.
- Encourage and promote the policies and goals of the Isanti County Local Water Management Plan 2007.
- Encourage and promote the policies and goals of the Isanti County All Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Continue local commitment to promoting resource conservation through sound waste prevention, reuse, recycling, composting, and purchasing practices.
- Encourage local businesses and residents to explore and implement alternative energy techniques such as small wind turbines, solar collectors, and other energy saving devices.
- Promote energy conservation and consumption reduction through design techniques on new home and commercial construction sites (geothermal, bio-fuels, etc.)

Objective No. 6: Preserve open space and wildlife habitat and protect natural resources.

- Restrict or prohibit development on shoreland and flood plain areas, wetlands, and other natural features that serve important environmental functions.
- Develop and enforce development standards that are consistent with soil suitability, steep slopes and ground water sensitivity.
- Enforce development standards that are consistent with the Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA).
- Encourage the preservation and restoration of native vegetation in areas not used for agricultural purposes.
- Encourage the preservation and restoration of natural vegetation in shoreland buffer areas.

Objective No. 7: Work to provide recreational opportunities for county residents.

- Work cooperatively with other entities to identify potential trails.
- Encourage use of county, city and township parks.
- Maintain County parks.
- Identify and accept park or open space land with natural features and habitat qualities.
- Encourage developers to provide trails or sidewalks and access to such.

Objective No. 8: Encourage housing of various types for people of all economic levels in a manner that is consistent with county land use goals.

- Coordinate with the municipalities to conduct a thorough assessment of the county's future housing needs.

- Explore the establishment of housing programs (private, public, and private/public partnerships) that provide assistance for housing improvements.
- Establish programs that encourage life-cycle, affordable housing.
- Explore incentives for cluster or conservation development, which may include a density bonus or easing of other development restrictions.
- Identify and designate areas appropriate for higher density residential development.

Objective No. 9: Communicate information and issues to residents in a timely, regular manner and communicate with adjacent communities and counties.

- Encourage the publication of county newsletters.
- Continually update the County web site.
- Create informational brochures that assist citizens in understanding County procedures.

Objective No. 10: Maintain a safe, cost-effective, efficient and environmentally sensitive transportation system.

Roads:

- Strive to ensure that the transportation network promotes the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.
- Understand the correlation between growth in the county and its transportation system to ensure that decisions regarding transportation are integrated with locally approved land use planning and development policies.
- Recognize economic development issues when managing the transportation system's resources.
- Build cooperation and coordination among state and local jurisdictions.
- Investigate opportunities to secure new funding for transportation needs and maximize the efficiency of current resources.
- Recognize role as a steward of the County's Natural Resources.

Transit:

- Cooperate and coordinate with other governmental entities, including surrounding counties to enable cross-jurisdictional transit travel.
- Encourage coordinated planning by non-profit and governmental para-transit agencies for vehicle acquisition and use, driver training, maintenance, and dispatching.
- Promote existing transit and para-transit in order to encourage use and gain recognition for existing transit options.

Air Transportation:

- Encourage use of the Cambridge airport for business development purposes.
- Examine options to limit traffic nuisances that may occur from increased air traffic.

Railroad:

- Establish an industrial rail district
- Promote fully utilized, safe, and quiet freight and passenger rail services.
- Work with railroad properties to promote a safe, efficient and effective freight rail system that meets the needs of local producers.
- Develop ordinances to ensure proper setbacks and buffering between the railroad rights-of-way and non-compatible uses.
- Investigate future commuter rail transportation to/from the metropolitan area.

Trails:

- Develop and maintain recreational trail systems throughout the county.
- Support the creation of permanent non-motorized trails in the county and work with other local and State agencies to create regional, non-motorized trail systems.
- Encourage new developments to create links to existing local and regional trail systems.
- Develop an ordinance to address ATV use.
- Explore development of dedicated ATV facilities.

Objective No. 11: Encourage development designs that minimize the need for new roadways.

- Where possible, coordinate transportation planning and system improvements with neighboring jurisdictions.
- Where desirable and safe, maintain existing gravel roads, thereby maintaining the rural character and reducing potential run-off.
- Develop priorities to improve the existing transportation system.
- Encourage developer agreements with townships where new roads are proposed.
- Encourage development in areas that create the least amount of maintenance to existing road systems.

Objective No. 12: Work to promote economic development opportunities in the county.

- Identify and market appropriate locations for commercial and residential development in the county.
  - Fund feasibility studies to assist in identifying appropriate areas. Feasibility studies should consider existing infrastructure and need for additional infrastructure.
- Encourage development of eco-industrial areas.
- Encourage small business development.
- Partner with neighboring counties to encourage regional economic development.
- Support Isanti County's EDA and EDA plans.

Objective No. 13: Support the efforts of the private and public sectors to ensure Isanti County's energy efficiency and independence.

- Make revisions to the county's ordinance to encourage builders and property owners to site homes and buildings in a way that will maximize the potential use of solar and wind energy. The county should also use ordinances to protect access to direct sunlight for solar energy for building sites.
- Amend the county's ordinance to include installation standards for solar electric, solar water heating.
- Amend the county's ordinance to ensure that in the issuance of building permits, it will not discriminate against well-designed buildings that make active or passive use of solar energy.
- Evaluate the use of solar energy and natural light sources in the design of new county facilities and during the renovation of existing facilities.
- Encourage municipalities and townships in the county to follow the county's lead in managing land and approving developments in ways that bring about the optimum long-term economic and environmental benefits that stem from the efficient use of energy.
- Assist municipalities in the county in a review of their local policies, ordinances, approval processes, etc. to identify any regulatory barriers to the installation of solar roof technology.

- Create local regulatory or programmatic initiatives to encourage installation of solar roofs in both the public and private sectors.
- Promote and support efforts to reward private property owners who install energy efficient facilities in their homes and buildings, such as solar, wind, geothermal, bio-fuel heat, green roofs, etc.

Objective No. 14: Provide adequate community facilities.

- Assess and quantify how future population increases will impact the delivery of county services.
- Fund a facilities study to analyze county facilities (program needs, space needs, physical condition, maintenance costs, etc.) and how to best improve them.

Planning Directives Timeline

This timeline indicates the actions and times for initiation and completion of planning directives for the implementation of objectives by zoning district for the Comprehensive Plan. The timeline begins upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

Directives	Years
	1 - 3
General	
1. Initiate a joint planning process between the County, cities and townships	
2. Blend County and City Comp Plans	
3. Adopt township Comp Plans when appropriate	
4. Maintain current ordinances until steps are taken to ensure refinement Of TDR rules and smart growth ordinances are implemented	
5. Update and adopt new ordinances to coincide with adopting the Comp Plan	
Ag District	
1. Maintain 2 du per Q/Q density with current ordinances	
2. Adopt a 4 du per Q/Q density with new ordinances and incentives	
3. Adopt smart growth ordinances	
Rural Service Centers	
1. Expand RSC boundaries and permitted uses as requested by townships	
2. Expand RSC locations to developing intersections or new town centers as requested by townships	
3. Establish district design and development standards	
USA 1 District	
1. The County, cities and townships work together to revise limits	
USA 2 District	
1. District designation changes to Ag with a 4 du per Q/Q density	
B-1 General Business District	
1. Combine the current zoning categories of B-1 and B-2	
2. Work with cities and townships to establish new development areas	
3. Establish district design and development standards	

Industrial District	
1. Establish district boundaries through the EDA	
2. Establish district design and development standards	
Shoreland District	
1. Revise existing County standards to MnDNR recommendations	
2. Consider revising lot sizes and densities	
3. Establish district design and development standards	
Rum River Scenic District	
1. Maintain current County standards	
2. Establish district design and development standards	