

Lynden Township



Comprehensive plan 2002

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Lynden Township Comprehensive Plan 2002

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SECTION 1 - ISSUES SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Comprehensive Planning process is not only to establish future development policy for Lynden Township, but also to identify and recognize issues that have affected development in the past that will have implications on future growth. The Plan's overall purpose is to minimize land use conflicts by controlling growth in the Township and to sustain and enhance environmental quality. This requires that land use decisions protect critical natural resources and balance the preservation of viable agriculture land use with non-farm rural residential and other more intensive development types.

The first phase of work in the formulation of a Comprehensive Plan for the Township has centered on identifying issues important to the community.

The next step in the planning process entails an analysis of the information collected to date and its organization into meaningful issue statements which will serve as a basis for the Policy Plan and Development Framework portions of the Comprehensive Plan. In organizing the issues, five categories of topic areas have been identified. In the paragraphs that follow, there is an outline and summary of community issues pertaining to the categories listed below.

- COMMUNITY IDENTITY
- NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
- LAND USE
- TRANSPORTATION
- ADMINISTRATION

The Comprehensive Plan differs significantly from a zoning ordinance in that the goals of this plan provide the overall policy direction for the Township decision makers and citizens. A zoning ordinance is one of the tools that can be used to accomplish the vision set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. While the Plan sets forth general land use categories, zoning requires a greater degree of exactness and the establishment of specific requirements for each zone or land use designation. The zoning ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan complement one another, but it is critical that the Comprehensive Plan be viewed as a policy document that provides the foundation from which implementation evolves.

The Comprehensive Plans of Stearns County and the City of St. Augusta have been used in reference to the issues we consider to be common to our Township. It is the intent of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission to review this Plan periodically and consider necessary changes or modifications.

1.2 COMMUNITY IDENTITY

The Township of Lynden is the eastern-most township in Stearns County. The city of Clearwater and Clearwater Township lie on the east side of Clearwater River, which is a boundary. The Mississippi River determines the northern boundary and Clearwater Lake the southern boundary. The cities of St Cloud and St Augusta and the Township of Fairhaven determine the western boundary.

I-94 cuts through the entire width of the township's northern quarter, with access at Clearwater, County Road 75 at Opportunity Drive, and St Augusta.

Lynden Township land use is mostly agriculture shared with randomly dispersed non-farm residences. Between 1970 and 1995, 1241 acres were platted into 457 parcels with an average of 2.732 acres per parcel.

The population of Lynden Township was 405 in 1960, 1800 in 2000, and projected to be 2900 in 2020. (I-94 corridor study 2001)

Near I-94 and the City of Clearwater, Lynden Township has developed an area for light industrial land use.

Critical in the development of Lynden Township, would be an annexation agreement with one of the cities on our borders to provide sewer and water services for high-density land use.

1.3 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

The mostly rural character of the community makes the natural environment an extremely valuable resource and one of its major attractions. The rural character concept includes commercial, agriculture, open space, low-density land use such as hobby farms and alternative agriculture uses, and the flavor of the countryside. Continued encroachment of urban uses into the rural areas through farmland conversions threatens the value of the countryside, which attracted development in the first place. From the increased traffic on rural roadways, to suburban housing on large lots, development even at relatively low densities can have a dramatic effect on rural lifestyle and rural aesthetics.

1.3.1 Ground Water Pollution

While not an overriding concern at the present, some concern exists in regard to septic system failures, the presence of shallow wells and the potential for ground water pollution. The older, smaller parcels that pre-date County subdivision regulations pose the highest risk. Some septic systems are functioning as they were designed, but technology or performance regulations have made them outdated. If ground water pollution were to occur, septic system correction would undoubtedly be difficult and costly.

1.3.2 Agricultural Land Protection

While the preservation and protection of agricultural lands is a land use issue, an economic issue, as well as governmental administration issue, it is also very much a natural environment concern. Such natural assets have been reduced and infringed upon as the community has experienced small lot, unsewered development. Based upon local and regional growth projections the conversion of agricultural land to residential, commercial and industrial development is expected. However, agricultural land use remains a primary land use in the community and as such needs to receive special attention both in its preservation and the maintenance of its economic viability. Development should be managed in such a way to lessen its impact on the natural environment and allow agricultural activities to continue through the use of buffers and open space. Agricultural operations may change based on technological advances and may not require the same number of acres but the pursuit of agriculture as a career should not be lost to encroachment of rural residents. It is important to balance the rate of conversion of the agricultural land with the desire of the Township to grow in a planned manner.

1.3.3 Waterways, Wetlands And Drainage Areas

Numerous waterways, wetlands, swales and natural ponding areas exist throughout the Township. These natural features are valued for their role in floodwater retention, ground water recharge, nutrient assimilation, livestock watering, and aesthetics. Additionally, wetlands, swales and ponding areas provide natural habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife. Concern has been noted that development within the community has already negatively impacted some of these elements.

1.3.4 Erosion

Erosion and sedimentation is a concern for both agriculture and urban development. In this regard, both wind and water erosion are aspects of the problem. As it relates to agriculture, the community needs to encourage farming practices which minimize erosion concerns. In the area of development, the Township can play a more direct role in insuring proper grading and drainage planning. The Township should coordinate with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Stearns County in the implementation of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit that manages erosion through the development and implementation of Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP). All developers, builders and contractors are required to obtain authorization to discharge stormwater by obtaining this when more than one acre of ground is disturbed.

1.3.5 Vegetation

The majority of the Township's natural vegetation is interspersed within areas of steep slopes and wetlands due to clearing for agriculture fields, and to the extent possible, the remaining vegetation should be preserved, as it can be considered an aesthetic asset for the community. Additionally, consideration should be given to means of adding new types of vegetation as part of a subdivision and development process.

1.3.6 Air And Noise Pollution

At the present time, Lynden Township is not plagued with air or noise pollution of major significance, except on parcels immediately adjacent to I 94. To the extent that local control can be exerted, measures to minimize such additional problems need to be considered and implemented.

1.4 LAND USE ISSUES

In recent history, Lynden Township has been evolving into a more rural residential community from its predominately agricultural beginnings. Prior to implementing the Planning and Zoning process, development was not very well regulated; as a result the Township has small areas of development throughout the entire community. The aging of existing development, along with continued local and regional development pressure, require that specific attention be given to planning the Township's future and outlining actions to address underlying concerns.

1.4.1 Agricultural Uses

Agricultural uses were the primary land use in the Township, but much agriculture land has recently been deemed marginal from an economic standpoint. The soil types, primarily sandy loam, have been increasingly more difficult to provide a satisfactory income for the farmers. Fewer farmers each year derive their primary income from planting and harvesting cash crops. Continued increase in urban and rural residential land use raises the issue in regard to agricultural preservation and the compatibility of modern agriculture practices with such development. Measures need to be taken to define rural/urban boundaries in order to allow continuation of economically viable agricultural activities in areas separate from urban and rural residential development.

The sporadic development of non-agricultural activities within the rural areas of the community needs to be carefully evaluated. At issue is the need to minimize compatibility problems between residential dwellings and farming activities. To be stressed is the benefit of agricultural preservation not only to the farm population, but also to the community's urban and rural residents.

There is a strong interest in preservation of the values of the rural landscape. However, a basic conflict exists in the interest to allow retiring farmers to capture a return on the value of their land for development. For many, there is a perceived unfairness in restricting some farmers from selling land at agricultural values, whereas others are able to sell their land for much higher rates due to development potential. Ultimately, this issue is a function of the strength of the respective land markets (agriculture vs. residential), desired economic return, private property rights and public policy. This issue pervades many of the discussions related to public management of land use and growth.

1.4.2 Feedlots

As the Township continues to develop urban and rural residential uses, feedlots and their inherent characteristics become issues of consideration. In this regard, the Township has relinquished the regulation of feedlots to the Stearns County Zoning Ordinance. The County has defined its own performance standards and regulations for these modern agricultural practices that balance the need of operators to maintain the competitiveness of their business with the inherent land use compatibility issues.

1.4.3 Residential Development

The existence of sparsely scattered residential development within the Township is a major community issue. Specifically, concern exists to the cost and efficiency of future service delivery to such development. To economize service delivery and provide cohesive land development patterns and avoid sprawling developments, the Township has identified specific growth centers and conversely, areas intended for agricultural preservation.

In the event that municipal sanitary sewer service is made available or there is a mandated need for such service to existing developed areas, this approach will add to the feasibility of installation while maintaining costs. Also, where unsewered rural or urban subdivisions continue to be allowed, design practices need to be implemented that provide for future re-subdivision of these lots or parcels to minimize the cost to property owners when public sewer service becomes available. The new technology of a community septic system, under a subdivision plan or under a sewer district set up by the Township, needs to be explored and evaluated for future planning. Allowing unsewered, large lot subdivisions within a potential sanitary sewer service area will hinder efforts to extend sanitary sewer service into the community. Concern is that a rural suburban development may create a physical barrier to the extension of a trunk line into undeveloped areas.

Continued development of unsewered, suburban or rural residential areas may also compromise extension of municipal sanitary sewer financially as well. The provision of such service is dependent upon a minimum number of sewer connections in order to generate fee payments to fund the cost of the improvements. Allowing unsewered development creates a supply of lots that do not contribute to payment for the system, which competes with those connected to the sewer service. The extension of a sanitary sewer system into preexisting subdivisions also creates problems with assessment appeals that could compromise system funding.

1.4.4 Home Occupations/Home Extended Businesses

While the existence of home occupations/home extended businesses within the community is considered a relatively minor issue at this time, the possibility of this matter escalating to a more significant level may be expected as the Township population continues to grow. Home occupations/home extended businesses will also be a growing

concern as the Township seeks to realize more commercial and industrial development to support local tax bases. Although commercial in nature, home occupations/home extended businesses do not contribute to the Township revenues in the way that a business located in a traditional commercial site would. Recognizing these potential concerns, it is imperative that proper development controls are in place to effectively regulate such uses.

1.4.5 Commercial Development

Lynden Township presently has limited commercial land use within its boundaries. With the close proximity of St. Augusta, St. Cloud, and Clearwater it is expected that they would accommodate the commercial growth for the area. This land use may have a low priority in Lynden Township.

1.4.6 Industrial Development

The Lynden Industrial areas are a product of a progressive plan by the Township Board of Supervisors to develop industrial land use in the Township and expand the potential tax base that it provides. The Comprehensive Plan should promote policies that would allow complete and expanded use of the area.

As in residential development, the issue of use concentration for industrial development should be considered in the Plan to provide economical utility and service delivery. Advance consideration needs to be given to development quality and the standards that are expected of various industrial activities that may possibly be located in the Township.

1.5 TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Although a community's transportation system is comprised of many elements, the Township's primary concern focuses upon its roadways and its regional aspects due to its bedroom community status. The following paragraphs highlight issues that presently exist within this context.

1.5.1 Street/Road Network

As the community has experienced development, the County Highways have been the backbone of the street/road system and cross-country means of access. To assure adequate access and circulation for basic convenience, as well as public safety, a street system network needs to be defined in advance of development. Moreover the components of this network need to be clearly detailed and classified as to function and related design standards.

1.5.2 Interstate 94

As the major carrier of traffic connected to the county road network, I 94 serves both regional and interstate travel needs. In consideration of the importance that the highway provides for commercial/industrial development, the Township needs to participate in

improvement and management planning for the Interstate. Participation in these processes can yield a positive traffic-engineering outcome, plus it can relate to positive land use arrangements and opportunities. This issue is most relevant with a possible additional bridge crossing of the Mississippi River. The Lynden Township Board of Supervisors will oppose any river crossing option that includes any portion of the Township. If a crossing were proposed in Lynden Township, the Board would oppose an access to County Road 75.

1.5.3 Construction And Improvements

Most of the primary arterial roads in the Township are maintained by the Stearns County Highway Department, which has proposed improvements to certain portions of these roads in their capital expenditure schedule.

The Township has a plan for continual maintenance and upgrading the gravel roads under its responsibility and has expanded to include the application of dust suppressants. These applications reduce fugitive dust emissions and the loss of aggregate from the roads. The cost savings of retaining aggregate partially offsets the costs of the dust suppressants.

1.6 ADMINISTRATION ISSUES

Beyond the physical aspects of the Comprehensive Plan, is the very important issue of how the Township will bring about a realization and implementation of the goals, policies and plans it has defined. The development of Administration capabilities therefore is as important as the plans we have prepared.

1.6.1 Annexation Agreement

A plan for a long-term annexation agreement with one of the Cities on the Township boundaries should be pursued. The agreement would assist in the realization of the high-density development areas in the Township by providing the needed services.

1.6.2 Planning And Zoning

Lynden Township has a Zoning Ordinance and an active Planning Commission, and enforces the Stearns County Zoning Ordinance. The Township has determined the parts of the County Ordinance that it feels is proper for it to maintain administrative control. These areas have been delineated in a Memorandum of Understanding with the County.

Changes in the existing land use map were given consideration to determine areas of land use that present a need for change. The designation of Agricultural and Residential areas was given top priority in determining proper areas for future growth.

1.6.3 Economic Development

Township Supervisors have expressed a strong desire to promote Industrial development within the community. Promotion of this type of development is seen as a way to

increase the tax base and financial resources of the Township. To promote such development, an economic development strategy to entice new commercial and industrial development to Lynden Township in light of the competition from surrounding communities will need to be developed.

1.6.4 Conclusion

The foregoing statements have focused upon issues and needs of Lynden Township and the concerns that must be addressed as part of the Comprehensive Plan. While the problems have captured the primary spotlight of this discussion, the positive opportunities and assets of the community are not to be overlooked.

SECTION 2 - POLICY PLAN

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Policy Plan portion of a Comprehensive Planning process is intended to outline what the community desires to achieve relative to the physical environment. The Policy Plan is also intended to set forth guidelines as to how these objectives are to be achieved. Proceeding in a logical fashion, this section identifies general goals and supporting policies. These elements comprise a review and decision-making process and the basis upon which plans, programs and actions can be formulated and initiated.

It is emphasized that these goals and policies are the basic and fundamental plan for the development of the Township. Their purpose is to provide a decision-making framework to guide public and private actions and development within Lynden Township. In addition to the active function of guiding response and action, the goals and policies also serve the more passive function of establishing evaluation criteria for development which occurs in the future.

The Policy Plan is a guide that directs action on the part of the public and private sectors of the community when responding to needs, problems and opportunities. As such, the Policy plan is not an implementation program. No time framework or priority of action is intended or stated. The function of work and issue programming is addressed in later sections of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as on an on-going basis through legislative and administrative policy and activities.

The goals and policies outlined herein are intended to be considered and utilized collectively. While in some instances a single policy may define a course of action or decision, it is more commonly the case that several policies apply to a given situation. Reactions to individual policies should therefore be tempered pending consideration of applicable statements.

An additional note should be made that the Policy Plan will be used as the foundation of graphic plans and future decision-making due to its flexibility and adaptability. Lacking “hard line” delineation, policies can be applied and used for decision-making when unanticipated situations emerge. Such is not the case with a map plan that is static and fixed. There will, however, be instances where the policies do not reflect what may be a change in policy direction. In such cases, the Policy Plan should be updated and amended by modifying the policy statements to reflect what is the new direction or to address new, unforeseen issues. A portion of the Plan shall be scheduled to be reviewed each year. Operating in this manner, the Comprehensive Plan will remain current and up-to-date and will continue to be an effective tool for Township officials.

The Policy Plan has been subjected to detailed and thorough review on the part of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission. It therefore reflects the interests of the local community, the ends that are to be achieved, and the means whereby these ends are to be accomplished.

To ensure a proper understanding and clarification. The terms utilized in this chapter are defined as follows:

Goals~

The generalized end products, which will ultimately result in achieving the kinds of living, employment and recreation areas, that are desired.

Policies~

Definite courses of action, which lead toward goal achievement. Guides for helping to make present and future decisions consistent with goals.

2.2 COMMUNITY GOALS

The role and function of local government is the improvement and maintenance of the community for an orderly, safe, productive and enhanced living and working environment for the individual. While this basic goal encompasses social, economic and physical concerns, Lynden Township is basically limited to addressing and influencing the quality of life through the physical environment. As a result, the Comprehensive Plan is physically oriented. Within the context of the township's present capabilities, the following are a list of basic fundamental goals, which Lynden Township is organized to achieve.

2.2.1 Establish, maintain and protect existing neighborhoods. Create a strong sense of neighborhood and community identity with the development of new neighborhoods through the conservation design process and sustainable practices.

Explanation~

The residents of Lynden Township, as a bedroom community, work, attend schools, participate in church and social activities, shop and accomplish their other daily activities in other jurisdictions. As a consequence of these factors Lynden Township is not readily identifiable as a cohesive social community. There appears to be more of a political than social identity.

2.2.2 Maintain and enhance community character by ensuring that the Township is well managed and a framework for controlled, directed change is established.

Explanation~

Lynden Township is a diverse community, with a blend of agricultural, industrial, and suburban activities. Each element of the Township must be considered and respectively enhanced. Moreover, change within the community from increased urban growth is likely inevitable. As a consequence, future growth needs to be anticipated and properly managed so that the results are positive. To accomplish this end, a framework guiding change is required and must be enforced.

2.2.3 Maintain a desirable community character through the recognition of existing neighborhoods. Maintain economic vitality by ensuring that new development in the Township is of premium quality. The Township recognizes the potential for

alternative energy and will work to assimilate new technology in the natural, rural, and suburban atmosphere of the community.

Explanation~

In developing its Comprehensive Plan, Lynden Township should pay special attention to a variety of development types and relationships, and base its plans for supportive systems and services upon those uses that attain optimal land use and harmony. The related Ordinance controls should reflect and enforce the characteristics of development as specified in the Plan.

The community should seek to provide for the development and maintenance of orderly land use patterns supported by a functional transportation system and utility infrastructure.

2.2.4 Encourage continued but orderly growth in Lynden Township.

Explanation~

In order to establish a strong economic and social base for Lynden Township, growth is viewed as positive. A need does exist to balance and diversify development and related opportunities. This growth and diversification, however, needs to be accomplished in an orderly, organized and coordinated fashion with provision of adequate levels of government services.

2.3 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT GOALS

Lynden Township growth goals must include the following elements:

- 2.3.1 Protect environmentally sensitive areas and unique physical features including their viewshed.
- 2.3.2 Ensure that urban development and farming operations are compatible with features of the natural environment and can be accommodated without destroying environmental features and natural amenities.
- 2.3.3 Recognize and preserve productive agricultural lands.
- 2.3.4 Manage agricultural operations, subsurface extraction activities, and suburbanization of land use in a way that respects the capacity of the natural features to support such activities.
- 2.3.5 Encourage the preservation of soils, forests, floodplains, rivers, lakes, shorelands, wetlands, ground water and natural habitats to insure against their loss as well as protecting the viewshed of said features within existing residential neighborhoods and the creation of new neighborhoods through the conservation subdivision process.
- 2.3.6 Promote the protection of ground water resources.

- 2.3.7 Promote the reduction of noise and air pollution.
- 2.3.8 Establish solid waste management practices that will achieve environmentally safe disposal, conserve energy and material resources, and minimize total costs.
- 2.3.9 Maximize the recovery of energy and materials from solid wastes, to the extent economically feasible.
- 2.3.10 Recognizing the many advantages to the environment in general, alternative energy sources will be encouraged in agricultural, new residential neighborhoods and industrial areas.

2.4 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

2.4.1 General

- A. Preserve environmentally sensitive areas (i.e., poor soils, severe slopes, wetlands, drainage ways, floodplain areas) in their natural state.
- B. Formulate regulations that manage growth and continue the policy of minimizing the impacts of development upon productive agricultural lands.
- C. Require that activities in naturally or environmentally sensitive areas conform to local, county and state regulations and incorporate state and federal pollution regulations into local policy, when appropriate.
- D. Regulations are to be formulated and/or updated, and enforced in a fair and consistent manner to ensure the proper protection of identified natural resources within the community.
- E. Encourage cooperation between the Township and Stearns County on the monitoring and where necessary, the correction and updating of septic systems.

2.4.2 Development

- A. Encourage the use of concentrated urban development patterns and cluster development concepts where protection of natural features is important to the community, which will enhance development desirability.
- B. Carefully review new development and the expansion of existing activities adjacent to drainage ways, wetland, shoreland, floodplains and other natural features that perform important environmental functions in their natural state where undue environmental damage may result.
- C. Review soil suitability and ground water information as criteria for determining the kind of development to be permitted.

- D. Promote low impact lighting within commercial and industrial development that is reflected downward to prevent glare or light spillage on adjoining rights-of-way, properties, or skyward.
- E. Recognize the need for maintaining existing neighborhoods that were developed to protect, enhance and promote natural features including viewsheds from within the development as established in the subdivision process.

2.4.3 Soils/Slopes

- A. Promote the preservation of soil types associated with steep slopes and drainage ways in order to channel flowage, control erosion, and prevent flooding.
- B. Inform developers of the NPDES requirements and the need for SWPPP's to manage erosion and stormwater.
- C. Promote standards intended to minimize adverse impacts of subsurface extraction and protect surrounding areas from both a safety and aesthetic perspective.

2.4.4 Vegetation/Forestation

- A. Pursue programs designed to protect trees through disease control measures and reforestation.
- B. Encourage preservation of existing trees, where feasible, by identifying the location, type and condition of existing vegetation in development requests.
- C. New development is to be responsible for adding trees and vegetation amenities to the landscape where necessary.

2.4.5 Storm Water Management / Floodplain

- A. Preserve natural drainage patterns.
- B. Prohibit development on or alteration of natural drainage system components where possible so that storm water can be adequately managed without construction of storm sewer pipe.
- C. Require new developments to adequately address stormwater on-site.
- D. Recommend appropriate zoning of lands adjacent to water bodies and watercourses.

2.5 LAND USE GOALS

Lynden Township shall consider the following land use goals:

- 2.5.1 A cohesive land use pattern, which ensures compatibility and functional relationships among activities, is to be formulated and implemented.
- 2.5.2 Protect and preserve productive agricultural land and the economic viability of farming operations, including alternative cash crop or livestock operations.
- 2.5.3 Ensure efficient utilization and conservation of land.
- 2.5.4 Land uses and environmental quality are to be compatible with features of the natural environment and are to be accommodated without destroying environmental features and natural amenities including viewsheds.
- 2.5.5 Individual residential neighborhoods are to be maintained and protected as a cohesive unit, and where necessary, upgraded in character.
- 2.5.6 Land use allocations are to be balanced with economic market demands and services availability.
- 2.5.7 Permit growth on a phased basis, providing for logical extension of urban growth and related community services based upon infrastructure capacity and investment.
- 2.5.8 Prevent improper land use development, defined as development that is not accompanied by a sufficient level of supportive services and facilities (utilities, roads, parking, access, etc.).
- 2.5.9 Attract, retain and expand businesses and industry as a priority for diversifying the local tax base.
- 2.5.10 Create the opportunity for a range of industrial development within the community and segregate it into harmonious and compatible use types.
- 2.5.11 Establish and maintain an advantageous property tax situation and pursue a strengthened and sound tax base.

2.6 LAND USE POLICIES

2.6.1 General

- A. Delineate boundary limits for urban expansion in a staged manner to prevent non-farm uses from prematurely encroaching into agricultural areas.

- B. Discourage the spread of small scale, non-farm subdivisions in productive agricultural areas.
- C. Establish standards for hobby farms and locations in the community where they are acceptable.
- D. Analyze development proposals on an individual basis from a physical, environmental, economic and social standpoint to determine the most appropriate uses within the context of the Lynden Township Comprehensive Plan.
- E. Apply development policies and regulations consistently and uniformly.
- F. Provide a varied range of development types and areas to satisfy the needs of the community, while avoiding an over-supply of one type or variety of development to the extent possible.
- G. Relate land use development to transportation needs, desired development patterns, and community priorities.
- H. The Land Use Plan is a general, suggested land use pattern for the Township as development occurs over time. The plan serves to prevent an over-allocation of land zoned for any particular use in excess of actual demand or service capacities. Agricultural district zoning is to be maintained as part of an Interim Land Use Plan for property until such time as the property is eligible to be rezoned to a residential, commercial, industrial, institutional or planned unit development zoning district that allows a more intensive land use.
- I. A rezoning or subdivision of property to allow a more intensive land use guided by the Land Use Plan will be deemed premature unless the criteria set forth below are satisfied:
 - 1. Consistency with Comprehensive Plan: A proposed development is deemed to be consistent with the Lynden Township Comprehensive Plan when the development is consistent with the goals, policies and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. Developments that follow planned public improvement corridors or constitute an infilling of development are to be deemed consistent with the Town growth strategies as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.
 - 2. Adequate Waste Disposal Systems: A proposed development is deemed to have adequate waste disposal if a sanitary sewer service district is created, or there is a common septic system for the entire development. A development community septic system, if approved to handle the entire development, must be designed to connect to a sanitary sewer system in the future.

3. Adequate Water Supply: A proposed development is deemed to have an adequate water supply if the proposed development has adequate sources of water, either from public systems or private wells, to serve the proposed development if constructed to its maximum permissible density without causing an unreasonable depreciation of existing water supplies for surrounding areas.
4. Adequate Drainage: A condition of adequate drainage is deemed to exist if:
 - a. Surface or subsurface water retention and runoff are such that it does not constitute a danger to the structural security of structures within the proposed development or adjacent lands.
 - b. Structures within the proposed development will not cause pollution of water sources or damage from erosion and siltation on downhill or downstream land.
 - c. The proposed development and related site grading will not cause harmful and irreparable damage from erosion and siltation on downhill or downstream land.
 - d. Factors to be considered in making these determinations may include: average rainfall for the area, the relation of the land to the floodplain, the nature of soils and subsoils and their ability to adequately support surface water runoff and waste disposal systems, the slope of the land and its effect on effluents, and the presence of streams as related to effluent disposal.
5. Adequate Access: A proposed development is deemed to have adequate access to serve the development when:
 - a. Streets that serve the proposed development are of such a width, grade, stability, vertical and horizontal alignment, sight distance and surface condition that an increase in traffic volume generated by the proposed development will not create a hazard to public safety and general welfare, or not seriously aggravate an already hazardous condition, and when, with due regard to the advice of Stearns County and/or the Minnesota Department of Transportation, said streets are appropriate for the intended use.
 - b. The traffic volume generated by the proposed development would not create unreasonable congestion or unsafe conditions on the street at the time of the application or for at least two years after the development is completed.
6. Consistency with Capital Improvement Plans: A proposed development is deemed consistent with capital improvement plans when improvements

and/or services necessary to accommodate the proposed subdivision have been programmed in the Lynden Township, Stearns County or other regional capital improvement plans or that a revision to capital improvement programs can be accommodated.

- J. Those that initiate a request to rezone or subdivide property for the purpose of allowing a more intensive land use that is guided by the Land Use Plan must demonstrate that the requested action is not premature.
- K. Once established, geographic land use designations and related zoning classifications will be changed only when it can be demonstrated that such modifications are in the best interest of the community on a long-range perspective and such changes will promote land use compatibility and pre-determined goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- L. Immediate, short range market potential and demands for activities which are not suggested for a site or area by the Comprehensive Plan or allowed by the Zoning Ordinance will not be the sole justification for a change in activity.
- M. Where land use allocations are provided for long term community needs, interim uses may be considered provided that these activities can exist in harmony with existing and proposed uses and that these uses will not serve as obstructions to planned activities and developments.
- N. Transition between distinctly differing types of land use is to be accomplished in an orderly fashion, which does not create a negative (economic, social or physical) impact on adjoining developments.
- O. Wherever possible, changes in types of land use shall occur either at center or rear, mid-block points so that similar uses front on the same street, or at borders of areas separated by major man-made or natural barriers.
- P. Compatible uses and activities are to be concentrated and clustered into functional neighborhoods, districts and zones. Incompatible land uses shall be properly regulated and located so that conflicts are minimized through the use of natural and/or man-made physical barriers (i.e., topography, drainage-ways, transportation routes, etc.), distance, screens and/or physical orientation in relation to other uses, lots or structures.
- Q. Reduce the impact of physical barriers wherever possible to increase relationships between segregated areas and reinforce continuity and sense of community.
- R. Consider removal of land from the tax rolls only when it can be clearly demonstrated that such removal is in the public interest.
- S. Protect property investments through the harmonious relationship of land uses, streets and natural features and the maintenance of properties.

- T. Coordinate the Township's plans for future growth and expansion with neighboring communities and affected jurisdictions regarding the provision of facilities and insure that necessary services are readily available.
- U. Reinforce, maintain and upgrade the character of individual neighborhoods. Promote energy conservation and alternative energy where appropriate and in ways that do not alter the character of the neighborhood (i.e. roof mounted solar panels, geo-thermal heat pumps etc.).
- V. Encourage a creative approach (as opposed to "traditional" subdivision design) for the use of land and related development.
- W. Establish, adhere to, and enforce standards for development quality for land uses to insure an enhancement of community character. Recognize the types of permitted, accessory and conditional land uses within each district and strive for compatibility within existing developments through the permitting process.
- X. Plan land use development so as not to isolate or create land-locked parcels or neighborhoods and require that development be accessed by public streets.
- Y. Implement programs and incentives for continuing privately initiated property maintenance, improvements for energy conservation, and redevelopment of questionable land uses. Strive to balance individual needs with the overall goals of the community.
- Z. Guide the physical development of the community through consideration of development projects that will not impair the visual aesthetic.
- AA. Accomplish proper growth and development by means of properly administered zoning, subdivision and building/property maintenance ordinances and follow-up inspection and enforcement.

2.6.2 Annexation

- A. Right to vote will be strongly encouraged.
- B. Plan to accommodate long-term orderly growth.
- C. Continue to work with neighboring communities and jurisdictions for sharing necessary utilities and services.

2.6.3 Agricultural

- A. Give the preservation of productive agricultural land a priority in community planning and development decisions.
- B. Prohibit division of land in agricultural areas if such action will infringe upon or threaten the maintenance of farming.

- C. Agricultural land use shall observe conservation practices, which prevent erosion and preserve natural resources.
- D. Regulate the subdivision of farmsteads and small parcels so as not to create future problems with land division or extension of services (streets and/or utilities).
- E. Unless there is a threat to public health or safety, agricultural activities are not to be limited or curtailed due to impacts on non-agricultural uses, which have or are proposing to encroach into rural areas.
- F. The clustering of development should be allowed to a limited degree in areas designated for rural use as a means of minimizing service demands.
- G. Encourage the development of alternative energy and promote the use of conservation practices throughout the agricultural district.

2.6.4 Residential

A. General

1. Developers of residential subdivisions and subsequent lot purchasers must be made aware of impacts associated with adjacency to agricultural uses. Unless public health or some other such issues are found to exist, agricultural activities will not be curtailed due to negative impacts upon residential development.
2. Protect residential development from adverse environmental and aesthetic impacts, including noise, air, and visual pollution. New residential developments are to be prohibited in areas where noise and/or pollution exceeds accepted standards and the negative impacts are not correctable by construction, site planning or other techniques.
3. The low-density character of existing residential neighborhoods shall be preserved and maintained.
4. Lower density residential neighborhoods are to be protected from encroachment or intrusion of incompatible higher use or density types and by adequate buffering and separation from other residential as well as non-residential use categories.
5. Provide high-density development with reasonable, but not necessarily direct, access to major thoroughfares.
6. Housing, including rental housing and housing for persons of low and moderate income, will adhere to the highest possible standards of planning, design and construction.

B. Residential – New Development

1. Confine new residential development to the designated growth area.
 - a. High Density-provide an area of concentrated growth and affordable housing near the center of designated growth areas.
 - b. Medium Density-provide an area of moderate residential growth and development opportunities on land that is neither highly desired farmland nor land located within a concentrated growth areas or the expansion of these growth areas.
 - c. Low Density-provide areas for Rural Residential/Agricultural, an area of limited growth.
 - d. T -20 an area that is adjacent to a medium density classification that could be considered for parcels contained in the limited growth area.
2. Single-family residential land is to be developed in a manner responsive to determined market needs and compatible with surrounding development.
3. Encourage design and planning innovations in housing units and land development.
4. The development of patio homes, apartments, townhouses, quads and condominiums to supplement existing conventional single family homes is to be recognized, giving due consideration to local market demands.
5. Encourage a balanced proportion of medium density and high-density residential development that will specifically include provisions for traffic circulation that would mitigate adverse effects on existing single-family residential neighborhoods.
6. Prohibit residential development in wetland areas and near other natural features that perform important protection functions in their natural state.
7. New housing must comply with established zoning and conform to applicable building performance standards.
8. Encourage housing styles and development techniques, which conserve land and resources and increase efficiencies, provided desired densities can be maintained.
9. Locate multiple family housing in areas not inferior to those generally used for conventional single-family housing. Also it is not to be utilized specifically as a buffer or viewed as being capable of absorbing negative impacts.
10. Promote medium and high-density residential development near areas targeted for economic development to provide market support.

11. The mixing of various housing types or densities will not be allowed unless specifically planned and approved as part of large scale projects.

C. Residential – Existing Development

1. Coordinate and channel neighborhood preservation efforts through individually defined neighborhoods.
2. Minimize home business/home extended business uses within residential neighborhoods to the extent that if they exist, are not to be evident. They must conform to the applicable regulations in the Township zoning ordinance.
3. Minimize outside storage within residential areas. In those instances when it is acceptable, is to be allowed only in an orderly, confined and limited fashion.
4. Accessory buildings are to be limited to residential use related activities with a compatible design and size to maintain a residential neighborhood character.
5. Accessory building area allowances should reflect the size and scale of the lot (urban or suburban versus rural) on which the building is to be constructed.
6. Encourage the use of energy efficient practices, conservation of resources and use of alternative energy in ways that are cohesive with the neighborhood aesthetic and do not infringe on the rights of others.
7. Uses within existing neighborhoods should recognize the value of existing viewsheds so that the aesthetic value of the area is maintained as new uses are proposed.

2.6.5 Commercial

- A. Consider enactment of a commercial/industrial maintenance code to ensure that commercial and industrial development maintains community character on an ongoing basis.
- B. Provide for safe and convenient pedestrian movement within commercial areas.
- C. When possible or when opportunities arise, arterial or collector street access to service and commercial districts is to be provided at the periphery of the districts.
- D. Commercial development may be limited at street intersections. Development of one quadrant does not indicate or dictate commercial use of the remaining quadrants.

- E. Promote efforts to encourage upgrading of existing commercial uses.
- F. Regulate and enforce outdoor storage and environmental quality maintenance.
- G. Signing of commercial service properties is to facilitate identification and business promotion, but will be restricted to prevent over-intensification.
- H. Encourage the removal or relocation of conflicting non-complementary uses in areas of the Township targeted for immediate commercial development.

2.6.6 Industrial

- A. Designate areas for industrial uses within the Township, with distinct areas for varying types of industrial activities. Planned industrial areas are to provide for phasing of development as demand increases.
- B. Plan industrial uses and activities in locations with high accessibility and limit such industrial uses to areas which are so designated.
- C. Establish and enforce standards governing industrial development quality.
- D. Screen outside storage of equipment and materials to eliminate negative visual impact.
- E. Industrial development is to have convenient access and is to be located near major streets and highways while prohibiting direct, uncoordinated access.
- F. Limited signing within industrial areas is intended to facilitate ready business identification, while not to include advertising.
- G. Industrial and commercial development is to be strongly encouraged to create new job opportunities and expand the local tax base.
- H. Investigate potential fiscal incentives to attract new desired types of industries to Lynden Township.
- I. Give due consideration to potential physical implications and services and facility demands (i.e., traffic generation, sewer and water demands, etc.) of proposed industrial development.
- J. Encourage site upkeep and maintenance through code enforcement to promote a positive industrial image.
- K. Existing industrial users will be expected to connect to municipal sanitary sewer and water service, when available.

- L. Industrial development and operations within the Township are to be focused on designation of general industrial land uses adjacent to 200th street or County Road 145.

2.7 TRANSPORTATION GOALS

2.7.1 General

- A. Approach transportation in a comprehensive manner, giving attention to various modes and related facilities.
- B. Provide for safe and convenient movement by as many modes as possible.
- C. Define future street system routes and connections in the undeveloped urban areas of the community.
- D. Establish and develop a street system that is sensitive to homogeneous neighborhoods and activity areas.
- E. Develop a street system and install necessary traffic control devices, which conform to existing laws, to optimize service and provide for the efficient movement of people and goods, while minimizing adverse impacts.
- F. Provide sufficient off-street parking to meet the demands of the specified land use.
- G. Support the development of public transit, car-pooling and other such measures that will minimize the need for individual automobile travel.

2.8 TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

2.8.1 General

- A. Treat modes of transportation and related facilities as one system to be coordinated and related on a comprehensive basis.
- B. Plan transportation facilities to function in a manner compatible with adjacent land use. In those instances where the function of transportation facility has changed over time to become incompatible with adjacent land use (such as gravel surfaces), programs shall be established to address the issue.
- C. Design transportation facilities to conserve natural resources and minimize the total need for on-going public investment.
- D. Prepare and annually update a Capital Improvement Program for Township roads.

- E. Coordinate transportation planning and implementation with neighboring and affected jurisdictions with early and continuing opportunities for citizen involvement.
- F. Focus the transportation system on activity centers within the community and those in neighboring communities.
- G. Consider the mobility needs of all persons in the planning and development of the transportation system.
- H. The highway system is to complement and facilitate local movements provided by local streets, bicycle trails and pedestrian facilities. A line of communication shall be maintained with Stearns County and State highway officials in order to ensure that planned improvements are consistent with the goals and objectives of the community.

2.8.2 Streets

- A. Adopt and follow a functional classification system in the planning and design of the street system.
- B. Coordinate planning for the street network with Stearns County, including street improvements, construction of new streets, implementation of a functional classification system and potential turn back of existing county roads to the jurisdiction, or vice versa.
- C. Construct new streets and existing streets upgraded in compliance with Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) standard specifications.
- D. On street parking which conflicts with moving traffic or creates hazards, must be prevented and eliminated.
- E. Street system facilities are to be planned, designed and developed according to the highest standards, giving due consideration to both land use and overall transportation goals and policies.
- F. The Township will plan for anticipated increases in traffic volumes and corresponding street improvements by analyzing existing right-of-way widths, access standards, speed, surfacing, sizing and maintenance requirements of existing streets and those in areas of new development.
- G. Design residential streets categorized as low volume carriers to encourage inter neighborhood connections, properly direct traffic to collector or arterial roads, and yet prevent penetration by through traffic.
- H. Relate street improvements to area land development in order to avoid interrupted or inadequate access.

- I. Require proper visibility, design and control of intersections (including access points) to promote safety.
- J. Establish a phased program to improve hazardous and poorly designed intersections and access points so as to increase the safety to both motorized and non-motorized traffic.
- K. Promote street safety through the appropriate use of sign control.
- L. Develop and utilize a uniform system and policy regarding public signing to eliminate unnecessary signs and replace outdated, inappropriate and confusing public signs.
- M. Standards and controls for business and advertising signing and lighting have been established and will be enforced in order to prevent driver distraction and potential hazards.
- N. Minimize the amount of land devoted to streets. The number of streets and the number of street miles within the community shall be minimized to the extent possible.
- O. Where feasible and practical as funds allow, provisions for other transportation modes i.e., bicycles, snowmobiles, park and ride, etc., are to be included in street and highway improvement plans.

2.9 COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOALS

2.9.1 General

- A. Plan and provide public facilities and services in a coordinated and economic manner on a basis that is consistent with the nature of development and possible pending problems within the Township.
- B. Coordinate facilities and services on a joint use basis between governmental units.
- C. Ensure the public safety of the Township residents is adequately provided.
- D. To the extent possible, establish and implement physical features, which will create a sense of community identity and recognition.
- E. Provide for safe, easy access to facilities and services in the community.

2.10 COMMUNITY FACILITIES POLICIES

2.10.1 General

- A. Moderate and low-density areas, which include agricultural preservation, are to be clearly designated with appropriate density and use controls to facilitate staged and fully utilized service systems.
- B. Minimize the impact of required utility facilities and services upon the surrounding areas.
- C. Those creating the demand will be responsible for costs associated with the extension of services to new developments.

2.11 ADMINISTRATIVE GOALS

2.11.1 General

- A. Ensure that development and redevelopment that occurs in the community is in accordance with the Comprehensive plan.
- B. Review and amend the Comprehensive Plan and related ordinances as necessary to reflect changing community needs and priorities.
- C. Pursue means and measures to provide more local control and a direct response to development proposals and ongoing community needs and problems. Encourage community input.
- D. To the extent possible, allocate administrative and improvement costs to those generating the demand or utilizing the services.
- E. Pursue available means to increase/improve community identity.

2.12 ADMINISTRATION POLICIES

2.12.1 Decision Making

- A. Development proposals will be evaluated to determine economic, physical, social and service demand implications and sufficient time will be provided for thorough analysis and decision-making.
- B. Analysis and basis for decision-making on development proposals will be thoroughly substantiated and documented.

- C. Communication and continued coordination is to be maintained and promoted between the Township, Stearns County, and related governmental jurisdictions.
- D. An opportunity for the direct involvement and input of area residents, business persons, and property owners will be provided in the planning and implementation of development or redevelopment projects in the Township.
- E. Prior to public hearings, the Township may encourage developers to hold informal meetings with project area residents, business persons, and property owners on a neighborhood basis to inform them of area plans.
- F. Formal public hearings on area plans and projects are to be held with adequate prior notice to citizens in the community.
- G. The Township will make use of public media, notably area newspapers and Township newsletters, as a means to keep citizens informed of all development projects.
- H. Specialized expertise, which can contribute to the area plans, may be enlisted from individuals of the community at large.

2.12.2 Economic Development

- A. The Township will encourage leadership by the business community for economic development.
- B. The Township will work with business interests presently existing in Lynden Township on plans and programs for expansion and enhancement.
- C. Economic development that takes full advantage of market opportunities afforded by the major transportation corridors within or adjacent to the community will be identified and promoted.
- D. The Township will work progressively to retain and attract businesses that are compatible with a clean environment.
- E. To the extent practical, public and private programs that are available will be utilized to assist new and existing businesses in the community.

SECTION 3 - DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The intent of a comprehensive planning process is to provide a well-founded and coordinated decision-making framework to guide public and private development, community improvement, and change. In this regard, this section of the Comprehensive Plan presents the Development Framework for Lynden Township. The plan is based upon community issues and desired results that were identified as part of the Issues Summary and Policy Formulation phases of the process.

A primary goal of the Lynden Township Comprehensive Plan is to coordinate planning efforts to ensure successful implementation of a policy framework that acknowledges the relationships between environmental quality, controlled growth and individual community well being.

The Development Framework, which is the third phase of the comprehensive planning process, is the general plan for the community. It establishes the parameters and overall results that are to be achieved. It further defines and establishes direction for the basic elements that comprise and influence the community. In the case of Lynden Township, the elements are natural environment, land use, transportation, community facilities and administration. It is the function of these planning elements to provide both detailed guidance and the implementation of actions for community development.

Development regulations and improvement programming are based upon the Development Framework. Once the precedent-setting elements of the comprehensive planning process have been completed, ordinances and programs must be formulated as a means to bring about the plans and desired results that have been described.

The Concept Plan, upon which the Development Framework is based, represents general planning concepts for the community. Categorical plans are then presented for natural environment, land use, transportation, community facilities and administration. These sections are arranged in a format that provides guidelines for how specific policies presented within the Policy Plan may be applied.

In total, the Development Framework provides a fundamental management tool for guiding change and improvements within the community. Directives and means for specific assignments and accomplishments are determined by this document.

3.2 CONCEPT PLAN

The elements of a comprehensive community plan including natural environment, land use, transportation, community facilities and administration, develop from a concept. To ensure the viability of this concept, it must be derived from the established goals of the community as well as the primary function(s) of the community. The Concept Plan for

Lynden Township revolves around eight basic principles, which are summarized as follows:

- The establishment of a community identity.
- The strengthening of the Township's commercial/industrial tax and employment base.
- The protection of the Township's environmental features.
- The management of growth in an orderly, fiscally responsible manner, which allows the coordinated co-existence of urban and rural uses. This includes the preservation of areas designated for long-term rural uses and planned controlled growth which will allow future, economically viable community sewer systems.
- The promotion of functional and compatible land use relationships through the fundamental planning concepts of the neighborhood foundation, community focus and land use transition.
- The consideration of transportation in a comprehensive manner in future growth.
- Planning for alternative energy uses and the use of sustainable development practices.
- The consideration of the use of conservation design and low impact development throughout the Township.

3.2.1 Community Identity

It is essential that Lynden Township continue its efforts to establish a sense of continuity and focus in the community. Ongoing residential development within Lynden Township needs to emphasize quality development and the amenities required, insuring a high standard of living. In this regard, the development of remaining open land should be done in a manner which respects the integrity of existing neighborhoods and existing farmland, as new neighborhoods and other land use areas are created.

A first step in creating desirable residential development is the establishment of a desirable development format. Residential development formats range from strict grid-type platting to curvilinear and cul-de-sac street patterns. As stated in the Policy Plan, patterns that include some variation in the street pattern are preferred, as they tend to discourage through traffic and thereby increase privacy and safety within neighborhoods. This attention to traffic consideration is coupled with a fundamental consideration for natural and man-made barriers which tend to help delineate and organize neighborhoods. As a focus for neighborhood activity, parkland and open spaces are primary examples, contributing substantially to the creation of a desirable residential environment with the community. The overall neighborhood orientation is

set in terms of amenities and services which function as a focus for neighborhood activity.

Finally, residential developments must provide a plan for a common septic system that can be incorporated into a community sanitary sewer service if and when one can be economically provided.

3.2.2 Tax and Employment Base

The Township has had the foresight to recognize the major transportation corridors within the community as an opportunity for the location of commercial/industrial uses that would contribute to a strong community tax base.

Previous Lynden Township Boards of Supervisors designated and planned development of land in the area north of 200th Street and northwest of County Road 145 near Clearwater for commercial/light industrial purposes. This development has been the beginning of an extended tax base for the Township.

There is an opportunity for expansion of this land use to the west of the present property and the Township should consider zoning additional land south of 200th Street and west of County Road 145 for additional commercial/industrial land use.

The Township board shall maintain close communication with St. Augusta and St. Cloud to be aware of potential opportunities for additional commercial/industrial land use in the northwest corner of the Township.

3.2.3 Environmental Protection

The existing character of Lynden Township is defined by its dominant rural residential/agricultural land uses and abundant natural resources. Numerous lakes, wetlands, wildlife areas, and woodlands provide a rich and diverse resource base.

Lynden Township relies on the zoning standards adopted by Stearns County to control shorelines, floodplain, and development along waterways and lakes. The purpose of the Lynden Township zoning ordinance, as established, is to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the community. Through current land use planning efforts, Lynden Township will direct development based on the Comprehensive Plan while preserving its valued environmental integrity. As land becomes available for development, it is the intent of these efforts to continue to promote high quality development within the Township, while minimizing potential impacts to our environment.

The drinking water in Lynden Township is drawn from shallow glacial aquifers that are highly susceptible to groundwater contamination, therefore groundwater quality must be one of the Township's primary concerns.

3.2.4 Growth Management

While it is the intent of Lynden Township to welcome future urban growth, such growth should only be allowed in an orderly and fiscally responsible manner. The concept of “growth staging” presents the primary strategy for guiding and managing urban growth in the community. It can be clearly shown that haphazard and premature development can and often does result in severe economic consequences for communities. The basic philosophy underlying the proposed concept of growth management is compatible co-existence of urban and rural areas and the avoidance of premature and unwarranted urban development within such rural areas.

Since the Township is likely to maintain agricultural activities well into the future, preservation of large, contiguous, productive farmlands is essential. As low and moderate density development increases, productive farmlands are threatened by residential neighborhoods and their supporting services. In this regard, future development should be encouraged in a manner which respects the integrity of existing farmlands by concentrating the development into neighborhoods or clusters. This long-term vision should not, however, be construed to mean that established agricultural operations should not be protected from premature development.

It is the intent and purpose of the growth concept to provide an ongoing framework in which growth is afforded optimum flexibility, yet managed to the extent that Lynden Township’s rural areas can continue to enjoy the rewards of the rural atmosphere.

3.2.5 Land Use Compatibility

As mentioned previously, functional and compatible land use relationships are achieved through the fundamental planning concepts for activities in the Township.

The impacts of varying land uses define the need for infrastructure, demands for public services, the sustainability of the natural resource base, and the need to sustain economically volatile agricultural endeavors.

When growth accelerates, the conflicts between various land uses raise concerns over the ability of the rural community to sustain its way of life. As a response to these conflicts, the Lynden Township Board of Supervisors will use this Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance to establish a sense of direction for future development in the Township.

3.2.6 Community Focus

Within the concept of developing the entire community, it is important that individual neighborhoods not only have internal continuity, but also that they relate to one another. In order to relate neighborhood districts on a community scale, it is recommended that community focal points be developed. These can be the higher density development areas near Clearwater and the areas north of Clearwater Lake.

3.2.7 Transportation

Lynden Township's transportation needs are served by I-94, County roads, and Township roads maintained as local streets. Lynden Township's Transportation plan is to provide, in cooperation with the State and County, a transportation plan that will serve the anticipated growth and projected travel needs for the Township residents and business needs.

The maintenance of Township roads is the largest segment of the Township annual budget. The Township Board of Supervisors shall endeavor to provide these transportation services to meet the needs of the residents in the most economical and overall effective way.

3.3 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT PLAN

Natural environment areas are of prime importance to the Community. Besides serving as aesthetic amenities, which enhance the total quality of life in the area, they perform important ecological roles. Natural areas often act as buffers or barriers in determining the extent and direction of development and growth. Therefore, it is necessary that special consideration be given to these areas in formulating the Lynden Township Comprehensive Plan. Environmentally sensitive areas include those characterized by soil limitations, forested areas, wetland and especially the Mississippi River tributaries. Lynden Township residents have expressed particular concern in regard to ground water pollution, the preservation of productive agricultural lands, storm water drainage and the effects of development on lakes and significant waterways.

3.3.1 Topography

The topography of Lynden Township was formed as a result of glacial events, the formation of the bedrock foundation and the process of erosion. Glacial washout plains in our township provide relatively flat landscapes. The lowest point in Stearns County is in Lynden Township at the convergence of the Clearwater and Mississippi Rivers.

To better manage surface and groundwater resources the MN DNR Division of Waters divided the State into eighty-one major watersheds. The Clearwater-Elk River watershed district exists within Lynden Township.

3.3.2 Soils

As mentioned in the Policy Plan, a major environmental issue confronting the Township is the desire to minimize the intrusion of urban or suburban development upon areas of productive agricultural land. It is acknowledged by Township officials that growth will occur in Lynden Township and that agricultural land will be converted to other uses. Township officials have planned for growth outward from the City of Clearwater and to a lesser extent outward from the southern lakes/river

area of the Township. Soil type and the use of land for agricultural pursuits have not been main factors in determining where residential development should occur. The use of a conservation oriented subdivision ordinance will help Township Officials and developers assess development options available and manage development in a way to protect highly erodible soils.

3.3.3 Recreation and Open Space

Long range planning for recreation and open space is required to insure that a rural residential atmosphere is maintained in future developments. Open space includes sensitive areas, natural communities, shorelines, wetlands and wildlife management areas. Open spaces also serve as a buffer between conflicting land uses. Cluster development and set-aside land provide separation and visual relief.

3.3.4 Shorelands/Floodplain

The Township's streams and waterways have significant natural vegetation, which makes them a primary area of development interest. In response to such interest, it is imperative that proper measures are taken to maintain the integrity of the area.

As a means of protecting the public health and safety and to minimize property damage and pollution from flood waters, the County has established an FP (Flood Plain) Overlay District. As a result, development proposals which lie within the designated flood plain district shall conform to a specific set of regulations and shall be subject to additional review by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

3.3.5 Wetland Areas

Wetlands in the Township function in a variety of ways. They help to provide a natural atmosphere in the community in addition to providing habitat for fish and wildlife. From an ecological perspective, the wetlands in the Township serve to protect the Mississippi River and its tributaries from the effects of urban storm water run-off by acting as settling ponds. Finally, and perhaps most important for the Township's present circumstances, the wetlands also act as holding ponds for floodwaters. Indiscriminate grading, filling or draining of these wetlands can lead to environmental damage which may be costly to correct or even irreparable.

3.3.6 Storm Water Drainage

Natural drainage swales and man-made ditches alongside Township streets and County roads are the predominant storm water infrastructure within the Township. Development and redevelopment typically creates a higher percentage of impervious surfaces causing increased storm water runoff rates, volume and associated pollutants.

The township includes multiple lakes, wetland, streams, ravines and other natural water resources that are susceptible to stormwater runoff. In some cases, development or redevelopment provides an opportunity to improve the existing qualities by reducing runoff and/or pollutant loads through conservation design

practices, a result of high infiltration rates in typical soils found within the Township. In other cases, development/redevelopment may cause significant stress to either existing high quality or agriculturally impacted waterbodies.

Every two years, the MPCA develops a list of “303d impaired waters”. These waters have been tested and do not meet state water quality standards for a single or multiple pollutants. Currently, the Mississippi River and the Clearwater River are listed as impaired under this program.

The Mississippi River is impaired for excess mercury (Hg). Since mercury impairments throughout the state are a result of atmospheric deposition, stormwater runoff will not increase this pollutant load to the river.

The Clearwater River is impaired for low dissolved oxygen. Typically, low dissolved oxygen is a result of excess nutrients. The Clearwater River Watershed District (CRWD) is conducting a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study to help identify the specific sources of pollutants. The Township should coordinate with CRWD and the MPCA during the TMDL process and help guide future implementation policies.

To help minimize the impacts of stormwater runoff, the Township should consider low impact design or conservation design as possible alternatives. The Township has a large amount so sandy soil with high infiltration rates. However, care should be taken to not contaminate ground water. The Township should encourage development or redevelopment to follow stormwater design guidelines from the Minnesota Stormwater Manual.

3.3.7 Forestation

Because of the historic agricultural character of the community, existing natural vegetative masses within the Township are interspersed within areas of steep slopes, wetlands, and along the waterways. Areas of the Township that have flatter topography contain relatively few natural vegetated clusters. The Township may wish to consider the adoption of more detailed tree preservation guidelines to preserve existing vegetation.

3.3.8 Erosion and Sediment Control

As development continues throughout the Township, it is important that appropriate erosion and sediment control measures are undertaken. Within natural drainage ways, the preservation of natural vegetation should be encouraged. Further, the placement of buildings and streets upon steep slopes should be avoided to the extent possible. Generally, the steeper the slope the greater the erosion hazard. To ensure proper erosion control, proposed developments should be required to submit a temporary and permanent erosion control plan as part of the application materials. These plans should locate and describe the project specific erosion and sediment control methods necessary to comply with MPCA and Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District requirements.

3.3.9 Solid Waste

In addressing this issue, the Township has established a number of goals and policies aimed at ensuring responsible environmental planning. Specifically, assurance must be provided that waste disposal facilities not be allowed unless it is demonstrated that such activities can exist in harmony with the natural environment as well as existing and proposed uses. In specific review of solid waste facility proposals, factors to be considered include but are not limited to: 1) environmental impact, 2) location, operation and long term uses of the facility, 3) disposal costs, 4) the methods of collection, transportation, processing and disposal, and 5) reclamation.

In a related issue, there have been concerns over the spreading of sludge obtained from the St. Cloud Wastewater Treatment Plant. It should be noted that such activities are governed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and must follow various provisions of a strict permitting and monitoring procedure.

3.3.10 Subsurface Extraction

The major cost of maintaining gravel roads within the Township is the transportation cost from outside the Township, therefore the Township should consider gravel resources in the Township for the use of Township road construction, repair and maintenance.

Recognizing the potential adverse impacts of subsurface extraction within Lynden Township, thoughtful consideration of the management of the resource before, during and after extraction must be a part of the resources development process. Areas of high aggregate potential should be protected from unnecessary encroachment of incompatible uses. Subsurface extraction in Lynden Township would operate under permitted conditions to protect the current living environment of Township residents.

3.3.11 Alternative Energy

Promote the use and development of alternative renewable energy sources for residents and the community (i.e. geo-thermal, solar and wind). Recognize the need for conservation of natural resources and creation of efficiency measures within our community. Development of large scale alternative energy should be done in ways that benefit and are compatible with the community.

3.4 LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan takes the Township's projected growth rates and applicable Township policies and formulates a description of desirable locations for future land uses. The Plan Map when used in conjunction with the General Land Use Plan narrative, designates growth density districts and development related ordinances, and provides a graphic description of the future land use within the Township. The Land Use Plan shall serve as a guide in assessing development requests and how they may

affect or relate to the desired land use in a given area. In the sections that follow, the specific land use categories: rural residential/agricultural (limited growth), residential (moderate and concentrated growth), commercial/industrial, and natural areas are defined.

3.4.1 Rural Residential/Agricultural (Limited Growth)

The intent of this district is to provide adequate landmasses for productive agricultural use. This land use district includes agricultural operations, traditional (e.g. dairy) and nontraditional (e.g. elk farming) related activities.

These areas also include residential development in the “rural character”. This is one of the highly valued attractions of Lynden Township. It has the open, rural character and the flavor of the countryside. Continued encroachment of medium density development into these areas threatens the value of the countryside, which attracted development in the first place. From the increased traffic on rural roadways, caused by medium density housing on large lots, development even at relative low densities can have a dramatic negative effect on rural lifestyle and rural aesthetics.

Even though there is a strong interest in preservation of the values of the rural landscape, a basic conflict exists in the interest to allow retiring farmers to capture a return on the value of their land for development. For many, there is a perceived unfairness in restricting some farmers to selling land at agricultural values, when others are able to sell their land for much higher rates due to developmental potential. Ultimately, this issue is a function of the strength of the respective land markets, desired economic returns, private property rights and public policy. This issue precedes many of the discussions related to public management of land use and growth. The districts shown on our Plan Map were determined, as much as possible by natural boundaries and existing roadways and did not consider ownership of property.

As noted in the Concept Plan, the segregation of rural and non-rural uses is critical for the successful operation of both uses. The isolation of the rural residential/agricultural uses from the higher density development allows each to function as intended or desired, and removes potential nuisance conflicts or concerns. In existing residential neighborhoods located within the limited growth areas of the Township, changing land uses must be carefully considered and adverse impacts mitigated to retain the values and aesthetic qualities that initially attracted development.

Transition areas will be considered between the limited growth and moderate growth areas. These areas must be adjacent to the medium density growth areas to be considered favorably.

3.4.2 Residential Uses

The Residential area should be divided into two districts. Medium density shall be considered in a moderate growth area, high density will be considered a concentrated

growth area. Regardless of the district, care must be taken in locating structures and managing uses in order to maintain the features of the area.

A. Medium Density (Moderate Growth)

The purpose of this district is to provide moderate residential development opportunity on land that is neither highly desired farmland nor is land located within a concentrated growth area or expansion from a growth center. In order to maintain the area's rural characteristics and preserve open space, cluster developments shall be encouraged.

B. High Density (Concentrated Growth)

The purpose of this district is to provide high-density growth and affordable housing near the center of growth areas that can be more readily provided services and to allow additional development in areas that are more urban in character. The land within this district will be land that is not agriculturally desirable, and in need of special considerations because of its unique natural or topographical characteristics. For this reason clustering of developments may be requested. It is also intended that this district will allow residential development, near lakes and rivers, consistent with the County Shoreland Overlay District.

3.4.3 Commercial/Industrial

Although distinct in their activities, these two categories are combined for the purpose of the Plan.

The existing Lynden Industrial area, with its close proximity to the City of Clearwater will be the primary reason to develop a relationship with Clearwater for future services, both sanitary sewer and water.

The easy access to I 94 also will encourage further growth in this area. The land allocated to the Commercial/Industrial district shall allow growth in that district.

3.4.4 Natural Areas

This category illustrates the various levels of environmental protection efforts throughout the township. Included here are shoreline management areas, watershed areas of the Clearwater River and the Mississippi River, wildlife management and protection areas, major wetlands, floodplains and other features. Land in these areas will be subject to the requirements of protection regulations in place.

3.5 TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Transportation Plan is based upon the various modes of transportation working as a system and how it serves the land use patterns within the Township. The transportation system serves to tie together, and in some instances, separate the various land use activities within the Township.

Lynden Township's existing transportation system is reflective of the development patterns. Residential and commercial/industrial developments are heavily reliant on the access to County roads and highways. Sporadic residential development has resulted in fragmented and inconsistent patterns of some Township streets. These issues represent the basis for programming and planning the extension of local street systems and the need to identify future collector street corridors to provide access to the major commuter routes (I 94).

3.5.1 Roadway Functional Classification System

Characteristics developed by the Metropolitan Council, along with County Highway classifications should be used in future growth development. These classifications should perform as a means of determining road widths, speed limits, intersection controls and other design features. Functional classifications will be considered in the Township's street network to determine the number of access points which should be permitted on major streets or highways and the design and relationship of local streets to other county and state highway systems. Access management will be based on Access Management Guidelines within the township's subdivision ordinance and the Stearns County Comprehensive Plan.

3.5.2 Conditions

The Township street system involves three governmental jurisdictions. Besides the Township streets, the community contains both Stearns County and MN DOT highways. The Stearns County highways located in Lynden Township have been found to be both well constructed and properly maintained. Township roads, as they exist today are also well maintained. The Township Board of Supervisors conducts two road inspections per year to determine condition and need for maintenance.

Lynden Township Ordinance requires developers to pave all new roads in accordance with Township, County and MN DOT specifications.

The Township has 37 miles of gravel roads. Future major gravel road upgrading should be included in the Capital Projects budget for that year. Current plans include the use of dust control substances to prevent the loss of gravel binders as dust. The Township should maintain these gravel roads at the most effective cost.

3.5.3 Weight Restrictions

One of the key transportation elements facing the rural areas of the Township, particularly those served by gravel roads, is the ability to move people and product to market and other destinations. Each year roadways in the Township become susceptible to heavy load damage as the upper roadbed layers thaw more quickly than the lower levels. As a result the County restricts loads in the spring so that roadways do not experience this degradation. Following the county guidelines, all gravel roads in the Township should be considered a five-ton limit during this time.

The cost of providing asphalt roads has increased greatly in the last few years. A determination of the feasibility of additional asphalt roads in the Township should be studied as needed.

3.5.4 Street Extensions

Regarding future development, the Township should concentrate on the extension of streets in functional and connected patterns. An extended street pattern will make future development both physically practical and economically efficient by accommodating phased future sewer and water connections in growth areas.

Limiting development outside of growth centers will also serve to minimize the need for street extensions. Existing gravel roads do not have the design capacity to support significant increases in traffic volumes. Allowing development outside of defined growth areas that utilize gravel streets increases maintenance costs and accelerates the need for major improvements.

3.5.5 Highway Corridor (I-94)

Interstate 94, which runs through the entire width of Lynden Township, is the largest traffic corridor in the community. To some degree, the limited access to I 94 may be somewhat of a negative, but it does not impede the Township's ability to grow further as "a bedroom type community".

MN DOT funded a study of the future capacity of I 94 from Avon to Minneapolis during 2001-2002. In the alternate 1 Anterior Improvement Plan, the following was recommended in Lynden Township:

- Construct a new collector from CSAH 44 to CSAH 75 of 2.2 miles in relationship to the new exchange for the St. Cloud Industrial Park.
- Expand CSAH 75 to four lanes from Monticello to St. Cloud.
- Expand 208th Street from CSAH 44 to CR143 from two lanes to four.
- New connector from CSAH 44 to CSAH 8 in Clearwater Township.

3.5.6 Trail System

Lynden Township supports the connection of the River Country Bike Trail from Sportsmans Park to Warner Lake County Park and the extension of the Beaver Island Trail to Warner Lake County Park.

Future development in Lynden Township near Warner Lake Park should include some provisions to expand this trail system and assist in the development of the Mississippi River Trail.

3.6 COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

Community Facilities include those buildings and services provided for the benefit of the residents of the community. Their importance should not be underestimated in

that they are offered as a necessity of life within the community and are therefore a major determinant of the quality, welfare and safety of the Township's environment.

3.6.1 Sanitary Sewer and Water Service

The Township is currently without public sanitary sewer and water service. On site septic systems and water wells are currently utilized to meet the needs of existing development. The Lynden Township Board of Supervisors has approached the City of Clearwater for consideration of an orderly Annexation agreement to provide the first potential sewer and water service for the future. The Board will also communicate with Annandale, St. Augusta, and St. Cloud for potential service in those areas as needed.

The Township relies on Stearns County to monitor and maintain control over private septic systems in the Township.

3.6.2 Storm Water Drainage

Currently, storm water drainage in the Township is handled by naturally occurring drainage, swales and ponding areas and by ditches along the Township and County roads. Although this system is adequate for current development levels, anticipated future growth at medium densities may have negative impacts on the system unless some forethought is given to the issue.

To address this issue, The Township should analyze the effect of each new development on the current storm water system. New developments within growth centers should be required to avoid storm water piping and utilize natural drainage ways whenever possible.

3.6.3 Government Buildings

The Lynden Township Hall was remodeled in 1996 and provides an office for the Township Clerk and Board of Supervisors. The building has adequate meeting room space for Township meetings, elections and contracted private use. It is expected to be adequate for some years in the future.

3.6.4 Fire Protection

Lynden Township currently receives its fire protection from the City of Clearwater and the City of Annandale. The Town Board of Supervisors communicates each year with these units and contracts for fire protection service.

3.6.5 Police Service

The Stearns County Sheriff's Department provides police service for Lynden Township. The Township Board of Supervisors is in continual communications with the Sheriff's department pertaining to traffic concerns, domestic issues and stray or dangerous dogs.

The Board shall maintain this close relationship with the Sheriff's department to provide adequate protection for our residents.

3.7 ADMINISTRATION PLAN

Administration and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and the Ordinances and Regulations developed in support of the Plan is equally as important as the development the Plan itself. Unless the Plan and related development tools are constantly referenced and utilized as a part of long-range community decision-making, as well as reviewing specific development proposals, the time and resources invested in preparation of this Comprehensive Plan would be futile.

The issues below are seen as the most critical elements of overall administration and planning and should receive priority in implementation.

3.7.1 Zoning Administration

Stearns County has completed its Zoning Ordinance #209 effective April 21, 2000.

Its purpose:

- Protecting and promoting public health, safety, welfare and morals.
- Promoting and providing the order by development of agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, and public lands.
- Preserving agricultural land and animal agriculture.
- Conserving natural resources and open space.
- Providing official controls to implement the goals and policies included in the Stearns County Comprehensive Plan.

The Zoning Ordinance will allow the County to accomplish the following:

- Categorizing of land uses into specific districts and management of those district's boundaries.
- Distinction between agricultural uses and intensity with consideration given to varied land use impacts.
- Implementation of LESA (a scoring system used by the County to measure the value of the soil for agriculture purposes) criteria in determining appropriate or inappropriate areas for conversion of agricultural lands to other uses.
- Establishment of cluster residential regulations for non-farm residential development.
- Establishment of maximum lot sizes to limit the conversion of agricultural lands to residential use.
- Coordination of other land use management techniques with a comprehensive zoning plan.

Lynden Township Board of Supervisors administers the Land Use Ordinance as outlined in the existing Memorandum of Understanding with Stearns County.

This memorandum will ensure each party's mutual understanding of their respective duties and responsibilities related to land use. The permitting process will involve provisions enforced by the County and provisions enforced by the Township. These responsibilities for the Township are set out in Attachment 1 of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Lynden Township operates under the Lynden Township Land Use and Zoning Ordinance #2.1 or successor ordinance.

3.7.2 Subdivision Ordinance

Lynden Township promotes the use of Conservation Design as outlined in their Subdivision Ordinance.

3.7.3 Transfer of Development Rights

The County has developed a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) system. TDR is a method of providing a means of protecting agricultural land and allowing for compensation to farmland owners for restrictions on development. It has been developed by the county for county use and the Lynden Township Board of Supervisors has determined that it should not accept transfers of density into the Township. Landowners should be allowed to transfer development rights within and outside of the Township. The Lynden Township Comprehensive Plan will determine the development criteria within the Township.

3.7.4 Cluster Development

Another tool available for implementation is Cluster Development, which focuses on the preservation of open space, rural character and important natural resources.

Grouping residential structures on a particular portion of the development site and maintaining the remainder of the site as open space achieves these goals. The number of allowable units is determined by the Township Zoning Ordinance and is based on the density for a particular area. The physical layout of the development is based on this density requirement, the physical constraints, open space, and opportunities of the site. The utilization of cluster development can also preserve agricultural areas and minimize conflicts between residential growth and agricultural preservation by buffering new development from existing agriculture.

3.7.5 Orderly Annexation

Informal discussion with the City of Clearwater has occurred concerning an orderly annexation agreement. If and when completed, this agreement can define future growth areas with specificity, define the criteria for orderly annexation and manage land use in the interim period between the adoption of the agreement and the development. An agreement provides assurance to both the City of Clearwater and Lynden Township as to the location and timing of land use, and helps to avoid costly disputed annexation hearings.

3.7.6 Economic Development

Promotion of commercial/industrial development within Lynden Township is seen as a primary method for increasing the Township's financial resources by expanding the tax base. Because a high percentage of the Township's tax base is comprised of agricultural and residential properties, a high proportion of the tax burden falls on single-family households. Based upon the current property tax system and law, moderately valued single-family residential uses typically generate less property tax revenue for the local government than the cost of service expenditures. However, under the property tax system, commercial/industrial uses typically provide a higher return in property tax revenues, while demanding less service from the Township. Thus the Township would generate a net gain in revenue from property taxes from commercial/industrial uses.

To expand the commercial/industrial tax base, an aggressive promotional program for attracting commercial/industrial development to the Community should be implemented. The Comprehensive Plan can further facilitate economic development by establishing policies to provide for necessary services and designating appropriate locations for such development, which are attractive and within service capabilities and capacity.