CHAPTER 3:
BUILT ASSETS

To write the next chapter in the Faribault story, we need to understand and transform our built assets.

INTRODUCTION

Built assets provide the structural framework that allows Faribault to thrive. Faribault’s built assets include buildings, roadways, railways, trails, utilities, and other vital infrastructure. They provide shelter and energy. They enable us to communicate and get from one place to another. They also help keep the community safe, clean, and healthy. We interact and rely on our built assets every day. They are the physical embodiment of Faribault’s will and ingenuity. After all, someone’s brother, mother, father, or daughter used their hands and minds to build Faribault.

Built assets also contribute to Faribault’s sense of place. Whether it is a park bench that provides a place for solace, a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility that houses hundreds of workers, or a sanitary sewer line that helps keep our water sources clean, our built assets reflect who we are. Faribault’s built assets provide the foundation to grow the economy, engage the population, and offer a unique destination.

This Comprehensive Plan divides Faribault’s built assets into the following components:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Housing
- Parks, Trails, and Open Space
- Community Facilities
- Utilities and Energy

Later sections in this chapter describe each component in more detail.

OVERARCHING GOAL FOR OUR BUILT ASSETS

The following goal is a broad statement that reflects the City’s vision for Faribault’s built assets. It represents the end that the City is striving to attain.
LAND USE

We must guide land to accommodate our built assets.

Faribault’s Land Use Plan plays a key role in guiding development and redevelopment in the community. The Land Use Plan identifies the planned location, intensity, and nature of future development and redevelopment in Faribault, and it establishes the framework in which future development will occur. It also promotes balanced and efficient growth that protects significant natural areas.

The Land Use Plan relates to all sections of the Comprehensive Plan. In developing the Land Use Plan, the City considered the following elements:

- community goals and objectives,
- amount and location of vacant and underutilized lands,
- existing land use patterns,
- natural resources,
- existing transportation network and planned future investments,
- supportive infrastructure, including utilities and drainage systems, and
- coordination with surrounding communities, Rice County, and state agencies.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Existing Land Use. Existing land use patterns in Faribault reflect the implementation of short-term City decisions based on long-term planning efforts. Existing land use patterns also help tell the story of how Faribault developed. For example, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, industries developed along rivers. Today, Faribault would not deliberately plan for industries along the river. Still, this land use pattern reflects how Faribault’s view of natural assets at that time influenced existing land use patterns in Faribault.

The existing land use map (Map 3-1) and the existing land use table (Table 3-A) present a snapshot of the city’s existing land uses in 2020. The City prepared this inventory based on a variety of sources, including available property information, aerial photography, and windshield surveys. The following defines the existing land uses in Faribault:

- **Single-Family Residence-Farmstead.** Land that encompasses a single-family residential dwelling and associated buildings and farm uses.
• **Single-Family Residence-Detached.** Land meeting the definition of a single-family residence and detached from another residential dwelling. Includes detached townhomes.

• **Detached Manufactured Home Community.** Land meeting the definition of single-family residence-detached and designated for multiple manufactured housing structures. This classification does not pertain to an individual manufactured home.

• **Single-Family Residence – Attached.** Land meeting the definition of multi-family residential containing two or more attached dwelling units, such as an attached townhome, double bungalow, triplex, and large multi-unit structures with each unit having an external entrance.

• **Multi-Family Residence - 2-3 Units/Building.** Land meeting the definition of residential containing two or three attached dwelling units, one or more of which does not have primary ground floor access to the outside, such as a duplex in which each unit is on a separate level of the structure.

• **Multi-Family Residence - 4+ Units/Building.** Land meeting the definition of residential containing four or more attached dwelling units, one or more of which does not have primary ground floor access to the outside, such as an apartment or condominium building with a main entrance for all residents.

• **Mixed Use Residential and Commercial:** Land that includes residential and commercial uses in the same building. Most of this land is in or near the downtown where a building may have a commercial use on the ground floor with a residential use above.

• **Office.** Land used predominantly for administrative, professional, or clerical services.

• **Retail and Other Commercial.** Land used for the provision of goods or services.

• **Mixed Use Commercial and Other:** Land containing a building with multiple uses but with no residential units or industrial uses, such as a building containing commercial shops, childcare facilities, offices, and restaurants.

• **Industrial and Utility.** Land containing manufacturing, transportation, construction companies, communications, utilities, or wholesale trade. This category includes publicly-owned industrial lands, such as wastewater treatment plants and water towers. Industrial also includes warehouses and salvage yards.

• **Mixed Use Industrial.** Land containing primarily industrial uses, but may include a mix of retail uses as well.

• **Extractive.** Land containing an extractive industry, such as a mine.

• **Institutional.** Land used primarily for religious, governmental, educational, social, cultural, or major health care facilities (where they have beds for overnight stay). Examples include schools, cemeteries, hospitals, nursing homes, city halls, county and state fairgrounds, and museums.

• **Golf Course.** Land used for golfing, including driving range and practice areas.

• **Park, Recreation, Preserve.** Land used for park and recreation or passive open space.
- **Airport.** Land used for the operation of aircraft and any related uses.
- **Agriculture.** Land used for agricultural purposes.
- **Undeveloped.** Land not currently used for any defined purpose, but that will likely develop in the future.
- **Railway.** Land used and occupied by railroad track lines or similar uses.
- **Major Highway:** Major road rights-of-way, including all interstate highways and all 4-lane divided highways with rights-of-way of 200 feet or greater in width.
- **Other Roadway Right-of-Way (ROW).** Land used as a roadway, but not defined as a major highway.
- **Waterbody.** Lakes and rivers.

### Table 3-A: Existing land use acres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Land Use (2020)</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family Residence – Farmstead</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family Residence – Detached</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufactured Home Community</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family Residence - Attached</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Family Residence – 2-3 units/building</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Family Residence – 4+ units/building</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed-Use Residential and Commercial</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail and Other Commercial</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed-Use Commercial and Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial and Utility</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed-Use Industrial</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extractive</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>9.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Golf Course</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Park, Recreation, Preserve</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>11.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Airport</td>
<td>255</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>1435</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undeveloped</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>6.4</td>
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<td>Railway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Highway</td>
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<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Road Right-of-Way</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>7.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waterbody</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,110</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3-A: Existing land use acres*
Primary findings of the existing land use inventory include the following:

1. The City of Faribault has a gross area of 10,110 acres. Roughly 20 percent (2,080 acres) is undeveloped or used for agricultural purposes.

2. Six existing land use categories account for 75 percent of the land in Faribault: detached single-family residence, agriculture, right-of-way, parks/recreation/preserve, industrial and utility, and institutional.

3. Significant existing land use changes that occurred from 2003 to 2020, include the following:
   - Annexations added approximately 970 acres to the city (or an 11 percent increase);
   - Land used for industrial purposes grew by roughly 600 acres, nearly tripling the amount of industrial land that existed in 2003. New industrial development during this period occurred primarily on the City’s north side, straddling Interstate 35;
   - Agriculture and undeveloped land increased by about 250 acres or 14 percent, mostly occurred through annexation; and
   - Detached single-family residence land increased by over 200 acres or 11 percent.

**Relationship between the Land Use Plan and Zoning.** The City’s zoning map and unified development ordinance are primary tools for implementing the City’s vision for land use. However, an analysis of the zoning map shows inconsistencies between existing zoning, existing land use, and the 2003 Land Use Plan. For example, there are significant areas where the City has guided land for commercial use, yet the area is zoned residential and the existing land use is residential.

One such area is the existing residential area on Wilson Avenue south of Highway 60. The 2003 Land Use Plan guides this area for commercial use, but the City zoned this area for low-density residential use. Therefore, the City’s expressed vision for land use is inconsistent with the zoning for this area. Typically, if a city guides an area for commercial use, it also zones the area for commercial use, which means the existing residential uses would become nonconforming uses that should transition to commercial uses over time.

Although there will always be structures and uses in the city that do not conform to current zoning requirements, zoning should be consistent with the Land Use Plan. Therefore, the City will need to amend its zoning map and ordinances to reflect the Land Use Plan presented in this Comprehensive Plan.
**Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts.** Most existing land use conflicts in Faribault pertain to disputes between existing residential neighborhoods and existing industries. Historically, industries developed along the rivers and railroads; and residential neighborhoods developed adjacent to the industries. However, some residents have expressed concern over truck traffic, noise, and odors associated with the existing industries. In recent years, residents have also shown a strong desire to increase public land adjacent to the rivers, where there is existing industry or other development.

Although land use conflicts have existed for many years, it does not diminish the need to address ongoing conflicts between uses. In some cases, the City may guide areas for redevelopment that includes a change in land use and zoning. In those cases, it may take many years and substantial community investments to facilitate the transition. In other cases, the City may conclude that it is unrealistic to guide an existing industrial use to residential use, for example. In those cases, the City should promote opportunities for the current industrial use to co-exist with the residential use. Opportunities to minimize conflicts include requiring more substantial buffer areas between uses, requiring industries to adjust truck traffic, and similar mitigation measures.

To some extent, the City’s Land Use Plan can and should address existing and potential land use conflicts. However, the City should also employ other tools (regulatory and incentive-based) to mitigate disputes.

**Limitations for Future Development.** A variety of factors may limit future development in Faribault:

1. Natural features, such as wetlands, floodplain, steep topography, and significant vegetation may limit the feasibility or desirability of future growth in certain areas. For example, while it may appear logical to promote future industrial development along the Interstate Highway 35 corridor north of the city, steep slopes, wetlands, and extensive woodlands may limit the feasibility of developing vast industrial uses on some properties in this area.

2. Existing infrastructure (for example, existing pipelines) may limit development in areas, particularly areas adjacent to the Interstate Highway 35 corridor. Also, the feasibility of extending roads, sewer, and water to certain areas may limit the viability of future development.

3. Existing brownfields (contaminated or polluted land) may present additional development challenges related to the types of uses allowed and the costs involved to mitigate the contamination.

4. Property owners who are not interested in selling or developing their property can also limit development opportunities in the city. Likewise, some property owners may expect to sell their land for more money than what the market is willing to spend.

In short, even though the land may be available for development, in reality, certain properties may have challenges that limit the feasibility of future growth. The City’s Land Use Plan should account for these limitations.
Market Dynamics and Land Supply and Demand. A relatively large amount of undeveloped land exists within the city. However, the undeveloped land is not suitable for all types of development. Market dynamics affect the supply and distribution of land uses. For example, an oversupply of property guided for commercial use may depress commercial land prices. As a result, undesirable development (for example, self-storage facilities located in prime retail locations) may occur. Oversupply of land can also cause development to become unnecessarily scattered, which often results in costly extension of services or a missed opportunity to create a needed critical mass of development that supports a thriving district or neighborhood. These market dynamics are keenly evident in commercial districts.

Faribault’s previous Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2003, illustrates how changing market dynamics affect land use. The previous Land Use Plan guided over 600 acres for future retail and/or commercial development. However, since 2003, almost all land guided for future commercial development remains undeveloped. Moreover, a review of forecasted household and employment growth in Faribault (a barometer for gauging future demand) indicates that even with an aggressive forecast, the City would have a 400-year supply of commercial land.

In general, the City can accommodate all anticipated residential needs through 2040 within the 2020 boundaries of the city. Likewise, the City can accommodate all anticipated commercial needs within the 2020 city limits. In addition, retail is evolving in a way that will likely not require the acquisition of additional land for retail development in the city.

In contrast to the ample availability of land for future residential and commercial uses, the city lacks tracts of land suitable for large industrial development. Even with the annexation of the Met-Con Business Park north of the city, Faribault does not have an excess of property ready for industrial development. Some undeveloped industrial land has development limitations due to existing pipelines and wetlands.

In conclusion, there is an adequate supply of land in the city to meet the demand for residential and commercial uses through the year 2040. However, the City must be prepared to guide additional areas for future industrial development, which means the City must consider opportunities for industrial growth outside the current boundaries of the city.

Development and Redevelopment Opportunities. As noted earlier, undeveloped properties within the city offer a variety of development opportunities. However, many redevelopment opportunities in the city may provide a range of benefits to the community and the developer. Redevelopment of blighted areas, for example, offers the chance to enhance an existing neighborhood and to develop in an area that does not require the construction of new streets, sewer, and water. Before guiding additional land for new development, the City should carefully consider the costs and benefits of promoting redevelopment in some regions of the city.

Existing commercial or industrial uses that have outgrown their property (or no longer need their property) may offer good redevelopment sites for similar uses or, potentially, different uses. For example, an existing industry by the river and near the downtown may find it beneficial to move to an industrial park near the Interstate Highway 35 corridor. That current industrial site could then be redeveloped into a commercial/residential mixed-use development that can take advantage of the river and the nearby downtown.
Chapter 9: Strategic Development Areas provides an overview of potential development and redevelopment areas in Faribault. The City should remain open to additional development and redevelopment areas in the city.

**LAND USE OBJECTIVE AND POLICIES**

The following objective is a specific, measurable, intermediate end that is achievable and marks progress toward the built assets goal. The following policies are actions to accomplish the stated objective.

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### Land Use Objective and Policies

**Objective 1.1:** Guide land to provide an appropriate mix of compatible land use that meets the City’s current and anticipated needs.

- **Policy 1.1.A:** Guide and regulate land to respond to social and market demands, respect significant natural and cultural assets, and support the efficient use of infrastructure.

- **Policy 1.1.B:** Seek first to strengthen existing development and guide new development in areas currently served by existing infrastructure, but where appropriate, allow logical and strategic staged growth in undeveloped areas if it is in the City’s best interest.

- **Policy 1.1.C:** Encourage the development of complete neighborhoods where all people have reasonable, safe, and convenient access to healthy food, goods, parks, social offerings, and services.

- **Policy 1.1.D:** Identify and implement opportunities to maximize synergies and minimize conflicts between land uses.

- **Policy 1.1.E:** Coordinate with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions on land use issues and opportunities in the region.

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**Complete Neighborhoods.** Land Use Policy 1.1.C promotes complete neighborhoods. The term "complete neighborhoods" refers to neighborhoods that include safe and convenient access to the following:

- a variety of housing options
- grocery stores and other commercial services
- quality public schools
- public open spaces and recreational facilities
- affordable active transportation options
- civic amenities
Complete neighborhoods are walkable and bikeable. They meet the needs of people of all ages and abilities. Many of Faribault’s older neighborhoods function as complete neighborhoods. They are compact and walkable with a variety of housing options and access to convenience stores. In contrast, newer neighborhoods often focus on one type of housing. Furthermore, residents in these newer neighborhoods usually have to use a car to access basic goods and services.

With an aging population, however, mobility and accessibility to essential goods and services are becoming increasingly important. Younger households also wish to live in neighborhoods that include a variety of uses and options for walking and biking. Complete neighborhoods provide an opportunity to strengthen the quality of life in Faribault.

**LAND USE PLAN**

The City of Faribault has many opportunities for redevelopment and development within its boundaries. The City’s Land Use Plan guides City Staff, the Planning Commission, the City Council, property owners, developers, and others in decisions relating to the type, location, and density of future development in the city. It also serves as the basis for updating the City’s zoning map, unified development ordinances, and other implementation tools.

The Land Use Plan guides land in a manner consistent with Community Vision 2040, but it also allows developers to respond to market demands and changing community needs. It guides land for continued investment and reinvestment in the community while maintaining and enhancing the character of existing neighborhoods. The following factors guide land use in Faribault:

- the location of existing development and infrastructure
- forecasts of households and employment growth
- environmental considerations and constraints
- regional growth strategies
- the compatibility of land uses with one another
- other community goals

**Future Land Use Classifications.** The following describes the future land use classifications shown on the Land Use Plan (see Map 3-2 following the description of the future land use classifications). The future land use classifications provide sufficient guidance and flexibility to respond to market demands and changing community needs. Unlike the future land use classifications identified in the 2003 Land Use Plan, the following future land use classifications are more general and more closely related to existing land use patterns and neighborhood characteristics.
- **Established Residential Neighborhood.** Existing residential neighborhoods make up much of the city. Most of these neighborhoods evolved over many years to include diverse and interspersed uses that serve the needs of the neighborhood. Therefore, it follows that the City continue to guide these areas for established residential neighborhood use.

Established residential neighborhoods may have a variety of existing housing types and densities. They may also include existing institutional and commercial uses that are under 2.5 acres in area and that typically serve the neighborhood. Unless identified as a redevelopment area, the City envisions that established residential neighborhoods will remain relatively unchanged. However, the City encourages ongoing maintenance and reinvestment in these neighborhoods, which may result in redevelopment that incorporates different housing types and densities, as well as neighborhood commercial uses in key areas.

An example of an area that the City guides for established residential neighborhood is the area bounded by 7th Street NW, 8th Street NW, 1st Avenue NW, and Central Avenue (see photos below). This is an older neighborhood that includes existing single-family, multi-family, and commercial uses. Depending on market demands and neighborhood needs, this area could remain as-is, or it may transition in a manner consistent with the needs and character of the neighborhood.

The photos below show examples of a commercial use and a mix of single-family and multi-family uses in established residential neighborhoods. The City finds this mixture of uses acceptable in an established residential neighborhood. The introduction of new uses in an established residential neighborhood may be acceptable if the new uses respect the character of the neighborhood. The City will use the zoning ordinance and zoning map to help ensure the compatibility of uses in established residential neighborhoods. The Land Use Plan does not guide specific areas in established residential neighborhoods for commercial or different housing densities. It merely guides the area for established residential use, regardless of the existing uses in the area.
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• **Planned Residential Neighborhood.**
Areas guided for planned residential neighborhood use are largely undeveloped areas that the City envisions will develop into residential neighborhoods by 2040. These neighborhoods may include a variety of housing types and densities. They may also include parks, small-scale institutions, and neighborhood commercial uses in key areas.

The undeveloped land east of Saint Paul Avenue is an example of an area that the Land Use Plan guides for planned residential neighborhood (see photo below). This area will likely develop with a variety of housing types, parks, and perhaps small-scale institutional uses. Notably, the Land Use Plan does not envision that industrial or major commercial uses will develop in this area. Rather than Land Use Plan identifying specific areas for different types and densities of housing in the area, the planned residential neighborhood designation provides flexibility in how the residential area will develop. When the property owners are interested in exploring development options for this area, the City, property owners, and developers will coordinate on the development plans and the appropriate zoning for the area.

• **Commercial/Residential Mixed Use.**
Areas guided for commercial/residential use are generally adjacent to arterial or collector roads. Some areas have a mixture of existing commercial and residential uses (like the 4th Street NW/State Highway 60 corridor). In some cases, existing residential uses may transition to commercial uses (see photo below).
In other cases, an existing commercial use could transition to a residential use. For example, the former Farmer Seed and Nursery use at 818 4th Street NW could transition to a commercial/residential mixed use with commercial uses at street level and residential uses above (see photo below). In general, the City envisions that areas adjacent to arterial or collector roads will develop (or redevelop) into commercial areas that may have residential above the street level. The City envisions the areas further away from the arterial or collector road would likely have a less intense use (for example, a landscaped parking lot for a commercial use or a medium to high-density residential use).

In select areas, the Land Use Plan guides existing industrial uses for future commercial/residential mixed use. For example, the existing industrial uses east of Willow Street are near the downtown and adjacent to existing residential uses (see photo below). The City believes these industrial uses are better suited for the industrial parks adjacent to Interstate Highway 35, where minimal potential for conflicts between uses exists. Therefore, the land use plan guides this area east of Willow Street for commercial/residential mixed use. The area closest to the downtown would have the most potential for commercial use. However, most of this area would likely transition over many years to a higher density residential use.

The Land Use Plan also guides some largely undeveloped areas for future commercial/residential mixed use. Most notably, the Land Use Plan guides the area along the north side of State Highway 60, west of Interstate Highway 35 for commercial/residential mixed use (see photo below). The previous Comprehensive Plan guided this entire area for big-box commercial use. However, such a development is unlikely. Therefore, this Land Use Plan guides the area for a mix of commercial (which would likely occur near State Highway 60) and residential (which would probably happen adjacent to the Cannon River).
Existing industrial use east of Willow Street guided to transition to commercial/residential mixed use

Undeveloped area north of State Highway 60 guided for commercial/residential mixed use
Mixed use is a type of development pattern that blends two or more land uses (i.e., residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or entertainment) into one space, where those functions are to some degree physically and functionally integrated. Mixed use development may apply to a single building or to a zoning district. The mixing of uses can occur through either horizontal or vertical integration as shown below.

- **Commercial.** The Land Use Plan guides large areas of existing commercial uses along arterial roads (like State Highway 60 and Lyndale Avenue) for commercial use. Compared to the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, this Land Use Plan guides less land for exclusive commercial use. However, this plan allows commercial uses in areas guided for “commercial/residential mixed use” and “commercial/industrial mixed use.” It should also be noted that the current zoning ordinance allows residential uses in commercial districts with the issuance of a conditional use permit.

The West Faribo Mall/Walmart area is an example of an area that this plan guides for commercial use (see photo below). The City envisions that this area will support primarily commercial uses through the year 2040. However, complementary uses, for example, an institutional use or even a residential use, would be an acceptable use in an area guided
for commercial use. Nevertheless, if major mixed use development were to be proposed in an area guided for commercial use, the City should then consider amending the Land Use Plan accordingly. The Land Use Plan guides many existing retail centers in Faribault for commercial use (see photos below). The City envisions that these areas will remain commercial and will likely not include a mixture of other uses.

- **Downtown.** The vision of the community and the guiding principles of this Comprehensive Plan illustrate the importance of the downtown area to the community. Characteristics of the downtown include the following:
  
  - a cohesive concentration of historic structures
  - compact, pedestrian-oriented development that generally includes reduced or no building setbacks
  - a mix of commercial, residential, and institutional uses that may also include limited industrial uses that do not negatively affect the area
  - quality architecture and design
  - shared and public parking
  - public realm improvements, including streetscapes, parks, and public gathering areas for parades and special events.

The photo below shows the area that the Land Use Plan guides for downtown uses. The heart of the downtown area is in the vicinity of Central Avenue south of 7th Street NW. Not all development in the downtown will have historic buildings or pedestrian-oriented design (see photos below for examples of different types of existing development in the downtown). Nevertheless, the downtown is an essential and cohesive neighborhood of community importance. Large institutions (including the City Hall and Rice County buildings) are guided for institutional use, rather than downtown use. Likewise, existing parks are guided for parks.
• **Commercial/Industrial Mixed Use.** Commercial/industrial mixed use areas exist throughout the city. In most cases, commercial uses are not traditional retail or restaurant uses. Rather, commercial uses include implement dealers, office/showroom/warehouses, and similar uses (see photos below). In general, the Land Use Plan envisions that light industrial uses will be the dominant use in areas guided for commercial/industrial mixed use. However, the Land Use Plan guides some isolated existing industrial areas that are in the midst of commercial areas for commercial/industrial mixed use. In those areas, the Land Use Plan would support the current industrial use transitioning to a retail or other commercial use consistent with the surrounding area.
• **Industrial.** Areas guided for industrial use are suitable for manufacturing plants, warehouses, and similar uses. Many areas have railroad access or convenient access to Interstate Highway 35. These areas are not directly adjacent to residential areas. They are the preferred areas for industrial uses.

Some existing industrial uses are adjacent to existing residential areas. In some instances, the Land Use Plan guides those areas for another use (like commercial/residential mixed use – see photo below). The City envisions that those industrial uses would eventually relocate to an industrial park near Interstate Highway 35. In other cases, the Land Use Plan envisions that the existing industry will remain at its current location (see photo below). In those cases, the industry, the surrounding...
neighborhood, and the City should work together to minimize potential conflicts between the industry and the neighborhood.

**Institutional.** Areas guided for institutional use include existing schools, religious institutions, government buildings, the county fairgrounds, and similar uses. This Land Use Plan identifies existing institutions that have an area of 2.5 acres or more (see photo below). Existing institutional uses that have an area under 2.5 acres are guided the same as the surrounding land use (see photo below). The Land Use Plan does not identify land for future institutional uses that are anticipated to be 2.5 acres or more. Future institutional uses greater than 2.5 acres will require an amendment to this Land Use Plan.
• **City Park or Open Space.** Areas guided for City parks or open space include existing city parks and significant city open space. The City does not operate River Bend Nature Center, but the City owns the land. Therefore, the Land Use Plan guides it for City park and open space. City stormwater basins and similar City property are guided for the same use as the surrounding area. Private parks and play areas associated with multi-family residential, religious institutions, and schools are not guided for City park and open space. Private open space and land owned by the state, county, or conservancy organization is not guided for City park or open space. Refer to the City’s Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan for additional information.

• **Other Open Space or Recreation.** Areas guided for other open space or recreation include existing private golf courses, existing conservancy land, and existing county park or state open space within the city.

• **Airport.** The area guided for airport use includes private or public uses that are specifically for airport-related activities.

• **Major Utility.** Areas guided for major utility use include the City’s existing water plant, wastewater treatment plant, water reservoirs, major utility substations, and pipeline parcels.

**STAGED GROWTH PLAN**

Faribault has sufficient vacant or undeveloped land to accommodate future residential and commercial uses within the city limits through the year 2040. The City will seek first to strengthen existing development and guide new development in areas currently served by existing infrastructure, but where appropriate, allow logical and strategic staged growth in undeveloped areas if it is in the City’s best interest. Land for industrial use is becoming scarce within the city limits. Consequently, the City must identify suitable areas for future industrial development. Map 3-3: Staged Growth Plan shows staged growth areas outside of Faribault’s 2020 city limits.

Faribault does not control land use outside the city limits. Therefore, the Staged Growth Plan shows what the City envisions for land use should the areas currently outside the city limits be brought into the city. Discussions with neighboring towns helped inform the Staged Growth Plan. The City and Towns should cooperate on developing orderly annexation agreements that address the City’s anticipated growth. Orderly annexation agreements reduce the potential for conflict and encourage cooperation and collaboration.

Although the Staged Growth Plan guides most growth areas outside the current city limits for industrial use or commercial/industrial mixed use, some growth areas are not suitable for commercial or industrial development due to steep topography and other reasons. As a result, the Staged Growth Plan guides some land in the growth area for rural estate (large residential lots of ten acres or more) and agricultural use, which the City would not serve with public sewer and water. Most of the staged growth is along the Interstate Highway 35 corridor, south of State Highway 60 and north of State Highway 21. The City does not foresee the need to grow to the east before the year 2040. At present, there is sufficient vacant and undeveloped land in east
Faribault to accommodate future housing needs. The City does not envision new industrial development on the east side of the city.

The Staged Growth Plan envisions logical and orderly annexation that is contiguous to the city limits. However, the City recognizes that unique situations may result in “island” annexations, which are not adjacent to the city. The orderly annexation agreements will outline when the City annexes land. The City does not intend to extend City water and sewer to areas outside the city limits. Nevertheless, the City recognizes that in unique situations, it may consider allowing property outside the city limits to connect to City sewer and water.

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TRANSPORTATION

We must have the infrastructure to move and connect people and products.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan guides the maintenance and development of road, transit, rail, aviation, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities in Faribault. It addresses the present and future mobility, access, and safety needs of Faribault’s residents and visitors.

Faribault’s Transportation Plan:

- positions the City’s transportation system within a regional context,
- emphasizes the ability of neighborhoods to attract new families,
- supports the capacity of business districts to attract new companies, and
- enables residents to access employment centers via a variety of transportation options.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Faribault’s transportation network developed over the last century from a rail and water transportation system to a more complex surface transportation system focused on highway corridors that provide regional connections and links. Today, Faribault’s road network of more than 120 miles follows a traditional grid pattern, with many of the busiest roadways located in or leading to the central business district from Interstate Highway 35.

Road Function Classifications. Roads serve a variety of functions. Some roads maximize mobility, while others maximize access. All roads fall somewhere on the spectrum between mobility and access. The following describes the functional classification of roads in Faribault (refer to Map 4-4):

- **Principal Arterial**: Generally made up of interstate freeways and major state and county highways that connect regional centers. Their design emphasizes mobility much more than land access and, as a result, provides for the longest and highest speed trips. They typically connect only with other principal arterials and select minor arterials and major/minor collectors.

- **Minor Arterial**: Generally made up of state and county highways, county roadways, and major city streets that connect small urban areas, rural growth centers, and major activity centers. They provide supplementary connections to regional centers, and their design typically emphasizes mobility more than access. They usually connect only with other principal arterials, other minor arterials, and major/minor collectors.

- **Major/Minor Collector**: Generally made up of county highways, county roadways, and major city streets that connect rural growth centers and activity centers. They provide supplementary connections to small urban areas, and their design typically places equal emphasis on mobility and access. They usually connect with minor arterials, some principal arterials, other major/ minor collectors, and some local streets. Major collectors will typically place a slightly greater emphasis on mobility versus access when compared to minor collectors.
• **Local Streets:** Made up primarily of local city streets and township roads. They typically provide access to adjacent land parcels. As a result, they best accommodate low speed, short distance trips. They usually will connect to other local streets and major/minor collectors. Sometimes they may link to a minor arterial.

**Traffic Volumes and Problem Crash Zones.** Safety issues and concerns often correspond to areas of higher traffic volumes. Map 3-4 shows traffic volumes on select roadways. Most City streets (shown as white on the map) carry a low amount of traffic (under 100 vehicles per day).

The highest traffic volumes are associated with Interstate Highway 35, State Highway 21 (Lyndale Avenue North), State Highway 60, Rice County Highway 48 (Lyndale Avenue South), and State Highway 3. Except for Lyndale Avenue, which functions as a business route for Interstate 35, all of these roads connect Faribault to other communities and more distant destinations. Roadways that primarily move people and goods within Faribault, but also carry a significant volume of traffic, include 7th Street, Division Street, 9th Avenue SW, 30th Street NW, Prairie Avenue, Park Avenue NW, Western Avenue, and Willow Street.

Since the adoption of the previous Comprehensive Plan in 2003, the volume of traffic on the City’s major roadways has grown. Increased traffic volume on the north side of the city reflects strong employment growth in that area. It also illustrates the interrelationship between built and economic assets in the community.

**Trails and Sidewalks.** Trails and sidewalks provide pedestrians and bicyclists with an environmentally-friendly mode of transportation that offers economic, recreation, and health benefits. Faribault has an extensive trail and sidewalk system, which the City will continue to expand. In particular, the City will link isolated trails and sidewalks and strengthen trail and sidewalk connections to significant areas in the city. For example, the City will connect the White Sands Trailhead to the downtown via trails or bicycle lanes.

The City is fortunate to be at the hub of two state multi-use trails. The Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail is a 39-mile multi-use trail that connects Faribault and Mankato. The Mill Towns State Trail is partially constructed. When complete, it will connect Faribault to Northfield and eventually to Red Wing. There are also concept plans to develop the Wildflower State Trail that would connect Faribault and Owatonna. However, the development of the trail would depend on the abandonment of an existing rail line, which appears to be unlikely, at least in the near future. Nevertheless, Faribault is uniquely situated to be a significant trail hub.

Refer to the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan for additional inventory and analysis of the existing trails and sidewalks in Faribault.
Map 3-4: Road function classifications, traffic volumes, and high-frequency crash areas
Transit and Accessibility. Hiawathaland Transit provides transit service in Faribault. Two fixed routes (the Red Route and the Blue Route) connect users to major destinations, including the downtown area, Faribault High School, South Central Community College, District One Hospital, Jennie-O Turkey Store, Hy-Vee, and the Faribo West Mall Area (see Map 3-5). Both routes converge in the downtown with the Blue Route primarily serving neighborhoods north of 4th Street and the Red Route serving neighborhoods south of 4th Street and east of the Straight River (see route map below). In addition to the two fixed routes, dial-a-ride service is also available.

Transit provides economic benefits by allowing those without a car an option to access places of employment. Hiawathaland Transit works with local employers to coordinate transit service with work shifts. Transit also provides social benefits by giving those who do not have a vehicle or are unable to drive with an option to access healthcare facilities, grocery stores, and support services and programs.

The City has strived and will continue to strive to make Faribault accessible to all people. Faribault has provided curb cuts, ramps, and other accessibility accommodations. Still, the City has more work to do. Compared to other Minnesota cities, Faribault has a higher percentage of residents with disabilities. Also, as the Faribault’s population continues to age, the need to ensure universal accessibility will grow.
Aviation. The Faribault Municipal Airport (FBL) is west of the intersection of State Highway 21 and Interstate 35. The airport has a 4,300-foot paved runway and a 2,300-foot turf, crosswind runway. Roughly 65 aircraft are based at the airport.

The airport’s strategic location offers several benefits:

- It is outside of the Metropolitan Airport Commission (MAC) territory;
- It has excellent access to Interstate 35 and a nearby business park; and
- There are opportunities to develop supportive uses nearby.

In 2016, the City adopted a master plan for the Faribault Municipal Airport. Based on forecasted demand for the facility, the Plan recommends lengthening the primary runway to accommodate more traffic and larger aircraft. It also recommends additional private hangar development, extra T-hangar space for the increase in based aircraft, and expanded apron area to accommodate tie-down spaces for aircraft parking. The Master Plan identifies possible property acquisitions and the realignment of Canby Avenue as needed to extend the primary runway. The airport is an essential component of the City’s Transportation Plan that provides Faribault with economic benefits and recreational opportunities.

Rail. Two active railroads serve Faribault. The Class I Union Pacific line runs north-south through Faribault along the Straight and Cannon rivers. According to the Minnesota Department of Transportation, this line carries approximately 11 freight trains per day.

Progressive Rail (a class III operator) operates the Canadian Pacific Railway line, which also runs north-south through Faribault, roughly one mile west of downtown. It runs intermittently and serves local users that want to connect to the Union Pacific line just north of Faribault. Therefore, this line does provide economic benefits to the community.

Like many communities, passenger trains no longer serve Faribault. Although passenger rail service is unlikely in the near future, Faribault has participated in preliminary discussions regarding the possibility of passenger service. The City will continue to participate in conversations as warranted.

Several rail lines in Faribault have been converted to multi-use trails. Significant segments of the Canadian Pacific Railway line in Faribault have received little to no use in recent years. If the railroad abandons portions of the line, the City strongly supports converting the track into a multi-
use trail. However, in 2019, the Railway improved the line in anticipation of future rail use. The City will continue to monitor the situation. If the rail use does not materialize, the City will continue to advocate for the conversion of the rail to a multi-use trail.

**Emerging Transportation Trends.** Private, human-operated automobiles powered by an internal combustion engine have been the overwhelmingly dominant mode of transportation since World War II. However, emerging technological innovations and social trends may change this dynamic as described below. The City must continue to monitor and respond to these trends.

- **Ridesharing Services.** Ridesharing services, which operate in many large metropolitan areas, are exploring how to provide services to small cities. These services may alter the need for car ownership and change how roadways and parking lots function due to increased levels of drop-off and pick-up activity. Faribault should continue to monitor the ridesharing service movement and respond accordingly.

- **Electric Vehicles.** As longer battery life becomes economically viable, electric-powered vehicles will become more prevalent. As a result, businesses and buildings oriented around the maintenance of internal combustion engines (such as gas stations) may need to evolve. Also, the City must plan for the infrastructure necessary to support electric vehicles.

  Between 2017 and 2018, the City conducted a detailed analysis of its existing fleet vehicles. The study concluded that transitioning existing fleet vehicles to electric or electric hybrid vehicles would result in substantial economic savings and it would help reduce the City’s greenhouse gas contributions. In 2019, the City replaced two existing gas-powered vehicles with a fully-electric car and a hybrid vehicle. In the coming years, the City will continue to transition its fleet to electric vehicles as conditions warrant.

  Due to Faribault’s location on Interstate Highway 35, the State of Minnesota has identified Faribault as a critical location for electric vehicle charging stations to serve the needs of travelers. Charging stations can attract travelers to the city where they can visit Faribault restaurants and shops while they charge their vehicles.
• **Autonomous Vehicles.** Fully automated self-driving vehicles may not be the dominant form of transportation for many years, if at all. However, newer vehicles are becoming more automated. Increased levels of automation may allow drivers to take on other activities during commutes, which could result in the willingness to accept longer commute times. Also, as automated ridesharing services become pervasive, less off-street parking will be needed.

• **Alternative Modes of Transportation.** Walking and bicycling are essential modes of transportation, especially for those without the means or desire to own or the ability to operate a motor vehicle. However, with increased awareness of the benefits of physical activity and concerns about how motor vehicles can impact the environment, the demand for more safe and accessible walking and biking facilities has increased. Related to this has been the recent growth in rented electric scooters in larger metro cities. They use a small amount of electricity and allow the user to reach destinations within a distance (less than two miles) very quickly and without significant physical exertion.

**TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVE AND POLICIES**

The following transportation objective is a specific, measurable, intermediate end that is achievable and marks progress toward the built assets goal. The following transportation policies are actions to accomplish the stated objective.

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**Transportation Objective and Policies**

**Objective 1.2:** Develop and maintain a comprehensive, multi-modal transportation system that supports the City’s goals and objectives.

**Policy 1.2.A:** Ensure the transportation system supports Faribault’s economy by adequately serving existing and planned uses in the community.

**Policy 1.2.B:** Maximize the safety of the transportation system and, where feasible, integrate pedestrian, bicycle, and other healthy, non-motorized modes of transportation into the City’s transportation system.

**Policy 1.2.C:** Enhance the aesthetic and wayfinding qualities of the transportation system.

**BA-Policy 1.2.D:** Develop and maintain the transportation system based on principles of sustainability.

**BA-Policy 1.2.E:** Stay abreast of transportation trends and changes and coordinate with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Rice County, and the private sector on anticipated changes and enhancements to the transportation system.
TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Faribault’s Transportation Plan promotes a comprehensive, multi-modal transportation system that respects the natural environment and provides economic and social benefits:

- It offers efficient and cost-effective options to transport people and goods to and from businesses, industries, and other locations. It also promotes tourism related to the transportation system.
- It respects the natural environment by providing alternative modes of transportation that do not depend on internal combustion engines. It also promotes roads, trails, parking lots, and other transportation improvements that have minimal adverse impacts on the natural environment.
- It provides recreation trails and attractive roads and entrances that help enhance the overall quality of life in Faribault.

The remainder of this section provides an overview of the Transportation Plan.

Road System Plan. The following provides an overview of Faribault’s road system and parking.

- **Highway System.** The highway system is the primary means of transporting people and goods to, from, and within the city. The City works closely with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and Rice County, who have authority over the highways. Although MnDOT and Rice County have no significant highway improvements planned in the near future, the City should continue to participate in long-range discussions regarding potential highway improvements as discussed below (see Map 3-6):

  Potential Interstate Highway 35 and County Road 9 Interchange. MnDOT has no plans for an interchange at Interstate Highway 35 and County Road 9 (see photo). However, some people in Faribault and Rice County are in favor of the interchange. They believe the interchange is necessary to support existing industrial development and spur additional industrial growth in the area. The City will continue to be an active participant in discussions about the possibility of developing the interchange.
Map 3-6: Potential road system improvements
Potential Improvements to the Existing Interstate Highway 35 and State Highway 21 Interchange. The City supports a new exit ramp for southbound travelers on Interstate Highway 35 who want to head west on State Highway 21. This ramp would eliminate an existing difficult left turn at the end of the current exit ramp. It would also provide a safer and more convenient route for trucks accessing industries on the west side of Interstate Highway 35. (see photo).

Potential Improvements to the Existing Interstate Highway 35 and County Road 48 Interchange. The existing interchange at Interstate Highway 35 and County Road 48 is a partial interchange that does not provide a northbound on-ramp to Interstate Highway 35. Although MnDOT has no plans for a full interchange at this site, there are concept plans for the interchange. The interchange would allow residents in south Faribault easier access to northbound I-35. It could also facilitate future industrial development on the west side of I-35. As an alternative to a full interchange in this location, some have suggested it could be more advantageous and feasible to develop a new, full interchange at I-35 and County Road 39, south of Faribault.

- **County and City Roads.** As development conditions warrant, the City and Rice County will continue to explore necessary road improvements. Refer to Map 3-4 and Map 3-5 for the location of potential road improvements. There are two important areas where the City anticipates possible road improvements (see image below):

  1. In 2020, the City adopted an official map that identifies the location for the extension of East View Drive at 14th Street NE to State Highway 3 at 30th Street NW. Eventually, this future road extension would connect to State Highway 60 at the eastern border of the city. This new road would help facilitate east-west traffic through the city.
2. The Staged Growth Plan envisions future industrial growth south of State Highway 60 and west of Interstate Highway 35, but the existing road system is not suitable for significant industrial development. Conceptually, the City is planning a new road from County Road 48 (just north of the CR 48 and I-35 interchange) to Western Avenue to the west. Then from Western Avenue, a new road would connect to Canby Avenue still further west. This new road would help facilitate future industrial development in this area.

The City will prepare detailed road studies as conditions warrant.

- **Wayfinding and Beautification.** The first impression of Faribault that many people have of Faribault is from the road system. A safe and attractive road system with clear wayfinding contributes to a positive image of the community. Working with others, the City will strive to develop and implement a major road corridor wayfinding and beautification plan that leads people to the downtown and other key areas in Faribault. In 2019, MnDOT and the City made substantial improvements to the 4th Street NW/Highway 60 corridor from State Highway 21 to the downtown (see photo).
• **Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School.** Complete streets are safe, environmentally-friendly, and open to all modes of transportation. Typical complete street characteristics include pedestrian walks, bicycle lanes, transit stops, wayfinding signage, lighting, green space with stormwater facilities, and sometimes public art. In general, complete streets have a narrower pavement width for vehicles than traditional streets. These narrower widths can help encourage vehicles to travel the posted speed limit and reduce stormwater runoff. The City will strive to analyze its current street design standards and, where appropriate, modify the standards to be consistent with complete street principles.

The Safe Routes to School program complements complete streets principles in that it promotes safe walking and bicycling routes to school. The City will continue to coordinate with Rice County Statewide Health Improvement Partnership and others on analyzing and implementing complete streets and safe routes to school projects where appropriate.

![Complete streets diagram](image)

• **Parking.** The City regulates the minimum amount of parking required for various land uses. However, requiring (or allowing) too much parking can create environmental concerns and additional costs. Therefore, the City will analyze its parking ordinance and amend the ordinance as needed. In particular, the City will strive to identify opportunities to minimize the environmental impact of parking lots (including the heat island effect and increased stormwater runoff). In addition, the City will continue to monitor parking needs and trends and plan accordingly. For example, the City should explore ordinances and incentives to provide electric vehicle chargers in parking lots. The City is planning to install four electric vehicle charging stations on City-owned parking lots in the downtown in 2020. The City received a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for the installation of the charging stations.
Trail and Sidewalk System Plan. The City will continue to complete existing gaps in the City’s existing trail and sidewalk system. The City will also continue to coordinate with Rice County Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) and others to develop appropriate trails and sidewalks in the city. Rice County SHIP funded a demonstration bike lane on Hulett Avenue as a means to show the vital role bike lanes can play in Faribault’s Transportation Plan (see photo). Refer to the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan for additional information regarding Faribault’s Trails and Sidewalk System Plan.

Transit and Accessibility Plan. The City will continue to support Hiawathaland Transit and will help facilitate discussions between Hiawathaland Transit, employers, and others to ensure appropriate transit routes and service times. In coordination with others, the City will strive to explore the feasibility of developing a transit hub in Faribault that could support Hiawathaland Transit, commuter bus service, rideshare programs, and interstate bus service providers. The City will strive to ensure universal accessibility for all modes of transportation.

Aviation Plan. The City acknowledges the importance of the airport to Faribault’s economy and quality of life. The City will continue to implement policies and plans of the 2016 Airport Master Plan.

Railroad Plan. The City will continue to support freight train service in Faribault by guiding appropriate places along existing rail lines for industrial uses that can benefit from the rail service. If a railroad chooses to abandon a line, the City will support converting the rail to a multi-use trail where appropriate. The City will participate in future discussions (if any) regarding passenger rail service to Faribault and other cities.

Housing

We must ensure that our residents have access to quality and affordable housing.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan evaluates Faribault’s existing housing stock. It also provides a plan to address Faribault’s housing needs based on household and population projections. The City’s residential land uses account for nearly one-quarter of the City’s current area, by far the most abundant land use in Faribault. A diverse housing stock with access to open space and essential goods and services is vital to a healthy, sustainable, and resilient community. A diverse housing stock:

- protects the community’s tax base against market fluctuations,
- helps the economy by assisting Faribault businesses with employee attraction and retention,
- provides options for existing residents to remain in the community should their life circumstances, and

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• offers future residents access to the same amenities and levels of service that current residents have come to expect and appreciate.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

The following provides an inventory and analysis of the percentage, types, tenure, age, and affordability of housing that exist in Faribault.

Type of Housing. A diverse housing stock provides residents with options that can best meet their needs as they shift from one life stage to another. Too many homes of a particular style or type can result in an imbalanced market and thus create a barrier for households to relocate to Faribault or for existing households to remain in the community when their life circumstances change. Table 3-B compares the number and percentage of housing types in Faribault and the state. Primary findings include the following:

• The percentage of single-family detached housing in Faribault (61.4%) is below that of the state (67.2%);
• The percentage of single-family attached housing in Faribault (6.1%) is below that of the state (7.4%)
• The percentage of two or more-unit housing in Faribault (26.5%) is above that of the state (22.2%)
• The percentage of mobile homes in Faribault (6.1%) is above that of the state (3.3%).

The reasons that Faribault has a high percentage of mobile homes are discussed later in this section. From roughly 2015 to 2020, City Staff noted that residents and employers desire the development of additional multi-family units in the community. Subsequently, in 2019/2020, the City approved development plans for an additional roughly 300 multi-family units. Table 3-B does not include those additional units.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Housing</th>
<th>Number of Units</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number of Units</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family Detached</td>
<td>1,625,616</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
<td>5,568</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family Attached</td>
<td>178,197</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Units</td>
<td>53,312</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or 4 Units</td>
<td>50,352</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9 Units</td>
<td>53,247</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19 Units</td>
<td>82,485</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 or More Units</td>
<td>296,688</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home</td>
<td>80,828</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Housing Units</td>
<td>2,420,473</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>9,066</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census, 2018 American Community Survey

The photos below show examples of the different types of housing in Faribault.
Examples of housing types in Faribault

Single-Family Detached Homes (61 percent of housing stock)

Single-Family Attached Homes and Small Multi-family Buildings up to 4 Units (14 percent of housing stock)

Large Multi-family Buildings 5 Units or More (18 percent of housing stock)

Manufactured (Mobile) Homes (6 percent of housing stock)
Housing Tenure and Household Size. Communities should provide a mix of owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing. Historically, cities strived to have roughly 65-70 percent of its housing units owner-occupied. However, in recent years, the percentage of people wishing to rent is increasing. In 2018, the US Census, American Community Survey estimated that 65.7 percent of Faribault’s housing units were owner-occupied (see Table 3-C). The percent of renter-occupied housing in Faribault will likely continue to grow. Various factors correlate with whether a household owns or rents their house, such as the age of the householder, level of income, employment status, and the overall condition of the housing market. The vast majority of multi-family units in Faribault are renter-occupied. The inverse is true for single-family detached units, which are overwhelmingly owner-occupied. However, over 10 percent of single-family homes are rental units.

Owner-occupied housing has a larger average household size in comparison to renter-occupied housing. However, in recent years, City Staff has noted strong demand for renter-occupied units that can accommodate large households. The average household size for renter-occupied housing in Faribault will likely increase.

Table 3-C: Occupied Housing Tenure -2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Average Household</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Average Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner-Occupied</td>
<td>1,551,290</td>
<td>71.6%</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>5,690</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter-Occupied</td>
<td>616,511</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2,974</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census, 2018 American Community Survey

Vacancies. An appropriate percentage of vacancies in the housing market provides housing choices and promotes housing affordability. Although the preferred vacancy rate can vary from community to community, Faribault strives to have a vacancy rate of around 5-8 percent.

In 2017, the City hired a consultant to conduct a vacancy rate study of renter-occupied housing. The study found that renter-occupied housing in Faribault had a vacancy rate of roughly 0.8 percent, which is extremely low. As a result of that study, the City put extra efforts into attracting additional multi-family residential development. Between 2018 and 2020, the City approved the construction of roughly 300 additional multi-family residential units. The City will conduct a study in 2020 to determine the market to develop other multi-family units above the approved 300 additional units. Although the 2017 vacancy study did not identify the vacancy rate in owner-occupied housing units, it appears that the owner-occupied housing vacancy rate was below four percent in 2017.

In short, Faribault’s vacancy rate from roughly 2015 into 2020, was too low. Major employers expressed concern about how the lack of available housing in Faribault negatively impacted the employer’s ability to attract new employees. Therefore, the City of Faribault must continue to monitor vacancy rates and work with developers and others to provide additional housing options in Faribault as conditions warrant.
**Housing Value and Affordability.** Housing is typically the costliest household expense, often capturing 30 percent or more of a household’s budget. High housing costs can hinder attracting workers to the community. Furthermore, high housing costs can place substantial burdens on households by reducing resources for other necessities, such as healthcare, education, childcare, and transportation. Figures 3-A and 3-B below illustrate how the cost of for-sale and rental housing has risen sharply in recent years. In 2010, the median home sale price was less than 2½ times the median household income. By 2017 that ratio had grown to more than 3½ times the median household income.

![Figure 3-A: Ration of median home sales price to median household income](US Census, 2017 American Community Survey)

![Figure 3-B: Median monthly rent for market rate rental housing](US Census 2017 American Community Survey)

The lack of affordable housing is a significant issue for many people in Faribault and across the United States. As a general rule, households should pay no more than 30% of their income towards housing costs, including utilities, insurance, and the like. The 2018 American Community Survey estimated that 21.1 percent of households in owner-occupied housing units in Faribault paid 30% or more of their monthly household income towards their housing. Roughly, 52% of households in renter-occupied housing units paid 30% or more of their monthly household income towards their housing (up from 47.7 percent in 2010).

As provided in state law, the Faribault Housing and Redevelopment Authority administers a variety of housing programs and facilities that help address housing affordability issues. The City also coordinates with other programs and organizations including the state tax credit program, the federal housing voucher program, Habitat for Humanity, and others.

Map 3-7 shows the distribution of single-family detached and attached homes according to their assessed market value. There is a strong correlation between the age of a house and its assessed market value. Nevertheless, there are areas with relatively newer homes in which the assessed market value is considered affordable. These homes tend to be in areas with attached housing or manufactured homes on individually-owned lots.
Map 3-7: Estimated market value of single-family detached and attached homes
**Age and Maintenance of Housing.** The age of housing is often a good proxy for its overall condition and value. Older homes require more-frequent and costlier repairs, and their size and design may not match current cultural or societal preferences. Although older housing stock can have aesthetic and historical value, if the homes are not well-maintained, they may decline in value and contribute to neighborhood blight. Therefore, many communities closely track the condition of their older housing stock and support programs that aid homeowners in their upkeep and overall maintenance.

Over 60% of Faribault's housing stock is more than 40 years old, which is not surprising due to the age of the community. However, houses over 40 years old often need roof, furnace, window, and siding repairs or replacements. Map 3-7 shows the location of existing houses based on age. The oldest houses are concentrated near the downtown area.

The Faribault Housing and Redevelopment Authority has a variety programs to address housing maintenance, including an owner-occupied housing rehab program and a mobile home buyout program. The City also works with property owners to ensure compliance with the property maintenance code.

**Subsidized and Special Needs Housing.** A 2012 Rice County Housing Study identified 296 subsidized housing units in 14 facilities in Faribault. Many units serve very low-income people and charge rent based on 30% of the tenant’s household income. Senior and disabled units account for 195 of the 296 subsidized units. There is a long waitlist for people wanting to live in a City-managed residential complex.

Residential care facilities, located throughout Faribault, provide options for those who need various levels of care. The City allows accessory dwelling units, which allows a single-family residence to construct an accessory dwelling onsite to house an elderly parent or perhaps provide a low-cost housing option for an adult child or someone that can help care for the resident in the primary dwelling.

**Housing in the Downtown.** The Journey to 2040 Downtown Master Plan proposes new standalone housing at the periphery of the downtown and new housing above the ground floor in existing building in the downtown. Housing in the downtown can help support downtown businesses and revitalize the downtown. Refer to the Downtown Master Plan for additional information.
**Housing Objective and Policies**

The following housing objective is a specific, measurable, intermediate end that is achievable and marks progress toward the built assets goal. The following housing policies are actions to accomplish the stated objective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Objective and Policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 1.3:</strong> Ensure the City’s supply of housing meets the current and future needs of the community.</td>
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<td><strong>Policy 1.3.A:</strong> Ensure a range of housing options to meet the needs of Faribault, including housing for all income levels, special needs, and stages of life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy 1.3.B:</strong> Ensure that Faribault’s housing stock is safe, attractive, and well-maintained.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Housing Plan**

The Housing Plan expands on the housing issues, objective, and policies discussed above. General steps that the City will take to address housing issues include the following:

- Guide and zone property to address housing needs;
- Ensure subdivision regulations and housing standards encourage affordable and well-maintained housing;
- Promote housing assistance programs; and
- Encourage public/private partnerships to assist first time home buyers and those with special housing needs.

**Maintenance of Existing Housing.** With over 60% of Faribault’s housing over 40 years old, property owners must conduct ongoing property maintenance. The City will continue to enforce the property maintenance code and continue to require rental licenses and inspections as a means to address property maintenance concerns before they become significant problems. The City’s Housing and Redevelopment Authority will continue to provide resources and tools that help property owners maintain their housing.

**Infill Housing Opportunities.** Housing infill is a cost-effective way of providing new housing because the infrastructure (roads, sewer, and water) already exist. In 2020, Faribault had roughly 400 undeveloped residential lots adjacent to existing roads, sewer, and water that could be developed (see Existing Land Use Map). In addition to vacant residential lots in the city, there are many existing houses on large residential lots that the property owner could subdivide for future infill housing.

**Planned Residential Neighborhoods.** Faribault will expand opportunities to increase the housing supply in a way that meets changing needs and desires. This means allowing more housing options, especially in areas that currently lack housing choice and in areas with access to transit, employment, and goods and services. It also means creating and expanding new
resources and tools to produce and preserve affordable housing, to minimize the displacement of existing residents, and to ensure housing is maintained to promote health and safety.

Strategies that are meant to increase the supply of housing include reducing the barriers to construction by creating more flexible zoning, actively promote housing in redevelopment areas, and streamline the approval process, where feasible. Increasing the supply can also be achieved by helping homeowners to maintain and/or modernize older properties through home improvement programs and making zoning more amenable to reinvestment.

**PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE**

*We must provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and leisure.*

Parks are a source of civic identity and pride. They contribute to the physical, economic, environmental, and social health of the community. The following summarizes the primary findings of the Journey to 2040 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan as it relates to this Comprehensive Plan. Refer to the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan for additional information.

**INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

The following provides a general inventory and analysis of existing parks, trails, and open space in Faribault. Refer to the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan that the City prepared as part of the Journey to 2040 process for additional information.

**Overview of Existing Parks.** Faribault has 39 parks with a total area of roughly 365 acres, which includes mini parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, special use parks, and linear parks. Faribault has more park land per capita than the national average. The City also has two recreation centers: Washington Recreation Center and the Faribault Community Center. The above calculation does not include River Bend Nature Center, but the City owns the land, which the Nature Center maintains. The above park calculation also does not include unprogrammed open space. Open space is discussed later in this section.

The City identifies ten park service areas in the community. The park service areas are essentially neighborhoods that are bounded by major roads and rivers. Within each park service area, the City strives to provide parks and recreations opportunities that meet the needs of residents in the area. Each park service area includes existing parks and recreation areas that residents can access without having to cross major roads or go around natural barriers like rivers. However, as discussed in the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan, some areas should have additional parks and recreation facilities. Refer to Map 3-8 for the location of the existing parks and park service areas.

Although Faribault’s parks are in good condition, the City is working to ensure that parks and park facilities are accessible to all people and that park equipment is safe and up to date. The City also recognizes that as recreation needs evolve, the park facilities must also evolve to meet the changing demands.

In addition to City parks, schools and private entities offer recreation opportunities to Faribault residents and visitors. Where mutually beneficial, the City partners with others on recreation
facilities. For example, the City does not own tennis courts, but the City and school district have an agreement that allows the public to use the school district tennis courts when the school district is not using them. Refer to Map 3-8 for the location of existing school or other recreation areas in the community.

**Overview of Existing Trails.** Trails provide pedestrians and bicyclists with an environmentally-friendly mode of transportation that offers economic, recreation, and health benefits. Faribault has an extensive trail system, which the City intends to expand (see Map 3-9). In particular, the City will link isolated trails and sidewalks and strengthen trail and sidewalk connections to significant areas in the city. For example, the City will connect the White Sands Trailhead to the downtown via trails or bicycle lanes.

The City is fortunate to be at the hub of two state multi-use trails. The Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail is a 39-mile multi-use trail that connects Faribault and Mankato. The Mill Towns State Trail is partially constructed. When complete, it will connect Faribault to Northfield and eventually to Red Wing. There are also concept plans to develop the Wildflower State Trail that would connect Faribault and Owatonna. However, the development of the trail would depend on the abandonment of an existing rail line, which appears to be unlikely, at least in the near future. Nevertheless, Faribault is uniquely situated to be a significant trail hub.

**Overview of Existing Open Space.** The City owns open space throughout the community. The City does not program these spaces for specific recreation use. Still, the open space provides visual and environmental benefits. The Natural Assets chapter of the Comprehensive Plan provides additional information regarding the City’s open spaces.

**PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE OBJECTIVE AND POLICIES**

The following parks, trails, and open space objective is a specific, measurable, intermediate end that is achievable and marks progress toward the built assets goal. The following policies are actions to accomplish the stated objective.

**Parks, Trails, and Open Space Objective and Policies**

**Objective 1.4:** Provide functional, attractive, safe, and accessible parks, trails, and open space that reflect Faribault’s high quality of life and the community’s commitment to live in harmony with nature.

- **Policy 1.4.A:** Promote broad awareness and understanding of the importance of parks, trails, and open space as they relate to Faribault’s quality of life, economy, and natural assets.

- **Policy 1.4.B:** Ensure that Faribault’s parks, trails, and open space meet the diverse passive and active recreation needs of all in the community, regardless of age, abilities, culture, and other factors.

- **Policy 1.4.C:** Ensure fair and equitable distribution of parks, trails, and open space in the city.

- **Policy 1.4.D:** Coordinate or partner with others to address community and regional parks, trails, and open space needs that the City cannot exclusively meet.

- **Policy 1.4.E:** Develop and maintain parks, trails, and open space based on principles of sustainability.
The Journey to 2040 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan also includes the following guiding principles:

- Diversify the park facilities to address the needs of the community;
- Strengthen connections to and between parks, trails, and open space in the community;
- Ensure that parks, trails, and open space are universally accessible;
- Incorporate meaningful gathering spaces for people within the parks, trails, and open space system;
- Enhance opportunities for people to experience nature – especially Faribault’s rivers; and
- Embed principles of sustainability into the design, operation, and maintenance of Faribault’s parks, trails, and open space

**PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN**

The Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan expands on the parks, trails, and open space issues, objective, and policies described above.

**Promote awareness and understanding.** As stated in several places throughout this Comprehensive Plan, the community is proud of its parks, trails, and open spaces. Yet, Faribault’s parks, trails, and open space require regular maintenance and improvements. As funding becomes more challenging, the need grows to ensure the community has a deep awareness and understanding of many values that parks, trails, and open space provide. The City will strive to ensure that the community has a solid understanding of the costs and benefits of the park system to help inform the level of support needed to maintain and improve the park system.

**Meet the diverse needs and desires of the community.** As the demographics and recreation needs of Faribault change, the City will ensure Faribault’s park system remains relevant. For example, interest in pickleball has grown in recent years. Consequently, the City has developed pickleball courts and programs to accommodate the increased interest in the sport. The City will continue to ensure open communication with all stakeholders to ensure the park system meets the diverse needs of the community.

**Ensure fair and equitable access.** As development and redevelopment occur, the City will strive to ensure all areas in Faribault have fair and equitable access to the park system. In addition, the City will continue to improve the accessibility of the park system to all people in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Cooperate with others.** The City will continue to cooperate with Rice County, the State of Minnesota, schools, and others on parks, trails, and open space. All parties can benefit by cooperating with one another. For example, the City does not have tennis courts because it is has an agreement with the school district to allow public use of the school district’s courts. This agreement benefits the school district and the City.

**Apply principles of sustainability.** The City will model principles of sustainability in the design, development, and maintenance of the park system. Principles of sustainability ensure that the parks are environmentally sound, socially just, and economically responsible.
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Map 3-8: Existing and Planned Parks
Map 3-9: Existing and Planned Trails
COMMUNITY FACILITIES
We must provide facilities that serve the fundamental needs of the community.

Community facilities contribute to Faribault’s quality of life by housing government and nonprofit services and activities. Community facilities are essential for several reasons:

- They provide critical services;
- They provide employment opportunities;
- They serve residents and visitors;
- They often celebrate community heritage and identity;
- They may influence the pattern of traffic and adjacent land use;
- They grow and evolve along with the community; and
- They can model best practices, such as energy conservation and quality design.

The following provides an overview of the significant community facilities in Faribault. It also describes policies and plans to develop and maintain the City's facilities.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Map 3-10 displays the location of Faribault’s most prominent community facilities. Many government facilities are in or near downtown Faribault, including the following:

- Faribault City Hall,
- Faribault Police Station,
- Buckham Community Library,
- Buckham West Community and Senior Center,
- Rice County Courthouse,
- Rice County Government Service Building, and
- Rice County Law Enforcement Center.

Some community facilities require significant space or involve activities that are not appropriate for residential or commercial locations. These facilities include, but are not limited to, the Faribault Public Works Facility, the Faribault Municipal Airport, the Faribault Water Reclamation Facility, Rice County Fairgrounds, and the Rice County Department of Transportation.

Educational facilities are distributed throughout the City, especially in residential areas, where students have the opportunity to walk to the schools. Prominent healthcare facilities are concentrated on the east side of Faribault close to District One Hospital, but healthcare facilities are scattered throughout the community.

While City facilities are adequate to serve the community’s existing needs, as the City grows, the need for expanded or new community facilities will likely grow.
COMMUNITY FACILITIES OBJECTIVE AND POLICIES

The following community facilities objective is a specific, measurable, intermediate end that is achievable and marks progress toward the built assets goal. The following policies are actions to accomplish the stated objective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Facilities Objective and Policies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 1.5:</strong> Develop and maintain community facilities that support the City’s goals and objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy 1.5.A:</strong> Ensure that all community facilities are designed for current and future needs, accessible to all, equitably distributed throughout the community, and are safe and welcoming places for all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy 1.5.B:</strong> Work with others in the public and private sectors to share facilities and services when mutually beneficial.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

The following highlights actions the City will take to ensure its facilities continue to meet the needs and desires of the community.

**Maintenance of Existing Community Facilities.** The City will maintain its facilities to ensure that they are safe, accessible, and welcoming to all people. The City will also work to ensure that facilities operate efficiently and in a cost-effective manner. To that end, the City will implement ways to conserve energy. Where appropriate, the City may install solar panels or other technologies to reduce energy costs. Also, where feasible, the City will install low-maintenance landscapes as a means to reduce maintenance costs and enhance the natural environment.

**Development of New Community Facilities.** As the City continues to grow, the City will analyze the need to develop an additional fire station. If industrial uses continue to expand to the north, the City may consider developing a satellite fire station in the general area shown on Map 3-10.

The City’s community center could use additional area for indoor activities. However, the existing community center has limited area for growth. Consequently, the City will consider opportunities to potentially build a new community center and repurpose the existing community center. See Map 3-10 for possible locations for a new community center. Alternatively, the City could build a new community center and maintain the existing center as well. As a part of this discussion, the City will also analyze the costs and benefits of maintaining or selling Washington Recreation Center.

**Cooperation with Other Public and Private Facilities.** The City will continue to work with Rice County, the schools, and others to ensure that they have adequate land in the city to accommodate their needs. In addition, the City will continue to coordinate with others in mutually beneficial ways to reduce costs and improve efficiency. For example, the City will continue to share athletic facilities where feasible.
Map 3-10: Existing and Planned Community Facilities
Utilities and Energy

We must ensure our residents, businesses, and industries have access to safe and cost-effective utilities and energy.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan provides an overview of Faribault’s public utilities – primarily the City’s sewer and water system. More specifically, this section:

- provides an inventory of public utilities,
- identifies utility improvements needed to accommodate growth over the next 20 years,
- outlines policies to guide the timing of utility extensions in areas of planned growth, and
- provides the planning framework for more detailed water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer improvements.

Inventory and Analysis

The City of Faribault provides municipal water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater systems. The City operates and maintains these systems as a public service through associated use and access fees. As a municipal utility, the City operates these systems for the benefit of its users in compliance with applicable state and federal standards. The City has prepared and implemented plans to guide system improvements and accommodate changing needs. These plans continue to guide utility development that meets growth needs and adheres to all applicable standards.

Xcel Energy and Steele-Waseca Cooperative provide electric service to Faribault properties. Xcel Energy provides gas service. There are multiple Internet and wireless providers in Faribault.

Water System. The City of Faribault owns and operates a municipal water system that provides service to the urbanized portions of the community. The Faribault water system was initially installed in 1883 and consisted of a well, reservoir, and a small distribution system. As the city has grown, the system has expanded to meet its needs.

The City is enhancing the existing water system. The system can handle forecasted household growth over the next 40 years. However, the City must construct a water tower to accommodate planned commercial-industrial development along the Interstate 35 corridor north of Lyndale Avenue. The City intends to construct the new tower in the early 2020s at the site shown on Map 3-11.
Sanitary Sewer System. Faribault’s water reclamation facility, also known as the wastewater treatment facility, is in the northern part of the City near the confluence of the Cannon and Straight Rivers. Similar to the water system, the sanitary sewer system does not have significant deficiencies. The facility’s existing capacity is sufficient to handle growth projected throughout the current planning period.

Stormwater System. Like many cities of Faribault’s age, portions of the City’s stormwater system are over 100 hundred years old. The City regularly evaluates and, where needed, improves the oldest parts of its system. The City implements best practices in the design of low-impact stormwater systems.

Energy. The City developed an Energy Action Plan in consultation with Xcel Energy’s Partners in Energy Program. The City is working to reduce energy consumption and source clean and renewable sources of energy. A portion of the City’s electrical use is provided through the community solar program. The City continues to analyze ways to reduce energy use and save money, including analyzing the costs and benefits associated with onsite solar.

Utilities and Energy Objective and Policies

The following utilities objective is a specific, measurable, intermediate end that is achievable and marks progress toward the built assets goal. The following policies are actions to accomplish the stated objective.

Utilities and Energy Objective and Policies

Objective 1.6: Provide high quality municipal utilities that minimize energy use and attract businesses and residents to Faribault.

Policy 1.6.A: Provide safe and cost-effective municipal utilities and services to existing users and plan for appropriate capital expenditures for necessary improvements.

Policy 1.6.B: Guide the extension of municipal services and utilities in a way that is appropriate for increased density and commercial and industrial uses.

Policy 1.6.C: Maximize opportunities for City facilities and operations to conserve energy and use or generate clean and renewable forms of energy in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Foster similar actions throughout the community as a means to strengthen our economy and reduce our carbon footprint.

Policy 1.6.D: Work to ensure Faribault has Internet access at speeds and costs that allow businesses, industries, and residents to thrive.
UTILITIES AND ENERGY PLAN

The Utilities and Energy Plan promotes safe, reliable, environmentally responsible, and cost-effective delivery of utilities and energy to properties in Faribault. This section summarizes and expands on the issues, objective, and policies discussed above.

City Utilities. The City’s water and waste water treatment plant are up-to-date and have capacity to serve the current and anticipated needs of the community through the year 2040. However, the City will continue to maintain, repair, and upgrade water and sewer lines as needed. In particular, the City will continue to reduce inflow and infiltration related to the City’s waste water. The City will promote development and redevelopment in areas of the city that are currently served by public utilities and streets. However, the City will allow logical and sequential outward expansion of public utilities in accordance with the City’s Staged Growth Plan.

The City will continue its efforts to handle stormwater and runoff in an environmentally responsible manner. The City will continue to ensure that new developments, which meet specified criteria, comply with stormwater management practices. In addition, the City will strive to improve existing deficiencies in the stormwater system where feasible.

City Energy Use. The City will continue to implement its Energy Action Plan, which will help save the City money and reduce the City’s impact on climate and the natural environment. The City will also continue its efforts to facilitate efforts with electric and gas providers to help property owners conserve energy.