

CITY OF NORTH MANKATO MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Council
John Harrenstein, City Administrator
Michael Fischer, City Planner

From: Kelsey Johnson, AICP, Comprehensive Plan Consultant Planner
Addison Lewis, Comprehensive Plan Consultant Planner

Date: March 11, 2014

WSB Project No. 02271-000

Request: Discussion on the Impacts of Future Land Use Changes as it Relates to the Comprehensive Plan

OVERVIEW

City governments provide many important services, but one function stands apart in its impact on future generations the authority to engage in planning and zoning of the community. Adoption and enforcement of comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances are effective tools current officials can utilize to influence the future layout and landscape of a city for many years to come.

Land Use

The City of North Mankato is in the process of developing its first comprehensive plan. In essence, a comprehensive plan is a broad expression of the community's vision for the future and a strategic map to reach that vision. Comprehensive planning is not mandatory in cities outside the seven-county metropolitan area, however, it is an important tool for cities to guide future development of land to ensure a safe, pleasant, and economical environment for residential, commercial, industrial, and public activities and to cast a vision for the community.

At its core, comprehensive planning is a relatively straightforward three-step process:

1. First, a community takes stock of where it is today (Existing Land Use Map);
2. Second, a community generates a shared vision and goals for what the city will be like in the future (Future Land Use Map); and
3. Third, but not least, the community develops a set of specific objectives and policies to achieve that vision over time (the Comprehensive Plan).

An important part of a comprehensive plan is the creation of a "future land use map". The future land use map is also known as the "future land use plan", and is a critical component of the comprehensive plan as it sets a direction for land use policy decisions. The future land use plan reflects the community's desire for *how land is to be used in the future*. Property is guided for a variety of different land uses including various types of commercial, industrial, residential, park and open space, and institutional uses.

Zoning

State law authorizes a community zoning ordinance as a tool to implement a comprehensive plan. Zoning is a method of establishing a land use pattern by regulating the way land is used by landowners. A zoning ordinance has area standards that regulate the size and location of buildings and structures in the city. A zoning ordinance typically divides a city into various zoning districts and sets standards regulating uses in each district. These "area standards" are rules that constrain the size and location of buildings and other structures and typically include rules about building location and size, including height, width and bulk, and percentage of lot space that may be occupied, and required yards or open spaces. Other standards might be performance standards such as related to density, parking or lighting.

Zoning is typically accomplished by dividing the land in the city into different districts or zones and regulating the uses of land within each district. Generally, specific districts are set aside for residential uses, certain types of commercial uses, and various industrial uses. By creating zoning districts that separate uses, the city assures that adequate space is provided for each use and that a transition area or buffer exists between distinct and incompatible uses.

Land Use vs. Zoning and Non-conforming Uses

In summary, the Future Land Use Map is the policy framework for setting a vision for the future development of a community. The Zoning Map is the legal framework for what is allowed and prohibited on a property. The Zoning Map is the implementation tool for the Future Land Use Map.

Sometimes, the future vision that a community identifies for a particular parcel does not match its current zoning. For example, if a property is guided commercial in the Comprehensive Plan, in order to realize the city's vision for that property in the long-term, a re-zoning to commercial would be in order (although not required by statute). However, re-zoning properties that have already been built-upon results in the creation of a "legal non-conforming" use. State statute protects legal non-conforming uses in the sense that they are allowed to continue indefinitely, can conduct regular repairs, maintenance to structures, and can rebuild in the event of a fire or other event. Non-conforming uses, however, may not be expanded. This means that non-conforming uses may not be enlarged through the construction of an addition or expansion to their buildings or take any action that would intensify the operations of the use on that site from a land use perspective.

In order to avoid making those uses non-conforming, the City may choose not to rezone those properties, in which case those uses would remain legal, conforming uses and may continue on with the same legal rights as they do today (may be reconstructed, expanded, etc.). Since the primary mechanism for implementing the Comprehensive Plan is the zoning ordinance, failing to rezone parcels to be consistent with the Future Land Use Map poses a challenge to implementing the vision stated in the Comp Plan.

There is still value in guiding property for the preferred land use while retaining the current zoning because it gives the city a justification for approving or denying a re-zoning in the future. The City can guide future land use for the preferred use without restricting the rights of existing businesses and property owners and still promote redevelopment in the long term.

The only exception would be in granting variances on properties where the existing zoning does not match the future land use plan. When a variance is applied for, a required finding for approval is that the variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan. If an existing use is not consistent with what the property is guided for in the future land use plan, the requested variance would not be consistent with the comprehensive plan. If the City wishes to continue to grant variances, as otherwise deemed appropriate for uses where the use is inconsistent with the future land use plan, support language must be added to the comprehensive plan stating such.

Chapter 3: Land Use & Growth Management

Introduction

The Land Use & Growth Management Chapter is a roadmap that helps guide City officials and staff on how to make policy decisions related to land use and future growth. These policies may influence the type, location and density of future development within the community. This chapter is intended to result in orderly and efficient development that utilizes land efficiently and makes the most of the community's resources. It offers guidance on key initiatives for the community which is consistent with the City's vision and goals.

In this chapter is a description of existing land use patterns, as well as an overview of how the City anticipates land will be used and developed in the future. It accommodates growth and applies the desired qualities of the community.

Another important aspect of this chapter is that it also serves as the foundation for reviewing the City's Zoning Ordinances, Zoning Map, Subdivision Regulations and other implementation tools.

Implementation of the Land Use Plan produces several important implications:

- **Uses.** Every parcel is placed into a specific land use category. Each category includes a description of the type of land use or uses intended for that category. This description should match with the types and forms of development currently found in North Mankato and desired for the future.
- **Relationships.** Much like a jigsaw puzzle, the true picture comes from how each piece fits together into a whole. The Land Use Plan guides how elements of the built and natural environment come together in North Mankato. These relationships will determine how North Mankato will look, function and feel.
- **Actions.** The Land Use Plan sets the framework for public actions and investments. Utilities, streets, parks, and facilities are all influenced by the form and pace of development.

Inventory and Analysis

Existing Land Use Characteristics

Figure 3-1: Existing Land Use shows the location, amount, and types of existing land uses in the City of North Mankato in 2013. The inventory as conducted as part of this planning process reflects general development patterns and is intended for general planning purposes only. Table 3-A: Summary of Existing Land Use - 2013 summarizes the amount and type of existing land uses in North Mankato.

Insert Figure 3-1: Existing Land Use Map

Table 3-A: Summary of Existing Land Use - 2013		
Existing Land Use	Gross Acres*	Net Percent of City
Low Density Residential	1256.7	43.6%
Medium Density Residential	169.2	5.9%
High Density Residential	86.2	3.0%
Neighborhood Commercial	15.4	0.6%
General Commercial	81.8	2.8%
Light Industrial	87.5	2.8%
Heavy Industrial	298.6	10.4%
Public/Institutional	227.4	7.9%
Park and Open Space	459.2	16.0%
Vacant/Undeveloped	202.5	7.0%
TOTAL	2884.5	100%

* Gross acres of use determined by WSB & Associates, Inc. based on parcel data provided by the City of North Mankato

The following provides a general description of each of the existing land uses in North Mankato.

Low Density Residential

Low Density Residential is the largest land use within the City of North Mankato in terms of total acres, making up almost half of the City's area with 1256.7 acres or 43.6%. This land use is largely characterized by single-family homes with densities of 1 to 5 dwelling units per acre. One of the greatest strengths of the City of North Mankato is the quality and variety of its single-family homes, which helps make it such an attractive community for families. The City has an abundance of older single-family homes, mostly in Lower North, that have been well preserved and provide a classic small town feel to these neighborhoods. Alternatively there has been an abundance of new single-family and two-family home construction, mostly in Upper North, which provides a more modern style of home. Ensuring older housing stock continues to be well maintained is a priority, as is the ongoing efforts to add new housing units. This balance between old and new ensures a quality and variety of housing stock is available throughout the City.

Medium Density Residential

Medium Density Residential makes up 169.2 acres or 5.9% of the total acreage in the City of North Mankato. Medium Density Residential is mostly characterized by townhome style development, duplexes, and small scale apartment and condo buildings with densities of 5 to 10 dwelling units per acre.

High Density Residential

High Density Residential land use consists of all forms of multi-family attached housing units such as apartment buildings and condominiums. High density residential has densities of over 10 dwelling units per acre. In 2013, roughly 86.2 acres or 3.0% of North Mankato was classified as high density residential use. High Density Residential units may be rental units or may be owner-occupied and can provide housing options for all income levels. In some cases, high-density residential units in North Mankato are exclusively for seniors, while in other cases there are no limitations for who can live in the development.

Neighborhood Commercial

Neighborhood Commercial uses generally serve the nearby surrounding areas and are intended to allow residents to meet some of their basic needs within a close proximity to where they live. These uses are generally smaller in nature and may be mixed in with residential uses. Examples of some Neighborhood Commercial uses might include bakeries, drug stores, banks, coffee shops, post offices and similar types of uses. Roughly 15.4 acres or 0.6% of North Mankato is classified as Neighborhood Commercial land use.

General Commercial

The General Commercial designation is intended for more intense commercial uses that may draw from a wider geographic area. It includes a broad range of commercial uses that are generally larger in size, require more parking spaces, and may not be compatible adjacent to residential uses in some cases. Examples of General Commercial uses might include department stores, restaurants, offices, health care services and similar types of uses. Many residents currently travel to Mankato to meet most of the needs generally served by this land use category. In 2013, roughly 81.8 acres or 2.8% of North Mankato was classified as General Commercial residential use.

Light Industrial

The Light Industrial land use includes all forms of businesses with manufacturing, distribution, warehousing or other industrial uses that are less intense and may have fewer negative impacts to surrounding properties generally associated with industrial uses such as noise, odor, dust or low quality aesthetics. Light Industrial land use makes up approximately 87.5 acres or 2.8% of the City.

Heavy Industrial

Similar to the Light Industrial land use category, Heavy Industrial land uses are all forms of businesses with manufacturing, distribution, warehousing or other industrial uses. Heavy Industrial uses may be more intense than the types of uses in the Light Industrial land use category and may be less compatible with residential and commercial uses. Heavy Industrial Land uses may exhibit more of the externalities generally associated with industrial uses such as noise, odor, or dust or storage of equipment. Heavy Industrial land use makes up approximately 298.6 acres or 10.4% of the City.

Public/Institutional

Public/Institutional uses make up approximately 227.4 acres or 7.9% of area in North Mankato. These uses include all government buildings, schools, libraries, and religious institutions. These types of uses are generally mixed in with residential or commercial uses.

Park and Open Space

The Park and Open Space category contains public parks and open spaces and all property owned by the City that is preserved as natural land. Approximately 459.2 acres or 16.0% of land in 2013 is allocated to the Park Open Space land use. Park and Open Space uses are intended to provide a variety of recreational opportunities for all residents of the community. The City of North Mankato is generally well served by the amount and placement of existing park facilities.

Vacant/Undeveloped

Vacant/undeveloped land refers to land that is in an undeveloped state, but that is guided and zoned for future development. Wetlands are not included in this category. In 2013, roughly 202.5 acres or 7.0% of North Mankato consisted of vacant/undeveloped land.

Analysis of Existing Land Use

With over 2,800 acres of land, an analysis of the existing land use illustrates several important issues about current and future development:

- The largest land use category in the City is low density residential. It is anticipated that the share of this land use category will continue to grow throughout the life of this plan. The three residential categories account for 52.5% of the total land use in the City. Residential uses make up 56.4% of all non-vacant land use.
- The Central Business District is characterized by a development style common among other older downtowns. It is pedestrian oriented in nature with greater commercial and residential densities and buildings built to the sidewalk. Parking for these uses is typically on street, in the rear of buildings, or shared among several users. The Central Business District also serves as a common gathering place for community events such as Blues on Belgrade and Oktoberfest.
- Of the existing commercial uses, most would generally be characterized as neighborhood commercial uses that serve the surrounding area. North Mankato is lacking in community commercial type uses and residents typically travel to the City of Mankato for these types of goods and services. Although it is not anticipated that this will change significantly, some community commercial type uses may be necessary in the City as this area develops.
- The City has an ample amount of existing industrial uses. These land uses supply a significant number of jobs for residents. This plan anticipates the continued growth of industrial uses in the north and west half of the City. For heavy industrial uses, consideration should be given for compatibility with adjacent land uses. Controls should be in place that protect against negative impacts to neighboring property.
- The City is well served by existing park facilities. There are approximately 396.6 acres of Park and Open Space uses. General guidelines for parks and open spaces suggest there are at least 7 acres of municipal park land per 1,000 residents and that 90% or more of residents are within one-half mile of a park or protected green space. Further analysis on Parks and Open Space is described in Chapter 8: Parks and Recreation.
- There are significant commercial and industrial development opportunities in the northwest portion of the city.
- The “vacant/undeveloped” category includes all of the non-developed land uses. These uses include wetlands, flood plain areas, open water, natural areas, and other undeveloped land. Majority of the vacant/undeveloped land is located in the northwest portion of the City and is guided for future industrial/commercial type development. Further analysis and study is warranted as the City looks to grow and potentially annex lands over time, especially in areas to the northwest.
- Commercial and industrial uses represent 16.6% of total land use (18.0% of non-vacant uses).

Key Land Use Issues and Opportunities

The following provides an overview of the key land use issues and opportunities relating to land use in North Mankato.

Land Supply and Demand

The City of North Mankato is fortunate there remain opportunities for growth and development within the city limit. This serves as an excellent opportunity for North Mankato to grow as a great place to live and visit. A majority of the remaining vacant land supply located in the north, northwest, west and southwest portions of the City. There are also opportunities for future annexation to expand the boundaries of the City. This plan generally calls for residential in these areas; mostly low density, with some medium and high density residential mixed in. Because these areas are furthest from the City of Mankato, guiding some areas for commercial, both neighborhood and general, will be necessary. As the population increases in this direction, North Mankato may be able to attract the types of businesses that residents currently must travel to Mankato for, such as larger retailers.

Neighborhood commercial uses, such as gas stations, convenience stores, and banks serve most of the day to day needs of many residents; however, many of the larger commercial uses may not be found within the City limits. Proximity to Mankato has made it very easy for most residents to get what they need that may not be available in North Mankato. Mankato has an abundance of what would be considered General Commercial uses, such as the larger retail stores, grocery stores, shopping centers, restaurants and movie theaters and other entertainment venues. As the community continues to grow its population, some of these types of commercial users may choose to locate in North Mankato.

Development and Neighborhood Character

The City of North Mankato has portions of the City which have developed over a number of different decades. As a result, some parts of the City tend to feel very different from others.

The oldest areas are in Lower North, in the southeast portion of the City. These areas developed on a typical grid pattern, consistent with most development prior to the 1960s. Residential lots in Lower North tend to be smaller in area and are generally more consistent with one another in terms of their lot dimensions. Many of these houses have been well maintained and enhance the small town character of the neighborhoods. The Central Business District is also part of this area for which Belgrade Avenue serves as a main street and provides a number of small businesses to residents of the surrounding area. The classic small town feel of Lower North attracts some residents to North Mankato. Preserving this character will be a challenge and a priority in the future.

Areas to the west of Lake Street developed later and generally follow more of a suburban style layout with a series of arterials and residential streets. Residential subdivisions in the more recently developed areas tend to have winding streets, which result in a variety of different lot shapes and sizes. Cul-de-sacs are also common in many of these neighborhoods. Generally, these newer subdivisions have larger lots overall. Since 1995, the City of North Mankato has approved building permits for 758 single family housing units, which has contributed to there being an abundance of quality housing in the City.

Downtown North Mankato (Central Business District)

Although not the geographic center of the City, Downtown North Mankato represents a focal point for the community. It is a central gathering place for community events throughout the year and has a unique sense of place with its small business environment. Just west of Highway 169 along Belgrade Avenue, the location of Downtown North Mankato is a strength and will be a critical factor to its future success. Because many people enter North Mankato at this point along Belgrade Avenue, an opportunity exists to create a more attractive gateway into the community by prioritizing the appearance of the downtown. This could be accomplished through a variety of streetscape improvements such as lighting, façade improvements, revised signage regulations, trees and other vegetation, outdoor seating, and additional public art. Design requirements for buildings in the Central Business District should be considered to maintain a consistent character.

Land use in the downtown should be aimed at optimizing the pedestrian environment. This means encouraging a mix of uses including small shops, restaurants, office and service uses, and higher housing densities. Buildings should be built no more than ten feet from front lot lines and parking should be located in the rear of buildings. Long and narrow lots should be preserved in order to encourage smaller store fronts. Policies should also be explored that preserve many of the existing buildings that give the downtown its cherished character.

Downtowns are beginning to make a comeback as cities are realizing the value they have in creating identity and sense of community. North Mankato is fortunate to have a well preserved downtown that withstood the trend of auto-oriented development. Through the community engagement process, the downtown was clearly identified as a value of the community. Some other values of residents revealed through the community engagement process regarding the Central Business District were a preference for more walkability, more mixed use development, street trees, emphasis on Belgrade Avenue, and rehabilitation of existing buildings.

Northport Industrial Park

The Northport Industrial Park serves as an economic hub for the City of North Mankato. This plan anticipates that the City will look to expand its industrial base in the Northport Industrial park located in the northwest part of the City. Industrial businesses supply a significant portion of the jobs in North Mankato. Continuing to attract industrial business to this area is viewed as an opportunity that will help ensure the long term economic health of the community, as they tend to provide higher wage jobs than most retail businesses. The Northport Industrial Park is conveniently located near Highway 14 and Lookout Drive. The new interchange at Highway 14 and County State Aid Highway 41 improves access to a number of sites that are fully serviced and ready to build.

The Future Land Use Map shown in **Figure 3-2** guides several parcels in the Northport Industrial Park for General Commercial along CSAH 41, north of Highway 14. In recognizing that there are currently few commercial opportunities in the city, this plan aims to provide additional commercial areas where appropriate. With prime access to Highway 14, and anticipated nearby residential growth, these parcels are believed to be viable for commercial development. The City acknowledges that these sites would also be appropriate for industrial use. If market forces prove that the area is unattractive for

commercial development, the City may choose to re-designate these areas for either heavy or light industrial use in the future.

Recreation Opportunities and Facilities

One of the greatest strengths of the City of North Mankato is the quality and quantity of existing park space. The City of North Mankato currently has an extremely healthy ratio of 21.8 acres of park space per 1,000 residents. In addition, a wide variety of quality recreational programs are offered for both adults and youth. An opportunity exists to strengthen North Mankato as a recreational center within the region. Caswell Park is already one of the premiere softball complexes in the nation, having hosted numerous state, regional and national tournaments since opening in 1987. Benson Park, although not yet fully developed, will soon be a natural resources themed destination with habitat restoration, natural resource education, nature based play and water quality improvements, a natural amphitheater, outdoor classrooms and demonstration areas and more. Spring Lake Park is another significant park in the community with a variety of amenities and has something for everyone. Continuing to maintain and strengthen these existing facilities is a priority of the City. In addition, this plan calls for better trail connections between these areas and surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and neighborhood parks. This will ensure that people of all ages and abilities can reach these areas safely and comfortably. In 2013, a market analysis was completed for a proposed sports complex which would provide year round activities and would further enhance North Mankato as a recreational destination. See Chapter 8 – Parks and Recreation for more detailed information on future park and recreation development.

Vision for Land Use

The City of North Mankato is a complete community that provides a well-balanced and wide range of places to live, work, shop and play. Land uses make efficient use of existing infrastructure, contribute to a strong local economy, preserve natural resources and contribute to a high quality of life.

Residential Uses

A diverse housing stock allows people at any stage in their life to be able to find a home in North Mankato. Older housing is well maintained while new development respects the character of existing neighborhoods.

Commercial and Industrial Uses

A significant amount of commercial and industrial uses can be found within the City that allow residents to work in North Mankato, while also being able to meet all of their day-to-day needs. Commercial and industrial uses are compatible with their surrounding land uses.

Public/Institutional

Public and institutional uses are viewed as valued resources to the community and contribute to making North Mankato a better place to live and do business.

Parks and Open Space

Quality parks and open space are within close proximity to all residents, providing recreational opportunities to encourage an active lifestyle. A wide variety of community facilities are provided to serve a range of interests.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following is the primary goal for land use followed by a series of objectives and policies intended to influence future land use decisions in a direction that is aligned with the Vision Statement above.

GOAL 1: Maximize the use of land within the City of North Mankato in a way that strengthens the local economy, preserves natural resources, and ensures a high-quality of life for all residents.

Objective 1.1: Preserve and enhance the small business environment of the downtown.

- Policy 1.1.1: Encourage and promote the renovation and rehabilitation of existing buildings within the downtown.
- Policy 1.1.2: Connect businesses with façade improvement grants and loans.
- Policy 1.1.3: Make infrastructure improvements that enhance the pedestrian realm such as lighting and seating.
- Policy 1.1.4: Explore opportunities for purchasing property within the downtown for the purpose of constructing a public plaza as a central gathering place for community activities.
- Policy 1.1.5: Increase the permitted density for residential uses in the downtown.
- Policy 1.1.6: Establish a maximum front yard setback of no more than ten (10) feet for commercial uses.
- Policy 1.1.7: Consider property acquisition for parking in the downtown area.

Objective 1.2: Use land in a manner that strengthens the economy of North Mankato.

- Policy 1.2.1: Expand the amount of property guided for industrial and commercial use in the northwest portions of the City within the industrial park.
- Policy 1.2.2: Work with site selectors on attracting businesses which can economically succeed in North Mankato and incentivize qualifying commercial and industrial projects for the Northport Industrial Park and other industrial/commercial areas within the City.

Policy 1.2.3: Identify residential areas prime for redevelopment and analyze whether these sites could be suitable for commercial use. Work to re-zone these properties and amend this plan as appropriate.

Policy 1.2.4: Increase the number of residential housing units in the City to improve the local market for commercial opportunities.

Objective 1.3: Protect and preserve natural resources for long term environmental sustainability and the enjoyment of residents.

Policy 1.3.1: Work with landowners to either obtain property or ensure protection of natural areas with high ecological value.

Policy 1.3.2: Increase opportunities for neighborhood commercial uses in close proximity to residential uses to minimize travel distances and encourage alternative modes of transportation.

Policy 1.3.3: Work with the watershed district to ensure that all ground and surface water ordinances are consistent with the recommended standards.

Objective 1.4: Use land in a manner that ensures a high quality of life for residents.

Policy 1.4.1: Maintain a ratio of 15-20 acres of park land per 1,000 residents as the City's population continues to grow.

Policy 1.4.2: Review and encourage methods of development which promote linkages to recreational facilities using trails and sidewalks.

Land Use Plan

The land use plan provides the framework or "road map" for the growth and development of the City. The land use plan serves as a guide for the character and intensity of development and will be supported by other land use controls and public actions taken pursuant to the Comprehensive Plan.

The land use map appears in Figure 3-2: Future Land Use. The Plan illustrated by this map evolved from inputs and evaluations received through the planning process completed in 2013. The Plan builds on the existing community pattern to achieve the desired vision for the future of North Mankato.

Insert Figure 3-2: Future Land Use Map

Table 3-B: Summary of Future Land Use		
Existing Land Use	Gross Acres*	Net Percent of City
Low Density Residential	2,531.6	54.4%
Medium Density Residential	313.5	6.8%
High Density Residential	112.4	2.4%
Neighborhood Commercial	26.3	0.6%
General Commercial	95.1	2.0%
Central Business District	18.4	0.4%
Commercial/Industrial Mixed Use	74.86	1.6%
Light Industrial	98.1	2.1%
Heavy Industrial	525.5	11.3%
Public/Institutional	218.5	4.7%
Park and Open Space	638.8	13.7%
TOTAL	4653.1	100%

* Gross acres of use determined by WSB & Associates, Inc. based on parcel data provided by the City of North Mankato

Residential

Low Density Residential

The predominant land use in this category is single-family detached homes but may also include some duplexes and townhomes. This plan anticipates that this is where the majority of new housing units will be added over the next 20 years. One of the biggest strengths of the City of North Mankato is its attractiveness to young families. Part of this attraction is due to the amount of quality affordable single-family homes. Continuing to add new housing units will provide more opportunities for all families to locate in North Mankato, while making older housing more affordable. Several areas in Upper North are expected to see new low density residential development. Densities targeted in this category are 1 to 5 dwelling units per acre with an overall average of 3.5 dwelling units per acre. However, an important policy of this Plan is that the allowable density of each neighborhood will be based on the desired character of the neighborhood.

Medium Density Residential

Medium density residential uses are typically in the form of townhomes, duplexes, and small scale apartment and condo buildings. Advantages of these types of housing are that less property maintenance may be required since yards are smaller and some medium density developments may have associations that handle lawn care and snow removal. As a result, these types of housing tend to be very attractive to seniors. As part of the community engagement process, some residents felt there was a shortage of quality medium density housing. This plan guides approximately 35.4 additional acres of property for medium density housing. Providing enough medium density housing options helps residents stay within the City of North Mankato as they age to different stages in their lives. Densities targeted in this category are over 5 dwelling units and up to 10 dwelling units per acre.

One area currently guided for Medium Density Residential is the existing manufactured home community (Camelot Park) located at the northwest corner of Lor Ray Drive and Howard Drive. Long term, the City views this property as a potential redevelopment area and would support a combination

of park, institutional, and commercial land uses. Redevelopment of this site could be a great opportunity for a public/private partnership between the City, school district, and commercial developers. An opportunity presents itself for a connected greenway and regional recreation amenities with connections to Benson Park and Caswell Park, with a commercial land use designation at the intersection of Lor Ray Drive and Howard Drive. A future planning study should be performed prior to site redevelopment.

High Density Residential

The High Density Residential land use category consists of multiple family attached housing oriented in a vertical fashion, more commonly referred to as apartments and condominiums. Housing units may be owner or renter occupied. High density housing is an efficient land use because it contains more dwelling units per acre than other residential uses.

High density residential uses are located in places with compatible adjacent land uses and where the local street system will accommodate the traffic. Ideally, they are located near commercial uses or employment centers to maximize the number of people who can walk or use alternative modes of transportation. Residential areas near the downtown suitable for redevelopment may be prime locations for new high density housing.

Because high density housing is generally associated with renting, it may be a very attractive option for recent graduates looking to live in North Mankato. Providing enough quality high density residential housing is essential for providing a diverse housing stock. The densities targeted in this category are over 10 dwelling units per acre.

Commercial

Neighborhood Commercial

Areas guided for Neighborhood Commercial are those intended to serve the nearby surrounding area. Neighborhood commercial uses are small scale businesses that are generally compatible with residential uses. These uses may include bakeries, drug stores, coffee shops, banks, small offices and similar uses. While some parking may be provided, they may also rely on on-street parking, pedestrians and bicyclists. Residential properties suitable for redevelopment should be analyzed as potential neighborhood commercial uses. Single family homes located near the downtown may be especially well suited for this. Although not designated on the Future Land Use Map, the City envisions a future neighborhood commercial node developing in the vicinity of Lor Ray Drive and Belgrade Township 121 as residential development increases on the north end of the City. The City also views the area on the west side of Lookout Drive between Carol Court and Commerce Drive as a redevelopment area that could incorporate new Neighborhood Commercial uses in the future.

General Commercial

General Commercial land uses are those that may have a wider draw beyond the nearby surrounding area. They are larger in size than Neighborhood Commercial uses and are intended to serve the entire community and potentially adjacent communities as well. They are generally clustered together and situated along arterial roadways. North Mankato has traditionally been underserved with these types

of commercial uses but may create demand for some additional general commercial uses as the population continues to grow. Because residents in the northern parts of the city are generally farthest from the city of Mankato, it anticipated that there will be demand for additional commercial uses as this area continues to grow and develop. Properties at the northeast, southeast, and southwest corners of Lor Ray Drive and Howard Drive have been guided for General Commercial despite currently being used for industrial purposes. The City values these existing businesses and will wait to rezone these properties until the current property owners are prepared to sell or redevelop the sites so as to not make these uses non-conforming. The City views General Commercial as the best use for these sites long term.

Properties at 1840 and 1880 Commerce Drive are other areas currently used for industrial purposes where the City supports a transition to commercial uses should these property owners decide to redevelop their properties. This would be in an effort to continue the flow of commercial uses existing on the east end of Commerce Drive.

As mentioned above, the City views the area on the west side of Lookout Drive between Carol Court and Commerce Drive as a redevelopment area. Redevelopment of this area could incorporate new General Commercial uses in the future. See the Economic Development chapter for more details.

Central Business District

The Central Business District is generally the property adjacent to Belgrade Avenue between Highway 169 and property just west of Center Street. This land use category is a mixed use district for a combination of residential and commercial uses. It has historically served as the City's downtown and is intended to be pedestrian oriented.

A number of the community's small businesses are located here. It is also the location for several community events throughout the year. Rather than guiding individual parcels for a specific use, this district provides flexibility in that it envisions commercial, residential, or a combination of both.

Ideally, the Central Business District will contain a wide mix of commercial uses which bring people to the area for a variety of different reasons. Although a number of single family homes currently exist in the Central Business District, new residential development should be consistent with medium or high density districts. Increasing the residential population in the downtown will help support a healthy business environment and allow more people to be able to walk to their destinations.

Buildings should be located close to the street and parking should be located in the rear or side of properties. Streetscape improvements that enhance the pedestrian realm, such as street trees, outdoor seating, public art, street lighting, should be prioritized here. The City should continue to work with business owners and encourage façade improvements by connecting them to grant and funding opportunities.

Industrial

Light Industrial

Light Industrial uses include all forms of businesses with manufacturing, distribution, warehousing or other industrial uses that are less intense and may have fewer of the negative impacts to surrounding properties generally associated with industrial uses such as noise, odor, dust or low quality aesthetics. As a result, these uses can be in closer proximity to residential, commercial, park and open space uses, without causing as many negative impacts as might occur with Heavy Industrial uses. This plan allows for light industrial expansion.

Heavy Industrial

Heavy Industrial uses also include manufacturing, distribution, warehousing or other industrial uses; however these uses are generally more intensive than light industrial uses. This means that the nature of activity typically requires more land, generates more noise and truck traffic, and may involve outdoor storage. Areas guided as new Heavy Industrial are located in the Northport Industrial Park, located north of US Highway 14 and near Lookout Drive. The new interchange at CSAH 41 and US Highway 14 improves access to other sites and minimizes the number of semi-trucks on arterial roadways. In addition, there is a significant amount of undeveloped land to the northwest that is currently outside the City limits, which could be added in the future.

Commercial/Industrial Mixed Use

The only area guided for Commercial/Industrial Mixed Use is located just north of Highway 14, along County Road 41. This land use designation provides flexibility in that it allows for commercial or industrial development. There are few other parcels north of Highway 14 that are guided for commercial use on the Future Land Use Map. Therefore, this area provides an opportunity to provide additional commercial uses where they may be underserved. Because of the proximity to the new interchange, commercial uses envisioned for this land use category would be those classified as General Commercial uses. These types of uses have a wider draw than Neighborhood Commercial uses, may be larger in scale, and generate higher traffic volumes. However, depending on market conditions, the area may be more favorable for industrial development, which would also be an appropriate use for the area. Industrial uses could be those consistent with either the Light or Heavy Industrial land use category.

Park and Open Space

This land use category includes all City parks, as well as natural preserve areas such as woods and wetlands. As new residential subdivisions develop, sufficient park and open space should be added to serve new residents.

The property located at 1895 Howard Drive is currently used and guided for industrial purposes. The northernmost portion of the property is currently undeveloped. In the future, if the property owner were interested in subdividing the property, the City may be interested in acquiring this property for additional park land space to contribute to the Caswell Park regional park area; however, the City also supports a continuation of industrial uses at the site should the property owner desire to do so.

Public /Institutional

This category includes land used for public and institutional purposes. These uses include all government buildings, schools, libraries, and religious institutions.

Required Zoning Changes

The City has adopted zoning regulations for the purpose of carrying out the policies and goals of the land use plan element of the Comprehensive Plan. The application of zoning districts and the specific regulations should support the objectives of the Plan. As a result, an outcome of adopting the plan will be the review and modification of the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map as necessary.

The land use plan provides the basis for guiding zoning decisions that will be made by the City and private property owners. Minnesota Statutes Section 462.357 states that “.....the planning agency shall study and propose to the governing body reasonable and practical means for putting the plan into effect. Subject to the limitations of the following sections, such means include, but not limited to, zoning regulations, for the subdivision of land, an official map.....”

This statute anticipates that the zoning regulations will be reviewed and updated to ensure implementation of the land use plan. In a broad sense, this review of the zoning ordinance should examine the following:

- The regulations for each zoning district should be reviewed to determine if they fit with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Zoning districts should be examined in relationship to the land use designation. Changes in zoning districts will be needed to match zoning with land use.
- The City will need to thoroughly review and update its Ordinances to address inconsistencies and conflicts to integrate the concepts described in this Comprehensive Plan. Updating the Zoning Ordinance will be a large undertaking that will require significant input, time and energy.

One of the policy decisions the City will need to make is how to implement the land use plan through the zoning map. Unlike the Metropolitan Land Planning Act (Minnesota Statutes Section 473), which requires consistency between the land use plan and zoning in cities within the Twin Cities metropolitan area, North Mankato may choose to take a number of implementation strategies. It is recommended that North Mankato elect to have the Zoning Map consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Each has varying implications for existing property uses and current zoning. The strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Keep current zoning in place until such time as the use terminates or redevelopment is initiated.
- Rezone property to a zoning district compatible with a land use plan category.
- Develop an interim strategy to address current use situations as they relate to long term objectives.

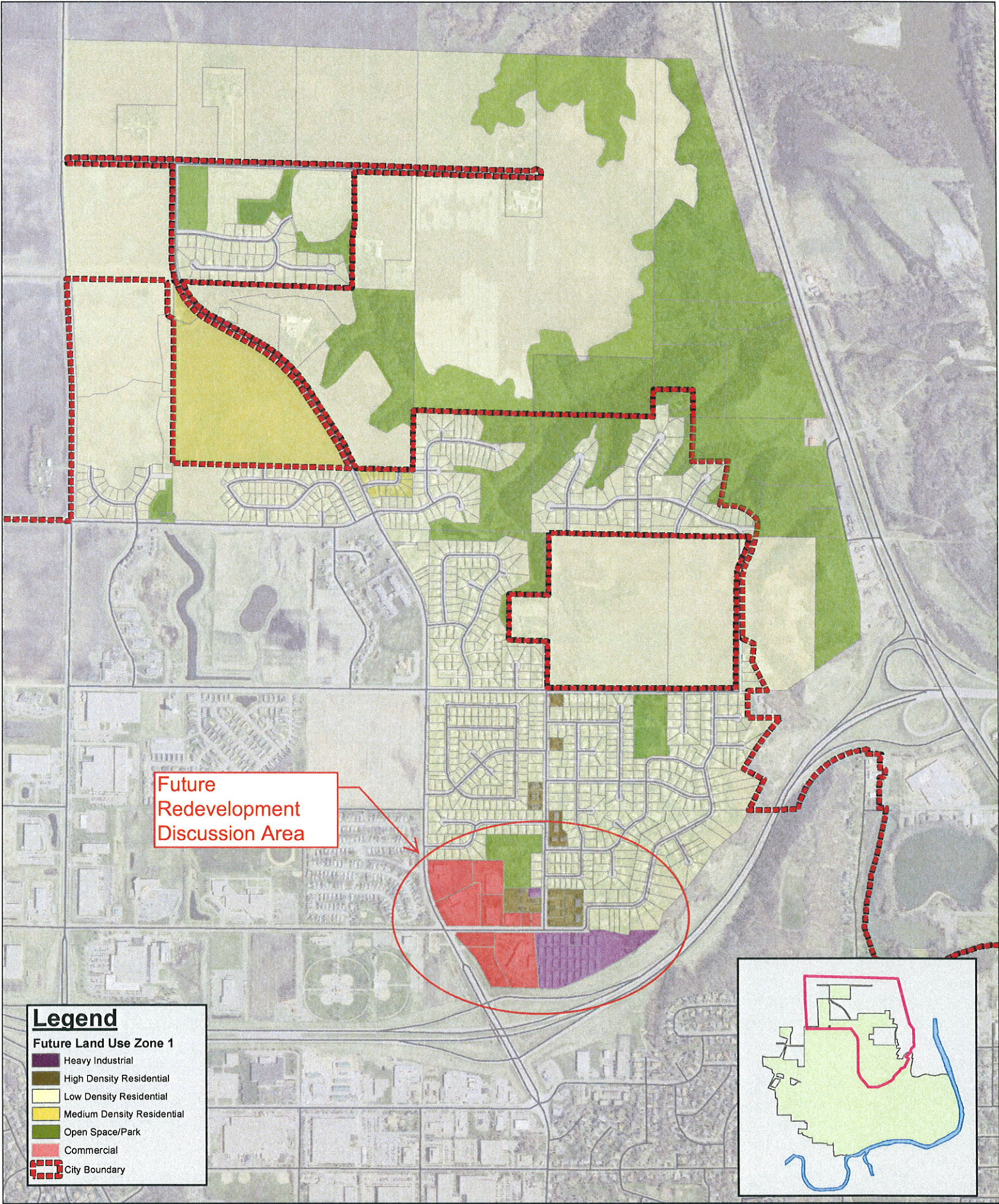


Figure 3-1A: Future Land Use
 North Mankato Comprehensive Plan - Zone 1

1 inch = 1,350 feet
 February, 2014



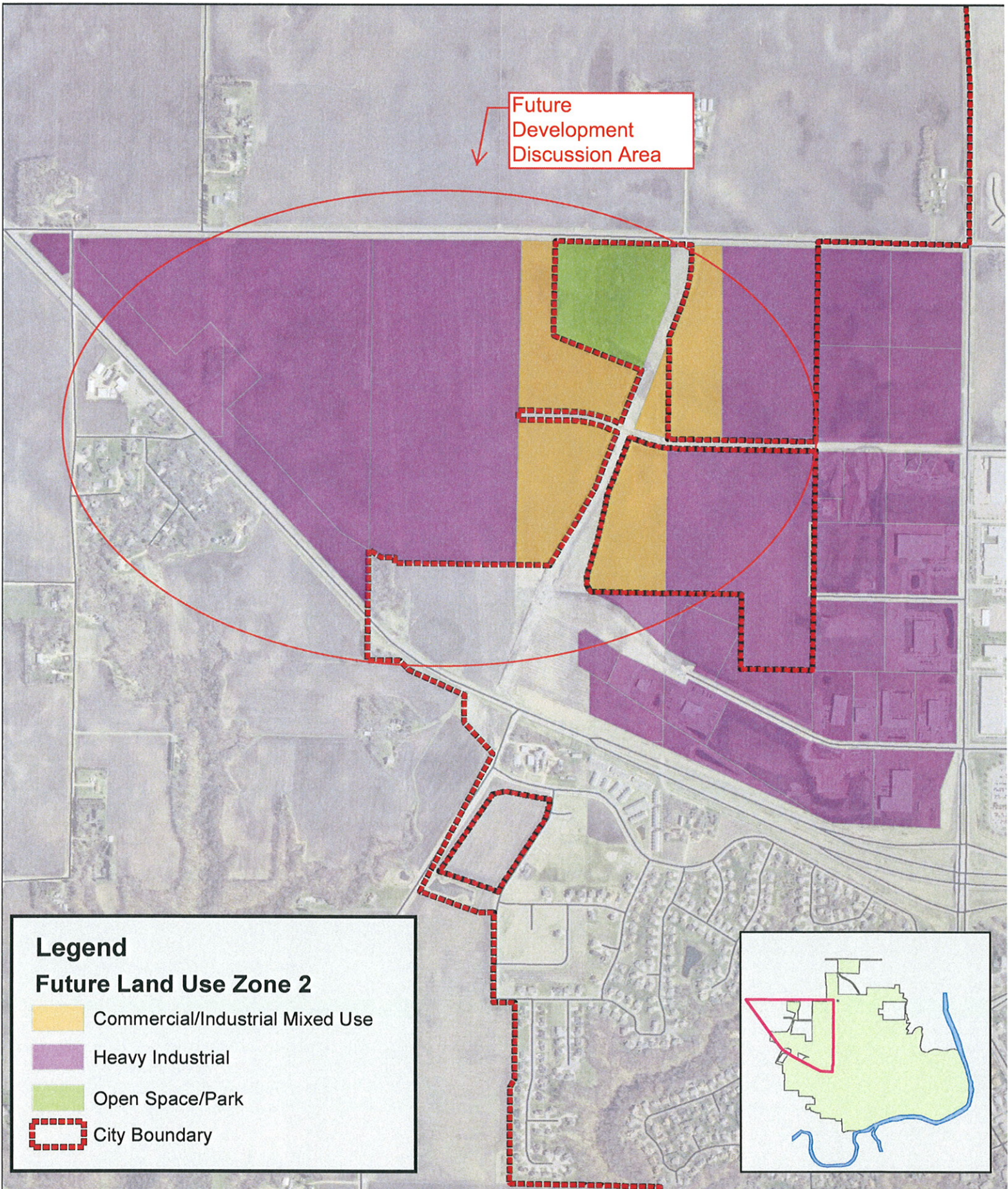
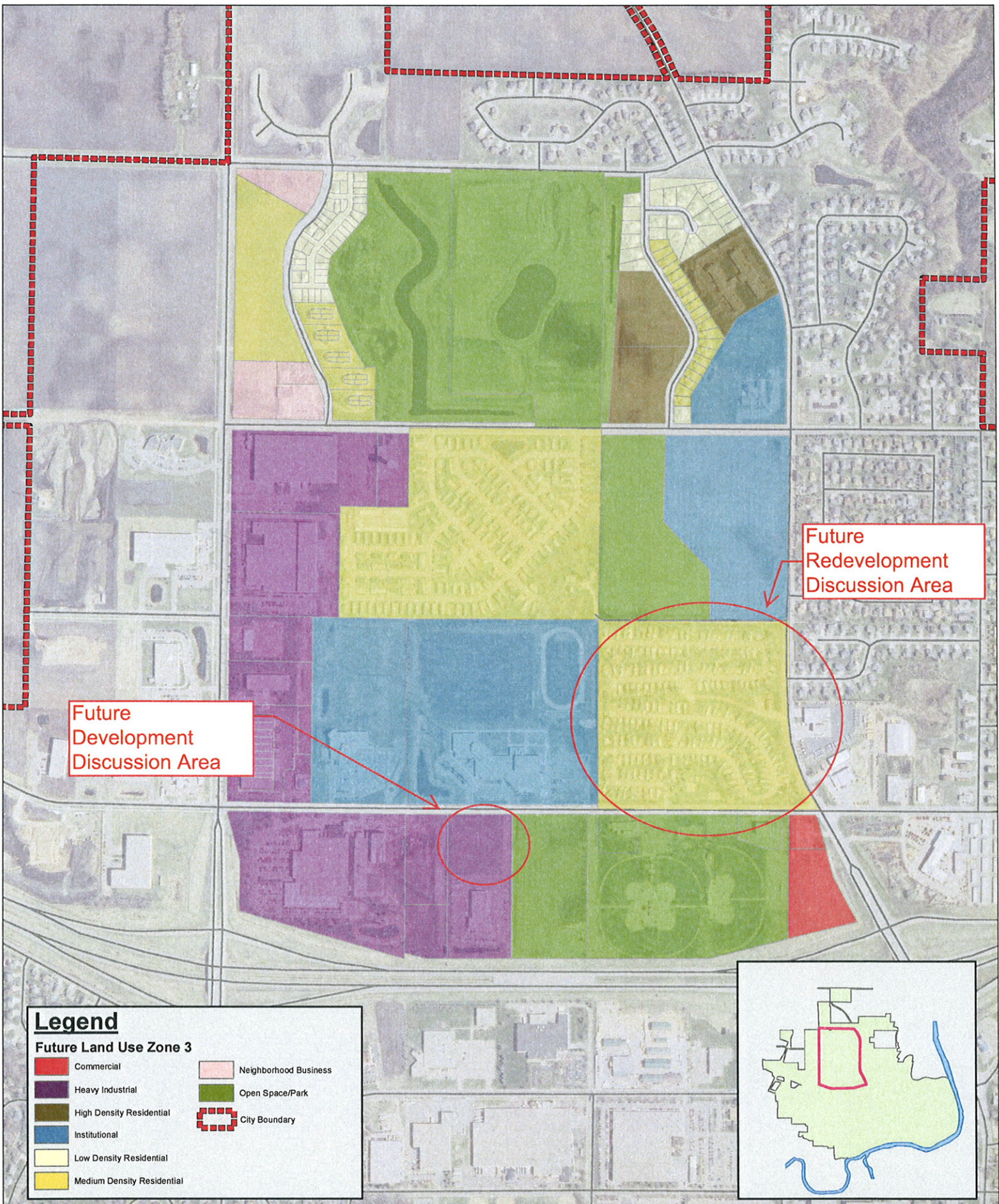


Figure 3-1B: Future Land Use
 North Mankato Comprehensive Plan - Zone 2

1 inch = 1,100 feet
 February, 2014





Legend

Future Land Use Zone 3

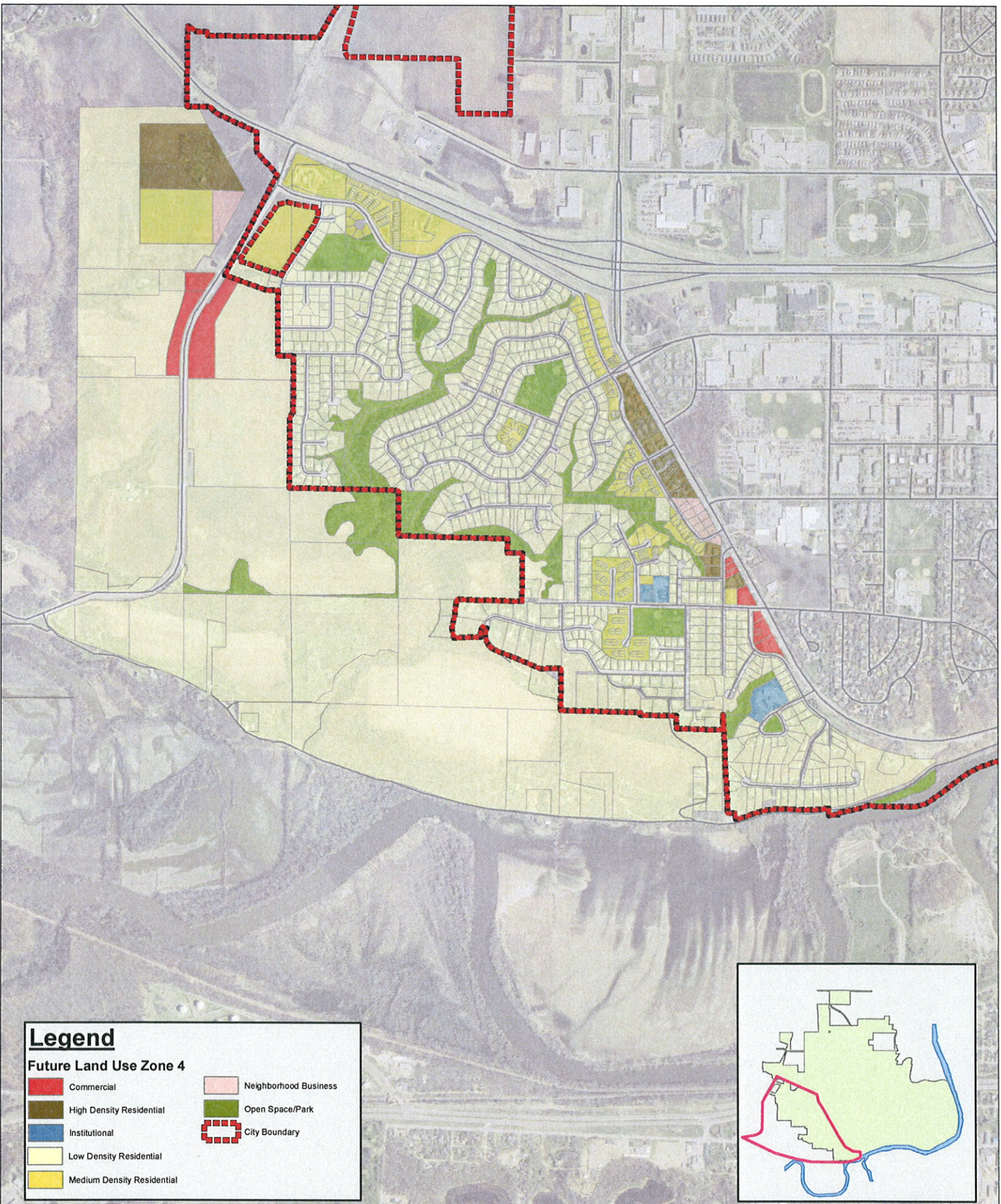
- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Commercial | Neighborhood Business |
| Heavy Industrial | Open Space/Park |
| High Density Residential | City Boundary |
| Institutional | |
| Low Density Residential | |
| Medium Density Residential | |

Figure 3-1C: Future Land Use
North Mankato Comprehensive Plan - Zone 3

1 inch = 850 feet









February, 2014





Legend

Future Land Use Zone 4

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Commercial |  Neighborhood Business |
|  High Density Residential |  Open Space/Park |
|  Institutional |  City Boundary |
|  Low Density Residential | |
|  Medium Density Residential | |

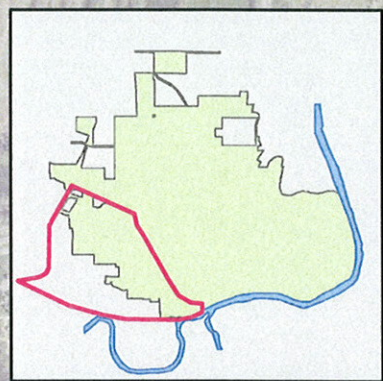


Figure 3-1D: Future Land Use
 North Mankato Comprehensive Plan - Zone 4

1 inch = 1,500 feet
 February, 2014













Future
Redevelopment
Discussion Area

Future Discussion
Area

Legend

Future Land Use Zone 5

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Commercial |  Low Density Residential |
|  Heavy Industrial |  Medium Density Residential |
|  High Density Residential |  Neighborhood Business |
|  Institutional |  Open Space/Park |
|  Light Industrial |  City Boundary |

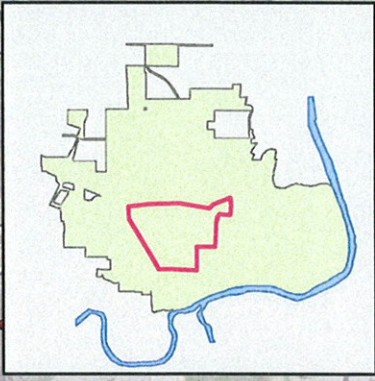


Figure 3-1E: Future Land Use
North Mankato Comprehensive Plan - Zone 5

1 inch = 800 feet

February, 2014





Legend

Future Land Use Zone 6











- | | |
|---|--|
|  Commercial |  Medium Density Residential |
|  Heavy Industrial |  Neighborhood Business |
|  High Density Residential |  Open Space/Park |
|  Institutional |  City Boundary |
|  Light Industrial | |
|  Low Density Residential | |

Figure 3-1F: Future Land Use
 North Mankato Comprehensive Plan - Zone 6

1 inch = 1,250 feet

February, 2014



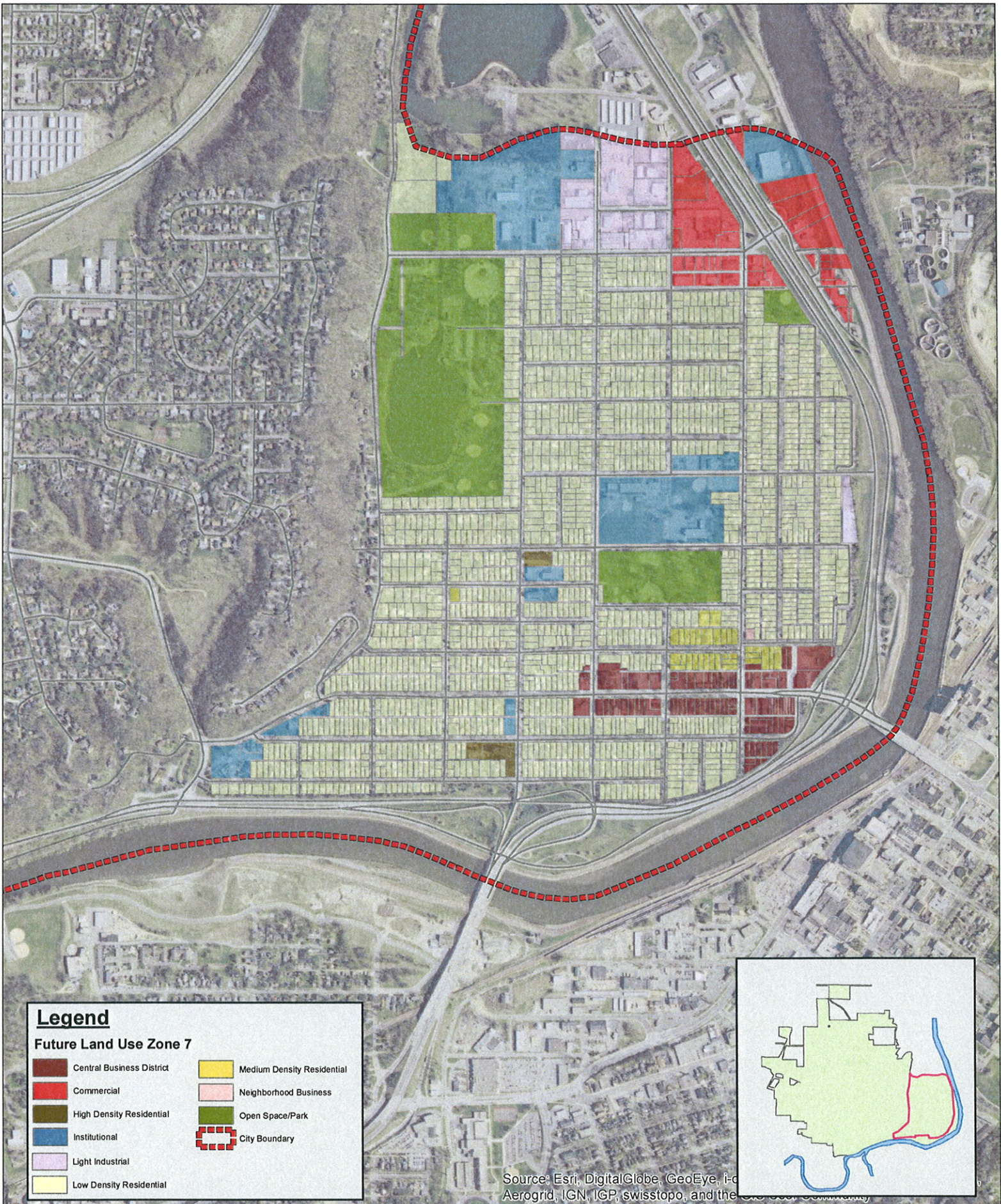
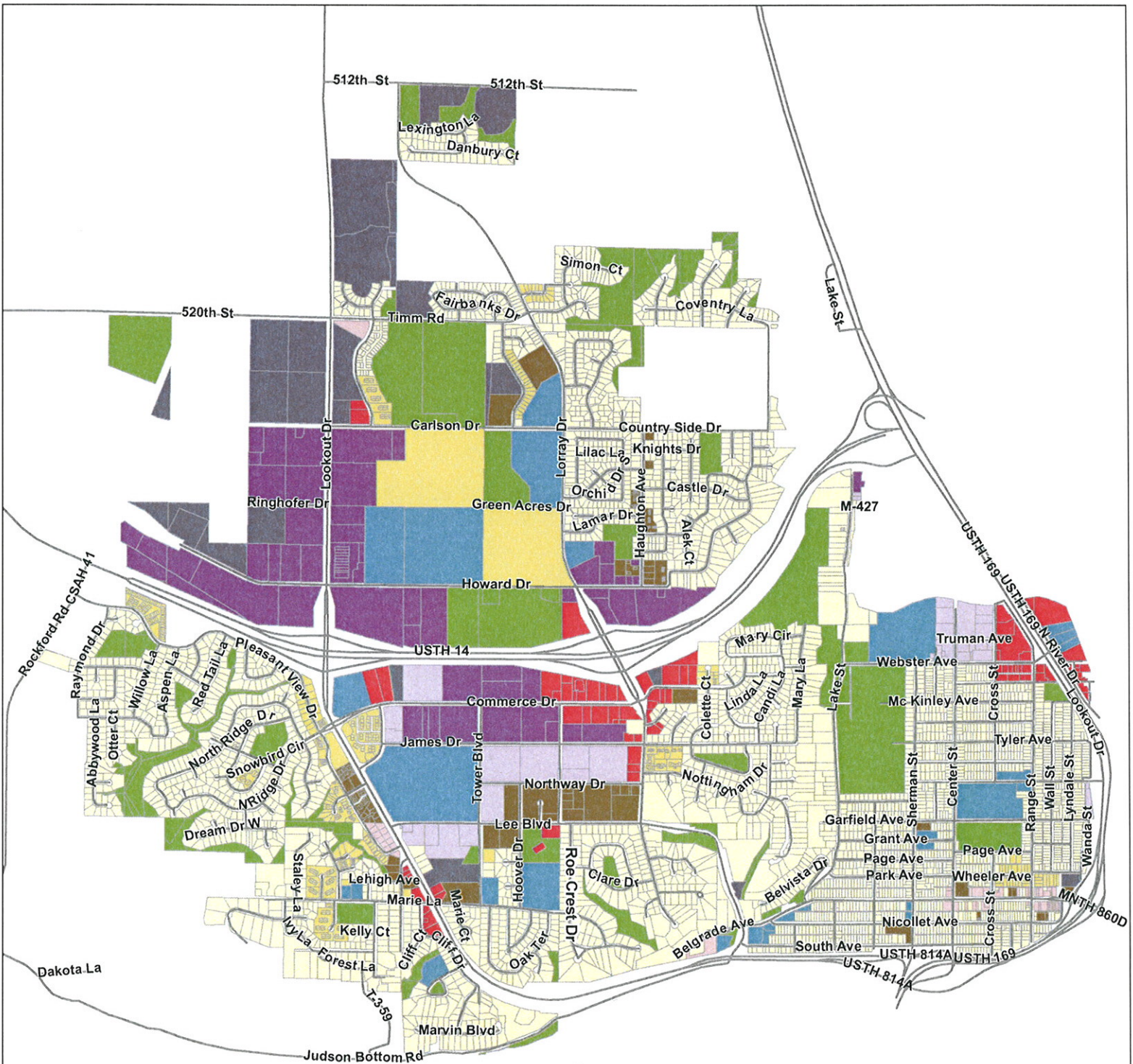


Figure 3-1G: Future Land Use
North Mankato Comprehensive Plan - Zone 7

1 inch = 1,100 feet

February, 2014





Legend

Existing Land Use

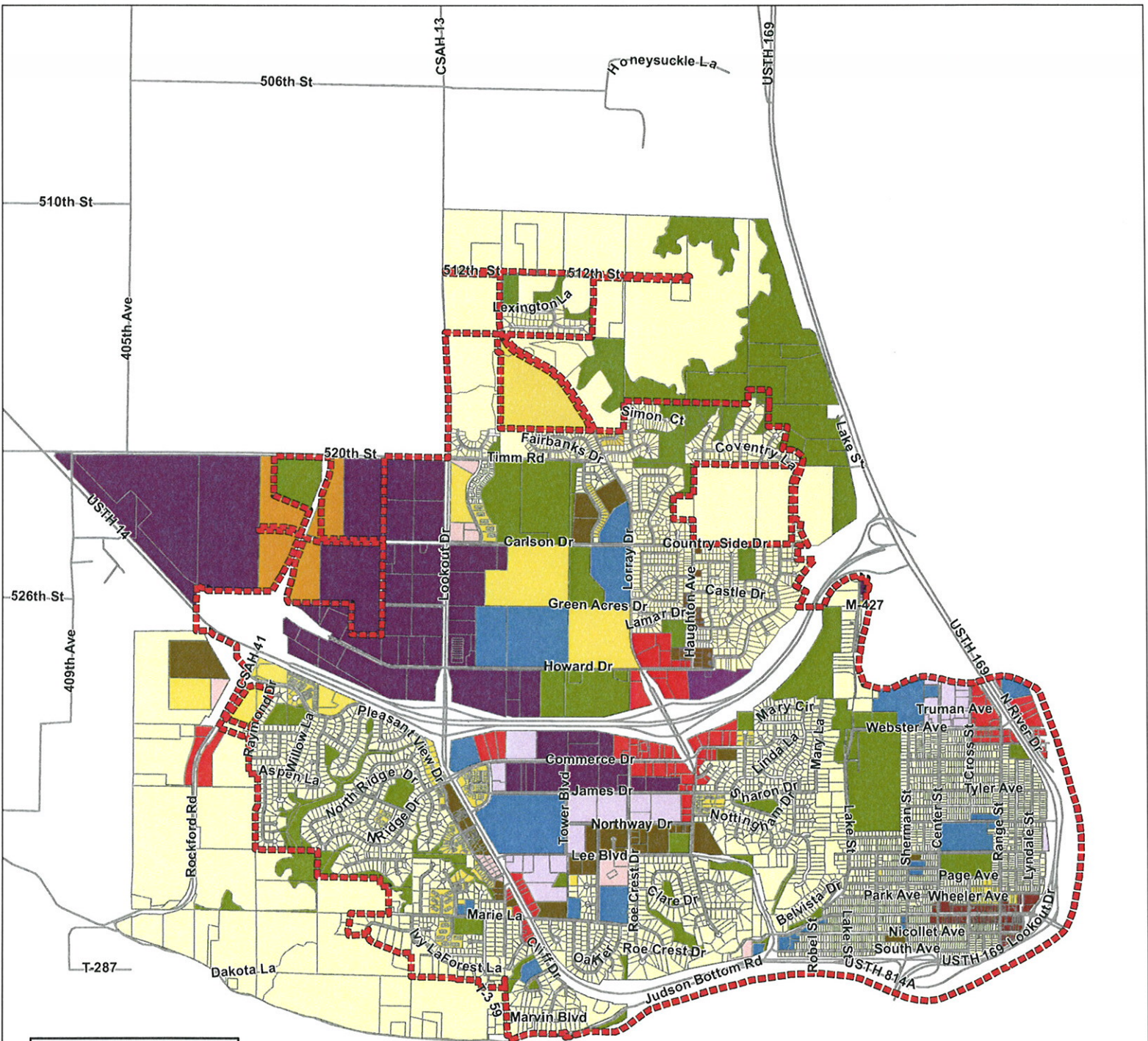
	Low Density Residential		Public/Institutional
	Medium Density Residential		Light Industrial
	High Density Residential		Heavy Industrial
	Neighborhood Commercial		Park and Open Space
	General Commercial		Vacant

Figure 3-1: Existing Land Use
North Mankato Comprehensive Plan

1 inch = 2,325 feet

February, 2014





Legend

Future Land Use

- Neighborhood Business
- Commercial
- Central Business District
- Commercial/Industrial Mixed Use
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Institutional
- Open Space/Park
- City Boundary

Figure 3-1: Future Land Use
 North Mankato Comprehensive Plan

1 inch = 3,000 feet
 February, 2014

