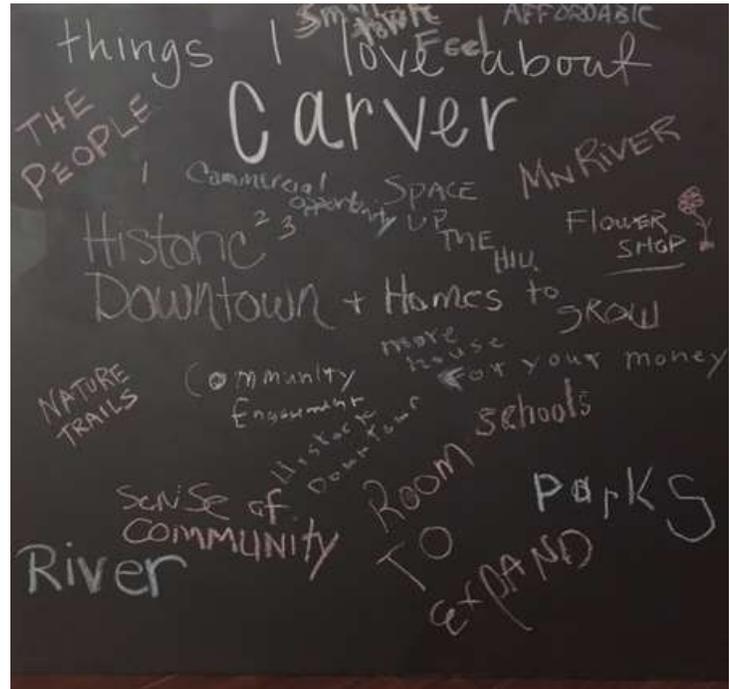


LAND USE

Introduction

The City of Carver's land use plan defines and creates future development and redevelopment potential within Carver. This section outlines goals and policies that will guide the location, type and intensity of development both within the existing City limits and looks forward into areas anticipated for annexation within this plan. The Land Use section of the plan also identifies the types of development that are anticipated within each land use included throughout the Design Carver Plan.

The goal of the land use plan is to create a diverse and self-sustaining plan with nimble language to allow for creative and innovative planning and development that is cognizant of unique natural and historic resources.



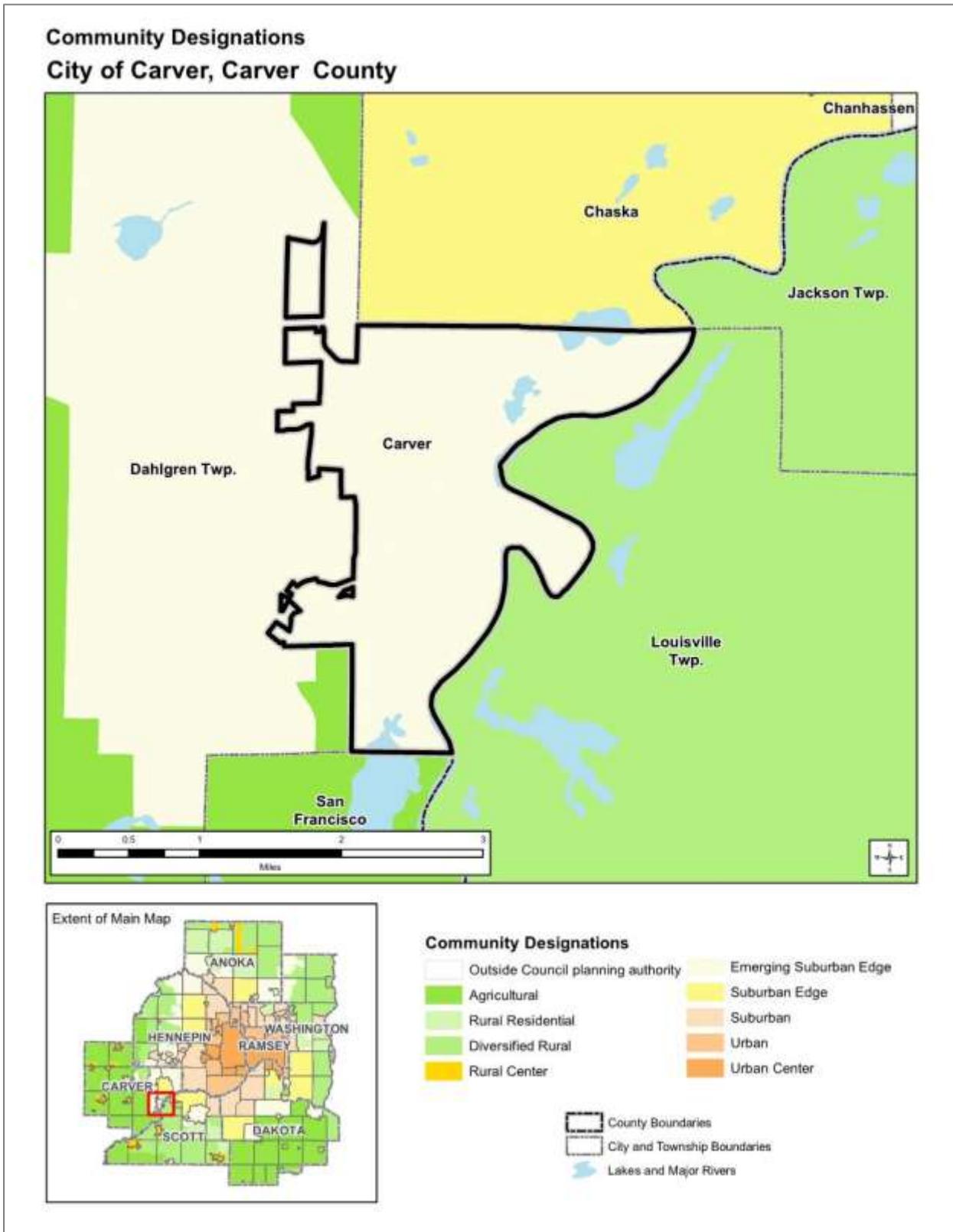
Background

The Village of Carver was founded in 1854 by the Carver Land Company and incorporated in 1877. The Village of Carver had exponential growth throughout the late 1800s. Carver was an essential location for trade and immigration travel along the Minnesota River and was a bustling town for several decades. The introduction of rail and widespread flooding throughout the once active downtown created major challenges for Carver leading to a downtown that once flourished, impoverished. In 1969, Carver-on-the-Minnesota was founded to stop decline of the early river town. The work by Carver-on-the-Minnesota helped bring the historic downtown back to some of its early glory. Carver created a Heritage Preservation Commission in 1989. The group was recognized in 2005 by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office as a Certified Local Government.

Regional Setting

According to *Thrive MSP 2040*, the regional development guide, Carver is identified as an Emerging Suburban Edge community (see Figure L-1).

Figure L-1 – Community Designation



Emerging Suburban Communities are categorized by early transitions toward urbanized development but are less than 40% developed. They are characterized by low-density residential development and higher density commercial development in a small downtown or retail/service center and have access to Metropolitan Council sewer, transportation, and parks systems. Emerging Suburban Edges are anticipated to develop at an average density of three to five units per acre. This presents both the challenge and opportunity to engage in greenfield development, incorporating natural resources preservation in development practices. This is certainly true of Carver, which is tasked with balancing growth with the preservation of natural corridors located in the City.

Current Existing Conditions

Today, Carver has seen solid and steady development primarily of single family homes through the 1990s and 2000s while historic preservation efforts have created a destination downtown for residents and visitors. A majority of recent development has been north and northwest of the historic downtown expanding the City limits of Carver with new neighborhoods and commercial nodes.

Carver is nestled in an area of Carver County that allows residents to have direct access to a diverse landscape including topography, natural resources and preservation areas that allows residents to feel as if they can easily disconnect from the stresses and pressures of living in a metropolitan area. The City is currently bordered by the City of Chaska, the Minnesota River and Dahlgren Township. Development that is anticipated in the Carver will be both north and west of the existing City limits. Redevelopment opportunities are anticipated throughout the existing City limits but will not drastically change the landscape of the City.

Accessibility of Highway 212 has drastically changed the outlook for the City of Carver and has led to significant development both along the corridor of Highway 212 as well as Jonathan Carver Parkway (County Road 11). The future expansion of Highway 212 beyond the City of Carver will continue to spur development throughout Carver County.

Significant areas have been incorporated into the 2040 Future Lane Use Map beyond the 2030 Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use map included illustrates the Carver and Victoria sharing a northern border for the first time and area between Chaska and Carver that will continue develop toward one another through the life of this plan. Growth areas outlined in this plan is consistent with an orderly annexation agreement in place with Dahlgren Township that has allowed the City to expand our scope of work and future development. The exercise of working with surrounding communities to ensure similar development patterns where intersection is anticipated has allowed for greater collaboration and visioning processes based on growth areas for Carver, Chaska and Victoria.

Goals and Policies

Design Carver and the land use plan depicts a community with a variety of land uses that will lead to a community that allows residents to live, work and play in the community while respecting diverse natural and historical resources present in the community. The following goals and policies have been established to ensure thoughtful planning and development while maintaining awareness of our history.

1. The historic downtown in Carver will continue to be a destination area for residents and visitors and serve as the gateway to the Minnesota River. Redevelopment potential

throughout the downtown will continue to be cognizant to the deep and rich history in Carver. The City’s Historic Preservation Commission will continue to play an active role in the development and redevelopment throughout the downtown.

2. Development techniques should be sensitive to the natural landscape and work to preserve mature trees, native plants and animals while respecting topography and natural wetlands.
3. With an extensive future growth area and land use types, development should include buffering and staging of incompatible uses.
4. Redevelopment opportunities of obsolete, underutilized and deteriorated sites uses should be explored.
5. Development of commercial and industrial uses are targeted to create a diverse tax base and allow for varied employment opportunities throughout the community.
6. Public services and facilities should be developed and implemented in cost-effective and in an accessible manner that allows both for future development while working to ensure adequate City resources to provide maintenance to existing infrastructure.
7. Establish and foster community spaces that include a mix of both public and private resources that create community destinations throughout the City.
8. Enhance major entrances and corridors throughout the City with signage, wayfinding and landscaping that identify the City of Carver.
9. Create a strong, inclusive culture throughout the City that brings community.

Forecasts

Carver is a growing community. The greatest period of growth, so far, occurred between 2000 and 2010, when the population increased by nearly 200 percent. The growth trend is expected to continue to 2040. Table L-1 details the estimated and forecasted population, household and employment for Carver.

Table L-1 | Forecasts

Year	Population	Households	Employment
2010	3,274	1,182	187
2017	4,623	1,503	288
2020	6,300	2,120	650
2030	10,300	3,630	1,030
2040	15,500	5,600	1,700

Existing Land Use

Carver’s comprehensive planning effort focuses on more than the current City limits. This plan also encompasses the future growth area outside of the current City limits. The following paragraphs describe the existing land uses in both the current City limits, and the ultimate growth boundary.

Existing City Limits

Most land within the current City limits is developed. Some areas currently identified as undeveloped or agriculture have recently approved development plans in place, with construction scheduled to begin in late 2018 or early 2019. The eastern boundary of the City, adjacent to the Minnesota River, is part of the

Minnesota River Valley Wildlife Refuge. This is approximately 46% of the land use within the current City limits. Figure L-2 and Table L-2 identify existing land use within the current City limits.

Figure L-2 – Existing Land Use – Current City Limits

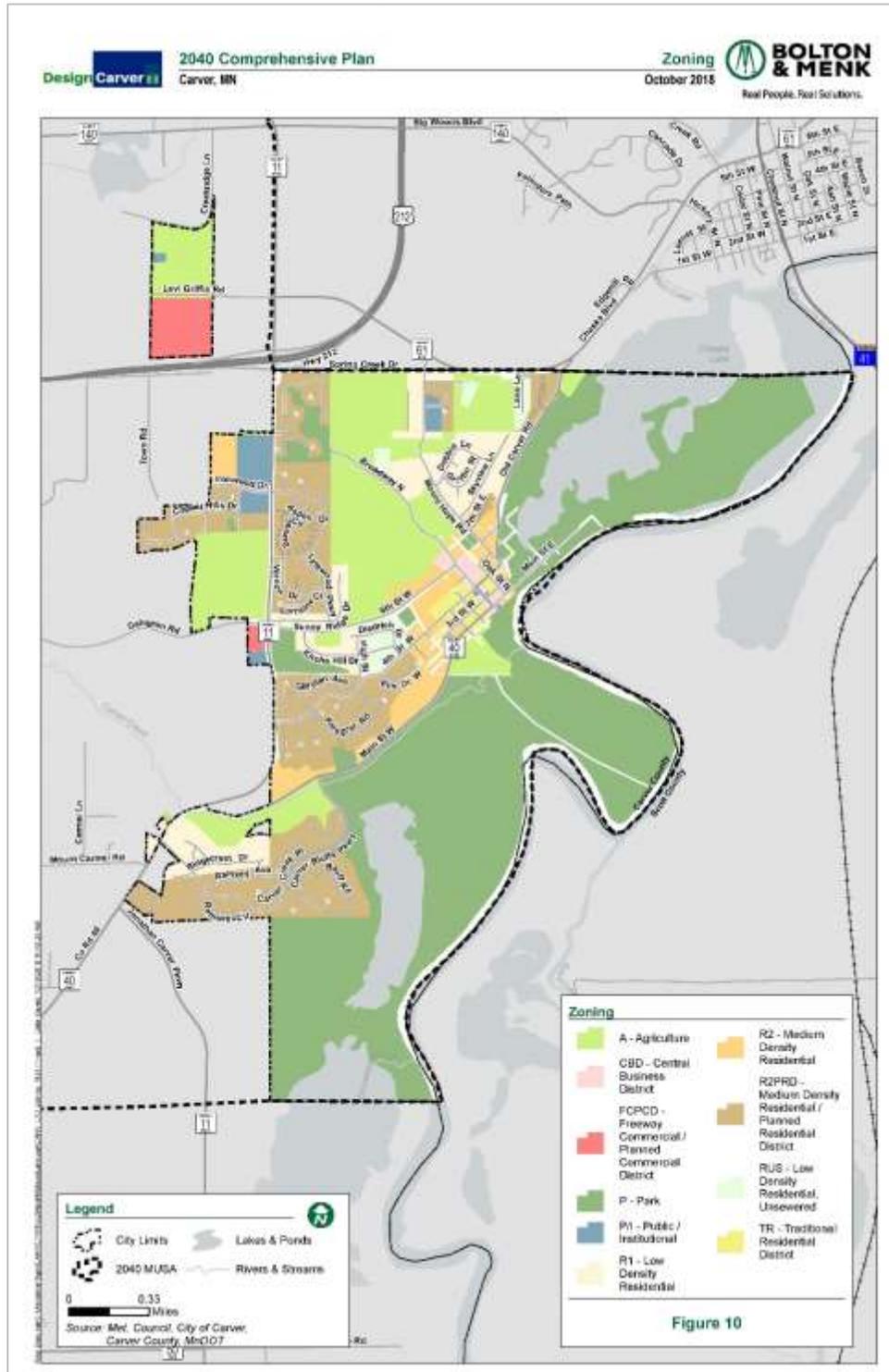


Table L-2 | Existing Land Use – Current City Limits

Existing Land Use	Acreage	% of Total
Agricultural	222.26	7.7%
Extractive	0	0.0%
Industrial and Utility	5.62	0.2%
Institutional	23.89	0.8%
Low Density Residential	604.8	21.0%
Major Highway	1.38	0.1%
Manufactured Housing Park	0	0.0%
Medium Density Residential	4.76	0.2%
Mixed Use	2.12	0.1%
Open Water (Lakes, Ponds, Rivers and Streams)	220.82	7.7%
Office	0	0.0%
Park, Recreational or Preserve	1330.81	46.2%
Retail and Other Commercial	36.75	1.3%
Undeveloped/Vacant	428.56	14.9%
Total	2881.77	100.0%

Orderly Annexation Agreement

The City of Carver and Dahlgren Township entered into an orderly annexation agreement in 2009 to establish roles and procedures for how and when a private property owner should be annexed into the City. The orderly annexation agreement defines the future growth area for the City. Properties outside of City limits are within the jurisdiction of Carver County until the time they are annexed.

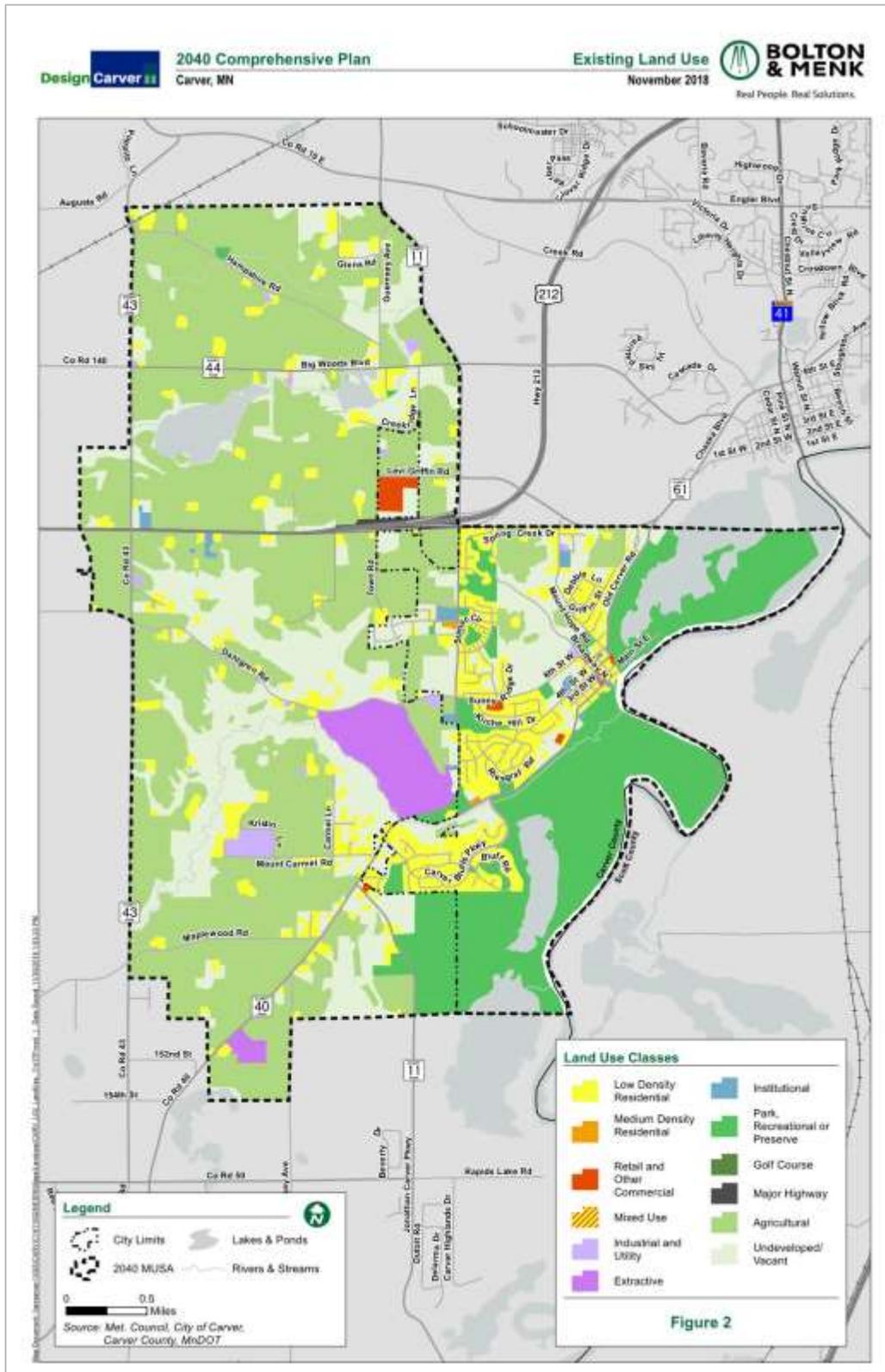
Ultimate Growth Boundary

The area within the ultimate growth boundary includes both the area within the existing City limits and the area covered by the Orderly Annexation Agreement. The predominate land uses within this area are agricultural and undeveloped land (65%). Table L-3 further details the existing land uses, and Figure L-3 illustrates the current land uses.

Table L-3 | Existing Land Use – Ultimate Growth Boundary

Existing Land Use	Acreage	% of Total
Agricultural	4042.85	44.1%
Extractive	233.15	2.6%
Golf Course	0	0.0%
Industrial and Utility	55.75	0.6%
Institutional	36.63	0.4%
Low Density Residential	994.3	10.9%
Major Highway	59.74	0.7%
Manufactured Housing Park	0	0.0%
Medium Density Residential	4.76	0.1%
Mixed Use	2.12	0.0%
Open Water (Lakes, Ponds, Rivers and Streams)	275.61	3.0%
Office	0	0.0%
Park, Recreational or Preserve	1497.59	16.4%
Railway	0	0.0%
Retail and Other Commercial	38.08	0.4%
Undeveloped/Vacant	1920.09	21.0%
Total	9160.68	100.0%

Figure L-3 – Existing Land Use – Ultimate Growth Boundary



Future Land Use

The City uses the Future Land Use Map to develop policies, strategies and recommendations for land use, infrastructure and development review and approvals. The Land Use plan includes both text and a Future Land Use Map that is used for guiding both day to day development decisions as well as large scale policy decisions. Development of area in the identified growth area for Carver will be completed when market conditions and willing private property owners initiate annexation into the City. Annexations of parcels that are not contiguous to City limits should be studied and leap-frogging of annexation should be avoided unless extenuating circumstances arise.

All property within the future growth area has been given a land use classification but City policy requires property not yet ready for development but recently annexed is to be held in an agricultural zoning classification. When urban services are available to the parcel and a development plan is proposed, rezoning should be consistent both with the Future Land use map as well as adopted zoning ordinances. The City may approve development if adequate public facilities are available to serve the development. Proposed new development is required to access public utilities and will not be permitted to be served via new well and septic.

Figure L-4 and the Future Land Use Map (Figure L-5) shows the desired land use for all property within the Carver growth area.

Figure L-4 – Land Use by Category

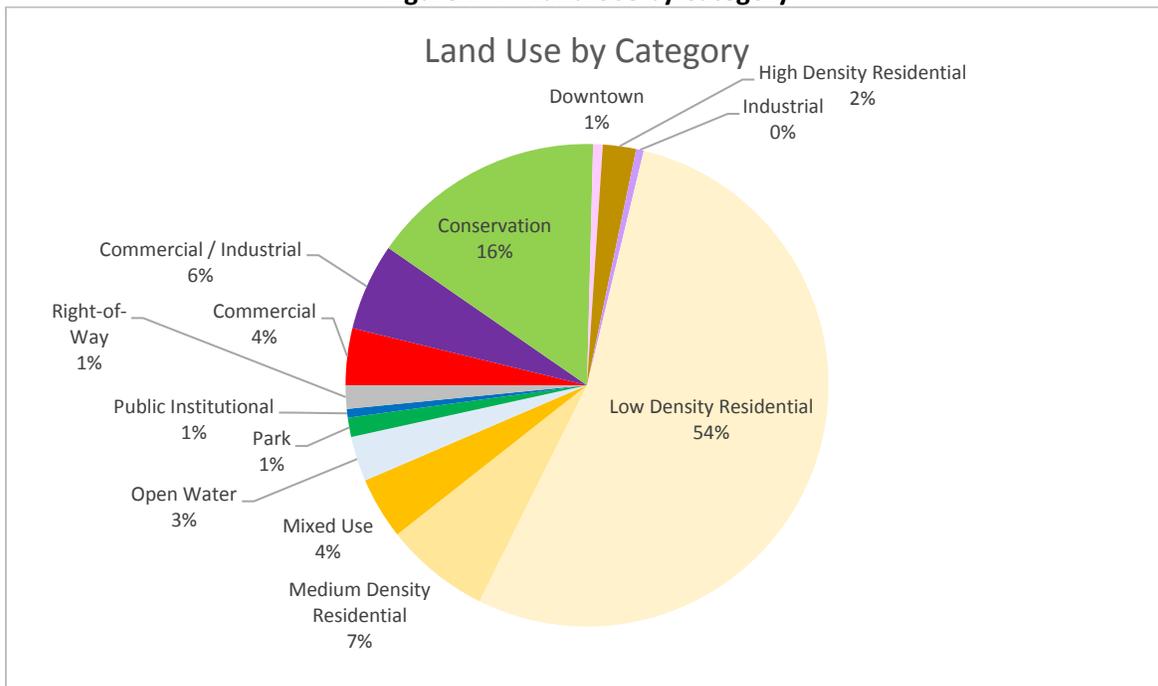
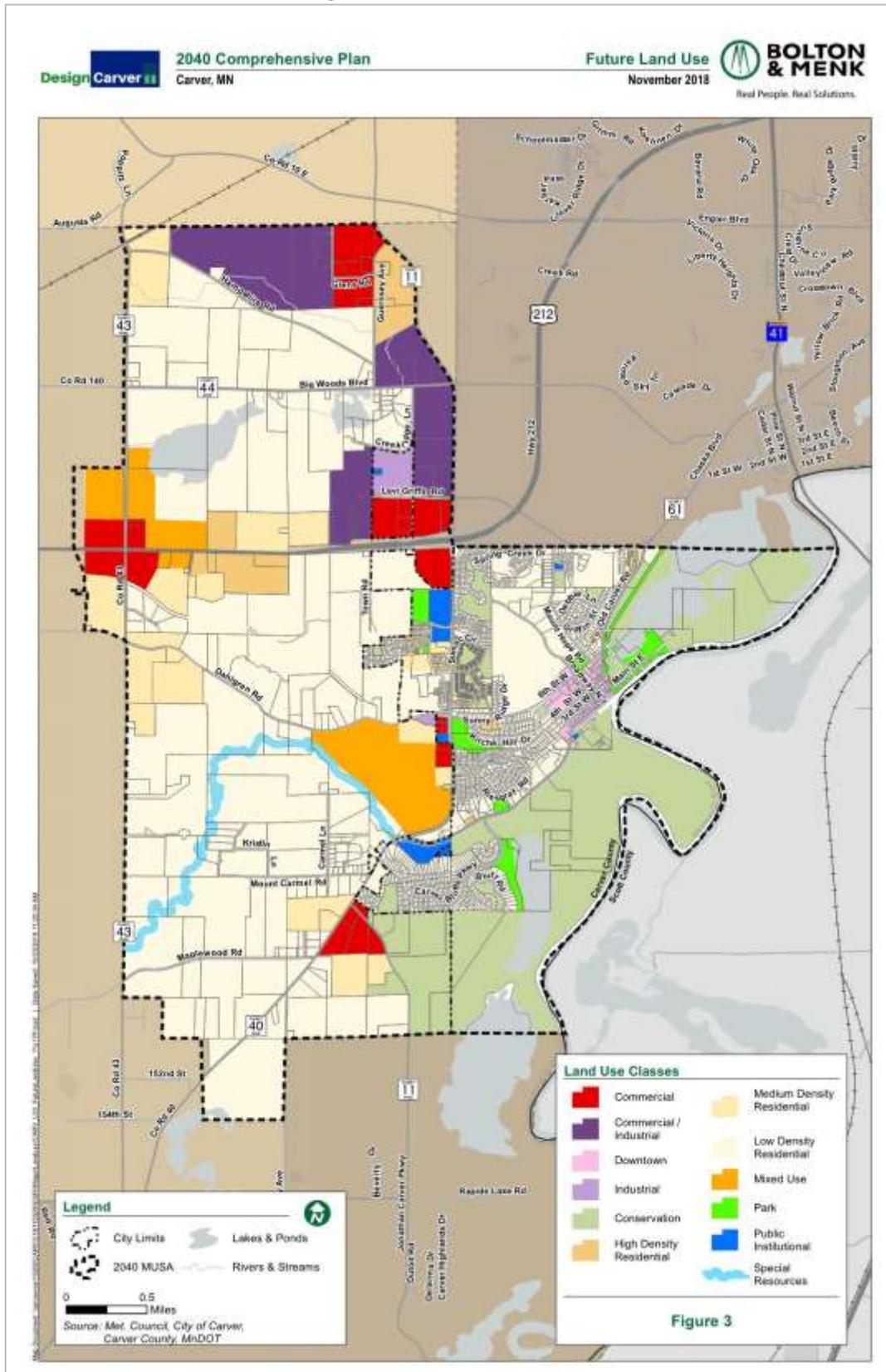


Figure L-5 – Future Land Use



Developable Land Use Areas

Not all land within the City or the growth area is developable. Factors influencing the ability to develop any parcel of land include

- 30+% Slopes
- City and Regional Parks
- Roads, Right of Way, Rail Lines
- Waterbodies

Figure L-6 illustrates the development constraints in Carver.

Figure L-6 – Development Constraints

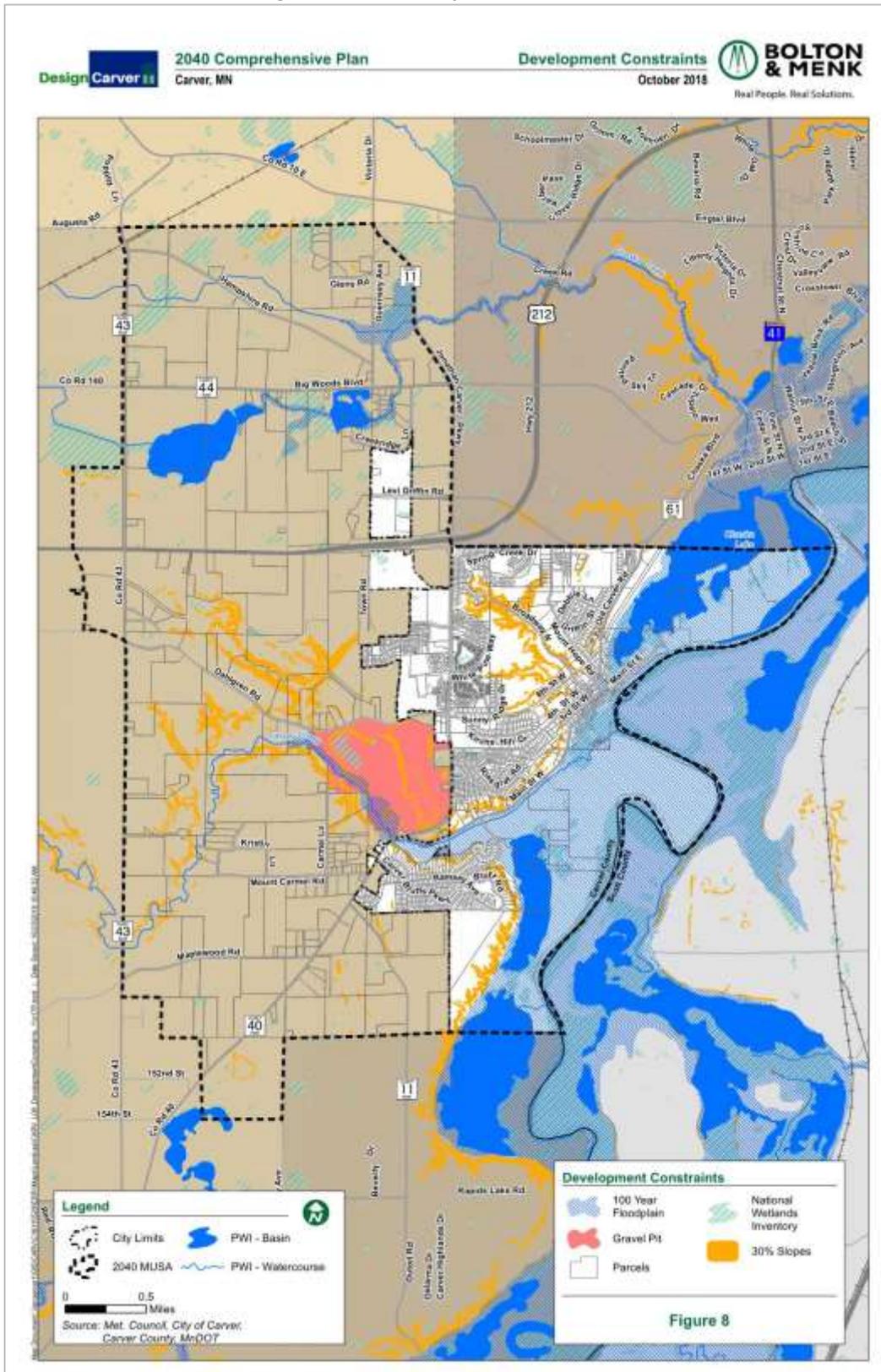


Table L-4 summarizes the planned land uses by category shown on the map. This table includes both gross acres and net developable acres.

Table L-4 | Future Land Use

Future Land Use	Gross Acres	% of Total	Net Acres	% of Net
Commercial	348.41	4%	271.73	5%
Commercial / Industrial	534.49	6%	451.13	8%
Conservation	1444.53	16%	368.39	7%
Downtown	58.6	1%	7.84	0%
High Density Residential	203.47	2%	138.65	3%
Industrial	46.98	1%	40.68	1%
Low Density Residential	4908.46	54%	3375.6	62%
Medium Density Residential	643.56	7%	517.47	9%
Mixed Use	381.11	4%	242.56	4%
Open Water	275.61	3%	0	0%
Park	118.38	1%	28.11	1%
Public Institutional	53.61	1%	33.35	1%
Right-of-Way	143.47	2%	0	0%
Total	9160.68	100%	5475.51	100%

Land Use Categories

Land use categories are a general guide for proposed densities and types of development that may occur on the property. The land use categories work hand in hand with the adopted zoning ordinances for the City to ensure that development is consistent and methodical.



Residential Development Classifications

Residential classifications within the land use map allow for a range of housing options, densities, and related uses to achieve the goals and policies outlined in this chapter.

Downtown

The existing downtown designation encompasses Carver’s historic downtown and includes both residential, commercial, and public uses. The downtown designation allows for flexibility in uses so adaptive reuse and infill redevelopment may occur over time if compatible with preservation of the historic district. The corresponding zoning district is Central Business District (CBD). Residential uses are permitted in the CBD above the first floor of commercial establishments, at densities of 4 to 12 units per acre.

Low Density Residential

Low density residential development typically captures traditional single family neighborhoods and developments on large, executive lots. The average density for low density residential ranges from 2 to 5 units per acre. Historical examples of low density residential in Carver include the Bluffs and Spring Creek neighborhoods. Low density will primarily offer development potential of single family homes but attached housing units may be included to protect sensitive environmental resources. Low density residential largely conforms to an R-1 zoning district.

Medium Density Residential

Medium density residential development allows for a range of housing types to be included. Small lot single-family homes, alley loaded developments, townhomes, twinhomes may be developed in the medium density residential category. Medium density allows for different housing intensities to have transition areas. Densities will range between 5 to 12 units per acre. This category closely aligns with a typical R-2 (Medium Density Residential) and TR (Traditional Residential) zoning districts.

High Density Residential

High density residential may include a variety of housing including townhomes, row homes, apartments and condominiums. High density residential will include density that is stacked in construction. Density for high density may range from 12 to 36 units per acre. This category closely aligns with the R-3 (High Density Residential) zoning district. Applicable projects in Carver include Carver Crossing and Sunny Ridge Senior Living.

Mixed Use

The mixed use designation includes property that is anticipated to be developed as master planning areas to allow for a mix of compatible uses. Areas designated as mixed use in the Future Land Use map include development of property near the Highway 212 corridor and Highway 43. Mixed use is also incorporated in the Future Land use map that will include unique resources in the City of Carver at the time of redevelopment. A mixed use district will allow for compatible land uses to develop without the use of a Planned Unit Development. Development of mixed use should include roughly 80% residential uses at a density range of 8 to 36 units per acre with 20% of property to be developed as a commercial use. Commercial components of the mixed use designation should be at a neighborhood level and provide day to day services.

Industrial and Commercial Uses

Commercial

The commercial designation primarily allows for development of retail uses that may include goods and services as well as office use. This designation is intended to allow broad flexibility to support the goals of Carver to diversify tax base and employment and services opportunities. The commercial use designation may include development of residential units supported by main floor retail or commercial space. Commercial nodes should be located near neighborhoods that can support the use via pedestrian traffic as well as good connection to collector and higher order streets. The commercial designation should be at a community level. The GC (General Commercial) zoning district is closely aligned with this designation.

Commercial/Industrial

The commercial/industrial designation allows for employment areas that may develop with both a mix of typical industrial and commercial users. Large scale retail users may occupy areas under this designation to create destinations for residents to acquire goods. The commercial/industrial designation may include office parks, flex space, data centers and light industrial users. Proximity to major road corridors and availability of on-site parking are two driving features that should be included in this designation. The commercial/industrial designation should provide services at a more regional level.

Properties directly adjacent to Highway 212 and Jonathan Carver Parkway should be preserved for commercial uses with direct frontage onto major roadways. Zoning districts similar to the Commercial/Industrial district include the following: commercial and freeway commercial. Users directly adjacent to major roadways should have a focus on job creation, consumer traffic and economic development of community needs.

The current corresponding zoning districts are the FC (Freeway Commercial) and PCD (Planned Commercial) districts.

Industrial

The industrial land use designation allows for an end user that will require direct access to a connected road system. Development may include manufacturing, fabricating or assembly. The uses and standards in the I-1 (Industrial) zoning district correspond to this designation.

Public Spaces and Land Uses

Park

The park classification represents active and passive recreation areas. The parks and trails section speaks to search areas for future park areas.

Public/Institutional

The public/institutional designation allows for development of City services as well as development of County, School District or State facilities in Carver.

Conservation

The conservation land use designation illustrates areas owned, operated and maintained by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service within the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Population Density and Employment Intensity Calculations

Residential and commercial land use requirements have been calculated to help Carver plan for and meet Metropolitan Council projections for population, households, and employment.

Residential Density

The 2040 population and household projections indicate an additional 4,097 housing units by 2040. Based on previous development patterns and available land, it is anticipated development will occur in the following percentages in each respective land use district.

The 2040 population and household projections indicate an additional 5,409 housing units in Carver by 2040. Table L-5 identifies the percentage of residential development anticipated to occur in each of the respective land use designations. These calculations are based on previous development patterns and available land.

Table L-5 | Planned Land Use Characteristics

Land Use	Percent of Anticipated Housing Units
Low Density Residential	65%
Medium Density Residential	20%
High Density Residential	10%
Mixed Use	3%
Downtown	2%
TOTAL	100%

The calculations in Table L-6 show the number of acres needed to accommodate all needed housing units in each land use category. Residential development is anticipated to take place in all residential zoning districts in an orderly manner. Actual acreage needed to accommodate future households and their locations will be influenced by market forces.

Table L-6 | Residential Density Calculations

Land Use Category	Density (units/acre)		Desired Distribution	Number of Households	Acres Needed	Net Developable Acres
	Minimum Value	Maximum Value				
Low Density Residential	3.0	5.0	65.0%	2,663	888	3,376
Medium Density Residential	5.0	12.0	20.0%	819	164	517
High Density Residential	12.0	36.0	4.5%	184	15	139
Mixed Use	8.0	36.0	10.0%	410	51	243
Downtown	4.0	12.0	0.5%	20	5	8
TOTAL			100.0%	4,097	1,123	4,282
AVERAGE NET DENSITY	3.65 units/acre					

The calculations above indicate the City has more than enough developable acres planned for residential uses to accommodate the forecasted growth. The average net density of 3.65 units per acre is consistent with the Emerging Suburban community designation.

Commercial

To meet forecasted 2040 employment projections, an additional 1,412 jobs will be added by 2040. Table L-7 identifies the potential number of new jobs, based on developable acres in the commercial and industrial land use categories.

Table L-7 | Commercial/Industrial Intensity Calculations

Land Use Category	FAR ¹	Developable Acres (based on FAR)	Developable SF	Potential Number of Jobs	
				Minimum	Maximum
Commercial	0.17	46.19	2,012,215	808	3,603
Commercial/Industrial	0.19	85.71	3,733,732	1500	6,686
Downtown	0.25	1.96	85,378	34	153
Industrial	0.19	7.73	336,684	135	603
Mixed Use	0.17	8.25	359,241	144	643
Public Institutional	0.25	8.34	363,182	146	650
TOTALS		158.18	6,890,431	2,768	12,338

¹ FAR based on Metropolitan Council's "Measuring Employment" Fact Sheet

These calculations indicate the City has more than enough land planned for commercial and industrial uses to accommodate the forecasted employment by 2040. Actual acreage needed to accommodate jobs will greatly depend on the types of new or expanding businesses. These calculations also do not include remote telecommuting, home occupations, or other less traditional employment bases.

Staged Development

Table L-8 summarizes the developable land available by decade in future land uses classifications. Forecasted development is based on projected housing and employment needs (as projected in Table L-1, Forecasted Population, Households and Employment), minimum lot sizes by each land use district and an anticipated allocation of the projected housing development between each of the land use districts. This table indicates the anticipated timing and sequence of growth. It identifies the developable acres, number of housing units and jobs that may be developed in each 10-year planning period. The table is not intended to limit or to compel growth in any specific area within the planning period. Rather, it is an estimation of where and when growth may logically occur.

Table L-8 | Developable Land Area by Category and Decade

Residential	Density (units/acre)		Existing Net Acres	2020		2030		2040	
	Min	Max		Acres	Units	Acres	Units	Acres	Units
Low Density Residential	3.0	5.0	3375.6	444.7	1334.0	351.0	1053.0	735.3	2206.0
Medium Density Residential	5.0	12.0	517.5	41.0	204.0	137.9	690.0	0.1	0.0
High Density Residential	12.0	36.0	138.7	0.7	9.0	92.4	1109.0	0.0	0.0
Mixed Use	8.0	36.0	194.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	51.6	330.0
Downtown	4.0	12.0	7.8	7.8	31.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Non-Residential	Employment		Existing Developable Acres	2020		2030		2040	
	Min	Max		Acres	Jobs	Acres	Jobs	Acres	Jobs
Commercial	17.0	78.0	271.7	74.4	1265.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Commercial/Industrial	17.0	78.0	451.1	14.1	239.2	155.7	2646.1	281.4	4783.8
Downtown	17.0	78.0	7.8	7.8	132.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Industrial	17.0	78.0	40.7	40.7	691.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mixed Use	17.0	78.0	48.5	0.1	1.2	0.1	1.2	51.6	877.7
Public Institutional	17.0	78.0	33.4	33.3	566.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Special Resource Protection

Natural resources are beneficial to the social, environmental, and economic vitality of a community. To ensure their quality and benefits, it is essential to plan and manage natural resources and areas as we do residential and commercial areas.

The City of Carver will promote, preserve and enhance natural resources within the City and protect them from adverse effects by regulating land disturbances or development activities that would have an adverse and potentially irreversible impact on environmentally sensitive land. The City will encourage development techniques that are sensitive to the natural landscape and work to preserve mature trees, native plants and animals while respecting topography and natural wetlands.

Tree Preservation

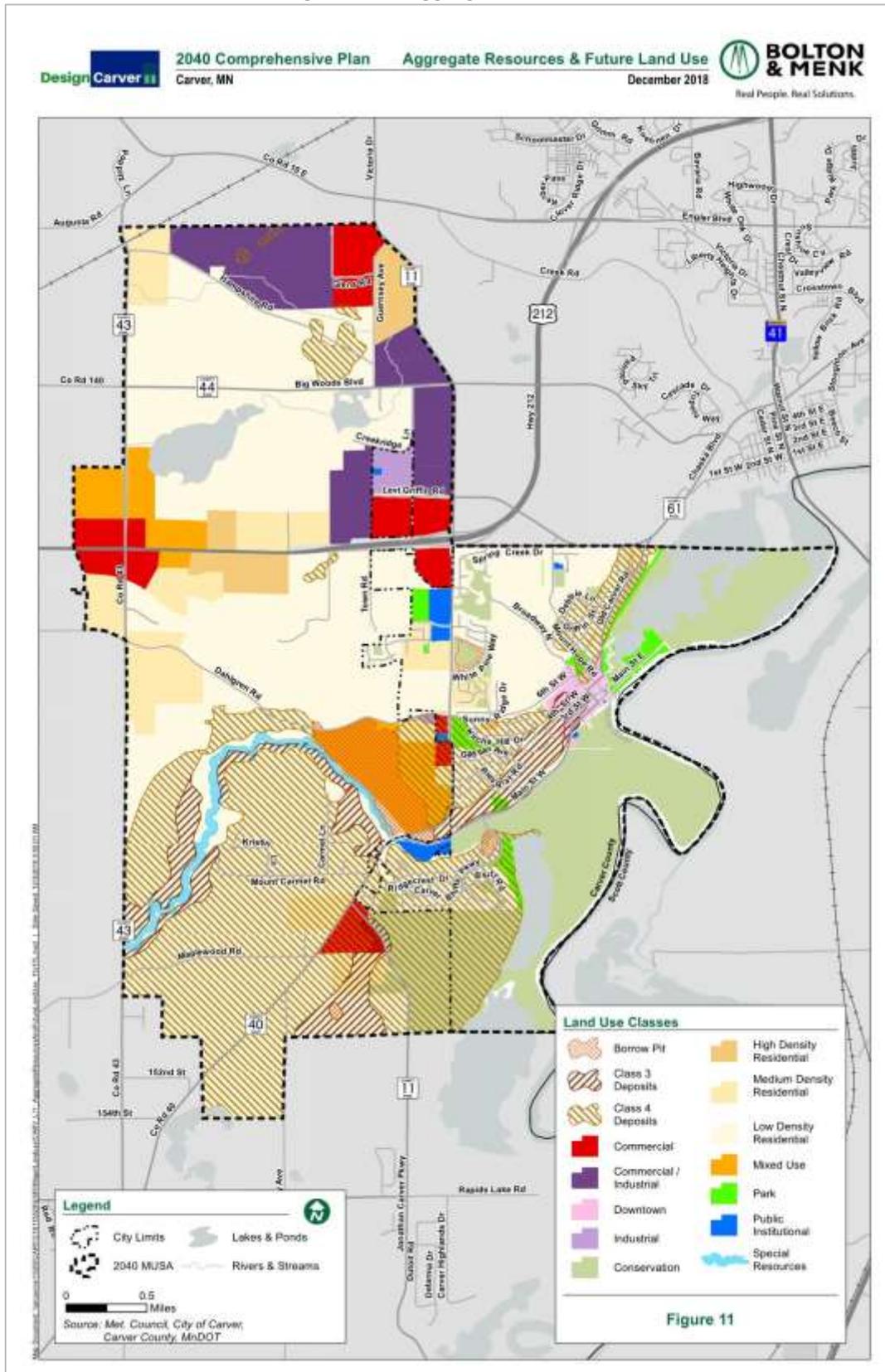
The City's Tree Preservation, Replacement and Reforestation ordinance is intended to preserve, protect, maintain and manage the community's existing forest resources. The ordinance recognizes the benefits of tree preservation and reforestation for erosion control, reduction of stormwater runoff, removal of carbon dioxide and generation of oxygen in the atmosphere, buffering noise pollution, protection against severe weather, providing wildlife habitat, conserving and enhancing the City's physical and aesthetic environment, and generally protecting and enhancing the quality of life and the general welfare of the City.

Aggregate Resources

In 2000, the Metropolitan Council, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Minnesota Geological Survey collaborated on an aggregate resource inventory of the seven-county metropolitan area. The inventory identified and categorized likely areas of dolostone deposits, and sand and gravel deposits.

Significant sand and gravel deposits exist in the entire southern portion of the existing City of Carver as well as the portion of Dahlgren Township included within the Comprehensive Plan; however, a large portion of these deposits do not meet current industry standards. There are two generalized areas of natural aggregate that meet industry standards, located generally adjacent to Carver Creek and also contained with the land area situated between CR 40 and CR 11. Mining in the area located near Carver Creek would negatively impact the bluff, ravine and forest resources in the area. The area located between CR 40 and CR 11 would have less impact on natural resources. Aggregate resource deposits are shown on Figure L-7.

Figure L-7 – Aggregate Resources



Solar Access

The Metropolitan Land Planning Act (Minnesota Statutes 473.859, Subd. 2) requires local comprehensive plans to include for the protection and development of access to direct sunlight for solar energy systems. Table L-9 identifies the solar potential in Carver.

Table L-9 | Solar Resource Calculations

Gross Potential (Mwh/yr)	Rooftop Potential (Mwh/yr)	Gross Generation Potential (Mwh/yr)	Rooftop Generation Potential (Mwh/yr)
5,593,491	186,291	559,349	18,629

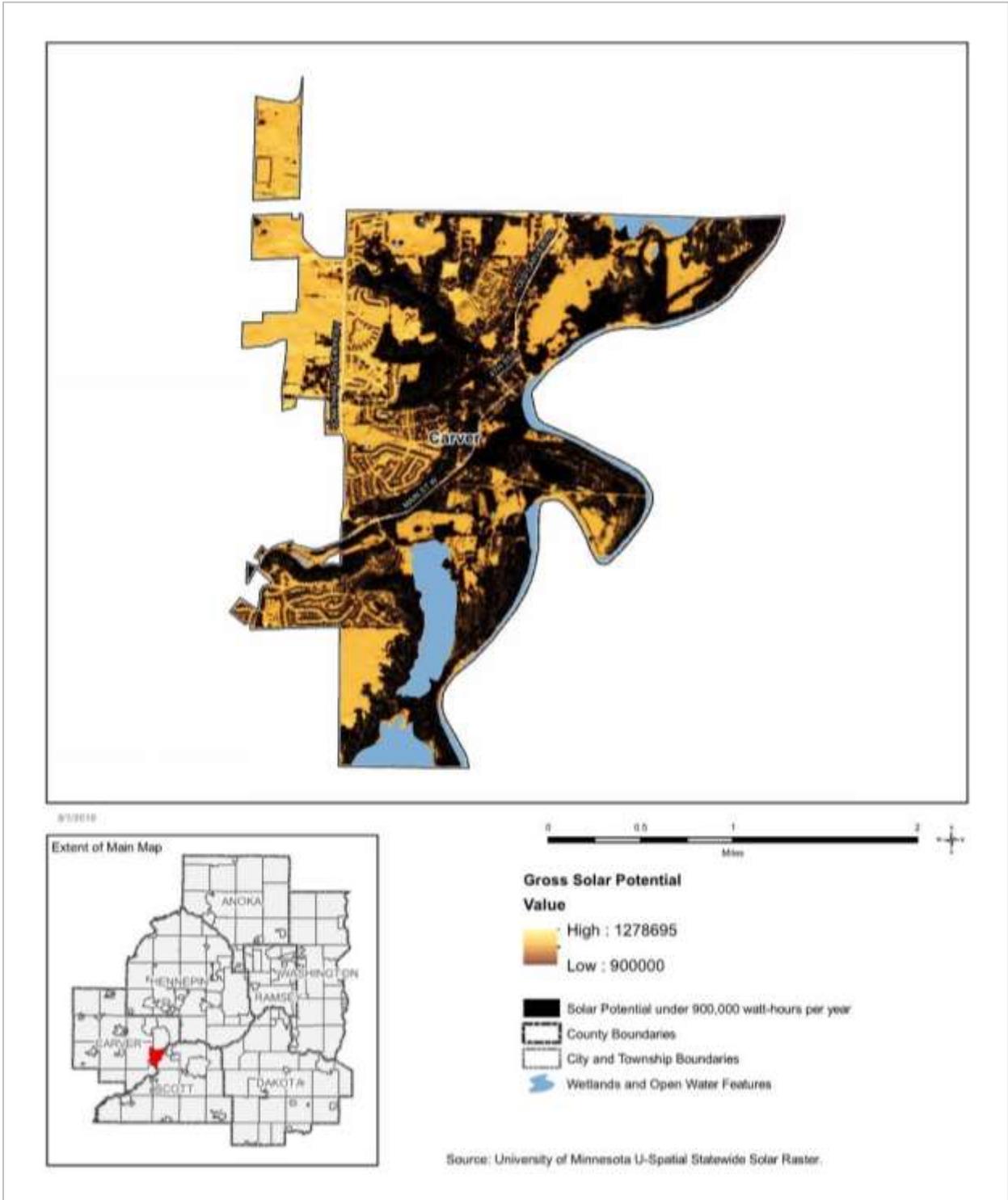
Source: Metropolitan Council

These calculations assume a 10% conversion efficiency and current (2016/17) solar technologies. The average home in Minnesota consumes between 9 and 10 Mwh/year (Solar Energy Industries Association; US Energy Information Administration). Using only Carver’s rooftop generation potential, between 1,863 and 2,070 homes could be powered by solar energy annually.

These numbers should be interpreted as a baseline; on average, communities would be able to expect between 30% and 60% of total energy used to be able to be generated by solar rooftops. The rooftop potential estimated here does not consider ownership, financial barriers, or building-specific structural limitations. Solar potential in the City of Carver is displayed in Figure L-8.

The City of Carver shall continue to consider the impacts of solar throughout the community for residential, commercial and industrial use. Carver has an existing solar ordinance that allows for solar development in all zoning districts and preserves direct solar access. The City will continue to monitor and update the ordinance to ensure access to solar energy should a property owner choose and ensure minimum lot size, setbacks and open space allow for development.

Figure L-8 – Gross Solar Potential



Historic Resources

Historic assets help to maintain a strong “sense of place” and community pride. Carver has a rich history as a steamboat community. The downtown with its concentration of historic buildings adjacent to the riverfront provides a community gathering location and helps to distinguish Carver from other growing suburban communities.

National Historic District

Much of Carver's downtown, comprising about 60 acres, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. According to the district's nomination form, compiled in 1978, Carver is significant as a well-preserved Minnesota River town dating from 1852- 1900. The 100 buildings and structures within the district represent the most significant and best preserved concentration of commercial, religious, residential and social buildings in Carver County. In addition, Carver contains the most concentrated number of architecturally distinguished buildings in the county.

The nomination form lists fifty buildings that were considered historically and/or architecturally significant, another 39 that were considered complementary to the district, and only nine that were considered "intrusions" because of later construction. Although a number of significant and complementary buildings have been demolished or destroyed, the district still retains its integrity, and restoration efforts have continued.

Although "pure" architectural styles are not found in Carver, architectural influences represented in the district's earlier buildings (1854-1875) include Federal, Greek Revival, and Italianate styles. Later buildings (1875-1900) show the influence of Eastlake, Stick Style, Queen Anne, and Neo-Classic styles.

Most of the historic resources within the current City boundary are located within the locally designated historic preservation district. An intensive survey of the resources within the City has not been completed since the initial National Register nomination in 1970. The City will be completing a survey this year in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Traditionally, the Carver downtown has served as the hub for all commercial and civic activity in the community. The impending developments near CSAH 11 and TH 212 are anticipated to service the general retail and service needs of the community in the future. The downtown will likely experience a shift from providing for the general needs of the community to providing more specialized goods and services. The City should work with the downtown business community to promote and enhance the central business district.

Other Historic Resources

There are many other historic resources located within the City of Carver and the expansion area in Dahlgren Township, many of which are associated with agricultural uses. The City will be inventorying the historic resources coincident with review of development requests and evaluating their reuse potential. The majority of these resources are not protected from demolition and are currently outside of the corporate limits of Carver. As such, Carver County's regulations apply to these structures, which may be removed at the request of the property owner following issuance of a demolition permit from Carver County.

Preservation Initiatives

In the late 1960s and early 70s, historic preservation took hold in Carver through the efforts of two new residents, Anne Neils and Edith Herman. They began the restoration of a number of historic homes and established an organization, Carver-on-the-Minnesota, with the goal of restoring Carver as an 1870s river town. The organization ran tours of restored homes, encouraged development of antique stores and other businesses, and started the Steamboat Jubilee, a yearly festival, held the first weekend after Labor Day.

Several preservation and design initiatives were undertaken in the early 1980s. Carver Historic District; Design One: Architecture, an architectural history and guide, was published by Carver-on-the-Minnesota in 1981, with additional funding from the Minnesota Historical Society and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (a former agency of the federal Department of Interior).

In an essay in this work, Gary Roberts cites three main reasons for the homogeneity of age, style, size and quality among Carver's buildings. First, the scarcity of usable land between the river's floodplain and bluffs meant that development occurred rapidly in outlying areas. Second, the town site had been platted before settlement, leaving no large parcels undeveloped. Third, the town's early and rapid growth meant that it was nearly fully developed by the 1880s. Roberts describes many of the City's noteworthy buildings in detail. The guidebook also contains a history of Carver's boom years, by Lucie Hartley, and guidelines for historic preservation and new construction, by MacDonald and Mack Partnership. This firm also provided case studies of facade renovations for three buildings on Broadway.

In 1983-84, a team of landscape architecture students from the University of Minnesota conducted a study of Carver's existing setting, history, tourism potential and resident opinions, and developed a design framework, entitled Visual Master Plan: Carver, Minnesota. Their survey of resident opinions about the downtown showed a desire to build on the City's history, improve access to the river, and to retain Carver's rural small town character. Their plan included a photo survey and recommendations for downtown design improvements, new parks, and improvements to existing parks (see below under "Urban design").

Historic District Regulations

Carver is a Certified Local Government through the National Park Service. Carver has a Heritage Preservation Commission, which advises the City Council on the issuance of permits and other activities within the historic district. The Commission has the authority to review any applications for repair or remodeling (except for painting), new construction, moving or demolition of buildings.

Because much of the downtown falls within the 100-year floodplain, many existing buildings are considered non-conforming under the floodplain regulations. According to the City's floodplain ordinance, such non-conforming structures may continue in use, but may not be enlarged or altered in any way that would increase flood damage potential, unless they are flood-proofed. Thus, expansion of buildings, new construction, and even subdivision of land are all quite difficult in much of the downtown. However, existing buildings may be repaired and renovated, or converted from one permitted use to another, without violating the regulations. Many properties within the historic downtown are required by their mortgage lenders to carry flood insurance.