

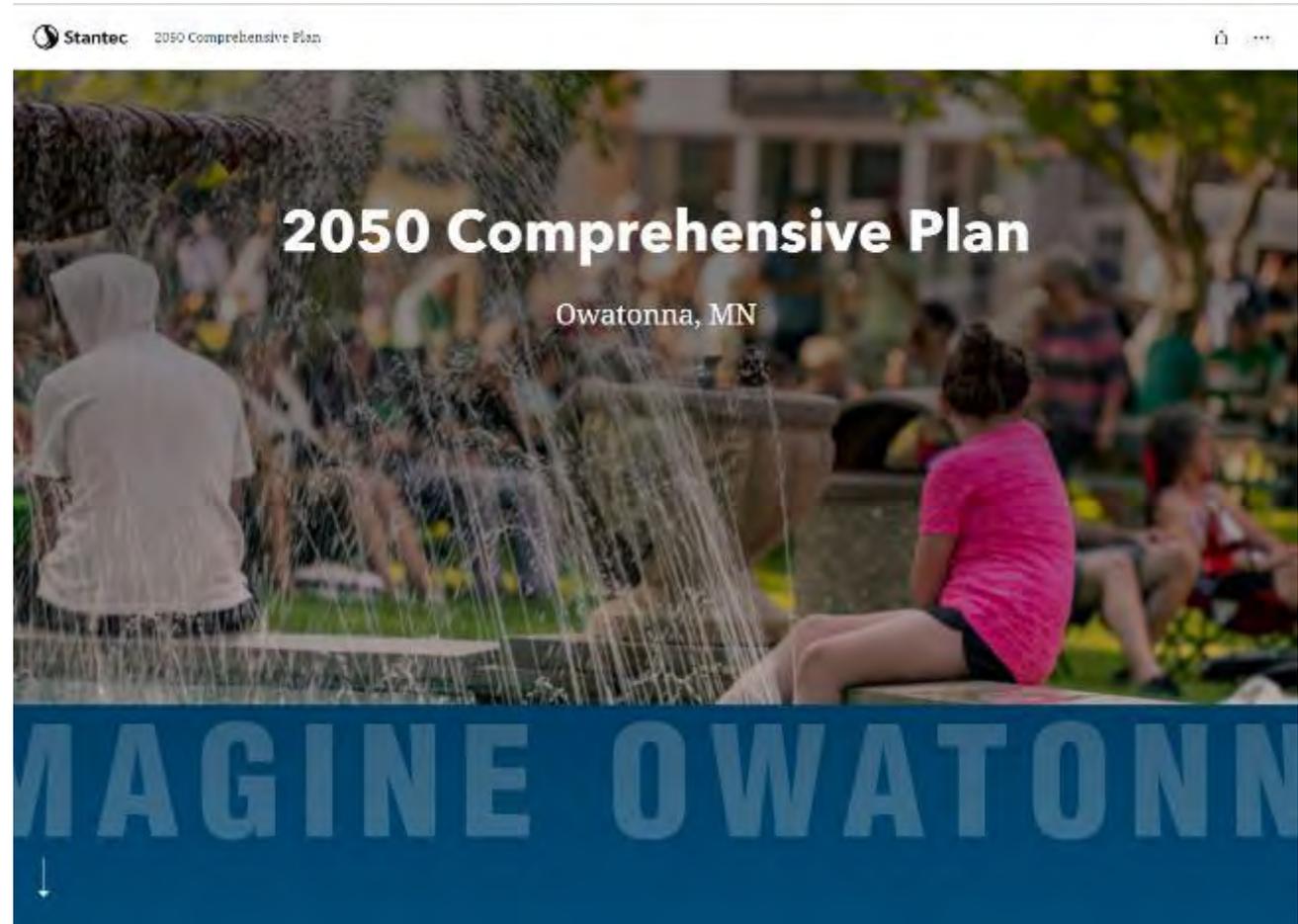
IMAGINE OWATONNA

2050 Comprehensive Plan

Planning Commission

April 23, 2023

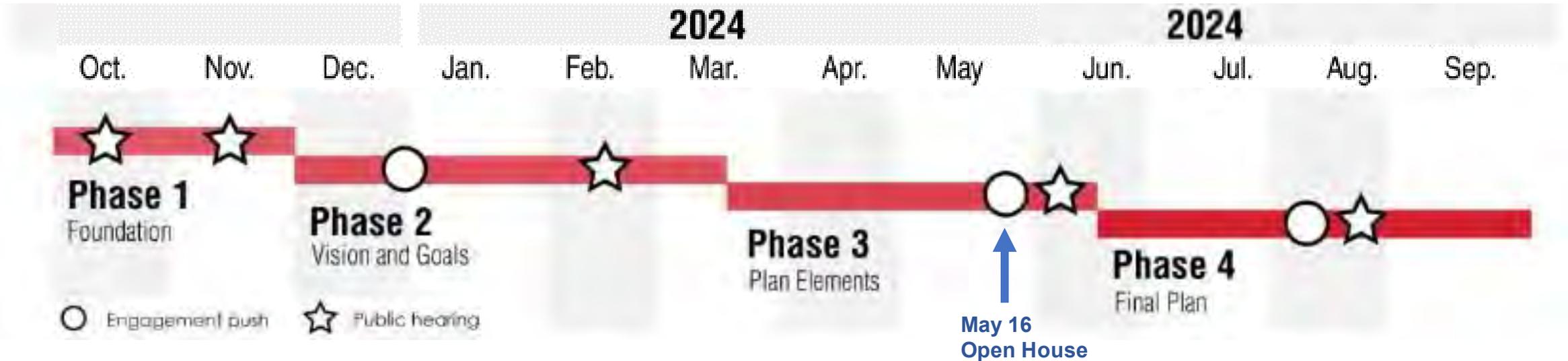
- Comp Plan Process/Schedule
- Vision and Guiding Values Recap
- Draft Plan Chapters
 - Land Use and Housing
 - Parks and Trails
 - Economic Development
 - Transportation
 - Sustainability and Resilience
 - Utilities
- Next Steps



IMAGINE OWATONNA

2025 Comprehensive Plan

- Phase 1: Foundation/Background Report Complete ✓
- Phase 2: Engagement/Focus Groups + Vision & Goals ✓
- Phase 3: Prepare Plan Elements/Chapters
- Phase 4: Final Plan Mid-2024



Vision for 2050

Owatonna – where the extra mile takes you – is strategically located at the crossroads of I-35 and US 14 with opportunities for all. Residents and businesses thrive, with easy access to work, shopping, high quality education, and recreation. We are better together, welcoming and diverse, creating a quality of life unparalleled in Southern Minnesota.



Guiding Values

- Owatonna strives to be a community with opportunity for all to live happy, healthy, successful lives
- Owatonna is both traditional and progressive, keeping its historic strengths and embracing new opportunities
- Our city is innovative and supportive of its residents and businesses, helping all to succeed in Owatonna
- Owatonna residents are determined and passionate about the city as a place to live, work and play



Land Use and Housing

Trends:

- More and more people are choosing to live in neighborhoods where they can easily walk to do their daily errands. This can be either a horizontal or vertical mix of uses – designated as mixed use, applied in the downtown, and any other locations that the city envisions having a mix of uses.
- Currently, the city has three future land use categories for residential uses – low density residential, high density residential and mobile/manufactured homes. To attract a range of housing options and to be more consistent with zoning, the city could add a medium density residential category, what is often called “the missing middle”.
- The form of sites and buildings is becoming just as important as the function, or land uses. Incorporating design criteria can aide new development to fit into the character and context of the existing community.
- Owatonna now has one commercial future land use category, where many cities have multiple representing different types of commercial development.
- Comp Plans in growing cities such as Owatonna generally consider growth areas where the city could expand within the next 20 years. This is something that could be included and planned for in a future land use map.
- Owatonna has good momentum in downtown with the Downtown Streetscape Project. There is an opportunity to build on this momentum through the Comprehensive Plan by carefully planning the desired future land uses.



DRAFT Land Use Goals:

Goal 1. Explore developing a regional destination community center to include an indoor swimming pool, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, meeting rooms, and other integrated uses.

Goal 2. Improve housing opportunities and neighborhoods in Owatonna.

- a) Provide areas for a mix of housing densities and types throughout the City.
- a) Identify and zone new neighborhoods and neighborhood nodes on the east side of the City to include commercial and high density housing to serve as focal points for new development.
- a) Encourage mixed use development at key nodes throughout the City to encourage walkability and community character.
- a) Create a mixed use node near the new Owatonna Senior High School in southeast Owatonna to include commercial and high density residential uses.
- a) Continue to explore growth opportunities outside current city limits to expand housing and commercial opportunities.



DRAFT Land Use Goals, cont'd:

Goal 3. Support Owatonna's economic development through land use plans and policies.

Continue to invest in and support downtown Owatonna as the economic and social center of the City – a destination to live, work, and play.

Explore mixed use development near the Straight River as an amenity and resource.

Continue to build on Owatonna's historic buildings and character in land use and development decisions.

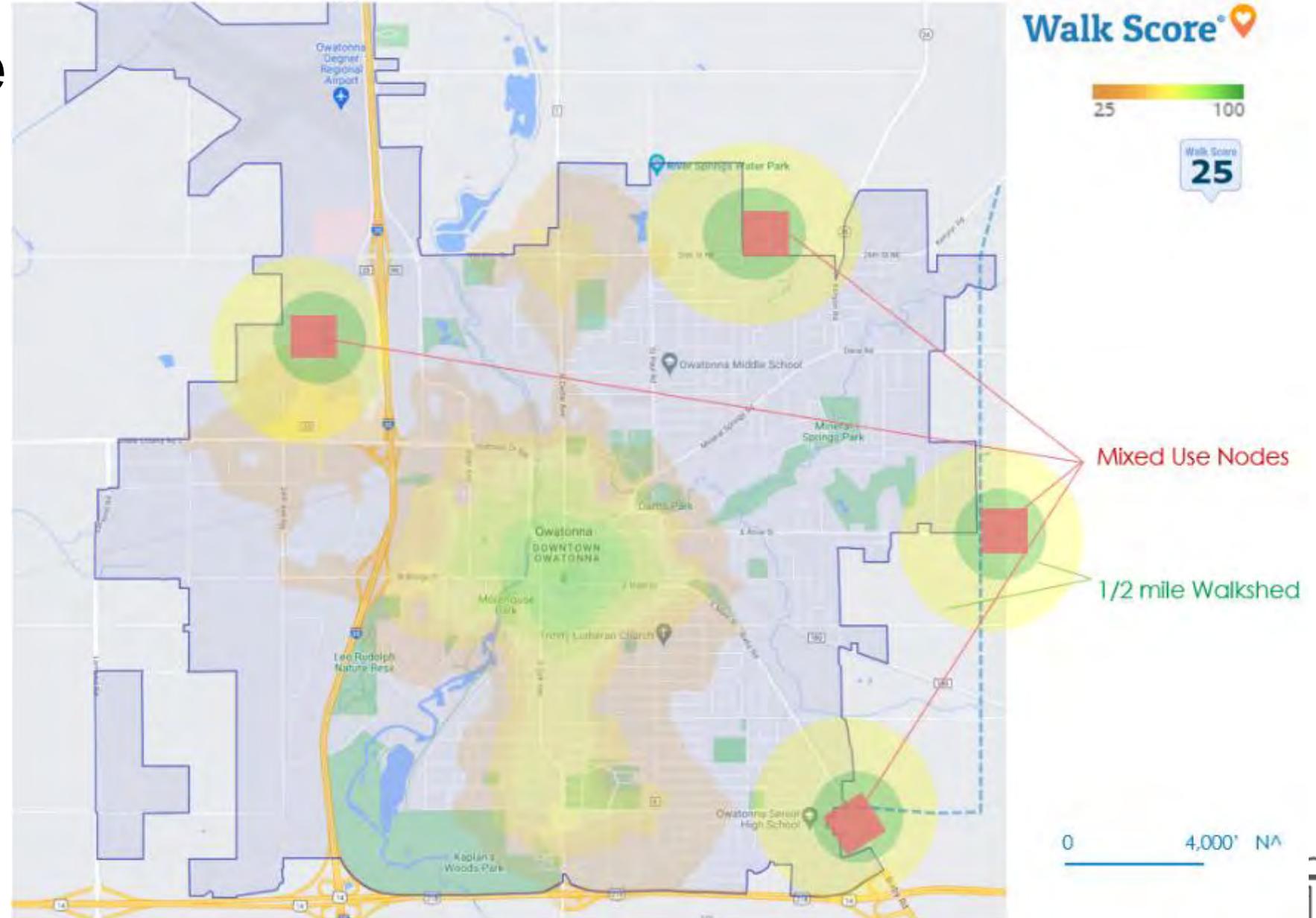
Explore adding residential, mixed use, and open space areas to the industrial park area along with improved connections to the rest of Owatonna.

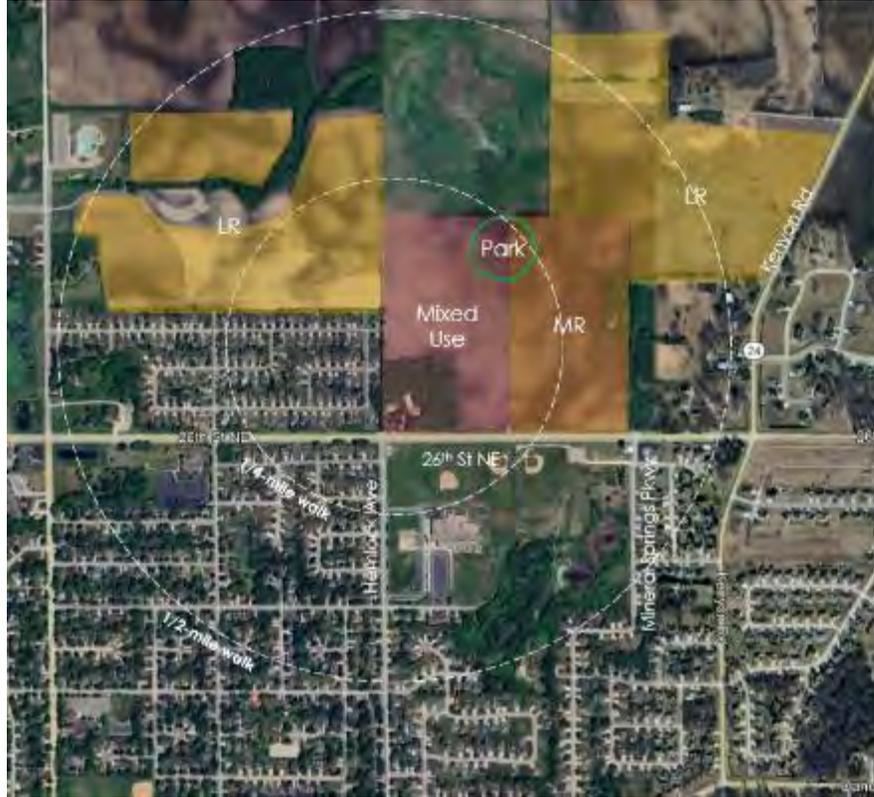


Mixed Use

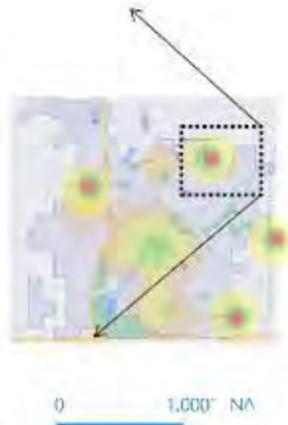
Walkable neighborhoods centered on mixed use nodes

Owatonna Walk Score & Suggested Mixed Use Nodes

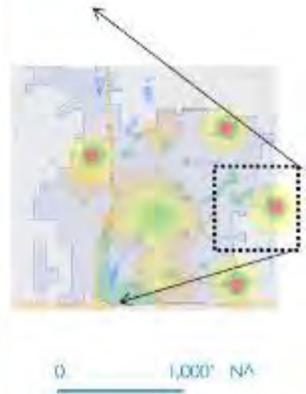




Owatonna
Comp Plan
**Mixed Use
Neighborhood
Node #1**
26th Street NE &
Hemlock Avenue

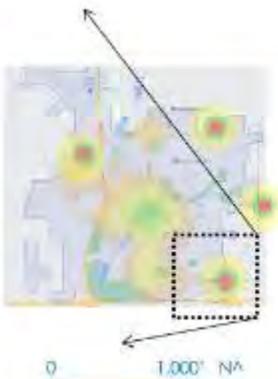


Owatonna
Comp Plan
**Mixed Use
Neighborhood
Node #2**
Rose Street & Future
29th Avenue





Owatonna
Comp Plan
**Mixed Use
Neighborhood
Node #3**
SE 18th Street & Bixby
Road



Owatonna
Comp Plan
**Mixed Use
Neighborhood
Node #4**
24th Ave NW
& 18th Street NW



Residential – Low Density



Residential – Medium Density



Residential – High Density

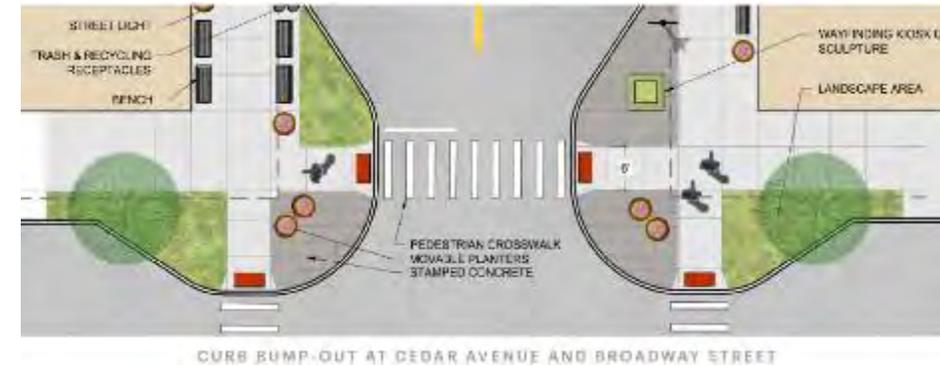


Mixed Use



Downtown

- Center of social, economic and cultural life
- 2019 Downtown Streetscape Study
- Emphasize historic character
- Partner with Chamber of Commerce
- Enhance connections
- Look for residential opportunities



Parks and Trails

What We Heard:

- People of all ages enjoy Owatonna's park system and see it as a selling point for the city. People especially enjoy the green space around Lake Kohlmeier, along the river, Kaplan Woods and Morehouse Park.
- It was highlighted that the park and trail network can bolster economic development, attracting businesses and employees.
- While there are trails connecting parks, there are some missing connections that would make the system safer and easier to utilize. Trail maintenance is also an issue that came up in many focus groups as something that the city could work to improve.
- Specific opportunities mentioned include more indoor spaces for year-round recreation, trail connections west of I-35 and a splash pad.

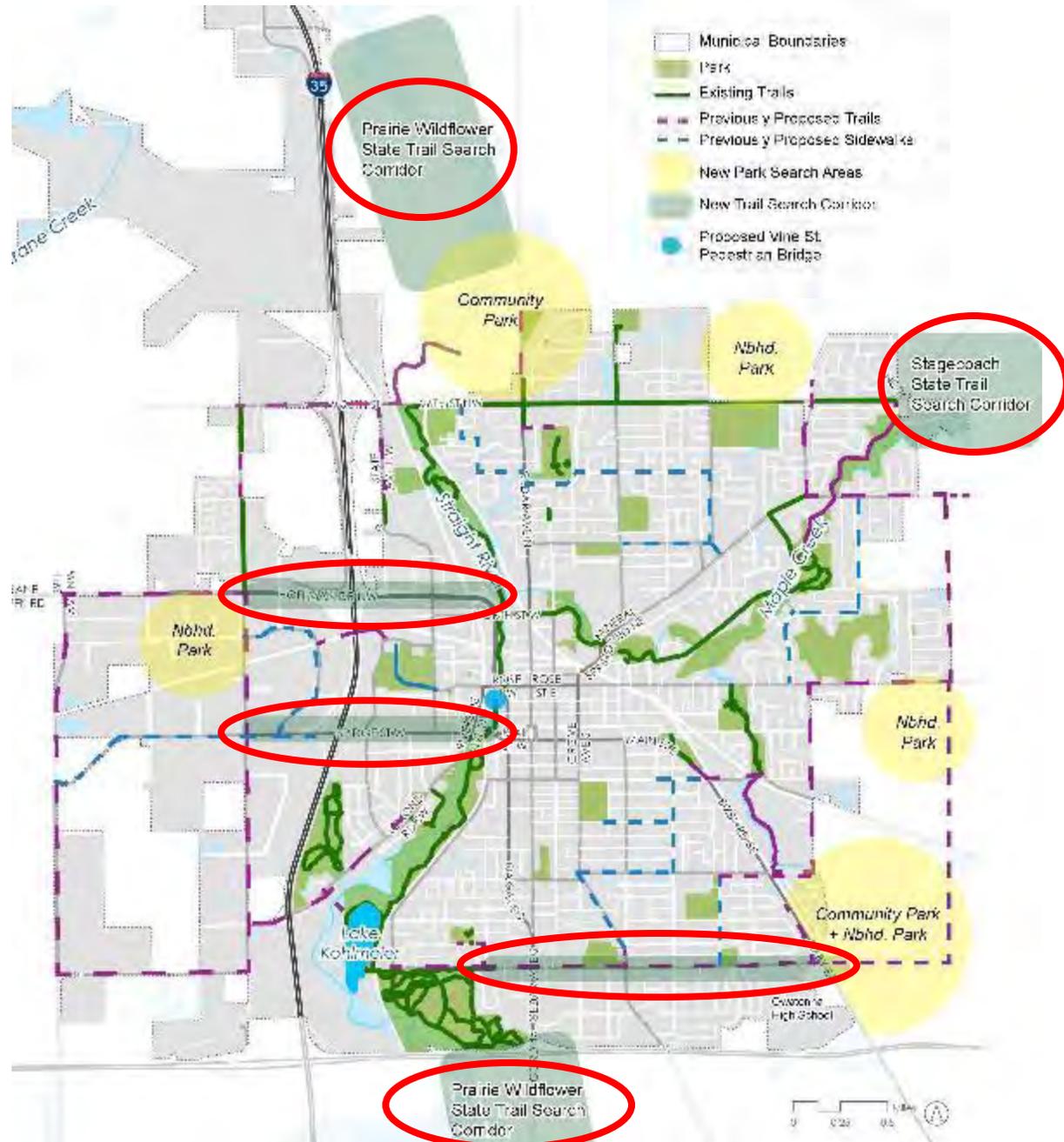


Parks and Trails

Trends:

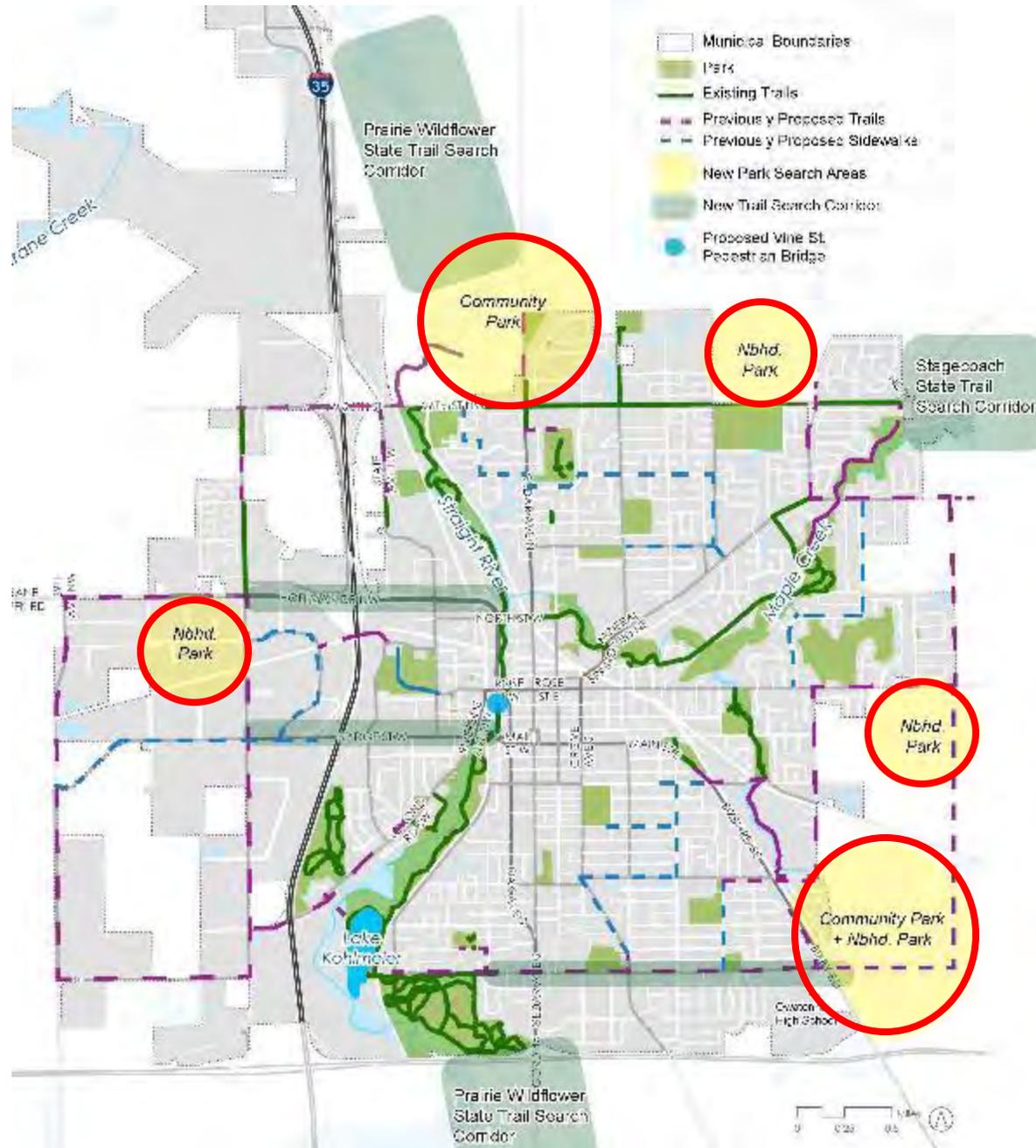
- Increased need for trails to accommodate a trend towards more active living and health and wellness activities.
- A more intentional focus on accessible facilities to serve both people with disabilities, younger generations (moms with strollers etc.), and older generations.
- Recreational and social programming for the growing population of older adults and seniors.
- Increased participation in field sports, and a need for more space in communities for these types of facilities
- Park space as an indicator of equity. Cities are viewing park space as critical infrastructure and increasing commitments to provide open space in every neighborhood.
- Greater understanding of the connections between parks and public health, and the mental and physical health benefits of parks, open spaces and trails.
- Shifting desires in park amenities including increased interest in splash pads, pickleball courts, dog parks, challenge courses, nature play areas, community gardens. The city's *Parks and Trails System Master Plan* includes a full list of park trends, which should be referenced in master planning for any new park space.





Search Areas	Description
State Trail Search Corridors – Prairie Wildflower (North-South) and Stagecoach (East)	Plan for designated State Trails
Bridge Street Trail	Addresses desire for connection between downtown and the industrial park.
Hoffman Drive Trail	Serves the commercial areas west of I-35 and the proposed residential growth area south of Hoffman Drive.
18 th Ave Trail	Facilitates safe non-motorized connections to the high school and serve the proposed growth area east of Bixby Road.





Search Areas	Description
<p>Community Park - North</p>	<p>A community park (~20 acres) search area was identified in the <i>Parks and Trails System Master Plan</i>, in the northern portion of the city. The city should continue to explore land acquisition options to fill the need for a larger park in this area of the city.</p>
<p>Neighborhood Parks – North of 26th St at Hemlock Ave, Rose St and Future 29th Ave, 24th Ave and 18th St NW</p>	<p>The Future Land Use map in this Comprehensive Plan includes planning for four new mixed use neighborhood nodes. These nodes should all be planned with new neighborhood park (~3-5 acres) space.</p>
<p>Community and Neighborhood Park - Southeast</p>	<p>The southeast portion of Owatonna is lacking in park land and amenities. The high school helps with this deficiency, but additional park space will be needed east of Bixby as this area of the city continues to grow. The city should look for space for both a neighborhood park, as well as a larger community park.</p>



DRAFT Parks and Trails Goals

Goal 1. Improve park, trail and recreation programming in Owatonna.

- a) Follow the recommendations of the Owatonna Parks and Trails Master Plan and regularly update the Plan to address changing needs in the City.
- b) Provide green space for each neighborhood in Owatonna, including active park space within one half mile of all residents wherever possible, and sidewalk or trail links between Owatonna neighborhoods and key destinations and services.
- c) Continue seeking regional park status for the combined properties of Kaplan's Woods, Lake Kohlmeier and a portion of the Straight River public land as a regional park.
- d) Continue to make all City park and recreation facilities accessible to all ages and abilities.
- e) Continue to work cooperatively on park and recreation programs and facilities with Owatonna Public Schools.
- f) Continue using a master planning process to best determine correct use of park space, trail connections, amenities and to ensure accessibility standards are met before park facilities are constructed.
- g) Continue to emphasize and build in safety in all park and trail facilities and programs.
- h) Integrate park and recreation facilities into a planned community center.
- i) Explore a park land dedication ordinance.



Parks and Trails Goals (cont'd)

Goal 2. Improve connections within the park and trail system in Owatonna.

- a) Explore new east-west trail connections between Downtown, across the Straight River, across I-35, and the industrial park.
- a) Continue focusing on trail development, trail safety, and maintenance of existing trails in the community.
- a) Continue to pursue including Owatonna's trail system in the regional trail system defined by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC), providing both north-south and east-west trail connections to regional destinations.
- a) Continue to establish relationships with Steele County and neighboring communities (Clinton Falls, Medford, Claremont) to partner on regional trail opportunities in order to best secure future grant funding of these amenities.
- a) Pursue funding to develop and implement a Safe Routes to School program in Owatonna.



Economic Development

What We Heard:

- Owatonna is one of the most business-friendly cities in Southern Minnesota and should take advantage of this to attract a bigger workforce.
- Young people are key drivers for economic development, and the city should work to attract and retain a young workforce.
- Entrepreneurship is a strength and there is room to build on this through a business incubator program.
- The consensus among the business community is that the city should continue to grow, and that Owatonna needs to plan its infrastructure and services for that growth. Growth is essential to attain the amenities that residents desire.



Economic Development

Recommendations:

- Address concern that there is a lack of appropriately priced housing options for people who would like to live and work in Owatonna by implementing Land Use goals.
- Address transit access to jobs in Owatonna and the greater region. A circulator could be considered in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, SMART Bus, and other key stakeholders.
- Prioritize community amenities, parks and open spaces, downtown, quality schools and affordable housing to retain young adults and young families in Owatonna.
- Continue to partner with Steele Co. Works, local colleges, educational organizations, and local businesses to address workforce shortages.
- Downtown Owatonna is one of the engines for economic development in Owatonna. Continue efforts to bolster the downtown to attract both tourists and residents to the City.



DRAFT Economic Development Goals

Goal 1. Continue to support and expand the work force in Owatonna.

- a) Continue to work with the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce and other business interests to attract and retain businesses in Owatonna.
- a) Continue partnerships with Steele Co. Works, Owatonna Public Schools, Riverland Community College, and other educational organizations to support educational programs that will meet Owatonna's workforce needs.
- a) Work to identify and implement activities, services, and community features that will attract and retain young people in Owatonna.
- a) Continue to identify and develop amenities and services that will attract and retain employees and businesses in Owatonna.



Economic Development Goals (cont'd)

Goal 2. Continue to support business development in Owatonna.

- a) Expand the services and awareness of offering for the business incubator program.
- a) Work to reduce any actual or perceived regulatory barriers to development in Owatonna.
- a) Continue to build and invest in the vibrancy of Downtown Owatonna.
- a) Explore opportunities to expand transit within Owatonna and to surrounding communities to provide increased access for workers.

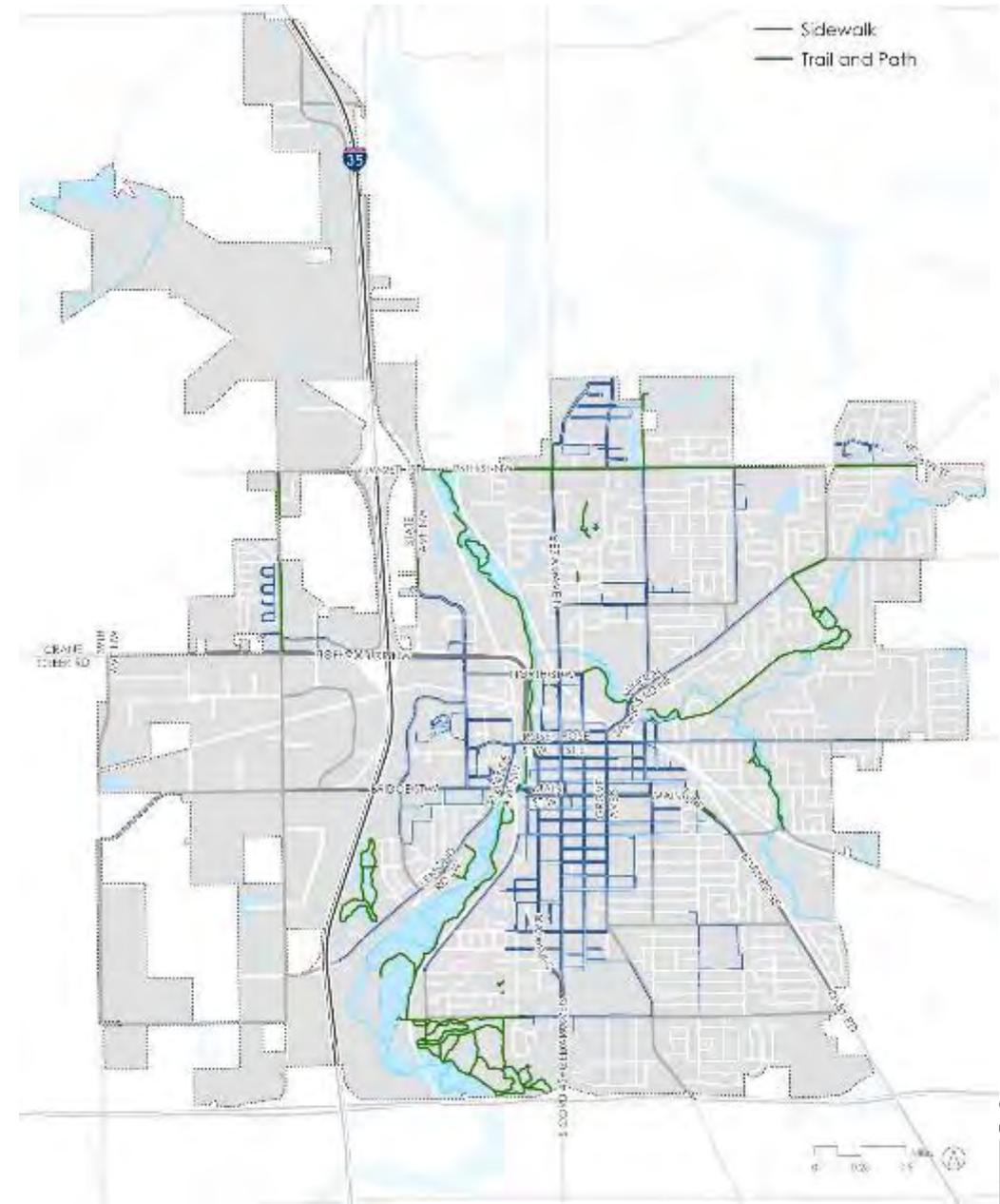


Transportation

2021 Transportation Plan

“The transportation vision for the City of Owatonna is to provide an integrated transportation system that will serve the future needs of its residents and businesses, support the city’s development plans, and balance the safety and mobility of its system for all users.”

The Plan lists four goals that support the vision statement along with policies that would help achieve these goals. Goals are focused on finding sustainable investments in the transportation system, enhancing safety for all roadway users, continuing to support and pursue opportunities that would interconnect the pedestrian and bicycle system, and supporting economic development through a reliable, affordable, and efficient multimodal transportation network.



DRAFT Transportation Goals

Goal 1. Improve transportation connections within Owatonna.

- a) Explore a new east-west vehicle and bicycle/pedestrian connections to connect the east and west sides of the City.
- b) Explore a new north-south vehicle and multi-modal connection on the east side of the City.
- c) Include traffic calming on roadway segments and intersections where pedestrians are present.
- d) Narrow roads and rights-of-way where possible to fit neighborhood character.
- e) Explore allowing more continuous roadway corridors by removing stop signs and other controls where possible.
- f) Continue to prioritize road maintenance throughout the City.

Goal 2. Improve multimodal transportation options in Owatonna.

- a) Explore expanded transit within the City to provide increased access for workers and shoppers.
- a) Explore expanded transit options between Owatonna and nearby cities.
- a) Provide bike lanes and sidewalks on key roadways.



Sustainability and Resilience

Current Initiatives:

- The city has several programs for planting, preserving and managing trees: Tree City USA, Shade Tree Committee, Emerald Ash Borer management.
- The city partners to clean up its water through the Straight River Cleanup – Clean Rivers Partners (CRP). "Clean H2Owatonna" is the city's Stormwater Management Program.
- Public Works has objectives to: provide and operate a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), provide and properly manage a yard waste compost site, protect the environment through administration of programs and permits, maintain a healthy and diverse urban forest; public Works Wastewater Outreach and Education.
- Owatonna is a "Pollinator Friendly City."
- The city has a compost site for community yard waste.



Sustainability and Resilience

Trends:

- **Land Use:** Sustainability and resiliency trends are intimately tied to land use patterns, design and function of parks and open space, economic development, and alternative mobility options. Shift towards a smart growth pattern with city infrastructure that is sustainable and affordable long-term.
- **Trees:** Renewed awareness about the public health benefits associated with urban forests. Importance of selecting species of trees for urban forests that are adaptable to climate change and disease resistant.
- **Stormwater:** Rather than designing stormwater ponds, instead creating native planting amenity areas that can be used as open space.
- **Building design:** Healthy buildings include aspects such as indoor air quality, lighting, access to open space, etc.
- **Renewable Energy:** Policies that focus on multiple energy sources, transition to new renewable energy options, and energy conservation should be explored.
- **Community Resilience:** Partnerships that promote and support access to food, health services, housing, emergency preparedness, and overall community wellbeing should be encouraged.



DRAFT Sustainability and Resilience Goals

Goal 1. Continue activities that preserve and maintain Owatonna's natural resources

- a) Continue efforts to plant, preserve and manage trees within the City including Tree City USA, Shade Tree Committee, Emerald Ash Borer management.
- a) Continue efforts to ensure clean water including partnership with the Straight River Cleanup – Clean Rivers Partners (CRP) and through the City's Clean H2Owatonna program.
- a) Continue public works objectives to provide and operate a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), provide and properly manage a yard waste compost site, protect the environment through administration of programs and permits, maintain a healthy and diverse urban forest.
- a) Continue to embrace the city's status as a Pollinator Friendly City and explore ways to include native plantings in parks and new developments.
- a) Continue strategic plan goals for flood mitigation and emergency management.



Sustainability and Resilience Goals (cont'd)

Goal 2. Explore programs and regulations that will enhance the city's sustainability and resilience

- a) Explore participation in the GreenStep Cities program to encourage city-led sustainability actions.
- a) Explore the adoption of ordinance language to establish shoreline buffers, address erosion issues along the city's waterways and protect waterways from pollution.

Goal 3. Continue to develop sustainable and equitable governance structures

- a) Commit to transparency and inclusion in all City decisions and actions, including exploration of a welcome center or communications hub of events and resources for new and existing residents.
- a) Embrace diversity as a strength and work to ensure city leadership is representative of this diversity.



Sustainability and Resilience Goals (cont'd)

Goal 4. Continue to provide city services in an efficient and sustainable manner

- a) Plan for efficient and effective growth of City infrastructure and services.
- a) As shown in the City's Future Land Use Map, approach development growth that is sustainable in the long-term.
- a) Maximize efforts to incorporate energy savings, renewable energy, resilience, and sustainable practices in all areas of City services.
- a) Continue to be fiscally responsible through careful stewardship of City resources and staff.



DRAFT Utilities Goals

Goal 1. Work with Owatonna Public Utilities to maintain the existing water supply system and plan for expansion of this system as the city plans for growth.

Goal 2. Continue to plan for expansion of the wastewater system as the city plans for growth and implement actions from the 2023 Wastewater Collection System Study or subsequent updates to this plan.

Goal 3. Continue to enforce the city's Stormwater Ordinance and MS4 permitting through the MPCA. Continue the city's Clean H2Owatonna stormwater management program.



Next Steps

- Draft Plan Open House – May 16th, 2024
- Final Plan Summer 2024

