



COMPREHENSIVE

PLAN

BYRON

2030

December 2011

City of Byron, Minnesota

www.byronmn.com



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Introduction & Community Context

Welcome to Byron

Our community was founded in the 1860s as an agricultural community located along a major rail corridor. Since that time, we have grown to a community of just under 5,000 residents. Our growth has been influenced by our proximity to Rochester and location along US Highway 14. Today, most of our residents work and shop in nearby Rochester. The most prominent feature that gives us our identity is our award winning Byron School District.



US Hwy 14 runs through the southern part of Byron, and its growth as a major thoroughfare connecting Mankato, I-35 (just 33 miles west of Byron) and Rochester (US Highway 52) has and will continue to affect future development and planning for the city.

Byron is surrounded by an agricultural landscape, which has slowly been developed over the years to add housing to Byron and Rochester. With the addition of the nationally-recognized Somerby Golf and Country Club and Golf Course Community in 2004, Byron has attracted a more diverse population of families and retirees.

To the north of Byron, the south fork of the Zumbro River flows through rolling hills and deep ravines. Our community shares some of these topographic features and through our plan for the future, we hope to better connect to these features that distinguish our community from other communities across the country.

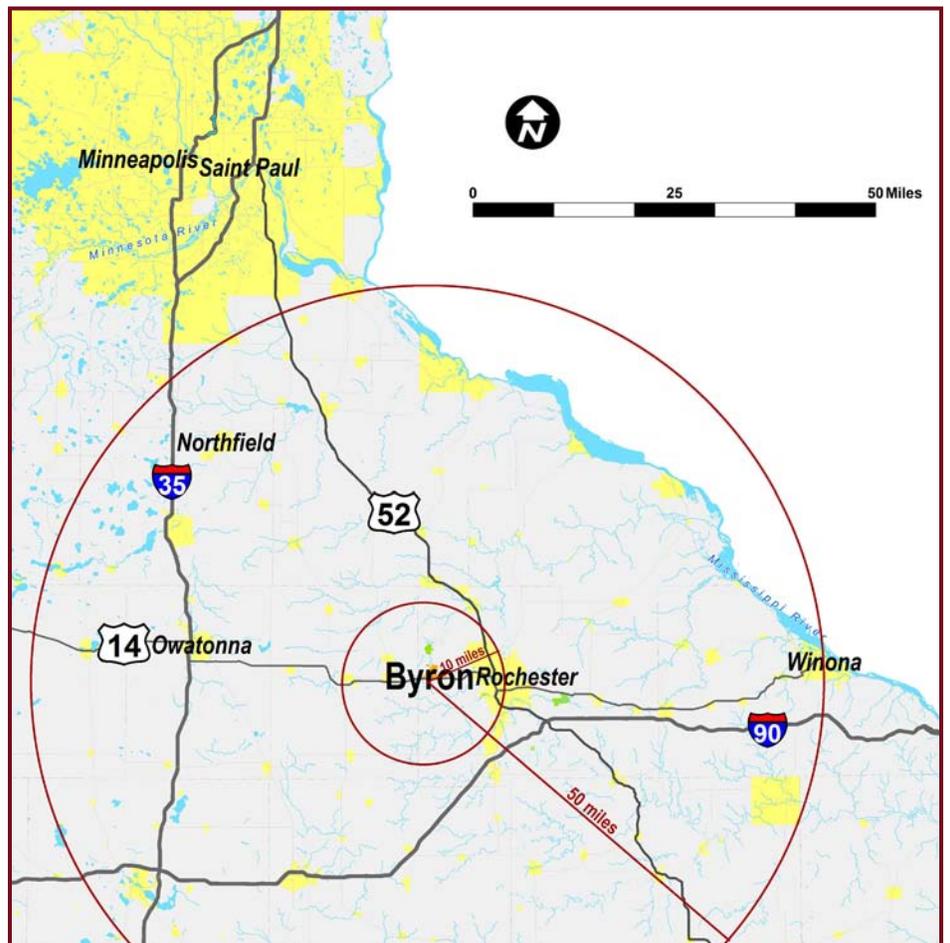


Figure 1-1. Byron's Regional Context

Byron is located approximately 70 miles southeast of the Twin Cities metro area and approximately 6 miles west of Rochester.

Comprehensive Plan vs. Zoning Ordinance

Characteristics of a Comprehensive Plan:

- ▶ Broad in scope
- ▶ Visionary
- ▶ Principles and Policy oriented
- ▶ It's a guiding document
- ▶ Conceptual and idealistic
- ▶ Focus is on neighborhood, community or regional scale
- ▶ Flexible in its interpretation

Zoning Ordinance:

- ▶ Narrow in scope
- ▶ More rigid standards
- ▶ It's the law
- ▶ Detail oriented, specific
- ▶ Focus on the district and site level

So which one rules? In many instances, State Statutes make direct references linking a zoning ordinance provision to a community's master plan. Case law over the years has proven that a zoning ordinance in sync with a comprehensive plan is a more defensible ordinance than one that is not in sync or is not based on an approved comprehensive plan.

A review of zoning and subdivision ordinances always follows the updated comprehensive plan, resulting in minor or major modifications, depending on the new directions forged by the comprehensive plan.

A Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a statement of what our community wants to become. The plan is based on a composition of concepts, patterns and relationships that deal with integrating the social aspects of a community with its physical development. Unlike a zoning ordinance, a comprehensive plan is futuristic in that it guides decisions that have yet to be made. The word "comprehensive" in itself provides meaning to the plan: it deals with the whole community and not just the parts.

The Comprehensive Plan is the blueprint for the future of Byron. It guides the use of every parcel of land (public and private) in Byron.

Land use is only the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan. Land use creates implications for city investments in infrastructure, facilities and services.

Streets provide the capacity for land development and, in conjunction with sidewalks, trails and bike paths, for movement within Byron. Planning seeks to ensure that Byron has a street system with the design and capacity to support future development. The character of streets and the volume of traffic also affect adjacent land uses and the ability to move people. The Comprehensive Plan must balance the transportation and land use aspects of the street system. Consideration of "complete streets" can maximize the value and impact of streets on the community.

Development requires service by municipal sanitary sewer and water systems. Development can only occur within the capacity of the city's sewer and water system. The City seeks to provide a safe water supply at pressures needed to provide adequate fire protection.

Parks are an important component to the quality of life in Byron. We must consider the type and location of parks needed to meet the future needs of the community. A system of trails and sidewalks should allow people to move throughout the community on foot and bicycle, thus promoting an active and healthy lifestyle.

The pattern of development and the characteristics of the population influence the nature of public services.

All of these factors create financial implications. Land use creates the value used for property taxation - the primary source of revenue for our City. Many revenues used to build public improvements come directly from new development.

These factors make the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan critically important for Byron.

Our plan is a guide and a tool.

The plan for Byron will be used as a guide for making land use decisions, preparing and implementing ordinances, preparing capital improvement programs and influencing the rate, timing and location of future growth. This plan will become the Planning and Zoning Commission's plan, who, with the help of City Staff, will be charged with interpreting it and keeping it current. All land use decisions faced by the City of Byron will be determined using the goals and policies in this plan, and while the City Council will ultimately

determine the fate of any proposal, the Planning and Zoning Commission has the authority and responsibility to evaluate all such proposals for their consistency with the intent of the plan and the needs and desires of the people of Byron.

Our plan is dynamic.

While intended to guide change, this plan must also remain flexible to respond to changing needs, conditions and emerging trends. We must understand that we are responsible for the future of our community, and we must consider carefully the merits of adjustments to the plan. This is a critical step in the community development process; proposals need to be evaluated against the goals and vision laid out in this plan. Some proposals will fit well. Others may not. And still others may not fit well, but may contain ideas that are good and worthy of further consideration and quite possibly lead to changes to the vision or the plan. That is the trigger for a community planning process.

Contents of the Plan

Byron's Comprehensive Plan includes many components. Woven throughout the plan are principles that promote active and healthy living, complete streets, sustainability and energy conservation among others. Key elements that can be found in the plan include:

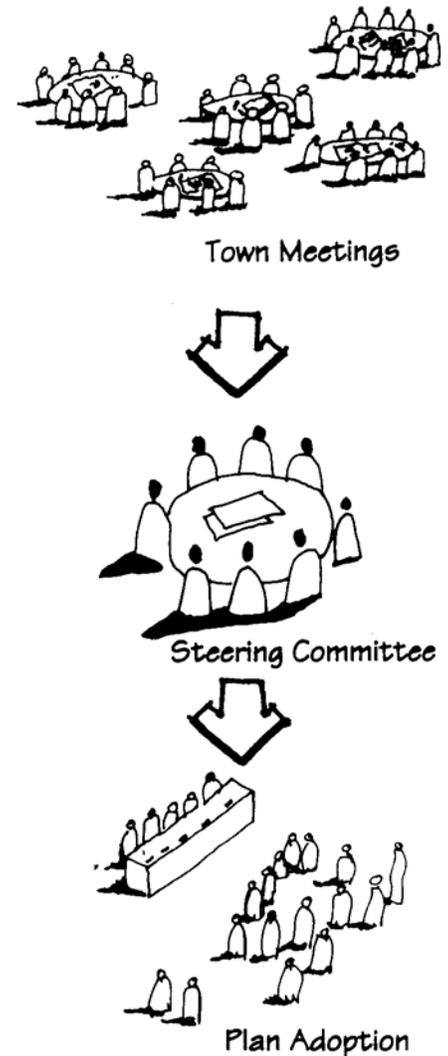
- ▶ Community background and history
- ▶ Vision and guiding principles
- ▶ Natural resource management and environmental enhancements and a concept for a greenway corridor
- ▶ Neighborhoods with a focus on land use, housing, commerce, economic development and infrastructure systems (parks, roads, schools and natural resources)
- ▶ A system for parks and open space
- ▶ A system for trails and sidewalks
- ▶ A street network that emphasizes complete streets and community identity
- ▶ Infrastructure systems that connect the development of neighborhoods with potable water, sanitary sewer and public services
- ▶ Implementation strategies and action steps

Planning Horizon (2010-2030)

This update of the Comprehensive Plan looks to the year 2030. Considering a future up to 20 years away forces the community to broadly consider issues and opportunities facing Byron. Issues are easier to face before they become a problem. Opportunities can be capitalized upon early.

A comprehensive plan is not only about encouraging the right actions, but also preventing the wrong ones. A residential subdivision in the wrong place may block the expansion of a needed industrial area or the right-of-way for a critical road corridor. Looking into the future helps to prevent unintended consequences.

Our planning process was led by a steering committee consisting of elected and appointed officials, citizen volunteers and city staff. The process included a series of community outreach efforts (town meetings and surveys). Future amendments to this plan should follow a similar process.



Active Living

“Make the healthy choice the easy choice by making improvements to the physical environment in communities that create sustainable opportunities for residents to engage in healthy behaviors.”

-Olmsted County Communities Putting Prevention to Work Grant Guidelines

“The goal of active living is to increase the amount of physical activity in the daily routines of local residents through means such as walking or biking to school, the grocery store, work or for other daily activities.”

-Byron Safe Routes to School Study



Look for the icons above to identify Active Living and Complete Streets initiatives throughout the plan.

Complete Streets

Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, transit riders of all ages and abilities must be able to safely move along and across a complete street.

Active Living Grant

This Comprehensive Plan is funded by a grant from Olmsted County Public Health Services. The goal of this grant is to implement projects that create sustainable environmental changes to increase biking and walking in Olmsted County communities under its local Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) initiative.

Our Plan embraces active living by:

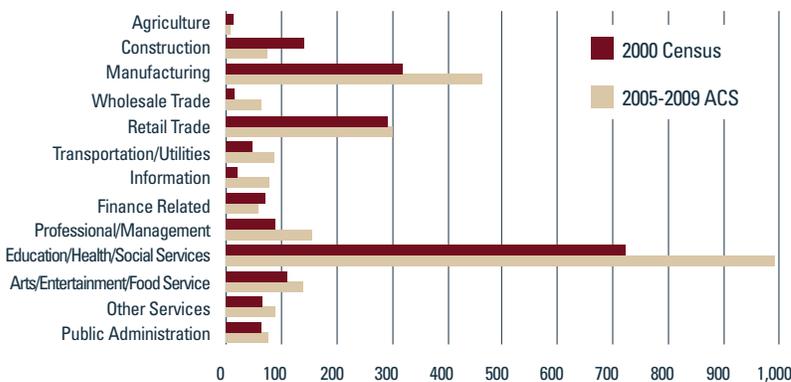
- ▶ Establishing policies that encourage new neighborhoods to incorporate destinations within the new neighborhood (parks, schools, churches, neighborhood retail nodes or gathering places) that support biking and walking.
- ▶ Designing streets that balance the ability for bicycles, pedestrians and motorized vehicles to travel harmoniously.
- ▶ Planning for a greenway corridor system as a connected linear open space network that invites off street multi-use trails for active and leisure recreation.
- ▶ Establishing a policy direction that considers stormwater and landscaping as integral parts of a street’s design.

Byron History

In 1854 the first settlers arrived in Byron, Minnesota. In 1865, when the Winona St. Peter Railroad, now known as the Canadian Pacific Railroad, was being built, it was decided to establish a station ten miles outside of Rochester close to this community, then known as Bear Grove. G.W. Van Dusen, a New York millionaire, purchased land near this station and platted a village. Mr. Van Dusen named the village “Byron” after his home town, “Byron, New York,” which is approximately twenty-five miles southwest of Rochester, New York. The railroad became the lifeline of the village and at one time there were at least eight passenger trains stopping daily in Byron.

Byron’s growth was slow over the years. In 1958, IBM opened a large factory in Rochester employing thousands of people. The continued expansion of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester added many new residents to our city creating a boom in the city’s population. Since 1967 there have been additions and renovations to the middle school, and a new elementary and a new high school have been built. Many homes and small businesses have been built, and the city has grown from a population of 660 residents in 1960 to 4,914 in 2010.

(Sources: Byron Comprehensive Plan, 1995; Byron School District website. <http://www.bears.byron.k12.mn.us/se3bin/clientgenie.cgi?G5button=116&categoryID=51>)



Source: 2000 U.S. Census, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Figure 1-2. Industries in which Byron Residents are Employed

Historical Milestones

1854	First settlers arrived
1856-65	Railroad constructed
1865	First passenger train arrives, post office moves to Byron
1866	Wheat elevator, coal station and the first church are constructed
1876	First town newspaper
1890	Independent school district established
1914-15	Electric lights and power came to Byron
1935	First water tower was built
1938	Construction of municipal building
1982	Construction of new sewage treatment plant
1991	Construction of Schmidt Printing
1992	New elementary school opened
2004	Somerby Golf and Country Club opened, as well as a new grocery store
2006	New high school built
2006	City Hall constructed at Byron Towne Square
2011	2030 Comprehensive Plan adopted



Former City Hall



First Security Bank



New City Hall

The Olmsted County General Land Use Plan identifies the following historic structures:

- ▶ Old (First Security) Town Bank
- ▶ Former City Hall
- ▶ Odd Fellows Lodge

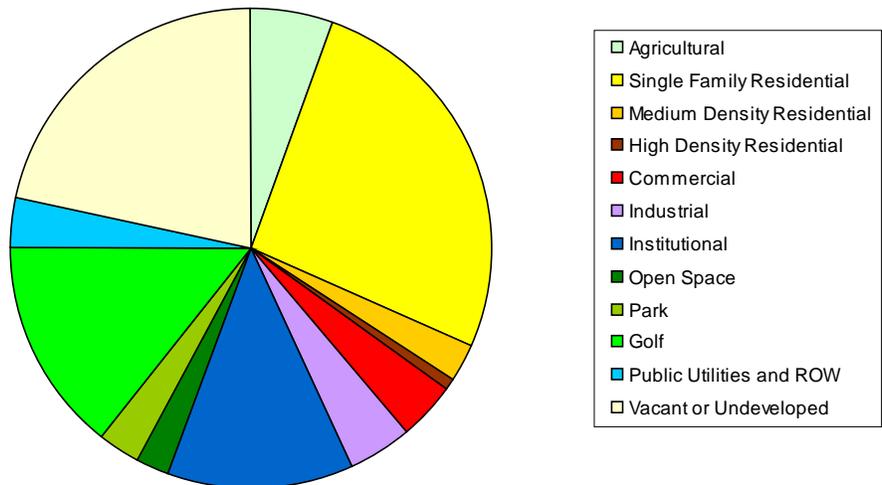
Existing Land Use and Growth Area Planning

The existing land use map is a snapshot of the community today (2011). It shows how each parcel of land in the city is used (based on its primary use). This helps us understand how our current distribution of jobs (industrial or business), housing (residential), retail services (commercial), civic institutions and park lands, correspond to our population and demographic composition. It also helps us derive an understanding of the demand on infrastructure services and the need for land area to accommodate future growth. We have anticipated future growth in our community and long ago established urban growth boundaries that look out to the future. These boundaries have been respected over the years and are embraced by the Olmsted County Land Use Plan as well as our 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Our infrastructure system has been planned according to future urban growth following these general boundary distinctions.

Table 1-1. Existing Land Use (within Current City Boundary)

EXISTING LAND USE	ACRES	%
Agricultural	89.2	5.6%
Single Family Residential	417.1	26.1%
Medium Density Residential	41.9	2.6%
High Density Residential	12.6	0.8%
Commercial	63.7	4.0%
Industrial	67.0	4.2%
Institutional	198.8	12.4%
Open Space	34.4	2.1%
Park	43.7	2.7%
Golf	230.4	14.4%
Public Utilities and ROW	56.5	3.5%
Vacant or Undeveloped	345.9	21.6%
CURRENT CITY TOTAL	1,601.0	100.0%

Figure 1-3. Existing Land Use Breakup (within Current City Boundary)



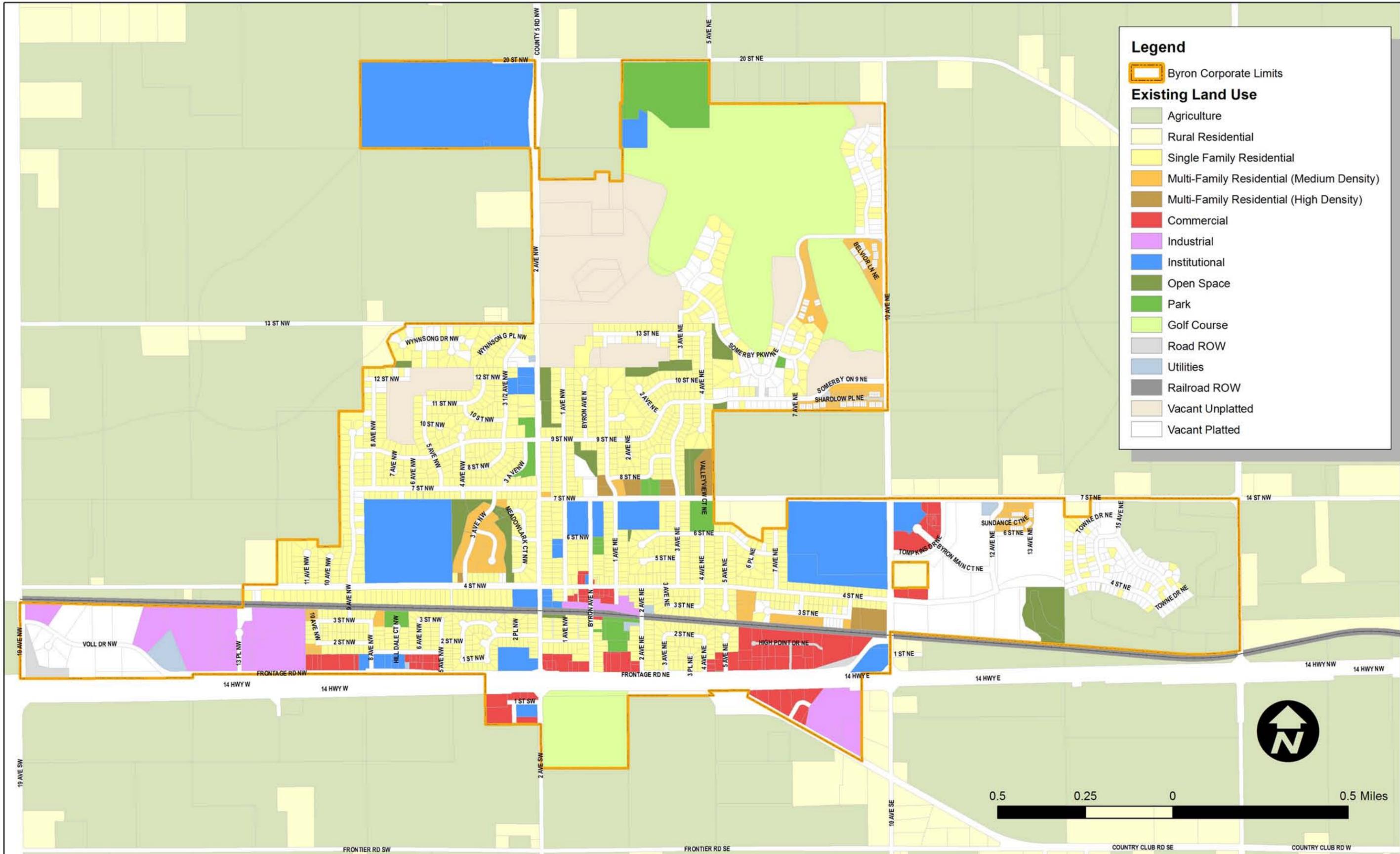


Figure 1-4. Existing Land Use Map (2011 City Boundary)

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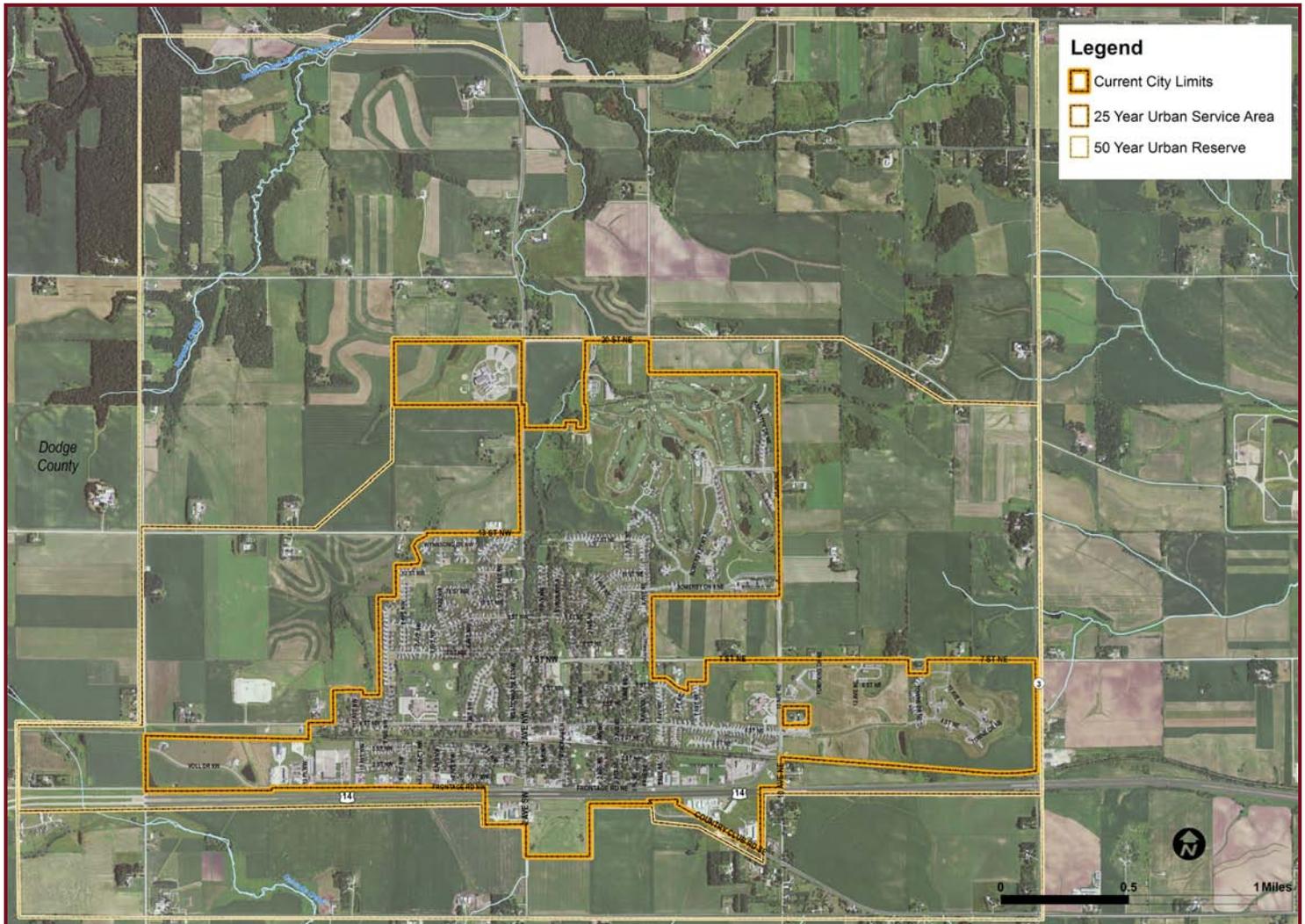
Growth Patterns



Byron Towne Square Master Plan Concept

Byron has followed Rochester in growth, depending on Rochester for jobs, shopping and entertainment. Byron is surrounded on all sides by Kalmar Township. Growth has generally occurred in a northerly fashion due to the ability to efficiently provide sewer and water services without having to cross Highway 14. The natural pull of growth is also driven to the east due to proximity to Rochester. Commercial growth is driven by proximity to Highway 14. Byron Towne Square and Village were platted in the late 2000's and while struggling due to economic conditions, is envisioned as the commercial center for the City. Historical planning for the City of Byron has identified urban growth boundaries reaching beyond the City. Of significance are the 25 year and 50 year growth boundaries. Our planning for this process has focused on the land areas within the 25 year boundary. Under current and projected economic conditions, future growth can be accommodated within this boundary.

Figure 1-5. Byron Growth Boundaries



Demographic Projections

Our resident population has grown on average by more than 55% per decade since 1950.

Table 1-2. Population Growth 1950-2010

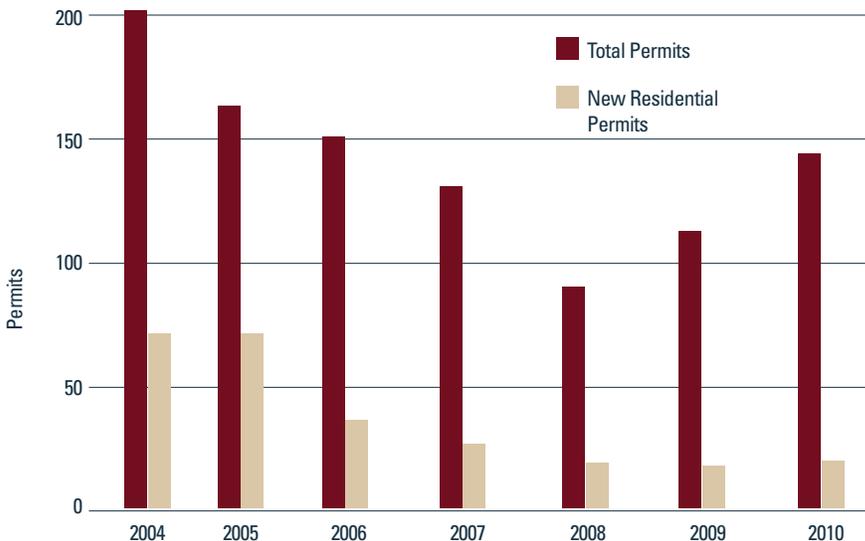
Decade	Population	% increase
1950	385	NA
1960	660	71.43%
1970	1,419	115.00%
1980	1,715	20.86%
1990	2,441	42.33%
2000	3,500	43.38%
2010	4,914	40.40%

If that trend were to continue, our population would approach 12,000 people by the year 2030. However, we are all intimately familiar with the current economic recession and we do not anticipate such a rapid rate of growth to continue over this planning horizon.

Another indicator of growth is the number of building permits pulled over the years. At its peak, Byron saw approximately 70 to 75 new residential housing units in a year. If we assumed 75 new units per year, over a 20 year period, that would result in a potential population increase of 4,000 to 4,500 people. Thus our 2030 population would be around 9,000 to 9,500 persons.

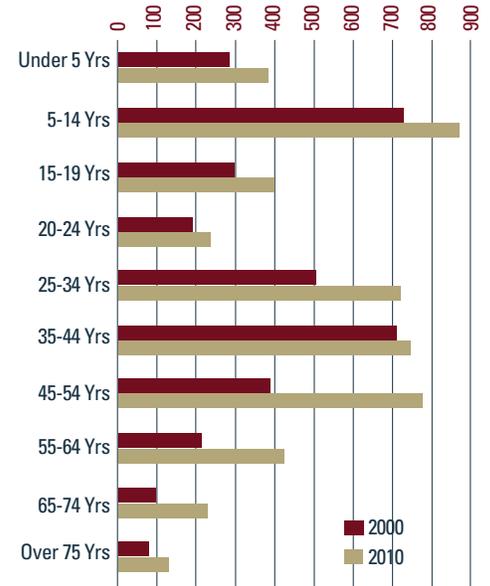
ROCOG has recently updated its general land use plan. Population projections completed by ROCOG projected Byron's 2030 population to be 7,500 persons. This is based on an assumption of how much of the total county growth Byron would absorb.

Figure 1-6. Building Permits (2004-2010)



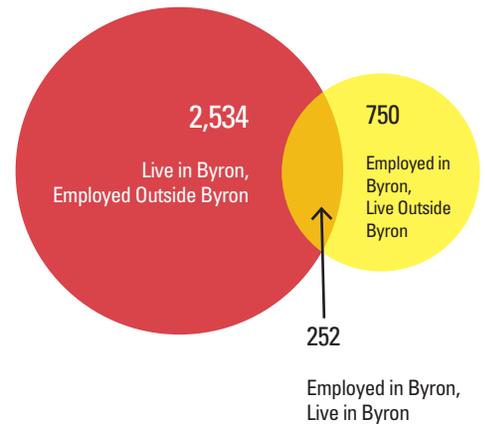
Source: City of Byron

Figure 1-7. Population by Age (2010)



Source: 2010 U.S. Census

Figure 1-8. Byron Jobs Inflow/Outflow



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LED Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2009

Table 1-3. Future Population and Household Projections

As we plan for future land use, growth and infrastructure we will utilize these projections.

Year	Population	Households
2010	4,914	1,891
2020	6,150	2,400
2030	7,700	2,900

Population can be projected following many methodologies and implementing a variety of assumptions. For our plan, we will assume that we will see population growth at an approximate rate of 25% per decade over our planning horizon to 2030. This will result in growth of approximately 50 new housing units per year on average. This assumption is based on historical growth patterns in Byron and projecting forward housing starts at a more conservative rate than what has occurred in the last three decades. With the sluggish economy, we may see slower growth in the near term (in fact 2010 produced only 20 new residential units), periods of more moderate growth upon the economic recovery, and a slowing or leveling out of growth over time.

Why do we project population and household growth?

Figure 1-9. Linear Population Projections (2020-2030)

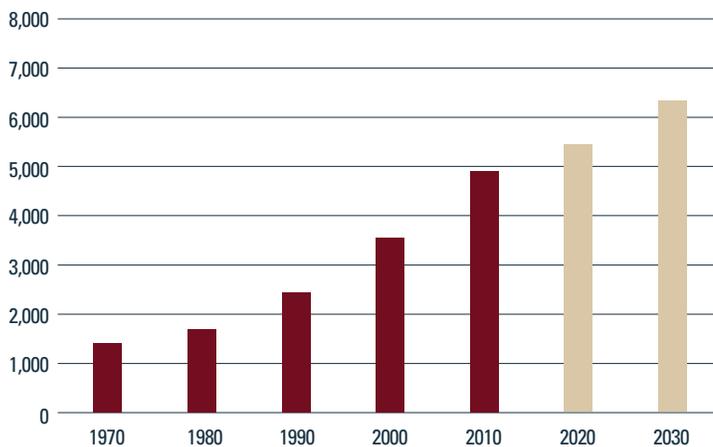
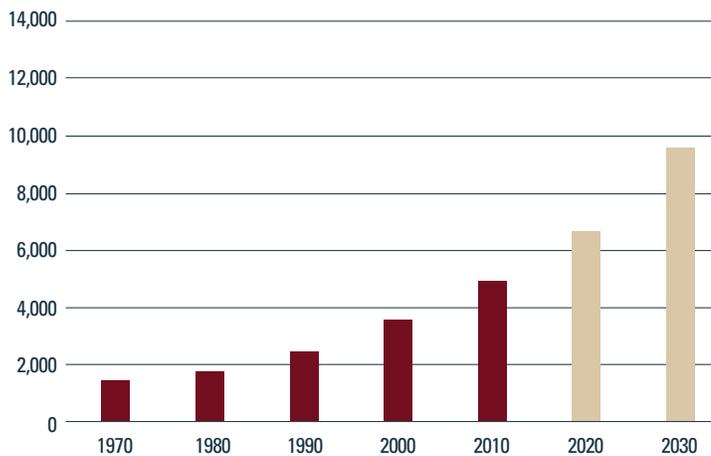


Figure 1-10. Exponential Population Projections (2020-2030)



Source: 2010 U.S. Census and HKGi

- ▶ We need to understand how much demand for urban services future growth is going to place on our community.
- ▶ We need to be able to plan our neighborhoods to accommodate future growth and make sure that enough land area is guided for growth to ensure stability in the market place (i.e. demand and supply are balanced).
- ▶ We need to make sure our economic development strategies are in place to provide balance with commercial services, job opportunities and a balanced property tax structure.
- ▶ We need to understand how population growth requires reconfiguration or expansion of our strong public school system.
- ▶ Growth generates traffic and we need to be able to plan for road improvements ahead of time rather than reacting to traffic problems.
- ▶ Police, fire, government services, public works, libraries and recreation programs are all driven by demand for services. Understanding population projections helps in budgeting and planning future services.
- ▶ Population is a measurement for various state funding aids. Population projections help us in understanding how and when available financial resources can be applied to our community development needs.

Byron Schools

Byron is well-known for its excellent school system. In 2010, Byron High School was selected as one of 300 Blue Ribbon high performing schools across the country by the U.S. Department of Education.

The Byron School District is growing and recently built a new high school facility on an 80 acre site in the northwest part of the city.

As population continues to grow, new space will be needed for schools. A challenging part of community planning is to maintain school facilities and to grow a system to meet projected demands generated by new housing growth. Our Comprehensive Plan provides assumptions to help in future school facility planning.

Byron Elementary School has limited capacity to accommodate future demand within its existing building in the near term. Future facilities will need to be added to accommodate growth towards the end of the planning horizon.

Figure 1-11. Byron School Facilities

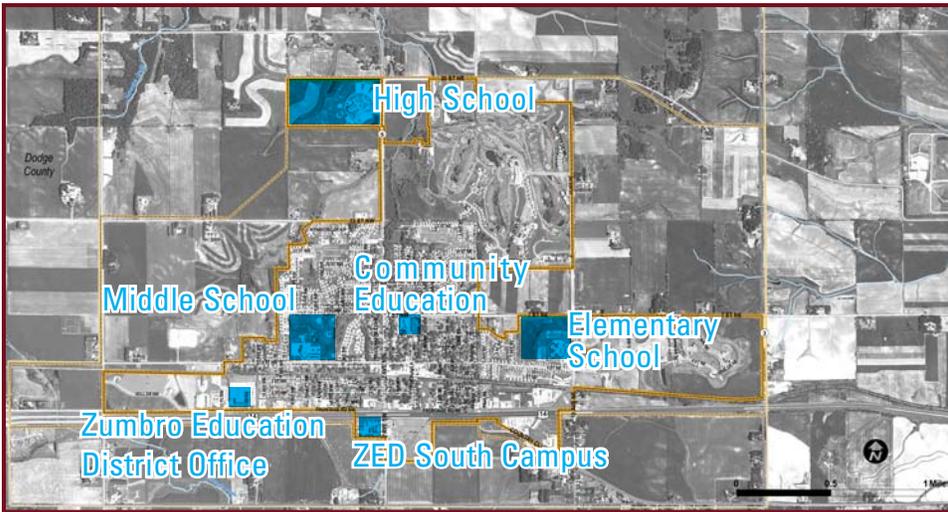
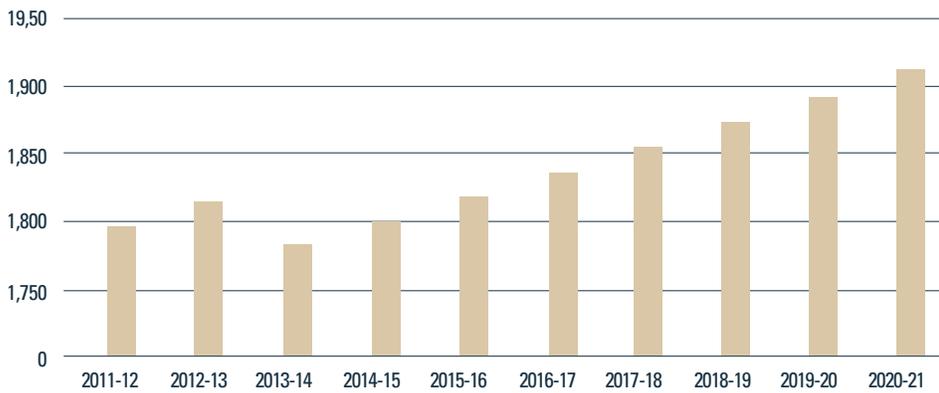


Figure 1-12. Byron Public School Enrollment Projections



Source: Byron School District

Blue Ribbon Schools

The Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools that are either high performing or have improved student achievement to high levels, especially among disadvantaged students. The program is part of a larger Department of Education effort to identify and disseminate knowledge about best school leadership and teaching practices. Each year since 1982, the U.S. Department of Education has sought out schools where students attain and maintain high academic goals, including those that beat the odds.

-U.S. Department of Education website (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/index.html>)



Intel Award

Byron High School was honored as an Intel School of Distinction in mathematics in September of 2011. "Six schools [nation wide] were named as Intel Schools of Distinction for their demonstrated excellence in math and science education and their ability to promote students' problem solving, critical thinking and collaboration skills, areas called 21st century skills by educators."

-<http://www.intel.com/about/corporateresponsibility/education/soda/winners.htm>

Trends

Our community is young, and as we look to the future while developing a plan, it is important for us to understand who we are today, and look at who we are becoming in the future. We can learn from key trends in community development to help us proactively plan for our future.



New Family Model

Although Byron has many young families, the trend in Minnesota and the nation is moving toward more couples without children. Only twelve percent of new households over the next twenty years will have children, according to a study by the Brookings Institute. The traditional family occupies roughly one quarter of households today and that number is shrinking. As a result, people are seeking family and social experiences outside the household much more than ever before. In the near future, children will make up a much smaller segment of the population than any other point in American history.



Active Living

This Comprehensive Plan is funded by a grant from Olmsted County that requires a focus on complete streets and active living. As our country and state become aware of the social influences that affect our health, more money and initiatives are being directed toward preventing obesity and improving life-long health, including walkable and bikeable neighborhoods.



Local Foods

Byron, along with many other communities in Minnesota, has recently added community gardens and a farmers market to the food supply options in the city. In recent years, more and more people have started to be interested in where their food comes from and who grows it. Community supported agriculture (CSA) farms are increasing in number every year in Minnesota. With the help of SHIP (State Health Improvement Program) we recently started our own community garden plot program. All 37 plots are spoken for in 2011!



Pets

Owning a pet, especially a dog, is more popular than ever before. The demand for off-leash dog parks has increased dramatically in recent years to serve this growing pet population. Interest has been expressed by some in our community to establish an off-leash dog park.



Economic Downturn

Rising health care costs, anti-tax sentiments, increasing fuel and material costs, and limited funding are reducing the resources available for public entities. Public/private partnerships, creative funding, right-sizing and a renewed focus on quality spaces and programming is becoming the recipe for success.

Public Engagement Strategies

Byron Community Mail Survey (2001)

In 2001, the City completed a community mail survey to gather input for the future vision of Byron. The survey had a special focus on recreational facilities. A total of 652 surveys were returned for a response rate of 33%. The survey asked residents about future buildings and services, recreational facilities, a library, new city hall and a community center.

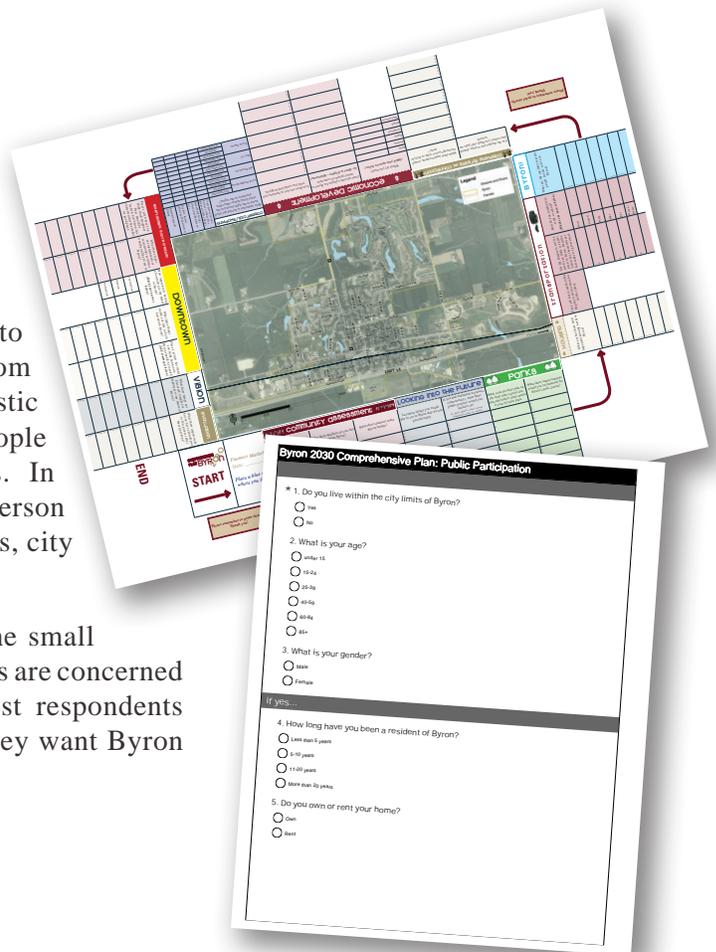
In rating their desire for possible new services and buildings in Byron, survey respondents chose as top priorities a full-time police department dedicated to Byron, bike trails, more restaurants and a public library. If outdoor sports and recreation facilities were to be built in Byron, permanent bathrooms and a picnic shelter topped the list with respondents, followed next by ball fields and a swimming pool/water park. Indoor sports and recreation facilities that were rated as most desirable include a swimming pool, a weight/fitness room and a locker room. More than half of the respondents expected to pay \$30 or less for a single adult monthly membership to an indoor sports and recreation facility. Almost half of respondents indicated they would be likely to consider membership if an indoor sports and recreation facility were to be built in Byron. If a community center were to be built in Byron, most residents indicated that it should be a place for youth activities, followed next by senior activities.

Recent Public Input Efforts

The current comprehensive planning public process included an online survey (using Survey Monkey) and a monopoly style game that was completed by groups of 3-7 people from various organizations in Byron. Both the survey and the game asked similar questions about the future of Byron.

A booth was held at Good Neighbor Days in July of 2011 to inform citizens of the planning process and to gather input from surveys filled out by hand. The citizens of Byron are enthusiastic about the future of their community. In all, nearly 300 people (mostly residents) provided input into the public process. In addition, the Plan was developed with the guidance of a 15 person steering committee representing elected and appointed officials, city staff, citizens and other stakeholders.

Major outcomes of the survey include a desire to maintain the small town atmosphere and good school system in Byron. Respondents are concerned about growth of the community and a loss of identity. Most respondents appreciate Rochester as an economic engine for Byron, but they want Byron to maintain its own small town identity.



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BYRON



Vision & Guiding Principles

2

Our Plan and its Purpose

This plan is a statement of what Byron wants to become. It is a collection of principles based on a community defined vision; an assembly of concepts and ideas established to support the vision and the principles. The plan provides an action plan that will help guide us toward achieving our vision and advancing the concepts and ideas toward reality.

The principles and ideas reflect Byron's vision in its desires for *growth*, maintaining its *small town feel and identity*, preserving and strengthening the qualities of its *educational and civic institutions* and holistically achieving a high level of "*community resilience*."

Community Resilience is:

- ▶ *The ability to sustain a high quality of life,*
- ▶ *The ability to adapt to change; and,*
- ▶ *The ability to capitalize on and thrive in the face of change.*

The Comprehensive Plan is broad in scope, recognizing that there are many factors influencing how and why change occurs. Therefore the comprehensive plan deals more with concepts, patterns, and relationships, which ultimately provide direction and serve as the "nexus" for establishing more specific plans, programs, rules and ordinances.

Byron's reasons for undertaking the Comprehensive Plan are many.

Our close proximity to Rochester and its high job base has shaped our town as a "bedroom" community. We have come to rely on Rochester (and surrounding communities) for commerce, employment and entertainment and we have come to realize that we desire a more balanced and sustainable mix of land uses, housing, services, employment opportunities and recreational/entertainment venues.

Our quality of education is a central reason that people to move to Byron. As more people look at our community as a great place to live, pressure will be put on the schools to maintain their strong educational performance and small class sizes. We need to plan for how our neighborhoods grow and how we maximize the linkages and connections between our community and our schools such that both are able to achieve desired results.



Somerby Golf Community is a recent addition to the city and reflects on some of the positive growth in Byron.

The majority of Byron residents surveyed rate their quality of life as good or very good.

(Source: Byron community survey, 259 total respondents, summer 2011.)

Walkable and bikeable access to key destinations in Byron were rated by most residents surveyed as okay or good.

(Source: Byron community survey, summer 2011.)

Highway 14 is a significant influence on Byron’s long term growth. Improvements (and particularly access) to Highway 14 will have a lasting impact on the identity, mobility and future commerce of our community. We must clearly articulate a vision for how our community embraces Highway 14’s significant role, providing local connectivity and regional connectivity, and serving as a State Highway.

We are a growing community, and without carefully considering the implications of growth, Byron may lose some of the special qualities and unique character that attracted people to it in the first place. Through this planning process, we will articulate how to accommodate growth in ways that protect what is valuable to this community.

Our current plan dates back to 1995 when Byron had less than 3,000 residents. As we grow it is necessary to look at where the community is headed, and from time to time modify the plan to ensure the community grows with its vision in mind. An update to our plan is overdue.

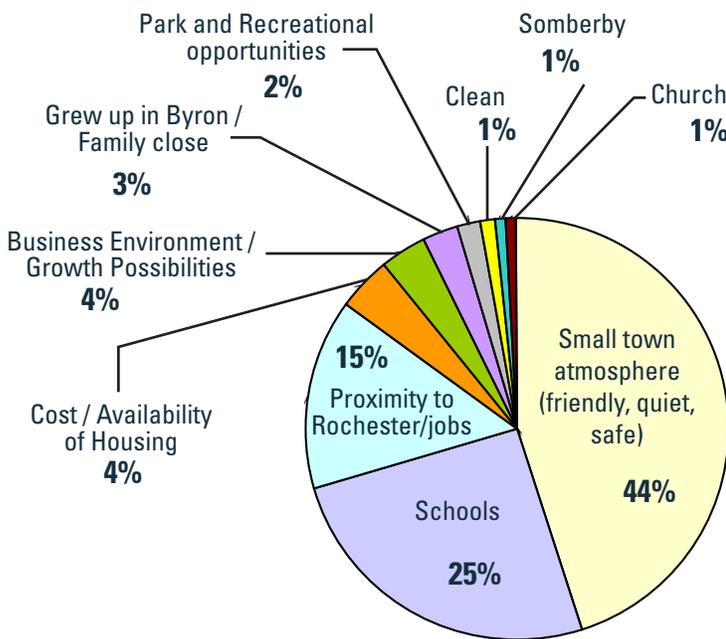
Our Community Vision

Our vision reflects the needs and desires of the people who live and work here and our concerns for the future of our community.

Ultimately, our vision will become a way of achieving stability (or resilience) while making positive change in the community. A successful vision begins by balancing issues such as growth and economic development with compatibility of the land, growth with small town identity and protection of sensitive features, flexibility toward the future with some degree of predictability, open space and parks with neighborhood development and property tax generating uses, roads designed for pedestrians and bicyclists with the need to move autos, trucks and agriculture equipment.

Our vision recognizes the special character of Byron, and the commitment that people must make to this place as they move forward.

Our vision has been crafted using input from our community gathered from community surveys and dialogues held during the summer and fall of 2011.



What are the top 3 qualities that attract you to live or work in Byron?

(Source: Byron community survey, 259 total respondents, summer 2011.)

VISION - Growth with respect for the needs of our residents, a commitment to small town values, and strong linkages between neighborhoods, services and institutions.

We are a small community today, strategically located 10 minutes west of a major metropolitan area and directly connected by a key transportation corridor. As such, we are prepared to accommodate the population and industry growth that will result from this proximity. We will encourage and support growth that is sensitive to the environment and to the people’s desire for a small town ‘way of life.’ As we grow, we will embrace the patterns and forms of development that contribute to a desirable and sustainable quality of life. As our community continues to build (and older areas rebuild) we will build not for present use alone, but for lasting impact. We will continue to provide and enhance facilities, activities and services – both public and private – that benefit the citizens and businesses of our community and contribute to our great quality of life in Byron.

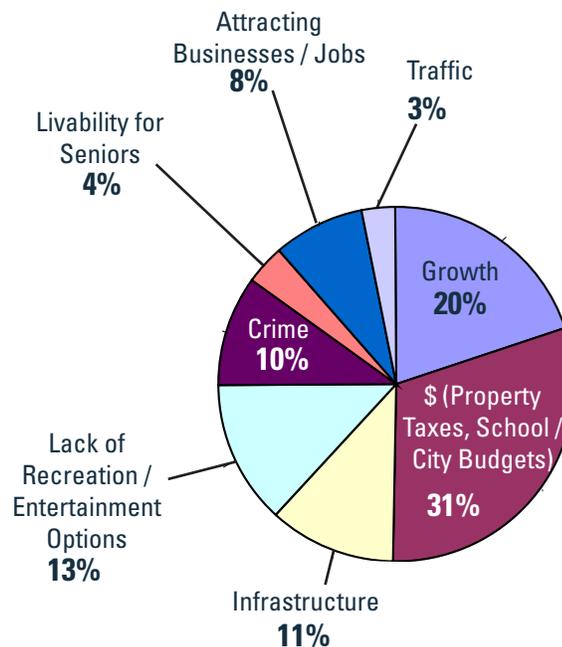
If given the chance to invest \$1million in Byron, most survey respondents would build an aquatic center or provide incentives for business.

(Source: Byron community survey, 249 total respondents, summer 2011.)

Our vision:

- ▶ Is *oriented toward the future*, even one that might be twenty years away;
- ▶ Is based on a *shared understanding* of what our community desires for itself;
- ▶ Will be used as a *tool for evaluation* of proposals, ideas, projects and future directions;
- ▶ Will be an *anchor during conflict*, a way of finding common ground and shared values;
- ▶ Becomes a *basis for coordination and cooperation*; and,
- ▶ Is a *source of energy and enthusiasm* for maintaining a commitment to the future of Byron.

What do you think are the most serious issues that Byron will be faced with in the next 10 years?



(Source: Byron community survey, 259 total respondents, summer 2011.)

The Guiding Principles

Guiding principles represent the basic goals of this plan and reflect the expressed needs and desires of the people of Byron. These principles show direction for the resolution of issues and the advancement toward achieving the vision. These principles guide the creation of the comprehensive plan and serve as tools to help shape future development and improvements of our community.



The Historical Society building in the old Byron downtown



New housing in Byron Towne Village



Future retail and development center at Byron Towne Square



Byron Elementary School Prairie



Community Character and Identity

- I-1. Maintain and preserve a small town character and atmosphere.
- I-2. Build civic involvement and opportunities for community gathering.
- I-3. Recognize the differing roles of historic downtown Byron and that of our more modern downtown, Byron Towne Square.
- I-4. Utilize Byron school facilities as focal points for community and neighborhood interaction.



Growth and Development

- G-1. Balance housing growth with consideration of a diverse job base, retail services and educational institutions.
- G-2. Establish a pattern of development that encourages walking, biking, active living and healthy lifestyles.
- G-3. Encourage a mix of housing that enables one to stay in Byron regardless of age or income.
- G-4. Encourage design patterns that proactively promote a safe and secure community.
- G-5. Support partnerships in pursuit of public improvements and community development.
- G-6. Encourage commercial development that suits community needs.



Environment and Natural Resources

- P-1. Embrace and preserve natural systems within the city and beyond, creating connections for both recreational value and environmental value.
- P-2. Support development patterns that treat natural resources as an integral part of the neighborhood rather than relegating them to remnant pieces of land.



Connectivity

- C-1. Strengthen and create connections to destinations within Byron, specifically schools, parks, churches, commercial service nodes, gathering places and historic areas.
- C-2. Foster the connection of people and organizations, both civic and private, through the creation and support of innovative community partnerships.
- C-3. Connect Byron regionally and locally to the state, county and adjacent communities, both physically and programmatically.



Watching a school athletic event



Parks and Recreation Systems

- R-1. Develop a parks and open space system that is an integral part of the community and forms defining elements of neighborhoods.
- R-2. Establish a parks and recreation program that serves all ages.



Valley View Park



Transportation and Mobility

- M-1. Ensure a transportation system made up of complete streets that accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders, regardless of age or ability.
- M-2. Embrace Highway 14 as a gateway into the community but recognize it as a regional highway.
- M-3. Plan future roadway networks based on the desired function, character and connectivity of the road and corridor.
- M-4. Consider the transportation system as a mover of vehicles, pedestrians and bikes as well as an enjoyable experience and a builder of identity.



Bike trail along 7th Street



Infrastructure

- B-1. Plan for both new infrastructure to serve growth areas as well as preservation and maintenance of existing facilities.
- B-2. Encourage development and redevelopment in areas where infrastructure already exists and could be better utilized.



Byron water tower



Our PLAN for the Future

3

Plan Overview

Our plan includes innovative methods for future growth. We incorporate complete streets and active living goals into policies that will shape our City to 2030. Our Plan for the future is made up of six categories:

- ▶ Greenways and Natural Resources
- ▶ Neighborhoods (land use, housing and economic development)
- ▶ Street System
- ▶ Parks and Recreation
- ▶ Bike and Pedestrian Network
- ▶ Infrastructure (sanitary sewer, potable water, storm sewer and schools)

Woven throughout all of these categories are objectives that encourage walking and biking, respect our natural resources and promote sustainability.

The traditional “future land use plan” is replaced in our plan as the Neighborhood Districts Plan. Rather than assign specific future land uses to every parcel, this plan uses the greenway, roadway, parks, trails and other features to define areas where a future neighborhood should be located. We have provided goals and policy direction that define the elements that make up a neighborhood and the general land use policy direction to guide future growth.

Greenways and Natural Resources

Byron has a tremendous asset in its surrounding natural resources, particularly the more pronounced features north of the City and within the Zumbro River Valley. These features include both visual amenities such as woodlands, wetlands, rolling topography, rivers and streams and unique geological features below the surface. Once these features are altered or compromised due to development, they are difficult, if not impossible, to restore or bring back. The greenway system concept recognizes these resources and their inherent value to the natural and built landscape, and our quality of life. The concept establishes a network comprised of the amenities and corridors that provide recreational and ecological connections. The greenway concept furthers past and present planning initiatives framed by the City of Byron, Olmsted County and the State of Minnesota.



Streets within the greenway can incorporate stormwater infiltration infrastructure to provide aesthetic and functional qualities.

Byron's Recreation Facilities Plan (2006) identifies several policies that are in line with the greenway system concept:

- ▶ Identify and attempt to reserve and protect ponding areas, water courses, select stands of trees, select wildlife habitat areas/wetlands, which are essential to the natural ecological system.
- ▶ Provide for both passive and active recreation within the community.
- ▶ Ensure that maximum advantage is taken of natural features, notably waterways, when developing park and open spaces.
- ▶ Coordinate the City's park and open space system through the use of a citywide trail plan.
- ▶ Encourage the use of utility easements and transportation right-of-way for trail development.



Multi-use off-street trails can weave through the greenway.

Components

The following are key components of the greenway (See Figure 3-7):

Primary areas include: streams and wetlands with a buffer of approximately 150 feet, steep slopes greater than 25% and major utility easements (50% or more of these areas are prohibited from development by current regulations at the city, county or state level).

Secondary areas include: woodlands and slopes that are considered steep but not such that they are prohibitive to development. These areas are attractive for development, principally because of the amenity that the natural resources bring. Development within these areas is typically unconstrained from a regulatory standpoint.

Parks include: lands currently under ownership by the City of Byron or lands that are proposed as a future park.

Connection areas include: corridors that may not contain natural resources. These areas are intended to connect key destination points such as schools, civic facilities, commercial areas or other activity generators to the greenway network. They also link areas of the network that are not naturally connected by existing environmental features. Often the connections follow a road corridor and offer opportunities for identity along key travel corridors.



Roads that are adjacent to or within the greenway should have landscaped medians or trees along them.

Greenway Definition

A greenway is defined by Merriam-Webster as “a corridor of undeveloped land preserved for recreational use or environmental protection.” The word greenway evokes many images, most commonly a recreational trail separated from motorized traffic, but greenways can also include parks, preserved open space, protected waterways and automobile parkways. Not all greenway areas will be publicly accessible.

Grants, partnerships, philanthropic donations and land dedication can help finance land accumulation and preservation. Preserving land can be built into Byron’s zoning code so that areas set aside for park dedication in the future can be added to the greenway system.

The greenway areas shown on the concept plan are suitable sites for long-term protection of sensitive landscapes, important habitats, connections and water quality. The greenway areas can be planned and subsequently developed as property owners wish to develop their land or when funding becomes available. As development projects are implemented in Byron, preserving sensitive ecological areas and connecting important corridors could be easily forgotten. It is important to plan a future vision now so that Byron will create a beneficial park, trail and open space system for Byron.



Rain gardens in residential lawns can contribute to stormwater quality in the greenway.



Seating areas and overlooks should be incorporated into the greenway to be used for rest stops and interpretive signage.



Figure 3-1. Typical Urban Greenway (50-foot corridor)



Figure 3-2. Typical Suburban Greenway (175-foot corridor)



Restored stream banks and preserved prairies should be incorporated into the greenway in rural areas.



Goals for the Greenway Corridor:

- ▶ Provide a vision for the preservation and enhancement of natural resources.
- ▶ Provide a place for habitat to coexist with urban/suburban development patterns.
- ▶ Establish a lasting and unique identity for Byron.
- ▶ Connect neighborhoods and habitat with a continuous corridor.
- ▶ Connect Byron to areas beyond the city limits for recreational and functional value.

Policy Directions:

1. Integrate the greenway into neighborhood master plans as defining elements for neighborhood identity.
2. Use the greenway to coordinate community wide events and activities (benefit runs, bike rides, community festivals).
3. Locate consumable food production, such as community gardens, within greenway areas.
4. Use greenway lands to coordinate locations for utility and trunk infrastructure systems (sewer/water).
5. Identify steep slopes and existing stands of woodlands. Form the greenway adjacent to these areas and connect to these areas. Use borrowed open space for views/visual aesthetics (golf course, agriculture fields). Preserve sensitive natural resources and habitats.
6. Inventory wetlands, streams and 150 foot buffers as areas for incorporation of functional and aesthetic stormwater management systems.
7. Utilize existing and future parks, schools and utility easements as areas for integration and connection to the greenway. Locate off-street biking, walking, hiking and other active living programs within the greenway.

Figure 3-3.
Typical
Rural
Greenway
(~250 foot
corridor)

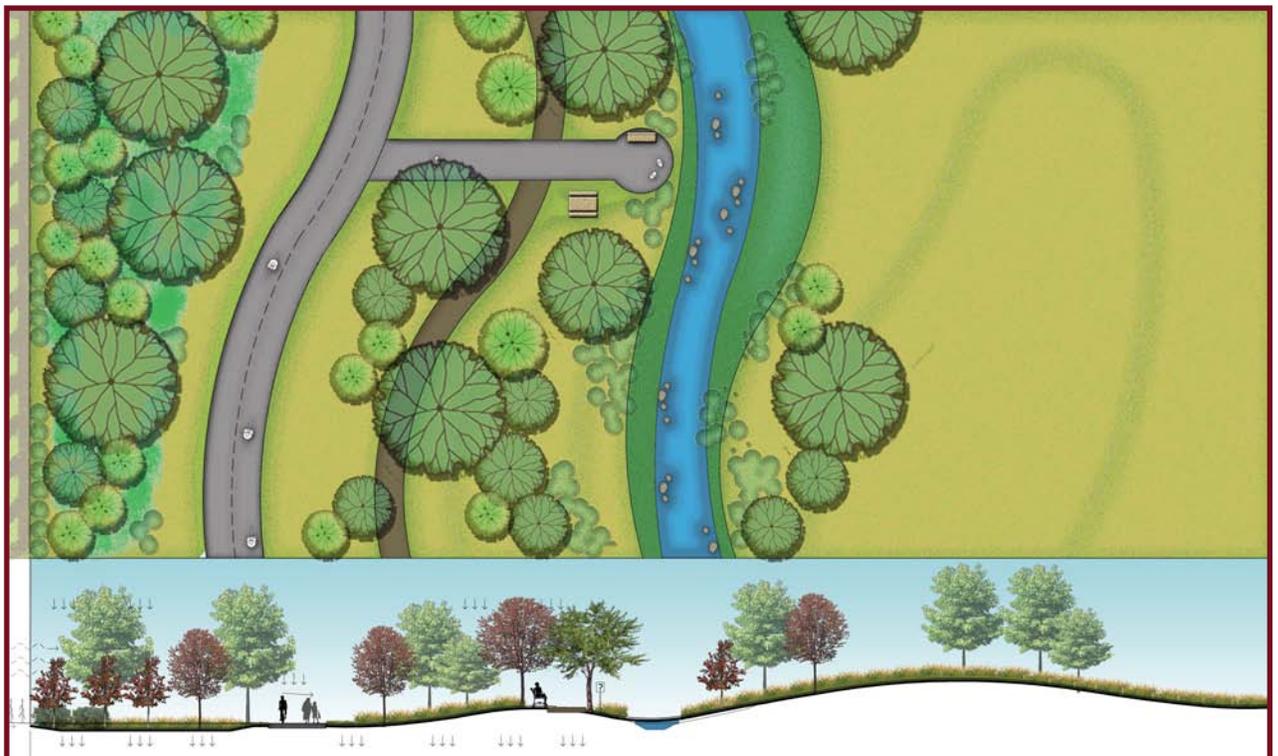
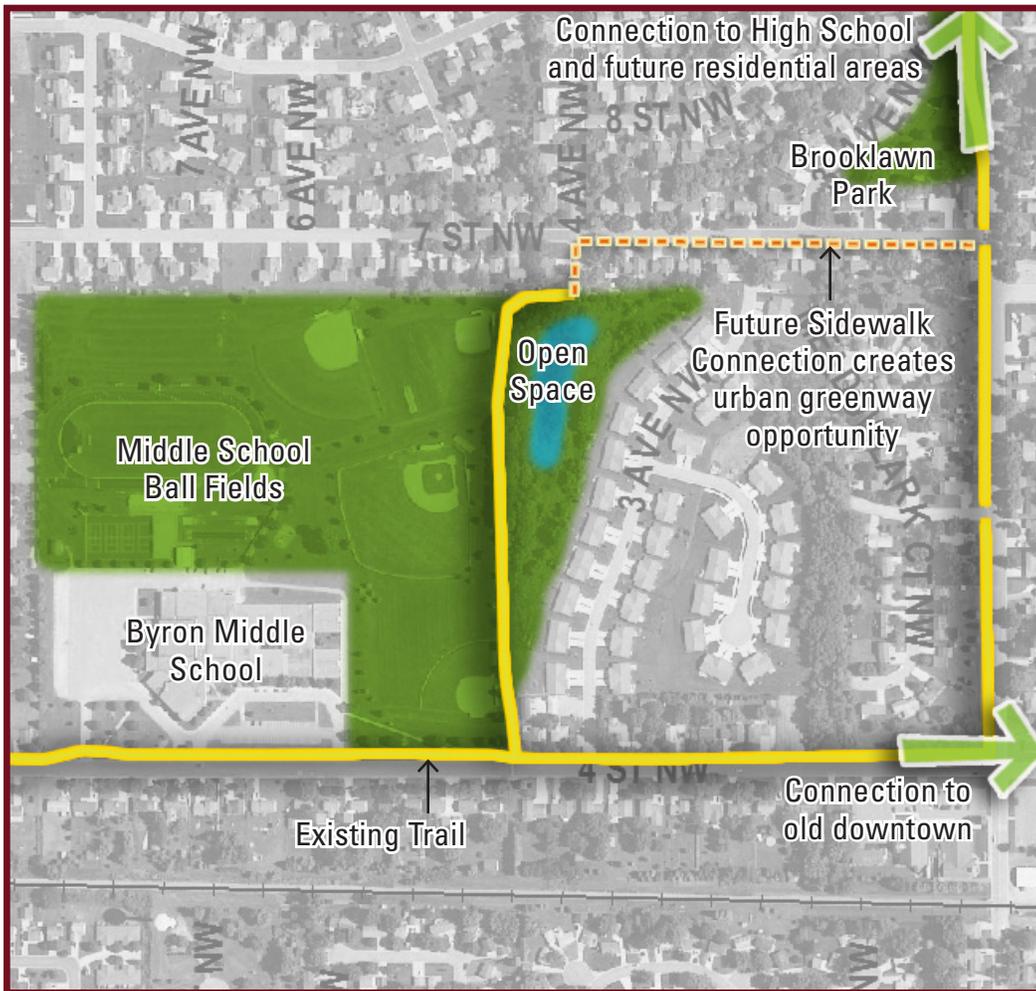


Figure 3-4. Example of a Greenway at Byron Middle School



The diagram above shows how a greenway already exists in one part of Byron. Parks and open space areas are highlighted as “green” areas that serve as trail buffers, recreational areas, stormwater functions and borrowed views. Existing trails are highlighted in yellow, and a needed future connection is highlighted as a dashed line.



The trail through Brooklawn Park is an existing element of the greenway concept.



The prairie at Byron Elementary School is an open space area that presents an opportunity for interpretation of nature. Located alongside of a multi-use trail, the prairie serves as a bike/walk destination that connects with the larger greenway network.

Figure 3-5. Parks and Powerline Easement

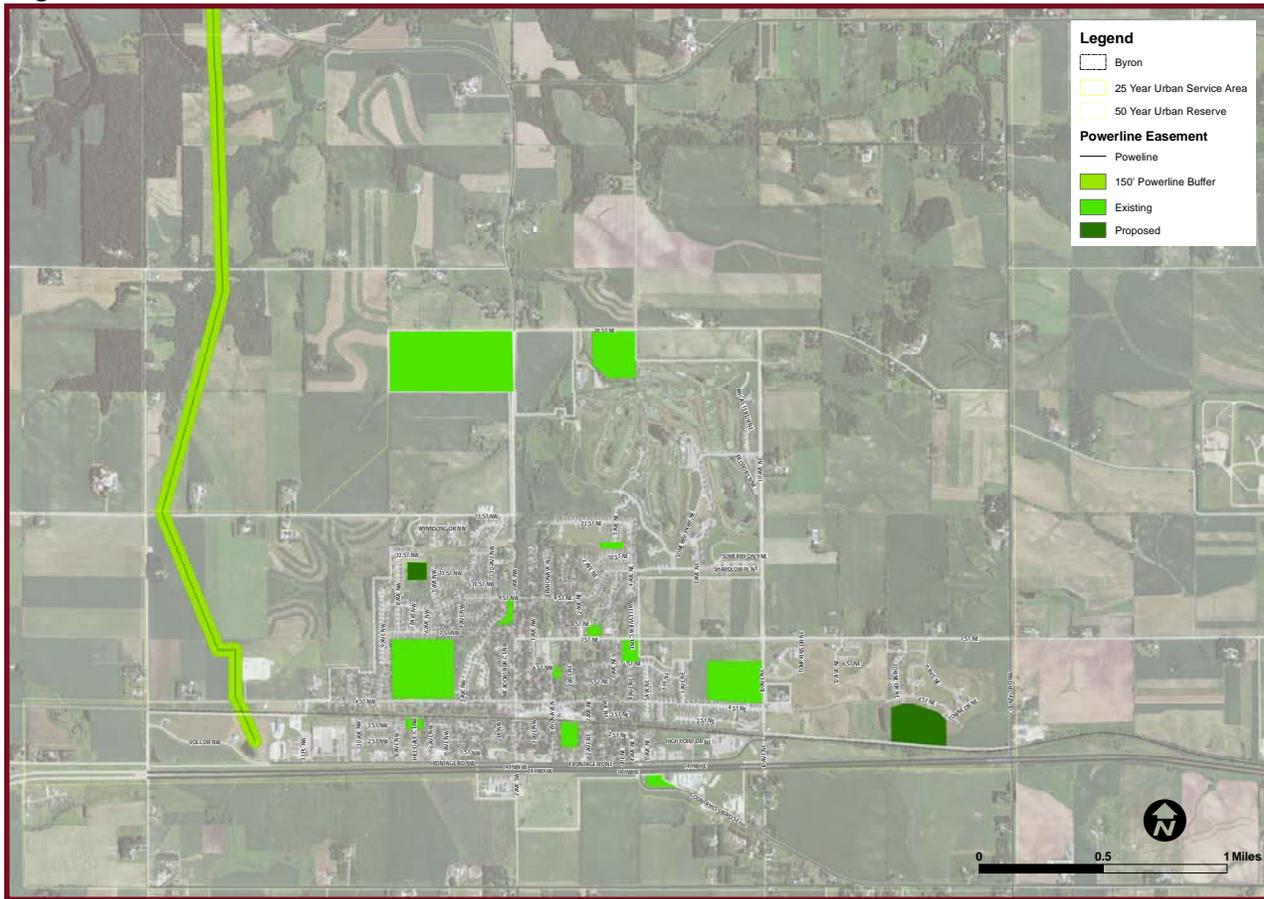
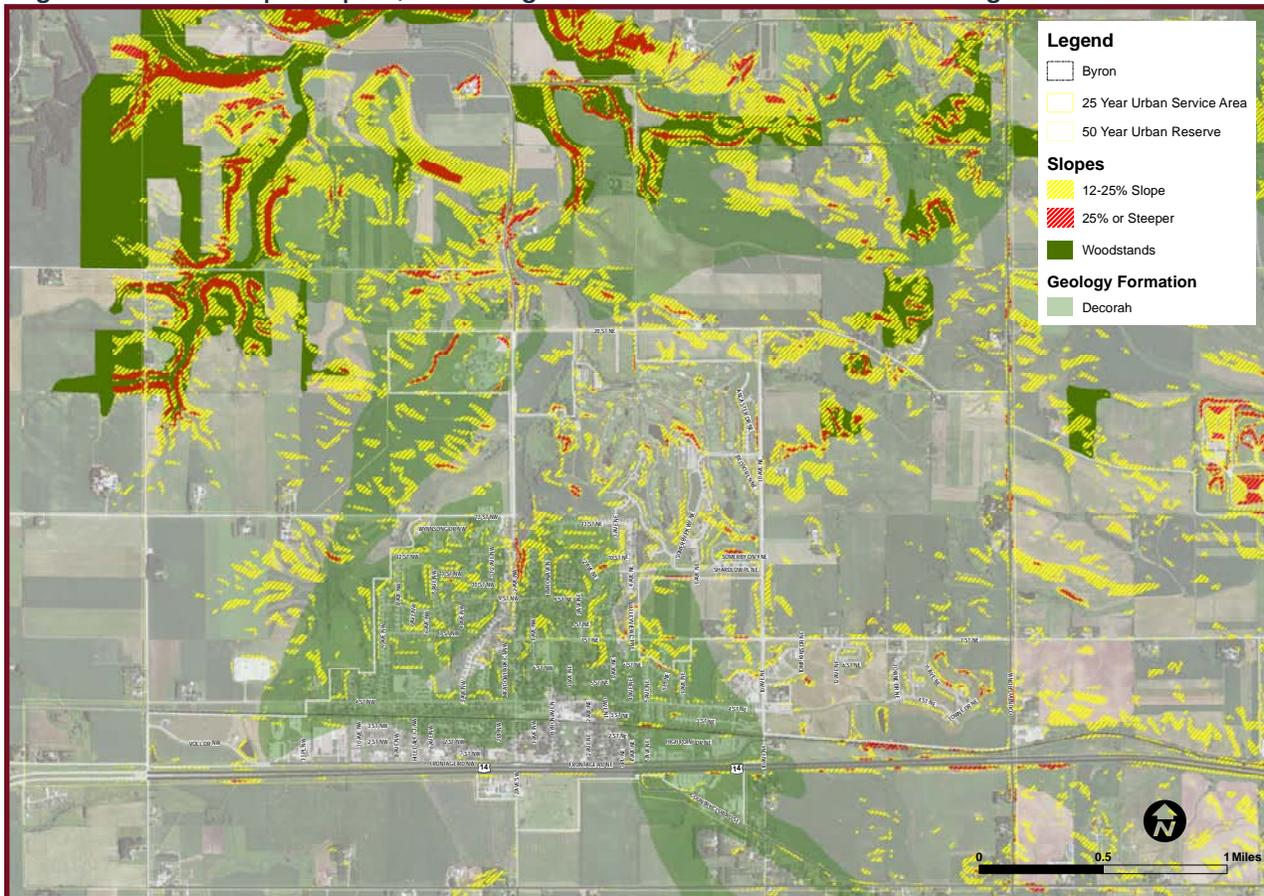
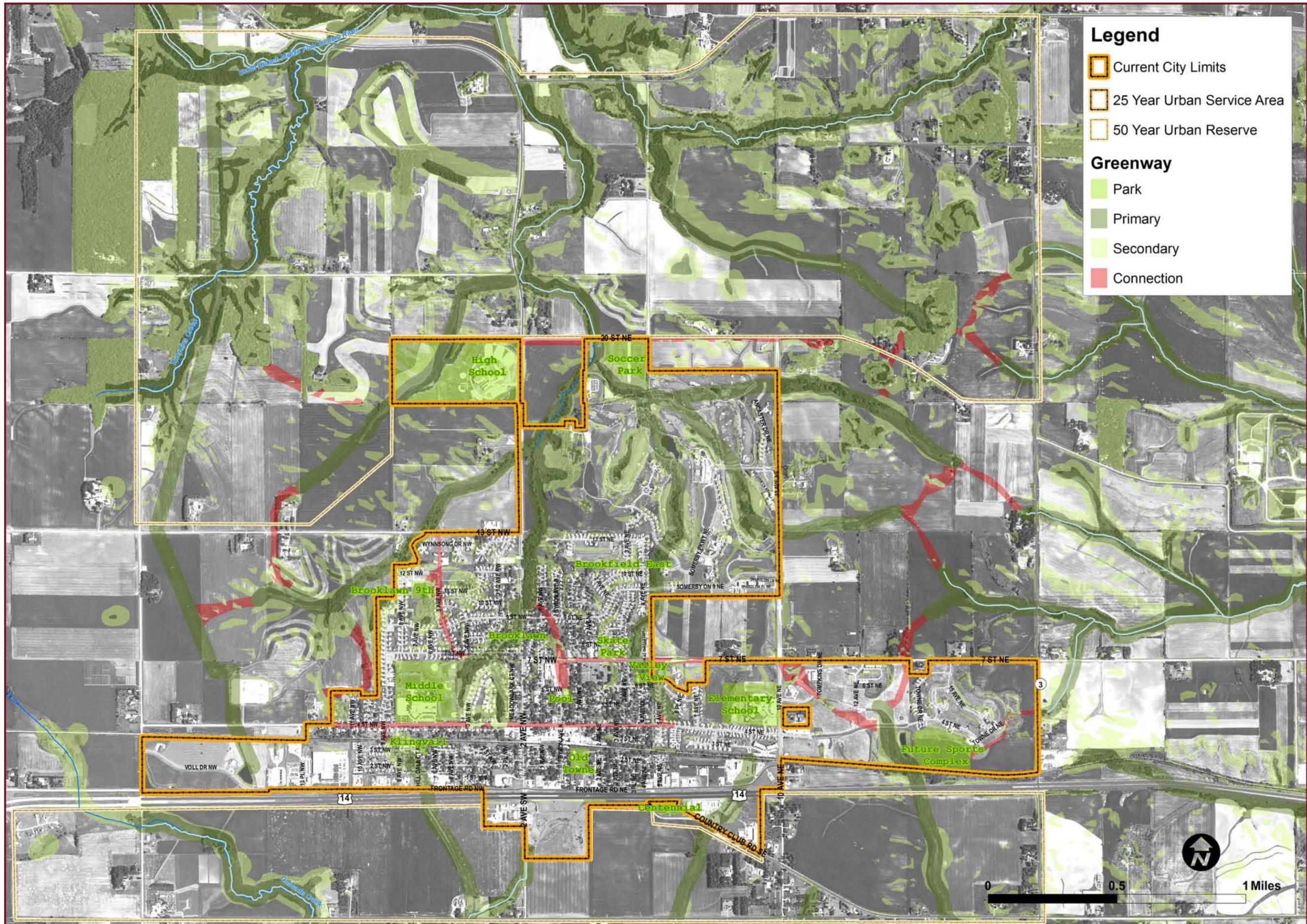


Figure 3-6. Steep Slopes, Existing Woodlands and Decorah Edge





“They [the wealthy elite] will have wealth enough to purchase all that money can buy, but all their wealth cannot purchase a lost opportunity, or restore natural features of grandeur and beauty, which would then possess priceless value...”

-Horace Cleveland, landscape architect who developed the vision for the Minneapolis Grand Rounds (now recognized as one of the best urban park systems in the world), over 100 years ago

Figure 3-7. Greenway System Concept Map

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Figure 3-8. Wetlands and Streams (NWI Data)

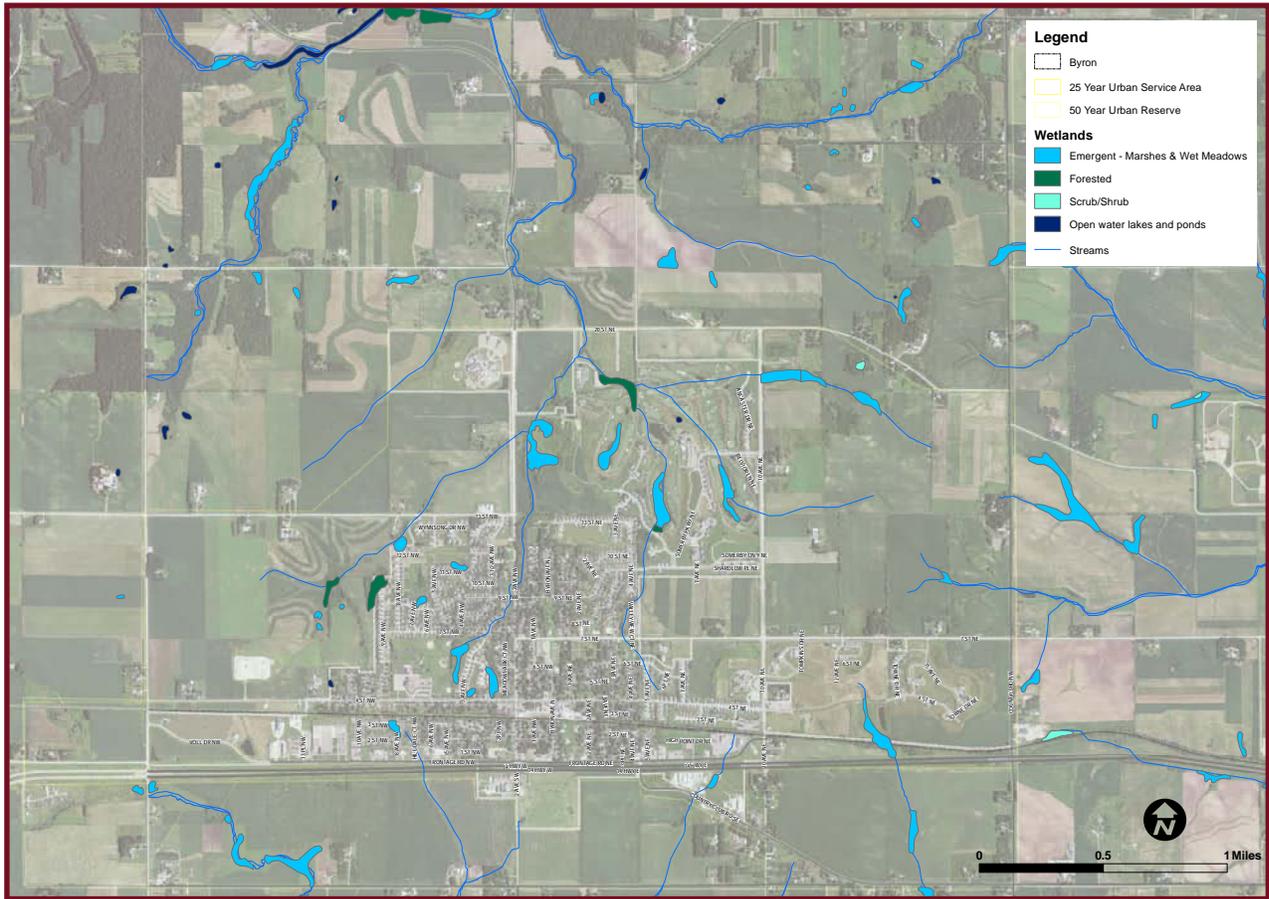
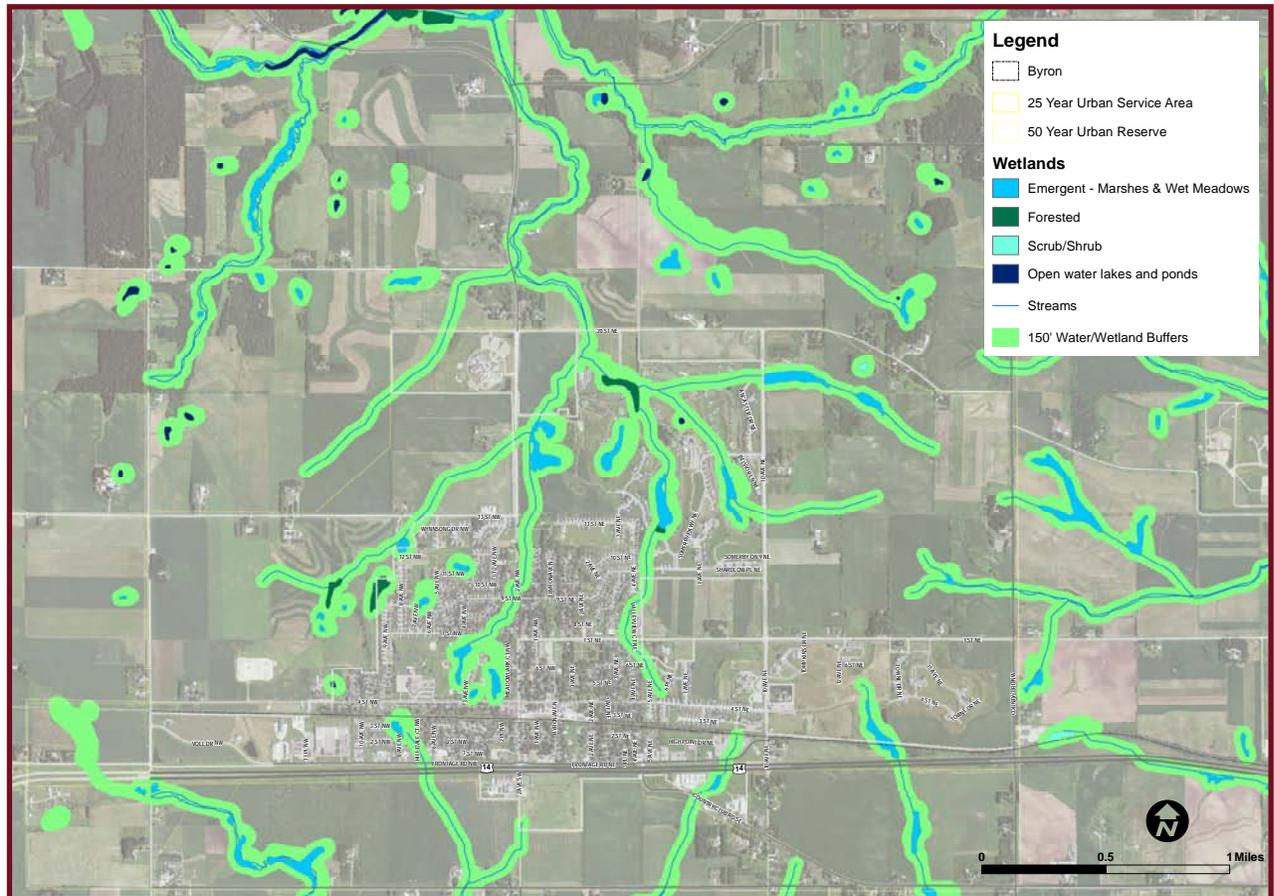
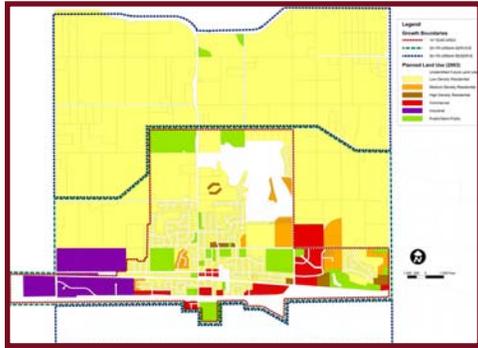


Figure 3-9. Wetland and Stream Buffers (150 feet)



Neighborhood Districts

Traditional land use planning assigns specific land uses to parcels. Our approach recognizes the need to be able to adapt to new ideas and changes in market demands, while we preserve the integrity of our longer term vision. We must grow effectively so that future development expands in a connected, efficient and sustainable pattern. Our 2030 Land Use Plan for Byron is organized around a series of neighborhood districts. The neighborhood districts concept provides direction for creating development with a sustainable mix of land uses with the intent to restore existing neighborhoods and create new ones. Our focus on neighborhood districts is intended to enhance livability for both current and future residents.



Traditional land use planning is shown in Byron's current future land use plan. Land uses are prescribed to every parcel in the community.

This process suggests that the City collaborate closely with the development community to achieve a connected system of neighborhoods, open space, trails and roadways. Flexibility is provided to the development community to distribute specific land uses within each neighborhood district: varying forms of residential, neighborhood commercial, parks, schools and churches, etc. while factoring in market demands and development phasing needs. The overall land use distribution and community systems (parks, infrastructure and roadways) provide a framework to ensure continuity between neighborhoods and to ensure that community systems are not over stressed by new development.

Implementation of the neighborhood districts concept will require an emphasis on master planning and concept planning in order to envision relationships and connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods and connected systems (streets, trails, greenway and parks). Traditional zoning district tools can be applied following a detailed master planning process and approach.

Our plans for neighborhoods consist of "new growth," "infill," "redevelopment" and "preservation and maintenance areas."

"Streets are a critical component of public space and play a major role in establishing the image and identity of a city, providing a key framework for current and future development."

Source: Complete Streets Policy (October 13, 2010)



Future Growth areas are those beyond the 2030 growth areas that will be preserved for urban growth beyond 2030.

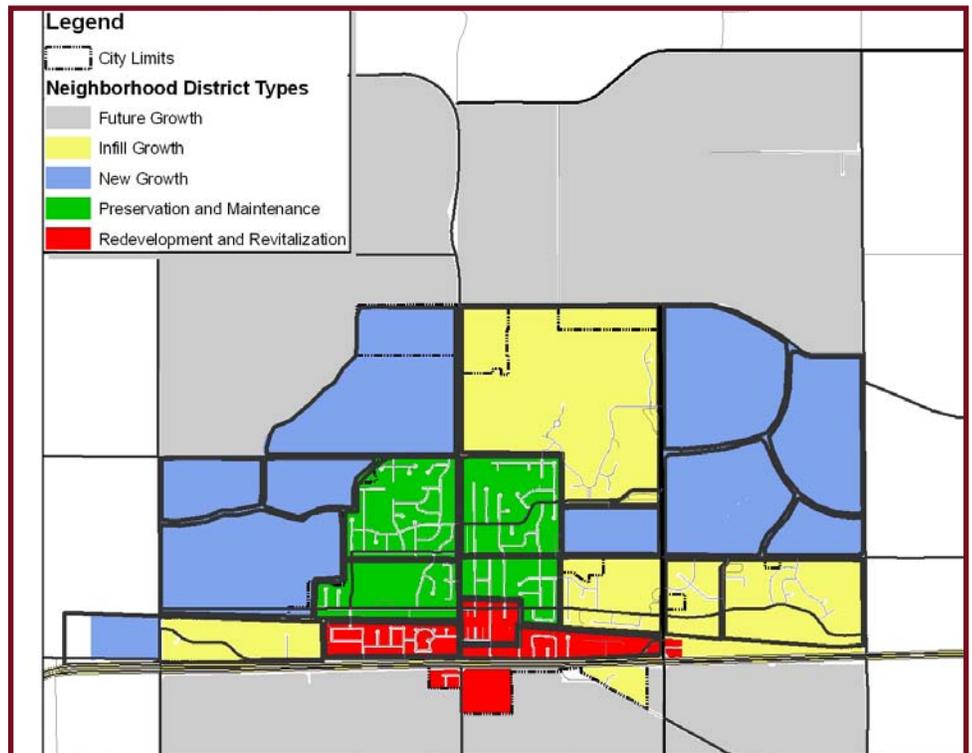


Figure 3-10. Neighborhood Districts Diagram

Assuming traditional development density (number of dwelling units per acre), the land use distribution within new neighborhoods will more than accommodate projected residential growth and will accommodate job growth consistent with the current mix of jobs per households in Byron, to the year 2030.

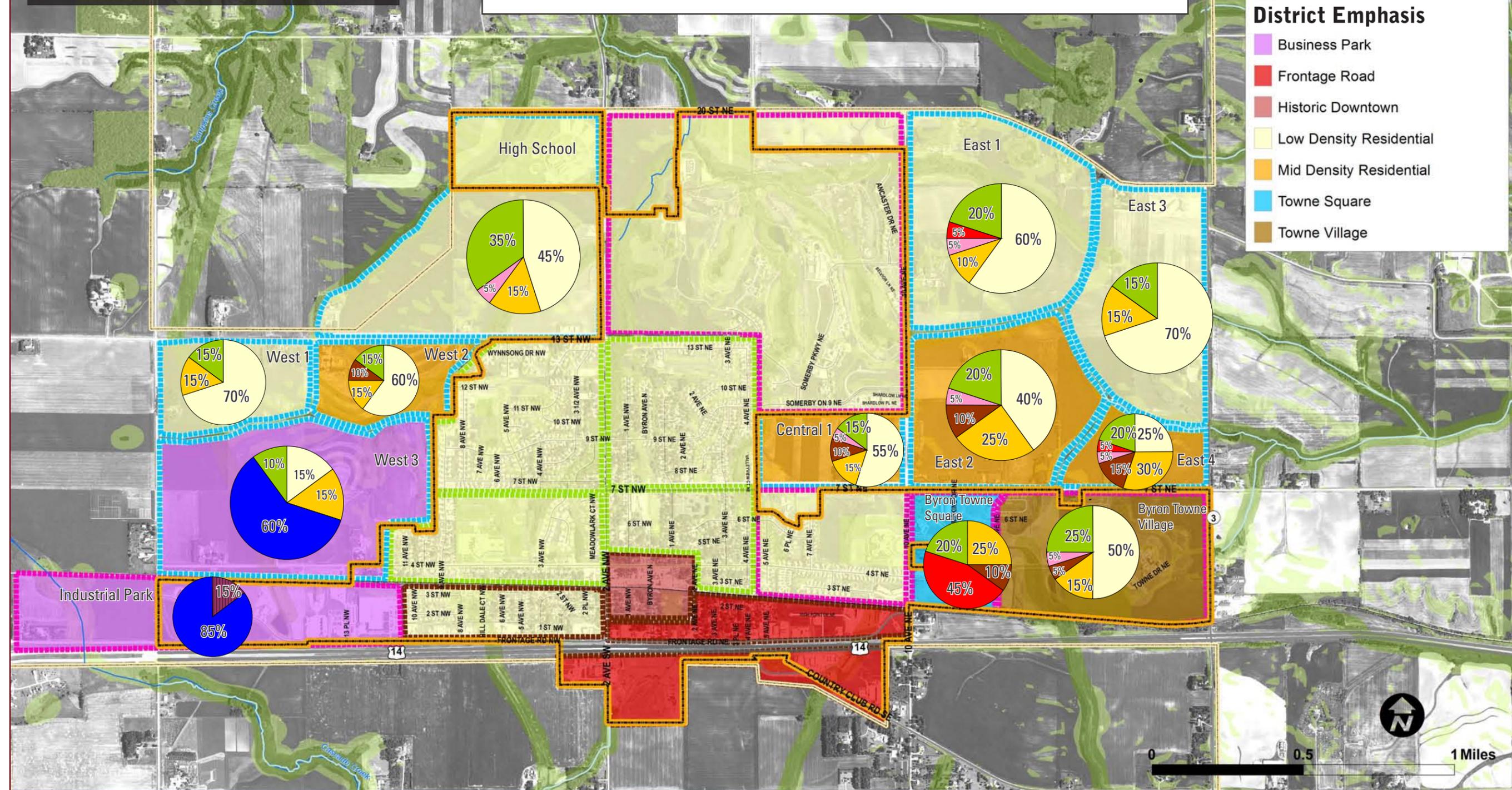
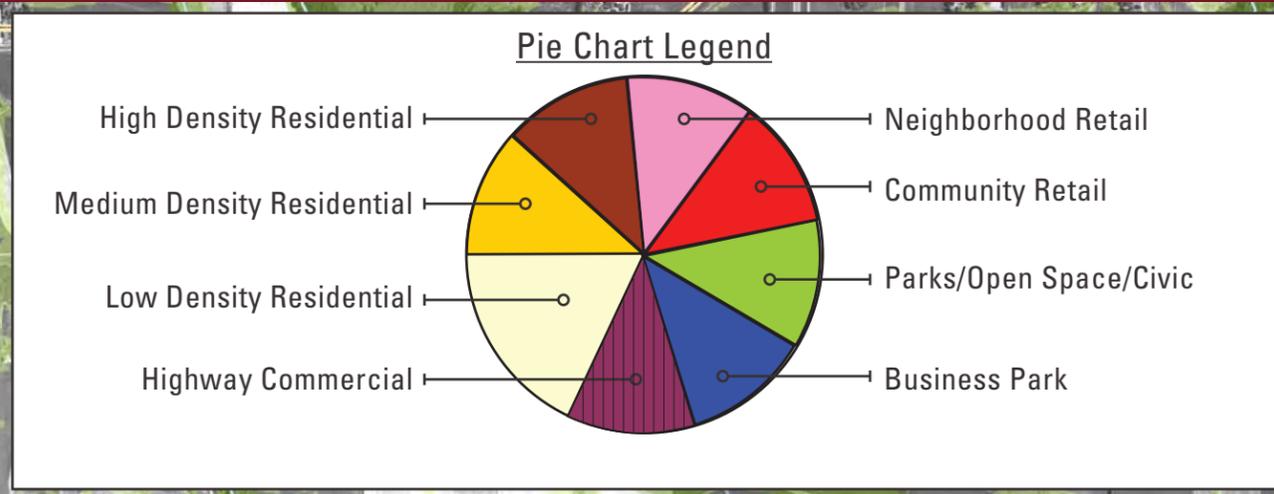


Figure 3-11. Neighborhood Districts Concept Plan Map

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LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL



Our future land use plan includes these land use categories:

Low Density Residential – This land use pattern consists of single family detached residential as the prevailing development type but may also consist of limited amounts of two unit buildings (twin home or duplexes). Density of development within the Low Density Residential areas falls within a range of 2 to 4 housing units per gross acre (lot sizes ranging from 8,000 to 20,000 square feet).



MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL



Medium Density Residential – This land use pattern represents greater density residential development than Low Density Residential, consisting of more attached housing products. The land use pattern would include some single family detached housing, typically on small lots clustered together, as well as some high density housing in small apartment/condo type structures. Density in this land use pattern would fall in the 4 to 12 units per gross acre.



HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL



High Density Residential – Includes the traditional stacked orientation of multi-family housing including apartments and condos. Generally, this land use category would not include any single family detached housing product type but could include attached townhome or condominium type structures. Density in this land use pattern would generally exceed 12 units per acre.



NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL



Neighborhood Retail – Neighborhood retail is a pattern of development that supports the notion of a walkable community, providing destinations for residents. These will occur as small nodes, 5 to 10 acres in size with no more than 50,000 to 75,000 square feet of commercial service or retail space. Typical uses would be retail goods and services such as coffee, restaurant, dry cleaner, hair/beauty salon, real estate/finance/accounting, dental office etc.



COMMUNITY RETAIL



Community Retail – Community retail consists of nodes of 10 to 20 acres that are intended to accommodate large facilities for commercial retail and services (100,000 to 200,000 square feet) and are typically oriented around other high intensity commercial and residential uses. Byron Towne Square is the principal location where we would find community retail services. Uses in this category might be general retail and service commercial, specialty retail, small professional offices and support services.



HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL



Highway Commercial – This land use category reflects highway frontage along Highway 14. Uses require high visibility and good access to the principal arterial system. The uses within this land use category accommodate a wide variety of business and retail goods/services.



BUSINESS PARK



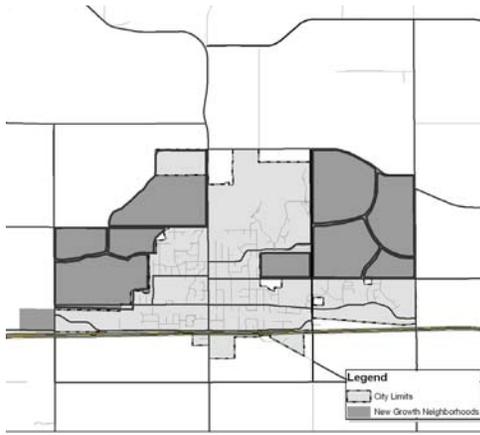
Business Park – This land use category is intended to provide a coordinated and planned environment for business uses including manufacturing, research and design, or professional offices. This category is less focused on retail goods and services and more focused on jobs. Uses would be oriented around a central feature (storm water feature, park or open space element) and would carry some common design theme that would distinguish it from other business parks or campuses in southern Minnesota. Development patterns in the Business Park category encourage maximum use of developable land to increase efficiency in service delivery and infrastructure systems.



PARKS / OPEN SPACE / CIVIC



Parks/Open Space/Civic – This land use category represents public and institutional uses, such as neighborhood parks, community parks, churches, schools, government facilities and golf courses.



New Growth Neighborhoods

New Growth Neighborhoods

New growth neighborhoods will accommodate most of the growth in households and population over the next 20 years. Our emphasis on new growth areas focuses on sustainable design and connectivity; the creation of new neighborhoods that endure over time and are connected physically, socially and economically.

New growth neighborhoods are generally defined by key natural features (ridge line, valley or drainage way as articulated through the greenway concept) or key roadway corridors. Each neighborhood ranges in size from 80 to 160 acres, defined by the ability to walk (at a strolling pace) from the center of the neighborhood to any area in the neighborhood within 10 to 15 minutes. Future neighborhoods will be highly walkable and able to be connected by trails and sidewalks as well as streets and open space corridors.

New Growth neighborhoods are anticipated to receive the majority of household growth in Byron over the next 20 years. These assumptions are based on a land use pattern consisting of single family detached housing, multi-family attached units (townhomes or twinhomes/duplexes) and multi-family stacked housing (apartment or condos).



Goals for New Growth Neighborhoods

- ▶ Accommodate enough land area to meet projected household growth to 2030.
- ▶ Plan growth areas that factor in future infrastructure systems, park and open space corridors, and roadway connections.
- ▶ Achieve a neighborhood design pattern and mix of uses that encourages biking, walking and active living.
- ▶ Broaden the mix of housing types, styles and price ranges available for our current and future residents.

Policies for New Growth Neighborhoods

Land use mix

1. New growth areas should be master planned and designed to connect to the greenway system, highlighting the natural resources on a site as development amenities and preserving the integrity of sensitive environmental resources.
2. New growth areas should first conduct a detailed inventory of existing natural resource systems on a site.
3. New growth neighborhoods should each accommodate a mix of residential uses including single family detached, multi-family attached and multi-family stacked. Some neighborhoods might contain more of one type of housing than another, but each neighborhood should integrate a mix of homes. This contributes to the long term sustainability of a neighborhood by allowing people to age in place and move through the housing life cycle, putting less “peak” demands on infrastructure caused by single use neighborhoods.

4. High density uses should be located near park areas and the greenway, providing direct access to commercial service areas from neighborhood collector streets or the arterial street system where walking is most prevalent.
5. Civic uses should be spread among key neighborhoods, maximizing the ability to walk to schools, churches, government institutions or other public places. This is particularly important to future elementary or middle school needs, where students are less able to drive and more likely to bike or walk.
6. Neighborhood retail should be considered as a long term option within each neighborhood. The City and development community should explore interim uses on parcels as a way to hold property until the market matures. Design of neighborhood retail nodes should seek to connect the nodes to the adjacent residential areas and not simply buffer them or set them apart. Good design can help transition commercial/retail services to avoid the conflicting components of retail and residential.
7. Business Park uses should be oriented around a common theme or identity. This can be achieved through unique monument signage, stormwater infrastructure designed as an amenity with passive park like features or a common building vernacular amongst individual business development. The business park use should seek to maximize the use of the land to increase building square footage and job density.



Example of a neighborhood retail development with a residential design character.



Stacked housing should be considered within new growth areas at varying levels with greater intensity nearest services and transportation corridors. Integration of housing options enables us to “age in place” if we choose.

Housing

1. New neighborhoods should be encouraged to integrate a variety of housing designs and styles. Not every house should have a garage dominating the public street. Some homes should be single level ranch style while others might be two story or split level, thus supporting different housing types for different stages in a life cycle.
2. New neighborhoods should seek to integrate housing for mixed income levels. No one project should be entirely affordable housing, nor should any one neighborhood be solely high end housing. Design of public spaces, parks and open space areas and incorporation of the greenway system can establish an amenity package that enables a distribution of mixed income homes. Lot sizes can vary within a master planned community, reducing land costs and including a variety of home sizes. The end goal should be to balance housing price points across a neighborhood while maintaining integrity of the built structures and the quality of the housing.



Live Work housing units offer residents affordable options for people who want to live near where they work, cutting down on commute times and providing active living opportunities.

Economic Development

1. New neighborhoods should support neighborhood retail nodes that present opportunities for job growth and services.
2. Land use patterns that are unique and present opportunities for live-work should be considered as an economic opportunity to create affordable work spaces and housing options all in one. These uses should be closely monitored and design regulations should ensure parking and traffic patterns, noise, dust or other nuisances are considered prior to establishing such a use.
3. Phasing of development in Byron’s new neighborhoods may take years to build out. Opportunities for retail or commercial uses within neighborhoods may be difficult to hold. Interim uses on prime future commercial areas should be explored that provide low intensity uses which derive economic benefit such as greenhouse, horticulture, or market spaces.
4. The business park neighborhoods should be primarily places of

employment but may include a mix of retail services and limited housing opportunities.

Parks

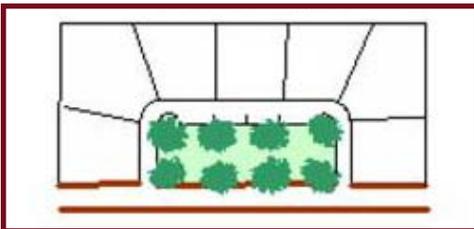
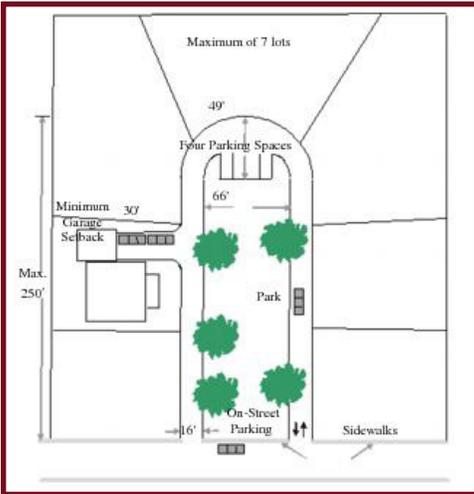
1. Parks should be incorporated into every neighborhood. Where possible, parks should be integrated with the greenway corridor and utilized to maximize the value, enhancement and protection of natural resources.
2. Parks should be designed with public frontage and not isolated to back yards. This adds value to neighborhood property and it contributes to a pleasant, safe park environment by ensuring more “eyes” on the park.
3. Neighborhood parks should be located within each neighborhood so that most homes in the neighborhood are within a walkable distance (approximately 1/4 mile) to a park.
4. Community parks might be located on the edge of neighborhoods and serve a cluster of neighborhoods. Community parks provide destination features, such as athletic complexes and aquatic centers.

Natural systems

1. The greenway provides a vehicle to protect natural resources and connect habitat areas. Neighborhoods should be designed with linear open space and park elements that contribute to the greenway.
2. As part of all neighborhood design processes, a detailed inventory of natural resources should be prepared, understood and integrated into the neighborhood’s design with preservation and enhancement as key objectives.

Roads

1. Streets should be designed to connect neighborhoods, minimizing the use of dead ends and cul-de-sacs to those areas where such a street design serves as a way to preserve open space or protect the integrity of the greenway system.
2. Streets should connect with one another forming blocks that are walkable in size and that offer opportunities for connectivity. A walkable block size would be in the range of 440 to 600 feet in length.
3. Local streets should be the primary access points for individual homes and development. Neighborhood collectors should move people out of residential areas and connect people to the arterial street system. Neighborhood collectors should have an attractive frontage and should utilize unique design strategies to prevent the street from becoming lined with back yards or with private driveways and garage frontages.
4. Neighborhood collectors should be “complete streets.” Roads within neighborhoods should be thought of as a way to build image and identity for the neighborhood through landscaping, street lighting and design of bikeways and trails.



The plan diagrams above illustrate alternatives to cul-de-sacs that could be used along neighborhood collector streets to reduce the amount of driveways along them.



Preserved streams and wetlands can be used as educational and entertainment spaces for children and adults.



Infill Neighborhoods

Infill neighborhoods represent areas that are largely already served with municipal utilities and have been designed or planned and partially developed. Our emphasis for infill neighborhoods is to stay the course, directing development opportunities to existing vacant parcels in order to complete planned neighborhoods as they were originally envisioned. In some cases, reconfiguration of uses or physical design elements (such as streets or utilities) might be required to respond to emerging market trends or community needs and should be carefully considered as to their impact on the existing adjacent neighborhoods and uses.

Goals for Infill Neighborhoods

- ▶ Utilize the capacity within our existing infrastructure system first to the extent property owners are interested or willing to develop.
- ▶ Complete the development of planned neighborhoods as originally envisioned.
- ▶ Maximize efficiency and utilization of existing infrastructure systems.
- ▶ Direct future development to remnant land within existing development focusing on a variety land uses that contribute to the sustainability of the neighborhood, and not simply filling in with more of the same.

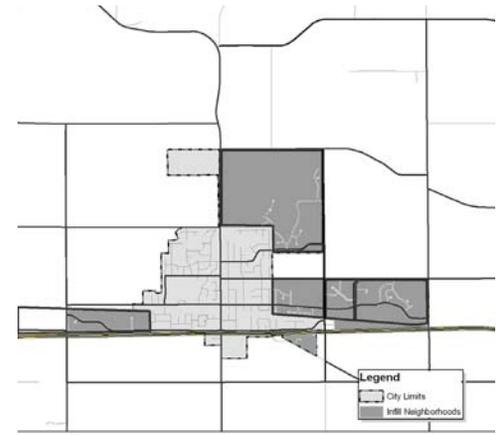
Policies for Infill Neighborhoods

Land use mix

1. As part of planning for infill sites, evaluate the land use mix of the adjacent neighborhood and pursue development that complements the neighborhood's mix of uses. In existing neighborhoods where the housing type or style is dominated by one particular type or style, explore rezoning that would add diversity to the housing type or style within the neighborhood.
2. Ensure new uses (uses that differ than what is adjacent or already the predominant use in the neighborhood) on infill sites give strong consideration to adjacent uses relative to traffic impacts, building scale and building massing. The "land use" should not be rejected without first exploring design configurations that reduce or eliminate the undesirable elements of a proposed project.
3. Balance market economics/demand with the goal of providing a sustainable (or resilient) mix of land uses to serve the neighborhood.

Housing

1. Support efforts to build on new lots within already platted and partially developed neighborhoods.
2. Work with neighborhoods to complete infrastructure systems such as sidewalks, parks and stormwater improvements, which contribute to the vitality of neighborhoods and housing value. Consider the landscape, street



Infill Neighborhoods



Mixed use housing and retail surrounding public gathering space - this type of development could be used at Byron Towne Square



trees and boulevard plantings as new homes are built and infrastructure systems are completed. A mature landscape greatly enhances the resilience of a neighborhood.

3. Monitor housing maintenance issues where new homes or existing homes have fallen into disrepair or are in jeopardy of falling into disrepair based on economic or natural (weather related) distress.
4. Understand the existing neighborhood's housing mix (style of home, price ranges, size) and encourage new housing that adds to the diversity of housing products within a neighborhood.

Economic development

1. Encourage high density housing to be integrated into Byron Towne Square, Byron Towne Village and adjacent neighborhoods to support long term household growth and a strong local customer base of retail and service commercial needs.
2. Collaborate with property owners of vacant industrial/commercial sites to promote Byron as a great place to live and a great place to start a business.
3. Support and encourage new development types that provide opportunities for small business startups either in incubator type spaces or in live-work units. These types of uses might locate in the High Point neighborhood or within the business park neighborhoods on the west side of town.
4. Support and encourage the growth and evolution of the local cottage industries, truck farms and gardeners from the region looking for places to promote or sell home grown products. Explore sites within infill neighborhoods that are intended for commercial services and gathering places where permanent spaces can be established for the farmers market and adjacent uses can benefit from the draw of the farmers market customers.

Parks

1. Monitor the use patterns of parks and evaluate the use of parks relative to the neighborhood housing mix and demographic composition. Park planning should adjust to neighborhood changes so that on-going maintenance is appropriate to the park use and demand. Reconfiguration of parks should be considered to adjust to less use of a park.
2. Engage neighborhood residents in the monitoring of park use, evaluation of facilities and planning for park transitions.

Natural systems

1. Prioritize preservation of mature trees. The urban forest provides shade, identity and visual relief from the built environment, all of which contribute to sustaining the vitality of a neighborhood.
2. Target neighborhoods that contain part of the greenway system concept to help demonstrate management of environmental corridors in the areas of water quality management, tree maintenance and invasive species management.
3. Encourage existing homeowners to establish native plant species that absorb water within boulevard areas or areas prone to collecting stormwater.

Roads

Within existing infill neighborhoods roadway corridors are well established. Our policy is to:

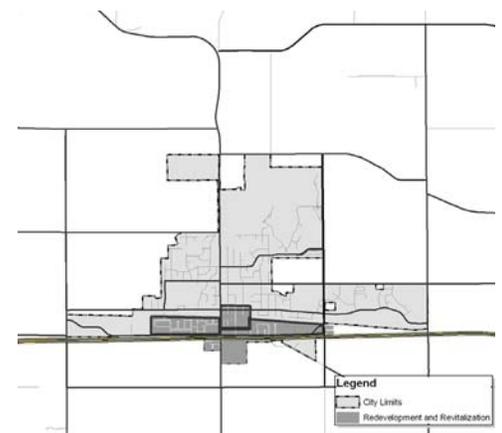
1. Monitor street condition over time and continue with normal maintenance measures.
2. Over the long term, plan (design and budget) for street reconstruction once our streets have reached the end of their useful life.
3. Explore opportunities to improve the long term maintenance of streets through reduction of pavement width and access management (driveway widths and access points).
4. Preserve planned connection points to adjacent undeveloped lands to protect the long term integrity of a connected roadway system.

Redevelopment Neighborhoods

Redevelopment neighborhoods are developed areas where major community system improvements, underutilized properties, distressed properties or land owner decisions might warrant significant change within the neighborhood. These neighborhoods are small areas in the southern, central part of the city and are defined by key identity elements such as an historic structure, civic use, or major infrastructure system (highway or railroad). These areas will require further detailed planning to define what the future land use distribution might become, what change might look like and how it will happen over time.

Goals for Redevelopment Neighborhoods

- ▶ Restore neighborhood vitality.
- ▶ Increase land use and infrastructure efficiency.
- ▶ Reuse vacant or dilapidated structures that are structurally sound.
- ▶ Establish redevelopment plans/strategies in areas where significant land use and development changes are anticipated.
- ▶ Update aging public infrastructure.



Redevelopment Neighborhoods

Policies for Redevelopment Neighborhoods

Land use mix

The land use mix in redevelopment areas should respond to the unique character of each neighborhood district.

1. Downtown is a redevelopment district because of its historic nature and because the uses that were once there are changing. Some businesses have left and some will likely leave to pursue development of new facilities in locations that better complement their use.
 - a. *The land use mix in downtown should include a balance of specialty commercial retail services, civic uses (museum, library, cultural or civic arts center), professional offices and mid density housing.*



“...Communities that support active living strive to create amenities that will enhance the quality of life of its residents, improve the physical and social environment in ways that attract business and workers, and contribute to **economic development...**”

Source: Complete Streets Policy (October 13, 2010)



2. The Frontage Road area, particularly at County Road 5, is a redevelopment area because of the anticipated access changes along Highway 14 and the impacts these changes will have on properties in the area. The extent of redevelopment depends on the ultimate design of the transportation improvements.
 - a. *The land use mix in the Frontage Road area should include a mix of highway commercial retail, professional office and service retail, taking advantage of proximity and visibility of Highway 14.*

Housing

1. Redevelopment areas should focus on replacement of dilapidated/sub-standard housing with high density housing. High density housing will promote downtown as a desirable location and would be required to help the economics of redevelopment.

Economic development

1. Economic development strategies within redevelopment areas should include business owners within the districts and reposition them in the redevelopment area or relocate them elsewhere within Byron.
2. Long term strategies should be put in place to attract desired retail users along Highway 14 and specialty users for downtown.

Parks

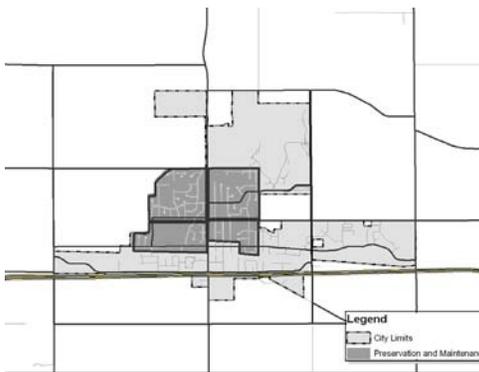
1. Within redevelopment areas, our policy is to incorporate mini parks or small plazas that allow opportunities for historical interpretation, identity building and resting/gathering areas for patrons of the district.

Roads

1. Roads through redevelopment districts should be designed to highlight the districts including streetscape beautification and banner sign identity.
2. Walking and biking are critical components for streets. Complete streets concepts should be carried through both the historic downtown area and the Frontage Road redevelopment area.

Preservation and Maintenance Neighborhoods

Many of our neighborhoods are fully developed and we do not perceive a need for change of any significance. Our efforts are focused on preserving the integrity and character of these neighborhoods by maintaining existing infrastructure, buildings and sites. When our streets and infrastructure systems reach their useful life and require more significant reconstruction, we will approach such projects as opportunities to improve upon our preservation and maintenance neighborhoods. In doing so we will look to apply the policies we establish in our infill, redevelopment and to some degree our new neighborhoods.



Preservation and Maintenance Neighborhoods

Growth and Development

Our comprehensive plan helps in guiding future growth of our community over the next 20 years. Our plan for growth is outlined by our neighborhood

districts and framed by the greenway system, network of complete streets, and our system of parks and trails.

Our plan for growth and development is driven by the need to guide and shape our projected population and household growth. In line with our vision we must ensure areas for growth that support opportunities for commercial goods and services and areas for job growth so that our residents have the ability to seek job opportunities in Byron.

A key part of our plan for growth and development is to shape new neighborhoods to be more walkable and encompass a more sustainable mix of land uses. As such, not all new growth will occur in new neighborhoods.

The following table demonstrates our projected future land use and development to the year 2030.

Table 3-1. Projected Future Land Use and Development (2011-2030)

Land Use Category	New Growth Neighborhoods		All Others Neighborhoods		Total	
	TOTAL LAND (AC.)	AVAILABLE DEVELOPABLE LAND (AC.)	TOTAL LAND (AC.)	AVAILABLE DEVELOPABLE LAND (AC.)	TOTAL LAND (AC.)	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Low Density Residential	725	639	522	108	1,246	38%
Medium Density Residential	242	242	96	54	338	10%
High Density Residential	49	49	66	54	116	4%
Neighborhood Commercial	46	46	54	54	100	3%
Community Commercial	15	15	197	189	212	7%
Highway Commercial	7	7	82	27	89	3%
Business Park	191	191	121	54	312	10%
Parks/ Civic/ Institutional and Utility	374	297	465	27	839	26%
Total	1,648	1,485	1,603	566	3,251	100%

Small Town Character and Identity Idea

We live in Byron because of the small town, friendly way of life. We appreciate the safe streets and sense of community. Maintaining that character by building a unique identity is important for the future of our community and to attract new businesses and home-buyers to Byron.

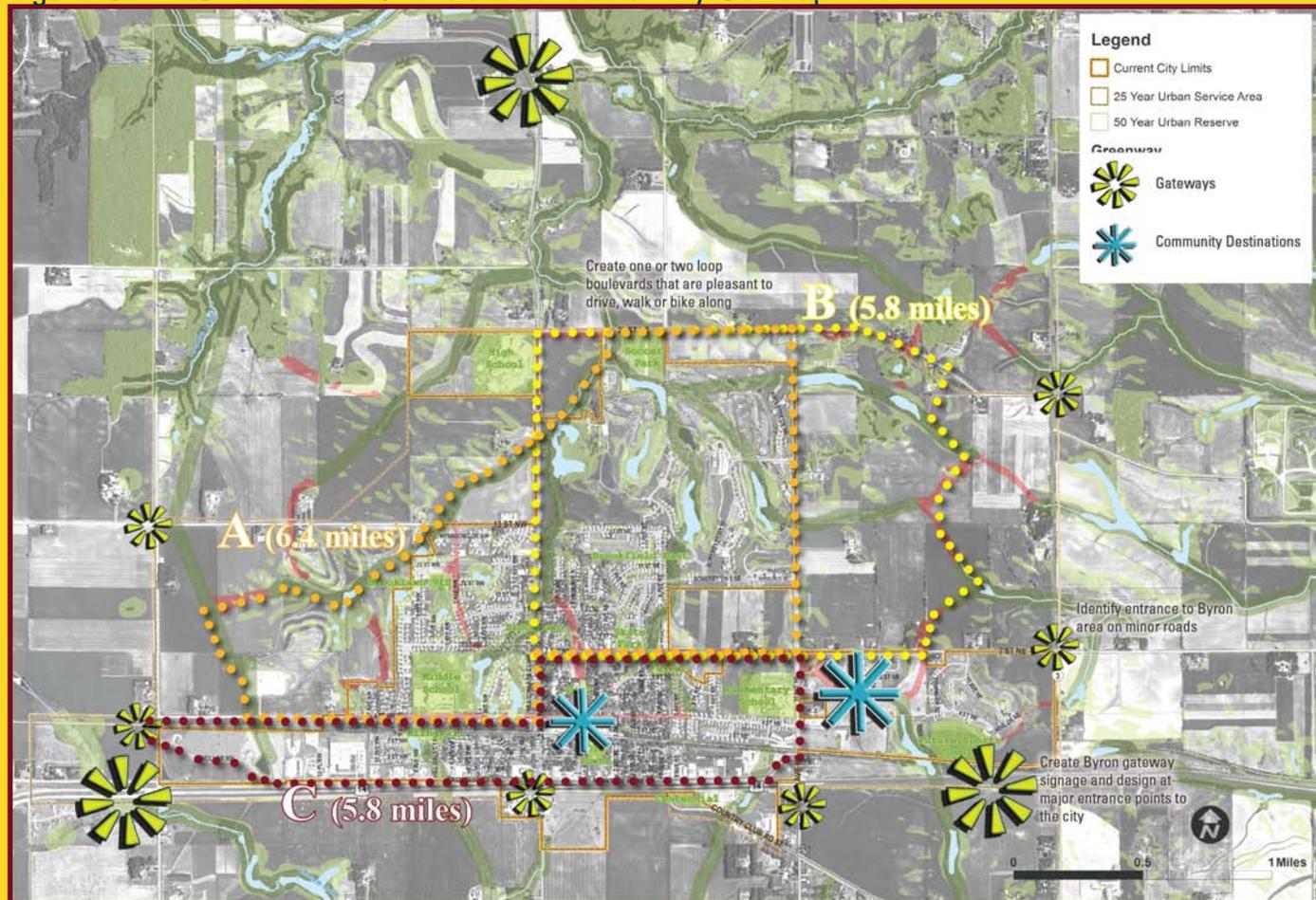
Byron has a high quality of life but lacks a unifying identity and downtown activity hub. Creating physical spaces for community gathering enhances and promotes a high quality of life. Characteristics of Byron that residents identified as top priorities to maintain include: friendly, quiet, good schools, compact growth, family-oriented.

A loop boulevard can identify a corridor of recreation, scenic views and connections with a physical linear feature. Monumental gateways and signage could welcome visitors to Byron and bring a sense of identity to the City. Byron Towne Square can become a central retail, dining and community gathering place for residents and visitors. Historic downtown Byron could become a more intimate community gathering location with dining and historic experience sites.

Implementation Strategies

- ▶ Create a destination at historic downtown Byron - use business incentives to revitalize the area.
- ▶ Maintain and encourage economic development programs, such as “Build Byron Buy Local.”
- ▶ Complete the streets to create pedestrian and bicycle connections to key destinations.
- ▶ Invest in high quality public parks and open spaces.
- ▶ Create an urban growth boundary that limits sprawl.
- ▶ Create neighborhood identities around parks, schools and retail nodes.
- ▶ Embrace the rural aesthetic and preserve viewsheds.
- ▶ Develop a gateway theme and identity at key entrances to the community.

Figure 3-12. Small Town Character and Identity Concept Plan



Street System



Our street system is an essential aspect of community development. It has largely shaped the development pattern that exists today and will continue to have a great influence on the community as we grow. Most importantly, our street system is not solely about vehicular movement. Our streets provide several key functions:

- ▶ They provide access to property and enable land to develop.
- ▶ They provide access to commercial and business property in order to conduct business.
- ▶ They enable people to move throughout the community by driving, walking or biking.
- ▶ Their physical design influences the character of neighborhoods (residential or commercial) and provides neighborhood identity.

Our roadway network is a critical component to everyday life in Byron. The network serves many types of users so streets must be designed differently to meet various needs.

Imagine trying to drive to Rochester using only neighborhood streets or trying to back out of your driveway onto Highway 14. These are extreme examples but they help illustrate why access matters. Managing access is one of the elements that defines the function of a street. Too many individual driveways lead to congestion and safety concerns on heavily used or through streets. Consolidating or managing these access points makes collectors and arterials more efficient and less dangerous. It also means fewer crossings/conflicts for off street bike trails and sidewalks.

By doing a better job of understanding the roadway network and how the individual components are used, it is possible to create a safer, more efficient roadway network that works for automobiles, bikes and pedestrians. Designing streets as “Complete Streets” is an emerging trend in good community design.

Within our city limits, we have approximately 26 miles of local municipal streets, four miles of county roads, one mile of township road, two miles of state highways and two miles of private streets or drives. All added together, Byron has a total of nearly 35 miles of streets and highways. Managing our roadway system requires collaboration and coordination with Olmsted County, MnDOT, Kalmar Township and Dodge County where our roads and streets connect.

Highway 14

A key element of our roadway system is Highway 14, a part of the State Trunk Highway System. Currently, Highway 14 is a four lane divided highway with at grade signalized intersections at 10th Avenue, and County Road 5. Over the last decade, communities along Highway 14 have collaborated to study the long term needs for improvements to Highway 14 and the collector roadway system that would support the corridor. Improvements would include converting the highway to a grade separated freeway type design, thus eliminating at-grade intersections along the corridor. The challenges have been (and continue to be)

Complete Streets Policy

On January 12, 2011, the City of Byron adopted a Complete Streets Policy.

The Complete Streets Policy encourages development of city roadways to create a connected network of facilities that accommodate every mode of travel and encourages the City of Byron to enhance the safety, access and comfort of all users of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, motorists and freight drivers, through the design, operation and maintenance of the transportation network.



Why Complete Streets?

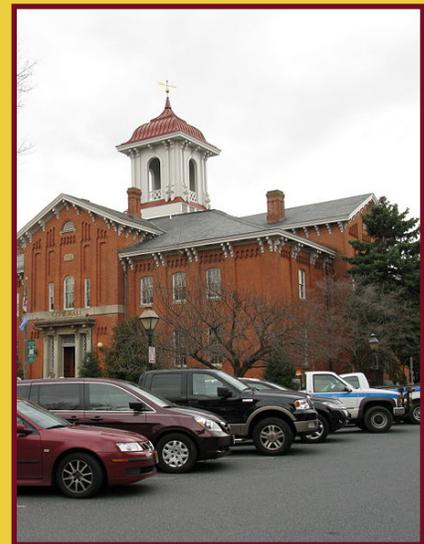
- ▶ Increasing demand: 55% of Americans want to drive less and walk more
- ▶ Mobility: 1/3 of our population doesn't drive
- ▶ Health: Each kilometer walked = 5% reduction in likelihood of obesity
- ▶ Environment: Residents in a sidewalk neighborhood are 65% more likely to choose to walk rather than drive to a destination
- ▶ Return on investment: Complete street improvements are routinely shown to promote private reinvestment and property value - paying for themselves in property tax generation

By 2025: 1 in 5 Americans will be over 65. More than 50% of elderly who don't drive stay home on a given day because they lack mobility options. Complete Streets.org

On May 15, 2010 the Minnesota Transportation Policy Bill, referred to as the MN Complete Streets Law, was enacted. Key provisions of the bill include:

- ▶ Legislative reporting on complete street initiatives by MnDOT
- ▶ Improved transparency of state-aid variance process
- ▶ Strategy for complete street policies
- ▶ Identify statutory barriers to complete street implementation
- ▶ Seen as Step 1 to more far-reaching policies

In May of 2011, Rochester Olmsted Council of Government also adopted a complete streets policy. The key guiding principle of ROCOG's complete streets policy "is to plan, design, operate and maintain the transportation network to promote safe and convenient access and travel for all users."



determining locations for interchange access. A 2004 study jointly completed by MnDOT and the agencies along the corridor between Rochester and Kasson provided significant analysis and explored design configurations for a number of alternative scenarios. No conclusive decision was drawn from the study by MnDOT or Olmsted County as more detailed analysis and design would be required to fully understand the impacts of each alternative.

In June of 2004, the City of Byron adopted Resolution 2004-14 clearly stating the City's preference for interchange locations at 10th Avenue and County Line Road (19th Avenue NW). Our plan is based on this recommendation for future interchange access. Furthermore, our community would greatly benefit from overpasses located where current access exists to maintain connectivity to our community. We recognize however, that the final location and design configuration of interchanges or overpasses will be determined collaboratively with MnDOT, Olmsted and Dodge County and the City of Kasson. We recognize that any alternative will have significant impacts on our community that will need to be fully understood and mitigated.

County Road and County State Aid Highways (CSAH)

We have several county roads within our city: County Road 5 (2nd Avenue NW) falls entirely within the city limits and County Road 3 (only adjacent to the southeast city limits) and County Road 134 (also known as 7th Street NE) These roads receive state aid funding as part of the County State Aid Highway system and provide critical linkages to nearby towns and the regional arterial roadway system. They generally carry heavy traffic volumes and serve as key routes for our agriculture community to ship products to market.

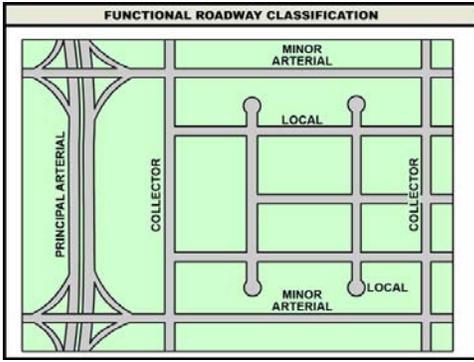
Municipal State Aid Streets (MSAS)

Cities receive financial assistance from the state for construction and maintenance of streets included within the Municipal State Aide Street (MSAS) system. To be included in the MSAS, cities must be over 5,000 in population. In 2010, our community fell short of that threshold; however, we project to reach that threshold upon the next census taking. Generally, cities receive funds for streets that qualify for the program, which essentially adds up to 20% of the street system. Our proposed functional classification system outlined in this section of the Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the MSAS system and our desire for complete streets fit with the design policy of MnDOT. We have defined a series of "collector" streets within our street plan that serve to connect and integrate traffic generating areas (demand) to the larger street network. These "collectors" will form the basis of our future MSAS system.

Our Street Plan

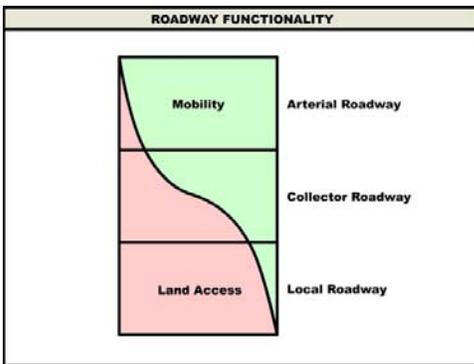
Functional Classification of Streets

Each street within our community (and connecting outside of our community) serves a specific function within the larger system. A street classification system is used to help define the role of various streets and corridors within the city. By establishing a functional class system, we can in turn develop cohesive overall system design and continuity. The following components make up our functional class of streets:



A Functional Class system of streets provides guidance on the role that each street plays in a larger community system.

- ▶ **Principal Arterial:** 4 lane divided highway with priority on mobility, very limited roadway access and no private access drives. *Example: Highway 14*
- ▶ **Minor Arterial:** 2-4 lane roadway spaced at 1/2 to 1 1/2 mile intervals, main emphasis on mobility, 1/4 to 1/2 mile roadway access and no private access drives on future configurations. Off-street multi-use trails are preferred on both sides of the street, but acceptable on one side with a sidewalk on the opposite side. *Example: 10th Avenue NE, 2nd Avenue NW, County Line Road, 7th Street NE, 13th Street NW, 20th Street NE, CR3*
- ▶ **Existing Neighborhood Collector:** 2 lane roadways, emphasis on connecting neighborhoods to arterial and regional roadways, spaced 1/3 to 1/2 mile apart, managed traffic and controlled access where possible to reduce conflicts with private drives. Should include sidewalks and bike lanes or sidewalk and off-street multi-use trail. *Example: 9th Street, 7th Street NW, 4th Street, Frontage Road*
- ▶ **Future Neighborhood Collector:** 2-3 lane roadways with center turn lane or landscaped median, spaced 1/3 to 1/2 mile apart, priority on connecting neighborhoods to arterial and regional roadways, limited private drive access, instead connecting to local streets or utilizing an alleyway system. Should be paired with off-street multi-use trail on one side & sidewalk on other.
- ▶ **Local Road:** 2 lane streets with sidewalks on both sides, priority is on providing access to neighborhood residents.



The balance between providing access for land development and providing safe and efficient mobility is addressed through the functional class system.

Street System Goals

- ▶ Develop a network of streets that provides a balance of mobility and access to all of Byron’s residents, businesses, and visitors.
- ▶ Provide a street system that enables safe travel regardless of travel mode (bike, walk, auto, truck, or bus).
- ▶ Develop future streets as complete streets and where appropriate/feasible, reconstruct aging streets to incorporate components of complete streets.
- ▶ Coordinate development of new streets with the neighborhood districts and the land use directions established for each district.
- ▶ Design future streets to be operationally sound and to maximize long term maintenance and management efficiencies.



A future condition representing a complete minor arterial street with auto, transit and bike/walk elements.

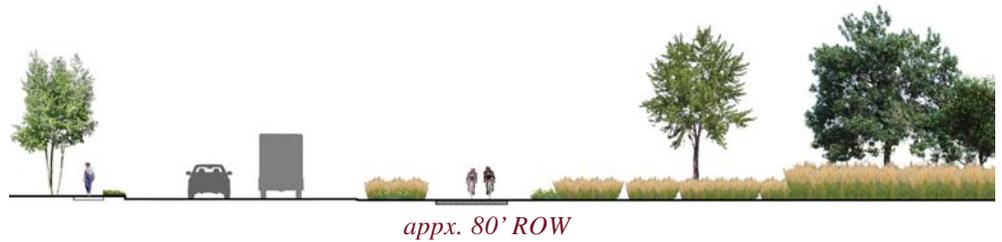
Figure 3-13. Minor Arterials



Four-lane minor arterial street with off-street trails - future condition



10th Ave NE is a good example of a minor arterial in Byron with an off-street trail. It could be enhanced with tree plantings and landscaping.



Two-lane minor arterial street with sidewalk (left) and off-street trail (right) - similar to existing condition



Example of a neighborhood collector street with bike lanes, controlled access and enhanced landscaping treatments.

Figure 3-14. Neighborhood Collectors



Boulevard collector street with bike lanes and sidewalks. Boulevard area may become a left hand turn lane at intersections - future condition



Example of a neighborhood collector street with sidewalks, well marked pedestrian crosswalks and controlled access. Street dimension is modified at intersection to enhance pedestrian safety.



Two-lane collector street with center turn lane, sidewalk (left) and off-street trail (right) - future condition



A community trail system could provide safe, off-street bike and walk trails along busy roads.



Bike boxes can be used in a heavily trafficked area to provide a designated area for bikers to wait at a stoplight.

- ▶ Ensure improvements to Highway 14 that support a balance of land development objectives, mobility needs (safety, efficiency and accessibility for all modes), aesthetic considerations and connectivity principles.

Street System Policies

General Street Network Policies

1. Establish a system of collector streets that serve as the primary traffic corridors connecting neighborhoods to arterial systems.
2. Build streets to meet broad community values of traffic management as well as pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, traffic calming, on-street parking, aesthetics and beautification and environmental protection/enhancement.
3. Build a community wide sidewalk and trail network that links households, schools, parks, commercial services and job centers.
4. Be innovative with alternative street designs that help implement the community's vision and principles without compromising safety and increasing long term maintenance costs.
5. Consider parking strategies that include on street parking in areas where off street parking could be limited by sharing street area.
6. Work with the railroad to maintain safe railroad corridors and convenient crossings to facilitate movement and community connections.
7. Establish and follow a program of street maintenance, repair and reconstruction throughout the City to ensure quality and enduring street infrastructure.
8. Maintain the assessment policy for equitable sharing of improvement costs and the levy of special assessments for street reconstruction.
9. Use a context-sensitive approach that integrates design, safety, cost considerations, environmental stewardship and aesthetics when planning roadway and infrastructure improvements.

The Neighborhood Districts section provides additional policies for how streets should facilitate great place making. These policies are repeated here for reference as organized by neighborhood type:

Growth Neighborhoods

1. Streets should be designed to connect neighborhoods, minimizing the use of dead ends and cul-de-sacs to those areas where such a street design serves as a way to preserve open space or protect the integrity of the greenway system.
2. Streets should connect with one another to form blocks that are walkable in size and thus offer greater opportunities for connectivity. A walkable block size would be in the range of 440 to 600 feet in length.

3. Local streets should be the primary access point for individual homes. Neighborhood collectors should move people out of residential areas and connect people to the arterial street system. Neighborhood collectors should have an attractive frontage and should utilize unique design strategies to prevent the street from becoming lined with back yards, private driveways or garages.
4. Neighborhood collectors should be “complete streets.” Roads within neighborhoods should be thought of as places to build image and identity for the neighborhood through landscaping, street lighting and design of bikeways and trails.

Infill and Preservation/Maintenance Neighborhoods

1. Monitor street condition over time and plan (design and budget) long term for their reconstruction once they have reached the end of their useful life.
2. Explore opportunities to improve the long term maintenance of streets by reducing pavement width and managing access (driveway widths and access points).
3. Preserve planned connection points to adjacent undeveloped lands to protect the long term integrity of a connected roadway system.

Redevelopment Neighborhoods

1. Roads through redevelopment districts should be designed to portray an identity unique to the district with a streetscape that allows for beautification and banner sign identity.
2. Walking and biking are critical components for streets. Complete streets concepts should be carried through both the historic downtown area and the frontage road redevelopment area.

Roadway Network Implementation

- ▶ Existing streets will be managed for traffic and maintenance.
 - *Long term consideration and exploration of driveway consolidation and access management along arterials and collectors.*
- ▶ Future arterials and collectors will adhere to new design criteria.
 - *Neighborhood Collectors will be laid out as new development is proposed, following design guidelines.*

Roadway Network Impacts

There will be an effort in the future to reduce driveways on existing collector streets. At some point in time, streets need to be reconstructed. When this happens, the city will work with individual property owners to explore feasible ideas to consolidate driveway access, or to design the street in a way that reduces traffic and pedestrian conflicts. In some cases the impact may preclude alternate designs.

Neighborhood collector arrows are shown on the Roadway Network Concept Plan as preferred locations for neighborhood collector street connections.

The City will work with property owners to ensure these connections factor into designs for future development and that they consider future connections to adjacent lands to preserve the integrity of the full neighborhood street connection.

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Parks and Recreation

Our parks and trails build the fabric of our community. In tough economic times, parks are local and budget-friendly places for recreation and outdoor entertainment. Several neighborhood and community parks provide facilities including ball fields and play equipment. Regional parks and trails such as Oxbow Park, an Olmsted County facility three miles north of the city in the Zumbro River valley, provide specialized facilities including a natural center, hiking trails, camping areas and Zollman Zoo. Our city contains 40 acres of active park space. The park and recreation facility standards on the table on page 56 are a general guide for park size, accessibility and amenities based on population. According to these standards, Byron citizens are served well with its 3.7 acres of neighborhood park area per 1,000 residents and underserved with only 4.5 acres of community park area per 1,000 residents (18.28 acres of neighborhood parks; 22.15 acres of community parks). With the addition of the Future Youth Baseball and Softball Complex in Byron Towne Village, there will be an average of 8.7 acres of community park area per 1,000 residents (42.94 total future community park acres). In addition to acres per resident, access and location should be considered to ensure every resident lives within a 1/4 to 1/2 mile of a recreational area. As population continues to grow in Byron, future parks will need to be planned and developed.

Park System Goals

- ▶ Develop a park system that serves all residents regardless of age or ability.
- ▶ Provide park facilities and recreational programming that encourages an active and healthy lifestyle.
- ▶ Integrate future park development within new neighborhoods such that every neighborhood is served by a park facility and every home is within a 1/4 to 1/2 mile of a neighborhood or community park.

Park System Policies

The following are key policy directions for our park system. Many of the park system policies are embedded within the neighborhood districts element of the plan, while others will be developed through completion of the park system plan.

1. Future parks should be designed to face residential front yards on public right of way. Parklands that are located largely in back yards should be minimized. When fronting on public right of way, the park land has greater ability to contribute to neighborhood aesthetics, is more accessible and is generally a safer environment because it is more visible.
2. Future parks should be integrated with the greenway concept where possible. In locations where parks can be designed in a linear fashion, they might be incorporated into the greenway as connectors between areas of habitat or natural resources.
3. Unique stormwater features can be integrated into park design such that the park serves both a recreational purpose as well as a more passive open space.
4. Existing parks within preservation and maintenance neighborhoods should be periodically evaluated to ensure the park facility is servicing the neighborhood needs. This can be done through volunteer user surveys or observation programs.

When asked to list their favorite park in Byron, most game respondents chose Oxbow Park, an Olmsted County facility, as their favorite.

-Summer 2011 Community engagement gameboard



Previous Planning Studies

Byron's Recreation Facilities Plan, completed in 2006, outlined a strategy for physical development of parks and recreation facilities in Byron. An update to this plan is currently underway and will be completed following our comprehensive plan update.

Approximately 150 people responded to an online pool survey in early 2011. The survey asked about season pass prices, number of children per household, pool hours, pool use, pool safety and desired Byron Community Pool enhancements. A desire for a new pool and aquatic center (similar to Stewartville's) emerged as a high priority among survey participants.

Table 3-2. Park Types and Standards

The park and recreation facility standards on the table below are a generic guide for park size, accessibility and amenities based on population. These standards are adopted and modified from the National Park and Recreation Association. According to standards, Byron citizens are served well with its 3.7 acres of neighborhood park area per 1,000 residents and underserved with only 4.5 acres of community park area per 1,000 residents (18.28 acres of neighborhood parks; 22.15 acres of community parks). With the addition of a future sports complex in Byron Towne Village, there will be an average of 8.7 acres of community park area per 1,000 residents (42.94 total future community park acres). In addition to acres per resident, access and location should be considered. A key characteristic of great neighborhoods is a walkable neighborhood. A measure of walkability and active living is for every home to be within a 1/4 to 1/2 mile of a park. As population continues to grow in Byron, future parks will need to be planned and developed.

Park Type	Use	Service Area/ Population	Size	Site	Potential Amenities
Mini Park or Plaza	Provides opportunities for recreation close to home, particularly where access to larger parks is limited/not feasible. Includes plazas with limited recreational development.	1/4 mile or less radius .25-.5 ac./1,000 people	less than 2 acres	Easily accessible to neighborhood residents; Safe walking and/or biking access; Located in areas not served by larger parks or isolated areas with low population	benches, water feature, open area, plaza, landscaping, small play equipment
Neighborhood Park	Developed primarily for active recreation and neighborhood-scale gatherings close to home	1/4 mile radius, free of major barriers such as major highways or steep topography 1-2 ac./1,000 people	2-15 acres	Easily accessible to neighborhood residents; Safe walking and biking access	Play equipment, ball fields, court games, skating, multi-use fields
Community Park	Area of diverse environmental quality, May include intense recreational facilities, such as athletic complexes, large swimming pools; May be an area of natural quality for outdoor walking, viewing, siting, picnicking	1-2 mile radius 5-8 ac./1,000 people	25+ acres	Easily accessible to community, includes natural features, such as water bodies	Premium ball fields, multi-use fields, trails, restrooms, swimming pools, disc golf, picnic shelter, parking facilities

Source: National Park and Recreation Association modified by HKGi

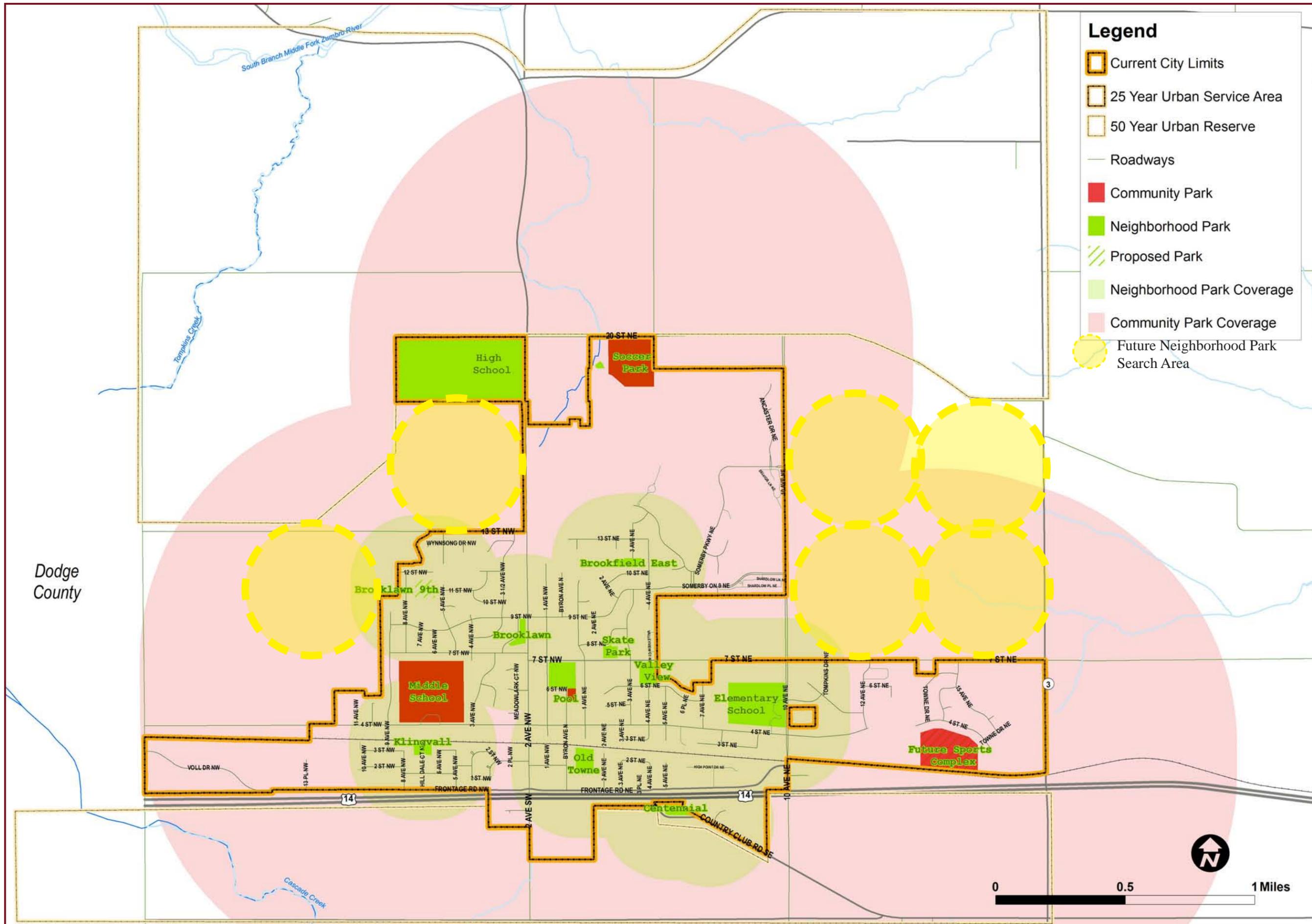


Figure 3-16. Existing and Planned Future Parks Map

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Table 3-3. Existing Park Facilities in Byron

Park	Park Type	Size (acres)	Site/Location	Amenities
City Parks				
Brookfield East	Neighborhood Park	1.82	north of 10th St NE, west of 4th Ave NE	play equipment, benches
Brooklawn	Neighborhood Park	1.99	at southwest corner of 9th St NW and County Rd 5	outdoor exercise equipment, play equipment, benches
Centennial	Neighborhood Park	2.80	south of Hwy 14	open lawn, picnic tables
Community Gardens	Community Facility	.43	north edge of City, northwest of City Sewer Treatment Plan, access off 20th St NE	38 garden plots, parking
Community Pool	Community Park	1.04	east of intersection of 6th St NW and Byron Ave N, centrally located within City	outdoor swimming pool, bath house, play equipment, picnic tables, benches
Klingvall	Neighborhood Park	1.89		play equipment, open area, bench
Old Towne	Neighborhood Park	4.26		play equipment, benches, ball field, picnic tables, open area
Skate Park	Neighborhood Park	1.65		ice skating rink, hockey boards, warming house
Soccer Park	Community Park	20.68	north edge of City, west of Soccer Park, access off 20th St NE	4 soccer fields, parking lot
Valley View	Neighborhood Park	3.87	south of 7th St NE	play equipment, picnic shelter, ball field, half-court basketball, volleyball court
<i>Brooklawn 10th (future)</i>	<i>Neighborhood Park</i>	<i>3.34</i>	<i>south of 12th St NW, between 5th and 8th Aves NW</i>	<i>future park</i>
<i>Future Youth Baseball/ Softball Complex</i>	<i>Community Park</i>	<i>20.79</i>	<i>south of 4th St NE, part of Byron Towne Village development</i>	<i>future park</i>
School Facilities				
Community Education Center		6.57		play equipment, ball fields, Community Education Center building
Elementary School		23.21		restored native prairie, play equipment
High School		38.99		
Middle School		37.94		ball fields, track, tennis courts

Community Education Recreation Partnership Idea

Our residents are interested in organized recreation within the City, especially adult and senior programming. In order to provide quality organized recreational programming for adults, youth and seniors, the City of Byron should consider partnering with the Byron Community Education Department. Byron's Community Education Department could take on recreational programming and scheduling for the City and surrounding area. The City may allocate funding to the Community Education Department, maintain facilities and provide outreach. The Community Education Department would utilize school and city facilities and resources, organize volunteer networks and provide scheduling for superior youth, adult and senior recreation options. Partnerships reduce staffing and funding needs and reduce redundancies, especially in cities of Byron's size. This model is functioning in several other communities in Minnesota. Three precedents offer incite into the success of this model.

Byron's Recreation Facilities Plan (2006) identifies several policies that are in line with the Community Education Recreation Partnership Idea:

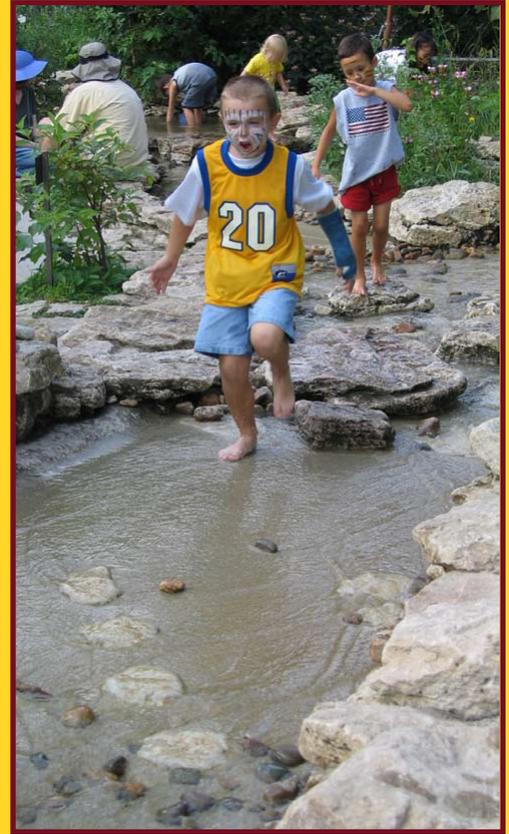
- ▶ Provide for a variety of activities within the park system, including various cultural and social activities, and active and passive recreation.
- ▶ Joint use of park facilities shall be encouraged by incorporating school district facilities with City facilities whenever possible.
- ▶ Promote annual discussion with community organizations as part of the annual review of the park system.
- ▶ Provide for both passive and active recreation within the community.

Components of the Community Recreation Partnership Idea should include:

- ▶ Offer adult recreation programming including softball, baseball, and volleyball.
- ▶ Utilize school facilities and city parks.
- ▶ Foster the creation of new programs and continue existing programs (ie. Team R.E.D.).
- ▶ Encourage communication between club athletics, community education and the City.

Implementation

- ▶ The City may provide funding to the Community Education Department, which provides staffing and scheduling needs.
- ▶ Work with Park Board and School District to collaborate on an efficient recreation system.
- ▶ Develop an Action Plan that includes budget needs.
- ▶ Collaborate with Chamber of Commerce, existing athletic associations, seniors and volunteer network.



Precedent Communities:

Morris, MN (2010 population - 5,286)

- ▶ Adult recreation programs include: volleyball, basketball, dodgeball, floor hockey, flag football, kickball, Tae Kwon Do
- ▶ Youth recreation programs include: soccer, football, volleyball, gymnastics, figure skating, Tae Kwon Do, and more
- ▶ Funded by:
 - *State Aid - \$69,768 (2010)*
 - *City of Morris - \$47,000 (2010, cut 5% in 2011 to \$44,650)*
 - *School District Levy - \$81,500 (2010) [Youth Enrichment Levy - must be used for youth programming, CE receives \$1.85 per capita - this \$ helps fund after school programs and the salary of the Youth Program manager position]*
 - *Program Fees and Grants - \$374,427 (2010)*
- ▶ Expenses for 2010: \$560,658

Cloquet, MN (2010 population - 12,124)

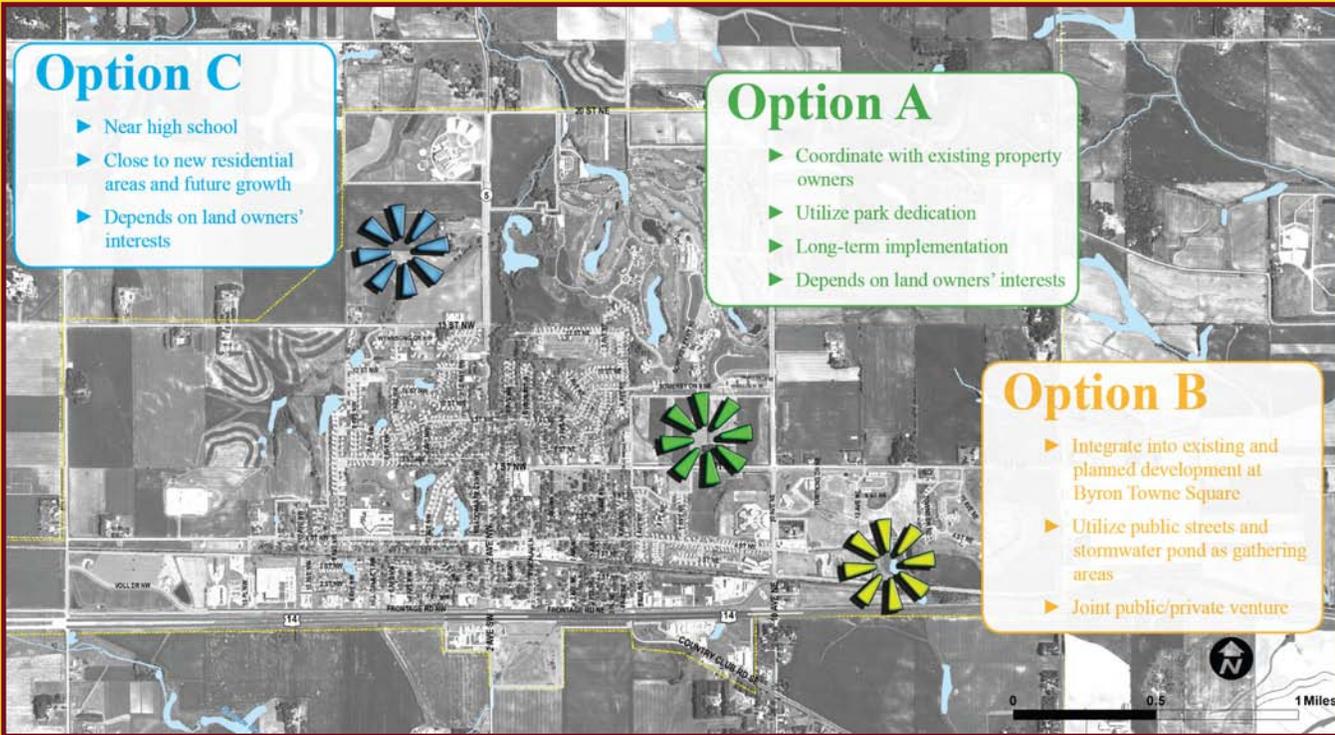
- ▶ Facilities: Swimming Pond, Winter Tubing Hill. Programs: adult recreation, aquatics
- ▶ Funded by:
 - *City of Cloquet: \$66,000 (recently cut 25% from \$88,000)*
 - *State Aid, Community Levies and Program Fees also contribute*
 - *City provides maintenance of park facilities*
- ▶ Provides jobs for youth in community
- ▶ Community Ed. hires all recreational staff without City interference
- ▶ Twice annually a community council meets made up of city staff, community ed. staff and club athletic association members
- ▶ Has operated jointly since before the 1970s

Willmar, MN (2010 population - 19,610)

- ▶ Serves a 30-mile radius around Willmar
- ▶ Offers adult recreation programs (Senior programming, Civic Center, Aquatic Center)
- ▶ Funded by
 - *State Aid (recent reduction in LGA), City of Willmar, Community Levies, Program Fees*
 - *The City has budgets in place for recreation services, Civic Center (two sheet ice arena), WCAC (senior programming) and the Aquatic Center. The use of tax dollars offset the expenses not covered by fees. Roughly in 2010, the fees covered about 25% of recreation programming, 57% of Civic Center programming, 12% of senior programming and about 35% of the Aquatic Center facility. In addition to city programming the CE program handles many recreation aspects as well with the same type of split in resources between tax and fees but more of the CE programs run on a dollar for dollar manner; in other words, the fees cover the costs of the programs.*
- ▶ Work closely with club associations on programming and facility needs
- ▶ Director is school employee (City pays half salary)
- ▶ Has operated jointly for 11 years -- works well now, but reduction of LGA makes sustainability of programs questionable

Central Park Idea

Figure 3-17. Central Park Potential Locations



As a community, we lack a large central open space to use for large organized gatherings, athletic tournaments and community events. A central park would create a centrally located community park space that would have facilities for: informal gatherings (picnic shelters), local functions (parking lot for farmers market) and planned community-wide events (amphitheater for concerts). This park should be adjacent to bikeways and pedestrian routes and close to athletic fields to use in conjunction with tournament events. This park should be planned and developed according to the future needs and desires of Byron residents. This park could be developed in phases, allowing for future additions, such as an aquatic center or community center. The space could be a permanent location for Good Neighbor Days and other events in the City. The site should be accessible by trails and roadways and include signature design features, such as an amphitheater, gardens, trails, natural areas and formal play areas.

Various features could make up Byron's central park. An amphitheater or bandshell could provide a space for informal or formal gatherings, including concerts and performances. Water features could include small fountains for aesthetic purposes, splash pads for entertainment or an aquatic center as a major attraction. As a permanent community event location, facilities such as restrooms, picnic shelters and parking would be necessary elements at the central park. Additional natural or unprogrammed space would be included for possible future park development or passive open space. Long-term additions could include a community center building.

Central Park Precedent Images:



Implementation

- ▶ Coordinate with public and private groups to plan for site selection and acquisition.
- ▶ Complete a funding study.
- ▶ Explore different options for funding, including private investment or sponsorship and property taxes.
- ▶ Work with existing land owners.
- ▶ Prepare a master plan that includes a phased plan of action steps.



Parks and Recreation Action Steps

- ▶ Secure funding for a future athletic complex in Byron Towne Village.
- ▶ Complete a master plan for Byron Towne Village, including possible connections to potential future Central Park.
- ▶ Form a Central Park Action Group to locate a site and create goals for potential future Byron Central Park.
- ▶ Coordinate with the Byron Community Education Department to discuss a joint recreation venture.

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Bike and Pedestrian Network

Our City currently has approximately 5.7 miles of off-street trails. Plans for future trails exist along County Hwy 5, 7th Street NE, 20th Street NE and the Frontage Road NE-NW.

Trails, bikeways and sidewalks connect people of all ages to destinations for recreation and commuting including schools, areas of commerce, work and home. An interconnected system of trails, bikeways and sidewalks is a necessary component to promote active living - the idea that activity can be a part of everyone's daily routine. Byron's existing off-street trails can be linked to planned and proposed trails and create closed loops for seamless recreational purposes and connect more destinations, such as schools, parks and retail areas, to residential neighborhoods. Trail connections promote safety and a small town feel, both priorities for residents in Byron (2011 community survey).

Previous and Related Planning Studies

Byron's Recreation Facilities Plan (2006) identifies several policies that are in line with the Bike & Pedestrian Network Concept:

- ▶ A consistent signage policy shall be developed for all open space areas, buildings, etc. This policy shall include all directional and informational signs.
- ▶ Coordinate the City's park and open space system through the use of a citywide trail plan.
- ▶ Place signage along the trail directing pedestrians and bicyclists to points of interest within the community, which are accessible by the trail.
- ▶ Install bicycle racks, trash receptacles, benches, and other facilities promoting use of the trail system.

Byron adopted an updated Sidewalk Ordinance in 2006 (revised in 2010) to enhance, maintain and provide new sidewalks throughout the City. Future off-street trails are planned along major roads in the city. The Bike & Pedestrian Network Plan Map shows additional trail and sidewalk connections that should be considered as the city develops. Planning for a comprehensive trail and sidewalk network now avoids issues of retrofitting roads and trails later when areas have been developed. Adding to the existing sidewalks and off-street trails in Byron, bikeways can be designated on streets to create more connections through town. Bikeways will be marked by painted lines, symbols and signs.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources recently released a draft of the Stagecoach State Trail Master Plan. A study area has been identified just north of Byron for the trail to connect from the existing Douglas State Trail west toward Owatonna.

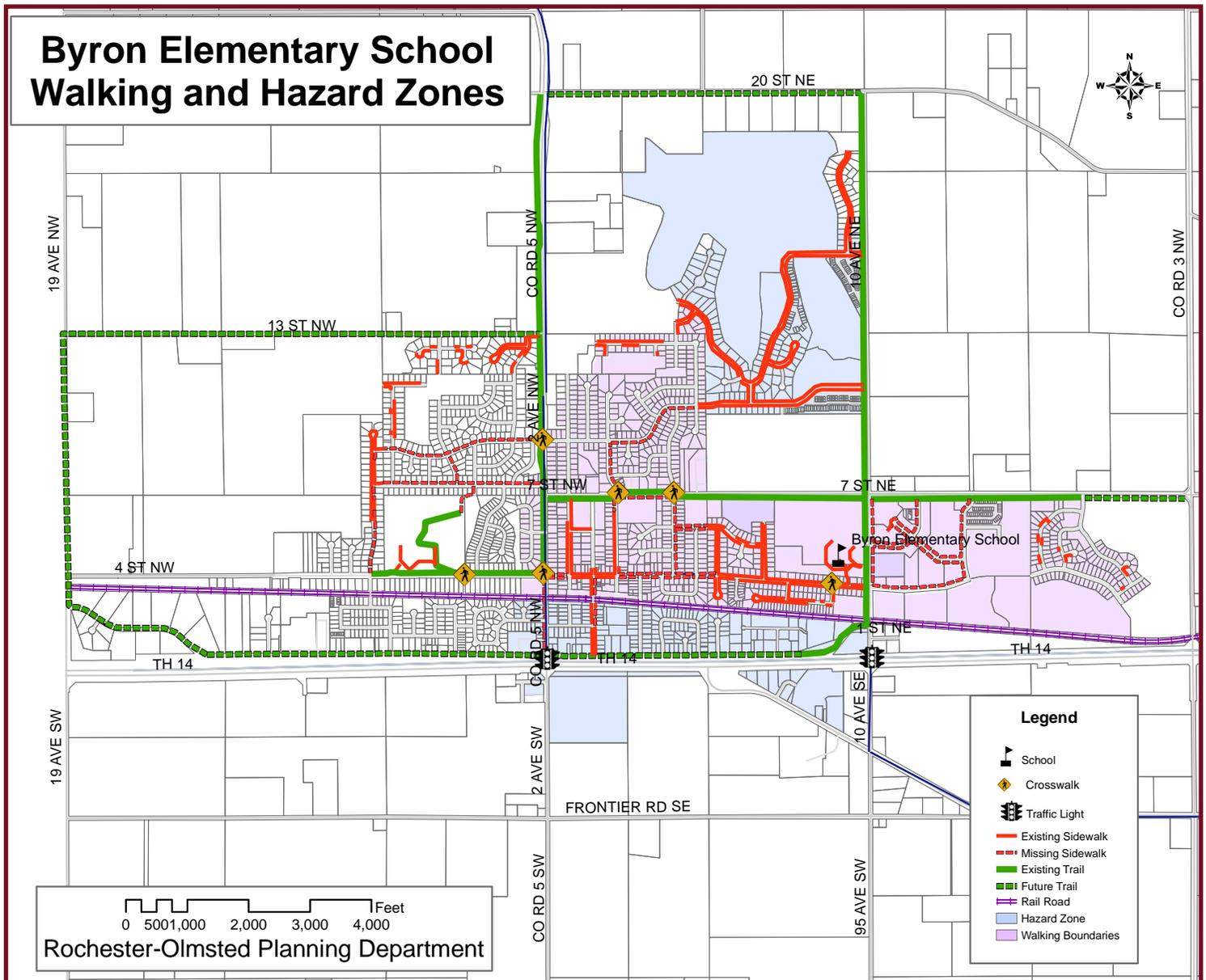
Byron Safe Routes to School Study conducted in 2010, sponsored by the State Health Improvement Program (SHIP), identifies walking boundaries and hazard zones for the middle and elementary schools. Travel to school by walking or biking is discouraged within the hazard zones due to high speed or traffic volume on a state or county road, no crosswalks or other barriers.

Sidewalk Ordinance

“The City of Byron intends to provide safe pedestrian walkways throughout the community and, in particular, to provide for the safe pedestrian traffic to and from schools and school bus stops, and other services to the neighborhood and community.”



Figure 3-18. Byron Safe Routes to School Map



Goals for the Bike and Pedestrian Network

Our goals for the Bike and Pedestrian Network include the following:

- ▶ Create a safe physical environment that encourages walking and biking.
- ▶ Create new neighborhoods with a land use pattern that supports commuting and recreational biking and walking.
- ▶ Create a street network with physical connections and designs that accommodate biking and walking on a similar priority level as motorized traffic.
- ▶ Improve existing neighborhoods and streets with bike and pedestrian infrastructure and maintain existing infrastructure in good condition.

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Bike and Pedestrian Network Policies

1. Create trails, bike lanes and sidewalks concurrent with new development.
2. Incorporate sidewalks and off-street trails into street reconstruction efforts where the physical space exists without compromising safety.
3. Coordinate Byron trails with regional trail plans, such as the DNR's Stagecoach State Trail Master Plan and trail planning efforts of Dodge County, Kasson and ROCOG.
4. Seek out and utilize state and regional trail grants and funding sources to implement major trail corridors.
5. Partner with ROCOG's Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) as a resource for advocacy and information.
6. Coordinate Safe Routes to School, Recreation Facilities Plan and ROCOG planning documents to ensure comprehensive and efficient implementation.
7. Employ best practices (where technically and financially feasible) for bike and pedestrian safety design (see following page) such as enhanced crosswalks, signage, grade separated street crossings (for trails), median treatments, pavement markings or other strategies.

Bike and Pedestrian Plan and Its Implementation

The potential trails on Figure 3-19 (page 67) are shown as conceptual and open to adaptation. The trails would be built as properties are subdivided and developed. At some point, the City may play a more active role in facilitating trail completion when the improvement would benefit completion of a connected system by closing a gap.

There are many options for funding trails and sidewalks. Byron's current Sidewalk Policy requires new sidewalks to be built as streets are reconstructed. Sidewalks can be paid by assessments to benefitting property owners, general fund dollars, grant resources (such as Safe Routes to Schools or others) or through other creative funding strategies.

Trails, bikeways and sidewalks shown along existing streets can be developed as funding becomes available. Trails shown in undeveloped land can be planned, designed and built along with new developments. This concept ensures that trails will be considered during the planning stages of developments rather than after neighborhoods are formed.

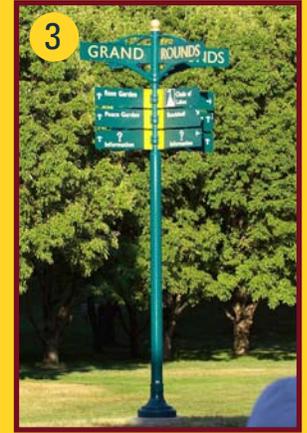
Figure 3-20. Bikeway and Pedestrian Best Practices Images



Medians offer pedestrians and bicyclists refuge points when crossing a wide or busy street. These are especially important for children, the elderly and disabled people.



Grade-separated crossings of high traffic roads allow bicyclists and pedestrians to move safely and efficiently through a community.



Wayfinding signage can direct trail users to destinations in and around Byron.



Marked bike routes alert cars to watch out for bicyclists.



Share the road with bicycles using on-street bike lanes.



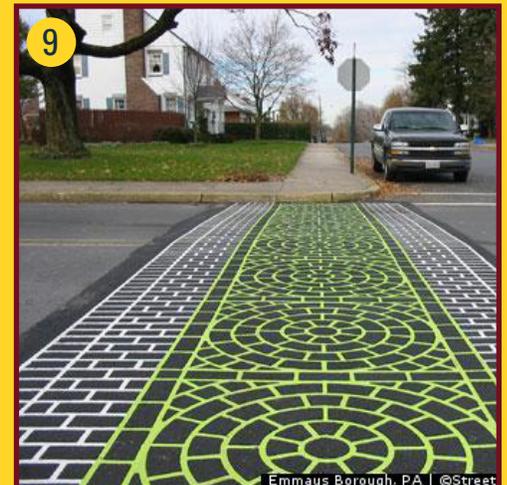
Safe crossings for pedestrians, such as traffic countdown signals



Tree-lined sidewalks create a sense of security and provide shade.

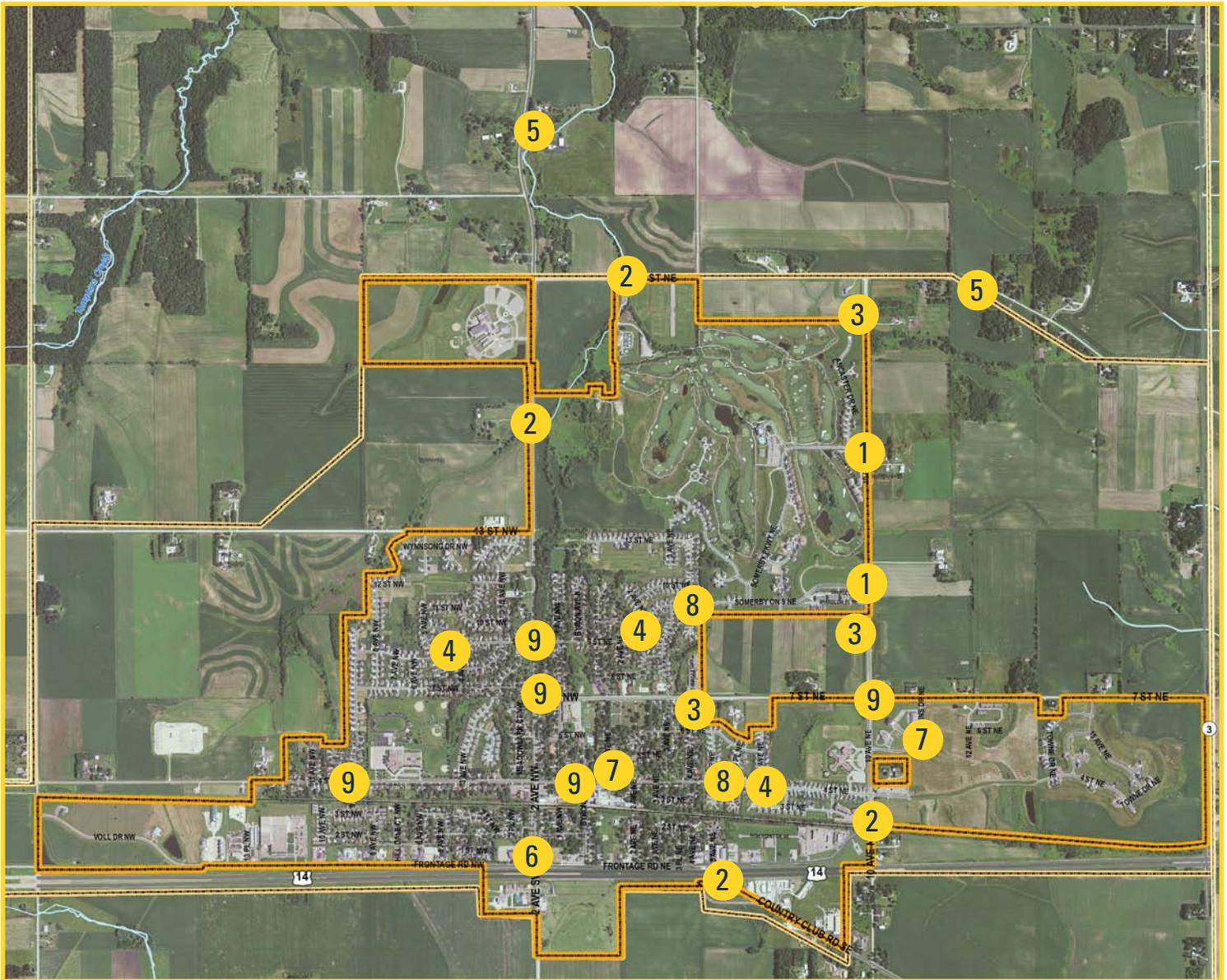


Signed crosswalks alert drivers to be aware of pedestrians.

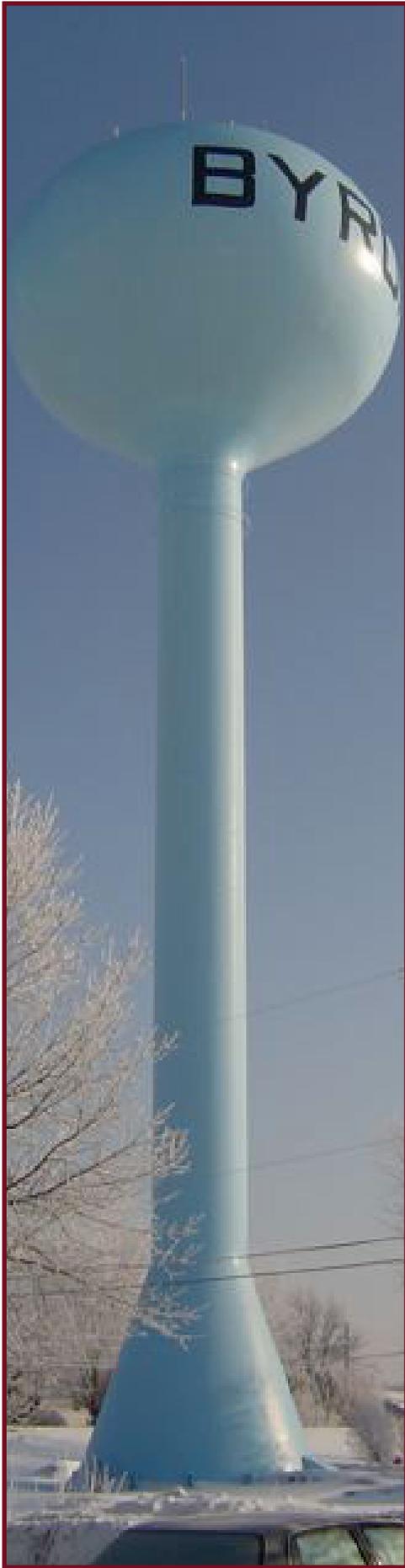


Crosswalks along major trail and sidewalk corridors should be heavily marked for safety.

Figure 3-21. Bikeway and Pedestrian Best Practices Map



The numbers above identify areas in the city where bicycle and pedestrian best practices can be implemented to improve connectivity and movement.



Infrastructure and Utility Systems

Wastewater Systems

Sanitary sewer systems comprise a central wastewater treatment plant connected to a series of collection pipes that flow via gravity or pumping to the treatment plant. In Byron, the Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plant provides central treatment for the city. The plant was originally built in 1983 and expanded in 2005. The expansion in 2005 considered growth and development utilizing the 25 year and 50 year urban service area boundaries. Ultimately, the plant was designed to a projected population of 12,750. The plant capacity is sufficiently sized to accommodate the planned growth in Byron for the Plan horizon (to 2030). Serving the plant is nearly 30 miles of sewer collection piping. The areas within the 25 year urban service boundary can be served largely by cost effective gravity flow systems.

The city has a Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan last updated in 2000. This plan demonstrates how future growth areas would be served. While many elements of this plan continue to be relevant, the plan should be updated following completion of the Comprehensive Plan.

Municipal sanitary sewer systems should be considered a necessity for urban growth and should be required in locations where density is to exceed a threshold of 0.5 to 0.33 units per acre or where there are commercial, institutional or industrial uses.

Municipal Solid Waste

Byron has a plan for collecting solid wastes produced by residential, industrial and commercial land use activities. Solid waste management in Byron is about much more than the proper handling and disposal of solid wastes. It encourages lifestyles that promote the efficient use of resources in a way that minimizes generation of waste. Designing buildings that are sustainable, longer lasting and durable is one way of contributing less to solid waste production. Use of recycled materials for construction purposes also reduces the need to throw away resources that can be re-used in a different manner.

As a community, we might consider adopting independent goals for recycling of the solid waste stream and construction debris stream.

Drinking Water

Byron's public water systems are comprised of three parts: wells (two current wells built in 1962 and 1978), storage (two facilities with a capacity of just over one million gallons) and a distribution system consisting of roughly 35 miles of pressurized pipes that deliver water to homes and businesses for consumption and fire protection. Delivery of public water should coincide with sanitary sewer and other public infrastructure systems.

Key directives that might influence the water supply and distribution plan include the emphasis of the Comprehensive Plan on green infrastructure and sustainability. Creating landscapes that require less watering and encouraging more environmentally sensitive lifestyles will put less pressure on the public

water supply system. Land use regulations will also need to be established or modified to ensure locations of well fields are protected from inconsistent land use patterns.

Critical to the preservation of the water supply is the predominant geologic formation of the region, the Decorah Edge. Our plan supports the efforts led by Olmsted County to protect and preserve areas that are most sensitive to contaminating ground water supplies. We embrace the principles behind the Decorah Edge Overlay district established in the County Zoning regulations. Our concept of the Greenway Corridor includes the Decorah Edge and where possible, our policy encourages preserving those areas as open space or low impact development through the use of conservation design strategies.

The City has a Water System Distribution Plan completed in 2000. Like the Sanitary Sewer Master Plan, this plan continues to have some relevancy; however, an update to the plan following completion of the Comprehensive Plan is needed.

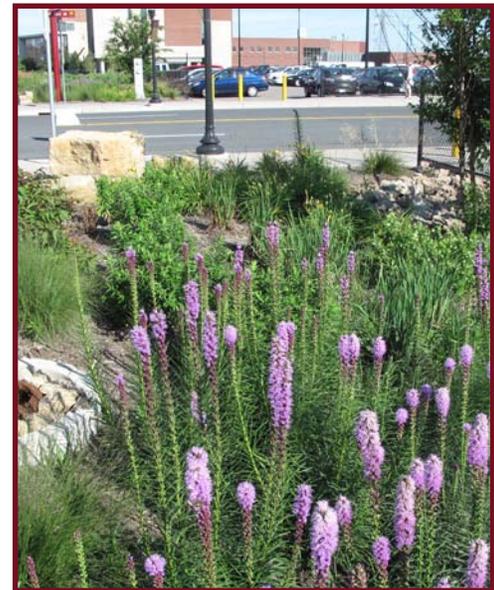


Communications

Communications infrastructure is an important aspect of a livable community. It is becoming a necessity in order to compete in a global economic environment. Such infrastructure systems including Wi-Fi, fiber optic, and other high speed data communication systems should continue to be explored and implemented by the City. The City should explore the creation of a technology plan that will demonstrate to prospects (both business development as well as residential development) a connected community. Consideration should be given to how communication infrastructure fits within future public ROW along street corridors, utility corridors, trail corridors or perhaps as part of the Greenway system.

Education

The trend for schools (K-12) has been to move toward a more efficient campus environment with lots of space and room to grow. Schools located within neighborhoods are becoming a thing of the past. However, the value of schools serving neighborhoods is unparalleled to many other livability factors. Schools serve as neighborhood identity features, gathering places and learning environments for more than just children growing up. They also serve as walking/biking destinations. Our award winning K-12 school system currently has one facility for each level: elementary, middle and high school. All facilities have some capacity to expand and grow at their current sites. As our community grows, this plan encourages efforts to improve the pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and existing schools and to consider long term siting of future school facilities to carefully consider neighborhood identity, connectivity and walkability in their facility planning efforts.



Stormwater Management

Stormwater management is an important overall infrastructure improvement that Byron can address. It is one that will contribute to water quality within Byron and to the Zumbro River and ultimately the Mississippi River. Currently, the city has over 7.5 miles of storm sewer pipes along with limited areas for



Grass pavers can be used on fire lanes, driveways and other low traffic areas as a green alternative to typical asphalt.



A cistern collects rain water from a roof.

ponding to treat stormwater before it infiltrates or flows into surface drainage ways. Recently, we adopted a stormwater utility fee that helps sustain our existing stormwater system, providing a funding source to maintain our system and provide educational resources that help our community understand the impacts that our development decisions and behaviors have on the greater environment.

Our Plan suggests a sustainable development pattern that seeks to minimize runoff through innovative community design and development and education. We can utilize proven best management practices from state and regional resources to help our community efficiently and effectively manage stormwater so that it is not just a problem, but an opportunity and an amenity.

An implementation initiative is to create a guide that will provide examples of how small development projects and existing properties can better manage stormwater runoff for the betterment of water quality in the region and ultimately everyone downstream.

Infrastructure System Goals

Goals for our infrastructure system include:

- ▶ Maintain a community infrastructure system that is environmentally sound (providing safe and clean drinking water and minimizing pollutants), technologically current (reliable and efficient systems), efficient in its operations (linking operational costs to design, construction and development trends and to usage behaviors), and able to grow and expand to adequately accommodate future development (proactively manage our system).
- ▶ Link our infrastructure system development to our neighborhood districts and coordinate its implementation with the greenway concept.
- ▶ Efficiently utilize existing infrastructure capacity in redevelopment, infill or preservation/maintenance neighborhoods before subsidizing future infrastructure investments to new growth areas.

Infrastructure System Policies

The following are key policies that will guide our infrastructure system:

1. Water conservation should be encouraged in all aspects of community development and the ongoing maintenance of our community. Using drought tolerant landscaping, low pressure faucets/fixtures, monitoring irrigation systems or implementing best management practices that capture rainwater for future reuse are key policy directions for implementing our community vision.
2. Good water quality is an essential element of maintaining a high quality of life. Both potable water (drinking water) for our physical health and clean water that is discharged to the environment after being used. We will continue to employ the most effective and efficient technologies and regulatory provisions to ensure clean drinking water supplies and to protect against unintended consequences and negative environmental impacts.

3. System expansions will be required for our community to grow. We will extend municipal utilities (sewer, water, and stormwater) in an orderly manner that discourages leap-frog development.
4. Best Management Practices (BMPs) for stormwater management can contribute greatly towards many of our guiding principles including those aimed at community character and identity, environment and natural resources, connectivity (partnerships) and infrastructure. We will encourage use of BMPs in public and private development to help manage stormwater runoff (volume control and treatment) and to contribute to the aesthetic value of our neighborhoods, parks, streets and open space corridors.
5. School siting is a critical element to our future growth neighborhoods. While the need for additional school facilities may be in the distant future, it is never too soon to be thinking about how future facility planning can be done collaboratively between the School District and the City. We will encourage our school facilities to be integrated into our neighborhoods, well connected by trails and sidewalks, equipped with bicycle friendly infrastructure, accessible to well-planned collector streets and connected to our park system.
6. Utilities and communication infrastructure should be considered as future development or redevelopment projects are planned. We will make sure that public improvements incorporate provisions for technology enhancements and connectivity to our neighborhoods and our public facilities.
7. We will continue to plan for capital improvements that maintain, redevelop and grow our infrastructure system.



Action Plan for Implementation

4

Introduction

The Byron Comprehensive Plan provides the policy framework to guide physical change in our community over the next 20 years. The effectiveness of our Plan to guide development and public investment decisions depends to a large extent on clearly identifying actions and initiatives to implement the ideas outlined in the Plan.

Implementation of our Plan will occur in several ways.

The Plan as a guide to decision making

The Plan will be used on a daily basis by City Staff in the day to day operations of local government. Staff will reference plan policies and goals to support elected and appointed officials while carrying out their responsibilities in making key decisions relative to public investments, growth and redevelopment. Requests for land use applications and development projects will be evaluated based on consistency with the plan. City Staff's copy of the Plan should be most noted by its torn edges, protruding sticky notes and coffee stains, evidence of extensive use of the plan.

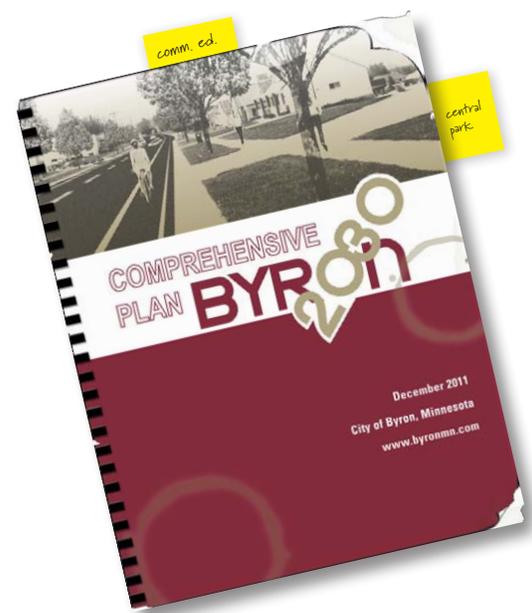
Our elected and appointed officials will use the Plan to justify hard decisions related to land use development, zoning requests, annexation, growth, redevelopment, regional infrastructure investments and local public infrastructure investment.

The Plan will be used by the development community to understand how particular projects fit within the community and how it might affect existing or planned future growth around their projects. Developers, brokers, realtors and investors will use the Plan to help formulate strategies for new development projects or investing in existing development and to help with risk assessment.

Boards and commissions of the City will use the Plan to help in establishing annual work programs and priorities, using the Plan as a "to do list."

The Plan as a marketing tool

Our guiding principles emphasize a number of strategies that require coordinated efforts by the community to attract, grow and develop ideas. As



A well-used plan document is evidence of solid planning strategies.

an adopted policy plan the Comprehensive Plan can help solidify the support, commitment and collaboration needed to mobilize the community. The Plan should be referenced, celebrated and promoted to the Byron community and the region seeking to invest or re-invest in the City. In essence, the Plan becomes the document that is provided to prospective businesses, residents or investors or potential grantors/philanthropies.

The plan as a “to do list”

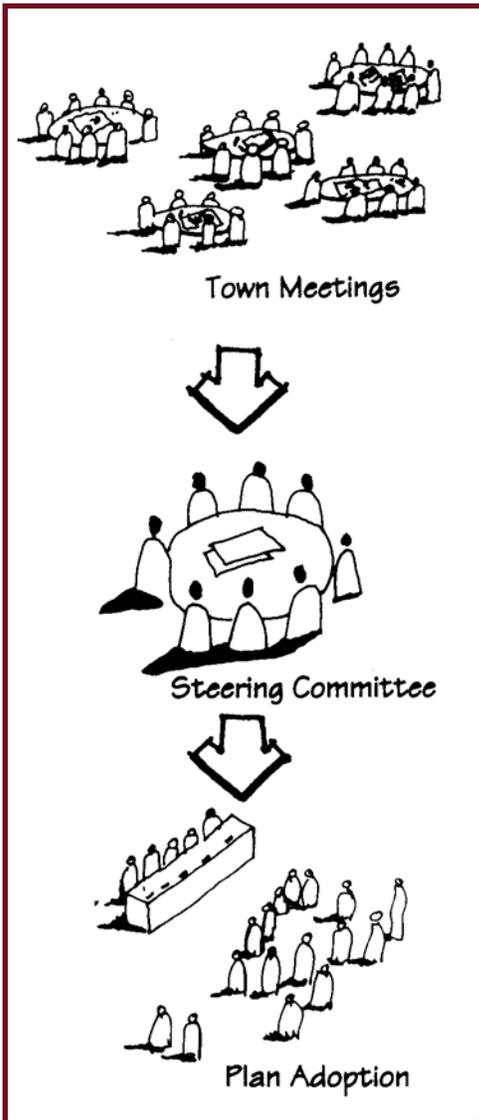
We all have our “to do lists” at home stuck on the fridge or bulletin board. In fact some of us have many to do lists. The Comprehensive Plan is the City of Byron’s to do list and should be a resource for City departments, boards and commissions as they establish annual goals and work programs.

Successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan results in checking off some of the projects on our list. As items get checked off the list, it is an indicator that the plan should be revisited and refreshed.

Implementation Action Steps

Action steps are physical initiatives that are intended to carry out an idea or policy identified through the planning process and memorialized in the adoption of the Plan. The action steps directly correlate to the vision and guiding principles. Action steps will result in both tangible and intangible outcomes. For example, one action step may be to provide a service that enhances quality of life (recreational programing). Providing a service might not result in a physical product but it is implementing a policy of the Plan. On the other hand, an action step that is focused on growing a business or industry might result in a new development or new jobs, both tangible outcomes.

In the case of action steps, the Plan identifies an initiative or action, an entity or person responsible for the action or initiative, a time frame for completion, a general statement of cost to understand the magnitude of the action or initiative and a means to measure the action or initiative’s effectiveness in moving towards the Plan’s objectives/goals.



Volunteering / Philanthropy

Volunteerism is important within small towns across America. It is of critical importance to our community in Byron and it helps preserve some of the small town identity that drew us here in the first place. Volunteerism helps build ownership of community, strengthens our civic engagement, builds relationships and ultimately, greatly contributes to the “quality of life” we aspire to have. It can be very rewarding when it is supported by a shared vision created by an entire community. Our new Comprehensive Plan has been prepared with many opportunities for the public to participate in a dialogue. As we move forward with implementation, we must continue the dialogue and grow the community participation in that dialogue. We must recognize that changing times require us to continuously plan for our future and be able to adapt to change and seize opportunities as they emerge.

A key strategy for growing volunteer participation is to open up more opportunities for community members to volunteer their services, expertise and time in the pursuit of carrying out our vision, guiding principles and Comprehensive Plan ideas.

Action Steps:

1. Establish a coordinator of volunteer activities.
2. Provide a means to align and connect community members strengths, skills, passions and assets with the appropriate implementation strategy, project or idea.
3. Establish specific targets and goals for volunteerism (i.e. number of new volunteers participating, total estimated volunteer hours logged, projects completed, projects initiated, etc...).
4. Establish a recognition and appreciation program that celebrates accomplishments and recognizes contributions.
5. Create/advocate for matching contributions from local organizations that seek to benefit from the volunteer activities and efforts.



Coaching a youth sport could be a volunteer activity.

Volunteerism / Philanthropy:

Responsible entity: City Council/Administration

Timing: Immediate – and ongoing

Cost implications: will require staff time to initiate/start up – minimal budget impacts

Funding sources: general fund, grant resources, philanthropy

Key measurements: create a volunteer database and record total volunteers, new volunteers added on an annual basis, total volunteer hours logged and measured on an annual basis. An important measurement is also to be able to measure the diversity in the volunteer base, particularly new residents vs. long term residents and age of volunteers (kids, young adults, families, retirees, seniors).

Partnerships

Implementation of our Comprehensive Plan requires partnerships between the public and private sectors. The private sector builds new neighborhoods; they provide the supply. The community helps shape that neighborhood and is the demand. Neighborhoods don't form overnight. They take time to develop, emerge and mature. Collaboration with property owners, developers and investors will be required to see neighborhoods come together in a connected fashion. Our plan also recognizes the need to focus on the core of the community, our historic downtown area and areas along Highway 14 particularly will require collaboration among the public and businesses that are affected by redevelopment. Forming new partnerships and strengthening existing partnerships are critical strategies in realizing our vision.



Action Steps:

1. Partner with landowners who control parcels most suitable for new development in the future to provide a coordinated marketing and development plan that reduces development barriers and maximizes consistency with the City's vision and guiding principles.
2. Partner with Olmsted County, Dodge County and MnDOT in pursuit of a feasible resolution and implementation of improvements to Highway 14.
3. Partner with the School District to provide recreational programming for all ages of the community. (See Page 60-61 for the Recreational Programming Idea.)
4. Partner with major businesses in downtown to strategize land use transition and redevelopment impacts and ultimately an identity for downtown.
5. Partner with local/regional produce farmers to provide a more substantial and permanent place for the farmers market, integrated with future development that is destination oriented.
6. Partner with local business leaders to explore new business ventures and economic development/growth opportunities.

Partnerships can take many forms. A first step is defining the objective of the partnership and establishing a desirable outcome such as a specific development project, coordination of an event or delivery of a particular service. A second step in forming the partnership is to understand the organizational structure and the roles of each partner. This would include the financial commitments, decision making structure and staffing responsibilities. Lastly, and probably most important, is identifying a passionate leader who coordinates and facilitates activities of the partnership, mediates potential challenges and advocates for the desired outcome.

Partnerships:

Responsible entity: City Council/ Administration

Timing: Immediate – then ongoing

Cost implications: will require staff time to coordinate – minimal budget impacts

Funding sources: general fund

Key measurements: number of partnerships created, number of projects initiated, number of projects completed

Official Controls

Official controls are key tools for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Official controls generally refer to the ordinances and regulations that control the physical development of a city such as a zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, building codes and official maps. These controls need to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan provides the broad policy framework and basis for the more detailed zoning ordinance. The following topic areas need to be addressed and updated:

The Subdivision Ordinance provides regulations for the platting of land. Key sections that should be evaluated and considered for revisions include:

- ▶ Street definitions: incorporate complete street concepts, ensure consistent functional class descriptions and provide visual graphic illustrations of street-cross sections.
- ▶ Strengthen the inventory of natural resources on a site as part of the land planning process.
- ▶ Strengthen access management regulations.
- ▶ Revise the maximum block size from 1,200 feet to a more walkable block size.
- ▶ Revise park dedication requirements so that they are more in line with future park needs.

The Zoning Ordinance provides regulations for the use of land. Key components that should be evaluated and considered for revisions include:

- ▶ Commercial zoning districts: consideration for establishing separate zoning districts for neighborhood retail, community retail and highway oriented retail.
- ▶ Mixed use district: consider establishing a mixed use district or modifying the planned unit development district to support the integration of uses on a single parcel, either vertical mixed use (retail/commercial on ground level with residential/office above) or horizontal.
- ▶ Review bulk standards (setbacks, building height, lot coverage, etc...) to evaluate standards that are in conflict with a more walkable/bikable environment.

Action Steps

1. Conduct a thorough review of the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances confirming purpose and objective statements, use regulations and bulk standards.
2. Revise the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to incorporate updates.
3. Adopt a new and updated zoning map.

Official Controls:

Responsible Entity: Planning Commission/Planning Staff

Timing: Year 1-2

Cost Implications: will require staff time to coordinate and consultant time to do work – budget range \$10K to \$15K

Funding sources: general fund

Key Measurements: na (on going measurements include number of applications denied in a year, number of variances requested, granted or denied)

Capital Improvement Programs

The City of Byron uses a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to manage capital improvement expenditures. CIP planning is critical to maintaining the community's core infrastructure systems such as streets, sidewalks, trails, wastewater system, potable water system and stormwater infrastructure. The CIP focuses on maintaining infrastructure systems as well as growing new systems. As future growth and development occurs, the CIP plan should be maintained as a valuable planning and budgeting tool.

Action Step:

1. Update the CIP to include 3 year, 5 year and 10 year CIP projects such as future road extensions/improvements, trail corridors/improvements, park improvements, and trunk/main infrastructure improvements. The CIP can also include planning and engineering design services that ultimately lead to capital improvements.

Capital Improvement Plans:

Responsible entity: City Council/Administration

Timing: ongoing

Cost implications: Staff time – minimal budget impacts

Funding sources: general fund

Key measurements: new projects identified and funded – projects completed – dollar value of completed projects/investments

Future Special Studies

Downtown Master Plan

While it is not highly recognized as the focal point of activity for our community, our downtown carries significant historical roots and changes in land use will present opportunities to recapture and recast the area. What it is recast as should be the subject of a more detailed process with neighborhood and community engagement. As such, we should derive a plan that demonstrates how we can achieve some of the desired improvements to our historic downtown while not compromising the integrity and continued growth of Byron Towne Square and Towne Village, the area that serves as our more traditional downtown (shopping, entertainment and jobs). A downtown master plan would provide the following directions:

1. Identify opportunities for investments in public improvements that strengthen connections to adjacent neighborhoods and enhance the pedestrian environment (walkability and bikeability) and generally define the cost implications of the improvements.
2. Identify locations for organized civic events, activities and gathering places that bring people into downtown for entertainment, cultural and social opportunities and devise a strategy for establishing such spaces/ places.
3. Evaluate redevelopment and reuse needs and demonstrate opportunities for new development aligned with creation of new downtown housing opportunities, new office opportunities, niche retail/services and civic attractions (museum, library, other???).
4. Devise a strategy and plan for how redevelopment can occur including public financial incentives/assistance.
5. Ensure a coordinated parking and wayfinding strategy that enables smooth traffic flow and circulation in downtown and a complete street element to street design.
6. Provide design direction relative to scale and massing of new development so that it can retain the small town, traditional downtown character desired by Byron.

Downtown Master Plan:

Responsible entity: City Council/ EDA/Chamber

Timing: mid term 3 – 5 years

Cost implications: will require staff time to coordinate and consultants to conduct planning process – \$20K to \$30K

Funding sources: general fund, grant resources, TIF

Key measurements: goals addressed in the Comprehensive Plan

Action Step

1. Complete a Downtown Master Plan.

Neighborhood Master Plans

New Growth (Neighborhood District) areas are described in the land use plan. These areas will be needed to accommodate new development that is forecasted over the next 20 years. Future growth in these areas will require the planned extension of community infrastructure (sanitary sewer, potable water, storm sewer and roads) and the coordination of future community park land.

A goal of the plan is to create new neighborhoods that will help offer a diversity of housing choices and neighborhoods that are attractive to live in (i.e. are walkable and bikeable, close to services and have desirable amenities like parks, trails and natural resources or open space areas).

Neighborhood master plans would be triggered by an initial development interest within a new neighborhood. The City of Byron will need to play an organizational role at first coordinating a funding strategy for master plan design and engineering work.

Ultimately, individual land owners seek to benefit by the master planning process. The planning and design will help position one's property for future development. Steps in the environmental review process will be completed as part of the master planning process. A community process would help garner community support for a smoother development approval process. The City seeks to benefit by avoiding future traffic, infrastructure or development conflicts that are unintended consequences of the traditional subdivision design approach. Because of the benefit that potentially is realized through the master planning process, costs for master planning should be shared amongst benefiting land owners, developers and the City.

A neighborhood master plan would include the following key elements:

- ▶ A detailed master plan that defines how land uses would interact with the greenway framework (reference Greenway Corridor Idea pages 24 to 29) taking into consideration a mix of housing (or business uses depending on the neighborhood district), neighborhood retail, park and open space systems
- ▶ A quantification of development magnitude (how many units by type of units)
- ▶ A street network that provides access to development parcels and ensures connectivity to the street system and adjacent neighborhoods
- ▶ A feasibility study of infrastructure requirements identifying associated costs and establishing a financial plan for covering the costs
- ▶ Location, size, orientation and programing of future park needs following Byron's park plan
- ▶ Area and site amenities that contribute to quality of life and neighborhood character development (open spaces systems, infrastructure design, streetscape, sidewalk/trails, etc...)
- ▶ A phasing plan that would understand how development would occur over an extended period of time and how infrastructure would ultimately be designed and extended to the entire neighborhood and adjacent neighborhoods

Action Steps:

1. Complete a Neighborhood Master Plan for the Business Park area (west/southwest).
2. Complete a Neighborhood Master Plan for future Residential growth areas (northeast).

Neighborhood Master Plans:

Responsible entity: Planning Commission in partnership with landowner/developer

Timing: developer or development driven in most cases – can be initiated by City when public infrastructure needs warrant

Cost implications: will require staff time to coordinate – design/engineering budget could vary depending on size and scope of project – planning/design/engineering costs may range from \$15,000 to \$100,000.

Funding sources: general fund/park fund/grant resources/developer-landowner funding

Key measurements: number of goals addressed in the Comprehensive Plan

Infrastructure Master Plans

The City currently has infrastructure master plans for its Sanitary Sewer and Potable Water Supply systems that date back to 2000. With our new Comprehensive Plan update, we need to take a closer look at our infrastructure systems focusing on how future growth areas will be served and evaluating existing system operations. The master plans would also help fully inform a 3 to 5 year CIP plan.

Infrastructure System Plans

Responsible entity: Public Works/Engineering - City Administration

Timing: near term - 1 to 3 years

Cost implications: will require staff time to coordinate and consulting services

Funding sources: general fund/CIP

Key measurements: number of goals addressed in the Comprehensive Plan

Economic Development and Housing

Expanding the commercial and industrial base of the City is an ongoing effort. Identifying new, effective strategies for Byron will most likely come in response to the needs articulated by existing and prospective businesses. Thus, listening to and establishing relationships with existing businesses, and even business prospects, is the best initial step.

Action Steps:

1. **Support and Enhance Educational Institutions** - Schools are perhaps the most prominent asset within the community of Byron. School quality is a primary factor in a family's location decision. In order to attract entrepreneurs and business interests, the City must continue to maintain high quality school facilities and educational programming.
 - a. *Conduct biannual meeting between School Board and City Council to ensure open communication.*
 - b. *Continue to explore new city-school cost sharing and seek opportunities to supplement school activities with city facilities when possible such as through the community education program.*
 - c. *Attract young families that will support the school system.*
 - d. *Consider impacts on school planning and engage district administration in master planning future growth areas.*

2. **Increase connectivity to Rochester** - Creating access to amenities and work opportunities in Rochester will make Byron an attractive place to live for those who are less mobile due to age, socioeconomic status, physical disability, or those who want to limit car usage. Safe transportation for children to recreational facilities outside of Byron would enhance the quality of life for families in Byron.
 - a. *Seek grant opportunities through MnDOT to expand bus services/transit opportunities and plan future neighborhoods with long term transit service in mind.*
 - b. *Develop a forum for residents to seek ride-share opportunities.*
 - c. *Explore dedicated or off street/highway bike routes that connect Byron's bikeways all the way to major employment campuses in Rochester.*
 - d. *Explore business spin offs or start ups that build off of the identity and image of major businesses in Rochester but are more interested in the quality of life offered by a smaller, bedroom community.*

3. **Facilitate Planned Housing Development** - Housing development is an important component in economic development. Housing can define the character of a community, and is often a primary factor in people's location decision. Housing development can affect property values throughout the city and aid or hinder other economic development. Byron must ensure that a diverse and abundant supply of housing at all price ranges will make this community an attractive place to locate for individuals and families with diverse socioeconomic characteristics.
 - a. *Assist with the development of senior housing/assisted living so individuals have the option of staying in Byron throughout their life and living close to family members.*
 - b. *Market available property to potential home builders.*
 - c. *Facilitate connectivity between future housing and current and*

future commercial/retail.

- d. *Create a diverse housing stock with affordable housing options to ensure that Byron workers can also afford to live in Byron.*

4. **Encourage Appropriate Commercial Development** – Commercial development eases the tax burden on residents for city services and creates employment opportunities for the local workforce. Increasing the local workforce will have secondary and tertiary benefits for local commercial and retail businesses as these workers spend money within the local economy. However, public officials must scrutinize these projects to ensure that they are the right fit for the community.

- a. *Establish objective measures to evaluate development projects that seek financial assistance. These might include number of new jobs, type of jobs created, potential tax benefits, possible externalities (spin off growth, support of local businesses), as well as secondary and tertiary economic benefits. Refer to the business subsidy policy for guidance regarding any potential business subsidy.*
- b. *Facilitate marketing of available industrial/commercial properties and buildings.*
- c. *Offer competitive tax/fee benefits for industrial projects that display long-term benefits for the community.*
- d. *Collaborate with businesses to meet service needs.*
- e. *Continuously explore emerging retail consumer behavior and trends to understand what retail form and markets are best suited for our community.*
- f. *Create continuity among businesses that complement each other.*

5. **Encourage Entrepreneurship and Business Retention** – Part of being a great place to live is fostering an environment that encourages entrepreneurship and supports long standing businesses. The following key strategies are meant to support business development and retention:

- a. *Assist business development services such as financial planning, marketing, and market research.*
- b. *Create a revolving loan fund to assist with small capital investments and gap financing.*
- c. *Ensure that businesses have adequate workspace to expand within the community.*
- d. *Partner with the Byron Chamber of Commerce to identify and address business needs relating to public services.*
- e. *Survey current businesses to gauge satisfaction with city services.*

6. **Encourage consumption of local goods and services** - Due to the great percentage of residents that commute into Rochester, where retail is plentiful and convenient, business in Byron suffers. Byron businesses and the City should work to create businesses that capture consumption of goods and services by Byron residents.

- a. *Develop a public relations/marketing campaign to create awareness.*
- b. *Ensure that new development has convenient access to commercial business.*
- c. *Create greater access and higher visibility from Hwy 14.*



Economic Development and Housing:

Responsible entity: EDA/Byron Chamber

Timing: ongoing

Cost implications: will require staff time to coordinate and conduct

Funding sources: general fund/EDA

Key measurements: number of goals addressed in the Comprehensive Plan – could be numerous

Parks

The City is in the process of updating its parks master plan. This includes an assessment and inventory of existing park facilities and programs. The Comprehensive Plan provides general guidance on the park system. A more detailed system master plan would further define park programming, future improvements and a phased approach to on-going park improvements. The Park System Plan would inform future CIP projects and would provide the legal basis and rationale for updates to the City Park Dedication Funds.

Action Steps

1. Develop a Park System Master Plan.

Parks:

Responsible entity: Park Board/ City Staff

Timing: immediate

Cost implications: acquisition and planning

Funding sources: general fund, philanthropy, park dedication, grants

Key measurements: number of Comprehensive Plan goals met

Establish a “Future of the City Forum”:

Responsible entity: Planning Commission/Planning Staff

Timing: Year 1 – then ongoing

Cost implications: will require staff time to initiate/start up – minimal budget impacts

Funding sources: general fund, philanthropy

Key measurements: number of total participants in the community dialogue, number of new participants in the dialogue

Establish a “Future of the City Forum”

Establish a “Future of the City Forum” or similar event to review the Plan on an annual basis and facilitate a community dialogue about what has worked well and what has not worked so well. This evaluation should lead to identifying a need for amendments or updating the “to do list” on an annual or every other year basis. This can occur through regular survey mechanisms or through a process designed to “take the pulse of the community” and celebrate community accomplishments.

Action Steps:

1. Schedule a recurring “Future of the City Forum” to occur December of each year after plan adoption.
2. Prepare a report template that can be appended gradually over the year documenting issues with plan implementation, actions completed or new actions that should be added. This report template serves as the working agenda for the annual meeting.
3. Bring together all elected and appointed staff for a goal setting meeting.

ACTION STEP	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Volunteering/ Philanthropy		
1. Establish Coordinator	City Council/ Administration	Immediate
2. Connect to the community	City Council/ Administration	Ongoing
3. Establish targets and goals	City Council/ Administration	Immediate - Ongoing
4. Establish appreciation program	City Council/ Administration	Immediate
5. Connect with local Organizations	City Council/ Administration	Ongoing
Partnerships		
1. Partner with landowners	City Council/ Administration	Immediate - Ongoing
2. Partner with Olmsted County	City Council/ Administration	Immediate - Ongoing
3. Partner with the school district	City Council/ Administration	Immediate - Ongoing
4. Partner with major businesses	City Council/ Administration	Immediate - Ongoing
5. Partner with local produce farmers	City Council/ Administration	Immediate - Ongoing
6. Partner with local business leaders	City Council/ Administration	Immediate - Ongoing
Official Controls		
1. Conduct review	Planning Commission/ City Council/ Planning Staff	1 -2 years
2. Revise zoning and subdivision ordinance	Planning Commission/ City Council/ Planning Staff	1 -2 years
3. Adopt a new zoning map	Planning Commission/ City Council/ Planning Staff	1 -2 years
Capitol Improvement Plans		
1. Update the CIP	City Council/ Administration	Ongoing
Future Special Studies		
1. Complete Master Plan	City Council/ EDA/Chamber	Midterm 3-5 years
Neighborhood Master Plans		
1. Complete Master Plan- Business Park Area	Planning Commission/ Landowners/Developers	Variable
2. Complete Master Plan - Residential Area	Planning Commission/ Landowners/Developers	Variable
Economic Development and Housing		
1. Support educational institutions	EDA/ Byron Chamber	Ongoing
2. Increase connectivity to Rochester	EDA/ Byron Chamber	Ongoing
3. Facilitate Planned Housing Developments	EDA/ Byron Chamber	Ongoing
4. Encourage Commerical Development	EDA/ Byron Chamber	Ongoing
5. Encourage business retention	EDA/ Byron Chamber	Ongoing
6. Encourage consuming local goods	EDA/ Byron Chamber	Ongoing
Parks		
1. Develop Park System Master Plan	Park Board/ Staff	Immediate
Future of the City Forum		
1. Schedule recurring forum in December	Planning Commission/ Planning Staff	1 year - then ongoing
2. Prepare report templates	Planning Commission/ Planning Staff	1 year - then ongoing
3. Establish goal-setting meeting	Planning Commission/ Planning Staff	1 year - then ongoing

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