City of Carlton, Minnesota Comprehensive Plan

2015

City of Carlton

Comprehensive Plan

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Adopted by the Carlton City Council: 4/14/2015

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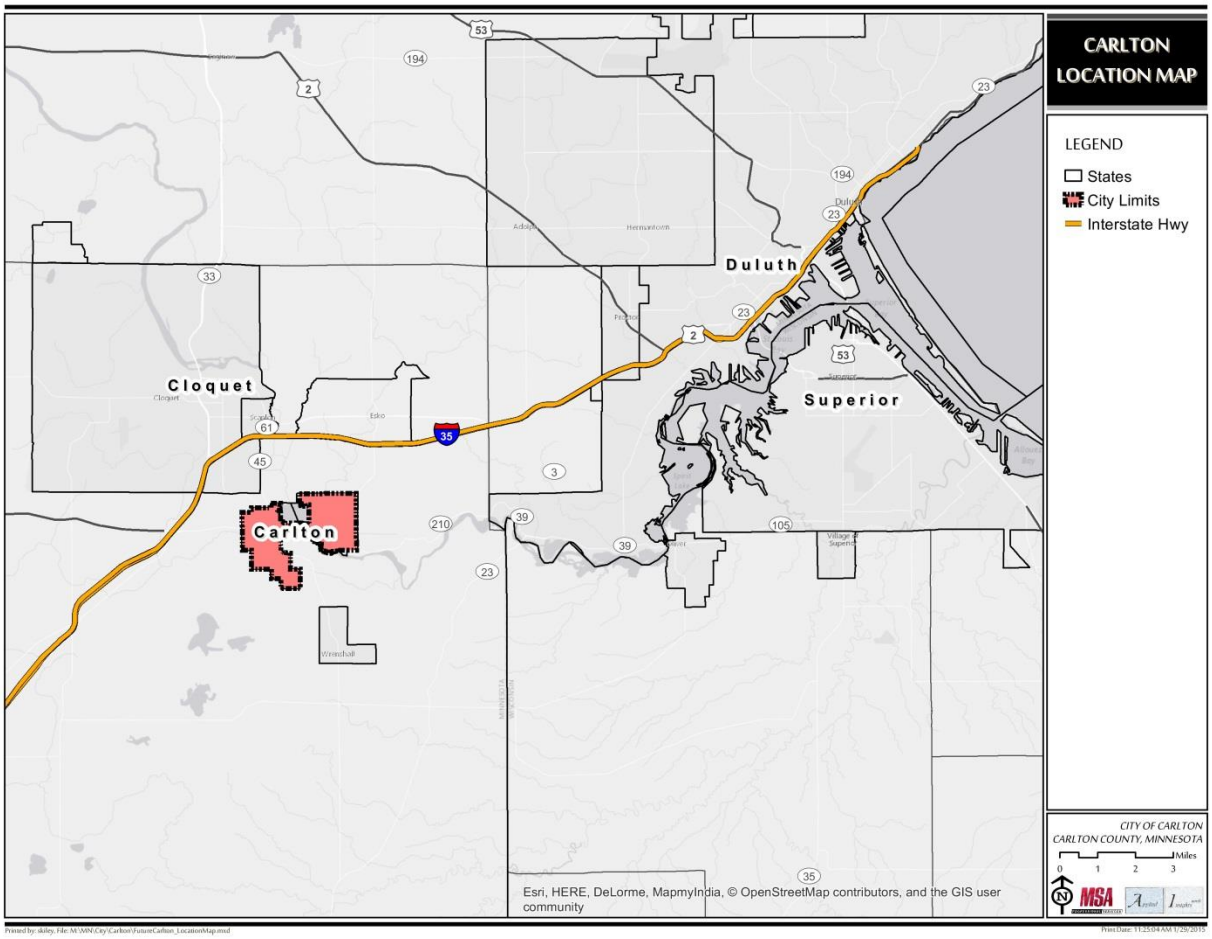

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Chapter 1

1+ 1 = The New City of Carlton

In November 2013 the citizens of Carlton and Thomson passed a referendum question authorizing the consolidation of the two cities into one. Ever since that vote the communities have been working hard on the hundreds of details needing attention for such a momentous undertaking. One such action is the adoption of a comprehensive plan for the newly merged community called Carlton.

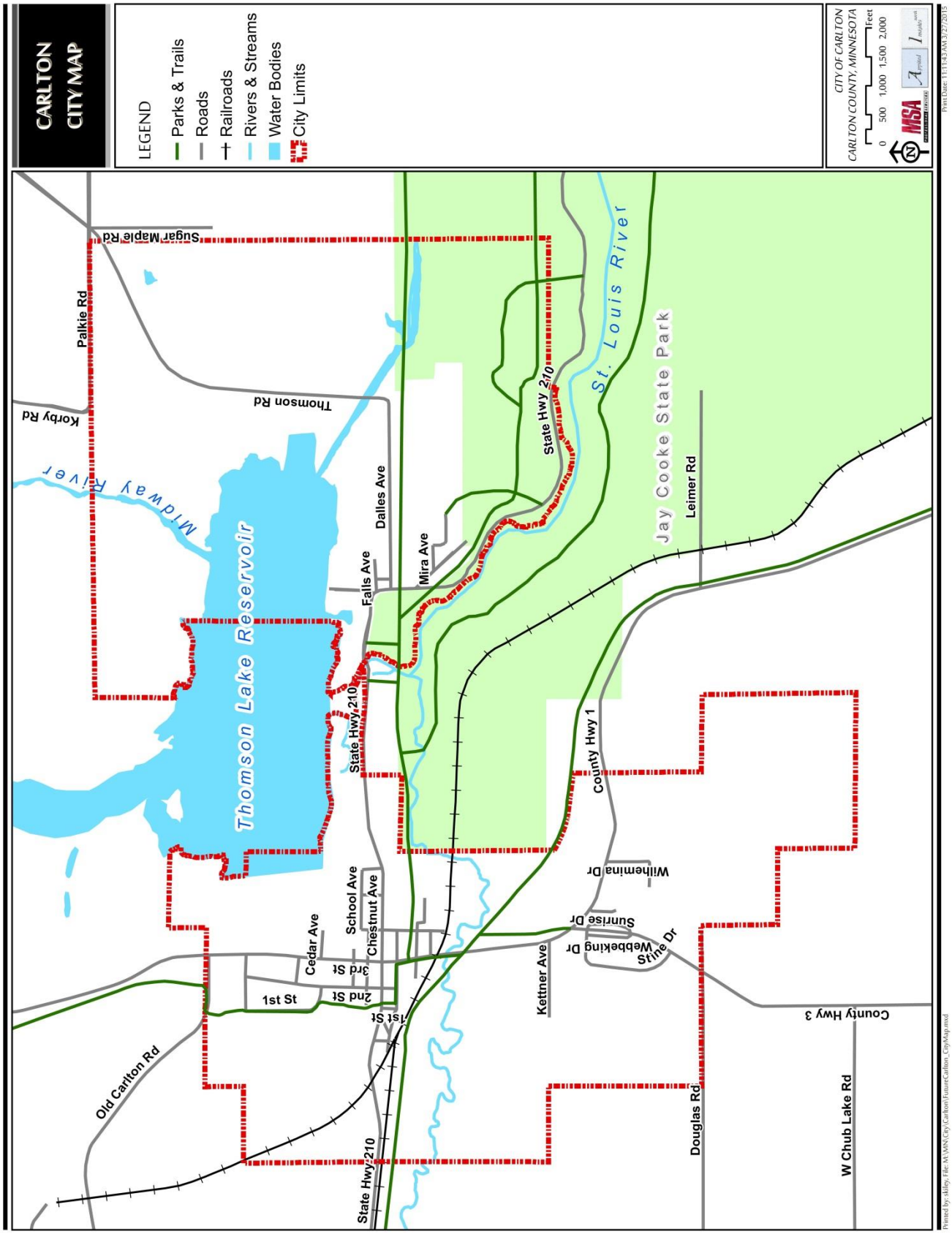
Consolidation was not a step taken lightly but it was viewed as one that had to be made. The former cities each had their long, proud histories yet, at heart, they were a single community divided only by a legal boundary and a river. That sense of common community, strengthened by the responses to the unprecedented 2012 flood, became the basis for the growing realization that a formal pooling of resources under a single administrative structure was long overdue.

Soon after the referendum the communities devised a “vision statement” that was an initial joint undertaking. Emerging from that exercise was the move to create this comprehensive plan.

This Plan is a Living Document

This plan is one of the first actions of the newly consolidated City of Carlton. It is intended to guide city decision making and investments. To truly make this a living, effective document each time the city council or one of its commissions or staff make land use related decisions these questions should be asked and answered:

- Will this action further the effective consolidation of our community? [Chapter 1]
- Does this action affirm why we live here and how we want our community to be? [Chapter 2]
- Does this action implement one of our strategic initiatives? [Chapter 4]
- Will this action help achieve our desired future condition? [Chapter 5]


CARLTON CITY MAP
LEGEND
Parks & Trails
Roads
Railroads
Rivers & Streams
Water Bodies
City Limits
CITY OF CARLTON
CARLTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA
0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet
MSA
Sugar Maple Rd
Palkie Rd
Korby Rd
Thomson Rd
Midway River
Thomson Lake Reservoir
Dalles Ave
Falls Ave
Mira Ave
State Hwy 210
St. Louis River
Jay Cooke State Park
Leimer Rd
County Hwy 1
Wilhemina Dr
Sunrise Dr
Webbeking Dr
Stine Dr
Kettner Ave
School Ave
Chestnut Ave
Cedar Ave
3rd St
2nd St
1st St
Old Carlton Rd
Douglas Rd
W Chub Lake Rd
County Hwy 3

Chapter 2

The New Carlton will be...

Carlton is a great place today and intends to be an even better place tomorrow. Where once railroads and timber industry gave identity to the community, now it is connections: to the surrounding natural environment, other communities, a vibrant agricultural sector, and fellow residents. This will result in a community that is safe, healthy and welcoming – a community where others will want to live and work.

Carlton will be a special and desirable place to live, raise a family, and run a business because:

- We enjoy an intimate connection with the outdoors especially the St. Louis River and Thomson Lake Reservoir.
- We are a community identified with active living and recognized as a year-round outdoor recreation mecca.
- Our small town atmosphere and pace of life meshes with convenient access to nearby urban amenities.
- Excellent educational facilities, from early childhood through community college, are immediately accessible.
- We are a hub for the county's robust organic, family-based agricultural sector.

Carlton is a community that:

- Is safe.
- Is healthy.
- Is welcoming.
- Has modern facilities and infrastructure systems.
- Is sustainable.
- Protects its cultural and natural resources.

Chapter 3

Assessment of Opportunities

Seen from the proper perspective every condition is an opportunity for community action. It is easy to see the opportunities provided by a stunning natural setting or the presence of vibrant commercial establishments. But negative situations are opportunities as well: an unsafe intersection is an opportunity to craft a safer one or rundown housing stock is an opportunity to launch a residential rehabilitation initiative. In this chapter various aspects of Carlton's current situation are assessed as a framework for visualizing opportunities for change and improvement.

Outstanding Natural Environment

Carlton is embraced by a stunning natural environment that features the wilderness-evoking Thomson Lake Reservoir, the majesty of the St. Louis River roaring through its canyons, the quiet serenity of the Midway River, and craggy rock outcrops that dot the community. Along with stands of towering pines and direct access to Jay Cooke State Park, it is clear that Carlton enjoys a level of scenic beauty few towns can match.

Assessment: Carlton's outstanding natural setting offers an unparalleled opportunity to boldly establish Carlton's identity as an outdoors oriented community that is an exceptionally attractive place in which to live. Yet, even with the city's naturally scenic setting there are places where beautification is needed to bolster that image. Specifically, areas along the railroad tracks and industrial facilities near downtown and trails form a backdrop at odds with the rest of the pine and craggy look of the town.

Recreational Trail System

Multiple regional recreational trails run through Carlton. The Willard Munger Trail, Alex Laveau Trail, and St. Louis River Trail serve bicyclists, hikers and in-line skaters. Winter activity is met with a regional snowmobile trail. Several trails offer direct access into Jay Cooke State Park and its miles of hiking, biking, skiing and snowshoeing trails. Via the park and Munger Trail, users can conveniently access Duluth's large and growing multi-purpose trail system including horseback riding routes and the new Traverse Trail for mountain biking.

Assessment: Few, if any communities of Carlton's size, enjoy such direct access to such an expanding array of high quality recreational trails. In conjunction with the community's natural setting, the trail systems are a ready-made foundation for attracting outdoors minded residents and supporting a thriving tourism sector.

Economic Activity

Carlton's economic activity is a blend of community level convenience stores and services located in its downtown and tourism oriented facilities, light industry, and agriculture. Its status as the county seat and the presence of the county courthouse and law enforcement center generates a significant volume of traffic. The primary markets served by Carlton are local and county residents, workers at the county courthouse complex, and visitors including those to Jay Cooke State Park and recreational trail users.

The light industrial activity is in the form of Chemstar Products and several trucking and warehousing operations. The Greenhouse is a major regional nursery production and sales enterprise. The community benefits from the nearby commercial area at the I-35/TH 210 interchange which focuses on the Black Bear Casino complex and its proximity to the sub-

regional commercial and service center of Cloquet. Tourism service operations include kayaking/rafting rentals and bike rental and service; a private campground is located just north of town. Residential care facilities provide a needed service and generate employment. Finally, Carlton County is home to an active family farm organic agricultural sector.

The County courthouse complex includes courts, county offices, and the jail. Workers and visitors are an important desired traffic flow into the community and the presence of these facilities are important to community image. In the recent past the County has relocated the land department offices out of Carlton. The County is currently evaluating options to rebuild, remodel or relocate its offices in order to address issues with court space and the jail.

Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College is located about two miles away in Cloquet. In addition to providing employment and creating a market in the form of students and staff, the college has an excellent business education program known for working with local businesses.

Assessment: A city's direct role in economic development can be limited by resources and market realities. However, Carlton has the opportunity to consider a number of substantive actions to bolster its commercial sector including: strive to keep the County's building complex within the heart of Carlton and integrate it into the community fabric; seek creation of new parking for downtown area; support new events and marketing endeavors that build Carlton's image as a major outdoor recreational center; work with property owner to replat and market the trucking and warehousing property into the community's light industrial center; encourage private initiatives to develop business ventures founded on area's agricultural sector.

Room for Housing

Carlton has a reasonable mix of housing types including single family homes in various settings, apartments, and assisted living. In 2010 there were 410 occupied housing units with 270 (66%) owner occupied and 140 rentals. Most housing is in good condition. The community has developable land within the core of the community, with access to the regional trail systems, in suburban settings, and rural areas. All except the rural parcels are easily served by existing utility and road infrastructure. There are issues with wetlands and rock but these do not preclude development. The possible restructuring of the school system may make a portion of the current high school site available for redevelopment.

Assessment: Carlton needs to bolster its housing stock in order to accommodate new residents that will be attracted by the community's new image as an outdoor recreational center. All types are needed but especially in price/rent ranges affordable to working families. Further, while the new apartment building is a major asset, more rental options are needed. The City has a housing tax increment finance district mechanism that can be used to assist with development.

Thomson Lake Reservoir and Minnesota Power Land

For over a hundred years the Thomson Dam has held back the water of the St. Louis River to create the 339 acre Thomson Lake Reservoir. The Midway River also empties into the reservoir. The dam and all the land around the lake are owned by Minnesota Power who uses the lake as a source of daily peaking power to drive its generating turbines downstream; the peaking activity augments the continuous flow to the turbines which empties out of the reservoir via the Forbay Canal. With a maximum depth of 22 feet and most of it much less than 15 feet the daily changes in water levels can quickly expose rocks and mudflats.

Views of the lake are exceptionally limited and most people, including many residents, are unaware of the rugged beauty of this body of water. Official access is limited to the Outpost located just east of the dam. The Outpost is leased by UMD to operate its outdoor recreation kayak and canoeing program and also serves as the site of the National Kayak Center. Kayakers and rafters (served by Whitewater Rafting of Carlton) access the St. Louis River upstream at a location near Scanlon and then travel down to the lake; rafters take-out at a designated location

in the southwest corner of the lake and kayakers at the Outpost. Although people can put-in at the Outpost this is discouraged.

At the spill way below the dam the State has leased land from Minnesota Power to provide parking and viewing of the river flow which is spectacular during the spring runoff. This is managed through Jay Cooke State Park.

Along the northeast and north sides of the lake Minnesota Power allows such uses as hunting and hiking. This is an undesignated and unsigned recreational area.

Assessment: Thomson Lake Reservoir is a hidden gem which could be a central attraction for a Carlton positioning itself as an outdoor scenic and recreation mecca. The lack of open views of the water body along with essentially no developed access points has precluded it from being recognized as the outstanding resource that it is. While safety concerns play a greater role on this body of water than on the typical upstream reservoir, there are many opportunities to make greater use of this resource.

There have been issues with wildcat off road vehicle use on the north side of the lake including crossings of the Midway River.

Minnesota Power is open to working with the city and other partners to enhance greater views of the water body and recreational uses along its shores and surrounding lands. Opportunities include creation of trails serving residents and visitors alike, designated viewing areas, enhanced educational programming, and designated recreational activity areas.

Jay Cooke State Park

Carlton is the gateway to this superb facility. Created in 1915 the park is 8,938 acres in size and is annually visited by 300,000 people. It boasts a range of facilities including picnic areas, overlooks, the famous Swinging Bridge, campground including cabins, and extensive system of trails. The trails are important since they can be directly accessed from Carlton; they include hiking (50 miles), paved bike (8 mi); mountain bike (13 mi), horse (6 mi), cross country ski (32 mi), snowmobile (6 mi), and snowshoe (10 mi). Roughly 90% of visitor traffic goes through Carlton. Park administration is willing to develop more interactions with the community.

Assessment: Jay Cooke State Park is a major year-round attraction for the Carlton area with a setting and facilities that are vital components of the community's growing image as an outdoors recreation center. Serving as the literal gateway to the park and with direct trail access into it, Carlton is positioned to generate more spin-off services and amenities. At one time there was a physical "gateway" in downtown Carlton for the park. While replacing that feature may not be viable, striving to identify Carlton as the park's entry in the minds of visitors is vital to the community's future attractiveness.

School Future

Education plays a large role in the community. The Carlton school district has its high school in the heart of the community and its elementary in the South Terrace neighborhood. The Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, while not in Carlton, lies about two miles to the north and is directly accessible from town. The college is thriving and has a need for additional student housing. While offering an easily accessible post-secondary education opportunity, the college also has programs, such as its business center that can assist local businesses.

The public school system provides an identity and focal point for the community. Whereas the elementary school is in excellent shape, the current high school building is in need of upgrade or replacement. In addition, in context of the hyper-competitive environment that is public education these days the district is exploring all options for its future. The district's avowed purpose is to ensure the provision of the best possible education for its students.

Assessment: If at all possible, the community would want to retain the elementary and high school facilities. However, the decision about the future of the district and its buildings rests with the school board and the district encompasses more territory than just the city. That said, the operating assumption is that at a minimum the South Terrace Elementary School will remain. Regarding ultimate decisions about the high school, the city needs to retain a flexible approach to the potential reuse of the high school site.

Regarding the college, Carlton needs to engage it to discuss school needs, such as student housing, which could be met within Carlton, potential programming that could occur at venues in the city, and any joint initiatives utilizing the resources of the college (e.g., business assistance program).

Small Town with Access to Cloquet and Duluth

In terms of population Carlton is a small community of an estimated 1,008 people in 2013.[1] This is up from the 963 in 2000 and even with the 2010 population of 1,021. The State Demographic Center projects the town to modestly increase in size by 2020 to 1,114 people.

The town's small size is matched with a small town pace of life and atmosphere. Yet, Cloquet with its commercial and service areas is just next door and I-35 conveniently connects the community to Duluth's major regional service and employment hub in a matter of minutes.

Assessment: Carlton's small size in today's environment precludes it from being a full service commercial and service community but whose location ideally allows residents easy access to the county's hub, Cloquet, and the tri-state region's major activity center, Duluth. This allows it to develop its small town atmosphere and sense of community within its outstanding natural setting while permitting residents the ability to conveniently access major services, employment, and cultural amenities.

Transportation

Fitting for a town where the Northern Pacific Railroad began in 1870 Carlton remains a transportation crossroads. The railroad, now the BNSF, is still a major presence and local firms generate a level of truck traffic. But it is through traffic that is of concern.

Carlton is at the crossroads of TH 210 going east and west and TH 45 running to the north. County Roads 1 and 3 also cross through the town. I-35 swings around to the west and north and is accessed by both state highways.

Volumes on TH 210 (2010 data) were 3,650 vehicles (Average Daily Traffic) west of downtown and 2,450 east of it. TH 45 carries a much more significant volume at 7,000 vehicles between downtown and Spruce Avenue and 5,200 vehicles north of Spruce to Scanlon.[2]

CR 3 carries 2,850 vehicles as measured at either end of town. CR 1 has 800 vehicles on Dalles Avenue with 2,400 south of North Avenue and 1,100 as it exits town past South Terrace.

By state law logging trucks may exceed the 80,000 pounds gross weight limit as long as the 10,000 pounds axle limit is met. However, trucks at this weight are not allowed on the federal interstate system. Thus, trucks hauling to the sappi mill in Cloquet run through Carlton on TH 210 and TH 45. The level of traffic is between 100 and 249 trucks per day.

In general, the city street system is in reasonably good condition. Not all streets are paved. Major issues tend to be with the condition of the utilities beneath the roadways necessitating rebuilding projects such as the School Avenue one slated for 2015.

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[1] All population figures combine Carlton and Thomson into a single number. Source: US Census.

[2] Source for traffic counts: Mn/DOT database: 2013_MnDOT_Traffic_Volumes.xlsx.

Assessment: There are no "missing links" in the system. Any new roads generated by development are the responsibility of the developer to build who then turns them over to the city for ongoing maintenance and upkeep.

The city's gravel streets are targets for upgrading to paved streets but need to wait for current paved roads that are in poor condition to be resurfaced.

The issue of through truck traffic is a difficult one as it involves state and federal government and the city has no direct authority. Removing this traffic from the community will involve a physical solution, which is unlikely, or a regulatory one to permit the trucks on the short segment of I-35. That option, too, has a low probability of succeeding since the issue centers on long-term wear and tear on the roadbed and access ramps.

High volumes of through traffic are more than a road issue for Carlton. Streets such as 3rd Street (TH 45) become obstacles for safe pedestrian travel across or along them. Instead of unifying the town these roads are barriers.

Throughout the city there are numerous places where crossing streets is hazardous for pedestrians and bicyclists. This situation counters the community's desire for safe, easy and convenient access throughout the city. Specific areas of concern include downtown along TH 210 and TH 45, north on TH 45 from downtown, CR 1/3 in South Terrace, trail crossings of TH 210 in the area of the St. Louis River, and TH 210 and Dalles Avenue in the Thomson neighborhood.

Public Facilities

Carlton owns several buildings and facilities: Civic Center, former Thomson City Hall, fire station, public works garage, and the water plant. A recent structural analysis of the Civic Center found it in good to very good condition.

In addition the City owns the land and building for the 4-Seasons Recreation Building. The building is leased to a non-profit management entity which in coordination with Carlton hockey association operates it as an ice arena and event site.

The city library occupies rented space in the downtown.

The City owns and operates a number of parks and play areas:

- "Tennis courts" facility on Mira Avenue.
- Tom McFarland Park which serves as a wayside as well as play area with a pavilion and sand volleyball court.
- Baseball field at the 4-Seasons complex.

In addition to Jay Cooke State Park, there are non-City owned recreation facilities that are a critical component of the town's recreational system:

- South Terrace Elementary School (play equipment, ball field, open play area and a 40-acre school forest with trails and shelter).
- South Terrace park, which is owned by the school district, has tennis courts, play equipment, and the Carlton Disc Golf course.
- Northern Pacific Junction: this facility serves as the trail head for the Munger Trail and features a log pavilion, picnic tables, bike racks, toilets, parking and the new Little Caboose Playground for young children. The land and most of the amenities are owned by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; the City owns the tot lot and maintains the entire site.
- Open space at Carlton high school provides play area.
- Minnesota Power's land around Thomson Lake, especially to the north and east, is used for general recreation uses such as hunting and hiking.

Just outside of Carlton is the county-owned Chub Lake Recreation Area with facilities including swimming beach, boat access, play area, picnic area and baseball field.

Assessment: In general, current public buildings can accommodate city functions. The Civic Center can house city offices and the library with space available for lease. The former Thomson City Hall, which has outstanding bonds requiring it to remain in public use, is available for general public use or could be leased to a public entity. The fire hall may need to be expanded to provide additional space for ambulance equipment and crews due to increased activity that continues to grow.

The 4-Seasons Recreation Building needs a new ice-making plant. If it is to become the year-round community event venue, the site needs a site design and landscaping in order to make it more attractive and functional. Also, the City may have to negotiate a new management arrangement to better account for the division of operations (ice arena and event center).

Existing City-owned parks are generally in good condition. Attention to making them better handicapped accessible may be necessary. As long as the non-city owned facilities remain there is no need for additional neighborhood level facilities. There is a need for new recreational facilities such as open space and trails along Thomson Lake Reservoir to better make this feature an integral part of the community. There is also the potential to work with Minnesota Power regarding formal designation of company lands on the north and east sides of the lake for recreational purposes.

Utilities

Water and sanitary sewer service covers all but the rural portions of the city. The water system consists of two wells, a water filtration plan, elevated storage and a distribution system. Of the two wells, the water quality of one of the wells is such that it is maintained for emergency purposes only. Both of the wells have 12 inch diameter casings and are connected to the City's water filtration plant.

The filtration plant has three filters that remove iron and manganese. The plant also has a 150,000 gallon clear well where the finished water is stored until the distribution system requires additional water.

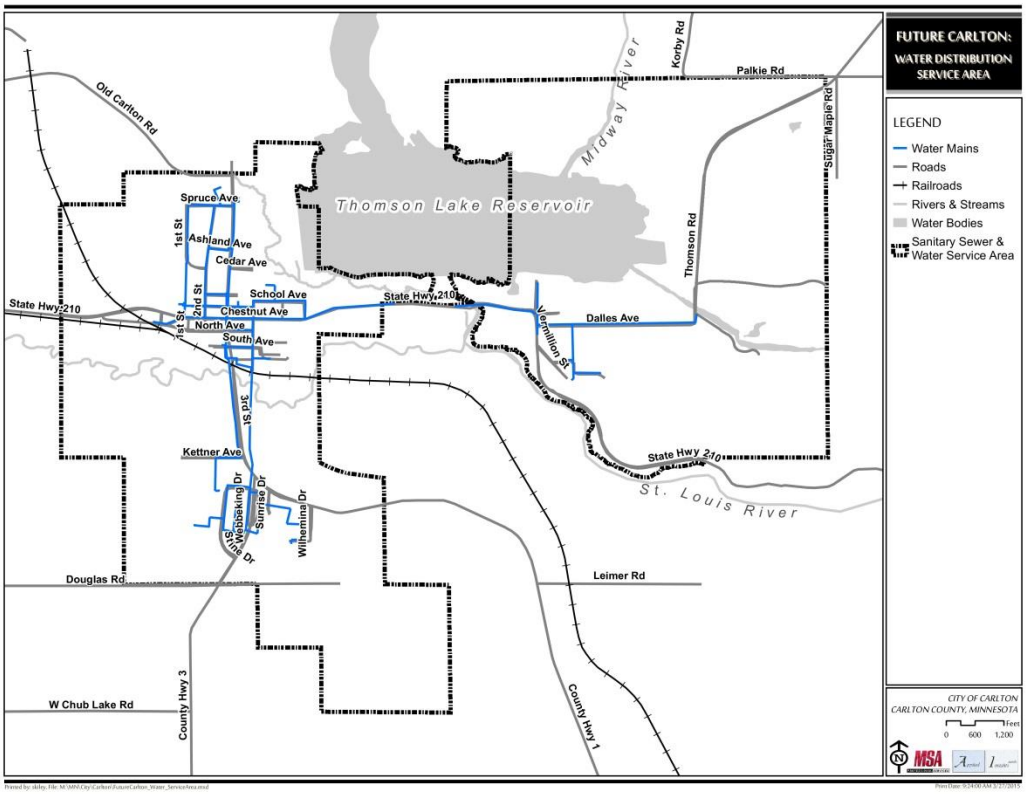
The distribution system includes a 300,000 gallon elevated water tower. When the tower level falls to a given set point (or system pressure), pumps in the clear well pump water into the system until the elevated water tower fills to the high pressure shut off. The water tower was recently upgraded and has capacity to handle approximately twice the current level of demand. The City has a joint powers agreement with Twin Lakes Township to explore the provision of water to development in the TH210/I-35 interchange area.

The City's sanitary sewer collection system includes pipes of varying ages and materials. The City has been working on reducing inflow and infiltration through repairs and improvements to its collection system. Much of the existing clay tile sanitary sewer in the City has been lined. Lining is a method that seals cracks and joints in the sanitary sewer. This is a good practice for sewers that are generally in good structural condition.

The collection systems in Carlton and Thomson also include three lift stations. These lift stations are in good condition and are operating well.

Assessment: The condition of the water filtration plant will require attention in the next few years as the filter plant is over 30 years old and is showing its age. The building structure needs attention as well as the steel structures that make up the filtration system.

Pipes in the water distribution system vary in size and materials. The City will need to continue to replace undersized pipes and lesser quality pipes as the need arises or when opportunities present themselves such as when a street is in need of reconstruction.


FUTURE CARLTON:
WATER DISTRIBUTION SERVICE AREA
LEGEND
Water Mains
Roads
Railroads
Rivers & Streams
Water Bodies
Sanitary Sewer & Water Service Area
CITY OF CARLTON
CARLTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA
Feet
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MSA
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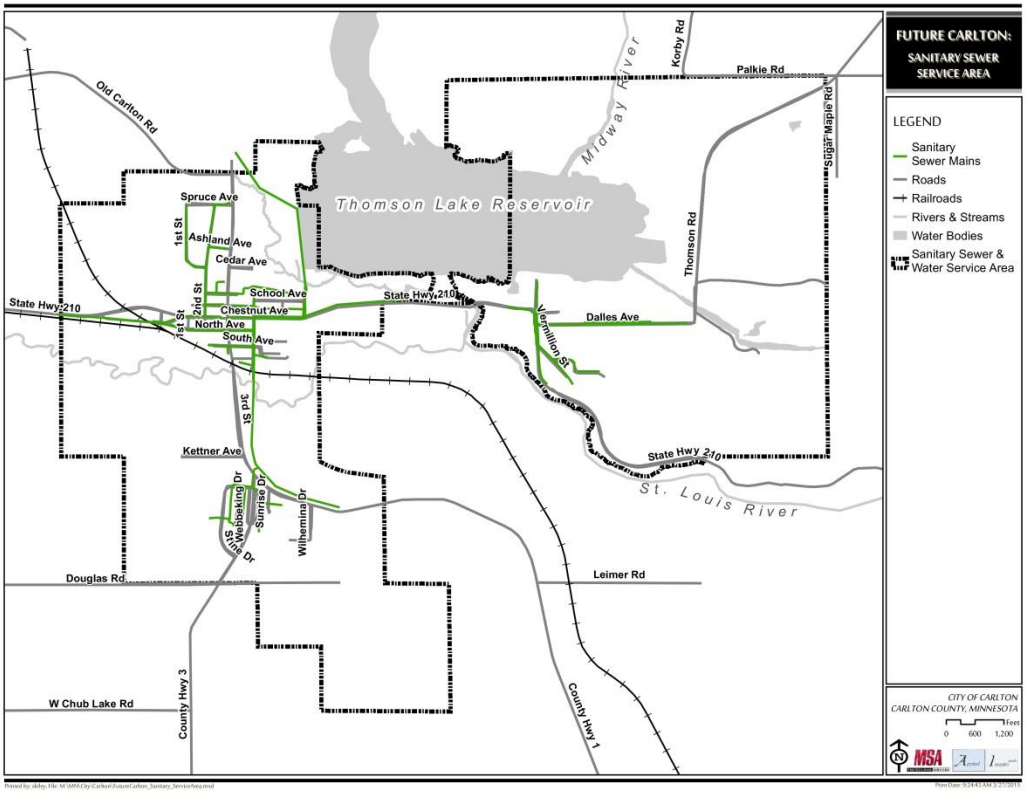
FUTURE CARLTON:
SANITARY SEWER SERVICE AREA
LEGEND
Sanitary Sewer Mains
Roads
Railroads
Rivers & Streams
Water Bodies
Sanitary Sewer & Water Service Area
CITY OF CARLTON
CARLTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA
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Old Carlton Rd
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1st St
Ashland Ave
Cedar Ave
2nd St
School Ave
Chestnut Ave
North Ave
South Ave
State Hwy 210
Dalles Ave
Vermillion St
3rd St
Kettner Ave
Webboking Dr
Sunrise Dr
Wilhemina Dr
Douglas Rd
Leimer Rd
W Chub Lake Rd
County Hwy 3
County Hwy 1

There are segments of sanitary sewer that are not in good structural condition. There are manholes within the collection system that are constructed with block; these manholes are highly susceptible to infiltration as the joints are not water tight. Where there are opportunities, block manholes need to be replaced with precast concrete. When a street is reconstructed, serious thought should be given to replacing clay tile sanitary sewer, even if it has been lined. A new street is expected to be serviceable for at least 20 years. Leaving a clay tile sewer under a brand new pavement is not recommended.

Public Services

The City provides the usual array of general governmental services. In addition, the city operates a public library and community cemetery.

The Carlton volunteer fire department provides fire and emergency response services to the community. Offices and equipment are housed in the fire hall.

Police services are provided by the Carlton County Sheriff's department.

Minnesota Power provides electrical service. Residents contract privately for refuse collection.

Assessment: There are no major issues with any of the services provided within Carlton. The library, which currently leases space in a downtown storefront, may be relocated into a City-owned facility.

Strategic Initiatives

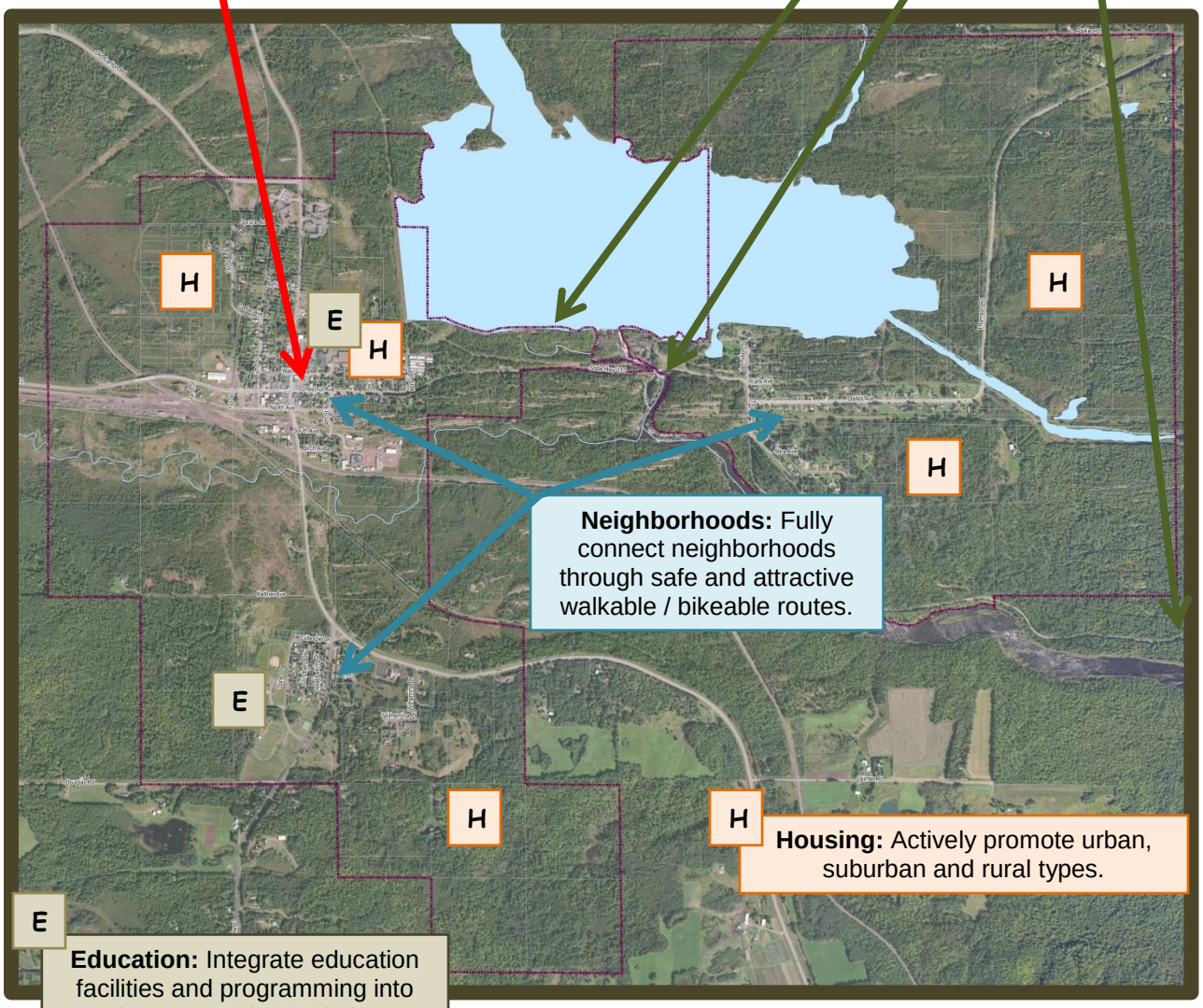
Taking advantage of our opportunities to become the community we desire demands concentrating on a handful of key strategic endeavors. These initiatives focus our attention and resources on those actions and investments that will produce the most results for Carlton.

C	Expand / strengthen **connections** to Thomson Lake Reservoir, St. Louis and Midway Rivers, Jay Cooke State Park, and regional trail systems.
H	Actively facilitate development of new **housing**.
D	Actively foster **development** of new commercial enterprises within a revitalized downtown, support light industrial development, and kick start an organic agriculture food sector based on local farms.
N	Fully connect all **neighborhoods** through attractive and safe walkable / bikeable routes.
T	Maintain cost effective street network that provides for safe, efficient flow of **traffic** through the community.
E	Integrate **educational** facilities and programming into the community fabric for residents of all ages.
M	Aggressively **market** Carlton as a quality place to live, to visit, and to operate a business.
G	Build and operate cost effective public infrastructure and **governance**.

Carlton Plan Strategic Initiatives

Development: strengthen downtown, promote light industry, foster local agriculture-based sector.

Connections: Jay Cooke State Park, Thomson Lake Reservoir, St. Louis River, regional trails.



Neighborhoods: Fully connect neighborhoods through safe and attractive walkable / bikeable routes.

Housing: Actively promote urban, suburban and rural types.

Education: Integrate education facilities and programming into the community fabric for residents of all ages.

Transportation: Maintain cost effective street network that provides for safe, efficient flow of traffic through the community.

Governance: Build and operate cost effective infrastructure and governance.

Market: Aggressively market Carlton as quality place to live, visit and do business.

Carlton Tomorrow

The Strategic Initiatives are intended to enhance and change Carlton making it a more attractive community in which to live and operate a business. This chapter highlights key features of the community as it may be 20 or so years in the future. It presents a combination of what is present today and the new features proposed in this plan.

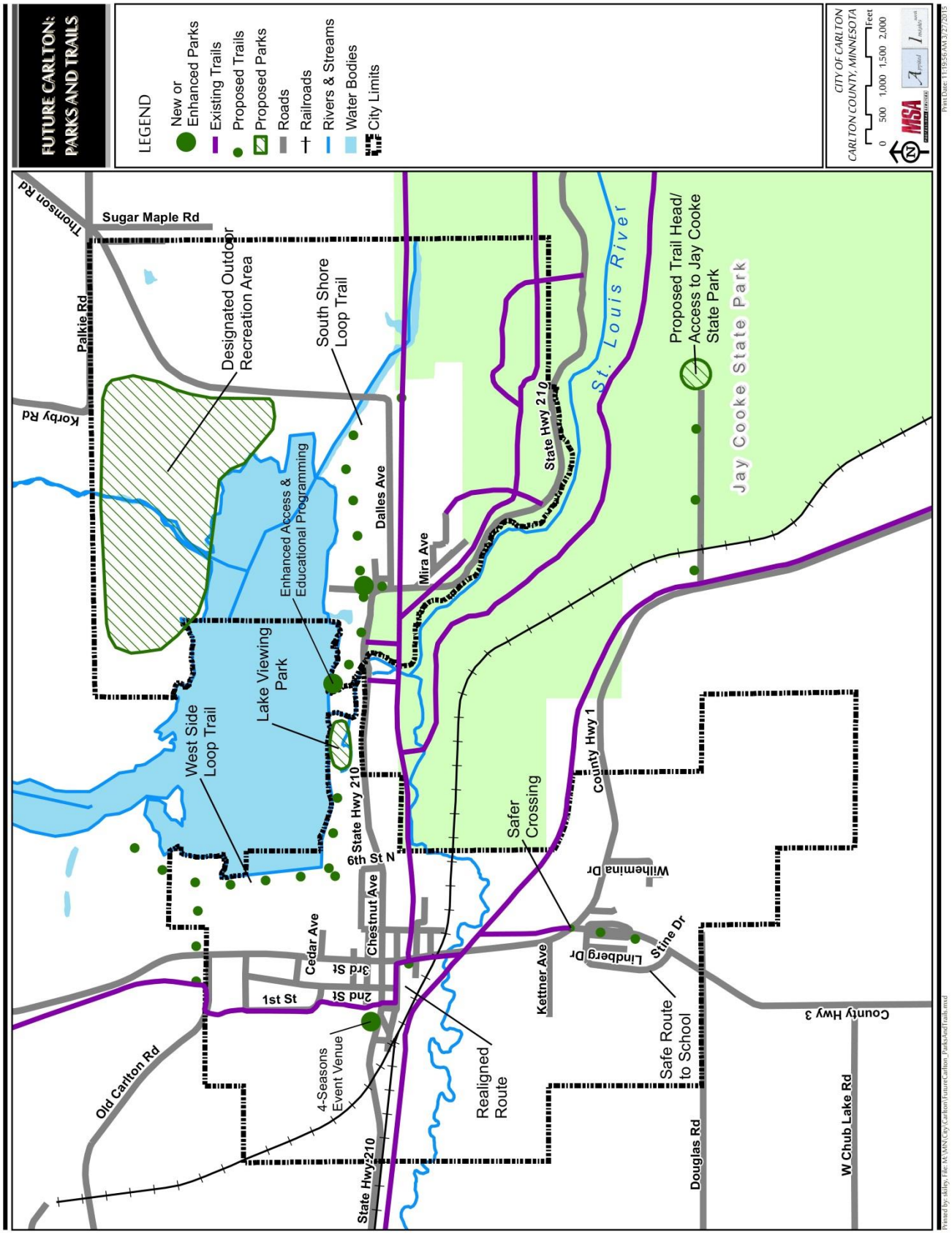
C Connections

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the future Carlton will be the enhanced connections between it and the surrounding natural environment and the growing array of regional recreational trail systems. These linkages will truly make Carlton an outdoor recreation mecca and entice people who seek such direct connections and the active lifestyle they promote to move here.

In addition to the existing regional and local trails and parks, the following facilities and programs will be pursued.

- A new park on the south side of Thomson Lake Reservoir which will open scenic views of the lake, provide opportunities for day uses such as picnicking, and serve as a trail head for local and regional systems. It will be coordinated with the existing parking area used by kayakers to access the lower reaches of the St. Louis River. It will also provide direct access to the existing Thomson Canyon Walking Loop trails which in turn connect to the Willard Munger Trail.
- New trails will run along the south and west sides of Thomson Lake. These will connect the new park to Carlton's business district and adjoining neighborhoods; further along it will connect to the St. Louis River Trail. A spur can provide access to the St. Louis River as it enters Thomson Lake opening up good access to wildlife viewing areas and shore fishing spots.[3]
- The existing Outpost, UMD's Kayak Center facility, will be enhanced in several ways. First, the viewing area owned and managed by Minnesota Power will be restored. Second, the kayak/canoe take-out will be enhanced so as to make it more visible and attractive for users; the trail to the access will be enhanced to be a more visible and usable trail for people wishing to view the lake and is to be accessible by people with handicaps. Third, where the Thomson Canyon Loop Trail crosses TH 210 will be fully striped and demarcated as formal trail crossings.

[3] For the purposes of this plan the type and design of new trails is intentionally kept general. However, the actual trail type (e.g., hiking, bicycling, motorized, cross country skiing / snowshoeing / fat tire biking, etc.) will be determined in coordination with property owners and funding sources. Also, all trails, especially those in areas with sensitive terrain, will be sustainably designed for their intended uses.

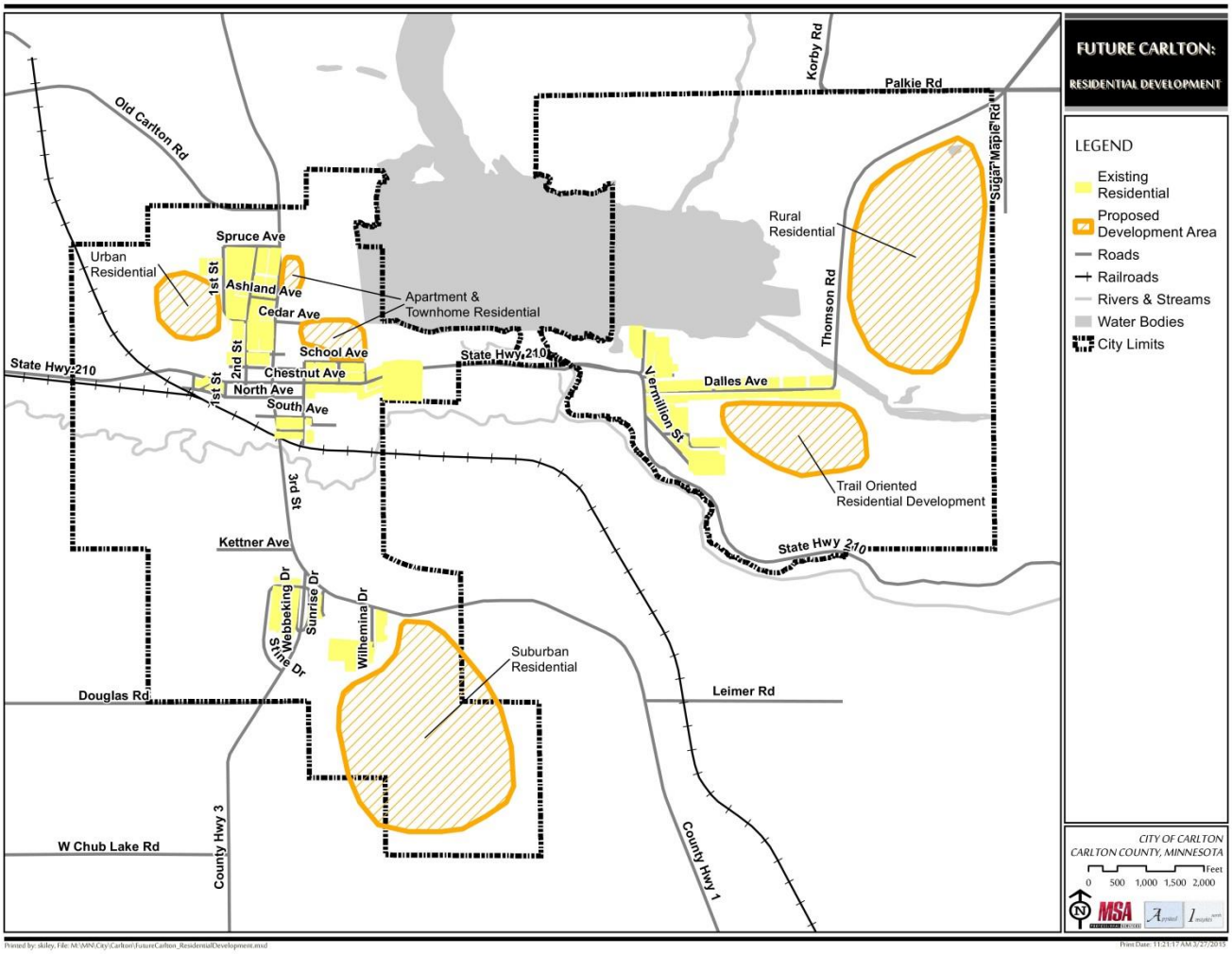

FUTURE CARLTON: PARKS AND TRAILS
LEGEND
New or Enhanced Parks
Existing Trails
Proposed Trails
Proposed Parks
Roads
Railroads
Rivers & Streams
Water Bodies
City Limits
CITY OF CARLTON
CARLTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA
0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet
MSA
Thomson Rd
Sugar Maple Rd
Palkie Rd
Korby Rd
Designated Outdoor Recreation Area
South Shore Loop Trail
Enhanced Access & Educational Programming
Lake Viewing Park
West Side Loop Trail
Dalles Ave
Mira Ave
State Hwy 210
St. Louis River
Proposed Trail Head/ Access to Jay Cooke State Park
Jay Cooke State Park
County Hwy 1
Safer Crossing
6th St N
Chestnut Ave
Cedar Ave
3rd St
2nd St
1st St
Wilhelmina Dr
Kettner Ave
Lindberg Dr
Stine Dr
Safe Route to School
Realigned Route
4-Seasons Event Venue
Old Carlton Rd
State Hwy 210
Douglas Rd
W Chub Lake Rd
County Hwy 3

- A trail head facility may be built at the corner of Vermilion Street and Falls Avenue. This will provide parking, perhaps a service center, and a direct link to the Munger Trail. It will replace the unsafe ad hoc parking area currently along Vermilion Street.
- A new trail will run from the Vermilion Street trail head across city property to the east and provide views of and access along Thomson Lake before swinging back to Dalles Avenue at Forbay Canal and linking to the Munger Trail.
- Enhanced signage will better guide all types of trail users into and through town informing them of available services and amenities and directions to them. There is to be particular attention given to better informing snowmobilers how to access local service amenities.
- The community will greatly enhance its cooperation and interaction with Jay Cooke State Park with the focus on firmly establishing Carlton as the gateway to the park. Among the possible actions are:
    - Create a “Friends of” group to promote the park.
    - Create the sense that visitors are entering the park when they are in Carlton. This could include restoring the historic park gateway sign.
    - Support actions by the park to establish a new park access point off Leimer Road that would spur use of that portion of the park that lies south of the river.
    - Create a trail from the Alex Laveau Trail along the Leimer Road corridor into the park.
- A Safe Route to School route will be established for the South Terrace Elementary School. This will include a redesign of the CR 1 / CR 3 intersection to safely permit trail users to cross the highway to connect with the city trail that leads to the Alex Laveau Trail.
- The Four Seasons complex is to be redeveloped into Carlton’s year-round event venue. Outdoor space will be landscaped so the site can attractively hold various community activities, parking space better delineated, the St. Louis River Trail through the site will be landscaped so as to highlight it and enhance safety.
- The St. Louis River Trail will be rerouted off North Street west of Third Avenue to a new alignment that will be done in conjunction with the development of new parking along the south side of North Street west of 3rd Avenue. The intent is to use vacant railroad property for downtown parking space. The realigned trail corridor, protected by fencing on one side and landscaping on the other, would run on the south side of the new parking lot.
- On its property along the east and northeast sides of Thomson Lake Reservoir Minnesota Power currently allows unstructured recreational uses such as hunting. This plan calls for a cooperative arrangement with the company to designate this area as a low intensity recreational use area. This could include the development of trail systems such as hunter / walking trails and designated parking areas.

H Housing

Carlton will attract people wanting to live here and the city intends to be ready with opportunities for a variety of new housing to meet their needs. Leveraging these opportunities into reality will require solid cooperation between the city and the private sector. Focal points for housing development activity include the following:

- A four-block area on the west side of 1st Street offers an excellent opportunity for single family homes that can take advantage of the direct access to the St. Louis River Trail and attractive heart-of-the-town location.
- A section of land off Dalles Avenue provides the opportunity to build single family homes that would be especially attractive for people desiring direct access to the Munger Trail, Jay Cooke State Park and easy access to Thomson Lake Reservoir.
- The South Terrace neighborhood has space to provide large lot homes served by municipal utilities. This area would be attractive for people desiring proximity to the elementary school and, like all of Carlton, direct access to regional trail systems and Jay Cooke State Park via the Laveau Trail and the proposed Leimer Road connection.
- East of Thomson Road in the northeast corner of Carlton is enough, nicely forested land that could be developed into large lot, rural style residences.
- The future of the Carlton High School building is unknown but some type of change is highly likely. If for any reason the school is no longer needed as a school, the building and/or site becomes a major redevelopment opportunity in the heart of town. The redeveloped county courthouse complex could utilize a portion of it. A larger portion could be available for residential development that could be apartments or townhouses, some form that provides needed variety within Carlton. This could be an exceptionally attractive location conveniently situated near downtown and with direct access to the proposed trail system along Thomson Lake Reservoir.
- Another potential site for apartments or townhouses exists along 3rd Street north of Cedar Avenue. This area abuts the grocery store, is near downtown, and, again, could access the proposed Thomson Lake Reservoir trail system.



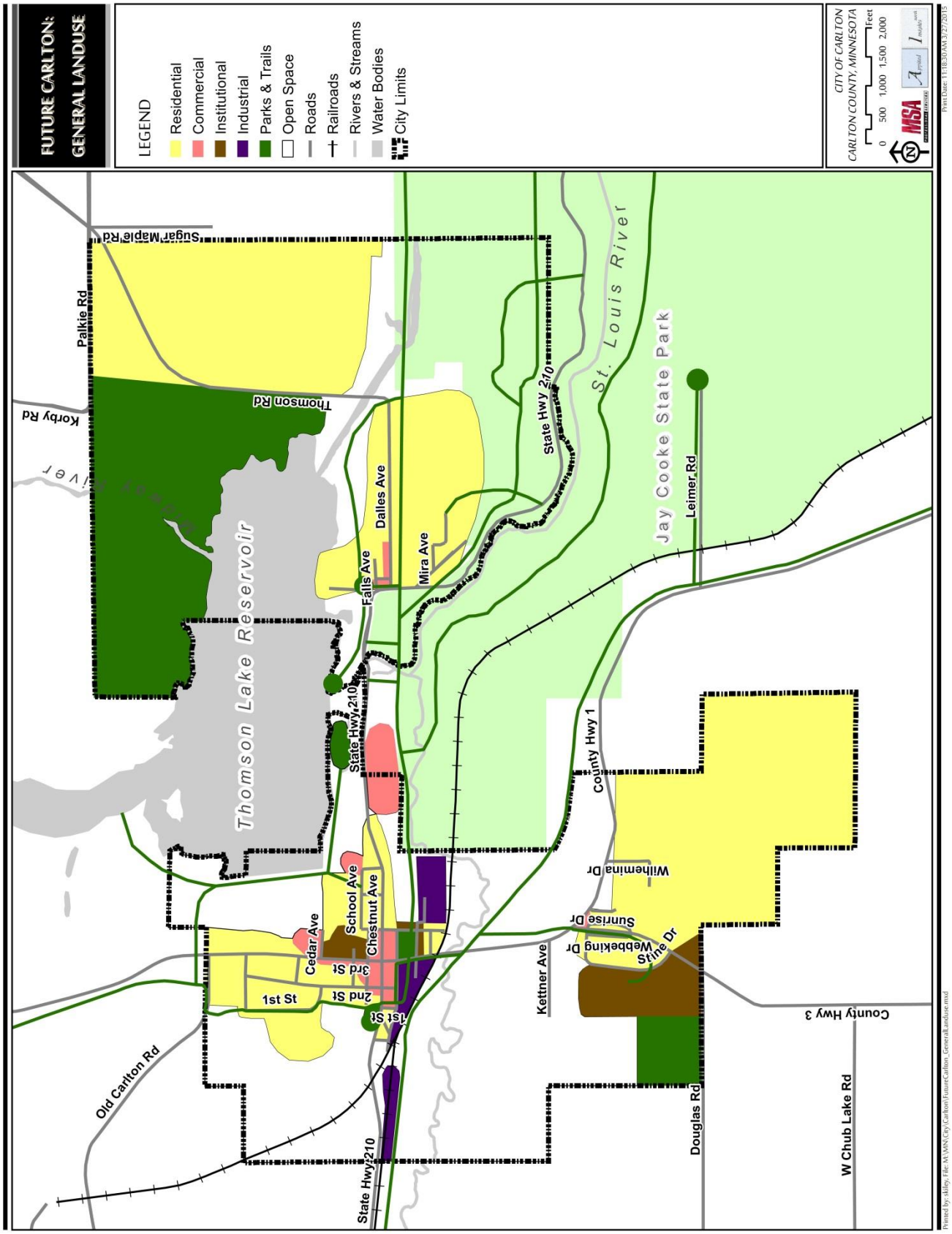
Development: Commercial & Industrial

Downtown Carlton is the focal point for commercial development. Most businesses cater to the local market but a number, including the tourism service ones, serve more extensive markets and can act as destination ventures. Among the strategies for strengthening the community's business sector are: creating direct connecting links from the downtown to other commercial sites such as the grocery store north on 3rd Street; support the development of a multi-faceted local food production sector; and expand tourism services including lodging and activity ventures.

Carlton's industrial activities are limited but include Chemstar Products, the BNSF railroad operations, trucking and warehousing. The Green House is a retail / wholesale nursery with production facilities in Carlton. The goal is to retain these enterprises and enhance the area containing the trucking operations into an industrial park.

Focal points for economic development include:

- Make the Carlton Area Development Corporation the lead entity for economic development initiatives with the City being an integral partner.
- Cooperate with railroad to create parking area on railroad property west of 3rd Street and south of North Avenue. This would allow owners of businesses to fully use their parcels for buildings while providing attractive, convenient parking.
- Initiate discussions with area farmers regarding the need for, and how to establish food based businesses such as specialty meat processing plant, freezer/storage/transfer facility, and food processing. Include The Green House operation in these discussions.
- Establish a relationship with Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College's business program regarding assistance with business plan preparation for expanding and new enterprises, creation of a business incubator facility, entrepreneur development program, and assistance with specific development projects (e.g., the local food business initiative).
- Support the platting of the trucking / warehousing area near downtown into a light industry park.
- Promote the redevelopment of the small commercial area in the Thomson neighborhood for recreation oriented businesses.
- Promote redevelopment of Superior Whitewater Rafting property and adjacent parcel into destination facility (e.g., lodging, dining, recreational activity, etc.).
- Work to retain the Carlton County Courthouse facilities in downtown Carlton with a design that integrates the facility into the downtown area's vehicle and pedestrian flow.
- Participate in the recently funded Carlton County broadband initiative to identify actions to enhance economic and community development within the city.
- Encourage new and remodeled businesses to incorporate building massing and design that reflect and reinforce the small-town scale and style of development with particular sensitivity to the community's natural setting.
- Encourage railroad and industrial facilities to use trees and other vegetation and building enhancements to create a more attractive backdrop for the entrance into the community and the downtown area.


FUTURE CARLTON: GENERAL LANDUSE
LEGEND
Residential
Commercial
Institutional
Industrial
Parks & Trails
Open Space
Roads
Railroads
Rivers & Streams
Water Bodies
City Limits
CITY OF CARLTON
CARLTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA
0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet
MSA
Print Date: 11/18/2015 10:30 AM 3/27/2015
Printed by: sklisy, File: M:\MN\City\Carlton\FutureCarlton_GeneralLanduse.mxd
Sugar Maple Rd
Palkie Rd
Korby Rd
Thomson Rd
Thomson Lake Reservoir
Dalles Ave
Falls Ave
Mira Ave
State Hwy 210
St. Louis River
Jay Cooke State Park
Leimer Rd
County Hwy 1
Wilhemina Dr
Sunrise Dr
Webbeking Dr
Stine Dr
Kettner Ave
School Ave
Chestnut Ave
Cedar Ave
3rd St
2nd St
1st St
1st St
Old Carlton Rd
Douglas Rd
County Hwy 3
W Chub Lake Rd

N Neighborhoods

Carlton's three main neighborhoods – central Carlton, South Terrace and Thomson – are linked by a variety of physical features and joined through community events. The clear intent is to foster a positive shared sense of community and to promote safe, convenient connections.

Focal features and actions include:

- Attractive travel corridors linking all neighborhoods. These are to feature safe pedestrian and bicycling routes and attractive landscaping and lighting. A pilot project will be undertaken along 3rd Street linking the downtown with the grocery store location to the north.
- All pedestrian and bicyclist crossings of major streets and roads are to be clearly identified, signed and lighted.
- Specifically the intersection of County Roads 1 and 3 at South Terrace is to be redesigned to allow safe crossing from the neighborhood to the trail system on the other side.
- Additional events are to be created that engage the community and visitors. The new events are to promote the community's image as a great place for active living within a scenic area; they can feature specific activities such as bicycling, hiking, kayaking and outdoor play as well the arts. One event should specifically incorporate Jay Cooke State Park into the theme and venue for some of the activities.
- Enhance the 4-Seasons facility as the community's year-round event venue. This would include designing the site specifically to hold outdoor events (e.g., landscape improvements, convenient electrical and water service, and lighting), clearly delineate St. Louis River Trail route starting at Chestnut, upgrade indoor facility, and support facility management.

T Transportation

Carlton's core street and transportation system is in place with few major improvements needed. Emphasis is on upgrading and maintenance. New streets will likely result from development projects in which the developer will build streets to city standards; city would assume control once streets are approved.

Focal points for enhancing the transportation system in Carlton are:

- Work with state and federal officials and legislators to secure a waiver for heavy trucks to use the segment of I-35 between TH 210 and TH 45.
- Work with MnDOT to design the stretch of TH 210 between 6th Street and Vermilion Street into a more attractive parkway-like corridor. Enhancements could include decorative street lighting and a paved sidewalk/trail within the right of way.

- Support actions by Carlton County to redesign the CR 3/1 intersection in South Terrace so as to enhance vehicle safety and facilitate safe crossing by pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Work with MnDOT to create designated pedestrian crossings across TH 210 and TH 45 in multiple areas of the city including the downtown, at trail crossings, and the Thomson neighborhood.
- Recognize walking and biking as integral components of Carlton's transportation system and include them in the transportation capital improvement budget.
- Upgrade existing paved roads that are in poor condition before proceeding to pave existing gravel surfaced roads.
- Work with developers and others platting land to provide streets that meet city standards and provide appropriate access to properties within the development or plat.
- Evaluate options to reduce speeding within the community.

E Education

Carlton views education as a vital component of a dynamic community. Realizing that decisions on the public schools are the purview of the school board, the community of Carlton strongly prefers the retention of both the high school and elementary school. That could mean replacement and relocation of the current high school. It could mean consolidation with another district meaning that the high school could relocate outside of the community while the South Terrace School remains.

Besides just having the physical buildings in town, this plan endorses the "community school" concept through which schools are used by the entire community throughout the year. School buildings are major community facilities with a range of features that can support such activities as health care, wellness and fitness programs, multi-generational activity center, venues for adult education, and community education throughout the year.

In addition to the public school system, the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College is adjacent to Carlton. Enhancing community use of this educational facility would improve the lives of residents and make Carlton an even more attractive community in which to live.

- Support a Carlton school district decision to retain both schools within the city and, at a minimum, to retain the South Terrace Elementary School.
- Work with the school district on the integration of community facilities and services within school buildings.
- Encourage the development of an outdoor recreation and environmental learning venue at UMD's Kayak Center, and, increased use of Jay Cooke State Park as an environmental learning venue.
- Discuss with Fond du Lac college regarding college needs, such as student housing that could be met within Carlton.
- Develop a cooperative relationship with Fond du Lac college regarding provision of college programming within the community and programming specifically aimed at meeting needs of residents and businesses.

M Market

Gaining new residents and businesses and attracting visitors will take a concerted and sustained effort. Carlton needs to aggressively brand itself with the image of an active living community situated within a stunning natural setting and directly connected to regional trail systems. This necessitates a cooperative venture between the city and the business community in which the businesses assume a leadership role in community promotion. Promotion includes: pushing information out to prospective residents, businesses and visitors; effectively handling requests for information; and generating community events that boost awareness of, and visitation to Carlton.

The Carlton Area Development Corporation is to be tapped to lead economic development related marketing and interaction with potential developers.

Among the key features of this marketing effort are:

- Support the Chamber of Commerce as the lead entity for community promotion and event generation.
- Support development of a multi-pronged program to brand and promote Carlton including a multi-functional website.
- Develop Carlton-centric mobile apps for recreational visitors (e.g., maps, directions to businesses and services). Consider working with high school and college staff and students to develop the apps.
- Cooperate with Duluth and other partners in coordinated promotion of this area as an outdoors recreation destination emphasizing the highly interconnected trail systems shared by the communities.
- Support the Carlton Area Development Corporation as the lead entity for business development promotion, marketing and response to development inquiries.
- Develop a new logo for the city built around city's brand and image.

G Governance and Infrastructure

Consolidation of Thomson and Carlton did not end on January 1, 2015 when the two cities formally became the new city of Carlton. Completing the merger will take additional time even as the city moves ahead with day-to-day actions and undertakes new initiatives. Among the key actions are the following:

- Integrate ordinances from the cities into a single cohesive code.
- Determine cost efficient utilization of public facilities including location of city offices, library and meeting space. Many options remain open at this point. Among the guiding policies in this regard are: the library is to be located within a city-owned building; and, only retain space needed for city functions.

- Evaluate need to expand fire hall to accommodate additional emergency medical services equipment and crews.
- Continue to prepare and implement a capital improvement program that ensures timely investment in utilities, roads, facilities and equipment. Investment focus is to be on maintaining and upgrading existing infrastructure before developing new features.
- Update the city's emergency management plan.
- Regarding the extension of utilities outside of the corporate limits, it will be City policy that such extensions will be allowed only if the area served generates sufficient revenues to pay for the cost to install and deliver the service and contribute to the maintenance and upgrading of the entire utility system on par with recipients of the service located within the city.

The Nature of Development

Carlton's image and quality of life are rooted in its superb natural setting. As the city actively promotes new development, it is mindful that such development sustains and enhances this setting by applying site design and structure location that is responsive to the site and its relationship to waterways, wetlands, blocks of natural areas, and ecological systems.

Action Program

The following defines an initial set of actions associated with each strategic initiative presented in this plan. Clearly there are more that will arise and, upon further consideration, some that are listed will fall by the wayside as no longer needed or appropriate.

In each category the highest priority action is listed first.

Overall Action #1

Establish a small Plan Implementation Team of committed individuals, responsive to the City Council, dedicated to the task of setting and driving a 12-18 month effort to initiate implementation.

Overall Action #2

Recognize that every major initiative requires a champion and that champions can come from all walks of life, need to be encouraged and supported.

C Connections

1	In cooperation with Minnesota Power and other stakeholders prepare a design for developing recreational trails and use areas around Thomson Lake Reservoir. Then, implement component projects. Even as overall plan is being prepared, design and build the West Side Loop Trail system as an example of what can be done and to create enthusiasm for the total trail initiative set forth in this plan.
2	Design and build South Shore loop trail along with trailhead facility
3	Enhanced signage for recreational trail users
4	Work with County on redesign of CR1/3 intersection and coordinate this with development of Safe Route to School for South Terrace Elementary
5	Design year-round venue plan for 4-Seasons Recreation Building

H Housing

1	Establish a housing task force to undertake short-term initiative to encourage development of new housing in Carlton
2	Work with landowners in targeted areas to consider residential development
3	Extend existing TIF district to encompass entirety of consolidated Carlton

D Development: Commercial

1	Formally identify the Carlton Area Development Corporation as the lead economic development entity for the city
2	Work with BNSF Railroad to develop parking lot west of 3rd Street and south of North Avenue. This will include rerouting of the St. Louis River Trail
3	Assist landowner to replat the trucking and warehouse industrial area into city's light industrial park
4	Establish task force to evaluate potential locally produced food based business needs and ventures
5	Encourage and support development of lodging facilities within the city
6	Engage Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College to initiate business development and assistance program in Carlton
7	Encourage industrial facilities to enhance the exterior look of their facilities and the railroad to introduce trees and other vegetation along its tracks to upgrade the image of downtown Carlton

N Neighborhoods

1	Design pilot project to enhance 3rd Street corridor between Chestnut and Cedar Avenues.
2	Work with County, MnDOT, MnDNR and Jay Cooke State Park to consistently and appropriately identify, mark and light all trail crossings within community
3	Participate in a re-energized Active Transportation partnership to develop Safe Route to School for South Terrace elementary and the high school.
4	Create new outdoor recreation oriented event themed around Jay Cooke State Park – this event is intended to attract visitors to the community
5	Create a new, or enhance an existing community event, focused on active living and connections to outdoor features such as Thomson Lake Reservoir and St. Louis River.

T Transportation

1	Initiate discussions with appropriate federal and state legislators and officials regarding actions to redirect heavy through truck traffic onto I-35 and out of Carlton
2	Work with MnDOT on redesign of TH 210 through Carlton as per this plan
3	Include a plan in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to repave streets in poor condition and then follow with program to pave gravel-surfaced streets
4	Work with MnDOT to designate pedestrian crossings throughout the community along TH 210 and TH 45 and with the County regarding CRs 1 and 3.
5	Meet with County Sheriff and Highway Patrol to consider additional measures to control speeding and crosswalk violations. Actions could include purchasing additional Sheriff patrol time, installation of traffic cameras, and installation of additional radar-speed monitoring signs.

E Education

1	Convene dialogue with Carlton school district and Fond du Lac college regarding provision of educational programming in Carlton, implementation of the "community school" concept, etc.
2	Discuss with Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College needs it may have that could be met within Carlton

M Market

1	Support Chamber of Commerce as lead entity for community promotion and event development – this includes financial assistance for promotional initiatives
2	Develop a new logo for the City built around city's brand and image; could be done as a community contest
3	Work with appropriate agencies (e.g., MnDOT, County) to update directional and entrance signs to Carlton
4	Promote new community events [see Neighborhoods]

G	Governance
1	Complete consolidation of Thomson and Carlton including integration of ordinances into single cohesive code
2	Implement utilization plan for city-owned buildings
3	Continue preparation and implementation of Capital Improvement Program