



City of Morris Comprehensive Plan

1999

Original January 12, 1999
Updated February 9, 1999

Acknowledgments

No project of this magnitude can be completed without the help of many devoted people. First, I am particularly indebted to Mark Olson, the original developer of this plan, for all of his efforts. Mark's tireless work and comprehensive approach are reflected throughout the document. Much of the writing in this document is Mark's work and the work of the Focus Groups.

I also offer my warmest thanks to my research assistants, UMM students Tasina Nitzschke and Ben Wallner, for their endless support as we worked throughout the summer to complete the Plan.

I am grateful to the Mayor, Carol Wilcox, the City Manager, Ed Larson, and all of the other members of the City Council. Your support was critical to the completion of the Plan. You continue to offer Morris exemplary leadership. Thanks also to the many city employees who provided us with an enormous amount of relevant data. Your support and encouragement were important to us throughout this process.

At the University, thanks are also due to Roger McCannon, David Fluegel, and the Center for Small Towns for offering the Center's services towards the completion of the Plan. Loren Gustafson provided timely help with the final editing of the document. Tom Mahoney and the Grants Development Office offered their insightful assistance in putting together a workable agreement with the City. But most of all, thanks are due to the many citizens of Morris who volunteered their time to serve on Focus Groups. Although you are all so very busy in your daily lives, you took time out to offer your vision for the city of Morris. You have indeed made a very meaningful contribution to your community.

Finally, I offer special thanks to my wife, Janet, and our two daughters, Anne and Allyson. Your endless support and patience made all the difference.

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Introduction

The development of a Comprehensive Plan is a very important task. Ideally, the Plan should lay out a strategy for growth during some prescribed time period, in this case ten years. The methods chosen to complete a city's Comprehensive Plans will affect the Plan's contents and usage. To illustrate, in 1986 the City of Morris contracted with Gunnar Isberg and Associates, a consulting firm specializing in local planning and development, to complete the city's Comprehensive Plan. The resulting plan, although written in a technical manner, was concise and workable for city decision-makers. The 43-page document produced by Gunnar Isberg and Associates served the city well for its intended life of ten years.

The current Comprehensive Plan was developed in a much different manner. From the outset, the Plan was devised to be a reflection of the values and the visions of the people of Morris. As a result, this plan was developed in a manner quite different from the one used for the previous Comprehensive Plan. Public participation has been encouraged throughout the various stages of the Plan, and the citizens of Morris participated at an unusually high rate. As a result, it is my belief that the Plan is quite reflective of what the citizens of Morris want their city to look like. Correspondingly, I have made every attempt to make the Plan accessible to Morris residents. Every attempt has been made to use language understandable to the residents of the city. My hope is that the Plan will be broadly read and discussed, and will promote discussion of the issues that confront Morris in the immediate future.

A note is in order about some of the data presented in the Comprehensive Plan. Readers will notice that while some of the data is very recent, other tables reflect data from the most recent census (1990). Unfortunately, getting current information can be extraordinarily expensive. In future years, the City may want to consider, when practical, administering the plan when census data are both new and widely available.

Overview

The residents of the city of Morris have a vision for their city. It is clear from the work of the focus groups that members of the community want a safe, clean city that offers quality schools, economic opportunity, and enjoyable rural living. Yet to some extent, the policy options available to us are going to be shaped by factors external to the city itself. Most prominently, the overall economic health of the region will clearly affect the viability of various policy alternatives. How much we want to get done is going to be shaped by how much revenue we have to work with. Currently, signs of economic prosperity abound in Morris. New construction can be found throughout the city, including a major expansion of the Stevens Community Medical Center, the construction of a new Regional Fitness Center, a much larger Willie's grocery store, a new liquor store, a new Science Center at the University of Minnesota, a new funeral home, and a proposed expansion to the ethanol plant (Morris Ag-Energy). Growth is also occurring in residential home construction, as evidenced by strong overall home sales and prices. New home construction is also strong. Both the city and the school district have been praised for their dependable, competent work on budgeting. Unemployment is exceptionally low. Things seem to be going very well.

Unfortunately, the near future may offer some serious economic challenges. Virtually all studies of the region lead to similar conclusions. As a region, the western portion of Minnesota is in for some very difficult times. The past year has been a very poor year for many area farmers. According to an article published in the August 9, 1998, edition of the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* entitled "Farmers Abandoning the Great Plains," The Minnesota Farm Service Agency estimates that as many as 30% of its borrowers in northwestern Minnesota will quit farming this year. Agricultural prices have reached extremely low levels, and many economists predict that the government is unlikely to intervene again to the degree that it once did to assist family farmers. The Minnesota Planning State Demographic Center, in its publication entitled, "Faces of the Future: Minnesota County Population Projections, 1995-2025" paints an equally unpleasing picture. The office predicts that the population of Stevens County will decrease from its estimated 1995 population of 10,575 to only 9,840 by the year 2025. In addition to these overall changes in population of the county, the report also predicts significant changes to the greater western region of Minnesota. The report forecasts a strong aging trend in the population, with a statewide trend of the number of children between age birth to 14 declining about 10 percent between 1995 and 2005. Worse yet, losses of 20% or more of this age group are predicted for much of western Minnesota. Simultaneously, the United States is experiencing a significant aging of the so-called "baby boomer" generation. As a result, we will likely see record numbers of seniors, measured as a percentage of the population, living in the area.

Such demographic changes will have profound influences on our city. There will be increased demands on our health care system to provide for a higher percentage of senior citizens within our community. School programs will likely need to be modified to accommodate declining enrollments. An overall shortage of young people in the area may cause labor problems. Significant losses of population would likely affect all area businesses. Clearly, we need to be aware of the challenges that await us and take strategic action as soon as possible.

The good news is that the community has positioned itself rather well for these changes. Morris has diversified its local economy more than many of its neighbors. Morris has a major university as well as several large businesses that will help it meet the oncoming challenges. Communities that are wholly dependent upon small area farms face grave problems during the next decade, problems similar to the ones faced by many mining towns in northern Minnesota during the 1970s. Communities that have diversified their local economies, and used their creative talents to address the new economic challenges that meet them, will succeed.

The challenge for Morris is to continue to diversify its local economy. The leadership of the city has done a good job of keeping the expansion of existing facilities here in Morris. The city must continue to compete aggressively for the future expansion of businesses that operate in Morris. In addition, the city need to seek ways to keep more of the expendable money of Morris residents within the city. Can we pursue our economic development in a way that encourages Morris consumers to spend more of their money in the city rather than in other surrounding communities? Pursuing these solutions may involve utilizing to a greater degree the Community Development Group. The Community Development Group meets informally on a monthly basis. In most small communities, informal networks of concerned citizens accomplish many significant tasks. Morris is no exception in this regard. Special attention needs to be made to two groups: 1) Morris consumers making typical, inexpensive, purchases and 2) UMM students spending on recreation, including movies, restaurants, etc. Capturing the revenues of these groups who currently spend many of their dollars in other communities would increase the viability of additionally diversifying the local economy. In addition, keeping more UMM students in the community may eventually help solve a long-term problem that will be prevalent throughout the region – a dramatic shortage in the labor pool.

In “Faces of the Future,” the Minnesota State Demographic Center argues that regions under stress, like western Minnesota, “will have to attract more residents or persuade more young adults to remain in the area.” To a significant degree, the success that Morris has in this area will be dependent upon the success that Morris has in providing for young families. Currently, the city possesses a very good park system, strong public schools, and a very good Early Childhood program. As the city experiences some population loss, it will be a challenge to maintain the strength of each of these programs. Yet by allowing any or all of them to suffer in quality, the eventual effect will be to accelerate the problems caused by demographic shifts.

Clearly, the region is facing some serious challenges. Morris residents are fortunate in that the city’s leadership has actively pursued economic diversification for many years. Morris will clearly benefit from this activity. Yet the storm is just now beginning to arrive. The enrollment in our public schools has begun to drop. The farming community is in very serious decline, and the effects of this trend will be much more pronounced when the nation is no longer in a period of prolonged economic growth. Morris does face some serious challenges, but if we respond in a strategic and well-calculated manner, residents of the city can continue to enjoy its high standards of quality rural living.

The Comprehensive Plan: Process

This Comprehensive Plan emerged from a process that requested and received a very high level of public participation. Most of the Focus Groups met during earlier phases of the development of the Comprehensive Plan. I have largely left the recommendations of the Focus Groups and the Plan's original author unaltered. Much of the following material should therefore be credited to Mark Olson and the work of the Focus Groups. Their endless work provided me with an exhaustive set of assessments and policy recommendations. I have tried to set a context for each of the issue areas, as well as tried to take the material and give it a bit more of a consistent theme. Therefore, any remaining errors of fact or of omission are solely mine.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF COMMUNITY PLANNING IN MORRIS

The role of planning is pivotal to future decision making for community development. With planning and implementation, ideas become possibilities, agendas are set, and scarce resources are dedicated to community needs.

The history of the City of Morris in community planning efforts is generally noted by at least three earlier benchmarks:

- The first Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1962; it established a precedent for comprehensive planning and its continuance.
- The second Comprehensive Plan, established in 1986, formalized planning efforts and directions for the community.
- The Main Street Repaving Program emerged from planning efforts in 1989.
- This Comprehensive Plan differs from previous plans in using community visioning and the community's assessment to establish the goals and policies.

PURPOSE OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

" Why plan? " seems to be the perennial question in the face of the problems and promise that commonly beset the process. We find at least eight compelling reasons for establishing and maintaining community involvement in the Comprehensive Plan for Morris. With community involvement, a plan

- maintains community involvement in the city's present and future needs

- provides a historical perspective on the Morris community by reviewing the way Morris has changed over time and identifying the qualities and role of Morris in West Central Minnesota
- examines the given resources, i.e., population, economy, land uses, environment, public and community facilities, infrastructure and cultural diversity
- discusses future trends and issues related to growth, development, and change
- establishes policies for growth, land use, natural resources and environmental quality, economic development, public and community facilities, and infrastructure
- identifies implementation goals and planning needs for growth, land use, natural resources and environmental quality, economic development, public and community facilities, and infrastructure.
- guides decisions concerning land use including zoning and subdivision ordinances, specific zoning decisions, and planning applications
- serves as a basis for municipal decisions regarding public property acquisition, disposition, and capital improvements.

This plan considers the following topics: General Goals, Land Use, Community Facilities, Services and Utilities, Transportation, Population and Housing, Economic Development, Environmental Analysis, Central Business District, Arts and Culture and other items.

It addresses the following concerns: community facilities - particularly indoor recreation, park systems, sufficiency of housing supply, adequacy of street lay out and extensions, future land use patterns such as an industrial park and the Highway 59 Bypass, growth management, environmental quality and GIS technology for future land use planning.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

Morris residents participated in the Comprehensive Planning process in the following ways:

- Community Survey
- Community Visioning
- Focus groups meetings
- Community Feedback meeting

- Community Survey on future needs and priorities

Community Survey

A survey was distributed in Morris before the community visioning. It was divided into four areas: Concerns and Issues, Challenges and Opportunities, Commitments and Solutions, and Community Evaluation and Change. Fifty three (53) surveys were returned.

Under concerns and issues, the things most frequently mentioned by people about what they liked about Morris were the University of Minnesota, Morris (15.7%), the friendly people (15%), its small size (9.1%), and its low crime rate (9.1%).

Conversely, the respondents wanted to see more services and facilities (15%), businesses (12.4%) and restaurants (10.5%). Respondents also disliked the parochial attitudes and the closed relationships of some their fellow Morris residents (10.4%).

Examining challenges and opportunities, the most frequently mentioned goals or priorities include improved mosquito spraying (5.2%), increased community involvement (4.5%), and more economic development (4.5%).

The friendly qualities of the people (11%) and the University of Minnesota (5.9%) were the most frequently cited strengths that Morris can draw upon to achieve its goals. Resistance to change (10.5%) and too few businesses (9.1%) were the most mentioned obstacles to change.

The following rankings of 15 items for their importance under commitments and solutions provide some prioritization of expenditures.

1. Business retention and attraction
2. Affordable housing
3. Industrial parks
4. City parks
5. Environmental protection
6. Library services
7. Theatre and arts programs
8. Fire department
9. New sewers
10. Police services
11. Transitional (elderly) housing
12. Reforestation
13. Curbs and sidewalks
14. Consolidating county and city services

Taxes in general (15.7%), property taxes (11.8%) and cutbacks/reallocations/consolidations (11.8%) are the most frequently mentioned means for raising revenues for paying for new services or maintaining present ones.

Community Visioning

From October 3, 1995, to April 2, 1996, the City of Morris conducted two (2) public participation meetings and one (1) workshop and assembled eight (8) focus groups.

Volunteers from the University of Minnesota Extension Service, the University of Minnesota, Morris and West Central Initiative Fund assisted in all phases. The public participation process was established to solicit a broad range of opinion, information, and foresight to define planning goals, priorities, objectives, and strategies for a ten-year time frame. Below is a summary of discussions.

The 120 participants at the October 2, 1995 Community Visioning identified the following general priorities:

1. Business Expansion (n = 79)
2. Community Recreation Center/ Youth Entertainment (n = 53)
3. Pool (n = 40)
4. Improving Community Links to UMM (n = 36)
5. Affordable Housing (n = 34)
6. Development of Enforceable Housing Codes (n = 23)
7. Environment (n = 27)
8. Diverse Restaurants (n = 13)
9. Commitment to Arts (n = 13)
10. Keeping Resources in Community (n = 11)
11. Government as an Enabler for Community (n = 11)
12. Cooperation between Governments & Entities (n = 10)

Focus Groups

Focus groups were assembled for each of the following eight areas: Economic Development; Central Business District; Environmental Analysis; Land Use; Transportation; Demographics; Public Facilities, Services and Utilities; and Arts and Culture. The recommendations of each of the focus groups are contained in each of the following sections of the Comprehensive Plan.

Community Report-Back

The priorities for immediate consideration that were identified by 65 persons attending the Community Report-Back from the focus groups' recommendations are:

- Consider UMM/Community Recreation Center Venture (n = 18)
- Increase Visibility for Town's Arts Events (n = 13)
- Examine Merits of a Board of Adjustments & Appeals (n = 12)
- Explore Geographic Information Systems (GIS) (n = 12)

Consideration of a joint venture for a UMM and City of Morris Community Recreation Center and the establishment of Board of Adjustments and Appeals were proposed at the Report-Back Meeting. Both had been previously discussed in Focus Groups.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision that has emerged from the Community Visioning, the focus groups sessions and the Community Feedback sessions held by the Morris City Planning Commission can be expressed in the following statement:

Community planning in Morris, Minnesota shall reflect a long-term commitment to continuously and comprehensively improve:

1. the business climate in Morris by focusing on business retention, attraction, and expansion including increased land use for industrial parks in appropriate settings
2. community recreation opportunities such as a community recreation center, a pool and youth entertainment
3. the housing supply with housing stock that is affordable, meets code requirements, and addresses the needs of those seeking to reside in Morris
4. the social and natural environment with renewed attention to harmonious land use and enforced zoning in buildings, parks, and public space
5. quality of life through a community commitment to the arts, improved community facilities and services, respect for cultural diversity and partnerships between government and local entities including the University of Minnesota, Morris.

Operational Definitions

The various focus groups worked to identify and reflect the community's Goals and Policies because the community's aspirations for the future are the centerpiece of the Comprehensive Plan. The background information and analysis can help in formulating and clarifying Goals and Policies. The final plan describes how the community intends to attain them.

The terms "Goal" and "Policy" are subject to a wide range of interpretation and application. Since it is desirable to have a common frame of reference, these and related terms are defined below. These definitions were adapted from the *City of Alexandria Comprehensive Plan* (12/13/94):

GOAL: A general statement of community aspirations and desired objectives indicating a broad social economic or physical state of conditions that the community officially agrees to strive to achieve in various ways including, among others, through the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

POLICY: An officially adopted course or method of action intended to be followed to implement the community goals.

The Goals and Policies spell out various roles and responsibilities for the City of Morris. To better understand the City's role for each goal and policy, a number of key terms are defined below with the City 's corresponding responsibility:

Create: Bring the desired goal from planning to implementation, usually with City staff involved in all levels. May involve City financial assistance.

Continue: Follow past and present procedures to maintain desired goal, usually with City staff involved in all levels from planning to implementation.

Encourage: Foster the desired goal through City policies. Could involve City financial assistance.

Endorse: Subscribe to the desired goal by supportive City policies.

Enhance: Improve current goal to a desired state through the use of policies and City Staff at all levels of planning This could include financial support.

Identify: Catalog and confirm resource or desired item(s) through the use of City staff and actions.

Maintain: Keep in good condition the desired state of affairs through the use of City policies and staff. Financial assistance should be provided if needed.

Recognize: Acknowledge the identified state of affairs and take action or implement policies to preserve or change them.

Prevent: Stop described event through the use of appropriate City policies.

Promote: Advance the desired state through the use of City policies and staff activity at all levels of planning.

Protect: Guard against a deterioration of the desired state through the use of City policies, staff, and financial assistance, if needed.

Provide: Take the lead role in supplying the needed financial and staff support to achieve the desired goal. The city is typically involved in all aspects from planning to implementation to maintenance.

Strengthen: Improve and reinforce the desired goal through the use of City policies, staff and financial assistance, if needed.

Support: Supply the needed staff support, policies, and financial assistance at all levels to achieve the desired goals.

Sustain: Uphold the desired state through City policies, financial resources and staff action to achieve the desired goal.

Work: Cooperate and act in a manner to create desired goal through the use of City staff, actions, and policies.

The Comprehensive Plan: Substance

Assessment, Goals, and Policies

The City of Morris clearly has some very strong assets. The city features good schools, affordable housing, a low crime rate, and a strong artistic community. Residents have a great deal of civic pride and are willing to work to improve their city. The following goals and policies were identified by several focus groups in coordination with Mark Olson.

General Goals and Policies

GENERAL GOAL #1: Maximize Morris' potential as a thriving regional center for business and education while maintaining and enhancing its livability.

Policies

- A. Promote the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Plan that meets future needs for land use, community facilities, transportation, housing, economic development and environmental protection for Morris.
- B. Review and amend this Comprehensive Plan to maintain the plan's relevance. Ideally, this would involve regular monitoring, frequent updating, consistent use, and continued commitment to the planning process by City Hall and the community of Morris to maintain it as a workable document. Neglect will assure the plan's obsolescence and irrelevance as a framework for community development.
- C. Continue to plan for land uses to support and enhance Morris' ability to attract quality development.
- D. Formulate and enforce City ordinances to ensure development in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

GENERAL GOAL #2: Achieve an ongoing relationship between the City, Stevens County and appropriate organizations, including the University of Minnesota and the Western Area City/County Cooperative (WACCO), in all matters related to regional planning and the provision of public services.

Policies

- A. Conduct regular meetings (and special meetings as needed) to establish and review the attainments in regional planning and the provision of public services.
- B. Inform the public and media on a regular basis about attainments in regional

planning and the provision of public services.

GENERAL GOAL #3: Continually strive to improve the planning process enabling the community to learn efficiently from and respond effectively to the changing social, economic and political environment.

Policies

- A. Identify and implement appropriate changes in governmental structures, mechanisms and processes that enable the community to use more channels of communication and representation to improve quality, outcomes, and responsiveness of the planning process as well as improve governance by City and County Governments.
- B. Continually improve professional performance and outcomes within the City government by improving the mechanisms for and frequency of feedback on performance.
- C. Establish and maintain an on-going, relevant, planning education process for elected officials, city employees, and the community.

Issue Areas to be Addressed in the Comprehensive Plan

The following issue areas will be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. Focus groups were created in each of these areas and their assessments and recommendations follow the brief descriptions below.

Land Use

Morris is primarily a residential community with expectations for further growth. An important component of community planning should be to identify vacant land suitable for new residential development. The issues to be addressed include the timing and cost of providing public utilities to new developments and the identification of areas to be annexed.

Residential neighborhoods form the heart of Morris. The Comprehensive Plan should provide for the protection and enhancement of these areas. Techniques should be explored that separate as much as possible existing neighborhoods from the impact of commercial industrial and other non-residential uses; eliminate non-residential through traffic within neighborhoods; maintain and improve building conditions and improve public facilities.

While primarily a single-family residential community, some multi-family housing has been built. The Comprehensive Plan should explore locations for new multi-family development and should identify techniques to ensure that they will be attractive and of high quality.

There is some commercial development within Morris along Highway 28. The Comprehensive Plan should identify ways to ensure that the commercial development presents a good impression to City visitors as well as compatibility with adjacent residential use.

Downtown Morris and the surrounding blocks contain a concentration of mixed commercial and residential uses. The Comprehensive Plan should define a boundary for the downtown, explore the use of a transition around it and identify areas for further commercial growth if appropriate. While downtown Morris will remain an important commercial hub of the community, population and industrial growth will produce a need for additional commercial facilities.

Community Facilities

Morris offers its residents a host of recreational opportunities through its solid park system and other community facilities. Maintaining and expanding these facilities will be an important task necessary to maintaining a high quality of life standard in Morris. There seemed to be substantial support in both the surveys and community meetings for an increase in the number of recreation opportunities; construction of a community pool is seen as one way to meet some of these recreation needs. Attention should be paid to resolving the potentially divergent needs of youth and the elderly.

Transportation

Morris has approximately 26 miles of surfaced roads, the majority of them local streets. The city's transportation system can be characterized as a grid system with local streets forming city blocks at 90-degree angles. Through traffic is served by two main thoroughfares. A transportation model should be developed that incorporates economic and physical impact assessment, accessibility, traffic intensity, and environmental issues.

Population and Housing

Morris' population increased by 4.05%--from 5,367 to 5,613--from 1980 to 1990. The age groups that experienced the largest population decreases were the 25-29 age group, the 45-49 age group, and the 50-54 age group. The 35-39 and 40-44 age groups showed significant population increases, and the number of seniors 70 and over increased by 12.7 %

Population for the county is projected to increase from 1995 population estimates of 10,575 to 10,850 by 2005. Substantial decline is predicted after that period, and the county population is forecast to decline to 9,840 by 2025.

Over 31 percent of the City's housing stock is less than 25 years old. Another 25% of the housing stock was constructed in 1939 or earlier. Housing maintenance will continue to be a major concern to keep the housing stock in good condition. The quality of rental housing in the community will need to be addressed in the near future.

Excluding vacant houses, Morris homes are nearly split between homeowners (55%) and renters (45%). Although there is a diversity of rental housing, some concerns remain about the availability of home ownership opportunities in the city for lower income groups. This concern is heightened by the steep increases in home values that have occurred over the last few years.

Economic Development

The economy has become more diversified with the growth of local industries. The City's primary economic development activities have included tax increment financing and the creation of an industrial park. Economic development priorities were identified as the retention and expansion of existing businesses, marketing information and education, Morris Industrial Park expansion and design improvement, community marketing and bolder initiatives, and more partnerships between local government and business.

Environmental Analysis

In terms of physical expansion, urban development should be controlled so as to not unduly overlap with agricultural areas. With construction and pollution placing the city's aquifers at risk, groundwater contamination is an increasingly important issue. Municipal Conservancy protection, wetlands preservation, ethanol plant emissions control, environmental hazard areas identification, solid waste reduction and increased recycling are issues of increasing community importance.

Increased tree planting in the city was seen as a measure addressing both environmental and social concerns. Similarly, improving the visual appearance of entrances is another crossover measure touching on both social and natural environment. Historic preservation in Morris and the Central Business District is another area for policy development.

Central Business District

Efforts need to be continued in strengthening the Central Business District as a major retail center. An SBDC survey, a Morris survey, and community meetings suggest that expanding merchandise selection, more stores and more competitive prices are important to increasing purchases locally. Establishing construction guidelines that create better harmony and focal points of interest may also attract both businesses and customers. Recent construction may open up new possibilities.

Arts and Culture

Morris features various entities that promote arts and culture within the community. The opportunity for greater coordination and more effective use of resources is prompting the creation of a local Arts Council. The creation of the Arts Council will likely generate more community interest in the arts. Arts and government have a common aim of promoting the culture(s) of community members. Greater community participation can be fostered by joint efforts involving city government.

Issue Area #1: Land Use

The City of Morris is a medium-sized city located in a prime agricultural area of West Central Minnesota. City acreage estimates range from 2,827 to 2,916 acres. A retail trade and government center for Stevens County area, these functions continue to influence the existing land use pattern in the city. Government and institutions own or control a high proportion of the existing land. The following analysis of land use is based on the 1986 Comprehensive Plan, EPIC land use data, estimates of acreage by zone from GIS/ArcView data, and land use focus group input.

1. Residential Development

Residential zones (R) comprise an estimated 639.9 acres of the city. Beginning on the northwest side, most residential development took place in the center of the city with older residential neighborhoods on the east and west sides of the Central Business District (CBD). Recent single-family residential development has been on the southeast side near the river and the US TH-59 Bypass. More developments are both being planned and completed for this area including assisted living apartments and several platted additions.

Some recent multi-family developments have taken place in the northeastern and southeastern portions. The U of M campus contains student housing, but there may be need for more student housing. There are mobile manufactured housing parks in the southwestern portion of the city and close to the U of M.

Residential development is likely to continue in the southeastern portion. There will probably be additional in-filling in the subdivision in the northwestern portion of the city.

2. Commercial Development

The Central Business District (CBD), contains an estimated 61.4 acres and Highway Business (HB) another 228.8 acres. The CBD is adjacent to Atlantic Avenue and runs in a northwest-southeast direction through the center of the city. It includes a 10-block area from South Street through 9th Street and varies in width from one block to several blocks in the center between 4th and 8th Street. The proximity of businesses on Atlantic Ave to the railroad trunk line effectively limits property development in the CBD.

The former supermarket property on the northeast side of Atlantic Avenue was under lease until August 1998. This property may now be available for re-development. Some vacant lots exist including one on the 600 block of Atlantic and another on the 400 block. However, the lot sizes may preclude some business uses. Other properties with older, less efficient buildings could be re-developed.

Alternatives to the CBD for commercial development are in areas most often zoned HB. The following options are examined below: MN TH-28 East, MN TH-28 West, US TH-59 North, US TH-59 South, MN TH-9 North, and MN TH-9 South.

MN TH-28 East. Some vacant lots on the southeast side exist for development, especially for restaurants, hotels, motels, ag-equipment and automobile dealerships, etc. Institutional property on the northwest side could be obtained for such uses.

MN TH-28 West. Redevelopment of some commercial property especially on the southeast side is possible. Some vacant lots exist for development, especially restaurants, hotels, motels, agricultural equipment and automobile dealerships etc.

US TH-59 North. This sector has limited potential for commercial development. It remains more suitable for agricultural or residential use.

US TH-59 South. This area has some potential for industrial use.

MN TH-9 North. Some property is available, but commercial development should be discouraged.

MN TH-9 South. While some property is available at the former MN Department of Transportation site, not much other commercial property is available.

3. Industrial Development

I1 and I2 zones are estimated to total 358.6 acres. Most industrial development in the city took place between Pacific Avenue and the Burlington Northern railroad in the central and northern portions of the city, adjacent to the CBD. Some of these areas are now zoned Highway Business. Industrial development is taking place in the southern portion of the city adjacent to TH #59 in the 47 acre Morris Industrial Park, by Lake Crystal and the northwest side of MN TH-28 East. The Morris Industrial Park is currently full, but 40 additional acres have been platted, 30 of which will be suitable for development after right-of-way usage.

4. Public/Semi-Public

Publicly owned and controlled lands within Morris are approximately 45% of Morris or 988 acres. Municipal Conservancy (MC) accounts for an estimated 803.64 acres of this amount. An unspecified part of Residential Multiple (RM) estimated at 198.6 can be included here. Estimates are difficult because institutional ownership can fall under RF, RM, CBD or possibly MC zoning classifications.

The West Central Experiment Station and the University of Minnesota, Morris, are two prominent institutional landowners. On Highway 59, where some strip development is occurring, half of the undeveloped land is owned by the Experiment Station. "There is a great deal of potential for cooperation between the city and UMM in the following areas: the planning of future utilities, shared pump stations, zoning, and watershed control, housing expansion on both campus and in the private market and the possible sale or exchange of land between public and private owners" (UMM Master Plan Draft, 1995: 21).

Stevens County also owns several facilities including the courthouse located in the central portion of the city, the county fairgrounds, located in the southern portion of the city along TH 59, and a highway shop in the northwestern portion of the city. MN DOT also owns several facilities in the southern portion of the city along TH #9 and a facility adjacent to TH # 59, C.S.A.H. #10.

Government

The category includes State, County, and City properties; the Post Office and the West Central Experiment Station are examples of publicly owned land and facilities. The City Hall, Post Office, and Council Chambers/Senior Center are within a one half block radius of each other. These facilities together with the open grassy knoll in front of the Public Library create a City Center environment that is a short walking distance from the Central Business District and only three or four blocks from County Courthouse.

Park and Recreation

Parks and Recreational Facilities comprise 380 acres or 13.5% of the total City. This figure includes the city park located along the Pomme de Terre River, a 360-acre regional park facility at the southeastern edge of town. The other seven parks range in size from 1/4 acre to ten acres.

Institutional

Institutional uses include schools, churches, a nursing home, and a hospital. The University of Minnesota, Morris, for example, contains 165 acres.

CBD Parking

**Table 1
Parking Stalls in Morris, 1995**

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>
Public Off-Street	231
Public On-Street	301
Private Off-Street	<u>952</u>
Total	1,484

One way to determine whether a downtown area has enough parking is to calculate the parking ratio per 1,000 gross square feet (GSF) of space in the commercial area. In densely developed downtown areas, parking ratios can range from 1 to 3 spaces per 1,000 GSF of commercial, retail, institutional and residential space while in typical malls or highway commercial retail centers like a Pamida, the ratio is usually closer to 4 - 6 spaces per 1,000 GSF. Given the size of Morris, it is estimated that City's parking ratio is in the 3.0 - 3.5 range. There will likely be some increase in the amount of available parking with the construction of the new Willie's grocery store. The new store will accommodate 140 cars. The surface parking areas located in the downtown that serve downtown establishments contain an unspecified number of acres.

Water

Comprising 154 acres or 5.6% of the total City, the water category includes Lake Crystal and the Pomme de Terre River.

Right-of-Way

Street and rail right-of-ways comprise another 1% of land use.

Vacant Land

There are some 280 acres of land that are not under cultivation or use, approximately 10% of the total for the city.

5. Agricultural Protection

EPIC data indicates 868 acres are under cultivation within the city's borders. There are approximately 560 acres classified as Residential Farm (RF). Wetlands in and near the city amount to 54.96 acres. Because of the limited availability of land within the city, care is needed to anticipate and resolve conflicting demands on agricultural land if it is to be made available for purchase for residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Table 2
EPIC Cross-Tabulations* for
1989 Land Use and Minor Civil Divisions

<u>Land Use Classification</u>		<u>Acreage</u>
Urban and Industrial	1,248.4	
Cultivated Land	868.8	
Transitional or Idle Cultivated Land		280.8
Water	154.4	
Open Shrub Grassland		101.5
Deciduous Forest	80.1	
Wetlands	54.9	
Rural Residential Development Complexes	16.0	
Closed Shrub Grassland	11.9	
Farmstead and Rural Residents	<u>9.8</u>	
	2,826.6	

* Source: Cross-Tabulation Report for 1989 Land Use & Minor Civil Divisions

Table 3
GIS Acreage Estimates*
By Zoning Classification

<u>Zoning Classification</u>	<u>Acreage (Est.)</u>
Municipal Conservancy (MC)	803.6
Residential (R)	639.9
Residential Farm (RF)	559.8
Residential Mixed (RM)	299.5
Industrial 1 (I ¹)	325.7
Highway Business (HB)	228.9
Central Business District (CBD)	61.4
Industrial 2 (I ²)	<u>32.9</u>
	2,915.8

* Geographic Information Systems project completed by Alexandria Technical College students.

MORRIS LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

Introduction

The Land Use Plan guides future growth and development of the City. Consisting of a land use map and a set of policies, its use can guide the Planning Commission and City Council for future development within the City and its perimeter expansion area for the next five to ten years. It needs to be placed within the context of county land use planning and need to take into account the following constant and variable forces:

CONSTANT FORCES:

- The City of Morris will provide sewer to development within its service area
- The City of Morris may well experience moderate growth while the rest of the county declines in population.
- The highway bypass will result in increased demand for development along its corridor.

VARIABLE FORCES:

- Level of inter-governmental cooperation in regional planning decisions
- Location of City boundaries
- Development pattern outside of City
- Amount of services provided in the areas outside the City limits

A. Future Outlook and Foreseeable Trends

City population projections indicate population levels as follows:

Year	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>
	5,613	5,750	5,900

These projections do not take into account any annexation. Questions of who (i.e., property owners, developers, or the city) will bear the costs of utilities extensions, police, fire, planning, and other city services need to be addressed before any significant annexation.

Current development patterns are as follows:

- *southward* commercial expansion with the new bypass, with anticipated commercial/industrial expansion in this direction
- industrial park area
- residential development pressures mainly to the northeast and southeast

B. Planning Issues

1. Growth Management and Orderly Annexation

What is the appropriate design size of the community in terms of geographic size and population?

The community and its governance should define growth limits for Morris keeping in mind the infrastructure capacity for the community. For example, at what point in Morris' future development would increased wastewater treatment facilities be warranted? How will the community balance the benefits of new growth with the costs of supporting it? Will there be more attention to continuous improvements that enhance quality of life?

Housing development should focus on available land already within the City limits in the short term. In managing land use and planning for the future, the City must deal with the following issues:

- a. Street extension. The City needs to lay out major roads in the directions that the community is growing. To the south, for example, the City should lay out major roads to the southerly County roads.
- b. Infrastructure capacities. Streets, drainage systems, storm sewers, water, schools, fire, and police services, etc. Capacity features that merit examination include the following.

- City street capacities. What are the population thresholds where increased population in particular areas would create street traffic greater than current service capacities?
- Storm sewer system capacity
- Sanitary sewer system capacity (not limited to the treatment plant alone).
- Water production and distribution capacities
- Capacity of community facilities including schools

At what point do the costs of capacity expansion outweigh the economic benefits and property tax contributions for new growth?

c. Residential Development Capacity

Specific market demands will reveal the extent to which the available land can meet all housing and land tastes and preferences. There may be some segments of the future housing market having demand different from housing opportunities available with the city or immediately abutting the city.

d. Orderly Annexation

As the city grows, annexation allows new areas to receive city sewer and water and other municipal services while contributing to the city tax base. Since the extension of municipal services is a significant undertaking for the City, it is important to prioritize areas that would be considered for future annexation. A first priority for annexation should be undeveloped area planned and needed or residential or industrial expansion that is abutting the city limits. A second priority for annexation should be already developed areas abutting the city.

Orderly annexation should support long term growth management taking into consideration financial feasibility of City utility extensions and provision of City services to new areas. A phased orderly annexation plan should be reflected in the City's capital improvement program for utility extensions. Options for workable

financing should also be explored to determine what financing arrangements would be most feasible for and represent a fair cost-share to properties that benefit. Utility hookup should be unconditionally required, and this requirement should not allow for various adjustments based on given situations.

Future utility extensions would need to be planned in light of present city capital improvement obligations. Such obligations include site improvements and utility expansion.

Defined phases of annexation must deal with strategies of both priority and cost effectiveness. An orderly annexation plan must also reflect capacity of the sanitary sewer collection system and treatment plant to handle new areas. After any annexation capacity would be re-evaluated to determine capacity for additional growth.

e. Urban Fringe Planning

City-County cooperation is needed to address appropriate planning in the fringe area around the City of Morris. One area of concern is that subdivisions outside the city limits have made no provisions for parks. Other areas of concern are agricultural preservation and drainage. In exurban areas, trial plans should be done of probable residential areas so that comprehensive planning can occur for street layouts, bike paths, parks, etc. The City has authority to review plats proposed within one half (1/2) mile of the city borders.

2. Residential Planning Issues

a. Mixed Densities and Mixed Uses

The City of Morris will need to develop approaches to mixed uses in residential areas, whether for low density and higher density residential or for low intensity commerce carefully intermixed with residential. Appropriate designation of areas for new multi-family development and for new single family development will be a challenge since it is unknown what the specific housing needs will be with the growth of other businesses. Residential districts for various densities of housing must be carefully but fluidly planned so that the appropriate mix and settings of housing can be provided.

Properly planned mixtures of densities can be very appropriate. Intermixing of high and low density housing is most workable when the high-density development is not highly concentrated in some instance. For example, apartment developments such as a 48 plex concentrate too many people in a small area. Development this dense tends to worsen social lifestyle and activity (noise, traffic, behavior), and produces conflicts among neighbors, both within the development and abutting the development. Lower density multifamily developments, such as those having eight

(8) or fewer units per structure, may be more appropriately intermixed with single family housing.

b. Home Occupations

There is an increasingly wide range of businesses that are being conducted in the home, from cottage industries whose products and services are transported elsewhere without on-site customer traffic to full-fledged home occupations involving signage, advertisement of the home address as a place of business, and on-site customers. Different standards may be appropriate for different forms of home occupations.

c. R-1/R-2 Zoning

Some of the more established districts now zoned R-1 might now be more appropriately zoned R-2 due to the character of the developments and the sizes of the lots typical in these areas. Some of the current R-1 districts were not designed with the same intent as that reflected in R-1 zoning (for more spacious setbacks and larger lots). Some R-1 problems are occurring because many of the homes that were originally built with only single car attached garages are being expanded to double car garages, which are now the minimum standard for family lifestyles. These double garage expansions have caused the majority of variance requests.

d. Improvements in New Subdivisions

Aside from lots, blocks, and streets in conformance with modern city standards, many other features are critical to the proper function of a subdivision. New subdivisions should provide a well-designed neighborhood and fit well into the overall community. Among the critical features are the following:

Drainage. To what extent will drainage be handled on site? If stormwater runs off site, are ditches, wetlands and other systems sufficient to handle the additional runoff plus the existing load? Drainage plans submitted with preliminary plans and development plans must focus on accommodating post-development runoff on site. In case where some of the runoff cannot be handled on site and must be directed to the street or drainage way, stormwater runoff after development must not exceed pre-development runoff. The existing drainage system must be able to handle new runoff plus existing runoff load

Streets. New plus existing traffic volume must not exceed street design capacity of streets that will handle the traffic. New streets and avenues should be numbered rather than named. Cul de sacs and

eyebrows should not occur except where a street connection cannot be made. Street design should consider ease of maintenance for tasks such as snow plowing.

Parks Trails and Open Spaces. Parks are an important component of both living and overall community design. Parks provide for a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. As part of overall community design, parks, trails and open spaces provide green spaces that serve as an environmental respite from rows of streets and buildings. Park trails and open spaces also help preserve natural habitat. Park dedication in new Morris subdivision must set aside at least one acre of parkland for every 100 residents.

Sidewalks. Sidewalks help promote neighborhood character by offering a place to walk for parents with young children in carriages and strollers and a place where children can ride tricycles and skate without being confined to driveway or sent to the street. Nonetheless, subdivisions created since 1960 lack sidewalks.

e. Housing

The following housing needs have been identified:

- Larger rental and owner-occupied housing units for families relocating in Morris.
- Short term housing. There are few rental options that provide short term housing in Morris for a few days, several months, or one year minimum (rental units). More short term or interim housing is needed for new or prospective residents, whether transitory or as preliminary housing prior to selecting permanent housing.
- Rental housing. The main gap in rental housing availability is for units renting in the low to moderate price ranges.
- Housing options for the senior population. Senior housing and amenities will be in greater demand as the population ages. One particularly emerging market will likely be empty nesters and early retirees. It has been noted that Morris offers many amenities for those looking for a retirement location. The strategic positioning of Morris for access to metropolitan amenities while retaining distinctive rural character is an advantage.
- More residential care facilities. It is anticipated that residential care in group home or foster home environments will increase. Many of Morris' older and

larger homes fit the characteristics of homes suited to residential care.

Single family housing in all price ranges and levels of amenities. Prevailing single housing market needs appear to be the following

<u>Market Niche</u>	<u>Home Features</u>
First Timers /Singles	Attached or detached garages; medium density; in cost ranges under \$80,000 (mainly existing housing stock) or the \$90,000-\$120,000 starter home range
Empty nesters/Early Retirees	Attached double garages; one level; low density; single family neighborhood; management services
Move-ups	Neighborhoods; schools; security; \$150,000 - 250,000; single family development.
Exurban	Large lots-upper bracket. Also large lots-affordable.

Industry expansion will cause increased housing demand. Housing shortages in specific market segments can make new employee recruitment more difficult. The wider the range of housing choices, community facilities, and services, the greater the likelihood that people new to the area will find a suitable home in Morris.

3. Commercial Land Use

The growth in major retail concentration in Morris has occurred along Highway 28 east and in the downtown area. The downtown area changed dramatically during the 1980s. Development of commercial businesses outside the Central Business District shifted convenience shopping away from Downtown. Since then, the downtown focus has changed to offices, specialty services, and community facilities.

4. Industrial Land Use

The current platted portion of the Industrial Park is full. However, Otter Tail power has recently deeded to the city 40 acres adjacent to the current Industrial Park. The city has recently platted the area. The next step will be to extend city water and sewer to the expansion. The expansion, after right-of-way considerations, will provide 33 additional acres for future industrial development.

Uses that appear to be increasing in the community include storage, warehousing, and distribution and transportation.

Some have argued that current industrial land use liabilities include poor property maintenance in and the overall appearance of the Morris Industrial Park. According to these critics, the conditions hinder marketing the area to potential manufacturing or business prospects.

5. Agricultural Land Use

Stevens County adopted a Farmland Preservation Plan in 1988. The County consults this plan for exurban development proposals. The County zoning ordinance does not permit platting in the Agricultural District unless the proposed location is not on productive farmland.

6. Environmental Issues

Among the most critical features in need of protection and/or proper management are the following.

- . Lakes
- . Trees
- . Groundwater
- . Wetlands
- . Natural Habitats
- . Soils, Slopes, and Drainageways

C. Policies

1. Growth Management and Community Development should:
 - a. be consistent with Land Use Plan Maps
 - b. prevent premature demands on city utilities and services
 - c. implement street extensions and alignments that contribute to efficiency, safety, and accessibility throughout different areas of the community
 - d. maintain at least a minimum standard of one acre of parkland for every 100 residents current as well as anticipated
 - e. expand the city trail system to allow connected-ness among parks and among neighborhoods and to enhance major trail connections
 - f. promote planned use of land surrounding Highway 59 Bypass

- g. reserve sufficient land to allow for needed expansions for community facilities such as hospital clinics, schools, etc.
- h. allow mixed uses that are well-matched in terms of intensity of uses, size of uses, interrelationship of uses, and balance of uses.
- i. consider cluster development and other nontraditional development strategies such as Planned Unit Development.

2. Residential Land Use should

- a. emphasize flexibility in density levels, yet without abrupt changes between low and high density
- b. enhance residential neighborhood quality by ensuring that elements such as sidewalks, parks, trails, trees, and open spaces are incorporated at the front end in new residential subdivisions
- c. protect and promote preservation and redevelopment of existing neighborhoods and community resources.

3. Commercial Land Use

Limit commercial expansions to existing commercial areas, while still allowing small scale Neighborhood Commercial areas to serve the needs of special areas. Focus commercial development primarily in the North Street area.

4. Industrial Land Use

Promote industrial development primarily in the Morris Industrial Park.
Concentrate on light industrial

5. Environmental Resources/Quality

Protect, maintain, and enhance the area's natural resources and environmental quality; Identify and control future growth and development so as to protect the natural resources and enhance the environmental features of the community.

D. Goals

1. Growth Management and Community Development

- a. Focus new housing development in existing housing developments as well as new areas according to the following order of priority.

- 1) Existing plats
- 2) Incorporated, unplatted areas designated for residential development
- 3) Land abutting city borders and easily accessible by city utilities and services that will provide for the type of housing or natural amenities currently not available in the city limits within a specific housing demand.

b. Develop an orderly annexation plan that includes annexation policy and annexation priorities. Annexation policy should include a policy on jurisdiction and/or maintenance responsibility for roads at the perimeter of newly annexed areas. Priorities of areas to be annexed should give first priority to undeveloped land abutting the city that is planned and needed for future residential or industrial expansion. Second priority should be given to already developed lands abutting the city primarily to the east.

c. Create new parks that will provide one acre of parkland for every 100 residents, current as well as anticipated

d. Expand the city trail system to allow connect-ness among parks and among neighborhoods and to enhance major trail connections.

2. Residential Land Use

a. Review at least every two years, the city land use map, zoning map, and zoning ordinances to ensure consistency of plans and land use controls with current and anticipated community needs. When necessary, initiate amendments to these documents.

b. Ensure that the zoning map and zoning ordinances provide for flexibility in density levels within residential districts--including at least one residential district that can provide for a compatible mix of low, moderate, and high density development--while avoiding abrupt changes between low and high density.

3. Commercial Land Use

Focus commercial expansion in areas already zoned for commercial development.

4. Industrial Land Use

Plan and implement a program for enhancing the physical appearance of the Morris Industrial Park, improving such elements as the screening of outdoor storage and the landscaping treatments. Use gravel rather than dirt as the minimum quality of surface for drives and parking areas (paved drives and parking areas preferred).

5. Environmental Resources /Quality

a. Review city regulations and practice, at least every two years, to ensure consistency with State and federal regulations regarding natural resources protection and environmental quality. Amend

regulations and practices as necessary.

Other Goals and Policies Forwarded by Focus Groups and/or Mark Olson:

Land Use Goal #1

1. Support the compact and orderly growth of all urban development including residential, commercial, and industrial areas.

Policies

General

- A. Facilitate orderly and compact growth within the City and limit urban development outside of the City.
- B. Ensure that new developments are well planned and connected to existing development through the efficient use of streets, utilities, and infrastructure.
- C. Negotiate with major institutional landholders about possible land swaps.
- D. Work to incorporate all existing and planned urban development in the adjacent Townships within the City limits.
- E. Identify and preserve viable and prime agricultural areas.

Commercial

- F. Encourage the location of commercial and industrial development in areas that avoid adverse impacts on residential areas.
- G. Protect residential neighborhoods adjacent to the commercial areas.

Residential

- H. Continue to guide residential growth in an orderly and compact manner so that 1) new development can be effectively served by public facilities and, 2) the character and quality of the City's existing neighborhoods can be maintained and enhanced.
- I. Encourage development of multiple housing units in appropriate areas.

Industrial

- J. Actively pursue the expansion of the Industrial Park to meet future industrial needs.

- K. Develop rational land use policies for industrial development of the N HWY 59 So. bypass, Hwy 28 E and MN TH-9 So. areas.

Land Use Goal #2

- 2. Strengthen coordination of urban and rural land use services between the City and County.

Policies

- A. Explore collaboration with the County and appropriate regional entities to implement Geographic Information Systems to monitor land use.
- B. Develop working relations with appropriate environmental agencies and organizations to prevent groundwater contamination, promote healthy water supplies and protect the city's aquifers.

Land Use Goal #3

- 3. Maintain adequate active and passive open space to meet community needs.

Policies

- A. Require adequate transitions between different land uses.
- B. Annex municipal conservancy areas and place them under City jurisdiction and ordinances for environmental considerations.
- C. Ensure that there are adequate neighborhood park facilities and open spaces to meet the needs of the residential neighborhoods.

Land Use Goal #4

- 4. Enhance the community character and identity.

Policies

- A. Redevelop the city's core with an appropriate mix of housing and commercial buildings that is compatible with its future as a service center economy and with aesthetic, architectural, and historical preservation norms.
- B. Develop and enforce architectural and site planning standards.
- C. Monitor and control development of manufactured housing parks.

- D. Clean up and develop MN TH-28 East, US TH-59 South, MN TH -9 South entrances as "front doors" to Morris.

- E. Clean up and develop MN TH-28 West, US TH-59 North, MN TH 9 North entrances as "side doors" to Morris.

In addition to the above stated goals and policies, the city has contracted with Widseth, Smith, and Nolting (WSN) to provide Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data. The base city map should be completed within a month or so. Additional utility maps will be added thereafter. Once that data is made available from WSN, it might be wise to contact Quinto Lotti at Alexandria Technical College. Lotti directs the GIS program at Alex Tech, and he has numerous students who may be interested in working with the data. In addition, the city might also consider working with an intern from the Humphrey Institute. The Humphrey Institute offers programs in land use planning as well as the use of GIS data. Most communities now structure their land use plans around GIS mapping. The technique is very effective in that it allows you to overlay a series of maps to determine ideal land uses. Ideally, the city should consider training and providing city employees with computing resources to update the maps themselves. A standard PC equipped with a CADD drawing program could be used to update the city maps. Major changes to the maps could still be contracted out to WSN.

Issue Area #2: Community Facilities, Services, and Utilities

The buildings owned and maintained by the City of Morris and the other public buildings owned by the County, School District, and others vary in age, condition, and function. This section provides an inventory of various public buildings within the city, states their condition and function and notes their deficiencies or planned upgrades. The listing of community facilities is broken down into five categories: Government, Medical, Park and Recreation, Schools, Sanitary Sewers and Storm Sewers. City staff and others supplied this information.

1. GOVERNMENT

Carnegie Building

Location: 116 West 6th Street

Condition: Built in 1905 with grant monies from Andrew Carnegie, the building served as the city library until the new library was constructed in 1968. The building is owned by the City of Morris and is leased to the Stevens County Historical Society. The lease agreement stipulated that the city will maintain the building, keeping it in a "state of good repair," as well as the grounds and the sidewalks, including the "mowing of grass, trimming of hedges and trees and snow removal." The City also provides sewer, water and garbage pick up for the location. The facility currently does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Function: The Carnegie Building functions as the home of the Stevens County Historical Society (SCHS). The contents of the building are the property of SCHS. SCHS has received national recognition for its efforts in providing the population of Stevens County with an outstanding museum and research center. In July 1996, SCHS and the Stevens County Arts Council formed a partnership to help support each other's efforts. SCHS will serve as the fiscal agent for the Arts Council.

City Hall

Location: 609 Oregon Avenue

Condition: The building was purchased from Minnegasco in 1976. The building is in fair condition. The building is handicapped accessible, but improvements are needed to satisfy all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Additional storage is also needed.

Function: City Manager's office is located in City Hall along with City Building Inspector, City Engineer and Transit office. There is one small meeting room in addition to offices.

City Garage and Shop

Location: Highway 59 South

Condition: The maintenance shop, a heated facility, was built in 1969 and is in fair condition. A larger building is needed to replace the salt and sand storage building, constructed in 1977, which is in poor condition. Another storage building built in 1994 is shared with the Police.

Function: Staff include a Public Works Director, five street maintenance employees, 1993 Loader, 1974 motor grader, 1975 motor grader, 1964 snow blower, 1978 snow go blower, 3 snow plow trucks, 5 gravel trucks, 1975 back hoe, and various equipment.

County Courthouse

Location: 400 Colorado Avenue

Condition: Built in 1957, this brick building is good condition. Improvements were made in summer 1996. Building is handicapped accessible; improvements were made to satisfy ADA requirements.

Function: The courthouse provides offices for the County Auditor, Chemical Dependency Program, County Coordinator, Housing Redevelopment Authority, Law Enforcement, Social Services, Veteran's Office and other county offices.

Fire Hall

Location: South Highway 9

Condition: Built in 1981, the Fire Hall is in excellent condition. The exterior was painted in 1994. Two new insulated garage doors were installed in 1994. Four new doors were to be installed in 1997, and a new roof is scheduled for 1998. Estimated cost is \$15,000. The building houses the department's vehicles, a decontamination shower, chief's office, equipment storage, shower stalls, and a kitchen training room. It is open for public meetings and can accommodate up to 50 people. The building is fully accessible and satisfies ADA requirements.

Function: The Department provides fire and rescue protection services for the City of Morris and parts of 6 adjacent townships. The Department has an ISO fire rating of 6 and 31 firefighters, who are all part time. Equipment includes a 1995 ladder truck, 1994 75' ladder/pumper, 1991 equipment and personnel carrier, 1985 tanker/pumper, 1975 1 ton 4 X 4 rescue, grass rig, 1975 750 gal. pumper, 1971 750 gal. pumper. All trucks are in excellent condition. Next replacement is in 2001 at an estimated cost of \$250,000.00.

Morris Senior Nutrition Center

Location: 603 Oregon Avenue

Condition: Built in 1988, the brick building is in excellent condition except for a leak in the roof. The interior was painted in 1994-95. Some carpet may need to be replaced in two years. Building is handicapped accessible and satisfies American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. However, another railing could be added in the women's washroom.

Function: The Center is used for the Senior Nutrition program and has a fully approved kitchen with dining room for 96 people and a card area with kitchenette. It offers social and recreational opportunities for the community's elderly. Community social functions, community sales, and meetings are also held in the facility. The center houses the City's Council Chambers.

Municipal Liquor Store

Location: 14 East 5th Street

Condition: Built in 1998, the brick building is in new condition. The building fully complies with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Function: The Municipal Liquor store sells liquors, wines and beers to public 21 years of age and older. There are two full-time and four part-time staff.

Police Department

Location: Sheriff's Office, Stevens County Courthouse, 400 Colorado Avenue

Condition: The police office is housed in the County Courthouse. (Refer to the above description of the County Courthouse for building description.) The police car storage garage, built in 1978, is in fair condition.

Function: The Morris Police Department has nine police officers and support personnel. The department owns four radio equipped patrol cars.

Post Office

Location: 105 East 6th Street

Condition: This brick structure was built in 1938 and is in excellent condition. The old wooden loading dock was demolished and the existing dock completed in 1990. Building is not currently

handicapped accessible. Renovation will be undertaken to satisfy American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. An expansion of parking capacity was completed in 1998.

Function: The Post Office serves 2059 delivery points in the City of Morris and 768 in the surrounding rural area. It is also a source of forms and applications for Veterans, funeral flags, Social Security, Selective Service registration and income tax. In addition to stamps, packaging products, postal money orders and other postal services, the Post Office sells Federal Migratory Bird Stamps. FBI wanted posters are displayed in the lobby.

Public Library

Location: 102 East 6th Street

Condition: This structure was built in 1968 and has not been remodeled since. The roof has a structural problem that results in a leak during heavy precipitation. A referendum was passed in November 1998 to provide money for both interior and exterior renovations. The planned renovations will provide for more public seating, more room for non-print materials, and allow staff to install better lighting as well as remodel a conference room. The improvements will also make the library comply with American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Function: The library has a collection of 40,000 items has two computers and is converting its operation to an automated system. The library is part of the Viking Regional Library System and has access to holdings of over 330,000 items in 11 libraries in 6 Counties. There is a community room available in the library building. Attached is a garage which is used for storing a Morris Taxi.

Sewage Treatment Plant

Location: southeastern portion of the city

Condition: The existing sewage treatment plant was constructed in 1962. There are approximately 35 miles of sewer lines, (6) lift stations for transferring sewage and (5) stabilization treatment ponds located on 132 acres of land. Primary stabilization ponds 1, 2, and 3 cover 42, 20, and 20 acres respectively. Secondary stabilization ponds 4 and 5 are on 20 and 30 acres, respectively. A rehabilitation project was completed on the stabilization ponds in 1994. However, the impacts of further industrial discharges would need to be closely examined before any more industrialization is carried out.

Function: The system has capacity to serve a population of 9,000.

Water Treatment Plant and System

Location: East 2nd Street and east central part of the city.

Condition: The water treatment system was constructed in 1976. The system includes a 500,000 gallon elevated storage tank, a million gallon ground storage tank, 4 wells and a water treatment plant. A new 750,000 gallon water tower is currently planned for construction at the 'Tube Hill' location. The larger tank will eliminate the need for the ground storage tank. The water treatment plant is in good condition as it was renovated 2 years ago; this includes the replacement of (8) valves and drive units. Additional improvements, including the replacement of an antracite filter, replacement of broken nozzles, and the installation of a blower, are to be completed in 1998.

Function: The water system can pump 2 million gallons per day and 2,200 gallons per minute for fire protection purposes. There are approximately 35 miles of water system lines. The present system does not constrain the city's development in any one direction. The Department has two 1/2-ton pick-ups, one 3/4-ton utility van, one jet machine for sewer cleaning, one 1-ton small dump truck, one 2-1/2 ton dump truck, and one 1/2-ton utility van.

2. MEDICAL/SENIORS

Stevens Community Medical Center

Location: 400 East 1 Street

Condition: The current medical center was built in 1951 and is in excellent condition. It was expanded in 1977 and again in 1998. The facility satisfies ADA requirements for handicapped accessibility.

Function: It is the primary health care facility for the county and the city having consolidated the Stevens Community Hospital with the Morris Medical Center. This 54-bed facility is staffed with physicians 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Services include emergency/trauma, ambulatory services, physical therapy, a mental health center, a chemical dependency center, Ob/Gyn, surgery, among others. Medical Staff include 5 regular primary care/family practice physicians, one internal medicine specialist, a surgeon, an urgent care/emergency medicine physician, and several specialists who provide services from other facilities.

Prairie Medical Associates

Location: 202 E 7th Street

Condition: Prairie Medical Associates will be moving to 24 East 7th Street (the location formerly occupied by Willie's Super Valu) in the fall of 1999. Extensive renovation will take place at the new location.

Function: Prairie Medical Associates currently employs three medical doctors and a certified nurse practitioner. Staff specialties include family medicine, general, vascular, and thoracic surgery, cardiology, and cancer detection services. In addition, three counselors serve in the Prairie Counseling Center.

Villa of St. Francis

Location: 1001 Scotts Avenue

Condition: This building was constructed in 1963. The Northwest Wing, West Wing, and the Activity Room were added in the early '70s. Recent improvements include new tile floors (1994), computerized control of heating and cooling systems (1993), fire alarm system (1995), and new roof (1992). It satisfies ADA requirements for handicapped accessibility.

Function: It has 138 beds and 170 staff and is the only nursing home facility in Stevens County.

3. SCHOOLS

Morris Area Elementary School (MAES)

Location: 600 Columbia Avenue

Condition: Originally built in 1914 with additions in 1949, 1956, 1975 and 1995, the building is in fair to good condition. Recent improvements include a new sprinkler system and fire alarm, new communications system (phones and Internet), ramps, ADA accessible doors/bathrooms/drinking fountains, elevator, and receiving room. The front sidewalks were replaced in 1997.

Function: MAES provides education for grades K - 6 with a professional staff-student ratio of 1:13. Current enrollment capacity is 650. The school serves mainly Donnelly and Morris. There are open enrollment students from Appleton, Chokio-Alberta, Cyrus, Hancock, Herman and Hoffman. MAES also houses Adult Farm Management, Community Education, Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE) and the Midwest Special Education Cooperative.

Morris Area High School (MAHS)

Location: 201 South Columbia Avenue

Condition: Originally built in 1968 with addition of an auditorium in 1976 and renovation and addition of 13 classrooms, athletic facilities, and a media center in 1991, this building is in excellent condition. The facility complies with ADA accessibility requirements and other codes.

Function: MAHS provides education for grades 7 - 12 with a professional staff - pupil ratio of 1:14. Enrollment capacity is 750. The schools serves primarily Morris, Donnelly, and Cyrus. At risk students in the region are served by the Morris Alternative Program. The program is designed to assist young people with their needs to obtain a high school diploma.

St. Mary's Catholic School

Location: 411 Colorado Avenue

Condition: Originally built in 1914, the building is in good condition. The entire building was recently tuckpointed, and was made ADA accessible through the church building. Current improvements include extensive upgrading of the electrical and communications systems (including Internet).

Function: St. Mary's Catholic School provides education for grades K - 6 with a student-teacher ratio of 15:1. The school is designed to serve the entire region, with students coming from Morris, Chokio, Appleton, Cyrus, Donnelly, and other nearby communities. Other groups that utilize the building are the Assumption Religious Education Programs, Elementary through Adult Education, Befrienders Ministries, Social Action Committees, the Knights of Columbus, and numerous other groups.

4. PARKS AND RECREATION

Morris has eight parks that total approximately 380 acres. The following is a description of each.

Eagles Ball Park

Location: East 7th Street

Condition: This park was developed in 1979 and is in good condition. Recent improvements include a new scoreboard in Chizek Field.

Function: This 10-acre regional facility has two lighted softball fields and two baseball fields, one of which is lighted.

East Side Park

Location: East 7th Street

Condition: The park was developed in the early 1900s and is close to downtown. The park contains restrooms, warming house, and a picnic shelter, which are in fair condition. A bandshell is currently under construction.

Function: This 1/2-acre park has playground equipment, basketball courts, and lighted horseshoe pits.

Green River Park

Location: Green River Road

Condition: Park was developed in 1975 and is in good condition. Contains restrooms and a picnic shelter.

Function: This 4-acre facility has a lighted court for tennis and basketball, a soccer field, playground equipment, and a recreational softball field

Kjenstad Park

Location: North Shore of Lake Crystal on West 4th Street.

Condition: It was established in 1960 and is in fair condition.

Function: This 1/4-acre nature park has a playground.

Pomme de Terre Park

Location: Southeast of Morris on County Road 10

Condition: The State of Minnesota deeded the park to the City in 1967. The park's facilities are generally in good condition.

Function: This 360-acre regional park has campgrounds, concessions, picnic areas, earthen swimming pool and beach. Facilities includes three park shelters, playground equipment,

restrooms, showers, sand volleyball courts and open play areas.

Theдин Park

Location: Corner of Lyndale and West 6th Street

Condition: Established in 1937 as a PDT recreational reserve, it was platted in 1962 and transferred to the City in 1967 when it became a PDT City Park. Plans for developing the park include planting some trees around the perimeter, putting up a park sign, improving access, adding additional playground equipment, lights, and benches, and creating a picnic area.

Function: This 1.67-acre park has a ballfield play area. A swing set and some small bouncing animals were donated. A small off-street parking area was created at the same time.

Riverside Park

Location: Riverside Addition near Pomme de Terre Park

Condition: Established in 1995, it remains undeveloped. Trees and shrubs have been planted. Plans include acquiring playground equipment and establishing a picnic area.

Function: This .64-acre (150' by 185') neighborhood park is still in its early stages of planning and development.

Wells Park

Location: Pacific Ave and West 11th Street.

Condition: Park developed in 1916 and is in good condition. It contains restrooms, storage area, and a picnic shelter.

Function: This 2-acre park has two lighted ball diamonds for Little League, tennis and basketball courts, and playground equipment. A referendum was passed in November 1998 to provide for lighting and new seating in Wells and Eagles Park.

5. SANITARY SEWERS

Information for this section is taken from the *Comprehensive Plan for the City of Morris* (1986: 21-22).

The sanitary system currently serves much of the developed portions of the city. Some of the more

recent developments, including Riley's Addition, are not connected to the sanitary system. However, several portions of the collection system are either up to capacity or because of topography require the installation of lift stations, either of which can be very costly.

The areas listed below are on the outskirts of the city where there may be some problems in extending sanitary sewer services.

North and Northwest

The existing sewer lines, located adjacent to TH #9 in the northernmost portion of the city, are currently at capacity. The northwestern area of the city adjacent to the Westwood Acres Subdivision would require the costly installation of one or two lift stations to serve additional land.

Northeast

The general area northeast and adjacent to US# 59 and TH# 28 beyond Eagles Park would require the installation of lift stations to serve the area. The addition of the lift stations would add significant costs to the total development cost in this area.

Southwest

Some of the area between Lake Crystal and US # 59 in the southwestern part of the city is served by sanitary sewers. Additional development south of the presently served area would require the installation of a lift station, again, at relatively high cost.

In conclusion, proposed extensions of the existing sanitary sewer collection system to the north, northwest, northeast and west would require either the installation of a new sewer line or lift stations. Either alternative could add significant development costs. The eastern and southeastern parts of the city are the least expensive areas to extend sanitary sewers and services.

6. STORM SEWERS

The existing storm sewer system serves all of the developed portions of the city. The existing system basically flows into Lake Crystal and then crosses County Road 22 (in the southern portion of the city) and then east to the Pomme de Terre River. Some of the more recent improvements to the system have been along West 7th.

The current storm sewer system is at capacity, especially the major interceptor on the west side of the city. The sewers back up during heavy rainfall or snow melt because of the high water table in this area, at time of heavy rain or snowmelt. To expand the system, especially on the west side of the city, the existing storm sewer lines need to be cleaned out and another interceptor added. On the east and southeast sides, there is capacity for expansion. As with the sanitary sewer system, the best place for expansion is to the east and southeast.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND UTILITIES GOAL #1: Provide adequate park facilities, bikeways, walking trails and open spaces in the city to meet the needs of all persons.

Policies

- A. Develop sufficient programs and recreational facilities in existing parks to meet the needs of people in the community and maximize park use.
- B. Create joint recreational programs within the community.
- C. Develop programs and recreational facilities in the parks that address the needs and future possibilities of the community in the context of the Five Year Park Plan.
- D. Insure adequate funding is available for operation, maintenance, and capital improvement of all city parks and open spaces.
- E. Designate certain parks and park areas to emphasize wild life in its natural habitat.
- F. Enhance the quality of life and safety of the citizens by expanding and improving city pedestrian and bicycle pathways.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND UTILITIES GOAL #2: Maintain and upgrade a full range of public utilities to all developed portions of the city to maximize public health and safety.

Policies

- A. Develop public utility programs that provide the full range of public utilities to all urbanized parts of the City and minimize pollution problems.
- B. Encourage new developments in areas contiguous to existing ones in the City to bring about orderly expansion of public utilities.
- C. Require that a full complement of public utilities, i.e. streets, curbs, sewers systems, gas, electricity, etc., be provided to subdivisions at the time of development.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND UTILITIES GOAL #3: Provide and finance public utilities equitably and fairly so that the City's planned growth and redevelopment policies are reinforced.

Policies

- A. Maintain a public utility assessment program for newly developed areas whereby the benefited property owner pays for the utilities.
- B. Continue an equitable assessment policy in the replacing or upgrading of older utilities in redevelopment areas.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND UTILITIES GOAL #4: Support public and private programs to minimize energy consumption

Policies

- A. Continue to explore the use of alternative energy sources.
- B. Encourage utility companies to provide incentives for energy conservation.
- C. Encourage private developers to build energy efficient residential, commercial and industrial buildings.
- D. Provide for the use of new and innovative energy technology in future planning and redevelopment efforts.

Issue Area #3: Transportation

Morris has approximately 60-65 miles of roads. Of these, 26 miles are surfaced roads, the majority of which are local streets. The City's thoroughfare system consists of all of the various streets and highways within its limits that are designed to accommodate vehicular movement. The definitions included below are adopted from a draft of the *Comprehensive Plan for Alexandria*.

A typical city thoroughfare serves the needs of two types of traffic:

Thorough-Traffic. Traffic that has its origin and destination outside the community and merely travels through it, typically on Major and Minor Arterials.

Local Traffic. Traffic that has its origin and destination inside the community and utilizes the local street system.

To aid in the understanding of the City's thoroughfare system, all of the City's roadways have been classified by function and are illustrated on Figure D.1. The function and basic characteristics of each type of roadways are as follows:

Major Arterial. These roadways serve moderate to long trip lengths and provide a system to distribute traffic that is making external trips. Turning movements are often handled with channelized turn lanes or signal systems. Their very nature causes them to divide neighborhoods and to have negative effects on adjacent residential land uses. Major arterials are characterized by an emphasis on traffic mobility rather than land access and traffic counts in excess of 8,000 cars per day. Typical speeds are between 30 and 50 miles per hour. Major Arterials typically have access to Minor Arterials and Collectors. Typically there is not direct land access to these arterials with the exception of major traffic generators.

Minor Arterial. These thoroughfares either augment the arterial system in more densely or intensively developed areas requiring a closer spacing of arterials facilities or provide service in lieu of Major Arterials in less densely or intensively developed areas where trip lengths are relatively short. Minor Arterials provide a somewhat lower level of mobility than those served by Major Arterials and should not penetrate identifiable neighborhoods. They may, however, provide slightly greater direct access to abutting properties than a Major Arterial. Traffic volumes on Minor Arterials are generally in excess of 3,000 cars per day. Access to these arterials should be limited to Major and Minor Arterials and Collectors. Direct land access to Minor Arterials is typically restricted.

Collectors. These streets serve as connections between local streets and Minor Arterials. Their principal function is to carry short trip lengths and to serve adjacent land. At the same, they must be capable of moving relatively large traffic volumes for limited distances. They may also carry traffic to dispersed traffic generators.

Local Streets. Residential streets carrying less than 100 vehicles per day averaging speeds less than 20 miles per hour are the best example of residential streets. They connect blocks within neighborhoods. Typical access is to Collectors and to other local streets.

With each step upward in the street system comes an increase in the size and carrying capacity of the roadway. Larger trucks would soon tear up local streets if they were allowed to use them and conversely major thoroughfares cannot be built in front of every house. Determination of size, location, and timing of construction of roadways is what transportation planning is all about.

The relationships among streets in this system are hierarchical. Each street type has been designed specifically for a separate and distinct function. Local streets are intended to collect traffic from and distribute traffic to residential areas and other low traffic generators; local streets channel traffic to collector streets, which, in turn, channel to Minor Arterials, etc. This interconnected network of local streets, such as the one in Morris, serves an important function. This network of streets distributes traffic throughout the transportation system and allows multiple access points to the rest of the system, taking the stress off one or two hierarchical access points.

The basic principal of land use planning, tied directly to traffic, is that land uses that generate heavy traffic loads and require efficient access to function properly, such as industrial facilities, should be located near major thoroughfares. Conversely, land uses that generate very little traffic and which would be benefited by thorough traffic, such as residential neighborhoods, should be located away from the noise, pollution, and bustle of busy arterials.

Traffic Counts

**Table 4
City of Morris
1989 Average Daily Traffic**

<u>Location</u>		<u>Traffic</u>
Highway 59 S @	_____	1,050
Highway 9 S @	_____	3,600
Highway 28 E @	_____	3,700

Source: MnDot Traffic Counts

Bike and Pedestrian Trails

The Morris area is served by a trail system from Green River Road to the Pomme de Terre Park. Beyond this trail, there are few designated walkways or bikeways within the City. Pedestrians may use the sidewalks to get from one place to another. However, there is no systematic pedestrian network. The City may want to examine connecting community facilities such as parks and schools with a bike and pedestrian trail.

Railroads

The City was served by the Great Northern, later known as Burlington Northern Railroad. AmTrac passenger service was discontinued in August of 1979.

Airport

The Morris airport is located on Highway 28, three miles west of the city. The paved, lighted runway (32-14), which runs northeast to southwest, is 3400' long and 75' wide. The turf (4-22) runway, which runs northeast to southwest, is 2635' long by 150' wide. The turf runway is closed during the winter months. Other facilities include the Arrival-Departure building with a pilot's lounge, two heated hangars, t-hangars, AWOS Weather Observation system. The Airport has a VOR/DME navigational aid system. Runway 32-14 is lighted. Services include aircraft refueling, tie-downs, pre-heating, plug-ins, some maintenance, aerial application, and flight instruction. The Arrival-Departure building and the first heated hangar were constructed in 1990. The second heated hangar was completed in 1998 and is 80'x80'. It features a 60' door and infrared heating. Strong arguments can be made for an expansion of the existing runway to at least 4000'. The length can be quite easily added, and moneys are available from external sources to help complete the project. Numerous businesses have indicated that they would be likely to fly larger planes into the airport if the runway were to be expanded. The City is responsible for the operation, financing, and upkeep of the facility and pays the required costs that are not paid for by rentals and federal contributions.

Transportation Improvements

There are several highway and street improvements that are planned from Morris Area. The Highway 59 Bypass was completed in 1997. Other programmed improvements from Capital Improvements Program currently under construction under the State Aid Project include East 6th, West 7th and Lyndale. Forums or studies might be needed to anticipate and resolve traffic-related problems on Atlantic Avenue and land use issues for land surrounding the Highway 59 Bypass. Current projects in planning include the extension of the Industrial Boulevard to the Highway 59 Bypass, reconstruction of Oregon Avenue from East 7th Street to East 10th Street. A larger transportation plan for Morris will be undertaken this winter.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL #1: Provide an adequate and safe pedestrian, rail, truck, and air transportation system designed to support the overall physical, social, and economic goals of the community.

Policies

- A. Enhance the aesthetic character of major roadways and corridors in the city by continuing to develop and implement studies, design guidelines, and zoning standards.

- B. Work with State, County, and Federal officials to improve transportation access through and within the City.
- C. Require the provision of safe and adequate access to all properties through the implementation of subdivision regulations.
- D. Promote and maintain safe and efficient pedestrian movement.
- E. Construct a bypass to relieve the problems that trucks have completing turns at 5th Street and Atlantic Avenue. Make an extension of the TH 59 bypass linking connection to the TH 28 west of the city. Encourage construction of a truck stop with accommodations for lodging, food, and fuel.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL #2: Maintain safe and efficient local street system movement of people and goods.

Policies

- A. Carefully analyze the traffic generation characteristics of proposed land uses and adopt street standards to avoid exceeding the carrying capacity of local, country, and regional roadways.
- B. Require the design of local streets that will discourage unsafe speeds. Local streets in developing areas should connect to an appropriate local street network, reflecting the existing character and design where possible.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL #3: Encourage and support the use of bicycle and pedestrian trails to move people within the City.

Policies

- A. Establish a well-lighted walkway between the University of Minnesota campus and the business district to encourage students to use the business district.
- B. Cooperate with the County and neighboring cities and townships in designing and implementing a regional bikeway system.
- C. Integrate bike safety standards into planned transportation improvements.
- D. Encourage bike parking facilities in high density development areas.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL #4: Encourage and support the use of mass transit, where appropriate, to provide transportation access to those who may not own an automobile.

Policies

- A. Increase central business district links for UMM students by providing transit services at no charge to students who shop downtown.
- B. Add transit service for all business and shopping trips.
- C. Publicize various transit services on the local access channel.
- D. Encourage Rainbow and Twin City services to tie schedules for connecting, to extend rider services to counties to the south. Increase the number of destinations. Survey customers about needs.

Issue Area #4: Population and Housing

Population

"Stevens County's population peaked in 1980 and in the last decade has declined 6%. Similar to statewide trends, Stevens County's population has also migrated from rural to urban sectors or to cities of 2,500 or more...The farm population declined by 72% from 1940 to 1990. The student population at the University of Minnesota-Morris has had a significant impact (especially in housing and poverty figures.) Stevens is still primarily a white culture (97.5%)". (Scharf et. al. 1993: 2-3). Ethnically, persons of German (55%) and Norwegian (23%) descent are the dominant groups. People of Asian descent are 1.12% of the population, and other racial minorities make up 1.41%.

Beyond ethnic and racial composition, the character of the community has been determined by its function as a government and service center. In the county, government (26%) and services (20%) comprise nearly half of the sources of employment. The University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM) exerts a significant influence on the community with 2,000 students in addition to approximately 400 faculty and other personnel employed at UMM.

The county is predominately urban (53%). Rural population (47%) can be broken down into Rural Non-Farm (31%) and Rural Farm(16%). Urban is defined as a city of population of 2,500 or more. Projections to 2010 show gradual decline for the county's population (Scharf et.al, 1993:2-3).

The county's population has declined 4% since 1940 and 6% since 1980. This decline has prompted concern about revenue from the tax base, the economy's well-being, employment opportunities, and labor force supply. Changes in age distribution of the residents also raise issues about housing, education, and service needs (Scharf et. al 1993:4).

In contrast, the population of Morris increased by 4.6% from 1980 - 1990. As suggested above, this modest growth is attributable to the presence of UMM, the city's role as a governmental and service center, and in recent years, the growth of local industry.

Table 5
Morris Area Population
City 1980 - 1990

<u>City</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Morris	5,367	5,613	+04.6%
Hancock	887	723	-18.5%
Chokio	559	521	-06.8%
Donnelly	317	221	-30.3%
Alberta	145	136	-06.2%
Stevens County	11,322	10,634	-06.0%

The number of persons in the county aged 65 years and over has increased from 10% of the county's population in 1960 to 16% in 1990. An additional 4.5% of the population is aged 60-64. During this time, the 15 - 24 age group went from 11% in 1960, 30% in 1970 to 33% in 1980. In 1990, this group was 24.5% of the population. Projections for 2000, 2010 and 2020 put percentages at 27.9%, 29% and 26.% respectively for the 15 - 24 age group.

Table 6 shows Morris population breakdown by age cohorts for the years 1980 and 1990. In ten years, the most dramatic changes occurred in the 30 - 39 cohort, which increased by 30%, and the 50 - 59 cohort, which decreased by 24%. Persons over the age of 60 went from 20.4% in 1980 to being 19.7% of the city's population in 1990.

The UMM population skews the median age for the city and the county. The median age in Morris is 23.6, but in the county it is 30.5. The state average is 32.5. The increase in the 30 - 39 and 40 - 49 age cohorts suggests that the "baby boomers" are transitioning. They are 17 % of the community and those 50 - 69 are 13% of the community. The largest segment remains the 20-29 cohort at 26% of the total population for Morris.

Table 6
Morris Population Breakdown
1980 - 1990

<u>Age Cohort</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>% Share 1980 Pop.</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>% Share 1990 Pop.</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
00-09	581	11%	608	11%	5%
10-19	1097	20%	1136	20%	4%
20-29	1354	25%	1453	26%	7%
30-39	478	9%	621	11%	30%
40-49	335	6%	359	6%	7%
50-59	427	8%	325	6%	-24%
60-69	454	8%	398	7%	-12%
70+	<u>641</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>713</u>	<u>13%</u>	<u>11%</u>
Total	5367	100%	5,613	100%	5%

Morris contains 45% of the county's population under the age of 18 and nearly 54% of its population over 65 years of age. Yet, Hancock and Chokio, for example, are "older" communities with their median ages being 39.2 and 42.2 years of age, respectively. As mentioned, the University influences the age distribution of Morris and Stevens County, accounting for 40.4% of the city's population and 21.3% of the county's when both students and employees are included.

Table 7 projects UMM student enrollment at 2000 by the year 2000. UMM officials estimate an additional ten students, yearly.

Table 7
UMM Student Enrollment
1960 - 2000

Year	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Student Enrollment	238	984	1,593	1,900	2,000

Source: Chancellor's Office, UMM

Table 8 shows that Morris is expected to increase its population by 137 between 1990 and 2000 for a population base of 5,750 persons. By 2010, the population is forecast to increase to 5,900 persons (an increase of 150 persons over 2,000) (Maxfield, 1993:9).

Table 8
City of Morris
Population Projections

<u>Year</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
5,613	5,750	5,900

Sources: Bureau of Census, U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1990
Woods and Poole: State Profile, 1990.

The government, public, and service sectors' dominance in Morris employment can be seen in Table 9 in this partial listing of employees by category. When financial, insurance and real estate, personal services, and business and repair services are combined, employees number 233. Even when taken together, manufacturing of durable and non-durable goods still only number 84. Taken alone, without regard to the categories below, UMM as an institution accounts for some 314.5 full-equivalent employees.

Table 9
Employment in Morris
by Industry

Retail Trade	450	
Other Professional and related	253	
Health services	171	
Wholesale Trade	127	
Public Administration		118
Transportation	95	
Construction	89	
Financial, Insurance, and Real estate		84
Personal Services	76	
Business and Repair Services	73	

The general preponderance of retail and service trade and the presence of minimally employed university students tend to depress income levels in the area. The general median income for a household in Morris in 1990 was \$18,176. As Table 10 indicates, 61.7% of the households have incomes of under \$25,000.

Table 10
Morris Household Income in 1989
(n = 1,974)

Less than	\$5,000	200
\$5,000 to	\$9,999	345
\$10,000 to	\$14,999	288
\$15,000 to	\$24,999	386
\$25,000 to	\$34,999	216
\$35,000 to	\$49,999	323
\$50,000 to	\$74,999	178
\$75,000 to	\$99,999	21
\$100,000 to	\$149,000	14
\$150,000 or	more	3

Nearly 1/4 of the residents (n = 1,365) and 12% (n = 122) of the families in Morris live below the poverty level. Approximately 44% or 53 female householder families (n=121) are below the poverty line. There were 87 households receiving Public Assistance mean incomes amounting to \$4,433 in 1989. Table 11 lists income by origin, the percentage of households and the mean income for 1,974 households.

Table 11
Income by Origins
For Morris Households

<u>Income Origin</u>	<u>% of Households</u>	<u>Mean Income</u>
Wage and Salary	72%	23,085
Social Security	35%	6,716
Non Farm Self-Employed	16%	12,058
Retirement Income	13%	7,807
Public Assistance	04%	4,433

Total personal income in Stevens County increased from \$160,831,000 in 1989 and then declined to \$157,818,000 in 1993. Transfer payments, mainly Social Security and retirement funds, represented 16% of personal income in 1989 and 21% in 1993. The unresolved issue, from a

planning stand point, is whether Morris will follow broader county trends in declines in population and income. Even with growth, there will be greater strains placed on resources allocation for the needs of the elderly. Affordable housing in the current context takes on heightened importance in the attraction and retention of young families along with job and quality of life considerations.

Population Trends and Conclusions

Increasingly, demographic trends need to be seen in terms of their complex interplay with social and economic forces. In Stevens County, population trends are expected to course steadily towards a decreasing birth rate, increased life expectancy, slower population growth, decreased family size and increased average age. The population of Morris is expected to grow if the local economy does well. Given projections, using current data, several issues call our attention.

Resolving Inter-generational Resource Needs. Resources will continue to be strained as officials look for ways to head off youth problems (e.g. the growth of "predator" adolescents), but also address elderly needs. The challenge will be to ensure that the needs of both groups are met. For example, a survey of Morris High School indicated that students would like to see a roller rink, arcade, billiard hall or a dance place in the community. The elderly may want more passive recreational activities in both facilities and parks. Apart from examining the repercussions of any proposal, inter-generational needs should be addressed as much as possible in parks, recreation and facilities.

Cementing City/UMM Relations. Collaboration with UMM takes on added importance for Morris with the continued demise of the family farm through consolidations. Even the gains made by local industry, though impressive, cannot take up the entire economic slack. Bridging the gap between the University of Minnesota, Morris and the broader community of Morris is seen as an important socio-economic issue to be resolved in the next ten years. Efforts that promote cooperation between the City and the University, such as the Campus Compact program at UMM, should be supported.

Growing Workforce Shortages. There are not enough young workers (18-24) to replace the older workers leaving the workforce. Greater retention of area high school, technical school and university graduates could be key for the area's future economic well being. Key issues surrounding the attraction and retention of workers that need to be addressed are job availability, wage scales, housing conditions, community amenities, and the social environment.

More Working Mothers. While the number of children under age 9 has declined by over 10% since 1960, working mothers in Stevens County now make up some 46% of the labor force as compared with 22% in 1960. This phenomenon places increased demands on the community for quality day-care, after-school programming, recreation, and community facilities.

Fewer Informal Care Providers. The informal care provider network, often female or church-related, has weakened with the entrance of more females into the workplace. Demands for formal care services will continue to increase for both ends of the age spectrum, i.e., young children and frail elderly. This accelerates the need for clarifying and implementing collaborative measures

among private and public agencies in funding and providing services. The situation is compounded by rural elderly coming into Morris to be closer to services.

Increased Demand for (Co-location of) Elderly Services. Poverty rates among the elderly, especially elderly women living alone, are generating special service needs. The growth of elderly numbers, especially frail elderly, will increase demand for long term care services, nutrition programs, elderly care facilities, transport and health care services. While small in absolute terms, the number of frail elderly of 85 years and over is expected to increase by 33%. This may necessitate the co-location of more services at various sites to increase efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

Decreased Numbers of Children. The shrinking numbers of children in Stevens County force the issue of school consolidation to be addressed. In 1990, the number of children under age 18 had decreased by over 200 children to 1,719, a decrease of 13.4 percent from 1980. Consolidation prospects have important implications for cooperation between school districts, the allocation of education resources, school building capacity, recreational needs, community identity, and the adaptive re-use of vacated school buildings.

Coping With Cultural and Racial Diversity. The presence of the University of Minnesota, Morris, growing labor shortages, the proximity of communities using migrant workers and future demographic trends point to the likelihood of increased cultural and racial diversity.

Housing

Morris has approximately 50% of the housing stock of Stevens County. The housing stock compared to the rest of Stevens County is younger. It has 52% of the homes built after 1970, and 36% of those built before 1940. Within the city, the largest share of homes, 44%, were built between 1960 and 1979. One fourth of the housing stock in Morris was built before 1940.

Table 12
Age of Housing Stock

<u>Year Structure Built</u>	<u>Morris Stevens Co.</u>	
1989 to March 1990	30	48
1985 to 1988	75	110
1980 to 1984	96	191
1970 to 1979	450	881
1960 to 1969	457	672
1950 to 1959	223	384
1940 to 1949	216	374
1939 or earlier	<u>519</u>	<u>1448</u>
Total	2066	4108

Household growth is expected to outpace population growth because of demographic and social trends including more divorces, smaller family sizes (fewer children per family), and seniors living

longer. These trends are expected to continue over the next twenty years. The greater increase during the early part of the next century will be the result of the household formations of the baby boomlet (children of the baby boom generation), persons born after 1976 (Maxfield, 1993: 11).

Table 13 suggests that housing starts in recent years are directed at the upper end of the housing market. However, affordable housing for lower income young families has recently begun to be addressed in 1995 and 1996.

**Table 13
Number of Housing Starts**

	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>
Single Family							
No. Housing Starts	2	8	8	10	12	5	16
Avg.	\$50,905	\$66,153	\$81,195	\$82,556	\$96,250	\$96,200	\$92,817

Another indicator of housing activity is the number of building permits in a given year. Table 14 shows the number of residential building permits has increased by 35%. The number of permits is up by 31% from 1990.

**Table 14
City of Morris
Building Permits**

	<u># Total Permits*</u>	<u>Commercial</u>	<u>Residential</u>	<u>Industrial</u>
1990	129	20	101	6
1991	141	19	109	7
1992	151	23	119	5
1993	182	20	150	6
1994	169	22	136	8
1995	173	31	134	5
1996	138	12	117	4
Average	155	17	124	5.9

* includes demolition, footing, and void permits

Table 15 indicates that there has been more activity in creating housing with 10 or more units. Mobile homes and other housing have also increased. The increases up to 1990 suggest that housing needs have been mainly addressed by increasing the number of rental units.

Table 15
City of Morris
Housing Type (Total Units)

<u>Structure Type</u>	<u>1980 Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>1990 Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Single family	1374	67%	1286	62.2%
2-9 units	385	19%	239	11.6%
10 units +	234	12%	447	21.6%
Mobile Home/Other	<u>48</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>04.6%</u>
	2041	100%	2066	100.0%

Table 16 looks at persons per household in Morris for the years 1985 and 1994. Population increases (3.7%) nearly equal household increases (3.1%). In other outstate communities and in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, households have typically increased at a faster rate than the population. The nearly equal growth rates point to a substantial increase in the student population, approximately half of whom are housed in group quarters (Maxwell, 1993:1).

Table 16
City of Morris
Persons per Household

<u>Year</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Persons per Household</u>
1985	1,954	5,443	2.79
1994	2,014	5,647	2.80

Source: State Demographer's Office

Table 17 shows Morris' housing occupancy characteristics. This table shows that there were in 1990 nearly as many renter-occupied units as owner-occupied units. During this same time, the number of year round vacant houses dropped by 57%. The tightening of the housing supply becomes even more dramatic considering that in 1970 the year round vacancy rate was 9.6%. By 1990, the rental vacancy rate was at less than 3% and the percentage of owner-occupied housing was 55%. It is expected that rental units will continue to outpace homes in growth.

Table 17
City of Morris
Housing Occupancy

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Owner	998	1092	+ 9.4%
Vacant	167	71	- 57.0%
Renter	<u>566</u>	<u>903</u>	+ 60.6%
	1731	2066	

Median value for owner-occupied housing in 1980 was \$36,400. In 1990 it was \$41,500.

Table 18
City of Morris
Housing Values*

<u>Value</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>%</u>
Less than 50,000	745	74.6	635	64.6
50,000 - 99,999	245	24.5	331	33.7
100,000 - 149,999	7	.7	14	01.4
150,000	<u>1</u>	<u>.1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>00.3</u>
	998	100.	983	100.0

* for owner occupied

Table 19
Morris Area Housing Values

<u>City</u>	<u>1980</u> <u>Median Value</u>	<u>1990</u> <u>Median Value</u>	<u>Percent</u> <u>Change</u>
Morris	36,400	41,500	+14.0%
Hancock	23,900	22,100	- 8.5%
Chokio	23,100	27,800	+20.3%
Donnelly	17,800	19,800	+11.2%
Alberta	23,100	23,800	+ .03%

It is projected that Morris will increase its household base by 85 households during the 1990s from 1,995 households in 1990 to 2,080 in 2000, an increase of 4.3 percent. It is projected that approximately 50 of these will be renter households. By 2,010, Morris is forecast to have 2,150

households, a further increase of 70 households or 3.4 percent. Morris Township is also expected to experience household increase adding 26 households during the 1990s and 30 households during the following decade (Maxfield, 1993:9).

Table 20
City of Morris
Household Projections

<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
1,995	2,080	2,150

Sources: Bureau of Census, U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1990
Woods and Poole: State Profile, 1990.

Housing Trends and Conclusions

Housing Densities and Mix. An estimated 640 acres are zoned for single family housing. This is 68% of the acreage for areas zoned residential (R) and residential mixed (RM). On the average, there are an estimated 3+ units per acre. No ranges for density (units/acre) could be calculated. The City's housing mix has remained relatively stable, but home ownership increased only 9% while rentals have increased by 64% since 1980.

Rental and Overall Vacancy Rates. The City had a rental unit vacancy rate of 3% and an overall rate of 2% or less, indicating limited availability of housing in the city. The availability of land for the development of new housing needs to be formally addressed.

Quality of Housing Stock. Housing quality varies. A number of smaller, substandard houses used frequently as college rentals lie in the northeastern quadrant of Morris. Other substandard units can be found mainly in the older "core" of the city. The number of housing units that are considered substandard needs to be quantified. A significant percentage of the housing stock (64.6%) is valued under \$50,000. Nearly half of the housing stock (47%) was built between 1950 and 1969. Only 18.9% of the houses have been built since 1970.

Housing Needs. From 1990 to 1994 there have been 40 housing starts. In the last 5 years, the value of housing has more than doubled from \$50,905 to \$115,042. Housing was 30% of income and is now 35% of income. If there are constituencies whose housing needs are not being met, they continue to be younger families who are starting out in housing purchases.

Rental and Subsidized Housing. Stevens and Traverse Counties have a combined 102 existing Section 8 subsidized housing certificates that may be used at select living complexes in those counties. In addition, Grandview Apartments offers senior and disabled persons first access to 60 subsidized units. In general, rental housing is often geared to the University of Minnesota student population with a predominance of one and two bedroom units. The demand for smaller one story, low maintenance units and transitional housing will continue as "empty nesters" leave larger homes. Given the limited choices in rental conditions, rental code enforcement must be strengthened to

maintain a safe rental environment.

HOUSING GOAL #1: Provide a full range of housing opportunities that meet the needs of all income and age groups and establish a set of development criteria to ensure developments are "good" developments.

Policies

- A. Evaluation of housing development proposals should include the following:
 - 1. natural features and the development's potential impacts upon these natural features
 - 2. utility availability or the possibility of extending utilities to serve the development site
 - 3. On-site systems will not be permitted in areas that are served by municipal sewer and water.
 - 4. In areas not served by municipal sewer and water, on-site systems will be encouraged to be located on the lot in such a way that they will not hamper the location of public utilities later.
 - 5. An orderly growth pattern for residential development will be encouraged; scattered development will be discouraged.
 - 6. In areas for which a development is proposed, the developer will bear the cost of extending available utilities and making all road improvements that serve the development.
 - 7. Increased densities will be allowed in residential districts through use of the Planned Unit Development performance standards. In addition, open space must be protected from future development as payment for the increased densities.

- B. Coordinate growth outside the city with Stevens County to ensure future compatibility.

- C. The City of Morris should consider the need for a performance standard in development requirements regarding prairie land, wooded land, wetlands, river land or other significant environmental areas.

HOUSING GOAL #2: Create a high quality of living environment for the citizens of the community in all residential neighborhoods.

Policies

- A. Adopt and enforce the necessary codes and inspection procedures to ensure the continued maintenance of the housing stock.

- B. Secure funding from state and federal sources for the renovation of both existing owner-occupied housing as well as existing rental housing.
- C. Develop small neighborhood parks to provide a safe environment for young families.
- D. Work with the school district to continue the use of school properties in providing neighborhood park and recreational services in appropriate locations
- E. Address rental issues with senior housing and university students, encouraging affordable housing and safety.

HOUSING GOAL #3: Encourage the development of viable senior housing to meet the needs of an aging population.

Policies

- A. Encourage the use of federal, state, local, and other financial resources that will maintain area senior housing projects as low to moderate income housing.
- B. Seek additional funding to update and modify these facilities to meet current housing standards.
- C. Encourage and promote the development of senior housing to make available viable housing for young families in the community.
- D. Support and sustain the continued operation of adequate nursing homes and medical facilities.

POPULATION GOAL #1: Establish opportunities and amenities necessary to retain and sustain a productive and skilled labor force.

Policies

- A. Develop job listing service with the help of area business for area labor force participants and students.
- B. Promote job opportunities to attract students to stay in the Morris area.
- C. Encourage business growth through assistance for labor in housing, child care and related concerns.

POPULATION GOAL #2: Steward youth and student involvement in the community.

Policies

- A. Encourage UMM and high school student involvement in planning for youth concerns and events.
- B. Develop community service components within the UMM and high school curriculum.

POPULATION GOAL #3: Structure formal and non-formal educational experiences and opportunities that reinforce the positive valuation of communities and community life.

Policies

- A. Encourage the development of student initiated clubs and activities with diverse interests.
- B. Re-establish and increase summer educational opportunities for area youth and senior citizens at UMM.
- C. Develop more local internships in for-profit and not-for-profit settings for high school and UMM students.

POPULATION GOAL #4: Create opportunities for broader communication in the community.

Policies

- A. Set up a community events calendar containing community high school and university events.
- B. Establish and strengthen collaboration between service agencies, at the city, county, and school levels.
- C. Foster communication between high school students and UMM campus with the Morris community using media such as electronic media, newspapers, radio, etc.
- D. Increase contact between high school and UMM student groups and community groups, especially the elderly.

POPULATION GOAL #5: Develop cross-cultural sensitivity by on-going education, communication and consultation between various cultural groups in the community.

Policies

- A. Consult with minorities concerning cross-cultural relations on a continuous basis using formal and informal channels.
- B. Educate the community about the changing ethnic demographics, both locally and nationally, and encourage better planning for changing demographic needs.

POPULATION GOAL #6: Anticipate and meet recreational needs of people in the community.

Policies

- A. Evaluate current recreation situation in the Morris area.
- B. Create broader public awareness of current recreational opportunities.
- C. Increase community involvement in future recreational planning.
- D. Encourage development of recreational activities for all ages.

Issue Area #5: Economic Development

Economic development, in the context of the greater Morris area, has been defined as "a systematic approach to enhance the economic vitality and viability of Stevens County." The aims of economic development are to (1) retain or create above average wage paying jobs; (2) retain or attract value added businesses; and (3) retain or attract business, education, or government resources that complement existing businesses. Economic development covers the areas of agriculture, business, commercial, education, housing, government, manufacturing, retail, service, etc. (SCEIC, 1995:1)

Traditionally, agriculture has been the major economic activity in the surrounding area, although its economic effect on the economy has lessened with the consolidation of farms. The industrialization of farming has produced the "mega family-farm" and increased contract farming, both of which have had mixed consequences for the economic health of Morris and neighboring communities. With declines in the rural economy, the city has diversified its local economy to provide a center for manufacturing, agro-industry, offices, retail jobs, and the University of Minnesota, Morris.

Underlying this goal is a basic unresolved issue: **Do we want economic growth and if so, do we assume a conscious growth philosophy?** Sustained economic growth will present attendant infrastructure costs associated with transportation, street maintenance, sanitary sewers, parks, open spaces, urban services, and other social costs.

This section briefly reviews the following benchmarks of economic development: a) economic growth and adequacy of family income, b) business creation, innovation, and retention, and c) industrial diversity. Economic Development policies from the 1986 Comprehensive Plan are examined in terms of their status in 1996. Information from focus group input, a community meeting, and a survey are used in examining the future of economic development in Morris.

Economic Growth and The Adequacy of Family Income

Economic Growth For Stevens County, the largest sources of earnings in 1993 were state and local government, which accounted for 28.7 percent of earnings, followed by services at 20.1 percent, and retail trade at 9.9 percent. In 1983, the largest sources of earnings were state and local government, with 34.3 percent of the earnings, followed by services with 17.0 percent, and retail trade with 14.1 percent.

Of the sources that accounted for at least 5 percent of earnings in 1993, the slowest growing from 1983 to 1993 was retail trade, which increased at an average annual rate of 2.9 percent; the fastest was construction (8.4 percent of earning in 1993), which increased at an average annual rate of 12.5 percent.

Table 21
Stevens County
Earnings By Principal Sources

<u>Source</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1993</u>
State and Local Government	34.3%	28.7%
Services	17.0%	20.1%
Retail Trade	14.1%	09.9%

(source: Regional Economic Information Systems, Bureau of Economic Analysis)

Employment Between November 1994 and November 1995, 478 jobs were created in the county. In 1995, over 35 jobs were created and 17 jobs retained by the Steven County Economic Improvement Commission (Morris Tribune, V. 115, No.6:1, 2/8/96).

Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI) The earnings of persons employed in Stevens County increased from \$56,642,000 in 1983 to \$108,015,000 in 1993, an average growth rate of 6.7 percent. In 1993, Stevens County had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$15,156. This PCPI ranked 60th in the State, and was at the 72nd percentile of the state average (\$20, 979) and the 73rd percentile of the national average (\$20, 800). In 1983, Stevens County's PCPI of \$8,911 ranked at the 61st percentile in the State. The average annual growth rate for the State was 5.7 percent and for the nation was 5.5 percent.

Table 22
Stevens County
Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI)

	<u>1983</u>	<u>1993</u>
Total Earnings	\$56,642,000	\$108,015,00
PCPI	\$8,911	\$15,156
State Ranking	61	72

(source: Regional Economic Information Systems, Bureau of Economic Analysis)

Total Personal Income (TPI) Total personal income includes the earning wages and salaries, other labor income, and proprietors income; dividends, interest, and rent and transfer payments received by the residents of Stevens County. In 1993, Stevens County had a total personal income (TPI) of \$157,818,000. This TPI ranks at the 70th percentile in the State and accounted for 2 percent of the state total. In 1983, Stevens County's TPI of \$97,880,000 ranked at the 71 percentile in the state. The average annual growth rate of TPI over the past 10 years was 4.9 percent. The average annual growth rate for the state was 6.6 percent and for the nation was 6.5 percent.

Table 23
Stevens County
Total Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI)

	<u>1983</u>	<u>1993</u>
Total PCPI	\$97,880,000	\$157,818,000
State Ranking	71	70
% State Total		2

(source: Regional Economic Information Systems, Bureau of Economic Analysis)

In 1993, earnings constituted 58.0 percent of TPI (compared with 49.5 percent in 1983); dividends interest and rent were 20.6 percent (compared with 31.3 percent in 1983); and transfer payments were 21.5 percent (compared with 19.1 in 1983). From 1983 to 1993, earnings increased on average 6.6 percent each year; dividends, interest, and rent increased on average, 0.6 percent; and transfer payments increased on average, 6.1 percent.

Table 24
Stevens County
Total Personal Income (TPI)
By Percentage Share

<u>Share of TPI</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1993</u>
Earnings	49.5%	58.0%
Dividends/ Interest/Rent	31.3%	20.6%
Transfer Payments	19.1%	21.5%

(source: Regional Economic Information Systems, Bureau of Economic Analysis)

Median Household Income In Morris, the median household went from \$11,799 in 1980 to \$18,176 in 1990, an increase of 54%. Table 25 shows that Morris has the lowest median household income of the cities in the county. It is likely that the presence of a university student population heavily contributed to the median household income averages.

Table 25
1990 Median Household Income

<u>City</u>	<u>1990</u>
Morris	\$18,176
Hancock	\$18,833
Chokio	\$18,409
Donnelly	\$19,926
Alberta	\$24,821

Poverty Approximately one in five people residing in Stevens County falls into the federal definition of poverty. This figure is twice the state average. The average of people living in

poverty within the city of Morris is one in four. The high rate of poverty within the city is also influenced by the concentration of students and the elderly in Morris. The median family income is \$29,345 or 20.5% below state averages. Per capita income is \$9,814 or 32% below state averages.

**Table 26
Poverty
Stevens County**

	1980	1990	1990 MN
All Persons	19.2%	20.6%	10.2%
Female headed families	69.3%	49.2%	40.0%
Children in families	18.4%	13.5%	10.8%
Persons 65+ years old	17.4%	17.4%	12.1%
Median family income	\$29,345	State of MN \$36,916	
Per capita income	\$9,814	State of MN \$14,389	

Business Creation, Innovation, and Retention

While businesses within Morris have not always been retained, there have been considerable efforts to innovate, replace or substitute mechanisms for lost services. In recent times, the Sunwood Inn was replaced by the Prairie Inn (Best Western). Papa John's Pizza was replaced by the Pizza Ranch. Holiday Store was replaced by Coburn's. In other cases, a service is absorbed by a larger organization, such as the Morris Clinic by the Stevens Community Medical Center.

Business creation has largely involved services including computer and information systems, investment services, and pizza and hamburger franchises. The result has been a rather diversified mix of commercial activity.

There are 18 manufacturing entities in Stevens County accounting for approximately 5% of the categorized entities.

**Table 27
Stevens County
Entities By Category in 1990**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Service	88	25%
Retail	75	21%
Government	44	12%
Fin/Ins/Real Estate	36	10%
Construction	35	10%
Wholesale Trade	30	8%
Manufacturing	18	5%
Transportation	16	5%
Agriculture	12	3%

Current manufacturers rely on welding skills and focus on products involving storage of products or waste as well as agriculturally related products.

Employment within the city is also diversified. Table 28 shows the number of employees among major employers in Morris in both 1985 and 1995.

Table 28
Number of Employees
in 1985 and 1995

<u>Employer</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1995</u>
U. of MN, Morris	249	315 ^a
Villa of St. Francis	195	236
Stevens Cmty. Memorial Hosp.	107	204 ^b
Morris Public Schools	160	176
Stevens County	144	155
Prairie Community Services	35	142
Riley Brothers	42	127
Kleespie Tank & Petro. Equip	21	119
Prairie Cmty. Wavered Svs.	xx	96
Willies Super Valu	30	70
W. Central Experiment Stn.	42	47
USDA No. Central Soils Lab	55	49
Met Lounge & Diamond Supper	42	45
City of Morris	53	43

^a Numbers are full-time equivalents; UMM's figure was rounded up from 314.5.

^b Includes Morris Medical Center which has approximately 60 employees

The Future of Economic Development in Morris

Although family farms in the region may be experiencing difficult times, the agro-industry is nevertheless creating new opportunities around the state. Examples include the creation of the potato processing plant in Glenwood, the vegetable processing plant in Brooten, and the turkey plants in Willmar and the surrounding areas. Agro-industry is a potential strength that merits further exploration.

Additional economic development is possible in the service industries. According to recent surveys, many Morris residents spend considerable amounts of money for typical, routine purchases outside of the city. More can also be done to capture the entertainment dollars of UMM students.

Of course, many of the largest employers in Morris continue to grow. The city should aggressively seek the expansion of such facilities within the city. To encourage future expansion in Morris, the city should continue to invest in its parks, its educational programs, and other factors that will make locating employees here more attractive.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL #1: Develop a Comprehensive Economic Plan for the Morris area that:

Policies

- A. Takes advantage of community assets
- B. Encourages public and private participation and partnerships
- C. Utilizes human resources made available through such sources as the University of Minnesota - Morris
- D. Assures the availability of land for planned expansion of business and industry.
- E. Identifies and develops infrastructure systems that support business and industrial expansion.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL #2: Support the development of small business ventures and self-employment opportunities by:

Policies

- A. Creating a business climate that encourages entrepreneurship.
- B. Encouraging expansion of existing industries and businesses.
- C. Expanding financial and business assistance resources.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL #3: Attract the skilled workers necessary to foster continued business expansion by:

Policies

- A. Developing customized training programs (through appropriate partnerships) that will assure a skilled workforce.
- B. Utilizing communication technology to market local job opportunities.

- C. Retaining youth through programs that enhance the transitions of students from regional high schools and college to jobs that exist within the region.
- D. Developing the resources necessary to address shortages in affordable housing.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL #4: Develop internal and external marketing strategies that will encourage economic development for Morris through:

Policies

- A. Development of public awareness and support for business and industrial expansion.
- B. Promotion on a regional and statewide basis a quality of life in Morris that features excellent health care, education, and recreational opportunities.

Issue Area #6: Environmental Analysis

With the exception of the EPIC cross-tabulation data, sections one through four are adapted from the *Comprehensive Plan for the City of Morris* (1986:15).

1. Rivers and Lakes

The most prominent natural feature in the city is Crystal Lake, located in the southwestern part of the city. This lake covers approximately 200 acres; a shallow part containing 75 acres is within the city. Some residential development has located adjacent to the lake in the northern and southwestern portions.

Another prominent natural feature is the Pomme de Terre River running in the north-south direction east of the city. The Pomme de Terre City Park is located around the pond formed to the southeast of the city. EPIC data identifies 154.39 acres of water within the City of Morris.

2. Topography

The topography of the majority of the city is flat except for areas south and east of the city. In the eastern portion of the city, there is a relatively steep slope from city boundaries and the college down into the Pomme de Terre River corridor.

In general, the area's topography should not restrict future development. The only areas where topography becomes a factor are east and south of the city.

3. Vegetation

There is little vegetation in or around the city. Most of the existing vegetation consists of wooded areas located adjacent to the Pomme de Terre River and along the shoreline of Crystal Lake. The city has 80 acres of deciduous forest and 101.5 acres of open shrub according to EPIC data.

4. Soils

When analyzing the potential for future development in the city, it is important to consider the characteristics inherent to the soils. Certain soils are capable of supporting development, while others are not. Interpreting each soil type enables a community to predict urban growth areas and identify the environmentally sensitive areas. Appropriate policies can be developed to restrict development in the environmentally sensitive areas or encourage growth in areas able to support it.

The U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service with the Minnesota Experiment Station issued the Stevens County Soils survey in June 1971. This survey included aerial photos of the county, maps of the different soil types and interpretations of the limitations and suitability of each kind of soil for various types of development. The following major soil complexes are found in the study area:

Forman-Aasted Association

These soils are located in the eastern and southern portion of the city and were formed in glacial clay loam. Most of these soils have high potential for cultivated crops owing to high levels of fertility, organic matter and available water.

These soils have moderate to severe limitations for urban development, primarily because of poor drainage and high water table. This is especially true for private sewer systems.

Forman-Aasted Parnell Association

These soils located in the northern and western portions of the city, also formed in glacial clay loam. These soils also have high potential for cultivated crops because of high fertility and water retention.

These soils generally have severe limitations for urban areas because of poor drainage and high water table. Soil types can be classified into three types: slight, moderate, and severe. The rating system of the soil categories are defined below:

Ratings	Definition
Slight	Slight to no limitations; limitations are easy to overcome.
Moderate	Moderate limitations that can normally be overcome with proper planning, careful design, and average management.
Severe	Limitations that are difficult to overcome. Careful planning and above average design and management are required or problems and limitations are very difficult to overcome and costs are generally prohibitive; major soil reclamation work is generally required.

Even though a certain soil may have severe limitations for a particular use, this does not necessarily mean that the soil cannot be successfully used. The limitations may be overcome through corrective measures although the costs may be high. ...[M]ost of the soils in the outlying areas have severe limitations for dwelling units with private sewer systems (septic tanks and drainfills). Thus, care must be used in locating any dwelling unit in this area.

Care must also be used in planning for future development in the outlying areas of the city, especially for dwelling units with private sewer systems. Even if public sewer systems are provided, there are significant areas of severe limitations for development. This suggests that soil borings and soil analysis should be required for any future development in these areas.

5. Wetlands

EPIC data identifies some 54.96 acres of seasonal wetlands or areas of highwater table within the

city of Morris; many wetlands are in the southern and southeastern portions of the city. These wetlands will limit the amount and density of development to the south and southwest. The following is adapted from the Alexandria Comprehensive Plan Draft.

Wetlands have generally been regarded as obstacles to development rather than opportunities. Only recently have public attitudes changed and brought the destruction of these productive areas to an end. Most wetlands are valuable for storing essential surface waters and establishing surface waters to alleviate the dangers of droughts and floods and support wildlife habitat areas. They also serve as the primary method of recharging aquifers to insure a continued supply of water to serve an area's needs. Wetlands also serve to cleanse and purify the water by removing nutrients and other contaminants in storm water runoff.

Wetland regulations are dependent on what the landowner intends to do with the wetland. Two of the regulatory bodies having jurisdiction over wetlands, the Army of Corp of Engineers and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources regulate them differently.

Army Corps of Engineers

The Army Corp of Engineers is solely concerned about one aspect of wetland alterations. They require a permit (404) if a landowner intends to discharge fill or dredge material into a wetland. In general, permit applications are denied when alternatives to the proposed project could be practicable and have less adverse impact on the aquatic environment. In addition, permit applications are denied when the proposed discharge

- 1) Violates state water quality standards
- 2) Violates toxic effluent standards
- 3) Jeopardizes the continued existence of an endangered species
- 4) Violates requirements enacted to protect federally designated marine sanctuary.

Discharges will not be allowed when there are significant adverse effects on

- 1) Human health, or welfare, including but not limited to, effects on municipal water supplies, fish, shellfish, and special aquatic sites
- 2) Life stages of aquatic life and other wildlife that are dependent on aquatic ecosystems
- 3) Aquatic ecosystem diversity, productivity, and stability
- 4) Recreational, aesthetic, and economic values.

Finally, all appropriate and practicable measures to minimize potential harm to the aquatic ecosystem should be taken.

Minnesota State DNR

All water and wetlands below the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) are considered a protected water by the DNR. Any project that alters the course, current, or cross-section of a protected water

or wetland is subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of DNR.

The DNR implements rules for the permit program. The program essentially outlines deregulated, permitted, and prohibited types of projects. The rules for the protect waters and wetland permits program are contained in Minnesota Rules Part 6115.0150 to 61115.0280.

In general, deregulated projects include activities that either have been determined to be categorically beneficial to public waters or wetlands, or have been determined to have minimal environmental impact.

Permitted activities include projects that require review and analysis including:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1) Filling | 5) Bridges and Culverts |
| 2) Excavation | 6) Stormwater outfall and water intakes |
| 3) Water level controls | 7) Mining |
| 4) Structures | 8) Drainage (docks, piers, retaining walls etc.) |

Prohibited activities are those that typically have no public beneficial impacts, including filling for development and excavating to eliminate aquatic vegetation for aesthetic desires.

The state has recently passed new wetlands protection legislation (Wetlands Conservation or WCA) and on January 1, 1992, it became illegal to fill or drain a wetland without replacing it, unless that wetland was exempt. Exempted wetlands include:

- 1) Wetlands planted with annually seeded crops or set aside to receive price support, in six of the past 10 years before January 1991.
- 2) Wetlands in the Federal Farm Program or the Federal Conservation Reserve.
- 3) Wetlands subject to U.S. Army C.O.E.'s 404 General Permit Program.
- 4) Types 1 and 2 wetlands two acres or less, located on agricultural land.
- 5) Aquaculture, forest management and wild rice production activities in a wetland.
- 6) Development projects that have received preliminary or final plat approval within five years of August 1, 1991.

In July 1993, the final rules were adopted regarding the State's wetland protection legislation. Included in those rules are a list of agricultural exemptions as well as requirements for wetland banking and mitigation.

6. Flood Plain

Floodplains also determine land use around a water body. The DNR-administered Floodplain Management Program is intended to minimize the threat to life and property resulting from flooding. This program restricts development in floodplains by preventing structures from being built at too low an elevation in areas at a high risk of flooding. It also controls encroachment so that the floodplain's capacity to hold water will not be reduced, causing flooding to properly located structures.

7. Historic Landmarks

Landmarks can be described as man-made buildings and structure that reflect the culture and significant architecture of the area and its people. Morris has lost many of its landmarks. Among those still existing are:

- Assumption Church
- Carnegie Building
- Eul's Building
- Johnson's Elevator
- Longfellow School
- Masonic Building
- Morris Elementary School (1914 section)
- Morris Theater
- (old) Music Hall, UMM
- Spooner Brick Block
- Stanton House
- Theidin Building
- Zimmerman/Smith Statue in Summit Cemetery

various private homes

Environmentally classified land can be categorized as follows:

Table 29

**City of Morris Acreage
By Environmental Classifications***

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Urban and Industrial	1248.4
Farmstead and Rural	9.8
Rural Residential	10.6
Cultivated Acres	868.8
Transitional Or Idle Cultivated	280.8
Open Shrubs	101.5
Deciduous Forest	80.1
Water	154.4
Wetlands	54.9

* Source: Cross-Tabulation Report for 1989 Land Use & Minor Civil Divisions from EPPL7 data in EPIC

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT GOAL #1: Protect and enhance the natural environment of Morris and conserve natural resources with appropriate measures that

Policies

- A. improve air quality in significant, noticeable ways for Morris residents
- B. encourage travel on foot or bicycle to downtown, schools and in the community
- C. mandate healthier alternatives to aerial spraying including larvacide and clean up of man-made mosquito breeding sites.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT GOAL #2: Reduce solid waste and promote increased recycling by

Policies

- A. converting to appropriate pricing systems for garbage pick-up and trash disposal based on volume and frequency.
- B. regulating and managing commercial trash storage more effectively.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT GOAL #3: Increase the number and aesthetic quality of green spaces and improve their value as wildlife habitat by

Policies

- A. planting windbreaks around Morris.
- B. incorporating a wider variety of tree planting species.
- C. requiring all newly platted development to include communal green spaces.
- D. introducing a wider variety of vegetation, evergreens, and berry producing shrubs in parks.
- E. planting flowers in the central business district and in parks.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT GOAL #1: Preserve and enhance the historic buildings by

Policies

- A. creating a set of guidelines for renovation and historic preservation.
- B. orienting residents in the importance of historic preservation to the town.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT GOAL #2: Encourage the adaptive use and appropriate renovation of commercial buildings in the downtown area by

Policies

- A. adapting the renovation policies for commercial use.
- B. educating property owners about the potential commercial benefits and offering incentives.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT GOAL #3: Improve the visual appearance of the main entrances to the city by

Policies

- A. hiring a consultant to identify solutions
- B. purchasing the rights of way, as needed, for implementing the goal.

Issue Area #7: Central Business District (CBD)

The Central Business District (CBD), as in other communities, continues to play an important social and economic function in the development of the community. The downtown area continues to serve the commercial center of Morris, although in recent years, some service, retail, and office activity has shifted to the commercial strip along Highway 28 East.

This section identifies the issues facing the downtown area based on data from opinion surveys of area residents, high school students, a community meeting, focus group input and City Hall staff. It contains a brief overview of the downtown mix of businesses, the condition of buildings, parking, downtown character, and design. Finally, CBD policies from the 1986 Comprehensive Plan are examined in terms of their status in 1996.

Business Mix

A glance at the US West Yellow Pages provides an approximate indicator of business mix. After removing duplicated entries, an estimated 129 businesses are located in the downtown area. Services comprise approximately 56%, Retail 19%, Professional 11%, Restaurants 9%, and Government 3%.

Parking

There are three sources for parking in the central business district. They include on-street parking, public parking and private parking. On-street parking spaces include those areas along the street where a car may be parked legally. Virtually all of the streets in the downtown provide some on-street parking. These spaces are typically used for short term (2 hours or less) parking. Public parking includes lots owned by the City for visitors and workers in the Central Business District. These lots are scattered throughout downtown and serve the bulk of longer term or all day parking needs of the downtown community. Private parking includes those lots on private property for use of employees and clientele of the business. These lots typically provide both long-term parking for employees as well as short-term parking for visitors to the business.

Table 30
Parking Stalls in Morris, 1995

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>
Public Off-Street	231
Public On-Street	301
Private Off-Street	<u>952</u>
Total	1484

One way to determine whether a downtown area has enough parking is to calculate the parking ratio per 1000 gross square feet (GSF) of space in the commercial area. In densely developed downtown areas, parking ratios can range from 1 to 3 spaces per 1000 GSF of commercial, retail, institutional

and residential space while in typical malls or highway commercial retail centers like a Pamida, the ratio is usually closer to 4 - 6 spaces per 1,000 GSF. Given the size of Morris, it is estimated that City's parking ratio is in the 3.0 - 3.5 range. There will likely be some increase in the amount of available parking with the construction of the new Willie's grocery store. The new store will accommodate 140 cars.

Character and Design

Downtown Morris was platted in the late 1800's and many of buildings were built during this period. Many of the buildings constructed are either one- or two-story brick structures. Many of the fronts of the buildings have been altered with false fronts and the originals window openings have been closed off for energy conservation.

1986 Comprehensive Plan Central Business District Policies And Their Status in 1996

Review of the 1986 Comprehensive Plan policies and their attainment suggests mixed results. The policies (in bold) from the 1986 *Comprehensive Plan for the City of Morris* (p. 28-29) are compared with the 1992 Moorhead State University/Small Business Institute (MSU/SBI) survey of Morris and data supplied by City of Morris staff.

Policy 1. Encourage programs that will promote diversified commercial developments to meet the needs of the citizens of the community and increase the retail trade areas of the city.

On numerous occasions, the city has utilized tax increment financing to diversify its economic base.

Policy 2. Encourage and strengthen the central business district as a major retail center through various public and private development programs.

A research team from MSU/SBI conducted a telephone survey of 369 respondents in Morris and its environs. The survey results (n= 367) indicates that 52% of the respondents stated that they occasionally or seldom shop in Morris. The majority (66.6%) of the respondents indicated that they spend half or less of their money in Morris. The highest percentage (26%) spend hardly any money in Morris. To encourage shopping in Morris, the most frequent responses included offer more merchandise/selection (23.3%), more stores (11%) and lower prices (9.5%). Of those items that respondents purchase, the following are most often purchased in Morris: groceries at 59%, hardware items at 55%, shoes at 41%, gifts at 40%, furniture at 32% and athletic equipment at 23%.

Figures for gross retail sales and outlays for recreation and amusement are found in Table 31.

Table 31
Gross Retail Sales And
Recreation and Amusement Outlay
From 1986 to 1994

	<u>Gross Retail</u> <u>Sales</u>	<u>Recreation</u> <u>And Amusement</u>
1986	50,885,521	173,428
1987	67,345,694	156,081
1988	71,267,141	161,579
1989	62,416,656	156,086
1990	69,198,129	219,383
1991	66,523,000	211,090
1992	58,136,000	215,044
1993	59,987,000	195,844
1994	64,009,000	203,748

Policy 3. Adopt programs to encourage commercial property and building owners to continuously maintain and upgrade their buildings and properties.

The Chamber of Commerce had a program for low interest loans for building refurbishment, but less than 5% of the potential target business population applied for and used loans from the program.

Policy 4. Upgrade public facilities in the Central Business District, including sidewalks, lighting, etc.

Beautification projects have been recently conducted along the Central Business District, including the planting of numerous trees.

Policy 5. Discourage unplanned and strip commercial development that will have an adverse effect of the central business district.

This has not been an issue. In the case of a discount store, for example, the MSU/SBI team did not believe it would be a feasible option because of the small population size of Morris. A discount store would most likely locate in a commercial strip. However 36% of the general population surveyed stated that they would shop frequently at a discount store if another were opened in Morris.

Policy 6. Provide for reasonable and safe access to and adequate parking for all retail and industrial concentrations.

A recommendation made in the 1992 SBI/MSU study was to increase parking if any other store is opened in Morris. Significant increases in available parking have been adopted with the new construction of Willie's grocery store.

The Future of Downtown Morris

Various surveys have suggested that Morris area residents would like to see a wider variety of merchandise, more stores along main street, a men's clothing store, increased parking facilities as needed, more recreational activities and the continuance of current store hours. Handicapped accessibility to community facilities and handicapped parking accommodations should figure significantly in improvements in community facilities.

The October 2, 1995 Community Meeting, as well as the community and high school surveys, reinforce findings from the previous MSU/SBI study that focus on the importance of a more user-friendly environment, increasing the variety of selection and establishing more stores, especially a men's clothing store, and more diverse offerings for restaurants and products geared at younger markets. In all surveys and the Community Meeting, recreational needs were mentioned - in a number of instances in the context of CBD.

Community pride in history and architecture, as other Minnesota cities are discovering, can also have a positive economic impact for a community. The continued removal and rehabilitation of older buildings in the absence of any enforced, aesthetic guidelines could leave the CBD lacking in a harmonious identity. Future plans for the downtown area as a service and retail center should consider the establishment of construction guidelines that address community identity, historical interest, and the creation of focal points for commercial activity.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT GOAL #1: Promote Morris by:

Policies

- A. making all entrances to Morris inviting
- B. supplying an information and resource package to support business retention and expansion efforts
- C. meeting at least semi-annually with representatives from the business community (including UMM) to address promotional and economic well-being needs
- D. continuing to develop and nurture a friendly business atmosphere within City Hall, by actively gathering and responding to consumer and visitor feedback

- E. implementing innovative business practices.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT GOAL #2: Redevelop downtown Morris by

Policies

- A. creating a friendly business environment and supporting infrastructure that encourages existing entrepreneurs and developers to expand employment opportunities.
- B. adopting programs to encourage commercial property and building owners to continuously maintain and upgrade buildings and properties.
- C. expanding public parking areas.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT GOAL #3: Utilize the human resources from the University of Minnesota-Morris to attain community development objectives.

Policies

- A. re-establishing the WCEDA or a similar organization.
- B. assisting UMM students and faculty spouses with placement in jobs commensurate with their professional experience and salary history.
- C. collaborating to meet the identified needs of UMM faculty, staff, and students.

Issue Area #8: Arts and Culture

Arts and culture bring quality of life to all community members. Among the various entities promoting arts and culture in the Morris area are:

- . City Government
- . Kickers
- . Morris Area Community Band
- . Morris Area Schools
- . Morris B Squares
- . Morris Public Library
- . Playwright Theatre Company
- . Stevens County History Museum
- . Stevens County Historical Society
- . University of Minnesota, Morris

The City has begun construction of the Eastside Park Outdoor Performing Arts Center, with funding from the Kiwanis.

Recognizing the need for greater coordination among the diverse efforts aimed at increasing the quantity and quality of artistic offerings in the city, an Arts Council is being established for networking with other arts organizations. The Arts Council intends to:

- Promote and assist the growth of both the quality and quantity of arts in the region so that all residents can have access to and enjoy a variety of arts forms as creator, participants, consumers, and audience. The economic impact of arts events can benefit the region.
- Increase access to high quality, culturally diverse arts experiences.
- Create awareness of opportunities through communication with other arts organizations, activities, and exchanges of guest speakers or performers.
- Encourage the development of rural artists.
- Make high quality art lessons available for young people in collaboration with community education.
- Increase public accessibility to locally produced arts through display and sales in businesses, including the local museum, cafes and coffee houses, banks, medical center and hospital, etc.

ARTS AND CULTURE GOAL #1: The City of Morris should "... promote and assist the growth of and quantity of arts in the region so that all people have access to and enjoy a variety of arts forms as creators, participants, consumers, and audience in order that the economic impact of arts events can benefit the region."

Policies

Where appropriate, the City of Morris shall provide:

- A. coordination to involve local government units, business, civic and commerce groups and service clubs for the arts
- B. sponsorship for local arts festivals or exhibits and sales featuring the work of local artists, outdoor arts and music programming
- C. support for community theater, community band, community choir, and community dance
- D. adequate facilities for performances and exhibits.
- E. assistance for forming a local art display gallery and museum collection
- F. increased visibility for the town's arts events through electronic and other media
- G. education opportunities with other entities.

Summary of Policy Recommendations

1. Land Use Issues

Models.

Given the importance of land use planning to Comprehensive Planning, decisions about land use should be guided by a rational goal model and informed decisions. A simulation model could be developed and circulated in the community and modified by data and input from various groups. This would aid public understanding regarding the impact of various trends on land use. More informed decisions can be made when a set of comprehensive land use ordinances are developed.

Continuous data collection should be established to take into account existing structures, residences, geological and climatic factors, green belts, general economic and social structures, recreational needs, transport networks, impacts on land fertility, regional land use, and population projections. Data collection arrangements with Campus Compact should be broadened.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) incorporates many of the above considerations for effective land use planning. By overlaying elements in a digitized CADD base map, GIS permits the monitoring of land use, infrastructure needs, park and institutional development, and social dimensions. GIS tools can indicate, for example, areas for extending sewer and water service. The Western Area City/County Cooperative (WACCO) should be supported in its efforts to organize GIS on a regional level.

Constraints.

The most significant constraint on community growth and size is the availability of land. Public institutions are major landholders; this reduces both tax base and available land within the city. Land swaps with major institutional landholders should be investigated as means to create development prospects in Morris. Some agricultural land near and in the city should be made available for development.

Another constraint is the preservation of agricultural and environmental resources. Urban development should not leapfrog into agricultural areas. Construction and pollution could place the city's aquifers at risk. The City should work with appropriate environmental agencies and private sector groups to prevent ground water contamination and establish wellhead protection through appropriate measures. Municipal Conservancy protection, wetlands preservation, ethanol plant emissions control, environmental hazard areas identification, solid waste reduction, and increased recycling were also mentioned.

Policy Proposals.

In the short term, development should focus on redeveloping the city's core, keeping in mind future trends towards a service economy as well as aesthetic architectural and historical preservation norms. Carefully delineated light commercial uses could co-exist compatibly with residential uses.

Appropriate standards and enforceable rental and housing codes should be established to reduce substandard housing. Community sites appropriate for multi-family development need to be identified. Areas available for single family housing and for multi-family housing should also be considered for medium density housing options, such as twin homes or townhouses.

In the longer term, appropriate policies that foster contiguous development and a rational annexation process should be established to manage growth and focus it in the southeastern and northeastern quadrant of the city. Lower density multi-family structures should be considered for inclusion in single family residential areas. This seems more desirable than a highly concentrated development next to single family houses. The extension and development of South Street merits exploration.

Existing and anticipated housing shortages were identified in larger rental and owner occupied housing. Rental housing; housing options for the seniors; and more single family homes in all price ranges-- especially for first-time homeowners--were identified as needs. Affordable housing projects should be promoted through community partnerships with local industry. Affordable is defined as no more than 30% of median income for mortgage or rent. It was suggested that one of the more popular price ranges for homes in the near term would be \$50,000 - \$100,000.

It was urged that the "front doors" to Morris, i.e. the southern and eastern highways, be cleaned up and receive more planning attention to present a quality community image. The remaining northern and western entrances, the "side doors", also must be cleaned up. Planting a wide variety of species of tree and other vegetation at these and other sites will aesthetically improve entrances, provide wind breaks and enhance their value for wildlife.

2. Infrastructure

Infrastructure Monitoring.

Another significant determinant of size is infrastructure capacity and the rate at which the system can be improved and expanded. This includes traffic circulation, parking, and transit needs, the age and condition of water and sewer mains, downtown building needs, and communications (fiber optics extensions etc.). The need for developing and having adequate infrastructure monitoring in place is illustrated by loss of 1.5 million gallons of water valued at \$3,000 as a result of a broken water main in December 1995.

Traffic Circulation and Parking

A number of the downtown traffic circulation and safety problems are structurally defined by a) the relatively narrow width of the main trafficked streets, b) the proximity of train tracks to the Central Business District and c) the restrictions on parking and access.

The intersection for turning onto West 5th coming from the south on Atlantic Ave. poses problems for large trucks and tractor trailers. The construction of an extension linking the T.H. 59 bypass to T.H. 28, west of city was proposed to re-route large vehicles away from main street.

A train track divides Morris into eastern and western sides. To alleviate occasional traffic tie-ups when a long train passes, an over-pass could be constructed, but no site was identified.

The use of Central Business District parking lots by downtown store managers and employees contribute to parking and access difficulties. Increased parking facilities and regulatory mechanisms should be examined to address these needs.

It was also proposed that a well lighted walkway/mall linking the UMM campus with the Central Business District be established. Similarly, new housing developments should be tied to the CBD by foot and bicycle paths.

Transit

A transportation model should be developed that incorporates economic and physical impact assessment, accessibility, traffic intensity, and environmental issues.

It was proposed that free rides through the city transit system be provided for students who shop in Morris. Additional service for the public for business and shopping should also be added.

The schedules for Rainbow and Twin City services should be coordinated to better link services. This would expand the number of destinations and possibly the ridership.

Airport transit may be needed in the future if business air traffic increases significantly.

3. Community Facilities and Resources

Community Assets/Liability Audit.

It is important to understand what a community has to work with and what elements are missing in the community vision. A list of assets and liabilities should be developed. This includes a physical inventory of community facilities, services and utilities and their condition, people, skills, history, and attitudes.

The major resource in Morris is its residents. Morris is a family-oriented community with many child-focused activities. Community members are willing to volunteer time and talents toward community improvement efforts. Residents are highly supportive of their local education system. The quality of life currently experienced is highly valued.

Another resource is the University of Minnesota, Morris, (UMM) with 40.4 % of the city's population either studying or working there. Since the fates of UMM and Morris are intertwined, the city should encourage and expand opportunities to utilize human resources available through UMM to attain community development objectives.

Facility Needs

Demography and community composition affect facility needs. Facilities are needed to address community health, schooling, childcare, recreation, job growth, and handicapped issues. Stevens Community Medical Center serves a population base of 18,000. Hospital revenues have shifted from in-patient (48% of total revenues) to out-patients and alternative revenue sources (52% of the total).

The school is land-locked and lacks the requisite 35 acres for new construction if it were necessary in the future. However, the changing functions of the school wrought by longer school operating hours, demands for after-school care, early childhood education and learning disabilities intervention or future consolidations could create a demand for a new facility.

Parks, Recreation and the Arts

Park planning priorities were identified as follows:

- Pursue planned use of parks and open spaces with policies that promote quality of life and environment.
- Improve and maintain park system.
- Enhance East Side Park as a focus to showcase various events.
- Develop pedestrian/bicycle trail especially along the river to Pomme de Terre City Park.
- Designate future park sites.

The Morris Area Arts Council organizers demonstrated that communities with strong arts and culture programs often are more viable socially, culturally, and economically. Resources for arts and culture promotion should be considered for establishing a Web Page and for sponsorship of local arts festivals, outdoor arts, and music programming.

Downtown Center

The Central Business District needs to continue to attract residents and visitors. Some strategies for doing this may include: continuation of extended store hours, more stores, wider selection of products, attention to a more harmonious environment in appearances, creating a more user-friendly environment for parking, access, maneuverability, and shopping. Handicapped accessibility to community facilities and handicapped parking accommodations should figure significantly in improvements in community facilities.

4. Economic Development

Identified **economic development priorities** are as follows:

- Retention and expansion of existing business
- Market information and education to assist retail and service business in understanding how they can be more successful in today's marketplace

- Morris Industrial Park expansion and design improvement
- Community marketing and public relations focused on a strategy and a theme
- Bolder initiatives and more partnerships by local government and local business.

Key **industrial technology trends** impacting long term community planning include:

- Maximization of cubic feet rather than square feet.
- Plant layouts geared to shorter smaller runs requiring reductions in set-up time and
- quicker changeovers.
- Strides in computer data storage and retrieval technology. Manufacturers' networks can be effective in building quality and productivity enhancements into manufacturing firms' operations in a community through non-proprietary knowledge exchange, technology transfer, expert resource sharing. Minnesota Technology Inc. should be encouraged to facilitate such a network.

Employment and training ought to address needs for:

- Continuous computer and technology training
- Training partnerships with the University of Minnesota, Morris and technical schools
- Continuous improvement and updating of techniques and technologies
- Labor force to support significant employment expansions (The Morris labor force comes mainly from Morris and a 30-mile radius around Morris.)
- Increasing numbers of both manual and higher technology workers
- Jobs to replace those lost as advancements in productivity and technology are made
- Bigger role for fiber optics, satellite and interactive television in training and corporate communications.

5. Cultural Diversity

Cultural Diversity was identified as a school, church, social and business issue. Long term viability of the industrial community in terms of available work force may be affected by how successful new people are integrated and welcomed into the community. Specific needs that should be anticipated are cross-cultural sensitization, accommodations for larger families, and the need for bilingual people in industry, the school system, and social services.

Implementation of the Plan

Detailed summaries in each of several areas are presented next.

Formal adoption of the Comprehensive Plan establishes the policy directions for the community. The plan, in turn, describes the objectives, how they are to be achieved and by whom. Because it is a "living document", the planning process needs to be on-going. The Plan must be continuously revisited and efforts made to implement and update it on a regular basis. This section outlines the steps that need to be taken to implement and maintain the plan.

For effective implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, four requirements must be met: *goal attainability, adaptability, role clarity, and suitability of organization design*. Each of these requirements is briefly discussed below.

- One means to attain goals is using regulatory measures (zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations). They should be used to enforce the Plan's policies and recommendations. Another means is through project scheduling devices (Capital Improvements Program).
- To be adaptable, the Plan must be continually monitored, reviewed, and updated, as needed, to reflect local aspirations and changing opportunities.
- Roles are clarified by sharing responsibilities, establishing expectations and setting realistic time frames. Clarification of roles is encouraged when City officials actively involve the community in planning discussions and decisions.
- Organizations must meet the mission that they are set up to do. The planning commission cannot do planning if the time allotted to planning is minimal or the tasks are overwhelming. In either case, the organization must be appropriate to the tasks given to it.

Goal Attainment

Comprehensive Plans do not imply that City Government is responsible for all goals established by the citizens of the community. However, within its sphere of activities, zoning is the primary regulatory tool used by government units to implement planning policies and for attaining goals. It consists of the official zoning map and supporting ordinance text. The official map divides the community into a series of zoning districts. The text describes the regulations for land use within these districts, (e.g. permitted uses, lot sizes, setbacks, density standards etc.). Design controls and controls on the maintenance and upkeep of property are other regulatory devices.

First, discrepancies between the current zoning map and adopted Land Use Map need to be

reconciled. If the two documents are not identical, the reasons should be clarified.

The second step is to review, update, and refine the zoning ordinances to implement and enforce the guidelines of the updated Comprehensive Plan. Through the planning process, a number of areas have been identified for potential improvements in the zoning ordinances and their application. These need to be further examined and actions taken.

Design Controls. One of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan states the City's intent to maintain and improve the community character and identity especially along Highway 28, downtown and the town center. A cursory review of the zoning ordinances identified a need for improved standards for exterior buildings materials, landscaping screening, lighting and the control of outdoor storage.

Standards related to these design elements can be made part of the zoning ordinance and incorporated in to the normal site plan review process.

The long term maintenance of community housing was also identified as an important challenge. Truth in Housing or similar housing maintenance programs could be implemented in order to maintain the quality of housing stock in the community. A revision of the job description of the building inspector to more adequately address these tasks may also be helpful.

Downtown. The City should continue to create a framework for implementing Central Business District proposals when appropriate. Proposed assistance in creating a scale model of downtown for examining re-development options should be pursued.

Residential Areas. The Plan delineates areas north and south of the City's built-up areas as appropriate for residential development. The City should be prepared to approve residential subdivisions in these areas and provide the necessary public services, if appropriate.

Subdivision Regulations

The subdivision regulations are also important in implementing the Plan. This ordinance regulates the development of land and the provision of public facilities with the community properly enforced subdivision regulations, coupled with zoning, can help ensure proper physical development and adequate public facilities with growth areas. They normally prescribe standards for street improvements, lot setbacks and layouts, water and sewer facilities, etc. Subdivision regulations can also ensure that costs of public improvements within growth areas are borne by the developer and the new residents as appropriate rather than by the established common city. Morris' subdivision regulations should be reviewed against the recommendations of the new Comprehensive Plan, and revised and modified where necessary.

Official Map

The City should work to refine the GIS map information and data to improve land use planning capabilities. New subdivisions in these areas must adhere to the illustrated street system. Changes must then be made as an amendment to this Comprehensive Plan. The City should also begin to

address land use issues created by the bypass.

Capital Improvement Program

Another tool for implementation is the Capital Improvement Program, which establishes schedules and priorities within a five year period. The City, first, prepares a list of all public improvements that will be required in the next five years, including transportation and community facilities projects. Then, all projects are reviewed; priorities are assigned; cost estimates prepared; and potential funding sources identified. The City can determine which projects should be financed through annual tax receipts, which require public borrowing, and which may be eligible for outside sources of assistance.

Morris' financial resources are limited and there will always be competition for community resources. The Capital Improvement Program allows the City to provide many critical public improvements, while staying within budget constraints. Many of the recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan can be articulated in a Capital Improvements Program. By using the CIP, recommendations can be prioritized, budgeted and programmed into the City's decision-making process. The Community Facilities Inventory section of this Plan will be helpful in determining budget projections that anticipate future infrastructure and facility costs. Capital budgeting processes can be improved with assistance from the University and other sources.

Adaptability

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document. The planning process must be continuous. The Plan should be monitored and updated when necessary. If community attitudes change or new issues arise that are beyond the scope the current Plan, the document should be reviewed and updated. From time to time, certain changes to the Plan document will be required. The Planning Commission and City Council should carefully review proposed changes and their implications and actively seek citizen comments on such proposals. If changes are found to be appropriate, they should be formally added to the Plan by legal amendments.

The entire Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed and modified at ten year intervals to ensure that it continues to be an up-to-date expression of community goals and intentions. The City should establish regular community reviews of Comprehensive Plan progress through community meetings and annual progress reports on the Comprehensive Plan.

Roles

This Comprehensive Planning effort has begun to establish a healthy dialogue among local residents concerning the future of the community. Wide publicity has been given to this Comprehensive Plan with a number of citizens involved in the planning discussions. This Plan will affect everyone in the community and everyone should have the opportunity to contribute to planning decisions. Completion and continual review of the grid sheets for goals and policies will clarify roles of various groups and organizations where assigning responsibilities to various positions in city government is not appropriate. Training and regular performance evaluations will

enhance the performance of City Hall staff, Planning Commission, Contractors, and City Council, alike, in their various roles.

Many groups exist within Morris that deal with the issues presented in this Comprehensive Plan. The city would be well-served to break the plan into workable parts and assign them to these various groups. The city might also ask these informal groups to take on the task of formal planning by developing comprehensive plans within their areas of interest. Such an undertaking would ensure that the Comprehensive Plan would continually be adopted to meet the changing needs of the community. The community should capitalize on the historic opportunity offered to it by the Blandin Foundation to train leaders of the community in leadership skills. The community should immediately engage as many of these residents in future planning activities as possible.

Suitability of Organizational Design

Organizations are set up to complete tasks. The Planning Commission's effectiveness in completing its planning tasks is contingent upon the design of its strategic, operational and managerial systems. These systems must be designed in a way that permit the Planning Commissioners to successfully complete the implementation, execution and revision of the Comprehensive Plan as a living document.

To plan effectively, the Planning Commission must be able to:

- carry out planning, zoning and other functions equally well, as required
- collect, analyze and use planning data
- draw on and develop planning commission members' strengths in decision-making
- encourage dialogue with the community *before* decisions are made
- establish working relationships with other planning bodies in the community
- evaluate performance of regulations and activities in goal attainment
- search actively for resources in its surroundings and elsewhere.

Effectiveness, as defined here, means that: 1) Planning Commission actions lead to intended outcomes; 2) its actions can be changed to continue to attain intended outcomes and 3) Planning Commission actions are coordinated with the City Council and City Hall. Successful planning can only take place if the Planning Commission is designed to be effective. However, none of these parameters can substitute for the active leadership and guidance of the City Council as well as the full collaboration of City Hall in carrying out the community's directives.

Conclusion

Morris residents enjoy a high quality, rural, way of life. Good public schools, quality parks, affordable living, and low crime are all trademarks of our community. Yet times are likely to become more challenging as the region suffers a significant economic downturn. New challenges will face Morris, including declining populations in neighboring communities and decreases in school enrollments. The diversification of the local economy will be important in the continued success of Morris, for unlike many of its neighboring communities, Morris is better positioned to handle a prolonged slump in any single industry.

This Comprehensive Plan contains many policy proposals to address the problems facing the city today. Morris residents were present throughout the process as they met in Focus Groups. They identified many problems and solutions. Of course, more problems will arise and be identified in the coming years, so it is important now to involve the informal network of groups that meet around the community in the formal planning process. Members of the community are more knowledgeable about Morris than anybody else. They are in every respect the experts on the state of the community. Every attempt should be made to involve Morris residents in the planning and implementation of city policy.

A class at UMM will be conducting a follow-up survey to this Comprehensive Plan. Residents will be asked to assess their city in many different areas. The data will allow the city to evaluate the changing assessments of its residents.

It is my hope that city residents will not see this as the “end” of the Comprehensive Plan, but only the beginning. All interested residents of Morris are encouraged to talk with each other and with their elected leadership about the Plan, or other issues that they think are important for their community. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any additional assistance. Like you, I care deeply about the future of Morris and believe that we must together, as a community, look for innovative ways to meet the challenges that lie before us.

Respectfully yours,

Greg Thorson

Appendix A: Focus Group Membership

1. Planning (never established)

- Merlin Beyer, (Mayor), Coordinator, 589-1446
- Karen Berget, (Planning Commission Head), 589-4054
- Focus Group 2 rep.
- Focus Group 3 rep.
- Focus Group 4 rep.
- Focus Group 5 rep.
- Focus Group 6 rep.
- Focus Group 7 rep.
- Focus Group 8 rep.

2. Economic Development and Financial Resources

- Lowell Larson, WCIF, (Coordinator) (218) 739-2239
- Bart Finzel, (UMM Business Management Center), 589-6195
- John Ekern, (independent businessman) 589-4796
- Duane Flanders, (AURI), 589-7280
- Michael Haynes, (SCEIC), 589-2609
- Dave Kremer (citizen at large representing labor), 589-3405
- Mark McCabe, (UMM print shop), 589-6145
- Tim Anderson, (Cmty First Bank), 589-4433
- Loren Carr, (1st American Bank), 589-1424
- Jerry Lesmeister, (Brothers Industries), 589-1971
- Gene Weigand, (County Planner), 589-7417
- Tom Hoffman, (Planning Commission & EDA member), 589-2159
- Bob Smith, (City Council), 589-3128

3. Central Business District

- Pat Flannery (Coordinator), 589-4024
- Kathy Bittner, 589-1715
- Ellie Kremer, 589-3405
- Bud Rentz, 589-2442
- Carl Benson, 589-4550
- Holly Witt, (Chamber of Commerce), 589-1242
- Vivian Heltemes, (Chamber Board and UMM Fund Dev.) 589-6066
- Ken Johnson, (Planning Commission), 589-2821
- Ruth Kearney , (City Council), 589-2644

4. Environmental Analysis

- Larry Hutchings, (Historical Society) Coordinator, 589-1719
- Margaret Kuchenreuther, (UMM, Biology) 589-2512
- Deb Economou, 589-4553
- Jim Dieter, 589-1159
- Karen Berget, (Planning Commission), 589-4054

5. Existing Land Use

- Larry Zilliox, (Minn. Extension), Coordinator, (320) 762-3890
- Gail Nelson, 589-3077
- Michael Haynes, (SCEIC), 589-2609
- Nora Jost, (HRA), 589-7416
- Dave Aronson, (UMM), 589-6475
- Skip Sherstaad, (County Commissioner, realtor), 589-1632
- Leonard Eich, (Planning Commission), 589-2471
- Melanie Fohl (Grandview Apts), 589-3748

6. Demographics

- Ben Winchester, (Center, Small Towns), Coordinator, 589-6450
- LeAnn Dean, (UMM census specialist), 589-6175
- Nancy Jost, (Day Care), 589-0323
- Judy Nord, (Sr. Nutrition Center), 589-2951
- Julie Jenson, (CROP), 589-9069
- Mary Ann Scharf, (Minnesota Extension), 589-7423
- May Jesseph, (Planning Commission), 589-3728

7. Transportation

- Don Goracke, (MNDOT) Coordinator, 589-7300
- Sherman Waage (Sr. Citizen), 589-3449
- Eric Klinger (UMM), Morris Transit volunteer, 589-1023
- Pat Hein, (Planning Commission), 589-4736

8. Public Facilities, Services, and Utilities

- Cindy Perkins, (Community Ed., Parks), Coordinator, 589-4394
- Peg Rinkenberger (MAHS teacher) 589-3593
- Lowell Rasmussen, (UMM Plant Services), 589-6100
- Marion Beck (fixed income representative), 589-3675
- Jeremiah Day, (MAHS student), 589-3685
- Dave Evenson, (Planning Commission), 589-1681
- Jay Fier (City Engineer), 589-3141

9. Arts and Culture

- Ray Strand, 589-1454
- Marie O'Riley, 589-3420
- Stella Conroy

10. Resource Identification (never established)

- Gene Kroschell, (City Hall Accounting) Coordinator, 589-3141
- City Council representatives
- Planning Commission representatives

Appendix B: Call for Community Visioning Meeting

Please bring your responses in person to the community visioning to be held at Sunwood on October 3rd at 7:00 p.m. or send them to Planning, City Hall, P.O.B. 438, 609 Oregon Av., Morris, MN 56267

CONCERNS AND ISSUES

- . What 3 things do you like most about Morris?
- . If you could change 3 things about Morris, what would they be?
- . What 1 thing would you tell a visitor or a newcomer?

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- . What do you think Morris should look like in the year 2010? Describe and rank these characteristics in order of importance to you.
- . What goals or priorities would you set to achieve the various pieces of your vision?
- . What obstacles may keep Morris from achieving these goals and realizing this vision? What strengths can Morris draw on to achieve these goals? What opportunities may arise to help Morris?
- . What actions can Morris take to overcome or avoid obstacles or benefit from its strengths and opportunities? Think about new or enhanced policies, projects, programs, buildings, regulations...
- . How does this vision relate to Morris' physical environment?
(Think about ways that the vision, goals and ideas relate to such things as economic growth, housing development and programs, recreation, the arts, historic preservation, tourism, social services, downtown, environment and transportation.)

COMMITMENTS AND SOLUTIONS

- . Answer yes or no. Do you favor additional expenditures for: affordable housing___, transitional housing___, industrial parks___, community policing___, improved fire department response time___, new library services ____, tourism ____, and arts programs___, other (Please list):
- . What is the best means of raising revenues for paying for new services and maintaining present services?

COMMUNITY EVALUATION AND CHANGE

- . Answer yes or no. Do you believe the following listen to you:
councilman___, city manager___, city staff___, mayor___, police___

. Answer yes or no. Do you favor community forums?

How often: Yearly___, Every 6 months___, Every 3 months___, Monthly___, Not at all ___

Planning Focus Groups: - Tasks (6/29/95)

1. Planning:

- Attend planning workshops
- Educate focus groups and public (provide press releases)
- Review planning and learning mechanisms for updates
- Assign responsibilities to other focus groups as needed
- Examine collaborative city/county planning prospects
- Synthesize Issues and Opportunities of 2 to 9 below
- Establish working conferences

2. Economic Development and Financial Resources:

- Analyze trends in income, employment, economic indicators
- Review and summarize Economic Dev. Efforts
- Make recommendations for (over \$10.00/hr.) job generation
- Examine Flexible Manufacturing Networks
- Make recommendations for promoting Ed./Tech.Industry

3. Central Business District

- Review Central Business District studies
- Review Star City Plan
- Analyze downtown building, business and parking needs

4. Environmental Analysis:

- Make inventory of natural environmental features
- Establish Historic Preservation (architecture) priorities
- Alternative solutions for improvement of image and function of Central Business Design

5. Existing Land Use:

- Develop land use area inventory tool (survey)
- Make recommendations for Affordable Housing
- Make recommendations for Transitional Housing
- Make recommendations for Parks/Open Space/Recreation
- Make recommendations for Industrial Park Space
- Identify compatible and incompatible land use relationships

6. Demographics:

- Analyze trends
- Make demographic projections for planning
- Analyze implications of "graying" on service demand, fiscal burden and taxation prospects

7. Transportation:

- Analyze external traffic connections
- Analyze internal circulation systems
- Analyze implication of changes in transportation formula

8. Public Facilities, Services and Utilities:

- Develop inventory (survey) of community facilities
- Assess current condition of facilities,serv.& util.

- Project future demand (include energy for industry)

9. Resource Identification:

- Examine consolidated government services for savings
- Identify ways to protect TIF, HACA, LGA
- Make recommendations for budget cutbacks/increases
- Identify alternative funding sources to property taxes
- Examine public/private partnerships and innovative alternatives.
- Seek low cost sources for planning assistance