



Fairview Township
Comprehensive Plan
2006

Acknowledgements

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Section I. Introduction

Located in the southeast corner of Cass County along the western threshold of the Central Lakes Region, Fairview Township hosts a variety of forested areas, lakes, and wetlands. Rapid population growth in the nearby cities of Brainerd and Baxter has expanded to surrounding communities including the Township, which has resulted in a population growth rate of 60 percent between 1990 and 2000. The State Demographer's Office forecasts this trend will continue and the Township should double in population in 15 years. Accommodating expected growth while maintaining the character of Fairview poses a unique challenge for residents, developers, and officials.

The Brainerd Micropolitan Statistical Area (defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as including both Cass and Crow Wing Counties), was ranked as the fourth fastest growing micropolitan area in the Midwest, and ranked 28th in the nation. A micropolitan statistical area is a population cluster with at least 10,000 people and located outside of metropolitan areas.



In preparation for these population and economic pressures, citizens of Fairview Township came together in May of 2006 and initiated the development of a Comprehensive Plan. Based on input from residents, this Plan identifies current and future needs of the community and establishes a foundation for development, land use, and future growth for the next two decades.

The Planning Process

A comprehensive plan is a community-created document that identifies policies, objectives, and strategies that profile future community development. The Plan entails a proactive process that interprets the nature of a place and implements strategies that can enhance a community's potential. With input from residents and officials, a sound comprehensive plan will serve as a platform to make land use decisions and provide insight for future development. To manage the expected growth and protect the distinct characteristics of Fairview Township, this Comprehensive Plan outlines a development path for the community for the next twenty years.

Developing a
Comprehensive
Plan is a
Community Effort

The planning process began in the spring of 2006 when residents attended a visioning session and mapped the present character of the community. Goals and expectations that accentuate the positive identity of the Township were also identified. Participants contributed not only their time, but also their concerns, knowledge, ideas, and expertise about Fairview Township's past, present, and future. Although communities have characteristics that distinguish them from others, they also share common traits that can serve as the basis for future goals and strategies. Some such similarities outlined in this Plan include natural resources, demographics, and development potential.



Section II. Current Demographics & Trends

To plan for the future of a community, it is essential to understand the significance of historical trends. Examining Fairview Township's past aids in explaining existing conditions; thus producing more realistic projections.¹ Although history is not a perfect indicator of things to come, it sheds light on the status of the community and suggests where the Township may be heading.

To analyze the impact of population and economic shift, three basic questions emerge:

1. How many people will be living in the Township in the future?
2. What characteristics will that population have and how will it impact the type and amount of infrastructure and services demanded?
3. What will be the source of employment and income for the population of the Township?

Population Change

Fairview Township is situated just to the north and west of Brainerd, in the rapidly growing Central Lakes Region of northern Minnesota. Figures and projections will compare surrounding communities as well as Cass County to demonstrate the role that Fairview plays as a separate entity amid a larger region. The information presented in the tables, figures, and maps in this plan is as current as possible for the year 2006. Several data sources were sampled including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Census Bureau, the Minnesota State Demographer, and others.

The Central Lakes Region has been identified as a Minnesota Regional Growth Area. Several townships in Crow Wing County and Cass County can expect significant growth in the near future. Census data show a 320 percent increase in population in Fairview Township since 1970 (Table 1); an overall increase from 135 residents in 1970 to 567 in 2000.

Table 1. Population 1970 - 2000

Unit of Government	% Change			% Change			% Change	
	1970	1980	1970-1980	1990	1980-1990	2000	1990-2000	1970-2000
Fairview Township	135	311	130%	354	14%	567	60%	320%
East Gull Lake	440	586	33%	687	17%	978	42%	122%
Crow Wing County	34,828	41,722	20%	44,249	6%	54,058	55%	257%
Cass County	17,323	21,050	22%	21,791	4%	27,150	25%	57%
Minnesota	3,806,103	4,075,970	7%	4,375,099	7%	4,919,479	12%	29%

¹ General Notation on Data: Not all percentages presented within the tables provided in this document will add to 100% due to rounding. Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing 1970-2000, MN Demographer

Fairview Township

Table 2. Population 2000-2030

Unit of Government	2000	2010	% Change 2000-2010	2020	% Change 2010-2020	2030	% Change 2020-2030	% Change 2000-2030
Fairview Township	567	803	42%	1042	30%	1244	19%	119%
East Gull Lake	978	1241	27%	1537	24%	1782	16%	82%
Crow Wing County	54,058	67,090	24%	79,420	18%	90,240	14%	67%
Cass County	26,717	33,630	26%	40,070	19%	45,280	13%	69%
Minnesota	4,919,479	5,452,500	11%	5,909,400	8%	6,268,200	6%	27%

Source: Projected population to 2030 for cities and townships outside the Twin Cities area, MN Demographer

Fairview and other surrounding communities within the Central Lakes Region will continue to see consistent growth. The population of the Township is expected to double in 15 years (Table 2).

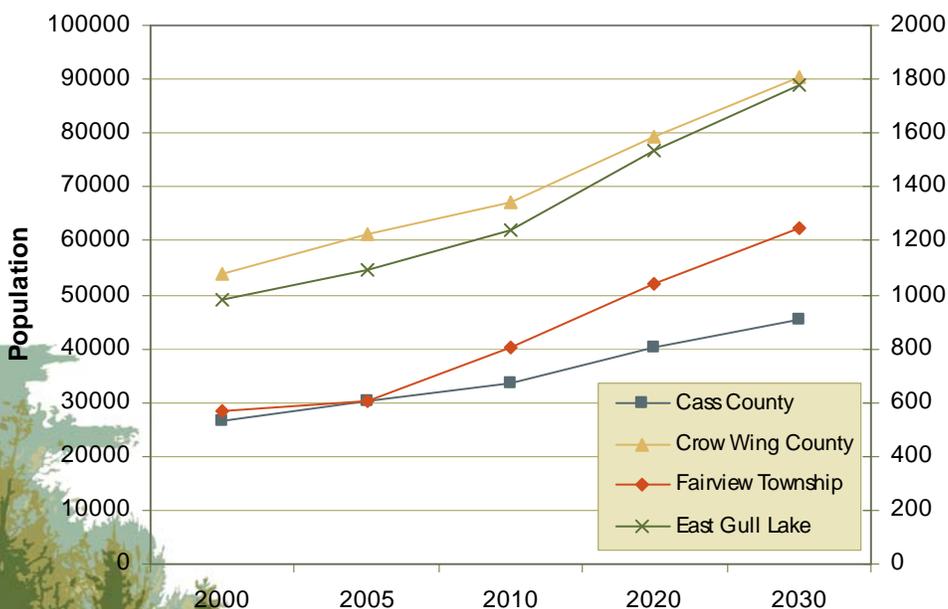
It is important to understand how the influx of new residents will affect the infrastructure of Fairview Township and surrounding support systems. Population growth can bring economic benefit but also impacts roads, land values, schools, the environment, and a number of other factors.

The population of Fairview Township will more than double by 2030. Migration of Baby-Boomer retirees, improvements to highways and transportation systems, growth of the tourism industry, a healthy economy, and a wealth of natural resources and scenic amenities are motivating factors for the projected population increase. In fact, the entire Central Lakes Region will see steady growth in the upcoming decades (Figure 1, Minnesota State Demographer's Office).

Advances in the technology and communications industries have made it possible for businesses to operate and compete in local, regional, and global markets from almost any location. While metropolitan employment centers will still dominate as centers of commerce for years to come, it is becoming more common for businesses and employees to locate to rural areas and smaller cities where they can escape

traffic congestion, noise, and high costs of large cities. Rather than proximity to work, many people base their decision of where to live on a location's natural surroundings, recreational resources, crime rate, and quality of schools. The planned improvements to State Highway 371 to the east of Fairview are likely to make the Township more accessible and desirable to people from other parts of the State.

Figure 1. Population Projection 2005 - 2030

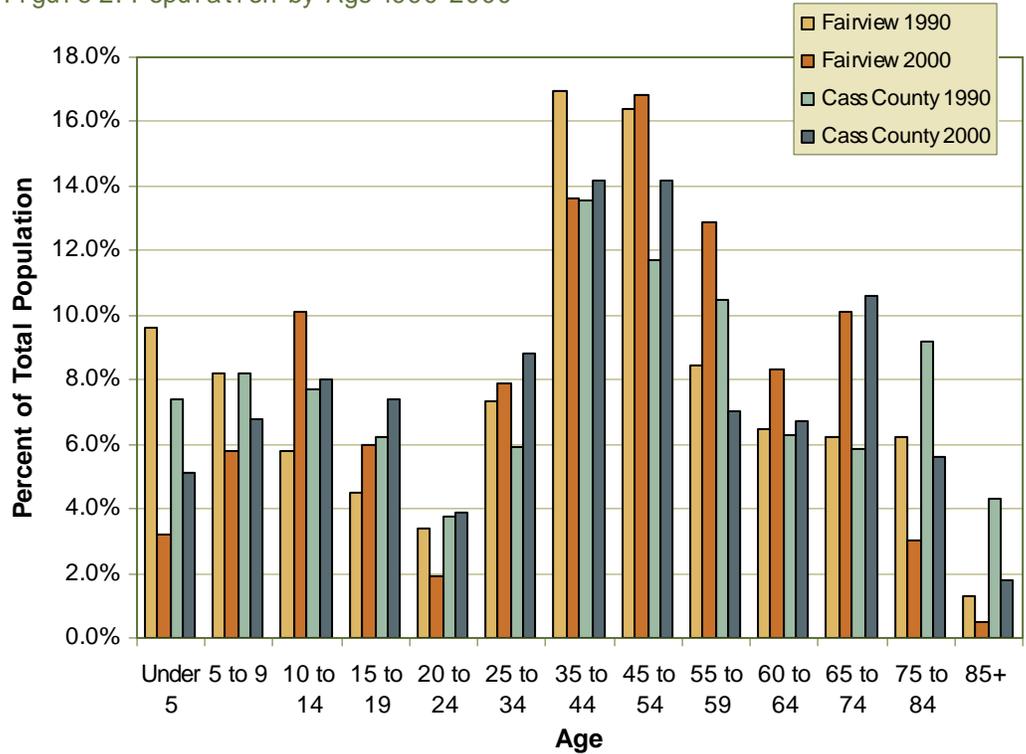


Population Structure

While the Central Lakes Region is experiencing significant growth, the structure of the population is also changing. The average age of the population is increasing as middle-aged professionals and retirees migrate to the area. The 2000 median age of the Township was 46, meaning that half of the people in the Township were below the age of 46 and half were above that age. The aging of the population reflects a similar national trend. Age groups will grow in absolute terms over the next thirty years; however, as the Baby Boom generation ages, older persons will comprise a larger percentage of the total population.

Fairview Township experienced significant growth in the 45 to 74 age groups between 1990 and 2000 (Figure 2). More people retire at an earlier age, which accounts for a significant proportion of these age group increases. The drop in 20-34 year olds might be due to the lack of jobs for young professionals. It is common for rural areas to experience a drop in population among residents over 75 years of age. Senior citizens are often unable to take care of their homes or require nearby health care facilities, resulting in relocation to seek housing elsewhere.

Figure 2. Population by Age 1990-2000



Employment

In 2005, a survey was administered by the Township that asked residents their working status and the city in which they were employed: There were 210 people respondents. The results help to understand the composition of the community and will be useful to better plan for the Township's future. Not surprisingly, 29 percent of respondents were retired. Of those who were working at the time the survey was conducted, the majority named the Brainerd-Baxter and Twin Cities Metropolitan areas as the location of their workplace.

Fairview Township residents work in a variety of locations. Part-time, seasonal, and temporary employment was not specified.

Table 3. Employment Survey Results

Place of Employment	Percent of Total
Retired	29%
Twin Cities Metro	18%
Brainerd-Baxter	19%
East Gull Lake	2%
St. Cloud	1.5%
Nisswa	2%
Self Employed	3%

Income

Between 1990 and 2000, Fairview Township’s median household income doubled to \$55,000, surpassing Cass County and Minnesota as a whole (Table 4). A 106 percent change over this time period suggests that people with higher incomes are moving into the Township.

Table 4. Median Household Income, 1990-2000

	Fairview Township	Cass County	Minnesota
1990	\$26,719	\$18,732	\$30,909
2000	\$55,000	\$34,332	\$47,111
% Change		83%	52%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing

Labor Force

The labor force is measured by the number of people able to work and over age 16. Excluded among this group are individuals who are not actively seeking employment, students, and retirees. In 2000, Fairview Township was home to 270 working age adults all of whom were employed (Table 5). Because there are few employers in the Township, it is likely that most people that move to the township that are in the labor force already have jobs.

Table 5. Labor Force Status, 2000

	Fairview Township	Baxter	Brainerd	Cass County
Persons 16+	413	4,124	10,086	21,223
Civilian Labor Force	270	3,119	6,283	12,511
% in Labor Force	65.4	75.6	62.3	58.9
Employed	270	3,006	5,814	11,658
Unemployed	0	105	450	853
% Unemployed	0	3.4	7.2	6.8

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing

Travel Time to Work

Although highway and transportation system improvements provide for more fluid mobility, they do not necessarily correspond with reduction in travel time. Between 1990 and 2000, Cass County saw consistent growth in the number of workers, but their respective travel times fluctuated very little. In the same sample time, Fairview Township saw a 15 percent increase in employees whose commute time was between 15 and 29 minutes (Table 6). It is likely that workers who have jobs in nearby regional markets, namely the Brainerd-Baxter area are moving to Fairview.

Table 6. Travel Time to Work, 1990-2000

	Fairview Township		Cass County		East Gull Lake	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Less than 5 minutes	5%	2%	10%	9%	2%	4%
5 to 14 min.	13%	14%	34%	32%	23%	20%
15 to 29 min.	35%	50%	32%	33%	60%	63%
30 to 44 min.	29%	18%	14%	16%	9%	8%
45 to 59 min.	7%	1%	5%	5%	0%	0%
60 or more min.	10%	7%	5%	6%	5%	5%
Work at Home (Persons)	15	19	668	783	13	30

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing

Occupation

Because Fairview Township has only a handful of businesses, the State of Minnesota does not release detailed employment data for the Township to maintain business establishment privacy. However, the Census does track the types of occupations that Township residents have. As the Central Lakes Region becomes more populated, industries such as entertainment and food services will continue to add jobs (Table 7). The number of professional jobs increased significantly between 1990 and 2000 in Fairview Township and Cass County. Paired with increased household income and home values, this might signify that more professionally oriented people are moving into Fairview and working outside the Township.

Table 7. Employment by Industry, 1990-2000
(Percent of total workers)

	1990	2000
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, mining	3.4	0.7
Construction	11.6	10.4
Manufacturing	7.5	11.5
Transportation, warehousing, information/communication, utilities	1.4	4.1
Wholesale trade	2.7	4.1
Retail trade	19.9	9.3
Finance, insurance, real estate, information	7.5	9.6
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management	8.2	7.8
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services	13.0	10.4
Education, health and social services	19.2	21.5
Other services	0.0	6.3
Public administration	5.5	4.4

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing*
*Note, some industries have been added or conjoined since 1990 Census



Section III. Natural Resources

Forests

Fairview Township is home to many beautiful natural resources such as forests, wetlands, woodlands, grasslands, and agricultural landscapes. About three-quarters of the Township is covered by forests, which contains mixed forests of white, jack and red pine, aspen, birch and oak, interspersed with wetlands and lakes (Table 8).

Much of Fairview Township’s landscape is covered by water. Lakes and open spaces that have existed since pre-European settlement have been fragmented by development. Because development in the Township is concentrated on lakes, forests cover most of the land. At one time, the area attracted millers and lumber companies but now, these forests bring in visitors. Although these forests are not home to much wildlife, one exception is the abundance of bird species. The forests in Fairview Township are home to downy woodpeckers, song sparrows, finches, wrens, warblers, cat birds, chickadees, as well as coots, and wood ducks and other birds.

Table 8. Land Use and Land Cover

Cover Type	Area (sq. mi)	Percent of Total
Open Water	4.07	10.3%
Wetlands	5.45	13.8%
Forest	25.83	65.4%
Grassland	2.86	7.2%
Cultivated Land	0.57	1.4%
Farmsteads & Rural Residences	0.13	0.3%
Other Rural Development	0.55	1.4%
Gravel Pits & Open Mines	0.04	0.1%
Total	39.51	100.0%

Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Lakes

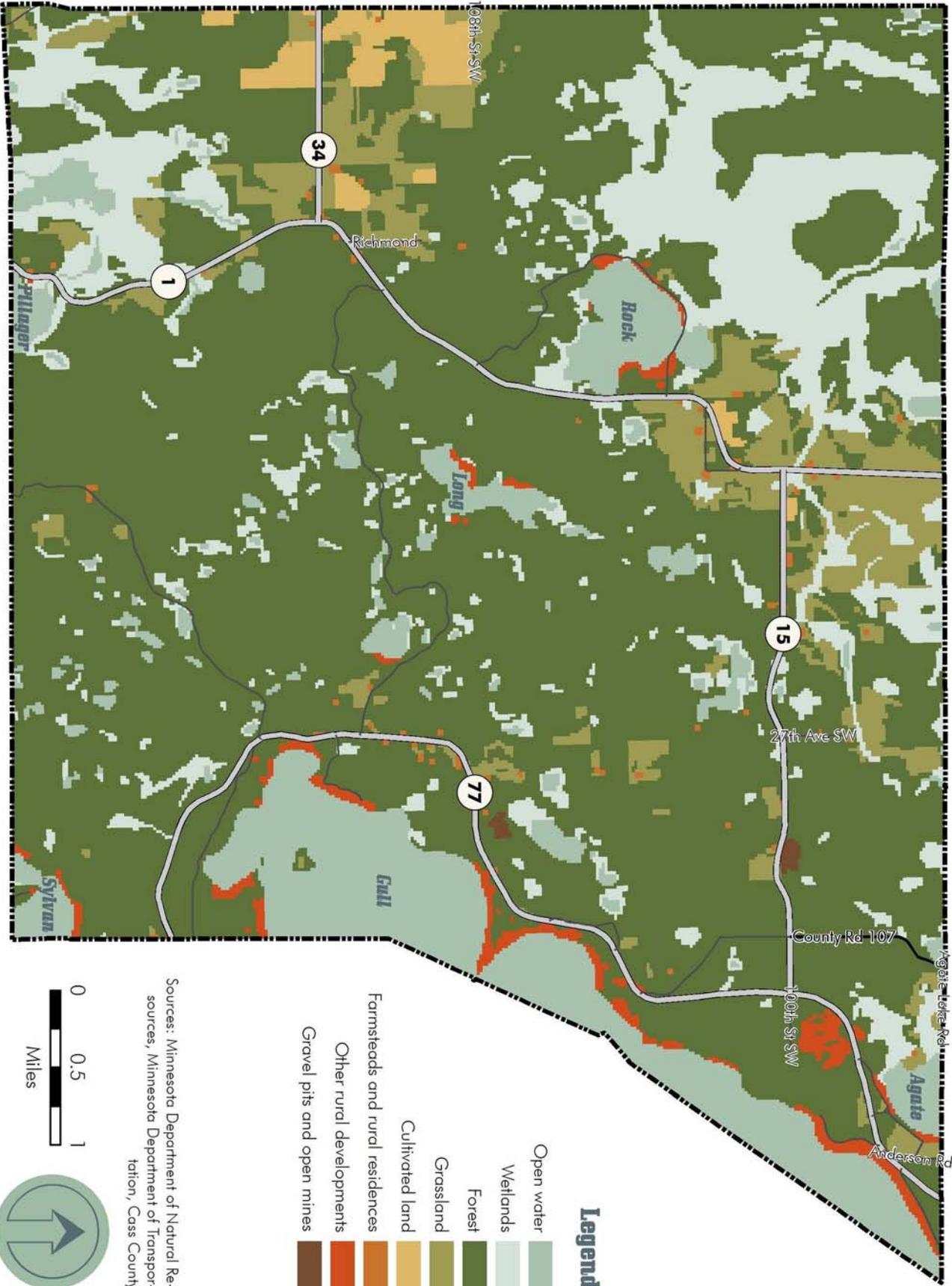
Fairview Township experienced a 60 percent increase in population between 1990 and 2000. Much of this growth is credited to the area’s lakes. Gull Lake attracts tourists and new residents with scenic views and recreational opportunities. Over 10 percent of the Township is covered with open water. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency classifies Fairview’s lakes as either oligotrophic or mesotrophic.

Because local lakes are such a vital part of the Township’s character, ensuring their natural health and well being is essential. Since a large portion of the shoreline in Fairview Township has already been developed with homes, the physical condition of the lakes could be negatively impacted. These effects may be further amplified when additional growth occurs. Development on lakeshores has been shown to increase nutrient levels in the lake and increase shoreline erosion leading to an increase in algae blooms and suspended sediments. This decreases a lake’s water clarity and degrades the habitat for many species in the surrounding area. Complicating this process is the high proportion of lots in the Township that are slated for redevelopment.

Development-related activities that contribute most to degradation of the lake include removing aquatic and terrestrial vegetation along the shore, increasing impervious surfaces, use of nitrogen and phosphorous fertilizers, using rip-rap and other harmful landscaping practices, and compacting the soil.²

² According to The Water’s Edge, published by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and University of Minnesota, 2003

Current Land Use / Land Cover



Wetlands

According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, over 52 percent of the State’s wetlands have been lost due to development. Although Minnesota continues to lose wetlands, the rate of loss is slowing. These unique areas reduce erosion along lakes, provide sanctuary for spawning fish, yield runoff minimizing flooding levels, store nutrients while filtering pollutants, and provide sanctuary for rare species. Wetlands comprise nearly 14 percent of Fairview Township’s land cover and are vital to ensuring the health of the area’s lakes and streams. There are several types of wetlands that dot the forested areas including bogs, swamps, and marshes. These wetlands comprise a large complex in the northwest and southwest portions of the Township.

Environment

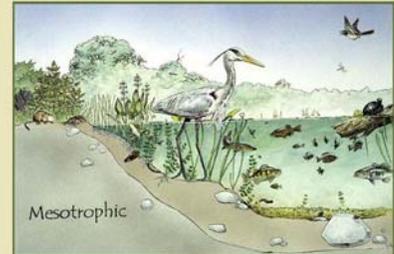
Surface water use is a significant concern of lake residents and others concerned about overuse and pollution of the lakes. While resorts do contribute to increased use, surface water exhaustion continues to expand regardless of resort expansion or contraction. Lakes are publicly owned and it is difficult to manage surface water use on lakes with public accesses and privately developed shorelines. While land use does affect surface water use, it is not the only factor.

Lake Types

Oligotrophic Lakes—usually typified as young, healthy lakes in the early phases of production and lake development—feature clear water, high oxygen levels, and low productivity of vegetation, algae, and other aquatic microorganisms. They tend to be deep, and, while they do not support large fish populations, they do often support good food chains and large game fish.



Mesotrophic Lakes are usually older and usually experience more run-off and sedimentation. They feature increased production of aquatic plant life and microorganisms. They tend to have a greater accumulation of organic matter and experience occasional algal blooms. Mesotrophic lakes support a diversity of fish and other aquatic wildlife species.

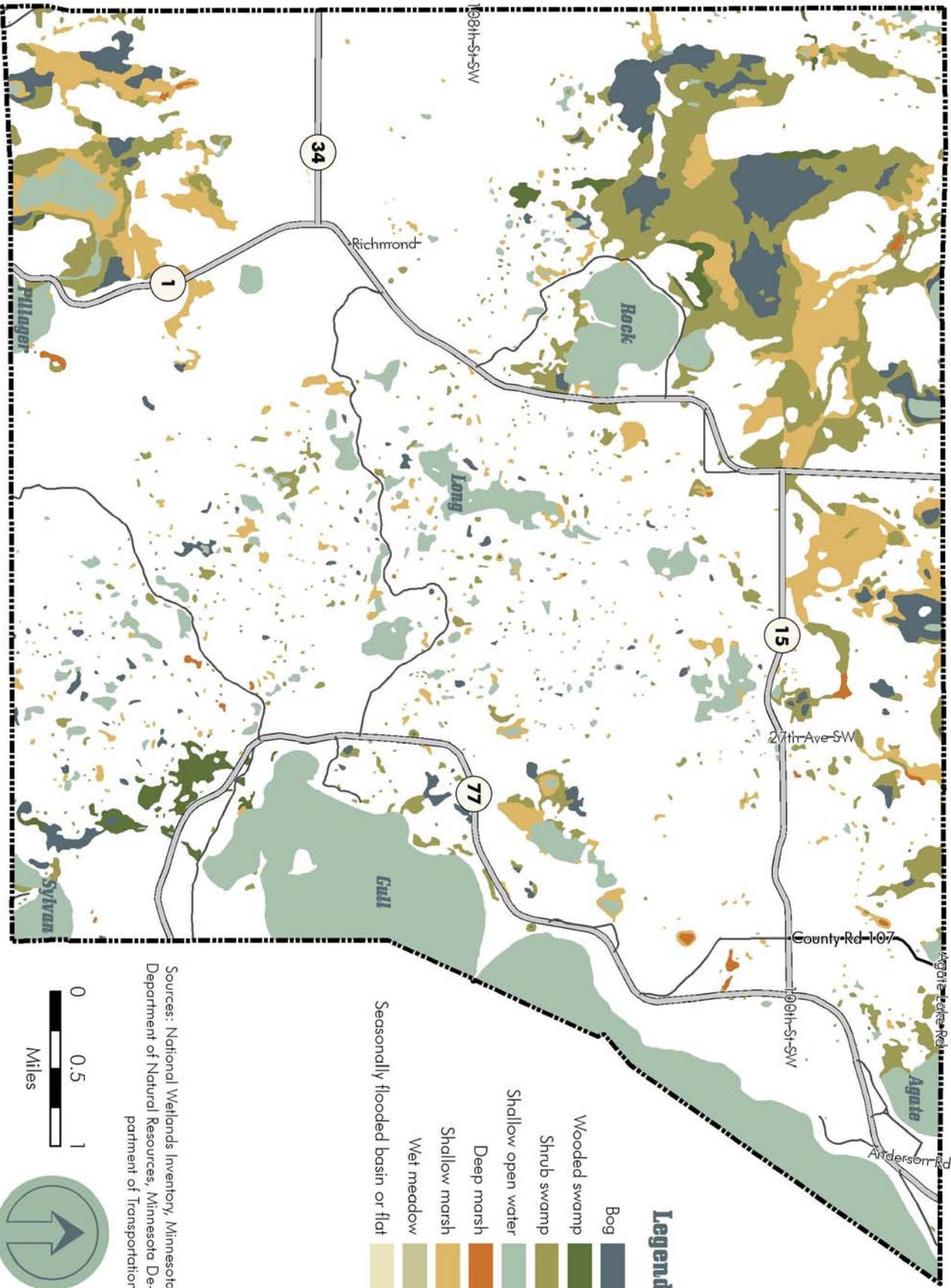


Eutrophic Lakes are in advanced stages of production and development with poor water clarity, heavy sedimentation, high phosphorous and nitrate levels, and an accumulation of organic matter. They tend to be oxygen poor and do not support a healthy fishery, but rather rough fish species. Eutrophic lakes tend to be shallow due to the accumulation of organic matter. Those that are small in size are vulnerable to winter kills.



Information and drawings courtesy of University of Wisconsin Extension—Stevens Point.

Wetlands and Water Resources



Prepared June 2006 by:
COMMUNITY GROWTH
 INSTITUTE

Section IV. Land Use & Residential Development

Background

Fairview Township and surrounding communities have existed in large part due to the tourism and service-oriented industries. The Township plays an important role in the regional economy by providing high quality living in a small town atmosphere. In order to thrive in the future, the Township must strengthen its character and define its function in the regional hierarchy.

The amount of housing in Fairview Township increased significantly between the 1990 and 2000 censuses, rising from 332 to 410 units. With an expected increase over the next 25 years, population density will also swell. Most shoreline properties within the Township are already developed so most new residential construction is likely to occur away from the lakes in second and third tier shoreland areas and larger lot or cluster development in non-shoreland, limited access areas of the Township.

Accommodating population growth and maintaining the interests of Township residents is an essential theme of the planning process. The following objectives were developed with respect to residential development.

Ensure that new growth and development is consistent with the rural, natural, and recreational character of the community.

Homes in the Township should reflect the present character of the community. Protecting the resources that attract visitors and residents will strengthen the tax base and promote sound development. It will be important to keep the Township a desirable place to live by maintaining existing residential neighborhoods.

Ensure that new subdivisions maintain privacy and incorporate rural conservation subdivision design.

Strong neighborhoods invite good development. Fairview Township will better accommodate inevitable growth if it has strategic development goals. The rural nature of the community is an important element of the Township's character. Subdivisions and other residential development must take this into account so as not to obstruct the privacy of residents.

Fairview Township

Most of the growth in Fairview Township has been in residential development with 95 percent of the housing units occupied by owners in 2000. A large number of the housing units in the Township are single-family homes that border Gull Lake, Agate Lake, and Rock Lake, with some farmsteads and a growing trend towards developments of 2.5 acre lots throughout the area. The cause of this trend is twofold: First, baby-boomers and people approaching retirement age are drawn to places like the Central-Lakes Region because of the abundance of natural amenities. Second, in the case of Fairview Township, much of the land is a challenge to develop due to wetlands and other limiting factors. Furthermore, homeowners in Fairview do not wish to live in an urban or suburban area or to be forced to pay for infrastructure improvements.

Fairview Township's housing supply is characterized by these main characteristics:

1. **High property values:** In 2000, the median value was near \$220,000 compared with \$96,200 in Cass County.
2. **High percentage of lakeshore homes, with few lake shore lots remaining:** Nearly all residential development abuts Agate Lake, Rock Lake, and Gull Lake.
3. **Declining percentage of seasonal homes:** The proportion of seasonal homes to year-round homes has been on the decline, dropping nearly 15 percent between 1990 and 2000.

These three distinguishing characteristics signify that the Fairview Township serves a particular constituency of home buyers who seek to convert seasonal homes and cabins into year-round residences. As you move away from the lakes, the housing stock becomes more affordable. Given these and other trends, several issues related to housing in the Township are expected to be of primary concern including the redevelopment of existing lakeshore properties, new development on off-lake properties.

Redevelopment of Existing Lakeshore Properties

As population increases and development spreads, new and native Minnesotans migrate to northern parts of the State, lakeshore property becomes scarcer. Location is a determining factor for potential homebuyers both in terms of proximity to goods and services and accessibility to transportation systems. The high demand for land with these characteristics has increased property values in many Central Lakes communities, despite the condition of the existing improvements on the land.

The land values in Fairview Township, which exceed the County averages, are extremely high, causing a trend towards redevelopment.

Redevelopment of shoreline lots may have the potential to result in larger homes, additional impervious surface coverage, increased stormwater runoff levels, and vegetation removal. Fairview Township has many properties with high redevelopment potential and highway access that do not border lakes. Encouraging responsible residential development in these areas will likely counterbalance high lakeshore property values.

New Development on Off-Lake Property

Many Township residents have expressed interest to include more variety in housing options both in type and location. How and where land is subdivided will contribute to the future appearance and character of the Township. Given the significant potential for new development, Fairview Township must establish a balance between growth and corresponding infrastructural costs, such as road maintenance and fire protection.

Housing Type and Cost

As stated previously, the majority of homes within Fairview Township are single-family, detached dwellings with significantly higher values than those from other communities in the region. Despite the stability that a community dominated by single-family, relatively affluent households provides, residents have expressed concern about having such a limited choice of housing types and price ranges.

With a narrow scope of housing sizes and styles, the Township might alienate some potential residents. The limited housing choices also make it difficult for those working in the Township to actually live there. When there are not enough places for workers to live near their place of employment, a jobs-housing imbalance results. This phenomenon can drive up prices in the local housing market, which turns potential homeowners away. A jobs-housing imbalance also leads to longer commutes and traffic congestion as workers live farther from jobs, an issue that affects the entire region.

Table 9. Households, 1990-2000

	1990	2000	% Change
Fairview Township	132	224	70%
East Gull Lake	239	370	55%
Crow Wing County	17,255	22,250	29%
Cass County	8,302	10,893	31%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing

Households

Households are homes occupied year-round by residents as compared to the number of actual housing units. It is important to examine household trends as the Central Lakes Region contains a significant proportion of seasonal residents. The number of households in Fairview Township increased by 70 percent between 1990 and 2000 (Table 9). Dramatic household growth in nearby Baxter will place added pressure on the community as new residents begin to look outside Baxter for housing. Fairview Township's household growth closely resembles that of surrounding communities such as East Gull Lake, both averaging over 50 percent growth during the 1990's.

Household growth tends to reflect population growth, although some variation exists due to changes in the number of people per housing unit. The current trend nationally and in Minnesota is toward fewer people per household. This is evident in Fairview Township, Baxter, Brainerd, and Cass County as the number of persons per household fell in all four government units (Table 10). Both Fairview and Cass County experienced losses of over 5 percent in persons per household from 1990 to 2000. This is caused by two primary occurrences: First, Minnesotans and Americans in general are having fewer children. Second, children of Baby-Boomers are moving out of their parents' homes.

Table 10. Population & People per Household, 1990 – 2000

	Population			People per Household		
	1990	2000	% Change	1990	2000	% Change
Fairview Township	354	567	60.2%	2.68	2.53	-5.6%
East Gull Lake	687	987	43.7%	2.85	2.64	-7.4%
Cass County	21,791	27,150	24.6%	2.63	2.45	-6.8%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing

There is a high demand for housing in Fairview Township and surrounding areas. The number of residents and housing units in the region continues to grow while vacancy steadily declines. In 1990, 60 percent of Township housing units were vacant but as of 2000, that share has dropped by 15 percent (Table 11).

Table 11. Total Housing Unit Status, 1990 - 2000

	Fairview Township			East Gull Lake			Cass County		
	1990	2000	% Change	1990	2000	% Change	1990	2000	% Change
Total	332	410	23.5%	637	709	11.3%	18,863	21,286	12.9%
Occupied	132	224	69.7%	241	370	53.5%	8,302	10,893	31.2%
Vacant	200	186	-7.0%	369	339	-8.1%	10,561	10,393	-1.6%
%Vacant	60.2%	45.4%	-14.8%	57.9%	47.8%	-10.1%	56.0%	48.8%	-7.2%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing

In 2000, Fairview Township had a vacancy rate of only 45 percent, a lower figure than Cass County and nearby East Gull Lake. This figure is misleading as seasonal homes are considered vacant. Of the 186 total vacancies in 2000, 177 units were used for seasonal purposes (Table 12). It appears that there is a balanced mix of new residents permeating into the Township. Some are retirees that migrate from the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, some transplant from Brainerd-Baxter, while others relocate from other states entirely.

Home values in Fairview Township have risen exponentially for the past 15 years. In 1990, over 60 percent of owner occupied homes were valued below \$100,000 but as of 2000, only about 20 percent were in that range. There is a higher proportion of expensive homes in Fairview Township compared with Cass County. Median home price has also skyrocketed from about \$85,000 in 1990 to nearly \$220,000 in 2000 (Table 13). As more people migrate to the area, lakeshore properties are more difficult to obtain. Their supply is limited, so demand can remain constant or can increase.

Table 12. Vacant Housing Status, 1990-2000

	Cass County			Fairview Township		
	1990	2000	% Change	1990	2000	% Change
Total Vacant	10,561	10,393	-1.6%	200	186	-7.0%
For seasonal, recreational or occasional use	9,591	9,582	-9.4%	193	177	-8.3%
Other Vacant	970	811	-16.4%	7	9	28.6%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing

Fairview Township

Table 13. Financial Housing Characteristics, 1990-2000

Owner-Occupied Housing Value	Cass County (%)		Fairview Township (%)	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Less than \$50,000	48.7	19.7	18.5	9.4
\$50,000-\$99,999	39.6	32.5	43	12.9
\$100,000-\$149,999	7.6	20	1.8	14.9
\$150,000-\$199,999	2.5	11.2	5.4	9.4
\$200,000-\$299,999	1.2	9.5	6.1	16.3
\$300,000-\$499,999	>1%	5.1	1.8	30.2
\$500,000-\$999,999	>1%	1.5	-	6.9
\$1,000,000+	-	>1%	-	-
Median Home Value	\$51,000	\$96,200	\$84,400	\$219,400

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing

Rental units are often identified and included in comprehensive plans. Currently, Fairview has no known rental properties, though residents have expressed interest in extending housing opportunities to include senior and retirement living quarters.

Section V

ment



The abundance and quality of natural resources in and around the Township, along with the

expansion of the Brainerd-Baxter area, make the community rife with potential for economic growth. The Township has an opportunity to capture a share of the development that typically accompanies a burgeoning economy. Currently, Fairview Township serves as a housing community to employees working in the area.

Fairview has many amenities that would be conducive to expanding tourism. Local lakes, trails, as well as Pillsbury State Forest attract campers, hikers, horseback riders and hunters who seek respite amid northern Minnesota's natural wildlife away from the bustle that accompanies many resort areas.



Fairview Township has parks and open spaces on or near local lakes and natural amenities.

To better understand the economy of the Township, it is essential to understand historical trends and future projections of resident housing status.

Recreation and Tourism

The location of homes and businesses in Fairview Township indicates the significance of the area's lakes. Although much development has occurred on Rock Lake and Agate Lake, the Township's primary attraction is Gull Lake. Built in 1910, the dam on Gull Lake has created a haven for campers, boaters, and visitors. As a result, tourism and the resort industry have fueled the regional economy. The resort industry started on Gull Lake in the early 1930s and has evolved from a scattering of seasonal cabins to facilities that feature golf courses, luxury homes, hotels, restaurants, complete family activities, winter activities, conference amenities, and spas. As the resort industry in Minnesota has changed, the resorts around Fairview Township have adapted to accommodate new recreational demands and increasing land values.

Changing Nature of Recreational Commerce: Maintaining and Sustaining Tourism

Residential growth and tourism industry expansion in and around Fairview Township and the entire Brainerd Lakes area is built on the natural amenities the region provides. However, as more people move to and visit the region, maintaining the area's character will become increasingly difficult. Potential impacts include increased traffic, irresponsible commercial development, and a reduction of architectural creativity. Successful tourism destinations are built upon preserving the characteristics that cannot be found elsewhere and providing a distinctive atmosphere.

Fairview Township

Sustaining tourism involves protecting natural amenities from overuse and overdevelopment, protecting and promoting unique architecture in the area, and focusing on what the Brainerd Lakes Region can offer that other areas cannot. The resorts provide jobs for residents and strengthen the tax base.

Section VI.

Future Goals & Strategies

Beginning in the spring of 2006, residents and property owners of Fairview Township came together to develop a Comprehensive Plan. With their input, this Plan takes into consideration collective goals and strategies that address several issues facing the Township. This Plan is a guide for future decision-making with respect to the community's character land use matters, and development. Through a series of meetings and workshops, residents developed general goals with specific strategies to accomplish these goals. The Plan also includes a future land use map to serve as a framework for future development.

GOAL 1

Fairview Township will be understanding and accepting of all residents, be non-judgmental in decision-making processes, and treat all applicants fairly and with consistency.

Planning for the future of a community should be a process that includes citizens, developers, and local officials. Collective goals create policies that keep in mind the interests of current and prospective residents. Creating open forums and other outlets that promote community interaction will keep property owners informed and ensure a higher standard of living within the Township. Land use regulations should not stray from the ideas developed by residents or the goals set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.

To achieve this goal, the Township will implement the following strategies:

- Keep property owners informed of development proposals so residents have an opportunity to express concerns.
- Maintain transparency in Township decision-making processes by providing information upon request and posting in a variety of locations and media.
- Utilize public information outlets such as the community website and newsletter.
- Develop and maintain a standard public hearing format that emphasizes citizen interaction and equal speaking opportunity.
- Create land use regulations and consistently enforce them.

GOAL 2

Maintain a serene and peaceful community environment within Fairview Township.

Safety and privacy are two elements that Fairview Township residents value. Establishing regulations and enforcement strategies that maintain a peaceful nature will create a more harmonious environment. This will require communication between officials, residents, as well as special interest groups.

To achieve this goal, the Township will implement the following strategies:

- Consider buffers to separate incompatible land uses that could negatively impact the community.
- Utilize public lands where possible as a buffer from future development.
- Work with local outdoor enthusiasts to coordinate trail projects to reduce operation in environmentally sensitive or private areas.
- Meet with local residents to establish “neighborhood watches” or similar groups that improve neighborhood-level peace and security.

GOAL
3

Ensure that new growth and development design is consistent with the rural, natural, and recreational character of the community.

Future growth and development are key concerns in Cass County. The Central Lakes Region is one of the fastest growing regions in Minnesota as people seek to move outside urban areas into rural settings. However, the very reasons that people are moving into this region and Fairview Township – lakes, forests, privacy, and rural character – are qualities that need to be protected. Protecting the qualities that make Fairview Township rural is a value expressed by many residents.

To achieve this goal, the Township will implement the following strategies:

- Establish an active Planning Commission responsible for the monitoring and implementation of the Fairview Township Comprehensive Plan.
- Implement minimum lot sizes for non-shoreline development within the Township.
- Establish maximum density thresholds for non-shoreline development.
- Be sensitive to open spaces by defining buildable area, with attention given to wetlands and slopes, and use only the buildable area calculation when developing and applying lot or parcel area requirements.
- Ensure that roadways within new developments are constructed to minimum design standards, as adopted by the Township.
- Ensure that local roadway networks that are proposed to serve new development are designed and constructed utilizing sound access management practices.
- Ensure that all new development along existing roadways is designed in a manner that makes the best use of the roadway with consideration given to future roadway connections and capacities.

GOAL **4** Maintain a neat and non-offensive appearance of properties within Fairview Township.

The appearance of a community tells much about the residents that reside there. Excessive trash, refuse, and “junk” vehicles create a visually unappealing environment that poses a threat to public health and has the ability to lower property values and infringe upon the rights of neighboring property owners. It is important for a community to take pride in its appearance.

To achieve this goal, the Township will implement the following strategies:

- Develop regulations and an enforcement program that will limit the accumulation of trash and refuse on properties within the Township.
- Classify “junk automobiles,” junk piles, health hazards, agricultural machinery, etc., and develop regulations to minimize unsightliness within the Township.
- Create fence and vegetative screening requirements for uses that could cause nuisance or degradation of the Township’s image.
- Inform residents to properly report violations and maintain anonymity.
- Create a violation policy that is observed and enforced.
- Work with the Cass County solid waste program to increase solid waste disposal options and educate the public about year-round disposal options.

GOAL **5** Utilize a collaborative approach to work with the Cass County Environmental Services Department to revise and implement land use controls.

Currently, Cass County oversees planning issues in and around Fairview Township. By localizing the planning process and retaining lines of communication between other governing bodies, Fairview can exercise more control over land use decisions.

To achieve this goal, the Township will implement the following strategies:

- Meet with the Cass County Environmental Services Department Director to discuss implementation of specific land use districts based on the future land use map.
- Develop a process that enables the Township to assess potential land use controls and enforcement options.
- Maintain an active role in regional planning which is consistent with the goals and strategies developed by the Fairview Township community and promote regional planning consistency.

**GOAL
6**

Preserve the rural, open feel of the Township through the use of community design principles that reduce density and safeguard open space.

Maintaining open space during a period of population growth and development will be a difficult task for the community. Careful steps must be taken so new developments reserve open space, yet limit density. Much of the available land in the Township is undevelopable because of topographical constraints or proximity to wetlands. As such, remaining parcels should experience an increase in value and development potential. Officials and residents will need to work with developers to identify common goals that minimize the impact on the overall quality of the Township's natural resources.

To achieve this goal, the Township will implement the following strategy:

- Implement subdivision design standards that preserve natural environmental features such as wetlands and forests.

**GOAL
7**

Reduce the impacts of development on riparian resources within the Township and implement best management practices for design.

The water resources in the Central Lakes Region are a primary motivator for growth and development. Shoreline properties must be held to a high standard in terms of pollution control and stormwater management so as not to threaten the condition of lakes. Their protection is an essential strategy toward progressive development.

To achieve this goal, the Township will implement the following strategies:

- Encourage implementation of subdivision performance standards that reduce, limit, and make best use of impervious surface coverage.
- Work to preserve valuable open space and foster growth of native plant species along shoreline areas.

Section VII. Public Infrastructure & Services Plan

Transportation and Roads Policies

Fairview Township currently contains 29 miles of roadways serving nearly 600 permanent residents. The community is served by four County State Aid Highways: 1, 15, 34, and 77, which account for most of the paved road surface in the Township. In many rural communities, infrastructure costs of building and maintaining roadways sometimes outweigh the benefits they provide.

Many of the Township’s roads are used to access lakeshore properties, historically developed as seasonal residences and resorts that generate different traffic patterns than permanent housing. Specifically, seasonal dwellings produce more traffic during the summer, especially on holidays and weekends. Conversely, seasonal migration results in lower traffic levels during summer weekdays and the winter months. As more seasonal residences are converted to permanent residences and resorts to year-round getaway destinations, traffic volumes should fluctuate less dramatically between seasons.



Currently, Fairview Township is served by the following transportation providers:

Nearest Transit:	Crow Wing County Transit
Cab Service:	Brainerd Area Taxi
Nearest Regional Airport:	Brainerd/Crow Wing Regional
Nearest International Airports:	Minneapolis-St. Paul International Duluth International Hector International (Fargo-Moorhead)

In the next 25 years, Fairview Township can expect more than 600 new residents. While the current capacity of the non-lakeshore area roads may be adequate, future housing growth could result in more traffic on existing roads and increased demand for greater road capacity. In response to these demands, Fairview residents outlined seven policies that will impact transportation system development and maintenance:

1. **Ensure safe driving conditions for travelers within Fairview Township and continue to coordinate with the Cass County Highway Department on roadway safety.**
2. **Increase pedestrian travel safety along Township roadways.**
3. **Ensure that traffic increases driven by growth are well managed via roadway improvements, increased maintenance, and ongoing coordination.**
4. **Establish policies and procedures for developers to construct or upgrade roadways and accommodate project-specific traffic.**
5. **Develop policies and procedures that require financial security for public improvements.**

6. **Coordinate area trails into Fairview Township and establish connections with East Gull Lake, Lake Shore, Pillager, Sylvan Area, and other adjacent areas through the creation of an active trails related committee.**
7. **Support the creation of a public transit system for lower Cass County that will provide service to Fairview Township residents.**

Emergency Services

In small communities there is often a need to collaborate with other localities to maximize the effectiveness of public services. The arrival of additional residents to the Central Lakes Region will require an efficient emergency services system that can be both accommodating and flexible. Currently, Fairview Township is served by the following service providers:

Law Enforcement:	Cass County Sheriff's Department
Fire Protection:	Pillager Area Fire Protection Association
Ambulance:	Pillager Area Fire & North
Ambulance Emergency Medical:	St. Joseph's (Brainerd)/Lakewood Hospital (Staples)

In preparation for additional residents and a growing tax base, Township residents established an Emergency Services Policy:

1. **Continue to develop and maintain cooperative relationships between emergency services providers.**

Pursuing this guiding principle will ensure the safety and protection of not only Fairview Township, but surrounding communities as well.

Communications Policy

Establishing and maintaining open lines of communication is a common trait among progressive communities like Fairview. Recent advances in technology have revolutionized the way we interact with others. Upgrading communication infrastructure provides valuable resources to residents and attracts economic and residential development. At a community meeting Fairview residents instituted a communications policy to serve as a guideline for future investment and service:

1. **Support the expansion of communications infrastructure to serve Fairview Township residents including cable TV, high-speed Internet, increased cellular telephone coverage, and new technologies such as fiber optics.**

Currently, Fairview Township is served by the following communications outlets:

- Satellite TV/Cable TV (Limited)
- High-Speed Internet – DSL/Cable (Limited)
- Telephone Service
- Cellular Telephone Coverage

Facilities Policies

For many communities, balancing spending and providing necessary facilities can be difficult. As Fairview Township grows, its facilities infrastructure will need to be updated and expanded. The following policies reflect the needs and desires of the community with respect to facilities:

1. **Establish and maintain a cemetery within the Township.**
2. **Explore development of a community center or public gathering facility.**
3. **Ensure that the Township Hall facility can accommodate an increasing population.**

Wastewater Treatment and Infrastructure Policies

The ability to efficiently and effectively treat wastewater without impacting the quality of our natural resources continues to be a significant challenge for Fairview Township and surrounding communities. Several area communities have developed centralized municipal wastewater infrastructure which eliminates the need for on-site treatment of wastewater, while others are focusing on better managing on-site systems.

Management options include not only implementation of regulations and policies, but also financial tools and support available through area agencies. In order ensure wastewater treatment and infrastructure policies continue to be addressed effectively, Fairview Township must consider both centralized treatment and on-site management of wastewater treatment systems.

1. **Continue to develop and improve upon partnerships, policies and programs to efficiently and effectively treat wastewater without impacting the quality of our natural resources.**
2. **Continue to work with the City of East Gull Lake, City of Lake Shore and all Gull Lake communities to address wastewater treatment as a team, rather than as individuals and, more specifically, on the expansion and management of a centralized wastewater treatment system along the shores of Gull Lake.**
3. **Work with Cass County, landowners, developers, businesses and other sectors of the community on developing and implementing improved policies and programs to better manage on-site septic treatment systems and ensure the availability of improvement tools to landowners.**
4. **Encourage and require, where feasible, the use of centralized or cluster wastewater treatment systems to serve new development and ensure those systems are well-managed through the implementation of a property owners association or, as possible, a subordinate service district.**
5. **Establish an infrastructure committee responsible for the monitoring and implementation of the policies contained within this plan and address infrastructure related issues facing Fairview Township, primarily wastewater management.**



Section VIII. Development Suitability & Future Land Use

Development Suitability

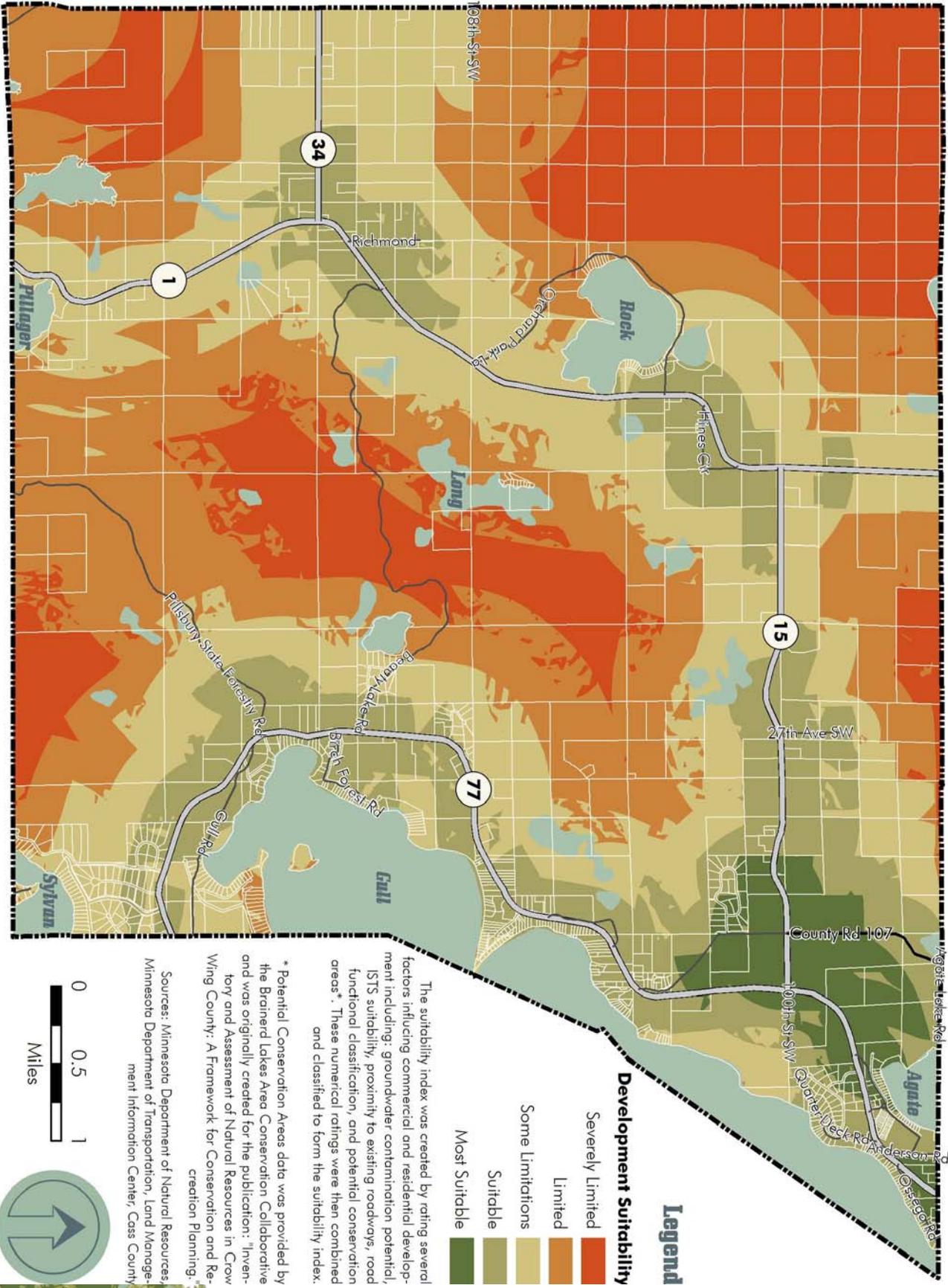
What is development suitability?

Our physical pattern of development shapes how we relate to the resources around us. Fairview Township is projected to grow and develop at a fast rate over the next 25 years. Planning issues are not about whether or not growth will happen, but rather, where and how it will occur. The Township wants to protect its valued amenities and ensure that new development does not negatively impact the local community character, economy, environment, and quality of life.

The map of development suitability is a general indicator within the Township. For example, lands closer to roads and existing development generally have a higher suitability for development than lands near wetlands. The map is not intended to be used for parcel-specific planning.

Suitability for Development

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 INSTITUTE



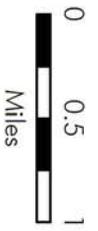
Development Suitability

- Severely Limited
- Limited
- Some Limitations
- Suitable
- Most Suitable

The suitability index was created by rating several factors influencing commercial and residential development including: groundwater contamination potential, ISTS suitability, proximity to existing roadways, road functional classification, and potential conservation areas*. These numerical ratings were then combined and classified to form the suitability index.

* Potential Conservation Areas data was provided by the Brainerd Lakes Area Conservation Collaborative and was originally created for the publication: "Inventory and Assessment of Natural Resources in Crow Wing County: A Framework for Conservation and Recreation Planning."

Sources: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Land Management Information Center, Cass County



Future Land Use

What is a future land use map?

A future land use map is intended to guide the decision-making process for the Township on development and subdivision proposals and annexation actions. It is important to understand that a future land use map is NOT a zoning map. Instead, it is a visual representation of how the community would like to see the Township developed in the future.

A primary function of the future land use map is to assist the Township in making decisions to approve or deny rezoning and subdivision proposals, and to make annexation decisions. Without a future land use map, rezoning and subdivision requests may lead to development patterns that are not compatible with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

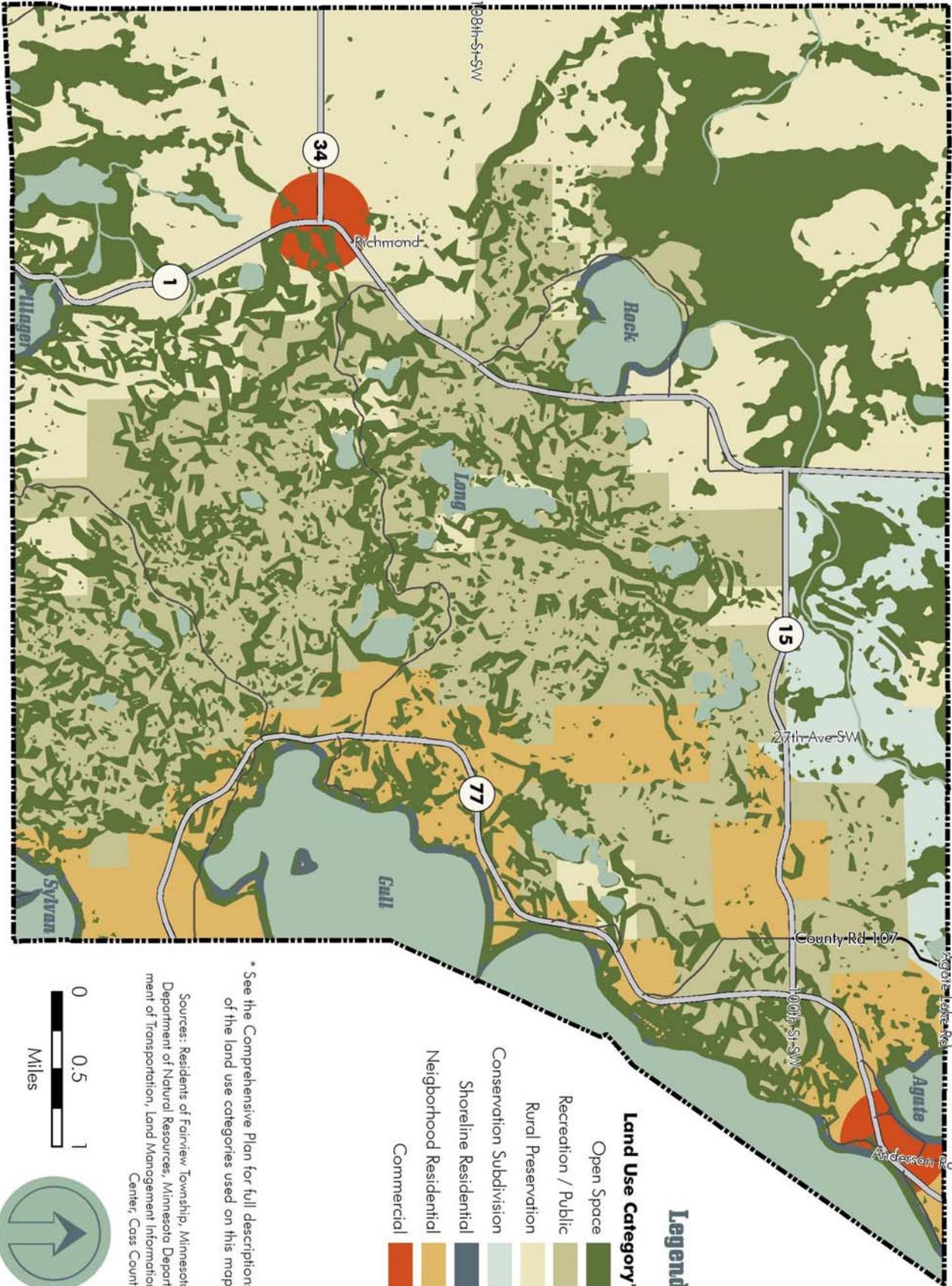
How is the future land use map created?

The future land use map is a visual representation of the values and goals of the community. In addition, other criteria are included for participants to consider. These criteria include the following information: public and protected lands; forested and critical habitat areas; wetlands and water bodies; topographic features; and existing major and minor roadways.

Land Use Categories

- **Open Space** - A designation for the preservation of publicly-owned lands, environmentally sensitive lands, wetlands, unique resources, historic sites, and land set aside as part of the development process.
- **Recreation/Public** – A designation for lands to be used for public and private recreational facilities.
- **Rural Preservation** – A designation for properties that are non-shoreline and have developed, or are suitable to be developed, to preserve the rural character of the area. Lot sizes would be five acres or greater.
- **Conservation Subdivision** – A designation for properties that are non-shoreline and are most suited to being developed using conservation design principles. Conservation design would allow for preservation of open spaces and sensitive areas while allowing increased development flexibility in areas most suitable to development.
- **Shoreline Residential** – A designation for shoreline properties to be developed residentially. Lot sizes would range from 20,000 square feet (less than one-half acre) to 40,000 square feet (slightly less than one acre).
- **Neighborhood Residential** – A designation for properties that are non-riparian and have been developed, or are suitable to be developed, in a residential neighborhood. Lot sizes shall be 2.5 buildable land, excluding wetlands.
- **Commercial** – A designation for non-shoreline property that is suitable for commercial development.

Future Land Use



Prepared August 2006 by:
 COMMUNITY GROWTH

Appendix.

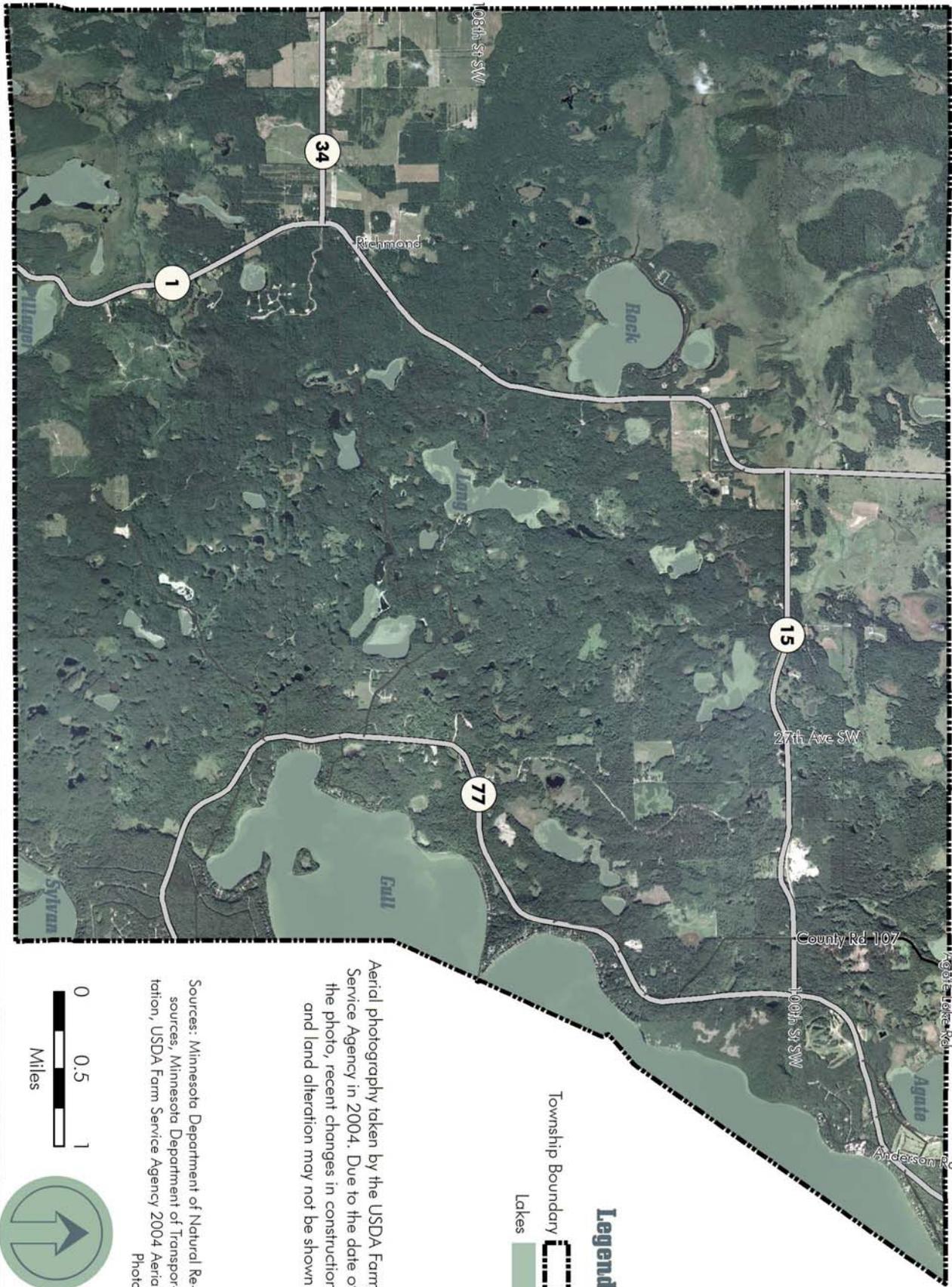
Additional Planning Maps

The maps contained in the following appendix were created to inform the overall comprehensive planning process, helping residents, facilitators, and all participants to develop a better understanding of the land use patterns, existing resources, and over lay of the land within the Township. Some of the maps created for the planning process are contained in the text of this play. All other maps are included in this appendix.

Planning Maps

- Aerial photography
- Geomorphology
- Lands in Public Ownership
- Presettlement Vegetation
- Roadways and Functional Class
- Topography & Elevation

Aerial Photography



Aerial photography taken by the USDA Farm Service Agency in 2004. Due to the date of the photo, recent changes in construction and land alteration may not be shown.

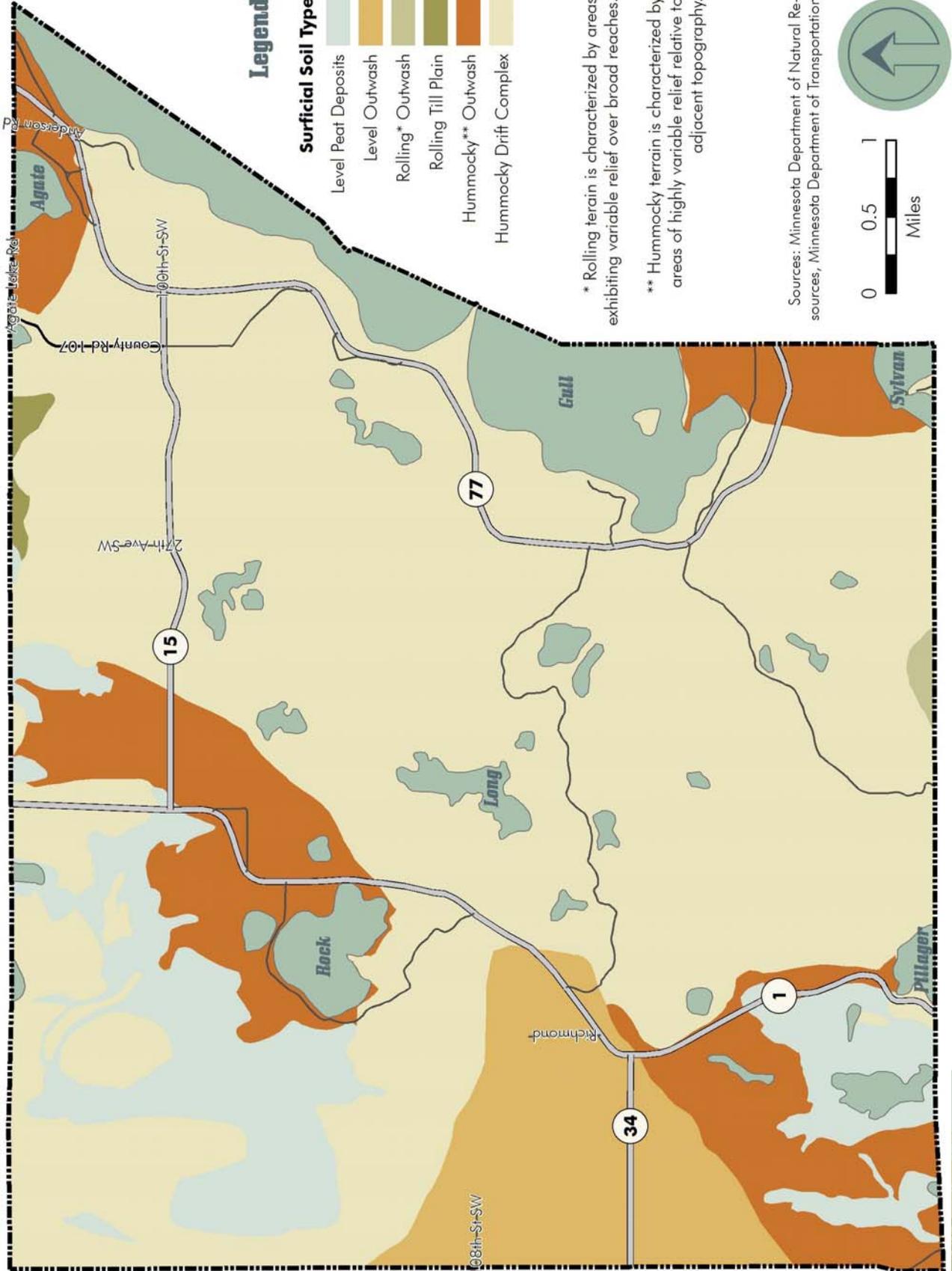
Sources: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Department of Transportation, USDA Farm Service Agency 2004 Aerial Photo

Prepared June 2006 by:

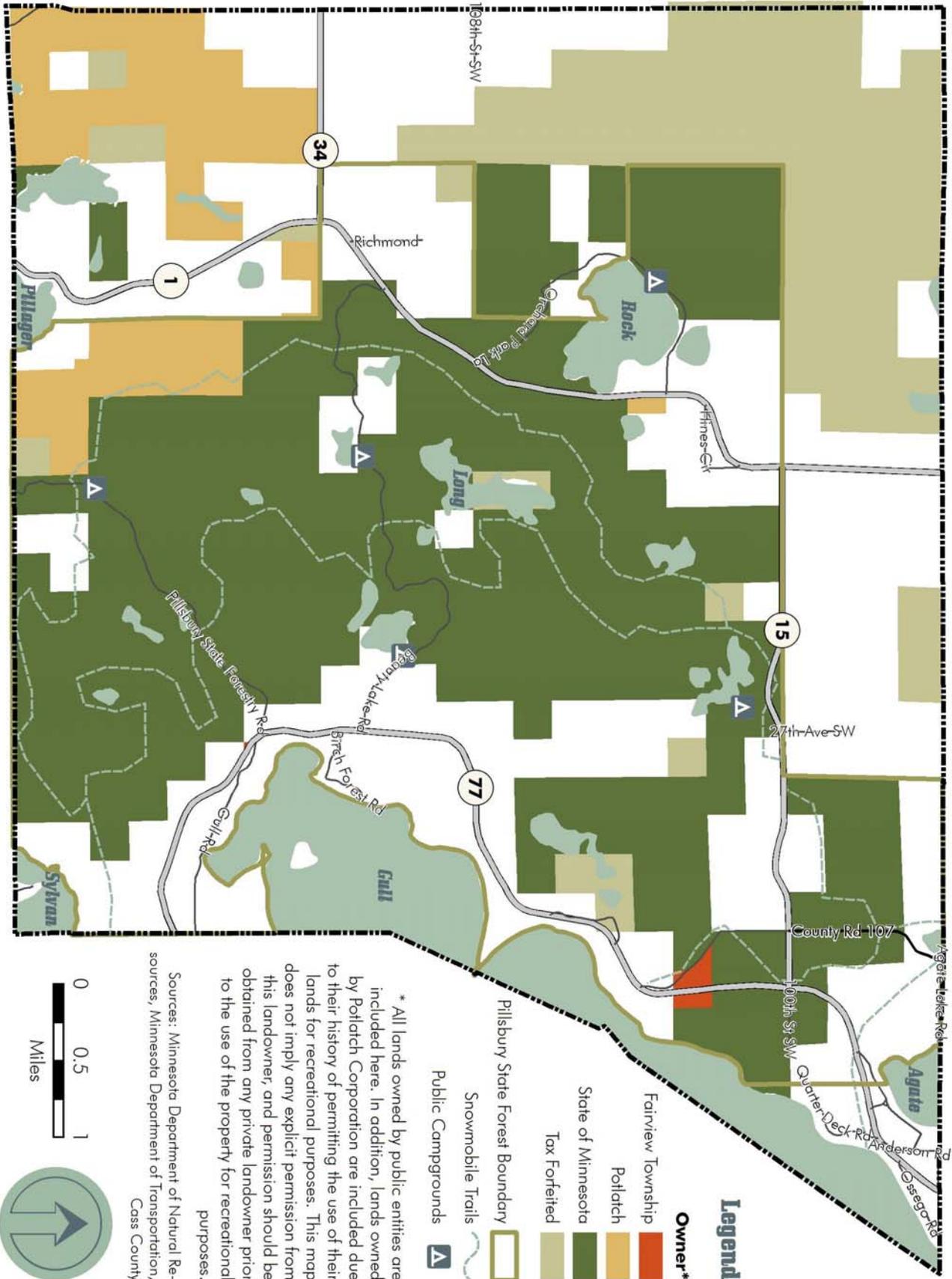
 COMMUNITY GROWTH INSTITUTE

Geomorphology

Prepared June 2006 by:
 COMMUNITY GROWTH ALLIANCE



Lands in Public Ownership



Prepared July 2006 by:
COMMITTEE ON GROWTH
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Legend

Owner*

- Fairview Township
- Pollatch
- State of Minnesota
- Tax Forfeited

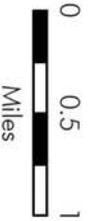
Pillsbury State Forest Boundary

Snowmobile Trails

Public Campgrounds

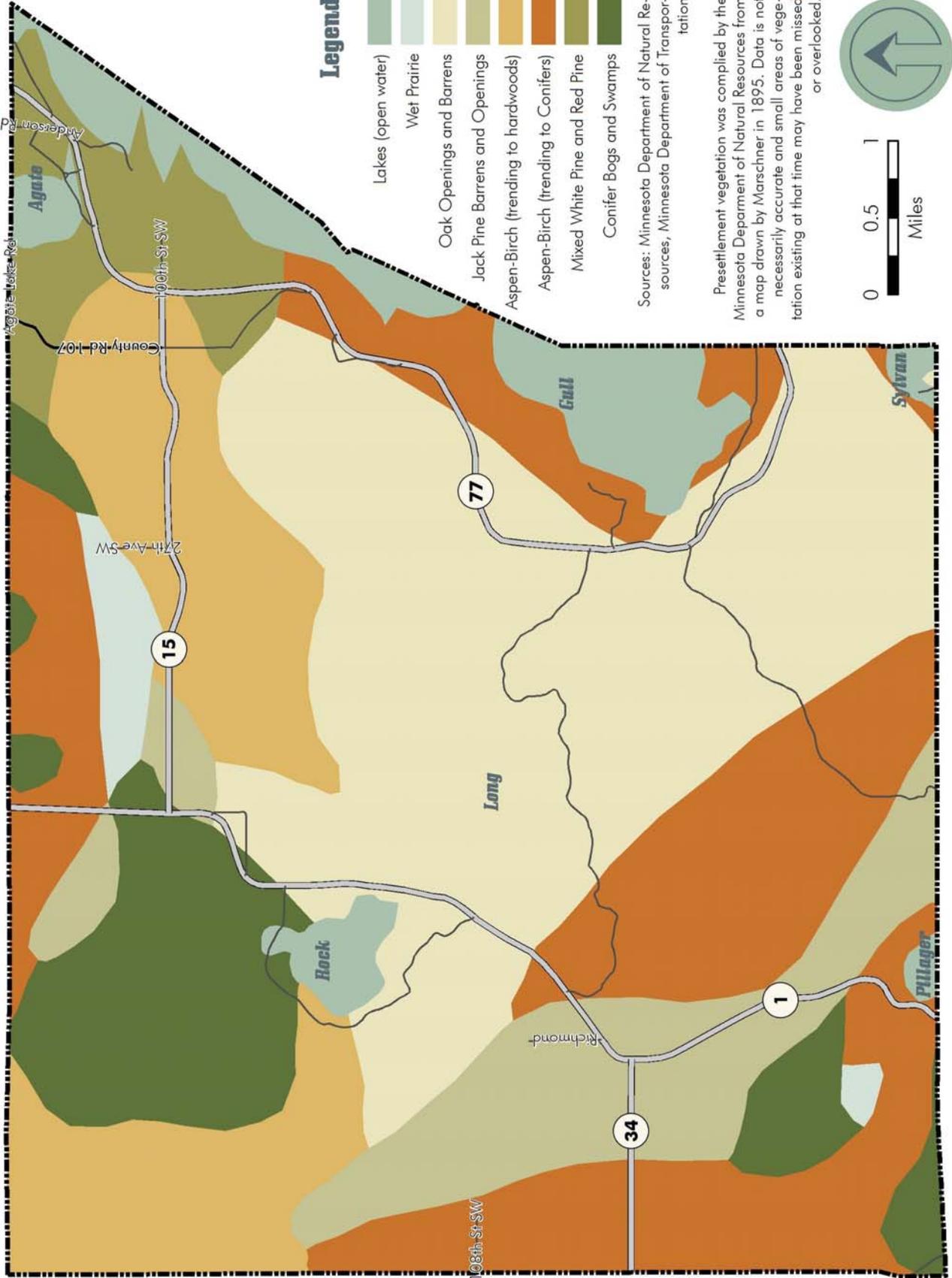
* All lands owned by public entities are included here. In addition, lands owned by Pollatch Corporation are included due to their history of permitting the use of their lands for recreational purposes. This map does not imply any explicit permission from this landowner, and permission should be obtained from any private landowner prior to the use of the property for recreational purposes.

Sources: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Cass County



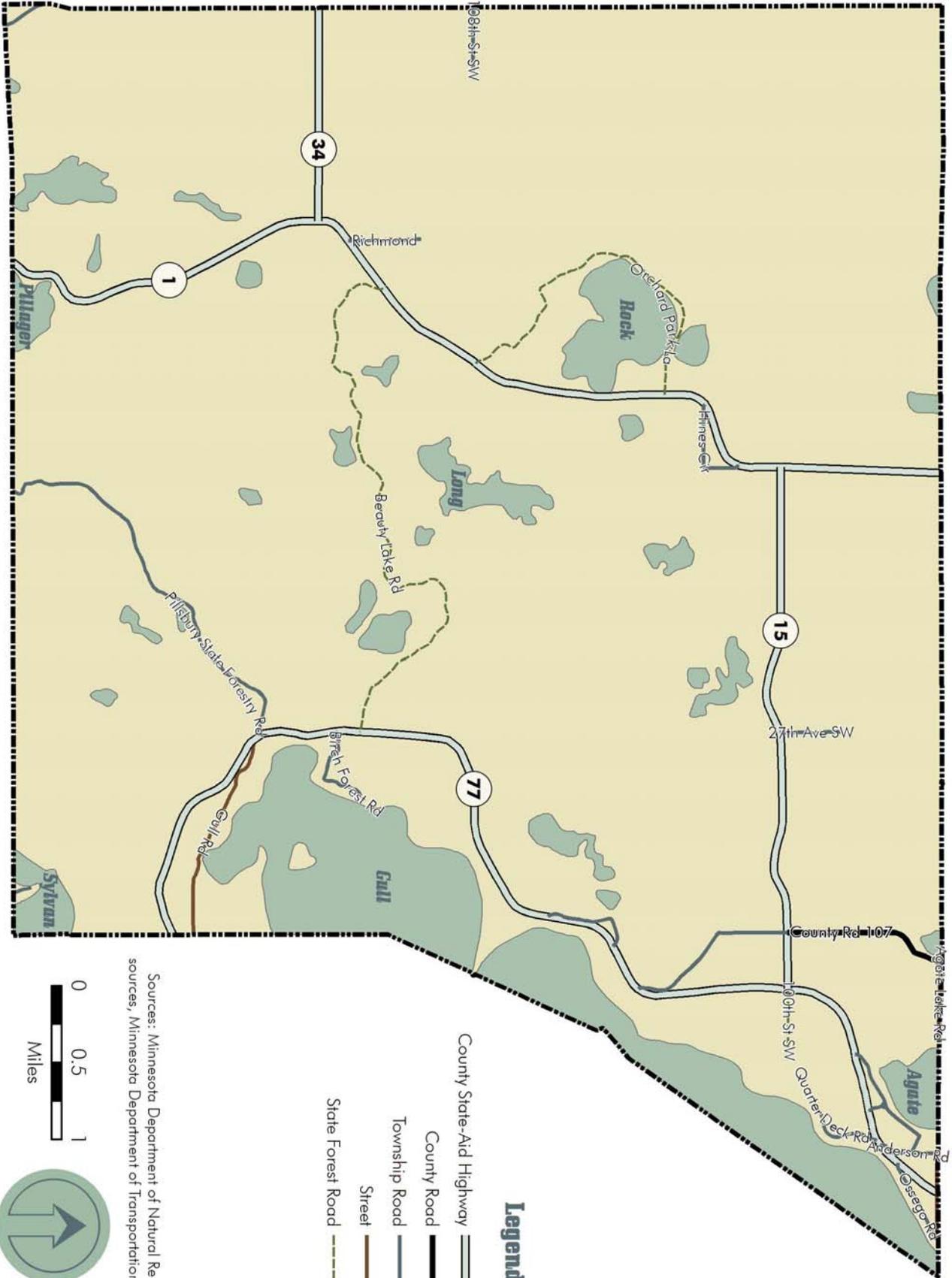
Presettlement Vegetation

Prepared June 2006 by:
 **COMMUNITY GROWTH INSTITUTE**





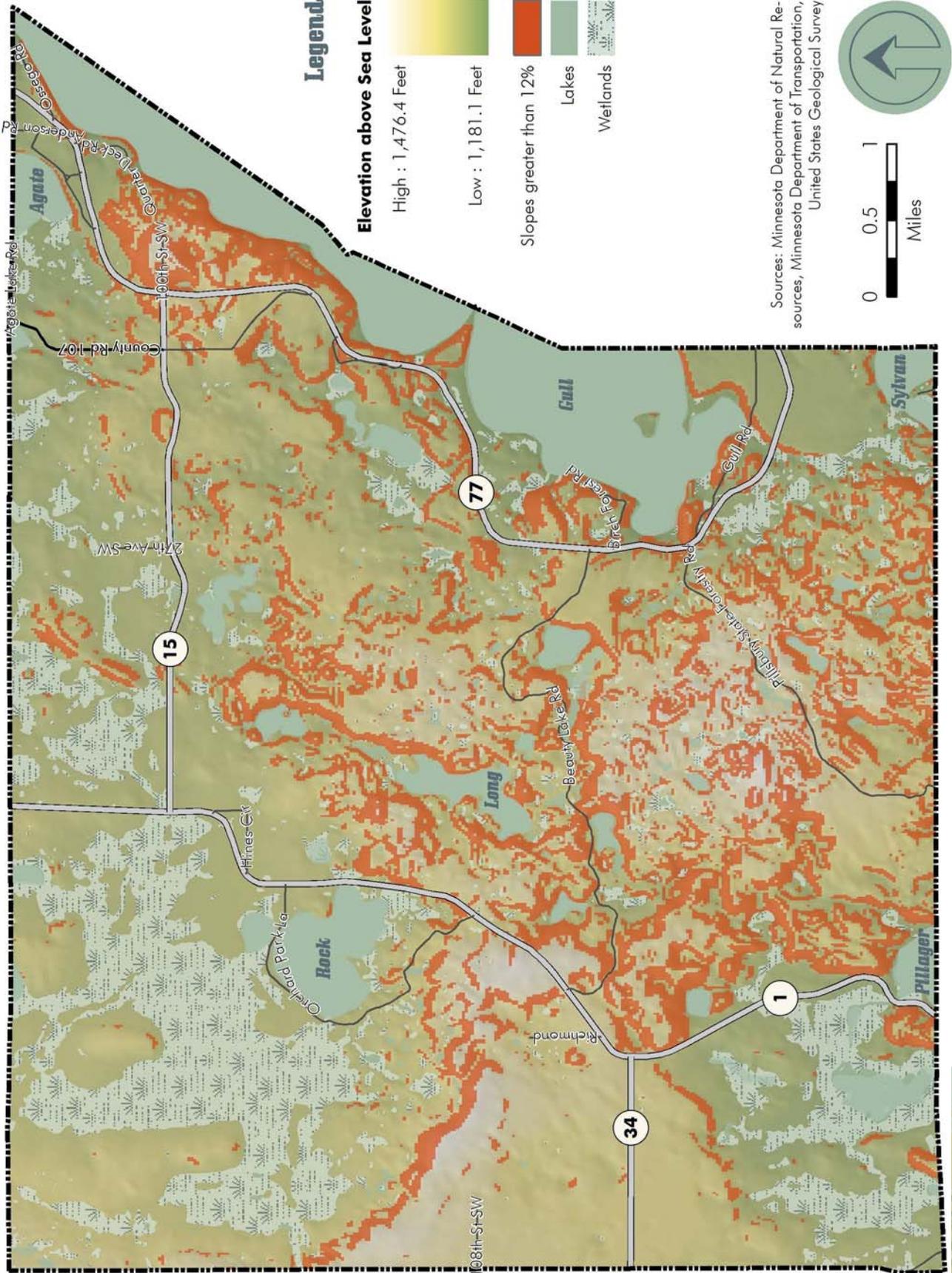
Roadways and Functional Class



Prepared June 2006 by:
COMMUNITY GROWTH
 PARTNERS

Topography & Elevation

Prepared July 2006 by:
COMMUNITY GROWTH INSTITUTE



This Plan was adopted by the
Fairview Township Board of Supervisors
on November 8, 2006.

