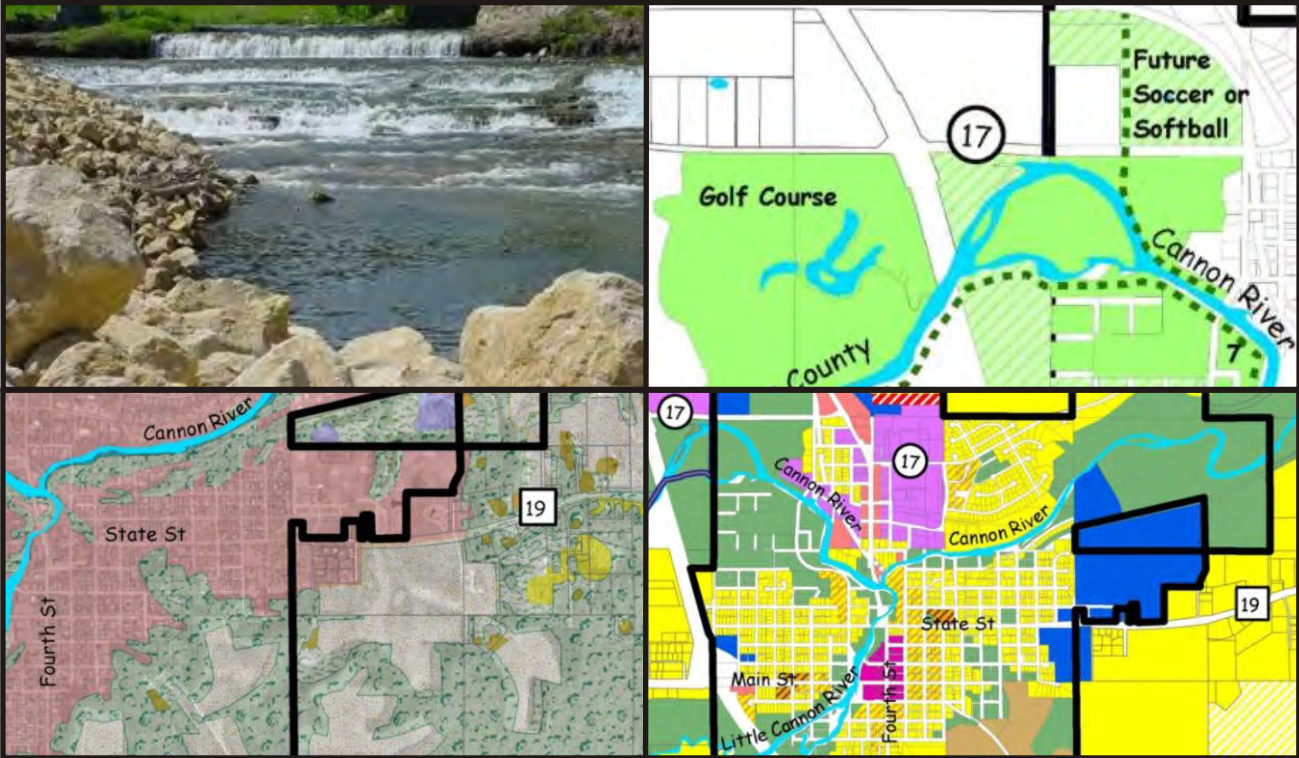


# Cannon Falls Comprehensive Plan



Approved November 6, 2003  
Prepared by Dahlgren, Shardlow and Uban, Inc.

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This Comprehensive Plan was approved by the Cannon Falls City Council on November 6, 2003.

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# Introduction

## Project Description

This version of Cannon Falls' comprehensive plan is the third since 1964. The city's first plan was done in that year. A second plan was developed in 1994.

Many things have changed since 1964.

It was about that time that Highway 52 was relocated west of its old alignment out to the edge of town. That started a process of adjustments for the city. New developments emerged out along the highway. The rail line to Red Wing was abandoned. The Twin Cities grew from 1,482,030 in 1960 to over 2,642,056 in the year 2000. Families got smaller and more people started driving and commuting to work.

Additional changes occurred that impacted Cannon Falls. New shopping centers were built in the developing Twin Cities suburbs south of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. Big box retailers and large automobile dealerships also moved in to serve those communities. Their retail impacts spread far into distant communities. Cannon Falls felt the impact as clothing and auto outlets left the city in response to competition from stores in other communities.

This plan addresses these impacts and the way Cannon Falls residents will respond to the challenges that face them. For example, residents hope they can replace some of the lost services as expected population increases bring buying power to the community. At the same time, the community wants to make sure that the new subdivisions and developments that house new residents are well designed and provide a variety housing types and prices.

Some things have not changed in Cannon Falls.

The rivers, flood plains, bluffs and wooded areas are essentially as they were in 1964. And, the community overwhelmingly supports preservation of these natural features in the face of new growth pressures.

## Plan Content

The content in the plan recognizes the conflicts between growth, environmental protection, and retention of the city's small town atmosphere. It contains policies to guide growth and change in the community over the next several years and tries to strike a balance between competing forces.

**This plan includes the following chapters:**

1. Environmental Protection
2. Growth Management
3. Housing
4. Economic Development
5. Downtown
6. Community Services
7. Transportation
8. Land Use

## Planning Process

Citizens from Cannon Falls and surrounding communities that have a stake in the development of Cannon Falls played an instrumental role in developing the vision, goals, objectives, and policies in this plan.

They convened on January 28, 2002 to prepare lists of what they liked and disliked about Cannon Falls. They also identified what they thought should be preserved, avoided, and achieved in Cannon Falls. Finally, they went through an exercise to help identify a vision for Cannon Falls.

The results of this work led to the identification of key questions that needed to be addressed. These questions were addressed at focus topic discussions during the summer and fall of 2002. Goals, objectives, and policies emerged from the work of the citizens who attended these meetings.

## Background and Planning Context

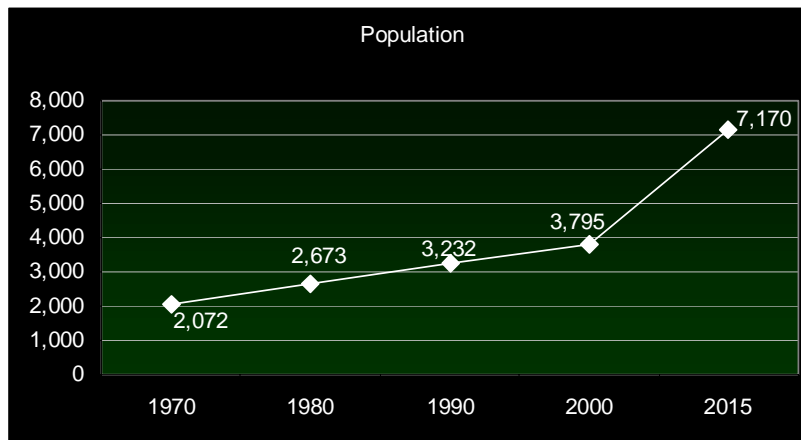
Cannon Falls is located in a ring of growing free-standing cities some 35 to 50 miles from the Twin Cities. Cannon Falls is 38 miles from the heart of the Twin Cities and twelve to sixteen miles from developing subdivisions in Farmington and Rosemount. It is approximately a 30-minute drive to competing service centers in Northfield, Hastings, and Red Wing. Map 1 shows Cannon Falls with respect to neighboring cities.

Cannon Falls is a free-standing service center that has traditionally served the agricultural area surrounding it. However, it has a growing industrial and tourism economic base and is increasingly providing housing for people working in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and Rochester. About half of working Cannon Falls residents are able to find employment in Cannon Falls.

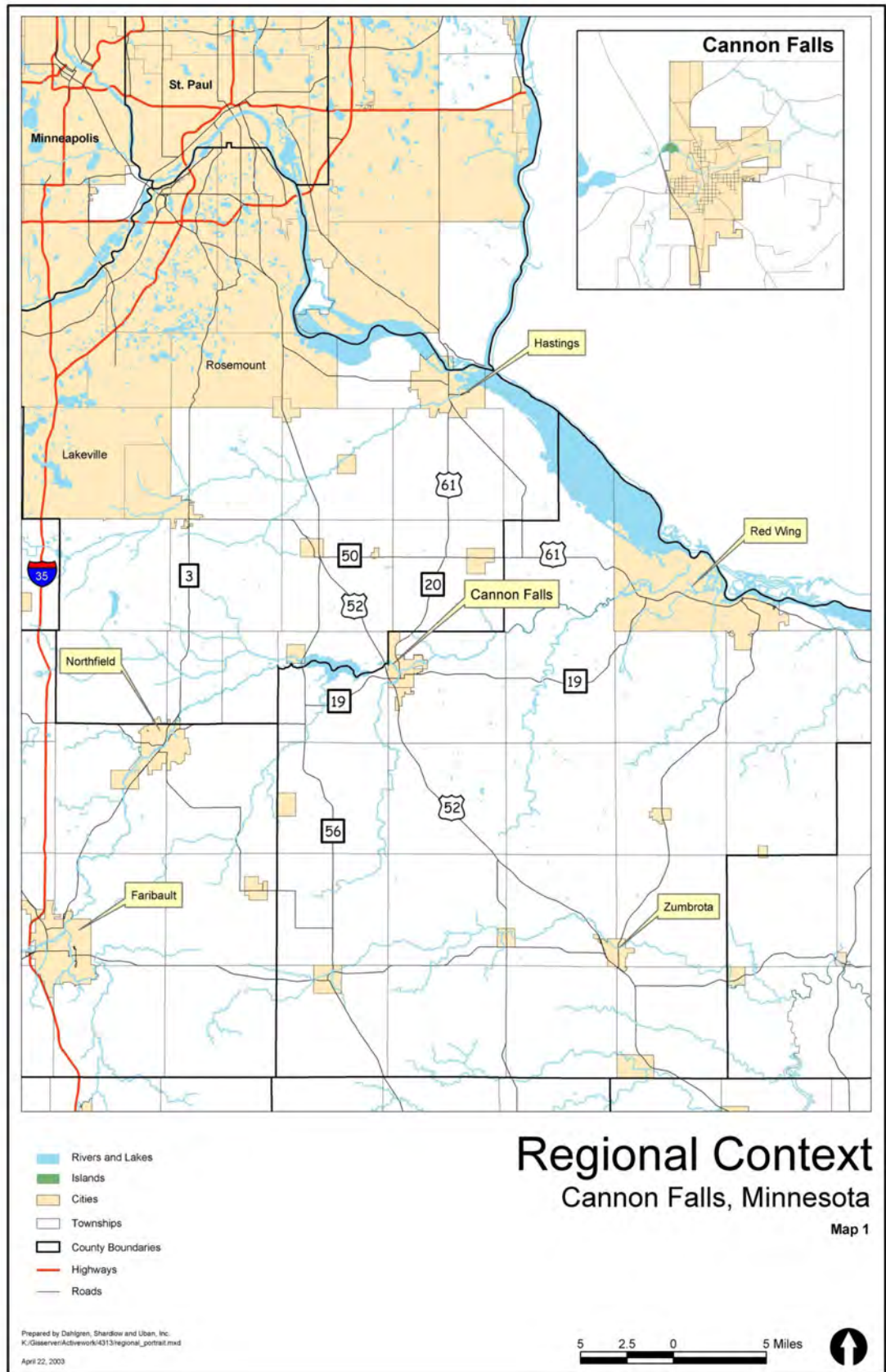
Red Wing and Northfield are about four times the size of Cannon Falls. But, they are not growing as fast as Cannon Falls.

Population				
<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2015</u> (Projected)
2,072	2,673	3,232	3,795	7,170

Cannon Falls' recent growth spurt started in the 1970s. There was a 17.4% increase in the 1990s and an 83% increase since 1970. However, some of this growth was accommodated in areas



annexed to the city. Overall, Cannon Falls, Cannon Falls Township, and Stanton Township increased by 12.4% between 1990 and 2000. Cannon Falls and its adjacent townships increased faster than the county. Goodhue County increased by 8.4% in the same period.



Cannon Falls has a traditional downtown main street with several historic buildings. The Cannon and Little Cannon Rivers run through town. The downtown is surrounded by compact neighborhoods on the east, west, and south sides and a smaller residential neighborhood on the north side of the river. Newer subdivisions have been built in the 1980s and 1990s in the northeast part of town, north of the Cannon River. This part of town also accommodates the older agricultural service activities such as the grain mills and the new industrial park. It is the area where the railroad once passed through town. The south side of town has attracted highway-oriented businesses where old Highway 52 (now County 24) and new Highway 52 now converge.

The natural amenities of the area have been fairly well preserved and provide an attraction to tourists and homeowners alike seeking a place with a traditional small town atmosphere.

Traffic in town has increased substantially over the years and threatens to adversely impact mobility and the quality of life unless several improvements are made. MnDOT has plans for a major upgrade of Highway 52 to a freeway type of design that will eliminate at-grade intersections. A new interchange is planned for the southside of town.

Cannon Falls faces problems of aging infrastructure (bridges and streets) and providing additional water and waste water capacity for the growing parts of town.

## **Planning Assumptions**

Growth pressures will continue as people moving to the Twin Cities region and existing Twin Cities residents seek alternatives to traditional suburban living. It is assumed that Cannon Falls will grow by 750 dwelling units between 2003 and 2008. This includes about 47 units per year from the Sandstone Ridge development that is under construction, 58 units per year from the Schwiech Farm development that is in the review process, and 50 units per year from other projects including the remaining Wilson project, the Hwy. 17 project, and one north of Filmor Trucking. This will mean an additional 2,025 people in Cannon Falls by the fall of 2008.

The Schweich Farm development will continue until 2013 with an additional 58 units per year scheduled. Another 50 units per year could be generated from developments parallel and north of Hwy. 17 and from other locations on the west and south sides of the city. All these developments could add another 500 units to the city between 2008 and 2013. This would result in another 1350 people.

That's a total of 3,375 new residents in the next 10 years. That total would almost double the size of Cannon Falls.

Traffic will continue to grow as new homes are added to the community. Most of the new development will likely occur on the south side of town on or very near Hwy. 25.

Local access will be lost along Highway 52 when the highway is rebuilt and the new interchange developed.

New streets will have to be added and connections made to the high school area from new



subdivisions that will be built above the bluffs on the southeast edge of town. Some sensitive environmental features may have to be altered to make way for these new streets.

Communication and close working relationships will have to be maintained with Cannon Falls, Randolph, and Stanton Townships to deal with growth pressures.

Cannon Falls residents will likely seek community amenities similar to Rosemount and Farmington. These include a community center with indoor ice, meeting rooms, sports courts and practice facilities.

Cannon Falls residents will also want to replace some of the elements of the community that have been lost over the last several years – entertainment (bowling and movie theater), clothing stores, and other retail outlets.

## The Vision for Cannon Falls

Cannon Falls will be a place where family and church are still important. It will be a place where folks say, “hi,” as they pass on the sidewalk. People can walk the streets at night without feeling threatened and children will always feel “at home.” People use the parks for lunch at noontime and for just hanging out on the swings. Youth football and baseball games will still be played at John Burch Park on the edge of downtown.

Cannon Falls will retain its natural beauty. Special steps will be taken to preserve the bluffs, the hills, cliffs, wooded areas, and scenic drives. The river, Lake Byllesby, the falls, and the Little Cannon, and Cannon River valleys will continue to be special places. Tourism will be a big thing in the summer time. The biking trail extends all the way from Northfield through Cannon Falls to Red Wing. Downtown has maintained its charm and appearance. Business folks have worked together to take advantage of the area’s recreational assets to increase business and service opportunities for tourists as well as community residents.

Cannon Falls will grow out into the surrounding agricultural areas. But, the growth rate will be controlled and the compatibility between the older part of town and the newer, developing areas will be assured through the city’s development standards. A good share of the new housing will be built to accommodate young families and empty nesters.

The industrial park will accommodate new companies that will provide jobs for area residents as well as folks from surrounding communities.

Despite the growth, the town will not be overwhelmed with traffic and congestion. Highway 52 will be improved by eliminating at-grade crossing and building an interchange near its intersection with Hwy. 24. Highway 19 will no longer carry through-traffic directly through the downtown neighborhoods because it was relocated to the north city limits. As a result, those neighborhoods will become more livable.

Downtown will be a little busy though. The growth on the outskirts of town and the growth of tourism will put more folks into downtown. Downtown buildings will be preserved and the traditional character retained. A few more businesses will be located in downtown. However, the new facilities made feasible by population growth in town, namely the movie theater, bowling alley, and community center may be located on the edge of town where there is more room for parking.

The city's community facilities such as the library, schools, and hospital have grown along with the population. Assisted living apartments and a community nursing home will also be expanded to accommodate the community's senior population.

Cannon Falls will always have that small town, friendly feeling even as it grows to accommodate new businesses and folks moving from the Twin Cities area. Folks will say, "Even though Cannon Falls has grown, it doesn't seem that it has changed that much."

# Chapter 1. Environmental Protection

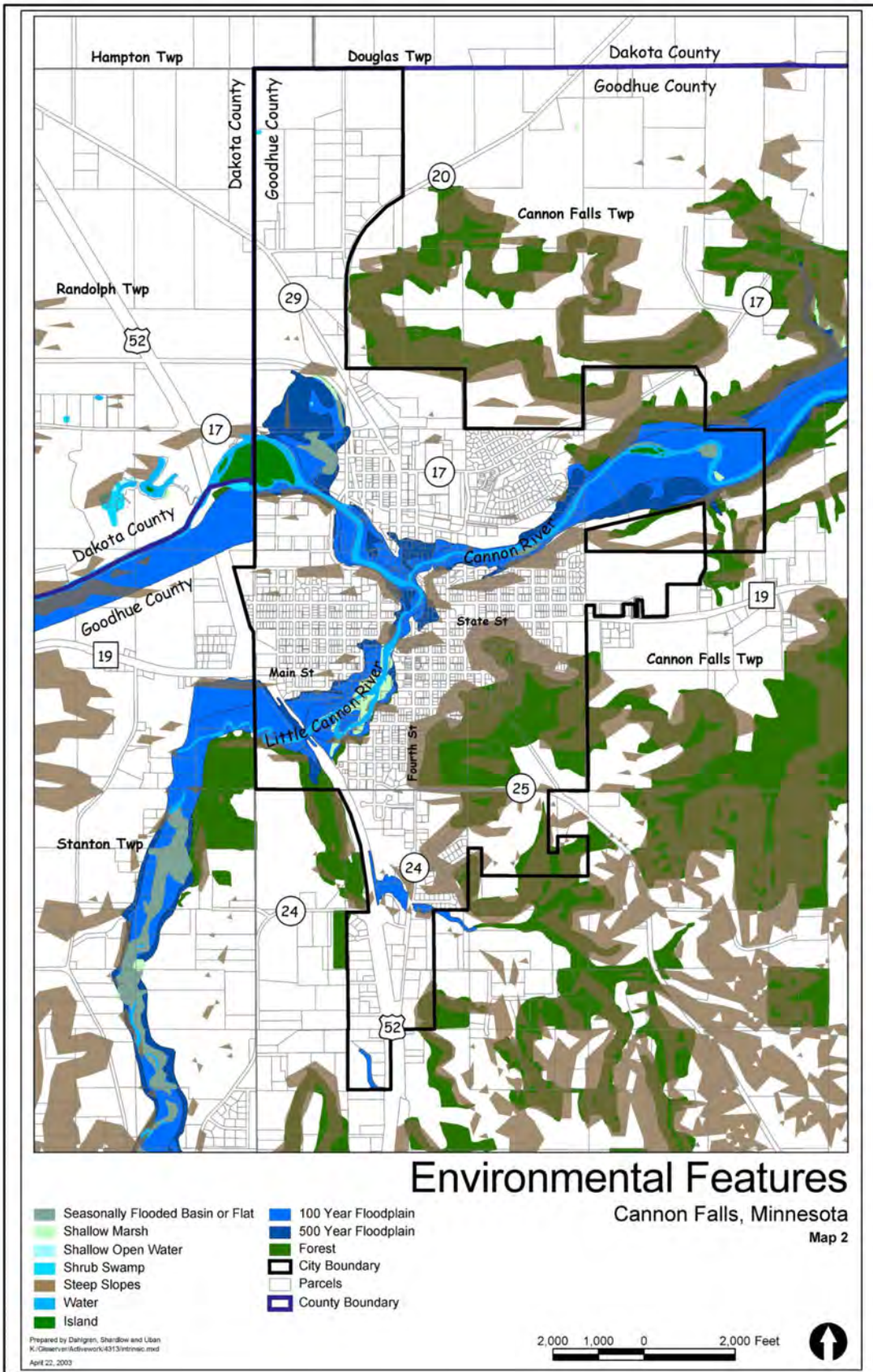
The defining features of Cannon Falls are the natural amenities and quality physical environment. Residents of the area are proud of these features and wish to preserve them. The town derives its name from the waterfall on the Little Cannon River. Original settlers built a mill on the river to grind the grain produced on the adjacent rich farm- lands. The city then grew up around the mill. The city's growth was shaped and confined by rivers and steep wooded bluffs. Fortunately, these bluffs have been, for the most part, preserved except for the occasional construction of a street or highway.

Recently, these physical amenities have become the focal point of a tourism industry. The Cannon River Trail was built along the river on an old railroad grade between Cannon Falls and Red Wing. Summertime bikers, canoists, and rafters come to Cannon Falls to enjoy the trail and the river. They also enjoy the other scenic assets of the community.

The following goal, objectives, and policies are intended to preserve the environment and scenic beauty of the area.

## **Goal: Preservation of the following natural features or amenities in Cannon Falls.**

- The Cannon and Little Cannon Rivers and their flood plains.
- Lake Byllesby and the Oxford Mill.
- Bluffs, steep slopes, and forested areas.
- Agricultural land on the periphery of town until it is ready for urban densities and can be annexed into the city.
- Open space and park lands.



## Agricultural Land

**Objective:** Preservation of agricultural land in the surrounding townships until it is ready for urban densities.

**Policies:**

**EP 1** The city is opposed to the premature conversion of agricultural land to development.

**EP 2** The city supports density of no more than 1 unit per 40 acres in developments in the townships around the city.

**EP 3** The city supports gradual, planned annexation of agricultural areas that does not leap-frog undeveloped property.

**EP 4** The city is opposed to the establishment of any feedlot within 1 mile of the city boundary. The city is also opposed to feedlots 1 to 2 miles from the city boundary which have more than 300 animal units.

## Lake and Rivers

**Objective:** Preservation of the water quality and recreational value of Lake Byllesby and the Cannon and Little Cannon Rivers.

**Policies:**

**EP 5** The city supports the use of phosphate-free fertilizers on land inside and outside the city limits.

**EP 6** The city supports education efforts regarding the use of phosphate-free fertilizers and pesticides on urban and rural properties.

**EP 7** The city encourages agricultural best management practices.

**EP 8** The city supports and will encourage greater participation by households in the county sponsored household hazardous waste collection programs.

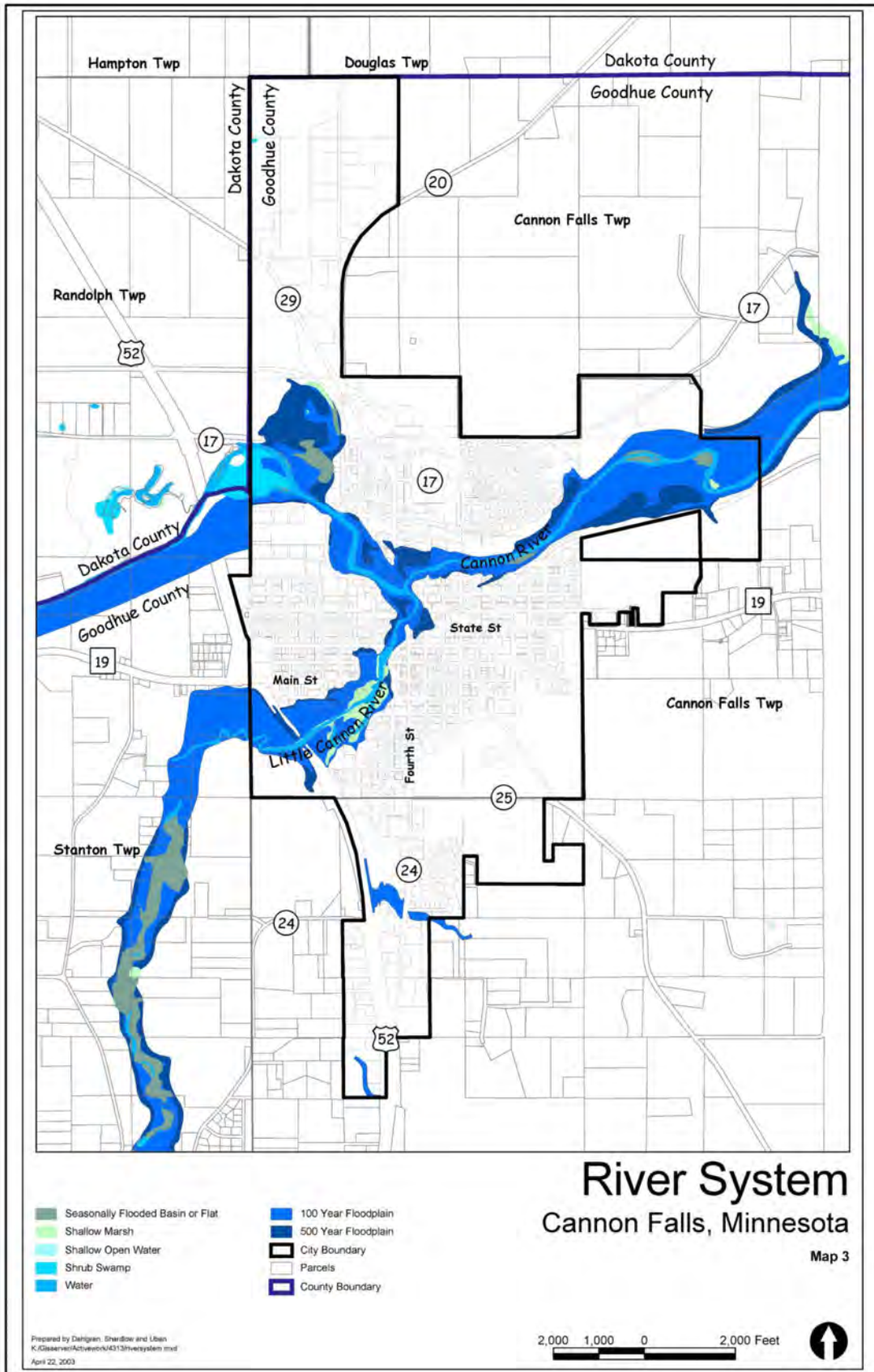
**EP 9** The city encourages the strong county enforcement of septic system regulations and individual sewage treatment systems.

**EP 10** The city discourages developments of greater density than one unit per 40 acres outside the city when no municipal services are available.

**EP 11** The city will not permit developments in the city when municipal water and sewer services are unavailable.

**EP 12** The city is opposed to tampering with the water level of Lake Byllesby either by removing the dam or manipulating the seasonal level of the lake.

**EP 13** The city will continue its shoreland management regulation.



## Bluffs and Slopes

**Objective:** Protection of the bluffs and views of the bluffs from a distance.

**Policies:**

**EP 14** The city will maintain and enforce the setbacks from the top and toe of the bluffs and prevent development in the bluff impact zone.

**EP 15** The city will enforce vegetation management standards for clear-cutting and intensive vegetation clearing in the bluff impact zone.

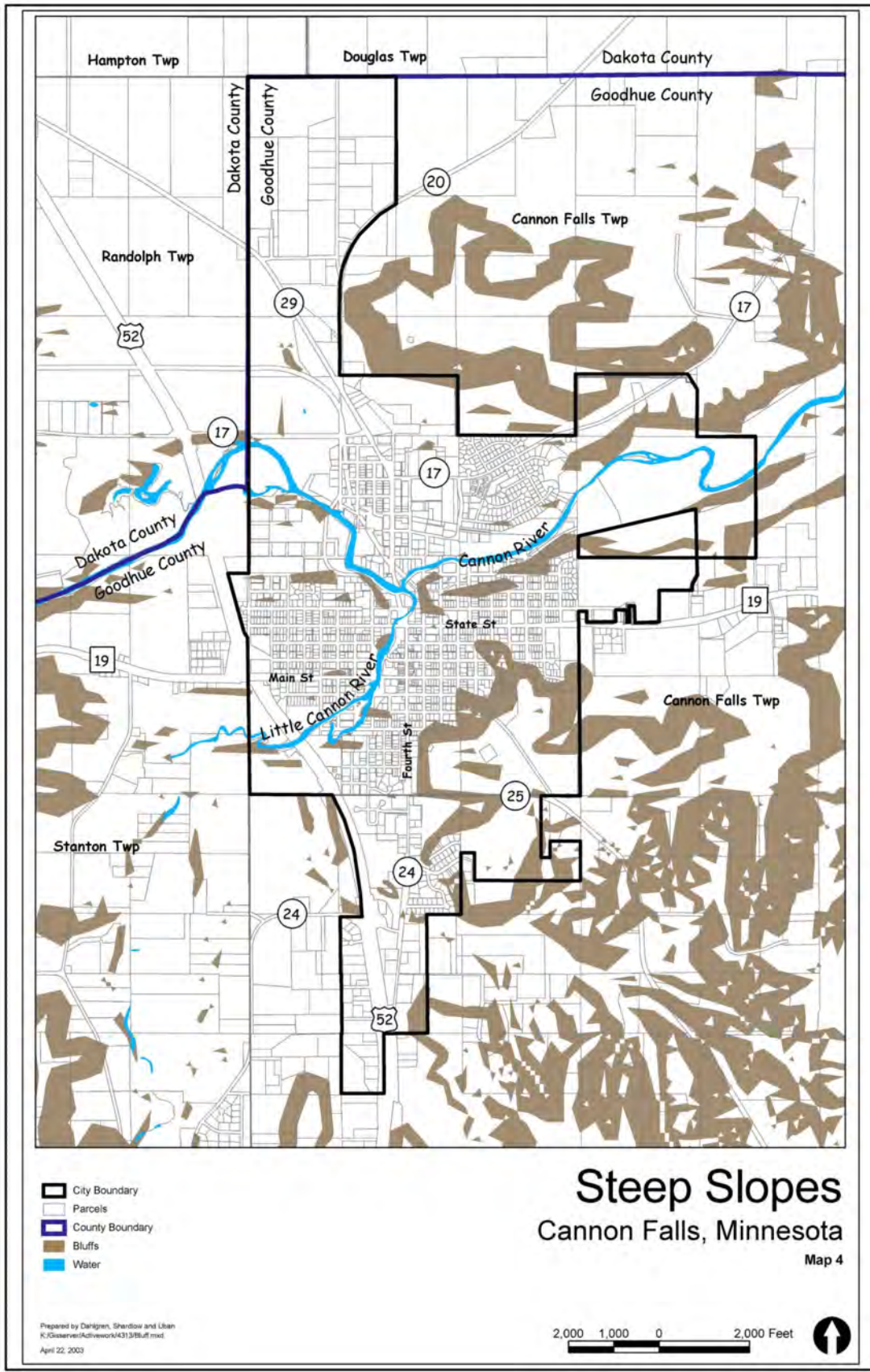
**EP 16** The city will work with agencies and protection groups to assess and preserve bluffs and thereby prevent any gradual degradation of the bluffs.

**EP 17** The city supports maximum height standards so that developments on the top of the bluffs are not intrusive and blend into the surroundings.

**EP 18** The city will develop performance standards for achieving access up and down the bluffs.

**EP 19** The city will continue to require erosion control and sedimentation plans for development near bluff areas.







## Open Space

**Objective:** Preservation of existing open space and parks.

**Policies:**

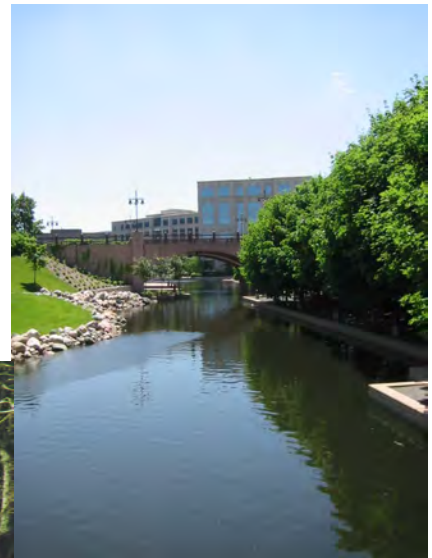
**EP 20** The city will not dispose of existing open space that it owns without considering the relative benefit of the new uses of the land versus the continued use of the land as open space.

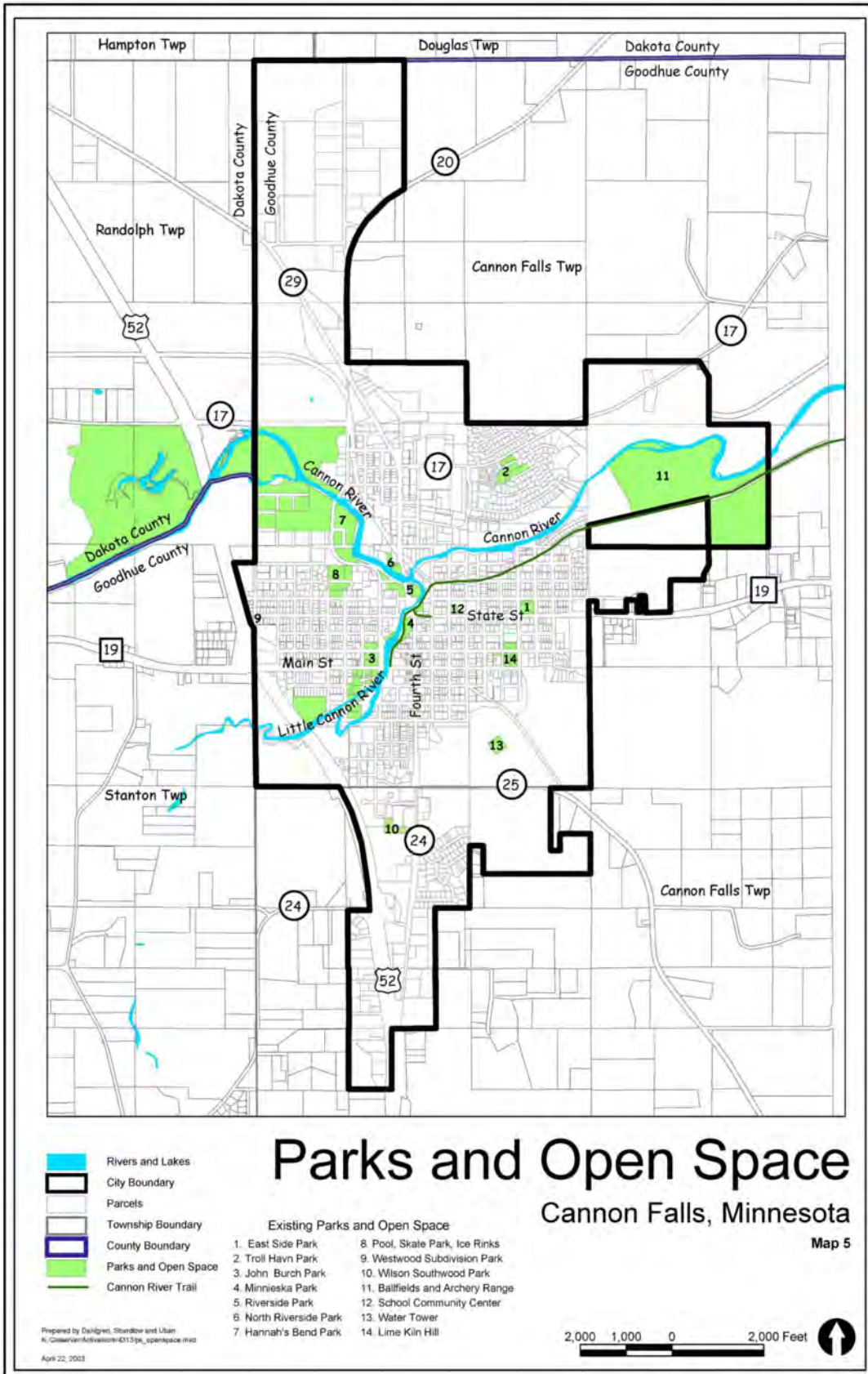
**EP 21** The city will monitor the condition of park facilities and provide enough operating funds for their maintenance.

**EP 22** New properties will not be acquired for open space purposes if the city does not have the projected financial resources to maintain them.

**EP 23** The city will work with civic organizations to “adopt-a-park” for upkeep and beautification.

**EP 24** The city will seek park lands or payments in lieu of land from residential developers to provide for adequate open space. Park lands may be provided by the developer and conveyed to the city. Or, the developer may develop open space and assign its control and maintenance to a homeowners association.





## Forests and Wooded Areas

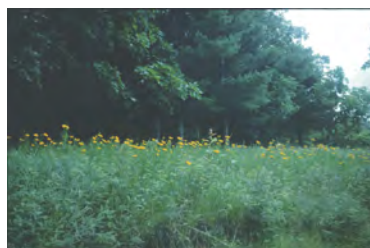
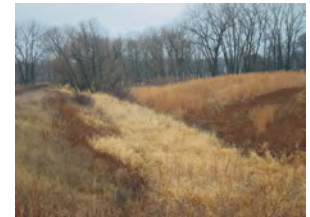
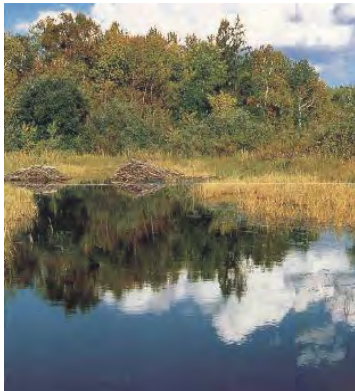
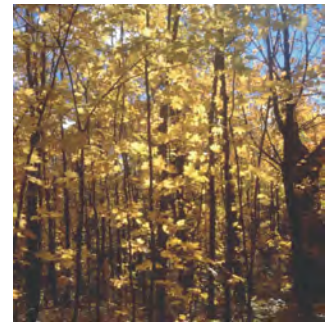
**Objective:** Preservation of the urban forest in the city and large, dense tree stands and forested areas in and adjacent to Cannon Falls.

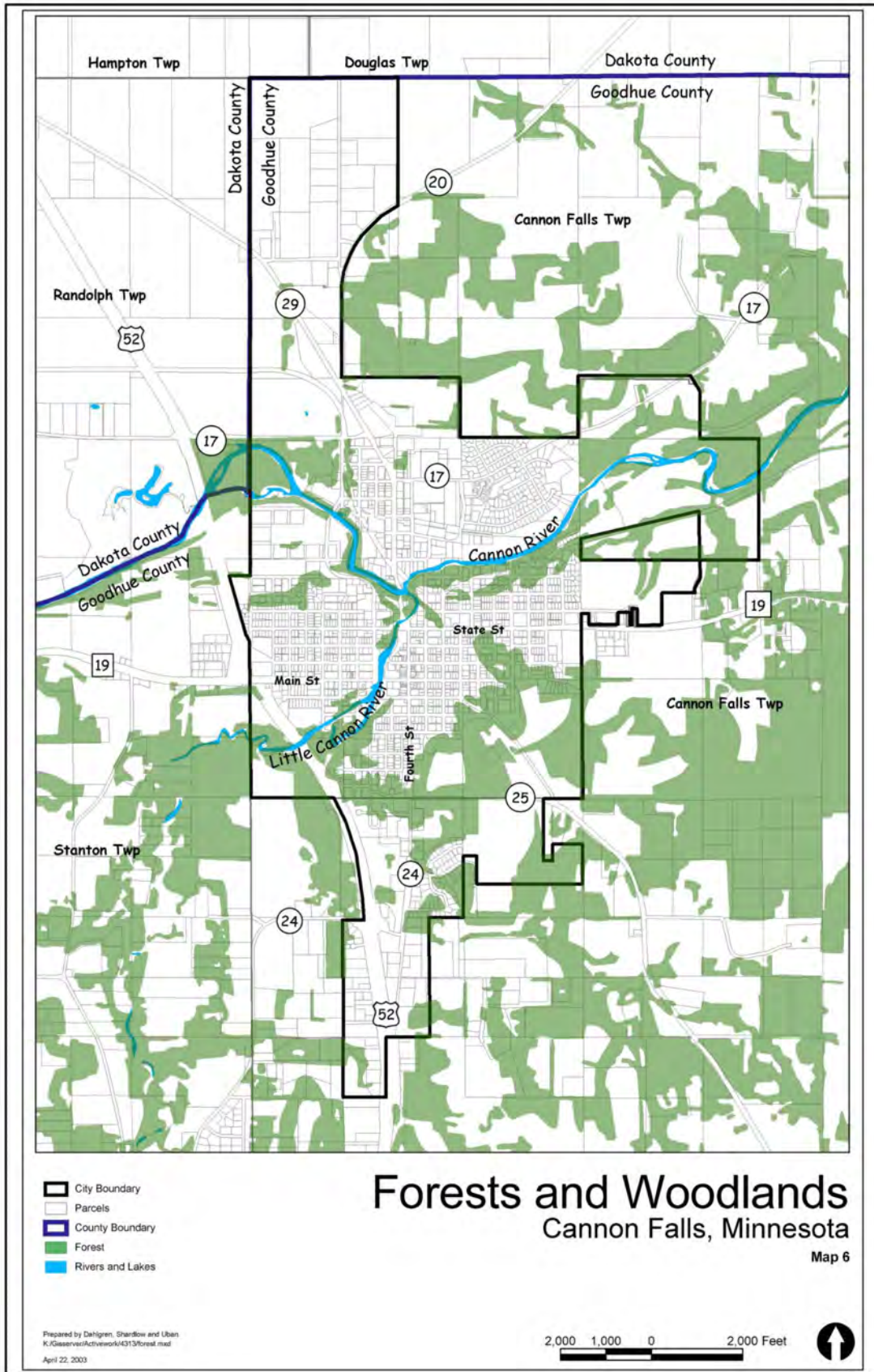
### Policies:

**EP 25** The city will regulate the number of mature trees removed in order to build homes or other developments.

**EP 26** The clear-cutting of woods and tree stands is strongly discouraged. The city will allow transfer of development rights from wooded areas to open areas (pastures or crop land) so that the landowner still has development rights.

**EP 27** The city will encourage the preservation of native and replanted forest lands.





## Flood Plains and River Valleys

**Objective:** Preservation of the natural function of the flood plains to allow the expansion of the rivers during flood events.

**Policies:**

**EP 28** The city will adopt and periodically update its ordinances to regulate development within the floodways and flood fringe districts so that flood waters can flow freely and buildings are protected from 100 year floods.

**Objective:** Preservation of the scenic qualities of the river valleys.

**Policies:**

**EP 29** The city supports scenic easements along the valleys.

**EP 30** The city supports screening new developments as viewed from the river valley through site design and vegetation management.

## Wetlands

**Objective:** Preservation of wetland areas in the river valleys and other parts of the community.

**Policies:**

**EP 31** The city supports the preservation of wetlands to protect water quality, wildlife and fish habitat and to provide for water storage and groundwater recharge.

## Implementation Directions/Actions

The city will need to work with **surrounding townships** on a coordinated development policy that preserves agricultural land and promotes orderly annexation and growth in the townships and on the edge of the city.

The city will have to **publicize the ills of phosphorous fertilizers** and other pollutants of the Cannon River in order to protect the recreational and scenic value of the river. A brochure on the ways to protect the Cannon River should be developed and distributed to the townships, counties, property owners, and recreational users of the river.

The city will also need to convey to the counties and townships its support of strong enforcement of **septic system regulations**.

The city will also need to work out an agreement with the **DNR** concerning the manipulation of the water levels in **Lake Byllesby**. The city will need to work with the DNR to define those areas where scenic easements should be acquired.

Cannon Falls' will have to amend and **utilize its zoning code** as a primary method of controlling environmental degradation. They will need to continue to enforce the bluff protection ordinance. The zoning code may need to be amended to control height on the top of the bluffs. The zoning code will have to be amended to regulate the cutting of mature trees and the transfer of development rights and density to preserve tree stands. Continue enforcement of the flood plain zoning regulations. Site plan review standards should be amended to require screening near the river. Wetlands preservation should also be supported through appropriate amendments to the Wetlands Conservation Act and zoning code.

The city will need to **maintain its park facilities along the river**. It should get annual updates on the condition of its parks. The city will have to enlist the help of civic groups to help take care of parks under the “adopt a park” program.

## Chapter 2. Growth Management

One of the primary challenges in Cannon Falls is to control growth in such a way that the city's small town atmosphere is preserved. Cannon Falls wants to avoid growing too fast or too big. The city also wants to preserve the history and historic buildings in the area. There is a prevailing feeling that too much commercial growth along Highway 52 may not be a good thing because it could have a detrimental effect on the old downtown. There is also concern about sprawling residential subdivisions occupying converted farmland.

Cannon Falls residents identified the obstacles to preserving the city's small town atmosphere. The primary obstacles are:

- Uncontrolled growth in and outside of the city gives the city a different feel and appearance.
- Transportation access and highway design results in highway oriented growth that is uncharacteristic of a small town.
- Decision-making without a vision or thought about consequences allows new developments that change the character of the city.
- A need for population to support services and activities leads to the approval of new subdivisions and industry.
- A need for tax base to pay for services leads to more development.

They also identified those actions or governmental decisions that would be detrimental to preserving the small town feel. Those actions are:

- Approving development plans at a pace that is too fast for the community to comfortably absorb.
- Failure to address the continued loss of downtown retail businesses.
- Failure to adopt design guidelines for downtown and new housing developments and rehabilitation.
- Failing to fund key infrastructure elements in the city.
- Not communicating and listening to the citizenry.
- Not planning and prioritizing.
- Failing to set economic development priorities.
- Failing to strive for a balanced community in terms of age and income.
- Withdrawing support for community events.

They identified what could be done to avoid growing too big or too fast. The results of these discussions are the goal, objectives and policies that follow.

**GOAL:** Growth at a pace that preserves the city's small town atmosphere and does not overtax city infrastructure.

## **Pace of Growth**

**Objective:** Growth at a pace that is not too fast.

**Policies:**

**GM 1** The city will consider annexation requests in the Future Urban Expansion Area shown on Map 7.

**GM 2** The city's priority areas for housing and commercial growth are also shown on Map 7.

These priority areas have one or more of the following characteristics. They are in or adjacent to the city boundaries, near or adjacent to existing city utilities, near the proposed Hwy. 52 interchange with Hwy. 24, contain relatively large parcels, or have owners who have expressed some form of interest in developing the parcel.

**GM 3** New subdivisions will be approved only when there is sewer and water capacity to accommodate the new units.

**GM 4** The city will limit growth to the number of housing units, commercial, and industrial developments that can be accommodated by the school, transportation, sewer and water systems.

**GM 5** The city will develop a careful annexation plan that does not outpace the demand for developable land.

**GM 6** The city will carefully control the types of business allowed in Cannon Falls.

**GM 7** The city will assure that infrastructure is in place to serve developments.

**GM 8** All annexations must be adjacent to the city boundaries.

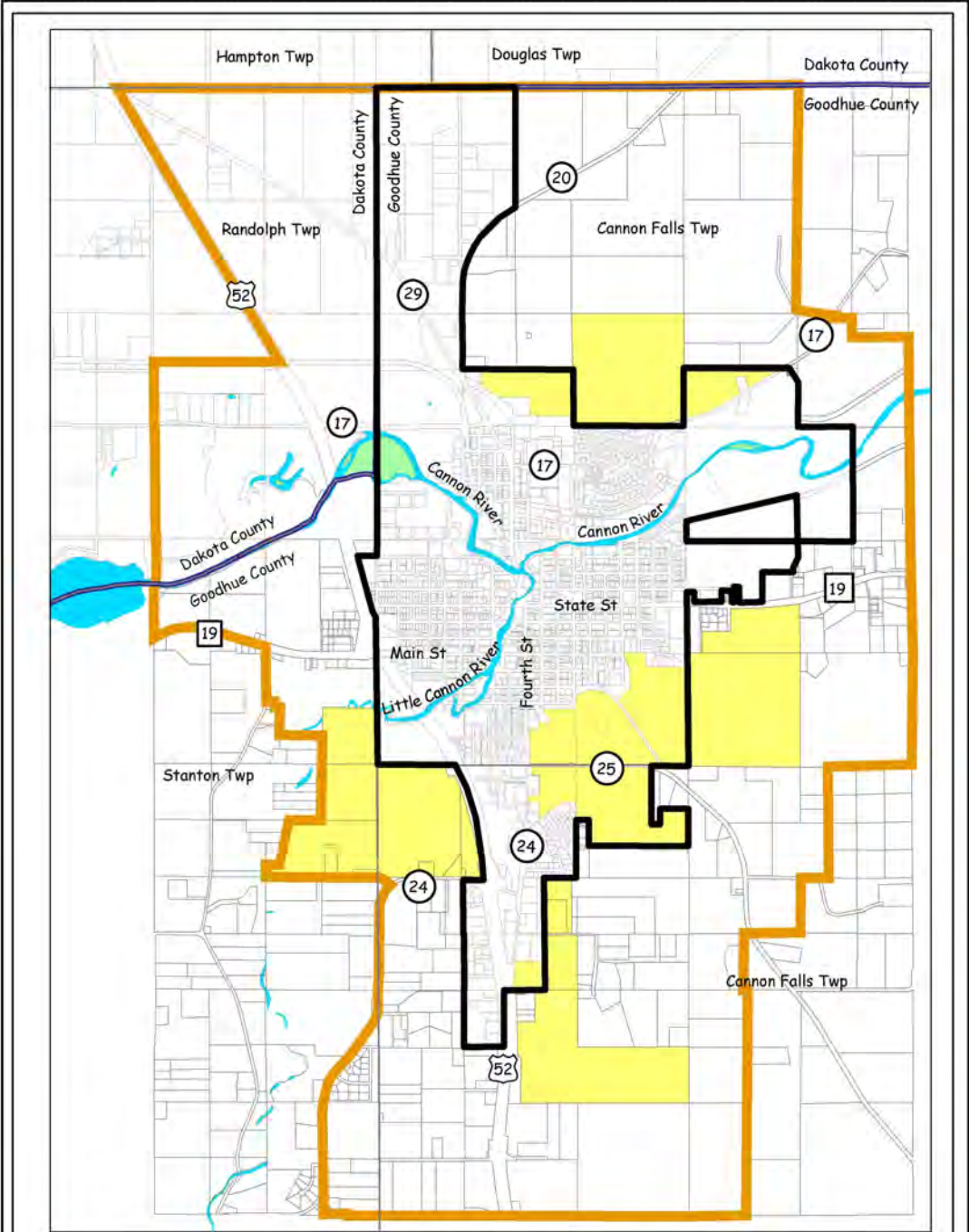
**GM 9** The city encourages annexations of at least 40 acres.

**GM 10** The proposed land use in all annexed areas must be consistent with the proposed land use in the city's comprehensive plan.

## **Density In Adjacent Townships**

Development in the adjacent townships has resulted in a wide variety of lot sizes and development types. Uses include relatively small residential lots along main roads, large lot subdivisions of 20 to 40 lots with paved streets, large rural residential lots, hobby farms of less than 40 acres, and an occasional satellite business located along a major road. The area north of town in the area that is best suited for farming has remained primarily agricultural in character with an occasional residential lot along one of the highways. However, land on the southwest side of town out along Hwy. 24 has been converted from agricultural uses to residential uses on lots of less than 40 acres in size.












# Future Urban Expansion Area

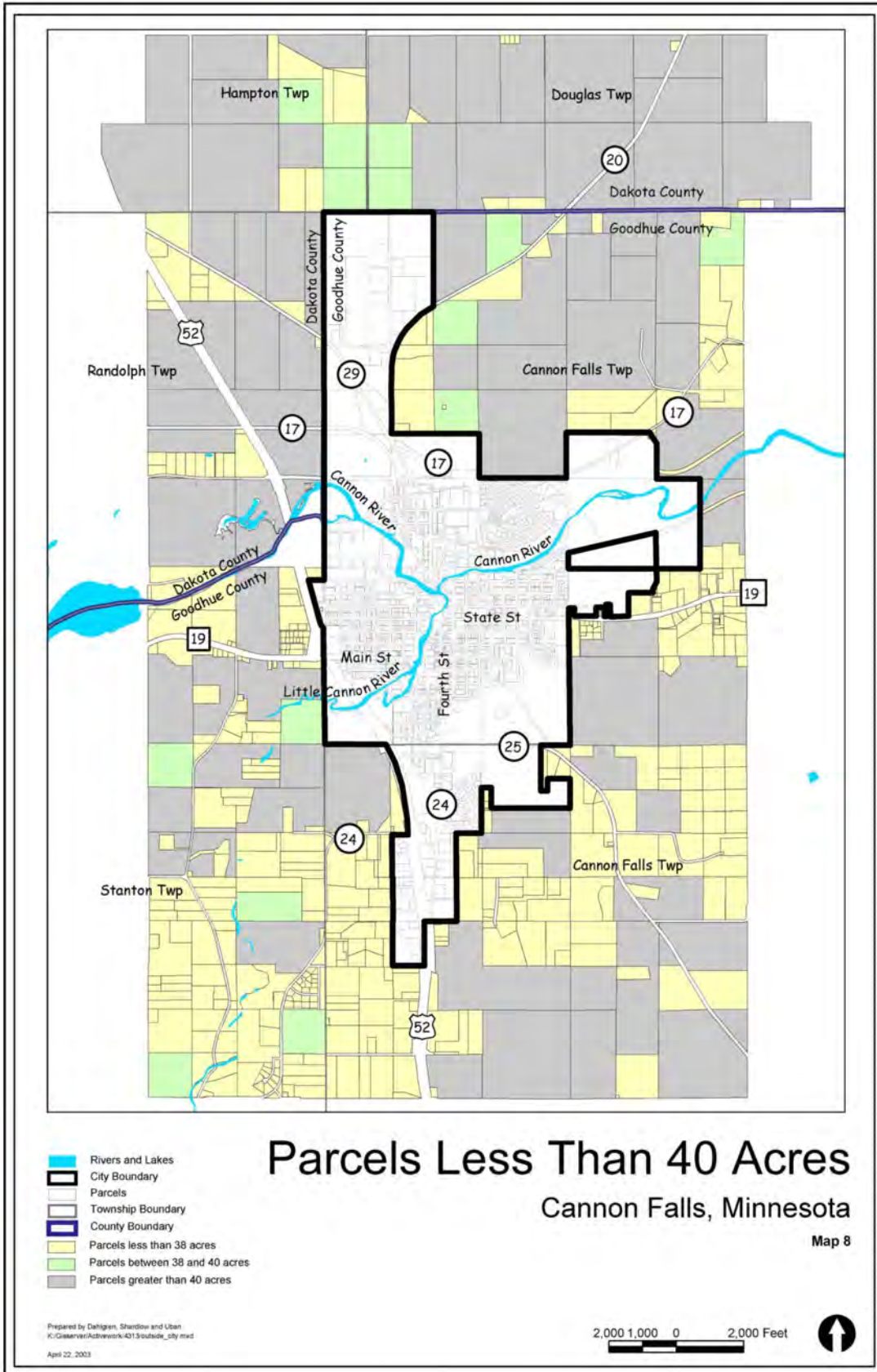
## Cannon Falls, Minnesota

Map 7

-  Rivers and Lakes
-  City Boundary
-  Parcels
-  Township Boundary
-  County Boundary
-  Priority Areas for Housing and Commercial Growth
-  Urban Expansion Area Boundary

Prepared by Delgrin, Sharrow and Liban  
 K:\GIS\arcview\4313\urban\_exp.mxd  
 September 15, 2003





Most of the townships have standards that prohibit subdivision of parcels less than 40 acres in size. However, variances have been granted that allow lots of less than 40 acres. The accompanying map (Map 8) entitled Parcels Less Than 40 Acres shows the extent that smaller parcels have been created surrounding Cannon Falls.

This kind of development has caused two problems.

First, the residential subdivisions that have been created pose a significant service problem. When the property owners petition for annexation, the city is committed to constructing new city water and sewer lines. One such subdivision will cost substantially more to service than can be assessed against the property owners. Therefore, the rest of the city will have to pay the difference.

The second problem is that the breaking up of farms into parcels of less than 40 acres makes it difficult to assemble parcels for larger scale developments and makes it less efficient and economical to provide city services when the time comes for those areas to be annexed into the city.

Large scale, isolated commercial developments along Hwy. 52 or other locations also make it difficult to provide city services and/or assemble compatible land uses.

With these problems in mind, the City has adopted the following objective and policies.

**Objective:** Preservation of surrounding agricultural land and cost effective provision of city sewer and water services.

**Policies:**

**GM 11** Cannon Falls supports very low density, no more than one unit per 40 acres, in land outside the city. These densities will make it easier to eventually develop lands on the edge of the city with subdivisions that have enough density to support city sewer and water services.

**GM 12** If developments do occur in the townships, the city encourages the townships to require on-site sewage disposal systems that are designed in such a way that they can be economically converted to city sewer service at some future date.

**GM 13** The city also encourages the townships to reject plans that do not fit the land use plan (Map 23) proposed for areas beyond the existing Cannon Falls boundaries.

## **Small Town Atmosphere**

**Objective:** Preservation of the small town atmosphere.

**Policies:**

**GM 14** The city will continue investment in parks, bike trails, recreational facilities, and encourage the investment in the city's schools.

**GM 15** The city will continue to support special events that promote a feeling of community.

**GM 16** The city supports the preservation, rehabilitation, and upgrading of the downtown area.

**GM 17** The city will control the appearance of new and rehabilitated buildings in the downtown area so that the historic character is maintained.

**GM 18** The city will promote the economic health of the downtown area so that there are viable businesses for the historic buildings.

**GM 19** The city will promote economic development that provides jobs and living wages.

**GM 20** The city will explore the need and funding sources for a community center that would be a family focal point and foster a strong sense of community.

**GM 21** The city supports a housing plan that accommodates all ranges of income that are typical of a small town.

**GM 22** The city will seek transportation solutions that accommodate projected growth, relieve congestion, and maintain the small town character of Cannon Falls.

## Implementation Directions/Actions

Growth will come to the whole Cannon Falls region. The city, townships, and Goodhue county will be affected. There needs to be a **regular dialogue** among all these governmental units about growth challenges in the area. Only then, can the region effectively deal with the growth pressures that it will experience.

The city will need to use this plan as a base for discussions with the surrounding townships. Agreements need to be drafted concerning an **annexation plan** with townships. The agreements should describe when and under what conditions land will be annexed by the city. The agreement needs to include a requirement that township developments have sewer facilities that can be economically connected to a city trunk line if and when connection occurs.

The city will also need to be in regular **contact with the school board** about enrollment capacity. The city will need to slow down the approval of new subdivisions if school capacity is reached. The school board also needs to know how many dwelling units are being proposed so that they can plan for additional school classrooms to keep pace with projected growth.

New sewer and water lines will have to be extended to new housing subdivisions. Fortunately, the **sewer and water infrastructure** is in good condition and has the capacity to be expanded to the projected major residential growth priority areas.

Implementation directions/actions on preserving downtown are located in that section of the plan.

# Chapter 3. Housing

Cannon Falls has experienced modest housing growth since 1970. However, the community is poised for expanded growth over the next several decades as the Twin Cities expands out toward Cannon Falls. Map 9 shows the proximity of Twin Cities' suburbs.

In 2002, a market study of housing needs was done for the City of Cannon Falls, the Cannon Falls Economic Development Authority, and Southeastern Minnesota Multi-County HRA.<sup>1</sup> The study made the following findings:

## Low-Income Housing

There is a shortage of low-income housing with the greatest need being two bedroom units. Two bedroom, low-income senior units are also needed.

## Affordable Housing

There is also a shortage of more than 100 units to fill the general occupancy demand. However, there were more than enough elderly affordable units.

## Moderate/Market Rate Rental Units

There is a shortage of all unit types. There are only four market rate rental buildings in town with just 43 units. It was estimated that there was a pent up demand for 71 units and a future supportable demand of 52 units through 2006.

## Senior Housing with Services

There are no senior-housing-with-services facilities in Cannon Falls. There is a need for up to 30 congregate units, 36 assisted living units, and 13 memory care units.

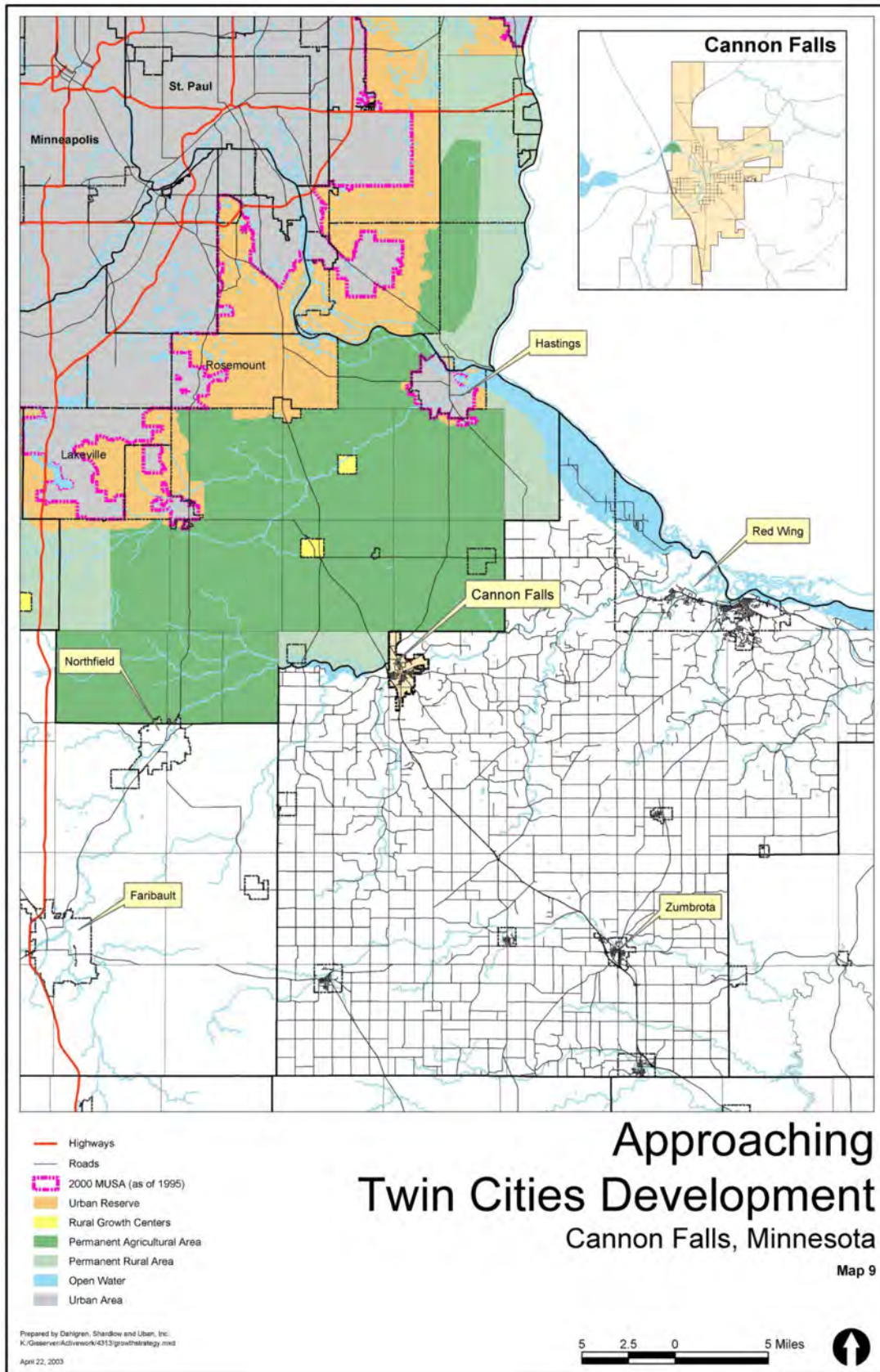
## Single Family Housing

There is a shortage of affordable single family homes. Some of this demand can be satisfied through the construction of upscale apartments, townhouses, patio homes, and senior housing with services. These units will allow people to move out of their existing single family homes and provide a number of homes in the \$90,000 to \$150,000 range.

There has been an average of 12 new homes a year built in the city since 1990. The study recommended having approximately a two-year supply of lots available for housing construction. It is expected that the pace of housing production will increase substantially beyond the pace of the 1990s.



<sup>1</sup> Community-Wide Housing Assessment for Cannon Falls, Minnesota, AdMark Resources, June 2002.



Most of the community's housing is at least 50 years old. It was developed around the historic downtown on a grid pattern of small, square blocks. Some new housing has been built on blocks adjacent to the traditional grid. However, the largest of the newer subdivisions built since 1980 are physically separated from the older neighborhoods and have abandoned the traditional grid. The pattern is typical of suburban subdivisions in Twin Cities suburbs.

Current city residents are concerned about this trend and what the influx of new housing will mean to the existing character of the community. They are also concerned about the design of the housing in the new subdivisions and how much of the housing will be of modest cost so that it is affordable to young families and individuals seeking their first apartment.

The following goal, objectives, and policies have been developed to guide the development of new housing in the community.

**Goal:** Preservation of existing housing and construction of a variety of new housing that is sensitive to the area's natural amenities, affordable, and blends in well with the city's existing housing stock.

## Housing Type

**Objective:** Construction of a variety of housing types including single-family homes, townhouses, and apartments.

### Policies:

**H 1** Each new subdivision should include a variety of housing choices in terms of style, type, cost, and size.

**H2** Senior citizen, assisted living, and nursing home units should also be developed to provide for an aging population.



## Housing Cost

**Objective:** Construction of housing with a broad range of costs.

**Policies:**

**H 3** Developers will be encouraged by the City to provide some affordable housing units <\$170,000 in new subdivisions. The \$170,000 cost is the cost in the year 2002. It needs to be adjusted for inflation for every year beyond 2002.

**H 4** The City will consider density bonuses or dismissing park dedication fees for developers who supply affordable housing units.

**H 5** The city encourages compact new housing developments with lot sizes in the 60 to 70 foot range and will adjust its zoning provisions accordingly.

**H 6** The City will utilize programs of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency to reduce the cost of new housing.

## Multiple-Family Housing

**Objective:** Provision of multiple-family housing for empty nesters and young households just entering the housing market.

**Policies:**

**H 7** The homes near downtown that have been zoned R3 will be included in the low density land use classification to protect them from being subdivided into apartments or assembled for sites on which apartments could be built.

**H 8** The city will consider the inclusion of some multiple-family units as part of subdivisions of more than 50 units provided the development is part of a planned unit development or controlled by a conditional use permit.





## Housing Quality

**Objective:** Well-designed new housing developments that include trees and enough new housing types so that a “cookie-cutter” appearance is avoided.

**Policies:**

**H 9** The City will upgrade its building and zoning provisions to assure that new housing developments, including infrastructure, use quality materials and that there are a variety (at least six) of architectural styles in developments of more than 50 units.

**H 10** Zoning provisions will be amended to address the problems of accessory buildings and outside storage of recreational vehicles, snowmobiles, and boats.

## Subdivision Design

**Objective:** New subdivisions that blend in well with the existing city street pattern and are sensitive to and protect the natural amenities in and adjacent to the city.

**Policies:**

**H 11** Subdivisions adjacent to the old city grid pattern (Map 10) should continue the grid pattern except in those situations where topographical conditions prevent application of the grid.

**H 12** Subdivisions that are separated from the existing grid by bluffs, river valleys, tree stands or other natural features need not follow the standard grid. However, subdivisions must be designed to connect with other subdivisions to form neighborhoods where pedestrians and vehicles can move between subdivisions without traveling on an arterial or collector street.

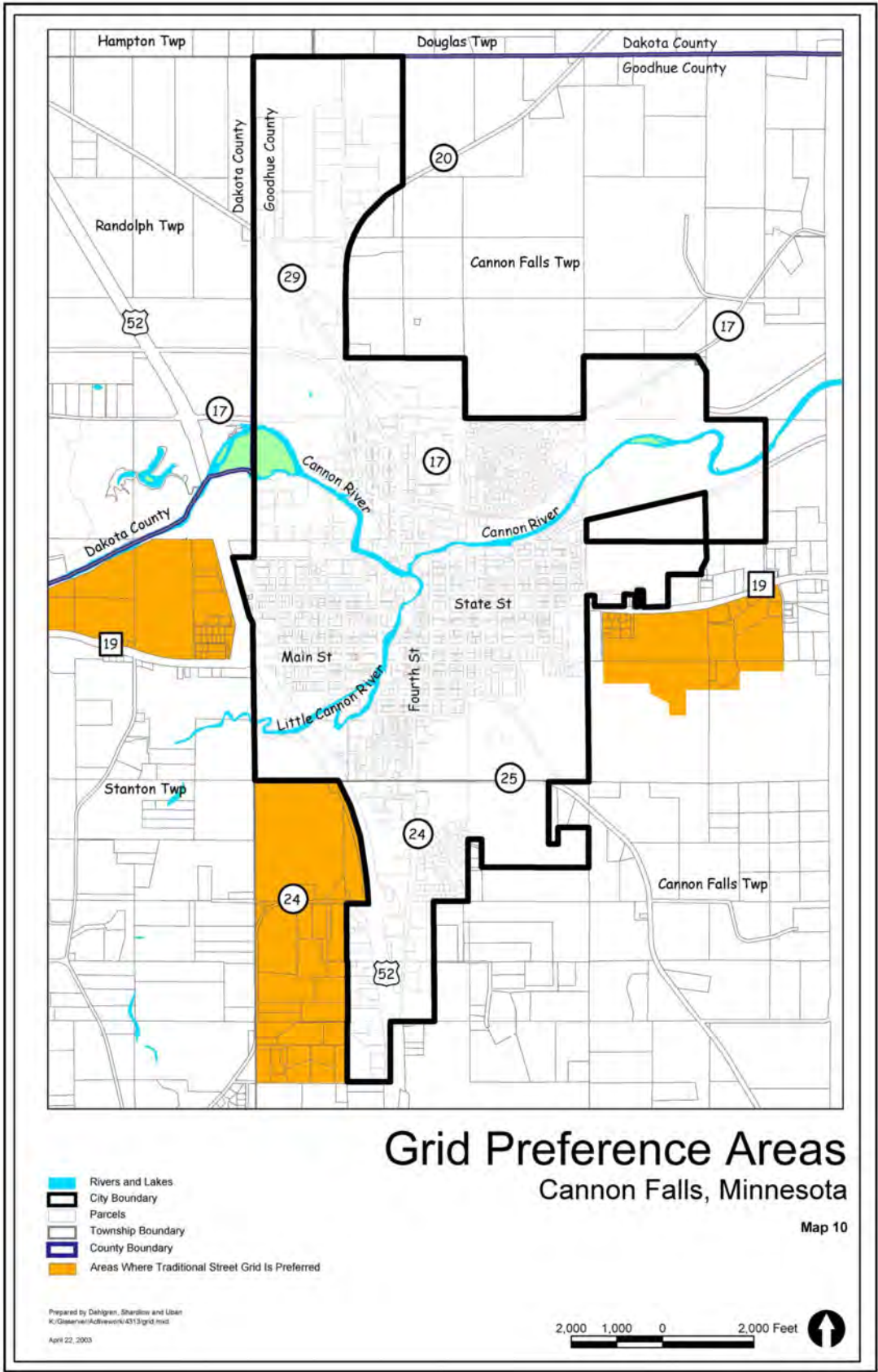
**H 13** The cutting of vegetation and other disturbance of any bluff impact zone shall be prohibited.

**H 14** The clear-cutting of woods and tree stands is strongly discouraged. The city will allow transfer of development rights from wooded areas to open areas (pastures or crop land) so that the landowner still has development rights.

**H 15** All new subdivisions will require the planting of trees on lots at the time the houses are constructed.

**H 16** The placement of buildings shall not be allowed in DNR scenic easements, bluff impact zones, or flood plains, except as permitted by the Cannon Falls zoning code. Setbacks from these areas shall also be required to protect these features.





# Housing Maintenance and Rehabilitation

**Objective:** Preservation and upgrading of the existing housing stock.

**Policies:**

**H 17** The city will identify nuisance properties and upgrade its ordinances and enforcement provisions to eliminate or bring these properties into conformance with city ordinances.

**H 18** The city will work with other agencies to identify financial resources for housing programs to improve the condition of existing housing. This could include low interest loans, deferred loans, revolving loans, and hands-on assistance to elderly to maintain properties.

**H 19** The city will maintain street and park infrastructure in neighborhoods to provide an incentive for private property owners to upgrade their properties.

**H 20** The city will prepare redevelopment plans for those residential properties located in places where residential use is no longer appropriate.



# Housing Infill

**Objective:** Utilization of small, or vacant lots for new housing opportunities.

**Policies:**

**H 21** The city will maintain an infill site inventory and encourage the development of those properties.

**H 22** The city will develop flexible zoning standards that remove the obstacles to the development or redevelopment of infill lots.



*Examples of new infill housing on smaller lots that fits the character of the existing neighborhood.*

## Implementation Directions/Actions

Most of the plan objectives can be implemented by changes in the city's **subdivision regulations**. The city will need to amend the subdivision regulations to require a variety of housing styles, types, cost, and size. The plan policy is that there be at least six housing styles in subdivisions of more than 50 units. The regulations should include the requirement that apartments be included when a subdivision of over 50 units is proposed. A requirement for a grid street pattern needs to be included in the requirements. Subdivision connections and tree planting and tree preservation must be covered in the amendments.

The **zoning code** also needs to be examined to make sure that it allows compact housing developments and removes major impediments to infill development on small lots. There also need to be upgraded zoning standards related to outdoor storage and storage of recreational vehicles on residential property.

Housing condition needs to be addressed either through a more aggressive **code enforcement** program or creation of a **redevelopment authority** to undertake acquisition or major rehabilitation activities. Housing financial resources need to be found either in the private sector or public sector to implement these objectives. The city may have to hire another inspector or **housing specialist** to focus on these programs.

The city can facilitate the growth of new housing by keeping an **inventory of vacant properties** where infill housing is needed.

Property owners are more inclined to maintain their properties in good conditions if the city's streets and parks are also in good condition. The city needs to undertake a **residential street rebuilding and maintenance program** that substantially improves the condition of its streets.

## Chapter 4. Economic Development

Cannon Falls has a diverse economy and a modern industrial park on the north end of the city with room for expansion. There are also several industrial activities along Hwy. 52 near the south end of the city. The traditional agri-business activities are located in the center of the city along the railroad track near the Cannon River.

The city has been successful in attracting new businesses. It has also lost some businesses. However, it appears that there is nothing basically wrong with the city's services, taxes, or utility charges that have caused companies to close or move. There have been times when the economy has been so strong that there has been a shortage of local workers to fill jobs.

The retail climate is not as good as the industrial climate. There are no major clothing or general apparel stores in the city. There are no car dealerships and a scarcity of entertainment businesses. The reason for this is that Cannon Falls faces stiff competition from retail outlets in surrounding cities that are only about 20 minutes away. There are major big box retail outlets in Northfield, Apple Valley, Hastings, and Red Wing.

Cannon Falls recognizes that there are several obstacles to bringing in more stores, family restaurants, and entertainment establishments.

- Cannon Falls residents are generally very mobile and can easily drive the 20 miles necessary to get to major retail centers in the surrounding communities.
- The population in Cannon Falls is not large enough at this time to support a major retail establishment such as Target or Wal Mart.
- Even if there were the population to support new retail outlets, there is a shortage of good sites.
- Cannon Falls has not developed a focus for its retail facilities.

Being aware of these retail development obstacles and industrial trends, Cannon Falls has the following goal, objectives, and policies for economic development.

**Goal:** Preservation of existing jobs and businesses and the addition of new retail and industrial activities that are a benefit to the community.

## Retail Businesses

**Objective:** Retention of existing retail businesses.

**Objective:** New clothing stores, another grocery store, family restaurants, and entertainment facilities such as movie theaters.

**Policies:**

**ED 1** The city supports planned growth of nearby residential areas to increase the local market for retail outlets.

**ED 2** The city will support the preservation and enhancement of the downtown area. See the policies in the Downtown section of the plan.

**ED 3** The city supports the continuation and creation of new special events that attract people to Cannon Falls.

**ED 4** The city will work with local businesses to develop a theme for Cannon Falls retailing. The most likely themes are the service to local residents and the tourists who would visit the city.

**Objective:** Avoiding objectionable businesses and those that have an unattractive appearance.

Those businesses of particular concern include bars and liquor establishments, adult uses, a mall that would erode downtown businesses, big-box stores, and strip commercial development.

**Policies:**

**ED 5** The city will carefully evaluate new requests for liquor licenses in order to assure that the businesses are well managed and will not cause undue problems.

**ED 6** Big-box stores and strip malls will not be approved in the city, or supported in adjacent townships, if they adversely impact downtown Cannon Falls.

**ED 7** Adult uses will be controlled through the zoning code so that the secondary impacts do not adversely impact churches, residential areas, or public uses such as schools, day care centers, and parks.

**ED 8** The city will not give any form of public assistance to objectionable businesses.

**ED 9** The city will utilize the zoning code to limit the size of objectionable businesses, control their location, improve their appearance and the kind of building materials used, control their signs, and institute spacing restrictions where necessary.

## Industrial and General Commercial Activities

**Objective:** Jobs and working opportunities in Cannon Falls.

**Policies:**

**ED 10** The city supports the development of a promotional brochure that tells the Cannon Falls story. That story includes the fact that the city is within easy commuting distance of the cities. It has a traditional downtown, tremendous scenic beauty, has nice people and good schools, and there is space available in the industrial park.

**ED 11** The city will attempt to address labor shortage issues by using promotional material to appeal to commuters from Twin Cities metropolitan area.

**ED 12** The city supports the involvement of the Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations in promoting the city as well as advocating for existing businesses.

**ED 13** The city will make sure that there is a supply of affordable housing. This includes evaluating the city's zoning requirements to make sure they do not require excessively big lots that drive up the cost of housing. It also includes working with developers to make sure they have a segment of their new developments set aside for affordable units.

**ED 14** The city does not endorse bringing in or recruiting problem businesses. These are businesses that might have impacts that adversely affect other businesses. These impacts could include traffic, pollution, poor appearance, unsightly outside storage, etc.

**ED 15** The city will make sure there are adequate services including sewer, water, police, parks, and schools.

**ED 16** The city will attempt to keep the costs of services in line with other nearby communities. In other words, the taxes and utility costs need to be competitive.

**ED 17** The city supports working with businesses to identify their needs and concerns so that the city is not surprised when someone moves. This could include the Economic Development Council, Business and Industrial Commission, or the Chamber of Commerce making regular contacts with local businesses and reporting their findings to the city council.

**ED 18** The city will plan for time when the industrial park is full and more land in the vicinity is needed for industrial activities.

## Implementation Directions/Actions

The city needs to **work with the Chamber of Commerce** and local businesses to develop a Cannon Falls retailing theme and strategy for promoting Cannon Falls businesses.

The same kind of effort is needed to develop a **promotional brochure** that tells the Cannon Falls story but is aimed at prospective employees of local businesses. There is a need to attract employees from surrounding communities or the Twin Cities southern suburbs.

The city will need an **outreach program** where staff or one of the commissions or committees contacts local businesses to try to identify and address their needs. Ideally, this would result in better understanding between city hall and the business community and result in community efforts to improve and retain businesses in the city.

Even though the city is desirous of new businesses, the city will prohibit or strongly control objectionable businesses through **zoning regulations**. Regulations relating to adult uses, building appearance, exterior building materials and signage need to be reviewed to make sure controls are adequate. The city will also need to talk with the township or county about having adequate zoning measures to control uses that might develop on the edge of town prior to their annexation. The city also needs to talk to townships about big boxes.

The city also needs to review the **liquor licensing** requirements of the city so that these businesses positively contribute to the tourism industry and the overall welfare of the community.

Finally, the city needs to assure that there is **affordable work force housing** for those who work at Cannon Falls jobs. This will be accomplished through the implementation actions outlined in the Housing section of the plan.



# Chapter 5. Downtown

Cannon Falls is fortunate to have an attractive, traditional downtown. It fits very well with the natural attraction of the Cannon River. Visitors to the river also like the historic nature of the downtown area. There is significant potential to sustain the downtown by appealing to those who will use the bike trail, float the river, and drive the scenic highways in the area.

But, there is considerable competition just 20 minutes away to the north, west, and east from several big-box retailers that drain spending away from Cannon Falls. It has been several years since Cannon Falls had a lot of general retail activity in its downtown area. There still is a grocery store, hardware stores, and drug store. But most of the space in downtown is focused on a niche market. Some of these businesses are antique stores, gift shops, the quilt store, and offices for service businesses.

The goal, objectives and policies related to downtown development are stated below.

**Goal:** Preservation of downtown as the cultural and business focal point of the community.

## Historic Buildings

**Objective:** Preservation of the city's history and historic buildings.

### Policies:

**D 1** The city supports the national designation of downtown as an historic district.

**D 2** The city supports the creation of a Preservation Commission to oversee rehabilitation and infill development in the district.

**D 3** The Preservation Commission should develop a preservation plan and promote the city's history.

**D 4** The Preservation Commission should review all building permits in the historic district and provide advice to the City Council on whether building permits and/or demolition permits should be approved in the district.

**D 5** The Preservation Commission should also develop materials that explain the importance of preserving the historic character of downtown. These materials should be given to owners of historic properties.

**D 6** The city supports the tax credits and state and federal funding to finance the rehabilitation of historic buildings.



**D 7** The city supports the development of a marketing program for downtown buildings. The program would:

- Encourage business to utilize existing buildings.
- Encourage a larger, more economically viable downtown district.
- Promote the city's history through support of tourism and telling the Cannon Falls story.

**D 8** The city supports focusing activities and events in the downtown area.

## **Downtown Retail**

**Objective:** Avoid losing downtown retail and add to the vitality of downtown Cannon Falls.

**Policies:**

**D 9** The city will continue to upgrade elements of the public realm in the downtown area so that it remains attractive. This includes streets, sidewalks, decorative lighting, and public parking lots.

**D 10** The city will make a special effort to retain the Econo Foods grocery store, hardware stores, bakery, drug store, and restaurants.

**D11** The city will carefully consider the impacts on local businesses when considering similar new stores at other locations in the community and will urge the townships to do likewise.

**D 12** The city will refrain from providing public assistance to businesses that would compete with these businesses.

**D 13** The city will make downtown walkable and more pedestrian friendly.

**D 14** The city will develop unique signage themes and directions to local businesses from the Cannon River Trailhead parking lot.

**D 15** The city will develop a beautification plan for downtown.

**D 16** The city will create design themes for downtown including awnings, lighting, trees and flowers.

**D 17** The city will evaluate the need for convenient parking for downtown.

**D 18** The city will examine the need to provide senior access to downtown businesses.

**D 19** The city will continue and support local special events such as the art fair, Cruising Days, the garage sale, farmers market, and county fair.

## Implementation Directions/Actions

The city needs to create a **preservation commission** to encourage preservation and economical uses for downtown buildings. The plan policies give several other directions to activities that could be conducted by the commission. The commission should also develop preservation construction and renovation guidelines so that uninformed property owners or developers do not jeopardize the historic downtown through use of inappropriate construction methods or materials. The city can capitalize on the historic character of the downtown to promote tourism and the city's economic base.

The city will need to devote **operating funds** each year to making sure that the downtown area is **attractive and well kept**. Additional public parking will be needed. The city should also be creating a design theme for downtown including historically appropriate awnings, lighting, trees, and flowers. Support by the city for a variety of special events during the year is very important to the economic viability of downtown.

The city will have to **organize a group to work with key downtown businesses** such as the grocery store, hardware store, bakery, and drug store to make sure that their needs are being met so that they do not choose to leave downtown. The city has to be very careful in its economic assistance or redevelopment activities that they do not do anything that will be detrimental to these key uses. The city will also have to talk with surrounding townships about the fragile economic nature of these businesses, and the downtown as a whole, so that the townships do not zealously embrace big box retailers that may want to locate outside the city limits near Hwy. 52.

## Chapter 6. Community Services

The City of Cannon Falls provides a variety of services to community residents. These services include:

- Municipal water
- Sanitary sewers and waste water treatment
- Street construction and maintenance
- Snow plowing
- Fire and police service including emergency response
- Parks and recreation
- Government administration
- Library

Services provided by other public or quasi-private organizations are:

- Schools
- Hospital services
- Nursing home
- Post office

## Community Facilities Inventory

The table below includes an assessment of capacity, condition, and needs for all Cannon Falls community facilities except for parks.

Facility	Capacity	Condition	Needs
City Hall	Too Small -	Converted from grocery store in 1977.	One thousand Sq. ft. and larger reception area. 600 to 800 sq. ft for building inspections function. Consultant recommended about 15,000 sq. ft. for city hall and library.
Water Storage	Good – new 1 million gallon tower in 2002.	Poor – 1975 tank	Major repair or replacement needed on 1975 storage tank.
Water Wells	Good – three new wells in 2002.  Two older wells have been abandoned.	Good	None at this time.
Wastewater Treatment	Good – new addition completed in 2002. 1 million gallon per day capacity. Year 2002 use was 400,000 gallons per day.	Good	None at this time.
Electricity	Good	Good	None
Natural Gas	Good	Good	None
Street Maintenance Buildings (3)	Good	Good – newest in 1995.	Additional space will be needed as equipment is added to meet city growth.
Maintenance Equipment	Good	Good – on replacement schedule	Additions as city grows.
Public Works Administration Space	Good	Good – new building at Water Treatment Plant	None at this time.
Streets	Capacity is acceptable.	Poor – Inventory being done.	Reconstruction and storm sewers needed. No money anticipated until 2005.
Storm Sewers	Inadequate – runoff contributes to flood hazards.	Poor	New storm sewers needed.
Fire and Police Building			

## Cannon Falls City Parks

Facility	Location	Function	Needs
East Side Park	Minnesota St. and Hwy. 19	Family neighborhood, near the schools and many day care facilities.	May need to fix the surround to the play structure to allow for larger fall zones by some slides. New park sign.
Riverside Park	Confluence of Little Cannon and Cannon Rivers on the Trail.	Used by bikers and canoe users, visitors, and local citizens. A downtown/river view.	Border around play areas to retain mulch. Play structure will have to be replaced within two years. Bench replacement. New park sign.
North Riverside Park	Fourth Avenue and Cannon River	No play structure. This is more an adult get together area for volleyball and horseshoe games.	Picnic tables/pavilion, bathrooms, water fountain, grills, and horseshoe pits.
East Riverside Park		A place to stop along the trail and enjoy the scenery.	Picnic tables and grills.
Hannah's Bend Park - Lower	Cannon River near Fair Grounds.	Picnic and fishing area.	Bathrooms and pavilion are old. Need updating. Sand volleyball court needs to be taken out or upgraded. Poison Ivy is growing everywhere, needs to get under control. Would like to put in some sort of dock for fishing.
Hannah's Bend Park - Upper	Across from the swimming pool.	A meeting place for kids and parents after swimming. A connector off the trail. A picnic area on the 4 <sup>th</sup> of July.	New swings. Remove sandbox. New climbing/small structure, more picnic tables, and grills.
Evergreen Park	Viking Avenue and Evergreen Drive	Neighborhood park.	Park equipment needs to be move to flow better. Needs border around play areas to retain mulch.
Troll Haven Park	CH 17 near Viking Avenue	Neighborhood park.	Basketball court needs to be made more useable, picnic tables, 2 toddler swings, baseball field needs to be filled and add ag lime and backstop needs work, play equipment needs to be rearranged to better fit the park shape.
Minnieska Park	Downtown next to the river.	Passive open space next to the river.	Flood in 2002 washed out one pond. Needs reconstruction and turf work.

Facility	Location	Function	Needs
Wilson Development Park		Neighborhood Park	Play structure, swings, benches, and picnic tables. Land needs to be filled with black dirt and sodded. Fence needed along 3 sides to keep children away from businesses and parking areas.
Westwood Subd. Park	Northwest of nursing home.	Mini-Park	
Swimming Pool		Special Use.	Zero grade pool is needed eventually. Bathroom facilities need to be upgraded.
Basketball Courts		Special Use.	
Ice Rink/Skateboard Park	Located with swimming pool and basketball courts.	Special Use	Rink needs paving to accommodate skateboarding. New boards surrounding hockey rink. Warming house needs new benches, floor covering, and paint. Restrooms need to be in working order.
John Burch Park and Athletic Field	SH 19 and Little Cannon River	City Park	None.
Sewer plant ball fields	Near sewer plant	City Park	
Unidentified parcel	near 87 and 17	Undeveloped open space	
Lime Kiln Hills and water storage tanks			
Fair Grounds			
School grounds			

This chapter of the plan describes the condition and needs of these facilities and describes the city's policies that relate to them.

**Goal:** Provision of community services that are cost-effective and comparable in all areas of the city.

## Schools

**Objective:** Quality schools and education.

### Policies:

**CS 1** The City supports the School District's plan to provide public school facilities on one campus located along SH 19 on the east side of town.



**CS 2** The City and School District will work together to acquire or retain land in the immediate vicinity of the school campus to accommodate future expansion if it is needed.

**CS 3** Football and baseball games will occur at John Burch Park so that campus space is available for school buildings and downtown is supported by continued sports activities.

**CS 4** The City will seek ways to provide additional road connections to the school campus by supporting a ring route around the east side of town from SH 52 near CH 24 to CH 17 north of the Cannon River.

## **Library**

**Objective:** Adequate public library resources.

**Policies:**

**CS 5** The City will explore the financial feasibility of expanding the library to meet current and future circulation projections. It is projected that a facility of 15,000 sq. ft. will be needed.

**CS 6** The City will seek a downtown relocation site that is convenient to seniors and youth and supports downtown vitality.

## **Parks and Trails**

**Objective:** Adequate parks and open space to provide for the recreational and social needs of the community.

**Policies:**

**CS 7** The City will maintain and rehabilitate existing park and trail facilities so that they are safe and attractive to the community.

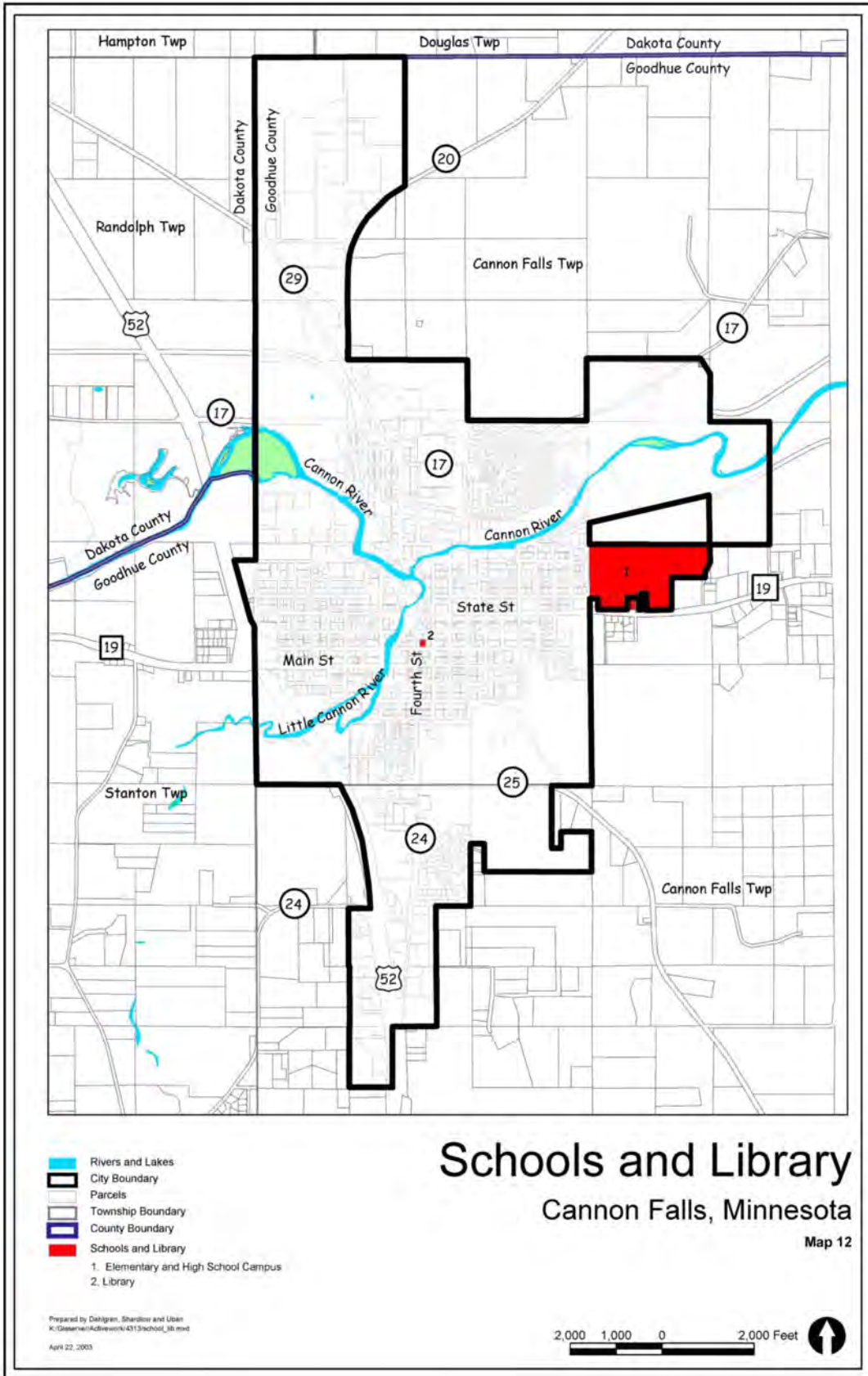
**CS 8** The City will explore the feasibility of adding trail extensions from the community to the Cannon Valley Trail.

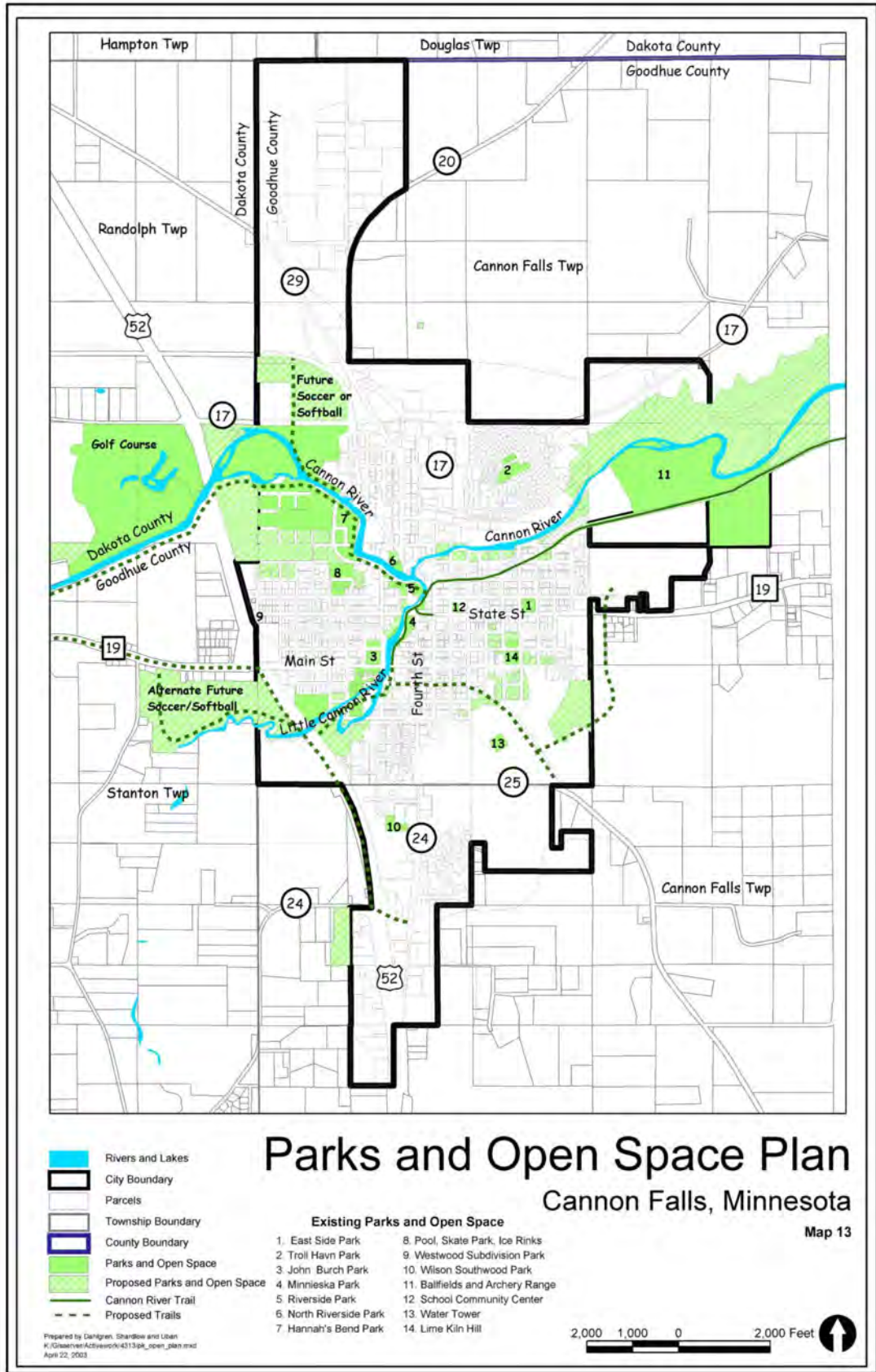
**CS 9** The City intends to continue its cooperation with other jurisdictions to provide maintenance of the Cannon Valley Trail.

**CS 10** The City will seek a site to accommodate the future relocation of the softball fields from the vicinity of the wastewater treatment plant.

**CS 11** The City will seek sites for soccer facilities.

**CS 12** The City will seek sites and funds for a youth center to provide recreational opportunities not available at other facilities in the city.





## **Hospital**

**Objective:** Construction of a new hospital and preservation of local health care services.

**Policies:**

**CS 13** The City supports the relocation of the hospital to a south side location near Hwy. 52 and CH 24.

**CS 14** The City supports uses at the old hospital site that are compatible with and supportive of the adjacent nursing home.

## **Water and Sewer Service**

**Objective:** Adequate water and sewer service capacity to sustain projected growth in the community.

**Policies:**

**CS 15** The City will explore the feasibility of rehabilitating the in-ground water reservoirs.

## **City Office and Operations Space**

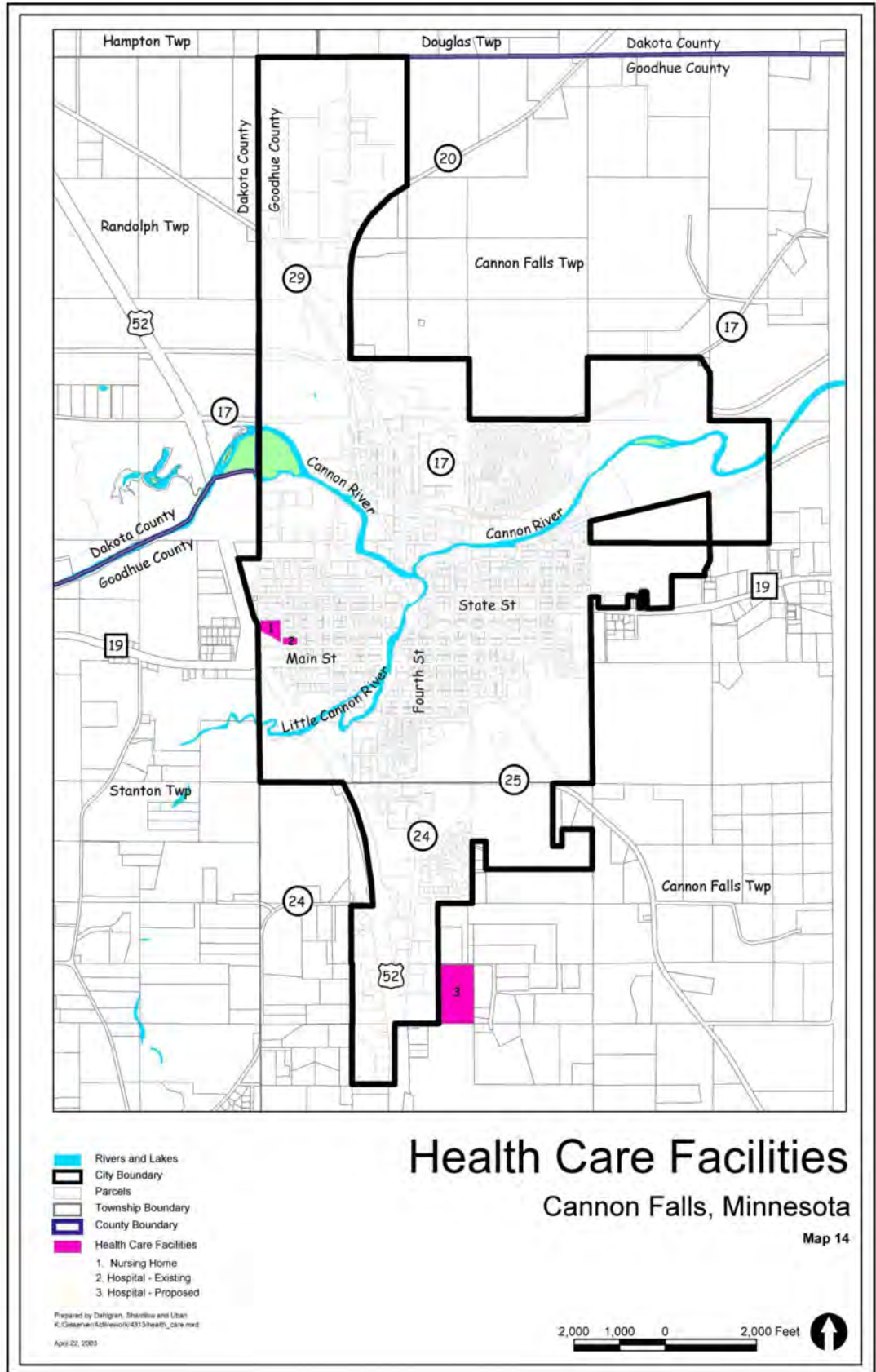
**Objective:** Adequate space for the city's administrative and operations functions.

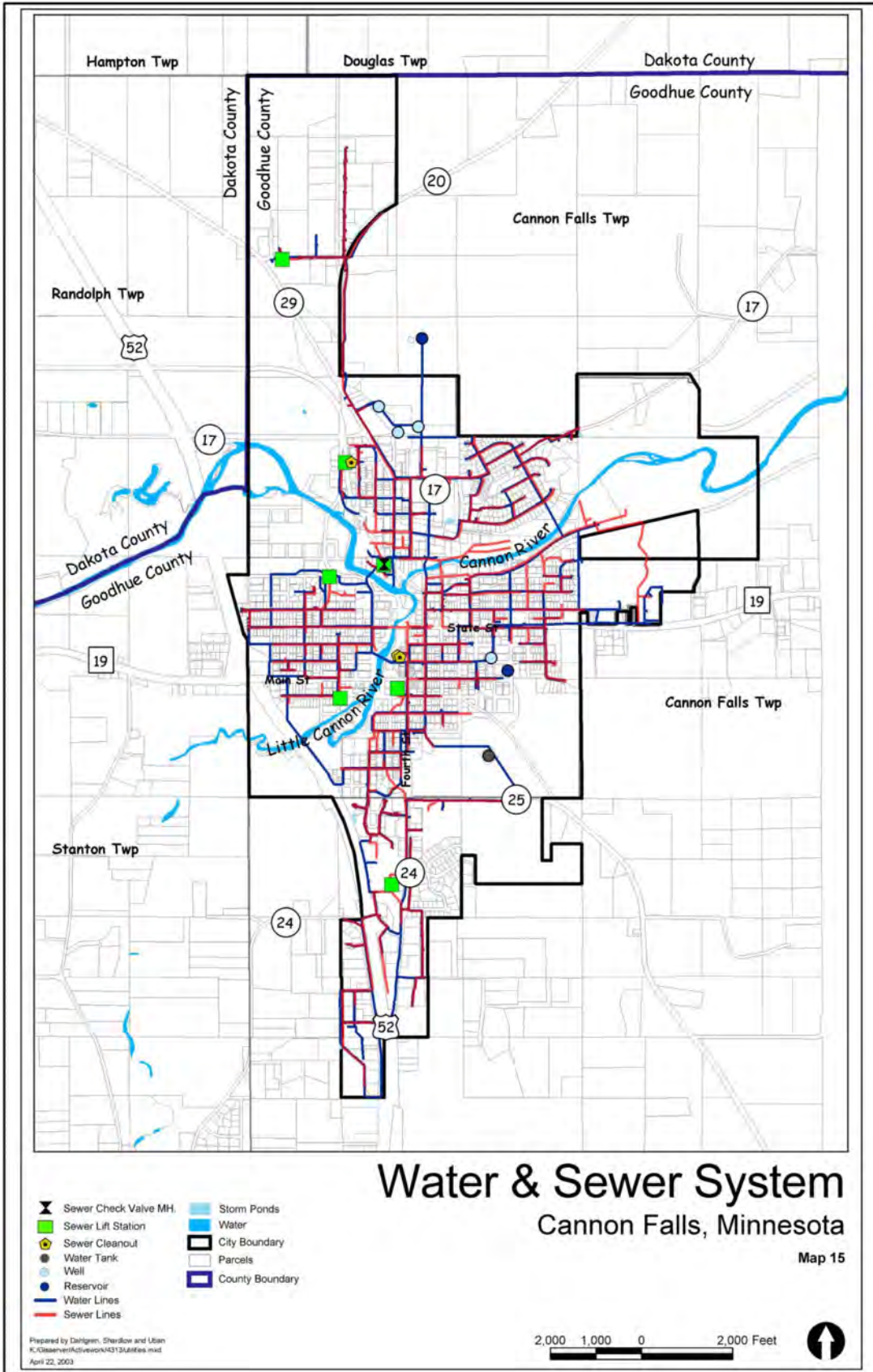
**Policies:**

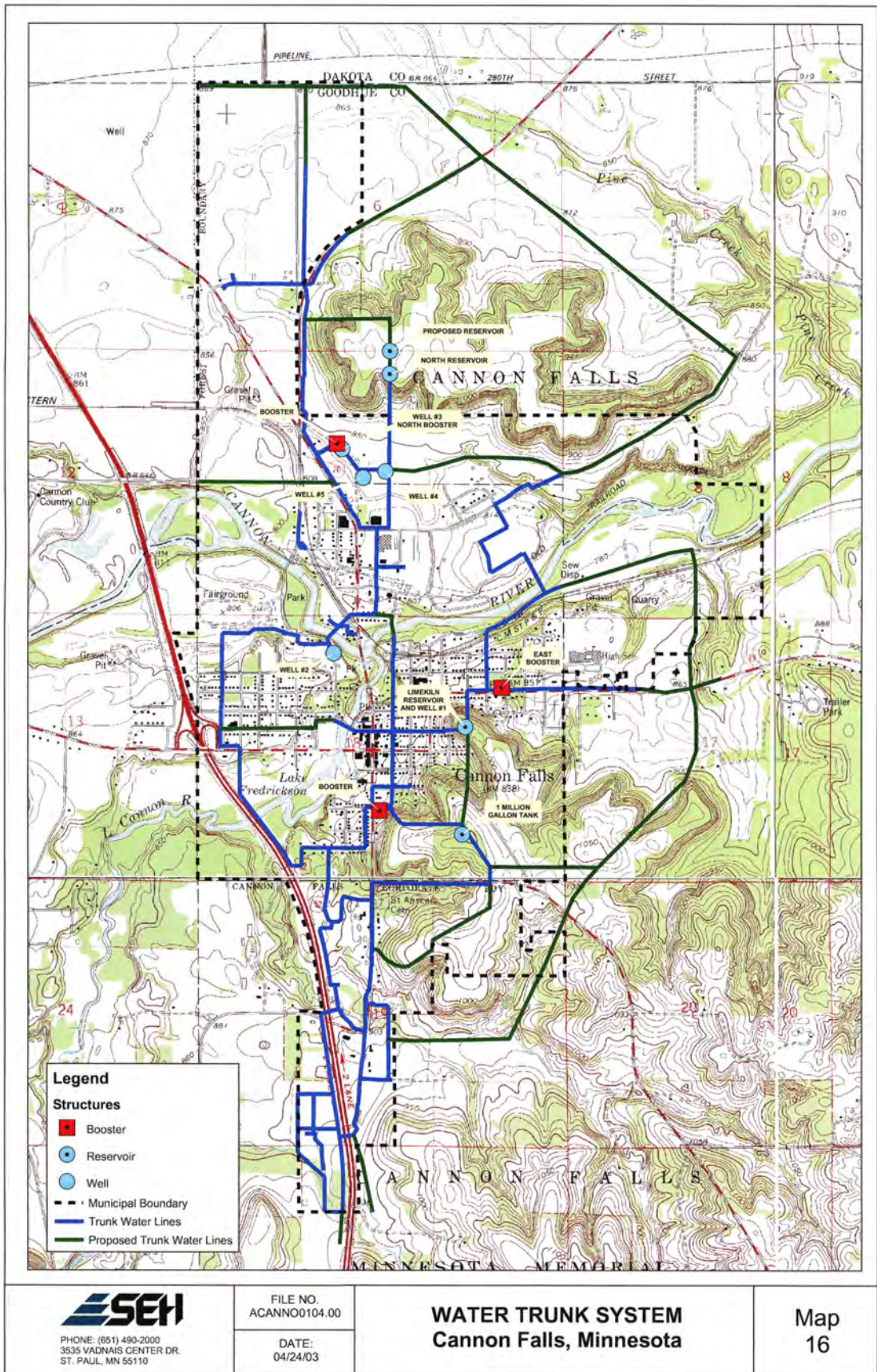
**CS 16** The city will seek a larger space for City Hall.

**CS 17** The city will expand its equipment storage and maintenance space as the community grows and more equipment is purchased.

**CS 18** The City will continue to utilize the jail facilities in Red Wing until the volume of arrests/bookings requires a local jail facility to be constructed.







**SEH**  
 PHONE: (651) 490-2000  
 3535 VADNAIS CENTER DR.  
 ST. PAUL, MN 55110

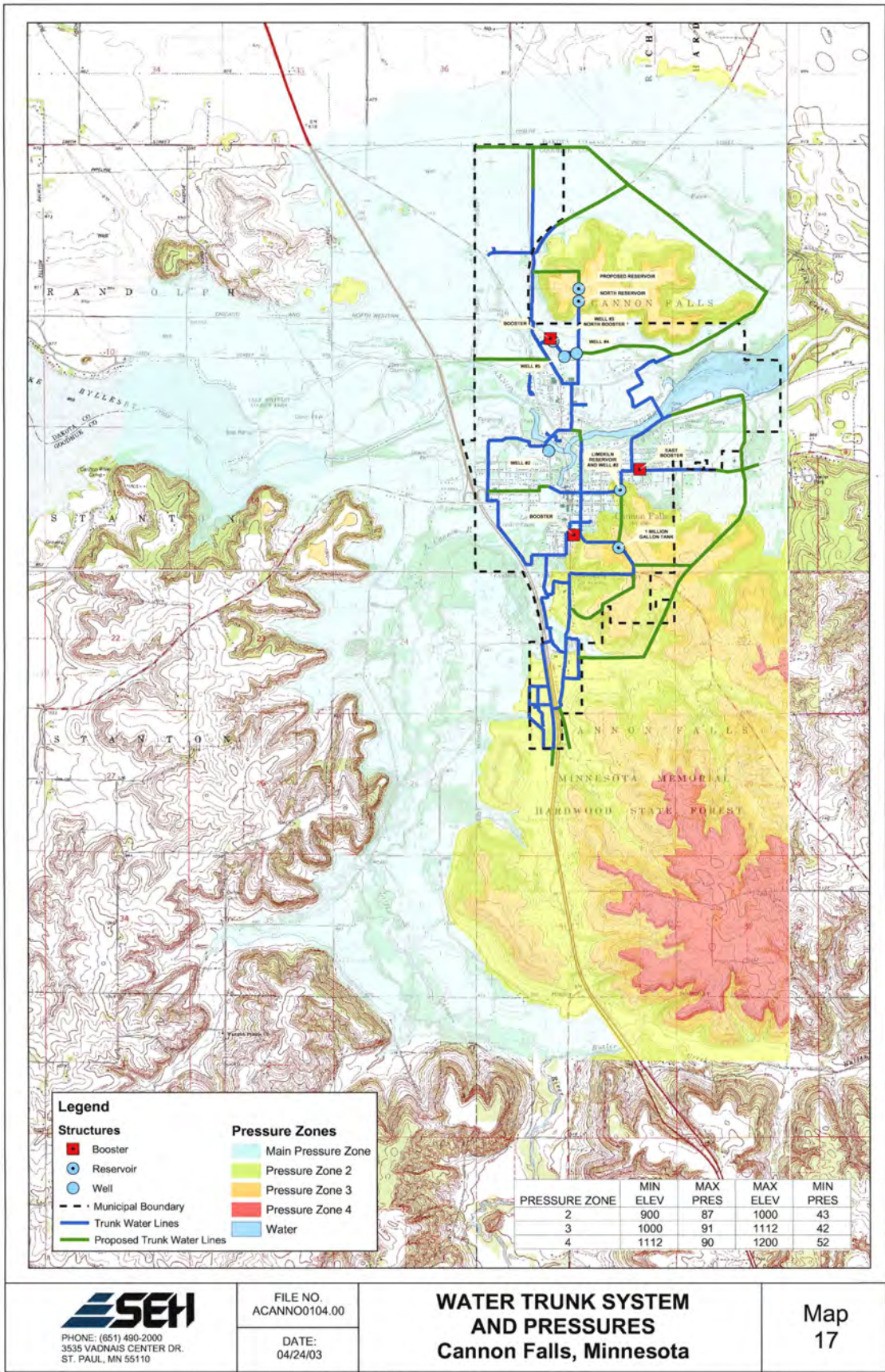
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04/24/03

**WATER TRUNK SYSTEM  
 Cannon Falls, Minnesota**

Map  
16





**SEH**  
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 3535 VANDIAIS CENTER DR.  
 ST. PAUL, MN 55110

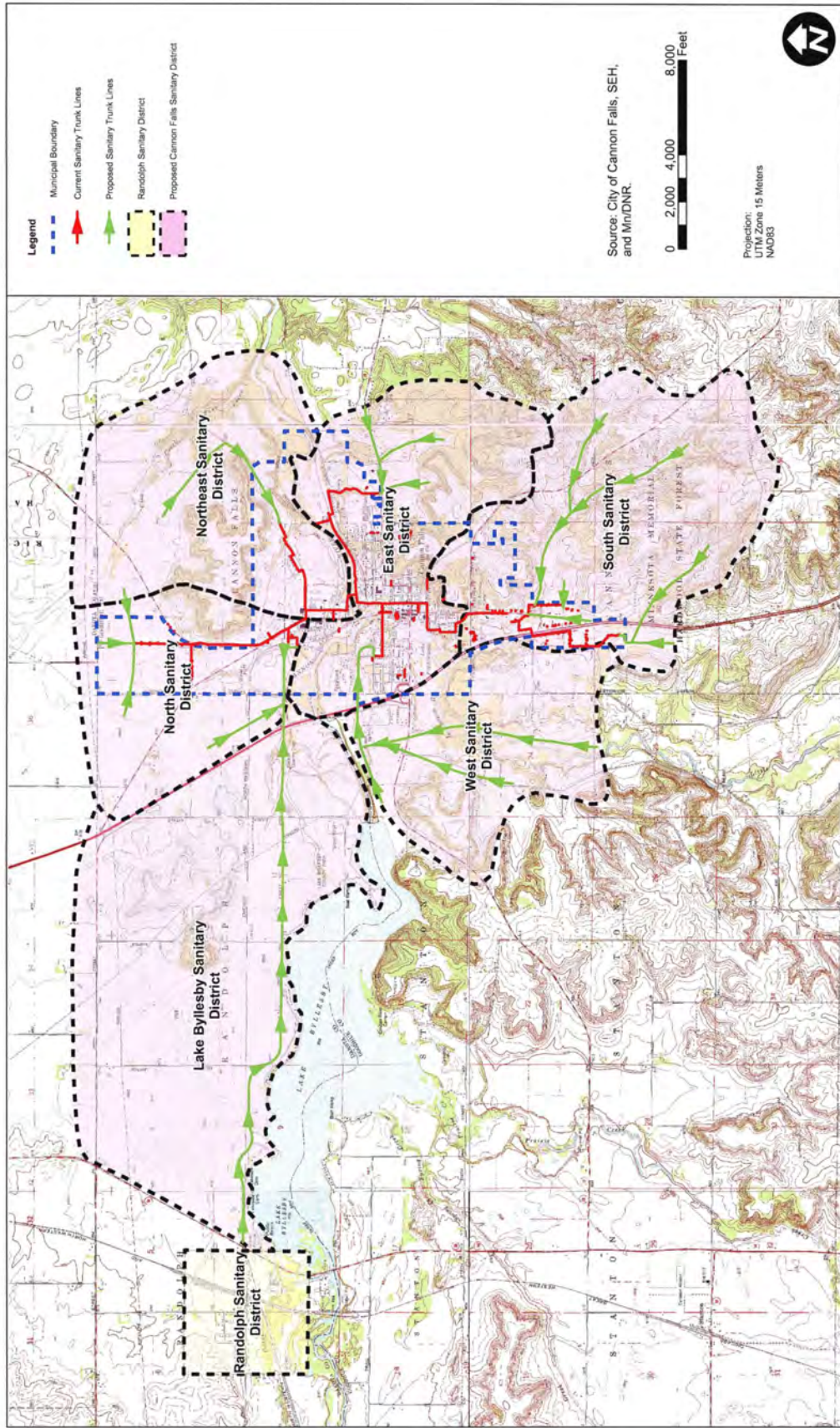
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**WATER TRUNK SYSTEM  
 AND PRESSURES  
 Cannon Falls, Minnesota**

Map  
 17





**Existing and Proposed Conditions**

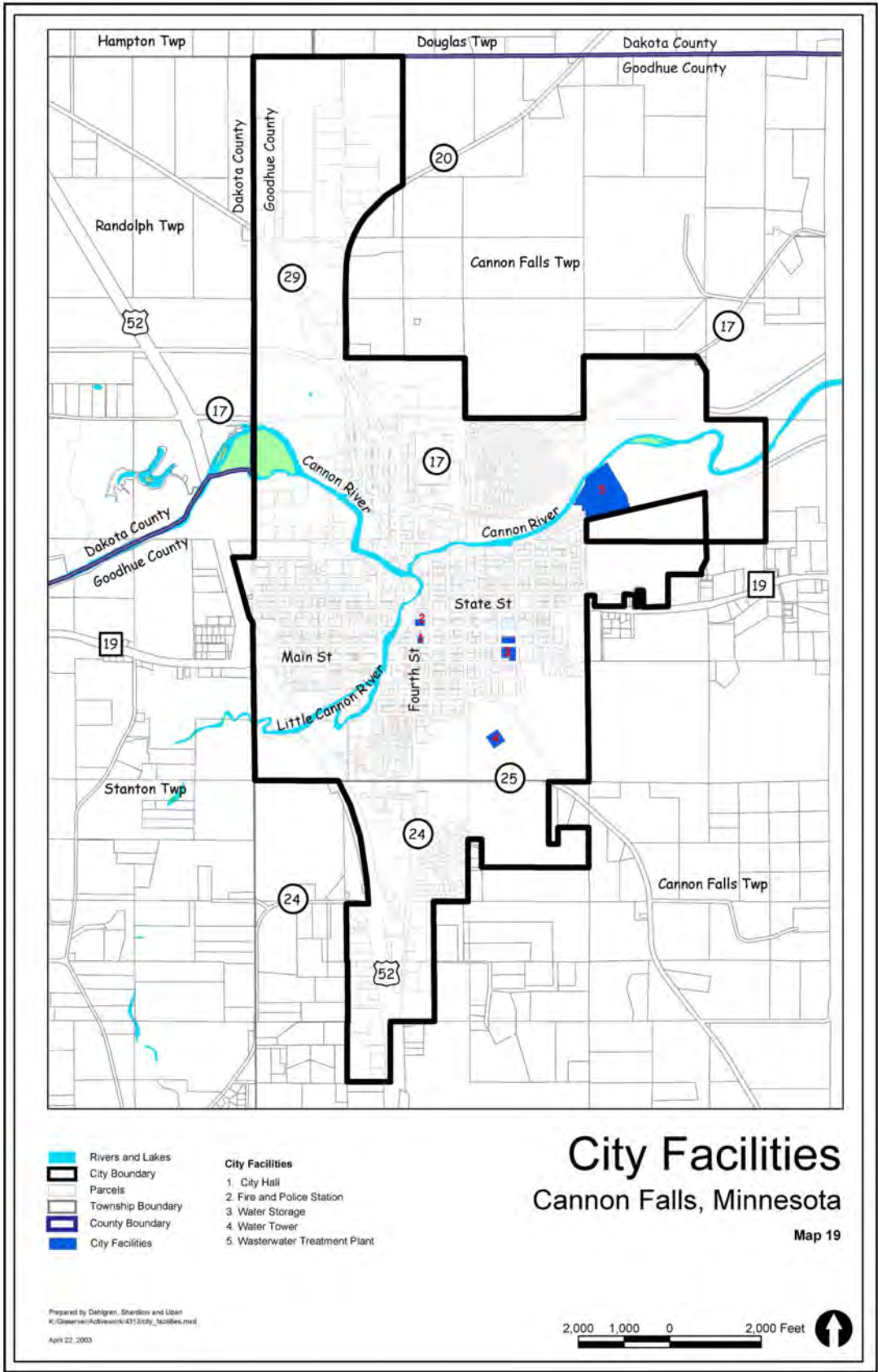
**Map 18**

**SANITARY SEWER TRUNK SYSTEM  
Cannon Falls, Minnesota**

Project Number  
ACANN00104.00

DATE  
04/24/2003





## Implementation Directions/Actions

The **city and the school district** must be in regular contact with each other to make sure that there is a balance between proposed housing units and enrollment capacity in the schools. The city and school district will also need to continue their cooperative arrangement so that high school football and baseball games are played at John Burch Park.

The city will need to develop a five-year capital improvement program that includes money for feasibility studies, acquisition of land, and construction for several projects. These projects include the following community facilities except for transportation related improvements:

- A new or remodeled library
- City hall
- Existing park upgrades
- New park development in places shown in the comprehensive plan
- Trail extensions from city neighborhoods to the Cannon Valley Trail
- A community center
- Water reservoir rehabilitation and repair
- Public Works equipment storage

# Chapter 7. Transportation

Transportation and traffic issues are one of the key issues for Cannon Falls area residents. Of the things that folks do not like in Cannon Falls, roads that are poorly located or in poor condition ranked third on the list. The specific irritations identified are as follows:

- City streets – many are in terrible shape.
- The fact that it is dangerous and nearly impossible to walk around the south side (i.e. from mall to Countryside).
- No sidewalks, inadequate shoulders on road.
- Hwy. 19 running right through residential area.
- Hwy. 52 access on the south end of the city.
- Stoplight timing.
- Bad roads (potholes, gravel).
- Need more physical road improvements.
- Highway 19 going through town.
- The high speed of 52 through town.
- The growing difficulty for access to 52 for people living on the fringe because of increased traffic and speed.
- Dangerous intersections.

Cannon Falls is the focal point of the rural road system in the area. Highways 52, 17, 19, 20, 24, and 25 funnel traffic from the surrounding area into the city. There are relatively few ways to get through town now because of the constraints in routes caused by the river valleys, bluffs, and Hwy. 52.

This funneling effect will eventually become a major problem as new subdivisions are developed on the edge of town. It is anticipated that without transportation improvements, traffic along Fourth Street will exceed maximum design volumes by 2025.<sup>1</sup> For example, the table below shows existing, year 2025 projected traffic (without improvements), and maximum design volume for various spots on the street system.

	<b>1999 Traffic Volumes</b>	<b>2025 Traffic Volumes with No Improvements</b>	<b>Maximum Volume with Current Size of Roadway</b>
<b>N. 4<sup>th</sup> St. near Cannon River</b>	5,600	17,300	15,000
<b>4<sup>th</sup> St. betw. Main and Hwy. 25</b>	8,300	24,200	15,000
<b>Hwy. 24 near Superamerica</b>	6,000	25,550	15,000

The table shows that traffic volumes are expected to increase three to four times over their 1999 levels.

<sup>1</sup> S.E.H. and MnDOT, report to the Vision 52 Internal Management Team, March 4, 2002.

The S.E.H./MnDOT report to the Vision 52 Management Team contained two improvement scenarios that would keep traffic volumes below the maximum design volumes of downtown streets. Scenario 2 improvements included a new connection to Hwy. 25 from the new south interchange with Hwy. 52 and an extension to the north to Hwy. 19 in the vicinity of the school complex. Scenario 3 included the Scenario 2 improvements as well as northerly extension of the east ring route from Hwy. 19 to Hwy. 20 and then west to Hwy. 52 along the county line.

The traffic impacts of these scenarios are shown in the table below.

	<b>1999 Traffic Volumes</b>	<b>2025 Traffic Volumes with Scenario 2</b>	<b>2025 Traffic Volumes with Scenario 3</b>	<b>Maximum Volume with Current Size of Roadway</b>
<b>N. 4<sup>th</sup> St. near Cannon River</b>	5,600	16,700	10,100	15,000
<b>4<sup>th</sup> St. betw. Main and Hwy. 25</b>	8,300	20,000	13,100	15,000
<b>Hwy. 24 near Superamerica</b>	6,000	16,000	11,200	15,000

The study projects that traffic will nearly double on 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Hwy. 24 by 2025 even with the scale of improvements projected in Scenarios 2 and 3. Maximum volumes will be exceeded if just the improvements in Scenario 2 are completed.

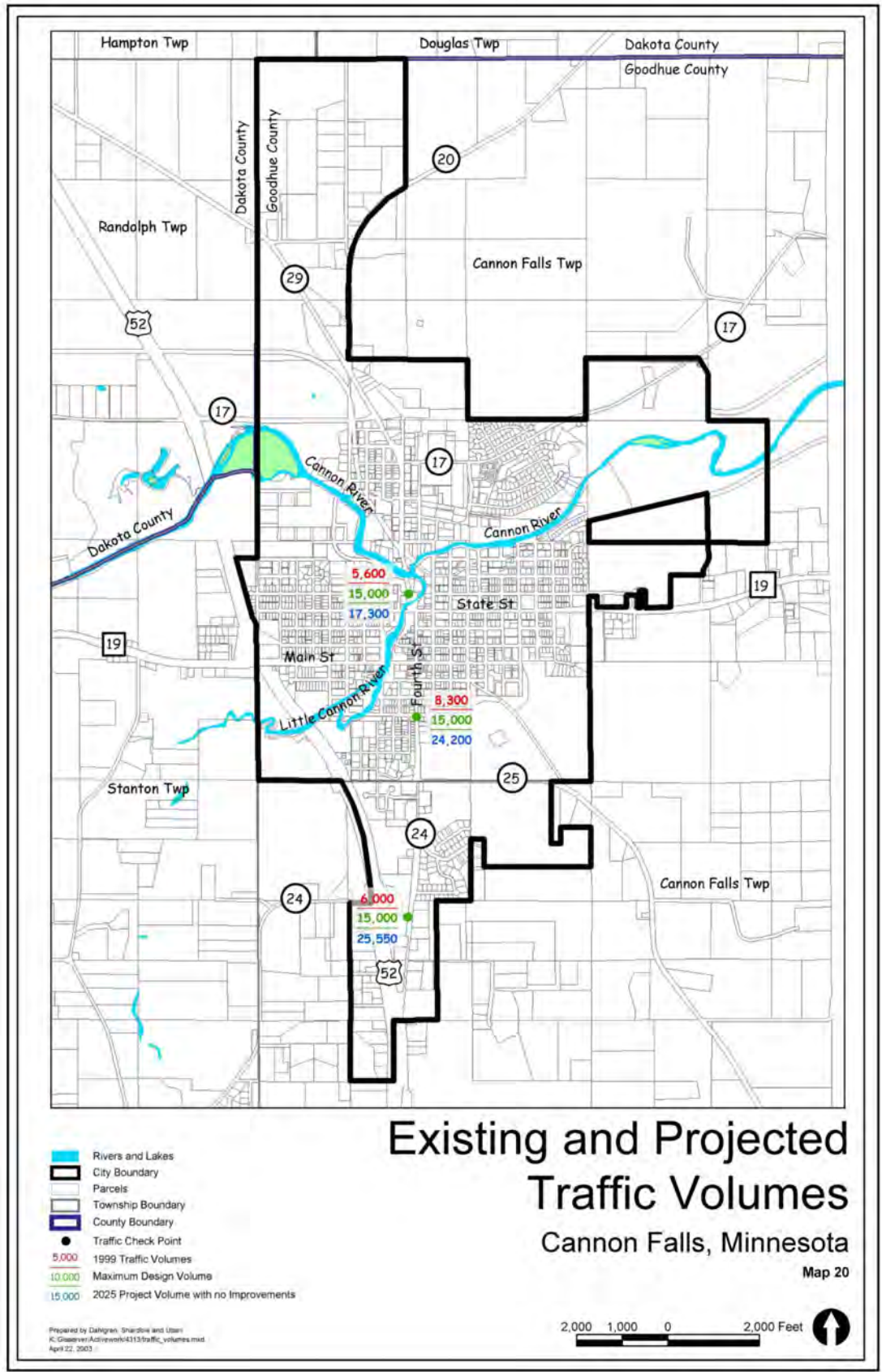
Transit options are limited because of the city's small size. Residents are desirous of some sort of shuttle bus in town and restoration of intercity bus service connecting to the Twin Cities and Rochester.

The goal, objectives and policies below are intended to guide Cannon Falls in coping with the inevitable traffic increases that will occur if development proceeds on the edge of town.

Goal: A transportation system that avoids streets operating beyond their design capacity and that provides alternative means of transportation for those who cannot or do not want to use the automobile.

Cannon Falls acknowledges that money and human resources are the most critical impediments to achieving this goal. Highway and bridge improvements will cost several million dollars. Cannon Falls must compete with other projects in MnDOT District Six and the Twin Cities metropolitan area because Cannon Falls is on the border between the two districts.

In order to effectively compete for funding the city has assembled the following objectives and policies related to the city's transportation system.



## **Governmental Communication and Cooperation**

**Objective:** Increased communication and cooperation between government units.

**Policies:**

**T 1** The city will support and will initiate the creation of an intergovernmental group to discuss the implementation of the improvements suggested in this plan. The group should include the City of Cannon Falls, the surrounding townships, Goodhue and Dakota Counties, MnDOT, and the DNR.

## **Controlled Growth**

**Objective:** A growth rate that does not generate traffic that exceeds the design capacity of the arterial street and highway system.

**Policies:**

**T 2** The city will annually monitor traffic levels and stop or slow the pace of development if it appears that traffic will eventually outpace the design capacity of the arterial street system.

**T 3** The city will work toward the implementation of the improvements suggested in this plan.

## **Traffic Management**

**Objective:** Changes to the existing street system of Cannon Falls to accommodate increased traffic levels.

**Policies:**

**T 4** The city will utilize turn lanes, one-way streets, and acceleration lanes to ease traffic flow.

**T 5** The city will work with other units of government to provide a long-range solution to Hwy. 19 through Cannon Falls.

**T 6** Cannon Falls supports the designation of Hwy. 86 in Dakota County as the eventual route of Hwy. 19.

**T 7** The city will employ whatever steps necessary to keep traffic on the major streets and out of residential neighborhoods.

## New Construction

**Objective:** Construction of several new roads between neighborhoods and around the edge of town to relieve congestion in downtown that would result without the improvements.

**Policies:**

**T 8** The city supports the development of sidewalks for pedestrians and bicycles along all major thoroughfares to promote safety as traffic volumes increase. This includes an extension to the Cannon Falls golf course and Lake Byllesby even though they are outside the city.

**T 9** Cannon Falls supports trails or new streets with sidewalks between new subdivisions on the south edge of town and the high school.

**T 10** Cannon Falls supports the sensitive design of these streets so that the bluffs and the river corridor are not severely impacted by the construction of the streets.

**T 11** The city is in favor of the reconstruction or repair of the Third St. bridge or the relocation of the bridge crossing to a point further east toward or beyond the high school.

**T 12** The city supports the upgrading of Hwy. 52 to a freeway type of roadway.

**T 13** The city is in favor of three interchanges on Hwy. 52. They should be in the vicinity of Hwy. 24 where it intersects with Hwy. 52 and where Hwy. 19 and Hwy. 86 intersect with Hwy. 52.

**T 14** The city supports the interchange near Hwy. 24 as shown in the accompanying illustration.

**T 15** The city supports the construction of several new streets in and adjacent to the city that are shown on Map 21.

## Maintenance

**Objective:** Well-maintained streets, including curb, gutter, and sidewalks.

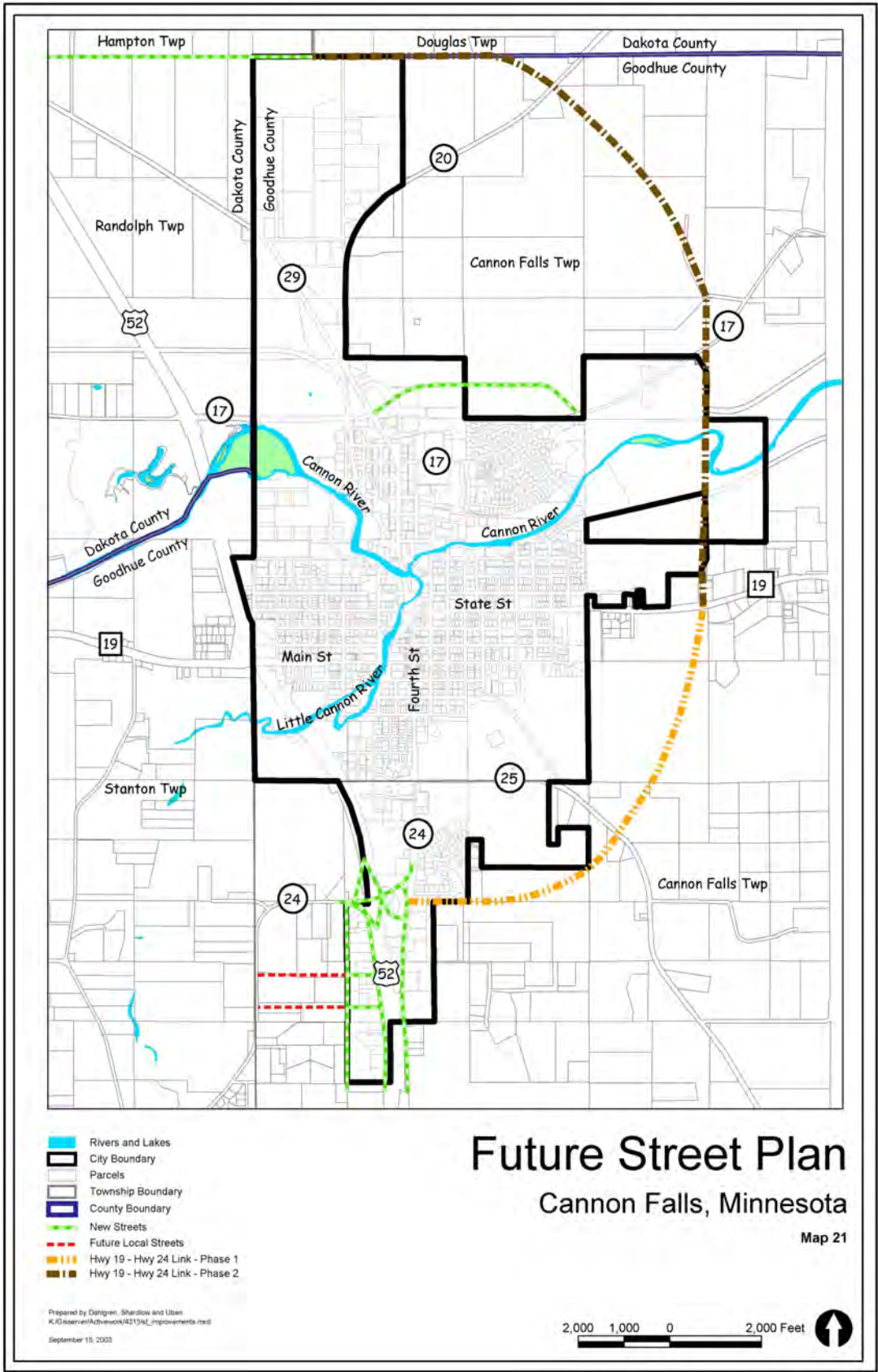
**Policies:**

**T 16** The city will continually improve the condition of the city's residential streets.

**T 17** The city will encourage the State of Minnesota and Goodhue county to upgrade the condition of roads that are in poor condition.

**T 18** The city will require the construction of new streets to a standard that resists long-term deterioration.





## Transit

**Objective:** Intra-city and intercity transit options.

**Policies:**

**T 19** The city supports the continuation of Dial-A-Ride service within the city.

**T 20** The city supports the reestablishment of intercity bus service to the Twin Cities and Rochester.

**T 21** The City also encourages the continuation of bus service to the Mayo Clinic from the Cannon Falls park and ride lot.

## Parking

**Objective:** Ample off-street parking.

**Policies:**

**T 22** The city supports additional off-street parking in the downtown area.

**T 23** The city does not support major off-street parking lots directly on Fourth Street. Parking should be behind the historic buildings.

**T 24** The city supports limits to the number of cars parked on the high school grounds as a way to control the amount of traffic in the area and to encourage the use of the bus service provided by the district.

## Implementation Directions/Actions

Other sections of this comprehensive plan require that Cannon Falls and surrounding jurisdictions engage in **regular discussions** concerning various “regional” types of issues. Implementation of the transportation objectives also requires that those discussions include transportation issues. For example, the southeast connection between highways 19 and 24 will require a great deal of discussion among city, Cannon Falls Township, and Goodhue County to work out all the issues and find a way to fund the project. The city also has to be a part of the continuing planning and dialogue concerning the realignment of Highway 19 across Dakota and Goodhue counties.

The city will also need to work with MnDOT and Goodhue county on the various issues related to the construction of the **Highways 52 and 24 interchange**.

The plan pledges to keep development in line with road capacity. The city will have to **monitor the growth of traffic** in key spots around town and halt subdivision approvals if it looks like progress is not being made toward the implementation of the southeast connection and other road improvements.

The city may have to make **improvements to its existing road system** including turn lanes and one-way streets if it is to keep its pledge of keeping traffic from overwhelming the city.

The city will likely have to contribute construction funds to assure safe pedestrian and bicycle **routes to Lake Byllesby** from the downtown area.

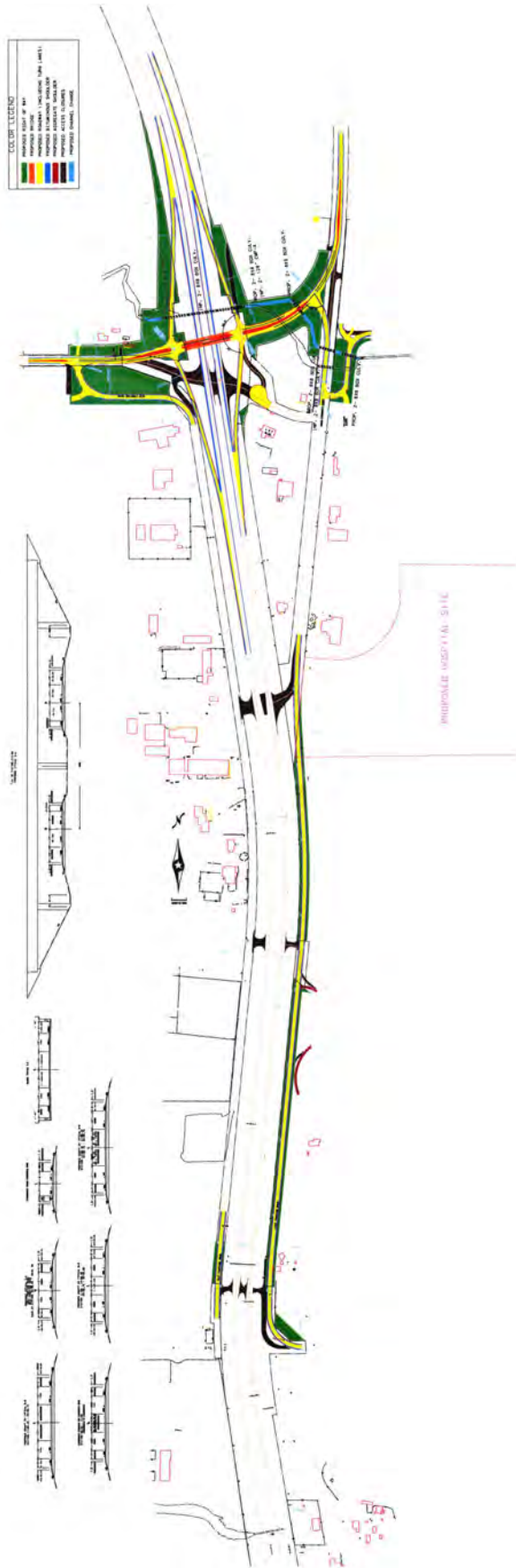
The city needs to find a way to provide funding for the repair and reuse of the **Third St. bridge**.

The city needs to advocate the continuation of **Dial-a-Ride** service within the city and **commuter bus service** to Rochester as well as the reestablishment of **intercity bus service** to the Twin Cities.

In summary, the city needs to assure that the following projects are included in a **capital improvement program** that includes funding sources and timing for each project.

- The southeast connection
- A major rebuilding of the city's residential streets
- The construction of the new Hwy. 52 interchange and local street realignments in the vicinity of where it intersects with Hwy. 24.
- A full freeway interchange at Hwy. 86 and 52.
- Construction of pedestrian and bike trails to Lake Byllesby and in other locations shown in the comprehensive plan.
- Rebuilding of the Third Street bridge.

Map 21a:  
Interchange Concept for TH 52 and CR 24  
Source: Mn/DOT



## Chapter 8. Land Use Plan

The one element that ties together all the other elements of the comprehensive plan is the land use plan. The land use plan that follows is designed to accomplish the goals and objectives in all the other chapters of the plan including the *Vision for Cannon Falls*.

Goal: Development of appropriately located and compatible land uses that allow and encourage the achievement of the policies in the other chapters of the comprehensive plan.

The plan shows designations for property in and near the City of Cannon Falls. The city is not trying to dictate the uses outside the city. Where designated properties are outside the city limits, the designations are those that the city prefers the townships implement and that the city believes are most compatible with long-range orderly growth of the city and adjacent areas. However, because these properties are outside the jurisdiction of the City of Cannon Falls, actual land use decisions by the townships may be at odds with the land use designations in this plan. —

EXTRA-TERRITORIAL ZONING

### PLAN DISTRICTS

#### Environmental Protection/Parks/Open Space

This category is intended to show where sensitive environmental features are located and areas of existing parks and future parks.

**Objective:** Preservation and protection of existing natural amenities and open spaces.

**Policies:**

**LU 1** Cannon Falls will follow the policies in the Environmental Protection and Community Services section of the plan.

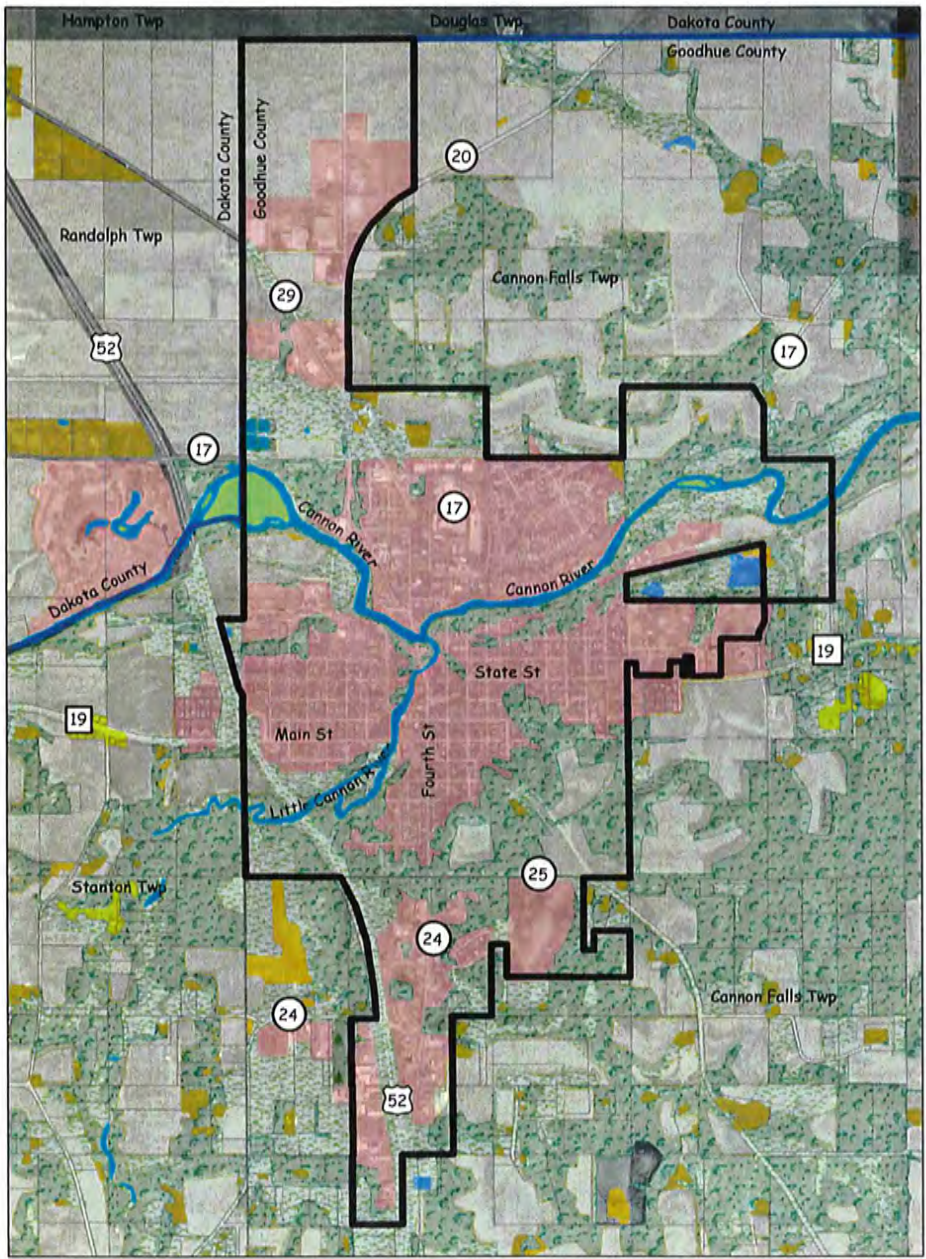
#### Agricultural Uses

**Objective:** Preservation of agricultural uses.

**Policies:**

**LU 2** The areas designated as Agricultural should be retained for active agricultural uses.

**LU 3** Parcels of less than 40 acres should not be created in these areas.



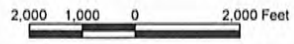
- Urban and Industrial
- Farmsteads and Rural Residences
- Rural Residential Development Complex
- Other Rural Developments
- Cultivated Land
- Pasture and Hayland
- Transitional Agricultural Land
- Grassland
- Grassland-Shrub-Tree (deciduous)
- Grassland-Shrub-Tree (coniferous)
- Deciduous Forest
- Coniferous Forest
- Mixed Forest
- Water
- Wetlands
- Gravel Pits and Open Mines
- Bare Rock
- Exposed Soil, Sandbars, and Sand Dunes
- Island

## Land Cover

### Cannon Falls, Minnesota

Map 22

Prepared by Dahlgren, Schriebe and Urban  
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April 22, 2003



## Urban Reserve Uses

**Objective:** Preservation of land for future urbanization.

**Policies:**

**LU 4** These areas may be converted from agricultural uses to residential uses of no greater density than one unit per for 40 acres.

**LU 5** These areas are expected to be next in line for development of greater densities when all of the low-density areas are developed.

**LU 6** Buildings should be located on parcels in such a way that these properties can be more densely developed in the future.

**LU 7** Parcels less than 40 acres in size should not be further subdivided unless annexation agreements have been accepted by the Cannon Falls and the townships and the density is acceptable to the city.

## Low Density Use

**Objective:** Single-family development.

**Policies:**

**LU 8** Neighborhoods of existing single-family homes should receive this designation.

**LU 9** Single-family areas may have medium and high density uses if a planned unit development or conditional use permit is applied to the development and the land use plan is changed to mixed use residential.

## Medium Density Use

**Objective:** Two-family and townhouse development.

**Policies:**

**LU 10** These areas should be for twin homes, duplexes and townhouses.

## High Density Use

**Objective:** Apartment development.

**Policies:**

**LU 11** These areas should be for apartments, nursing homes, assisted living projects, and similar housing types.

**LU 12** Existing apartment areas in the City should be shown as high density on the Land Use Plan.

## Mixed Use

**Objective:** A mixture of uses containing single-family, twin home, townhouse, and apartment development.

**Policies:**

**LU 13** Large subdivisions of 50 or more lots should be designated mixed use so that they can accommodate a variety of housing units including townhouses, twin-homes, and apartments.

## Downtown Commercial Use


**Objective:** Preservation of a compact downtown.

**Policies:**

**LU 14** The commercial properties in the downtown area should be designated as downtown commercial.

**LU 15** Downtown should not be expanded east and west along Hwy. 19.


**LU 16** Downtown should allow a full variety of small scale (30,000 sq. ft. or less) retail, office, and service uses.

 **LU 17** Multiple-family residential uses should be permitted in and adjacent to the downtown area.

## Convenience Commercial Use

**Objective:** Continued utilization of the commercial strip along Fourth St. north of downtown.

**Policies:**

 **LU 18** The commercial area along Hwy. 29 north of downtown should be for small-scale convenience retail and service businesses that serve local residents and the workforce at the nearby industries.



## Highway Oriented Use

**Objective:** A commercial district that serves Hwy. 52 travelers and provides for larger scale uses that are incompatible with the city's other commercial areas.

**Policies:**

**LU 19** The businesses should be those that benefit from Hwy. 52 visibility and the high volume of traffic between Rochester and the Twin Cities.

**LU 20** The area should accommodate primarily retail and service uses rather than manufacturing and production businesses that could be located in the city's industrial park.

**LU 21** The area should provide for buildings that are too large and incompatible with the smaller scale commercial uses in the downtown and convenience commercial areas of the city.

## Industrial

This classification includes all major industrial, processing, storage, warehouse, trucking activities, and similar uses.

**Objective:** Areas for large-scale industrial businesses that provide jobs for Cannon Falls and the surrounding area.

**Policies:**

✓ **LU 22** Manufacturing, production, storage, warehousing, trucking and other businesses should be located in the industrial areas on the north side of the city.

✓ **LU 23** Large areas of presently agricultural uses on the north side of town between Hwys. 20 and 52 should be reserved for eventual development of industrial uses.

\* **LU 24** The Minnesota Malting Plant property would be appropriate for mixed use residential development and some commercial uses when the plant is closed.

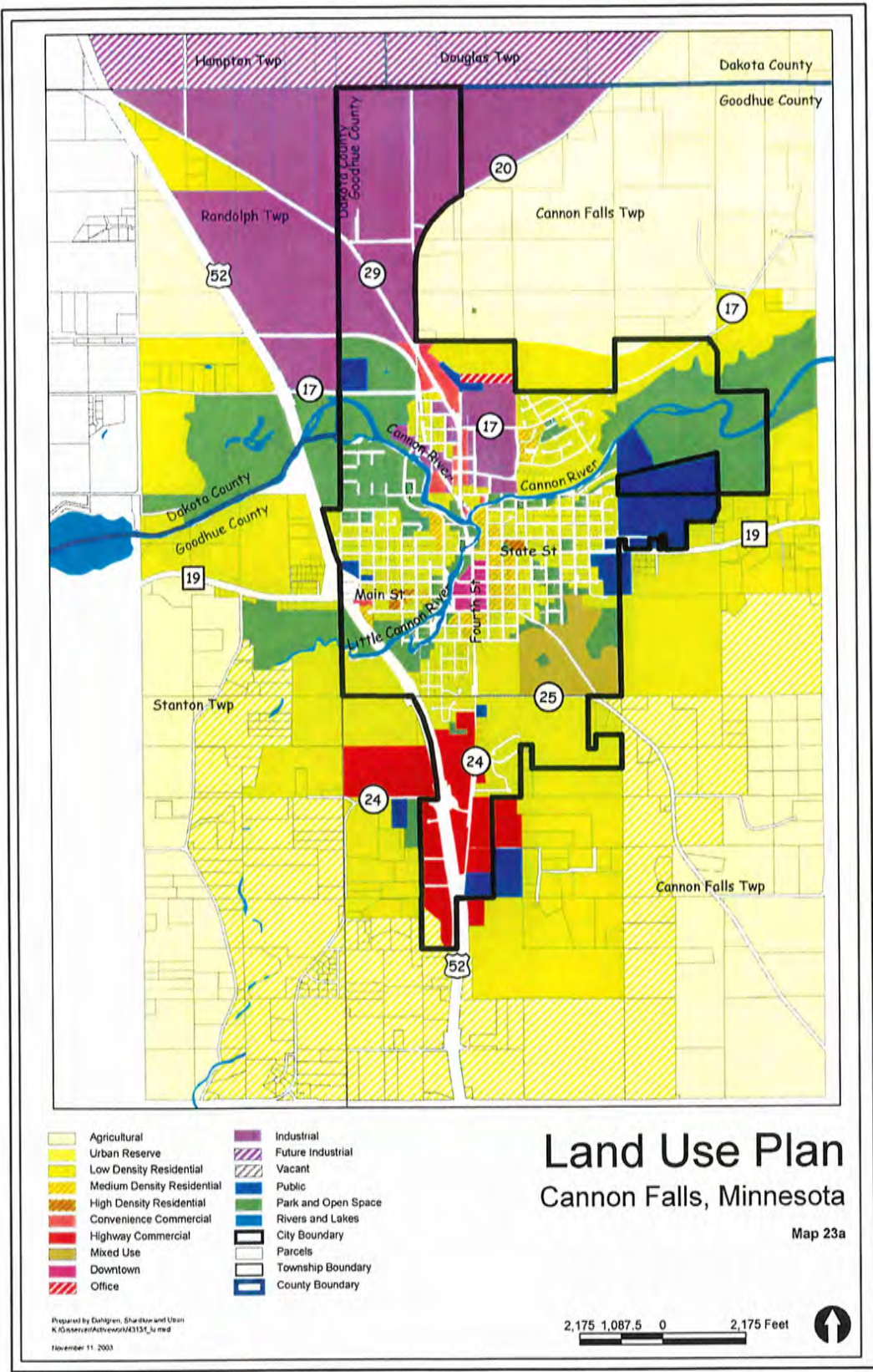
## Governmental/Public/Institutional

This classification includes government office and service buildings such as city hall, water and sewer treatment, and the library as well as institutional uses such as hospitals and nursing homes.

**Objective:** Preservation of land for government, public, and institutional uses.

**Policies:**

**LU 25** The old quarry area north of the school complex should be reserved for eventual expansion of school outdoor play and activity spaces.

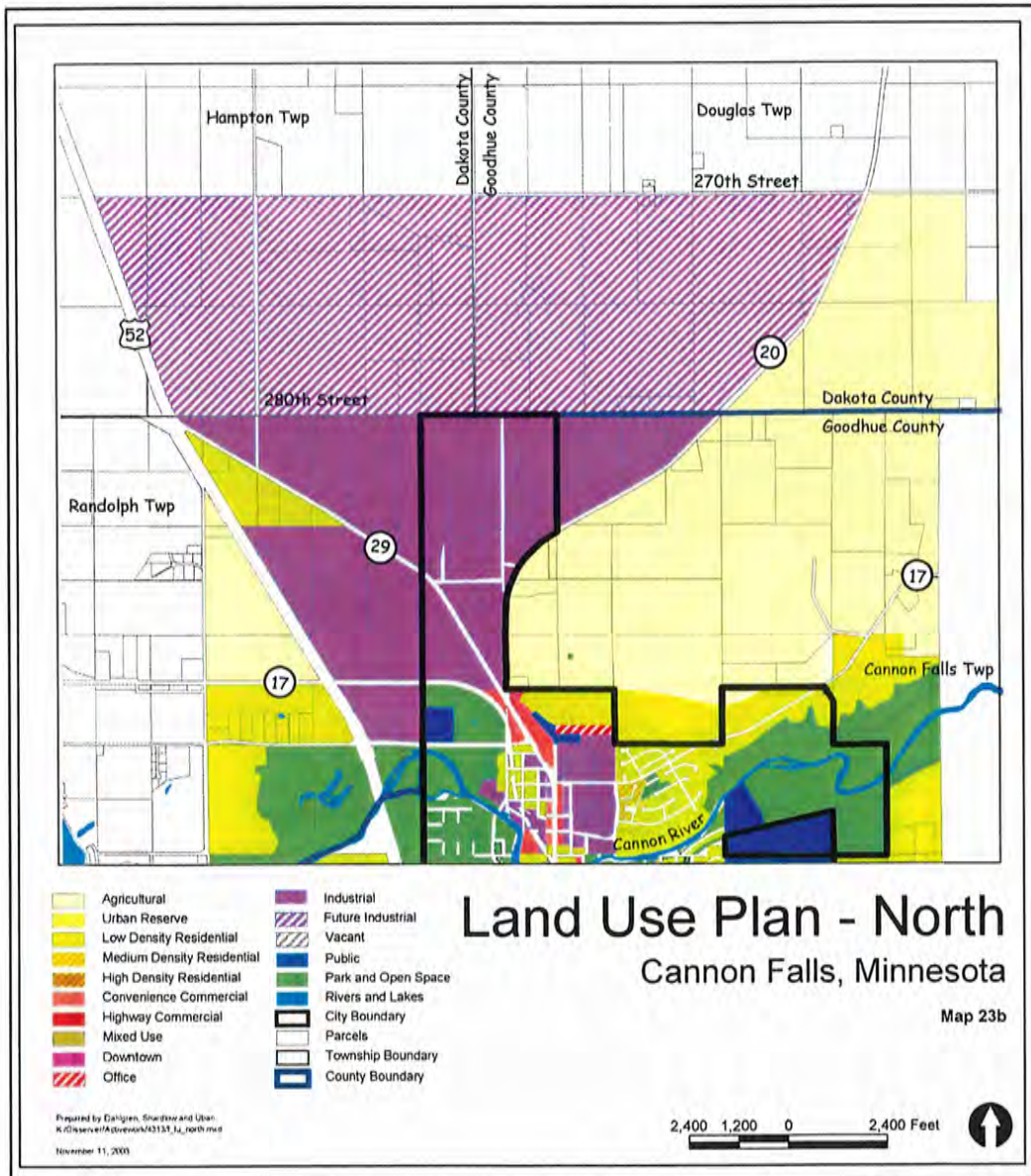


## Implementation Directions/Actions

The city needs to check its **zoning codes** to see that they implement the policies in the plan. If there are problems, the zoning code should be amended.

There should also be consistency between the plan's land use designations and the **zoning districts**. The district boundaries also need to be changed if they are found to be inconsistent with the plan.

Finally, the planning commission should follow the guidance of the comprehensive plan when providing recommendations to the city council on development proposals. All staff reports should contain a statement as to whether or not a proposal is consistent with the city's comprehensive plan.



# Chapter 9. Implementation

This section of the plan augments the **Implementation Directions/Actions** that are included in each section or chapter of the plan.

Implementation of the plan will occur in a number of ways. Major implementation tools include:

- A capital improvement program. (street paving, sewer line construction)
- Annual budget appropriations. (park and road maintenance)
- Zoning code. (flood plain protection, minimum lot sizes)
- Subdivision regulation. (subdivision design and housing type requirements)
- Other city ordinances. (liquor and licensing)
- Implementation committees or commissions. (downtown promotion, preservation)
- Advocacy and lobbying. (legislative agenda)
- Intergovernmental communication and discussion. (work with townships and county agencies)

The **Implementation Direction/Actions** are concise “To Do” lists of what the city needs to do to implement the various sections of the plan. In some cases the city will have to be proactive (change zoning regulations and pave streets). In other cases implementation will come through a reactive response such as denying development projects that do not meet the requirements in revised codes or do not otherwise follow the comprehensive plan policies.

Oversight responsibilities need to be assigned to make sure that the plan policies do get implemented.

The roles of the various participants in plan implementation are described below.

## City Planning Commission

Monitor plan implementation and compliance of city decisions related to development and environmental protection policies.

## City Council

Require a yearly progress report from staff and the Planning Commission on progress toward implementation of the plan and problems with plan policies and city regulations. Consider the report and direct staff to draft any plan or regulation change proposals suggested by Council.

The Mayor shall arrange for at least two meetings each year with surrounding township boards to discuss development issues of mutual concern.

## City Manager

Check the adequacy of all zoning, subdivision, and other regulations to see that they are carrying out the intent of this comprehensive plan.

Prepare an annual report to the planning commission and city council evaluating implementation efforts and adequacy of the comprehensive plan policies.

Work with the Public Works and Finance Directors on an updated five-year capital improvement program (CIP) and annual capital budget.

## Public Works Director

Prepare a yearly update of the five-year CIP and annual capital budget.

Work with MnDOT to implement the interchange design approved as part of this plan.

Work with land owners, DNR, MnDOT, and surrounding communities to select a location for an easterly bypass around the city that connects Hwy. 19 to Hwy. 52.

## Five Year Capital Improvement Program

Cannon Falls will undertake the following capital improvement projects over the next five year period to implement the city's comprehensive plan. This table should be updated each year.

<b>Project/Estimated Cost by Year</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Project A	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Project B					
Project C					