

MINNESOTA BY DESIGN

Options for a State Development Strategy

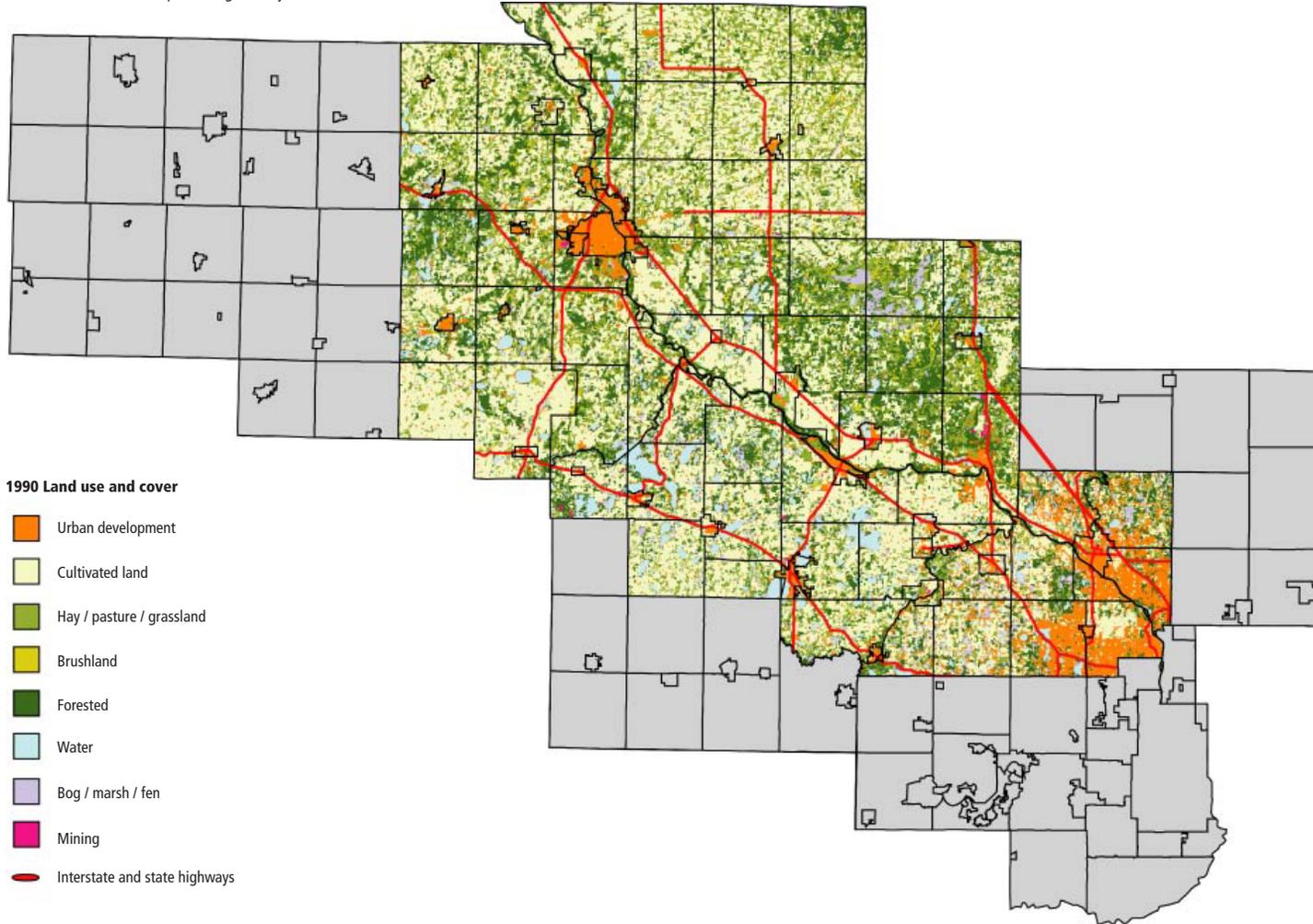


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MINNESOTA PLANNING



Land use and cover of I-94 study area

The I-94 study area is dominated by agricultural land use, but urbanization extends from St. Cloud and Minneapolis along the major roads.



MINNESOTA PLANNING is charged with developing a long-range plan for the state, stimulating public participation in Minnesota's future and coordinating activities with state agencies, the Legislature and other units of government.

Minnesota by Design: Options for a State Development Strategy was prepared in response to Minnesota Laws of 1999, Chapter 238. The lead author was Sarah Ginkel and the project manager was Deborah Pile, both of Minnesota Planning. Photography was by Sarah Ginkel.

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Upon request, *Minnesota by Design* will be made available in alternate format, such as Braille, large print or audio tape. For TTY, contact Minnesota Relay Service at 800-627-3529 and ask for Minnesota Planning.



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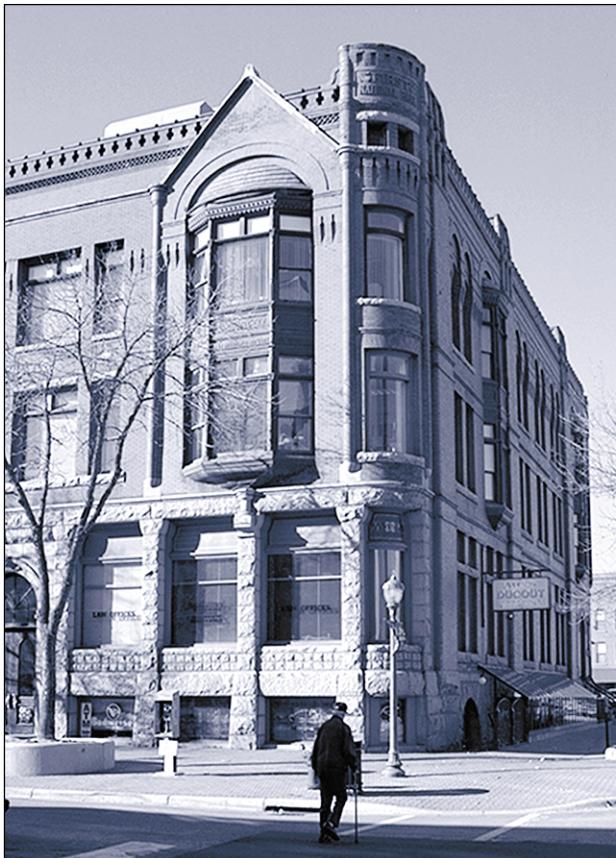
April 2000

Cover map: A 1993 topographical map
of the St. Cloud area.
Source: U.S. Geological Survey

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Options for a State Development Strategy

Historic building in St. Cloud, Stearns County



- 1 *Summary*
- 3 *Introduction*
- 6 *Minnesota faces change*
- 12 *Why Minnesota needs a strategy*
- 14 *Essential components of a strategy*
- 19 *Study area has important assets*
- 23 *Challenges in the study area*
- 26 *Options for a strategy*
- 30 *Next steps*

Glossary

Affordable housing Owner-occupied or rental housing for which the monthly payment does not exceed 28 percent of the household's gross monthly income

Brownfields Abandoned or idle properties that have actual or suspected contamination

Comprehensive plan An adopted statement of a local government to guide present and future physical, social and economic development within the jurisdiction. The plan may include goals and policies, as well as elements for things such as land use, transportation, community facilities, water and plan implementation.

Conservation Management or control of use of resources and activities to restore, enhance, protect and sustain natural resources

Density The number of dwelling structures or people per unit of land

Generic environmental impact statement An extensive, in-depth analysis of social, economic and environmental influences, used for a major class of development projects that have the potential to greatly affect the environment

Geographic information systems Computer systems that reference data to a set of geographical coordinates and encode this data so it can be sorted, selectively retrieved and statistically and spatially analyzed

Growth management Techniques, regulations and incentives to control development

Historic site A structure or place of outstanding historical and cultural significance and designated as such by state or federal government

Individual sewage treatment systems Systems that treat sewage at its location, rather than transporting the sewage to a central treatment facility. There are various types of individual sewage treatment systems, the most common of which consists of an underground septic tank connected to a soil treatment system, usually a drainfield, mound or at-grade system.

Infrastructure Those facilities under public ownership or operated or maintained for public benefit that support development and redevelopment; protect public health, safety and welfare; and sustain industry, residential, commercial and all other land use activities. For example, infrastructure covers public facilities for transportation, energy, telecommunications, educational institutions, drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, open space and recreation, and solid and hazardous waste.

Interchanges Road structures and ramps that separate intersecting roadways and provide directional ramps for movement between them

Land use plan A compilation of policy statements, goals, standards and maps to guide the future development of private and public property

Ridership Number of rides provided by a public transit system in a given period of time

Sewer A centralized underground drainage system used to carry off water and waste

Signals Stoplights and meters used to regulate traffic flow

Trade centers Centers of specialized business, personal and professional services that tend to diversify in the higher-level trade centers

Urban growth boundary A mapped line dividing land to be developed from land to be protected for natural and rural uses

Wetland Area of land inundated or saturated by surface water or ground water on a permanent or periodic basis, characterized by soils that develop in wet conditions and by vegetation adapted to wet soil conditions

Summary



Trees line a bicycle and pedestrian trail in Montissippi County Park, Wright County.

Dramatic shifts in population, transportation, the economy and the environment have altered the face of Minnesota and its communities over the past 20 years. These trends are expected to continue, presenting Minnesotans with a crucial question: Should such changes occur by chance or by choice?

Minnesota's population is on the rise, with growth concentrating in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and certain regional trade centers. Transportation patterns focus on key statewide and regional corridors for moving people and goods by rail, water, air and road. The state's economy and employment have shifted from a historical base in farming, mining and logging to service industries — including transportation, trade, construction and finance, insurance and real estate. Minnesota's overall environment continues to provide a healthy place for people to live, work and play, but some ecosystems have been adversely affected by agriculture, urbanization and development.

Recognizing the challenges these changes represent, the 1999 Minnesota Legislature directed Minnesota Planning to prepare options for a state development strategy that would guide growth for the next 20 years. Using an area along Interstate Highway 94 between Minneapolis and St. Cloud as a prototype, Minnesota Planning worked with several state agencies to determine the essential elements of and options for such a strategy. The results of this effort are presented in this report, *Minnesota by Design: Options for a State Development Strategy*.

Why have a strategy?

Overall, most Minnesotans enjoy a healthy environment, feel safe in their communities and have access to necessary goods and services. However, the

things that Minnesotans value may be threatened if development and growth damage the environment, communities and individual lifestyles. Whatever form it might take, a state development strategy would help the state to:

- **Focus on values.** A strategy would recognize the things that Minnesotans value and would equip and guide people and organizations to focus on and honor these values in the course of developing the state.
- **Conserve and protect resources.** Minnesota has invaluable natural, cultural and historical resources. A development strategy would give priority to ensuring that resources are conserved and protected for present and future generations.
- **Take action.** Solving problems often costs more than preventing them. A strategy would allow the state to address needs and problems before they become crises.
- **Offer predictability.** A strategy would give local and regional governments and businesses a predictable, consistent vision of the state's goals and priorities.
- **Optimize investments.** Through a strategy, government would better direct its efforts to citizen-defined priorities, allowing state agencies to optimize monetary and staff investments and to work together to provide more efficient and better services.
- **Address statewide and multijurisdictional concerns.** A state development strategy would provide a way to approach issues that affect more than one jurisdiction and would encourage collaboration between many planning efforts to obtain integrated solutions.

Development strategy requires four key components

Minnesota is not the only state to face the consequences of growth and development. Fifteen other states have chosen to address these concerns with statewide approaches, and their efforts reveal four common components of a successful state development strategy:

- **Vision and goals.** The vision and goals are the cornerstone of a state development strategy because they define what the people want their state and their communities to look like in the future.
- **Commitment to the strategy.** Local, regional and state governments, nonprofit organizations, foundations, businesses and citizens all must help develop and implement a state development strategy.
- **Evaluation of success.** Ongoing evaluation is necessary for determining the success of the strategy as it is implemented.
- **Inventory of assets and challenges.** An accounting of statewide, regional and local assets and challenges galvanizes people to take action and identifies key issues that must be addressed by the strategy.

Strategy could take several forms

Several options are possible for a state development strategy, each involving a different level of participation by state, regional and local governments. These options can exist independently, but they also can build on each other.

- **A policy guide** would document the vision and goals Minnesotans have for the future of their state. It would provide direction to state, regional and local governments that choose to use it in their planning and decision-making.

- **Technical and financial partnerships** would offer various forms of assistance to help local and regional communities plan for their futures.
- **A state investment guide** would work to coordinate how state agencies distribute investments among Minnesota communities. It could guide state-level investments, provide investment criteria or filters, or identify where modifications are needed in tax and revenue policies.
- **Required local planning** would ensure that every local community develops a comprehensive plan that incorporates the vision and goals of the state development strategy.
- **A state comprehensive plan** would be applied to all land use and development decisions by local, regional and state governments. Consistency with the state plan would be required of all local and regional plans.

Next steps

Minnesota by Design looks at the options for a state development strategy. The options presented in this report are first glimpses of what a state development strategy might look like. Because of time and resource constraints, not all of the elements required by the legislation are included in this report. But the law's elements must be included in the next phases of strategy development. To move forward, Minnesota needs to:

- **Refine a vision and goals**
- **Reach consensus** on the type of strategy to be developed
- **Determine process** and sequence steps
- **Estimate and allocate funds** for developing the strategy

Introduction



A law firm uses a historic building in St. Cloud, Stearns County.

In 1999, the Minnesota Legislature directed Minnesota Planning to develop a proposal for a state development strategy that would guide growth and development for the next 20 years. According to the legislation, a state development strategy must:

- **Include forecasts, issues, goals and policies** relating to development and the connection between transportation, land use, environmental protection, energy and economic development
- **Identify major development and transportation corridors** in the state
- **Identify cultural and natural features and resources** of statewide, regional and local significance
- **Make recommendations for coordinated state investments** necessary to achieve goals and policies in the area of infrastructure, including transportation and wastewater treatment facilities
- **Describe any legislation or programmatic changes** necessary to implement the plan
- **Recommend approaches for coordinating local government decisions** with the strategy
- **Encompass the community-based planning goals** in Minnesota Statutes, Section 4A.08, including citizen participation and intergovernmental cooperation

This report, *Minnesota by Design: Options for a State Development Strategy*, should be considered a work in progress. It is not an exhaustive or comprehensive inventory, analysis or plan for the study area or the state, nor is it the strategy itself. Rather, this report proposes options for a state development strategy and offers a glimpse of what a state development strategy could

look like. Many essential elements that were outlined in the legislation are missing from this proposal because of time and resource constraints, but those elements should be considered in the next phases.

The options for a strategy proposal included in this report were developed with the assistance of seven state agencies: Metropolitan Council, Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Planning and the departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Trade and Economic Development, and Transportation.

To illustrate the necessary elements of a strategy in a region of Minnesota, the Legislature directed Minnesota Planning to use a six-county area surrounding Interstate Highway 94 between the Twin Cities metropolitan area and St. Cloud. The I-94 study area, illustrated on the inside covers of this report, was chosen because it is one of the most dynamic and growing corridors in the state in terms of demographic, environmental and historical trends, some of which are cited in this report. The I-94 study area also contains a vast array of unique resources of statewide and regional significance, such as the Mississippi River, the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad and the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, that must be considered when making development decisions in the state. Although each region of the state has unique needs, resources and growth trends, it is hoped that the I-94 study area represents a sample of some development concerns common in the state.

The boundaries of the I-94 study area were deliberately defined to include areas of the counties that have been or are most directly influenced by transportation, development and demographic patterns along the interstate highway. Portions of the counties, such as the northeastern part of Anoka County, were excluded if trends were linked to other

transportation and development corridors or if the areas were not experiencing growth pressures, such as the western part of Stearns County.

Many agencies develop plans for addressing specific resources and issues, and many conduct studies to support these plans. The state development strategy should be viewed as a bridge tying these efforts together. Some of the efforts will provide information for developing strategy detail; others will offer avenues for implementation. This proposal is only a first step.

The maps and charts in *Minnesota by Design* illustrate some of the key issues that should be considered when designing a strategy. They also

are not comprehensive but rather were chosen because data was available. Information for many other key issues, such as public transit and affordable housing, was not readily accessible in a consistent or compatible format. Some of the data gaps in the I-94 study area have been identified, but the extent of data limitations for the entire state is unknown.

Finally, the public played no direct role in preparing this proposal due to the short time frame and limited resources. Involvement of citizens, businesses, nonprofit organizations and local, regional, state and federal governments is essential for the success of any planning effort and must be a critical part of developing a statewide strategy.

Geographic information system data capabilities vary in study area

| TYPE OF DATA | AGENCY | COVERAGE IN GIS FORMAT |
|---|---|--|
| Digital elevation models | U.S. Geological Survey | Entire study area |
| Digital orthophoto quadrangles | Minnesota Planning | Entire study area |
| Flood insurance rate maps | Federal Emergency Management Agency | Entire study area |
| Geological atlas and hydrogeologic assessment | Minnesota Geological Survey and Department of Natural Resources | Stearns and Hennepin counties have detailed assessments; Sherburne and Anoka counties have less detailed assessments; no assessments are available for Benton and Wright counties. |
| Land use and land cover | U.S. Geological Survey | Entire study area |
| Minnesota County Biological Survey | Department of Natural Resources | Stearns, Anoka, Hennepin and Sherburne counties; Benton and Wright counties have been surveyed, but data is not yet available. |
| National Wetland Inventory | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | Entire study area |
| Natural Heritage Information System | Department of Natural Resources | Entire study area |
| Public Recreational Information Maps | Department of Natural Resources | Entire study area; eastern portion of study area is in digital format. |
| Soil surveys | Natural Resources Conservation Service | Anoka County is covered by an outdated survey; Benton, Hennepin and Stearns counties need to have terrain distortions removed for better spatial accuracy; Sherburne and Wright counties have modern surveys with high spatial accuracy. |

Strategy could expand and unify existing efforts

State transportation plan: The latest update of the state transportation plan, *Moving Minnesota, from 2000 to 2020*, builds on the transportation plans from eight districts in the state and sets statewide policies that provide decision-making frameworks for shaping the state's transportation system. The primary objective of the plan is to foster an efficient and effective transportation system with multiple modes of transportation, including air, road, rail, water and transit.

Community-based planning: The Minnesota Community-Based Planning Act of 1997 established guidelines for planning and provided technical assistance and grant money to local communities engaging in comprehensive planning efforts. The act outlined 11 goals for communities to consider and incorporate into their plans. To date, 17 counties and more than 150 cities, townships and local units of government have been involved in community-based planning efforts. In addition, these communities have formed technical partnerships with dozens of state agency offices around the state.

Minnesota Milestones: Begun in 1992 with the involvement of more than 10,000 citizens, *Minnesota Milestones* is a tool to help Minnesotans envision the future they want for themselves, their children and their grandchildren. It lays out 19 long-term goals for the state in key areas — the economy, the natural environment, community life, children and families, education, health and quality of government. The state's progress toward each of the goals was tracked in 1993, 1996 and 1998.

Regional trade center studies: Since 1960, Minnesota cities have been classified into an eight-level hierarchy of trade centers that incorporates the centers of specialized business, personal and professional services that tend to diversify in the higher-level trade centers. Community classification is based on criteria such as number of establishments, types of services and population. Follow-up studies conducted in 1989 and 1998 showed consolidation, expansion and growth in higher-level centers, coupled with erosion and loss in small places. The trade center studies were used in developing the interregional corridor system for the state transportation plan.

Smart Growth Initiative of *The Big Plan*: In October 1999, Governor Jesse Ventura released *The Big Plan*, a strategic plan for the next three years of his administration. As part of the plan's healthy, vital communities focus, the Smart Growth Initiative identifies ways for Minnesota to grow that improve the prosperity and quality of life for all citizens. The principles of smart growth include:

- Using land and natural resources wisely to sustain them for the future
- Making more efficient, integrated public investments in transportation, housing, schools, utilities, information infrastructure and other public services
- Giving communities options and choices for growth, transportation, housing, jobs, education and the amenities that make communities desirable places to live
- Reinforcing responsibility and accountability for development decisions

Generic environmental impact statement on urban development: The 1999 Legislature directed the Environmental Quality Board to prepare a generic environmental impact statement examining the long-term effects of urban development on Minnesota's economy, environment and way of life. The study will look at urban development trends, existing land use policies, environmental quality issues associated with urban development, economic and social issues, and the roles of various governmental units. The scoping phase of the study, which identifies the content and issues to be addressed, will be completed in late 2000.

Minnesota faces change



Development encroaches upon the historic St. Michael's church and cemetery in St. Michael, Wright County.

St. Michael, in Wright County, is an attractive place to live and work because of its proximity to the Twin Cities and its location along the Crow River and Interstate Highway 94. Ten years ago, St. Michael was a small, agricultural community of 2,500 people. In 1996, St. Michael and Frankfort township consolidated, and the ramifications of this change are significant. St. Michael increased its land area more than tenfold to become a large city. The city projects its population to climb to 14,375 by 2010 and 21,000 by 2020. As a community, St. Michael must balance agricultural preservation and staged urban development.

Communities like St. Michael can be found throughout the state and demonstrate the changing nature of Minnesota. Some areas, particularly small towns and rural areas, have faltered because of economic change and population loss; others have thrived due to population growth, rapid development and a labor market that has more jobs than workers. These trends are expected to continue and present the people of Minnesota with two options: change by chance or change by choice.

Minnesota's population is growing, aging and concentrating

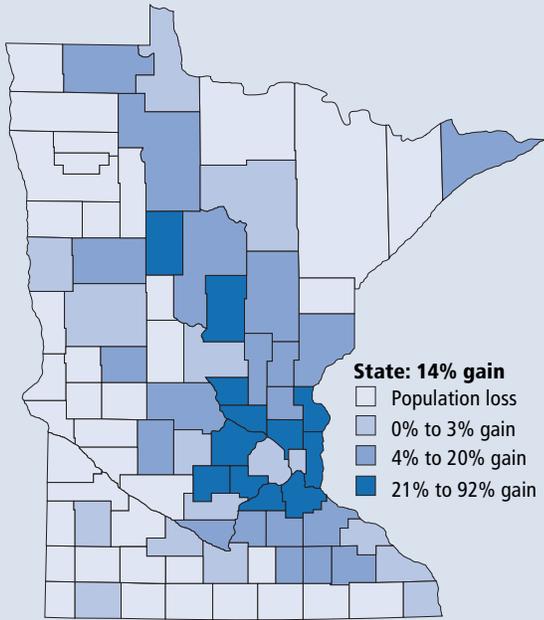
Minnesota's population grew more than 9 percent between 1990 and 1998, as estimated by the State Demographic Center at Minnesota Planning. This rate was slightly below the national average but above the Midwest region's 5 percent gain. The State Demographic Center projects the state's population to increase by 14 percent over the next 25 years, with the most dramatic expansion occurring in regions such as the Brainerd lakes area and the ring of counties around the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Minnesota is expected to add 190,640 new households, or almost half a million people, to the state by 2025. This change could consume a substantial amount of land if development to accommodate this population growth occurs at lower densities.

As its population grows, Minnesota will become more diverse, with roughly 17 percent of the population being African American, Asian, American Indian or Hispanic by the year 2025 — more than double the current proportions of minority populations.

Agricultural lands are often lost to development. Hassan Township, Hennepin County.

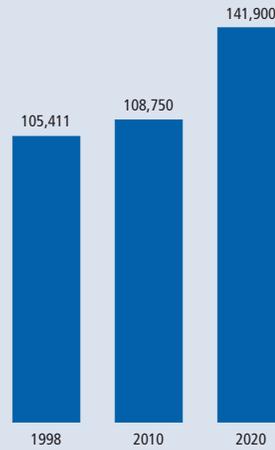


Minnesota's population projected to increase 14 percent between 1995 and 2025



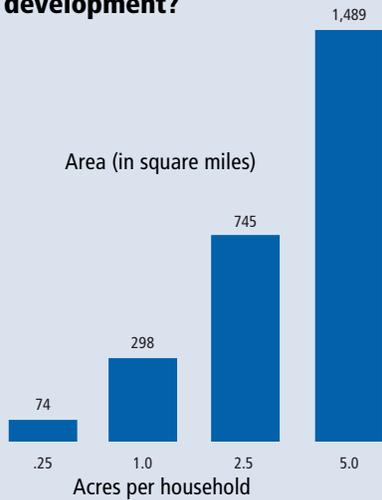
Source: Minnesota Planning

City of St. Cloud and surrounding urban areas expect 35 percent rise in population between 1998 and 2020



Source: Maxfield Research

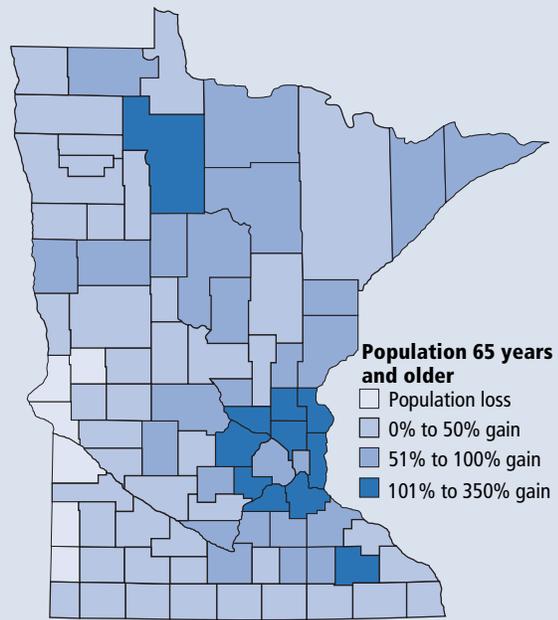
How much land will Minnesota need for development?



Minnesota is projected to add 190,640 households, or 476,000 people, by the year 2025. If development occurs at five acres per household, an area equal to 40 miles by 40 miles, or an additional 2 percent of the state, will be used. This is roughly equal to the total combined land area of Benton, Sherburne and Wright counties.

Source: Minnesota Planning

Older population likely to grow dramatically between 1995 and 2025 as baby boomers age



Source: Minnesota Planning

The state's population is also getting older. By 2025, the number of Minnesotans age 65 or older is projected to be 80 percent larger than in 1995. This age group will start to grow rapidly between 2010 and 2015, as baby boomers begin to pass their 65th birthdays. The number in this age group will go up in almost all areas of the state and is expected to triple or even quadruple in suburban counties. Many counties projected to lose population or grow only slightly will nevertheless see a considerable rise in their residents age 65 and older, simply because the baby boom generation is so large.

In addition, Minnesota's population is concentrating in the Twin Cities area and in regional trade centers. The State Demographic Center estimates that in 1998, the Twin Cities seven-county area accounted for 2.5 million, or 53 percent, of the state's 4.7 million people. This number is expected to increase substantially in the next 25 years; the State Demographic Center projects a gain of 367,000 people, while the Metropolitan Council anticipates it could be as high as 625,000.

Trade centers are categorized by level and type

| LEVEL | CENTER TYPE | 1963 | 1989 | 1998 |
|-------|---------------------|------|------|-------------|
| 0 | Metropolitan area | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 1 | Primary regional | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| 2 | Secondary regional | 2 | 8 | 24 |
| 3 | Complete shopping | 33 | 27 | 22 |
| 4 | Partial shopping | 55 | 55 | 65 |
| 5 | Full convenience | 53 | 62 | 65 |
| 6 | Minimum convenience | 171 | 172 | unavailable |
| 7 | Hamlet | 577 | 423 | unavailable |
| TOTAL | | 894 | 749 | 181 |

Most cities in Minnesota fall into the lower levels of the trade center hierarchy. They support their regions by supplying larger communities with workers, consumers and tourists, but they themselves provide only basic needs for their residents.

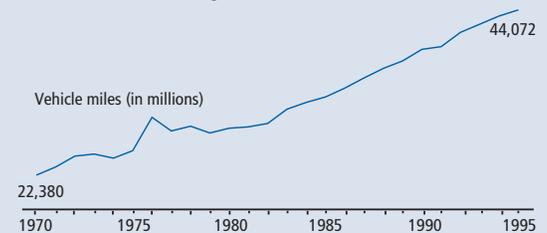
Notes: The 1963 primary regional centers were Duluth-Superior and Fargo-Moorhead, and the secondary regional centers were St. Cloud and Rochester. The 1989 primary regional center was Duluth-Superior. The 1998 primary regional centers were Duluth-Superior, Fargo-Moorhead, St. Cloud and Rochester.

Source: University of Minnesota

The Metropolitan Council, the planning body for the seven-county metropolitan area, has worked with local governments to develop a metropolitan urban service area to determine which communities will receive sewer and transportation services between now and 2020. The council also has identified a long-term potential urban area with a boundary intended to be large enough to accommodate urban growth through 2040. The increase in the area's population, as well as in the populations of surrounding counties, puts pressure on the boundaries of the metropolitan urban service area and on the ability of the Metropolitan Council to achieve area goals.

Outside of the Twin Cities, one of the fastest growing urban areas is St. Cloud, where Maxfield Research projections show that the population is expected to increase by 35 percent, or more than 36,000 people, between 1998 and 2020. Among trade centers, most population growth has occurred in cities within the top three levels of the eight-tier trade center hierarchy into which Minnesota cities are classified. Counties outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area with trade centers in the top three levels contain 37 percent of the state's population.

Vehicle miles traveled in Minnesota increase steadily



Vehicle miles traveled on all roads in Minnesota doubled between 1970 and 1995. Interstates and other principal arterial roads make up about 5,200, or 4 percent of all road miles in Minnesota, yet they carry nearly 50 percent of total highway travel.

Source: Department of Transportation

Interregional corridors link trade centers



Interregional and regional corridors in Minnesota provide important links for the movement of people and goods.
Source: Department of Transportation

Shifts are occurring in transportation and the economy

A growing population puts greater demands on transportation facilities. Nearly 50 percent of all highway travel occurs on about 4 percent of the road miles in the state, according to the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and federal highway statistics show that vehicle miles traveled on all types of highways and roads increased by more than 70 percent between 1980 and 1998. This trend, along with a 30 percent rise in motor vehicle registration over the same period, has led to increased congestion and road deterioration.

While the number of public transit systems in Minnesota has risen over the past 20 years, the total number of rides on them has not kept pace. The Department of Transportation estimates that in 1984, the state had 70 public transit systems with a total of 85 million rides, but in 1997, it had 105 systems with a total of 76 million rides. Although 70 percent of these systems were in urban and rural areas outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area, more than 80 percent of all transit rides in 1997

were within the Twin Cities metropolitan area on vehicles operated by the Metropolitan Council Transit Operations. In addition, the Twin Cities metropolitan area has more than 150 park-and-ride lots where commuters can park their cars and carpool or take transit to work.

Another key shift is seen in Minnesota's economy, which has been moving away from its historical base in farming, mining and forestry. As of 1997, 4.5 percent of Minnesota's total employed labor force worked in these industries, while the remainder was concentrated in services, manufacturing, transportation, retail and wholesale trade, construction and finance, insurance and real estate. Although farming, mining and forestry directly employ small numbers of Minnesotans and represent a decreasing share of the state's gross state product, these industries are still important parts of the economy, especially in certain regions of the state. In addition, all sectors of the economy are interrelated and contribute to the gross state product. For example, economic models suggest that agriculture accounts for a much higher percentage of the state's employment when related and supportive functions, such as feed suppliers and food processors, are included.

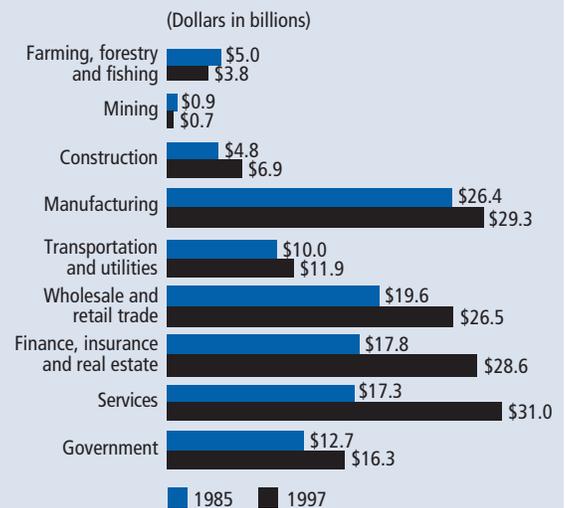
Gooseberry Falls is a popular attraction on the North Shore.



Autumn brings a sunny day to Bay Lake near Deerwood.



Most industries showed real growth in gross state product



Gross state product total for 1985: \$115 billion

Gross state product total for 1997: \$155 billion

Note: All figures adjusted to 1999 dollars.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce

State continues to boast natural beauty, healthy environment

Minnesota is a unique place to live, work and play because of its abundant physical, historical and cultural resources and features. Lake Superior and the North Shore, river bluffs and remnant prairie grasslands, beautiful state parks, more than 12,000 lakes, world-class theaters and museums — all contribute to the beauty, economy and character of the state, making their worth immeasurable. Not only do these features provide recreational opportunities for Minnesotans, they also draw about 26 million tourists to the state every year and make Minnesota attractive to businesses seeking new locations.

Minnesota's environment is basically healthy and clean. However, in the past 150 years, many of the state's natural resources have experienced dramatic and, in some cases, irreversible changes due to agriculture, manufacturing, mining, urbanization and other development. Land use decisions and individual actions that directly and indirectly affect the condition of the environment are made every day. Construction activities, malfunctioning individual sewage treatment systems, improper handling and use of pesticides and fertilizers, and a host of other activities can affect air and water quality.

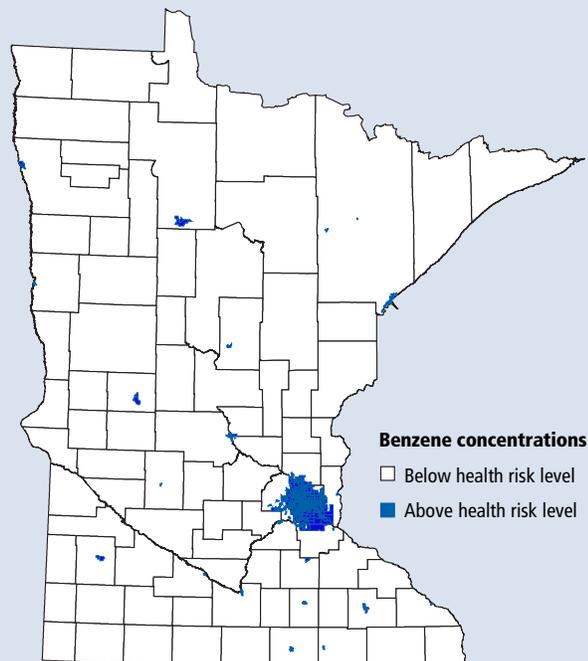
One indicator of effects on water quality is the amount of phosphorus in lakes. Phosphorus is typically the primary nutrient that controls the growth of algae in lakes, which affects the transparency of the water and determines the degree to which lakes can support swimming. Sixty-seven percent of Minnesota's monitored lakes support swimming throughout the summer; 20 percent have algae blooms and low transparency that may limit swimming for a significant part of the summer; and swimming is limited for most of the season in 13 percent.

An example of effects on air quality is pollution from mobile sources, such as cars and trucks, that emit carbon monoxide, benzene and other pollutants. More than half of all benzene emissions in the state are attributed to mobile sources. So far, technological improvements have offset the effects of increasing

traffic. In 1999, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency determined that the Twin Cities metropolitan area is no longer a nonattainment area for carbon monoxide, leading to the discontinuation of vehicle emissions testing in the area. Pollution Control Agency monitoring data shows a slight decrease in benzene concentrations in the Twin Cities metropolitan area since 1991. However, benzene concentrations are still above the health risk level in many parts of the state.

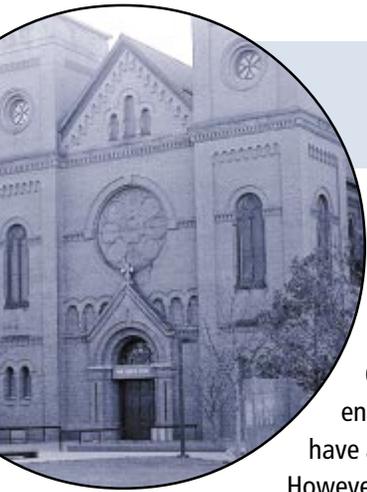
Finally, conflicts can arise over how land is used. Because agricultural activities can generate noise, dust and odors, and sometimes take place at night, conflicts can result between nonfarm residents and farmers. Similar issues can occur when logging, mining and manufacturing activities coincide with residential development. Planning and careful development choices can help ameliorate these conflicts and effects of land use decisions and individual actions on air and water quality.

Benzene found in urban areas



Concentrations of air toxics, including benzene, were estimated by the Pollution Control Agency based on monitoring data and models documented in its 1999 report *Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Staff Paper on Air Toxics*.

Source: Pollution Control Agency



The Great Hall on the campus of St. John's University, Stearns County.

Why Minnesota needs a strategy

Despite the shifts in Minnesota's population, economy and transportation, the state is not on the brink of a crisis. Overall, most Minnesotans enjoy a healthy environment, feel safe in their communities and

have access to necessary goods and services. However, the things that Minnesotans value may be threatened if development and growth occur in ways that damage the environment, communities and individual lifestyles.

In Minnesota, as in other states, most issues of growth and development are addressed by local governments through comprehensive planning, development regulations and capital improvement plans. The authority for this planning is given to local communities through enabling legislation in state statute. In addition to local planning, state government plays an important role through taxation, spending, regulation and exercise of powers such as eminent domain. The state also influences growth and development through the plans, policies and programs of state agencies that work to protect resources and respond to issues that are of statewide importance. A state development strategy would coordinate these plans, policies and programs among all levels and divisions of government, as well as enhance the overall efficiency and function of the state.

Minnesota would benefit from having a strategy that guides growth and development over the next 20 years. Such a plan would help the state to:

- **Focus on values.** A strategy would provide a clear statement of what people want. It would recognize the things that Minnesotans value, such as the natural environment, economic opportunities, diverse culture and distinct housing choices. Such recognition would then equip and guide state, regional and local governments, nonprofit

organizations and foundations, special interest groups, businesses and citizens to focus on and honor these values in all levels of decision-making and in planning for the future development of the state.

- **Conserve and protect resources.** Minnesota has lakes, parks, trails and natural areas that are the envy of many states and are the foundation of its tourism industry. As the state grows, the need for recreational areas will increase. A development strategy can help identify these needs so that the best places can be acquired and maintained for future generations. The state also has invaluable natural, cultural and historical resources, and sustainable growth depends directly on the conservation of and continued access to these resources, as well as to forest, mineral, aggregate and water resources. Forest lands that are fragmented into small parcels by development can lose their commercial value. Sand and gravel operations can be limited by encroachment of the very development that depends on them. Greenways, trail corridors and highway rights-of-way can become too expensive or impossible to acquire once development occurs. A strategy can give priority to these resources to ensure they are conserved and protected.

What has motivated some states to take action?

| | |
|------------|---|
| Delaware | Loss of open space and farmlands |
| Florida | Rapid increase in population and developed land |
| Georgia | Economic inequality between Atlanta and the rest of the state |
| Hawaii | Increased development and tourism |
| Maine | Environmental degradation of coastal and sensitive areas |
| Maryland | Environmental degradation of Chesapeake Bay area |
| New Jersey | Loss of open space, including Pinebarrens |
| Oregon | Depletion of natural resources |
| Tennessee | Loss of forest and prime agricultural land |
| Wisconsin | Loss of prime farmland, traffic congestion |

- **Take action.** Solving problems is often more expensive than preventing them in the first place. A development strategy could allow the state to take action to identify and address needs and problems before they become crises. Such activities could include enhancing the vitality of the state’s regional economies through housing, highways and other investments; local planning assistance and guidance for residential development decisions to ensure that today’s housing developments are not tomorrow’s wastewater problems; and setting aside areas for future facilities, such as park-and-ride lots, transit, schools and open space. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency estimates that more than \$355 million will be needed in the next five years to solve wastewater treatment problems in areas that do not have sewers. Twenty-eight percent of Minnesota’s projected five-year wastewater spending is to correct problems in such areas.

- **Offer predictability.** Because state agencies and state government do not share overarching goals, decisions they make can appear at odds with each other and work at cross purposes. A strategy would work to streamline and focus the state’s goals and priorities so they can offer a predictable, consistent vision that would be both clear and useful to local and regional governments and businesses. A strategy would focus state government action on results and efficiency by increasing the possibilities for collaboration to meet common goals and making state-level priorities more understandable and compatible.

- **Optimize investments.** Just as state agency goals sometimes conflict, funding decisions and the resulting public investments may sometimes work at cross purposes, leading to inefficiency and additional government costs. Using a state strategy built through public involvement, state government could better direct its efforts to citizen-defined priorities. Having clearly defined goals and priorities would allow state agencies to optimize monetary and staff investments and to work cooperatively to provide more efficient and better service. Working through a strategy and common goals, agencies can more easily couple their investments in transportation, housing, economic development, training and other areas to maximize impacts. The total effect of such coupling can often be more than the sum of individual parts.

- **Address statewide and multijurisdictional concerns.** Every community has challenges and concerns. Many of these cross boundaries and interests, which makes identifying and solving problems difficult because approaches may be segmented and resources limited. A strategy would provide a way to approach issues that affect more than one jurisdiction. It would foster coordinated efforts to find statewide approaches to addressing regulations, ordinances, property taxes, school aids and other incentives that might hamper local governments and state agencies in reaching common goals. It would also encourage collaboration among planning efforts, such as for school, water, transportation and telecommunication facilities, to obtain integrated solutions.

Oregon benefits from certainty

Oregon’s state-administered land use planning system strives to ensure the certainty and reliability of plans and regulations. It enhances the predictability of development regulations, ensures that cities have adequate public facilities and services to accommodate new development and protects public investments in capital improvements by maximizing the capacities of existing infrastructure.

Rhode Island plans for green spaces

In 1994, Rhode Island completed a 25-year plan for the creation of a statewide greenspace and greenway network. The plan is consistent with the state’s history of open space protection and voter support for greenway and bikeway acquisition and development. When completed, the system will provide 500 miles of natural greenways, 200 miles of bikeways and 65 miles of trail corridors.

Essential components of a strategy



Development spills out of Rogers into Hassan Township, Hennepin County.

Given the changing landscape of Minnesota, citizens have a spectrum of options. At one end is taking no action and allowing conflicting individual and government responses to population and job growth, market forces and real estate decisions to define the state's future. At the other end of the spectrum is taking a deliberate approach by acknowledging that change will occur, choosing to chart where Minnesota is and where it wants to go, and then planning how best to get there.

Minnesota is not the first state to reach this point. Nearly every state faces challenges from growth, development and change, and at least 15 states have made conscious choices to address the growth and plan for their communities. Most of these states have been motivated by issues such as environmental degradation, loss of open space and farmland, inefficient use of infrastructure, lack of affordable housing and transportation congestion. For some, the goal has been to promote economic vitality and opportunities across all parts of the state. Oregon, often held up as the premier example of statewide action to guide growth and development, passed its first statewide land use law in 1973 to address the depletion of natural resources; other states have passed comprehensive planning and management acts, most recently Wisconsin in 1999. However, no single solution works for all states and regions. The options vary greatly and reflect the unique character, needs and interests of each state.

Change begins with citizens

Any effort to manage growth must begin with Minnesota's citizens and local communities, because they make most of the decisions that affect land use and development patterns. The state can provide

guidance, support and resources for communities to make choices for better managing growth. But citizens, local governments, interest groups, developers and other stakeholders must be the catalysts for managing growth, including developing a state strategy, and their contributions must be incorporated into the discussions and products.

A state strategy should build on work already begun in local comprehensive plans and community-based planning projects, as well as other planning efforts around the state, including transportation, water and telecommunication plans. Not every community has a comprehensive plan, however, and a strategy framed entirely from local plans might be inadequate. Every community, whatever its planning history, must have the opportunity to participate and shape a statewide strategy.

Maryland manages growth with innovative initiatives

Two public concerns drove Maryland's growth management legislation: the environment, especially the significant degradation of the Chesapeake Bay; and unchecked suburban growth, with its attendant loss of farm and forest land, decline of municipal vitality and rising costs of community infrastructure. Since the 1960s, a number of land use programs have been established, the most recent being the 1997 Smart Growth Initiative. The Initiative has programs in five areas: smart growth regions, rural legacy, brownfields, job creation tax credits and "live near your work." In the "live near your work" program, a variety of incentives, supportive services and partnerships are provided to local governments and financial institutions to encourage employees to buy homes near their work.

Other states' efforts clearly show that successful strategies are driven by the will and desire of the people. They also show that although strategies can take many different forms, certain essential components must be included: a clearly delineated vision and a set of goals, an acceptance and acknowledgement of roles and responsibilities, a system for measuring and evaluating success, and an inventory of assets and challenges.

Examples from the I-94 study area illustrate strategy components and options. This six-county area between St. Cloud and Minneapolis has had and will continue to have dramatic changes in population, land use, and economic and transportation patterns. According to estimates from the Metropolitan Council and consultants working with the counties, the populations of some cities and townships in the study area are expected to increase by 50 percent between 1990 and 2010, with growth greater than 100 percent in more than 15 of them, as noted on the map on the inside back cover of this report. The study area contains a wide variety of assets and challenges,

as well as local, regional, state and national resources, such as Interstate Highway 94, Lake Maria State Park, the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad/NorthStar Corridor and the Mississippi River. While land use is dominated by agriculture, there are also significant urbanized and natural resource areas, as can be seen on the land use map on the inside front cover of this report.

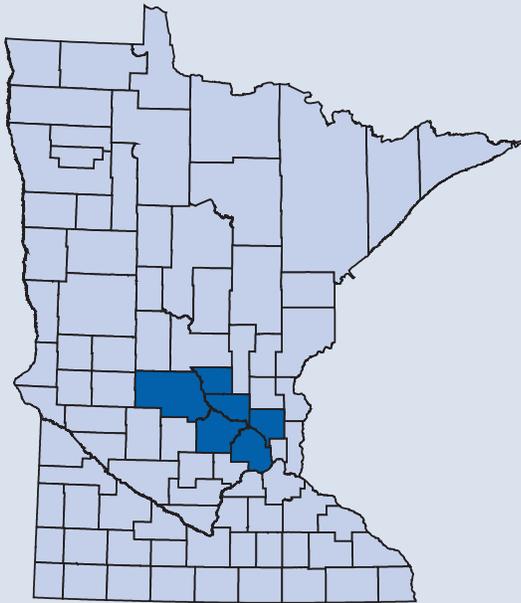
Vision and goals are essential to a strategy

The cornerstone of a development strategy is the vision of what people want their state and communities to be like in the future. The processes and action steps of the strategy must all relate to and support the vision and goals.

A sample vision statement for the strategy could be: *The unique natural environment on which the people and economies of Minnesota depend will be protected and sustained so that all Minnesotans can participate in economic opportunities and live, work and play in healthy communities.*

Goals support, clarify and direct the strategy's vision statement. They are interrelated and sometimes conflicting, especially when situations present seemingly win-lose choices involving two or more of the goals. This tension is particularly evident when decisions affect the environment, such as the siting of a new road or housing

I-94 study area includes all or parts of six counties



Source: Minnesota Planning



Fishing is a lure on the Mississippi River near Monticello, Wright County.

construction. While such projects promote economic development and community well-being, they also can damage a wetland or destroy a wildlife habitat. The strategy cannot eliminate such tensions, but through the collaboration of people on state, regional and local levels, conflicts can be uncovered and decisions promoted that best meet long-term interests.

Sample goals for a strategy could include:

- **Public investments:** Make efficient and effective use of existing infrastructure, services and

policy incentives, as well as direct future investments to encourage development in and around existing population centers and other suitable areas.

- **Conservation:** Protect significant environmental and cultural resources, as well as conserve open space, farmland and other lands that maintain ecosystem health and support tourism and natural resource-based industries.

- **Community well-being:** Foster communities that have a high quality of life and are safe, pleasant places to live, work and recreate.

States take action to guide growth

| | CONNECTICUT | DELAWARE | FLORIDA | GEORGIA | HAWAII | MAINE | MARYLAND |
|---|--|---|------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Title | Conservation and Policies Plan Public Act 91-395 (1991) | Land Use Planning Act HB 506 (1978, amended 1996) | Growth Management Act (1985) | Georgia's Planning Act (1989) | Hawaii State Land Use Law (1961) Hawaii State Plan (1995) | Comprehensive Planning Land Use Act (1988) | Economic Growth and Resource Protection Act (1992) |
| Is planning required, conditional or optional? | Required when city has planning commission | Required | Required for cities and counties | Required for counties and municipalities | Required for counties | Optional | Conditional for counties and municipalities |
| What are some incentives for planning? | Eligible for state capital investments, industrial and business development block grants | Eligible for state capital investments | Avoid financial sanctions | Can be eligible for state economic development funds and can levy impact fees | Avoid legal sanctions | Eligible for planning implementation grants and validated zoning ordinance; can levy impact fees | Eligible for state investments in local communities |
| *Is there a consistency requirement? | Yes, with state and local governments | Encouraged but not mandated | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| *Is there a concurrency requirement? | No | Yes | Yes, with development | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| *Do consistency requirements apply to state agency plans? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| What agency manages the program? | Office of Policy Management | Office of State Planning Coordination | Department of Community Affairs | Department of Community Affairs | State Land Use Commission | Department of Economic and Community Development | Office of Planning |
| What services are provided by the managing agency? | Technical assistance, state agency coordination | Matching grants | Technical and financial assistance | Technical and financial assistance | Technical and financial assistance | Matching grants | State agency coordination; technical and financial assistance |
| Is a review of local plans required? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| How often is the plan reviewed? | Every 5 years | Every 5 years | Every 7 years | Every 10 years | Every 5 years | Every 5 years | At least every 6 years |
| Is there a board of appeals? | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |

- **Economic development:** Stimulate sustainable economic development opportunities throughout the state.
- **Housing:** Provide and preserve an adequate supply of affordable, high-quality housing throughout the state to accommodate people in various stages of their lives.
- **Transportation:** Provide and preserve an enhanced mix of transportation options that efficiently move people, goods and information.

- **Equity:** Serve all people throughout Minnesota fairly and equitably with public investment costs distributed among those who use and benefit from the investments.

- **Information and education:** Better inform all Minnesotans about the effects of growth and decline, as well as the range of choices, tools and opportunities for managing each, so communities can make informed decisions.

The sample vision and goals build on the work already begun in the local communities within the

| | NEW HAMPSHIRE | NEW JERSEY | OREGON | RHODE ISLAND | TENNESSEE | VERMONT | WASHINGTON | WISCONSIN |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| Title | RSA 4-C, RSA 162-C and RSA 672-677 (1996) | State Development and Redevelopment Plan (1992) | Senate Bill 100 (1973) | Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act (1988) | Public Chapter 1101 (1998) | Act 200 (1970) | Growth Management Act (1990/1991) | Assembly Bill 133 (1999) |
| Is planning required, conditional or optional? | Required for cities and towns | Optional for municipalities; conditional for counties | Required for cities and counties | Required for cities and towns | Required for counties and municipalities | Conditional for cities and towns | Required for cities and counties with certain growth thresholds | Conditional |
| What are some incentives for planning? | Can levy impact fees | State investments in local communities; high priority for state investments | State investments in local communities; authority to issue building permits and approve land subdivisions | Remain eligible for planning grants | State investments in local communities; state economic and infrastructure funding | Eligible for planning funds; authority for land use decisions and can levy impact fees | State investments in local communities; avoid real estate excise tax | Planning grants and assistance |
| *Is there a consistency requirement? | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| *Is there a concurrency requirement? | No | Yes | Yes | Yes, with zoning ordinance | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| *Do consistency requirements apply to state agency plans? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Encouraged but not required |
| What agency manages the program? | Office of State Planning | Office of State Planning | Land Conservation and Development Commission | Department of Administration, Office of Statewide Planning | Department of Economic and Community Development | Department of Housing and Community Affairs | Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development | Land Council, Office of Land Information Services |
| What services are provided by the managing agency? | Technical and financial assistance | Promotion of planning; smart growth grants | Technical and financial assistance | Technical and financial assistance | Technical and financial assistance | Grants | Technical and financial assistance | Technical and financial assistance |
| Is a review of local plans required? | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| How often is the plan reviewed? | Periodically | Periodically | Every 10 years | Every 5 years | Every 20 years | Every 5 years | Every 20 years | Every 10 years |
| Is there a board of appeals? | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |

*Consistency requirements mean that all plans include the same state-mandated elements and are consistent across jurisdictions. Concurrency requirements mean that the plan or planning action (zoning, etc.) must concurrently provide for or address public infrastructure needs.

I-94 study area. The comprehensive plans of nearly 40 communities in the study area reveal several commonly held desires:

- Revitalize and strengthen central business districts
- Have viable economies with an expanded commercial and industrial base
- Preserve and protect open and recreational space
- Provide affordable, high-quality housing
- Maintain efficient and effective use of present and future infrastructure
- Retain a sense of community

Commitment, evaluation and taking stock also necessary

Support for and commitment to a state development strategy are necessary for its success. The strategy must clearly define responsibilities for achieving its goals. And all Minnesotans — citizens, business owners, directors of nonprofit organizations and local, regional, state and federal government officials and staff — must be committed to fulfilling their role in designing, implementing and evaluating the strategy.

Ongoing evaluation of a strategy is critical. Clear goals are the foundation of evaluation because they allow meaningful indicators to be identified and used. Without clear goals, indicators may fail to measure what is important. Success of the strategy can be evaluated by answering two questions: Is the strategy being implemented, and is it advancing the state toward desired goals? The answer to the first question can be a rather straightforward evaluation of actions called for in the strategy, so that emphasis and resources can be directed to areas with inadequate action. The second question involves identifying and tracking indicators of progress. The direction and rate of change of these indicators can point to whatever changes and fine-tuning might be needed.

An inventory of assets and challenges of statewide, regional and local significance is another essential

component of a state development strategy. Clear and broadly shared information can provide a basis for decision-making that is thoughtful and well informed. Assets embody the history and future of local communities and the state, and their identification motivates people to protect them from threats. The following pages give a flavor of some, but by no means all, of the key assets and challenges in the I-94 study area.

St. Cloud area community-based planning project sets goals

In 1997, Benton, Stearns and Sherburne counties and the cities of St. Cloud, St. Joseph, Sartell, Sauk Rapids and Waite Park joined forces to design a comprehensive plan for the St. Cloud area. During an extensive public involvement effort, residents contributed nearly 2,000 ideas for the future of the region. These ideas were then refined and condensed into 18 goals during goal-setting workshops. Some of the St. Cloud Community-Based Planning Project goals include:

- **Encourage ongoing, shared planning** among all local communities within the tricounty area.
- **Manage growth and urban sprawl** to balance agricultural issues and land preservation with planned urban development to protect and enhance both the region's rural character and its natural resources.
- **Promote the development and maintenance of a regional transportation system** that is clean, safe, accessible and integrated .
- **Provide well-maintained, attractive, safe and affordable housing** that is designed to meet the needs of all economic levels and age groups within each community.
- **Promote the equitable and efficient distribution of wastewater treatment facility costs and services.**

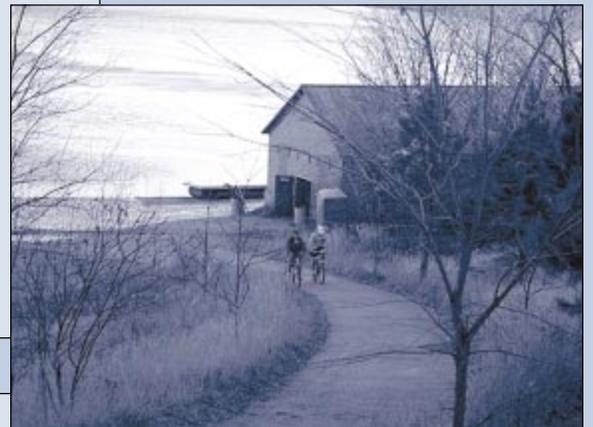
Transportation and development corridors promote state and regional vitality



The I-94 study area is one of the most important transportation and development corridors in the state. The integrity, quality and diversity of the corridor — with a national interstate highway, several state trunk highways, one of the state’s most heavily used freight railroads, the proposed Northstar commuter rail line and a national river — must be maintained.

Source: Department of Transportation

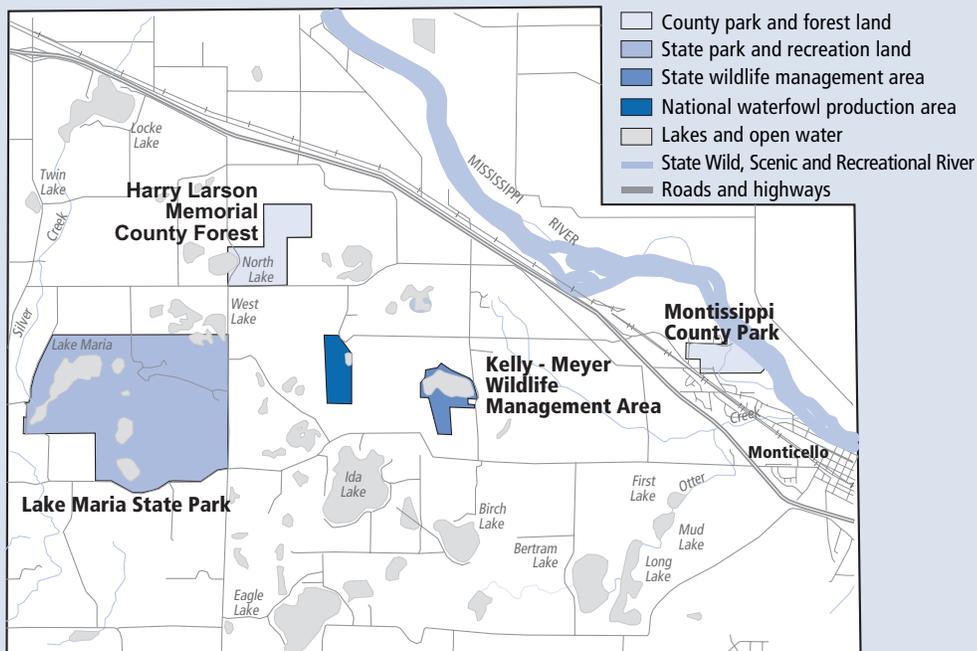
Study area has important assets



Minnesotans and visitors play and relax in this region

Among Minnesota’s many inviting assets are its park and recreational facilities, which showcase the natural beauty of the state and offer recreational activities in all seasons. The I-94 study area, with the Mississippi River running through it, is home to many national, state and regional park and recreational facilities and opportunities. The map shows some recreational facilities in the northwestern portion of Wright County.

Source: Department of Natural Resources



Bike riders enjoy the trails near Sagatagan Lake in Collegeville, Stearns County.

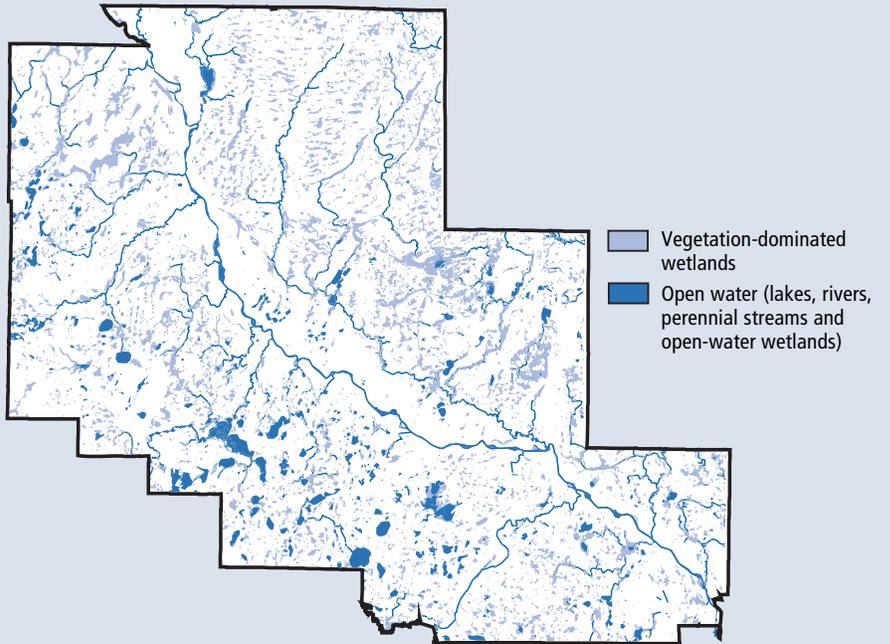


The St. Francis River winds its way through Sherburne County near Santiago Township.



Sagatagan Lake beautifies the Colleeville area in Stearns County.

Lakes offer fish and wildlife habitats and sites for recreation



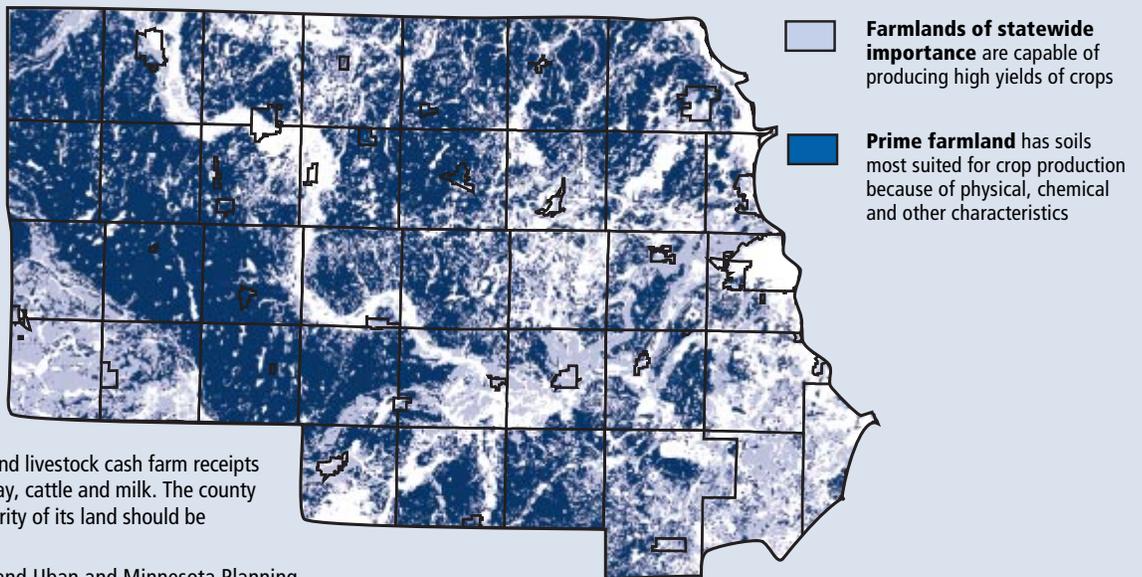
Minnesota is known for its more than 12,000 lakes, which provide sites for recreational activities and fish and wildlife habitat. Five percent of the I-94 study area is open water, including lakes, large rivers, perennial streams and open-water wetlands. Vegetation-dominated wetlands cover 15 percent of the study area.

Source: Department of Natural Resources

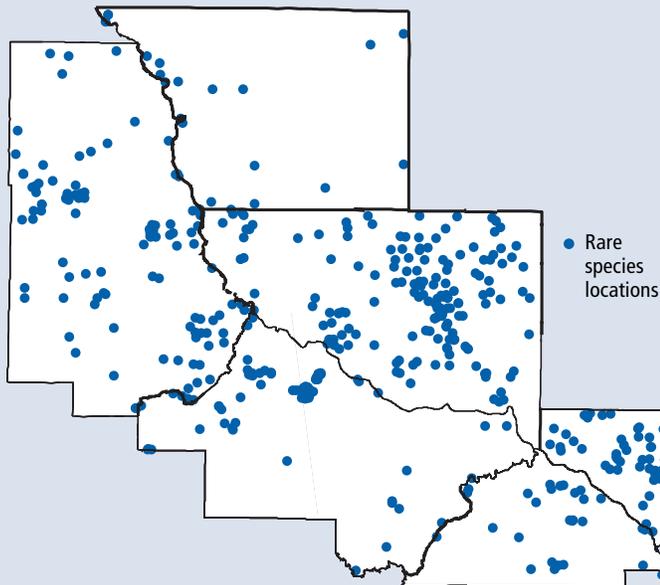
Agriculture is a key industry in Stearns County

Agriculture is important to the economy and the history of Minnesota, and productive farmland is a critical resource for this industry. Generally, the southwestern half of Stearns County has soils with high capacities for crop production. The sandy soils of the northwestern half have lower capacities but with irrigation and fertilization are well suited for producing high-value crops such as potatoes and sweet corn. Stearns County leads the state in both total and livestock cash farm receipts and the production of oats, hay, cattle and milk. The county has determined that the majority of its land should be preserved for agricultural use.

Source: Dahlgren, Shardlow and Uban and Minnesota Planning



Rare species are located in the area



Nearly 450 occurrences of rare species have been identified within the I-94 study area. Rare species are those listed as threatened, endangered or of special concern under federal or state endangered species acts. Some examples of rare species in the area as of October 1999 are Blanding's turtle (167 locations), red-shouldered hawk (39 locations), cerulean warbler (31 locations) and American ginseng (20 locations).

Source: Department of Natural Resources



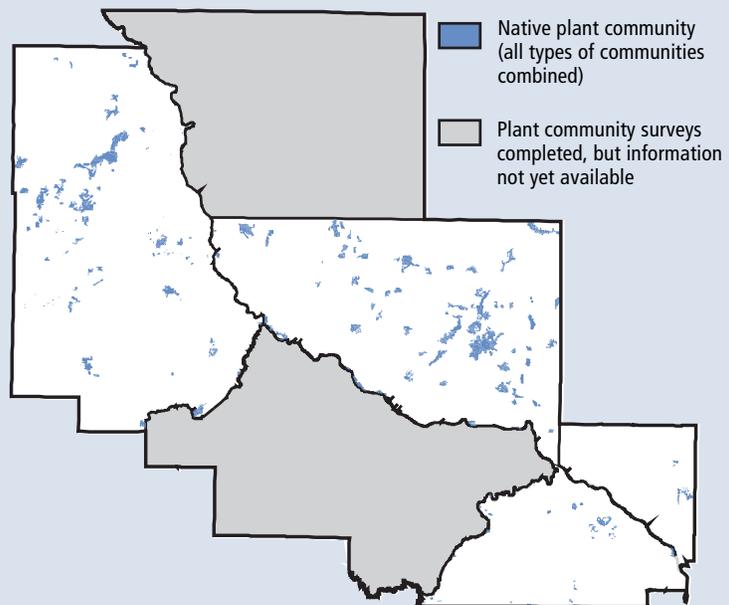
The Crow River flows under the historic Hanover Bridge in Hanover, between Wright and Hennepin counties.

Native plant communities provide link to the past

Natural communities are groups of native plants and animals that interact with each other in ways not greatly altered by modern human activity or introduced species. These plant communities are remnants from the time of European settlement and form recognizable units, such as oak forests, prairies or marshes. Vegetation and major habitat features form the primary basis for the mapping of native plant communities in the study area.

According to the Minnesota County Biological Survey, as of October 1999, native plant communities cover 3 percent of the I-94 study area for which information is available. In the I-94 study area, most of the sensitive natural resources — 92 percent of vegetation-dominated wetlands, 74 percent of natural communities and 76 percent of listed species — are privately owned. Overall, some 90 percent of the land associated with these resources is in private hands, which speaks to the need for education and collaboration with landowners to protect and conserve these important resources.

Source: Department of Natural Resources



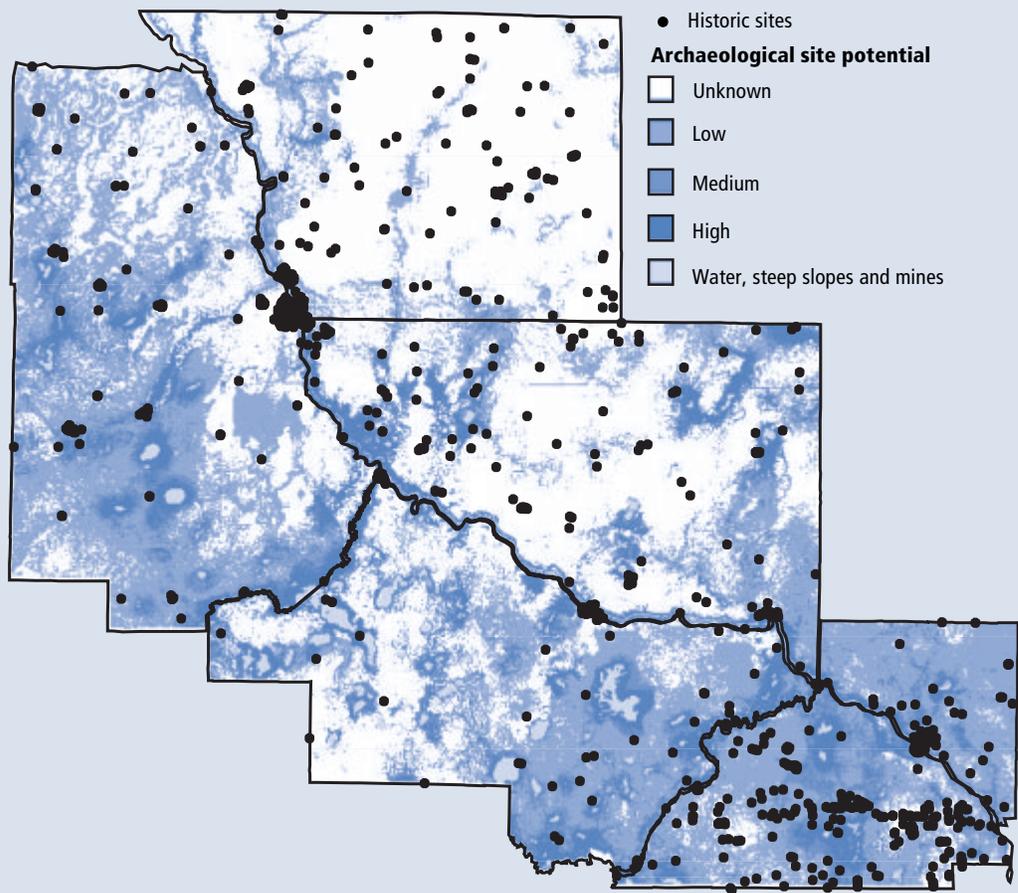
The historic district of St. Cloud in Stearns County connects the city's past and future.



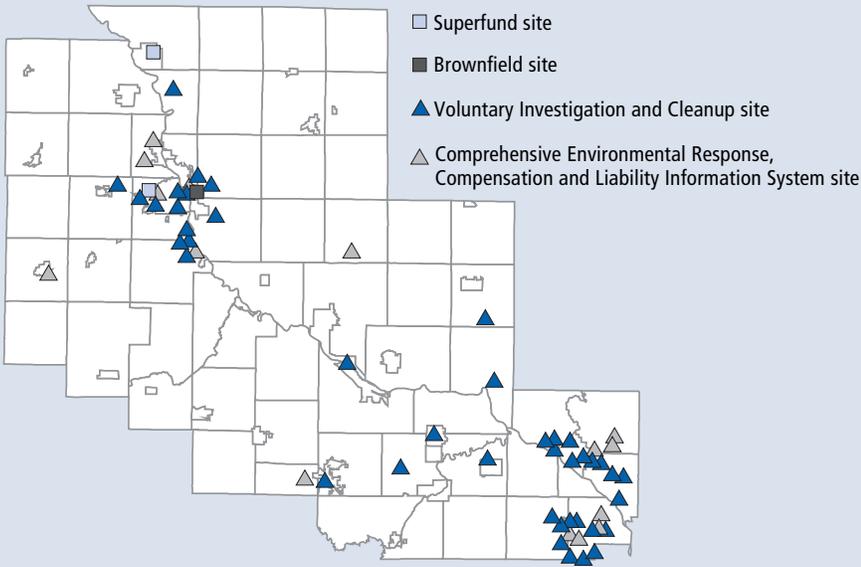
Sites represent rich history and culture

The study area is rich in historic and cultural sites that represent or reflect significant people, architecture and events in Minnesota's history. More than 50 sites in the study area are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but many cultural sites, especially archaeological ones, are undocumented. The Minnesota Department of Transportation has developed a predictive model, Mn/Model, that maps the potential for finding archaeological sites throughout the state. The model is based on statistical analysis of the relationships between known archaeological sites and their environmental context.

Source: Department of Transportation



Brownfields can threaten health and environment

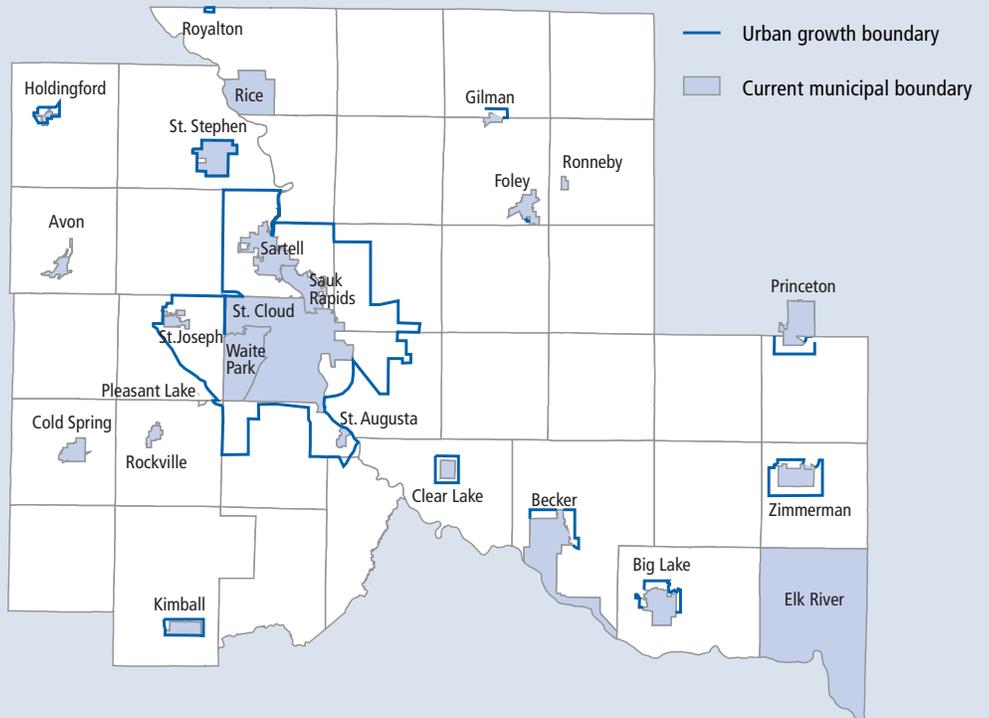


Hazardous waste and brownfields can pose a threat to public health and the environment, and a number of these sites are being monitored in the I-94 study area. Brownfields are abandoned or idle properties that have actual or suspected contamination; Superfund sites have had a known release of hazardous materials. These and two other kinds of sites — Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup sites, and Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System sites — have the potential to be cleaned up to the industrial, commercial or residential standards of the site and surrounding land use.

Source: Pollution Control Agency

Challenges in the study area

St. Cloud area proposes urban growth boundaries



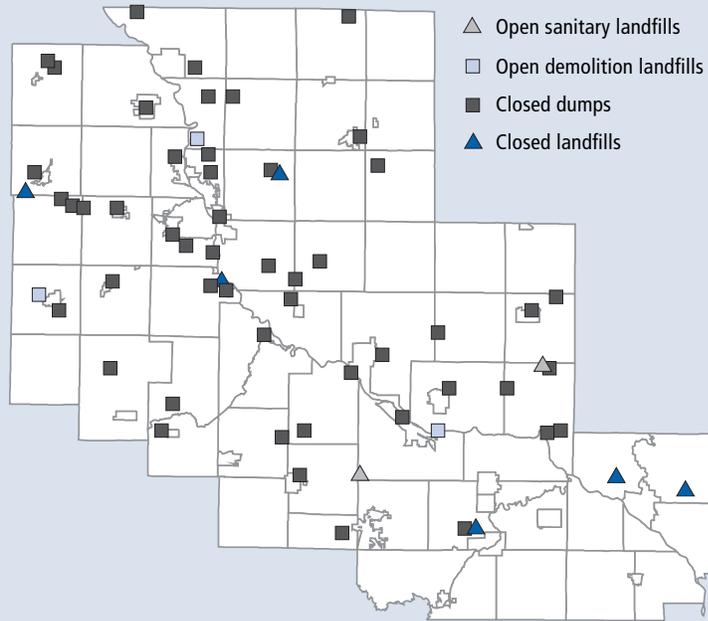
In response to concerns over rapid population growth in the St. Cloud area (see the inside back cover for a map of population growth), the St. Cloud community-based planning project has proposed urban growth boundaries to accommodate the land areas needed by the municipalities in Benton, Sherburne and Stearns counties for growth over the next 20 years.

Source: Dahlgren, Shardlow and Uban

Two landfills operate in the area

Before 1969, garbage and waste were disposed of in local open dumps that had few or no environmental controls. All 54 dumps in the study area were closed in the 1970s. Modern land disposal facilities, often called landfills, have environmental controls that decrease risks to air, ground and surface water quality, as well as to human health. Two landfills are operating in the study area; the landfill in Elk River is one of the largest in the state, and the landfill in Monticello Township has recently received a permit for a vertical expansion. Closed landfills can be reused for limited purposes, but the areas must be protected so that the cover and liner are not breached. In addition to the dumps and landfills, three permitted demolition landfills have been identified in the study area. Demolition landfills are unlined facilities that accept debris from old and demolished buildings.

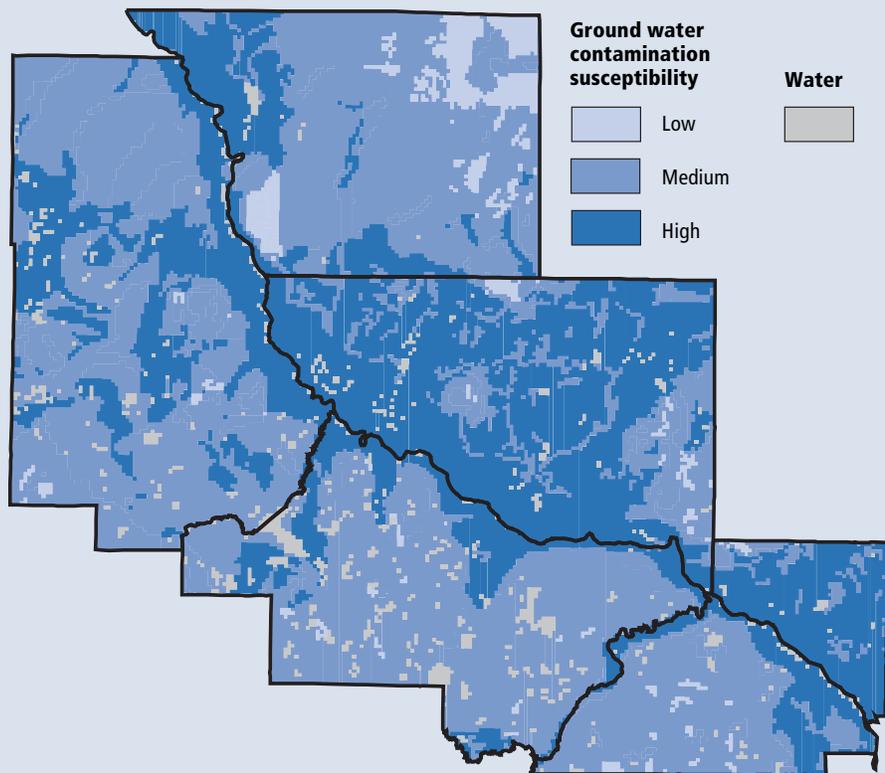
Source: Pollution Control Agency



Ground water is susceptible to contamination

Ground water contamination is a threat in the study area, and the susceptibility of land and water to contamination is based on such things as the recharge potential and the types of aquifer and soil materials. In highly susceptible areas, contamination could move from the surface to the aquifer within a matter of hours, resulting in contaminated water. The areas around the Mississippi River are highly susceptible to ground water contamination.

Source: Pollution Control Agency and Minnesota Planning



Many communities have wastewater needs

| Portions of the counties in study area only | Communities with needs identified in 2000 Intended Use Plan | Additional communities with needs projected for next 5 years | Undersewered communities |
|---|---|--|--------------------------|
| Anoka | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Benton | 0 | 3 | 17 |
| Hennepin | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Sherburne | 0 | 0 | No data available |
| Stearns | 0 | 2 | 16 |
| Wright | 3 | 3 | 26 |
| TOTALS | 4 | 12 | 64 |

Inadequate wastewater treatment can jeopardize public health and the environment. While most communities in Minnesota have adequate wastewater collection and treatment systems, many systems are aging or in need of expansion to handle growing populations. The Pollution Control Agency estimates that 16 communities in the study area have more than \$30 million in current and projected wastewater needs. In addition, four incorporated cities and 60 unincorporated communities are considered to be "undersewered," or lacking adequate wastewater treatment. These communities may have partial treatment in place, or raw sewage may discharge directly to surface waters.

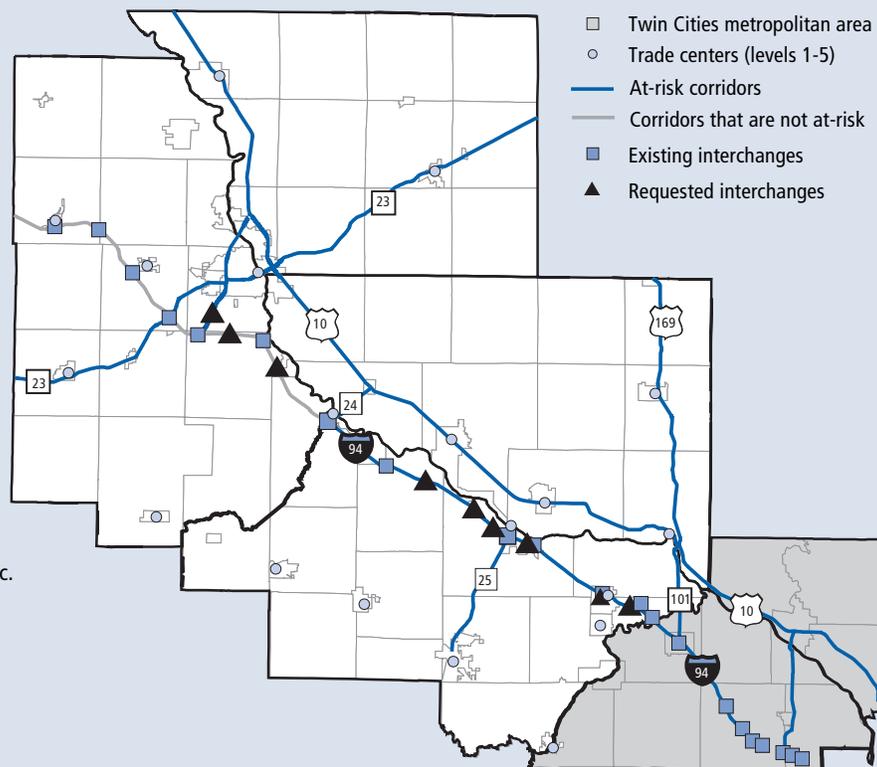
Notes: Data on "undersewered" communities is based on 1996-1997 county surveys. Data on wastewater needs is based on the 2000 Intended Use List and the 1999 Annual Evaluation and Planning Survey.

Source: Pollution Control Agency

Transportation corridors face congestion

Interstate Highway 94 and Trunk Highway 10 are major routes that serve statewide and interstate transportation needs. The increasing use of these roads and the development that is occurring along them put them at risk of congestion and safety problems. Almost all of the interregional roads in the I-94 study area are classified as being at risk by the Department of Transportation. Interchanges requested between July 1999 and November 1999 are displayed because interchange proliferation can affect the performance and flow of traffic on the interstate highway. Corridors such as Trunk Highway 10 also have a high risk of traffic signal proliferation, which can negatively affect the highway's capacity for traffic.

Source: Department of Transportation





The dome of the Sacred Heart Chapel on the campus of the College of St. Benedict, Stearns County.

Options for a strategy

A state development strategy can take many forms, each involving different degrees of participation by state, regional and local governments. At the very least, it can be a vision and set of goals for the state, refined through public involvement in the identification of assets and challenges. Options for creating a state strategy are shown below in order of increasing involvement of state government. These range from developing a general policy guide to building a state-level plan. Various options can exist independently, but they can also build on each other, such as a state investment guide paired with a local planning mandate or a policy guide with technical assistance partnerships. Ideally, all options would include a vision and goals.

Policy guide would document the vision

A general policy guide would be a citizen-developed vision and goals document that would define the preferences and priorities Minnesotans have for the

Maryland provides technical assistance

The Maryland Office of Planning provides financial and staff assistance to help counties and municipalities meet comprehensive planning requirements. Much of the assistance is coordinated through other state agencies. For instance, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources provides information on planning for sensitive areas and natural resources management. The department also works with builders, homeowners and large retailers to encourage environmentally responsible development practices.

future of their state. It would provide direction to the local, regional and state governments that choose to use it. It also could provide policy guidance on parks, housing and other issues of statewide concern. The state has a type of policy guide in *Minnesota Milestones*, which sets goals for the state and tracks progress toward meeting them. Local governments could adopt similar goals and indicators to measure their own progress. Unlike *Minnesota Milestones*, however, a state development strategy policy guide should be adopted by the Governor's administration and incorporated into statute to ensure that it is used.

Assistance and partnerships would help communities plan

A state development strategy would be an integrated system of technical and financial assistance, along with partnerships designed to help communities plan. This option could be fashioned after technical assistance programs already conducted by state agencies, as well as the Community-Based Planning Act of 1997, which established goals, technical assistance and grants for local communities to engage in comprehensive planning. With a state vision and goals, local plans could identify ways to achieve the goals and provide ideas and input for further refinement of the state strategy. State technicians could work in partnership with interested communities to help them implement their plans. These voluntary partnerships could also be used to address problems that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Statewide, regional and local codes, standards and practices that stand in the way of better development could be identified through these partnerships. Better practices could then be promoted that would help communities work toward achieving their local plans, as well as the goals and vision of the state development strategy.

Investment guide would promote efficiency, coordinate action

The strategy could take the form of an investment guide, designed to coordinate and integrate state spending to achieve the strategy's vision and goals. Although state investments are dwarfed by the dollars spent by private developers, the state does make significant contributions to communities, including those in the I-94 study area.

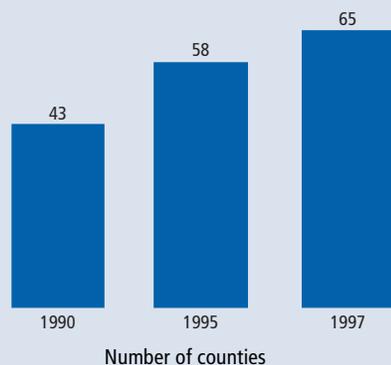
In fiscal year 1999, Minnesota state government spent roughly \$17 billion. Through income and sales taxes, the state collects 60 percent of all revenue raised by state and local governments in Minnesota.

However, local governments account for more than 60 percent of total state and local spending after state aids for schools, human services, highways and other purposes are transferred to them. These expenditures affect local economies and development decisions in several ways; for example, the state gives grants and loans to communities to build such projects as housing, wastewater treatment facilities and convention centers. The state also spends money directly for major infrastructure, most notably highways. In 1999, the trunk highway fund, a portion of which is federal aid, financed more than \$1 billion in highway investments. In addition, the state contributed \$445 million for county and municipal roads and highways.

Minnesota Milestones sets ground work for policy guide

These indicators, part of *Minnesota Milestones*, are examples of the many evaluation techniques and benchmarks that could be used to measure the success of a state development strategy.

Number of counties with countywide public transportation serving people with disabilities

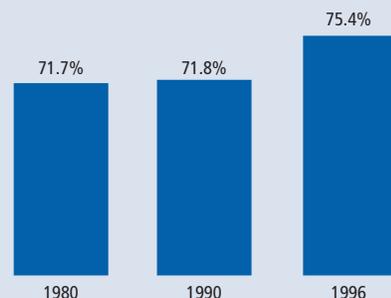


Goal: All people will be welcomed, respected and able to participate fully in Minnesota's communities and economy.

| 1980 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 31 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 44 | 46 | 58 | 60 | 65 |

Source: Minnesota Department of Transportation

Home ownership as a percentage of all housing units



Goal: All Minnesotans will have decent, safe and affordable housing.

| 1980 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 71.7% | 71.8% | 68.9% | 66.7% | 65.8% | 68.9% | 73.3% | 75.4% |

Note: Data for 1991 to 1996 is based on surveys.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

A state investment guide could take at least three approaches to guiding various types of infrastructure investments, such as highways; waste, storm and drinking water systems; housing; and development or redevelopment. It could offer guidance for state-level investments, including the maintenance, construction, development, protection or acquisition of lands and infrastructure. In another form, it could be a filter that sets minimum criteria for evaluating and approving investment requests. Finally, it could determine how tax and other fiscal policies help or hinder appropriate development. For example, school district aid can influence development through decisions on where to locate schools, and property tax relief may foster particular types of development in certain areas. Nearly half of the state's general fund expenditures currently go to property tax relief in the form of school district aid (\$3.9 billion) and property tax aids and credits (\$1.4 billion), as well as tax credits to individuals.

Local planning could be required

The state development strategy would be brought to the local level by requiring local and regional governments to plan comprehensively. It would also require local plans, ordinances and regulations to be consistent with the state-defined vision, goals and planning. State agencies could give funding priority to communities that have demonstrated a project's support and merit through their planning. Local plans also would help give a clear local voice to shaping and refining state agencies' plans and the strategy so that they better reflect the work of local planning around the state.

State-level comprehensive plan could be established

A state development strategy could determine a comprehensive plan for the state and require

Water, wildlife and roads focus of some state investments in study area

| INVESTMENT | AGENCY | DESCRIPTION | INVESTMENTS IN STUDY AREA |
|---|--|---|--|
| Clean Water Partnership Program | Pollution Control Agency | Program is geared to protect water resources, watersheds and aquifers of concern from nonpoint or overland runoff sources of water pollution, as well as to restore lakes to swimmable and fishable use. | \$1.3 million in grants and loans to Sauk River to address failing septic systems, feedlot improvements and erosion |
| Wildlife Management Area Program | Department of Natural Resources | Program works to protect lands and waters that have high potential for wildlife production, as well as to develop and manage those lands and waters for the production of wildlife, hunting, fishing, trapping and other recreational activities. | 3,800 acres in 23 wildlife management areas in the corridor; \$741,000 to acquire and develop; \$31,000 per year to maintain |
| Additional lanes will be needed on I-94 southeast of Clearwater | Department of Transportation | Due to growing congestion on I-94, the department has identified the need for an additional lane in each direction to keep traffic flowing efficiently from Clearwater to I-494 and I-694. | Addition of a third lane from Rogers to Monticello, a distance of 12 miles, at an estimated cost of \$24 million |
| Wastewater infrastructure grants and loans | Department of Trade and Economic Development | Program provides supplemental grants and loans to municipalities seeking financing for wastewater infrastructure projects that meet the standards of the federal Clean Water Act. | Zimmerman wastewater loan for \$4.3 million; St. Michael wastewater grant and loan for \$4 million; Monticello wastewater treatment system expansion grant and loan for \$15 million; Hanover wastewater and drinking water grant and loan for \$3.7 million |
| Elm Creek interceptor | Metropolitan Council | Gravity interceptor sewer service is extended to provide wastewater service to the growing northwestern portion of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. | Budget of \$38 million to service Brooklyn Park, Maple Grove, Dayton, Corcoran, Plymouth and, potentially, Hassan and Rogers |

statewide concordance with that plan. This would apply to all land use and development decisions. The state criteria would act as an umbrella for all local and regional plans, and interjurisdictional and interregional cooperation would be an essential element to ensure consistency across plans. For example, the state could adopt development and policy guides for housing, sewers, schools, parks,

highways and other systems similar to those adopted for the Twin Cities area by the Metropolitan Council. Some states have chosen to use state-level comprehensive plans to address their growth and development issues, and local communities are required to develop plans, ordinances and regulations consistent with the state plan.

New Jersey plans for investments

The New Jersey State Planning Act of 1985 is used by the state to guide infrastructure investments. For example, the New Jersey Department of Transportation provides additional funding to grant applicants that have plans consistent with the state plan; it also funds transportation improvements, such as bicycle and pedestrian paths and downtown streetscapes, that help municipalities implement the state plan. The department uses a technical scoring factor consistent with the state plan to prioritize transportation projects. The Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, the State Agricultural Development Committee and the departments of Community Affairs and Environmental Protection also incorporate the state plan into their investment guidelines.

Certain counties in Washington must plan, work together

Washington's Growth Management Act of 1990 calls for the fastest-growing counties and cities in the state to plan for the next 20 years in accordance with detailed criteria set out in the law. Comprehensive plans must be coordinated between all the cities in a county, as well as between counties that share borders or regional issues. Technical assistance and grants are provided to local communities to develop land use plans and regulations.

Wisconsin promotes local planning

Traffic congestion and a growing demand for transportation infrastructure spurred Wisconsin's comprehensive land use planning effort. The 1999 legislature passed the Comprehensive Planning Goals and Directions to State Agencies. The law does not mandate planning, but it does require local government programs or actions affecting land use to be consistent with a comprehensive plan. The law also provides grants for local planning efforts, defines key elements, sets timelines and establishes 14 goals for planning. Among the goals are:

- **Promote redevelopment** of lands.
- **Encourage land uses**, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low utility costs.
- **Encourage cooperation** and coordination among nearby units of government.
- **Build community identity** by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.
- **Provide an adequate supply of affordable housing** for individuals of all income levels.
- **Provide adequate infrastructure and public service** and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future demand for residential, commercial and industrial use.
- **Provide an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system** that affords mobility, convenience and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.



The sun begins to set over Lake Sagatagan, Stearns County.

Next steps

Minnesota by Design takes a preliminary look at the options for a state development strategy. But it only scratches the surface. Discussion and action, as well as a substantial commitment of time, resources and energy, are needed to take this proposal from vision to reality.

To go forward, the people of Minnesota must be engaged in creating the state development strategy. Such a strategy cannot be defined by state government agencies; it must be a citizen-driven effort that articulates the people's desires for Minnesota's future and reflects their support. Businesses and the development community must also be involved because of the impact their investment decisions have on how the state develops. Because a state development strategy could represent a shift in focus and in the processes of state, regional and local government, the public must have opportunities to participate in and influence the design of a strategy.

Much work and a number of technical decisions must be accomplished to move forward with the strategy, including:

- Refining a vision and goals
- Reaching consensus on the type of strategy to be developed
- Establishing process and sequence steps
- Estimating staff and other costs and allocating funds for them

These decisions could be made throughout 2000 and 2001, with the appropriate legislative, funding and administrative changes made as needed. The work would build on and tie together existing state agency and local government planning efforts, some of which are identified earlier in this report. It would foster partnerships with local government associations, private organizations and others for proposal refinement and strategy development.

The sample vision and goals were included in this report to illustrate possibilities, but they are not a reflection of citizen participation in the design. The next steps of strategy development, which would begin to inventory critical assets and challenges through public involvement, must define the vision and goals. All of this will help people define the key issues for their communities and the state, and fashion a plan for action to make the vision a reality.