St. Cloud is a desirable place to live and work, and has remained one of the fastest growing cities in Minnesota. Building on the foundation of the City’s existing pattern of development, the Land Use Plan identifies what types of development are desired in the future for the City of St. Cloud and its planning area.

The Land Use Plan provides a framework for future planning decisions that builds upon the desirable characteristics of St. Cloud’s established residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, and employment areas. Retaining an appropriate mix of land uses in the community is key to ensuring that the City continues to grow and maintain itself in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner. As such, the Land Use Plan seeks to promote balanced growth while preserving natural areas and open space.

### Goals

Promote growth that strengthens existing neighborhoods and minimizes impacts to City resources, infrastructure, and the natural environment.

### Objectives

- Support incremental growth by prioritizing infill development within the City Core.
- Discourage noncontiguous development to limit impacts to community facilities and services.
- Ensure the City can accommodate future growth while maintaining existing infrastructure and services.
- Continue to maintain and invest in existing neighborhood infrastructure and services as the City grows.
- Coordinate future land uses with Stearns County, Benton County, Sherburne County and adjacent municipalities and townships.
- Ensure annexation agreements reflect current growth, development, and land use goals and practices.
Accommodating Future Growth

The established core of St. Cloud has an average population density of approximately 3,500 people per square mile. If future development were to occur with a mix of land uses similar to that of existing development then approximately six square miles of land would be required to accommodate projected population growth through the year 2030. Building on this understanding, the Growth Areas Framework identifies what areas should be prioritized for development in accordance with the Land Use Plan and what areas should be preserved and retained to accommodate additional growth beyond the horizon of this Comprehensive Plan.

The Growth Areas Framework consists of four components: City Core, Primary Area, Secondary Area, and Rural Preservation Area. These components establish priorities for future growth within the planning area with an emphasis on leveraging existing infrastructure. The Growth Areas Framework does not preclude development from occurring outside priority growth areas; however, it serves to encourage infill development and avoid leapfrog development. Adhering to the Growth Areas Framework, in concert the Land Use Plan, will reinforce existing neighborhoods and ensure future growth occurs in a well-managed and resource-efficient manner.

City Core

The City Core is centered on Downtown St. Cloud and comprises portions of the City that have experienced extensive development, including the City’s Core Neighborhoods, established commercial districts, industrial corridors, and new, complete residential subdivisions. Future growth in St. Cloud should be prioritized within the City Core to stabilize and strengthen existing neighborhoods. Within the City Core, the City should encourage the development of vacant or underutilized parcels, continue to strengthen code enforcement, and seek to enhance quality of life for existing residents through improved services, infrastructure, and neighborhoods and commercial area beautification projects.

Primary Growth Area

The Primary Growth Area includes land that is adjacent to the City Core in incorporated areas to the south of 33rd Street South and north of I-94. This area is already served by infrastructure and City services. In accordance with the Land Use Plan, future development within the Primary Growth Area should primarily consist of single-family detached and attached housing complemented by a mix of multi-family strategically located adjacent to significant natural areas and major transportation corridors. The 33rd Street interchange at Trunk Highway 15 and a future potential interchange at County Road 108 and I-94 should anchor new commercial development within the Primary Growth Area with smaller-scale, neighborhood-serving development occurring at other key intersections.

Opportunities exist for infill housing and redevelopment within the Primary Growth Area, including incomplete subdivisions where final build-out slowed during the recession. Moving forward, new housing construction should be compatible to the scale and intensity of existing development and connectivity should be encouraged with adjacent neighborhoods. Similarly, complementary development should be encouraged within and adjacent to existing industrial and business park areas along the I-94 corridor.

As development occurs, new streets should be aligned to connect to the existing roadway network and existing neighborhoods. Trails and non-motorized transportation networks should be integrated to expand pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and access.

Secondary Growth Area

The Secondary Growth Area includes areas located south of I-94 and areas located in the western portion of Minden Township, south of Highway 23, in the north-eastern portion of the City’s planning area. Development within the secondary growth area will require strategic annexation by the City to ensure newly incorporated areas are adequately served by municipal infrastructure without undermining the existing system. Portions of the Secondary Growth Area have already been incorporated into the City of St. Cloud. These areas are generally served by City infrastructure, but additional capacity may be required to properly supply future development with needed water and sewer.

Consistent with the Future Land Use plan, development within the Secondary Growth Area should primarily consist of single-family detached land uses, but should also include areas of denser, single-family attached and multi-family housing units. Additional employment-related development should also be encouraged near existing and future potential interchange areas along I-94 interchange as well as areas to the north of the St. Cloud Regional Airport.
Rural Preservation Area

The Rural Preservation Area consists of areas that are predominantly rural in nature with agricultural and rural residential uses that are not serviced by City infrastructure, primarily the southeast quadrant of the City’s planning area. Development within the Rural Preservation Area will require significant investments in infrastructure including the extension of water and sewer across the Mississippi River in concert with the extension of 33rd Street east to Trunk Highway 10. Projected population growth through the year 2030 should be accommodated within the City Core and Primary and Secondary Growth Areas, minimizing the need for new development within the Rural Preservation Area.

In general, the City of St. Cloud should discourage development within the Rural Preservation Area until land within both the Primary and Secondary Growth Areas has been built out. Although it is projected that the Primary and Secondary Growth Areas have adequate capacity to absorb future growth and development over the life of this Comprehensive Plan, if development occurs more quickly and begins to impact the Rural Preservation Area, the City should consider revisiting the Comprehensive Plan. Development within the extended area will require further analysis to plan for impacts to infrastructure and community facilities and could be vulnerable to “leapfrog” development that overburdens existing systems.

Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan identifies desired uses throughout the City of St. Cloud and its planning area. All parcels have been designated under one of 16 land uses categories which include:

- Single-Family Detached
- Mixed Residential
- Multi-Family
- South Side Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Corridor Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Downtown/Mixed Use
- Office & Research
- Light Industrial
- Quarry
- Parks and Open Space
- Public/Semi-Public
- Rural
- Utility
- Airport

Single-Family Detached

Single-family detached homes should remain the predominant land use within St. Cloud. This land use varies in intensity from half-acre lots in some newer subdivisions near to the south of 22nd Street S, to more traditional, smaller lot single-family in the Core Neighborhoods and adjacent areas. While a mix of owner-occupied housing should be accommodated, single-family neighborhoods should primarily comprise owner-occupied housing and the conversion of owner-occupied housing to renter-occupied or multi-unit housing should be strongly discouraged. The build out of incomplete subdivisions should also be prioritized prior to new subdivision approval and construction.

Mixed Residential

This land use encompasses a range of residential uses. Mixed residential land use includes single-family attached homes, single-family attached homes, and low-density multi-family development. Single-family attached homes include both two-unit and multi-unit single-family attached structures, such as rowhomes and townhomes, but each dwelling maintains its own entrance. Within the mixed residential land use category, single-family attached homes provide an important housing option within St. Cloud, serving as a stepping stone to homeownership in single-family neighborhoods and providing opportunities for empty-nesters to downsize. Single-family attached development of limited scale and intensity may be integrated within a predominantly single-family detached area; however, it must maintain the character of the surrounding neighborhood. Single-family attached development can be used to buffer single-family detached residential areas from more intense development such as commercial or industrial. Similarly, low-density multi-family structures and high-density single-detached homes can be seamlessly integrated utilizing similar design characteristics. This land use can be used at infill locations to increase the number of residents living in areas well-served by infrastructure and community assets such as Downtown St. Cloud.

Multi-Family

Multi-family housing should continue to compose a significant portion of the overall housing stock in St. Cloud. Multi-family includes structures where residences are stacked horizontally and vertically, with individual units sharing a common entrance and on-site amenities. The multi-family category includes traditional multi-family housing such as apartments and condominiums, as well as senior housing and affordable housing developments. The Multi-Family land use serves a vital role in providing a diverse range of housing St. Cloud to a range of incomes and stages of life including from higher education students and young professionals to recent immigrants and seniors.

As with mixed residential development, multi-family development should be encouraged along major corridors where it can serve as a buffer between commercial areas and single-family neighborhoods. Properties in and around Downtown St. Cloud should also be targeted for multi-family development where residents are in proximity to numerous community amenities. Multi-family infill of appropriate scale and character should be encouraged while the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family structures should be discouraged.
Downtown Vision

As highlighted in this illustration from the 2013 Placemaking Design Manual, the St. Cloud community has long supported a vision for the downtown area as a pedestrian-friendly, mixed use district with strong ties to the Mississippi River.

The Comprehensive Plan encourages continued reinvestment and redevelopment in the downtown to realize this vision. New development should be placed on improving public access to the riverfront. Private investment should also be complemented by public investments in high quality streetscape and green space improvements throughout the downtown.

More detailed discussion of the vision for Downtown St. Cloud and recommendations to achieve that vision are provided in Chapter 10: Subarea Plans.

Southside Residential

Home to St. Cloud State University and a large student population, the Southside University Neighborhood represents a unique residential land use category within the City. The historic Southside consists of a distinct mix of single-family homes, townhomes, multi-family structures, and single family homes that have been converted to multi-family units. Multiple housing types often intermingle within the same block and while significant multi-family and rental housing development has occurred within the Southside, there is a strong desire to retain and enhance the single-family character of the area as reinvestment and redevelopment occurs.

A mix of housing should continue to be supported to ensure long-time residents and students have high quality housing options. Regardless of whether a given property is owner-occupied for rental, however design guidelines and updated development regulations are needed to ensure that future development is of appropriate scale and character and well maintained. The conversion of additional single-family homes to multi-family units should be discouraged moving forward. These steps will provide current property owners with the fair certainty that redevelopment of adjacent properties will serve to enhance their property and encourage further reinvestment. Additional discussion of these strategies is provided in Chapter 5: Housing & Neighborhoods.

Mixed Use

The Mixed Use category consists of a multi-story, mixed use structures featuring retail, restaurant, and service uses on the ground floor and office or residential uses on the upper floors. Mixed use development is concentrated within Downtown St. Cloud and should continue to be encouraged throughout the Downtown to increase foot traffic and create a more vibrant atmosphere. Buildings should be located at or near the sidewalk with parking provided through a combination of on-street spaces and off-street parking structures. Given the availability and proximity of public transit and other amenities, reduced parking requirements for residential units should also be considered to help encourage more dense development that complements the existing historic character of Downtown. Additional discussion of mixed use development in Downtown St. Cloud is located in Chapter 10: Subarea Plans.

Neighborhood Commercial

The Neighborhood Commercial land use consists of small-scale commercial business that cater to the everyday shopping and service needs of St. Cloud’s residential neighborhoods. Neighborhood Commercial uses are geared toward the service, retail, and convenience needs of the surrounding community. Structures within a Neighborhood Commercial area should be of a similar size and scale to the adjacent residential community and exhibit complementary architecture and materials. Pedestrian connectivity and vehicular parking and circulation management should be promoted to encourage walkability and reduce potential conflict points.

Corridor Commercial

The Corridor Commercial land use designation encompasses a range of commercial uses that are sited along primary roadways. These include, but are not limited to retail, entertainment, and service commercial businesses that are sited within large commercial developments, inline retail centers, or as individual sites along roadways such as Division Street and University Avenue. Because corridor commercial areas are sited along busy roadways, curb cuts should be reduced and cross-access encouraged between businesses to minimize conflict points and increase access. Corridor Commercial areas are auto-oriented by nature, but should be enhanced to be pedestrian-friendly including the introduction of parking lot and perimeter landscaping that fosters an inviting environment for all users.
Regional Commercial
Areas designated as Regional Commercial are intended to accommodate larger commercial shopping centers and developments that serve a more regional function, drawing on a customer base that extends beyond the City limits. These areas often have a mix of big box stores and national retailers set among large shared parking areas. Commercial service uses are also appropriate within Regional Commercial areas, but must be compatible with adjacent and nearby retail and commercial shopping areas and should be located so as to not occupy prime retail locations.

Office & Research
The Office & Research land use category accommodates professional offices, medical offices, and research facilities that are clustered or arranged in a business park or campus setting. This land use broadens the potential to attract employment-related development to St. Cloud by providing opportunities to accommodate corporate users in areas outside of the Downtown. Similar to light industrial uses, future Office and Research areas are concentrated along the I-94 and Truck Highway 15 corridors where land is available to accommodate larger scale users. As prominent features along major roadways, Office and Research developments should be of high quality and reflect positively on the image of the City using high quality architecture, signage, and landscaping.

Light Industrial
Areas designated for Light Industrial are intended to accommodate a variety of uses ranging from light assembly, storage and distribution, low intensity fabrication operations, intense commercial service uses, and others. Examples of Light Industrial uses range from larger users like Electrolox and Pan-O-Gold Baking Company, to the I-94 Business Park and smaller users along the Roslewll Road corridor. The scale and intensity of Light Industrial uses should vary based on context and respect the scale and character of nearby non-Industrial development. Industrial uses should be well buffered and screened to minimize noise, light, and other environmental nuisances to adjacent commercial and residential areas.

Public/Semi-Public
The Public/Semi-Public category encompasses a wide variety of uses that provide public services and facilities to St. Cloud residents and businesses. Specific uses include, but are not limited to, government-owned facilities, hospitals, local schools, universities, and places of worship. A significant portion of the Public/Semi-Public land use category is dedicated to medical uses. These areas include the St. Cloud Hospital, CentraCare Medical Plaza, and the VA Medical Center. Higher education institutions such as St. Cloud State University and St. Cloud Technical Community College, and the Minnesota Correctional Facility also make up much of the Public/Semi-Public land use category. Because Public/Semi-Public land uses generally serve the public, multi-modal access including vehicular, public transit, walking, and biking should be integrated within all Public/Semi-Public sites and nearby neighborhoods. Additional discussion of Public/Semi-Public uses is located in Chapter 8: Community Facilities & Service Plan.

Rural Preservation
The Rural Preservation land use encompasses the southeast quadrant of the St. Cloud planning area. Currently, agriculture and rural homesteads are the predominant land uses within this area and should remain as such during the life of this Comprehensive Plan. Development should be discouraged within the Rural Preservation areas until other portions of the planning area are built out in accordance with the Growth Areas Framework. Significant development pressure exists to accommodate a growing population and job base, the City should reevaluate and update the Comprehensive Plan.

Quarry
Known as the Granite City, St. Cloud and its planning area are home to numerous quarries dedicated to the extraction of stone. It is anticipated that existing quarries will remain active during the life of the Comprehensive Plan. As discussed in the Industrial Areas Framework, over the near term, it is important that the City and surrounding townships continue to enforce mining operation regulations to minimize negative impacts on nearby residents related to noise, dust, and potential nuisances. Over the near term, it is important that long-term site reclamation plans are in place to ensure compatibility with future development and leverage quarry areas as natural assets to the greater St. Cloud community.

Parks & Open Space
The parks and open space category is defined by areas that are used for active and passive recreation as well as natural areas. These include fully programmed park spaces that are owned and operated by the City of St. Cloud, common open space areas within subdivisions, and significant environmental features such as large tree stands, floodplains, wetlands, and lands with steep slopes. Additional discussion of Parks and Open Space uses is located in Chapter 9: Parks, Open Space & Environmental Features.

Utilities
The Utilities land use includes land that is dedicated to utility infrastructure such as gas, electric, water, and wastewater. This land use also includes various utility and railroad rights-of-way.

Airport
The airport land use category includes the St. Cloud Regional Airport as well as adjacent land that may be impacted by airport operations as identified in the St. Cloud Regional Airport Master Plan Update (2014).
CITY OF ST. CLOUD Land Use Plan

KEY
- Single Family Detached
- Townhouse
- Multi-Family
- South Side Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Corridor Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Related Use
- Office & Research
- Light Industrial
- Parks and Open Space
- Public/Semi-Public
- Rail
- Utilities
- Quarry
- Airport
- Environmental Constraints

0' 1/4 Mile 1/2 Mile 2 Mile
7,920' 5,280' 2,640' 10,560'

CITY OF ST. CLOUD
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, SUBAREA PLANS & CATALYST SITES
An Orderly Annexation Agreement (OAA) encourages the managed growth and development of rural lands located in proximity to urbanized areas. This strategy prevents “leap frog development” and the need to extend municipal services to areas that are not contiguous to existing municipal boundaries and infrastructure. The City of St. Cloud has two OAs in place that will both expire in 2025.

**Minden Township OAA**

The Minden Township orderly annexation area is roughly bounded by Highway 23 to the north, Trunk Highway 10 to the west, the Benton County line to the south, and the Elk River to the east. The 2001 agreement indicates that 3,370 acres of land in Minden Township will be annexed by resolution after December 31, 2025. At that time, the City will need to ensure that adequate public services (police, fire, snow plow, sanitation, etc.) and infrastructure will be provided to existing and future development in the area.

The 2001 agreement outlines annexation procedures while Minden Township Orderly Annexation Area Master Plan dictates land use for the area, which was updated to be consistent with the 2003 St. Cloud Comprehensive Plan. While the development principles remain relevant and should be applied to new projects within the OAA area, the agreement should be amended to reflect the minor land use plan changes within this Comprehensive Plan. These changes include:

- A focus on rural preservation for undeveloped areas to the west of 55th Avenue SE.
- The location of light industrial uses along the Highway 23 corridor (in keeping with established development patterns) with a corresponding reduction in the amount of commercial uses along the corridor.

**Haven Township OAA**

The City of St. Cloud and Haven Township entered into an OAA in 2010 to encourage development contiguous to existing City boundaries and to “limit non-farm rural development.” Under the agreement, the areas identified are to follow land uses according to the Sherburne County Land Use Plan with the intent of protecting the areas from scattered and piecemeal residential and non-residential development. Haven will protect current agricultural uses by limiting housing to one home per 40 acres without a plat, and to five acre lots in areas substantially wooded. Haven will maintain existing commercial and industrial districts, and protect and promote existing commercial activities. Tracts within the OAA area may only be annexed through a petition of a majority of property owners or the City may initiate annexation proceedings after the OAA expires in 2025.

Much of the Haven Township OAA is located within the Rural Preservation Area identified in the Growth Areas Framework. As such, it is not anticipated that significant development pressure will occur within this area over the life of the Comprehensive Plan. Portions of the Haven Township OAA area located to the east of the St. Cloud Regional Airport are identified for future single-family residential and commercial development and should the City annex any areas within the Haven Township OAA boundaries, development should occur in accordance to the Land Use Plan.

**Lynden Township - Future Annexation**

While St. Cloud’s future residential and commercial development should be accommodated within the City’s existing boundaries or nearby portions of Minden and Haven Townships, opportunities exist in neighboring Lynden Township to expand St. Cloud’s industrial base. The City has sold much of the land within the existing I-94 Business Park with limited options for expansion within the City’s existing boundaries. Demand exists for additional business park development in areas to the south in Lynden Township along the Opportunity Drive corridor. Given development pressure in this area and existing market opportunities, it is appropriate for the City to begin to engage Lynden Township officials in conservation regarding future potential annexation and the development of a formal orderly annexation agreement.