

# 4 Land Use & Development

*This Land Use and Development chapter is an update to the existing 2016 Comprehensive Plan chapter to reflect St. Cloud's changing needs and priorities. Building on the City's existing pattern of development as a foundation, this update to the Land Use and Development chapter identifies what types of development are desired and needed for the City of St. Cloud.*

*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

- Encourage infill development within the City Core through converting industrial lands to multi-family residential and mixed-uses.
- Support transit-oriented redevelopment in the East End to optimize the use of land near the train station.
- Discourage noncontiguous development to limit impacts to community facilities and services.
- Promote new commercial development opportunities along Highway 10 to accommodate future growth while maintaining existing infrastructure and

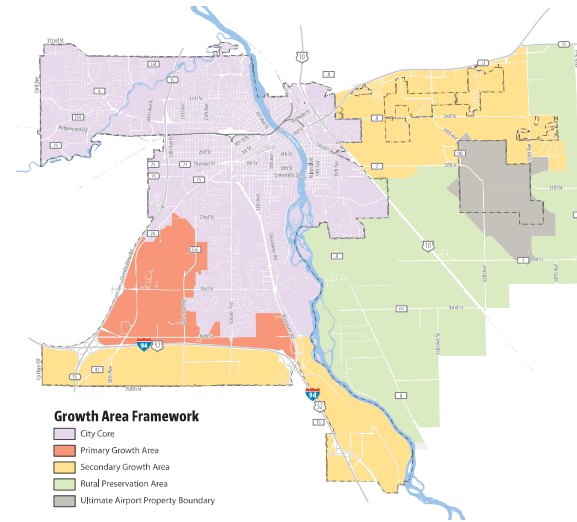
services.

- 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.

## Population Projections (2020-2050) St. Cloud & St. Cloud Region

	2020		2050		Projected Change (2020-2050)	
	Population	Percentage	Population	Population	Percentage	
St. Cloud	70,636	50.5%	80,921	10,285	14.6%	
St. Cloud Region	139,767	100.0%	171,775	32,008	22.9%	

Source: St. Cloud APO Long Range Transportation Plan 2040



## Growth Areas Framework

The City of St. Cloud currently makes up approximately 50.5% of the region's total population and if this share of the regional population is maintained, St. Cloud is projected to grow by more than 10,000 residents between 2020 and 2050, according to the St. Cloud Area Planning Organization.

As St. Cloud's population grows, additional pressure will be placed on undeveloped areas within and surrounding the City, including extensive agricultural areas and natural areas. The Growth Areas Framework provides a general guide as to what areas are best suited to accommodate future growth through the year 2050. While the Land Use Plan presented in the following section identifies how various areas should be developed in response to projected population growth, the Growth Areas Framework identifies when such development should occur.

## Accommodating Future Growth

St. Cloud is projected that it will need a total of approximately 34,397 households by 2050, up from 30,582 households in 2020, representing an increase of about 11.1% between 2020 and 2050. 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 leap-frog 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 promote the redevelopment of underutilized or vacant industrial lands and support transit-oriented development near the train station or along major corridors like Division Street or Highway 10.

With the Highway 10 reconstruction process underway, industrial uses in the area are less viable as freight access may become restricted. Uses like multi-family residential and neighborhood commercial are encouraged in the area to replace vacating industrial uses.

## 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 should anchor new regional commercial development while the interchange at Trunk Highway 15 and I-94 should serve as a light industrial area for uses such as warehousing and logistics. Smaller-scale, neighborhood-serving commercial development should be located at other key intersections along I-94 including County Road 136 and Roosevelt Road within the Primary Growth area.

Opportunities exist for infill housing and redevelopment within the Primary Growth Area, including incomplete subdivisions or vacant parcels ready for development between 33rd Street and 40th Street. 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 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 such as new industrial and manufacturing land uses should also be encouraged along I-94 and areas 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 2050 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. For example, the Southwest Beltline roadway connection aligned with 33rd Street travelling east-west may require further analysis to plan for impacts to land uses, infrastructure and community facilities. However, should this connection become a major corridor through the City, development within the extended area will likely be comprised of a mix of uses.

## 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
- Southside 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 which are primarily located adjacent to the north, west, and south of Downtown St. Cloud. This land use varies in intensity from half-acre lots in some newer subdivisions near to the south of 22nd Street South, to more traditional, smaller lot single-family in the Core Neighborhoods and adjacent areas. While a mix of renter-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.

## Mixed Residential

This land use encompasses a range of residential uses. Mixed residential land uses include single-family detached 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 home ownership 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 in 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. Vacant or underutilized properties in the east end of Downtown St. Cloud should also be targeted for multi-family development where residents are in proximity to numerous community amenities including the train station. Multi-family infill of appropriate scale and character should be encouraged along the Division Street and Highway 10 corridors while the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family structures should be discouraged.

## 2026 Downtown Plan Vision Statement

*The Vision Statement describes what Downtown St. Cloud will become by 2045. It reflects the key ideas and themes identified through community engagement and captures the community's shared aspirations for Downtown.*

*By 2045, Downtown St. Cloud will remain a premier destination for entertainment, art, history, culture, and riverfront activity. Downtown will function as a lively, year-round destination that balances regional appeal with a strong local identity. The City will continue to leverage its historic architecture and character, supporting active streets, vibrant public spaces, and a multimodal environment that prioritizes people.*

*People will enjoy family-friendly activities, well-designed parks and plazas, local shops, restaurants, food trucks, and year-round events. Downtown will offer a safe, comfortable, and accessible experience for all users. Strong connections to major anchors such as St. Cloud State University and CentraCare will reinforce Downtown's role within the broader community.*

*The City will actively support redevelopment and reinvestment in both residential and commercial uses, honoring Downtown's historic identity as the Granite City while establishing a dynamic, active riverfront destination. Downtown will provide amenities and experiences that serve residents, businesses, and visitors alike.*



### Southside Residential

The Southside Residential neighborhood is home to St. Cloud State University and much of the student population in the City. The 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.

The Southside Residential area serves as a transition area between Downtown and the University campus. A mix of housing options in this area should continue to be supported to ensure long-time residents and students have high quality housing options. Future development and redevelopment should be of appropriate scale and character for the neighborhood. New construction and redeveloped properties will help to encourage additional reinvestment and revitalize the area. 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 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 existing 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. Neighborhood Commercial uses are typically located along corridors such as Division Street and portions of Highway 10 to encourage pedestrian-oriented development with improved pedestrian connectivity, upgraded landscaping, and enhanced streetscapes.

### 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 portions of Division Street and University Avenue. With corridor commercial areas being 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-oriented, 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.

As key destinations for tens of thousands visitors on a daily basis, the appearance of Regional Commercial areas has a significant impact on the City of St. Cloud's image within the region. As such, enhancements to on-site landscaping, vehicular circulation, and pedestrian access should be prioritized to create a unique sense of place that is welcoming to visitors and local residents alike.

## Office & Research

The Office and 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 Downtown. Similar to light industrial uses, future Office and Research areas are concentrated along the I-94 and Trunk 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. Light Industrial uses are concentrated near major transportation corridors such as the I-94 corridor or portions of Roosevelt Road and range from larger tenants like warehousing and logistics facilities and to smaller tenants like auto repair shops. 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 CentraCare Medical Plaza, CentraCare St. Cloud Hospital, and the St. Cloud VA Medical Center. Higher education institutions such as St. Cloud State University and St. Cloud Technical Community College also make up much of the Public/Semi-Public land use category. With Public/Semi-Public land uses generally serving 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.

## 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 (2017).

## Quarry

Known as the Granite City, St. Cloud and its planning area are home to numerous quarries dedicated to the extraction of stone and other minerals. It is anticipated that existing quarries will remain active during the life of the Comprehensive Plan, while no new quarries are currently designated. Future Quarries should be located in areas of the City that will not restrict or limit future growth and development.

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 long term, it is important that long-term site remediation and reclamation plans are in place to ensure compatibility with future development and leverage quarry areas as natural assets to the greater St. Cloud community.

## Utilities

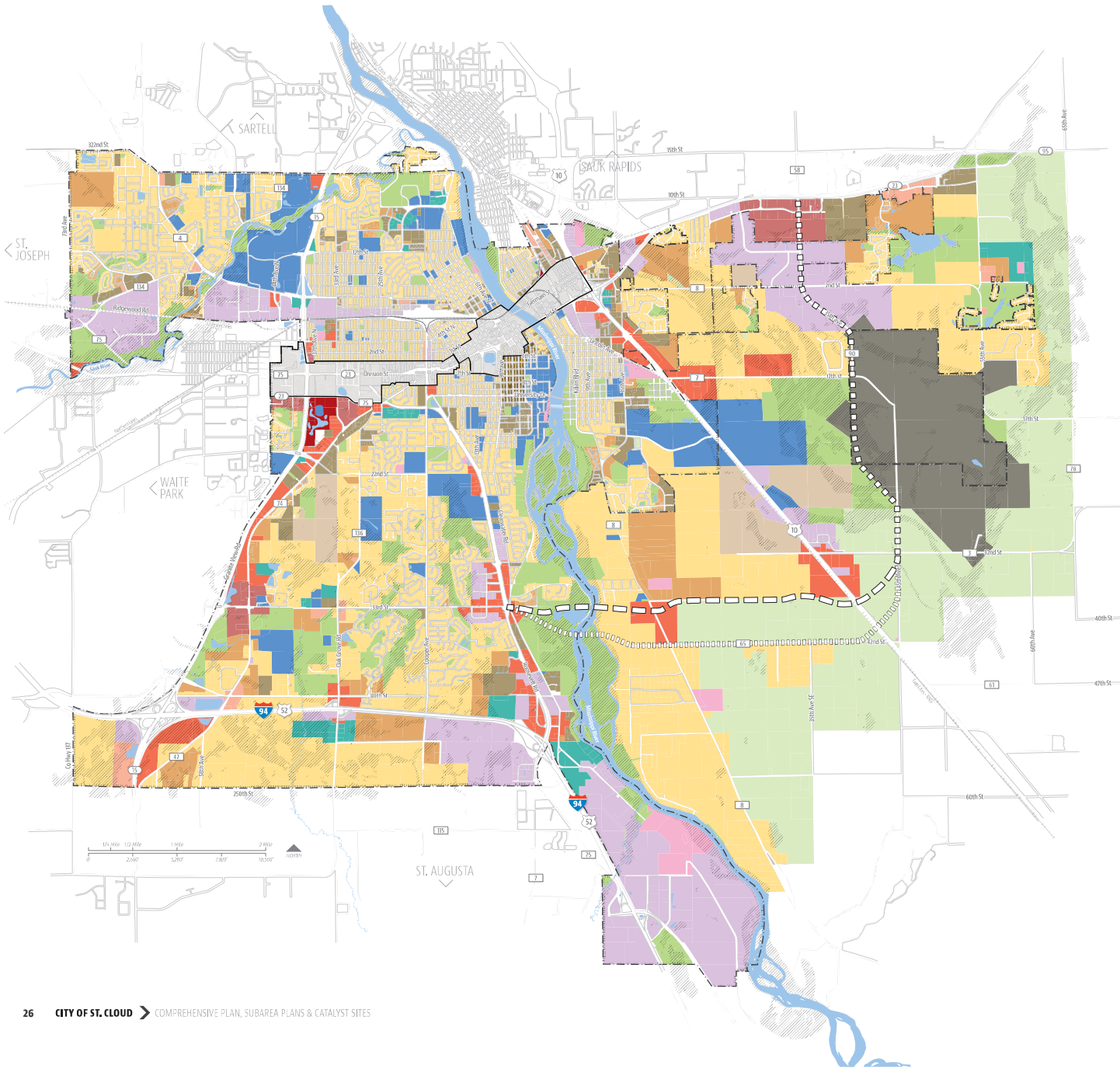
The Utilities land use includes land that is dedicated to utility infrastructure such as gas, electric, water, and wastewater. This land use also includes various utility and railroad rights-of-way.

## Parks & Open Space

The Parks and Open Space designation 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. New open space areas or neighborhood parks should be incorporated in new developments in Downtown and corridors within the City Core and growth areas. Additional discussion of Parks and Open Space uses is located in Chapter 9: Parks, Open Space & Environmental Features.

## 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. Should significant development pressure exist to accommodate a growing population and job base, the City should reevaluate and update the Comprehensive Plan.



# CITY OF ST. CLOUD Land Use Plan

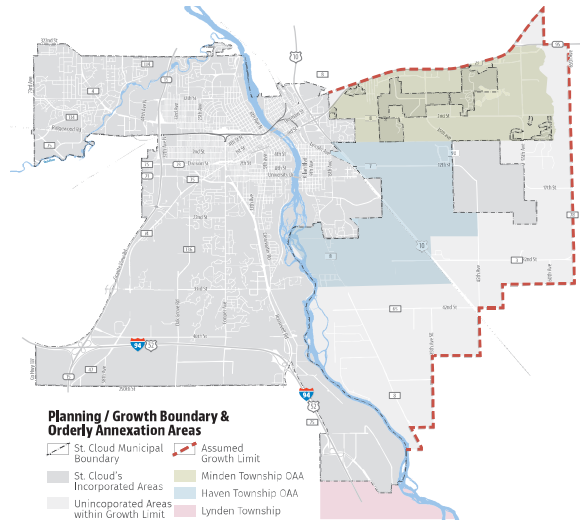
## KEY

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

Downtown and Division Street Subareas

\*See the Division Street and Downtown subareas in Chapter 10, on p.g. 87 for more detailed land uses.

- Proposed Corridor - Alternative #1
- Proposed Corridor - Alternative #2
- Proposed Corridor - Unified Route



## Orderly Annexation

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 OAA in place that will both expire in 2025.

### Minden Township OAA

The Minden/St. Cloud Orderly Annexation Agreement is bounded by Highway 23 to the north, Trunk Highway 10 to the west, the Benton County line to the south, and Elk River to the east which establishes two tiers of annexation known as Area A and Area B. Area A is the furthest west and can be annexed anytime following January 1, 2026. Area B is located east of Area A and cannot be annexed until all of Area A is annexed given the orderly extension of city utilities and services from west to east. Until water and sewer services become available and to limit development of non-farm areas prior to annexation, parcels within Area B have been placed in the Agriculture zoning district.

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 Stearns County Land Use Plan with the intent of protecting the areas from scattered and piecemeal residential and non-residential development.

Haven protects current agricultural uses by limiting housing to one home per 40 acres without a plat, and to five-acre lots in substantially wooded areas, making new housing development difficult. 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. St. Cloud and Haven Township are currently negotiating a new OAA.

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. However, Haven currently has failing infrastructure systems and will need to upgrade or expand their systems shortly to accommodate should they allow for any new development. 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 conversation regarding future potential annexation and the development of a formal orderly annexation agreement.

