



Comprehensive Plan 2035

WILLIAMS COUNTY
NORTH DAKOTA
DECEMBER 2012



Williams County Comprehensive Plan 2035

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PLATEAU

DU

Lake

{chapter one}

WILLIAMS

Muddy Cr.

Sandy Cr.

Tioga

White Earth

Ray

River

Wheelock

Hofflund

Avoca

Spring Brook

Nesson

Grinne

ARY
ford.

GREAT

Williston

Tenton

F O R

TION

Welcome to Williams County North Dakota



Williams County is 2,077 square miles and is mainly rolling prairie land. The county includes 10 incorporated municipalities. The 3 largest cities are Williston, the county seat and population center, Tioga, and Ray. The county also has 57 townships.

Williams County and several adjacent counties are underlain by an oil-rich shale formation known as the Bakken. The County experienced a previous oil boom in the late 1970s whose abrupt demise a few years later left many projects unfinished and placed a financial burden on the communities and individuals that only recently was overcome. With the relatively recent innovation of hydraulic fracturing rejuvenating hard-to-extract formations, since approximately 2005, Williams County is once again at the epicenter of an intense oil and gas boom. This boom is predicted to last another 15 to 25 years, peaking around 2025 then scaling back to maintenance level of operations for another indefinite period of time.

Williams County’s Growth Boom

The oil boom has triggered a steep population growth with projections that more than double the 2010 Census count of 22,398. If the level of projected growth materializes over the next 15 – 25 years, how it develops will have a dramatic impact on the quality of life of its residents, and the fiscal well-being of the local government.

While much of the growth impact is visible in Williston and Tioga, the two largest cities, the unincorporated areas of the county have also been impacted by the current boom in many ways including:

- Over 10,000 workers are housed in “man camps” located outside of city boundaries, many requiring hauling of water and sewage to the few community treatment plants

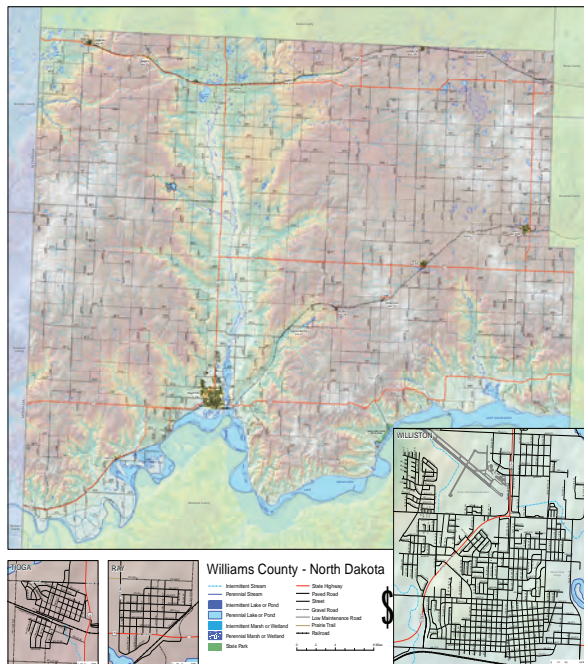
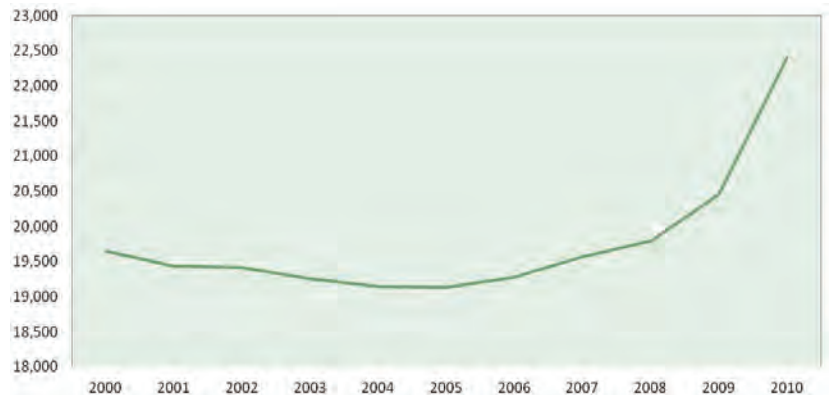


Figure 1-1: Map of Williams County, ND

- Residential subdivisions scattered in the rural areas of the county, putting many new homes far from emergency services and infrastructure
- Increased number of septic systems in areas with a history of non-suitable soils
- Over 450 drilling rigs are moved every 30 days to new locations—hauling the extremely heavy rigs breaks gravel roads that the County is barely able to maintain
- The dispersed and random pattern of oil and gas drill and well activity that makes it difficult to predict impacts to roads and future employment locations
- A growing transient population that is perceived to increase crime and decrease overall community safety and well-being
- High levels of truck traffic related to hauling sand, water, oil, and machinery that results in road damage and safety concerns
- Increased competition for housing resulting in increases in the price of land, houses and rental units
- Increased need for funds to pay for road, infrastructure and service improvements.



Figure 1-2: The energy industry is currently booming in the region causing growth impacts to the community



Accommodation Type	Raw Population Units	Occupancy Multiplier	Current Population Estimate	2015	2020	2025	2030
Resident Population	22,398	1	22,398	Population growth rates are estimates obtained from the Williston Housing Demand Analysis and represent the midpoint of a range of estimates. The study was completed in December 2010 by Ondracek, Witwer and Bertsch			
Man Camp Beds	9,777	1	9,777				
Hotel Rooms	1,581	2	3,162				
RV Sites	424	2	848				
Other Transient	1,447	1	1,447				
TOTAL			37,632	41,550	46,099	50,002	44,321

Figure 1-3: Population estimates and projections for the county over the next 25 years

A major objective of this Comprehensive Plan, as expressed by residents, is to better manage and guide growth to appropriate locations with the capacity to absorb the impacts of that growth in an efficient manner.

At the same time, having experienced a previous boom-bust cycle, the County is also aware that precautions need to be taken in order to avoid the negative impacts of the bust – vacancies, hollow buildings, and public debt – and to harness the boom while it lasts – to maintain roads, enhance communities, retain the rural character and leave a legacy of amenities for future generations.

Williams County, through this Comprehensive Plan, is charting how best to accommodate future growth of all types in the community: housing, commercial, and industrial development. At the same

time, the Plan addresses the infrastructure framework necessary to support that growth: transportation, utilities, and natural resources.

While each land owner has inalienable property rights, if individual decisions are not coordinated, at least at a basic level, they can lead to a variety of negative impacts that affect others' use of their properties. These impacts may include incompatible uses next to each other, inefficient layouts of roads and utilities (often maintained at public expense), and increased public costs for services (such as fire and police protection and school bus service). Thus, the pattern of development influences quality of life; health, safety, and welfare; and cost to the public, in the present and the future. This coordination also brings predictability about the future and an ability to anticipate problems in a proactive rather than reactive manner.



Figure 1-4: Traditionally, Williams County has been primarily an agricultural community

Vision Statement, Goals, and Objectives

Williams County Vision Statement

Williams County desires to retain its agricultural heritage and rural character over time despite facing the realities of a boom - bust economy. To do this, new development is encouraged to occur in and adjacent to existing communities and not scattered throughout the countryside. The County also desires to plan ahead to ensure the harnessing of the benefits of the boom and also soften the impacts of any bust.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives, derived out of the public engagement process, for this planning effort include:

GOAL: Efficient, Orderly Growth

Objectives:

- Growth is directed to areas that are most cost efficient to grow
- Growth is directed to the most suitable locations with infrastructure and services
- Growth is directed to existing towns and developed areas
- Adequate emergency response times are considered during development proposal review
- Commercial and industrial land is designated in a few defined locations
- Incompatible adjacent land uses are avoided

GOAL: Well-maintained County Highways and Roads

Objectives:

- Connection of missing segments of roads
- Improved road maintenance
- Construction of truck route west of Williston
- Increased traffic safety and access control

GOAL: Protection of Natural Resources

Objectives:

- Protection of river and creek corridors
- Protection of aquifer for clean water
- Protection of habitat areas especially riparian areas

GOAL: Remedied Crime and Social Issues

Objectives:

- Emergency service response time is maintained at its current level of service of 10 – 15 minutes
- Law enforcement increases at same rate as development
- Increase in the range of housing options
- Reduction of the cost of living

GOAL: Protection of Rural Character and Agriculture Heritage

Objectives:

- Retention of a rural character and “small town” feel in the rural areas of the county
- Protection of prime agricultural land from development

GOAL: Adequate Public Facilities and Services

Objectives:

- Retention of current levels of service and keep pace as the community grows
- Identification of areas where sewer is needed to support development
- Retention and expansion of good schools and other education opportunities
- Traffic safety improvements
- Development of recreation opportunities
- Lessen government expenditures

Key Recommendations

Among the many recommended actions, there are several that are most important to achieving the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan. They are:

- The County land development regulations to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Coordinate the County's capital improvements program (CIP) with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Coordinate with communities to plan Growth Areas and direct future development there to efficiently use the existing infrastructure and facilities.
- Plan ahead to coordinate the layout of major roads and related land uses to avoid duplication and conflicting decisions between the County and municipalities.



Figure 1-5: The railroad has connected communities within the county for decades.

The Code of the West

It is important to understand that life in the country is different than life in the city, therefore, those interested in purchasing land should be informed of the differences prior to making the decision. The Code of the West is an unwritten code of conduct that has been a guide for country living since the westward expansion of the United States first occurred. Key tenets of the Code of the West include:

- Agriculture is valued by the community. Do not expect the County government to intervene with agricultural operations or when they occur. Many occur around the clock and can cause dust, smoke, odors, and noise. Sometimes chemicals (such as fertilizers, insecticides, and herbicides) may be used.
- Emergency service vehicles may not achieve adequate access to your property and response time will depend on your proximity to a emergency service station.
- Expect that extreme weather conditions can destroy roads. Roads can also become impassible due to extreme weather.
- Utility services may be limited in some rural areas. Other services such as school bussing programs, mail delivery, and newspaper delivery may also be limited in many areas.
- Dust happens and needs to be expected.
- If the road is unpaved now, it is highly unlikely that the road will be paved in the future.
- Many people do not own the mineral rights under their property.

How the Plan is Organized

Chapter 1: Introduction to Williams

County – provides a background description of Williams County and the issues to address in the Williams County Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter 2: Introduction to a Comprehensive

Plan – explains what a comprehensive plan is and the county’s authority to prepare a plan

Chapter 3: Land Use Concepts and Growth

Strategies – presents major directions and concepts of the plan to guide future growth.

Chapter 4: Transportation

– contains the specific issues, goals, policies for transportation systems throughout the county.

Chapter 5: Infrastructure and Services

- contains the specific issues, goals, policies for transportation systems throughout the county.

Chapter 6: Economics and Economic

Development - contains the specific issues, goals, policies for county finances and economic development throughout the county.

Chapter 7: Implementation Chart

- contains the actions to implement the plan over time.

Appendix 1: Community Setting and Profile – provides a snapshot of the existing conditions in the county.

Appendix 2: Comprehensive Plan Update Public Outreach – outlines the public engagement process employed during the preparation of the comprehensive plan.

Appendix 3: Associated and Referenced Reports and Documents – lists relevant reports and documents associated with the Williams County Comprehensive Plan.

Appendix 4: Example Intergovernmental Agreement

Appendix 5: Glossary of Terms – defines terms used within the comprehensive plan.

Appendix 6: Additional Maps

{chapter two}



Comprehensive Plan Users' Guide



A comprehensive plan is designed to provide guidance to decisions affecting the future shape and character of the county through land use and development considerations. The plan develops a shared vision of what the county will look like in 20-25 years and then creates goals and policies to help achieve that vision. It is advisory rather than regulatory in nature, but it is the **foundation** for land management documents such as zoning and subdivision regulations and is used as a strategic tool to help a county guide development and investment decisions to achieve a healthy and balanced community.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to preserve and improve the quality of life enjoyed by the residents of Williams County. The accelerated growth in Williams County over the last few years, due to the energy industry, has begun to change the quality of life experienced by county residents. The plan is to guide the development of non-urban areas to appropriate locations; to provide opportunity and safety to county residents; to lessen government expenditures; and to conserve and develop natural resources.

The Williams County Comprehensive Plan (the “Plan”) has been developed to provide a foundation for decisions and policies that will guide the future land use and development in the unincorporated portions of the county. It is designed to serve as a tool for citizens, county staff and elected officials, and focuses on responding to both the immediate and anticipated long-term needs of the county. The Williams County Comprehensive Plan represents the official statement regarding the manner in which development is to occur to achieve its physical, economic, social and environmental goals.

This plan builds on the 1986 comprehensive plan as well as the adopted comprehensive plans of the City of Williston and City of Tioga.

Authority for the Comprehensive Plan

Titles 11, 40, and 58 of the North Dakota Century Code provide the basis for county land use planning and regulation. This enabling legislation allows local jurisdictions the authority to mandate certain aspects of planning.

The Williams County Code gives a strong role to the comprehensive plan with regard to land use decision-making: “With the exception of agricultural uses, buildings or structures, no buildings, structures or land shall hereafter be used or occupied unless in conformity with the Comprehensive Plan of Williams County, North Dakota (or the provisions of Williams County Townships and municipalities which are more restrictive).”

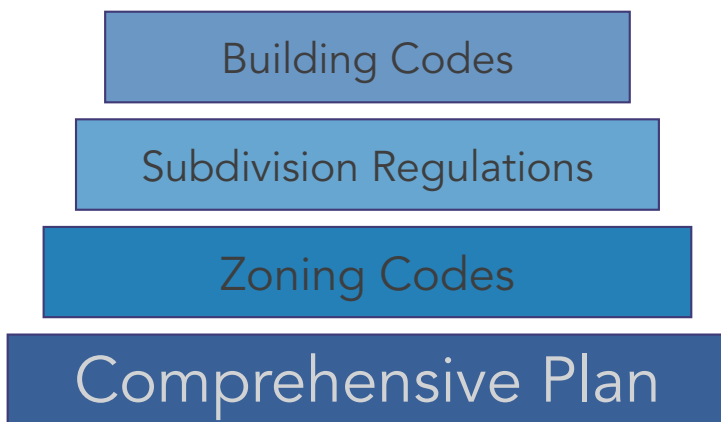


Figure 2-1: The comprehensive plan provides the basis for and is used with other county plans, codes and standards

Comprehensive Plan Components

Vision Statement

The vision statement is a broad description of the desired future condition achieved between now and 2035. This vision describes Williams County's assets and values and focuses on moving the community toward achieving the preferred future growth scenario.

While the vision statement is the backbone of the comprehensive plan, it is realized through a well thought out set of goals, policies, and strategies and actions that provide a clear blueprint for where the county would like to go and how it will get there.

Goals

Comprehensive plan goals provide concise statements of what the community aims to accomplish within the next 20 years. The goals add specificity and more detail to the vision. Goals are instrumental in evaluating future land use decisions and then further implemented by the policies, and strategies and actions that follow.

Policies

Policies are defined as: a course of action, guiding principle, or procedure to guide present and future decisions. Policies are established, and then implemented through actions, including legislation, budget decisions, etc. Comprehensive plan policies are important to provide ongoing guidance for elected and

appointed community leaders, developers, the public, and the county staff and administrators to enable consistent decisions over time about development, budgeting, priorities, and investments in the county.

Strategies and Actions

Strategies and actions provide suggested specific actions and programs that can be taken to implement the Plan. Because priorities and budgets will change from year to year, county staff and officials should consider the potential actions and draw up an implementation plan, or specific tasks and assignments to be accomplished each year, and modified on an as-needed basis.

Maps

Maps - which display such information as future land use and prioritized road improvements - are to be used as tools for development review.

How to Use the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is to be used by the Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of County Commissioners, County staff, developers, and residents.

For County staff, the plan will be used to analyze development proposals, zoning changes, and subdivision requests. It will be used as a guide for making changes to land management strategies and for the initiation of new plans or projects. It is also used to plan for capital improvements and can be a basis for grant applications.

The Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of County Commissioners will refer to the plan when making land use decisions. Following the Comprehensive Plan will help ensure that decisions are defensible. Knowing that County officials follow the plan provides developers and citizens with a predictable process and reliable guide for their own decisions regarding change for their properties or those adjacent to their properties.

Directions in the form of written goals, objectives, and implementation actions are supplemented by the Comprehensive Plan maps. When referring to the Comprehensive Plan, users should consider the written directions as well as the maps.

Maintaining Consistency between the Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Regulations and Development Decisions

For the Plan to remain relevant over time, the County Planning Commission must be able to review, revise, and update the Plan on an as needed basis to respond to significant trends or changes in the economic, physical, or social conditions of the community.

In Williams County, the comprehensive plan establishes the broad land uses and the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations of Williams County, North Dakota establishes the detailed standards such as specific uses, minimum lot size, and setbacks. The Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations of Williams County, North Dakota requires that land use decisions be consistent with the comprehensive plan. However, the North Dakota Century Code requires that zoning decisions are consistent with the county comprehensive plan.

Amending the Comprehensive Plan

Revisions to the comprehensive plan will be conducted according to three distinct and different procedures: (1) comprehensive updates (2) major amendments and (3) minor amendments.

Comprehensive Updates

The purpose of a comprehensive update is to reevaluate the foundations, and directions of the Plan, and to set new directions if necessary, to make sure that the Comprehensive Plan continues to be an effective guide for growth and change in Williams County.

It is intended that a review of the comprehensive plan be conducted every 5 years (unless otherwise directed by the Planning Commission) to determine whether a comprehensive update is warranted. In making a determination of when a comprehensive plan update should be initiated, a prime consideration should be the magnitude of the changes that have occurred since the Plan was last updated. For instance, significant changes in the economy, the environment, housing affordability, traffic congestion, or projected growth may require a plan update or an update to a specific plan element.

If a comprehensive plan update is initiated, the county will thoroughly reevaluate the goals, policies, and strategies of the Plan, as well as the Growth Strategy Map. A comprehensive plan update will also include a thorough review of the validity of all background information

contained within this Plan and should include broad opportunities for involvement by the public, elected and appointed officials, county staff, and other affected interests. Once the update is complete, the Planning Commission shall then amend the comprehensive plan based on North Dakota State Statutes, the consideration of the public input, recommendations of staff and specialists, and evidence provided at public hearings.

MAJOR AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Plan, that occur outside of a regular comprehensive plan update, are considered to be major if they constitute a significant change in the vision, goals, policies and/or land uses of the county. Major amendments may include revisions requested by individual property owners, as well as changes to reflect or incorporate adoption of other plans (e.g. municipal changes within growth areas, departmental master plans, etc.), or a recommendation from the staff, Planning Commission or the Board of County Commissioners.

The Planning Commission shall determine whether a proposed amendment is major or minor after reviewing a recommendation from county staff. Major amendments may be processed at any time, pursuant to the standards or approval, submittal requirement, and procedural requirements below.

Standards for Approval

A major plan amendment shall be approved if the Planning Commission makes specific findings that:

1. The existing comprehensive plan and/or any related element thereof is in need of the proposed amendment; and
2. The proposed amendment is compatible with the surrounding area, and the goals and policies of the Plan; and
3. The proposed amendment will have no major negative impacts on transportation, services, and facilities; and
4. The proposed amendment will have minimal effect on service provision, including adequacy or availability of facilities and services, and is compatible with existing and planned service provision; and
5. The proposed amendment is consistent with the logical expansion of services; and
6. The county or the general area in which an amendment is proposed has changed or is changing to such a degree that the amendment is in the public interest; and
7. Strict adherence to the Plan would result in a situation neither intended nor in keeping with other key elements and policies of the Plan; and
8. The proposed plan amendment has a significant public benefit; will promote the public welfare and will be consistent with the goals and policies of the Williams County Comprehensive Plan and the elements thereof.

Procedural Requirements

To process a major amendment, the following steps should be followed:

1. Pre-Application Conference. The applicant shall schedule a pre-application conference.
2. Submit Application. The application materials as listed in the submittal requirement and any additional materials as determined in the pre-application conference.
3. Determination of Completeness. The Zoning Administrator will review the application for determination of completeness.
4. Schedule Public Hearing. Upon a determination of completeness, the Zoning Administrator will schedule the application for consideration by the Planning Commission on the agenda following the scheduling of previously submitted and complete applications. Public notice of the hearing shall be made pursuant to the County Procedures.
5. Evaluation by Staff Review. Upon determination of completeness, the Zoning Administrator will review the application for compliance with the applicable standards set forth above. A staff report shall be prepared. The evaluation of the application may include comment by referral agencies.
6. Review by the Planning Commission. A major amendment application will be considered by the Planning

Commission at a public hearing, after proper notice. The Planning Commission will approve or deny, by written resolution, the application based upon compliance with the standards as outlined above. If the amendment is approved by the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission shall certify the amended Comprehensive Plan to the Board of County Commissioners and municipality within Williams County.

7. Objection. Any municipality within Williams County has the right to file a written objection to the amendment within 30 calendar days following adoption of the amendment.

MINOR AMENDMENTS

A minor amendment is an amendment that does not represent a change to the vision, goals, and policies of the Williams County Comprehensive Plan and has modest, if any, impact on adjacent land uses, infrastructure and services. A minor amendment may include small projects that are consistent with the surrounding area, or may be as small as correcting text or map errors.

Minor amendments may be processed at any time, pursuant to the standards or approval, submittal requirement, and procedural requirements below.

Standards for Approval

A minor plan amendment shall be approved if the Planning Commission makes specific findings that:

1. As applicable, the proposed text or designation addresses errors in the Growth Strategy Map or Comprehensive Plan text; and
2. The proposed designation will result in a logical and orderly development pattern and will not constitute spot designation; and
3. The proposed designation is in compliance with the goals, policies, and strategies /actions of the comprehensive plan and any applicable intergovernmental agreement affecting land use or development; and
4. The amendment does not create unreasonable hazards or undue hardship upon adjacent property owners and/or residents of Williams County.

Procedural Requirements

Procedural requirements for a minor amendment are as follows:

1. Pre-Application Conference. The applicant shall schedule a pre-application conference.
2. Submit Completed Application Form. In addition to the application form all materials as listed in the submittal requirement as well as any additional materials required for a minor plan amendment as determined in the pre-application conference.
3. Determination of Completeness. The Zoning Administrator will review the application for determination of completeness.

4. Schedule Public Hearing. Upon a determination of completeness, the Zoning Administrator will schedule the application for consideration by the Planning Commission. Public notice of the hearing shall be made.
5. Evaluation by Staff Review. Upon determination of completeness, the Zoning Administrator will review the application for compliance with the applicable standards set forth above. A staff report shall be prepared. The evaluation of the application may include comment by referral agencies received.
6. Review by the Planning Commission. A minor amendment application will be considered by the Planning Commission at a public hearing, after proper notice. The Planning Commission will approve or deny, by written resolution, the application based upon compliance with the standards as outlined above. If the amendment is approved by the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission shall certify the amended Comprehensive Plan to the Board of County Commissioners and municipality within Williams County.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS (MAJOR AND MINOR AMENDMENTS)

1. A cover letter containing a detailed narrative describing the purpose of the proposed amendment. This narrative shall also include a response to all of the review standards as outlined above.
2. A legal description, or copy of the deed, of the real property(s), owned by the applicant in Williams County, which will be affected by such change.
3. A copy of the County Assessor's Map identifying the subject property along with all adjacent properties within 200' from the subject property. The subject property and all adjacent properties within 200' shall be identified with the relevant Assessor's parcel number, address and name of the property owner, identification of the primary use of the property and existing land use per comprehensive plan and zoning.
4. In the case where the amendment affects a specific property, and an individual is acting as an agent on behalf of the application, an acknowledgement from the property owner that you may act in his/her behalf shall be submitted. If the property is owned by an entity (such as an LLC, LLLP, etc.), please submit a copy of a recorded "statement of authority" demonstrating that the person signing the application has the authority to act in that capacity for the entity.
5. A vicinity map locating the parcel(s) in the county. The vicinity map shall

clearly show the boundaries of the subject property(s) and all property within a 3-mile radius. The map shall be at a minimum scale of 1"=2000' showing the general topographic and geographic relation of the proposed land use change to the surrounding area for which a copy of U.S.G.S. quadrangle map may be used.

6. A signed "agreement for payment" form and payment of base fee.
7. A copy of the completed pre-application conference form and any required attachments.

The success of the Comprehensive Plan, reaching its vision, depends upon the will of public officials, the development community, County staff, and the general citizenry to follow through with its implementation actions. The future of our county, and the communities within it, can be better-shaped to meet desired goals and objectives as the Williams County Comprehensive Plan becomes a part of every land-use decision in the county.



{chapter three}

Land Use Concepts and Growth Strategies



This chapter contains the Land Use Concepts and the Growth Strategy Map. These concepts and strategy frame the distribution of residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural lands.

This update of the comprehensive plan reinforces a major direction of the previous plan: *most new growth should occur in areas that have urban services or can easily be served by them.*

The intention is that the municipalities would annex the development in its associated growth area, if not immediately, then eventually.

Unincorporated Williams County is largely rural and, based on public outreach responses, county residents want it to remain rural. Agricultural production is important to Williams County's cultural heritage, economy, and rural communities. Once decisions are made to develop agricultural land, the resource is almost always irretrievably lost because it is difficult to reclaim that land back to an agricultural use. The loss of agricultural land and the farming/ranching tradition leads to loss of rural character, county identity, and a way of life.

Increased low-density development in the rural areas of the county would also cause an increase in service costs: road maintenance, fire protection, and law enforcement expenditures, in addition to many others. This is because there would be more land to travel to reach all of the developments and more roads needed on which to travel that need to be constructed and maintained over time. The County is not equipped to provide urban levels of infrastructure or public services nor does it have the tax rates that would be required to make such capital investments or even to maintain them at urban or suburban levels. New growth should not be a financial burden on the County or its tax payers or a reduction of current levels of service.

Therefore, the Growth Strategy Map directs the great majority of the development associated with the increased population to occur in and around existing municipalities that have water, sewer, schools, parks and public services, or

existing communities where that infrastructure and services are provided by special districts. With this pattern, existing communities would receive the maximum benefit from growth while at the same time using existing or expanding public facilities more efficiently while preserving the rural character of areas between communities. These benefits include a higher population to attract new businesses as well as more dollars spent and more taxes collected to support amenities and services for those residents.

Land Use Goals and Policy Direction

GOAL: Efficient, Orderly Growth

Objectives

- Growth is directed to areas that are most cost efficient to grow
- Growth is directed to the most suitable locations with infrastructure and services
- Growth is directed to existing towns and developed areas
- Adequate emergency response times are considered during development proposal review
- Commercial and industrial land is designated in a few defined locations
- Incompatible adjacent land uses are avoided

Policies

Policy 3.1 The County will make land use decisions based on the Comprehensive Plan and its Zoning and Subdivision ordinances. Development will not be supported unless it is located within:

- a growth area
- a designated employment area with an area plan
- a master-planned new center
- adjacent to appropriately located existing land uses.

Policy 3.2 The process for land use approvals in growth areas will be consistent with an executed Intergovernmental Agreement between the County and municipality. In the interim, the following policies will apply:

- Within designated growth areas, County land use policies and development approvals will be compatible with existing County zoning and/or the future land use plan of the adjacent municipality.
- Within a designated growth area, development applicants will obtain project review comments from the local community prior to submitting for county review.

Policy 3.3 Growth is directed to areas that are most cost efficient to grow and to the most suitable locations with infrastructure and services ; adequate emergency response times are considered during development proposal review.



Figure 3-1: Aerial view of Williams County

Policy 3.4 The County does not intend to be a provider of urban-level (central sewer, water, police, fire) infrastructure or services. Urban-level services must be provided by municipalities, the developer, and/or those served—unless there is found to be a public benefit to do otherwise.

Policy 3.5 New, non-agricultural uses will be directed to existing communities and the growth areas adjacent to their boundaries, or other designated centers, thereby reducing the demand for urban growth patterns in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Policy 3.6 Development adjacent to municipalities (i.e. in growth areas) should annex into the adjacent jurisdiction if contiguity exists.

GOAL: Protection of natural resources

Objectives

- Protection of river and creek corridors
- Protection of aquifer for clean water
- Protection of habitat areas especially riparian areas

Policies

Policy 3.7 The County will encourage and cooperate with the federal and state protection of critical habitat including threatened or endangered species.

Policy 3.8 The County will encourage the protection of watersheds, floodplains, and riparian areas. Development should not occur on lands deemed unsuitable for health, safety and property damage, such as due to flooding, inadequate drainage, severe erosion potential, and unfavorable topography such as steep slopes.

Policy 3.9 The County discourages development that compromises natural drainage patterns so the cumulative impact of public and private land use activities will not:

- Cause storm runoff to exceed the capacity of natural or constructed drainage ways
- Subject other areas to an increased potential for damage due to flooding, erosion or sedimentation
- Result in pollution to streams, rivers or other natural bodies of water.

Policy 3.10 The County will apply the Natural Resources Framework and Landscape Sensitivity Map during the development review process.

GOAL: Protection of rural character and agriculture heritage

Objectives

- Retention of a rural character and “small town” feel in the rural areas of the county
- Protection of prime agricultural land from development

Policies

Policy 3.11 Agricultural uses are protected so that agriculture can continue to be a viable industry.

Policy 3.12 Between communities, the County will remain largely agricultural—except for designated areas of existing development that may be expanded per the future land use plan. The County discourages the conversion of agricultural uses to non-agricultural uses. New isolated industrial areas in the rural areas of the county are discouraged as they may result in environmental deterioration, agriculture production impacts, and/or increased need for road maintenance.

Growth Strategy Map

The Growth Strategy Map generally represents how Williams County residents desire future growth and development to take place. It reflects all of the land use goals and objectives endorsed by the public and elected officials. A key objective with regard to maintaining quality of life, is arranging development to conserve land and discouraging development that reduces current levels of service (efficiency) for our existing residents.

Land Use Frameworks

The Growth Strategy Map (Map 3-1) displays the concepts in four categories, or Frameworks:

- Growth Framework
- Transportation Framework
- Public Facilities Framework
- Natural Resource Framework.

NATURAL RESOURCE FRAMEWORK

William County’s natural beauty and varied landscapes are prize assets. Across the county, a rich physical landscape provides both wonderful visual amenities and natural resources that perform important functions (such as drainage and providing wildlife habitats). These attributes establish a unique character and sense of place. They also provide for recreation that is important to the region.

Thus, Williams County’s natural amenities contribute to both quality of life and a stable, diversified economy. It is important that economic growth is compatible with natural resource protection. Ultimately, degradation

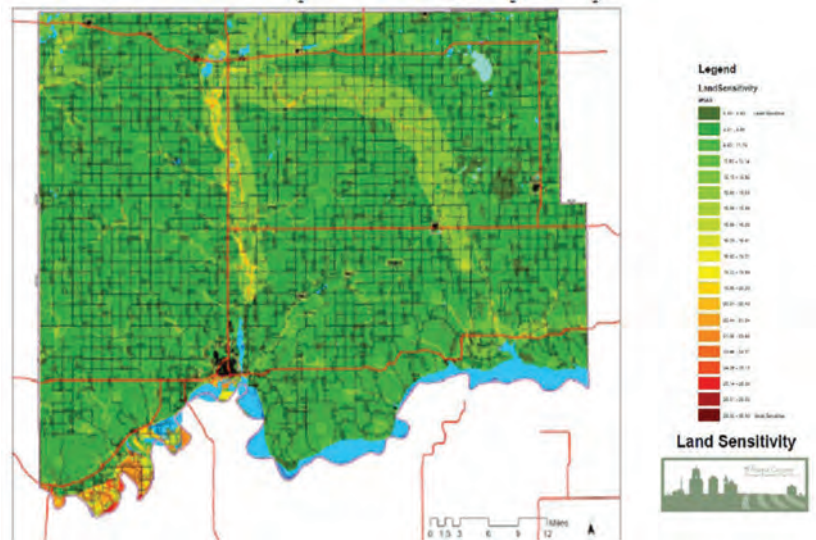


Figure 3-2: Landscape Sensitivity Map (for larger version, please see Appendix 6)

Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape sensitivity indicates natural features that should be protected despite development pressures. Landscape sensitivity for Williams County was developed by asking residents what natural features (floodplains, river corridors, etc.) should be respected overtime and therefore development in and around these areas should be discouraged or of low impact. Responses were weighted based on the level of support to protect that natural feature.

of the natural environment will have a negative impact on the economy of the county.

The Growth Strategy Map, via the Natural Resource Framework layer, conserves the natural environment as well as productive agricultural lands. The Natural Resource

Growth Efficiency

Growth efficiency refers to encouraging growth near existing infrastructure in order to leverage capital existing investments and avoid unnecessary additional funding to extend infrastructure systems and service provision. Growth efficiency for Williams County was developed by asking residents what infrastructure and services should be in proximity of development.

by the Board of County Commissioners for reasons of soil limitations, designated flood hazard, incompatible land use or any other condition likely to be harmful to the health, safety, or welfare of future residents of the area or harmful to the County.

In reviewing future development applications, the County will take into account the potential impact (positive or negative) on the Natural Resource Framework.

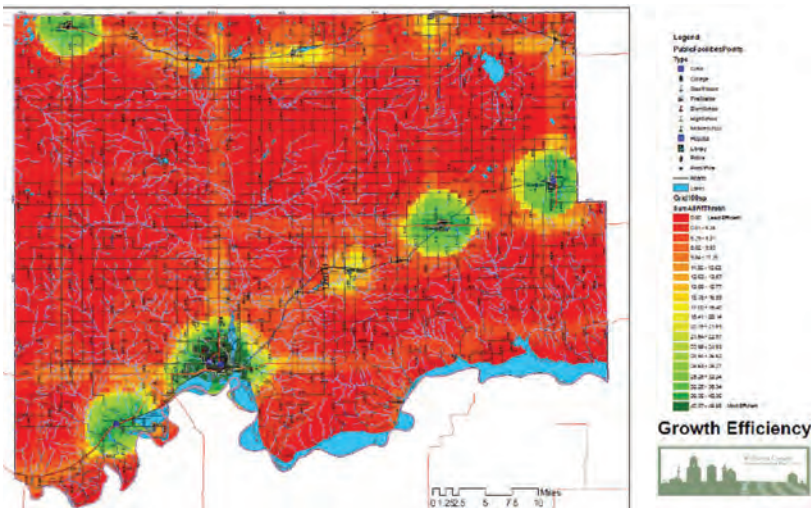


Figure 3-3: Growth Efficiency Map (for a larger version, please see Appendix 6)

GROWTH FRAMEWORK

To protect the health, safety and welfare of the community, the Growth Framework of the Growth Strategy Map encourages growth in locations with potable water, sanitation systems, sources of power, and roads, as well as fire, emergency and law enforcement services. Thus, the Plan supports and encourages orderly expansion, infill and redevelopment of existing communities—both municipalities and unincorporated communities (where services and infrastructure are provided by special districts). It is expected that the majority of growth that occurs in the county over the next 20 – 25 years will take place in existing communities.

Framework is a compilation of sensitive lands that should be considered for protection as development occurs, including: floodplains, steep slopes, wildlife habitat and corridors, aquifer recharge areas, river and creek corridors, etc. It builds on the existing County regulation regarding land suitability:

No land is to be divided, subdivided or developed for a use which is held unsuitable

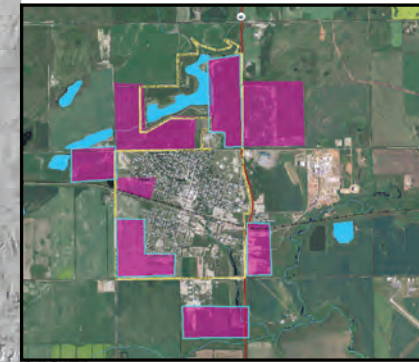
The Growth Framework is based upon the concept of growth efficiency—locating new development to take advantage of existing services and infrastructure. The higher the growth efficiency score, the more there are existing services and infrastructure nearby that can be leveraged for additional growth.



Grenora Growth Area



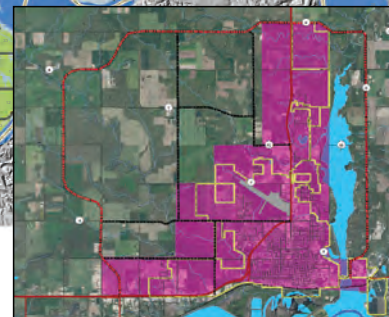
Wildrose Growth Area



Tioga Growth Area
(Areas edged in blue are Tier One Zones)



Trenton Growth Area



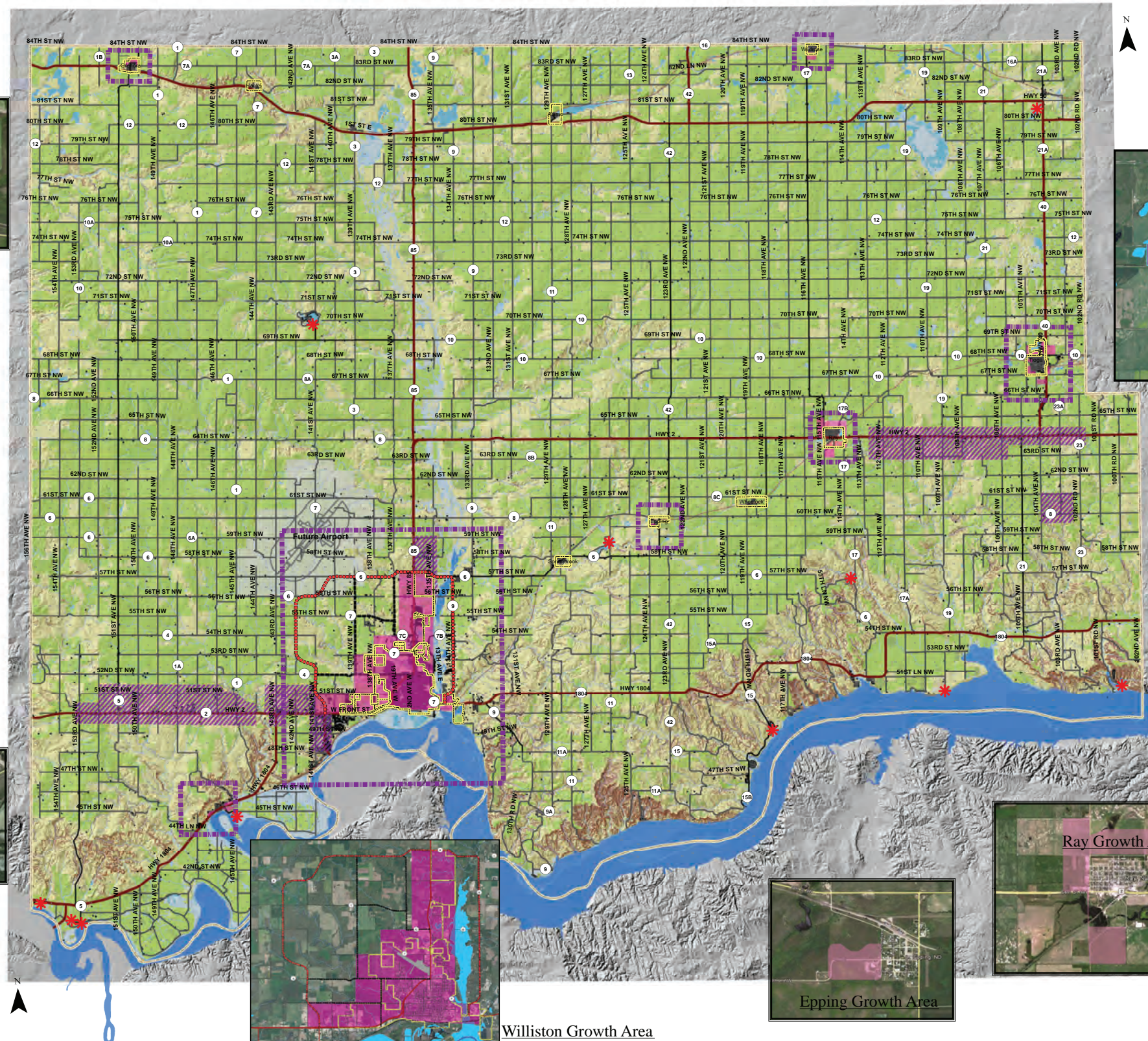
Williston Growth Area



Epping Growth Area



Ray Growth Area



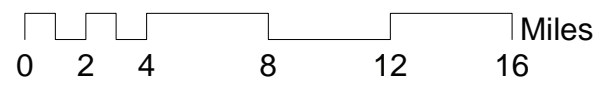
- Legend**
- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Future Truck Route | Cultivated Crop |
| Recreation Destinations | Deciduous Forest |
| City Limits | Developed High Density |
| WillistonCL | Developed Low Density |
| Zoom Area for Detail | Developed Open Space |
| Growth Areas | Evergreen Forest |
| Employment Areas | Grasslands Herbaceous |
| County Line | Mixed Forest |
| Future Arterial/Williston | Open Water |
| County Paved Road | Pasture & Hay |
| State Highway | Shrub |
| Township Paved Road | Wetland Herbaceous |
| Roads | Wetland Woody |
| Railroads | |
| Houses | |
| Oil Wells | |
| Rivers & Streams | |
| Safety Airport | |
| Airport Study Areas | |
| Airport | |
| Steep Slopes 20% | |
| River/Missouri/SBM | |
| Barren Lands | |

Growth Framework

- City Limits
- City/Town Growth Areas
- Employment Areas

Natural Resource Framework & Recreation

- Recreation Destinations
- (National Park/State Park/ County Park)
- Sensitive Lands (Bonus to protect?)
- Trail System Countywide



Dec.21, 2012

The Growth Framework directs growth to the following areas:

- Growth Areas
- Employment Areas.

Growth areas are identified around existing communities throughout the county where the community has determined it is cost-effective to accommodate growth without placing a financial burden on the general public.

Employment areas are locations where existing commercial and industrial uses exist today and where future similar uses can efficiently be located in the future. These areas will need planning additional detail to ensure the transportation and infrastructure networks can support the land use pattern.

The Land Use Map designations of agriculture, residential, commercial and industrial are described in more detail in the following section.

THE TIER APPROACH

The “tier approach” is means of encouraging growth in an incremental manner. It builds on the concept of growth efficiency: areas closer to existing infrastructure and services are considered more efficient for development than areas farther away from services. “Tiers” are areas that have a similar proximity to existing services and infrastructure.

The goal of the tier approach is to encourage compact and contiguous development patterns that can be efficiently served by public services.

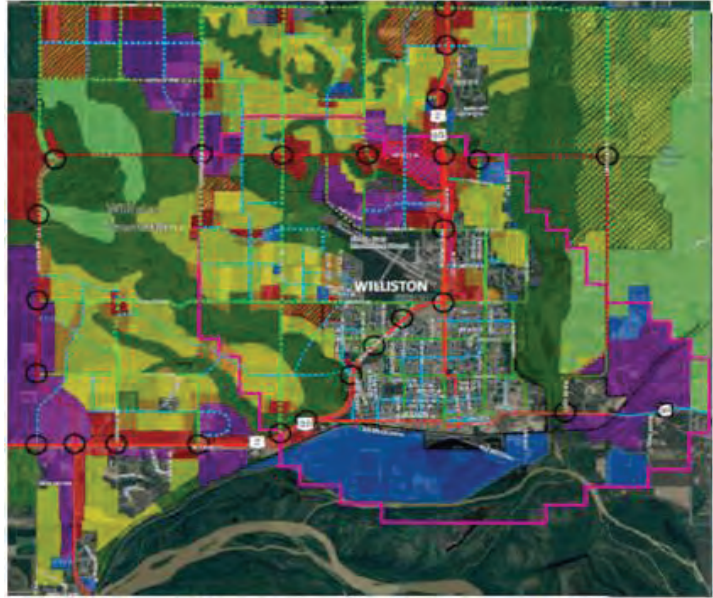


Figure 3-4: City of Williston Future land Use Plan (for a larger version, please see Appendix 6)

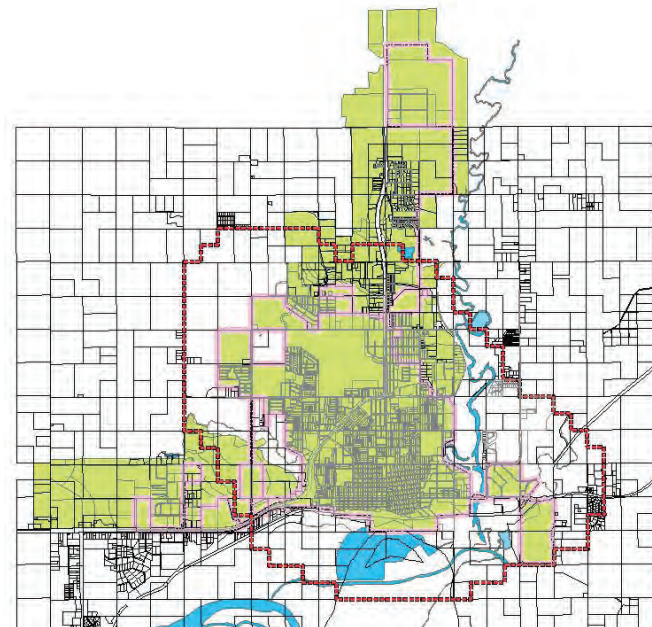


Figure 3-5: City of Williston Sewer Coverage (for a larger version, please see Appendix 6)

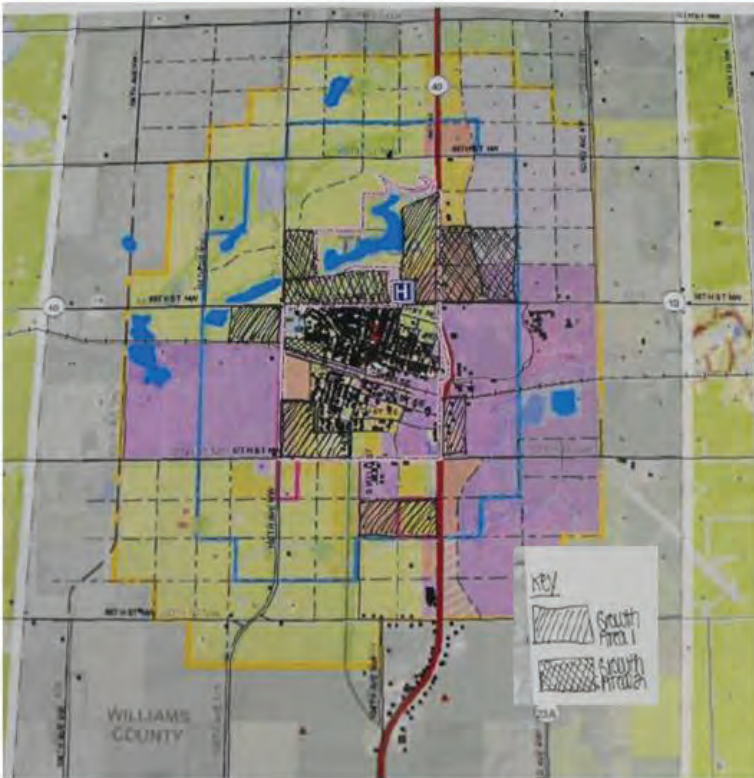


Figure 3-6: City of Tioga Future Land Use map (for a larger version, please see Appendix 6)

This approach directs urban types of growth to specific areas while also choreographing infrastructure investments in a logical progression.

Two tiers are proposed for Williams County.

Tier 1 is land within a municipal boundary that already has infrastructure and immediately serviceable areas within Identified growth areas. Tier 1 is comprised of:

- Platted but unbuilt lots
- Annexed but - undeveloped land
- Un-annexed small enclaves
- Parcels outside municipality limits but serviced by sewer, water, and roads. Land within designated growth areas that are in close proximity to infrastructure which could be extended relatively cost-effectively.

Tier 2 is an area within designated growth areas that are not readily serviceable.

GROWTH AREA DESIGNATIONS

Tioga and Williston

The Growth Strategy Map incorporates the growth area plans already adopted by the cities of Williston and Tioga. The map designations in those areas reflect their own land use colors and definitions. For more detail, see the Comprehensive Plans for Williston and Tioga.

The City of Williston’s Comprehensive Plan indicates a desire to extend its extra-territorial area from one mile to two miles outside its existing city limits. This would require different administrative procedures involving joint review procedures with four townships: Williston, Missouri Range, Stony Creek, and Pherrin Townships. Williston, Missouri Ridge, and Stony Creek have relinquished their zoning authority to Williams County and Pherrin Township is considered unorganized. The County and City can work together to forward this agenda and allow Williston to plan urban-level of growth in its vicinity.

In the Williston area, Tier 1 would generally be the area within the sewer coverage that extends beyond the city limits. Further discussions with the City are needed to determine which additional portions of the City’s growth area should be added to or removed from Tier 1.

In Tioga, Tiers 1 and 2 would be the areas designated as so, by the City, within the growth area.

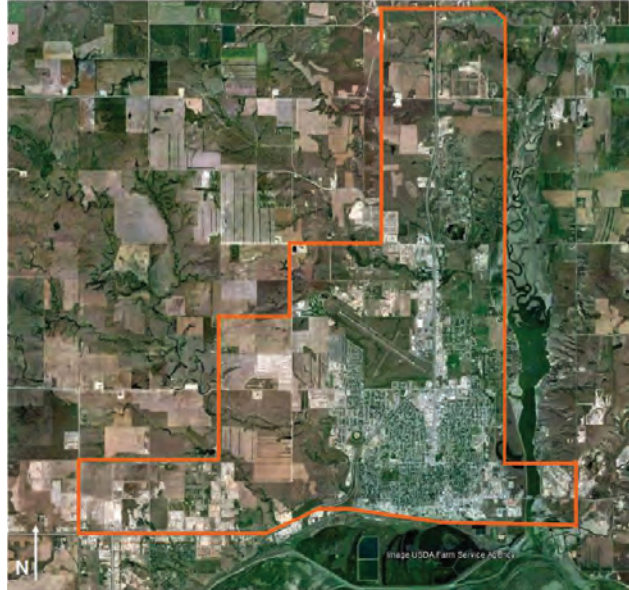


Figure 3-7: City of Williston Tier 1 Growth Area (for a larger map, please see Appendix 6)

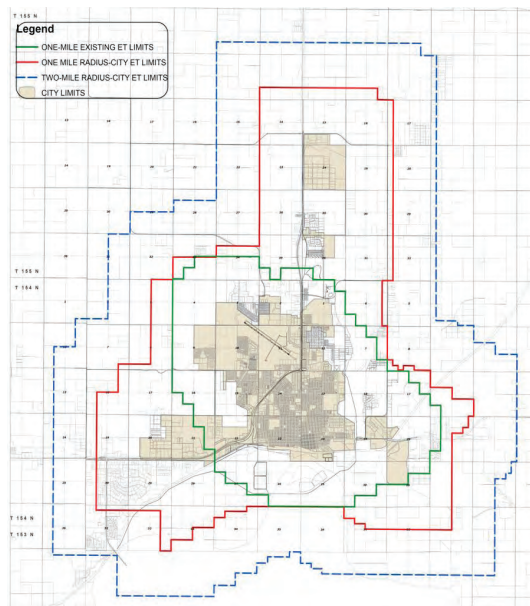


Figure 3-8: City of Williston Extra-territorial Boundaries (for a larger map, please see Appendix 6)

Other Designated Growth Areas

Around each community is an identified growth area that was designated with the assistance of each community. These growth areas are the preferred locations in Williams County for growth that require urban level services. They are also the preferred locations for commercial and employment uses that can take advantage of supporting infrastructure and a close-by client base that reduces travel demands.

Inasmuch as the growth areas are outside the current boundaries of each community, the following guidelines are established to guide joint decision-making between the community and Williams County:

1. Each community's growth area plan is adopted into the Williams County Comprehensive Plan. As each community refines or modifies its growth area plan, it will be updated in the County Comprehensive Plan.
2. Unless there are preventing circumstances, land to be developed should first be annexed into the community.
3. If there are circumstances that prevent prior annexation (such as lack of contiguity) but there is a public benefit to facilitating the development prior to annexation, the County and municipality will cooperatively endeavor to facilitate such development through such means as:
 - The County will apply zoning in the growth areas that are as close as possible to the land use plan of the municipality.



Figure 3-9: Grenora Growth Area (for a larger version, please see Appendix 6)



Figure 3-10: Ray Growth Area (for a larger version, please see Appendix 6)

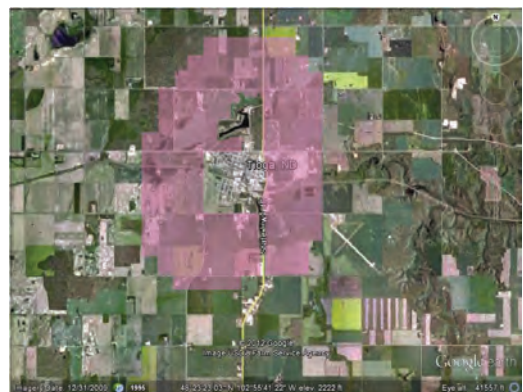


Figure 3-11: Tioga Growth Area (for a larger version, please see Appendix 6)

- Prior to County review, a proposed growth area development will obtain a formal review by the adjacent jurisdiction.
- Each community agrees to extend services and infrastructure to the proposed development. Landowners and the respective municipality are strongly encouraged to enter into pre-annexation agreements that provide commitments with respect to extensions of services and infrastructure, densities, etc.

These procedures may be superseded by a formal Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) developed between the municipality and the County. (See Appendix 4 for an example IGA.)

Non-designated Growth Areas

New, free-standing subdivisions and land uses in the unincorporated county are discouraged. The Comprehensive Plan acknowledges the existence of unincorporated communities that have a dense level of development and have road and/or utility services provided by special districts. However, new (or expanded existing) unincorporated communities should meet the following guidelines:

- The development is not located within the growth area of existing municipalities
- The development is served with urban services by a special district
- A contract for police from county sheriff is established
- Connecting county roads are upgraded at developer's expense



Figure 3-12: Trenton Growth Area (for a larger version, please see Appendix 6)



Figure 3-13: Wildrose Growth Area (for a larger version, please see Appendix 6)

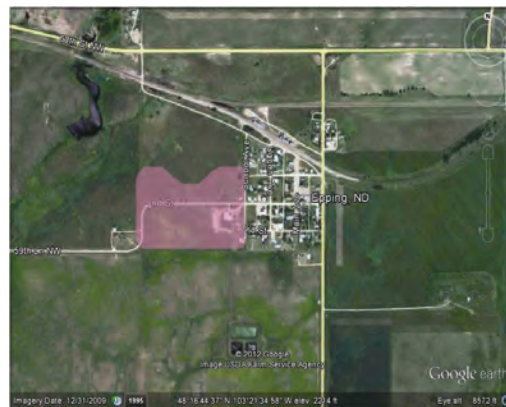


Figure 3-14: Epping Growth Area (for a larger version, please see Appendix 6)

- Fiscal costs to the public will be considered in the review of new unincorporated communities
- Recreation and other public services and amenities are provided
- School sites may be required.

Urban Residential Reserve (URR) in Growth Areas

The intent of the URR is to provide an incentive to avoid filling growth areas with large lot subdivisions that prevent further growth of the community. In general, it is envisioned to operate as follows:

1. In growth areas, where sewer service is expected to be available in the future, a developer or property owner may opt to develop a portion of their property at a lower initial density, with lots clustered in a fashion that reserves the remaining land for eventual, more dense development, when central sewer/water become available.

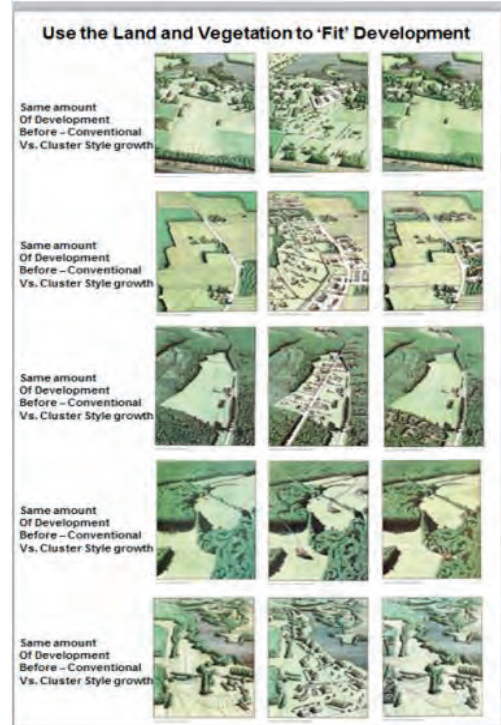


Figure 3-15: Example rural land use development patterns

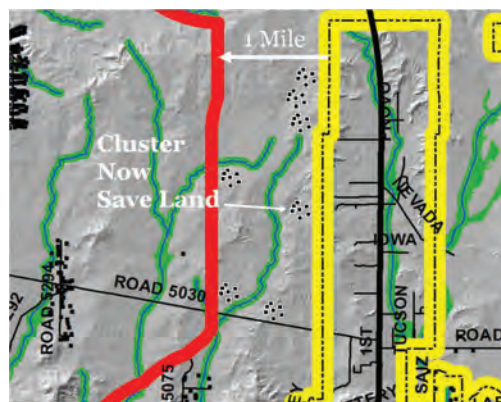


Figure 3-17: With the Urban Reserve development pattern, development is first clustered so that agricultural uses can continue

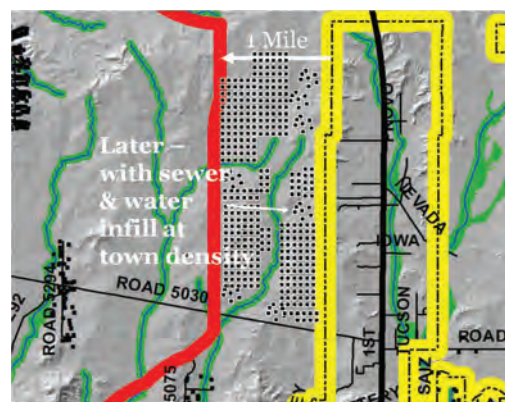


Figure 3-16: When sewer is available to accommodate the area, additional development occurs at urban densities

2. For example, if a 40 acre parcel in a growth area is designated as Rural (1 du/2 acres), if a URR approach were approved, the initial development could consist of the 20 allowed units clustered on lots of 1 acre each, with the remaining 20 acres reserved for future urban development (say at 3 du/acre) when public sewer and other urban infrastructure/services are available.

While waiting for public sewer to be available, the initial development could utilize a shared septic system, even located on the reserve parcel. Once sewer is extended to the subdivision, all units (initial and subsequent) must connect to that central sewer system.

A URR approval will include a plan and plat showing how the initial development cluster complies with current zoning and/or the

Growth Strategy Map and a designation of the reserved area for eventual urban development.

Employment Areas

The Growth Framework identifies locations of existing and potential future employment areas (commercial & industrial) so they can continue to be destinations for employment. These areas include:

- The existing man-camps near the intersection of County Road 19 and Hwy 2.
- The existing industrial area on 60th Street NW
- Hwy 2 west of Williston
- Hwy 85 north of Williston.

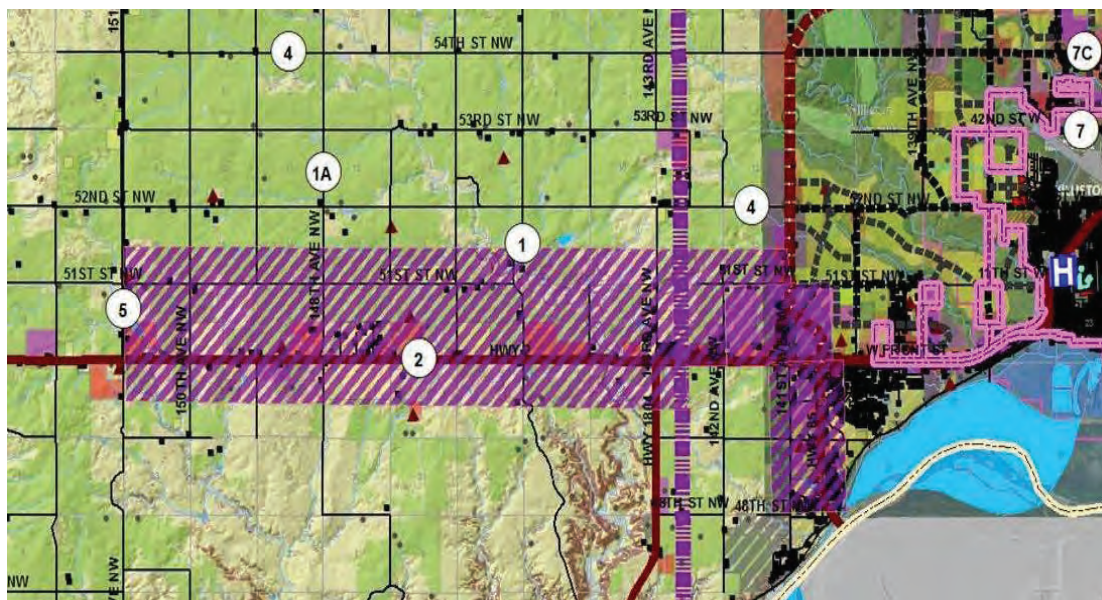


Figure 3-18: Sub-area planning will add detail to areas designated for future development

Sub-Area Planning

It is strongly encouraged that the County prepare more detailed plans for the key sub-areas in the county—such as:

- The industrial areas between Ray and Tioga
- The employment area along Highway 2 west of Williston
- Highway 85 north of Williston
- The 13-Mile corner
- Community plans for communities like Grenora and Trenton to devise a future land use plan with detailed land use assumptions.

Sub-Area Plans can assist the County and land owners to coordinate the locations of important, jointly needed improvements, such as roadways and major utilities. Identifying corridors for these elements will allow a more efficient land use pattern, and will allow properties that benefit from the infrastructure to participate in providing it. Sub-Area plans can also add more detail about land uses, transitions between uses to avoid conflicts, and areas that deserve special protection.

Two preliminary sub-area plans for two key sub-areas are included in this chapter. Figure 3-22 is an example of a more detailed plan for circulation related to an employment area. It shows lateral roads that connect to park entrances meeting the highway, thus minimizing the curb-cuts and traffic congestion along these roads. These designed employment

parks have internal circulation to provide access to many internal parcels thus creating a more significant critical mass for business success. Service provision to these areas is more efficient and demand for open road highway frontage should be reduced.

The truck route is intended to be a limited access corridor. Land use along the corridor should be limited to current uses including agriculture. Development to support the route should occur at the major intersections of US 85 and 57th St. NW north of Williston and US 85 and US 2 (probable southwestern terminus) west of Williston. These termini nodes are encouraged to include truck support uses such as fuel stations, rest stops, and convenience shops. Land use planning for the termini nodes is under the jurisdiction of the City of Williston. The nodes are located in Tier One (north node) and Tier Two (west node). The land use and development approach for each node should follow the tier strategy described in this chapter of the plan.

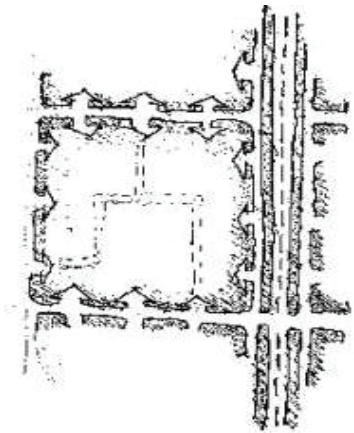


Figure 3-19: Example circulation plan for future industrial areas

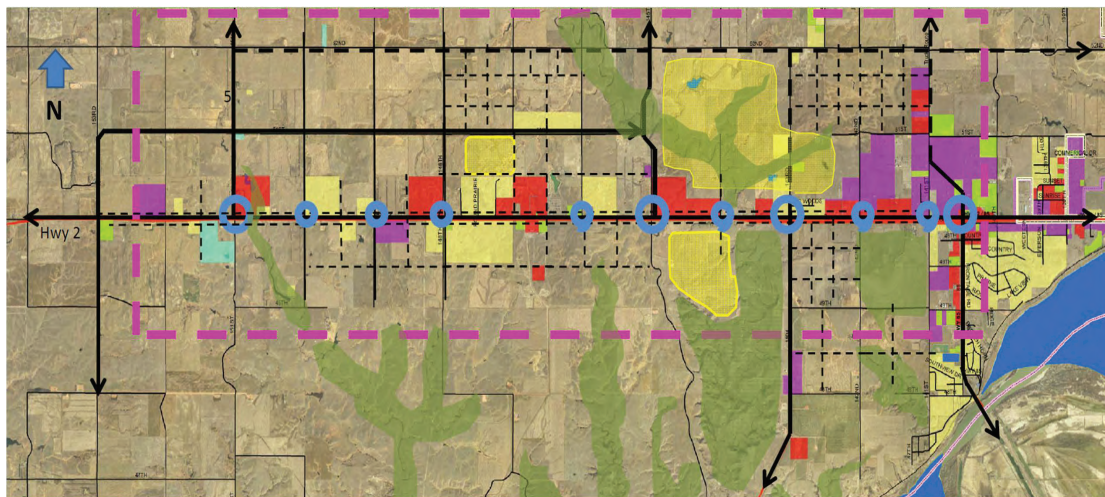
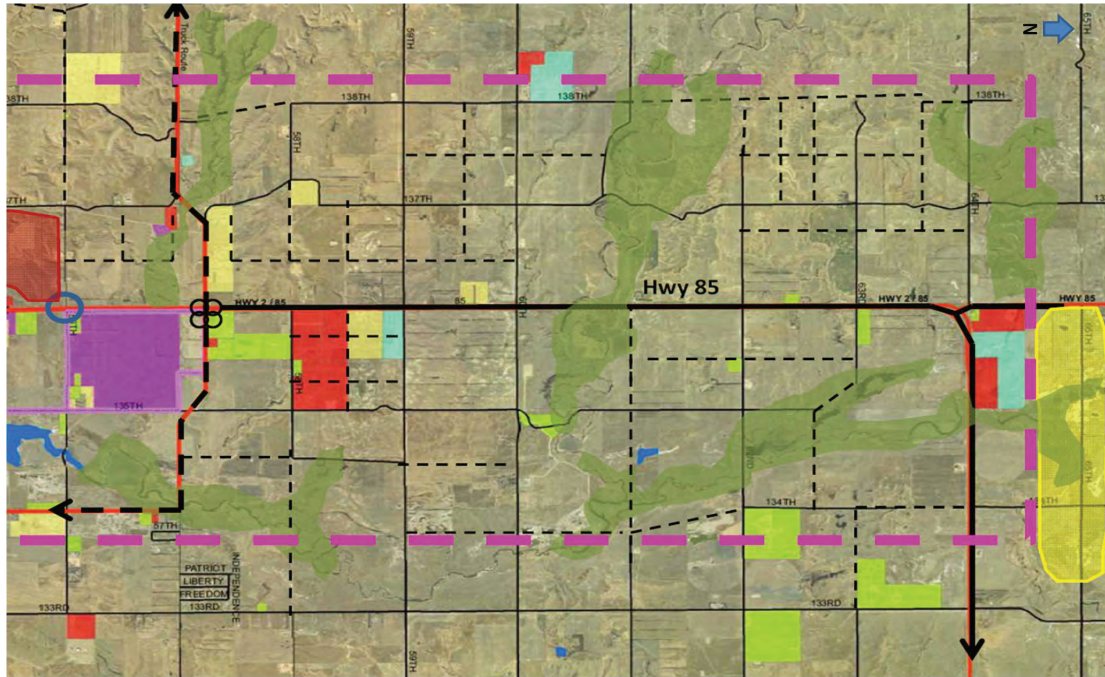


Figure 3-20: Example sub-area planning ideas for Highway 85 north of Williston (top) and Highway 2 west of Williston (for larger versions, please see Appendix 6)

TRANSPORTATION FRAMEWORK

The Transportation Framework displays the major transportation routes planned for the horizon of this plan. Additional details for the transportation system are discussed in Chapter 4. The major transportation concepts include:

- The planned truck route around Williston
- Major road segments to improve connectivity
- Needed intersection improvements.

PUBLIC FACILITIES FRAMEWORK

There are some Growth Areas that will need additional services and facilities to better serve the planned population. These areas may need schools, sewer systems, law enforcement and/or fire stations. Though additional review is necessary to determine all needed services and facilities, a symbol on the map brings the attention to the lack of appropriate services in certain areas. Additional details to direct future infrastructure and services are located in Chapter 6.

Land Use Designations

The following table describes the general characteristics and density (or density range) of the land uses that may be applied to sub-area plans and within growth areas.

Agricultural (A) (10 acre parcels or greater)

Land for commercial farming and ranching operations. This area allows for active production and management of livestock, production and storage of commercial and grain crops, and related functions.



Figure 3-21: Images of Agricultural land use designation

Rural Residential (RR) (1 du/2 acres or greater)

This area has single-family dwellings with the ability to store, maintain, and adequately care for limited livestock. Designated for residential uses and limited agricultural operations, and for areas with limited utility capacity and on-site well and septic systems.



Figure 3-22: Image of the Rural Residential land use designation

Urban Residential (UR) (1

du/1.9 acres or greater)

This residential land use is primarily for single-family uses on individual lots less than 2 acres with sewer and/or water availability.

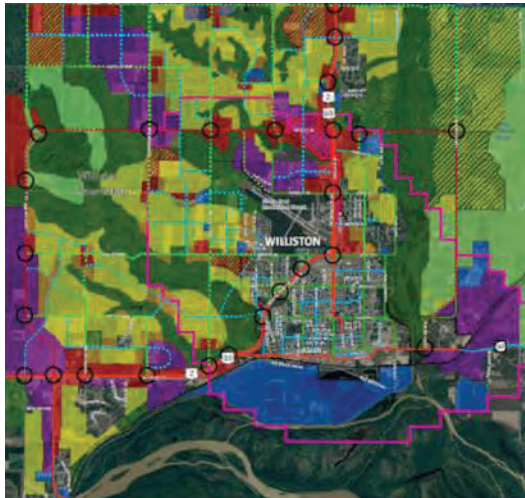


Figure 3-23: Image of the Urban Residential land use designation

Rural Commercial (RC)

Intended to provide for small commercial uses to serve the nearby area and for community facilities. Buildings are typically small-scale to relate to surrounding residences. Examples of typical uses include convenience stores, gas stations, restaurants, and professional offices.



Figure 3-24: Images of the Rural Commercial land use designation

Rural Industrial (RI)

For industrial and/or extractive uses, and associated utilities.



Figure 3-25: Images of the Rural Industrial land use designation

Future Population Target

The population target for this comprehensive plan is the population in the maintenance phase. The drilling phase of the oil exploration is expected to continue over the next 10 – 15 years. The population of the county is projected to peak at approximately 50,000 people around 2025, which is when the drilling and exploration phase of the energy industry tapers. There will be some loss of population as the industry shifts to the maintenance phase of production. The projected population for 2030-5 is approximately 44,321. It is assumed that the difference in population of the two phases will be accommodated with temporary housing facilities such as man camps, camp grounds, RV parks, hotel rooms and extra bedrooms in existing houses.

In addition to the population to accommodate, the County recognizes the demand for additional employment areas (commercial and industrial land) to support the energy industry, agricultural industry and other industries looking to locate in the region.

In regard to an explanation of acre count, based on the anticipated growth in population, households, and jobs, estimates have been made to the acreage that is likely to be consumed by the amount of urban development necessary to allow for this growth. The anticipated acreage is separated into land use categories, and is projected for 2035. Density similar to existing development was assumed for future growth.

Land Use Strategies and Actions

GOAL: Efficient, orderly growth

1. **Designate and plan growth areas with individual service areas.** Planning should include land use designations, identification of infrastructure and capacity needs, funding, and common policies and standards.
2. **Enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with each community** that stipulates mutual commitments to follow the plans, and procedures for review.
3. **Review the progress** toward implementing the comprehensive plan annually.
4. **Create and adopt a workbook** that includes flow charts and checklists to assist landowners, citizens, and staff through the development review process.
5. **Adopt future municipality amendments** of growth area land uses and design standards.
6. **Involve regional jurisdictions, agencies, and special districts** in future updates to the County Comprehensive Plan and other planning projects by inviting them to meetings, providing drafts, and having them participate in the public process.
7. **When the county comprehensive plan is updated in the future,** update and amend accordingly intergovernmental agreements to reflect future updates to the county comprehensive plan.
8. **Work with the City of Williston** to extend its extraterritorial area to 2 miles outside its boundary.

9. **Reserve land area within growth areas** to accommodate growth for the energy industry maintenance phase. The difference in population between peak drilling and the maintenance phase can be addressed with temporary housing strategies. Adjust land use plan to reflect results of growth area planning.
10. **Conform design standards** within growth areas to complement those of the associated community.
11. **Develop area plans for county employment areas** to express desired development patterns in more detail.
12. **Work with Upper Missouri District Health Unit** in regard to proper sized lots for septic.
13. **Update the existing zoning resolution** so that it is consistent with the Growth Strategy Map.
14. **Adopt new zoning categories** for light industrial versus industrial districts and commercial versus heavy commercial districts.
15. **Create sub-area plans for key growth areas** such as Hwy 2 west of Williston and Hwy 2/85 north of Williston.

GOAL: Protection of rural character and agriculture heritage

16. **Retain agricultural zoning** for the majority of the undeveloped lands in the county.
17. **Amend subdivision regulations** to include an option for cluster developments, with emphasis on continuing agricultural operations.

18. **Facilitate farmers and ranchers working together** in an ongoing effort to develop strategies to preserve agriculture, including addressing estate issues to keep land holdings together.
19. **Protect existing agricultural operations** from nuisance complaints by adjacent subdivisions with right to farm policies.
20. **Consider incorporating a right to farm statement** on all pertinent land use plats so that future land owners are made aware of the program.

GOAL: Protection of natural resources

21. **Delineate hazardous or sensitive places** on plats and/or site plans, which include, but are not limited to, areas of slope movement, fire hazard, aquifer recharge, steep terrain, non-reclaimed mined lands, unstable soils, shallow ground water, hazardous waste deposits, and flood plains. Discourage unsafe development in these areas.
22. **Develop and apply appropriate standards** reclamation of land after extraction processes.
23. **Require basic erosion and noxious weed control** on construction sites.
24. **Develop regulations for mineral resource practices** so as to minimize disruption to ground and surface water courses, fish and wildlife habitat, and historical sites.
25. **Continue to integrate a natural resource review process** throughout the county.

A blurred background image of a train, likely a passenger train, with a teal overlay. The train is moving from left to right. The text "{chapter four}" is overlaid on the teal area.

{chapter four}

Transportation



There are two primary challenges for ensuring a safe and well maintained transportation system in Williams County. The first is addressing impacts of the energy industry. This includes safety and maintenance needs caused by a dispersed and dynamic industry that is dependent on heavy truck traffic. The second is addressing impacts of land use and development patterns. This includes the circulation of people and goods in an efficient manner that supports the Future Land Use Plan.

Transportation Issues

Roads

The transportation network in Williams County consists of U.S. Highways, North Dakota State Highways, county roads and township roads. The major federal and state routes are supported by a number of county roads. Several county roads have been designated as federal aid roads and are eligible for State and Federal financial support. Both county and township roads are maintained by the Williams County Highway Department.

The majority of county and township roadways are gravel. This results in maintenance concerns once traffic volumes get above 200-300 vehicles per day particularly when heavy truck volumes are taking place. However, it is financially advantageous for the county to retain these gravel roads. Paving and maintaining a paved road system would be very costly both immediately and over time – particularly during bust-cycles of the energy industry. The majority of paved roads in the county are State highways. Trucks are discouraged from using paved routes, outside of the Federal and State highways, because in many cases, gravel roads can accommodate the heavy truck traffic better, and with less repair cost when damaged, than paved roadways.

STANDARDS

Currently the County has two typical road standards. One is for county major collectors “on-system”. The other is for local roads “off-



Figure 4-1: One of the services that the County provides is road maintenance

system”. The two standards appear to be adequate to support the transportation system in rural areas of the county, but additional standards will be necessary for areas where increased development or urbanization is occurring.

WILLISTON TRUCK ROUTE

A truck route around the City of Williston has been planned. The truck route would lessen the truck traffic and its associated impacts through the city itself. The intent is to combine Federal, State, City and County funds to allow the route to be realized. The chosen alternative is illustrated in Figure 4-2.

A temporary truck route has been identified and would use the existing roads of County Road 1 and County Road 8 to connect between Highway 85 and Highway 2 around the west and north sides of Williston. Maintenance to fortify the route to allow it to serve as a temporary reliever began in 2012.

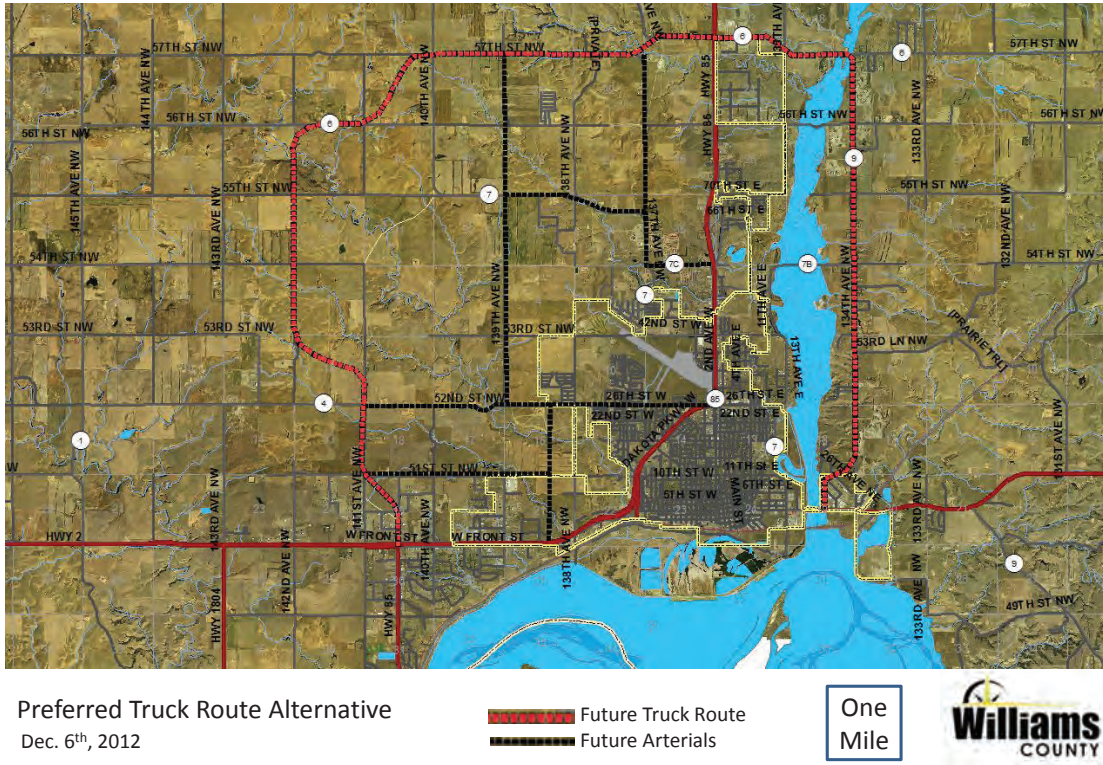


Figure 4-2: Williston truck route alignment

The design of the future permanent truck route is for a limited access four-lane highway. A two-lane highway is also being evaluated. There is on-going discussion about whether the status of the route should be a new stretch of Highway 2/85 (with the current section through Williston being ceded to the City) or if it should solely be a city and/or county-level reliever route. Regardless of the category decision and section, land use along the truck route must be clearly framed to discourage isolated development happening prematurely along the corridor.

The potential relocation of the airport to the northwest of its current location will also

influence the land uses in the area and the use of this new road roadway connection, and will need to be carefully planned/coordinated.

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance is becoming an on-going challenge for the County. Though road capacity appears to be adequate for typical rural land uses, road damage is increasing. The majority of road damage is due to truck traffic associated with the energy industry including those for drilling rigs and fracking support materials. To some extent, increased traffic on roads also is due to increasing commercial, industrial, and residential development throughout the county.

Seasonal Road Closures

Another factor influencing road conditions is seasonal thaw when roads become weak during the springtime. The County currently monitors roadways during thaw periods and places closures on roads showing weakness and poor conditions. Road closures are listed on the website and are posted at the Highway Department building.

Road Stabilization

To strengthen roads, the County currently applies a stabilization process. The current process includes stabilizing the roadbase with a chemical additive. After a one-year wear-in period, the road is chip sealed. The result is a surface comparable to a paved road, but at a much lower cost, and these stabilized roads tend to hold up well to the heavy truck traffic.

Dust Control

Because the great majority of the roads are gravel, both increased car and truck traffic results in escalating dust impacts. Currently, the County responds to requests for chemical dust suppressors on a case by case basis. However, such suppressors can be unpleasant (potentially damaging to the finish) on passing vehicles and can be expensive. There is also concern that roadway sections that have been treated with a dust control agent actually become more susceptible to damage from heavy truck traffic, thus increasing the cost of road maintenance.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

In early 2012, the County established an access permit system primarily for energy extraction site access. The permit system is an attempt to oversee locations of access points to ensure adequate sight distance and avoid impacts to county culverts and road systems. The permit system is seen as a good step toward tracking drill rig truck impacts and to track and monitor access onto county roadways.

TRUCK ROUTE MANAGEMENT

The County currently requests that drill rig transportation companies associated with the energy industry provide routes of transit between sites. The route planning requires avoidance of road closures and county paved roads as well as respect for assigned weight limitations. Though many companies abide by the process, there are instances when drill rigs use paved roads and ignore weight restrictions and road closures. This presents a difficult enforcement issue.



Figure 4-3: Heavy truck traffic associated with the energy industry causes impacts to road condition as well as traffic safety

SAFETY

Increased traffic in general, and increased truck traffic has caused a need for increased safety measures. One area of need is in roadway traffic control (signing, marking, etc.). The County currently is creating a roadway sign inventory and database to help track content and conditions. While progress is being made, there are areas where signage for curves, advance intersection warning, and other advanced warning conditions does not meet current standards as outlined in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Manual UTCD). With the increased traffic that has occurred and future predictions for more increase, the County needs to be more cautious in the application of warning signage for roadway repair work, road damage, limited sight distance, etc. The County should continue efforts to replace old signs that do not meet current reflective standards. There may also be a need to add additional traffic signalization over time as traffic concentrates on the periphery of communities within the County.

Currently, speed limits are inconsistent along County roadways. This is partially due to requests for lower speed limits by property owners that have been granted historically. This creates road sections transitioning from higher speeds such as 50 mph to 25 mph then back to 50 mph in a few hundred yards. These unexpected and unwarranted speed zones may create a safety issue for motorists, especially for large trucks, and are also difficult to enforce.

Rights-of-way Preservation and Acquisition

Currently section and township lines are reserved for potential roads as they are deemed necessary. Additional roadways are obtained during the land use permitting process. As the county continues to grow, adequate rights-of-way are necessary to ensure an adequate road system throughout the county – both for commercial/industrial/residential land uses and for energy extraction purposes.

Bridges and Culverts

At this time, there is not a complete inventory of information on the bridges and culverts in the county. On a yearly basis, the State and County do evaluate the bridges in the county. However, there are a number of bridges that need attention in the near future. Culverts also need to be inventoried over the next few years in order to better track conditions and maintenance needs. Impacts of truck weight make this a serious task to bring up-to-date.

Railroads

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad track runs east and west through Williams County and connects to Minot and either Fargo (primary) or Grand Forks. It is used for freight and passenger service.

Historically the rail line has been important for agriculture transport—corn and soybeans. With the energy boom it has played an increasing role in transporting oil. The Minot/Williston segment carries over 40 million ton-miles per mile of freight annually.

Amtrak's Empire Builder runs on the BNSF main line through Williston on its runs between Chicago and Seattle/Portland. Service is twice daily, with one train in each direction.

ND Amtrak ridership has trended upward since 2002, except for 2009 (perhaps due to the economic downturn). In 2010, the Williston Station ridership (24,000 riders) was second in ND only to Minot (40,000) and more than Fargo (21,000).

The existence of the BNSF line is important to the economic development and prosperity of the area both for agricultural products and for the energy industry.

Traffic control at at-grade roadway crossings need to be carefully monitored and updated as needed.

Airports

Sloulin Field International Airport is an over 600-acre facility located in the northwest corner of Williston. The airport offers access to commercial air travel for residents of northwestern North Dakota.

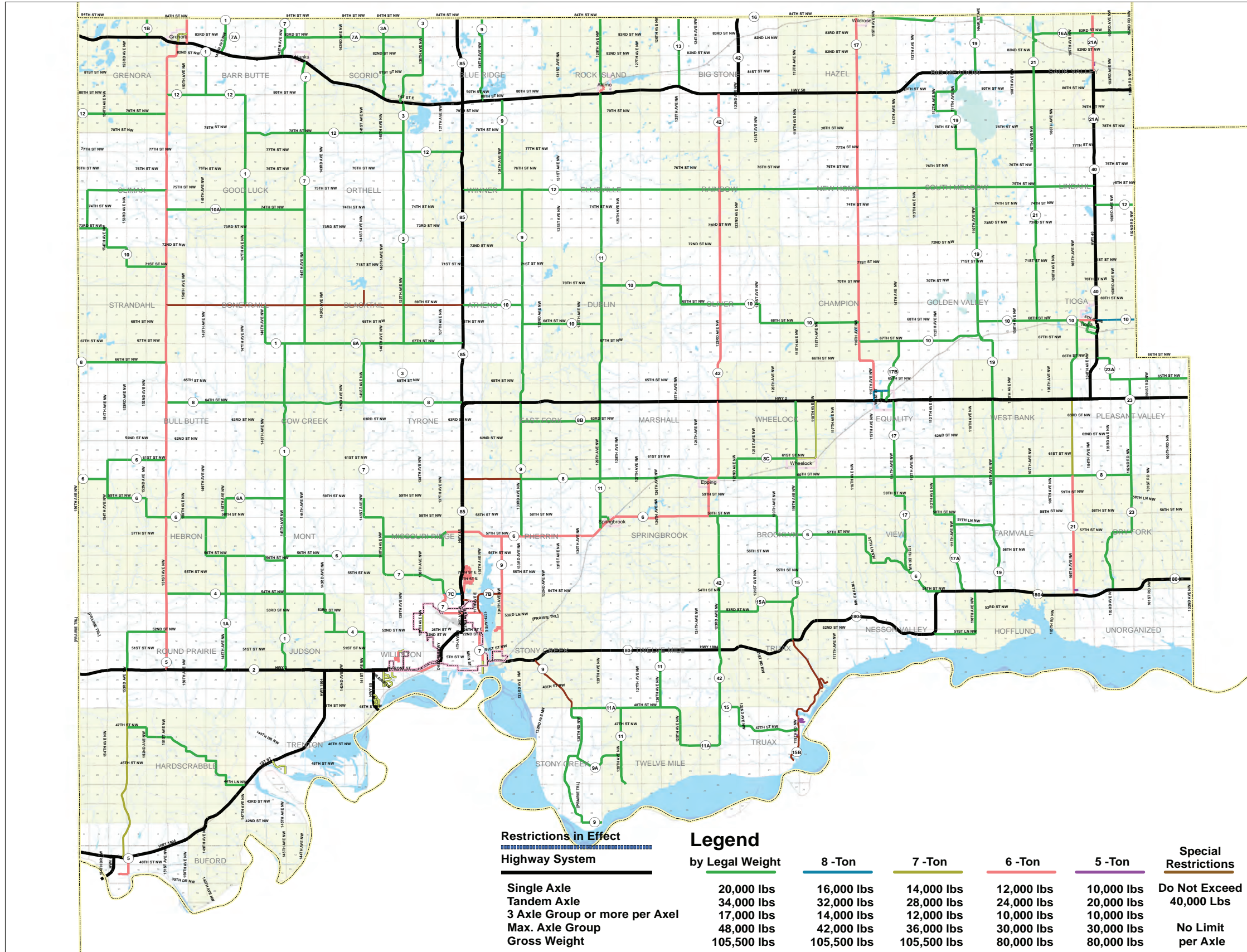
The City of Williston is considering the relocation of the airport to a more remote location. Two of the perspective locations may be accessible via the planned truck route around Williston. If a location along the truck route is selected, airport access will need to be carefully coordinated when and if relocation plans emerge.



Figure 4-4: Traditionally, the railroad has played an important role in the land use patterns in the county; most communities are located on the rail line or a major highway corridor



Figure 4-5: Sloulin Field provides a great amenity to county businesses and residents



- Williston City Limits
 - City Limits
 - RailRoads
 - Airport
 - Rivers & Streams
- Roads**
- WtLimitTons**
- Highways
 - Paved Township
 - by Legal Weight
 - 8 Ton
 - 7 Ton
 - 6 Ton
 - 5 Ton
 - Special Restrictions

Restrictions in Effect

Highway System

Single Axle	20,000 lbs
Tandem Axle	34,000 lbs
3 Axle Group or more per Axel	17,000 lbs
Max. Axle Group	48,000 lbs
Gross Weight	105,500 lbs

Legend

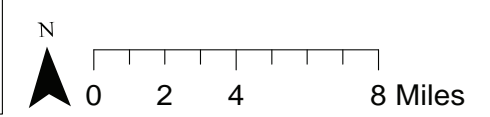
by Legal Weight

8 -Ton	7 -Ton	6 -Ton	5 -Ton
16,000 lbs	14,000 lbs	12,000 lbs	10,000 lbs
32,000 lbs	28,000 lbs	24,000 lbs	20,000 lbs
14,000 lbs	12,000 lbs	10,000 lbs	10,000 lbs
42,000 lbs	36,000 lbs	30,000 lbs	30,000 lbs
105,500 lbs	105,500 lbs	80,000 lbs	80,000 lbs

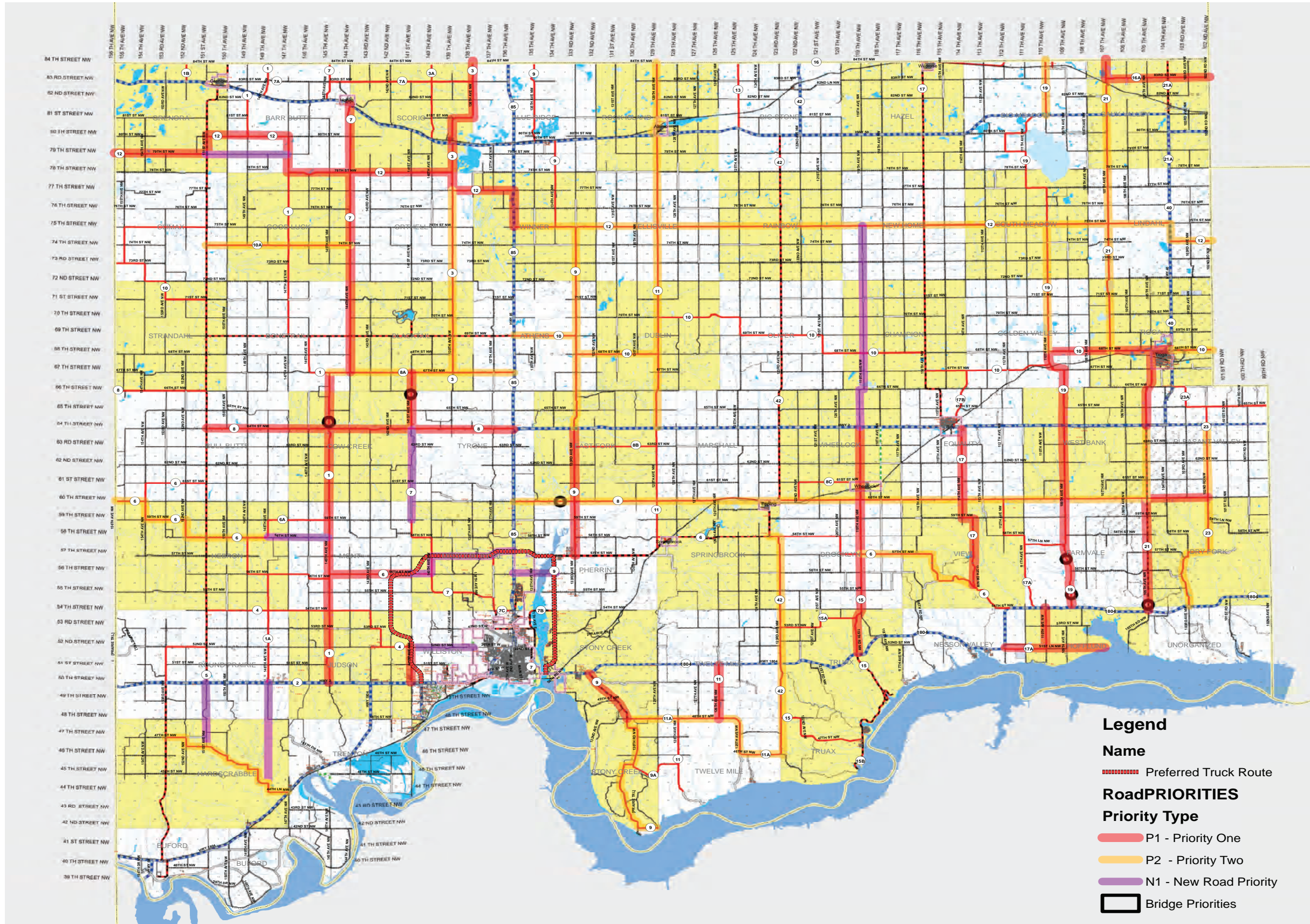
Special Restrictions

Do Not Exceed	40,000 Lbs
No Limit	per Axle

County Road Weight Limits



Map 4-1 Existing County Roads



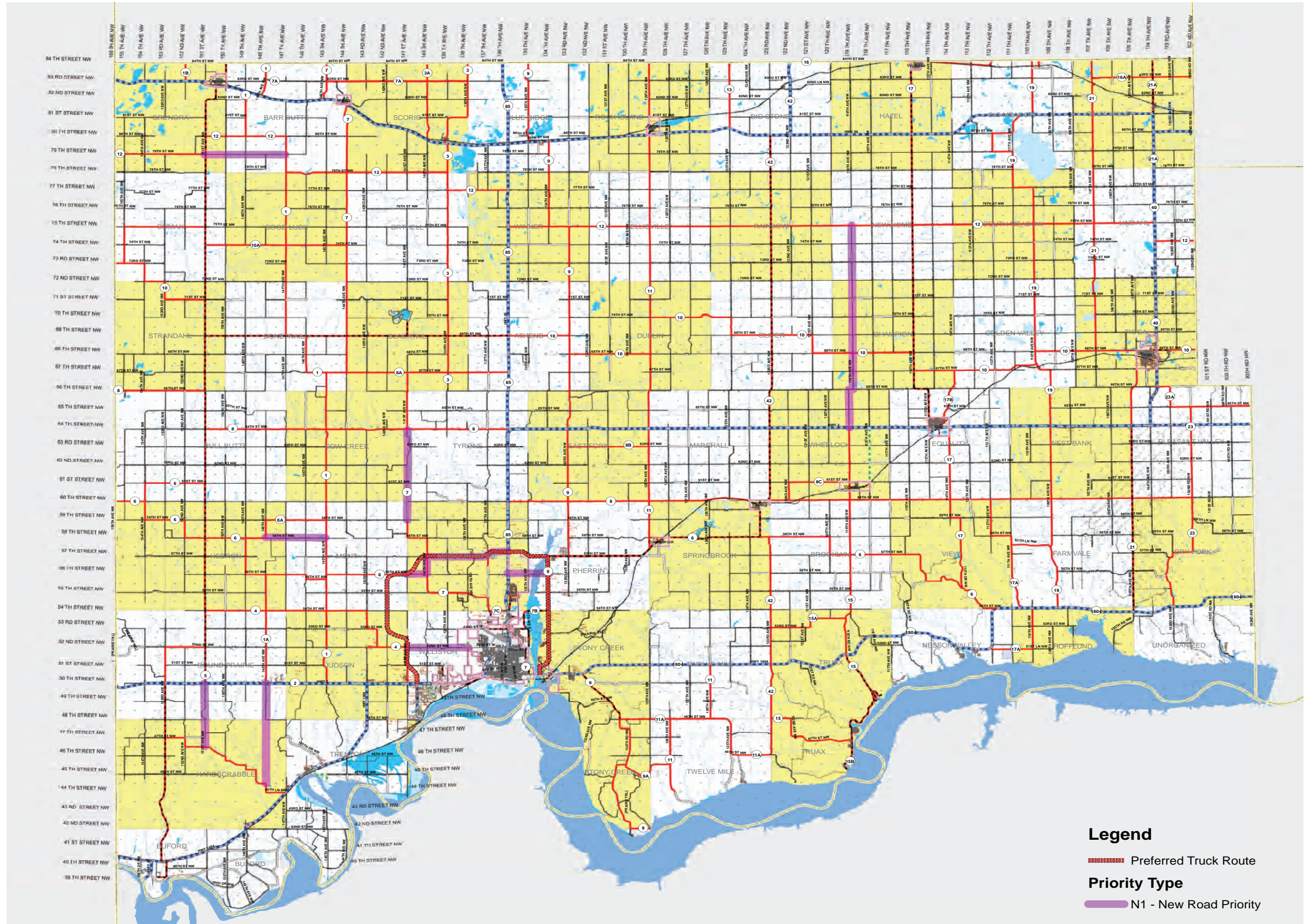
- Legend**
- Oil & Gas Wells
 - County Line
 - City Limits
 - RailRoads
 - TOWNSHIP PAVED ROAD
 - CITY WILLISTON
 - STATE HIGHWAY
 - COUNTY PAVED ROAD
 - COUNTY GRAVEL ROAD
 - GRADED GRVEL ROAD
 - GRAVEL ROAD
 - LOW MAINTENANCE ROAD
 - PRAIRIE_TRAIL
 - Airport
 - Lakes**
 - Type**
 - Lake or Pond
 - Marsh or Wetland
 - River or Stream
 - Rivers & Streams
 - Subdivisions

- Legend**
- Name**
- Preferred Truck Route
- RoadPRIORITIES**
- Priority Type**
- P1 - Priority One
 - P2 - Priority Two
 - N1 - New Road Priority
 - Bridge Priorities

County Roads Priorities-2013



Map 4-2 Road Maintenance Priority Map



- Legend**
- Oil & Gas Wells
 - County Line
 - City Limits
 - RailRoads
 - TOWNSHIP PAVED ROAD
 - CITY WILLISTON
 - STATE HIGHWAY
 - COUNTY PAVED ROAD
 - COUNTY GRAVEL ROAD
 - GRADED GRVEL ROAD
 - GRAVEL ROAD
 - LOW MAINTENANCE ROAD
 - PRAIRIE_TRAIL
 - Airport
- Lakes**
- Type**
- Lake or Pond
 - Marsh or Wetland
 - River or Stream
 - Rivers & Streams
 - Subdivisions

- Legend**
- Preferred Truck Route
 - Priority Type**
 - N1 - New Road Priority

**County Roads
Needed New
Roads-2013**

0 2 4 8 Miles

Map 4-3 Missing Links Map

Plan Direction for Transportation

The Williams County Comprehensive Plan provides a number of tools to support the management of the transportation system over time:

- Road Maintenance Priority Map
- Missing Links Map
- Additional Road Standards
- Goals and Policy Direction
- Action Items.

Road Maintenance Priority Map

The Road Maintenance Priority Map (Map 4-2) displays the roads in the rural areas of the county that need priority maintenance within the next 5 years. The County should update this map on a yearly basis. Allocation of funding for road maintenance should consider this map.

It should be mentioned that other priority roads would be those within growth areas; however, this would be a combined effort between the county and the respective community.

Missing Links Map

The Missing Links Map (Map 4-3) shows the ideal future roadways that would improve the overall county road system. These roadways will facilitate access for energy extraction activity and also provide redundant access as part of the overall roadway grid in the County. As funding

is available and demand warrants, these roads should be constructed. Development proposals along these corridors are to dedicate appropriate rights-of-way to accommodate potential roads shown on the Missing Links Map. Additional missing links are identified in the City of Williston Transportation Master Plan.

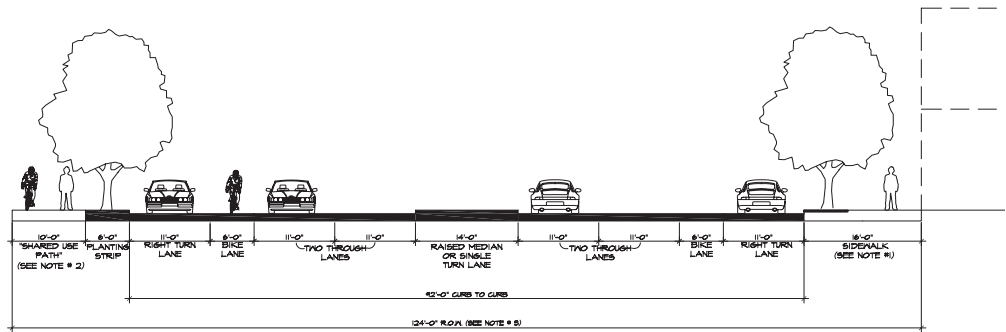
Standards

As noted above, the County currently has two standard roadway cross-sections that serve most rural roadway needs. However, as development continues in the County, particularly in identified growth areas, there will be the need for a broader set of typical roadway cross-sections to accommodate a wider range of transportation corridor types. A proposed set of roadway cross-sections has been developed for inclusion in this plan. The standards include:

- Urban Major Arterial Street - for areas that may transition to more urban in the future
- Rural Major Arterial Roadway - rural areas with higher intensity uses
- Urban Minor Arterial Street - for areas that may transition to more urban in the future
- Rural Minor Arterial Street
- Collector Street
- Local Access Street.

① URBAN MAJOR ARTERIAL STREET

- NO ON-STREET PARKING
- MEDIAN WILL ALLOW FOR SINGLE OR DOUBLE TURN LANE
- RIGHT TURN LANES PROVIDED AS NEEDED
- MINIMUM RAISED MEDIAN WIDTH OF 4'-0" ADJACENT TO LEFT TURN LANE

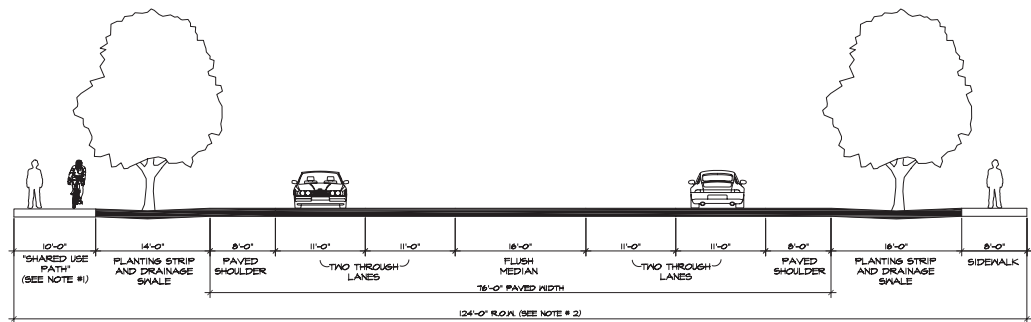


NOTES:

1. IN URBAN AREAS WITH BUILDINGS AT R.O.W. LINE, SIDEWALKS MAY BE WIDENED TO 18'-0", ATTACHED TO CURB, WITH TREES IN TREE GRATES.
2. IN NON-URBAN AREAS, SIDEWALK ON ONE SIDE MAY BE WIDENED TO 10'-0" TO BECOME A "SHARED USE PATH". PLANTING STRIP SHOULD BE 6'-0" WIDE MINIMUM.
3. R.O.W. WIDTH SHALL BE WIDENED TO 134'-0" WITHIN 500'-0" OF AN ARTERIAL CROSS-STREET TO ALLOW FOR A DOUBLE LEFT TURN LANE.

② RURAL MAJOR ARTERIAL ROADWAY

- NO ON-STREET PARKING
- MEDIAN WILL ALLOW FOR SINGLE LEFT TURN LANE OR TWO-WAY LEFT TURN LANE
- RIGHT TURN LANES MAY BE ADDED AS NEEDED (NARROW PLANTING STRIP)
- 8'-0" WIDE PAVED SHOULDER SUITABLE FOR BICYCLING
- MAY BE CONVERTED TO AN URBAN SECTION OVER TIME



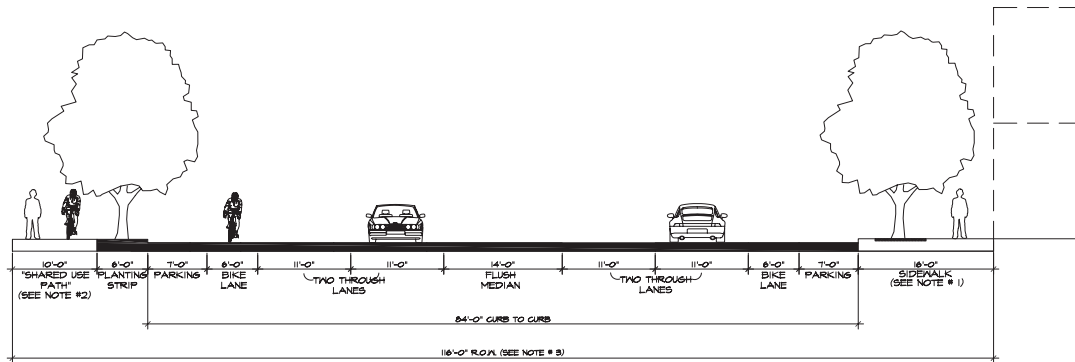
NOTES:

1. SIDEWALK ON ONE SIDE MAY BE WIDENED TO 10'-0" WIDE TO BECOME A "SHARED USE PATH".
2. R.O.W. WIDTH SHALL BE WIDENED TO 134'-0" WITHIN 500'-0" OF AN ARTERIAL CROSS-STREET TO ALLOW FOR A DOUBLE LEFT TURN LANE.

Figure 4-6: Example road section standards

③ URBAN MINOR ARTERIAL STREET - WITH ON-STREET PARALLEL PARKING

- MEDIAN WILL ALLOW FOR SINGLE LEFT TURN LANE OR TWO-WAY LEFT TURN LANE
- MEDIAN MAY BE RAISED IF APPROPRIATE FOR ACCESS CONTROL OR STREETSCAPE

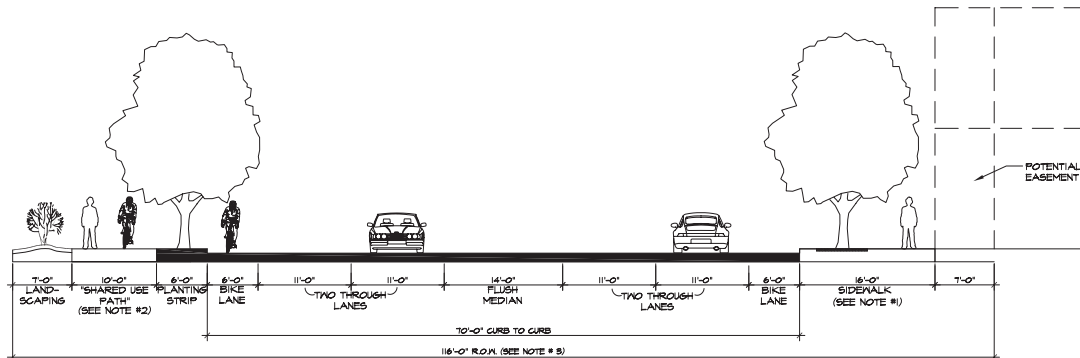


NOTES:

1. IN URBAN AREAS WITH BUILDINGS AT THE R.O.W. LINE, SIDEWALKS MAY BE WIDENED TO 18'-0", ATTACHED TO THE CURB, WITH TREES IN TREE GRATES.
2. IN NON-URBAN AREAS, SIDEWALK ON ONE SIDE MAY BE WIDENED TO 10'-0" TO BECOME A "SHARED USE PATH". PLANTING STRIP WOULD BE 8'-0" WIDE.
3. R.O.W. WIDTH SHALL BE WIDENED TO 126'-0" WITHIN 500'-0" OF AN ARTERIAL CROSS-STREET TO ALLOW FOR A DOUBLE LEFT TURN LANE.

④ URBAN MINOR ARTERIAL STREET - NO ON-STREET PARKING

- MEDIAN WILL ALLOW FOR SINGLE LEFT TURN LANE OR TWO-WAY LEFT TURN LANE
- MEDIAN MAY BE RAISED IF APPROPRIATE FOR ACCESS CONTROL OR STREETSCAPE



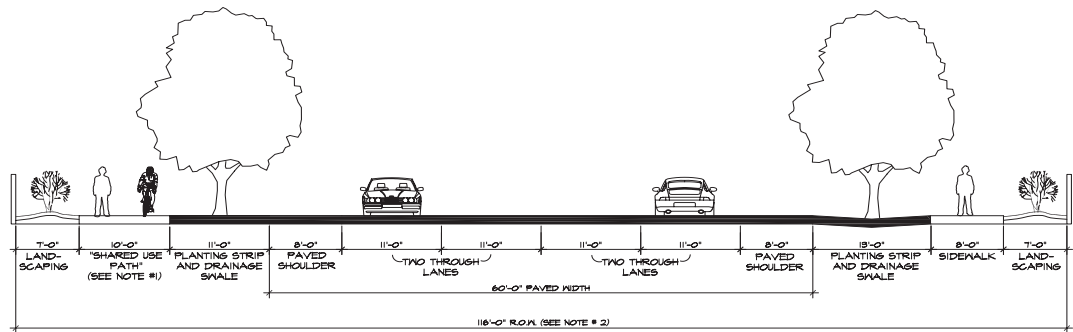
NOTES:

1. IN URBAN AREAS WITH BUILDINGS AT THE R.O.W. LINE, SIDEWALKS MAY BE WIDENED TO 18'-0", ATTACHED TO THE CURB, WITH TREES IN TREE GRATES.
2. IN NON-URBAN AREAS, SIDEWALK ON ONE SIDE MAY BE WIDENED TO 10'-0" TO BECOME A "SHARED USE PATH". PLANTING STRIP WOULD BE 8'-0" WIDE.
3. R.O.W. WIDTH SHALL BE WIDENED TO 112'-0" WITHIN 500'-0" OF AN ARTERIAL CROSS-STREET TO ALLOW FOR A DOUBLE LEFT TURN LANE.

Figure 4.6: Example road section standards, continued

⑤ RURAL MINOR ARTERIAL ROADWAY

- NO ON-STREET PARKING
- LEFT TURN LANE MAY BE ADDED IF NEEDED BY NARROWING PLANTING STRIPS
- MAY BE CONVERTED TO URBAN SECTION OVER TIME
- 8'-0" WIDE PAVED SHOULDER SUITABLE FOR BICYCLING

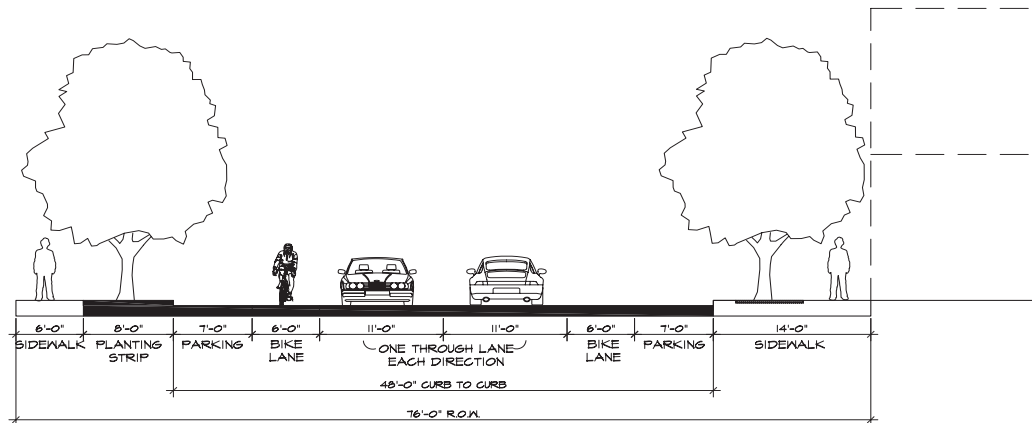


NOTES:

1. SIDEWALK ON ONE SIDE MAY BE WIDENED TO 10'-0" WIDE TO BECOME A "SHARED USE PATH".
2. R.O.W. WIDTH SHALL BE WIDENED TO 112'-0" WITHIN 500'-0" OF AN ARTERIAL CROSS-STREET TO ALLOW FOR A DOUBLE LEFT TURN LANE.

⑥ COLLECTOR STREET

- TWO-LANE UNDIVIDED
- CURB AND GUTTER REQUIRED
- ON-STREET PARKING LANES AND BIKE LANES PROVIDED



NOTES:

1. SIDEWALK MAY BE WIDENED TO 14'-0" IN URBAN AREAS WHERE BUILDINGS ARE FRONT ON THE R.O.W. LINE. TREES WOULD BE IN TREE GRATES.

Figure 4.6: Example road section standards, continued

⑦ LOCAL ACCESS STREET

- TWO-LANE SECTION
- PARKING ALLOWED ON BOTH SIDES
- BICYCLISTS TRAVEL IN VEHICLE LANE

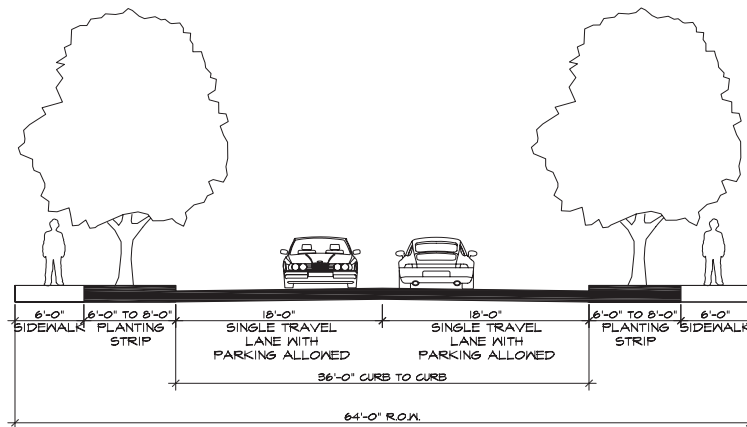
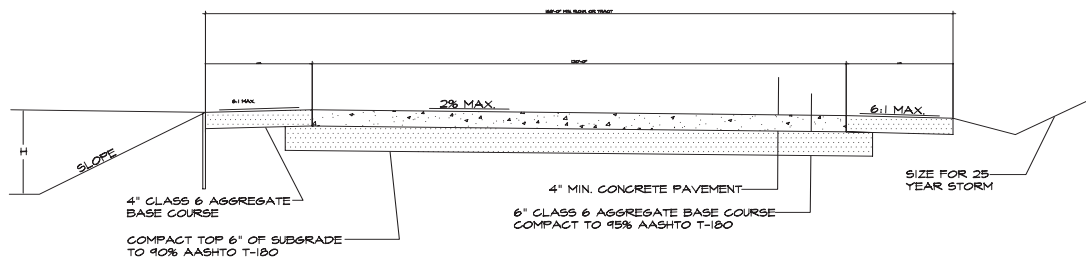


Figure 4.6: Example road and path section standards, continued



OFF STREET PATHS SHALL BE DESIGNED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AASHTO "GUIDE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF BICYCLE FACILITIES" LATEST EDITION.

- NOTES:
1. 10'-0" BETWEEN CONTRACTION JOINTS REQUIRED, 100' BETWEEN EXPANSION JOINTS REQUIRED.
 2. APPLY BROOM FINISH PERPENDICULAR TO PATH.
 3. TWO FOOT MIN. RECOVERY AREAS EACH SIDE OF PATH WILL BE KEPT CLEAR OF OBSTACLES.

Figure 4-7: 2-way shared use off-street path on separate right of way

Transportation Goal and Policy Direction

Goal: Well-maintained county highways and roads

Objectives

- Connection of missing segments of roads
- Improved road maintenance
- Construction of truck route west of Williston
- Increased traffic safety and access control

ROADS

Policy 4.1 - The county road network should be constructed and maintained on a safe and fiscally sustainable basis.

Policy 4.2 - Land use and transportation planning are to be coordinated to assure that the transportation system is balanced with, and provides for, anticipated land uses.

Policy 4.3 - The county promotes interconnectivity of the county roadway system, to provide multiple routes to reduce truck congestion, truck / personal vehicle conflicts, and provide for emergency access.

- New developments are to provide road connections to existing streets and to provide easements to connect to existing or future development on adjacent land. Cul de sacs and limited/single-access neighborhoods are discouraged.

- Industrial land use should have roads designed to accommodate heavy freight and vehicles with large turning radii.
- Commercial land use should have roads of adequate capacity and traffic control to handle peak period traffic volumes at an acceptable level of service (generally LOS C or better).
- Land uses that generate a significant amount of truck traffic are to be located adjacent to a truck route. If this is not possible, other locations may be appropriate if provision is made to create truck connections (such as through a funding partnership of adjacent landowners) to ensure appropriate design and construction of streets leading to truck routes.

Policy 4.4 - Development in a growth area will have road patterns that are compatible with the adjacent municipality grid of roadways and should be developed in growth areas, particularly along regional highways, such that access can be provided from secondary parallel roadways where possible and all parcel access is not directly onto the regional roadways.

- Access control for all new and expanded development must be consistent with applicable IGA's.
- Williams County will refer to existing municipal comprehensive plans when roadway development is proposed within a designated growth area. (The Williston and Tioga comprehensive plans include a road strategy. Williston also has an adopted Transportation Plan that includes more detail on policies, priorities, and procedures.)

Policy 4.5 The County will only accept into its road system those roads which meet county standards and have been accepted by the Board of County Commissioners.

Policy 4.6 The truck route is intended to be a limited access corridor. Land use along the corridor should be limited to current uses including agriculture. Development to support the route should occur at the major intersections of US 85 and 57th St. NW north of Williston and US 85 and US 2 (probable southwestern terminus) west of Williston. These termini nodes are encouraged to include truck support uses such as fuel stations, rest stops, and convenience shops. Land use planning for the termini nodes is under the jurisdiction of the City of Williston. The nodes are located in Tier One (north node) and Tier Two (west node). The land use and development approach for each node should follow the tier strategy described in Chapter 3 of this plan.

Policy 4.7 - Williams County and the City of Williston will need to collaborate with the State to determine the appropriate jurisdiction and source of funding for construction. As the truck route is completed, existing roadway segments that are currently part of the township or county systems will become a part of the Williston roadway system.

Policy 4.8 - Williams County will work with the City of Williston to coordinate and plan for

the truck route around the city. Coordination among jurisdictions will provide opportunities for collaboration that could benefit all agencies and the public. This may result in financial and time savings through economies of scale, as well as potentially reducing construction impacts to residents through the coordination of projects.

Policy 4.9 - Access along the truck route should be limited. Development should be directed to the north and west termini nodes. This development is to be regulated by the City of Williston. The County should work with the City of Williston to revise the City's comprehensive plan to reduce non-agricultural land uses along the truck route corridor with the exception of the north and west termini nodes. If the airport does relocate and access is taken along the truck route, land use around the new airport and at this site along the truck route corridor will be assessed along with the development application for the airport relocation. Ideally, an area plan will be developed prior to any additional development in the vicinity of the airport or its access roads.

MAINTENANCE

Policy 4.10 - The County should focus infrastructure improvements (and road maintenance) in a cost-effective pattern, in areas where growth is appropriate.

Policy 4.11 - The County will maintain Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) which prioritize

road improvements based on needs for traffic flow, safety enhancements, maintenance and linkages, and anticipated energy extraction needs.

Policy 4.12 - The County road extensions will be prioritized based on the following criteria:

- Logical extension of existing roadway
- Presence of existing land uses adjacent to the project
- Consistent with future land uses based on the comprehensive plan and the county zoning regulations
- County roads which are on the Federal Aid Highway system should receive top priority for road upgrading, repair, and maintenance. These roads should be viewed as the major transportation links to the State and Federal Highways in the county.
- Roads within communities' Growth Area Tier One.

Policy 4.13 - It is not in the interest of the county to pave all roads. Current road treatments should be continued to avoid future costs of maintaining paved roads.

Policy 4.14 - All upgrading of existing roads and any new road construction required by proposed (and approved) development will be funded by the developer. If a road is necessary to serve an individual development, the road constructed is to be built to accommodate land uses designated by the Future Land use Plan and not incrementally per subdivision. The

roadway constructed shall be to the appropriate cross-section (cross-sections are contained in this Plan), as determined by County staff.

Policy 4.15 - Upfront cost sharing with energy companies should be required. If a road segment is not to adequate standard prior to access use, the entity requiring the access should upgrade the road to adequate standards prior to use. The road should be maintained throughout the use and once the access is no longer needed, the road should be left as it was after initial improvements were made but prior to use of the road.

- Encourage joint agency and/or public-private partnerships and cost sharing strategies.
- Increased partnerships with the energy industry should be considered. Opportunities are secured for new funding sources for transportation needs and the efficiency of current resources are maximized. This includes funding partnerships with the energy industry, particularly where missing links are needed to facilitate energy extraction, or where roadway maintenance needs are directly linked to heavy truck traffic associated with energy extraction.
- Expand research for funding sources for road construction and maintenance. Federal and State funding sources should be obtained. Grants and bonds should be considered.

STABILIZATION AND DUST CONTROL

Policy 4.16 - Due to costs, logistics and associated impacts to the roadway, it is not cost-effective for the County to have county-wide dust control. However, there may be instances where spot dust control is warranted.

Policy 4.17 - The County's approach to road stabilization is to rework the roadbase and apply the stabilizer, allow it to set and "wear in", then apply a chip-seal treatment once the road is stabilized properly. This practice is typically appropriate for the rural or semi-rural level of development occurring in the county (paved roads are likely to be required in designated growth areas).

Policy 4.18 - The current approach to road stabilization and chip-seal treatment also will provide a level of dust control.

STANDARDS

Policy 4.19 - In growth areas, with an IGA in place, the County will typically defer to the standards of the associated municipality or district. The county may apply new standards for roads that eventually will be connected to the municipal system but are outside current growth areas.

Bridges and Culverts

Policy 4.20 - From the inventory and inspections above, create (or commission the creation of) a prioritized listing of necessary bridge and culvert repairs/maintenance/replacement for use in of the annual Capital Improvement Plan preparation and funding allocation.

Access Management

Policy 4.21 - For safety and to maintain roadway capacity, local access to main roadways (Federal, state and county paved highways) should be limited to half of a mile. In these conditions, parallel secondary road circulation, including frontage and backage roads, should be used to provide frequent driveway access.

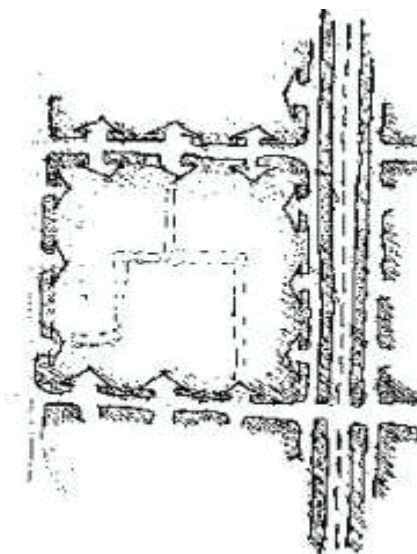


Figure 4-8: Example access management plan for industrial areas along Highway 2 west of Williston

Policy 4.22 - Any new access to a County roadway shall comply with intersection sight distance criteria contained in A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, (AASHTO “green book, 6th Edition, 2011 or current version). Under no circumstances shall an access be allowed that does not maintain adequate stopping sight distance for approaching motorists.

Safety

Policy 4.23 - On new roadways, speed limits should be assigned during the planning review stage of development, and then verified once in operation, using standard engineering practices. The County should avoid granting individual speed zone requests that do not comply with standard engineering practice.

Rights-of-way preservation, acquisition

Policy 4.24 - The traditional reservation of road rights-of-way along section lines will continue to be used in the rural areas of the county.

Policy 4.25 - Rights-of-way for roads will be obtained during plan review of development projects.

Transportation Strategies and Actions

1. Maintain the map of existing road conditions and ownerships.
2. Ensure connectivity of county roads by applying the transportation framework to identify needed rights-of-way and missing links that need constructed.
3. Implement the new safety signage strategy for road maintenance:
 - Require the road crew to erect warning signage in advance of road maintenance activity, using guidance provided in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Mobile maintenance activity, such as road grading, shall include advanced warning at the ends of the roadway section being graded for each direction of travel. Advance warning shall also indicate the length of the segment being graded.
 - Once the maintenance is completed for the section, the road crew should move signage to the next section of work (or remove signage if appropriate) before beginning maintenance on another section of roadway.
4. Inventory existing road signs (speed limit, yield, stop, curve or intersection warnings, railroad crossings, etc.). Replace all signs that are not reflective and provide new regulatory or warning signs where needed.
5. Identify and consider “blind corners”, areas of limited sight distances (such as near crest vertical curves), narrow or subpar roads, and apply appropriate warning signage.

6. Identify safe routes to school, and school bus routes, and develop/enact procedures to eliminate heavy truck traffic on them during school commute times.
7. Prepare a county-wide transportation improvement master plan that evaluates all county roads and recommends priorities and capital improvement implications.
 - Evaluate rural roads within the current system to determine if the capacity and function of the roadways is adequate for existing and future land uses and determine improvement needs
 - Establish joint City-County standards for road development in growth areas.
8. Adopt a Transportation Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), including system-wide improvements to meet existing and future demands. Prioritize improvements, and develop a financial plan for project implementation and maintenance. Coordinate the CIP with local, state, and federal systems and the County comprehensive land use plan to assure that roads provide traffic capacity and connectivity consistent with the land uses.
9. Assist, and/or collaborate with, municipalities to plan for roadways in their Growth Areas. Integrate their local road grid with the county road system. Assure that future development does not occur within future roadway alignments.
10. Inventory roads, culverts, and bridges to determine capacity and condition.
11. Define desired speed limits within the development review process and then design the roadway to yield the desired traffic speed when constructed.
12. Identify areas where guardrail may be needed, apply AASHTO roadside design standards, and develop a prioritized list of needed guardrail installation.
13. Work with the City of Williston to designate appropriate land uses along the truck route that supports a limited access roadway. Low intensity land uses should be allowed along the road except at the west and north termini nodes.
14. Work with Williston to identify the new airport location. Once selected, commission a Comprehensive Plan update to plan land uses in the airport vicinity—to assure that airport uses are protected from conflicting land uses.
15. Preserve adequate rights-of-way for roads at the time of subdivision approval process to meet future transportation network needs. Do this by amending the County platting and subdivision regulations to include:
 - Right-of-way design standards
 - Road improvement districts requirements and acceptable maintenance standards
 - When traffic studies should be required as part of the sub-division process, and require an impact analysis when they create significant traffic volume increases.

16. Work with Williston District of NDDOT and the City of Williston in the planning and improvement of the roadway system around Williston.
17. Do a study to document (and ensure that North Dakota's congressional delegation is fully aware of), the impacts that development of the oil industry has on Williams County road system and the need for funding to address those issues. Identify the real costs and impacts due to energy development and seek reimbursement from ND state for maintenance and construction.

A photograph of a water tower with a blue band around its upper section. The word "RAY" is written in large, blue, block letters on the band. Below the band, a cursive "RAY" logo is visible. An American flag is partially visible on the right side of the tower. The tower is supported by a metal lattice structure. A teal horizontal bar is overlaid on the image, containing the text "{chapter five}" on the right side.

RAY

{chapter five}

Infrastructure and Services



One of the purposes of the Williams County Zoning and Subdivision Code (per Section 1,C) is to “lessen government expenditures”—which suggests that the County can, and is in fact obligated to, consider the public cost of providing services before authorizing development. It is important to the health, safety, and welfare of all county residents that all public services and infrastructure are sufficient and affordable, and remain so in the future. Therefore one of the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan is to plan ahead for cost-effective provision of services and infrastructure.

General services and infrastructure must be coordinated with land use and development in Williams County. The Public Facilities Framework shown on the Growth Strategy Map (Map 3.1) indicates where services and facilities may be needed in the future.

New development creates demands for services and improvements, sometimes far in advance of the property taxes that help pay for them. This is referred to as the fiscal impact of development. Development places impacts on administrative, and plan review costs; creates a need to expand public facilities, such as roads and utilities; as well as public services, such as law protection, road maintenance, and utility extensions.

Not all services are directly provided by the County. However, the County can take a role in ensuring all services are adequately provided for new development (so that the level of service to existing residents is not lessened) and that those that will most benefit (developers, future residents) shoulder most of the cost of providing that infrastructure and service.

To assure infrastructure and services are provided in the most cost-effective manner, the County has adopted a policy that future growth should be directed to designated growth areas that provide a full range of services and infrastructure. Also, the County has developed a growth efficiency tool to aid in evaluating new development to assure that the cost to service new growth will be balanced by the benefits that it provides.

Services

Law Enforcement

The Williams County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement and protection on a county-wide basis. The Cities of Williston and Tioga have their own police force. The Williams County Sheriff's Department is responsible for both law enforcement and the Corrections Center. The department is also responsible for emergency services, service of civil process, concealed weapons permits, fireworks permits and hazardous waste hauling permits.



Figure 5-1: Emergency services (outside of law enforcement) are provided by municipalities and special districts



Figure 5-2: Williams County Courthouse, which houses many county departments as well as the jail, is located in Williston

Fire Protection

The county is divided into eight fire districts: Alamo, Epping, Grenora, Ray, Tioga, Trenton, Wildrose, and Williston. Fire and Emergency Services response times are important to consider when evaluating new development. With this in mind, it is most beneficial for new development to locate within communities and their growth areas.

Schools

There are nine school districts in the county: District 64 – Alamo, District 88 – Epping, District 99 – Grenora, District 2 – Ray, District 15 – Tioga, District 6 – Trenton, District 91 – Wildrose, and Districts 1 and 8 – Williston. Transportation of students to and from school is a significant cost to the districts. New residential subdivisions are to locate within growth areas to minimize capital and operating costs.

Infrastructure

Sewer

The County does not provide water or sewer to any residents. Sewer is provided by:

- Individual septic systems (rural areas)
- Package treatment systems (subdivisions and special districts)
- Central public systems (municipalities)

Septic Systems

The majority of Williams County has soil types that, as shown on the maps of the Williams County Soil Conservation District, have severe limitations for soil absorption disposal systems (septic tanks). Unless well-maintained, septic systems in these conditions pose a real threat to water quality. Experience has shown that septic systems often fall into disrepair, especially as they reach the end of their functional life—which is considered to be approximately 25 years—after which they must be totally replaced.

The Upper Missouri District Health Unit does not require percolation tests for new systems, but instead relies on the installer to comply with County standards. There is no active monitoring of septic system function throughout the county.

Package Treatment Systems

Package treatment systems provide a higher level of treatment than septic treatment, but

package systems require a trained operator and regular maintenance, which is sometimes difficult to achieve with small homeowners associations.

Many man camps have been hauling sewage to municipalities that are willing to treat, and a few are just now beginning to install their own package treatment systems. There is a risk with the proliferation of independent treatment facilities. Typically, it is difficult to properly monitor these systems and overtime, they can fail. Currently, there is little monitoring of man camp sewage treatment except by complaint.

Central Public Systems

Many communities provide central sewer:

- Grenora
- Ray
- Tioga
- Trenton
- Williston.

The Cities of Tioga and Williston have planned capacity expansions to their individual wastewater treatment plants.

Water

Potable water is provided by:

- Individual wells (rural areas and small subdivisions)

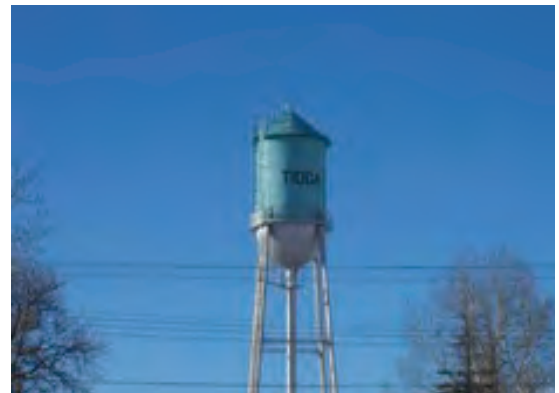


Figure 5-3: Grenora, Ray, Tioga, Williston provide municipal water systems; other areas are served by special districts or wells

- Special water districts (subdivisions) such as Williams Rural Water District and the new WAWS (Western Area Water System) that consists of the City of Williston, Williams Rural Water District, McKenzie County Rural Water District, R&T Water Supply, and the legislative-appointed BDW Rural Water System.
- Public water systems (municipalities).

The largest municipal water treatment system, the City of Williston, was designed for a population of up to approximately 25,000. In 2011, the Williams Rural Water District put a moratorium on new rural water connections in parts of Williams County due to lack of water supply and capacity to serve the booming population in these areas. The WAWS is working with the Williams Rural Water District to resolve the problem. The State of North Dakota is assisting in the funding of an expanded capacity water treatment center from 10 million gallons a day to 14 million gallons a day by 2013. Future projects are slated to expand capacity to 28 million gallons a day.

Other municipal water systems include Grenora, Ray, Tioga, and Trenton.

Electricity and Natural Gas

Montana-Dakota Utilities Company provides electricity and natural gas in Williams County. Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative also provides electricity.

Telecommunications

A variety of telecommunications providers are servicing Williams County. They include Midcontinent Communications, Alltel, Helpmate Cellular, Kohler Communications, Kotana Communications, Northwest Communications Cooperative, and Nemont.

Infrastructure and Services Goals and Policies

Infrastructure and Services Goals

Goal: Adequate public facilities and services

Objectives

- Retention of current levels of service and keep pace as the community grows
- Identification of areas where sewer is needed to support development
- Retention and expansion of good schools and other education opportunities
- Lessen government expenditures



Figure 5-4: Retaining quality schools is important to the community

Goal: Efficient, orderly growth

Objectives

- Growth is directed to areas that are most cost efficient to grow
- Growth is directed to the most suitable locations with infrastructure and services
- Adequate emergency response times are considered during development proposal review

Infrastructure and Services Policies

Policy 5.1 - It is the intention of the county to provide or allow for the provision of legal, adequate, dependable, cost-effective infrastructure and services for new development.

Policy 5.2 - The County will make infrastructure decisions consistent with the comprehensive plan and the Growth Strategy Map.

Policy 5.3 - Development is strongly encouraged to locate adjacent to municipalities or sanitation districts with available capacity in their central water/sewer systems.

Policy 5.4 - The proliferation of private sewer systems is strongly discouraged. Special districts will only be considered in rare circumstances and only after other options with municipal governments are determined unfeasible after an objective review process.

Policy 5.5 - Adequate infrastructure, utilities, facilities, and services will be provided by the developer concurrent with new development. Associated expenses will not be borne by county government unless there is a significant public benefit to do so.

Policy 5.6 - Soils having “severe limitations for septic absorption” should not be used for septic sewage disposal facilities unless:

- The applicant can present evidence to the Planning Commission that the facility is designed to negate the limitations or
 - The property is two acres or larger.
- Only existing subdivisions with well-managed package treatment system will be permitted to expand.

Policy 5.7 - Development proposals in rural areas without existing central water and/or sewer systems must show that legal, adequate, dependable and environmentally sound water/sewage disposal facilities will be provided.

Policy 5.8 - New development is to mitigate impacts on existing water/sewer systems.

Policy 5.9 - Higher density development, including man camps, should be located in areas where central sewage treatment facilities are either currently available or feasible in the future.

Policy 5.10 - The rate and location of new development will not exceed the county or associated municipality's ability to provide and maintain the associated public services and infrastructure.

Policy 5.11 -The county will work with non-county service providers, such as the school district and health care providers, to ensure that they can provide adequate services and facilities to meet demands of the growing population.

Policy 5.12 - Primary and secondary schools should be located where they can support cost-effective growth. The County, its municipalities, and the school districts should work together to more specifically identify, reserve and/or acquire suitable sites for schools in locations that support cost-effective growth. In locations that are appropriate for schools, new developments should be required to dedicate land.

Policy 5.13 - The County does not support development where the emergency service response level is beyond ten to fifteen minutes.

Infrastructure and Services Strategies and Actions

1. Support the efforts of municipal and special district water and sanitation service providers to assure adequate facilities and services can be provided in the future. Refer subdivision and development proposals to the appropriate water district so that the district can evaluate impacts, determine line locations, and ascertain if the development can be adequately serviced.
2. Take advantage of development in growth areas to seek financial assistance for the local municipality to upgrade their facilities.
3. Coordinate with other public entities concerning plans for growth of public facilities and services. Assemble and make available data necessary to affected agencies, on an ongoing basis, to develop plans for future needs of facilities and/or expansion of existing facilities.
4. Work with the Upper Missouri District Health Unit to establish an appropriate lot size and other requirements for septic systems.
5. In cases where annexation does not occur, require development within growth areas to build to associated city infrastructure standards. If not in place, assist the municipality to develop such standards.
6. Continue to refer proposed land developments to appropriate local, township, state and federal agencies as well as public utilities managers for their review and recommendations.

7. Contact emergency service providers and obtain information, or set up a reporting system to monitor levels-of-service (average response times) to ensure levels of service are maintained as population increases. The incentive for participation is that the information may be useful in establishing impact fees for service for the providers.
8. Modify the subdivision and development review process to require that adequate public educational facilities are provided concurrent with new development.
9. Hold a “utility summit” with other utility providers to:
 - Educate as to how they contribute to problem and solutions.
 - Compare plans, policies
 - Get on the “same page”.
10. The County will consider appropriate locations for schools and service sub-stations (such as fire protection and law enforcement) during the sub-area planning exercises for each community’s growth area.
11. Work with the school districts to refine policies and procedures regarding locating and acquiring school sites consistent with the growth strategy of the Comprehensive Plan.



{chapter six}

Economic Development



An economy booming beyond anyone's imagination may seem like a strange time to be thinking about economic development and diversification of the economy. However, Williams County has been here before. Most of the older residents remember how the last boom was over abruptly, leaving a wake of financial commitments and broken dreams that took decades to overcome.

Thus, a concern voiced by residents is the need for economic diversity in the long term. There is a deep desire to take advantage of the boom, to harness it to a) create improvements of lasting value, and b) to divert some of the current investment into ventures that will provide alternative employment and income after the current investment subsides.

This desire influences many aspects of the comprehensive plan such as:

- Planning for eventual demobilization that will not result in vacant buildings littering the landscape
- Making sure that current land use designation and strategies preserve rural character and environmental quality (truly lasting assets)
- Planning for amenities and recreational opportunities that make Williams County a pleasant place to live (and stay)
- Being an incubator for other kinds of businesses.

Current Industry

Agriculture has been the mainstay of Williams County throughout its history. Staple crops have been: corn, wheat, sugar beets, soy and sunflowers. Today, although agricultural production remains strong, it is greatly overshadowed by the resurgence of the oil industry through advances in hydraulic fracturing (also called “fracking”). Current projections are that

the drilling activity will continue in Williams County for 10 to 15 years.

Previous oil development has typically been characterized by a boom period that settled down to a much lower level of long-term maintenance of wells, transport of product, etc. However, current hydraulic fracturing/fracking practices suggest that the production trails off faster unless there is periodic re-fracking over time, which suggests that the employment graph will be not as dramatic a drop in employment, although it will indeed decline.



Figure 6-1: Though agriculture is traditionally an important economic base for the County, the energy industry is so competitive that it stifles almost all other segments of the economy

Strategies for Diversifying and a “Soft” Landing

To harness the boom to both leave a lasting legacy and to prepare for a “soft landing” in case of a bust the following strategies are proposed.

Identify and accommodate long-term oil-related activities

Tioga and Williston are already central hubs for the oil industry—not only equipment and storage, but they also have offices and at least one corporate headquarter. To diversify beyond the drilling phase, the county can look to bring other components and businesses that lead to vertical integration of the industry. For example:

- Expand the refinery being built in the Trenton area to process more types of petroleum products.
- Target industries that service the production and maintenance phase of the energy industry—this could include providing offices and other kinds of facilities than currently exist.

Keeping Williams County an Attractive Setting

The energy industry is attracting people from all over the country to the region. Keeping the county an attractive place to live will encourage workers to bring their families and to remain there for the less- labor intense production-maintenance phase.

There are several ways to achieve this goal:

- One is to avoid negative visual impacts on the countryside by locating development in planned areas and not randomly scattered throughout the countryside. The County’s Growth Strategy Map provides more-than-adequate opportunities for commercial and industrial development— located in areas that are appropriate for such development, and that consolidate visual impacts, such as around the airport center, along Hwy 2 west of Williston and adjacent to other existing employment centers.
- To further minimize visual impacts, temporary uses (such as man camps, trailer parks, recreational vehicle parks, and energy industry supply yards) are encouraged to locate in and near growth areas where



Figure 6-2: Fort Buford and the beauty of the surrounding landscape should be protected from development and energy industry impacts

services and infrastructure can be provided. With temporary uses in these locations, the land can be reclaimed or redeveloped in the future depending on needs.

- In regard to housing, if not carefully planned, it is possible that if the County allows a proliferation of random subdivisions they will be the first ones abandoned, or worse, partially abandoned, when and if a slowdown occurs. It is in the best interest of the county to avoid permitting residential subdivisions outside of designated growth areas.
- Expand and upgrade education. Elementary education is one of the main reasons families will choose to live or not to live in Williston. Housing for teachers has to be a major priority. Higher education is a characteristic of most stable communities and regions. Williston State College currently enrolls about 950 students. Engaging the energy sector to help expand and upgrade its offerings will not only benefit the community but could also help train workers for the more technical jobs that will follow the boom.

Stay Out of the “Urban” Business in the Unincorporated Areas

Related to cost-benefit, it is in the best interest of the county to retain its policy of not providing urban infrastructure. County governments generally, including Williams County, are not set up organizationally or fiscally to provide urban services (sewer, water, recreation, quick response emergency services, animal control, etc.) and to do so would not be cost-effective due to the potential costs involved for the number served. The County

The Lesson of Battlement Mesa

When the energy industry boomed in Western Colorado in the mid to late 1980s, Garfield County allowed the development of an isolated residential development consisting of homes on 1 acre lots to accommodate the need for housing energy industry workers in the region. Within a few years of development, the industry left the region without notice. Along with the industry went the majority of those workers who were not able to find other employment in the area. Battlement Mesa became a burden for the County support. Its remote location and lack of commercial and service uses contributed to the demise of the subdivision even though it was a relatively new product. Many homes stood vacant and the County had to consider whether or not to address the issue. Fortunately in the 1990s, retirees began to purchase the houses and the area largely became a retirement community. The County allowed some commercial and service uses adjacent to the development to help support the community. Garfield County was lucky in this situation but it was highly possible for the development to become fully abandoned and a public safety risk which may have led to the need for the structures to be razed.

should focus on providing assistance (training, obtaining grants, planning, etc.) to established service providers such as the water districts and municipalities in order to provide infrastructure in areas that are considered appropriate locations for development (growth areas or within existing communities).

Avoiding residential development in scattered subdivisions will also help the county resist the inevitable homeowner pressure to pave rural roads.

The County should work with energy industries for coordination of adequate improvement needs prior to permitting of use of county roads and retain its preference for gravel roads in rural areas of the county to avoid associated costs road maintenance over time.

Effectively Guiding Development

While it is a high priority for the County to be business-friendly, open to hearing about project ideas, and to avoid over-regulation that would discourage development—this does not mean allowing any use in any location. To effectively direct development, to existing communities and employment areas where proper infrastructure is available will require the following:

- Make the development review process more user-friendly—for applicants and staff- with the use of forms, code update, maps, pre-application conferences, etc.
- Enable the Planning Commission and BOCC to better understand the nature of the proposals by employing and requiring



Figure 6-3: Recreational vehicle parks can provide housing options for energy industry workers but the land can be reclaimed for other uses if the need emerges

context mapping, more complete submittals, use technology for displays during hearings, staff recommendations, etc.

Promote Recreation in the Region

There are over 400,000 acres of public land abutting the Missouri River and Lake Sakakawea in the southern portion of the county. This is a unique landscape with enough recreation value to make Williams County a recreation destination. The land is owned and managed by the U.S. Corps of Engineers, and there is an opportunity for the County to work effectively with the Corps of Engineers to promote recreation in the area. Williams County can develop a Parks and Recreation Department and hire some rangers to ensure compliance with area rules while increasing access to the area.

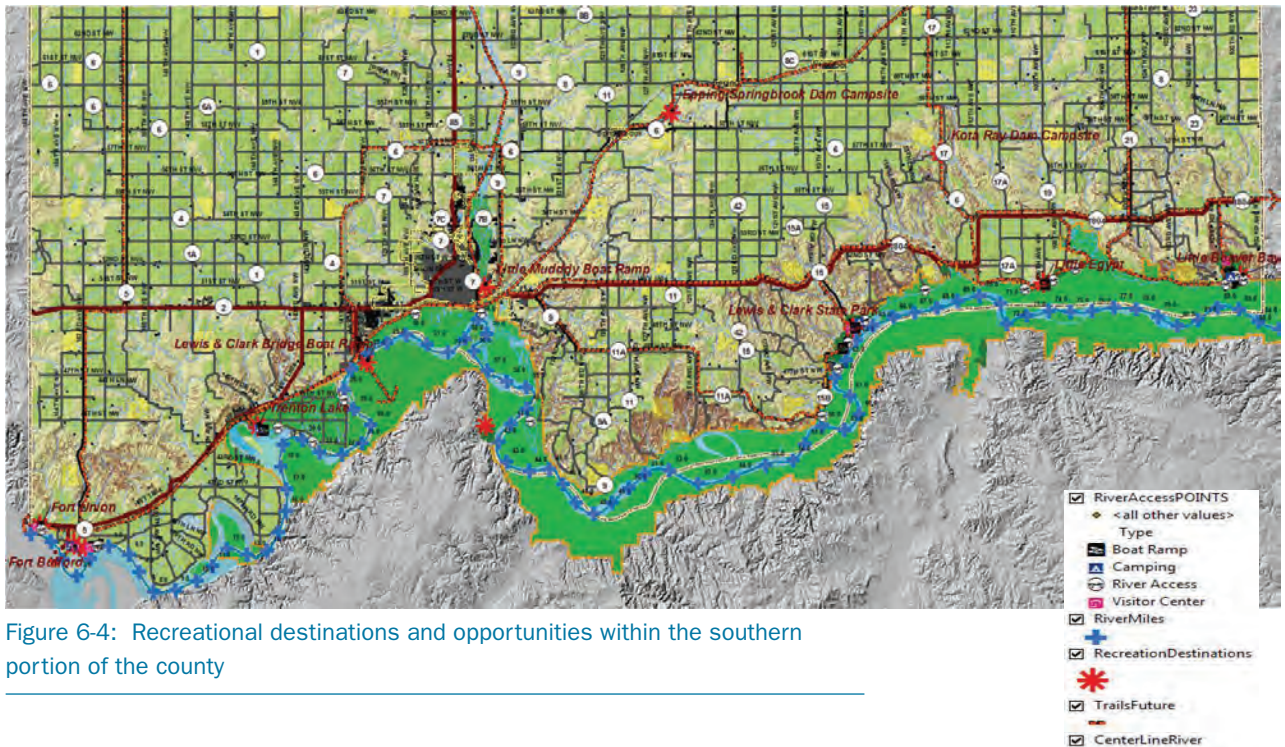
Another potential attraction to live in or visit the county is hunting. What the County can do to provide amenities for the region is to allow and promote hunting on private land. Another

is to promote the wildlife management areas within the county along with the lands around Lake Sakakawea.

Trails are also a popular amenity. In the United States, trails tend to be the highest ranked amenity a community can have. The County can extend municipal trails, work with State and Federal agencies to build and promote a trail system along the north banks of Lake Sakakawea, or plan trail links between communities.

Establish Capital Reserve Fund

Currently the County has a budget surplus that continues to grow. The County should continue to be good stewards of the county funds and be prudent in spending to allow for a rainy day fund that can be used to lighten the blow of a bust or the transition into the maintenance phase.



Economic Development Goals and Policy Direction

Economic Development Goals

Goal: Efficient, orderly growth

Objectives

- Growth is directed to areas that are most cost efficient to grow
- Growth is directed to the most suitable locations with infrastructure and services
- Growth is directed to existing towns and developed areas
- Adequate emergency response times are considered during development proposal review

Goal: Adequate public facilities and services

Objectives

- Retention of current levels of service and keep pace as the community grows
- Lessen government expenditures

Economic Development Policies

Policy 6.1 - Williams County will promote the agriculture and energy industries traditionally and currently prominent in the county while it expands its economic base with local and regional attractions.

Policy 6.2 - The County will protect its rural character and quality of life by protecting the rural landscape and supporting local and regional amenities.

Policy 6.3 - The County will encourage development to occur according to the Growth Strategy Map to promote development in appropriate areas where adequate infrastructure is located.

Economic Development Strategies and Actions

1. Through area planning of employment areas, ensure that adequate land is reserved for the type, size and scope of industrial/commercial development that is consistent with long-term economic development objectives.
2. During the development review process, evaluate compatibility of commercial/industrial developments with adjacent land uses and preserve the visual quality of the county.
3. The County should seek non-county funding sources for street, highway and infrastructure improvements.
 - Work with Williston District of NDDOT to seek federal transportation funding for transportation improvements – particularly those associated with US Highway 2/85 and proposed truck route roadway.

- Work with Williston and NDDOT on the location and design of the truck route designation of CR 4 and initial improvements to 26th Street West connection.
 - Pursue special legislative funding for improvements based on unique impacts of oil industry resurgence on community.
 - Seek federal transportation funding for later phases of highway improvements later phases of beltway completion.
 - Seek funding sources from the state to address road maintenance issues brought about by the high truck traffic levels resulting from the energy industry.
 - Seek funding partnerships and funding assistance from the oil industry.
 - Encourage joint agency and/or public-private partnerships and cost sharing strategies.
4. Continue to develop relationships between county government and energy industry representatives. Explore opportunities for them to partner with the county in meeting the needs of employees and the community.
 5. Preserve, maintain, and manage the existing roadway system according to the recommended directions in Chapter 4: Transportation.
 6. Create a project priority list to follow as funding for transportation improvements becomes available.
 7. Create a Capital Improvements Plan budget that supports the recommendations of the comprehensive plan for road maintenance priorities and planned other amenities.
 8. Form a Blue Ribbon Economic Development Committee of business and community leaders with the express purpose of identifying legacy “quality of life” improvements that could be funded with energy revenues to make sure Williams County and its municipalities harness the boom for the benefit of current and future residents.
 9. Work with regional partners (Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, State of North Dakota, etc.) to develop a diversified recreation strategy for both county residences and visitors.
 10. Establish a Parks and Recreation Department to oversee recreation goals for the county.

Implementation Chart and Comprehensive Plan Policies



This chapter summarizes the implementation actions presented in the individual chapters. The actions are grouped according to the chapter topic. The column adjacent to the action shows which department is responsible for the action. Next to that column is a prioritization column. Though it is understood that the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners will prioritize the implementation actions, a time frame in which to complete the action is suggested. This chapter also presents the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Implementation Chart

Land Use Concepts and Growth Strategies and Actions

Action	Department	Priority
1. Designate and plan growth areas with individual service areas. Planning should include land use designations, identification of infrastructure and capacity needs, funding, and common policies and standards.	Planning	1 year
2. Enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with each community that stipulates mutual commitments to follow the plans, and procedures for review.	Planning	1 - 2 years
3. Review the progress toward implementing the comprehensive plan annually.	Planning	yearly / ongoing
4. Create and adopt a workbook that includes flow charts and checklists to assist landowners, citizens, and staff through the development review process.	Planning	1 year
5. Adopt future municipality amendments of growth area land uses and design standards.	Planning	1 - 2 years
6. Involve regional jurisdictions, agencies, and special districts in future updates to the County Comprehensive Plan and other planning projects by inviting them to meetings, providing drafts, and having them participate in the public process.	Planning	4 - 8 years
7. When the county comprehensive plan is updated in the future, update and amend accordingly intergovernmental agreements to reflect future updates to the county comprehensive plan.	Planning	4 - 8 years
8. Work with the City of Williston to extend its extraterritorial area to 2 miles outside its boundary.	Planning	1 - 3 years

Action	Department	Priority
9. Reserve land area within growth areas to accommodate growth for the energy industry maintenance phase. The difference in population between peak drilling and the maintenance phase can be addressed with temporary housing strategies. Adjust land use plan to reflect results of growth area planning.	Planning	3 - 5 years
10. Conform design standards within growth areas to complement those of the associated community.	Planning	2 - 4 years
11. Develop area plans for county employment areas to express desired development patterns in more detail.	Planning	2 - 5 years
12. Work with Upper Missouri District Health Unit in regard to proper sized lots for septic.	Planning	1 - 2 years
13. Update the existing zoning resolution so that it is consistent with the Growth Strategy Map.	Planning	1 year
14. Adopt new zoning categories for light industrial versus industrial districts and commercial versus heavy commercial districts.	Planning	1 year
15. Create sub-area plans for key growth areas such as Hwy 2 west of Williston and Hwy 2/85 north of Williston.	Planning	1 - 2 years
16. Retain agricultural zoning for the majority of the undeveloped lands in the county.	Planning	yearly / ongoing
17. Amend subdivision regulations to include an option for cluster developments, with emphasis on continuing agricultural operations.	Planning	1 - 3 years
18. Facilitate farmers and ranchers working together in an ongoing effort to develop strategies to preserve agriculture, including addressing estate issues to keep land holdings together.	Planning	3 - 5 years
19. Protect existing agricultural operations from nuisance complaints by adjacent subdivisions with right to farm policies.	Planning	1 - 2 years

Action	Department	Priority
20. Consider incorporating a right-to-farm statement on all pertinent land use plats so that future land owners are made aware of the program.	Planning	1 - 2 years
21. Delineate hazardous or sensitive places on plats and/or site plans, which include, but are not limited to, areas of slope movement, fire hazard, aquifer recharge, steep terrain, non-reclaimed mined lands, unstable soils, shallow ground water, hazardous waste deposits, and flood plains. Discourage unsafe development in these areas.	Planning	1 - 2 years
22. Develop and apply appropriate standards reclamation of land after extraction processes.	Planning	2 - 3 years
23. Require basic erosion and noxious weed control on construction sites.	Planning	2 - 3 years
24. Develop regulations for mineral resource practices so as to minimize disruption to ground and surface water courses, fish and wildlife habitat, and historical sites.	Planning	2 - 3 years
25. Continue to integrate a natural resource review process throughout the county.	Planning	yearly / ongoing

Transportation Strategies and Actions

Action	Department	Priority
1. Maintain the map of existing road conditions and ownerships.	Engineering / Highway	yearly / ongoing
2. Ensure connectivity of county roads by applying the transportation framework to identify needed rights-of-way and missing links that need constructed.	Engineering / Highway	yearly / ongoing
3. Implement the new safety signage strategy for road maintenance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require the road crew to erect warning signage in advance of road maintenance activity • Once the maintenance is completed for the section, the road crew should move signage to the next section of work (or remove signage if appropriate) before beginning maintenance on the another section of roadway. 	Engineering / Highway	1 - 2 years
4. Inventory existing road signs (speed limit, yield, stop, curve or intersection warnings, railroad crossings, etc.). Replace all signs that are not reflective and provide new regulatory or warning signs where needed.	Engineering / Highway	1 year
5. Identify and consider “blind corners”, areas of limited sight distances (such as near crest vertical curves), narrow or subpar roads, and apply appropriate warning signage.	Engineering / Highway	1 year
6. Identify safe routes to school, and school bus routes, and develop/enact procedures to eliminate heavy truck traffic on them during school commute times.	Planning / Engineering / Highway	2 - 3 years

Action	Department	Priority
<p>7. Prepare a county-wide transportation improvement master plan that evaluates all county roads and recommends priorities and capital improvement implications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate rural roads within the current system to determine if the capacity and function of the roadways is adequate for existing and future land uses and determine improvement needs • Establish joint City-County standards for road development in growth areas. 	Engineering / Highway	1 - 2 years
<p>8. Adopt a Transportation Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), including system-wide improvements to meet existing and future demands. Prioritize improvements, and develop a financial plan for project implementation and maintenance. Coordinate the CIP with local, state, and federal systems and the County comprehensive land use plan to assure that roads provide traffic capacity and connectivity consistent with the land uses.</p>	Engineering / Highway	1 - 2 years
<p>9. Assist, and/or collaborate with, municipalities to plan for roadways in their Growth Areas. Integrate their local road grid with the county road system. Assure that future development does not occur within future roadway alignments.</p>	Planning / Engineering / Highway	1 - 5 years
<p>10. Inventory roads, culverts, and bridges to determine capacity and condition.</p>	Engineering / Highway	1 year
<p>11. Define desired speed limits within the development review process and then design the roadway to yield the desired traffic speed when constructed.</p>	Engineering / Highway	yearly / ongoing
<p>12. Identify areas where guardrail may be needed, apply AASHTO roadside design standards, and develop a prioritized list of needed guardrail installation.</p>	Engineering / Highway	1 - 2 years
<p>13. Once a truck route has been selected, work with the City of Williston to designate appropriate land uses along the truck route that supports a limited access roadway. Low intensity land uses should be allowed along the road except at the west and north termini nodes.</p>	Planning	1 - 2 years

Action	Department	Priority
14. Work with Williston to identify the new airport location. Once selected, commission a Comprehensive Plan update to plan land uses in the airport vicinity—to assure that airport uses are protected from conflicting land uses.	Planning	1 - 5 years
15. Preserve adequate rights-of-way for roads at the time of subdivision approval process to meet future transportation network needs. Do this by amending the County platting and subdivision regulations to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right-of-way design standards • Road improvement districts requirements and acceptable maintenance standards • When traffic studies should be required as part of the sub-division process, and require an impact analysis when they create significant traffic volume increases. 	Planning	yearly / ongoing
16. Work with Williston District of NDDOT and the City of Williston in the planning and improvement of the roadway system around Williston.	Planning / Engineering / Highway	1 - 3 years
17. Do a study to document (and ensure that North Dakota’s congressional delegation is fully aware of), the impacts that development of the oil industry has on Williams County road system and the need for funding to address those issues. Identify the real costs and impacts due to energy development and seek reimbursement from ND state for maintenance and construction.	Planning / Engineering / Highway	1 - 3 years

Infrastructure and Services Strategies and Actions

Actions	Department	Priority
1. Support the efforts of municipal and special district water and sanitation service providers to assure adequate facilities and services can be provided in the future. Refer subdivision and development proposals to the appropriate water district so that the district can evaluate impacts, determine line locations, and ascertain if the development can be adequately serviced.	Planning / Engineering	yearly / ongoing
2. Take advantage of development in growth areas to seek financial assistance for the local municipality to upgrade their facilities.	Planning / Engineering	yearly / ongoing
3. Coordinate with other public entities concerning plans for growth of public facilities and services. Assemble and make available data necessary to affected agencies, on an ongoing basis, to develop plans for future needs of facilities and/or expansion of existing facilities.	Planning / Engineering	yearly / ongoing
4. Work with the Upper Missouri District Health Unit to establish an appropriate lot size and other requirements for septic systems.	Planning / Engineering	1 year
5. In cases where annexation does not occur, require development within growth areas to build to associated city infrastructure standards. If not in place, assist the municipality to develop such standards.	Planning / Engineering	1 - 3 years
6. Continue to refer proposed land developments to appropriate local, township, state and federal agencies as well as public utilities managers for their review and recommendations.	Planning / Engineering	yearly / ongoing

Actions	Department	Priority
<p>7. Contact emergency service providers and obtain information, or set up a reporting system to monitor levels-of-service (average response times) to ensure levels of service are maintained as population increases. The incentive for participation is that the information may be useful in establishing impact fees for service for the providers.</p>	<p>Planning</p>	<p>1 - 3 years</p>
<p>8. Modify the subdivision and development review process to require that adequate public educational facilities are provided concurrent with new development.</p>	<p>Planning</p>	<p>1 - 2 years</p>
<p>9. Hold a “utility summit” with other utility providers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate as to how they contribute to problem and solutions. • Compare plans, policies • Get on the “same page” 	<p>Planning / Engineering</p>	<p>1 - 2 years</p>
<p>10. The County will consider appropriate locations for schools and service sub-stations (such as fire protection and law enforcement) during the sub-area planning exercises for each community’s growth area.</p>	<p>Planning</p>	<p>yearly / ongoing</p>
<p>11. Work with the school districts to refine policies and procedures regarding locating and acquiring school sites consistent with the growth strategy of the Comprehensive Plan.</p>	<p>Planning</p>	<p>yearly / ongoing</p>

Economic Development Strategies and Actions

Actions	Department	Priority
1. Through area planning of employment areas, ensure that adequate land is reserved for the type, size and scope of industrial/commercial development that is consistent with long-term economic development objectives.	Planning	1 - 3 years
2. During the development review process, evaluate compatibility of commercial/industrial developments with adjacent land uses and preserve the visual quality of the county.	Planning	yearly / ongoing
3. The County should seek non-county funding sources for street, highway and infrastructure improvements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Williston District of NDDOT to seek federal transportation funding for transportation improvements – particularly those associated with US Highway 2/85 and proposed truck route roadway. • Work with Williston and NDDOT on the location and design of the truck route designation of CR 4 and initial improvements to 26th Street West connection. • Pursue special legislative funding for improvements based on unique impacts of oil industry resurgence on community. • Seek federal transportation funding for later phases of highway improvements later phases of beltway completion. • Seek funding sources from the state to address road maintenance issues brought about by the high truck traffic levels resulting from the energy industry. • Seek funding partnerships and funding assistance from the oil industry. • Encourage joint agency and/or public-private partnerships and cost sharing strategies. 	Engineering / Highways / Planning	1- 2 years
5. Preserve, maintain, and manage the existing roadway system according to the recommended directions in Chapter 4: Transportation.	Engineering / Highways / Planning	yearly / ongoing
6. Create a project priority list to follow as funding for transportation improvements becomes available.	Engineering / Highways	1 year
7. Create a Capital Improvements Plan budget that supports the recommendations of the comprehensive plan for road maintenance priorities and planned other amenities.	Engineering / Highways	1 - 2 years

Actions	Department	Priority
8. Form a Blue Ribbon Economic Development Committee of business and community leaders with the express purpose of identifying legacy “quality of life” improvements that could be funded with energy revenues to make sure Williams County and its municipalities harness the boom for the benefit of current and future residents.	Planning	1 - 2 years
9. Work with regional partners (Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, State of North Dakota, etc.) to develop a diversified recreation strategy for both county residences and visitors.	Planning	3 - 5 years
10. Establish a Parks and Recreation Department to oversee recreation goals for the county.	Planning	3 - 5 years

Comprehensive Plan Policies

Land Use and Growth Policies

Policy 3.1 - The County will make land use decisions based on the Comprehensive Plan and its Zoning and Subdivision ordinances. Development will not be supported unless it is located within:

- a growth area
- a designated employment area with an area plan
- a master-planned new center
- adjacent to appropriately located existing land uses.

Policy 3.2 - The process for land use approvals in growth areas will be consistent with an executed Intergovernmental Agreement between the County and municipality. In the interim, the following policies will apply:

- Within designated growth areas, County land use policies and development approvals will be compatible with existing County zoning and/or the future land use plan of the adjacent municipality.
- Within a designated growth area, development applicants will obtain project review comments from the local community prior to submitting for county review.

Policy 3.3 - Growth is directed to areas that are most cost efficient to grow and to the most suitable locations with infrastructure and services; adequate emergency response times are considered during development proposal review.

Policy 3.4 - The County does not intend to be a provider of urban-level (central sewer, water, police, fire) infrastructure or services. Urban-level services must be provided by

municipalities, the developer, and/or those served—unless there is found to be a public benefit to do otherwise.

Policy 3.5 - New, non-agricultural uses will be directed to existing communities and the growth areas adjacent to their boundaries, or other designated centers, thereby reducing the demand for urban growth patterns in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Policy 3.6 – Development adjacent to municipalities (i.e. in growth areas) should annex into the adjacent jurisdiction if contiguity exists.

Policy 3.7 - The County will encourage and cooperate with the federal and state protection of critical habitat including threatened, or endangered species.

Policy 3.8 - The County will encourage the protection of watersheds, floodplains, and riparian areas. Development should not occur on lands deemed unsuitable for health, safety and property damage, such as due to flooding, inadequate drainage, severe erosion potential, and unfavorable topography such as steep slopes.

Policy 3.9 – The County discourages development that compromises natural drainage patterns so the cumulative impact of public and private land use activities will not:

- Cause storm runoff to exceed the capacity of natural or constructed drainage ways
- Subject other areas to an increased potential for damage due to flooding, erosion or sedimentation
- Result in pollution to streams, rivers or other natural bodies of water.

Policy 3.10 - The County will apply the Natural Resources Framework and Landscape Sensitivity Map during the development review process.

Policy 3.11 - Agricultural uses are protected so that agriculture can continue to be a viable industry.

Policy 3.12 - Between communities, the County will remain largely agricultural – except for designated areas of existing development that may be expanded per the future land use plan. The County discourages the conversion of agricultural uses to non-agricultural uses. New isolated industrial areas in the rural areas of the county are discouraged as they may result in environmental deterioration, agriculture production impacts, and / or increased need for road maintenance.

Transportation Policies

Policy 4.1 - The county road network should be constructed and maintained on a safe and fiscally sustainable basis.

Policy 4.2 - Land use and transportation planning are to be coordinated to assure that the transportation system is balanced with, and provides for, anticipated land uses.

Policy 4.3 - The county promotes interconnectivity of the county roadway system, to provide multiple routes to reduce truck congestion, truck / personal vehicle conflicts, and provide for emergency access.

- New developments are to provide road connections to existing streets and to provide easements to connect to existing or future development on adjacent land. Cul de sacs and limited/single-access neighborhoods are discouraged.
- Industrial land use should have roads designed to accommodate heavy freight and vehicles with large turning radii.
- Commercial land use should have roads of adequate capacity and traffic control to handle peak period traffic volumes at an acceptable level of service (generally LOS C or better).
- Land uses that generate a significant amount of truck traffic are to be located adjacent to a truck route. If this is not possible, other locations may be appropriate if provision is made to create truck connections (such as through a funding partnership of adjacent landowners) to ensure appropriate design

and construction of streets leading to truck routes.

Policy 4.4 Development in a growth area will have road patterns that are compatible with the adjacent municipality.

- Grid of roadways should be developed in growth areas, particularly along regional highways, such that access can be provided from secondary parallel roadways where possible and all parcel access is not directly onto the regional roadways.
- Access control for all new and expanded development must be consistent with applicable IGA's.
- Williams County will refer to existing municipal comprehensive plans when roadway development is proposed within a designated growth area. (The Williston and Tioga comprehensive plans include a road strategy. Williston also has an adopted Transportation Plan that includes more detail on policies, priorities, and procedures.)

Policy 4.5 - The County will only accept into its road system those roads which meet county standards and have been accepted by the Board of County Commissioners.

Policy 4.6 The truck route is intended to be a limited access corridor. Land use along the corridor should be limited to current uses including agriculture. Development to support the route should occur at the major intersections of US 85 and 57th St. NW north of Williston and US 85 and US 2 (probable southwestern terminus) west of Williston.

These termini nodes are encouraged to include truck support uses such as fuel stations, rest stops, and convenience shops. Land use planning for the termini nodes is under the jurisdiction of the City of Williston. The nodes are located in Tier One (north node) and Tier Two (west node). The land use and development approach for each node should follow the tier strategy described in Chapter 3 of this plan.

Policy 4.7 - Williams County and the City of Williston will need to collaborate with the State to determine the appropriate jurisdiction and source of funding for construction. As the truck route is completed, existing roadway segments that are currently part of the township or county systems will become a part of the Williston roadway system.

Policy 4.8 - Williams County will work with the City of Williston to coordinate and plan for the truck route around the city. Coordination among jurisdictions will provide opportunities for collaboration that could benefit all agencies and the public. This may result in financial and time savings through economies of scale, as well as potentially reducing construction impacts to residents through the coordination of projects.

Policy 4.9 - Access along the truck route should be limited. Development should be directed to the north and west termini nodes. This development is to be regulated by the City of Williston. The County should work with the City of Williston to revise the City's

comprehensive plan to reduce non-agricultural land uses along the truck route corridor with the exception of the north and west termini nodes. If the airport does relocate and access is taken along the truck route, land use around the new airport and at this site along the truck route corridor will be assessed along with the development application for the airport relocation. Ideally, an area plan will be developed prior to any additional development in the vicinity of the airport or its access roads.

Policy 4.10 - The County should focus infrastructure improvements (and road maintenance) in a cost-effective pattern, in areas where growth is appropriate.

Policy 4.11 - The County will maintain Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) which prioritize road improvements based on needs for traffic flow, safety enhancements, maintenance and linkages, and anticipated energy extraction needs.

Policy 4.12 - The County road extensions will be prioritized based on the following criteria:

- Logical extension of existing roadway
- Presence of existing land uses adjacent to the project
- Consistent with future land uses based on the comprehensive plan and the county zoning regulations
- County roads which are on the Federal Aid Highway system should receive top priority for road upgrading, repair, and maintenance. These roads should be viewed as the major

transportation links to the State and Federal Highways in the county.

- Roads within communities' Growth Area Tier One.

Policy 4.13 It is not in the interest of the county to pave all roads. Current road treatments should be continued to avoid future costs of maintaining paved roads.

Policy 4.14 - All upgrading of existing roads and any new road construction required by proposed (and approved) development will be funded by the developer. If a road is necessary to serve an individual development, the road constructed is to be built to accommodate land uses designated by the Future Land use Plan and not incrementally per subdivision. The roadway constructed shall be to the appropriate cross-section (cross-sections are contained in this Plan), as determined by County staff.

Policy 4.15 - Upfront cost sharing with energy companies should be required. If a road segment is not to adequate standard prior to access use, the entity requiring the access should upgrade the road to adequate standards prior to use. The road should be maintained throughout the use and once the access is no longer needed, the road should be left as it was after initial improvements were made but prior to use of the road.

- Encourage joint agency and/or public-private partnerships and cost sharing strategies.

- Increased partnerships with the energy industry should be considered. Opportunities are secured for new funding sources for transportation needs and the efficiency of current resources are maximized. This includes funding partnerships with the energy industry, particularly where missing links are needed to facilitate energy extraction, or where roadway maintenance needs are directly linked to heavy truck traffic associated with energy extraction.
- Expand research for funding sources for road construction and maintenance. Federal and State funding sources should be obtained. Grants and bonds should be considered.

Policy 4.16 - Due to costs, logistics and associated impacts to the roadway, it is not cost-effective for the County to have county-wide dust control. However, there may be instances where spot dust control is warranted.

Policy 4.17 - The County's approach to road stabilization is to rework the roadbase and apply the stabilizer, allow it to set and "wear in", then apply a chip-seal treatment once the road is stabilized properly. This practice is typically appropriate for the rural or semi-rural level of development occurring in the county (paved roads are likely to be required in designated growth areas).

Policy 4.18 - The current approach to road stabilization and chip-seal treatment also will provide a level of dust control.

Policy 4.19 - In growth areas, with an IGA in place, the County will typically defer to the standards of the associated municipality or district. The county may apply new standards for roads that eventually will be connected to the municipal system but are outside current growth areas.

Policy 4.20 - From the inventory and inspections above, create (or commission the creation of) a prioritized listing of necessary bridge and culvert repairs/maintenance/replacement for use in of the annual Capital Improvement Plan preparation and funding allocation.

Policy 4.21 - For safety and to maintain roadway capacity, local access to main roadways (federal, state and county paved highways) should be limited to half of a mile. In these conditions, parallel secondary road circulation, including frontage and backage roads, should be used to provide frequent driveway access.

Policy 4.22 - Any new access to a County roadway shall comply with intersection sight distance criteria contained in A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, (AASHTO “green book”, 6th Edition, 2011 or current version). Under no circumstances shall an access be allowed that does not maintain adequate stopping sight distance for approaching motorists.

Policy 4.23 - On new roadways, speed limits should be assigned during the planning review stage of development, and then verified once in operation, using standard engineering practices. The County should avoid granting individual speed zone requests that do not comply with standard engineering practice.

Policy 4.24 - The traditional reservation of road rights-of-way along section lines will continue to be used in the rural areas of the county.

Policy 4.25 - Rights-of-way for roads will be obtained during plan review of development projects.

Infrastructure and Services Policies

Policy 5.1 - It is the intention of the county to provide or allow for the provision of legal, adequate, dependable, cost-effective infrastructure and services for new development.

Policy 5.2 - The County will make infrastructure decisions consistent with the comprehensive plan and the Growth Strategy Map.

Policy 5.3 - Development is strongly encouraged to locate adjacent to municipalities or sanitation districts with available capacity in their central water/sewer systems.

Policy 5.4 - The proliferation of private sewer systems is strongly discouraged. Special districts will only be considered in rare circumstances and only after other options with municipal governments are determined unfeasible after an objective review process.

Policy 5.5 - Adequate infrastructure, utilities, facilities, and services will be provided by the developer concurrent with new development. Associated expenses will not be borne by county government unless there is a significant public benefit to do so.

Policy 5.6 - Soils having “severe limitations for septic absorption” should not be used for septic sewage disposal facilities unless:

- The applicant can present evidence to the Planning Commission that the facility is designed to negate the limitations or
- The property is two acres or larger.
Only existing subdivisions with a well-managed package treatment system will be permitted to expand.

Policy 5.7 - Development proposals in rural areas without existing central water and/or sewer systems must show that legal, adequate, dependable and environmentally sound water/sewage disposal facilities will be provided.

Policy 5.8 - New development is to mitigate impacts on existing water/sewer systems.

Policy 5.9 - Higher density development, including man camps, should be located in areas where central sewage treatment facilities are either currently available or feasible in the future.

Policy 5.10 - The rate and location of new development will not exceed the county or associated municipality’s ability to provide and maintain the associated public services and infrastructure.

Policy 5.11 - The county will work with non-county service providers, such as the school district and health care providers, to ensure that they can provide adequate services and facilities to meet demands of the growing population.

Policy 5.12 - Primary and secondary schools should be located where they can support cost-effective growth. The County, its municipalities, and the school districts should work together to more specifically identify, reserve and/or acquire suitable sites for schools in locations that support cost-effective growth. In locations that are appropriate for schools, new developments should be required to dedicate land.

Policy 5.13 - The County does not support development where the emergency service response level is beyond ten to fifteen minutes.

Economic Development Policies

Policy 6.1 - Williams County will promote the agriculture and energy industries traditionally and currently prominent in the county while it expands its economic base with local and regional attractions.

Policy 6.2 - The County will protect its rural character and quality of life by protecting the rural landscape and supporting local and regional amenities.

Policy 6.3 - The County will encourage development to occur according to the Growth Strategy Map to promote development in appropriate areas where adequate infrastructure is located.



appendices

Appendices



1. Community Setting and Profile
2. Comprehensive Plan Update Public Outreach
3. Associated and Referenced Documents
4. Example Governmental Agreement
5. Glossary of Terms
6. Additional Maps

Appendix 1 Community Setting and Profile

Community Setting

Williams County is located in northwest North Dakota.

Geography

The land area of the county is 2,077 square miles with approximately 10.8 persons per square mile. The county is mainly rolling prairie land.

Climate

The climate of the Williams County area is semi-arid and continental, characterized by long cold winters and short warm summers. The annual mean temperature for the area is approximately 41 degrees Fahrenheit. The average temperature for July is approximately 70 degrees Fahrenheit, while January is the coldest month with an average temperature of about 8 degrees Fahrenheit. The growing season extends from May until late September.

Most precipitation occurs between April and September and the annual average is approximately 14.5 inches. Much of the summer rainfall comes from short severe thunderstorms. Approximately 25% of the precipitation is received as snow.

Soils and Geology

A good deal of the soils throughout Williams County are rated as “excellent to good” for their suitability as cropland. There is also a substantial amount that is rated “fair to medium”.

The soils in the county are of several types including Williams, Oahe-Sioux, Williams-Zahl, Havre-Banks, Bainville-Zahl, and Zahl-Williams. Some of these soil associations such as Williams and Williams-Zahl have been identified as having severe limitations for septic tanks and filter fields. A wide variation of soil characteristics is possible within a relatively small area and limitations may not be present in all areas. Site specific engineering studies will be necessary to determine if soil limitations are present.

Mineral Resources

Minerals found in Williams County include petroleum, lignite, potash, sodium chloride, sodium sulfate, uranium, sand and gravel.

Williams County lies within the central area of the Williston Basin’s Bakken Shale Formation which includes roughly 130,000 square miles covering the northeastern portion of Montana, the northwestern portion of North Dakota and the southern portion of Saskatchewan, Canada. The Nesson Anticline that is mostly located in Williams County and McKenzie County is a major oil producing formation in for the region.

According to a 2008 U.S. Geological Survey report, there is an estimated mean undiscovered volumes of 3.65 billion barrels of oil, 1.85 cubic feet of associated/dissolved natural gas, and 148 million barrels of natural gas liquids in the Bakken Shale Formation. The North Dakota Department of Mineral Resources projects 1,500 to 1,800 wells per year for the next 10 to 15 years based on recent discussions with the

12 most active well drilling operators in the Bakken/Three Forks formations. Between 2010 and 2015, the Bakken Formation is expected to produce approximately 300,000 to 400,000 barrels of oil per day.

Sand and gravel deposits are found throughout the area and are used primarily for aggregate for concrete and road paving. Deposits of lignite coal have been mined in the areas of Tioga and Williston. Potash, a form of mineral sylvite, is found inter-bedded with sodium chloride in the Prairie Formation of Devonian age rocks in the region. Sodium sulfate is found in natural deposits in the northwest part of the county. A number of salt beds also are underlying Williams County.

Water Resources

Water resources in Williams County consist of substantial quantities of surface water and ground water aquifers. Approximately 74 square miles of the county's total 2,077 square miles is under water. Major water bodies include Lake Sakakawea, the Missouri River, and the Little Muddy River.

Several ground water aquifers are located throughout the county. Aquifers of greater significance include the Trenton, Ray, Little Muddy, Hofflund, and Grenora Aquifers. The Buried Missouri Channel Aquifer and Wildrose Aquifer are largely located in Divide County but extend into Williams County.

Wetlands are found in various locations around the county. View the County Atlas for specific locations.

Water quality varies from place to place but most ground water in the county exceeds U. S. Public Health Service standards. The majority of water in the county is provided by municipalities and special districts.

Wildlife and Waterfowl

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers owns land along the Missouri River. The protected lands in these areas are important with respect to the abundant waterfowl and wildlife in the area. The publicly owned lands work in concert with the agricultural land and windbreaks to provide habitats and food supplies for wildlife.

Agricultural Land

Agriculture, in the form of both cropland and grazing land, is also an important element of the Williams County economy.

Composition

Williams County has 10 incorporated cities. The 3 largest cities are Williston, Tioga and Ray. The county also has 57 townships.

Population

Between 1990 and 2000, Williams County's population was slowly declining from 21,129 in 1990 to 19,761 in 2000. According to the US Census, the population of Williams County increased 13.3% from 19,761 in 2000 to 22,398

in 2010. This increase is largely due to the recent energy boom.

This count does not include much of the transient people and persons living in man-camps, hotels, and camp grounds. In 2012, it was estimated that there were 9,777 man-camp beds, 1,581 hotel rooms, 424 RV sites. It is also estimated that approximately 1,447 other transients are renting rooms within houses. With 2 persons per hotel room or RV site and one person per man camp bed, the number of estimated transients and the population in 2010, the estimated population in the first quarter of 2012 was closer to 37,632.

The median age was 40.4 in 2010 up from 39.8 in 2000.

Housing Units

Housing units were counted at 10,184 with approximately 2.22 persons per household. Over 90% of the units were occupied. Mean household income 2006-2010 was \$55,396.

Employment

Historically, agriculture and energy / mineral extraction have been the two dominant industries in the county. In 2009, there were 909 private nonfarm establishments and 9,308 private nonfarm employees in the county (which is a 36% increase from 2000).

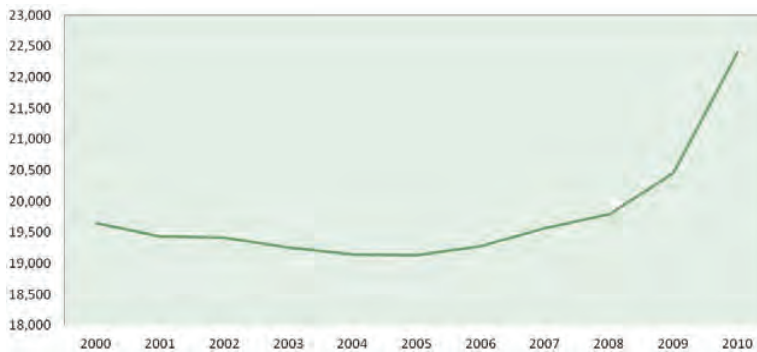


Figure A1-1: Williams County population change from 2000-2010 Source: US Census

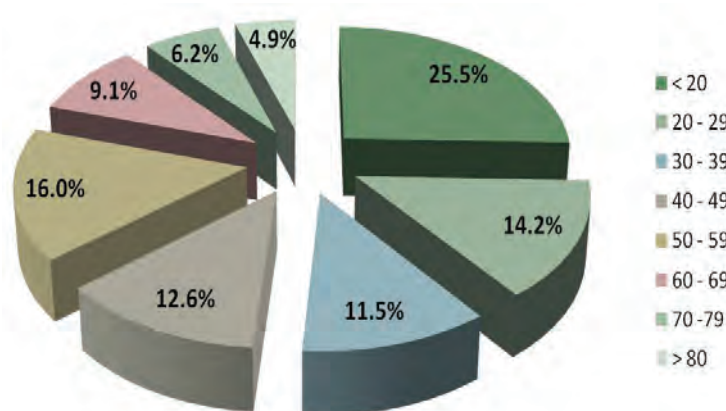


Figure A1-2: Williams County 2010 population projection by age

Accommodation Type	Raw		Current		2015	2020	2025	2030
	Population Units	Occupancy Multiplier	Population Estimate	Population Estimate				
Resident Population	22,398	1	22,398					
Man Camp Beds	9,777	1	9,777					
Hotel Rooms	1,581	2	3,162					
RV Sites	424	2	848					
Other Transient	1,447	1	1,447					
Total			37,632		41,550	46,099	50,002	44,321

Population growth rates are estimates obtained from the Williston Housing Demand Analysis and represent the mid-point of a range of estimates. The study was completed in December 2010 by Ondracek, Witwer and Bertsch.

Figure A1-3: Williams County population estimates

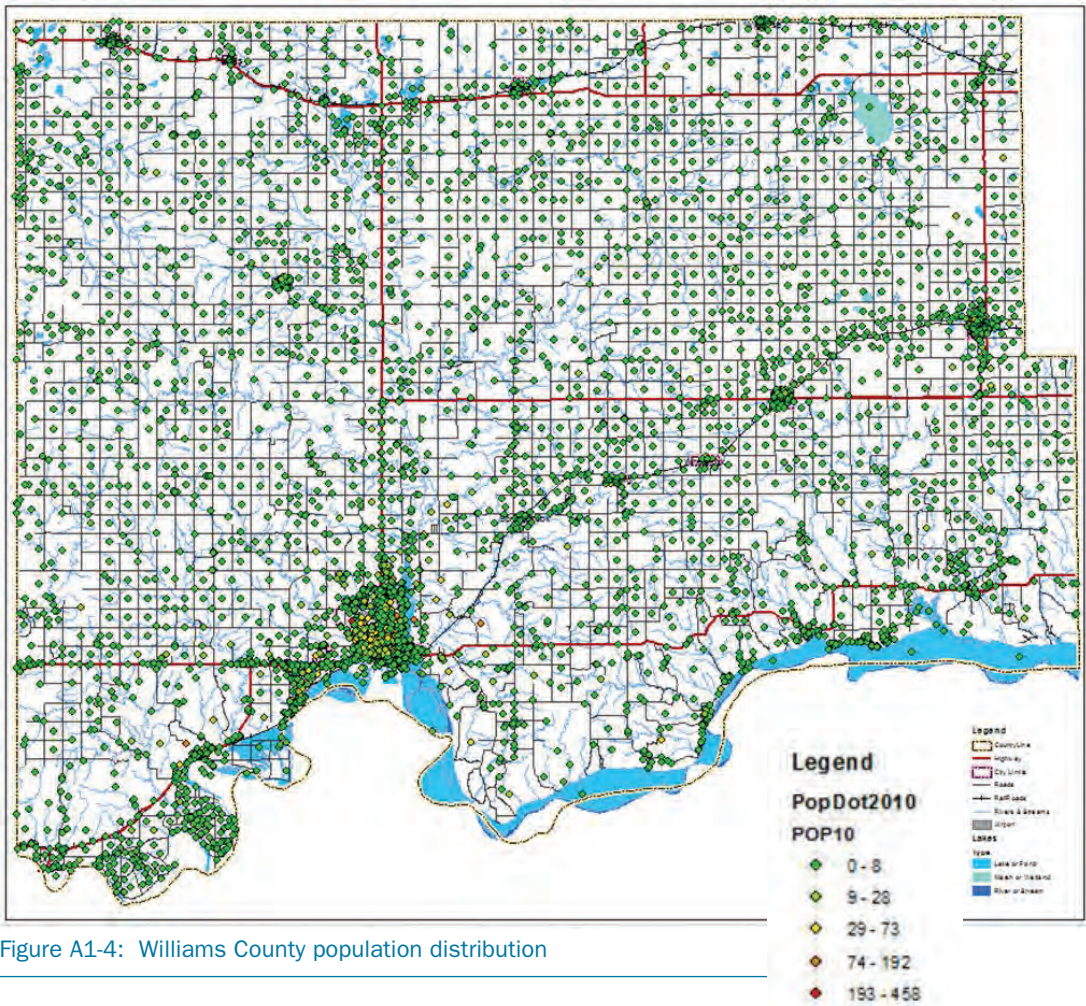


Figure A1-4: Williams County population distribution

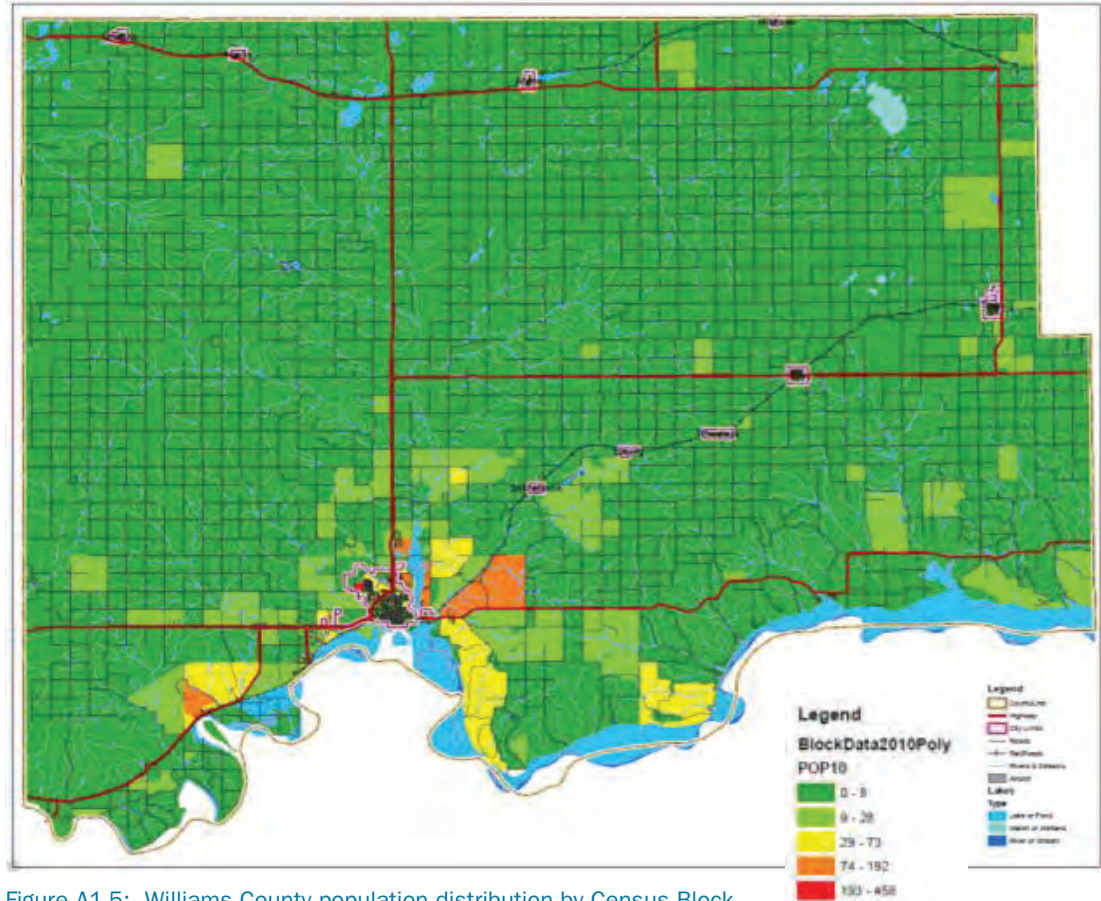


Figure A1-5: Williams County population distribution by Census Block

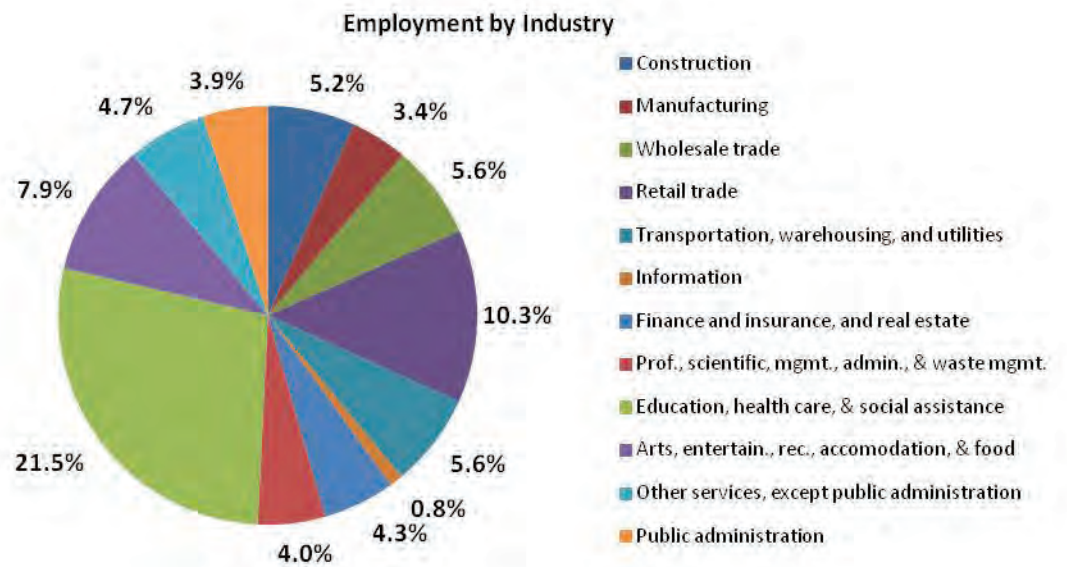


Figure A1-6: Williams County employment by industry

Appendix 2 Comprehensive Plan Update Public Outreach

This appendix provides an outline of the public outreach efforts conducted during the comprehensive plan update. A key element of the comprehensive plan process is public participation. Public involvement is critical to the success of this planning effort and the long-term implementation of the plan. In the end, the goal is to build consensus from an informed public that will outweigh objections from vocal special interests that do not represent the broad community. The following is an outline of the public outreach efforts.

Analysis of Existing Conditions

The comprehensive plan team reviewed existing conditions, which are included in the County Atlas and topic reports.

Process Updates

WEBSITE

The project website, www.PlanWillCo.com, was created upon initial onset of the project. Process updates to the project website were made throughout the entire process. Results of stakeholder interviews, chip game exercises, key pad polling and other information could be found at the site.

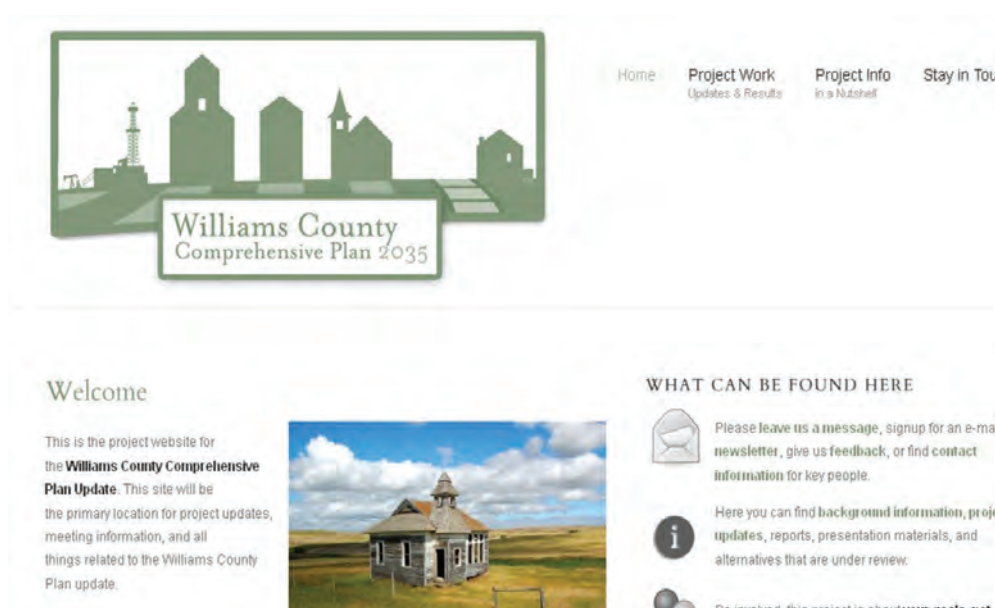


Figure A2-1: Williams County Comprehensive Plan website - www.PlanWillCo.com

Flyers

Flyers were prepared and displayed prior to every public meeting. Periodic emails announcing public meetings were sent to all who left an email on a sign-in sheet or requested the service.

Williston Herald, Plains Reporter, & Other Media

Media coordination with *Williston Herald* and the *Plains Reporter* occurred during the process. Press releases were sent to the *Williston Herald* and the *Plains Reporter* prior to each public meeting and announcements were placed in the newspapers prior to each public meeting. One such announcement was a full insert describing alternative scenarios for the community’s future. Press releases were also sent to local radio stations, television stations and the *Tioga Tribune*.

Interviews

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

At the onset of the process (January - February 2012), the consultant team conducted stakeholder / focus group interviews with business leaders, emergency services, local home builders, and key property owners, etc. The stakeholder / focus group interviews assessed issues, concerns, existing plans, community needs, and health of public services.

INTERVIEWS WITH DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Along with the stakeholder interviews, the consultant team discussed local issues and identified needs of the various County Departments. Approximately 10 employees participated.

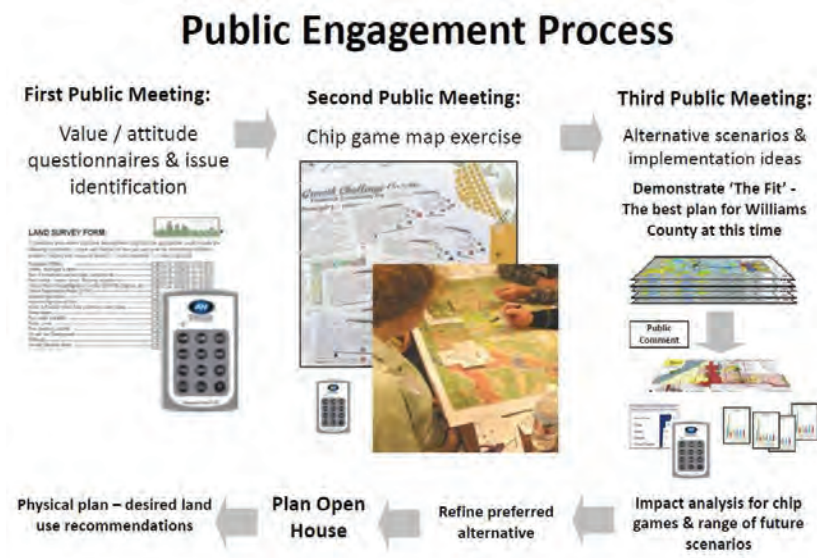


Figure A2-2: Williams County Comprehensive Plan process

STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee reviewed the process at various stages and made recommendations regarding vision, goals, policies and strategies for each element of the comprehensive plan.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

A series of public meetings were held three times during the process in five county locations (Grenora, Ray, Tioga, Williston, and Trenton). At the public meetings, participants responded to keypad polling questions, participated in a “chip game” exercise to help conceptualize and recommend types and locations for future growth, reviewed alternative futures, identified components of a preferred scenario for future growth, and were asked to comment on the various stages of the plan direction and major themes.

Development of the Plan

The consultant team used the input gathered at stakeholder meetings, public meetings, from the Steering Committee, and from the web site and created alternative scenarios for the future. The public selected attributes of the scenarios that were then combined into a preferred future alternative. The preferred future alternative became the basis of the plan. Consultant expertise was added to the various elements of the plan. The growth strategy of the comprehensive plan was developed from the results of the public input gathered during the plan process.

Public Meeting #1

At the first public meeting, participants provided feedback on various community values and issues that need addressed in the comprehensive plan update. They were also asked to evaluate 1) the importance of development locating near various infrastructure, and 2) what types of landscape should be protected from development. The big concepts that came out of the discussion include:

- Efficient orderly growth
 - In and near towns
 - In designated locations
 - Not scattered throughout county
 - Compatible with adjacent land uses
 - Areas with infrastructure and are cost-effective to serve
 - Consider emergency response times
 - Direct growth to suitable locations
- Highways and roads
 - Signals needed at key intersections
 - Improved road maintenance
 - Truck bypass around Williston
 - Connect missing segments of road
- Protection of natural resources
 - Protect rivers and creeks
 - Protect aquifer
 - Protect habitat – particularly riparian habitat
 - Avoid intense development on sensitive land
- Crime and social issues
 - Consider emergency services response times

- Support public safety and law enforcement
- Reduce the cost of living
- Improve the range of housing types and cost
- Locate housing near services and infrastructure
- Temporary housing to locate in appropriate areas
- Rural character and agricultural protection
 - Small-town feel
 - Protect prime agricultural lands
 - Direct growth away from rural areas
 - Avoid residential subdivisions in rural areas
- Public facilities and services
 - Retain levels of service
 - Retain good schools
 - Develop recreation opportunities
 - Use existing services
 - Do not grow beyond capacity
 - More intense development should locate where sewer is available
 - County is not in the urban infrastructure business
 - Develop fees to offset cost

The group was also asked to provide input on different development patterns such as cluster development in rural areas and the urban residential reserve concept. Feedback on values and issues were used to develop a landscape sensitivity map and a growth efficiency map.



Figure A2-3: Williams County Comprehensive Plan public meetings

Public Meeting #2

At the second public meeting, the participants took part in an interactive exercise called the “chip game”. Chips were created that represented the amount of development required for the 2030 projected population. On a map of the county, players (grouped by table) were asked to place the chips where they thought development would be appropriate. A representative from each table then explained to the larger group why they placed the chips as they did. The group also re-confirmed the values and issues that resulted from public meeting #1 including the landscape sensitivity map and the growth efficiency map. These issues and values to measure the results of the various chip games. Twenty-four games were played.

Public Meeting #3

The focus of public meeting #3 was to test concepts and alternative scenarios (a model based on expected or supposed events and projections; also can be described as an alternative future) of potential land use patterns.

Four scenarios were presented:

- One based on current trends and zoning map
- One where development was distributed around all existing communities and municipalities (all existing service areas)
- One where a new town was created that would absorb the majority of the projected growth

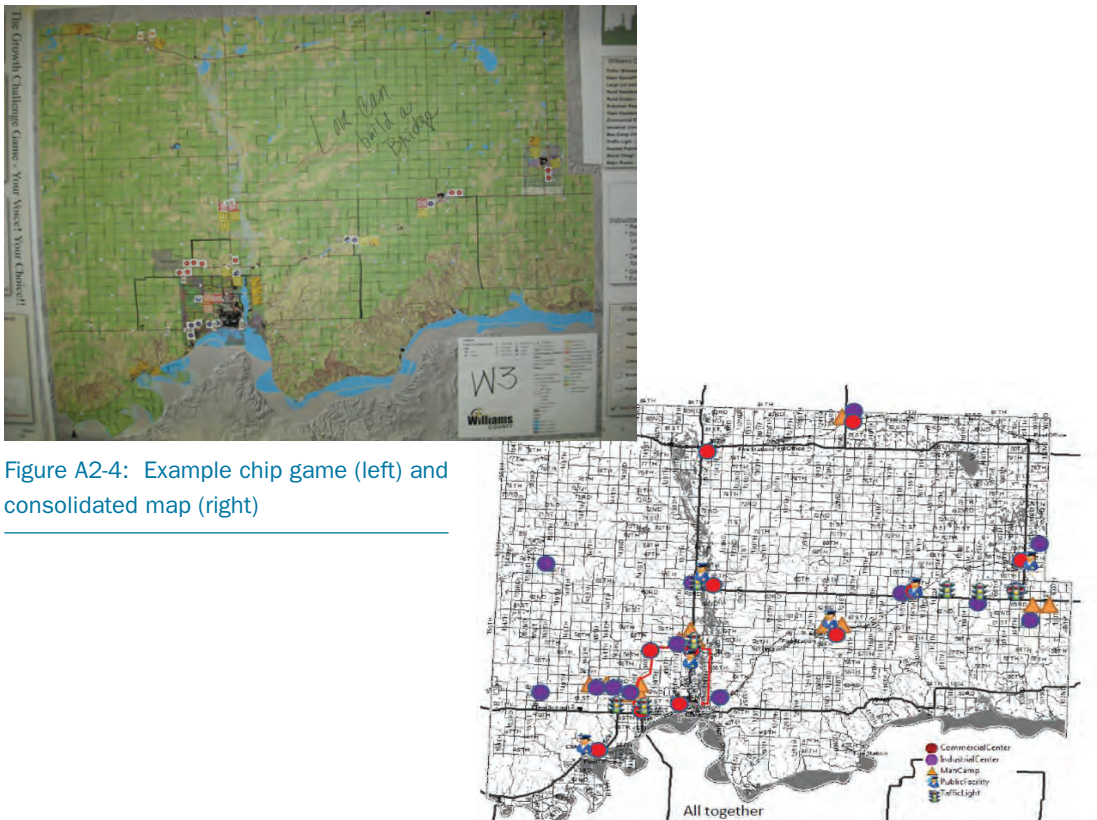


Figure A2-4: Example chip game (left) and consolidated map (right)

- One where the majority of the growth is focused around the City of Williston with some growth around the City of Tioga.

The scenarios were based upon the current zoning map, the chip game results, key pad polling results, and the stakeholder interviews.

An evaluation of each scenario assisted citizens to understand the implications of their choices. The project goals and objectives were used as evaluation criteria. Participants were asked which characteristics of the alternative scenario were most appropriate for Williams County's future.

The most supported alternative was to direct growth to all of the existing service areas. Directing growth to Williston has the next level of support. There was very little support to continue the current trends in development.

The group also reviewed alternative concepts that could be used in the plan. Concepts supported include:

- Growth areas
- Growth efficiency
- Landscape sensitivity
- Urban residential reserves
- Cluster development
- Area plans.

Refining the Plan

The plan outline was based on the results of the public input received. The comprehensive plan team worked with staff, the consultants, the Steering Committee, the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners to refine the plan concepts and add expert opinion and direction.

Elected and Appointed Officials Briefings

Throughout the plan process, the Board of County Commissioners and Planning Commission were engaged in work sessions to discuss plan expectation, key directions of the plan and conduct a "red flag" review of the draft.

Public Review of the Draft Plan

During October 2012, the County accepted written comments from the public.

Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners Public Hearings

Public hearings with the Planning Commission (November 2012) and Board of County Commissioners (December 2012) were held to take input on the final draft Plan and to adopt the Plan.

Appendix 3 Associated and Referenced Documents

This section provides a list of associated reports and documents to the Williams County Comprehensive Plan. These reports and documents can be found at the Williams County Planning and Building Department.

Area Comprehensive Plans

Tioga Comprehensive Plan

Williston Comprehensive Plan

1986 Williams County Comprehensive Plan

Reports

Draft Residential, Hotel, and Commercial Market Analysis - Dwain Davis Property – April 2012

Economic Report

Transportation Report

City of Williston Transportation Plan

US Highway 2/85 Corridor Study

County Atlas

North Dakota Century Code

Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations of Williams County, North Dakota

Appendix 4

Example Intergovernmental Agreement

Following is a very preliminary list of topics that might be covered in an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) that is intended to implement the Williams County Comprehensive Plan with regard to planning decisions within the Growth Areas.

1. The land outside the municipal boundary (or service district area) is under County jurisdiction.
2. It is the intent of the IGA to create a decision-making process that will enable, to the greatest extent possible, the community to achieve its plan for their Growth Area.
3. Annexation is the preferred mechanism to allow urban types of development to occur outside the current municipal boundaries.
4. Modifications (if any) to current annexation policies and procedures (streamlining, notifications, treatment of surrounded properties, etc.).
5. Process for considering urban development when annexation is not practicable.
 - a. The objective is to engage both the City and County in a way that does not significantly burden the applicant with regard to time or cost of development review process.
 - b. Procedure for pre-submittal conferences.
 - c. Procedure for applications.
 - d. Procedure for referrals.
 - e. Procedure for review by city and county staffs.
 - f. Criteria for approval (definition of substantial compliance, recognition of differences between county zoning and municipal land use designations, etc.)
 - g. Procedure for review by city and county planning commissions.
 - h. Procedure and criteria for approvals, as appropriate by city council and/or county commissioners.
 - i. Procedure and criteria for appeals.
 - j. Policy regarding sharing of taxes.
6. Policies regarding extension of municipal infrastructure and services beyond city boundaries.
7. Policies regarding construction standards in the Growth Area for streets, lighting, sidewalks, parks, etc.
8. Policies defining improvements to land and structures that would not trigger joint review (e.g. improvements related to on-going agricultural uses that do affect ultimate developability).
9. Acknowledgement that in case of failure to reach agreement, the property will be subject solely to County land use review and approval.

Appendix 5 Glossary of Terms

Action – A specific measure to be taken to implement a policy within the comprehensive plan.

Agricultural land use - Land that is intended for agricultural uses and uses associated with agriculture.

Arterial - A high capacity road to deliver traffic from collector roads to highways.

Backage road - A local road that provides access to properties along a higher speed / capacity road so that access points can be limited on the higher speed / capacity road.

Best Management Practices - Methods or techniques found to be the most effective and practical means in achieving an objective.

Blind corner - A bend or turn in a road where there is little ability to see vehicles approaching from the other direction.

Blue ribbon committee - A group of specialized or expert persons appointed to review and / or study a given subject.

Boom - The rapid expansion of an industry.

Boom - bust cycle - A business cycle characterized by rapid increases in the industry followed by a rapid decline in that industry.

Bust - The rapid decline of an industry.

Capital improvement - Land, improvements to land, structures, and equipment that enhance the value of a property.

Capital improvement plan / program- A plan that lists improvements and projects that

a government intends to complete along with costs associated and a time line for the need.

Cluster development - A form of development design where development is concentrated on a specific portion of a site to allow the remaining land area to be devoted to common space, open space, active recreation, reservation of environmentally sensitive areas, or agriculture at least until a future date.

Collector - A road that delivers traffic from arterial roads to local access roads.

Cost - benefit - A process for identifying and comparing benefits and costs of a project, decision, or policy.

Cost of living - The cost of maintaining a standard of living in terms of housing costs, utilities, food, and other needs.

Cost of services - The amount of money required for a utility or service to operate and maintain facilities, cover capital expenses, and provide an opportunity to earn a profit and maintain adequate reserves.

Density - The number of dwelling units (DU) allowed per unit of land (acre).

Dwelling unit - A room or group of rooms that constitutes an independent housekeeping unit, occupied or intended for occupancy by one household on a long term basis and having permanent provisions for living, cooking, eating, sleeping and sanitation.

Emergency service response time - The amount of time it takes an emergency response team to reach a destination.

Employment areas - Land that is intended to be primarily used for industrial and commercial uses where people are employed.

Energy industry / oil and gas industry - The industry that focuses on the retrieval, processing and selling of petroleum and natural gas products.

Floodplain - The land area on either side of the banks of a stream subject to flooding. The 100-year floodplain is an estimation of the area that would be flooded by a flood event that would only occur once in 100 years.

Fracking / Hydraulic fracturing - A process used to retrieve gas and / or petroleum from source rocks by causing fractures as a result of forcing pressurized fluid into the rock layer.

Frontage road - An access road that runs parallel to a higher speed / capacity road.

Goal - Comprehensive plan goals provide concise statements of what the community aims to accomplish within the next 20 years. The goals add specificity and more detail to the vision. Goals are instrumental in evaluating future land use decisions and then further implemented by the policies, and strategies and actions that follow.

Growth – Physical development and expansion, along with increasing population, of a community over time.

Growth area - A highly developed area that includes or is appurtenant to a place and contains a variety of commercial, residential, and cultural uses or is found appropriate for

future growth due to the presence of existing or planned infrastructure and services and absence of natural constraints to development.

Growth efficiency - A measurement of the proximity of existing and future development to existing infrastructure and services. The closer the proximity, the higher the growth efficiency.

Growth Framework – The proposed land use pattern that is to accommodate projected growth in the county.

Growth Strategy Map - A graphic and written analysis of a desirable and feasible pattern, or alternative patterns indicating the general location, character, extent and relationship of future land uses at specified times.

Housing affordability - The ability not to spend more than a third of one's income on housing and utility costs.

Hydraulic fracturing / fracking- A process used to retrieve gas and / or petroleum from source rocks by causing fractures as a result of forcing pressurized fluid into the rock layer.

Infrastructure - Public services and facilities needed to sustain industry, residential, commercial, and all other activities. Infrastructure includes sewage-disposal systems, water-supply systems, other utility systems, and roads.

Intergovernmental agreement - An agreement established between two or more government agencies or municipalities that outlines a specific unified policy or direction to be honored by all parties involved.

Land use / land use designations - A description of how land is occupied or utilized.

Landscape sensitivity - A weighted measurement of different landscape features to determine areas that would be impacted by development. The more valued landscape features at a location, the higher the landscape sensitivity.

Level of service - A level-of-service (LOS) is a ratio of some measurement of public service or facility (such as water pressure for fire protection) related to population.

Livability - Suitable for living; habitable; comfortable.

Local road - A low-volume road that provides access to individual lots.

Low-density development - Development that occurs sparsely.

Natural Resource Framework - A plan strategy to protect valued natural areas from development impacts.

Non-suitable soils - Soils that do not provide proper drainage rates for septic systems.

Non-urban - Not located in municipalities or developed areas; rural.

Policy - A course of action, guiding principle, or procedure to guide present and future decisions.

Public Facilities Framework - A plan strategy to ensure the provision of adequate public facilities in the county over time.

Pre-application conference - A meeting with the Zoning Administrator or staff where comprehensive plan and zoning code issues are discussed in relation to a specific development proposal prior to the submittal of a land use application.

Prime agricultural land - Land that has been identified by the Department of Agriculture as land that is very agriculturally productive.

Quality of life - A measurement or evaluation of the general well-being of a community and individuals.

Rural area - A sparsely developed area, with low population density, where the land is primarily undeveloped or used for agricultural purposes without urban services such as central sewer service.

Rural Commercial land use - Land where commercial uses are allowed to occur.

Rural Industrial land use - Land where industrial uses are allowed to occur.

Rural Residential land use - Land where residential uses are allowed to occur.

Safe routes to school - A program that identifies walking, biking and vehicle access to schools in order to encourage alternative forms of travel outside of the individual automobile.

Special district - A corporation created by state statute and endowed with a definite governmental organization and revenue raising authority for the purpose of performing a single function or a few related functions.

Stabilization - The enforcement of a roadway to ensure long term integrity.

Strategy - A suggested specific program that can be taken to implement the plan.

Sub-area - An identified smaller, subsidiary area to a larger study area.

Subdivision - A division of a lot, tract, or parcel of land into two or more parts for the purpose of sale or building development.

Submittal requirements - Materials that are to be included with a development or land use application.

Tier One - Areas within a growth area that have existing infrastructure to support development in the near term.

Tier Two - Areas within growth areas that do not yet have infrastructure to support development or are targeted for development at a later date.

Transportation Framework - A strategy of the plan to provide an efficient and adequate transportation system.

Urban residential land use - Land where the urban residential reserve land use pattern is allowed to occur.

Urban residential reserve - An area allowed to develop incrementally with cluster development until a time when planned infrastructure is available and open areas between clusters may be developed.

Vision Statement - A broad description of the desired future condition to be achieved between now and 2035. This vision describes Williams County's assets and values and focuses on moving the community toward achieving the preferred future growth scenario.

Wildlife management area - An area set aside and managed for the sake of protecting wildlife and associated habitat.

Zoning - The delineation of districts and the establishment of regulations governing the use, placement, spacing and size of land and buildings.

Appendix 6 Additional Maps

Maps

Landscape Sensitivity

Growth Efficiency

Williston Future Land Use Plan

Williston Sewer Coverage

Tioga Future Land Use Plan

Epping Growth Area

Grenora Growth Area

Ray Growth Area

Tioga Growth Area

Trenton Growth Area

Wildrose Growth Area

Hwy 2 Sub-area

Hwy 2 Sub-area Plan Concepts

Hwy 82 Sub-area Plan Concepts

Williston Tier 1 Growth Area

Williston Extra-territorial Boundary

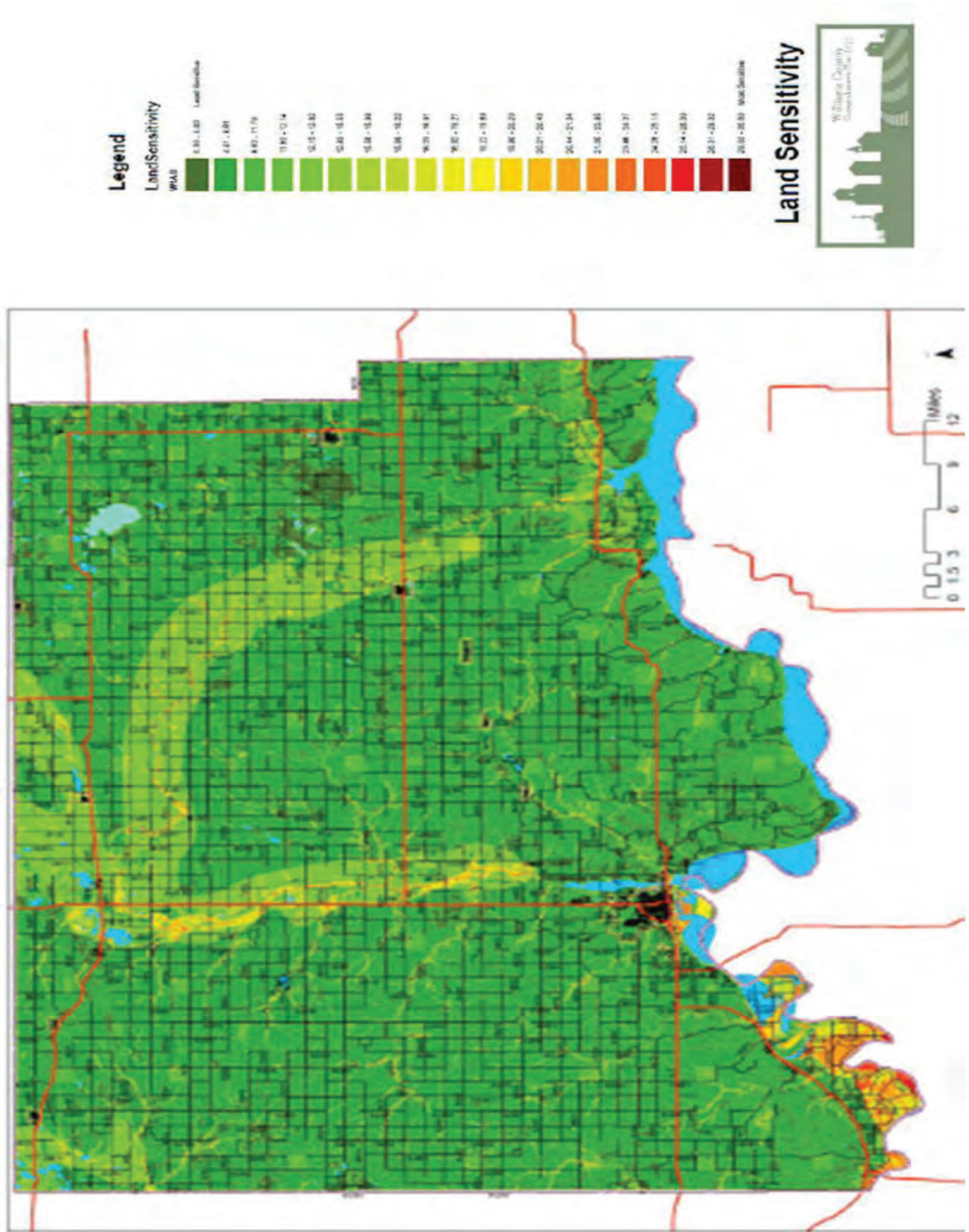


Figure A6-1: Landscape Sensitivity Map

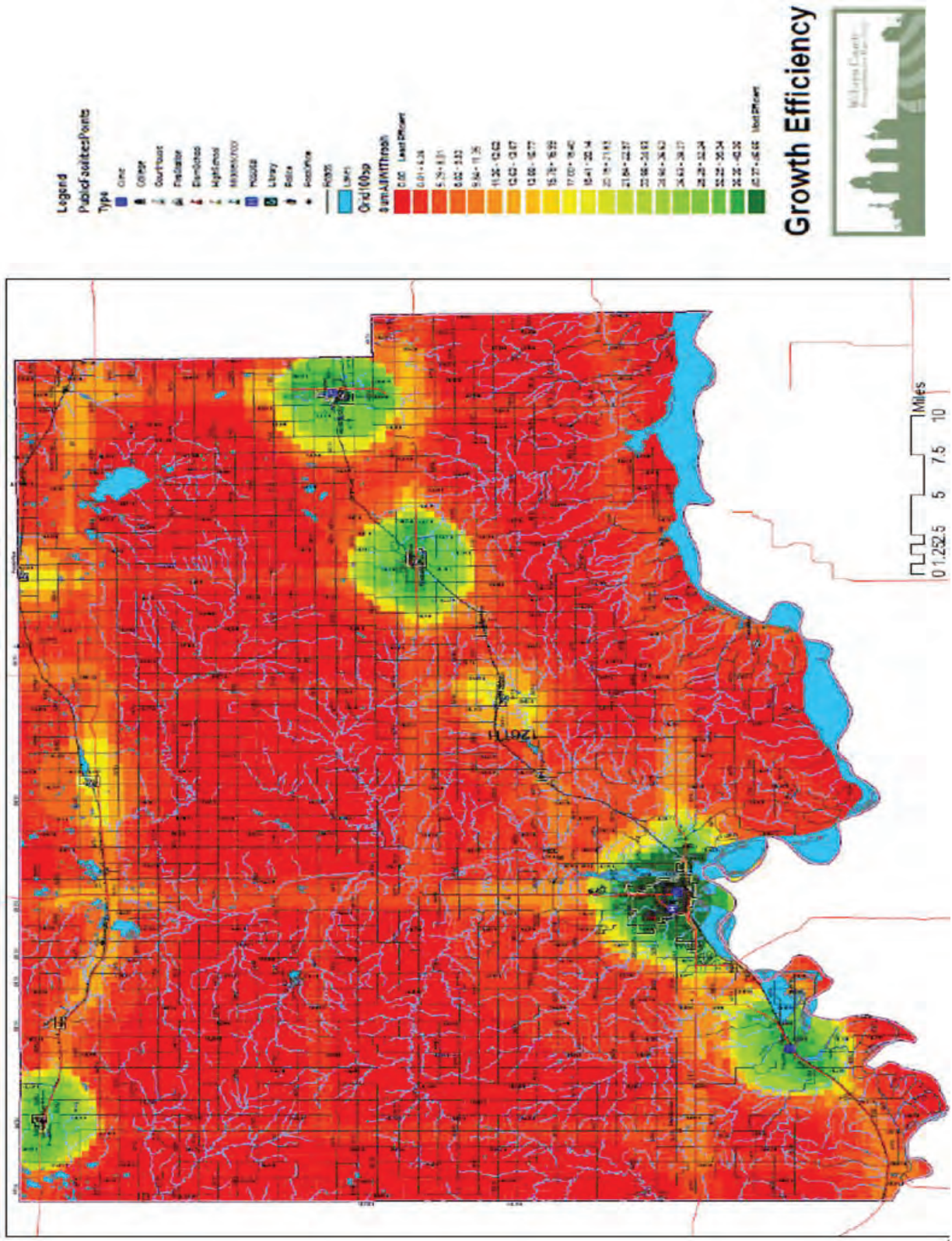


Figure A6-2: Growth Efficiency Map

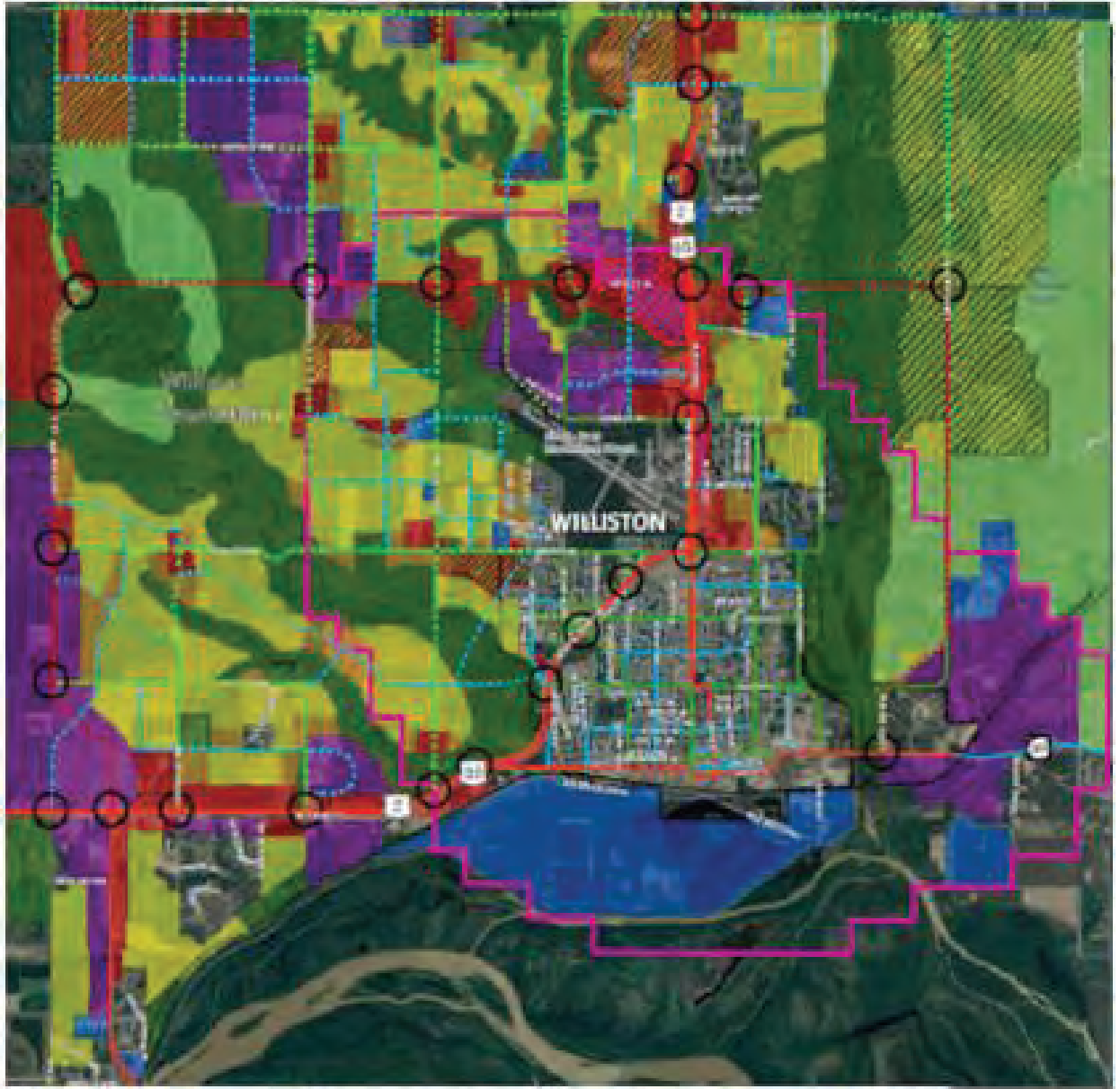


Figure A6-3: City of Williston Future Land Use Plan

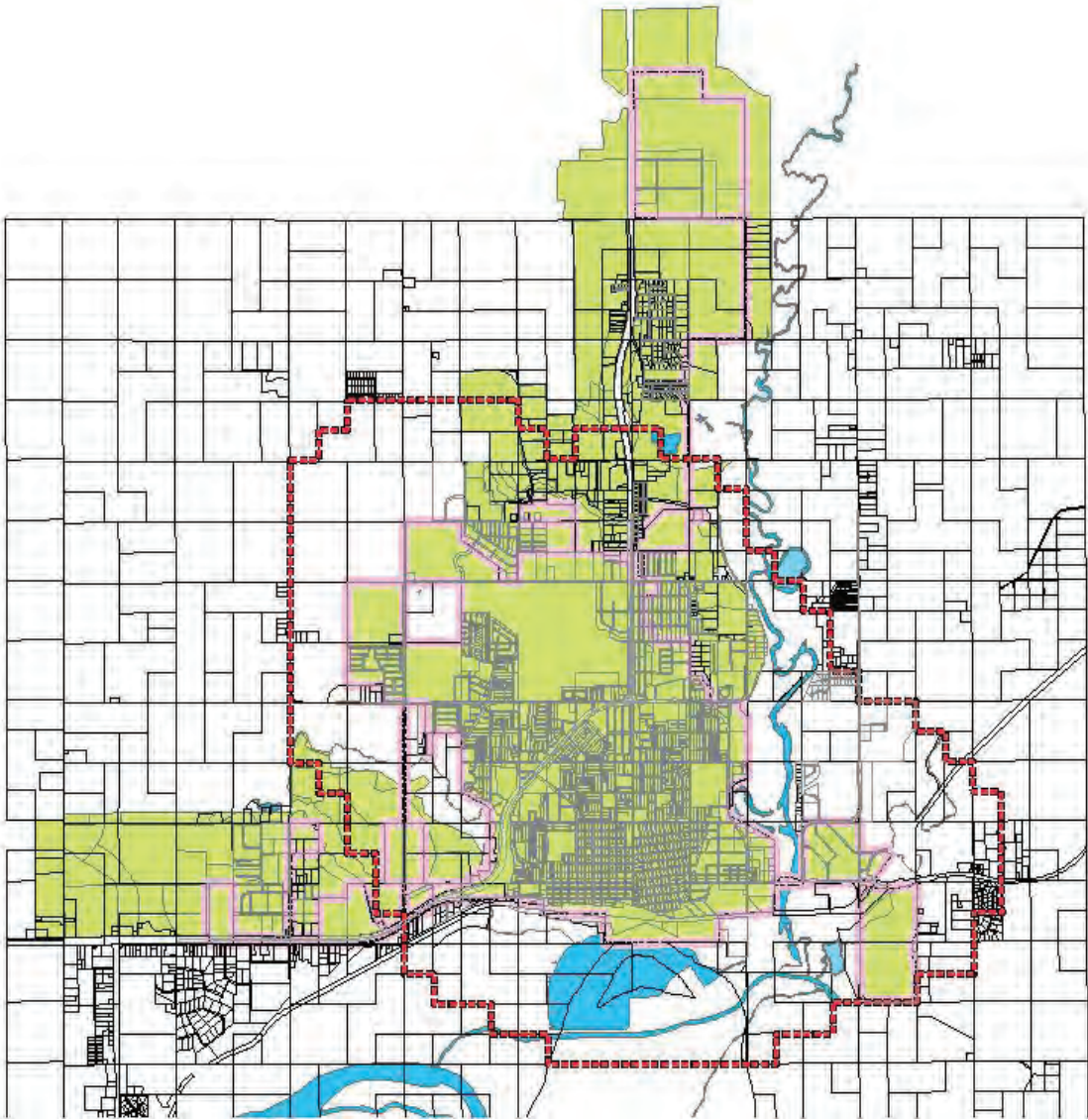


Figure A6-4: City of Williston Sewer Coverage

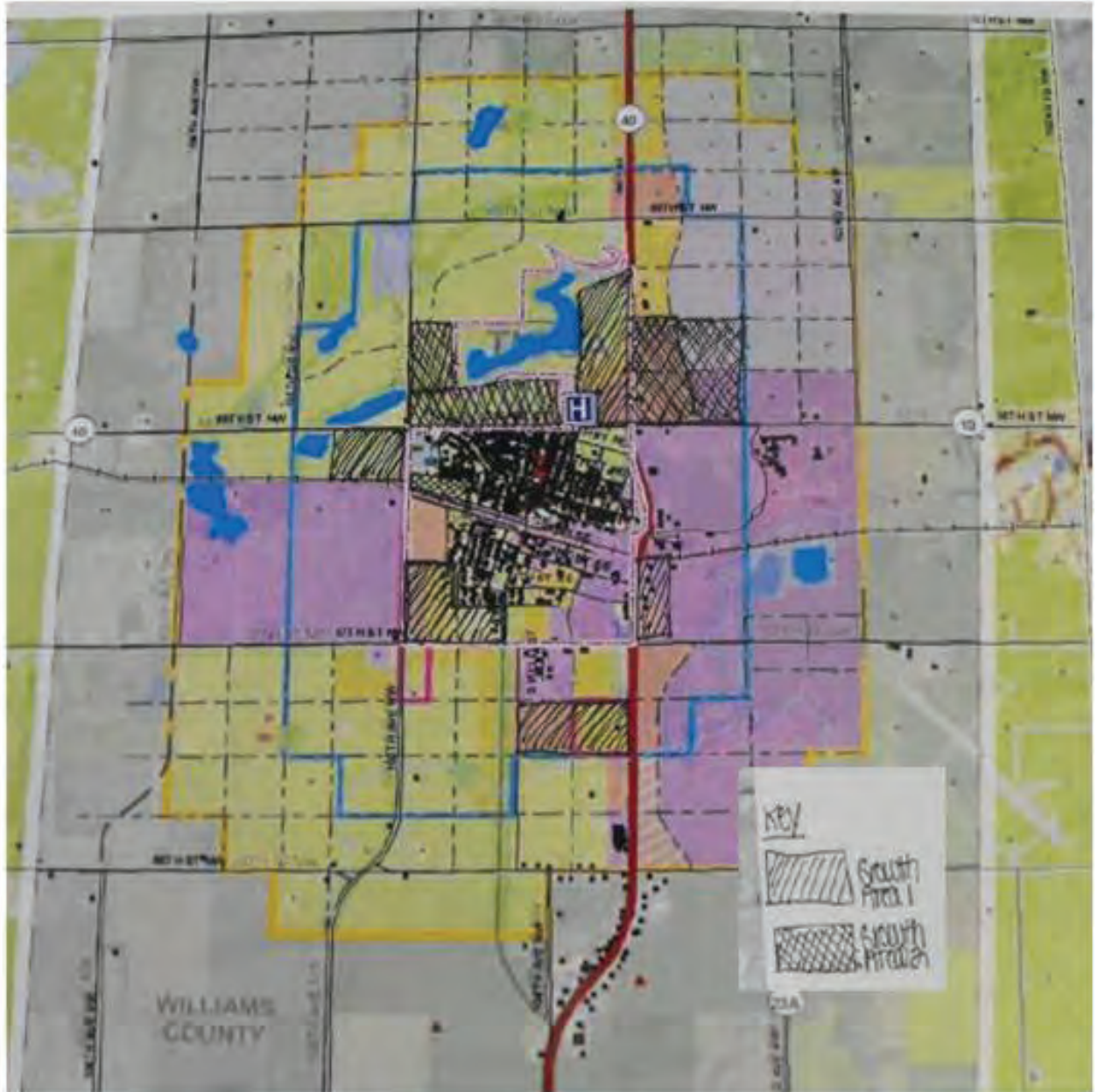


Figure A6-5: City of Tioga Future Land Use map



Figure A6-6: Epping Growth Area



Figure A6-7: Grenora Growth Area



Figure A6-8: Ray Growth Area



Figure A6-9: Figure A6-9-Tioga Growth Area



Figure A6-10: Trenton Growth Area



Figure A6-11: Wildrose Growth Area

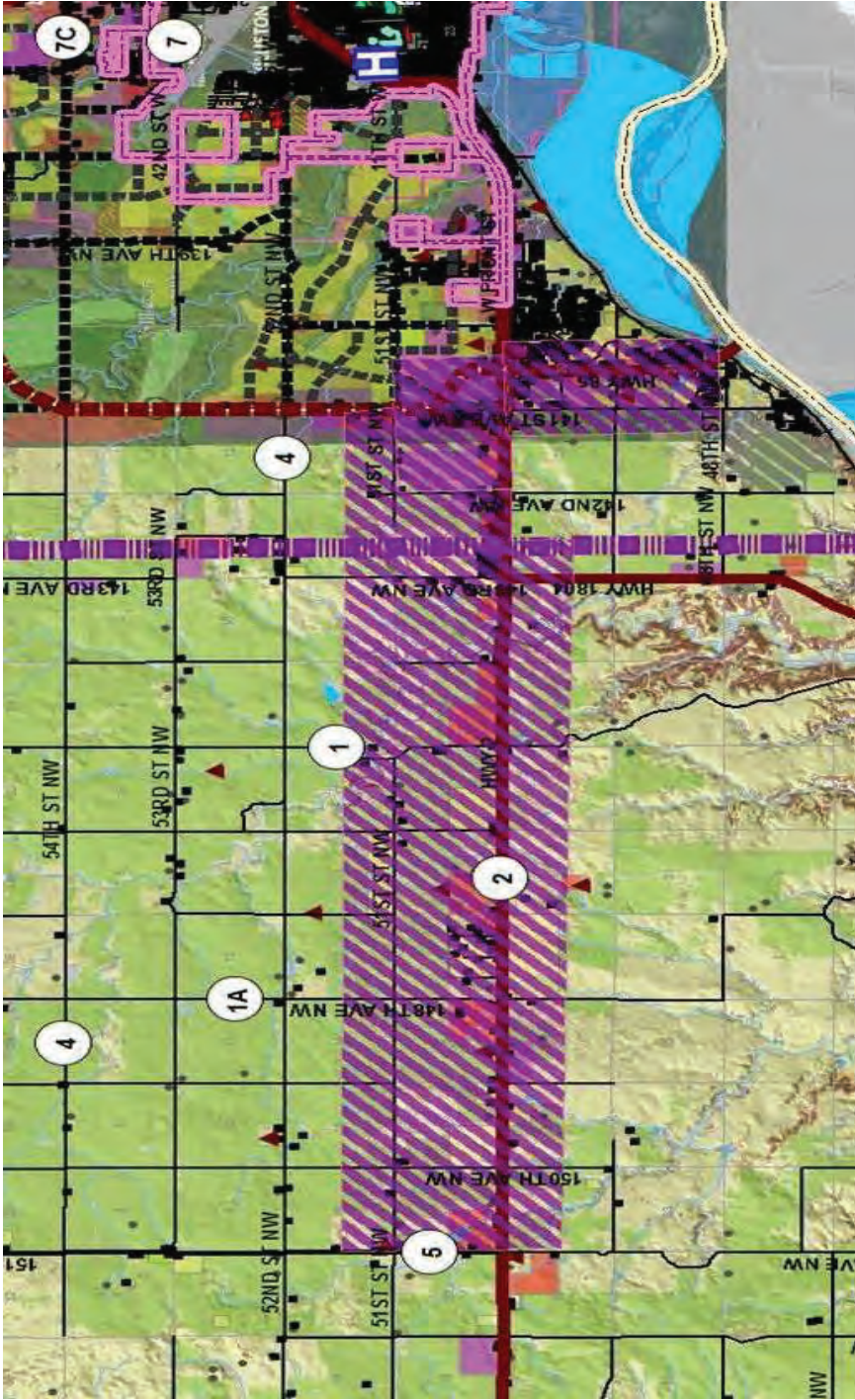


Figure A6-12: Hwy 2 Sub-area

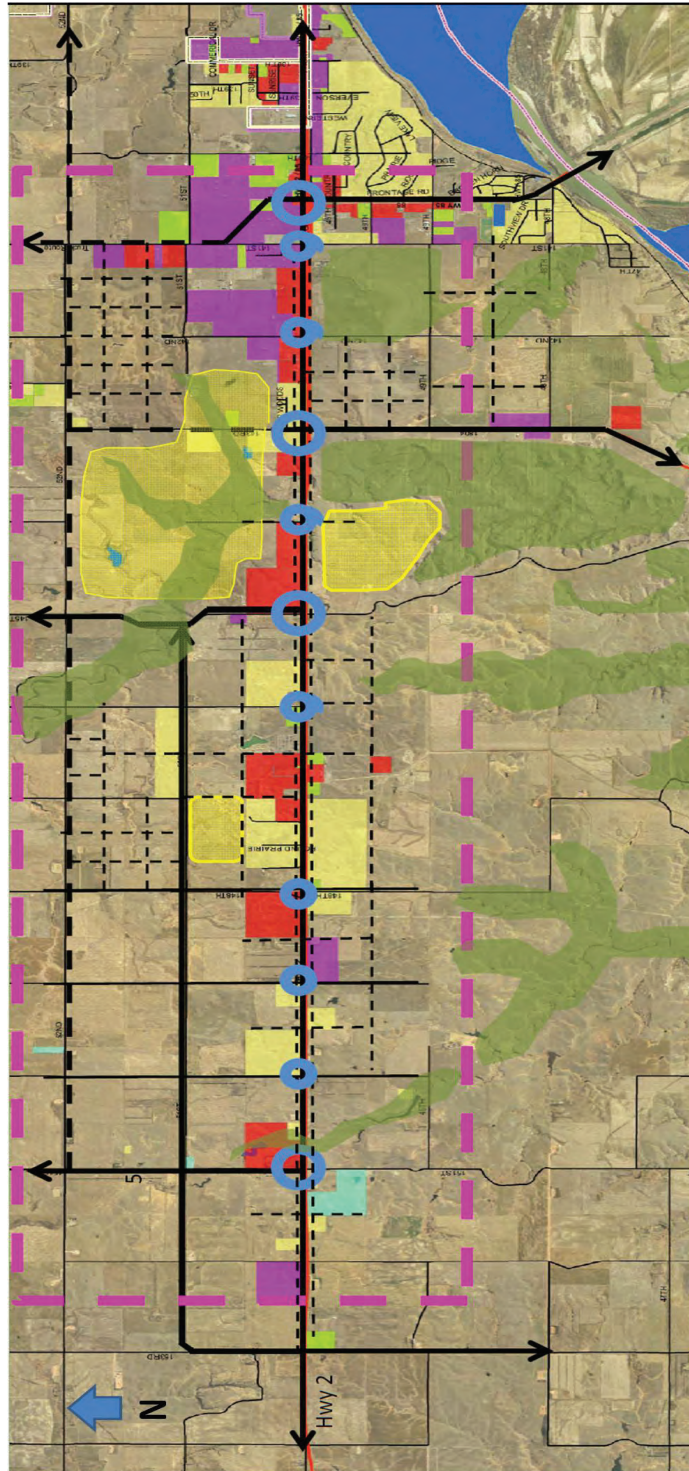


Figure A6-13: Hwy 2 Sub-area Plan Concepts

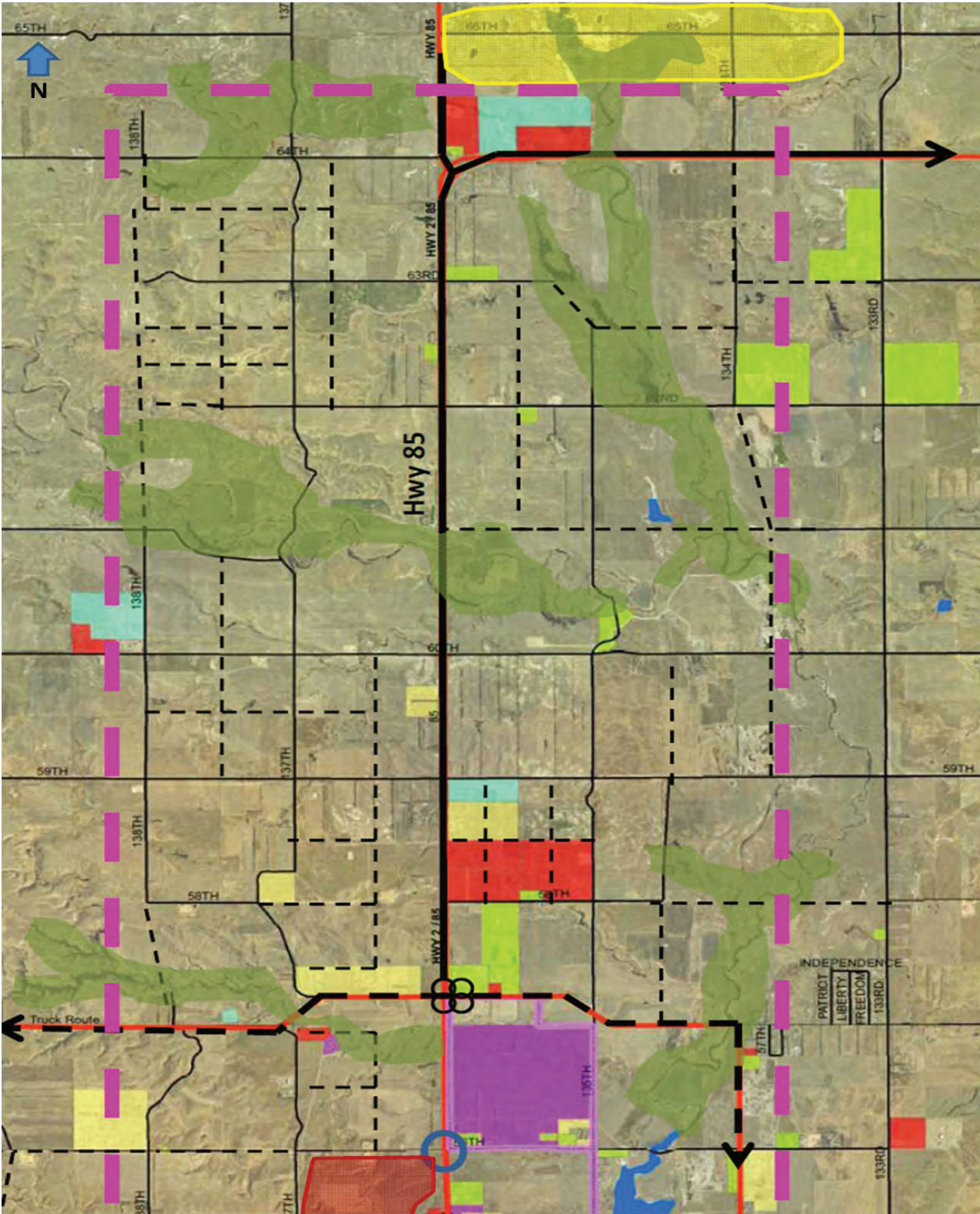


Figure A6-14: Hwy 85 Sub-area Plan Concepts

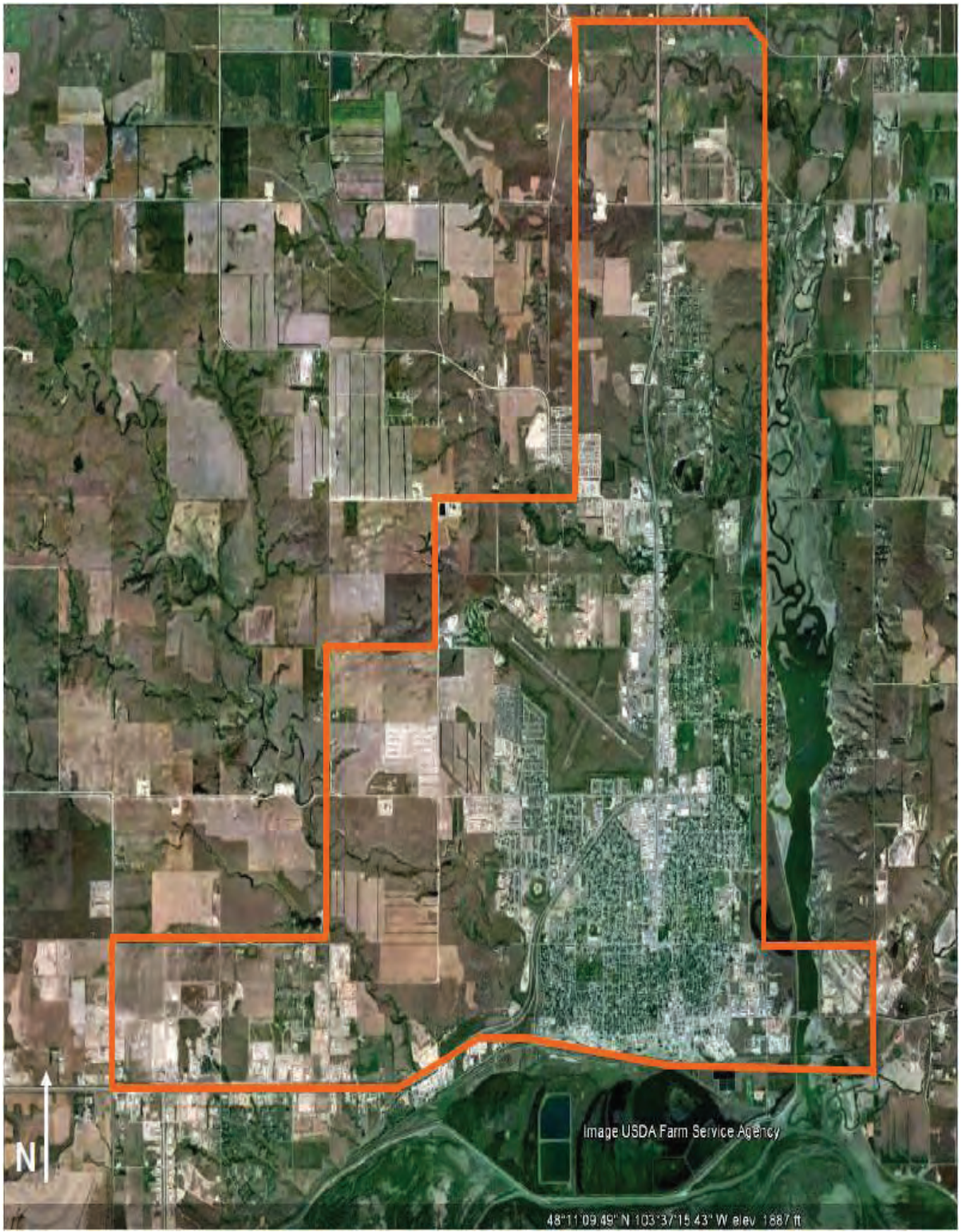


Figure A6-15: Williston Tier 1 Growth Area

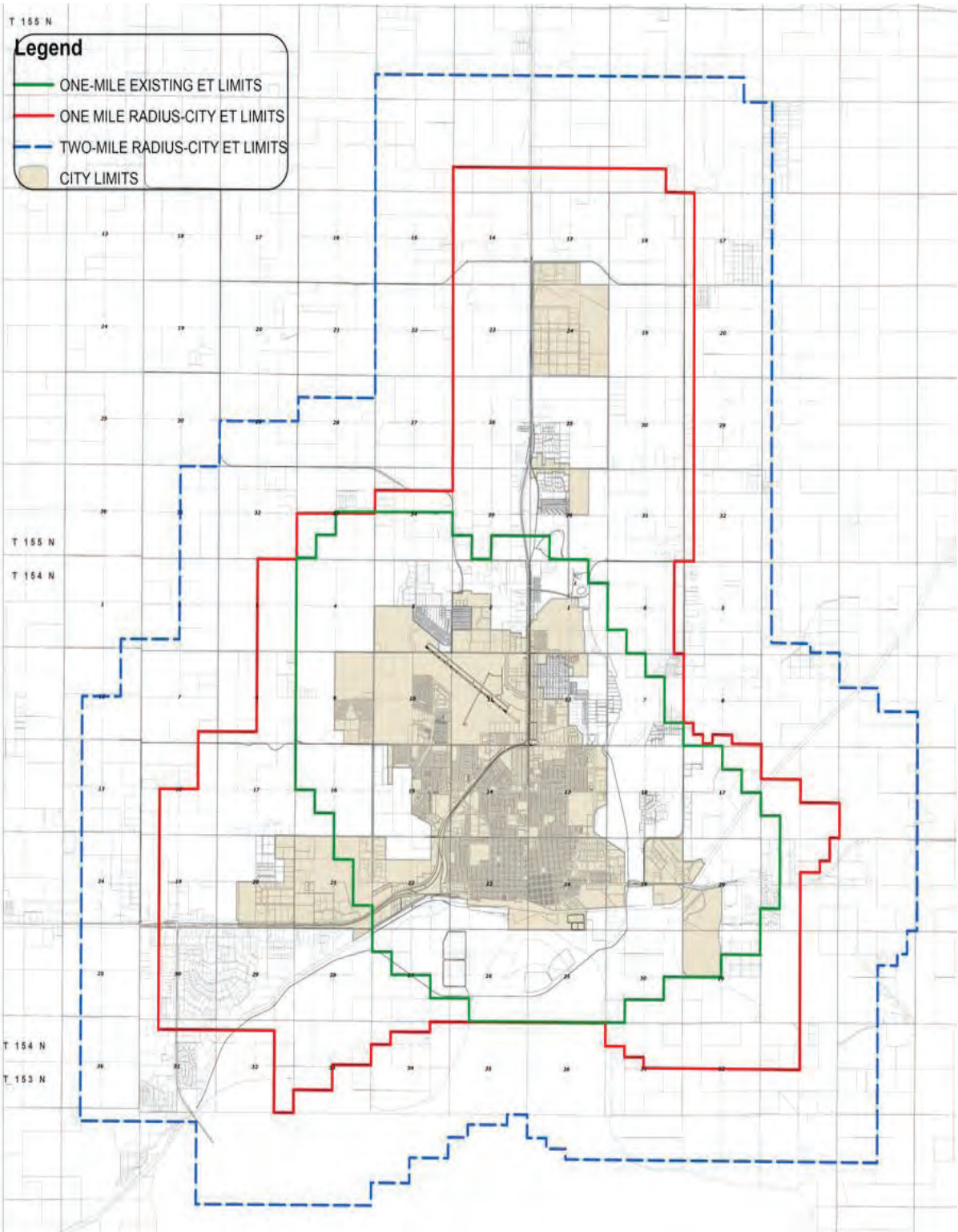


Figure A6-16: Williston Extra-territorial Boundary

