

**C** Community Development Committee  
For the Metropolitan Council meeting of April 27, 2011

Item: 2011-106

**Subject:** City of Afton 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update  
Review File No. 20736-1

**Proposed Action**

That the Metropolitan Council adopt the Advisory Comment and Review Record and take the following actions:

**Recommendations of the Community Development Committee:**

1. Authorize the City of Afton to put its 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update into effect without any plan modifications.
2. Adopt the revised forecasts for population and households for the City of Afton as detailed in Table 1 in the attached Review Record.
3. Advise the City to send to the Council the dates that the Valley Branch, South Washington, and Middle St. Croix Watershed districts approve the City's local surface water management plan (SWMP), the date that the City adopts the final SWMP, and a copy of the final SWMP.

**Summary of Committee Discussion / Questions:**

Senior Planner LisaBeth Barajas presented the staff report to the Community Development Committee. Barajas introduced Afton City Council member Peg Nolz and Planning Commission Chair Barbara Ronningen.

The Committee unanimously adopted the proposed actions.

**C** Community Development Committee  
Meeting date: April 18, 2011

**ADVISORY INFORMATION**

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject:</b>                  | City of Afton 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update<br>Review File No. 20736-1   |
| <b>District(s), Member(s):</b>   | District 12, Council Member Harry Melander  |
| <b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>   | Minnesota Statutes Section 473.175  |
| <b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b> | LisaBeth Barajas, Principal Reviewer, 651-602-1895<br>Phyllis Hanson, Local Planning Assistance Manager, 651-602-1566 |
| <b>Division/Department:</b>      | Community Development / Planning & Growth Management  |

**Proposed Action**

That the Metropolitan Council adopt the Advisory Comment and Review Record and take the following actions:

**Recommendations of the Community Development Committee:**

1. Authorize the City of Afton to put its 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update into effect without any plan modifications.
2. Adopt the revised forecasts for population and households for the City of Afton as detailed in Table 1 in the attached Review Record.
3. Advise the City to send to the Council the dates that the Valley Branch, South Washington, and Middle St. Croix Watershed districts approve the City's local surface water management plan (SWMP), the date that the City adopts the final SWMP, and a copy of the final SWMP.

## ADVISORY COMMENTS

### City of Afton 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update

Review File No. 20736-1 – Council Business Item No. 2011-106

The following Advisory Comments are part of the Council action authorizing the City to implement its 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update (“Update”):

#### Community Development Committee

1. The Council-adopted *Local Planning Handbook* states that the City must take the following steps:
  - a. Adopt the Update in final form after considering the Council’s review recommendations; and
  - b. Submit one electronic copy and one hard copy of the Update to the Council. The electronic copy must be organized as one unified document.
  - c. Submit to the Council a copy of the City Council resolution evidencing final approval of the Update.
2. The Council’s *Handbook* also states that local governments must formally adopt their comprehensive plans within nine months after the Council’s final action. If the Council has recommended changes, local governments should incorporate those recommended changes into the plan or respond to the Council before “final approval” of the comprehensive plan by the governing body of the local governmental unit. (Minn. Stat. § 473.858, subd. 3)
3. Local governmental units must adopt official controls as described in their adopted comprehensive plans and must submit copies of the official controls to the Council within 30 days after official controls are adopted. (Minn. Stat. § 473.865, subd. 1)
4. Local governmental units cannot adopt any official controls or fiscal devices that conflict with their comprehensive plans or which permit activities in conflict with the Council’s metropolitan system plans (Minn. Stat. §§ 473.864, subd. 2; 473.865, subd. 2). If official controls conflict with comprehensive plans, the official controls must be amended within nine months following amendments to comprehensive plans (Minn. Stat. § 473.865, subd. 3).

## Background

The City of Afton is located in eastern Washington County on the St. Croix River. The City is bordered by West Lakeland Township to the north; the Cities of Lakeland, Lake St. Croix Beach, and St. Marys Point to the northeast; Denmark Township to the south; the City of Cottage Grove to the southwest; the City of Woodbury to the west; and the City of Lake Elmo to the northwest (see Figure 1).

The *2030 Regional Development Framework* identifies the City as a Diversified Rural planning area. The City submitted its City of Afton Comprehensive Plan (Update) to the Council for review to meet the Metropolitan Land Planning Act requirements (Minn. Stat. 473.175) and the Council's 2005 System Statement requirements.

## Rationale

1. Does the proposed Update conform to Regional Systems Plans?
2. Is the Update consistent with Metropolitan Council policies?
3. Is the Update compatible with the plans of adjacent governmental units and plans of affected special districts and school districts?

### Conformance with Regional Systems Plans

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. Regional Parks   | Yes |
| 2. Transportation, including Aviation   | Yes |
| 3. Water Resources Management<br>(Wastewater Services and Surface Water Management) | Yes |

### Consistent with Council Policy Requirements

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1. Forecasts   | Yes |
| 2. Housing   | Yes |
| 3. <i>2030 Regional Development Framework</i> and Land Use | Yes |
| 4. Individual Sewage Treatment Systems (ISTS) Program      | Yes |
| 5. Water Supply  | Yes |

### Compatible with the Plans of Adjacent Governmental Units and Plans of Affected Special Districts and School Districts

- |                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Compatible with other plans | Yes |
|-----------------------------|-----|

## Funding

The City has received the first half of a \$15,000 planning grant from the Council to facilitate completion of the Update.

## Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition.

## REVIEW RECORD

### Review of the City of Afton 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update

#### STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The Metropolitan Land Planning Act (MLPA) requires local units of government to submit comprehensive plans (plans) and plan amendments to the Council for review and comment (Minn. Stat. § 473.864, Subd. 2). The Council reviews plans to determine:

- *Conformance with metropolitan system plans,*
- *Consistency with other adopted Plans of the Council, and*
- *Compatibility with the Plans of other local jurisdictions in the Metropolitan Area.*

The Council may require a local governmental unit to modify any plan or part thereof if, upon the adoption of findings and a resolution, the Council concludes that the Update is more likely than not to have a substantial impact on or contain a substantial departure from metropolitan system plans (Minn. Stat. § 473.175, Subd. 1).

Each local government unit shall adopt a policy plan for the collection, treatment and disposal of sewage for which the local government unit is responsible, coordinated with the Metropolitan Council's plan, and may revise the same as often as it deems necessary. Each such plan shall be submitted to the Council for review and shall be subject to the approval of the Council as to those features affecting the Council's responsibilities as determined by the Council. Any such features disapproved by the Council shall be modified in accordance with the Council's recommendations (Minn. Stat. § 473.513).

#### CONFORMANCE WITH REGIONAL SYSTEMS

##### Regional Parks

*Reviewer: Jan Youngquist, CD – Regional Parks System Planning, (651-602-1029)*

The Update conforms to the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. The Update acknowledges the regional parks system facilities within the City, which include the planned St. Croix Valley and Afton Bluffs Regional Trails.

##### Transportation

###### *Roads and Transit*

*Reviewer: Ann Braden, MTS – Systems Planning, (651-602-1705)*

The Update conforms to the *2030 Transportation Policy Plan* (TPP) adopted in 2004, and addresses all the applicable transportation and transit requirements of a comprehensive plan.

The City is served by one principal arterial, I-94, as well as several "A" Minor arterials. The City is outside of the Metropolitan Transit Taxing district; therefore, no regular route transit service exists or is planned in the City.

###### *Aviation*

*Reviewer: Chauncey Case, MTS – Systems Planning, (651-602-1724)*

The Update conforms to the TPP for aviation and is consistent with Council policy.

##### Water Resources Management

###### *Wastewater Service*

*Reviewer: Kyle Colvin, ES – Engineering Services, (651-602-1151)*

The Update conforms to the *2030 Water Resources Management Policy Plan* (WRMPP). The Update represents the City's guide for future growth and development through the year 2030. The City is entirely provided with wastewater service through the use of

private wastewater systems, or SSTs. The Update indicates continued wastewater services will be provided through the use of SSTs through 2030.

The Update does not propose, nor anticipate, requesting connection to the Regional Wastewater Disposal system within the 20-year planning period. Therefore, the City is not required to submit a Tier II Comprehensive Sanitary Sewer Plan for approval.

The Metropolitan Council does not have plans to provide regional wastewater services to the community within the 2030 planning period.

### **Surface Water Management**

*Reviewer: Judy Sventek, ES – Water Resources Assessment, (651-602-1156)*

The Update conforms to the Council's WRMPP for local surface water management. The City lies within the Valley Branch, South Washington, and Middle St. Croix watersheds. The Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization's watershed management plan was approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) in 2005. BWSR approved the Valley Branch and South Washington Watershed District's watershed management plans in 2005 and 2007 respectively.

The City submitted a surface water management plan (SWMP) to the Council for review in November 2010 that was reviewed under separate cover. The Council provided comments to the City regarding the SWMP on November 23, 2010. After additional information was received and reviewed by Council staff, the SWMP was found to be consistent with Council policy and with the Council's WRMPP.

#### Advisory Comments

The City needs to send to the Council the dates that the watersheds approve the City's SWMP, the date that the City adopts the final SWMP, and a copy of the final SWMP.

## **CONSISTENCY WITH COUNCIL POLICY**

### **Forecasts**

*Reviewer: Todd Graham, CD - Research, (651-602-1322)*

The Update, with supplemental materials dated November 30, 2010, and January 3, 2011, is consistent with Council expectations.

The supplemental information is premised on reduced growth expectations. Council staff have corresponded with the City in October 2010 and consider reduced forecasts to be reasonable and acceptable. Council staff have reviewed the supplemental information and consider the forecasts to be reasonable and acceptable.

These forecasts appear on page 33 of supplemental information received November 30 and December 30:

**Table 1. City of Afton Revised Forecasts**

|            | 2010  | 2020  | 2030  |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Population | 2,950 | 3,100 | 3,200 |
| Households | 1,100 | 1,200 | 1,250 |
| Employment | 450   | 560   | 630   |

For reference, the City's System Statement forecasts are shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. City of Afton System Statement Forecasts**

|            | 2010  | 2020  | 2030  |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Population | 3,250 | 3,650 | 4,050 |
| Households | 1,150 | 1,350 | 1,550 |
| Employment | 450   | 560   | 630   |

Metropolitan Council's forecasts will be revised as shown in Table 1 above, effective upon Council action on the Update.

All of the households, population, and employment in the City are served by private septic systems. Metropolitan Council, in approving the forecast revisions above, expects this to remain the case. Council staff notes that the Update indicates a possibility of a future municipal plant serving the Old Village area. Such development could affect the Council's forecasts in the future.

### **2030 Regional Development Framework and Land Use**

*Reviewer: Lisa Barajas, CD – Local Planning Assistance, (651-602-1895)*

The Update is consistent with the *2030 Regional Development Framework (RDF)* for land use. The RDF designates the City as a Diversified Rural Area, directing cities to plan for densities no greater than one housing unit per 10 acres. Typically, these communities include a mix of a limited amount of large-lot residential and clustered housing with agricultural and other uses. Diversified Rural Areas are expected to accommodate forecasted growth without requiring the provision of regional urban services. In addition, these communities are expected to protect natural resources, to prevent scattered rural residential development, and to adopt conservation subdivision, cluster, or other environmental protection provisions in their ordinances.

The Update also contains a chapter on environmental resources within the community and the City's policies for protecting resources in the community, including surface waters, groundwater, wildlife habitat, steep slopes, and viewsheds within the community. As can be seen in the attached Figure 3, the City is home to a significant amount of natural resources, particularly heading east toward the St. Croix River.

As shown in Table 3 below, the City is largely rural, with nearly half of the land being guided as Agriculture and a larger amount as Rural Residential. Similar to other communities along the St. Croix River, Afton has a historic town center in the Village Historic Site (VHS). Densities in the Village are higher than in the surrounding rural area, and commercial uses are generally concentrated here, with the Marina Services district located just to the north. This area is also served by a "201 sewage treatment system," which is overseen by Washington County as discussed in the SSTS section of this report below.

The Update continues the existing planned land uses throughout the remainder of the City, which is guided as Rural Residential and Agriculture with Afton State Park guided as Park in the southeast and Industrial uses adjacent to I-94 in the north (see Figure 4). The Rural Residential areas are generally located in the eastern half of the community and reflect and complement existing development patterns. These areas allow lot sizes as small as 5 acres, but as described in the Update, with the steep topography and the minimum buildable area requirement of at least 2.5 acres of contiguous land, the City expects that the average density attainable in this district to be about 1 unit per 10 acres.

The Agriculture district is located mostly in the western half of the community, with pockets in the northeast and southeast. The Agriculture district is intended to preserve agricultural land for permanent agricultural use. To that end, the Update guides lands enrolled in the Agricultural Preserve program at densities no greater than 1 unit per 40

acres, with the remainder of the district guided at 1 unit per 10 acres, subject to preservation and land conservation requirements for conservation or continued farming purposes.

**Table 3. Land Use District Acreages**

| District                    | Acres         |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Agriculture                 | 7,180         |
| Rural Residential           | 7,702         |
| Village Historic Site (VHS) | 176           |
| Industrial                  | 289           |
| Marine Services             | 25            |
| State Park                  | 793           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>16,165</b> |

**Housing**

*Reviewer: Linda Milashius, CD – Livable Communities, (651-602-1541)*

The housing element of the Update fulfills the affordable housing planning requirements of the Metropolitan Land Planning Act (MLPA). Afton is a community that does not have a numerical share of the regional feed for affordable housing. The Update provides an assessment of the housing stock, and provides goals and strategies that the City will use to address its local housing needs. The Update indicates that the City will work with Washington County and the Washington County HRA to address low- and moderate-income housing needs, and to identify resources to maintain and advance housing affordability in the community.

**Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS)**

*Reviewer: Jim Larsen, CD – Local Planning Assistance, (651-602-1159)*

The Update is consistent with the WRMP for SSTS. The Update indicates that there are 1,119 individual SSTS and one community treatment system serving 11 homes currently in operation within the community. The City has entered into an agreement with Washington County to oversee its SSTS maintenance program. The County's program is consistent with MPCA Rules and with Council policy requirements.

**Water Supply**

*Reviewer: Christopher Elvrum, ES – Water Supply Planning, (651-602-1066)*

The Update is consistent with the Council's policies for water supply and with the WRMP. Since the City does not have a municipal water supply system, it is not required to prepare a water supply plan.

**Resource Protection**

**Historic Preservation**

*Reviewer: Lisa Barajas, CD – Local Planning Assistance, (651-602-1895)*

The Update addresses historic preservation as required by the MLPA. The Update details the historic properties and the Historic District of the Old Village within the community. The Update also describes policies for preservation of historic structures and character.

**Solar Access Protection**

*Reviewer: Lisa Barajas, CD – Local Planning Assistance, (651-602-1895)*

The Update addresses solar access protection as required by the MLPA. The Update contains policies to protect access through zoning tools and standards. The Update also indicates that the City will review and revise, as necessary, the zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure the protection of solar access.



## **Aggregate Resources Protection**

*Reviewer: Jim Larsen, CD – Local Planning Assistance, (651-602-1159)*

The Update contains a section on aggregate resources protection as required by the MLPA. *Minnesota Geological Survey Information Circular 46* indicates a presence of over 3,000 acres of potentially viable aggregate resources in the community. The locations of these resources are identified on Map 4 in the Update. Most of the areas where aggregate resources are located are either existing developed residential neighborhoods, or are encumbered by permanent conservation easements. The remaining areas are zoned primarily industrial, which allows for extraction through a permitting process outlined in City Code Chapter 12, Article X.

## **PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

*Reviewer: Lisa Barajas, CD – Local Planning Assistance, (651-602-1895)*

The Update includes a description of and schedule for any necessary changes to:

- Capital Improvement Program Yes
- Zoning Code Yes
- Subdivision Code Yes
- ISTS Code Yes
- Housing Implementation Program Yes

The Update contains an Implementation Plan, which describes the official controls and fiscal devices that the City will employ to implement the Update, with a plan for revising or modifying ordinances to implement the plan. Specific implementation strategies are contained in individual chapters of the Update, with capital improvements planning detailed in the Capital Improvement Program chapter.

## **COMPATIBILITY WITH PLANS OF ADJACENT GOVERNMENTAL UNITS AND PLANS OF AFFECTED SPECIAL DISTRICTS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

The City submitted its Update to the adjacent communities, Washington County, affected school districts, affected watershed districts, and other special districts for comment on January 15, 2009. There do not appear to be any conflicts with the plans of adjacent and affected jurisdictions.

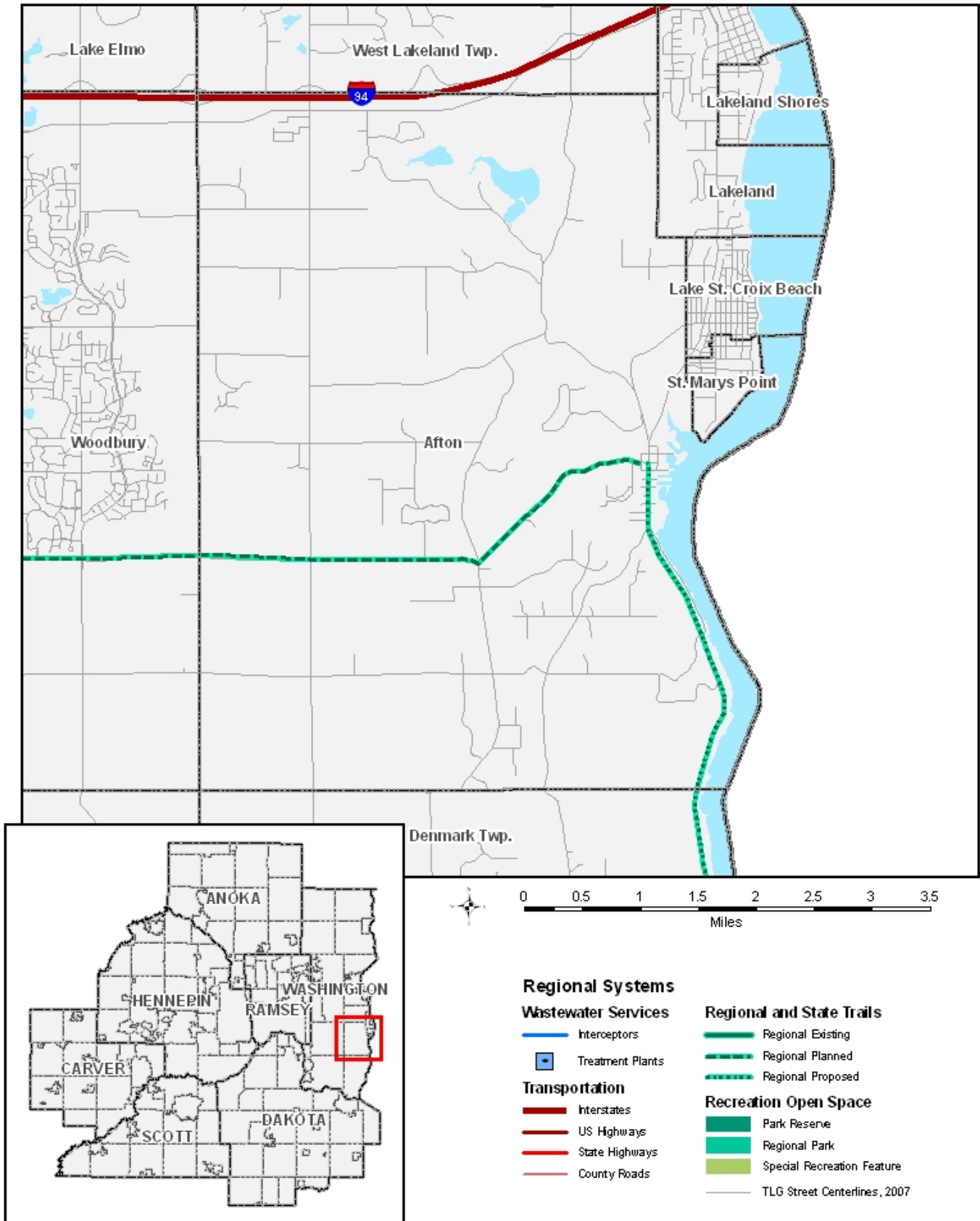
## **DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW**

- City of Afton Comprehensive Plan (April 9, 2010)
- Local Surface Water Management Plan (November 15, 2010)
- Revisions to aggregate resources, forecasts, housing, SSTS, land use, parks, solar access, surface water management, and transportation (December 9, 2010)
- ISTS Inspection Agreement between City and Washington County (December 13, 2010)
- Revisions to forecasts, SWMP, and transportation (December 30, 2010)

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Figure 1: Location Map with Regional Systems
- Figure 2: 2030 Regional Development Framework Planning Areas
- Figure 3: Existing Land Use
- Figure 4: 2030 Planned Land Use
- Figure 5: Existing and Future Land Use Tables

**Figure 1. Location Map with Regional Systems**



**Figure 2. 2030 Regional Development Framework Planning Areas**

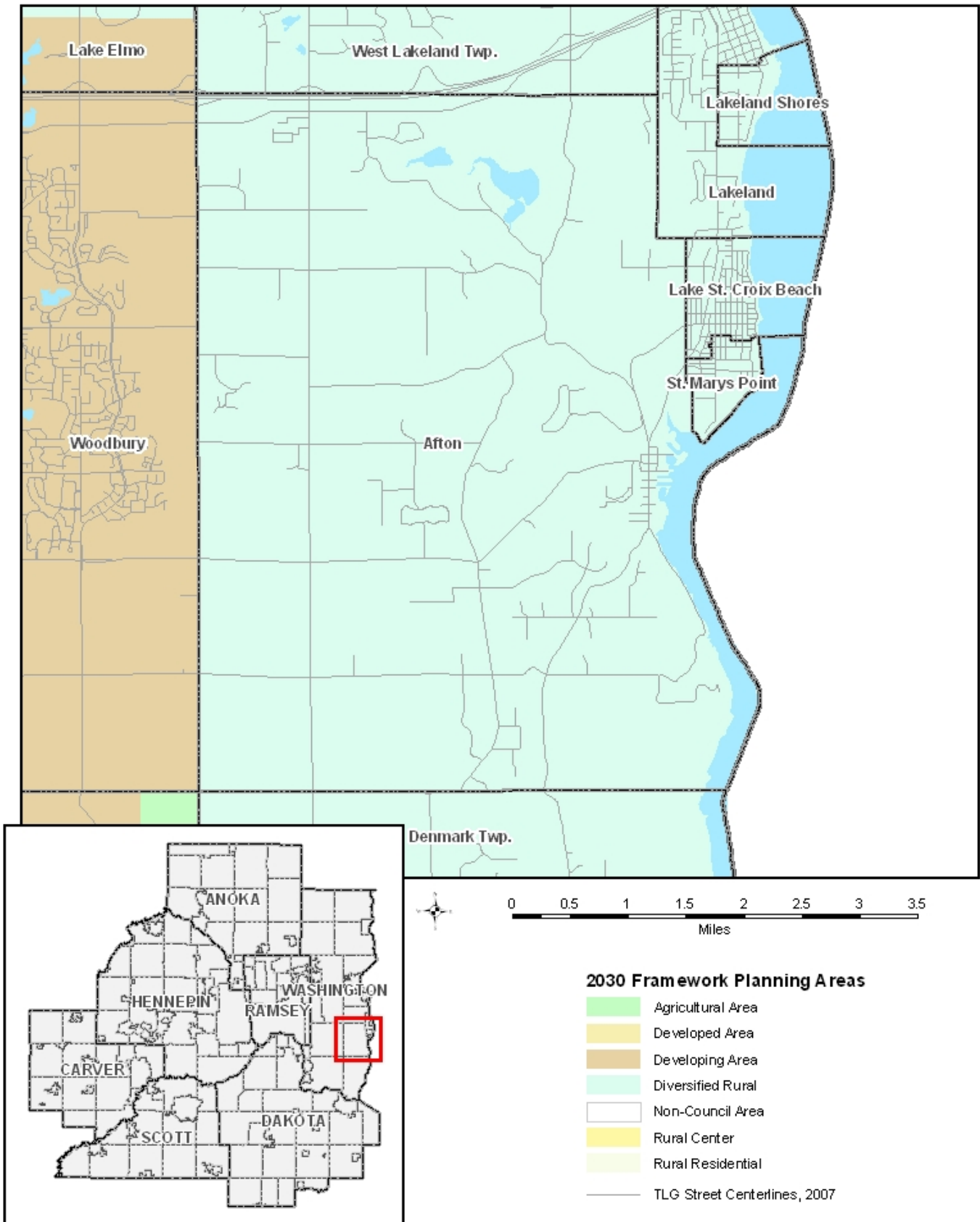


Figure 3. Existing Land Use

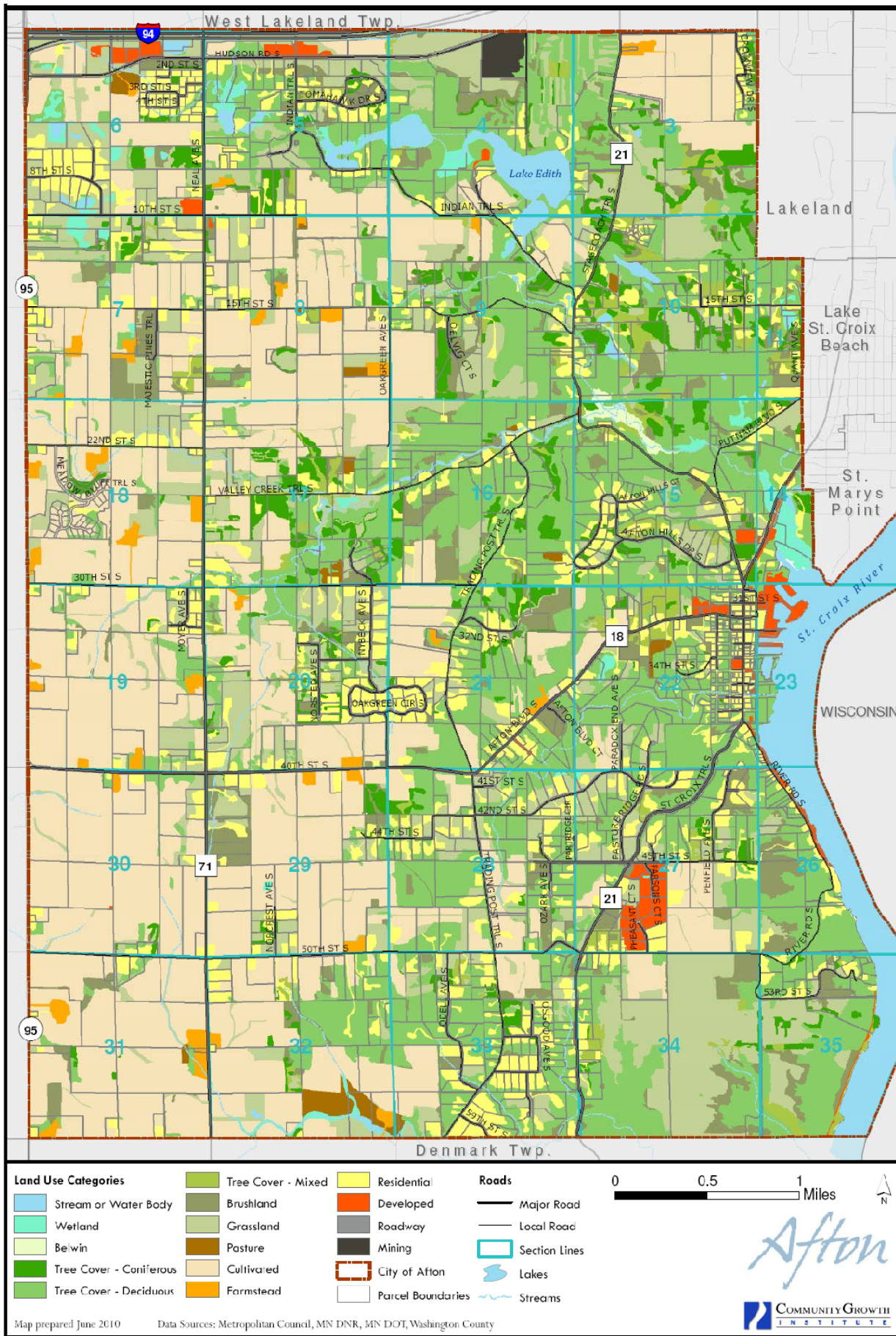


Figure 4. 2030 Planned Land Use

