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# ALEXANDRIA TOWNSHIP

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## PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING PACKET FOR  
November 23, 2015



**PRELIMINARY AGENDA**  
**Alexandria Township Planning Commission**  
**November 23, 2015**  
**6:00 p.m. – Township Conference Room**

**Call to Order**

**Adopt Agenda**

**Approve Minutes**

October 26, 2015

**Public Hearing**

1. None

**Zoning Administrator's Report**

**New Business:**

**Old Business:**

1. Discussion – Comprehensive Plan Update Draft

**Adjournment**

\*\*NOTE: This is a preliminary agenda, subject to change at any time.

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## STAFF REPORT

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**Issue:** Discussion - Comprehensive Plan Update Draft

**Agenda Item:** Old Business - 1

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**Background:** Over the past months, the Township Planning Commission has been reviewing various sections of the Comprehensive Plan and drafting updates as determined necessary.

A full copy of the draft updates to the Comprehensive Plan, along with new amendments to Sections I and II are enclosed for review.

At the point that the Commission feels the draft update are ready, a public hearing will need to be scheduled. Eventually, the Commission would make a recommendation to adopt any amendments to the Town Board, who would make a final decision whether or not to adopt the updates.

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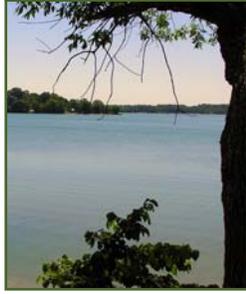
This Plan was **originally** prepared by the Community Growth Institute in partnership with the Citizens of Alexandria Township, Minnesota. The Alexandria Township Town Board officially adopted the Plan on July 3, 2006. **The plan was updated in XXXXX, 2015 with assistance from Hometown Planning.**

# Alexandria Township



## I. Introduction

Situated in the heart of the Alexandria Lakes Region of West Central Minnesota, Alexandria Township is blessed with an abundance and variety of natural, cultural and economic resources. Located adjacent to the City of Alexandria, the Township benefits from a vibrant and entrepreneurial local economy that includes a strong employment base in manufacturing, health care, education and service as well as a growing retail sector of the economy. Culturally, the city and surrounding townships provide a strong “small town” and “rural” character that is becoming increasingly attractive to those seeking to escape the traffic congestion, noise and dense housing of larger urban areas. In addition, the Township is part of a broader region containing a variety of natural amenities that include productive agricultural soils, numerous woodlands, prairies, wetlands and small ponds that provide habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife, and an abundance of lakes and streams that provide excellent recreational opportunities.



This unique combination of amenities, combined with the increasing accessibility and connectedness of small towns and rural areas to the wider world, ~~has~~ contributed to ~~the~~ rapid growth in the population of the township ~~between 1970 and 2000~~~~over the last 10-15 years~~ – making it the sixth largest township in the State according to the 2000 Census. ~~Since 2000, the Township’s population has declined significantly due to a 2002 orderly annexation agreement that culminated in 2012. While~~ ~~†~~The growth ~~over the past several decades and the continued expansion of residential and other development expected in the future~~ has certainly brought many benefits to the Township and surrounding area, ~~–~~ it has also challenged leaders to find ways to balance the various infrastructure and service demands with the desire to maintain the scenic and ecological amenities that make the township so desirable in the first place.



The list of factors changing the landscape of the township includes the increasing demand for city services in areas near the City of Alexandria, ~~which has resulted in the recent orderly annexation agreement with the City of Alexandria that will convert approximately one half of the Township to city jurisdiction by the time the four phases of annexation are completed in 2014.~~ Other trends include the ~~rapid~~~~continued~~ subdivision of lakeshore areas previously viewed as undesirable or impractical for development and the expansion of new residential neighborhoods into agricultural ~~and other rural~~ areas where farming, ~~hunting and open space uses have~~ ~~has~~ been occurring for generations – raising concerns about topics as broad as water quality, wildlife habitat, increased boat traffic on area lakes, groundwater contamination and the ability of farmers to continue operating as they are steadily encroached upon by urban growth.

The process to create this Comprehensive Plan is borne out of the recognition of four basic principles:

1. That growth and change affecting Alexandria Township is due largely to broader regional, national and global influences over which it has little direct control and that these trends are likely to continue bringing new development and growth to the Township and surrounding area, ~~although the past 10 years have shown how difficult it is to predict the rate and timing of such growth over time;~~
2. That unplanned, scattered growth without a vision of where the community is heading results in greater conflict, increased taxes and public expenditures, lost opportunities and ultimately less satisfaction;

# Alexandria Township



3. That the Township has the responsibility to its residents and landowners to find an appropriate balance in land use issues that makes efficient use of public resources, preserves sensitive natural resources, respects the environmental and social character of an area, provides landowners with reasonable use of their property, and protects property values by minimizing conflict between various land uses, and;
4. That the Township has a responsibility to ensure that its land use planning efforts are conducted in a manner that is open, accountable, and consistent so that residents, landowners, and others can invest in their properties with a reasonable certainty that those investments will not be negatively affected by what happens around them.

## The Planning Process

Recognizing the need to take an active role in addressing the challenges that come with growth and development, the Alexandria Township Board began discussing the need to update the 1998 Comprehensive Plan covering the townships of Alexandria, La Grand, and Carlos in early 2005. In August 2005, the Township began a public process to gather input designed to help the Town Board identify the most important issues to address over the next two decades and a vision of what the Township should look like in 2025. Residents and other concerned citizens were asked, through a series of public meetings, to provide input based on their experience, expertise and ideas as to the goals and policies that the Township should adopt and the steps it should take to achieve those goals.

~~This~~ ~~The~~ 2005 plan ~~is~~ ~~was~~ ~~the~~ ~~a~~ culmination of a series of numerous public meetings before the Township's Planning Commission and is intended as a guide for future growth and development in Alexandria Township. It ~~is~~ ~~was~~ an effort to define a vision of what Alexandria Township would like to look like twenty years from now and to formulate goals, policies and implementation strategies that help achieve that vision. The plan ~~covers~~ ~~covered~~ four primary topic areas:

- 7 land use
- 7 public infrastructure and services,
- 7 parks and recreation, and
- 7 governance.

While the plan is intended to plan for growth over a twenty year timeframe, it ~~is~~ ~~was~~ recognized and understood that adaptations ~~will~~ ~~would~~ be necessary on a regular basis to accommodate changing conditions and new challenges. Further, it ~~is~~ ~~was~~ understood that ~~this~~ ~~the~~ plan does not cover all of the possible land use issues facing the Township and that future amendments to the Plan may include completely new sections.

Consistent with this understanding, the Township embarked on an effort in 2015 to update the Comprehensive Plan. Many things changed during the 10-year period between 2005 and 2015, including the "Great Recession" of 2008 and the completion of the 10-year orderly annexation agreement that was signed with the City of Alexandria in 2012. These and other changes necessitated a re-evaluation of the goals and policies as well as the discussion of trends facing the Township. Numerous amendments to the plan, as well as an updating of the demographic and other data within the plan, was conducted during the 2015 update.

## Aerial Photography



### Legend

-  Alexandria Township Boundary
-  Other township and municipal boundaries



Aerial photography was taken by the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency in 2003. The photography does not reflect recent changes in development and land use, but rather is meant to give a general view of the layout of the community.

Prepared May 2006  
Sources: Minnesota Department of Transportation,  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

# II. Historic & Current Trends

## Development History

Since Minnesota became a state in 1858, the patterns of growth and change have largely been driven by changes in transportation and communications technology. These various phases of technological innovations have had a significant influence both on which cities and rural areas have been able to succeed as centers of economic activity and growth as well as in the patterns and styles of development that have taken place. Each successive phase was marked by an expansion of the amount of land that was economically and socially feasible to live on or operate a business.

### The Railroad Phase (late 1800s – 1920)

Small towns and unincorporated townships in west-central Minnesota, such as those in the Alexandria Lakes Area, formed and grew largely due to the influence of railroad companies and the rail lines they built. These lines distributed agricultural products grown around towns such as Alexandria, Osakis, and Sauk Centre to larger rail towns such as Fargo/Moorhead, St. Cloud and Minneapolis/St. Paul. The first rail lines and early road systems also brought seasonal visitors to the Alexandria area to enjoy the lakes and resorts that were forming at the time. Between 1900 and 1920, Douglas County added more than 1,100 people to its population. Due to the limited road network in place at the time, Alexandria and other towns had to be built in a very compact manner that placed most homes and businesses within walking distance of the rail line running through town. As a result, Alexandria Township remained, for the most part, sparsely populated farmsteads during this time period.

### The Early Automobile Phase (1920-1960)

After the invention of the personal automobile, and with steadily improving road networks, the residents of Douglas County and elsewhere in the state began to enter a period of new freedom and mobility. Farmers in the Alexandria area became much more connected to the small towns located nearby for their daily needs and social interactions, urban residents from Minneapolis/St. Paul and other large urban centers began to vacation in the Alexandria area, and the growing population of Alexandria and Douglas County were now able to spread out into residential areas further from the railroad lines and the central business district of the city. Rather than being defined exclusively by the rail system, Alexandria and its surrounding areas, including Alexandria Township, were beginning to be shaped more by roads, with new businesses and residential neighborhoods being constructed in places previously inaccessible by foot or rail. During this time, Douglas County grew by about 1,300 people.

### The Automobile/Highway Phase (1960 – 1980)

The third, and largest phase of growth impacting Alexandria Township to this point, began in the late 1960s with the continued improvements to the road system and the construction of Interstate 94 just south of the Township. The increased ability of people to move about using personal automobiles and good roads further increased the ability of people to live and work in the Alexandria Lakes Area. In addition, the Alexandria area and its many lakes (including those in the Township such as Le Homme Dieu, Geneva, and Victoria) become much more accessible to people looking to make use of seasonal cabins.

Development patterns in the Alexandria area, as in other parts of the State, began to reflect this new found freedom as “suburban” areas began to grow that contained new neighborhoods and new styles of commercial development tied to the road and highway system rather than rail lines. About 6,500 people were added to the population of the County during these 20 years, with the bulk of the growth occurring in the 1970s.

### The Satellite/Internet Phase (1980-current)

The Township is now in the midst of a fourth phase of growth and development that began in the 1980s



and is continuing through today. This phase is being driven largely by the explosion of internet and satellite technology that has allowed people and businesses to locate almost anywhere they like while still having the ability to reach national and international markets.

Alexandria Township (like many other communities in Central and North-Central Minnesota) began to see rapid changes in development pressures and patterns. Lakeshore properties that just twenty years before had seemed unfeasible or undesirable for development were now generating significant demand. The closing or consolidation of farming operations that began largely in the 1980s, coupled with increased demand for housing in the Township, resulted in the conversion of more and more agricultural land to new housing developments. The rising cost of lakeshore property, combined with low interest rates, increased the pace of remodeling projects that converted seasonal cabins to larger year-round homes as well as the construction of homes on more affordable “second tier” lots across the road from lakeshore lots. All of these factors combined to add about another 6,750 people to the County from 1980-2004 – about 5,900 of which have been added since 1990. Alexandria Township during this same time added about 500 people to its population.

## Looking to the Future (2006-2016-2030)

With each of these successive phases of transportation and technological advances, the pace of change and development that residents and Township officials have had to address has increased remarkably. The “Great Recession” during the period beginning around 2008 slowed significantly the high growth rates ~~are that had been~~ expected to continue in the mid-2000s (~~with~~ Alexandria Township ~~had been~~ expected to swell to a population of 6,470 by 2030 – an increase from the 2000 population of 50 percent). As such, while the Township continues to be an attractive place for new development and will likely continue to grow, it is difficult to predict just when and where new growth will take place. The ups and downs of growth and change that have occurred in the last 10 years indicated a need for the Township to be prepared for a variety of possibilities – from rapid growth to periods of relative stagnation. Likewise, Douglas County as a whole is expected to add more than 14,000 people over the same time period. While the annexation agreement with the City of Alexandria will undoubtedly absorb some of the Township’s expected growth, the trend of converting agricultural and rural land to urban uses is expected to continue at a rapid pace.

## Current & Future Trends

As Alexandria Township explores the issues and trends that it can expect to have an impact over the next twenty years or more, it is important to consider what has been occurring in the recent past for both in the Township itself and in surrounding communities. Since the trends affecting the Township are occurring largely on a regional basis, it is essential that the Township’s leaders and residents understand that what occurs in Alexandria Township is not only affected by what is occurring within its borders, but also beyond its borders. This requires looking at what has been occurring in the City of Alexandria, other surrounding townships, and even more broadly in surrounding counties and in nearby metropolitan areas such as St. Cloud, Fargo/Moorhead and Minneapolis/St. Paul. Thus, the trends examined in this section look at Alexandria Township and compares these to those in surrounding



### Alexandria Township / City of Alexandria Orderly Annexation Agreement

After numerous meetings, more than fifteen revisions, and a significant amount of “give and take,” Alexandria Township and the City of Alexandria completed an orderly annexation agreement on November 4, 2002 that identified a four-phase annexation process that would take place between 2002 and 2014.

The annexation agreement lays laid out not just an orderly phasing of which land will be annexed and when (see map), but also agreements as to how property tax revenues will-would be distributed between the Township and city and when the city will extend city services to the newly annexed areas – including water, street lighting, police and fire services, parks and street maintenance.

Prior to the agreement, annexations were conducted on a piece-meal basis when landowners adjacent to the Township petitioned to become part of the city – usually as a way to gain access to city services such as water and police services. This approach made it difficult for the City to budget and plan for the increased services and for the Township to absorb a sudden decrease in property tax revenues that it depended on to provide services to the remaining portions of the Township. In addition, the piecemeal approach left an ever-changing boundary to the city and township that was confusing to many landowners and to city and township service providers.

By agreeing on an orderly plan and timeline for annexation, the city and Township are-were better able to plan ahead for their infrastructure and service needs while at the same time providing residents in the annexation areas with a clear timeline of when they would move from township to city jurisdiction.

As the 2002 annexation agreement has now run its course, future annexations would presumably be returning to the piece-meal basis that existed prior to 2002. The same challenges with that approach that existed then would likely still exist today. As such, the Township and City will need to closely monitor annexation-related issues to try and develop workable, efficient solutions if annexation pressures continue.

Land use and zoning decisions in the annexation areas are overseen by a joint township/city planning board consisting of two city members, two township members and one at-large member. This board regulates development according to the city’s zoning ordinance so that city new development will conform to the city’s zoning and land use regulations at the time they are annexed.

# Alexandria Township



areas.

There are three primary demographic characteristics that are especially important to consider in helping the Township decide how best to plan for its future. These are:

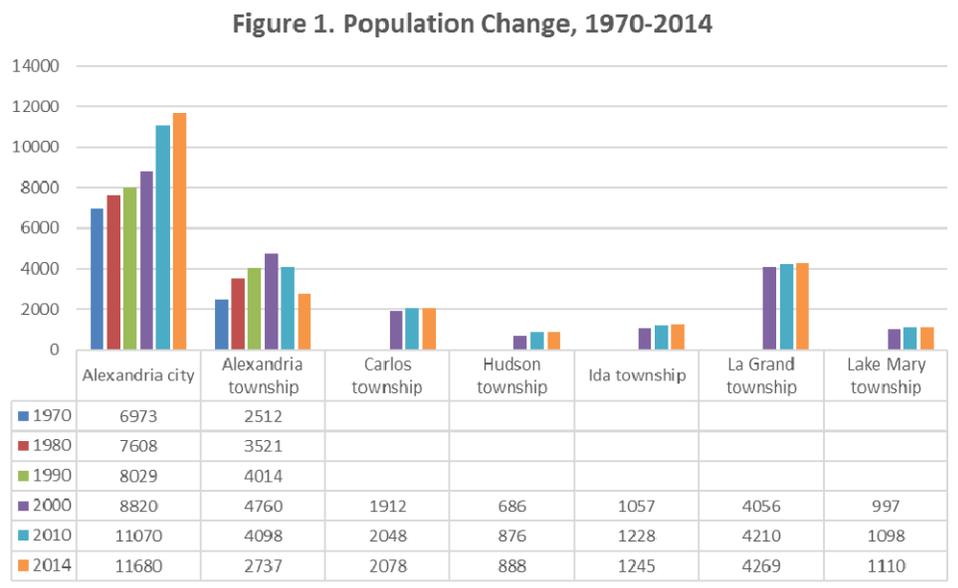
1. How many people will be living in the Township in the future?
2. What type of characteristics will that population have and how will it impact the type and amount of infrastructure and services demanded?
3. What will be the source of employment and income for the population of the Township?

Knowing the answers to these questions is not an exact science by any means, but it is possible to make reasonable predictions that will help to provide the basic information needed to plan ahead for the various infrastructure and service needs of the community as well as to guide development in ways that preserves the unique cultural, economic and environmental resources within the township.

## Population Trends

### Population Growth

Like many communities in the Alexandria Lakes Area, Alexandria Township experienced significant gains in population during the 1990's, rising by nearly 750 people. This outpaced all other townships surrounding the City of Alexandria (Figure 1). Between 2000 and ~~2004~~2010, the trend of an increasing population reversed with a drop in population of about ~~600-760~~ persons, although this ~~is~~was primarily due to the annexation of portions of the Township into the City of Alexandria rather than a decrease in actual population in the area (over this same period, the City of Alexandria increased by about ~~1,600-2,250~~ people). Between 2010 and 2014, the population of the Township was estimated by the US Census Bureau to have increased slightly by about 20 persons although this would not have accounted for Phase IV of the



Orderly Annexation agreement between the Township and the City of Alexandria. As such, the population of the Township actually decreased by an estimated 1,383 persons and 596 households after Phase IV was completed in 2012 to bring the Township population down from a high of around 4,800 to a current population of about 2,700.

Looking to the future, Alexandria Township can expect ~~continued~~ increases in population growth, although likely at a much slower rate than had been

**Table 1. Projected Population Change, 2000-2030**

previously predicted. The Minnesota Demographer's Office projecteds in 2006 that Douglas County would have grown in population by about 32%, or 9,070 persons between 2010 and 2035. Updated projections now predict an increase of only 3,228 over the same time period.a 50 percent increase in population growth for Alexandria Township from 2000 to 2030 (Table 1).

# Comprehensive Plan

Unit of Government	2000	2010	% Change 2000-2010	2020	% Change 2010-20	2030	% Change 2020-30	% Change 2000-30
Alex Township	4,760	4,863	2%	5,647	16%	6,470	15%	36%
Alex City	8,820	10,521	19%	11,708	11%	12,501	7%	42%
Douglas County	32,821	36,970	13%	41,720	13%	46,180	11%	41%

US Census Bureau, MN Demographer

While the Township is well-poised to accommodate any growth given a relatively large number of available platted lots in the Township, the expectations for replacing the more than 2,000 people lost to annexation is not likely to occur in the relatively short time period that perhaps had been expected in 2002 when the annexation agreement was originally signed. ~~some of this growth is likely to be absorbed by the City of Alexandria through remaining phases of annexation, which is not factored into population projections.~~ Still, it is very likely that the Township will continue to experience steady population growth and change. ~~This is~~ due to a number of local and regional factors.

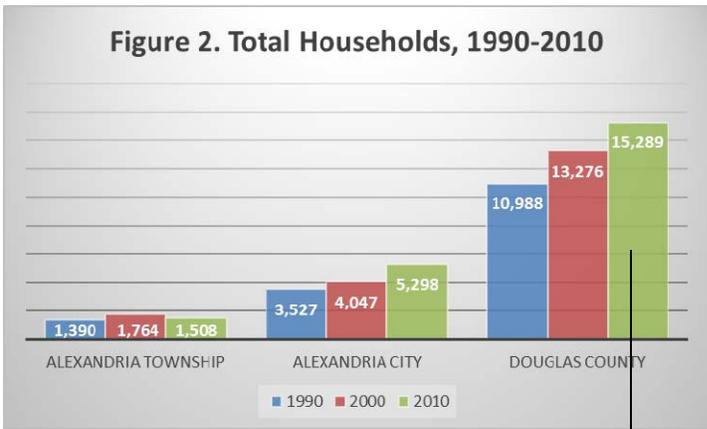
From a regional standpoint, the Township and the Alexandria Lakes Area are within one of the fastest growing areas of the state. Between ~~1990-2000~~ and ~~2004~~2010, Mille Lacs (16.9%), Crow Wing (34.3.4%), Stearns (13.1%), Benton (12.3%) and Douglas (21.9.7%), Stearns (1.9%), and Otter Tail (1.6%) counties all grew at a significant pace faster than that of nearby counties. All of these counties share a number of common features, including easy access from three of Minnesota's major metropolitan areas (Minneapolis/St. Paul, St. Cloud and Fargo/Moorhead) for those who would choose to live in a less urban area but still retain access to metropolitan jobs, an abundance of lakes and other natural amenities that attract an increasing number of retirees and seasonal residents, and the presence of towns that serve as employment and retail centers for the broader rural areas surrounding them (Brainerd, Alexandria, St. Cloud and Fergus Falls). From a more local standpoint, Alexandria Township can expect that it will continue to serve as a "bedroom" community within the Alexandria Lakes Area due to its proximity to the increasing number of jobs and services available in the City of Alexandria, the significant supply of developable land, and the continued demand for newer homes and larger lots than what the City has available.

## Households

The United States Census differentiates between households and housing units. A household refers to the people living in occupied housing units. A housing unit refers to the actual number of housing structures, occupied or vacant. It is not uncommon to have the number of households and housing units increase faster than population. Throughout the United States, the size of a household, meaning the number of people living in one housing units, has fallen. If the size of a household decreases and the overall population increase, then the number of households must increase faster than population growth in order to accommodate the new population. This has occurred in Alexandria Township.

~~As with population, annexation caused the number of households in Alexandria Township to decrease, from 1,764 in 2000 to 1,508 in 2010. Phase IV would have caused this number to fall even further. While the population increases four percent, the number of households increased by 26.9 percent (Table 3). Consequently, the household size decreased by 7.3 percent (Figure 2). The affect of past annexations may not be fully represented in these calculations.~~

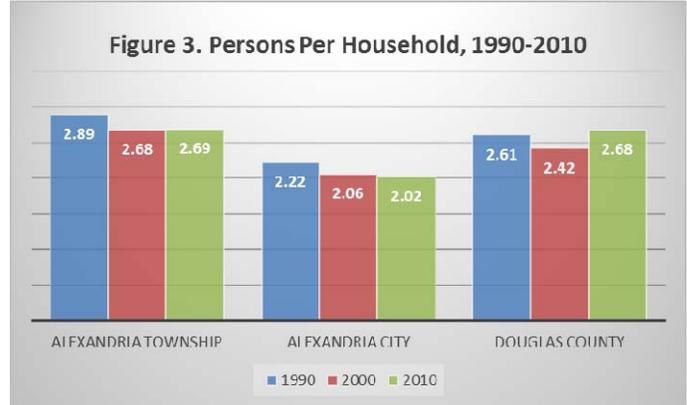
While the Township is well-poised to accommodate any growth given a relatively large number of available platted lots in



# Alexandria Township



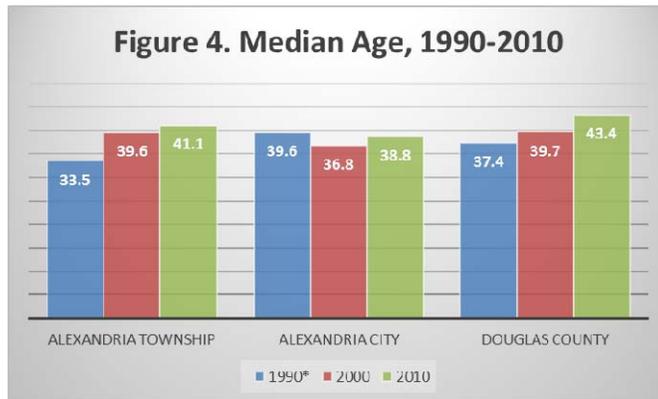
An increasing population throughout the County combined with a decreasing average size of household indicates that the population is spreading out. In Alexandria Township however, as with the County as a whole, the average household size has actually staid relatively level or even increased. This suggests that more families with children have been moving into the area than in the past. When the population is increasing, but the average size of a household is decreasing, size and an increase in the number of households indicates that population is spreading out, which can make it difficult to keep up with transportation demands and road maintenance. Other services must also extend further to accommodate the increasing number of households. This trend is likely to continue into the foreseeable future as large families and households with children become less common.



## Population Characteristics

### Age Structure

~~In addition to a growing population overall,~~ Alexandria Township is experiencing an aging of its population, as evidenced by an increase in the median age of its residents. Between 1990 and ~~2000~~2010, the median age (the age at which half of the population is above and half is below),

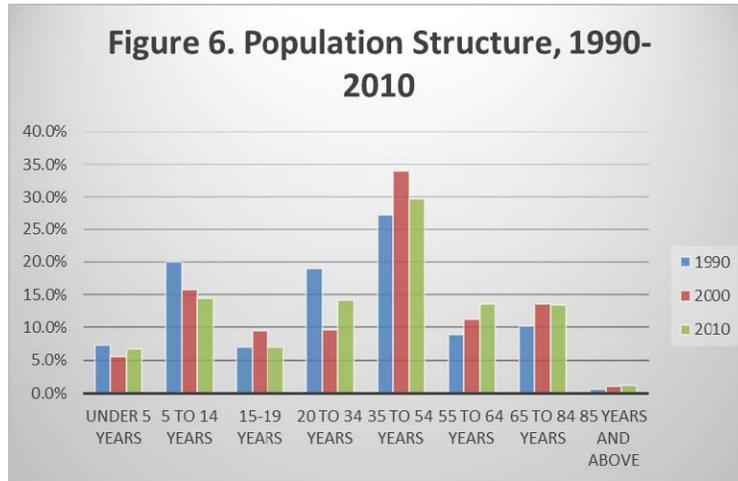


increased by more than ~~six-seven~~ years from 33.5 to ~~39.6~~41.1 years old (Figure 34). This was a ~~significantly~~ higher increase in median age than that experienced in the City of Alexandria, which saw its median age drop from 39.6 to ~~36.8~~38.8, and Douglas County which rose by ~~only two six~~ years, from 37.4 to ~~39.7~~43.4 years old.

Looking more closely at the changes in the distribution of various age groups in Alexandria Township, the age groups that saw the greatest increases as a percentage of the

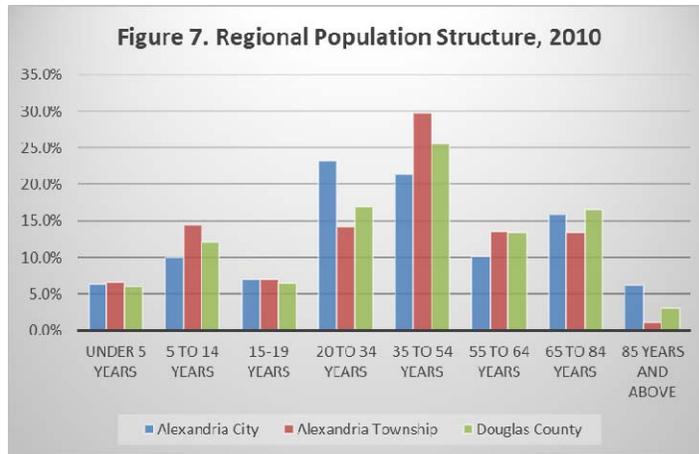
total population included the 20-34 year olds and the 55-64 year olds. Overall, the percentage of the population above the age of 55 increased from 19.6% in 1990 to 28.1% in 2010. there is a clear shift towards the older age groups (Figures 4 and 5). The percentage of the population under 40 between 35 and 54 years old decreased from more than 60-46.1 percent in 1990 to just slightly over 50-43.8 percent in 2000-2010. The most significant drop was among those aged 25-39 years old decreasing from 23.8 percent in 1990 to 17 percent in 2000. Similarly, the percentage of the population of high school age people 20 years old or younger dropped from 31.6-34.4 percent in 1990 to 26.7-28.1 percent in 2000-2010. Within this time frame however, there were fairly significant swings in each age group – particularly for those between 15 and 54 years of age. These numbers are indicative of the high mobility of those aged 25-39 in their prime working years and their school-age children and suggest that Alexandria Township may not currently be providing the housing options or amenities that this age cohort demands and desires. It may also suggest that there is a lack of jobs in the area for those looking to start or gain experience in their career field.

By contrast, age groups above 40 saw significant increases, particularly among those aged 40-54 and 55-69, representing those likely to be well established in their careers and those nearing retirement age. Together, these two age groups increased as a percentage of the population in Alexandria Township from about 30 to 39 percent between 1990 and 2000. There are also noticeable differences in population structure between Alexandria Township, the City of Alexandria, and Douglas County (Figure 6).



The 20 to 29 age group is significantly higher in the City of Alexandria as compared to the Township or the County. This is likely due to Alexandria Technical College and a higher availability of affordable housing than what is available in the Township or the County. The population over the age of 85 is also much higher in the City than in the Township or County. Limited retirement housing options in the County and Township are likely encouraging senior citizens to relocate into Alexandria City for assisted care living and easier access to services. By contrast, the Township has a relatively high percentage of persons in the 35-54 age grouping, suggesting that it is more attractive to people in their prime working years and/or with elementary and junior high school age children than in the City of Alexandria or the County as a whole.

The many amenities within the Township, including its lakeshore property and relatively affordable off-lake housing, as well as the advances in healthcare, have been a driving force behind this increase in the percentage of older age groups; the dynamics of who is attracted to the Township. Relatively low property taxes compared to those in the City may also be a contributing factor. This—Such trends can have a significant impact on the community as those in older age groups tend to contribute significantly to the local economy through their relatively high disposable income, their higher demand for health care services and, in some cases, by moving their businesses and associated jobs to the community from metropolitan areas. On the other hand, people in these age groups, due to their status as “empty nesters,” tend to be less supportive of public expenditures on education and other public services that younger families tend to demand. So long as there is a healthy balance among various age groups and values in homes and properties, the Township is likely to continue to be able to generate sufficient property tax revenues to fund its needs.



For the immediate future, as the baby boomer generation continues to age, it is expected that the overall population aging trend will continue. As a high amenity region of the State with excellent health care facilities, the aging trend is unlikely to reverse anytime in the next 30 years in Alexandria Township.

## Housing Characteristics

The current housing stock in Alexandria Township is primarily year-round use, single-family, owner-

# Alexandria Township



~~occupied housing and, became increasingly so between 1990 and 2000.~~ In ~~2000~~2010, 86 percent of the Township's estimated ~~2,044~~1,759 housing units were owner occupied ~~year-round~~, up from ~~83~~82 percent in 1990. By contrast, just ~~9~~14.3 percent of homes were ~~renter-occupied~~vacant in ~~2000~~2010 as compared with ~~11~~17.8 percent in 1990, ~~with the great majority of those vacant units being seasonal homes.~~ The ~~declining~~rising population of ~~relatively affluent families raising young children these in their 20s and 30s within the Township,~~ coupled with the increasing population of relatively affluent retirement-age persons suggests that the high percentage of single-family housing will likely be a continuing trend for Alexandria Township and that the demand for rental housing within the broader areas will continue to be served primarily within the City of Alexandria.

~~The percentage of seasonal homes within the Township is another factor that will have a significant impact on the Township. Seasonal residents, typically, pay relatively high property taxes due to the high value of their property, but tend to create relatively few demands for public services. By contrast, year round residents tend to increase the demand for public services and infrastructure that increase costs to the Township. Thus, an increasing percentage of year round homes can often mean an increase in public expenditures with little corresponding increase in public revenues.~~

Traditionally, the presence of several large lakes in the Township has made for a high percentage of seasonal housing. In recent years however, with the low interest rates, the rising cost of lakeshore, the increasing number of people retiring to lake areas, and the ability of people to live in lake areas while retaining jobs in metropolitan areas has contributed to a rapid conversion of seasonal homes to year-round homes. In ~~2000~~2010, there were ~~195~~181 seasonal homes in the Township, down from 222 in 1990. As a percentage of the total housing units in the township, seasonal homes decreased from 13% to ~~10~~7% over this same period.

## III. Community Vision

A community vision is a shared idea of what a community would like to become over a period of years. The vision may include a broad range of issues – including how and where new development occurs, a desire to preserve unique cultural or ecological features, or an attempt to revitalize a community’s employment base or housing stock. In essence, a community vision answers the question “What kind of community do we want to create over the next twenty years?”

While the process of developing a shared community vision can be difficult, it is one of the most important factors in determining whether a community is able to address challenges and respond to opportunities in an effective manner. Without defining a vision of where it should be going, community leaders – whether they are in business, government, service organizations, non-profits or simply a group of concerned residents - end up reacting to change or working in an ineffective, disconnected manner.

By contrast, a well-defined vision and plan for achieving that vision puts a community in a position to manage change and coordinate activities throughout the community to achieve much more than they otherwise would. While there are many economic, social and ecological factors over which a community has little control, there is much that a community can do to shape and guide its future. Four major areas over which Alexandria Township has a significant ability to define and implement a vision are addressed in this plan – land use, public infrastructure and services, public recreation and governance.

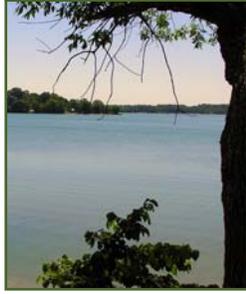
Throughout a series of several public meetings of the Alexandria Township Planning Commission where public input was gathered, the following Vision Statement was adopted to reflect the desired state of Alexandria Township in 2025.

### ALEXANDRIA TOWNSHIP VISION

Alexandria Township in ~~2025~~2035 will be a vibrant, safe and attractive community that has accommodated residential, commercial and industrial growth in an orderly manner, planned for future growth, and maintained areas where farming and other agricultural uses can continue to be productive. The Township will be an effective, responsive and efficient government that makes decisions in a proactive manner.

Alexandria Township will have a land use pattern that:

- Makes efficient use of existing public infrastructure and services
- Separates conflicting land uses into distinct areas of the Township
- Preserves and enhances scenic landscapes and fragile natural resources
- Maintains the Township’s rural/small town character while allowing for orderly urban growth where appropriate



## IV. Issues & Trends

Early in the Comprehensive Planning process of 2005-2006, township officials, residents and property owners within the Township developed and refined statements about the primary issues facing the Township in each of four topic areas – land use, public infrastructure and services, parks and recreation, and governance. These statements were reviewed and updated in 2015 by the Township's Planning Commission after holding a public hearing on the proposed updates. A summary of the issues and trends identified in each of ~~these~~ the four topic areas is provided in this section.

### Land Use

#### Agriculture

- International, national and regional trends in the agricultural economy, ~~and in~~ land prices fluctuations and the growth of the Alexandria region have contributed to the loss of some farms and the consolidation of others. These trends are largely beyond the ability of the Township and individual farmers to control. While many farmers will continue to operate successfully within the Township, this Township expects that this broader trend will continue.
- Population growth in the Alexandria Lakes area, and throughout Alexandria Township, has increased the demand for new development. While the pace of growth has slowed since the nationwide 2008 economic downturn, it is expected to remain the long-term trend albeit likely at a slower rate than had been experienced in the late 1990s through the mid-2000s. Such new development results in the conversion of productive farmland, wildlife habitat, and scenic open space to urban uses ~~and is a trend that is likely to continue.~~
- High densities of non-farm development, and particularly residential development, present an inherent conflict with intense agricultural activities. Development patterns that mix the two uses often results in conflict between property owners, unnecessary expenditures to mitigate the conflicts, and lowered property values for both uses.
- Despite the economic ~~challenges within~~ fluctuations of the agricultural economy nationwide and the pressures to convert agricultural land to non-farm uses, agriculture remains a valuable part of the local economy and contributes to the rural character of the Township. Many local farmers are adapting to these challenges and have been able to continue operating successfully.



#### Housing Development

- While the pace of new housing development has slowed between 2008 and 2015, there continues to be significant population growth in the region. —a strong demand for new housing over the last several years as the population of the Alexandria Lakes Area has grown.



# Comprehensive Plan

Between ~~1990-2000~~ and ~~2000-2010~~, the number of households in the City of Alexandria and the surrounding Townships increased by ~~374-1,485~~ homes (~~16.3%~~) and the population increased by ~~746-2,340~~ people (~~10.5%~~). This trend is expected to continue due to the ~~Township's proximity to the City of Alexandria, the relatively strong employment opportunities in the area, area's status as a regional center for both employment and retail opportunities,~~ and the scenic amenities in the region, although the net impact on the Township ~~will be~~ has been affected by the completion of the annexation agreement with the City of Alexandria in 2012 (see below).



- While the region expects continued population growth, Alexandria Township – like much of the broader region – has a significant inventory of approved, platted lots which have not yet been developed. This is likely to reduce the demand for the creation of new residential subdivisions until the supply of undeveloped platted lots is reduced.



- Due to the orderly annexation agreement reached in 2002 with the City of Alexandria, the number of households and people in the Township has decreased. According to ~~estimates from the State~~ U.S. Census data, the number of households in the Township dropped by ~~about 100~~ 256 and the population decreased by ~~about 400~~ 662 people between 2000 and ~~2004~~ 2010. Further household and population reductions ~~will occur in 2006, 2009 and have occurred since the last phase of the annexation agreement was completed in 2012~~ as

~~the annexation plan is implemented.~~

- The Township is part of a larger, regional housing market that has a need for a variety of types, sizes, and costs of housing as well as diversity in neighborhood designs and amenities.
- The continued economic viability of the Alexandria Lakes Area depends, in part, on the availability of housing that is affordable and meets the needs of all residents and workers in the area as they move through the various life stages.
- Zoning regulations, subdivision design standards, investments in roads, parks and trails, and other public investments play a significant role in determining the designs of neighborhoods, the types and cost of housing available, and the efficiency with which they can be served with public infrastructure and services.
- As the population of the Township and the larger region grows there will be a need to plan for the expansion of central sewer and water infrastructure. It is anticipated that the current areas ~~identified for annexation into the City of Alexandria or within the ALASD boundaries will accommodate this growth for the next twenty years or more, but that current lot size and lot width requirements could make further expansion of central sewer and water impractical or excessively costly. The Township has amended its ordinances so as to prevent the creation of lots outside of the ALASD boundaries that would be too large to make future sewer expansion economically feasible.~~
- New housing developments create the potential for significant public safety and quality of life concerns within and outside of the development area if not thoughtfully designed and constructed. These concerns include flooding from inadequate drainage controls, poor access for emergency service vehicles due to inadequate snow removal or disconnected street patterns, and dangerous

# Alexandria Township



traffic conditions for both vehicles and pedestrians.

- New housing developments create demands for additional public services, such as road construction and maintenance, snow removal, public sewer or water, public safety services, parks and trails and others.
- A number of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) with lakeshore access ~~have had~~ been proposed and approved in ~~recent years~~ the 2000s. The intent of the regulations applicable to these developments is to allow greater flexibility in lot layout and size, encourage a variety of subdivision designs throughout the community, create significant open spaces, and preserve sensitive or unique environmental features. In return, the developer may be allowed a higher number of lots than they would be in a standard “lot/block” subdivision. In practice however, the result of these subdivisions has tended to be higher density without the provision of significant open space or preservation of sensitive and unique environmental features. Due to broader economic trends and changes in housing markets, the demand for these types of developments has dropped significantly. Still, the Township has made several amendments to ordinances regulating PUDs to assure they are properly designed at the time they are proposed.



- Several recently approved Planned Unit Developments have presented other concerns, including the construction of private roads with inadequate widths to ensure public safety, lack of on-street parking, inappropriate housing densities and locations for common docks, and inadequate planning for stormwater management to protect property and lake water quality.
- As lakeshore property has become increasingly scarce and private lakeshore access has become limited, there has been an increased demand for second- and third-tier lots with a common lake access area to serve these “back lots.” Such practices can help to increase property values and tax revenues, but also have the potential to degrade sensitive shoreland, increase surface water degradation from runoff, and create safety concerns.

## Commercial/Industrial Development

- The Township is part of a larger, regional economic market that has a need for a variety of commercial and industrial businesses. The Township benefits from increased business activity in other communities within the region, just as those communities benefit from increased business activity in Alexandria Township.
- There is likely to be a demand for additional commercial and light industrial development within the Township. Such uses create special concerns related to traffic flow and safety, visual appearance, noise, glare and other nuisance characteristics.
- Commercial and industrial development often conflicts with residential uses and should be located in areas where these conflicts can be eliminated or minimized. Heavy industrial development generating odors, heavy traffic, noise and other significant nuisances are particularly incompatible with residential uses.
- Supporting small, home-based businesses can have a positive effect on the local economy, but must not create traffic, noise, odor, pollution or other nuisances inconsistent with residential areas. The Township has adopted revised ordinances which seek to prevent harms to residential areas while

still allowing for limited home-based business activities.

- There are certain commercial “adult use” businesses that have a harmful impact on surrounding property values, frequently become places of criminality, and which have objectionable characteristics, particularly when located in close proximity to areas which the youth of the community may frequent, such as churches, parks, schools, and residential areas.



## Infrastructure & Public Services

- The increasing population of the Township requires that additional, or more frequent, infrastructure and services be provided to its residents and businesses. Additional infrastructure may also be required, although there are a significant number of undeveloped residential lots present in the Township which already are served with public infrastructure.



- The pattern and location of different types of development (residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, etc...) has a significant impact on the cost of providing public infrastructure and services and ultimately the tax burden necessary for their provision. Policies and regulations that promote the efficient use of existing infrastructure before major investments in new infrastructure results in a lower tax burden for landowners within the Township
- That zoning regulations, subdivision design standards, the pattern of land uses and various public policies play a significant role in determining how efficiently public infrastructure and services can be provided.
- The Township is part of a larger, regional network of infrastructure and public services. The quality of this network of

roads, sewage treatment, public water supply and public facilities plays an essential role in the continued economic stability of the larger region. Coordination with other townships, the Cities of Alexandria and Nelson, Douglas County, the Minnesota Department of Transportation and ALASD is required to ensure future investments are adequate and efficient.

- Several significant community assets currently located in the City of Alexandria have been discussed as needing to relocate in the near-future – including the airport, and the County Fairgrounds, the County Jail, and Jefferson High School.
- Several transportation investments may occur at the County or State level that would have a significant impact on the amount and type of traffic in Alexandria Township. These could include the construction of a new freeway entrance/exit on I-94, the relocation of the Alexandria Airport, or the construction of a light rail line along the Central Lakes Trail.



## Parks & Recreation

- Parks, trails, and other recreational opportunities add to the value of property, can help to improve the health of residents and visitors, and contribute to the overall quality of life of

# Alexandria Township

Township residents.

- Douglas County has ~~recently~~ adopted a “Park Dedication” ordinance requiring the dedication of land or ~~donation of monies payment of fees~~ to create or expand parks. This ordinance provides an opportunity for the Township, in coordination with Douglas County, to create new parks and trails in the Township, although the amount of dollars placed into this fund is not expected to be significant enough for land acquisition anytime in the near future.
- A coordinated network of parks and trails provides greater value to the community than “island” parks that are disconnected from each other.
- Acquisition of land to create parks and trails is much more orderly, efficient and practical at the time of subdivision, than after a subdivision is approved.
- The only parks present in the Township were annexed into the City of Alexandria during the various phases of the Orderly Annexation Agreement. The Township does not currently contain any public parks.

## Governance

- Alexandria Township has recently ~~adopted~~ completed an Orderly Annexation Agreement with the City of Alexandria that ~~allows~~ allowed for identified portions of the Township to be annexed into the City on a scheduled basis. ~~To facilitate the regulation development in areas not yet annexed, the City and Township have formed a Joint Planning Board for the regulation of land uses. The Township will continue to work cooperatively with the City on matters affecting both jurisdictions, but does not expect the need for any additional annexation in the foreseeable future.~~
- Alexandria Township has the authority to adopt and enforce a variety of general and specific regulations, as authorized in various sections of Minnesota State Statutes. The Township has acted upon this authority by adopting several ordinances related to the general welfare of the Township, including zoning and subdivision ordinances.
- Alexandria Township will need to continue to work cooperatively with Douglas County on the administration of the Township’s zoning and subdivision ordinances so as to comply with MN Statutes 394.33<sup>1</sup>. ~~STILL NEED TO WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH COUNTY ON ZONING AND SUBDIVISION ORDINANCES. WE WILL.~~
- Due to annexation of previous Township lands into the City of Alexandria since 2002, the Township has seen reductions in its population that have not been fully offset by new growth. At the same time, the number of road miles the Township needs to maintain has also been reduced by the City’s annexation of lands. As the last phase of annexation and the phasing out of property tax revenues accruing to the Township occurs, the Township will need to understand the financial impacts that the ending of the annexation agreement will have. ~~ANNEXATION HAS REDUCED POPULATION, REDUCED NUMBER OF ROAD MILES TO MAINTAIN. NEED TO UNDERSTAND IMPACT ON TOWNSHIP BUDGET AND FUTURE DECISIONS.~~ The Township
- ~~Among the regulations the Township is authorized to adopt and enforce are ordinances related to planning and zoning that include the authority to regulate the physical development of the town. Presently, Alexandria Township has not adopted any zoning ordinances and is subject to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances of Douglas County.~~
- ~~Alexandria Township does have the opportunity to provide input into zoning and subdivision decisions made by Douglas County. While the Township has taken advantage of this opportunity~~

<sup>1</sup> MN Statutes 394.33 states that “after the adoption of official controls for a county or portion thereof by the board of county commissioners no town shall enact or enforce official controls inconsistent with or less restrictive than the standards prescribed in the official controls adopted by the board.”

# Comprehensive Plan

~~many times in the past, the County may or may not choose to make decisions consistent with Township recommendations.~~

- ~~• In the course of reviewing various zoning and subdivision decisions made by the County in the past, Alexandria Township has found several areas of concern where existing County regulations are insufficient or contradictory to the wishes of the Township. Current areas of concern include inadequate permanent stormwater controls in new subdivisions; the failure to require preliminary grading plans which reveal the transformation of topography affecting drainage patterns; the improper handling of variances; and the approval of conditional use permits allowing for inappropriate mixing of residential, commercial, and industrial uses; the acceptance of incomplete applications; the approval of residential subdivisions (including Planned Unit Developments) in unsuitable locations or with inappropriate densities; the allowance of roads with inadequate widths to ensure public safety and which do not accommodate on-street parking within Planned Unit Developments; inconsistent enforcement of regulations; inadequate inspection of road, stormwater, and other improvements; and the inadequate provision of parks and trails to serve existing neighborhoods or new subdivisions.~~



## V. Goals & Policies

Through a series of public meetings, Township officials, residents, and property owners were provided opportunities to brainstorm and develop a series of policies and strategies that would be intended to provide direction to Township officials and property owners as they make land use decisions. This section provides a summary of the policies and strategies that were identified through this process for each of the four primary topic areas.

### Land Use Agriculture



- Alexandria Township will maintain areas within the Township where non-farm uses are minimized and agriculture may continue to be productive and viable.
- Alexandria Township will follow a policy of phased, orderly growth patterns that discourages costly and scattered development in productive agricultural areas and that allows for the efficient expansion of roads, sewer, and other public infrastructure.
- Alexandria Township will provide for appropriate buffers and/or transition areas between intense urban development and intense agricultural operations so as to avoid unnecessary conflict and maintain property values for both farm and non-farm properties.

### Housing Development

- Alexandria Township will allow for varying densities and designs of housing developments within its boundaries that: 1) facilitate the efficient and orderly expansion of public infrastructure and provision of public services to accommodate urban density neighborhoods; 2) preserve unique or sensitive features of the landscape as much as possible during the development process, including land that is currently or could be used for productive agricultural purposes; and 3) facilitate the ability to further subdivide lots to appropriate urban dimensions as the need or demand for such densities arises to make the most efficient use of public infrastructure and services.
- Alexandria Township will continue to contain primarily single-family residential housing. Attached townhome, condominium, and other multi-family housing options that will allow for residents of various life stages and income levels to live within the Township may be allowed in appropriate areas.



- Alexandria Township will allow for the provision of a wide variety of housing options and neighborhoods in terms of the amenities they provide, their layout, and in the segments of the housing market that they serve.
- Alexandria Township will maintain its rural character by preserving wooded areas, open spaces, and scenic views, in addition to screening developed areas with trees and other vegetation as new housing development takes place.

# Comprehensive Plan

- Alexandria Township will ensure that new residential developments are designed, constructed, and maintained to provide adequate stormwater controls that protect public safety and prevent damage to public and private property. The Township will explore the feasibility and effectiveness of both neighborhood and regional stormwater controls.
- Alexandria Township will ensure that all new roads constructed to serve residential housing – including roads within Planned Unit Developments – are of adequate width to ensure space for on-street parking and still maintain space for the safe passage of pedestrians, vehicles, and emergency service equipment.
- Alexandria Township will ensure that new housing developments provide space for parks and trails as they are developed to meet the demand of future residents.
- Alexandria Township will strictly require that Planned Unit Developments are designed and constructed in ways that maintain appropriate densities of housing for the site and the surrounding area and that create significant, contiguous open space and preserve sensitive or unique environmental features such as bluffs, steep slopes, wetlands, lakeshore, and aquatic vegetation. Density bonuses will not be considered unless the resulting densities are appropriate for the area and open spaces meet the intent of the Planned Unit Development regulations.
- Alexandria Township will ensure that regulations applicable to commonly owned, private boat access lots are carefully located in appropriate areas, protect sensitive environmental areas, do not create excessive stormwater runoff problems, or create safety concerns on the lakes.



## Commercial/Industrial

- Alexandria Township will carefully locate commercial and industrial uses in identified industrial parks or other suitable locations – primarily along or near major roadways and intersections – so as to minimize conflicts with surrounding uses and ensure their efficient and orderly expansion.
- The Township will discourage permanent, heavy industrial development that creates nuisance characteristics inconsistent with the small town, residential nature of the area. Temporary industrial uses, such as gravel extraction and processing may be considered provided they can minimize nuisances on surrounding properties.
- The Township will seek to enhance regional economic development efforts by encouraging commercial and industrial uses that complement existing businesses in the area and promote further economic development throughout the region.
- Alexandria Township will have separate and distinct areas within the Township where commercial and industrial uses are served with adequate roadways and other public infrastructure. These areas will be required to develop with appropriate traffic controls, screening, landscaping, or other methods to ensure they are safe and attractive.
- Alexandria Township will ensure a gradual transition or sufficient barriers between commercial/industrial development and residential development so as to avoid unnecessary conflict and maintain property values for both business and residential properties.
- Alexandria Township will review and revise Ordinance No. 94-19 as needed to ensure that any adult use businesses are properly regulated and located to protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents and particularly its youth.

# Alexandria Township

## Infrastructure & Public Services

- Alexandria Township will develop in an orderly manner that maximizes the use of existing infrastructure and services and provides new infrastructure and services in an efficient, well-planned manner.
- Alexandria Township, as part of the review process for all new development, will seek input and comments from public and semi-public service providers to determine whether new development can be adequately served. Examples of service providers to be contacted include libraries, schools, social services, fire departments, law enforcement, electric and telephone service companies.
- Alexandria Township will contain a coordinated network of roadways, trails, rail lines, and other transportation corridors to ensure the safe and efficient movement of people, goods, and services throughout the Township and beyond.
- Township residents, visitors, and those passing through will have multiple options for moving from one place to another – both in terms of the mode of transportation (automobile, biking, walking, etc.) and in the routes available to them.
- Alexandria Township requests notice of relevant meetings in order to have the opportunity to provide input into discussions regarding the relocation of major community facilities to a site within or in close proximity to Alexandria Township —such as the County Fairgrounds or Jail Facilities, or a new school—to ensure that these or similar facilities are consistent with the goals and policies of the Land Use Plan.
- Alexandria Township requests notice of relevant meetings in order to have the opportunity to provide input into discussions regarding major transportation-related investments by other levels of government that would be within or in close proximity to Alexandria Township – such as a new I-94 highway interchange, the relocation of the Alexandria Airport, or a lightcommuter/passenger-rail line through the Township – to ensure that these or similar facilities and/or investments are consistent with the goals and policies of the Land Use Plan.

## Parks & Recreation

- Alexandria Township will create a Township Parks & Trails Plan that ensures adequate parkland and a wide variety of recreation amenities to serve the Township's residents and visitors. Wherever possible, this Plan will provide for connecting parks through a series of trails so that users can safely access parks throughout the Township.
- Alexandria Township will work with Douglas County to ensure that lands for parks and trails are dedicated during the subdivision process whenever appropriate, as opposed to the collection of park acquisition funds.
- When dedication of land is not feasible or advisable, the Township will work with Douglas County to ensure that any funds collected through the County's Park Dedication Ordinance are placed toward the creation of a larger park to serve the entire Township and its visitors.
- Alexandria Township will continually review existing and future park dedication ordinances and programs to ensure that they are providing for adequate parks and trails and that the costs of land acquisition fairly distributed between land developers



and Township residents.

## Governance

- Alexandria Township will continue to work ~~cooperatively~~ with the City of Alexandria throughout ~~the orderly annexation process to ensure a smooth transition from Township to City jurisdiction~~ any future annexation discussions. Its representatives, ~~through the Joint Planning Board~~, will ensure ~~both~~ the interests and concerns of the ~~affected residents and landowners that are being annexed~~ are heard.
- Alexandria Township, ~~in order to ensure that the physical development of the Township occurs in an orderly manner and adequately protects the general health, safety, and welfare of its landowners and residents~~, will ~~pursue the adoption of~~ continue to administer zoning and subdivision regulations as authorized by State Statute in order to protect the general health, safety, and welfare of its landowners and residents.
- ~~Alexandria Township recognizes that by adopting zoning and subdivision regulations, there is the potential to make the land development process more cumbersome and time-consuming. It is the policy of the Township to minimize any confusion and unnecessary burdens in the application and approval process as it formulates its ordinances and to work with Douglas County as much as possible to ensure that any overlap in County/Township jurisdiction is minimized or eliminated.~~
- ~~As the~~ The Township implements current and future ordinances, it will seek to ~~act in a proactive manner to~~ facilitate orderly and beneficial economic development, prevent harm to persons and property, and preserve the quality and beauty of the environment, ~~and generally ensure the health, safety, and welfare of its landowners and residents.~~
- In making Township decisions, Alexandria Township will encourage the active participation of its residents through public hearings or other appropriate means to help facilitate public involvement and support.
- Alexandria Township will ~~continue to~~ exercise prudence in its budgetary and taxation practices and policies.



# VI. Future Land Use

A future land use map was prepared as part of implementing the policies and strategies identified earlier in this Comprehensive Plan. The map contains the following land use designations that will serve as a guideline for making future zoning-related decisions. Under each land use designation is a description of its purpose and of general policies that would apply to that designation.

## Urban Residential

The purpose of this land use category is to provide opportunities for urban density housing in areas that are most readily served by urban infrastructure and services. This category is intended for areas that are currently served by Alexandria Area Sanitary Sewer District (ALASD) infrastructure or are within the identified future service area of ALASD. Within these areas, new residential development will be reviewed to ensure that the proposed density, dimensions, and layout of lots will allow for the efficient use of public infrastructure and the cost-effective provision of public services. A gross urban density of two to three dwelling units per acre or higher is intended for these areas. Proposed subdivisions that would create oversized lots would be reviewed to allow for a transition to urban densities of housing in an orderly and efficient manner. This may be accomplished through ghost platting, conservation subdivision designs that cluster homes on urban-sized lots, provision of urban sewer or road infrastructure at the time of development, or by other appropriate means.

Typical “lot-block” or “conservation” subdivision designs are both considered appropriate in these areas. Where sensitive or unique natural or cultural resources, such as wetlands, shoreland, etc. are present, a conservation subdivision design with lower densities that protects these resources may be required. Long-term commercial/industrial uses that are incompatible with residential uses should not be allowed in this district.

## Transition Residential

The purpose of this land use category is to provide opportunities for residential development in areas not currently identified for provision of urban infrastructure, such as sewer, water, or storm drains, but that could efficiently accommodate urban housing densities within the next twenty-five (25) years as the population of the area increases. These areas may be developed at rural or semi-rural densities, but are intended to be designed in a manner than allows for a transition to urban densities of housing in an orderly and efficient manner as sewer, water, or other public infrastructure or services become available. This may be accomplished through ghost platting, conservation subdivision designs that cluster homes on urban-sized lots, provision of urban sewer or road infrastructure at the time of development, or by other appropriate means.

Where sensitive or unique natural or cultural resources are present, a conservation subdivision design that protects these resources may be required. Long-term commercial/industrial uses that are incompatible with residential uses should not be allowed in this district.

## Rural Conservation Residential

The purpose of this land use category is to provide opportunities for residential development in areas of the Township not expected to be consistent with urban densities of housing within the next twenty-five (25) years, but that may be consistent over a fifty (50) year time frame. These areas may be developed at rural or semi-rural densities, but are intended to be designed in a manner than protects sensitive or unique natural or cultural resources that exist on or near the property. As such, any residential subdivision in this area at a density inconsistent with the protection of sensitive or unique natural or cultural resources must be developed with a conservation subdivision design (typical “lot-block” designs are not considered appropriate).



Residential subdivisions in this district shall also allow for a transition to urban densities of housing in an orderly and efficient manner as sewer, water, or other public infrastructure or services become available. This may be accomplished through ghost platting, conservation subdivision designs that cluster homes on urban-sized lots, provision of urban sewer or road infrastructure at the time of development, or by other appropriate means.

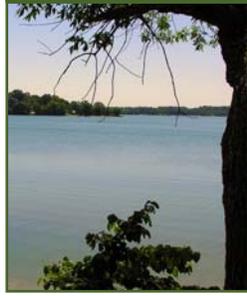
Long-term commercial/industrial uses that are incompatible with residential uses should not be allowed in this district.

## Urban Commercial/Light Industrial

The purpose of this land use category is to provide opportunities for commercial and light-industrial uses that are best served by urban sewer infrastructure due to the types and/or amount of wastewater produced. Examples of such uses include those that generate high-strength or problem wastes not typically found in residential wastewater, such as facilities serving food or drinks, those generating large amounts of wastewater such as laundry operations, or facilities that discharge chemical or other non-organic wastes in amounts not suitable for treatment in an individual sewage treatment system. This category is intended for areas that are inside of the identified future service area of ALASD that are visible or easily accessible from State highways at major intersections. These areas are intended to be located in “nodes” at major intersections rather than in a “strip” design along long sections of a road corridor. Heavy industrial uses which require significant water supply or that generate nuisance characteristics inconsistent with residential uses are not intended within this district. Long-term residential uses that are incompatible with commercial/industrial uses should not be allowed in this district.

## Rural Commercial/Industrial

The purpose of this land use category is to provide opportunities for commercial and industrial uses that do not require urban sewer infrastructure or substantial water supply. Examples of such uses include those that generate only those wastes typically found in residential wastewater and that do not create nuisance characteristics incompatible with residential uses. Temporary heavy industrial uses, such as gravel extraction and processing may be allowed in these areas provided that they can be operated and closed in a manner that will make the land consistent with residential uses. This category is intended for areas that are outside of the identified future service area of ALASD that are visible or easily accessible from state highways at major intersections. These areas are intended to be located in “nodes” at major intersections rather than in a “strip” design along long sections of a road corridor. Long-term residential uses that are incompatible with commercial/industrial uses should not be allowed in this district.



### What is a conservation subdivision?

The basic premise of a conservation subdivision is to place homes on relatively small parcels of land on a relatively small portion of the property, while preserving the unique natural and cultural features of the property. By contrast, a traditional “lot/block” subdivision lays a “grid” of private lots and roads over the entire property that is more likely to degrade the unique features that made the property desirable in the first place. A conservation subdivision can have several advantages:

- Allowing homes to be placed on smaller lots that do not require as much upkeep
- Reduced road and infrastructure construction and maintenance costs
- The ability to preserve the most desirable portions of the property as a scenic amenity
- Protection of sensitive natural resources

Traditional Subdivision



Conservation Subdivision

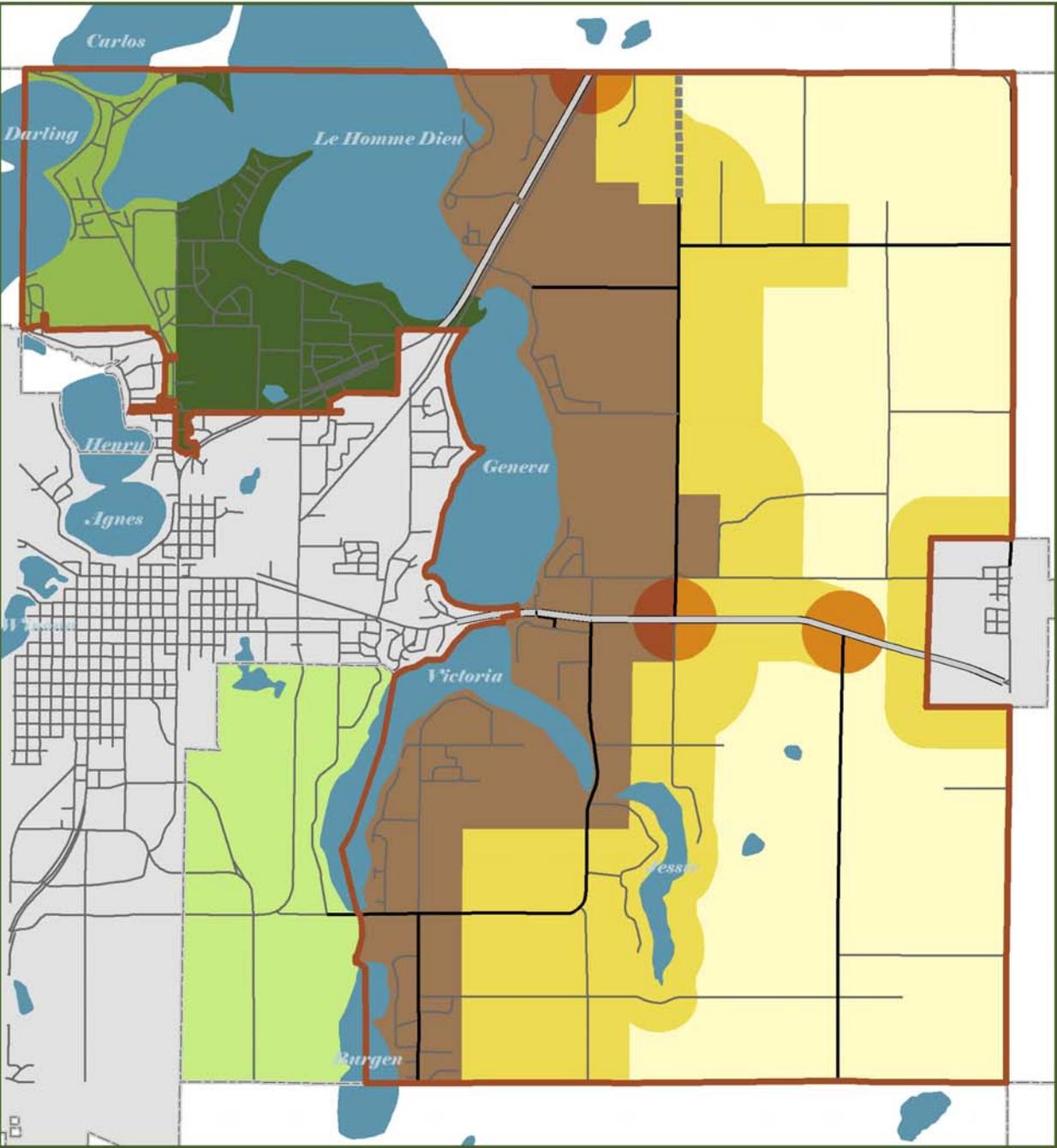


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# Alexandria Township



## Future Land Use

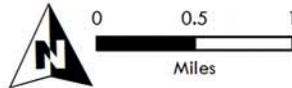


### Future Land Use

- Rural Conservation Residential
- Transition Residential
- Urban Residential
- Rural Commercial/Industrial
- Urban Commercial/Industrial
- Annexation Phase II (Completed Jan. 2006)
- Annexation Phase III (2009 - 2011)
- Annexation Phase IV (2012 - 2014)

### Future Road Classification

- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Other Road
- Proposed Future Road



Prepared June 2006  
 Sources: Minnesota Department of Transportation, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Citizens of Alexandria Township

## VII. Implementation

Implementation is perhaps the most important step within a Comprehensive Plan process. Extensive time and effort was put into developing a vision statement for the Township as well as in identifying the goals and policies of the Township. However, if nothing is done to move toward accomplishing these goals and vision, there is little value to the Plan.

While State laws limit the ability of a Township to implement land use controls to a certain degree, there is much that the Township can do to achieve the goals and vision identified earlier in this Plan. The following is a listing of the implementation steps identified during the series of public meetings.

### Land Use

- ~~Adopt/Continue to administer~~ Township ~~Zoning~~ Ordinances that ~~implement~~ the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map.
- Adopt Ordinances related to ~~Planned Unit Developments, Subdivisions,~~ Tree Preservation and ~~Stormwater Management.~~
- ~~Hire/Appoint a Zoning Administrator to help enforce and administer ordinances.~~
- Study options for facilitating orderly growth, taking into account fluctuations in housing demand over time.
  - a. Downzoning
  - b. Require that urban infrastructure (roads, sewer, etc...) be constructed at the time of development (for developments proposing urban densities) to prepare for expansion of these services
  - c. Keep County Regulations (least restrictive option)
  - d. Ghost Platting
  - e. Where/whether to allow multi-family housing (should require that multi-family housing be connected to public water supplies to ensure adequate drinking water and fire protection?)
- Identify and study possible methods for regulating existing businesses in non-Commercial/Industrial zoning districts that allow for reasonable changes from one business to another, but ensure adequate protection for surrounding properties, maintenance of roads leading to such sites and other appropriate considerations regarding public health, safety and welfare.
- Adopt/Create a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.
- Develop a Sensitive Areas Map of the Township.
- Work with Douglas County and the State of Minnesota to identify areas likely to have significant gravel deposits.
  - a. Review existing County Ordinance related to mining and extraction to ensure they are adequate to protect neighboring properties, control secondary uses of gravel pits (i.e. concrete recycling, shooting ranges, ATV riding, etc.), and ensure proper reclamation of existing and new pits.
  - b. Consider requiring subdivision applicants to show whether there are gravel deposits in the land proposed for development to help ensure that dwindling gravel resources remain available.
- Identify types of businesses that would be appropriate for the commercial/industrial areas identified on the Future Land Use Map.
  - a. Work with the Alexandria Area Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC)
  - b. Work with Douglas County, the Alexandria Airport Commission, and the owners of Viking Speedway, or other relevant agencies/organizations to ensure that any potential sites within the Township that may be considered for a relocated airport or race track would be compatible with the Future Land Use Plan.
- ~~Review existing Township and County Ordinance related to adult use businesses to ensure that~~



# Alexandria Township

~~these types of businesses are appropriately located. If necessary, work to have these ordinance revised.~~

## Infrastructure & Public Services

- Review existing studies and research and consider the feasibility of implementing new policies to ensure that proposed subdivisions and other developments pay their share of new infrastructure and public services.
- ~~Establish a process within the Subdivision Ordinance or other appropriate means~~Continue to solicit comments from local service providers and help ensure that adequate infrastructure and services are available to serve the increased population as development occurs.
- Create an Official Map for the Township consistent with state law that may include:
  - a. Existing and proposed future streets, roads, highways, and airports.
  - b. Areas needed for widening of existing streets, roads and highways.
  - c. Existing and future rights-of-way.
  - d. Existing and future public land and facilities.

## Parks & Recreation

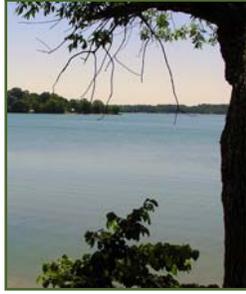
- Work with Douglas County to review park dedication needs as new development takes place. Request that Park Dedication is in the form of land, rather than cash, where appropriate.
- Develop a Parks and Recreation Plan for the Township to identify where parks may be needed based on current and projected residential areas based on the Future Land Use Map.

## Governance

- ~~Work~~Continue to work closely with Douglas County and the City of Alexandria to ensure that County and Township Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and Building Code regulations are implemented in a clear, consistent manner and to avoid confusion or “double permitting” of new development activities
- Explore and implement methods to increase public participation in and/or understanding of Township decision-making.
  - a. ~~Consider re-establishing~~Continue sending a regular Township newsletter to inform residents of decisions the Township is facing and how they can get involved.
  - b. Explore other options to increase public participation, such as holding certain meetings on Saturdays, e-mail distribution lists, newspaper advertisements, etc....
  - c. Develop educational materials to help inform residents and landowners of the importance of township government.
  - d. Attempt to be as proactive as possible to address land use and other issues before they become problems. When issues generating significant public participation arise, use those opportunities to educate the public about the importance of becoming involved as early as possible.
  - e. Review existing public notice policies to consider expanding the number of landowners notified of land use issues, simplify public notice language, and more clearly explain how they can become involved.

# Appendix. Additional Planning Maps

A series of maps were prepared at the beginning of the planning process in order to facilitate a better understanding of the Township's land and characteristics. The maps assisted in the development of many of the goals and policies contained in this plan, as well as guiding the development of the Future Land Use Map and accompanying policies. Some of these maps have been included in the body of this text with the remaining maps contained in this appendix.

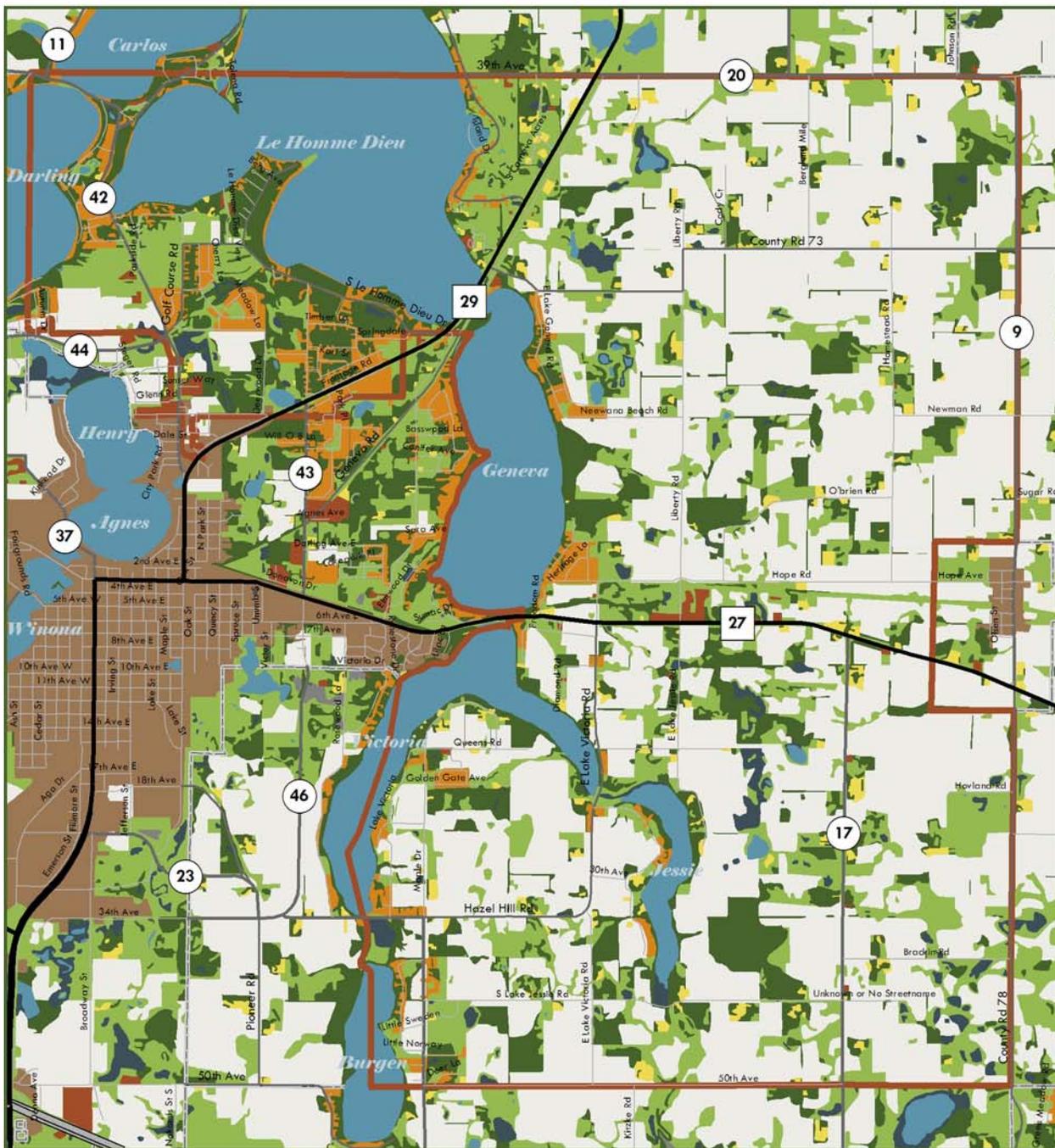


## Additional Maps

- Land Use / Land Cover
- Wetlands and Water Resources
- Watershed and Shoreland Areas
- Prime Farmland
- Local Recreational Amenities
- Regional Recreational Amenities
- Planned Orderly Annexation Phases
- Road Classification
- Alexandria Area Sewer District

# Alexandria Township

## Land Use / Land Cover



### Legend

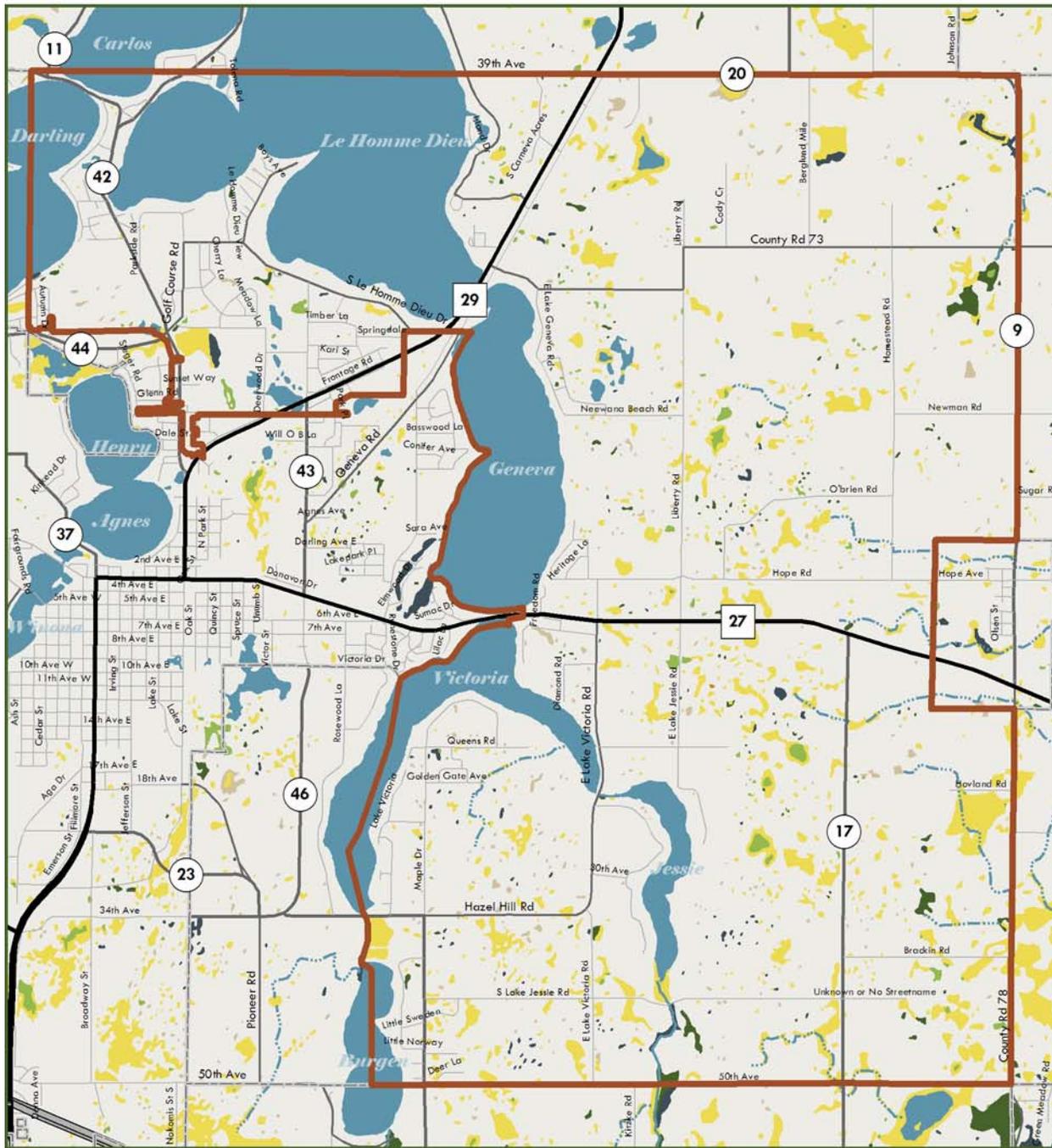
	Urban and Industrial		Grassland
	Farmsteads and Rural Residences		Forest
	Rural Residential Development Complex		Water
	Other Rural Developments		Wetlands
	Agricultural Land		Gravel Pits and Open Mines



**COMMUNITYGROWTH**  
INSTITUTE

Prepared July 2005  
Sources: Minnesota Department of Transportation,  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

## Wetlands and Water Resources



### Legend

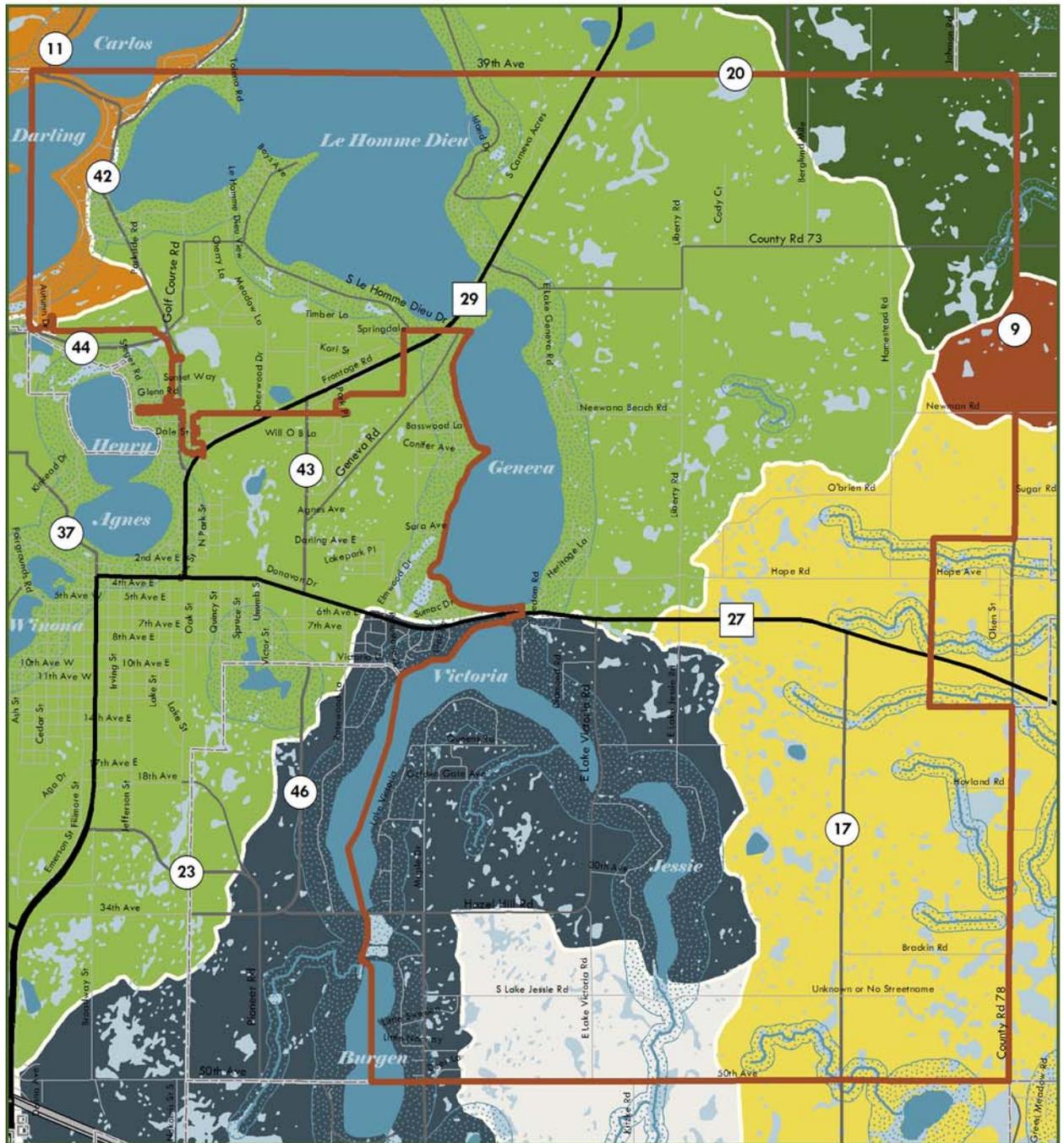
- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|  Seasonally flooded basin |  Open water                      |  Perennial stream    |
|  Wet meadow               |  Shrub swamp                     |  Intermittent stream |
|  Shallow marsh            |  Wooded swamp                    |   |
|  Deep marsh               |  Municipal / industrial activity |   |
|  Riverine system          |  Uplands                         |   |



Prepared July 2005  
 Sources: National Wetlands Inventory, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

# Alexandria Township

## Watersheds and Shoreland Areas



### Legend

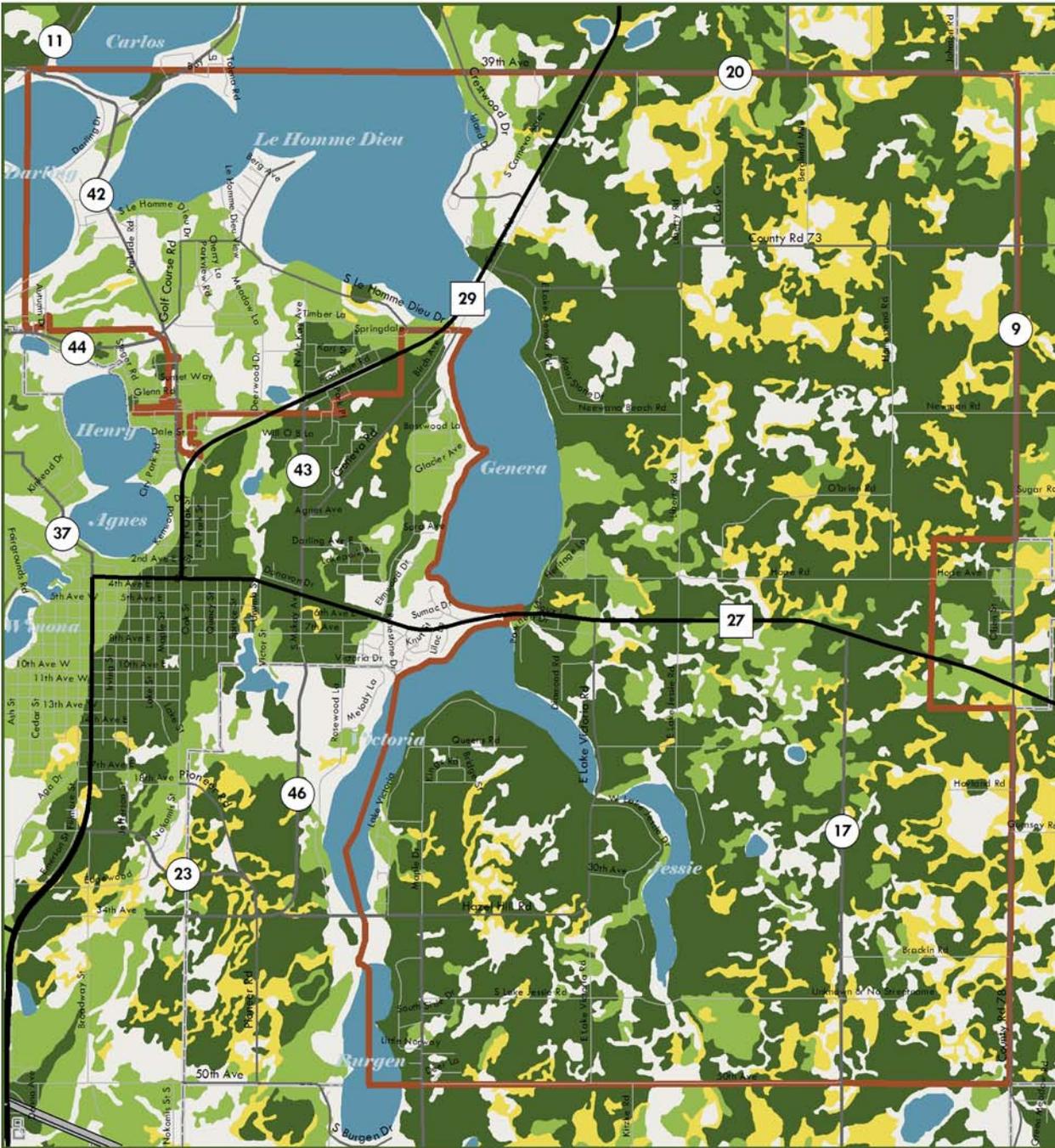
#### Minor Watersheds

- Lake Carlos
- Crooked Lake Ditch
- Fairfield Creek
- From Smith Lake
- Lake Le Homme Dieu
- Lake Victoria
- Unknown Watershed Name
- Shoreland Area
- Lake
- Wetland
- Stream



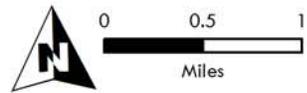
Prepared July 2005  
 Sources: Minnesota Department of Transportation,  
 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

## Prime Farmland



### Legend

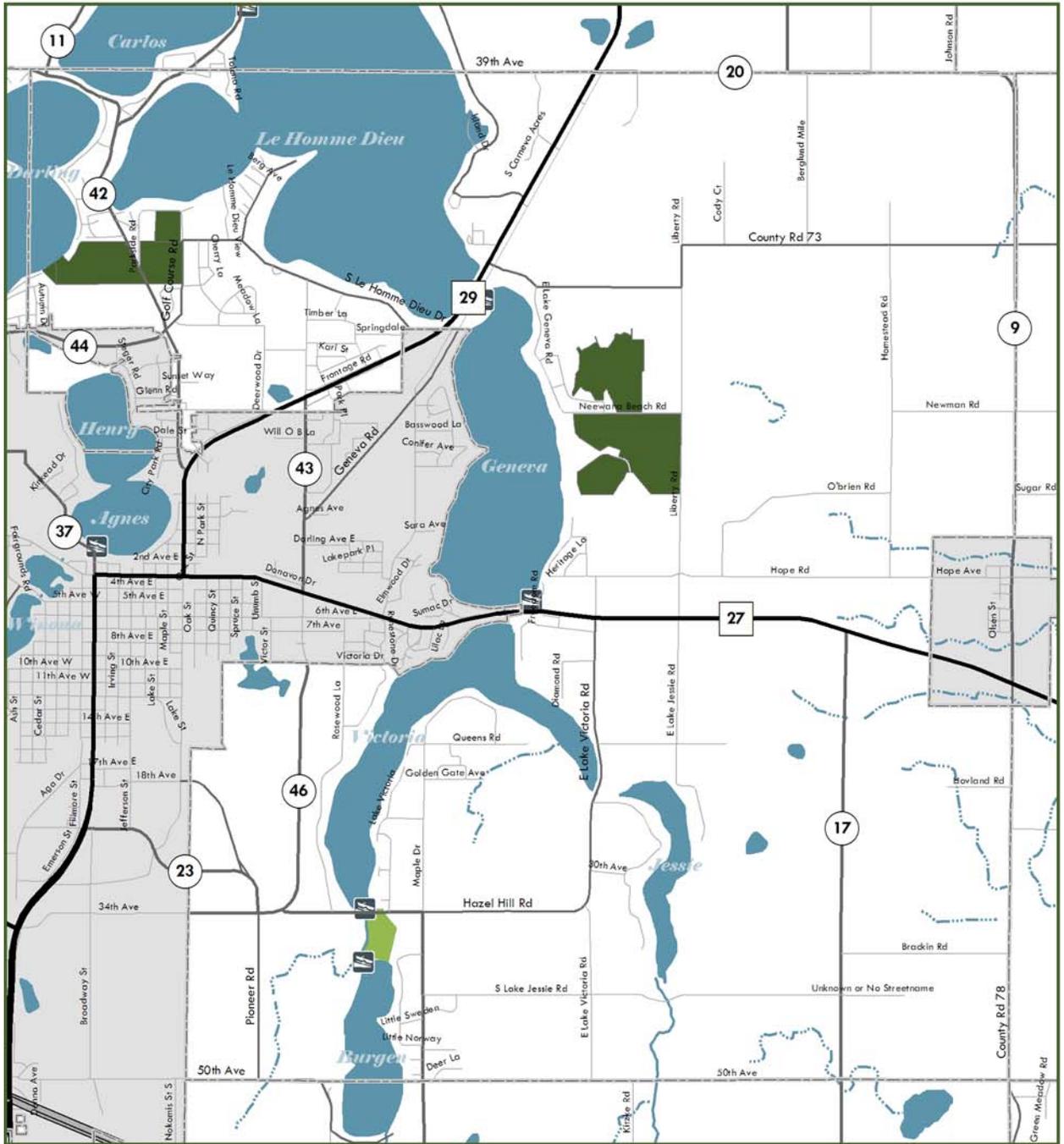
- Prime Farmland
- Farmland of statewide importance
- Prime farmland if drained
- Not prime farmland



Prepared July 2005  
 Sources: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Survey, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

# Alexandria Township

## Local Recreational Amenities



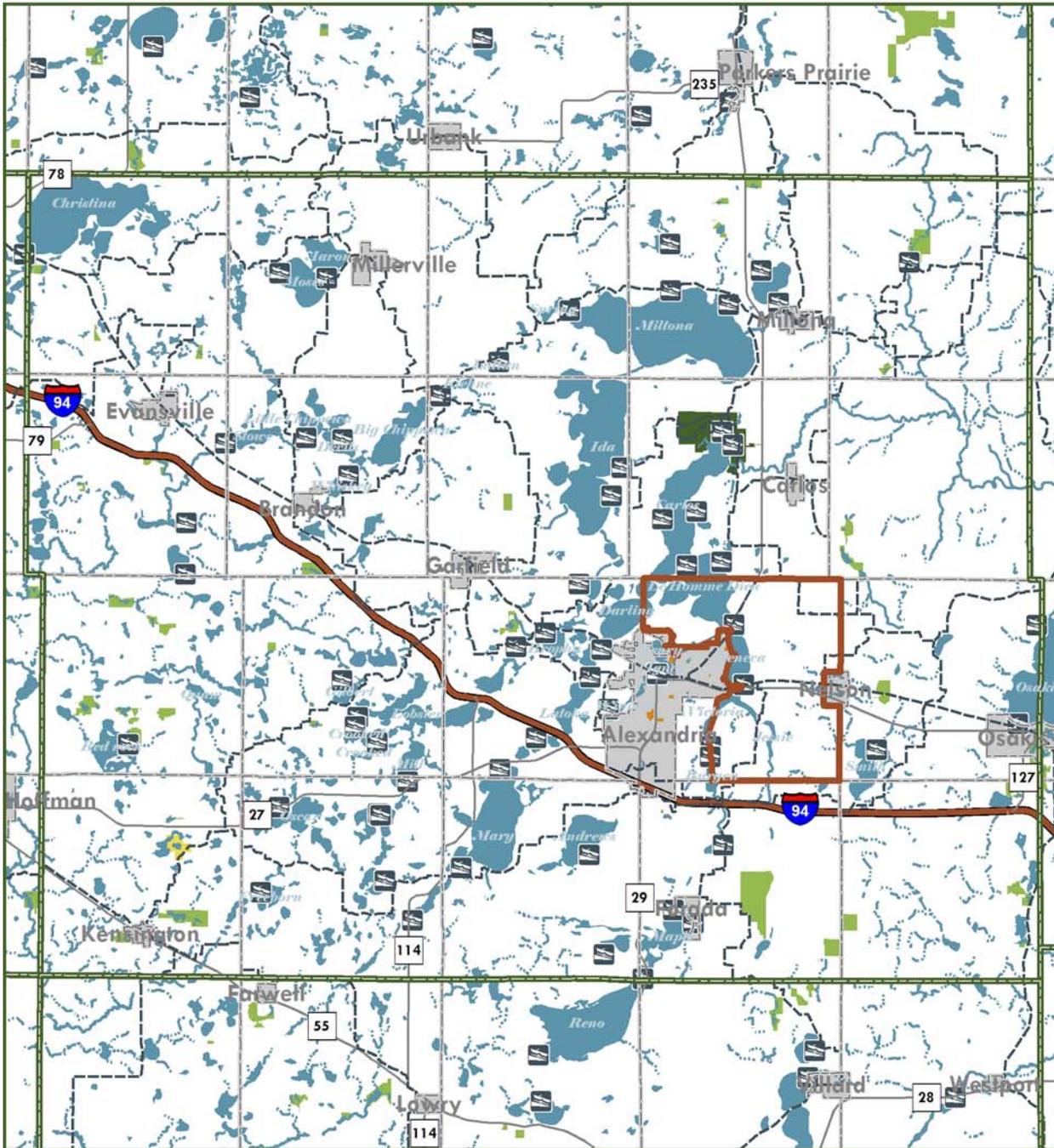
### Legend

- Wildlife Management Area
- Golf Course
- DNR Public Water Access



Prepared July 2005  
 Sources: Minnesota Department of Transportation,  
 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

## Regional Recreational Amenities



### Legend

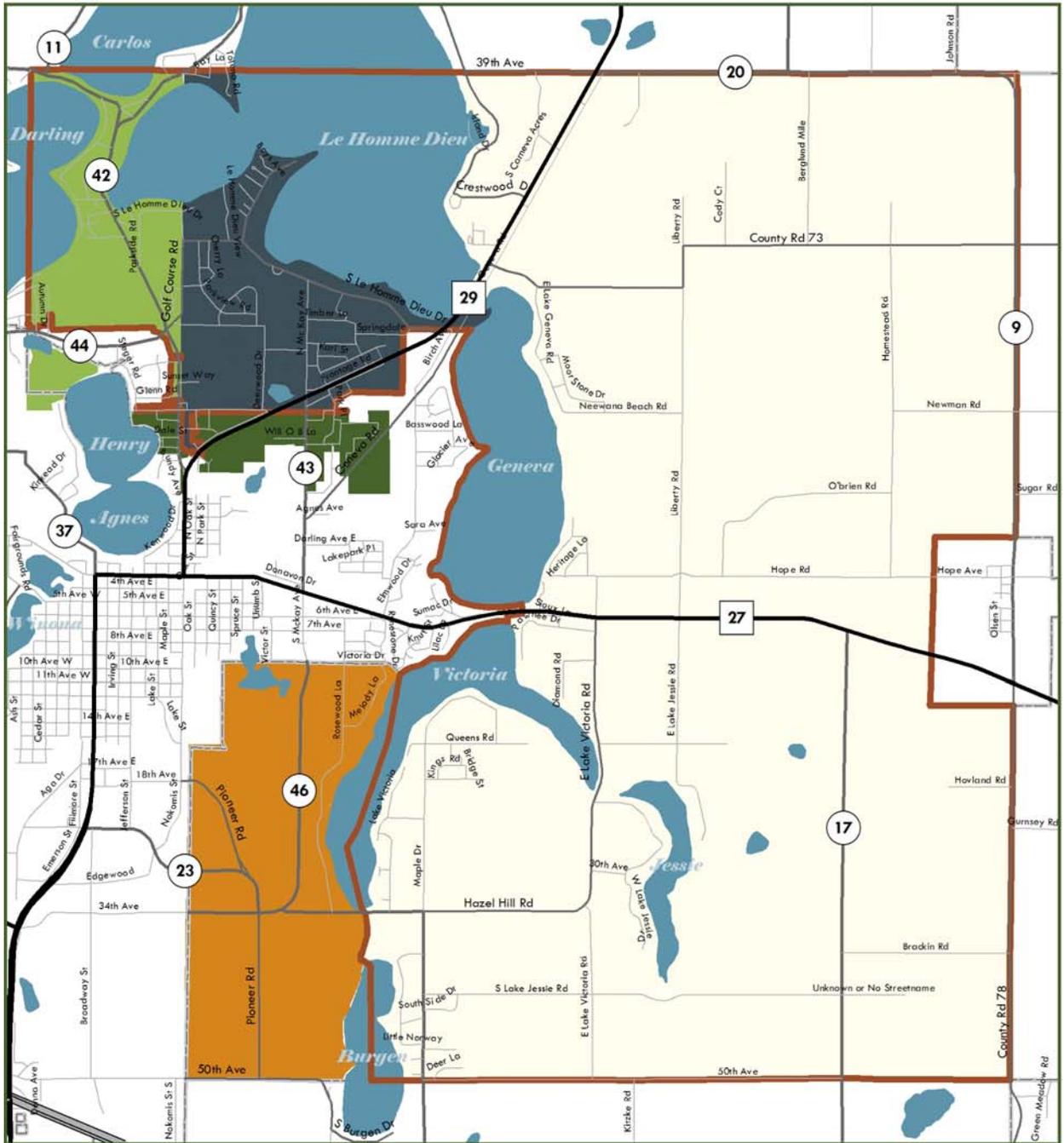
- City of Alexandria Parks
- Douglas County Resource Management Land
- Wildlife Management Area
- Lake Carlos State Park
- DNR Public Water Access
- Snowmobile Trails
- County Boundary



Prepared July 2005  
 Sources: Minnesota Department of Transportation,  
 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

# Alexandria Township

## Planned Orderly Annexation Phases



### Legend

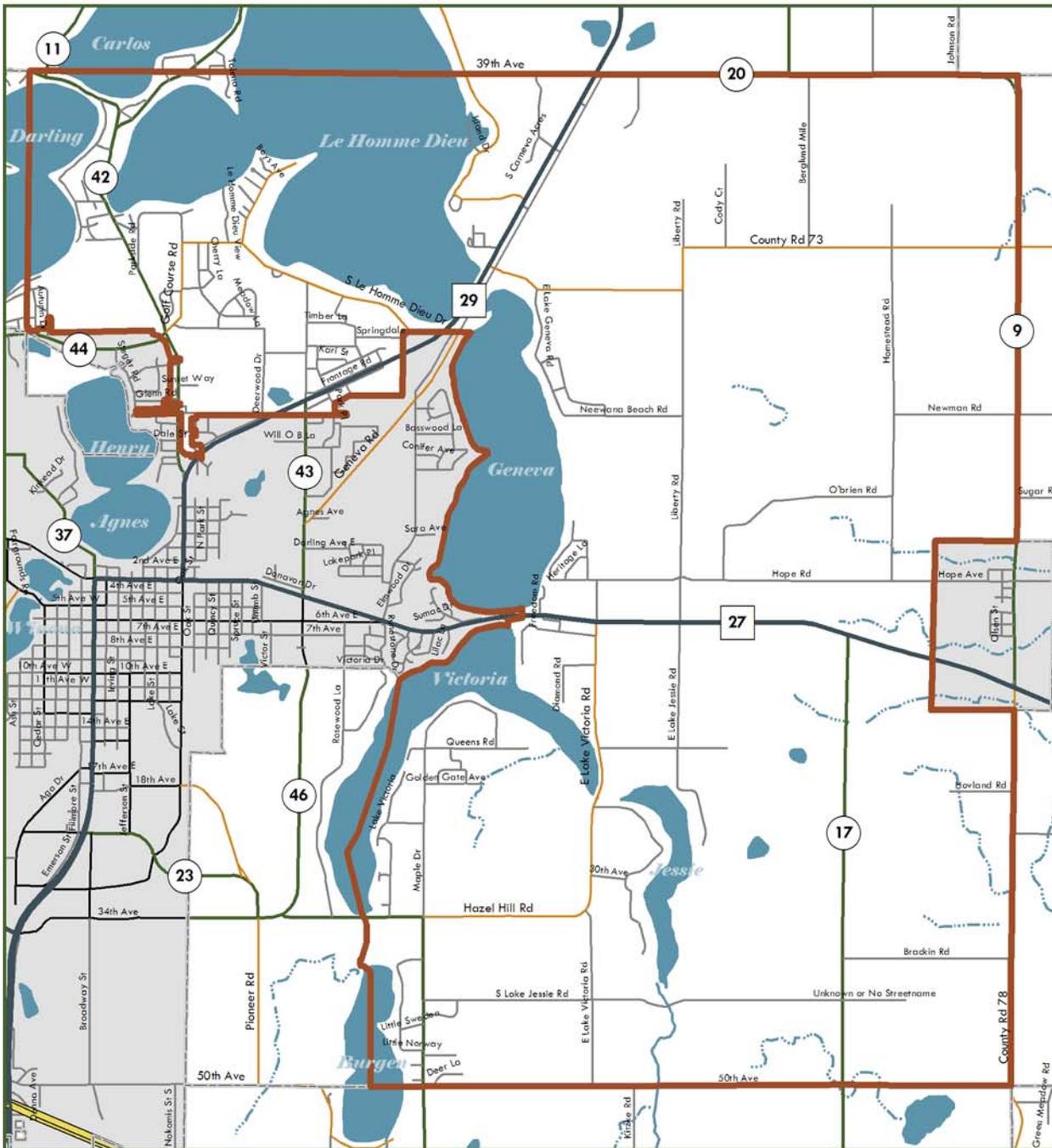
#### Annexation Phases

- Phase I (Completed January 2003)
- Phase II (Completed January 2006)
- Phase III (2009 - 2011)
- Phase IV (2012 - 2014)
- No Planned Annexation



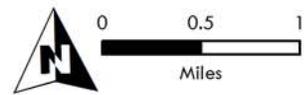
Prepared July 2006  
 Sources: City of Alexandria, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

## Road Classification



### Legend

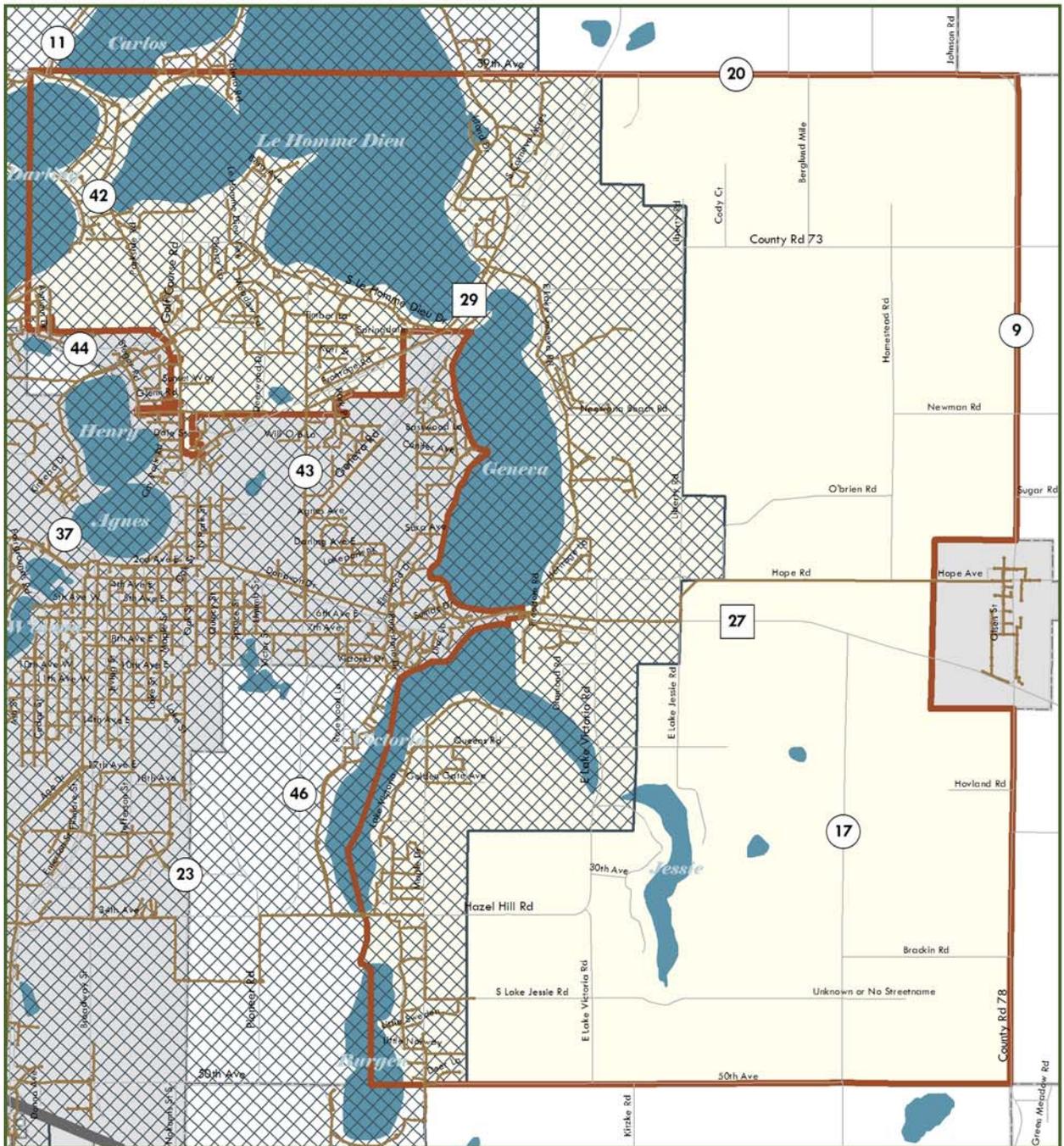
- Interstate Highway
- State Highway
- County State Aid Highway
- Municipal State Aid Road
- County Road
- Township and Municipal Roads



Prepared July 2005  
 Sources: Minnesota Department of Transportation,  
 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

# Alexandria Township

## Alexandria Area Sewer District



### Legend

-  Alexandria Area Sewer District Service Area
-  Sewer Line



Prepared May 2006  
 Sources: Minnesota Department of Transportation,  
 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources