

## 2 LAND USE

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This chapter provides direction and policies to maintain sound existing development and to achieve desired change in Coon Rapids through 2030. The Land Use Plan influences the future physical character of the City to enhance existing positive aspects, produce future characteristics compatible with sound existing conditions, and enrich the overall quality of the community.

The Land Use Plan defines a framework for future City development, guiding the amount, location, and intensity of future land uses to ensure compatibility with one another and the natural environment. While Coon Rapids is now a fully developed community, careful land use planning remains important. Since ways of living and doing business change over time, the City must be prepared to react to those trends. This Plan stresses ensuring high-quality development, maintaining the integrity of the City's established neighborhoods, and redeveloping obsolete and underutilized areas.

Several general premises guide the Plan, balancing urban development with community amenity, welfare, and environmental protection considerations. The Plan's development strategy stresses:

- Complete and balanced neighborhoods, which include a variety of housing resources and supporting commercial development.
- Protection of environmentally sensitive areas.
- Adequate public and recreational areas.
- Appropriate attention to surface water management, historic preservation, and solar access protection.

This Chapter includes four sections:

- The **Existing Conditions** section examines Coon Rapids' current distribution of land uses, residential densities, locations of natural resources, and employment characteristics. This information provides a foundation for the Chapter's policies and recommendations.
- The **Goals and Policies** section defines land use needs, sets goals and objectives, and recommends policies for each issue area.

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- The **Future Land Use** section describes how Coon Rapids will accommodate growth and maintain balanced neighborhoods.
- The **Resource Protection** section addresses policies for the City’s natural and cultural resources, including historic preservation, aggregate resources, renewable energy, and the Mississippi River Critical Area.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Existing Land Use

Map L-1, “Existing Land Use,” illustrates Coon Rapids’ current distribution of land uses. Table 2-1 lists the number of acres in each land use category.

**TABLE 2-1: Existing Land Uses, 2007**

Land Use	Description	# Acres	% of Total
Agricultural	Farming, horticulture, and other agricultural purposes, including farmsteads.	158	1.1%
Single Family Detached Residential	Mostly one-family homes.	6,289	43.6%
Single Family Attached Residential	Mostly duplexes and townhouses.	867	6.0%
Multi-Family Residential	Mostly apartment buildings and condominiums.	308	2.1%
Mobile Homes	Manufactured housing in a common interest community.	49	0.3%
Office	Administrative, professional, or clerical services.	93	0.6%
Commercial	Provision of goods or services.	886	6.1%
Industrial	Manufacturing or processing of goods; warehouse facilities.	508	3.5%
Institutional	Religious, governmental, educational, social, or healthcare facilities.	596	4.1%
Utility	Power substations, communications towers, water towers, or similar uses.	146	1.0%
Park, Recreation, and Preserve	Public active recreation facilities and other public open spaces.	2,425	16.8%
Major Right-of-Way	Principal arterial rights-of-way.	634	4.4%
Railway	Freight or passenger rail activities.	81	0.6%
Undeveloped	Privately owned land that is neither developed nor in agricultural use.	1,395	9.7%
Water	Open water.	541	3.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>14,976</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Detached single-family homes comprise about 44% of Coon Rapids’ total land area. Attached and multi-family residential, generally located at the periphery of single-family neighborhoods along major streets, make up another 8%. Table 2-2 presents the net density of Coon Rapids’ residential development. Net residential acreage is calculated by subtracting from gross acres, wetlands, water bodies, public parks, arterial streets, and natural resources protected by ordinance. Overall, the City’s residential density is about 3.25 units per acre, which exceeds the Metropolitan Council’s minimum of three units per net developable residential acre. Because Coon Rapids is a developed community

with little remaining vacant land, the overall residential density will likely increase in the coming years, as underutilized commercial land is converted to residential uses. The Future Land Use section of this Chapter addresses potential locations for residential redevelopment.

**TABLE 2-2: Net Density of Residential Development, 2007**

Land Use	# of Units	Net Acres in Land Use	Net Density (Units/Acre)
Single-Family Detached	15,474	6,246	2.48
Single-Family Attached	4,323	898	4.81
Multi-Family	4,306	307	14.03
Manufactured Housing Park	276	49	5.63
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,379</b>	<b>7,500</b>	<b>3.25</b>

Commercial and industrial uses comprise about 10% of the City’s land area, with the largest concentrations in the Riverdale commercial area near Highway 10 and Main Street and the commercial and industrial areas near Highways 47 and 610 and Coon Rapids Boulevard. Coon Rapids’ existing business districts generally fall into three categories, illustrated by Map L-2, “Commercial Districts,” along with one-half mile service radii.

**Neighborhood Commercial Areas.** These are small shopping centers, generally less than 3 acres in size, that include low-intensity commercial uses serving the daily needs of residential areas within about one-half mile of the center and having good pedestrian access. In a few instances, these areas include only a single convenience store. These areas correspond to the Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zoning district. They include:

1. The southwest corner of Main Street and Foley Boulevard.
2. The northwest corner of 121<sup>st</sup> and University Avenues.
3. The southeast corner of 121<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Hanson Boulevard.
4. The northwest corner of Northdale and Crooked Lake Boulevards.
5. The southwest corner of 105<sup>th</sup> Lane and Foley Boulevard.
6. The northeast corner of Quince Street and Egret Boulevard.
7. The southwest corner of 113<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Robinson Drive.
8. The southwest corner of 105<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Hanson Boulevard.
9. The southwest corner of 119<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Round Lake Boulevard.

**Community Commercial Areas.** These are moderate-intensity shopping centers and peripheral businesses serving wide areas of the City. They may include lower-intensity office uses on the fringes. While they are more automobile-oriented than neighborhood commercial districts, these areas still provide pedestrian accessibility. Community commercial areas, which typically require more buffering from surrounding residential areas than neighborhood commercial districts, generally correspond to the Community Commercial (CC) zoning district and in some instances the General Commercial (GC) district. Existing community commercial districts include:

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10. The intersection of Foley and Northdale Boulevards, centered around the Northdale Shopping Center.
11. Areas near Northdale Boulevard and University Avenue.
12. Areas near Highway 10 and Foley Boulevard, centered around the Foley Plaza and Pine Cone Plaza shopping center.
13. Areas near 101<sup>st</sup> Avenue and University Avenue.
14. Areas near Highway 10 and Hanson Boulevard, centered around the Village Ten Shopping Center.
15. Several areas along Coon Rapids Boulevard, including intersections with Round Lake Boulevard, Pheasant Ridge Drive, Hanson Boulevard, Foley Boulevard, and the areas between Xavis Street and Mississippi Boulevard.

**Regional Commercial Areas.** These are large-scale commercial districts, generally at least 100 acres in size, with a regional market orientation. They are zoned Regional Shopping (RS), General Commercial (GC), or Community Commercial (CC). They include:

16. The Riverdale shopping area near Highway 10 and Main Street and Round Lake Boulevard.
17. Businesses at the periphery of Northtown Mall located near Highway 47 and Coon Rapids Boulevard.

Coon Rapids contains two industrial areas, which include primarily light manufacturing, warehouses, services, and related uses:

- The Coon Rapids Industrial Park, bounded by Highway 10, Northdale Boulevard, and the railroad tracks.
- The Evergreen Industrial Park and peripheral industrial areas, which are generally bounded by 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Springbrook Drive, Coon Rapids Boulevard, and East River Road.

Lakes, streams, wetlands, and drainage courses make up a large portion of Coon Rapids' land area. Map L-3, "Surface Water Resources," illustrates the City's surface water resources, including all wetlands by management classification. Mapping these areas helps identify areas to be maintained for less intense land uses or public open space and assists in evaluating the effect of increased intensity on water resources. Wetland management classifications, detailed in the 2004 *Wetland Management Plan* prepared by WSB and Associates, are as follows:

**Preserve.** These wetlands provide the highest functions for vegetative diversity and wildlife habitat.

**Manage 1.** These wetlands provide high functions for vegetative diversity and wildlife habitat with some functions for water quality protection and flood attenuation.

**Manage 2.** These wetlands provide some functions for vegetative diversity and wildlife habitat with high functions for water quality protection and flood attenuation.

**Manage 3.** These wetlands provide the highest functions for water quality protection and flood attenuation.

**Restore.** These wetlands received low scores for vegetation and habitat, but due to their location, past disturbance, or hydrology may be good candidates for restoration.

**Storm Pond.** These water bodies were created to treat and store water runoff and may have taken on wetland characteristics, but are not considered jurisdictional wetlands based on the *Wetland Conservation Act*.

**Previously Planned Land Use**

Map L-4, “Previously Planned Land Use,” indicates the location and extent of land planned for each land use type in the *City of Coon Rapids Comprehensive Plan* approved by the Metropolitan Council in 2001. Table 2-3 indicates the number of acres planned for each land use category, along with the land use category descriptions listed in the previous Comprehensive Plan.

**TABLE 2-3: Previously Planned Land Use**

Land Use	Description	# Acres	% of Total
Low-Density Residential	One and two family housing units at a gross density up to 4.9 units per acre.	6,865	47.4%
Moderate-Density Residential	Attached housing at a gross density of 4 to 9.9 units per acre.	960	6.6%
High-Density Residential	Multi-family housing at a gross density of 9 to 30 units per acre.	406	2.8%
Mobile Home Residential	Manufactured housing at a gross density of up to 10 units per acre.	57	0.4%
Office	Offices and other commercial uses generally compatible with adjacent residential uses.	230	1.6%
Neighborhood Commercial	Small shopping centers serving the daily needs of neighborhood residents.	27	0.2%
Community Commercial	Shopping centers and peripheral businesses serving wide areas of the City.	304	2.1%
General Commercial	Broad range of businesses serving other businesses, industries, and consumers.	722	5.0%
Regional Shopping	Integrated retail, entertainment, restaurant, and complementary uses with a regional market orientation.	154	1.1%
Industrial	Light manufacturing, warehouses, services, and related activities.	838	5.8%
Conservancy	Areas where development is constrained due to soil or hydrologic conditions.	594	4.1%
Public and Semi-Public	City, county, school district, and community college functions; hospitals, churches, and cemeteries.	777	5.4%
Public and Private Open Space	City and county park land and common areas of housing developments.	2,546	17.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>14,480</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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### Employment Trends

Coon Rapids added about 3,000 jobs between 2000 and 2007. Chart 2-1 illustrates changes in the number of jobs in the City since 2000. While the number of jobs generally drops off in the summer (closed schools and college) and increases in the fall of each year, the City's level of employment has gradually increased over the years from about 21,000 in 2000 to over 24,000 in 2007.

**CHART 2-1: Number of Jobs, Coon Rapids**

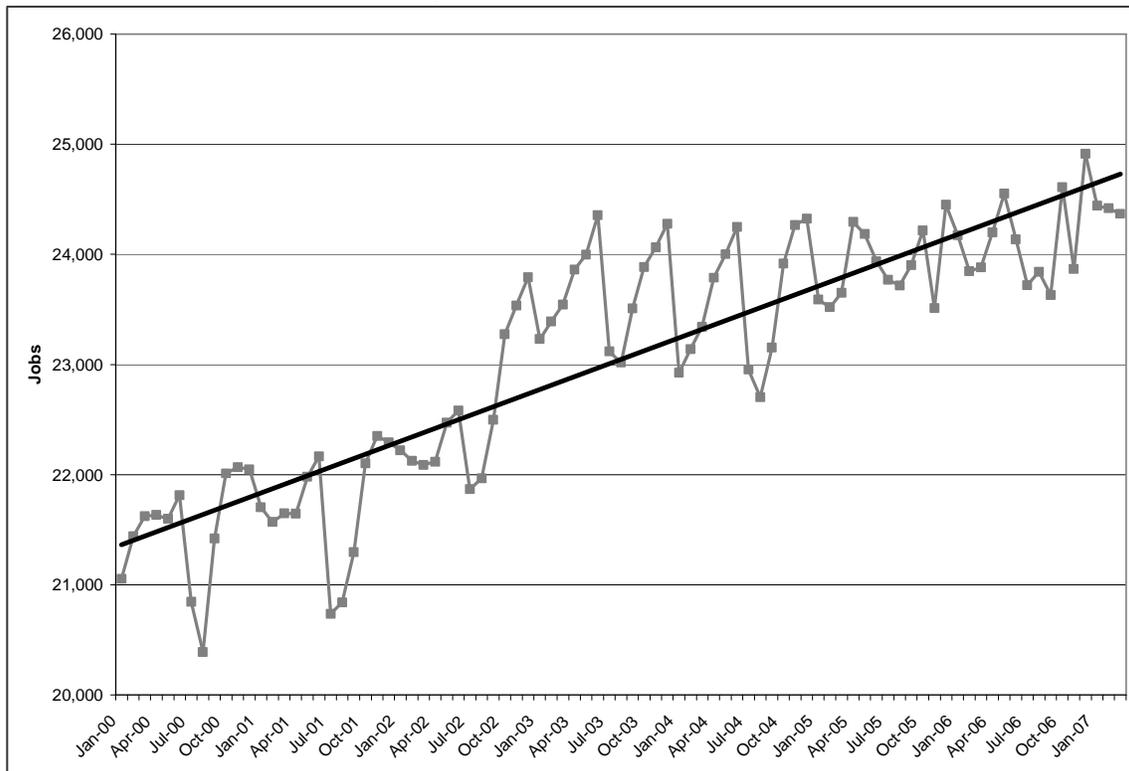


Table 2-4 lists Coon Rapids' largest employers.

**TABLE 2-4: Major Employers, Coon Rapids**

Employer	Products/Services	Employee Count
Anoka-Hennepin School District #11	-	4,500
Mercy Medical Center	-	3,300
Honeywell Inc	Electrical Equipment Mfg.	550
Coon Rapids Medical Center	Medical Office	482
Anoka-Ramsey Community College	-	441
John Roberts Company	Printing	330
RMS Inc	Electronic Component Mfg.	321
Ryerson	Metal & Mineral Merchant Wholesalers	237
City of Coon Rapids	-	206
Modern Tool Inc	Metal Product Mfg.	182
Camilia Rose Convalescent Center	Nursing Care Facility	166
Mary T. Inc	Residential Care Facility	150

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Employer	Products/Services	Employee Count
Diversified Adjustment Services Inc	Business Support Services	133
Possis Medical	Navigational, Measurement, Electromedical and Control Instrument Mfg.	130
Assurance Mfg.	Metal Stamping, Fabricated Metal Products	125
Steinwall Inc	Resin, Synthetic Rubber and Fibers Mfg.	88
Delta Industrial Services	Metal Product Mfg.	80
Dynamic Engineering Inc	Resin, Synthetic Rubber and Fibers Mfg.	60

Major employment concentrations in Coon Rapids include Evergreen Industrial Park and surrounding office buildings near Northtown Mall, Coon Rapids Industrial Park, Riverdale shopping area, Mercy Hospital, Anoka-Ramsey Community College, and the City's public schools.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

Because Coon Rapids is a nearly fully developed community, this Plan's land use policies must focus on redevelopment priorities, changes to residential densities, and design of infill development.

During the City's *2030 Visioning Plan* process, residents participating in a community survey overwhelmingly identified growth and redevelopment as major City issues. While a plurality of participants in a community survey indicated that Coon Rapids' growth had been well-planned, they also stressed a need for redevelopment along Coon Rapids Boulevard and other older commercial areas. Transit-oriented development along the Northstar Commuter Rail line and coordinating development with transportation facilities were also identified as important issues. Focus group meetings and a joint City Council/Planning Commission workshop held as part of the Comprehensive Planning process reaffirmed these priorities.

Based on these overall visions, this section identifies needs by issue area, sets goals with respect to future land use in Coon Rapids, and recommends policies, or courses of action, which can be followed to achieve the goals. Table 2-5 outlines the City's land use needs by issue area.

**TABLE 2-5: Land Use Needs**

Issue	Summary Assessment
Residential Densities/ Neighborhood Design	While Coon Rapids offers a variety of housing types throughout the City, residential densities do not necessarily correspond to access to transportation facilities or the character of the surrounding neighborhood. The future mix of housing types must be determined to ensure a proper balance. Future locations of townhomes, detached townhomes, and apartments must be clearly defined to ensure access to transportation facilities and preserve the integrity of existing neighborhoods.
Economic Development	Because only a small amount of vacant land exists in the City for new employment opportunities, future increases in the employment base will have to occur through redevelopment of existing properties. As redevelopment

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Issue	Summary Assessment
	occurs, the role of each employment center, including Port Wellness, Port Evergreen, Evergreen Industrial Park, Coon Rapids Industrial Park, and the Federal Cartridge site, must be determined to ensure orderly employment growth and job opportunities for a variety of individuals.
Natural Resources/ Open Space	While the City's amount of parkland is generally adequate, several natural resource areas should shift to public ownership, neighborhood parks should be upgraded, and the City's trail system should be expanded.
Building/Site Design	In some instances, the appearance and orientation of new residential and commercial buildings has not reflected the community's long-term goals for particular neighborhoods. Standards for building and site design should be reviewed periodically to ensure high-quality appearance and compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.
Commercial Districts	The City's commercial areas tend to be dispersed along several corridors. The future role of each commercial area should be determined to encourage businesses to cluster in areas where they can benefit from one another. Future land uses and redevelopment strategies should be identified for underutilized and obsolete commercial areas.
Coon Rapids Boulevard	Coon Rapids Boulevard, presently a mix of unevenly spaced and unrelated businesses, contains a substantial amount of underutilized land and obsolete land uses. The future land use mix must be determined to ensure that redevelopment occurs in an organized manner.

**Goal #1: Maintain complete and balanced neighborhoods that include a variety of housing resources, supporting commercial development, and adequate open space and recreation opportunities.**

Objectives:

- 1-1. To ensure that new development is adequately served by public facilities and enhances the character of existing neighborhoods.
- 1-2. To provide a variety of housing types serving all stages of the life cycle so that residents can remain in the community.
- 1-3. To preserve the integrity of existing stable single-family residential areas.
- 1-4. To ensure adequate mobility throughout the City via motorized and non-motorized transportation modes.
- 1-5. To curb the spread of blighting characteristics and eliminate obsolete land uses.

Policies:

- 1-1. Ensure that future development decisions are based on the Comprehensive Plan so that new development is adequately served by public facilities and enhances the character of existing neighborhoods.

- 1-2. Encourage a balanced housing stock serving all stages of the life cycle in all portions of the City. Allow increased residential densities in appropriate locations along major transportation corridors.
- 1-3. Preserve the integrity of existing stable single-family residential areas by ensuring adequate buffering from adjacent more intense uses. Ensure the location of higher density residential development at the fringes of neighborhoods and along transit corridors. Disallow twin homes and other attached housing in areas zoned for single-family homes. Allow detached single-family common-interest communities in areas zoned for single-family homes, but only as planned unit developments at the fringes of neighborhoods.
- 1-4. Continue to enforce the City's property maintenance code to encourage proper upkeep of all residential areas.
- 1-5. Ensure that neighborhoods appropriately interface with the City's transportation systems, including the sidewalk and trail network.
- 1-6. Ensure that development near the City's commuter rail stations and bus lines is transit-supportive in its density and design.
- 1-7. Encourage conversion of underutilized commercial land to multi-family residential uses in areas designated by the Comprehensive Plan.
- 1-8. Adhere to the City's Parks and Open Space Plan and the parks component of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure appropriate geographic distribution of active and passive recreation facilities.
- 1-9. Review and update the City's zoning regulations periodically for residential districts to reflect changing lifestyles and ensure that infill development is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood in scale and design.

**Goal #2: Maintain a diversified economic base and a climate that encourages economic development, redevelopment, and ongoing business activity.**

Objectives:

- 2-1. To provide a wide range of employment opportunities for City residents.
- 2-2. To promote efficient land use and increase the City's tax base.
- 2-3. To foster a high-quality, diverse business climate.
- 2-4. To eliminate blighting characteristics in the City's business districts.

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### Policies:

- 2-1. Redevelop distressed and underutilized commercial and industrial properties by means of various financial incentives to make efficient use of existing infrastructure. The City may assist in site assembly for redevelopment of areas displaying blighting characteristics.
- 2-2. Develop and implement corridor and small-area plans that refine the policies of the Comprehensive Plan to encourage high-quality infill and redevelopment.
- 2-3. Promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and the attraction of new businesses, particularly those in the medical and pharmaceutical, information technology, environmental technology, and general office sectors.
- 2-4. Provide a supply of commercial and industrial land that meets the City's projected demands, with employment centers concentrated at Port Wellness, Port Evergreen, Evergreen Industrial Park, Coon Rapids Industrial Park, and the Federal Cartridge site.
- 2-5. Encourage high-intensity use of remaining industrial land to promote efficient land use and increase the City's tax base. Discourage new low-yield industries and those with nuisance characteristics.
- 2-6. Maintain strong relationships with local and regional economic development agencies, educational institutions, and the business community to share resources and achieve common goals.
- 2-7. Continue to enforce performance standards in industrial areas, including adequate screening of outdoor storage and loading areas. Reexamine the permitted uses in the Industrial zoning district and eliminate those that may have significant negative impacts on surrounding properties. Periodically review and update applicable zoning regulations to reflect changing business needs and ensure compatibility with surrounding properties.
- 2-8. Ensure that the range of housing options in the City matches the housing needs of local employees.

### **Goal #3: Protect and enhance the City's natural resources for the community's long-term benefit.**

### Objectives:

- 3-1. To protect air quality, water quality and wildlife habitats.

3-2. To provide active and passive recreation opportunities to City residents.

Policies:

- 3-1. Maintain a connected system of active and passive open space to protect natural resources and provide enjoyment to the City’s residents.
- 3-2. Protect the City’s surface water from the negative impacts of development by means of shoreland zoning regulations, Mississippi River Critical Area regulations, and wetland buffer regulations.
- 3-3. Follow the policy guidelines of the *Mississippi River Critical Area and Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Plans* at the end of this section to protect and enhance the Mississippi River corridor through the City.
- 3-4. Adhere to the City’s *Wetland Management Plan*, updating it as necessary.
- 3-5. Encourage the use of new energy resources and protect solar access for existing and new developments.

**Goal #4: Maintain community character and ensure top-quality appearance of new development.**

Objectives:

- 4-1. To ensure high aesthetic quality of new development and compatibility with the surrounding area.
- 4-2. To protect historically and culturally significant sites.

Policies:

- 4-1. Enforce architectural and site design standards, including landscaping standards, for new commercial, industrial, and attached residential development. Ensure that landscaping is properly maintained.
- 4-2. Review zoning regulations periodically for new development to ensure a high aesthetic quality and compatibility with the surrounding area.
- 4-3. Identify and preserve historic and cultural landmarks and ensure that adjacent developments complement them.

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- 4-4. Consider adopting a tree preservation ordinance to ensure that valuable mature trees are preserved as new development occurs.

**Goal #5: Provide distinctive commercial districts that serve neighborhood, community, and regional consumers.**

Objectives:

- 5-1. To ensure that all City residents can access a variety of shopping areas by way of motorized and non-motorized transportation modes.
- 5-2. To encourage high aesthetic quality in each commercial district.

Policies:

- 5-1. Ensure that new commercial development is consistent with the role of each commercial area as defined by the Comprehensive Plan.
- 5-2. Avoid strip commercial development and concentrate it in nodes, as defined by the Comprehensive Plan.
- 5-3. Direct high-intensity, regional commercial development toward portions of the City with traffic capacity and transit options.
- 5-4. Establish and implement beautification programs for various commercial districts and enforce site design standards, including landscaping, screening of parking areas, and pedestrian and vehicular access, to ensure top-quality appearance.
- 5-5. Continue to enforce sign regulations that encourage high aesthetic quality.
- 5-6. Require pedestrian access within commercial developments and ensure connectivity with the City's sidewalk and trail network.

**Goal #6: Improve the appearance and function of Coon Rapids Boulevard, ensuring that it gradually redevelops with a variety of housing types, supporting commercial uses, and urban design amenities.**

Objectives:

- 6-1. To curb the spread of blighting characteristics along Coon Rapids Boulevard and eliminate underutilized land and obsolete land uses.
- 6-2. To increase the number of housing units and bolster the market for neighborhood commercial development along Coon Rapids Boulevard.

- 6-3. To ensure high aesthetic quality of both private developments and the public right-of-way.

### Policies:

- 6-1. Continue to concentrate commercial uses in existing commercial nodes, including the PORTs (Preservation or Renovation Tracts), and encourage the transition of commercial properties in between nodes to residential uses. Consider increased residential densities for new developments in certain locations between the PORTs. Ensure new residential developments along Coon Rapids Boulevard are compatible with surrounding land uses and the street environment. When commercially zoned land redevelops as varied density residential uses in the River Rapids Overlay district, change the underlying zoning to reflect the new uses.
- 6-2. Update the PORT Master Plans periodically to encourage desirable, market-driven redevelopment of the four PORTs. Refine the Master Plans to include future street locations, open spaces, and other expectations for redevelopment. Consider expanding the PORT boundaries in appropriate instances, such as the northeast corner of Coon Rapids and Round Lake Boulevards.
- 6-3. Update design guidelines periodically for new buildings in the River Rapids Overlay district.
- 6-4. Draft and implement an urban design plan for Coon Rapids Boulevard that addresses street section improvements, lighting, landscaping, street furniture, open spaces, and distinct themes for each PORT.
- 6-5. Update the entire *Coon Rapids Boulevard Framework Plan* as needed and at least every 10 years to reflect changing conditions and priorities.

### **Goal #7: Eliminate blighting influences throughout the City and encourage redevelopment of underutilized land.**

### Objectives:

- 7-1. To curb the spread of blighting characteristics and eliminate underutilized land and obsolete land uses.
- 7-2. To ensure high aesthetic quality of new development.
- 7-3. To ensure that new development reflects current market conditions and meets the needs of the surrounding area.

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Policies:

- 7-1. Prepare small area plans to guide future land uses, densities, and public improvements in redevelopment areas.
- 7-2. Review and update zoning regulations to allow desired uses and densities at key redevelopment sites.
- 7-3. Obtain Housing and Redevelopment Authority assistance with land acquisition and site assembly in appropriate instances.

## FUTURE LAND USE

### Future Land Use Considerations

Several factors were considered in determining Coon Rapids' future land uses, providing a conceptual basis for Map L-5, "Future Land Use."

**Environmental Considerations.** While their primary function is to provide drainage and preserve water quality, the City's water-related systems also provide important amenities, recreational resources, and wildlife habitats. The maintenance of the function, integrity and quality of these systems to convey and store water and to address urban storm water concerns is an important consideration for the location of future development. This includes protection and appropriate preservation of floodplain, shoreland, wetland, and Mississippi River corridor areas and responsible management of lakes, creeks, and storm water channels and ponds. Map L-3, "Surface Water Resources," illustrates the location of these resources.

**Existing Uses.** During Plan preparation, all existing uses were analyzed to confirm their future desirability and relevance. The definition of appropriate uses for presently vacant or underutilized land and any alternatives proposed for inappropriate existing uses recognizes the need for compatibility with sound existing uses.

**Public Facilities.** Because Coon Rapids is a nearly fully developed community, all City, County, and metropolitan systems needed to support future land uses generally exist now or are programmed for construction. During Plan preparation, it was confirmed that the capacities and service levels of the following public facilities are adequate to serve planned land uses:

- Metropolitan, County, and City arterial and collector road systems
- Metropolitan, County, and City recreation open space systems
- Metropolitan and City waste water and sanitary sewer systems
- City storm water management and water systems

Despite sufficient levels of service to accommodate future land uses, subsequent chapters of the Comprehensive Plan address modifications to these systems to accommodate regional growth and maintain a high level of service.

In addition, the Future Land Use map considers the implications of anticipated changes to metropolitan transit service, including the Northstar Commuter Rail and bus service along key corridors.

### **Future Land Use Framework**

The Goals and Policies and Future Land Use Considerations sections form the overall influences of the Future Land Use map. Addressing the collective implications of these influences provides the conceptual basis for the Plan. This section outlines the factors influencing the locations of future land uses.

**Transportation Systems.** Arterial streets are a primary organizing feature for the Plan. This transportation system provides accessibility to intensive land uses and facilitates the movement of people and goods in the City. Anticipated changes to metropolitan transit service, including the Northstar Commuter Rail and bus service along key corridors, such as Coon Rapids Boulevard, also affect locations of new development. This includes increased residential densities in areas with frequent transit service and appropriately located commercial development.

**Natural and Recreational Systems and Non-Private Land.** The City's water-based natural systems, including water courses, water bodies, and wetlands; extensive park and trail facilities; and major public and semi-public land provide a significant structuring influence on the built environment. These systems also offer a high level of amenity to the community.

**Development Systems.** The Future Land Use map determines the location of uses in the City to maximize the influence of transportation, natural, and recreational systems and to assure efficient, orderly, compatible, and livable development patterns.

The Land Use Plan provides distinctive kinds of commercial areas with varying market orientations in compact locations with good transportation access. These include regional, general (highway-oriented), community, and neighborhood commercial. Office and industrial areas are clustered in locations throughout the City with high levels of arterial street accessibility.

Areas of low-density, or generally single-family, housing are located throughout the City with moderate and high density housing generally occurring on the edges of low-density

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housing with arterial or collector street access. In most instances, these neighborhoods are centrally served by an elementary school or neighborhood park.

### Future Land Use Plan

This section outlines the location and extent of future land uses in Coon Rapids. Map L-5, "Future Land Use," illustrates future land uses in the City. The previous chapter of this Plan projects a 2030 population of 65,000 in 27,000 households. The Future Land Use map indicates that by converting presently vacant and underutilized land to residential uses at various densities, the City can accommodate as many as 2,400 new housing units by 2030.

Table 2-6 lists the land use categories used on the Future Land Use map, which correspond to the Metropolitan Council's standardized categories. The following two sections provide a narrative for areas that are slated for changes in land use in the coming years.

Coon Rapids presently exceeds the Metropolitan Council's minimum density of three units per net developable residential acre. Because Coon Rapids is a developed community, virtually all of its residential growth will occur as redevelopment of underutilized land with increased residential densities. Except in areas noted in this section, particularly along Coon Rapids Boulevard, the City's neighborhood, community, and regional commercial areas will generally retain their current functions. Residential uses adjacent to existing commercial areas should not be converted to commercial uses. In certain instances noted in the following sections, obsolete commercial uses may be redeveloped with residential uses in the long term.

**TABLE 2-6: Future Land Use Categories**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Residential Land Uses</b>	
Low Density Residential	Mostly single-family homes with some two-family homes and open space within or related to a residential development at a gross density of 2 to 4 units per acre.
Mobile Homes	Manufactured housing in a land-lease community at a gross density of 5 to 10 units per acre.
Moderate Density Residential	Generally attached housing, including two-family homes and townhomes, at a gross density of 4 to 7 units per acre.
High Density Residential	Multi-family housing, including apartment buildings and condominiums, at a gross density of 7 to 30 units per acre.
Residential Mixed Use	Residential at a gross density of 7 to 30 units per acre; neighborhood commercial uses may be appropriate.
<b>Commercial/Industrial Land Uses</b>	
Office	Predominantly administrative, professional, or clerical services, including medical clinics. May include limited commercial uses generally compatible with adjacent residential uses.
Neighborhood Commercial	Small shopping centers, generally less than 3 acres in size, which include low-intensity commercial uses serving the daily needs of residential areas within about ½ mile of the center.
Community Commercial	Moderate-intensity shopping centers and peripheral businesses, generally less than 30 acres in size, serving wide areas of the City and having minimal detrimental influences on surrounding residential areas.
General Commercial	Broad range of businesses, generally highway-oriented, serving other businesses and City residents and requiring buffering from surrounding residential areas.
Regional Shopping	Integrated retail, entertainment, restaurant, and complementary uses, generally at least 100 acres in size, with a regional market orientation.
Commercial Mixed Use	Primarily commercial, office, and institutional; some high-density residential may be appropriate.
Industrial	Primarily light manufacturing, warehouses, services, and related uses.
<b>Public/Semi-Public Land Uses</b>	
Institutional	Primarily religious, governmental, educational, social, or healthcare facilities.
Park and Recreation	Primarily for public active recreation activities improved with athletic fields, playground equipment, golf courses, or similar facilities.
Open Space	Natural resource protection or buffer areas that may or may not support unorganized public recreation, including trails, picnic areas.
Utility	Public or private land occupied by a power plant or substation, transmission line, municipal water facility, communications tower, or similar facility.
Major Right-of-Way	Large land areas occupied by vehicular or freight or passenger rail activities.
<b>Agricultural Land Uses</b>	
Agriculture	Primarily agricultural purposes, including farming and horticulture, including farmstead or rural residence.
<b>Undeveloped</b>	
Open Water	Permanently flooded open water, not including wetlands or periodically flooded areas.
Wetlands	Wetlands included in the National Wetlands Inventory.

## Land Use

Table 2-7 compares the acreages of existing land uses with those of the planned land uses. Table 2-8 estimates the impact these land use changes will have on sanitary sewer flows. Overall, as the City is built-out and redevelopment occurs, its sanitary sewer demand will increase by less than 20% over its present level.

**TABLE 2-7: Existing and Planned Land Use**

Land Use	Allowed Density Range Housing Units/Acre		Existing	Planned	Change
	Minimum	Maximum			
<b>Residential Land Uses</b>			<b>7,514</b>	<b>8,277</b>	<b>763</b>
Low Density Residential	2	4	6,289	6,809	519
Medium Density Residential	4	7	917	981	64
High Density Residential	7	30	308	347	39
Mixed Use Primarily Residential (70% min.)	7	30	0	141	141
<b>C/I Land Uses</b>	Est. Employees/Acre		<b>1,486</b>	<b>1,827</b>	<b>341</b>
Commercial	20		886	751	-135
Industrial	20		508	606	99
Office	20		93	250	158
Mixed Use Primarily C/I (70% min.)	20 (70%)		0	220	220
Extractive			0	0	0
<b>Public/Semi Public Land Uses</b>			<b>5,435</b>	<b>4,331</b>	<b>-1,104</b>
Institutional			596	725	129
Parks and Recreation			2,425	2,576	151
Open Space/Agricultural/Undeveloped			1,553	0	-1,553
Roadway Rights of Way			634	681	47
Utility			146	180	34
Railroad			81	168	87
Airport			0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>14,435</b>	<b>14,435</b>	<b>0</b>

The unnumbered map entitled Areas of Proposed Land Use Change shows those areas where the proposed land use classification in this Plan is different from the classification in the pre-2008 plan.

**TABLE 2-8: Land Use and Sewer Flow Analysis**

Land Use	Allowed Density Range Housing Units/Acre		Sewer Flow Assumptions (gallons/acre)	Existing million gallons per day (mgd)	Planned million gallons per day	Flow Increase in million gallons per day
	Minimum	Maximum		mgd	mgd	mgd
<b>Residential Land Uses</b>						
Low Density Residential	2	4	392	2.5	2.7	0.2
Medium Density Residential	4	7	785	0.7	0.8	0.1
High Density Residential	7	30	1,962	0.6	0.7	0.1
Mixed Use Primarily Residential (70% min.)	7	30	1,373	0.0	0.2	0.2
<b>C/I Land Uses</b>	Est. Employees/Acre					
Commercial	20		1,200	1.1	0.9	-0.2
Industrial	20		1,200	0.6	0.7	0.1
Office	20		1,200	0.1	0.3	0.2
Mixed Use Primarily C/I (70% min.)	20 (70%)		840	0.0	0.2	0.2
Extractive				0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Public/Semi Public Land Uses</b>						
Institutional				0.0	0.0	0.0
Parks and Recreation				0.0	0.0	0.0
Open Space/ Agricultural/Undeveloped				0.0	0.0	0.0
Roadway Rights of Way				0.0	0.0	0.0
Utility				0.0	0.0	0.0
Railroad				0.0	0.0	0.0
Airport				0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>5.6</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>0.9</b>

**Coon Rapids Boulevard**

The Coon Rapids Boulevard corridor, stretching from the Blaine border on the east to the Anoka border on the west, has undergone several changes in recent years. While the corridor used to include a majority of the City’s commercial and institutional uses, it has been transformed due to the out-migration of many of the principal users to newer or more accessible commercial developments, including Riverdale, Woodcrest Drive, the Northtown area, and the Northdale-Hanson area. This transformation has meant that existing buildings have been converted to lower value uses, redeveloped to new uses, or remained vacant for extended periods of time. Portions of the corridor also include obsolete commercial uses and incompatible housing. In 2000, the *Coon Rapids Boulevard Framework Plan* was adopted as part of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The

## Land Use

*Framework Plan* addresses transportation enhancements, public improvements, land use, site and building design for new development, and priorities for redevelopment. The *Framework Plan's* overall land use recommendation is that commercial and high-density residential development should be concentrated in a handful of nodes. Four of these nodes, known as "Preservation Or Renovation Tracts," or PORTs, have been given a special zoning designation to ensure that redevelopment occurs in accordance with a master plan for each area, and are considered priorities for redevelopment. These areas include: Port Evergreen (between Highway 47 and Foley Boulevard), Port Riverwalk (between East River Road and Egret Boulevard), Port Campus Square (between Crooked Lake and Mississippi Boulevards), and Port Wellness (between Round Lake Boulevard and the Anoka City limits). Land uses in each PORT are dictated by adopted master plans, which refine the future land uses outlined in this plan. Areas along Coon Rapids Boulevard in between the PORTs, which presently include a variety of land uses, are planned for primarily moderate density residential redevelopment. This redevelopment has been encouraged by means of an overlay zoning district. Some neighborhood commercial development is appropriate between the PORTs, but is expected to be concentrated at existing nodes at Hanson Boulevard, Xavis Street, and Pheasant Ridge Drive.

This Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan sets a goal of periodically updating the *Framework Plan* to respond to changing conditions and new priorities. Given that redevelopment along Coon Rapids Boulevard represents a major component of future land use changes in the City, this section outlines and updates the land use policies recommended by the *Framework Plan*. Land use policies for specific areas along Coon Rapids Boulevard are as follows:

**Port Riverwalk.** Areas along Coon Rapids Boulevard between the "Y" at East River Road and Egret Boulevard are priorities for redevelopment. The City demolished the Coon Rapids Shopping Center to make way for a major redevelopment on the south side of Coon Rapids Boulevard. Primarily moderate and high-density housing is planned for this area. Neighborhood commercial and small-scale office development is planned for the north side of Coon Rapids Boulevard. As redevelopment occurs, the street network should be modified to include a new street parallel to Coon Rapids Boulevard connecting Egret Boulevard and Avocet Street. Future development on the north side of Coon Rapids Boulevard would be served by a new street behind the development extending from Egret Boulevard to Avocet Street. The vacant land and storage facility east of Coon Rapids Boulevard Extension, while not included in the PORT, should be guided for office development, rather than the current industrial designation.

**Port Campus Square.** The area between Crooked Lake Boulevard and Mississippi Boulevard, near Anoka-Ramsey Community College, is the City's second priority for redevelopment. Moderate and high density residential development are planned for the existing Family Center Mall site on the north side of Coon Rapids Boulevard and the strip commercial development with poor visibility on the south side of the street. Parcels

fronting Coon Rapids Boulevard are planned for commercial, office, or mixed-use redevelopment. A portion of this area would also be an appropriate location for a community center in combination with other uses.

**Port Evergreen.** Areas along Coon Rapids Boulevard generally between Foley Boulevard and Highway 47 have experienced a fair amount of redevelopment in recent years. While some commercial development exists in this area, it is envisioned that offices will continue to be the predominant land use in the future, with vacant and underutilized parcels redeveloping as such. Some supporting commercial uses, such as restaurants and hotels, are also planned along Coon Rapids Boulevard with neighborhood or convenience commercial uses near its intersection with Foley Boulevard. The single-family neighborhood north of Coon Rapids Boulevard and south of Highway 610 is slated for eventual redevelopment with office uses. The City should update the Master Plan for Port Evergreen to show the future street network through this area.

**Port Wellness.** While the area between Round Lake Boulevard and the west City limits, near Mercy Hospital, is generally a viable office and commercial district, several opportunities exist for redevelopment. Primarily office and institutional uses are planned for both sides of Coon Rapids Boulevard to accommodate future expansions of the hospital and additional medical office development. Some commercial development is planned for the northwest corner of Coon Rapids and Round Lake Boulevards, on the former Carlson Toyota site. The City should consider expanding the PORT boundaries to include several properties east of Round Lake Boulevard, guiding areas fronting Coon Rapids Boulevard for commercial mixed-use development and areas to the north for residential mixed-use. The former McKay auto dealership and Frank's Nursery sites have several vacancies and could redevelop in the near future, while other areas will probably not experience redevelopment for some time.

**WCCO Tower Site.** If this facility is ever vacated, moderate density residential development is planned close to Coon Rapids Boulevard and low density residential development is planned for the northern portion of the site with street connections to the existing neighborhood to the north and east.

**Riverview Reservoir.** Residential properties between Coon Rapids Boulevard and the Riverview Reservoir should eventually be acquired to connect the reservoir park to Coon Rapids Boulevard.

**Other Areas of Coon Rapids Boulevard Between PORTS.** Areas along Coon Rapids Boulevard between the PORTs, which presently include a variety of land uses, are planned for a mixture of land uses, but primarily moderate density residential redevelopment due to the corridor's transit access. The existing River Rapids Overlay zoning allows for moderate density residential development with densities up to seven units per acre along all areas of the corridor outside of the PORTs. This includes areas with underlying zoning for office, commercial, and low-density residential. Some

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neighborhood commercial development is appropriate, but should be concentrated at existing nodes at Hanson Boulevard, Xavis Street, and Pheasant Ridge Drive, on parcels currently zoned for commercial and office development.

### Other Key Development and Redevelopment Areas

This section addresses land use policies for specific development areas elsewhere in the City.

**Federal Cartridge Site.** While it is unlikely that Federal Cartridge will vacate its site at Highway 10 and Round Lake Boulevard in the near future, the City should plan for its redevelopment if some or the entire site becomes available in the long term. The Future Land Use Plan calls for an office campus development if the site is vacated. The City should explore rezoning the site in the near future to ensure appropriate redevelopment.

**Undeveloped Areas Generally Along Main Street.** While Coon Rapids contains very little vacant, developable land for new residential development, a few sod farms along Main Street could be developed as residential uses when it becomes cost-effective to complete the necessary soil corrections and wetland mitigation. The Future Land Use Plan indicates that areas along Coon Creek Boulevard north of Main Street are planned for low density residential development. The single-family homes between Main Street and Bison Creek Park should eventually be acquired to expand the park and eliminate this generally incompatible land use. The parcels on the northeast and northwest corners of Main Street and Shenandoah Boulevard should be redeveloped as primarily moderate density residential. The sod farm east of Shenandoah Boulevard, if ever developed, should include generally low-density residential development, possibly with some moderate-density development adjacent to Main Street. The farmstead on the southwest corner of Main Street and the railroad tracks is planned for moderate density residential development. The sod farm at the southwest corner of Main Street and University Avenue is planned for entirely low density residential development. The undeveloped privately owned land generally southwest of the intersection of 121<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Shenandoah Boulevard is slated for low density residential development, although the southern portion of this site will likely remain undeveloped to accommodate drainage and wetlands.

**Northdale and Foley Boulevard Commercial Area.** The Northdale Shopping Center and peripheral commercial and office uses near the intersection of Northdale and Foley Boulevards may require revitalization in the future. Because the present mixture of land uses is generally viable, the area should remain as a primarily Community Commercial district as rehabilitation and redevelopment occur. Some residential development may be appropriate at the district's periphery if commercial uses become obsolete. A new zoning district for this area may be necessary to encourage mixed-use redevelopment.

**Riverdale and Foley Commuter Rail Station Areas.** Introduction of commuter rail service to Coon Rapids presents opportunities for new development. When the Northstar Commuter Rail line begins service, the Riverdale station along Northdale Boulevard will be the only station in the City. Anoka County Rail Authority owns a 15-acre parcel adjacent to the station site that will be used for transit-oriented development (TOD). A report, completed in 2007, established development guidelines for this site, suggesting that it develop with a mix of residential, retail, office, and open space uses. In the longer term future, an additional rail station may be located near the existing Foley Boulevard Park & Ride. The surrounding area, which presently includes a variety of industrial, office, and incompatible single-family residential uses, provides another opportunity for transit-oriented development. A master plan should be prepared for this area before the station comes online. A new zoning district or modifications to existing regulations may be necessary to ensure that development occurs as dictated by the plans for both station areas.

**Coon Rapids and Evergreen Industrial Parks.** Coon Rapids Industrial Park (generally along Xeon Street between Highway 10 and Northdale Boulevard) and Evergreen Industrial Park (generally along Evergreen Boulevard south of Highway 610) provide important employment opportunities for City and regional residents. Both areas contain a variety of manufacturing, warehousing, office, and research businesses and are almost completely developed. In the long term, some of the existing low-yield industrial uses may become obsolete and their redevelopment will become necessary. As redevelopment occurs, new businesses in the industrial parks should provide quality jobs and fall within the following sectors: light manufacturing with minimal outdoor storage, medical and pharmaceutical industries, information technology (computer and telecommunication), environmental technology, and office/research and development. The City may consider financial incentives to encourage these types of businesses. The City may consider revising its Industrial zoning district regulations to prohibit new low-yield uses with nuisance characteristics and encourage high-yield, high-technology uses that are compatible with the surrounding area. This may include limiting outdoor storage, ensuring high-quality building materials, and extensive landscaping.

**Predominantly Large-Lot Residential Areas South of Coon Rapids Boulevard.** In recent years, several large residential lots between Coon Rapids Boulevard and the Mississippi River east of Hanson Boulevard have been subdivided to allow new home construction. Current zoning regulations allow further subdivision of this area, with the exception of lots with frontage on the river. Additional subdivision is appropriate, provided the street network is well-connected and newly created lots do not display awkward platting. Prohibiting “flag” lots in this area should be considered.

### RESOURCE PROTECTION

While the Land Use Plan takes into account preservation and enhancement of Coon Rapids' natural and cultural resources, additional efforts are necessary to ensure their protection. This section addresses historic preservation, aggregate resources, renewable energy, and the Mississippi River Critical Area.

#### Historic Preservation

The City presently has a nine member Historical Commission to address historic preservation needs. The Commission:

- Advises the City Council on matters relating to the preservation of buildings, lands, areas or districts which possess historical or architectural significance and which will promote the educational, cultural, and general welfare of the City.
- Recommends to the City Council acquisition and maintenance of buildings, lands, areas or districts which the Commission has determined to have historical or architectural value. Also recommends methods to recognize and record persons, places, and events having historical significance to the City.
- Plans activities to recognize and celebrate the history of the City.

In the future, it is anticipated that the Commission will:

- Continue the historical site marker program.
- Support City housing rehabilitation efforts maintaining the historical and architectural integrity of the City's housing stock.
- Support Mississippi National River and Recreation Area efforts to recognize the historical significance of the Coon Rapids Dam.

#### Aggregate Resources

According to the *Minnesota Geological Aggregate Resources Inventory of the Seven-County Metropolitan Area*, Coon Rapids does not contain substantial deposits of aggregate materials. Because Coon Rapids is a developed community, no resource extraction is anticipated in the future.

## **Renewable Energy Resources**

Minnesota Statutes require comprehensive plans to include “an element for the protection and development of access to direct sunlight for solar energy systems.” While this requirement was intended to address concerns over declining fossil fuel supplies in the 1970s, alternative energy production has received an increasing amount of attention in recent years.

This Plan has a goal of encouraging use of new energy resources and protecting solar access. The large setbacks and low height limits required by the City’s zoning regulations generally allow for direct solar access on rooftops and south-facing walls. The City will also work with power companies to accommodate customer use of solar energy systems.

In addition to solar energy systems, Coon Rapids’ zoning regulations allow for earth-sheltered single-family homes, which are typically more energy efficient than traditionally constructed homes. Earth-sheltered homes that do not meet all zoning requirements for standard homes can be considered as a conditional use in residential zoning districts. This allows for more flexibility in accommodating energy-efficient dwellings.

City Code also allows the use of wind-powered generators. The City should encourage the use of wind power, provided that turbines are compatible with surrounding land uses and any noise generated meets Minnesota Pollution Control Agency standards.

The City should also ensure that its building and zoning regulations allow and encourage construction techniques and site design characteristics that limit negative environmental impacts and provide high levels of energy efficiency. This includes the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards.

## **Mississippi River Critical Area Protection**

**Mississippi River Critical Area Plan.** The Mississippi River corridor within Coon Rapids was designated as a Critical Area in 1976 and as a permanent Minnesota Critical Area in 1979. In March 1979 the Coon Rapids City Council adopted the plan for the Mississippi River Critical Area, in response to the *Minnesota Critical Areas Act* (Executive Order 79-19) and addressed the protection of the economic, environmental, recreational, and aesthetic values of the river corridor in the City. This plan was the result of an open citizen participation process and reflected the following general goals:

**Goal #1: Preserve and enhance the natural environmental characteristics and scenic qualities of the Mississippi River corridor.**

## Land Use

**Goal #2: Maintain the existing high quality residential and recreational environment provided with the river corridor.**

**Goal #3: Increase opportunities for City residents and the general public to use the river corridor as a recreational resource.**

**Goal #4: Achieve and maintain water quality conditions conducive to recreational activity and propagation of aquatic life.**

Since the original *Critical Area Plan's* adoption in 1979, the City has implemented policies and completed several projects to protect and enhance the river corridor. These include limiting development to residential uses, expanding the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park, amending the zoning code to incorporate special development regulations to protect bluff faces, developing a trail system, managing erosion control, removing diseased trees, minimizing the impacts of utility transmission lines, and monitoring water surface use. While many of the original Plan's recommendations have been implemented, several of its policies require ongoing efforts and remain relevant today. These include:

1. The current zoning, predominantly low-density residential, should be maintained. No industrial and only limited commercial development associated with recreational activity should be permitted in the corridor.
2. The City will work with the Metropolitan Council, Department of Natural Resources, Anoka Conservation District, Army Corps of Engineers, and neighboring cities to ensure adequate erosion control along the corridor.
3. The City will encourage property owners along the river to replace diseased trees with new plantings and introduce appropriate vegetation on river banks and steep slopes to control erosion.
4. The City will encourage an efficient erosion control permit process and City staff should be available to help homeowners prepare applications for erosion control permits.
5. The City will give appropriate attention to water quality and ensure elimination of non-point sources of pollution.

**Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Plan.** The Mississippi River Critical Area corridor in the City was federally designated as the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) in 1988. This section also addresses achieving consistency with the MNRRA Plan to further address the national, regional and local importance of the river.

Based on plans and management efforts from the City's 1979 *Critical Area Plan*, current full residential development, and complementary river-related recreational facilities in the corridor, this section sets the following goals:

**Goal #1: Preserve and enhance the natural environmental characteristics and scenic qualities of the Mississippi River corridor.**

**Goal #2: Maintain the existing residential and recreational environment provided within the river corridor.**

**Goal #3: Increase opportunities to use the river corridor as a recreational resource.**

**Goal #4: Maintain water quality supportive of recreational activity and aquatic life.**

**Goal #5: Assure regulations adequately protect natural and water resources and the aesthetic qualities of the corridor.**

**Goal #6: Achieve enhanced shoreline restoration, tree preservation and replacement, water quality management, and erosion control in the corridor.**

**Goal #7: Promote the economic benefits of the river corridor including tourism and a closer relationship with the Coon Rapids Boulevard corridor.**

**Goal #8: Continue to use intergovernmental cooperation and education to address corridor issues and to increase public appreciation of corridor resources.**

The following general policies for protection, preservation, and management of the river corridor reflect the direction of the preceding goals:

1. Recognize and respect the river corridor as a unique and valuable regional, state, and national resource.
2. Protect and preserve the river corridor for the benefit of the health, safety, and welfare of citizens of the region, state, and nation.
3. Prevent and mitigate irreversible damage to the river corridor.
4. Protect and preserve the biological and ecological functions of the river corridor.
5. Manage the river corridor in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws, including laws governing Metropolitan Council development guidance, the *Critical Areas Act* and the *Minnesota Environmental Policy Act*.

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*Natural Resources.* Throughout most of the corridor, the bluff ranges from 20 to 40 feet in height and rises directly from the river's edge. From the top of the bluff inland, the terrain is generally flat or gently sloping. This general character of the shoreline changes from approximately 2,000 feet north of the Coon Rapids Dam to the mouth of Pleasure Creek. Along this portion of the river, the bluff is set back from the river's edge, with the area between the river and the bluff subject to periodic flooding.

All development applications must include surveys with two-foot contour intervals. Map L-6, "Critical Area Slopes," highlights slopes warranting protection. Twelve percent to 18% slopes are prevalent in areas near the regional park, down river from the park, and near the Anoka border. Eighteen percent to 35% slopes are found near Anoka-Ramsey Community College. Slopes with grades steeper than 35% are generally located just east of the Anoka Ramsey Community College.

The river's water level is controlled in the six mile pool north of the dam. In winter, the level is lowered to prevent ice jams during the spring thaw. Fluctuations of the water level cause rapids south of the dam. Several islands, which periodically flood, are also found south of the dam.

Map L-7, "Critical Area Erosion," illustrates slopes along the river susceptible to erosion. Erosion has been a problem in several areas, as a result of storm water runoff, loss of slope stabilizing vegetative cover, the river current and boat motor wakes, and outlets to the river from the City's storm drainage system.

The river corridor has Hubbard-Nymore type soils, which are nearly level to gently sloping, excessively drained, sandy soils that are well suited for urban development.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain mapping designates the 100 and 500 year floodplain areas in the corridor. About 370 of the 1,160 acres in the river corridor lie within the 100 year floodplain and an additional 20 acres are located in the 500 year floodplain. Floodplains include a narrow strip along the river from Anoka to the dam. Here, slopes and bluff lines limit the area subject to flooding. South of the dam, the bluff turns inland, exposing a broader area to the 100-year flood potential. The floodplain is particularly broad near Coon Creek. South of Pleasure Creek the bluff runs adjacent to the river, leaving only a narrow area exposed to flooding.

About 25 homes were constructed in the floodplain before the City adopted floodplain zoning regulations. These properties experience occasional flooding that does not typically cause significant damage. City floodplain regulations do not allow new permanent structures within the 100-year floodplain unless special flood protection measures are provided.

Wetlands are generally located in the floodplain south of the dam. The “Water Resources” Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan addresses wetland locations and types in more detail.

The corridor provides a habitat for a variety of species, including ducks, geese, songbirds and bank swallows, bald eagles, deer, fox, rabbit, woodchuck, raccoon, and muskrat. River fish species include northern pike, bass, catfish, and carp. The lake within the regional park is stocked with trout.

Map L-8, “Critical Area Woodlands,” depicts the generally wooded character of the corridor. Hardwoods, mostly located on slopes and bluffs, offer animal habitat and provide erosion control. Over 40% of the river corridor has significant tree cover. Tree species include ash, cottonwood, elm, linden, maple, oak, and willow. Previous and current efforts to prevent and control elm and oak tree diseases have been generally effective in preserving these tree resources. Since 1980, the City’s Critical Area regulations have controlled the loss of trees on bluff tops and slopes when land development occurs.

The following policies provide direction for the management of the natural and cultural resources in the river corridor. The areas where these policies will apply are summarized on Map L-9, “Resource Management Plan.”

1. Provide an uninterrupted vegetated shoreline where practical by encouraging preservation and replacement of natural plant materials.
2. Control and prevent riverbank erosion by:
  - Regulating preservation of shoreline vegetation.
  - Encouraging replacement of lost shoreline vegetation with native plant materials.
  - Encouraging installation of systems to control existing areas of erosion.
  - Continuing to assist homeowners to obtain required permits for erosion control.
  - Providing needed erosion control measures at City storm drainage outlets.
3. Manage surface water drainage to maintain river water quality.
4. Minimize direct overland surface water runoff.

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5. Improve quality of surface water runoff received by streets and watercourses through Best Management Practices. Manage the use of chemical fertilizers and application of salt to streets in winter.
6. Minimize site alteration within the corridor.
7. Protect wetlands in accordance with the *Wetland Management Plan*.
8. Protect archaeological resources, historic structures, and cultural landscapes in their present condition.
9. Preserve natural areas when designating parks and open space.

*Cultural and Historic Resources.* The Mississippi River forms the southwestern boundary of Coon Rapids. Originally called “Father of Waters” by Native Americans, the river has significance in United States history. The river has served as a transportation route since the first canoe. By 1000 A.D. Minnesota Native Americans used the river to trade with tribes in the Illinois and Ohio River valleys. In 1690 Father Lewis Hennepin was the first missionary and fur trader to explore the river through Coon Rapids. In 1821 soldiers used the river to float logs from the 200 foot tall white pines growing along the Rum River for the construction of Fort Snelling. This timber resource also supported a flourishing lumber industry north of Coon Rapids during the 1860s and 1870s. From the 1860s to the early 1940s, when construction of single family homes along the river began, much of the river corridor was used for livestock and crop production.

During 1912 and 1913 the Coon Rapids hydro-electric dam was built for one million dollars. At the peak of construction of the dam, 1,000 laborers worked on it for 24 hours a day. Completion of the dam required 800 railcar loads of crushed rock and 42,000 cubic feet of concrete to produce the structure which raised the level of the river 15 feet behind the dam. The dam produced electricity until 1966 and became regional park property in 1969. In the mid 1970s a walkway was built across the top of the dam for pedestrian and bicycle use and a visitor center was built. In the 1980s, major construction occurred to assure the structural integrity of the dam, provide better and more efficient water level control gates, and to provide a new walkway across the river below the dam.

State Historical Society records indicate that the Coon Rapids Dam is the only historic structure in the river corridor and that the corridor does not contain any significant archaeological or cultural resources.

*Land Use.* As shown on Map L-10, “Critical Area Existing Land Use,” the river corridor is fully developed with predominantly low density housing and recreational and institutional uses consistent with its Urban Developed District designation. Map L-11,

“Critical Area Zoning,” indicates that most of the corridor is zoned Low Density Residential (LDR-1), a large lot single-family residential district. The Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park is zoned Conservancy.

The Anoka-Ramsey Community College offers a public walkway along the river and indoor and outdoor river overlooks. The regional park provides four overlooks on the shore and several overlook opportunities on the dam. Trail facilities along the Highway 610 bridge also offer vistas of the river and shoreline.

The following policies address future land use within the river corridor:

1. Retain compatible, existing low density residential, recreational and institutional uses in the corridor and do not allow commercial or industrial development.
2. Ensure new development in the river corridor has a relationship to the river, a need for a river location, or the capability of enhancing the river.
3. Provide a development management system that respects the natural and aesthetic qualities of the river corridor by continuing to enforce the Mississippi River Critical Area Overlay District regulations that have been incorporated into City Code. These include:
  - Preserving or restoring a 40-foot wide zone of vegetation along the shoreline. A zone of 100 feet from the ordinary high water mark of the river will be considered in areas where it does not conflict with the location of existing structures.
  - Preserving existing native vegetation and non-invasive, non-native vegetation on bluff faces.
  - Prohibiting disturbance of bluff faces with slopes of greater than 12%.
  - Preserving or restoring a 40-foot wide zone of vegetation landward of bluff faces.
  - Maintaining a maximum 35-foot height limit for all structures.
  - Requiring a 100-foot structure setback from the normal high water levels of the river and 40-foot setback landward from the bluff line.
  - Requiring utilities serving new development or redevelopment be placed underground.
  - Requiring detailed topographic survey information for all new construction.

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- Permitting new development or redevelopment only after approval of site plans that adequately assess and minimize adverse effects.
- Requiring site plan review for all development, except for construction of one single-family house or modification to an existing single-family house, addressing compatibility with the river corridor, mitigation of adverse environmental effects, maintenance of wildlife and vegetative habitats, and dedication of appropriate lands for public riverfront access.
- Restricting future public docking, marina, and boat launching facilities to appropriate locations within Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park to minimize adverse effects associated with water transportation facilities.
- Using nonconforming use regulations to convert inconsistent river corridor uses to consistent uses if uses are discontinued.
- Notifying the Department of Natural Resources at least 30 days before taking action on any development requiring discretionary action or a public hearing by the City.

*Parks and Open Space.* Map L-12, “Critical Area Parks and Open Space,” illustrates the location of recreational resources along the corridor. Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park contains 470 acres, or about 40% of the land in the river corridor. The park has a renovated former hydro-electric dam with a walking and biking bridge connection to regional park lands on the west side of the river. The park has facilities for walking, cross-country skiing, nature study, lake and river fishing, boat launching, picnicking, and various special events.

The park has an interpretive nature center to provide public education about the history of the dam and the natural characteristics of the park.

Two neighborhood parks, Mercy Park and Kennedy Park, are located within the corridor.

The following policies provide direction for park, open space, and recreational uses within the river corridor:

1. Maintain existing City, County, and State park lands and trail facilities within the corridor.
2. Encourage connections to the river corridor trail system.

3. Pursue opportunities to increase pedestrian access and add parkland to the riverfront in the northern part of the corridor if redevelopment of large lot residential areas occurs.
4. Support facilities to provide enhanced visitor experiences at Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park.

*Economic Resources.* Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park is a regional tourist attraction and is promoted by the North Metro Visitors and Convention Bureau. Enhancing the relationship between the river corridor and the Coon Rapids Boulevard corridor presents great potential for the river corridor as an economic resource.

The *Coon Rapids Boulevard Framework Plan* provides a number of recommendations to strengthen the identity of the river corridor and more closely link the river corridor to housing and commercial development along Coon Rapids Boulevard. While some of the recommendations have already been implemented, others will be implemented in the coming years. They include:

- Provide more housing along the corridor, increasing the number of residents to enjoy the river corridor.
- Provide a more distinct and redefined identity for the Boulevard using river-related themes, including designating the Boulevard as the “River Rapids” corridor and designating redevelopment nodes as “PORTS.”
- Provide strong sidewalk and trail links to the river to strengthen the connection between the river and the PORTS.
- Provide a unified streetscape for the “River Rapids” corridor including streetscape elements that are dark blue in color and have river-themed accents.

The following policies focus on using the river corridor as an economic resource:

1. Preserve existing residential, institutional, and recreational land uses within the corridor.
2. Encourage and support special events that bring people to the river.
3. Promote tourism in the river corridor.
4. Encourage investments in river corridor improvements.

*Public Facilities.* Six electrical transmission lines currently cross the river and there are no planned crossings that would require new right-of-way.

## Land Use

There are 13 storm drainage system discharge points to the river including Coon and Pleasure Creeks, Riverview and Egret drainage channels, and nine storm sewer outfalls.

The following policies guide the design and location of public facilities and electrical transmission lines within the corridor.

1. Provide carefully designed, safe, and accessible public facilities that complement their river corridor context.
2. Provide high quality and sustainable open space, public plazas, historic landscapes, interpretive facilities, and related facilities in the river corridor responsive to Mississippi National River and Recreation Area location and resource protection policies.
3. Design new or modified transportation facilities to complement planned land and water uses and to not stimulate development incompatible with the river corridor.
4. In planning and designing the construction or reconstruction of all public transportation facilities in the river corridor, give consideration to providing:
  - Scenic overlooks for motorists.
  - Safe pedestrian crossings and facilities along the river corridor.
  - Access to the riverfront in public ownership.
  - Aesthetically pleasing details, including railings, lighting, paving, and landscaping.
  - Any future utility crossings in existing rights-of-way.
  - Public improvements to strengthen the link between the Coon Rapids Boulevard corridor and the river.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Comprehensive Plan establishes policies for future development in Coon Rapids, guiding the amount, location, and intensity of future land uses to ensure compatibility with one another and the natural environment. This section tells *how* the City intends to accomplish this future vision. Official controls, including ordinances and fiscal devices, are the primary tool for implementing the City's land use policies.

**Zoning Districts.** The *Metropolitan Land Planning Act* requires that a community's official controls be consistent with its Comprehensive Plan. A community's zoning ordinance and map are the primary mechanisms for realizing the vision of its Comprehensive Plan. Overall, Coon Rapids' existing zoning districts allow for implementation of Map L-5, "Future Land Use," and the policies established in Chapter

2, Land Use. The least dense residential district allows three dwelling units per acre and other districts allow up to 30 units per acre. The City may need to create a new zoning district to allow mixed uses and appropriate residential densities near the Riverdale and Foley commuter rail stations. In addition, a new zoning district may be necessary to facilitate eventual reuse of the Federal Cartridge site at Highway 10 and Round Lake Boulevard. Table 2-9 lists the future land use categories, along with the corresponding zoning districts and residential densities. Map L-13, “Existing Zoning,” presents current zoning in the City.

**TABLE 2-9: Future Land Use-Zoning Relationships**

<b>Future Land Use Category</b>	<b>Zoning Districts</b>	<b>Residential Density Range</b>
<b>Residential Land Uses</b>		
Low Density Residential	LDR-1-Low Density Residential	Up to 3, min. lot size-15,000 sf
	LDR-2-Low Density Residential	Up to 4, min. lot size-10,800 sf
Mobile Homes	MH-Mobile Home	5 to 10
Moderate Density Residential	MDR- Moderate Density Residential	4 to 7
High Density Residential	HDR- High Density Residential	7 to 30
Residential Mixed Use	PORT-Preservation or Renovation Tract	7 to 30
	HDR- High Density Residential	
	NC- Neighborhood Commercial	
<b>Commercial/Industrial Land Uses</b>		
Office	O-Office	
Neighborhood Commercial	NC- Neighborhood Commercial	
Community Commercial	CC- Community Commercial	
General Commercial	GC- General Commercial	
Regional Shopping	RS- Regional Shopping	
Commercial Mixed Use	PORT-Preservation or Renovation Tract	
	NC- Neighborhood Commercial	
	CC- Community Commercial	
Industrial	I- Industrial	

**Zoning Map.** Nearly all new development in the City will occur in areas that are well-served by existing infrastructure. The existing zoning map allows for increased residential densities and intensification of land uses along transit corridors and other areas with infrastructure capacity. In certain locations, the current zoning map does not reflect the future land use designation. Therefore, zoning map amendments to achieve consistency with the Future Land Use Map should be made by February 2011.

**Development Regulations.** When the Planning Commission reviews proposals for new development, it should ensure that its decisions are based on the policies established in the Comprehensive Plan, particularly when a rezoning is requested. Over time, site plan regulations should be reviewed and updated to encourage high aesthetic quality, support a multi-modal transportation system, and ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.

## Land Use

**Subdivision Regulations.** The City's subdivision regulations require access to public services for all subdivided land and payment of park dedication fees to ensure implementation of the City's *Parks, Open Space, and Trail Plan*. The subdivision regulations also include standards for implementing proposed pedestrian facilities.

**Wetland Management.** The City revised its regulations for protection and mitigation of wetlands after the *Wetland Management Plan* was adopted in 2004. The existing regulations allow for implementation of policies pertaining to wetland management.

**Shoreland Zoning Regulations.** While the City generally follows the shoreland zoning requirements recommended by the Department of Natural Resources, the City's zoning ordinance should be refined to reflect these requirements by 2010.

**Mississippi River Critical Area.** The existing Mississippi River Critical Area zoning regulations implement all policies established in the Comprehensive Plan. Residential zoning should be retained within the Critical Area overlay zoning district.

**Plan Maintenance.** Although most official controls are in place for implementing the *Comprehensive Plan*, the City's zoning ordinance should be reviewed at least every three years to ensure that the Plan's policies are followed. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan's policies should be reviewed periodically to reflect emerging trends.

**Redevelopment.** Staff will monitor the physical condition and economic viability of land uses to determine if there is potential for redevelopment consistent with Land Use Plan objectives. If there is redevelopment potential, fiscal tools such as tax-increment financing and tax abatement will be considered as a way to stimulate and facilitate redevelopment.