

Chapter 3 - Goals & Strategies

Planning Elements

The Clara City Comprehensive Plan includes the following planning elements:

- Land Use and Zoning
- Housing
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Public Utilities and Facilities
- Sense of Community

For each planning element, the Planning Commission developed goals and strategies for the City to consider in their daily and long-range planning activities. These goals and strategies are based on planning commission meetings and community survey results, and are meant to continue to change and evolve as planning activities occur.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

Goals are the main framework for the strategies, which in turn, provide specific information on how decisions should be made by the City on a day-to-day basis. Strategies are based on Clara City's current and emerging issues that were identified during the comprehensive planning process and community survey. Together these goals and strategies establish a foundation for implementing the planning recommendations for each planning topic.

The goals and strategies are defined in the following way (see Figure 3.1):

Goal: This is an idealistic statement intended to be attained at some undetermined future date and are purposely general in nature. They describe the ideal outcomes for which the community will strive.

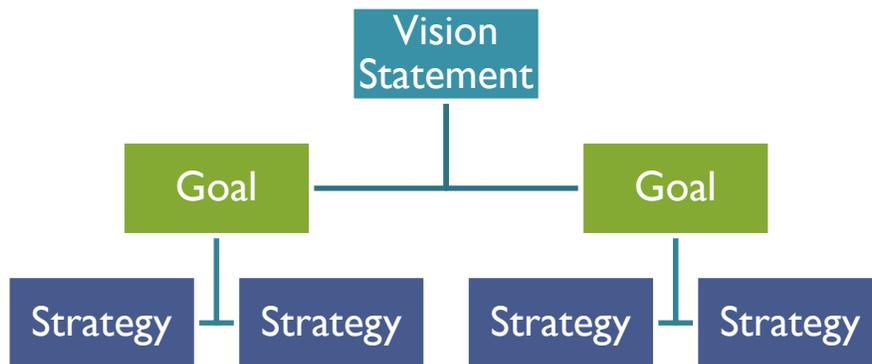
Strategies: These statements offer a **recommended** course of action to achieve the desired outcomes described in the community's goals. Strategies can also be converted into action work plans. It should be noted that the strategies are "**guides**" that may not be feasible to carry out in all circumstances.

Using the Goals & Strategies

These goals and strategies provide recommendations for a course of action the City could take and identify key areas to focus planning efforts. Several factors will need to be evaluated with each strategy to determine its feasibility for completion. City officials and staff will need to evaluate each "recommendation" on a one-by-one basis. The primary reason for this is because opportunities and circumstances change from day-to-day, and what is considered to be the best decision for the City today may not be the same belief in the future. **In short, these goals and strategies are meant to be a helpful tool that guide future planning decisions**, but do not limit opportunities that are perceived to be "good" for the community.

The strategies are intended to be periodically evaluated and updated as new projects and needs become apparent and as land uses change.

Figure 3.1: Vision Statement, Goals and Strategies Hierarchy



Land Use and Zoning

The purpose of land use planning is to provide a consistent set of policies specific to Clara City that will guide the future growth and development, and provide a basis for land use decisions. The Land Use Plan translates the community vision for the future into a recommended physical pattern of neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas, roads and public facilities. The Land Use Plan includes current zoning, future land use map, future planning areas map, and goals and strategies.

The Land Use Plan provides general guidance for future land uses as well as goals and strategies to help direct development and infrastructure improvements for the public good. The future land use map (page 24) is a graphic representation of how parcels are currently developed or the activity that occurs on the land and within the structures that occupy it. This future land use map should be used to guide infrastructure and service delivery and provide a thoughtful and orderly process for development and redevelopment within the City. Land use categories often offer more detail of what exists on the parcels and frequently there are several land uses represented within one zoning district. The land use categories used on Clara City's Future Land Use Map are found on page 22.

Zoning is the implementation of land use guidelines into a legally enforceable framework that determines the specific standards required for each development type within the given geographic locations of a community. A specific zoning designation within a community may include just one land use type, or it may include numerous allowable land uses that together achieve stated goals for community character and economic development.

Zoning regulations are comprised of two components: the zoning text (codes and ordinances) and the zoning maps. The text establishes zoning districts and sets forth development regulations governing land use and development. The map shows the locations of the zoning districts. The zoning map typically provides predictability for the residents and development community as to what type of land uses may be expected and allowed within each zone district. A typical zone district will set forth regulations for permitted land uses, building height, density, setbacks, minimum lot sizes, etc

Specific zoning regulations should derive from the general recommendations of a land use plan. Thus, a discussion on "land use" focuses on community character, while a discussion on "zoning" focuses on the implementation and enforcement of that character within the community. The Land Use Plan created during the

development of this comprehensive plan will drive the discussion of zoning law and possible zoning law changes within Clara City.

As a part of this comprehensive planning process, the zoning map has been updated to reflect current zoning law. As a "next step", the zoning text will need to be reviewed and updated after the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan.

CURRENT ZONING

Local governments regulate land use primarily through zoning ordinances. Clara City's zoning regulations are found in the Zoning Code. The Planning Commission is given the responsibility for Clara City's planning, zoning ordinance administration, policy recommendations, handling variances, conditional uses and re-zoning. The Planning Commission is generally advisory to the City Council. The current zoning districts and their intended purpose are as follows:

A-O AGRICULTURAL-OPEN SPACE DISTRICT. The Agricultural-Open Space District is intended to provide a district which will allow suitable areas of the city to be retained and utilized in open space and/or agricultural uses, prevent scattered non-farm uses from developing improperly, promote orderly development, and secure economy in government expenditures for public utilities and service.

R-1 LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT. The Low Density Residential District is intended to establish an area of low density residential uses consisting of one and two-family dwellings and directly related complimentary uses.

R-2 MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT. The Medium Density Residential District is intended to establish an area of medium-density residential uses consisting of one- and two-family dwellings and multiple-unit dwellings.

R-3 MANUFACTURED HOME PARK DISTRICT. The purpose of the Manufactured Home Park District is to provide for manufactured home uses in an appropriate, safe, sanitary and attractive environment.

B-1 GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT. The General Business District is designed and intended as a specialized district directed to serve the pedestrian in a compact central area of the city. The B-1 District will provide for a shopping and business environment, especially stressing the pedestrian function and interaction of people and businesses, rather than being heavily oriented toward the use of automobiles.

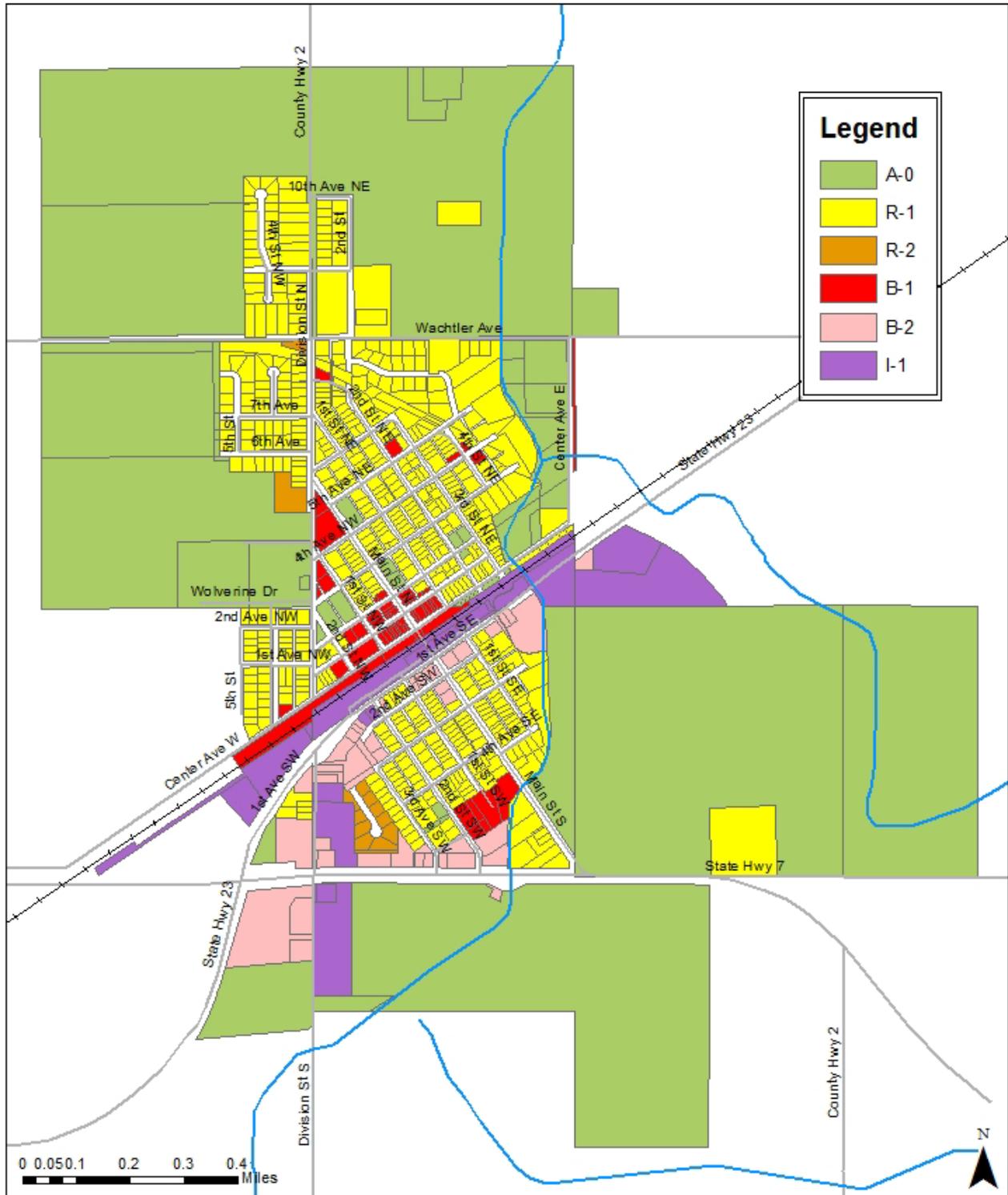
B-2 HIGHWAY BUSINESS DISTRICT. The purpose of the Highway Business District is to provide for accommodations and services to the traveling public and related retail services activities.

I-1 GENERAL INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT. The General Industrial District is established to provide for areas for manufacturing, warehousing and related commercial operations. It will be the intent to encourage industrial development which is compatible with surrounding uses and districts. All activities in the district shall be carried on in a manner not injurious or offensive to the occupants of adjacent premises due to odors, dust, smoke, noise or vibrations.

PUD PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT. To help encourage a more credible approach to the use of land, departures from the previously described zoning districts may be granted by the City Council in planned unit development districts. A planned unit development is allowable as a conditional use

in all zoning districts. Permission to develop specific parcels of land under the provision which follow, shall be binding on all construction. Any significant change in the development plan after approval by the City Council shall be resubmitted for consideration. The land use, minimum lot area, yard, height and accessory used determined by the planned unit development requirements shall prevail over conflicting requirements listed elsewhere within the zoning code.

Clara City Zoning Map



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FUTURE LAND USE

A future land use plan should present a vision of how residents want their town to grow. It will serve as the basis for major revisions to the zoning ordinance, other land use regulations, and a capital improvement plan. The future land use plan should represent a balance between the need to preserve rural character and natural resources, while also allowing reasonable opportunities for future growth. Through careful planning, Clara City can accommodate anticipated changes in population, industry and business.

The future land uses in Clara City are divided into ten categories that are similar to the zoning categories, however the land use categories provide more detail about what uses are intended to be present in the specified space. Therefore there may be several land use categories included in each zoning district. Below are descriptions of each of the ten land use categories:

AGRICULTURAL-OPEN SPACE. The Agricultural-Open Space land use category describes parcels of land within the city boundary to be retained and utilized in open space and/or agricultural uses. It aims to prevent scattered non-farm uses from developing improperly, promote orderly development, and secure economy in government expenditures for public utilities and service.

PARKS. The Parks land use category describes all land used for parks and recreational activities within the city.

LARGE LOT RESIDENTIAL. The Large Lot Residential land use category is meant for single-family residential homes on lots larger than the typical city lot and may have multiple out buildings on the property. They are not, however, associated with farmsteads.

RESIDENTIAL. The residential land use category primarily describes lower density residential development on regular sized residential lots within the city. The structures on these lots usually are detached single family homes or attached single family homes such as a townhome or duplex.

MEDIUM-HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL. The Medium-High Density Residential land use category includes higher density residential development than the large lot residential and residential categories. They are typically made up of a variety of housing types ranging from townhomes and duplexes with relatively few dwelling units in them to multi-story and multi-family dwelling units such as apartment buildings.

INSTITUTIONAL. The Institutional land use category typically describes civic, educational, governmental or religious institutions. It is a category that gives more specificity to what development exists on the parcels than the zoning code.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL. The Neighborhood Commercial land use category refers to commercial and/or retail uses that serve the residents of that particular neighborhood and are compatible with the neighboring residential uses. Some characteristics of Neighborhood Commercial areas are that they are designed to accommodate autos, but they are friendlier to, and encourage travel by bicyclists and pedestrians; the architecture is compatible with the neighborhood (i.e. the size, scale, materials, style, etc.); they are not meant for big box retail or any use that generates a lot of automobile traffic; and common examples include small groceries, laundries, personal services, pharmacies, restaurants, coffee shops, book stores, etc.

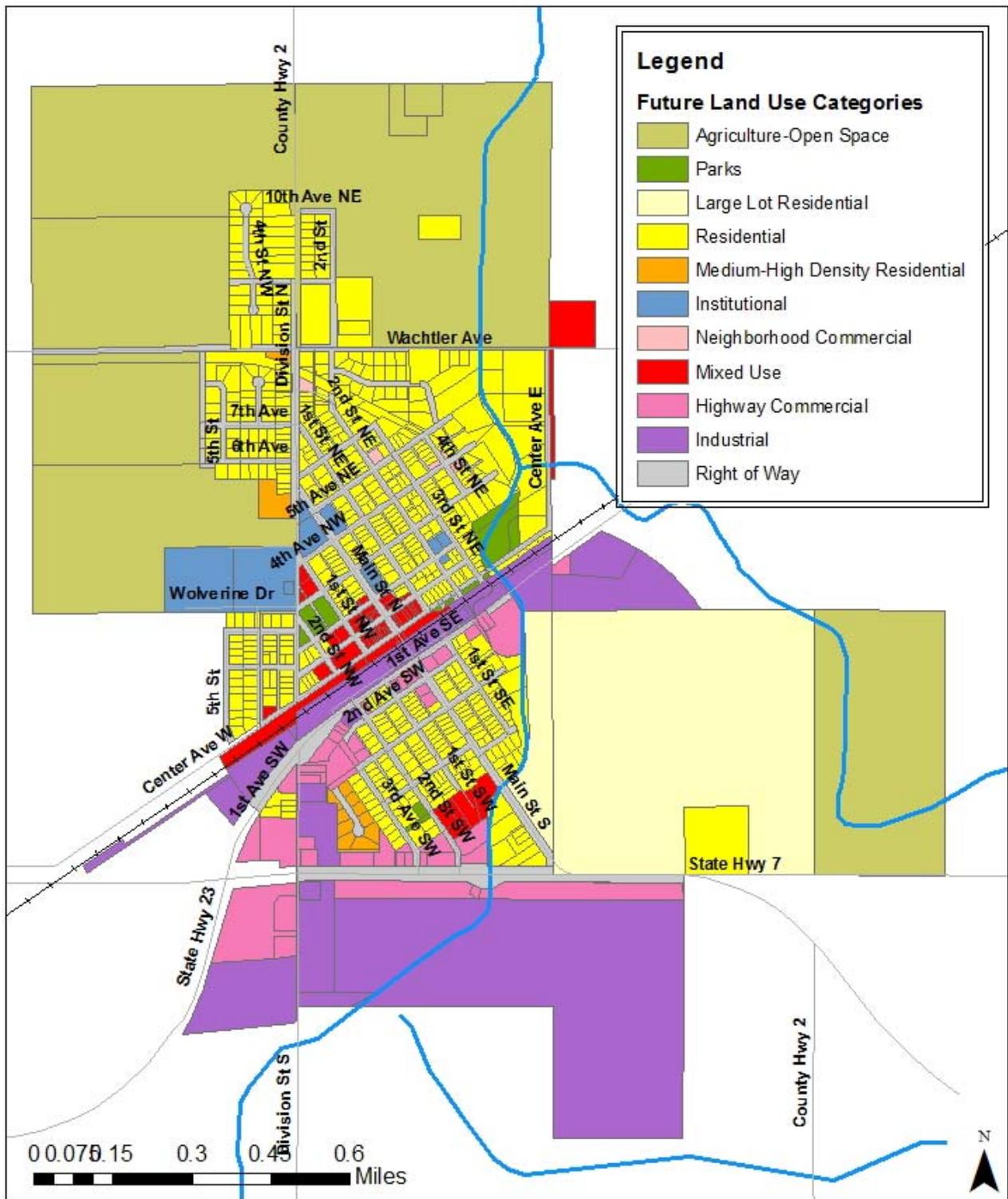
MIXED USE. The Mixed Use land use category refers to a building, set of buildings or a neighborhood that is used for more than one purpose. Mixed use development is typical of many traditional downtowns. It include a mix of housing, jobs and commercial uses and the mix of uses can be mixed within a single building or can be a mix of uses in a particular zone. For Clara City, mixed use development differs from neighborhood commercial in that neighborhood commercial is more restrictive in allowed uses. Mixed use development is geared not only toward the residents of its specific neighborhood, but to the entire city and visitors to the city, such as a vibrant downtown that attracts tourists to downtown shops.

HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL. The Highway Commercial land use category is for use in locations along primary commercial corridors where automobile-oriented businesses are already present or are planned. These areas are meant for commercial uses that benefit from larger volumes of traffic going by their site such as gas stations, big box retail and fast food restaurants.

INDUSTRIAL. The Industrial land use category describes all industrial uses such as manufacturing. These areas often house many of the jobs within the city and can be part of an industrial park or stand alone sites. In Clara City's case, there is only one classification for industrial—there is no need to specify heavy or light industrial.

RIGHT OF WAY. The Right of Way land use category describes all of the land that is used for transportation including roadways and sometimes railroads. Often the right of way extends beyond the actual road or railroad tracks. This land is classified as right of way.

Clara City Future Land Use Map



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FUTURE LAND USE AREAS:

Residential Growth Area: Clara City's future growth area for residential development was identified north, south, and far south of the city. North of the city lies Hawk Creek Acres, with 20 lots available for residential development. Currently two lots have been sold and one new house has been built. South of the city is the Hanson Addition, with ten lots open for residential development, and four homes built and sold for a total of 14 lots and eventually housing units. On the far south side of Clara City, agricultural land is available for future development behind Donner's Crossroads.

Additionally, there are infill land opportunities throughout the city due to empty lots. It is preferable to focus and direct new residential construction to these lots as they are already being served by public utilities and infrastructure. Should Clara City need it, there are other areas adjacent to the city, but outside its border, that are suitable for residential development such as on the southwestern edge of the city. Additionally, land classified as Agriculture and Open Space on the outer borders of the city's limits could prove viable for residential development in the future.

Residential Area: There are currently areas within the residential area that are zoned B-I. When practical or when the property is sold, the zoning should be changed to R-I for greater consistency in Clara City's residential neighborhoods.

Downtown Business District: The Downtown Business District, or sometimes known as the Central Business District, is located in the geographic center of city and is central to everyday commerce in Clara City. It will be important for Clara City's future to maintain an active and vibrant Downtown Business District and future development or redevelopment in the district will serve to enhance the community. Additionally, any future development proposed in any location in Clara City should be evaluated to determine what effect it may have on the Downtown Business District and attempt to eliminate or mitigate any potential negative outcomes for the Downtown Business District. Issues that need to be addressed when looking at Clara City's downtown include the variety of business, condition of the buildings, signage, infrastructure, parking and the character and design of the downtown area.

Highway Commercial and Industrial District (Hwy 23/7): This area includes the land on both sides of Minnesota Highways 7 and 23. It is a high traffic area for both goods and people, making it suitable for both commercial and industrial expansion. This area is Clara City's primary commercial and industrial corridor where automobile-oriented businesses already exist and should be planned for expansion. The most fitting uses for this area are those that typically benefit from access and visibility from major highway corridors such as gas stations, grain elevators, and big box retailers. Having available and sufficient off-street parking is crucial for highway commercial and industrial uses.

While convenient, highway commercial and industrial development's appearance and orientation towards automobile traffic and parking often lacks visual appeal and discourages pedestrian or bicycle movement. Yet highway corridors of this type are often the gateways into – and the places that visitors get their first impressions of – communities. To make this development pattern be made more attractive, walkable and less congested; Clara City should encourage the development of human-scale buildings, walking and biking connections to and from as well as within the district to create a district with a strong sense of place and identity.

Business and Industrial Growth Areas: The undeveloped parcels within the city limits provide more than enough space to meet the foreseeable future business and industrial growth in Clara City. Currently, there are several lots available for industrial development; therefore an industrial park is not needed at this time.

Flood Risk Areas: Clara City and Maynard have homes at risk during 100-year flood events and have not addressed the 100-year flood risks in its planning and zoning.

Recreation Area - Campground and Trailhead: An area on the east side of the city has been identified as an ideal location for a campground and a trailhead with a trail extending east of the city. This location has several qualities that make it ideal for recreation in Clara City. It is close to Hawk Creek, provides a large space for a campground and other recreational activities and is in close proximity to a nearby winery (Hinterland Vineyard) that could be connected to Clara City via a trail.

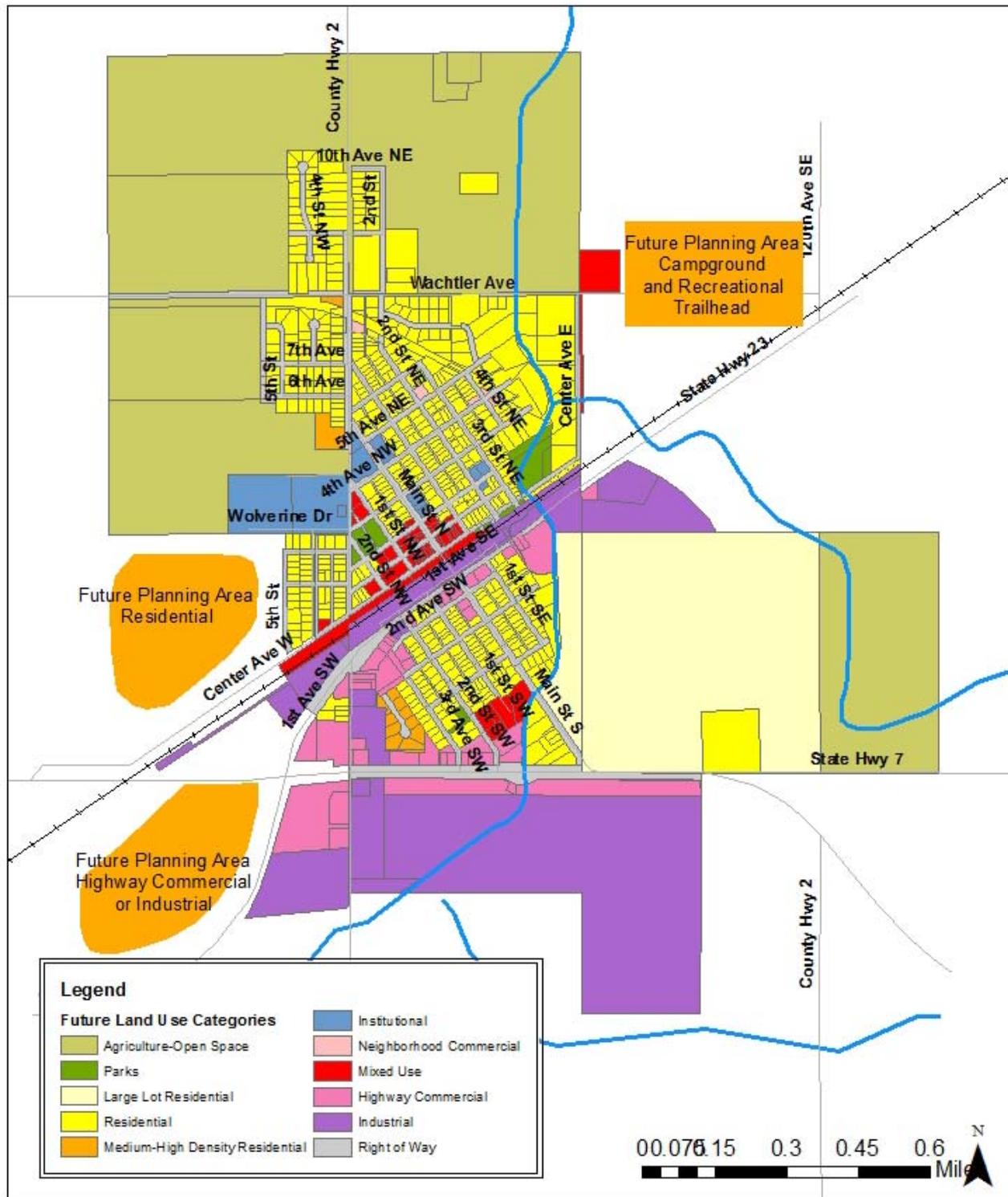
FUTURE PLANNING AREAS (URBAN GROWTH):

In general, identifying areas for urban growth outside of the current city limits is not necessary at this time as there is an abundance of undeveloped land within the current city limits. At some point, Clara City may wish to identify areas of undeveloped land to remove from the city limits. However, there are several areas adjacent to Clara City, but outside city limits that have potential for growth due to their proximity to developed city land, easy access to city utilities and convenient locations along Minnesota Highways 23 and 7. Although these parcels are not within the city, it is likely they will be developed in the future before other undeveloped land within city limits because of their favorable characteristics for development.

Since these areas are favorable for growth and development, but outside the city limits, they are defined as future planning areas rather than being identified in the future land use map. If development pressures in these areas increase in the future, Clara City should work with the township to establish an orderly annexation process. However, no action is needed at this time.

The Future Planning Areas map shows the locations of three areas outside the city limits that may be suitable for development in the future, should the need arise.

Clara City Future Planning Areas Map



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LAND USE AND ZONING GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The purpose of defining goals and establishing strategies related to current and future land use is to establish a sustainable, comprehensive and equitable approach and analysis for all decisions and action related to land use.

Goal:

A. Clara City will grow and develop in an orderly and harmonious way, consistent with natural features and socio-economic factors that will be sustainable for generations to come.

Strategies:

1. **Development and Redevelopment:** The City should encourage development and redevelopment in areas currently served by municipal utilities and should growth occur beyond the boundary of existing facilities, growth should occur in conjunction with municipal facilities and services.
2. **Annexation:** Orderly annexation, if needed, should be done in conformance with current and future land use plans.
3. **Partnerships:** The City should consult and partner with Chippewa County, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation and other affected agencies on important land use issues.
4. **Educational Facilities:** The City and the school district should work together in the planning for educational facilities.
5. **Flood Zones:** The City should prevent future development in flood prone areas identified in the Chippewa County Hazard Mitigation Plan.
6. **Consistency:** The City should update ordinances that regulate land use for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and enforce those ordinances regularly.

Goal:

B. Clara City's zoning ordinances and land use decisions will promote and contribute to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the community.

Strategies:

1. **Nuisances and Pollutants:** The City should closely monitor and enforce regulations for nuisances and pollutants, or partner with the regulating public agencies, in an effort to provide for a safe and healthy living environment for all residents.
2. **Housing:** The City should promote and support a wide variety of residential neighborhoods, such as, multi-family dwelling units and cluster development to meet the wide-ranging needs of Clara City residents, now and in the future.
3. **Consistent Zoning:** To ensure zoning is consistent with Clara City's vision for the future, zoning should be updated to reflect the City's future land use map, when property is sold or when practical.
4. **Downtown:** The City should encourage a downtown that allows for a mix of residential, office, commercial and retail uses creating a vibrant city center and encourages investment in the Downtown Business District, where there is existing infrastructure, rather than on the fringes of the community.
5. **Community Needs:** The City should carefully consider both the needs of individual property owners and the needs of the public in the development and implementation of plans and controls related to land use.

6. **Environmental Preservation:** The City should support the acquisition and preservation of wetland areas and natural corridors to be preserved for groundwater recharge, surface water conservation, recreation and wildlife.
7. **Preservation:** The City should promote preservation of land and structures that possess scenic, historic, cultural or archeological features.
8. **Design Standards:** The City should consider creating design standards to ensure new and remodeled buildings are compatible with their surroundings and further Clara City's vision for the built environment.
9. **Industrial Development:** The City should promote quality industrial development that is compatible with, and minimizes adverse environmental impacts such as wetland or water quality degradation.
10. **Vision Statement and Goals:** The City should review its vision statement and goals when making land use decisions to assess if the decision could compromise the vision and goals of the community.

Housing

Suitable housing is a basic need and a key element to quality of life. A wide choice of housing styles, types and price ranges is a major community asset. Clara City has a variety of housing choices for its residents, but throughout most neighborhoods, historic and newer, single-family housing is the most prevalent housing type.

Examining the City’s historical and current housing data is important to long-range planning for several reasons. Housing data serves as an indicator of the health of the local economy and examining housing stock in comparison to the City’s demographic data is crucial to assess whether or not the housing stock meets the needs of residents currently and into the future.

The 2010 Census and the 2006 – 2010 American Community Survey sample estimates were the last official counts of housing data in Clara City.

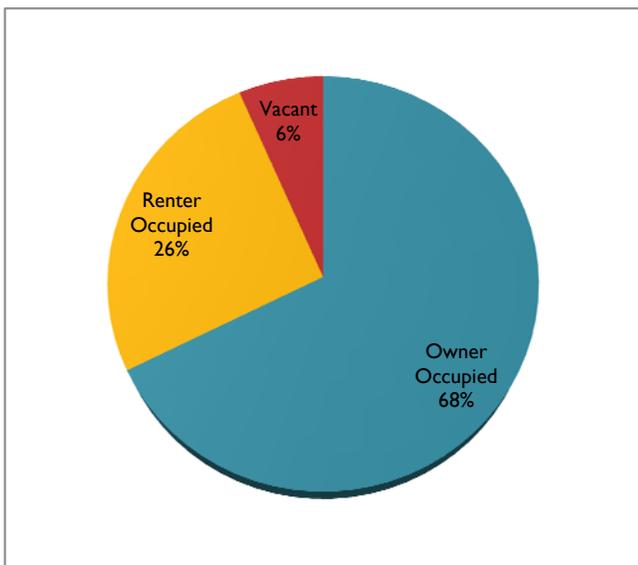
Quick Housing Facts

- There are 625 housing units in the city
- 68% of housing units are owner occupied
- The median home value is \$81,800
- 26% of housing units are renter occupied
- The median rent is \$682
- 81.7% of the city’s housing stock are detached single-family homes
- The vacancy rate is 6.6%
- 25.3% of housing structures are over 50 years old

HOUSING INVENTORY

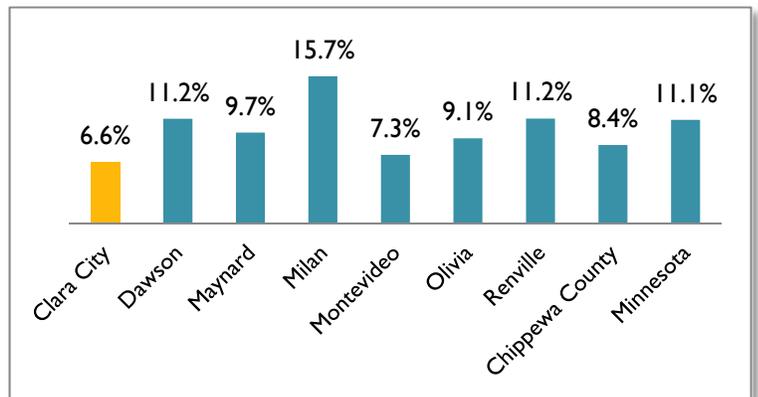
The 2010 Census reported 625 total housing units, including all single family homes, mobile homes, rental units and vacant dwellings. Of Clara City’s 625 housing units, 93.4%, or 584 units are occupied and 41, or 6.6%, are vacant. Clara City’s vacancy rate of 6.6% is the lowest vacancy rate among nearby cities listed in Figure 3.3. It is also below the vacancy rate for the county, at 8.4% and the state of Minnesota, at 11.1%.

Figure 3.2: Housing Occupancy Status in 2010



Source: 2010 Census

Figure 3.3: Vacancy Rates in 2010



Source: 2010 Census

Figure 3.4: Comparative Housing Data, 2010

Place	Housing Units	Occupied	Vacant	Vacancy Rate
Clara City	625	584	41	6.6%
Dawson	768	682	86	11.2%
Maynard	175	158	17	9.7%
Milan	178	150	28	15.7%
Montevideo	2,510	2,326	184	7.3%
Olivia	1,142	1,038	104	9.1%
Renville	606	538	68	11.2%
Chippewa County	5,721	5,241	480	8.4%

Source: 2010 Census

Figure 3.5: Housing Types

Housing Types		
1-unit, detached	500	81.7%
1-unit, attached	9	1.5%
2 units	2	0.3%
3 or 4 units	0	0.0%
5 to 9 units	35	5.7%
10 to 19 units	38	6.2%
20 or more units	25	4.1%
Mobile home	3	0.5%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0%
Total Housing Units	612	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census 2006-2010 American Community Survey

* Note, data for the housing types is taken from the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, which is an estimate based on sample data. Therefore it does not exactly match the 2010 Census data.

Figure 3.6: Comparative Housing Values

Place	Median Home Value	Median Rent
Clara City	\$81,800	\$682
Dawson	\$68,600	\$444
Maynard	\$56,500	\$625
Milan	\$55,000	\$389
Montevideo	\$84,600	\$547
Olivia	\$97,000	\$521
Renville	\$64,400	\$536
Chippewa County	\$94,400	\$542
Minnesota	\$206,200	\$759

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 - 2010 American Community Survey

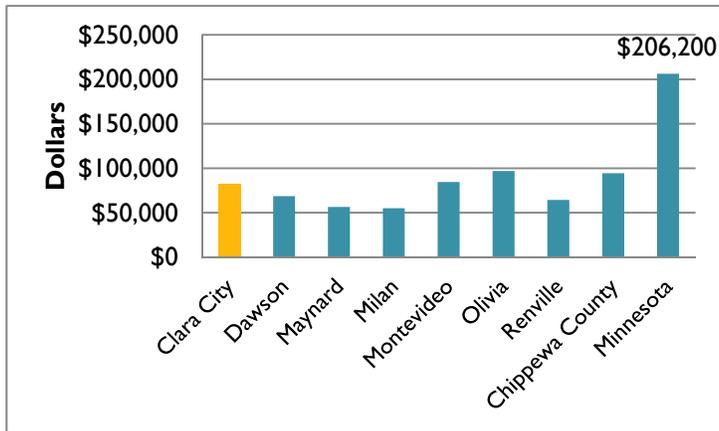
Housing Data

The housing data, available from the U.S. Census Bureau, provides the background and facts regarding housing in Clara City and helps to inform the community's goals and strategies related to housing. Figure 3.4 shows the number of housing units along with those occupied and vacant for Clara City and surrounding communities.

As identified in the previous section covering land use and zoning, the dominant land use in Clara City is residential, making up over three-quarters of the city's land area. Within residential zones, the dominant housing type is a single-family, detached structure, which accounts for 81.7% of all housing types (Figure 3.5). As the city's population continues to age, and as household size shrinks, it is evermore important for the city to support a mix of housing types suitable for all income, ethnic, ability and age groups.

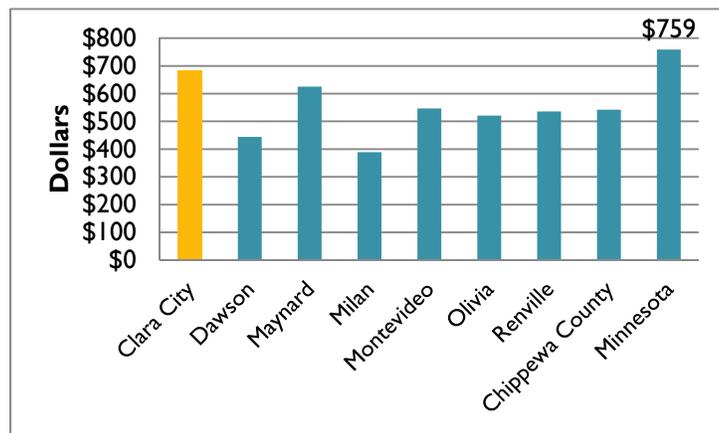
At \$81,000, Clara City's median home value is well below the median home value for the state of Minnesota at \$206,200 and the Nation at \$185,400. However, it aligns with median home values in the area. Clara City's median home value is also below that of the county at \$94,400, but it has the third highest median home value compared to nearby cities. It is behind only Olivia (\$97,000) and Montevideo (\$84,600), both of which have significantly more housing units than Clara City.

Figure 3.7: Median Home Value



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 - 2010 American Community Survey

Figure 3.8: Median Rent



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 - 2010 American Community Survey

At \$682 per month, median rent in Clara City is only slightly lower than the median rent throughout the state of Minnesota at \$759. It is also significantly higher than median rents in the surrounding communities as well as in Chippewa County, shown in Figure 3.6. This could mean a lack of affordable rental housing options for Clara City residents.

Although the median home value in Clara City is \$81,000 and 44.1% of homes are valued between \$50,000 and \$99,999, over one quarter of the homes in Clara City have a value of less than \$50,000.



Figure 3.9: Home Value

Less than \$50,000	95	25.3%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	166	44.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	67	17.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	19	5.1%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	29	7.7%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	0	0.0%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	0	0.0%
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0.0%
Total Owner-Occupied Units	376	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census 2006-2010 American Community Survey

A snapshot of housing affordability can be seen from the Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income table below (Figure 3.10). The widely accepted standard for housing affordability is 30 percent of household income, which originated out of the United States National Housing Act of 1937. According to the American Community Survey, nationwide, 46 percent of renters are paying more than 30 percent of household income as rent. In Clara City, 52 percent of renters are paying more than 30 percent of household income as rent. When households are spending more than 30 percent of household income on housing, those costs become a burden to them and they are unable to afford other life necessities such as food, clothing and transportation.

Most (55.3%) of the housing in Clara City is over 50 years old, built before 1960. Only seven housing units were built in the city since 2000.

Affordable housing is not only a problem for those that it affects directly, in many places throughout Minnesota, the lack of affordable housing has become a limiting factor for economic development and can create a jobs housing imbalance if workers are unable to afford housing near work. It would appear that Clara City needs more affordable rental housing as the median rent is \$682, significantly higher than surrounding communities and the county.

Figure 3.10: Gross Rent

Gross Rent			Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income		
Less than \$200	7	4.7%	Less than 15.0 percent	22	14.9%
\$200 to \$299	2	1.4%	15.0 to 19.9 percent	23	15.5%
\$300 to \$499	53	35.8%	20.0 to 24.9 percent	17	11.5%
\$500 to \$749	30	20.3%	25.0 to 29.9 percent	9	6.1%
\$750 to \$999	41	27.7%	30.0 to 34.9 percent	12	8.1%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	13	8.8%	35.0 percent or more	65	43.9%
\$1,500 or more	2	1.4%	Not computed	23	15.5%
Occupied Units Paying Rent	148	100.0%	Occupied units paying rent	148	100.0%
No Rent Paid	23	N/A	No Rent Paid	23	N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey

Contrarily, only 18.8 percent of all homeowners, those who own their home free and clear and those with a mortgage are paying 30 percent or more of their household income toward housing costs. From these statistics, it seems housing may be affordable for homeowners, but it is unaffordable for many renters. Interestingly, the Clara City survey reveals that 35 percent of respondents, answered “yes, definitely” when asked if Clara City has enough low income housing—the highest percentage for any answer for any of the housing type questions.

Figure 3.11: Building Permits

Year	Buildings	Units	Total Cost
1996	6	7	\$750,000
1997	3	4	\$350,000
1998	0	0	\$0
1999	4	9	\$535,000
2000	3	7	\$410,833
2001	1	1	\$50,000
2002	0	0	\$0
2003	0	0	\$0
2004	4	5	\$412,000
2005	4	5	\$525,000
2006	0	0	\$0
2007	0	0	\$0
2008	1	1	\$250,000
2009	0	0	\$0
2010	0	0	\$0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

HOUSING ISSUES

Issues identified through the planning commission meetings, the community survey and analysis of housing data include:

- A need to promote residential building rehabilitation
- A need to look into enforcing the Minnesota State Building Code.
- A need to enforce the Clara City Zoning Code.
- Clara City has a relatively low vacancy rate and few rental units available.
- A need for more affordable rental housing. The rental median rent is \$682, significantly higher than surrounding communities and the county.
- A need for a current housing study to analyze owner-occupied and rental units.

HOUSING GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The section above shows historical and current housing trends in Clara City, but the Housing Goals and Strategies help Clara City develop the kind of housing it wants and needs for the future. Understanding housing needs in the community is important because housing is related to infrastructure, economic development, energy and the environment.

Infrastructure: the amount and location of housing directly affect the pressures on public infrastructure, such as roads, water and wastewater systems and electric utilities.

Economic Development: a community's housing policies can have significant impact on economic development efforts. Housing costs should be consistent with prevailing wages, and low levels of housing availability can diminish the ability to local businesses to retain or expand a productive workforce. Communities with a dearth of 'starter homes' or apartments may find that businesses are unable to fill entry-level jobs. Similarly, economic development can occur faster than the expansion of housing, causing rapid escalation of housing costs and pricing low- and middle-income households out of the market.

Energy and Environment: housing is not just an economic or social issue, but an environmental one as well. While making housing more energy-efficient can increase up-front capital costs, these measures have been shown to dramatically lower lifetime operation and maintenance costs, thereby actually making housing more affordable in the long run.

Taken from Under Construction: Tools and Techniques for Local Planning

Goal

A. Provide an adequate and affordable supply of housing that meets the needs of all residents, current and future.

Strategies:

1. **Adequate & Affordable Supply.** An adequate supply of housing in a wide range of prices, types and locations should be encouraged. Provide a variety of life-cycle housing for the diverse needs of the community.
2. **Rental Units.** Ensure a variety of affordable rental units are available in Clara City in order to encourage diversity of housing stock that meets the needs of all current and future Clara City residents.
3. **Maintain Quality Existing Stock.** Monitor the quality of housing stock and enforce codes and ordinances relating to outdoor storage, etc. as well as research the desirability of applying for Small Cities Development funds for housing rehabilitation as a means of encouraging on-going maintenance of older housing stock.
4. **Housing Needs.** Local units of government should share in the responsibility for meeting low and moderate income housing needs.
5. **Collaboration.** Utilize the Chippewa County HRA housing plan and work with local, state and federal agencies to address housing needs for the City of Clara City. Involve residents, service providers, developers and funders in developing and implementing housing strategies.
6. **Housing study.** A periodic study should be completed that analyzes the City's housing supply and future needs.

Goal:**B. Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of the existing housing stock and the development of existing residential land where existing infrastructure is accessible or planned.****Strategies:**

1. **Residential Development.** Residential growth should occur in vacant areas that are or soon will be supplied with municipal services. Develop land use policies that promote infill development, while maintaining community character, on existing infrastructure.
2. **Adequate zoned land.** An adequate supply of suitable land appropriately zoned for residential development should be made available.
3. **Inventory of Lots.** The City should develop and maintain a list of available lots for housing so that developers and potential home builders can easily learn what is available.
4. **Map Redevelopment Sites.** Conduct an inventory and map potential redevelopment sites. This information can be used to assess available land for redevelopment and shape policy promoting redevelopment on these sites.
5. **Map Housing Resources.** Inventory resources available to the City to promote housing development and use this to identify strategies and priorities for housing efforts.
6. **Infrastructure to guide development.** Existing public facilities and services should be used to guide development. Encourage commercial and industrial development toward vacant lots where existing infrastructure is accessible

Goal:**C. The housing stock will provide a convenient, safe and aesthetically appealing living environment for all Clara City's residents.****Strategies:**

1. **Neighborhood Character.** The character of residential neighborhoods should be preserved.
2. **Updated Regulations.** Zoning and subdivision ordinances and building code regulations should be consistently enforced and updated as needed.
3. **Compatible Zoning.** Housing developments should be constructed so they are compatible with existing land use.
4. **Abate Nuisances.** Nuisances should be abated in Clara City.
5. **Dilapidated Housing.** The City should work to create a more time and cost efficient process for removing dilapidated houses. This process can be improved through continued work with the EDA.
6. **Manufactured Housing.** The City should update its manufactured home park district ordinance to help ensure high quality housing conditions. According to the Hazard Mitigation plan, the City should consider mandating tie-downs for all manufactured housing in their zoning ordinance.
7. **Manufactured Home Park District.** Study the impacts of creating a Manufactured Home Park District. Within this study, determine the best and viable areas for a Manufactured Home Park District.
8. **Environmental Protection.** Housing developments should take into account the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.
9. **Hazard Mitigation.** Address housing issues from Chippewa County Hazard Mitigation Plan:
 - Encourage that all new homes without basements have a safe shelter where household residents may go in case of violent storms.
 - Establish a plan to purchase a safe shelter for community use in the next 8-10 years.

Parks, Recreation & Open Space

Clara City residents, workers and visitors identify parks, trails and recreational facilities as valuable community resources that contribute positively to Clara City’s quality of life. Recreation facilities, open space, and natural features increase Clara City’s livability and are the intrinsic qualities that can set Clara City apart from other Cities. As rural areas continue to lose population, ensuring Clara City is a livable place will help to retain and gain residents.

Livability, or the presence of amenities that contribute to a high quality of life, has become the driving force behind growth and success of communities. Ingredients such as natural beauty, vibrant neighborhoods, architectural and artistic quality, parks and open space, transportation alternatives and the pursuit of sustainable practices contribute to a livable community.

The focus on livability leads to a shift in the way communities pursue growth and economic vitality. There was a time when the primary way to attract economic activity was to build a ship yard, rail line or freeway. Today, the top priority is attracting creative talent and the best way to do that is to build a livable community. This requires innovative and thoughtful approaches to development that preserve inherent landscape and cultural qualities.

Open Space Can:

- Define the look and feel of a community
- Improve property values
- Provide places for recreation, rest and relaxation
- Promote socializing with neighbors
- Facilitate physical health and well-being
- Help clean the air and support a diversity of animal and plant life
- Allow people to learn about and appreciate nature
- Provide garden space for those who may not otherwise have it
- Naturally store and filter rainwater and runoff
- Provide corridors of habitat for wildlife

PARKS AND RECREATION INVENTORY:

Recreational opportunities in Clara City include:

Clara City Community Park / Lion's Park

Location: Lion’s Park is located on the western edge of the city near the High School between Second and Third Avenues and First St. SW and Division St. N.

Description: The amenities at Lion’s Park include two shelters, a variety of playground equipment, a skate park, concrete bleachers, horseshoes, picnic tables and four baseball/softball fields.

This park is home to many of the events that take place in Clara City such as Prairie Fest Days.



Outdoor Swimming Pool

Location: The outdoor swimming pool is located next to the Clara City Community Park/Lion's Park on Wolverine Drive and Division Street.

Description: The amenities in this area include an outdoor swimming pool, one baseball/softball field and several tennis courts. Across Wolverine Drive is a fenced skate park for skateboarding and rollerblading.



Willms Park

Location: Willms Park is located on the east edge of Clara City on Center Avenue East and abuts Hawk Creek.

Description: Willms Park offers a large grassy area perfect for yard games, sports and picnics. Other park amenities include, public restrooms, a picnic shelter, playground equipment, a view of the creek and an ice skating rink and warming shelter in the winter months.



South Side Park

Location: South Side Park is located on the south side of Clara City between Second and Third Streets SW and Fourth Avenue SW and Minnesota Highway 7.

Description: Park amenities includes a grassy open area swings and a basketball court.

Annual and important city events and festivals:

Prairie Fest Days: Held in July each year
Little Lighting Parade

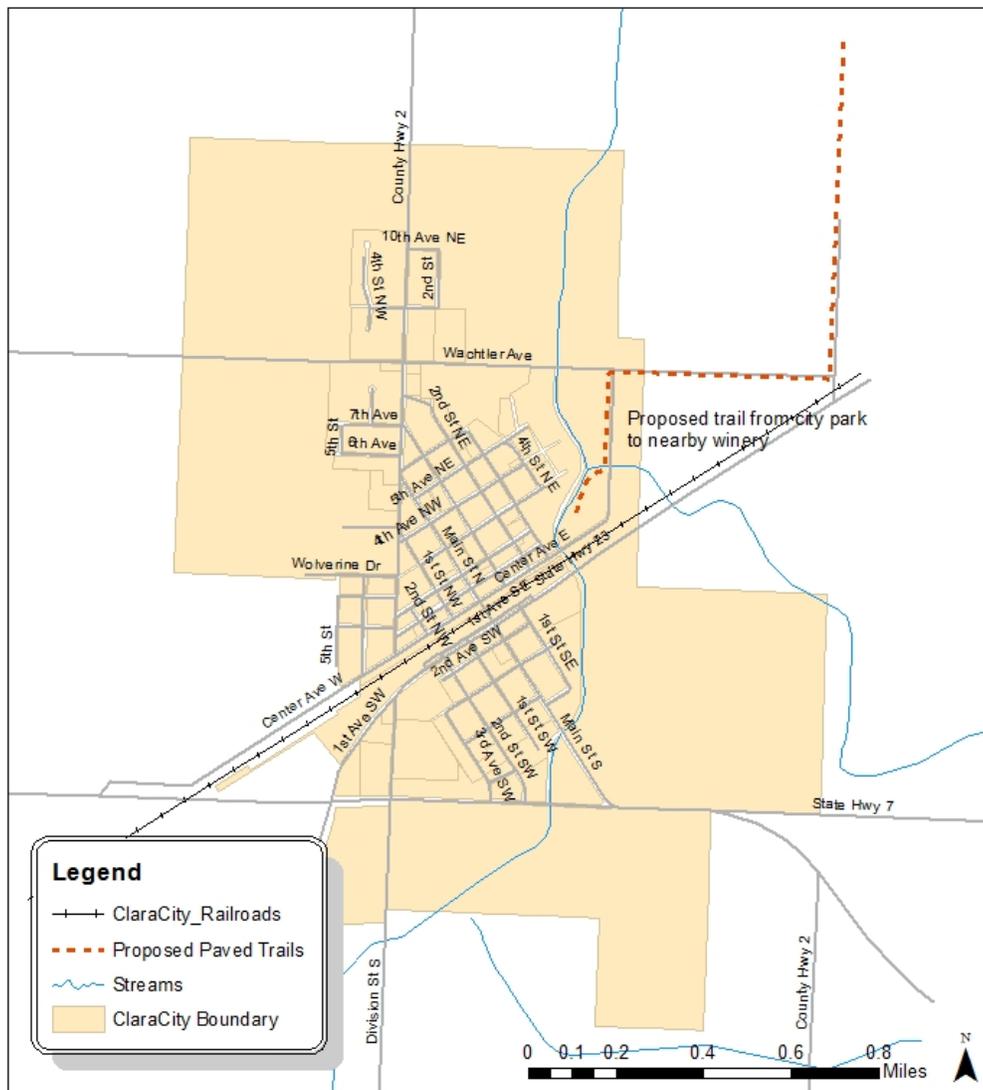
PARKS & RECREATION ISSUES

Clara City is fortunate to have many recreational opportunities already available for residents. Some of the park and recreational issues currently in Clara City include:

- Interest to have an indoor pool in Clara City
- An update for the outdoor pool, with baby pool addition
- Continued maintenance of the parks and recreation facilities
- Interest in the addition of a bike and walking trail
- Repairs needed for ice skating rink

Recently, there has been renewed interest in developing a walking and biking trail within Clara City. Currently, the proposed trail extends from Willms Park adjacent to Hawk Creek on the east side of the City north toward Hinterlands Winery. See the map below for location.

Clara City Trails



Disclaimer: There is no guarantee or representation to the user as to the accuracy, currency, suitability, or reliability of this map for any purpose. The UMRDC assumes no responsibility for actual or consequential damage incurred as a result of any user's reliance on the information from this map.

Created August 2012 by the UMRDC
Source: MnDOT BaseMap & MN DNR



Upper Minnesota Valley
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Helping Communities Prosper

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PARKS & RECREATION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The goals and strategies for parks, recreation and open space in Clara City strive to make the City's recreation and open space system an asset to the community, drawing residents to the city, protecting the natural environment and providing recreational opportunities for all members of the community.

Goal

A. Continue to develop and maintain a cohesive, balanced and equitable recreational and open space system that provides a diverse range of activities and leisure opportunities for all residents and visitors.

Strategies

1. **ADA Requirements.** New facilities will be designed to be barrier free and provide other accommodations for people with disabilities, in accordance with ADA requirements.
2. **Walkable City.** The City should ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access for all ages to recreational facilities within the community for recreational use year-round.
3. **Recreational facilities.** The City shall strive to provide active and passive recreational facilities for all seasons to meet the needs of diverse groups within the community.
4. **Equitable access.** The City shall strive to provide equitable access to recreational and open space facilities for residents throughout all areas of the city.
5. **Existing recreational facilities.** The City shall place priority on maintenance and enhancement of existing recreational and open space facilities.
6. **Recreation and open space plan.** The City should develop a recreation and open space plan including inventory and evaluation of existing facilities and use the plan to promote the system to the community and surrounding areas.
7. **Promote tourism.** The City should work with local organizations to promote its recreational opportunities for tourism and as a way to attract new residents to Clara City.

Goal

B. Provide a recreational and open space system that adds value to the community, both economically and socially, to sustain a safe, healthful and enjoyable living environment.

Strategies

1. **Natural and cultural community features.** The City should ensure maximum advantage is taken of natural and cultural community features in the city's recreational and open space areas.
2. **Preserve trees.** The City should ensure the preservation or creation of tree-lined streets and forested parks and open space as trees have many aesthetic, economic, and environmental community benefits.
3. **Grants.** The City should work with the DNR, the UMRDC, MnDOT, foundations and other entities to obtain grants for parks, trails and recreational facilities to lessen the financial cost of creating and maintaining recreational opportunities in Clara City.

Goal

C. Clara City's recreational and open space system will preserve and enhance biodiversity of the natural environment, for human enjoyment as well as the protection of wildlife and plant species habitat.

Strategies

1. **Trails.** The City should promote new trail development as an opportunity to increase recreational options for residents.
2. **Protect sensitive land.** The City should strive to protect privately held environmentally sensitive lands.

Economic Development

Economic development seeks to strengthen a community through the expansion of its tax and employment base. A strong tax and employment base allows the community to support a higher quality of life for its residents by improving public services (parks, schools, libraries, sewer and water services, police, fire and emergency response, refuse collection and other governmental services). Ideally, economic development should balance economic vitality with stability, environmental protection, and preservation of Clara City's small town character.

EMPLOYMENT

Figure 3.12: Employment Statistics 2010

Population over 16	972
In labor force *	681
Employed	618
Unemployed	63
Unemployment rate**	9.3%

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey.

*The Labor Force includes people actively seeking work. People not counted as part of the work force include students, retired people, stay-at-home parents, people in prisons or similar institutions; people employed in jobs or professions with unreported income, as well as discouraged workers who cannot find work.

**Percent of those unemployed in the labor force.

Employment statistics from the 2006-2010 American Community Survey indicate that of the 972 people age 16 and over, 70.1%, or 681 workers are in the labor force. The unemployment rate is 9.3%.

Major industries in Clara City include educational services, health care and social assistance as well as manufacturing. Figure 3.13 shows workers per industry in Clara City.

Figure 3.13: Workers by Industry

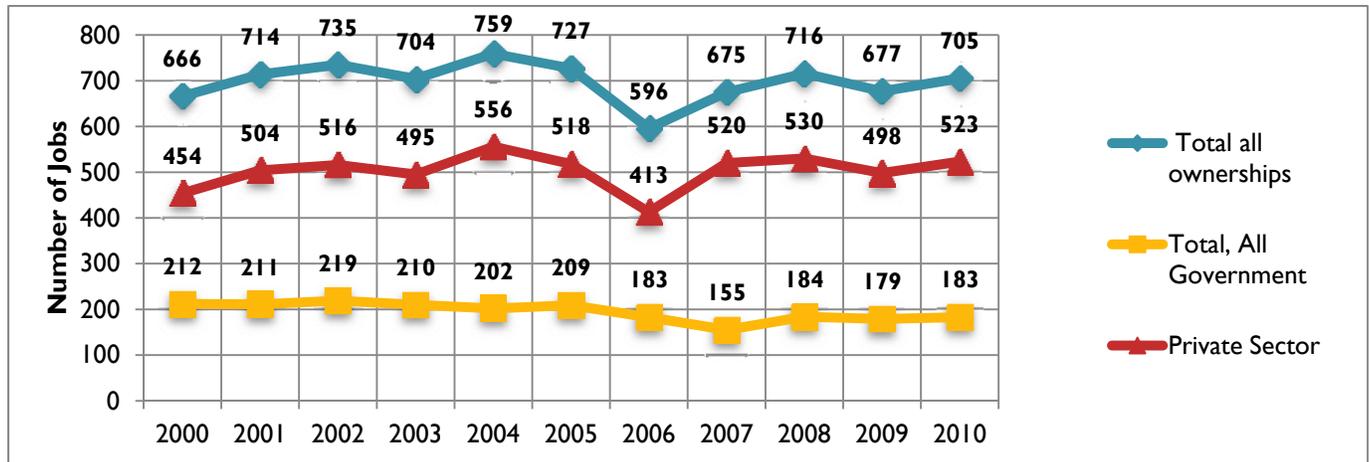
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	162
Manufacturing	97
Construction	60
Retail trade	52
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	49
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	43
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	33
Wholesale trade	30
Arts, entertainment and recreation, and accommodation and food services	25
Other services, except public administration	23
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	23
Public administration	18
Information	3
Total	618

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS)

See page 7 for information on the types of **CENSUS DATA**.

According to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, of the 618 employed workers in Clara City, 452 or 73.1% are employed by the private sector, 117 or 18.9% are government employees and 46 or 7.4% of workers are classified as self-employed workers and 3 or 0.5% are classified as unpaid family workers.

Figure 3.14: Clara City Area* Industry Employment by Year



*Area includes Rheidlerland and Stoneham Townships. In 2006, not all employment data was disclosed.
Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program

Employment data is looking at Clara City and the surrounding townships because of how the data was gathered in the past 10 years. The number of private sector jobs in Clara City has remained steady. The dip in 2006 is due to a lack of data and a dip in the recession.

Figure 3.15: Existing Businesses
Clara City Industry Employment Statistics, 2010 Annual Data

NAICS Industry Title	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll	Avg. Annual Wage
Total, All Industries	57	425	\$12,260,176	\$28,860
Total, All Government	6	90	\$2,699,113	\$30,212
Total, Private Sector	51	335	\$9,561,063	\$28,496
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	5	6	\$176,760	\$39,260
Construction	6	15	\$738,570	\$48,620
Manufacturing	3	52	\$1,033,395	\$26,312
Retail Trade	10	99	\$1,627,677	\$16,380
Transportation & Warehousing (gov't only)	1	4	\$182,740	\$45,656
Financial Activities	7	48	\$1,892,981	\$39,437
Professional & Business Services	5	39	\$1,446,420	\$37,088
Education & Health Services (gov't only)	3	71	\$2,094,664	\$29,502
Leisure & Hospitality	6	7	\$129,131	\$18,447
Public Administration	2	15	\$421,709	\$30,472

Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program

Figure 3.16: Largest Employers in Clara City in 2012

Company Name	Number of employees	Description	Year Established	Website
Clara City Care Center	110	Nursing Homes	1984	claracitycarecenter.org
Maccray High School	70	Schools		Maccray.K12.Mn.Us
Impact Innovations Inc	50	Indoor And Outdoor Advertising Display	1968	Impactinnovationsinc.Com
Maccray Public High School	45	Schools		Maccray.K12.Mn.Us
Tebben Enterprises Inc	40	Farm Equipment (Whls)	1966	Tebben.Us
Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar	30	Nonclassified Establishments		
KAYS Processing LLC	25	Food Products (Whls)	2003	Kaysnaturals.Com
Citizens Alliance Bank	25	Banks	1902	Citizens-State-Bank.Com
Clara City Fire Dept	20	Fire Departments		
Donner's Crossroads Cafe	20	Pizza	1999	
Vreeman Construction Inc	20	Drainage Contractors		
Clara City Ambulance	17	Ambulance Service		
Prinsburg Ambulance	17	Ambulance Service		
Raymond Ambulance	17	Ambulance Service		
Farmers Cooperative Oil Co	16	Service Stations-Gasoline & Oil	1984	farmersoilcoinc.com
Clara City Elevator	15	Grain Elevators	1984	prccoop.com
Rhode's Family Foods	15	Grocers-Retail	1900	
Renville Sugar Beet	14	Nonclassified Establishments		
Speiser Brothers Constr Inc	12	Excavating Contractors	1985	
Donner's Crossroads Truckstop	11	Service Stations-Gasoline & Oil		
Thein Moving	11	House & Building Movers		
Grussing Bonnema & Wrede Pllp	10	Accountants	1984	
Swift Manufacturing Co Inc	10	General Ind Machinery/Equip NEC (Mfrs)	1961	Swiftmfg.Com

Source: MNPProspector, DEED and ReferenceUSA



Figures 3.17 and 3.18 show where the people live who work in Clara City and, conversely, where the people work who live in Clara City. There are 80 people that both work and live in Clara City. Clara City jobs bring 213 people to town each day. There are 463 people that live in Clara City that work elsewhere.

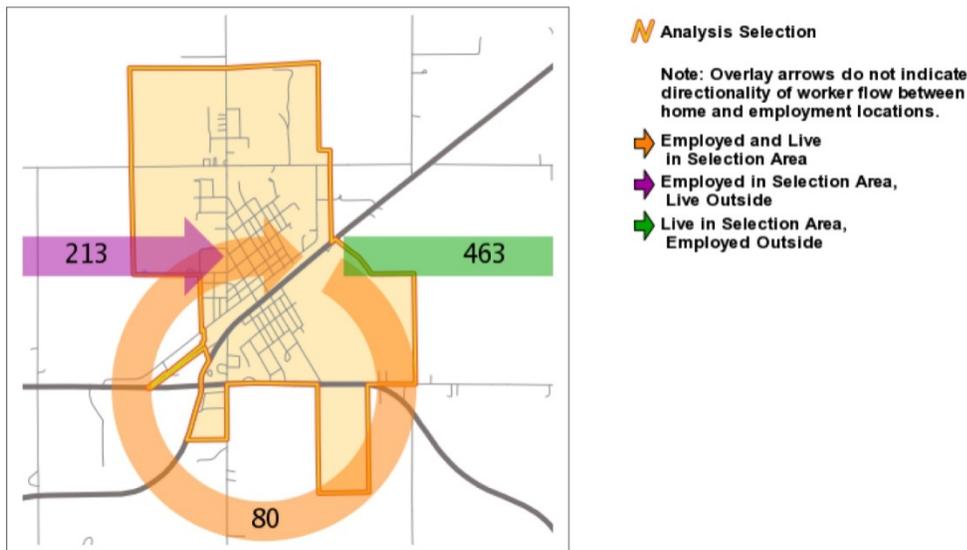
Clara City has a unique location that adds to their economic development potential. The City is located at the crossroads of two major highways (23 and 7). Clara City is within commuting distance to larger towns that have diverse employment opportunities. If multiple workers are needed in one family, Clara City offers a central location to the towns of Montevideo, Granite Falls, and Willmar.

Figure 3.17: Job Counts of Workers in 2009

Jobs Counts Where Workers Live			Jobs Counts Where Workers are Employed		
Counties	Count	Share	Counties	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	293	100.00%	Total All Jobs	543	100.00%
Chippewa County	201	68.60%	Chippewa County	226	41.60%
Kandiyohi County	44	15.00%	Kandiyohi County	145	26.70%
Renville County	8	2.70%	Renville County	22	4.10%
Swift County	6	2.00%	Blue Earth County	16	2.90%
Yellow Medicine County	6	2.00%	Yellow Medicine County	16	2.90%
Lac qui Parle County	3	1.00%	Hennepin County	11	2.00%
Brown County	2	0.70%	Swift County	11	2.00%
Goodhue County	2	0.70%	Kittson County	10	1.80%
Lyon County	2	0.70%	Ramsey County	10	1.80%
Nobles County	2	0.70%	Stearns County	9	1.70%
All Other Locations	17	5.80%	All Other Locations	67	12.30%
Cities	Count	Share	Cities	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	293	100.00%	Total All Jobs	543	100.00%
Clara City city	80	27.30%	Willmar city	93	17.10%
Montevideo city	18	6.10%	Clara City city	80	14.70%
Willmar city	17	5.80%	Montevideo city	20	3.70%
Granite Falls city	12	4.10%	Granite Falls city	19	3.50%
Maynard city	5	1.70%	Mankato city	15	2.80%
Raymond city	5	1.70%	Prinsburg city	8	1.50%
Kerkhoven city	3	1.00%	Sacred Heart city	8	1.50%
Atwater city	2	0.70%	Spicer city	7	1.30%
New Ulm city	2	0.70%	Maplewood city	6	1.10%
Redwood Falls city	2	0.70%	Olivia city	6	1.10%
All Other Locations	147	50.20%	All Other Locations	281	51.70%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap5 tool

Figure 3.18: Inflow/Outflow in 2009



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2009) <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>.

Notes:

1. Race, Ethnicity, and Educational Attainment statistics are beta release results and only available for 2009 data.
2. Educational Attainment is only produced for workers aged 30 and over.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

In the Clara City Community Survey, participants responded overwhelmingly that the City should focus its energy, talents and dollars on the developing job opportunities, develop new manufacturing businesses, work on rehabilitating the downtown businesses and market the City to regional audiences.

They also responded that it is very important to maintain a strong central business district and to attract new business, industry and jobs growth. The survey also overwhelmingly showed an interest in recruiting a new pharmacy, and identified that the grocery store is in need of a new building.

One of the most important issues in Clara City is to understand their commercial center and help guide development in the downtown area and the crossroads area. Land use, zoning and careful strategic planning are needed to develop guidelines for their future retail centers.

Issues that need to be addressed when looking at Clara City's downtown include the variety of business, condition of the buildings, signage, infrastructure, parking and the character and design of the downtown area. These needs could be addressed by completing a Downtown Business District Revitalization Plan and, or creating a Chamber of Commerce that works to promote and enhance Clara City's businesses.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The goals and strategies in this section work to create economic development strategies and provide economic opportunities throughout the City that will achieve a balanced distribution of healthy growth.

Goal

A. To support the existing industries and businesses, encourage healthy business growth and increase economic opportunities in Clara City.

Strategies

1. **Downtown.** Promote the growth and development of the downtown area as the city's retail and service center.
2. **Land Use.** Commercial and industrial expansion should take into account existing and future adjoining uses and create minimum land use conflicts.
3. **Environmentally Sound.** Encourage business expansions and developments that do not create an adverse impact on the environment.
4. **Balance Development.** Redevelopment and renovation of existing commercial and industrial developments and the downtown area should be balanced with the creation of new developments.
5. **Agri-business.** Agricultural activities in the area should be considered an existing industry that is important to the City, and efforts should be made to promote and maintain agri-businesses and agricultural product processing facilities in Clara City.
6. **Renewable Energy.** Support the development of low cost, alternative or renewable energy and power generation including the distribution of the same to all areas of the region.
7. **Complimentary Business.** Attempts should be made to attract business and industry that would complement the services and products produced by existing businesses. Actively seek new retail businesses, entertainment facilities and restaurants to strengthen the retail area and to improve the marketing ability of the City.
8. **Business Recruitment.** Recruitment of new business and industry should take into consideration the size, type, wage, jobs, utility demand and compatibility with existing land use and natural resources.
9. **Livable Wage.** Efforts should be made to attract new industrial and commercial businesses that pay a livable wage.
10. **Work Local.** Employment opportunities should be created that promote the City's residents to work locally rather than commute.
11. **Broadband.** Continue to support efforts to extend broadband access and infrastructure throughout the county and educate businesses in its use.
12. **Technology services.** Efforts should be taken to have the available technology and telecommunications services for local businesses.
13. **Diversified Tax Base.** A diversified tax base offering a large number and wide variety of employment opportunities at different education and skill levels should be promoted.
14. **Financing Tools.** Financing tools such as tax increment financing, tax abatement, revolving loan funds, State and Federal programs, and other financing tools should be offered to businesses.
15. **Industrial Park.** A new industrial park with planned infrastructure should be identified.

Goal

B. Encourage business groups, government entities and community organizations to develop and organize planning and marketing efforts that increase the economic development potential of Clara City.

Strategies

1. **Chamber of Commerce.** Create a Chamber of Commerce to help the businesses of Clara City organize and work together.
2. **Downtown Business District Revitalization Plan.** Create a Downtown Business District Revitalization Plan to address the variety of business, condition of the buildings, signage, infrastructure, parking and the character and design of the downtown area.
3. **Inventory of Businesses.** An inventory of existing businesses should be created and periodically updated.
4. **Coordinate Efforts.** The City should continue to coordinate efforts with the Clara City Economic Development Authority (EDA) in supporting economic growth in the community, as well as county, neighboring city, regional and State economic development agencies.
5. **Understand local business needs.** The City should work with local businesses to understand current and future needs.
6. **CIP.** Implement a Capital Improvement Planning program to assist with assessing the long-term capital project requirements and to establish funding of high-priority projects in a timely and cost-effective fashion.
7. **Youth Flight.** Efforts should be made to promote the post-college return of area youth.
8. **Market Strategies.** Marketing strategies should be used to promote the use of goods and services currently produced or provided in the City
9. **Market to the Metro.** The City should pursue relationships with Minneapolis/St. Paul and other metro business communities in an effort to obtain and increase small business interests in Clara City.
10. **Website.** The City and the Clara City EDA should continue to maintain and improve its web site as a marketing tool to promote economic development.
11. **Community Profile and Marketing.** The City, along with the EDA, should continue to maintain an updated community profile and promotional brochure, which can be used to encourage new growth and development.
12. **Market crossroad location.** The City should utilize their location of two major highways. Good planning, visioning the business district and well placed signs (electronic community billboard) should be considered to take advantage of the opportunities along the highways.
13. **Livable communities.** In order to promote Clara City as a place to develop or expand business, the needs of the school, hospital, clinic, community center and other vital elements to a healthy community should be addressed.

Transportation

Clara City's transportation network connects people and places within the City and connects Clara City to the region, the state and beyond. Additionally, it has a major impact on existing and future land uses as well as future growth. Therefore, the transportation plan is an important component of the Comprehensive Plan.

Transportation in Clara City must be thought of as a system that includes all modes of transportation from buses, automobiles, bicycles and pedestrians to heavy commercial vehicles, freight trains and airplanes. A well balanced transportation system that offers options and choices to users will help to improve the quality of life in Clara City. The concept of quality of life is important to retain and grow residents as well as businesses and industry within the City.

“Effective and efficient transportation systems are vital to the prosperity of regions because they link residents with employment, public services, shopping and social networks, and businesses to labor, consumer, buyer and supplier markets.”

From: Minnesota Planning's *Under Construction: Tools and Techniques for Local Planning*

TRANSPORATION INVENTORY:

Roads are the most frequently used and most visible form of transportation in Clara City and can accommodate several modes of transportation including vehicular, bus and freight traffic as well as bicyclists and pedestrians.

The roads in Clara City, and throughout all cities, can be described by the Functional Classification System. The Functional Classification System is a method used to describe the main function each road performs in the highway network (typically access and mobility). Classification of roadways is important for planning purposes as it reveals the function of roads in relationship to existing and future land uses.

The Functional Classification System defines roadways in the following way:

Principal Arterial: these highways provide an integrated network of routes which carry the highest traffic volumes, serve the longest trip movements, and provide for statewide or interstate travel. They serve all major urbanized areas and population centers. Principal arterial routes provide for through movement with minimum interference.

Minor Arterial: these highways link cities, larger towns, and other major traffic generators, such as major resort areas, to each other and to principal arterial routes. They form an integrated network which provides for movements within the State and between counties.

Major Collectors: these routes provide service to any County Seat and larger cities not served by the higher systems. They predominantly serve trips within the County and link locally important traffic generators with their service areas and other nearby larger cities with higher order routes.

Minor Collectors: these routes link smaller cities and locally important traffic generators and provide developed areas reasonable access to a higher functioning roadway.

Local Roads: the rural local roads primarily service relatively low traffic volumes and short distance trips.

Regional System

In Clara City the major roadways that connect the city to the region, state and beyond are Minnesota State Highways 7 and 23. Highways 7 and 23 carry the majority of people and goods to, from and through Clara City and they connect Clara City to other cities throughout the state. Although not owned or maintained by Clara City, these State Highways run through the community and are vital to the City's transportation system.

Minnesota Highway 7 runs east and west through Clara City's southern edge. It connects Clara City to Montevideo to the west and Hutchinson and the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area to the east. Minnesota Highway 23 runs northeast and southwest through the center of Clara City connecting it to Granite Falls and Marshall to the southwest and Willmar, St. Cloud and Duluth to the northeast.

Chippewa County Regional Roadways

The major county regional roadway in Clara City is Chippewa County Highway 2. Although not owned or maintained by Clara City, Chippewa County Highway 2 that runs through the City is a vital link to the community's transportation system. It runs north and south through Clara City and is an especially important route to get to Clara City from the north where it connects with Minnesota Highway 40.



Local System

Local roads make up the remaining roadway system in Clara City. The main through routes within the city are 40th Street SE, also named Wachtler Avenue that runs east and west at the north end of the city, connecting to Minnesota Highway 23 and paralleling Minnesota Highway 7 and Center Avenue W., also named 115th Avenue SE for a portion. Center Avenue W. parallels Minnesota Highway 23 and then turns north, wrapping around the city.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure/Amenities

Currently, there are no trails within Clara City. Some areas of the City have sidewalks, however similar to communities throughout the country; sidewalks have not been required in more recent residential development. Additionally, residents have petitioned the City Council to be allowed to remove portions of the sidewalk system. The City has allowed residents to remove portions of the sidewalk system; therefore the sidewalk system is inconsistent and varies from one part of the City to the next. Due to the inconsistent and aging sidewalk system, residents walk, run and bike on the streets which can be dangerous and cause a conflict between pedestrians and automobiles, especially when it is dark.

According to the Community Survey, Clara City residents would like to see walking and biking infrastructure in their town. When asked "What services and/or recreational facilities would most add to the quality of life in Clara City?", the most frequent response was a walking and biking path or trail. The City should explore its options to meet the demand and address safety concerns for walking and biking in the city.

Public Transit

Several transit providers offer service to Clara City. Regional transit service, including service to Clara City is available from Prairie Five Rides (nonprofit provider) and Peoples Express (private provider). Additionally, transit service available throughout Chippewa County including Clara City is provided by Chippewa County

Montevideo Hospital, Chippewa Enterprises and Clark Transportation. Clara City does not have a local transit system; however Prairie Five Rides fulfills this role.

Although there is transit service in Clara City, it is not widely known. According to the Community Survey, many respondents, about 40%, are unaware of transit service offered to Clara City residents and about 34% of respondents do not think the public bus system provides adequate service to the citizens of Clara City. Perhaps educational outreach to Clara City residents regarding available public transportation options would be beneficial to the community. Additionally, a study of the adequacy of the public transportation system might provide beneficial insights in to the public transportation needs of the community.

Air Transportation

Clara City does not have its own airport; however it is within minutes of airports in Willmar, Granite Falls and Montevideo. These regional systems adequately meet the needs of Clara City.

Rail Transportation

There is a class I line Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway that runs through Clara City. The rail line is an important amenity for business and industry in Clara City. It is important for Clara City to develop a positive working relationship with the railroad to mitigate negative externalities of the railroad such as traffic congestion on local roads due to rail cars on the tracks.



TRANSPORTATION DATA

The following data, compiled from several sources, including MnDOT and the U.S. Census Bureau, are helpful to determine how the transportation system is being utilized.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) inventories and keeps records of traffic counts and other roadway data on many of the roads throughout the state of Minnesota. Figures 3.19 and 3.20 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) and Heavy Commercial Annual Average Daily Traffic (HCAADT) volumes for Minnesota Highways 7 and 23 on given portions within the city of Clara City.

AADT is a theoretical estimate of the total number of vehicles using a specific segment of roadway (in both directions) on any given day of the year. This estimate represents the total number of cars per year divided by 365 and is developed using factors to adjust for season, day of the week, and vehicle type. HCAADT is an estimate of the total number of vehicles with at least two axles and six tires, using a specific segment of roadway (both directions) on any given day of the year. This estimate is developed by the Vehicle Classification Program.

Figure 3.19: Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) on MN Highway 7

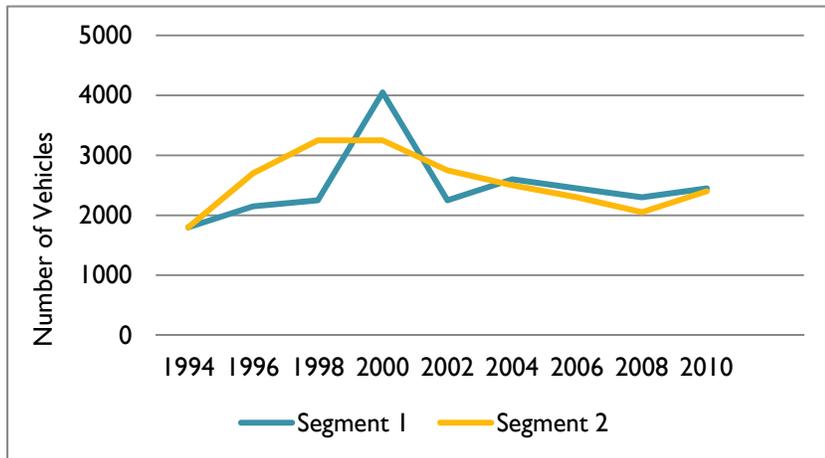
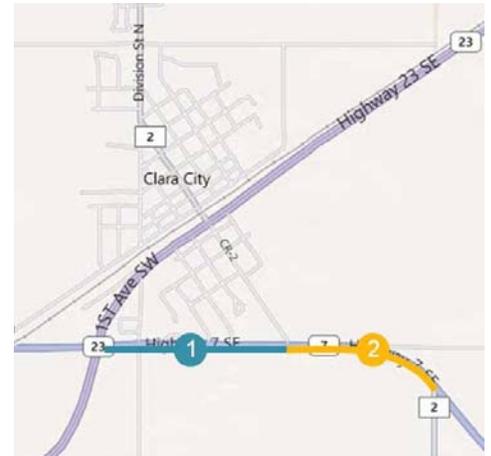
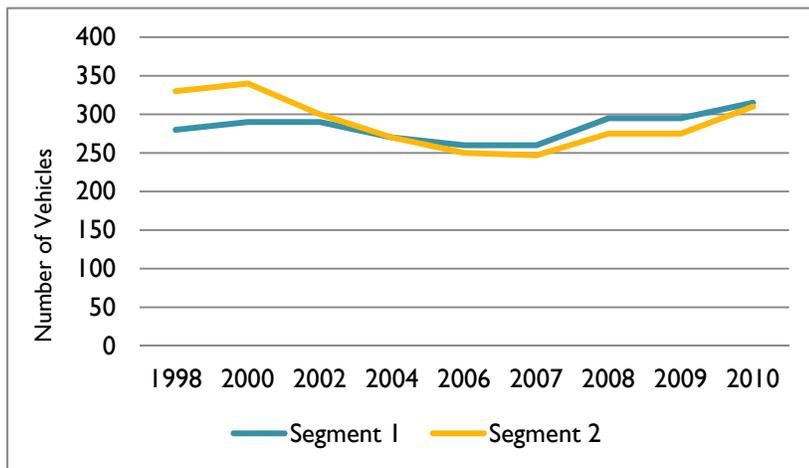


Figure 3.20: Heavy Commercial Annual Average Daily Traffic (HCAADT) on MN Highway 7



AADT on Minnesota Highway 7 has fluctuated from fewer than 2,000 to over 4,000 vehicles per day with a spike in the year 2000 from the intersections of Minnesota Highway 23 to Main Street.

HCAADT on Minnesota Highway 7 has remained fairly constant from 1998 to 2010 dipping in the mid-2000's and rising after 2007. Monitoring HCAADT is important, as commercial vehicles are much larger and heavier than passenger vehicles and thus cause more damage to the roadway.



Figure 3.21: Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) on MN Highway 23

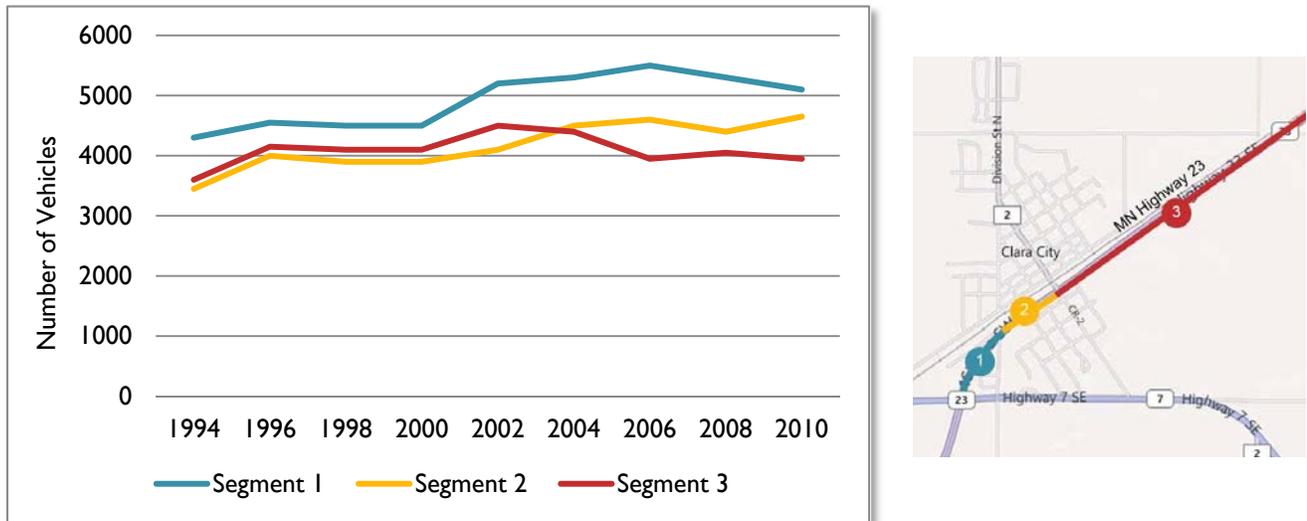
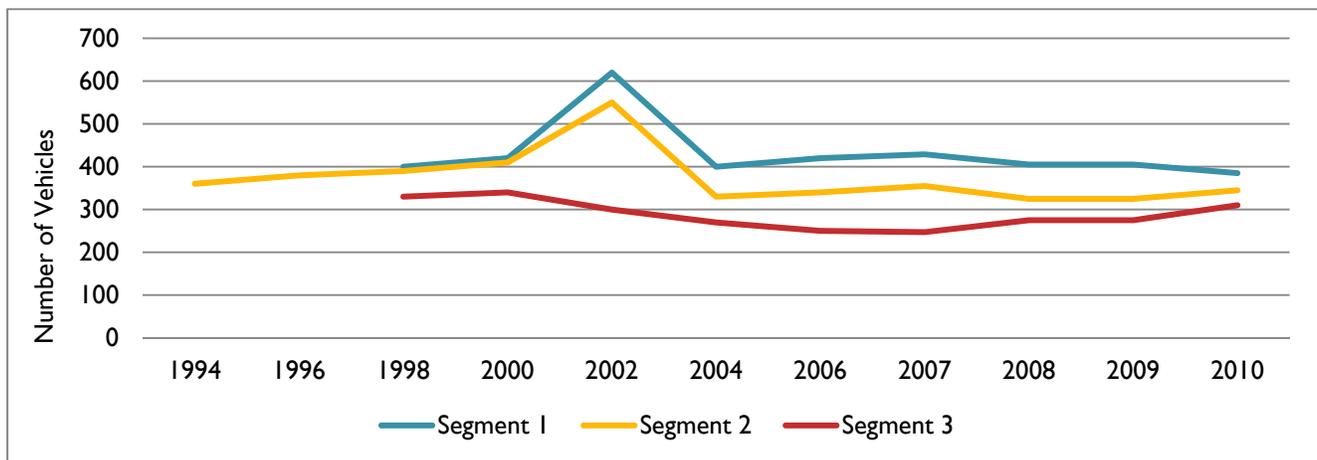
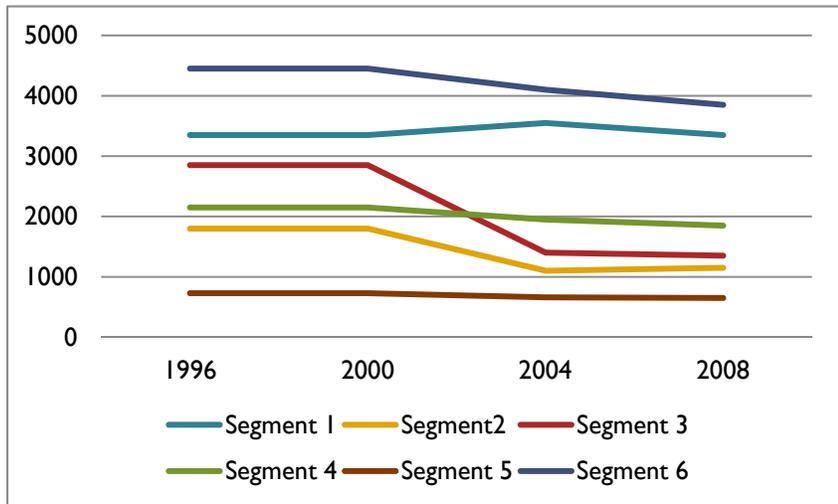


Figure 3.22: Heavy Commercial Annual Average Daily Traffic (HCAADT) on MN Highway 23



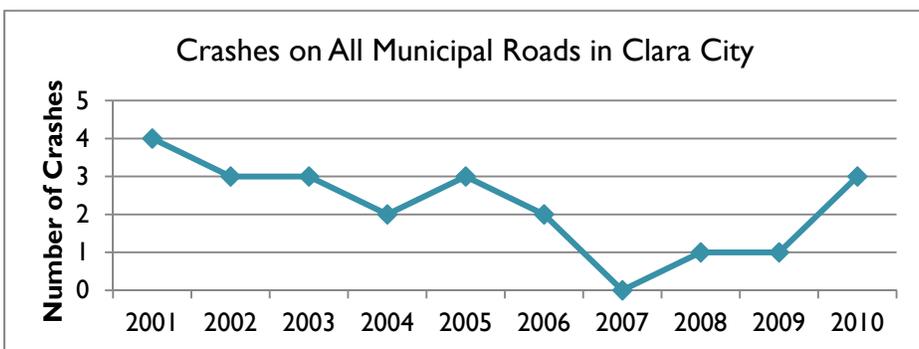
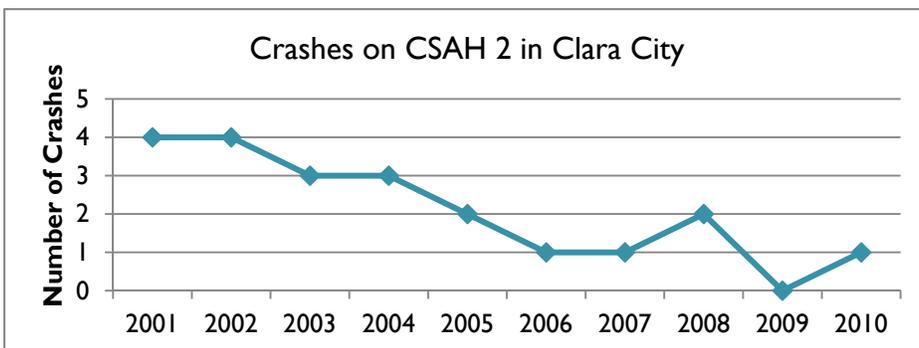
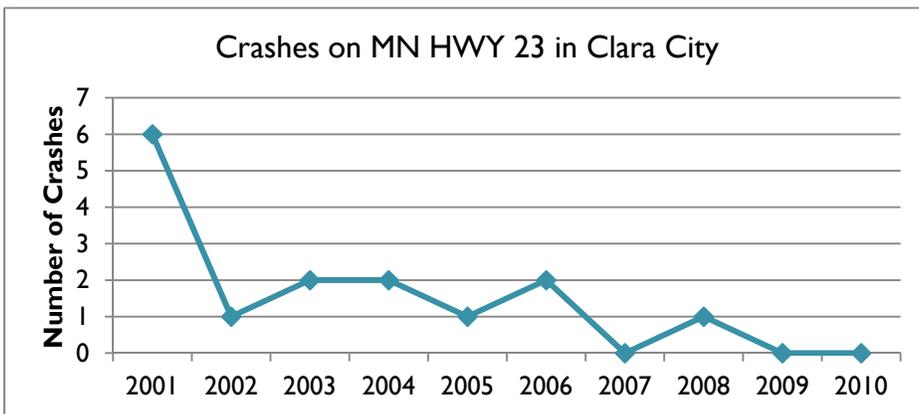
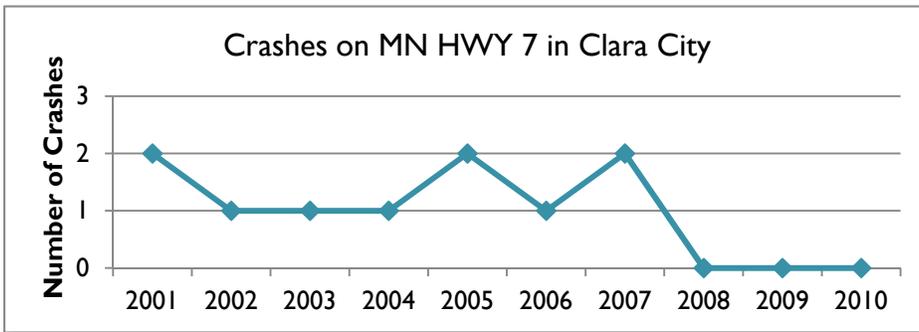
MnDOT's Annual Average Daily Traffic data indicate that Minnesota Highway 23 is the most heavily traveled highway in Clara City. Annual Average Daily Traffic appears to be increasing slightly since 1994. This data is not alarming, as Minnesota Highway 23 is a major interregional corridor throughout the state. Heavy Commercial Annual Average Daily Traffic remains steady from 1994 through 2010, despite a spike in 2002.

Figure 3.23: Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) on CSAH 2



Annual Average Daily Traffic on County Highway 2 (CSAH 2) remains steady with dips in traffic for segments two and three, which run through the heart of Clara City, after the year 2000. The lower traffic volumes on CSAH 2 for segments 2, 3, 4, and 5, all of which run through the heart of the City, suggest traffic disperses to other routes within the local network since the numbers are higher for segments 1 and 6 which bring traffic into the City. Segment 4 is slightly higher than the other segments within the city boundaries because it is located where the road crosses the railroad tracks and all traffic is funneled into that segment. The lower traffic counts for segments of CSAH 2 running through Clara City could be because drivers are finding alternate routes through town for those segments of CSAH 2.

Figure 3.24: Crash Data for Clara City Roadways from 2001 through 2010



According to MnDOT's crash data, there were 68 reported crashes in Clara City from 2001 through 2010.

There was one fatal crash in 2004, no crashes that resulted in incapacitating injuries, eight crashes that resulted in non-incapacitating injuries, nine crashes that resulted in possible injuries and the 50 remaining crashes did not result in injury, but may have resulted in property damage.

On State roadways running through Clara City there has been a reduction of crashes per year since 2001, however on municipal roadways, the number of crashes per year, first decreased, but since 2007 have been on the rise.

2000 and 2009 Means of Transportation to Work

Existing travel characteristics from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that most Clara City residents travel to work by automobile alone (84.5%). The percentage of residents commuting to work alone, by automobile has increased since 2000. Figure 3.25 below displays a comparison of means of transportation to work for Clara City residents in 2000 and 2009. It is important to monitor this and other data over the years to ensure the transportation system meets the needs of its users.

Figure 3.25: Means of Transportation to Work

Means of Transportation to Work	2000	2010	Change
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	81.5%	84.5%	3.7%
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	7.8%	7.9%	1.3%
Public transportation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Walked	6.8%	3.0%	-55.9%
Other means	0.3%	1.0%	233.3%
Worked at home	3.6%	3.5%	-2.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2006-2010 American Community Survey

Clara City residents enjoy a shorter average travel time to work than the rest of America and the state of Minnesota. The national average travel time to work is 25.2 minutes and 22.2 minutes for Minnesotans. According to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, the mean travel time to work is 14.6 minutes. Travel time to work has decreased.

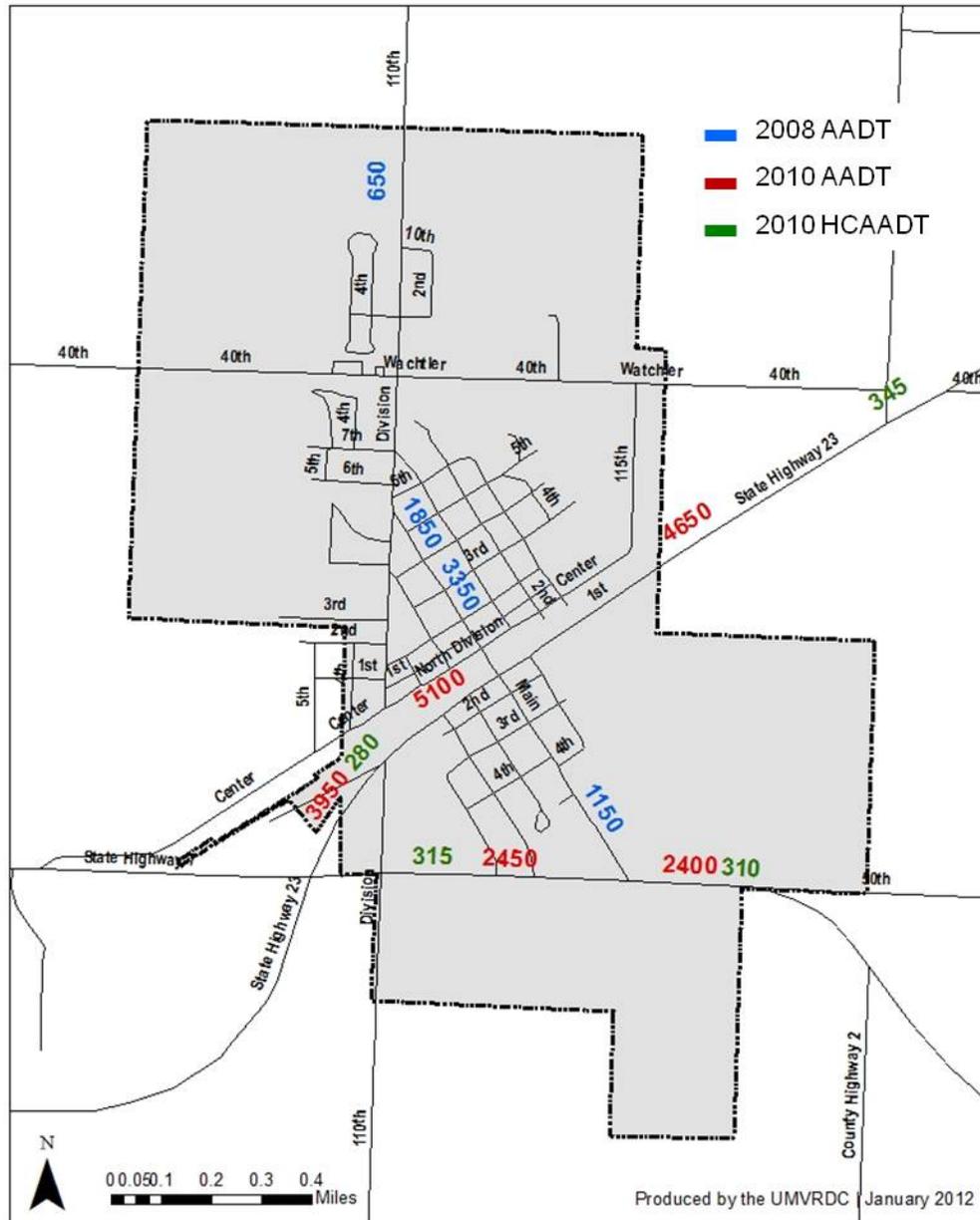
Figure 3.26: Travel Time to Work in 2010

Less than 10 minutes	41.6%
10 to 14 minutes	6.1%
15 to 19 minutes	12.4%
20 to 24 minutes	15.2%
25 to 29 minutes	5.7%
30 to 34 minutes	16.7%
35 to 44 minutes	0.0%
45 to 59 minutes	0.0%
60 or more minutes	2.3%
Mean travel time to work	14.6 minutes

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey

Over 75% of Clara City residents have a shorter travel time to work than the average American. Short commute times contribute to Clara City's quality of life and mean that Clara City residents have more time than average Americans to spend with their families or doing things they enjoy.

Clara City Roads Map



Disclaimer: The UMRDC makes no representation or warranties, express or implied, with respect to the reuse of data provided herewith, regardless of its format or the means of its transmission. There is no guarantee or representation to the user as to the accuracy, currency, suitability, or reliability of this map for any purpose. The UMRDC assumes no responsibility for actual or consequential damage incurred as a result of any user's reliance on the information from this map.

The Clara City Roads Map above shows the local roads through the City with the average annual daily traffic that they carry for the years 2008 and 2010. In 2010 data was also available for heavy commercial average annual daily traffic.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Issues identified through the planning commission meetings, the community survey and analysis of transportation data include:

- A need to work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Minnesota Highway 23 Coalition, and consider helping to create a coalition for the Minnesota Highway 7.
- A need for more transit options available to Clara City residents and for education about existing transit options.
- A need to work to make sure Clara City is mapped correctly online.
- A need for a better working relationship with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad that runs through Clara City.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The goals and strategies outlined in this section are meant to provide for and protect the public's interest and investment in the transportation system and Right of Way (ROW) by encouraging the development of a balanced, affordable, efficient and equitable transportation network.

Goal:

A. Support a transportation network that safely and economically meets the needs of all users and provides access to key resources and amenities throughout the community and region.

Strategies

1. **Multi-modal impacts.** Consider and evaluate all potential modal (i.e. automobiles, heavy commercial vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, trains, etc.) impacts for each transportation project.
2. **Transportation Amenities.** Consider the inclusion of amenities such as sidewalks, lighting, landscaping and other enhancements to the transportation system during highway and street improvements or construction.
3. **User Needs.** Consider the needs of all users, of all ages and abilities when planning for and designing improvements to the transportation system.
4. **Improved Safety.** The City should support programs or projects designed to improve the safety of the transportation system and programs or projects that improve the safety for multiple modes of transportation, or high numbers of users, should be given higher priority.
5. **Proactive Safety Solutions.** The City should make safety improvements to the transportation system such as appropriate signage or traffic control devices in anticipation of problems, rather than in reaction to them.
6. **Partnerships.** The City should work with Chippewa County and surrounding townships on maintaining and upgrading critical County and township roads leading into Clara City.
7. **Improved Connectivity.** Proactively encourage maintenance improvements and partner with MnDOT early in the planning process for projects on MN Highways 7 and 23 to maintain a transportation network that maintains or increases mobility through critical connections to regional centers and the Twin Cities.
8. **Access Management.** The City should review the most current and effective access management standards to develop and implement access management strategies to protect the integrity of the designed roadway and increase the safety of travelers.
9. **Railroad.** The City should support the maintenance and improvements to a railroad system to encourage the safe, convenient, economical and timely movement of commodities by developing a positive working relationship with BNSF.

Goal:

- B. Clara City will continue to develop a financially responsible transportation system that best allocates available resources for both the short-term and long-term by strategically investing in transportation infrastructure to maintain and enhance the vitality of the city now and for future generations.**

Strategies

1. **Improvement Program.** Develop a multi-year road improvement plan as part of a Capital Improvements Program, which includes maintenance, safety improvements, paving and construction work, etc. prioritized by year, cost and method of financing.
2. **Data, Forecasting and Projecting.** The City should use data, forecasts and projections from MnDOT, the Census and other resources when planning future transportation investments to ensure transportation investments meet the needs of today and the future.
3. **Cohesive System.** Work with area townships, cities, Chippewa County, MnDOT and the FHWA to plan for a cohesive transportation system and maximize efficiencies among these systems wherever possible.
4. **Economic Competitiveness.** The City should develop transportation services and infrastructure that are consistent with local land use plans and that encourages employment growth and fosters economic competitiveness.
5. **Preservation and Maintenance.** The City should give priority to the preservation and maintenance of the existing transportation system.
6. **Reduced Lifecycle Costs.** The City should support and expand programs or projects with the potential for reducing lifecycle transportation costs.
7. **Minimize Through Traffic.** The City should ensure the location of commercial and industrial development avoids through traffic generation in residential areas.
8. **Public-Private Partnerships.** Support and encourage creative public and private partnerships for transportation investments to reduce costs and improve outcomes.
9. **Right of Way Preservation.** Identify and preserve current and planned right-of-ways for transportation system improvements.
10. **Road Capacity.** The City should analyze traffic generation characteristics of proposed land uses to prevent the exceeding of carrying capacity of nearby roads.
11. **Vision Statement and Goals.** The City should review its vision statements and goals when making decisions related to transportation to assess if the decision could compromise the vision and goals of the community.

Public Utilities and Facilities

Clara City's public utilities and facilities present an important challenge as well as a great resource as the City plans for its future. It is a resource in that it represents an extraordinary investment in economically useful capital. It is a challenge because the infrastructure is always aging while needing large amounts of financial resources. The services a community provides are often an important factor in attracting new residents as well as in keeping current residents.

This chapter includes information on:

- Sanitary Sewer, Water, Storm Sewers
- Energy providers
- Telecommunication networks
- Public-owned buildings
- Health and safety: fire departments, ambulance, health services

SANITARY SEWER, WATER AND STORM SYSTEMS.

The sanitary sewer, water and storm systems of Clara City are currently in good working order. They have recently completed many expansion projects in residential areas. When any work is completed along roads or construction of any kind, it is City's policy that all lines are upgraded at that time.

Sanitary Sewer Facilities

The wastewater treatment plant built in the 1960's and was updated in 1997 and continues to be in good condition with capacity to expand.

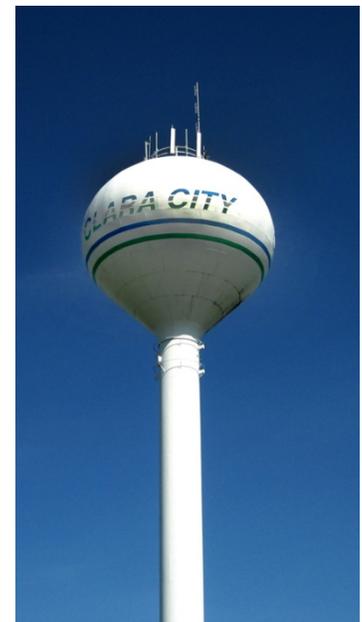
Water System

400 S. Division Street Box 560

The water treatment systems, mains and water tower were replaced in 2000. The water tower's capacity is 200,000 gallons.

Stormwater System

The stormwater system is updated each time construction creates an opportunity.



ENERGY PROVIDERS

Electricity is provided to the city from Xcel Energy.

Propane is available from two vendors:

- Cenex/Farmers Coop
- Dooley's Petroleum, Inc.

Natural gas service available starting October 2012. Dooley's Natural Gas, LLC is the provider for Natural Gas.

B3 Benchmarking is planned to be completed for the City-owned buildings to identify where energy efficiencies could be better.

TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORKS:

Internet, phone, cell phone and cable are available from the following vendors:

- Clara City Telephone Co.
- Media Com–Prior Lake
- Verizon Wireless

PUBLIC-OWNED BUILDINGS

City Hall

215 1st Street NW, Box 560

Community Center

30 NW 2nd Avenue Box 560

City Hall was built in 1960's. The Community Center was added in late 70's. City Hall is owned by the City. Although it is relatively good shape, it is an older building in need of upgrading. The heating and cooling systems will need to be upgraded or replaced and the building could be more energy efficient.



Public Library

42 W Center Avenue, Box 645

The Clara City Public Library is part of the Pioneerland Public Library. The library provides a number of services to the public. These services include public internet access, word processing programs, copy machine, fax machine, a meeting room, interlibrary loan options, year-round children's programs and reference materials.

The public library building is owned by the City. The building used to be a bank before it was made into a library. It is in good condition as the bank made necessary repairs before it was gifted. The routine heating and cooling systems and energy efficiencies should be looked at in the near future.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Chippewa County - Montevideo Hospital

Clara City Clinic, 330 West Center, Clara City, MN 56222 Phone: 320-847-3711

Clara City is a part of the Chippewa County - Montevideo Hospital. The clinic in Clara City is served by medical providers from the Montevideo Clinic. The clinic is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8:30am – 5pm.

The Clinic Building is owned by the City. Although it recently has had a new roof, the building will need to be renovated or replaced in the near future.



Clara City Care Center

1012 N Division Street Box 797
(320) 847-2221
www.claracitycarecenter.org

The Clara City Care Center is a skilled nursing facility with a tradition of providing excellent care in a friendly, homelike atmosphere.

Services are designed to meet each resident's individualized care needs and to maximize their level of independence. Whether a resident needs short term rehabilitation to return to their home, or traditional long-term care, the Clara City Care Center can provide that care. The Care Center has been part of the Clara City community for over 40 years.



The Care Center was first built in 1965 and is owned by the City. In 2011, a new kitchen was added on to the facility, and the west lobby and family areas were remodeled.

Future needs include:

- an addition of a new therapy room that would be used by both residents as well as outpatients.
- allow room/addition for a possible new clinic
- upgrade rooms with the goal of creating a greater number of single rooms with private bathrooms.

Prairie Park Place

1100 Warrings Avenue, (320) 847-3785

Prairie Park Place is also owned by the City, and is a independent living senior facility connected to the Care Center.

Prairie Park Place Apartments offer independent living units with a controlled entrance. Services include an emergency call system, organized social and recreational activities, noon meal and weekly housekeeping. There are 29 apartments and part-time staff available Monday - Friday.

Flexible Assisted Living Plans are available, and assistance with personal care needs can be arranged. A guest room is available for out of town visitors.

Prairie Park Place was built in 1991. The roof was redone in 2011 and some of the siding was redone in 2012. Many parts of the building will need to be updated in the coming years, including replacing windows.

Fire Hall

215 1st Street NW Box 560

There are no full-time fire departments in Chippewa County. All fire departments are volunteer-based with responsibilities being divided into four response zones. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for fire protection on state forest and parkland. The DNR works closely with local fire units for protection of these lands through contracting agreements. Both the U.S. Forest Service and the DNR work closely with local fire fighters whenever danger of woodland and urban fires is elevated. Additionally, all fire departments have mutual aid agreements among each other.



The Fire Hall is connected to the city hall and built in the 1960's. The hall is in decent shape, but an air system needs to be added to address the issue of idling trucks in the winter. The building is also in need of upgrades such as heating and cooling, energy efficiencies, roof and drainage issues.

Figure 3.27: Clara City Fire Capabilities

City	Pumpers	Tankers	Grass Rig/Truck	Aerial/Ladders	Air Packs	Firemen
Clara City	2	3	2	0	8	20

Ambulance

The City has one ambulance. The ambulance is stored in a building connected to the fire hall that was built in the 1970's.

Police Department

215 1st Street NW Box 560

The Police department office is part of the Community Center built in the 1970's and is owned by the City. Currently there is one full-time chief of Police, one full-time staff and one part-time staff.

PUBLIC UTILITIES AND FACILITIES ISSUES

Issue for public utilities/facilities include:

- There are some issues with flood protection.
- All of the buildings are aging and will require some major renovations.
- Energy efficiencies are low for most of the public buildings.

PUBLIC UTILITIES AND FACILITIES GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The goals and strategies outlined in this section identify ways to ensure quality infrastructure and services for the City's residents.

Goal

- A. Provide basic infrastructure and services to as many of the residents of the city as possible without creating substantial economic problems or undue environmental problems.**

Strategies

1. **Condition analysis.** The condition, capacity and annual plan of the sanitary sewer, storm sewer, water supply, water treatment facilities, telecommunication services and local roads and streets should be analyzed on a regular basis to determine need for replacement, repairs, new services, etc. in an effort to allocate funds to projects where the funding is needed most.
2. **Capital Improvement Plan.** A capital improvements plan of City buildings, services and infrastructure analyzing short and long-term needs should be maintained and updated annually in order to keep facilities updated and in good working order.
3. **Coordination.** Plans for proposed new, upgraded or expanded services and facilities should be coordinated with applicable units of government and agencies.
4. **Telecommunication.** The City should continue to support upgrading and extending telecommunication services throughout the city in order to enhance its competitive stance for social and economic development.
5. **Equal Access.** Efforts to provide affordable and equal technology access to all should be encouraged.
6. **Renewable Energy.** The City should consider wind and solar ordinances that provide a smooth transition for community members that decide to implement renewable energy projects.
7. **Comprehensive Energy Planning.** The City should consider all energy infrastructure possibilities, including renewable energy (such as biomass, wind and solar), in planning activities.
8. **Water system.** Maintain an efficient, adequate and safe drinking water system that meets the needs of current and future residents and businesses.
9. **Wastewater system.** Maintain a safe and efficient wastewater collection and treatment system that meets the long term needs of the community's residents and businesses.
10. **Storm Water.** Ensure that storm water runoff is managed to protect residents, property and water resources.
11. **Design Standards.** Design standards should be evaluated for roads and other public investments that would assist in storm water management.
12. **B3 Benchmarking.** The City should develop their B3 Benchmarking and keep up to date.

B3 Benchmarking

mn.b3benchmarking.com

B3 Benchmarking is a building energy management system for public buildings in Minnesota including state, local government, and public school buildings.

The **B3 Benchmarking mission** is to provide you with tools to help manage your buildings, improve your building portfolio efficiently, and monitor the improvements.

The B3 Benchmarking system provides the ability to manage your existing buildings energy consumption with simple reports using your monthly utility billing information and some basic facility data about your building so you can easily identify which of your building sites are:

1. Consuming more or less energy than expected – the Benchmarks view
2. Consuming more or less energy than similar buildings in the B3 system - the Peer Comparison view
3. Consuming more or less energy than similar buildings nationwide - the ENERGY STAR view
4. Consuming more or less energy than in a previous 12 month period – the Baselines view

Knowing which building sites use more energy than expected identifies which buildings are cost-effective candidates for energy retro-commissioning or retrofit projects. And knowing which buildings are consuming more or less energy than in previous years allows you to know which buildings to focus attention on right away so you can determine what is required to maintain or improve its energy consumption.

The State of Minnesota launched a new technical and financial assistance program called PBEEEP (Public Building Enhanced Energy Efficiency Program) in early 2010. The program targets existing public buildings owned by State agencies, cities, counties, townships, and public school districts within the State. ***The Program will require data to be up-to-date in the B3 Energy Benchmarking system as part of the project qualification and prioritization process, and on-going monitoring and verification activities.***

B3 Benchmarking Reports work best if you enter the three most recent years of bills for each meter. If billing data is kept current in B3 Benchmarking, you will be able to track and manage your building's energy use on an ongoing basis.

Sense of Community

A sense of community is an elusive yet vital component of a healthy community. It encompasses elements such as image, spirit, heritage, character and pride, along with processes such as communication, inter-group relations, and networking. Many times a sense of community has deep historical roots. It is centered around a place, building, or event such as a festival, church, or 4th of July parade which has been in the community for generations. However, communities can also come together around a crisis or an opportunity, and find that a shared purpose, intent, or vision – protecting children, preventing crime, helping the disadvantaged. Like many of the communities in rural Minnesota, Clara City celebrates with an annual summer festival, Prairie Fest Days held during the first weekend in July. The first Prairie Fest Days was held September 3rd and 4th, 1931, and at that time was called Soybean Days. A sense of community can also come from a collective vision, where community members are asked to participate in creating the vision versus being told what their vision is.

Ease of mobility and increased ability to communicate mean that today many people have decreasing loyalty to their community of place. Many regularly uproot to follow economic opportunity. However, for an increasing number, quality of life is an important factor in their decision to relocate. As well as good schools, affordable housing, economic opportunities, clean air and water and low crime, a sense of community is increasingly a key factor. And for those people, communities that welcome newcomers, invite their participation, and value their residents, will surely attract those willing and active individuals, adding to the strength of the community. Building a sense of community requires fostering a sense of connection among citizens and developing a sense of civic pride.

Open communication and networking are key ingredients in fostering a sense of community. It also takes involved citizens. A sense of community involves joining together to work on community issues, celebrate, listen, vision, plan, problem solve and make decisions. Cities with a sense of community include those where members:

- Contribute to and hold a common vision for the future
- Respect and celebrate their heritage, diversity, and resources
- Share information
- Have a strong, positive identity,
- Uphold a shared set of values, rights and responsibilities
- Foster an atmosphere of civility, trust, and respect

Healthy, sustainable and safe communities do not just happen - they are the product of people working together and investing time, energy and commitment. Children and youth are critical to the future of the city and region. The entire community should share in supporting their growth and development. City government has an important role to play, but institutions alone cannot create or sustain community. By their involvement in civic and neighborhood activities, people see the impact of their own actions, recognize the difference they make, and can become acquainted with the people around them. This reinforces the understanding that personal responsibility is crucial to the development of a vibrant, growing community. Government can support efforts by encouraging participation from all sectors of the community. The following goals and strategies have been established to foster 'sense of community' within the city:

SENSE OF COMMUNITY GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The goals and strategies for sense of community recognizes the importance of the residents of a community, and encourages ways to connect and involve those who live in Clara City.

Goal

A. Make Clara City a place where people are involved in community and neighborhood life; where they help each other and contribute to the vitality of the city. Create a caring community that nurtures and supports children and families. Work toward achieving a sense of belonging among all residents.

Strategies:

1. **Connections.** Promote opportunities that bring people together to help them build connections to each other, their peers, their neighbors and the greater community.
2. **Intergeneration.** Enhance opportunities for intergenerational activities (wheel and walk, etc.)
3. **Broad participation.** Strive to reach people in new ways to encourage broad participation in neighborhood and community activities and events.
4. **Volunteerism.** Promote volunteerism and community service and enhance people's access to information about opportunities to contribute their time, energy or resources.
5. **Community service projects.** Encourage people of all ages to be involved in creating and participating in community service projects.
6. **Involvement.** Strengthen efforts to involve people in the planning and decision-making that affect their lives.
7. **Organizational involvement.** Encourage other governments, schools, institutions and community-based organizations to provide opportunities for people's participation in discussions that shape decisions about their neighborhoods and communities.
8. **Informed citizenry.** Keep citizens informed and involved, so they can make educated choices about their lives and assist in finding community solutions to issues and problems and responses to opportunities.
9. **Responsible youth.** Promote activities that help teach children and youth to act responsibly, and acknowledge young people's accomplishments.
10. **Retirement Community.** Improve marketing efforts as a place to not only raise a family, but to retire and grow old.

