

# Executive Summary

**Fosston Community Vision Statement:** *Fosston is the premier community for families in every stage of life. It has a broad range of services, including primary shopping opportunities, an outstanding education system, quality health care, a range of affordable housing options and a broad array of arts, cultural and recreational amenities. It is a community that everyone takes responsibility for – community involvement by all is expected and encouraged. Leaders from other communities of similar size throughout Minnesota are drawn to Fosston to learn “the Fosston way.”*

The Comprehensive Plan is a plan that should serve as a blueprint to a community to assist them in realizing their vision. It is important that the community uses the plan and refers to it often. The elected officials will need to direct their energy and resources in order to work towards the identified goals. The Plan gives direction to elected and appointed officials by providing implementation strategies that will allow them to focus their efforts. It helps set priorities so that efforts will not be wasted on issues that are not as important to the Community. However, the Council must recognize that change is also necessary and at some point, amendments or updates to the Plan may be necessary and desirable.

## **Plan Organization**

The Plan consists of seven sections: I – Introduction; II – Background Information; III – Public Participation; IV – Goals and Policies; V – Land Use/Community Facilities Plan; VI – Housing Plan; and VII-Economic/Community Development Plan.

### **Sections I-III. Introduction, Background Data and Public Participation**

These sections include information such as demographics, a land use inventory, public participation information, etc. This information was then reviewed and analyzed and used in the formation of the Goals and Policies.

### **Section IV. Goals and Policies.**

Fosston’s goals are an expression of the direction the task force would like to see the community work towards for the future. These goals and policies are the result of public input. They are ideas that have been worked on and refined to arrive at goals with accompanying policy

statements.

### Economic Development Goals:

- Goal #1: Expand the industrial base in the community.*
- Goal #2: Work together as a region to develop a labor force and resources to attract and fund new businesses.*
- Goal #3: Promote the business district and community.*

### Housing Goals:

- Goal #1: Provide housing for all socio-economic levels.*

### Public Facilities/Infrastructure Goals:

- Goal #1: Continue to maintain and improve public facilities.*
- Goal #2: Identify land to provide for development of residential, commercial and industrial areas.*
- Goal #3: Develop and support a technology based infrastructure.*

### Land Use Goals:

- Goal # 1: Support the orderly growth of residential areas that are served by city utilities or where utilities are easily accessible.*
- Goal #2: Promote the orderly development of land for residential, industrial and commercial development in areas identified as growth areas.*
- Goal #3: Promote and expand the industrial base.*
- Goal #4: Enhance the community’s character and appearance.*

### Transportation Goals:

- Goal #1: Provide and maintain a safe and efficient transportation system.*

### Quality of Place Goals:

- Goal #1: Support and maintain a great healthcare system in Fosston.*
- Goal #2: Support and maintain an outstanding educational system in Fosston.*
- Goal #3: Promote Fosston as a place to live with a high quality of place.*

### **Section V-VII: Land Use/Community Facilities, Housing and Economic/Community Development Plans.**

The following implementation strategies were developed to assist in each of the three main

categories of the Plan. These categories include Land Use/Community Facilities, Housing and Community/Economic Development. A detailed listing of these strategies and how they are to be accomplished is included in Sections V -VII of the Plan.

#### Land Use Implementation Strategies Summary:

##### *Residential:*

1. Encourage Development of Existing Lots or Property Already Served by City Utilities.
2. Identify Property for Future Residential Development.
3. Zone Areas As Single Family and Multi-Family Residential

##### *Commercial:*

1. Zone Property Identified As Commercial

##### *Industrial:*

1. Zone Property Identified as Industrial
2. Develop New Industrial Park Land

##### *Agricultural:*

1. Modify the Agricultural Land as Noted on the Land Use Plan
2. Zone Areas Identified as Agriculture

##### *Growth Areas:*

1. Develop into the Designated Growth Areas as noted in the Land Use and Growth Area Plan
2. Develop a joint powers board with the City and Rosebud Township

##### *Other Land Use Issues-Transportation:*

1. Continue to develop and implement the Capital Improvement Program to ensure timely maintenance and upgrading of city streets, sidewalks and trails.
2. Extend Streets into Growing Areas of the Community.
3. Develop a sidewalk/trail system linking residential and recreational areas of the City.

#### Community Facilities Implementation Strategies Summary:

1. Continue to maintain existing parks and recreational facilities.
2. Work with the school, and medical institutions to plan for the future of their facilities.
3. Implement the CIP to provide for maintenance and upgrades of local infrastructure and community facilities.

#### Housing Implementation Strategies Summary:

##### *Existing Residential*

1. Continue to Identify and Upgrade Existing Housing Stock

##### *New Single-Family & Multi-Family Residential*

1. Develop a Housing Strategy

#### Economic Development Implementation Strategies Summary:

##### *Commercial:*

1. Maintain and promote existing commercial properties.

##### *New Commercial:*

1. Continue to update and implement the marketing strategy for the City.

##### *Industrial:*

1. Maintain and promote existing industrial properties.
2. Develop the new industrial park land.

### **Short-Term Action Steps**

A number of action steps were identified that will need to be addressed in the short-term as Fosston begins to implement the Comprehensive Plan. These are necessary in order to begin carrying out the various parts of the plan. These steps and an explanation of each are included in Sections V-VII of the Plan.

### **Land Use and Community Facilities:**

1. Continue to review the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and other regulatory codes for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Continue to budget for the development of a Capital Improvement Plan for city infrastructure.
3. Monitor the Comprehensive Plan on a regular basis to ensure compliance and to make changes and update as necessary.

### **Housing:**

1. Develop a Housing Committee.

### **Economic/Community Development:**

1. Develop a recruiting/hospitality committee to showcase what Fosston has to offer prospective businesses, employees and residents.
2. Work with First Care Services in planning the

area around the Hospital, Clinic, and Nursing home and look at future needs, including additional assisted-care living facilities.

3. Work with the schools to identify community and continuing education needs.
4. Apply for additional funding to replenish the Revolving Loan Fund.

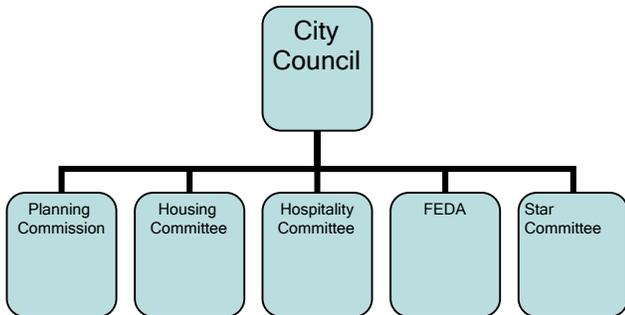
**Organizational Structure for Implementation**

The City Council is ultimately responsible for the success of the Comprehensive Plan but will require help from community members. To assist them, the plan outlines the development of two committees: the Housing and Hospitality Committees. The Planning Commission, FEDA and the Star Committee already exist. The Planning Commission will work with the Land Use/Community Facilities plans and FEDA and the Star Committee will focus on the Economic/Community Development plans. A newly formed Housing Committee would be available to begin work on the Housing Plan and the Hospitality Committee could assist with Community and Economic Development issues. A City Council member should serve on each of these committees as a liaison. These groups will serve as advisory to the Council and will help make the plan and its strategies manageable.

growth during the coming decade. Several industries are viewing Fosston as an attractive location to locate in. The healthcare and school system are excellent and continually improving their services and quality. Retail provides much needed goods and services in downtown Fosston. The community is working hard to continue to grow and develop in a positive way with a high quality of place as a goal.

To capitalize on this, the Comprehensive Plan was written with the vision in mind. The land use and community facilities, housing and economic development sections, all work towards providing a higher quality of life for Fosston residents. This, in turn, will serve to attract people who desire to live in a community such as Fosston.

To achieve the vision, elected and appointed officials can use the Plan to guide them forward as Fosston continues to improve its quality of life for residents to enjoy.



**Realizing the Vision**

People chose to live in Fosston because it is a good place to live. From families to senior citizens, people appreciate the high quality of life that Fosston offers to its residents. The small-town atmosphere with it's kindergarten through twelfth grade school, healthcare campus, community center, library, many churches of various denominations, low-crime rate and the amenities that only a small town can offer, can be found in Fosston.

The City is beginning to see growth after a few decades of population loss and will see continued



A Comprehensive Plan is a community's vision for the future and a guide for elected (policymakers) and appointed officials. It is a legal policy document that supports the City's Zoning Ordinance. It can also be a good source of information for City officials, staff, residents and business people.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan update is in response to the desire of the Fosston community to identify strategies to retain and grow their population. Maintenance of the current economy and land values were also reasons to update the Plan to guide the efforts of the community in the coming years.

The Fosston Comprehensive Plan reflects the vision and goals developed by residents, elected and appointed officials, business owners, and other Fosston stakeholders over the 12 month planning process. The Comprehensive Plan identifies a vision for how development and programs will shape Fosston's future.

Community Solutions was chosen as the planning consultant to update the plan in March of 2007. Following is the planning process that was used.

## **Planning Process**

The project began with the formation of a Planning Task Force. This group consisted of members from many organizations throughout the community, including members of the Planning Commission and City Council, city staff, representatives from surrounding townships, Polk County, school, healthcare, churches, and business people. This group provided much information for the public participation process and helped solicit more involvement from the community for the public forum and workshops. The members of the Planning Task Force are listed in Appendix A.

The process included the following areas:

- Inventory and Analysis
- Public Participation
- Goal and Policy Identification
- *Plan Review and Refinement*

During the inventory and analysis phase, background data was assembled through a land use inventory and a review of community facilities. In addition, demographics were compiled and analyzed and planning task force meetings were held to further review the information.

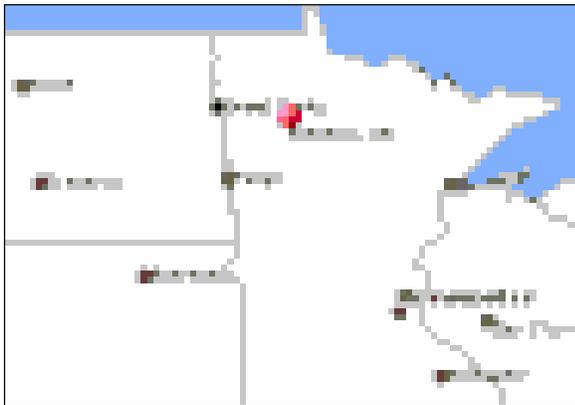
Public participation included an Issues Forum on May 16, 2007 to elicit public involvement and responses. A summary of the information gathered at this meeting is included later in *Section III, Public Participation*. Approximately 45 people attended and community concerns, issues and visions were gathered from this meeting. The information recorded from the Issues Forum was reviewed and refined at later meetings.

The Fosston Economic Development Authority and STAR Committee held joint goal setting sessions to further refine the issues from the Forum. The Planning Task Force also held several meetings to discuss the results of the public meeting and the smaller group meetings.



## Plan Setting

Fosston is a community of about 1,575 people located in the northwestern part of the state in east Polk County, Minnesota. It is a transition area from the Red River Valley prairie to the wooded, lakes area. Located on U. S. Highway #2, Fosston is approximately 70 miles east and slightly south of Grand Forks, ND and 300 miles north and west of the St. Paul/Minneapolis metropolitan area. See the map below for the location of Fosston in a regional context.



**Figure 1. Regional Map**

Fosston serves as a sub-regional center for communities within 10 to 20 miles.

The background information found in this plan includes information on the area surrounding Fosston, as well as the City of Fosston. Regional information is important to gain insight into the past, present and future of the City. The City is affected by the surrounding area and in turn, influences and affects the surrounding area. It is important to realize that a plan for Fosston must also consider the area around the City in its long-range planning. Growth and prosperity for the City is contingent upon working together as a community. The surrounding townships, the County and the City of Fosston need to see themselves as a community and work

cooperatively to realize common goals.

## Environmental Features

### *Soils and Vegetation*

The Fosston area is included in the Aspen Parklands, a scientific and natural area classified by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Aspen parkland is a transition between prairie country to the west and south, and coniferous forest along the north and east. Large, open, natural communities in the Parkland provide good opportunities to see moose feeding on aquatic plants during spring and autumn months. Birders commonly find sandhill cranes, sharptail grouse, and yellow rails in this landscape.

This small, flat, northwestern region of Minnesota was once completely covered by Glacial Lake Agassiz. The slightly rolling lowlands were formed of ground moraine, the swells and swales now supporting brush prairie, wet-mesic brush prairie, and shrubby wet meadow communities that intermingle as the topography fluctuates. Aspen Parkland soils are geomorphically distinct, their heritage being lacustrine or derived from the glacial lake bed. The Parkland lies on lake plain and lake-washed till plain (till that the lake waters reworked without depositing sediment), with coarse textured soils. The thickest clay sediment was deposited in the western portion, thinning toward the east. Low areas have accumulated a thin layer of organic material; elsewhere a thin mantle of fine sand is occasionally found. The soil is generally calcareous (containing calcium carbonate), with some saline pockets (containing soluble salts). Boulders are common. Drainage is poor to moderate, due to the flat topography and the clayish soil. Numerous beach ridges left by the receding Glacial Lake Agassiz further preclude drainage. Rivers and streams meander about,

and few lakes have developed.

Before European settlement, parkland prairie burned regularly, controlling aspen and other woody intrusions. Wet prairie, sedge meadow, shrub thicket, and aspen grove plant communities thrived. Tall grass and wet prairie dominated, with occasional aspen thickets in the eastern portions and elm and ash along the flood plains. Surveyors in 1877 described the area as low prairie covered with willow brush and luxuriant grass. Postsettlement fire suppression, however, has encouraged succession - from prairie to brush land to woodland. Fire could easily return this woodland to presettlement era savanna, brush prairie, or sand prairie, as appropriate to local topography and hydrological influence.

Parkland soils and drainage are poorly suited to cultivating, leaving vast continuous areas of natural parkland. Agriculture has developed in the west, with agriculture and forestry mixed in the eastern portion. The eastern portion tends to be lower, with more soil moisture. Wet sedge meadows, brush prairie, and wet prairie vegetation grows in these areas, particularly the eastern portion. Brush prairie, most common in the eastern portion, varies locally with topography and drainage, grading into wet-mesic brush prairie and shrubby wet meadow. Brush covers less than half the landscape. Willows dominate the wet areas, mixed with bog birch and shrubby cinquefoil. Hazel, chokecherry and serviceberry thrive on drier ground, with bur oak and trembling aspen occurring as small to medium size trees.<sup>1</sup>

Agriculture today ranges from sugar beets in the west to wild rice in the eastern part of Polk County, making it one of the most diverse agricultural counties in the state.

<sup>1</sup> - **MN DNR - Scientific and Natural Areas: Aspen Parkland Landscape**

## Demographics

### *County Population*

In 2000, Polk County had a population of 31,369. The County saw a decrease of just over 3% from 1990 to 2000. From 1980 to 1990, the County decreased in population by 6.7%. This decline was in response to the shift from rural to urban for many young people. It was also the result of the farm crisis in the 1980's with the decrease in the number of farms and increase in overall farm size. From 1990 to 2000, some of the larger communities in the Red River Valley lost population after the devastating 1997 flood.

The 2000 Polk County projections from the state demographer's office show an increase of less than 1% from 2000 to 2030 (Table 1). However, the population projections project the population of Polk County to decline from 2000 to 2010 and start to increase around 2015. The number of people ages 0 to 54 are declining in the projections, while men and women age 55 and over are generally increasing to the year 2030. In 2000, approximately 17% of the population in Polk County was over 65 years of age. In the year 2030, it is projected that persons age 65 and over will make up about 20% of the total population in the County. The median age in 2000 in Polk County was 38.2 compared with 34 in 1990, another indication of an aging population.

**Table 1: Polk County Population Projections: 2000-2030**

Age Group	2000*	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2000 - 2030 % Change
0-4	1,868	1,700	1,720	1,720	1,700	1,640	1,580	-15.4
5-9	2,146	2,070	1,940	1,950	1,970	1,940	1,900	-11.5
10-14	2,444	2,320	2,220	2,110	2,110	2,130	2,130	-12.8
15-19	2,812	2,350	2,230	2,130	2,030	2,050	2,070	-26.4
20-24	1,898	1,950	1,750	1,670	1,570	1,520	1,530	-19.4
25-29	1,432	1,640	1,720	1,610	1,550	1,450	1,420	-0.8
30-34	1,708	1,580	1,740	1,850	1,760	1,690	1,600	-6.3
35-39	2,238	1,800	1,670	1,820	1,920	1,840	1,790	-20.0
40-44	2,398	2,280	1,860	1,730	1,850	1,960	1,890	-21.2
45-49	2,290	2,360	2,260	1,850	1,720	1,820	1,940	-15.3
50-54	1,864	2,250	2,340	2,240	1,850	1,720	1,820	-2.4
55-59	1,487	1,850	2,240	2,340	2,240	1,860	1,730	16.3
60-64	1,321	1,460	1,830	2,200	2,310	2,230	1,870	41.6
65-69	1,196	1,240	1,390	1,740	2,100	2,220	2,150	79.8
70-74	1,217	1,070	1,130	1,270	1,600	1,940	2,070	70.1
75-79	1,135	1,040	930	990	1,120	1,430	1,730	52.4
80-84	934	900	840	770	830	960	1,230	31.7
85+	981	990	1,010	1,020	980	1,050	1,180	20.3
Total	31,369	30,850	30,820	31,010	31,210	31,450	31,630	0.8

\* 2000 population is from Census 2000.

Note: County data is rounded to 10's.

### *Fosston Population*

From 1960 to 1990, Fosston saw a steady decline in population in response to the rural decline in agriculture and agricultural-related industry (see Table 2 below). From 1990-2000, population grew by 3% and households by 6%, partially in response to the creation of new industry and new, technology-related and healthcare jobs.

**Table 2: Fosston population from 1960-2000.**

Fosston	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	1990-2000 Change
Population	1,704	1,684	1,599	1,529	1,575	3%
Households	--	--	633	643	681	6%

Source: Minnesota State Demographer's Center

### *Population Estimates and Projections*

Although the 2000 census shows an increase in population in Fosston, the state demographer's office estimates indicate a steady decrease in population from 2001 to 2006 (see Table 3). *Population estimates* are based on *present* and *past* population. Estimates rely on statistical methods and administrative records. (Basing the estimates on Fosston's past shows a decline in population until 1990, thus the estimates beyond 2000 show a decrease in population, even though Fosston's population began to show an increase with the 2000 census.)

**Table 3. Fosston Population Estimates for 2001 to 2006.**

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Fosston	1,569	1,555	1,537	1,532	1,531	1,527

Source: MN State Demographer’s Center

In Table 4 below, the state demographer’s office has projected the population for Fosston from 2006 to 2035. The projections show a steady increase every five years. The projections are based on growth or loss in the county population from 1990-2006 and also on the growth or loss of the city during this time. Instead of the population decrease shown by *population estimates*, the *population projections* show an increasing population for Fosston.

**Table 4. Fosston Population Projections for 2006 to 2035.**

	2006	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Fosston	1,527	1,568	1,609	1,649	1,683	1,688	1,695

Source: MN State Demographer’s Center

*Population projections* are based on simple mathematical formulas. Four extrapolation methods are used to project population. They are as follows:

- *Each cities share of the growth or loss in the county population is calculated for the 1990-2006 period.*
- *Each cities share of county population in 2006 is kept constant in the future.*
- *The exponential annual growth rate from 1990 to 2006 is kept constant.*
- *The average annual numeric change between 1990 and 2006 is carried into the future.*

The results of the four methods are similar in many cases but sometimes differ drastically. Therefore, the high and low values are discarded leaving the average of the two middle values.

The numbers don’t reflect any special knowledge such as zoning, land availability, current development projects or other factors that can and do affect future population. They should not be used as a substitute for projections based on such detailed local knowledge and development plans.

### Area Population

Bransvold Township (Table 5) continues to decline in population, likely in response to a continuing farm crisis and movement to urban areas for increased job opportunities.

**Table 5: Bransvold Township population from 1960-2000.**

Bransvold	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	1990-2000 Change
Population	345	318	295	261	241	-7.66
Households	--	--	101	97	95	-2.00

Source: Minnesota State Demographer’s Center

While Rosebud Township (Table 6) saw a dramatic decrease in population from 1980 to 1990, the trend in 2000 is a slight increase in population, possibly in response to Fosston’s population stabilization and an increase in job opportunities.

**Table 6: Rosebud Township population from 1960-2000.**

Rosebud	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	1990-2000 Change
Population	365	354	386	331	343	3.6
Households	--	--	121	120	125	4.17

Source: Minnesota State Demographer’s Center

The closest cities to Fosston, Bagley and McIntosh, are approximately 18 and 8 miles away, respectively. The following table illustrates some of the demographics of each.

**Table 7. Bagley, Fosston & McIntosh population**

	Bagley	Fosston	McIntosh
<b>Population</b>			
2000 Population	1,235	1,575	638
1990 Population	1,388	1,529	665
Percent change from 1990 population	-11	3	-4.1
Median age	42.7	43.5	52.9

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

In Table 7 above, Fosston is the only city with a population increase from 1990 to 2000. The decline in population is a trend that continues in many small towns in rural northwestern Minnesota. From a high of 1,704 in 1960, Fosston's population declined to 1990 and is slowly increasing today.

Bagley is the youngest community in the area, with 42.7 as the median age while McIntosh is by far the oldest with a median age of 52.9. Fosston's median age is 43.5 compared to 38.2 for Polk County. The larger cities in the County (Crookston- 35.8 and East Grand Forks - 34.1) have much lower median ages due to more job opportunities for young people and also because colleges are located there.

<b>Fosston Area Median Age</b>	
<i>City/Township</i>	<i>Median Age</i>
Rosebud Township	38.1
Polk County	38.2
Bagley	42.7
<b>Fosston</b>	<b>43.5</b>
Bransvold Township	44.8
McIntosh	52.9

Table 8 below shows the breakdown of the various age groups in Fosston.

**Table 8: Fosston population profile by age**

Age	Number	Percent
<b>Total population</b>	<b>1,575</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Under 5 years	88	5.6
5 to 9 years	96	6.1
10 to 14 years	97	6.2
15 to 19 years	114	7.2
20 to 24 years	71	4.5
25 to 29 years	81	5.1
30 to 34 years	82	5.2
35 to 39 years	86	5.5
40 to 44 years	100	6.3
45 to 49 years	88	5.6
50 to 54 years	73	4.6
55 to 59 years	65	4.1
60 to 64 years	82	5.2
65 to 69 years	84	5.3
70 to 74 years	77	4.9
75 to 79 years	97	6.2
80 to 84 years	100	6.3
85 to 89 years	62	3.9
90 years and over	32	2.0
Median age (years)	43.5	(X)

(X) Not applicable.

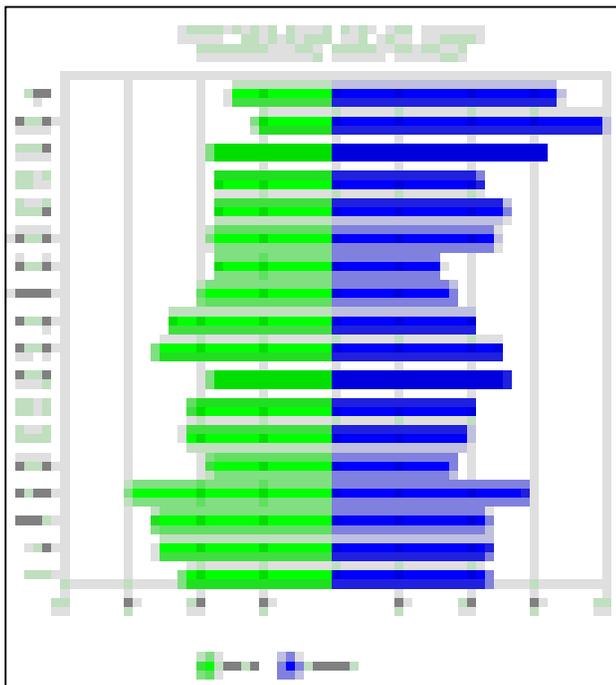
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

According to the 2000 census, the senior population remains strong in Fosston with 28% over 65 years old, compared with 17% for Polk County. The biggest change was seen in those aged 20 to 64 which went from 42.5% of the population in 1990 to 46% in 2000. Those aged 0 to 19 remained the same at 25% of the total population.

Fosston is a pleasant, safe city with excellent health care facilities for the elderly and it will continue to attract and retain seniors as they reach retirement age. With such a large portion of the population (28%), seniors and services for them will remain an important economic consideration for the community. Service-related jobs should remain constant and grow as the overall population grows and continues to attract older residents. With this growth will also come growth in the working-age population and consequently, those under 19 as families increase to fill the needs of the community.

The median age for males in Fosston is 40.1 while for females it is 47.6, an indication of the larger female population as people age.

**Figure 2. Fosston Population Pyramid**



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

<b>Table 9: Number of Persons by Age and Gender in Fosston in 2000</b>						
<b>Age</b>	<b>Male Persons</b>	<b>Male Pct</b>	<b>Female Persons</b>	<b>Female Pct</b>	<b>All Persons</b>	<b>Total Pct</b>
Under 5 years	43	6.0	45	5.2	88	5.59
5 to 9 years	50	7.0	46	5.4	96	6.10
10 to 14 years	52	7.3	45	5.2	97	6.16
15 to 17 years	39	5.4	44	5.1	83	5.27
18 and 19 years	19	2.7	12	1.4	31	1.97
20 years	8	1.1	6	0.7	14	0.89
21 years	10	1.4	5	0.6	15	0.95
22 to 24 years	18	2.5	24	2.8	42	2.67
25 to 29 years	42	5.9	39	4.5	81	5.14
30 to 34 years	41	5.7	41	4.8	82	5.21
35 to 39 years	35	4.9	51	5.9	86	5.46
40 to 44 years	51	7.1	49	5.7	100	6.35
45 to 49 years	47	6.6	41	4.8	88	5.59
50 to 54 years	38	5.3	35	4.1	73	4.63
55 to 59 years	34	4.7	31	3.6	65	4.13
60 and 61 years	13	1.8	14	1.6	27	1.71
62 to 64 years	22	3.1	33	3.8	55	3.49
65 and 66 years	9	1.3	17	2.0	26	1.65
67 to 69 years	25	3.5	33	3.8	58	3.68
70 to 74 years	34	4.7	43	5.0	77	4.89
75 to 79 years	35	4.9	62	7.2	97	6.16
80 to 84 years	22	3.1	78	9.1	100	6.35
85 years and over	29	4.1	65	7.6	94	5.97
Total Population	716	100	859	100	1,575	100.00

**Source: 2000 U.S. Census**

## Employment and Income

### Employment

In 1990, the largest employment sector in Fosston was the *retail* industry. *Health care* and *education* came in a close second and third, respectively, followed by *other professional, related services*. In 2000, *healthcare and social assistance* became the number one employment industry of Fosston residents, followed by *retail, construction and education*. A complete listing of the industry classification of employed persons, 16 years and over is included below in Table 10.

**Table 10: Fosston Employment by Industry of Employed Persons 16 yrs. and older**

Industry	1990		2000	
	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent
Farming, fisheries, forestry, and mining	21	4.0	18	2.9
Construction	41	7.8	55	9
Manufacturing	41	7.8	37	6.0
Transportation	13	2.5	26	4.2
Communication and public utilities*	17	3.2	-	-
Wholesale trade	26	5.0	10	1.6
Retail	105	20.0	86	14
Finance, insurance, and real estate	36	6.8	19	3.1
Business and repair services*	14	2.6	-	-
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services**	-	-	32	5.2
Information**	-	-	28	4.6
Personal and entertainment recreation services	28	5.3	34	5.5
Professional Services:				
Health care & social assistance	69	13.1	147	23.9
Education	66	12.5	53	8.6
Other professional, related services	45	8.6	47	7.7
Public administration	4	0.1	22	3.6
<b>Total employed persons, 16 and over</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: 1990 & 2000 U.S. Census

\*Category in the 1990 Census but not included in the 2000 Census.

\*\*Category in the 2000 census but not included in the 1990 census.

A look at the Fosston area (City of Fosston, Bransvold & Rosebud townships) in Table 11 indicates that in 1990, retail trade still employed the largest percentage of people in the area while *farming* became the second highest employment industry, followed closely by *healthcare* and *education*. In 2000, *healthcare* grew dramatically to become the number one employment industry in the area, followed by *retail*, with *education* and *construction* tied for third highest employment numbers. *Farming* fell to fifth place in overall employment.

**Table 11: Fosston Area\* Employment by Industry of Employed Persons 16 and older**

Industry	1990		2000		1990-2000
	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent	Percent Change
Farming, fisheries, forestry, and mining	97 <sup>2</sup>	12.0	51	5.7	-6.3
Construction	66	8.1	80 <sup>3</sup>	8.9	.8
Manufacturing	55	6.7	47	5.2	-1.5
Transportation	34	4.2	46	5.1	.9
Communication and public utilities*	21	2.5	-	-	-
Wholesale trade	38	4.7	10	1.1	-3.6
Retail	153 <sup>1</sup>	19.0	130 <sup>2</sup>	14.5	-4.5
Finance, insurance, and real estate	43	5.3	31	3.4	-1.9
Business and repair services*	16	1.9	-	-	-
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services**	-	-	48	5.3	-
Information**	-	-	33	3.7	-
Personal and entertainment recreation services	31	3.8	48	5.3	1.5
Professional Services:					
Healthcare & social assistance	96 <sup>3</sup>	12.0	212 <sup>1</sup>	23.6	11.6
Education	92	11.3	80 <sup>3</sup>	8.9	-2.4
Other professional, related services	55	6.8	49	5.5	-1.3
Public administration	13	1.6	34	3.8	2.2
<b>Total employed persons, 16 and over</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>899</b>	<b>100%</b>	

(\* includes Fosston city, Bransvold and Rosebud townships)

Fosston, like most of Minnesota, is experiencing a shortage of qualified workers for many employment positions. Upon review of the labor force statistics, it appears that over 46% of the residents over 16 years old are not in the labor force. Seniors over the age of 65 account for the majority of this figure. For some employers in need of employees, this may be an employee pool to market to and tap for part-time or seasonal positions. Of those in the labor force, women and men are equally divided at 50%. This compares with 53% for men and 47% for women in 1990. For those not in the labor force, 36% are men and 64% are women, many of whom are retired. As women age, there are proportionately more women than men in the population (see Table 9).

Unemployment is low among Fosston residents with just 3.4% of all males unemployed and 1.7% of the women unemployed.

### Income

The 1999 median household income in Fosston was \$27,634, compared with \$35,105 for Polk County. Approximately 15% are below the poverty level compared to 11% in Polk County. In 1990, approximately 20% were below the poverty level in Fosston and 14% in the County, so gains have been made in decreasing poverty. From 1989 to 1999, median household income rose by 80% in Fosston. This compares with approximately 55% for Polk County during the same ten year period.

A profile of family and household income follows in Table 12 for Fosston. *Family income* is defined as the sum of the income of all members 15 years old and over in each family while *household income* includes the income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years old and over in the household, whether they are related to the householder or not.

**Table 12: Fosston City - Family and Household Income in 1999**

Income	Households		Families	
	Number	Pct	Number	Pct
Total:	675	100.0	369	100.0
Less than \$10,000	138	20.4	30	8.1
\$10,000 to \$14,999	61	9.0	17	4.6
\$15,000 to \$19,999	69	10.2	28	7.6
\$20,000 to \$24,999	50	7.4	26	7.0
\$25,000 to \$29,999	46	6.8	26	7.0
\$30,000 to \$34,999	27	4.0	21	5.7
\$35,000 to \$39,999	54	8.0	34	9.2
\$40,000 to \$44,999	35	5.2	21	5.7
\$45,000 to \$49,999	34	5.0	28	7.6
\$50,000 to \$59,999	49	7.3	43	11.7
\$60,000 to \$74,999	37	5.5	35	9.5
\$75,000 to \$99,999	34	5.0	30	8.1
\$100,000 to \$124,999	17	2.5	16	4.3
\$125,000 to \$149,999	10	1.5	5	1.4
\$150,000 to \$199,999	7	1.0	4	1.1
\$200,000 or more	7	1.0	5	1.4

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

In the area, Bagley had the lowest median household income with \$23,125 while Bransvold Township had the highest at \$39,000.

<i>City/Township:</i>	<i>Median Household Income</i>
Bagley	\$23,125
<b>Fosston</b>	<b>\$27,634</b>
Rosebud Township	\$28,281
McIntosh	\$31,328
Polk County	\$35,108
Bransvold Township	\$39,000

## Housing

Housing is an important part of a community's overall health. The ability to attract new residents and industry is directly related to the quality and quantity of housing stock. Without adequate housing, a community may lose residents to surrounding areas where there is a wider selection of desirable housing choices. A company may choose to locate elsewhere if housing is not available for the employees that will be needed to supplement the local workforce.

In the winter of 2008, there were approximately 28 homes for sale in Fosston. Realtors indicated that homes in the \$60-80,000 market were needed and that some homes were overpriced in the area.<sup>2</sup>

The following information shows sales of homes in Fosston from 2000 to 2007.

Table 13. Fosston Home Sales: 2000-2007

Year	Total # of Sales	Average Price
2000	19	\$43,897
2001	27	\$54,720
2002	34	\$46,125
2003	35	\$63,285
2004	37	\$59,005
2005	36	\$53,286
2006	33	\$66,821
2007	16	\$62,318

Source: Sollie Realty, Inc. 2008

In 2007, sales were sluggish as interest rates rose and housing was overinflated in many areas.

Rental housing, especially single-family homes, was in short supply in 2008. The 2000 census reported a 7.8% vacancy rate in Fosston but 1.7% were homes for sale and only 2% were actual rental units. The others were classified as seasonal, recreational or other vacancies. All indications are of a tight housing market in Fosston which was also the case in the 1990's.

The median housing value in 1999 in Fosston was \$52,200 compared with \$72,700 for Polk County. Housing values in the 1990's increased at a rapid rate until values were overinflated in Fosston, also in part because of the shortage of housing and a strong demand. In 2007-08, the demand slowed somewhat due to higher interest rates and a slow housing market.

<sup>2</sup>-Darlene Sollie, Sollie Realty, Inc. 2008

*From 1989 to 1999, housing values in Fosston increased by approximately 44% and almost 59% in Polk County. (This compares with an increase in median household income of 80% in Fosston and about 55% for Polk County during the same ten year period.)*

In the chart below, Fosston's median house value is slightly higher than Bagley and McIntosh's values but lower than the surrounding townships and Polk County.

<u>City/Township</u>	<u>Median House Value</u>
McIntosh	\$41,600
Bagley	\$42,600
<b>Fosston</b>	<b>\$52,200</b>
Bransvold Township	\$66,700
Polk County	\$72,700
Rosebud Township	\$78,000

In 2000, the City completed a housing study that included a discussion of land availability and infrastructure. According to the study, some communities use a standard that the number of lots available or under development should be sufficient to accommodate 2 ½ years of anticipated construction activity. Fosston has had about 2 new single family units built per year for the past fifteen years or so. Using this standard, the City would need to make sure that an adequate lot inventory of approximately 5 lots are available each year to facilitate ongoing housing construction. The City currently has approximately 24 buildable lots available with utilities in the new Fairlawn Park subdivision. Two homes have been built there with one coming in the summer of 2008.

In the 2000 housing study, Fosston had 573 single family (duplexes included) structures. The condition of housing was noted by completing a "windshield or visual survey" of homes. Some of the highlights regarding the condition of housing are noted below.

- *A majority of the houses in Fosston are generally in good repair but the survey did rate over 20% of the structures as needing major repair or possibly beyond repair.*
- *Twenty houses were rated as dilapidated. These houses may be beyond repair, and may be candidates for acquisition and demolition. In the 1990's as many as 20 houses in Fosston were demolished, many presumably due to poor condition.*

Regency Apartments – 15 units  
 Linda Marie Apartments – 18 units  
 Town Square Apartments – 24 units  
 Evergreen Apartments – 12 units  
 Fosston Homes – 14 units  
 Prairie Pines Community – 20 units  
 Cornerstone Residence – 22 units

The 2000 Housing Study for Fosston is available at the Fosston City Hall.

Mobile or manufactured housing was also part of the study. (Only single-wide mobile homes were included in this as the double wide homes were included in the single family home part of the study.) The study identified 45 mobile homes in Fosston in 2000. Of those viewed 43 were in defined mobile home parks, with 2 mobile homes in scattered locations throughout the City.

The findings regarding the condition of mobile homes are as follows:

- Most of the mobile homes viewed in Fosston were older units and in some need of repair. Nineteen of the mobile homes viewed were rated as needing major repair. (While the term "repair" has been used to rate mobile homes, it is often difficult or financially impractical to rehabilitate older mobile homes.)

Rental housing was also studied. In 2000 there were approximately 207 rental units in the City. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, rental units make up about 31% of occupied housing in Fosston.

In response to the housing study and the housing needs identified, the City built an assisted care living facility in 2004 with 20 units. In 2005, a private developer built a second assisted care facility with 22 units. Both of these buildings are fully occupied with waiting lists. These numbers are not reflected in the 2000 housing study noted herein.

The following is a summary of the multifamily rental buildings (4 or more units) identified in the 2000 study, with the addition of the two assisted care living facilities which were built in 2004 and 2005.

Columbia Oaks – 4 units  
 Summerfield Apartments – 12 units  
 Summerfield Apartments – 12 units

## Transportation

A community's transportation system is an integral part of the appearance and function of the community. A well-functioning network of streets, highways, sidewalks, and paths play an important role in the community's livability.

In terms of access, Fosston is fortunate to have U.S. Highway #2 running through the city and also the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad. While important to the movement of goods and services, a major highway and railroad can also create access problems. Railroad and highway crossings become potential accident sites. A community must ensure that these crossings are adequately signed and maintained for easy and safe access for residents in vehicles, on bicycles, or on foot.

County and state roads are classified by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) according to function and basic characteristics. To better understand the City's transportation system, all of the roads have been classified by function as shown in Table 10 and illustrated on *Figure 6, Roadway Functional Classification*. Definitions of the different classifications follow.

**Principal Arterials** running through urban areas need to be carefully monitored and controlled for access. The concept of service to abutting land should be secondary to providing through-traffic or movement out of, and into, the community. New developments should centralize access points to minimize conflicts with the principal arterial. U.S. Highway #2 is classified as a Principal Arterial.

**Major Collectors** in smaller urban areas should provide service to the larger towns not directly served by a higher road system, such as a principal arterial, and serve the more important intracounty travel corridors. These streets also serve as connections between local streets and principal arterials. Major collectors in Fosston include: County Roads #'s 30, 6 and 1.

**Minor Collector** roads should be spaced at intervals, consistent with population density to collect traffic from local roads and bring developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road; provide service to other smaller communities; and link the locally important traffic generators with their rural hinterland. County #6 heading south from Fosston is

considered a minor collector road. On the following page, many more streets have been identified as collectors within the city limits.

**Local roads/streets** should have the following characteristics: serve primarily to provide access to adjacent land; and provide service to travel over relatively short distances as compared to collectors or other higher systems. Local roads will constitute the rural mileage not classified as part of the principal arterial, minor arterial, or collector systems. Generally, these are residential streets carrying less than 100 vehicles per day and averaging speeds less than 20 miles per hour. They serve to collect traffic by connecting blocks within neighborhoods and specific activities within similar land use.

Following is a list of Fosston's street hierarchy:

*Principal Arterial:*

- U.S. Highway #2-First St.

*Major Collectors:*

- County #30-N. Omland Ave.
- County #6-Sixth St.NE to Johnson Ave.
- County #1-Hilligoss Boulevard W.

*Minor Collectors:*

- 400<sup>th</sup> Street SE
- Ninth Street NW
- Stephen's Boulevard
- Third Street NW
- Third Street NE
- Granum Avenue
- First Street NE
- N. Amber Avenue
- N. Brandt Avenue
- Hilligoss Boulevard E.
- S. Omland Avenue to S. Mark Ave.
- County #6 heading S. from Fosston

A basic principle of land use planning is that land uses that generate heavy traffic loads and require efficient access to function properly, should be located near arterials or major collectors. Land uses such as residential, should be located away from heavy traffic areas with roads designed for local traffic, but connecting to more major collector streets. With each step up in the roadway classification system, roads are designed for more traffic volume and less local access. Thus, it is important when planning future land uses, to examine the roadway system and provide appropriate streets for compatible land uses. Channeling heavy traffic away from quiet, residential uses is an example of this. Locating

heavy industrial or commercial uses close to major collectors or arterials provides easier access and a safer, more compatible street system for the rest of the community.

#### *Traffic Counts*

Traffic counts through Fosston on U.S. Highway 2 are quite heavy, ranging from 3,400 average daily traffic (ADT) to 5,800 ADT from the 2004 state highway statistics. North Omland Avenue, a major collector, also has high average daily traffic counts, peaking at about 2,000 ADT. Industrial truck traffic accounts for much of this number, with in-and-out traffic to the industrial park. North Johnson Avenue counts are high, reaching 2,150 around Third St. NW and 1,700 as it continues on to Sixth Street NE. Inderlee Avenue, north of Highway 2 was also high in the 1997 counts, with 2,050 ADT (2005 ADT was not available for this road). Much of this traffic is generated by the school district buildings located in this vicinity. See *Figure 7, Traffic Counts* for more average daily traffic counts throughout the City of Fosston.

#### **Airport**

The Fosston Municipal airport is located in the northwest corner of the City. It is a general aviation airport designed to handle aircraft with a maximum gross weight of 12,500 pounds. Primary loading on the runway is from single engine and light twin traffic. Runway length is 3,501 feet and 75 feet wide. Navigation aides include NDB and AWOS systems. There are 10 privately owned hangars on the property.

The arrival/departure building is in good shape and is not staffed. It has a total of 1008 sq.ft.

Many improvements are planned and included in the five year capital improvement program. These are discussed in the *Community Facilities* section.

#### **Bike and Pedestrianways**

Recreation is the primary reason for biking and walking in the City of Fosston, although some choose walking or biking as the mode of transportation to and from work, school and the downtown business district.

Plans have been discussed to link the city sports complex to Melland Park and the hospital/nursing home complex with a boardwalk, pedestrian

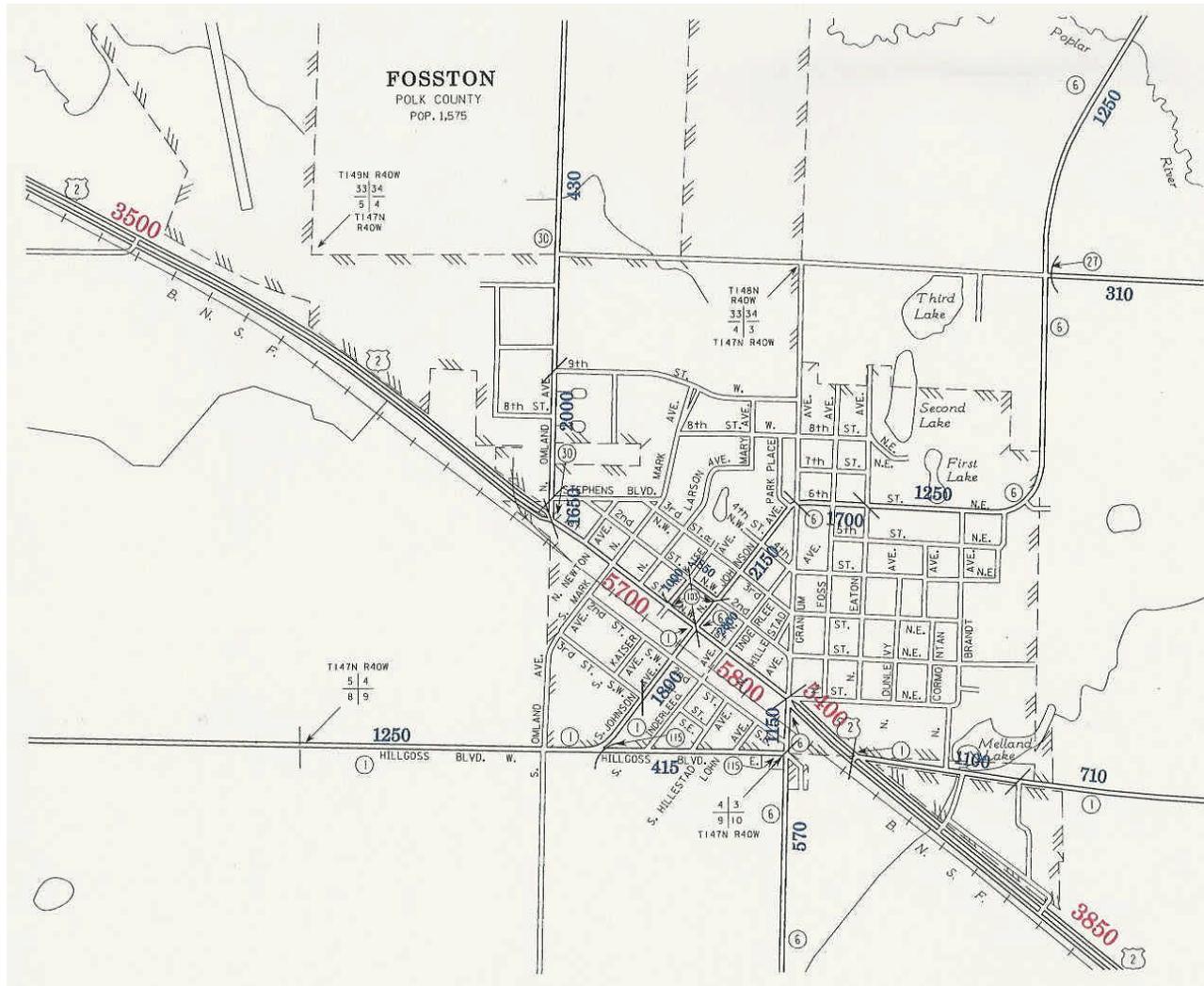
walkways and signage.

#### **Transportation Improvements**

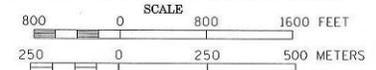
There are currently no plans for street upgrades beyond normal maintenance and repair throughout the City. Fosston's transportation network is currently adequate to serve the needs of the community. Most streets are served with paved surfaces, curb and gutter.

As development occurs, the street system should be carefully monitored to determine the adequacy of traffic movement throughout the City.

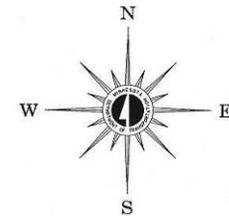
Figure 3: 2004/2005 Traffic Counts



MUNICIPALITIES OF  
**POLK CO.**  
 PREPARED BY THE  
 MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
 OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION DATA & ANALYSIS  
 IN COOPERATION WITH  
 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
 FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION



2005  
 BASIC DATA - 1990



LEGEND

INTERSTATE TRUNK HIGHWAY..... (5)

VOLUMES PREPARED BY  
 THE OFFICE OF  
 TRANSPORTATION DATA & ANALYSIS

NUMERALS INDICATE AVERAGE DAILY  
 TRAFFIC VOLUMES ON DESIGNATED ROADS.

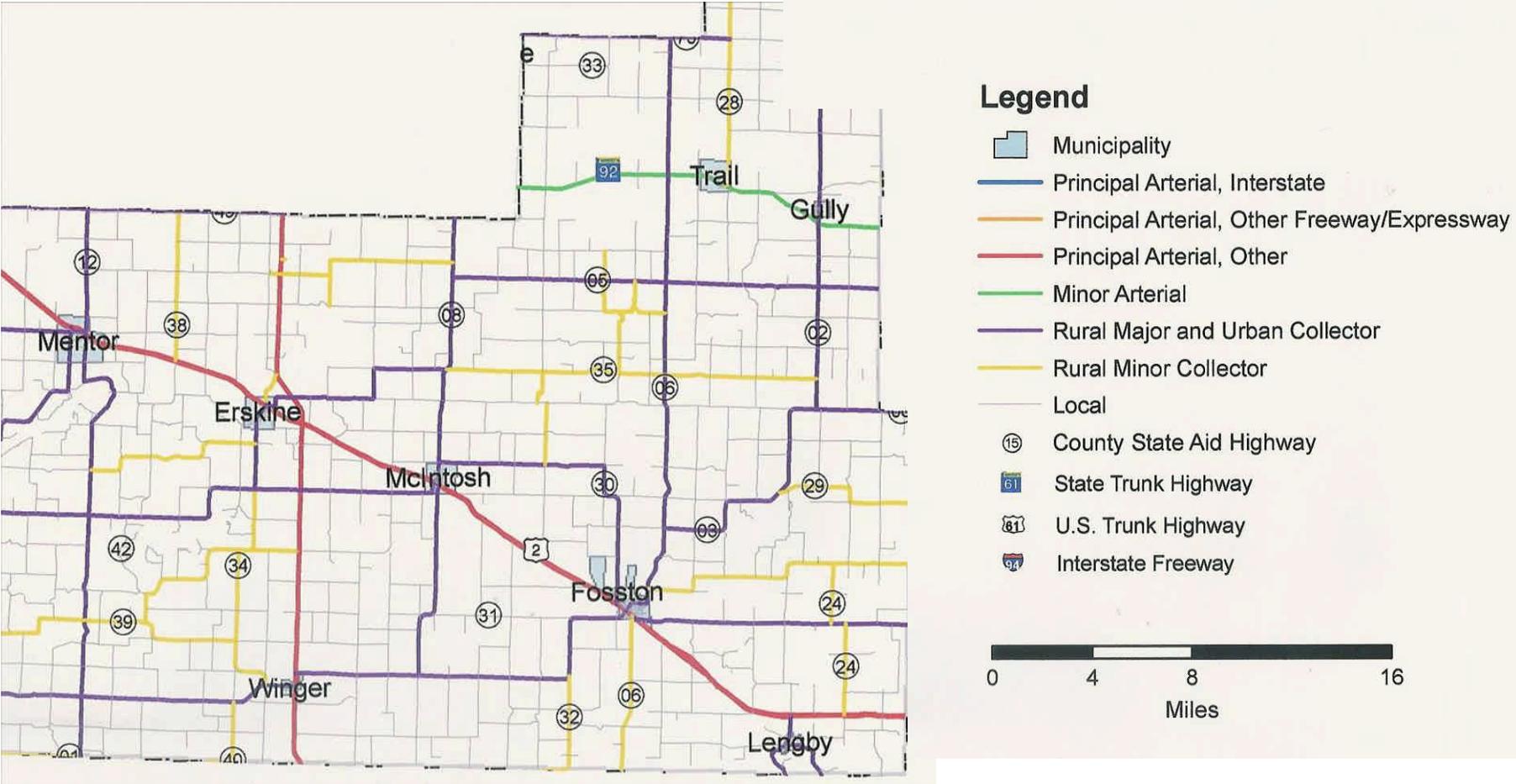
TRUNK HIGHWAY ROUTES ARE 2004 A.A.D.T. VOLUMES.  
 COUNTY SYSTEM ROADS ARE 2005 A.A.D.T. VOLUMES.

FOR DESIGNATED ROADS :  
 / = SEGMENT ENDPOINT FOR ALL  
 ROADS INTERSECTED BY HATCH  
 ( = SEGMENT ENDPOINT ONLY FOR  
 ROAD SEPARATED FROM INTERSECTING  
 ROAD BY ARC

# Polk County

## Functional Classification Verification

Figure 4. Highway Functional Classification



Source: Minnesota Department of Transportation, December 2005

## Existing Land Use

A land use inventory was completed in the fall of 2007 of the Fosston community. The existing land use map can be found in *Figure 5, Existing Land Use*.

Fosston comprises land of approximately 1.85 square miles or 1,182 acres. The area surrounding Fosston is predominately agricultural while the City contains a full-range of urban land uses. Public is the major use of land within the City limits at 41%, with residential the next highest use at approximately 30 % of the total land area. Commercial use is next with 11% followed by Industrial with 8% and Agricultural with approximately 7%. Open Space/Parks is approximately 3%.

### *Residential*

Residential property comprises the second largest use of land in Fosston with approximately 30% or 350 acres used residentially. Residential includes both single and multi-family dwellings. Lot sizes vary from 25' x 140' near the core of the city, to 100' x 200' in the newer subdivisions. In the older core near downtown, densities average 5 to 6 units per acre while in some newer areas there may be 2 units per acre and, sometimes 1 per several acres in more rural settings. Housing styles are mixed and most homes appear to be in good shape. There is a need for maintenance and repair in some of the older neighborhoods, but in general, housing is very well maintained within the City.

Fairlawn Park is a new subdivision in the City with 27 lots. Seven lots have been sold and two homes built, with one to come in the summer of 2008. The owners of the development are working with the school to have the industrial arts class build a home there. They hope to have them build one house per year to encourage development.

In 1990, the demand for housing in Fosston was high. According to the vacancy rates in the 2000 census, this is still true. The price of homes has been inflated due to the lack of homes in a moderate price range. New home construction can often be too costly for many first time home buyers. Programs exist from local and regional organizations that can help with down payments and financing for first-time home buyers and income-eligible persons.

Land has been identified in the northwest quadrant of the City for future residential development.

Land exists within Fosston that is available for in-fill development of multi-family housing. Apartment buildings are also a need within the community for seniors, transitional housing, and income-eligible families.

### *Commercial*

Commercial land use comprises 11% or 132 acres of land in Fosston. This includes highway, office and downtown commercial uses throughout the city. Most of this use is concentrated in the downtown core area of the community and along U.S. Highway #2, in close proximity to the downtown. Another area of commercial concentration exists in the south-southeast section of town, along U.S. Highway #2.

The downtown area has a few vacant buildings that could be developed to increase the retail and service community. Some residential land along the north side of U.S. Highway #2 has also been identified as an area that could be rezoned to commercial to allow for expansion of the commercial district.

### *Industrial*

Industrial use comprises approximately 8 % or 94 acres of land in Fosston. This is land that is used for assembly and manufacturing, warehousing, grain storage and light manufacturing. Currently, industrial land is located in the northwest section of the city and along the railroad tracks in the southwest section of the city. The existing percentage of 2% industrial use of land does not include industrial park land that is used by the County or land that is currently vacant.

The current industrial park is almost full but land exists adjacent to the park on both the east and west sides that will be developed for an expanded industrial park. Land has also been identified south of the railroad tracks for additional industry that may require access to a rail spur or line.

### *Agricultural*

Land in this category comprises approximately 7 percent (85 acres) of all land within the City of Fosston. Agricultural land is defined as land currently used for agricultural purposes – including crop farming, pasture land, animal raising (cattle, horses, sheep, hogs, chickens, turkeys, etc.), and forestry (tree farming), if this is the major use of the land. This category does not include personal gardens, nurseries that raise plants or public forest

land.

Land in the northern part of Fosston is currently used agriculturally. Much of this will be zoned residential but some is poorly drained and this should be noted when the property is platted to avoid development of unsuitable lands.

Very little land is currently used agriculturally within the city limits and as the community develops, agricultural land will become an even smaller percentage of the total land use acreage.

### *Vacant*

Vacant land is defined as undeveloped land that is not in active agricultural or forestry use. This land is combined with agricultural when determining the city's growth potential. This can also include residential or commercial properties that are not actively being used but that are available for development.

Fosston has very little vacant land available for in-fill or other development. Thus, in the future there will be a need to look beyond the current city limits for available development areas.

### *Parks/Open Space*

Parks and open space comprise 33 acres or 3 % of the land within the city limits. This acreage includes public parks and recreation facilities. The city provides some very nice green spaces/parks, and community facilities such as; Berge-Stafford Park, Melland Park, the City Complex and the Civic Center.

For a community of just over 1,500, Fosston does an admirable job of providing recreational opportunities for its residents.

### *Public*

Public land comprises approximately 41% or 487 acres in Fosston. This includes land used for city, county or state uses and schools, non-profits and public utilities. The largest land user of public land in Fosston is the City with approximately 440 acres located in several sites around the community. Contributing many acres to this use category is the airport with approximately 308 acres and the waste water treatment ponds with approximately 120 acres.



## Community Facilities

This section includes community facilities owned and maintained by the City and other public buildings owned by the County, School District and other quasi-public facilities. The purpose of this report is to inventory these facilities and state their condition and function and note planned upgrades or current needs of the facility. This information was gathered during the winter of 2007-08 and is broken down into four main categories: City/Government; Parks and Recreation; Medical Facilities; and Schools.

### **City Government**

#### **City Hall      220 East First Street**

Condition: The City Hall building was built in 1941 and has a total of 8,320 sq.ft. It has a brick exterior, concrete slab, and wood frame interior with metal roofing. It is in good condition with the most recent remodeling occurring in 1992. The former electric generation portion of the building was remodeled for the Fosston Law Enforcement and Director of Public Works office and an office for the Polk County Sheriff Department. Improvements are needed to meet ADA requirements. Among the improvements needed is a van accessible parking space, entrance door improvements, and converting the two current restrooms to one wheelchair accessible Unisex Restroom. The roof over the Law Enforcement offices is a flat rubber roof and does leak certain times of the year. There has been some discussion about constructing a pitched steel roof over that portion of the building.

Function: The City Hall building provides offices for the following administrative departments:

- City Administrator
- Fosston Municipal Utilities – Electric, Water and Sewer, Cable TV, and Gas
- Director of Public Works
- Law Enforcement
- Council Chambers – 500 sq.ft.
- Polk County Sheriff's Office Substation

The former water treatment plant, located on the west end of the building, has been converted to an office space for a technology incubator.

#### **Law Enforcement/Public Safety 220 East First Street**

Condition: The police office space was built several years ago in the City Hall Administrative Office. There have been discussions to construct a new City dog pound. The current pound does not meet state statute requirements.

Function: The City police department was discontinued in June, 2000 and the City currently contracts with the Polk County Sheriff's Office for law enforcement services. Coverage is provided by two full-time deputies who work out of the law enforcement office. The office also serves as a regional office for deputy sheriffs, state patrol and conservation officers.

#### **Water Department 209 S. Granum Avenue**

Condition: The building was built in 1996 and is 768 sq.ft. (24'x32'). It is in excellent condition and is made of concrete slab foundation, block exterior and a steel roof. No known improvements are necessary to meet ADA requirements.

A 500 GPM Iron-Manganese-Arsenic Removal Plant addition was constructed in 2006. The 1,248 sq. ft. addition consists of concrete slab foundation, block exterior, a steel roof, an 18,000 gallon below-grade basin and a Filtronics pressure filter system.

The source of Fosston's water supply is an underground aquifer. The three wells are located in SE Fosston and have a pumping capacity of 700 gallons per minute. Three new submersible pumps were installed in 2006 to allow for increased pumping capacity. There are no known water quality issues at this time. The water tower is located on Industrial Avenue in the Industrial Park and has a capacity of 500,000 gallons. Painting and repairing of the water tower was completed in 2003 at a cost of \$330,000.

The City of Fosston replaced water mains, and sanitary sewer mains under Highway #2 in 2001. Also, a new storm sewer line from Highway #2 south to County Rd. #1 was completed as part of the Highway #2 project. In addition, a storm water retention pond was constructed as a receiving pond for the storm water line from Highway #2.

The water capacity is adequate for the City and future growth and development.

Function: The water system provides municipal water to City residents, businesses and industrial customers.

#### **Sewage Treatment Plant Wastewater Treatment ponds in north Fosston**

Condition: The three, 22 acre ponds were constructed in 1964, with a one acre aeration pond. The main lift station was also built in 1964 and is in a 12' x 12' steel building. The condition of this structure is good and houses a 6' diameter, 25' deep dry well.

The average gallons-per-day to the ponds is 300,000 gallons. Master lift station controls have been recently updated. The current capacity of the plant is 43 million gallons per pond.

The City completed construction of an Industrial Wastewater Pretreatment Facility (IWPF) in the fall of 2004. The IWPF is designed to pre-treat all industrial wastewaters being discharged to the City of Fosston collection system. The plant has been treating high loadings of BOD and TSS from Minnesota Dehydrated Vegetables (MDV). The facility is 80' x 200', has a depth of 20' and has a capacity of 2.5 million gallons. The project was jointly funded by the Economic Development Administration, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, Wild Rice Electric Cooperative and the City of Fosston. The IWPF is a complete wastewater treatment system with renewable energy production in the form of either methane or hydrogen. MDV will be using the methane in combination with natural gas in their vegetable drying process. The use of this renewable energy will reduce the consumption of natural gas by as much as 50%.

The City Consulting Engineer has begun a Facility Study for wastewater collection and treatment. As part of the study, the current and future wastewater collection and treatment systems are established, current phosphorus contributions are discussed, wastewater alternatives are discussed, industrial user demands on the wastewater system are established, and a partial rate structure for wastewater treatment and collection will be proposed. Alternative proposals for the wastewater treatment systems will be evaluated based on economic, environmental, and social considerations.

The wastewater treatment ponds are currently at their maximum hydraulic capacity. Future improvements may include a fourth treatment pond to relieve hydraulic overloading and to assist with wastewater treatment. The engineer's estimate for another pond is approximately \$2,200,000. The City engineer is also considering a mechanical treatment plant.

Function: The facility provides sanitary sewage treatment for City residents, businesses and industrial customers.

### **Electric Utility 220 East First Street**

Condition: The electric utility is housed in the same building as City Hall. The source of the City's electricity is from the Coyote Generating Plant in Beulah, North Dakota. Ownership of this utility includes: Northern Municipal Power Agency – 30%, Ottertail Power – 35%, Montana Dakota Utilities – 25% and Northwest Public Utilities – 10%. Fosston is a member of NMPA along with 11 other cities in

Minnesota and North Dakota. The Coyote plant is a coal fired generating plant. There is sufficient electrical capacity at this time.

Environmental legislation targeting the electric industry and coal-fired power plants is one of the main issues facing the City and rural electric cooperatives. Mandates resulting from legislation would have a significant impact on electric rates in the future. Other issues include reliability of the power grid, power generation capacity and increasing energy costs for peaking plants. All of these issues may have an impact on future rates.

The Capital Improvement Plan includes the following items: upgrading underground power cable; new utility service truck; industrial electrical feeder switch; emergency generator for city hall.

Function: This department provides municipal electric service to City residents, businesses and industries.

### **Natural Gas Utility 220 East First Street**

Condition: The natural gas utility is housed in the same building as City Hall. The source of the city's natural gas is the Great Lakes Gas Pipeline that transports gas from Canada. Constellation New Energy Gas Division with offices in Omaha, NE manages the gas supply for the City. The gas utility was built in 1998 and is in very good condition with adequate gas capacity at this time. The Cities of Fosston, Bagley and Clearbrook jointly own the Town Border Station (TBS) located at Clearbrook. The three cities jointly own 1.9 miles of 4" high-pressure main line on County Road #49. Fosston and Bagley jointly own 8.1 miles of 4" high-pressure main line on State Highway #92. Fosston owns 14 miles of 4" high-pressure main line on Polk County #1 and Clearwater County #22. Fosston also owns 3 miles of 4" polyethylene gas main on Polk County #1. The gas utility also consists of 6.9 miles of 2" plastic gas line within the city limits to serve residential, industrial and commercial customers.

The Capital Improvement Plan calls for upgrading the utility service truck.

Function: This department provides municipal natural gas service to City residents, businesses and industries.

### **Public Works Maintenance Facility 226 South Johnson Avenue**

Condition: The Public Works Maintenance shop was built in 1978 and is 9,600 sq.ft. It is in fair condition and has a concrete slab foundation, pre-engineered steel frames, steel siding and roof. It is currently at maximum capacity for equipment and vehicles. There

are no known improvements needed to meet ADA requirements.

This department employs 7 full-time employees. Major equipment includes; an Elgin Street Sweeper, Cat loader, Cat backhoe/loader, sandtrailer/extractor, 1988 GMC/Leach Sanitation Truck, 1981 Ford Bucket Truck, 1987 Ford Dump/Snowplow Truck, 1994 Ford 2 x 4 utility pickup, a 1995 Ford 4 x 4 utility pickup and a 2005 Chevrolet utility pickup.

The public works storage garage is also located here and houses the sanitation truck. This was built in 1948 and is 1,440 sq.ft. It is in fair condition and has a concrete slab foundation, wood frame and siding. It is also at maximum capacity with no recent or planned remodeling. There are no known improvements needed to meet ADA requirements.

**Function:** This facility is the operations and maintenance headquarters for the Street, Sanitation, Water and Sewer, Electric, Natural Gas and Cable TV departments.

The Capital Improvement Plan includes the following items: new garbage truck; one-ton truck for brush pickup; building renovation; new street sweeper; snow-plow truck.

### **Fire Department 301 North Johnson Avenue**

**Condition:** The fire station was built in 1998 and is 120' by 80' for a total of 9,600 sq.ft. The roof and walls of the building are concrete and the new building fills the department's needs well. There are 25 volunteer firemen in the Fosston Fire Department. The City has a fire rating of 7.

Several pumper trucks are included in the fleet as follows:

- 1) 1250 GPM pumper
- 2) 750 GPM pumper
- 3) 4 x 4, 1 ton rescue pumper
- 4) 4 x 4, 1 ton rescue pumper
- 5) 4 x 4, 1 ton rescue pumper
- 6) 4 x 4, 3/4 ton pumper

Other equipment includes a 4 x 4, 1 ton pickup; and, a 3,200 gallon tanker and a 5,000 gallon tanker and Polaris 6-wheeler.

**Function:** The fire department provides fire protection services for a service area which, includes the Cities of Fosston and Lengby, and the following townships; Beaulieu, Brandsvold, Columbia, Heier, Inland Lake, Rosebud, Queen, Gregory, Sletten, Hill River and 1/4 of Eden.

### **Fosston Municipal Airport Highway 2 West**

**Condition:** The arrival/departure building was built in 1959 and has 1,008 total sq. ft. It is wood frame with a concrete slab, asphalt shingles and metal siding. The condition of the building is good and the siding and shingles were recently replaced. A new pilot lounge was added in 2005 with a new computer that allows pilots to access weather reports via the internet.

This building is not staffed. The runway length is 3,501 feet and 75 feet wide. Navigation aids include NDB and AWOS systems. There are 10 privately owned hangars on the property.

The City installed a new automatic aviation fueling system at the airport in 2000. The system includes a 2,000 gallon above ground tank, pump and credit card reader for unattended fueling of aircraft.

An overlay of the runway, taxiway and apron area as well as a new electrical service building, runway lights, PAPI's and replacement of the underground electrical cables were completed in 2002. A new septic system was also installed in 2002.

A new 6420 John Deere tractor with snow-blower, front end loader and 15' rotary cutter mower were purchased by the City in 2006 for winter and summer maintenance.

An overlay of the entrance road, the hangar access road and the parking lot was completed in 2006. A new rotating beacon was installed in 2007.

The Airport Layout Plan will be completed by the City's consulting engineer in late 2007 or early 2008. The plan will include: physical inventories of facilities and services at the airport; identification of the airport's role in the local and municipal airspace; identification of potential physical, environmental and operations at the airport; basic aeronautical and development forecasts; design rationale for lighting, pavement rehabilitation, building development, land purchases and other capital projects; staged development for a 20 year planning horizon broken down into 5-year increments.

Major improvements included in the Five-year Capital Improvement Plan include: crack repair; turnaround expansion; snow removal equipment storage building; snow plow truck; paved taxiway construction; airport signing; perimeter fencing; skid steer; crosswind runway; a new multi-plane hangar (80' x 80'). Federal and State funding would assist in the costs of these improvements.

**Function:** The Fosston Municipal airport is designed to handle General Aviation aircraft with a maximum gross

weight of 12,500 pounds. Primary loading on the runway is from single engine and light twin traffic.

**Fosston Public Library and Arts Center**  
***421 Fourth Street Northeast***

Condition: The library and arts center is located in what used to be a church, built in 1949. Total square footage is 3,723 sq.ft. It is in fair condition being constructed of a concrete slab, wood frame, stucco exterior, built-up roofing, and painted plaster walls. Replacement of the roof was completed in the fall of 1998.

The Community Theater is located on the main floor with storage in the basement.

The City completed a 4,733 sq. ft addition to the library in 2003. The facility is on the ground floor and now meets all ADA requirements.

Function: The Fosston Public Library is part of the Lake Agassiz Regional Library which provides inter-library loans and reference service, as well as, purchasing and cataloging, and maintaining the catalog database. There are two librarians on staff. The library has a meeting room separate from the general area. There are a number of computers for internet use, one for the card catalog and one for circulation services.

The Art Center is managed and operated by a non-profit board. The City owns the building but does not charge rent to LARL or the Library and Arts Board. The City provides funds for operation and maintenance of the building.

**Embassy Community Center**  
***Third Street NE & Eaton Avenue North***

Condition: The Embassy Community Center, which houses twenty four groups, was started in this former church. As more and more organizations began using this facility, more space and accessibility became paramount. A project to construct a 40' by 80' addition was undertaken by the Embassy Board of Directors and the organizations that use the facility. As part of the project, handicap accessibility was provided. The condition of the building is good and no additional ADA modifications are required.

Function:

The Embassy Community Center is owned by a non-profit group and provides meeting space for twenty four organizations that span all ages and types of activities. It is also used for



community forums, seminars and training. The large kitchen is used to prepare full course meals for any occasion. The facility also serves as a collection center for used clothing and small appliances for distribution to the needy. There is a large meeting room space that serves the community well for large group meetings.

Organizations that utilize the Embassy Community Center include:

- Audio Care Hearing Services
- Clothing Department
- Country Music Jam Session
- Fosston Garden Club
- Lake Country Knitting
- Nursing Assistant Classes for Pioneer MCC
- Pine to Prairie Knitting Machine Club
- RSVP Headquarters
- Senior Center Card Club
- Senior Center Social Club (Dances)
- Senior Meals
- Senior Triad
- Singles Christian Fellowship
- Sons of Norway
- Tax Aide

**City Bus Service**

The Fosston city bus service is operated by the City. The bus operates Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and on Sundays from 8:00 a.m. to noon. It costs 50 cents to ride the bus within the city limits.



**Polk County Resource Recovery Plant**  
***Fosston Industrial Park***

Condition: The waste-to-energy plant was constructed in 1988 and is an all-metal building with 25,551 sq.ft. The materials recovery part was added in 1996 with an additional 12,600 sq.ft. No improvements are

currently planned for ADA.

There are a total of 24 employees ranging from waste combustion operators, materials recovery and maintenance personnel, supervisors and office staff. The waste-to-energy plant operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Other employees work Monday through Friday.

The plant completed the installation of a 400 KW turbine generator in 2007. The turbine uses excess steam from burning trash to produce power for plant operations.

One current need would be to provide more space in the lunch room.

**Function:** The plant processes and burns mixed-municipal solid waste. Materials recovery and waste-to-energy are the permitted activities of this plant.

#### **Post Office     219 Second Street Northwest**

**Condition:** The post office underwent a major renovation in 2006. Plans for a new post office were placed on hold due to lack of funds. The current building is 1,849 sq.ft. and was built in 1957 of block construction.

**Function:** The post office provides postal service for Fosston and the surrounding area.

### ***Parks and Recreation***

#### **Civic Center             215 E. First Street**

**Condition:** The Civic Center was built in the fall of 1967 and completed in December of 1968 with a total square footage of 17,460. The building is brick and block exterior, block interior with a suspended ceiling.

The condition of the building over the 30 year life has deteriorated. Major remodeling was completed in the spring of 1999. A new roof, tiling the pool and locker rooms, new gas boilers, fire alarm system, and lockers were completed in the remodeling project.

A \$325,000 energy improvement project was completed in 2005. The project included energy management controls, lighting retrofit and controls, pool and gymnasium ventilation improvements, restroom ventilation improvements, water efficiency improvements, a new pool cover, new pool filtration and heater improvements and replacement of entrance doors.

The Capital Improvement Plan includes the following items: Recreation Dept pickup; ceramic tile for lobby walls; replace carpet in Civic Center office, lobby and glass room; replace backboards in gym.

**Function:** The center houses several service offices,

scout rooms, teen center, gym and an indoor swimming pool. The school rents the facilities from the City during the school year for physical education and swimming classes, sharing in maintenance and operational costs.

The Civic Center employs a recreation and aquatics director, an assistant recreation director, 2 part-time evening supervisor and 12 lifeguards and instructors. The Aquatics department gives swimming lessons to area schools as well as the Fosston school system. There is one office and two meetings rooms available for rent to the public.

#### **Berge-Stafford Park *Located on Larson Avenue***

**Condition:** This park is a little over 2 acres with a pond and youth playground equipment. An upgraded irrigation system is needed for the pond. New sidewalk to the playground, the picnic shelter and to the bathrooms is needed to make the park more accessible for individuals with disabilities. The bathrooms at the park need to be renovated in the near future.

With the assistance of the Berge-Stafford Playground Coalition, \$20,000 was spent to upgrade the playground equipment in 2006 and 2007. Older equipment that did not meet safety code was removed from the park.

The Capital Improvement Plan for the parks includes the following: new tractor mower; and upgrading the pond in Berge-Stafford Park. This would include cleaning the pond, placing fabric and rock on the banks for erosion control and install a storm drain diversion pipe from 3<sup>rd</sup> St. NW.

**Function:** Berge-Stafford Park hosts many youth and picnic gatherings, reunions, Veteran's Day celebrations and more. It is a beautiful park but in need of the above-mentioned upgrades and more trees.

#### **City Complex     204 North Brandt Ave.**

**Condition:** This multi-purpose complex was developed beginning in the spring of 1988 with site improvement to 9 acres of City-owned property. It includes four ball fields, some playground equipment and a trail around the ball fields. There is a need for lighting to more fully utilize the complex and the ball fields. An upgraded concession stand that would meet codes is also needed.

The City and local organizations in Fosston desire to provide a comprehensive recreational area that will be utilized by residents and visitors of all ages. The complex is part of the overall plan that includes development of a historic/cultural site in Melland Park

by the Fosston Heritage Center and landscaping on the Fosston hospital/nursing home campus. These properties are located next to the complex.

Long-range plans include connecting the three sites with a pedestrian/bike/ski multi-purpose trail and signs to provide a multi-use area for all ages.

The Capital Improvement Plan includes the following items: remodeling and upgrading restrooms; tractor-mower with 62" mower and front-end loader; upgrade fields with agri-lime; install hockey rink; install tennis courts; upgrade softball dugouts with safety fence; lighting for softball fields.

**Function:** This park is well-used by the community with several hundred ball players and teams throughout the summer and fall seasons. Many children participate through the recreation department programs (ages 5 - 15 yrs. old) in the summer and also the hockey program during the winter months.



**Thompson Athletic Field**  
**Stephens Boulevard & Omland Ave. N. (CSAH #30)**

**Condition:** This complex has 11.5 acres and is currently undergoing renovation. New bleachers for the football field were installed in October, 1998. In May, 1999 new sod was put on the infield for the baseball diamond, the dugouts were rebuilt, and a batting cage was installed. A new facility containing a press box, concession and bathroom was constructed along with improvements to the infield fence, drainage, and a new set of bleachers behind the backstop.

**Function:** This is a school-owned facility that is used for baseball, football and track.

**Mittun Park**  
**Second Street Southeast & Hillestad Ave.**

**Condition:** This park includes approximately 0.8 acres and has a limited amount of new playground equipment. The equipment is still functional and safe but should be replaced soon.

**Function:** This is a school-owned facility that is used as a playground.

**Melland Park**  
**County Highway #1 & U.S. Highway #2**

**Condition:** This site contains the East Polk Heritage Center (Heritage House and Log Cabin), the Veteran's Memorial, the Wayside Chapel, public restrooms and some playground equipment and includes approximately 3 acres. The Veteran's Memorial has been completed with 175 paver stones installed with the names of armed forces veterans engraved in the stones.

Approximately 50 trees are to be planted at this site. All elements of this park are in good condition.



Additional upgrades such as surfaced walking trails are planned for the future as funding becomes available.

**Function:**  
This is a city-owned park for public enjoyment.

**Medical Facilities**

**First Care Services**  
**900 Hilligoss Boulevard Southeast**

First Care Services, an integrated rural healthcare organization, includes Hospital, Nursing Home, Home Health Care, Hospice and Clinic services. The not-for-profit organization employs over 200 people.

Services offered are:

**Major Hospital Services**

Emergency Care  
Medical Care for all ages  
Coronary Care  
Obstetrics  
Surgery  
Orthopedics  
Extended Care (Swing Bed)  
Respite

**Surgical Services**

General Surgery  
Orthopedic Surgery  
Ophthalmology (eye procedures)  
Urology  
ENT (Ear/Nose/Throat procedures)  
Podiatry

**Ambulance-Advanced Life Support**

**Long Term Care**

50 bed skilled nursing home  
Adult Day Care

Assisted Living

Home Health and Hospice

Fitness/Wellness Center

Support Services

Physical Therapy  
Occupational Therapy  
Respiratory Therapy  
Clinic  
Radiology  
Laboratory  
Cardiac Rehab  
Pulmonary Rehab  
Vascular Rehab  
Chemotherapy  
Diabetes Education  
Wound Care Specialist  
Pain Management

**Hospital**      ***900 Hilligoss Boulevard SE***

Condition: The First Care Medical Services building was built in 1961 and includes 25,297 sq.ft. A facility renovation was completed in 1998. The building is block and brick walls with metal studs and rafters. A 10,000 sq. ft addition of an outpatient wing and surgery center was added in 2003.

Function: The hospital has 43 beds and 7 bassinets. One Physician Assistant, one Midwife/Nurse Practitioner (dually certified) and one Nurse Practitioner/Certified Wound Care Nurse are employed by the hospital, as well as, office staff, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, nurses aides, lab and radiology technicians, social worker, certified nurse specialists in diabetes, chemotherapy and wound care and therapists.

The organization initiated teleradiology in 2004 and is now offering telemedicine visits for specialist consults and follow-up.

**Nursing Home**  
***900 Hilligoss Boulevard SE***

Condition: The nursing home was built in 1973 and has 22,771 sq.ft. A facility renovation was completed in 1998 and the building is block and brick walls with metal studs and rafters.

Function: There are 50 beds with an occupancy rate exceeding 95% annually. Services include long term care with skilled nursing, Adult Day Care and Assisted Living. Licensed staff include: registered and licensed practical nurses, nursing assistants, Occupational and Physical Therapists, a Dietician and activities staff.

**Prairie Pines Community Housing**  
***Hilligoss Boulevard SE***

Condition: This 20 unit assisted-care living facility was built in 2005 in cooperation with the City of Fosston.

Function: The 20 unit complex provides senior housing with services. Advantages to the senior housing are: medical care close by, staff available 24 hours a day, exercise program, activities and spiritual programs, planned activities, meals, laundry, housekeeping services and more.

**Home Health and Hospice** provides services in a 30 to 50 mile radius of Fosston to people in their homes. Services are available to those who are homebound and those suffering from terminal illness. Telehome care services have been available to patients since 2003.

**Innovis Health Clinic 102 Sather Drive**

Condition: The building is leased from First Care Medical Services and was built in 1993 of block and brick walls with wood rafters. It has a total square footage of 8,100.

Function: Three physicians and one physician assistant are on staff at this location providing Family Practice, OB, Pediatric and Geriatric services. Visiting physicians provide oncology, orthopedics, urology, surgery, cardiology, ENT and podiatry.

## **Schools**

**Elementary School**      ***700 East First Street***

Condition: Magelssen Elementary School was built in 1952 with four classrooms added in 1968. The structure is made of brick and was renovated and additions built in 1996. The additions consisted of a new media center, gymnasium, band and choir room, 2 new classrooms, computer lab, speech therapy room and offices. The building meets ADA requirements and no further remodeling is needed.

Function: This school provides class rooms for 361 students in grades K - 6. The professional staff number 31 and there are 22 paraprofessionals including aides, cooks, and custodians. The classroom student/teacher ratio is 22:1. Special education programs include speech, MMI, EBD, and SLD. There are also a PE and a Music specialist. Head Start, ECFE and ECSE are also housed in the elementary school. The building is not at capacity and could accommodate another 90-100 students.

## **High School 301 East First Street**



Condition: Fosston High School was originally built in 1913 with a small portion of this building remaining today. The facility includes 1962, 1984 and 1996-97 additions. The most recent addition includes a new media center, art room, health room, English room, Special Education department, gymnasium, computer lab and offices. The building meets ADA requirements and no further remodeling is necessary.

Function: There are 348 students in grades 7 - 12 in this facility. The High School employs 34 professional staff, and 24 support staff including paraprofessionals, cooks and custodians. The classroom student/teacher ratio is 16:1. Special education programs include Speech, MMI, EBD, and SLD. They offer a wide range of extra curricular activities including music, athletics, drama and other organizations. The present facility could accommodate growth of 100- 120 students.

In addition to the regular high school curriculum, the High School is also a member of a vocational class consortium, as well as, a participant in the College in High School Program where students are eligible to receive college credit upon completion of approved courses.

## **SECTION III: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A Visioning Session was held on May 16, 2007. Approximately 45 people attended and helped identify Fosston's challenges and assets. The results of these meetings are summarized below.

During the visioning session, participants were asked to work in small groups. Four different exercises were given to them, one to each group. These exercises all revolved around different people looking at Fosston as a potential place to live. The four groups of people considering Fosston as a home were: an elderly widow with a low income; a young, single professional male; a young couple with three small children; and a newly retired, higher income couple. The groups were asked to list the reasons these people should make Fosston their home. After finishing these exercises, the groups reported their findings to the entire group.

In the second exercise, the groups were asked to report why this person or people *should not* move to Fosston. This was more difficult and required some critical thinking on the part of the participants.

After all of the assets and challenges were written down for all to review, each person was asked to prioritize the top three assets they felt were most important to Fosston and then the top three challenges they felt were the most important ones facing Fosston today. After this was completed, their priority issues were tabulated and the top issues were presented to the participants.

The top *challenges* as seen by the participants were:

- Lack of good paying jobs
- Taxes are higher (than surrounding area)
- Streets are in disrepair
- Local support is needed for businesses
- No retail competition
- Limited affordable housing
- School programs are being cut
- Volunteers are aging (lack of new volunteers)
- Lack of social opportunities for young adults

### **Assets:**

The participants ranked the following as the top assets for Fosston:

- Healthcare-(hospital, clinic, nursing homes)
- Clean town, streets (well-kept community)
- Rural setting
- City Bus
- School
- Good infrastructure
- Library Arts Center
- Civic Center (pool)
- Retail stores
- Churches
- Heritage Center
- Volunteerism

A full report of the Visioning Session results can be found in Appendix B.

### **Focus Group Meeting:**

After the results for the Visioning Session were evaluated, a Focus Group meeting was held with the STAR Committee and Fosston Economic Development Authority (FEDA). The following exercise was completed by this group:

*"It's the year 2020 and Midwest Life has just named Fosston one of the best small towns in the upper Midwest. They're sending a photographer and journalist to do a story for next month's magazine issue."*

The group was then asked to answer the following questions:

- What do you want them to see?
- Who do you want them to talk to?
- What pictures do you want them to take?
- What do you want them to hear?

There was lively discussion and the results of that meeting can be found in Appendix C. The group was asked to develop a list of about five general

goals they would like to see Fosston work towards. The following goals were a result of this meeting.

*Goal #1: Support and maintain a great healthcare system in Fosston.*

*Goal #2: Promote and expand the industrial base.*

*Goal #3: Support and maintain an outstanding educational system in Fosston.*

*Goal #4: Provide a wide range of Housing Options.*

*Goal #5: Promote Fosston as a place to live with a high quality of place.*

From these goals the group worked on more detailed ways that the City could begin to realize these goals. Additional goals were added and updated from the 1998 Comprehensive Plan. Policies were developed from this list and the full list of goals and policies can be found in Section IV: Goals and Policies.

### *2006 Community Survey*

The City of Fosston conducted a survey of residents in 2006. In general, the responses reflected a high rate of satisfaction, with a few suggested areas of improvement.

Survey respondents rated Fosston a great place to live, raise a family or to retire. Almost 88% rated the quality of life in Fosston as either "excellent" or "good." About 81% rated the City as either an "excellent" or "good" place to raise children and 80% said that it was either an excellent or good place to retire.

City employees also earned a very high rating from survey respondents.

Some of the areas that needed improvement included: job creation; city park maintenance/equipment; leisure time opportunities; shopping opportunities; water quality; affordable housing; drug use; taxes; and services for youth. The full survey can be found at City Hall or downloaded from their website.

The information from the survey coincided closely with the results of the visioning session and other public input that was received.

### *Summary*

Overall, people in the community are enthusiastically proud of their community facilities including the school, health care facilities and government services. They feel that Fosston offers a high quality of life and is a good place to raise a family and also, a good place for seniors to retire. They understand that in order to continue to be successful, the community needs to grow and projects need to be developed, undertaken and completed. To remain status quo would mean to become stagnant and the residents of Fosston recognize this.

The community recognizes the need for increased industry and retail and service-businesses. A challenge facing the community is providing enough diversified jobs to retain their young people. At present, many youth leave the community for further education and then move to larger communities that offer a more diverse range of higher-paying job opportunities.

The community is committed to providing opportunities for people to move back to Fosston to live, work and play.

#### **Fosston Community Vision Statement:**

*Fosston is the premier community for families in every stage of life. It has a broad range of services, including primary shopping opportunities, an outstanding education system, quality health care, a range of affordable housing options and a broad array of arts, cultural and recreational amenities. It is a community that everyone takes responsibility for - community involvement by all is expected and encouraged. Leaders from other communities of similar size throughout Minnesota are drawn to Fosston to learn "the Fosston way."*

## Section IV: Goals and Policies

Fosston's goals are an expression of the direction they would like to see the community work towards for the future. These goals and policies are the result of public input from the Issues Forum and also small group meetings with key stakeholders from the community, working to further define them. They are ideas that have been worked on and refined to arrive at goals with accompanying policy statements.

These goals and policy statements have been designed to assist elected and appointed officials, as well as, staff in their management of city government and in working toward the desired future identified by members of the community.

The terms, *goals and policies*, can be interpreted and applied in various ways. For purposes of clarity and common understanding, definitions follow for words used in this section.

A **goal** is a statement of the Community's desired objectives that the community officially agrees to strive to achieve through various methods, including the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. **Policies** are the methods of action that will be officially adopted to follow in order to implement the community goals and the Comprehensive Plan.

The goals and policies will indicate the roles and responsibilities for the City of Fosston. A number of terms are defined below indicating the City's responsibility:

- Create:** To bring about the desired goal, and may involve City financial assistance. City staff is usually involved in all levels from planning to implementation.
- Continue:** To follow past and present procedures to maintain the desired goal. Again, City staff is usually involved in all levels from planning to implementation.
- Encourage:** To foster the goal through City policies. May involve City financial assistance.
- Endorse:** To subscribe to the desired goal by supportive City policies.
- Enhance:** To improve current goals to a desired state through the use of policies and City staff at all levels of planning. This may include City financial support.
- Identify:** To catalog and confirm resource or desired item(s) through the use of City staff and actions.
- Maintain:** To keep in good condition the desired state of affairs through the use of City policies and staff. Financial assistance should be provided if necessary.



<i>Prevent:</i>	To stop the described event through the use of appropriate City policies, staff, action and finances, if needed.
<i>Promote:</i>	To advance the desired state through the use of City policies and staff activity at all levels of planning.
<i>Protect:</i>	To guard against a deterioration of the desired state through the use of City policies, staff and if needed, financial assistance.
<i>Provide:</i>	To take the lead role in supplying the needed financial and staff support to achieve the desired goal. The City is typically involved in all aspects from planning to implementation to maintenance.
<i>Recognize:</i>	To acknowledge the identified state of affairs and take actions or implement policies to preserve, or change them.
<i>Strengthen:</i>	To improve and reinforce the desired goal through the use of City policies, staff and financial assistance, if needed.
<i>Support:</i>	To supply the needed staff support, policies, and financial assistance, if needed, at all levels to achieve the desired goal.
<i>Sustain:</i>	To uphold the desired state through City policies, financial resources, and staff action to achieve the desired goal.
<i>Work:</i>	To cooperate and act in a manner through the use of City staff, actions, policies to create the desired goal.

The following are the goals with accompanying policies to provide strategies to realize the objectives of the community. Each of the main categories: *Economic Development, Housing, Public Facilities/Infrastructure, Land Use, Transportation and Quality of Place* includes goals and policies. They are in no particular order as far as priority as the city is encouraged to work on their goals as they can and as opportunity arises.

**Economic Development Goals:**

**Goal #1: *Expand the industrial base in the community.***

Policies:

1. Promote clean industry such as satellite offices of larger firms, technology-based industry, etc.
2. Promote industry that develops, produces and/or utilizes alternative energy sources.
3. Continue to actively recruit and expand industry in the industrial park through the use of programs such as tax-increment financing, grants, JOBZ and local initiatives, etc.
4. Expand and develop additional industrial park land within the city limits and in areas adjacent to the railroad tracks and highway.



5. Support existing local industry and assist them with their expansion plans.
6. Promote the availability of the business incubator as an education/resource center.
7. Continue to encourage private enterprise and explore technology advances available to local industry and business.
8. Develop new industrial/office park land with state-of-the-art utilities extended to lots for development.

**Goal #2: *Work together as a region to develop a labor force and resources to attract and fund new businesses.***

Policies:

1. Work with the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), the Northwest Regional Development Commission, and other resources available on surveying area businesses to determine labor needs and future plans.
2. Continue to contact larger corporations and alumni to determine and foster interest in developing and expanding their businesses in Fosston.
3. Work with the Fosston School district to ensure that students are learning job skills necessary to enter the labor force. Promote school to work programs that train students for the local and regional job market.
4. Continue to promote Fosston with the area youth, alumni and retired persons as a place to live and work.
5. Develop a recruiting/hospitality committee or task force to showcase what Fosston has to offer prospective businesses and employees.
6. Host a Job Fair periodically.

**Goal #3: *Promote the business district and community.***

Policies:

1. Identify through updated surveys what consumers in the Fosston area want or need.
2. Promote and support the businesses identified as needed and wanted in Fosston.
3. Promote and support entrepreneurs and new businesses.
4. Continue to maintain and upgrade the business district through the use of programs such as tax-increment financing, grants, and local initiatives, etc.
5. Support local organizations in their efforts to promote and beautify the business district in Fosston.



6. Apply for additional funding for the Revolving Loan Fund to continue offering low-interest loans to businesses in Fosston.

### **Housing Goals:**

#### **Goal #1: *Provide housing for all socio-economic levels.***

##### Policies:

1. Form a Housing Committee to address housing needs in the Fosston area.
2. Update the comprehensive housing study and survey to identify and prioritize housing needs.
3. Continue to work with local and regional agencies to develop housing through available resources such as TIF, tax abatements, MHFA, etc.
4. Provide increased housing choices to encourage the sale of homes to accommodate both seniors and families.
5. Continue to work with local health care agencies to identify needs for an increasing senior population.
6. Continue to periodically review and update city zoning ordinances to ensure housing development that meets Fosston's vision of a well-maintained community.
7. Continue to work with local organizations to maintain and increase city services available for seniors such as: city bus service, churches, health care, senior centers, cultural and recreational opportunities, etc.
8. Encourage the development of apartment buildings to increase housing stock of homes for first time home buyers and families.
9. Work with regional and state agencies to identify and rehabilitate or demolish housing as needed.
10. Ensure an adequate number of buildable lots exist for new housing development.

### **Public Facilities/Infrastructure Goals:**

#### **Goal #1: *Continue to maintain and improve public facilities.***

##### Policies:

1. Provide a budget to develop a Capital Improvement Program to identify current and future priority infrastructure needs.
2. Continue to provide support for excellent community services such as parks and recreation, library, etc.
3. Support and work with local health care organizations to ensure maintenance of quality services and in identifying future needs.
4. Work with existing and prospective industries to ensure viability of sewer and water systems for current use and to accommodate moderate growth.



5. Continue communication with MnDOT for coordination of utility and road construction projects through the city limits.

**Goal #2: *Identify land to provide for development of residential, commercial and industrial areas.***

Policies:

1. Review city policies and ordinances to ensure the affordable extension of utilities to development areas within city boundaries through the implementation of fair and cost-effective assessment policies and zoning ordinances.
2. If land is identified for annexation, form a joint powers committee to work with townships on development areas surrounding Fosston to avoid duplication of services and to provide cost-efficient government services.
3. Work to provide infrastructure ahead of development for the orderly growth and development of commercial, industrial and residential neighborhoods.

**Goal #3: *Develop and support a technology based infrastructure.***

Policies:

1. Work closely with local, private utility companies to ensure efficient and orderly development of technology infrastructure development.
2. Communicate with and involve local business, industry, service providers, schools, government and other agencies in the decision-making process to fully utilize technology resources.
3. Continue to provide and evaluate affordable basic cable TV service while also encouraging private entrepreneurs who may provide increased affordable services to residents.

**Land Use Goals:**

**Goal # 1: *Support the orderly growth of residential areas that are served by city utilities or where utilities are easily accessible.***

Policies:

1. Continue to support in-fill development of buildable residential lots already served by city utilities.
2. Promote new residential development in the Fairlawn Park subdivision and northwest section of the city.
3. Support the annexation of property abutting land in the northeast quadrant of the city to the section line between sections 3 and 34 and extend city utilities to these properties.



**Goal #2: Promote the orderly development of land for residential, industrial and commercial development in areas identified as growth areas.**

Policies:

1. Develop a future plan to show what areas could be annexed (growth areas) and what lands would be preserved for agricultural use by discouraging development at urban densities.
2. Maintain City policy requiring properties served by public utilities be located within the City.

**Goal #3: Promote and expand the industrial base.**

Policies:

1. Develop the land to the east and west of the existing industrial park – including platting and extension of utilities.
2. Consider the development of additional industrial land with rail access to the South of Highway 2 by the potato warehouse for industry requiring rail service via a rail spur.
3. Develop additional industrial-zoned land for an office park/light industrial and commercial area along U.S. Highway #2.
4. Work with existing industry to determine expansion needs and to identify available land.

**Goal #4: Enhance the community's character and appearance.**

Policies:

1. Rezone residential areas on both sides of Highway #2 and develop commercially.
2. Explore working with MnDOT on Landscape Partnership program to provide planning and financial assistance for Highway #2 corridor landscape improvements.

**Transportation Goals:**

**Goal #1: Provide and maintain a safe and efficient transportation system.**

Policies:

1. Identify high-traffic roads in city limits and request traffic count assistance from MnDOT: Review traffic counts on Highway #2 to determine if 40 mph speed limit could be moved east to the city limits.
2. Review signage along the highway for aesthetics and conformance with Fosston's zoning ordinance and MnDOT regulations.



3. Develop a multi-use trail linking residential and recreational areas of the City.
4. Work on upgrading existing sidewalks.
5. Work with MnDOT on safer pedestrian crossings on MN Hwy #2.
6. Continue to support the City bus service.
7. Continue to upgrade and maintain the city airport and property.

**Quality of Place Goals:**

***Goal #1: Support and maintain a great healthcare system in Fosston.***

Policies:

1. Support regular communication between healthcare administrators and city leaders.
2. Support First Care in their efforts to provide a full-range of services, including adding specialists.
3. Continue to work with healthcare providers in providing housing with services that are adequate for area needs.

***Goal #2: Support and maintain an outstanding educational system in Fosston.***

Policies:

1. Work with the school on identifying community education needs in Fosston.
2. Support the adult and continuing education efforts of the school by actively participating on boards and in classes.
3. Work with the school to ensure career-opportunity training continues.

***Goal #3: Promote Fosston as a place to live with a high quality of place.***

Policies:

1. Review city parks and update with new and expanded playground equipment.
2. Provide parks and recreational programs that are handicapped accessible.
3. Ensure parks and recreation programs include amenities for all ages.



4. Continue to work on a multi-use trail for walking, skiing, and biking to connect recreational and residential areas.
5. Work with local clubs and organizations to sponsor an Adopt-A-Park program.
6. Continue to support, maintain and improve the Arts Center including the library and community theater.
7. Promote tourism and Fosston as a place to live, play and visit.

The following sections contain implementation plans for each of the following areas: *Land Use/Community Facilities; Housing; and Community/Economic Development*. The background information, land use inventory and goals and policies that were developed were used in developing this section and the corresponding implementation plans. The plans include strategies to promote the goals and policies.





## **Section V: Land Use/Community Facilities Plan**

This section uses the information from the land use inventory and the review of Community Facilities. The first area is *Land Use* and a section on *Community Facilities* follows.

### **Land Use Plan**

The City of Fosston encompasses 1.85 square miles of land. Within this area, many recreational opportunities exist with Berge-Stafford Park, the City Complex with its sports fields, the school Sports Complex, Civic Center, Melland Park and others. Fosston is an attractive community, with small-town charm.

The existing use of land within Fosston was inventoried and future needs were reviewed. The result of this is the Land Use Plan, which as the name implies, lays out a plan for future use of land. Each category of land use (residential, commercial, public, industrial and agricultural) is reviewed in terms of future needs. The land use map is then changed to reflect the future needs of the community, resulting in the Future Land Use Map.

#### **Planning Provisions:**

Once the Comprehensive Plan, which includes the land use plan, is adopted and implemented, the following provisions should be followed to realize the community's plans and visions.

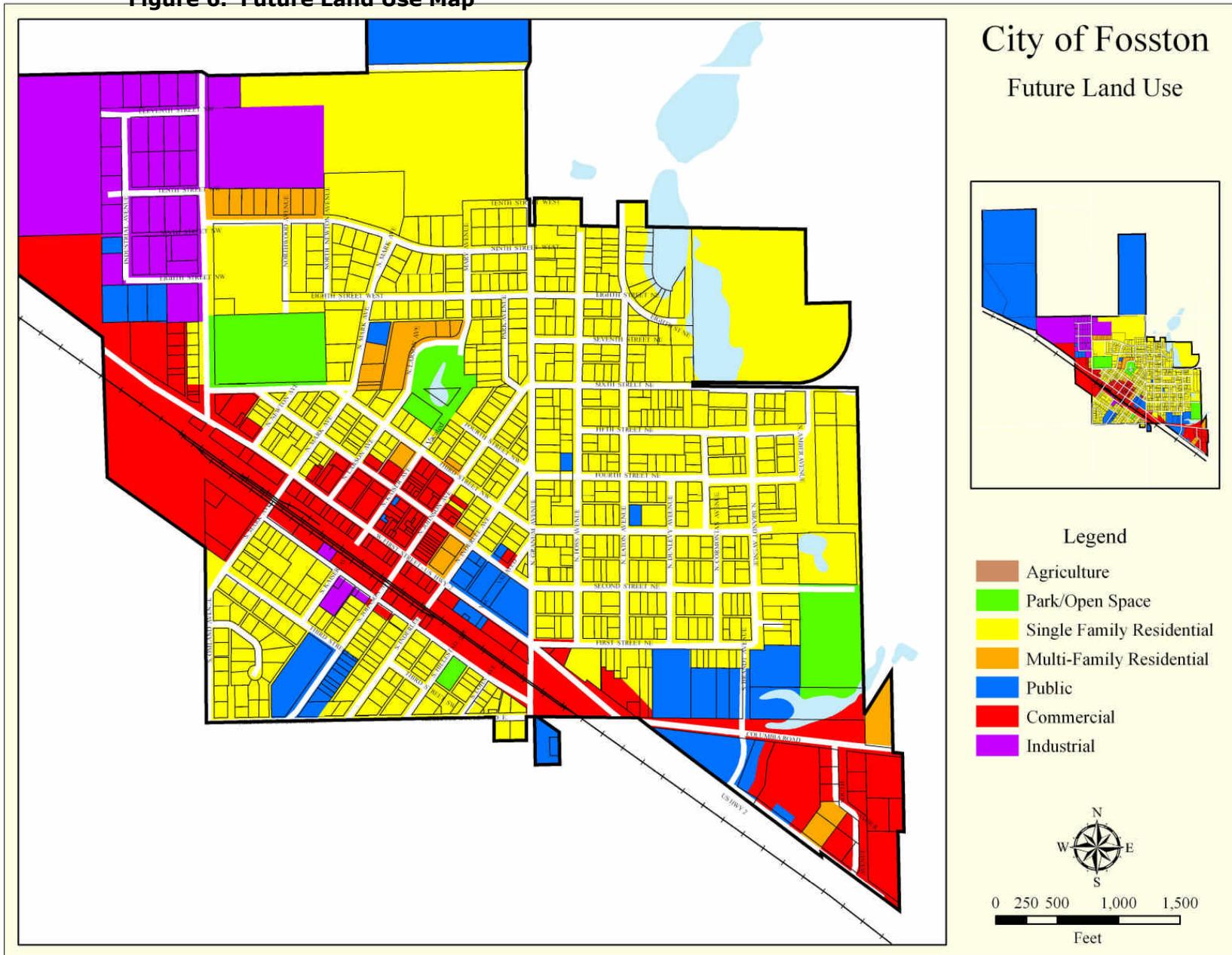
- The Planning Commission should be assigned the task of overseeing the Comprehensive Plan and specifically, the Land Use Plan and assist in carrying out the policies and working towards the goals as identified in Section IV. Each year, the Commission should present a state of the Comprehensive Plan to the City Council.
- The zoning map and zoning ordinance should follow the land use plan or have provisions for

future zoning in accordance to the plan. (This is currently being updated in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan update.)

- To accommodate growth and development, the extension of sewer and water utilities should be addressed and extended to all areas of the city.
- Additional, collector streets should be planned for areas of future development to accommodate ease of access to all areas of the city. An official map should be developed to ensure future development of roads and to deter building over future roadways.
- Extension of utilities to areas outside the city limits should be reviewed and these areas considered for annexation. The City should work cooperatively with surrounding townships to accomplish orderly annexation for these growth areas when they are needed.
- In-fill development should be encouraged where possible, to take advantage of existing sewer and water utilities and to provide cost-effective development for the future.
- Consider adopting the building code to ensure quality residential and commercial construction. The building code can serve as protection for home and business owners and also maintain and enhance property values.

This land use plan will focus on increasing residential, commercial and industrial development opportunities while maintaining the existing uses within the developed areas of the city. It builds upon the established land use pattern and identified compatible uses for future development. The future land use map is found on *Figure 9* on the following page. The plan and strategies for accomplishing this are outlined in the following pages.

**Figure 6. Future Land Use Map**



## Residential

Fosston is a community that stresses a high quality of life for raising families and attracting seniors and retired persons. Existing residential development is one of the most important factors of this quality of life.

The residential neighborhoods in Fosston include a mix of single-family and multi-family housing styles and a manufactured housing park within the community. Most of the properties are very well-maintained and neighborhoods are served with paved streets, curb and gutter. City utilities of sanitary sewer and water also exist in all neighborhoods. Commercial development has not been allowed to encroach into neighborhoods for the majority of the city. There are few vacant lots that exist that are available for additional, in-fill housing.

Maintaining existing residential areas and encouraging future development are important factors for maintaining the quality of life in Fosston. The community focuses on its good school system and health-care facilities in its ability to attract families and retired persons to the area. This further strengthens the need for increased residential areas to maintain the strong school system and also, the excellent health care facilities available in Fosston.

Much of the residential development consists of single-family housing, however, several multi-family apartment buildings exist in the northern half of the community. More apartment buildings could be built to house seniors and income-eligible families. In-fill development should be encouraged where possible to take advantage of existing sewer and water lines. Housing in need of maintenance should be addressed through the zoning ordinance and building codes.

Non-conforming commercial uses existing within residential neighborhoods should be identified and phased-out over time.

Preserving the residential character of neighborhoods will strengthen and increase the livability of these areas, in addition to protecting property values.

The roadway system should be reviewed and platted streets that are not developed should either be developed or vacated. Streets that are substandard should be upgraded to city street standards. Where unbuildable lots exist, abutting property owners should be encouraged to purchase these lots and maintain them as open space.

### ***New Single-Family Residential***

In the future land use plan, residential land use is expanded to approximately 36% of all land use.

This compares with 30% for existing residential land use. Land in the north end of Fosston that is currently agricultural has been identified for future residential development.

The Fairlawn Park subdivision includes 27 residential lots on the old fairground property that is ready for development.

### ***New Multi-Family Residential***

The Fosston community has identified multi-family housing as a need also. Housing for seniors and families in both single-family and multi-family (apartment) developments is desired.

Performance standards found in the zoning ordinance regarding off-street parking, landscaping, green space and setbacks should be reviewed to ensure high quality development.

### ***Residential Implementation Strategies:***

#### ✓ **Encourage Development of Existing Lots or Property Already Served by City Utilities**

**What:** Create a list of vacant properties on city utilities. Strategies could include an incentive for people building new housing within the city limits. For unplatted property, enforce subdivision regulations for platting. Educate real estate firms and surveyors about subdivision regulations. Continue to work with realtors and property owners to submit lists of vacant residential lots for sale and send to the city office on a regular basis.

**Who:** City staff, Planning Commission, property owners and local real estate companies.

**When:** Short-term.

#### ✓ **Identify Property for Future Residential Development**

**What:** Identify land that could be developed for residential use. Develop a plan to extend city utilities to the property and work with local developers to plat the property.

**Who:** City staff, Planning Commission, property owner and local developers.

**When:** Mid-term.

✓ **Zone Areas as Single Family and Multi-Family Residential**

What: Zone the designated areas on the land use plan as single-family and multi-family residential. Areas in the northwest section of the city that are currently used for agricultural purposes have been identified for future residential development.

Who: Planning Commission and City Council.

When: Short-term.

Who: Planning Commission, City Council.

When: Short-term.

## **Industrial**

The city supports the continued maintenance of the existing industrial uses. The continued upkeep of these facilities is important to the image of the community. As these uses are located near residential areas, buffer zones should be considered to assist in the protection of abutting property values and the quality of residential neighborhoods.

Industry consists of a variety of businesses from Minnesota Dehydrated Vegetables to the Polk County Solid Waste Management incinerator and recycling center to Northern Food and Dairy.

Expanding the industrial base with clean industry is a priority for the community. Few lots are vacant in the current industrial park but land has been acquired adjacent to the existing industrial park and also along the railroad track for future industrial expansion.

In the future land use plan, Industrial land becomes 9% of all land use compared to a current land use of 8%. Some of the vacant industrial land is counted as occupied industrial land in the future land use plan, thus adding acreage to the future plan. Also, new industrial land has been identified to the west and east of the existing industrial park.

### Industrial Implementation Strategies:

✓ **Zone Property Identified as Industrial**

What: Promoting new industry is seen as a priority for the community. Prior to this, land should be available and properly zoned for industrial use. It is in the best interests of the city if land exists that is already zoned Industrial and has utilities available to the property line.

Who: City Council and Planning Commission.

When: Short-term.

✓ **Develop New Industrial Park Land**

What: Platting the property and extending city utilities is crucial to attracting new industry. The City owns 44 acres west of the existing Industrial Park and should pursue funding to develop this property.

Who: City staff, FEDA, Planning Commission, City Council and local and state agencies (DEED,

## **Commercial**

The commercial district has been identified as an area to promote and develop. There are a number of vacant buildings, some in disrepair, that are available for new businesses. The community should actively pursue options for enticing new businesses to purchase and fill these buildings.

### **Existing Commercial**

Fosston's commercial district extends along U.S. Highway #2 from one end of the community to the other. A newer commercial district exists north of the highway on the south, southeast edge of town. A more traditional, downtown business district exists on both sides of the highway in the center of town and extends for a couple blocks northeast of the Highway.

The downtown commercial area is a retail center serving local and area residents. Some service-type commercial such as the post office, City offices, County Social Services, bank, etc. also exist in this area.

### **New Commercial**

Land has been identified along U.S. Highway #2 on the north side of the highway that can be zoned commercial. It is currently residential but appears to be transitioning to commercial.

### Commercial Implementation Strategies:

✓ **Zone Property Identified as Commercial**

What: New commercial areas identified on the land use plan should be zoned as commercial to accommodate the transition. Areas along U.S. Highway #2 and in the downtown area should be zoned according to the plan to begin the transition from residential or agricultural to commercial.

USDA, NW MN Foundation, etc.)

When: Short-term.

## Agricultural

On the existing land use map, 7% of all land is used agriculturally. However, at the present time, Fosston has no land that is zoned agricultural. The land that is being used for agricultural purposes has been identified for residential and industrial use in the land use plan and will be included in those districts for the updated zoning map.

On the future land use map, agricultural land decreases to 0% of total land use compared to 7% of existing land use. In the future plan, all of the agricultural land has been changed to residential or industrial. Within city limits, transitioning to a more intense use is a natural and desired progression for land use.

### Agriculture Implementation Strategies:

✓ **Modify the Agricultural Land as Noted on the Land Use Plan**

What: Several agriculture areas have been identified for future residential use. It is important to zone these appropriately to accommodate the transition from agriculture to residential. The City will need to enforce subdivision regulations in all areas zoned residential that can reasonably be served by city utilities.

Who: City Council and Planning Commission

When: Short-term.

✓ **Zone Areas Identified As Agriculture**

What: In the future if land is annexed and not identified for development in the near future, it may be appropriate to zone this property agricultural when it first comes into the City. When development is imminent, it can be zoned to the desired land use at that time.

Who: City Council and Planning Commission

When: Mid-term.

## Growth Areas

Typical growth areas are areas within the City that are

anticipated to see development within the next 10-20 years and can also be areas outside of a city’s current boundaries that are experiencing development pressure and the need for city utilities. These areas are described below. The City should develop a plan for growth to ensure the efficient extension of city utilities to these areas, ahead of development. These areas are both within and outside of the current city limits. Plans for annexation should be considered to serve the areas that are currently outside of the city limits with utilities. The three areas identified have been further categorized as short and mid-term planning areas. Although no areas of development have been identified for long-term planning, the need exists to monitor development patterns closely to determine future needs.

### **Short-Term Planning (0-5 years):**

Area 1. The city has acquired additional land for Industrial use that is adjacent to the current Industrial park to the west. This land is located within the city limits and is currently used agriculturally. This area will allow for extension of utilities in a cost effective manner, keeping land costs reasonable for future industrial developers. About 44 acres is available for industrial park expansion.

Also in close proximity to this area is property directly to the east of the Industrial Park. This has also been identified as an area that could see industrial development. This area comprises approximately 18 acres. Contacting the current land owner to determine any future plans is the first step in planning the development of the area.

Area 2. Land identified as future Residential land is located inside the city limits in the northern section of town. This property is bordered on the north by a township road, on the west by N. Omland Avenue and on the east, by N. Granum Avenue. This is a piece of property that is approximately 35 acres in size. Some of the area may contain low lying land and the zoning ordinance subdivision requirements should be reviewed to prevent platting of lots in these areas. These areas could be preserved as open space but restrictions would be placed on them so building does not occur.

With the pressure for housing that the City is currently experiencing, Area 2 should become a priority for future development. Plans should be implemented to begin development in this area in the short-term, from 0 to 5 years.

### **Mid-Term Planning (5-10 years):**

Area 3. The Growth Areas described above were chosen for their ability to be served by city utilities, including; sewer, water, and paved streets. The surrounding land use patterns were also taken into

account for compatible land use.

At this time, one area outside city limits has been identified as desirable for future residential development to occur. It is an area abutting the northeast quadrant of the City to the section line between sections 3 and 34.

This area will require the extension of city utilities in order to develop residentially. Annexation of this area will be necessary as current city policy states extension of city utilities will occur only within city limits. The City should plan for this and work closely with Rosebud Township to plan for future development in this area that will coincide with development within the city limits.

If additional land should be annexed into the city and it is not scheduled for development in the near future, this land could be zoned agriculture until such time as development is imminent.

Densities in agricultural areas should remain low (one unit for five acres) so that residential development does not occur without the extension of city utilities. When residential development does occur, lots must be developed so that they can be subdivided later at urban densities (less than 1/2 acre) to prevent unplanned and inefficient development. The City should also work with Rosebud and Bransvold Townships to encourage zoning to prevent unplanned and unwanted residential development near city boundaries that may require or request city services be extended at some point in the future.

#### Growth Area Implementation Strategies:

- ✓ **Develop into the designated Growth Areas as noted in the Land Use and Growth Areas Plan.**

What: The City should develop a plan to extend utilities to the areas identified as growth areas. The Land Use Plan should be followed when plats are submitted and in planning sewer and water extensions and improvements. The plan should also be used when making orderly annexation agreements.

Who: City Council, Planning Commission.

When: Short to mid-term.

- ✓ **Develop a joint powers board with the City and Rosebud Township**

What: The City will need to work cooperatively with Rosebud Township to develop orderly annexation agreements for growth areas.

These agreements should describe the terms, including timing and the extent of any annexations in the township.

Who: City Council, Planning Commission, Rosebud Township.

When: Mid-term.

### **Other Land Use Issues -Transportation**

The existing transportation system is an integral part of the appearance and function of the City. Fosston has a system of streets and highways that provide generally good access to all areas of the city. Much of the street system in Fosston consists of a grid-like pattern, commonly found in older communities. In a few of the newer areas of town, a more suburban street layout can be found with curving roadways. Generally, good east-west and north-south access is found throughout the community.

U.S. Highway #2 runs through the City from northwest to southeast, together with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, connecting Fosston with the rest of the region and the northern part of the state, from east to west. Because these two major transportation links run parallel to each other, the community benefits from less splitting of the city into additional quadrants that would occur if the highway and rail system ran in different directions. This has enabled the city to have a minimal number of access problems throughout the city. Access to all areas across the railroad tracks is adequate for the community's needs.

One concern that was identified is regarding the existing speed limit on Highway #2 to the east city limit line. It is felt that the 40 mph speed limit should be moved further east to slow traffic entering the community at an earlier point. This had been brought to the attention of MnDOT earlier but it was felt that the traffic numbers did not warrant it. A request for a new traffic count should be made if the Council agrees that this remains a concern and should be remedied.

With an increasing senior population, special attention should be paid to the sidewalk system within the community. Many seniors require a well-maintained, even surface to walk safely on. Handicap-accessible curbing is important for the wheel-chair bound or those requiring walking devices with rollers. Ensuring that a good system exists near health-care facilities, the nursing home, assisted-care facilities and other senior residential developments should be part of a comprehensive transportation access plan.

The continued support of the city bus system is also an important aspect of transportation within and around Fosston. Again, with a large percentage of elderly, this service will remain an important part of services available to the community.

## *Transportation Recommendations*

The existing transportation system for Fosston should continue to be maintained. The capital improvement program will assist in the timely maintenance and upgrading of this system. The collector street system should be designed and developed with the appropriate traffic loads in mind for development areas. A sidewalk and bikeway system should be developed along the principal arterial and major and minor collectors in these areas. The following steps should be taken to ensure the timely maintenance of the existing transportation system.

- Continue to maintain and improve existing streets in a timely and effective manner.
- Develop and enforce streetscaping or landscaping standards for property abutting U.S. Highway # (the entrance corridor to the city).
- Work with MnDOT on landscaping plans in conjunction with their Landscape Partnership Program.
- Work with MnDOT regarding signage along U.S. Highway #2 and review current ordinances to ensure desired sign standards exist.
- Work with MnDOT on safer pedestrian crossings on U.S. Highway #2.

In addition to the steps mentioned above for maintenance of the current system, this plan recommends some improvements which were described previously in the land use section and goals and policies. These improvements include: continuing to develop and implement a capital improvements program; extending streets into growing areas of the community; and developing a sidewalk/trail system to connect residential and recreational areas.

### Transportation Implementation Strategies:

In implementing the following improvements, the City may have to work with other transportation agencies including MnDOT, Polk County highway department, and surrounding townships in order to implement the transportation strategies.

- ✓ **Continue to develop and implement the Capital Improvement Program to ensure timely maintenance and upgrading of city streets, sidewalks and trails.**

What: A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is important for the timely and efficient maintenance of existing streets, sidewalks and trails. Cost savings will be realized by budgeting for scheduled maintenance and repair. A budget for the CIP process should continue to be included that includes engineer's fees, financial planning assistance and other assistance required, as determined by the City Administrator and staff.

The plan should project needs for a five to ten year period, with annual review.

Who: City Council, Public Works, City Administrator.

When: Short term and on-going.

- ✓ **Extend Streets into Growing Areas of the Community**

What: The northwest section of the City will see Industrial and Residential growth requiring that new roads be extended in this quadrant. To ensure that this growth is adequately served by streets, right of way for street extensions should be identified and protected from development through the development of an official map. Working closely with MnDOT will ensure safe and efficient access to U.S. Highway #2.

Who: Planning Commission, Public Works, City Council, MnDOT, Polk County.

When: Mid to Long Term.

- ✓ **Develop a sidewalk/trail system linking residential and recreational areas of the City.**

What: Plans have been discussed to link the city sports complex to Melland Park and the hospital/nursing home complex with a boardwalk, pedestrian walkways and signage.

Who: Planning Commission, Park Board, Public Works, City Council and First Care Services.

When: Short term.

## Land Use Plan Summary

The following is a summary listing of the Implementation Strategies identified under each land use category. Most have been identified as short-term strategies to be implemented within three years. Many of the strategies could be implemented upon the updating of the zoning ordinance and zoning map. Others could be annual projects assigned to the Planning Commission to implement.

### Implementation Strategies Summary:

#### Residential:

1. Encourage Development of Existing Lots or Property Already Served by City Utilities
2. Identify Property for Future Residential Development
3. Zone Areas As Single Family and Multi-Family Residential

#### Commercial:

1. Zone Property Identified As Commercial

#### Industrial:

1. Zone Property Identified as Industrial
2. Develop New Industrial Park Land

#### Agricultural:

1. Modify the Agricultural Land as Noted on the Land Use Plan
2. Zone Areas Identified as Agriculture

#### Growth Areas:

1. Develop into the Designated Growth Areas as noted in the Land Use and Growth Area Plan
2. Develop a joint powers board with the City and Rosebud Township

#### Other Land Use Issues-Transportation:

1. Continue to develop and implement the Capital Improvement Program to ensure timely maintenance and upgrading of city streets, sidewalks and trails.
2. Extend Streets into Growing Areas of the Community.
3. Develop a sidewalk/trail system linking residential and recreational areas of the City.

The Planning Commission should review these strategies, together with the entire Land Use Plan and chart their progress. Regular meetings should be held to work towards implementation of the strategies.

The City Council should use the Land Use Plan to guide them in policy and decision-making. An annual review of the Land Use Plan should be accomplished to ensure consistency with the plan and zoning ordinance, and to make amendments whenever necessary.

From the information gathered at the public forum and small-group meetings, it was clear that residents are proud of their community. They like the small-town friendly atmosphere of Fosston. They are proud of their school system and health-care facilities and have a strong desire to maintain and improve upon, the quality of life they enjoy so much in Fosston.

This land use plan for Fosston outlines some strategies to follow to guide development and maintain what already exists. No plan is foolproof but the first step is to develop the plan, implement the plan, and then follow it. With the commitment of the leaders and citizens of the community, land use regulations can help guide a community toward their goals. While sometimes a slow process, progress can be seen, especially as the city develops and grows. Conformity to zoning ordinances and building codes will have a positive effect on the appearance of the community and contribute to the pride of the residents. Implementation of this Plan and enforcement of city ordinances are the key. Education of, and support from, the community will contribute to the success of the Plan.

## **Community Facilities Plan**

Community or public facilities include parks and open space, governmental buildings and facilities, schools, medical facilities, and the infrastructure which serves the community. These are usually financed by the city, county, state or federal government agencies. Many times they are the focus of the community such as parks, sports centers, and schools or they may provide essential services such as fire, police, public works, and medical. These community facilities are important resources to maintain for community image and support. Their location in the community is equally important and new facilities should be planned with this in mind. In the *Background* section of the Plan, a *Community Facilities* chapter lists the community facilities, their condition, function, location and needs.

In 2006, Fosston was designated a "Fit City" by Minnesota's Governor Pawlenty. The city earned the

recognition by making a commitment to support and encourage its residents to be more physically active and to improve the overall health of the community.

The City's commitment includes:

- ❖ Developing and maintaining a cohesive system of parks and trails, incorporating accessible neighborhood parks.
- ❖ Supporting recreation programs that encourage active living.
- ❖ Ensuring that physical activity facilities (youth/senior centers, trails, etc.) are accessible and affordable.
- ❖ Introducing active living issues, such as walkable communities, into public dialogue.
- ❖ Increasing measures for pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

Planned Improvements/Recommendations:

In general, community facilities are in good shape in Fosston. These should continue to be maintained at their present locations. City offices and facilities appear to be in good shape for the most part and are able to accommodate the current number of employees and services. The School District has made recent improvements and additions to accommodate current and future needs. Medical facilities in Fosston serve the area well with acceptable occupancy rates.

Several areas were identified that either have improvements or additions planned or are in need of improvements, and most are included in the city's Capitol Improvement Program (CIP). A more in depth discussion of community facilities and needs can be found in the *Community Facilities* chapter. A summary of these needs are listed below:

City Services/Facilities:

- 1) Wastewater treatment ponds are at maximum hydraulic capacity. Future improvements may include a fourth treatment pond. Engineer's estimates are approximately \$2,200,000. A mechanical treatment plant is also a consideration.
- 2) Electric utility improvements include upgrading underground power cable, new utility service truck, industrial electrical feeder switch and an emergency generator for City Hall.
- 3) Natural gas utility improvements include upgrading the utility service truck.
- 4) The Public Works Maintenance Facility is currently at maximum capacity for equipment and vehicles. Additional space will be needed shortly. The CIP includes a new garbage truck, one-ton truck for brush

pickup, building renovation, new street sweeper and a snow-plow truck.

- 5) The Airport has a CIP in place with several major improvements planned: crack repair; turnaround expansion; snow removal equipment storage building; snow plow truck; paved taxiway construction; airport signing; perimeter fencing; skid steer; crosswind runway; a new multi-plane hangar (80' x80').
- 6) The Civic Center CIP includes the following items: recreation department pickup; ceramic tile for lobby walls; replace carpet in office, lobby and glass room; replace backboards in gym.
- 7) The Parks CIP includes: new tractor mower; upgrading the pond at Berge-Stafford Park including cleaning the pond, placing fabric and rock on the banks for erosion control and installing a storm drain diversion pipe from 3<sup>rd</sup> St. NW.
- 8) The City Complex CIP includes remodeling and upgrading restrooms; tractor mower with 62" mower and front-end loader; upgrade fields with agri-lime; install hockey rink; install tennis courts; upgrade softball dugouts with safety fence; and lighting for softball fields.

Schools:

- 1) Mittun Park is in need of new playground equipment.

Community Facility Implementation Strategies

Strategies for implementation of community or public facilities focus on continued maintenance of existing facilities. As summarized above, the community has done a good job of identifying and planning for future improvements and needs. Some implementation strategies follow:

- ✓ **Continue to maintain existing parks and recreational facilities.**

What: Use the CIP to continue providing for scheduled maintenance and upgrades. Plan new residential developments with park or open space in mind.

Who: Public Works, Planning Commission, City Council.

When: On-going and Long-term.

✓ **Work with the school, and medical institutions to plan for the future of their facilities.**

What: School and medical facilities include a large portion of community facilities in Fosston. These are major entities to include in the planning process of the community at all levels.

These institutions have a major impact on the community and the City will work closely with them to ensure their success and future viability and to assist with the appropriate planning and placement of new facilities.

Who: Planning Commission, City Council, School Board, Healthcare Community, Public Works.

When: On-going and Long-term.

✓ **Implement the CIP to provide for maintenance and upgrades of local infrastructure and community facilities.**

What: As identified throughout the Plan and most recently, in the *Transportation Plan* chapter, the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is important for the timely and efficient maintenance of all local infrastructure, including the transportation system, sewer, storm sewer and water utilities, parks and community facilities. Cost savings will be realized by budgeting for scheduled maintenance and repair. A budget for the CIP process should be included in the city budget and include engineer's fees, financial planning assistance and other assistance required, as determined by the City Administrator and staff. The plan should project needs for a five to ten year period, with annual review.

Who: City Council, Public Works, City Administrator.

When: Mid-term and on-going.

In order for Fosston to grow and succeed, community facilities must be maintained and improved. Fosston's growth has not kept up with the loss of population in the past few decades. The population must grow for the schools and healthcare system to maintain their current quality and to succeed in the future. This will be an important task for policy makers and the community to embrace and strive to accomplish. Maintaining the current quality isn't the goal; improving facilities and services so that they are the highest quality they can be is what the community has said they want to achieve.

*The success and future of the school and healthcare system are closely tied to the City. The population must grow for the schools and healthcare system to maintain their current quality and to succeed in the future.*

## **Community Facilities Plan Summary**

The following is a summary listing of the Implementation Strategies identified for Community Facilities. Most have been identified as on-going and mid to long-term strategies to be implemented immediately and within the next five to ten years. Many of the strategies will be implemented with the implementation of the CIP, while others could be assigned to the Planning Commission to implement.

### Implementation Strategies Summary:

1. Continue to maintain existing parks and recreational facilities.
2. Work with the school, and medical institutions to plan for the future of their facilities.
3. Implement the CIP to provide for maintenance and upgrades of local infrastructure and community facilities.

### *Land Use and Community Facilities Short Term Action Steps:*

The following action steps have been identified to assist in implementing the policies that were identified with corresponding goals. In order to realize the goals, the policies will need to be followed. Prior to this, some short-term actions will need to be implemented.

- 1. Continue to review the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and other regulatory codes for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.**

The zoning ordinance and zoning map are the primary regulatory tools that are available to local governments to implement land use planning policies. The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances are being updated concurrently with the Comprehensive Plan. The Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and its updates.

**2. Continue to budget for the development of a Capital Improvement Plan for city infrastructure.**

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was identified as a priority in the 1999 Comprehensive Plan. Since then, the City has implemented a CIP, resulting in long term financial savings. Providing a budget and support to city administration staff will allow the CIP to continue.

**3. Monitor the Comprehensive Plan on a regular basis to ensure compliance and to make changes and update as necessary.**

The Comprehensive Plan is not meant to be a static document. While it is the intention that the Plan will accommodate the needs of the community for the next five to ten years, development patterns, community attitudes and issues may change and the plan should be updated as needed to reflect these changes.

The Planning Commission should review all proposed changes to the Plan and hold a public hearing to gather input on the changes as presented. Upon their review and after public comment, the Planning Commission would then make a recommendation to the City Council as to their findings. Plan amendments should be considered very carefully. Criteria to use when deciding upon plan amendments would include: a mistake in the Comprehensive Plan; or, changes in the community or issues that were not anticipated by the Plan at the time of development.

The Plan should be reviewed every five to ten years for updates and to ensure that it reflects the attitudes of the community and their desired goals.

*It is recommended that each year the Planning Commission would review the Comprehensive Plan and submit a report to the City Council on the progress of the plan and its implementation strategies and also to refresh the Council on the intent of the plan. Tasks should be assigned to the appropriate boards or commissions and to city departments or staff members.*

Resource List:

**Parks & Recreation:**

1. Minnesota Department of Natural Resource Grants
  - Local Trail Connections Program
  - Federal Recreational Trail Fund
  - Natural and Scenic Area Grants

Contact: [info@dnr.state.mn.us](mailto:info@dnr.state.mn.us) (1-888-MINNDNR)

2. Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC)
  - Recreational Trail Projects (assist with construction and maintenance)
  - Letters of support for grant applications

Contact: [www.conservationcorps.org](http://www.conservationcorps.org)  
Minnesota Conservation Corps  
2715 Upper Afton Road, Suite 100  
Maplewood, MN 55119  
(651)209-9900

**Infrastructure:**

1. United States Department of Agriculture: Rural Development program

Contact: Thief River Falls office:  
201 Sherwood Ave. South  
P.O. Box 16  
Thief River Falls, MN 56701  
(218)681-2843

2. Economic Development Authority (EDA)

Contact: Economic Development Authority  
111 North Canal Street  
Suite 855  
Chicago, IL 60606-7208  
312-353-7706  
312-353-8575 fax

3. Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
  - Public Facilities Authority (PFA)
  - Redevelopment Grant Program
  - Small Cities Development Program (SCDP)
  - Business Development Public Infrastructure (not funded in 2008)

See:  
[www.deed.state.mn.us/Community/assistance/pfa.htm](http://www.deed.state.mn.us/Community/assistance/pfa.htm)



In 2000, Fosston, in conjunction with the NW MN Multi-County HRA worked with Community Partners Research to prepare a Housing Study. This study was a comprehensive analysis of the overall housing needs of the City. The study included a market area defined as the City of Fosston, Lengby and the townships of Rosebud, Heier, Island Lake, Columbia, Queen and Bransvold. Some of the information from that study is noted in this plan. A complete copy of the Housing Study can be seen at the Fosston City Hall.

Most housing in Fosston is well-maintained as noted earlier in the background information. However, the study did identify over 20% of the structures needing major repair or possibly beyond repair. The city should continue to work with state and local programs to identify and repair or demolish substandard housing.

Also noted in the study, some communities use a standard that the number of lots available or under development should be sufficient to accommodate 2 ½ years of anticipated construction activity. Because Fosston has about 2 new single family units built per year, the City should make sure that approximately 5 lots are available each year to facilitate ongoing housing construction. The City currently has 24 buildable lots available with utilities in the new Fairlawn Park subdivision, so this will help accommodate housing development in the near future.

The City should also identify and develop other areas for new housing as people like to have a choice of lot sizes and locations for building new homes.

**Existing Residential**

In 1999, the City received a grant of approximately \$430,000 to rehabilitate existing single-family housing in Fosston. The NW MN Multi-County HRA administered the program and 25 projects were completed. The HRA spent an additional \$36,000 to rehabilitate seven other properties. In 2007, the City used \$60,000 in revolving loan funds to finance four more projects. As funds are paid back, the City will continue to participate in additional rehabilitation

projects.

**Existing Residential Implementation Strategies:**

- ✓ **Continue to Identify and Upgrade Existing Housing Stock**

What: Housing programs exist at the local, state and federal level to provide funding for the rehabilitation of existing housing.

Who: City staff working with local lending institutions, local agencies, state agencies and City Council.

When: On-going and long-term.

***New Single-Family Residential***

Many needs for single-family housing have been identified through the planning process for this Plan. Housing is needed for families of all socio-economic levels. As noted below under multi-family residential, developing a housing strategy and updating the housing study will help the City better determine what types of housing are needed most.

***New Multi-Family Residential***

Many seniors enjoy living in Fosston and are attracted to the community because of its services: health-care facilities; cultural and recreational opportunities; retail and service district; and, the friendly nature of the community.

In the 1998 Fosston Comprehensive Plan and also in the 2000 Housing Study, assisted care facilities were identified as desirable for Fosston. In response to these findings, in 2004 a 20 unit assisted care facility was built by the City in conjunction with First Care Services. In 2005, a private developer built a 22 unit assisted care facility. Both are fully leased with waiting lists. A new housing study would be able to identify if Fosston has the capacity to build another assisted care facility sometime in the future.

Rental housing in Fosston is tight and the development of additional senior housing may help to open up some

of the single-family homes which could then be put on the market for new families. In addition to senior housing, rental units for families are also a need that has been identified.

### New Multi-Family Implementation Strategies:

#### ✓ **Develop a Housing Strategy**

**What:** Work with local lending institutions and agencies to develop a plan that makes it easier for families to purchase and build homes in Fosston. Update the 2000 Housing Study to determine the most important housing needs in the area. Housing surveys or studies are often required by state agencies to determine need before funding is provided. Identify local developers willing to build in Fosston and pursue the possibility of providing incentives for developers to build apartment buildings in Fosston – i.e., tax increment financing, etc..

**Who:** City staff and City Council working with local lending institutions, community organizations, local and state agencies (NWRDC, NHMC, ROHDA, NW MN HRA, MMCDC, MHFA, DEED, etc.) and local developers.

**When:** Short to mid-term.

## **Summary**

The following is a summary listing of the Implementation Strategies for housing. The City could have the FEDA or Star Committee work on these strategies or develop a Housing Committee to focus on housing issues. It will take the cooperation of more than one committee to work on the issues to be successful and most effective.

Because a number of housing issues were identified during the Comprehensive Plan update process, it is recommended that the 2000 Housing Study be updated. This will provide the City with more detailed housing information for the most effective and successful development in the future.

### Housing Implementation Strategies Summary:

#### Existing Residential

- Continue to Identify and Upgrade Existing Housing Stock

#### New Single-Family & Multi-Family Residential

- Develop a Housing Strategy

## *Short Term Action Steps:*

The following action steps have been identified to assist in implementing the policies that were identified with corresponding goals. In order to realize the goals, the policies will need to be followed. Prior to this, some short-term actions will need to be implemented.

### **1. Develop a Housing Committee.**

During the focus group meetings, housing needs were identified. Many types of housing are needed. Because the issues are so diverse, the development of a housing committee is important in order to begin the process of prioritizing and further identifying housing needs. This Committee could start by updating the 2000 Housing Study of the Fosston area and reporting the findings to the Council and Planning Commission.

### Resource List:

1. Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA)

See: [www.mhfa.state.mn.us](http://www.mhfa.state.mn.us)

2. Minnesota Housing Partnership (800-728-8916)  
Contact: [info@mhponline.org](mailto:info@mhponline.org)

3. Midwest MN Community Development Corporation (MMCDC) 218-847-3191

See: [www.ruralisc.org/mmcadc.html](http://www.ruralisc.org/mmcadc.html)

4. Northwest Community Action (218-528-3258)

5. Region One Housing Development Alliance (ROHDA) – principals include:

- Inter-County Community Council (218-796-5144 - Wes Roland, Housing Director)
- Tri-Valley Opportunity Council(218-281-5832 -Craig Folkedahl, Director of Community Services)
- Multi-County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (218-637-2435 - Lee Meier, Community Development)
- Northwest Regional Development Commission (218-745-6733 - Leon Heath, Executive Director)

6. Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

See: [www.deed.state.mn.us/scdp](http://www.deed.state.mn.us/scdp)

7. Greater Minnesota Housing Fund

See: [www.gmfh.com](http://www.gmfh.com)

8. Local banks

9. Tax Increment Financing – (TIF) City Council



## Economic Development

The City of Fosston has two organizations involved in community and economic development in Fosston. The first is the Fosston Economic Development Authority (FEDA) and the second is the STAR committee.

FEDA has been active since 1988 and has helped procure investments of over \$8,200,000 in Fosston through loans to local manufacturing, retail and service businesses. They have assisted in the creation of over 250 jobs in Fosston. Currently, FEDA assists local businesses through several programs:

- ❖ JOBZ is Job Opportunity Building Zones and is a tool to stimulate business activity in Greater Minnesota. An eligible business located in a zone will operate nearly free of state and local taxes for a specified time (exemptions are available for up to 12 years, beginning in 2004). These tax incentives help new and expanding companies lower their overall costs and facilitate their growth. Fosston has several designated JOBZ properties available for qualifying applicants. (See Figure ?? for the location of the JOBZ properties.) To qualify, a business must start-up in the zone, relocate from outside the zone or expand. A business must also meet local business assistance goals to qualify.
- ❖ The FEDA Micro-Loan Program is available to all businesses and industry in Fosston who have been in business for a minimum of six months. The loans can be used for business expansion, equipment, inventory, working capital, rehabilitation of existing buildings and other types of financial assistance will be considered.

### Commercial

The commercial district has been identified as an area to promote and develop. There are a number of vacant buildings, some in disrepair, that are available for new businesses. The community should actively

pursue options for enticing new businesses to purchase and fill these buildings.

As mentioned earlier, a Small Cities Development Program grant was received and much rehabilitation of buildings and streetscaping was done at that time. The continued maintenance of the existing commercial core should be the first priority before the community works on expanding the area.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- ✓ **Maintain and Promote Existing Commercial Properties**

What: Some buildings are in need of repair. Business owners should be encouraged to repair and maintain their buildings. The use of a revolving loan fund should be encouraged to assist with improvements to existing businesses.

Performance standards should be reviewed in the zoning ordinance for maintenance and landscaping of commercial properties to enhance the area. Special attention can be paid to highway commercial and entrance corridors to the community for new development to ensure compliance with these standards and provide an aesthetically pleasing gateway to the community.

Who: City staff, City Council, DEED (SCDP), NWRDC.

When: On-going and short to long-term.

### New Commercial

As noted in the existing commercial section, maintaining and filling the existing downtown buildings is a priority for Fosston. Developing a marketing strategy will help the community identify desirable new businesses and a plan can then be implemented to begin to attract these businesses. Much work was done on this in the Report titled "1996 Strategic Plan for the Fosston Economic Development Authority." A brochure or other materials could be created to help in

this process. Contacting businesses in regional centers to open satellite offices or retail businesses is an option to pursue.

The business incubator that is adjacent to City offices is an existing tool that could help new start-up businesses.

The community has the advantage of U.S. Highway #2 running through to provide easy access for travelers and local residents to both the downtown and highway business district. Reviewing performance standards for new and existing commercial properties is important to maintain the appearance of the business districts.

✓ **Continue to Update and Implement the Marketing Strategy for the City**

What: The Fosston Economic Development Authority and STAR Committee can work cooperatively with existing businesses to attract business to Fosston. Encouraging unique, specialty types of retail businesses will enhance the downtown. As Crookston and Bemidji serve as more regional centers, large retail uses may not fare as well in Fosston as the specialty-type business.

A number of businesses were identified in the 2006 survey as necessary and desirable to the community. Public offices such as City Hall, the Post Office, etc. should be encouraged to remain in the downtown area as these uses can help attract people to downtown businesses.

Who: City Council, Planning Commission, Fosston Economic Development Authority and STAR Committee.

When: Short to Long-term.

## **Industrial**

Today, the original industrial park's 40 acres are almost full. An additional 44 acres has been made available for industrial development but has not yet been developed.

Fosston worked with Minnesota Dehydrated Vegetables (MDV) on a wastewater treatment facility that produces biogas, a renewable energy source. The project was jointly funded through the Economic Development Administration, Department of Employment & Economic Development and Rural Development. This facility virtually solved the odor problem for residents of the area.

Expanding the industrial base with clean industry is a priority for the Community.

The new acreage west of the existing Industrial Park should be developed as quickly as possible. When a prospective industry makes an inquiry, available land with utilities will be high on their list of priorities. The following implementation strategies will assist the city in maximizing their efforts to attract and retain industry in Fosston.

### **Industrial Implementation Strategies:**

✓ **Maintain and Promote Existing Industrial Properties**

What: Some buildings are in need of repair. Industry owners should be encouraged to repair and maintain their buildings. The use of a revolving loan fund should be encouraged to assist with improvements to existing businesses.

Performance standards were reviewed and updated in the zoning ordinance for maintenance and landscaping of commercial properties to enhance the area. Enforcement of these standards will assist in maintenance of property and property values.

Who: City staff, City Council, DEED, NWRDC.

When: On-going and short to long-term.

✓ **Develop the New Industrial Park Land**

What: The city has a new industrial park area of 44 acres to the west of the existing park. This land should be platted and utilities extended to property lines.

Who: City Council, Planning Commission, DEED, EDA, USDA, FEDA and Star Committee.

When: Short-term.

## **Summary**

The following is a summary listing of the Implementation Strategies for Economic Development. FEDA or the Star Committee could work on these strategies as they focus on Economic and Community development issues.

### **Economic Development Implementation Strategies Summary:**

#### **Commercial:**

1. Maintain and promote existing commercial properties.

*New Commercial:*

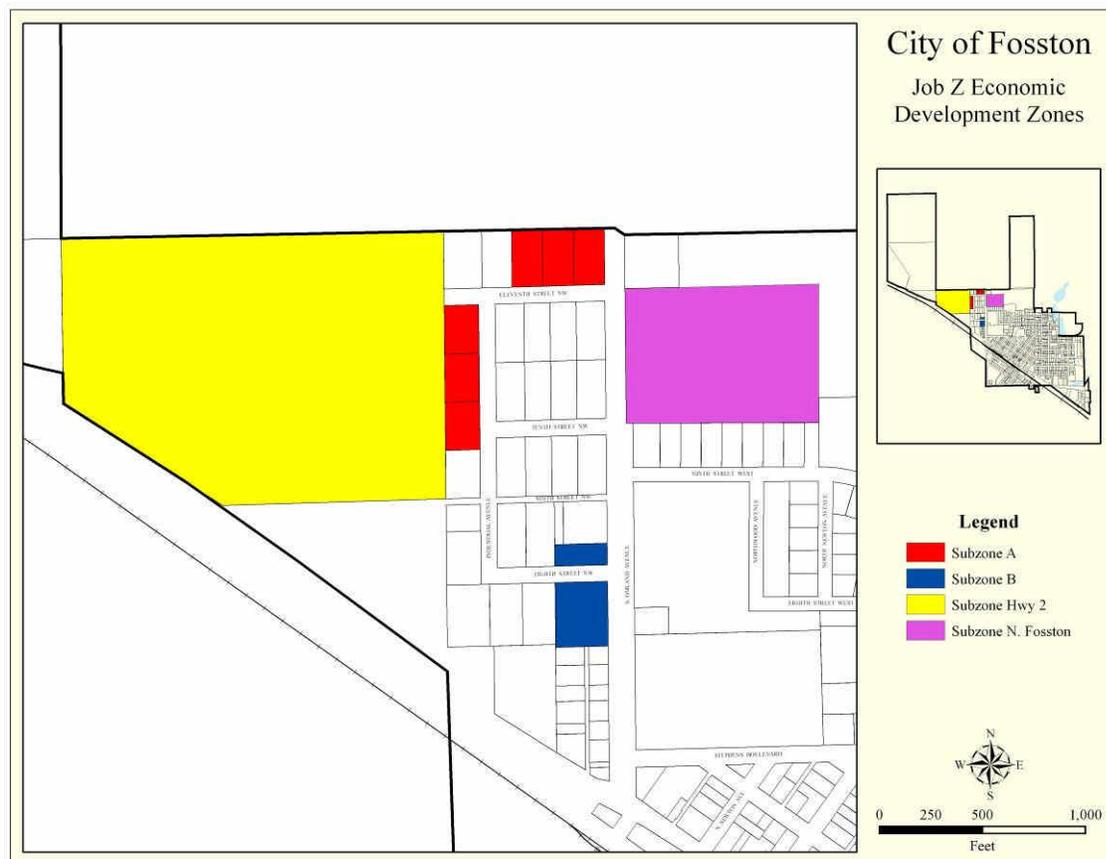
1. Continue to update and implement the marketing strategy for the City.

*Industrial:*

1. Maintain and promote existing industrial properties.
2. Develop the new industrial park land.

As noted earlier, JOBZ stands for Job Opportunity Building Zones and is a tool to stimulate business activity in Greater Minnesota. The business must be located in a zone or relocate from outside the zone or expand. The following map shows the location of eligible JOBZ properties.

**Figure 7. JOBZ Economic Development Zone Properties**



Source: Fosston City Hall - 2008

# Community Development

The STAR Committee works with community development issues in Fosston, including marketing of business and industry and the community in general. Some of their projects include:

- Build Fosston brand
- Fosston brochure
- Media campaign to encourage people to do business in Fosston
- Annual "Come Home to Fosston" campaign
- Visit Fosston brochure
- Fosston website
- TV Commercials
- Billboards
- Crazy Days & Flea Market
- Light Up the Night festival

Improving the entrance corridors to the City was discussed and desired by the STAR Committee. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) offers the Landscape Partnership Program. This program offers financial and technical assistance to communities to enhance corridors into the city. They will provide expert technical assistance, as well as, financial assistance for planning, landscape materials, etc. This is a program worth looking into for future corridor improvements.

The entrance signs to Fosston declare "Where the Prairie Meets the Pines". Some discussion occurred on this as there are very few trees to mark the transition from prairie to pines or forested area when you reach Fosston. This could be part of the corridor enhancement project and would fit in well with the MnDOT Landscape Partnership program.

## *Economic and Community Development Short Term Action Steps:*

The following action steps have been identified to assist in implementing the policies that were identified with corresponding goals. In order to realize the goals, the policies will need to be followed. Prior to this, some short-term actions will need to be implemented.

### **Short-Term Action Steps:**

- 1. *Develop a recruiting/hospitality committee to showcase what Fosston has to offer prospective businesses, employees and residents.***

When prospective employees, businesses, residents, etc. come to Fosston, it would be very beneficial if there were a group already formed that could be called upon to show

them the highlights of the community.

Members from various businesses and organizations throughout the community could be members, such as: healthcare, school, churches, city, FEDA, business people, senior citizens, youth, etc. This committee could be instrumental in attracting people to local jobs and in deciding to make Fosston their home.

- 2. *Work with First Care Services in planning the area around the Hospital, Clinic, Nursing home and to look at future needs, including additional assisted-care living facilities.***

During the last Comprehensive Plan, assisted-care living facilities was identified as a priority need. Since that time, 42 units have been built in two facilities. They are both full and consideration should be given to future senior needs.

Working with the existing health care organizations and other care facilities will ensure that all entities are involved in planning activities and the sharing of information. The City should also actively involve the Health Care industry in its planning for infrastructure improvements such as sidewalk, sewer and water extensions, etc.

- 3. *Work with the schools to identify community and continuing education needs.***

The school in Fosston is well-supported by the community and is an integral part of its success. The community should work with the school to help them identify the on-going educational needs of the community. Support for the school is important to the success of the entire community. Ensuring that city officials are involved with the school system by serving on boards, committees, etc. is a good way to show support and help maintain the high quality of education in Fosston.

- 4. *Apply for additional funding to replenish the Revolving Loan Fund.***

The revolving loan fund is close to being depleted. To continue assisting businesses, this fund must be active and available.

## Sources:

1. Northwest Regional Enterprise Fund
  - Contact: Northwest Regional Development Commission (NWRDC) -218-745-6733 - Leon Heath, Executive Director

2. United States Department of Agriculture: Rural Development program

**Contact:** Thief River Falls office:  
201 Sherwood Ave. South  
P.O. Box 16  
Thief River Falls, MN 56701  
(218)681-2843

3. Economic Development Authority (EDA)

**Contact:** Economic Development Authority  
111 North Canal Street  
Suite 855  
Chicago, IL 60606-7208  
312-353-7706  
312-353-8575 fax

4. Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

See: [www.deed.state.mn.us/scdp](http://www.deed.state.mn.us/scdp)

5. JOBZ, TIF, Fosston RLF, FEDA Micro-Loan

Contact: Fosston City Council, FEDA

6. MnDOT -Landscape Partnership program

Contact: Todd Carroll, LLA, ASLA  
State Landscape Partnership Program Coordinator  
Mn/DOT Office of Technical Support, M.S. 686  
395 John Ireland Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155-1899  
Phone: (651) 366-4617, Fax: (651) 366-4699  
E-mail: [Todd.Carroll@dot.state.mn.us](mailto:Todd.Carroll@dot.state.mn.us)

7. MnDOT - Safe Routes to School program

Contact: Kristie Billiar  
Safe Routes to School Coordinator

**E-mail**

[Kristie.billiar@dot.state.mn.us](mailto:Kristie.billiar@dot.state.mn.us)

**Phone:** 651/366-4164

**Fax:** 651/366-4192

**Mail:**

Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Transportation Building  
Kristie Billiar, MS 315  
395 John Ireland Boulevard  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

## In Conclusion

The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is the start of the planning process in a community. Although the City of Fosston has participated in a process for the development of this plan, the planning has just begun. The Goals and Policies section gives direction for the elected body (City Council) to proceed on many issues according to the desires of the community. The Land Use Plan gives guidance and direction to the Planning Commission for planning for the present and into the future. The Community Facilities Plan, in addition to providing direction for elected officials, gives staff a priority listing of tasks to undertake.

A number of action steps for various issues have been identified that should be addressed in the short-term as Fosston begins to implement the Comprehensive Plan. These are necessary in order to begin carrying out the various parts of the plan. An Implementation Chart is included in Appendix D for city staff and elected officials to use in their decision-making to ensure they are working towards the goals that the city stakeholders have developed to realize Fosston's vision.

## Appendix A: Comprehensive Plan Task Force Members

Member:

Warren Affeldt  
Barry Anderson  
Mark Finstad  
Leah Hemmingsen  
Traci Juve  
Laverda LaMaack  
Michelle Landsverk  
Larry Lenes  
Bob Lofstrand  
Chuck Lucken  
Larry Miller  
Greg Mireault  
Bob Moore  
Jim Noyes  
Jim Offerdahl  
Wayne Ommundson  
Walter Pederson  
Dan Paulson  
Bob Saeter  
Dale Salberg  
Laurel Skala  
Darlene Sollie  
Kari Swanson  
Pat Wangler  
Bill Wilson

Representing:

County Board  
Planning Commission  
Ultima Bank Minnesota  
Main Street Businesses  
Real Estate  
Embassy Community Center/Elderly  
Economic Development Director  
Rosebud Township  
Utilities Commission/Retired  
Planning Commission, City Administrator  
Planning Commission  
Main Street Businesses  
FEDA Executive Committee  
Industries  
Mayor, City of Fosston  
Embassy Community Center  
Brandsvold Township  
American Federal Bank – Farming  
Planning Commission  
School District  
Assistant City Administrator  
Real Estate  
Nursing Home/Assisted Living  
First Care Medical Services  
Airport Commission/Industry

## Appendix B: Visioning Session Results

### ***FOSSTON ASSET SUMMARY***

<i>Asset</i>	<i>Score</i>
Healthcare-hospital, clinic, nursing homes	22
Clean town, streets (well-kept community)	10
Rural setting	9
City Bus	6
School	6
Good infrastructure – water, lights, natural gas	6
Library Arts Center	5
Civic Center (pool)	5
Retail stores	4
Churches	4
Heritage Center	4
Volunteerism	4
Friendly people	3
Trustworthy community	3
Embassy Sr. Center	2
Fire protection	2
Low crime rate	2
Good electric utility	2
Proximity to large communities	2
Healthy Support Groups	2
Strong businesses	2
Golf Course	1
Good highway access	1
Service Organizations	1
Restaurants	1
Single Women	1
Incinerator	1
Assisted Living facilities	0
Apartments	0
Auto body/repair shops	0
Airport	0
Short commute to job	0
Outdoor activities	0
Internet access	0
Caring, helpful people	0
ECFE	0
Banks	0
Housing programs	0
Affordable Housing	0
Wildlife	0
Sports complex	0
Parks	0

<i>Asset</i>	<i>Score</i>
Housing variety	0
Childcare	0
Theater	0
Activities at school	0
Sportsman's Club	0
Industrial Park	0
Quiet	0
Jefferson Bus line	0
Cable TV	0
Welcome Committee	0
Tri-County bus	0
Radio station	0
Good law enforcement	0

### **FOSSTON SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES**

<i>Category</i>	<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>COMMERCIAL/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT</b>		
	Lack of good paying jobs	18
	Local support for businesses needed	11
	No retail competition	5
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b>		
	Odor in town	2
	Lack of downtown parking	2
	Parks, recreation not handicap friendly	1
	Not handicap-accessible	0
<b>HOUSING</b>		
	Limited affordable housing	5
	Old housing stock	1
	Lack of medium priced housing	0
	Need new housing development	0
	Shortage of rentals for families	0
<b>SERVICES</b>		
	School programs being cut	5
	Aging Volunteers	5
	Lack of volunteers (new ones)	4
	Poor cell phone service	2
	Lack of sufficient childcare	2
	Lack of healthcare specialties	1
	Politics in school system	0
	Limited cable TV (no HD)	0
	Hospital – no pediatric equipment	0
<b>SOCIAL</b>		
	Lack of social opportunities (young adults)	7

<b>Category</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Score</b>
	Lack of city festivals	1
	Lack of evening eating establishments	1
	Lack of single, older men	0
	Everyone's related	0
	Everyone knows your business	0
	Lack of social opportunities (newly retired)	0
	Little ethnic diversity	0
	Lack of cultural activities	0
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>		
	Streets in disrepair	9
	Poor traffic control – Highway 2	4
	Sidewalks need repair	4
<b>OTHER</b>		
	Higher taxes	14
	High cancer and M.S. rates	2
	Winter weather – climate	1
	Roots/families live elsewhere	0

## Fosston 2027 Summary

*What would you like to remain the same?*

1. Quality of life
2. Health care
3. Schools
4. Low crime rate
5. Maintain city services
6. Keep Highway #2 through Fosston
7. Culture
8. Service organizations
9. Invest in Health care
10. Minor improvements in structures, schools and all infrastructures
11. Small-town atmosphere
12. Maintain small teacher-pupil ration
13. Volunteering
14. Safe
15. Clean town
16. Church-based
17. Retail stores
18. Friendliness
19. Clean yards
20. Community Pride

*What would you change?*

1. Comprehensive health care
2. More industry
3. Higher paying jobs
4. Housing subdivisions
5. More retail variety
6. Population
7. Continuing with infrastructure plan for each year
8. Everything delivered to us!
9. Build our industry
10. Our own police force
11. Historical building location, increase interest
12. Population grow to 2,500
13. More local support to the community
14. New recreation facility – swimming pool, bigger civic center
15. More diversified population
16. More businesses, employment
17. Newer housing
18. At-home employment
19. Newer buildings/retail
20. Growing city
21. Growing businesses, services
22. Have Fosston become a regional center while maintaining a small town
23. More retail
24. Technical school satellite

# Appendix C: Economic/Community Development Focus Group Results

## *Joint FEDA/STAR Goal Setting Session*

The answers below are from the joint STAR Committee and FEDA goal-setting session on October 1, 2007. At this session, it was the year 2020 and you just found out that Fosston had been named one of the best small towns in the Upper Midwest by *Midwest Life* magazine. They are sending a journalist and photographer to town to do a story for the next issue of the magazine. The group answered the following questions with this in mind and following are the answers to those questions.

### ***I. What do you want them to see?***

1. Eco-Tourism
2. Clean, active business district
3. Bike paths, ski, ATV trails (multi-use)
4. New RV Park w/access to trails and playground (east of Sports Complex and Rotary Park)
5. New industry
6. New Sports Complex (promote)
7. New houses (from past 5 years)
8. Young kids/families playing in the parks
9. Vital Medical Park (increased connectivity)
10. Veterans Memorial Garden (new military equipment – i.e., cannon too)
11. Alternative energy source
12. Vital school system
13. New fitness center
14. City bus
15. New indoor activity center
16. Farmer's Market (organic agriculture)
17. Coffee house
18. Expanded Heritage Museum, Heritage Days expanded
19. Library and Embassy Center (internet cafe)
20. Computer supply store
21. Bowling alley
22. Antique store
23. Big Event
24. New, expanded airport to serve business and industry
25. Hub (Fosston) of area trail system connecting area interests, eco-tourism, trails, etc.)
26. See the Pines (Where the Prairie Meets the Pines – build on the theme, plant trees!)
27. Great theater

### ***II. What pictures do you want them to take?***

1. Wildlife, nature, fishing, hunting, etc.
2. Schools
3. Healthcare
4. Recreational Activities
5. Nice neighborhoods
6. Clean, well-kept community
7. Pro-active Mayor (for over 15 years!)
8. The 5 new houses being built each year for the past 12 -17 years.
9. Rodeo

10. Kids having fun (young, dynamic, growing town)
11. Youth volunteers
12. Medical care coordinated through technology with specialists
13. Attractive downtown
14. Memorial Park
15. Cordwood Pete
16. Heritage Park
17. the Big Event (i.e., build on Cordwood Pete theme, Where the Prairie Meets the Pines, Lumberjack Show, Norwegian Theme, something that appeals to ALL ages.)
18. Industry and Industrial Park

### **III. *Who should they talk to?***

1. Everyone – the Mayor!
2. Community leaders
3. Well-rounded group of people – youth, seniors, business people, industry, medical
4. Economic Development Director
5. Newest industry in town – why they located here
6. Oldest industry in town – why have you stayed.
7. Newspaper
8. Kids – what they do for fun
9. Realtor
10. New TV station
11. President of the Chamber of Commerce
12. President of the Embassy Center
13. Superintendent of school
14. Big Event coordinator
15. Church Youth Leaders
16. Chair of Ministerial Association

### **IV. *What do you want them to hear?***

1. Visitor testimonials
2. Residents and how satisfied they are
3. Safe community to live in
4. Busy community
5. Broadband connected
6. Affordable housing options
7. Community and Arts Center
8. Local student who won the National Math Competition
9. Lagoon has to be expanded to handle growth
10. Hear kids tell how great Fosston is to live in.
11. Kids laughing and playing
12. Growth with small-town values
13. The truth
14. Hear about the unique things Fosston has (for a small city) – bus, animal clinic, best theater in northern Minnesota
15. Birds singing

## Appendix D: Implementation Chart

PLAN AREA:	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY:	On-going:	Short-term:	Mid-term:	Long-term:	Who:
LAND USE: Residential	1) Encourage Development of Existing Lots or Property Already Served by Utilities		X			S, PC,PO,O
	2) Identify Property for Future Residential Development			X		S, PC,PO,O
	3) Zone Areas as Single Family and Multi Family Residential		X			PC, CC
Commercial	1) Zone Property Identified as Commercial		X			PC,CC
Industrial	1) Zone Areas Identified as Industrial		X			PC,CC
	2) Develop New Industrial Park Land		X			S, FEDA, PC,CC,O
Agricultural	1) Modify the Agricultural Land as Noted on the Land Use Plan		X			PC, CC
	2) Zone Areas Identified as Agricultural			X		PC,CC
Growth Areas	1) Develop into the designated Growth Areas		X	X		PC, CC
	2) Develop a joint powers board with Rosebud Township			X		PC, CC, O
Transportation	1) Continue top develop and implement the CIP	X	X			CC, S
	2) Extend streets into growing areas of the community		X	X		PC, S, CC, O
	3) Develop a sidewalk/trail system		X			PC, S, CC,O
COMMUNITY FACILITIES:	1) Continue to maintain existing parks & recreational facilities	X			X	CC,PC,S
	2) Work with the school and medical institutions to plan for future facilities	X			X	PC,CC,S,O
	3) Implement the CIP to provide for maintenance & upgrades	X		X	X	CC,S
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:	1) Maintain & Promote Existing Commercial Properties	X	X	X	X	S,CC,O
	2) Continue to Update and Implement the Marketing Strategy		X	X	X	CC,PC,FEDA,STAR
	3) Maintain & Promote Existing Industrial Properties	X	X	X	X	S,CC,O
	4) Develop the New Industrial Park Land		X			CC,PC, FEDA, STAR, O
HOUSING: Existing Residential	1) Continue to Identify & Upgrade Existing Housing Stock	X			X	CC, S, O
New Multi-Family Residential	1) Develop a Housing Strategy		X	X	X	S,CC,O

CC-City Council  
PO-Property Owners

PC – Planning Commission  
O- Other Organizations  
(Short-Term – 0-5 years

S-City Staff

FEDA – Fosston Econ. Dev. Authority

STAR- Star Committee

Mid-Term: 5-10 years

Long-Term: 10-20 years)

