



NORTH BRANCH

—Minnesota—

Steve Cich
Chair

Gary Shaefer
Commissioner

Ross Otto
Commissioner

Nathan Ehalt
Commissioner

Open
Commissioner

**PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR AGENDA
TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2025 @ 6:30 PM
CITY HALL, 6408 ELM STREET, NORTH
BRANCH, MN 55056**

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. ROLL CALL
4. AGENDA APPROVAL
 - a. Approve Agenda ACTION
5. PUBLIC COMMENT
6. CONSENT AGENDA
 - a. Approval of May 6, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes ACTION
7. PUBLIC HEARINGS
 - a. Public Hearing to consider a conditional use permit to allow for multiple principal buildings on one parcel for the Main Street Apartments ACTION
 - b. Public Hearing to consider a Comprehensive Land Use Amendment and Rezoning from R2 to R3 ACTION
 - c. Public Hearing to consider a preliminary plat for Westside Commons 3rd Addition ACTION
8. REPORTS
 - a. Zoning Code Items INFO
 - b. Comprehensive Plan Update INFO
9. NEXT MEETING - JULY 1, 2025 - 630PM
10. UPCOMING AGENDAS

11. ADJOURNMENT



Prepared By:

Presenter:

Date: 05/29/2025

Board & Commission: Planning Commission

Subject: Approval of May 6, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Voting Requirements:

Voting Options Simple Majority

PLANNING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2025 @ 6:30 PM

City Hall, 6408 Elm St., North Branch, MN 55056

Members Present: Steve Cich, Gary Shaeffer, Ross Otto

Council Member Robert Canada and City Staff

Members Absent: Nate Ehalt

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. ROLL CALL

Members present: Cich, Otto, Schaefer, City Council Liaison Canada, along with City Staff and members of the public.

4. AGENDA APPROVAL

Member Schaefer motions to approve the agenda, seconded by Member Otto.
All aye 3-0, motion approved unanimously.

5. CONSENT AGENDA
 - a. Approval of April 1, 2025 Planning Commission Minutes

Member Schaefer motions to approve the agenda, seconded by Member Otto.
All aye 3-0, motion approved unanimously.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments. Public comments were closed at 6:38 P.M.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS
 - a. Public Hearing to consider a conditional use permit to allow for multiple principal buildings on one parcel for the Main Street Apartments

Community Development Director Sondrol presented an overview of the Main Street Apartments. The site is the old Main Street School site and zoned CBD, Central Business District. Four apartment buildings with 8 units each are proposed. Surrounding uses include mostly residential with a funeral home to the southwest of the site. The site is 2.4 acres with a density of 13.3 units per acre. The site is located in Zone 1 for building materials which includes a need for 65% of brick, stone, glass curtain wall. The applicant is proposing 15% of natural stone, 15% for glass and windows and steel. The steel will not

meet the Zone 1 classification but the other materials will meet the requirement. Parking on site exceeds parking minimums per city code with 88 stalls proposed while only needing to provide 64 stalls. A traffic study was conducted in the area for a previously proposed 64 unit development on this site in 2023 and the recommendation was that the roadway was unlikely to be impacted significantly with the increase in vehicles on site. Thirty two trees are proposed for screening on site from nearby residences. The Parks Commission recommended the acceptance of cash for this development, as there are already parks nearby the site. Sondrol finished the presentation of the project and asked if Commission Members had any questions. Member Cich asked how far along in conversations Sondrol was with developers regarding the proposed siding material of the building. Sondrol expressed that the developer would like to use a vertical steel siding due to durability and a 50 year warranty. The code prohibits steel in the class 1 building materials. Member Cich expressed that the apartments should be intended to look similar to homes in the immediate neighborhood and that the proposed steel siding will not look similar.

Public Hearing:

Emmanuel Kintu asked if these apartments would be low income. Sondrol responded by saying that these will be market rate apartments. Kintu asked if this would change in the future. Sondrol said that they would remain market rate. Kintu was concerned about traffic and if the study from 2023 could be relooked at. Sondrol said that the previous study didn't show a concern for traffic with 64 units proposed. This project is 32 units and would essentially be half the amount of vehicles as the original proposal. Charlie Klopp commented that he would like to see a small playground on site for residents of the future apartments since the nearby parks do not have playground equipment and Central Park is dangerous to get to from this particular site. Charlie also would like to see "no parking" signs on some of the surrounding streets to avoid congestion. Walt Anderson was concerned of the underlying zoning district used to be residential and this project would be too high density for the area. Resident Travis Miles stated that the proposed development would meet the zoning district classification of CBD Central Business District and the comprehensive plan designation and home town feel. The pitched roofs meet the look of the neighborhood homes. Travis mentions a need for multifamily housing in the state and the general area. Resident Bryan voiced concern for the proposed siding material and would not like to see it. Sondrol read aloud a public comment that was received via email from Christine Dinsel. The comment included statements of disapproval of the project and that it would decrease the open feel of the neighborhood and lower property values. The destruction of the Main Street School on this site would also present troubles with breathing in toxic materials and would be hazardous to people living in the area. Tommy Foster, the builder made comments about the durability being a 50 year warranty and that they install this material on several buildings including high end lake homes on Rush Lake. He mentioned that he could possibly go with a batten board wood siding but prefers the steel. Tommy mentions that they oversized the parking lot for guests and to eliminate the need for nearby street parking. Cich asked Foster what the warranty is for hardie board plank siding. Foster said he believes it is only 20 years for warranty and will crack from impacts and weathering. Schaefer asked what the builder's timeline looks like. Tommy said he would plan to start after approval but hoping as soon as July of this year to get going. Resident Jackie mentioned the traffic study needing updating and the funeral home has several overflow cars during an event and hopes that

this apartment wouldn't create additional congestion. She also voiced concern for school buses not coming to service the apartments due to proximity to the schools. Travis Miles mentioned that there is a busing route in the area. The public hearing was closed by Member Cich at 7:13 P.M.

Planning Commission Discussion:

Member Schaefer mentioned that he believes apartments are appropriate there based on the past use being a school, how it meets zoning, and the site plans not being overcrowded. Schaefer said he did not like the design of the building, and the materials would not meet the current Zone 1 requirements. Cich agreed that the builder needs to reconsider the siding to better fit the neighborhood. Schaeffer asked if Tommy Foster would be willing to change the siding to a lap style to match the neighborhood. Tommy said he will work with city staff to determine what would be best to accommodate the requirements of the Zone 1 building materials to match the look of the neighborhood while still having an aesthetic they are going for. Sondrol mentioned that he would ask the Commissioners to request an extension of the timeline beyond the June 5th date. Cich asked the developer if he would be willing to get the siding issue resolved prior to July 1st. Tommy, the developer agreed. Schaefer made a motion to table this item to the June 3rd Planning Commission Meeting. Otto seconded the motion. The motion to table the item passed unanimously with a 3-0 vote.

- b. Public Hearing to consider requests for a preliminary plat for Cedar Ridge Community and a zoning text amendment to clarify single family homes a permitted use in the R-3 Zoning District

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented the request for a text amendment to allow for single family homes in the R-3 Zoning District and preliminary plat approval for the Cedar Ridge Community. The site features 75 single family lots with 3 future lots designated for apartment style buildings (167 total units) on roughly 62 acres. Seven outlots are proposed for commercial development and storm water ponding. Density is proposed at 6.29 units per acre for single family residential and 16.2 units per acre for the apartments. The developer is proposing 2 phases for the development. Sondrol explains that currently single family homes are not permitted in the R-3 residential zoning district based on the permitted uses chart within city code. Sondrol finished the presentation and asked the Planning Commissioners if they had any questions. Member Schaefer asked what phase the apartments would be included within and questioned if they would ever be built. Member Cich asked if the single family homes and apartments would be built simultaneously. Sondrol answered that they are shown on the plat as Phase 1 but have been mostly ghost platted in the development and don't appear to be part of the preliminary plat. Member Schaefer asked if the road cutting through the development would be a part of 381st Street and link up with Tanger Drive and if it is dedicated Right-of-way. Sondrol said that they have included ROW but would need to be addressed to meet the state aid design standards. Cich closed the regular meeting at 7:40 and opened up the public meeting simultaneously.

Public Hearing:

Brandon Tervo, a resident who lives at the corner of 381st Ln and Falcon Ave, opened the public hearing and asked questions regarding buffers on Falcon for the increase in traffic as a result of the added houses in the area. Sondrol responded that typically the city does not install any buffers on adjacent properties for new developments but the plans do show landscaping plantings on the east side of their development along Falcon. Plantings include coniferous and deciduous trees for buffering. Haylee Goulet, a resident who lives on 382nd St, reiterated that traffic would be a concern and that traffic has increased on Falcon. Speeds were also a concern on Falcon with the addition of new homes. Haylee mentions that the sense of privacy and security is crucial for the residents of the Wild Ridge Community. Phil Carlson, a landowner south of the proposed site expresses that single family homes are better than apartments as far as traffic and increased density goes. Emmanuel Kintu, a resident on 381st Ln, speaks about the development happening first in the state, instead of preparing first by installing roads. Widening lanes and turn lanes are essential for new development. Kintu also asked if the goal of the city is to raise tax money through rooftops. Kelly Higbee was also worried about traffic and the tax base in the city. Kelly mentions that taxes in the city are already high and that there should be alternate ways to bring in revenue for the city such as industry. Kelly mentions that the increase in population will create the need for more services such as grocery stores. Brandon Tervo questioned if there were any discussions on the commercial businesses that would be a part of the Phase 3 development. Sondrol answered that the land is privately owned and haven't received any information for the types of businesses that would be located in Phase 3. Tervo asked if the developer has previously developed in North Branch. Sondrol said that they have not developed in North Branch before. Tervo asked the developers to speak on their previous developments that they have completed. Joss Jondahl, the home builder, approached the podium and stated that they have done roughly 8 developments and that in order to get business in the city, they first need rooftops. Josh said that they would be selling off the apartment land and don't have renderings for the design of the commercial or apartment areas on the site yet. Joss said that they build roughly 40 homes per year mostly around the Princeton area. Joss said that they are very hands-on builders and will be doing the roads, excavating and framing. Subcontractors will be as local as possible but will need to use larger contractors for certain projects to keep the prices as low as possible for the homes and end up in the high 300k house range. The builder said that they would also sell lots to other select builders. The builder has about 15 workers to help construct the houses and try to do most of the work in-house. Deb Donley who lives on 381st Ln asked if the state owned the roadway in the development for state aid. Sondrol explained that the extension of Tanger Drive is a city road. Different roads have state aid requirements for certain roads for design and engineering. Deb said that it would be nice if the people in this new community could access their site from Tanger Drive instead of Falcon Ave to minimize traffic. Sondrol said that they would be constructing the roads coming off from Falcon and that the city would request that the Right-of-Way would be platted to ensure that the roadway gets constructed as the commercial area gets developed. Jessica Kintu opposes apartments on the site based on traffic concerns and often sees people crossing Falcon Ave stating that it's dangerous. Jessica is also concerned with the value of their property in Wild Ridge going down due to the added development. Jessica asked how the services in the city would change such as fire and police presence. Haylee Goulet asked if there is any consideration of round a-bouts or additional stop signs on Falcon Ave. Sondrol responded by saying that Falcon Ave is a County roadway and they are the authority. Right and left

turn lanes are planned to be added to access the proposed community. Public Comment was closed by Member Cich at 8:18 P.M.

Planning Commission Discussion:

Member Cich explained that there is a lot to consider with this project, including the zoning, density, the commercial piece and apartments. Member Schaefer said that the site has been zoned R-3 for a long time, but adding the apartments would be the only way to reach the density requirements for this zoning district. Sondrol confirmed by expressing that it is zoned and guided for high density residential and that the site would need to meet the density requirements of a minimum of 6 units per acre of the R-3 district. Schaefer said that he thinks this would be a loophole for the development by using the apartments to satisfy the density requirements. Schaefer asked if the city would be setting precedence if they allowed single family homes in the R-3 district. Sondrol said that the R-3 district as of now allows for a variety of townhouses and apartment style housing and by allowing single family homes in this district, they would still have to meet the minimum density requirements based on the Comprehensive Plan designation. Member Otto questioned if they were to allow for the preliminary plat as presented and the single family homes were being built, whether the apartments would actually come to the site and if it would bring up issues down the road. Otto reiterated that the site would not meet density just with the single family houses and asked Sondrol if there is a timeline that the apartments would need to be constructed. Sondrol said that there can be conditions added that mention the inclusion of the apartments on the site and put certain restrictions on the property. Cich mentions that they are in a predicament if the apartments never come. Sondrol mentioned that if they were to go through with a text amendment, that it would allow for single family homes in all R-3 districts in the city and would essentially make these developments have tight lot widths to meet density requirements. Otto said that townhouses could also be an option instead of apartments in the R-3 District but for this specific development it might get tight to meet the density requirements and lot dimensions. Cich asked the Commissioners and Community Development Director if they wanted to open themselves up to allow for single family homes in the R-3 zoning district. Sondrol responded by saying that there are pros and cons to this, but a PUD could be an alternative option to allow the single family homes in the area while also providing the apartments. The comprehensive plan update will help guide where the city wants to see certain types of development. Cich asks Sondrol if they would be stuck if they went through with the text amendment. Sondrol said that through an ordinance it could be changed back but is looking for community collaboration through the future comprehensive plan amendment to see what the community wants. Cich asked if utilities would be a problem with the apartments. Sondrol confirmed that the utilities in the area were designed for high density. Member Schaefer said that he can't support the text amendment but believes this is a good project. Schaefer said that he believes that the text amendment would be a bad idea for future development. Member Cich said that they are trying to work with businesses and this development is a business, however the text amendment would impact more than originally intended.

Schaefer made a motion to deny the proposed text amendment for Section 66-6 of the city code, to allow for single family homes in the R-3 zoning district. Member Otto seconded that motion. Denial for the text amendment passed 3-0 with a unanimous aye vote.

Findings of Fact include the development not following the guidance of the comprehensive plan if the zoning is not permitted and opening up future developments to only construct single family homes in the R-3 District.

A second vote was taken for the preliminary plat. Schaefer made a motion to deny the preliminary plat and was seconded by Otto. Motion passes 3-0 unanimously.

Findings of fact include the preliminary plat not meeting the zoning district and density requirements.

Recommendation for denial of both the text amendment and preliminary plat will be forwarded to the City Council at the May 13th Meeting.

The public hearing for the text amendment and preliminary plat was closed at 8:45 P.M.

8. REPORTS

a. Comprehensive Plan Update

Sondrol explained that the City Council and Parks Board have begun looking at their sections of the city's comprehensive plan and expressed to have the Planning Commission start to review the comp plan as well. Certain issues with zoning designations and regions should be explored. Sondrol explained that there would be meetings in June and August for the public to express opinions on how the city should be guided and create goals to meet for the future of the city. City Administrator Hill reiterated that Commissioners should reach out to city staff for the parameters of the comp plan and what they would like changed. Hill said that the comprehensive plan was last completed in 2018 and the city has changed tremendously since then, so creating new goals is necessary to guide the city in the right direction.

9. NEXT MEETING – June 3, 2025 – 6:30 PM

a. Upcoming Agenda Items

- i. Falcon and 95 development
- ii. Text Amendments for inconsistency in zoning districts

10. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 P.M.



Prepared By: Kim Lindquist, Director, Community Planning & Econ. Dev, Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director

Presenter: Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director

Date: 05/07/2025

Board & Commission: Planning Commission

Subject: Public Hearing to consider a conditional use permit to allow for multiple principal buildings on one parcel for the Main Street Apartments

Applicants Request

1. Conditional Use Permit approval for multiple principle buildings on one parcel for the Main Street Apartments

Overview / Background

The 2.4 acre site is located along Main Street and is zoned and guided for the Central Business District. The site is rectangular in shape and is bordered on all four sides by public roads. Hwy 95 or Main Street is to the south and is the most visible side of the site given the traffic volumes on the street. The proposal is for a multi-family apartment project housed in four buildings with 8-units in each. The site plan has four buildings located in the four corners of the site with parking located in the central portion of the site. The application is for a conditional use permit to allow more than one principal structure on the site.

The site is relatively flat which creates some difficulty when installing new sanitary sewer and storm sewer. The high point is in the west central at 886' with the low points along the eastern property line. The building elevations present a 2-story rectangular building with 15% stone and the remainder metal siding. The landscape plan illustrates 32 trees along the perimeter of the site, equating to one tree per unit.

Attachments

Issue(s) to Consider

1. Land Use and Zoning
2. Development Overview
3. Conditional Use Permit

Analysis of Issue(s)

1. Land Use & Zoning

The property is zoned CBD, Central Business District and guided for LUCBD, which is Land Use Central Business District. The zoning ordinance permits apartments and also permits multi-family housing in the 7-16 units per acre density range. The proposed density of the site is 13.3 acres based upon 32 units on a 2.4 acre parcel.

The CBD zoning and comprehensive plan designation look for mixed use or commercial development, this site is more removed from the heart of the downtown area and is bordered primarily by single family residential development. There is some commercial development to the west, a funeral home which looks residential in character and a lower density office building to the south, which houses several smaller tenants. The office building is also residential in character, being one story with a pitched roof.

As noted, the comprehensive plan indicates that “new residential development should be part of a mixed use plan with a balance of housing and commercial uses within a single building or complex.” The Plan goes on to state that replacing single family homes with mixed use structures and redeveloping existing commercial buildings will help support a healthy business environment and allow more people to be able to walk to their destinations. The concept of mixed use is attractive since it brings both the commercial cities want and new residential, increasing the market for commercial uses. While it is understood that the City would like additional commercial mixes within the Downtown area, the location of this site is less downtown and more located within a mixed-use area, with more residential than commercial development. Because the site is deeper than just the frontage along Main Street, a residential use is more consistent with the immediately adjacent development pattern. There is residential development on all four sides of the site, with two non-residential buildings directly adjacent to the west and one across Main to the south.

Further, the economy and financial investors are less supportive of mixed use than previously. Lending institutions do not like the mix, and therefore the City may be in a better position to attract horizontal mixed use than vertical mixed use. Further, the traditional mixed use; three story buildings with commercial on the lower level and residential on the two higher floors, will mean that the project would be significantly larger in scale and height than the surrounding neighborhood development. It is reasonable to desire some commercial to continue to build out the downtown, although more cities are also focusing on bringing in more dense residential

development to create additional markets for the downtown businesses, especially daytime customers.

It is understood that the comprehensive plan indicates a preference for mixed use, but the zoning ordinance permits apartments and multi-family at the density proposed by the project as permitted uses.

2. Development Overview

General Plan

The 2.4 rectangular site is currently vacant and is zoned and guided for Central Business Districts uses. The proposal is for four apartment buildings with 8 units in each. The project includes surface parking and access drives from the west and east. Stormwater ponding is located in the northeast and southeast. Utilities are available to the site and the developer will connect all four buildings to the municipal system.

The site is relatively flat which creates some difficulty when installing new sanitary sewer and storm sewer. The high point is in the west central at 886' with the low points along the eastern property line. The building elevations present a building with predominately metal vertical siding which is much more residential in character than anticipated by the exterior materials requirements for the CBD zoning. Similarly, the landscape plan provides for 32 trees the minimum expected for a site this open and highly visible to all four adjacent properties.

Dimensional Standards

The developer appears to be meeting the CBD dimensional standards found in the Dimensional & Design Standards Table.

Use	Ordinance Requirement (CBD)	Site Plan
Front-yard setback North	0 ft	8 ft
Front-yard setback South	0 ft	56 ft
Front-yard setback East	0 ft	48 ft
Front-yard setback West	0 ft	48 ft
Lot Width – corner lot – E to W	25 ft	301 ft
Lot Depth - minimum – N to S	100 ft	350 ft

Minimum Lot Size - sq ft	2,500 sq ft	104,544 sq ft
Building height - in ft	50 ft	
Impervious surface - maximum	NA	54.7%
Parking Setback	5 ft	22 ft
Parking Spaces- Minimum spaces	64	88

Parking

The zoning ordinance requires 2 parking spaces per unit for a total of 64 parking stalls. Parking and access aisles must be setback at least 5' from all property lines. The individual accesses to the site must be under 40' in width.

Design Elements (Façade Materials)

The ordinance requires building elevations with type and color of building materials, typical floor plans, dimensions of all structures and location of exterior buildings and equipment. The site is located in Zone 1 which requires that "Structures must provide a cohesive architectural appearance reflecting its functional purpose and must be composed of at least 65% Class I materials and not more than 35% Class II materials. Class 1 materials consist of brick, natural stone, glass curtain wall, copper or other comparable materials. Class II includes concrete block, precast concrete panels, masonry stucco, fiber-cement exterior siding, EFIS, smooth and scored block, and other similar materials.

The applicant has provided building elevations which depict 14.4% of the building is doors and windows, 15% is stone and the remainder is siding. Shake shingle side is under the roofline with the majority of the building being vertical metal siding. It appears the stone wainscoting is approximately 3' and also highlights the center of the north and south elevations, surrounding the main entrance when appropriate. The sides of the buildings, the east and west, do not have any additional stone besides the wainscoting. It is unclear if the percentages listed above are for the front elevations only as the sides of the structures have a significant amount of vertical metal siding.

In some instances, there could be some recognition other project attributes which would allow some reduction in the exterior materials requirements. However, in this instance the landscape plan and the site design do not provide any reason to vary from the current materials standards. As noted previously, this is a high visibility site both due to its location and lack of topography and the city is interested in having a project that sets the tone for future development and redevelopment in the downtown area. The lower quality building materials vary greatly from the ordinance criteria, and staff does not support the plan as proposed.

Landscape & Tree Preservation Plan

The tree preservation plan show the site contains 8 existing trees with 1 planned for removal. The site is a highly visible site in the downtown area and significant landscaping is desired for the site.

From a landscape perspective, the ordinance generally requires 1 tree per unit for multi-family development, which is what is proposed on the plan. The CBD district is not held to that standard necessarily; and given the sites high visibility and lack of natural vegetation, staff is recommending additional landscaping above what is proposed by the applicant. The plan illustrates 32 overstory trees along the perimeter of the site, with 12 on the south side meaning a spacing of approximately 25'. The west side would be similar to the north side having 6 trees and the east having 3 due to the location of the drainage ponds. Based upon the notes on the landscape plan they all appear to be either red oak or white maples. The applicant should provide more vegetation over the entire site. There are no trees between buildings and nothing closer to any of the four structures. They do not show any landscaping around the buildings or a seed mix specifically for the drainage areas which could be vegetated more attractively than the present condition. This plan reflects the minimum expectation for plantings on the site and additional work is needed to elevate the site plan to be consistent with the goals of the comprehensive plan for the downtown.

Utilities

The project has all public utilities available to the site and the project density can be accommodated by the existing systems and capacities. Because the site lacks elevation there has been a lot of discussion about getting the proper grades on the pipes for operational reasons. The applicant has addressed those issues.

The site will meet stormwater requirements in part through installation of two infiltration basins in the northeast and southeast. These may also provide some opportunity of differing landscaping on the site.

Signage

The plans do not depict any signage for the site. The applicant shall obtain a permit prior to installation of any signage.

Parks, Trails and Open Space

The Parks, Trails and Open Space Commission will review this at their May 5, 2025 meeting and their recommendation will be provided at the meeting.

3. Conditional Use Permit

Section 66-932 Building Restrictions requires a conditional use permit in the CBD District to permit more than one principal structure on a site. The proposed use of multi-family apartments on the site, located within four different buildings, prompts the need for approval of a conditional use permit. There are ten findings of fact the City must find to consider when granting a conditional use permit. The City Council is not limited to these 10:

1. Relationship to the city's comprehensive plan;
2. The geographical area involved;
3. The character of the surrounding area;
4. The availability and design capacities of existing or proposed utilities;

5. Whether such a request will tend to or actually depreciate the surrounding area;
6. Whether the request will place an undue financial burden on the city;
7. Whether the request will impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property;
8. Whether the request will unreasonably increase the congestion in the public right-of-way;
9. Whether the request will increase the danger of fire or endanger the public safety;
10. Whether the request is consistent with the spirit and intent of this division.

There are 13 conditions of approval that may be considered when approving a conditional use permit. The City Council is not limited to these 13 standards which are found in the ordinance:

1. The land area and setback requirements of the property containing such a use or activity shall be the minimum established for the district;
2. When abutting a residential use in a residential district, the property shall be screened and landscaped in compliance with section 66-970 et seq.;
3. Where applicable, all city, state and federal laws, regulations and ordinances shall be complied with and all necessary permits secured;
4. All signs shall be in compliance with section 66-821 et seq. and shall not adversely impact adjoining or surrounding residential uses;
5. Adequate off-street parking and loading shall be provided in accordance with section 66-848 et seq. Such parking and loading shall be screened and landscaped from abutting residential uses in compliance with section 66-970 et seq.;
6. The proposed water, sewer and other utilities shall be capable of accommodating the proposed use;
7. The street serving the use or activity is of sufficient design to accommodate the proposed use or activity, and such use or activity shall not generate such additional traffic to create a nuisance or hazard to existing traffic or to surrounding land uses;
8. All access roads, driveways, parking areas, and outside storage, service, or sales areas shall be surfaced or grassed to control dust and drainage;
9. All open and outdoor storage, sales and service areas shall be screened from view from the public streets and from abutting residential uses or districts;
10. All lighting shall be designed as to have no direct source of light visible from adjacent residential areas or from the public streets;
11. The use or activity shall be properly drained to control surface water runoff;
12. The architectural appearance and functional plan of the building and site shall not be so dissimilar to the existing buildings or area as to cause impairment in property values or constitute a blighting influence;
13. Where structures combine residential and nonresidential uses, such uses shall be separated and provided with individual outside access, and the uses shall not conflict in any manner.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on May 6, 2025, and obtained public input at that meeting. The Planning Commission considered the request and recommended to table the request to the June 3, 2025, meeting to meet to allow the developer to address meeting the design standards. The developer agreed to extend the request out to July 1, 2025.

The developer has provided a revised landscaping plan to address screening along the east side of the site. City staff have not received the revised building and architectural plans to meet the city design standards.

Staff Recommendation

1. Staff has identified 2 issues which should be addressed by the applicant prior to granting any approvals. Staff is recommending the application be continued to permit the applicant time to address the following issues:

1. The applicant revise the landscaping plan to provide significantly more vegetation on the site, along the infiltration basins, and around the buildings.
2. The applicant revise the building elevations to meet the city performance standards for exterior materials. That includes all four buildings and all four elevations.

Planning Commission Action

After the public hearing and discussion, the Planning Commission could take one of the following actions:

1. Recommend approval with the conditions and findings of fact.
2. Recommend denial with findings of fact.
3. Table the request to the next Planning Commission meeting and provide direction to Staff and the applicant as to the additional information needed.

Attachments

1. Main Street Townhomes Civil Plans
2. Building Color Renderings

Voting Requirements:

Voting Options **Simple Majority**

MAIN STREET APARTMENTS

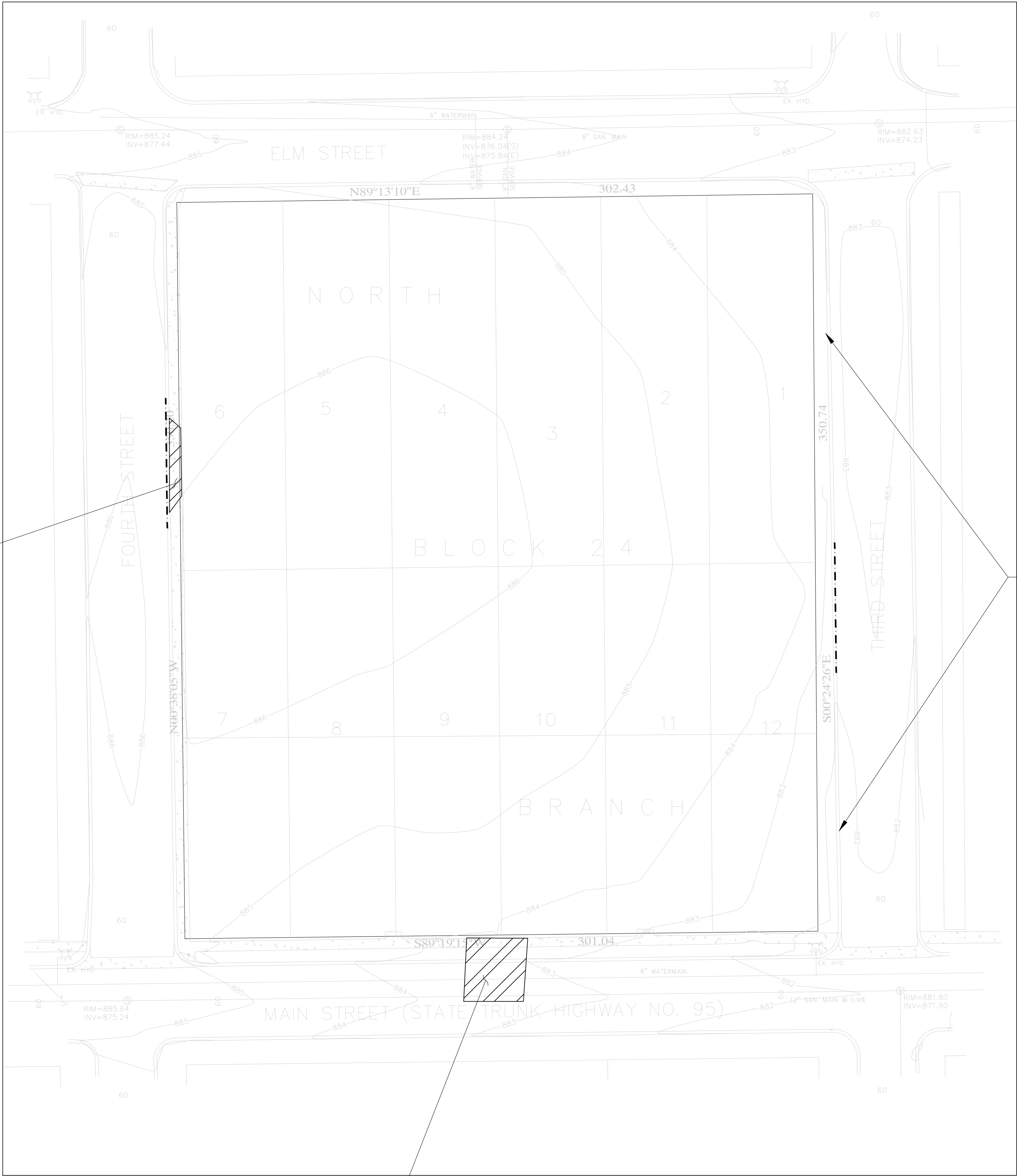
LEGEND

- CURB REMOVAL
- PAVEMENT OR SIDEWALK REMOVAL

REMOVE AND REPLACE WALK AND PAVEMENT
FOR UTILITY CONNECTIONS

REMOVE WALK FOR NEW ENTRANCE

REPLACE ENTIRE LENGTH OF
DEPRESSED CURB ALONG
EAST CURBLINE WITH B618
(CONFIRM THIS MATCHES
EXISTING),
EXCEPT IN LOCATION OF
NEW ENTRANCE.



JOB NO. 24-02

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN,
SPECIFICATION, OR REPORT WAS
PREPARED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT
SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A DULY
LICENSED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER UNDER
THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.

PRELIMINARY

KRISTLE L. BLOCH

5-26-2025

49893

DATE

LIC. NO.

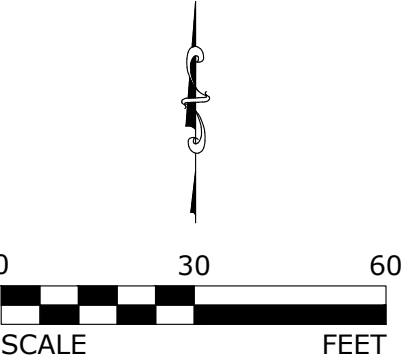
MAIN STREET APARTMENTS

OWNER: TOMMY FOSTER

1275 WEST 4TH ST, RUSH CITY, MN

EXISTING CONDITIONS
AND REMOVALS PLAN

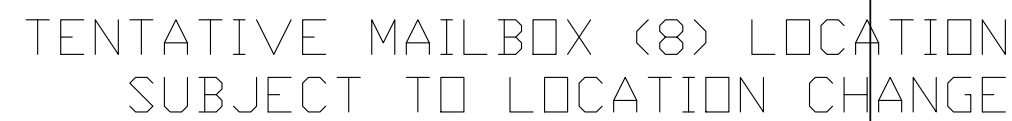
REVISIONS	NO.		DESCRIPTION		BY	DATE



LEGEND

PROPOSED B618 CURB AND GUTTER

PROPOSED BITUMINOUS PAVEMENT



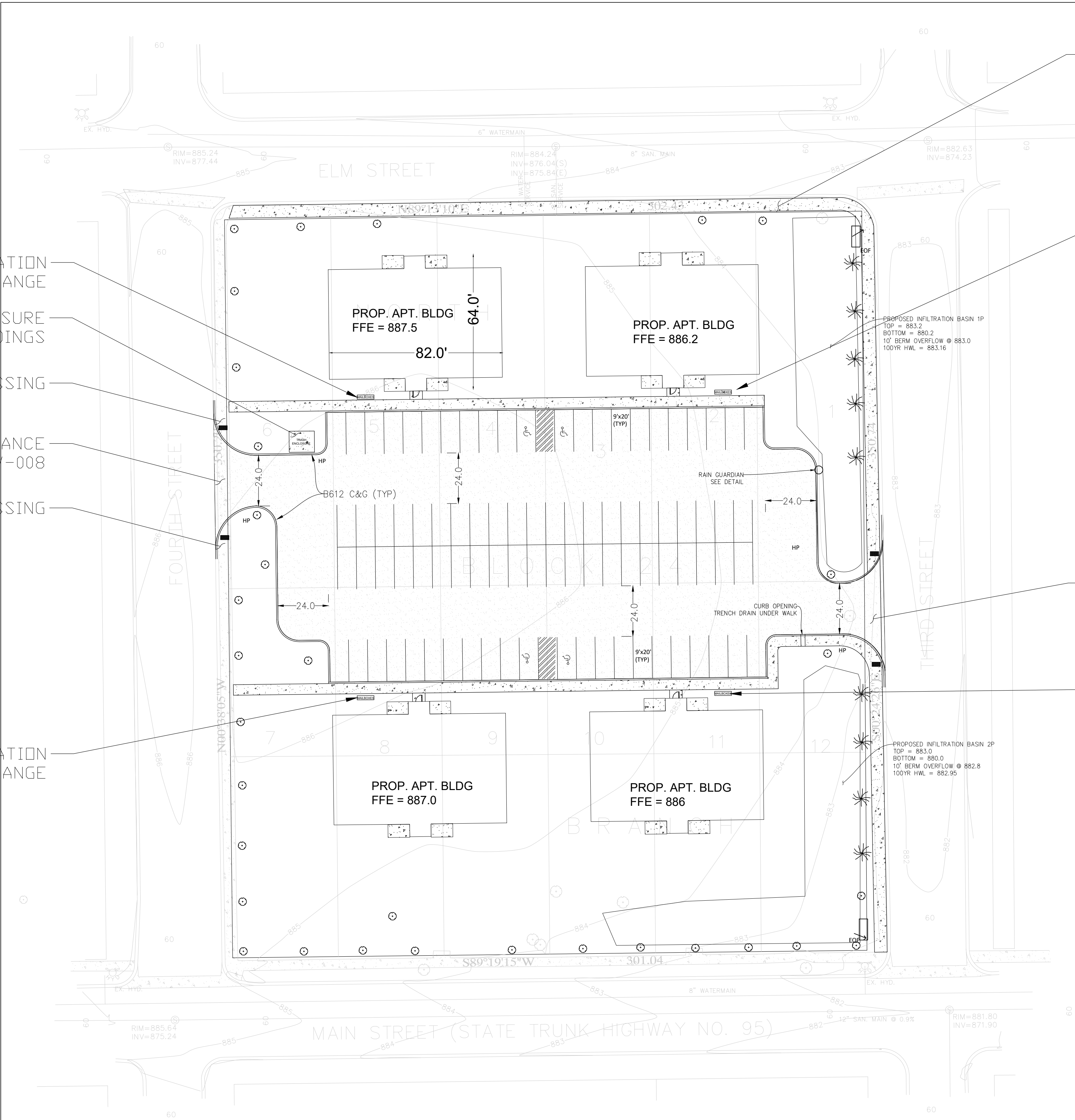
TRASH ENCLOSURE
MATERIAL TO MATCH BUILDINGS

ADA RAMP AT DRIVEWAY CROSSING

COMMERCIAL ENTRANCE
PER CITY STD DETAIL RDW-008

ADA RAMP AT DRIVEWAY CROSSING

TENTATIVE MAILBOX (8) LOCATION
SUBJECT TO LOCATION CHANGE



-6' PERIMETER SIDEWALK
PER CITY STANDARDS

TENTATIVE MAILBOX (8) LOCATION
SUBJECT TO LOCATION CHANGE

-COMMERCIAL ENTRANCE
PER CITY STD DETAIL RDW-008

TENTATIVE MAILBOX (8) LOCATION
SUBJECT TO LOCATION CHANGE

BLOCH
ENGINEERING

BLOCH ENGINEERING, PLLC
blochengineering.com

32210 XEON ST NW
CAMBRIDGE, MN 55008

krystle@blochengineering.com

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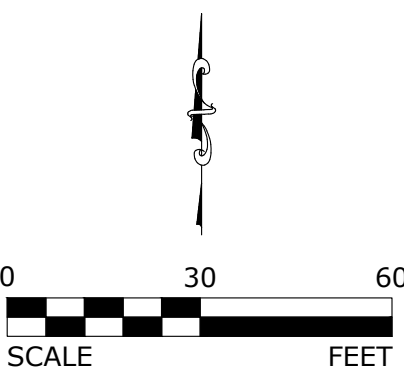
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KRYSTLE L. BLOCH	
5-26-2025	49893

MAIN STREET APARTMENTS

OWNER: TOMMY FOSTER

1275 WEST 4TH ST, RUSH CITY, MN

SITE PLAN

[illegible]

SHEET
C3

SHEETS
11

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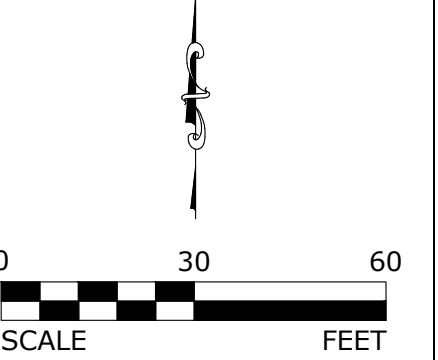
KRISTLE L. BLOCH
5-26-2025
49893

DATE L.C. NO.

MAIN STREET APARTMENTS
OWNER: TOMMY FOSTER
1275 WEST 4TH ST, RUSH CITY, MN

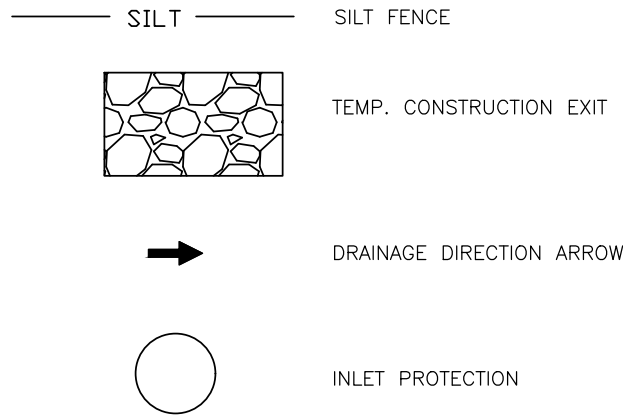
GRADING AND EROSION CONTROL PLAN

REVISIONS	NO.	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION					



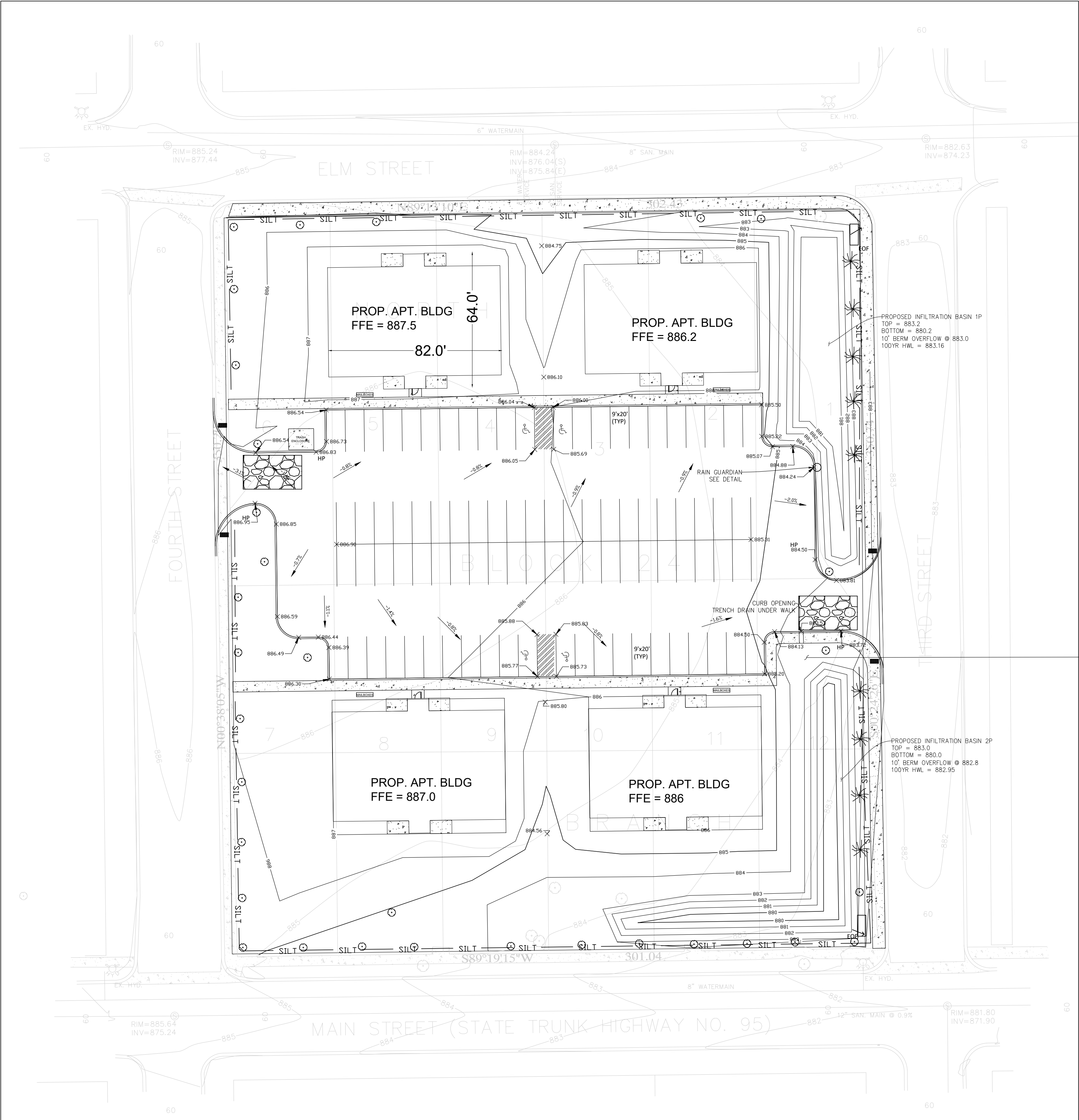
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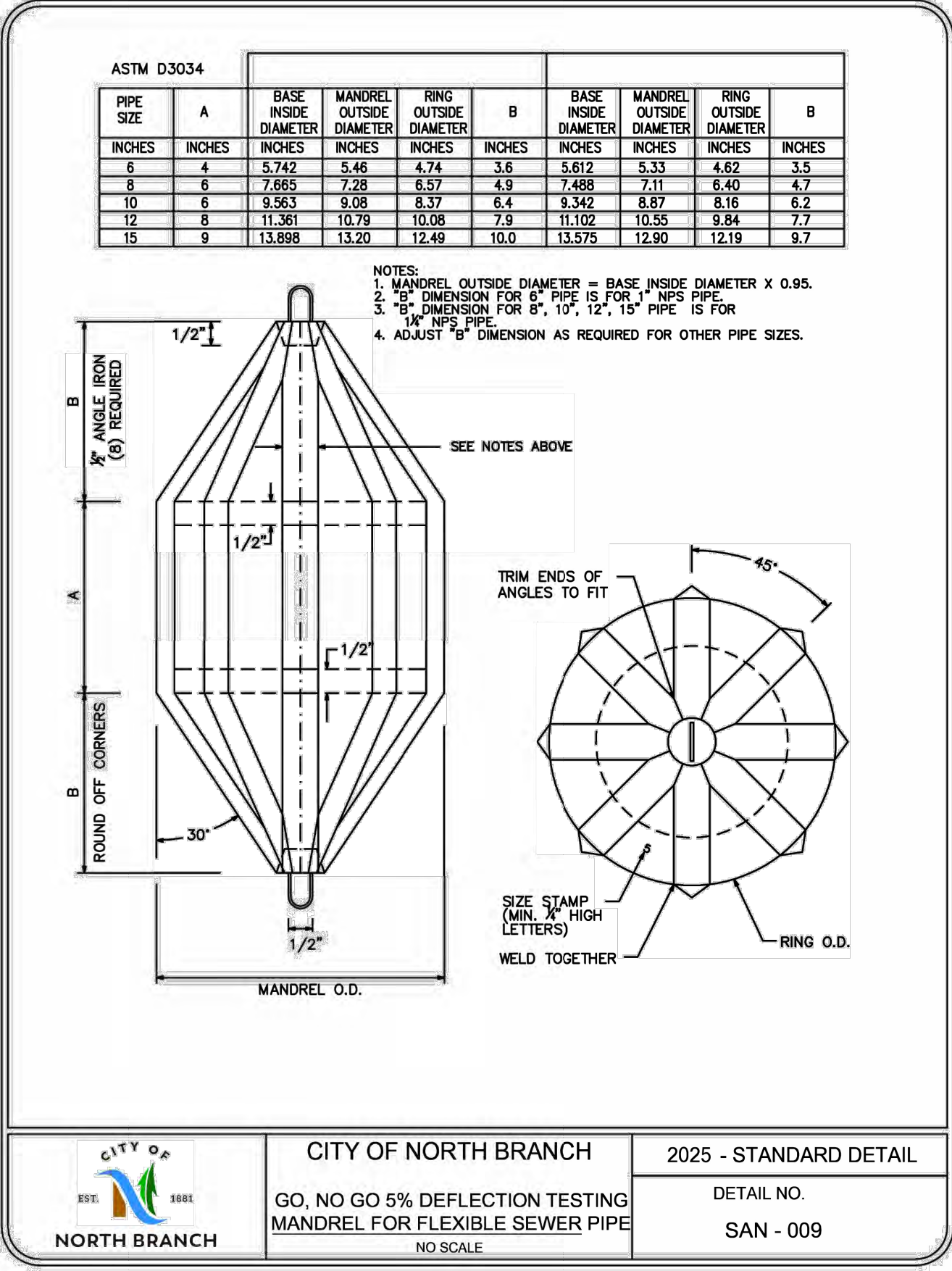
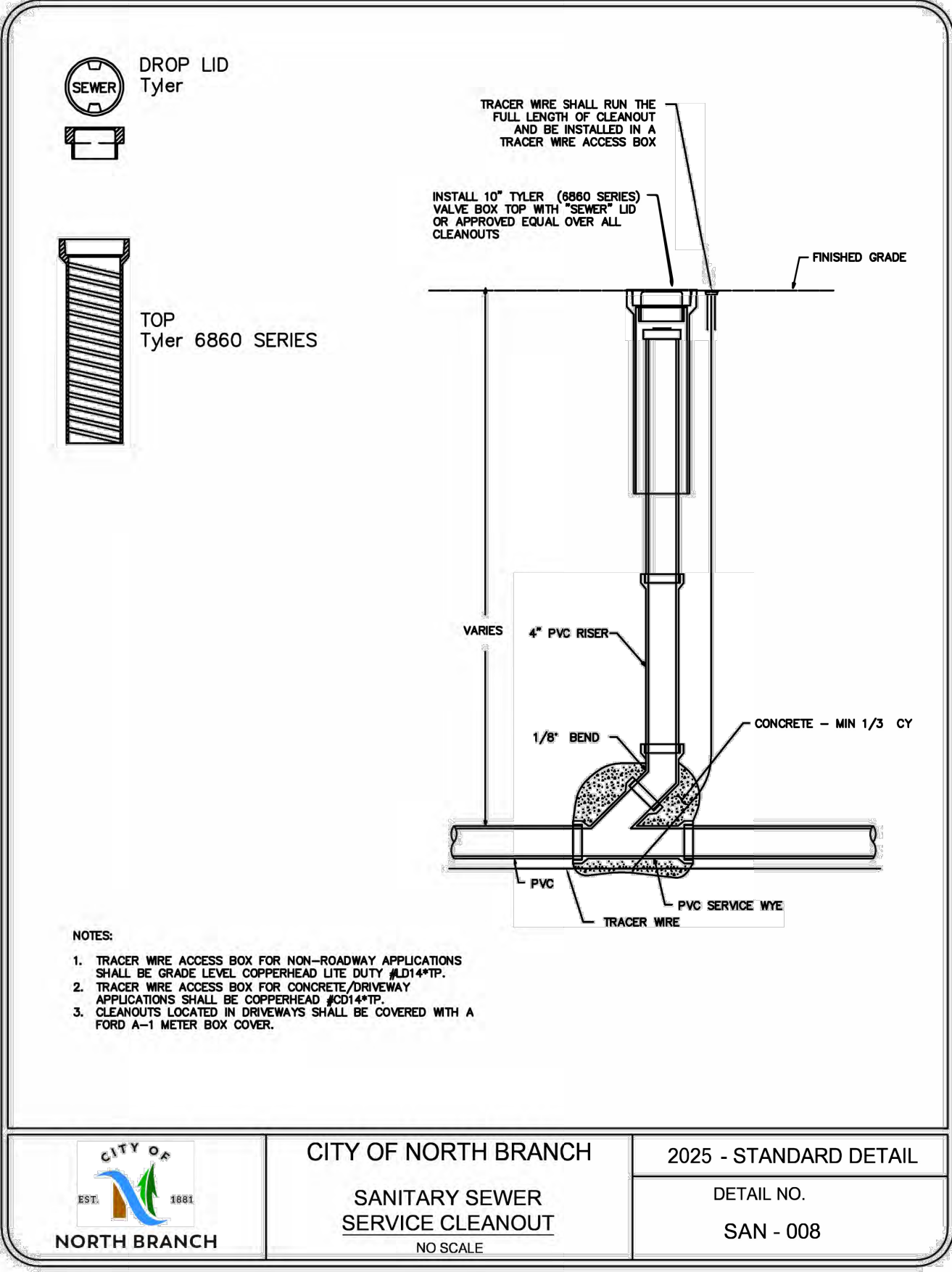
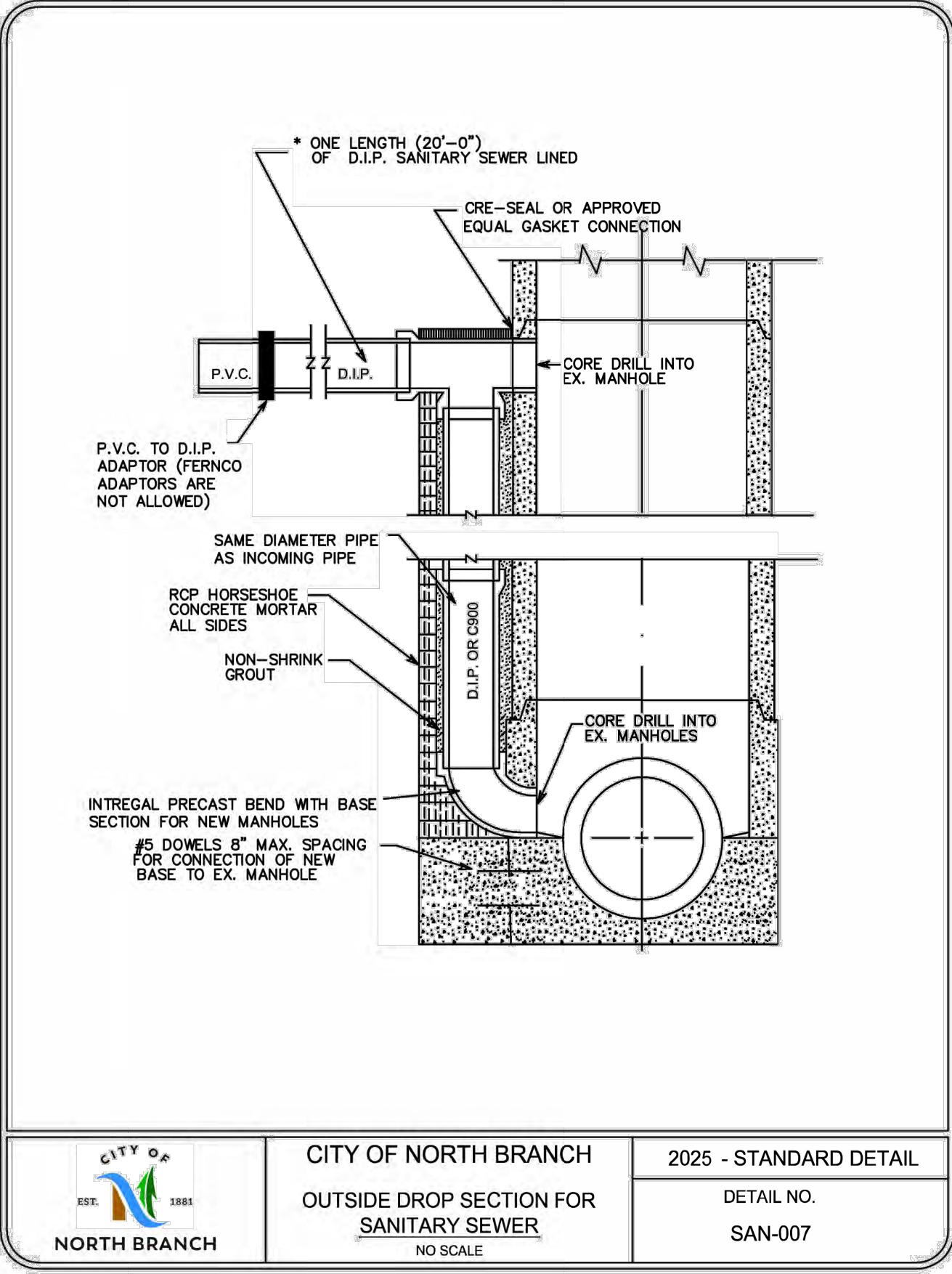
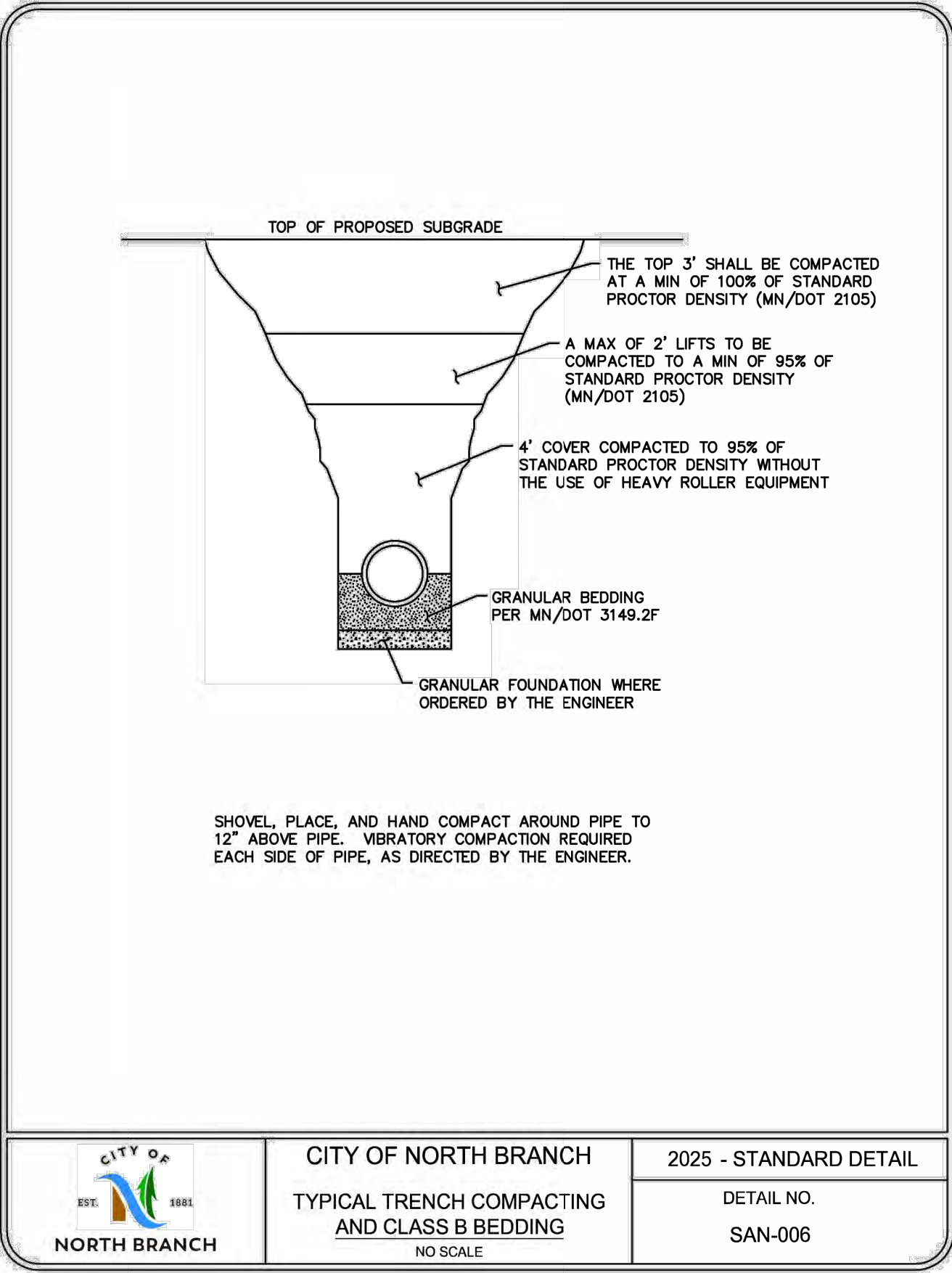
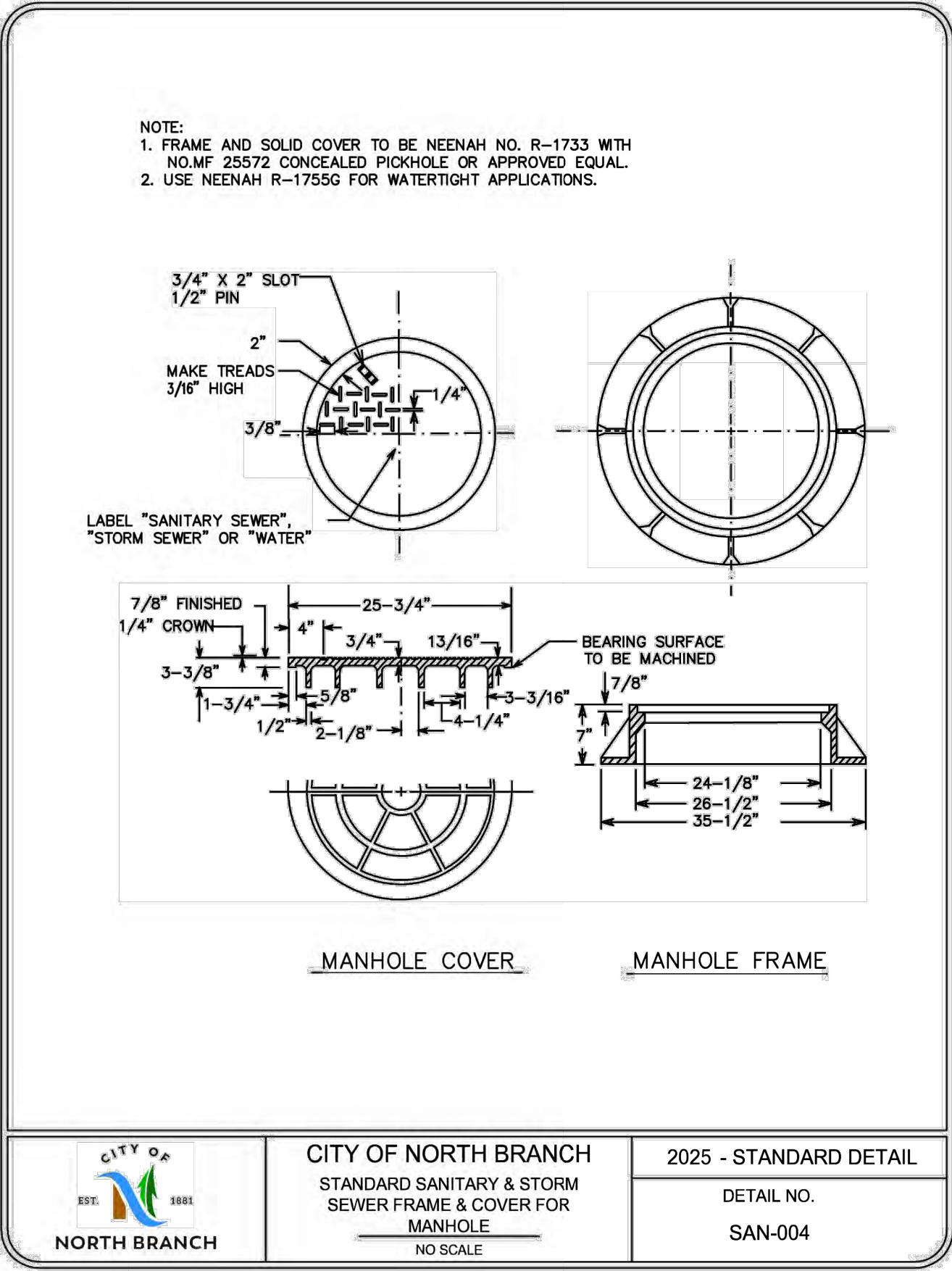
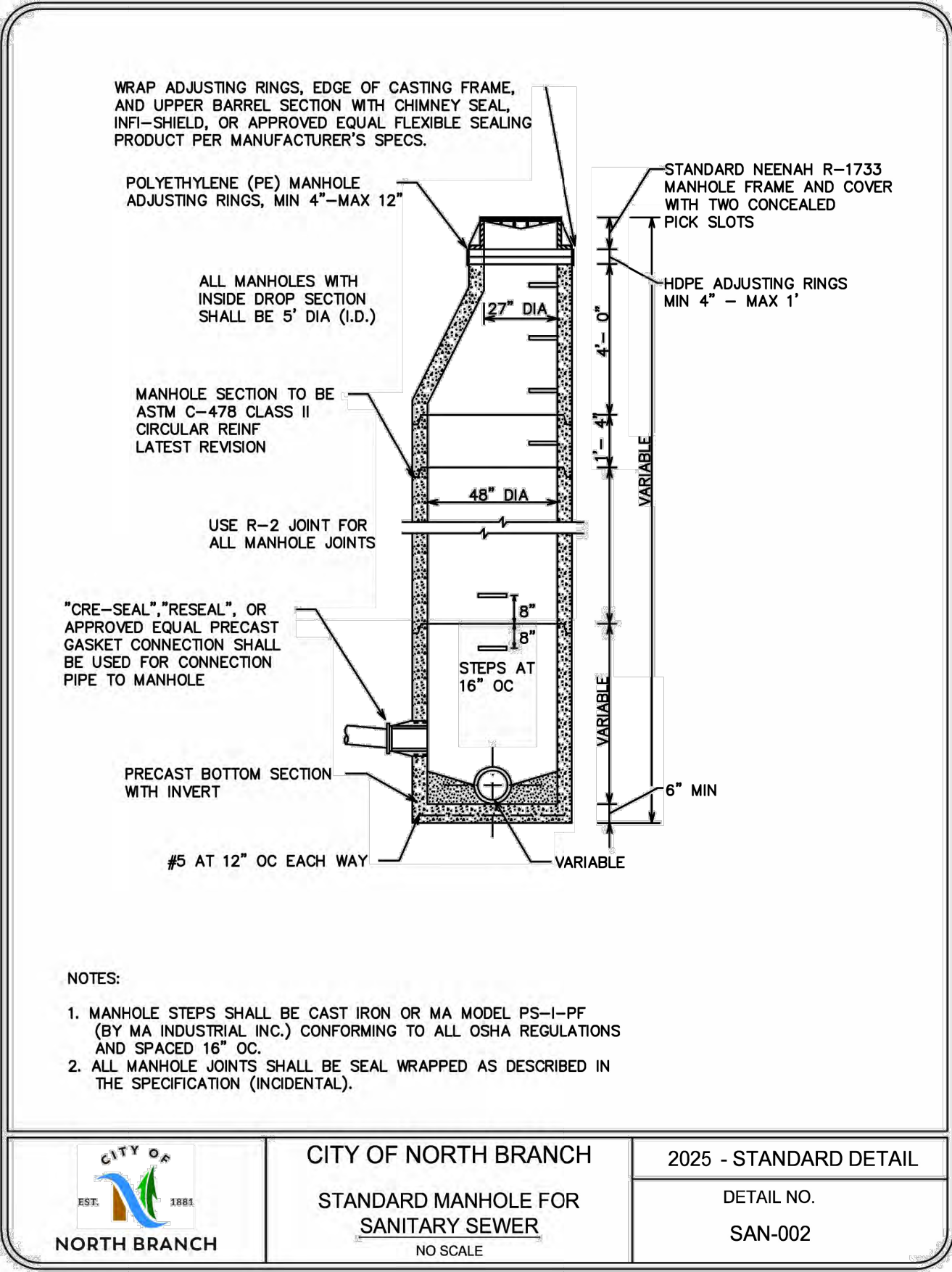
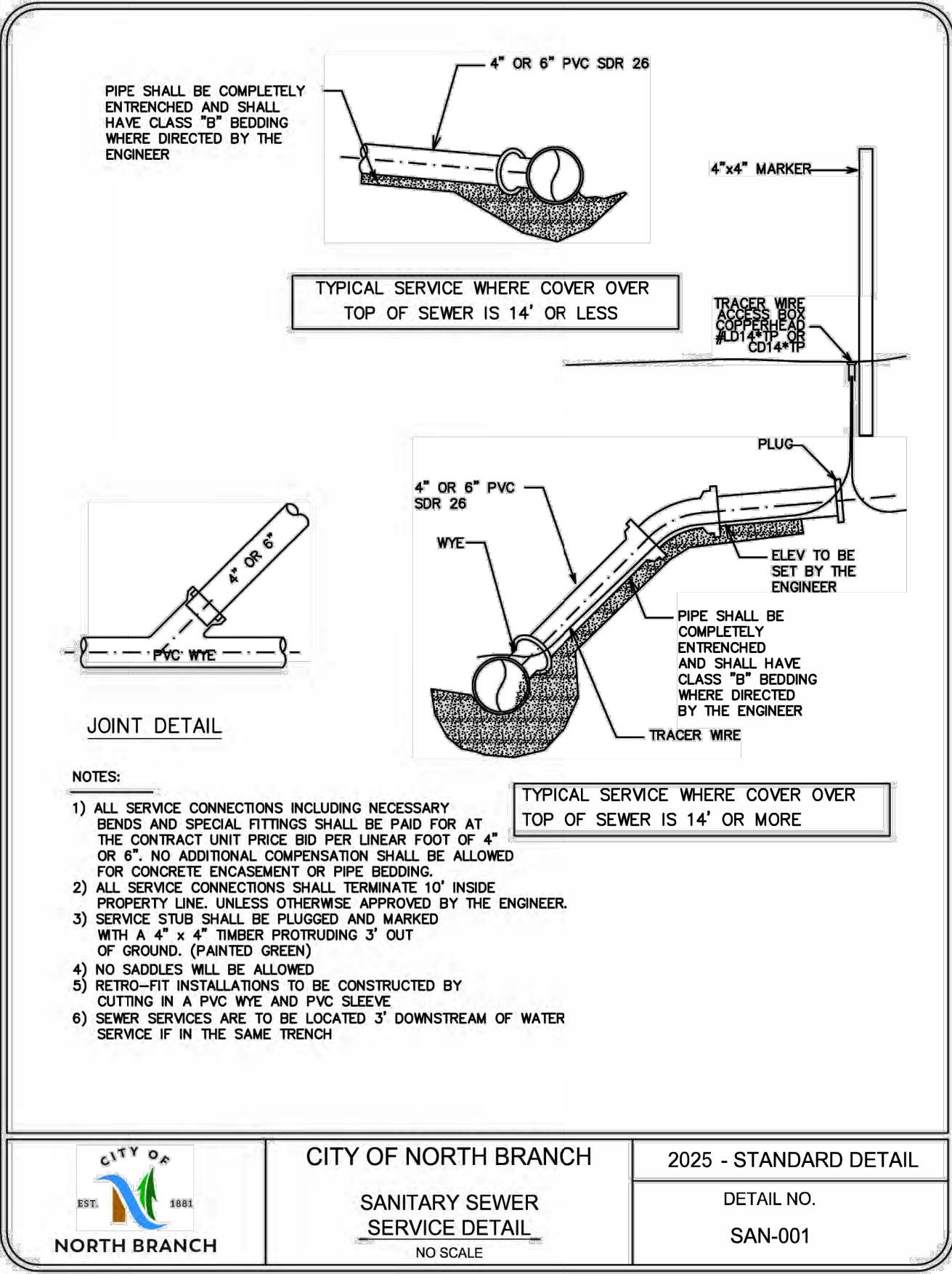
LEGEND

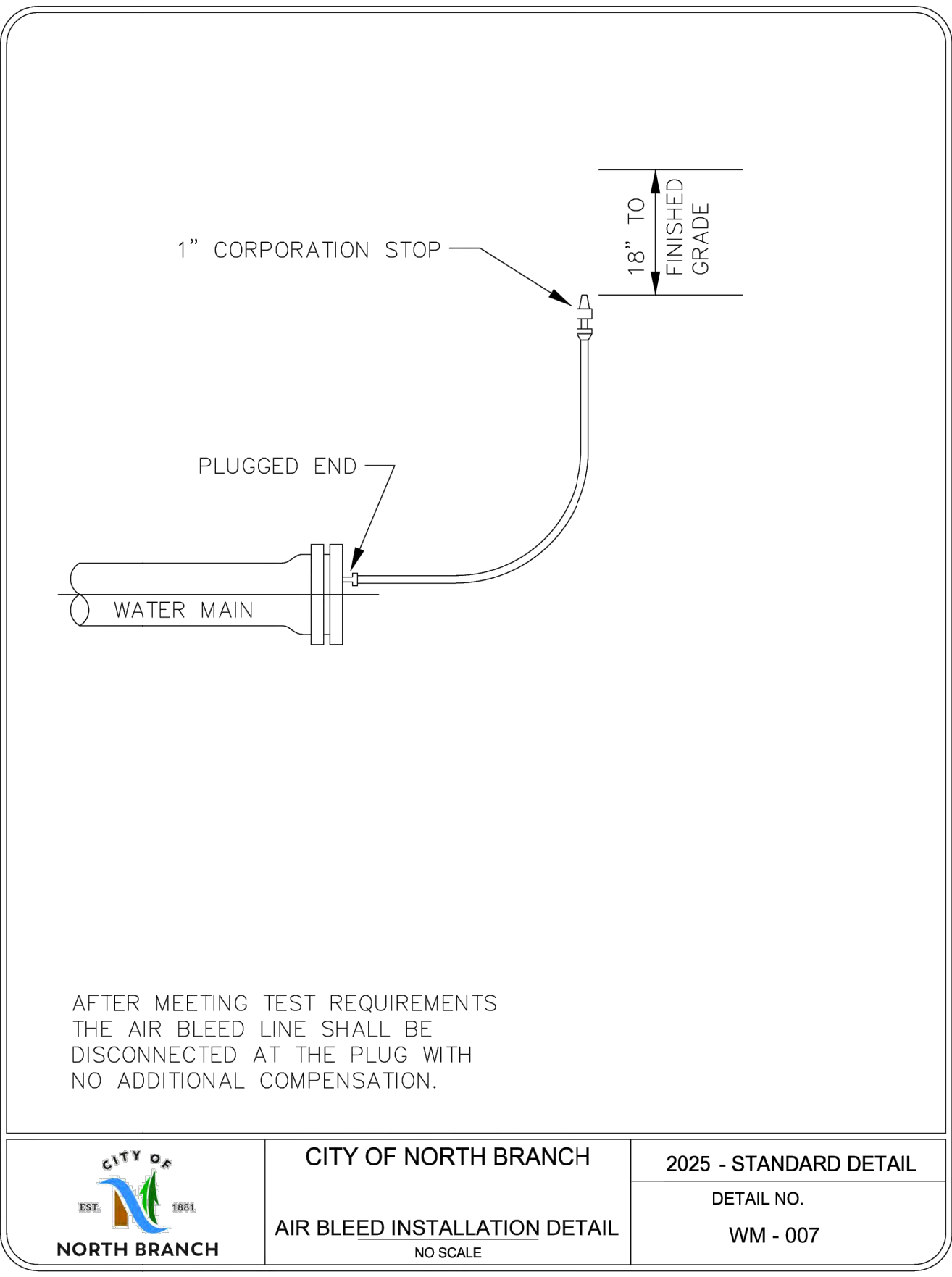
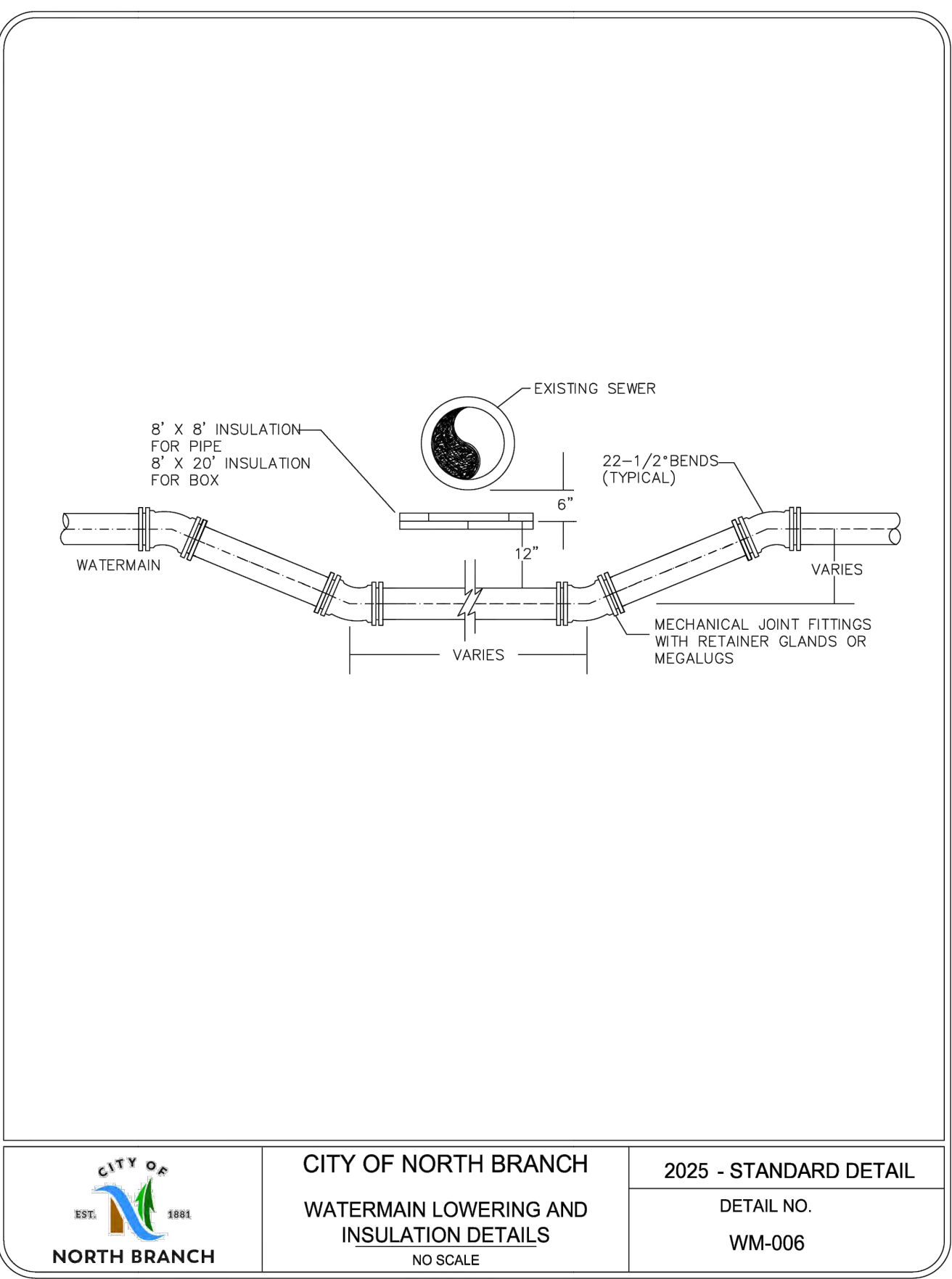
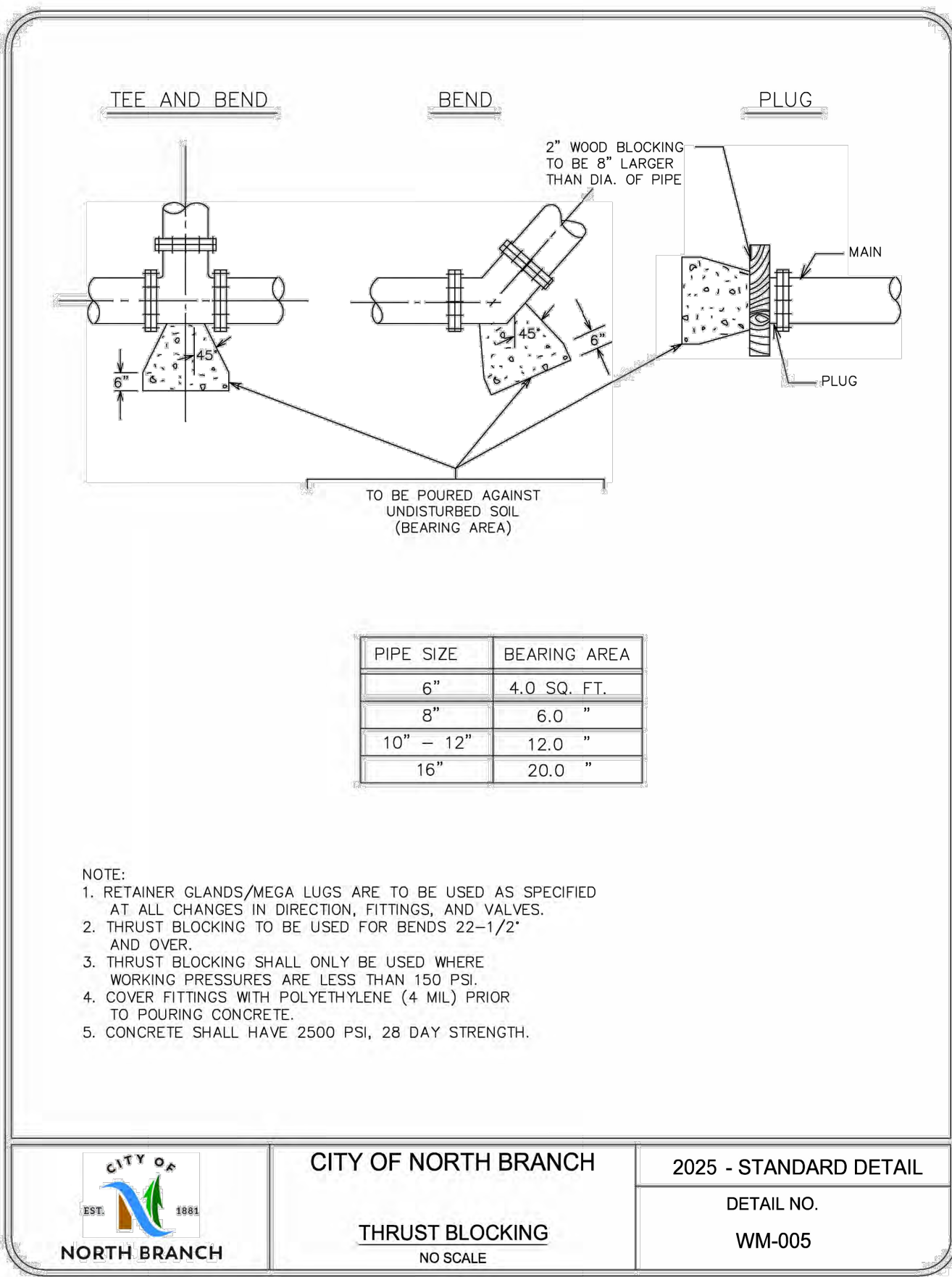
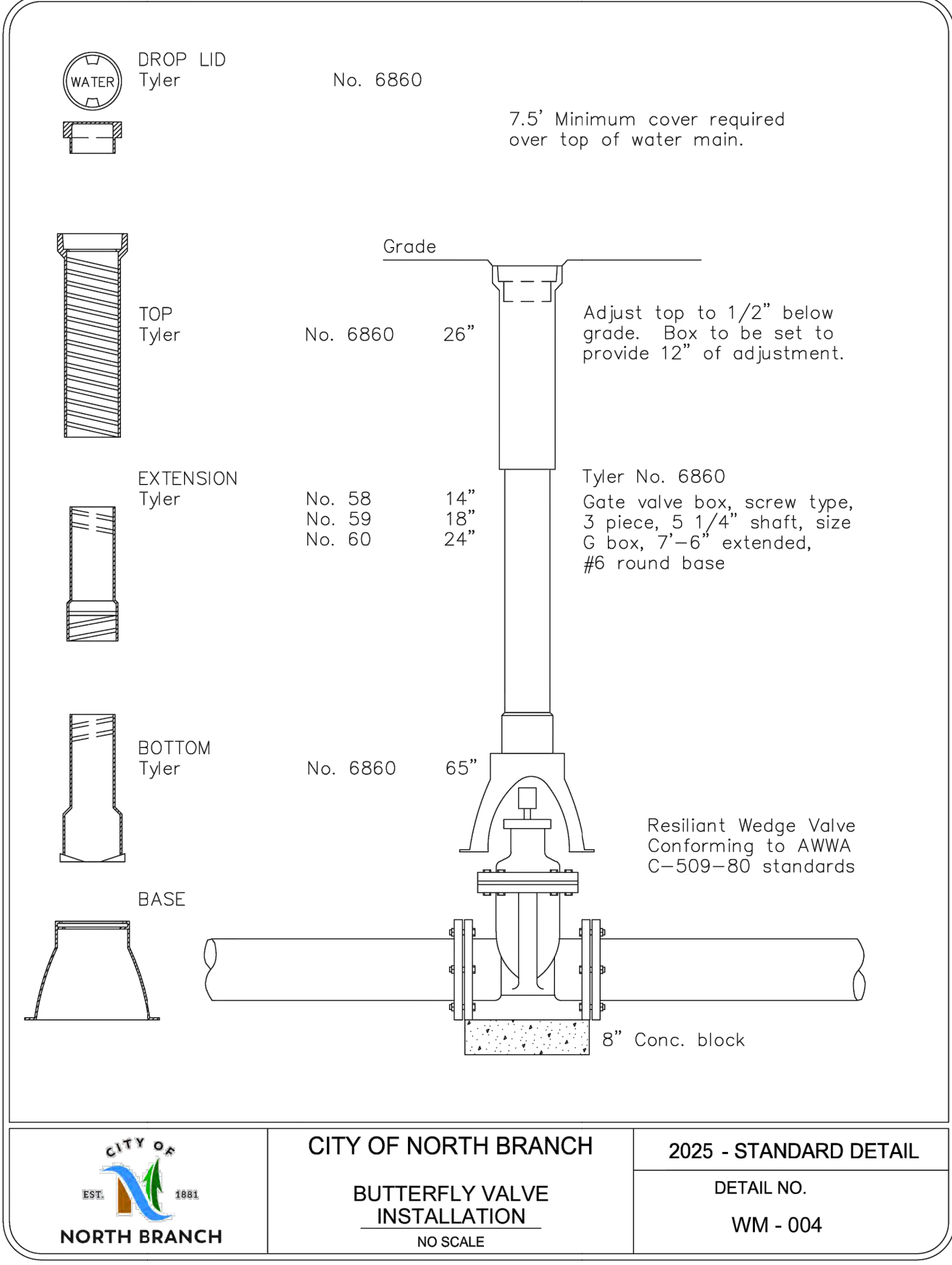
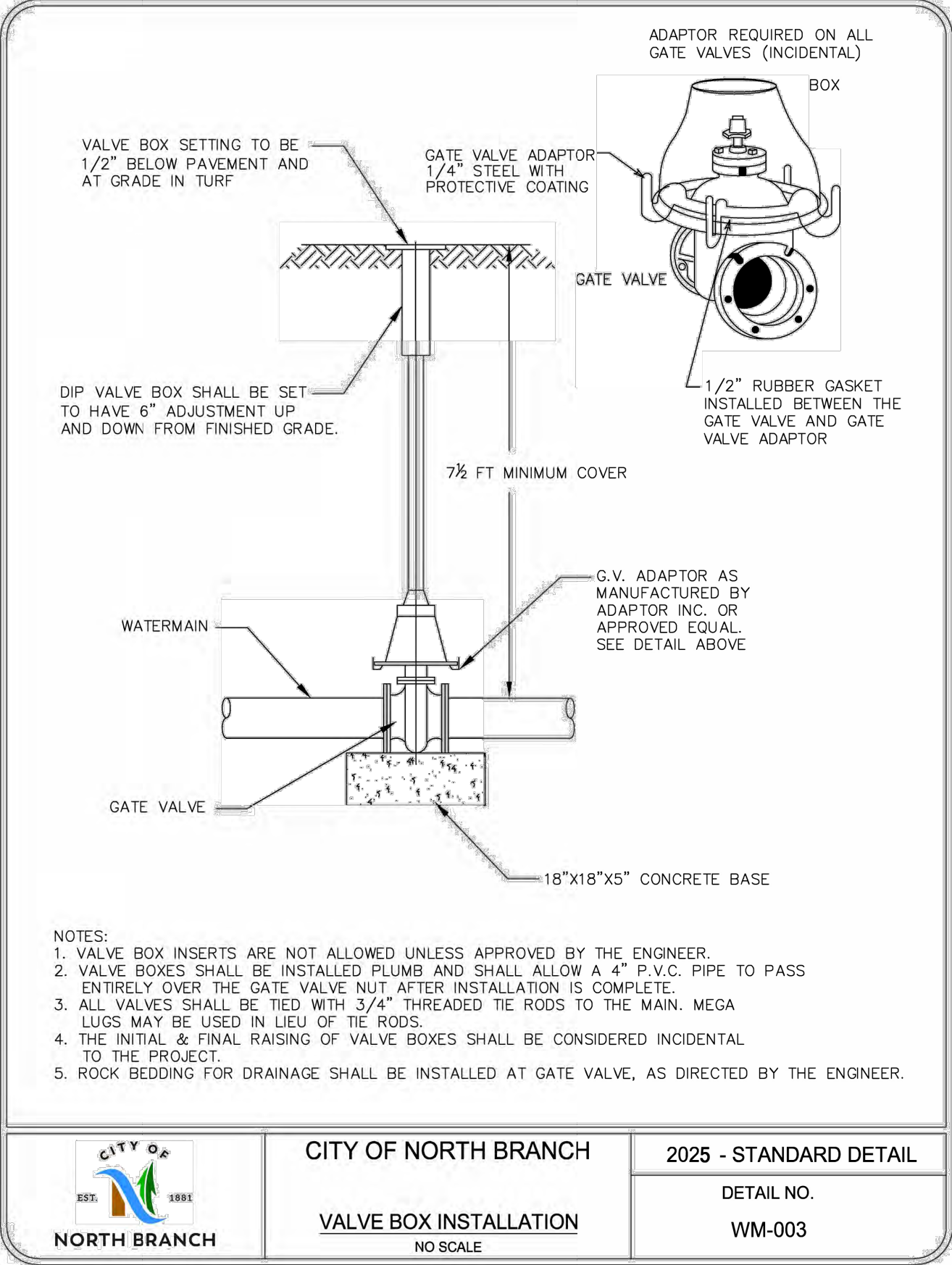
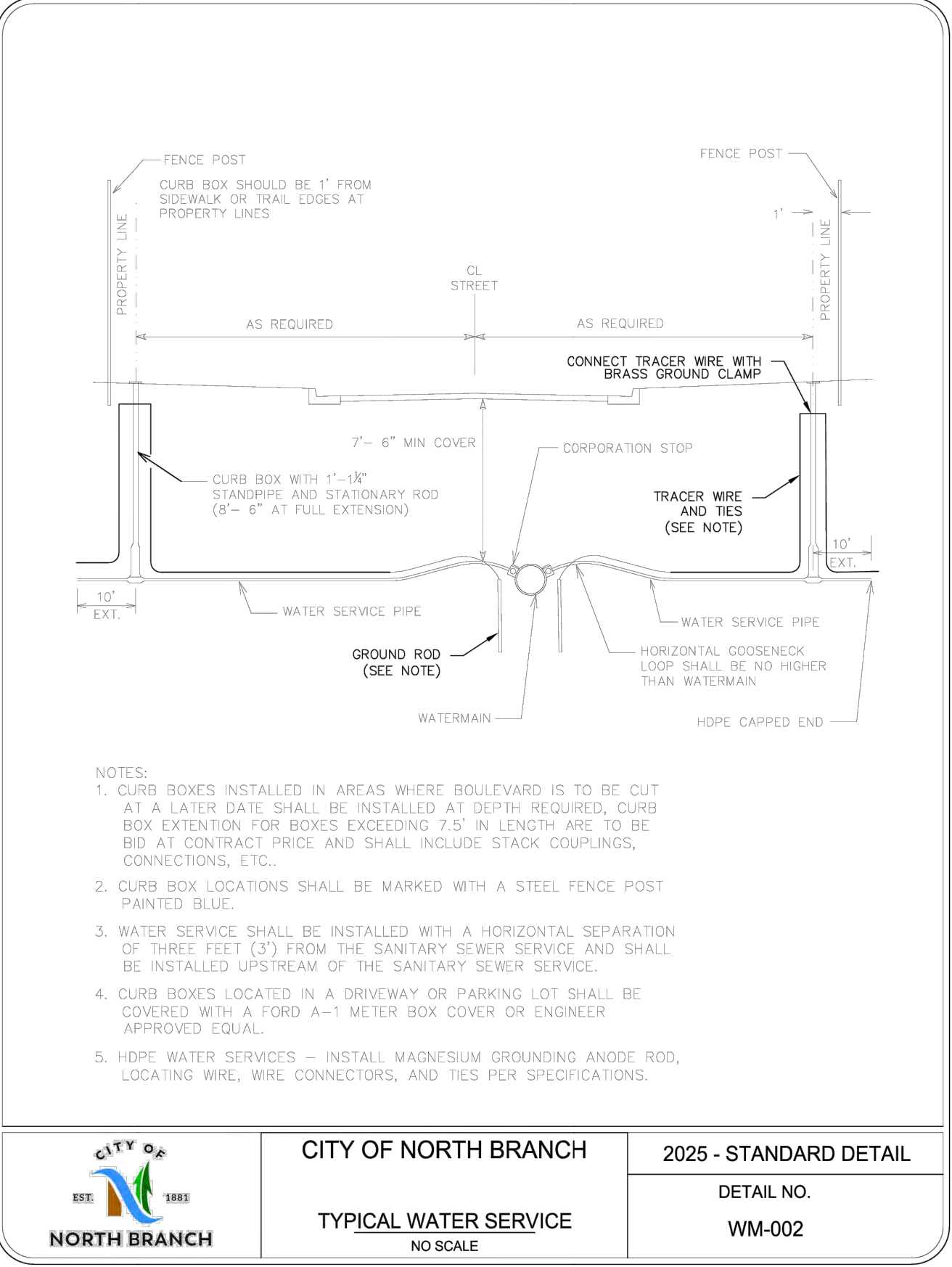
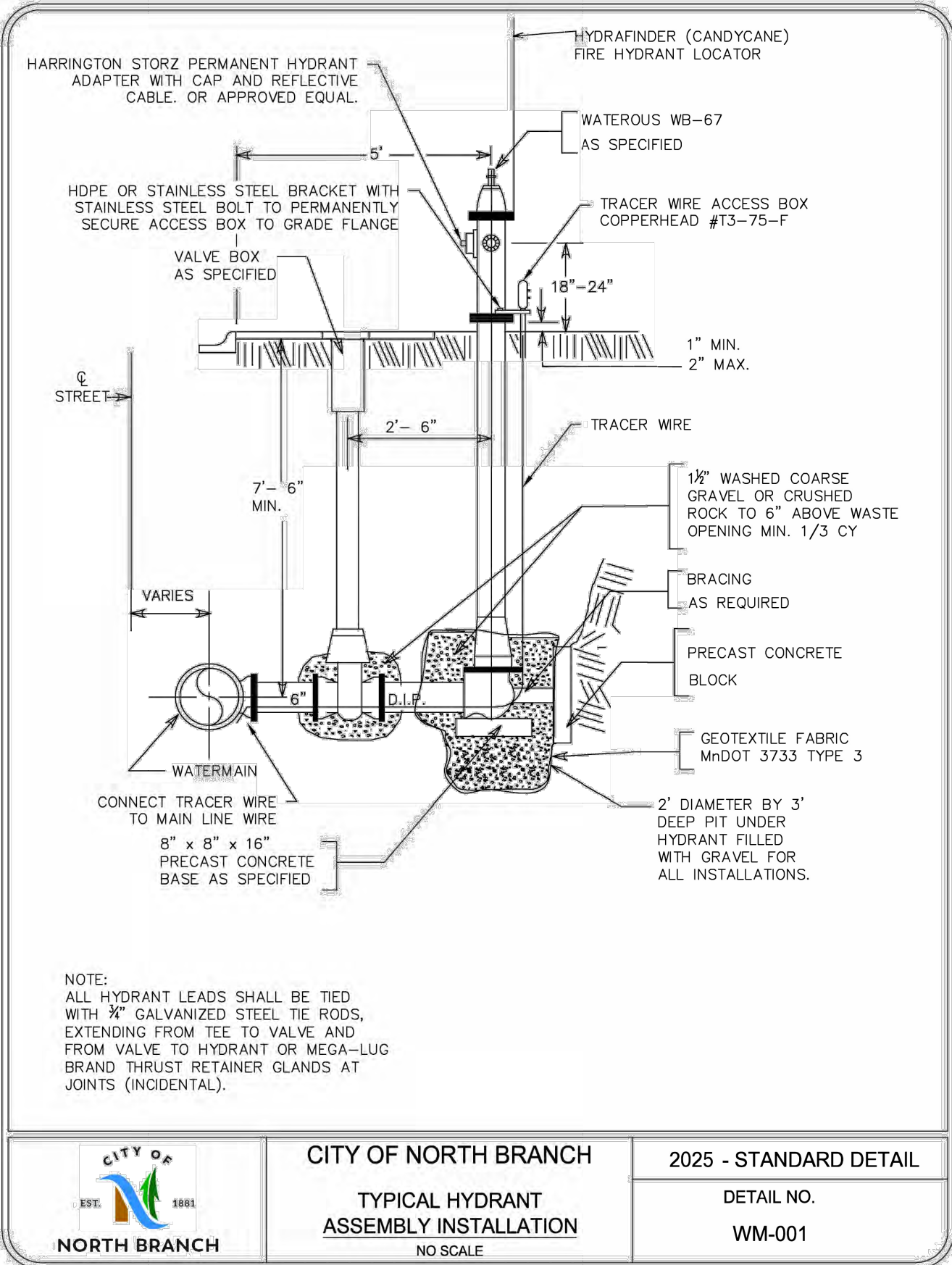


- SITE GRADING NOTES:
1. THE CONTRACTOR IS SPECIFICALLY CAUTIONED THAT THE LOCATION AND/OR ELEVATION OF EXISTING UTILITIES AS SHOWN ON THESE PLANS IS BASED ON RECORDS OF THE VARIOUS UTILITY COMPANIES, AND WHERE POSSIBLE, MEASUREMENTS TAKEN IN THE FIELD. THE INFORMATION IS NOT TO BE RELIED ON AS BEING EXACT OR COMPLETE. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL VERIFY THE FIELD LOCATION OF ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UTILITIES PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL CONTACT GOPHER STATE ONE CALL AT (651) 454-0002.
 2. ALL CUT OR FILL SLOPES SHALL BE 3:1 OR FLATTER UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
 3. EXISTING GRADE CONTOUR INTERVALS SHOWN AT 2 FOOT INTERVALS (TOPOGRAPHIC/SURVEY SHOT-BASED SURFACE).
 4. PROPOSED GRADE CONTOUR INTERVALS SHOWN AT 1 FOOT INTERVALS.
 5. IF ANY EXISTING STRUCTURES TO REMAIN ARE DAMAGED DURING CONSTRUCTION IT SHALL BE THE CONTRACTORS RESPONSIBILITY TO REPAIR AND/OR REPLACE THE EXISTING STRUCTURE AS NECESSARY TO RETURN IT TO EXISTING CONDITIONS OR BETTER.
 6. CONTRACTOR SHALL ASSURE POSITIVE DRAINAGE AWAY FROM BUILDINGS FOR ALL NATURAL AND PAVED/GRAVEL AREAS.
 7. TOPOGRAPHIC INFORMATION TAKEN FROM A TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY BY LAND SURVEYORS, IF CONTRACTOR DOES NOT ACCEPT EXISTING TOPOGRAPHY AS SHOWN ON THE PLANS, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, HE SHALL HAVE MADE, AT HIS EXPENSE, A TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY BY A REGISTERED LAND SURVEYOR AND SUBMIT TO THE OWNER FOR REVIEW.
 8. CONSTRUCTION SHALL COMPLY WITH ALL APPLICABLE GOVERNING CODES AND BE CONSTRUCTED TO SAME.
 9. ALL PROPOSED SPOT ELEVATIONS ARE FLOWLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

- EROSION CONTROL NOTES:
1. ALL DISTURBED AREAS TO BE SEEDED AND MULCHED. 4IN MIN TOPSOIL, EXCEPT IN RIGHT OF WAY. RIGHT OF WAY TO BE SODDED.
 2. MULCH TYPE 1 (DISK ANCHORED) IN DISTURBED AREAS
 3. SEED MNDOT TYPE 35-221, AT A RATE OF 36.5 LB/AC
 4. ALL SLOPES STEEPER THAN 4:1, SHALL BE RESTORED WITH SEED AND PROTECTED WITH EROSION CONTROL BLANKET PER MNDOT SPEC. 3885.1 OR SODDED AND STAKED.
 5. SILT FENCE AROUND ENTIRE PERIMETER/PROPERTY LINE. MAY NEED TO USE EC LOGS IN LIEU OF SILT FENCE FOR MOBILITY IN AREAS WHERE THE BMPS WILL BE MOVED (NEAR PROPOSED SIDEWALKS)







REVISIONS	
NO.	DESCRIPTION

STORM WATER POLLUTION PREVENTION PLAN (SWPPP)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The existing site is a total of 2.4 acres, which will be regraded as part of this current project. Runoff from this site is routed to proposed infiltration ponds.
Grading, infiltration, and paving will be installed as part of this project along with building construction.

SWPPP IMPLEMENTATION

The Project Engineer and the Contractor are responsible for implementation of the SWPPP and the installation, inspection, and maintenance of the erosion prevention and sediment control BMPs before and during construction. The Contractor will have an Erosion Control Supervisor who is responsible for coordinating the erosion prevention and sediment control BMPs.

PROJECT CONTACT IMPLEMENTATION/MAINTENANCE:

Erosion and Sediment Control, BMP Inspection Performed By:
Individual contact TBD
Erosion Works
Elk River, MN
763-262-7458

Long Term Pond Maintenance Provided By:
Bigfork Valley Log Cabins, LLC

TIMING OF BMP INSTALLATION

The erosion prevention and sediment control BMPs shall be installed as necessary to minimize erosion from disturbed surfaces and capture sediment on site.

1. Erosion and sediment control BMPs must be installed prior to the start of construction.
2. Where applicable, disturbed areas will immediately be temporarily stabilized prior to permanent turf establishment whenever construction ceases for 7 days, with special consideration of areas within 200 feet continuous positive slope of a surface water.
3. Temporary or permanent energy dissipation shall be placed at pipe outlets within 24 hours after connection to a surface water.
4. Temporary stabilization of stockpiles must be initiated immediately to limit soil erosion whenever any construction activity has permanently ceased on any portion of the site and will not resume for a period exceeding 7 calendar days.
5. Planned slopes of 1:3 (V:H) or steeper and greater than 75 ft. in length will be temporarily or permanently stabilized in increments not to exceed 75 ft., prior to constructing or disturbing a new increment.
6. BMPs must remain in place until final stabilization is achieved and permit NOT has been submitted to the MPCA.
7. The normal wetted perimeter of any temporary or permanent drainage ditch or swale that drains water from any portion of the construction site, or diverts around the site, must be stabilized within 200 lineal feet from the property edge, or from the point of discharge into any surface water. Stabilization of the last 200 lineal feet must be completed within 24 hours after connecting to a surface water.

CALCULATIONS:

Total Area of Grading = 2.4 Ac
Total Existing Impervious = 0 Square Feet
Total New Impervious = 51250 Square Feet

$$\text{WATER QUALITY VOLUME} = (1'')(1' / 12'')(51250 \text{ SF}) = 4271 \text{ CF}$$

SOIL TYPES:

Majority A Soils (Web Soil Survey)

EROSION CONTROL QUANTITIES:

EROSION CONTROL QUANTITIES		
	UNIT	QUANTITY
SILT FENCE	EACH	1300
TEMP. CONSTRUCTION EXIT	EACH	1
SEED	ACRE	2.40
MULCH	TON	5

APPLICATION RATES:
SEED TYPE 25-151 @ 120 LB/AC
MULCH TYPE 1 @ 2 TON/AC

CONSTRUCTION SEQUENCE:

Construction to begin spring 2025. Silt fence around where specified and Rock entrances to be installed before any of the following scheduled events take place. Existing structures shall also be protected from sediment from the start of construction.

1. Grading
2. Install Utilities
3. Building Construction
4. Infiltration basin(s) constructed
5. Landscaping and Turf Restoration

Construction completion expected Fall 2025. All temporary erosion control measures will be removed and disposed of according to MPCA requirements. Final stabilization will be established.

If construction is not completed before winter, stockpiles and any slopes must be stabilized with appropriate BMPs (mulch, seed, erosion control blanket) as applicable to avoid erosion in the following spring season.

See NPDES CWS Permit Part 11 for inspection frequency adjustments throughout the course of scheduled construction.

IMPAIRED AND SPECIAL WATERS

The Sunrise River is within one mile of discharge point, and has impairments for the following: Fecal Coliform, Fishes Bioassessments, Mercury in Fish Tissue.

KARST AREA PROTECTION:

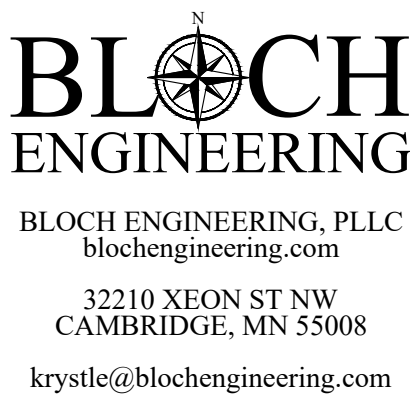
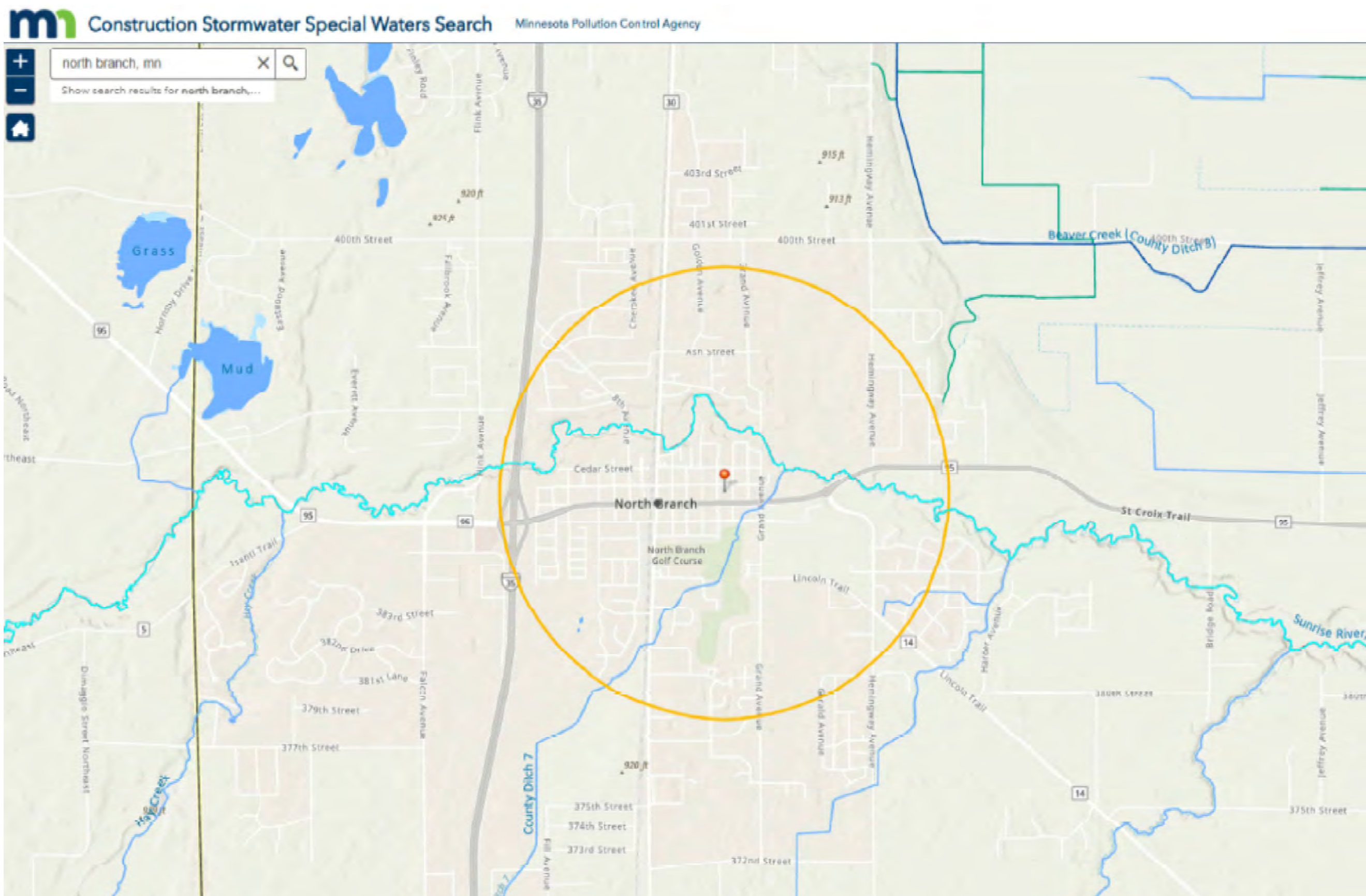
This area is not considered Karst area.

CALCAREOUS FENS:

No calcareous Fen sites exist on this project.

MITIGATION DUE TO REVIEWS:

There are no stormwater mitigation measures proposed as part of environmental, endangered species, archaeological or other required local, state or federal reviews conducted for the project.



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KRYSTLE L. BLOCH	5-26-2025
49893	

MAIN STREET APARTMENTS

OWNER: TOMMY FOSTER

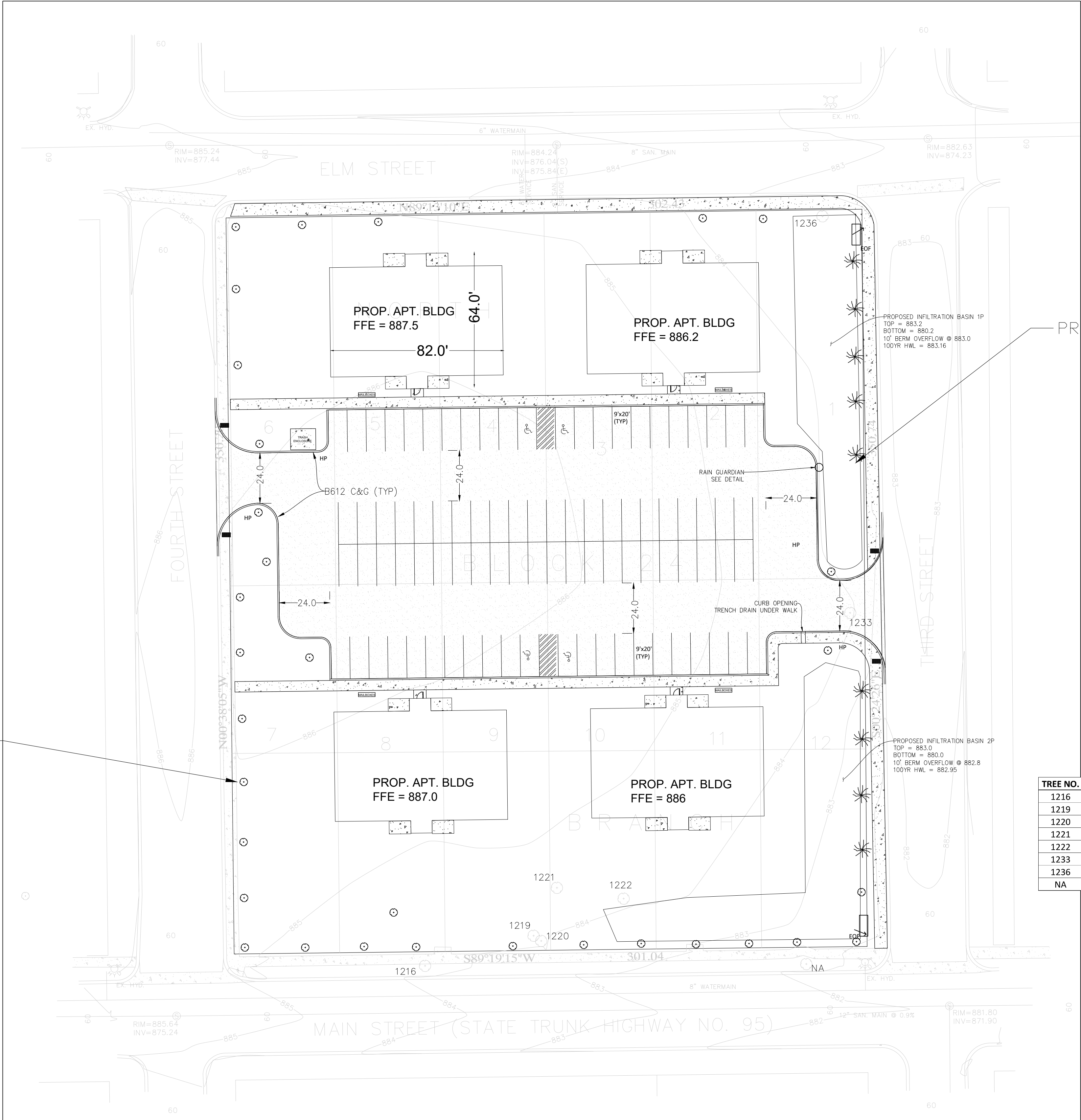
1275 WEST 4TH ST, RUSH CITY, MN

STORMWATER POLLUTION PREV. PLAN
SWPPP

[illegible]

LEGEND

- PROPOSED B618 CURB AND GUTTER
- PROPOSED BITUMINOUS PAVEMENT



PROPOSED OVERSTORY TREE (TYP.)

PROPOSED CONIFEROUS TREE (TYP.)

- EROSION CONTROL NOTES:
1. ALL DISTURBED AREAS TO BE SEEDED AND MULCHED. 4IN MIN TOPSOIL, EXCEPT IN RIGHT OF WAY. RIGHT OF WAY TO BE SODDED.
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- TREE PLANTING NOTES
1. TREE LOCATION SUBJECT TO CHANGE TO AVOID UTILITY CONFLICT.
 2. ALTERNATE RED OAK AND WHITE MAPLE TREES OR SIMILAR SPECIES. VERIFY SPECIES WITH CITY.

MINIMUM SIZE OF PLANTINGS
OVERSTORY DECIDUOUS: 2" CALIPER
CONIFEROUS: 6FT IN HEIGHT
ORNAMENTAL TREES: 1.5" CALIPER

PLANTING NUMBER REQUIREMENTS:

TOTAL BUILDING UNITS = 32
TOTAL TREE REQUIREMENT = ONE OVERSTORY TREE PER UNIT
= 32 TREES

TREE NO.	TYPE	DIA. (IN)	KEEP/REMOVE	NOTES
1216	ASH	16	KEEP	IN MAIN ST ROW
1219	OAK	15	KEEP	
1220	OAK	17	KEEP	
1221	OAK	29	KEEP	
1222	OAK	22	KEEP	PROTECT ROOTS IN INFIL. POND EXCAVATION
1233	OAK	22	REMOVE	DEAD
1236	OAK	25	KEEP	PROTECT ROOTS IN INFIL. POND EXCAVATION
NA	OAK?	?	KEEP	IN MAIN ST ROW - SIDEWALK BUILT AROUND IT

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ENGINEERING

BLOCH ENGINEERING, PLLC

blochengineering.com

32210 XEON ST NW

CAMBRIDGE, MN 55008

krystle@blochengineering.com

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KRISTLE L. BLOCH

49893

DATE

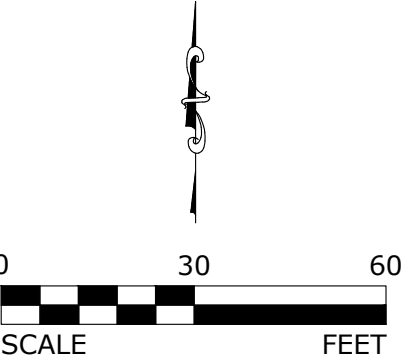
5-26-2025

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MAIN STREET APARTMENTS
OWNER: TOMMY FOSTER
1275 WEST 4TH ST, RUSH CITY, MN

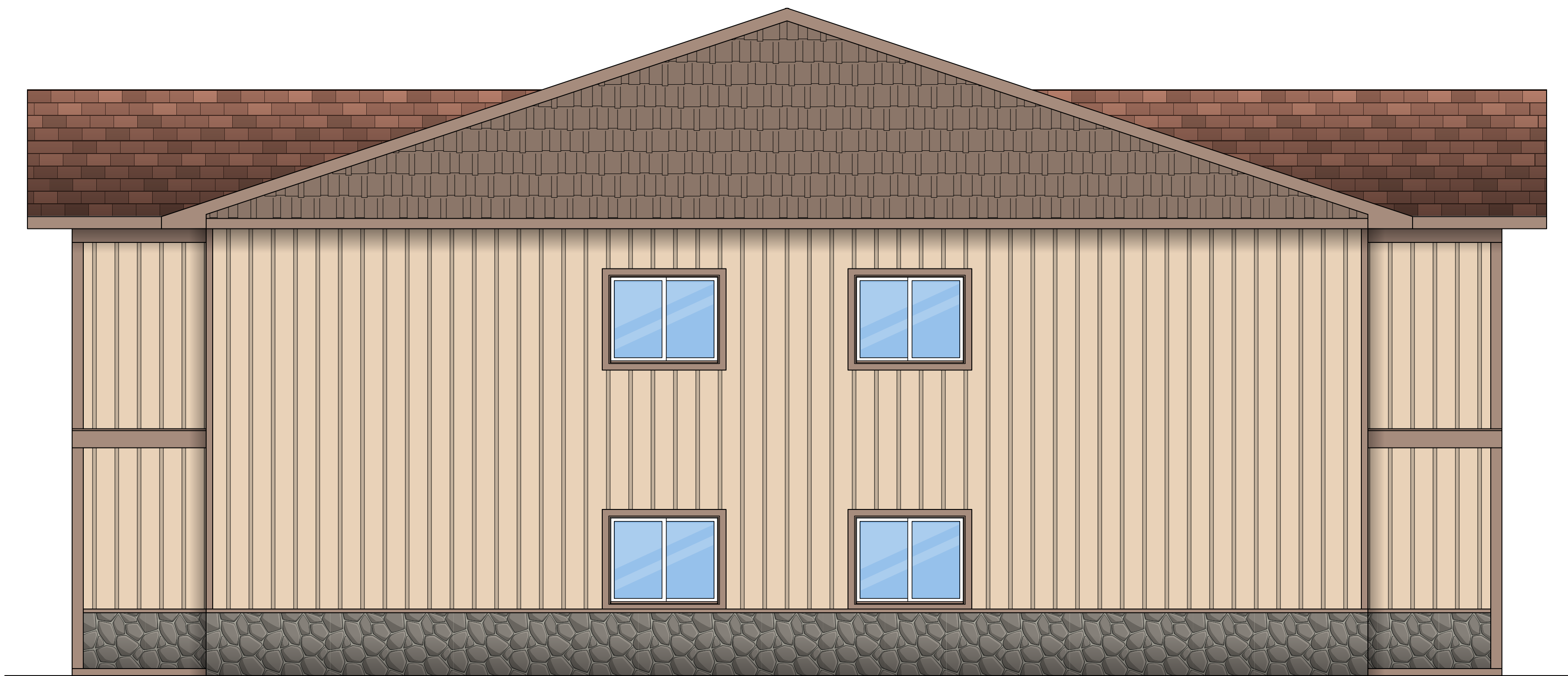
LANDSCAPE AND
TREE PRESERVATION PLAN

REVISIONS	NO.	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION





FRONT ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1' (1/2 SCALE ON 11X17)



SIDE ELEVATIONS
SCALE: 1/4" = 1' (1/2 SCALE ON 11X17)

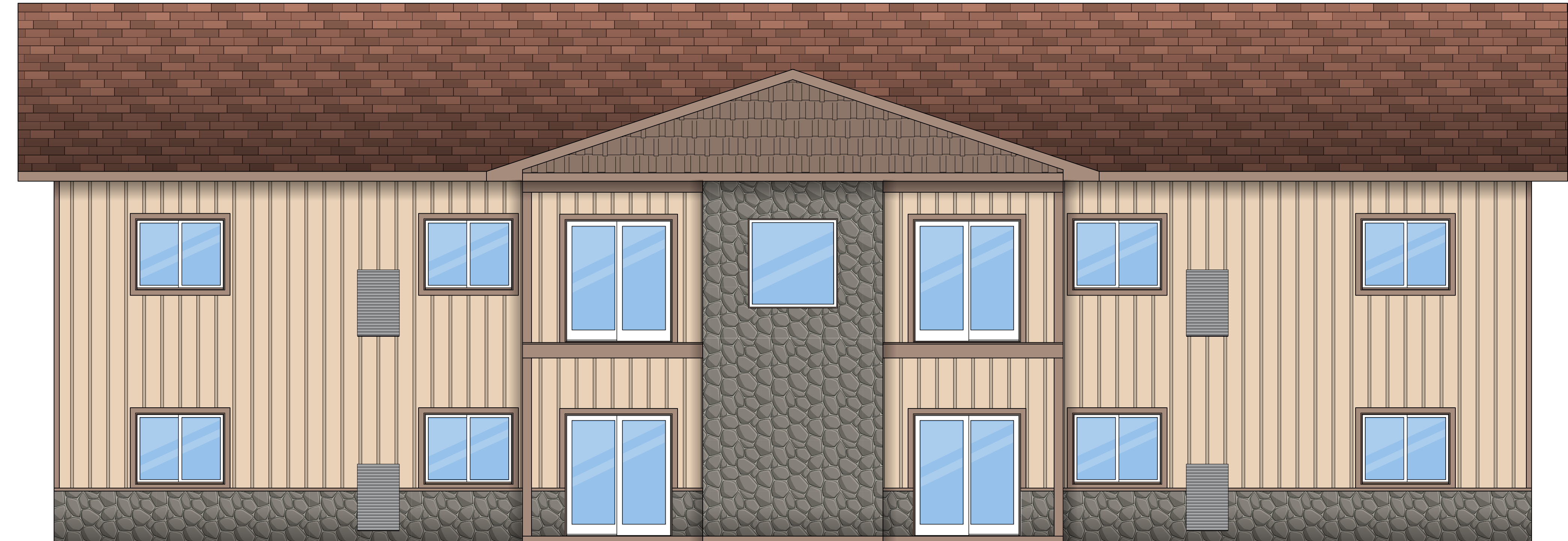
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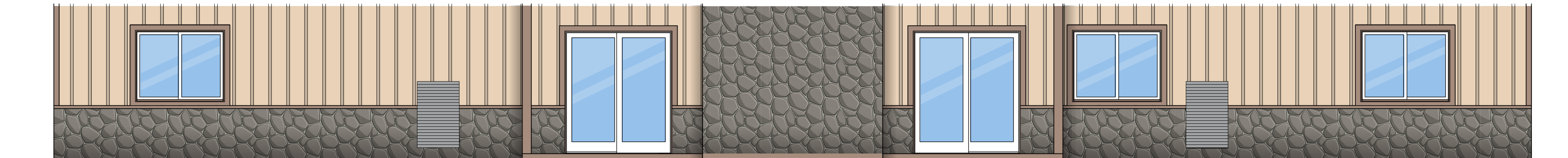
EME DRAFTING
ERIC EGERT
900 MAPLE AVE. E.
MORA, MN 55051

8 UNIT
NORTH BRANCH, MN 55056

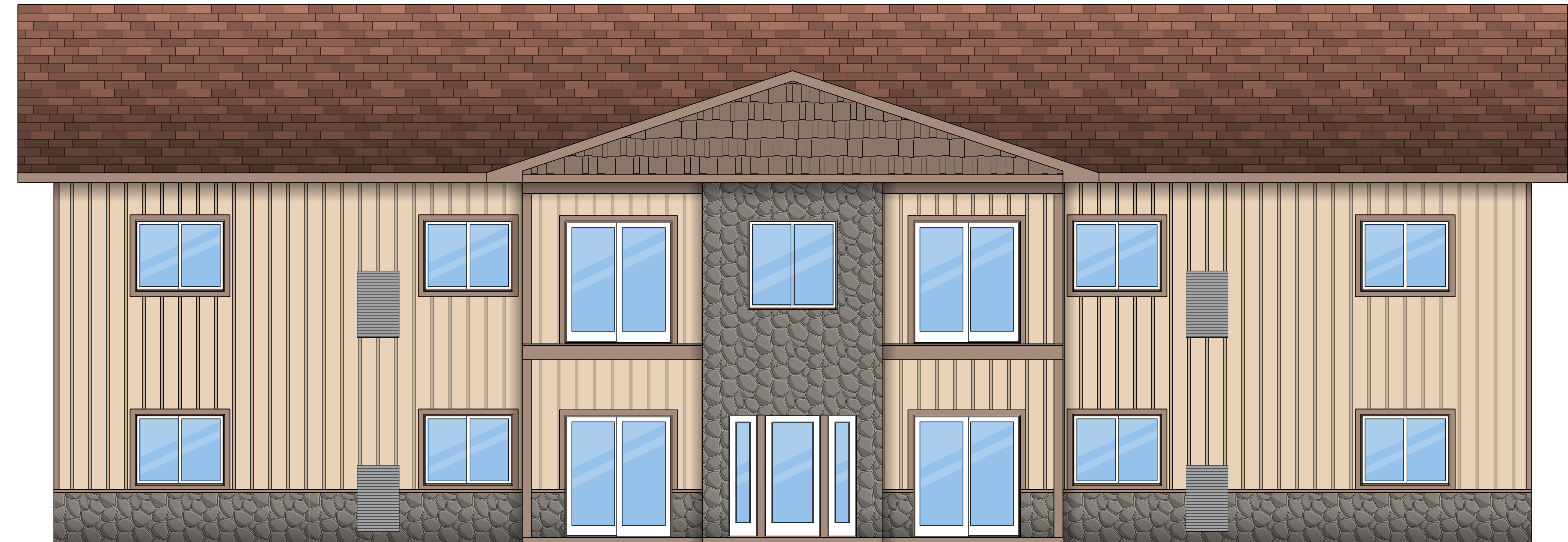
FILE NAME:	8 UNIT
DRAWN BY:	EME
DATE:	4/7/25
REVISED:	----
REVISED:	----
REVISED:	----
REVISED:	----
REVISED:	----
REVISED:	----
ELEVATION	A1.1



REAR ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1' (1/2 SCALE ON 11X17)



REAR ELEV @ H.C. UNIT
SCALE: 1/4" = 1' (1/2 SCALE ON 11X17)



REAR ELEV @ STREET
SCALE: 1/4" = 1' (1/2 SCALE ON 11X17)

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DRAFTING

E.M.E. DRAFTING
ERIC EGERT
900 MAPLE AVE. E.
MORA, MN 55051

8 UNIT
NORTH BRANCH, MN 55056

FILE NAME:	8 UNIT
DRAWN BY:	EME
DATE:	4/7/25
REVISED:	----
REVISED:	----
REVISED:	----
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REVISED:	----

ELEVATION 2
A1.2



Prepared By:

Presenter:

Date: 05/27/2025

Board & Commission: Planning Commission

Subject: Public Hearing to consider a Comprehensive Land Use Amendment and Rezoning from R2 to R3

Voting Requirements:

Voting Options Simple Majority



Comprehensive Rental Housing Study & Needs Analysis Executive Report

July 2024

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Executive Summary

The population growth in North Branch has surpassed the increase in available housing units, creating a shortfall expected to persist until at least 2030. This dynamic is driving up rental prices, making it difficult for many current residents to afford rent. This may lead to migration out of the city and a reduction in growth as people are priced out of the market and forced to consider moving out of North Branch. This shortage has ripple effects, impacting tax revenues and tax liability for public service delivery to be carried by existing community members.

Analyzing the rental market reveals a mismatch between available housing options and residents' needs and incomes, particularly for larger units suitable for growing families. While there has been some housing supply growth, it has not kept pace with demand, leading to a diminishing surplus. This imbalance is further exacerbated by demographic trends, such as the aging population's need for age-friendly housing options and the challenges younger individuals face in securing mortgages due to financial constraints from educational or other types of debt.

To address the housing challenges in North Branch, it's crucial to consider policies and programs catering to residents and potential newcomers. Here are some key points:

1. **Retaining Younger Generations:** Encourage younger individuals (including those under 18) to stay in North Branch after completing their education. Providing viable employment opportunities and creating a supportive environment can help retain this demographic.
2. **Motivating Seniors to Transition:** Seniors (aged 65+) can be motivated to transition into lower-maintenance housing and assisted living options. This frees up housing stock for young families (under 40 years old).
3. **Preventing Migration:** Develop programs that retain and attract residents. Preventing migration out of the city is essential for sustained growth.
4. **Balancing Local and Newcomer Needs:** While meeting residents' needs is crucial, consider accommodating newcomers. An exclusive focus on existing residents could lead to a stagnant housing market.
5. **Avoiding Housing Moratoriums:** Slowing housing growth directly or indirectly could worsen the supply challenge. A housing moratorium might backfire by increasing existing housing prices and reducing affordability for locals.

Additionally, disparities in housing status exist among different racial demographics, highlighting the importance of equitable access to housing. Education, while valued, can also impact housing choices, as higher educational debt can hinder individuals' ability to qualify and thus afford suitable housing. Despite a relatively healthy median household income in North Branch, there is still a need to ensure that rental options align with local incomes to prevent the displacement of lower-income residents. Addressing the housing shortage and ensuring attainable housing options for residents with different incomes, backgrounds, and abilities is crucial for North Branch's future sustainability. Ultimate solutions must consider

demographic trends and income disparities and ensure everyone can access the housing they need.

Valuable local input was sought via public input, stakeholder interviews, and a survey. Information about the study and housing needs was available through articles, websites, and social media materials. In addition, community conversation and steering committee workshops were conducted to gather input from residents, stakeholders, and experts. Feedback was sought on various aspects of the rental market, housing preferences, and community development.

Key findings from the engagement process included:

- **Insufficient Housing Supply:** Ensuring housing availability for future growth and accommodating diverse age groups (under 18, 25-29, and seniors aged 65+) is crucial.
- **Barriers to Suitable Residences:** Challenges include costs, insufficient bedroom options, and unavailability due to low vacancies.
- **Attainable Housing Options:** There's a desire for more or less costly housing, especially for seniors and young individuals entering the market.
- **Location Importance:** Emphasizing proximity to amenities and employment areas.
- **Challenges:** High utility costs, property taxes, and rental conditions (maintenance issues and lack of amenities).

Overall, the engagement process fostered community involvement to ensure that the study's recommendations aligned with the needs and preferences of North Branch residents.

Housing Demand Context

Potential Market Reach

Generally, most home seekers in the United States are willing to commute up to 30 minutes to attain housing. In North Branch, more than 50 % of residents commute more than 30 minutes. When a half-hour drive time band is placed from the center of the city of North Branch's core, as shown below, it reaches over 217,500 people with major population centers such as Blaine (71,739 population), Forest Lake (21,013 population), and Lino Lakes (21,399 population). If the city prioritized attracting residential developers using the strategies outlined in this housing study and providing housing for just 0.93 % of residents within a half-hour commuting distance, matching the area's population growth rate, it could potentially draw 2,023 new residents to North Branch. This influx would represent a 17.65 % increase in the current population, equating to 749 new households. Individuals aged 35-39 and 55-59 comprise the largest demographic segments in this region, most likely to seek North Branch as their new community.

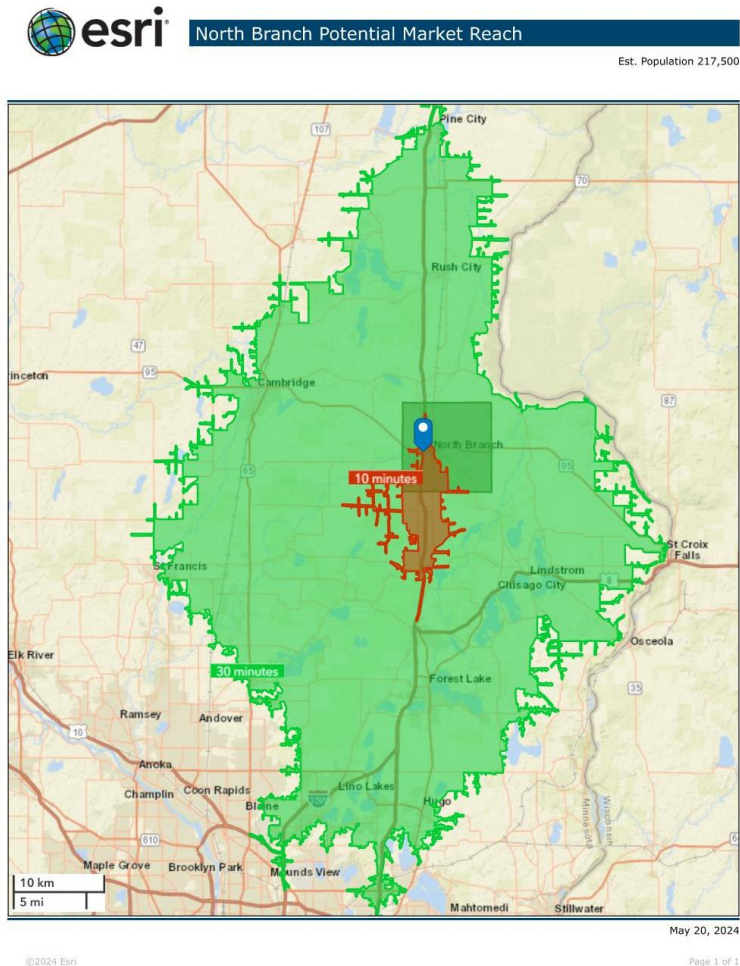


Figure 1: Map of North Branch Potential Market Reach

The relationship between housing choices and community well-being is interconnected. In the 35-39 age group, individuals often transition to purchasing their second homes, favoring larger

properties after selling their starter homes. Conversely, those aged 55-59, end-career workers or early retirees, tend to gravitate toward smaller homes with reduced maintenance requirements. These trends emphasize how housing availability directly impacts the local workforce, affecting employee availability and, in turn, local businesses. Indeed, housing plays a fundamental role in the overall success of a community.

Tables 1 and 2 recommend housing units and types for both ownership and rental based on the income distribution of the city's population. Scenario A proposes a 1.89% growth rate, assuming a continuation of the current growth. Scenario B projects a more accelerated growth rate at 2.49%, similar to the rate experienced in North Branch from 2000-2010. In comparison, from 2000 to 2022, Minnesota had an average annual population growth rate of 0.72%¹. These projections are up to 2030.

Each table also utilizes the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development formula for determining the economic sustainability of a housing payment or rent based on Annual Median Income. For example, "Incentivized Housing" is what someone earning 50% to 80% of the \$39,127 annual median income in North Branch would spend if contributing 30% of their income to their housing. To increase the usefulness of these projections, we have defined the cost break points at which housing would need to be priced in the community to meet economic demands based on the current population's income distribution.

¹ <https://mn.gov/admin/demography/data-by-topic/population-data/our-estimates/>
North Branch Rental Housing Study

Table 1: Ownership Homes Quantity Recommendation

	Price Point	Scenario A: Recommended Units at 1.89 % growth	Scenario B: Recommended Units at 2.49 % growth	Recommended If rentals increased to 30% of total housing ²	
Single Family (detached)					
Incentivized, 50 %-80 % AMI (\$489-\$783/month)	\$65,777 - \$104,407	65	89	46	62
Workforce Housing, 80 %-120 % AMI (\$783-\$1,174/month)	\$104,407 - \$163,117	72	96	50	67
Middle Income and Above, 120 %+ AMI (\$1,174/month)	\$163,117+	362	479	253	333
Sub-total		499	664	349	462
Active Adult/ Independent Living					
Incentivized, 50%-80% AMI (\$489-\$783/month)	\$65,777 - \$104,407	21	28	14	20
Workforce Housing, 80%-120% AMI (\$783-\$1,174/month)	\$104,407 - \$163,117	22	30	14	21
Middle Income and Above, 120%+ AMI (\$1,174/month)	\$163,117+	112	149	78	104
Sub-total		155	207	106	145
Total Ownership Units		654	871	455	607
Plus, .93 % potential Market outreach		641	641	524	524
Total potential demand for ownership housing		1,295	1,512	989	1,131

² Currently, the housing stock is only 14.5 % rentals. This column examines the total recommended housing units if this proportion were to increase to 30 %.

Table 2: Rental Housing Quantity Recommendations

	Price Point	Scenario A: Recommended Units at 1.89 % growth	Scenario B: Recommended Units at 2.49 % growth	Recommended If rentals increased to 30% of total housing ³	
				1.89% Growth	2.49% Growth
Multi-family Housing					
Incentivized, 50%-80% AMI	\$489-\$783/ month	13	18	17	24
Workforce Housing, 80%- 120%AMI	\$783-\$1,174/ month	14	18	18	24
Middle Income and Above, 120%+ AMI	\$1,174/mont h	36	47	47	61
Sub-total		63	83	82	109
Townhomes, Condos, Cottages, Duplex, and Attached Units					
Middle Income and Above, 120%+ AMI	\$1,174/mont h	36	47	47	61
Sub-total		36	47	47	61
Specialty Housing (ADA) Rental Units					
Middle Income and Above, 120%+ AMI	\$1,174/mont h	36	47	47	61
Sub-total		36	47	47	61
Light Care		5	7	7	9
Assisted Living (Special Care with Medical Assistance)		7	11	9	14
Sub-total		12	18	16	23
Total Rental Units					
Plus, .93 % potential Market outreach					
Total potential demand for Rental Housing					
		111	148	145	195
		109	109	225	225
		220	257	370	420

³ Currently, the housing stock is only 14.5 % rentals. This collum examines the total recommended housing units if this proportion were to increase to 30 %.

Final Strategies Pursued

The following recommendations were pursued through a multi-faceted approach, drawing on data analysis, public input, and stakeholder interviews to tailor strategies to the specific needs of North Branch. Note the recommendations in this report apply to subdivisions, PUD's and any other housing development:

Recommendation 1: Establish a Housing and Redevelopment Authority for the City of North Branch.

Creating a Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) would dedicate resources and efforts to resolve the city's housing needs. This initiative will require research into the benefits and logistics of creating such an authority, considering factors like building programs and partnerships with housing organizations, budget funding sources, governance structure, and potential legal frameworks. As a starting point, an HRA manager and grant writer (shared with other city functions) could be a skeleton staff member to test this recommendation.

Recommendation 2: Establish a rental licensing and inspection program.

This initiative involves designing and implementing a program to regulate and ensure the quality and safety of rental properties in North Branch. Data analysis and input indicate the need for increased life-safety improvements and updated conditions, which can be achieved through inspection and licensing. Several national codes define acceptable standards for rental properties and can help guide this type of program, such as adopting the ICC (International Code Council) Property Maintenance Code.

Recommendation 3: Create or support programs to transition rental tenants into home ownership.

Such programs can help tenants qualify for rental assistance or even home ownership, deposits/down payments, and credit scores. The HRA could develop and support this type of programming.

Recommendation 4: Facilitate zoning code changes to accommodate new housing units.

This recommendation involves reviewing and potentially revising the city's land use and zoning regulations to encourage the development of new housing units. The housing map created (see Housing Map-1) can be used to inform where to maximize suitable densities and locations.

Recommendation 5: Attract and encourage construction that adds housing units with three or more bedrooms.

Data analysis justifies the need for housing units with three or more bedrooms. The key will be to attract developers with proven experience in providing these types of homes with the design features needed/in demand. However, the cost of unit construction will need to be low enough to make these units attainable for the range of incomes in the community.

Recommendation 6: Incentivize the development of rental properties in North Branch that offer more options for temporary and shorter-term leases.

This recommendation involves designing incentives, such as financial assistance programs (i.e., grants or forgivable loans), to encourage landlords to offer more flexible leasing options. Data analysis and public input indicate a demand for temporary or shorter-term leases (less than 12 months) in the rental market, such as month-to-month or weekly rental options.

Recommendation 7: Incentivize the upkeep and upgrade of existing rental properties and naturally occurring attainable housing (NOAH).

It is critical to support landlords in maintaining or upgrading their properties. Develop programs that can offset costs (grants or low-interest loans), provide free labor such as partnering with apprentice outlets, or provide technical assistance for renovations. Such programs may also include and benefit owner-occupied housing that meets certain affordability criteria.

Background and Demographics

Historical Origins and Relevance to Housing

Founding

Established as a Township in 1861, North Branch has witnessed a dichotomy in its development. The tension between rural and urban development persisted for 40 years after its founding. By 1901, the original 36 square mile township was bifurcated into two entities due to this political tension regarding the town's future. The Township of Branch encompassed the 35 square miles surrounding the core downtown area, where the residents who desired a more rural community could flourish. The remaining one square mile, where the downtown core of the old township exists today, became incorporated into the City of North Branch. Over the first half of the 20th Century, the newly formed City of North Branch underwent moderate urbanization, resulting in today's older housing stock, with 11.7 % of all current housing units constructed before 1969. In contrast, the former Branch Township, later known as Branch Village, maintained its rural, agricultural character for most of the last century, experiencing sparse development and sustaining a notably lower population.



Figure 2: Historical Society

Table 3: Housing Units Construction

Before 1969	11.7%
1970-1999	56.1%
2000-2020	31.5%
2020-2024	(data unavailable%)

I-35 Completion to Consolidation

In 1969, the completion of Interstate-35—a 1,569-mile north-south highway stretching from Duluth to Laredo, TX—intersected with Minnesota Highway 95 in the City of North Branch. This intersection significantly altered the growth trajectories of both cities: the branch and the North Branch. The strategic positioning of North Branch along this transportation corridor led to a population surge in both North Branch and Branch. Between 1970 and 1999, more than 56 % of North Branch's housing stock was constructed. The expansion of both areas ultimately prompted the consolidation of the two municipalities in 1994, marking their reunification for the first time in 93 years.

Post-1994 Consolidation

The City of North Branch experienced strong growth trends from 2000 to 2010, with a 26.2% increase in population. From 2000-2020, the remaining 31.5% of the current housing stock was constructed, reflecting the continued growth of the population. Despite the nationwide decrease in housing unit development due to the

2008 housing crisis and the hindrance caused by the Coronavirus Pandemic, North Branch's population continues to grow at an average rate of 1.89% annually. The historical trend of growth and development in North Branch has typically seen housing unit growth aligned with population growth. Nevertheless, this pattern is shifting, with less housing being built and insufficient supply for the current growth rate.



Figure 3: North Branch Economic Development Authority

Present-Day Trends

As land and building costs rise, developers face increased loans, investments, and risk, leading them to prioritize client-driven projects over speculative ones. The population stagnates when housing development caters solely to those purchasing market-rate single-family homes. Despite high demand from prospective residents, limiting rental or owned housing production exacerbates the issue. In North Branch's current market climate, home and land prices have surged, impacting both renters and homeowners. Due to higher demand and rising costs, long-standing tenants may be priced out, and homeowners may find it challenging to sell and relocate without losing equity. The following report will explore the data indicating these trends and the urgency of the current housing market concerns.

Key Points:

- The historical origins and relevance to housing in North Branch reflect its development and impact on current housing conditions.
- Historically, the area's housing market evolved alongside its economic and demographic shifts, with historical events shaping the housing landscape. As the city grew, so did its housing needs, influenced by various factors such as migration patterns, economic changes, and policy developments.
- Understanding these origins is crucial for addressing contemporary housing challenges, as past decisions and developments set the foundation for the current housing situation.
- Economic conditions are causing less housing to be built but not changing the housing demand growth. The document highlights significant demographic and economic factors impacting housing in North Branch. It emphasizes the challenges posed by a growing population, including an aging demographic needing suitable housing and younger individuals facing obstacles in homeownership due to education debt. The analysis acknowledges disparities in housing access and affordability across different races and ethnicities, underlining the necessity for equitable housing solutions. While generally high, education levels contribute to financial constraints impacting housing

affordability due to associated debt. Despite a decent median household income, there's a concern over ensuring that housing remains attainable for lower-income residents, pointing to a broader issue of income and wealth distribution affecting housing stability and access. Addressing these issues is crucial for providing inclusive, sustainable housing options that cater to the diverse needs of its current residents.

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Current Demographics and Conditions

Population and Households

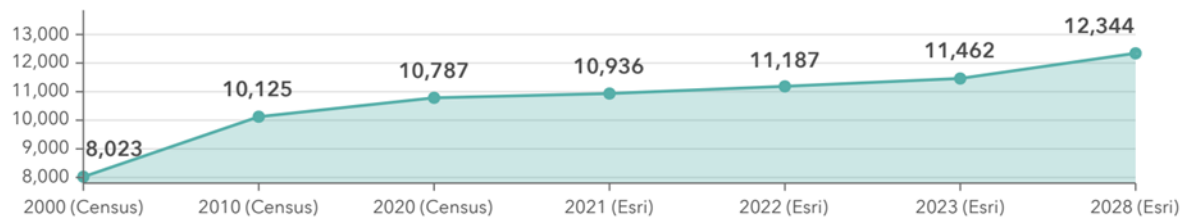


Figure 4: Source: <https://links.esri.com/esri-demographics/united-states>

The population growth in North Branch has outpaced the availability of housing units, leading to a shortfall projected to persist until at least 2030. As a result, sale and rental prices have risen, making it difficult for some existing and prospective residents to afford housing. This situation may naturally reduce the growth rate and possibly even the population, as rental costs exceed what existing and potential residents can manage.

The impact extends beyond housing affordability. The City of North Branch's basic local government services are funded through property taxes, and with fewer constituents, the tax burden falls on a smaller base. The city has already increased taxes to cover service costs, highlighting the need to balance tax burdens while maintaining essential services. Density helps to reduce the cost of city services, such as sewer and water, easing these burdens.

Furthermore, employers may hesitate to expand or relocate to an area without adequate housing for their workforce. In today's market, businesses follow rooftops. The housing shortage creates a negative economic cascade that proper planning and investments can help mitigate.

Assessing the rental market entails considering the average household size to match available rental housing options and residents' housing needs. The average household size of 2.70 in 2023 (the state average is 2.4 people) indicates that multi-bedroom housing units align more closely with population requirements than single-bedroom or efficiency options.

Average Household Size

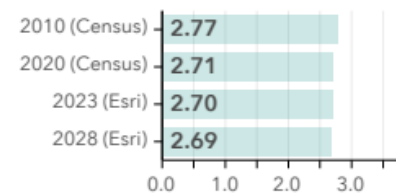


Table 4: Census Housing by Size

However, 70 % of rental households in North Branch are inhabited by one or two individuals. The apartment/multi-family housing type traditionally provides smaller units, yet the rental housing stock needs to be more conducive to the population and growth pattern North Branch is experiencing. The primary groups moving to the city tend to have younger families

People	Percentage Own	Percentage Rent
7+		
Person	1.6%	1.4%
6-Person	2.6%	2.4%
5-Person	8.1%	3.6%
4-Person	16.7%	9.9%
3-Person	17.2%	12.9%
2-Person	36.9%	22.7%
1-Person	17.0%	47.0%

requiring more space. For these families, a three-bedroom rental unit is most suited if they cannot afford a home in the current market.

Key Points:

Proactive housing development is essential to meet demand, prevent economic losses, and maintain a balanced market.

1. Compound Annual Growth Rates (CAGR) for Households and Housing Units:
 - Between 2000 and 2020, the CAGR for households was 1.68%, while for housing units, it was 1.73%.
 - This indicates that the housing supply generally kept pace with demand during this period.
2. Recent Shift in Demand and Supply:
 - Over the last four years, demand has outpaced supply.
 - This suggests that the housing market is experiencing increased demand, potentially due to population growth or other factors.
3. Anticipatory Housing Development:
 - Prospective residents cannot live in North Branch if housing isn't built in anticipation of buyers or tenants.
 - Without such development, people may seek employment and contribute taxes elsewhere, leading to long-term economic losses for the city.
4. Balancing Growth and Immediate Needs:
 - If housing unit growth doesn't outpace household growth, excess supply in the rental market will diminish.
 - Eventually, the housing stock may no longer have surplus capacity to accommodate immediate demand.
 - Balancing construction timing with immediate needs is crucial to ensure the market meets the community's current requirements.



Figure 5: Source Community Change Snapshot North Branch, MN by Esri (2023)

By not providing adequate housing options, the City of North Branch:

- Lacks sufficient housing options for the existing young generations to remain in the community.

- Lacks available senior housing types from independent living to assisted living to full care facilities as existing residents age and families look to bring aging parents closer to family.
- Lacks the variety of transition housing options to accommodate empty nesters and seniors to remain in their homes due to housing prices and lack of available and desired options.

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Age

The city's age profile is pivotal in determining people's housing needs. The population distribution remains consistent proportionally across age bands, ranging from 5.5% to 8.0% until age 65. Notably, the 25-29 age group comprises the largest portion of the population. This suggests a growing age bracket of individuals at a prime stage of life who are typically starting families, thereby signaling the need for first-time home buyer programs, starter homes, entry-level pricing with multiple bedrooms, and child/pet-friendly features.

Meanwhile, 12.2% of the population, 65 and older, require "age-friendly" housing options. These accommodations should feature single-level living, step-free entries, and attached garages to cater to the needs of aging residents. As individuals age, maintaining exterior spaces and larger living spaces becomes increasingly challenging, prompting a demand for third-party maintenance services and floor plans with smaller square footage.

Race and Ethnicity

The majority of residents in North Branch are white. While 85.6% of housing in North Branch is owner-occupied versus 14.4% are rentals, this is not true across all racial demographics. Housing status is weighted more heavily towards renting for non-whites. Hispanic residents comprise 3.7% of the population in the city but half. Ensuring equitable access to housing is crucial for fostering an inclusive community that accommodates the needs of its demographic.

Education

Education is highly valued in North Branch, but this prioritization has implications for rental housing. Higher education often leaves students with significant debt, which can affect their ability to purchase homes or rent due to reduced credit scores and borrowing potential. While education typically correlates with higher income levels, resulting in increased earning potential, the accompanying higher income-driven payments can still hinder individuals in these circumstances from transitioning into more suitable housing options, especially as they enter their middle-age years or the beginning of their professional lives (this aligns with the 25-29 cohort mentioned above).

Age Profile: 5 Year Increments



Figure 6: Age Profile

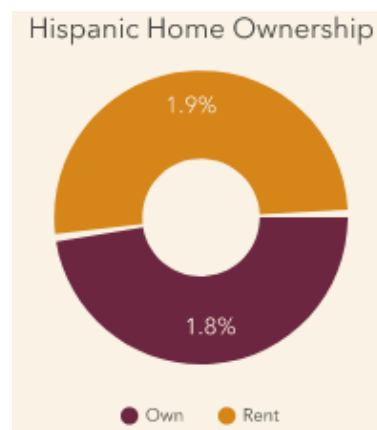


Figure 7: Source Housing Market Characteristics by Esri (2023)

Income and Wealth

North Branch's median per capita income is \$39,127 annually, while household income averages \$87,900. Although the household income is adequate to afford the median gross rent of \$1,345 or the purchase of a medium-priced home valued at \$265,900, individuals earning the per capita income (\$39,127) may need help finding attainable rental options within their budget, especially if single. Households with two or more people have better purchasing power. Singles may have to seek shared homes or room rentals to afford housing. Consequently, if rentals are not aligned with local incomes, these individuals may be compelled to seek housing outside the community or those with higher incomes from the outside may displace locals.

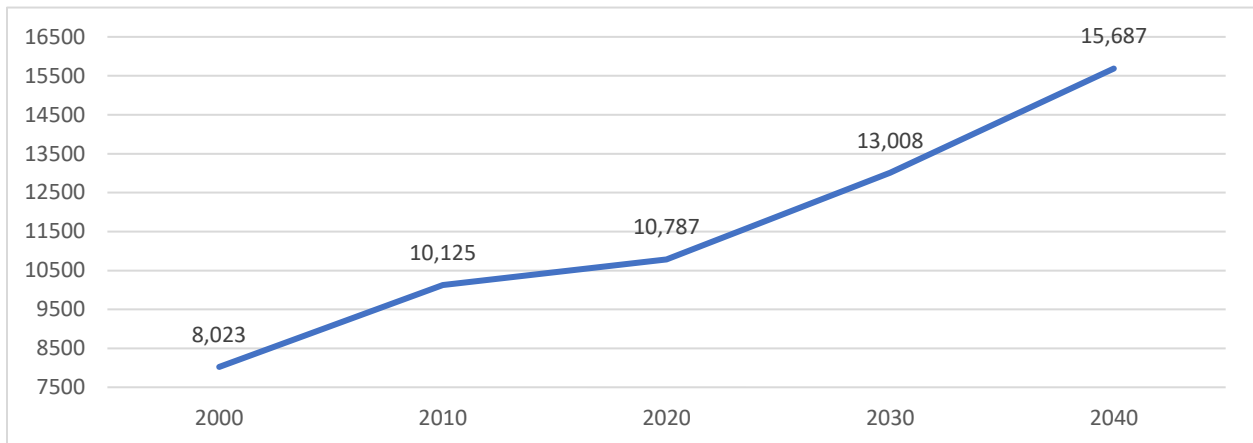
Key Points:

- A growing population that includes an aging demographic needing suitable housing and younger individuals facing obstacles in homeownership due to education debt.
- The analysis acknowledges disparities in housing access and affordability across different races and ethnicities, underlining the necessity for equitable housing solutions.
- Education levels, while generally high, contribute to financial constraints impacting housing affordability due to associated debt.
- Despite a decent median household income, there's concern over ensuring that housing remains attainable for lower-income and single residents. This points to a broader issue of income and wealth distribution affecting housing stability and access.
- Addressing these issues is crucial for providing inclusive, sustainable housing options that cater to the diverse needs of North Branch's population.

Scenario-Based Population Projections

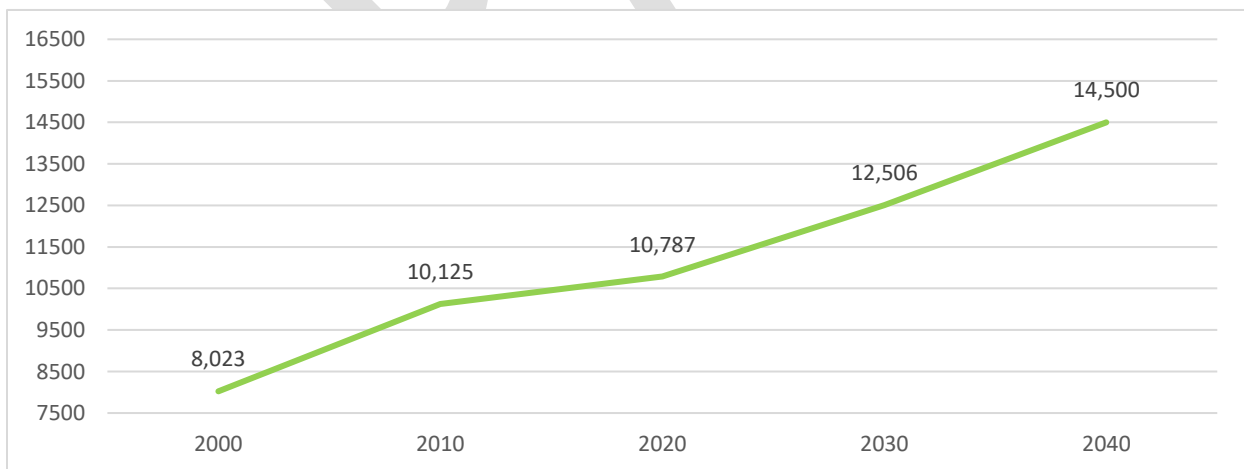
As North Branch experiences growth, it prompts a need for adaptation within the housing market. Several scenarios are possible based on different assumptions, which lead to various outcomes. The following scenarios consider five different potential market behaviors and outcomes.

Scenario 1: 2040 Projections (current rate)



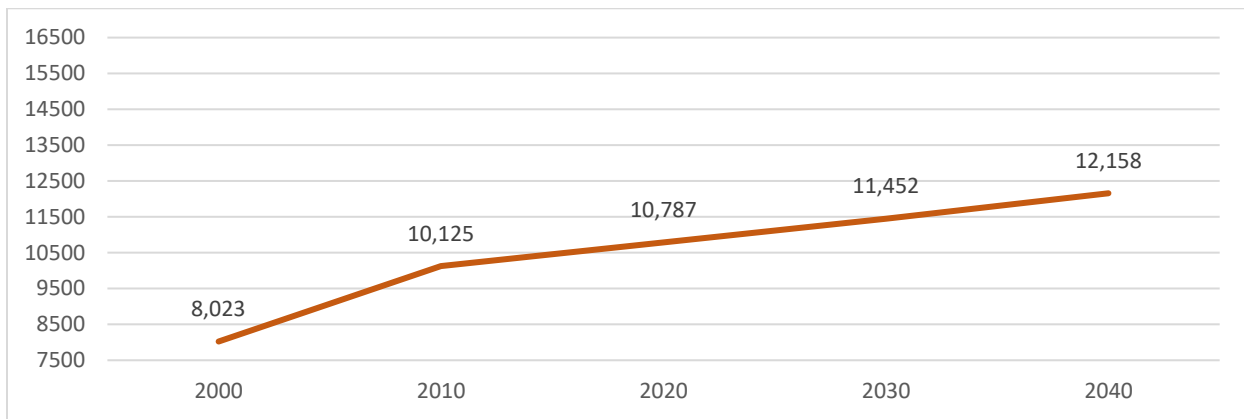
This scenario assumes a continuation of the current 1.89 % compounding annual growth rate after 2020 through 2040 and no changes to the community's growth trends.

Scenario 2: 2040 Projections (2000-2040 rate)



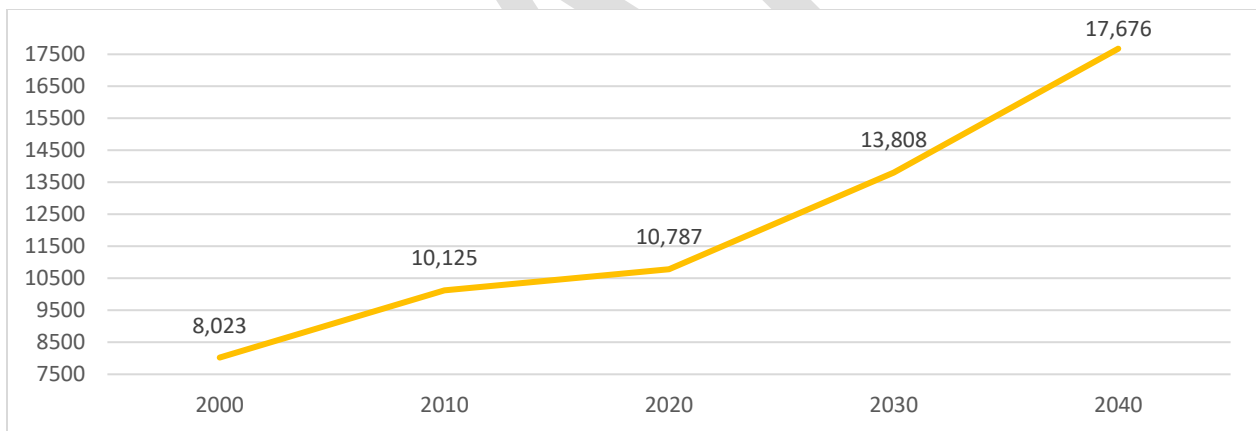
This scenario takes a more conservative stance on community growth, assuming it will match the annual growth rate over the century's first two decades. Ultimately, this growth rate would be lower than the city's current post-COVID growth trends.

Scenario 3: 2040 Projection (State growth rate 0.6%)



This scenario accounts for the North Branch slowing to the same growth rate as the State of Minnesota from 2020-2023, which is 0.6 % annually. North Branch is not likely to curtail its growth to this low a level; this rate sets a baseline for the minimum level of growth that can be anticipated, though trends have never been this slow for the City's development.

Scenario 4: 2040 Projections (2.5% growth rate)



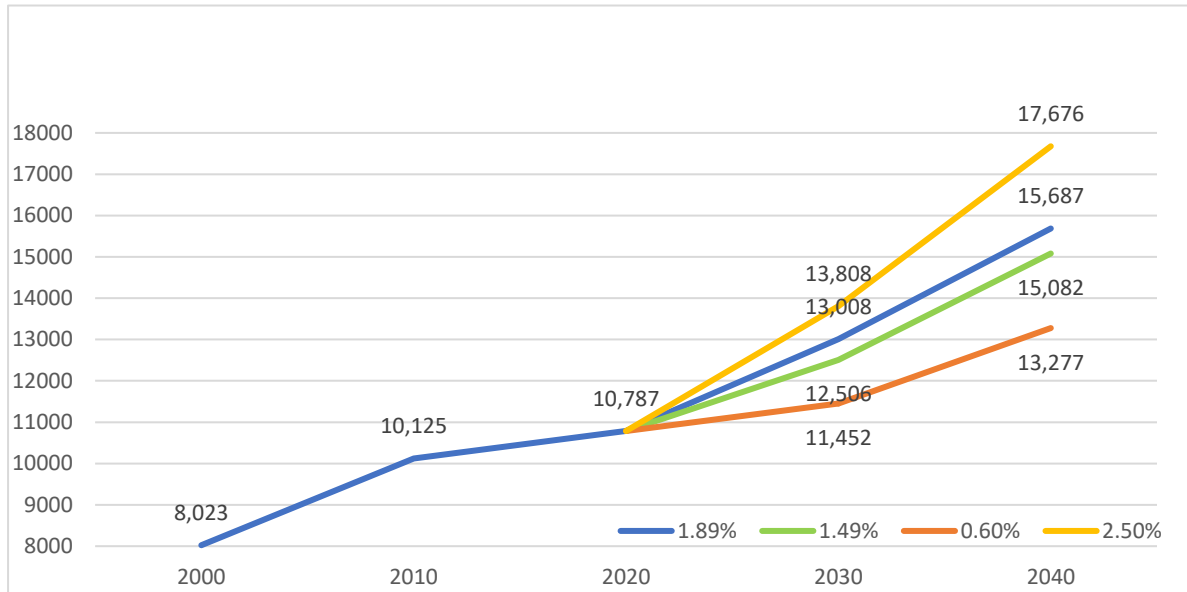
The fourth scenario depicts a growth rate of 2.5 %, which was seen from 2000 to 2010. If these rates were matched in the next two decades, North Branch would experience growth that would significantly outpace its current rate of housing development and require more housing to be developed faster to meet the demand.

Each of the previous scenarios projects growth at reasonable rates for the city based on historical trends. Applying these trends to the current population data creates parameters to estimate where the population will fall at each given time interval.

The annual growth rate for housing units in the city is 1.73 %. Generally, this rate needs to be higher than the population growth rate to avoid a housing crisis and help control increasing costs to the existing population. The population is outpacing housing development in half of the scenarios, including North Branch's current growth rate. The rate of housing unit development

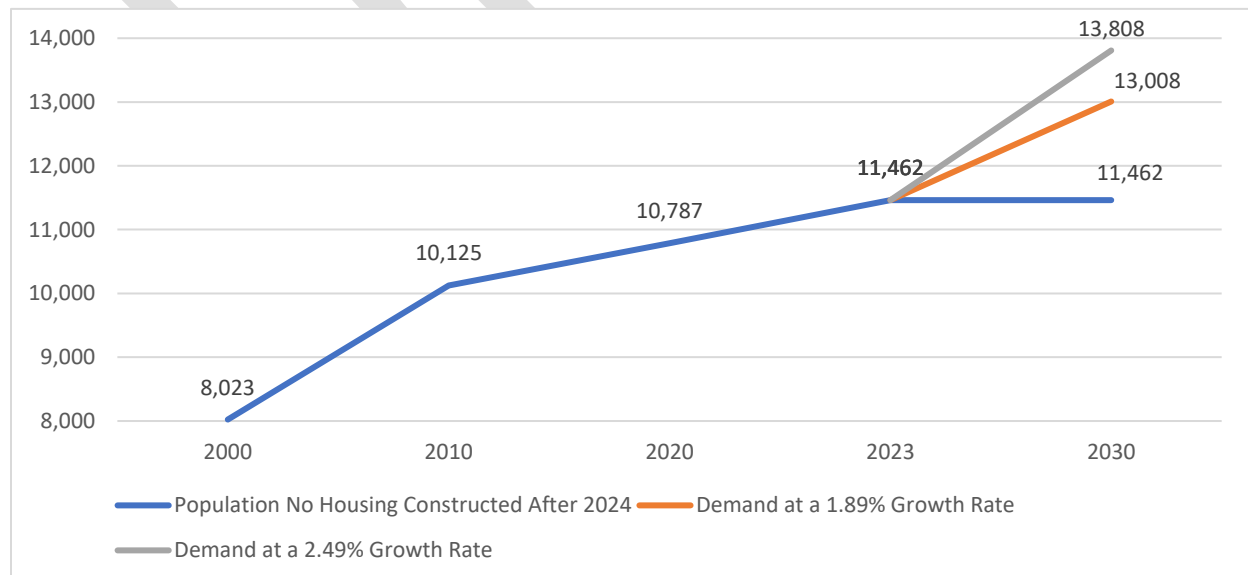
and population will slow to equilibrium as prices increase to match supply availability and eventually reduce demand as potential residents find less expensive substitutes for living in the city. Each of the following graphs demonstrates this effect on the rental housing market.

Scenarios 1-4: North Branch Growth



The last scenario is a no-growth scenario that limits or prohibits the production of new multi-family housing units. Displaying this trend through 2030 also indicates that market demand still drives people to wish to move into the city at the same rates as they previously had. The difference is that the housing stock is stagnant, meaning the only way to move in is to take the vacancy of an existing resident.

Scenario 5: No Growth Vs. Housing Demand



This pent-up demand from a pause in new housing supply production would cause a 573 to 869 housing unit shortage by 2030, as these would be the needed units to accommodate the 1,546 to 2,346 people who would otherwise move into the city. This would accelerate the current rise in housing prices and lease costs. However, it could also signal to developers and future residents that they are unwelcome in the community, hindering potential growth. In this scenario, when supply exceeds demand, buyers or renters have more choices, which puts pressure on sellers or landlords to offer competitive prices. When demand outstrips supply, buyers or renters may have to pay more due to limited options.

Key Points:

- North Branch is experiencing rapid population growth that has consumed the available housing supply, leading to a significant shortfall projected to continue until at least 2030.
- This imbalance has increased rental prices, making it increasingly difficult for many residents to find attainable housing.
- This trend is straining current residents and the local economy, as the increased cost of living impacts the overall cost of public services and the ability of businesses to sustain and find local workforce over the long term.

Current Employment Trends and Conditions

Resident Employment: Service Jobs

Due to the typically lower wages in the service industry, many residents in North Branch may find renting to be their only viable housing option. However, even in this case, these individuals may need help to secure a rental unit within the city at a market rate or lower cost.



Table 5: Service Occupations Share of Total Jobs

Job	Percent
Health Support	4.8%
Building Maintenance	3.5%
Food Preparation	3.4%
Personal Care	1.6%
Protective Service	1.2%

Resident Employment: Blue Collar Jobs



Blue-collar industries tend to yield higher earnings than service sector wages, allowing a single earner to afford a rental home in the City of North Branch and sometimes afford to buy a home.

Table 6: Blue Collar Jobs in North Branch

Job	Percent
Production	10.8%
Transportation/ Moving	7.8%
Construction/Extraction	7.0%
Maintenance/Repair	4.1%
Farm/fish/forestry	0.1%

Resident Employment: White Collar Jobs

White-collar jobs in the North Branch do not guarantee high earning potential, as prevailing wages in these fields may not always be sufficient. For instance, teachers are considered white-collar workers but earn wages that are too low to afford a home in the city. Consequently, many workers in these sectors may need help securing rental accommodation at the current market rates or finding housing in other communities.



Table 5: White Collar Jobs in North Branch.

Job	Percent
Management	9.8%
Business/Financial	2.8%
Computer/Mathematical	1.7%
Architecture/Engineer	1.3%
Life/Social Sciences	1.0%
Social Service	3.2%
Legal	2.4%
Education/Library	8.2%
Arts/Entertainment/Rec	0.9%
Health Practices	5.1%
Sales	8.3%
Office/Admin	11.2%

The following table demonstrates how wages in North Branch for different careers would fair against market-rate housing costs.

Table 6: North Branch wages against market-rate housing costs.

Occupation	% of North Branch Residents	Median Income Hourly / Annual	Home Value Worker Can Afford*	Can workers afford a Median Home of \$265,903?	Monthly Rent Worker Can Afford	Can workers afford an Average Rent of \$1,345
Retail	13.3 %	\$16.26 \$33,821	\$147,666	No	\$930	No
Manufacturing	15.6 %	\$22.26 \$46,300	\$188,449	No	\$1,283	No
Education	8.7 %	\$25.34 \$52,707	\$223,280	No	\$1,449	Yes
Construction	10.6 %	\$29.51 \$61,381	\$267,500	Yes	\$1,688	Yes

Commuting Patterns

The distribution of commute times clarifies that there are mainly two types of commuters: those working within the immediate 25-minute range of their homes and those working in the Twin Cities metro area 45-59 minutes away. There is a need to keep residents close to work and minimize the cost burdens of extensive driving (i.e., time, gas, insurance, maintenance, etc.). Most home seekers in the United States are willing to commute up to 30 minutes to attain housing. In North Branch, more than 50 % of residents commute more than 30 minutes. Using that commute shed factor, there are 217,528 people within 30 minutes from North Branch. This suggests to developers that many potential tenants are within 30 minutes of North Branch.

Table 7: Commute Time Minutes

People	Percentage Own
7+ Person	1.6%
6-Person	2.6%
5-Person	8.1%
4-Person	16.7%
3-Person	17.2%
2-Person	36.9%
1-Person	17.0%

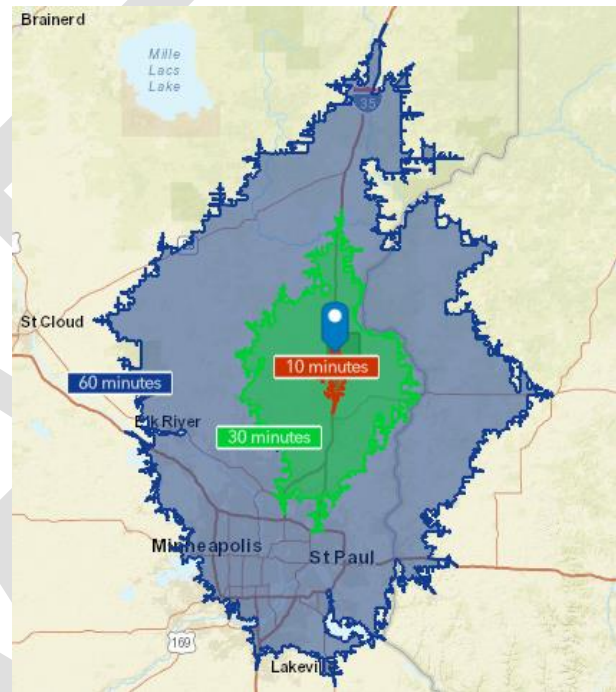


Figure 8: Commute Time Map

Economic Development

The primary determinant of what type of housing a person can attain is directly tied to their earnings, thus employment. It is essential to understand a community's economic development landscape and the effect their employment has on the local housing market. When there is a disconnect between the wages present in the prevailing industries in the community and the housing price, it leads to the displacement of residents or longer commutes, which impacts quality of life. Residents will either leave the city for housing that is attainable on their budgets to keep their jobs or take longer commutes for higher-paying jobs. The table on the next page represents the largest employers in the City of North Branch. These employers have a significant stake in the availability of housing that their employees can attain in the community to increase the viability of retention and recruitment efforts. Working with

employers to provide adequate housing or housing bonuses for the workforce could provide more solutions than any entity tackling this issue alone.

Table 8: Employers and employees in North Branch.

Largest Employers in North Branch	# of Employees
North Branch School District Education	340
Andersen Windows Manufacturing	248
Stepp Manufacturing	67
Peterson Mill	55
Zinpro	55
Branch Manufacturing	52

Job Growth Projections

The annual job growth rate in North Branch is 0.175%, equivalent to around 20 jobs per year. However, job growth could slow down without sufficient housing to accommodate workers. Existing and potential employers consider the availability and suitability of housing when evaluating expansion or relocation.

While there's an opportunity to attract businesses to the community's business park and create jobs, forming partnerships with employers to identify specific housing needs is critical. Otherwise, it may hinder business recruitment and impact the local economy. North Branch can transition from a bedroom community to its employment epicenter if adequate housing is provided. The following projections anticipate relatively little change in the North Branch economy at the current job growth rates unless housing is provided.

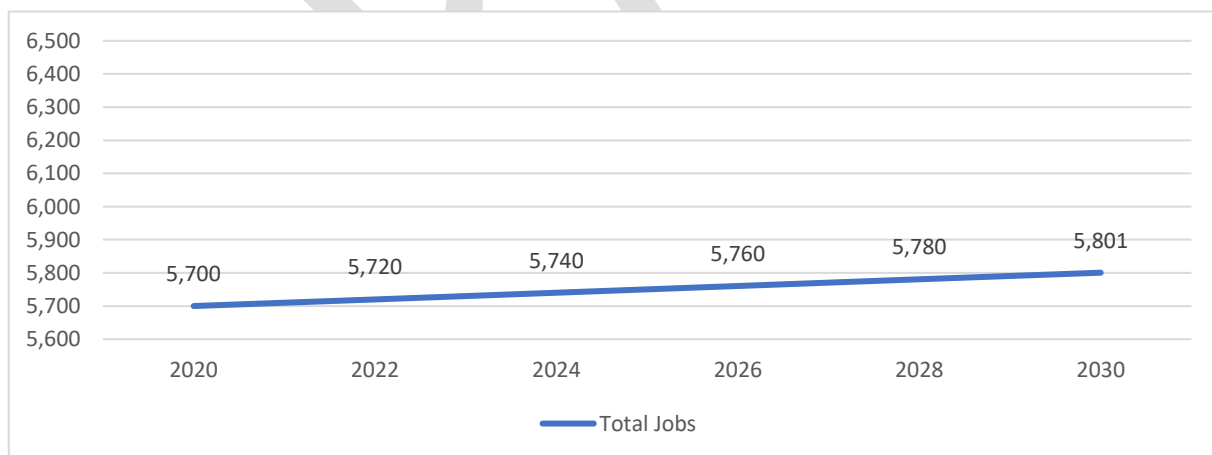


Figure 9: Total Jobs in North Branch

Wage Analysis

An analysis of various wages sheds light on what housing people can afford. North Branch's single median income of \$39,127 encompasses diverse roles, from personal caregivers earning \$17.45/hr. to those working in senior living facilities. Unfortunately, personal care employees

often earn less than the annual median income, making homeownership or renting economically unsustainable even if these jobs are in high demand due to the projected growth of this age group. The standard for affordability is the Annual Median Income (AMI), with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defining affordable housing as costing 30% or less of the AMI. Housing falling below 80% and 120% of AMI is generally termed 'Workforce Housing,' whether naturally occurring or incentivized. In North Branch, an affordable rental home costs approximately \$978.18 per month at the annual median income level. The following are key insights stemming from the local wage analysis:

- 51.5 % of North Branch residents lack the income to secure a rental at the market rate of \$1,345.
- 74.7 % of North Branch residents lack the income to purchase a median-value home at \$265,903.
- Market rate rentals are \$171.19 higher than the highest cost workforce housing at 120 % of AMI or \$1,173.81/month.

Table 9: Table of Resident Occupations and Maximum Cost of Housing Attainable

Occupation	Resident %	Income		% of AMI	Max. Rent Budget	Max. Home Purchase Price	Difference Between Budget and Median Cost		Housing Attainability	
		Hourly	Annual				Rented	Owned	Rent	Own
Office/Admin	11.2 %	\$22.25	\$46,280.00	118 %	\$1,285	\$200,000	(\$59)	(\$65,903)	No	No
Production	10.8 %	\$22.26	\$46,300.80	118 %	\$1,286	\$200,000	(\$58)	(\$65,903)	No	No
Management	9.8 %	\$45.02	\$93,641.60	239 %	\$2,601	\$405,203	\$1,256	\$139,300	Yes	Yes
Sales	8.3 %	\$16.26	\$33,820.80	86 %	\$939	\$145,000	(\$405)	(\$120,903)	No	No
Education /Library	8.2 %	\$25.34	\$52,707.20	134 %	\$1,464	\$221,288	\$119	(\$44,615)	Yes	No
Transportation	7.8 %	\$19.42	\$40,393.60	103 %	\$1,122	\$178,598	(\$222)	(\$87,305)	No	No
Construction /Extraction	7.0 %	\$29.51	\$61,380.80	156 %	\$1,705	\$261,876	\$360	(\$4,027)	Yes	No
Health Practices	5.1 %	\$40.05	\$83,304.00	212 %	\$2,314	\$360,084	\$969	\$94,181	Yes	Yes
Health Support	4.8 %	\$17.90	\$37,232.00	95 %	\$1,034	\$160,000	(\$310)	(\$105,903)	No	No
Maintenance/ Repair	4.1 %	\$24.88	\$51,750.40	132 %	\$1,437	\$217,727	\$92	(\$48,176)	Yes	No
Building Maintenance	3.5 %	\$18.03	\$37,502.40	95 %	\$1,041	\$164,714	(\$303)	(\$101,189)	No	No
Food Preparation	3.4 %	\$14.99	\$31,179.20	79 %	\$866	\$134,837	(\$478)	(\$131,066)	No	No
Social Service	3.2 %	\$25.76	\$53,580.80	136 %	\$1,488	\$226,200	\$143	(\$39,703)	Yes	No
Business /Financial	2.8 %	\$33.54	\$69,763.20	178 %	\$1,937	\$298,058	\$592	\$32,155	Yes	Yes
Legal	2.4 %	\$35.76	\$74,380.80	190 %	\$2,066	\$319,398	\$721	\$53,495	Yes	Yes
Computer /Mathematical	1.7 %	\$38.36	\$79,788.80	203 %	\$2,216	\$343,679	\$871	\$77,776	Yes	Yes
Personal Care	1.6 %	\$17.45	\$36,296.00	92 %	\$1,008	\$159,139	(\$336)	(\$106,764)	No	No
Architecture /Engineer	1.3 %	\$38.62	\$80,329.60	205 %	\$2,231	\$346,522	\$886	\$80,619	Yes	Yes
Protective Service	1.2 %	\$29.98	\$62,358.40	159 %	\$1,732	\$280,000	\$387	\$14,097	Yes	Yes
Life/Social Sciences	1.0 %	\$33.22	\$69,097.60	176 %	\$1,919	\$300,000	\$574	\$34,097	Yes	Yes
Arts/Rec/ Entertainment	0.9 %	\$26.15	\$54,392.00	139 %	\$1,510	\$244,494	\$165	(\$21,409)	Yes	No
Farm/Fish /Forestry	0.1 %	\$22.00	\$45,760.00	116 %	\$1,271	\$200,000	(\$73)	(\$65,903)	No	No

Addressing North Branch's housing affordability crisis requires a multifaceted approach considering rental and homeownership dynamics. The situation highlights a critical issue faced by many communities: housing affordability. When a significant portion of the population cannot afford to buy homes, it has far-reaching consequences for both renters and homeowners. Rental housing often serves as a stepping stone toward permanent homeownership. However, if 74.7% of the community cannot afford to buy a home in North Branch based on their annual income, this creates a barrier to homeownership. As a result,

renters may remain in rental properties for longer periods, reducing rental turnover. Reduced rental turnover can increase demand for rental units unless new housing developments are created. Meanwhile, over 85% of North Branch residents are homeowners. These homeowners may be reluctant to sell their properties due to the high cost of re-entering the market. Consequently, this scarcity of available homes affects the real estate market volume and drives up prices.

The interplay between rental affordability, homeownership, and market dynamics creates a negative feedback loop. Renters are most vulnerable to price variability from insufficient supply. As housing prices rise, affordability decreases, leading to further challenges for renters and potential homebuyers. In the non-residential sector, businesses considering North Branch as a location must navigate the rental market when recruiting and retaining employees. Access to affordable housing is crucial for attracting talent. Additionally, local labor can fill new positions, even with slightly higher unemployment rates, provided housing options are feasible for relocating employees.

Housing Market Inventory

North Branch faces housing challenges driven by high demand, limited supply, and competitive market conditions. Although it looks like a lot of housing is being built, more housing is needed to meet demand, especially housing for various life stages and price points. Key points to address affordability and housing availability are based on 2023 data:

1. Occupancy Rate and Home Sales:
 - There are 4,365 housing units in North Branch, with a high occupancy rate of 96%.
 - Over the past 12 months, 264 home sales have been closed, representing a 13.3% increase compared to the same period in 2023.
 - These sales accounted for 6.1% of all homes changing hands in the town last year.
2. Market Activity and Time on the Market:
 - A property's average time on the market is 39 days, nearly a 50% increase from the previous year.
 - The short duration indicates a heated market with properties moving quickly.
3. Scarcity of Housing Supply:
 - The rapid turnover of properties suggests a scarcity of available housing supply.
 - As homes enter the market, they are swiftly purchased, leaving limited options for buyers.
4. Rental Market Implications:
 - This scarcity affects the rental market as well.
 - Those who can afford to move from rentals to permanent homes may choose to stay in rentals longer due to the competitive housing market.
 - Approximately 746 rental-occupied housing units exist in North Branch, with an average tenancy of 8 years (leases beginning in 2016).

- These units seldom become vacant for new tenants.

Implications

The implications of the Demographics Analysis section of this study are divided into two main categories:

- Population growing challenges.
- Economic disparities

The critical statistics under these themes illustrate a need to approach housing from multiple perspectives. There is no single root cause of North Branch's current market conditions and its effects on the city's current and future residents.

Population Growing Challenges

- The population of North Branch in 2030 is projected to be between 13,000 and 14,000, which equates to an increase of 1,500 to 2,500 people from the present-day population.
- To meet this need, approximately 556 to 926 new housing units, both rentals and owner-occupied units, will be required.

Economic Disparities

Examining the ESRI data and performing quick calculations delivers the following facts.

- The median single income in the City of North Branch is \$39,127, and the median rent in the rental market is \$1,343/month, which is 137.3% AMI.
- Based on our wage analysis, 51.5% of people in North Branch cannot afford a rental in the city alone. Further, 74.7% cannot afford to buy a median-valued home in the city alone.
- Approximately 85% of the city's homes are owner-occupied. This high percentage indicates a strong preference for homeownership within the community.
- Residents often choose to retain their homes even beyond where the home meets their needs because selling and re-entering the housing market can be financially challenging for most incomes in the city.

In summary, the combination of high owner-occupancy rates and affordability concerns creates a situation where residents hold onto their homes, affecting housing turnover and availability.

Based on data projections, the housing market faces several challenges in the coming years. The key points are:

1. Existing Home Sales and Mortgage Rates:
 - Existing home sales fell to a 28-year low in 2023.
 - However, as mortgage rates decline, existing home sales are expected to rebound gradually.
 - Home prices have held onto their gains due to a lack of supply.

- As lending rates fall and more homes are listed for sale, true price discovery will occur.⁴
- 2. Newly Built Homes:
 - Sales of newly built homes will maintain an elevated market share.
 - Builders can buy down mortgage rates, and there's pent-up housing demand.
 - This trend is likely to continue <https://realestate.usnews.com/real-estate/housing-market-index/articles/housing-market-predictions-for-the-next-5-years>⁵.
- 3. Rental Market:
 - Rents are expected to stabilize due to added supply.
 - They will more closely track inflation rates⁶.
- 4. Market Dynamics:
 - The housing market will face challenges due to demographic shifts.
 - Gen Z maturing will impact housing starts.
 - The expansion of artificial intelligence and other factors will influence real estate trends.
- 5. Long-Term Outlook:
 - By 2030, the average price of a single-family home in the U.S. could reach \$382,000⁷.
 - If current trends continue, market conditions will increase lease prices, leading to vacancies as tenants are priced out, ultimately displacing economically disadvantaged residents from the community.

In summary, while the housing supply struggles with population growth, market dynamics and affordability issues will shape the housing landscape over the next decade. Developers, buyers, and renters must adapt to these changing conditions.

Currently, realtors and developers are noticing these important trends and market movements:

1. Homes Selling Despite Rental Need:
 - Homes are still selling despite the need for rental housing due to various factors, such as demand from buyers seeking homeownership and investment opportunities.
 - Buyers are likely individuals or families who prioritize homeownership over renting or see potential value in investing in property.
 - Developers continue building homes because buyers demand to purchase rather than rent.

⁴ <https://realestate.usnews.com/real-estate/housing-market-index/articles/housing-market-predictions-for-the-next-5-years>

⁵ <https://realestate.usnews.com/real-estate/housing-market-index/articles/housing-market-predictions-for-the-next-5-years>

⁶ <https://realestate.usnews.com/real-estate/housing-market-index/articles/housing-market-predictions-for-the-next-5-years>

⁷ <https://www.cnbc.com/select/how-much-will-a-home-in-the-us-cost-by-2030/>

2. Interest in Building Subdivisions:
 - Developers may still be interested in building subdivisions due to demand from buyers looking for single-family homes.
 - Subdivisions offer developers opportunities to meet the demand for larger homes with more space, particularly from younger families leaving suburbs for more attainable housing options.
3. Lack of Interest from Apartment Developers:
 - Apartment developers may not be interested in building apartments in North Branch due to various factors, such as perceived market demand, zoning regulations, or infrastructure limitations.
 - Developers may prioritize areas with higher rental housing demand or where they see better potential returns on investment.
4. Advising Clients to Drive Until They Qualify:
 - Clients are advised to drive until they qualify for the housing they want. In many cases, this is now White Bear or Hugo housing, a change in the last decade because these areas offer more attainable housing options than North Branch.
 - The cost of housing in North Branch may be comparatively higher, leading clients to seek more attainable options in neighboring areas.
5. Migration Patterns:
 - Younger families are leaving suburbs for areas where they can find larger houses at a lower cost, potentially contributing to the demand for single-family homes in North Branch.
 - People leaving cities to start families elsewhere may be attracted to areas like North Branch, where they can afford the size of the house they desire compared to more expensive urban areas.

Housing Analysis

Existing Rental Housing Conditions & Operational Costs

The average apartment size in North Branch is 720 square feet, with a typical cost of \$965 as of November 2023. While these smaller units are efficient for some residents, they may not meet the needs of families requiring two- or three-bedroom apartments, which are scarce in the rental market. The tight rental market in North Branch sometimes results in zero or only one rental listing available. This scarcity makes rental conditions somewhat irrelevant, as prospective tenants cannot move into nonexistent units. Additionally, the existing rental housing that is income-restricted housing further limits availability, impacting average rental costs.

Rental Housing Market Analysis

Analysis

In North Branch, the current inventory of rental properties consists of 746 units, but only ten are available for lease. With a vacancy rate of 1.3%, the market is exceptionally tight. Typically, a low vacancy rate in a local rental housing market is around 5%, indicating a shortage of units to meet existing demand.

North Branch experiences a natural monopoly, with all nine available rental units concentrated in a single complex. Consequently, prices can increase without restraint until they align with alternative housing options in neighboring communities like Forest Lake and Cambridge. For context, the average rents in Cambridge and Forest Lake stand at \$1,176 and \$1,273, respectively, compared to North Branch's average of \$965. However, this average is influenced by the 22% of rental units in North Branch that are income-limited. Despite this, there's room for significant price increases before other housing options become more economically attractive to consumers, especially considering that the average non-incentivized unit price already exceeds that of neighboring communities. For further details, you can find a summary of rental units and buildings in Appendix A.

Senior Housing Market Analysis

Senior housing options vary, and affordability remains a critical consideration for older adults. Senior housing encompasses various options tailored to individuals aged 55 and older. Some of these include:

1. Assisted Living:
 - In assisted living facilities, medical staff are available around the clock.
 - Residents receive assistance with daily tasks while maintaining some independence.
2. Independent Living:
 - Independent living communities cater to fully self-sufficient seniors.
 - Medical supervision is not provided, allowing residents to live independently.

3. Naturally Occurring Housing:

- Certain existing housing types naturally suit seniors, such as townhomes, condos, and single-level apartments.
- However, affordability can be challenging for seniors on fixed incomes, especially if their current home no longer meets their physical needs.

Senior Housing Inventory in North Branch

Based on North Branch's demographics, approximately 12.2% of the city's residents are over 65 years old, totaling 1,403 people. These seniors have specific housing needs that their current homes may or may not continue to meet as they age. The population of Americans over 65 is growing rapidly, with an expected 47% increase in this age group between 2022 and 2050 (equivalent to a 1.4% annual growth rate). If this trend continues in North Branch until 2030, the city will likely face a significant shortage of optimal housing options for its senior residents. Anecdotally, a noticeable trend of seniors relocating to places like Cambridge has occurred due to more affordable housing options unavailable in the North Branch market.

Table 10: Senior Housing Inventory

Name	# Units	Type	Cost	Unit Size Range	Status
Ecumen North Branch	119	Assisted Living	The local average assisted living costs are \$3042 - \$3260.	569-886 Sq Ft	Open
Encore Assisted Living and Memory Care	30	Assisted Living		-	Open
Boka Haven	*	Assisted Living		-	Opening July 2024
Heritage Court Apts	32	Independent Living 55+ Income Limited	\$529-\$917	958 Sq Ft	Open
Uptown Maple Commons	33	Independent Living/ Incentivized Housing	-	-	Open
Northern Oaks	12	Independent Living 55+	\$885 - \$1,015	594 Sq Ft	Open
Total	224*				

For-sale housing market analysis

Based on North Branch's annual median income for individuals (\$39,127), the monthly payment considered affordable at the following price points, assuming a 20% downpayment at a 7.0% interest rate are:

- 50 % - 80 % of AMI = home purchase price of \$65,777 - \$104,407
- 80 % - 120 % of AMI = home purchase price of \$104,407 - \$163,117
- 120+ of AMI = home purchase price of \$163,117+

As of June 2024, seventy-eight (78) properties, homes intended for home ownership, are on the market in North Branch; a few empty lots are listed under the \$65,000 price point. Only one (1) home on the market would carry a payment sustainable on an income under 120 % of AMI; it is listed at \$154,900. The home is a 1,011 sq. ft. craftsman's home built in 1901 that needs significant repairs.

Considering the household annual median income of \$87,900 for North Branch, the price points change to the following, assuming a 20% downpayment at a 7.0% interest rate:

- 50 % - 80 % of AMI = home purchase price of \$195,946 - \$301,792
- 80 % - 120 % of AMI = home purchase price of \$301,792 - \$457,573
- 120+ of AMI = home purchase price of \$457,573

The current market in North Branch contains twelve (12) homes that could be purchased under the 80 % AMI threshold for household income. While this stock will likely be off the market in less than two months, as has been typical in North Branch, it is prudent to look at the costs of unbuilt lots of land that could allow for the construction of a home at a price point under the threshold for the 50 % to 80 % of AMI. Eight (8) vacant lots, ranging from \$64,999 - \$199,000, would allow for building new homes if the construction cost was under \$236,793 - \$102,792. While there are other lots above \$200,000, building a home for less than \$100,000 is unlikely based on current new construction/traditional costs, so these are not considered. Non-traditional construction, such as cargo container homes, or smaller square footage homes, such as tiny homes or factory-built homes, may make these lots viable. North Branch faces a complex housing landscape, balancing affordability, construction timelines, and market dynamics. In summary:

Workforce Homes:

- There are currently 38 homes meant for homeownership on the market priced between 80% and 120% of the area median income (AMI).
- Of these, six are not under construction but are available for sale.
- Only 13 homes are available above 120% of the AMI.

Challenges:

- The available-for-sale housing supply primarily consists of newer buildings and custom constructions.
- Delays between purchase and occupancy create additional expenses and obstacles for residents.
- Even if prospective buyers want to move in immediately, the market favors new buildings tailored to customer specifications.
- This situation necessitates additional rentals for temporary residences.

Niche and Renting:

- Due to building times and limited inventory, some residents may need to rent until homes are constructed.

- Cost barriers for land make it challenging to build homes at 50% of AMI.
- Feasibility increases at 80% of AMI, but subsidies are necessary for profitable housing below 80% of AMI.

Pending Rental Development

Throughout the housing study, interviews were conducted with various developers, property managers, and stakeholders involved in rental housing construction. These conversations provided valuable insights into the community's growth. However, concerning development trends emerged from these conversations. In summary, the key points made were:

- **Incentivized Housing:**
 - There's a clear need for housing catering to low-income individuals (50% to 80% of the Area Median Income) and workforce housing (80% to 120% of AMI).
 - Unfortunately, willing developers are scarce in providing such housing options.
 - Instead, developers lean toward market-rate housing, which doesn't align with North Branch's needs.
 - The challenge lies in producing units below the market rate despite developer interest in profitable market-rate projects.
- **Local Government and Minor Frustrations:**
 - Local government doesn't pose significant barriers to new development.
 - Minor frustrations for developers include adding and expanding garage facilities.
 - Enhancing amenities can enhance the existing market's quality and appeal.
- **Senior Housing Demand:**
 - Aging residents create a growing demand for specialized senior housing units.
 - Meeting their needs and desires is crucial.
- **Lack of Imminent Developments:**
 - Existing developers/builders in North Branch's housing market lack plans for additional units.
 - Urgency in increasing housing production is needed to avoid exacerbating supply shortages.
- **Impact on Education and Labor:**
 - Educators, a significant industry in North Branch, face challenges due to the housing shortage.
 - Absence of available rentals hinders talent recruitment.
 - Students' connections with local employers affect future local labor.

Target Markets

Consumer behaviors reinforce the understanding of the rental housing market dynamics in North Branch, pointing to the need for housing solutions that cater to the diverse needs of its residents in the following way:

Demographic Segmentation:

- The text introduces three distinct consumer segments within the North Branch: Up and Coming Families, Middleburg, and Front Porches. This segmentation aligns with previous facts regarding the diversity of residents and their varying housing needs.

Consumer Preferences and Behaviors:

- Each consumer segment exhibits unique preferences and behaviors that impact the rental housing market. For example:
 - Up and Coming Families prefer suburban living and homeownership but may initially rely on rental housing.
 - Middleburg families prioritize family-building and require housing suitable for larger families.
 - Front Porches residents, consisting of smaller families and single households, heavily rely on rental housing due to income constraints.

Implications for Rental Housing Market:

- Many residents, especially those fitting the consumer behavioral characteristics outlined, are active participants in rental and housing markets. They may seek to transition from rental to permanent housing as their families grow or their financial situations improve.
- The influx of people into the North Branch has outpaced the growth in available housing units, indicating a high demand for rental and permanent housing.

Population Growth and Housing Demand:

- The demographic characteristics of these consumer segments, particularly their youthfulness and growing families, contribute to increasing population growth rates and housing demand pressures.
- The population growth and housing demand challenges in North Branch are partly due to a shortage of available housing units.

Demand Analysis

Rental Housing Economic Theory

Balancing housing supply and demand is crucial for sustainable growth and community prosperity. Key points to highlight:

1. Supply and Demand Equilibrium:
 - Like any economy, the housing market seeks equilibrium between supply and demand.
 - However, from a government perspective, reaching this equilibrium isn't ideal for housing.
 - If supply equals demand, population growth and tax base expansion stagnate.
2. Rental Housing Market Dynamics:

- When all housing units are occupied, demand pressure drives up rental prices.
 - Existing tenants may be priced out, and new occupants struggle to afford rent.
 - Waitlists for new units persist, but former tenants still seek affordable leases elsewhere.
3. Benefits of Slightly Exceeding Demand:
- A slight housing supply surplus benefits the local government.
 - Attracting new citizens and retaining existing ones is possible with stable rent prices.
 - This supports future population growth and tax base expansion without tax rate adjustments.
4. Developing Ahead of Demand:
- Constructing housing units proactively alleviates market pressure.
 - It ensures people can afford to stay in North Branch while saving for home purchases.

Forecasting Current Market Conditions

We can estimate the expected market supply and demand at certain intervals by understanding the growth rates for housing units and population and the average household size. In North Branch, the present state of the rental housing market is based on:

- Population Growth Rate = 1.89 %
- Housing Unit Growth Rate = 1.73 %
- Average Household Size = 2.70
- Population in 2020 = 10,787
- Total Housing Units in 2020 = 4,090

The current growth scenario will produce an ever-tightening market where prices increase as the available rental supply dwindles. By 2030, there will be a 37-unit surplus of all housing in the city, including rentals. Assuming development occurs proportionally between owned and rental housing units at the same rates of ownership and rental status, it is anticipated that this could yield a total surplus of 5 rental units. The implications are that employers may not find the housing conditions appealing to their workforce. North Branch is an attractive community, and people want to move here, evidenced by the continued growth rate, the growing student population in our schools, and developers continuing to build homes. However, this may slow down due to rising costs.

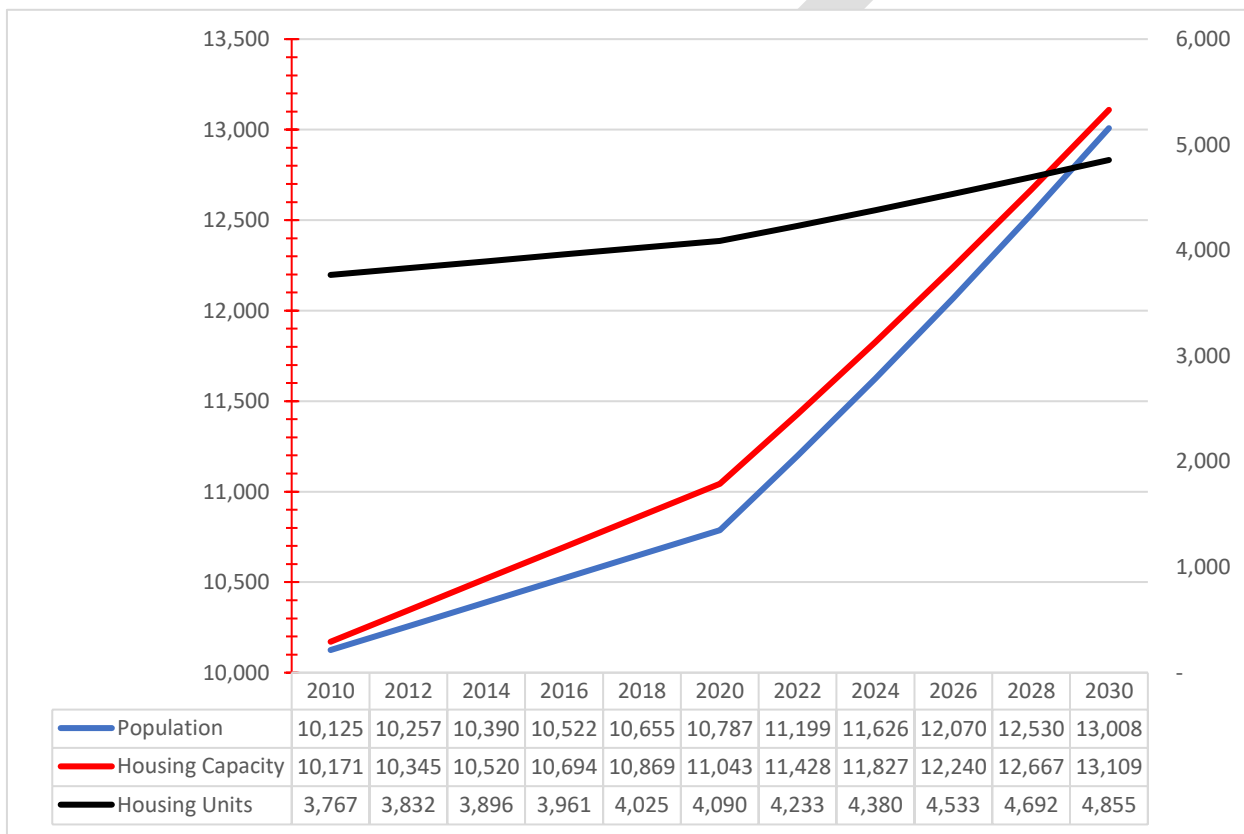


Figure 10: Housing Capacity of North Branch, Projected to 2030 (1.89% population growth).

Forecasting Market Conditions Based on 2000-2010 Growth Trend

The City of North Branch experienced 26.2% growth over the 2000-2010 decade. If the above assumptions remained constant for the current housing units, population, and housing unit production rate, the population growth rate would increase to 2.49% annually, slightly less than during the 2000s. If North Branch were to experience 2.49% annual growth, it would cause a general housing shortage of 254 units by 2030. This would have a significant effect on the city's pricing and growth. Assuming this shortage is proportional to the community's

ownership and rental distribution, that would still mean a 37-unit shortage of rental housing units.

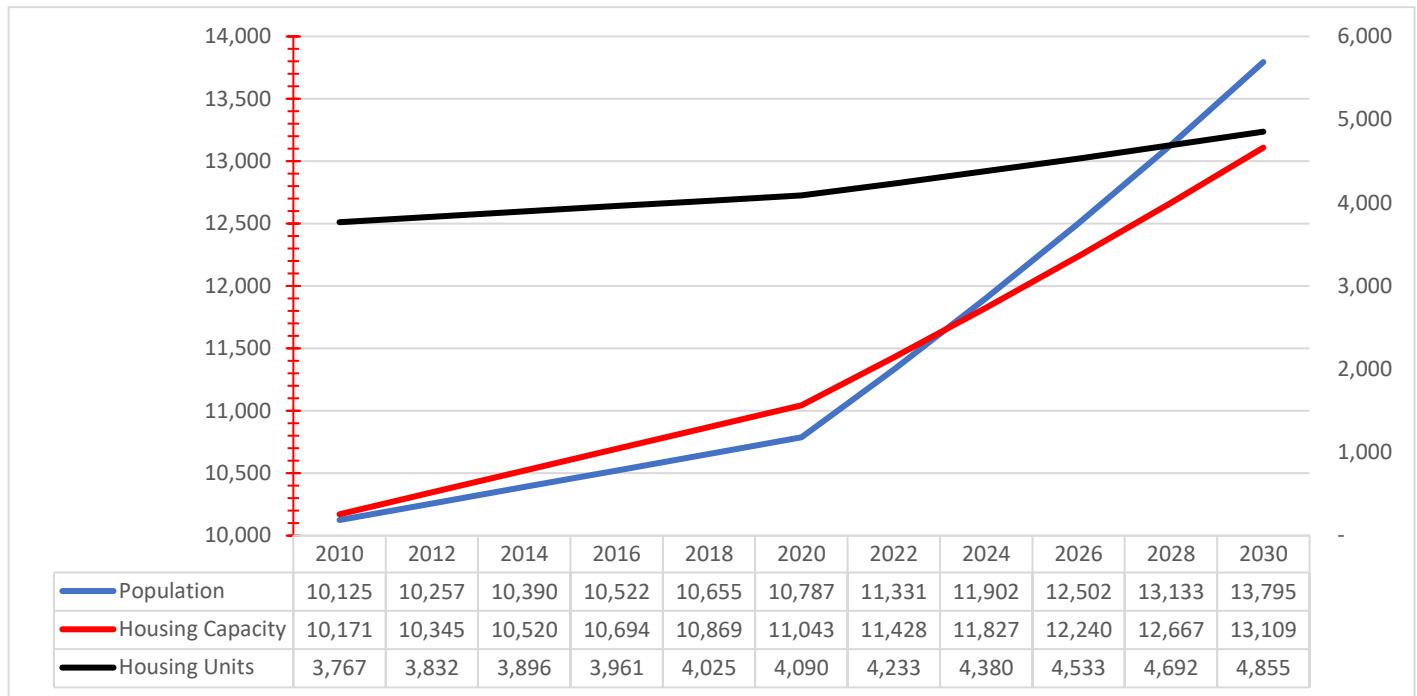


Figure 11: Housing Capacity of North Branch, Projected to 2030 (2.49% population growth).

Residential Building Permit Analysis

Upon review of the permitting data from 2020-2023, the average construction cost for a new single-family home has decreased by \$15,000. This indicates a recovery in the housing market and a decrease in inflation that should be reflected in lower housing costs. However, there is no evidence of housing prices decreasing, which indicates the housing supply is still lower than demand, resulting in greater consumer costs and higher developer profits. These trends contribute to the unavailability of ownership housing for residents; there may be a solution through non-traditional housing options referenced in the for-sale market analysis.

Table 7: North Branch Housing Construction Permitting Data 2020-2023

Year	Housing Units Constructed	Total Cost of All Projects	Cost per Unit Built
2023	98	\$ 15,566,448.00	\$ 158,841.31
2022	64	\$ 11,968,017.00	\$ 187,000.27
2021	102	\$ 16,768,813.00	\$ 164,400.13
2020	113	\$ 19,660,923.00	\$ 173,990.47

Zoning Analysis

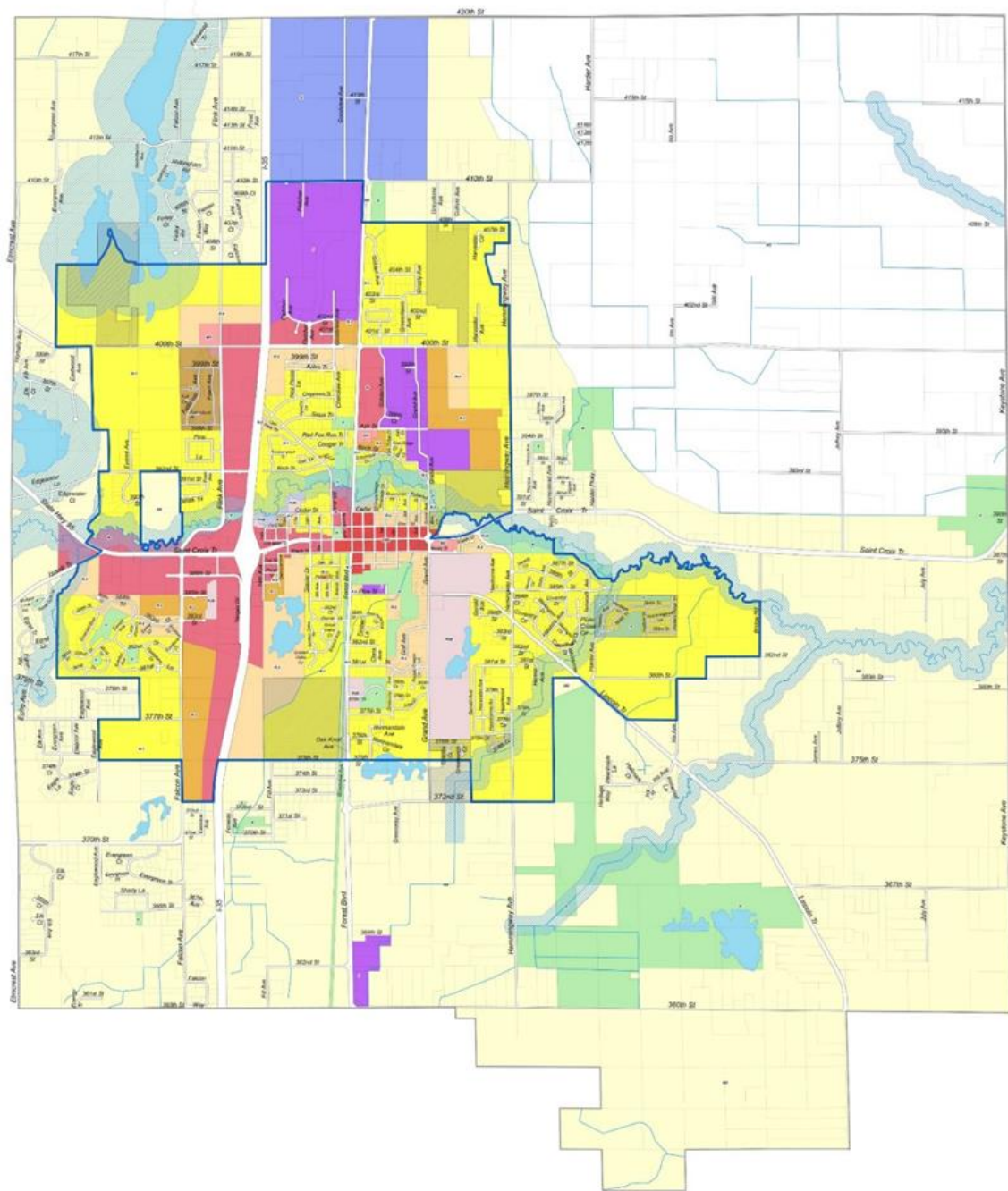
Service Areas

The City of North Branch is divided into an urban service area and a rural service area. The urban service area encompasses the city's core east from the intersection of I-35 and Highway 95 to Hemingway, plus another mile west of I-35, and north to south from 410th to 372nd streets. The central defining feature of the urban service area is sewer service, which is essential to multi-family development. The rest of the North Branch is in the rural service area, which lacks municipal sanitary sewer services. However, it is not impossible to expand sewer infrastructure if growth necessitates it. While in the rural service area, the city's northeastern quadrant is dedicated to agricultural uses. This area is undeveloped due to the soil not being conducive to residential or commercial development. The current Comprehensive Plan and Zoning code calls for a significant reduction in the rural service area, which has yet to be implemented fully.

Table 11: Sec 66-170 Establishment of Zoning Districts

AG	Agriculture
B	Business
BN	Business Neighborhood
CBD	Central Business District
I	Industrial
I2	Heavy Industrial
P	Park/Open Space
PUB	Public-Semi Public
R-1	Low Density Residential
R-2	Medium Density Residential
R-3	High Density Residential
RR	Rural Residential

Zoning Map



Zoning Map

- Urban Service Area Boundary
- PUD Planned Unit Development Overlay
- SL Shoreland Overlay District
- Zoning
 - AG - Agricultural
 - B - Business
 - BN - Business Neighborhood
 - CBD - Central Business District
 - I - Industrial
 - I2 - Heavy Industrial
 - P - Park/Open Space
 - PUB - Public/Semi-Public
 - R-1 - Single Family Residential
 - R-2 - Medium Density Residential
 - R-3 - High Density Residential
 - RR - Rural Residential
 - RightOfWayOld



Disclaimer: The City of North Branch provides this data "as is" without warranty or any representation of accuracy, timeliness or completeness. The data does not represent a survey. No liability is assumed for the accuracy of the data delineated herein, either expressed or implied.

March 2024

Source: [Layout1 \(revize.com\)](https://www.layout1.com/)

The North Branch Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code locate higher residential uses adjacent to commercial activity centers at major intersections and along main transportation corridors. The Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2018 and defined the Future Land Uses (p22-23) as follows:

Table 12: Summary of Future Land Use - Source: [https://cms4files1.revize.com/northbranch/2018 %20North %20Branch %20Comp %20Plan.pdf](https://cms4files1.revize.com/northbranch/2018%20North%20Branch%20Comp%20Plan.pdf)

Summary of Future Land Use		
Future Land Use by Designation	Gross Acreage*	Net % of City
Agriculture (Ag)	5,271.4	22.9%
Rural Residential (RR)	9,992.6	43.3%
Low Density Residential (R1)	3,492.5	15.1%
Medium Density Residential (R2)	577.2	2.5%
High Density Residential (R3)	330.8	1.4%
Central Business District (CBD)	71.4	.3%
General Business District (B)	802.2	3.5%
Industrial District (I)	1,123.7	4.9%
*Gross acres determined by GIS mapping data do not include public and institutional areas separately defined under the proposed land use map.		

The following future land use categories allow residential dwellings:

Rural Residential corresponds to the RR-Rural Residential Zoning District. Land used in this category includes hobby farms and homes on large lots. The area is outside the designated Urban Service Area and is served by wells and individual septic systems. Individual lots must be a minimum size of one acre buildable. This is the lowest density in the **residential development** land use category.

Low-density residential corresponds to the R1-Single Family Zoning District. In this category, the land use is single-family detached homes served by municipal utilities. The density is limited to up to **4 dwelling units per acre**.

Medium-density residential corresponds to R2-Medium-Density Zoning Districts and typically consists of single-family homes on smaller lot sizes, townhomes, duplexes, and small-scale apartment and condo buildings served by municipal utilities. The density is limited to **6 dwelling units per acre**.

High-density residential corresponds to the R3-High-Density Residential Zoning District. This land use category consists of multiple families' attached vertically oriented housing, more commonly called apartments and condominiums, and served by municipal utilities. The density is set at **more than six dwelling units per acre up to 18 units per acre**.

Agriculture corresponds to the AG-Agriculture Zoning District and typically has a strong agricultural heritage. Single-family homes are present and are an accessory to the commercial operations of farms. Non-agricultural uses will be limited, and densities targeted in this category will be no more than **one dwelling unit per 10 acres**.

The Central Business District corresponds to the CBD-Central Business District Zoning District. Although several single-family homes currently exist in the Central Business District, new residential development should be part of a mixed-use plan with a balance of housing and commercial uses within a single building or complex. Single-family homes should be replaced with mixed-use structures as these homes become vacant or no longer suitable for residences. **No density is specified.**

Commercial / B - Business While there is general opposition to reducing commercial space in the city, the designated Commercial properties behind those located on transportation corridors are candidates for mixed-use and high-density residential uses.

Infrastructure Analysis

When presented with the housing map and its recommendations, the city engineer cited no “major issues with the proposed mixed-use locations in comparison to the existing comprehensive sanitary sewer and water plans.” However, it was also noted that the existing system will require expansion to meet the comprehensive plan objectives, which are less aggressive than the growth models used in this study. Most locations identified as opportunities for mixed-use development are ready in areas where the existing comprehensive plan proposed medium- and High-density residential or business development. The City Engineer recognized there were three areas where most of the suggestions were located and noted the following capacity-related information:

The area North of TH95:

“Much of the sewer and water system north of TH 95 is set up to handle the projected flows, and the proposed change to mixed-use will have little impact on that. A 20-inch water main is in place down Flink Ave, and an 18" sanitary sewer and 6" force main is available to serve future development, so there are no concerns about capacity in this area.”

Area west of I35 & south of TH95:

“The water supply should be fine in this location; however, trunk water and sanitary service need to be extended south of the Tanger Outlet Mall area (see water system figure below). Sanitary sewer improvements will be necessary for growth in the area regardless of land use. Improvements are also needed for lift station pump upsizing at the Tanger and Mystic lift stations. The 30" trunk sewer downstream has plenty of capacity.”

Area east of I35 & south of TH95:

“Trunk water and sanitary extensions will be necessary for growth in the area regardless of land use. Water access is available from the south terminus of 14th Ave, and looping to the west side of I-35 and the east side of Forest Boulevard would likely be necessary (see water system figure below). Sanitary sewer improvements will be necessary for growth in the area regardless of land use. Improvements needed would be trunk sewer extensions and lift station pump upsizing.”

Engagement

The City of North Branch sought public input as part of a comprehensive study to assess multi-family, workforce, and senior rental housing needs and plan for future development that aligns with those needs. The purpose of this study is to recommend immediate, short-term (up to 2030), and long-term (beyond 2030) approaches to meeting current and future rental housing needs, including:

- Quantitative metrics of a variety of rental property types.
- Analysis of the specific types of rental units the community demands, ranging from compact studios to more spacious three-bedroom options.
- In-depth exploration of the rental prices per unit to foster a comprehensive understanding of the local housing market.

- Highlighting the most immediate rental housing needs while projecting both short-term and long-term demands, ensuring a forward-looking and proactive focus.

The engagement conducted was framed around four guiding goals.

1. Ensure that project information is made available to the public clearly and effectively, especially regarding the type and need for rental housing.
2. Gather meaningful feedback from stakeholders to develop a community-supported rental housing study.
3. Ensure that stakeholder questions and concerns are heard and addressed.
4. Document what we heard and how that information was used in completing the study.

Summary of Engagement Strategies

Phase One

We created a series of outreach tools, including articles, a website, and social media materials for the steering committee to approve and get the word out about the study. These materials included access to a summary of existing community conditions to give every engaged party an accurate context for their views. During this period, a survey was conducted to get a broad view of the public sentiments on a few questions that are key to understanding rental housing in North Branch. Additionally, the city hosted a community conversation to inform and solicit more in-depth feedback from engaged community members on the housing market in the city.

Phase Two

After gathering this input from the public, we compiled data, conducted stakeholder interviews, and conducted focus groups to refine the study's perspectives on various aspects of the rental market. At this stage, the study analysis and recommendation are drafted, building on the responses from the public in phase one.

Phase Three

After the steering committee presents a draft document to the City of North Branch, it is published for public comment on the study. At this point, any revisions needed due to public sentiments or concerns will be addressed before presenting a finalized draft to the city.

Community Conversation

On March 21, 2024, a community meeting was held at North Branch Area High School for citizens to learn more about the state of the rental market in their community. In addition, this meeting allowed the public to interact with their leaders, such as the mayor, councilmembers, and the project steering committee, on where rentals could be located and what would be most beneficial to the community. The discussion with the public centered on three key questions.

Question 1: What does North Branch need?

While the responses varied, the group agreed, "It is obvious there is a housing crisis based on the market demand." This was followed up with an anecdote about a recent sale on the market

in less than a week, with seven offers for a 700-square-foot home sold at more than \$220,000. While not explicitly related to housing, the following things were discussed as missing from the city in a broader sense:

- A community center.
- Good restaurants.
- Attainable groceries in the city
- A plan for business development
- Urgent care and more medical service options
- More sense of community
- More businesses
- Activities for youth near housing
- Lower taxes or more tax base
- Nice sit-down restaurants that are attainable, family restaurants

Specifically, attendees noted that most people visit Cambridge for attainable grocery stores. While they recognize a supermarket in town as expensive, many people, especially seniors or those with fixed incomes, do not go there.

Question 2: What kind of housing do they want?

As the conversation turned to this topic, it became clear that there was a public misconception about attainable and workforce housing. Developing public knowledge of this topic may improve public perception of workforce housing geared toward 80-120 % of the annual median income. The public disfavored the term *affordable* and favored *attainable* housing but expected it to be market-driven and unincentivized, which may be challenging in the current market. Other thoughts that were brought up included:

- Innovative housing types, like the modular home community in Northfield. They liked this because the units were single-family homes that were attainable, energy-efficient, innovative, and owner-occupied.
- Housing that allows people to build wealth so that they can buy a house and move up to higher housing as they have families.
- Design is critical to making development acceptable to the community.
- Step-down housing is appropriate for seniors who want their own space but smaller; they don't want to do or can't do all the maintenance.

Question 3: Where should the housing go?

When the facilitated activity posed the question of where to place rental housing in the city in the future, the attending community members and the public came to the following conclusions:

- Housing with many bedrooms should not go by the railroad.
- Housing with families should be near the school for easy access for parents who drive kids to/from school and for kids who can walk and bike.

- Senior housing should go near health care, grocery stores, services,
- There should be workforce housing near the industrial park so workers can easily access jobs.

The primary site where people wanted to avoid seeing multi-family housing development was the lot where the old school building had been downtown. This 2.4-acre site has been the subject of community controversy for numerous years, and development there would further enflame these controversies.

Final thought: What role should the city play in the housing market?

As the community members left, they were asked to leave their final answers to this question on notes before they left. The following were the prevailing opinions of the group:

- A city provides planning and infrastructure behind the market but lets the market drive growth.
- Senior housing is OK. Any other government-supportive housing needs design control and should not be shifted to a different housing type.
- In decision-making, we should include local businesses, especially our largest businesses, and what their employees say about their housing needs.
- Ensure housing meets all the needs of new homeowners, move-ups, and seniors; even renters go through the stages of new renter, large rental, and senior rental.

Housing Expert Interviews

During the analysis of the rental housing market in the city of North Branch, we conducted interviews with the following stakeholders:

- Laird J. Mork – Property Owner
- Bruce Vanderwalk – Property Manager and Owner
- Katie Harris – Willow Grove Lp – Property Manager and Owner
- Peggy Splittstoser – Splittstoser Apartments – Property Manager
- Chisago County Housing and Redevelopment Authority – Representatives
- North Branch Area School District – Representatives from the Administration

Each interviewee was asked a series of questions on rental housing and development. These questions were the following:

1. What is your role or connection to rental housing? Are you a banker, realtor, landlord, developer, etc.?
2. What are your overall thoughts on how easy or difficult it is to develop rental housing in North Branch?
3. When undertaking rental housing development projects, have you encountered any specific challenges or limitations imposed by the existing city environment, regulations, procedures, or approvals? For example, Taxes, schooling, or employment?
4. In your experience, how would you better modernize the current development standards or approvals to attract rental housing development in North Branch?

5. What kind of support would you need to help build rental housing in North Branch?
Examples: reduced utility rates, funding for remodeling existing stock or building new units, and other financing.
6. What is your opinion on the types of housing units needed and preferred locations?
7. What rental housing projects would you like to see yourself developing in North Branch?
8. What is the outlook of the workforce in North Branch?

Findings:

- Developers did not recognize significant problems in developing housing; however, they did see a large demand for housing.
- Employers noted that there is a major need for housing because of the cost being so high.
- No policies were requested to help add development, but there was a clear recognition that more housing would not hurt their business.
- Developers are not encouraged to build in this finance market.

Survey Data Analysis

The city allows the community to participate by sharing thoughts via a survey. In total, 62 participants responded throughout March 2024, sharing their public opinion on critical questions related to housing and rental housing in the City of North Branch. This data is presented in this section through graphs. However, the wealth of insight gained from the additional commentary offered in the survey was invaluable to crafting recommendations in this study. The results of all engagement activities tended to reflect the results of this survey.

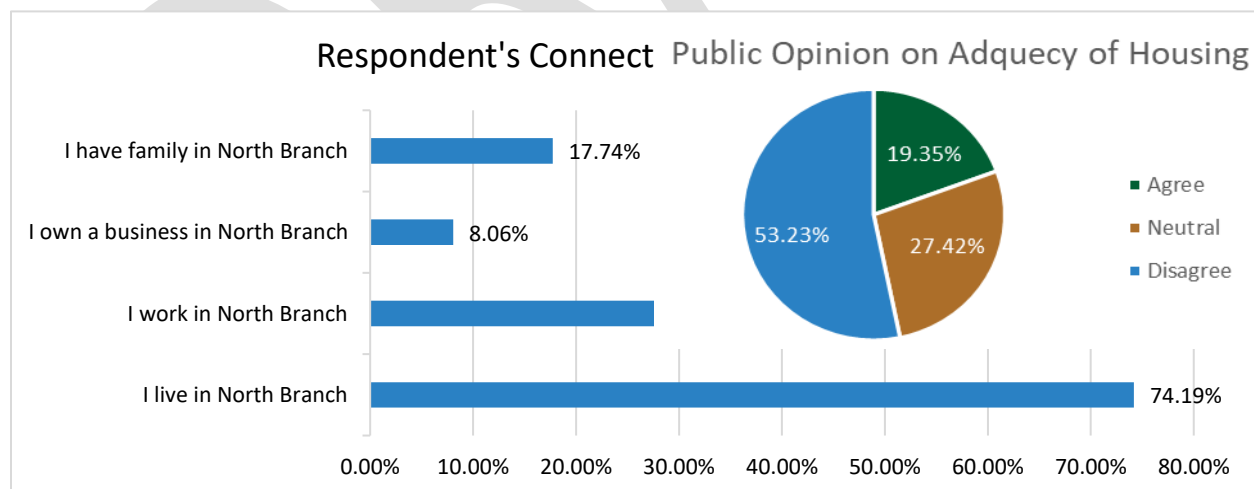


Figure 12: Public Opinion on Adequacy of Housing

From the first two questions, it became clear that the respondents were split on whether an adequate supply of quality housing choices was available.

When considering the top three issues related to rental housing in North Branch, cost and insufficient housing stand out as top concerns.

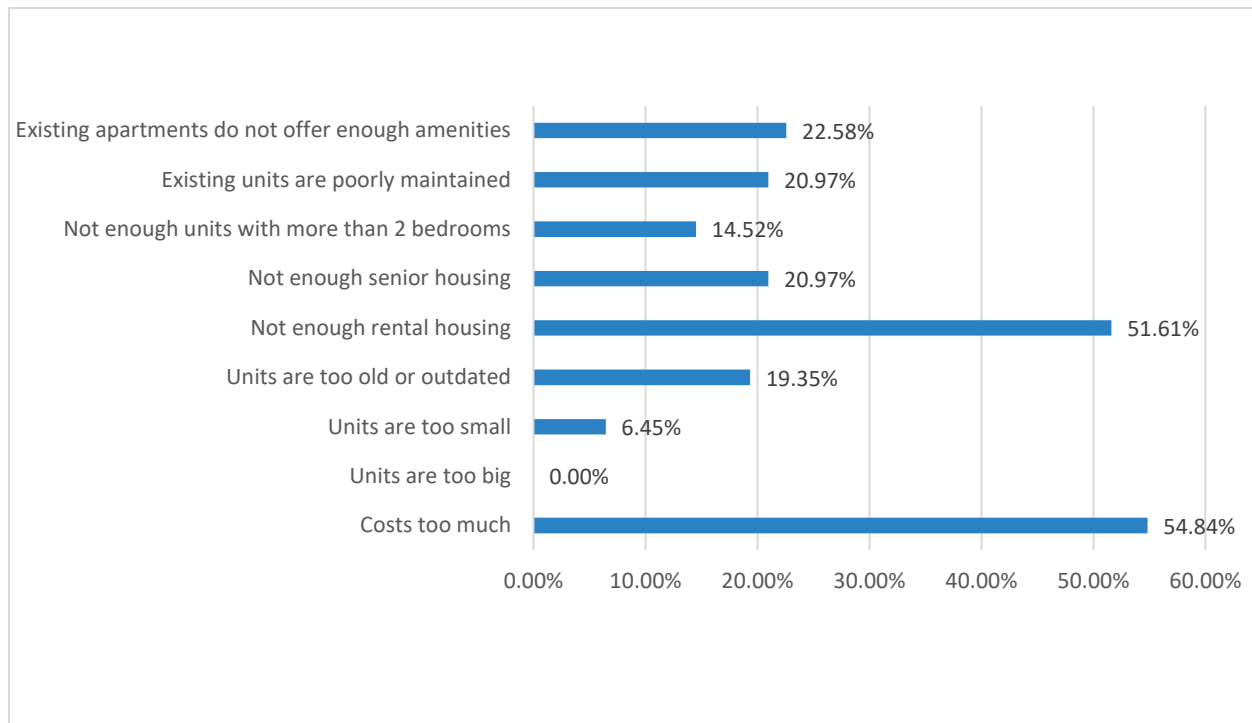


Figure 13: Top 3 Issues with North Branch Rental Housing

In addition, 24 respondents shared specific concerns. In general, open comments share:

- Concerns about the lack of wheelchair accessible/disability-friendly units and difficulty qualifying for income-based housing.
- There are mixed opinions on the need for rental housing. Some feel there are already enough options, but others call for more Incentivized and attainable housing.
- There is a desire for better support for mental health needs in existing apartment complexes and dissatisfaction with the quality of some rental properties.
- It calls for more diverse businesses and amenities instead of more rental housing, emphasizing entry-level homeownership opportunities and housing for veterans.
- Challenges regarding the high cost of homeownership and rental prices, particularly for retirees and low-income individuals

Respondents expressed a range of barriers to finding suitable residences in the North Branch. In addition to the answer choices provided, respondents expressed difficulty paying the high cost of utilities and property taxes, accessibility, and lack of public transportation. More than 71 % of respondents know someone currently looking for housing or rental housing, particularly for apartment and townhome rentals. There is an expressed need for attainable options.

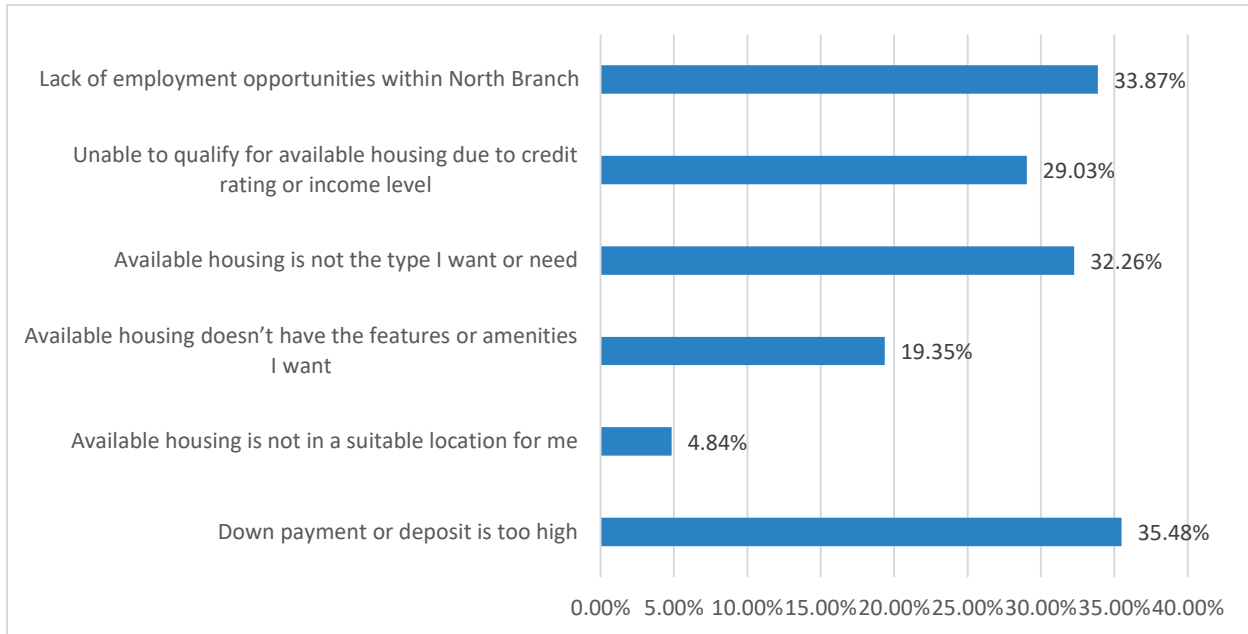


Figure 14: Barriers to Finding Suitable Housing Experienced in North Branch.

Respondents are evenly split when considering the best apartments or medium-density housing locations, with nearby shopping/dining and employment areas rising to the top. Regarding senior rental housing, respondents would like locations near shopping/dining and parks/recreational opportunities, as reflected in the following three graphs.

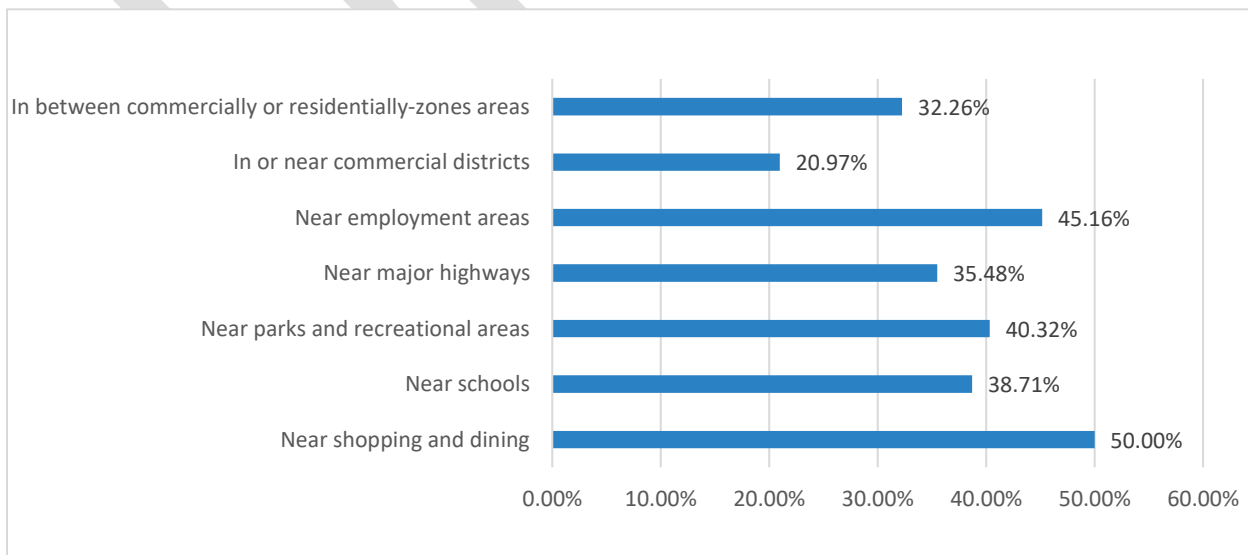


Figure 15: Public Preference for the Location of Apartment Housing in North Branch.

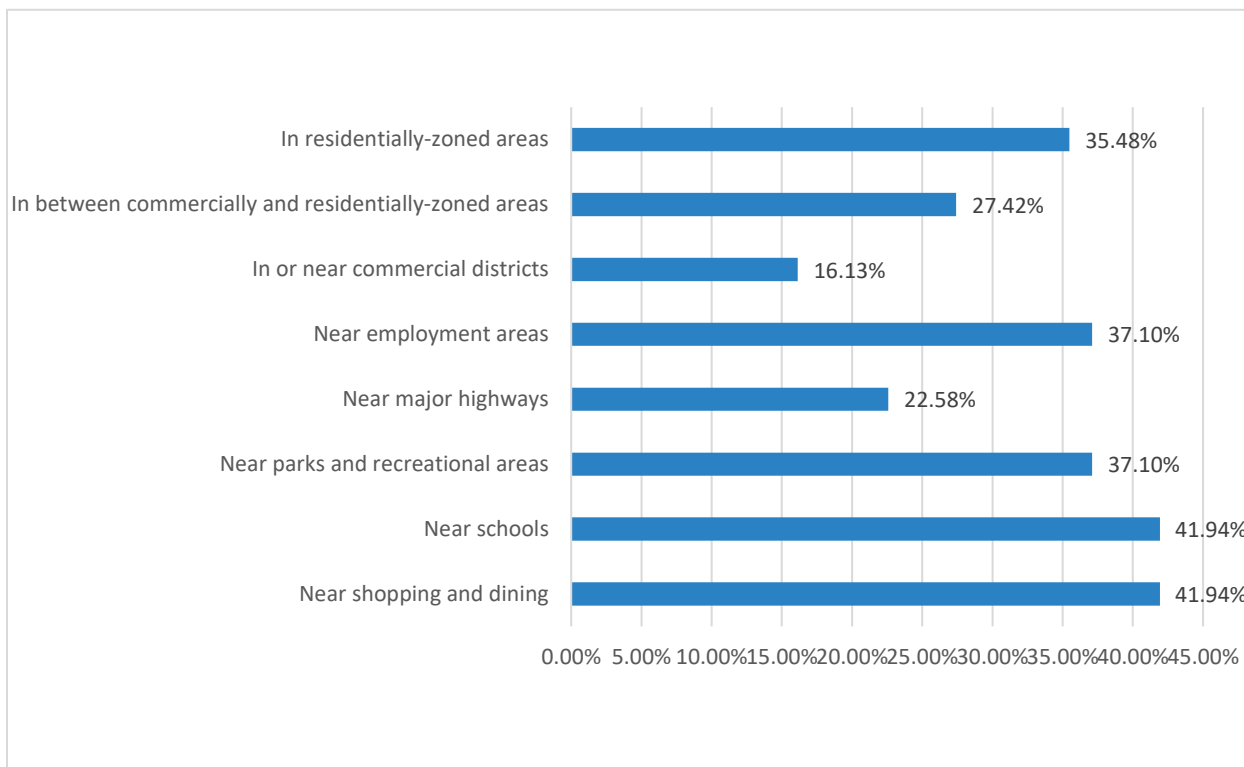


Figure 16: Public Preference for the Location of Medium -Density Housing in North Branch

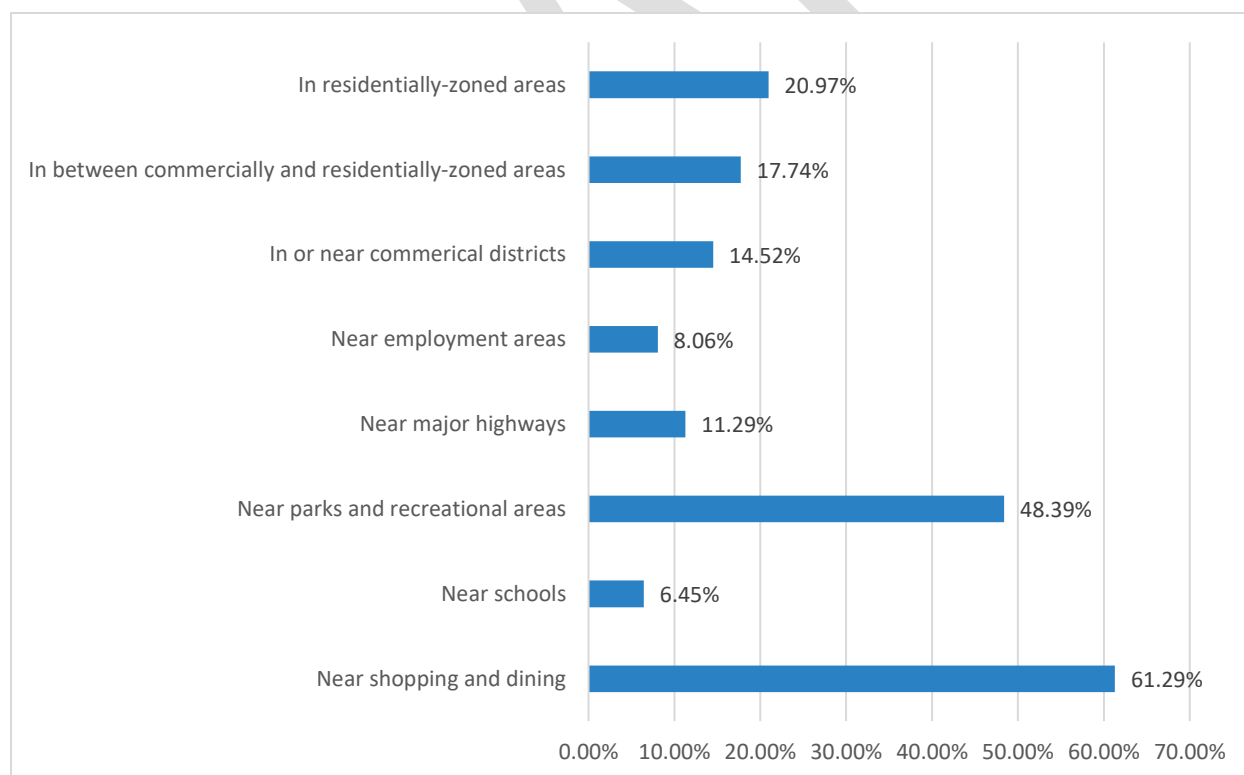


Figure 17: Public Preference for the Location of Senior Housing Units in North Branch

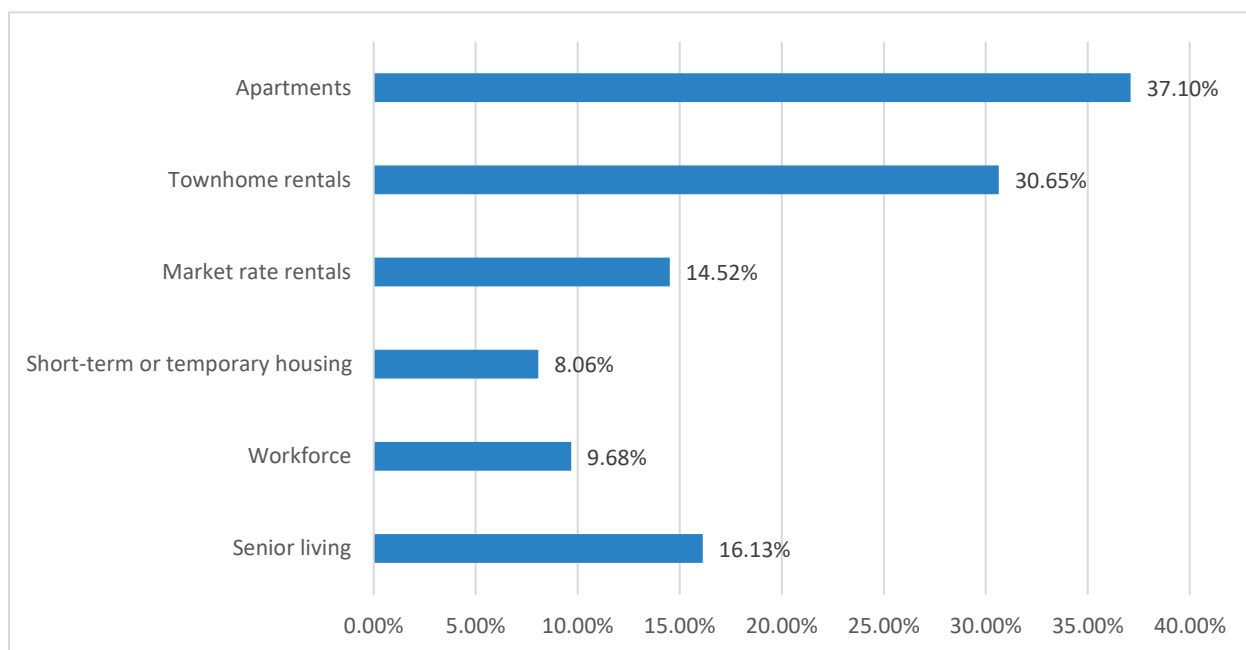


Figure 18: Rental Preferences of Rental Housing Seekers in North Branch.

Respondents shared 22 additional comments about rental housing in North Branch, including:

1. **Mixed experiences with housing affordability:** While some express gratitude for qualifying for loans and owning homes, others struggle with high rents, taxes, and utility costs, making it difficult to save for homeownership.
2. **Concerns about rental conditions and costs:** Renters report annual rent increases without corresponding improvements in maintenance or repairs, while others find it challenging to afford rentals due to low incomes.
3. **Desire for diverse housing options:** Residents call for more attainable rental housing, particularly for seniors, and suggest alternatives like tiny home villages or senior townhomes.
4. **Criticism of utility costs and taxes:** Many residents express dissatisfaction with high water utility and property taxes, suggesting they must be addressed before focusing on housing expansion.

When envisioning the community's future, Suggestions included integrating retail and housing developments, improving rental design and amenities, and balancing low-income and higher-end housing to attract businesses and maintain a visually appealing cityscape.

Strategies and Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Establish a Housing & Redevelopment Authority.

Strategies

Organizing and executing all housing-related policies and redevelopment efforts under one agency allows for specialized attention to key issues that time limitations prevent existing city staff from addressing effectively. A Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) maintains subject matter experts on staff who can monitor existing problems and seek external resources, from partnerships with housing organizations to state and federal grants, to provide solutions in the community. By allocating resources towards an HRA, the city can streamline this process and increase the productivity of housing efforts by uncoupling these duties organizationally from the city's Community Development Department.

1. **Program Establishment and Management:** Any housing programs established by the city related to development or the quality of the existing housing stock would be under the HRA's direction and could be structured to be under the city council's authority. Centralizing these functions and potentially sharing staff could be an initial step to testing this strategy. This anticipates starting with a skeleton staff composed of an HRA manager and a Grant Writer. The Grant writer could also help with grants beyond the HRA and support other city departments. The average salary for a Housing Manager in Minnesota is \$53,542, and Grant Writer is \$63,9458 Per year (salaries and benefits). This may require a ballpark budget of \$130,000-\$150,000 and further assessment.
2. **Resources Capture:** One of the HRA's functions is to secure and manage the dispersal of resources to achieve the city's housing goals. This could involve creating partnerships with housing organizations applying for state and federal grant money to help ensure adequate resources are available to owners, tenants, landlords, and developers to serve their diverse needs. Resources for homeowners to make improvements that allow existing housing to accommodate growing families are one example of funds that an HRA could request from a state or Federal agency to receive and redistribute.
3. **Quality Monitoring:** Currently, the city does not conduct rental licensing or inspection activities, but the HRA could be a pathway towards the city establishing these procedures and codes to ensure that the rental stock increases in quality.

⁸ (1) Housing manager salary in Minnesota - Indeed.
<https://www.indeed.com/career/housing-manager/salaries/MN>.

4. **Innovation Generation:** As the employees for this new organization would likely come from the existing field, they will have industry knowledge and insight that will provoke new ideas and solutions.

Timeline:

Short-Term—The sooner the city creates an HRA, the easier it will be to focus on housing solutions and implement housing recommendations. The HRA would implement and execute all other recommendations listed in these recommendations, with the city council as its authority and final approval body.

DRAFT

Recommendation 2: Establish a rental licensing and inspection program.

Strategies:

The observation from the survey highlights existing maintenance issues in the rental stock, emphasizing the need to monitor landlords operating in the city. In a market with limited available units and few housing options for tenants, landlords may lack incentives to maintain their properties. Consequently, units can deteriorate, becoming community eyesores. Legal mechanisms, such as rent increases during lease renewals and minimal maintenance requirements, can further exacerbate this situation. To address this, the city should monitor rental properties, assess their quality, and collaborate with landlords to ensure compliance with standards and policies.

1. **Consumer Protection:** With city oversight, tenants will have a greater degree of protection from poor-quality rentals and housing units that are not up to code. This also allows the city to enforce uniform standards and code violations.
2. **Improved Rental Stock Quality:** Well-understood and predictable standards and enforcement will improve the community's housing stock.
3. **Clear communication with Landlords:** The licensing process will encourage landlords to engage with the city, schedule inspections, and apply for rental licensure. This interaction can foster clearer communication between the city and housing providers, promoting better collaboration and understanding.

Timeline:

Mid-term—They could take on this function but may need certain training and certifications in the codes adopted.

Recommendation 3: Create or Support programs to transition rental tenants into home ownership.

Strategies

Ensuring affordable housing is crucial for people's well-being. Potential homeowners may remain in their current residences when housing prices are prohibitively high. To address this, consider the following strategies:

1. **Financial Assistance Programs:** Partner with national and community banks or financial institutions to create down payment assistance, low-interest loans, and grants for first-time homebuyers. These programs reduce upfront costs and make homeownership more accessible.
2. **Homebuyer Education and Counseling:** Offer education and counseling services to rental tenants interested in buying a home. Provide information on homebuying, financial planning, and mortgage navigation.
3. **Attainable Housing Development:** Invest in community land trusts or cooperative housing models. These create low-cost housing options for renters transitioning to homeownership. Prioritize smaller dwellings for lower-income individuals and families.
4. **Rent-to-Own Programs:** Establish rent-to-own options, allowing tenants to build equity while renting. After a set period, they can purchase the home at a predetermined price.
5. **Partnerships with Financial Institutions and Nonprofits:** Collaborate with organizations to offer specialized mortgage products, financial literacy workshops, and homeownership grants for low- and moderate-income individuals.

Timeline

Long-term—These programs will take time to fund and set up and are unlikely to take 1-5 years.

Recommendation 4: Facilitate Zoning Code changes to accommodate new housing units.

Strategies

Ensuring attainable housing is crucial for people's well-being. Potential homeowners may remain in their current residences when housing prices are prohibitively high. To address this, consider the following strategies:

1. **Zoning Code Streamlining:** Simplify and streamline the zoning code to allow more housing units by right. This means no land entitlement is required—just building permits for duplexes and triplexes in most residential zones. Consider revising zoning regulations to permit higher densities, reduce minimum lot sizes, and relax restrictions on accessory dwelling units (ADUs) or granny flats. Removing unnecessary barriers encourages additional housing construction without compromising quality or design standards.
2. **Mixed-Use Zoning:** Implement mixed-use zoning districts that combine residential, commercial, and recreational uses in the same area. This optimizes land use efficiency, creates walkable neighborhoods, and fosters economic growth. Suggest an 80% commercial to 20% residential ratio via zoning.
3. **Infill and Redevelopment:** Maximize previously built spaces through infill development. Strategies like cluster development increase the benefit-to-cost ratio. Allow underutilized properties to be redeveloped for residential or mixed-use purposes, respecting community history.
4. **Innovative Housing Solutions:** Explore tiny homes, co-housing developments, modular construction, and adaptive reuse of existing structures. These options provide sustainable housing choices while minimizing environmental impact. Encourage energy-efficient and green building practices.
5. **Community Engagement and Design Guidelines:** Involve residents in planning by gathering input on proposed zoning changes. Develop design guidelines prioritizing compatibility with existing neighborhoods and enhancing overall development quality.
6. **Increased Density for Housing Goals:** Consider allowing development to exceed maximum units per acre by up to 20% if it aligns with City Housing Goals for workforce, attainable, and senior housing at necessary AMI and rental rates.

Timeline

Short-Term – A zoning code amendment and adoption process could be finished in a year.

Recommendation 5: Attract and encourage construction that adds housing units with three or more bedrooms.

Strategies

Recognizing the high demand for housing options accommodating three or more occupants, particularly families, North Branch should prioritize units with three or more bedrooms. This approach supports the city's growth and addresses affordability by providing cost-effective housing options. Consider the following strategies:

1. **Incentives for Larger Unit Development:** Offer density bonuses, expedited permitting, or fee waivers to developers who commit to constructing units with three or more bedrooms. Encourage larger unit sizes to meet the needs of families and other household types. Public-private partnerships can leverage resources for large-scale housing projects.
2. **Flexible Housing Design:** Promote adaptable living spaces through flexible design. Incorporate convertible rooms, multi-functional layouts, and modular construction techniques. Residents can customize their environments to evolving needs while maximizing available space.
3. **Affordability Measures:** Implement subsidies, rental assistance programs, or inclusionary zoning policies. Ensure larger units remain accessible to low- and moderate-income households. Address socio-economic diversity and equity in housing opportunities.
4. **Community Amenities and Services:** Enhance neighborhood amenities—parks, recreational facilities, schools, and childcare centers—to create family-friendly environments. Access to transportation and healthcare services improves residents' quality of life.

Timeline

Short-Term—Staff in-house or a consultant could actively examine city codes to diagnose conditions that impede housing development. Implementing suggested changes could occur shortly after the code is revised to reflect any recommendations appropriate to the city's direction.

Recommendation 6: Incentivize the development of rental properties in North Branch.

Strategies:

Addressing the housing crisis requires multifaceted solutions. Collaboration among policymakers, developers, and communities is crucial. By implementing these strategies, a more equitable and accessible housing market is possible. The following recommendations can alleviate the shortage of attainable housing:

1. Community Engagement:

- Engage with local communities to gain support for rental housing developments.
- Conduct outreach efforts to educate residents about the benefits of rental properties.
- Address concerns and incorporate community feedback into development plans.
- Building consensus and fostering community involvement can help overcome opposition and expedite the approval process for rental projects.

2. Zoning and Regulatory Support:

- Streamline zoning regulations and permit processes to facilitate the development of rental properties.
- Implement flexible zoning codes that encourage mixed-use developments and higher density in strategic locations (e.g., commercial nodes and transit corridors).

See Housing Map – Included on page 55.

- Create multi-family residences outside traditional neighborhoods to meet the public's desire for diverse housing options.
- Consider traditional buffering between low-density residential and commercial uses, with high-density residential as the buffer.

3. Financial Incentives:

- Explore financial programs that incentivize developers to build rental properties.
- These incentives can offset the high cost of land and construction, making rental development more financially viable.
- Public-private partnerships can also be leveraged to share risks and resources in developing attainable rental housing.

4. Infrastructure Investments:

- Invest in infrastructure improvements (e.g., roads, utilities, public transportation) to support new rental developments.
- Enhancing infrastructure in targeted areas can attract developers and increase the attractiveness of rental properties for tenants.

5. Affordability Requirements:

- Implement affordability requirements or inclusionary zoning policies.
- Mandate a certain percentage of rental units be reserved for low- and moderate-income households.
- This ensures that new rental developments address the city's affordability crisis and provide housing options for diverse residents.

Timeline

Long-Term - These programs will likely take 3-5 years to establish.

Recommendation 7: Incentivize the upkeep and upgrade of existing rental properties and naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH)⁹.

Strategies:

Encouraging rental property owners to prioritize maintenance and enhance the quality of existing rental housing is crucial. Here are recommendations to achieve this:

1. Tax Incentives:

- Support rental property owners who invest in maintenance and upgrades.
- Consider tax deductions for renovation expenses, property tax abatements for safety or energy-efficient improvements, or state/federal tax credits for participating in maintenance programs.

2. Low-Interest Loans:

- Build partnerships with local financial institutions, lenders, and attainable housing organizations.
- Provide low-interest loans or financing options for maintenance and repair projects (e.g., roofing repairs, HVAC upgrades, plumbing renovations).

3. Grant Programs:

- Establish grants to assist rental property owners with essential maintenance and safety improvements.
- Target grants toward low-income neighborhoods or properties needing substantial repairs (e.g., lead paint remediation, asbestos removal, structural enhancements).

4. Technical Assistance and Training:

- Collaborate with local and state housing partners to offer technical assistance and training programs.
- Educate rental property owners on maintenance best practices, building code compliance, and energy efficiency measures.
- Provide resources, workshops, and access to experts in construction and sustainable building practices.

5. Fast-Track Permitting and Inspections:

- Implement streamlined permitting processes and expedited inspections for maintenance and improvement projects.
- Reduce bureaucratic hurdles to encourage prompt action and timely completion of repairs.

6. Public Recognition and Certification Programs:

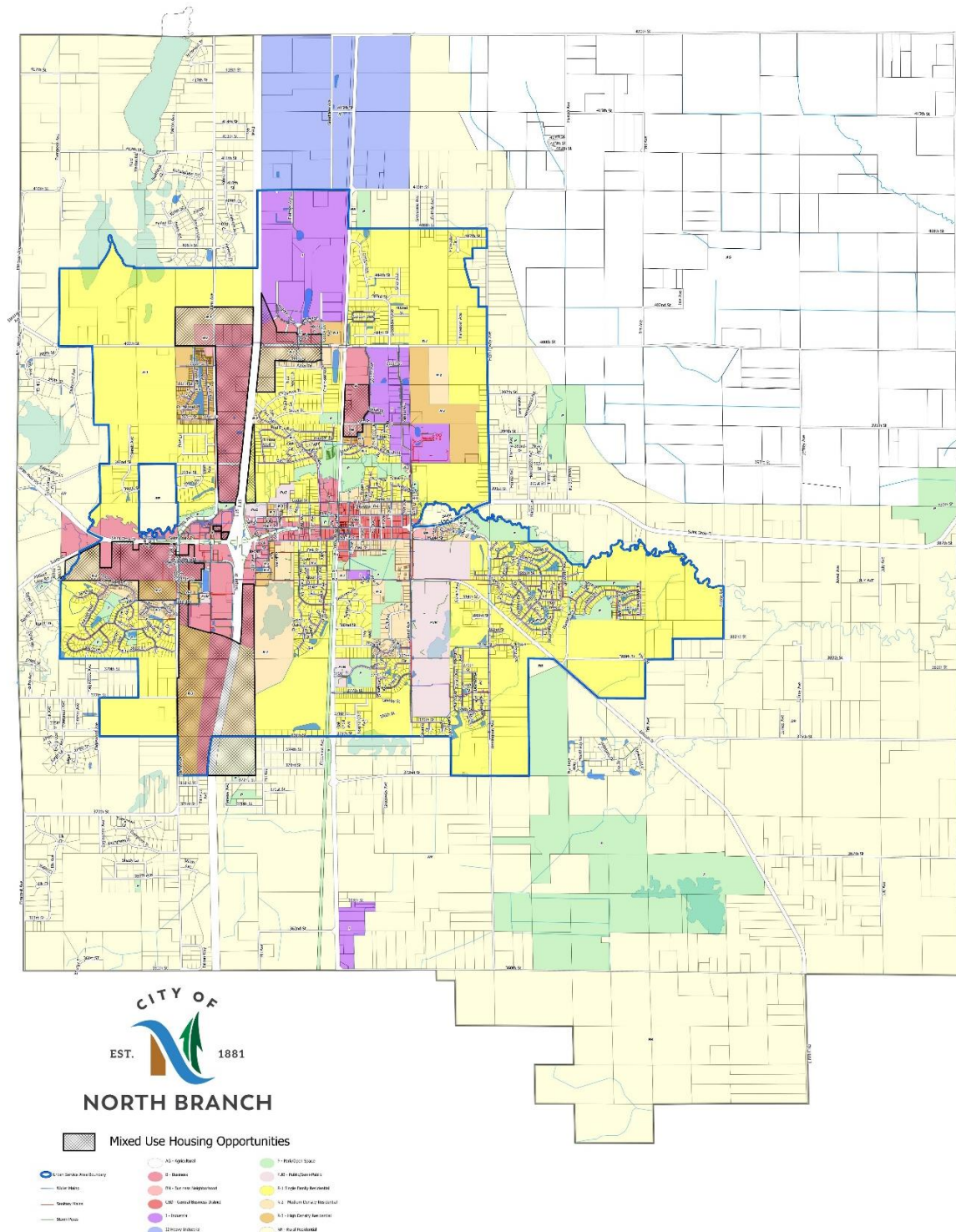
⁹ Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) refers to privately-owned and -operated rental housing units that are affordable without government subsidies. These unassisted rental buildings typically have lower rents due to their location in lower-cost markets.

- Establish programs to acknowledge rental property owners who maintain high standards.
 - Recognize landlords committed to property maintenance, tenant safety, and community engagement.
 - Incentivize others to follow suit by highlighting successful examples.
7. Partnerships with Nonprofit Organizations:
- Collaborate with nonprofit groups, community development corporations, and housing advocates.
 - Provide additional support and resources to rental property owners.
 - Focus on outreach efforts, educational campaigns, and technical assistance programs.
8. Tenant Incentives:
- Offer incentives to tenants who promptly report maintenance issues and actively care for their rental units.
 - Provide rent discounts, rebates, or lease incentives for tenants involved in property improvement initiatives.
9. Performance-Based Incentive Programs:
- Reward rental property owners based on overall property condition and maintenance.
 - Develop criteria for evaluating compliance with building codes, tenant satisfaction, and inspection results.
 - Offer financial rewards or reduced regulatory burdens for maintaining high property upkeep standards.

Timeline

Long-Term—These programs will take over 3-5 years to establish.

A Housing Map-1 is provided based on input, data analysis, and current zoning regulations. The city should consider allowing higher residential densities adjacent to commercial nodes and activity centers. The hatched areas suggest locations suited for mixed-use of housing and commercial uses.



Resources

Based on the recommendations in this document and the direction provided by the steering committee, the City of North Branch's may achieve these objectives by soliciting grant funding. The City could apply for several state and federal grants to assist in projects that benefit the public. Each of the following grants fits with a recommendation in this study or several. These are organized in the following table. Grant information is based on information available at the time this report was drafted July 2024.

Program: Thriving Communities Technical Assistance					
Description	Administering Agency	Qualifying Eligible Cost	Match	Award Size	Link
The TCTA program is designed to support the coordination and integration of transportation and housing in infrastructure planning and implementation.	US Department of Housing and Urban Development	Technical assistance for integrating housing into other projects and plans.	None N/A	None N/A	Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Program HUD USER
Recommendations applicable to grant: Recommendations 5, 6					

Program: Small Community Planning Grants for Stormwater, Wastewater, and Community Resilience					
Description	Administering Agency	Qualifying Eligible Cost	Match	Award Size	Link
Funding to help communities with climate-planning projects to assess vulnerabilities and plan for the effects of climate change on stormwater systems, wastewater systems, or community services/public spaces.	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)	Planning activities for stormwater, wastewater, and community resilience.	10%	\$350,000 available in total	Closed: Planning grants for stormwater, wastewater, and community resilience Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

					state.mn.us
Recommendations applicable to grant: Recommendation 4					

Program: Choice Neighborhood Planning Grants					
Description	Administering Agency	Qualifying Eligible Cost	Match	Award Size	Link
Supports the development of comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plans, which focus on directing resources to address three core goals: Housing, People, and Neighborhoods.	US Department of Housing and Urban Development	Costs related to developing and implementing a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy or Transformation Plan.	5%	Historical max is \$1.5m	Fiscal Year 2024 Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
Recommendations applicable to grant: Recommendations 5, 6					

Program: MN Active Transportation Program Planning Assistance Grant					
Description	Administering Agency	Qualifying Eligible Cost	Match	Award Size	Link
Funding to allow communities to create active transportation plans that allow people in their communities to safely walk and bicycle to destinations where they live, work, and play.	MnDOT	Planning services from a selected transportation planning consultant	N/A	Up to \$400,000	Planning Assistance Solicitation Guide - Active Transportation Program - MnDOT (state.mn.us)
Recommendations applicable to grant: Recommendation 4					

Program: Small Cities Development Program					
Description	Administering Agency	Qualifying Eligible Cost	Match	Award Size	Link
Funds are granted to local units of government, which, in turn, lend funds to rehabilitate local housing stock, rehabilitating wastewater treatment systems,	MN Dept of Employment and Economic Development	Housing, public facilities, or comprehensive projects	Varies by project	\$600k single-purpose project, \$1.4M	Small Cities Development Program / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (mn.gov)
Recommendations applicable to grant: Recommendations 1, 5, 6,					

Program: Resilient and Efficient Codes Implementation Funding Opportunity					
Description	Administering Agency	Qualifying Eligible Cost	Match	Award Size	Link
The primary focus centers around updating to more efficient building energy codes that save money for American homes and businesses, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and encourage more resilient buildings	US Dept of Energy	Funds to upgrade building codes	None	\$500k-\$10m	Resilient and Efficient Codes Implementation (RECI) 2024 - Energy Communities
Recommendations applicable to grant: Recommendation 4					

Program: Rural Community Development Initiative Grants					
Description	Administering Agency	Qualifying Eligible Cost	Match	Award Size	Link
RCDI grants are awarded to help non-profit housing and community development organizations, low-income rural communities, and federally recognized tribes support housing, community facilities, and community and economic development projects in rural areas.	USDA	To improve housing, community facilities, and community and economic development projects in rural areas.	Equal match	\$50k min - \$250k max	Rural Community Development Initiative Grants Rural Development (usda.gov)
Recommendations applicable to grant: Recommendations 1, 2, 5, 6, 7					

Appendix A: Rental Unit Inventory

Name or Owner	Address	Year Built	Units	Type	Unit Size	Cost	Status	Amenities
Cronos Holdings LLC	6599 Main St		2	Duplex		-	-	
Brizo Holdings LLC	39057 2nd Ave		3	Triplex		-	-	
Cedar Street LLC	6578 Cedar St 6576 Cedar St 6574 Cedar St		3	Single Family Home and Duplex		-	-	
Laird J Mork	38934 12th Ave		4	Multi-family Market Rate		-	-	
Bruce Vandewalker	5900 Elm St		7	Multi-family Market Rate		-	-	
Bruce Vandewalker	5904 Elm St		7	Multi-family Market Rate		-	-	
Cedarview Apartments	38980 10th Ave		4	Quadplex		-	-	
Elmwood Terrace LLC	5892 Elm St	1980 c.	7	Multi-family Income restricted	-	-	Non-Available	Laundry Facility, Controlled Access Entry, Heat, Water, and Trash Included, 24 Hour Maintenance, Air Conditioning, Garage Available, Off-Street Parking, Picnic Area
Elmwood North Branch LLC	5896 Elm St	1980 c.	7	Multi-family income restricted	-	-	-	
KC Rabobank LLC	38725 Oakview Ave	1976	8	Multi-family Market Rate	-	-	-	-
KC Rabobank LLC	5901 Maple St	1976	8	Multi-family	-	-	-	-

Name or Owner	Address	Year Built	Units	Type	Unit Size	Cost	Status	Amenities
				Market Rate				
Oakview Terrace Townhomes	5845 Oak St	1990 c.	12	Townhomes	1,134 - 1,358 Sq Ft	\$1,074 - \$1,180	-	-
Oakhurst Apartments	38671 Oakview Ave	1990 c.	24	Multi-family Market Rate	594-1,050 Sq Ft	\$629 - \$724	Non-Available	-
Kestrel Meadows	38518 Oakview Cir	1990 c.	30	Townhomes, Income Restricted	-	-	-	Washer/Dryer, Large Closets, Patio/Balcony, Dishwasher, Air Conditioner, Disposal, Playground, Garage, Off-Street Parking
Willow Grove Lp	38485 14th Ave	2010 c.	20	Multi-family Market Rate		\$985	One available	Central Air, Dishwasher, Case Management M-F, Common Laundry, Community Room, Controlled Entry, Designated Smoking Area, Tele-Health Room
Encore At the Twin Cities LLC	38610 14th Ave		30	Assisted Living		The local average assisted living cost is \$3042 - \$3260.	-	On-site dining in a social setting, Garden patio with raised planters, Spacious community room, Beauty salon, Spa/boutique

Name or Owner	Address	Year Built	Units	Type	Unit Size	Cost	Status	Amenities
Uptown Maple Commons	38799 7th Ave	2000 c.	40	Independent Living/ Incentivized Housing	569 - 729 Sq Ft	-	-	Laundry Facilities, Planned Social Activities, Clubhouse, Spa, Picnic Area
Cherokee Place Apt, LLC	6220 399th St	2000 c.	48	Patio homes, income limited	887 - 1,224 Sq Ft	-	-	Washer/Dryer, Refrigerator, Air Conditioner, Community Amenities, Off-Street Parking, Clubhouse, Fitness Center, Garage, Playground
Heritage Court Apts	39909 Cherokee Ave	2000 c.	32	Independent Living 55+ Income limited	887 Sq Ft	\$529 - \$917	Non-Available	Units are provided with; Central air, washers and dryers, dishwashers, and a secure storage area. <i>Community amenities include an attached Heated Underground Garage, Community Garden, Community Room, Controlled Entrance, Dog Run, Dog Wash Station, Pavilion, Secure Package Room, Smoke-Free, Tele-Health Room, Tenant Service Coordinator - Part-Time, Trash Rooms, Tub Room</i>
Shields Plaza North Branch, LLC	6100 Cedar St	1978	49	Multi-family Market Rate	635 - 1000 Sq Ft	-	Non-Available	Property Manager on Site

Name or Owner	Address	Year Built	Units	Type	Unit Size	Cost	Status	Amenities
Splittstoser Apartments	6426 Birch St	2000	23	Patio Homes	800 Sq Ft	-	Non-Available	High-Speed Internet Access, Washer/Dryer Hookup, Air Conditioning, Smoke-Free Wheelchair Accessible (Rooms), Dishwasher, Oven, Refrigerator
Kelly Brothers Ltd	6444 Birch St	2004	24	Multi-family Market Rate	700 –968 sq ft	\$990	Non-Available	High-Speed Internet Access, Air Conditioning, Smoke-Free, Cable Ready, Security System, Tub/Shower, Intercom, Wheelchair Accessible (Rooms)
Kelly Brothers Ltd	6470 Birch St	2004	30	Multi-family Market Rate	700 –968 sq ft	\$990	Non-Available	
Ashwood Apts	6499 Ash St	2004	32	Multi-family Market Rate	700 –968 sq ft	\$990	Non-Available	
Ashwood Apts	6495 Ash St	2004	24	Multi-family Market Rate	700 –968 sq ft	\$990	Non-Available	
Northern Oaks	6188 Pecan St	1970 c.	12	Independent Living 55+ Market Rate	594 Sq Ft	\$885 - \$1,015	Non-Available	Community Room, Heat, Water, and Trash Included, Controlled Building Access, 24-Hour Emergency Maintenance, Pet Friendly, Cable Ready, BBQ Grilling Area, High-Speed Internet Available, Laundry facilities on the property are operated, Located in a Residential Neighborhood

Name or Owner	Address	Year Built	Units	Type	Unit Size	Cost	Status	Amenities
Falcon Apartments of North Branch, Llp	5371 385th St, 5385 385th St, 5370 383rd St, 5370 383rd St	2022	144	Multi-family Market Rate	957 Sq Ft	\$960-\$1,410	9 Available	Community-Wide WiFi, Laundry Facilities, Controlled Access, Property Manager on Site, Pet Play Area, Elevator, Business Center, Multi Use Room, Fitness Center, Pool, Playground, Grill
Ecumen North Branch	5379 383rd St	2016	119	Assisted Living	569 - 886 Sq Ft	The local average assisted living cost is \$3042 - \$3260.	-	Beauty shop and barber services, Calendar of daily activities, Chapel, Community events such as concerts, lectures, and holiday parties, Engaging recreational, fitness, and spiritual programs in Sunrise Hall, Snack bar, Spa and Jacuzzi, Fireside lounge, Holiday-themed parties and celebrations, Pet-friendly campus, Heated garage parking
Total			746			Available	10	

Recommended Planning Commission Action

1. Motion to recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to re-guide the subject property to Land Use High Density Residential (LUR-3) with conditions and findings of fact.
2. Motion to recommend approval of the rezoning to rezone the subject property as High Density Residential (R-3) with conditions and findings of fact as presented by Staff.
3. Table the request to the next Planning Commission meeting and provide direction to Staff to additional information needed.

Overview / Background

The North Branch EDA is looking for the commission to hold a public hearing to obtain input and to discuss and make a possible recommendation to reguide and rezone the medium density residential (R-2) property to high density residential (R-3) to provide for apartment style housing on PID 11.00359.30.



The subject site is 6.94 acres total and borders 399th Street to the South, Fletcher Ave to the East, and 400th St to the North.

Issue(s) to Consider

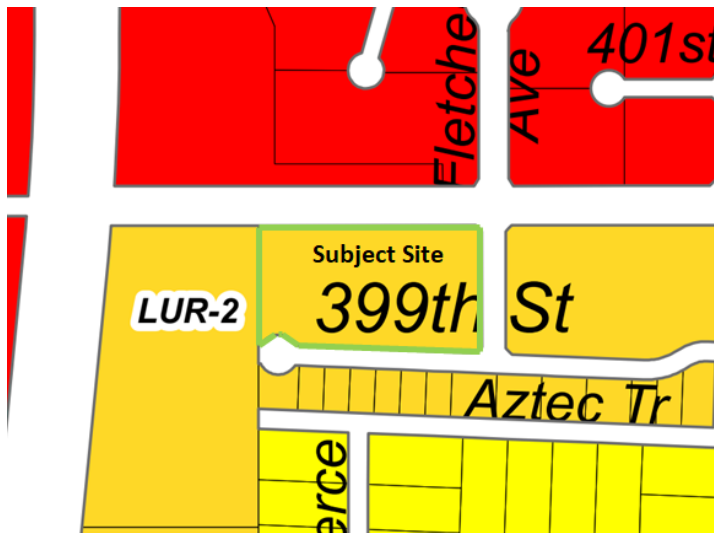
1. Land Use and Zoning

Analysis of Issue(s)

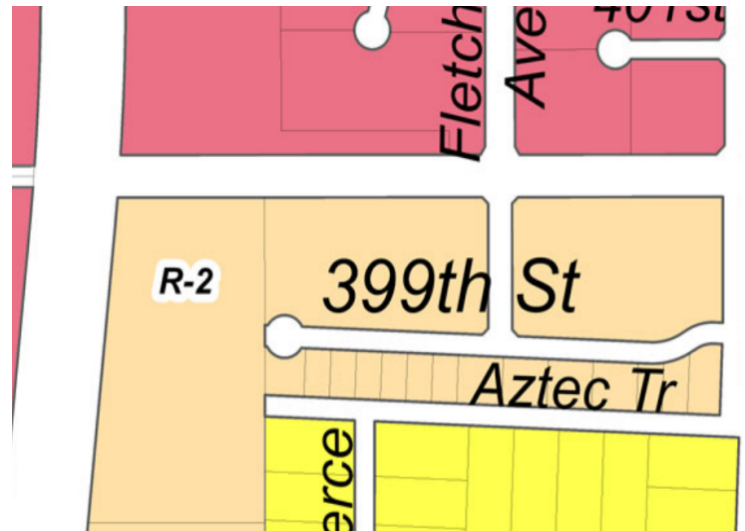
1. Land Use & Zoning

The Subject Property currently is guided LUR-2 Land Use Medium Density Residential, per the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The corresponding zoning is R-2 Medium Density Residential. The property is currently vacant platted land and is considered Lot 1, Block 1 of Cherokee Place 3rd Addition.

Land Use Map Excerpt:



Zoning Map Excerpt:



The subject site is surrounded by land currently guided as R-2 Medium Density Residential. There are single family houses to the south, attached townhomes to the east and vacant land to the west. Across 410th Street to the north, there is vacant land that is guided as LUB Land Use Business.

The proposed comprehensive plan amendment would remove the area guided as Medium Density Residential by approximately 7 acres and increase the guided area by the same amount. When considering comprehensive plan amendments it is important to consider the overall mix of uses, compatibility of uses, and future development potential before and after the change.

Considering the site from a development point of view, the roadways and nearby utilities will be able to accommodate the increase in density. Just to the north of the subject site, 400th Street is intended to be the future location of an interchange for I-35. The future interchange location has guided planning efforts in the area to reflect higher density residential uses, commercial, and industrial. A rezoning and comprehensive plan amendment of the subject site will fit into the surrounding land uses and overall goal for this area of the city.

Properties to the east of the subject site include the Cherokee Place Townhomes and Heritage Place Apartments. Development on this site would be a continuance of a higher density residential corridor.

- **Barriers to Suitable Residences:** Challenges include costs, insufficient bedroom options, and unavailability due to low vacancies.
- **Lack of Attainable Housing Options:** There's a desire for less costly housing and more of it, especially for seniors and young individuals entering the market.
- **Housing Challenges:** High utility costs, property taxes, and rental conditions (maintenance issues and lack of amenities)

Public desire for future housing options:

- **Location Importance:**
- Emphasized importance of proximity to amenities and employment areas.
- Utilizing available space near transportation corridors and potential interchanges

Key Points:

- Market demand exists for more rental housing.
- In today's market, businesses follow rooftops. Without the adequate housing at a price point that allows employees to thrive on their wages businesses will look to set up shop elsewhere.
- Increasing the density of housing spreads the tax burden across a greater number of payers reducing city service costs for residents.

Requested Action

Staff recommends the following motions:

1. Motion to recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to re-guide the subject property to Land Use High Density Residential (LUR-3) with conditions and findings of fact.
2. Motion to recommend approval of the rezoning to rezone the subject property as High Density Residential (R-3) with conditions and findings of fact as presented by Staff.
3. Table the request to the next Planning Commission meeting and provide direction to Staff to additional information needed.



Prepared By: RYAN SALTIS, Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director

Presenter: RYAN SALTIS, Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director

Date: 05/27/2025

Board & Commission: Planning Commission

Subject: Public Hearing to consider a preliminary plat for Westside Commons 3rd Addition

Voting Requirements:

Voting Options Simple Majority



Recommended Planning Commission Action

Motion to recommend approval to the City Council, approving the Preliminary for Westside Commons 3rd Addition, with the condition the Applicant provide copies of recorded ingress/egress access easements and agreements and complies with the city engineers memo dated May 29, 2025.

Overview / Background

Isaac Ryba (Applicant) has requested Preliminary and Final Plat approval for Westside Commons 3rd Addition (Plat), subdividing the 27.91-acre parcel located adjacent to Highway 95 and Falcon Ave at PID 11.00399.05 (Subject Property). The owner of the Subject Property is GS2, LLC. If approved, the Plat would create one (1) new lot in the northeast corner of the existing parcel (Westside Commons 2nd Addition) with the remaining area becoming Outlot A. The purpose of the Plat is for supporting the development of a restaurant and drive-thru for Culver's. A Right-Of-Way (labeled Explorer Way) is proposed heading north from 386th St to give the site access to Falcon Ave. There is not a proposed access to Highway 95 from this plat submittal.

State Statute establishes an automatic 120-day review period for Preliminary Plats; that period expires on June 5, 2025. The Applicant has addressed all City staff comments related to the Preliminary Plat. Development plans are subject to Site Plan review, which is handled administratively. Approval of the Site Plan is contingent upon Plat approval. The Final Plat is subject to City Council approval. All required notices were published in the local newspaper and mailed to adjacent property owners.

Issue(s) to Consider

1. Land Use and Zoning
2. Proposed Preliminary Plat
3. Plat Standards
4. Access Easements

Analysis of Issue(s)

1. Land Use & Zoning

The Subject Property is guided **Business**, per the Comprehensive Plan, and zoned **B - Business**.

Land Use and Zoning standards are satisfied.

2. Proposed Preliminary Plat

As described above, the Applicant is proposing to re-plat the Subject Property (currently Westside Commons 2nd Addition), subdividing the existing 27.9 acre parcel into a developable 2.56 acre parcel with the remaining 25.34 acres being designated as Outlot A. As a result, the future Culver's site would be legally described as Lot 1, Block 1 of Westside Commons 3rd Addition. This plat proposes new right of way being dedicated. Road access to the newly created parcel will come off of 386th Street and head north. This road is proposed to line up directly with the road to the south of 386th Street connecting the Boka Haven property.

For the purpose of plat approval, City staff and Planning Commission may only consider whether the division of land and creation of lots meet minimum lot standards based on the applicable zoning district. That said, the type of development proposed is allowed by both land use and zoning.

3. Plat Standards

Lots created by plat are required to satisfy specific lot performance standards as established by City Code. The minimum requirements for the **B Business** zoning district are listed in the table below.

Type	Lot Standards		
	Area (sf)	Width	Depth
B - Business	5,000	50'	100'

The Plat proposes the following specific to these standards:

Type	Lot Standards		
	Area (sf)	Width	Depth
Lot 1, Block 1	111,660	339.74'	338.91'
Outlot A	1,103,712	913.78'	1240.81'

Lot 1, Block 1 is primarily a rectangular lot. The northeast corner of the lot is angled due to existing utilities on the corner of Falcon Ave and Highway 95. The southeast corner of the lot is extended south and is proposed to be the location of the storm water pond for the future development. Lot 1 satisfies all minimum width and depth standards.

Outlot A includes all remaining area to the west of the proposed Lot 1, and the future Right-Of-Way. Outlot A satisfies all minimum width and depth standards for the B Business zoning district.

All minimum required performance standards, including setbacks, parking requirements, architectural (material) standards, etc., will be reviewed as part of the Site Plan review and conform to City requirements.

Preliminary Plat standards are satisfied.

4. Access Easements

Access to the parcel is provided by 386th St, a connecting street to Falcon Ave. The preliminary plat identifies existing easements per doc #676278 to provide said access. The future street heading north to the site (labeled Explorer Way) is proposed to be a city street and must be constructed to all City of North Branch standards and specifications. The developer of the site is expected to enter into a Development Agreement with the City to meet these standards and specifications for the new Right-Of-Way.

Staff Recommendation

City staff recommends approval of the Preliminary Plat request from Westside Commons 3rd Addition with conditions as stated.

Recommended Planning Commission Action

Motion to recommend approval to City Council, approving the Preliminary Plat and Final Plat for Westside Commons 3rd Addition, with the condition the Applicant provide copies of recorded ingress/egress access easements and agreements benefitting Lot 2 of the Plat and to comply with the City Engineers memo dated May 29, 2025.

BOUNDARY SURVEY OF "WESTSIDE COMMONS 3RD ADDITION"

FOR: CULVERS PID # 11.00399.05

APPLICANT/OWNER
CULVER'S RESTAURANTS
ISAAC RYBA
(715) 828-1970
ISAAC@WEBUSINESSGROUP.COM

SURVEYOR
ACRE LAND SURVEYING, INC.
9140 BALTIMORE STREET NE
SUITE 100
BLAINE, MN 55449
(763) 238-6278
JOSHUA P. SCHNEIDER, PLS

ENGINEER
BLOCH ENGINEERING, PLLC
(507) 995-2981
KRYSTLE BLOCH, PE

LEGEND

- DENOTES COUNTY MONUMENT
- DENOTES IRON MONUMENT FOUND
- DENOTES IRON MONUMENT SET
- DENOTES UTILITY POLE
- DENOTES TRAFFIC LIGHT POLE
- DENOTES ELECTRIC METER/BOX
- DENOTES CABLE BOX
- DENOTES FIBER OPTIC VAULT
- DENOTES BITUMINOUS
- DENOTES CATCH BASIN
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- DENOTES WATERMAIN
- DENOTES SANITARY SEWER
- DENOTES STORM SEWER
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- DENOTES STORM SEWER MANHOLE
- DENOTES GATE VALVE
- DENOTES FIRE HYDRANT
- DENOTES EXISTING CONTOUR
- DENOTES TEMPORARY EASEMENT (TURN AROUND)

BENCHMARK

MNDOT Horn Point "Otterness 2",
Elevation = 902.872 (NAVD88)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

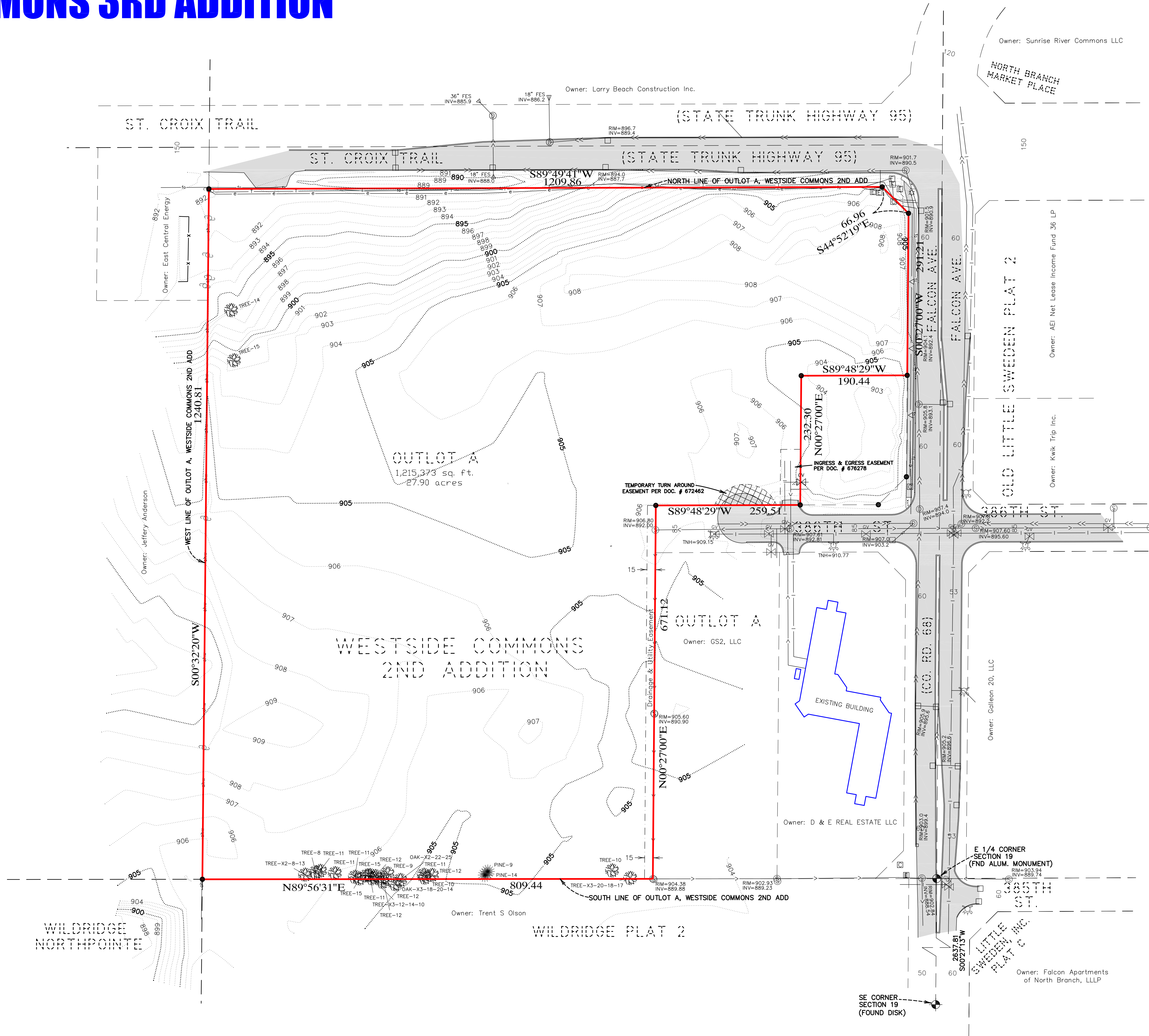
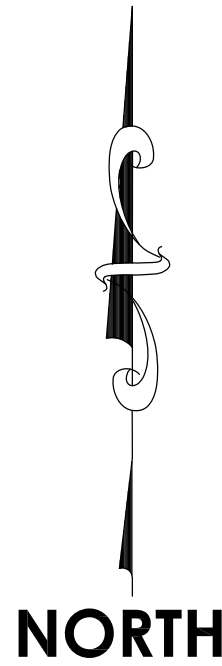
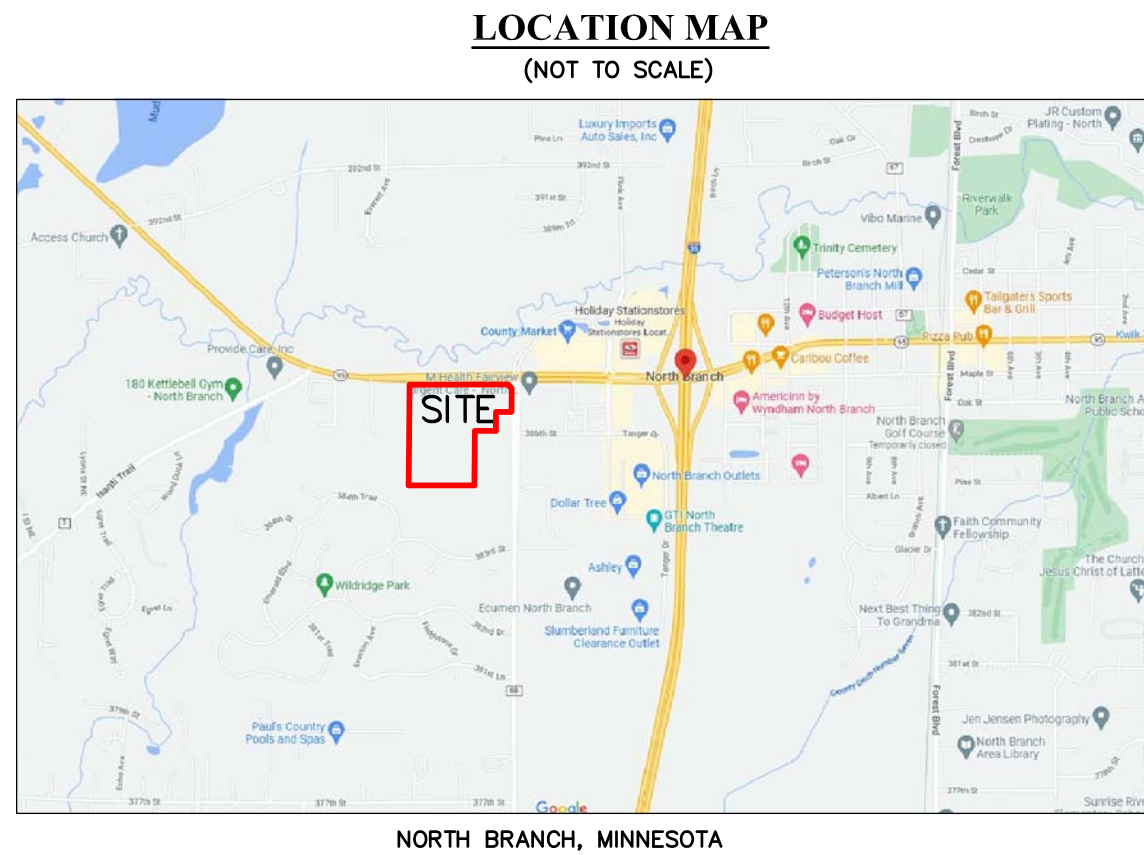
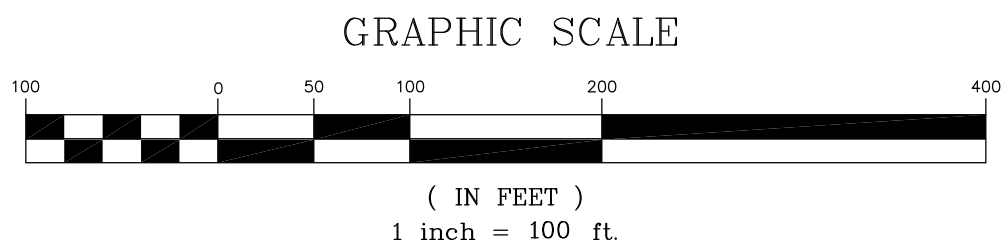
OUTLOT A, WESTSIDE COMMONS 2ND ADDITION, Chisago County, Minnesota

GENERAL NOTES

- Elevations shown are based on NAVD88, see benchmark.
- Boundary area of the surveyed premises: ±1,215,373 sq. ft. (±27.90 acres).
- The City of North Branch has indicated that the surveyed premises shown is Comprehensive Plan Designation: Business.
Zoning standards for the property are the following:
Lot Width (min) = 50'
Lot Depth (min) = 100'
Lot Area (min) = 5,000 sf
Setbacks - Front/Side/Corner/Rear = 15'/10'/15'/15'
Maximum impervious = 90%
- The surveyed premises has access to 386th Street, a public street.
- Utilities shown hereon are observed and proposed (designed by others). Excavations were not made during the process of this survey to locate underground utilities and/or structures. The location of underground utilities and/or structures may vary from locations shown hereon and additional underground utilities and/or structures may be encountered. Contact Gopher State One Call Notification Center at (651) 454-0002 for verification of utility type and field location, prior to excavation.
- Property is located in Zone X, per FEMA FIRM panel 27025C0145D, dated 04/17/2012.
- Bearing shown are based on Chisago County coordinate system. (NAD83, 96ad)
- Legal description take from title commitment no. 25-00249, prepared by Results Title, dated January 16, 2025 @ 7:00 am.

I hereby certify that this plan, survey or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Land Surveyor under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

Revised: 5-29-2025 (new layout)
Date: 2-5-2025 Reg. No. 44655



ACRE LAND SURVEYING
9140 Baltimore Street NE
Suite 100, Blaine, MN
763-238-6278 js.acrelandsurvey@gmail.com

JOB #24278

PRELIMINARY PLAT OF "WESTSIDE COMMONS 3RD ADDITION"

FOR: GS2, LLC PID # 11.00399.03

AREA SUMMARY

LOT 1, BLOCK 1: 99,660 SF/2.29 AC.
OUTLOT A: 1,088,650 SF/24.99 AC.
TOTAL OUTLOT AREA: 1,088,650 SF/24.99 AC.
TOTAL R/W AREA: 26,762 SF/0.61 AC.
TOTAL AREA: 1,215,373 SF/27.90 AC.

SITE DATA

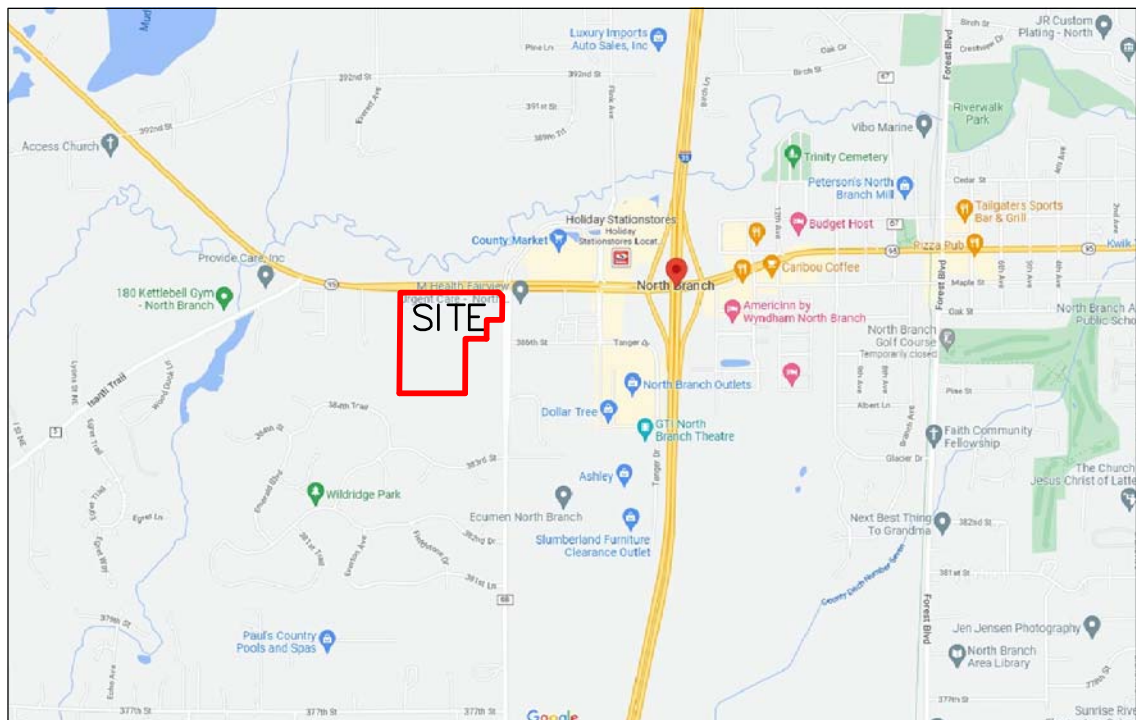
ZONING: COMMERCIAL BUSINESS (B)
GROSS AREA: 1,215,373 SF/27.90 AC.
PROPOSED ROW: 26.762 SF/0.61 AC
PROPOSED NEW EASEMENTS: 51,801 SF/1.19 AC.
NET AREA: 1,136,810 SF/26.1 AC.

DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

LOT WIDTH (min): 50 FT.
LOT DEPTH (min): 100 FT.
LOT AREA (min): 5,000 SF
FRONT SETBACK: 15 FT.
SIDE SETBACK: 10 FT.
CORNER SETBACK: 15 FT.
REAR SETBACK: 15 FT.
MAXIMUM IMPERVIOUS: 90%

LOCATION MAP

(NOT TO SCALE)



NORTH BRANCH, MINNESOTA

LEGEND

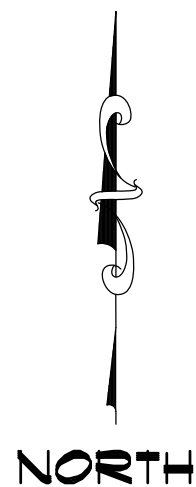
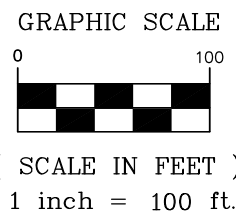
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- DENOTES RESTRICTED ACCESS

BENCHMARK

MNDOT Horn Point "Otterness 2",
Elevation = 902.872 (NAVD88)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

OUTLOT A, WESTSIDE COMMONS 2ND ADDITION, Chisago County, Minnesota



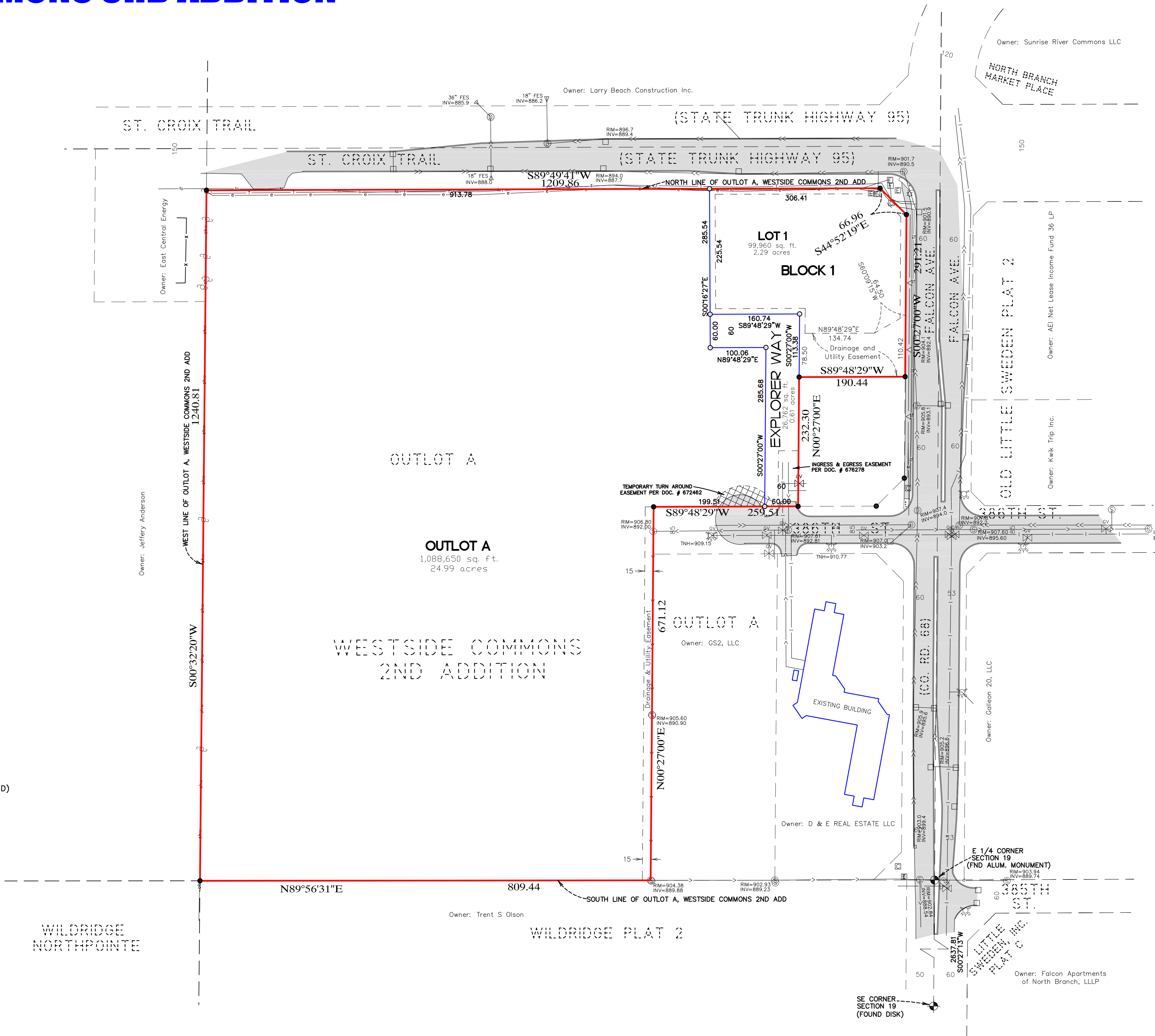
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JOSHUA P. SCHNEIDER

Revised: 5-29-2025 (new layout)
Date: 2-5-2025 Reg. No. 44655



ACRE LAND SURVEYING
9140 Baltimore Street NE
Suite 100, Blaine, MN
763-238-6278 js.acrelandsurvey@gmail.com

JOB #24278

PRELIMINARY PLAT OF "WESTSIDE COMMONS 3RD ADDITION"

NORTH INSET (1" = 50' DETAIL)

Owner: Larry Beach Construction Inc.

ST. CROIX TRAIL

(STATE TRUNK HIGHWAY 95)

ST. CROIX TRAIL

(STATE TRUNK HIGHWAY 95)

S89°49'41"W
1209.86

NORTH LINE OF OUTLOT A, WESTSIDE COMMONS 2ND ADD.

LOT 1

99,960 sq. ft.
2.29 acres

BLOCK 1

S44°52'19"E
66.96

S60°09'15"E
64.50

N89°48'29"E
134.74

S89°48'29"W
190.44

N00°27'00"E
232.30

S00°27'00"W
259.51

S00°16'27"E
285.54

S00°27'00"W
26,762 sq. ft.
0.61 acres

S89°48'29"W
199.51

S89°48'29"W
259.51

S89°48'29"W
199.51

S89°48'29"W
199.51

S89°48'29"W
199.51

S89°48'29"W
199.51

S89°48'29"W
199.51

OUTLOT A

1,215,373 sq. ft.
27.90 acres

OUTLOT A

1,088,650 sq. ft.
24.99 acres

TEMPORARY TURN AROUND
EASEMENT PER DOC. # 672462

INGRESS & EGRESS EASEMENT
PER DOC. # 676278

ACRE LAND SURVEYING
9140 Baltimore Street NE
Suite 100, Blaine, MN
763-238-6278 js.acrelandsurvey@gmail.com

JOB #24278

SOUTH INSET (1" = 50' DETAIL)

✓ 27.90 acres

1,088,650 sq. ft.
24.99 acres

WESTSIDE COMMONS 2ND ADDITION

S89°48'29"W 259.51

~~671.12~~

OUTLOT A

Owner: GS2, LLC

N00°27'00"E

Owner: D & E REAL ESTATE LLC

EXISTING BUILDING

N89°56'31"E

809.44

Owner: Trent S Olson

WILDRIDGE PLAT 2

TEMPORARY TURN AROUND
EASEMENT PER DOC. # 672462

INGRESS & EGRESS EASEMENT
PER DOC. # 676278

Owner: Kwik T

E 1/4 CORNER
SECTION 19
(FND ALUM. MONUMENT)

$EM=903.94$
 $NV=889.74$

2637.81
S00°27'13"W

LITTLE INC.
SWEDEN C
PLAT C

Owner: Falcon
of North Br

ACRE LAND SURVEYING
9140 Baltimore Street NE
Suite 100, Blaine, MN
763-238-6278 js.acrelandsurvey@gmail.com

JOB #24278

SHEET 4 OF 4 SHEETS

WESTSIDE COMMONS 3RD ADDITION

KNOW ALL PERSONS BY THESE PRESENTS: That North Branch Custard, LLC, a Minnesota limited liability company, owner and proprietors of the following described property situated in the County of Chisago, State of Minnesota, to wit:

Outlot A, WESTSIDE COMMONS 2ND ADDITION, Chisago County, Minnesota

Has caused the same to be surveyed and platted as WESTSIDE COMMONS 3RD ADDITION and do hereby dedicate to the public for public use forever the public way, drainage and utility easements and controlled access to Chisago County as shown on this plat.

In witness whereof North Branch Custard, LLC, a Minnesota limited liability company has caused these presents to be signed by its proper officer this ____ day of _____, 20 ____.

Signed: North Branch Custard, LLC

Isaac Ryba, Member

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF _____

This instrument was acknowledged before me this ____ day of _____, 20 ____ by North Branch Custard, LLC, a Minnesota limited liability company.

(DO NOT USE STAMP)

Notary Public, _____, County, Minnesota
My Commission Expires _____

I Joshua P. Schneider do hereby certify that this plat was prepared by me or under my direct supervision; that I am a duly Licensed Land Surveyor in the State of Minnesota; that this plat is a correct representation of the boundary survey; that all mathematical data and labels are correctly designated on this plat; that all monuments depicted on this plat have been, or will be correctly set within one year; that all water boundaries and wet lands, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, Section 505.01, Subd. 3, as of the date of this certificate are shown and labeled on this plat; and all public ways are shown and labeled on this plat.

Dated this ____ day of _____, 20 ____.

Joshua P. Schneider, Licensed Land Surveyor
Minnesota License Number 44655

This instrument was acknowledged before me this ____ day of _____, 20 ____ by Joshua P. Schneider.

(DO NOT USE STAMP)

Notary Public, _____, County, Minnesota
My Commission Expires _____

Approved by the City Council of the City of North Branch, Minnesota, this ____ day of _____, 20 ____, and is in compliance with the provisions of Chapter 505.03, Subdivision 2, Minnesota Statutes.

By _____ Mayor By _____ Clerk

Pursuant to Chisago County Subdivision Ordinance Number 99-2, I hereby certify that this plat has been checked and approved as to compliance with Chapter 505.021, Minnesota Statutes this ____ day of _____, 20 ____.

County Surveyor

This plat was recommended for approval this ____ day of _____, 20 ____.

County Engineer

No delinquent taxes and transfer entered this ____ day of _____, 20 ____.

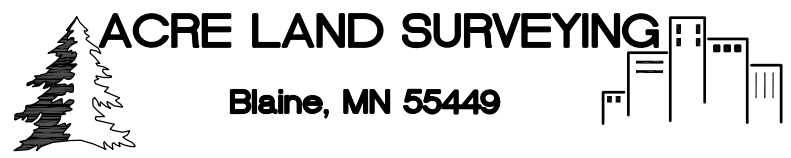
County Auditor

I hereby certify that the taxes for the year 20 ____ on the property described herein are paid this ____ day of _____, 20 ____.

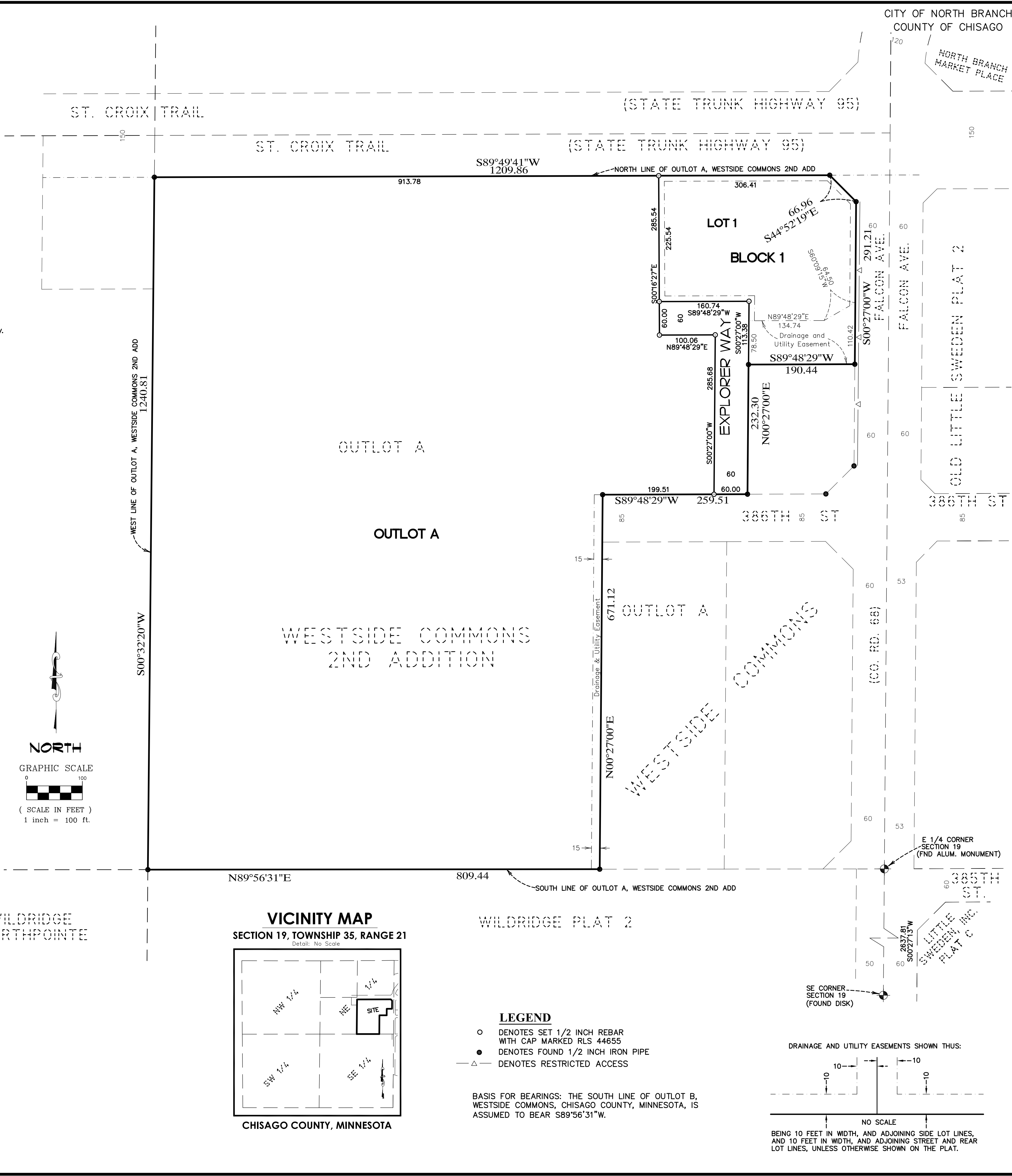
County Treasurer

Document No. ____
I hereby certify that this instrument was filed for record in the Office of the County Recorder for record on this ____ day of _____, 20 ____, at o'clock ____ M. and was duly recorded in Chisago County Records.

County Recorder



10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30



Memorandum

To: City of North Branch Development Review Committee

From: Justin Messner and Jeff Oliver, WSB

Date: May 29, 2025

Re: Culvers at Westside Commons
WSB Project No. 028163-000

An application for Site Plan Review and Preliminary and Final Plat were submitted for the proposed Culver's at Westside Commons development in the City of North Branch. The proposed development is located in the southwest quadrant of State Trunk Highway 95 and Falcon Avenue (County Road 68).

The plans for the proposed development were reviewed for conformance to the City's and industry standards. Additional redline comments are provided on the submitted civil plans. Applicant should provide responses to each comment and redline comment. We offer the following comments below.

- ~~1. The applicant must provide written verification that the proposed turn lane off Falcon Avenue has been approved in concept by the Chisago County Highway Department. This verification must also identify if the access point is a right in only, or a right in/right out. The approved layout must be shown on the plans. Removed from plans~~
- ~~2. The streets shown on the concept plan must be City streets and identified appropriately on all the plans. These streets must therefore be constructed to all City of North Branch standards and specifications, and the developer must enter into a Development Agreement with the City.~~
- ~~3. The preliminary plat and Site Plan must include an identification of future land use and conceptual layout for all property included in this proposed development.~~
- ~~4. In addition to city streets, the plans must demonstrate the ability to provide sanitary sewer, water supply and storm sewer to the entire area within the proposed preliminary plat.~~
- ~~5. In order to reduce the risk of turning conflicts and vehicle crashes, the proposed right-angle intersection immediately south of the site must be modified to include a curved intersection like that shown to the west. If approved by the county, the site plans and revised intersection must be incorporated into the access drive from Falcon Drive, the access into the site, and access to the drive through lanes.~~
- ~~6. An exhibit must be included with the submittal demonstrating that the parking areas designated for boat trailers and recreational vehicles are appropriately designed to accommodate these vehicles and must include turning a movement analysis that shows appropriate space for ingress and egress into the site and the parking stalls.~~

Existing Conditions and Removals Plan

1. See all comments on planset for additional details
2. Show the existing surveyed trail and not the previous proposed trail on the east side of the site
 - a. Delete previous proposed trail
- ~~3. Verify whether an existing retaining wall is present near northeast corner~~
- ~~4. Label existing utility stubs to the site~~
5. There is a conflict between the proposed trail extension and the existing signal/light pole

Site Plan

1. See all comments on planset for additional details
2. Show surveyed trail as existing NOT former 'proposed' trail
 - a. Delete previous proposed trail
3. Show commercial aprons (RDW-008) at both parking area connections to City streets
 - a. Add linework in the plan view that reflects the apron and curb
 - b. Drive thru would be a commercial entrance with the City street as well
- ~~4. Previous review asked for turning templates, please provide.
 - a. Assume largest motorhome, full size pickup with 20 ft boat.
 - b. Assume vehicles on both sides, no encroachment on cars parked on west curb, no driving over curb and single movement out of stall.~~
- ~~5. Show curved curbed public road similar to the west curve alignment at the south side of the site
 - a. Eliminate drive thru connection to City street (connect through parking area)
 - b. Provide curb and gutter through both sides of the curve.
 - c. Should entire curve be moved to the SW to provide enough room for proposed driveways in safe locations?~~
6. Provide temporary cul de sac
 - a. Clarify bituminous and curb limits
 - b. Detail all transitions and terminations (permanent or temporary)
 - i. End curbs with 3' 'beaver tail' transitions
 - ~~c. Provide type 3 barricades with future thru sign~~
 - ~~i. Protect temporary hydrant~~
- ~~7. Show connect to existing B6XX curb with proposed B6XX curb at existing intersection~~
- ~~8. Clarify bituminous and curb limits along City Road
 - a. Detail all transitions and terminations (permanent or temporary)~~
9. Sidewalk/Trail to tie into existing pedestrian ramp
 - a. Mirror connections from southeast corner of intersection
 - b. Show connection and any necessary modifications to the existing pedestrian ramp

- i. Note that the back of the existing pedestrian ramp has a curb on it that will probably need to be removed
 - c. There is a conflict between the proposed trail extension and the existing signal/light pole
- 10. Provide a continuation of the sidewalk and lighting established on the south side of St. Croix Trail to the western development limits
 - a. Will need to be sidewalk with coloring details for construction plans
- ~~11. Dimension any 'non-typical' parking area widths~~
- ~~12. Show curb on west side of lot to protect bituminous~~
- ~~13. Label Bus/RV/Trailer stalls as 10'x40' (not 10'x20')~~
- ~~14. Add proposed bollards to a legend?~~
- 15. The westernmost lane in the parking area is shown as 'one way' south. This should be 'two way' to allow access to the western most parking spaces
- 16. Show extents/linework of ramps that are labeled
 - a. Provide limits and a detail for raised sidewalk curb
- 17. Provide do not enter signs due to winter snow cover
 - a. 'Do not enter' pavement markings should be closer to intersection to allow for turnaround
- 18. Label all proposed signs
- 19. Extend the commercial apron for the drive thru or provide additional valley gutter for channelized drainage crossing north from the parking area to the southern curb cut

Grading

- 1. See all comments on planset for additional details
- ~~2. Show all gutter linework locations (not just curb)
 - a. Show areas of tipout curb~~
- ~~3. Verify whether a valley gutter is proposed near the south end of the lot based on drainage arrows~~
- ~~4. Call out all high points and low points present on the site~~
- ~~5. Provide additional spot elevations along all curb lines (every 100' or so)
 - a. Add proposed spot elevation labels to legend
 - b. Clarify whether top of curb (TC) or gutter (G) elevations~~
- ~~6. Provide top and bottom of wall elevations
 - a. Provide grades for the proposed contours from the bottom of wall to the proposed sidewalk
 - b. Provide grades from the proposed sidewalk to the existing back of curb
 - c. Provide existing back of curb shots~~

- ~~7. Provide details of the preferred storm drop pipe penetrating the retaining wall~~
 - ~~a. Provide outlet elevation~~
 - ~~b. Drainage proposed overland across sidewalk to street not acceptable~~
 - ~~c. Consider secondary storm drop pipe location~~
- ~~8. Pond banks must be covered by erosion control fabric, see 2025 detail~~
 - a. Include ERO-011 detail in the plans
9. Stabilize (riprap, etc.) EOF route from Infiltration Pond 1B. Stabilize EOF with riprap rather than fabric/vegetation.h
10. Extend the commercial apron for the drive thru or provide additional valley gutter for channelized drainage crossing north from the parking area to the southern curb cut
11. Coming out of the curve in the drive thru a 4' drop immediately on the back side of a curb without any recovery may be problematic
 - a. Recommend guard rail or railing
12. Confirm top of pond elevation, Noted as 904.5 but 905 contour shown to encompass the entire pond.

Utilities

1. See all comments on planset for additional details
2. Provide proposed centerline grades and any vertical curves
 - a. Minimal (0.5%) centerline grades
 - b. Verify drainage in curblines with construction
- ~~3. Label all proposed water fittings~~
4. Call out connections to existing utility stubs
 - a. Connect to existing 12" watermain stub with 12" gate valve
- ~~5. Label all existing utility stubs in the plan and profile views~~
- ~~6. Show existing hydrant~~
 - a. City Fire Official to review hydrant coverage and emergency access
 - b. Additional hydrants anticipated to be required along watermain, see fire coverage circles on plan.
- ~~7. Maintain minimum 10' horizontal separation between sewer and water (on northern east-west street)~~
 - ~~a. Shift water or storm sewer to north side of the street~~
- ~~8. Shift proposed/future utilities line in profile to structure SANMH 14~~
 - ~~a. Profile proposed/future lines in profile do not appear to match plan view~~
 - b. Shift proposed watermain linework limits
- ~~9. Match existing sanitary sewer main pipe grade with proposed connection and extension~~

- ~~10. Use 8" PVC SDR 35 main at 0.40% between SANMH 13 and SANMH 14~~
- ~~11. Show a 12" to 6" reducer and 6" temporary hydrant assembly and the west end of the proposed watermain~~
- ~~12. Provide a symbol on the plan for the 4" sanitary cleanout~~
13. Clarify how the 6" water service is becoming a fire protection line and 2" domestic service
 - a. Label all fittings (corp stop, curb stop, etc.)
 - b. **Verify with City fire official that single combined stub is allowed**

Stormwater Management

- ~~1. Soil borings should be provided to confirm infiltration feasibility and required separation to groundwater per the NPDES permit.~~
- ~~2. Based on the existing contours drainage would be split and drain both north and south. Drainage areas should be updated to show what would drain south versus what would drain north and discharge rates should be compared at the different discharge points. Similar comment for proposed conditions.~~
- ~~3. Drawdown calculations for the infiltration basins to confirm they can draw down in 48 hours per the NPDES permit.~~
- ~~4. Pretreatment is required prior to an infiltration basin. Show sump elevation and location on plans.~~ **Note sump elevation on the profile**
5. In future submittals include who will be responsible for maintenance of erosion control BMPs. **To be provided once contractor is known.**
- ~~6. Proposed impervious area is not consistent between SWPPP and stormwater management plan (2.4 vs 2.06 acres)~~
- ~~7. Include silt fence length in SWPPP~~
8. Provide storm sewer calculations and a drainage area map to confirm storm sewer is sized for a 10-year storm event. **Not provided**
- ~~9. Show inlet protection on proposed structures onsite~~
- ~~10. Note connect to existing structure shall be core drilled.~~ **Include existing rim and all existing invert elevations on the callout at the connection. Difficult to read survey underneath**
- ~~11. Note daylighting elevation of roof drainage line.~~
- ~~12. Include full perimeter silt fence around the site.~~
- ~~13. Note if storm sewer to the south of the site is proposed for future development~~
- ~~14. Structure 51 should include a sump for pretreatment.~~
- ~~15. Create storm sewer profiles for each alignment. See comment on planset for details.~~
 - a. **Update pipe directionality from structure 53 to 79 in plan view**

- b. Fix overlapping text
- c. Shift callouts so they can be fully seen within the profile view
- d. Currently showing an 18" pipe routed to a 12" pipe, update.
- e. Note the sump elevation on the profile view
- f. Remove structure 80 and structure 51 from the roadway profile, only show in the crossing profiles

BLOCH
ENGINEERING

BLOCH ENGINEERING, PLLC
blochengineering.com

32210 XEON ST NW
CAMBRIDGE, MN 55008

krystle@blochengineering.com

JOB NO. 24-29

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN,
SPECIFICATION, OR REPORT WAS
PREPARED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT
SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A DULY
LICENSED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER UNDER
THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.

PRELIMINARY	
KRYSTLE L. BLOCH	
5-27-2025	49893
DATE	LIC. NO.

CULVER'S AT WESTSIDE COMMONS
CLIENT: BOWE BUSINESS GROUP
NORTH BRANCH, MN

[illegible]

C1

THE PROPERTY IS CURRENTLY ZONED FOR THE FOLLOWING: COMMERCIAL

GOVERNING STANDARDS: COUNTY OF CHISAGO STANDARDS, CITY OF NORTH BRANCH STANDARD CONTRACT DOCUMENTS AND TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR UTILITY AND STREET CONSTRUCTION, 2018 EDITION OF THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION "STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION", LATEST VERSION OF THE "MINNESOTA MANUAL OF UNIFORM TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES" (MMUTCD)

GOPHER STATE ONE CALL
(651) 454-0002
gopherstateonecall.org

THE SUBSURFACE UTILITY INFORMATION IN THIS PLAN IS UTILITY QUALITY LEVEL D. THIS QUALITY LEVEL WAS DETERMINED ACCORDING TO THE GUIDELINES OF C1/ASCE 3-2, ENTITLED "STANDARD GUIDELINES FOR THE COLLECTION AND DEPICTION OF EXISTING SUBSURFACE UTILITY DATA."

CONTRACTOR SHALL FIELD VERIFY EXACT LOCATIONS PRIOR TO COMMENCING CONSTRUCTION AS REQUIRED BY STATE LAW. GSOC INFORMATION ABOVE.

1 - TITLE SHEET
2 - EXISTING CONDITIONS
3 - SITE PLAN - OVERALL DEVELOPMENT
4 - SITE PLAN - CULVER'S PROJECT
5 - GRADING AND EROSION CONTROL PLAN
6 - PLAN AND PROFILE - STREET AND STORM
7 - UTILITY PLAN
8 - PLAN AND PROFILE - WATER AND SANITARY
9-11 - STANDARD DETAILS
12-13 - STORMWATER POLLUTION PREVENTION PLAN
14 - LANDSCAPE PLAN
15 - SIGN AND STRIPE PLAN

CULVER'S
BOWE BUSINESS GROUP

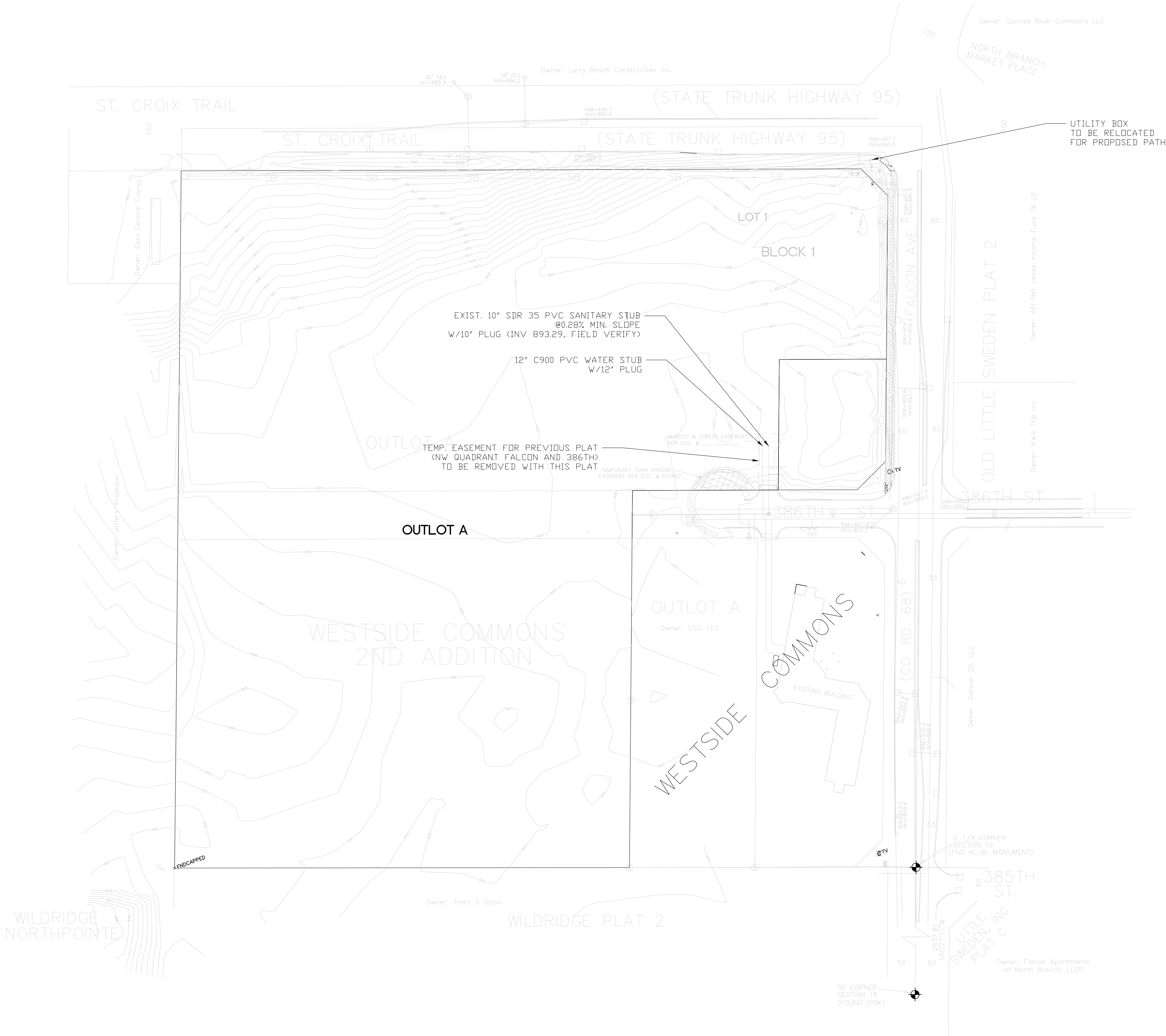
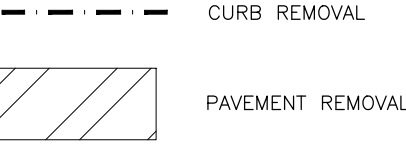
KRYSTLE BLOCH, P.E. (MN 49893)
BLOCH ENGINEERING, PLLC
32210 XEON ST NW
CAMBRIDGE MN 55008
(507) 995-2981

JOSHUA P. SCHNEIDER, PLS
9140 BALTIMORE ST NE, STE 100
BLAINE, MN 55449
(763) 238-6278

PROJECT AREA

Page 124 of 276

LEGEND



I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN, SPECIFICATION, OR REPORT WAS PREPARED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A DULY LICENSED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.

PRELIMINARY

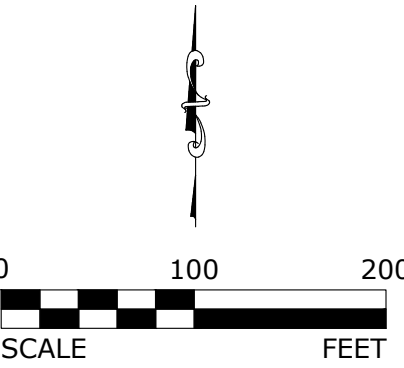
CRYSTLE L. BLOCH
5-27-2025
DATE

49893
LIC. NO.

CULVER'S AT WESTSIDE COMMONS
CLIENT: BOWE BUSINESS GROUP
NORTH BRANCH, MN

EXISTING CONDITIONS
AND REMOVALS PLAN

REVISIONS	DESCRIPTION	
	BY	DATE

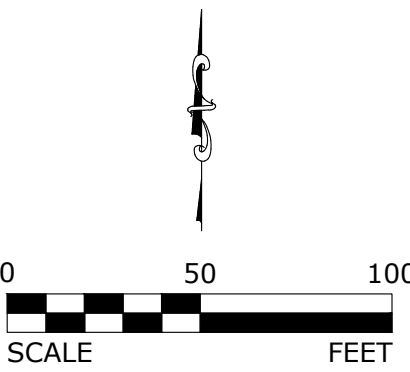




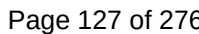
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN, SPECIFICATION, OR REPORT WAS PREPARED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A DULY LICENSED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.	PRELIMINARY
KRYSTLE L. BLOCH	5-27-2025 49893

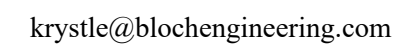
CULVER'S AT WESTSIDE COMMONS
CLIENT: BOWE BUSINESS GROUP
NORTH BRANCH, MN

SITE PLAN
CULVER'S PROJECT

[illegible]

C4



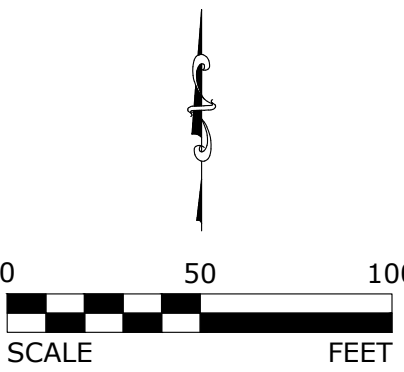


JOB NO. 24-29

PRELIMINARY	HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN, SPECIFICATION, OR REPORT WAS PREPARED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A DULY LICENSED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.
KRYSTLE L. BLOCH	49893
5-27-2025	

CULVER'S AT WESTSIDE COMMONS
CLIENT: BOWE BUSINESS GROUP
NORTH BRANCH, MN

GRADING AND EROSION CONTROL PLAN

[illegible]

C5

LEGEND

— SILT — SILT — SILT — SILT FENCE — PLACE AROUND PERIMETER OF SITE



X 9XX.XX

PROPOSED SPOT ELEVATION (FLOWLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

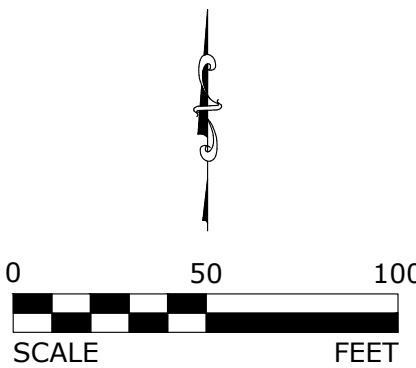


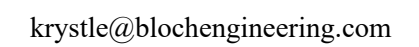
SITE GRADING NOTES:

1. THE CONTRACTOR IS SPECIFICALLY CAUTIONED THAT THE LOCATION AND/OR ELEVATION OF EXISTING UTILITIES AS SHOWN ON THESE PLANS IS BASED ON RECORDS OF THE VARIOUS UTILITY COMPANIES, AND WHERE POSSIBLE, MEASUREMENTS TAKEN IN THE FIELD. THE INFORMATION IS NOT TO BE RELIED ON AS BEING EXACT OR COMPLETE. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL VERIFY THE FIELD LOCATION OF ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UTILITIES PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL CONTACT GOPHER STATE ONE CALL AT (651) 454-0002.
2. ALL CUT OR FILL SLOPES SHALL BE 3:1 OR FLATTER UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
3. EXISTING GRADE CONTOUR INTERVALS SHOWN AT 2 FOOT INTERVALS (TOPOGRAPHIC/SURVEY SHOT-BASED SURFACE).
4. PROPOSED GRADE CONTOUR INTERVALS SHOWN AT 1 FOOT INTERVALS.
5. IF ANY EXISTING STRUCTURES TO REMAIN ARE DAMAGED DURING CONSTRUCTION IT SHALL BE THE CONTRACTORS RESPONSIBILITY TO REPAIR AND/OR REPLACE THE EXISTING STRUCTURE AS NECESSARY TO RETURN IT TO EXISTING CONDITIONS OR BETTER.
6. CONTRACTOR SHALL ASSURE POSITIVE DRAINAGE AWAY FROM BUILDINGS FOR ALL NATURAL AND PAVED/GRAVEL AREAS.
7. TOPOGRAPHIC INFORMATION TAKEN FROM A TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY BY LAND SURVEYORS, IF CONTRACTOR DOES NOT ACCEPT EXISTING TOPOGRAPHY AS SHOWN ON THE PLANS, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, HE SHALL HAVE MADE, AT HIS EXPENSE, A TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY BY A REGISTERED LAND SURVEYOR AND SUBMIT TO THE OWNER FOR REVIEW.
8. CONSTRUCTION SHALL COMPLY WITH ALL APPLICABLE GOVERNING CODES AND BE CONSTRUCTED TO SAME.
9. ALL PROPOSED SPOT ELEVATIONS ARE FLOWLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

EROSION CONTROL NOTES:

1. ALL DISTURBED AREAS TO BE SEEDED AND MULCHED. 4IN MIN TOPSOIL, EXCEPT IN RIGHT OF WAY. RIGHT OF WAY TO BE SODDED.
2. MULCH TYPE 1 (DISK ANCHORED) IN DISTURBED AREAS
3. SEED MNDOT TYPE 35-221, AT A RATE OF 36.5 LB/AC.
4. ALL SLOPES STEEPER THAN 4:1, SHALL BE RESTORED WITH SEED AND PROTECTED WITH EROSION CONTROL BLANKET PER MNDOT SPEC. 3885.1 OR SODDED AND STAKED.
5. POND SLOPES MUST BE COVERED WITH EROSION CONTROL FABRIC PER CITY DETAIL.

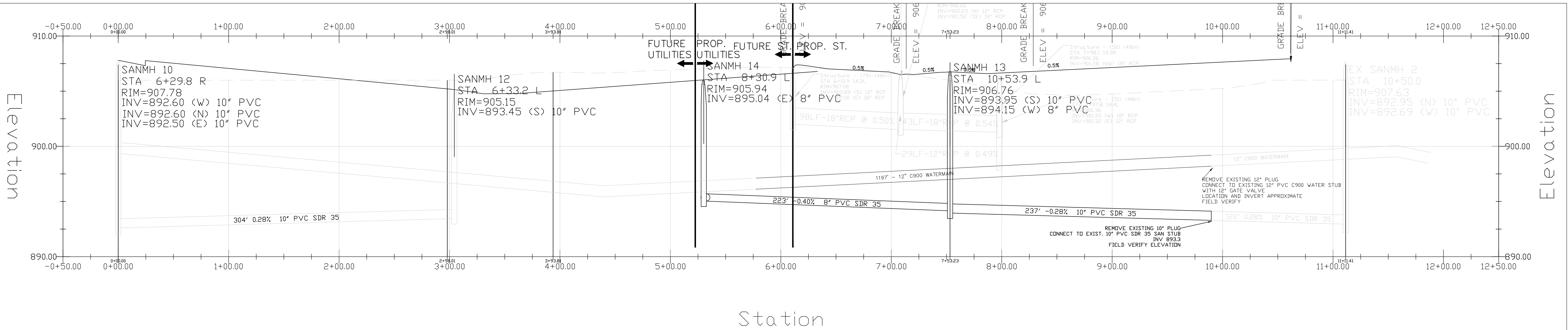
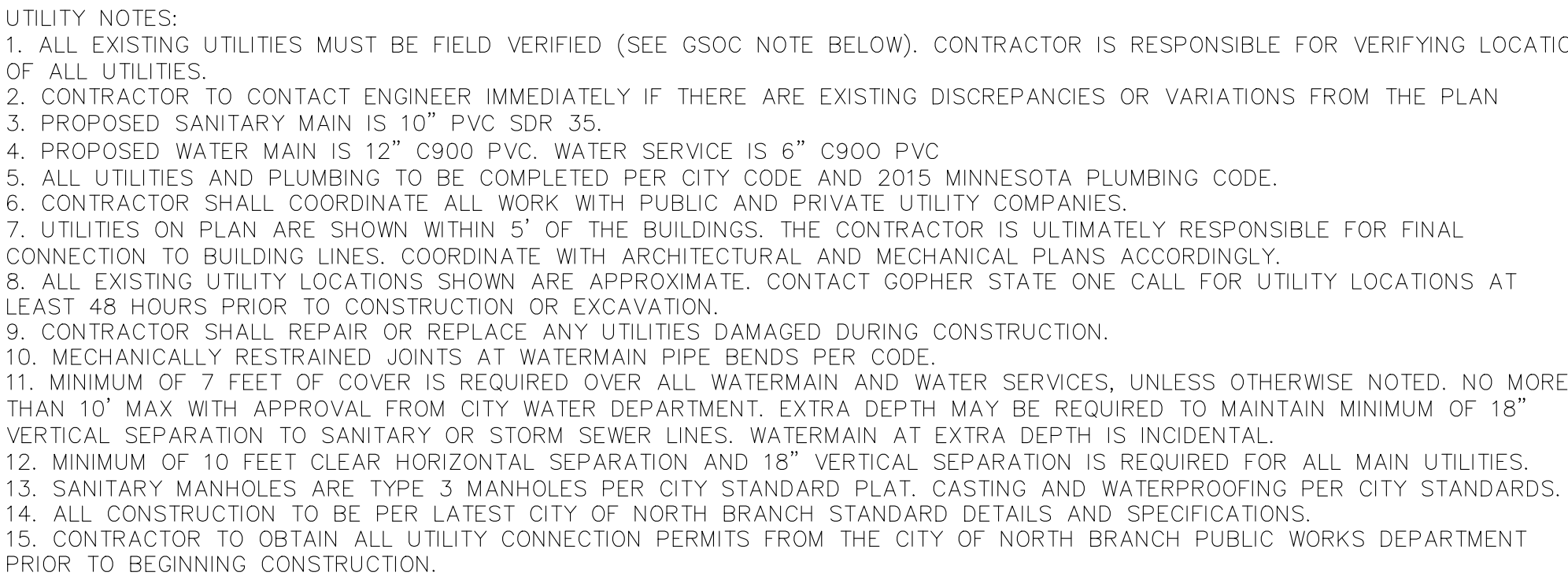
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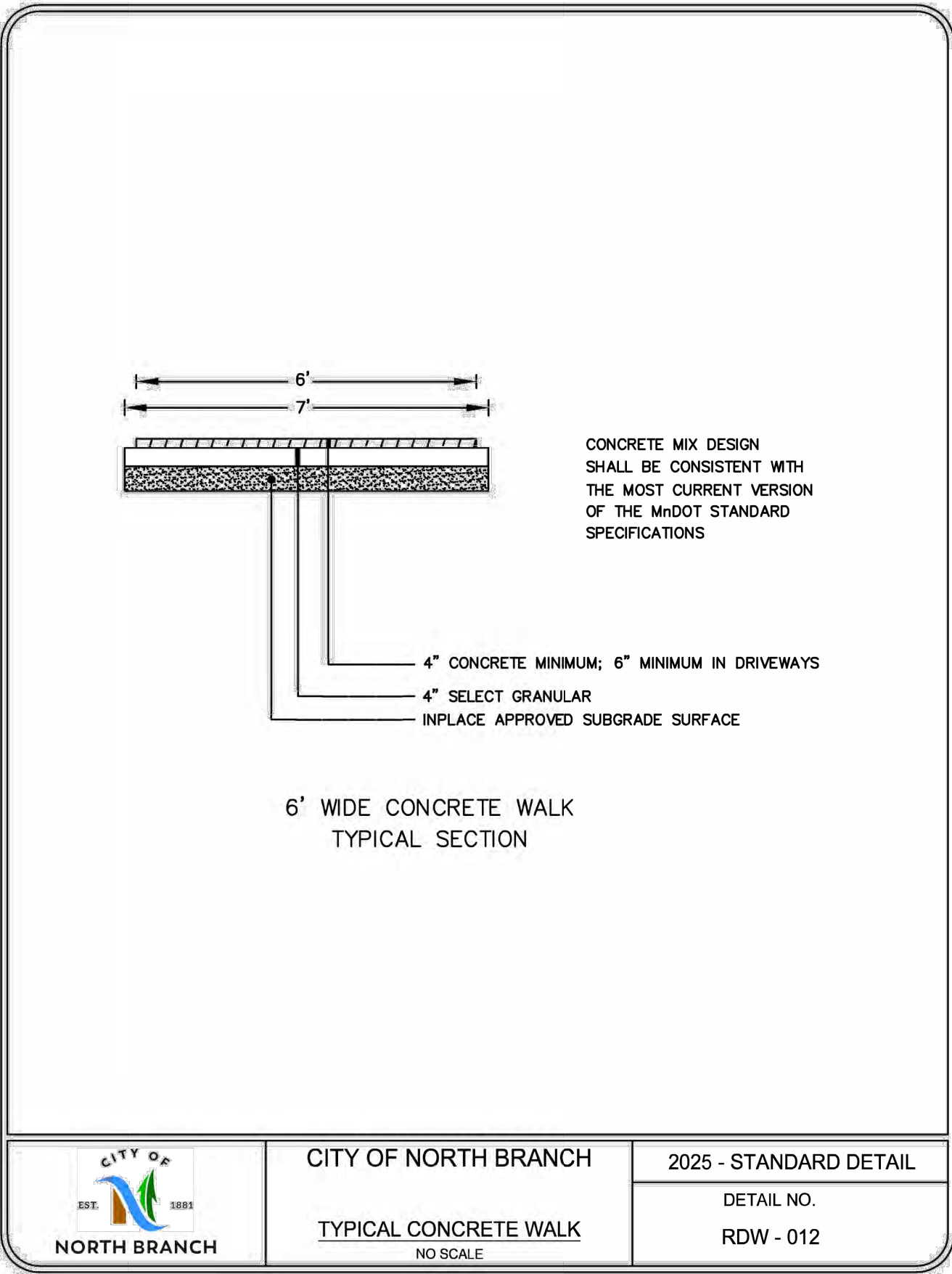
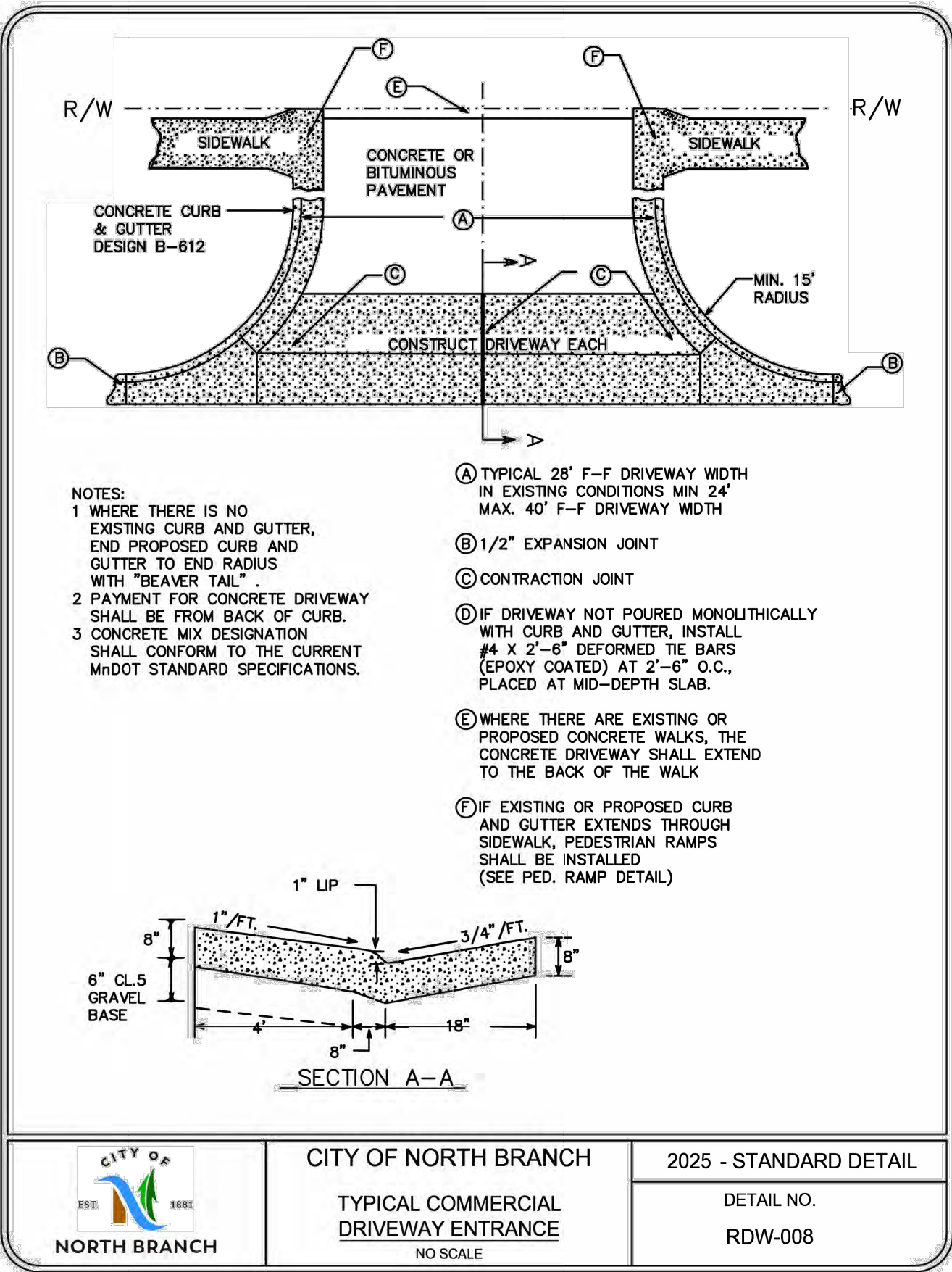
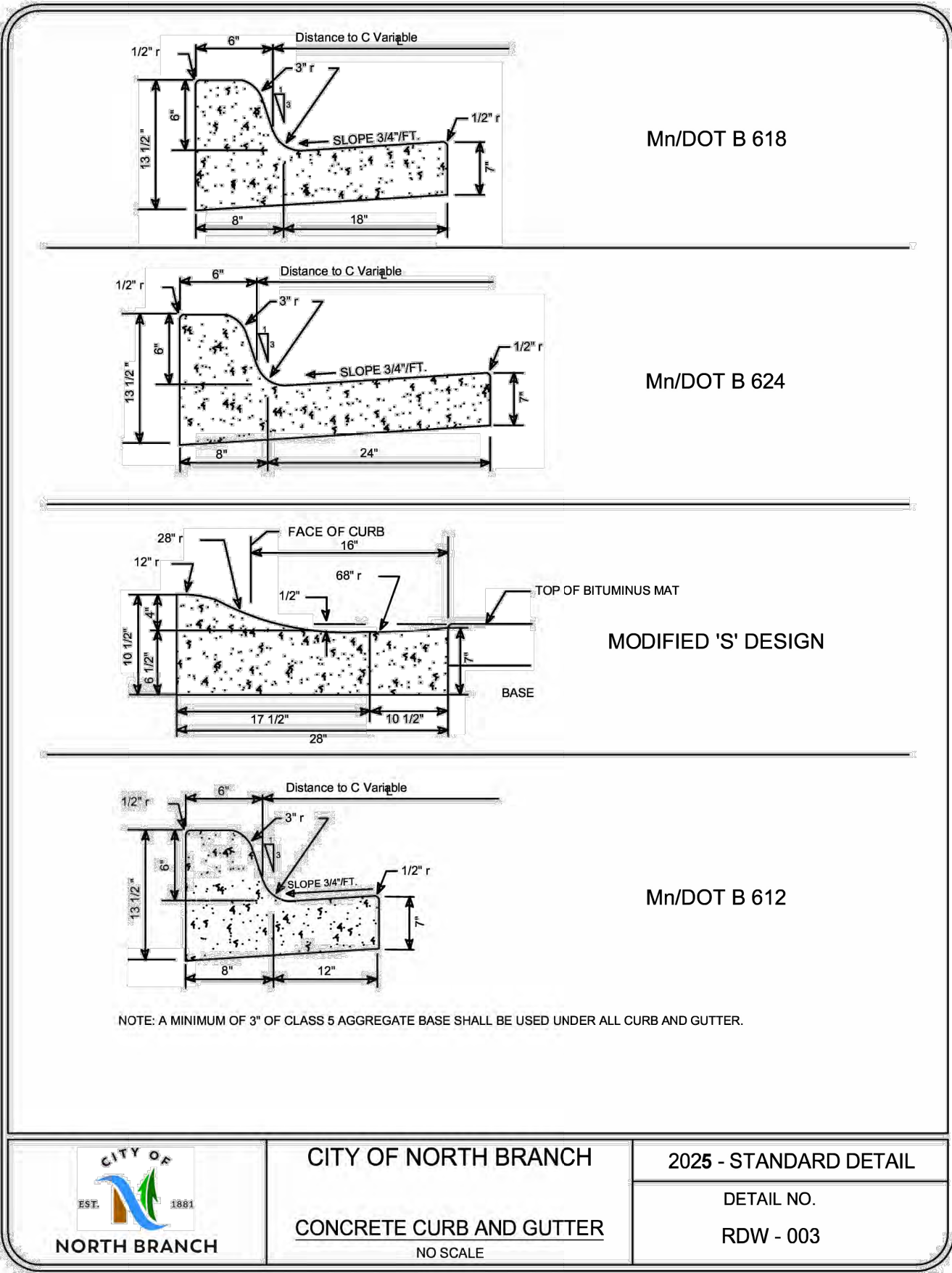
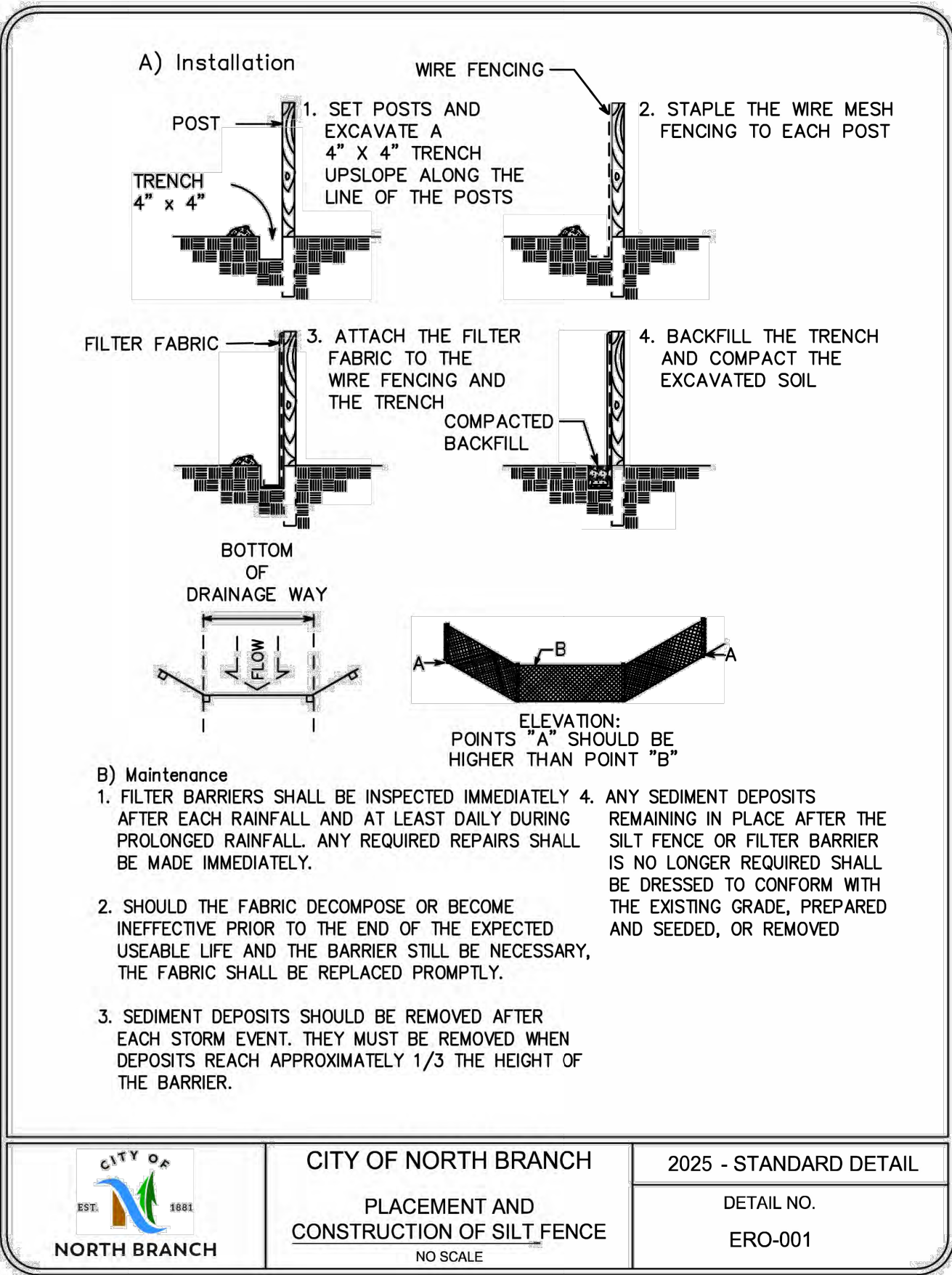


KRYSTLE L. BLOCH
5-27-2025
49893

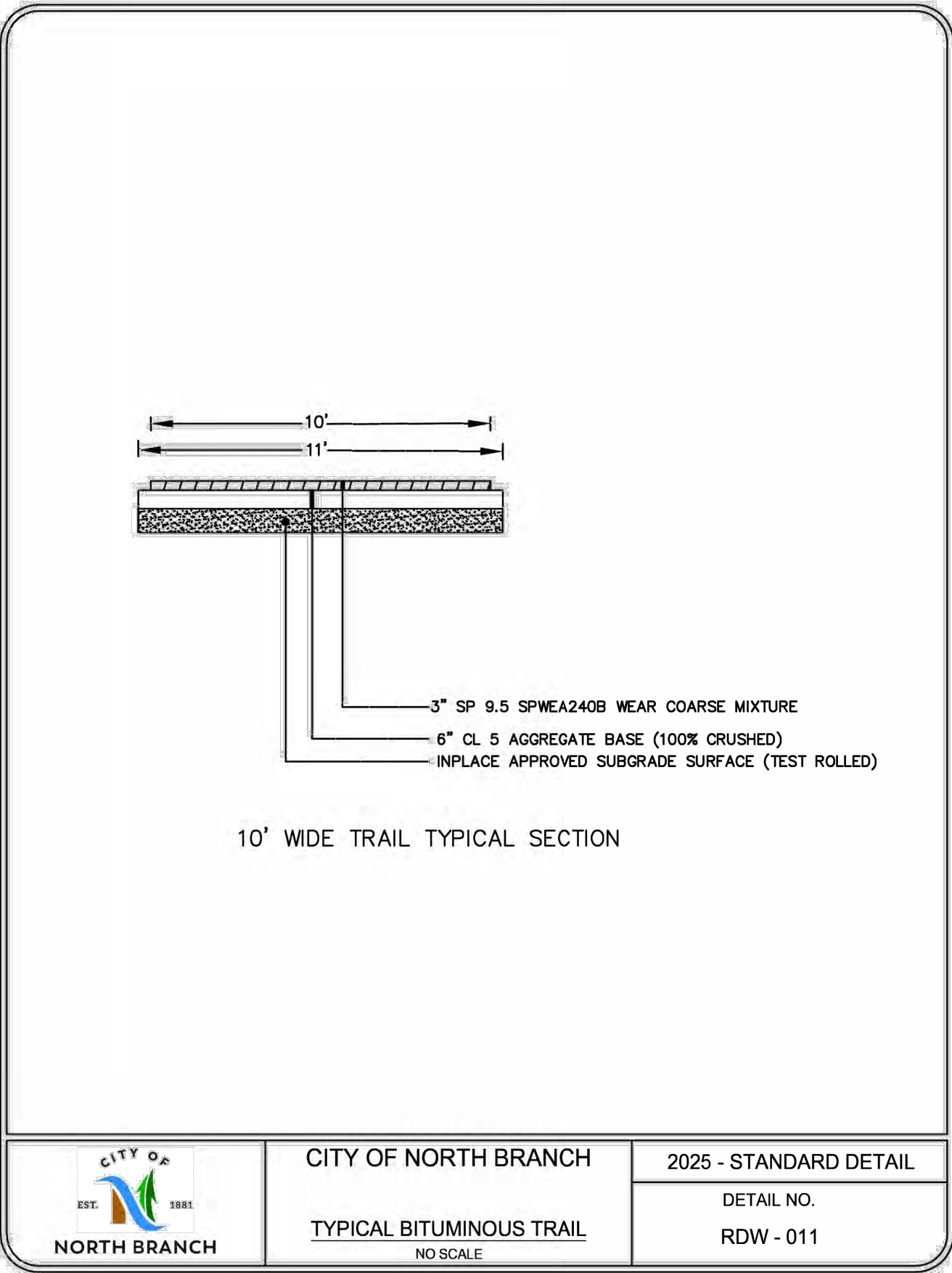
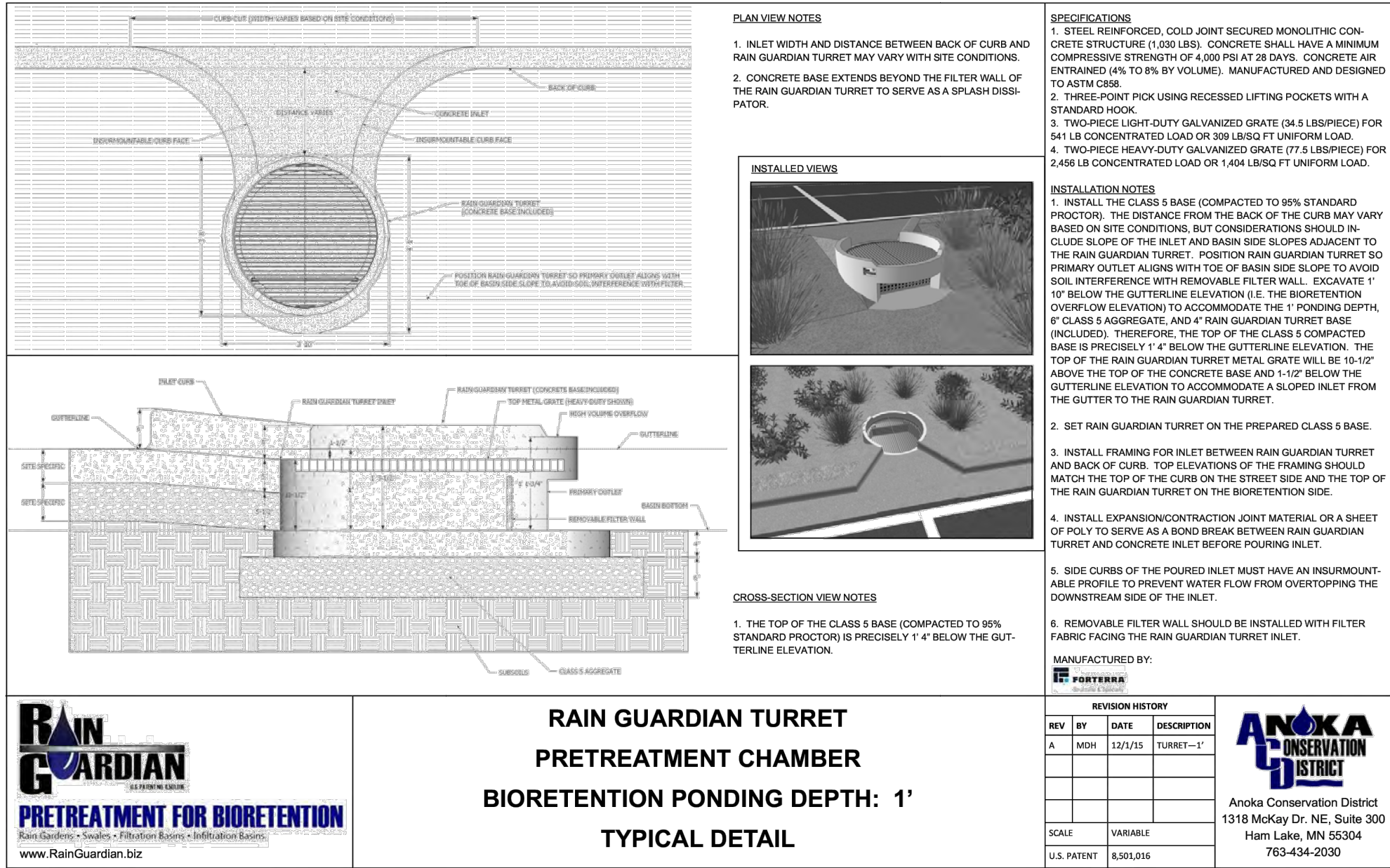
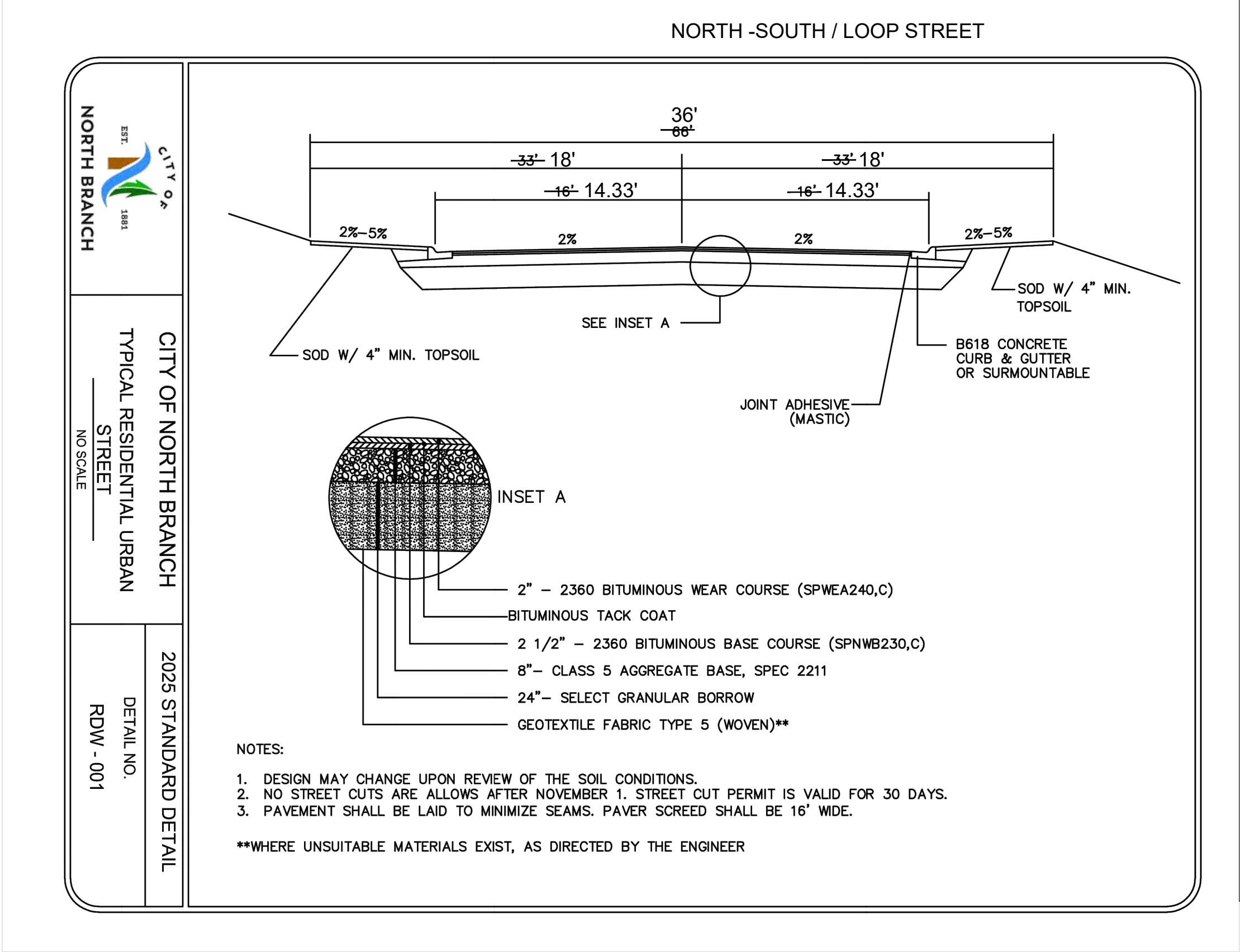
LOOP ST PLAN AND PROFILE

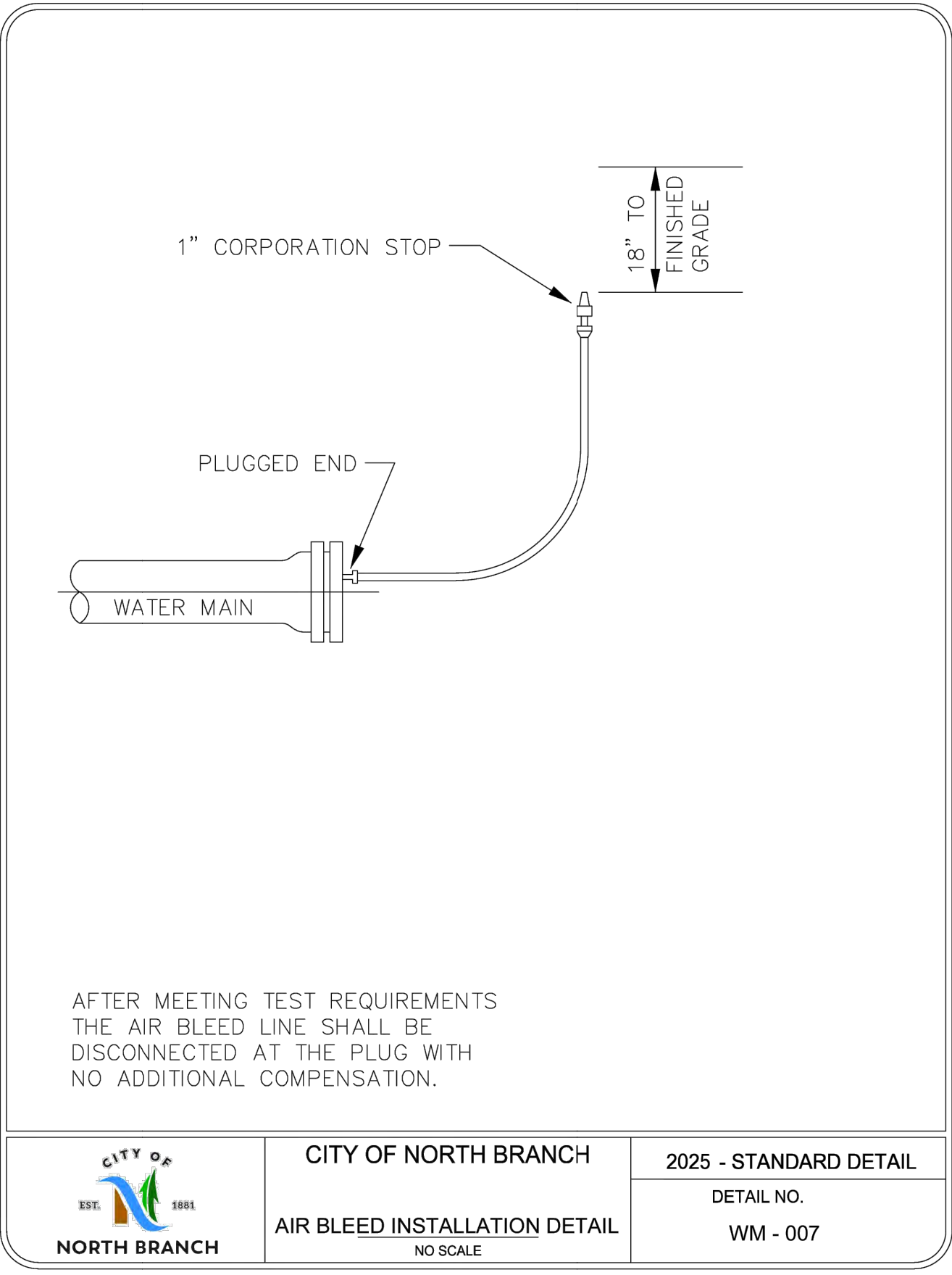
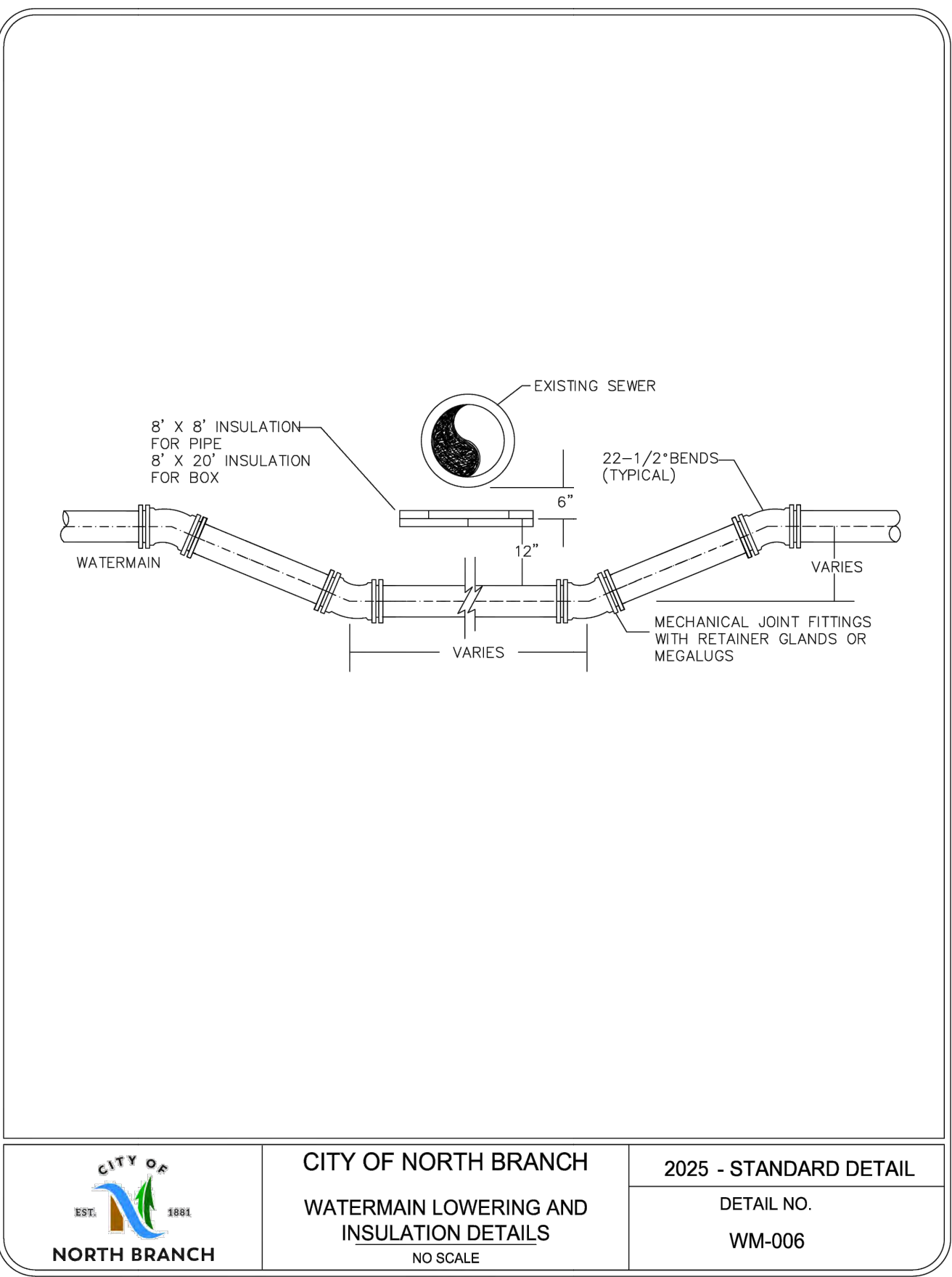
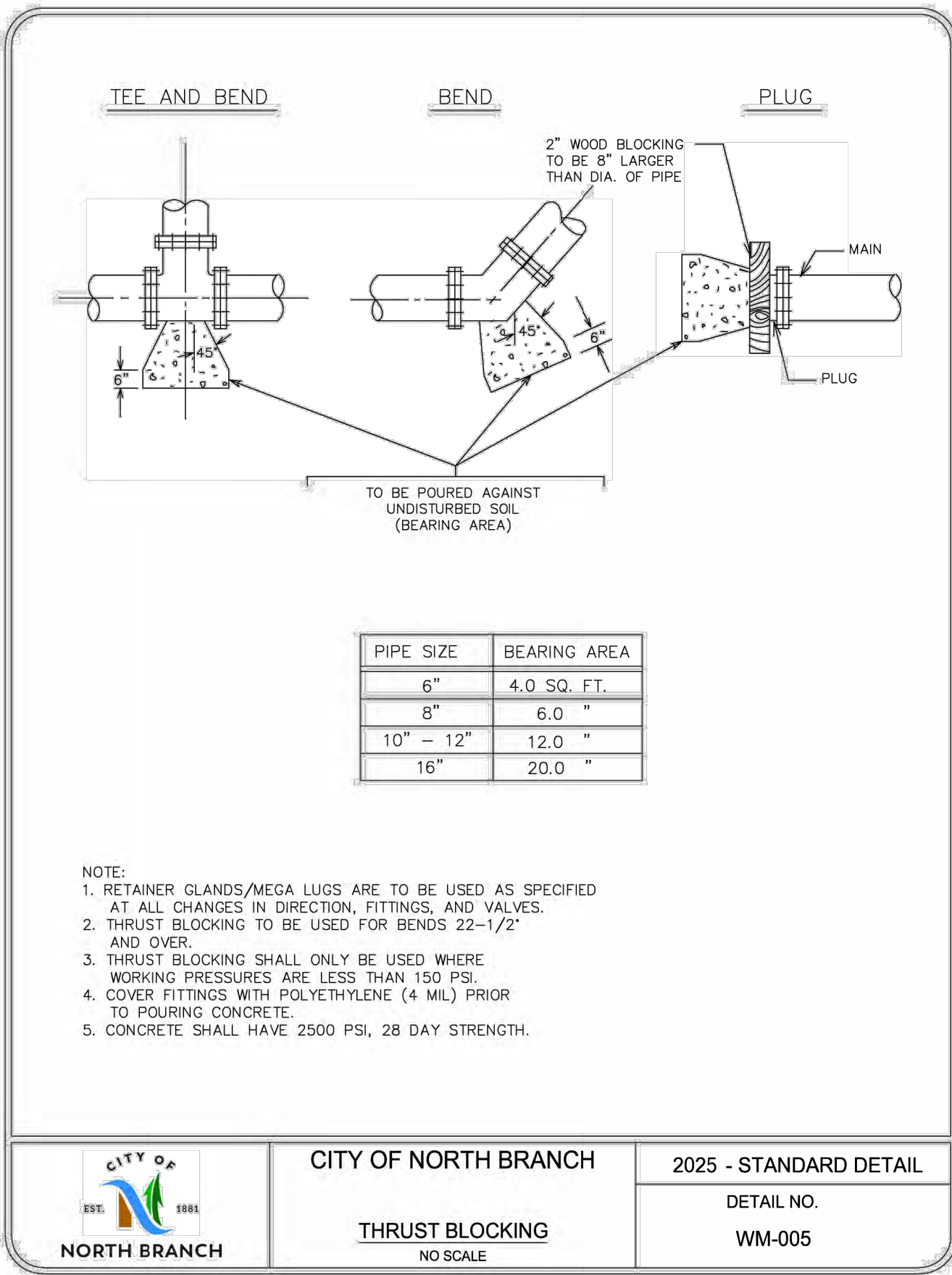
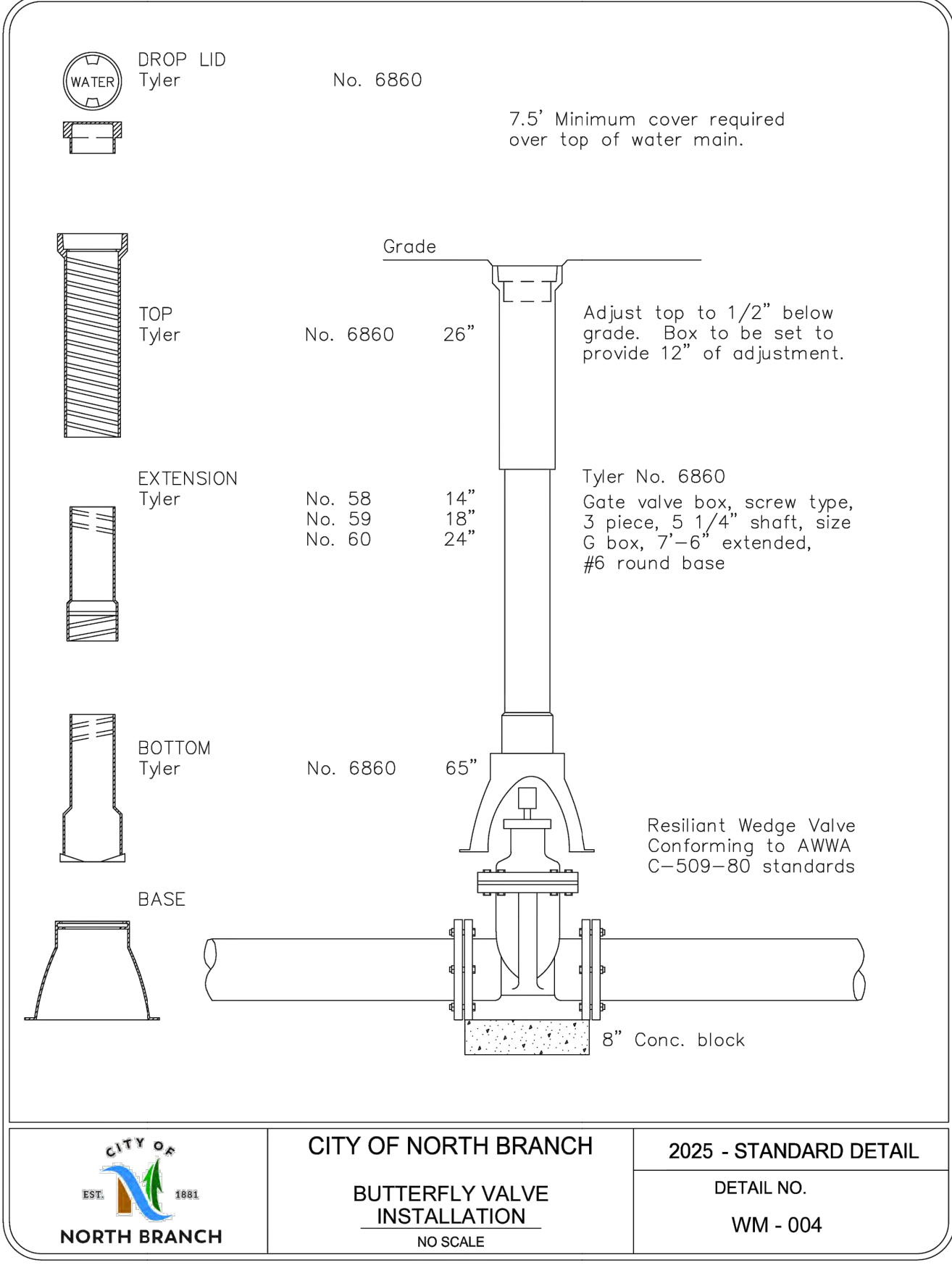
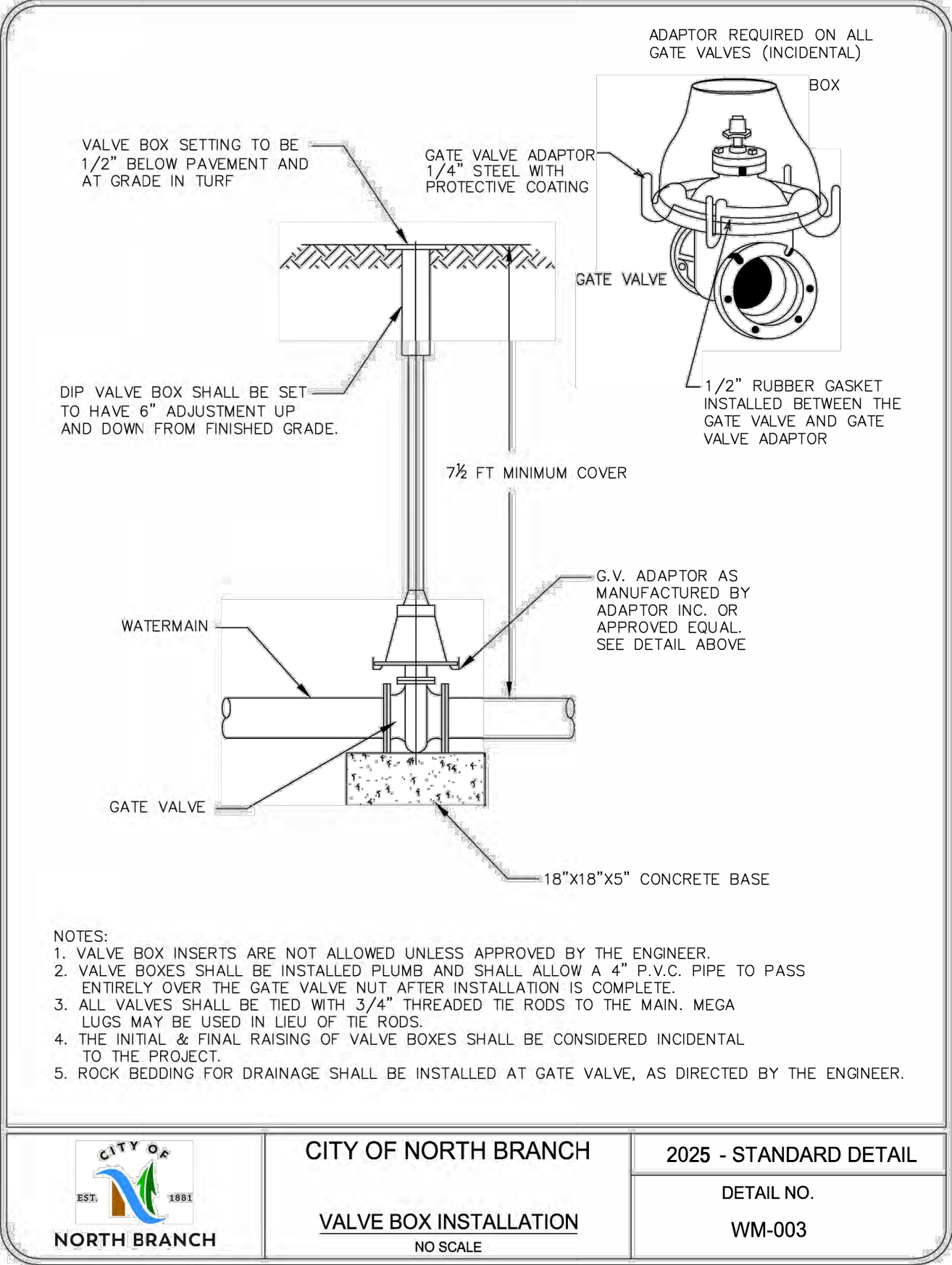
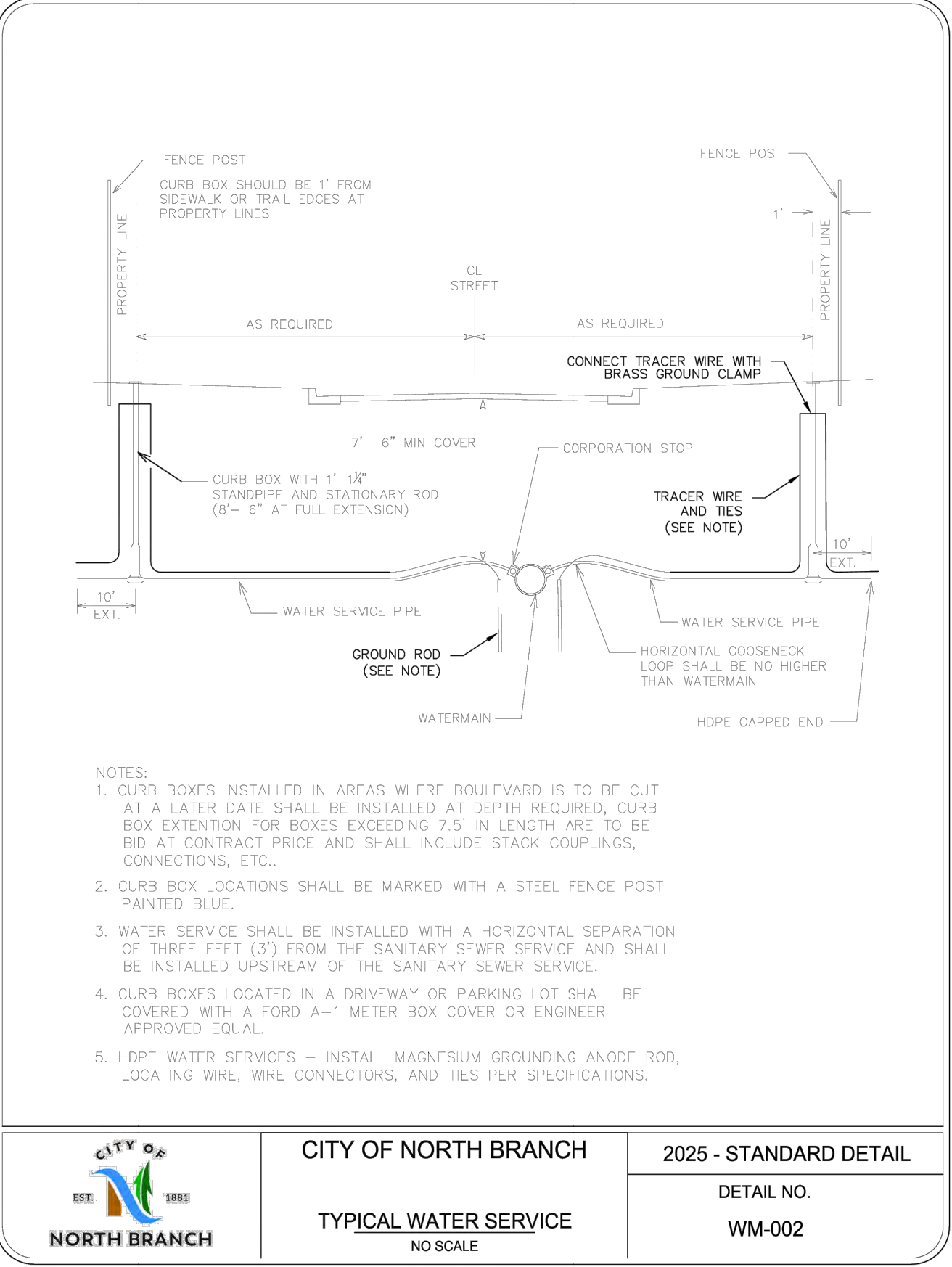
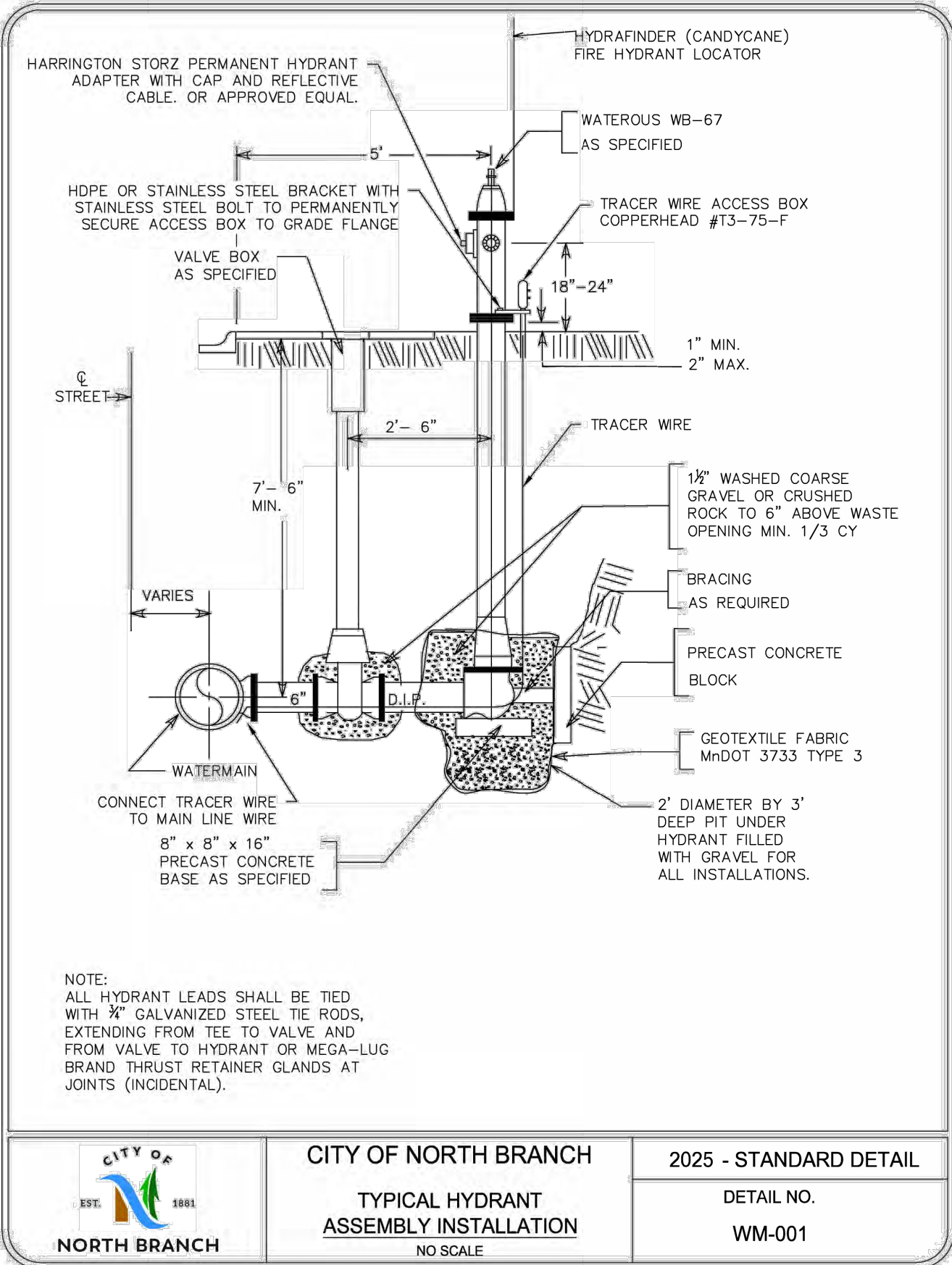
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REVISIONS	NO.	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION





REVISIONS		NO.	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION

STORM WATER POLLUTION PREVENTION PLAN (SWPPP)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The existing site is a total of 38.5 acres, but only 2.6 acres are being regraded as part of this current project. The remaining portion of the lot is is future development. Runoff from this site is routed to proposed infiltration pond and then to Falcon Avenue. Grading, infiltration, and paving will be installed as part of this project along with building construction.

SWPPP IMPLEMENTATION

The Project Engineer and the Contractor are responsible for implementation of the SWPPP and the installation, inspection, and maintenance of the erosion prevention and sediment control BMPs before and during construction. The Contractor will have an Erosion Control Supervisor who is responsible for coordinating the erosion prevention and sediment control BMPs.

PROJECT CONTACT IMPLEMENTATION/MAINTENANCE:

Erosion and Sediment Control, BMP Inspection Performed By:

XXX

xxx

North Branch, MN

XXX-XXX-XXXX

Long Term Pond Maintenance Provided By:

N/A

TIMING OF BMP INSTALLATION

The erosion prevention and sediment control BMPs shall be installed as necessary to minimize erosion from disturbed surfaces and capture sediment on site.

1. Erosion and sediment control BMPs must be installed prior to the start of construction.
2. Where applicable, disturbed areas will immediately be temporarily stabilized prior to permanent turf establishment whenever construction ceases for 7 days, with special consideration of areas within 200 feet continuous positive slope of a surface water.
3. Temporary or permanent energy dissipation shall be placed at pipe outlets within 24 hours after connection to a surface water.
4. Temporary stabilization of stockpiles must be initiated immediately to limit soil erosion whenever any construction activity has permanently ceased on any portion of the site and will not resume for a period exceeding 7 calendar days.
5. Planned slopes of 1:3 (V:H) or steeper and greater than 75 ft. in length will be temporarily or permanently stabilized in increments not to exceed 75 ft., prior to constructing or disturbing a new increment.
6. BMPs must remain in place until final stabilization is achieved and permit NOT has been submitted to the MPCA.
7. The normal wetted perimeter of any temporary or permanent drainage ditch or swale that drains water from any portion of the construction site, or diverts around the site, must be stabilized within 200 lineal feet from the property edge, or from the point of discharge into any surface water. Stabilization of the last 200 lineal feet must be completed within 24 hours after connecting to a surface water.

CALCULATIONS:

Total Area of Grading = 2.6 Ac

Total Existing Impervious = 0 Square Feet

Total New Impervious = 90,000 Square Feet (includes Culver's lot, right-in lane, and new portion of north-south loop road)

WATER QUALITY VOLUME REQUIRED = (1")(1'/12")(90,000 SF) = 7500 CF

SOIL TYPES:

Majority A Soils (Web Soil Survey)

CONSTRUCTION SEQUENCE:

Construction to begin spring 2025. Silt fence around where specified and Rock entrances to be installed before any of the following scheduled events take place. Existing structures shall also be protected from sediment from the start of construction.

1. Grading
2. Install Utilities
3. Roadway Construction
4. Infiltration basin(s) constructed
5. Landscaping and Turf Restoration

Construction completion expected Fall 2025. All temporary erosion control measures will be removed and disposed of according to MPCA requirements. Final stabilization will be established.

If construction is not completed before winter, stockpiles and any slopes must be stabilized with appropriate BMPs (mulch, seed, erosion control blanket) as applicable to avoid erosion in the following spring season.

See NPDES CWS Permit Part 11 for inspection frequency adjustments throughout the course of scheduled construction.

IMPAIRED AND SPECIAL WATERS

The Sunrise River is within one mile of discharge point, and has impairments for the following: Fecal Coliform, Fishes Bioassessments, Mercury in Fish Tissue.

KARST AREA PROTECTION:

This area is not considered Karst area.

CALCAREOUS FENS:

No calcareous Fen sites exist on this project.

MITIGATION DUE TO REVIEWS:

There are no stormwater mitigation measures proposed as part of environmental, endangered species, archaeological or other required local, state or federal reviews conducted for the project.

EROSION CONTROL QUANTITIES:

EROSION CONTROL QUANTITIES		
	UNIT	QUANTITY
SILT FENCE	EACH	2000
TEMP. CONSTRUCTION EXIT	EACH	1
SEED	ACRE	2.6
MULCH	TON	5.2

APPLICATION RATES:

SEED TYPE 25-151 @ 120 LB/AC

MULCH TYPE 1 @ 2 TON/AC

[illegible]

2. MULCH TYPE 1 (DISK ANCHORED) IN DISTURBED AREAS
3. SEED MNDOT TYPE 35-221, AT A RATE OF 36.5 LB/AC
4. ALL SLOPES STEEPER THAN 4:1, SHALL BE RESTORED WITH SEED AND PROTECTED WITH EROSION CONTROL BLANKET PER MNDOT SPEC. 3885.1 OR SODDED AND STAKED.

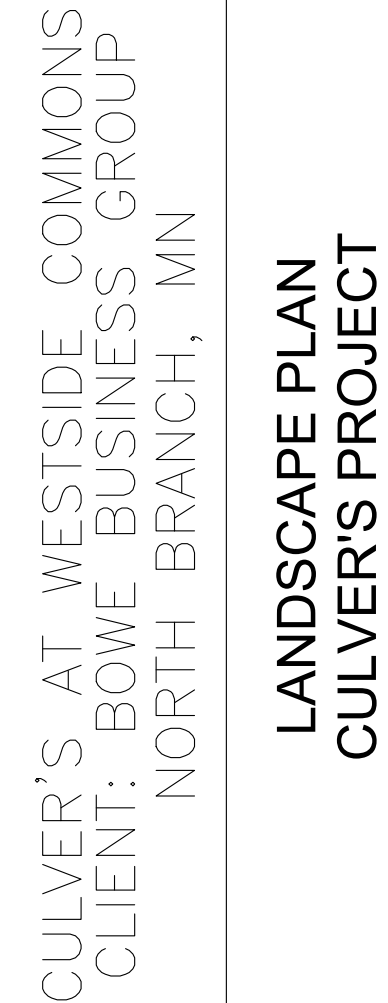
MINIMUM SIZE OF PLANTINGS
OVERSTORY DECIDUOUS: 2" CALIPER
CONIFEROUS: 6FT IN HEIGHT
ORNAMENTAL TREES: 1.5" CALIPER

TOTAL TREE REQUIREMENT = ONE TREE PER 1000 SF OF BUILDING FLOOR AREA
= 4352 / 1000 = 5 TREES

ORNAMENTAL TREE = 25% = $5 \times 0.25 = 1$

TREE PLANTING NOTES
1. TREE LOCATION SUBJECT TO CHANGE TO AVOID UTILITY CONFLICT.

*TWO ORNAMENTAL TREES COUNT AS ONE TREE

A horizontal graphic scale bar. It is divided into three main sections. The first section, from 0 to 50 feet, is further divided into alternating black and white squares. The second section, from 50 to 100 feet, is a solid black bar. The word "SCALE" is written below the 0 mark, and "FEET" is written below the 100 mark.

C14



Prepared By: Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director

Presenter: Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director

Date: 05/27/2025

Board & Commission: Planning Commission

Subject: Zoning Code Items

City staff have identified a few items through review and implementation of the city zoning code that they would like to begin to discuss with the commission and to possibly obtain direction to move forward to hold a public hearing or obtain additional information on these items. City staff will provide additional information prior to the meeting.

- **Corner fence setback**

Fence setbacks for corner lots have to follow City Code Section 66-973(o) where the fence cannot be placed within a vision triangle from the Right-Of-Way which is currently 30 feet in both directions from a corner property pin. This significantly reduces the amount of yard space for corner lots (450 square feet). Staff believes that this 30 foot setback can be reduced while still providing adequate vision for vehicles on roadways. Staff is intending to research other communities and safe setback guidelines for corner lot fencing. City Code Section 66-973(o) is described below:

(o) No fence, wall, shrubbery or other obstruction shall be permitted within the triangular area formed at the intersection of any street right-of-way lines by a straight line drawn between said right-of-way lines at a distance along each line of thirty (30) feet from their point of intersection.

- **Accessory Structure Setback from buildings**

Setbacks for accessory structures from buildings are currently set at 10 feet. The term “accessory structure” includes sheds, detached garages, pergolas, carports, etc. With these ten foot setbacks in place, it is becoming difficult for homeowners to find places in their yards for accessory

structures due to smaller lot sizes and following other accessory structure regulations such as not placing the structure in an easement. City staff is looking to reduce the 10 foot setback to line up with building code separation standards of 3 feet. City Code Section 66-898(2) is described below:

(2) An accessory building must be located at least ten feet from any other buildings on the same lot, including other accessory buildings.

- **Shipping Containers**

Shipping containers are currently not allowed in the City in any zoning district. However, staff has seen several instances where shipping containers will be placed on properties. Staff is willing to allow shipping containers within certain areas in the city or by zoning district. Further research will be conducted to see how surrounding communities handle shipping containers in their city code.

CBD Building Setbacks

- **Single Family Homes and Accessory Structures**

A new home build within the Central Business District was applied for and during the review process, it was apparent that the new home would be able to be placed directly on property lines (zero lot lines) and the detached garage would have to follow accessory structure setbacks since it is not connected to the principal structure. The Central Business District is not a listed zoning district within the accessory structure setback chart. Staff is looking to make new setbacks for this district to include in the chart to clear up confusion.

Setbacks are described in Section 66-898(d) of city code.

(d) *Setbacks.* All accessory buildings shall meet the following minimum setbacks.

Zoning District	Front Yard	Rear Yard	Side Yard	Corner Yard	Sidewall Heights > 14'
R1, R2, R3, R4	30	6	6	30	10
RR, AG1, AG2	40	10	10	40	10
Commercial	15	15	15	15	15
Industrial	20	20	20	20	20

- **Home Occupations**

- **Interim vs CUP vs Admin and Residential vs Business Licenses**

There have been several requests for home occupations and the city code is not clear about types of home occupations and what has to be brought to a Planning Commission meeting for their

review. Staff is looking for clarity on what types of home occupations would need to be brought up at a planning commission meeting and whether to consider these as Interim Use Permits or CUP's where they would need permission to operate after a certain time frame.

- **Kennel License**

City staff has reviewed the Kennel License section of City Code after a permit was applied for earlier this year. Staff has received several complaints from surrounding neighbors of this particular kennel mostly regarding noise, conditions of kennels, and non-fenced roaming areas. The Kennel License requirements are intended to be researched further of whether these would be more restrictive. There is also confusion whether these should be brought to the Planning Commission for approval (similar to a CUP) and whether staff can impose other conditions of approval to avoid excessive complaints from neighboring property owners. Some of the requirements for Kennels do not clearly distinguish if they apply to personal kennels or commercial kennels. Requirements may need to be kept separated as commercial kennels are usually more restrictive.

Kennel License regulations can be found in Chapter 6 Section 6-40 of City Code.

- **Sign Code**

City staff has found the sign code to be restrictive in certain instances when looking at sign permits and their locations. Currently freestanding signs must be placed outside of the vision triangle of 30 feet in both directions from corner property pins (similar to fences on corner lots). There is limited area on commercial properties where a sign can be located, and many times a corner of a property is one of the only places to put a sign when considering parking areas and limited green spaces on a site. Staff would look to change the 30 foot vision triangle requirement and also point out other findings in the sign code.

The sign regulations can be found in Chapter 66 Article VI of City Code.

- **Design Standards**

Design standards for buildings in certain zoning districts have been restrictive to builders and staff has found these standards to be outdated. Building materials have changed drastically from the time of adoption of the code and oftentimes are not included in the permitted materials. Staff is planning to change permitted materials or allow in certain zones to be more lenient for material types.

- **Commercial Vehicle Parking in residential districts**
- **Low Floor Elevation vs Low Floor Opening**
- **Maximum Impervious Surface Areas**

Voting Requirements:

Voting Options Simple Majority



Prepared By: Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director

Presenter: Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director

Date: 05/27/2025

Board & Commission: Planning Commission

Subject: Comprehensive Plan Update

The City Council discussed the roll-out of the Comprehensive Plan Update at their meeting on April 29, 2025.

The Council is looking for discussion and input from the commission on Comprehensive Plan from the Planning Commission as it relates to Landuse, Housing and Transportation.

The City Council will be holding a public input meeting on Tuesday June 17 and Tuesday July 15

Voting Requirements:

Voting Options Simple Majority



City of North Branch 2025 Comprehensive Plan Review

Agenda

Introduction

Building the team

Engaging the community

Comprehensive Plan Review

Final tips & takeaways



Overview

North Branch Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2018 with a purpose of serving as a vision and roadmap for where the community is headed.

Our goal is to review the Plan and discuss potential revisions, ensuring community understanding and buy-in.



2018

The intension of the plan was to be used in day-to-day activities by City Staff, City Council, and other Commissions and Stakeholders to help form important policy decisions such as...

Infrastructure and development

Capital improvements

Zoning and regulatory changes

And communicating a consistent vision.

2018

The current plan was initiated and completed in 2018 using valuable input from the community.

A series of four community meetings

In-person and on-line surveys

Public Meetings of the Planning, Economic Development Authority, and Parks/Trails/Open Space Commissions, and the City Council.

Comments were received via the project website, emails, and social media outlets.

Vision

North Branch is a growing and safe community with outstanding natural and recreational amenities and opportunities for all, and well-maintained infrastructure, vibrant business districts and neighborhoods, and provides residents with an excellent quality of life.



Building the Team

Co-Chairs – To provide direction and be a conduit of information to the rest of the team.

- ♦ Kevin Schieber, Mayor
- ♦ Matthew Hill, City Administrator

Update Coordinating Team – too be determined

- ♦ City Staff
- ♦ City Council Members
- ♦ Planning Commissioners
- ♦ EDA Commissioners
- ♦ Parks, Trails, and Open Space Commissioners
- ♦ North Branch Area Public Schools
- ♦ North Branch Area Chamber of Commerce
- ♦ Residents!

Calendar/Goals

May – Request input from Council, Commissions, and Community Organizations

May 5 – PTOS Committee

May 6 – Planning Commission

May 13 – North Branch Chamber of Commerce

May 20 – Economic Development Authority Commission

May 20 – City Council Special Meeting including request to residents for their input with invitation for first of two community meetings to gather general input on June 17



Needs assessment of current Comprehensive Plan



Vision and Values – has anything changed that requires the City to add or change?

Land Use – Do the existing land use ordinances and zoning maps need to be altered or adjusted to meet the current and future needs?

Housing – Does the current housing plans for maintaining and developing quality future housing stock still hold true?

Economic Development – Has the economic climate changed creating new opportunities for economic growth and redevelopment in areas of the City?

Needs assessment of current Comprehensive Plan



NORTH BRANCH



Transportation – Does the existing and future improvements noted in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan still meet the needs of the Community?

Utilities – Review of the current improvement plans and confirm that it meets the needs of both housing and industrial growth.

Natural Environment, Parks, Trails, and Recreation – Make sure that the trail connections and being met to connect the new housing development and have plans available for new and future park dedication fees.

Needs assessment of current Comprehensive Plan



Staff, Council and Commissioners have identified the following areas within the Comprehensive Plan that need updates

- **Land Use** – Zoning, Urban Service Area, Ordinance Updates.
- **Business Development** – Identify new ways of supporting existing businesses and new industry with guidance, direction, and financial support.
- **Municipal Utilities** – Assure that our long term plans can accommodate the expected growth of the Community.
- **Public Safety** – Possibility of adding an outline of the Community's vision and goals for addressing safety concerns, including road and pedestrian safety, emergency response, and crime prevention.

Next Steps



- **August and September** - The Update Coordinating Team will gather the input provided and work together to provide guidance to the City Council on a proposal of needed changes.
- ♦ **June and July** - Commissions, Council, School and Chamber Boards, and Residents will provide the Advisory Committee with their thoughts on the current plan and requests for change at their meetings in June and July. The City will provide two community gatherings to review the current plan and ask for feedback, one on June 17 at City Hall and one on July 15 at the North Branch Public Library.

THANK YOU!

- ♦ The City of North Branch looks forward to hearing from you!



NORTH BRANCH

— *Minnesota* —

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2018



NORTH BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Natural Environment, Parks,
Trails, And Recreation

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to serve as a vision and roadmap for where the community is headed.



1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to serve as a vision and roadmap for where the community is headed. The ideas and goals expressed in this plan are intended to be a reflection of the community's values and the desire for what North Branch is to become. Each chapter of the Comprehensive Plan provides the "big picture" of several important topics that are intertwined and have an impact on quality of life in North Branch.

It is the intention that this plan will be used on a day-to-day basis by city staff, the City Council, and other commissions and stakeholders to help inform important policy decisions, such as decisions involving infrastructure and development, the acquisition and sale of public land, capital improvements, zoning and regulatory changes, and communicating a consistent vision. It is anticipated that residents may use the plan to determine property use, understand decisions made by the City, and make improvements to property in a manner consistent with the plan. Developers may use the plan as a way to make decisions based on the goals and identified improvements.

The city of North Branch was formed in 1994 from the consolidated cities of Branch and North Branch. Shortly after consolidation, the city undertook a comprehensive planning process. Resulting from that process was the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 1995 for the consolidated city of North Branch comprised of 36 square miles in Chisago County, Minnesota. The plan was updated in 2003 and again in 2009. The comprehensive plan approach is intended to cover approximately a 10 - 20 year time period and may be amended and updated from time to time as conditions change. Time has passed and current growth and development necessitated a comprehensive update to the plan.

Planning Process

This Comprehensive Plan update was initiated and completed in 2018. Valuable input was gathered from those in the community through a series of four community cafes, in person and on-line surveys, and various public meetings conducted by the Planning Commission, Economic Development Authority (EDA), Parks Trails and Open Spaces (PTOS), and the City Council. A booth was held at the community's Expo and Job Fair event in April 2018, and a survey was administered to 7th and 8th graders at the North Branch Middle School as a way to gather input from younger stakeholders with regard to the city's parks and amenities.

As the plan evolved, drafts were available on the city's website and were presented and commented on at Planning Commission, PTOS, EDA and/or City Council meetings. Comments were also received via the project website, emails, and through the project Social Pinpoint page. The plan was reviewed by both the Planning Commission and City Council at their respective regular meetings in August, 2018. A public hearing was held before the Planning Commission on September 20, 2018, and adopted by the City Council on October 23, 2018.

Organization of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan provides a “big picture” look at several important areas that have an impact on quality of life for North Branch. The Comprehensive Plan covers the following chapters:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of what the Comprehensive Plan is and its purpose. It discusses the process for developing the plan and how it is organized.

CHAPTER 2: VISION AND VALUES

This chapter outlines the vision and values for the community that is intended to be expressed through all other chapters.

CHAPTER 3: LAND USE

This chapter establishes an existing and future land use for all property in the City. It also identifies future growth areas.

CHAPTER 4: HOUSING

This chapter provides an overview of existing housing conditions and a plan for maintaining and developing a quality future housing stock.

CHAPTER 5: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This chapter provides an analysis of the existing economic climate and opportunities for economic growth and redevelopment areas.

CHAPTER 6: TRANSPORTATION

This chapter analyzes the existing transportation system and future improvements, mostly as it relates to auto-oriented transportation. Non-motorized transportation is discussed further in Chapter 8: Natural Environment, Parks, Trails, and Recreation.

CHAPTER 7: UTILITIES

This chapter examines the existing system and future improvements to public utilities as it relates to the water, wastewater, and stormwater systems.

CHAPTER 8: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION

This chapter examines the city’s natural resources, including open space and natural habitats, existing park and trail system, as well as recreational opportunities and establishes planning criteria, guidelines and standards for protecting the natural environments and future development of various amenities.



Implementing the Plan

Summary of Land Use Implementation Strategies

The North Branch Comprehensive Plan is a flexible document working to the advantage of the community. The Plan Goals and Objectives should be reviewed every three years ensuring relevancy to current conditions and priorities. The Planning Agency should advocate use of the plan, review various projects for consistency with the Plan, and advise the City Council in matters related to implementation. In addition, any projects implemented should detail a timeline and have a funded budget. The Plan encourages interaction with governmental agencies, non-profits, and local citizens. Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs) shall be reviewed and updated annually.

Summary of Non-Land Use Implementation Strategies

North Branch, like most cities having faced financial difficulties, faces a number of challenges towards expanding affordable housing, replacing aging infrastructure and attracting new development and administrators to involve a variety of organizations. Additional difficulties include finding funding sources to address those issues over time and seeking to provide maximum flexibility in the planning and timing of needed public improvements. The Plan recognizes that North Branch has limited financial resources and vast human resources. The citizens of North Branch, through their involvement with government and various civic and charitable organizations, will be a key component of the actions necessary to implement the Comprehensive Plan. The City should involve other City Boards and Commissions, volunteer groups, local non-profit organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, and other governmental agencies in planning and funding these future projects.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2018 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE COORDINATING TEAM

Carla Vita
Nate Sondrol
Ragini Varma
Renae Fry
Shawn Williams

CONSULTANTS

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SPECIAL THANKS TO 2018 CITY COUNCIL:

Mayor Kirsten Hagen-Kennedy
City Councilmembers:
Bob Canada
Jim Swenson
Kathy Blomquist
Kelly Neider

2018 PLANNING COMMISSION

MacKenzie Guptil, Chair
Brian Voss
Gary Schaefer
Joel McPherson
Laurie Warner

2018 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Lorraine Moeller, Chair
Bob Streater
Brad Larson
Chuck Sinn
Dennis Johnson
Kathy Blomquist
Kirsten Hagen-Kennedy

2018 PARKS, TRAILS, & OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

John Pantelis, Chair
Beth Thorp
Bob Bernier
Jaime Souza
Robert Walz

AND AN EXTRA SPECIAL THANKS TO BRIAN VOSS FOR HIS FANTASTIC PHOTOS AND TO ALL OF THE RESIDENTS, STUDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN COMMUNITY SURVEYS, ATTENDED COMMUNITY CAFES, AND PROVIDED VALUABLE INPUT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE, OUR SUPPORTERS AND TO THE TEAM THAT HELPED GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN INPUT SESSIONS, INCLUDING THE NORTH BRANCH DOMINOS AND THE NORTH BRANCH AREA CHAMBER.

2

VALUES AND VISION

Values

Residents and other stakeholders were asked what they loved about North Branch at the Community Expo, at a chamber meeting, and at the first community café. The values expressed most often were:

THE STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY

A HOME TOWN FEEL

THE CITY'S COMMITMENT TO ITS PARKS AND TRAILS

A COMMUNITY THAT ENCOURAGES BIKING AND WALKING

QUALITY SCHOOLS

These values were reiterated at each of the other three community cafes and served as the foundation for the vision statements expressed below.

Vision for North Branch in 10 years

North Branch is a growing and safe community with outstanding natural and recreational amenities and opportunities for all, and well maintained infrastructure, vibrant business districts and neighborhoods, and provides residents with an excellent quality of life.

Vision for Land Use

The City of North Branch is a complete community that provides a well-balanced and wide range of places to live, work, shop and play. Land uses make efficient use of existing infrastructure, contribute to a strong local economy, preserve natural resources and contribute to a high quality of life.

Residential Uses

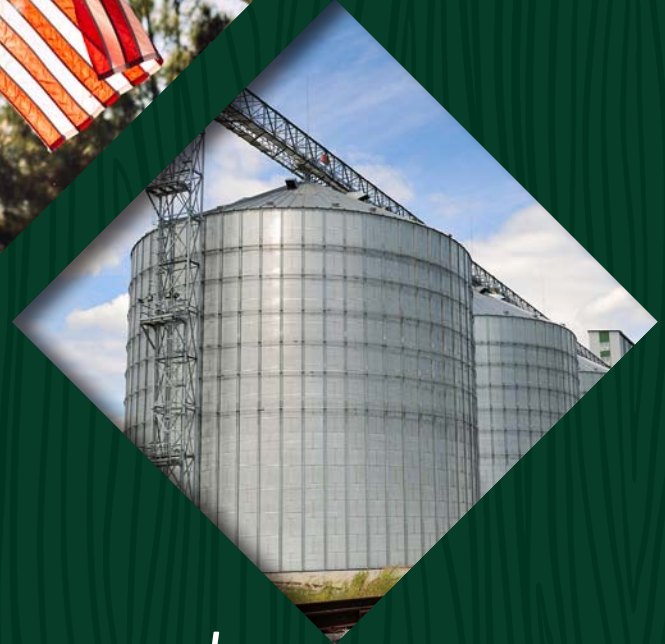
A diverse housing stock allows people at any stage in their life to be able to find a home in North Branch. Older housing is well maintained while new development expands housing options to complement existing neighborhoods.

Commercial and Industrial Uses

A significant amount of commercial and industrial uses can be found within the City that allow residents to work in North Branch, while also being able to meet all of their day-to-day needs. Commercial and industrial uses are compatible with their surrounding land uses.

Public/Institutional

Public and institutional uses are viewed as valued resources to the community and contribute to making North Branch a better place to live and do business.



North Branch is a growing and safe community with outstanding natural and recreational amenities and opportunities for all, and well maintained infrastructure, vibrant business districts and neighborhoods, and provides residents with an excellent quality of life.

Parks, Open Spaces and Trails

Quality parks and open space are within close proximity to all residents, providing recreational opportunities to encourage an active lifestyle. A wide variety of community facilities are provided to serve a range of interests. The City of North Branch has a proposed trail system that will allow bicycle and pedestrian access to most of the major pedestrian generators within the city, including schools, shopping areas, and parks. Many of the proposed trails are destinations in themselves, offering scenic walks or rides around many of the city's scenic views. With recreational activities such as running, bicycling, and walking increasing in popularity, the city's trail system will not only offer a recreational opportunity in itself, but will also help to connect the community's parks with the neighborhoods.

Vision for Economic Development

A strong business community is the cornerstone of a vibrant city. Economic development encompasses the policies and activities that improve the long term economic and social wellbeing of the community. Communities with strong economies have financial resources to support the levels of service that their residents need and desire. Successful communities realize that economic development is about bringing together social, natural, infrastructure, and economic assets in the community to sustain the "whole" community.

Vision for Municipal Utilities

The City of North Branch, individually and in collaboration with the North Branch Water & Light Utility, has a significant investment in its existing public utilities systems (water, wastewater and stormwater). The continued expansion and development within the Urban Service Area will require the extension of public utilities. In general, the existing infrastructure system is well-positioned and of adequate size to support expansion. However, coordination will be required between community development and the required expansion of the utility system. In some cases, the cost of providing utility service may dictate where and when future growth will occur.

Vision for Transportation

North Branch is located at the cross roads of I35 and TH95, providing for ease in and out of the city. Within the city limits, however, these features will require a coordinated approach to providing movement of traffic through the city to local destinations, safe pedestrian and bike corridors, and improved intersections to safely serve the increasing number of commercial vehicles passing through North Branch.

Vision for the Environment and Sustainability

Natural infrastructure includes all systems that relate to natural resources and contribute to an improved public life. Natural infrastructure considers the full range of natural resource uses including economic, environmental, health, cultural, and aesthetic. This broad view leads us to include surface water, groundwater, stormwater, wastewater, drinking water, geology, topography, soils, natural areas, open space, green spaces, urban forest, habitat, vegetation, scenic views, and parks and trails in natural infrastructure.

Natural infrastructure is a key element in planning where development should or should not take place within a city. This element is important to communities and development as it avoids certain development hazards, provides health benefits to citizens, protects ecological systems and enhances biological diversity, and offers communities unique quality of life components. Consideration of natural infrastructure ensures that homes are built upon stable dry soils, provides clean drinking water, accounts for resource based economic activities, provides scenic views and open spaces, and plans development that respect the integrity of natural systems and incorporate natural features into development.

Minnesota GreenStep City

In 2018, the Mayor and City Council approved a resolution to make North Branch a GreenStep City through the MPCA and League of Minnesota Cities' program. Minnesota GreenStep Cities is a voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program to help cities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals. This free continuous improvement program, managed by a public-private partnership, is based upon 29 best practices. Each best practice can be implemented by completing one or more actions at a 1, 2 or 3-star level, from a list of four to eight actions. These actions are tailored to all Minnesota cities, focus on cost savings and energy use reduction, and encourage civic innovation. North Branch is currently a Step 1 City. As North Branch plans for the future, it will continue to consider GreenStep City Best Management Practices as they relate to the goals and objectives of this comprehensive plan.



3

LAND USE & GROWTH

Introduction

The Land Use & Growth Management Chapter is a roadmap that helps guide City officials and staff on how to make policy decisions related to land use and future growth. These policies may influence the type, location and density of future development within the community. This chapter is intended to result in orderly and efficient development that utilizes land efficiently and makes the most of the community's resources. It offers guidance on key initiatives for the community which is consistent with the City's vision and goals.

In this chapter is a description of existing land use patterns, as well as an overview of how the City anticipates land will be used and developed in the future. It accommodates growth and applies the desired qualities of the community.

Another important aspect of this chapter is that it also serves as the foundation for reviewing the City's Zoning Ordinances, Zoning Map, Subdivision Regulations and other implementation tools. Implementation of the Land Use Plan produces several important implications:

USES

Every parcel is placed into a specific land use category. Each category includes a description of the type of land use or uses intended for that category. This description should match with the types and forms of development currently found in North Branch and desired for the future.

RELATIONSHIPS

Much like a jigsaw puzzle, the true picture comes from how each piece fits together into a whole. The Land Use Plan guides how elements of the built and natural environment come together in North Branch. These relationships will determine how North Branch will look, function and feel.

ACTIONS

The Land Use Plan sets the framework for public actions and investments. Utilities, streets, parks, and facilities are all influenced by the form and pace of development.

Figure 3-1: Existing Land Use

Identifies the location, amount, and types of existing land uses in the City of North Branch in 2018. The inventory as conducted as part of this planning process reflects general development patterns and is intended for general planning purposes only.

*The City of North Branch is
a complete community that
provides a well-balanced and
wide range of places to live,
work, shop and play.*

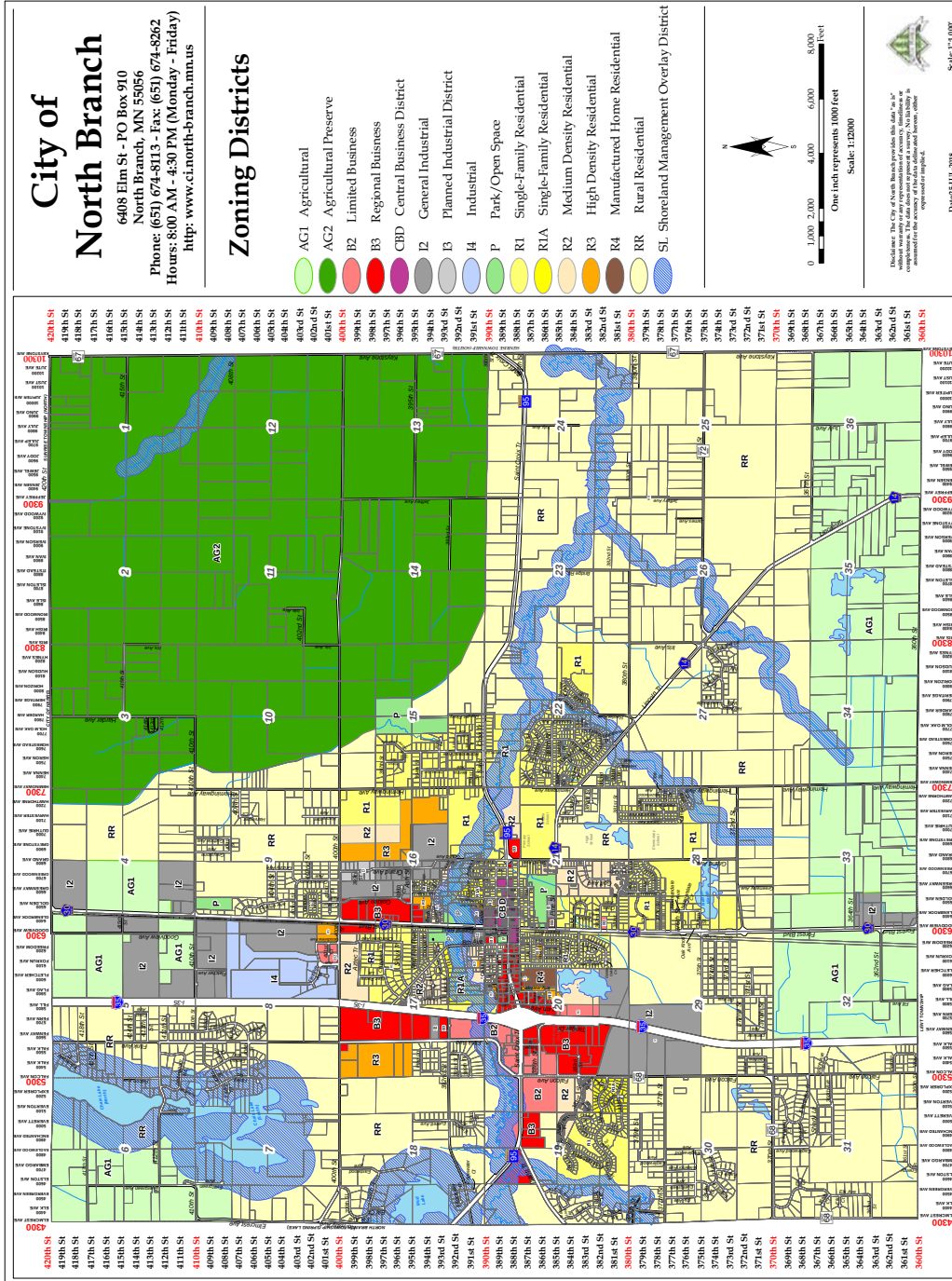


Table 3-A: Summary of Existing Land Use - 2018 summarizes the amount and type of existing land uses designated (whether or not fully developed) in North Branch.

Table 3 – A: Summary of Existing Zoning 2018		
<i>Existing Land Use Designation</i>	<i>Gross Acres*</i>	<i>Net Percent of City</i>
<i>Agriculture (AG1 and AG2)</i>	<i>8,680.2</i>	<i>37.6%</i>
<i>Rural Residential (RR)</i>	<i>9,961</i>	<i>43%</i>
<i>Low Density Residential (R1 and R1A)</i>	<i>1,869.7</i>	<i>8.1%</i>
<i>Medium Density Residential (R2)</i>	<i>403.4</i>	<i>1.7%</i>
<i>High Density Residential (R3)</i>	<i>216.6</i>	<i>.9%</i>
<i>Manufactured Home Residential (R4)</i>	<i>27.2</i>	<i>.11%</i>
<i>Central Business District (CBD)</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>.18%</i>
<i>Limited Business District (B2)</i>	<i>214.8</i>	<i>.9%</i>
<i>Regional Business District (B3)</i>	<i>437.3</i>	<i>1.9%</i>
<i>General Industrial District (I2)</i>	<i>858.1</i>	<i>3.7%</i>
<i>Planned Industrial District (I3)</i>	<i>21.6</i>	<i>.09%</i>
<i>Industrial District (I4)</i>	<i>158.6</i>	<i>.7%</i>

*Gross acres of use determined by GIS mapping data.

Figure 3-1:
Existing Zoning



Existing Zoning

Agriculture (AG1 and AG2)

Over one-third of the city's land area (37.6%) is currently used for agricultural purposes. Housing densities are low, and this zoning is characterized by active farms, hobby farms and homes on large lots. The northeast corner of the city is the historic river bottom of the St. Croix River and is framed by the historic river bluff line. Soils are well suited for sod farming and the production of produce. By maintaining a low density of development, it is the City's intent to preserve and protect the many natural resources found in this part of North Branch, including lakes, streams, wetlands and woodlands.

Rural Residential (RR)

Rural Residential makes up 9,961 acres or 43% of the total acreage in the City of North Branch. This land use is largely characterized by single family residences set on larger lot sizes to accommodate on-site sewage treatment systems. Some of these areas are located within the city's designated Urban Service Area and no new development is allowed within this zoning district without connecting to municipal services. Areas located outside of the Urban Service Area must meet a minimum buildable acre standard so as to ensure that there is sufficient land area with the appropriate soil separation to support both a primary and a future secondary on-site sewage treatment system.

Low Density Residential (R1 and R1A)

Low Density Residential makes up 1,869.7 acres or 8.1% of the total acreage in the City of North Branch. This land use is largely characterized by single-family homes with densities of 1 to 4 dwelling units per acre in those areas served by municipal utilities. Older areas of the city were platted before municipal utilities were established, resulting in larger lot sizes to accommodate on-site sewage treatment systems. The city has a limited inventory of older, historic homes that are located primarily in the one square mile area that had been the original city of North Branch. The areas around the historic center feature homes built approximately 50 years ago, with new development happening neighborhood by neighborhood since that time. 2017 marked the start of a new housing boom with new single family homes being constructed on existing lot inventory and multiple developments platted for the purpose of constructing even more single family homes. The new development that is planned or in process as of the writing of this plan is intended to provide the city with a more diverse mix of housing styles and at a wider range of price points.

Medium Density Residential (R2)

Medium Density Residential makes up 403.4 acres or 1.7% of the total acreage in the City of North Branch. Medium Density Residential is characterized by single family homes on smaller lots that required for R1, townhome style development, and two-family attached homes densities of 1 to 6 dwelling units per acre.

High Density Residential (R3)

High Density Residential makes up 216.6 acres or .9% of the total acreage in the City of North Branch. High Density Residential is characterized by land use that consists of all forms of multi-family attached housing units such as two-family attached homes, townhomes and apartment buildings.

High density residential has densities of up to 18 dwelling units per acre.

Manufactured Home Residential (R4)

The Manufactured Home Residential zoning classification only exists for the benefit of the four established manufactured home parks. It currently makes up 27.2 acres or .1% of the total acreage in the City of North Branch. Changes in Minnesota laws now allow manufactured homes in any zoning district that allows twin homes, subject to all applicable lot standards, such as lot size, frontage, road widths, etc. The new land use map and updates to the zoning map will include areas previously zoned at R4 within either an R2 or R3 zoning class.

Central Business District (CBD)

The Central Business District is a unique classification intended to provide for a planned, unified development of the City's historical downtown area. This zoning classification makes up 43 acres or .18% of the total acreage in the City of North Branch. Permitted uses include service based businesses, office uses, retail uses, apartments and hotel uses, among other things, in close proximity to one another to promote pedestrian movement between businesses. The area offers a mix of street and lot parking, with the parking lots being located behind buildings at various locations throughout the district. The existing land use is primarily commercial buildings, many of which are vacant and in need of rehabilitation. The area is dotted with existing single family homes which were intended to be phased out of use and converted to commercial uses over time. The area is adjacent to TH95, with sidewalks that provide pedestrian passage, but pedestrian movement across TH95 is difficult and poses a significant challenge to the goal of this area being an inviting public space offering a "range of retail and civic experiences" as hoped by the authors of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

Limited Business District (B2)

The Limited Business District makes up 214.8 acres or .9% of the total acreage in the City of North Branch. This land use is characterized by business uses and services, lodging, and retail that are also permitted in the CBD, but that are dependent on automobile traffic. Additionally, the area is intended to serve as a transition zone between the CBD and the Regional Business District (B3).

Regional Business District (B3)

The Regional Business District makes up 437.3 acres or 1.9% of the total acreage in the City of North Branch. This land use is characterized by business uses and services, lodging, and retail that are also permitted in the CBD and B2, but also provide for the location of commercial activities that serve primarily regional or nonlocal market. The lot sizes are larger so as to provide the area needed for retail and commercial activities that require very large buildings.

Light Industrial/Office District (I1)

The Light Industrial/Office District is defined as a region characterized by office, manufacturing and warehousing uses, but currently no part of the city is zoned for this use.

General Industrial District (I2)

The General Industrial District makes up 858.1 acres or 3.7% of the total acreage in the City of North Branch. This land use is characterized by manufacturing, assembly, warehousing, storage, showrooms and contractor shops.

Planned Industrial District (I3)

The Planned Industrial District is similar to I1, and makes up 21.6 acres or .09% of the total acreage in the city.

Industrial District (I4)

The Industrial District makes up 158.6 acres or .7% of the total acreage in the City of North Branch. This land use is characterized by manufacturing, assembly, warehousing, storage, showrooms and contractor shops as can be found in I2, but its location adjacent to I35 makes this area highly visible and is subject to stricter design standards. Currently, over 200 acres in the I2 and I4 zoning classifications are vacant but ready for development in the industrial park owned by the City through its Economic Development Authority.

Overlay Districts

Sensitive areas, such as those adjacent to bodies of water or within a designated flood plain or flood fringe are managed by the City in accordance with applicable Minnesota Statutes. Setbacks, design standards and other restrictions on use within the overlay district are imposed so as to limit ecological impact and loss.

Analysis of Existing Land Use

With over 36 square miles of land, an analysis of the existing land use illustrates several important issues about current and future development:

The largest land use category in terms of area in the City is agriculture. Followed by the rural residential land use category. It is anticipated that the agricultural areas will continue to be used for agricultural production due to its geologic characteristics and the community's desire to support its rich agricultural heritage and industry. The rural residential areas, which are served by private wells and septic systems, will also have agricultural or hobby farm uses. The total land areas for these two uses will not likely change, but development within these areas will occur at a much slower pace than the low density residential uses served by municipal utilities.

The second largest residential land use category is low density residential. It is anticipated that expanded development within this zoning classification will continue to grow throughout the life of this plan, resulting in greater intensity of the use without increasing the overall land area designated for this use. The three primary residential categories (R1 and R2) account for 9.8% of the total land use in the City.

The Central Business District is characterized by a development style common among other older downtowns. It is pedestrian oriented in nature with buildings built to the sidewalk. Parking for these uses is typically on street, in the rear of buildings, or shared among several users. The transition from residential uses to commercial uses did not occur as anticipated when the zoning district was created. There are numerous vacant buildings and the area is ripe for redevelopment.

The City, through its Economic Development Authority, owns over 200 acres of land zoned for industrial uses. Until this land is sold and developed, no additional industrial zoned land is needed within the Urban Service Area. If the city were to allow for heavy industrial uses, consideration should be given for compatibility with adjacent land uses. Controls should be in place that protect against negative impacts to neighboring property.

The nation's third largest solar farm is partially located within the City's limits. Other smaller solar installations are located entirely within the City. The solar installations feature native plantings intended to re-establish prairie habitat and support pollinator species, such as the Monarch butterfly.

The City benefits from existing park facilities, trails and open spaces. Approximately .6% of the total acreage in the City of North Branch is utilized as city owned park and open space uses. The City is also home to the Janet Johnson WMA, owned and managed by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail and other city sidewalks and trails serve the city's goal of being walkable and bikeable, but it is the goal of the city to expand those opportunities and consideration should be given to identify areas for preservation for these purposes.

There are significant residential development opportunities in the northwest portion of the city. Large tracts of land are currently undeveloped and the opportunity exists to establish traffic corridors without the need for redevelopment.

Vision for Land Use

The City of North Branch is a complete community that provides a well-balanced and wide range of places to live, work, shop and play. Land uses make efficient use of existing infrastructure, contribute to a strong local economy, preserve natural resources and contribute to a high quality of life.

RESIDENTIAL USES

A diverse housing stock allows people at any stage in their life to be able to find a home in North Branch, which may include housing options suitable to multigenerational households. Older housing is well maintained while new development expands housing options to complement existing neighborhoods.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL USES

A significant amount of commercial and industrial uses can be found within the City that allow residents to work in North Branch, while also being able to meet all of their day-to-day needs. Commercial and industrial uses are compatible with their surrounding land uses.

PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL

Public and institutional uses are viewed as valued resources to the community and contribute to making North Branch a better place to live and do business.

PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND TRAILS

Quality parks and open space are within close proximity to all residents, providing recreational opportunities to encourage an active lifestyle. A wide variety of community facilities are provided to serve a range of interests. The City of North Branch has a proposed trail system that will allow bicycle and pedestrian access to most of the major pedestrian generators within the city, including schools, shopping areas, and parks. Many of the proposed trails are destinations in themselves, offering scenic walks or rides around many of the city's scenic views. With recreational activities such as running, bicycling, and walking increasing in popularity, the city's trail system will not only offer a recreational opportunity in itself, but will also help to connect the community's parks with the neighborhoods.

GOAL 1

Maximize the use of land within the City of North Branch in a way that strengthens the local economy, preserves natural resources, and ensures a high-quality of life for all residents.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following is the primary goal for land use followed by a series of objectives and policies intended to influence future land use decisions in a direction that is aligned with the Vision Statement.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE SMALL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT OF THE DOWNTOWN.

Policy 1.1.1

Encourage and promote the renovation and rehabilitation of existing buildings within the downtown.

Policy 1.1.2

Connect businesses with façade improvement grants and loans.

Policy 1.1.3

Make infrastructure improvements that enhance the pedestrian realm such as lighting and seating and gathering places for community activities.

OBJECTIVE 1.2

USE LAND IN A MANNER THAT STRENGTHENS THE ECONOMY OF NORTH BRANCH.

Policy 1.2.1

Strive for a balance of areas guided for industrial uses and areas guided for commercial uses.

Policy 1.2.2

Continue to identify all areas prime for redevelopment and analyze the best use for each property. Work to re-zone these properties and amend this plan as appropriate.

Policy 1.2.3

Increase the number of residential housing units in the City to attract new residents to increase the workforce and thereby improve the local market for commercial and industrial opportunities.

Policy 1.2.4

Actively work to infill vacant land within the Urban Service Area that will be connected to municipal services, while preserving a network of functional ecologic areas.



Policy 1.2.5

Allow for mixed uses within some zoning districts to accommodate commercial, retail and residential uses.

Policy 1.2.6

Discourage “leapfrog” patterns of development on municipal utilities.

OBJECTIVE 1.3

PROTECT AND PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES FOR LONG TERM ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENJOYMENT OF RESIDENTS.

Policy 1.3.1

Work with landowners and other governmental entities to either obtain property or ensure protection of natural areas with high ecological value.

Policy 1.3.2

Discourage patterns of development that would stress existing infrastructure and ecosystems.

OBJECTIVE 1.4: USE LAND IN A MANNER THAT ENSURES A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS.

Policy 1.4.1

Expand parks, trails, sidewalks and other amenities as the City’s population continues to grow.

Policy 1.4.2

Review and encourage methods of development which promote linkages among residential, civic, commercial, industrial and recreational facilities using trails and sidewalks for safe and enjoyable pedestrian uses and provides pedestrian connections between complementary land uses.

Policy 1.4.3

Review and encourage street and sidewalk designs to provide for easy access by police, fire and ambulance services, school buses, and plowing.

Land Use Plan

The land use plan provides the framework for the growth and development of the City. The land use plan serves as a guide for the character and intensity of development and will be supported by other land use controls and public actions taken pursuant to the Comprehensive Plan.

The land use map appears in Figure 3-2: Future Land Use. The plan illustrated by this map evolved from inputs and evaluations received through the planning process. The Plan builds on the existing community pattern to achieve the desired vision for the future of North Branch. Where the Future Land Use map guides property for something different than the existing zoning, zoning approvals such as variances and conditional use permits should not be considered inconsistent with the comprehensive plan if otherwise deemed appropriate.

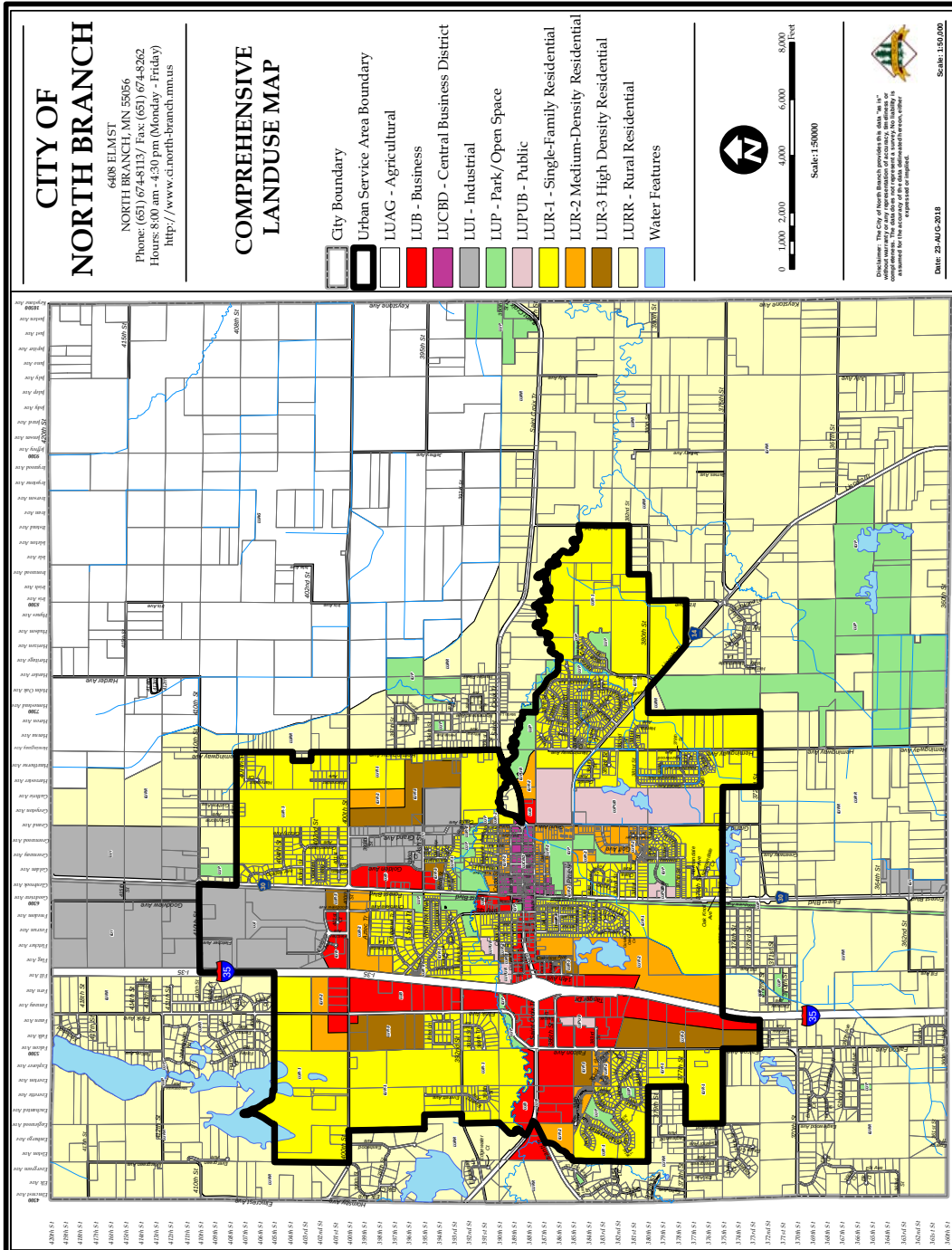
Table 3 – B: Summary of Future Land Use

<i>Future Land Use by Designation</i>	<i>Gross Acres*</i>	<i>Net Percent of City</i>
<i>Agriculture (AG)</i>	5,271.4	22.9%
<i>Rural Residential (RR)</i>	9,992.6	43.3%
<i>Low Density Residential (R1)</i>	3,492.5	15.1%
<i>Medium Density Residential (R3)</i>	577.2	2.5%
<i>High Density Residential (R3)</i>	330.8	1.4%
<i>Central Business District (CBD)</i>	71.4	.3%
<i>General Business District (B)</i>	802.2	3.5%
<i>Industrial District (I)</i>	1,123.7	4.9%

*Gross acres of use determined by GIS mapping data and does not include public and institutional areas which are separately defined under the proposed land use map.



Figure 3-2:
Future Land Use



Residential

Rural Residential

The land use in this category is hobby farms and homes on large lots. The area is outside of the designated Urban Service Area and will be served by wells and individual septic systems. Individual lots must be a minimum size of one acre buildable, and the presence of wetlands and other natural features may result in actual lot sizes much larger than one acre in order to achieve the required one acre buildable standard. This lowest density of residential development is intended to reduce demands on the rural roads and protect the natural resources found in North Branch. The primary zoning district that would generally correspond to this land use designation would be the LURR Rural Residential District.

Low Density Residential

The land use in this category is single-family detached homes served by municipal utilities. This plan anticipates that this is where the majority of new housing units will be added over the next 20 years. One of the biggest strengths of the City of North Branch is its attractiveness to young families. Part of this attraction is due to the anticipated development of quality affordable single-family homes, and the existing parks and trails system, school district and proximity to the metropolitan areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Continuing to add new housing units will provide more opportunities for all families to locate in North Branch, while making older housing more affordable. Densities targeted in this category are limited to no more than 4 dwelling units per acre. The primary zoning district that would generally correspond to this land use designation would be the LUR-1 Single Family District.

Medium Density Residential

Medium density residential uses are typically in the form of single family homes on smaller lot sizes, townhomes, duplexes, and small scale apartment and condo buildings and served by municipal utilities. Advantages of these types of housing are that less property maintenance may be required since yards are smaller and some medium density developments may have associations that handle lawn care and snow removal. As a result, these types of housing tend to be very attractive to seniors and professionals. Densities targeted in this category are up to 6 dwelling units per acre. The primary zoning district that would generally correspond to this land use designation would be the LUR-2 Medium Density District.

High Density Residential

The High Density Residential land use category consists of multiple family attached housing oriented in a vertical fashion, more commonly referred to as apartments and condominiums and served by municipal utilities. Housing units may be owner or renter occupied. High density housing is an efficient land use because it contains more dwelling units per acre than other residential uses.

High density residential uses are located in places with compatible adjacent land uses and where the local street system will accommodate the traffic. Ideally, they are located near commercial uses or employment centers to maximize the number of people who can walk or use alternative modes of transportation.

The densities targeted in this category are over 6 dwelling units per acre. The primary zoning district that would correspond to this land use designation would be the LUR-3 High Density Residential.

Agriculture

Agriculture

The city's strong agricultural heritage is clearly visible in the farm fields located in the northeast corner of the city. The fields, bordered by the historic St. Croix River bluff line, are dotted with artesian wells, have deep pockets of organic soils generally not conducive to development, and are linked by a series of more traditional farm style roads. Single family homes are present and seem accessory to the commercial operations of the farms. Non-agricultural uses will be limited and densities targeted in this category are no more than one dwelling unit per 10 acres. The primary zoning district that would correspond to this land use designation would be the LUAG Agriculture.

Commercial

Downtown Business

Although a number of single family homes currently exist in the Central Business District, new residential development should be part of a mixed use plan with a balance of housing and commercial uses within a single building or complex. Replacing single family homes with mixed use structures and redeveloping existing commercial buildings will help support a healthy business environment and allow more people to be able to walk to their destinations.

Buildings should be located close to the street but with ample space for sidewalks. Parking should generally remain in the rear of the property when on-premise parking is offered. Streetscape improvements that enhance the pedestrian realm, such as planters, hanging baskets, street trees, outdoor seating, public art, street lighting, should be prioritized here. The City should continue to work with business owners and encourage façade improvements by connecting them to grant and funding opportunities. The primary zoning district that would correspond to this land use designation would be the LUCBD Central Business District.

General Business

The General Business guiding designation allows a wide variety of uses including those for convenience oriented, neighborhood-oriented, community-oriented and bulk retail-oriented markets and consumers. These areas provide a wide range of goods and services to serve many of the shopping and dining needs of people who live, work in or visit the City. Certain commercial uses, such as those devoted to motor vehicle-oriented retail or service activities (e.g., vehicle service and fuel sales, drive-through businesses and sales of motor vehicles) depend on access to major transportation routes and often have characteristics that are incompatible with residential areas. Other commercial uses, such as those involving wholesale and retail trade of large volume or bulk commercial items with on-site storage and warehousing, may have both commercial and industrial characteristics.

This guiding designation also allows a variety of uses including professional offices, administrative offices, research and laboratory facilities, wholesale showrooms, service facilities (e.g., conference

centers, lodging and reception halls), and business uses having limited contact with the general public. These areas may provide for limited retail sale of convenience-type products and services for the immediate surrounding area.

Commercial uses in this classification are expected to develop with the highest standards of design and performance, with a higher level of amenities such as landscaping, preservation of natural features, architectural controls, pedestrian trails and other features. Office parks and campus-style developments are encouraged in these areas. Commercial office uses can also serve as, and provide for, an orderly and progressive transition between higher and lower intensity land uses. Locations adjacent to the Central Business District, TH95 and I35 may be subject to stricter design standards so as to achieve an attractive, inviting and high quality retail shopping and commercial services in areas of high visibility and sensitivity to surrounding uses. The primary zoning district that would correspond to this land use designation would be the LUB General Business District.

Industrial

Industrial uses include all forms of businesses with manufacturing, distribution, warehousing or other industrial uses that may have consequences typically associated an industrial activity such as noise, odor, dust or low quality aesthetics. As a result, when these uses are in close proximity to residential, park and open space uses, additional restrictions may be appropriate. These uses may generate truck traffic and may involve outdoor storage. Locations adjacent to residential uses, I35, TH95 or other high visibility areas may be subject to additional design standards. The primary zoning district that would correspond to this land use designation would be the LUI Industrial District.

Public/Institutional

Public, semi-public or institutional uses are comprised of churches, schools, city offices, public works facilities, fire stations, public utilities, and other governmental or non-profit entities. This use may also include parks, designated open spaces and regional storm water management, such as publicly maintained storm water management ponds. This land use classification is intended to differentiate these sites as providing a common amenity or service and not land that is intended to be developed. The primary zoning district that would correspond to this land use designation would be the LUPUB Public/Institutional District.

Required Zoning Changes

The City has adopted zoning regulations for the purpose of carrying out the policies and goals of the land use plan element of the Comprehensive Plan. The application of zoning districts and the specific regulations should support the objectives of the Plan. As a result, an outcome of adopting the plan will be the review and modification of the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map as necessary.

The land use plan provides the basis for guiding zoning decisions that will be made by the City and private property owners. Minnesota Statutes Section 462.357 states that “.....the planning agency shall study and propose to the governing body reasonable and practical means for putting the plan into effect. Subject to the limitations of the following sections, such means include, but not limited to, zoning regulations, for the subdivision of land, an official map.....” This statute anticipates that the

zoning regulations will be reviewed and updated to ensure implementation of the land use plan. In a broad sense, this review of the zoning ordinance should examine the following:

- The regulations for each zoning district should be reviewed to determine if they fit with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Zoning districts should be examined in relationship to the land use designation. Changes in zoning districts may be needed to match zoning with land use.
- The City will need to thoroughly review and update its Ordinances to address inconsistencies and conflicts to integrate the concepts described in this Comprehensive Plan. Updating the Zoning Ordinance will be a large undertaking that will require significant input, time and energy.

One of the policy decisions the City will need to make is how to implement the land use plan through the zoning map. Unlike the Metropolitan Land Planning Act (Minnesota Statutes Section 473), which requires consistency between the land use plan and zoning in cities within the Twin Cities metropolitan area, North Branch may choose to take a number of implementation strategies. Each has varying implications for existing property uses and current zoning. The strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Keep current zoning in place until such time as the use terminates or redevelopment is initiated.
- Rezone property to a zoning district compatible with a land use plan category.
- Develop an interim strategy to address current use situations as they relate to long term objectives.



4

HOUSING

Introduction

Housing is an important component of all communities. Not only do the quality, availability, affordability, and diversity of housing enhance the quality of life in the City, it also supports economic development and contributes to a community's sense of place.

Housing is not a single, one size fits all, commodity. Personal housing needs change as life passes from young, single adults to family, to empty nesters to elderly. This chapter provides an inventory and analysis of North Branch's existing housing and paints a broad picture of future residential development.

North Branch has experienced significant population growth since 2000. The US Census estimated the city's population at 8,023 in 2000 and 10,125 in 2010, representing a 26.2% increase. The Minnesota State Demographer estimates North Branch's population at 10,608 as of April 1, 2017, representing another increase in population of approximately 5% despite the effects of the recession. The population is expected to continue to increase over the next 10 years, resulting in a projected population of 11,934 by 2030, with the 75-84 age group growing the fastest, at a projected rate of 40% according to the recent Maxfield Research and Consulting Comprehensive Housing Needs Analysis for Chisago County, dated June, 2018 (the "Maxfield Study"). Over this same period of time, the number of households has grown from 2,815 in 2000, 3,604 in 2010 and 3,801 as of 2017 and the projected number of households is 4,276 by 2030.

Housing Supply

Quantity and Types of Housing Units

As of April 1, 2017, the number of households is estimated at 3,801 according to the state demographer's office. Data describing the household type, as shown in Table 4-A, is based on data available as an estimate. Refer to Table 4-A: Housing Supply by Type, for more information.

Table 4-A Housing Supply by Type/Units Per Structure	Number Units	Percentage of units
Single-Family detached	3,040	80%
Single-Family Attached	164	4%
2-4 Unit multi-family	129	3%
5 + Unit multi-family	305	8%
Mobile home	177	5%
TOTAL UNITS	3815	100%

By US Census 2016

Comparison of Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Units

It is important for communities to have a mixture of both owner-occupied and renter-occupied units. In general, many communities strive to have roughly 65-70% of their housing units owner-occupied. As of 2016, approximately 84.1% of the housing units in North Branch were owner-occupied, significantly higher than the national average (63.6%).

Table 4-B Housing Tenure by occupied	Number Units	Percentage of units
Owner-Occupied	3094	84.10%
Renter-Occupied	585	15.90%
TOTAL	3679	100%

By US Census 2016

According to the US Census Bureau, the median gross rent (2012 - 2016) was \$872.00. Refer to Table 4-C: Rental Rates - 2016, for additional information.

Table 4-C Occupied Units Paying Rent - 2016	Number Units	Percentage of units
Less than \$500	53	9%
\$500 to \$999	313	54%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	165	29%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	24	4%
\$2,000 to \$2,499	7	1%
\$2,500 to \$2,999	0	0%
\$3,000+	13	2%
TOTAL	575	100%
Median Dollars	\$872	

By US Census 2016

Few owner occupied houses are sold and converted to rentals, leaving a significant shortage of single family homes for rental. In addition, the existing multi-tenant properties experience a very low vacancy rate. The Maxfield Study (as commissioned by the Chisago County HRA/EDA in 2018) estimated the rental vacancy rate for North Branch and the immediate surrounding area at 2.4%. The US Census data from 2016 estimates the vacancy rates for North Branch specifically at 1.2% for owner occupied homes and 0% for rental units. Policies encouraging and promoting rental housing, whether traditional apartment style or via townhome-style construction, targeting all age groups and incomes, should be considered.

Value of Housing

According to the US Census Bureau, the median value of owner-occupied housing units in North Branch (2012 - 2016) was \$163,000. Refer to Table 4-D: Owner- Occupied Housing by Value, for additional information. According to the US Census Bureau, a median selected monthly owner cost with a mortgage (2012 - 2016) was \$1,500.00 and median selected monthly owner costs without a mortgage (2012 - 2016) was \$500.00.

Table 4 - D Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Value	Number Units	Percentage of units
Less than \$50,000	151	5%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	236	8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	823	27%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	959	31%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	673	22%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	210	7%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	25	1%
\$1,000,000 +	17	1%
TOTAL	3094	100%
Median Dollars	\$163,000	

By US Census 2016

Residential Construction

1,219 new housing units were added in North Branch between 2000 and 2017. This includes 80 multifamily units and 1,139 single family homes.

At the peak of the past 18 years (from 2000 - 2005), single family home construction averaged about 150 homes per year. During the early years of the recession (from 2006 - 2011), the average number of new homes was only 13 homes per year, meaning some new housing growth, but in very limited numbers. The last 6 years of this period (from 2012 - 2017) has seen on average 41 new homes per year, demonstrating that North Branch remained a viable new housing market when other communities saw little or no growth for the past ten years.

Table 4-E Building Permit Trends 2000 thru 2017

Year	Single Family Dwellings	Multi-Family Dwellings	TOTAL
2000	200		200
2001	156		156
2002	132	24	156
2003	153		153
2004	87	56	143
2005	90		90
2006	29		29
2007	27		27
2008	8		8
2009	5		5
2010	2		2
2011	5		5
2012	31		31
2013	41		41
2014	36		36
2015	45		45
2016	50		50
2017	42		42

Tenure by Age of Householder

Demand is great for affordable owner-occupied homes. Demand overall is calculated for approximately 1,000 new for-sale units over the next 10 years. Existing lot supply is low, therefore new lots will need to be platted soon to meet the growing demand for new construction over the next decade. Price points to accommodate a range of incomes and desired amenities will need to be balanced and future new housing inventory should be offered in a variety of layouts and styles, at a variety of different prices, and in locations throughout the city to address demand from all age groups and income brackets.

The city has a relatively small number of senior housing facilities, with a county wide vacancy rate of 1.7% based on the Maxfield Study. The Maxfield Study also indicated that market equilibrium is typically 3%. Consequently, the Maxfield Study concluded that there is a strong demand for senior housing (2017 - 2030), with the majority of demand in the form of independent/active living housing (i.e. no services). The Maxfield Study recommended several new senior housing concepts including a senior co-operative, active adult rental, affordable rental, independent living with some services, a memory care units.

Life-Cycle Housing and Profile of Households

The housing needs of a community relate to the demographic profile of the household. Typically,



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households move through several life-cycle stages; including entry-level households, first time homeowners, move-up buyers, empty nesters/young seniors, and older seniors. The following describes each of these household types and the effect that they have on housing demands in North Branch.

ENTRY-LEVEL HOUSEHOLDS

People in the 19 to 24 year old age group typically leave their childhood home and establish their own household. They often rent a house or an apartment because they generally do not have the income and savings needed to buy a home. In addition, many people in this age group move frequently, so they are hesitant to buy a house. They are also more apt to share housing with other unrelated people of similar age.

The entry-level household population in North Branch will fluctuate annually. Many North Branch residents that graduate from high school move to other communities to attend a university or to pursue other job opportunities. In the long term, unless current conditions and trends change, North Branch will not see a significant increase in the 19 to 24 year old age group.

FIRST TIME HOMEOWNERS

First time homeowners are typically in their 20s and 30s. They are usually “move-up” renters, meaning they “move up” from an apartment to a home. They are often married with young children and prone to moving within a few years of buying their first home for several reasons; including, increased salaries allowing them to move to more expensive housing, an increased number of children may require larger housing, and job opportunities may require that they move to another community.

MOVE-UP BUYERS

Move-up buyers are typically in their 30s and 40s. They move up from the smaller, less expensive house that they had purchased earlier. From an economic growth perspective, this is an important age group of people.

Typically, move-up buyers have children in school and an established job. They are less apt to move to another community and start over. Also, professionals who are moving to a community to advance their career are generally looking to move to a more expensive house than what they had in their previous community. North Branch should continue to ensure that it has adequate choices for those who are looking for move-up housing that will satisfy their needs until they are in their late 50s and beyond.

EMPTY NESTERS AND YOUNG SENIORS

Empty nesters and young seniors are generally in their 50s and 60s. Often, their children have moved out of their house and left them with a larger house than needed. Empty nesters

and young seniors often want to live in a smaller house, like a townhouse, that has less maintenance. As the baby boom generation moves into this age group, this population will likely increase in North Branch and there may also be a shift in this population group from their homes into apartments. There has already been a notable increase in demand for apartment and townhome style rentals in North Branch by members of the baby boom generation.

ADVANCED SENIORS

Those in their 80s and older are often looking for low maintenance or assisted living housing. As the population ages, North Branch should continually ensure that it has adequate housing to meet the needs of seniors, including the opportunity for multi-generational housing options, such as “senior or mother-in-law apartments”.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Housing for those with special needs includes housing for older adults and individuals with mental and/or physical disabilities or health issues whether it be temporary care, transitional housing, or long term care. The number of people with special housing needs is expected to increase as the population of North Branch continues to age. Ecumen offers a range of housing options at its North Branch facility. Bickford of North Branch offers assisted living and memory care. Apartment complexes including Shields Plaza and Splittstoser Apartments are tailored to the 55+ population and those needed wheel chair accessibility. A new supportive housing, 20 unit apartment complex intended for individuals with mental illness, called Willow Grove, is in development and construction is anticipated in 2019. North Branch is also home to Karcher Services, Provide Care and Progressive Living Solutions that offer a variety of care options.

Affordable Housing

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) generally defines housing as affordable if it costs less than thirty (30) percent of a household’s income. However, HUD’s Section 8 Income Guidelines are the basis for most affordable housing programs. Section 8 guidelines define low and moderate incomes on a sliding scale, depending on the number of persons in the family. For example, a four person household is considered “moderate income” if their family income is eighty (80) percent of the area’s median family income.

It is noted most housing affordability programs and data place emphasis on creating owner-occupied units at eighty (80) percent of the median family income (moderate income) and rental units at fifty (50) percent of the median family income (low income). Since low income persons are typically renters, the definition of “low income” is tied to the number of persons in each unit. This plan identifies “affordable owner occupied units” as those affordable for moderate income families (eighty (80) percent of median income). Affordable rental units are based on fifty (50) percent of the median income and reflected on a per capita and per family basis. While there are no units of designated as “subsidized” under HUD standards, there are 49 housing units that are subsidized under the USDA subsidy program in North Branch.

A new 48 unit, townhome style, affordable housing project is planned for construction in 2019. This workforce rental housing project will feature homes with 1 – 3 bedrooms, garages and on-site management an amenities.

Income by Age of Householder in North Branch.

Looking at income data is also important when predicting future housing demands in the City of North Branch. As of 2000 US Census, the median household income was \$50,924. By 2016, the median household income increased to approximately \$69,419 and the top employment industries, according to Data USA (2016), are health care and social service (912), manufacturing (680) and construction (656). The total population in 2017 age 16 and over was approximately 7,690, of which approximately 71.6% were considered to be in the labor force (US Census). The unemployment rate in the City of North Branch in September 2015 was approximately 3.4%. During this same time, Minnesota had an unemployment rate of about 3.2% (City-Data.com).

Income distributions as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau can be compared to affordability standards to determine how many households and families in the City of North Branch may require affordable housing. An estimated 1,144 households (30%) have annual household incomes of less than 80% of the median household income reported by the American Community Survey in 2016.

Table 4 - F Household income and benefits	Number Units	Percentage of units
Less than \$10,000	214	6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	147	4%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	128	3%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	306	8%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	349	9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	921	25%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	754	20%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	631	17%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	199	5%
\$200,000 +	30	1%
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	3679	100%
Median Household Income (dollars)	\$ 69,419.00	
Mean Household Income (dollars)	\$ 73,436.00	

By US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Table 4 -G Owner Monthly Costs as Percent of Household Income - 2016	Number Units	Percentage of units
Less than 20.0%	810	34%
20.0 to 24.9%	677	28%
25.0 to 29.9%	223	9%
30.3 to 34.9%	233	10%
35.0 % +	461	19%
Total	2404	100%

By US Census 2016

Table 4-H Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income	Number Units	Percentage of units
Less than 15%	58	10%
15.0 to 19.9%	37	6%
20.0 to 24.9%	50	9%
25.0 to 29.9%	23	4%
30.0 to 34.9%	88	15%
35.0% +	319	55%
Total	575	100%

By US Census 2016

Future Population and Household Projections

The future housing projections reported in the Maxfield Study assume that approximately 1,000 new housing units are needed to be constructed over the next 10 years to address pent up demand. The City recognizes that there are many factors and demographic trends that influence the number of housing units constructed and household size and that these numbers will likely change from year to year.

Vision for Housing

The City of North Branch has a high quality housing stock and variety of affordable options that allow residents to find housing at all stages of life. Quality housing is available for all income and age ranges. Existing homes have been well maintained and renovated, as the unique character of each neighborhood is preserved. The City is open to creatively seeking opportunities to meet our housing needs and responsibly providing our share of affordable housing. Housing in North Branch continues to be a strength in attracting young families to the area and supporting the desires of existing residents to find alternative housing options for their senior years that allows them to transition from their large single family homes into something more manageable with the amenities they desire all while remaining in North Branch.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following is a series of goals, objectives, and policies intended to achieve the vision for housing stated above.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

PROVIDE A FULL RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES THAT MEET RESIDENTS' NEEDS AT EVERY STAGE OF THEIR LIVES.

Policy 1.1.1

Attract a variety of residential developers to ensure a diversity of housing styles, layouts and costs.

Policy 1.1.2

Provide a variety of different residential zoning districts that have varying regulations with regard to setbacks, height, density, lot coverage and possible opportunity for accessory dwelling units.

Policy 1.1.3

Ensure that land is available in applicable zoning districts to allow for senior living options for all abilities (independent to assisted).

Policy 1.1.4

Encourage projects that include amenities to build and encourage active lifestyles.

OBJECTIVE 1.2

PROVIDE QUALITY AND SUFFICIENT AFFORDABLE HOUSING THAT MEETS THE AREA'S DEMAND.

Policy 1.2.1

Work with developers on providing affordable market rate housing.

Policy 1.2.2

Develop policies for naturally occurring affordable multi-family housing that encourage the maintenance and upgrading of aging apartment buildings, while maintaining affordability and preventing displacement of residents.

Policy 1.2.3

Promote additional housing diversity to serve families at all stages of their life cycle through housing finance programs and possible public-private partnerships.

GOAL 1

Allow all people the opportunity to call North Branch their home.



GOAL 2

Provide attractive and desirable residential properties.

OBJECTIVE 2.1

PROVIDE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS THAT ARE WELL DESIGNED.

Policy 2.2.1

For new development or redevelopment, consider streetscape improvements such as attractive street lighting, boulevards, sidewalks on at least one side of the street, landscaping and vegetation, and other amenities that enhance the visual appearance of neighborhoods. Consider similar opportunities in existing neighborhoods as street reconstruction projects occur.

Policy 2.2.2

Seek opportunities to provide additional green space and recreation amenities in residential areas that may be lacking them.

Policy 2.2.3

Promote moderate and higher density housing, such as apartment style and townhome style units, in areas where appropriate, such as within and near downtown, commercial areas, and along arterial roadways. Promote development practices that result in low traffic volumes near low density residential areas.

Policy 2.2.4

Promote residential development that occurs in an orderly manner consistent with the future land use plan and that makes efficient and responsible use of municipal utilities and infrastructure expansion and incentivizes (for example, through access to technical assistance) construction of more energy efficient and water efficient housing).

Policy 2.2.5

Implement housing codes and support programs which lead to a housing stock that reflects the City's commitment to sustainability and healthy living.



5

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

A strong business community is the cornerstone of a vibrant city. Economic development encompasses the policies and activities that improve the long term economic and social wellbeing of the community. Communities with strong economies have financial resources to support the levels of service that their residents need and desire. Successful communities realize that economic development is about bringing together social, natural, infrastructure, and economic assets in the community to sustain the “whole” community.

The City’s Economic Development Authority recently adopted a strategic plan to guide and inform its decision making over the next 3 – 5 years. The EDA identified the following strategic priorities:

- Expansion of broadband (high speed internet)
- Business growth, including continued land sales and development
- Transportation
- Community
- Housing

Inventory and Analysis

Existing Characteristics of the Economy

A significant number of North Branch residents commute to work, but have indicated via survey and other tools, that they would prefer to work in the city if comparable jobs were available. Therefore, retaining and attracting jobs is an ongoing objective for the City of North Branch. As of 2018 Assessment Year, non-residential property values amounted to \$146,754,700, as follows: commercial \$91,277,300, industrial \$22,953,100 and apartments \$32,524,300. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development estimates the unemployment rate in Chisago County at 3 percent, higher than the state average of 2.9 percent.

Table 5-A shows the employment and business profile of North Branch. The highest employment industry is health care and social assistance which provides 17.5 percent of all jobs in North Branch. Educational services is the second highest source of employment (13.1 percent), and construction, and other services provide about 12.6 percent each of the community’s total jobs. (Data-USA.com)

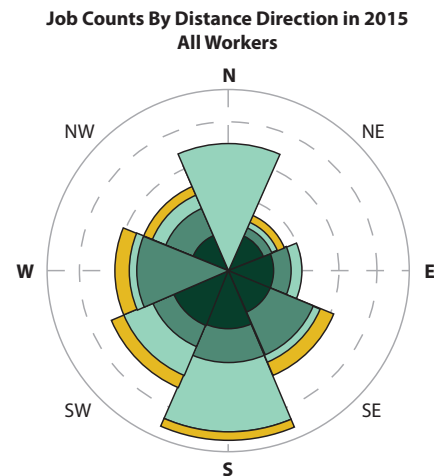
Table 5 –A Business and Employment Statistics

Name	Industry	Approximate # of Employees
North Branch School District	Education	388
Villages of North Branch	Elder Care	185
Andersen Windows	Manufacturing	180
Lakes Region EMS	Emergency Medical Services	92
County Market	Retail	90
Fairview Health System	Health Care	85
Branch Manufacturing	Manufacturing	72
Environmental Stoneworks	Manufacturing	69
Zinpro	Manufacturing	62
ShopKo	Retail	60
Wisconsin Coil Spring	Manufacturing	56

Commuting

According to the US Census as of 2015, 59.4 percent of North Branch residents commute more than 10 miles to work, resulting in an average commute time of 32.3 minutes trip.

Figure 5-1: Commute Distances



Jobs by Distance | Work Census Block to Home Census Block

2015

	Count	Share
Total Primary Jobs	3,366	100.0%
Less than 10 miles	1,368	40.6%
10 to 24 miles	1,148	34.1%
25 to 50 miles	614	18.2%
Greater than 50 miles	236	7.0%

Finance Tools

Community development actions require a framework for financial decision-making. The investment of public dollars to achieve community development objectives should be guided by several key principles:

- Financial resources are limited. The city has limited funding to apply to community development initiatives, so the use of resources must be targeted to achieve the greatest effect on community needs.
- Financial decisions require a long-term perspective. The current use of financial resources may reduce monies available in the future. In evaluating short-term opportunities, it is important to question the long-term impact on community development.
- Public funds should lead to private investment. While this section focuses on public finance actions, the Comprehensive Plan cannot become reality without private investment. The use of public funds should be targeted to actions that encourage private investment in North Branch.

The area of North Branch located north of TH95 received Opportunity Zone designation by the US Department of Treasury. While the tax credit opportunities that this designation allows are a private sector concern, the City will promote this designation as a tool for land sales and development in the City's Interstate Business Park as well as the other undeveloped portions of the City within the designated Opportunity Zone census tract.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment financing (TIF) is the primary development finance tool available to Minnesota cities (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 469.174 through 469.179). TIF is simple in concept, but complex in its application. Through tax increment financing, the property taxes created by new development (or redevelopment) are captured and used to finance activities needed to encourage the development. The challenge in using TIF lies with the complex and ever-changing statutory limitations.

Tax Abatement

Tax abatement acts like a simpler and less powerful version of tax increment financing. With TIF, the city controls the entire property tax revenue from new development. Under the abatement statute (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 469.1812 through 469.1815), the city, county and school district have independent authority to grant tax abatement.

Special Assessments

Public improvements are often financed using the power to levy special assessments (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 429). A special assessment is a means for benefiting properties to pay for all or part of the costs associated with improvements, and to spread the impact over a period of years. This tool can be applied to both the construction of new improvements and the rehabilitation of existing improvements.

Grant Programs

Cities can leverage funding from various grant programs to help take on economic development initiatives. There are numerous grant programs available to cities provided by various state and federal agencies related to economic development and downtown redevelopment. The Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG) administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides grants on an annual basis to states and eligible local governments for community development activities. In some cases, communities may choose to use these dollars for business retention and job growth activities. The City should also explore the use of these dollars for downtown redevelopment. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development is another agency with financial assistance available to local governments for business development, infrastructure, community development and site cleanup and redevelopment. Many other funding sources exist and city staff should monitor and pursue these opportunities when appropriate.





A significant number of North Branch residents commute to work, but have indicated via survey and other tools, that they would prefer to work in the city if comparable jobs were available.

GOAL 1

Encourage economic growth to meet the demand for commercial and industrial development.

Vision for Economic Development

The City of North Branch will remain focused on retaining a high quality of life, while at the same time working to encourage and facilitate job growth in its commercial and industrial sectors.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following section outlines the primary goals for economic development, followed by a series of objectives and policies intended to influence future economic development efforts that align with the community visions in this plan.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

DEVELOP THE INTERSTATE BUSINESS PARK.

Policy 1.1.1

Strive to maximize the community's strategic location as a valuable resource, promoting the Opportunity Zone designation whenever possible.

Policy 1.1.2

Actively target companies, both large and small, that offer good employment prospects, draw from the local labor pool, and are good corporate citizens.

Policy 1.1.3

Work to maintain a labor force in the immediate area that supports the growth of business and industry in the Interstate Business Park, including but not limited to expanding the inventory of affordable housing, providing transportation alternatives and encouraging expansion of services.

Policy 1.1.4

Coordinate with stakeholders and regional partners to identify users of rail and support development of rail spur adjacent to the Interstate Business Park.



OBJECTIVE 1.2

REVITALIZE THE HISTORIC DOWNTOWN AREAS OF NORTH BRANCH.

Policy 1.2.1

Address unique development challenges including the reuse and redevelopment of vacant buildings in the historic downtown areas.

Policy 1.2.2

Explore and implement plans to enhance pedestrian friendly features, promote available parking, and collaborate with Minnesota Department of Transportation to establish safe pedestrian crossings at intersections within the downtown area.

GOAL 2

Balance the use of undeveloped land and infill development throughout the City.

OBJECTIVE 2.1

CONTINUE AND EXPAND REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.

Policy 2.1.1

Foster private investment and economic activity without compromising community objectives to maintain and enhance North Branch's natural environment.

Policy 2.1.2

Promote the areas north of TH95 as being designated for Opportunity Zone tax treatment to further enhance private investment in those areas.



OBJECTIVE 3.1

RETAIN AND SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY.

Policy 3.1.1

Set attracting new, and retention of existing, businesses and industries as a priority of the City's economic development plan.

Policy 3.1.2

Continue outreach by City Staff and Elected Officials whereby the City representatives meet periodically on an individual basis with businesses and industries to listen to concerns and discuss opportunities for success. During these meetings, identify any perceived or real barriers or obstacles (such as overly restrictive ordinances) that the City could potentially remove or minimize to help industries and businesses prosper, while still protecting the overall health, safety and welfare of the community.

Policy 3.1.3

Coordinate with regional organizations, the North Branch School District, higher education institutions, and others in their efforts to promote training opportunities that can help businesses and industries prosper. If appropriate, co-sponsor and/or offer City facilities and/or meeting space for employee training programs.

Policy 3.1.4

Continue to promote North Branch's high quality of life as a means to help attract new businesses and industries.

Policy 3.1.5

Continue to work with local businesses and industries to ensure needs for expansion and development are adequately met.

Policy 3.1.6

Pursue ways to streamline the development approval process while still maintaining high quality development standards, by using consistent work flow practices, checklists, and hosting developer information sessions regularly.

Policy 3.1.7

Periodically review and promote economic development incentive programs such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Tax Abatement, utility energy and water efficiency design and improvement programs, county and state waste and pollution prevention assistance and other regional, state and national loan, grant and incentive programs to support business growth and development.

GOAL 3

Enhance North Branch's reputation as a resource to new and expanding businesses.



6

TRANSPORTATION

Introduction

The purpose of the Transportation chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide guidance to the City of North Branch, as well as existing and future landowners in preparing for future growth and development. As such, whether an existing roadway is proposed for upgrading or a land use change is proposed on a property, this Plan provides the framework for decisions regarding the nature of roadway infrastructure improvements necessary to achieve safety, adequate access, mobility, and performance of the existing and future roadway system. The primary goal of this Plan is to establish local policies, standards, and guidelines to guide major transportation investments and policy decisions.

Transportation System Principles And Standards

The transportation system principles and standards included in this Plan create the foundation for developing the transportation system, evaluating its effectiveness, determining future system needs, and implementing strategies to fulfill the goals and objectives identified.

Functional Classification

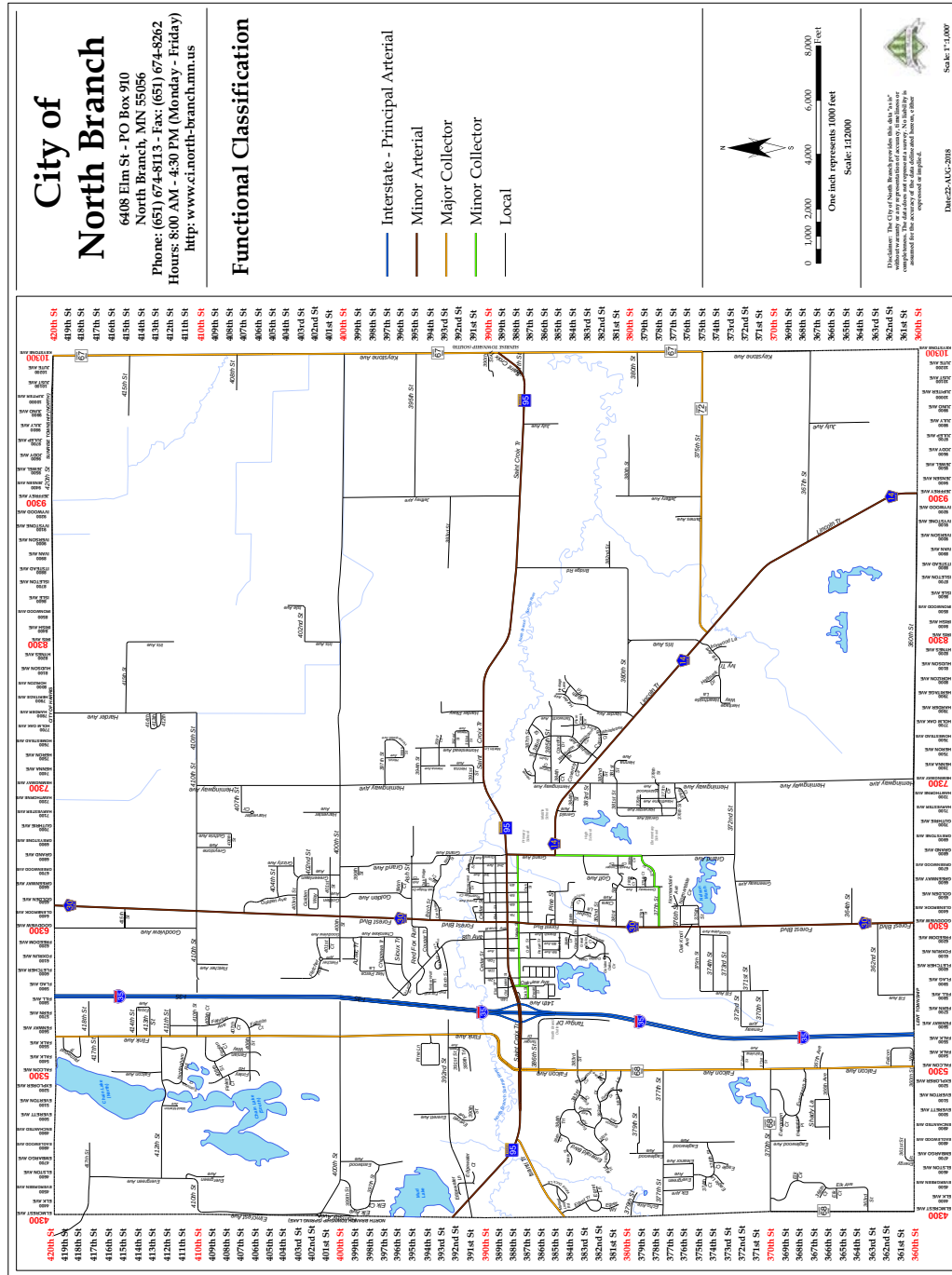
It is recognized that individual roads and streets do not operate independently in any major way. Most travel involves movement through a network of roadways. It becomes necessary to determine how this travel can be channelized within the network in a logical and efficient manner. Functional classification defines the nature of this channelization process by defining the part that any particular road or street should play in serving the flow of trips through a roadway network. Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Functional classification involves determining what functions each roadway should perform prior to determining its design features, such as street widths, speed, and intersection control.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has developed definitions and criteria for roadway classification based on function. The functional classification system typically consists of four major classes of roadways: Principal Arterials, Minor Arterials, Major Collectors, and Minor Collectors. Roadways are classified as either arterials, collectors, or local streets based on several criteria including (but not limited to) geographic units connected, types of streets connected, length of trip served, distance between streets of the same classification, volume of traffic carried by the facility, speed limit and design (right-of-way width and access provisions).

This Plan provides the framework for decisions regarding the nature of roadway infrastructure improvements necessary to achieve safety, adequate access, mobility, and performance of the existing and future roadway system



Figure 6-1:
Functional Classification
Map



The existing roadway classifications in North Branch are described below.

A. PRINCIPAL ARTERIALS

Roadways of this classification typically connect large urban areas to other large urban areas or they connect metro centers to regional business concentrations via a continuous roadway without stub connections. They are designed to accommodate the longest trips. Their emphasis is focused on mobility rather than access. They connect only with other Principal Arterials, interstate freeways, and select Minor Arterials and Collector Streets. There is one Principal Arterial roadway in the City of North Branch, Interstate 35 that runs north/south through the state of Minnesota and extending to Texas.

B. MINOR ARTERIALS

Roadways of this classification typically link urban areas and rural Principal Arterials to larger towns and other major traffic generators capable of attracting trips over similarly long distances. Minor Arterials service medium length trips, and their emphasis is on mobility as opposed to access in urban areas. They connect with Principal Arterials, other Minor Arterials, and Collector Streets. Connections to Local Streets should be avoided if possible. Minor Arterials are responsible for accommodating thru-trips, as well as trips beginning or ending outside the North Branch area. Minor Arterial roadways are typically spaced approximately ½ to 1 mile in developed areas and approximately 1 to 2 miles in developing areas. TH95, which runs east-west from the Wisconsin boarder on the east end and St. Cloud on the west end, Chisago County Rd. 14 and Chisago County Rd. 30 are identified as Minor Arterial roadways in North Branch.

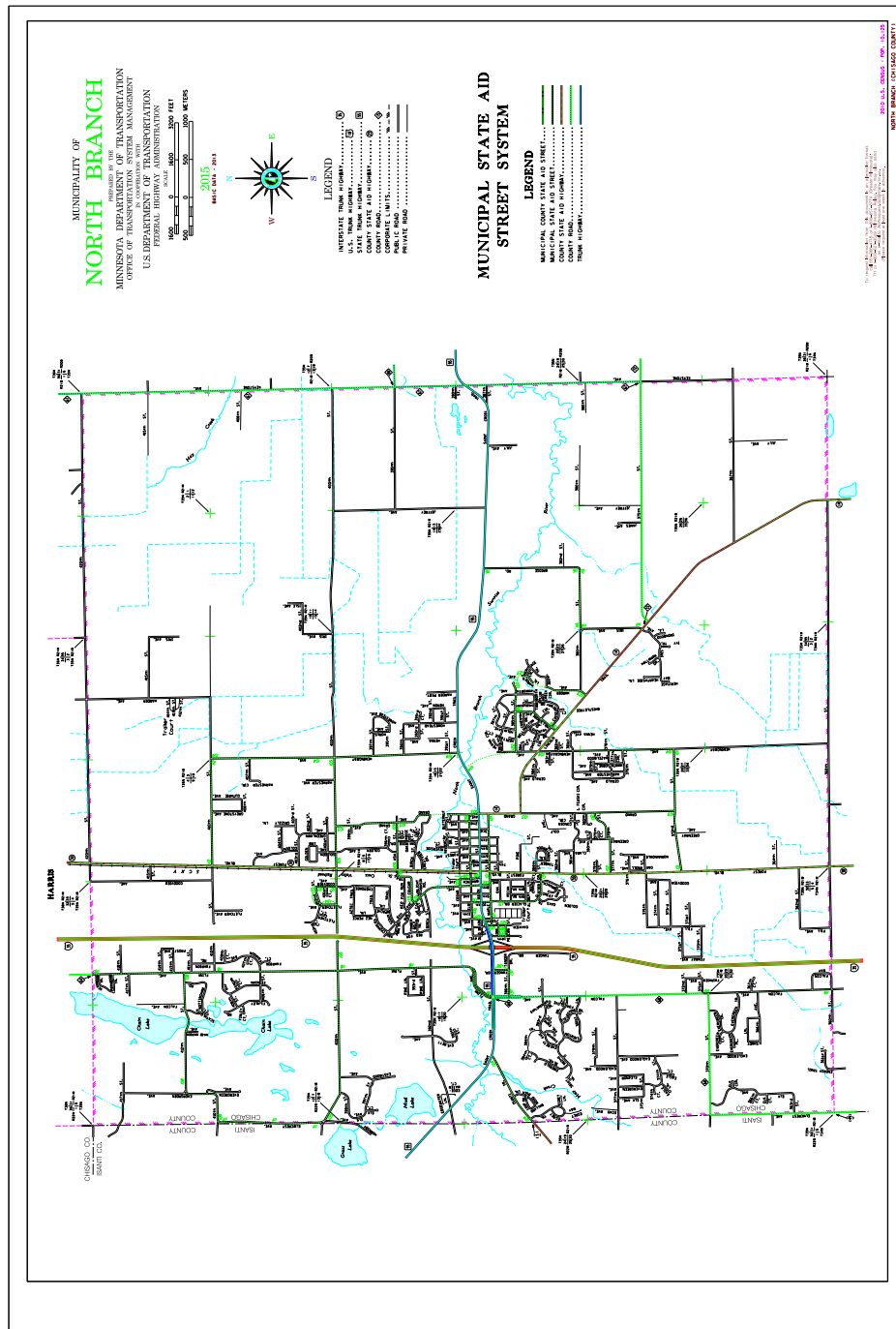
C. MAJOR COLLECTORS

Roadways of this classification typically link neighborhoods together within a city or they link neighborhoods to business concentrations. In highly urban areas, they also provide connectivity between major traffic generators. A trip length of less than 5 miles is most common for Major Collector roadways. A balance between mobility and access is desired. Major Collector street connections are predominately to Minor Arterials, but they can be connected to any of the other four roadway functional classes. Local access to Major Collectors should be provided via public streets and individual property access should be avoided. Generally, Major Collector streets are predominantly responsible for providing circulation within a city. However, the natural features associated with wetland and drainage complexes and parks, and location of principal arterials through the community results in circulation within North Branch being reliant on a combination of the Minor Arterial and Major Collector roadways. Major Collectors are typically spaced approximately ¼ to ¾ mile in developed areas and approximately ½ to 1 mile in developing areas. Flink Ave., Falcon Ave., portions of Keystone and Chisago County Rd. 72, and Isanti Trail are functionally classified as Major Collector roadways in the North Branch area.

D. MINOR COLLECTOR STREETS

Roadways of this classification typically include city streets and rural township roadways, which facilitate the collection of local traffic and convey it to Major Collectors and Minor Arterials. Minor Collector streets serve short trips at relatively low speeds. Their emphasis is focused on access rather than mobility. Minor Collectors are responsible for providing connections between neighborhoods and the Major Collector/Minor Arterial roadways. These roadways should be designed to discourage short-cut trips through the neighborhood by creating jogs in the roadway (i.e. not direct, through routes). Portions of Oakview, Oak, Maple, Grand, 378th, 377th and Greenway are functionally classified as Minor Collector roadways in the North Branch area.

Figure 6-2:



Roadway Capacity

Capacities of roadway systems vary based on the roadway’s functional classification. Based on accepted standards, roadway capacity per lane for divided arterials is 700 to 1,000 vehicles per hour and 600 to 900 vehicles per hour for undivided arterials. These values tend to be around 10% of the daily physical roadway capacity.

Principal and Minor Arterials

Based on the per lane capacity figures cited above, a two-lane arterial roadway has a daily capacity of 12,000 to 18,000 vehicles per day, a four-lane divided arterial street has a daily capacity of 28,000 to 40,000 vehicles per day, and a four-lane freeway has a daily capacity of approximately 70,000 vehicles per day. The variability in capacities are directly related to many roadway characteristics including access spacing, traffic control, adjacent land uses, as well as traffic flow characteristics, such as percentage of trucks and number of turning vehicles. Therefore, it is important that the peak hour conditions are reviewed to determine the actual volume-to-capacity on roadway segments with average daily traffic volumes approaching these capacity values.

Major Collectors and Minor Collector Streets

Major Collector and Minor Collector streets have physical capacities similar to those of a two-lane arterial street, however the acceptable level of traffic on a residential street is typically significantly less than the street’s physical capacity. The acceptable level of traffic volumes on Major Collectors and Minor Collector streets vary based on housing densities and setbacks, locations of parks and schools, and overall resident perceptions. Typically, traffic levels on Major Collector streets in residential/ educational areas are acceptable when they are at or below 50% of the roadway’s physical capacity, resulting in an acceptable capacity of 6,000 to 9,000 vehicles per day. Acceptable traffic levels on Minor Collector streets are considerably less. Typically, a daily traffic volume of 1,000 to 1,500 vehicles per day is acceptable on Minor Collector streets in residential areas.

Table 6-A: Roadway Types and Capacities, identifies various roadway types and the estimated daily capacities that the given roadway can accommodate.

Table 6-A: Roadway Types and Capacity	
Roadway Type	Daily Capacities
Minor Collector Street	Up to 1,000
Urban 2-Lane	7,500 - 12,000
Urban 3-Lane or 2-Lane Divided	12,000 - 18,000
Urban 4-Lane Undivided	Up to 20,000
Urban 4-Lane Divided	28,000 to 40,000
4-Lane Freeway	Up to 70,000

The capacity of a transportation facility reflects its ability to accommodate a moving stream of people or vehicles. It is a measure of a supply side of transportation facilities. Level of Service (LOS) is a measure of the quality of flow. The concept of LOS uses qualitative measures that characterize

operational conditions with a traffic stream and their perception by motorists. Six LOS are defined for roadways. They are LOS A, B, C, D, E, and F. LOS A represents the best operating conditions and LOS F represents the worst. The LOS of a multilane roadway can be dictated by its volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratio. The LOS of a two-lane roadway is defined in terms of both percent time-spent-following and average travel speed. LOS F is determined when v/c ratio is over 1.00. The criteria for LOS and general v/c ratio for multilane highways and speed for two-lane highways are provided in Table 6-B below:

Table 6-B: Highway Level of Service		
LOS	Multilane	Two-Lane
	v/c Ratio	Avg. Travel Speed (mph)
A	<0.28	>55
B	>0.28 - 0.45	>50-55
C	>0.45 - 0.65	>45-50
D	>0.65 - 0.86	>40-45
E	>0.86 - 1.00	≤40
F	> 1.00	v/c >1.00

For roadways in urban sections, the urban street class and average travel speed determine the LOS. This is generally similar to the LOS for two-lane highways but takes into account the free flow speed of the facility (average speed achieved with no other vehicles present on roadway) and the addition of traffic control.

This criterion is established in Table 6-C below:

Table 6-C: Urban Street Level of Service				
Range of Free-Flow Speed	55 to 45	45 to 35	35 to 30	35 to 25
LOS	Avg. Travel Speed (mph)			
A	>42	>35	>30	>25
B	>34-42	>28-35	>24-30	>19-25
C	>27-34	>22-28	>18-24	>13-19
D	>21-27	>17-22	>14-18	>9-13
E	>16-21	>13-17	>10-14	>7-9
F	≤16	≤13	≤10	≤7

Generally, the City of North Branch should consider capacity improvements on roadways with a LOS D or worse and volume-to-capacity ratios over 0.75 during the peak hours.

2017 Publication Traffic Volumes - North Branch

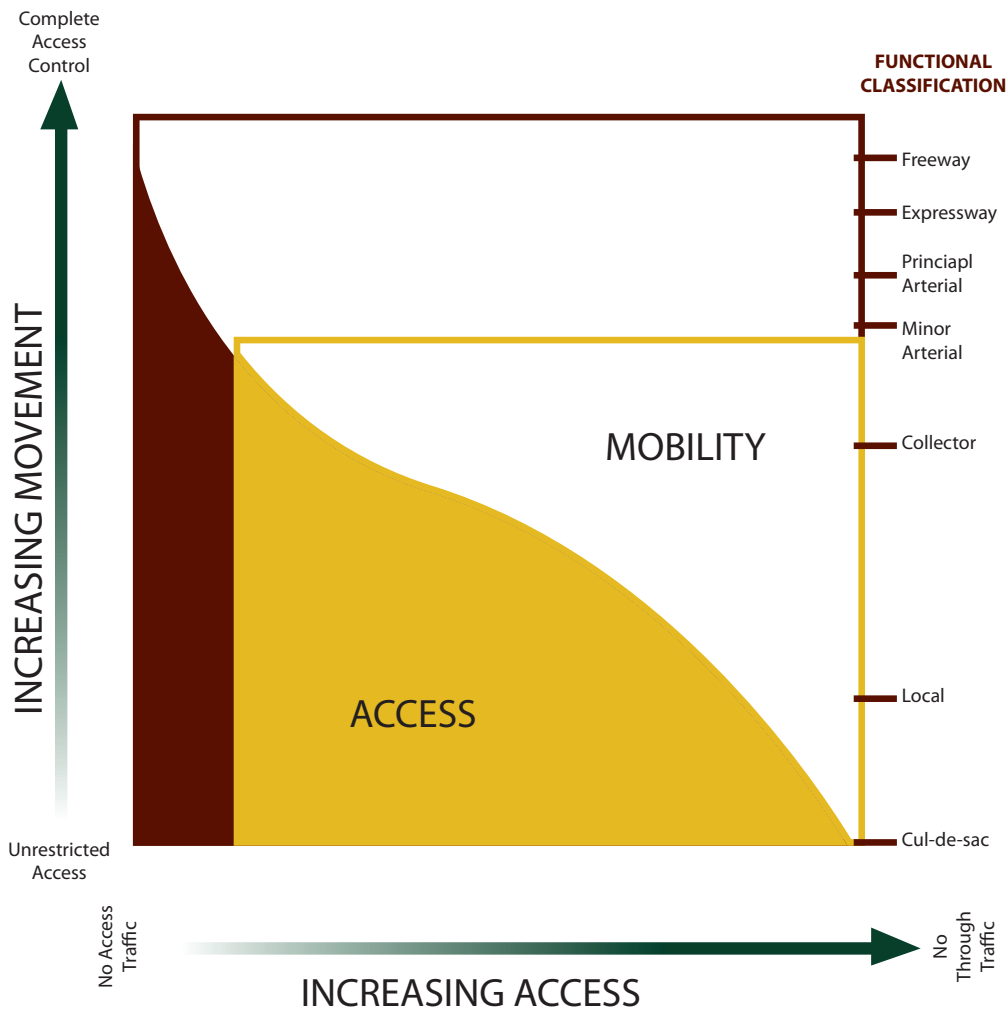


Access Management Guidelines

Access management guidelines are developed to maintain traffic flow on the network so each roadway can provide its functional duties, while providing adequate access for private properties to the transportation network. This harmonization of access and mobility is the keystone to effective access management.

Mobility, as defined for this Transportation Plan, is the ability to move people, goods, and services via a transportation system component from one place to another. The degree of mobility depends on a number of factors, including the ability of the roadway system to perform its functional duty, the capacity of the roadway, and the operational level of service on the roadway system.

Access, as applied to the roadway system in North Branch, is the relationship between local land use and the transportation system. There is an inverse relationship between the amount of access provided and the ability to move through-traffic on a roadway. As higher levels of access are provided, the ability to move traffic is reduced. The graphic below illustrates the relationship between access and mobility.



Each access location (i.e. driveway and/or intersection) creates a potential point of conflict between

vehicles moving through an area and vehicles entering and exiting the roadway. These conflicts can result from the slowing effects of merging and weaving that takes place as vehicles accelerate from a stop turning onto the roadway, or deceleration to make a turn to leave the roadway. At signalized intersections, the potential for conflicts between vehicles is increased, because through-vehicles are required to stop at the signals. If the amount of traffic moving through an area on the roadway is high and/or the speed of traffic on the roadway is high, the number and nature of vehicle conflicts are also increased.

Accordingly, the safe speed of a road, the ability to move traffic on that road, and safe access to cross streets and properties adjacent to the roadway all diminish as the number of access points increase along a specific segment of roadway. Because of these effects, there must be a balance between the level of access provided and the desired function of the roadway.

Roadway Width

Right-of-way width is directly related to the roadway’s width and its ability to carry vehicular and pedestrian traffic in a safe and efficient manner. For Minor Collector streets in residential areas, a minimum right-of-way width of 80 feet is recommended for the added roadway width, as well as to provide added setback distance between the roadway and homes along the roadway. Right-of-way widths of 80 feet to greater than 100 feet may be required on Minor Arterials and Major Collector roadways within commercial areas to accommodate the potential for higher traffic volumes and the need for additional lanes.

For the City of North Branch, geometric design standards for the reconstruction or construction of new Minor Arterial, Major Collector, and Minor Collector Streets will be based on MnDOT State- Aid standards.

Table 6-D: Access Spacing Guidelines for Collector Roadways in North Branch (1) (2)		
Type of Access by Land Use Type	Minor Arterial/Major Collector	Minor Collector
Low & Medium Density Residential		
Private Access	Not Permitted (3)	As Needed (4)
Minimum Corner Clearance from a Collector Street	660’	300’
Commercial, Industrial or High Density Residential		
Private Access	Not Permitted (3)	As Needed (4)
Minimum Corner Clearance from a Collector Street	660’	660’

(1) Some existing City streets that are currently functionally classified as Minor Arterial, Major Collector, or Minor Collector do not meet these criteria. These guidelines should be used for new streets and roadways that will functionally classified as Minor Arterial, Major Collector, or Minor Collector

(2) These guidelines apply to City streets only. Chisago County and MnDOT have access authority for roadways under their jurisdiction.

- (3) Access to Minor Arterials and Major Collectors should be limited to public street access. Steps should be taken to redirect private accesses on Major Collectors to other local streets. New private access to Major Collectors is not permitted unless deemed necessary.*
- (4) Private access to Minor Collectors is to be evaluated by other factors. Whenever possible, residential access should be directed to non-continuous streets rather than Minor Collector roadways. Commercial/Industrial properties are encouraged to provide common accesses with adjacent properties when access is located on the Minor Collector system. Cross-traffic between adjacent compatible properties is to be accommodated when feasible. A minimum spacing between accesses of 660' in commercial, industrial, or high density residential areas is encouraged for the development of turn lanes and driver decision reaction areas.*

Geometric Design Standards

Geometric design standards are directly related to a roadway's functional classification and the amount of traffic that the roadway is designed to carry. The following is a discussion of various geometric design elements and how each element relates to a particular roadway's ability to perform its function in the roadway network.

Roadway Width

Roadway and travel lane widths are directly associated with a roadway's ability to carry vehicular traffic. On Minor Arterial roadways, Major Collector roadways, Minor Collector streets and local streets, a 12-foot lane is required for each direction of travel unless the road meets the criteria for a more flexible design based on environmental factors as per the most recent State-Aid Operations Guide. The 24-foot total travel width is needed to accommodate anticipated two-way traffic volumes without delay. In addition to the travel width, minimum shoulder/parking lane widths are also required to accommodate parked or stalled vehicles. Roadway widths not meeting the Geometric Design Standards will result in decreased performance of the particular roadway and additional travel demand on the adjacent roadway network components. For example, a substandard Major Collector roadway may result in additional travel demand on an adjacent Minor Collector street resulting in an overburden for adjacent landowners. Similarly, additional local circulation may result on an adjacent Minor Arterial resulting in reduced mobility for regional trips.

Sidewalk/Trail

Sidewalks and/or trails are recommended to be adjacent to all Minor Arterial, Major Collector and Minor Collector roadways within North Branch to accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-motorized travel in a safe and comfortable manner. These roadways are expected to carry a significant amount of vehicular traffic and separation of travel modes is necessary. In commercial and industrial areas, the requirements for trails and sidewalks may vary to accommodate additional pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Along Minor Arterials and Major Collector roadways, an 8-10 foot wide bituminous or concrete trail and/or 6-foot wide concrete sidewalk is recommended on either side of the roadway to accommodate local pedestrian and bicycle travel. The pedestrian facilities on both sides of these roadways allow

for pedestrian travel within the corridor without introducing excessive crossing demand on Minor Arterials and Major Collectors. A sidewalk and trail will accommodate pedestrian and bicycle travel along the corridor, as well as provide a safe, comfortable link between lower volume residential streets and the other pedestrian and trail facilities within the community. A 10-foot wide trail would be more desirable as the 10-foot width would better accommodate two-way bicycle traffic. The City of North Branch’s comprehensive trail plan will be utilized to determine where bike trails are required.

Along Minor Collector roadways, a 6-foot concrete sidewalk is recommended on at least one side of the roadway both sides being preferred. With the anticipated vehicular volumes on Minor Collector streets, pedestrians can safely cross the roadway, however, pedestrian travel along the roadway may become uncomfortable.

Design Speed

The design speed of a roadway is directly related to the roadway’s function in the roadway system. The focus of Minor Arterial roadways is mobility; therefore these roadways should be designed to accommodate higher travel speeds. Likewise, Minor Collector roadways are more focused on accessibility and should be designed to accommodate lower travel speeds. The function of Major Collectors is balanced between mobility and accessibility; therefore these roadways should be designed accordingly. Table 6-F below presents the recommended design speed for the North Branch roadway network.

Table 6-E: Roadway Design Speed Guidelines	
Functional Classification	Design Speed (1)
Minor Collector Street	30 mph
Major Collector Roadway	35 – 40 mph
Minor Arterial Roadway	45 – 55 mph

At the discretion of the City Engineer for City roadways, with approval by the City Council.

Roadway Jurisdiction

Roadway jurisdiction directly relates to functional classification of roadways. Generally, roadways with higher mobility functions (such as arterials) fall under the jurisdiction of the State of Minnesota or Chisago County. Recognizing that these roadways serve greater areas resulting in longer trips and higher volumes, jurisdiction of Principal Arterial and Minor Arterial roadways should remain under the jurisdiction of the state and county, respectively. Similarly, roadways with more emphasis on local circulation and access (such as collectors) will likely fall under the jurisdiction of the local government unit. These roadways serve more localized areas and result in shorter trip lengths and lower volumes. Major Collector and Minor Collector roadways should fall under the jurisdiction of the City of North Branch.

As roadway segments are considered for turn-back to the City, efforts will be taken to evaluate the roadway features for conformance to current standards, structural integrity, and safety. This effort will help the City develop short and long-range programs to assume the responsibilities of jurisdictional

authority.

Current Transportation Conditions

The City is located at the cross roads of I35 and TH95. TH95 also intersects with several Chisago County roads, including Co 30, formerly known as Hwy. 61, the historic highway that runs along the eastern border of Minnesota spanning from the Iowa border and running up along the north shore of Lake Superior. Based 2017 MnDOT traffic data, daily traffic counts along I35 heading north to North Branch average 37,500. An estimated 22,400 cars move west from I35 along TH95 each day. The daily traffic count is estimated at 22,500 cars moving east from I35 along TH95. An estimated 15,400 cars pass through the intersection of TH95 and Co. 30, making this intersection an area of concern due to ineffective turn lanes and a reduced turning radius for large vehicles such as fifth wheel RV's, passenger vehicles with trailers and semi's needing to turn from or onto TH95 at that intersection.

Truck and passenger vehicle traffic also pose an issue with regard to the city's minor arterial and collector roads. The City's industrial park, located north of 400th Street, could benefit from more direct access to I35, reducing truck traffic at the intersection of TH95 and Co. 30, relieving pressure on the existing bridge at I35 and providing for movement east/west through the City. As and when appropriate, the City should engage MnDOT about a new bridge and interchange on I35 at 400th Street.

The city of North Branch has 105 miles of local streets and road infrastructure to maintain. This consists of 70 miles of asphalt pavement, and 35 miles of gravel. Of the 70 miles that are currently paved, 17.1 are state aid and 52.9 are non-state aid. Assuming streets are overlaid once every 20 years, the city of North Branch should be overlaying 2.65 miles per year so all 52.9 miles of the currently paved non-state aid street system is overlaid once every 20 years. As more streets are constructed, the number of paved streets increases adding to the total of streets that should be overlaid on a regular schedule. There are currently 17.9 miles of paved local streets that are over 20 years old, and have never been overlaid.

Issues facing the City include:

- Lack of effective controls at various intersections between City/County Roads and TH95, including the intersections at 392nd and Isanti Trail.
- Existing intersection controls at TH95 and Grand and along Lincoln (Co. Rd. 14) at Grand and Hemingway are inefficient and pose significant accident hazards because of the volume and number of traffic movements.
- The intersection at TH95 and Co. 30 is not adequate for truck/trailer movement, lacking adequate area of turns, poor sight lines and lacking adequate stacking for vehicles waiting to turn.
- TH 95 passes through the historic downtown area and pedestrian crossings are difficult at best.
- Several intersections have cross traffic approaching the intersection at a 45° approach, impairing sight lines at the intersections.
- There are only limited marked pedestrian crossings along Co. 30.
- High pedestrian roads, such as Maple Street, do not have sidewalks, forcing pedestrians to walk in the street.

Pavement Management Plan

Local Streets (non-State Aid Streets)

Funding local street rehabilitation is not a one-time need. It's a permanent need that must be addressed in order to preserve this huge asset. Assuming streets are overlaid once every 20 years, the city of North Branch should be overlaying 2.65 miles per year so all 52.9 miles of the currently paved non-state aid street system is overlaid once every 20 years. This equates to a cost of approximately \$1,250,000 per year. As more streets are constructed, the number of paved streets increases adding to the total of streets that should be overlaid on a regular schedule.

There are currently 17.9 miles of paved local streets that are over 20 years old, and have never been overlaid. See attached map. As the years pass, more streets will reach that 20 year mark thereby adding to the total that should be overlaid.

All cities need to have a continuous program for maintaining streets. The typical program includes rehabilitating a number of streets each year to keep the overall pavement condition at an acceptable level, spreading out the cost of maintenance over a long period of time. Funding PMP's vary across the state, but the goal for each one is to have a continuous long-term funding plan.

Street Rehabilitation Funding

Funding PMP's typically involve tax levies, assessments, franchise fees, local option sales tax or a combination thereof.

- Tax rates are very competitive for attracting business and using 100% property taxes puts an undue burden on moderate to higher-valued businesses and homes to pay for a street system that serves the entire City. Nonprofit organizations do not pay property tax and would not pay their share of the improvement cost if general taxes are solely used for this purpose.
- Special assessments are a common way to fund improvements and maintenance as the City can spread the cost to property owners over a period of time. However, there is a limit to the amount that can be levied. Assessments can be highly controversial and often are unanticipated costs by the property owner. As such, it can be difficult to enact an assessment roll and effectively collect the necessary funding to pay for the improvements. Often, the projects will not move forward until the street is in complete failure, adding to the cost of the repair.
- Franchise fees spread costs out to everyone over a longer period of time and provide a dedicated fee to ensure local control of the revenue and that repairs stay on schedule with the Pavement Management Plan.
- Local Option Sales Taxes (LOST) can also be used to fund pavement management programs.

Pavement Management Program

As mentioned above, funding PMP's vary considerably and many times include a variety of funding sources. As with all PMP programs, funding sources can be changed and modified as situations and conditions change in the future.

In addition to researching how best to fund a PMP, staff also reviewed the city's standard details for road construction to determine if changes should be made that would extend the life of new roads. Staff reviewed standards from other cities and the life expectancy results these cities were experiencing, and determined a few changes should be made to the city's road standards. These changes are as follows:

- Increase the bituminous thickness from 3.5 to 4.5 inches.
- Use a flexible sealer between the bituminous and concrete curbing to eliminate water infiltration.
- In areas where there is the potential for bad soil conditions, require soil borings and a geological report/recommendation for the pavement section.

PMP Plan 2019-2044

All city streets will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Age and condition of street surface
- Type of street usage
- Volume of traffic
- Annual maintenance costs
- Relationship to other construction or projects
 - Planned county road improvements
 - Planned MnDOT improvements (if any)
 - Utility projects
 - Planned new construction
 - Public safety considerations

Those roads demonstrating the greatest need for Paving or resurfacing projects for those roads demonstrating the greatest need based on the above mentioned criteria will be designed and constructed to the extent of available funding until all city non-state aid streets have completed one full cycle of resurfacing. Phase 1 of the project will consist of overlays to the 17.9 miles that have never been overlaid. See attached map. Phase 2 of the project will consist of paving high traffic gravel roads. If funding is available phases 1 and 2 will be undertaken concurrently. Once Phases 1 and 2 have been completed, funds will be used for Phase 3 with consists of overlaying the remaining 35 miles of city streets existing as of the date of the plan.

Future Transportation System

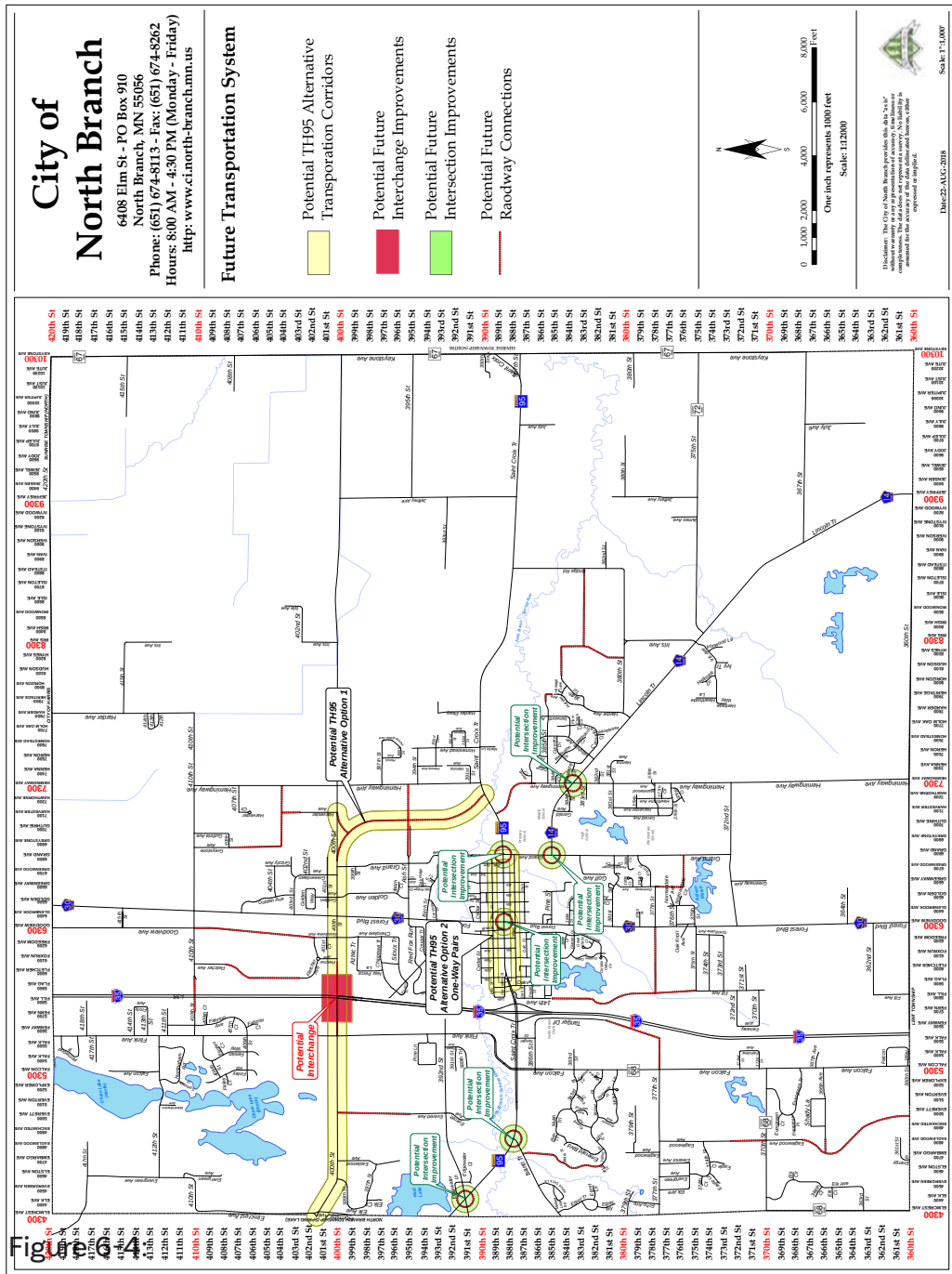
The City will monitor traffic and upgrade roads and intersections based on new housing and commercial development. Several intersections were identified by residents, staff, appointed committee members and elected officials as needing upgraded traffic controls utilizing best management practices such as roundabouts. Future growth and development will likely require roundabouts for efficient and safe movement in and through high volume intersections.

North Branch is located at the crossroads of I35 and TH95, but the current route of TH95 extends through the historic downtown of North Branch creating congestion and conflict between pedestrian, passenger vehicles and truck traffic at the intersection of TH95 and Co. 30 and extending west to

the existing overpass at I35. Citizens, staff and elected officials recognize that traffic volume and additional development within the community have created a need for alternatives to the existing TH95 corridor. Two possible options were mentioned at the city's community café relative to transportation concerns.

The first option is to plan for a new interchange on I35 at 400th Street, diverting traffic from Main Street north to 400th, crossing and accessing I35, and then extending to the west into Isanti County along 400th on the west side of I35. This option was considered by a citizen committee in 2016 and it remains a viable option, subject to funding, construction of a bridge overpass and the dedication of land for the new public rights of way. A second option is to utilize a split pair approach, diverting east or west bound TH95 traffic onto a parallel street. Additionally, expanding development in the Interstate Business Park, congestion along TH95 and current traffic volumes at the existing interchange at TH95 and I35 will drive the need for a new interchange at 400th and I35. [insert future transportation system map]





GOAL 1

Implement and enforce standards for new streets and roadways within identified growth areas.

Transportation System Goals, Objectives, And Policies

The following section outlines the primary goals for the transportation system followed by a series of objectives and policies intended to influence future development efforts that align with the community visions in this plan.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

ASSIGN APPROPRIATE FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION TO EXISTING AND NEW STREETS AND ROADWAYS.

Policy 1.1.1

Monitor traffic and other transportation characteristics of existing streets and roadways and make recommendations regarding changes to the functional classification of the existing streets and roadways.

OBJECTIVE 1.2

IMPLEMENT AND ENFORCE STANDARDS FOR EXISTING AND NEW STREETS AND ROADWAYS.

Policy 1.2.1

Incorporate standards related to complete street standards and geometric design standards as outlined herein into the City's zoning ordinances related to new streets and roadways insuring developers are aware of City standards.

Policy 1.2.2

Monitor best practices and incorporate new standards related to complete streets and geometric design as outlined herein into the reconstruction of existing streets and roadways and implement to the extent practical.

Policy 1.2.3

Prevent the creation of "private streets" or alleys or the like unless in full compliance with the street detail sheets in effect at the time; internal driveways should be constructed and maintained by an association.

Policy 1.2.4

Periodically, review and assess road design standards, including those set forth in the Big Book of Ideas, version 1.1 as may be amended or updated, prepared by ch2m:Team for Chisago County as a result of the Towards Zero Deaths initiative, Complete Streets Implementation Guide for Minnesota Local Agencies (MnDOT, MN Local Roads Research Board:2013) and incorporate new engineering techniques to extend the useful life of the road surface and promote public safety.



OBJECTIVE 2.1

IDENTIFY A POSSIBLE CORRIDOR FOR MOVING TRAFFIC EAST/WEST THROUGH THE CITY VIA A BY-PASS OR SPLIT PAIRS

Policy 2.1.1

Zone developable land near the corridor that is compatible with a future truck by-pass.

Policy 2.1.2

Work with developers along the corridor for future dedications of public right of way for this purpose.

Policy 2.1.3

Restrict new driveways or other access onto Elm Street, from Grand Ave. west to 14th Ave. to preserve Elm Street as a possible path for a split pair approach to managing increasing traffic counts TH95

OBJECTIVE 2.2

IDENTIFY LOCATIONS FOR FUTURE THROUGH STREETS AND CONNECTORS TO MORE EFFICIENTLY MOVE TRAFFIC WITHIN THE CITY

Policy 2.2.1

Develop a master plan for connecting existing streets to loop traffic and provide for alternative routes throughout existing developments.

Policy 2.2.2

Work with developers to obtain dedications of public right of way for construction of future through streets.

GOAL 2

Establish a transportation plan to more effectively move traffic in and through the city.



GOAL 3

Develop, implement and promote alternative transportation modes in order to achieve a walkable and bikeable community.

OBJECTIVE 3.1

EXPAND BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN PLANS TO PROMOTE SAFE AND EFFICIENT MOVEMENT ALONG STREETS, LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRAILS, BIKE PATHS AND SIDEWALKS.

Policy 3.1.1

Encourage walking as a healthy mode of transportation for short trips, within neighborhoods and to nearby commercial areas.

Policy 3.1.2

Create more complete networks of pedestrian facilities, and improve the quality of the pedestrian environment, by connecting to neighborhoods, regional and community parks, preserves, facilities, schools, and commercial areas and by connecting to destinations and pedestrian/bicycle facilities in neighboring communities.

Policy 3.1.3

Improve pedestrian safety, accessibility, and convenience for people of all ages and abilities for example, use neighborhood context and Complete Streets Policies to guide the design of trail and sidewalk projects

Policy 3.1.4

Expand bicycle transportation options that are safe, comfortable, and accessible to people of all ages and abilities, including other surface transportation models, such as bike lanes.

Policy 3.1.5

Use traffic calming tools, traffic diversion and other available tools and methods to create and maintain sufficiently low automotive volumes and speeds on city streets to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.



OBJECTIVE 3.2

CREATE A SAFE, MULTI-PURPOSE AND ALL SEASON TRAIL SYSTEM.

Policy 3.2.1

Sign paved shoulders when utilized to supplement the non-motorized system, transitioning to off-road facilities or bike lanes where and when possible.

Policy 3.2.2

Add system wayfinding and signage at key locations.

Policy 3.2.3

Consider options for hiking, biking, walking, skating and cross-country skiing.

Policy 3.2.4

Update the Snow and Ice Control Policy on an annual basis to ensure the appropriate prioritization of the network.

OBJECTIVE 3.3

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENT OPTIONS FOR MASS TRANSIT.

Policy 3.3.1

Support a public transit system and regional transportation to provide increased mobility options and access.

Policy 3.3.2

Support regional efforts to expand transit options, such as bus rapid transit, park and ride lots, ride sharing and express bus service to Minneapolis and St. Paul.

7

UTILITIES

Introduction

Water System

Existing Systems

The City's water system is operated and managed by a separate municipal utility, North Branch Water & Light (NBWL). NBWL has six municipal water supply wells including Well 1 (unique number 217922), Well 2 (unique number 112244), Well 3 (unique number 522767), Well 4 (unique number 706844), Well 5 (unique number 749383), and Well 6 (unique number 593584). Wells 1, 2, and 6 pump water from the Middle Proterozoic sedimentary aquifer and the Mount Simon - Hinckley aquifer. Well 3 and Well 5 pump water from the Mount Simon-Hinckley aquifer. Well 4 pumps from a buried Quaternary sand and gravel aquifer. Well locations are shown on Figure 7-A and well construction data are presented in Table 7-A.



Figure 7-1: Well Locations

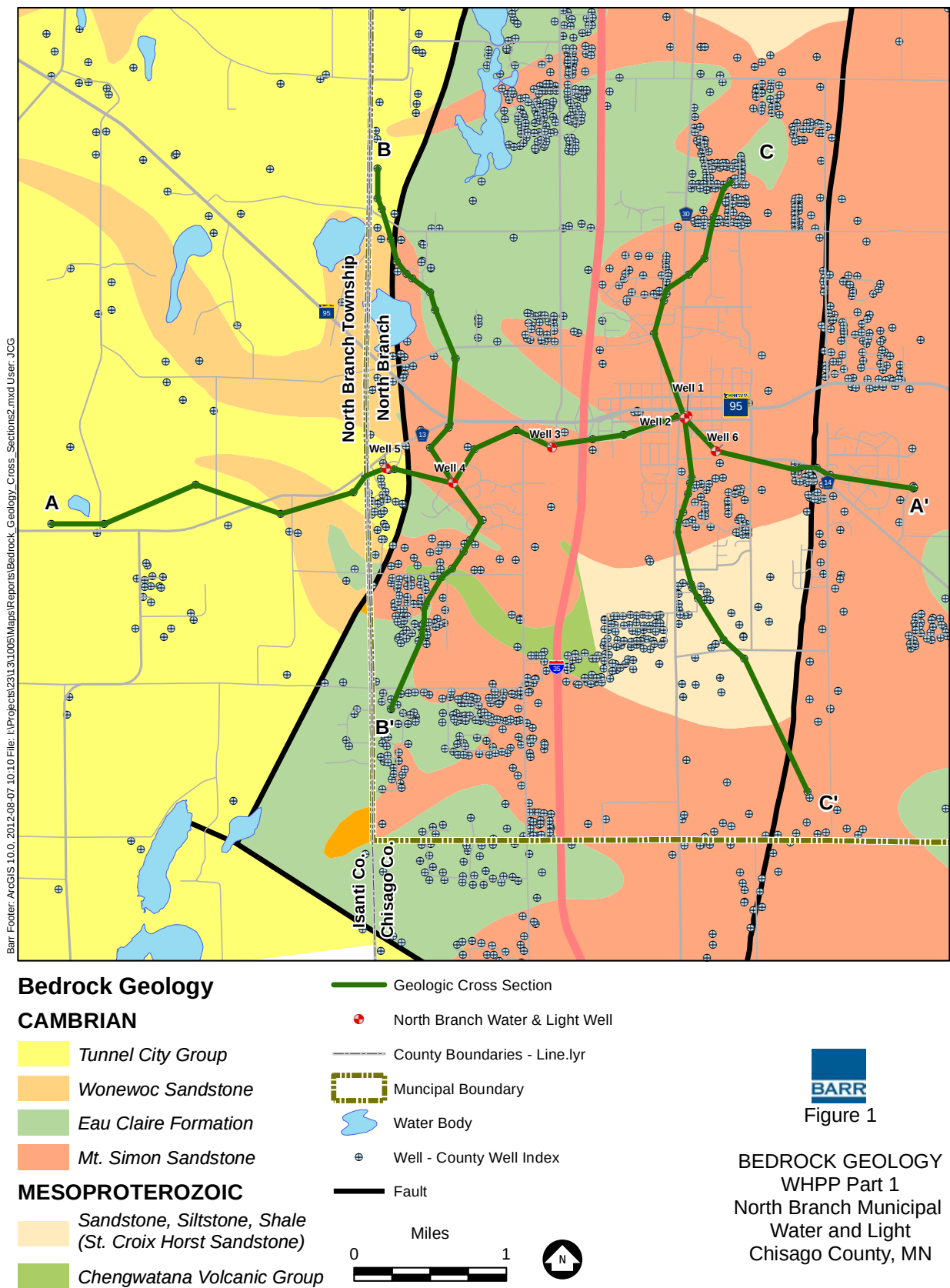
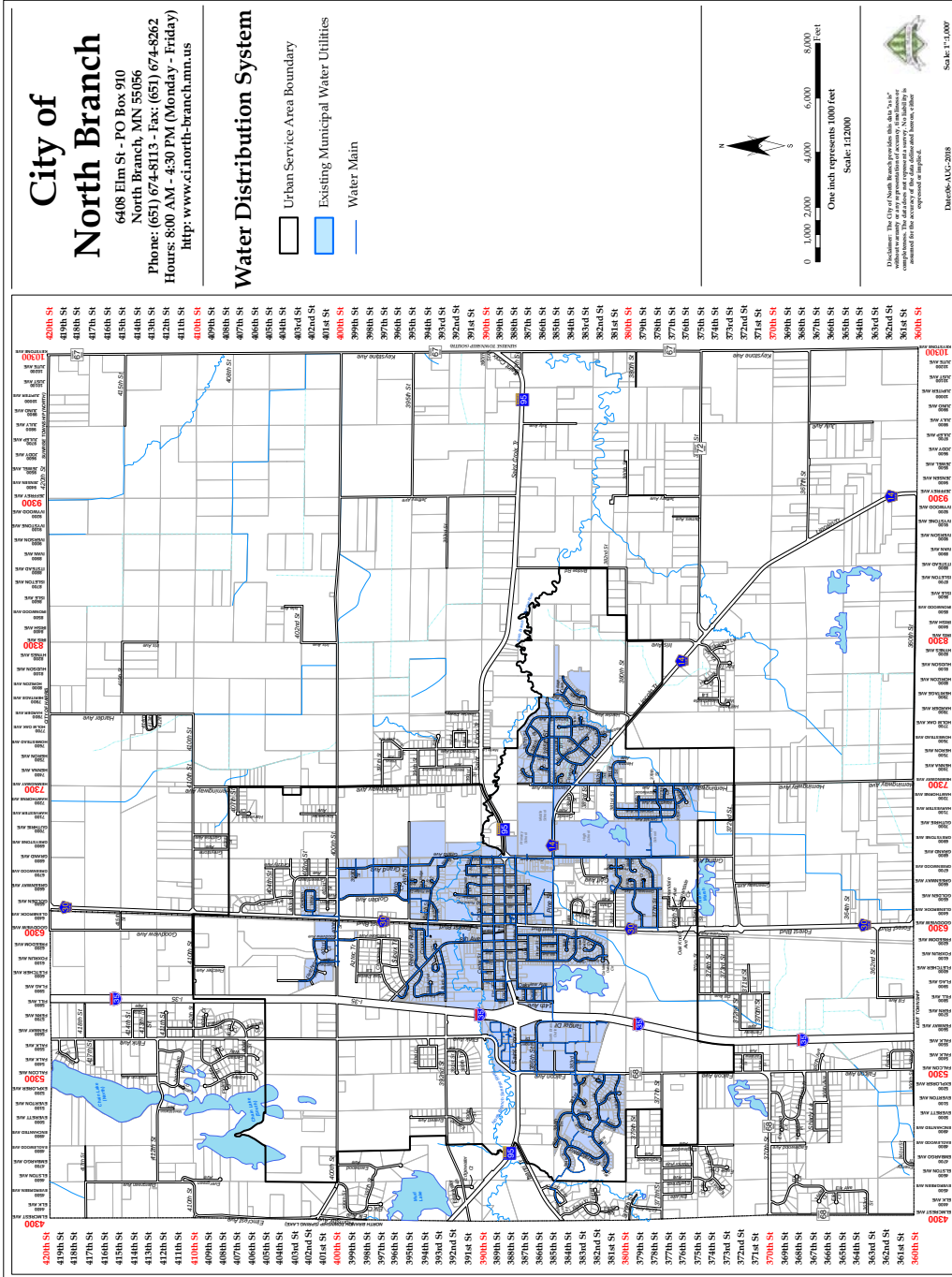


Figure 7-2:
Water Distribution
System Map



In response to the 2003 Comprehensive Water System Plan study (2002 thru the year 2043), based on land use, gross development acreages, and potential ultimate service area, the utility built two new water treatment plants, added new wells, raw water lines to the water system and storage capacity, this to meet the growing need of our community. The study also considered the quantity and timing of future water demands with estimated land use planning maps, estimated developable acreage, and water demand per acre for each land use type. Both average and peak day demands were estimated. The resulting projected average water demand is 1.9 mgd, 3.3 mgd and 7.2 mgd in 10, 20 and 40 years, respectively. See Table 7-B for pumping capacity and projections. Today, the treatment capacity is 3,500 gpm and the storage capacity is 2,000,000 gallons; average residential customer use as of 2016 is 4.22 thousand gallons of water per month. As areas develop in the community going forward, there will need to be new infrastructure added, including new trunk lines and elevated storage. However, Well No. 5 was found to produce water in quantities much greater than originally anticipated. It is likely that Well No. 5 would be expanded to produce the necessary amount of water to meet consumer demand before a new well would be drilled. See Figure 7-3 and 7-4 for anticipated Trunk Water Main locations and phasing.



The Utility will continue to supply sufficient water quantity for system users and emergency needs.

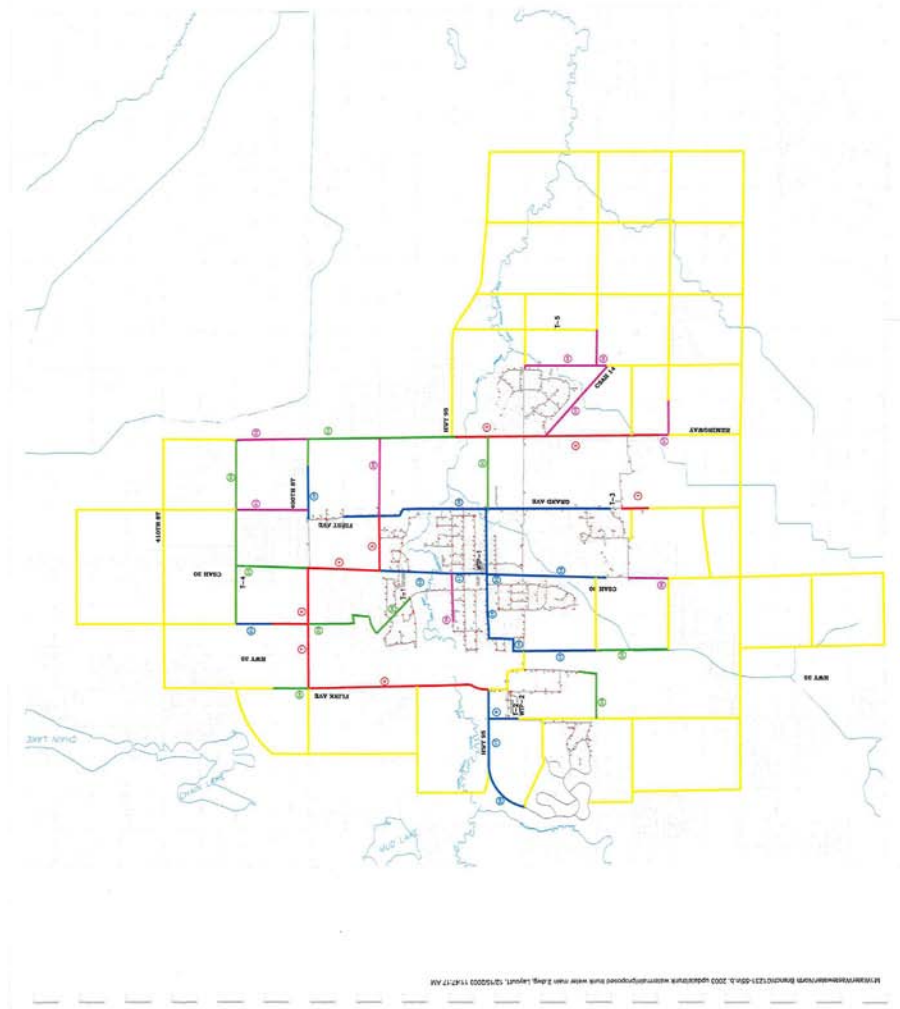


Figure 7-4:
North Branch Trunk Water
Main System Phasing

NBWL has an approved wellhead protection plan that addresses municipal water supply wells used by North Branch (6 municipal wells) and the associated source water aquifers (the Middle Proterozoic Sedimentary Aquifer, the Mount Simon – Hinckley Aquifer and Buried Quaternary Sand and Gravel Aquifer– the aquifers from which the municipal wells pump water). Part 1 of the Plan was completed and approved by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) in August of 2012. The WHP Plan Part 1 presented the delineation of the Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA), the Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA), and the vulnerability assessments for the system’s wells and aquifers within the DWSMA. The vulnerability assessment for the aquifers within the DWSMA was performed using available information and indicates that the vulnerability of the aquifers used by the system is classified as low. In 2015, the plan was updated to include Part 2. In Part 2, NBWL acknowledged that while water utility has jurisdiction over the drinking water system within the City, it does not have jurisdiction over land use planning within the City. NBWL indicated its desire to work collaboratively with the City as to future development. The goals for water quality adopted by NBWL included the following:

GOAL 1

The Utility will maintain or improve the current level of water quality so that the municipal water supply will continue to meet or exceed all applicable state and federal water quality standards.

GOAL 2

The Utility will continue to supply sufficient water quantity for system users and emergency needs.

GOAL 3

The Utility will provide and promote activities that protect the source water aquifer that provides water to the municipal system.

GOAL 4

The Utility will continue to collect data to support future wellhead and source water protection efforts.

Table 7-A: Well Construction Data

Local Well Name	nique Number	Aquifer	Casing Depth (ft)	Well Depth (ft)	Date
NB 1	217922	Middle Proterozoic Sedimentary and Mt. Simon-Hinckley	263 feet	762 feet	03/13/1947
NB 2	112244	Middle Proterozoic Sedimentary and Mt. Simon-Hinckley	261 feet	733 feet	10/06/1978
NB 3	522767	Mt. Simon-Hinckley	186 feet	304 feet	1993
NB 4 or "Water & Light"	706844	Buried Quaternary Sand and Gravel	171 feet	240 feet	02/10/2004
NB 5	749383	Mt. Simon-Hinckley	329 feet	467 feet	09/14/2007
NB 6 or "NB Golf Course"	593584	Middle Proterozoic Sedimentary and Mt. Simon-Hinckley	300 feet	410 feet	4/22/1999

Table 7-B: Annual and Projected Pumping Rates for North Branch Wells

Unique Number	Well Name	Total Annual Withdrawal (gal/yr)				
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
217922	1	159,891,000	158,063,000	91,027,000	3,942,000	209,000
112244	2	36,396,000	50,106,000	12,814,000	350,000	0
522767	3	5,872,000	3,352,000	65,103,000	129,316,000	124,964,000
706844	4	28,112,000	27,832,000	43,557,000	81,604,000	74,783,000
749383	5	0	0	0	13,254,000	806,000
593584	6	0	0	0	0	15,390
TOTALS		230,271,000	239,353,000	212,501,000	228,466,000	200,777,390

Source: MN DNR SWUDS Database

Unique Number	Well Name	Percentage of Annual Withdrawal					Average Annual % of Withdrawal
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
217922	1	69.4%	66.0%	42.8%	1.7%	0.1%	36.0%
112244	2	15.8%	20.9%	6.0%	0.2%	0.0%	8.6%
522767	3	2.6%	1.4%	30.6%	56.6%	62.2%	30.7%
706844	4	12.2%	11.6%	20.5%	35.7%	37.2%	23.5%
749383	5	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.8%	0.4%	1.2%
593584	6	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Unique Number	Well Name	Projected Water Use (2015)			Maximum Total Pumping for Model Input ²		
		Total ¹ (gal/yr)	% of Total Projected	Projected Well Pumpage Based on % (gal/yr)	gal/yr	gal/day	m3/day
217922	1		36.0%	105,372,000	159,891,000	438,058	1,658
112244	2		8.6%	25,172,200	50,106,000	137,277	520
522767	3		30.7%	89,858,900	129,316,000	354,290	1,341
706844	4		23.5%	68,784,500	81,604,000	223,573	846
74938	5		1.2%	3,512,400	13,254,000	36,312	137
593584	6		0.0%	0	21,000,000	57,534	218
	TOTALS	292,700,000		292,700,000	455,171,000	1,247,044	4,720

1 Percentages for Wells 1 through 6 are based the average annual % of annual withdrawal for the period 2005 through 20009.

2 Well 6 rate of 21 mg/yr represents sum of estimated pumping for irrigation (17 mg/yr) and municipal peak demand (4 mg/yr) that was provided by WSB & Associates

GOAL 1

Expand existing wastewater system infrastructure to meet the demands generated by continued development.

Water System Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following section outlines the primary goals for the water system followed by a series of objectives and policies intended to influence future development efforts that align with the community visions in this plan.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

EXPAND THE TRUNK WATERMAIN SYSTEM WITHIN THE URBAN SERVICE AREA.

Policy 1.1.1

Implement the expansion of the trunk watermain system within the Urban Service Area through orderly development.

Policy 1.1.2

The trunk watermain system within the future growth areas should generally follow the configuration as shown in Figure 7-4. Final trunk watermain sizes and locations should be based on the type, location and sequence of development within the projected growth areas.

Policy 1.1.3

Develop a financing strategy for funding the expansion of the trunk watermain system.



OBJECTIVE 2.1

REPLACE AGING WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE.

Policy 2.1.1

Prepare a study to document the condition of deficient watermain based on age, materials and history of breaks, leaks, freezing and other deficiencies.

Policy 2.1.2

Utilize the information from the watermain condition study, in conjunction with the condition information for other infrastructure elements, to develop, expand and prioritize projects to be included in the capital improvements.

OBJECTIVE 2.2

MONITOR THE CONDITION OF EXISTING WATER SUPPLY, TREATMENT, AND STORAGE INFRASTRUCTURE AND REPLACE AS REQUIRED.

Policy 2.2.1

Monitor the condition of the existing wells and related equipment and continue with regular inspections, maintenance and miscellaneous equipment replacement as required.

Policy 2.2.2

Monitor the condition of the water storage facilities and related equipment and continue with regular inspections, maintenance and miscellaneous equipment replacement as required.

Policy 2.2.3

Support planning intended to provide well head protection for wells supplying the municipal water system.

GOAL 2

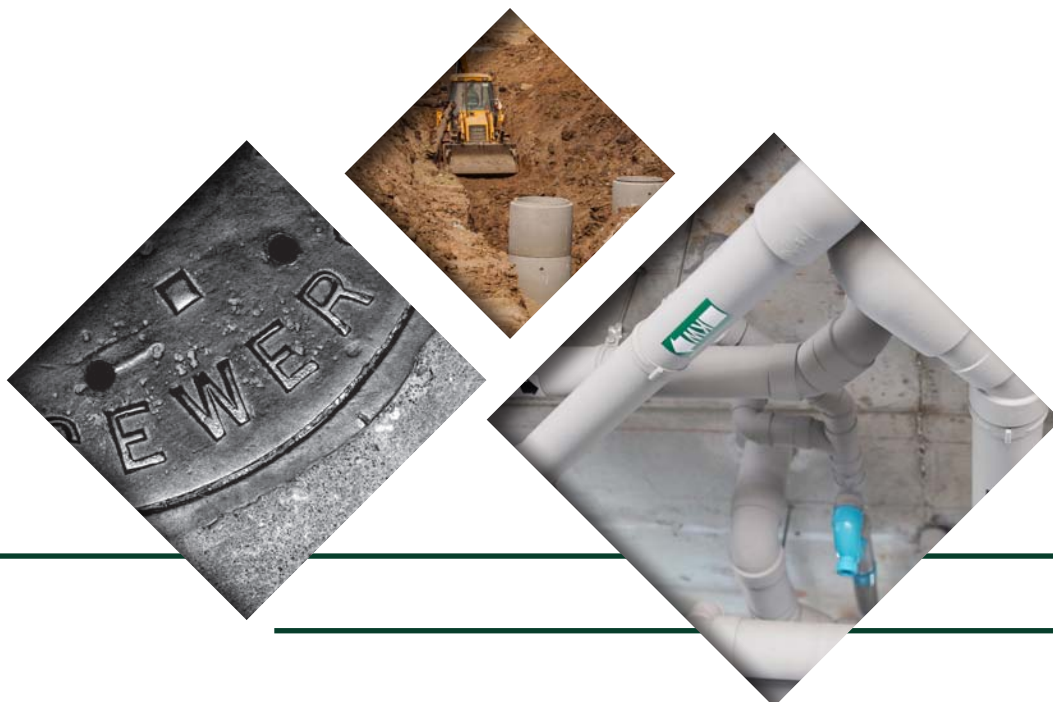
Monitor, evaluate and improve the condition of the City's existing wastewater system infrastructure.



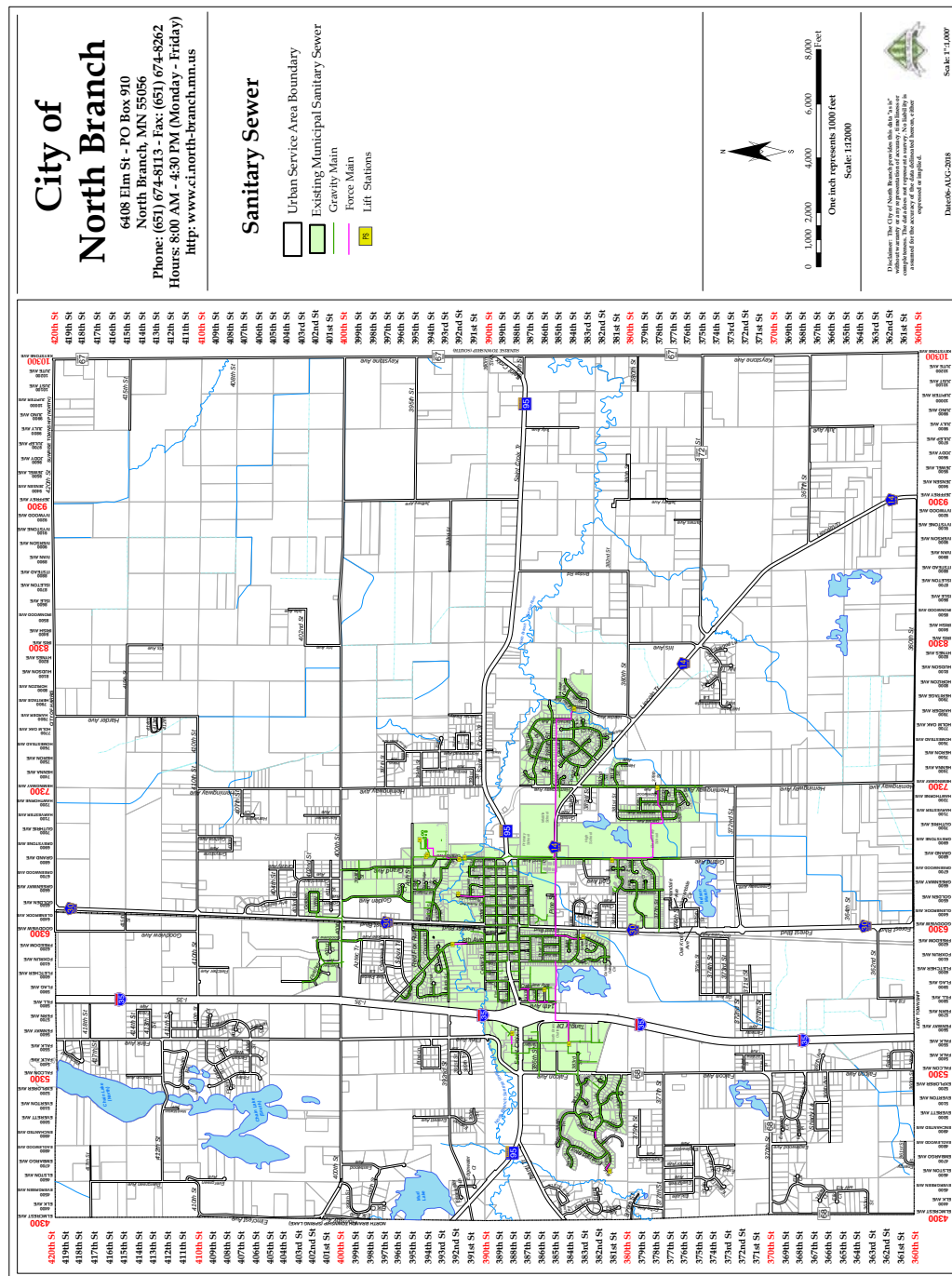
Wastewater System

Existing Systems

The existing wastewater collection system within the City of North Branch consists of a network of sanitary sewers ranging in size from 8 inches to 30 inches in diameter, totaling 40 miles of sanitary sewer pipe line throughout the city. There are also 12 wet well lift stations located throughout the City which collect and pump the wastewater from those areas which cannot be served by gravity sewers. The sanitary sewers and lift stations throughout the City collect into 2 main trunk sewers. The interconnected systems of lift stations pump all of the wastewater generated within the City North Branch to the City of North Branch's wastewater treatment facility. The City of North Branch has a mechanical treatment plant that came on line in 2004. The type of plant is an activated sludge extended aeration with aerated ash holding tanks and sludge storage tanks. The plant has an effluent phosphorus limit of 1 mg/l and the effluent is disinfected before being discharged into the North Branch of the Sunrise River. Figure No. 7-5 shows the trunk sewers system.



**Figure 7-5:
Existing Sanitary
Sewer Map**

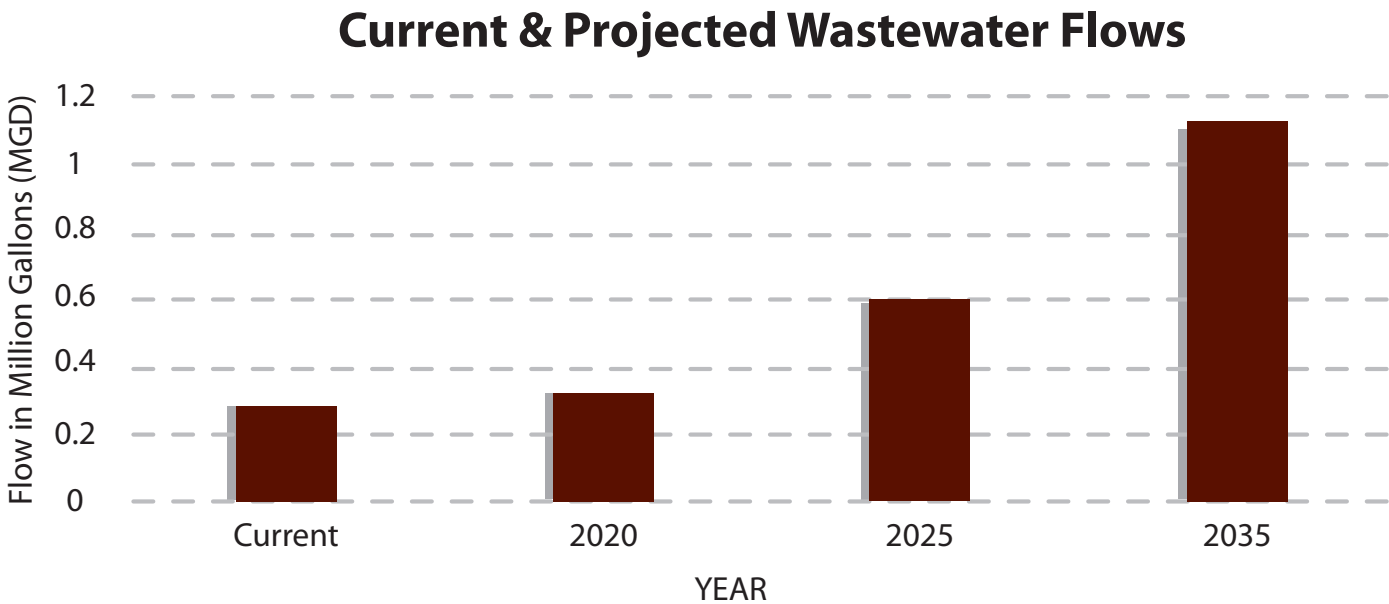


The capacity of the existing wastewater collection system is controlled, for the most part, by the capacity of the existing lift stations, trunk sewers, and the City’s wastewater treatment plant. The treatment plant capacity is .812 MGD wet weather flow, and has a current flow of .290 MGD. The sanitary sewer system and the lift stations within the City of North Branch are well maintained and well managed. Lift stations are cleaned every six months and the complete sanitary sewer system is cleaned annually. The sanitary sewer system is televised to verify the pipe condition and assure reliability of the system. Older segments of the municipal sanitary sewer pipes segments should be replaced as street construction projects are implemented using newer materials less susceptible to inflow and infiltration of ground water and surface water into the system. The City will continue to implement an on-going lift station maintenance and equipment replacement program to maximize the useful lives of the lift stations. Periodic repairs and replacements will be performed as required.

Future Improvements

The following table shows the current and projected wastewater flows from the City of North Branch:

Table 7-E:



The average daily wastewater flow is the total annual volume of wastewater collected within the City of North Branch and pumped to the North Branch Wastewater Treatment Plant divided by 365 days. The average wet weather wastewater flow is average daily flow for the 30 consecutive days that have the highest total flow during that 30-day period in each year.

The capacity of the existing wastewater collection system is controlled, for the most part, by the capacity of the existing lift stations, trunk sewers, and the City's wastewater treatment plant.

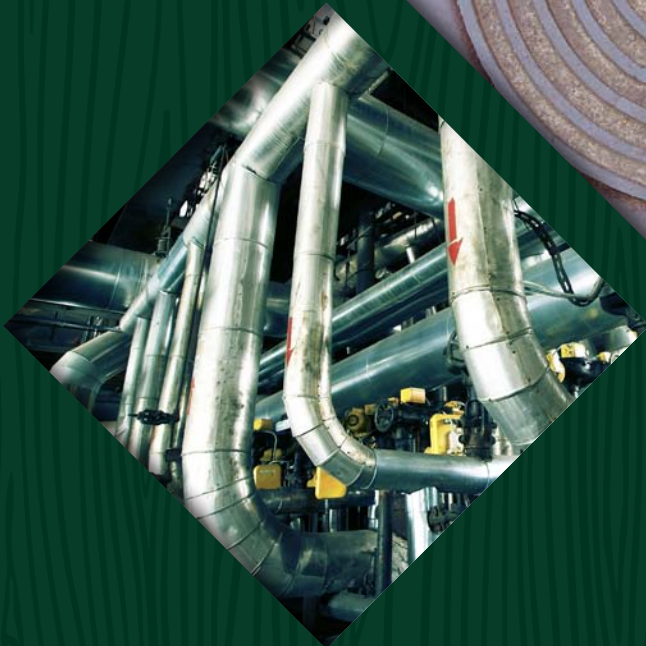


Figure 7-6:
Future Trunk Wastewater

Monthly Flows January 2019

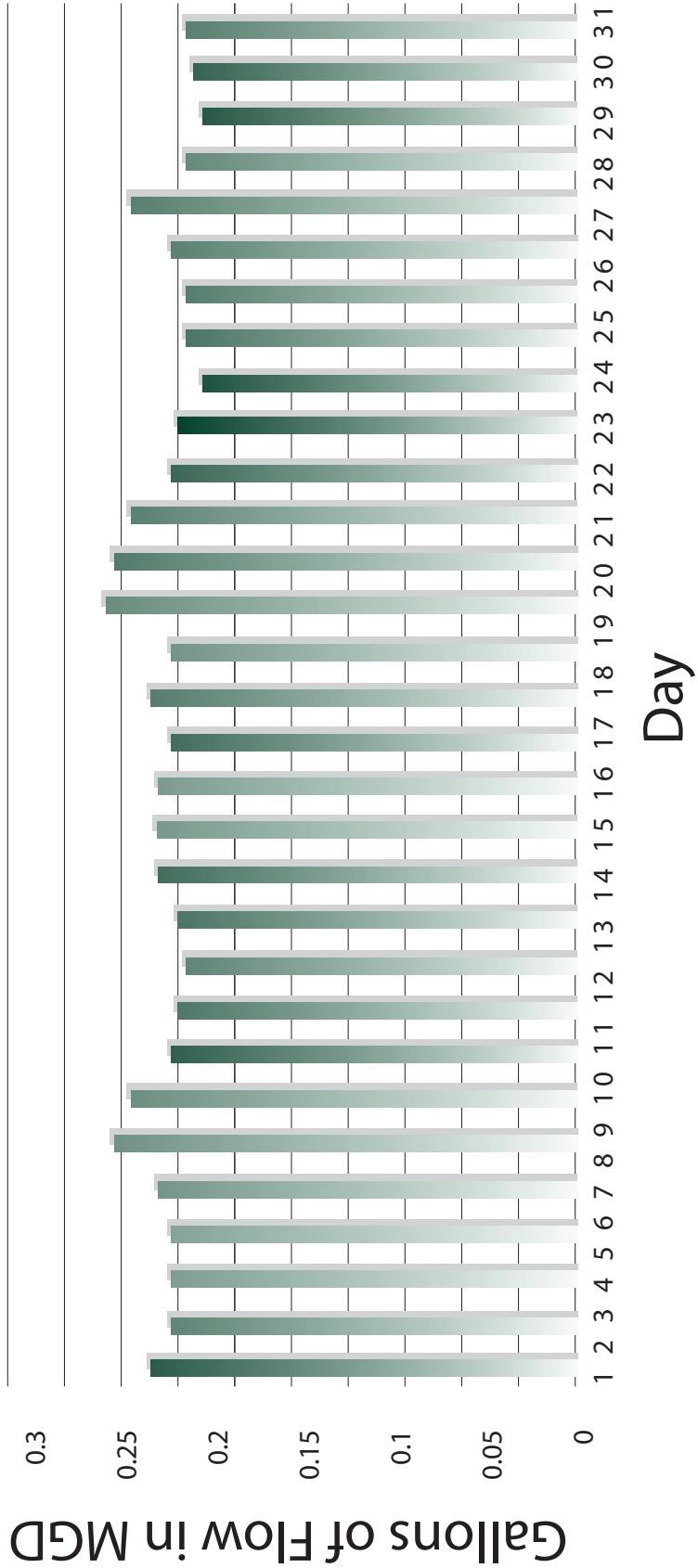
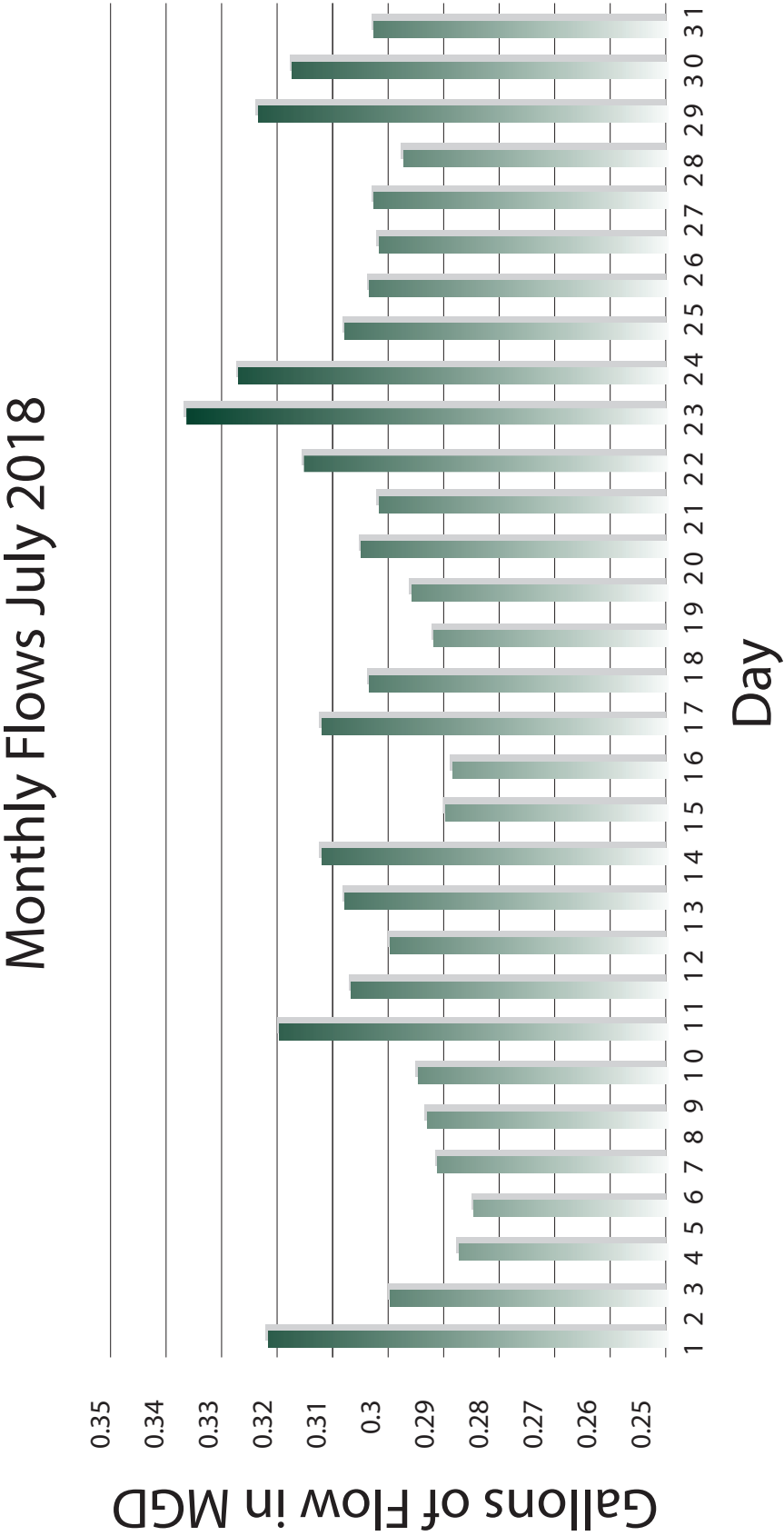


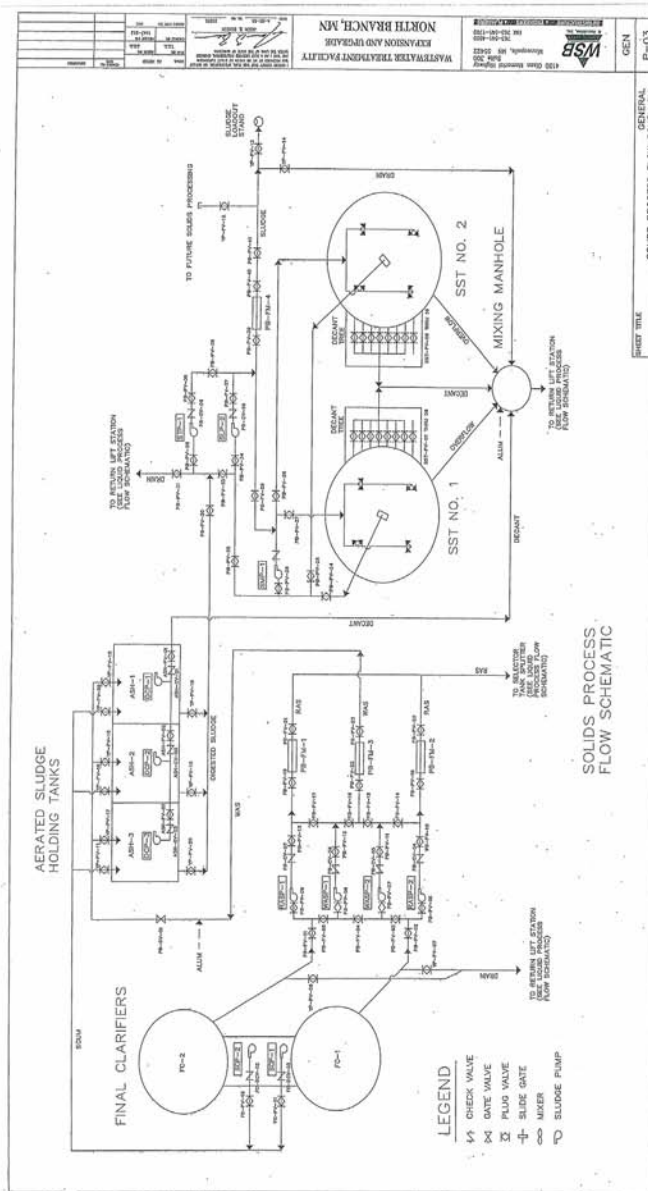
Figure 7-7:
Trunk Wastewater System



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Figure 7-9:



A system of sanitary sewers will be extended from the trunk sewer into the development areas. These trunk sewers will range in size from 8 inches to 15 inches in diameter. The exact size and configuration of the sanitary sewer system will be dependent on the type and density of development, existing and proposed topography, and in the case of commercial and industrial areas, the extent of water usage/ wastewater discharged. The approximate configuration of the primary network of sanitary sewers and lift stations within the projected development areas is shown in Figures 7-5.



The following section outlines the primary goals for the wastewater system followed by a series of objectives and policies intended to influence future development efforts that align with the community visions in this plan.

Wastewater System Goals, Objectives, and Policies

OBJECTIVE 1.1

EXPAND THE TRUNK WASTEWATER SYSTEM INTO FUTURE GROWTH AREAS.

Policy 1.1.1

Implement the expansion of the trunk sanitary sewer system as areas within the Urban Service Area are developed.

Policy 1.1.2

The trunk wastewater collection system within the future growth areas should generally follow the configuration as shown in Figures 7-6. Final trunk sanitary sewer and lift station sizes and locations should be based on the type, location and sequence of development within the projected growth areas.

Policy 1.1.3

Develop a financing strategy for funding the expansion of the trunk sanitary sewer system; monitor sewer access and trunk fees being assessed to insure that they reflect the costs of the system as it expands; explore assistance programs to reduce demands on the waste water system, resulting in reduced energy and other costs.

GOAL 1

Expand existing wastewater system infrastructure to meet the demands generated by continued development.



GOAL 2

Monitor, evaluate and improve the condition of the City's existing wastewater system infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE 2.1

REPLACE AGING SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE.

Policy 2.1.1

Prepare a study to document the condition of deficient sanitary sewers and collection system lift stations based on age, materials and deficiencies identified in sewer televising reports.

Policy 2.1.2

Utilize the information from the sanitary sewer condition study, in conjunction with the condition information for other infrastructure elements, to develop, expand and prioritize projects to be included in the capital improvements.

OBJECTIVE 2.2

MONITOR THE CONDITION OF EXISTING WASTEWATER PUMPING AND TREATMENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND REPLACE AS REQUIRED

Policy 2.2.1

Monitor NPDES wastewater quality standards and identify possible changes to the treatment processes currently utilized by the City.

Policy 2.2.2

Monitor the condition of the City's main lift stations, including the pumps, and continue with regular inspections, maintenance and miscellaneous equipment replacement, with emphasis on higher efficiency equipment, as required to accommodate existing and new users of the system.

Policy 2.2.3

Remove old wastewater ponds/infrastructure to accommodate future expansion as needed.



Stormwater System

General

The goal of the plan is to maintain and improve surface water quality and minimize impacts of increased water quantity through appropriate planning, policy enforcement and capital improvement projects.

Most Minnesota cities have existing pipe networks that were designed to relieve ponding within the original platted city limits. When these systems were designed, the concern for the downstream properties was not a consideration. The goal was the efficient and cost effective removal of stormwater runoff from developed areas. In North Branch's case, this meant the construction of direct pipelines to the Sunrise River with eventual transfer to the St. Croix River.

As little as 20 years ago, the urban storm sewer pipe design recommended by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) on County State Aid Highways for cities the size of North Branch was a 3-year design storm. That is, the pipe system was designed to handle less than a typical 3.5-inch rainfall. Now, as rainfall intensities appear to be increasing and construction costs are increasing faster than material costs, the recommended design is for the pipes to handle a 10-year storm while ensuring that overflow spillway routes prevent property damage for larger storms.

Based on the existing system, the effects of unmitigated growth on the downstream systems can be devastating and can lead to legal action against the governing authority. One of the best methods of mitigating the effects of growth is through the construction of stormwater retention basins. These basins are designed to store excess runoff at elevations where there is no adjacent property damage. The runoff is stored until the existing storm sewer system can take it away. Studies have shown that these basins not only provide flood protection, but can also help to remove stormwater pollutants.

Typically, the most efficient and most economical retention basins serve larger areas. Hence, an effort has been made to locate regional retention ponds as opposed to scattering smaller, localized development basins throughout the City. However, topography and available space must provide optimum locations for regional ponds. Regional ponds cannot be located in an existing wetland without the costly mitigation of the impacted wetland. They are also not recommended in floodplains. Recently, a Minnesota suburb was fined by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for illicit discharge of sediment into the Minnesota River associated with its floodplain stormwater treatment pond having its containment bank eroded away by the flooded river. This comprehensive plan considers these factors when recommending Best Management Practices (BMPs). It also considers information from long term residents of North Branch and City staff regarding the observation of the natural ponding associated with heavy rainfalls when siting regional basins.

One drawback associated with regional pond planning is finding a funding mechanism to purchase the land needed and finding ways to have new development assist in their construction. Ideal planning of regional basins includes the purchase of the needed land while constructing the basin with funding generated from area charges on the new developments that generate the excess runoff. The trouble is that the land acquisition should be made before the development occurs, but the development fees are used to pay for the land and regional pond. Greater Minnesota cities are also reluctant to

impose development charges, because their goal is to attract new businesses with low cost, and not to burden them with additional fees.

Although regional ponds are the most cost effective method of hydraulically managing flooding, they are not necessarily the best method of handling the new water quality regulations for stormwater. The water quality regulations for stormwater are ever changing. For example, since 2007, the City of North Branch has been required to obtain a permit for its Municipally Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4).

This MS4 permit is renewed every 5 years and the permit rules continue to evolve. The MS4 permit and in the coincidental Construction Stormwater Permit, municipalities and developers are required to reduce the runoff volume from new construction sites by removing the first 1-inch of runoff. To accomplish this, each new construction site having more than 1-acre of new impervious surfacing must take all appropriate measures to reduce the additional runoff volume created by the proposed new impervious surfaces (roofs and pavement).

Typically the most cost effective ways of accomplishing the required volume reduction is through infiltration or rainwater harvesting. Infiltration practices have the benefit of using the soil to assist in filtering the runoff. They also reduce runoff volumes from a developed area by taking a portion of the runoff and recharging the ground water. As such, they are often touted by surface water management agencies and review authorities. However, they must also be strategically placed to prevent the potential for contamination of City wells. Many cities have restricted the use of infiltration practices inside their wellhead protection area or well capture zone.

Filtration practices, such as filtration basins, biofilters, iron infused sand filters, etc., are similar to the more common infiltration practices, but are designed so that the stormwater filters through plants and filter media before draining into a storm sewer and not infiltrating into the ground. Filtration basins are recommended to manage stormwater runoff and improve water quality within the 1-year Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA). Filtration basins are recommended wherever they will fit into the designs and encouraged wherever local private property owners might request retrofitting them into their landscaping. Any private filtration basins that are installed will help lessen the load on the existing storm sewer system and improve water quality.

The northwest quadrant of North Branch is ideally suited for infiltration because the underlying soils are predominately sandy. On the other hand, much of the southern portion of North Branch has clay soils that are not conducive to infiltration. Because of these water quality regulation changes, it may be advantageous to plan regional ponds for flood prevention associated with extreme rainfall events, while planning smaller water quality BMPs on a neighborhood or individual development scale.

Wetlands

In 1991, the Minnesota Legislature passed the Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA). The WCA is administered according to Minnesota Rules Chapter 8420 to implement the purpose of the Act, which is to:

1. Achieve no net loss in the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota's existing wetlands;
2. Increase the quantity, quality and biological diversity of Minnesota wetlands by restoring or enhancing diminished or drained wetlands;
3. Avoid direct and indirect impacts from activities that destroy or diminish the quantity, quality, or biological diversity of wetlands;
4. Replace wetland values where avoidance of activities is not feasible and prudent.

Pretreatment of all stormwater from new developments is required prior to discharge into any wetlands. Wetlands may be, and are currently being used for stormwater storage for larger rainfall events. They may continue to be used for this purpose even after upstream development, provided that:

1. There is acceptable Best Management Practice pretreatment of the runoff in accordance with the MPCA NPDES/ SDS Construction Permit, Section III.D., Permanent Stormwater Management System.
2. The bounce from the normal water level to the high water level does not exceed two feet.

The Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) requires the designated Local Governmental Unit (LGU) in charge of administering the WCA to generate a Notice of Wetland Conservation Act Decision for any impact to wetlands within the City of North Branch. For North Branch, the wetland LGU is Chisago County. In all but minor decisions, the LGU will call for a Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) review of the application or impact prior to issuing a decision. The LGU must give notice of proposed actions affecting wetlands to all of the following:

1. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
2. The Soil and Water Conservation District
3. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
4. The City of North Branch
5. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
6. Interested citizens requesting notification of such actions

If a TEP meeting is required, all listed parties are invited to review the proposed action. However, it is not uncommon for a TEP meeting to consist of only a small contingent of this list, as some invitees may have no jurisdiction over the proposed action.

NPDES Phase II Considerations

General City Permits

In 1987, the US Congress amended the Clean Water Act to include stormwater pollution and directed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to initiate rulemaking. The first round of EPA rules were implemented in 1991 when NPDES Phase I permits were required for all cities exceeding 100,000 in population. Phase II was implemented in 2003 and targeted all cities with populations exceeding 10,000. In 2008, the Phase II rulemaking expanded the list of targeted cities to include cities with

populations exceeding 5,000 and that discharge into an impaired water. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) assumed responsibility for implementing the rules and issuing all Phase II permits. The NPDES Phase II rules apply to all construction disturbances of one acre or more.

The federal mandates are intended to regulate these sources of continued environmental degradation. New developments have become increasingly targeted. All new developments, creating more than one acre of impervious surfacing, are required to have some form of stormwater treatment. In general, this need can be satisfied by properly designed infiltration/ filtration basins or wet retention basins. The following is a listing of the available stormwater quality and quantity systems currently being designed to handle the water quality/quantity issue:

a. Regional Wet Retention Basins

Numerous studies have been done on the water quality treatment afforded by wet retention basins, most notably one by William Walker Jr. for the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Area (1987). The Walker study found that properly sized wet retention basins can effectively remove pollutants through sediment removal. When properly sized, these ponds can significantly reduce the contaminant levels, including phosphorus, commonly found in urban stormwater runoff. According to the MPCA's Stormwater Manual, on average wet retention basins can remove 84% of suspended solids, 50% of total phosphorus, and 30% of total nitrogen. Wet retention basins also provide flood storage. Wet retention basins are also well known for their stormwater quantity handling capabilities and work well for areas with Hydrologic Soil Group Type D (clay) soils.

b. Bioretention Systems

Another method of managing stormwater runoff is to install bioretention practices in strategic locations where stormwater will be collected and allowed to filtrate through the planting media or be taken up by vegetation before entering the storm sewer.

c. Infiltration/Filtration Bioretention Basins

According to the MPCA's Stormwater Manual 2, bioretention facilities capture rainwater runoff to be filtered through a prepared soil medium. Pollutants are removed by a number of processes including adsorption, filtration, volatilization, ion exchange and decomposition (Prince George's County, MD, 1993). Filtered runoff from bioretention basins can either be allowed to infiltrate into the surrounding soil (functioning as an infiltration basin or rainwater garden), or collected by an under-drain system and discharged to the storm sewer system or directly to receiving waters ("filtration only" bioretention basin). Due to the groundwater vulnerability and the WHPA covering a portion of lower North Branch, lined filtration basins are recommended for the areas of North Branch within the 1-year WHPA. Runoff from larger storms is generally allowed to bypass the filled bioretention basin and flow directly to the storm drain system. Infiltration/filtration basins are typically designed for treating the water quality and not for the water quantity of urban stormwater runoff.

That is, the MPCA requirement for water quality is to treat the first 1 inch of runoff from a site (water

quality volume). This is in contrast to the larger amount of runoff that may be actually leaving the site for a 3 to 6 inch rainfall (water quantity). Because stormwater quality has become a greater issue, bioretention basins have become a significant design tool for municipal stormwater systems. Bioretention basins can remove 85% of suspended solids, 100% of total phosphorus, and 50% of total nitrogen.

NPDES Phase II Construction Permits

The NPDES Phase II construction stormwater permit requirements have also taken effect. As of August 1, 2013 a new NPDES permit is in effect. A construction permit is required for any disturbance of more than 1 acre. The permit process is best summarized in the following table:

Table 7-E: Construction Stormwater Permit Requirements	
Item	Requirement
<i>Minimum Disturbance Triggering a permit</i>	<i>1 acre</i>
<i>New Homes</i>	<i>Permit required if part of the larger development</i>
<i>Permit Fee</i>	<i>\$400</i>
<i>Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)</i>	<i>1. Must be on file 2. Must be submitted if over 50 acres and is within 1 mile and discharges into a Special Water</i>
<i>Responsibility for compliance</i>	<i>Contractor is responsible for erosion controls.</i>
<i>Responsibility after land sale</i>	<i>Owner is responsible for implementation of the SWPPP</i>
	<i>Transferred with the property until Notice of Termination</i>

SWPPP for Construction Permits

The construction permit also requires the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for the disturbed site. The SWPPP requirements are as follows:

- a. Must be designed prior to permit application and available on site.
- b. Should typically use BMPs that are recognized as effective.
- c. Unique innovative designs may be used, but have formal review and monitoring requirements.
- d. Owner must identify a person with approved training in accordance with the Permit who will oversee the implementation of the SWPPP.
- e. Owner must identify a person with approved training in accordance with the Permit that will be responsible for long-term operation and maintenance of the permanent BMPs.
- f. Owner must develop a chain of responsibility to ensure that the SWPPP will be implemented and stay in effect until termination. The SWPPP must have the following:
 1. Location and type of all temporary and permanent erosion controls and sediment control BMPs.

2. Standard plates and specifications for the BMPs.
3. A site map with existing and final grades, subwatershed limits and direction of flow for both the pre and post development drainage areas. The site map must include existing and proposed impervious surfaces and soil types.
4. Locations of areas not to be disturbed (construction limits).
5. Locations of areas of phased construction to minimize duration of exposed soil.
6. All surface waters and wetlands within 1 mile that can be identified on a quadrangle map and will receive runoff from the site.
7. Methods used for final stabilization of exposed soils.
8. The range of soil particles expected to be present at the site.

Permanent Sedimentation Pond Requirements

If more than one acre of new impervious surface is created by the construction, permanent water quality BMPs are required as part of the permanent SWPPP. If the filtration or infiltration alternatives listed above are not possible, a permanent wet retention basin is the most utilized method of meeting the requirements. The new construction stormwater permit requires that the stormwater volume equivalent of 1 inch over any new impervious surface area be retained on site through infiltration or other volume reduction practices. There are some exceptions to this requirement, including projects that have Hydrologic Soil Group D (clay) soils. In the case of D soils, a permanent stormwater pond is a good option. The permanent pond requirements are summarized as follows:

- a. A permanent volume (dead storage) of 1,800 cubic feet per acre draining to the basin.
- b. A water quality volume (equal to 1 inch multiplied by the new impervious surface) that cannot be discharged at a rate exceeding 5.66 cfs per acre of pond surface area (when the pond has both the permanent volume and water quality volume in it).
- c. A 3 foot minimum depth and a 10 foot maximum depth.
- d. Outlets placed to minimize short circuiting and designed to skim floating debris.
- e. An emergency overflow.
- f. Adequate public access (typically 8 feet wide).

Regional Pond Considerations

An area regional pond may be used provided that:

- a. The regional pond is not a wetland.
- b. Must be designed to meet the treatment pond criteria for all impervious surfaces.
- c. Regional pond owner's authorization must be secured as part of the permitting process.

Existing Systems

The City of North Branch is a Municipally Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). The City of North Branch ultimately drains to the Sunrise River. The City of North Branch operates an extensive stormwater treatment system, serving residential, commercial and industrial users. There are several stormwater ponds in the City's stormwater system.

All areas served by public ditches are subject to the rules governed by Minnesota Statute 103E and

under the governance of Nicollet County. Minnesota Statute 103E states that all connections to the ditch, or in this case, the County Tile, must be petitioned to the County Auditor.

There is no other record that the City has entered into any water resource management related agreements with its neighboring cities, the county, watershed district, lake associations or the state of Minnesota. The City of North Branch has been responsible for construction, maintenance, and other projects in or along the City's stormwater collection systems outside of the mainline County ditch and tile systems.

In 1998, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) listed the North Branch of the Sunrise River as an impaired water for excessive E. coli fecal coliform TMDL under section 303 (d) of the Clean Water Act. The river, from its headwaters near Weber in Isanti County to its confluence with the main stem of the Sunrise River near Hay Creek in Chisago County, was listed as impaired for primary contact recreation swimming. The North Branch of the Sunrise River is located in east central Minnesota. It is a tributary of the Sunrise River and is part of the larger St. Croix River basin.

Future Improvements

Generally, the City will work to ensure erosion control and surface water quality standards are met through enforcement of the City's permitting requirements and implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as regional stormwater ponds. The City will ensure compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II permits for municipal operations and for construction activity greater than 1 acre. City cooperation with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is key to maintaining the relevance of the City's plan.



Figure 7-10:
Map of the North
Branch of the
Sunrise River
Watershed

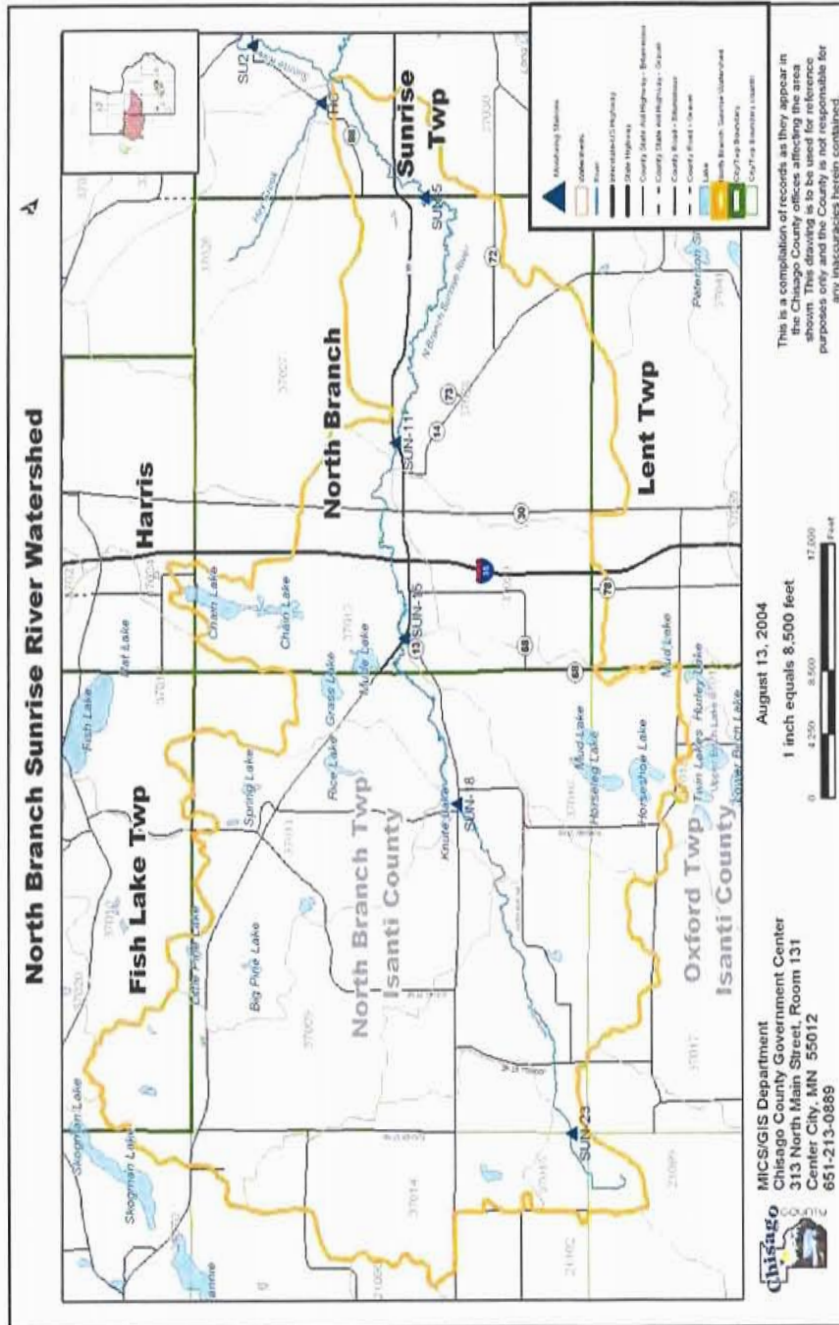
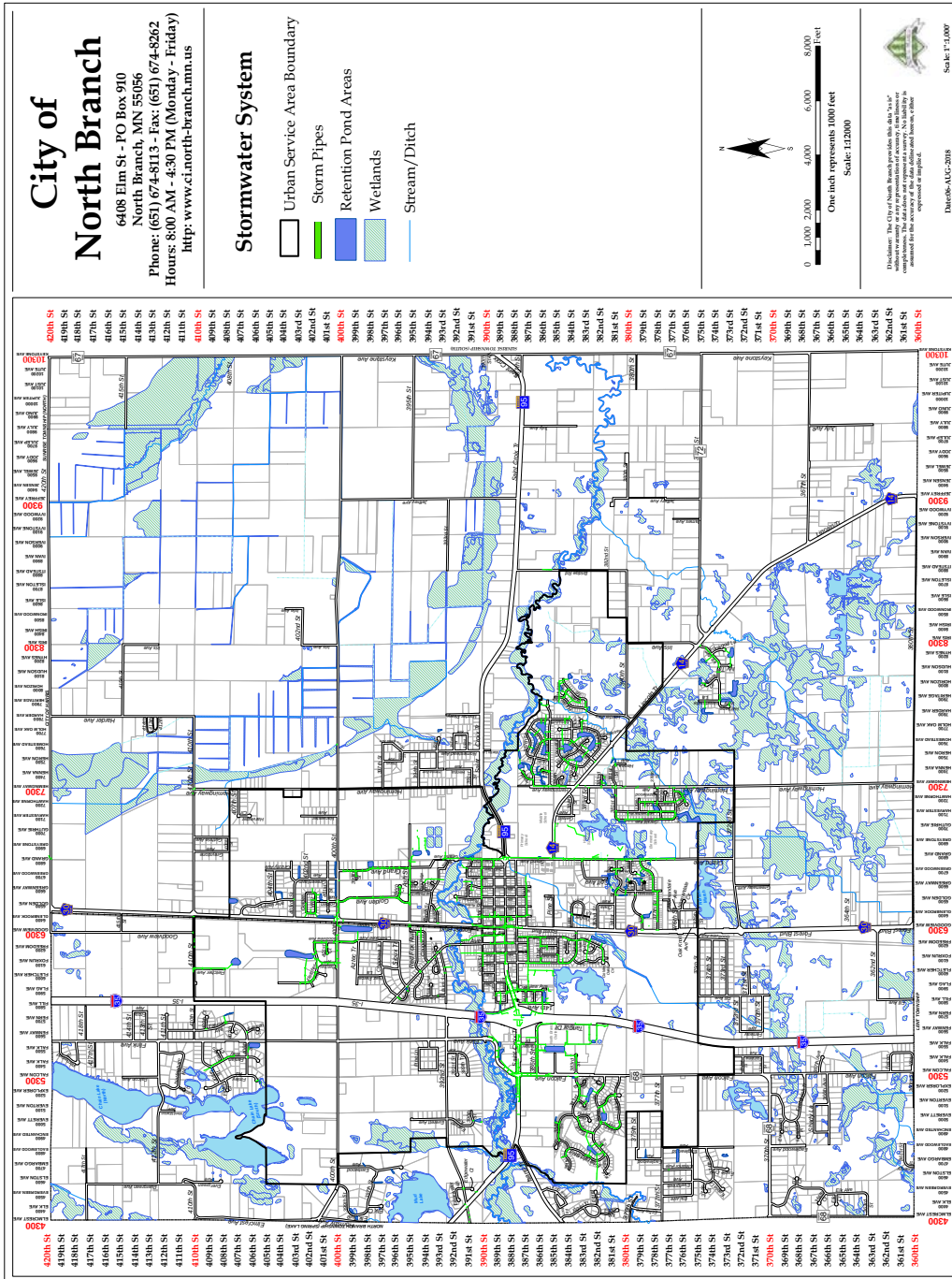


Figure 7-11:
Storm Sewer
Existing Map



GOAL 1

Expand existing stormwater management system infrastructure to meet the demands generated by continued development.

Stormwater System Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following section outlines the primary goals for the stormwater system followed by a series of objectives and policies intended to influence future development efforts that align with the community visions in this plan.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

EXPAND THE STORMWATER COLLECTION, TREATMENT AND OUTFALL SYSTEM INTO FUTURE GROWTH AREAS.

Policy 1.1.1

Include in existing stormwater system maps the locations of culverts serving the rural areas of the city (with dates of installation) so as to better anticipate repairs, replacements and future maintenance of the public ditch systems.

Policy 1.1.2

Implement the expansion of the stormwater collection, treatment and outfall system as areas outside the limits of the existing stormwater collection system are developed, with a focus on regional stormwater ponds, where possible and infiltration Minimal Impact Design Standards (green infrastructure).

Policy 1.1.3

Final collection, treatment and outfall sizes and locations should be based on the type, location and sequence of development within the projected growth areas.

Policy 1.1.4

Develop a financing strategy for funding the expansion of the stormwater collection, treatment and outfall system.



OBJECTIVE 2.1

REPLACE AGING STORM SEWER SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE.

Policy 2.1.1: Prepare a study to document the condition of deficient storm sewers and ponds based on age, materials and other known deficiencies.

Policy 2.1.2: Utilize the information from the storm sewer condition study, in conjunction with the condition information for other infrastructure elements, to develop, expand and prioritize projects, including those to implement green infrastructure science practices, to be included in the capital improvements.

OBJECTIVE 2.2

ADDRESS SEDIMENTATION ISSUES IN THE CITY'S EXISTING STORMWATER TREATMENT PONDS.

Policy 2.2.1

Develop a study to determine the levels and characteristics of sediment in the City's existing stormwater ponds.

Policy 2.2.2

Develop a plan for cleaning sediment from ponds and for disposal of sediment.

GOAL 2

Monitor, evaluate and improve the condition of the City's existing stormwater system infrastructure.



8

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION

Introduction

Natural resources are beneficial to the social, environmental, and economic vitality of a community. To ensure their quality and benefits, it is essential to plan and manage natural resources and areas as we do residential and commercial areas. The City of North Branch will promote, preserve and enhance the natural resources within the city and protect them from adverse effects occasioned by poorly sited development or incompatible activities by regulating land disturbances or development activities that would have an adverse and potentially irreversible impact on water quality and unique and fragile environmentally sensitive land; by minimizing conflicts and encouraging compatibility between land disturbing and development activities and water quality and environmentally sensitive land; and by requiring detailed review standards and procedures for land disturbing or development activities proposed for such areas, thereby achieving a balance between urban growth and development and protection of water quality and natural areas.

Wildlife Corridor

The Minnesota DNR has identified a regional greenway corridor in North Branch as part of the Metro Wildlife Corridors project (a 12-county metro area). The project, “ensuring that people and nature in the Twin Cities Area can grow together for generations to come” seeks to protect and restore key natural lands in the metro area by:

- Focusing pro-actively on strategic areas, of which North Branch is a part
- Efficiently leveraging private and public partners and resources
- Building upon prior investments in public lands, and
- Enhancing the cost-effectiveness of conservation efforts by coordinating them within a regional framework.

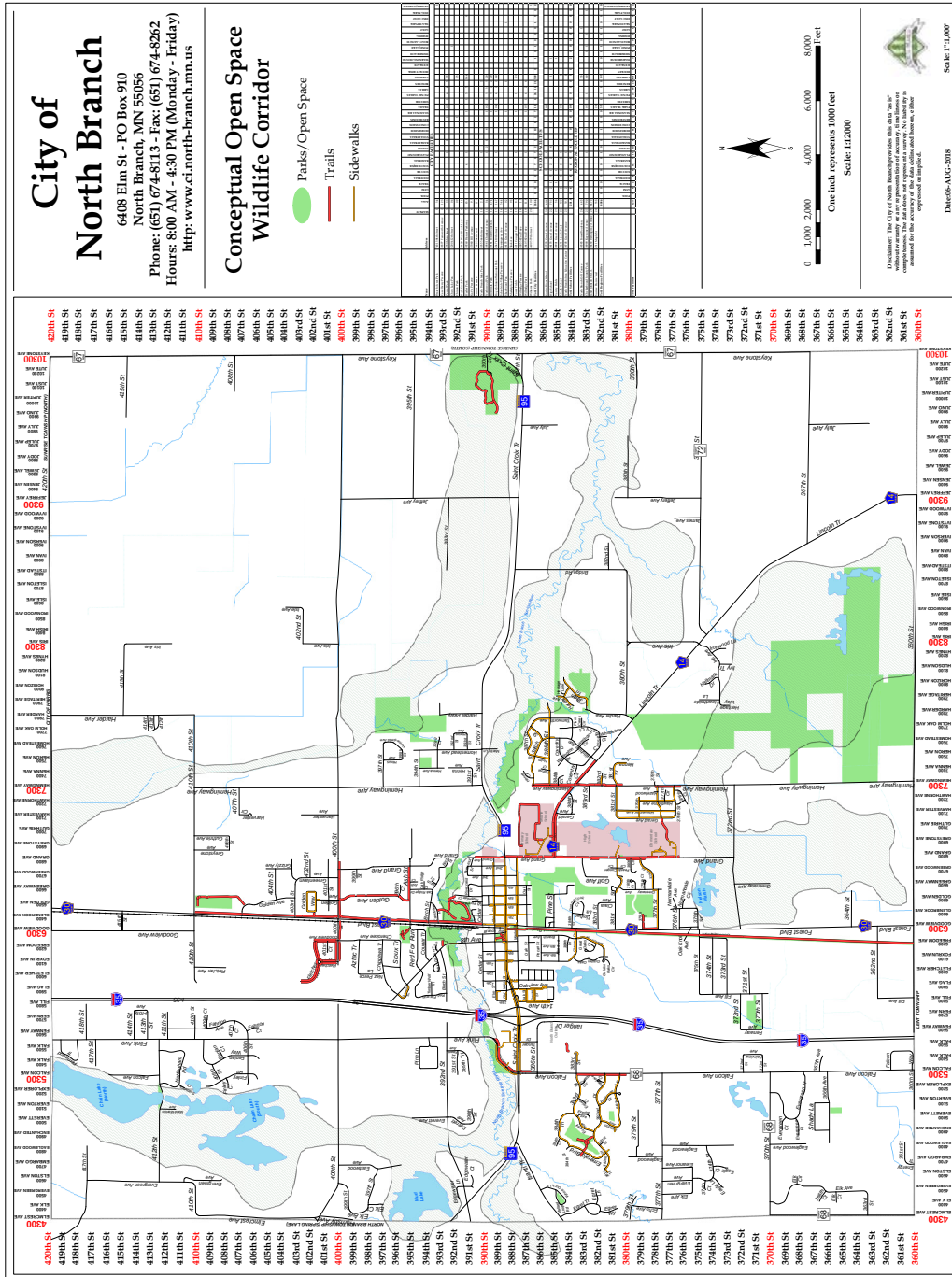
This corridor is specifically designed to incorporate, the high quality natural areas such as those identified in the Natural Resource Inventory or mapped by the MnDNR, natural corridors such as the Sunrise River, and areas that connect these features.

The City of North Branch supports the preservation of natural and open spaces along the north branch of the Sunrise River, the city’s name sake. It has also identified a conceptual greenway corridor, and as much as possible, development within the greenway corridor, should be encouraged to use conservation design strategies, conservation easements, park dedication, parcel evaluation, and the strategic siting of open space and natural areas parks to develop and improve habitat quality and connectivity within the greenways. Strategies to avoid fragmentation of existing natural areas are especially important for maintaining ecological function of the natural areas.



The City of North Branch will promote, preserve and enhance the natural resources within the city

Figure 8-1:
Conceptual Open
Space Wildlife Corridor



Tree Preservation

The City's tree preservation ordinance acknowledges the benefits and amenities trees offer to the community and acknowledges that trees are part of a more complex, interrelated system. Trees protect the environment by moderating climate, improving air quality, reducing erosion and stormwater runoff, and harboring wildlife. The ordinance focuses on protection of quality wooded areas rather than of individual trees. To preserve wooded areas in the City, each new development is required to submit a Tree Preservation Plan. The regulation also provides guidance for permitted tree removal, mitigation procedures, and tree replacement provisions.

Minnesota GreenStep City

In 2018, the Mayor and City Council approved a resolution to make North Branch a GreenStep City through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and League of Minnesota Cities' program. Minnesota GreenStep Cities is a voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program to help cities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals. This free continuous improvement program, managed by a public-private partnership, is based upon 29 best practices. Each best practice can be implemented by completing one or more actions at a 1, 2 or 3-star level, from a list of four to eight actions. These actions are tailored to all Minnesota cities, focus on cost savings and energy use reduction, and encourage civic innovation. North Branch is currently a Step 1 City. As North Branch plans for the future, it will continue to consider GreenStep City Best Management Practices as they relate to the goals and objectives of this comprehensive plan.

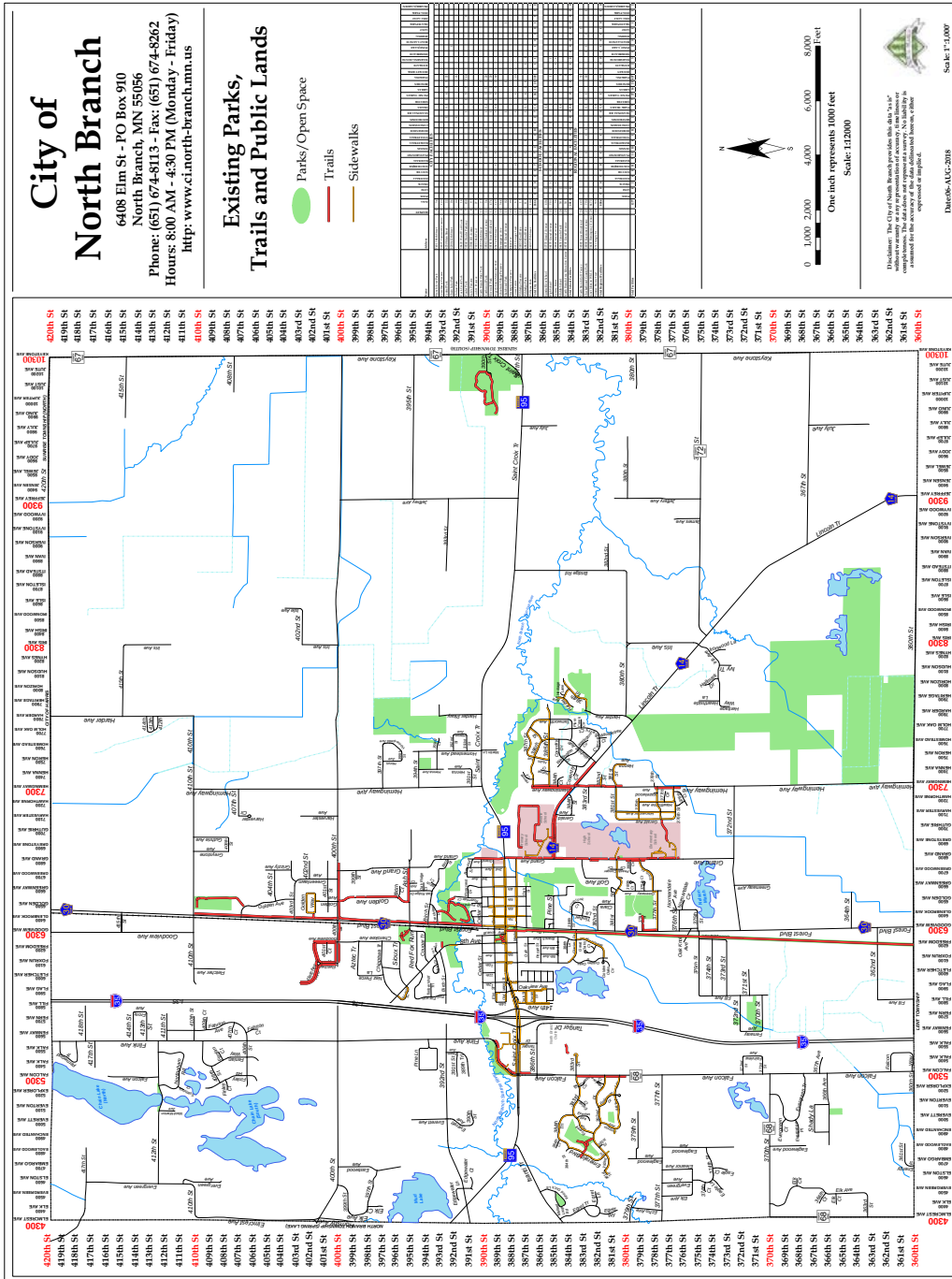
Parks, Trails and Recreation

The comprehensive parks and recreation plan is the first planning document devoted to establishing park, recreation, and trail planning criteria, guidelines, and standards, for future development of these amenities within the City of North Branch. The existing park system is already fairly developed with a strong emphasis and need placed on youth recreation opportunities. The community has done a good job of including sidewalks in various neighborhoods, but currently lacks a comprehensive trail system along TH 95 and the Sunrise Prairie Trail needs to be extended from 410th north to the city limits. Pedestrian and bike crossings are needed throughout the City. In addition, alternative transportation and exercise options through the use of trails should continue to be expanded and enhanced.

*North Branch is part of the
Metro Wildlife Corridors
project (a 12-county metro
area)*



Figure 8-2:
Existing Parks, Trails
& Public Lands



Vision for Natural Environment

Natural infrastructure includes all systems that relate to natural resources and contribute to an improved public life. Natural infrastructure considers the full range of natural resource uses including economic, environmental, health, cultural, and aesthetic. This broad view leads us to include surface water, groundwater, stormwater, wastewater, drinking water, geology, topography, soils, natural areas, open space, green spaces, urban forest, habitat, vegetation, scenic views, and parks and trails in natural infrastructure.

Natural infrastructure is a key element in planning where development should or should not take place within a city. This element is important to communities and development as it avoids certain development hazards, provides health benefits to citizens, protects ecological systems and enhances biological diversity, supports economic activities such as mining and forestry, and offers communities unique quality of life components. Consideration of natural infrastructure ensures that homes are built upon stable dry soils, provides clean drinking water, accounts for resource based economic activities, provides scenic views and open spaces, and plans development that respect the integrity of natural systems and incorporate natural features into development.



Natural Environment Goals, Objectives, and Policies

OBJECTIVE 1.1

PRESERVE OPEN SPACE AND WILDLIFE CORRIDOR.

Policy 1.1.1

Build upon the Metro Area Green Corridor System within North Branch incorporating the wooded edge while maintaining the rural character of the City's major natural amenities into the Open Space System.

Policy 1.1.2

Identify and conserve critical wildlife habitat including nesting sites, foraging areas, and migration corridors within or adjacent to natural areas, open spaces, and the developing urban areas, preserve sensitive habitat sites that support threatened species and urban wildlife habitat.

Policy 1.1.3

Identify and conserve forested and woodland cover and the scenic attributes provide between rural and urban land uses, preserve and protect significant environmental features including unique wetlands, open spaces, woodlands, shorelines, waterfronts and other characteristics that support wildlife and reflect the cities resource heritage.

Policy 1.1.4

Develop Partnerships with other organizations, institutions, and local units of government on planning and zoning, land use, preservation and conservation related issues, capitalize on the development and promotion of the North Branch of the Sunrise River and take ownership and promote the advantages of the City's relationship to the Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway and the importance the North Branch of the Sunrise River has to the river's federally protected status.

GOAL 1

Develop an integrated plan that balances community growth, natural resources, cultural and historical features.



OBJECTIVE 1.2

MAINTAIN HEALTHY URBAN FOREST AND PARK SYSTEM.

Policy 1.2.1

Continue high standards of park and public land maintenance, and management by continued investment in personnel, equipment, and methods, expand sustainable practices and invasive species management (i.e. the Emerald Ash Borer, buckthorn, etc.) and obtain the information, training and resources needed to effectively address planning, preservation and conservation issues.

Policy 1.2.2

Undertake citizen-based planning designed to manage growth and build needed infrastructure, while at the same time preserving the natural qualities with which the region is blessed.

Policy 1.2.3

Increase natural areas and open space linkages within the developing urban areas

OBJECTIVE 1.3

FOSTER NATURAL PARK DEVELOPMENT.

Policy 1.3.1

Promote native landscaping and greening initiatives, support use of best management practices and reduction of chemical use, establish community gardens, and encourage the use and planting of pollinator friendly habitats.

OBJECTIVE 1.4

IDENTIFY, PRESERVE, AND ENHANCE NORTH BRANCH'S MULTICULTURAL HERITAGE, TRADITIONS, AND CULTURAL FEATURES WITHIN HISTORICAL SITES, BUILDINGS, ARTWORK, PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS TO PRESERVE INTEREST AND PROVIDE A BALANCED SOCIAL EXPERIENCE.

Policy 1.4.1

Identify, designate and protect significant historic structures and sites, establish history and heritage preservation programs utilizing existing resources to help increase knowledge and promote the history and heritage of North Branch.

Policy 1.4.2

Implement natural resources and environmental educational and interpretive programs.

Vision for Parks, Trails, and Recreation

To provide a comprehensive and balanced system of parks, greenways, trails, and support for providers of recreation- orientated activities / programs for city residents in an as cost effective manner as possible.

Park Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following section outlines the primary goals for parks followed by a series of objectives and policies intended to influence future development efforts that align with the community visions in this plan.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

PLAN AND DESIGN PARKS, TRAILS, SIDEWALKS, AND BIKE PATHS IN A WAY THAT ENSURES THEIR LONG TERM VIABILITY.

Policy 1.1.1

All park properties that are set aside (and/or are proposed in the future) must take into account the long-term commitments required to develop, operate, and maintain across their lifecycles, with buildings constructed to the state's SB2030 performance standards for on-going cost reductions, when feasible.

Policy 1.1.2

Balance maintained turf areas with natural areas to add aesthetic appeal, control maintenance costs, infiltrate stormwater, eliminate toxic chemical use and provide wildlife habitat, and reduce carbon emissions.

Policy 1.1.3

Update parks plan every 5-10 years depending on the amount of change and development within the city.

Policy 1.1.4

Explore alternative methods for parkland dedication that will assure sufficient park facilities well into the future.

Policy 1.1.5

Phase Improvements based on replacement needs and available funding. Manage system investments through analysis of applicable data.

GOAL 1

Plan for a sustainable park and trail system.



OBJECTIVE 1.2

UNDERSTAND CURRENT TRENDS AND COMMUNITY ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND NEEDS AS RELATED TO PARKS WITHIN THE CITY.

Policy 1.2.1

Discuss local and regional park and trails issues and opportunities with the Department of Natural Resources, Chisago County, adjacent communities, environmental organizations, and others.

Policy 1.2.2

Master plans should be prepared for each park prior to their development to ensure that the right mix of amenities are provided and the park's design is cohesive and complementary to the design for other parks and public spaces.

Policy 1.2.3

Ensure public participation in the master planning process is included for each park development project.

Policy 1.2.4

Analyze the placement and use of "nature play" equipment in existing and proposed parks.

OBJECTIVE 1.3

USE SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PRACTICES.

Policy 1.3.1

Use renewable energy where possible (i.e. solar lights for trails, solar power at athletic facilities).

Policy 1.3.2: Consider use of recycled materials and promote recycling in all park areas.

OBJECTIVE 1.4

IDENTIFY ALTERNATIVE, SUSTAINABLE REVENUE SOURCES.

Policy 1.4.1

Expand grassroots parks and recreation advocacy.

Policy 1.4.2

Pursue alternative revenue sources such as program fees, community funds, grants, charitable gaming, memorials, commemoratives, and donations, etc.

Policy 1.4.3

Encourage business involvement, sponsorship, and naming rights of parks, recreation facilities and events.

Policy 1.4.4

Apply marketing strategies to increase income potential and broaden awareness.

OBJECTIVE 2.1

SERVICE LOCAL PARK AND RECREATION NEEDS BY PROVIDING NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY PARKS AS RESIDENTIAL GROWTH OCCURS.

Policy 2.1.1

Ensure neighborhood parks are developed as part of new residential neighborhoods with buildings constructed to the state's SB2030 performance standards for on-going cost reductions, when feasible.

Policy 2.1.2

Explore the possibility of including a community park in appropriate areas of the City.

Policy 2.1.3

Locate new parks based on how they can be best integrated with the new development that the park will serve.

GOAL 2

Provide additional park and recreation opportunities in areas of new development throughout the city.



GOAL 3

Adhere to Park
Master Planning
and Facility
Design Quality
/ Development
Standards.

OBJECTIVE 3.1

ENSURE THE QUALITY STANDARD FOR BUILT FEATURES WITHIN THE PARK SYSTEM IS CONSISTENT WITH INDUSTRY STANDARDS FOR SAFETY, DURABILITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY.

Policy 3.1.1

Periodically inspect and repair all parks, trails, and recreation facilities for hazardous conditions, including unsafe play equipment, fallen vegetation, etc.

Policy 3.1.2

The design of individual parks should be of a consistent quality, with buildings constructed to the state's SB 2030 performance standards for on-going cost reductions, when feasible.



OBJECTIVE 4.1

CREATE AND SUSTAIN CRITICAL PARTNERSHIP.

Policy 4.1.1

Partner with the North Branch School District, local athletic organizations, private enterprises, surrounding communities, and others to address those community and regional needs that cannot be met exclusively by the city or others.

Policy 4.1.2

Cultivate and support public/private partnerships with organizations like the YMCA, Park Trail Council and similar non-governmental organizations whose mission is to promote active living and recreation.

Policy 4.1.3

Involve representatives from the North Branch School District, athletic organizations, and others when developing new parks that may be co-located with educational and daycare facilities.

Policy 4.1.4

Consider the desire of the community to offer a multi-use athletic facility to the residents and attract regional tournaments and events.

Policy 4.1.5

Explore the impacts of developing such facilities, including impacts to adjacent neighborhoods.

Policy 4.1.6:

New facilities should provide year-round activities and programs for all age groups and all income levels.

Policy 4.1.7

Identify and build relationships with local special interest groups, such as scouting programs, Chisago County Master Gardeners, North Branch Monarch Strategy Group, North Branch Garden Club, North Branch Arts Group, Lions, Rotary, etc.

GOAL 4

North Branch's parks meet the diverse recreation needs of the community.



Policy 4.1.8

Identify and build relationships with regional organizations, such as Chisago County Parks and Recreation Department, Chisago Soil & Water Conservation District, Friends of Wild River State Park and association with the St. Croix River National Scenic Riverway and the Lower St Croix Management Commission, Chisago County Historical Society, etc.

OBJECTIVE 4.2

PROMOTE THE CITY'S PARKS AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Policy 4.2.1

Utilize diverse methods of communication, including social and digital media, and highlight youth, families, volunteers, etc. Provide information on the City's website and in outside publications about parks, facilities and programming that is accessible to all people.

Policy 4.2.2

Highlight the quality of life benefits of parks, trails, recreation and open space.



OBJECTIVE 5.1

USE PARK DESIGN TO MAKE THEM WELCOMING.

Policy 5.1.1

Ensure visible and legible signage at park entrances, use recognizable branding to indicate that parks are open to all people, provide entrances on public streets, and utilize vegetation that does not obscure views into and through the parks.

OBJECTIVE 5.2

IMPROVE THE PERCEPTION OF PUBLIC SAFETY.

Policy 5.2.1

Utilize planning techniques, designs and site planning to improve safety, such as cluster compatible activities to avoid conflicts and increase social observation, locate parking lots and facilities near streets so they are easily observable at night, locate restrooms and playgrounds in areas that are easily observable, and use the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in the design of parks.

OBJECTIVE 5.3

ENSURE SAFETY THROUGH REGULAR MAINTENANCE AND EQUIPMENT UPGRADES.

Policy 5.3.1

Conduct annual inspections of parks, buildings, restrooms, shelters, ballfields, play courts, skate park, outdoor ice rinks, parking lots, trails, and nature areas. Input annual inspections into asset management system and use to analyze and prioritize system investments.

GOAL 5

Provide a welcoming and safe parks and recreation system.

