

Comprehensive
Plan

City of Wrenshall



2017



City of Wrenshall

Comprehensive Plan 2017

Adopted by the Wrenshall City Council 5.4.2017

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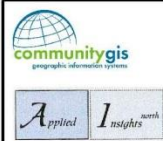
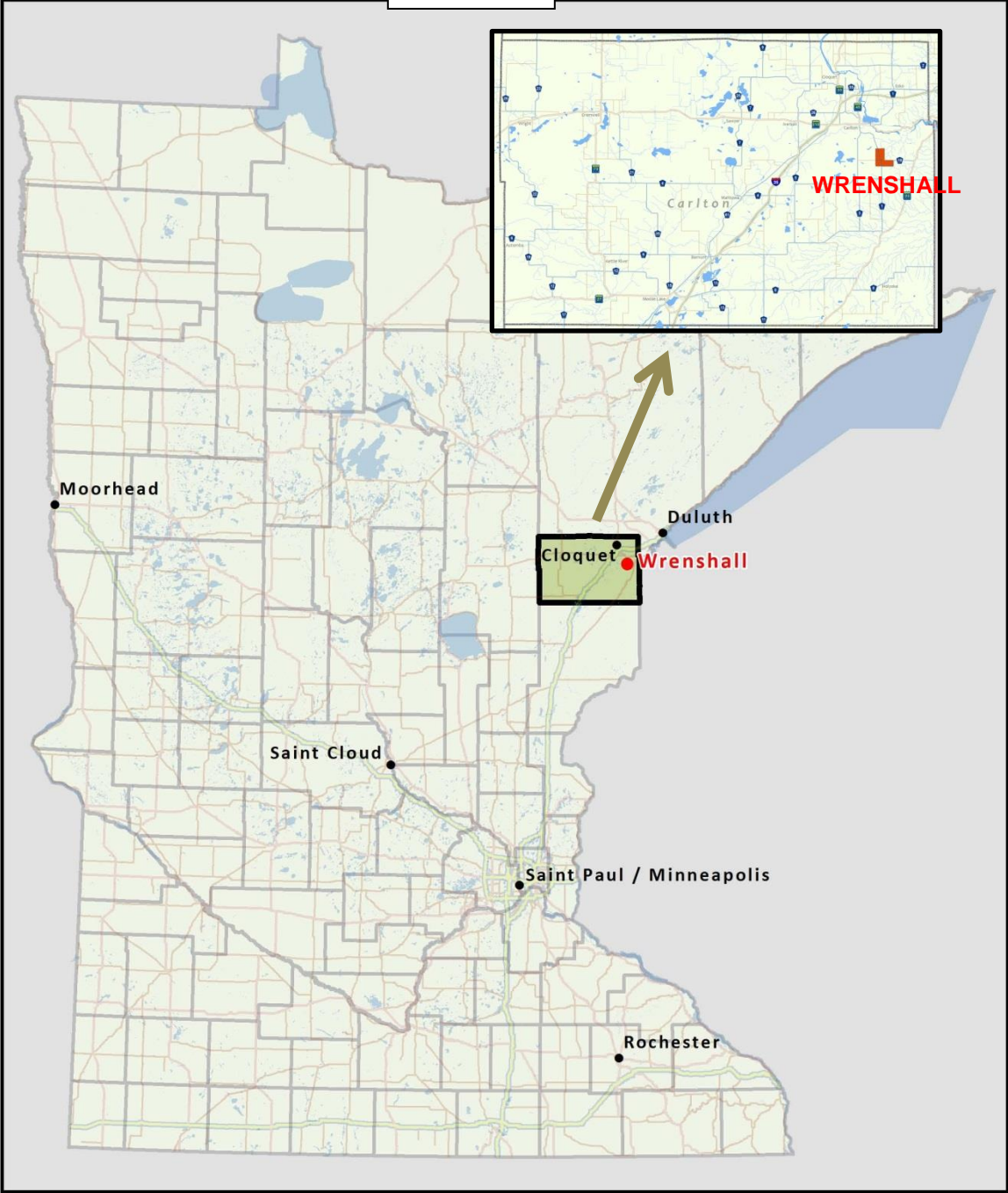
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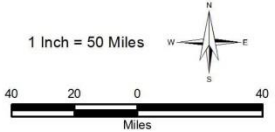
Images of brick factory and City Hall sign courtesy City of Wrenshall.

Figure 1



- REGIONAL LOCATION MAP - Wrenshall Minnesota

Map Information: Map printed March, 2017
Road data provided by MN DOT
Lakes and streams provided by MN DNR
Community locations provided by USGS





This Plan is a Tool

This plan is a tool with which Wrenshall asserts itself as a community serious about its future. The plan will be used to actively promote Wrenshall as a desirable place in which to live and conduct a business, and to guide City decisions including cooperative actions with other units of government and entities.

City will use the plan to:

- Promote Wrenshall as community in which to live and do business.
- Increase the number of people living here.
- Guide investments and actions to improve community infrastructure and facilities and direct the management of local community services.

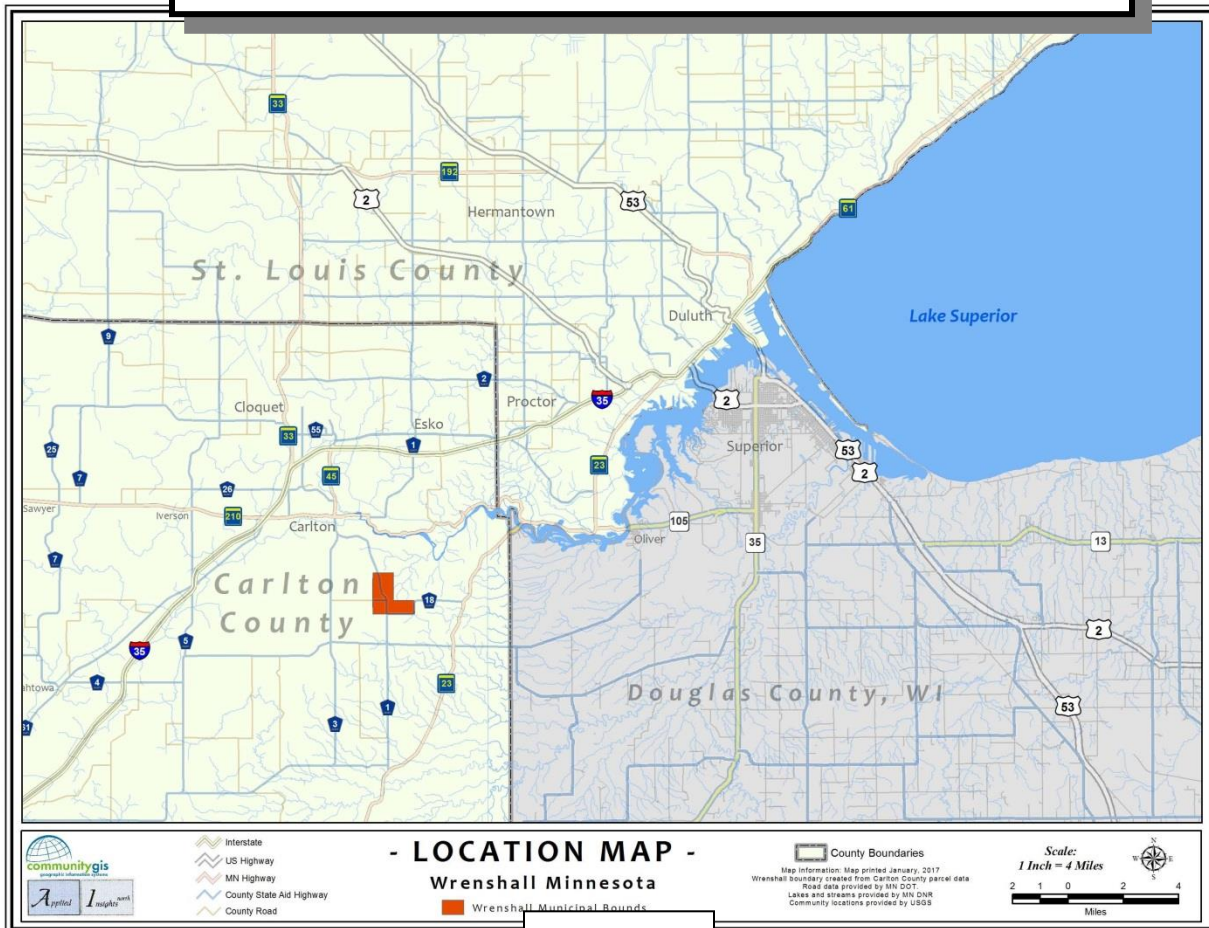
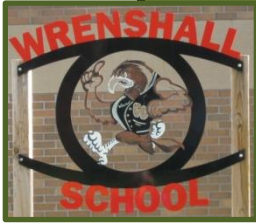


Figure 2



Our Community

History and Context

Wrenshall is a small community located in east central Carlton County. Although the city is named after a Northern Pacific railroad engineer it was clay and the bricks made from it that brought the town into being.¹

Frederick Jacob Habegger, a Swiss immigrant, acquired his brick making skills in LaCrosse, Wisconsin where he learned of good clay deposits in northern Minnesota. In 1887 he bought 160 acres where Wrenshall is now situated. He established his brickyard and within a couple decades the company was selling bricks nationwide. Peak production was around four million bricks per year with employment at 35. Eventually half a dozen brickyards were in the immediate area. Several existing local buildings including the First Presbyterian Church and the Brickyard Restaurant are made with bricks from the original brickyard.



The City of Wrenshall was incorporated, originally as a village, in 1926. Given that the Northern Pacific railroad began just north in neighboring Carlton it is not unusual that the community was named for a NP engineer, Charles Christopher Wrenshall. He had supervised the building of the branch line stretching east from Carlton to Superior, Wisconsin.

By 1954 the last brickyard closed in Wrenshall. Later Conoco would open a petroleum refinery which eventually closed by the 1980s and became the Magellan Pipeline Company's regional petroleum products distribution facility.

Throughout this period Carlton County evolved through timber harvesting into agriculture and then into manufacturing. Major employment has been and remains centered in Cloquet.

Wrenshall established its niche as a pleasant small community nestled into the surrounding small farm and rolling forests. Its location immediately abutting Jay Cooke State Park and the Alex LaVeau trail access to the Munger Trail network makes ready access to major regional recreation and scenic resources a plus. Even though the events that impelled the community into existence have faded away, it is important to recognize that the city's peak level of population is now in 2017.

¹ Much of the historical information is from the city's website: <http://www.cityofwrenshall.com/city-history>; accessed 3/20/17.

Community Description

General

Wrenshall is a small (~945 acres), compact community located in east central Carlton County. Once a brick making center and the site of an oil refinery, it is now a bedroom community for commuters working in Cloquet or Duluth-Superior. There are several major enterprises that generate jobs and bring workers to town including the Wrenshall School District, Magellan Pipeline distribution facility, Parson's Electric in the city's industrial park, and, adjacent to town, DelZotto Cement Products pre-cast concrete facility. Local businesses are situated along CR 1 and include the Brickyard Restaurant, Brick's Pub and Grub, and Wrenshall General Store plus several contracting, equipment repair, and home improvement operations.

The community has strong agricultural roots – several farms were once active within the city limits. Farms around the community are noted for organic production of vegetables and animals and are strong players in the regional Consumer Supported Agriculture (CSA) sector.

Most of the community consists of residential development. Three subdivisions created in the past twenty years have provided lots for the many new homes built since 2000 and they possess many lots available for new construction. Two churches help meet the community's spiritual needs and the Garden Terrace Assisted Living facility serves a valuable segment of the area's older population.

The Wrenshall School, a pre-kindergarten to grade 12 campus, is a major community component. It serves the educational needs of students from the district, which extends to the townships around the city, and a sizeable number that choose to open enroll into the school. The school also provides education and recreational opportunities for all citizens and is a source of community identity and pride.

Recreation and access to the outdoors are major attributes of Wrenshall. The city's main park is Hugh D. Line Park on the north side; it features a pavilion, volleyball court, tennis court, and play area. The smaller Memorial Park on the southeast side of town serves more like a neighborhood activity area. In addition, the school's play area and open space is available to residents.

Wrenshall is ideally situated relative to major regional recreation facilities. Jay Cooke State Park, one of Minnesota's most popular state parks, literally abuts the city and can be accessed via trails or a short 10-minute drive to the main facilities. Just as important is Wrenshall's location on the Alex LaVeau Trail which is a branch of and links to the Willard Munger State Trail; that trail connects Wrenshall south to Hinckley and north to Duluth and numerous recreational trail links from there. Further, the city has direct access the Superior Hiking Trail, the Soo Line South ATV trail and regional snowmobile trails.



Wrenshall's main annual event is Brickyard Days which brings the community together to celebrate its past and future. The Free Range Film Festival, organized by area residents, attracts dedicated fans of movies to a rustic setting adjacent to the city.

The City has its own water supply. Wrenshall is part of the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District which has its treatment facility in Duluth. All developed areas within the city are served by utilities; services easily can be extended where needed.

Population

Wrenshall is unique among most small rural communities in that its peak number of residents is occurring right now as opposed to 20, 50 or 70 years ago. The city's population in 2015 was estimated at 407 which was essentially unchanged from the 399 in 2010. However, that figure of 399 was a massive 30% greater than the 308 people who lived in Wrenshall in 2000. Prior to that

the city had lost population from its earlier peak of 333 in 1980. [See Appendix for additional details.]

The two townships around Wrenshall – Wrenshall and Silver Brook – also grew from 2000 to 2010 but not at the same rate as the city. Combined the three communities grew 15% during the period (1,243 to 1,429).

A good way to consider the change in population is to examine the change in size of age cohorts from one decade to the next; Tables A-2 and A-4 in the Appendix provide this information for the city and the city plus the two townships. This analysis showed three significant trends for Wrenshall:

- The number of people under age 19 grew at levels greater than expected suggesting in-migration of households with children.
- The number of 30 to 49 year olds also grew at levels greater than expected, these being the adult heads of households with children.
- The number of pre-retirees and early retirees (ages 50-69) also grew at rates greater than would have been anticipated.

Much of this growth probably occurred prior to the peak of the recent Recession and the level of change has flattened since then. Nonetheless, it shows that Wrenshall is a highly attractive community for a range of households most especially those with children.

Governance

Wrenshall is a city governed by an elected city council with the mayor being a member of the council.

The primary staff consists of the Clerk Treasurer and the Assistant Clerk Treasurer. A lead maintenance worker and assistants is responsible for roads, facilities and parks.

Fire protection and emergency medical services are provided by the Wrenshall Volunteer Fire Department. The Carlton County Sheriff provides public safety services.

An appointed Planning Commission is responsible for administration of the city's land use controls ordinance. A copy of the zoning map is in the Appendix. The city is divided into the following use districts: single-family residential, multi-family residential, rural residential / agriculture, central business and industrial. A private contractor is used for issuing building permits.



Assessment

The following statements summarize Wrenshall's position as it views its strengths on which to build its future and critical issues to be addressed to sustain community vitality.

Assets / Things to Build On

- Wrenshall is part of a larger community beyond its borders
- Direct connections to major regional attractions such as Jay Cooke State Park, Munger Trail, and ATV and snowmobile trails are incentives for people to move into the community.
- Strong sense of community which enhances feeling of safety.
- Local agricultural sector (although not everyone is aware of it and its level of activity).
- Community's sense of pride is evidenced in its exceptionally neat and tidy appearance.

- Two businesses have recently gained new owners indicating a solid level of confidence in the local market.
- A rarity for small communities, Wrenshall has three major housing subdivisions with lots available for development and one subdivision has substantial room for expansion.
- Excellent fire/EMT services
- Local events -- Brickyard Days and the Free Range Film Festival – help build sense of community and provide diverse ways of attracting people to Wrenshall.
- The school is a major asset around which the community can provide a wide range of education, recreation and economic activities to help attract new residents and businesses.

Needs / Wants / Liabilities

- Need rental units that are affordable for households with children.
- There are no empty/vacant buildings/spaces to encourage or accommodate new commercial development although there are 10 acres of commercially zoned land adjacent to the Wrenshall General Store.
- Need to recognize that despite its many assets Wrenshall is a small town with limited resources and thus must focus attention on key actions.
- There are a number of unpaved streets including within residential areas that tend to downplay attractiveness for new development.
- While most public facilities are in excellent shape, the fire hall will need expansion to accommodate larger vehicles.
- The City does not have but is in the process of developing a formal Capital Improvement Program intended to consistently direct investments into infrastructure.



Our Future

Wrenshall's comprehensive plan is **founded on this understanding** of the community:

Wrenshall is a **small community** with **substantial opportunities and assets** but admittedly possessing a small town's limited human and financial resources that **desires to increase the number of people** living within the city...

which in turn expands **the locally-based market for businesses** and generates **more students** for the school.

The **keys to attracting more people** to Wrenshall are:

- ➔ Taking advantage of the **existing** inventory of ready-to-build-on **residential lots**.
- ➔ A **successful school** that serves resident students and the large number of non-resident students attracted to the school's facilities and programming.
- ➔ Reality and image of a small-town community that is **directly connected** to significant regional and state recreational resources and surrounding **agricultural sector**.
- ➔ Active **community life**.
- ➔ Well-managed community with **sound public infrastructure**.

City of Wrenshall Strategic Plan Concepts

Wrenshall will enhance its attractiveness as a community where more people want to live and do business.

Concept 1: Residential Development

Leverage large base of ready-to-build-on sites with incentives and vigorous marketing campaign to attract more residents into Wrenshall.

Concept 2: School as Community Core

Partner with Wrenshall School to more fully utilize school facilities and resources for elevated levels of community-wide use so as to make community more attractive for existing and new residents.

Concept 3: The Great Outdoors

Use and greatly enhance community's direct connections to major regional recreational facilities – Jay Cooke State Park and Munger State Trail – to create additional benefits to living and running a business in Wrenshall.

Concept 4: Sense of Community

Reinforce strong existing sense of this place with its intertwining of small town wholesomeness, rural agricultural activity and civic engagement.

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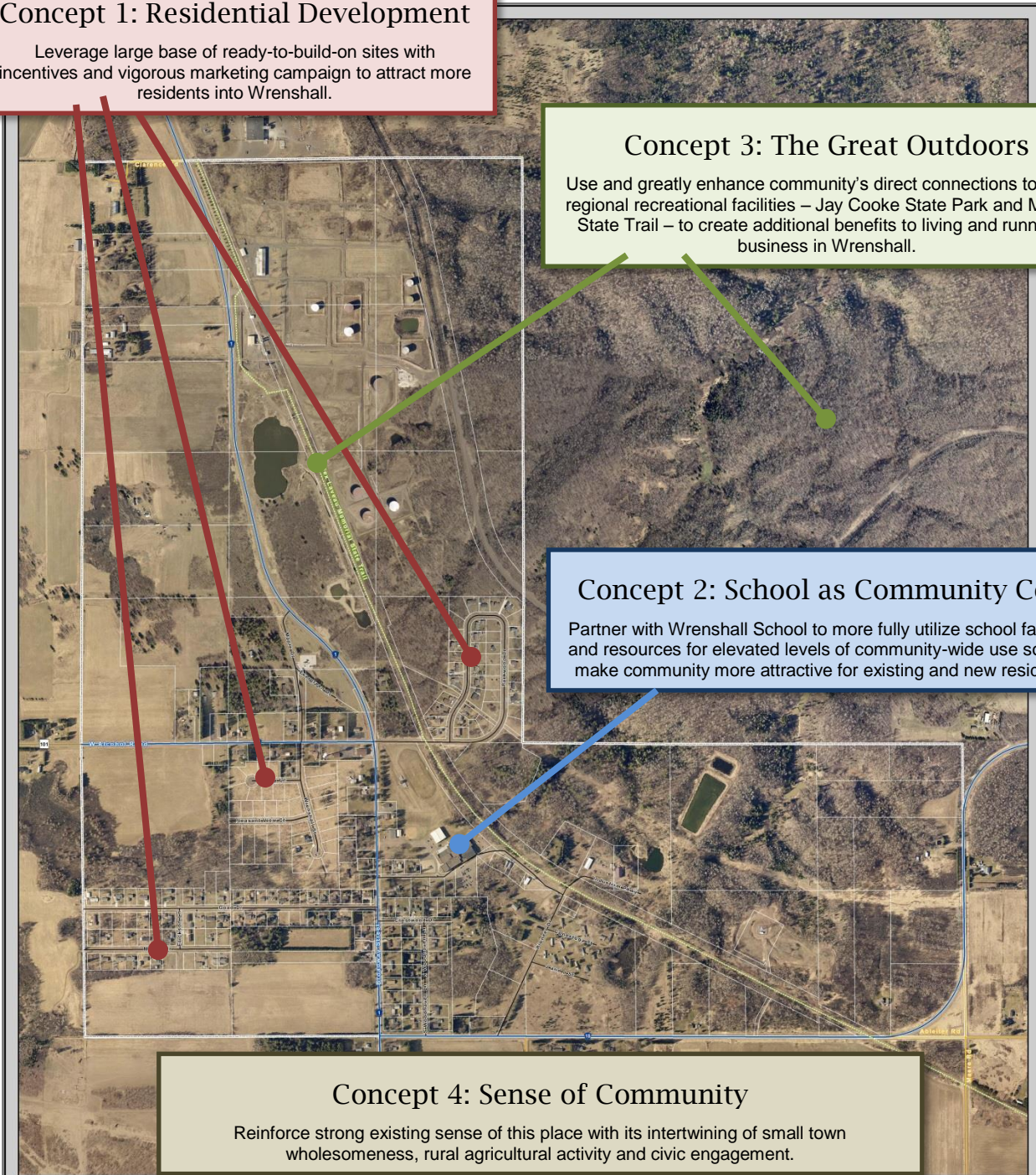
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Concept 4: Sense of Community

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 	County State Aid Highway County Road Township Road Street / Minor Road Trails	<p>WRENSHALL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONCEPTS City of Wrenshall Minnesota</p>	Municipal Boundary Parcel Bounds <p>Map Resource Information: Map printed January, 2017 Road and parcel data provided by Carlton County Trail data provided by MN DNR Carlton County true color aerial photography circa Spring, 2015.</p>	<p>Scale: 1 Inch = 400 Feet</p>



General Guidance

The heart of this plan is the Action Program which outlines likely first steps toward achieving the desired future. There are other statements, though, that offer general guidance for ongoing decisions and investments by the City.

The test for any future community action is:

In what way does the action further Wrenshall's desire to make itself a more attractive community where people want to live and run a business?

Land Use and Development

1. Land use pattern to adhere to general form of today:
 - a. Industrial located at Magellan Pipeline facility and city's industrial park.
 - b. Commercial, public and quasi-public uses located along CR 1.
 - c. Rest of community to be various types of residential, which can include home occupations and home businesses.
2. Maintain the Hugh D. Line Park as the city's community recreation facility.
3. Maintain Memorial Park as basically a neighborhood recreation site.

Community Infrastructure

4. Adhere to general policy of fixing currently paved streets before paving new streets.
5. Consider alternative methods for assessing landowners for paving streets.
6. In conjunction with Carlton County, evaluate safe crossings of CR 1 for pedestrians and bicyclists.
7. Maintain all public buildings in sound condition and easily accessible to all residents.
8. Maintain water and sewer utilities in sound condition and extend services as warranted by development.
9. Evaluate changes needed to fire hall in order for it to accommodate the next generation of larger trucks.



Action Program

The previous chapters created the framework for undertaking specific actions to make Wrenshall an even better community in which to live and do business. The following actions identify the initial steps to be taken to make this future a reality.

	<h2>Residential Development</h2> <p><i>Leverage large base of ready-to-build-on sites with incentives and vigorous marketing campaign to attract more residents into Wrenshall who in turn strengthen local business market.</i></p>
	<p>1 Partner with the owners of housing subdivisions to devise and undertake an aggressive campaign to attract builders and potential homeowners to develop and buy various types of new housing in Wrenshall. Other partners could include lending institutions, Carlton County Economic Development Authority, and Wrenshall School district.</p> <p>As part of this campaign the City needs to consider the type of incentives it could offer to attract builders and homebuyers. This could include, for instance, reducing fees or structuring utility connection assessments and road improvements into multi-year payments.</p>
	<p>2 When and as appropriate, encourage expansion of Erickson subdivision.</p>
	<h2>School as Community Core</h2> <p><i>Partner with Wrenshall School to more fully utilize school facilities and resources for elevated levels of community-wide use so as to make community more attractive for existing and new residents.</i></p>
	<p>1 Develop formal relationship with Wrenshall School district regarding enhanced use of school facilities by the general community. This could include use of the library, community education, pool, fitness center, and the like.</p>
	<p>2 Encourage and support Wrenshall School district to conduct programming that directly connects students with the community. Potential projects include community gardens, outdoor recreation facilities, online information and marketing initiatives, and the like.</p>

The Great Outdoors

Use and greatly enhance community's direct connections to major regional recreational facilities – Jay Cooke State Park and Munger State Trail – to create additional benefits to living and running a business in Wrenshall.

- 1 Initiate and actively pursue efforts to secure necessary funding so the Minnesota DNR can repair the Alex LaVeau Trail and bring it into full operational status. A first step may include a meeting of City, DNR and local legislators to identify funding sources and a game plan to secure them.
- 2 Retain a landscape architect to assist City in designing plan to upgrade Hugh D. Line Park. Potential actions include new facilities at the park (e.g., play equipment, walking trail, parking, etc.), integrating the park with the adjacent Silver Brook town hall property (e.g., identifying possible joint uses), and linking the park to the Alex LaVeau Trail to possibly serve as a trailhead.
- 3 Initiate discussion with Jay Cook State Park for the purpose of developing direct trail routes and links into the park from Wrenshall.

Sense of Community

Reinforce strong existing sense of this place with its intertwining of small town wholesomeness, rural agricultural activity and civic engagement.

- 1 Support “Brickyard Days” with direct financial and in-kind services and encourage event organizers to include additional activities including some that highlight the area’s agricultural sector, Wrenshall School, and the like.
- 2 Support the “Free Range Film Festival” with direct financial or in-kind services including possible support with advertising, use of Hugh D. Line Park as a film venue, and space for parking and shuttle bus service (which could be provided at a local business).
- 3 Seek ways to participate in or cooperate with events in other area communities to extend Wrenshall’s connections and enhance awareness of the community. Also, consider new events such as one involving all area communities linked by regional trail system.
- 4 Encourage and support a “welcome wagon” like effort to greet new residents.

Other Actions

- 1 Adopt a rolling 5-year Capital Improvement Program directing investment in city infrastructure and facilities.
- 2 Work with businesses and DNR to provide signage at access points along the Alex LaVeau Trail in Wrenshall directing trail users to community businesses and amenities. Include Wrenshall School district in this with possible outcome of making the final product a student project.
- 3 Pursue the provision of a higher level of broadband service throughout city.
- 4 Update the comprehensive plan at least once every 10 years.

Appendix

A. Population

Table A-1. City of Wrenshall: Population Change						
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015	
Population	333	296	308	399	407	
Change		-11.1%	4.1%	29.5%	2.0%	

Table A-2. City of Wrenshall Population by Age Group						
Age Group			Change (1)		Cohort Survival (2)	
	2000	2010	Number	%	Number	%
Under 5	14	24	10	71.4%		
5 to 9	20	27	7	35.0%		
10 to 14	41	32	-9	-22.0%	18	128.6%
15 to 19	32	24	-8	-25.0%	4	20.0%
20 to 24	13	18	5	38.5%	-23	-56.1%
25 to 29	19	19	0	0.0%	-13	-40.6%
30 to 34	24	17	-7	-29.2%	4	30.8%
35 to 39	33	25	-8	-24.2%	6	31.6%
40 to 44	25	27	2	8.0%	3	12.5%
45 to 49	17	33	16	94.1%	0	0.0%
50 to 54	27	33	6	22.2%	8	32.0%
55 to 59	6	20	14	233.3%	3	17.6%
60 to 64	11	42	31	281.8%	15	55.6%
65 to 69	9	13	4	44.4%	7	116.7%
70 to 74	11	14	3	27.3%	3	27.3%
75 to 79	3	12	9	300.0%	3	33.3%
80 to 84	3	12	9	300.0%	1	9.1%
85 to 89	0	6	6	100.0%	3	100.0%
90 and over	0	1	1	100.0%	-2	-66.7%
Total	308	399	91	29.5%		

(1) Change in size of age group from one decade to the next.
 (2) Change in age group cohort as it ages 10 years from 2000 to 2010.
 Example: 20 people ages 5-9 in 2000 became 24 people ages 15-19 in 2010.

Source: US Census

Table A-3. City of Wrenshall + Wrenshall & Silver Brook Townships						
	2000	2010	2015			
Population	1,243	1,429	1,422			
Change		15.0%	-0.5%			

Table A-4. City of Wrenshall + Wrenshall & Silver Brook Townships Population by Age Group						
Age Group			Change (1)		Cohort Survival (2)	
	2000	2010	Number	%	Number	%
Under 5	70	87	17	24.3%		
5 to 9	77	101	24	31.2%		
10 to 14	140	105	-35	-25.0%	35	50.0%
15 to 19	109	91	-18	-16.5%	14	18.2%
20 to 24	47	66	19	40.4%	-74	-52.9%
25 to 29	49	69	20	40.8%	-40	-36.7%
30 to 34	81	83	2	2.5%	36	76.6%
35 to 39	130	87	-43	-33.1%	38	77.6%
40 to 44	113	102	-11	-9.7%	21	25.9%
45 to 49	123	137	14	11.4%	7	5.4%
50 to 54	97	128	31	32.0%	15	13.3%
55 to 59	51	116	65	127.5%	-7	-5.7%
60 to 64	38	110	72	189.5%	13	13.4%
65 to 69	30	47	17	56.7%	-4	-7.8%
70 to 74	38	34	-4	-10.5%	-4	-10.5%
75 to 79	22	23	1	4.5%	-7	-23.3%
80 to 84	19	23	4	21.1%	-15	-39.5%
85 to 89	4	16	12	100.0%	-6	-27.3%
90 and over	5	4	-1	100.0%	-24	-104.3%
Total	1,243	1,429	186	15.0%		

(1) Change in size of age group from one decade to the next.
(2) Change in age group cohort as it ages 10 years from 2000 to 2010.
Example: 77 people ages 5-9 in 2000 became 91 people ages 15-19 in 2010.

Source: US Census

B. Generalized Landownership

The following tables present the findings of analyses of property ownership and zoning in Wrenshall. The analysis was conducted using GIS to review Carlton County parcel information and the city's zoning map.

Table B-1. Zone Districts and General Ownership (acres)

Zone District	Ownership (acres)		Total
	Private	Public	
R-1 Single Family Residential	48	24	72
R-2 Multi-family Residential	222	9	231
R/A Rural Residential/Agriculture	216	141	357
C-1 Commercial	14	7	21
I Industrial	192	72	264
Total	692	253	945

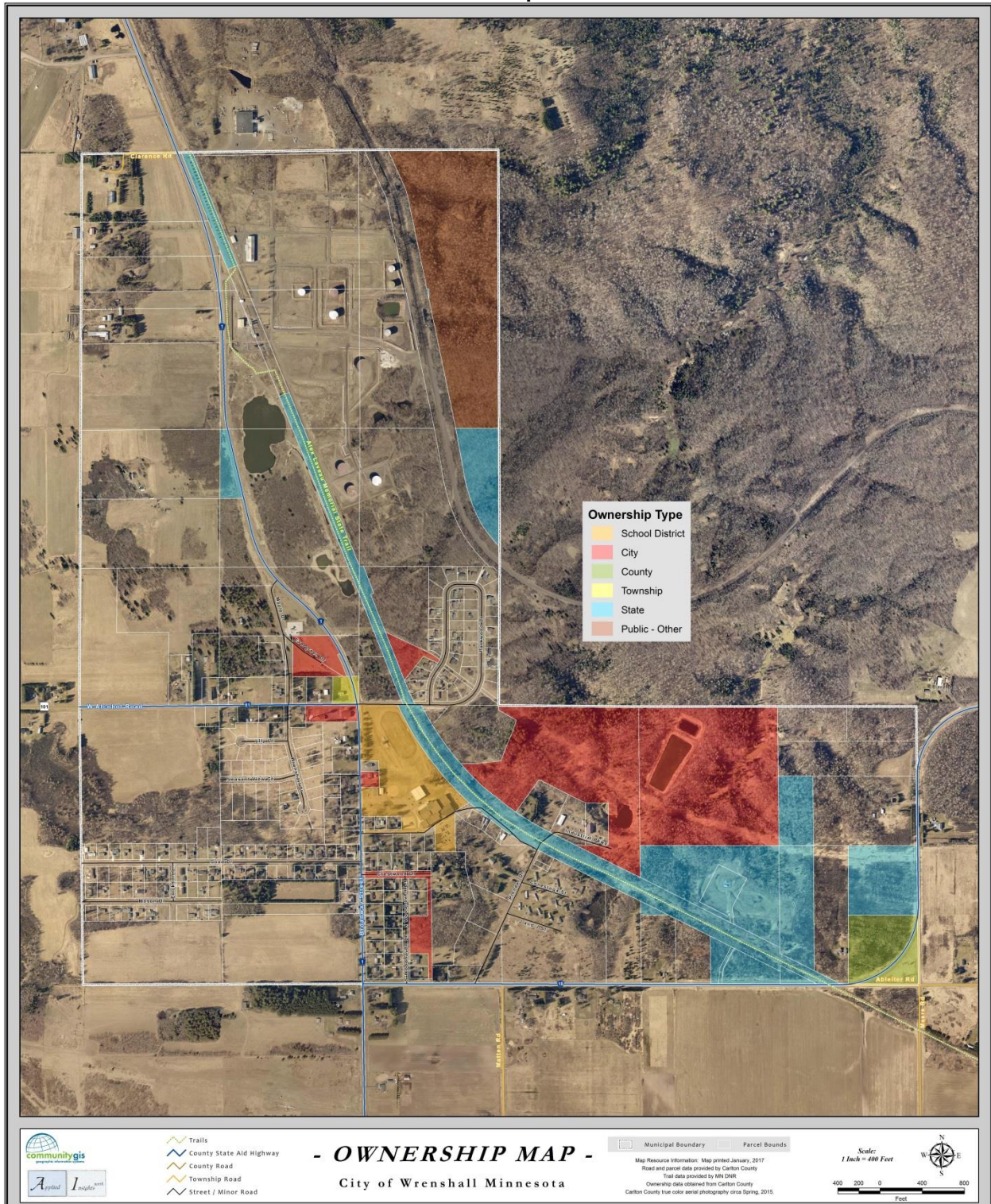
Table B-2. Status of Privately Owned Lands

Status	No. of Parcels	Acres
Developed	204	479
Undeveloped	81	213
Total	285	692

Table B-3. General Land Ownership

Owner	Acres	Percent
Private	692.4	73.9%
State	88.7	9.5%
City	83.5	8.9%
School	18.5	2.0%
Public-Other	41.6	4.4%
County	10.1	1.1%
Township	1.5	0.2%
Total	936.5	100.0%

Map A-1



C. Zoning

Wrenshall administers its own zoning ordinance. This is the City's zoning map.

