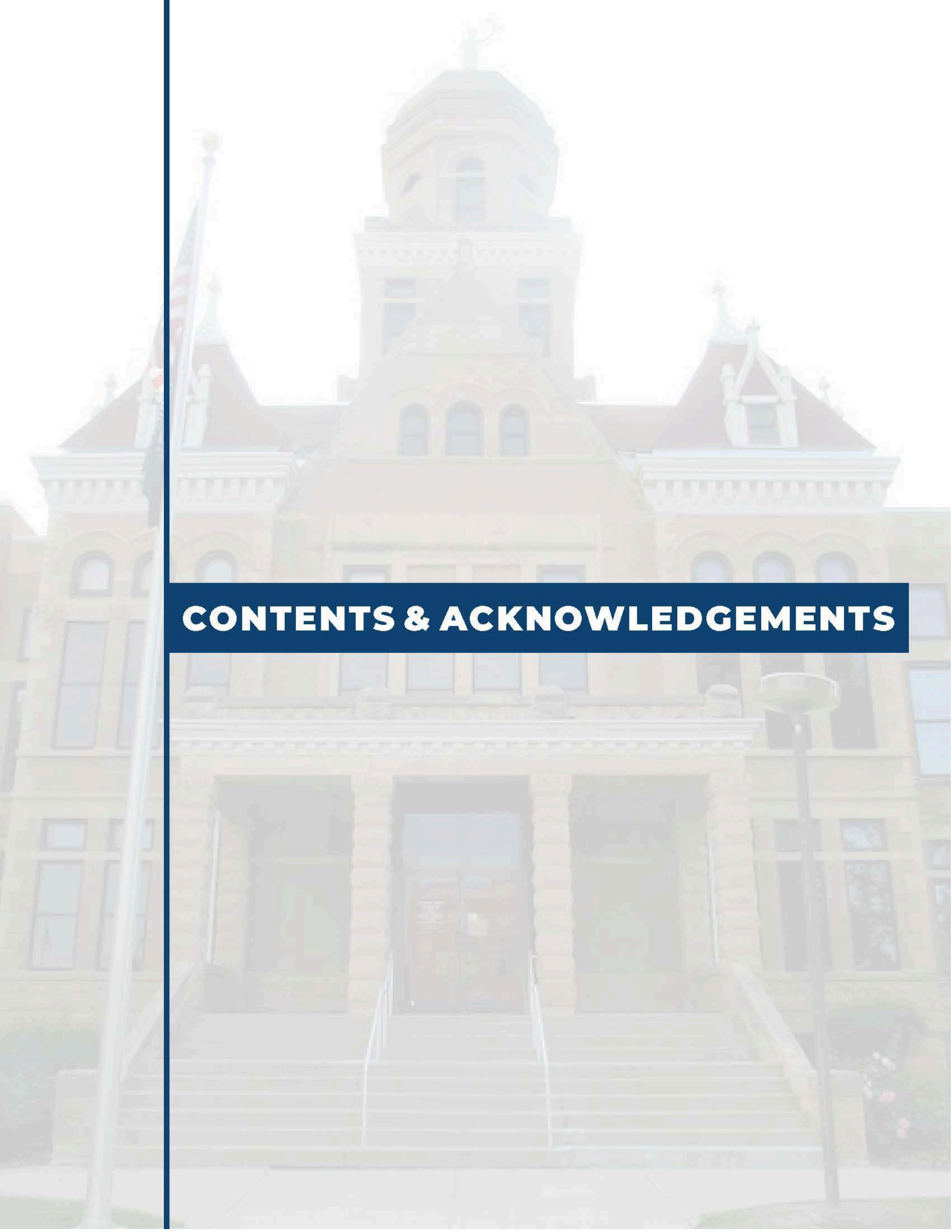
VISION 2050

Le Sueur County

Draft February 2026

BOLTON & MENK

Le Sueur COUNTY



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COUNTY BOARD

Dennis Tietz - District 1

Danny O'Keefe - District 2 (2026 Chair)

John King - District 3

David Preisler - District 4 (2025 Chair)*

Steven J. Rohlfing - District 5

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Aaron Stubbs - Environmental Services Director*

Michelle Mettler - Deputy Zoning Administrator*

Holly Bushman - Water Resources Manager*

Amy Beatty - Environmental Programs Specialist

Jon Hammel - Senior Planner

Trigg Capistrant-Kinney - Senior Planner

Anna Freundschuh - Drainage & Environmental Compliance Specialist

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Meghan Bajula-Hagen - Planner

Julie Hike - Planning and Zoning Technician

Trevor Rudenick - Water Resources Planner

George Phillips - GIS Analyst

Jay Sowieja - GIS Technician

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Mike Schultz - Soil & Water District Manager

Bruce Skluzacek - Shoreline Restoration Contractor

Liz Krocak - Township Representative

**Additional County Board, Planning Commission, and Staff Steering Committee Members*

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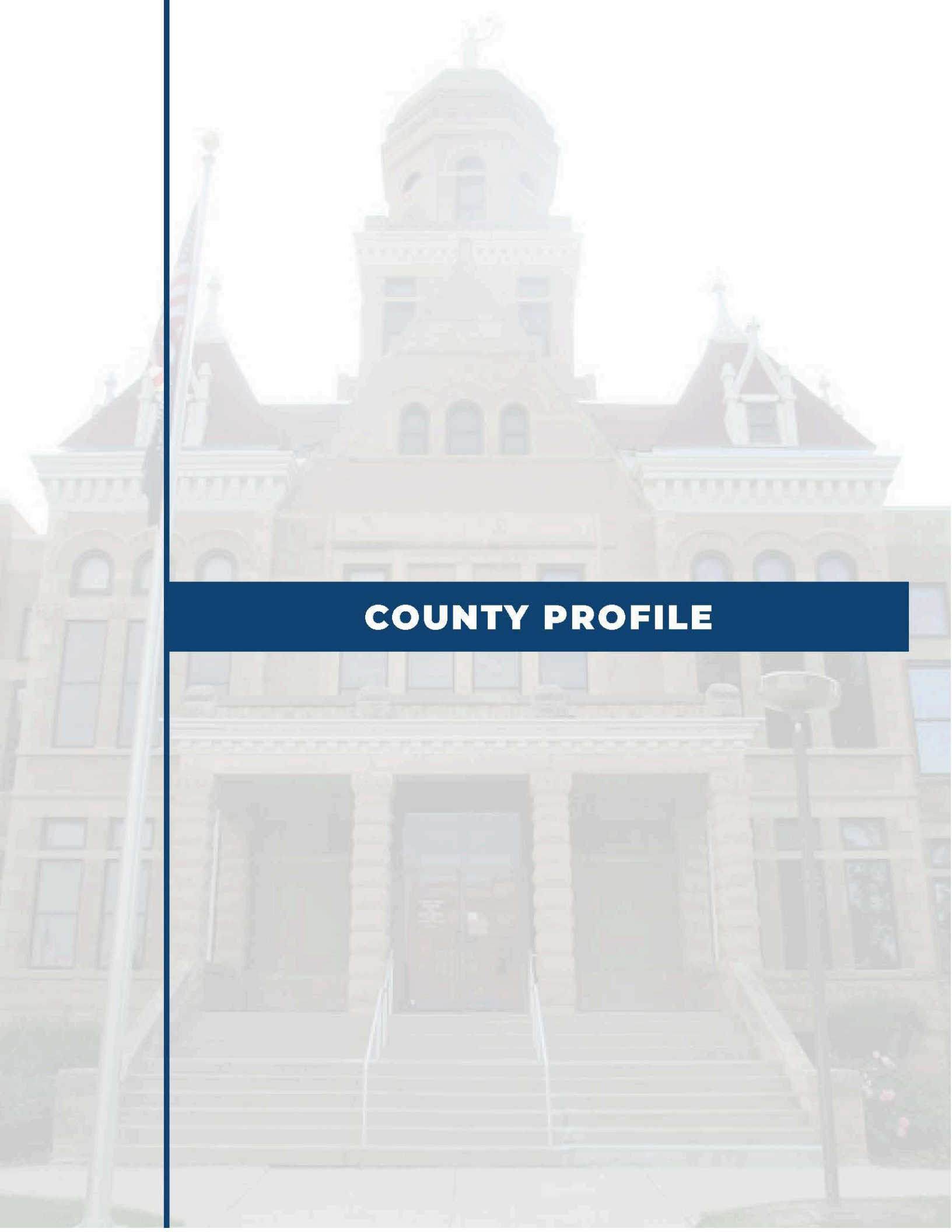
Angie Smith - Environmental Advisor

David Sandberg - GIS Specialist

Emily Holman - Communications Specialist

Brenna McConnell Jansen - Planning Support



COUNTY PROFILE

Source: Le Sueur County Historical Society, "Cleveland Hardware Store 1919"

20th Century Developments

The early 20th century saw continued growth and development in Le Sueur County. The county's economy remained heavily reliant on agriculture, but new industries began to emerge. The mid-20th century brought significant changes, including the development of manufacturing and service industries. This diversification helped stabilize the county's economy and provided new opportunities for residents.

Source: American Courthouses, Le Sueur County Justice Center

Current Historical Moment

In recent decades, Le Sueur County has continued to evolve, experiencing steady population growth and focusing on improving infrastructure and public services. Efforts to preserve the county's historical sites and promote tourism have been important, with recent initiatives including the development of new parks and recreational facilities, improvements in public services, and efforts to attract new businesses. Today, Le Sueur County is a vibrant community that balances its rich history with modern development.

GEOGRAPHY

Le Sueur County is located in the south-central part of Minnesota. Key geographical details:

Land and Water Areas

- Total Area: 474 square miles
- Land Area: 449 square miles
- Water Area: 25 square miles, which accounts for 5.3% of the total area

Geographic Features

Lakes and Rivers:

The county is home to numerous lakes and the Minnesota River, which runs along its western border. Notable lakes include Lake Washington, German Lake, Lake Francis, Lake Jefferson, Lake Sakatah, and Lake Tetonka.

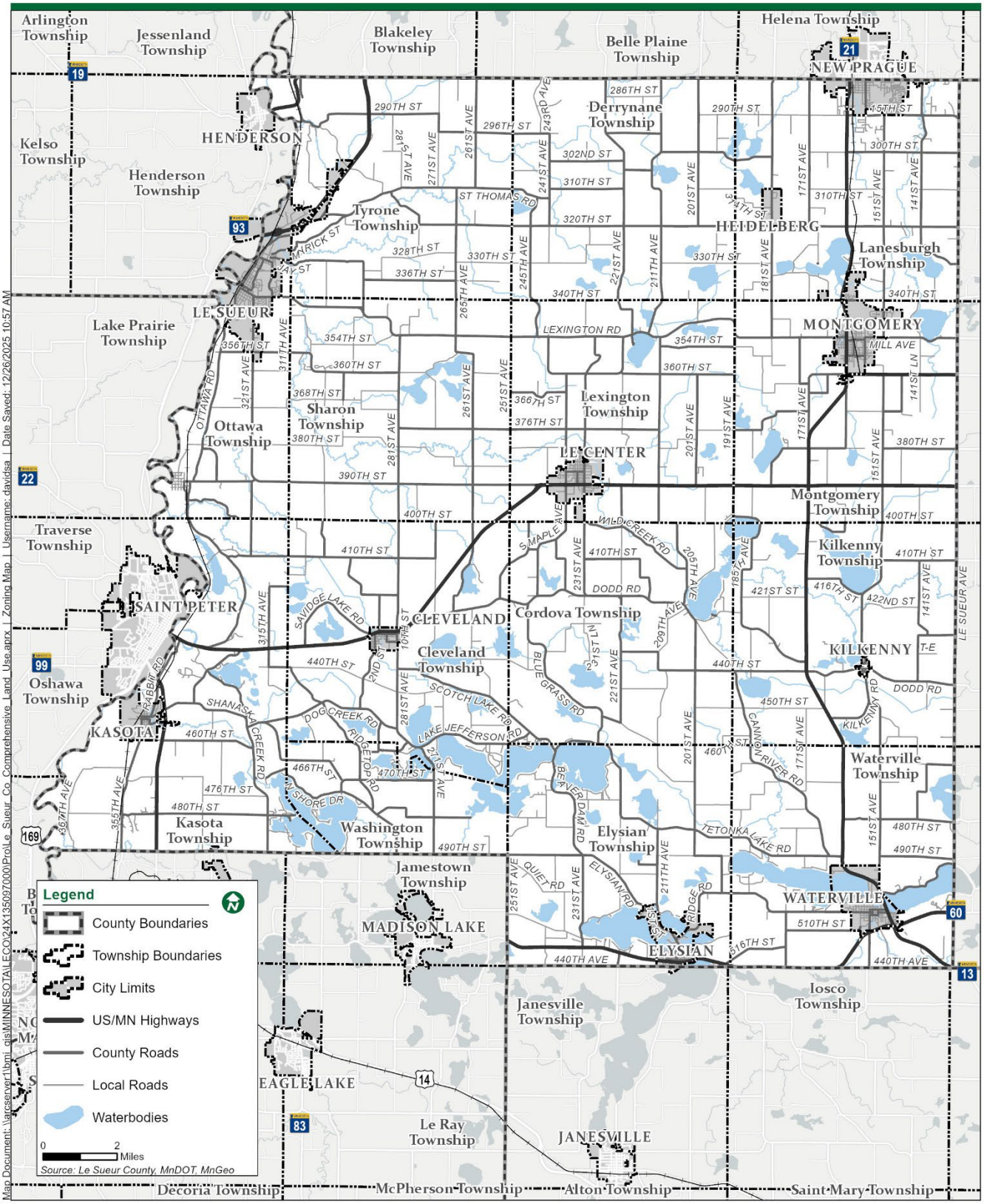
Protected Areas:

Le Sueur County has various protected areas, including parks and wildlife management areas, which contribute to its natural beauty and recreational opportunities.

Topography:

The county features a mix of rolling hills, flat plains, and wooded areas, providing a diverse landscape.

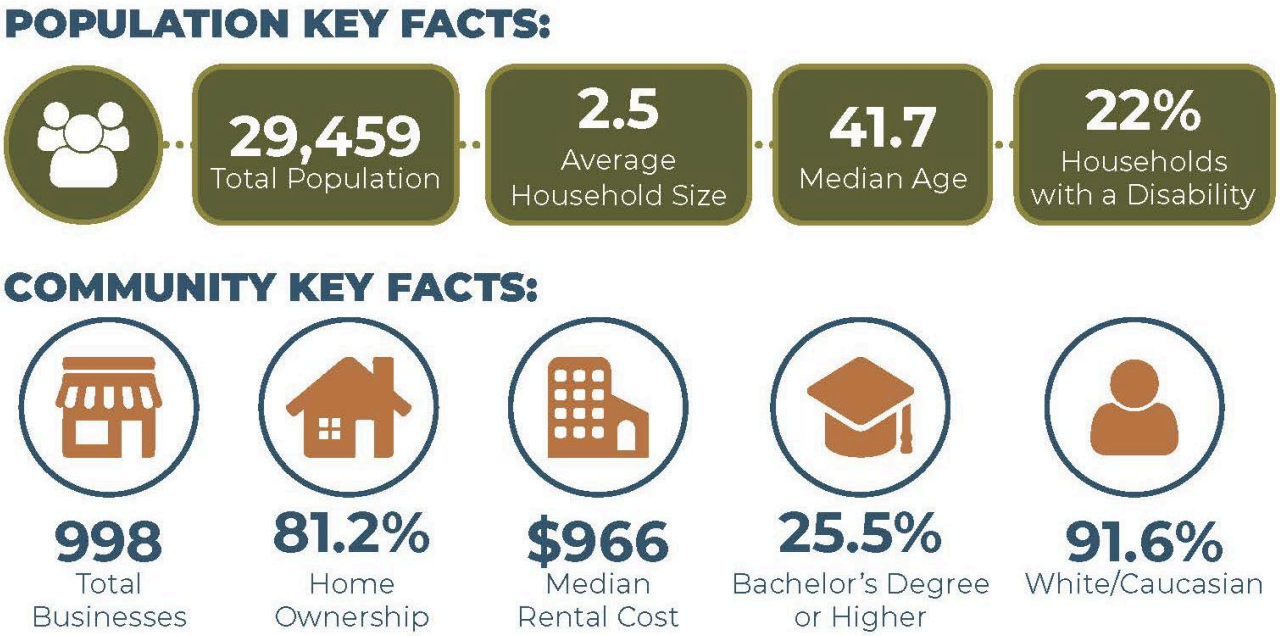
Lake Jefferson


Arlington Township
Jessenland Township
Blakeley Township
Belle Plaine Township
Helena Township
NEW PRAGUE
Kelso Township
HENDERSON
Henderson Township
Tyrone Township
Derrynane Township
HEIDELBERG
Lanesburgh Township
LE SUEUR
Lake Prairie Township
MONTGOMERY
Ottawa Township
Sharon Township
Lexington Township
LE CENTER
Montgomery Township
Traverse Township
Kilkenny Township
SAINT PETER
CLEVELAND
Cordova Township
Cleveland Township
KILKENNY
Oshawa Township
KASOTA
Waterville Township
Kasota Township
Washington Township
Elysian Township
Jamestown Township
MADISON LAKE
WATERVILLE
ELYSIAN
Janesville Township
Iosco Township
EAGLE LAKE
Le Ray Township
JANESVILLE
Decoria Township
McPherson Township
Alton Township
Saint Mary Township
Legend
County Boundaries
Township Boundaries
City Limits
US/MN Highways
County Roads
Local Roads
Waterbodies
0 2 Miles
Source: Le Sueur County, MnDOT, MnGeo
Map Document: \\arcserver1\bmi_gis\MINNESOTA\LECO\24X135097000\Proj\e_Sueur_Co_Comprehensive_Land_Use.aprx | Zoning Map | Username: davidsa | Date Saved: 12/26/2025 10:57 AM

COMMUNITY DATA

Le Sueur County, MN, is a dynamic community characterized by steady growth and development. The county's population has been increasing, with a notable rise in home values and a high rate of homeownership, indicating a prosperous and attractive place to live. Demographic trends reveal a community that is becoming more diverse and slightly older, which will influence future planning and services.

FIGURE 1 | KEY STATISTICS ABOUT LE SUEUR COUNTY

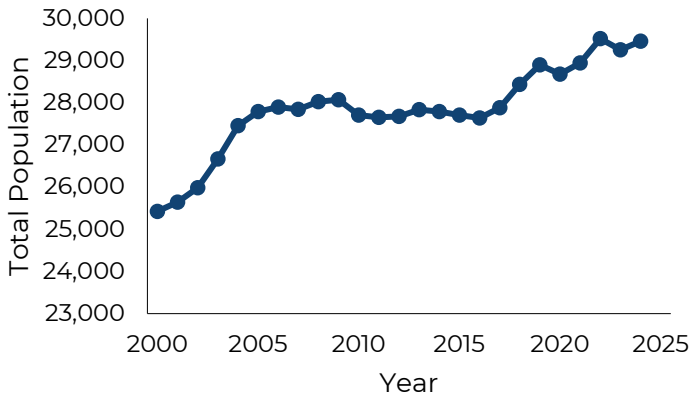


Source: US Census Bureau, Esri ArcGIS Business Analyst, and Minnesota Demographers Office

Population Growth

Le Sueur County's population has grown approximately 14.9% over the last two decades, according to the United States Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey. As of 2024, the population is estimated at 29,459. The county has seen a 2.7% increase in population from 2020 to 2024.

FIGURE 2 | LE SUEUR COUNTY POPULATION (2000-2024)

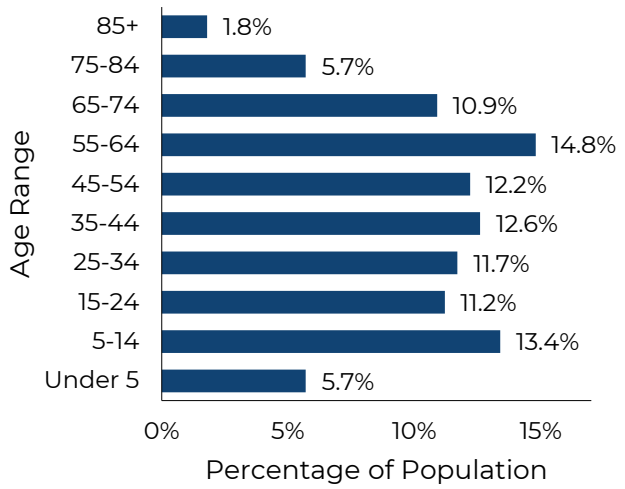


Source: US Census Bureau 2023 American Community Survey

Age Distribution

The county has a diverse age distribution, with 13.4% of the population between 5 and 14 years and 14.8% between 55 and 64 years. Demographic shift towards an older population suggests a need for enhanced healthcare services, senior housing, and recreational facilities tailored to older adults, ensuring the community can support its aging residents effectively.

FIGURE 3 | LE SUEUR COUNTY AGE DISTRIBUTION

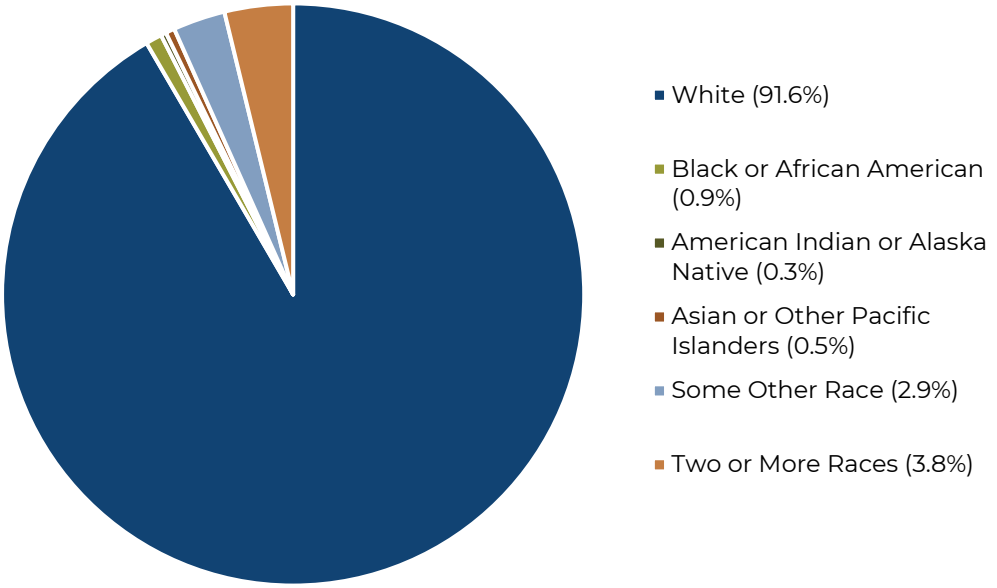


Source: US Census Bureau 2023 American Community Survey

Race and Ethnicity

Le Sueur County is predominantly White, with 91.6% of the population identifying as White alone, according to the US Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey. In the same survey, 6.6% of residents identified as Hispanic or Latino, which is considered an ethnicity and reported separately from race. Between 2013 and 2023, there was growth in the number of people identifying with every race and ethnicity category except American Indian or Alaska Native. The increasing diversity highlights the importance of inclusive community planning and services that cater to all demographic groups.

FIGURE 4 | RACE OF LE SUEUR COUNTY RESIDENTS



Source: US Census Bureau 2023 American Community Survey

Income

Median Household Income

As of 2023, the median household income in Le Sueur County is $90,218 (US Census Bureau 2023 American Community Survey). Le Sueur County ranks twelfth among Minnesota's 87 counties for median household income, indicating a robust economic environment that supports higher earnings for residents. In 2022, the median household income was $87,180, showing an 8.4% growth from the previous year.

Per Capita Income

The per capita income in Le Sueur County for the past 12 months (in 2023 dollars) is $43,236 (US Census Bureau 2023 American Community Survey). This metric provides a broader view of the average income earned by each resident, reflecting the overall economic well-being of the community.

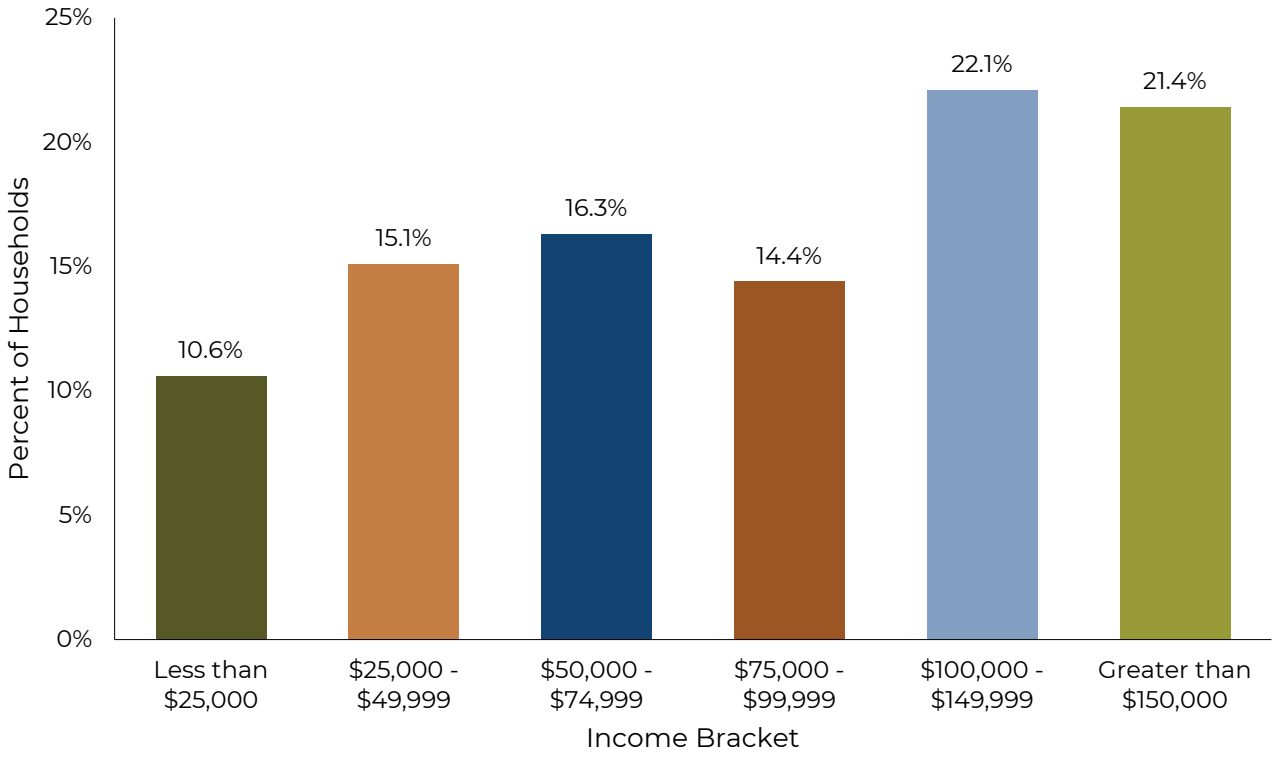
Income Distribution

Income distribution in Le Sueur County varies across different census tracts. For example, in 2022, Census Tract 9506 (southwest corner of the County, including the cities of Kasota and Cleveland) had the highest median household income at $95,096, followed by Census Tract 9504 (southeast corner of the County, including the cities of Elysian and Waterville) at $85,726 and Census Tract 9505 (south central area of the County, including the city of Le Center) at $83,523. There is the economic diversity across the county.

Poverty Rate

Despite the overall positive income trends, there are still residents facing economic challenges. The poverty rate in Le Sueur County is 7.45% as of 2022, which has decreased by 5.49% from the previous year. This decline indicates improvements in economic conditions and efforts to support lower-income households.

FIGURE 5 | INCOME DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS IN LE SUEUR COUNTY



Source: US Census Bureau 2023 American Community Survey

Education

Le Sueur County has a high percentage of residents with a high school diploma or higher (95.0%) and 25.5% with a bachelor's degree or higher. Ensuring that educational facilities can accommodate the growing number of students is vital for the county's development. There are eight public school districts located in the county. Tri-City United, Le Sueur-Henderson, and Waterville-Elysian-Morristown are the three geographically largest school districts in the county, followed by Cleveland and New Prague.

Cleveland PUBLIC SCHOOL
Home of the CLIPPERS

Source: Cleveland School District

GIANTS
Le Sueur-Henderson

Source: Le Sueur-Henderson School District, New Prague School District

SAINT PETER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
LEARNING MATTERS

TRI-CITY UNITED
TITANS
Montgomery • Lonsdale • Le Center

Source: St Peter School District, Tri-City United School District

Waterville-Elysian-Morristown
ISD #2143

Source: Waterville-Elysian-Morristown School District

PROJECTIONS

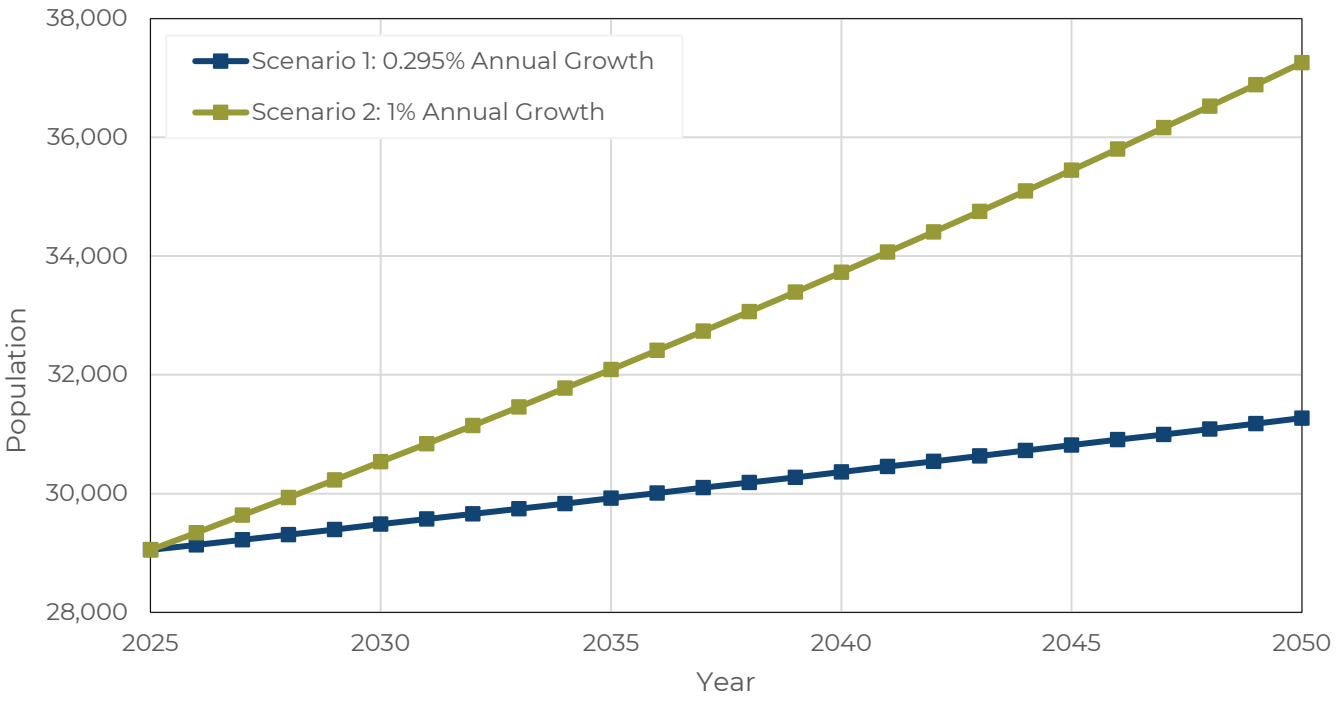
Le Sueur County's population is expected to grow modestly over the next few decades. By 2030, the state demographer anticipates a 0.295% annual growth with a potential population of approximately 31,000by 2040, and just under 32,000 by 2050 (additional 2,251 people).

This steady growth will require careful planning to ensure that infrastructure and services can meet future demands. Since no one knows what the future holds and what market changes will occur, another is depicted to provide a different growth rate. Two scenarios are calculated to provide a range of possibilities: Scenario 1 follows the state demographer projections, while Scenario 2 projects a slightly higher growth rate.

Scenario 1: Uses the State Demographer: 0.295% Annual Growth
(Based on MN Demographer's 3% growth from 2025–2035, extrapolated to 2050)
→ ~2,251 additional residents by 2050

Scenario 2: Accelerated Growth: 1% Annual Growth
(Assuming successful attraction of commuters and new businesses)
→ ~8,320 additional residents by 2050

FIGURE 6 | PROJECTED POPULATION OF LE SUEUR COUNTY BASED ON TWO SCENARIOS

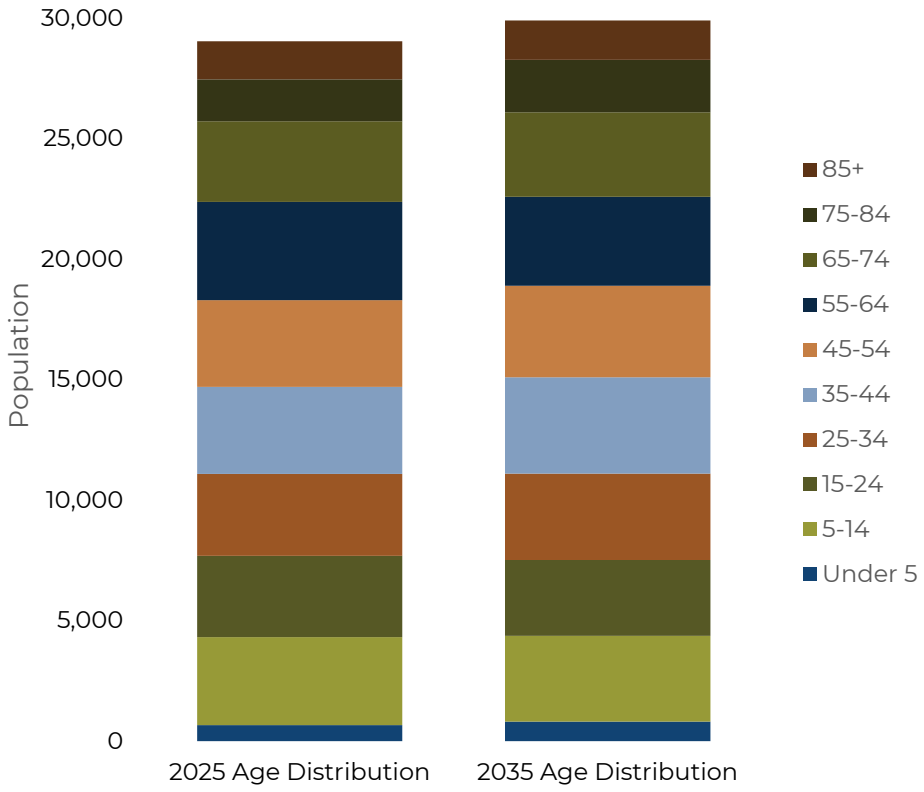


Source: US Census Bureau

Age Distribution

According to the Minnesota State Demographic Center, Le Sueur County's population is expected to grow about 3% from 2025 to 2035. This growth is about on track with the Minnesota State Demographic Center's projected statewide growth of 3-4% over the next decade. In addition to the overall growth, the number of people aged 65 years and older in Le Sueur County is expected to increase over the next decade (see Figure 7).

FIGURE 7 | CURRENT AND PROJECTED AGE DISTRIBUTION OF LE SUEUR COUNTY THROUGH 2035



Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center and Demographers Office

Age Projections

The county is expected to see significant growth in the older age groups, particularly those aged 75 and over. By 2030, the population aged 75 and over is projected to increase by 20%, and by 2040, it is expected to increase by 35%.

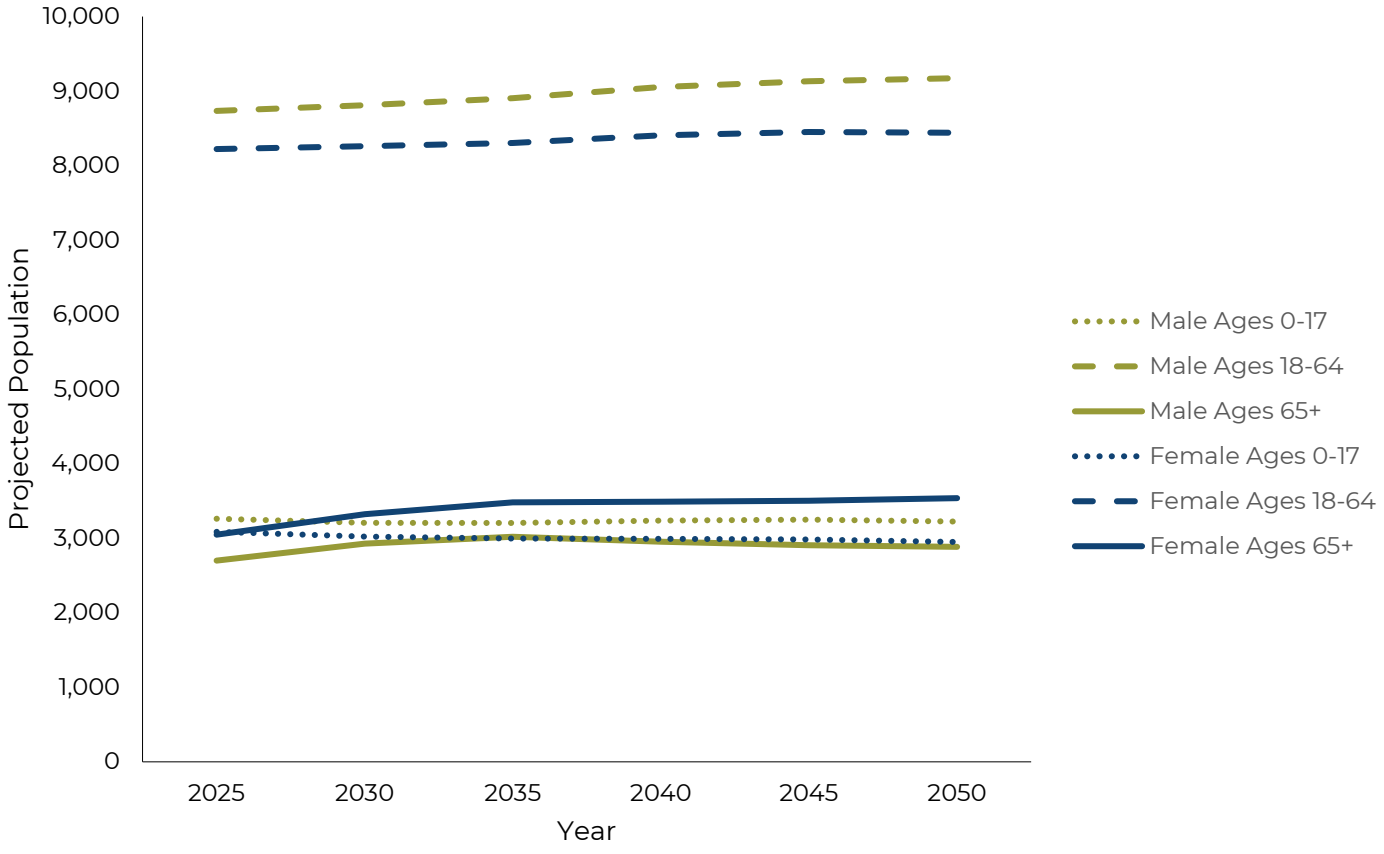
This trend indicates a need for increased healthcare services and senior housing, as well as programs and facilities that cater to the needs of an aging population.

The chart below illustrates the population projections for Le Sueur County, MN, from 2024 to 2050, segmented by age groups and sex. The data shows that:

- **Stable Youth Population**: The population of males and females aged 0-17 is projected to remain relatively stable, with slight fluctuations over the years.
- **Growth in Working-Age Population**: The population of males and females aged 18-64 shows a steady increase, indicating a growing working-age demographic.
- **Significant Increase in Elderly Population**: The population of males and females aged 65 and above is expected to rise significantly, reflecting an aging population trend.

Overall, Le Sueur County is projected to experience moderate growth in its working-age population and a notable increase in its elderly population, while the youth population remains stable. This demographic shift may have implications for local services and facilities.

FIGURE 8 | POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR LE SUEUR COUNTY THROUGH 2050



Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center and Demographers Office

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We received feedback from the public through several activities that took place over the course of this project. Thank you to all residents that participated and shared their insights!

Phase 1 Engagement

Participants included:

- Phase 1 Pop-ups: 150 interactions
- Phase 1 Survey: 273 respondents
- Phase 1 Community Forum: 65 attendees
- Interactive Online Map: 74 comments

Focus groups included:

- Agricultural focus group: 31 attendees
- Business owner focus group: 12 attendees
- City focus group: 8 attendees

Phase 2 Engagement

Participants included:

- Phase 2 Land Use Feedback: 6 comments
- Draft Plan Feedback: 9 comments
- Community Open House: 35 attendees

Focus groups included:

- Township Focus Group: 8 attendees

Of the topics included in this plan, survey respondents' top priorities were:
Jobs and Economic Development
Natural Resources
Housing

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development is not just about jobs, it is the intentional efforts to grow the economy, enhancing the vitality and quality of life for residents in a community. In 2024, Le Sueur County hired their first staff whose job duties include economic development activity. They join many other counties throughout the State of Minnesota and the country who have economic development staff focusing on activities to make their community a place people want to live, work, play, and thrive.

Economic development activities can span many different topics, dependent on specific community needs. These activities and topics may include business retention, expansion, and recruitment, strategic planning, real estate development, entrepreneurship training, workforce development, housing development, child care development, and broadband development.

Le Sueur County's economic growth is supported by diverse industries, providing opportunities for local businesses to thrive. The following chapter analyzes a variety of factors that play a role in the economic development needs in Le Sueur County.

When asked to rank housing, economic development, natural resources, community facilities, and transportation, residents ranked economic development as the top issue in Le Sueur County.

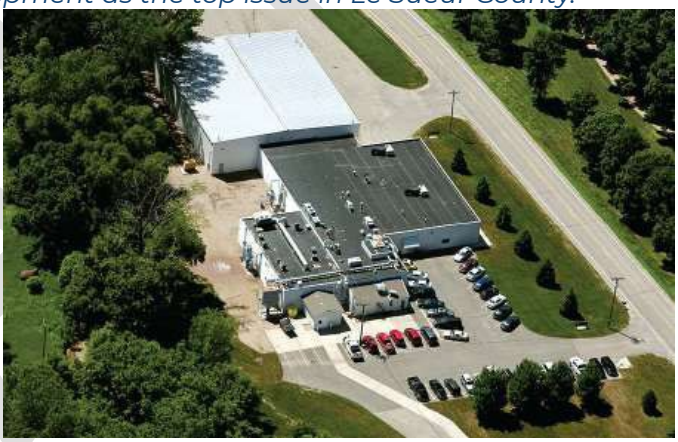
Employment

Anyone over 16 years old is considered a part of the working population, with the understanding that a substantially lower percentage of people over the age of 65 are employed. In Le Sueur County, about 23,411 people are over the age of 16.

According to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Minnesota ranks sixth overall for labor force participation rate at 68.7%. Le Sueur County's labor force participation rate is about 70.0%, above the state average.

As of December 2024, DEED reports Minnesota's unemployment rate is 2.7% (not seasonally adjusted). Le Sueur County's unemployment rate is 4.6%. Generally, 4 to 6% unemployment is considered average.

The labor force remains tight, even though job vacancies in the region have returned to rates similar to those prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Le Sueur County is home to hardworking employees that enjoy living in a rural setting. Workforce development efforts should work with local employers to meet their needs. Resources such as DEED Workforce Strategy Consultants and South Central Workforce Council exist to support local employers, job seekers, and economic development efforts to expand Minnesota's workforce.



Source: Bimeda, Le Sueur North American Manufacturing

Labor Movement and Commuting Patterns

Labor force patterns show the county has approximately 9,202 people who reside in Le Sueur County but work outside the county (outflow). The county attracts approximately 3,561 people who work in the county but live elsewhere. The remaining employees, approximately 2,707 people, live and work in Le Sueur County.

The average commute time of 25 minutes is above average. This is characteristic of Le Sueur County's position between the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan area and Mankato area.

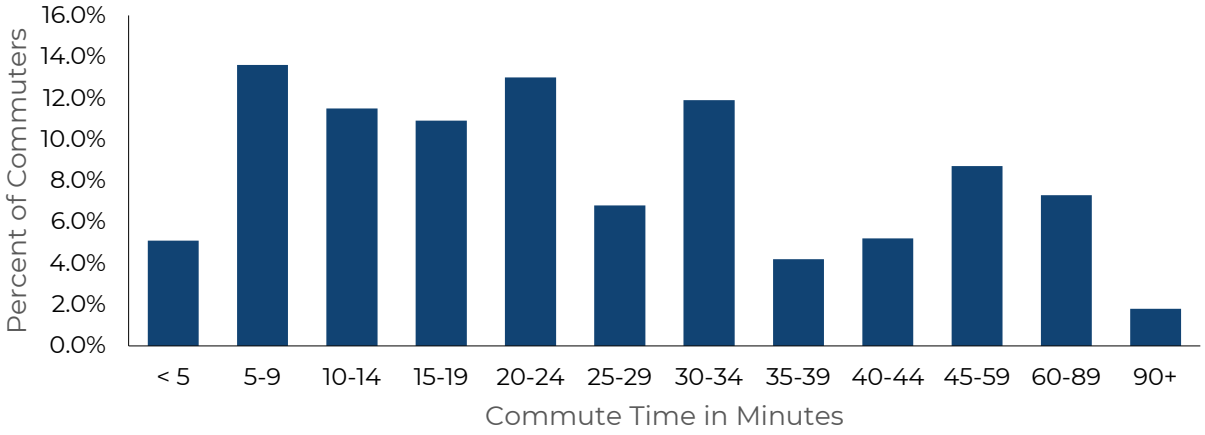
The County could put efforts into increasing employment inside the county to reduce daytime population loss and shorten average commute times. Being that the majority of employment in Le Sueur County is created by privately owned companies, these efforts would best be focused by working with new and existing private companies.

If more jobs were available, 22 percent of residents would choose to work in Le Sueur County instead of commute, according to the public survey.

FIGURE 9 | DAILY MOVEMENT OF EMPLOYEES INTO AND OUT OF LE SUEUR COUNTY

Source: US Census Bureau, On The Map

FIGURE 10 | LE SUEUR COUNTY RESIDENT COMMUTE TIMES



Source: U

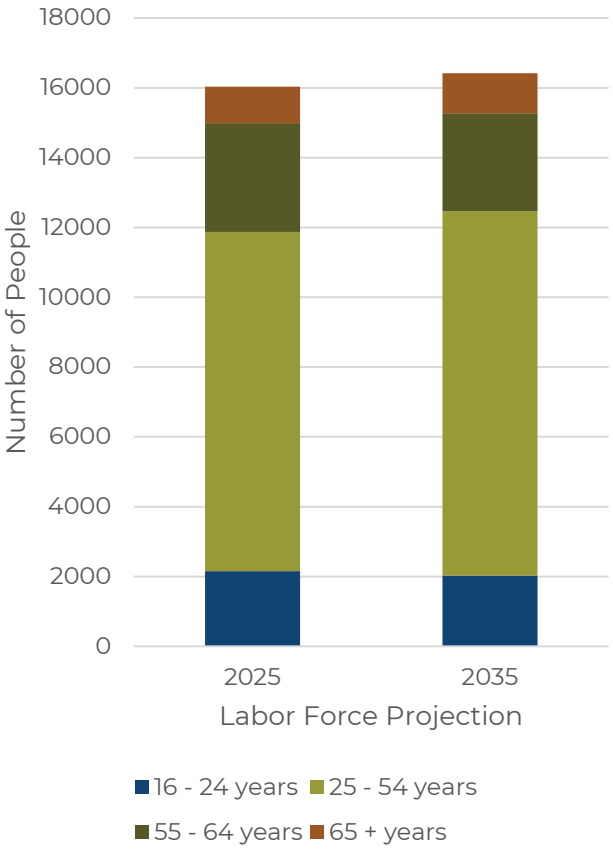
Employment Projections

Le Sueur County's labor force is anticipated to grow over the next ten years. This growth is expected to be driven by a larger number of 25 – 54 year olds in the labor force.

Employment in Le Sueur County's largest industries (manufacturing, healthcare, and construction) is also anticipated to grow. By 2030, employment in these sectors is expected to increase by 10%, and by 2040, it is projected to grow by 15%.

The county will need to focus on building infrastructure and services to support an aging population, attracting a younger workforce and retaining a skilled workforce to support these industries, which are critical to the county's economic future.

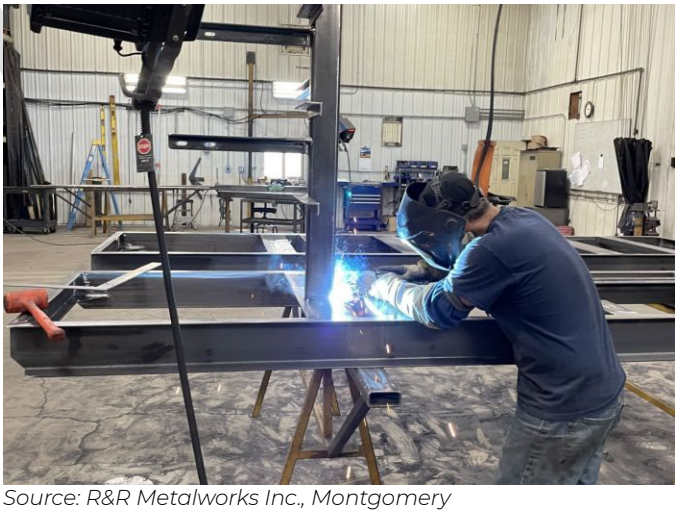
FIGURE 11 | LE SUEUR COUNTY LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS



Source: MnDEED County Profile

Source: Le Sueur County News, Construction of Le Sueur-Henderson Elementary School

Source: Central Healthcare, Le Center



Source: R&R Metalworks Inc., Montgomery

Industry

The top industries in Le Sueur County by the number of people employed are manufacturing (20% of labor force), health care (15.1% of labor force), and construction (10.3% of labor force).

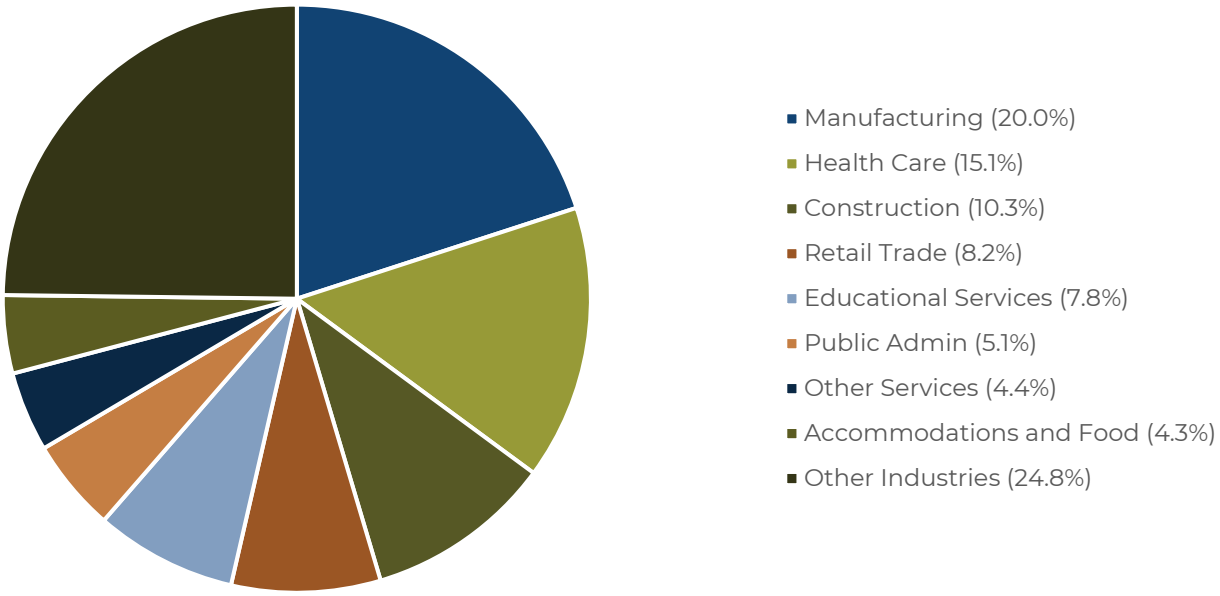
These key sectors are also driving local employment. All three of these industries are more specialized locally than in the U.S. as a whole. In other words, there is a higher concentration of employees in these industries in Le Sueur County.

Local/regional ownership of businesses was important for nearly 69% of survey respondents.

Food establishments, retail businesses, and childcare providers were the top three businesses that survey respondents reported as most needed in the county.

Source: Le Center Dental Clinic, Le Center

FIGURE 12 | TOP INDUSTRIES BY LABOR FORCE



Source: US Census Bureau 2023 ACS, Esri

Wages

Wages within the region are lower than the state, according to DEED, with a median hourly wage of $23.24 in Le Sueur County but $24.90 statewide.

The median hourly wage in all of the county's top industries - construction, manufacturing, and healthcare - are at or below the state median hourly wage.

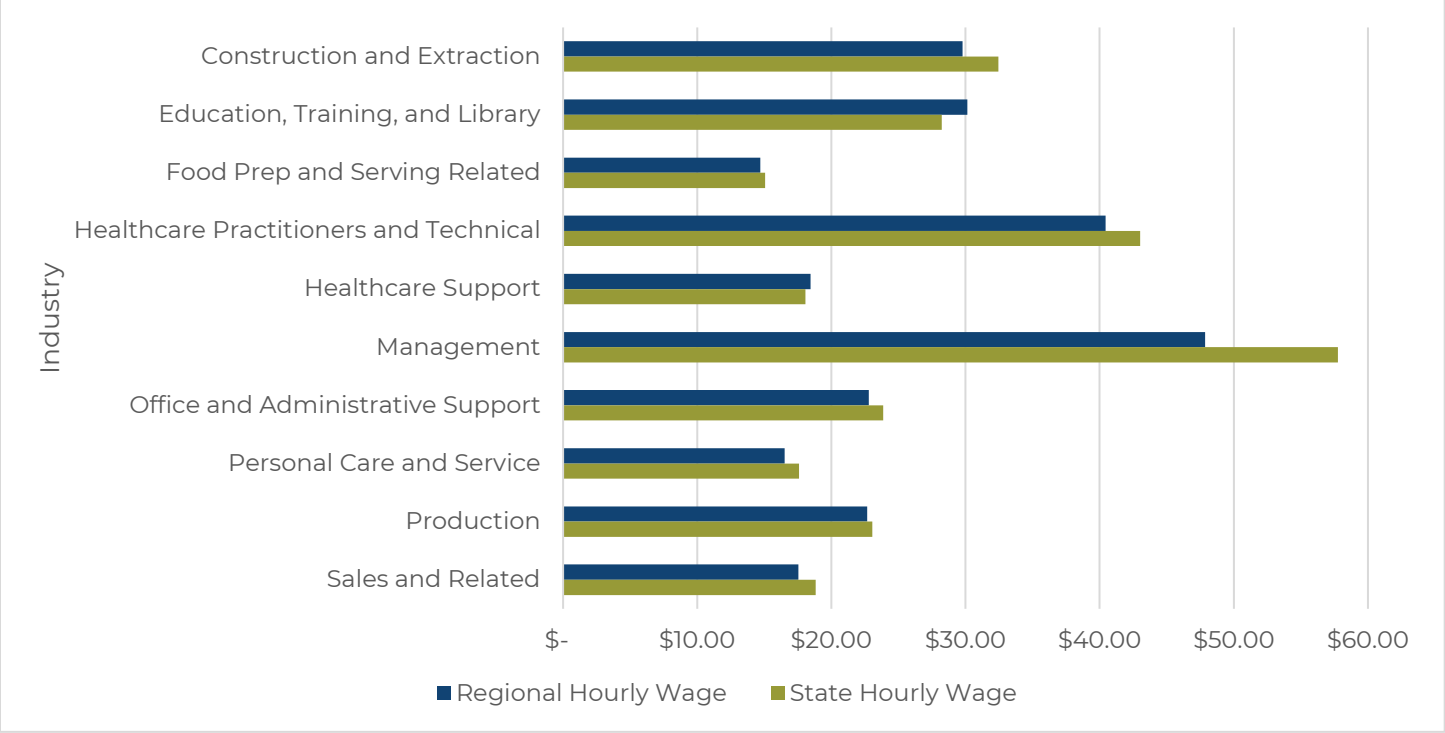
As industries that are projected to see substantial growth in the next ten years, economic development efforts should work closely with new and expanding businesses to increase wages for employees to more closely match or exceed the state average.

Top economic development efforts prioritized by survey respondents include:

- *small business and entrepreneurship development*
- *business recruitment and retention*
- *broadband internet development*
- *community revitalization*

Source: Cambria, Le Sueur

FIGURE 13 | WAGES OF TOP INDUSTRIES IN LE SUEUR COUNTY



Source: MnDEED County Profile, MN Demographic Center, ACS 2019-2023

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Goal 3.1 Support Local Business

Policy 3.1.1 Prioritize small business growth, retention, and entrepreneurship through partnerships and incentives.

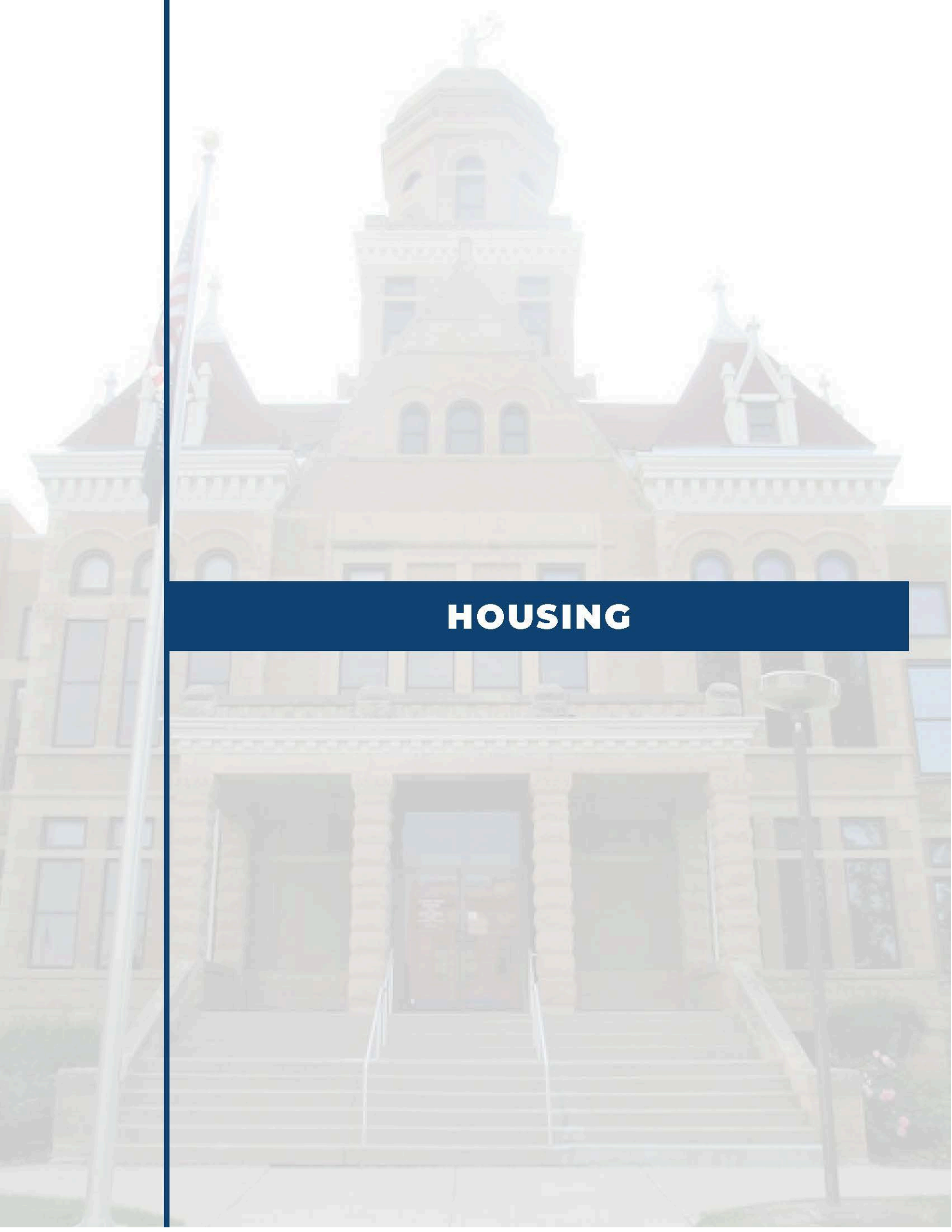
Goal 3.2 Strengthen Workforce

Policy 3.2.1 Incentivize key industries and expand local job opportunities.

Goal 3.3 Expand Infrastructure

Policy 3.3.1 Improve broadband and essential infrastructure to support business and community needs.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESILIENCY: Design infrastructure for extreme weather durability and maintain community assets, while fostering local economic growth.



HOUSING

4 | HOUSING

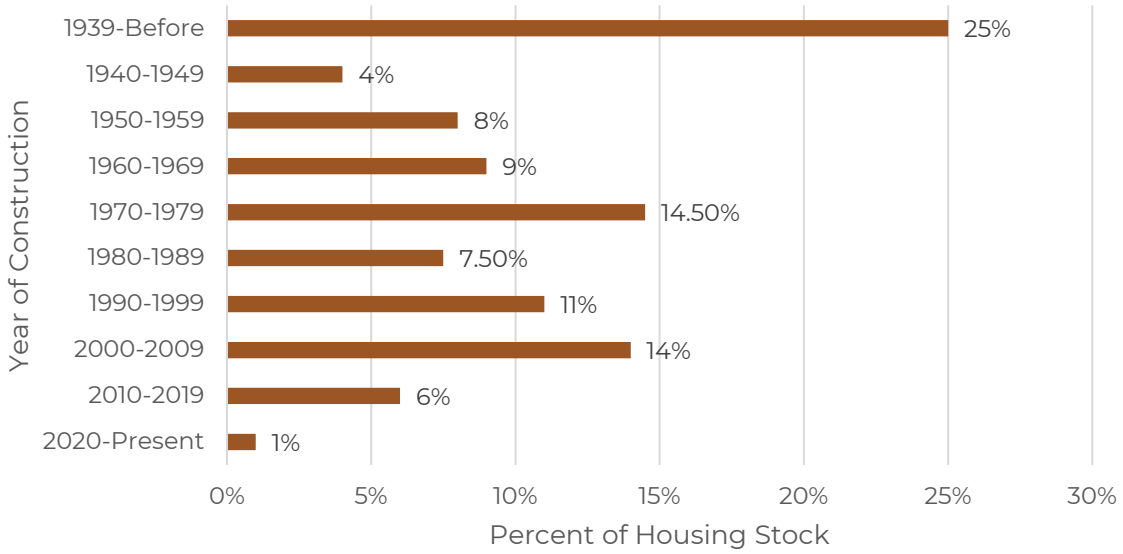
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Housing is a fundamental need that shapes communities and influences economic and social well-being. While Le Sueur County and its cities offer a variety of housing options, the critical question is whether this existing stock truly meets the needs of current residents. Furthermore, will the supply of housing keep pace with future demand, and will it remain affordable for households across income levels? These considerations are central for residents, developers, and decision-makers as they evaluate where to live, invest, and plan for growth in Le Sueur County.

Age of the Housing Stock

Housing is a resource that can last centuries if it is properly maintained; however, not all homes receive uniform attention. The likelihood that older homes will begin to have issues due to age is natural and tends to reduce their appeal to buyers. Le Sueur County has an older housing stock, with 38% of homes built more than 65 years ago and a quarter built nearly a century ago. The rate of new housing construction over the last 25 years has been relatively low, with only 21% of housing built between 2000 and the present. The desirability of new homes makes them easy to fill with residents; however, the limited supply of these homes makes them cost more, and the homes do not last long on the market. In situations like these, where the housing stock is older and more prevalent in the market, there is a greater need to revitalize and ensure these older homes are in the best condition to maintain a functional local housing market.

FIGURE 14 | AGE OF LE SUEUR COUNTY HOUSING STOCK

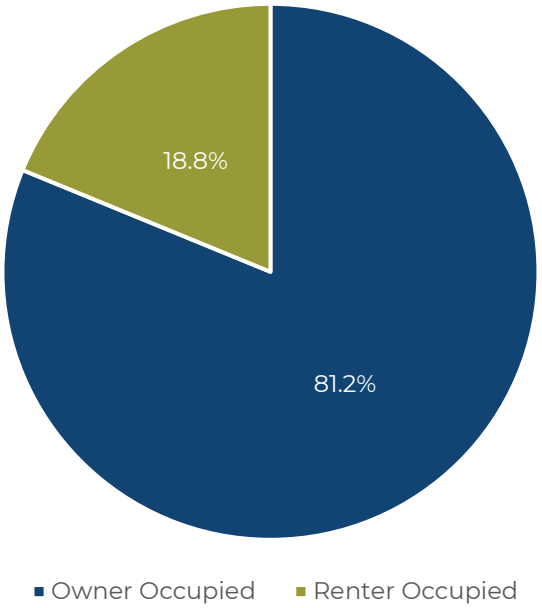


Source: US Census, Esri Business Analyst

Occupancy

Owner occupancy is the predominant means of procuring a home in Le Sueur County, with 81.2% of residents living in homes they have purchased and own. For the 18.8% of the population that rent a home in the county, the availability of rental housing and its variable long-term costs can create instability. The patterns in duration of occupancy between renters and homeowners are similar in proportion to one another.

FIGURE 15 | LE SUEUR COUNTY HOUSING OCCUPANCY

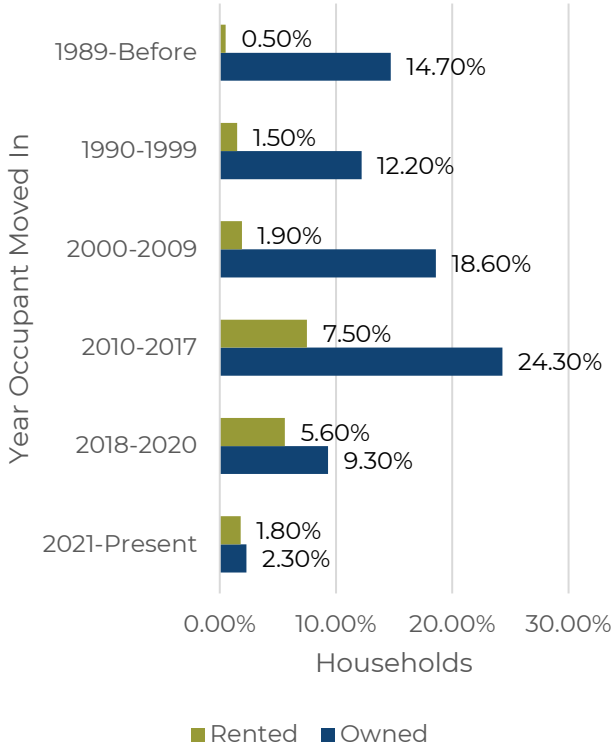


Source: US Census, Esri Business Analyst

Tenure

In Le Sueur County, 48.5% of households have been owned and occupied for 15 years or more. Financially, this is significant as these households, assuming the majority were financed on 30-year mortgages, are over halfway to being paid off by their owners, with roughly 1 out of 4 households having less than five years left of payments. Nationally, the average duration of home ownership in the US is 12 years. In the county, 13.1% of households (two-thirds of all renters) have established rental tenancies of 5-15 years. The national average is 3 years, demonstrating the stability of the rental market where tenants are occupying units significantly longer than expected.

FIGURE 16 | LE SUEUR COUNTY HOUSING TENURE



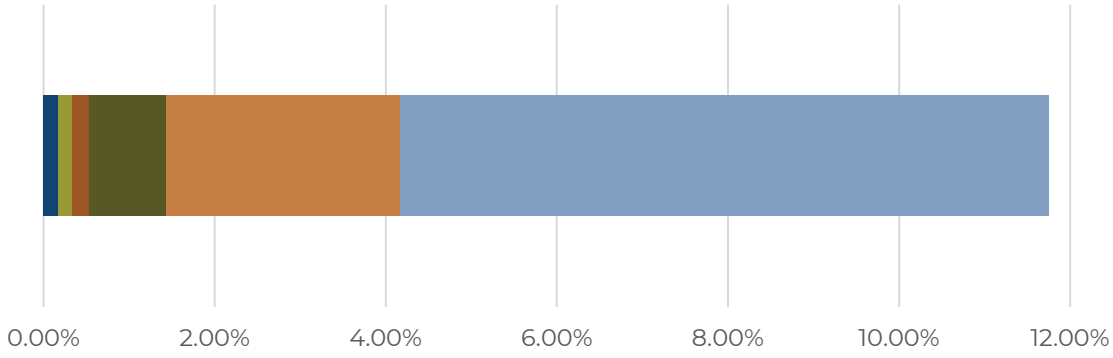
Source: US Census, Esri Business Analyst

Vacancy

In any housing market, the target vacancy rate is approximately 5%-8% of the total housing stock. This allows the supply for prospective residents to remain stable without significant price fluctuations. When less than 5% of the housing stock is available for lease or purchase, the cost of housing and rent will increase due to greater demand. When over 8% of the available housing is on the market, competition between landlords and sellers to fill their units and avoid losses will intensify. The market will drop until renters or buyers are enticed enough to make a transaction; however, this frequently leads to the degradation of the housing stock and the creation of blighted conditions, as repairing issues on these properties ceases to be profitable. On paper, at 11.5% of the market vacant, Le Sueur County appears to have a significant surplus of housing units available for those in need. However, only 1.1% of the country's total housing stock is currently on the market, with the remaining 10.4% of vacant homes being off the market, seasonal, or used for other purposes. The result is a market that is short on available housing, with twice the number of housing units needed for a healthy market present and unused.

Source: Zillow (top), Apartments.com (bottom)

FIGURE 17 | LE SUEUR COUNTY HOUSING VACANCY



	Percent of County Housing Units
Sold, Unoccupied	0.17%
Rented, Unoccupied	0.17%
For Sale Only	0.20%
For Rent	0.90%
Other	2.73%
Seasonal/Occupational	7.59%

Source: US Census, Esri Business Analyst

PROJECTED CONDITIONS

Through its goals and policies, this plan is expected to guide the next 25 years of policy and decision-making in Le Sueur County. While unpredictable events, such as pandemics or major employers relocating, can impact housing trends, projections based on current conditions and past patterns offer valuable insights. Two population growth scenarios are modeled: a 1% annual increase and the county's recent 0.295% rate, with outcomes expected to fall between these two rates, as detailed in the Community Profile and Land Use Chapters.

Each of these scenarios would create a need for more homes, while also increasing the community's economic activity and demand for local employment opportunities. Housing supply, currently growing at a rate of 0.8% annually, is assumed to remain steady, thereby shaping the estimated number of units by 2050. To assess affordability, projections use Annual Median Income (AMI), with housing costs compared to the standard 30% income contribution for households earning 50%, 80%, 100%, and 120% of AMI (see Figures 19 and 20).

Source: Siwek Lumber & Millwork, Le Sueur

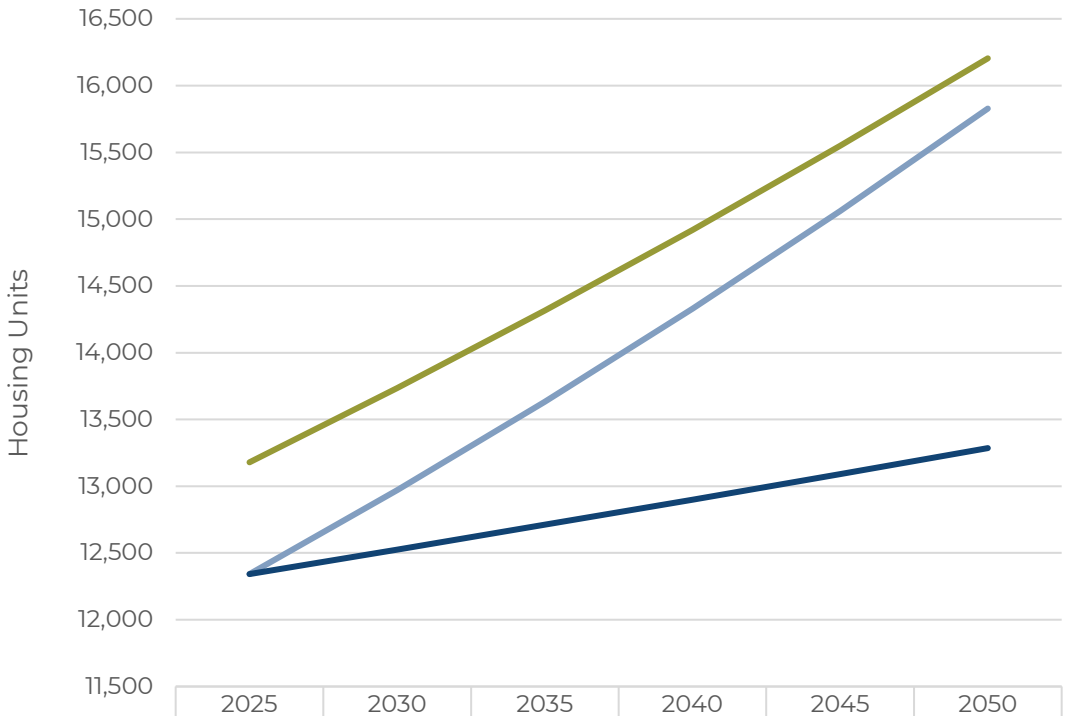
FIGURE 18 | PROJECTED HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AND NEED BASED ON TWO SCENARIOS

Housing Construction Projections

Le Sueur County currently has 13,179 housing units. To adequately provide housing for its 11,754 households and maintain a healthy 5% vacancy rate, the county needs approximately 12,342 units.

The difference in these numbers indicates a housing stock surplus of 837 homes. This reflects the number of vacant homes in the housing market (see Figure 17). While the housing stock grows at a rate of .83% annually, it's expected that the county will have 16,204 units of housing in 2050, or enough to support a population of 40,510 at an average household size of 2.5 people. As the population growth at 1% is marginally faster than the housing stock over the next 25 years, the excess housing units in the county will decrease to 376 housing units. For this to occur, the new construction would be supplemented by reductions in the total number of vacant units not on the market.

The surplus created over the next 25 years can be analyzed based on the current oversupply of housing. The green line represents the reduction of vacant surplus housing units over the next 25 years, with a projected 1% growth in population, which would necessitate the entry of 480 homes into the market. This is based on the county's home construction rate, which is 0.83%. If the population grows at a rate slower than the projected 0.295%, this surplus will increase, as there will not be enough people to fill homes. Development would realistically come to a halt in this situation, and the cost of housing would likely increase due to the lower profitability of development.



	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
Projected Housing Units @ .83% annual growth	13179	13735	14315	14919	15548	16204
Needed Housing Units @ 1% population growth	12342	12972	13633	14329	15060	15828
Needed Units @ .295% population growth	12342	12525	12711	12900	13091	13285

Source: US Census, Esri Business Analyst

Housing Costs

Rental Housing

Le Sueur County has a median rent of $966, which is lower than the national average and is attainable for households that make slightly more than 50% of the annual median income. As rental costs generally increase annually at a higher rate than inflation and salary increases, by 2030, the median rental cost is expected to exceed what is considered reasonable when making 50% of the annual median income. While not likely, by the year 2050, the median rental cost is expected to exceed the amount that is affordable at 80% of the county's household median income for housing.

FIGURE 19 | PROJECTED MEDIAN MONTHLY RENT AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING COSTS

	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
Median Rent	$966	$1,204	$1,501	$1,870	$2,331	$2,905
Monthly Housing Cost Affordable @ 50% Household AMI	$1,061	$1,224	$1,412	$1,629	$1,879	$2,168
Monthly Housing Cost Affordable @ 80% Household AMI	$1,697	$1,958	$2,259	$2,606	$3,006	$3,468
Monthly Housing Cost Affordable @ 100% Household AMI	$2,121	$2,447	$2,823	$3,257	$3,758	$4,335
Monthly Housing Cost Affordable @ 120% Household AMI	$2,546	$2,937	$3,388	$3,909	$4,509	$5,202

Source: US Census, Esri Business Analyst

Owner-Occupied Housing

The median value home in Le Sueur County costs $333,340, which, when financed at 7% interest with the national average downpayment of 13.6% of the sale price, produces a monthly payment of $1,916. The housing budget for a household earning 80% of the annual median income is only $37 greater than the monthly payment on a median-value home in the county. Over the next 25 years, as housing costs rise faster than income or regular inflation, the cost of a median-value home will cease being attainable for a household with the county's median annual income. By 2050, the cost of housing will reach almost the maximum that a household earning 20% more than the annual median income can reasonably attain. The graph below shows the changes in the price points of the homes attainable at each percentage of the annual median income and the cost of the median home value.

FIGURE 20 | PROJECTED MEDIAN MONTHLY MORTGAGE AND AFFORDABLE HOME PAYMENTS

	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
Median Home Value	$333,340	$411,442	$507,844	$626,833	$773,701	$954,981
Price Point of Home Affordable @ 50% Household AMI	$205,365	$236,920	$273,325	$315,323	$363,775	$419,672
Price Point of Home Affordable @ 80% Household AMI	$328,583	$379,073	$437,320	$504,517	$582,040	$671,475
Price Point of Home Affordable @ 100% Household AMI	$410,729	$473,841	$546,650	$630,647	$727,550	$839,344
Price Point of Home Affordable @ 120% Household AMI	$492,875	$568,609	$655,980	$756,776	$873,061	$1,007,213

Source: US Census, Esri Business Analyst

Economic Changes

The economic conditions of the housing market or greater economy are difficult to project without a great deal of assumptions. In these cases, with constant inflation, the rise in housing costs, and the interest rates constant over the 25-year period, an approximation of these conditions is visible. The general results are that as the population grows, the excess capacity will be reduced even with the continuation of the current rate of new housing construction. When viewed in the context of the age of the housing stock in the community, there will likely be challenges for residents who move into housing units based on the natural aging of the home. These necessary repairs, coupled with the rising costs of housing, will put some strain on households in the county in the next 5 to 10 years.

Over the next 25 years, survey respondents were most interested in seeing:

- *Single-family home development*
- *Incentives and resources to maintain existing housing*
- *Senior housing independent living facilities*

HOUSING GOALS

Goal 4.1 Preserve and Improve Aging Housing Stock

Policy 4.1.1 Support rehabilitation and maintenance of older homes to ensure safety, livability, and market competitiveness.

Goal 4.2 Ensure Housing Attainability and Stability

Policy 4.2.1 Promote housing options that remain attainable across income levels and support long-term tenure for both owners and renters.

Goal 4.3 Align Housing Supply with Population Growth

Policy 4.3.1 Expand residential development potential through strategic updates to Agricultural District.

Goal 4.4 Diversify Housing Types and Tenure Options

Policy 4.4.1 Expand housing choices to meet evolving needs—such as senior, workforce, and multi-family housing.

HOUSING RESILIENCY: Avoid flood-prone areas through zoning and hazard mitigation. Promote energy-efficient, climate-resilient housing.

FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

5 | FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Among the roles of the county government is to administer the state programs for its residents and regulate the unincorporated areas within its borders. Le Sueur County's government has grown substantially since it was established in the 1850s, including 20 different departments, each serving a vital function in meeting the needs of its nearly 30,000 residents. The organizational and physical infrastructure of the county can be divided into services provided for all residents and those that meet the needs of the unincorporated territory.

Trunk Highway 112 Turnback Construction

County Highway Department

Le Sueur County's 518 miles of roadway receives year-round maintenance from this department. Beyond the day-in and day-out maintenance functions, the department is also responsible for executing the county's transportation policies and ensuring the transportation network can effectively transport goods and services throughout the jurisdiction. This includes purchasing any needed right-of-way and inspecting the county's 86 bridges. Providing for the all-season use of the transportation infrastructure also requires the department staff to seal cracks, fill potholes, remove snow, and clear shoulders and ditches of noxious weeds. Developing and maintaining this infrastructure is among the most capital-intensive roles of the county.

Drainage Authority

The County Board oversees 236 miles of open county ditches that make up the 58 drainage systems (103E Systems) that alleviate stormwater following rain events. These systems are for the agriculture community to accommodate for drainage on their land and improve soil conditions for crops.

Environmental Services

The Environmental Services Department plays a vital role in promoting the protection of the County's natural resources and the preservation of the public's health, safety, and general welfare. Its responsibilities include overseeing planning & zoning, the County Surveyor, the design, installation, and maintenance of septic systems, feedlots & manure management, solid waste management, shoreland preservation, aquatic invasive species management, and water resource management, including surface & groundwater.

The Department ensures compliance with environmental regulations and provides education and outreach to residents. The County Surveyor maintains the public land survey section corners, reviews land division documents, and verifies GIS positional data. The Department contributes to economic development throughout the County by fostering balanced growth that aims to reduce conflict between competing land uses while also encouraging environmental stewardship.

The Environmental Services Department collaborates with residents, other local government entities, as well as State and Federal agencies. These efforts ensure that future economic progress aligns with the land use goals of the County, creating a more balanced and thriving community.

Source: Le Sueur County Environmental Services, Native Vegetation Planting

Sheriff's Office & Emergency Management

Tasked with law enforcement throughout the county, the 55 staff of this agency provide specialized services to achieve their mission. The communications center serves as the prime emergency services dispatcher for the county, 14 townships, and the county's 10 cities. Additionally, lateral cross-agency coordination with the highway department, human services, emergency services, and vertical agency coordination with state and local entities ensures all situations are met with the appropriate response. In addition to the public safety services, the law enforcement functions of the department provide significant service to county residents through the operation of the 80-bed jail facility, management of civil legal procedures, patrol of the county, and a team of investigators. Emergency Management serves as a complement to the duties of the Sheriff's office by providing advanced preparation strategies and education to mitigate the effects of disasters and other emergent events.

In addition to serving unincorporated areas, the Cities of Kilkenny, Elysian, and Kasota contract separately for Sheriff services instead of having their own Police Department.

Source: KEYC News

West Jefferson Sewer District

The West Jefferson Sewer District serves residential properties around West Jefferson Lake. It is operated by the West Jefferson Sewer District Authority in coordination with the Le Sueur County Board of Commissioners, and it is owned by Le Sueur County. This Sewer District was established through a Subordinate Service District in 2016, replacing the previous German-Jefferson Subordinate Service District. It was designed and approved for 141 residential connections. This system requires concurrence with the City of Cleveland for any new connections, as the system is connected to the city's wastewater treatment facility.

West Jefferson Sewer Construction

Assessor's Office

The Assessor's Office is responsible for the assessment of all real, personal, and exempt property in Le Sueur County. This includes approximately 19,000 parcels of property, inclusive of all townships and cities in the county. The Office is responsible for activities such as annual sales studies, property classification, and estimated market value for tax purposes. The Assessor's Office operates under the requirements of the Minnesota Department of

Revenue and staff continuously strive for uniform assessments on all properties.

Court Administration and Probation

Le Sueur County operates within the 1st Judicial District of Minnesota, which oversees a wide range of legal matters, including civil, criminal, family, juvenile, and traffic cases. These proceedings take place at the Le Sueur County Justice Center, located in Le Center, MN. Among these is the Le Sueur-Sibley County Treatment Court, a unique program focused on integrating rehabilitation and treatment into sentencing practices to reduce repeat offenses. Additionally, the Court administers probationary programs aimed at supporting defendants in adhering to legal requirements and fostering successful reintegration into the community.

Auditor/Treasurer

The Auditor/Treasurer's Office serves as the financial and licensing hub of the county. It acts as custodian of all county funds, handling revenues and expenditures, investing surplus funds, and securing collateral to protect public assets. The department also manages property tax collection and distribution, processes real estate transactions, and oversees tax forfeitures. In addition, it operates the License Center, providing services such as vehicle registrations, driver's license renewals, and recreational licenses for hunting, fishing, and boating.

Source: American Courthouses, Le Sueur County Justice Center

Source: UMN Extension Le Sueur County 4-H, Youth State Fair Training

Elections

The Le Sueur County Elections Administrator is the party tasked with overseeing the proper procedure for elections within the county and its incorporated cities. Among the most scrutinized and important roles in government is the orderly counting of ballots to ensure the public's will and voice are heard. In addition, the department is responsible for numerous tasks related to the registration of voters in the county, including the provision of requested absentee ballots. These duties are the county's role in implementing the Minnesota Office of the Secretary of State policies.

Finance

The Finance Department oversees the County's financial management, ensuring accountability and transparency in the use of public funds. Its responsibilities include preparing and monitoring the annual operating budget, maintaining accurate accounting records, and coordinating audits with independent auditors as required by Minnesota law. The department also enforces financial policies, provides budgetary control, and supports County operations by safeguarding resources and ensuring compliance with state and local regulations.

Extension Office

In collaboration with the University of Minnesota, the extension office provides education and research to the local community throughout the county. With a focus on learning for all ages, the entity fulfills the key programming roles of managing 4H programs, providing agricultural services, offering home horticulture learning opportunities, and providing nutrition education. Each is a dedicated effort to better the health and knowledge of all county residents.

GIS Services

This information service provides public access to tax and land information in one comprehensive location to allow for better-informed decision-making and faster emergency response due to addressing consistency. It provides a historical record of the property and geographical data.

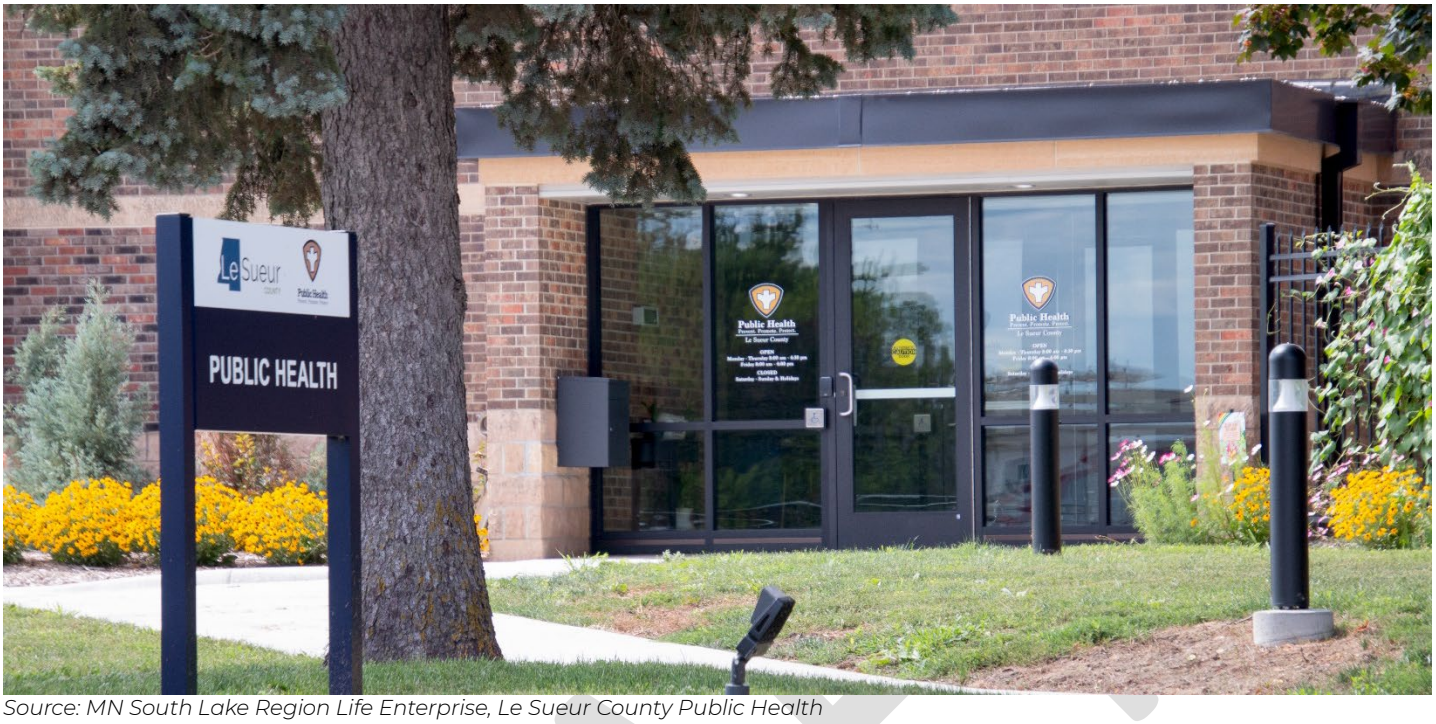
Source: Le Sueur County, Lake Washington Regional Park and Campground

Human Services

This department is the main avenue for the Minnesota Department of Human Services to implement its policies and disburse resources allocated for assistance to those in need within the county. The services offered can be divided into those offered on behalf of youth and those for adults. The services provided to the children of the county through this agency include protective services, mental health care access, school attendance monitoring, and substance abuse intervention. For adults in need, the department facilitates access to disability services, substance abuse treatment, and mental health solutions. Additionally, this entity is responsible for monitoring entitlement funds and benefits through applications and approvals to ensure the dispersal of these benefits to qualifying recipients.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks Department is responsible for managing and maintaining the 12 county parks. The Department maintains the 11 county-owned public water accesses and the DNR owns and maintains 24 public water accesses. The Parks Department operates two public campgrounds and a nature center. The parks offer a prime opportunity for the public to engage in nature-related recreation. The County Park System and this department are major programming service providers that allow the public to learn and engage with their surroundings. In addition to park programming from the nature center, the department oversees the rental of numerous facilities throughout the park properties that draw in revenue and facilitate community among residents.



Source: MN South Lake Region Life Enterprise, Le Sueur County Public Health

Public Health

The Public Health Department focuses on improving the health and well-being of all residents in Le Sueur County. They provide a variety of programs aimed at prevention and education specifically in the following priority areas: Substance Abuse, Mental Health, Healthcare Access, Transportation, and Social Connection. Community based services include the Healthy Smiles dental program, Statewide Health Improvement Partnership, and public health emergency preparedness. Additional health services include licensing and inspections for food, beverage, lodging, and commercial establishments that include a pool in their amenities.

Direct service delivery programs include medication management through public health nursing clinic, waiver services to help decrease healthcare costs and keep people in their homes, immunizations and disease prevention, family home visiting, and Women, Infant & Children (WIC).

Recorder's Office

The Recorder's Office is responsible for maintaining an index of all legal records of real estate since the 1850's. In addition to these records for both Abstract and Registered (Torrens) property, the Record's Office also maintains Vital Records, such as Birth, Death, and Marriage Records and other information such as Tax Liens, Military Discharge Records, Notaries, Ordinations, etc. Beyond retention of these different records, the Recorder's Office also provides search services of these records for customers.

Veterans Services

The Veteran's Services Office serves as a one-stop entity for seeking assistance in accessing benefits entitled to veterans for their service from the state, local, and federal government. While small in staff size, this department's impact is outsized. It provides advocacy, advice, and assistance in navigating the bureaucracy that administers veterans benefit programs at all levels, reducing barriers to local qualifying residents.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Department serves as the backbone of the County's workforce operations, overseeing all personnel-related functions with professionalism and care. From recruitment and selection to salary administration and employee relations, the Department ensures that County policies and procedures are effectively implemented and maintained. Operating under the County Personnel Policy and existing bargaining agreements, the HR team advises department heads and the County Board on matters of staffing and workplace dynamics. The Department is committed to fostering a fair, inclusive, and supportive work environment for all county employees.

Information Technology

Le Sueur County's Information Technology (IT) Department plays a central role in county operations, overseeing the planning, development, and support of all information and communication systems used throughout government offices. The department is divided into two key areas: Network Security & Support and Systems Support. Network staff manage the county's LAN/WAN infrastructure and safeguard data from unauthorized access, while Systems Support handles the installation and maintenance of PCs, laptops, printers, and software applications. Together, they ensure seamless connectivity, troubleshoot technical issues through a help desk system, and collaborate with other departments to align technology solutions with operational needs.

Building & Maintenance

The Building and Maintenance Department plays a vital role in ensuring the functionality and upkeep of county-owned properties. Tasked with providing repair, maintenance, and custodial services, the department supports a wide range of facilities, including government buildings and rental properties throughout the county. Their work helps maintain safe, clean, and efficient environments for both public use and county operations.

County Attorney

The Le Sueur County Attorney's Office serves as the chief legal authority for the County, handling a wide range of responsibilities that uphold justice and protect public interests. Led by an elected County Attorney, the office prosecutes all felony, gross misdemeanor, and certain misdemeanor offenses occurring within the County, including juvenile criminal matters and public assistance fraud. Beyond criminal prosecution, the office provides legal counsel to the County Board and departments on civil issues such as zoning, liability claims, and contract negotiations. It also represents the County in child protection cases, civil commitments, and child support enforcement, while offering vital support to victims and witnesses throughout legal proceedings.

Victim Witness

The Victim/Witness Program provides support and advocacy for individuals affected by crime, ensuring their rights are upheld and their voices heard throughout the legal process. Operated through the County Attorney's Office, the program assists victims and witnesses by keeping them informed about case developments, helping them understand court procedures, and offering emotional support to cope with the trauma of criminal acts. It also coordinates with city attorneys when needed, ensuring that victims and witnesses have access to resources even if a case is not prosecuted due to lack of evidence or other factors.

County Administration

The Le Sueur County Administrator's Office serves as the central hub for coordinating and managing county operations. As the administrative head of the county, the Administrator is responsible for implementing the decisions, policies, ordinances, and resolutions set forth by the Board of Commissioners. Acting as a liaison between the Board and county departments, the office ensures smooth communication, efficient service delivery, and strategic oversight across all areas of government. From budget planning to policy execution, the Administrator's Office plays a key role in shaping the county's direction and maintaining accountability in public service.

JOINT POWER SERVICES

Libraries

Five libraries are in Le Sueur County, all part of the joint power agreement between the Counties of Waseca and Le Sueur. This system features nine libraries in total. These establishments provide access to knowledge and culture through their collection of resources. Additionally, they pursue reciprocal borrowing agreements and maintain membership in the Traverse des Sioux Library System to increase patrons' access to materials.

Solid Waste Management

Tri-County Solid Waste Joint Powers Board is a three-county joint power agreement between Le Sueur, Sibley, and Nicollet Counties to efficiently and cost-effectively assist residents and businesses in the disposal of their solid waste and recyclables. While the disposal facilities are outside of the county's sole jurisdiction, this cooperative arrangement allows greater service levels to be provided to residents of Le Sueur County than could be achieved based on the economies of scale available to any county trying to manage solid waste disposal independently.

Other Joint Power Services

From time to time, Le Sueur County enters into other joint powers agreements for specific projects or long-term partnerships. Examples of long-term partnerships include joint powers agreements for task forces through the Sheriff's Department like the Cannon River Drug and Violent Offender Task Force. Examples of specific projects include joint power agreements for road and utility projects through the Highway Department and regional planning efforts through the Environmental Services Department, such as watershed management plans.

Source: Elysian Area Library and Heritage Center

Source: Waseca-Le Sueur Regional Library System

FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS

Goal 5.1 Maintain and Modernize County Infrastructure

Policy 5.1.1 Ensure safe, efficient transportation and utility systems through year-round maintenance, strategic upgrades, and capital investment in roads, bridges, drainage systems, and sewer districts.

Goal 5.2 Protect Public Health and the Environment

Policy 5.2.1 Promote environmental stewardship and land use balance through zoning, septic and feedlot regulation, water resource management, and invasive species control.

Policy 5.2.2 Promote responsible waste management by supporting waste reduction, recycling, resource recovery, and proper disposal practices.

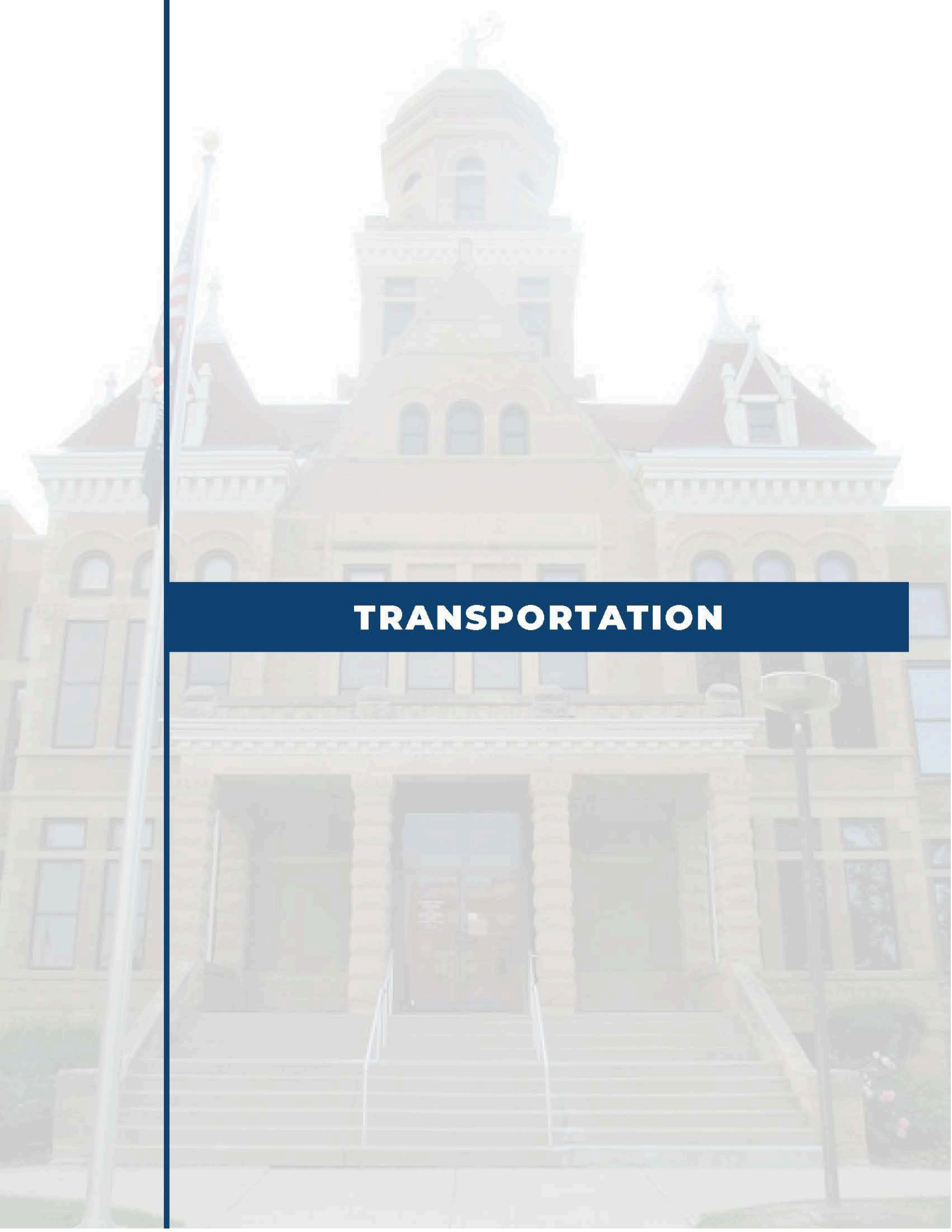
Goal 5.3 Ensure Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

Policy 5.3.1 Provide comprehensive law enforcement, emergency response, and disaster mitigation services, especially in unincorporated areas, through coordinated efforts across departments and jurisdictions.

Goal 5.4 Deliver Accessible Administrative and Civic Services

Policy 5.4.1 Support residents and municipalities with reliable property assessment, licensing, elections, court services, and youth programs to uphold transparency, equity, and civic engagement.

FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCY: Maintain emergency shelters. Ensure backup power and communication for critical facilities.



TRANSPORTATION

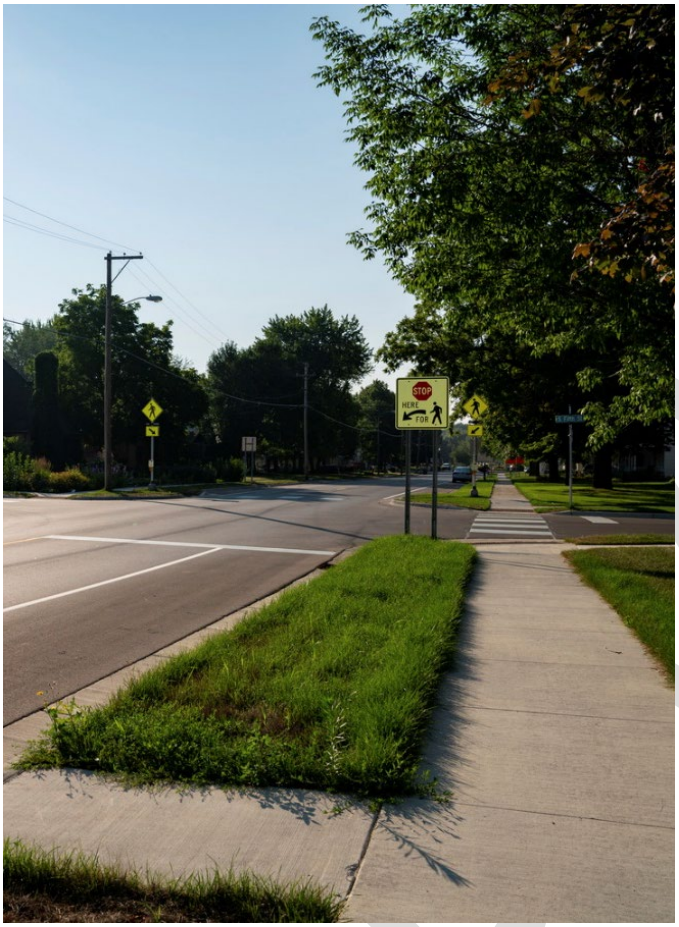
6 | TRANSPORTATION

Le Sueur County's transportation network enables public mobility by connecting residents, employees, and visitors with places to live, work, recreate, and play. Transportation networks are traditionally designed and understood through the lens of origins and destinations; however, the quality and experience of using a transportation network are as important as the destination. Traveling safely and with ease, regardless of mode, plays a significant role in the overall success of county mobility. As such, Le Sueur County is committed to working with local stakeholders and the Minnesota Department of Transportation to ensure they maintain an exceptional, multi-modal transportation system. The transportation chapter of the plan examines the future transportation needs for all modes of travel and people of all ages and abilities within the county.

TH 169

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The functional classification system describes each road's role in the community. A road's role and functions guide design features such as street widths, speed limits, and intersection control. Le Sueur County has three roadway functional classifications that carry cars, commercial traffic, and freight (trucks and semis) under its jurisdiction. These classifications are summarized as follows:



T.A.P. Sidewalk Project

Arterials

Arterials are designated as Principal or Minor; they are roads that provide mobility across regional communities. In Le Sueur County, there are only two principal arterials. The minor arterials in the system are predominantly east to west; however a single north to south route through New Prague and Montgomery, State Hwy 21, allows for regional transportation in the County's east side.

- Principal Arterial examples – US 169, State Hwy 22
- Minor Arterial examples – State Hwy 13, State Hwy 19, State Hwy 21, State Hwy 60, and State Hwy 99

Collectors

Collectors are designated as either major or minor and balance the mobility across a community. They generally serve trips through a community and connect neighborhoods and business districts. Collector roadways that Le Sueur County owns and maintains include the following:

- Major Collector examples – CSAH 2, 5, 11, 12, 15, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 36, 38, 39
- Minor Collector examples – CSAH 3, 7, 9, 10, 14, 16, 30, 32, 33, 35, 45, 60

Local Roads

All other remaining roadways are classified as Local Roads. Their primary function is to serve local and residential traffic and convey it to collectors and arterials. Residential neighborhoods are most often served via the Local Road classification. Generally, these roadways are under the local municipalities' jurisdiction since they have low traffic volumes and mainly serve local traffic. However, Le Sueur County has many of these under its jurisdiction, including the following:

- Local Road examples – County Rd 103, 110, 139, 148, 165

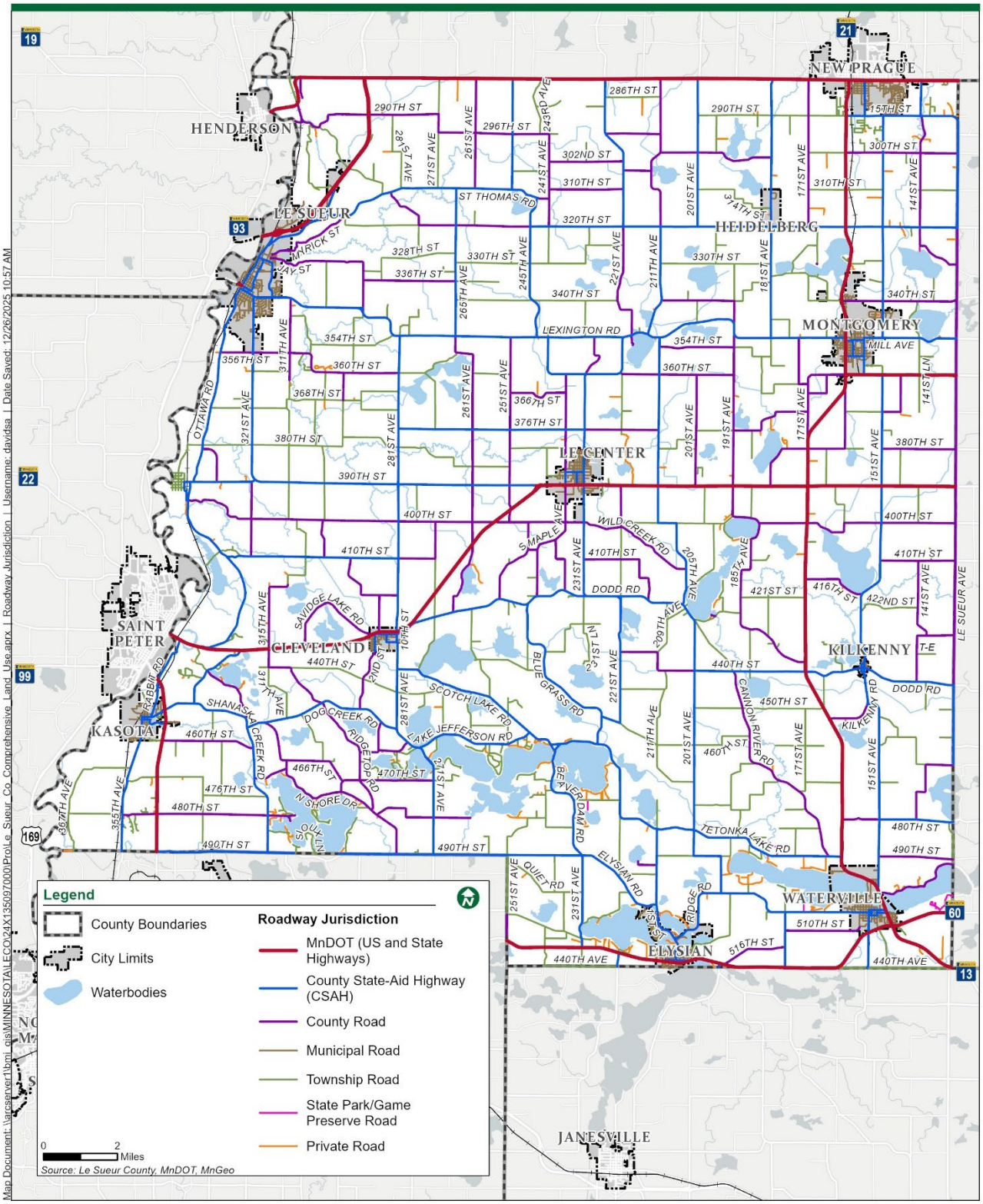
Bridges

The Le Sueur County Highway Department is responsible for inspecting and maintaining the county's 86 bridges. The State requires the County to adopt a resolution identifying bridges eligible to receive state bridge bonding or other bridge funding and those considered a priority to replace, rehabilitate, or remove within the next five years. The County notes that bridge repairs are usually structural replacements when dealing with smaller spans.

57% of survey respondents rated the overall conditions of the county's transportation infrastructure as good or excellent

Jurisdiction

None of the county's arterial roads are under the jurisdiction of the Highway Department, as all are either US Highways (US 169) or State Highways (State Hwy 13, 19, 21, 22, 60, and 99) maintained by MnDOT. Within the county's borders, a significant number of local, municipal, and private roads are not under the jurisdiction of the County. Only collectors and local roads are part of the transportation system and under the county's sole jurisdiction.


NEW PRAGUE
HENDERSON
LE SUEUR
HEIDELBERG
MONTGOMERY
LE CENTER
CLEVELAND
SAINT PETER
KASOTA
KILKENNY
WATERVILLE
ELYSIAN
JANESVILLE
290TH ST
286TH ST
296TH ST
302ND ST
310TH ST
320TH ST
328TH ST
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450TH ST
460TH ST
466TH ST
470TH ST
476TH ST
480TH ST
490TH ST
510TH ST
516TH ST
440TH AVE
ST THOMAS RD
LEXINGTON RD
MILL AVE
WILD CREEK RD
DODD RD
SAVIDGE LAKE RD
SCOTCH LAKE RD
LAKE JEFFERSON RD
DOG CREEK RD
RIDGETOP RD
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S MAPLE AVE
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315TH ST
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Legend
County Boundaries
City Limits
Waterbodies
Roadway Jurisdiction
MnDOT (US and State Highways)
County State-Aid Highway (CSAH)
County Road
Municipal Road
Township Road
State Park/Game Preserve Road
Private Road
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Miles
Source: Le Sueur County, MnDOT, MnGeo
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SAFETY AND CAPACITY

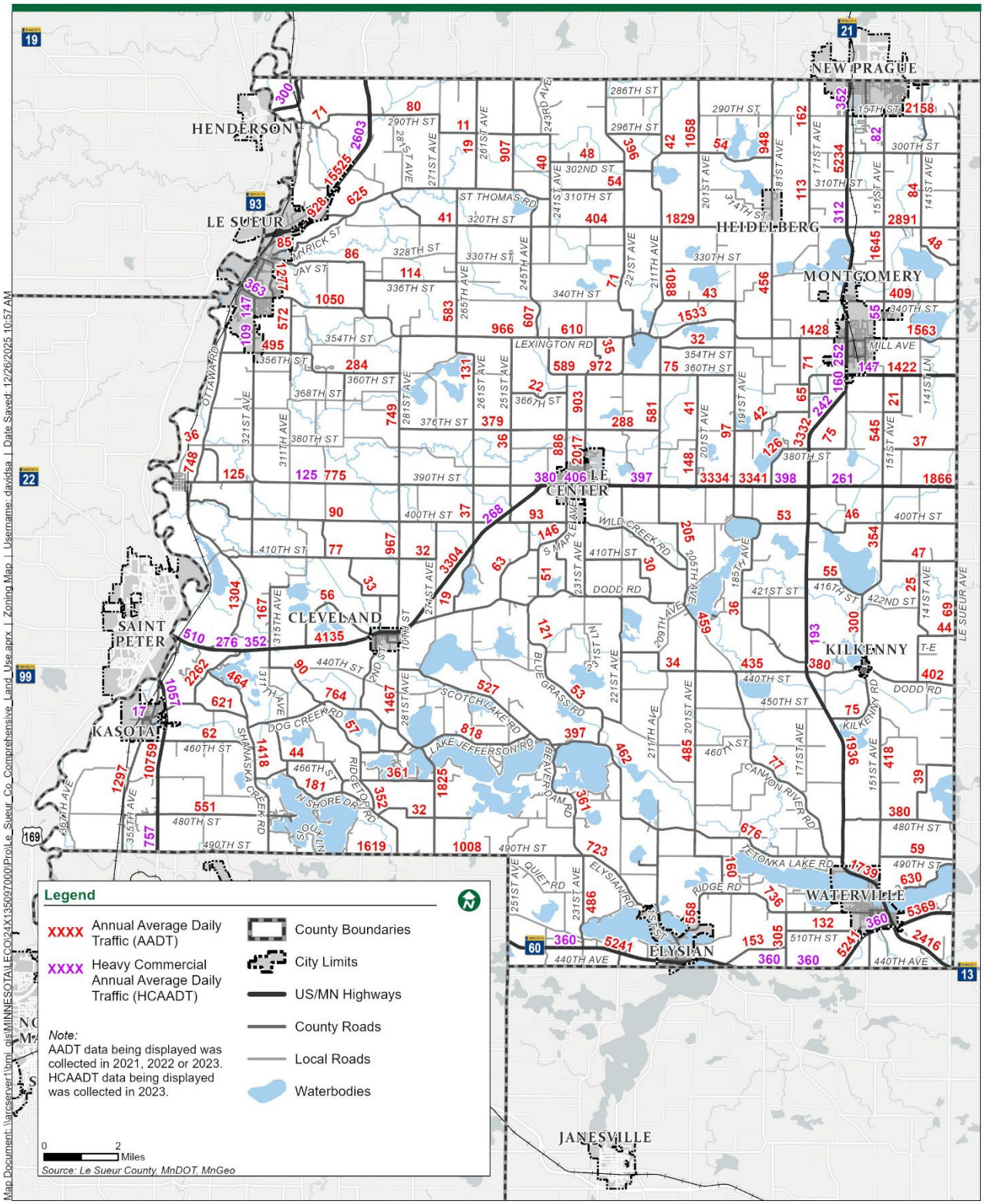
Current Traffic Volumes

The highest traffic volumes observed throughout the county's roadway network can be found on US Hwy 169, north of the City of Le Sueur, close to the northern border of the county (15,525 AADT). This is likely due to this transportation corridor's role in access to other cities and job centers. The second highest traffic volumes can be found on State Hwy 22 near the city limits of Kasota (10,759 AADT). This transportation corridor plays a key role in access to the Mankato area for many in this region. Throughout the remainder of the system AADT never exceeds 6,000. A few sections of road exceed 5,000 AADT: State Hwy 13 from New Prague to Montgomery, State Hwy 99 west of Cleveland, and State Hwy 60 from Elysian through Waterville to the eastern county border. Le Sueur County's roads tend to have an AADT of less than 1,000 with few exceptions along the collectors that provide cross-county routes, such as CSAH 16, 26, and 28.

Survey respondents felt safer driving in Le Sueur County than walking or biking.

Traffic Safety

While evaluating the 5-year crash data from MnDOT it would make sense that the highest crash frequency would occur where the highest traffic volumes are observed. However, this is not quite the case. The corridor near Kasota has an elevated frequency of these events. The amount does not reflect the traffic that passes through the area and is rather excellent compared to some other intersections. The highest accident frequencies occurred at the intersection of State Hwy 93 and 2nd and 3rd Streets in Le Sueur. The next two crash prone areas are 320th St and 151st Ave intersection, followed by the intersection of Lexington Ave and 4th Street NW (Hwy 13) in Montgomery. These areas carried smaller traffic loads on the network, yet they account for more frequent accidents.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ELYSIAN
JANESVILLE
Legend
XXXX Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
XXXX Heavy Commercial Annual Average Daily Traffic (HCAADT)
Note:
AADT data being displayed was collected in 2021, 2022 or 2023. HCAADT data being displayed was collected in 2023.
County Boundaries
City Limits
US/MN Highways
County Roads
Local Roads
Waterbodies
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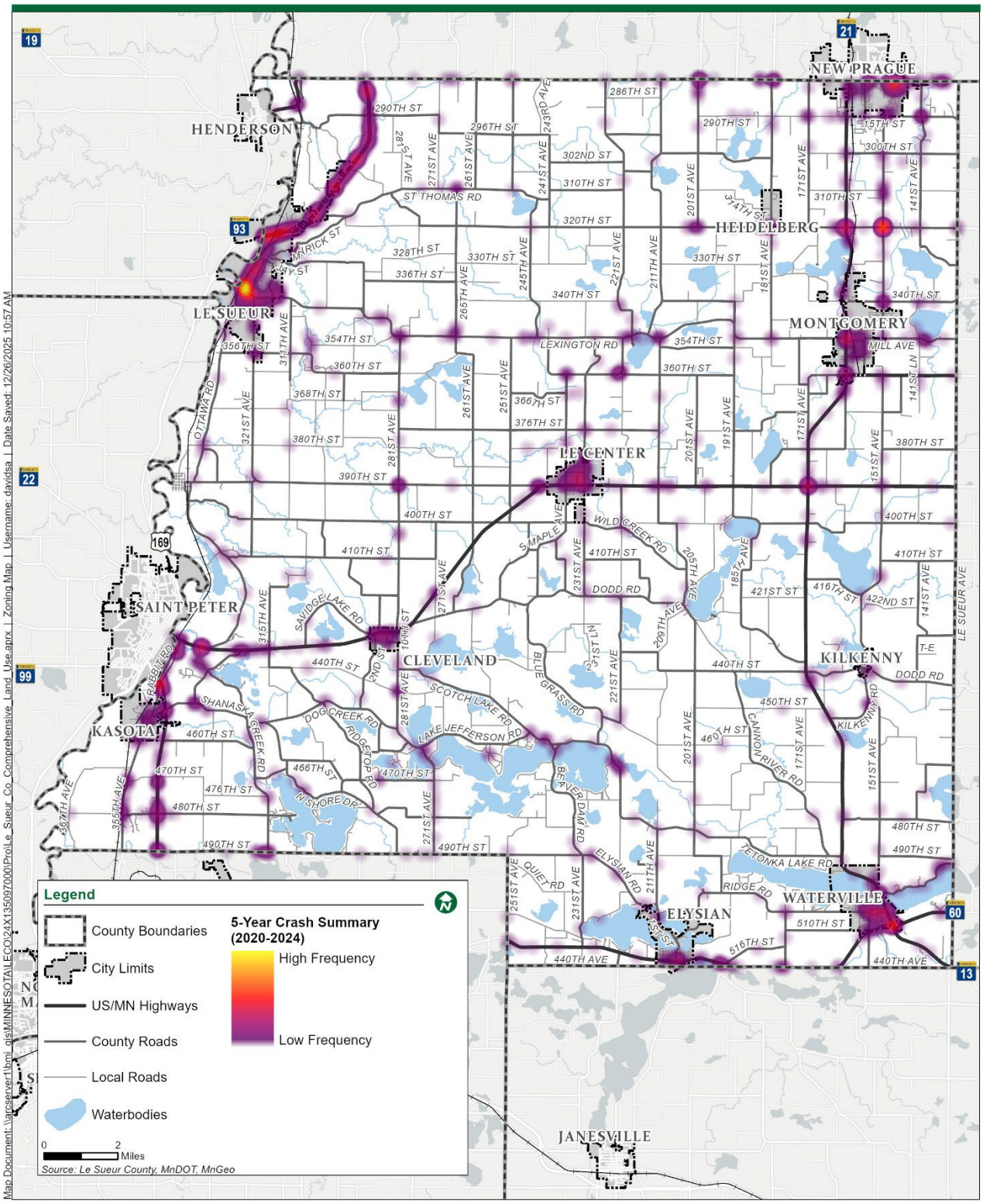
Source: Le Sueur County, MnDOT, MnGeo
Map Document: \\arcserver1\bmi_gis\MINNESOTA\LECO\24X135097000\Proj\Le_Sueur_Co_Comprehensive_Land_Use.aprx | Zoning Map | Username: davidsa | Date Saved: 12/26/2025 10:57 AM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MILL AVE
WILD CREEK RD
DODD RD
SAVIDGE LAKE RD
RABBIT RD
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County Boundaries
City Limits
US/MN Highways
County Roads
Local Roads
Waterbodies
5-Year Crash Summary (2020-2024)
High Frequency
Low Frequency
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Source: Le Sueur County, MnDOT, MnGeo
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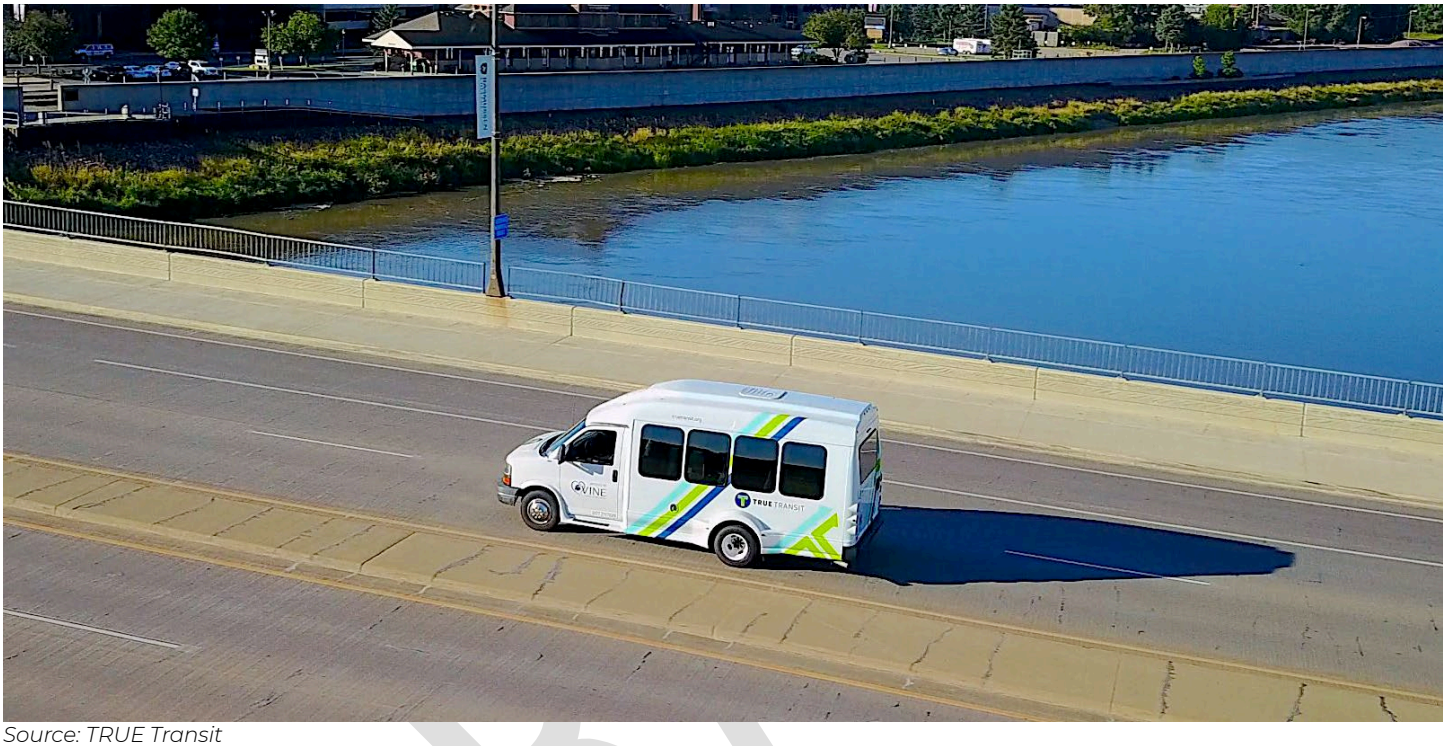
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Residents of Le Sueur County have access to the TRUE Transit public transit system, which offers bus service in Blue Earth, Nicollet, and Le Sueur Counties during weekdays. Rides are available throughout these counties and must be booked at least one business day in advance.

TRUE Transit has worked to coordinate with Scott County Transit to improve service for residents in New Prague that live along the County border and have split coverage.



Source: TRUE Transit

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

Goal 6.1 Enhance Safety and Accessibility for All Users

Policy 6.1.1 Improve roadway and intersection safety through targeted upgrades, crash data analysis, and design standards that support users of all ages, abilities, and travel modes.

Goal 6.2 Maintain and Modernize County Infrastructure

Policy 6.2.1 Sustain and upgrade the county's transportation assets—including roads, bridges, and drainage systems—through proactive maintenance, strategic investment, and coordination with MnDOT and local partners.

Goal 6.3 Support Multi-Modal Mobility and Connectivity

Policy 6.3.1 Promote a transportation network that accommodates walking, biking, transit, and freight, ensuring seamless connections between residential, commercial, and recreational destinations.

Goal 6.4 Align Transportation Planning with Land Use and Growth

Policy 6.4.1 Coordinate transportation improvements with land use planning to support efficient development, preserve rural character, and ensure long-term mobility across incorporated and unincorporated areas.

TRANSPORTATION RESILIENCY: Design infrastructure for winter durability and reduced salt use. Improve drainage to manage meltwater and prevent icing.

NATURAL RESOURCES

7 | NATURAL RESOURCES

Le Sueur County has a rich natural heritage shaped by its glacial history, diverse ecosystems, and active water and land management efforts. The County balances agricultural productivity with conservation, recreation, and environmental stewardship to support its natural resources.

Source: University of Minnesota Extension

HISTORIC LAND

Topography and Geologic History

Le Sueur County is located within the Minnesota River Lowland, a glacially influenced trough formed during the Pleistocene Epoch, which began approximately 2 million years ago and ended around 10,000 years ago. During this time, multiple glacial advances and retreats reshaped the landscape.

The most recent glacial activity in the region was the Des Moines Lobe of the Late Wisconsin Glaciation. This event deposited a medium-textured, calcareous, yellowish-gray glacial till across the area. These deposits played a critical role in shaping the county's soils, hydrology, and topographic features.

Vegetation at the Time of the Original Public Land Survey (1847–1907)

The first government land surveys in Minnesota were conducted between 1847 and 1907. These surveys produced detailed plat maps that are now foundational legal records for real estate and property descriptions. In addition to legal importance, they provide a valuable historical record of pre-settlement vegetation and land cover.

The dominant forest type documented in Le Sueur County during the original surveys was the maple-basswood forest. Characteristic tree species included Sugar Maple, Basswood, Elm, Red Oak, and White Oak.

These forests were located on the western edge of the Eastern Deciduous Forest biome and were particularly prominent in south-central Minnesota. The largest contiguous tract of this forest type was known historically as the "Big Woods," which extended over 3,000 square miles.

Fire played a significant role in shaping the distribution of forested areas. The tree species found in maple-basswood forests are highly fire-sensitive. As a result, these forests were typically confined to areas protected by natural firebreaks such as rivers, lakes, and rugged terrain that limited the spread of prairie fires.

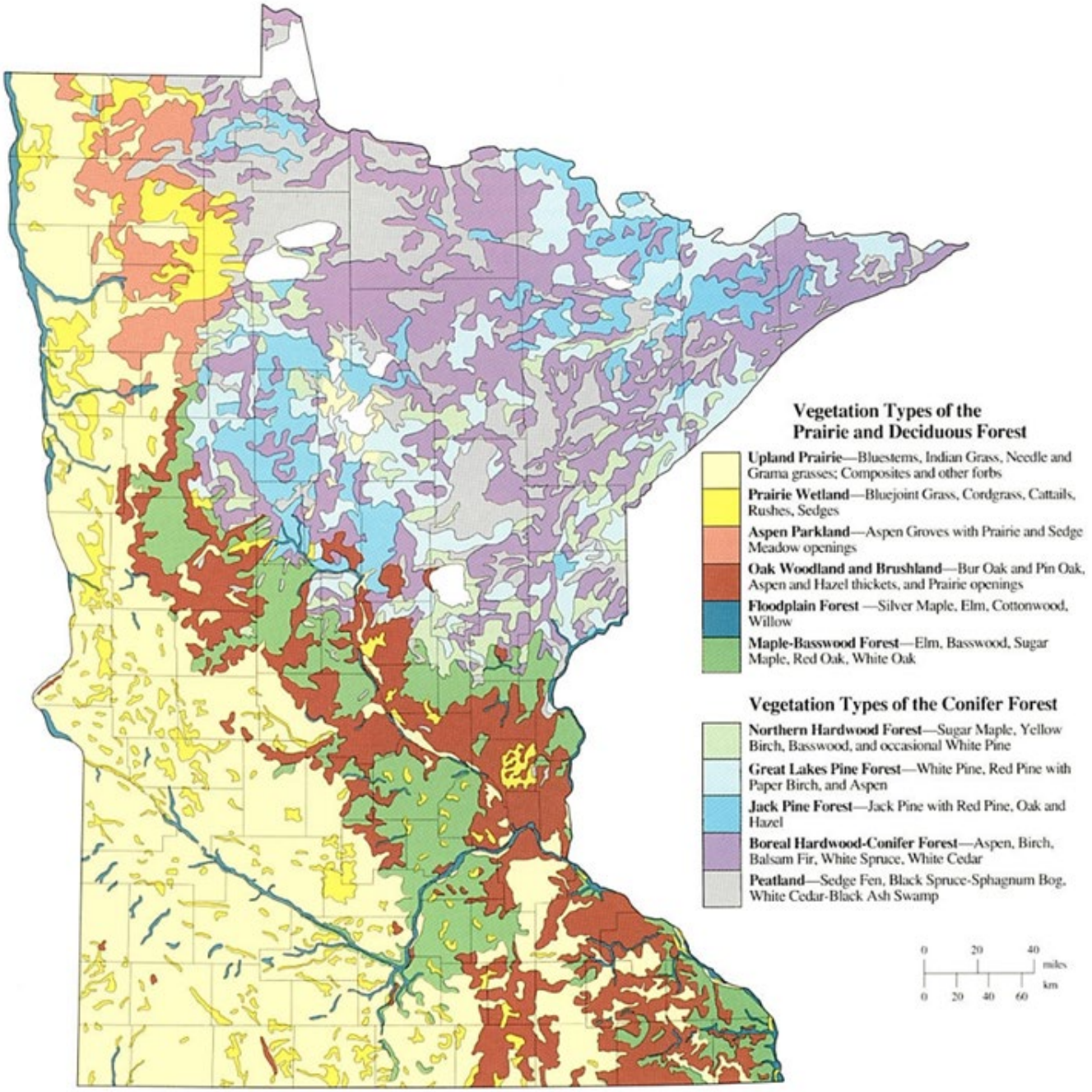
Prairie and Wetland Communities

Portions of Le Sueur County also included areas of tallgrass prairie and wetland systems. During the 1850s public land surveys, prairie covered roughly one-third of Minnesota's land area. In this region, prairie and wetland vegetation included:

- Cordgrass (Spartina pectinata)
- Bluejoint Grass (Calamagrostis canadensis)
- Cattails (Typha spp.)
- Sedges (Carex spp.)
- Rushes (Juncus spp.)

Prairie vegetation varied with soil moisture and topography. Wet lowlands supported Cordgrass and Bluejoint Grass; moist uplands supported Big Bluestem (Andropogon gerardii) and Indian Grass (Sorghastrum nutans); and dry uplands supported Little Bluestem (Schizachyrium scoparium) and Sideoats Grama (Bouteloua curtipendula). The region's glacial moraine topography—characterized by "knob and kettle" landforms—was especially conducive to the formation of prairie pothole wetlands.

Most of these historic prairie and wetland communities have been lost due to land conversion to cropland. According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), currently in Minnesota less than 1% of pre-settlement prairies remain. Furthermore, currently in Minnesota around 50% of pre-settlement wetlands remain; regions in Southern and Western Minnesota have displayed more than 50% loss of wetlands.



The Natural Vegetation of Minnesota at the Time of the Public Land Survey: 1847-1907

This map was adapted by Barbara Coffin of the DNR, Natural Heritage Program from *The Original Vegetation of Minnesota*, a map compiled in 1930 by F. J. Marschner from the U. S. General Land Office Survey Notes and published in 1974 under the direction of M. L. Heinselman of the U. S. Forest Service. It was produced by the Cartography Laboratory of the Department of Geography, University of Minnesota.

WATER RESOURCES

Le Sueur County is actively involved in comprehensive watershed management as part of Minnesota's One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) initiative. This integrated planning framework aligns local, state, and federal efforts to improve, protect, and restore surface water and groundwater resources on a watershed scale.

The county spans four major watersheds:

- Lower Minnesota River
- Middle Minnesota River
- Le Sueur River
- Cannon River

Each of these watersheds plays a significant role in shaping the hydrologic and ecological dynamics of the county. Le Sueur County currently has three approved 1W1Ps in place for the Cannon River Watershed, Lower Minnesota River East Watershed, and Le Sueur River Watershed. The Middle Minnesota River-Mankato Watershed is still in planning stages (draft plan), and is anticipated to be completed and approved in early 2026.

Surface Water and Hydrology

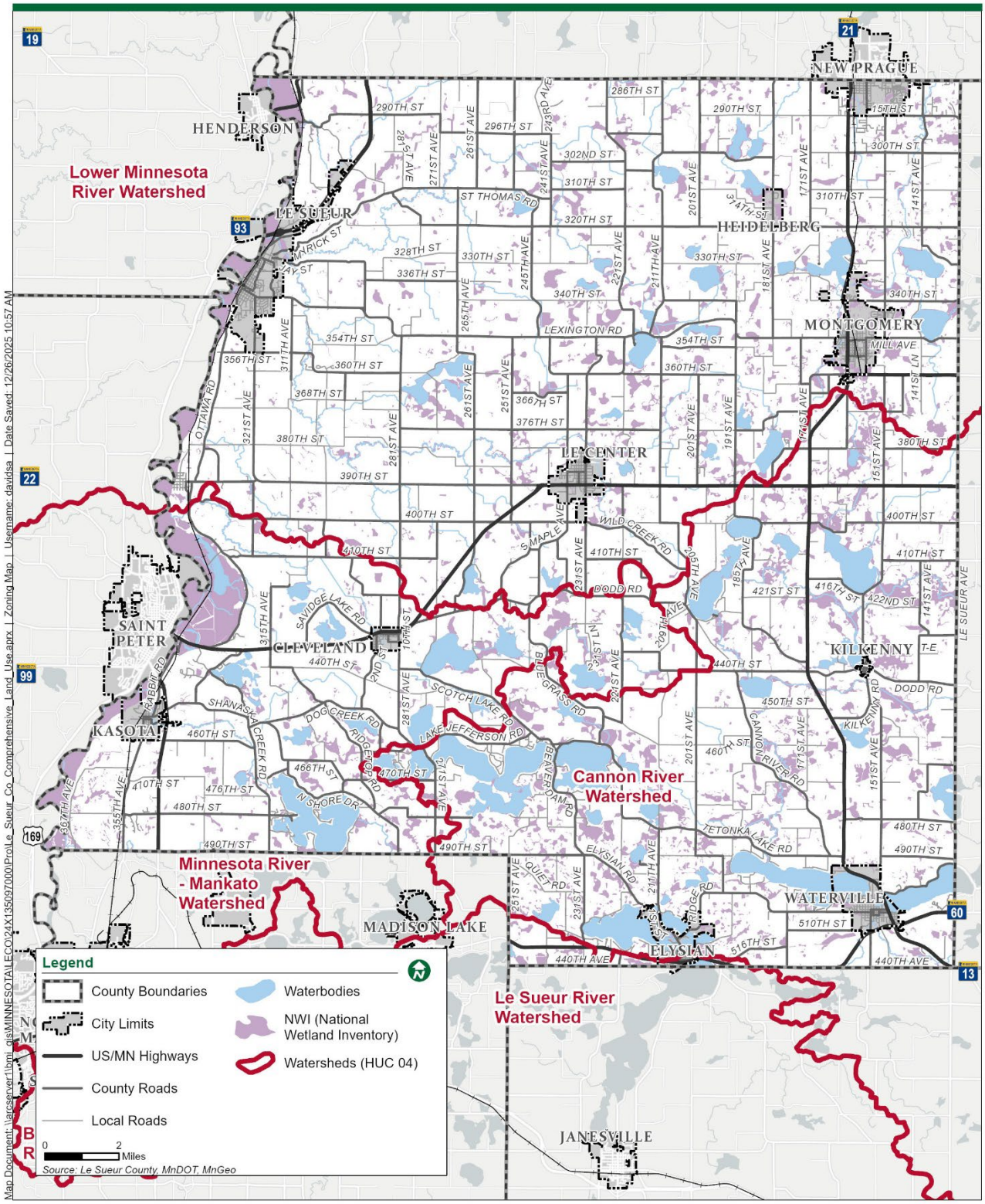
Approximately 6% of Le Sueur County's land area—equating to nearly 18,000 acres—is covered by surface water. This includes 73 lakes, 58 drainage systems (103E systems), and over 30 streams, rivers, and creeks. There are approximately 575 miles of streams, rivers, and creeks and 236 miles of open county ditches. All these water features support natural ecosystems, agriculture, and recreational use.

The Minnesota River forms the western boundary of the county, with a floodplain ranging from 1/8 mile to 2 miles wide. This river, which flows 320 miles from Big Stone Lake to the Mississippi River in St. Paul, drains a watershed of approximately 17,000 square miles across parts of Minnesota, Iowa, and South Dakota.

Recreational and Ecological Significance of the Minnesota River

The Minnesota River supports over 80 fish species, including game fish such as Flathead Catfish (Pylodictis olivaris), Channel Catfish (Ictalurus punctatus), Walleye (Sander vitreus), commercial fish such as Bigmouth Buffalo (Ictiobus cyprinellus) and Smallmouth Buffalo (Ictiobus bubalus), and nongame species such as Paddlefish (Polyodon spathula) and Shovelnose Sturgeon (Scaphirhynchus platorynchus). Despite the presence of five dams on the upper river (including Granite Falls Dam), the lower 240 miles remain free-flowing. These free-flowing stretches are nationally recognized for their sport fishing potential, especially for trophy Flathead Catfish (Pylodictis olivaris). The river also supports a wide range of recreational activities, including canoeing, kayaking, hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing, camping, and hunting. There are over 50 designated boat and canoe access points. There are also numerous City, County, and State parks and trails border the Minnesota River. Most notable parks and trails within Le Sueur County include the Ney Nature Center and the Kasota Prairie.

74% of survey respondents thought more should be done to protect the water quality of lakes and streams.


Lower Minnesota River Watershed
Minnesota River - Mankato Watershed
Cannon River Watershed
Le Sueur River Watershed
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LE SUEUR
NEW PRAGUE
HEIDELBERG
MONTGOMERY
LE CENTER
CLEVELAND
SAINT PETER
KASOTA
KILKENNY
MADISON LAKE
ELYSIAN
WATERVILLE
JANESVILLE
Legend
County Boundaries
City Limits
US/MN Highways
County Roads
Local Roads
Waterbodies
NWI (National Wetland Inventory)
Watersheds (HUC 04)
0 2 Miles
Source: Le Sueur County, MnDOT, MnGeo

Environmental Pressures and Concerns

Agricultural activity and development (residential, municipal, and commercial) in the Minnesota River Basin has introduced several environmental concerns including increased runoff, elevated nutrient and chemical inputs (e.g., fertilizers, pesticides), enhanced erosion and sedimentation, and habitat loss due to ditching and stream modifications. These practices degrade water quality and diminish aquatic habitat throughout the watershed.

Invasive Species

Invasive species are considered nonnative to an ecosystem and/or region and cause environmental, social, economic harm as well as harm to human health. Invasive species can include plants, animals, invertebrates, fish, or other living organisms. These species can exist on land or in the water. According to the Minnesota DNR's Infested Waters List, 13 lakes and one river (Minnesota River) in Le Sueur County are considered infested with aquatic invasive species. The lakes are infested with Eurasian Watermilfoil (Myriophyllum spicatum) and/or Flowering Rush (Butomus umbellatus) and the Minnesota River is infested for Zebra Mussels (Dreissena polymorpha). In addition to the infested waters in Le Sueur County, many of our lakes, streams, and wetlands contain invasive carp such as Bighead Carp (Hypophthalmichthys nobilis) and Common Carp (Cyprinus carpio). According to the University of Minnesota Invasive Terrestrial Plants and Pests Center, there are more than 300 invasive terrestrial species in Minnesota, many of which are located in Le Sueur County. Examples of common terrestrial invasive species that can be found in Le Sueur County include but are not limited to: Common Buckthorn (Rhamnus cathartica), Garlic Mustard (Alliaria petiolate), and Japanese Beetle (Popillia japonica).

Climate Change and Flow Regimes

According to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources' 2022 report *Water Storage: A Planning and Decision Support Framework*, watershed hydrology across Minnesota has changed and been driven by the increase in intensity and amount of precipitation that occurs each year. Additionally, land use practices such as expanded agricultural drainage and greater impervious surface area have contributed to altered hydrology. The increase in flows and volumes of water through Minnesota have led to more frequent and severe flooding, increased pollutant loads (nutrients, bacteria, sediment), and accelerated riverbank erosion. This has negatively impacted the environmental, public health, and local economies.

Fish Passage Barriers and Habitat Fragmentation

There are over 1,150 dams in Minnesota, and many were historically installed for water/flood control or to prevent fish movement and act as fish barriers. Many of these dams were installed decades ago, and many are failing due to age, lack of maintenance, or increased rain events, according to Minnesota DNR's "Dams and Dam Safety" website. Dam structures prevent fish passage, disrupt natural flows, can build up sediment and nutrients, and alter water chemistry, according to MN DNR's 2015 report *Barrier Effects on Native Fishes of Minnesota*.

There are a total of 20 dams in Le Sueur County. Two dams are considered privately owned, one dam is owned by the County, and 17 dams are owned by the Minnesota DNR (Minnesota DNR, "Dam Finder"). Minnesota has been taking an active approach in removing existing dams and replacing them with an alternative design called rock arch rapids, which allows fish passage, creates fish habitat, restores flow conditions, and increases recreational opportunities (Minnesota DNR Reconnecting Rivers "Chapter 2: Nature-like Fishways"). Le Sueur County is actively working on a few of these projects.

Fish Population Monitoring

The Minnesota DNR and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) actively monitor fish populations in rivers, streams, and lakes. The purpose of the surveys is to monitor fish populations, assess water chemistry, and assess fish habitat, according to MPCA's "River and Stream Biological Monitoring" website. The frequency with which rivers, streams, and lakes are monitored is dependent on recreational opportunities as well as the size of these resources. Examples of targeted fish species include Walleye (Sander vitreus), Sauger (Sander canadensis), Bluegill (Lepomis macrochirus), Creek Chub (Semotilus atromaculatus), Minnow Species (Cyprinidae sp.), and Freshwater Drum (Aplodinotus grunniens). Traditional survey methods such as gill netting and night-time electrofishing are utilized to complete these monitoring efforts, according to Minnesota DNR's "Fisheries Lake Surveys" website.

Comprehensive Water Management Plans

In accordance with Minnesota law, local jurisdictions must maintain local water management plans that guides land-use decisions and resource protection strategies at the watershed scale. To meet this requirement, Le Sueur County is collaborating on multijurisdictional One Watershed, One Plan efforts to address issues such as surface and groundwater protection, soil conservation, stormwater management, and habitat restoration across an entire watershed.

Residents are encouraged to participate in ongoing planning efforts and public engagement activities to shape future watershed priorities.

For more information, residents and stakeholders can visit:

- Le Sueur County's Local Water Management Plan (effective through December 31, 2026)
- Cannon River 1W1P website
- Le Sueur River 1W1P website
- Lower Minnesota River East 1W1P website

Floodplains

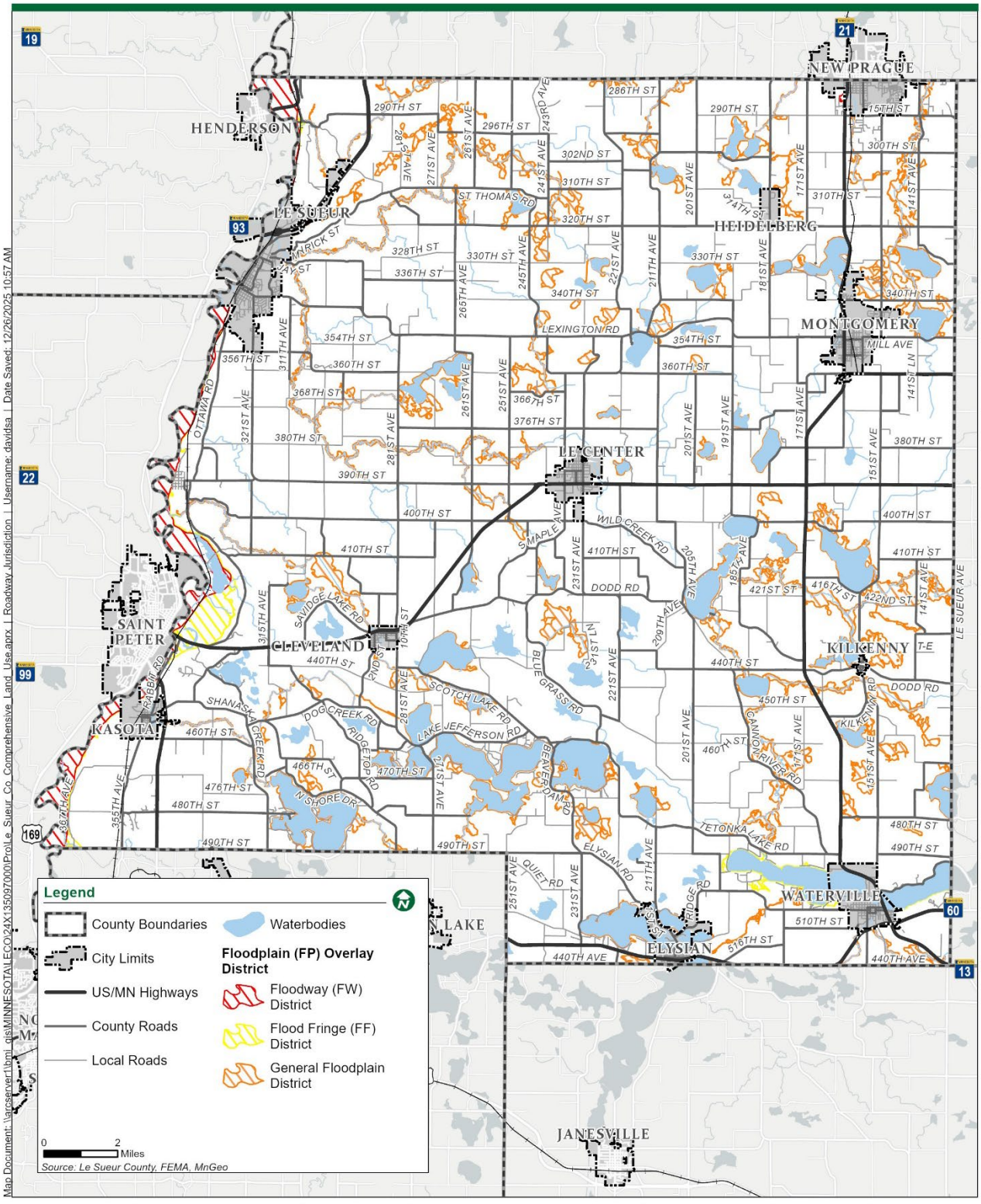
Floodplain management in Le Sueur County is guided by the overarching goal of minimizing damage and loss from flooding events. Local Government Units (LGUs) are granted the authority to adopt floodplain regulations under Minnesota Statutes Chapters 103F and 394. These regulations aim to mitigate a range of hazards associated with flooding, including threats to human life and safety, damage to property, disruption of commerce and public services, and adverse impacts on the local economy and tax base. Collectively, these risks pose a serious threat to public health, safety, and welfare.

Le Sueur County has established a Floodplain Overlay District that aligns with standards set by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for identifying flood hazards. In addition, this district must comply with the federal standards outlined in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), particularly those found in 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 59–78. Compliance with these regulations ensures that the County remains eligible to participate in the NFIP, thereby allowing property owners to access federally backed flood insurance.

Floodplains are defined in the Le Sueur County Ordinance as the beds, channels, and adjoining areas of wetlands, lakes, or watercourses that may be covered by the base flood. Within this defined area, three important components exist: the floodway, the flood fringe, and general floodplain.

The floodway refers to the bed of a wetland or lake, the primary channel of a watercourse, and the adjacent portions of the floodplain necessary to convey or store floodwater. According to the Le Sueur County Zoning Ordinance, this area must be capable of handling the base flood discharge without causing more than a half-foot rise in surface water elevation. In contrast, the flood fringe encompasses those areas of the one-percent annual chance floodplain located outside the floodway. This term is synonymous with "floodway fringe," as used in the Federal Flood Insurance Study for Le Sueur County. The general floodplain refers to any mapped floodplain without a defined floodway boundary. Typically general floodplain occurs in the A zone, but may also include the AE zone.

Recognizing the need for updated data and mapping tools, Le Sueur County revised its Floodplain Overlay District in the Zoning Ordinance in 2024. The updates incorporated the latest Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) panels and findings from the revised Flood Insurance Study. The updated ordinance officially went into effect on July 17, 2024, and ensures continued compliance with both state and federal floodplain regulations.



Water Quality

A significant number of Le Sueur County's lakes, rivers, and streams are considered impaired or impacted by one or more environmental stressors, according to Minnesota's 2024 Impaired Waters List. Common impairments include elevated levels of phosphorus, nitrates, sediment, E. coli, and chlorides, as well as issues related to stream connectivity, altered hydrology, and degraded aquatic habitats. Each of these factors contributes to diminished water quality and ecological health.

Phosphorus remains a primary concern, particularly in lakes. Excess nutrients such as phosphorus can fuel algal blooms, leading to oxygen depletion, green and turbid water, and in some cases, harmful blue-green algae, which poses risks to both humans and animals. These conditions not only impair the recreational value of lakes but also compromise aquatic life.

Streams and rivers in the county are especially vulnerable to sediment loading. This is largely due to hydrologic changes including increased runoff, altered drainage systems, and insufficient natural water storage. As a result, streambanks often suffer from erosion, and there is widespread loss of riparian vegetation. These changes negatively impact aquatic plants and animals by reducing habitat quality and altering flow regimes.

For those interested in detailed monitoring data, the MPCA provides access to raw water quality data on its website, while the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) offers the LakeFinder tool, an online resource that provides information about lake conditions, fish populations, water clarity, lake levels, aquatic plant surveys, and more.

A body of water is designated as "impaired" if it fails to meet one or more of Minnesota's water quality standards. These standards are established to ensure that water bodies remain safe and suitable for their designated beneficial uses, such as drinking, swimming, fishing, or supporting aquatic life. It is important to note that impairment for one designated use does not necessarily prohibit other uses. Common impairments include elevated mercury levels that restrict fish consumption, excess nutrients that promote algal growth, sediments that cloud the water, bacteria that pose health risks for swimmers, and poor biological conditions that affect fish and invertebrate communities. Other notable impairments include the presence of PFOS in fish tissue and sulfate levels that may impair the growth of wild rice.

To address these challenges, the MPCA works closely with local partners to identify pollutant sources and recommend strategies for pollutant reduction. Restoration efforts are guided by the goal of bringing waterbodies back into compliance with water quality standards, as outlined under the federal Clean Water Act. Every ten years, the MPCA collects water quality and biological data in each watershed to systematically evaluate whether it is meeting water quality standards. This analysis results in a Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy report that guides decision-making related to protecting and restoring water resources. Every two years, the MPCA publishes a Clean Water Fund Performance Report that details progress, findings, and ongoing efforts to improve water quality across the state, including within Le Sueur County.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

To reduce the risk of stormwater runoff and protect surface waters, Minnesota State Statutes and the Le Sueur County Zoning Ordinance require erosion prevention and sediment control measures to be in place before construction or land-disturbing activities begin. Le Sueur County mandates that an Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Plan be submitted and reviewed and a pre-construction site visit completed before any permits are issued. Stormwater best management practices (BMPs) are required in some cases for permits, other times they are strongly encouraged. These safeguards ensure that projects are planned and implemented with soil and water conservation in mind, helping protect the county's natural resources and agricultural productivity.

SOILS

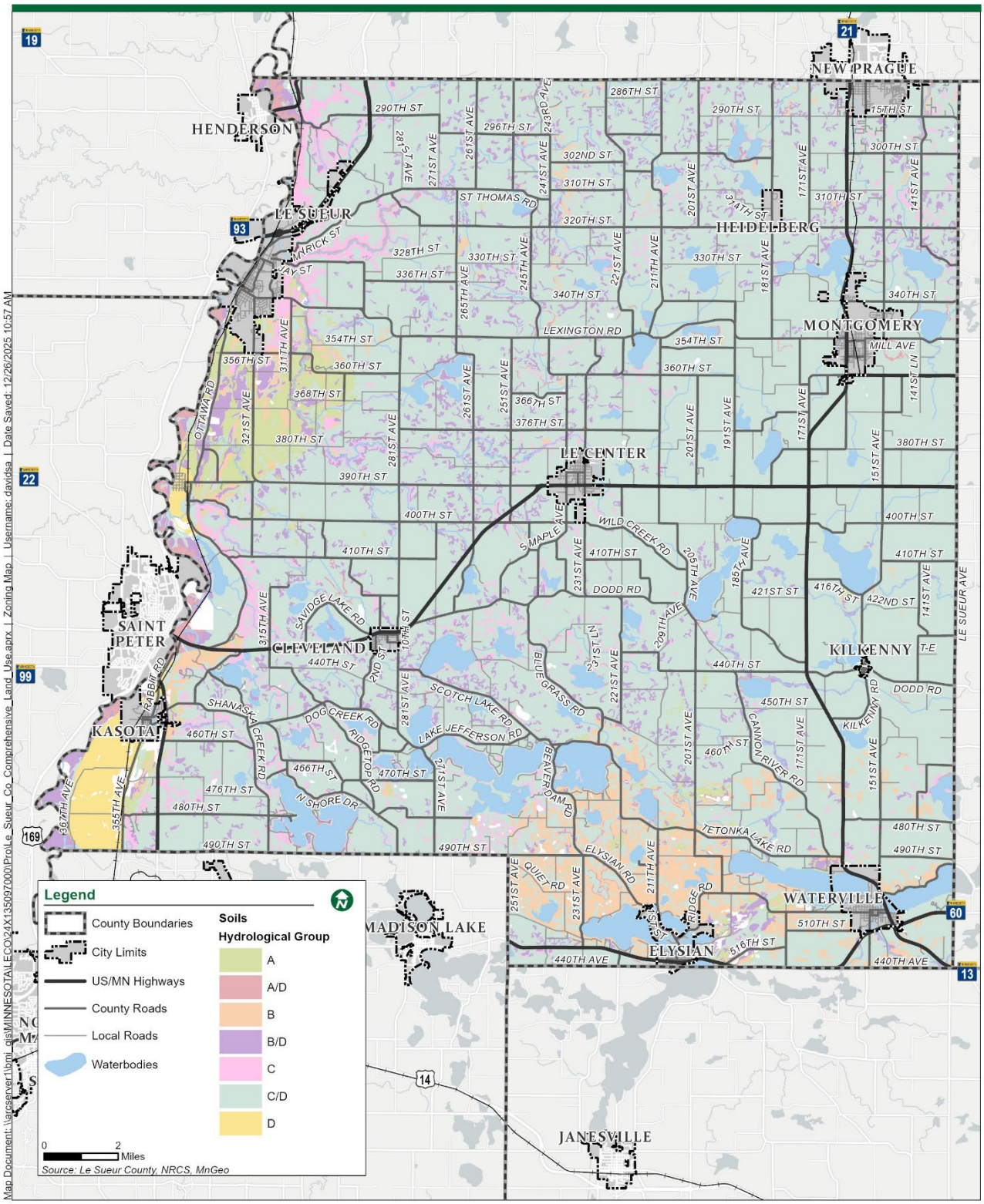
Knowing the soil type is important when planning land uses because it can influence how stable the ground is as well as whether stormwater will pool, runoff, or infiltrate into the ground. Soil type can be classified into four main groups, as described below:

Group A. Soils have a high infiltration rate (low runoff potential) when thoroughly wet. These consist mainly of deep, well-drained, excessively drained, or gravelly sands. These soils have a high rate of water transmission.

Group B. Soils have a moderate infiltration rate when thoroughly wet. These consist chiefly of moderately deep or deep, moderately well-drained, or well-drained soils with moderately fine to coarse texture. These soils have a moderate rate of water transmission.

Group C. Soils have a slow infiltration rate when thoroughly wet. These consist chiefly of soils with a layer that impedes the downward movement of water or soils of moderately fine or fine texture. These soils have a slow rate of water transmission.

Group D. Soils have a very slow infiltration rate (high runoff potential) when thoroughly wet. These consist chiefly of clays with a high shrink-swell potential, soils with a high water table, soils with a claypan or clay layer at or near the surface, and soils that are shallow over nearly impervious material. These soils have a very slow rate of water transmission.



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AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is a cornerstone of Le Sueur County's economy and identity. The county is a leading producer of agricultural commodities in Minnesota, supporting a robust mix of crops and livestock. According to the United States Department of Agriculture's 2022 Census of Agriculture, Le Sueur County reported the following major agricultural outputs:

- Corn: 75,924 acres
- Soybeans: 75,175 acres
- Forage (hay): 4,654 acres
- Vegetables: 1,296 acres
- Wheat: 1,017 acres
- Hogs: 109,236
- Turkeys: 68,974
- Cattle: 11,800

In addition to these leading commodities, the county also grows substantial amounts canning crops and small grains. Crops represent a significant share of statewide agricultural revenue, accounting for approximately 65% of all agricultural sales. Seneca's canning plant and warehouse located in Le Sueur County processes thousands of peas and sweet corn acreage from the region.

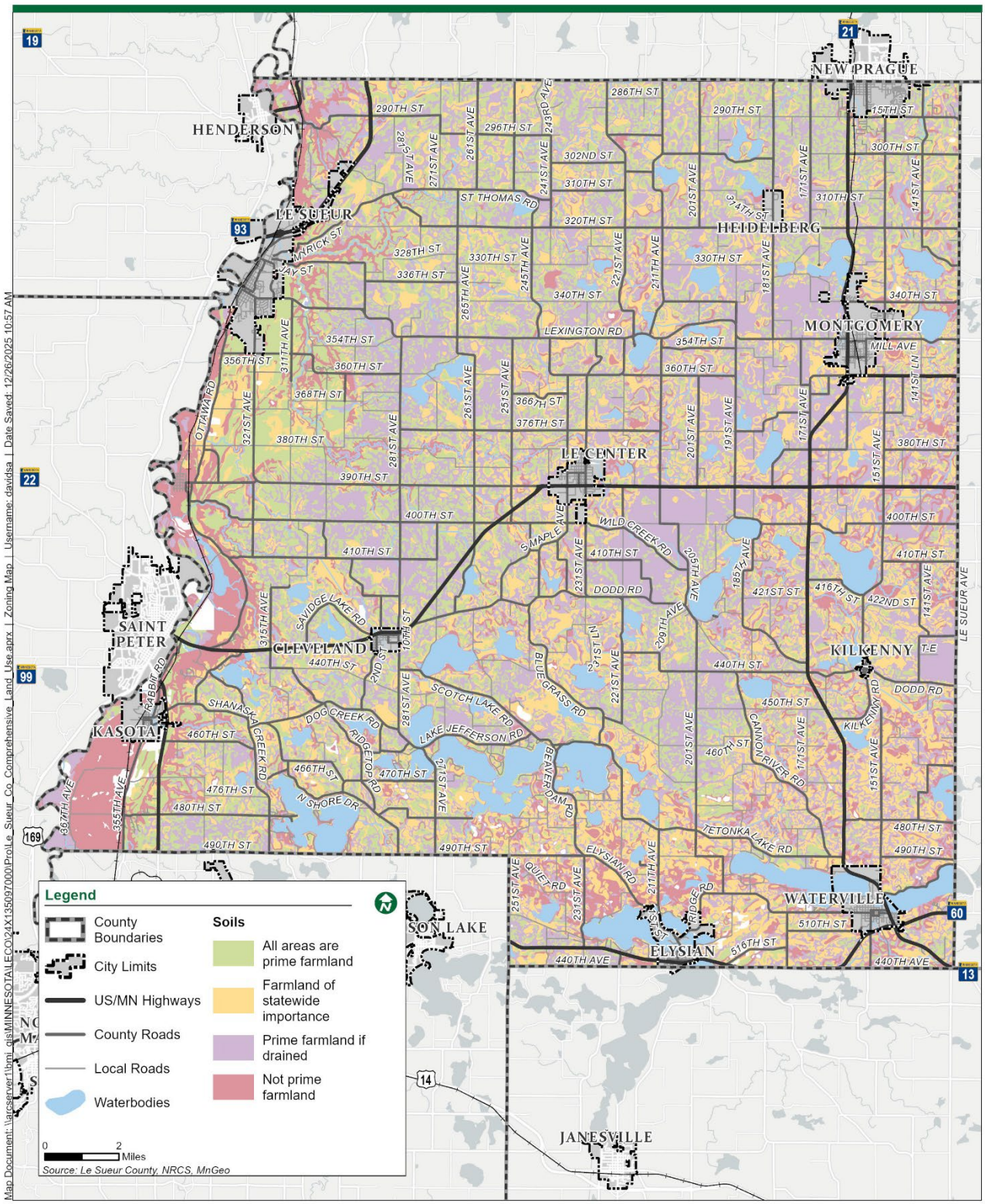
Le Sueur County's farming landscape includes a high number of active operations. According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, there were 896 operational farms in Le Sueur County and the average size of farms was 230 acres.

The Census of Agriculture reports on sales. According to Le Sueur County's feedlot registration and inventory (October 2025), livestock farmers currently care for:

- Turkey: 118,269
- Swine: 96,891
- Chicken (Layers): 20,755
- Beef: 11,562
- Dairy: 4,311
- Chicken (Broilers): 1,265
- Sheep: 1,188
- Goats: 778
- Horses: 219

Soil health and protection are essential to the longevity and production of these agricultural systems. Erosion, defined as the removal of soil by water, wind, or gravity, poses a significant risk to farmland, water quality, and infrastructure. Preventing erosion and managing sediment is a critical part of both state and county environmental stewardship. Examples of soil health practices include cover crops, reduced tillage, and nutrient management. According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, in Le Sueur County 10% of farms had no tillage, 23% of farms had reduced tillage, and 8% of farms had cover crops.

75% of survey respondents agreed that quality farmland should be protected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MONTGOMERY
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DOG CREEK RD
RIDGETOP RD
N SHORE DR
BLUE GRASS RD
BEAVER DAM RD
CANNON RIVER RD
KILKENNY RD
TETONKA LAKE RD
ELYSIAN RD
QUIET RD
RIDGE RD
LE SUEUR AVE
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281ST AVE
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221ST AVE
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171ST AVE
151ST AVE
141ST AVE
243RD AVE
231ST AVE
209TH AVE
185TH AVE
315TH AVE
311TH AVE
321ST AVE
387TH AVE
355TH AVE
251ST AVE
Legend
County Boundaries
City Limits
US/MN Highways
County Roads
Local Roads
Waterbodies
Soils
All areas are prime farmland
Farmland of statewide importance
Prime farmland if drained
Not prime farmland
0 2 Miles
Source: Le Sueur County, NRCS, MnGeo
Map Document: \\gisserver1\tpn_gis\MINNESOTA\LECO\2AX135097000\ProjLe_Sueur_Co_Comprehensive_Land_Use.aprx | Zoning Map | Username: davidsa | Date Saved: 12/26/2025 10:57 AM

OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION

The purpose of open space conservation is to protect land that is undeveloped, maintain environmental benefits such as wildlife habitat and clean water, provide recreational opportunities, protect cultural heritage, and improve the quality of life for our community. There are many different types of open space conversation land programs available through local, state, and federal agencies and organizations. Examples of open space conservation land that is present in Le Sueur County includes: National Wildlife Refuge, Waterfowl Protection Areas, Wildlife Management Areas, Aquatic Management Areas, Scenic and Natural Areas, County Parks and Trails, State Parks and Trails, Reinvest in Minnesota Program Conservation Easements, and Conservation Reserve Program land.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE LAND

This land is federally managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There are different units of the refuge system, including wildlife refuges and waterfowl protection areas. Le Sueur County does have a small portion of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge near Henderson, which was established in 1976. The refuge is over 14,000 acres in size and spans nearly 70 miles along the Minnesota River. Le Sueur County also has quite a few different Waterfowl Protection Areas, which consist of wetlands and grasslands within the National Wildlife Refuge Systems. These areas are critical to protect as it is habitat that is utilized by waterfowl and migratory birds in order to breed, nest, and rest during migration patterns.

WILDLIFE AND AQUATIC MANAGEMENT AREAS

This land is managed by the State of Minnesota. Le Sueur County is home to 22 Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), encompassing more than 5,600 acres of protected land. Le Sueur County is also home to seven Aquatic Management Areas (AMAs), encompassing more than 150 acres of protected shoreline. These areas are an integral part of Minnesota's outdoor recreation system and play a vital role in the conservation and stewardship of the state's natural resources.

Wildlife Management Areas are designated to protect lands and waters with high potential for wildlife production, while also offering public opportunities for hunting, trapping, fishing, and other compatible outdoor activities. Aquatic management areas provide angler and management access, protect critical shore land habitat and provide areas for education and research. Managed by the Minnesota DNR, these areas serve as the foundation for the state's wildlife and habitat conservation strategy.

The Wildlife Management Areas and Aquatic Management Areas in Le Sueur County help safeguard essential wildlife habitat for future generations, ensuring that native species can thrive in healthy, functioning ecosystems. They also provide residents and visitors with meaningful ways to connect with the outdoors through recreational activities such as birdwatching, nature photography, and seasonal hunting and fishing.

Beyond their ecological and recreational value, Wildlife Management Areas and Aquatic Management Areas also support the local economy by promoting wildlife-based tourism, which draws outdoor enthusiasts to the region and contributes to the broader rural tourism economy.

Together, these protected lands reflect Le Sueur County's commitment to conservation, public access, and the responsible management of natural resources.

SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREAS

This land is managed by the State of Minnesota. Le Sueur County is home to portions of three Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) that encompass approximately 262 acres of land that preserves the County's geological and ecological diversity. Many of the SNAs include rare species, biodiverse plant and animal communities, and unique geological features and formations. The Le Sueur County portion of Townsend Woods SNA on the eastern border of the county is not visible on the Parks and Trails map.

Source: Le Sueur County

PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION

Le Sueur County has 12 County Parks and one State Park (Sakatah Lake State Park). The Le Sueur County Parks System contains 11 county-owned public water accesses, two public campgrounds, and a variety of recreational facilities. Within Le Sueur County, the DNR owns and maintains an additional 24 public water accesses.

There is a diverse network of nearly 15 miles of trails across the county park system. These trails support a wide range of outdoor activities year-round, including hiking, walking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, and both groomed and ungroomed cross-country skiing. Each park offers its own unique trail experience depending on terrain, natural features, and seasonal conditions.

Bradshaw Woods provides a short and scenic walk through a half-mile of trails that traverse either natural terrain or mowed paths, ideal for a quick hike in a wooded setting.

Lake Washington Regional Park and Campground offers 3.5 miles of trails of varying difficulty. Visitors can explore the Dock Trail, Shanaska Creek Trail, or Washington Woods Trail, which wind through forested areas and alongside water features. The trails range from gently rolling hills to wide, flat, mowed paths, making the park accessible for casual and experienced hikers alike.

The Ney Nature Center, located across the Minnesota River from Henderson, is home to several miles of well-maintained trails considered among the best in southern Minnesota. During the warmer months, visitors can enjoy mowed trails along the Field Trail, Prairie Loop, White Oak Loop, and through the historic farmstead. More challenging routes like the Arm, Ravine, Stagecoach, and Windmill Trails lead hikers through forested valleys and ravines. In winter, the Ney Nature Center features groomed trails for classic cross-country skiing as well as marked trails for snowshoeing and hiking. A dedicated one-mile mountain bike loop is also located northwest of the main entrance, across Highway 19 in Scott County. Lastly, the Ney Nature Center hosts educational school field trips and nature classes/events for people of all ages.

Richter Woods Park offers 2.5 miles of trails through a mix of big woods and open areas. There is a facility at the Park hat can be rented for functions. These trails, composed of mowed grass and natural terrain, support a variety of uses, including walking, hiking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, and skiing.

In addition to county trails, the Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail, managed by the Minnesota DNR, runs through Le Sueur County. This 39-mile paved trail stretches from Mankato to Faribault and passes through the county from the Blue Earth County line to the Rice County line.

In the survey and focus groups, community members said they want more trails that provide access to parks and lakes.

With 73 lakes, Le Sueur County also offers abundant opportunities for boating, fishing, and lakeside recreation. Popular lakes for recreation include:

- Lake Francis is one of Le Sueur County's deepest lakes with a maximum depth of 70 feet. Part of the lake's boundary is within the City of Elysian, and there are public accesses on both the east and west ends.
- East Jefferson Lake, West Jefferson Lake, and German Lake are in the German-Jefferson chain of lakes, and provide excellent boating and fishing conditions, each with well-equipped DNR access points.
- Lake Tetonka is the largest lake in Le Sueur County, at over 1,300 acres. Part of the lake's boundary is within the City of Waterville, and there are two public accesses.
- Upper Sakatah Lake features Lake Sakatah State Park on its south side. The lake is mostly located in Le Sueur County, but the very eastern part of the lake is also located in Rice County. Within Le Sueur County, a part of the lake is located in the City of Waterville.
- Lake Volney, east of Le Center, is one of the Le Sueur County's deepest lakes with a maximum depth of 60 feet. The lake has a public beach and park with adjacent boat access. Factor Wildlife Management Area is located across the road.
- Lake Washington, northeast of Mankato, is one of southern Minnesota's most popular recreational lakes, with a Regional Park, two campgrounds, and two DNR public accesses that include large parking areas and double ramps.

Additional lakes that support recreational boating include Clear Lake, Gorman Lake, Greenleaf Lake, Lake Emily, Roehmhildts Lake, Sabre, Scotch Lake, Steele Lake, and Sunfish Lake.

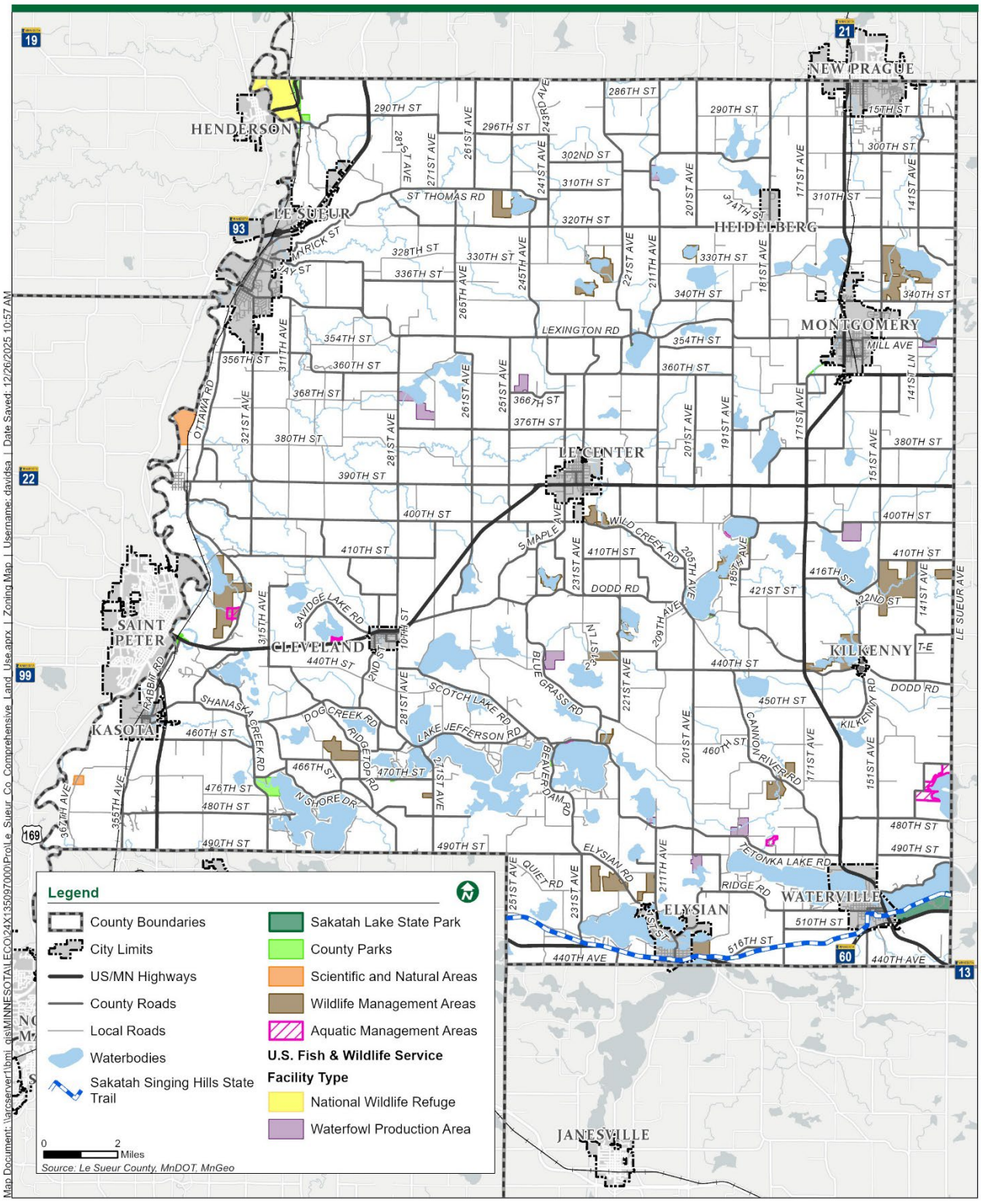
Camping is permitted in two Le Sueur County parks: Lake Washington Regional Park and Campground and Clear Lake Park.

Cross-country skiing is allowed in all county parks. The Ney Nature Center and Lake Washington Regional Park feature groomed trails, while Bradshaw Woods, Ray's Lake Park, and Richter Woods offer ungroomed trails that are often used by skiers.

Picnic areas are a staple feature in nearly all county parks. Notable locations include:

- Clear Lake Park: Each campsite includes a picnic table and fire ring.
- Geldner Saw Mill & Park: Tables are spread throughout the park.
- Henderson Station River Access & Park: A covered shelter and picnic tables are available.
- Lake Jefferson Fishing Pier: Tables are located along the shoreline and on the pier.
- Ney Nature Center: Several picnic spots near the Nature Center, farmstead, and scenic overlooks.
- Ray's Lake Park: Tables are positioned on the hilltop near the trees.
- Richter Woods Park: Tables are near the barn and scattered throughout the trail system.
- Lake Volney Park: Tables are located near the volleyball courts.
- Lake Washington Regional Park & Campground: Tables are found throughout the grounds, including near the community building and open field. Some tables include nearby fire pits or grates. A large picnic shelter is also available for rental.

Play areas for children are also integrated into several parks. Ney Nature Center offers a nature-based playscape made entirely of natural materials like logs and branches, encouraging creative outdoor play. Richter Woods Park has a traditional playground with swings, slides, and climbing structures, located behind the barn. Lake Washington Regional Park & Campground features two playground areas: one at the northeast corner with slides and climbing elements on a rubber mulch surface, and another centrally located in the campground with additional swings and play structures.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TETONKA LAKE RD
LE SUEUR AVE
OTTAWA RD
S MAPLE AVE
Legend
County Boundaries
City Limits
US/MN Highways
County Roads
Local Roads
Waterbodies
Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail
Sakatah Lake State Park
County Parks
Scientific and Natural Areas
Wildlife Management Areas
Aquatic Management Areas
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Facility Type
National Wildlife Refuge
Waterfowl Production Area
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Source: Le Sueur County, MnDOT, MnGeo
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GEOLOGY AND GROUNDWATER

Groundwater is a crucial resource, as residential drinking water within Le Sueur County is primarily supplied from groundwater resources. There are also resources within the County that are groundwater-dependent, such as lakes and calcareous fens. In the addition to sand and gravel aquifers in glacial deposits, there are major aquifer systems underlying Le Sueur County which include the Prairie Du Chien-Jordan Aquifer and the Franconia-Ironton-Galesville Aquifer (also called the Tunnel City-Wonewoc Aquifer).

Le Sueur is currently in progress of completing a Geologic Atlas. The County Geologic Atlas is important to understanding regional geology such as sand distribution, bedrock topography, and depth to bedrock as well as groundwater resources such as groundwater flow, aquifer properties, groundwater chemistry, and pollution sensitivity of aquifers.

A detailed map of Le Sueur County surficial geology can be found with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Land and Minerals.

Potential Groundwater Concerns

Karst features are present along the Minnesota River Valley and are a concern for groundwater quality issues. Contamination of the high-vulnerability ranking aquifers would primarily impact drinking water accessed through private and public wells, leading to an increased need for infrastructure to provide groundwater treatment or access to another source of drinking water. Additionally, contamination of these aquifers can negatively impact surface water resources in areas where the impacted aquifer is connected to surface water. Most of Le Sueur County's aquifer vulnerability rating is medium; however, there are portions of Le Sueur County along the Minnesota River and around the Cities of Elysian and Waterville, that have a high aquifer vulnerability rating.

Groundwater Testing

Groundwater has been monitored through the County well water-testing program. Le Sueur County continues to test private and community wells in order to educate residents about protecting their drinking and groundwater resources. Pollutants that the County has tested private and community wells for include nitrates, arsenic, lead, bacteria, and manganese. There are areas in the County that have exceeded the drinking water standards for some of these pollutants.

There are various new contaminants, or contaminants where existing knowledge of impacts are limited. These are often manmade chemicals, although some may be naturally occurring. These contaminants are referred to as Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs) and are often unregulated or regulated at a level that may no longer be considered protective of human health. Some CECs for drinking water in the Le Sueur County include: pesticides, chlorides, and Per- and Polyfluorinated Substances (PFAS). There have not been substantial efforts to monitor CECs, but this will likely be a priority for the County in the future as they become better understood.

Well Sealing

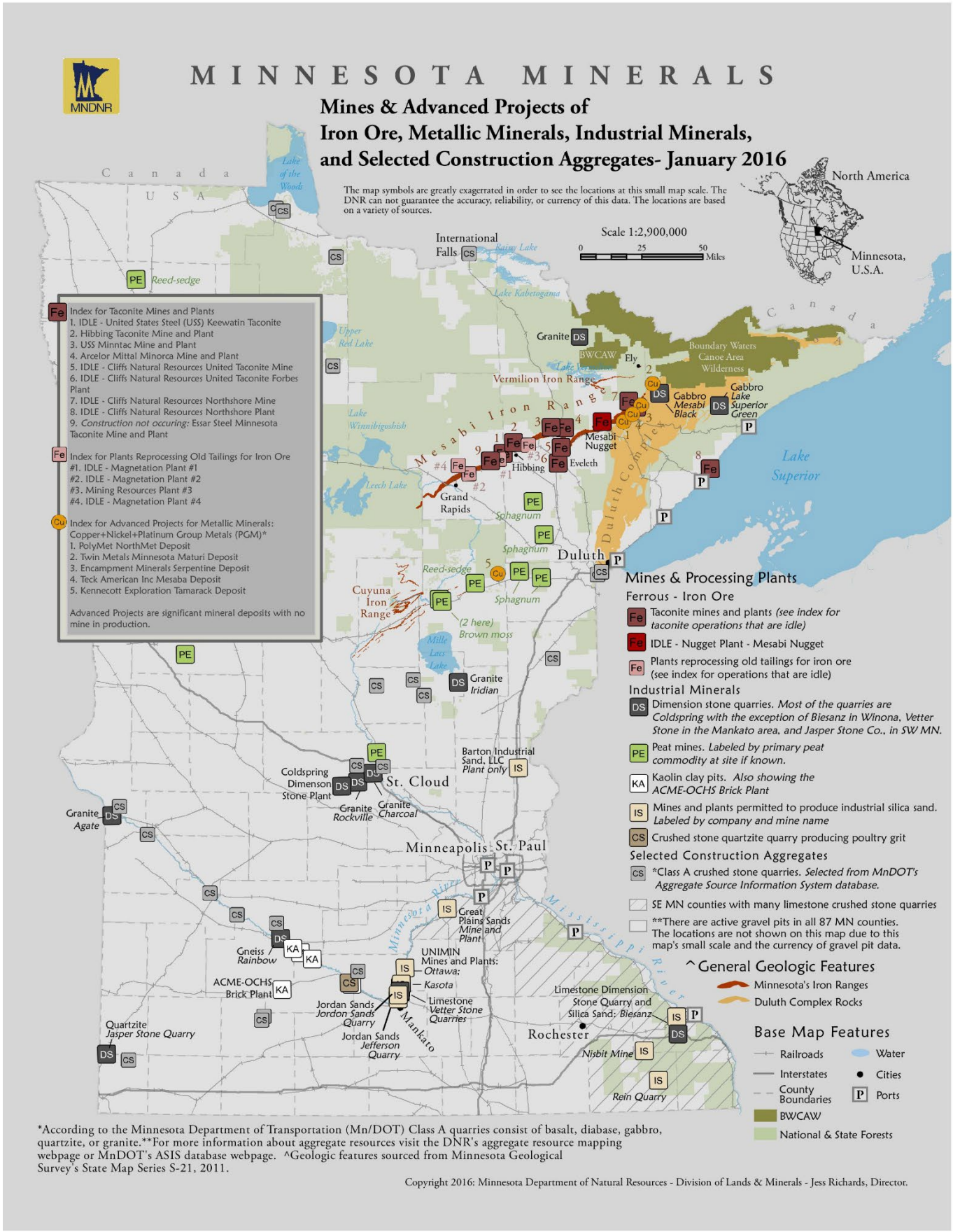
In addition to offering water testing clinics to residents, Le Sueur County also works with residents to seal their abandoned wells. Unused, unsealed, or abandoned wells provide a direct conduit for contamination to reach the aquifer. This is a particular concern when the unused, unsealed well is in an area with low vulnerability and when the well is constructed in a confined aquifer, which would otherwise be protected from contamination on the surface. In low vulnerability areas, well sealing is the main avenue to protect groundwater. In more vulnerable areas, other practices are used to protect groundwater. Failing septic systems, feedlots, mining, stormwater, fertilizers, pesticides, and hazardous waste generation are all potential pollutant sources to drinking and groundwater resources.

MINING AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Le Sueur County has active mining operations and processing plants which are congregated near the Minnesota River. The resources that are produced from these operations include industrial minerals, specifically silica sand, aggregate, and dimension stone. Silica sand is considered a fine sand that is composed of quartz. Silia sand is used in glassmaking, a source of silicon, and is also used to improve flow in oil wells. Aggregate materials are essential elements of a variety of construction products. Common aggregate materials that are found in Le Sueur County include gravel and sand. There are quarries in Le Sueur County that are mined in order to make crushed stone for construction aggregate uses. Common bedrock types that are mined for aggregate include dolomite, quartzite, granite, gabbro, and gneiss. Dimension stone, which includes but is not limited to limestone, granite, gabbro, quartzite, and carbonate rock, are mostly commonly used to construct homes, buildings, and monuments. These mining operations are regulated by Le Sueur County; however, additional state and federal permits apply to these operations. To learn more, visit the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Mining and Mineral Resources. To explore a map of aggregate resources around Minnesota, visit the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Aggregate Resources Viewer.

Gravel Pits

Le Sueur County has active gravel pits. Gravel pits reclamations are not funded through the State of Minnesota. However, there is an Aggregate Material Tax that is available to 33 Counties in Minnesota for this work. Le Sueur County is one of the 33 counties that sets this tax which assists with gravel pit reclamations, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Mining and Mineral Resources.


MINNESOTA MINERALS
Mines & Advanced Projects of
Iron Ore, Metallic Minerals, Industrial Minerals,
and Selected Construction Aggregates- January 2016
The map symbols are greatly exagerrated in order to see the locations at this small map scale. The DNR can not guarantee the accuracy, reliability, or currency of this data. The locations are based on a variety of sources.
Scale 1:2,900,000
0 25 50 Miles
North America
Minnesota, U.S.A.
Canada
U S A
Lake of the Woods
International Falls
Rainy Lake
Lake Kabetogama
Upper Red Lake
Lake Winnibigoshish
Leech Lake
Granite
BWCAW
Fly
Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness
Vermilion Iron Range
Mesabi Iron Range
Gabbro Mesabi Black
Gabbro Lake Superior Green
Mesabi Nugget
Hibbing
Eveleth
Grand Rapids
Duluth Complex
Lake Superior
Duluth
Sphagnum
Reed-sedge
Cuyuna Iron Range
(2 here) Brown moss
Mille Lacs Lake
Granite Iridian
Barton Industrial Sand, LLC Plant only
Coldspring Dimension Stone Plant
St. Cloud
Granite Rockville
Granite Charcoal
Granite Agate
Minneapolis St. Paul
Minnesota River
Mississippi River
Great Plains Sands Mine and Plant
Gneiss Rainbow
UNIMIN Mines and Plants: Ottawa; Kasota
ACME-OCHS Brick Plant
Limestone Vetter Stone Quarries
Jordan Sands Jordon Sands Quarry
Jordan Sands Jefferson Quarry
Mankato
Quartzite Jasper Stone Quarry
Limestone Dimension Stone Quarry and Silica Sand: Biesanz
Rochester
Nisbit Mine
Rein Quarry
Index for Taconite Mines and Plants
1. IDLE - United States Steel (USS) Keewatin Taconite
2. Hibbing Taconite Mine and Plant
3. USS Minntac Mine and Plant
4. Arcelor Mittal Minorca Mine and Plant
5. IDLE - Cliffs Natural Resources United Taconite Mine
6. IDLE - Cliffs Natural Resources United Taconite Forbes Plant
7. IDLE - Cliffs Natural Resources Northshore Mine
8. IDLE - Cliffs Natural Resources Northshore Plant
9. Construction not occuring: Essar Steel Minnesota Taconite Mine and Plant
Index for Plants Reprocessing Old Tailings for Iron Ore
#1. IDLE - Magnetation Plant #1
#2. IDLE - Magnetation Plant #2
#3. Mining Resources Plant #3
#4. IDLE - Magnetation Plant #4
Index for Advanced Projects for Metallic Minerals: Copper+Nickel+Platinum Group Metals (PGM)*
1. PolyMet NorthMet Deposit
2. Twin Metals Minnesota Maturi Deposit
3. Encampment Minerals Serpentine Deposit
4. Teck American Inc Mesaba Deposit
5. Kennecott Exploration Tamarack Deposit
Advanced Projects are significant mineral deposits with no mine in production.
Mines & Processing Plants
Ferrous - Iron Ore
Taconite mines and plants (see index for taconite operations that are idle)
IDLE - Nugget Plant - Mesabi Nugget
Plants reprocessing old tailings for iron ore (see index for operations that are idle)
Industrial Minerals
Dimension stone quarries. Most of the quarries are Coldspring with the exception of Biesanz in Winona, Vetter Stone in the Mankato area, and Jasper Stone Co., in SW MN.
Peat mines. Labeled by primary peat commodity at site if known.
Kaolin clay pits. Also showing the ACME-OCHS Brick Plant
Mines and plants permitted to produce industrial silica sand. Labeled by company and mine name
Crushed stone quartzite quarry producing poultry grit
Selected Construction Aggregates
*Class A crushed stone quarries. Selected from MnDOT's Aggregate Source Information System database.
SE MN counties with many limestone crushed stone quarries
**There are active gravel pits in all 87 MN counties. The locations are not shown on this map due to this map's small scale and the currency of gravel pit data.
^General Geologic Features
Minnesota's Iron Ranges
Duluth Complex Rocks
Base Map Features
Railroads
Interstates
County Boundaries
Water
Cities
Ports
BWCAW
National & State Forests
*According to the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) Class A quarries consist of basalt, diabase, gabbro, quartzite, or granite.**For more information about aggregate resources visit the DNR's aggregate resource mapping webpage or MnDOT's ASIS database webpage. ^Geologic features sourced from Minnesota Geological Survey's State Map Series S-21, 2011.
Copyright 2016: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Division of Lands & Minerals - Jess Richards, Director.

NATURAL RESOURCES GOALS

Goal 7.1 Improve & Protect Water Resources

Policy 7.1.1 Support watershed-based plan efforts to improve and protect surface and groundwater resources.

Goal 7.2 Preserve & Restore Ecosystems

Policy 7.2.1 Ensure compliance with laws protecting native vegetation, wetlands, and wildlife habitats, including required management of invasive species.

Policy 7.2.2 Support and collaborate with willing landowners to conserve native vegetation, restore wetlands, enhance wildlife habitat, and proactively manage invasive species beyond statutory minimums.

Goal 7.3 Promote Land Use Best Management Practices

Policy 7.3.1 Encourage soil health and reduce erosion and runoff through best management practices.

Policy 7.3.2 Evaluate the county's existing soil-loss authority to determine its scope, effectiveness, and potential updates needed to better protect soil health and reduce erosion across the landscape.

Policy 7.3.3 Explore the county's authority and potential solutions for managing urban and rural drainage, including their impacts on the countywide drainage system.

Policy 7.3.4 Minimize the risk of damage to human life and property from flooding by working with willing local stakeholders to promote a standardized approach to flood mitigation efforts.

Goal 7.4 Minimize Pollution

Policy 7.4.1 Reduce pollutants, including but not limited to nitrates, phosphorus, sediment, Escherichia coli (E.coli), and Chloride, through improved land management practices.

Policy 7.4.2 Promote best management practices that protect public health such as but not limited to well sealings and septic upgrades.

Goal 7.5 Enhance Public Access & Stewardship

Policy 7.5.1 Support and partner with local, state, and federal stakeholders to improve and expand outdoor recreational opportunities.

Policy 7.5.2 Develop and strengthen community engagement in environmental stewardship.

NATURAL RESOURCES RESILIENCY: Protect natural systems and public health by conserving water resources, preserving ecosystems, and promoting best practice land use and pollution reduction.

RESILIENCY

8 | RESILIENCY

Le Sueur County is committed to building a resilient and well-prepared community through policies and regional collaboration. In 2021, Le Sueur County updated its Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan in collaboration with the University of Minnesota. Le Sueur County is attempting to implement strategies across solid waste management, emergency preparedness, environmental protection, and infrastructure resilience.

In alignment with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) requirements and state statutes, the Tri-County Solid Waste Management Plan, developed with Nicollet and Sibley Counties, prioritizes waste reduction, recycling, and resource recovery while supporting continued innovation in environmental stewardship and public health protection.

Le Sueur County recognizes the need for winter-sensitive infrastructure design, emergency hazard mitigation planning, and comprehensive drainage and flood control measures into its planning framework to address the growing impacts of climate variability, population growth, and environmental challenges such as chloride pollution. The goals and policies reflect a multifaceted approach, aligning state mandates with local needs and emerging best practices to support community assets, safe housing, economic continuity, and long-term environmental quality.

Source: Waterville Chamber of Commerce, Waterville

PREVIOUS RESILIENCY PLANNING

Waste Management

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) requires counties to assess the feasibility of resource recovery in their solid waste management plans, in line with Minnesota Statutes 115A.02(b). The Tri-County Solid Waste Plan between Le Sueur, Nicollet, and Sibley Counties supports the state's waste management hierarchy, prioritizing reduction and reuse, followed by recycling, composting, resource recovery, and finally land disposal. The Tri-County system relies on public-private partnerships, including the Minnesota Waste Processing Company transfer station in Mankato and the Resource Recovery Technologies facility in Newport. These facilities convert waste into refuse-derived fuel (RDF), which is used for electricity generation at the Wilmarth Power Plant in the City of Mankato. Residuals and ash are landfilled at a designated cell at the Blue Earth County Ponderosa Landfill.

Most residential waste in the region is contracted into this system, which remains the preferred disposal method. If future access changes, the plan supports alternative resource recovery technologies that meet the state's 85% waste volume reduction goal. Municipalities may use other providers with county approval, provided they align with the Plan and state hierarchy. Le Sueur County and Tri-County Solid Waste Joint Powers Board also maintain active recycling programs. There is a contract with Waste Management, Inc. that provides recycling containers in rural locations for residents of Le Sueur and Sibley Counties to use. In 2023, Le Sueur County had a recycling rate of 45.3% With projected growth in population, Le Sueur County and Tri-County Solid Waste Joint Powers Board will need to increase recycling opportunities and explore options to provide uniform service to all three counties.

The plan also recommends petitioning MPCA for increased the Governor's Select Committee On Recycling and the Environment (SCORE) funding based on population growth and the region's strong resource recovery performance. It supports removing the RDF burn incentive at Wilmarth and advises counties to consider banning on-site disposal where off-site service is available.

Water Quality and Flood Monitoring

Le Sueur County, in collaboration with the Le Sueur Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), plays an active role in monitoring and assessing the quality of the county's lakes, rivers, and streams. Water sampling efforts vary by waterbody and are influenced by local and state priorities, available resources, and specific management goals. These partnerships help track long-term trends, identify impairments, and inform strategies to protect and improve water resources.

Flood resilience is a major focus of the county's preparedness strategy. Le Sueur County enforces floodplain regulations and participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which helps reduce flood risk and provides access to federal insurance. The county maintains up-to-date floodplain maps and has implemented property buyouts for structures that experience repetitive flooding. Drainage improvements are incorporated into the county's Transportation Improvement Plan, and stormwater and erosion control are regulated through the Le Sueur County Zoning Ordinance. The County manages a network of ditch systems that include 236 miles of open ditches and 27 miles of public drainage tile, which are critical for managing surface water and reducing flood risk. The Le Sueur County Drainage Manual and Guidelines further supports erosion control and water quality improvements across the county's four watersheds.

The Le Sueur County Environmental Services Department and the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) work together on flood mitigation and environmental quality projects. These efforts are reinforced by the county's enforcement of the State Buffer Initiative, which requires vegetative buffers along water bodies to prevent erosion and protect water quality. The Zoning Ordinance also play a role in hazard mitigation by requiring construction and septic system setbacks from bluffs, with specific guidelines based on slope percentages to reduce the risk of landslides.

Source: Le Sueur County Emergency Management, Waterville

Natural Disaster Preparedness

Le Sueur County's approach to natural disaster preparedness is guided by the 2021 Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, which aligns with the goals and strategies of the 2019 Minnesota State Hazard Mitigation Plan. This alignment ensures that local efforts are consistent with broader statewide objectives to reduce the impacts of natural hazards. The county's mitigation goals focus on minimizing deaths, injuries, property damage, and economic disruption caused by a wide range of hazards, including flooding, wildfires, windstorms, hail, winter storms, lightning, tornadoes, drought, extreme temperatures, and dam or levee failures.

In addition to flood-related efforts, the county collaborates with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to manage 20 dams. The Minnesota DNR maintains Emergency Action Plans for dams to ensure timely public notification and evacuation in the event of a dam failure. The SWCD and Environmental Services Department provide technical and financial assistance for erosion control and conservation practices, contributing to a comprehensive and proactive approach to natural hazard mitigation throughout the county.

Emergency Management

Le Sueur County maintains an all-hazards Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that outlines the county's response to a wide range of emergencies. The EOP addresses essential functions such as public warning, evacuation procedures, and mass care operations. Communication with the public during emergencies is supported through multiple channels, including Everbridge (an opt-in alert system), the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS, which does not require opt-in), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radios, local media outlets, and outdoor warning sirens. These systems ensure that residents receive timely and accurate information during critical events.

Source: Le Sueur County Emergency Management

The county has designated emergency shelter facilities in coordination with the American Red Cross. These shelters are staffed by personnel trained in emergency sheltering operations, including provisions for pet sheltering, which is an important consideration for many residents. Le Sueur County also promotes emergency preparedness through regular social media outreach and maintains backup power systems, including generators, for key government facilities to ensure continuity of operations during power outages.

Schools in the county have established closure plans for hazardous weather conditions, and the county actively participates in statewide public awareness campaigns such as Winter Hazard Awareness Week and Severe Weather Awareness

Week. These campaigns help educate the public on how to prepare for and respond to seasonal hazards. Public Works plays a vital role in emergency management by ensuring timely snow removal in accordance with established policies. During the summer months, the county maintains readiness for severe storms through the management of outdoor warning sirens and the training of SKYWARN volunteers, who assist with storm spotting and reporting.

Manufactured Home Parks (MHPs) in the county are required to comply with Minnesota Department of Health regulations regarding storm shelters and evacuation plans. The county also conducts public outreach on safety during extreme cold and heat events, which are becoming more frequent and severe. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to build community resilience and ensure that all residents, including vulnerable populations, are protected during emergencies.

Source: Le Sueur County Emergency Management, Bike Helmet Giveaway

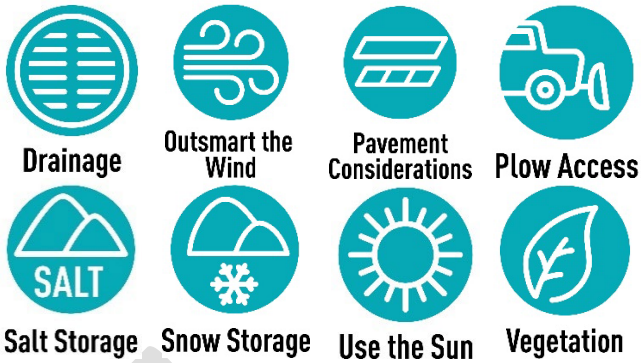
Source: Le Sueur County News

LOW SALT DESIGN

Chloride pollution has become a critical environmental concern in cold climate regions, driven primarily by the widespread use of road salt for winter maintenance. As a permanent pollutant, chloride does not degrade over time and instead accumulates in surface and groundwater systems, posing significant risks to aquatic ecosystems and potable water supplies. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, even a small amount of road salt, roughly one teaspoon, is enough to contaminate five gallons of water beyond the chronic chloride threshold of 230 milligrams per liter. With cold-weather regions spending hundreds of millions of dollars annually on salt procurement, the scale of environmental impact is immense and growing.

While advances in winter maintenance practices have reduced unnecessary salt use, these measures cannot fully compensate for infrastructure that is vulnerable to snow and ice accumulation. Many existing roads, sidewalks, and ramps are designed with little consideration for winter performance, making them dependent on chemical treatments to maintain safety. Low-salt solutions integrate chloride reduction strategies into the core of infrastructure planning and engineering. Rather than reacting to snow and ice events, low-salt solutions proactively improve how infrastructure responds to winter conditions, reducing the need for repeated salting and minimizing environmental harm.

The goals of low-salt solutions are twofold: to accelerate pavement recovery following winter weather and to eliminate recurring problem areas that require repeated maintenance. These recurring issues fall into two main categories: blowing snow and uncontrolled meltwater flow. Though snowfall itself cannot be prevented, thoughtful design can reduce the ways in which snow and meltwater are redistributed onto pavements after initial clearing, and reducing secondary icing and the need for additional salt applications. The most cost-effective opportunities lie in targeting critical safety zones, such as intersections, braking areas, curves, and high pedestrian activity zones. In these locations, careful application of winter-sensitive design principles can significantly reduce chloride use while maintaining high levels of public safety.



A key component of low-salt solutions is the strategic use of solar exposure. The sun provides a free, renewable energy source that can enhance snow and ice melting on pavement surfaces. However, many roads and sidewalks are shaded by bridges, retaining walls, buildings, and evergreen trees, particularly on their southern edges. These obstructions reduce the amount of direct sunlight that reaches the pavement during the already limited daylight hours of winter. Early-stage planning provides opportunities to site new infrastructure to maximize winter sun exposure. Placing deciduous trees instead of evergreens on the south side of a roadway can reduce shadowing while maintaining desirable vegetative cover. In winter, when deciduous trees are leafless, they allow greater solar penetration, promoting snow and ice melting and reducing the need for chemical intervention.

Meltwater control is another component of winter-sensitive infrastructure design. While traditional drainage systems are designed around rain events, snow and ice meltwater behaves differently. Meltwater often travels long distances across paved surfaces before reaching a drain, especially when gutters are filled with ice or snow. This can result in thin films of water that refreeze under dropping temperatures, creating hazardous conditions and prompting additional salting. To prevent this, design strategies must focus on minimizing meltwater sprawl. This can be achieved by shortening the distance water travels to a catch basin, ensuring that drainage infrastructure is placed where meltwater originates, and designing cross-slopes that direct water away from travel lanes. In some cases, modifying surface geometry, adding shallow trenches, or reconfiguring snow storage areas can help prevent meltwater from flowing across critical driving surfaces.

A broader shift in design philosophy is required to address these issues comprehensively. Winter must be treated as a primary condition during the design process, not as a seasonal exception. Incorporating winter performance criteria during private and public project development can significantly reduce the resources needed to maintain safety once infrastructure is in operation. Low-salt solutions do not inherently increase the cost of infrastructure projects. Instead, it focuses on making smarter design decisions early in the process. The benefits of this approach are multifaceted: reduced salt use leads to improved water quality, less corrosion of infrastructure and vehicles, lower long-term maintenance costs, and enhanced roadway safety. To learn more about Low Salt Design, download the Low Salt Design Guide from Bolton & Menk.

Chloride Use in Le Sueur County

The primary use of chloride in Le Sueur County is for public and private winter maintenance, as detailed in Figure 21. In review of Le Sueur County Highway Department's winter maintenance practices, the County uses substantially less chloride compared to average public road maintenance throughout the state (7.78 tons of salt per lane mile). Working with private developers to encourage low salt design in future developments is a key opportunity to continue working towards the reduction of chloride pollution.

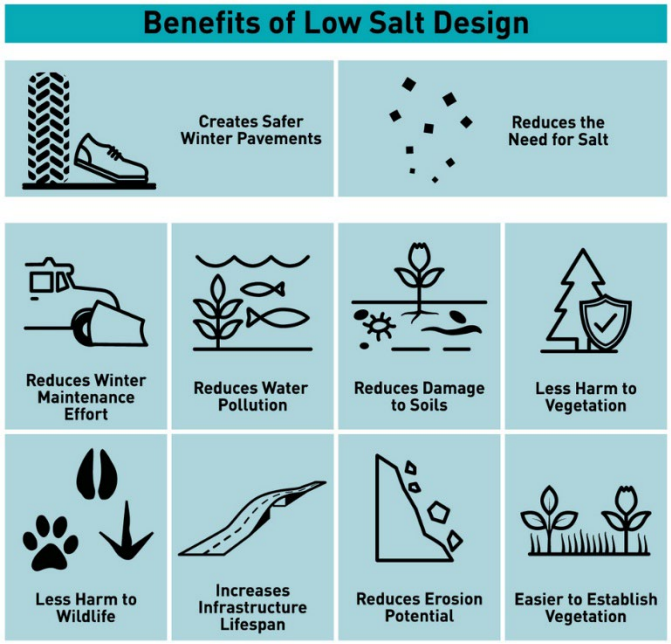
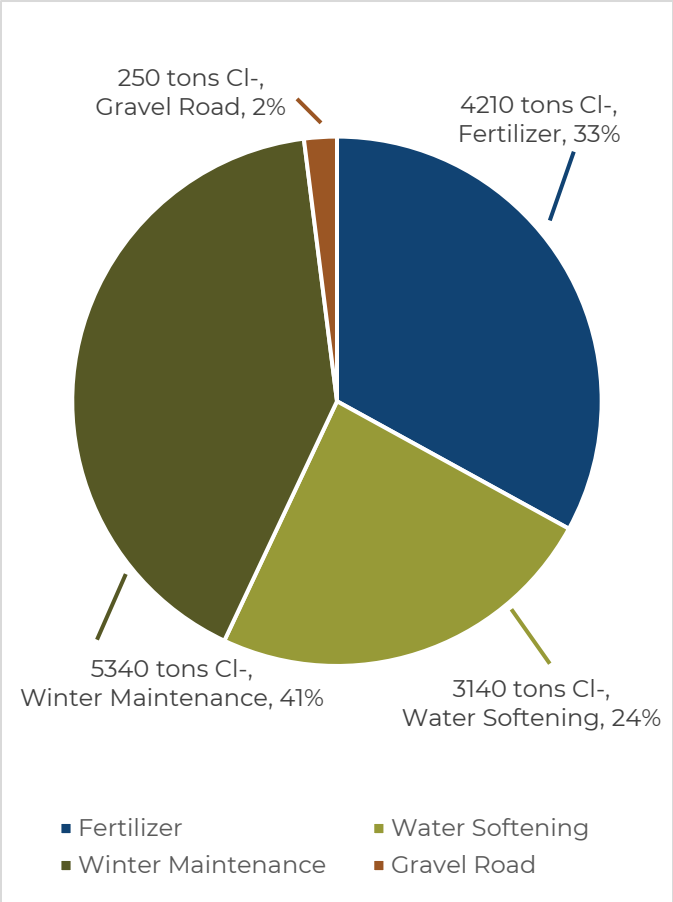


FIGURE 21 | LE SUEUR COUNTY CHLORIDE USE



RESILIENCY GOALS

Goal 8.1 Adaptive Capacity & Hazard Mitigation

Policy 8.1.1 Improve flood resilience through updated mapping, zoning, and infrastructure, and encourage flood proofing practices.

Policy 8.1.2 Support emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation for natural disasters.

LAND USE

9 | LAND USE

Purpose: This chapter outlines the vision for land use in Le Sueur County over the next 25 years. It provides a framework for guiding growth, preserving agricultural land, and ensuring fiscal responsibility.

Relationship to Other Chapters: This chapter supports goals in transportation, housing, economic development, and environmental protection.

Legal and Policy Context: The plan aligns with Minnesota state statutes, regional planning efforts, and local ordinances. It does not alter existing property rights but offers current and future landowners some additional land use options in the future.

CURRENT LAND USE

In its current Land Use Plan, Le Sueur County did not establish a formal set of land use categories to guide future development. Instead, the County chose to regulate future development through its zoning ordinance, which defines allowable uses, densities, and development standards for specific zoning districts. In this context, land use serves as a broader planning framework—a level above zoning—that helps organize and guide future development patterns across the County.

To support long-range planning and provide a clearer vision for growth, the County has developed a new set of land use designations. These designations were created by analyzing and grouping existing zoning districts into broader land use categories. This approach allows the County to:

- Maintain consistency with current zoning regulations,
- Provide flexibility for future growth,
- Preserve agricultural and rural character, and
- Introduce new development opportunities where appropriate

The newly created land uses were derived from existing zoning districts, as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1 | NEW LAND USES BASED ON EXISTING ZONING DISTRICTS

New Land Use	Existing Zoning District
Agriculture	Agriculture, Special Protection, and Conservancy
Residential	Urban/Rural Residential and Recreational Residential
Commercial	Recreational Commercial and General Business
Industrial	General Industry

TABLE 2 | CURRENT LAND USE CATEGORIES & ACREAGE & TAX CONTRIBUTION

Category	Acres	Tax Contributions	% of Total Land
Commercial	461.1	7.7%	0.15%
Industrial	1,761.5	Included in the Commercial Tax Contributions	0.58%
Residential	7,556.3	59.4%	2.49%
Agriculture	258,744.3	30.0%	85.27%
Water	24,094.3	--	7.94%
Cities	10,808.2	--	3.56%
Total County	**303,425.8**		

Residential

Residential properties, while occupying only 2.49% of the county's total land area, contribute a substantial 59.4% of the total property tax revenue. This reflects the high per-acre value of residential land, driven by housing demand, infrastructure access, and higher tax rates.

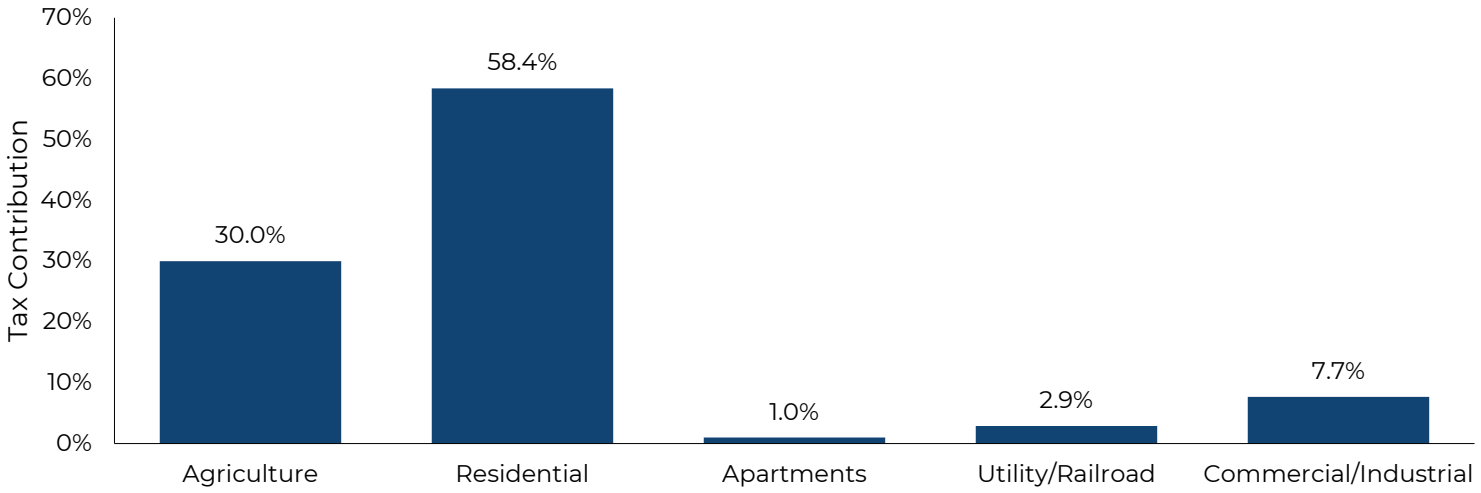
Agricultural

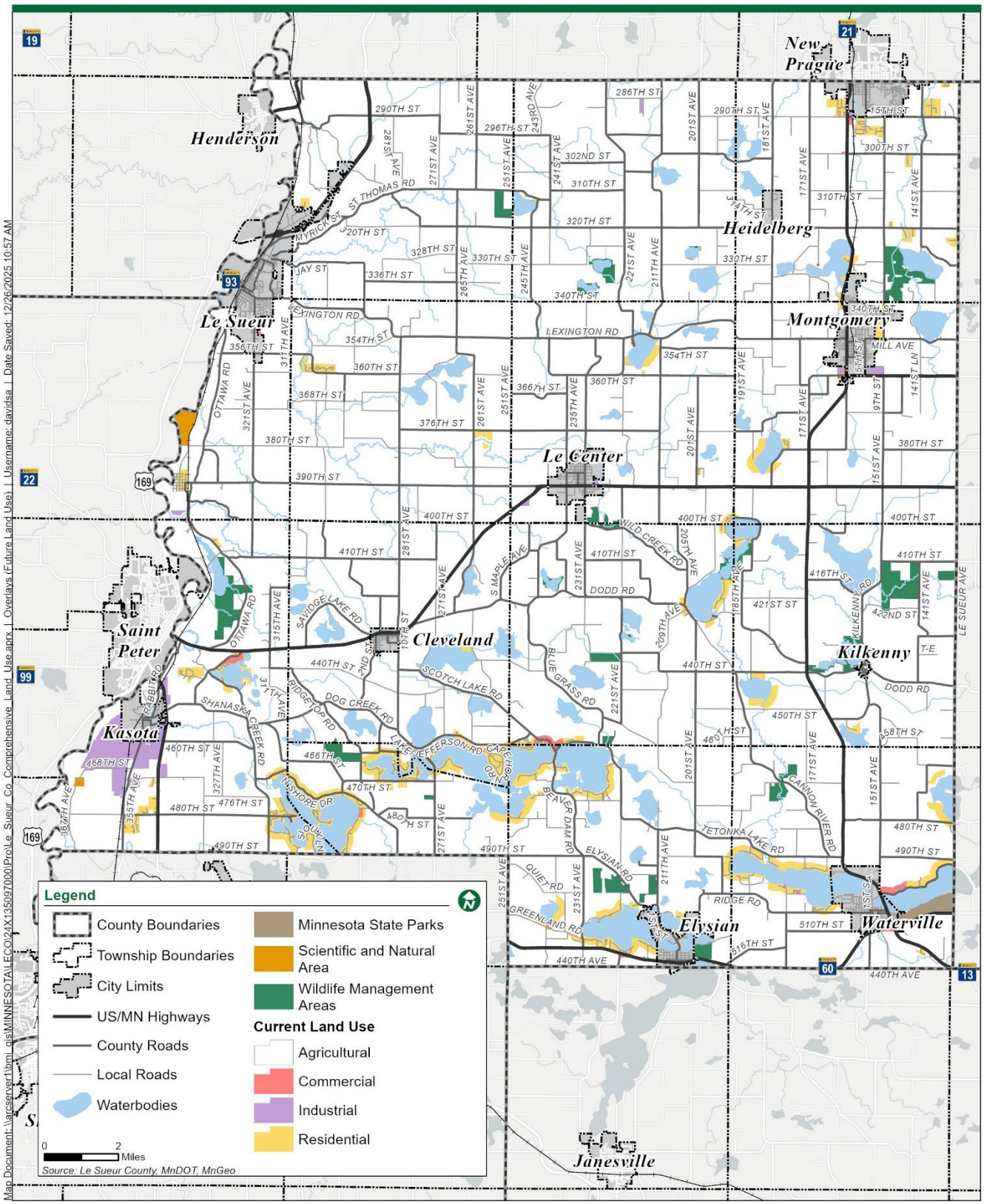
As a cornerstone of the county's economy and identity, agricultural land dominates the landscape, covering 85.27% of the county. Despite this, it contributes only 30% of the tax base. This is typical in rural counties, where agricultural land is assessed at lower values due to its classification and use, often benefiting from tax deferrals or special valuation methods.

Commercial and Industrial

Commercial and industrial properties, though occupying less than 1% of the land combined, contribute 7.7% of the county's tax revenue. This highlights their economic importance and the high value generated per acre, often due to business activity and infrastructure investment.

FIGURE 22 | 2025 TAX CONTRIBUTION BY LAND USE CATEGORY IN LE SUEUR COUNTY

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Le Center
Cleveland
Saint Peter
Kasota
Kilkenny
Elysian
Waterville
Janesville
Legend
County Boundaries
Township Boundaries
City Limits
US/MN Highways
County Roads
Local Roads
Waterbodies
Minnesota State Parks
Scientific and Natural Area
Wildlife Management Areas
Current Land Use
Agricultural
Commercial
Industrial
Residential
0 2 Miles
Source: Le Sueur County, MnDOT, MnGeo
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CURRENT OVERLAYS

Overlays are special planning tools used to define areas that require additional considerations or regulations beyond what is provided by the base land use or zoning designation. Unlike zoning districts, which typically follow parcel boundaries and are often orthogonal (grid-like), overlays are best suited for areas defined by natural features, infrastructure, or unique land characteristics.

Overlays are especially useful when:

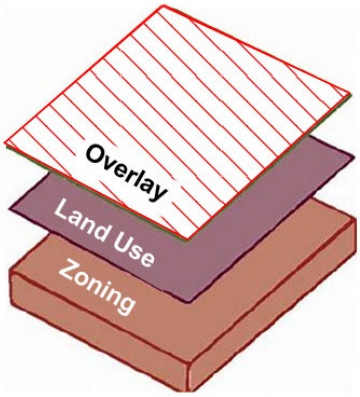
- The area of concern crosses multiple zoning districts or land use categories
- The boundaries are irregular and follow topography, water bodies, or hazard zones
- There is a need to preserve, protect, or manage specific resources or risks

Overlays do not follow parcel lines and are often based on geospatial data such as:

- Elevation and slope
- Floodplain boundaries
- Shoreland buffers
- Mineral deposits
- Airport safety zones
- Conservation
- Mix of uses
- Ordinary High Water Level of Waterbodies

Because these features do not align neatly with property lines, overlays are drawn to reflect real-world conditions, not ownership boundaries. This allows planners to apply targeted policies or building standards where they are most needed, regardless of parcel configuration. For example: Shoreland is currently made up of three zoning districts: Special Protection (SP), Recreational Residential (RR), and Recreational Commercial (RC). When we switch to an overlay, SP, RR, and RC will no longer be standalone zoning districts. The area will become Ag, Residential, or Commercial with Shoreland Overlay for the portion of the parcel that is within the shoreland.

FIGURE 23 | RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OVERLAYS AND ZONING



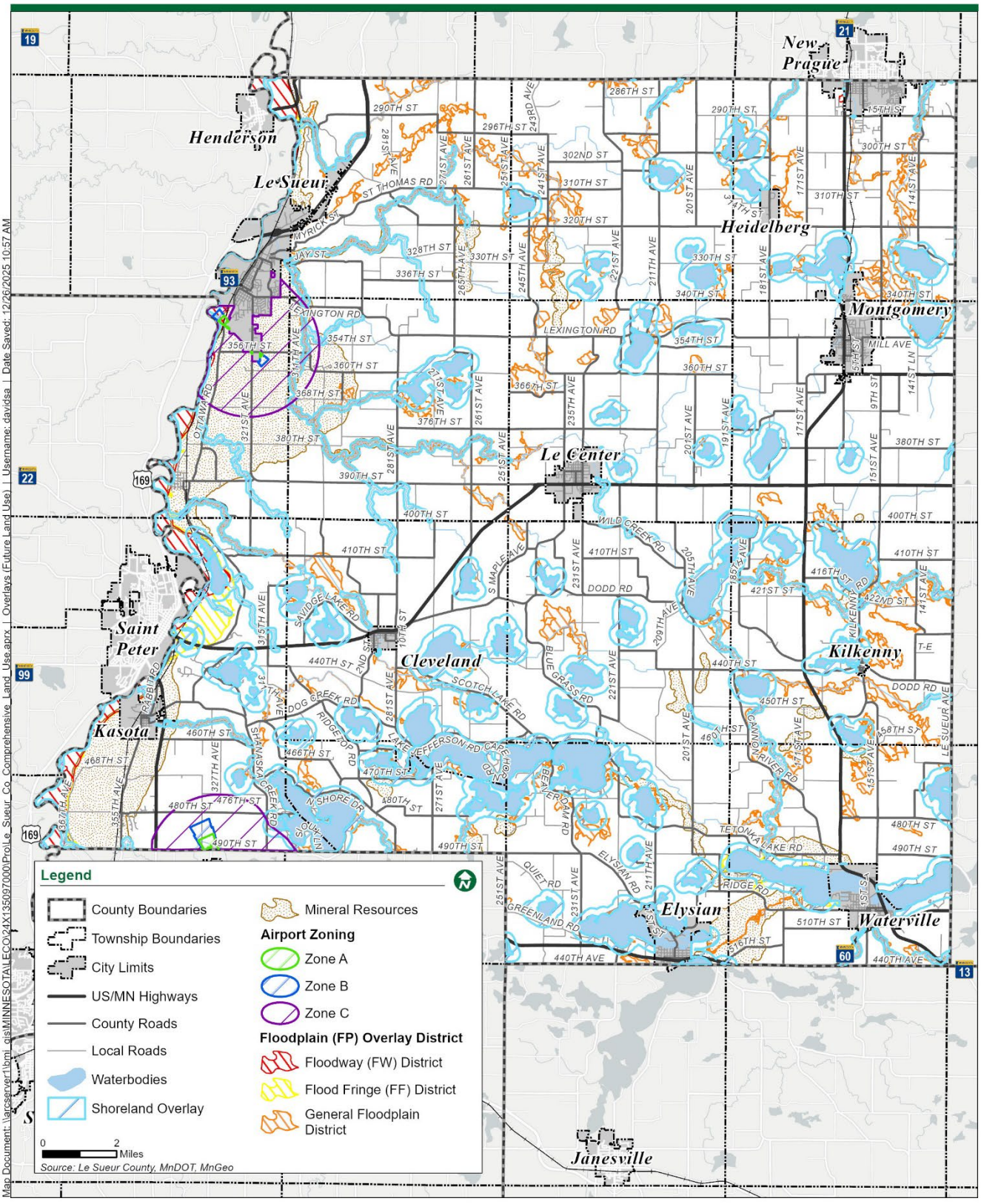
In the current Zoning Ordinance, the Shoreland Overlay is not a separate designation. It was formed by combining the Special Protection, Recreational Residential, and Recreational Commercial areas. It has been rebranded as the Shoreland Overlay District and established as an overlay in this Comprehensive Plan to preserve the necessary regulations in these sensitive areas.

TABLE 3 | PURPOSE OF OVERLAYS IN LE SUEUR COUNTY

Overlay Name	Purpose
Shoreland	Per DNR. Protects water quality and habitat within 1,000 feet of lakes and within 300 feet of rivers and streams
Floodplain	Includes 3 zones: • Zone 1: Floodway High-risk flood zones where development is typically prohibited • Zone 2: Flood Fringe Areas adjacent to floodways with limited development potential • Zone 3: General Floodplain Identifies areas at risk of flooding; subject to development restrictions
Airport	Ensures safety and noise compatibility near airports
Mineral Resources	Preserves access to valuable mineral deposits for future extraction
***Conservancy**	Intended to be a "no-build" area to protects environmentally sensitive or scenic areas from intensive development. *It includes, but is not limited to: Scientific Natural Areas, State Parks, Wildlife Management Areas, State Trails and 50 foot Buffer from State Trails, 50 foot Buffer from county drainage ditches as defined by Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103E. The bluffs/impact zones as defined in Le Sueur County Zoning Ordinance – Section 13: Shoreland Management *Note: This overlay is intended for planning purposes only and does not supersede or override the jurisdiction or regulatory authority of other agencies regarding building or development within these areas. This overlay is a new way of categorizing existing overlays and land uses and will continue to be studied.*

TABLE 4 | OVERLAY CONVERSION: EXISTING ZONING TO CURRENT LAND USE

Overlay Name	Status	Current Zoning Categories	Current Land Use Designation
Shoreland Overlay	Modified	• Special Protection • Recreational Residential • Recreational Commercial	• Agricultural (with shoreland portion now part of overlay) • Residential (shoreland portion in overlay) • Commercial (shoreland portion in overlay)
Conservancy Overlay	Existing Zoning Categories and Current Land Uses, Recategorized on Future Land Use Overlay Map	• Scientific Natural Areas • Wildlife Management Areas • State Trails with buffers	Overlay includes, but is not limited to: • Scientific Natural Areas • Wildlife Management Areas • Public Watercourses • Public Water Wetlands • State Trails • 50ft Buffer from State Trails • 50ft Buffer from County Ditches
Mineral Resources Overlay	Existing / No Change	• Mineral Resource Areas	No change
Floodplain Overlay	Existing / No Change	• Floodway (FW) • Flood Fringe (FF) • General Floodplain	No change
Airport Overlay	Existing / Zone A1 Added	• Zone A • Zone B • Zone C • Zone A1 is an overlap of Zones A and B	No change, except addition of Zone A1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Cleveland
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Elysian
Waterville
Janesville
Legend
County Boundaries
Township Boundaries
City Limits
US/MN Highways
County Roads
Local Roads
Waterbodies
Shoreland Overlay
Mineral Resources
Airport Zoning
Zone A
Zone B
Zone C
Floodplain (FP) Overlay District
Floodway (FW) District
Flood Fringe (FF) District
General Floodplain District
0 2 Miles
Source: Le Sueur County, MnDOT, MnGeo
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FUTURE LAND USE

Under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 394, counties outside the seven-county metropolitan area are authorized to adopt and implement land use plans and zoning ordinances to promote public health, safety, and general welfare. These comprehensive plans are essential tools for guiding long-term development in a way that reflects community values and priorities.

It is important to understand that future land use designations do not remove or alter existing land use rights or zoning entitlements. Instead, they serve as a visionary framework that adds additional options for how land could be used in the future. Property owners retain full rights to their current land uses, and any change would still require the landowner to initiate a formal application and follow the County's established review and approval process.

Planning for future growth is critical to ensure that the County can accommodate development in a thoughtful, efficient, and fiscally responsible manner. By introducing future land use categories, the county can better anticipate trends, support the types of development the community wants, and ensure that infrastructure and services are aligned with future needs. This proactive approach also helps support the tax base necessary to fund public services and maintain a high quality of life for residents.

TABLE 5 | CURRENT AND FUTURE LAND AREA OF LAND USE CATEGORIES

Land Use Category	Current Acres	Future Acres	Net Change (%)
Commercial	461.1	1,459.4	216.5%
Industrial	1,761.5	1,520.4	-13.7%
Residential	7,556.3	8,286.7	9.7%
Agriculture	258,744.3	257,251.2	−0.6%
Water	24,094.3	24,094.3	0%
Cities	10,808.2	10,820.4	0.1%
Total County	**303,425.8**	**303,425.8**	**0%**

**Note: Although city annexation may occur, annexation is not calculated for change between current and future land use.*

Community members said their top priorities for land use were:

- *Preserve agricultural land: Cluster development and concentrate it near cities to protect farmland*
- *Rural character: Retain Le Sueur County's small-town feel*

Understanding the Role of Future Land Use Designations

It is important to clarify that future land use designations do not remove or alter current land uses or zoning rights. Instead, they serve as a planning framework that could guide long-term growth:

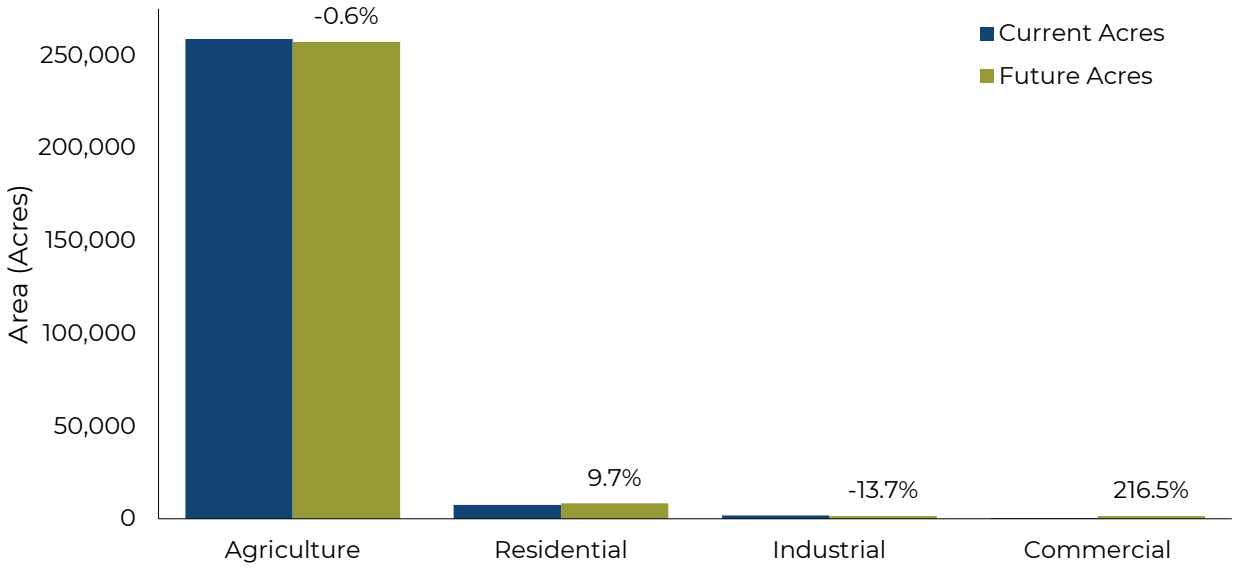
- Property owners retain their existing land use rights.
- These designations simply provide additional options for future development.
- Any actual change in land use still requires the property owner to initiate an application and go through the county's formal review and approval process.

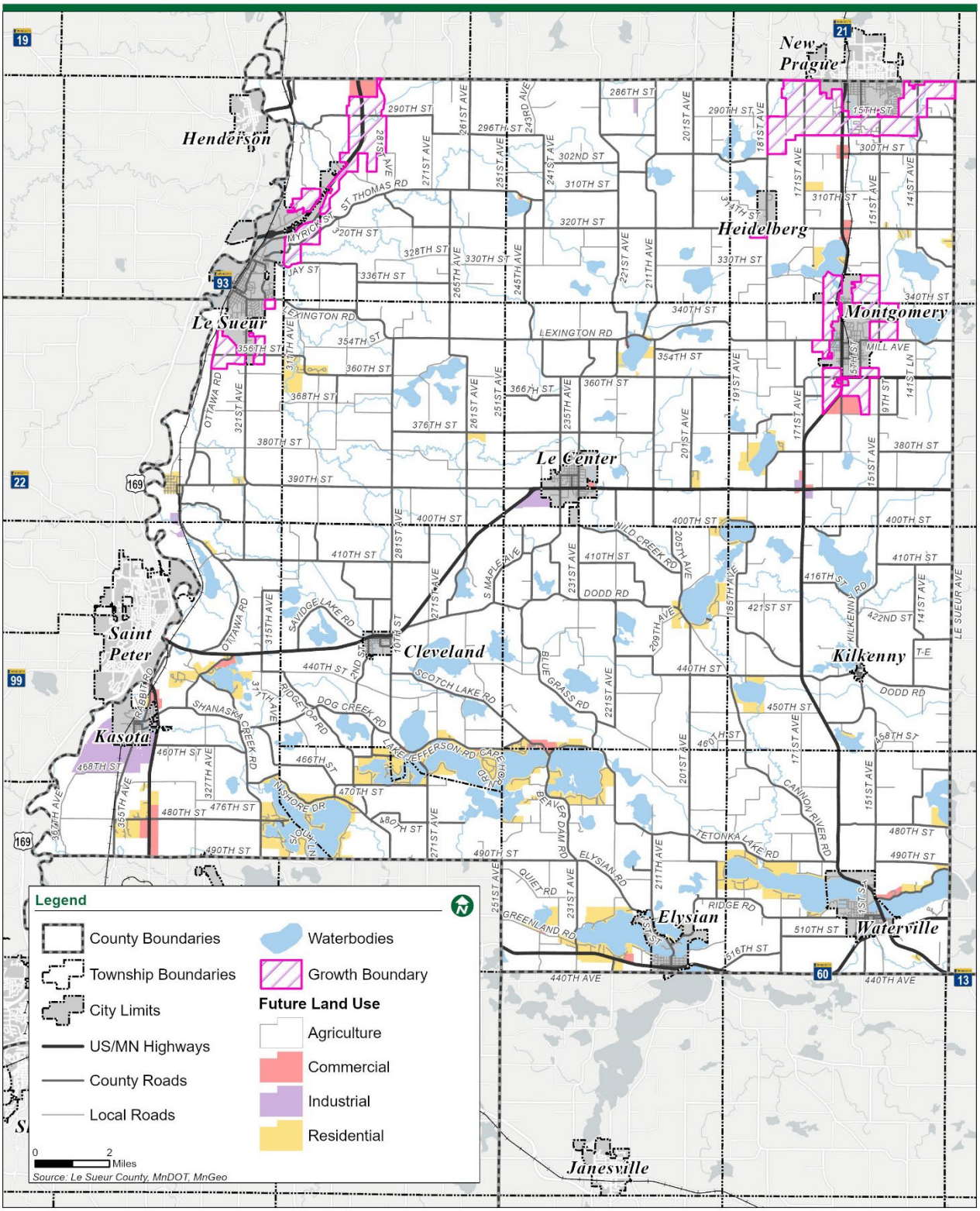
Areas Likely to Remain Stable

Water, Shoreland, and Total County areas are expected to remain unchanged, suggesting a continued focus on preservation and zoning stability.

**Note: Although city annexation may occur, annexation is not calculated in this scenario.*

FIGURE 24 | ACREAGE OF CURRENT VS. FUTURE LAND USE WITH PERCENTAGE CHANGE

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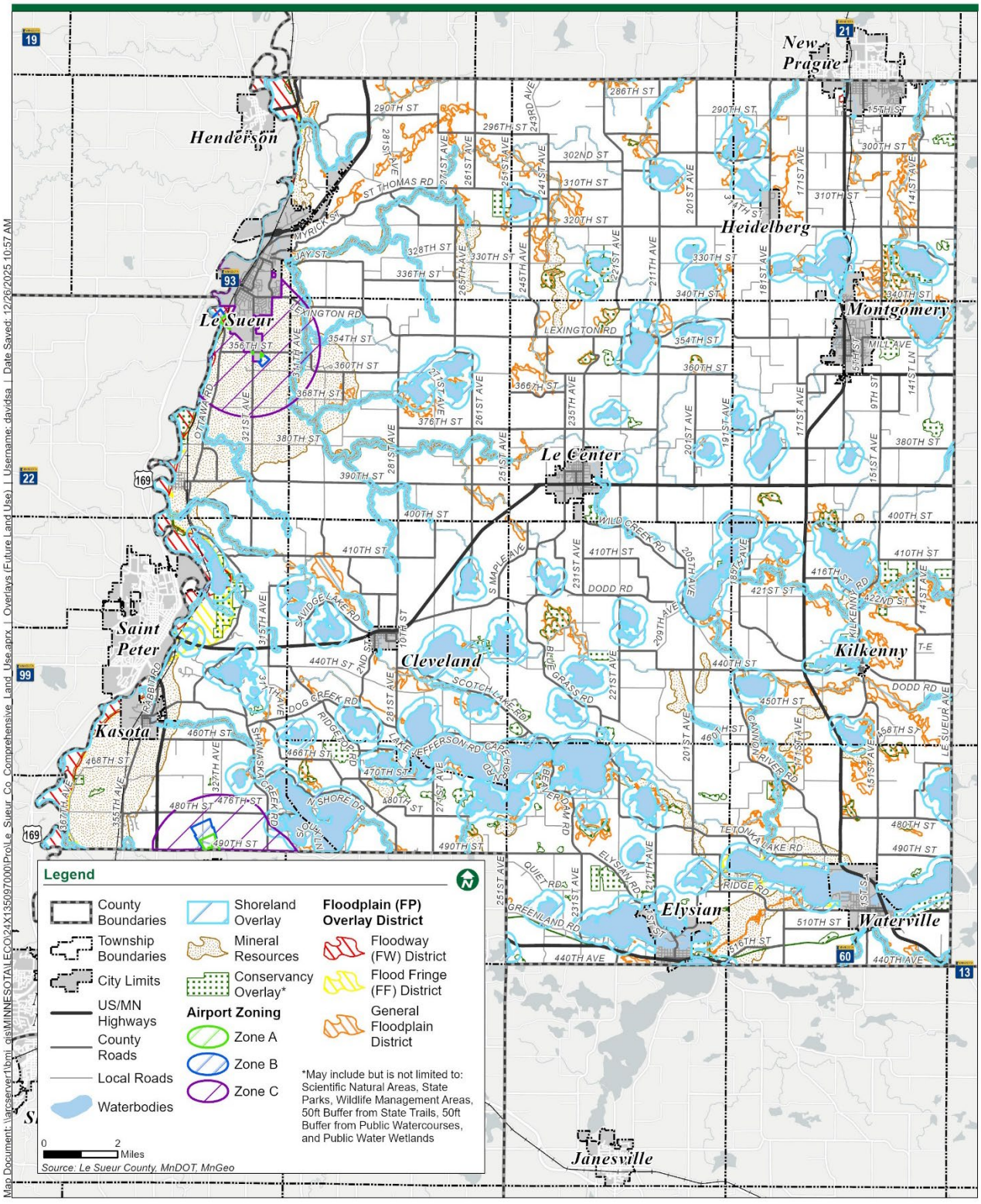
Legend
County Boundaries
Township Boundaries
City Limits
US/MN Highways
County Roads
Local Roads
Waterbodies
Growth Boundary
Future Land Use
Agriculture
Commercial
Industrial
Residential
0
2
Miles
Source: Le Sueur County, MnDOT, MnGeo

FUTURE OVERLAYS

Overlays are not additional zoning districts; however, they do "float" on top of existing zoning districts and provide additional protections and/or requirements. As you can see from this chart, overlay acreages are not additive to total county acreage and overlap various land uses.

TABLE 6 | AREA AND OVERLAPPING LAND USES OF OVERLAYS

Overlay Type	Subtype (if any)	Estimated Area (acres)	Overlapping Land Uses
Floodplain	Floodway (FW)	3,820.4	Agricultural, Residential
Floodplain	Flood Fringe (FF)	3,122.9	Agricultural, Residential
Floodplain	General Floodplain	28,550.6	Agricultural, Residential
Airport Zoning	Zone A	105.6	Agricultural, Residential
Airport Zoning	Zone B	213.6	Agricultural, Residential
Airport Zoning	Zone C	7,035.9	Agricultural, Residential
Mineral Overlay	—	23,599.4	Agricultural, Residential, Commercial/Industrial
Shoreland Overlay	—	37,989.6	Near water bodies across various land uses
Conservancy Overlay	—	11,323.4	Agricultural, Natural Areas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County Boundaries
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US/MN Highways
County Roads
Local Roads
Waterbodies
Shoreland Overlay
Mineral Resources
Conservancy Overlay*
Airport Zoning
Zone A
Zone B
Zone C
Floodplain (FP) Overlay District
Floodway (FW) District
Flood Fringe (FF) District
General Floodplain District
*May include but is not limited to: Scientific Natural Areas, State Parks, Wildlife Management Areas, 50ft Buffer from State Trails, 50ft Buffer from Public Watercourses, and Public Water Wetlands
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Miles
Source: Le Sueur County, MnDOT, MnGeo
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CURRENT VS. FUTURE LAND USE

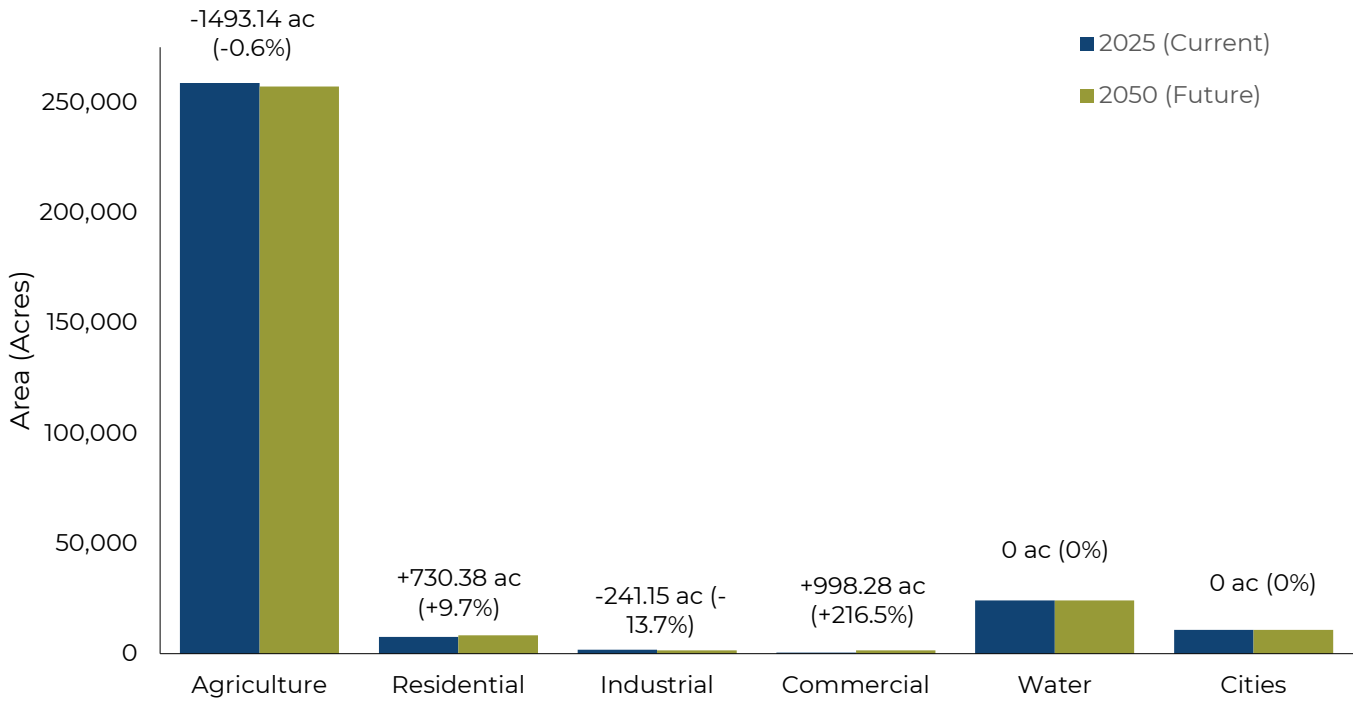
Growth in Developed Land Uses (Future 2050)

The future land use map was developed through a series of workshops and public engagement efforts, incorporating feedback from residents, stakeholders, and local officials. When comparing current and future land use (with growth areas identified through community input), we can make a few observations. It is important to note that while cities maintain their own future land use plans, this county-level plan does not attempt to project the amount of annexation that cities may initiate.

Land Use

This chart illustrates the projected changes in land use categories between 2025 and 2050. Notable increases are seen in commercial, industrial, and residential uses, reflecting anticipated growth.

FIGURE 25 | CURRENT VS. FUTURE LAND USE IN LE SUEUR COUNTY (2025 VS. 2050)



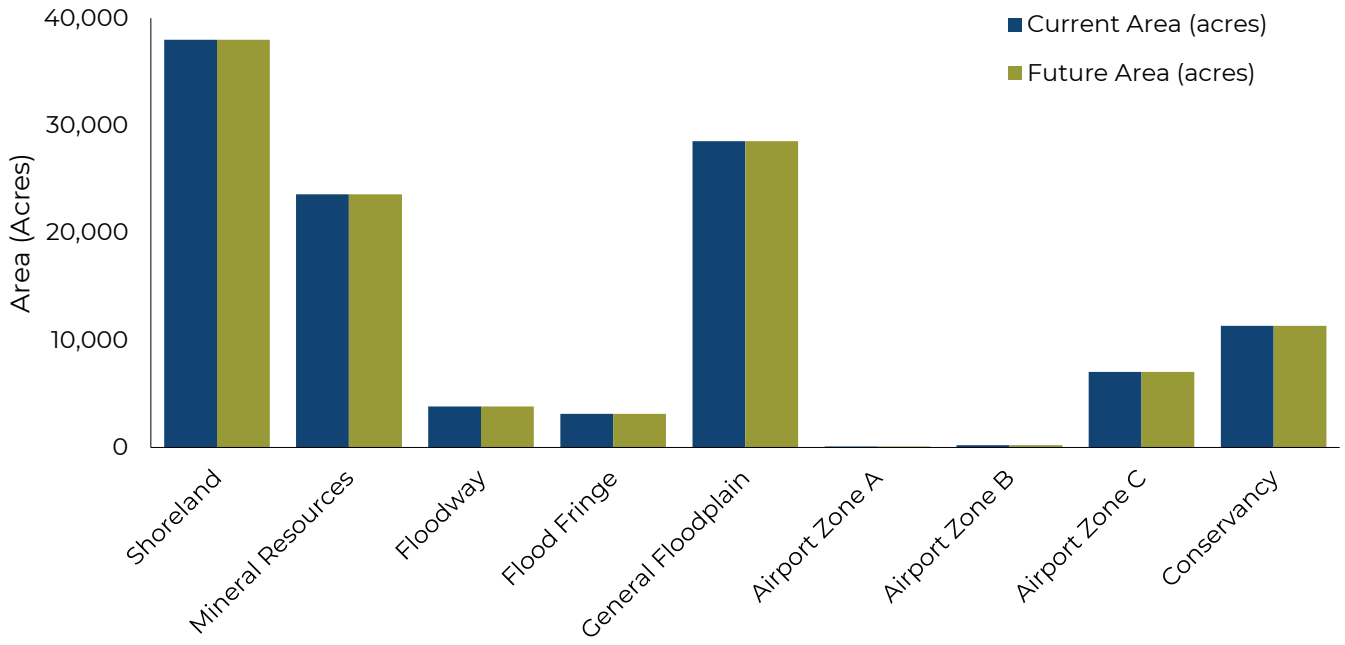
**Note: Although city annexation may occur, annexation is not calculated for change between current and future land use.*

Overlays

The chart below provides a clear visual representation of land use overlay designations in Le Sueur County, highlighting the relative scale of each overlay category. The Shoreland overlay dominates the landscape with nearly 38,000 acres, followed by General Floodplain, Mineral Resources, and then Conservancy, indicating a significant environmental and resource-based land use plan. Smaller overlays like Airport Zones A, B, and C occupy minimal acreage (Zone A1 is an overlap of Zone A and Zone B), reflecting their more limited spatial impact. Overall, the chart effectively communicates the distribution of land use priorities, emphasizing the county's focus on environmental conservation and floodplain management.

This chart shows the extent of regulatory overlays across the county. Shoreland and floodplain areas remain significant, while the conservancy overlay supports ecological preservation.

FIGURE 26 | COMPARISON OF CURRENT AND FUTURE OVERLAY AREAS



Note: As the Conservancy Overlay continues to be studied after the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, the future acreage of the Conservancy Overlay may be adjusted.

KEY FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR GROWTH

Growth Modeling:

- Scenario 1: State Demographer: 0.295% annual growth
- Scenario 2: Accelerated Growth: 1% annual growth

Fiscal Responsibility:

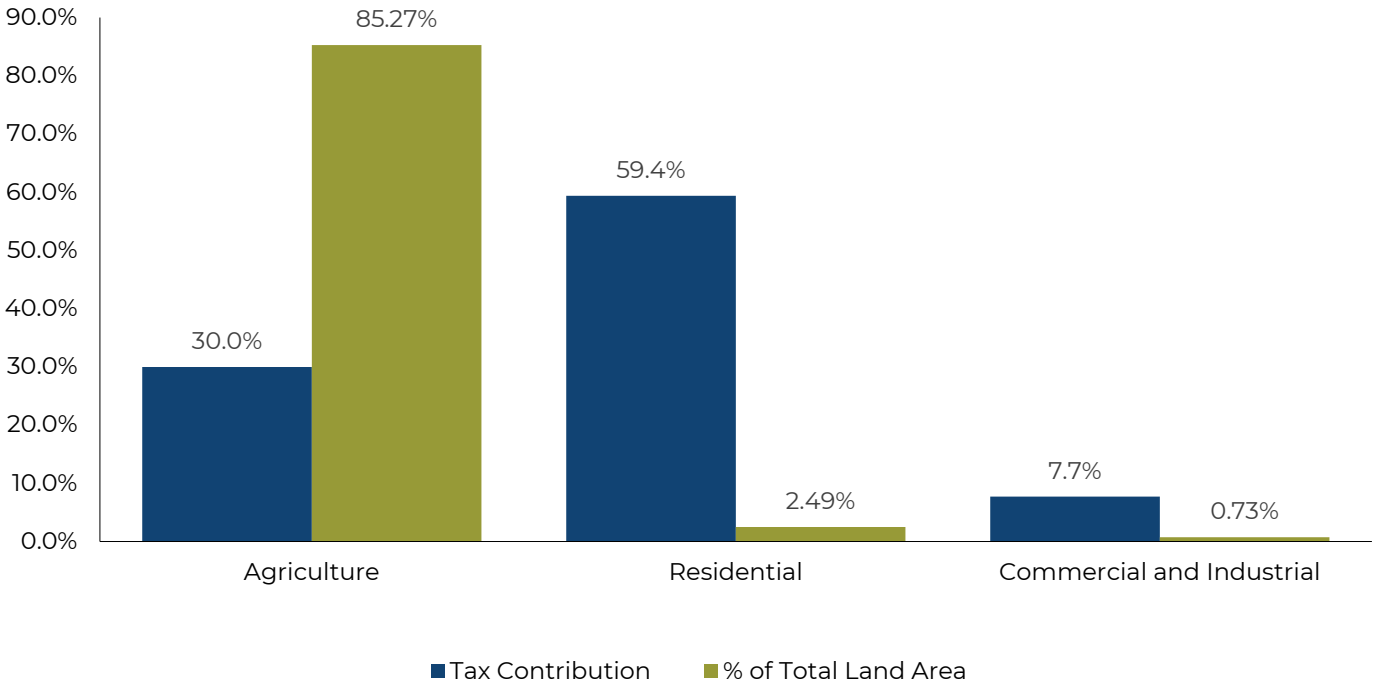
- The county should maintain a tax base that supports infrastructure and services.
- Small, incremental growth is essential to keep pace with inflation and service demands.
- No growth would result in budget shortfalls and reduced service levels.

Key Statistics (2025 Tax Contribution by Land Use):

- Residential: 58.4%
- Agriculture: 30.0%
- Commercial and Industrial : 7.7%
- Utility/Railroad: 2.9%
- Apartments (multifamily): 1.0%

These figures reflect the relative fiscal impact of land use categories on the county's property tax base. Residential properties, while occupying a small portion of land, generate the majority of tax revenue due to higher per-acre valuations. Agricultural land, despite its vast footprint, contributes less due to preferential assessments. Commercial and utility/railroad uses, though limited in area, provide strong per-acre returns. Apartments, while a small share, represent a growing component of the tax base.

FIGURE 27 | 2025 TAX CONTRIBUTION AND PERCENTAGE OF LAND AREA IN LE SUEUR COUNTY BY LAND USE CATEGORY



GROWTH SCENARIOS AND LAND DEMAND

According to the Minnesota State Demographer's Office, Le Sueur County is projected to continue to grow through 2050, but the pace of growth will be influenced by a combination of regional, national, and global factors. To account for uncertainty, two scenarios are presented to illustrate a possible range of outcomes: one based on the State Demographer's conservative projection and another reflecting a more accelerated growth strategy. These scenarios provide a framework for considering not only the low and high ends of potential growth but also the spectrum of possibilities in between:

- Scenario 1 reflects the Minnesota State Demographic Center's conservative projection which is the 10-year growth estimate (3% from 2025–2035) to calculate a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of ~0.295%, then applies it over 25 years to 2050.
- Scenario 2 assumes a 1% annual growth rate, representing an accelerated growth strategy driven by a more proactive approach to attract residents and businesses. This strategy also includes attracting those who commute into the County for work, but who are not currently living in the County.
- 3,561 inflow commuters -> 1 in 12 commuters -> ~296 new residents per year -> 1% growth

FIGURE 28 | PROJECTION OF LE SUEUR COUNTY POPULATION BY SCENARIO

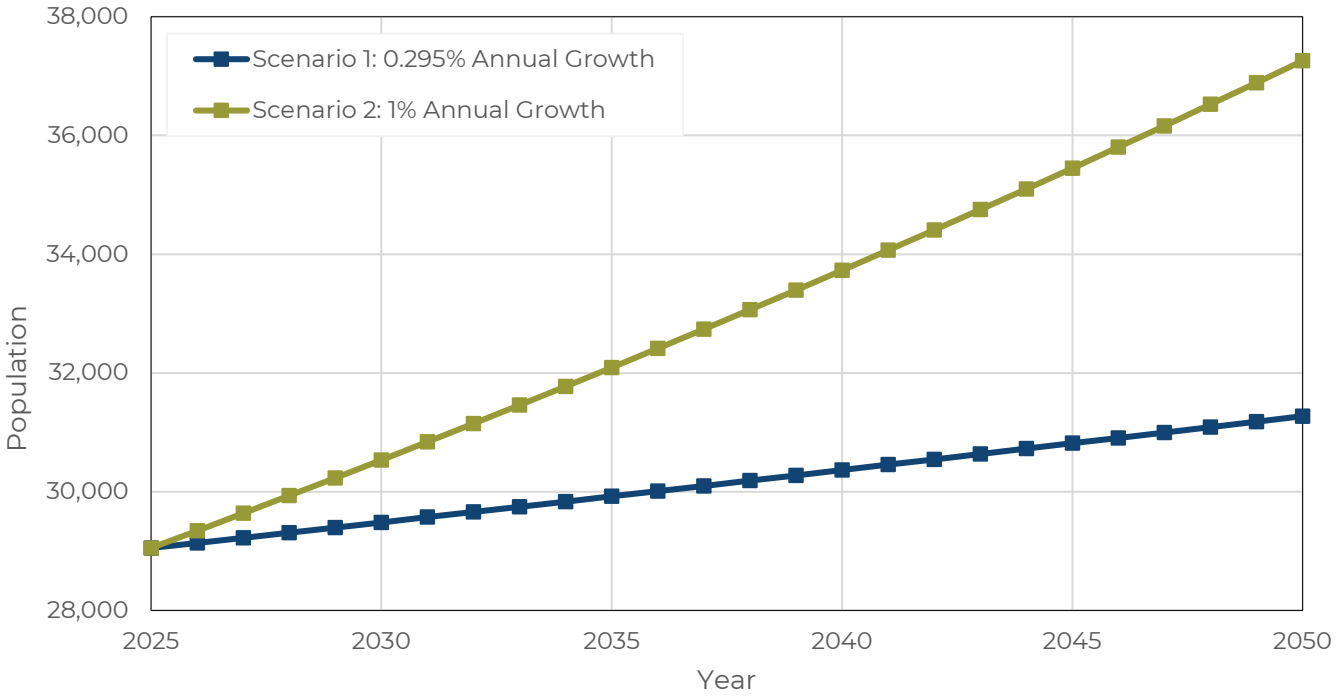


TABLE 7 | LAND SUPPLY VS. DEMAND ACROSS 4 LAND USE CATEGORIES UNDER 2 GROWTH SCENARIOS

Land Use Category	Future Land Supply (acres)	Scenario 1 Demand (acres)	Scenario 2 Demand (acres)
Residential	730.4	450	1,664
Commercial	998.3	800	1,600
Industrial	-241.1	1,000	2,000
Agricultural	-1493.1	-1,000	-1,500

FIGURE 29 | NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO COMMUTE TO LE SUEUR COUNTY

Source: US Census LEHD OnTheMap (2022), Inflow/Outflow

Daily inbound commuting pattern for Le Sueur County, MN

- Inbound commuters: There are 3,561 daily commuters who work in Le Sueur County but live elsewhere, representing a potential pool of residents who could relocate to live within the County.
- Top origin counties: Scott, Nicollet, Blue Earth, Rice, and Sibley.
- The inbound commuter pool (workers who live elsewhere but are employed in the county) represents a ready audience for relocation. The US Census LEHD OnTheMap (2022) indicates approximately 3,561 such workers tied to Le Sueur County jobs (All Jobs).
- If a small share of these inbound commuters moves into the county each year (a "capture rate"), they can account for a meaningful portion of the target 1% growth—especially when considering household members moving with them.
- Inbound commuters = 3,561. If each mover brings a household, the added residents per year ≈ inbound × capture rate × average household size.
- Average household size locally is about 2.5 persons (rounded).
- If even a small percentage of these commuters relocate annually, they could significantly contribute to the 1% growth:
  - 1% capture rate ≈ 94 new residents/year
  - 2% capture rate ≈ 188 new residents/year
  - 3% capture rate ≈ 282 new residents/year

The 1% annual growth scenario is plausible if:

- A modest share (roughly 2–3%) of inbound commuters chooses to relocate each year, and those movers bring typical-sized households; and/or
- Additional population change comes from births exceeding deaths and other migration (e.g., remote workers, retirees, new hires). The Minnesota State Demographers Office population baseline provides the anchor for the 1% math, while US Census LEHD OnTheMap provides the commuter pipeline that can convert into residents.

Summary of Growth Scenarios (2025–2050):

- Scenario 1: State Demographer: 0.295% Annual Growth
  (Based on MN Demographer's 3% growth from 2025–2035, extrapolated to 2050)
  → ~2,251 additional residents by 2050
- Scenario 2: Accelerated Growth: 1% Annual Growth
  (Assuming successful attraction of commuters and new businesses)
  → ~8,320 additional residents by 2050

The Future Land Use Map is aspirational in nature, designed to accommodate a variety of potential growth trajectories. Both Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 illustrate different possibilities for development. To understand how land use might shift from current conditions, we can examine the acreage changes in the future.

How the Future Land Use Map Supports Future Scenarios

The Future Land Use Map was developed through a series of community workshops and public engagement efforts, ensuring that designated growth areas reflect local priorities and values. It focuses on development near city centers and outside of extra-territorial jurisdictions where infrastructure and services may still be in the planning phase, promoting efficient land use and minimizing sprawl. The Future Land Use Map is designed to be adaptive and accommodate a range of growth rates and 2 scenarios- conservative to more accelerated. As such, the Future Land Use Map depicts Scenario 2 at 100% to provide the high-end scenario which is unlikely to occur at 100% to 2050.

Importantly, the map does not attempt to project annexation by cities, as each municipality maintains its own future land use plan. Instead, it offers a flexible framework that can accommodate a range of growth outcomes—from conservative to accelerated—through 2050.

TABLE 8 | PROJECTED CHANGE IN AREA OF LAND USE CATEGORIES

Land Use Category	Net Change (acres) of Current vs. Future Land Uses	Percent Change
Commercial	998.28	+216.5%
Industrial	-241.15	-13.7%
Residential	730.38	+9.7%
Agriculture	-1,493.14	−0.6%

Note: These figures are based on the future land use map and do not include overlay zones such as floodplain, airport, or mineral areas or city annexations.

Land Supply vs. Demand: Matching Growth with Acreage

To support projected population increases and economic development through 2050, the Future Land Use Map allocates land across key categories.

Scenario 1: Conservative Growth (~0.295% annually)

- Population increase: ~2,251 residents
- Estimated households: ~900 (based on average household size of 2.5)
- Residential: Sufficient, with ~280 acres of buffer.
- Commercial: Sufficient, with ~198 acres of buffer.
- Industrial: Insufficient by ~1,241 acres. This is the binding constraint.
- Agricultural (conversion): Sufficient; the plan allows up to 1,493 acres to convert, while demand is 1,000 acres (buffer ~493 acres).

Bottom line: Scenario 1 works for Residential and Commercial, but Industrial needs ~1,241 acres more designation (or equivalent intensity/reuse) to be feasible.

What's needed to make Scenario 1 feasible: Add ~1,241 acres of industrial capacity (new designation, reuse, or intensity increases). This could also be achieved by working closely with city partners where industrial land development opportunities exist on municipal services.

Scenario 2: Accelerated Growth (1% annually)

- Population increase: ~8,320 residents
- Estimated households: ~3,328
- Residential: Insufficient by ~934 acres.
- Commercial: Insufficient by ~602 acres.
- Industrial: Strongly insufficient by ~2,241 acres.
- Agricultural (conversion): Just short by ~6.9 acres of conversion capacity.

Bottom line: Scenario 2 requires significant adjustments such as additional land allocation and/or higher intensity across Residential, Commercial, and Industrial. Agricultural conversion capacity is nearly there but needs a minor adjustment (~6.9 acres).

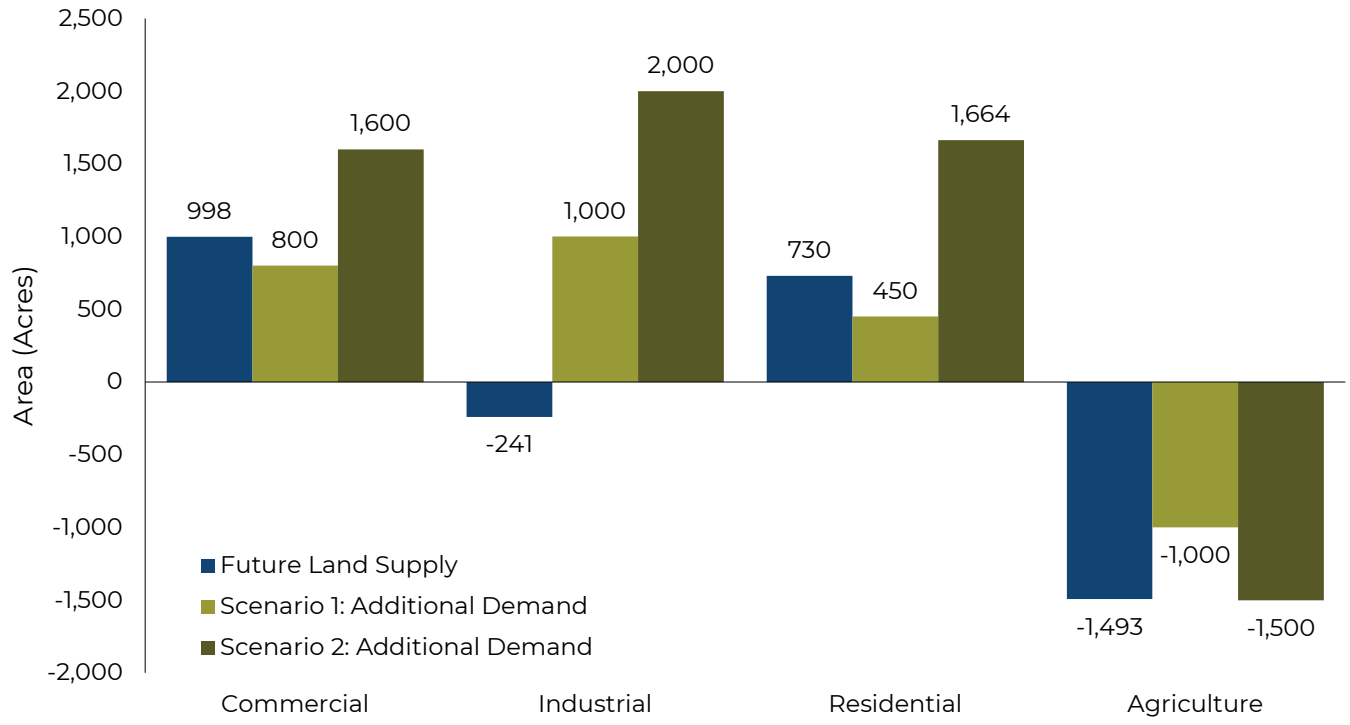
Land Supply and Demand

The Future Land Use Map is designed to support a range of growth scenarios—from conservative (0.295% annual growth) to more accelerated (1% annual growth)—enabling Le Sueur County to respond to changing conditions and growth pressures. Whether the county experiences modest growth or pursues a more aggressive strategy to attract new residents and businesses, the land use framework provides a solid foundation for managing land demand through 2050. It balances development with conservation, ensuring that land resources are used efficiently while preserving the county's rural character.

Land Supply is compared to Land Demand for both scenarios. Land Supply refers to the amount of additional land allocated in the Future Land Use Map for each category. Demand is based on projected population growth and estimated land needs under:

- Scenario 1: Conservative growth (0.295% annually)
- Scenario 2: Accelerated growth (1% annually)

FIGURE 30 | LAND SUPPLY VS. DEMAND UNDER TWO GROWTH SCENARIOS



Potential Land Use in Scenario 2

Scenario 2 reflects a more aggressive growth trajectory, modeled at 1% annual population increase. While full realization by 2050 is unlikely, evaluating a hypothetical 100% build-out provides insight into the upper bounds of land use change and infrastructure needs.

Residential

- Projected Demand: ~1,664 acres to accommodate ~3,328 new households (avg. household size = 2.5; 0.5 acres per household).
- Current Supply: 730.4 acres.
- Gap: −933.6 acres.

This shortfall indicates that existing residential allocations are insufficient under accelerated growth. Meeting demand will require higher-density housing, infill development, and mixed-use strategies to reduce greenfield consumption.

Commercial

- Projected Demand: ~1,600 acres.
- Current Supply: 998.3 acres.
- Gap: −601.7 acres.

Commercial expansion will need to leverage redevelopment of existing corridors, vertical mixed-use, and adaptive reuse of large-format sites to meet business and retail needs without excessive land conversion.

Industrial

- Projected Demand: ~2,000 acres.
- Current Supply: −241.1 acres (net deficit in FLUM).
- Gap: −2,241.1 acres.

Industrial land is the most constrained category. Addressing this requires new designations near transportation corridors, brownfield redevelopment, and consideration of regional partnerships for shared industrial capacity.

Agricultural

- Conversion Capacity: 1,493.1 acres.
- Projected Conversion Need: ~1,500 acres.
- Gap: −6.9 acres.

Agricultural land conversion is nearly sufficient but will require a minor adjustment or offset through density strategies to avoid expanding beyond planned limits.

Key Takeaways

- Residential and Commercial allocations fall short under Scenario 2, requiring strategic zoning updates and intensification policies.
- Industrial is the critical constraint, with a gap exceeding 2,200 acres—necessitating major land use adjustments.
- Agricultural conversion is close to capacity; minor adjustments or reduced greenfield demand can resolve this.

Rethinking Agricultural Land Adjustments

Agriculture is a cornerstone of Le Sueur County's economy and identity. As market forces shift, the potential demand for various land uses may also change over time. Under Scenario 1, which illustrates how population and household growth could unfold using projections from the Minnesota State Demographer, agricultural land in Le Sueur County may decrease from approximately 258,744.3 acres to 257,251.2 acres. This theoretical reduction of roughly 1,493.1 acres (about 0.6%) represents one possible outcome if farmland were to transition to residential, commercial, industrial, or other non-agricultural uses identified in this scenario's hypothetical Future Land Use Map.

When Conservancy areas are considered together with agricultural areas, the overall rural and ecological land base may remain largely unchanged. These Conservancy areas are intended for long-term preservation purposes and often function similarly to agricultural land in terms of open space and rural character. Conservancy zones, which cover about 11,323.4 acres (approximately 3.73% of the county's total land area), are typically preserved for ecological or recreational purposes and may include public or private lands with limited development rights, potentially resulting in lower assessed values.

In this scenario, much of the potential agricultural land shift is associated with possible residential (housing) growth and commercial or industrial activity. These outcomes are illustrative, not predetermined. They show how growth might be accommodated if the County were to follow the assumptions included in Scenario 1.

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, public feedback indicated a desire to balance economic growth with the preservation of rural land and open space. The County's scenario planning approach is designed to demonstrate how that balance could be achieved under different conditions, helping inform future decisions without prescribing a specific outcome.

DENSITY GUIDELINES

In Le Sueur County, land use is guided by broad designations with generalized density ranges to describe intended character, while its zoning districts, established in its zoning ordinance, will determine the specific regulations to implement development standards. The land use designations support the County's goals to manage growth, preserve rural character, and support infrastructure planning. It encourages compact development near city fringes and within extra-territorial areas to reduce infrastructure costs and avoid sprawl. The following information exists to serve as a guideline for future discussion and consideration.

Agricultural and Rural Residential Areas

These areas are designated to preserve farmland, support agricultural operations, and allow for limited rural housing. They are categorized into three agricultural zoning districts, each with specific density and development regulations.

Low Density Agricultural (AG-1)

- Density: 1 single-family dwelling per quarter-quarter
- Maximum: 4 single-family dwellings per quarter-quarter; 16 single-family dwellings per 640-acre section
- Transferability: Building eligibility may be transferred within a taxing district

Medium Density Agricultural (AG-2)

- Density: 2 single-family dwellings per quarter-quarter
- Maximum: 4 single-family dwellings per quarter-quarter; 16 single-family dwellings per 640-acre section
- Transferability: No transfer of unused building eligibility outside of its quarter-quarter

High Density Agricultural (AG-3)

- Density: 4 single-family dwellings per quarter-quarter
- Maximum: 4 single-family dwellings per quarter-quarter; 16 single-family dwellings per 640-acre section
- Development Pattern: Single-family dwellings must be built in a clustered manner
- Transferability: No transfer of unused building eligibilities outside of its quarter-quarter

Residential Neighborhoods

These areas support a range of housing types and densities, depending on infrastructure availability and proximity to urban centers. They are divided into two residential density categories:

Low-Density Residential

- Intended Use: Large-lot residential development in rural or semi-rural settings. Low-density residential is intended for one- and two-family homes.

Medium-Density Residential

- Intended Use: Suitable for areas with partial or planned infrastructure or near city edges. Medium-density residential is intended for homes, including townhomes or condos, with up to four dwellings in the same structure.

TABLE 9 | GENERALIZED DENSITY RANGES OF LAND USES

Land Use	Density	Max single-family dwelling per qtr.-qtr.	Max Homes per 640-Acre section	Special Notes / Restrictions
Low-Density Agriculture	1 single-family dwelling per qtr.-qtr.	4	16	Building eligibility may be transferred within a taxing district
Medium-Density Agriculture	2 single-family dwellings per qtr.-qtr.	4	16	No transfer of unused building eligibility outside of its qtr.-qtr.
High-Density Agriculture	4 single-family dwellings per qtr.-qtr.	4	16	Clustered development required; no transfer of unused building eligibilities outside of its qtr.-qtr.
Low-Density Residential	2.75 acres per lot	Approx. 14	Approx. 232	Transfer of unused building eligibility prohibited
Medium-Density Residential	1.84 acres per lot	Approx. 21	Approx. 336	Transfer of unused building eligibility prohibited
High-Density Residential	0.92 acres per lot	Approx. 43	Approx. 688	Transfer of unused building eligibility prohibited

These residential density ranges form the foundation for the County's future land use map and guide decisions about infrastructure, service delivery, and growth management. Zoning ordinances remain the regulatory mechanism for implementing these land use goals.

KEY INSIGHTS

Residential Land

- Scenario 1 demand (450 acres) is well below supply (9,350.2 acres).
- Scenario 2 demand (1,664 acres) is greater than Scenario 1 demand, but is well below supply.

Commercial & Industrial Land

- Scenario 1 demand is modest and well within supply.
- Scenario 2 demand approaches supply but can be managed through strategic zoning and vertical development.

Agricultural Land

- Both scenarios show relatively small reductions compared to total agricultural land, with Scenario 2 requiring slightly more conversion.

KEY PROJECTIONS FOR SCENARIO 1

Looking at the state demographer projections (Scenario 1) projections, Le Sueur County's land use planning must remain strategic and adaptable – ensuring that even moderate population increases are supported with well-planned residential, commercial, and service development, while continuing to preserve agricultural land and protect the county's rural character.

- Growth in residential, commercial and industrial land uses indicates strong demand for housing, jobs, and services and requires planning for infrastructure, utilities, and highway business development in growth areas.
- Agricultural Land Conversion reduction of −13,523.4 acres (−5.23%) reflects transition to urban uses near cities. Suggests preservation of large tracts of farmland and managed growth to reduce fragmentation.
- Infill and Redevelopment Opportunities: To minimize sprawl and infrastructure costs, the County encourages infill development within existing urbanized areas and redevelopment of underutilized parcels. These strategies support efficient land use, reduce environmental impacts, and make use of existing infrastructure.
- Growth Near Cities: Growth is primarily directed away from the edges of cities and outside their extra-territorial jurisdictions, where infrastructure and services may still be in the planning phase. This approach helps avoid leapfrog development and unnecessary public investment in remote areas. Urban growth boundaries are informally defined through coordination with municipalities to guide expansion in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner.
- Overlay Stability: No change in floodplain, shoreland, airport zones, or mineral resources overlays. Continue enforcing environmental and safety protections. Use overlays to guide development suitability and risk mitigation.
- Phasing and Timing of Development: Growth should be phased incrementally to align with infrastructure capacity and fiscal responsibility. This is known as concurrency.

LAND USE GOALS

Goal 9.1 Preserve agricultural land while accommodating growth

Policy 9.1.1 Consider additional Agricultural Districts with strict density limits and transferable development rights to preserve large tracts of land for farming purposes.

Policy 9.1.2 Encourage clustered rural residential development to minimize land fragmentation.

Policy 9.1.3 Protect riparian corridors, wetlands, and bluff areas and other sensitive features.

Goal 9.2 Promote reasonable development practices

Policy 9.2.1 Create Highway Business nodes at key intersections to create neighborhoods and community centers.

Goal 9.3 Ensure fiscal responsibility through coordinated growth

Policy 9.3.1 Direct growth toward areas with existing infrastructure and services, prioritizing development outside of the designated Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB), until adequate utilities are in place, in order to optimize public investments through joint planning coordination between county and cities.

Policy 9.3.2 Work with cities and townships to draft orderly annexation agreements in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Section 462.3535, Subdivision 5 with adjacent cities for development in UGBs to align standards for density, roads, stormwater, and utilities, reducing future conflicts between county vs. city standards of development and investments.

Policy 9.3.3 Encourage new development that strengthens and diversifies the County tax base.

Policy 9.3.4 Ensure long-term availability of essential aggregate resources by guiding land use decisions that prevent incompatible development, minimize resource loss, and support responsible extraction.

LAND USE RESILIENCY: Guide development away from floodplains using updated maps. Encourage infill development to reduce environmental impact.

IMPLEMENTATION

10 | IMPLEMENTATION

The Le Sueur County Comprehensive Plan establishes a long-term vision for growth, land use, infrastructure, and resource management across the county. This vision can only be achieved through a clear and actionable implementation framework. This chapter prioritizes the plan's goals and identifies responsible parties, resources, and timelines for carrying out each strategy.

OFFICIAL CONTROLS

Zoning

Le Sueur County's Zoning Ordinance regulates land use to protect public health, safety, and welfare while promoting orderly development. These regulations govern the location, size, and use of structures, lot arrangements, and density standards throughout the county. Zoning districts are designed to preserve agricultural land, guide residential and commercial growth, and protect sensitive environmental areas such as shorelands and floodplains.

Floodplain and shoreland management is addressed through overlay districts that impose additional restrictions on development within flood-prone areas, ensuring compliance with state and federal standards and reducing risk to life and property.

Land Division Ordinance

The County's land division regulations provide standards for dividing and platting land to ensure safe, efficient, and cost-effective development. This ordinance requires adequate provision for transportation networks, utilities, stormwater management, and public services. The review process includes Planning Commission and County Board oversight to maintain consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and protect community interests.

Ordinance Amendments

Following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, Le Sueur County will review and consider amendments to its zoning and land division ordinances to:

- Eliminate inconsistencies with the plan.
- Align with state and federal regulations.
- Support countywide goals for growth management, resource protection, and economic vitality.

The Future Land Use Map serves as a guide for development patterns and introduces new and revised land use designations (such as a Shoreland Overlay and Conservation Overlay which remain the same just converted from districts to overlays). Updates to official controls will ensure these designations are reflected in zoning and land division standards.

FUNDING MECHANISMS

The implementation of countywide improvements requires reliable funding sources. Le Sueur County will utilize a combination of tools to plan and finance these projects. Two mechanisms commonly used include:

Capital Improvement Program (CIP):

Capital improvement projects are major investments that benefit the County, such as the construction or reconstruction of roads, bridges, water and sewer systems, stormwater infrastructure, broadband expansion, and park and recreation facilities. A CIP is a multi-year budgeting plan that identifies priority projects, estimated costs, and funding strategies. The County will maintain a five-year CIP to ensure alignment with the Comprehensive Plan's goals and to guide annual budget decisions.

Grants and External Funding:

Grants are a critical resource for counties to fund projects that advance community priorities. These may include federal, state, and regional programs that support transportation, housing, economic development, environmental stewardship, and infrastructure improvements. Grants typically require competitive applications and compliance with program guidelines. Le Sueur County will actively pursue grant opportunities to implement Vision 2050 strategies and leverage partnerships with municipalities and regional agencies.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The Implementation Matrix serves as a working tool for the County Board, Planning Commission, and staff to align budgets, resources, and actions with the Comprehensive Plan over the next 20 years. The matrix identifies:

- Goals and Policies from each chapter
- Priority Levels and Timelines for short-, mid-, and long-term actions
- Resources and Funding Sources to support projects
- Responsible Parties (Leaders) for implementation

This matrix will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to reflect progress, emerging opportunities, and changing conditions.

Priority Levels

Priority levels found in the following implementation matrix are based on:

- Short-term action: 1-5 years
- Mid-term action: 6-10 years
- Long-term action: 11+ years

Leader

Leaders found in the following implementation matrix are:

- AD - Administration
- CT – Cities
- ED – Economic Development
- EM – Emergency Management
- ES – Environmental Services
- HWY – Highway Department
- JP – Joint Powers
- PH – Public Health
- PK - Parks
- PW – Public Works
- PZ – Planning & Zoning
- SH – Sheriff
- SWCD – Soil & Water Conservation District

Economic Development

Number	Goal/Strategy	Priority	Leaders
3.1	**Support Local Business**	Long-Term	ED
3.1.1	Prioritize small business growth, retention, and entrepreneurship through partnerships and incentives.	Short-Term	ED
3.2	**Strengthen Workforce**	Long-Term	ED
3.2.1	Incentivize key industries and expand local job opportunities.	Long-Term	ED
3.3	**Expand Infrastructure**	Short-Term	HWY, PZ, JP, CT
3.3.1	Improve broadband and essential infrastructure to support business and community needs.	Short-Term	HWY, PZ, JP, CT
Resiliency	**Design infrastructure for extreme weather durability and maintain community assets, while fostering local economic growth.**	Long-Term	HWY, PZ, JP, CT

Economic Development Resources:

- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED): Launch MN, Workforce Grants, CareerForce, Broadband Grants
- Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF): Grants and Technical Assistance

- US Economic Development Administration (EDA): Public Works, Workforce Grants, Disaster Grants
- Small Business Administration (SBA): Technical Assistance
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC): Technical Assistance
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA): RBDG, Rural Economic Development, Rural Utilities, BEAD Program

Housing

Number	Goal/Strategy	Priority	Leaders
4.1	**Preserve and Improve Aging Housing Stock**	Long-Term	PZ, CT
4.1.1	Support rehabilitation and maintenance of older homes to ensure safety, livability, and market competitiveness.	Mid-Term	PZ, CT
4.2	**Ensure Housing Attainability and Stability**	Long-Term	PZ, CT
4.2.1	Promote housing options that remain attainable across income levels and support long-term tenure for both owners and renters.	Mid-Term	PZ, CT
4.3	**Align Housing Supply with Population Growth**	Long-Term	PZ, CT
4.3.1	Expand residential development potential through strategic updates to Agricultural District.	Mid-Term	PZ, CT
4.4	**Diversify Housing Types and Tenure Options**	Mid-Term	PZ, CT
4.4.1	Expand housing choices to meet evolving needs—such as senior, workforce, and multi-family housing.	Short-Term	PZ, CT
Resiliency	**Avoid flood-prone areas through zoning and hazard mitigation. Promote energy-efficient, climate-resilient housing.**	Short-Term	PZ, ES

Housing Resources:

- Minnesota Department of Commerce: Energy Loan Plus, Weatherization Assistance Program
- Minnesota Housing: Fix Up Loan Program, Greater MN Housing Infrastructure Grants, Local Housing Trust Fund Grants, Statewide Affordable Housing Aid (SAHA/LAHA), Tier II Housing Aid Grants, Multifamily RFPs- Senior Housing Support (via MN DHS), Accessibility Grants
- National Housing Trust Fund
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA): Section 504 Home Repair Loans & Grants, Rural Housing Site Loans, Rural Rental Assistance, Rural Disaster Home Repair Grants
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): Housing Preservation Grants, Housing Choice Vouchers, HOME Program, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), Section 202 & 811 (senior/disabled housing), Disaster Recovery Grants, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- US Department of Energy (DOE): Weatherization Assistance Program

Facilities and Infrastructure

Number	Goal/Strategy	Priority	Leaders
5.1	**Maintain and Modernize County Infrastructure**	Mid-Term	HWY, ES, JP
5.1.1	Ensure safe, efficient transportation and utility systems through year-round maintenance, strategic upgrades, and capital investment in roads, bridges, drainage systems, and sewer districts.	Short-Term	HWY, ES, JP
5.2	**Protect Public Health and the Environment**	Mid-Term	ES, PH, SWCD, JP
5.2.1	Promote environmental stewardship and land use balance through zoning, septic and feedlot regulation, water resource management, and invasive species control.	Short-Term	ES, PH, SWCD, JP
5.2.2	Promote responsible waste management by supporting waste reduction, recycling, resource recovery, and proper disposal practices.	Short-Term	ES, PH, SWCD, JP
5.3	**Ensure Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness**	Short-Term	EM, SH
5.3.1	Provide comprehensive law enforcement, emergency response, and disaster mitigation services, especially in unincorporated areas, through coordinated efforts across departments and jurisdictions.	Short-Term	EM, SH
5.4	**Deliver Accessible Administrative and Civic Services**	Long-Term	AD
5.4.1	Support residents and municipalities with reliable property assessment, licensing, elections, court services, and youth programs to uphold transparency, equity, and civic engagement.	Mid-Term	AD
Resiliency	**Maintain emergency shelters. Ensure backup power and communication for critical facilities.**	Long-Term	EM, SH

Facilities and Infrastructure Resources:

- Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR): Clean Water Grant Funds Minnesota Department of Administration: Capital Projects Grants-in-Aid, Local Government Grants
- Minnesota Department of Commerce: Energy Resilience Grants, Weatherization Assistance Program
- Minnesota Department of Education: Library and Civic Facility Grants
- Minnesota Department of Health: Emergency Preparedness Grants, Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program, Drinking Water Revolving Fund, Environmental Health Grants
- Minnesota Department of Public Safety: Emergency Management Performance Grants
- Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT): Local Road Improvement Program, Bridge Bonding, Transportation Alternatives Program, Safe Routes to School Grants
- Minnesota Housing: Greater MN Housing Infrastructure Grants
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): Wastewater, stormwater, organics management, and climate resilience grants
- Minnesota Public Facilities Authority (MPFA): Clean Water Revolving Fund, Drinking Water Revolving Fund, Water Infrastructure Fund, Point Source Implementation Grants, Transportation Revolving Loan Fund

- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): State Revolving Funds (SRF): Clean Water, Drinking Water
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): Pre-Disaster Mitigation and Emergency Management Grants, Hazard Mitigation Grants
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA): National Highway Performance, Surface Transportation Block Grant, Bridge Investment Program, Rural Surface Transportation Grant
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development: Community Facilities Grants, CDBG Public Facilities Grants, Water & Waste Disposal Loans/Grants, Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program

Transportation

Number	Goal/Strategy	Priority	Leaders
6.1	**Enhance Safety and Accessibility for All Users**	Long-Term	HWY
6.1.1	Improve roadway and intersection safety through targeted upgrades, crash data analysis, and design standards that support users of all ages, abilities, and travel modes.	Mid-Term	HWY
6.2	**Maintain and Modernize County Infrastructure**	Mid-Term	HWY, JP
6.2.1	Sustain and upgrade the county's transportation assets—including roads, bridges, and drainage systems—through proactive maintenance, strategic investment, and coordination with MnDOT and local partners.	Short-Term	HWY, JP
6.3	**Support Multi-Modal Mobility and Connectivity**	Long-Term	HWY, PK
6.3.1	Promote a transportation network that accommodates walking, biking, transit, and freight, ensuring seamless connections between residential, commercial, and recreational destinations.	Long-Term	HWY, PK
6.4	**Align Transportation Planning with Land Use and Growth**	Mid-Term	HWY, PZ
6.4.1	Coordinate transportation improvements with land use planning to support efficient development, preserve rural character, and ensure long-term mobility across incorporated and unincorporated areas.	Short-Term	HWY, PZ
Resiliency	**Design infrastructure for winter durability and reduced salt use. Improve drainage to manage meltwater and prevent icing.**	Long-Term	HWY, PZ, ES

Transportation Resources:

- Minnesota Department of Administration: Local Government Planning Grants
- Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT): Local Road Improvement Program, Transportation Alternatives Program, Safe Routes to School Grants, Bridge Bonding, Greater Minnesota Transit Assistance, Winter Maintenance Innovation Grants
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): Climate Resilience Grants
- Minnesota Public Facilities Authority (MPFA): Transportation Revolving Loan Fund

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA): Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), Bridge Investment Program, Rural Surface Transportation Grant, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program, Planning and Research Grants
- US Department of Transportation (USDOT): Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grants, Integrated Planning Grants

Natural Resources

Number	Goal/Strategy	Priority	Leaders
7.1	**Improve & Protect Water Resources**	Short-Term	ES, SWCD, JP
7.1.1	Support watershed-based plan efforts to improve and protect surface and groundwater resources.	Short-Term	ES, SWCD, JP
7.2	**Preserve & Restore Ecosystems**	Short-Term	ES, SWCD, JP
7.2.1	Ensure compliance with laws protecting native vegetation, wetlands, and wildlife habitats, including required management of invasive species.	Short-Term	ES, SWCD, JP
7.2.2	Support and collaborate with willing landowners to conserve native vegetation, restore wetlands, enhance wildlife habitat, and proactively manage invasive species beyond statutory minimums.	Short-Term	ES, SWCD, JP
7.3	**Promote Land Use Best Management Practices**	Short-Term	ES, PZ, SWCD, JP
7.3.1	Encourage soil health and reduce erosion and runoff through best management practices.	Short-Term	ES, PZ, SWCD, JP
7.3.2	Evaluate the county's existing soil-loss authority to determine its scope, effectiveness, and potential updates needed to better protect soil health and reduce erosion across the landscape.	Short-Term	ES, PZ
7.3.3	Explore the county's authority and potential solutions for managing urban and rural drainage, including their impacts on the countywide drainage system.	Short-Term	ES, PZ
7.3.4	Minimize the risk of damage to human life and property from flooding by working with willing local stakeholders to promote a standardized approach to flood mitigation efforts.	Short-Term	ES, PZ, SWCD
7.4	**Minimize Pollution**	Long-Term	ES, PZ, SWCD, JP
7.4.1	Reduce pollutants, including but not limited to nitrates, phosphorus, sediment, Escherichia coli (E.coli), and Chloride, through improved land management practices.	Mid-Term	ES, PZ, SWCD, JP
7.4.2	Promote best management practices that protect public health such as but not limited to well sealings and septic upgrades.	Mid-Term	ES, PZ, SWCD, JP
7.5	**Enhance Public Access & Stewardship**	Long-Term	ES, PK
7.5.1	Support and partner with local, state, and federal stakeholders to improve and expand outdoor recreational opportunities.	Mid-Term	ES, SWCD, HWY, PK
7.5.2	Develop and strengthen community engagement in environmental stewardship.	Mid-Term	ES, SWCD, JP
Resiliency	**Protect natural systems and public health by conserving water resources, preserving ecosystems, and promoting best practice land use and pollution reduction.**	Short-Term	ES, PZ, SWCD, JP, PH

Natural Resource Resources:

- Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR): Clean Water Fund Grants, Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program, Soil Health Grants, Buffer Law Implementation Grants, Conservation Easement Programs

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): Conservation Partners Legacy Grants, Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid, Parks and Trails Legacy Grants, Outdoor Recreation Grants, Wildlife Management Area Grants
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): Surface Water Assessment Grants, Water Quality Monitoring Grants, Chloride Reduction Grants, Wastewater & Stormwater Grants, Climate Resilience Grants
- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): Clean Water and Drinking Water Funds, Nonpoint Source Pollution Grants
- National Park Service: Land and Water Conservation Fund
- US Fish & Wildlife Service: Wetland Conservation Grants, Wildlife Restoration Grants, National Wildlife Refuge System Grants
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA): Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wetlands Reserve Program, Water & Waste Disposal Grants, Solid Waste Management Grants

Resiliency

Number	Goal/Strategy	Priority	Leaders
8.1	**Adaptive Capacity & Hazard Mitigation**	Short-Term	ES, PZ, SWCD, JP
8.1.1	Improve flood resilience through updated mapping, zoning, and infrastructure, and encourage flood proofing practices.	Long-Term	ES, PZ, SWCD, JP
8.1.2	Support emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation for natural disasters.	Short-Term	ES, EM

Resiliency Resources:

- Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR): Clean Water Fund Grants, Buffer Law Implementation Grants
- Minnesota Department of Commerce: Energy Resilience Grants, Weatherization Assistance Program
- Minnesota Department of Health: Emergency Preparedness Grants
- Minnesota Department of Public Safety: Emergency Management Performance Grants, Homeland Security Grants
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): Floodplain Management Grants
- Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT): Winter Maintenance Innovation Grants
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): Climate Resilience Grants, Wastewater & Stormwater Grants
- Minnesota Public Facilities Authority (MPFA): Infrastructure Resilience Funding

- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) State Revolving Funds (SRF): Clean Water, Drinking Water
- Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA): Hazard Mitigation Grants, National Flood Insurance Program, Pre-Disaster Mitigation and Emergency Management Grants
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): Disaster Recovery Grants
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA): Community Facilities Grants

Land Use

Number	Goal/Strategy	Priority	Leaders
9.1	**Preserve agricultural land while accommodating growth**	Short-Term	ES, PZ
9.1.1	Consider additional Agricultural Districts with strict density limits and transferable development rights to preserve large tracts of land for farming purposes.	Short-Term	PZ
9.1.2	Encourage clustered rural residential development to minimize land fragmentation.	Mid-Term	PZ
9.1.3	Protect riparian corridors, wetlands, and bluff areas and other sensitive features.	Short-Term	PZ, ES
9.2	**Promote reasonable development practices**	Short-Term	PZ
9.2.1	Create Highway Business areas along critical transportation routes.	Mid-Term	PZ, HWY
9.3	**Ensure fiscal responsibility through coordinated growth**	Long-Term	PZ, AD
9.3.1	Direct growth toward areas with existing infrastructure and services, prioritizing development outside of the designated Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB), until adequate utilities are in place, in order to optimize public investments through joint planning coordination between county and cities.	Mid-Term	PZ, CT
9.3.2	Work with cities and townships to draft orderly annexation agreements in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Section 462.3535, Subdivision 5 with adjacent cities for development in UGBs to align standards for density, roads, stormwater, and utilities, reducing future conflicts between county vs. city standards of development and investments.	Mid-Term	PZ, CT
9.3.3	Encourage new development that strengthens and diversifies the County tax base.	Mid-Term	PZ, CT
9.3.4	Ensure long-term availability of essential aggregate resources by guiding land use decisions that prevent incompatible development, minimize resource loss, and support responsible extraction.	Long-Term	PZ
Resiliency	**Guide development away from floodplains using updated maps. Encourage infill development to reduce environmental impact.**	Short-Term	PZ, ES

Land Use Resources:

- Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR): Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program, Conservation Easement Programs, Buffer Law Implementation Grants, Clean Water Fund Grants
- Minnesota Department of Administration: Local Government Planning Grants
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Land Preservation Grants
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): Floodplain Management Grants
- Minnesota Public Facilities Authority (MPFA): Infrastructure Planning Grants

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): Climate Resilience Grants, Stormwater Management Grants

- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): Smart Growth Implementation Assistance, State Revolving Funds (SRF) Clean Water, Drinking Water
- Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA): National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)
- US Department of Housing and Economic Development (HUD): Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Disaster Recovery Grants
- US Fish & Wildlife Service: Wetland Conservation Grants
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA): Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wetlands Reserve Program, Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Community Facilities Grants

APPENDIX A | PUBLIC COMMENTS