

2030 City of Albany Comprehensive Plan

Table of Contents - Adopted May 3, 2006

	<u>Page</u>
Plan Participants	2
1.0 Introduction	3
1.1 Location	3
1.2 Historical Context	3
2.0 Existing Conditions	5
2.1 Natural/Environmental Features	5
2.11 Soils	5
2.12 Topography	5
2.13 Surface Water/Wetlands	9
2.14 Vegetation	9
2.15 Hazardous and Solid Waste Mgmt	9
2.16 Summary	12
2.2 Public Systems	12
2.21 Water Distribution System	12
2.22 Storm/Surface Water	12
2.23 Wastewater System	16
2.24 Transportation System	16
2.3 Community Facilities	18
2.4 Existing Development	18
3.0 Goals and Objectives	21
3.1 Community Participation and Analysis	21
3.2 Goals and Objectives	22
4.0 Economic Base Trends and Characteristics	
4.1 Background and Focus	26
4.2 Overall Economic Trends	26
4.3 Labor Force Education	27
4.4 Labor Force Participation	28
4.5 Employment Base	29
4.6 Retail Trends	31
4.7 Policy Implications	31
5.0 Population, Housing and Household Trends and Characteristics	33
5.1 Historical Context	33
5.2 Population Growth	33
5.3 Housing Growth	34
5.4 Value of New Housing	36
5.5 Housing Diversity	37

5.6 Household Size	37
5.7 Age Distribution	38
5.8 School Enrollment	39
5.9 Household Income	41
6.0 Projections	42
6.1 Population and Household Projection	42
6.2 Employment Projections	45
7.0 Development Framework	47
7.1 Overview	47
7.2 Annexation	48
7.3 Future Land Use Plan	48
7.4 Suitability of Soils for Building site development	49
7.5 Land Consumption Projections	51
7.6 Land Use Allocation	52
8.0 Summary	53
8.1 Overview	53
8.2 Public Systems	53
8.3 Community Facilities	53
8.4 Transportation System	54
8.5 Utilities and Surface Water Management	55
8.6 Plan Summary	55

LIST OF FIGURES

	<u>Page</u>
Figure 1- Soil Suitability for Building Site Dev	7
Figure 2- Topographic Map	8
Figure 3- Wetlands Map	11
Figure 4- Water System	14
Figure 5- Storm Sewer System	15
Figure 6- Sanitary Sewer System	17
Figure 7- City Facilities	19
Figure 8- Aerial Photo	20
Figure 9- Future Land Use Plan	50

LIST OF TABLES

	<u>Page</u>
Table 1- Educational Attainment	27
Table 2- Albany Labor Force Participation 1990-2000	28
Table 3- Employment Industry- Albany 2000	29
Table 4- Albany Major Employers	30
Table 5- Retail Sales	31
Table 6- Population/Household Historical Trends	34
Table 7- City of Albany Housing Units	35
Table 8- New Residential Construction Value 2000-04	36
Table 9- Average New Residential Unit Values 2000-04	36
Table 10- Household Size Trends	37
Table 11- 2000 Population Age Distribution	39
Table 12- Educational Enrollment Albany/Avon Schools	40
Table 13- Annual Household Income 1989 - 1999	41
Table 14- City of Albany Population & Household Proj.	44
Table 15- Population and Household Projections	45
Table 16- Albany Projections 1980-2030	46
Table 17- Suitable Land in 2030 Growth Area in acres	51
Table 18- Land Consumption Projections in acres	51

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

CITY OF ALBANY ALBANY, MINNESOTA

Adopted: May 3, 2006

PLAN PARTICIPANTS

Albany City Council: Mayor Jamie Thelen, Councilors Dennis Sand, James Beuning, Geri Schiffler, and John Greer

Planning Commission: John Harlander, Joseph Gilk, Todd Horton, Will Seiler, John Greer

Albany Township: Tim Nierenhausen, Paul Luethmers, Jeff Schwinghammer

Albany Clerk-Administrator: Tom Schneider

Consulting Assistance: Dave Hagen, Loucks Associates

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 LOCATION

The City of Albany with 1796 residents as of 2000 is located in the heart of Stearns County, Minnesota. The City's central geographic location, by circumstance or coincidence, followed from its early beginnings. Homesteaded in 1862 by John Schwinghammer Sr. just easterly of the current city center at what was called the Two River Settlement, the settlement became a half way stop for pioneer travelers along the Red River Trail.

In the big picture, Albany is nearly the midway point of Interstate 94 as it connects Billings, Montana and Chicago. Located eighteen miles west of the expanding St. Cloud metropolitan area and eighty miles from the Twin Cities metropolitan area, its geographic location continues to be noted. The Wurman US Atlas, for example, includes Albany as only seven identified cities on I-94 between the Twin Cities and Fargo-Moorhead. State Highway 238 originates in Albany and connects the region to the north. County Roads 10, 41, 54, and 157 also provide local area accessibility.

Host Stearns County was home to 133,166 people in 2000 and had 65,918 jobs in 2003. The County has continued to grow based on the central Minnesota economic base and proximity to the Twin Cities economic center as the nation's sixteenth largest metropolitan area. On the micro scale, this agricultural community was a Great Northern Railroad water stop west of Avon and east of Freeport. The steam engine has moved into history and Burlington Northern and Soo Line rail companies discontinued service to and through the City, now known as the Lake Wobegon Regional Trail. The areas northwest and southeast of Albany provide opportunities for some of Minnesota's famed freshwater fishing.

1.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As noted above, for his own reasons, John Schwinghammer Sr. laid claim to the Two River Settlement in 1862 and was followed by the Obermiller and Platz's beginning another central Minnesota, German influenced settlement. Whether the site was selected because that was as far as he could travel is not clear, but it is clear that the location served as a halfway house for travelers and traders along the Red River Trail.

What was an early settlement without a spiritual foundation? Within six years the now Catholic Church of Seven Dolores was founded and serves today as the architectural, spiritual and social cornerstone of the community. Yes, there are Lutherans too! After ten years, the settlement was relocated westerly to the present City site and renamed Albany. Its village status, attained in its 1890 incorporation, was changed to City by state law. The opening of the Great Northern Railroad in 1871 reinforced Albany's hospitality and economic role as it served as one of those every seven mile water and fuel depots to keep the steam engines rolling. The church moved to be by the railroad depot and erected a new church on the present site in 1872.

The published historical event log is filled with accounts of local baseball, church activities, and fires that shaped early community life. The big announcement in 1913 was of plans to build a 500-seat ballpark. Seven Dolores Church did not escape fire, but the present church was dedicated in 1900 on

its commanding site, expanded in 1931 and renovated in the 1970's and 80's. The parochial school opened in 1886 and the Holy Family School continues to provide K-6 schooling today. Organization of the Albany Cooperative Creamery Association in 1922 and dedication of the milk drying plant in 1936 reinforced the agricultural economic base of the City.

The City's public development can be traced by its infrastructure investment decisions. The public water system was approved in 1928, the sewage treatment plant approved in 1941 balloting, and land acquired for a new disposal system in 1953 with dedication and opening of the waste water treatment plant in 1986 and its subsequent expansion. Sewer and water extensions to the west end were approved in 1955. A water treatment plant will be constructed northwest of the City in 2006.

Albany High School moved into then new quarters in 1937 and to the current campus in the 1970's. Now a branch of the Great River Regional Library System, the library opened in a portion of the new City Hall complex in 1999.

Organizationally, it is noteworthy that the Albany Golf Club was organized in 1930. That early interest and organization set the stage for the 18-hole, public golf course that also accommodates the flood plain and provides an outstanding resource and visual setting for the City and adjacent developing properties. Police patrol was established in 1960 primarily to improve traffic flow. In 1968, voters adopted the present statutory Plan A form of local government. (Mayor and Council Members). The Economic Development Authority and Albany Township have provided guidance for comprehensive planning and economic development.

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.0 CONTEXT

A summary of existing conditions provides an overview catalogue of the significant in-place systems and development factors influencing the future growth of Albany. This chapter examines natural and environmental features, base line demographics, public infrastructure and systems, development patterns and trends.

As of 2000, 1796 people call Albany home, occupying 732 housing units. The City encompasses approximately 840 acres. The City has eight full time and 42 part time employees and an annual operating budget of more than \$1.1 million. Services include police, fire, public works, libraries, parks, zoning administration, finance and general administration.

2.1 NATURAL / ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Environmental features such as geology, soils, topography, hydrology, wildlife and vegetation define the area and provide the framework for urban development. Environmental features are unique because, for the most part, their geographical location is fixed. This section looks at some of those governing factors.

2.11 Soils

Albany is part of a glacial moraine area that lies in a large swale overlaid with loamy deposits. Three predominant soil deposits are found in the immediate expansion area, Waukon, Gonvick and Cordova loam. These loams are characteristically higher water content soils, supporting agricultural uses and woodlands. The soils support building development but require varying degrees of protection for soil movement from freeze/thaw cycles. The Cordova loam is found in pockets and drainage ways and constitutes probably wetlands. Some of these probable wetlands are depicted on the wetlands map. On site sanitary systems are more difficult in these soils that favor urban expansion only with public sewer and water.

The Soil and Water Resource Conservation Service has prepared a soils inventory for Stearns County that provides baseline data for a number of natural systems. Figure 1 shows the suitability of soils in the 2030 growth area for building site development. Generally with the exception of notable pockets, the crescent of land surrounding the developed City north of the interstate is well suited for urban development and less suitable for rural or suburban non-sewered home sites. A band of soils not suitable for building sites without investment in remediation runs east and southwest from a point on I-94 one-half mile southeast of the interchange. Erosion remains a concern on steeper slopes and as a result of active cultivation in the areas immediately surrounding the City.

2.12 Topography

Figure 2 is a map of area topography at 10-foot contours grouped in 50-foot intervals to illustrate the area pattern. The northwest and northeast sectors have the highest elevations at 1285' above sea level dropping to 1130' as the watercourse exits the area on the east to continue its path to South Two

River.

Central Albany is reasonably level with a southwest slope from North Lake. The City slopes upward to the higher ground plateau in the northwest. The land to the east is rolling, rising a hundred feet above downtown. North Lake has an elevation of 1,187 feet above sea level.

The areas of steeper slope and erosion potential are those areas where the contour intervals lines are close together. The topography also provides some positive building sites and locations. The topography generally carries surface water drainage in the immediate area in a horseshoe pattern starting in the northwest and wrapping around the City and proceeding northeast.

Perhaps most notable is the topography's impact on approaching the City from Interstate 94. The City, church, nursing home, golf course and expanding housing strike an imposing view overlooking the interstate travel corridor. The lowest lying land around the City coincides with the band of land running southwest and east from I-94 that is not well suited for building site development.

Figure 1- Soil Suitability for Building Site Development is bound behind narrative portion of Comprehensive Plan.

Figure 2- Topographic Map is bound behind narrative portion of Comprehensive Plan.

2.13 Surface Water/Wetlands

The definitive relationship between specific wetlands and aquifer recharge is still being developed, although the interrelatedness of surface and ground water is well established. Drainage is a significant issue in the Albany area. Because surface water runoff is a system where the problems often show up miles from the origin, it is often difficult to draw attention to the problem and establish consensus solutions.

Wetlands moderate drainage flow, remove pollutants, support wildlife habitat, and add to property values. State and federal regulations have been enacted or stepped up to protect these resources. State regulations require that the rate of runoff from developments that disrupt over one acre of area retain pre-development runoff rates. The Wetland Conservation Act is administered by Stearns County throughout the County, including Albany. Any parcel-by-parcel solution to surface water management runs the risk of falling more heavily on one parcel than another. An alternative is an overall drainage management plan encompassing all parcels along with financing mechanisms and policies. The City of Albany has adopted a Storm Water Management Plan.

Albany lies in the South Two River drainage area. North Lake and central Albany are located in the major drainage swale where run-off from adjacent areas deposits. In fact, North Lake and adjacent wetlands represent the dividing point where surface water runs northwest and southeast to join South Two River. The lake and drainage courses are and could be expanded to be major contributors to the City's open space and resource management efforts. The lake, because of shoreline conditions and water quality issues, remains an underutilized asset. The watercourse through the golf course enhances that recreational asset and provides for high water overflow holding capacity. All new development in the west end of the City and adjacent township area immediately adds to the current surface drainage flow in that area.

The soils and wetland mapping for the area reflects the areas where water and wetland areas exist. The National Wetland Inventory prepared by the U.S. Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service identified general wetlands as illustrated in the accompanying Figure 3. The surrounding wetlands, topography and soils provide a framework for solving today's and tomorrow's water management problems. There are some wetlands within current City boundaries. North Lake and the major drainage course are the primary concerns and opportunities.

2.14 Vegetation

Protection of areas with extensive existing vegetation is not a significant factor as a result of the cultivation that has occurred in the area. The result is a need to organize development opportunities and community features around surface water and surface water management areas to provide for natural and recreational corridors and amenities. Erosion control remains an important consideration. Soils are suitable for restoration of woodlands.

2.15 Hazardous and Solid Waste Management

Hazardous waste, solid waste reuse, recycling and disposal plans have been prepared by Stearns County. As noted, the county will also be the responsible

local government unit (RGU) in assuring positive surface water management and wetland conservation.

Figure 3- Wetlands Map is bound behind narrative portion of Comprehensive Plan.

2.16 Summary

Natural resources protection helps guide urban development, reduce future costs, and provide amenities for site and community life. Along with economic and infrastructure investments, the natural resources shape the community. Good soils, moderate slopes, minimal wetlands, and responsible development practices suggests new urban development in accord with the natural resource base would be directed contiguously in all directions except southwesterly and easterly from a point on the Interstate about one-half mile southeast of the interchange.

2.2 PUBLIC SYSTEMS

Existing public systems also give form to the community and guide its effective expansion. The natural systems described above suggest certain directions. The public systems to be considered include:

- Water Distribution System
- Storm/Surface Water System
- Sanitary Sewer System
- Transportation System
- Community Facilities and Open Space System

2.21 Water Distribution System

Four wells and one water tower provide public water for the community. Three of these well have recently been constructed and replace three older wells that have been taken out of production. A water treatment plant to remove arsenic, iron and manganese will be constructed by the City in 2006. This plant will have the capacity to process 2 million gallons of water per day initially and will have the expansion capacity for a total of 4 million gallons per day.

The 250,000 gallon elevated storage tank is located on 13th Street in the Industrial Park. The water system provides looped service in most instances, but several stubs exist in anticipation of expansion of the City or as the result of street patterns and existing utility easements. The water system has the capability of pumping 2,200 gallons/minute. The coverage of the water system and improvements that are part of the plan are illustrated in Figure 4.

2.22 Storm/Surface Water

Storm water management is one of the critical issues facing the City. The City's storm system consists of unofficial wetlands, North Lake, drainage courses, judicial ditches, roadway ditches, and storm sewers. The formal storm sewer system is depicted in Figure 5 that also includes a storm water improvement plan to correct drainage problems. The South Two River Watershed District has prepared plans for the multiple sub-watersheds within their jurisdiction.

The lack of an extensive storm drainage system, the unusual topography and historical development practices create surface water management challenges. The City does not have flood prone areas and is exempt from the HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development) and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Act) flood area delineation program. Minnesota DNR (Department of

Natural Resources) similarly classifies the City as not having flood plain areas. Flooding concerns as used in the context of this plan, then, are surface water problems resulting from water flow on private property, temporary ponding in streets and yards, and occasionally wet basements.

North Lake is the watershed lake literally contributing flows in two directions. Project 893 involved construction of a 5-acre retention pond north of the Soo Line Railroad embankment to control the rate of runoff. Site or area-wide surface water detention facilities deserve consideration as development occurs with the objective of detaining water flows to prevent flooding and to convey water in open courses to the extent possible. Any development northwest should be constructed with water detention ponds in mind. As noted in the wetlands sections, development involving more than one acre requires detention facilities. The City can limit run-off on a parcel-by-parcel basis or as a part of a broader surface water management strategy.

Figure 4- Water System is bound behind narrative portion of Comprehensive Plan.

Figure 5- Storm Sewer System is bound behind narrative portion of Comprehensive Plan.

2.23 Wastewater System

The City dedicated its expanded and upgraded wastewater treatment plant in 1986. It is designed to accommodate additional development as well as additional wet industries. The treatment facility and wastewater ponds are located south of I-94 at Orchard Road and County Highway 41. All development within the City except for a half dozen homes is served by the system. Three lift stations connect areas unable to be served by gravity. General extension of trunk lines northeast and northwest are possible to serve expanded development. The existing system is depicted in Figure 6.

2.24 Transportation System

The transportation system consists mainly of local streets, township roads, county roads and state highways. The Soo Line Railroad, now under ownership of the St. Cloud Regional Railroad Authority, running southwest by northeast through the City has been abandoned and developed into the Lake Wobegon Regional Trail. Likewise the Burlington Northern line has been abandoned and retained by the State of Minnesota for Lake Wobegon Regional Trail use by the Stearns County Park Department, placement of utilities and a possible light rail transit corridor to St. Cloud in the distant future.

The street and highway component of the transportation system actually consists of two systems:

- Jurisdictional System (who constructs and maintains)
- Functional System (who uses)

The first system is established by who is responsible for constructing and maintaining the roadway as follows:

STATE	Interstate	I-94	2.2 miles
	Trunk Highway	TH238	1.9 miles
COUNTY	County State Aid Highway(CSAH)		2.1 miles
	County Road	(CR)	
CITY	Local Streets		20 miles
TOWNSHIP	Township Roads		47 miles

Cities under 5,000 in population presently do not receive state gas tax fund financial support for road construction and maintenance.

Construction of I-94 resulted in reconstruction CR 156 and CSAH 54 to provide continuous parallel access between the crossover grade separations at Albany and Avon. County Highways serving the Albany area include:

CSAH	10	CR	154
CSAH	41	CR	156
CSAH	54	CR	157

The areas west and northwest of the City do not presently have direct arterial roadway access.

Figure 6- Sanitary Sewer System is bound behind narrative portion of Comprehensive Plan.

2.3 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Park, recreation, school and municipal government facilities are discussed in more detail later. Independent School District 745 has schools in Avon and Albany. The senior high school, junior high school and an elementary school are located within the City of Albany. A second elementary school is located in the City of Avon. A financing plan to move the junior high school and elementary school to new facilities adjacent to the senior high was passed by voters in 1994. The Church of Seven Dolors provides private elementary education K-6. The government center contains administrative offices, police, library and council chambers. The fire department is located in the central part of the community. North Park and Albany Golf Course offer major public recreational opportunities. Pioneer Village also provides a special combination of history and recreation. Figure 7 shows the locations of community facilities including parks and utility facilities.

2.4 EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

The pattern of man-made development and the direction of change are important influences on future development objectives. The slow, steady growth of Albany has ramped up significantly since 2000. A limited amount of redevelopment is necessary. Building and housing conditions should be regularly monitored to ward off major redevelopment investments.

The influence and development pattern that resulted from early highway and railway locations has been overshadowed by the construction of Interstate 94 and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the abandonment of the Burlington Northern and Soo Line right-of-ways and their conversion to bike trail use.

The aerial photo in Figure 8 graphically depict the existing development pattern. The golf course, church facilities, Mother of Mercy Nursing Home and residential development dominate the Interstate frontage. A non-residential corridor runs along the old Burlington Northern rail corridor through town hosting the downtown business center, Kraft Foods and anchored by the industrial park on the west and Master Mark Plastics and the Senior High School on the east. The remainder is well maintained residential. North Lake and North Park, the Albany Area Hospital and Pioneer Village provide a north rim of non-residential development. The area south of the City and south of 1-94 provides for wastewater treatment, MnDOT operations, auction facilities and scattered farm sites. Parcels of southeast of the interchange that include the Albany Business and Industrial Park are within the City limits with the remainder being in Albany Township. Albany has generally developed compactly, optimizing provision of public services.

Figure 7- City Facilities is bound behind narrative portion of Comprehensive Plan.

Figure 8- Aerial Photo is bound behind narrative portion of Comprehensive Plan.

3-GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A comprehensive plan is a physical, social and economic guide plan for the future. The goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan help direct the content of the comprehensive plan. The involvement of residents and other stakeholders in the comprehensive planning process gives a plan legitimacy to enable it to serve as the basis for difficult implementation decisions. Residents and stakeholders were involved in formulation of this comprehensive plan-- first becoming informed of existing conditions, characteristics and trends in Albany and then helping to analyze the community. The results of the community analysis process were then used to update the goals and objectives for Albany outlined in this chapter of the comprehensive plan.

3.1 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND ANALYSIS

In November, 2005 twenty persons participated in a community gathering to which the entire community was invited, with each person first recording their observations on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the community. Participants then shared their individual thoughts with a small group as each of the four small groups prepared a poster-sized comprehensive list of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats perceived by individuals. Each group posted their lists on the wall and presented their analyses to a reconvened meeting of all in attendance. After small groups presented their analyses to the reconvened meeting: Attendees voted on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that they felt most critical to the future of Albany.

The consultant facilitating the comprehensive plan update process then consolidated concerns to avoid duplication and tallied votes for the concern. Following are the lists of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as consolidated, with vote tally indicated:

STRENGTHS

12= Good School District
6= Good City services including police and fire protection, streets, sewer, water, storm sewer, city hall/library
6= Housing and commercial industrial growth including development of industrial park; Ag-oriented businesses within City to support and be supported by agriculture
4= Good health care including good hospital and nursing home
3= Strong City leadership
3= Strong sense of pride and sense of community, well-maintained homes, buildings and properties
2= Location in close proximity to St. Cloud
2= Golf course
1= History of City
1= Major roads through City
1= Trail System

WEAKNESSES

- 11= Lack of job opportunities- many commute to St. Cloud
- 6= Beautify main street
- 5= Youth recreation (16 to 18)
- 5= Need another I-94 interchange
- 4= Traffic concerns and spot congestion including amount and speed of traffic on narrow Railroad Ave.
- 2= Handling growth including need for agreement with township on annexation
- 2= Poor (no) ambulance service
- 2= Senior high school is aging and additional educational facilities needed
- 1= Sidewalks not connected including park trails

OPPORTUNITIES

- 5= Expand trail system and capitalize on spin-offs from it
- 4= I-94 related industrial job growth and to a lesser degree residential growth
- 3= Joint planning and promotion efforts with surrounding small towns
- 1= Low real estate taxes
- 1= Technology- i.e. Internet services available- people can telecommute, businesses can flourish

THREATS

- 11= Unplanned and uncontrolled growth and its impact on schools, traffic and future growth and, most importantly, on crime (5)
- 4= Bond levies
- 2= Energy costs- increase in gas prices, people may move closer to their jobs
- 2= Culture diversity
- 2= Retail shopping in St. Cloud for groceries, at Target, etc; Businesses in Albany can't compete
- 1= Large retailers

As noted above, the School District, City services and development around the I-94 interchange were the highest-ranking strengths identified while the lack of job opportunities and the need for main street beautification were high-ranking weaknesses. Expanding the trail system and capitalizing on spin-off was the highest ranking opportunity noted and unplanned and uncontrolled growth and its impact on the school system, traffic, future growth and most importantly, on crime, ranked as the most significant threat.

3.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives, adjusted for findings, feasibility and changing conditions help direct the content of the comprehensive plan which is the physical, social and economic guide plan for the future of Albany. Goals and objectives lead to policies and programs for implementation.

A **goal** is a broad statement of purpose or the general direction for the community. In a trip analogy, a goal is the destination.

An **objective** is a more specific expansion of the goal with some specific targets, time frames and responsibilities. An objective is similar

to the route to the destination. Objectives are often turned directly into policies, which are the adopted approach or direction to be followed.

Finally, programs are the implementing actions, which are taken, consistent with policies, to achieve the desired results.

The goals and objectives set forth in the 1994 Albany Comprehensive Plan were reviewed in light of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified as part of community participation, in the process of preparing this comprehensive plan update and were revised as follows:

A. Goal: Establish Albany as a progressive, highly accessible diverse small city, which encourages visitors, residents, businesses and students.

Objective A1. Maintain a small town sense of pride in appearance and physical condition of the community.

Objective A2. Encourage and support agricultural development and agricultural-oriented business within City.

Objective A3. Establish a cohesive identity through materials, lighting, landscaping and signing.

Objective A4. Encourage and support schools, expansion and improvement to school facilities.

Objective A5. Maintain high quality city services including police and fire protection, streets, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, water and city facilities including city hall/police/library.

Objective A6. Encourage and support high quality health care through hospital and nursing home

B. Goal: Establish an efficient physical development framework, which enhances natural, historical, cultural and environmental features.

Objective B1. Protect and enhance natural amenities.

Objective B2. Provide a range of recreational amenities to all ages.

Objective B3. Protect and enhance wetlands, lakes, streams and drainage courses.

Objective B4. Implement a surface water management plan to reduce flooding and require new development to retain the rate of runoff to protect from future flooding.

Objective B5. Improve the quality of area water bodies by requiring new development to meet National Pollution Discharge Effluent Standards (NPDES) and National Urban Runoff Program (NURP) standards.

Objective B6. Manage solid waste disposal in concert with state and county regulations, emphasizing reuse and recycling.

Objective B7. Create a compact, contiguous and phased development expansion pattern.

Objective B8. Utilize existing capacity before building or extending new capacity.

Objective B9. Continue to emphasize highway commercial, visitor oriented and large-scale industrial uses for development areas.

C. Goal: Retain and attract industry through responsiveness to existing and prospective business needs, marketing to targeted industries and the provision of financing and incentives to expanding businesses.

- Objective C1. Conduct an on-going business retention and expansion program that involves visits to local industry to determine individual business needs, opportunities and concerns.
- Objective C2. Develop and maintain marketing materials for selling Albany to prospective businesses, including a brochure, fact booklet and videotape.
- Objective C3. Develop expertise and assistance sources on all types of business finance programs, including tax increment financing, state, and federal loan programs, private development corporations and investigate the development of a local/county loan fund.
- Objective C4. Market recently developed Albany Business and Industrial Park.

D. Goal: Develop the full potential of the highway interchange area by attracting appropriate commercial development designed to capture additional tourism income.

- Objective D1. Create a recognizable district for attracting freeway travelers and area-destined visitors.
- Objective D2. Package and interpret tourism related information, activities, events and attractions.
- Objective D3. Encourage local businesses to feature local goods and services.

E. Goal: Improve the vitality of the Albany downtown business community through renovation, redesign and joint marketing.

- Objective E1. Examine alternatives and strategies to improve the appearance and design of the downtown, including traffic, parking and the possible removal of overhead utility lines.
- Objective E2. Increase the amount of retail sales, which occur in Albany through marketing and through increasing the diversity of the retail community through local expansion and/or retail recruitment.
- Objective E3. Capitalize on commercial spin-off from Lake Wobegon Regional Trail system.

F. Goal: Encourage the development of all types of new residential housing to provide increased choices for existing and prospective residents.

- Objective F1. Develop a strategy for encouraging residential development by forming an organization consisting of local property owners, realtors, city officials and developers.
- Objective F2. Organize those involved in housing to facilitate development and rehabilitation of a range of housing types, ownership and values.

G. Goal: Establish a cost effective system of public facilities and improvements.

- Objective G1. Establish a hierarchical road system to manage traffic flow and reduce congestion and infiltration into residential neighborhoods.

- Objective G2. Establish a system of parks and public facilities to meet current and future needs.
- Objective G3. Establish interconnected trail system for non-motorized use, connecting commercial areas, public spaces, activity centers and amenities for transportation and as an alternative to automobile travel.
- Objective G4. Extend and improve utilities in a cost effective manner consistent with desired development patterns.
- Objective G5. Provide adequate and appropriately located sites for schools, churches, medical facilities, maintenance, public safety, municipal information, libraries and related public facilities.

H. Goal: Enhance and improve implementation tools.

- Objective H1. Continue to adopt a public improvement investment strategy and program.
- Objective H2. Create incentives for private investment including plan adoption, assessment practices, land acquisition, and improvement assistance.
- Objective H3. Establish planning dialogue with other units of government and consider joint promotion.
- Objective H4. Consummate orderly annexation agreement with Albany Township for orderly development and expansion of urban services/boundaries.

4. ECONOMIC BASE TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS

4.1 BACKGROUND AND FOCUS

The City of Albany is facing the same dilemma as other small communities in the Upper Midwest -how to secure its future when jobs are concentrating in larger communities and mass merchandising is threatening the survival of main street, Railroad Avenue in Albany's case. The new realities that confront small rural communities include migration of young people to urban areas, a decrease of skilled and unskilled labor, declining agribusiness, and the continuing aging of the housing stock and infrastructure.

Albany's location was secured initially as a travel stop. This founding principle still has merit in examining potential economic development strategies. However, Albany's future is related to larger regional trends. Economic growth has been focusing on larger communities. It is also focusing on the major interstate routes, lake and resort country and the metropolitan complex from Rochester to St. Cloud.

Economic forecasts are an input to determining long-range community growth and needs. Albany has established economic development as the core of its long range planning efforts. To that end, a great deal of information has been collected and research conducted on labor force, economic trends and surveys. All of this effort is predicated on the legitimate concern that a healthy community is one which is growing in a controlled and planned manner and providing expanded employment opportunities.

In general, a quarter of the 807 person resident labor force works in Albany while the remainder travel to their jobs elsewhere. Local employment has been stable over the last decade while the regional employment base and local population have grown substantially. Retail business establishments have declined in number similar to other small sized cities. Total retail sales have increased as compared to the past decades but have decreased over the last several years.

The lack of significant growth in the local economic base is the driving concern of the historical efforts undertaken by the City to look at the work force and job market. That concern is projected by the desire to provide a quality home for current and future residents. This concern is placed in the context the majority of Minnesota cities fewer than 5,000 people continue to lose population while those larger communities are stable or growing. Survival, then, is the underpinning goal of a progressive economic strategy based on a position of strength.

4.2 OVERALL ECONOMIC TRENDS

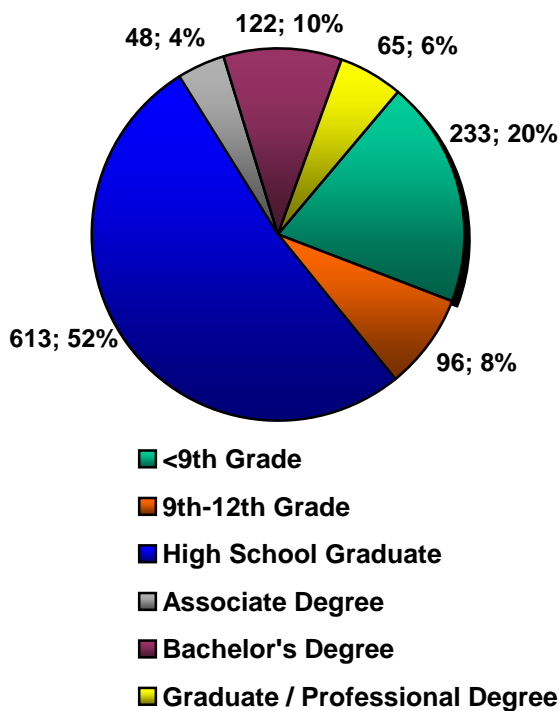
In determining the future economic condition of Albany it is important to define the relationship of the City to Stearns County and surrounding communities. The future of the City of Albany is linked to the fortunes of St. Cloud and Stearns County. As goes the County and St. Cloud so will go the City of Albany. At the present time this linkage works to the advantage of the City of Albany being located in a county that has demonstrated significant growth over the last decade.

Stearns County is a vibrant and growing county that is the economic engine for Central Minnesota. The strength of Stearns County is, to a large degree, attributed to the location of St. Cloud in Stearns and Sherburne County as a regional trade center and the impact this has on Stearns County. The fact that I-94 travels the entire county has some impact as well. But this also provides some interesting opportunities for smaller communities within the county that are looking for direction in their economic growth strategies.

4.3 LABOR FORCE EDUCATION

Current Albany employers and the workforce characteristics also provide insight into potential future economic growth. Albany's population is generally well-educated with 72% having at least a high school education and 16% obtaining at least a four-year post-secondary degree.

Table 1.
Educational Attainment
(Pop. 25yrs and Older)

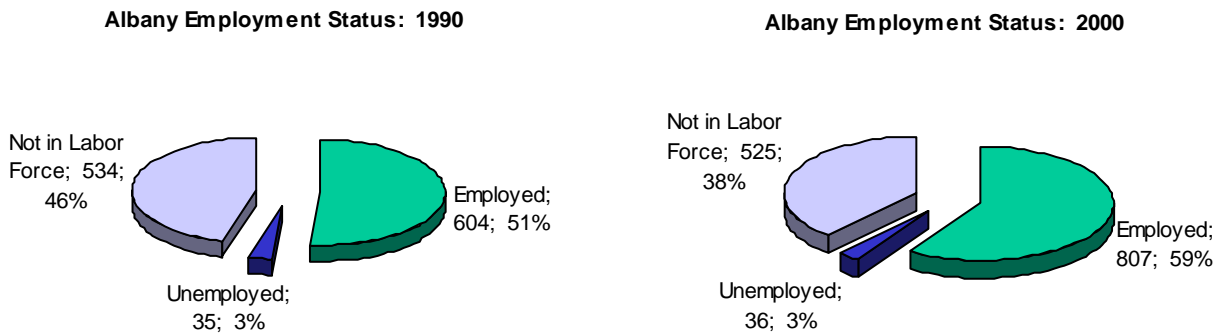


Source: 2000 US Census

4.4 LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

The percent of Albany population over 19 and employed increased markedly from 51% in 1990 to 58% in 2000 while the percentage not employed decreased correspondingly and the percent unemployed remained constant at 3%, as indicated in the table below.

Table 2
Albany Labor Force Participation 1990 and 2000

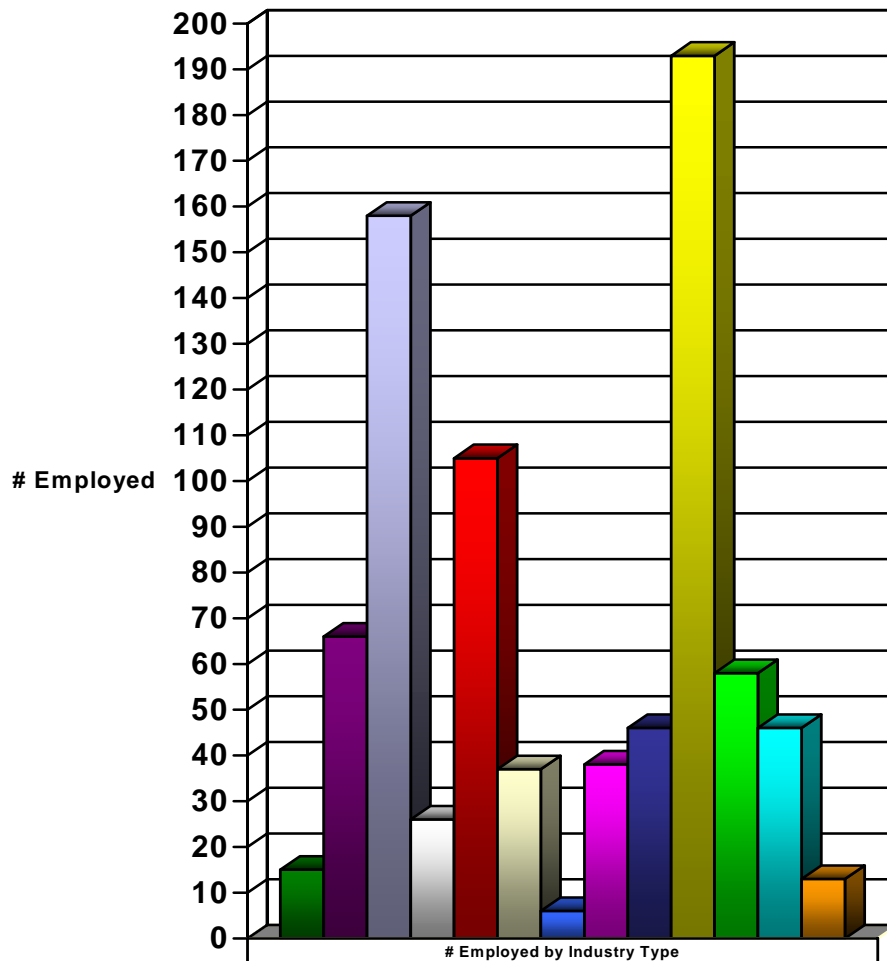


Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

4.5 EMPLOYMENT BASE - Source 2000 U.S. Census

The Education, Health and Social Services industry represented the most significant component of Albany's economic base in 2000 as indicated on the following table. As the table indicates, in 2000 manufacturing was the second largest industry group in Albany's economic base and retail trade was third.

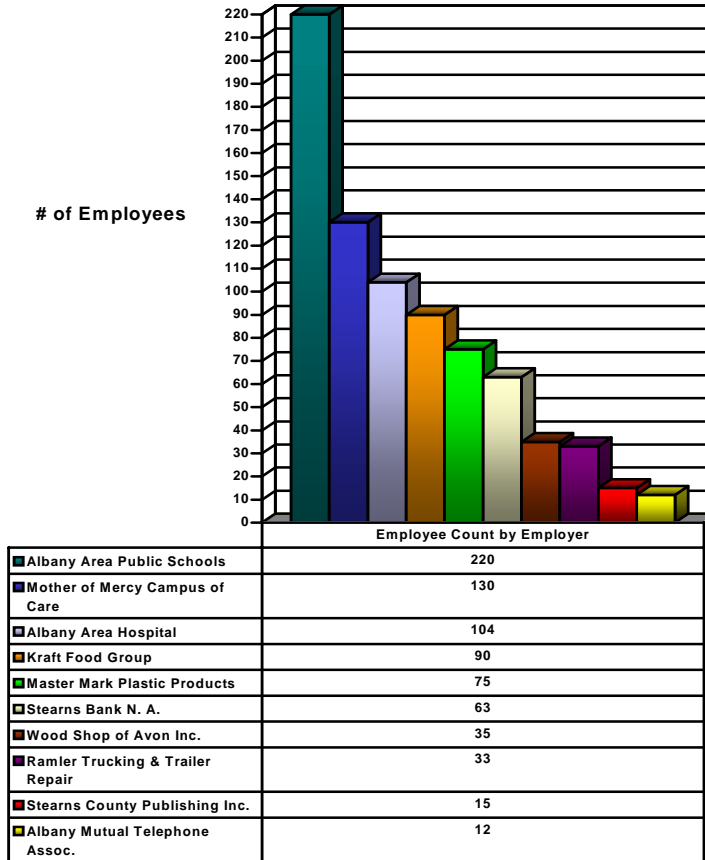
**Table 3
Employment Industry: Albany 2000**



	# Employed by Industry Type
■ Ag, fishing, hunting, mining	15
■ Construction	66
■ Manufacturing	158
■ Wholesale trade	26
■ Retail Trade	105
■ Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	37
■ Information	6
■ Finance, Insurance, Real estate	38
■ Professional, Scientific, Manangement, Administration	46
■ Educational, Health, Social Services	193
■ Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Food Service	58
■ Public Administration	46
■ Other Services	13

The primary employers and the estimated number of employees are shown on the table below. As might be expected from the previous table, Albany Public Schools was the largest employer in the City in 2000 with 220 employees.

**Table 4
Albany Major Employers**



Source: Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

4.6 RETAIL TRENDS

Retail sales both for Stearns County and the City of Albany were up in 2000 over 1998 but down in 2003 compared to 2000 as indicated on the following table. The Minnesota Department of Revenue, the source of information from sales tax records cautioned that changes to reporting categories were made during these years. St. Cloud and Albany categories were consistent in each of these reporting years, however, and Albany's retail trade as a percent of St. Cloud's declined from 5.8% in 1998, to 5.5% in 2000 and to 4.9% in 2003. The difficulty Albany's retailers have in competing against St. Cloud's in this age of mass merchandising is understandably viewed as a threat to Albany's future as expressed in the community analyses.

Table 5

	R	2003	2000	1998
etail Sales				
Albany		\$56,541,601	\$70,733,314	\$64,473,583
St. Cloud		\$1,153,069,430	\$1,282,381,530	\$1,101,148,705
Albany Retail Trade as percent of St. Cloud's		4.9%	5.5%	5.8%

Source: Minnesota Department of Revenue

4.7 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

How business grows, incentives and disincentives that factor into business decision-making is known. In business growth and expansion four things can occur:

1. Existing firm expands (locally, nationally, internationally).
2. Existing business spins off new business (competitive or otherwise).
3. Firm relocates from another location (locally, nationally, internationally).
4. New firms are formed.

Firm expansion, relocation and formation are based on a number of common factors as they relate to public policy initiatives. These include the factors highlighted earlier with emphasis on access to customers, taxes, quality of life, labor costs and availability of labor with the required skills (table 2). Additional factors are germane to Albany's readiness to integrate new business expansion, relocation or new firm generation and are assets that Albany clearly possesses. These include:

- Productive and educated workforce.
- In place employment.
- Regional access and metropolitan proximity.
- High quality living environment.
- In place industrial park.
- Quality infrastructure.
- Organizing helping hand.

- It is important to determine what can be done locally, privately and publicly, and to be ready to accommodate economic expansion while undertaking initiatives within the local resource base.

Strategy elements should be aimed at creating a positive, receptive living and business environment. Areas of specific actions should focus on residents as business starters and relocators and packaging and promoting attractions for residents and visitors. Most of the economic energy will be derived from forces beyond the City's control, proximity to the opportunities for economic expansion over the long haul. Being ready at all times with components of the economic development process that the City controls should be the basic strategy.

5. POPULATION, HOUSING AND HOUSEHOLD TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Monitoring and projecting various population, housing and household characteristics and trends helps define service needs and market opportunities. Examining birth and death trends along with migration patterns and age composition provides a basis for determining recreational and educational needs. Household composition and incomes allow projections for housing needs.

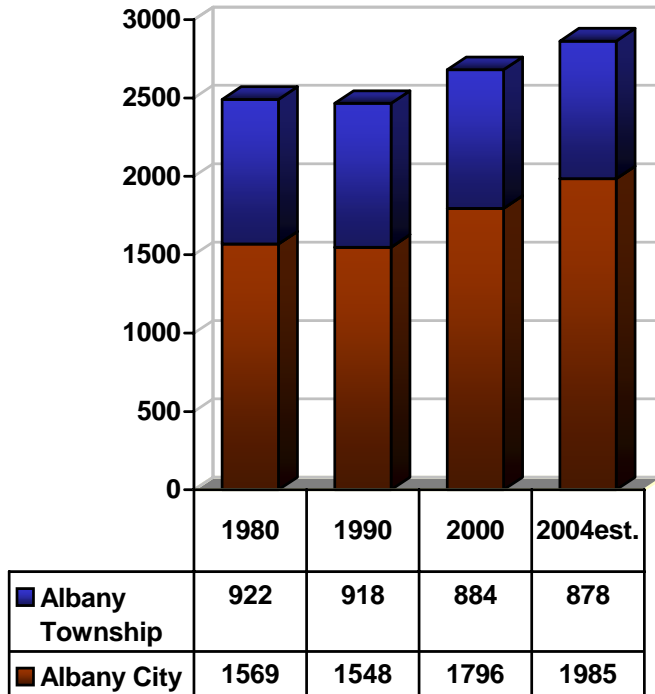
5.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Albany, as has been pointed out, sits astride Interstate 94, in the middle of Albany Township, in the middle of Independent School District 745 (which also includes Avon, Farming, St. Anthony, and a portion of St. Martin), in the middle of Stearns County, in the middle of Minnesota. The City is eighteen miles from St. Cloud and eighty miles from the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The City of Albany annexed a significant portion of Albany Township's residents in the 1940's.

5.2 POPULATION GROWTH

Growth of the Township and City were parallel until 1990 when the City of Albany reached 1,548 residents and Township had 918 dwellers. Population in the City of Albany grew by 16% during the 1990's, reaching 1,796 in 2000, whereas Albany Township population actually declined during that decade by 3.7% to 884. The State of Minnesota Demographer estimates that the City of Albany population was 1,985 in 2004, a 10.5% increase since 2000. It is expected that the City of Albany will continue to grow in the future and that Albany Township will remain stable due to the fact that nearly all new development in the Albany "sub region" will occur where city sewer and water are available. Thus, Albany Township will contribute very little population growth to growth in the Albany "sub region".

**Table 6
Albany & Albany Township Combined
Population / Household Historical Trends 1980-2004**



Source: 1980, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

The major factors in population growth are economic conditions, household size, demographic distribution and historic trends. Albany is at the edge of the St. Cloud economic region that is in the top 20 metropolitan growth rate areas in the country based on 20-year economic expansion projections.

5.3 HOUSING GROWTH

The number of housing units in Albany increased by about 7.0% and 17.5% per decade during the 80's and 90's, respectively and during the 80's population declined slightly as a result of declining household size. An increase in population of 248 was experienced in the 90's, marking a significant departure from the trend of the previous two decades.

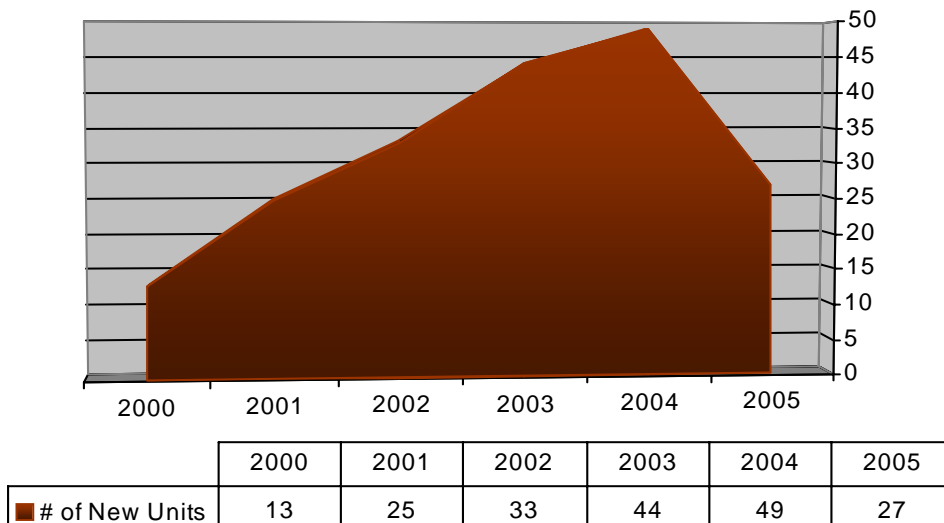
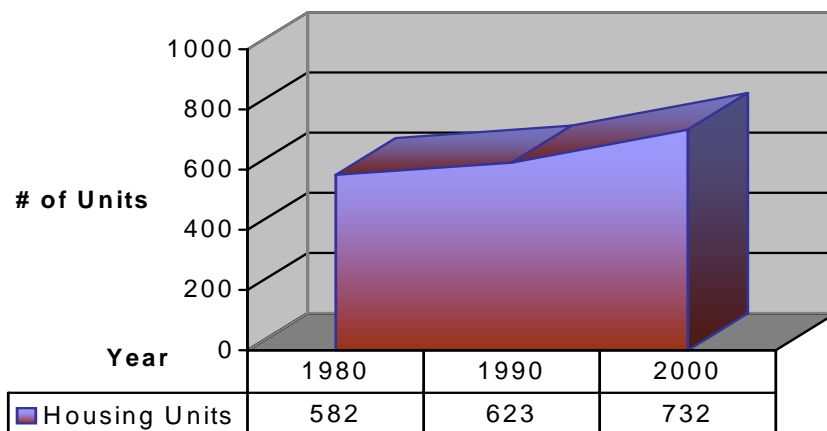
Household count is a function of dwelling unit count and occupancy rate. The number of dwelling units in Albany increased by 41 in the 80's and 109 in the 90's. A total of 191 dwelling units have been added to the housing supply in Albany since 2000, an average of 32 units per year. The occupancy rate has remained constant at about 97% and as a result the number of households has increased significantly.

On the average about 11 new dwelling units per year were added to Albany's housing supply during the 90's, whereas about 4 units per year were added during the 80's. During this decade the rate of growth in housing supply has

increased significantly, averaging 32 units per year. If unit growth continues at the 2000-05 pace for the remainder of this decade an increase in the housing supply of 43% would be realized by 2010. Economic growth in the St. Cloud region, low interest rates on home loans and possibly low gasoline prices have contributed to the increase in dwelling unit production in Albany since 2000. The likelihood of continued economic growth in the region bodes well for Albany's future. While the 90's saw significant increase in population, Albany entered a new era of growth in this decade that is likely to continue into the future despite the uncertainty of interest rates on home loans.

Table 7

City of Albany Housing Units - source: City of Albany Records



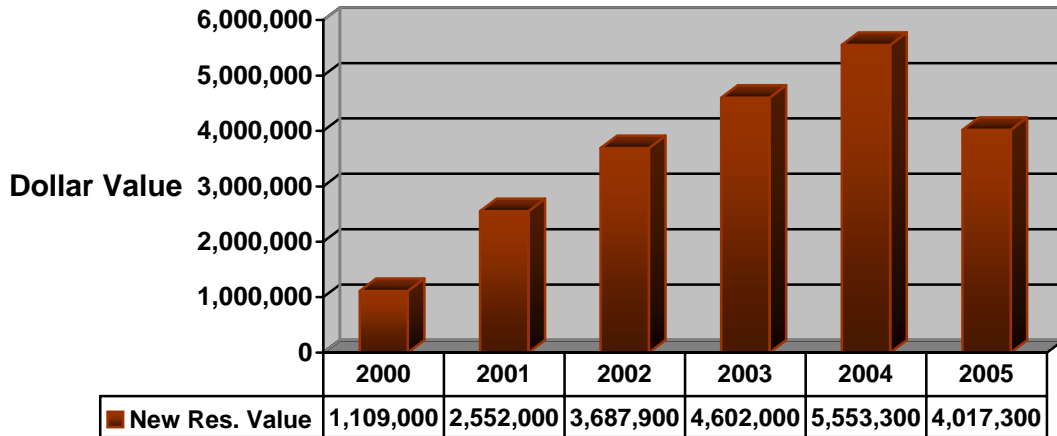
	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2005 (6-yr)
Number of New Units by Decade	41	109	191

5.4

VALUE OF NEW HOUSING

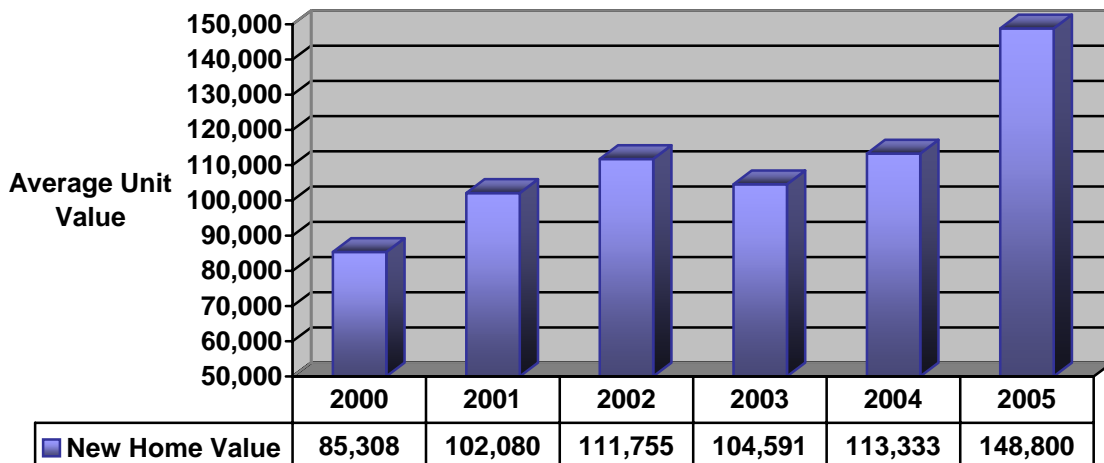
The average value of new home construction has been climbing as shown on the table below and since 2000 has averaged about \$139,000. As shown on the second table below the total value of new construction increased each year from 2000 to 2004 and then declined in 2005 as a result of a drop in new homes constructed.

Table 8
New Residential Construction Value 2000-2005



Source: City of Albany Records

Table 9
Average New Residential Unit Values 2000-2005



Source: City of Albany Records

5.5 HOUSING DIVERSITY

The housing supply and market demand is an ever changing backdrop. The mixture of housing types is important for a city to provide life cycle housing for the various age groups, but as with most communities, single unit housing dominates. Slightly more than a quarter of the housing supply is in multi-unit buildings. Home ownership in Albany is at 70% of the housing supply and is somewhat higher than state norms. The 3% vacancy rate is low indicating that there may be a pent up demand. The significant number and proportion of housing stock over 40 years old requires attention to assure that these homes are modernized to avoid any spreading of deteriorating housing that would impact otherwise strong neighborhoods.

5.6 HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Household size is decreasing as the age structure changes. As urbanization occurs and cities provide more variety of housing types, as well as supported or assisted housing units geared to single person or two-person households. In the 80's some growth in housing units occurred in Albany while population declined. Household size continued to decrease in the 90's, although at a somewhat slower pace than in the 80's and at a much slower pace than in the 70's, partly attributable to the increasing number of single person households.

Albany Township continues to exhibit rural single-family household characteristics.

Table 10
Household Size Trends
Population Per Household 1970-2000

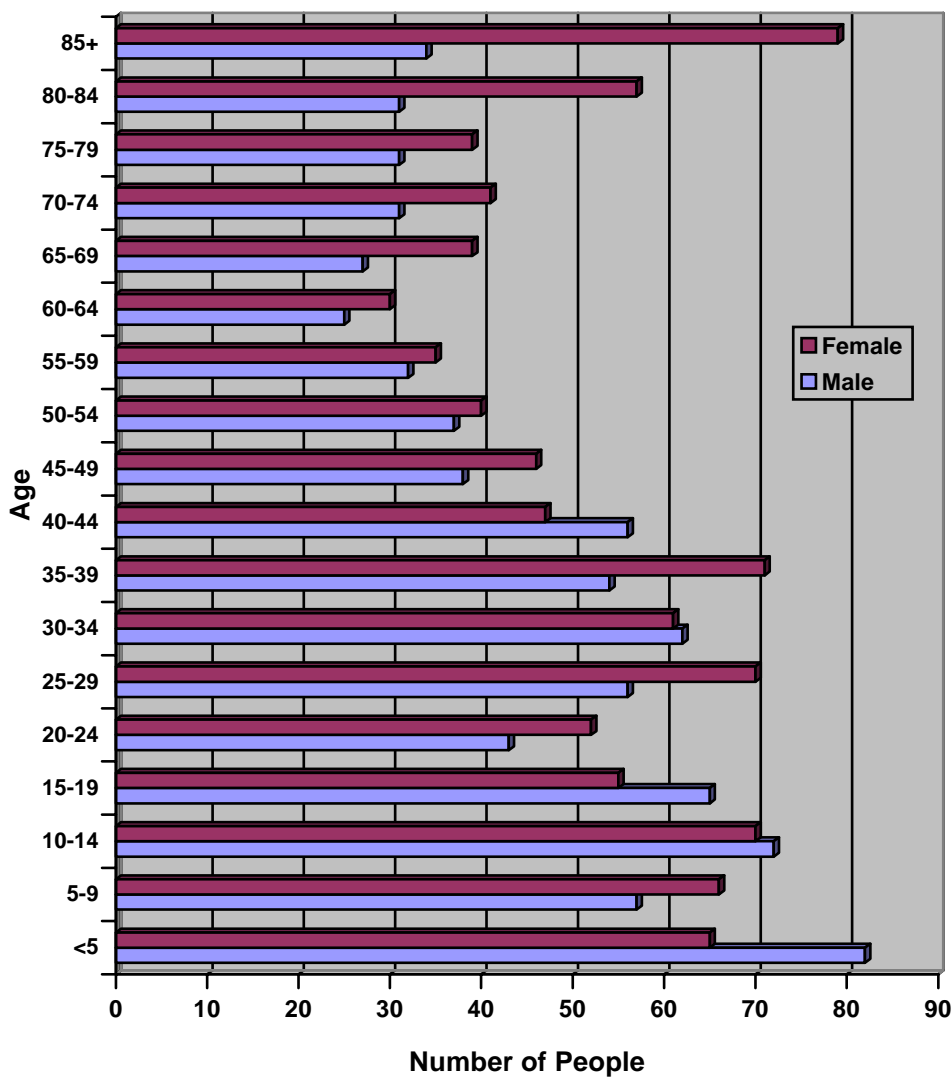
		Albany	Stearns
	Albany	Twp.	Co.
1970	3.45	4.51	4.12
1980	2.84	3.87	3.37
1990	2.56	3.58	2.98
2000	2.37	3.13	2.64

Source: 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

5.7 AGE DISTRIBUTION

The 2000 population pyramid is wide for females in the prime childbearing age 25 to 39 categories, accounting for the large number of children less than five years of age. A “baby boomer bulge” in the pyramid (age 40 to 54) in Albany corresponding to the bulge in the population of the United States is not evident. There are more people in the five-year age cohorts over 65 than there are in the age 60-64 cohort due to the large number of persons in the Mother of Mercy Nursing Home that is also the second largest employer in the City. With small group of baby boomer age and the large number of persons over 65 and of child bearing age, Albany’s age structure is atypical.

Table 11
2000 Population Age Distribution



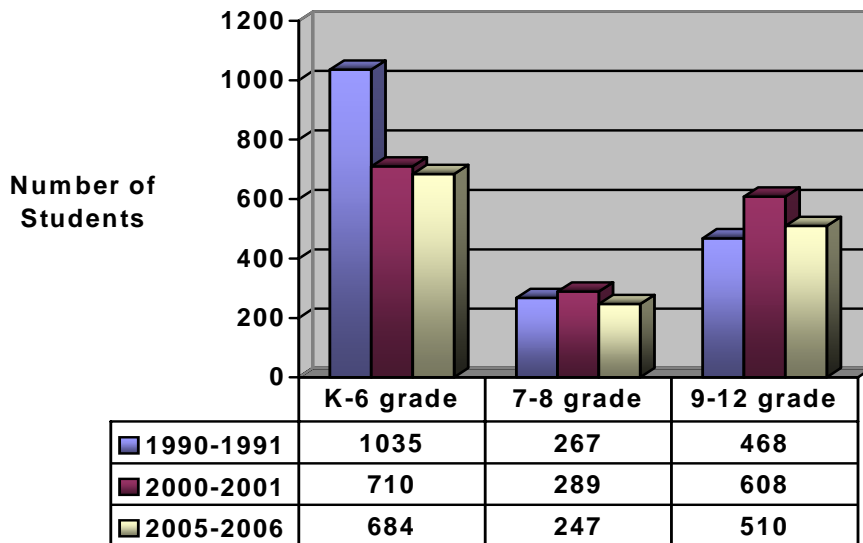
	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+
Female	65	66	70	55	52	70	61	71	47	46	40	35	30	39	41	39	57	79
Male	82	57	72	65	43	56	62	54	56	38	37	32	25	27	31	31	31	34

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

5.8 SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

While the population of child bearing age females appears high, it has declined significantly since the 1990 census, resulting in significant decreases in Kindergarten through 6th grade enrollment in the Albany/Avon School District. Enrollment in the School District is projected to grow at a modest but stable rate resulting from growth in Albany's population. About one-fourth of the School District's enrollment is residents of the City of Albany.

Table 12
Educational Enrollment Albany/Avon Schools

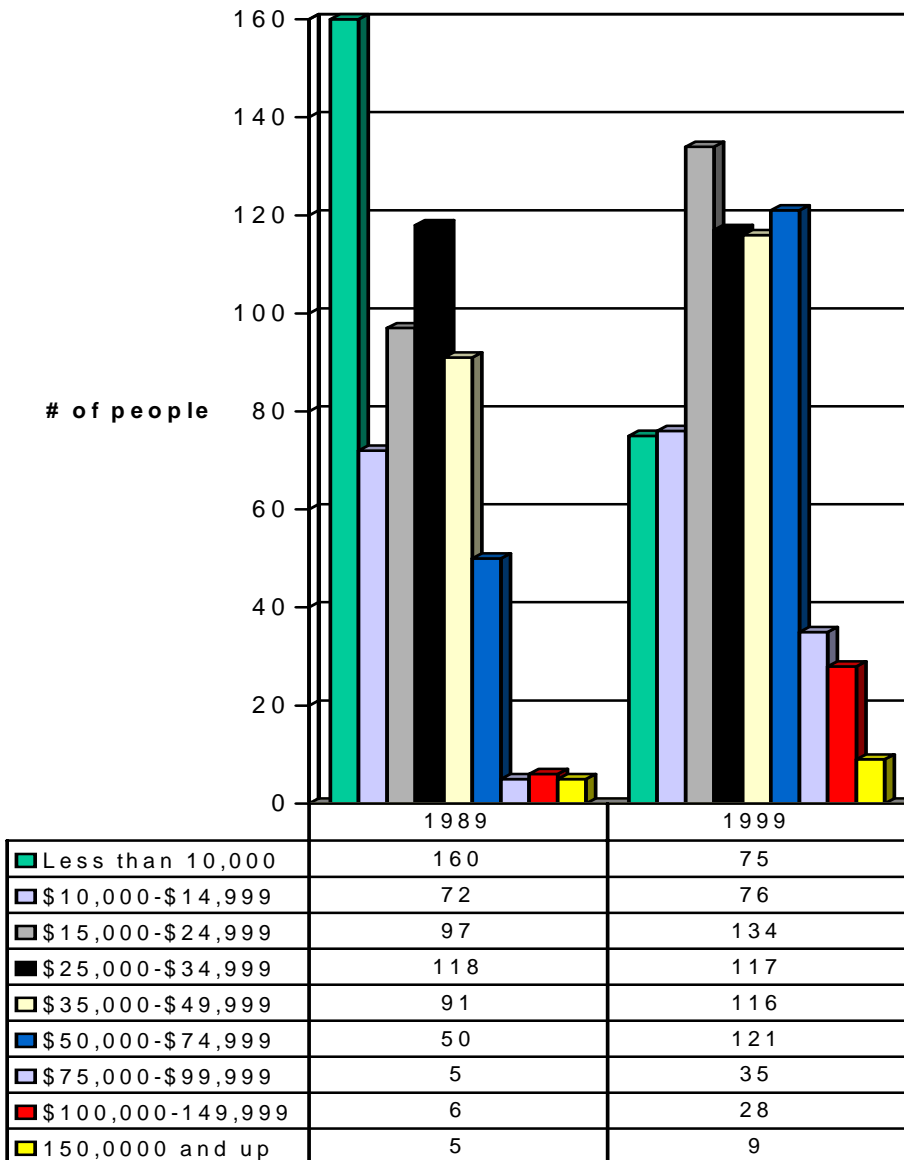


Source: Albany/Avon School District

5.9 HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The number of households with incomes of less than \$10,000 declined significantly between census taken in 1989 and 1999 while the number of households with income from \$15,000 to 75,000 increase. This increase in income is moderated somewhat by the affect of 33% inflation between 1989 and 1999 on buying power.

Table 13
Annual Household Income 1989 and 1999



Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

6. PROJECTIONS

Projections of population, household and employment growth enable a city to ensure that adequate land area for growth is available and to plan for efficient public facilities and services to serve existing needs and the needs of projected growth. Because nearly all of the property within the existing corporate boundaries is subdivided, projections of growth involve the surrounding area as well as the city itself. As a general rule, the larger the area or base, the better the projection. In other words state projections are more accurate than county projections, which are more accurate than city projections.

6.1 POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD PROJECTION

Methods for projecting population and household growth include:

- Economic base job projection, divided by household size.
- Population based projection, based on historical trends, divided by a household size.
- Household formation projection, based on historical construction trends, times a household size factor.
- County population trends share divided by a household size.

St. Cloud is the economic center for an economic region that includes several counties including Stearns within which Albany is located. Albany's population growth is influenced by job growth in St. Cloud and because of the relative proximity of Albany to St. Cloud, this influence is significant. In 2002 the state demographer projected the population of the City of Albany and Stearns County to the year 2030 as shown on the two top lines of the table below. The state demographer's projection involved averaging the middle values derived from the following four projections: an increasing share and a constant share for Albany of projected county growth, exponential growth rate and linear growth rate, all using 1990 to 2002 as a basis.

Also shown on the table below are projections of population and households for the City of Albany to the year 2030 using 1990 to 2004-05 trends employing the following methods:

- 1) The City as increasing share of State Demographers projection for Stearns County (Projection #1);
- 2) Exponential growth rate (Projection #2); and
- 3) Building permits times persons per household (Projection #3).

The first two methods are similar to projection techniques used by the State Demographer. The last method takes into account building permit issuance history but tempers the significant increase in permits issued since 2000 by using the 1990-2005 annual average. This 15-year averaging is employed to account for higher production of housing than is likely in coming years due to rising interest rates. In addition, while Albany is close to the economic center of the St. Cloud region where job growth is likely to be the highest, at 18 miles it may be far enough for growth to be sensitive to significant

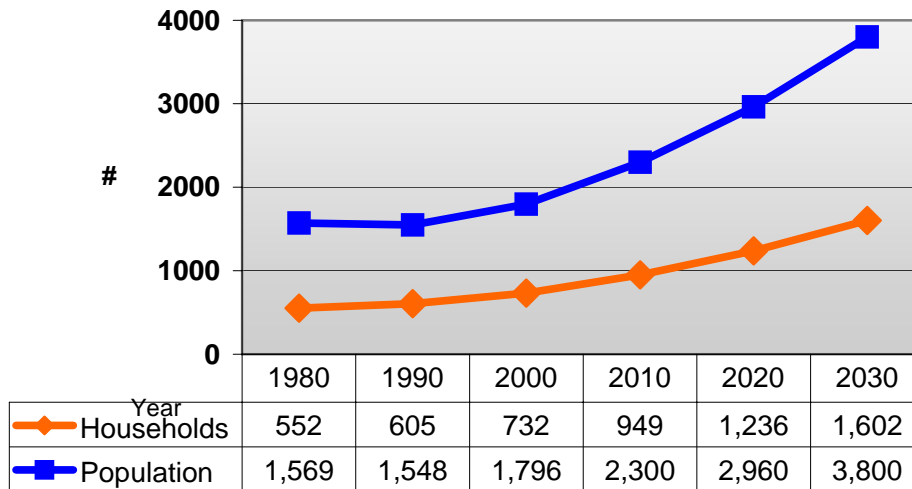
increases in the cost of gasoline. Rising interest rates and the lack of available lots account for the large drop in single-family building permits in Albany from 2004 to 2005.

Table 14
City of Albany Population and Household Projections

	History				Projections		
	1980	1990	2000	2004 est.	2010	2020	2030
City of Albany	1,569	1,548	1,796	1,985	2,050	2,322	2,594
Stearns County	108,161	118,791	133,166	140,841	148,480	163,200	177,370
City as % of County	0.0145	0.0130	0.0135	0.0141	0.0150	0.0165	0.0180
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; gap: 20px;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 15px; background-color: #FFC0CB; border: 1px solid black;"></div> =State demographer estimate or projection <div style="width: 20px; height: 15px; background-color: #E0FFFF; border: 1px solid black;"></div> =Projection of 2000-2004 trend </div>						
Projection #1-	City as % of state demographers County projection using projection of 2000-2004 trend				2,227	2,693	3,193
Projection #2-	Average annual growth rate of 1.79% using 2000-2004 average				2,306	2,962	3,804
Projection #3-	Building permits using 5 year (2000-05) average times persons per household (31.8 x 2.37)				2,437	3,191	3,945
POPULATION PROJECTION-	Projection #2 rounded off				2,300	2,960	3,800
HOUSEHOLD PROJECTION-	552	605	732	812	949	1,236	1,602
	Population projections minus 118 persons living in group quarters, divided by 2.37 persons per household, divided by .97 occupancy rate						

Source: 1980, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census and Minnesota Demographers Office

**Table 15
Population and Household Projections**



Source: U.S. Census and Minnesota Demographers Office

A note to the State Demographer's projections for Minnesota cities and townships indicates as follows:

The numbers do not reflect any special knowledge about individual communities such as zoning regulations, land available for development, current development projects, one-time events or any of the myriad other factors that can and do affect future population.

One such factor that will impact job and population growth in Albany is development of the Albany Business and Industrial Park and new residential subdivisions in 2005. The availability of reasonably priced, sewer and water serviced land for industrial and residential development in close proximity to St. Cloud, the economic center of the region, will stimulate growth in Albany, though the magnitude of that impact is difficult to predict.

6.2 EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Employment growth in all industry groups except retail trade and public administration occurred from 1980 to 2000 and growth in all groups except retail trade is projected in the future. Significant growth in manufacturing, construction, and professional, scientific, management, etc. is projected over the coming decades. A number of industry group categories into "professional, scientific, management, etc." were consolidated because of the changes in category that occurred between the 1990 and 2000 censuses. In the table below, straight line projections are made for each of the industry groups and, in addition to the actual projection, a "high" employment projection is set forth. This was done to be certain that adequate land in the proposed orderly annexation area is available should employment in Albany grow at a greater rate than the rate projected.

Table 16
Albany Projections 1980 – 2030
Historic and Projected Employment in Albany By Industry

INDUSTRY GROUP	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
BASIC INDUSTRY						
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining	11	13	15	16	17	18
Manufacturing	134	112	158	204	250	296
NON-BASIC INDUSTRY						
Construction	49	35	66	83	100	117
Transportation and Warehousing, utilities and Communication	19	31	43	55	67	79
Wholesale Trade	12	18	38	51	64	77
Retail Trade	139	169	105	88	84	80
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental & Leasing	12	24	26	28	30	32
Public Administration	17	10	13	15	17	19
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, Educational, Health, Social Service, Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Service	221	192	343	359	375	391
TOTAL	604	604	807	899	1,004	1,109
HIGH PROJECTION				1,009	1,211	1,413

Source: 1980, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

7. DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

7.1 OVERVIEW

Downtown offers some restructuring opportunities renovation and modest in-fill development. Accommodation of any Kraft site expansion will require careful review. The recently developed Albany Business and Industrial Park offers opportunities for highway business and industrial growth. Land availability will require consideration for future expansion locations. The City has recently annexed land areas consistent with the expansion framework as depicted in this chapter.

The planning principles and goals of compact and contiguous development, utilization of existing capacities, minimizing public costs and creating strong planning units should guide expansion of the City. Land ownership and interest in development has some impact on the discussion and selection of future expansion areas. It is appropriate to evaluate the direction for growth that in turn may influence land availability and timing. Again, the strategy would be to gradually absorb urbanizing areas with enough flexibility to respond to changing ownership patterns and development trends.

The City has instituted ongoing discussions and information exchange with Albany Township officials, the South Two River Watershed District, and the school district. Fostering economic development and orderly change will result in demand for government services. Recognition of the roles of various local governments can help position the area for cost effectiveness and avoiding duplication in the delivery of services.

Ongoing pressures exist for governments to build tax base and on developers to reduce cost and maximize returns. Unfortunately, many times short term savings produce long-term costs (like disposing of oil "out back" only to find contamination of ground water supplies 20 years later). Similarly, land costs and taxes are generally lower where public services are minimal. As development occurs, the cost of adding new required services often outstrips the revenues generated by the development.

A typical example is the new business location on an isolated parcel outside of the urban services area. At first, it looks like a good situation-low land costs, limited traffic and a visible location. Then, the well becomes contaminated, the septic system fails, fire insurance rates increase, traffic builds requiring street improvements, and repeated break-ins require additional policing. The local government, usually a township, is then faced with expanding services to meet their expanding tax base or merge the development with the City to take advantage of systems already in place. Any change in development activity and policies should occur with consultation between the affected government agencies. Only by looking and planning ahead together can the consequences of building tax base be fully anticipated.

This comprehensive plan serves to establish the factors governing change, possible directions for change, policies for land uses and public systems, and long term objectives. It sets the stage for ongoing discussion, particularly with Albany Township, as well as other overlapping governmental jurisdictions. The purpose of this section is to describe the process by which the City annexes land to geographically accommodate growth, to set forth proposed land use designations for the proposed annexation area, to provide rationale for the plan and to verify that there is adequate land area within the proposed annexation area to meet the demand for land, given land consumption estimates based on population, household and employment

projections.

7.2 ANNEXATION

Annexation is the process by which a city expands to include additional land to accommodate growth. Predictability in the annexation process is essential to a city's ability to accomplish this. Cities may annex land by ordinance in some cases and in many of these cases a township may challenge a city's annexation by ordinance. If a township challenges a city's annexation ordinance, the city must convince the state that the parcel is about to become urban or suburban in character. Minnesota statute also provides that a city may annex land through orderly annexation.

Orderly annexation requires the township and city to agree in the form of an orderly annexation agreement to the process and terms for annexation. Essentially the agreement sets forth the phasing and terms under which annexation, usually at the discretion of the city, may occur. The predictability of the outcome and the ease with which the process occurs makes this method of annexing land a better option from both the city's and the township's perspective.

The City of Albany is in the process of completing an agreement with Albany Township, the township surrounding the City of Albany, for the orderly annexation of land for the City's growth. The agreement, as drafted, outlines an orderly annexation area from which the City may annex pursuant to terms of the agreement. Figure 9 is the future land use plan for the 2030 growth area which is based on the proposed annexation area.

7.3 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The focus of the future land use plan for the City of Albany is on the area designated by the draft agreement for orderly annexation but the plan also sets forth future land use for area within the City. The future land use plan has little impact on the land within the City since much of it has already been developed and future use of remaining vacant land in the City is determined by how it is zoned. The City has not zoned land within the planned orderly annexation area, nor has this land been designated by the City for a particular land use.

The shape of growth is an important factor in protecting investments, reducing public costs and enhancing the community. Projected growth will require expansion of the corporate boundaries. Some development policies guide choices that will be a continuation of public direction and investment and the private market place. Community growth and development should:

- Minimize impacts on environmentally sensitive areas, such as steep slopes, poor soils, wetlands and high water table areas, agricultural lands and areas of significant vegetation.
- Be directed to areas that have existing or extendable system capacity first before adding capacity.
- Be contiguous to existing development to avoid unnecessary utility and road extension past vacant parcels.

- Have a concept development scheme to fit into the fabric of the community.
- Provide for land use compatibility with the plan and adjacent uses.

The future land use plan in Figure 9 is for the current City of Albany and the proposed orderly annexation area. Generally residential growth is planned north of I-94 and commercial and industrial is planned south. Eighty acres of land south of the Business and Industrial Park, south of I-94, is designated residential. Land is designated public-semi public east and northeast of the High School and for Pioneer Village.

7.4 SUITABILITY OF SOILS FOR BUILDING SITE DEVELOPMENT

A band of unsuitable soils (See Figure 1) is closely correlated with a band of low elevation (See Figure 2) that extends to the east and to the southwest from a point on I-94 one-half mile southeast of the interchange and represents a significant constraint to development. The table 17 shows the gross acres of residential, public/semi-public, commercial and industrial in the proposed orderly annexation area, the percentage of each designation suitable for building site development (50-60%) and, based on this percentage, the net acres in each designation available for building site development. The percentage of land in the proposed 2030 Growth Area that is suitable for building site development was estimated from Figure 1 and Figure 3.

Figure 9- -Future Land Use Plan is bound behind narrative portion of Comprehensive Plan.

Table 17
Estimates of Suitable Land in 2030 Growth Area in Acres

Proposed Designation	Gross Acres Available	Net Percentage Buildable	Net Acres Buildable
Residential	1,070	0.6	642
Public/Semi-Public	90	0.6	120
Subtotal	1,270		762
Commercial	520	0.5	260
Industrial	120	0.6	72
Subtotal	640		332
TOTAL	1,910		1,094

7.5 LAND CONSUMPTION PROJECTIONS

The table below shows land consumption projections for residential and economic base activities. The net buildable acres in each proposed designation are significantly more in each category than land consumption projections. Thus, the proposed orderly annexation area will readily accommodate projected population, household and employment growth to 2030, even under the "high" economic growth projection.

Table 18
Land Consumption Projections In Acres

Land Required to Support Residential	2010	2020	2030
Household Projection	949	1,236	1,602
Less 2004 Households	812	812	812
Equals Increase	137	424	790
Divided by 2.0 units/acre= Acres	69	212	395
Land Required to Support Economic Base Activities			
Employment Projection	899	1,004	1,109
Less 2000 Employment	807	807	807
Equals Increase	92	197	302
Divided by 4 employees/acre= Acres	23	49	76
Total Acres Required	92	261	471
Land Required to Support Economic Base Activities- High Growth Scenario			
Employment Projection	1,009	1,211	1,413
Less 2000 Employment	807	807	807
Equals Increase	202	404	606
Divided by 4 employees/acre= Acres	51	101	152
Total Acres Required- High Growth	120	313	547

7.6 LAND USE ALLOCATION

The future land use pattern is influenced by the existing investments. Change in land use patterns is a slow and evolutionary process, particularly in slow growth areas. Clearly, careful planning and managed diversity of development interconnected with reinforcing uses provides long term vitality not experienced in homogeneous, single purpose districts. A general pattern and set of development policies can assist the City in guiding change in a flexible and contemporary manner. These land use location policies can be expanded as development complexity increases. Some guiding policies include:

- Seek compact development that minimizes the length of street and utilities required to serve each lot or property.
- Designate adequate flat or level areas with direct arterial access for manufacturing, distribution and other had of household job producing industries.
- Consolidate commercial uses to reinforce downtown and the hospitality node at the I-94 interchange.
- Permit limited commercial development that is ancillary to residential neighborhood businesses to be intertwined within the residential neighborhood.
- Locate medium density housing in proximity to major roadways and amenities (school, park, golf course, downtown).
- Limit development south of the I-94 to extensive land users without major utility investments and trip interchanges with the residential community to the north.
- Utilize public investments and community facilities to reinforce development patterns and other investments.
- Consolidate manufactured homes into planned subdivisions that recognize their unique dimensions and sitting requirements.
- Consummate an orderly annexation agreement with Albany Township setting forth orderly annexation area, terms and process and joint zoning control.
- Encourage the township to limit agribusiness uses that generate significant levels of activity or noises to outside proposed orderly annexation area. Encourage high activity, extensive land users to areas south of I-94.
- Provide transition between animal agricultural uses and City development.

8. PLAN ELEMENTS

8.1 OVERVIEW

Existing residential areas within the City possess a high level of vitality. However, a third of the housing stock is over 60 years old and another third will be between 30 and 60 years of age with another hundred units moving into that 40 year major maintenance era where the roof and furnace need to be replaced. Committing to existing housing is a first step, keeping public services in place and at a quality level. Marshalling and organizing volunteers is a second step to assist people with painting and general yard maintenance. Step three is transferring information on "how to" including design, maintenance and helping hands. Finally, marshaling financing tools with local financial companies provides some wherewithal to creatively keep housing in shape. The key is to put policies in place to support housing upkeep and renovation.

The community facilities, private and public create a positive infrastructure for the City. With North Park, the school campus, the golf course, dispersed park areas and the business and industrial park, the City has a basic framework in place. Neighborhood play areas should be reserved in newly developing areas. The key to the community facilities is their identification, packaging and linkage. With the regional Lake Wobegon trail through the City and the visitor aspect of the location, providing a community knit together by trails, bikeways and boulevards will also provide appeal to visitors. Creating some contact hubs (downtown adjacent to the trail and at the interchange) for distribution of information should be considered. The downtown hub can also organize community assets and displays. City Hall could be a component of a new mixed-use development center.

The road system is fixed and workable. However, right-of-way should be reserved to develop a connecting grid system as development moves beyond current developed areas.

8.2 PUBLIC SYSTEMS

Existing public systems also give form to the community and guide its effective expansion. The natural systems described earlier suggest certain directions. The public systems considered include:

- ❖ Community Facilities and Open Space System
- ❖ Transportation System
- ❖ Storm/Surface Water System
- ❖ Sanitary Sewer System
- ❖ Water Distribution System

8.3 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Park, recreation, school and municipal government facilities collectively comprise the inventory of community facilities. Increasingly, private resources are being considered as well. Independent School District 745 has schools in Avon and Albany. The senior high school, junior high school and an elementary school are located within the City of Albany where there is also room for expansion. The Church of Seven Dolores provides private

elementary education through the Holy Family School. The recently constructed city hall complex contains administrative offices, council chambers, police department and library. The fire department is located centrally. North Park and Albany Golf Course offer major public recreational opportunities. Pioneer Village also provides a special combination of history and recreation and hosts an annual festival event.

Community facilities have historically been the collection of government owned properties - parks, schools, public works, utilities and civic buildings. Many of these facilities were planned as locations or sites quite independent from the community surrounding them or parallel investments. The park and open space properties were viewed as a "system", but again, only loosely linked to each other and other investments.

Community facilities are evolving into the broader collection of facilities meeting community needs, primarily services, whether private or public. Therefore, community facilities also encompass the non-profit senior center, the community medical center and hospital, churches and other social or community based services. Electronics and other recreational investments are enlarging the role of profit enterprises in providing leisure time activities. As resources become scarcer, the further connection of these facilities to other community activities serves to leverage investments and do more with less.

Community facilities mapped in Figure 7 focus on the traditional publicly owned lands and rights of way. They nevertheless should be considered in the broader community context. All of the pieces play some part in the fabric of the community. However, four nodes are of particular importance - North Park, North Lake, the school campus, and the golf course. Of the four, North Lake's potential is the least well defined and consequently (due in part to water quality and vegetation growth) serves more as a backdrop setting rather than an active attraction and contributor to the community's recreation and economy. Interconnecting these resources is important.

8.4 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Transportation plans focus on surface motorized and non-motorized travel. Arguably, of the public investments, transportation can have the most pronounced effect on the development of the community. Again, these investments should be considered in the multi-purpose atmosphere outlined in the community facilities discussion. The transportation system consists mainly of local streets, township roads, county roads and state highways. The abandoned Burlington Northern and the Soo Line right-of-ways have been retained for bike, pedestrian and snowmobile trail use as the Lake Wobegon Regional Trail and for future placement of utilities and possible light rail transit to St. Cloud in the future.

The road system is in place and does not pose significant capacity issues. Most of the street questions relate to function, continuity, connections and ties to development objectives. The need for another connection across I-94 was identified as being desirable in the community analyses. Should development patterns change or intensify, a revised circulation system should be considered.

Future oriented expansions of the surface transportation system were considered. First, right of way should be reserved to develop a connecting

grid system as development moves beyond current development areas. Essentially, that means preserving the right-of-way and limiting the number of individual lots receiving direct access along these connectors. Individual lots would be served from internal roads.

A second improvement focuses on improving downtown circulation, facilitating business expansion and connecting the golf course/City administration center with the trail and with downtown. The removal of the rail embankment improves the Church Avenue connection to Eighth Street.

8.5 UTILITIES AND SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT

Existing and planned water, storm/surface water and sanitary sewer are included as Figures 4, 5 and 6, respectively. The comprehensive plan development strategy has respected system components and emphasizes development that reduces infrastructure costs.

8.6 PLAN SUMMARY

This summary compiles the highlights of the plan that provides for community expansion while maintaining its strong and established base. Separate engineering studies provide for the water system, waste water disposal system and storm water system. This summary itemizes plan elements that guide:

- Overall expansion strategy
- Industrial development
- Commercial and business development
- Residential development
- Parks and trails
- Transportation

The major plan elements are summarized below:

- o Provide for clustering industrial expansion, reserving areas south of I-94 for potential extensive land users.
- o Reinforce community businesses and retail uses in the downtown area considering Kraft expansion needs.
- o Focus highway oriented businesses in managed, clustered arrangement in the I-94 interchange area.
- o Promote neighborhood improvement and housing renovation of the existing housing stock.
- o Promote contiguous residential expansion to the east, west and north in consultation with Albany Township.
- o Package and exploit the City's activities, places, spaces and stores for the traveler and visitor.
- o Create a perimeter trail and pathway system that connects major features and the regional trail.
- o Create a downtown hub utilizing the golf course, clubhouse, Lake Wobegon Regional Trail, and potential future government services building.

- o Work to expand the focal point qualities of North Lake in conjunction with North Park and Pioneer Village.
- o Reserve neighborhood parks in conjunction with west side development. Build neighborhood recreation opportunities into the school campus.
- o Develop area-wide solutions to storm water detention utilizing drainage corridors as community connectors.
- o Reinforce major travel routes with lighting and landscaping.
- o Reserve rights-of-way for extending a collector street grid on the west and east sides, limiting direct lot access to these routes.
- o Continue to concentrate visual and informational improvements in the Eighth Street entrance corridor to provide a strong first impression and offer information.