

APPENDIX A: SAUK RAPIDS CITY PROFILE

Located on the east bank of the Mississippi River, the City of Sauk Rapids takes pride in maintaining a “small town” flavor consistent with its historical roots. Keeping the relaxed, small-town feel has been a continuing objective for the city with new growth and redevelopment.

One of the City’s most identifiable features is its downtown, serving as both a gateway to visitors and a convenience to city residents. Sauk Rapids is also distinguished by the many recreational amenities associated with the Mississippi River, an extensive regional and local parks system, and a network of highly rated schools. The City also has an expanding network of locally owned and maintained active transportation facilities to serve those living and working within the city and the many visitors from outside the community.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The City of Sauk Rapids is becoming an increasingly urbanized area, with plans for new residential development mainly east of US 10. According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates, Sauk Rapids’ population has grown by 32.5% since 2000.

The City strives to provide equitable service to all segments of the community in its transportation planning investments. To assist with this effort, APO staff track specific population demographic subsets – known as traditionally underrepresented populations – at a regional level. This includes the following:

- People-of-Color (Black/African American alone; American Indian and Alaska Native alone; Asian alone; Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone; some other race; two or more races; Hispanic or Latino descent regardless of race).
- Persons with low income.
- People with disabilities.
- People with limited English-speaking capabilities.
- Households without access to a motor vehicle.
- Persons over the age of 65.
- Persons under the age of 18.

A look at these demographics in Sauk Rapids finds that approximately one-quarter of the city’s population is under age 18. In addition, approximately one in 10 people within the city have a disability and almost one in five households are considered low-income. See Figure A.2 below for other details.

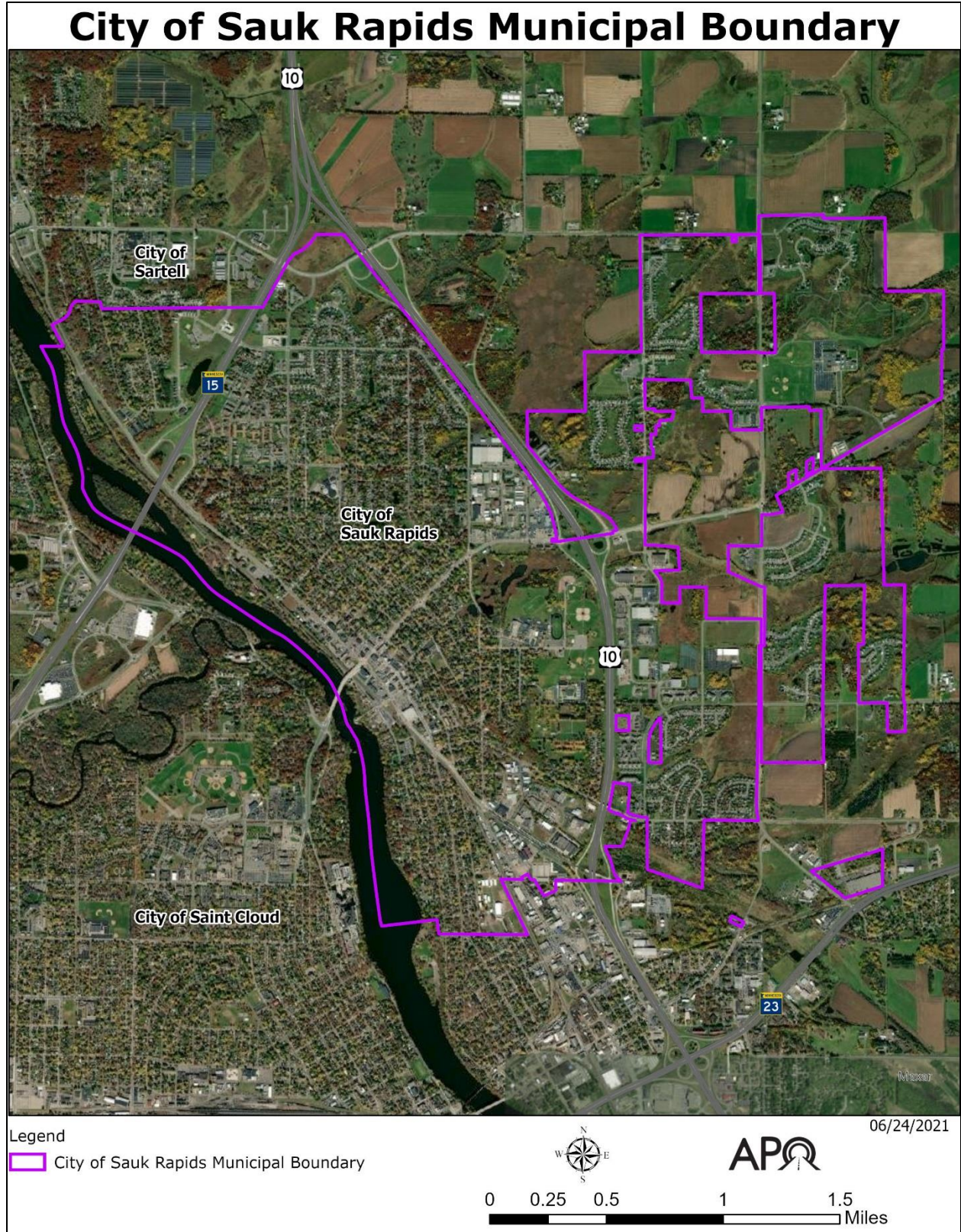


FIGURE A.1 – CITY OF SAUK RAPIDS.

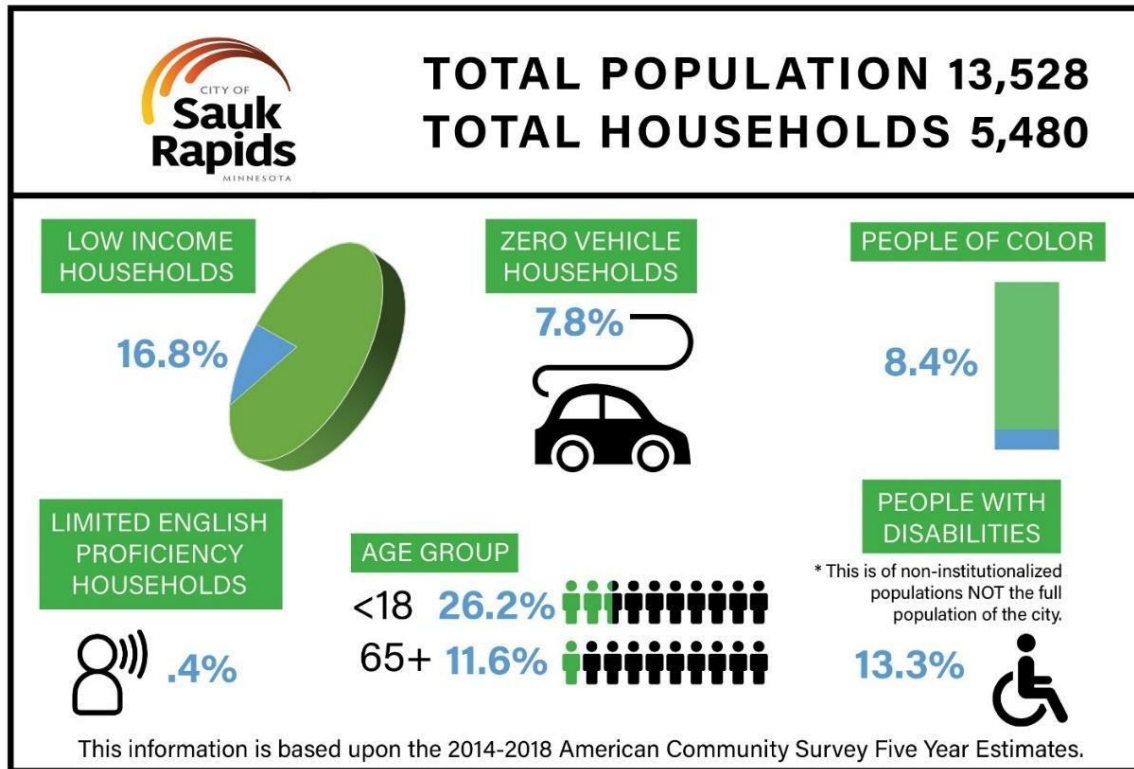


FIGURE A.2 – DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SAUK RAPIDS.

EXISTING LAND USES

How cities use the land within their boundaries (i.e., residential, commercial, industrial) impacts the transportation network and the modes of travel available or desirable to users. The relationship between existing land use and transportation often impacts communities. It can play a role in developing a transportation system that is mode-friendly to motorized and non-motorized users.

As a city situated on the Mississippi River and surrounded by two major roadways – MN 15 to the west and US 10 to the east – the City of Sauk Rapids contains various land uses.

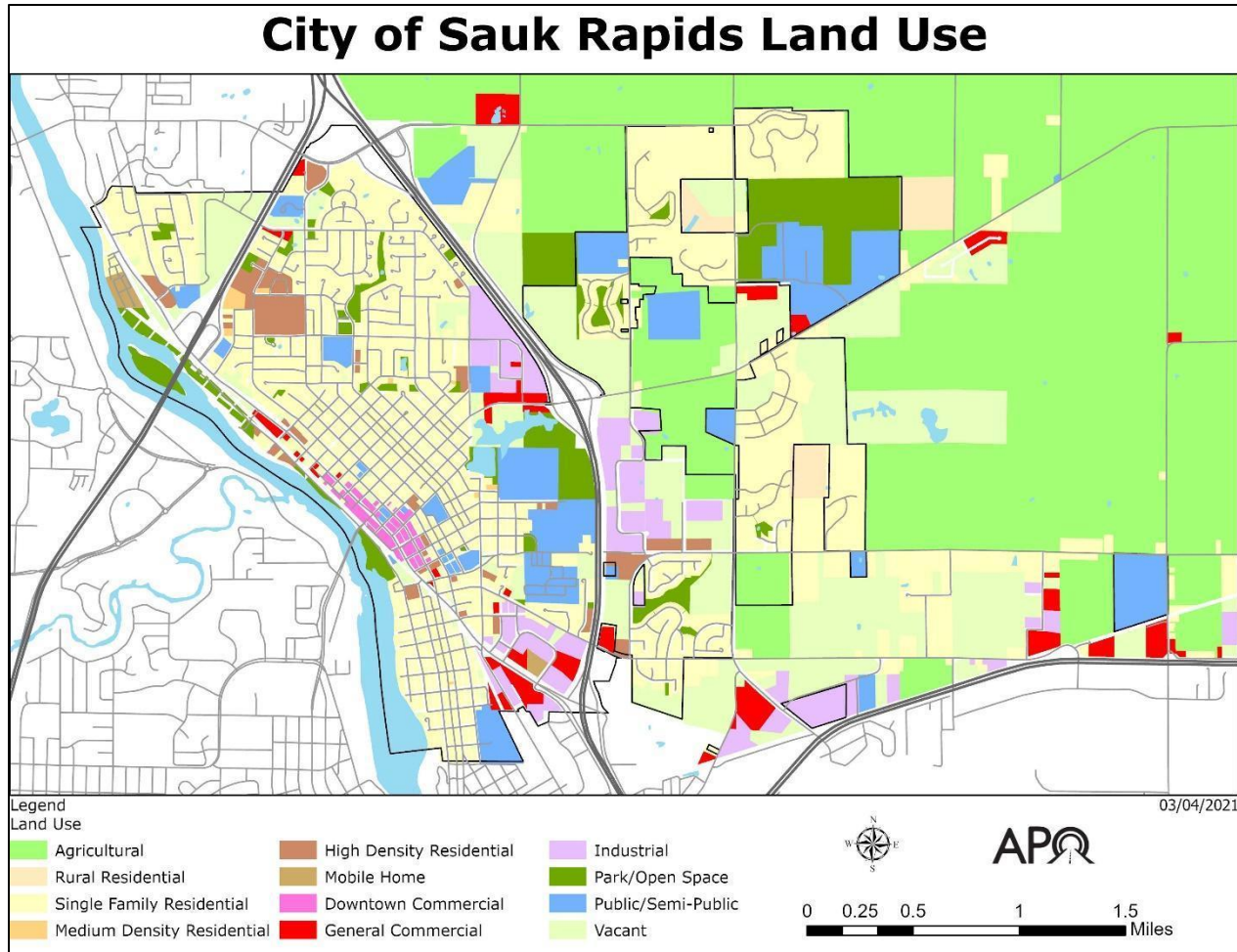


FIGURE A.3 – SAUK RAPIDS LAND USES.

As part of developing the Sauk Rapids 2005 Comprehensive Plan, the city conducted a land use inventory. This inventory was subsequently updated in 2008, as displayed in Figure A.3. Though somewhat dated, it remains relatively accurate, according to city staff. As shown, the majority of Sauk Rapids consists of residential areas, particularly single-family homes, though more multiple-family uses have been added in recent years. Concentrations of mixed-use and medium density residential use are located near MN 15 and US 10. In the nearly two decades since the comprehensive plan was adopted, the city has focused on infilling the underutilized areas to the east of US 10 with residential development.

The greatest concentration of commercial use is found in the downtown area along the Mississippi River, while most industrial use is clustered in regions around US 10. Several large Sauk Rapids industrial businesses are located on Industrial Boulevard east of US 10, such as J-Berd Mechanical and Hardware Distributors, LTD. Stearns Drive to the west of US 10 has several large manufactures and in the south part of the city along and near Benton Drive other large employers include Talon Innovations and C & L Distributing.

The downtown area is a major gateway to the City’s commercial hub with many retail and service destinations. Other areas of commercial activity are along Benton Drive, the area near the Second Street North interchange with US 10, and along 18th Street NW near MN 15.

Several acres of park land and open space are located throughout the city, including neighborhood parks and major parks such as Bob Cross Nature Preserve, Mayhew Creek Park, Municipal Park, and Lions/Southside Park.

Understanding how the city plans to develop in the future will inform the type of transportation system needed. Residents and visitors will only reach these destinations through the transportation network that is available to them.

TYPES OF ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Sauk Rapids has a variety of infrastructure designed specifically for active transportation users. Some are integrated into the roadway network, such as bike lanes (on-road facilities). Others are separated from the roadway network, such as sidewalks and shared use paths (off-road). Complementing the on- and off-road active transportation network is the transit network operated by Saint Cloud Metro Bus. Bicyclists and pedestrians can rely on both the on- and off-road network and the Metro Bus system to reach their destinations.

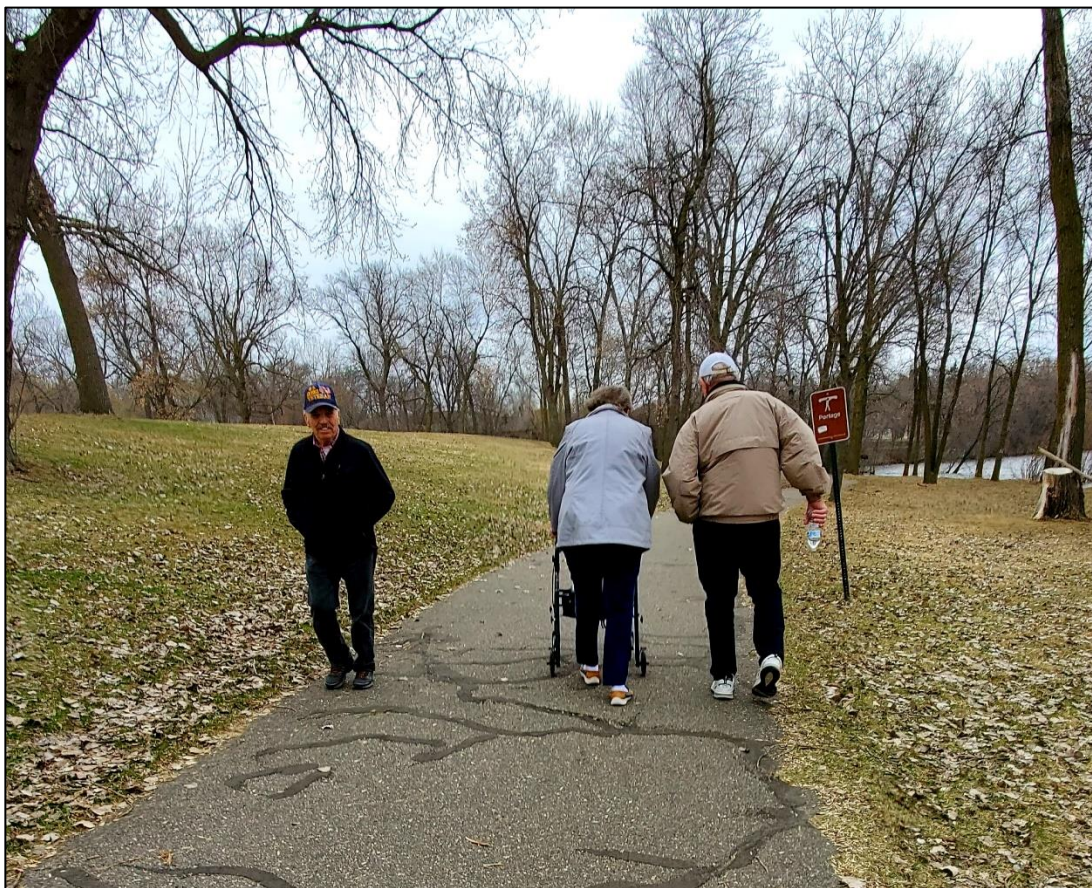


FIGURE A.4 – PEOPLE WALKING IN SOUTHSIDE PARK.

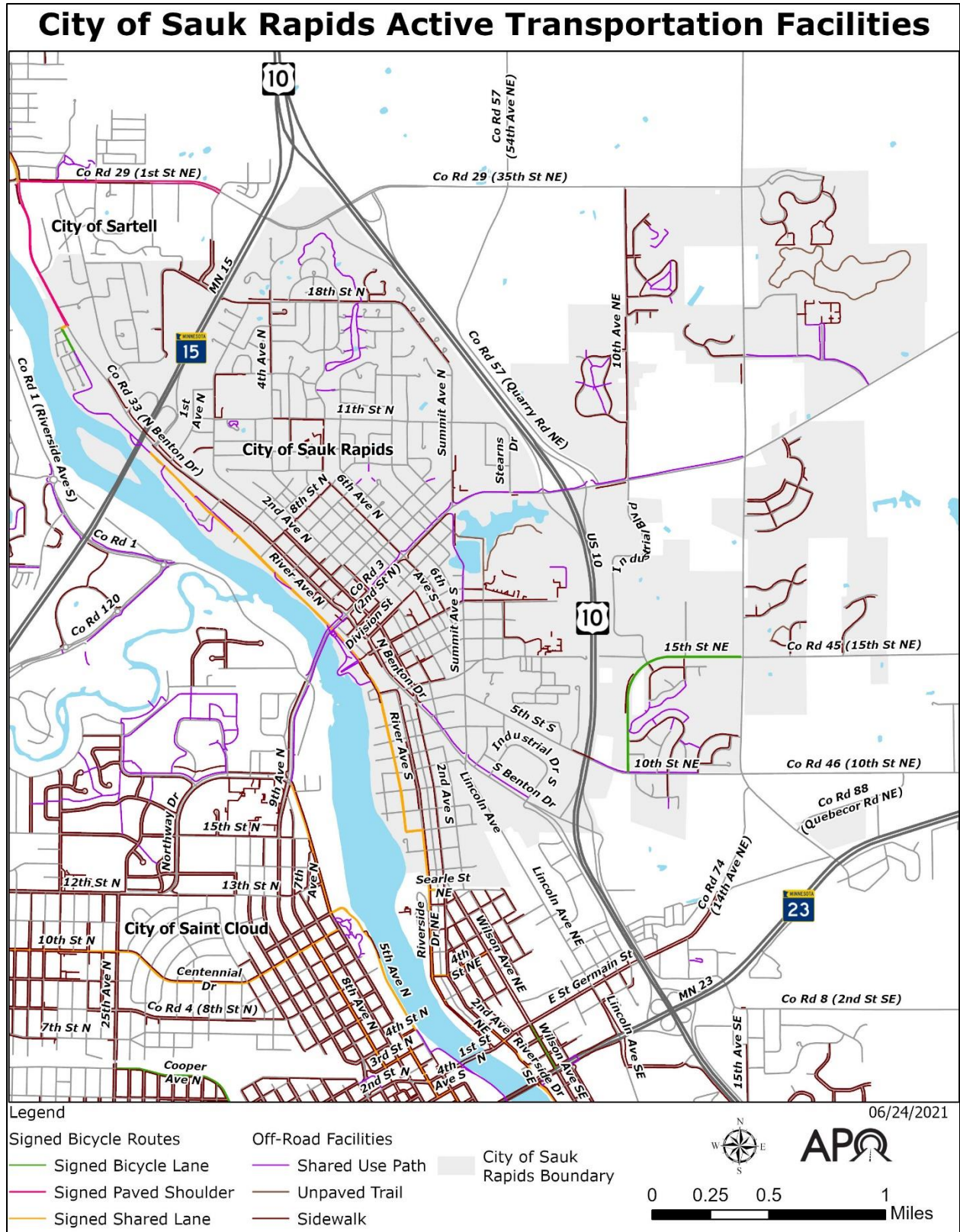


FIGURE A.5 – ON AND OFF-ROAD ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES IN SAUK RAPIDS BY TYPE AND LOCATION.

ON-ROAD FACILITIES

The City of Sauk Rapids has 7.5 lane miles of on-road bicycle facilities, including signed bicycle lanes, signed paved shoulders, and signed shared lanes to serve bicyclists. Over half of these on-road miles are part of the nationally recognized Mississippi River Trail (MRT).

The Mississippi River Trail (MRT)

The MRT is a planned network of bicycle facilities that winds its way along the Mississippi River through the City of Sauk Rapids. The MRT enters the city from the northwest along Benton Drive before following along Garden Avenue. At the Sauk Rapids Regional Bridge, the MRT splits. One route crosses the bridge and continues into the City of Saint Cloud, and another route follows Sauk Rapids' River Avenue. As a nationally recognized bicycle route and being close to the Great River Road Scenic Byway (which includes portions of Benton Drive), this facility is regionally significant to the city.

In addition, the MRT has been identified as one of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT's) high priority corridors for bicycle routes due to its inter-jurisdictional nature – spanning from northern Minnesota to Louisiana – and high potential of connecting to other regional active transportation facilities.

OFF-ROAD FACILITIES

Shared Use Paths and Trails

There are 12.8 miles of shared use paths that provide neighborhoods access to many of the City's parks, recreational areas, and schools. This includes 10.2 miles of paved shared use paths and 2.6 miles of unpaved trails found within Bob Cross Park and Mayhew Creek Park.

One of the most notable paved shared use paths in Sauk Rapids is the facility along Second Street N/CSAH 3 from the Sauk Rapids Bridge to Mayhew Lake Road. This corridor provides the only east/west active transportation facility connection across US 10. The Ox Cart Trail is the off-road portion of the MRT. The trail is in four riverside parks (Lions, Southside, Municipal, and Island View).

Sidewalks

In Sauk Rapids, approximately 28 miles of sidewalks are located throughout the city. New developments east of US 10 contain sidewalks on at least one side of local streets, while many older neighborhoods in the city's core do not. A network of sidewalks services the downtown commercial district. Collector and arterial roadways that lead to critical destinations in the city, such as schools and parks, typically have sidewalks leading to them.

TRANSIT SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

As the urban public transit provider, Saint Cloud Metro Bus is responsible for the daily management, operation, and maintenance of Fixed Route (FR) and Dial-a-Ride (DAR) systems within Saint Cloud, Waite Park, Sartell, and Sauk Rapids.

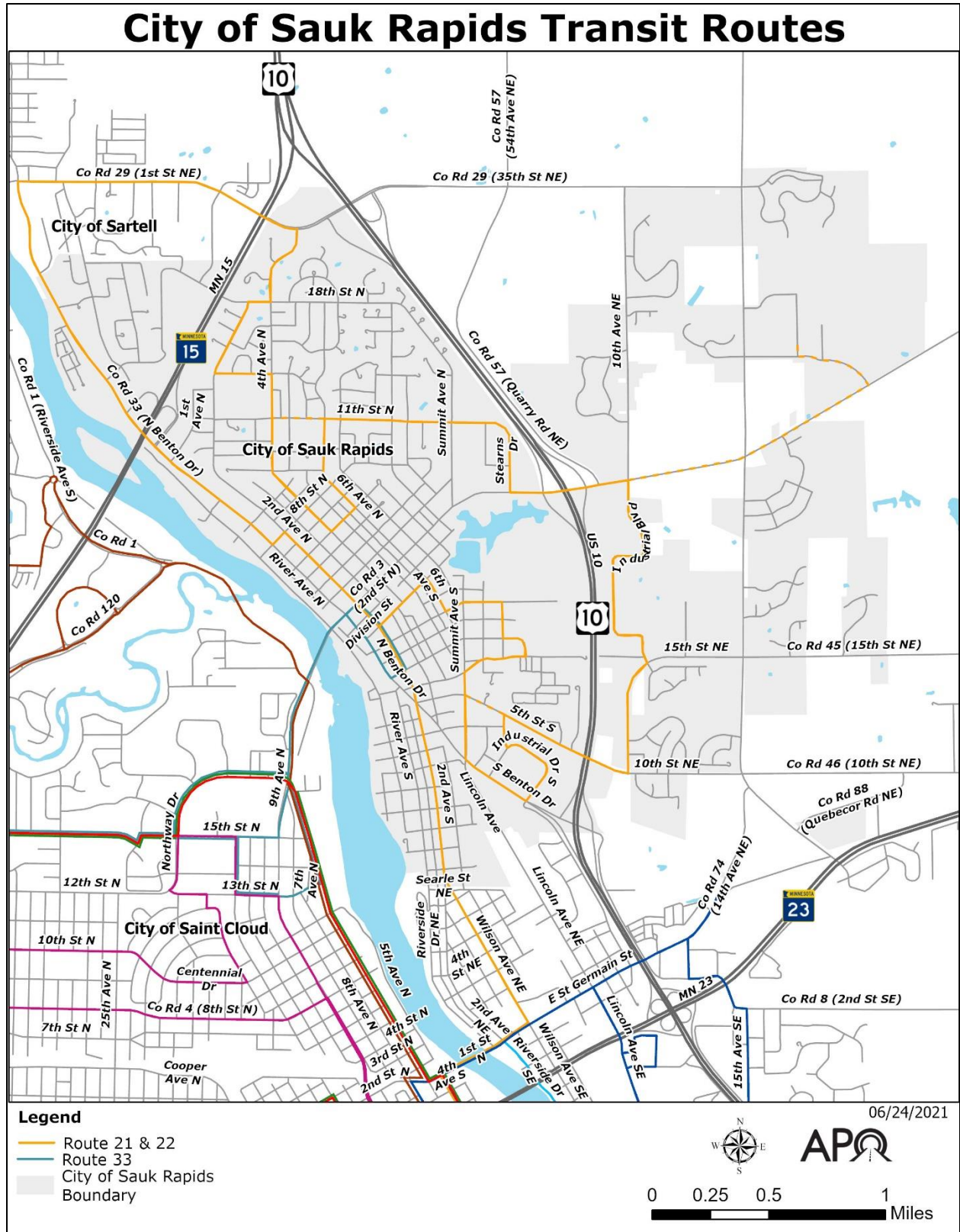


FIGURE A.6 – METRO BUS FIXED ROUTE SERVICE WITHIN SAUK RAPIDS.

FIXED ROUTE SERVICE

Metro Bus provides fixed route transit service to the City of Sauk Rapids seven days a week through routes 21, 22, and 33.

Routes 21 and 22 provide service to roughly the same areas within Sauk Rapids; however, they operate in opposite directions. Route 21 operates Monday through Friday, while Route 22 provides seven-day service. Route 21 does deviate from its regular fixed route three times during the day to provide service to Sauk Rapids-Rice High School while school is in session. With this deviation, several areas including Industrial Boulevard and Pleasantview Elementary School, are not served by Route 21.

The Coborn's transit shelter in downtown Sauk Rapids serves as a transfer point for Route 33. This crosstown route connects downtown Sauk Rapids to Crossroads Center in Saint Cloud.

All fixed route transit stops for these three routes are signed. Several stops, particularly in the downtown area, include benches and shelters.



FIGURE A.7 – METRO BUS TRANSIT STOP IN SAUK RAPIDS.

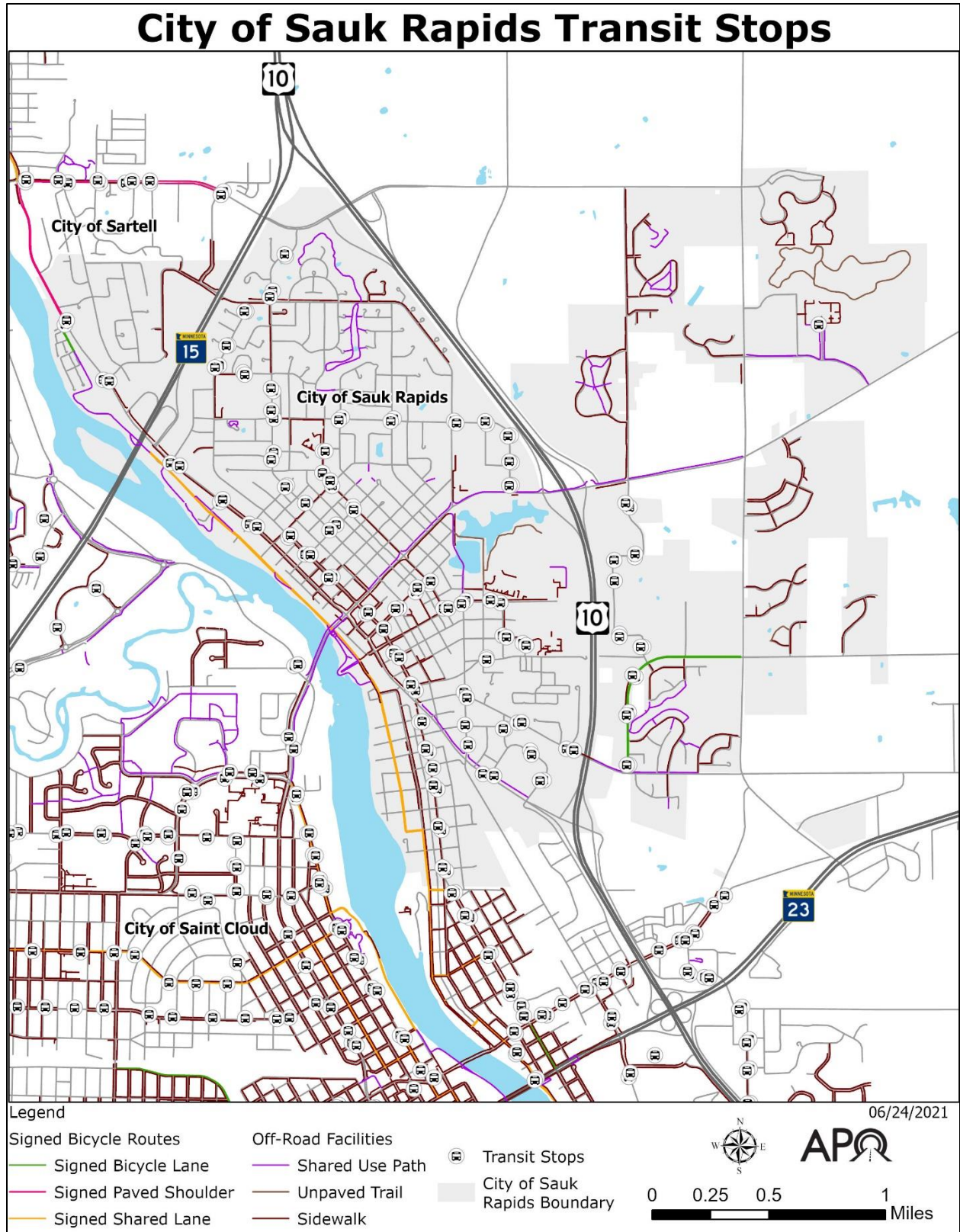


FIGURE A.8 – TRANSIT STOPS IN RELATION TO THE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM WITHIN SAUK RAPIDS.

Figure A.8 shows the location of transit stops and how close they are to active transportation infrastructure. While active transportation facilities serve some transit stops, many lack on- or off-road facilities. For those who rely on transit service, a lack of active transportation facilities from their bus stop to their homes and destinations can create a barrier. Transit stops for destinations in the downtown area and near commercial businesses typically include sidewalk access. The fixed route system does not service newer housing development east of US 10. Industrial areas within the city usually have access to fixed route service but often lack sidewalk access.

OTHER TRANSIT SERVICES

Metro Bus also offers additional transit service for Sauk Rapids residents. Dial-a-Ride (DAR) is an operator-assisted paratransit service provided for those unable to use fixed routes. West of MN 15, Sauk Rapids residents may also use ConneX, a curb-to-curb and/or door-through-door on demand service, to access various destinations throughout the neighboring city of Sartell.

CONDITION OF ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

If the existing active transportation infrastructure is in poor condition, it may cause safety issues, inconvenience for the user, or result in the underutilization of the facility. Keeping the system in good condition assures safety and a comfortable experience.

Pavement conditions data for on-road and off-road active transportation facilities within the City of Sauk Rapids was collected from areawide surveys performed for the APO as discussed in Chapter 2 of the ATP.

ON-ROAD FACILITIES

Pavement Condition and Striping

In 2019 GoodPointe Technology collected pavement and striping condition data on the existing on-road bicycle routes in Sauk Rapids.

Pavement condition was evaluated using a Digital Inspection Vehicle (DIV) – a specialized vehicle equipped with cameras and laser sensors to detect pavement distress and roughness. As shown in Figure A.9, of the 7.5 total lane miles signed as bicycle facilities, 3.4 centerline miles are in “fair” or “poor” condition. This includes most of the MRT mileage that runs through the City along River Avenue. The remaining mileage was rated “good” or “satisfactory.” *(Note: Some portions of River Avenue were reconstructed in 2020 after the pavement conditions shown below were measured.)*

Striping conditions of on-road facilities were rated from a visual inspection. In the City, only 2.5 lane miles are striped. Along 15th Street NE/10th Avenue NE and North Benton Drive, the striped lanes are rated “fair.” The striping on Garden Avenue, part of the MRT corridor, is rated “poor.”

City of Sauk Rapids Bicycle Route Pavement Condition

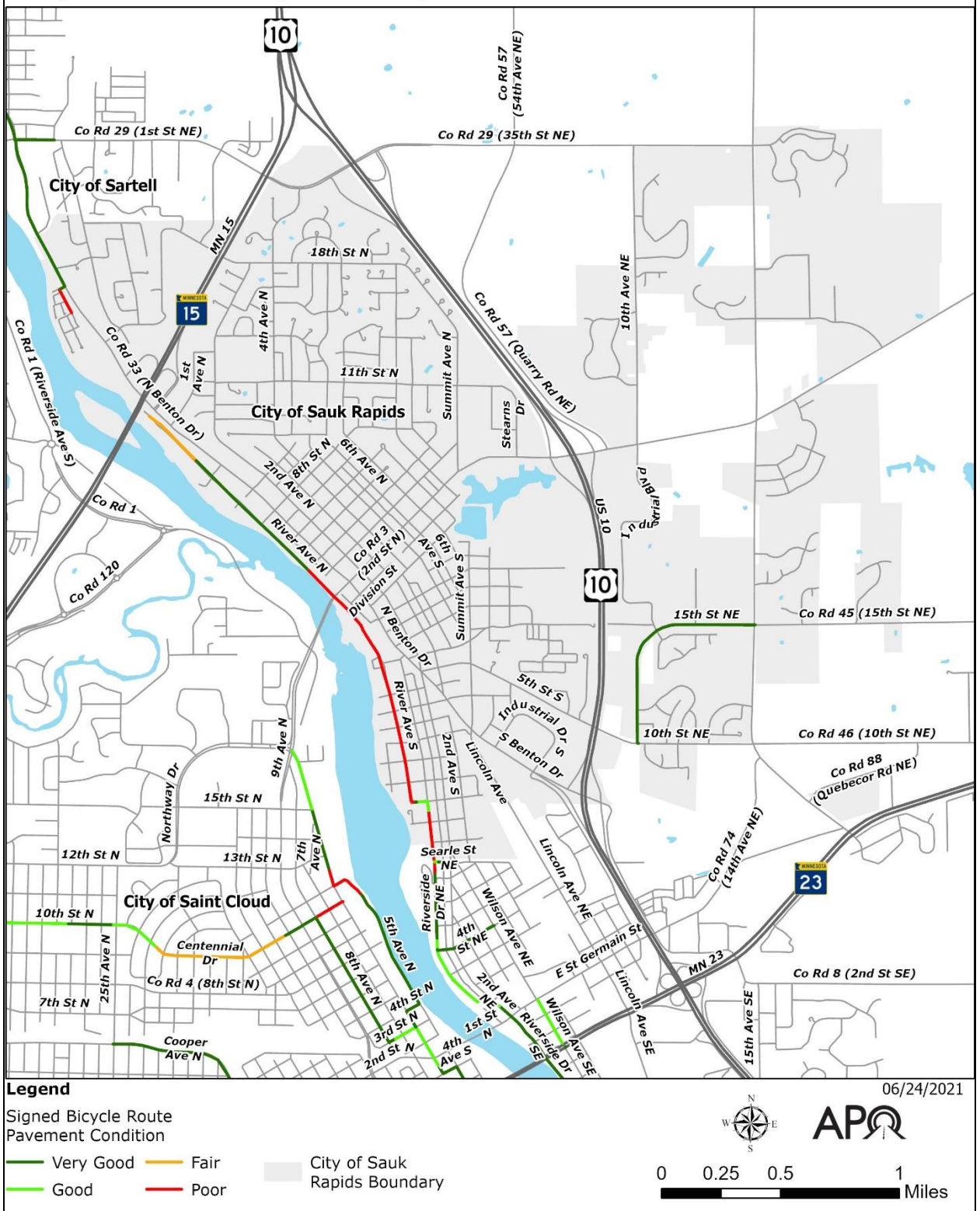


FIGURE A.9 – CONDITION OF SIGNED SHARED BICYCLE ROUTES.

City of Sauk Rapids Bicycle Route Striping Condition

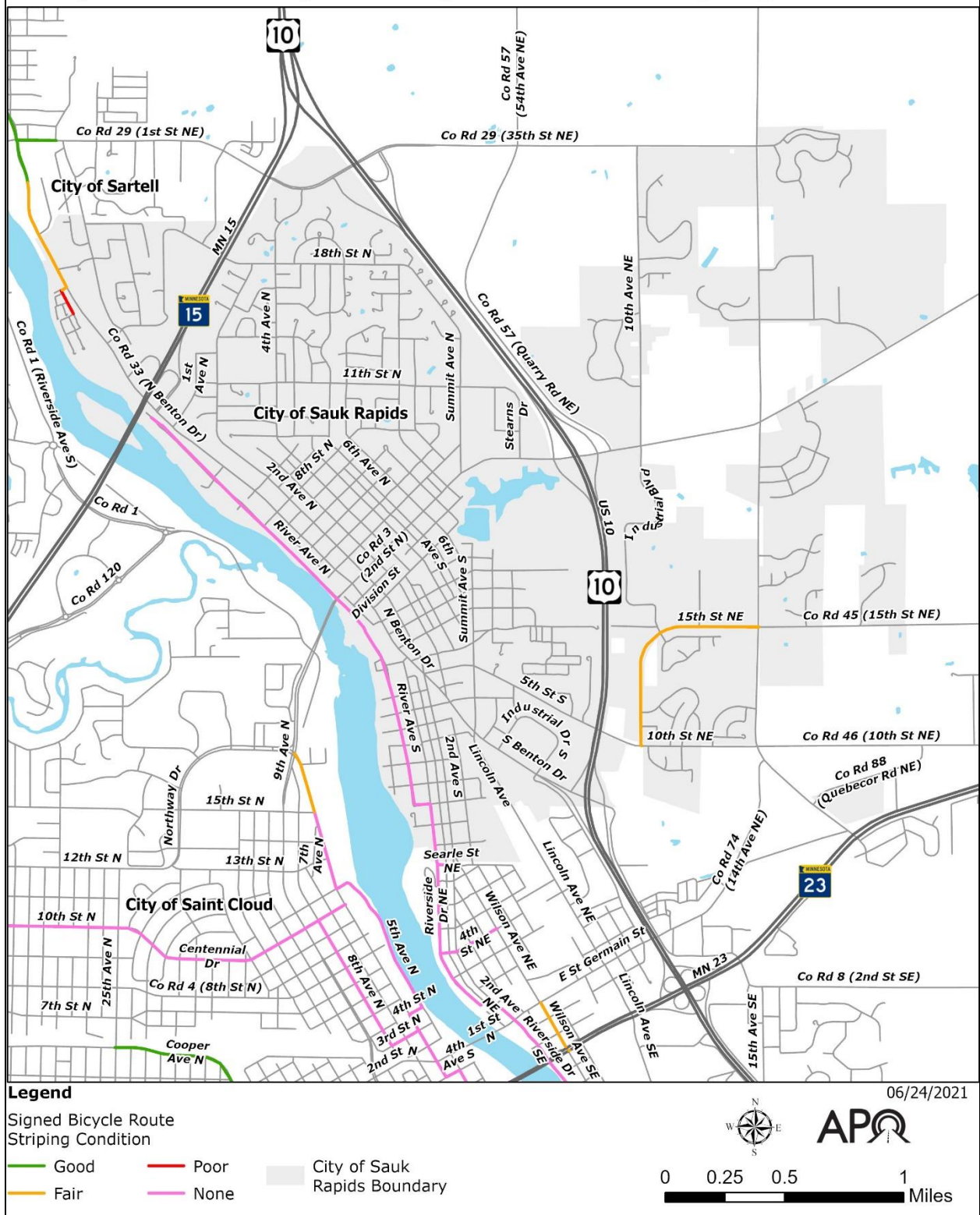


FIGURE A.10 - STRIPING CONDITION OF SIGNED SHARED USE BICYCLE ROUTES.

OFF-ROAD FACILITIES

Shared Use Path Pavement Condition

The Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota conducted a pavement condition assessment of most shared use paths within the APO in 2020. The Council used a specially equipped electronic bicycle with instruments aboard to record the “bumpiness” of the pavement throughout the MPA.

The study concluded that over 40% of Sauk Rapids’s shared use paths are in “very smooth” to “smooth” condition. Several facilities, such as the shared use path along Second Street N/CSAH 3, are in “smooth” condition.

Approximately 15% of all shared use paths in the city were identified as being in “rough” to “very rough” condition. Facilities in the neighborhood on 10th Avenue NE east of US 10 require repair along with smaller neighborhood segments across the city. Nearly half of the City’s trails were rated as “fair,” much higher than the region’s average.

Since the pavement condition assessment was conducted, the City has reconstructed River Avenue south of Second Street N with the addition of new shared use paths. As part of the 2020 reconstruction of Benton Drive, the city extended the shared use paths south of Summit Avenue to Franklin Avenue.



FIGURE A.11 - NEWLY PAVED SHARED USE PATH IN LIONS PARK.



FIGURE A.12 – SHARED USE PATH PAVEMENT CONDITION (2019).

SAUK RAPIDS PLANS FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

The [2005 Comprehensive Plan](https://bit.ly/2YvB3Rt) (https://bit.ly/2YvB3Rt) and the [2011 Transportation Plan](https://bit.ly/2YvPR2I) (https://bit.ly/2YvPR2I) for the City of Sauk Rapids provide the current planning framework for transportation. Both recognize the significance of planning to accommodate non-motorized modes to relieve growing congestion on roadways. Each of the city's plans cites the need for new or improved roadway facilities, including infrastructure for bicycles and pedestrians and expanding the off-road system as the area grows.

As a guide to transportation and other investments, the city maintains a [Capital Improvement Program \(CIP\)](https://bit.ly/3p8I9HV) (https://bit.ly/3p8I9HV). The CIP includes projected short- and long-term projects based on anticipated future revenues and needs.

CITY OF SAUK RAPIDS' 2005 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Ensuring safe and convenient travel for non-motorized users is one of the leading transportation goals identified in the Sauk Rapids Comprehensive Plan. The plan includes promoting bicycling, walking, and transit opportunities to accomplish this goal. A discussion on expanding the existing network of trails and other infrastructure is included to achieve this vision. The plan suggests strategies to design and maintain roadways that accommodate all travel modes. The city seeks to balance the need to efficiently move traffic through the region and provide local access to homes and businesses while also addressing the needs of pedestrians.

Active Transportation Needs as Identified in Comprehensive Plan

Among issues cited in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan is the lack of transportation infrastructure (all kinds) to accommodate growth, especially for developing commercial and industrial areas. The Comprehensive Plan includes specific strategies to provide routes from residential to pedestrian-friendly commercial areas, focusing on improving the City's downtown pedestrian environment. Strategies call for a complete network of sidewalks and additional wayfinding signage to the city's river-facing parks. In addition, the plan states the importance of connecting neighborhoods with sidewalks and expanding the network of parks and trails/shared use paths.

CITY OF SAUK RAPIDS' 2011 TRANSPORTATION PLAN

As identified in the city's 2011 Transportation Plan, residents rely on active transportation for recreational and commuting needs. The city strives to develop an active transportation network that complements the roadway system by expanding the network of bike lanes, sidewalks, and shared use paths

Active Transportation Needs as Identified in the Transportation Plan

According to the city's Transportation Plan, the primary barrier to bicycle and pedestrian trips is the limited ability to cross primary arterials. With few roadway crossings and only one shared use path that crosses US 10, the highway remains a significant barrier for residents who rely on walking and biking to get to schools, jobs, or other destinations.

The Transportation Plan calls for additional shared use paths around the high school and developing neighborhoods along CSAH 1/Mayhew Lake Road. In addition, the plan

recommends expanding roadways shoulders and designating additional bike lanes to serve the needs of all users.

The plan also addresses the lack of active transportation infrastructure surrounding schools and local parks. It is suggested that sidewalks and shared use paths be provided where there is an adequate right-of-way. The city should reserve the right to increase minimum right-of-way requirements for future roadways to accommodate active transportation modes.

CITY ORDINANCES

Along with various citywide planning efforts, [Sauk Rapids City Code](https://bit.ly/3tCM1TY) (https://bit.ly/3tCM1TY) has established several ordinances pertaining to the active transportation system and its users.

City Code Section 12 outlines provisions for active transportation with new street construction or reconstruction. A sidewalk and trail network shall connect new and existing subdivisions. With new construction or reconstruction of urban collector and arterial streets, city ordinance calls for a minimum five-foot (unstriped) bicycle route or (striped) lane plus the addition of five-foot sidewalks (on both sides of the street) if possible. The reconstruction of rural collector and arterial roads shall include five-foot bicycle routes or lanes plus a five-foot sidewalk or an eight-12 foot wide trail (shared use path). As determined, the sidewalk and trail network may also be adjacent to local streets. The adjacent active transportation network may extend to residential, commercial, or industrial development. The city's Sidewalk/Trail Committee plans and makes recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council for improving the network (City Code Section 12.06 subd. 8D).

Sidewalk maintenance, in particular snow and ice removal, is the responsibility of the landowner or tenant whose property is abutting the sidewalk. Snow removal must occur within 24 hours of the snowfall event. If the persons responsible do not comply, the city may assess removal costs. (City Code Section 8.04)

In addition, city ordinances also outline designated parking areas for nonmotorized vehicles and call for speeding restrictions of 5 mph within city parks.

SYSTEM USAGE

Understanding bicycling and walking behavior on the active transportation network within the City of Sauk Rapids can help in a couple of ways. The purpose of collecting system usage data is to measure the change in usage over time, prioritize the investment of new and existing infrastructure, and assist in planning and designing future facilities. It is essential to know how well current facilities address the user's needs.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN COUNTS

APO staff regularly place a MnDOT-owned portable bicycle and pedestrian counter along shared use path locations throughout the MPA, including three spots within the City of Sauk Rapids.

The MnDOT counter uses two different types of counters simultaneously. The Pneumatic TUBE counter uses two sets of tubes placed perpendicular to traffic. When a cyclist passes over the tubes, this counter can record that cyclist and determine which direction that person was heading. Meanwhile, the PYRO-Box utilizes infrared technology to measure people's body heat who pass in front of its sensor. This counter, much like the TUBE counter, can identify travel directions. While the PYRO-Box can detect bicyclists and pedestrians, it cannot definitively distinguish between the two. When used in conjunction with the TUBE counter, APO staff can calculate pedestrian traffic from the PYRO-Box by subtracting the bicyclists from the total count.

With these portable counters, APO staff monitors daily usage of shared use paths for one week intervals at specified locations. However, the portable counters are owned by MnDOT. As a result, various agencies and jurisdictions can (and have) utilized the counters throughout the year, impacting the consistency in obtaining data. As a result, no 2020 count data was collected in the City of Sauk Rapids.

As stated earlier, the APO regularly deploys the counter at three counting locations throughout the city:

1. The Ox Cart Trail in Island View Park.
2. The Helix Spiral at the Sauk Rapids bridge.
3. The shared use path along Second Street N/CSAH 3 just south of Seventh Avenue N.

The Helix Spiral location is one of a handful of sites throughout the MPA that has counts done seasonally – winter, spring, summer, and fall. Due to weather conditions, the TUBE counter is not deployed during winter. The year-round counting program is relatively new (beginning in 2020), so limited data is available.

Location	Dates Counted (2019)	Weekday Average Bike	Weekday Average Pedestrian	Weekend Average Bike	Weekend Average Pedestrian
Ox Cart Trail	07/08 – 07/14	2	114	0	125
Helix Spiral	07/15 – 07/21	3	81	3	104
Second Street N	07/22 – 07/28	2	50	1	27

FIGURE A.13 – 2019 BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN COUNTS FROM THE THREE SAUK RAPIDS LOCATIONS.

As found in Figure A.13, summer pedestrian usage of these three facilities is relatively high, with average weekday counts ranging between 50 and 114 users.

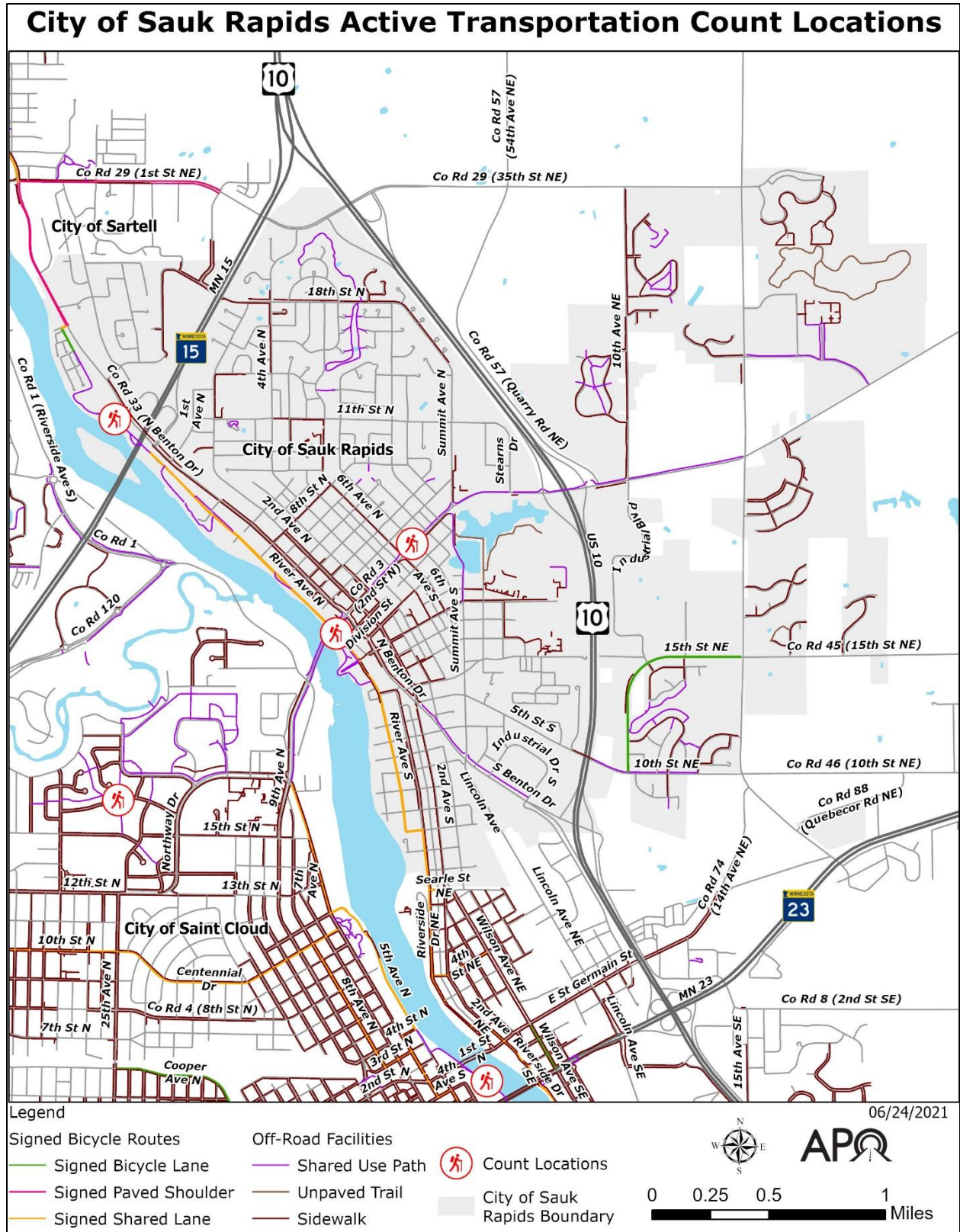


FIGURE A.14 – LOCATIONS WHERE THE APO REGULARLY DEPLOYS AUTOMATIC BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN COUNTERS WITHIN SAUK RAPIDS.

Figure A.15 is the one-week winter seasonal count on the Helix Spiral in 2020. As seen below, usage of this facility in the winter can be correlated to outside temperatures.

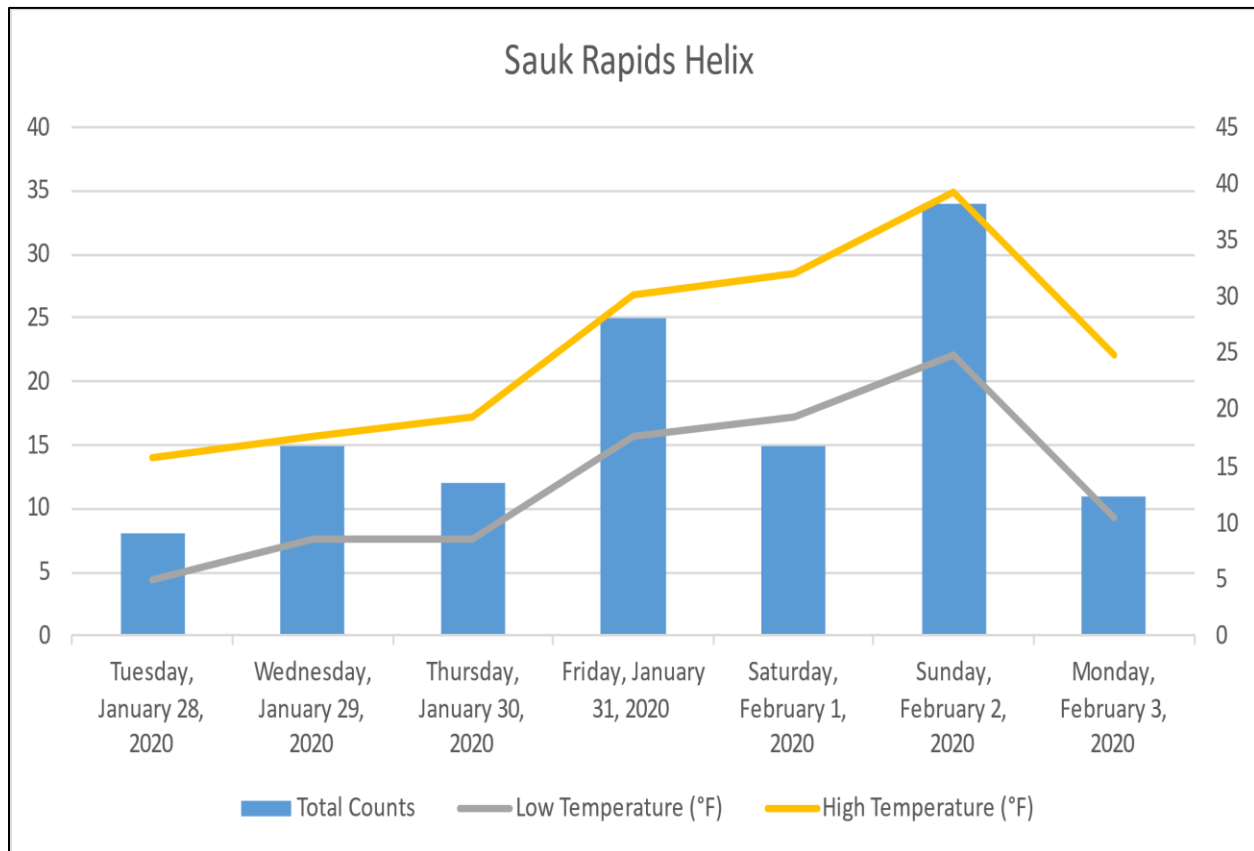


FIGURE A.15 – 2020 WINTER COUNT INFORMATION AT THE SAUK RAPIDS HELIX SPIRAL COMPARED TO DAILY HIGH AND LOW TEMPERATURES.

DESTINATIONS

Common destinations for active transportation users include schools, food assets, employers, and parks. These destinations are shown in Figure A.16. Food assets are grocery stores/supermarkets, specialty food stores, meat markets, convenience stores, and non-profit community food services. Employers listed have 100 or more full- and/or part-time employees.

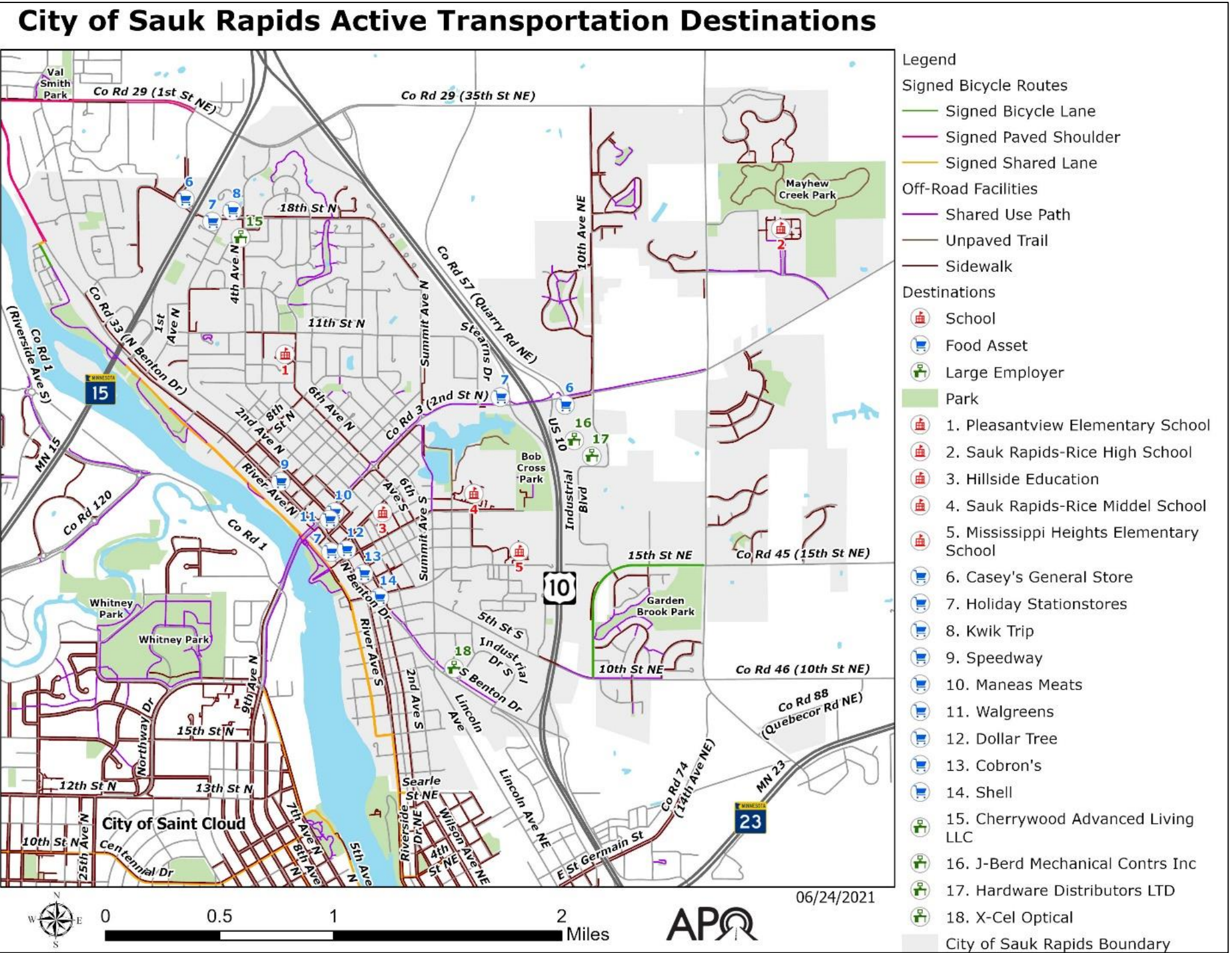


FIGURE A.16 – DESTINATIONS FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION USERS WITHIN THE CITY OF SAUK RAPIDS.

Schools

Among the city’s largest employers, the Sauk Rapids-Rice School District (SR-R District) operates five public schools within city limits. Rice Elementary School, located in Rice, is also part of the SR-R District.

The 2011 Transportation Plan cited safety concerns such as crossing and traffic speeds in many school areas. And while a mix of sidewalks and shared use paths has expanded over time to improve access and safety for students who bike or walk, gaps remain in some areas.

Name	Address	Grades Served	Approximate Number of Students Served
Hillside School	30 Fourth Ave. S	Early Childhood/Adult Basic Education	N/A
Pleasantview Elementary School	1009 Sixth Ave. N	K-5	800
Mississippi Heights Elementary School	1003 Fourth St. S	K-5	1,040
Sauk Rapids-Rice Middle School	901 First St. S	6-8	1,060
Sauk Rapids-Rice High School	1835 Osauka Road	9-12	1,300

FIGURE A.17 – THE FIVE PUBLIC SCHOOLS LOCATED WITHIN THE CITY OF SAUK RAPIDS.

Food Assets

Figure A.16 shows grocery stores and other food destinations are primarily found in the downtown commercial area. This includes Coborn’s, Manea’s Meats, Walgreens, Dollar Tree, and various small convenience stores. Other food asset hubs are located around the US 10/CSAH 3 interchange and locations along 18th Street N and 18th Street NW near the intersection of MN 15.

Food assets are typically along some sort of active transportation facility – either a sidewalk or a shared use path. In addition, food assets such as those in the downtown area are often located near transit stops.

Large Employers

Large employment centers within Sauk Rapids are located within the city’s industrial areas. As shown in Figure A.16, two major employers (J-Berd and Hardware Distributors, LTD) can be found along Industrial Boulevard east of US 10. Other major employers are located along Industrial Drive S, and Benton Drive S. Good Shepherd Community is another major employer in the city’s northern section.

Most large employers are located on a Metro Bus fixed route, though access to sidewalks and shared use paths vary. Again, it is worth noting that US 10 is a major barrier to active transportation facilities. Workers who live west of US 10 would need to travel miles out of their way to reach these employers by active transportation modes.

Parks

The City of Sauk Rapids has 24 parks within city limits. While most are small neighborhood parks, the city does define six regional parks – Island View Park, Municipal Park, Lions Park, Southside Park, Bob Cross Park, and Mayhew Creek Park.

These larger parks and several of the newer neighborhood parks in the city are generally well served with sidewalks or shared use paths. As a result, residential areas near these parks are more likely to have active transportation facilities. Older and smaller neighborhood parks tend to have limited or no sidewalk access.

In the park plan component of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, the city identified the need to grow its park and recreation system. Strategies include integrating the city's parks with regional parks and trails plans. The city plans to expand and improve existing paved and unpaved trail systems between these parks. Park facilities along the Mississippi are planned to connect with the downtown area and other community parks and trail systems.

SAFETY

According to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS), fatalities, serious injuries, and minor injuries involving bicyclists and pedestrians are rising in the Saint Cloud MPA. Within the City of Sauk Rapids, DPS crash data has indicated that 27 crashes involving active transportation users and vehicles have occurred in the 10 years between 2010 and 2019. Of those crashes, 11 injury crashes (41%) occurred in the downtown area. See Figure A.18 for locations and severity.

While most of these crashes resulted in minor injuries, it is essential to note that during this time frame, two pedestrians were killed. A pedestrian death resulted from a crash on US 10 near CSAH 3 in 2013 and another on Benton Drive near MN 15 in 2016. Both crashes involved pedestrians on high-speed arterials struck by vehicles in the traffic lane.

Crash history is reviewed to determine locations where crashes appear to be more likely to occur and whether there may be an engineering solution or partial solution to help mitigate the crashes. It is unclear from the DPS crash reports whether physical conditions at the crash locations were a contributing factor or if physical changes to the facilities may help mitigate future crashes. DPS crash reports do not indicate a common theme or roadway infrastructure/design flaw as a contributing factor. Some reports cited careless behavior or inattention to traffic laws on the part of the bicyclist or pedestrian. The crashes may be due to the high number of vehicles and active transportation users in this area, increasing the likelihood of possible conflicts.

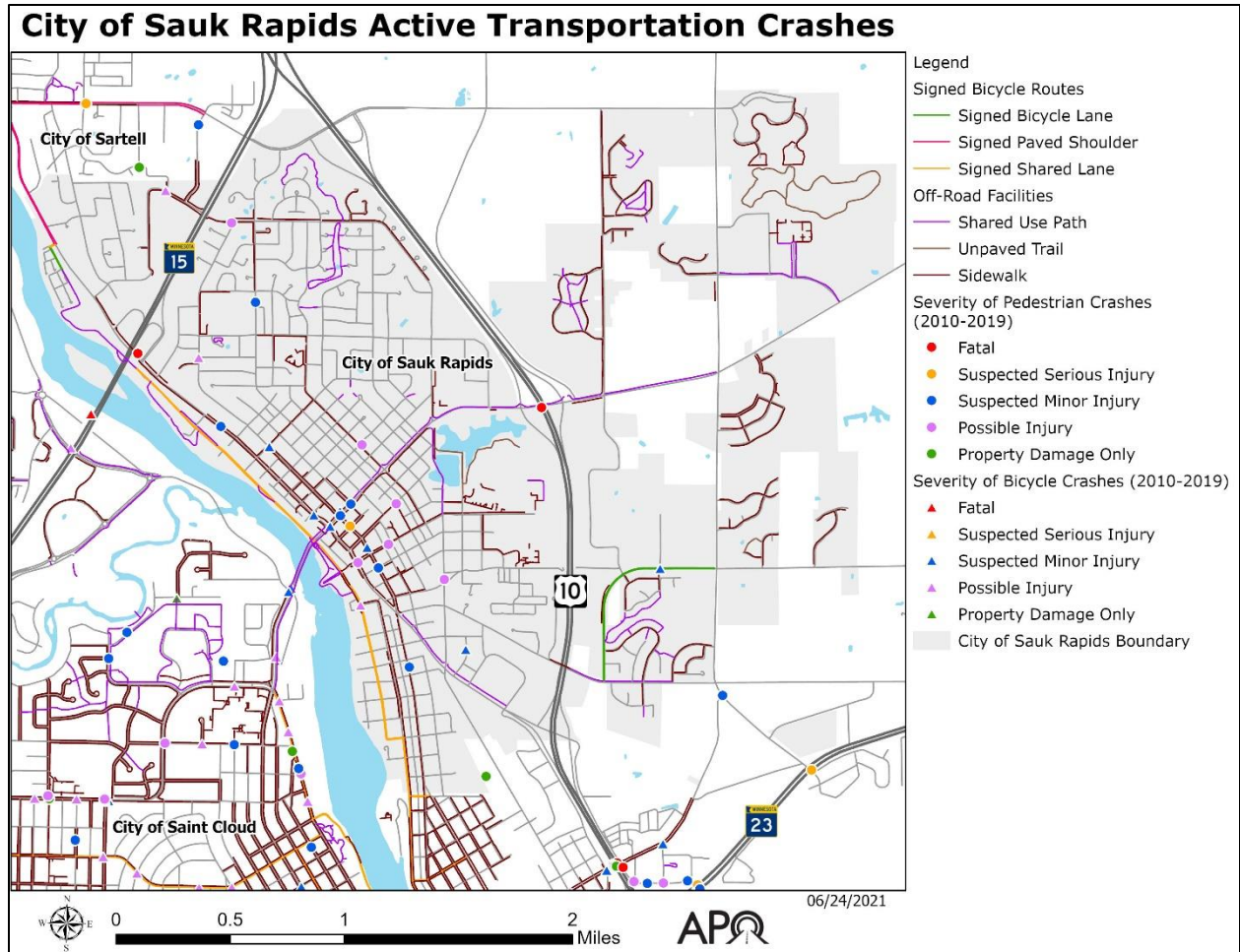


FIGURE A.18 - LOCATIONS WITH CRASHES INVOLVING BICYCLES AND PEDESTRIANS (2010-2019) WITHIN THE CITY OF SAUK RAPIDS.

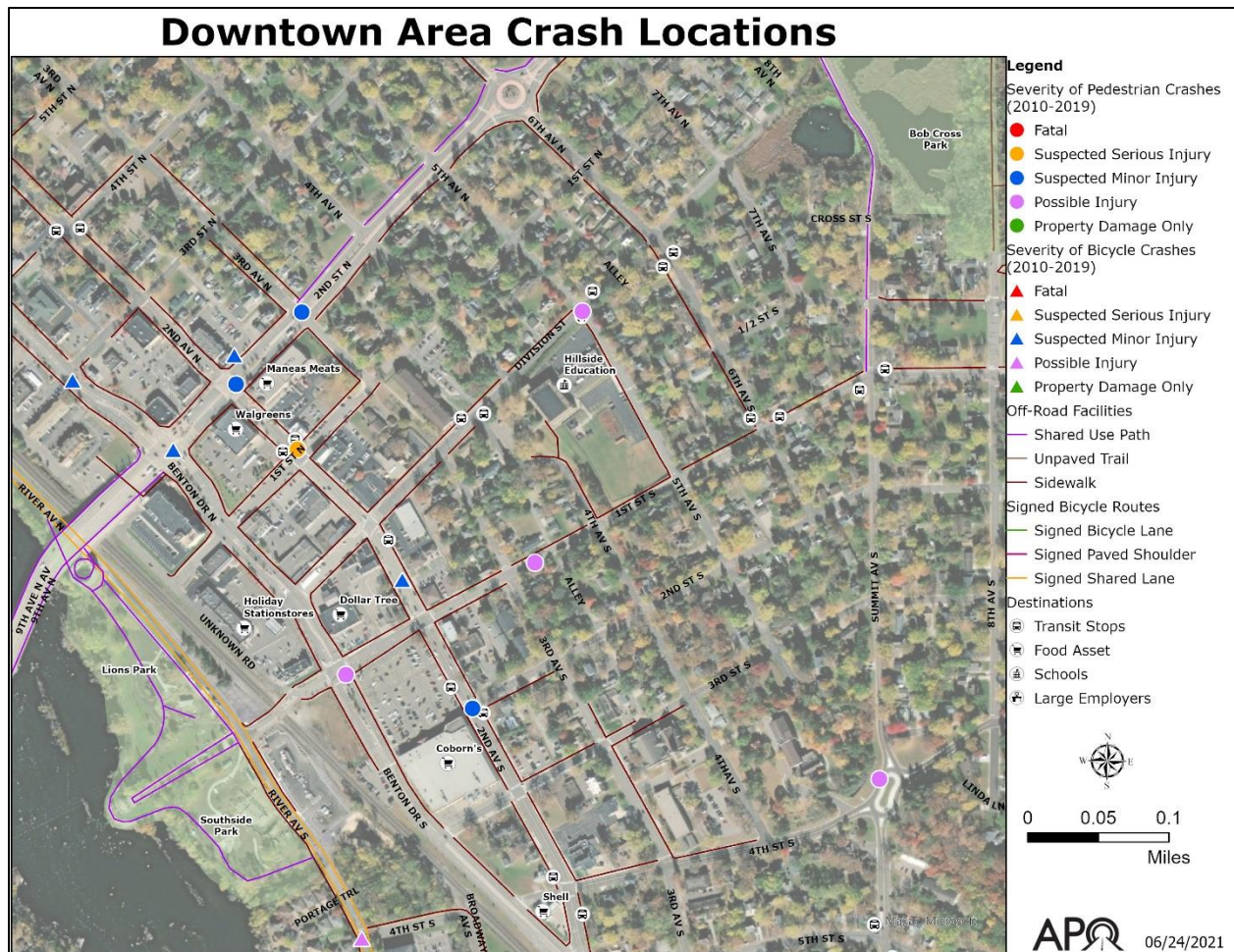


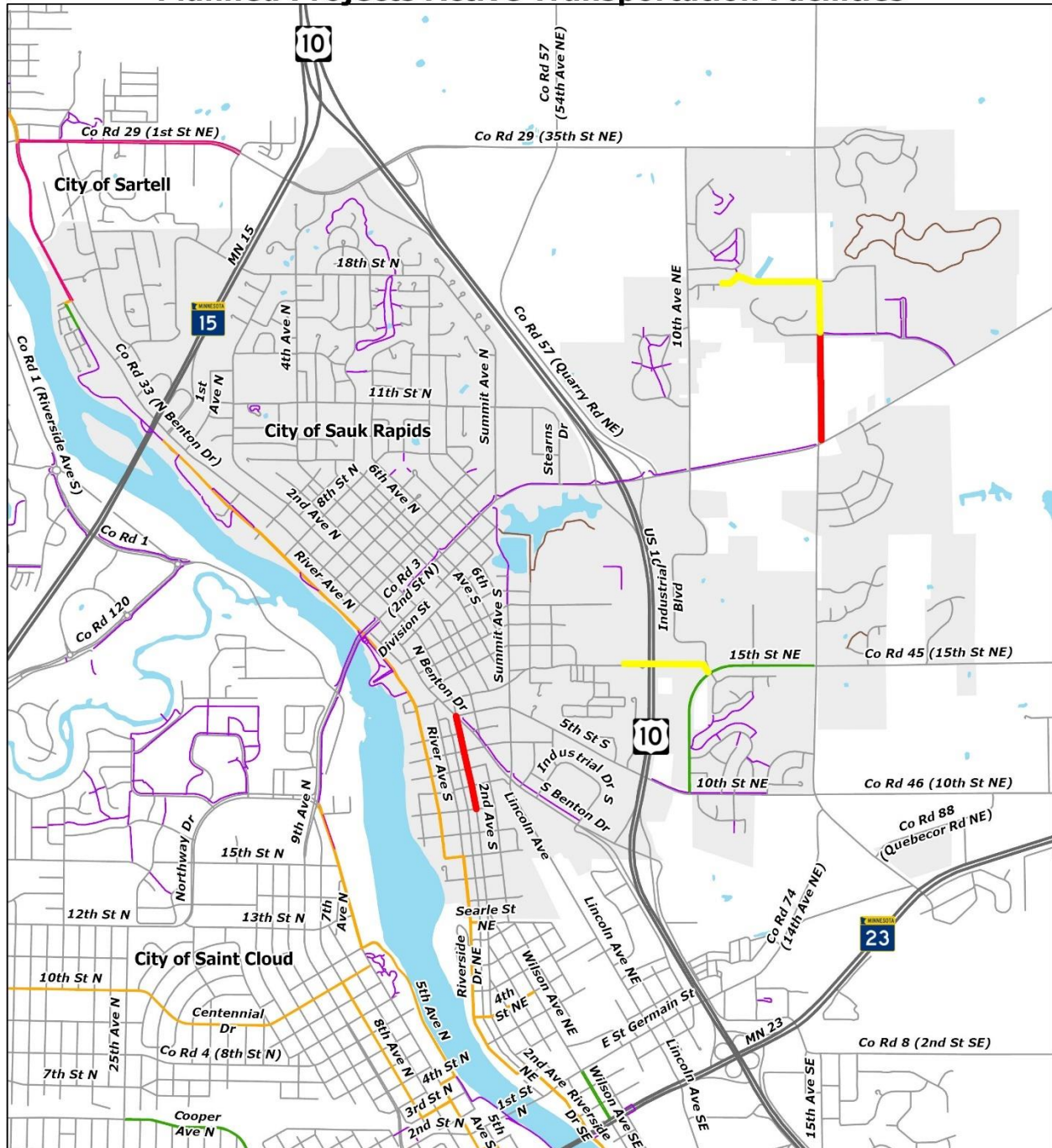
FIGURE A.19 – DOWNTOWN SAUK RAPIDS LOCATIONS WITH CRASHES INVOLVING BICYCLES AND PEDESTRIANS.

PROGRAMMED AND PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

As referenced earlier, the City of Sauk Rapids maintains a Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which identifies short-term projects and long-range concepts designed to improve active transportation facilities. The CIP also indicates anticipated future revenues that may be available to implement such projects.

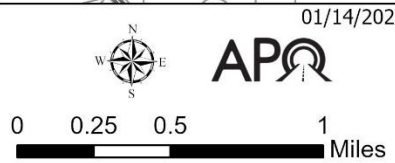
Two active transportation projects are identified in the CIP. In 2021 the city planned to construct a shared use path along Mayhew Lake Road (CSAH 1) from Golden Spike Road NE (CSAH 3) to Osauka Road NE. Around 2024, Second Avenue S from Benton Drive to 10th Street S is slated to be reconstructed and will possibly include the addition of sidewalks along with reconstruction work of existing active transportation infrastructure. The city includes the upgrade of shared use paths and sidewalks with its program of road reconstruction projects.

City of Sauk Rapids Programmed and Planned Projects Active Transportation Facilities



Legend

- Future Active Transportation Projects
- Programmed Project (2021-2024)
- Planned Project (>2025)
- City of Sauk Rapids Boundary



01/14/2022

FIGURE A.20 – EXISTING NETWORK WITH PROGRAMMED AND PLANNED FACILITIES.

Long-term (though currently unfunded) goals for the city’s active transportation network include the following:

- Extending the shared use path north from Osauka Rd NE to the city water tower, then west to 29th Street NE. This would connect to the existing and planned network of sidewalks serving neighborhoods in northeast Sauk Rapids.
- Constructing a grade-separated pedestrian bridge across US 10 connecting Fourth Street S to 10th Avenue NE. This would provide Mississippi Heights Elementary School access to the neighborhood east of US 10.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

APO staff performed a citywide analysis of facility and other needs for active transportation users to supplement and inform current city planning efforts. The intent of this assessment, conducted in coordination with city staff and representatives, was to identify active transportation needs within the city and assist in prioritizing those needs in the event funding becomes available.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

The regional goals and objectives for active transportation as adopted by the APO provide a starting point for the Sauk Rapids needs assessment.

Those goals were:

1. Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and comfort.
2. Improve active transportation connections to desired destinations.
3. Improve the condition of active transportation infrastructure.
4. Provide equitable access to active transportation facilities for all people of all abilities.
5. Promote an interconnected regional active transportation network.

The evaluation factors were equally applied for assessing needs within each city and across the MPA. The goals, objectives, and factors used to evaluate services and needs relative to each objective are detailed in Chapter 4. Performance ratings from the evaluation of factors for Sauk Rapids are shown in Figure A.21.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

From the goals and objectives framework, APO staff, in coordination with Sauk Rapids city staff and community volunteers, developed the following methodology to address critical gaps in the current active transportation system. It should be noted that while this process does not account for every gap or need in the network, it does focus on addressing gaps utilizing existing data as it relates to the region’s active transportation goals and objectives.

The APO’s active transportation needs assessment methodology was broken into three phases. Beginning with an in-depth analysis of transportation networks, APO staff identified issues and needs within individual communities across the region. This cursory review led to a more detailed analysis of active transportation needs for focus areas identified within each city and ultimately the identification of jurisdictional-level project recommendations – Phase 2. In the final phase, local and regional needs identified in the previous phases were prioritized according to the degree goals and objectives would be addressed.

Sauk Rapids		2019	
Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Suspected Serious Injuries Five Year Rolling Average		0.6	
Percentage miles of arterials & collectors that have a sidewalk or shared use path (SUP) on at least one side		38.6%	
Percent of destinations that fall within distance categories	Schools	0 Ft (Asset Served by AT Facility)	100%
		1-310 ft (One block or less)	0.0%
		311-930 ft (Two to three blocks)	0.0%
		> 931 ft (Four or more blocks)	0.0%
	Food Assets	0 Ft (Asset Served by AT Facility)	100%
		1-310 ft (One block or less)	0.0%
		311-930 ft (Two to three blocks)	0.0%
		> 931 ft (Four or more blocks)	0.0%
	Large Employers	0 Ft (Asset Served by AT Facility)	25.0%
		1-310 ft (One block or less)	25.0%
		311-930 ft (Two to three blocks)	25.0%
		> 931 ft (Four or more blocks)	25.0%
	Parks	0 Ft (Asset Served by AT Facility)	92.9%
		1-310 ft (One block or less)	0.0%
		311-930 ft (Two to three blocks)	0.0%
		> 931 ft (Four or more blocks)	7.1%
	Transit Stops	0 Ft (Asset Served by AT Facility)	34.9%
		1-310 ft (One block or less)	23.3%
		311-930 ft (Two to three blocks)	23.3%
		> 931 ft (Four or more blocks)	18.6%
Percent of street crossings that do not meet full ADA standards		80.0%	
Miles of Active Transportation facilities per 1,000 residents in EJ/Title VI Sensitive Areas in comparison to non-sensitive areas		3.1:3.9	
Percent mileage of Regional Priority bicycle facilities that do NOT exist		46.3%	
Percent of on-road bicycle facilities with poor pavement		41.8%	
Percent of SUP with rough/very rough pavement		14.4%	

FIGURE A.21 – SAUK RAPIDS PERFORMANCE REPORT CARD (2019)

Phase 1: Evaluating Needs for the City of Sauk Rapids

In order to begin this evaluation, APO staff reviewed needs and service area gaps relative to the factors listed under goals 1-4. APO staff compiled a series of maps and data that detailed the city's existing active transportation conditions. Utilizing the objectives and

applying factors (as identified in Chapter 4), staff began to dive into the existing conditions data to look for network gaps or areas of concern (i.e., high crash locations, locations of under-designed on-road/off-road facilities).

Figure A.22 summarizes the findings for the City of Sauk Rapids.

Areas of Need - City of Sauk Rapids															
	Safety & Comfort Factors					Connectivity Factors			Facility Condition		Equity Factors		Issues	Potential Treatments	
	1 High Number of Fatalities	2 High Number of Injuries	3 Under Design Guidelines	4 No Adjacent P/B Facilities	5 Cited as Safety Concern	1 Access to Destinations	2 Access to Transit	1 On Road Conditions	2 Off Road Conditions	1 Underserved Demographic	2 ADA Compliance				
CSAH 3 (2nd St N) - Benton Dr to 3rd Ave N		X											X	Downtown area - crashes with injuries, intersections not ADA compliant	Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, traffic calming, bring intersections to ADA standards.
CSAH 33 (Benton Dr N) - TH 15 to CSAH 3		X											X	One fatality (TH 15), crashes with injuries (downtown), intersections not ADA compliant	Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, traffic calming, bring intersections to ADA standards.
11th Street North				X	X		X	X						Major collector without adjacent facilities, serves school destination (Pleasantview), speed & safety concerns for students, lacks transit stops.	Construct sidewalks or shared use paths, crosswalks or crossing improvements, reduce speeds.
Summit Ave S - 1st St S to Benton Dr				X	X		X	X				X		Major collector without adjacent facilities, serves school destinations (elem, middle school), speed & safety concerns, high percentage of low income & zero vehicle households.	Construct sidewalks or shared use paths, crosswalks or crossing improvements, reduce speeds.
River Ave N				X						X	X			Signed shared lane with 30 mph speed (25 mph is the guideline). On road pavement condition (fair/poor). Oxcart Trail in rough condition.	Reduce speeds, add signage, striping bike lanes, improve pavements.
River Ave S				X	X					X				Signed shared lane with 30 mph speed (25 mph is the guideline). On road pavement condition (fair).	Reduce speeds, add signage, striping bike lanes, improve pavements.
Benton Dr S - Summit Ave to Hwy 10				X	X		X							Minor Arterial without adjacent facilities, serves major employers, speed & safety concerns in the overpass area.	Construct sidewalks or shared use paths, manage speeds.
Mayhew Lake Rd - North of CSAH 3				X			X					X		Minor arterial without adjacent facilities, neighborhoods not connected, serves high school, high percentage aged 18 or younger. Funded project completes gap from CSAH 3 to Osauka Rd NE.	Future project identified: connect from Osauka Rd NE to sidewalks at 29th St NE.
Mayhew Lake Rd - South of CSAH 3				X			X					X		Collector without adjacent facilities, neighborhood sidewalk facilities not connected, high percentage of low income & zero vehicle households.	Construct sidewalks or shared use paths to connect current facilities.
Industrial Boulevard							X	X				X		Serves large employers, transit stops with limited P/B facilities. High percentage of low income & zero vehicle households.	Construct sidewalks or shared use paths to serve current transit stops, businesses.
Industrial Drive S							X	X				X		Serves large employers, transit stops with limited P/B facilities. High percentage of low income & zero vehicle households.	Construct sidewalks or shared use paths to serve current transit stops, businesses.
5th St S - Summit Ave to Hwy 10				X			X	X				X		Major collector without adjacent facilities, transit stops with limited P/B facilities, service to large employers, high percentage of low income & zero vehicle households.	Construct sidewalks or shared use paths to serve current transit stops.
4th St S - 4th Ave S to Mississippi Heights Elementary School					X		X	X				X		Area with schools, transit stops with limited P/B facilities, high percentage of low income & zero vehicle households.	Construct sidewalks or shared use paths to serve current transit stops, neighborhoods and schools. Future project: Hwy 10 pedestrian crossing.

FIGURE A.22 – SAUK RAPIDS PHASE 1 NEEDS ANALYSIS.

Considered along with the factors were the comments from the APO’s initial public input along with comments from city staff. Areas where multiple issues were revealed when the factors were applied became the focus of further review and analysis.

Phase 2: Analysis of Sauk Rapids Focus Areas

From the process described for the review of needs and gaps for the City of Sauk Rapids, the following areas were identified as priority areas for improvements.

- 11th Street N area.
- Sauk Rapids-Rice Middle School and Mississippi Heights Elementary area.
- Mayhew Lake Road (Benton CSAH 1) area.

APO staff working in conjunction with city staff for each focus area further analyzed needs and issues and worked to identify possible solutions.

11th Street N Area

The 11th Street N focus area spans the entirety of the roadway from 13th Avenue to First Avenue N as well as Stearns Drive from 13th Avenue N to Second Street N/Benton CSAH 3 as shown in Figure A.23. Due to traffic speed, safety concerns, limited facilities, and the location of Pleasantview Elementary School, this is included as a focus area.

NEEDS AND ISSUES

Eleventh Street N is one of only a few continuous east-west collector roadways in the City of Sauk Rapids and often sees relatively high vehicle traffic. A 2015 traffic count estimated 1,650 vehicles use 11th Street N daily. The posted speed is 30 mph.

The area surrounding 11th Street N is primarily residential, with an abundance of single-family homes. Many homes along this corridor have direct driveway access to the street. Given its proximity to Pleasantview Elementary School, a lot of young children use this roadway. Eleventh Street N also serves the Good Shepherd Community - a church plus care facilities and congregate housing for older adults. The eastern end of the corridor is light industrial, providing many jobs. The 11th Street N corridor, therefore, is a conduit facilitating the flow of workers to and from those jobs.

While there is a small section of sidewalk on this collector roadway – between Fourth Avenue N and Sixth Avenue N – the roadway is not outfitted with much active transportation infrastructure. There are also several transit stops along the corridor.



FIGURE A.23 – SAUK RAPIDS 11TH STREET N AREA OF FOCUS.

Local public safety officials report concerns with vehicle speeds and the safety of children walking and/or biking to Pleasantview Elementary. The city has noted concerns, especially with crossing the intersection of 11th Street N and Sixth Avenue N as part of the 2011 Transportation Plan.

City ordinance calls for a minimum five-foot (unstriped) bicycle route or (striped) lane plus the addition of five-foot sidewalks (on both sides of the street) with reconstructed urban streets where possible.

Recognizing the concern for safety in this school area, the city has made some improvements to active transportation facilities. A new sidewalk, additional crosswalks, and signage were added to the section of 11th Street between 4th Avenue N and 6th Avenue N with the implementation of a Safe Routes to School project in 2014. With the City’s restriping of 11th Street N in 2021, the driving lanes were narrowed, and the shoulders widened to help calm vehicle traffic. On-street parking will remain along portions of this corridor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address needs for the 11th Street N area, it is suggested that investments be directed to improvements along this corridor as follows.

- The city's Transportation Plan called for additional crosswalks along the corridor, traffic control devices, and warning flashers to address safety needs. This plan reiterates these recommendations, especially near Pleasantview Elementary. Consider implementing crossing devices that assist pedestrians by increasing driver awareness, such as Rectangular Regular Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) or Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHBs).
- Add additional sidewalk on at least one side of the roadway from Second Avenue N on the west end, across Summit Avenue N, into the industrial park and following Stearns Drive right-of-way connecting to the existing shared-use path on Second Street N/Benton CSAH 3. This will help provide a critical continuous active transportation connection across US 10. The sidewalk will also help provide needed access to existing transit stops.
- The posted speed limit and traffic volume on 11th Street N suggest that an on-road bicycle facility would be relatively safe and comfortable for most users. The existing pavement is 42 feet wide. This appears to be sufficient for two five-foot wide bicycle lanes (one in each direction), two 12-foot wide driving lanes, and one eight-foot wide parking lane. While parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway, a parking study should be conducted to reaffirm adequate amount of street parking is available. Painting the parking lane and the bike lanes on the pavement should also help control excess speeds on the corridor by visually tightening the drivable area.

Middle School/Mississippi Heights Area

The area surrounding Sauk Rapids-Rice Middle School and Mississippi Heights Elementary School was identified as a focus area due to excessive speeds, safety concerns, and limited facility access to the two public schools. This area of focus includes much of Summit Avenue South and the network of streets that provide access to the City's centrally located elementary and middle schools.

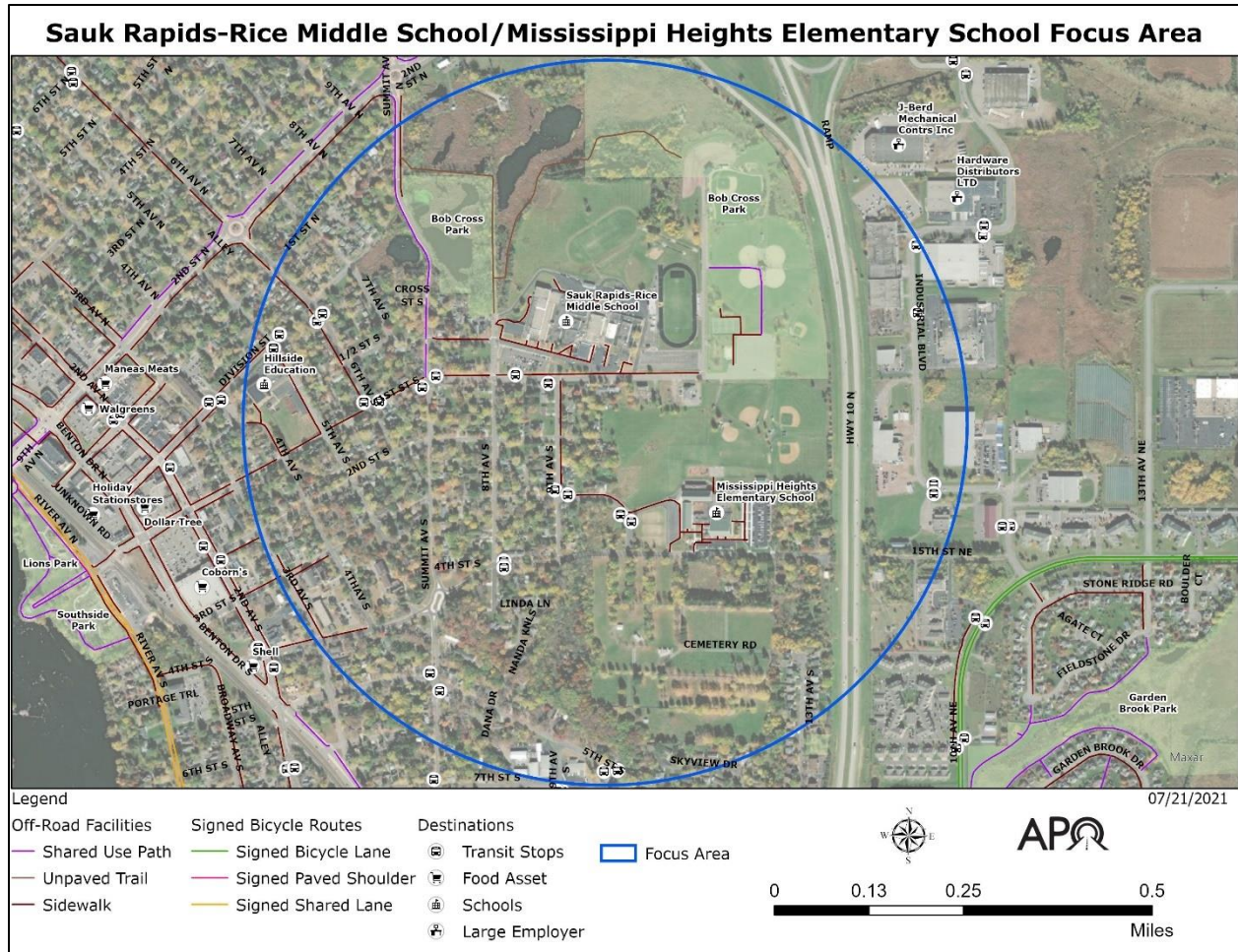


FIGURE A.24 – MIDDLE SCHOOL AND MISSISSIPPI HEIGHTS AREA OF FOCUS

NEEDS AND ISSUES

Vehicles often use Summit Avenue as one of the few crosstown north/south routes. Daily traffic on Summit Avenue was measured at about 1,850 vehicles in 2015. At the same time, Summit Avenue and other streets are used by those walking or biking to the nearby schools.

While a local street, Fourth Street S is the primary access to Mississippi Heights Elementary. At present, there are no active transportation facilities.

Within the focus area, the land use is primarily single-family residential. The residential area surrounding both the middle school and Mississippi Heights Elementary School has a higher number of low-income and zero vehicle households. These demographic groups have been known to rely more heavily on active transportation.

Aside from sidewalks along First Street S and Ninth Avenue S, this area predominately lacks active transportation infrastructure, including access to transit stops along Summit Avenue S and Fourth Street S.

As noted in the 2011 Transportation Plan, there are also concerns with the speed of vehicle traffic along the Fourth Street S corridor. Crossing Summit Avenue S and Sixth Avenue S

were identified as safety concerns in the Transportation Plan. Also noted was the difficulty for vehicles on Summit Avenue S and Fourth Street S to see bicycles and pedestrians.

Concerns from the public have been expressed with vehicle speeds approaching the roundabouts on Fourth Street S and Summit Avenue S and the safety of children who walk or bike on these streets.

The city has long-term plans for a new grade-separated shared use path under or over US 10, providing a direct connection between the elementary school and the residences on the east. However, funding has not yet been identified.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- This plan reiterates and reinforces the City’s plan for a grade-separated shared use path at US 10, connecting Fourth Street S with 15th Street NE, allowing school-aged children to traverse the highway safely.
- Further, adding sidewalks or shared use paths along Fourth Street S is recommended to improve safe access to the schools and other nonmotorized users. If this is impractical, the city may consider the possibility of alternative routes for pedestrians and bicycles such as Third Street S. A continuous active transportation facility from US 10 to the existing sidewalks at the edge of downtown (i.e., Third Avenue S at Third Street or Fourth Street) would be ideal.
- East of US 10, it is recommended that a continuous sidewalk or shared-use path be constructed along 15th Street NE to the Pheasant Ridge Apartments and to Stone Ridge Road.
- Marked crosswalks on Summit Avenue (especially at Third Street S and Fourth Street S) will improve safety and serve as a visual reminder to drivers to expect pedestrians crossing their path of travel. They may also help address the speeding concern as expressed by the public.

Mayhew Lake Road Area

The focus area shown in Figure A.25, CSAH 1 (Mayhew Lake Road) from CSAH 3 to 10th Street NE, was identified due to the lack of connected facilities to residential neighborhoods. This is a growing part of the city with a high percentage of low-income and zero vehicle households.

Mayhew Lake Road (Benton CSAH 1) Focus Area

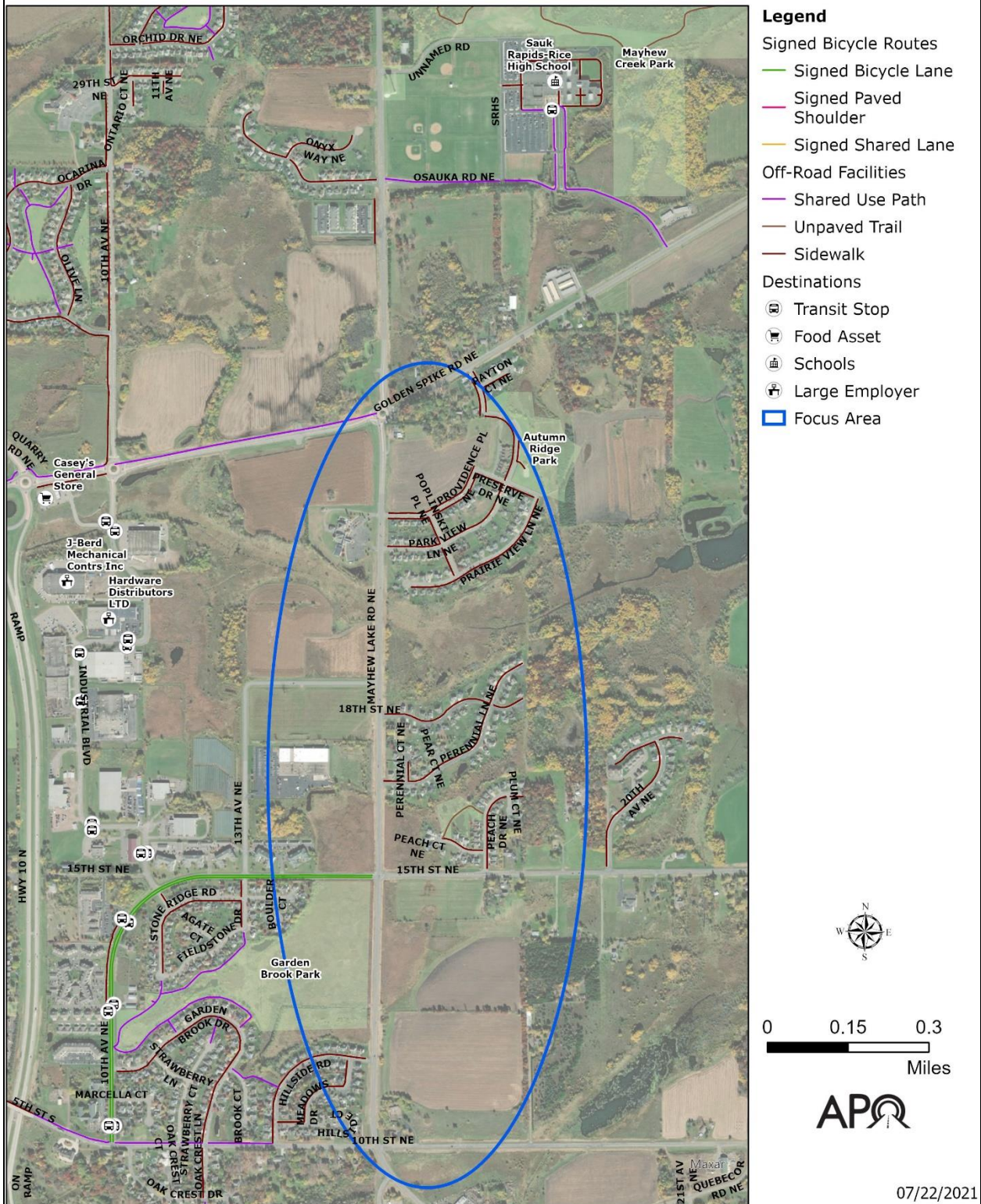


FIGURE A.25 – MAYHEW LAKE ROAD/BENTON CSAH 1 FOCUS AREA.

NEEDS AND ISSUES

The housing developments along Mayhew Lake Road NE south of CSAH 3/Golden Spike Road NE – which mostly contain sidewalks – are missing connections to the City’s more extensive active transportation network. This includes access to the shared use path along CSAH 3, leading to the high school and connecting downtown. Residential subdivisions along 15th Street SE are also missing connections to the more extensive network. The relatively high volume of motor vehicles (3,300-4,800 vehicles per day) and posted speed (55 mph) along Mayhew Lake Road are significant safety concerns for bicycles and pedestrians.

Much of this area is undeveloped. Vacant land along these corridors offers areas with infill potential. New residential or other land use types in the Mayhew Lake Road area will also need connections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Construct a new shared use path along south Mayhew Lake Road from CSAH 3 (Golden Spike Road) to 10th Street NE. Mayhew Lake Road currently has a rural cross-section - which is to say; there are open drainage ditches on both sides of the roadway. But this corridor is destined to become a significant arterial roadway in this fast-growing part of Sauk Rapids. There should be sufficient right-of-way to add a shared-use path on at least one side of the corridor. Doing so would add a vital connection between all subdivisions and neighborhood sidewalks and trails.
- Strong consideration should be given to connecting a new shared use path along Mayhew Lake Road to the recommended shared use path grade-separated crossing of US 10 (see the previous section) via 15th Street NE, thus connecting many east-side neighborhoods with the central part of Sauk Rapids and the downtown area. Continuing the path south to 10th Street NE would allow the facility to link into the network on the south end.
- Consider a shared use path connection east of Mayhew Lake Road along First Street NE to 20th Street NE.

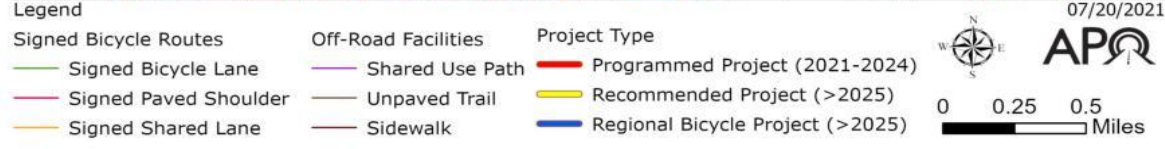
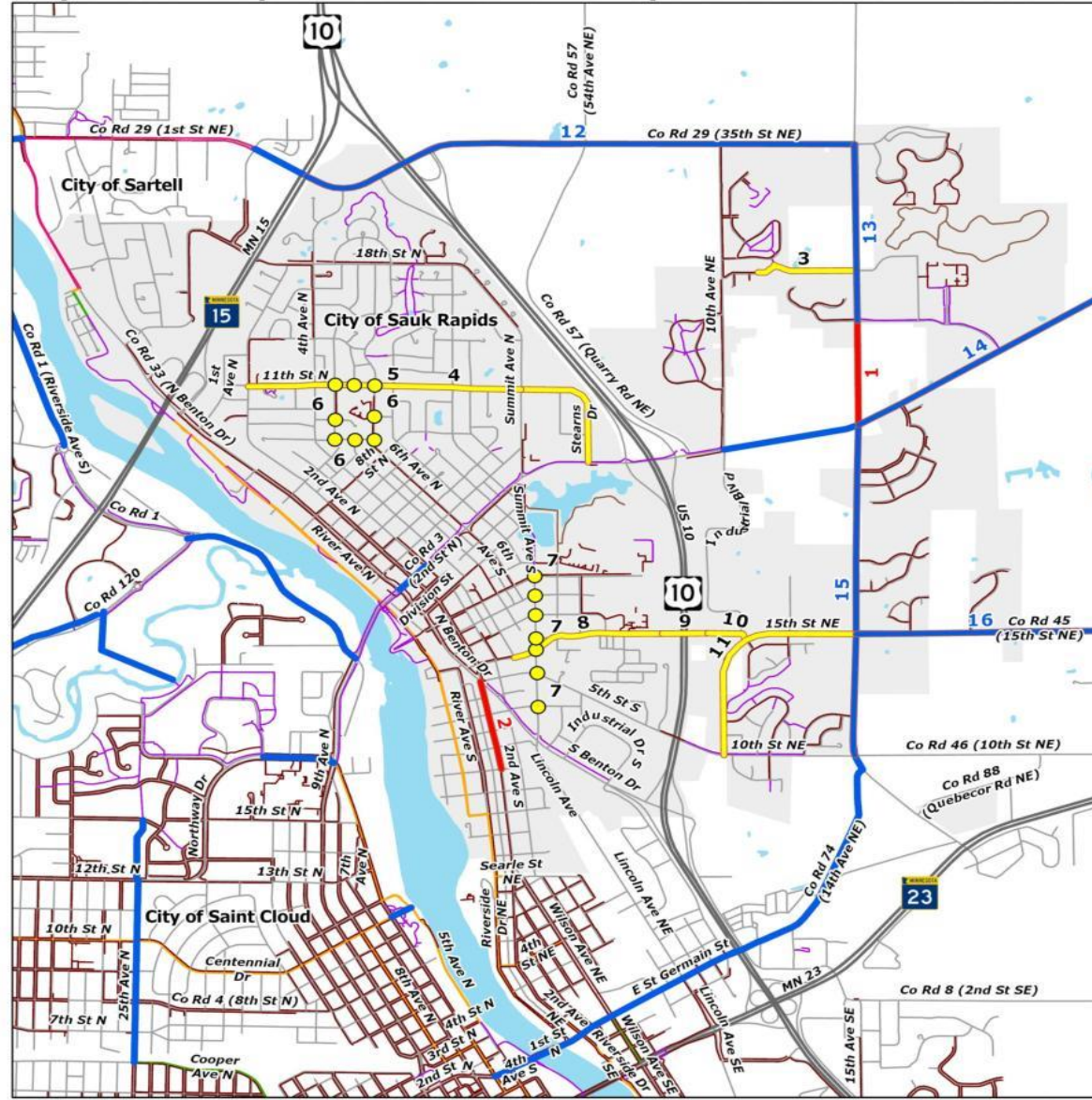
Phase 3: Evaluating Needs for the Region

The final phase of the needs analysis was to identify improvements to the regional facility network within the City of Sauk Rapids. These projects would assist in achieving an interconnected active transportation network that satisfies regional needs.

Regional bicycle facilities will logically connect cities and other parts of the planning area outside Sauk Rapids and include potential links to areas outside the planning region. Projects that connect the area regionally will provide an approximate spacing of two miles between facilities. In structuring a regional system, the preference is to complete gaps with shared use paths over on-road facilities.

Recommended regional facilities to extend the existing network within Sauk Rapids include shared use paths along 35th Street NE (existing County Road 29), north along Mayhew Lake Road (County Road 1), and east along 15th Street NE (County Road 45).

City of Sauk Rapids Future Active Transportation Recommendations



Map Number and Description	
1	Construct regional shared use path along Mayhew Lake Road (Benton CSAH 1) from Osauka Road NE to Golden Spike Road (Benton CSAH 3).
2	Reconstruct of Second Avenue S from North Benton Drive to 10th Street South with the inclusion of sidewalks.
3	Build a shared use path along future roadway extension of 29th Street NE traveling east of the water tower.
4	Construct a sidewalk on at least one side of 11th Street N/Stearns Drive.
5	Paint in a 5 foot wide bicycle lane on each side of 11th Street N.
6	Install additional crosswalks, traffic control devices, and warning flashers near Pleasantview Elementary.
7	Paint marked crosswalks along Summit Avenue.
8	Add sidewalks or shared use paths along 4th Street S connecting to Mississippi Heights Elementary School.
9	Construct a grade separated active transportation bridge crossing of US 10.
10	Build a shared use path from proposed bridge over US 10 along 15th S NE/Industrial Boulevard.
11	Construct a shared use path along 15th Street NE.
12	Build a regional shared use path along 35th Street NE (Benton CSAH 29).
13	Extend the regional shared use path along Mayhew Lake Road (Benton CSAH 1).
14	Construct a regional shared use path along Golden Spike Road (Benton CSAH 3).
15	Build a regional shared use path along Mayhew Lake Road (Benton CSAH 1).
16	Construct a regional shared use path connection along 15th Street NE (Benton County Road 45) east.

FIGURE A.26 – PROGRAMMED AND RECOMMENDED PROJECTS FOR THE CITY OF SAUK RAPIDS.

DRAFT REGIONAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN PROJECT SURVEY INPUT

The draft regional active transportation plan project survey was available for public comment between June 15 and July 15, 2022, via ArcGIS Survey123. The survey asked participants to rate each proposed project from one to five stars, one being the lowest priority and five being the high priority. Below are the results for the City of Sauk Rapids Projects. More information on the public input process can be found in Appendix F.

Project Number	Average Stars
Sauk Rapids Project 3	2.3
Sauk Rapids Project 4	3.0
Sauk Rapids Project 5	3.2
Sauk Rapids Project 6	3.3
Sauk Rapids Project 7	3.0
Sauk Rapids Project 8	3.6
Sauk Rapids Project 9	2.8
Sauk Rapids Project 10	3.2
Sauk Rapids Project 11	2.8

FIGURE A.27 – SURVEY RESULTS.

Comments
Stop wasting Taxpayers money...
Add a couple Metro Bus routes to go to St. Joe each day.

FIGURE A.28 – SURVEY COMMENTS.