City of Plato Comprehensive Plan 2040

Approved: 8/11/2025

Acknowledgments

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Plato Water Tower, Photo by Dylan Edwards.

Vision

"We envision Plato as a friendly, family-centered place that is safe, clean, and vibrant, blending tradition and modernity."

Mission Statement

"To foster a neighborly small-town atmosphere that provides affordable living, prioritizes infrastructure investment, thrives on community engagement, and supports local businesses."

Introduction to the Plato Comprehensive Plan

This document establishes a Comprehensive Plan for the City of Plato. The primary purpose of the Plan is to provide a guide for growth and development. This Plan accomplishes this in two ways. First, the city's goals and policy guidelines must be established. These describe how land use decisions should be made on a day-to-day basis. Second, a future land use map is included to show what type of land use is desirable within the city's current incorporated boundaries and inside the city's urban growth area. The Plan uses a 15-year time frame, although it will be implemented until it is either revised or ultimately replaced. The following information is included in this Plan:

Community Profile: Provides a profile of Plato, including sections on the City's history, social demographics, and future population estimates.

Natural Resources: Introduces the area's natural resource base. It includes sections on the area's water resources, soil, and wellhead protection.

Land Use: Examines Plato's existing land use and establishes future Land Use plans.

Housing: Examines the community's housing needs in the next 15 years.

Economic Development: Examines the economic trends and needs of the community to meet its goals.

Transportation: Examines capacity and system changes and their future impact on Plato.

Infrastructure: Examines capacity sewer, water, and other future needs

Implementation: Specifies implementation tools, including a temporary work plan.

The Role of the Planning Commission, City Council, and Steering Committee

The City Council formally adopted the Comprehensive Plan on February 10, 2003.

In 2024, The City of Plato recognized a need to update this plan in late 2024 and contracted with Bolton & Menk to update this document and review its content with the first of the project management team in February 2025, followed by the assembly of a steering committee of residents and business owners holding its inaugural meeting on February 20, 2025. Following this meeting, a focus group of residents under the age of 30 and business owners were assembled to understand the needs of these key demographics and incorporate them into the plan updates on March 20, 2025.

On April 24, 2025, a final steering committee meeting and public open house were held to engage the public on the new plan document. The Planning Commission and City Council heard the plan in 2025 and approved it in 2025.

Key challenges to future growth were identified:

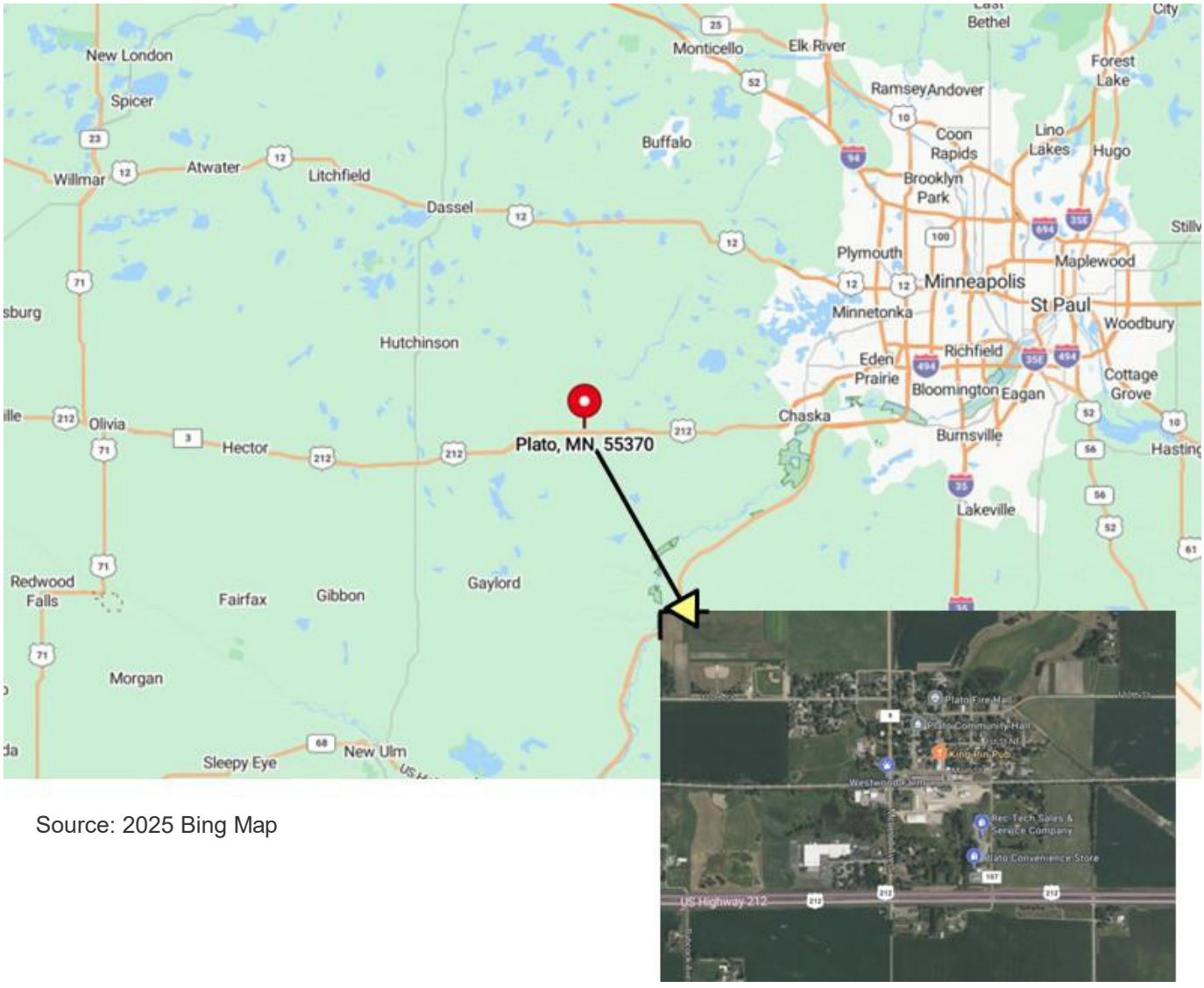
1) Need for more housing aligned with incomes

2) Highway 212 safety access into Plato

3) Water infrastructure expansion

4) Need for more local commercial activity - small businesses and larger employers

Community Profile



Source: 2025 Bing Map

The Community-Based Planning Act

In 1997, Minnesota passed the Community-Based Planning Act to provide a guide to updating comprehensive plans. The statute has been amended numerous times over the past three decades. MN Statutes 462 gives cities the power to plan for their future through a comprehensive process that seeks to engage residents in the future of their communities.

Location of Plato

The City of Plato is in central Minnesota, along the western edge of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area (see Map 1A). It is located along U.S. Highway 212, between Minneapolis to the east (49 miles) and Glencoe to the west (4 miles). The entire Plato area is characterized by vast farmland with pockets of trees and slightly rolling hills. The city is surrounded by Helen Township in the southeast corner of McLeod County near the border with Carver County.

A History of Plato:

1878 - Enoch Holmes and Frances Lavenscher laid out a plan for the town of Plato, and a school was built.

1881 - A new depot was constructed, featuring a bay window where the operators' instruments were housed. A bridge was also built over Buffalo Creek, north of the town.

1889 - The Village of Plato was incorporated.

1890 - The first well was dug.

1891 - The stockyards were established.

1895 - The first streetlamps were purchased.

1898 - Plato's first fire chief was appointed.

1900 - The village acquired its first fire bell.

1902 - A special election was held to establish a City Hall and a lockup.

1907 - Plato acquired its first gas fire engine.

1915 - A new schoolhouse was built. This building is still being used for other purposes.

1916 - The village purchased Block 6 to provide a public park for the city.

1921 - The current community building was constructed.

1941 - A grandstand was built at the ball diamond. 1948 - Dial telephones were installed.

1948 - Legion Post was organized in Plato.

1954 - The current water system was built.

1977 – Plato Bluejays first appearance State Amateur Baseball Tournament

1978 – Plato Centennial

1983 - A grandstand was constructed at Bluejays Stadium.

- Lions Club Founded

1986 - City streets were redone.

1990 – Glencoe/Plato State Division II Champions

1993 - A warming house at the ice skating rink was built.

1994 - A Legion shelter was built in the park.

1996 – Plato Bluejays Class C State Champions

1997 - The Plato Fire Hall was built.

1998 – Two new softball/little league fields constructed

1999 – Softball/little league field bathrooms, concession stand, storage constructed

2000 – City streets updated with wastewater system Air conditioning installed in Plato Hall

New Additions Since 2000:

2001 – New playground installed in city park

- Fire Department purchased new Fire Engine

2003 – Comprehensive Plan Developed

- Plato 125th celebration

2004 – Plato White Squirrel Celebration

2006 – Fire Department purchased Rescue Truck

2007 - Plato Bluejays Class C State Champion

2008 – Water tower painted

2009 – Skateboard Park constructed

- Plato Hall updates AC and stage

2012 – Plato Legion Division II State Champions

2014 – Plato Bluejays field updated – dugout, storage shed

- Plato Legion Division II State Champions- Central Plains Regional Champions

2015 - Plato Bluejays Class C State Champions

- Fire Department purchased Tanker 2

2016 – Renovation of the water tower including exterior metal work

2017 – Fire Department purchased Utility Grass Rig

2018 - Plato Bluejays Class C State Champions

2019 – Water tower painted

- Plato Legion Division II Central Regional Champions
- Christmas Lights in the Park established

2021 – Plato Hall bar rebuilt, and stage upgraded

2022 – Lights installed at the Baseball stadium

- The Plato Fire Department purchased Tanker 1

2023 – City wide National Night Out established

- Railroad electronic crossing lights installed

2023 – City ordinances updated and approved

2023 - The city park received a grant for landscaping improvements and new walking trails and a new community garden created.

2024 – New city park structure built

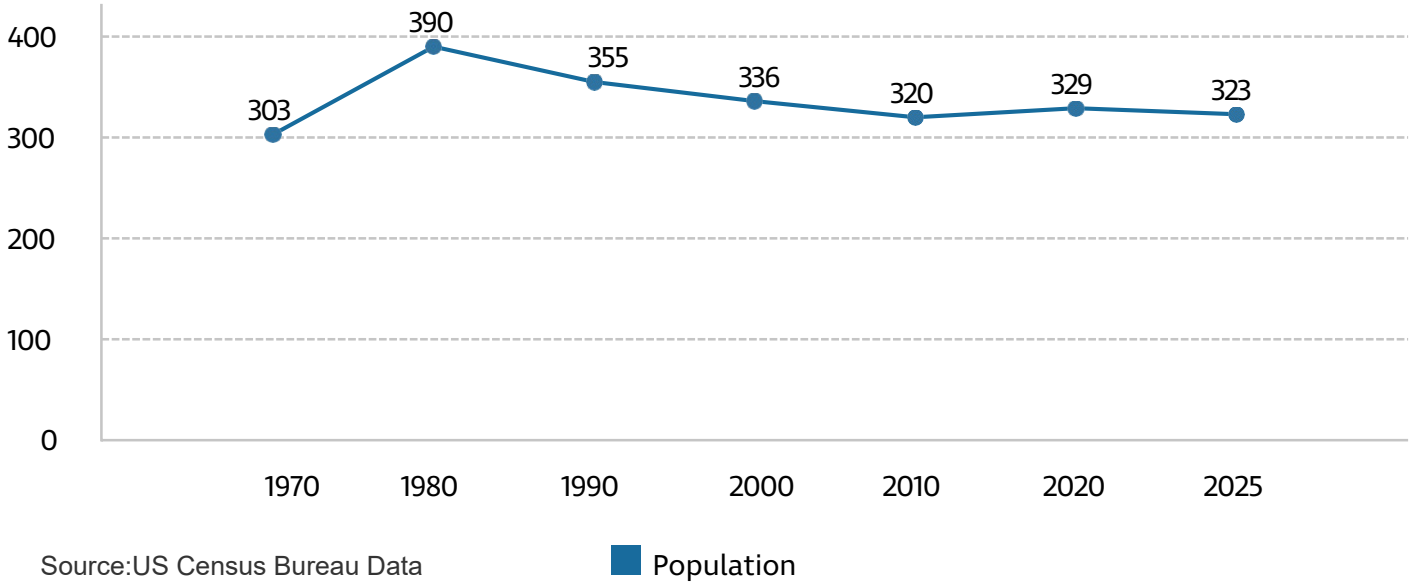
2025 – Fire Department purchased Fire Chief Vehicle

Local Business Improvement:

Ag Specialist additions -1993, 1997, 2012
Crown Door additions – 2015, 2018, 2024
King Pin addition – 1995, 2015
Pinske Edge addition - 2014
Plato Woodwork additions – 1986, 1996, 2001, 2022
Rec Tech addition - 2021
Stockman Trucking addition – 2010, 2015
Tangletown addition - constant incremental growth

Population

Plato consistently gained new residents until 1980, when it peaked at 390. Notice that Plato's population jumped between 1970 and 1980 by 87 people, representing a 29 percent spike in only 10 years. These spikes can occur at any given time, so always preparing for them is important. Since 2000, the population has continued to decline, with 323 people currently residing in the city in 2025. This is a slower decline than 72% of similarly sized cities rates.



Source:US Census Bureau Data

One of the best ways to judge a city's population growth rate is to compare it to the growth rates experienced by similar communities. The table below shows some of Plato's neighboring cities and townships.

City/ Township	2000	2010	2020	2025	25-year change	Percent Change
Glencoe	5,453	5,631	5,744	5,672	219	4.016%
Hutchinson	13,080	14,178	14,599	14,701	1,621	12.393%
Helen Township	835	863	833	1,002	167	20%
Lester Prairie	1,337	1,730	1,894	1,848	511	38.219%
City of Plato	336	320	329	323	13	-3.869%
Silver Lake	761	837	866	856	95	12.48%
Winsted	2,094	2,355	2,240	2,225	141	- 6.256%
McLeod County	34,898	36,651	36,771	36,785	1,887	5.407%
Minnesota	4,919,000	5,303,925	5,706,494	5,737,915	818,915	9.248%

Source: US Census Bureau Data: https://data.census.gov/profile/Plato_city,_Minnesota?g=160XX00US2751460

Age Demographics:

Comparing Plato's population to Minnesota's based on the 2020 Census reveals some unexpected results. Plato has a lower proportion of younger people, with 3.4% fewer individuals aged 20-29, and a higher proportion of older residents compared to the statewide average. Due to the larger sizes of the Baby Boomer and Gen X generations relative to subsequent generations, the portion of the population over age 65 is expected to grow substantially.

Photo Provided by JL

Young people often leave and then return to their cities of origin later in life. Yet keeping younger residents in the community may be achieved through reduced cost of living.

Age Group	Plato Population %	MN%	Difference
0-19	25.0%	22.8%	2.2%
20-29	9.1%	12.5%	-3.4%
29-44	21.9%	20.4%	1.5%
45-64	25.6%	24.3%	1.3%
65+	18.5%	17.9%	0.6%
Total	100%	100%	

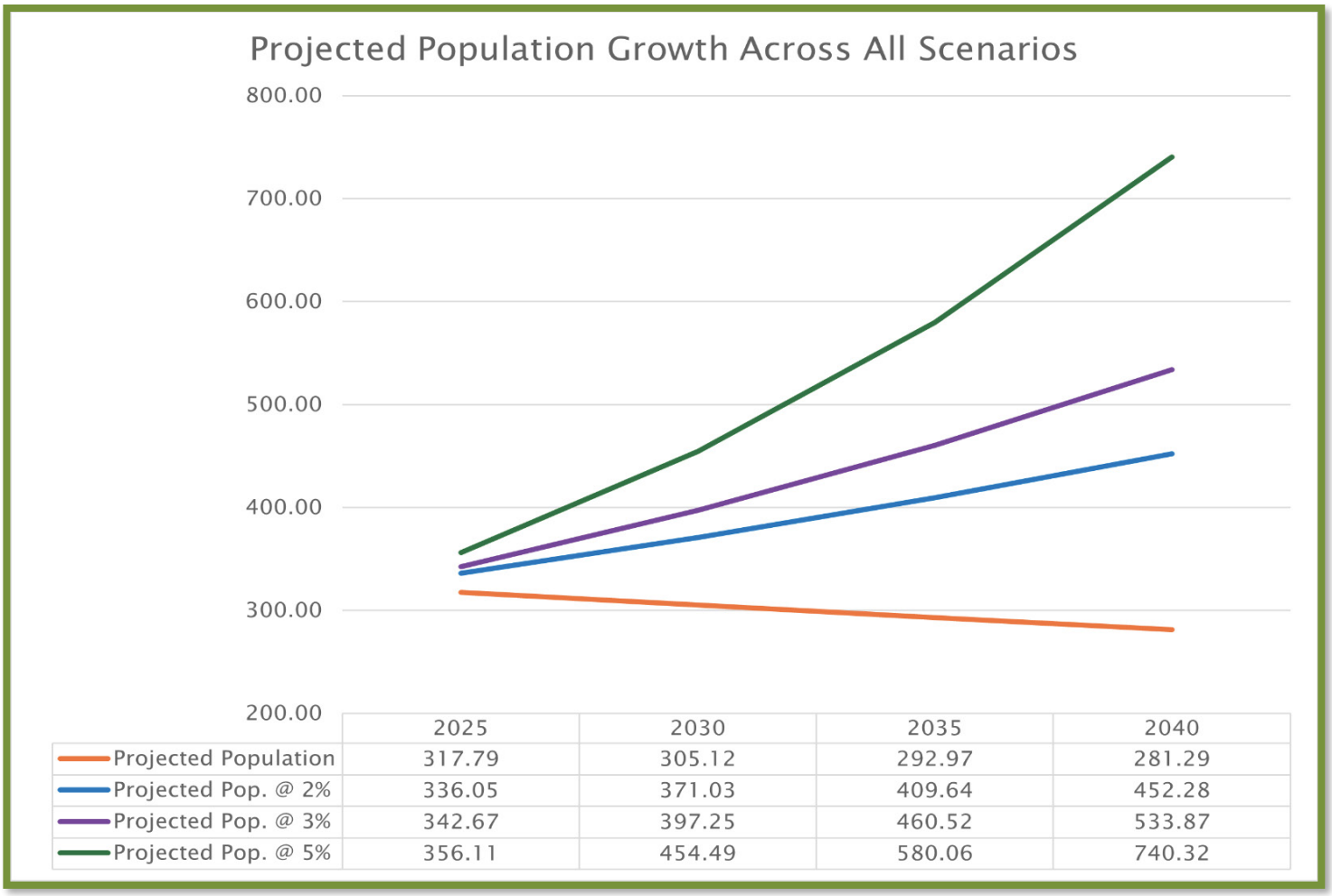
Source: US Census Bureau Data

	2000	2010	2020	2025	Change
Plato	38.0	44.5	39.9	44.4	+6.4
McLeod County	35.6	38.6	40.9	41.5	+5.9
Minnesota	35.4	37.4	39.5	38.6	+3.2

Examining the median age demonstrates this loss of youth is a broader trend. The average city household size can indicate population changes. Between 1970 and 2000, the average household size in Plato decreased by 0.8 people per household, going from 3.1 to 2.3 people. This trend is significant because it shows that even more housing units will be needed to accommodate Plato's growing population. However, since 2000, the average household size has increased to 2.53, indicating more people living in the housing units.

Population & Household Projections:

Plato's proximity to the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area and the recent expansion of Highway 212 to four lanes through Plato reduce the drive time to a commutable distance. With the region's relatively low property cost compared to the Twin Cities and their suburbs, the demand pressure for homes further out from the city is growing exponentially. While the city has experienced a negative growth rate since 1990, which is reflected in the baseline population projections for the city, this is unlikely to continue. Population projections are included for 2%, 3%, and a maximum of five percent annual growth through 2040 to quantify the population growth based on similar growth observations in cities with similar circumstances.



	2025	2030	2035	2040
Projected Population	317.79	305.12	292.97	281.29
Projected Pop. @ 2%	336.05	371.03	409.64	452.28
Projected Pop. @ 3%	342.67	397.25	460.52	533.87
Projected Pop. @ 5%	356.11	454.49	580.06	740.32

Source: US Census Bureau Data

Natural Resources

The Plato area has a diverse range of natural resources due to its location in a transitional region between the forested areas to the north and the agricultural lands to the south. Currently, agricultural land is predominant, with groves of trees remaining as reminders of the historical "Big Woods"[1][2].

Climate:

Plato experiences a continental climate with varied weather patterns between summer and winter. In 2024, the average summer temperature in McLeod County was 69.7°F, and the average winter temperature was 27.2°F. Relative humidity ranges from 59% in the afternoon to 78% in the early morning. The area receives sunshine 69% of the time in summer and 51% in winter. The prevailing wind comes from the northwest, with the highest wind speeds in April[4][3].

Annual precipitation in Plato ranges from 16.5 to 35 inches, with summer rainfall between 3.9 and 16.5 inches. Winter precipitation ranges from 0.98 to 4.77 inches, resulting in an average annual snowfall of 44 inches. Despite low winter precipitation, spring flooding can occur due to factors like deep snow pack, frozen soil, rapid snow melt, and heavy early spring precipitation[4][3].

Photo Provided by JL, wetland area

footnotes

[1] Government | City of Plato
[2] Home | City of Plato
[3] Yearly & Monthly weather - Plato, MO
[4] Plato, MN Climate - Sperling's BestPlaces

Photo Provided by JL, Old Kennison Lake-Wetlands

Topography and Native Vegetation:

The area around Plato features a gently undulating till plain with scattered moraines, shaped by the advance and retreat of the Grantburg glacial lobe during the Wisconsin glacial period around 10,000 years ago. This glacial activity carved out the valley of Buffalo Creek[5][6].

Historically, the area was covered with wet prairies, brush prairies, and hardwoods. Upland prairies were dominated by grasses like big bluestem and Indian grass, while lowland prairies had species such as prairie cordgrass and bluejoint. Hardwood forests included elm and ash. Most of these native vegetative communities have been replaced by agriculture[5][6].

Water Resources

Plato is located within the South Fork of the Crow River Watershed, specifically the Buffalo Creek Subwatershed. The area includes various water resources such as wetlands, aquifers, and Buffalo Creek[7][8][9].

footnotes

[5] Rocks, views, soils and plants at the temples of ancient Greece

[6] Plants in Plato's Timaeus - JSTOR

[7] Water Utilities | City of Plato

[8] Water Rates & Policies | City of Plato

[9] Plato 2020 Drinking Water Report - City of Plato

Wetlands:

A "wetland" refers to a low area in the landscape covered with shallow and sometimes intermittent water. Wetlands are also known as marshes, swamps, potholes, sloughs, shallow lakes, and ponds. While often considered marginal land, wetlands serve many essential functions in the natural ecosystem. They provide habitat for numerous species of flora and fauna, natural water filtration, flood attenuation, aquifer recharge, and opportunities for recreation and aesthetic appreciation[11][12].

As the city expands, utilizing these wetlands as natural areas may be desirable, and they can be integrated into walking trails, picnic areas, or bike paths.

Wetlands are classified according to their water depth, total area, and seasonal life span. The following wetland-type definitions are based on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Circular 39 wetlands classification system[13][14]

Type 1: Seasonally Flooded Basin or Flat: Soil covered with water or waterlogged during variable seasonal periods but usually is well drained during much of the growing season.

Type 2: Wet Meadow: Soil usually without standing water for most of the growing season but is waterlogged within a few inches of the surface.

Type 3: Shallow Marsh: Soil usually waterlogged early in the growing season, often covered with as much as six or more inches of water.

Type 4: Deep Marsh: Soil usually covered with six inches to three feet or more of water during the growing season.

Type 5: Shallow Open Water (Lake): Includes shallow ponds and reservoirs, with water usually less than ten feet deep.

Type 6: Shrub Swamps: Soil waterlogged during the growing season and often covered by as much as six inches of water.

Type 7: Wooded Swamps: Soil usually waterlogged at least within a few inches of the surface and is covered with up to one foot of water.

Type 8: Bogs: Soil usually waterlogged and supports a spongy covering, typically occurring in shallow basins, flat uplands, and sluggish streams.

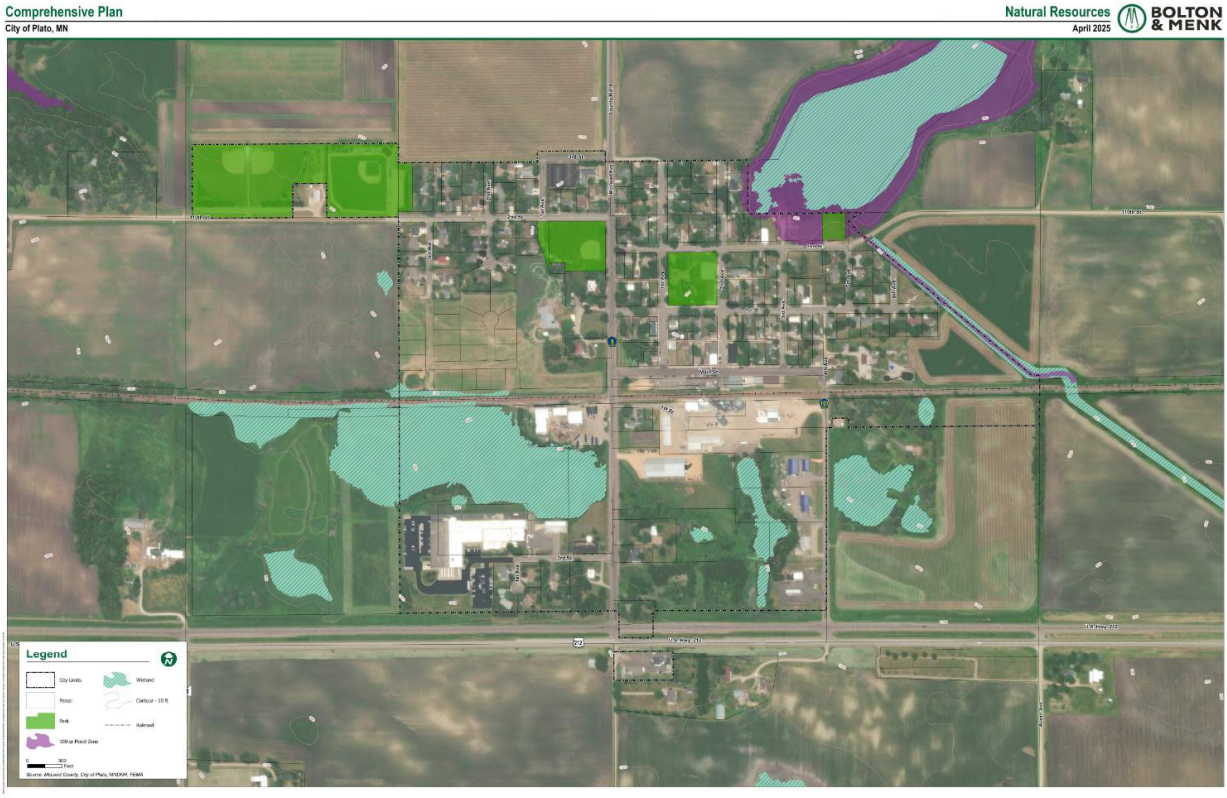
footnotes

[11] : EPA - How do Wetlands Function and Why are they Valuable?

[12] : EPA - Why are Wetlands Important?

[13] : US Fish & Wildlife Service - Wetland Classification Codes

[14] : EPA - Classification and Types of Wetlands



Plato Presettlement Vegetation

Wetlands are regulated and protected under various federal and state laws. In Minnesota, the Public Waters Inventory includes types 3, 4, and 5 wetlands that are ten or more acres in unincorporated areas or two and a half or more acres in incorporated areas. Any work below the ordinary high-water mark of public waters requires a permit from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). For more information on wetland laws and regulations, contact the McLeod County Soil and Water Conservation District or the Minnesota DNR[15][16].

Floodplains:

Floods are classified by their frequency and depth, such as 10-year, 25-year, 50-year, 100-year, and 500-year floods. A 100 year flood has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year and is more destructive due to its larger volume and greater depth of water.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) uses the term "base flood" to describe these events. Base Flood Elevation (BFE) requirements are listed on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and used on Elevation Certificates to indicate expected water depth during a flood. New buildings in Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) must have their lowest floors at or above the BFE[17][18]. Human activity has impacted the drainage in Plato which may have caused changes since the last FIRMs.

Buildings in 100-year flood areas must have flood insurance to receive federally backed mortgages or home equity loans. Over a 30-year mortgage period, buildings in these areas have a 26 percent chance of experiencing a 100-year flood[17][18].

footnotes
[15] Vegetation – Presettlement : Minnesota Natural Resource Atlas
[16] Native Vegetation at the Time of the Public Land Survey 1847-1907
[17] Find flood maps - Minnesota DNR
[18] Flood Maps - FEMA.gov

Aquifers:

The bedrock of eastern McLeod County is overlain by glacial drift deposits up to 200 feet deep. There are two types of aquifers within this drift: surficial drift aquifers, which are shallow and localized, and buried drift aquifers, which are deeper and cover larger areas. The City of Plato's public water supply well, located in Section 14 of Helen Township, is permitted by the Minnesota DNR to withdraw 17.0 million gallons per year[19][20].

Wellhead Protection:

To protect its water supply, the city, in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), is developing a Wellhead Protection Plan. This plan will identify a wellhead protection area, inventory potential sources of groundwater contamination, and outline measures to safeguard the public water supply[21][22].

Soil Resources:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has prepared a soil survey for McLeod County, which describes the characteristics of each soil type and their suitability for various land-use activities. Important characteristics for Plato include drainage, water table, and suitability for building construction. Soil surveys provide information on cropland management, erosion factors, crop production capability, windbreak suitability, woodland management, recreational development impact, wildlife habitat suitability, engineering suitability, and soil properties[23][24].

Natural Resources:

- **Protecting Natural Resources:** McLeod County's diverse natural resource base offers economic, recreational, and aesthetic benefits. The city should support policies to protect these resources.
- **Protect Wetlands:** Wetlands improve water quality, provide floodwater storage, and offer wildlife habitat. Land use decisions should consider the importance of wetlands and consult the DNR on significant wetland issues.
- **Value of Open/Green Space:** Open spaces provide recreational, ecological, and aesthetic value. The city should prioritize preserving these areas.

Dylan Edwards Photo on Hwy 212 North

footnotes

[19] Groundwater Provinces of Missouri: Springfield Plateau Groundwater ...

[20] Columbia Plateau Regional aquifer system | U.S. Geological Survey

[21] Wellhead Protection Rule Revision - MN Dept. of Health

[22] What is a wellhead protection area and how can a facility determine if ...

[23] Official Series Description - PLATO Series - USDA

[24] Web Soil Survey - Home

Controlling runoff and stormwater drainage is crucial for development in Plato, MN, for several reasons:

1. **Flood Prevention:** Effective stormwater management reduces the risk of flooding by controlling the flow and volume of runoff. This is particularly important in areas with impervious surfaces like roads and buildings that prevent water from infiltrating the ground.
2. **Water Quality Improvement:** Runoff can carry pollutants such as oils, chemicals, and sediments into water bodies. Proper stormwater management practices help filter and remove these pollutants, protecting the quality of rivers, lakes, and groundwater.
3. **Erosion Control:** Uncontrolled stormwater can cause soil erosion, damaging landscapes and infrastructure. Proper management practices stabilize soil and prevent erosion.
4. **Environmental Protection:** Stormwater management supports ecosystems by maintaining natural hydrology, protecting aquatic habitats, and ensuring that water bodies remain healthy and resilient.
5. **Infrastructure Longevity:** Proper management reduces the burden on drainage systems, preventing wear and tear and extending their lifespan.
6. **Regulatory Compliance:** In Minnesota, stormwater management is regulated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and State Disposal System (SDS) permits. The Minimum Impact Design Standards (MIDS) developed by the MPCA aim to minimize stormwater runoff and pollution, helping to maintain natural resource health. Compliance with these standards is essential for sustainable development in Plato.

Photo Provided by JL, Land East of the city

When standards apply based on development size:

1. Construction General Permit (CGP): This permit is required for construction activities that disturb one acre or more of land. It includes requirements for erosion and sediment control, as well as post-construction stormwater management [25].
2. Enhanced Runoff Control: For developments that disturb one acre or more, the post- development runoff rate and volume must be maintained for both the one-year 24- hour and two-year 24-hour storms.
3. Minimum Impact Design Standards (MIDS): These standards aim to minimize stormwater runoff and pollution. They apply to new developments and redevelopments, particularly those that disturb one acre or more of land.

By adhering to these standards, developments in Plato, MN, can effectively manage stormwater runoff, protect water quality, and comply with state and local regulations.

footnotes

[25] https://stormwater.pca.state.mn.us/in dex.php/Regulatoryinformation

Natural Resources Goals & Policies:

Goal One: The city aims to protect, preserve, and enhance its natural resources by carefully considering the impact of development.

Policy 1: Land use guidance will minimize impacts on the natural environment, including discouraging urban sprawl, limiting runoff, and reducing intense uses near waterbodies and wetlands.

Policy 2: Development activities will be directed to connect to the city water and sewer system to reduce contaminants from these septic systems and contaminated wellheads when economically feasible.

Policy 3: The city will seek opportunities to collaborate with McLeod County for technical and financial assistance in implementing these policies.

Goal Two: Plato will regulate activities within the city to ensure that prime soils, wetlands and wildlife are preserved for future residents.

Policy 1: The city will promote best practices to maintain open spaces and encourage positive land use, such as regenerative farming, to enhance resilience and community well-being.

Policy 2: Enforcement and implementation of ordinances and procedures to address environmental concerns will be prioritized.

Policy 3: The city will regularly evaluate open spaces and environmental conditions to ensure their availability for future enjoyment.

Photo Provided by JL, City Park

Land Use

Purpose of Planning for Land Use

Plato's current zoning indicates existing districts and clarifies parcels based on their allowed use. Currently, Plato adopted its most recent land use map in 2003. This plan creates a Future Land Use Map that looks forward 15 years and sets the blueprint for future land use decisions.

Land use planning is a critical process that helps communities like the City of Plato manage their growth and development in a resilient and organized manner. The primary purposes of land use planning include:

1. **Guiding Development:** Ensuring that land is used efficiently and appropriately to meet the community's needs.
2. **Protecting Resources:** Preserving natural resources, open spaces, and agricultural lands.
3. **Enhancing Quality of Life:** Creating a balanced environment that supports residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational needs.
4. **Promoting Economic Growth:** Facilitating economic development by designating areas for commercial and industrial activities.
5. **Ensuring Public Safety:** Reducing risks from natural hazards and ensuring safe and accessible infrastructure.

Relationship Between Land Use and Zoning

Land use planning and zoning are closely related but serve different functions:

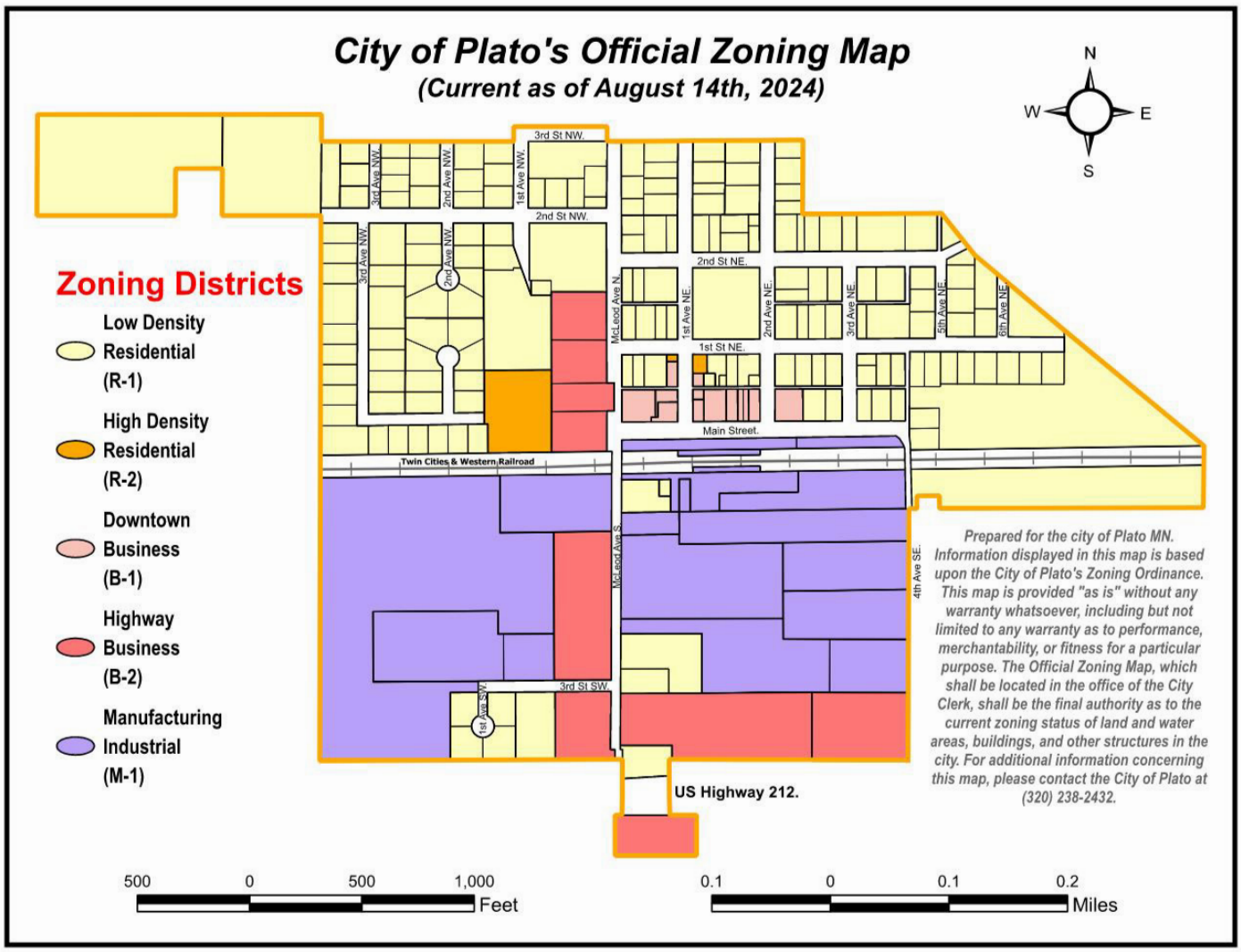
- **Land Use Planning:** This involves creating a comprehensive plan outlining the community's long-term development vision and designating areas for different types of land uses, such as residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational.
- **Zoning:** The regulatory tool implements the land use plan. It involves creating specific regulations and ordinances that control land use in different areas. Zoning laws dictate the types of buildings allowed, their heights, densities, and other aspects of land development.

Together, land use planning and zoning ensure that the community's growth is orderly, resilient, and aligned with the overall vision for the future.

Current Zoning

The following land use definitions were used to classify Plato's current land use:

- **Agricultural (Brown)** - identifies all the land within Plato's current corporate limit used for agricultural purposes.
- **Low-density residential (R-1 in Yellow)** - includes single-family dwellings, duplexes, and mobile homes, with limited institutional and recreational uses permitted.
- **High-density residential (R-2 in Orange)** - includes all multi-family dwellings, duplexes, mobile homes, nursing homes, and other retirement communities.
- **Downtown Business (B-1 in Pink)** - includes retail stores, restaurants, professional offices, and other businesses that serve the public.
- **Business Commercial (B-2 in light Red)** - This category includes highway-oriented retail, large box stores, and businesses.
- **Manufacturing/Industrial (M-1 in light purple)** – includes all businesses that provide goods and services not directly linked to the general public (i.e., manufacturing, warehouse, etc.)



Breakdown of zoning district areas:

- Single Family Residential (24.8%)
- Vacant (24.5%)
- Agriculture (18.9%)
- Industrial (18.0%)
- Parks/Recreation (8.9%)
- Retail/Commercial (3.4%)
- Semi-Public (0.9%)
- Public (0.6%)
- Multi-Family Residential (<0.1%)

By combining vacant and agricultural land, the city has adequate land to accommodate future growth. Much of the vacant land within the city is covered with wetlands, which makes these areas suited for drainage and green open space, or they can be developed with good civil engineering practices.

Zoning Districts

Agricultural District (Ag)- no parcels zoned Ag on the current zoning map.

Purpose: The Agricultural District (Ag) is intended to preserve, for a limited time, those lands devoted to agricultural enterprises within the city where future urban expansion is planned. In this manner, conflicts between agricultural and nonagricultural land uses shall be minimized. The District's effect is to restrict and control the infiltration of urban development into areas generally devoted to agriculture until the City Council determines that it is financially and economically feasible to provide public services and facilities, thereby promoting orderly urban development. It is intended that the status of all areas in this district be reviewed by the Planning Commission no less frequently than every five (5) years to determine whether, in light of current land development trends, there should be a transfer of all or any part of such areas to some other appropriate use district. Any such review shall be considered about the land use plan, in addition to the need for permitting other uses on such land, the nature of the use or uses to be permitted, the cost and availability of the public services and facilities that will be necessitated by such new use or uses.

Low Density Residential District (R-1)

Purpose: The Low-Density Residential District (R-1) is intended to provide for low-density residential development, with limited institutional and recreational uses permitted. The district is designed to protect residential areas that are now being developed and to regulate the efficient use and orderly development of vacant land designated for residential use. It is essential that areas be designated and regulations be imposed for various kinds of residential developments so that the city can plan for services, future schools, parks, streets, and utilities. The regulations are designed to promote a suitable environment for family life. Recreational and institutional uses compatible with residential areas are also permitted on parcels of adequate size to allow required parking and building needs.

High Density Residential District (R-2)

Purpose: The High-Density Residential District (R-2) is intended to provide medium to high-density residential development. It is designed to accommodate single-family and multiple-family structures in an acceptable relationship with one another and to regulate the efficient use and orderly development of vacant land designated for such use.

Downtown Business District (B-1)

Purpose: is intended to provide for various retail activities and could act as a banking and financial center, an entertainment and hotel center, or a center for business and professional offices. The district comprises the “downtown” section of the city. The use of land is intensive, one of the main determinants of its vitality. These regulations encourage such intensity of use and exclude activities that negatively affect the proper functioning of the Downtown Business District.

Highway Business District (B-2)

Purpose: The Highway Business District (B-2) was established to encourage the functional grouping of commercial enterprises that cater primarily to either “local” or “through” motorists. Typical uses include accommodations and services for motorists, specialized outlets, and commercial amusement enterprises. This district's requirements are developed to minimize traffic hazards and interferences with other related uses in the vicinity.

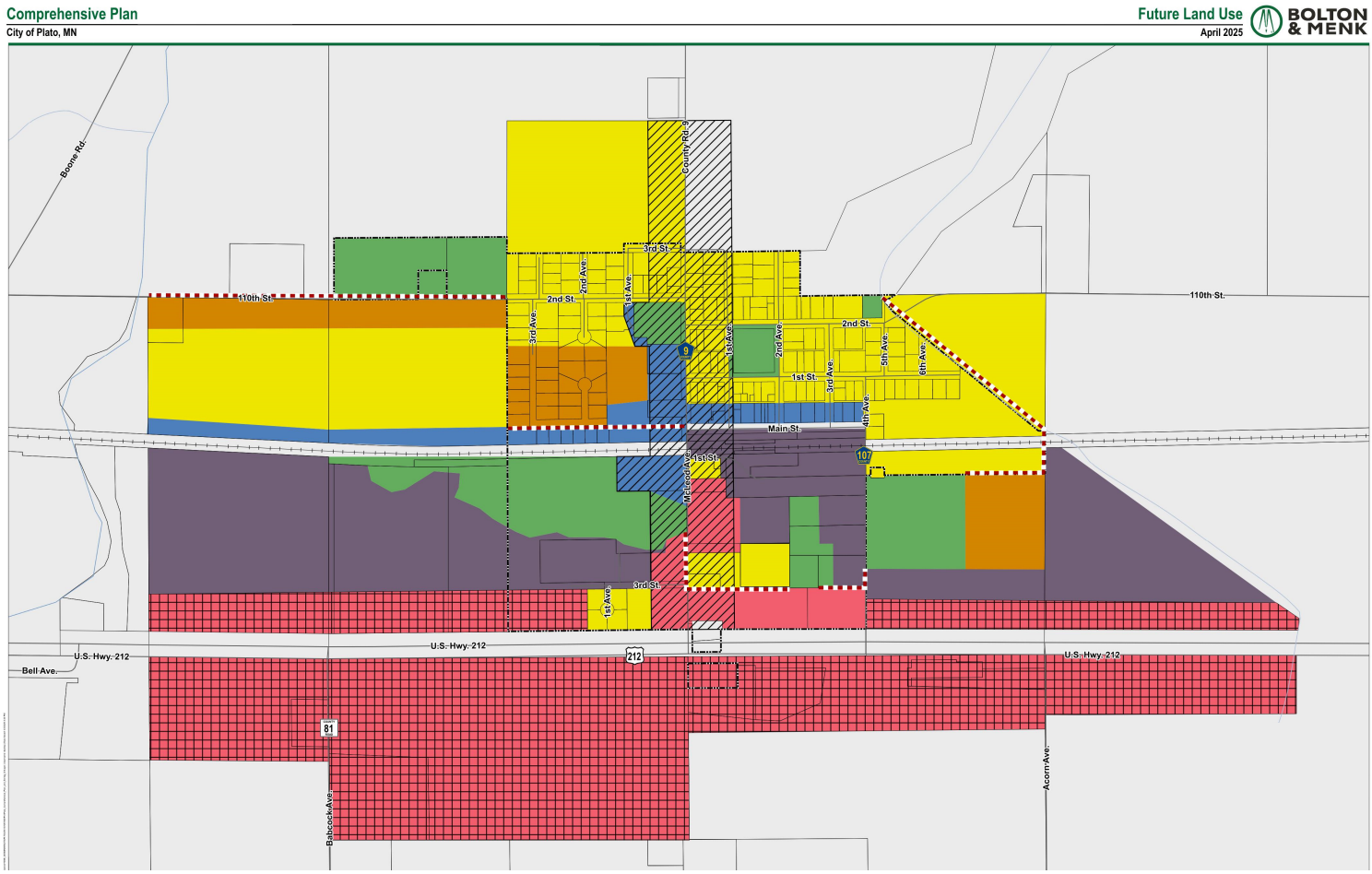
Manufacturing/Industrial District (M-1)

Purpose: The Manufacturing/Industrial District (M-1) regulations are intended to provide areas for manufacturing, warehousing, and related commercial operations. They intend to encourage industrial development compatible with surrounding uses and districts. All activities in the district shall be carried out in a manner not injurious or offensive to the occupants of adjacent premises due to odors, dust, smoke, noise, or vibrations.

Blueprint for Growth Over the Next 15 Years

The land use plan sets a blueprint for the growth of the City of Plato over the next 15 years by:

- Designating Growth Areas: Identifying areas where future development should be concentrated to optimize infrastructure and services.
- Balancing Land Uses: Ensuring a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and open/parks/green areas creates a vibrant and functional community.
- Preserving Character: Maintaining the unique character of different neighborhoods and protecting historical and cultural sites.
- Supporting Infrastructure: Planning for the necessary infrastructure improvements, such as roads, utilities, and public facilities, to support future growth.



Future Land Use	AcresUS
Commercial	208.00
Downtown Comemrcial Overlay	54.42
Downtown Commercial	24.04
Industrial	116.30
Industrial Overlay	191.02
Low Density Residential	158.75
Medium Density Residential	34.87
Park	55.98

Explanation of the Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map for the City of Plato categorizes land into various uses to guide future development. It shows areas with land use outside the city's current jurisdiction, as the city has the statutory ability to annex.

Here are the key land use categories depicted on the map:

1. **Commercial:** Areas designated for business activities, including retail, offices, and services.
2. **Downtown Commercial:** The central business district focuses on mixed-use development with commercial and residential uses.
3. **Low-Density Residential:** Areas for single-family homes and low-density housing (up to duplex, two dwelling units per parcel).
4. **Medium Density Residential:** Areas for multi-family housing, such as apartments and townhouses (up to 4 dwelling units per parcel).
5. **Industrial:** Zones for industrial activities, including manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution.
6. **Parks & Open Space:** designated to natural drainage areas, trenches, or spaces that should remain as open space for passive recreational uses or parks.
7. **Downtown Commercial Overlay:** This special overlay for the downtown area encourages the local mixed-use development of small local businesses and residential to sustain and strengthen the area's local business charm.
8. **Industrial Overlay:** A special overlay allows industrial uses in areas designated as commercial to create flexibility and more easily respond to development.

The map also includes:

- **City Limits:** The boundaries of the City of Plato.
- **Parcels:** Individual land parcels within the city.
- **Railroad:** Existing railroad lines that may influence land use and development.
- **Future Trail:** Planned trails for recreational use and connectivity within the community.

By planning for land use and implementing zoning regulations, the City of Plato can effectively manage its growth, protect resources, and enhance the quality of life for its residents. The Future Land Use Map is a visual guide to the community's vision for development over the next 15 years, ensuring that growth is resilient, balanced, and aligned with the city's goals.

Annexation Authority

Annexation Statute for the City of Plato, MN

The City of Plato is empowered by Minnesota statute to annex land into its city boundaries.

Statutes provide a framework for the City of Plato to manage annexation processes, ensuring orderly and legal expansion of municipal boundaries. The annexation process for the City of Plato, MN, is governed by Minnesota Statutes, specifically Section 414.033. Key points:

Annexation by Ordinance (Section 414.033)

Unincorporated Property:

- Unincorporated property abutting a municipality may be annexed to the municipality by ordinance.

Conditions for Annexation:

- Municipal Ownership: The land is owned by the municipality.
- Surrounded Land: The land is surrounded by land within the municipal limits.
- Abutting Land: The land abuts the municipality and is 120 acres or less, not served by public wastewater facilities, and the municipality receives a petition for annexation from all property owners.
- Subdivision Approval: The land has been approved by a preliminary or final plat for subdivision to provide residential lots averaging 21,780 square feet or less and is within two miles of the municipal limits.
- Before adopting an ordinance for annexation, the municipality must hold a public hearing and give 30 days' written notice by certified mail to the affected town(s) and all landowners within and contiguous to the area to be annexed.

Notice and Hearing:

- Before adopting an ordinance for annexation, the municipality must hold a public hearing and give 30 days' written notice by certified mail to the affected town(s) and all landowners within and contiguous to the area to be annexed.

Petition by Property Owners:

- If the land is platted or unplatted and does not exceed 200 acres, most property owners may petition the municipal council for annexation.

Key Land Use Insights

These points provide a concise overview of the key Policies for land use planning and community design in the City of Plato.

Urban Growth Boundaries: Identify and coordinate annexation with the county and nearby townships.

Residential Lot Size: Establish maximum lot sizes to balance resident needs and environmental impact.

Land Use Coordination: Align city and county zoning regulations for orderly development.

Maintain Rural/Urban Character: preserve the unique identities of rural and urban areas.

Main Street Identity: Develop retail along County Road 9 to enhance Main Street identity.

Buffer Strips: Use buffer strips to separate and reduce conflicts between land uses such as industrial and residential.

Future Land Use Planning: Focus industrial uses along Highway 212, retail/commercial between Highway 212 and the railroad, and residential north of the railroad.

Cluster/Conservation Subdivisions: Promote smaller lots, shared infrastructure, and public open spaces.

Examine Zoning Policies: Ensure zoning ordinances align with the Comprehensive Plan.

Future Land Use: The FLU map guides future development decisions.

Aging Population: Provide additional services like senior activities.

Pedestrian-Friendly: Design new developments, including trails, to accommodate diverse needs and abilities.

Recreational Opportunities: Ensure parks and open spaces meet the needs of all residents, including ADA considerations.

Land Use Goals and Policies

These goals and Policies are designed to be pragmatic and achievable for the City of Plato, ensuring that the community can grow and thrive while maintaining its unique character and quality of life.

Goal One: Enhance Community Livability

Policy 1: Promote Mixed-Use Development: Encourage development that integrates residential, commercial, and recreational spaces to create vibrant, walkable neighborhoods.

Policy 2: Improve Public Spaces: Invest in parks, trails, and community centers to provide residents with recreational opportunities.

Policy 3: Support Attainable Housing: Develop policies that ensure a range of housing options to accommodate different income levels and family sizes.

Goal Two: Foster Economic Growth

Policy 1: Designate Commercial Zones: Identify and promote areas for commercial development to attract businesses and create job opportunities.

Policy 2: Enhance Infrastructure: Upgrade roads, utilities, and public facilities to support business operations and attract new investments.

Policy 3: Encourage Local Businesses: To stimulate the local economy, provide incentives and support for small businesses and local entrepreneurs.

Goal Three: Preserve Natural and Historical Resources

Policy 1: Protect Open Spaces: Protect and maintain green spaces, parks, and natural areas to preserve the environment and provide passive and active recreational opportunities.

Policy 2: Conserve Historical Sites: Identify and protect buildings and areas of historical significance to maintain the city's heritage.

Housing

The 2020 U.S. Census recorded 142 housing units in the City of Plato, showing a decrease since 2000, with a growth rate of -0.81%. This means the city loses about one housing unit every decade. However, due to rising land costs in more urban areas, Plato is well positioned to benefit. The city's housing stock consists of 90.8% owner-occupied homes and 9.2% rentals, translating to about 12 rental units. The population decline and decrease in new housing construction can be partly attributed to an aging population and a slowing farm economy.

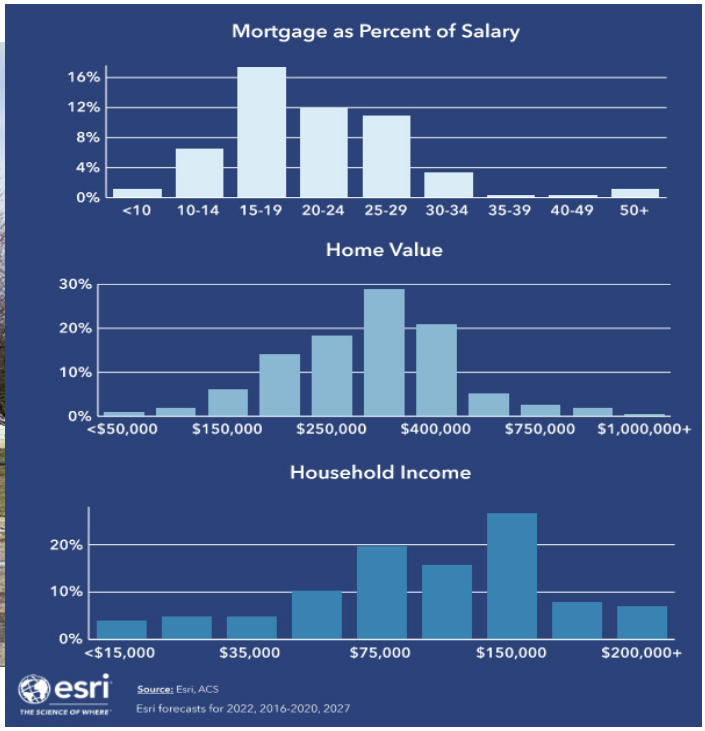
Photo Provided by JL

In the 1970s and 1980s, there was growth in the area as land was available on the outskirts, and farmers were more willing to sell. There have been no major land developments near the community or in its planned growth areas since 2000. In recent years, there has been a reluctance to sell land, contributing to the stagnation.

To incentivize the sale of land, the city could consider offering tax incentives or land trust for development that aligns with the city's vision. Land trusts are governed by Chapter 501C of the Minnesota Statutes. Creating a land trust offers advantages such as allowing donations of land protecting landowner anonymity, keeping property out of probate, and providing donation and tax incentives, including potential income and estate tax benefits. Additionally, creating a streamlined process for land transactions and development approvals could make it more attractive for landowners to sell. Promoting the benefits of suitable development, such as increased property values and community growth, may also encourage landowners to participate. These measures could help build a more robust tax base, supporting the city's financial health and ability to invest in public services and infrastructure.

The strong industrial presence in the community provides employment opportunities that could attract new residents and provide incremental growth.

Photo provided by JL



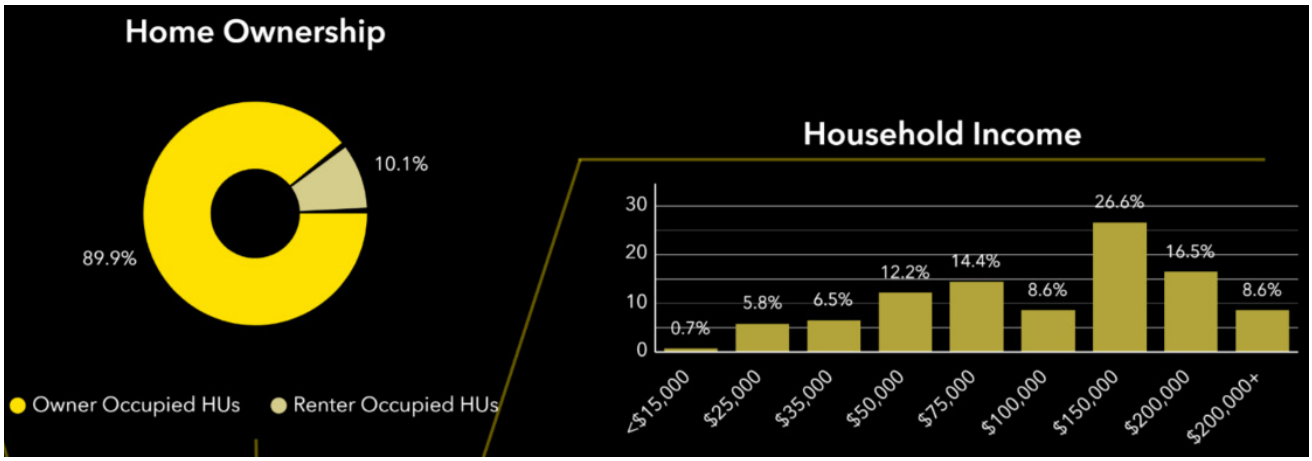
Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri. The vintage of the data is 2022, 2027.

Housing Unit Construction:

As of the 2020 census, 99% of the total housing units in Plato are occupied. The optimal vacancy rate for a healthy housing market is 5% suggesting a shortage for both owner-occupants and rentals.

While the quantity of housing stock is important, the quality and age of homes also significantly influence costs. Older homes or rentals may have lower upfront costs but can incur higher long-term expenses. Only 16% of all housing units in Plato were constructed after 1980. This aging housing stock presents an opportunity to create incentives for remodeling through grants. Additionally, providing information on comparable costs and services of assisted living can motivate elderly residents to consider selling their homes, thereby freeing up housing units for new residents.

Many residents choose to live in Plato for its quality of life and more affordable living while commuting to higher-paying jobs in urban areas near the Twin cities, enjoying the best of both worlds.



Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri (2024), Esri-Data Axle (2024), ACS (2018-2022), Esri-U.S. BLS (2024), AGS (2024).

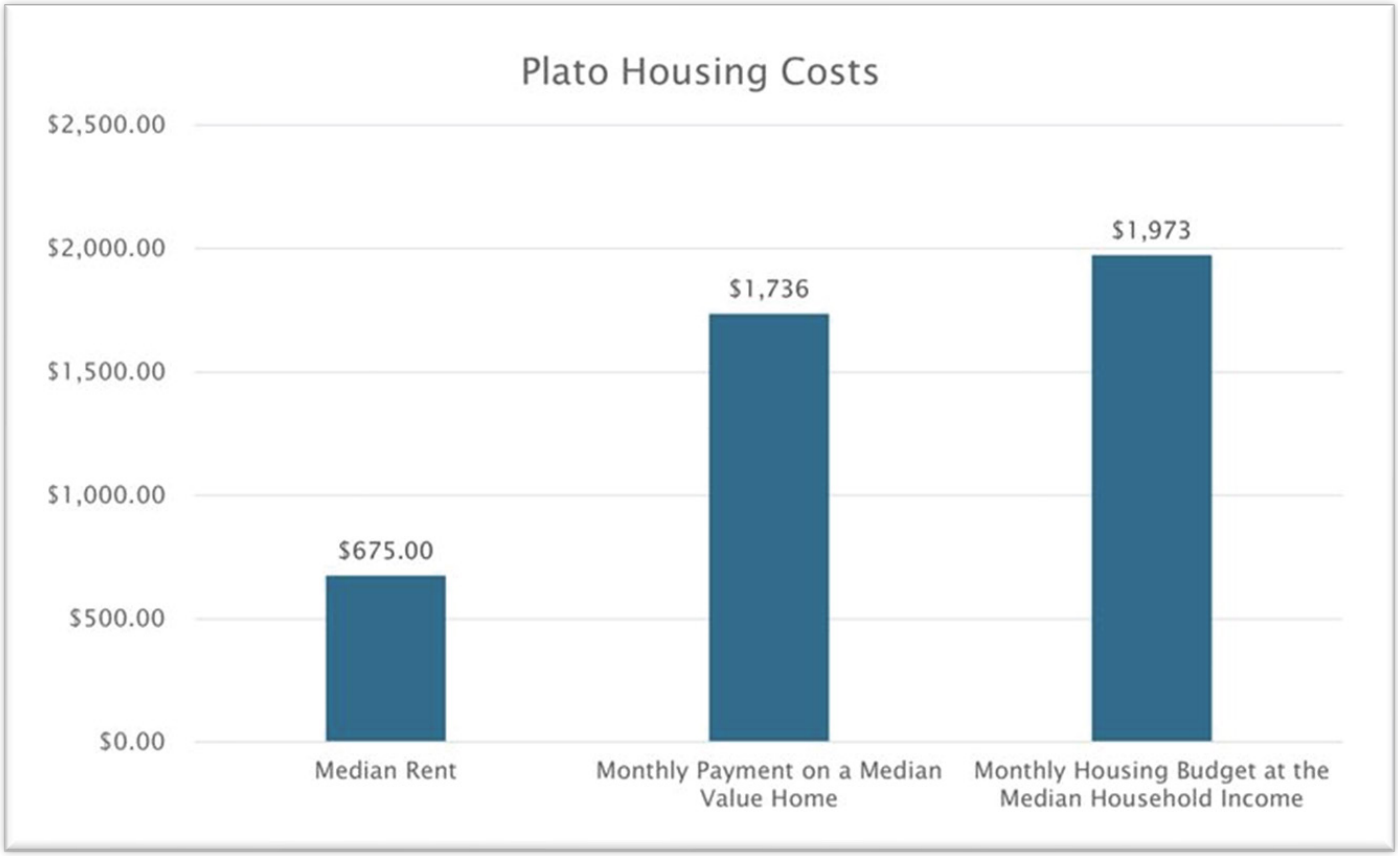
Housing Costs:

One of the challenges in the housing market is the increasing cost of construction, with an annual inflation rate of 5% for housing and 4.5% for rentals. The median home value in Plato is currently $265,909. The median contract rent for residents of Plato is $675 per month.

For a median household income of $84,412, the average mortgage qualifying calculation can be estimated using the standard rule that housing costs should not exceed 28% of monthly gross income. This translates to a monthly housing budget of approximately $1,973.

Mortgage Calculation:
- Monthly Housing Budget: $1,973
- 30-Year Fixed Mortgage Rate: 6.5%
- Down Payment: 10%
- Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI): Typically ranges from 0.46% to 1.50% of the loan amount per year

Given these parameters, the budget would qualify for a home priced around $320,000 to $350,000 (the exact amount would depend on the specific PMI rate applied). There is consensus among the under 30 cohort that most would purchase a home in Plato if priced between $250,000 and $300,000.



Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri. The vintage of the data is 2022, 2027.

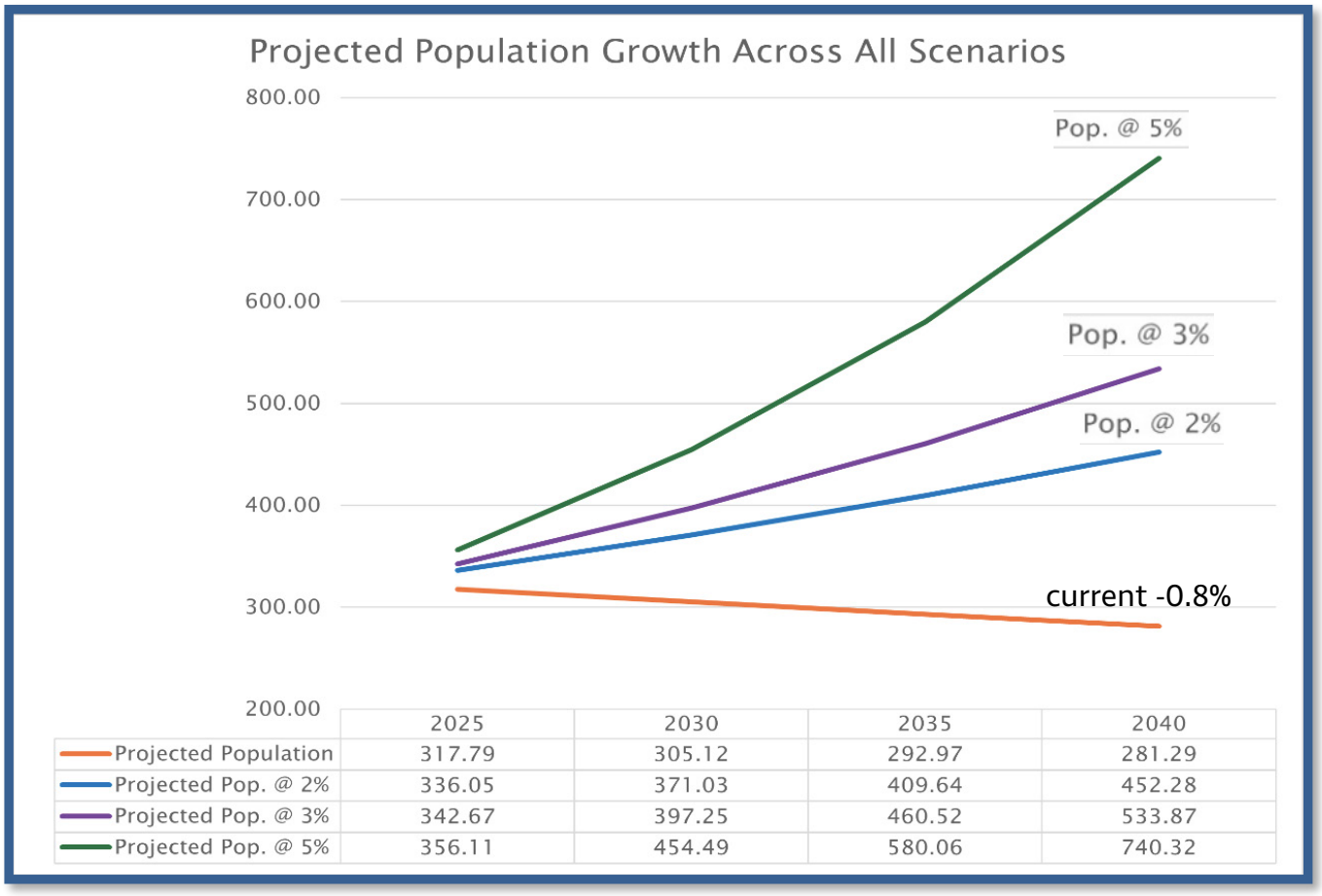
Housing Unit Projections:

While the current population growth rate and housing unit growth in Plato are negative, this trend is unlikely to continue long-term due to the recent completion of Highway 212's expansion to four lanes through the city and its proximity to the Twin Cities. Various growth scenarios project the population to increase from 323 to between 452 and 740 by 2040, requiring 39 to 154 additional housing units. Without new construction, there could be a deficit of up to 157 housing units, resulting in significant demand pressures on the existing housing market.

Additionally, current demand seems to be for larger garages (like 3 car spaces and RV) and smaller dwelling space footprints. This indicates a different building type that is built primarily with a larger structure as a garage containing within it a small portion (20%) of dwelling space, with all necessary fire and building separations and life safety measures.

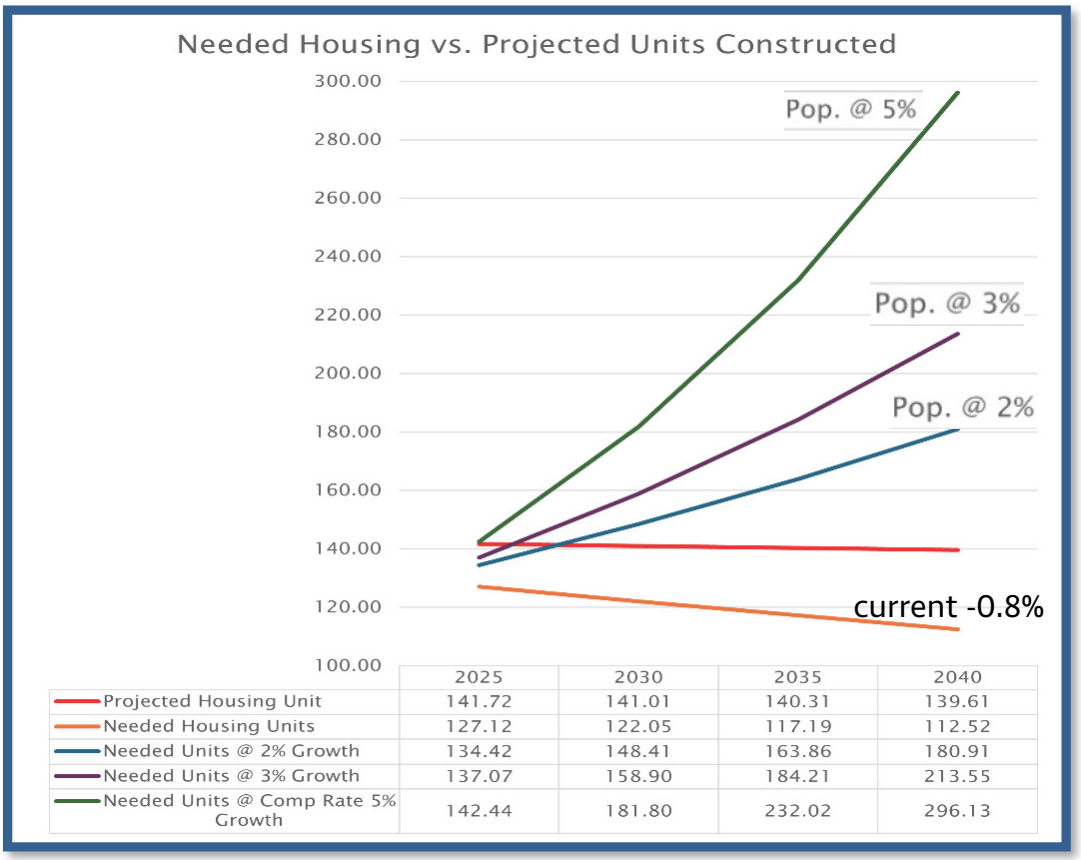
The housing market's challenges are particularly significant for younger home buyers and seniors, both of whom are sensitive to price. Seniors may find it difficult to cover the full cost of a downsized home with their existing home equity, while younger buyers may struggle to enter the market due to credit rating and means. Partnering with a local bank or financial institute to craft financial incentives or loans for Plato may yield more housing. Below are various population projections at 2%, 3% and 5% annual growth.

Pop. @ 5% Pop. @ 3% Pop. @ 2% current -0.8%

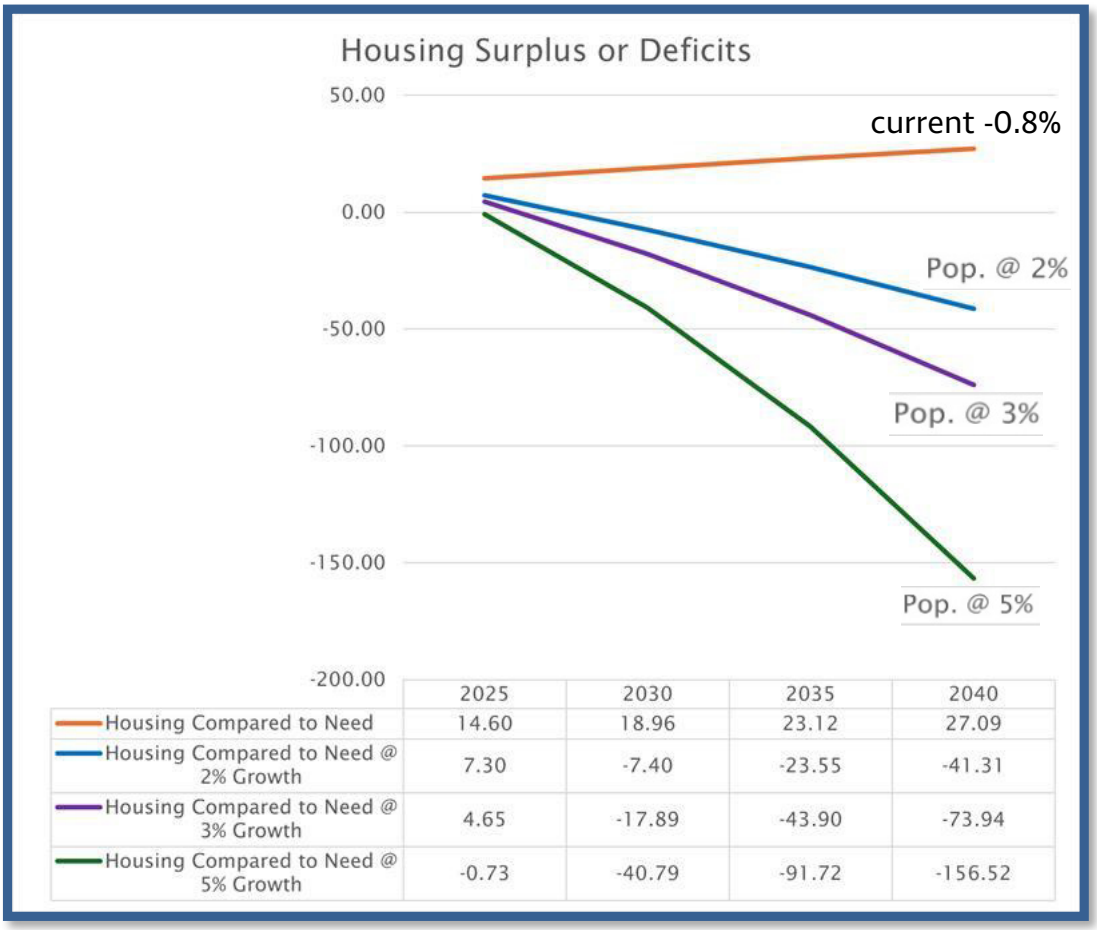


	2025	2030	2035	2040
Projected Population	317.79	305.12	292.97	281.29
Projected Pop. @ 2%	336.05	371.03	409.64	452.28
Projected Pop. @ 3%	342.67	397.25	460.52	533.87
Projected Pop. @ 5%	356.11	454.49	580.06	740.32

Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri. The vintage of the data is 2022, 2027.



	2025	2030	2035	2040
Projected Housing Unit	141.72	141.01	140.31	139.61
Needed Housing Units	127.12	122.05	117.19	112.52
Needed Units @ 2% Growth	134.42	148.41	163.86	180.91
Needed Units @ 3% Growth	137.07	158.90	184.21	213.55
Needed Units @ Comp Rate 5% Growth	142.44	181.80	232.02	296.13



	2025	2030	2035	2040
Housing Compared to Need	14.60	18.96	23.12	27.09
Housing Compared to Need @ 2% Growth	7.30	-7.40	-23.55	-41.31
Housing Compared to Need @ 3% Growth	4.65	-17.89	-43.90	-73.94
Housing Compared to Need @ 5% Growth	-0.73	-40.79	-91.72	-156.52

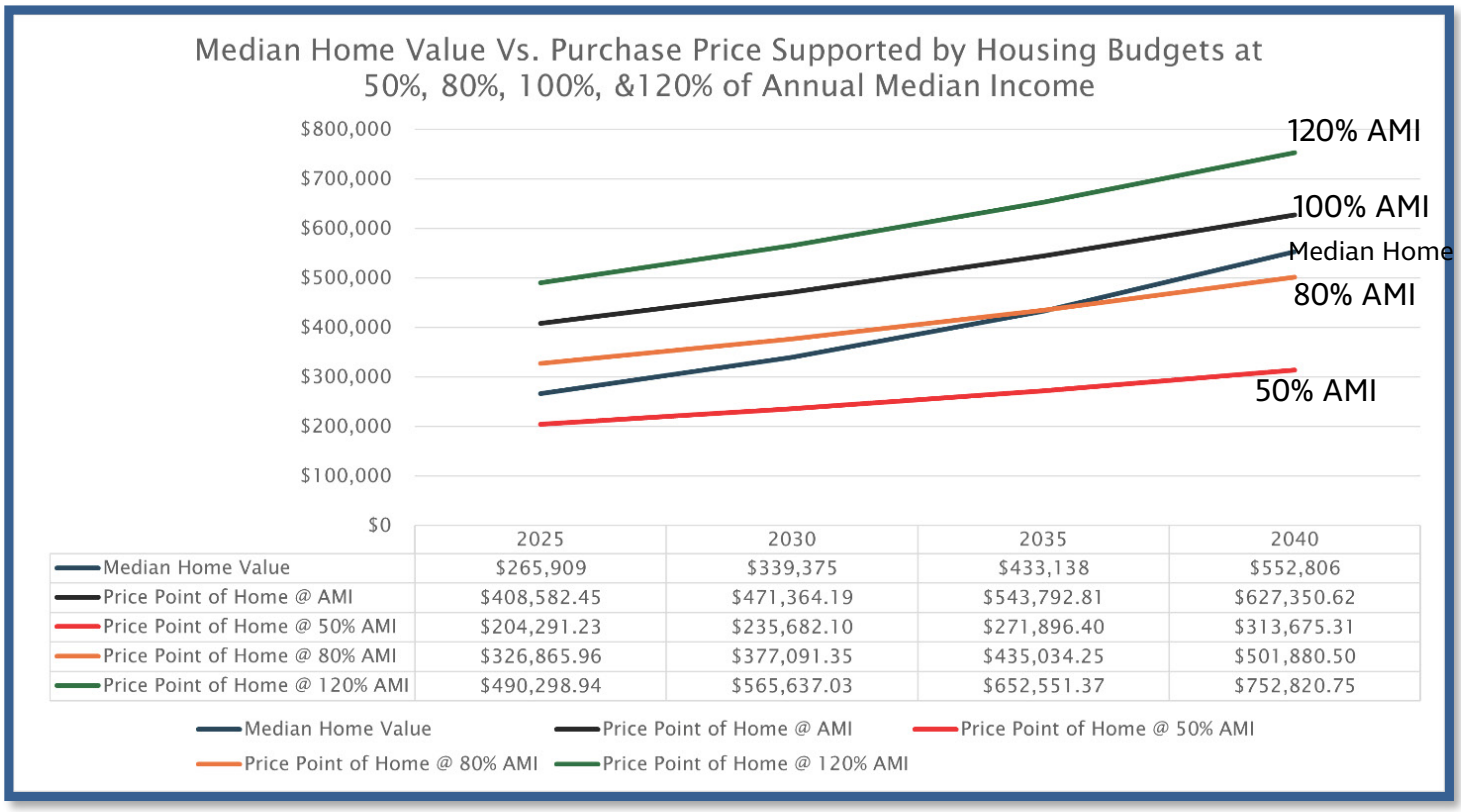
Source: These infographics contains data provided by Esri.

Housing Cost Projections:

To determine the median household income required in 2040, we need to account for the average annual inflation rate. Based on recent data, the average annual increase in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) from 2020 to 2023 was approximately 4.5%.

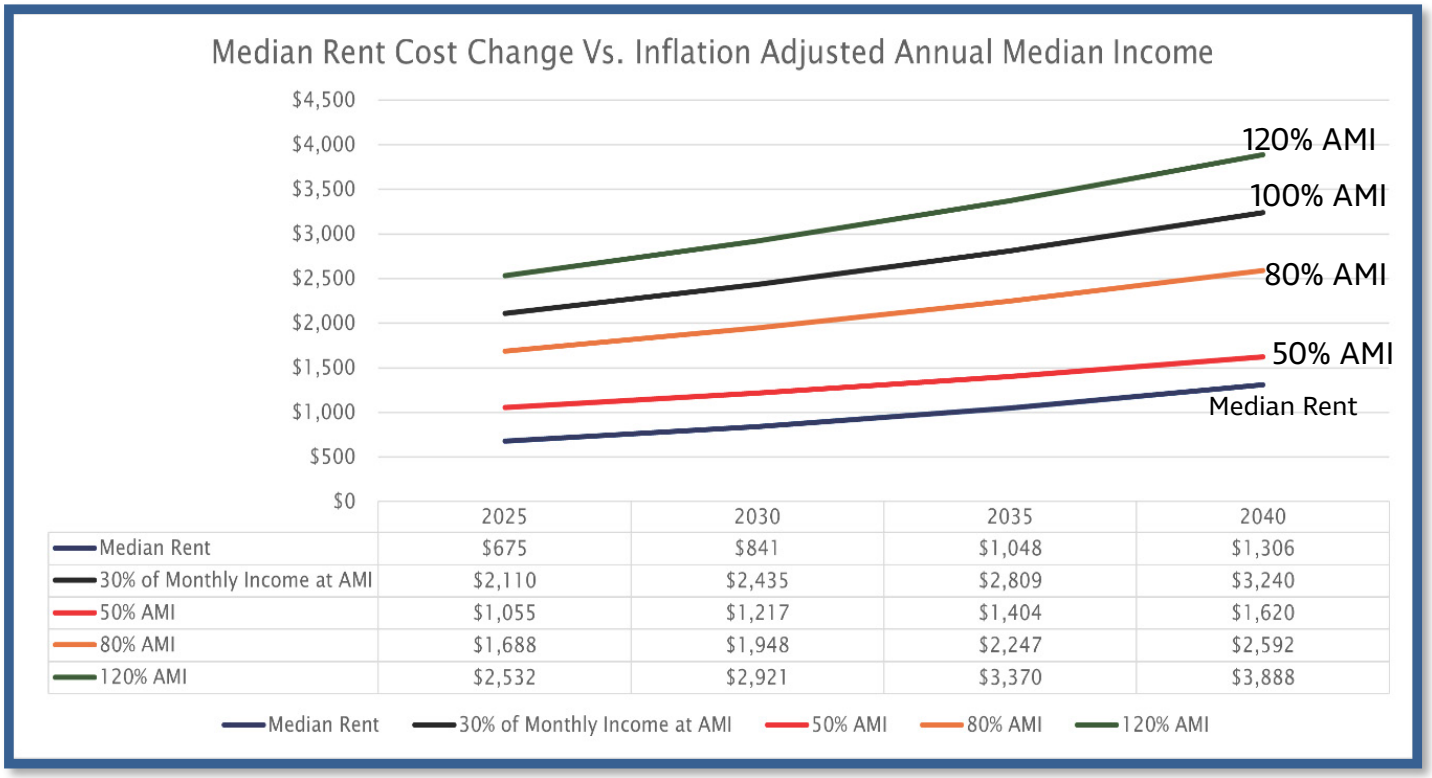
Using this inflation rate, we can project the median household income for 2040 would need to be approximately $167,764 in 2040 to keep up with the projected increase in housing costs.

In a scenario like Plato's, where there is low supply and infrequent turnover in the housing market, costs can increase faster than the national inflation rate for housing, which is about 4.3% annually. The current median home value of $265,909 is projected to rise to $552,806 by 2040. Rental costs are also projected to increase, with the median rent rising from $675 to $1,306 by 2040.

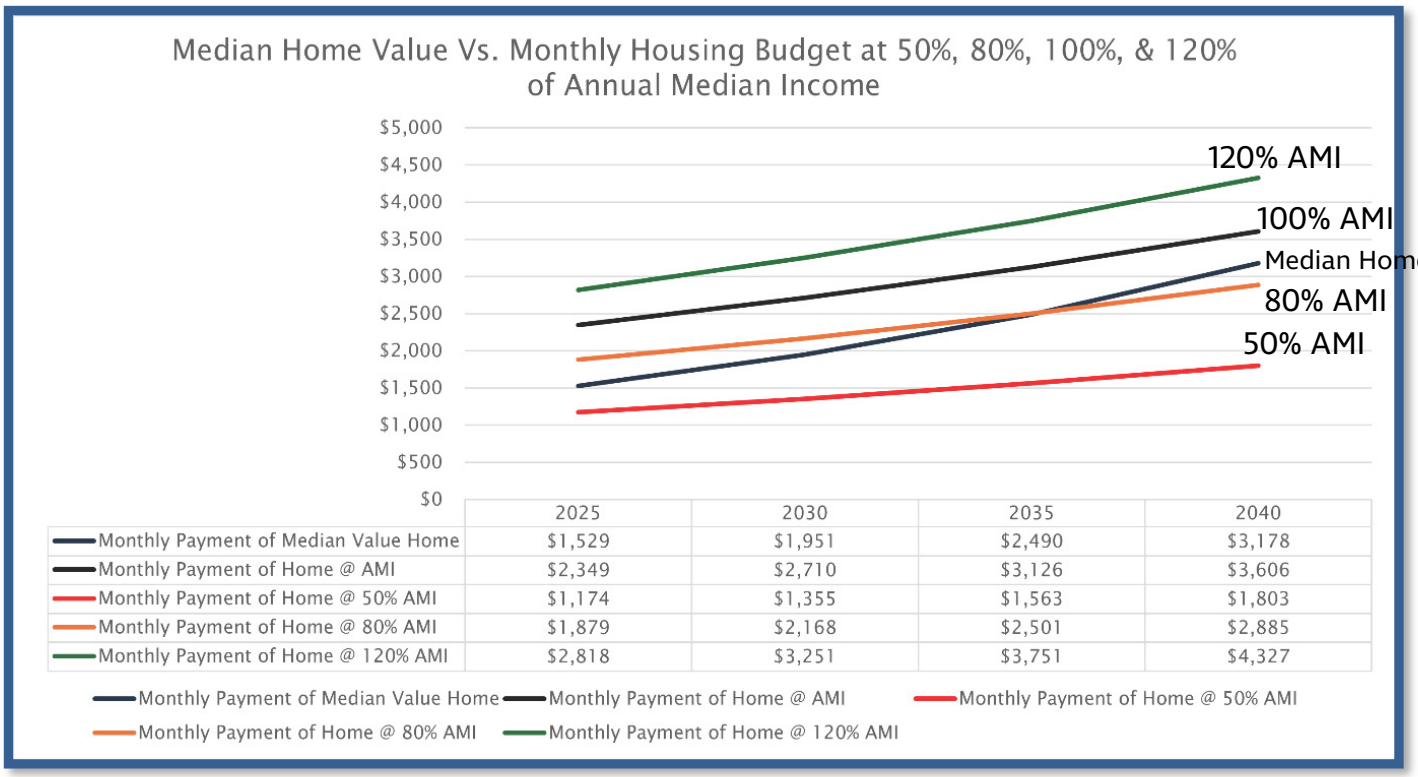


	2025	2030	2035	2040
Median Home Value	$265,909	$339,375	$433,138	$552,806
Price Point of Home @ AMI	$408,582.45	$471,364.19	$543,792.81	$627,350.62
Price Point of Home @ 50% AMI	$204,291.23	$235,682.10	$271,896.40	$313,675.31
Price Point of Home @ 80% AMI	$326,865.96	$377,091.35	$435,034.25	$501,880.50
Price Point of Home @ 120% AMI	$490,298.94	$565,637.03	$652,551.37	$752,820.75

Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri. The vintage of the data is 2022, 2027.



	2025	2030	2035	2040
Median Rent	$675	$841	$1,048	$1,306
30% of Monthly Income at AMI	$2,110	$2,435	$2,809	$3,240
50% AMI	$1,055	$1,217	$1,404	$1,620
80% AMI	$1,688	$1,948	$2,247	$2,592
120% AMI	$2,532	$2,921	$3,370	$3,888



	2025	2030	2035	2040
Monthly Payment of Median Value Home	$1,529	$1,951	$2,490	$3,178
Monthly Payment of Home @ AMI	$2,349	$2,710	$3,126	$3,606
Monthly Payment of Home @ 50% AMI	$1,174	$1,355	$1,563	$1,803
Monthly Payment of Home @ 80% AMI	$1,879	$2,168	$2,501	$2,885
Monthly Payment of Home @ 120% AMI	$2,818	$3,251	$3,751	$4,327

Source: These infographics contain data provided by Esri.

Photo by JL

Goals and Policies: Housing

Goal One: Ensure adequate, available, and convenient housing options in Plato.

Policy 1: Address senior housing issues and starter home availability periodically.

Policy 2: Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of existing housing stock.

Policy 3: Guide growth into areas that will have current capacity or will in near future have municipal services.

Goal Two: Collaborate with public and private housing developers to build housing.

Policy 1: Make suitable land appropriately zoned for residential development available.

Policy 2: Preserve the area's rural character by locating new housing developments within the current corporate limits or in areas included in the city's Future Land Use Plan.

Policy 3: Collaborate with and seek assistance from other entities, such as Federal, State, & County, to provide suitable housing.

Economic Development:

The City of Plato, strategically located in McLeod County, Minnesota, is a small community with untapped potential for economic growth. Its prime location offers significant business market potential, making it an attractive destination for both local entrepreneurs and outside companies. The city actively supports businesses through various incentive plans, tax abatements, and resources, creating a favorable environment for economic expansion and investment.

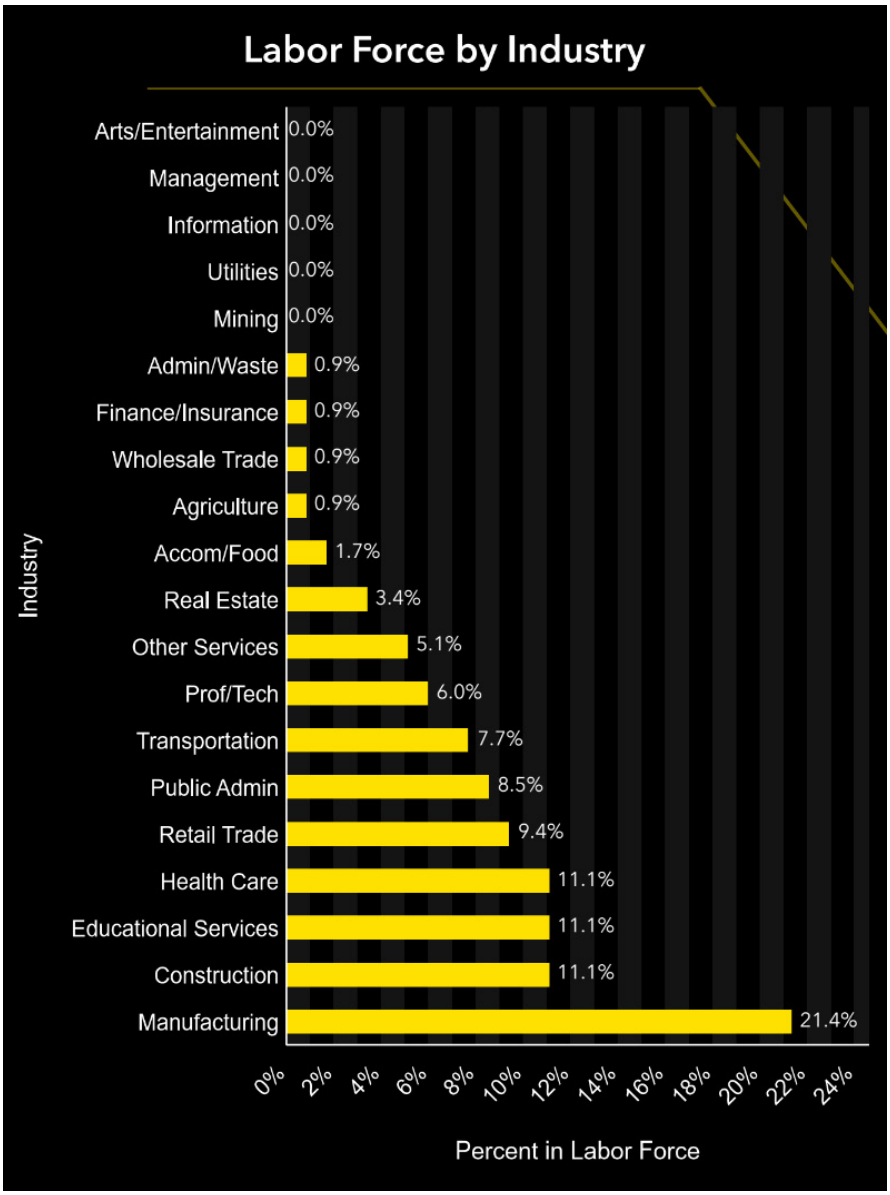
Strategic Location and Business Market Potential

Introduction: Plato's strategic location along Highway 212 enhances its business market potential, providing excellent connectivity and access to major cities, hubs, ports, and rail systems.

Traffic Flow and Commerce on Highway 212

- **Traffic Flow:** Highway 212 serves as a critical arterial road, facilitating the movement of goods and people between southwestern Minnesota, South Dakota, and the Twin Cities. It supports significant highway freight mobility and connectivity for a large area not served by the Interstate System.
- **Type of Commerce:** The highway is a backbone for commerce, supporting various industries, including agriculture, manufacturing, and retail. It carries a high volume of trucks daily, indicating its importance for freight and logistics.

Currently labor force in Plato mostly commutes over 20 minutes out of the city for employment and consists of:
1. Manufacturing has the highest percentage in the labor force at 21.4%.
2. Educational Services, Health Care, Construction each represent 11.1% of the labor force.
3. Several industries, including Arts/Entertainment, Management, Information, Utilities, and Mining, have lower representation in the labor force.



Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri. The vintage of the data is 2022, 2027.

Main Commerce and Logistics - Cities and Ports

- Nearby Cities: Plato is conveniently located near several major cities, enhancing its accessibility and business opportunities:

  Glencoe, MN: 4 miles away.
  Young America, MN: 6 miles away.
  Waconia, MN: 15 miles away.
  Hutchinson, MN: 17 miles away.
  Cologne, MN: 18 miles away.
  Chanhassen, MN: 30 miles away.
  Minneapolis, MN: 49 miles away.
  Saint Paul, MN: 56 miles away.
  Mississippi River Ports: less than 100 miles away.
  Lake Superior Ports: 200 miles away.

  Minnesota's ports on Lake Superior and the Mississippi River provide essential transportation connections and access to national and international markets. These ports facilitate the movement of goods, enhancing the business potential for companies in Plato.

Rail System

The Twin Cities & Western Railroad runs through Plato, MN. Even though it doesn't stop in Plato, it can still significantly boost local commerce by:

Facilitating Freight Movement: It enables efficient transportation of agricultural products, manufactured goods, and other commodities to larger markets.

Enhancing Connectivity: It connects Plato to regional hubs, improving access to suppliers and customers.
Supporting Economic Growth: It attracts businesses that rely on rail transport, fostering local economic development.
Future Potential: There is potential to add rail spurs for businesses locating in Plato, which would allow for direct loading and unloading of goods, further streamlining operations and reducing handling costs.

Other Key Transportation Routes

Highway 7: Enhances connectivity to nearby cities and supports local commerce.
Highway 212: Connects Plato to larger regional hubs, facilitating the movement of goods and services.
Highway 22: Intersects with Highway 212 near Glencoe, supporting local agricultural and industrial activities.
County Roads: Includes County Roads 1, 3, 4, and 9, providing additional access points, supporting agricultural activities, local traffic, and commerce.
Freight Movement: Supports substantial truck traffic for transporting agricultural products, manufactured goods, and retail items.
Regional Access: Ensures Plato is well-connected to larger markets in the Twin Cities and beyond.
Economic Growth: MnDOT's Corridors of Commerce program focuses on improving these highways to foster economic growth through targeted transportation investments.

Plato's strategic location along Highway 212, complemented by other key highways, roads, rail systems, and proximity to major cities and ports, creates a robust transportation network that supports commerce and economic development.

This connectivity, along with a supportive business environment, positions Plato as an attractive destination for businesses.

Key Points from Workshops, Steering Committees, and Public Input

1. Infrastructure and Development:

- Economic development should follow current and future infrastructure to make development more cost- effective.
- New industrial development should be directed towards currently developed industrial lands with measures to buffer industrial use from other types of development.
- Preferred businesses should be compatible with current and future land use plans and positively impact the local economy.
- **Importance of Broadband:**

  Broadband is considered the new utility and access is essential for economic stability and growth in Plato, MN. With fiber optic infrastructure already in place along Highway 212 and expanding further into the community, the city is optimally positioned to support industrial, commercial, and residential growth—making it an ideal location for businesses and families alike

2. Marketing and Grants:

- The city should develop innovative marketing strategies to attract new businesses and strengthen the local economy.
- Proactive grant writing is essential to find funds for community projects, including new housing, economic development, and public infrastructure.

3. Water & Sewer:

The City of Plato's agreement with Glencoe for sewer service provides sufficient capacity to support the community's planned housing growth. This partnership is important to ensure that essential infrastructure is in place to accommodate future development while maintaining reliable service.

As the community continues to grow — particularly with new commercial and industrial developments—it will be important to invest in water infrastructure to meet increasing demand. A key component of this growth strategy is the construction of a new water well in Plato. This investment is not only essential for ensuring a reliable and sustainable water supply, but it also lays the foundation for long-term economic development and community vitality.

Potential for Business Due to Location on Highway 212

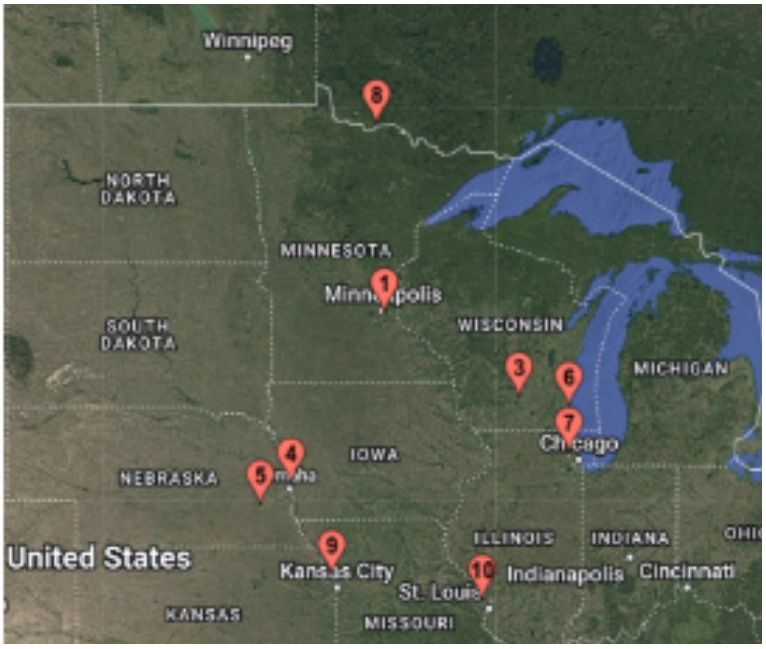
1. Strategic Location:

- Plato is strategically situated on Highway 212, a major east-west route that connects the city to larger metropolitan areas. This highway provides direct access to the Twin Cities metropolitan area, which is approximately 50 miles to the east.
- The proximity to Highway 212 enhances Plato's connectivity and accessibility, making it an attractive location for businesses that require efficient transportation and logistics.

2. Proximity to Major Cities:

Plato can benefit from it's location by marketing to other more developed commerce hubs such as:

1. Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP).
   a. Saint Paul, MN: Business opportunities,
2. Madison, WI: Business opportunities,
   a. Dane County Regional Airport (MSN).
3. Omaha, NE: Business opportunities,
   a. Eppley Airfield (OMA).
4. Lincoln, NE: Business opportunities,
   a. Lincoln Airport (LNK).
5. Milwaukee, WI: Business opportunities,
   a. Port of Milwaukee, General Mitchell International Airport (MKE).
6. Chicago, IL: Major business hub, Port of Chicago,
   a. O'Hare International Airport (ORD)
   b. Midway International Airport (MDW)
7. Winnipeg, Canada: Business opportunities,
   a. Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International Airport (YWG).
8. Kansas City, MO: Business opportunities,
   a. Kansas City International Airport (MCI).
9. Saint Louis, MO: Business opportunities,
   a. Lambert-St. Louis International Airport (STL).



3. Transportation and Logistics:

- Highway 212 facilitates the movement of goods and services, making Plato an ideal location for businesses involved in manufacturing, distribution, and logistics.
- The planned infrastructure improvements, such as the replacement of bridges on Highway 212, will further enhance the transportation network and reduce potential disruptions.
- The Twin Cities and Western Railroad (TCWR) runs through Plato, providing critical rail connectivity that enhances the city's attractiveness to industries relying on bulk transportation, such as manufacturing and agriculture. The Twin Cities and Western Railroad (TCWR) primarily transporting agricultural products like grains and other bulk commodities. This rail line is vital for local farmers and agricultural businesses, offering an efficient and cost-effective way to reach larger markets. Additionally, TCWR handles industrial goods, supporting the region's manufacturing sector.

4. Local Market and Workforce:

- The local population, though small, is supportive of local businesses, creating a stable market for goods and services.
- The proximity to larger cities provides access to a broader labor market, enabling businesses to attract skilled workers from nearby areas.

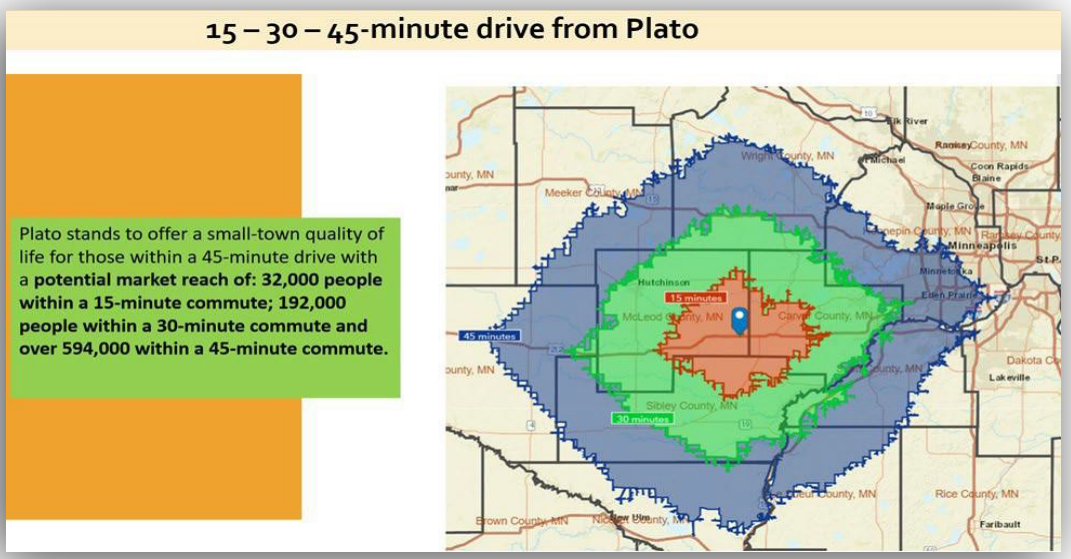
5. Quality of Life:

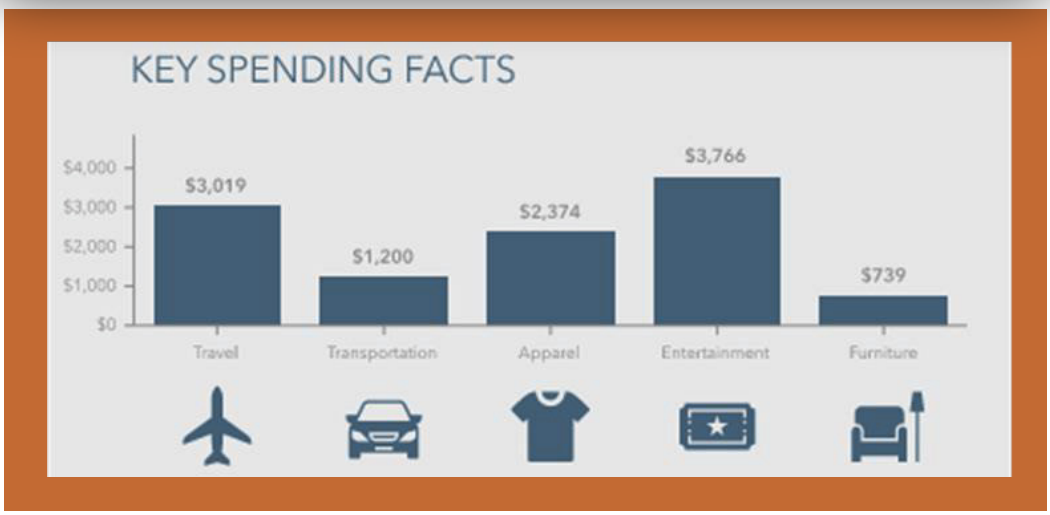
- Plato offers a high quality of life with a close-knit community, making it an attractive place for employees to live and work.
- The city's commitment to community development and maintaining a pleasant living environment supports business growth and employee satisfaction.

Potential Supportive Businesses for Existing Businesses in Plato, MN

Given the current spending habits and existing businesses in Plato, MN, several supportive businesses could thrive in the city's environment:

- Logistics and Warehousing: To support manufacturing and agricultural businesses, logistics and warehousing services could provide essential storage and distribution solutions.
- Agricultural Services: Businesses offering agricultural equipment, supplies, and services could support local farms and seed companies.
- Construction and Building Services: With ongoing development, construction companies, building material suppliers, and contractors could find ample opportunities.
- Professional Services: Accounting, legal, and consulting firms could support the administrative and strategic needs of local businesses.
- Retail and Hospitality: Additional retail stores, restaurants, and hospitality services could cater to the local population and visitors, enhancing the community's amenities.
- Healthcare Services: Clinics, pharmacies, and wellness centers could provide essential healthcare services to residents and workers.
- Technology Services: IT support, software development, and digital marketing firms could help local businesses leverage technology for growth and efficiency.





Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri, Esri-Data Axle, Esri-U.S. BLS. The vintage of the data is 2022, 2027.

Economic Development Goals and Policies:

Goal One: Invest in expanding the water supply using various funding sources to add a new well.

Policy 1: Promote resilience and innovation to allow businesses to thrive.

Policy 2: Encourage redevelopment and reclamation of existing commercial and industrial areas.

Policy 3: Pursue collaborative public and private partnerships to grow or redevelop existing infrastructure and expand capacity.

Goal Two: Recognize the value of the community spirit that welcomes new residents and businesses.

Policy 1: Develop marketing strategies to promote the city as a place to work and live.

Policy 2: Attract new businesses that fit the community and support, retain and expand existing businesses.

Policy 3: Collaborate with the public school system and private enterprises to achieve and retain a skilled labor force.

Policy 4: Develop incentives to attract businesses that create employment.

Goal Three: Consider the quality of life of residents as a measure of success.

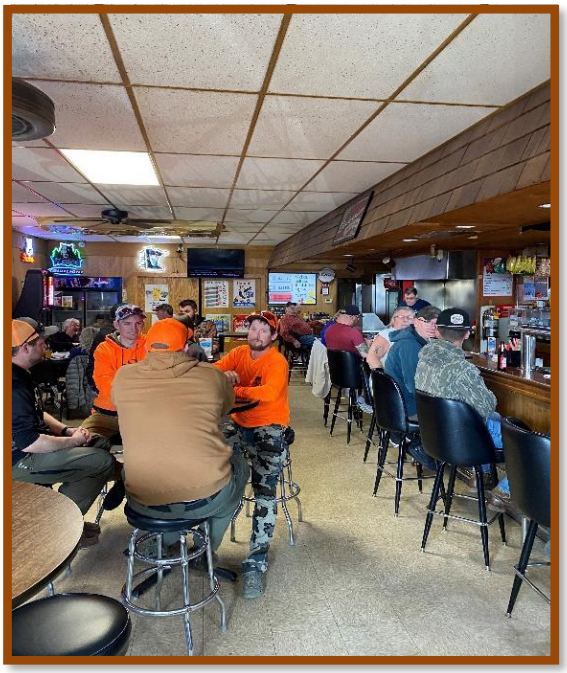
Policy 1: Prevent the outmigration of youth and facilitate older citizens remaining in the community.

Policy 2: Protect scenic and environmentally sensitive areas while pursuing development.

Policy 3: Actively seek funds for various business, human, and natural resource needs.

Conclusion:

The City of Plato, MN, presents significant potential for business development due to its strategic location on Highway 212, proximity to major cities, land value, and supportive economic environment including commercial and industrial zoning. The combination of transportation advantages, economic incentives, and a high quality of life makes Plato an attractive destination for businesses looking to establish or expand their operations and those looking for quality of life.



King Pin Pub, Plato, MN Photo Provided by JL

Transportation:

Any transportation system's purpose is to move goods and people efficiently. An efficient and balanced transportation system includes highways, railroads, mass transit, and aeronautics. While the most influential mode of transportation is the automobile, the other types play a key role in the overall transportation system.

Highways

As the City of Plato updates its comprehensive plan, transportation planning remains a key priority due to the city's location along two significant routes: County State-Aid Highway (CSAH) 9 and U.S. Highway 212. CSAH 9 provides a vital north-south connection to nearby communities such as Lester Prairie and Winsted. Meanwhile, Highway 212 serves as a major east-west corridor, designated as an Interregional Corridor (IRC), linking the Minneapolis metro area with South Dakota. The city benefits from a well-integrated roadway network that includes state, county, city, and township roads, supporting both local travel and regional commerce.

The Highway 212 Corridor spans 160 miles from the South Dakota border to the I-494 interchange in Eden Prairie. It traverses a mix of agricultural and urban areas, including 20 cities and 24 townships. Recent infrastructure investments have significantly improved this corridor. The segment between Norwood Young America and Cologne has been expanded to four lanes, completing a continuous four-lane route from west of Glencoe to I-494. A new freeway/expressway alignment through Chaska, Chanhassen, and Eden Prairie is expected to be completed by 2026, further enhancing regional mobility and safety.

Despite these major upgrades, there are currently no planned changes to Plato's intersections with Highway 212, including County Road 9 and 4th Avenue SE. MnDOT prioritizes projects based on crash data, particularly incidents involving fatalities or serious injuries. As of the latest data, none of Plato's intersections meet the threshold for intervention. While safety improvements such as high-tension cable barriers are being installed near Buffalo Creek Bridge, no specific projects are scheduled within Plato in the current 10-year plan.

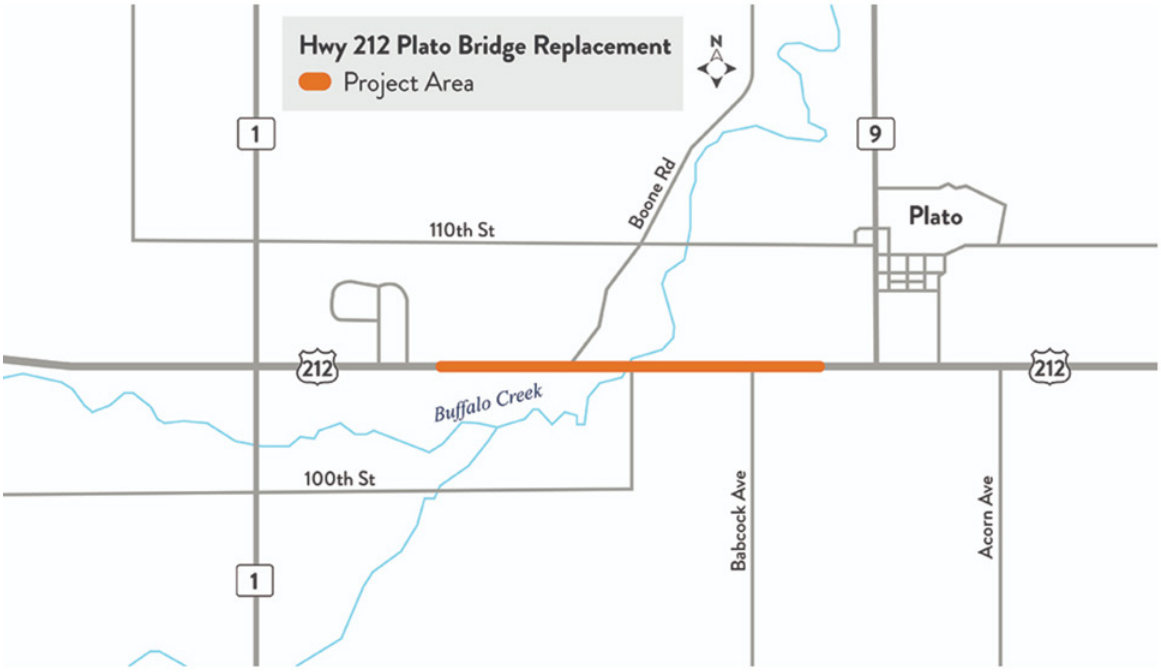
Looking ahead, future development—particularly on the south side of Highway 212—could prompt access management reviews. MnDOT generally prefers to limit new access points and favors solutions like T-intersections over new direct connections. Any response to development-related traffic issues would likely occur after the fact, based on observed impacts. Coordination with railroads and other agencies would also be necessary, especially where infrastructure overlaps.

City officials are encouraged to maintain open lines of communication with MnDOT representatives Cody Brand and Megan DeSchepper, who have expressed their willingness to answer questions and provide guidance as planning continues. This collaborative approach will help ensure that Plato's transportation network remains safe, efficient, and well-integrated with regional systems.

In addition, MnDOT is planning to replace two bridges crossing Buffalo Creek on Hwy 212, about 1 mile west of CR 9 in Plato. The project aims to minimize traffic disruption and prevent construction delays. Main construction in set for completion in 2026. This bridge replacement is expected to improve traffic flow and safety for residents and commuters in Plato, enhance the structural integrity of the bridges, and ensure long-term reliability of the transportation infrastructure.

About this project

MnDOT is planning to replace two bridges crossing Buffalo Creek on Hwy 212, 1.0 miles west of CR 9 in Plato



The vision statement adopted by the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) for the Highway 212 Corridor Management Plan is as follows: "Highway 212 is an important transportation corridor that connects the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and the South Dakota border. The vision for Highway 212 is to improve the operations and safety as an Interregional Corridor in balance with local community values."

Photo by Dylan Edwards

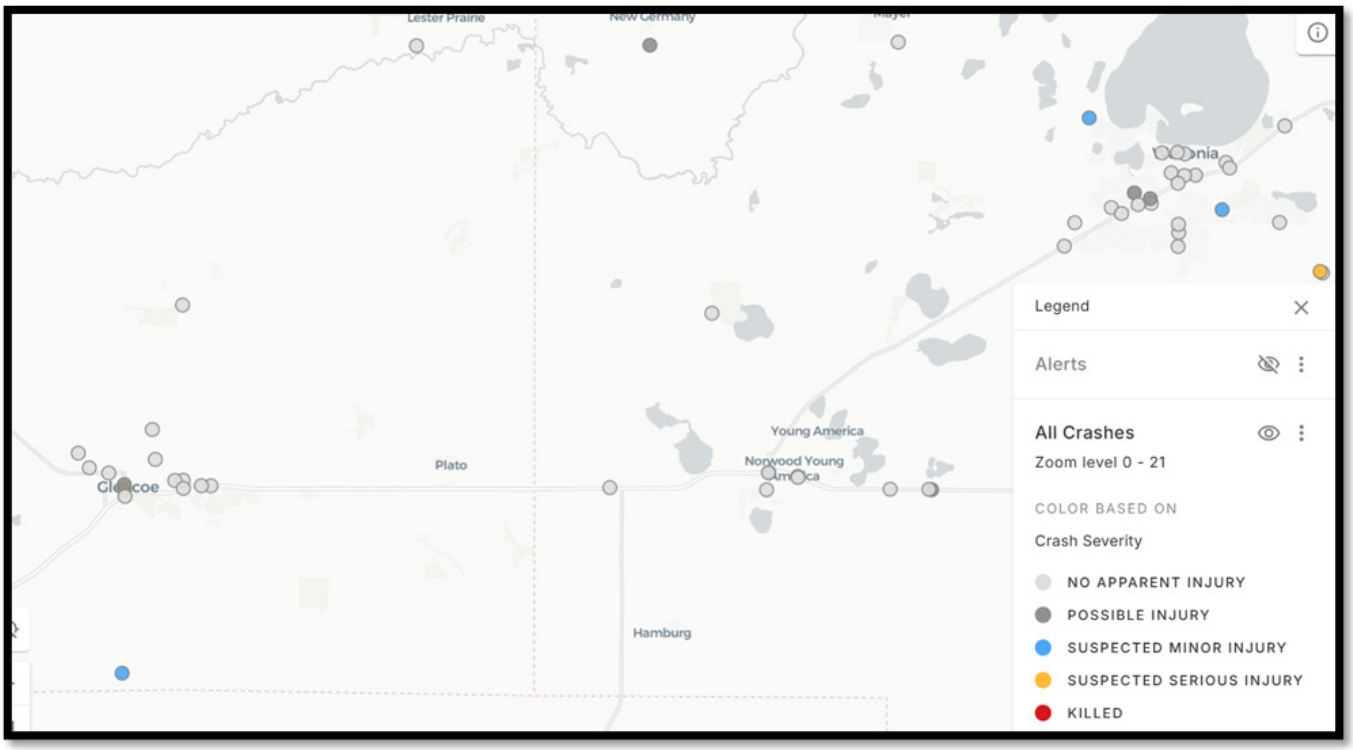
Functional Classification

The Functional Classification System is a method used to describe the main function each road performs in the highway network. It is a hierarchy of roads using criteria that describe the function that a particular road performs in a highway network (typically access and mobility). There is a general agreement among the public that the responsibility for the most important roads should be assigned to the highest level of government. In this fashion, the greatest road maintenance and construction resources are devoted to the most heavily traveled roads. It follows that less-traveled roads become the responsibility of lower levels of government. These roads are defined as:

- Principal Arterial routes: These highways provide an integrated network of routes that carry the highest traffic volumes, serve the longest trip movements, and provide for statewide or interstate travel. They serve all major urbanized areas and population centers. Principal arterial routes provide for through movement with minimum interference.

- Minor Arterial: These highways link cities, larger towns, and other major traffic generators, such as major resort areas, to each other and principal arterial routes. They form an integrated network that provides for movements within the state and between counties.
- Major Collectors: These routes serve the county seat and larger cities not served by the higher systems. They serve trips within the county and link locally important traffic generators with their service areas and nearby larger cities with higher-order routes.
- Minor Collectors: These routes link smaller cities and locally important traffic generators, providing developed areas with reasonable access to a higher-functioning roadway.
- Local Roads: Rural roads primarily serve low traffic volumes and short-distance trips.

The map below shows the crash data from the MNDOT Road Safety Information Center (data from 2020 - 4/15/2025). This data analytics platform can determine where, when, why, and how fatal and serious injury crashes occur.



The Traffic Volume

Highway 212 Traffic Volumes:
- Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT): 10,021 vehicles
- Heavy Commercial Annual Average Daily Traffic (HCAADT): 1,668 vehicles
- Highway 212 experiences significant traffic with an AADT of 10,021 vehicles. This indicates a high daily traffic volume, suggesting it is a major route for commuters and local traffic.

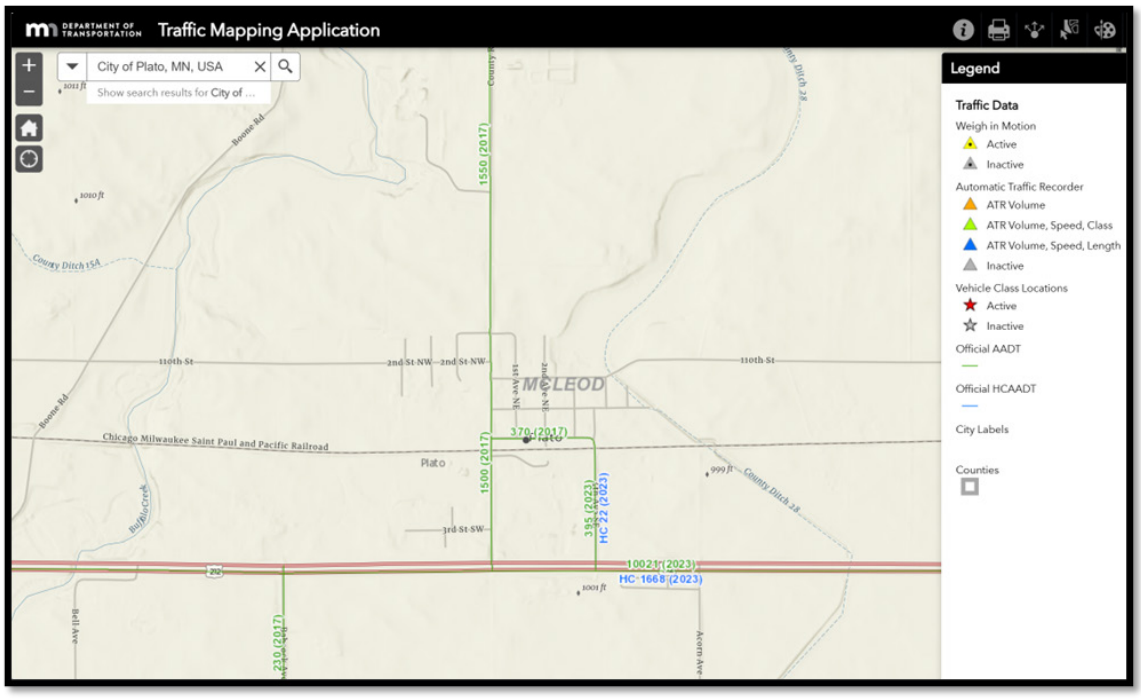
Heavy Commercial Traffic:
- The HCAADT of 1,668 vehicles indicates a substantial presence of heavy commercial vehicles, such as trucks and large freight carriers. This is a notable proportion of the total traffic, highlighting Highway 212's importance for commercial transportation and logistics. An AADT of 10,021 and an HCAADT of 1,668 suggest that Highway 212 has higher traffic volumes than smaller local roads but may be comparable to other major highways in the region. The high volume of general and heavy commercial traffic indicates a need for robust infrastructure maintenance and potential upgrades to accommodate the traffic load.

Types of Commerce Transported:

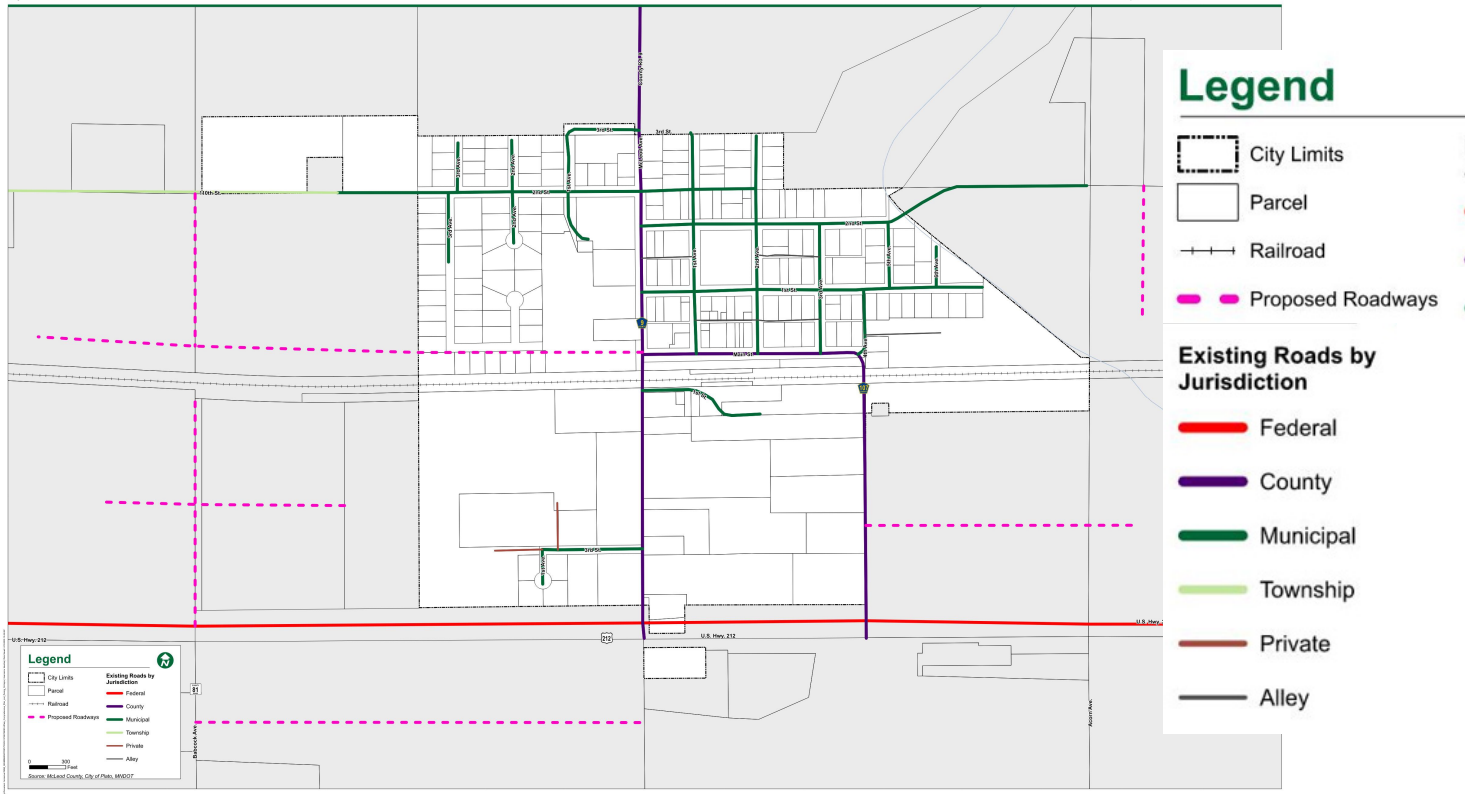
Freight and Goods: Highway 212 is a critical route for transporting various goods, including agricultural products, manufactured goods, and raw materials. This includes items from Minnesota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana, making it a vital link for regional commerce.

Benefits for Plato: Increased Business Opportunities: The high volume of commercial traffic can attract businesses to Plato, such as logistics companies, warehouses, and service providers catering to truck drivers and freight companies.

- Job Creation: New businesses and expanded commercial activities can create jobs for residents, boosting the local economy.
- Access to Markets: Improved transportation routes can provide local businesses with better access to regional and national markets, facilitating the movement of goods and services.
- Attracting Investment: Enhanced connectivity can make Plato more attractive to investors looking for strategic locations with good transportation links.
- Agriculture: Farmers and agricultural businesses can benefit from efficient transportation routes to move their products to market quickly and cost-effectively.
- Manufacturing: Local manufacturers can use the highway to deliver raw materials in a timely manner and distribute finished products.



Highway 212's significant commercial traffic can bring numerous benefits to Plato, including economic growth, improved infrastructure, enhanced connectivity, and support for local industries. The types of commerce transported on this route, such as agricultural products and manufactured goods, underscore its importance as a major commercial artery. The significant commercial traffic underscores Highway 212's role in locating businesses and industries in the City of Plato that require efficient logistics.



Updates to Roads in Plato:

- **U.S. Highway 212 Corridor:** One of the largest issues throughout the planning process was limiting access points along Highway 212. The city's main entrance point is already a major safety concern, and it wants to do all it can to help minimize accidents in the future. Mn/DOT is interested in creating an enhanced transportation study for Highway 212 between Plato and Glencoe, primarily focusing on access management.
- **U.S. Highway 212 & County Road 9 Intersection:**Currently, there are no plans for the intersection of Hwy 212 and County Rd 9 in the next 10 years, except for the Buffalo Creek Bridge replacement and adding a high tension cable barrier. Access to Hwy 212 via 4th Ave SE will remain though j-turns may be added by MnDOT, as MN Dot prefers limiting new access points and prioritizes funding based on crash data. Future developments south of Hwy 212 will be addressed reactively, prioritizing existing infrastructure.
- **Frontage/Backage Roads:**The City will need to support the establishment of new frontage and/or backage roads adjacent to U.S. Highway 212. The ideal situation is to have the developers pay for the roads as part of approving their plat. If this approach fails, the City can apply for federal funds to pay 80 percent of the cost through an access management project. A third option is to work with Mn/DOT's Cost Participation Policy based on Mn/DOT's priorities and available funding.
- **Pedestrian Safety:** Pedestrian concerns should be at the forefront of all planning and development activities, including pedestrian improvements along County Road 9.
- **110th Street Extension:**The City of Plato must proactively work with Glencoe, Helen Township, and McLeod County to extend 110th Street NW to Glencoe. Although each party favors the idea, the key planning component will limit the number of direct access points along the route. This can be easily handled in the future by having new access points along local streets rather than directly onto 110th Street.
- **Bike/Walking Trail:**The City has expressed interest in developing an off-road bike/walking trail between Plato and Glencoe. The likely location would be adjacent to 110th Street, directly connecting Plato to the High School in Glencoe and various pathways to the two ditches/open spaces as shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Railroads

The Twin Cities & Western (TC&W) Railroad runs parallel to Highway 212, serving the communities along the way, including Stewart, Brownton, Glencoe, and Plato. A fully staffed Customer Service Center at Glencoe is responsible for freight billing and service assistance.

Operations commenced July 27, 1991, over what was formerly known as the "Ortonville Line," operated by the Soo Line (now Canadian Pacific Railway) between Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN, and Milbank, SD. Before TC&W and Soo Line operations, this line was part of the Milwaukee Road's mainline for the Pacific Northwest. This main line was originally built in the 1870s by the Hastings & Dakota Railway.

TC&W interchanges with all Class I railroads in the Minneapolis/St. Paul terminal area (Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Canadian Pacific Railway, I&M Rail Link, Union Pacific) connects with Wisconsin Central Ltd. via the Minnesota Commercial Railway. Other connections include BNSF at Appleton, MN; Minnesota Central Railroad (MCTA) at Norwood, MN; and Sisseton Milbank Railroad (SMRR) at Milbank, SD.

Trains normally operate six days per week between the Twin Cities and Renville, with two or three-day service as far west as Milbank. Additional trains run during periods of peak demand. TC&W personnel are responsible for inspecting and maintaining the railroad's track.

TC&W's traffic base consists largely of grains (corn, wheat, barley), soybeans, sugar, beet pulp pellets, lumber, and other forest products, canned and frozen vegetables, edible beans, clay, fertilizers, coal, crushed rock, and agricultural machinery.

TC&W employs approximately 50 people, many of whom possess previous railroad experience. Most of them work out of the Glencoe terminal, and nearly half are trained Transportation Specialists.

TC&W has nine Caterpillar Generation II (GP20C) locomotives and three CF7 slug units. The car fleet comprises approximately 430 owned and leased covered hoppers (primarily 4,750 cu ft. capacity) and 16 Airslide cars (4,180 cu ft. capacity). TC&W also has 47 RBL boxcars and five gondola cars. Additional equipment is brought online as needed from connecting carriers.

TC&W has access to the Mississippi River through the Minneapolis River Terminal at Camden Place, MN, in north Minneapolis, and facilities on the Minnesota River at Savage, MN. TC&W also has access to all other major river facilities in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area through other carriers.

Mass Transit

Mass transit is considered an essential public service. It provides increased capacity on heavily traveled roads, transportation access to people with disabilities or those otherwise unable to drive, support for dense land use development, decreases dependence on car use, and helps prevent the creation of additional air pollution from diminished individual car use. Trailblazer Transit is the mass transit provider for Plato and McLeod County and is operated by a joint powers board.

Airports

The closest airport to the City is the Glencoe Municipal Airport. It features a 3,300-foot paved runway, 30 hangars, new lighting systems, a paved airport driveway, a non-directional beacon, an administration building, a new paved ramp area for plane parking, a replacement blacktop around the hangars, a paved airport parking lot, and an automated weather service. The airport accommodates 90-95 percent of general aviation aircraft.

Transportation Goals and Policies

These goals and Policies are designed to enhance the transportation infrastructure, promote safety, and support the efficient movement of goods in the City of Plato.

Goal One: Improve Road Infrastructure

Policy 1: Enhance Highway 212: Collaborate with MnDOT to enhance hwy 212 and advocate to improve safety access into Plato

Policy 2: Upgrade Access Points: Develop new frontage and backage roads adjacent to Highway 212 to manage access and reduce congestion.

Goal Two: Promote Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

Policy 1: Develop Bike/Walking Trails: Create off-road bike and walking trails between Plato and Glencoe to provide safe and accessible routes for non-motorized transportation.

Policy 2: Improve Pedestrian Infrastructure: Focus on pedestrian improvements along County Road 9 to ensure safe and convenient walking paths.

Goal Three: Support Efficient Transportation of Goods

Policy 1: Facilitate Freight Movement: Market the asset that is Highway 212 as a critical route for efficiently transporting agricultural products, manufactured goods, and raw materials.

Policy 2: Enhance Rail Connectivity: Collaborate with the Twin Cities & Western Railroad to develop incentives for rail spurs and connections, supporting local and new businesses, and capitalize on the transportation of grains, lumber, and other essential goods.

Public Infrastructure

Roads and Streets

The expansion of Highway 212 to four lanes in 2025 is a vital investment in the region's economic future. This improvement will enhance transportation efficiency, support commercial activity, and strengthen regional connectivity. In collaboration with McLeod County, MnDOT has also completed a single-lane roundabout at the intersection of Highway 212 and Morningside Drive in Glencoe, featuring ADA-accessible sidewalks and a multi-use trail—further improving safety and accessibility for all users.

Sidewalks, Curb, and Gutter

The city's sidewalks are generally usable, but some require maintenance and repair. The curb and gutter system is in good condition and expected to remain so. The City will identify and prioritize maintenance and replacement needs as necessary.

Streetlights

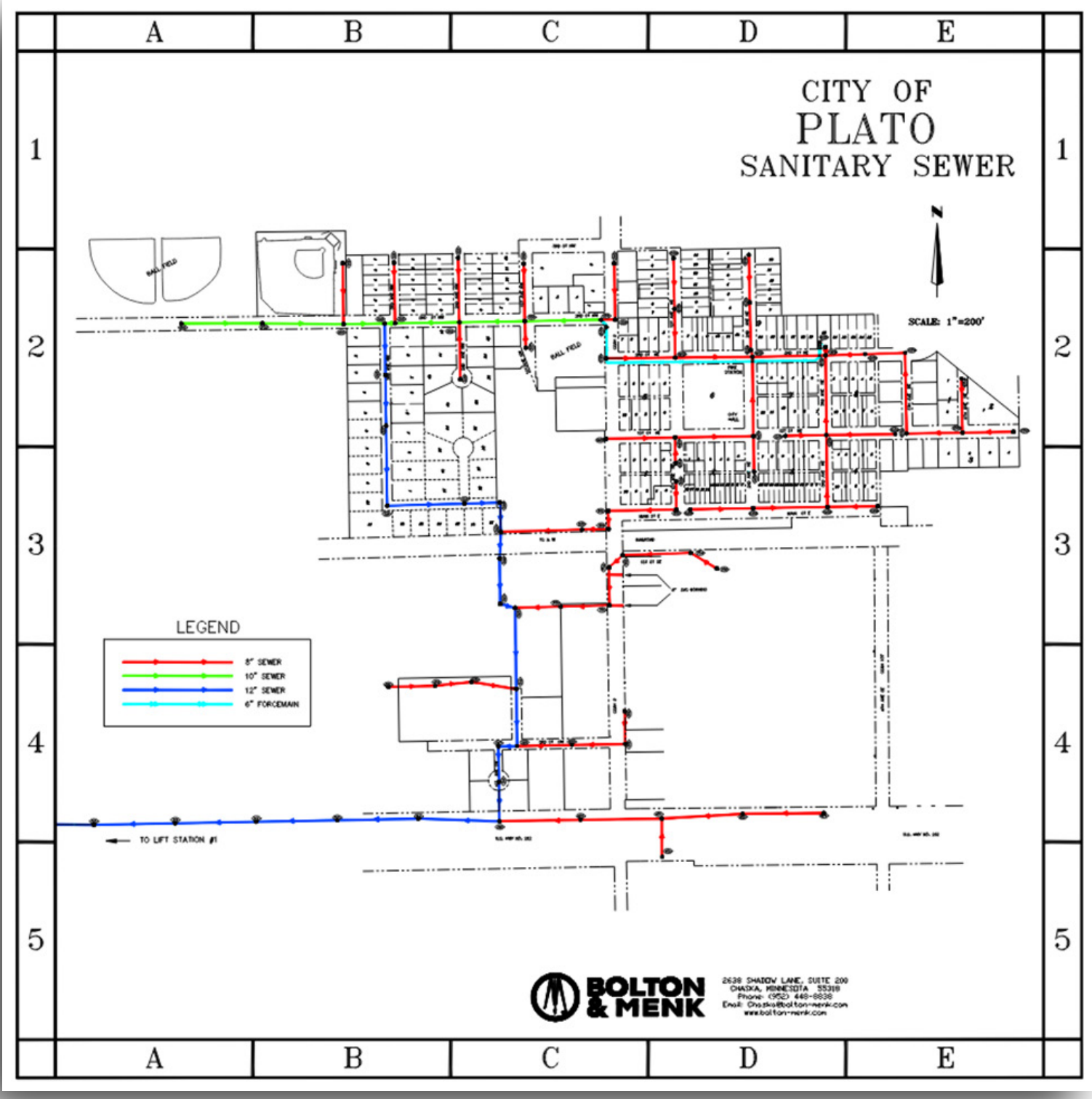
Xcel Energy owns and maintains the streetlights, and the City pays a monthly fee for their operation and maintenance.

Sanitary Sewer System

The City of Plato's sewer system was constructed in the summer of 2000. It includes two lift stations: one located at 220 2nd Street NE and another at 10591 Boone Road, west of the city along U.S. Hwy 212. Wastewater is pumped west to the City of Glencoe Wastewater Treatment Facility, which has a daily design flow rate of 1,350,000 gallons per day, equating to approximately 5,400 Equivalent Residential Units (ERUs), assuming each ERU generates an average of 250 gallons of wastewater per day.

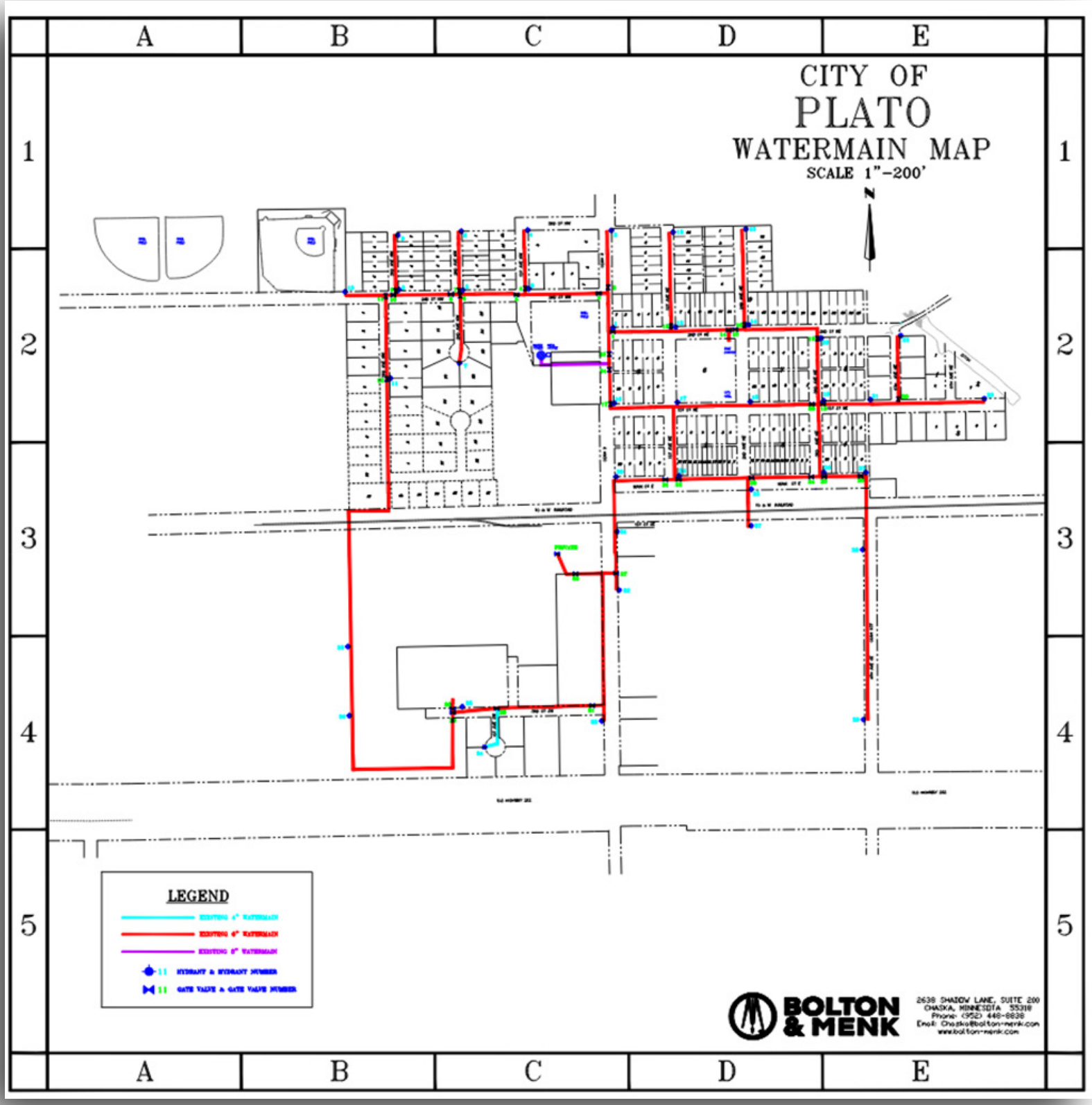
The City of Plato and Glencoe have a negotiable working agreement regarding the sewer system. Currently, Plato utilizes approximately 169 ERUs, comprising 36 commercial ERUs and 133 residential ERUs. The total system capacity can provide gravity service to 980 ERUs. To support additional ERUs, existing pumps would need to be periodically increased in size.

Definition of ERU: An Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) is a measure representing the average wastewater generated by a typical residential household. This unit is also used to estimate commercial and industrial demand, helping to calculate sewer system capacity and demand.



Water Supply System

Plato's water system includes water mains, two wells, a pump house, and a 50,000-gallon water tower. The water mains are in good condition. The primary well, constructed in 2001, is 510 feet deep and produces 205 gpm, while the backup well, built in 1952, is 96 feet deep and yields 125 gpm but has high arsenic levels. Water is treated with fluorine, chlorine, and polyphosphates to meet City standards.



Water Infrastructure Map

The map provides a comprehensive overview of the current and proposed water infrastructure in Plato:

- Watermains: Existing (red lines) and proposed (purple lines).
- Hydrants: Existing (blue squares) and proposed (light blue squares).
- Valves: Existing (green circles) and proposed (orange circles).

Proposed Watermains

The proposed water mains are strategically placed to extend the existing network, focusing on areas anticipated for growth, such as new residential and commercial developments. These water mains are designed to handle higher capacities to support increased demand and improve system reliability and efficiency. They are located close to existing lines to facilitate easier integration and reduce construction costs, ensuring accessibility for maintenance and future upgrades.

Pump House

The pump house, constructed in 1952, had its control equipment replaced in 2001 in conjunction with the new production well. It also has a hook-up for generator service.

Water Tower

The system's water tower is undersized, providing 50 psi of water pressure throughout the City. Based on ISO fire-fighting requirements, the City's computed required storage volume is 48,000 gallons. Additional storage and/or pumping capacity would be needed for extensive future growth. The City could evaluate annually when to invest in a new water tower and should try to get their water project on the Minnesota Department of Health's Project Priority List (PPL) to access the Drinking Water Revolving Fund (DWRF). For now, the City can expand slowly, relying on its pumping capacity to replenish the tower. Developing a household water conservation plan could also mitigate the situation.

MN DNR 2024 Water Use Report

The report details the City of Plato, Minnesota's water usage under permit number 1979-4377. Total water usage in 2024 was 11,093,400 gallons, with the highest usage on October 9 (85,600 gallons). The pump rate is 205 gallons per minute.

Storm Sewer

Plato's surface water system handles runoff from Highway 212, local farms, and residential/commercial/manufacturing buildings.

The SE quadrant receives runoff through culverts and tile lines, draining into Ditch #28 and large ponds.

The SW quadrant's drainage flows through culverts and tiles, eventually reaching Buffalo Creek.

The NW quadrant manages runoff from the SE and SW quadrants, with drainage passing under railroad tracks and into Buffalo Creek.

The NE quadrant primarily drains into Ditch #28 and Kennison Lake, with established tile lines managing flow.

Plato has a storm sewer system with pipes in all roads and numerous catch basins in the curb. However, there is no comprehensive layout for open water ponds drainage to the county ditch and/or Buffalo Creek, including the location of tiles outside the city limits.

Future Growth:

Development outside current city limits will increase drainage through existing conduits and ponds.

Mitigation measures, such as expanding ponds and upgrading tile lines, will be necessary to handle increased water flow.

Bottlenecks include culverts under County Rd #9 and railroad tracks, which may require upgrades.

Emergency repair agreements between property owners and city leadership are crucial for managing heavy rains and potential flooding.

Telecommunications/Utilities

Utility providers serving Plato include:

- Electricity: Xcel Energy
- Natural Gas: CenterPoint Energy (formerly Minnegasco)
- Fiber Optic available- commercial and residential
- Sanitation Services: Waste Management of Winsted

Public Investments

Before providing infrastructure to newly developed areas, the costs incurred for water, sewer, streets, and other services should be determined. Developers could contribute to the infrastructure costs, or the city could consider incentives for partial tax abatement or reimbursement agreements. Developers should check with the city for the latest incentives

Capital Improvements

The City could identify and plan its major public projects annually. Being prepared for major public expenditures such as the needed new well can save money. The city is determining whether to pursue a capacity through a feasibility study that would determine the communities needed street, storm water, sewer, and water capacities in the future.

Infrastructure Goals and Policies

Goal One: Efficient and Resilient Infrastructure

Policy 1: Conduct regular maintenance and upgrades to ensure the longevity and efficiency of public infrastructure.

Policy 2: Plan ahead for infrastructure expansion with a capital improvement plan to align with growth

Goal Two: Funding and Investment

Policy 1: Secure diverse funding sources, including grants and public-private partnerships, to finance infrastructure projects.

Policy 2: Prioritize investments in critical infrastructure to support community growth and resilience.

Goal Three: Intergovernmental Cooperation

Policy 1: Coordinate infrastructure planning and projects with local, state, and federal government units.

Policy 2: Regularly meet with neighboring municipalities to discuss shared infrastructure needs and opportunities.

Implementation

The following Implementation Matrix indicates priorities ranked by the steering committee, champions leading the efforts, and supporting partners. It includes the timeline and potential funding sources to make these actions happen. Goals are show in descending priorities with the first being the most urgent/important. Please use this as a guide in your decision-making.

Chapter & Goal Number	Goal/Strategy Language	Phasing	Resources	Champion	Support
Natural Resources 1.1	Land use guidance will minimize impacts on the natural environment, including discouraging urban sprawl, limiting runoff, and reducing intense uses near waterbodies and wetlands.	Short Term: 1-5 years	Minnesota DNR Grants: Various grants are available for conservation, habitat, land and water conservation, and more: https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/index.html	Planning Commission 1	Council Member 1, Ryan Freitag (SWCD District Manager), Community Member 1
Transportation. 1.2	Upgrade Access Points: Develop new frontage and backage roads adjacent to Highway 212 to manage access and reduce congestion.	Mid Term: 6-10 years	MnDOT Grants Portal: Visit the MnDOT Grants Portal for detailed information on available state grants and application guidelines: https://mn.gov/admin/citizen/grants/	Planning Commission 2	Council Member 2 Andrew Engel (Public Works Director/County Engineer) Community Member 2
Housing 2.2	Preserve the area's rural character by locating new housing developments within current corporate limits or in areas included in the city's Future Land Use Plan.	Short Term: 1-5 years	League of Minnesota Cities Grant Navigator: Provides small grants to help cities assess government grant programs and local needs: https://www.lmc.org/resources/grant-navigator/	Planning Commission 3	Council Member 3 Liz Danielson (Economic Development Coordinator) Community Member 3
Economic Development 3.1	Prevent the outmigration of youth and facilitiate older citizens remaining in the community.	Long Term: 11-15 years	Minnesota State Grants Portal: https://mn.gov/admin/citizen/grants/	Planning Commission 3	Council Member 3 Liz Danielson (Economic Development Coordinator) Community Member 3
Infrastructure 1.1	Conduct regular maintenance and upgrades to ensure the longevity and efficiency of public infrastructure.	Ongoing	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Funds: This federal act provides additional funding for SRF low-interest loans and principal forgiveness grants based on WIF affordability criteria. It also supports green infrastructure projects and the replacement of drinking water lead service lines[2].https://mn.gov/deed/assets/2026-ppl-iup-announcements_tcm1045-665105.pdf	Planning Commission 4	Council Member 4 Marc Telecky (Environmental Services and Zoning and Planning Director Community Member 4

Number	Goal/Strategy Language	Phasing	Resources	Champion	Support
Land Use 2.3	Encourage Local Businesses: To stimulate the local economy, provide incentives and support for small businesses and local entrepreneurs.	Short Term: 1-5 years	Minnesota Small Business Grants: provides grants to business owners to start and grow their ventures: https://www.usgrants.org/minnesota/small-business-grants	Planning Commission 4	Council Member 4 Marc Telecky (Environmental Services and Zoning and Planning Director Community Member 4
Infrastructure 2.1	Secure diverse funding sources, including grants and public -private partnerships, to finance infrastructure projects.	Short Term: 1-5 years	State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loans: These funds are available for wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water infrastructure improvement projects. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) administer these funds in partnership with the PFA. Projects must be listed on the appropriate Intended Use Plan (IUP) to be eligible for SRF financing[2]: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/2026-ppl-iup-announcements_tcm1045-665105.pdf	Planning Commission 4	Council Member 4 Marc Telecky (Environmental Services and Zoning and Planning Director Community Member 4
Land Use 2.2	Enhance Infrastructure: Upgrade roads, utilities, and public facilities to support business operations and attract new investments.	Mid Term: 6-10 years	See specific strategies for infrastructure, economic development and transportation	Planning Commission 4	Council Member 4 Marc Telecky (Environmental Services and Zoning and Planning Director Community Member 4
Infrastructure 1.2	Plan ahead for infrastructure expansion with a capital improvement plan to align with growth	Long Term: 11-15 years	Water Infrastructure Fund (WIF): Administered by the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority (PFA), this fund provides supplemental grants based on affordability criteria to help communities build wastewater and drinking water projects that replace aging infrastructure and meet permit requirements: https://mn.gov/deed/pfa/funds-programs/wastewater.jsp	Planning Commission 4	Council Member 4 Marc Telecky (Environmental Services and Zoning and Planning Director Community Member 4

Number	Goal/Strategy Language	Phasing	Resources	Champion	Support
Housing 1.1	Address senior housing issues and starter home availability periodically or as needed.	Short Term: 1-5 years	Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Grants: Supports cities, counties, and tribal nations in creating sites for workforce and affordable housing: https://www.mnhousing.gov/local-government.html	Planning Commission 3	Council Member 3 Liz Danielson (Economic Development Coordinator) Community Member 3
Land Use 2.1	Designate Commercial Zones: Identify and promote areas for commercial development to attract businesses and create job opportunities.	Mid Term: 6-10 years	504 Loan Program: The SBA 504 Loan Program provides long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets such as land, buildings, and machinery. 7(a) Loan Program: Offers access to capital for various business activities, including purchasing machinery and improving land and buildings https://mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/tax-credits/opp-zones/	Planning Commission 4	Council Member 4 Marc Telecky (Environmental Services and Zoning and Planning Director Community Member 4
Transportation 3.1	Facilitate Freight Movement: Ensure Highway 212 remains a critical route for efficiently transporting agricultural products, manufactured goods, and raw materials.	Mid Term: 6-10 years	Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grants (MPDG), Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Program, and the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program: MnDOT Grants Portal: Visit the MnDOT Grants Portal for detailed information on available state grants and application guidelines: https://www.dot.state.mn.us/grants/	Planning Commission 2	Council Member 2 Andrew Engel (Public Works Director/County Engineer) Community Member 2
Transportation 2.2	Improve Pedestrian Infrastructure: Focus on pedestrian improvements along County Road 9 to ensure safe and convenient walking paths.	Mid Term: 6-10 years	Active Transportation Planning Assistance: This program helps cities increase walking and biking through technical assistance and planning: https://www.dot.state.mn.us/news/2025/01/23-statewide-active-transportation-planning.html	Planning Commission 2	Council Member 2 Andrew Engel (Public Works Director/County Engineer) Community Member 2
Economic Development 1.1	Promote resilience and innovation to allow businesses to thrive.	Short Term: 1-5 years	Launch Minnesota Innovation Grants: https://mn.gov/launchmn/capital/launch-grants/	Planning Commission 3	Council Member 3 Liz Danielson (Economic Development Coordinator) Community Member 3

Number	Goal/Strategy Language	Phasing	Resources	Champion	Support
Natural Resources 2.1	The city will promote best practices to maintain open spaces and encourage positive land use, such as regenerative farming, to enhance resilience and community well-being.	Short Term: 1-5 years	Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant: Supports projects that demonstrate sustainable agricultural practices: https://www.mda.state.mn.us/funding Value-Added Grant Program: Provides funding for projects that add value to agricultural products and improve farm operations: https://www.mda.state.mn.us/funding AGRI Sustainable Ag Demonstration Grant: Funds on-farm research and demonstration projects that promote sustainable agriculture: https://misa.umn.edu/farm-food-resources/grants-loans-farmers SARE Farmer-Rancher Grant: Supports innovative projects that improve farm sustainability: https://misa.umn.edu/farm-food-resources/grants-loans-farmers	Planning Commission 1	Council Member 1, Ryan Freitag (SWCD District Manager), Community Member 1
Land Use 1.1	Promote Mixed-Use Development: Encourage development that integrates residential, commercial, and recreational spaces to create vibrant, walkable neighborhoods.	Mid Term: 6-10 years	Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Grants support cities, counties, and tribal nations in creating sites for workforce and affordable housing in Greater Minnesota and can cover up to 50% of capital costs for physical public infrastructure necessary to support qualifying housing developments, including mixed-use projects: https://www.lmc.org/resources/current-grant-opportunities/	Planning Commission 4	Council Member 4 Marc Telecky (Environmental Services and Zoning and Planning Director Community Member 4
Infrastructure 3.1	Coordinate infrastructure planning and projects with local, state, and federal government units.	Short Term: 1-5 years		Planning Commission 4	Council Member 4 Marc Telecky (Environmental Services and Zoning and Planning Director Community Member 4

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Housing 1.2	Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of existing housing stock.	Short Term: 1-5 years	Greater Minnesota Small Cities (Tier II Cities) Housing Aid Grant Program:https://www.mnhousing.gov	City & County	Private Builders & Developers
Land Use 1.2	Improve Public Spaces: Invest in parks, trails, and community centers to provide residents with recreational opportunities.	Mid Term: 6-10 years	Outdoor Recreation Grant Program: https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/outdoor_rec.html	Planning Commission 4	Council Member 4 Marc Telecky (Environmental Services and Zoning and Planning Director Community Member 4
Transportation 2.1	Develop Bike/Walking Trails: Create off-road bike and walking trails between Plato and Glencoe to provide safe and accessible routes for non-motorized transportation.	Mid Term: 6-10 years	MnDOT Active Transportation Program https://environment.transportation.org/news/minnesota-cities-getting-active-transportation-grants/	City & Glencoe	MnDOT
Economic Development 2.3	Collaborate with the public school system and private enterprises to achieve and retain a skilled labor force.	Mid Term: 6-10 years	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Grants: funding to support workforce development initiatives, including collaboration between educational institutions and businesses for programs that enhance job training, apprenticeships, and skill development: Grants.gov and https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/grants/	Planning Commission 3	Council Member 3 Liz Danielson (Economic Development Coordinator) Community Member 3
Housing 1.3	Guide growth into areas that will soon be supplied with municipal services.	Short Term: 1-5 years	see infrastructure	Planning Commission 3	Council Member 3 Liz Danielson (Economic Development Coordinator) Community Member 3
Housing 2.1	Make suitable land appropriately zoned for residential development available.	Short Term: 1-5 years	city zoning code	Planning Commission 3	Council Member 3 Liz Danielson (Economic Development Coordinator) Community Member 3

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Economic Development 1.2	Encourage redevelopment and reclamation of existing commercial and indusrial areas.	Short Term: 1-5 years	"Redevelopment Grant Program: https://mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/cleanup/redevelopmentgrantprogram.jsp Commercial Redevelopment Grants: https://mn.gov/irrrb/grant-resources/community-grant/commercial-redevelopment.jsp"	Planning Commission 3	Council Member 3 Liz Danielson (Economic Development Coordinator) Community Member 3
Economic Development 2.1	Develop marketing strategies to promote the city as a place to work and live.	Short Term: 1-5 years	Minnesota Investment Fund (MIF) & Job Creation Fund (JCF): https://mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/deed-programs/mif/	Planning Commission 3	Council Member 3 Liz Danielson (Economic Development Coordinator) Community Member 3
Economic Development 2.4	Develop incentives to attract businesses that create employment.	Short Term: 1-5 years	Innovative Business Development Public Infrastructure (BDPI) Program: https://mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/business-funding/innovative/	Planning Commission 3	Council Member 3 Liz Danielson (Economic Development Coordinator) Community Member 3
Economic Development 3.2	Protect scenic and environmentally sensitive areas while pursuing development.	Ongoing	"Natural and Scenic Area Grants: https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/land/natural-scenic-app-cycle.html Minnesota State Grants Portal: https://mn.gov/admin/citizen/grants/ Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) https://www.lccmr.mn.gov/about/faq-index.html"	Planning Commission 3	Council Member 3 Liz Danielson (Economic Development Coordinator) Community Member 3
Economic Development 3.3	Actively seek funds for various business, human, and natural resource needs.	Ongoing	Small Cities Development Program: Helps cities with funding for housing, public infrastructure, and commercial rehabilitation projects: https://mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/community-funding/small-cities.jsp	Planning Commission 3	Council Member 3 Liz Danielson (Economic Development Coordinator) Community Member 3
Infrastructure 2.2	Prioritize investments in critical infrastructure to support community growth and resilience.	Short Term: 1-5 years		Planning Commission 4	Council Member 4 Marc Telecky (Environmental Services and Zoning and Planning Director Community Member 4

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Land Use 3.1	Protect Open Spaces: Protect and maintain green spaces, parks, and natural areas to preserve the environment and provide passive and active recreational opportunities.	Mid Term: 6-10 years	GrantWatch Preservation Grants: https://minnesota.grantwatch.com/cat/27/preservation-grants.html	Planning Commission 4	Council Member 4 Marc Telecky (Environmental Services and Zoning and Planning Director Community Member 4
Land Use 3.2	Conserve Historical Sites: Identify and protect buildings and areas of historical significance to maintain the city's heritage.	Long Term: 11-15 years	Minnesota Grid Resilience Formula Grants: https://mn.gov/commerce-stat/IIJA/draftV4-program-narrative-bil-40101d-mar2023.pdf Greater Minnesota Public Infrastructure Grant Program: Provides grants to cities for public infrastructure necessary to expand or retain jobs: https://mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/business-funding/infrastructure/	Planning Commission 4	Council Member 4 Marc Telecky (Environmental Services and Zoning and Planning Director Community Member 4
Natural Resources 1.2	Development activities will be directed to connect to the city water and sewer system to reduce contaminants from septic systems and contaminated wellheads when economically feasible.	Short Term: 1-5 years		Planning Commission 1	Council Member 1, Ryan Freitag (SWCD District Manager), Community Member 1
Natural Resources 2.3	The city will regularly evaluate open spaces and environmental conditions to ensure their availability for future enjoyment.	Ongoing		Planning Commission 1	Council Member 1, Ryan Freitag (SWCD District Manager), Community Member 1
Transport-ation. 1.1	Enhance Highway 212: Collaborate with MnDOT to enhance hwy 212 and advocate to improve safety access into Plato	Long Term: 11-15 years	MNDOT	Planning Commission 2	Council Member 2 Andrew Engel (Public Works Director/County Engineer) Community Member 2

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Infrastructure 3.2	Regularly meet with neighboring municipalities to discuss shared infrastructure needs and opportunities.	Ongoing	talk to your neighboring communities	Planning Commission 4	Council Member 4 Marc Telecky (Environmental Services and Zoning and Planning Director Community Member 4