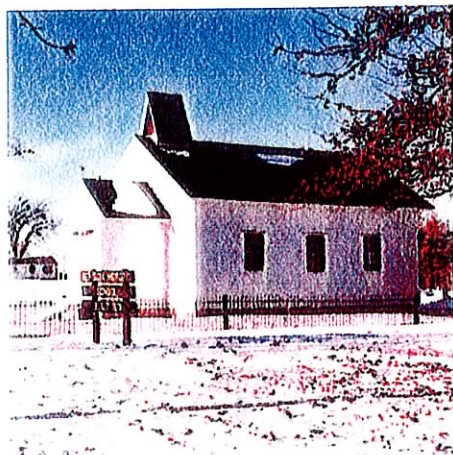
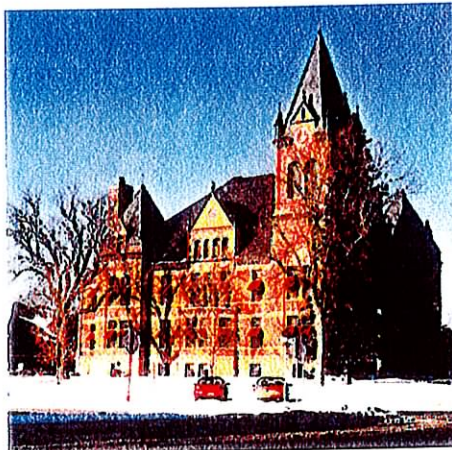
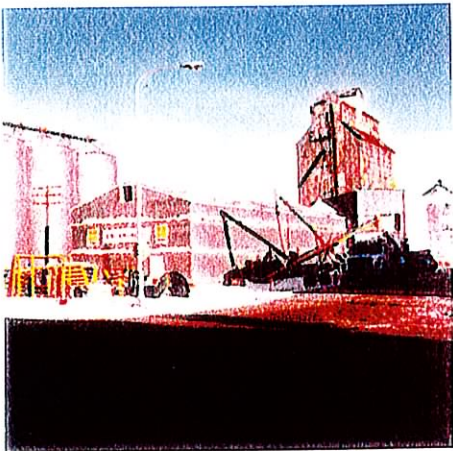
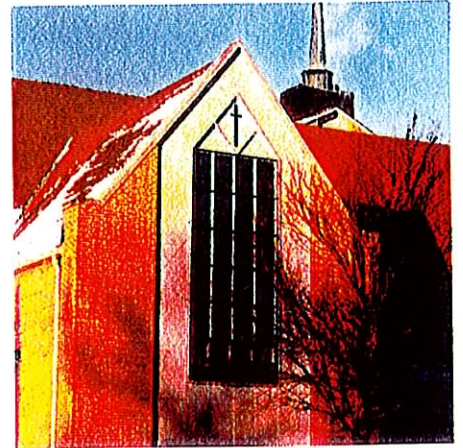


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# City of Benson Comprehensive Plan 2000

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A GUIDE TO BENSON'S FUTURE

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## CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

### PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Benson's Comprehensive Plan is a vision of what the City wants to be. It is a guide to help the City preserve what they value and to enhance what they feel should be improved. More specifically, the Plan serves the following purposes:

1. It addresses physical planning issues such as land use, transportation, housing, public facilities, and parks and open spaces. Yet it also considers social and economic issues.
2. It ties together various components of the City (land use, transportation, parks, etc.) into one "comprehensive" plan that reflects the interrelationships between these components.
3. It expresses a long range vision that can serve the City through the year 2020. Yet it also provides specific recommendations that address current issues.
4. It identifies key issues, sets goals, develops policies for achieving the goals, and describes actions needed to implement the policies. This provides the legal basis for land use control and it provides a link to the City's ordinances which, by law, must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
5. It guides City Staff, the Planning Commission, the City Council, and private developers in decisions related to preservation and development in the city.

### USE OF THE PLAN

Several parties will find this plan useful:

1. City staff and government will use the plan to assist them with a variety of tasks including:
  - development and infrastructure decisions

- acquisition and use of public land
  - budgeting capital improvements
  - annexation issues
  - establishing regulatory changes
  - communicating to the public Benson's vision for its future
2. Property owners and residents will use the plan to assist them with tasks such as:
    - determining potential property use
    - understanding possible land use changes in the surrounding area
    - establishing reasonable land value
    - understanding future infrastructure improvements
    - making property improvements
  3. Developers will use the plan as a basis for:
    - property acquisition
    - establishing reasonable land value
    - coordinating development plans with City infrastructure plans

### PLANNING PROCESS

The City began the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan in early 1999. They organized a Comprehensive Plan Task Force to work with a planning consultant on development of the Plan. The task force included representatives from City Staff, the Planning Commission, the City Council, Benson residents, and Swift County residents.

Throughout the planning process, the City encouraged community input into the development of the Plan. They mailed surveys to all city and surrounding area households. They also distributed surveys to high school students. Over 700 people completed and returned the survey.

The City and Comprehensive Plan Task Force held a public open house on December 12, 1999 to receive comments on draft goals, policies, and sketch plans. Based in part on public input at the open house, the Plan was revised and refined. A draft Comprehensive Plan was prepared and presented for task force approval on May 23, 2000. The Planning Commission held a public hearing in June of 2000 to review and recommend approval of the Plan. The City Council reviewed and adopted the Plan in July of 2000.

## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter briefly describes the history of Benson, its regional context, natural features, and people. This overview provides insight into how Benson developed and how it may develop in the future.

### HISTORY

Prior to the mid 1800s, the area that we now know as Benson was part of what appeared to be an endless prairie. The Chippewa and Sioux were the primary residents in the area, but by the early 1860s, settlers from the east began living in the area.

In 1870, the Saint Paul and Pacific Railroad Company prepared a plat for the City of Benson and they extended their railroad from Willmar to Benson. Because the railroad did not construct additional tracks for over a year, Benson was, for a while, the "end of the line." As such it became a regional center serving the needs of people within a 100-mile area to the north, west, and south. It also became a starting point for the Red River cart trails that carried goods and people farther west. By 1875, Benson had a population of 300 people and it had four general stores, two drug stores, two machinery houses, three hotels, one bank, and two saloons.

The railroad's original plat for the city included a town square and commercial development just north of the railroad track at the present day site of the Swift County Courthouse. But because of the importance of the railroad, most commercial development occurred along both sides of the railroad track rather than around the platted town square. In essence, the 250 foot-wide railroad right of way evolved into Benson's town square with the railroad taking center stage.

Over the years, trucks and automobiles became an

important mode of transportation. As a result, commercial and industrial uses began to develop along the highway system - particularly just east of the city on Highway 12. Many of the industrial and commercial uses that developed related to the agricultural base of the area.

Although Benson has grown and changed since the 1870s, it has also remained the same in many ways. Benson's economy is still strongly tied to agriculture. And the railroad and highway system continue to have a strong presence in the community. But perhaps most important, Benson continues to be a regional center that provides goods and services to the surrounding area.

### REGIONAL CONTEXT

Benson is located in Swift County in western Minnesota. It is approximately 120 miles northwest of Minneapolis, 30 miles northwest of Willmar, and 75 miles southwest of Saint Cloud (see Figure 2-1: Location Map).

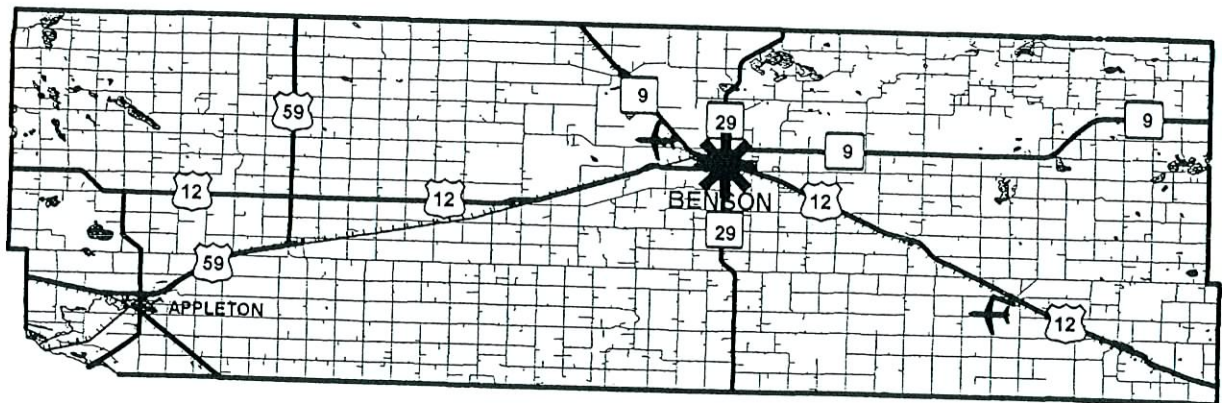
Benson is well served and easily accessed by several major highways, a railroad, and an airport. U.S. Highway 12 provides direct access between Willmar and Benson (roughly 30 minutes travel time) and Minneapolis and Benson (roughly two hours travel time). Morris is accessed by State Highway 9 and is roughly 30 minutes travel time from Benson. The Burlington Northern Railroad passes through the center of the city and provides an opportunity for Benson industries to transport grain and other freight by rail. The Benson Municipal Airport, located one mile out of town, has a 4,000 foot paved and lighted runway. The airport provides an important link to the broader region. Benson's transportation system is described in more detail in Chapter 5: Transportation System.

Benson is in the Upper Minnesota Valley Development Region. This is a rural, agriculture region that includes the counties of Swift, Chippewa, Yellow Medicine, Lac Qui Parle, and Big Stone. From 2000 to 2025, this region is expected to lose over 7,000 residents or roughly 15% of the existing population. Much of this expected loss is based on agriculture related issues - specifically, the belief that farm consolidation will continue to occur.

Unlike the surrounding region, Benson's population will likely increase over the same time period. This is partly because Benson is an significant regional



## LOCATION WITHIN STATE



## LOCATION WITHIN SWIFT COUNTY

Figure 2-1: Location Maps

center. In addition to serving as the County Seat, Benson has a hospital, schools, stores, and industries that serve an area much greater than the City itself.

Although much of the surrounding area is rural farmland, the Benson area also provides many opportunities for recreation - particularly hunting, fishing, and camping. Five state parks exist within roughly 30 miles of Benson: Sibley, Lac Qui Parle, Monson Lake, Big Stone Lake, and Glacial Lake. Many Wildlife Management Areas, glacial hills, and lakes provide additional opportunities for hunting and fishing. These recreational opportunities are a strong asset to Benson and the region.

## NATURAL FEATURES

This section provides a brief overview of the natural features that have shaped, and will continue to shape, development in Benson and the surrounding area.

### WATER FEATURES

Figure 2-2: Natural Features, shows wetlands, the river, and the perceived floodplain in Benson.

The wetlands shown are based on National Wetland Inventory Maps that were prepared from aerial photography flown in 1980. Most of the wetlands are "palustrine" wetlands which means they are shallow, freshwater wetlands that are usually vegetated. Pursuant to the Minnesota Wetland Act (1991), all wetlands are protected by state, federal, or local government regulations and requirements, but permitting procedures may allow some modifications of existing wetlands. Because most of these wetlands have not been field delineated, refer to this map for general planning purposes only.

The East Branch of the Chippewa River joins the main branch of the Chippewa River at the municipal golf course in northern Benson. The river then runs from north to south through Benson and eventually to the Minnesota River. Prior to 1950, the meandering river frequently flooded. During the 1950s, however, the river was channelized to reduce the possibility of flooding. After the channelization project was constructed, the threat of flooding was thought to be virtually eliminated and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) classified Benson as "having no special flood hazard". However, in 1997, substantial flooding occurred within the city limits. Although the floodplain has not been officially delineated, a perceived floodplain (based on

community recollection of the 1997 flood) is shown on Figure 2-2: Natural Features. The City should, however, seek to provide a more accurate delineation of its floodplain.

The Chippewa River is a valuable recreational resource for the community. The water quality of the river is important to Benson and other communities along the river. The streams and drainage ditches that drain to the river are significant, in part, because they contribute to the water quality of the river.

The Chippewa River also defines the western edge of development in Benson. Although the city limits extend farther west than the river, extension of City sewer past the river would be difficult.

### VEGETATION

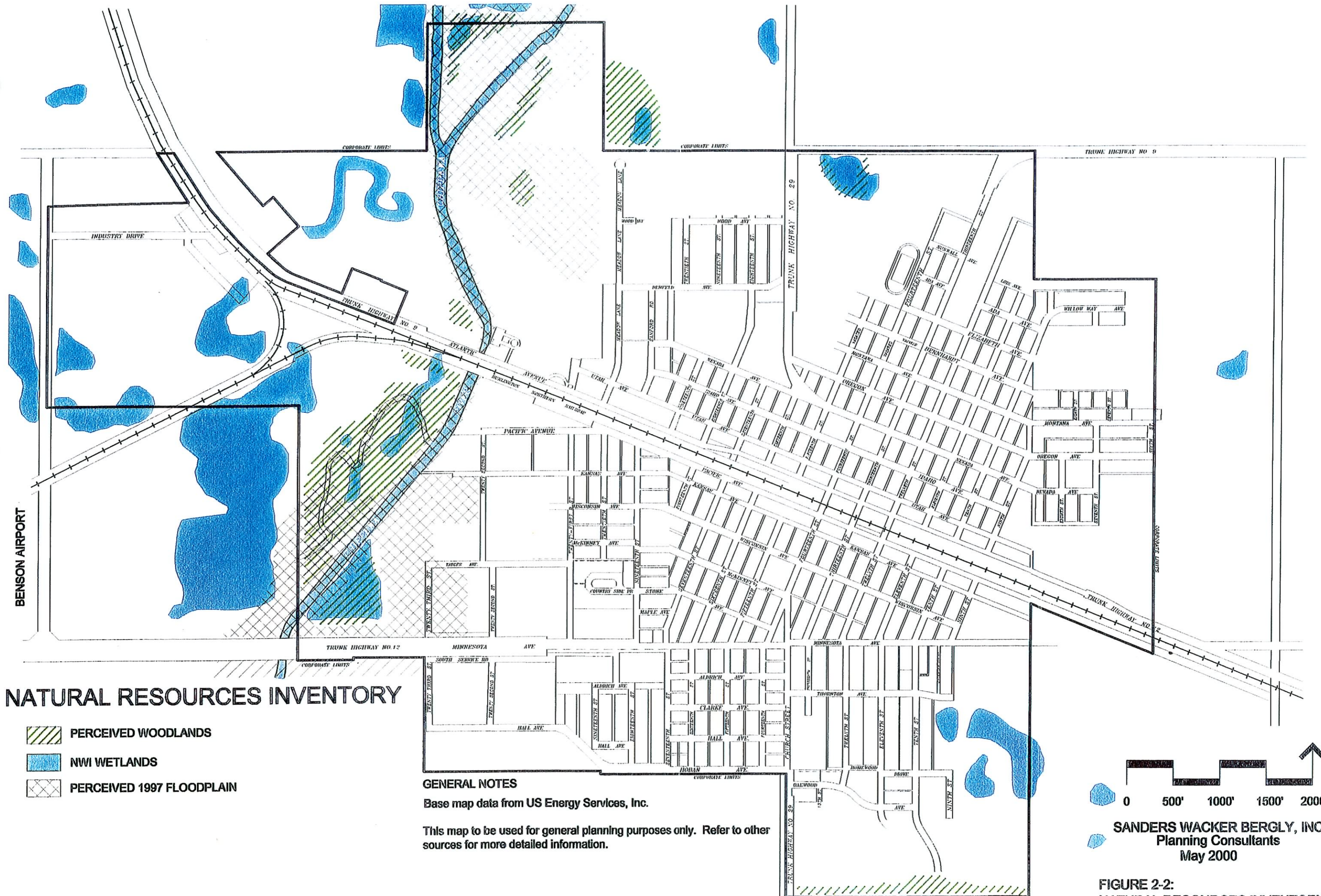
Pre-settlement vegetation in the Benson area consisted primarily of wetland vegetation and tall grass prairie. Wooded areas were found along rivers and streams.

Most, if not all, of the native prairies in the Benson area have been converted to cropland, grazing land, or urban development. Some wetlands have been drained - others remain. The wooded areas have likely grown since the 1850s, but are still found primarily along the waterways.



Most larger masses of vegetation coincide with the area's floodplain and wetlands. Plants typically found in these large masses include grasses (sedges, rushes and various other marsh plants), shrubs (dogwoods, alders, buttonbush, swamp-privet) and trees (cottonwoods, ash, and willows). Major areas of tree cover are shown in Figure 2-2: Natural Features.

### SOILS

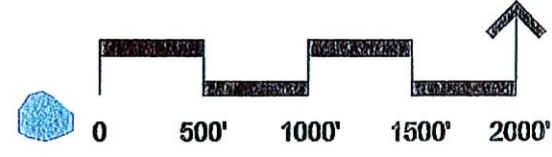
The Soil Survey of Swift County (1973), classifies the soils in Benson as belonging to the Arveson-Marysland-Hecla Association. This association is defined as "level, poorly drained, medium-textured soils that are shallow and moderately deep to sand and gravel; and deep, nearly level, moderately well drained, coarse textured soils". Throughout the City and the surrounding area, the wetlands and high water table associated with these soils place limitations on septic systems, road, and building development. The soil survey does not identify prime agriculture land within a one mile radius of Benson.



# NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

-  PERCEIVED WOODLANDS
-  NWI WETLANDS
-  PERCEIVED 1997 FLOODPLAIN

**GENERAL NOTES**  
 Base map data from US Energy Services, Inc.  
 This map to be used for general planning purposes only. Refer to other sources for more detailed information.



**SANDERS WACKER BERGLY, INC.**  
 Planning Consultants  
 May 2000

**FIGURE 2-2:**  
 NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

## TOPOGRAPHY

Benson is located in a large, nearly level basin. About 8,000 years ago, the area was covered by glacial ice. As the ice receded, melt water and alluvial deposits washed into the basin where the deposits remain today. The basin drains slightly to the southwest and eventually into the Minnesota River. The only areas that contain steep slopes are relatively narrow strips of land along the streams and riverbanks. The nearly level topography found in Benson is perhaps more problematic to future development than the few steep slopes that exist in the city. Although development is possible on these nearly level areas, the development may require additional fill and earthwork to ensure positive drainage.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

This section shows how the population of Benson has changed over the years and how the population will likely change in coming years. Planning implications are discussed throughout this Comprehensive Plan.

### POPULATION CHANGE FROM 1960 TO 1990

Every ten years the federal government conducts a census of the United States population. The census provides reasonably accurate information about the number of people living in a particular area at the time of the census.

The census shows that from 1960 to 1990....

- the population of Benson decreased from 3,678 to 3,235 (-12%),
- the population of Swift County decreased from 14,936 to 10,724 (-28%), and
- Benson's share of Swift County's population increased from 25% to 30%

Much of the population loss during this period is attributed to agriculture related issues. Farm consolidation, changes in farming practices, and a changing farm economy, meant fewer people were needed to farm the land. Some who worked in agriculture left the area for other employment opportunities. Young adults, in particular, moved out of the area.

However, Benson, as a regional center, did not lose population to the same degree that Swift County did. Indeed, some people who moved out of the surrounding rural area moved to Benson for

employment or retirement. Nevertheless, when a significant loss in a sector of the population occurs, it has a detrimental effect on the remaining population. With fewer people in the area, there was less need for the same number of stores, restaurants, and the like. Thus, from 1960 to 1990, the population loss in the rural area surrounding Benson contributed to Benson's population loss.

### 1998 POPULATION ESTIMATES

In between the years the census is conducted, federal and state governments (and sometimes local governments and private businesses) provide population estimates. They base these estimates in part on building permits, school enrollments, retail sales, and the like.

The Minnesota State Demographic Office estimated that Benson's population in 1998 was 3,316. This is a decrease of 11% over the 1980 population of 3,635, but it is an increase of 2.5% over the 1990 population of 3,235. Easy Analytic Software, Inc. (a private company that specializes in population projections) estimated that Benson's population in 1998 was roughly 3,476. This is an increase of 6.9% over the 1990 population.

As described above, population estimates for the same region are often different depending on who prepares the estimate and what assumptions they base their estimate on. However, it appears that Benson's population has increased in recent years, rather than decreased.

Recent population growth can be attributed to many factors including:

- an improvement in the economy as a whole,
- an improvement in the farm economy (although there are recent signs that the farm economy may be slowing - especially for small, family farms), and
- an increase in people moving to Benson to retire or to start new jobs

Benson's potential for future population growth is discussed below.

### POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections are powerful planning tools when used properly. They are based on many factors including assumptions for future birth rates, death rates, migration, and economic conditions.

Assumptions are based on past trends and the best information available at the time - but assumptions do not always hold true. Unexpected changes can occur - for example, existing industries may close or they may choose to expand. In a small community, these changes can have a major impact on the population. Therefore, small communities like Benson should use population projections as a general guide - not an absolute - and they should periodically review and update their projections based on new conditions.

Projections from the State Demographic Center suggest that *Swift County's* population will fluctuate slightly over time, but that it will remain fairly stable at least until 2025. The state's 1997 population estimate for Swift County is roughly 11,159. Their population projection for Swift County in the year 2025 is 11,010. Based on these findings, and assuming that recent trends will continue, one can speculate that Benson's population will also remain fairly stable at least until 2025.

Easy Analytic Software, Inc. (a private company that specializes in five year population projections) projects Benson's population will be at 3,538 in the year 2003. This is an increase of 1.8% over their 1998 population estimate of 3,476. Another way of looking at this projection is that Benson's population will increase by roughly 12 people a year for five years.

If recent trends continue, Benson will likely grow at a moderate pace (perhaps 1 to 2%) over the next five years. In comparison, the State of Minnesota expects to grow at a rate of roughly 3% over the same period.

Again, it is important to realize that the accuracy of population projections depends on the accuracy of assumptions used. If conditions dramatically change, for example, an industry leaves or moves into the area, these projections should be reevaluated.

## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Not only is it important to know how many people live in a community, it is also important to know key characteristics of those people - for example, their age, education, and employment. This helps communities plan for facilities and land uses that respond to the needs of the people in the community.

**AGE.** Several age groups have a significant effect on the future of Benson: those under age 18, those between the ages of 25 and 54, and those over 65.

The number of people under 18 will fluctuate over the years, but overall, this age group will likely not increase and may, in fact, decrease at least until 2020. There are two major reasons for this. First, the "baby bust" generation (those born in the 60s and 70s) are entering their prime childbearing years. Since there are fewer people in this "baby bust" group than the generation before, it follows that there will be fewer children born. Second, people today are having fewer children than people of the previous generation. So unless Benson attracts younger families from other areas, the number of children in Benson may decrease over the years.

People between the ages of 25 and 54 are at their prime working age. Most of the people that are currently in this age group were born during the "baby boom" era and therefore represent a relatively large percentage of Benson's population. However, the "baby bust" generation is moving into this age group, so the size of the 25 to 54 age group will begin to stabilize and perhaps decline. This is significant, because if Benson is to attract additional industry, the City will also need to attract additional people in this age group to fill the jobs created by new industry.

The over 65 age group is also important to the future of Benson. As life expectancy continues to increase, the number of people in this age group will also continue to increase. Currently, Benson has a fairly large percentage of elderly people, but this will likely begin to change. From 2000 to 2010 or so, the population of this age group may begin to decline in Benson. This is because starting in the 1960s and 1970s, many of the younger people born and raised in rural areas - including Benson - moved to metropolitan areas. Therefore, the metropolitan areas will see a dramatic rise in the elderly population, but Benson may actually see a decrease in this population group. However, if the "baby boomers" who now live in Benson also retire in Benson, this population group will begin to increase again after 2015 or so.

**HOUSEHOLDS.** In 1990, there were 1,485 households in Benson and 887 families. Nearly 90% of the families involved married couples and roughly two-thirds of the married couples had children under the age of 18 living with them. While married couples with children will continue to be the predominate household type, a shift is gradually occurring. In the future, there will be a larger percentage of married couples who will not have children living with them. There will also be more households with children that will have only one parent in the household. More households will involve a single person living alone or

sharing a dwelling unit with other single, unrelated people.

The median household size in 1990 was roughly 2.2 persons per household. Given the trend for more single person households and smaller family sizes it follows that household size will also decrease. Therefore, assuming that Benson's population will continue to grow at a moderate pace and household size will continue to decrease, Benson will need to plan accordingly to allow for development of an adequate amount and variety of housing.

**RACE AND ORIGIN.** Over 85% of Benson residents were born in Minnesota. Most are of Norwegian or German ancestry. Over 99% of the residents are white and speak English well. Although these statistics may change only slightly over the next 20 years, if Benson is to attract new industry it will also need to attract new residents. Therefore, Benson will gradually become more diverse.

**EDUCATION.** Nearly 60% of Benson residents over 25 years old have a high school graduate degree - nearly 10% have a college degree. In recent years there has been a dramatic rise in high school students that go onto college or vocational school. However, the general trend in most rural communities is that young people with college degrees usually leave rural areas and move to metropolitan areas. So even though the population is becoming more "educated", the challenge for rural communities like Benson is to entice younger people to return or move to their communities.

**EMPLOYMENT.** The Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development identifies the following major employers in the Benson area:

<u>Employer</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Employees</u>
Tyler	Farm Equipment	300
School District	Education	191
Lor-AL	Farm Equipment	155
Custom Ag	Farm Equipment	120
Future Products	Knit Outerwear	112
Benson Hospital	Hospital	98
Meadow Lane	Healthcare	94
Lorenz	Farm Equipment	35
Ethanol Plant	Chemicals	28

The Bureau of Labor Statistics breaks down the workforce in Swift County by the following sectors:

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Pct of Total Employment</u>
Government	22.7%

Manufacturing	13.3%
Retail Trade	12.7%
Services	9.5%
Wholesale Trade	5.2%
Finance/Real Estate	2.9%
Transportation/Utilities	2.8%
Construction	2.1%
Agriculture	Unknown
Mining	Unknown

As the County Seat, Benson has a relatively large percentage of its workforce employed by the government. People from federal, state, county, and city government live and work in Benson. Most of the manufacturing in and around Benson is related to agricultural products. Tyler, Lor-Al, Custom-Ag, and Lorenz are major employers of agricultural products. As a regional center, Benson's retail and service industries cater to an area much greater than the city itself - this is reflected in the number of people employed in these sectors.

### SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Population projections are powerful planning tools, but their accuracy is dependent on many assumptions that may or may not come true. Therefore, Benson should use the population information in this Comprehensive Plan as a general guide and not an absolute. With this in mind, we can expect that Benson's population will likely grow at a pace of 1-2% for at least the next five years and possibly for the next 20 years. The median age will continue to increase. If Benson is to maintain population growth and attract additional industry, the City will need to encourage young people to stay in the community and the City will need to entice more people between the ages of 25 and 54 to move to Benson. Planning implications related to demographic characteristics are discussed in more detail throughout this Comprehensive Plan.

### COMMUNITY SURVEY

As part of the planning process for development of the Comprehensive Plan, the City surveyed residents of Benson and the surrounding area. The following provides a brief overview of the survey results. Pertinent survey results are discussed in more detail throughout the Comprehensive Plan. Refer to Appendix A for a detailed summary of the survey.

## SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The City distributed surveys to roughly 1,450 households in Benson, 350 households in the surrounding townships, and roughly 200 students at the Benson High School. The survey was also printed in the local newspaper.

The City received 712 completed surveys. Respondents represent a broad cross section of the community:

- 81% are Benson residents
- 19% are township residents
- 58% work in Benson
- 20% are under 19 years old
- 10% are 19-34 years old
- 30% are 35-55 years old
- 12% are 55-65 years old
- 28% are over 65 years old

## TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

Of the various issues discussed in the survey, transportation issues appear to be a significant concern of people. People feel the railroad is a major inconvenience and a hazard. They also feel that traffic management, in general, should be improved. The younger respondents indicated that they would like to see more parking in the downtown area.

## RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Overall, people indicated that they believe Benson has adequate recreation and open space. Younger respondents, however, would like to see more recreation areas.

## LAND USE

Another major issue that came out of the survey is that people would like to see additional stores in Benson. In particular, the younger respondents indicated that they do much of their shopping in other towns because they feel that local stores do not meet their needs. The need for a new or improved discount store was also brought up by a significant number of respondents.

In regard to housing related issues, most respondents feel that the existing housing stock is adequate. However, younger respondents indicated that they would like to see improved rental and low income housing opportunities.

## COMMUNITY IMAGE

Overall, the respondents indicated that they feel that Benson has an attractive community with a good image. One area of concern is that people feel that the entrances into Benson are not very appealing and that they should be improved. Most people feel that Benson is a safe community to live in.

## QUALITY ISSUES

Overall, people feel that Benson offers a high quality of life. They are pleased with fire protection, the library, and schools. However, they feel street maintenance and Internet services could be improved.

## VALUES

Respondents indicated that having a strong education system in Benson is very important. They feel believe Benson should be an attractive community to live in and that Benson should continue to attract new businesses and industries.

## POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS

In general, respondents indicated that they like the small town atmosphere of Benson. They appreciate that it is a safe, quiet town - a town that they are comfortable raising a family in.

## DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS

Many respondents feel that Benson needs more retail stores. In particular they would like Benson to have more clothing stores, a shoe store, a 24/7 convenience/gas store, and a discount store like Target. Many people also feel that the traffic situation in Benson should be improved. They are concerned about truck traffic, trains, and uncontrolled intersections. The younger respondents feel that there should be more places for teenagers to "hang out".

## CONCLUSION

Overall, the results of the survey suggest that people are generally happy with Benson. They enjoy the small town atmosphere and want the City to work at maintaining and enhancing the positive qualities of the City. Those who participated in the survey were appreciative of the opportunity to express their opinions and contribute to the planning process.

## A VISION FOR BENSON'S FUTURE

A vision for Benson's future was developed through input from the community survey described above, discussions with the Comprehensive Plan Task Force, and public review. The vision is as follows:

*Benson is a good community to live and work in. We cherish its small town atmosphere. It's a friendly community - one where people know and respect each other. It's a safe, quiet, and peaceful community. We are proud of our schools, churches, parks and community events. These are the qualities of Benson that we value and want to carry forward into the future.*

*We want Benson to grow, but we believe that growth should enhance the small town character of Benson rather than detract from it. We want Benson to have an attractive and strong central business district - one that meets our shopping needs and respects the viability of small, locally owned businesses. We will strive to diversify our industries and embrace technologies that will provide Benson with strong economic growth and good paying jobs. We want to refine our transportation system to be safe and efficient for pedestrians and vehicles.*

*In short, we like Benson. As we move forward, we will be proactive in preserving and enhancing the qualities of Benson that we value.*

## CHAPTER 3: LAND USE

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes existing land use patterns in Benson and it sets forth a plan for future land use that is in keeping with the City's vision. The Land Use Plan guides City Staff, the Planning Commission, the City Council, and private developers in decisions related to the type, location, and density of future development in the community. It also serves as the basis for the City's Zoning Map, Zoning Ordinances, and Subdivision Regulations.

### INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

This section describes existing land use in the City of Benson. Figure 3-1: Existing Land Use, shows existing land use in 1999. Table 3-A: Existing Land Use Tabulations, describes the number of acres in each category of land use. Refer to Chapter 2: Community Background, for related information including maps and descriptions of existing natural features.

### EXISTING LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

The following describes the existing land use classifications in Benson:

- **Agriculture.** Land used for agriculture production - row crops or hay fields. No grazing/pasture land or animal holding/production facilities exist within the city limits.
- **Single Family Residential.** Single family detached housing including manufactured housing on a single family residential lot.
- **Multi Family Residential.** Attached housing including duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, apartments, and senior housing.
- **Mobile Home Residential.** Mobile homes and mobile home parks.
- **Commercial.** Retail sales and services, including professional services that are predominantly privately owned and operated for profit.
- **Industrial.** Manufacturing, assembly, warehousing, facilities involved in the movement of goods, construction, communications, utilities, and wholesale sales.
- **Public/Semi Public.** Publicly owned facilities including schools, the sewage treatment plant, and City Hall. Institutions including churches and hospitals.
- **Park/Open Space.** Parks and recreational facilities and open space owned or leased by local or other government.
- **Vacant.** Undeveloped land not used for agriculture or other existing land uses described herein.
- **Road Right-of-Way.** Public right-of-way used for roads or available for construction of new roads.
- **Railroad Right-of-Way.** Right-of-way used for the railroad and related uses. Part of the railroad right-of-way overlays other uses including industrial and park/open space.
- **NWI Wetlands.** Wetlands identified in the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). These wetlands are based on 1980 photographs and have not been field verified.
- **Perceived 100 Year Floodplain.** The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) classified Benson as "having no special flood hazard." Although not officially delineated, the perceived floodplain shown is based on community recollection of the 1997 flood.

