



Minnesota Cannot Afford the Cost of Sprawl

THE STATE CANNOT AFFORD SPRAWL

Minnesota is losing forests, wetlands, open space, and agricultural land at a rate disproportionate to its population growth.

- Since 1980, **more than 200,000 acres** of forests, wetlands, and farms in the Twin Cities area have been converted to urban or suburban development. (Source 1, p. 19)
- Twin Cities population increased 25% while **urbanized land grew by 61%**. (Source 2)
- On a regional basis, Minnesota is becoming less compact. For instance, from 1982 to 1997 St. Cloud's population grew 31%, yet the amount of **urbanized land grew 74%** for a 25% loss in density. (Source 2)
- Even though Duluth's **population fell by 7%** over that same time period, it **consumed 31% more land**. (Source 2)

COMPACT DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS COMMUNITIES & TAXPAYERS

- Studies indicate that the average cost of public infrastructure outlays for a new home can range anywhere from \$20,000 to \$70,000 depending on geographic location and housing density. Supposing a lower end average cost of \$35,000, the **metro's growth will require \$27 billion over the next 25 years—or \$1.1 billion per year**. (Source 2)
- "On a per capita basis, the cost of maintaining local roads within a county declines as density, residential market value, and percent of residents in cities increase." (Source 3)

FAMILIES CANNOT AFFORD SPRAWL

Transportation accounts for **20% of household budgets**.

(Source 4)

COMMUNITIES CANNOT AFFORD SPRAWL

- An analysis of 200 school districts within the state of Minnesota showed that the ten districts with the fewest pupils per square mile spent an average of \$394 dollars per pupil for transportation, whereas the ten with the highest numbers of pupils per square mile spent an average of only \$310 per pupil for transportation costs. (Source 3)
- "In general...the fiscal impact of new residential development is more favorable for all branches of local government when it occurs within or adjacent to cities where appropriate infrastructure and services are available." (Source 3)
- Academic studies suggest that nationwide compact development could **save as much as 11% in costs for new roads and sewers**—even by developing at just a slightly more modest level of density compared to current practices. (Source 5)
- Met Council predicted in 2000 that more efficient land use would yield approximately \$2 billion in savings from avoided street and sewer costs over 20 years. (Source 1, p. 15)

Source 1: *Transportation Performance in the Twin Cities Region*, prepared by Transit for Livable Communities, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, and the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership, 2008

Source 2: *Balancing Minnesota's Growth: Capturing Benefits Reducing Costs, and What's at Stake*, Collar County Study Committee, 2005

Source 3: *Cost of Public Services Study*, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, September 1999

Source 4: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Source 5: *Investing in a Better Future: A Review of the Fiscal and Competitive Advantages of Smarter Growth Development Patterns*, Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, March 2004

CASE STUDY: Sartell

Sartell's 1995 orderly annexation agreement with LeSauk Township provides for annexations and the extension of municipal services upon request from township residents. This agreement does not, however, allow for a phased or orderly process.

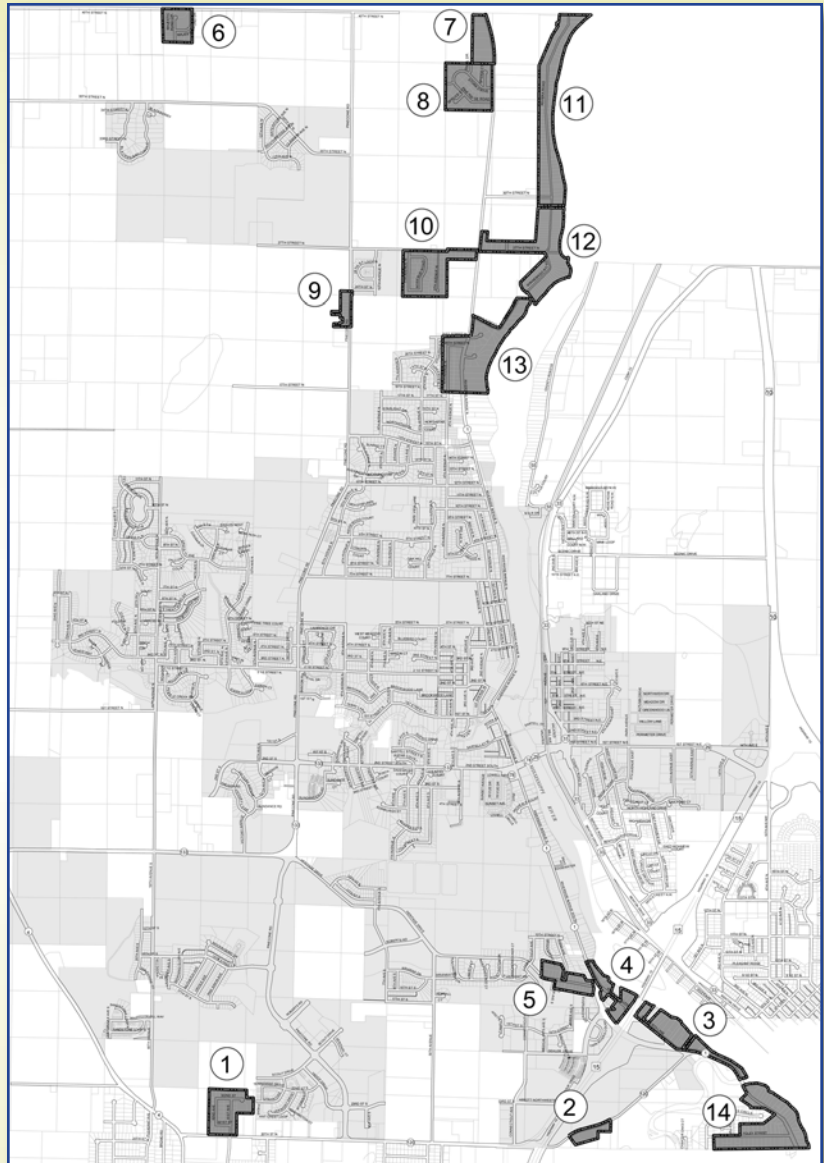
Historically, the city has accepted and approved individual lot or parcel requests for annexation and utility hook-up as property owners have desired.

Approving requests on an individual basis has proved inefficient and costly. Recently, the LeSauk Town Board of Supervisors has repeatedly refused requests to revisit the terms of the agreement.

The estimated cost of extending utilities into existing areas of urban development is \$22 million. Only \$11 million may be recouped through assessment. **This leaves an \$11 million gap that would need to be filled by city taxpayers.** Depending on the area, it would take **13 to 141 years to pay off** the city share if the city dedicated 100% of the property tax revenues of the area to paying for utility extension.

Because the cost of service extension is too high, the city will not be extending service on an individual basis. This means that some residents who need utility service may not be able to get it.

Having a growth boundary would help the city develop and extend service in a more orderly and cost effective manner.



City of Sartell: Key

- ① = Areas that the city could annex and extend services to
- = Sartell city boundary