



Warroad: Environmental degradation, property tax inequities result from annexation barriers

WARROAD COMMUNITY PROFILE

City of WarroadPopulation 1720
Lake TownshipPopulation 2123

The City of Warroad provides many services to city and township residents alike. The city is the site for services such as public safety, library, parks, hockey rinks, roads, and the municipal airport.

The cost of providing these services falls disproportionately on city tax payers who pay **property tax rates four times higher than those paid by township residents**—even when township residents live literally across the street from the city.



The City of Warroad provides services such as the library, public safety, and parks to both city and township residents.

CASE STUDY: HALLBERG ROAD



Hallberg Road A: Township area
B: City of Warroad

Recent development on Hallberg Road south of the city has resulted in nine homes being built in Lake Township immediately adjacent to the city and city sewer and water. These homes are situated on a stream that runs into Lake of the Woods and were developed on septic tanks.

Efforts by the city to negotiate an orderly annexation agreement and develop the area on city sewer and water were **blocked by the township**. The city contemplated a contested case annexation. **Even though these homes are clearly urban or suburban in character, the city declined to pursue a contested case because of the high cost.**

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Township resistance can stifle even the most obvious cases for annexation.
- An enhanced annexation by ordinance procedure would have accomplished what should be a clear and simple annexation case.
- Definition of urban or suburban in character would give city greater ability to affect annexation.
- Lack of ability to annex property perpetuates tax disparity between city and town residents.



To learn more, visit www.greatermncities.org/annexation

CASE STUDY: WARROAD ESTATES

Warroad Estates is a suburban style development of at least 60 homes situated around a golf course right on Lake of the Woods. This development is approximately 1½ miles from the city limits, adjacent to the municipal airport.

All of these homes are on very small lots with septic tanks.

Over the last ten years, the city has attempted to negotiate orderly annexation agreements with the township that would allow for the city to annex the area to make it feasible to extend city sewer and water to the area. **The township has blocked these efforts.**

The city has also contemplated a contested case annexation for this area, but has declined to do so because of the high cost and uncertain outcome associated with such cases.

Over the course of this fall and winter, the city has begun to receive inquiries from Warroad Estate residents wondering how they can be connected with city sewer and water because of failing or soon-to-be-failing septic tanks.

Until the township gets serious about the needs of its residents, there is little that can be done to solve these environmental problems.



The homes of Warroad Estates were developed on small lots with septic tanks. Many of these tanks are failing, which poses environmental risks for nearby Lake of the Woods.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Lack of township cooperation and strong annexation laws have led to a problem that could have been fixed years ago.
- Township decision making is not serving the best interests of many township residents.
- Definition of urban or suburban in character would give city greater flexibility to affect annexation.



A: Warroad Estates, golf course
B: Municipal Airport
C: Lake of the Woods
D: City of Warroad

