

# CITY OF EMILY

## 2035



Adopted: February 2022



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CITY OF EMILY  
COUNTY OF CROW WING  
STATE OF MINNESOTA

**RESOLUTION NO. 22-07**

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**RESOLUTION APPROVING THE ADOPTION OF THE 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council has designated as one of the duties of the Planning Commission to write and revise its Comprehensive Plan when it finds need to do so; and

**WHEREAS**, the current Comprehensive Plan for the City of Emily was adopted by the City Council in 2010; and

**WHEREAS**, the City determined the 2010 Comprehensive Plan was outdated, and it would be in the interest of the City and its residents to provide an update; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission, Steering Committee, with the assistance from Staff, and Sourcewell began the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, after reviewing the proposed document and taking public testimony, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Emily City Council has reviewed the proposed 2035 Comprehensive Plan on February 8, 2022 and does hereby approve its adoption.

**Adopted by the City Council of the City of Emily Minnesota, this 8th day of February, 2022.**

Councilmember 1

Aye

Councilmember 3

Aye

Councilmember 2

Aye

Councilmember 4

Aye

Mayor

Aye

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tracy Jones, Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ATTEST: Cari Johnson, City Clerk/Treasurer



## Acknowledgements

### Steering Committee

Cari Johnson  
 Justin Burslie  
 Kate Friesner  
 Tracy Jones  
 Jan Mosman  
 Josh Netland  
 Pam Roden  
 Kathy Breault  
 Donna Jones  
 Mary Eppen

### City Council

Tracy Jones  
 Gary Hanson  
 Bryce Butcher  
 Wesley Friesner  
 Mary Eppen

### Planning Commission

David Johnson  
 Gregory Koch  
 Donna Jones  
 Bill Spiess  
 Denise Vukelich

### City Staff

Cari Johnson  
 Pam Roden

This comprehensive plan represents a major community effort by the residents and leaders of Emily who worked together to develop a vision and solutions for the community. **Thank you** to all who participated in the development process of this plan. Your local knowledge and guidance were invaluable in the planning process.

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## Vision Statement

**The City of Emily is located in the center of beautiful lake country. Its rural charm and natural resources entice visitors and residents to live, vacation, and retire to the area. Prioritizing the environment and natural beauty, while offering recreation, housing, and economic opportunities remain the focus for current and future generations to come.**

## Guiding Principles

### **Be a healthy community that supports the needs and abilities of all ages**

A healthy community means making the healthy choice the easy choice. The way we design and grow the city can promote healthy living through enhancing parks and trail systems, environmental stewardship, housing choices, and streets that are design for all users in mind.

### **Continue to celebrate and promote the city's unique character and share its history**

A sense of community includes both physical development (place) and non-physical activities (social). The community's character is defined by its connection to the outdoors, woodlands, habitats, community gatherings, and civic engagement and collaboration.

### **Provide opportunities for single-family homes as well as other forms of housing**

Offer a mixture of housing types and patterns to allow existing and future residents to remain a part of the Emily community as they move through life. This means offering housing types that support an age-friendly community; from apartments, and single-family homes to retirement communities and rental and ownership options.

### **The community will protect, preserve, and provide access to natural resources**

Protect the natural resources that contribute to the community's identity. This includes wetlands, waterways, lakes, ponds, woodlands, forested tracts, and habitat. Seek to provide access to public lands and help steward and manage these lands for all to benefit.

### **Enhance partnerships and foster a welcoming environment**

Promoting and growing the community takes involvement from many groups, organizations, and volunteers; internal and external. Emily should strive to attain a welcoming environment for all residents, year-round and seasonal, promoting diversity and creativity as a way to achieve a vibrant community.

### **A thriving downtown setting for all to enjoy**

The downtown serves as the social hub of the community. By focusing our efforts on infill development and revitalization, we can transform our downtown into a destination, our cultural center, and the heart of the community.

### **Achieve economic vitality during all seasons**

Support and seek investments that create jobs and services within the city. Strive to provide a diversity of goods and services during all seasons. Create an environment where entrepreneurs thrive, local businesses expand, and jobs are created.

### **Proactively plan for connecting people to destinations**

Provide safe and accessible connections for motorized, pedestrians, and bicyclists to all community destinations. We will strive for a balanced motorized and nonmotorized trail network that exposes riders and trail users to welcoming trail corridors and unique experiences.

# 01 INTRODUCTION



## OVERVIEW

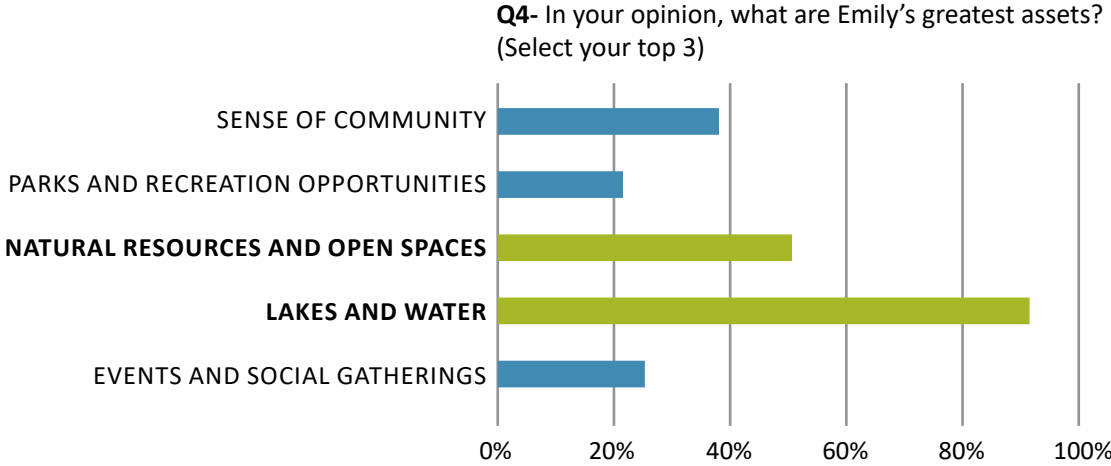
This plan aims to capture the character and sentiments of the city and its residents at this point. It gives the city a set of tools to help it thrive and become the destination community residents desire. The City of Emily is nestled between Lake Emily, Lake Mary, Ruth Lake, Dahler Lake, and Trout Lake in the northeast corner of Crow Wing County. This charming location makes Emily home for 843 (2020 US Census) year-round residents and a sought-after place for seasonal residents, visitors, tourists, and outdoor enthusiasts alike.

It is important to note that this is not the City of Emily’s first comprehensive plan. The city’s current plan was adopted in 2003, with updates to the goals and strategies in 2010. Therefore, many of the efforts in this plan were built and expanded on the foundation of the previous project.

## HISTORY

The Emily area was home to indigenous Americans long before settlers of European descent established settlements. Archeological digs show evidence of first persons living at the Roosevelt Lake Narrows and Crooked Creek sites as early as 800 BC. In more recent times, both the Dakota and Ojibwe tribes called the region home, with the Ojibwe being the last tribe to inhabit the area.

John Lambert filed for a quarter section of land from the United States government following the Homestead Act of 1862, where the City of Emily is now. The first European settlers made their living by mining, logging, farming, and hunting. In the last 150 years, the community has shifted, and tourism and land development industries have gradually replaced the previous ways of life.



## AUTHORITY TO PLAN

The state of Minnesota gives its communities the legal authority to adopt a plan according to the Municipal--Planning Act, Statute Sections 462.351 to 462.353. These statutes create a single, uniform procedure that applies to all cities (462.351-462.359). The comprehensive plan provides the legal framework to enact land use control and other municipal actions to implement long-term growth and development regulation strategies. Therefore, the city's land use (zoning) ordinances and official zoning map should be updated to conform to the comprehensive plan under adoption.

## PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Emily Comprehensive Plan is a dynamic planning tool intended to guide the future growth and development of the city. The comprehensive plan is based on local and regional historical facts, trends, and governmental planning standards. This document presents the comprehensive plan for Emily, Minnesota, reflective of the community planning process conducted in 2020. This plan is an update to the city's initial planning efforts in 2003 and 2010.

Planning begins with a vision. This vision focuses on what a desirable future would include. For example, in the development of a community, a desirable lot should take into consideration the availability of jobs and business opportunities, the quality of natural resources, the availability of affordable housing, the accessibility and adequacy of public utilities, parks and recreation, schools, and protective services, the condition of streets and highways, and the strength of communities. These are, in summary, some of the essential elements that contribute to a positive quality of life.

The comprehensive plan is based on local citizen input and careful consideration of significant natural and cultural resources. This inventory of pertinent data has been compiled to discern, classify, and analyze historical information. The comprehensive plan identifies the type, amount, and pattern of growth within the city and utilizes this information for the planning of future growth. Accordingly, the comprehensive plan provides a knowledge base for instituting a hierarchy of policies that will assist the community in processing various development issues on a defined policy level. This plan should be used as a guide to shape the City of Emily. This information and policy base will allow decision makers to evaluate and guide proposals benefiting the residents of Emily and fulfilling the city's goals and objectives.

## THE CORE PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN IS:

First, it provides the legal basis for land use regulations such as zoning and subdivision control. Second, it provides a long-range vision that will guide decision-making efforts. Finally, it is a guide for elected officials to use when concluding goals and strategies formed from residents' aspirations through a series of outreach and participation opportunities.

While the plan provides information and guidance, its execution relies heavily on city staff and elected officials' initiative, discretion, and understanding to fulfill this plan's overall vision, goals, strategies, and programming efforts.

## WHY UPDATE THE PLAN?

Comprehensive plans are intended to provide direction for a 10- to 20-year horizon; however, plans are most effective when updated every five years. From time to time, it's essential to evaluate the plan's content and see how it aligns with the changing conditions of the city. Therefore, this update will replace the 2003 comprehensive plan.

## PLANNING PROCESS

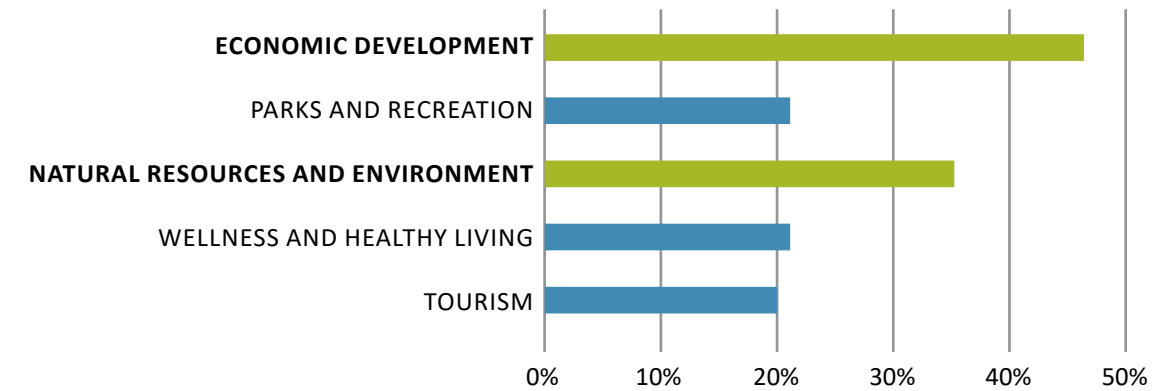
In the spring of 2020, the city began updating its comprehensive plan. A steering committee comprised of 10 members representing city staff and community members was appointed to help lead the planning efforts, provide oversight, give input, and develop goals, strategies, and implementation items. The committee also reviewed a broad range of information and facilitated two engagement opportunities and two surveys. The 2003 comprehensive plan and 2010 goals and strategies update were used as a guide to facilitate discussion and are still used and honored throughout this updated plan.

## ENGAGEMENT

The steering committee, project leaders, and city staff facilitated two community surveys, a chat and chalk event, and a meeting in a box activity to garner feedback for the content in this plan. The committee helped compile the information, and a list of leading themes and principles was identified and addressed in a later section of this chapter. In addition to the feedback gathered, residents provided guidance and preferences on a set of scenarios, statements, and futuristic questions that ultimately formed the foundation of the goals and strategies for each chapter.

**"FRIENDLY PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT  
THEIR NEIGHBORS"  
-SURVEY RESPONDENT**

**Q7- The city is looking to update its long-range plan. Which of the following topics do you feel require the most focus?**



## LEADING THEMES

1. Protect the lakes, rivers, and their water quality.
2. Preserve natural resources and open spaces that contribute to identity.
3. Preserve the character of the community.
4. Seek housing options for all ages and incomes.
5. Discover a balance of motorized and nonmotorized trail uses.
6. Explore downtown development options.
7. Build a strong, year-round economy.
8. Support social gatherings, events, arts, and culture.

## PLANNING ELEMENTS

Set of planning elements, or chapters is organized under the following sections:

- Land use
- Housing
- Parks, trails, and recreation
- Environment and natural resources
- Social involvement and engagement
- Economic development
- Transportation
- Infrastructure
- Community facilities and infrastructure
- Implementation

## GOALS

A set of goals for each planning element was developed for this comprehensive plan update. The goals were formed through public input and comment and were influenced by the 2010 goals and strategies update. The steering committee thoroughly reviewed each goal and finalized the language to ensure that each was appropriately scaled and tailored for the city. Goals are intended to serve as guidelines for the comprehensive plan. These goals were developed to represent general statements that identify community aspirations or desired conditions.

## STRATEGIES

A set of strategies follows each goal. A strategy describes a general course of action toward achieving each of the goals in the specific plan element. These speak to the underlying values, principles, or context of each goal and are often place-specific. The committee meticulously reviewed the content throughout meetings, and each strategy was carefully evaluated and reviewed.

## YOUR PLAN AS A WORKBOOK

This plan should be viewed as a living document. It should be reviewed periodically to ensure the city is undertaking the plan's priorities. Use this plan as a workbook of sorts, a place where you should feel comfortable making notes, editing, identifying content, and highlighting important sections. For example, in the implementation section, make notes on completed projects, including dates and costs. Having these notes and comments is extremely important for when the city is ready to amend or update this plan in the future.

## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND ASSUMPTIONS

To analyze future housing, park, and recreation, governmental, utility, and transportation needs of the city, it is essential to review historical trends and develop assumptions for the community's future growth. Population projections, land use, and housing needs depend on several factors, including those outside of the city's control; however, forecasts are necessary to assist the city in its long-range planning for infrastructure and services and funding of those items. The information in this chapter has been obtained through statistical data released by the United States Census Bureau, the state Demographic Center, the Minnesota Department of Economic Security, the Minnesota Workforce Center, Crow Wing County, and the City of Emily.

# DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

## TOTAL POPULATION



843\*

## TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS



334

## TOTAL WORKERS



33%

## HOUSEHOLD MEDIAN INCOME



\$41,000

## POPULATION CHANGES



3.7%\*  
SINCE 2010

## TOTAL HOUSING UNITS



1,087

## PRIVATE WAGE WORKERS



78%

## INCOME GROWTH RATE



9%  
SINCE 2010

## MEDIAN AGE



65

## MEDIAN HOUSE PRICE



\$264,400

## SELF EMPLOYED



11%

## MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME



\$48,214

## PERCENT OVER THE AGE OF 65:



51%

## HOUSING UNIT CHANGES



17%  
SINCE 2000

## AVERAGE COMMUTE



29  
(MINUTES)

## LEADING INDUSTRY



24%

Educational services, and health care and social assistance

## 02 LAND USE



### OVERVIEW

The land use portion of this plan helps the Planning Commission and City Council respond to development and redevelopment requests. Land use planning provides general guidance for the development and use of all land within the city. Land use can be defined as: the occupation, utilization, and/or designated differentiation of land based on type of use. Typical land use categories of varying densities include residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, parks, open space, and agriculture.

This chapter is comprised of text and maps that are intended to guide land use, zoning, and the physical development is consistent with residents' aspirations. In a collaborative effort, the text, and Future Land Use Map (FLUM) are the plan to achieve the vision.

### COMMUNITY INPUT

The surveys received a few comments about balancing

personal property rights and zoning restrictions. This is not an uncommon theme. It gives the community some direction to always be looking at the zoning ordinance for potential updates.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### Existing development patterns

The City of Emily has a large geographical area consisting of numerous lakes and forestland. Most of the area lakeshore has been developed over the years. What is most seen today is the redevelopment or expansion of existing cabins to year-round dwellings. The downtown area has seen some development in the past 10 years. This area is a mixed-use area with residential dwellings and commercial buildings existing together. Some areas are available for redevelopment with some lots available for new commercial opportunities.

*"ADD TOUCHES THAT WOULD MAKE IT MORE APPEALING AND COHESIVE - LIKE FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS. MAKE DOWNTOWN MORE WALKABLE."*  
-SURVEY RESPONDENT

*"... I THINK EMILY SHOULD HAVE A GREATER VARIETY OF BUSINESSES LOCATED CLOSE TOGETHER SO IT IS WALKABLE..."*  
-SURVEY RESPONDENT

*"WE NEED MORE BUSINESSES IN TOWN...RESTAURANTS AND A HOTEL WOULD BE GREAT."*  
-SURVEY RESPONDENT

### GOALS

**Goal 1:** Support development and redevelopment to meet the needs of changing demographics.

**Goal 2:** Connect residents to destinations and neighborhoods by transportation modes for all ages and abilities.

**Goal 3:** Prioritize the protection of natural resources to enhance the overall environmental quality.

**Goal 4:** Protect and enhance the character and livability of residential areas.



### Downtown improvement

The downtown will continue to serve as the heart of the community, and the revitalization of this amenity is important to residents, as well as achieving the outputs in this plan. The downtown offers a variety of land uses such as commercial, mixed use, civic, residential, and park/open space. In past decades, new buildings have been constructed and their build-to lines vary and stagger. A diverse, mixed-use downtown is important in creating a successful district. Many survey respondents stated the expansion of commercial opportunities in the downtown, specifically dining options, is heavily desired.

### Renewable energy

The City of Emily, like most communities, relies on outside sources for its supply of energy. There are renewable options that may be viable for the city to consider in the coming years. Solar energy is on the rise in Minnesota because of tax credits available from the state, and advances in technology that have allowed for a reduction in equipment costs. Demand in the coming years will continue to grow. The state of Minnesota pledges to have 100% of its energy from carbon-free sources by 2050, and the state is almost halfway there. Before the community or private individuals consider these forms of energy, significant research needs to be done into costs, current energy consumption, production feasibility, and potential land use conflicts. The city will also need to consider balancing the need for renewable energy sources with competing development opportunities to help the state meet its energy goals. The Minnesota Department of Commerce



and the University of Minnesota have developed feasibility maps for wind and solar production.

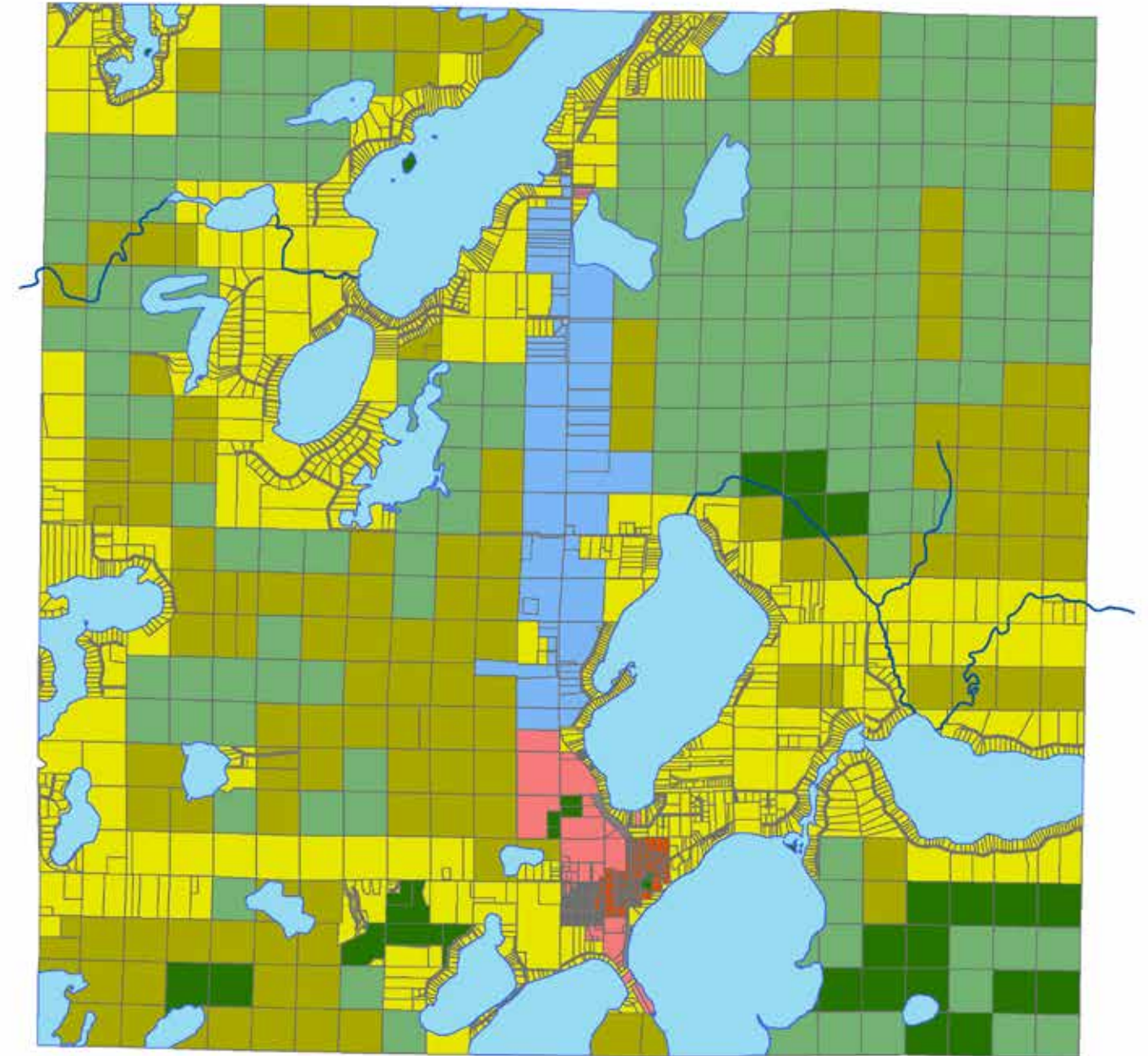
Source: Minnesota Commerce Department

### Future land use

As the City of Emily moves toward the future, the land use map may be modified to reflect the changing conditions. The Future Land Use Map is part of the adopted comprehensive plan document and carries the same legal weight as the plan itself.

Together with the comprehensive plan text, this map will be used to help determine whether proposed changes to zoning, both text and map amendments, are consistent with the comprehensive plan. The map uses color-coded categories to show the general character, distribution, intensity recommended, and planned land uses for the city's future. Residents, businesses, and landowners should understand that the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is intended to direct development to certain areas where facilities and services are available, and where land uses are compatible with one another.

As a decision-making tool, the Land Use Plan be viewed as general in nature and should not be used for site-specific decisions. For this reason, only general locations for designated land uses are mapped.

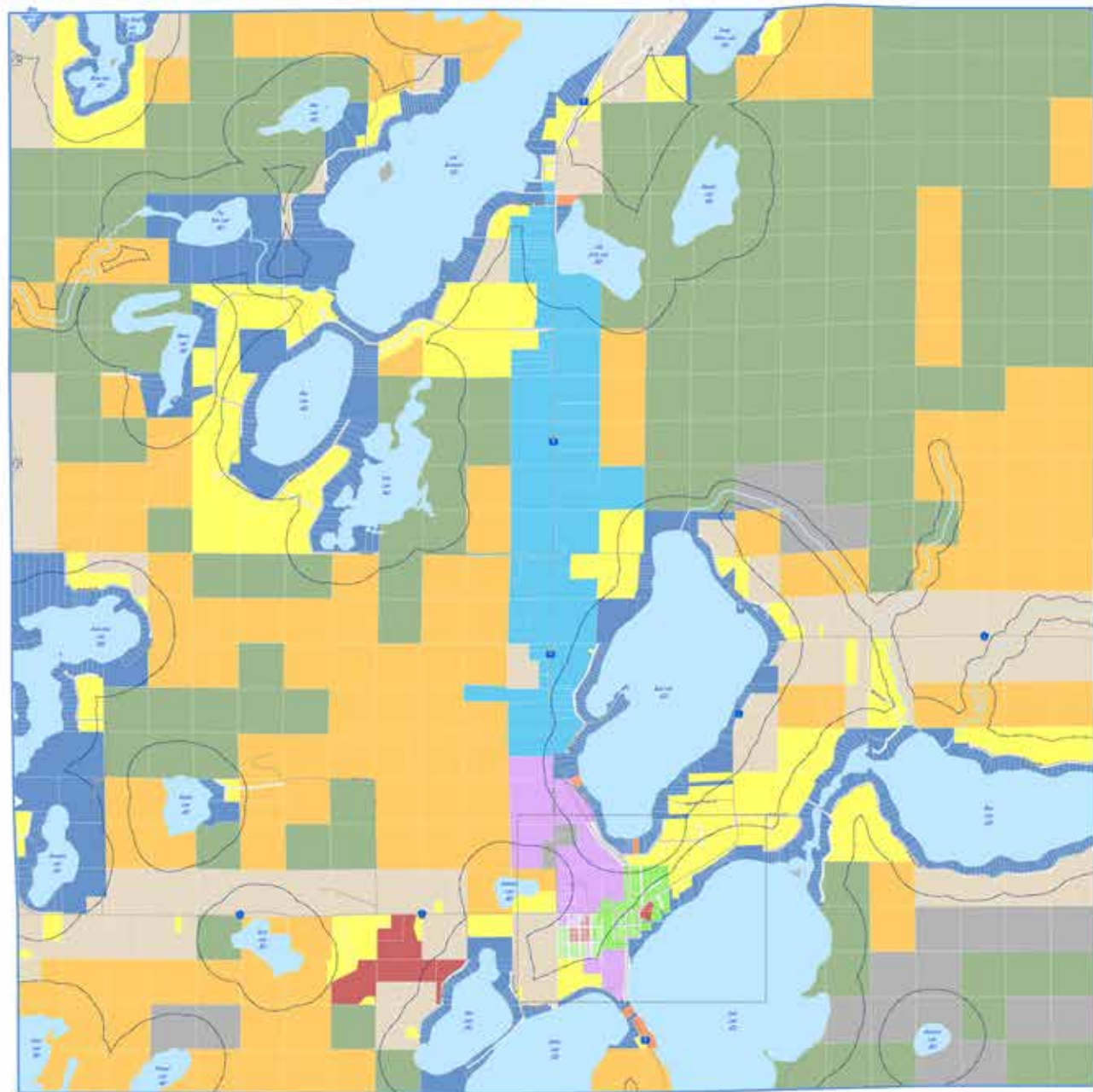


City of Emily Future Land Use Map, 2021

- Commercial / Light Industrial
- Downtown Mixed Use
- Highway Mixed Use
- Forest Preservation
- Rural (Forested) Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Open Space

Sources: Crow Wing County, City of Emily, Geospacial Database

# City of Emily Zoning Map



Date: 2017

## Legend

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| City of Emily Municipal Boundary         | Highway Mixed Use        |
| <b>Zone</b>                              | Shoreline Residential    |
| Road                                     | Neighborhood Residential |
| Shoreline Commercial                     | Open Space               |
| Recreation                               | Rural Preservation       |
| Downtown Mixed Use                       | Forest Preservation      |
| Commercial Transition / Light Industrial | Forested Residential     |
|  | Water Features           |
|  | Shoreland Overlay Buffer |



## Land use vs. zoning

The relationship between land use planning and zoning is an important one. Land use planning is the act of planning the uses of land within a community for the future, while zoning is the act of regulating the use of these lands by ordinance. A zoning ordinance will set rules and standards that are to be strictly followed for all development, whereas planning goals and strategies are established to help guide the rules and laws enacted under zoning. These two acts depend on each other to be successfully supported in a community.

The following are the categories designated on the map:

**Residential:** Residential land use makes up the largest single land use category in the city.

**Low- to medium-density residential:** This category consists of primarily owner-occupied, detached homes, but also includes duplexes and townhomes.

**High-density residential:** The category consists of multifamily housing units including apartments, nursing homes, townhomes, and row houses.

**Commercial:** This category consists of commercial businesses and services, including retail, dining establishments, professional offices, and commercial facilities.

**Industrial:** This category identifies portions of the city that contain industrial uses. Industrial uses include manufacturing, warehousing, assembly, and similar businesses.

**Public/civic:** This category includes all publicly owned spaces such as the school, city buildings, pumping stations, and public facilities. It also includes churches, cemeteries, etc.

**Park and open space:** This category includes all parks and open spaces within the city.

**Agricultural:** This includes areas that are currently farmed.

## TRENDS

### Communities for all ages

For years we have designed places where people live in different categories, i.e., where young adults live, where families live, and where seniors live. Communities today are seeking ways to develop places where people of all ages can thrive. This should be especially true for the City of Emily. A truly livable community should and can be intergenerational (Where we Live, AARP). Emily's population is older with a median age of 65. Residents often cite the natural resources (lakes, trails, etc.) as the main reason people wish to live in and visit town. Emily acts as a retirement or weekend getaway community for the area. Outdoor recreational opportunities for all ages will be a driving force for growth. All generations

want to live in towns that provide affordable housing choices, quality health care, walkable downtowns with prospering businesses and inviting outdoor spaces. Emily can put policies in place to strategically attract various generations to the city.

### Smart Growth Principles

The city can seek to integrate a framework aimed at creating walkable main streets, preserving natural features, and supporting economic growth and opportunity. Smart Growth Principles provide a set of strategies that can be applied to both expanding and contracting economies. When these strategies are integrated into city policy, the community's vision for the future can be more predictable, helping developers and the broader stakeholder community understand the larger aspirations of the community. This set of strategies can benefit the entire community by enhancing local heritage and resources and by jointly participating in the development and conservation of the community.

- Mix land uses.
- Take advantage of compact design.
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
- Create walkable communities.
- Foster distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place.
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
- Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
- Provide a variety of transportation options.
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decision.

Collectively, these strategies for development can help the city achieve the vision of a vibrant, small-town community that is addressed throughout this plan. One way to structure a Smart Growth approach is to use three goals as a leading framework for future growth:

1. Support the rural landscape – preserve the landscapes that community members value.
2. Help existing places thrive – take care of assets such as the downtown, existing infrastructure, and places that the community values.
3. Create great new places – build and enhance neighborhoods and vibrant places that people don't want to leave.

## 03 HOUSING



### OVERVIEW

The City of Emily serves as a neighborhood center. It lies within the greater Brainerd/Baxter regional center and smaller subregional centers of Pequot Lakes, Pine River, Crosby, and Crosslake. Other neighborhood centers in the area include Outing, Fifty Lakes, Longville, Cuyuna, and Trommald. As a neighborhood center, Emily is not a major employment or shopping area, but rather a small community that provides basic goods and services to residents and tourists. It is characterized by an aging population; beautiful lakes, forests and hills; and by an increase in housing development and expansion.

Housing is not a one-size-fits-all service. Housing choices and needs change as life progresses from young, single adults to families to elderly. Housing needs tend to evolve and reflect a concept known as lifecycle housing. This chapter includes descriptive data about Emily's housing stock, summarizes opportunities and constraints, discusses trends, and provides a set of goals and strategies to promote a healthy residential

infrastructure and furthering a variety of lifecycle housing options.

### COMMUNITY INPUT

Housing plays a critical role in the quality of life and livability in the city. Through a variety of public engagement methods, such as a community survey, focus groups, steering committee meetings, and a community visioning session, it was apparent that residents would like to expand housing options for all ages in the community and support efforts to provide more affordable housing options.

People support a wide range of housing choices at an array of prices as being important for the city's desirability and livability for current and future residents. Community members primarily supported the development of detached single-family homes on large and small lots and providing housing options such as townhomes, patio homes and other

types of housing generally geared toward seniors.

When the community was asked what Emily's greatest challenges are, 26% of the respondents indicated a suitable range of housing options as the great challenge when it comes to growth and development. Additionally, when asked what are the areas that need the most improvement in Emily, 21% of respondents indicated a range of housing choices and prices as their priority.

***"WE NEED HOUSING FOR ELDERLY SO THEY CAN STAY IN THE COMMUNITY THEY LOVE. IT WOULD BUILD JOBS AND BE A PLUS FOR THE COMMUNITY THAT WASN'T SO EXPENSIVE."***  
-SURVEY RESPONDENT

### GOALS

**Goal 1:** Prepare for an aging community with housing options that will keep residents in the community.

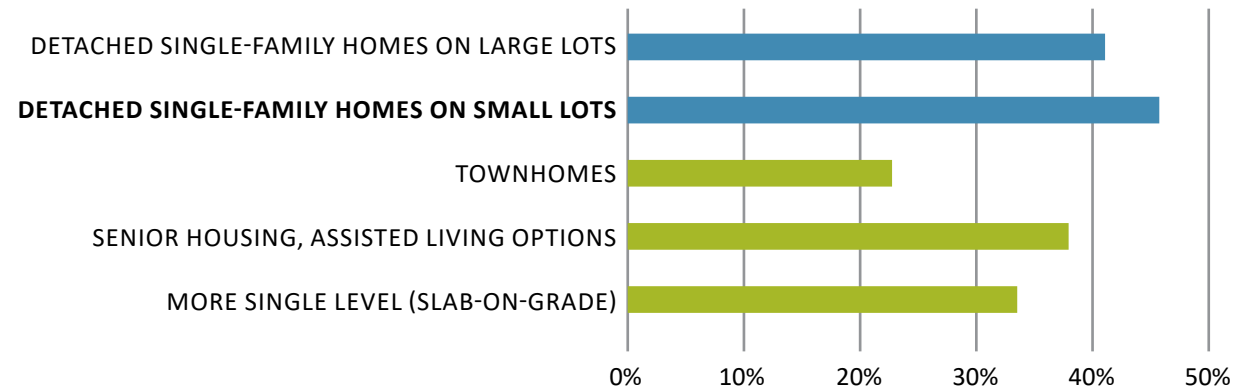
**Goal 2:** Encourage a variety of housing types, densities, and choices to meet housing needs.

**Goal 3:** Support affordable housing.

**Goal 4:** Create a high-quality environment in all new neighborhoods.

**Goal 5:** Promote the rehabilitation and retention of neighborhoods.

**Q17- What types of housing do you think are needed most? (Choose your top 3)**

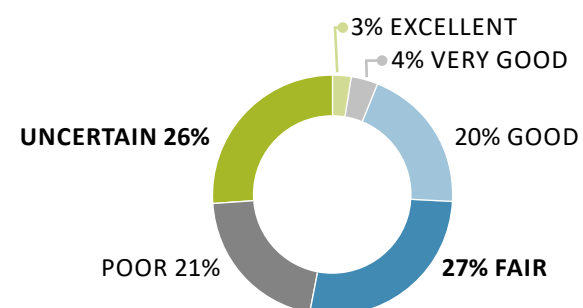


**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

By understanding the current housing inventory and its characteristics along with future needs, the city can take steps toward addressing future housing needs to meet the requirements of current and future residents. According to the American Community Survey (ACS) 2018, there are an estimated 1,087 units in the community, and of those, only 30% are occupied. There are 321 households (or occupied housing units), and the remaining are vacant, in reflection of the seasonal nature of Emily. The vast majority of the 321 households are single-family homes (one unit), and the ownership-to-renter ratio is 90:10 (287 owner, 34 rental). The housing stock in Emily was built primarily from 1970 through 2009 (68%), where housing built before 1969 makes up approximately 28% of the housing stock.

The median age in Emily is 65, one of the highest in the county. In comparison, the median age in Crow Wing County is 43.8. Over half the population of Emily is over the age of 62 and as the city's population ages, it will be important for the city to explore housing options that meet the needs of its residents and provide insight into housing needs for an aging population.

**Q16- How would you rate the overall current conditions of the existing housing stock in the city?**



**EXISTING ZONING**

The city currently provides a total of five districts that support residential development within the city. These districts are centered on the forested land use characteristics and parcel size and separates the type of development based on how the parcels are served by either municipal or on-site septic systems and wells. Below are the intent and purpose of each zoning district:

**Forest residential:**

To establish and maintain a land use district that provides for the sustainable management of forests for scenic beauty, ecological function, wildlife habitat, timber harvesting, and passive recreation as well as to provide for low density, residential development not served by municipal infrastructure.

**Shoreland residential:**

To establish and maintain a land use district for riparian residential development that preserves the natural shoreline.

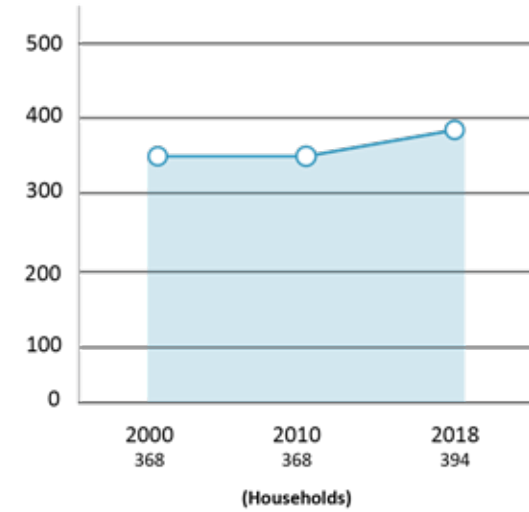
**Neighborhood residential:**

To establish and maintain a land use district for developed, non-riparian properties, for properties with infrastructure in place to provide for higher density development, and properties developed as a rural neighborhood cluster. Land in this district shall not be further subdivided unless it falls within the utility overlay zone, or the land is incorporated into a development on an adjacent property. This zoning classification is non-riparian.

**Rural preservation:**

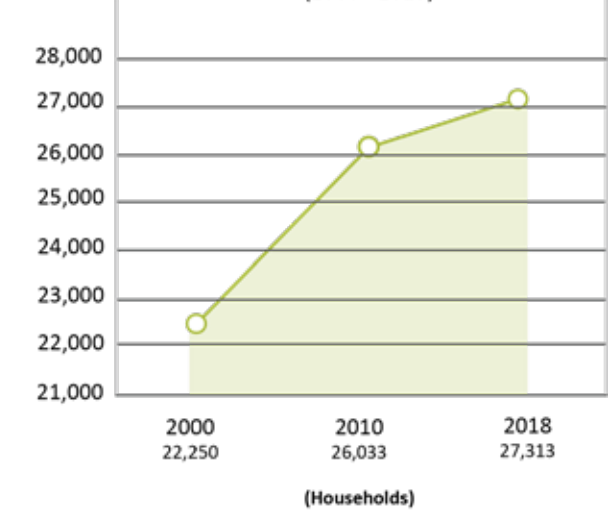
To establish and maintain a land use district that preserves the city's rural character and provides low-density, rural development adjacent to existing transportation infrastructure but not serviced by municipal sewer and water.

**Emily Household Growth (2000 - 2018)**



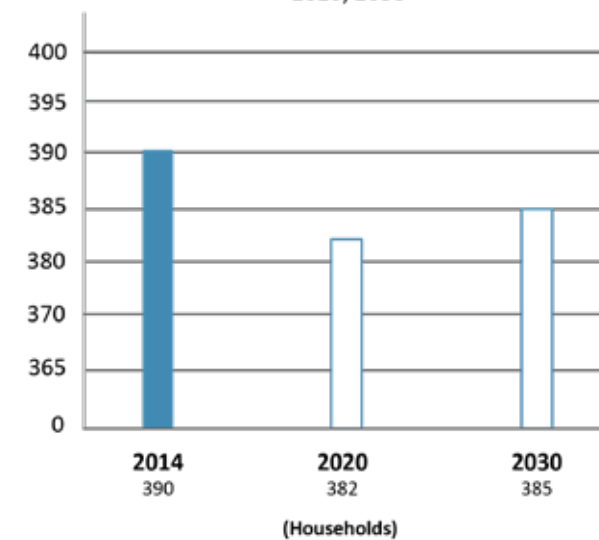
Source: Minnesota Demographer's Office

**Crow Wing County Household Growth (2000 - 2018)**



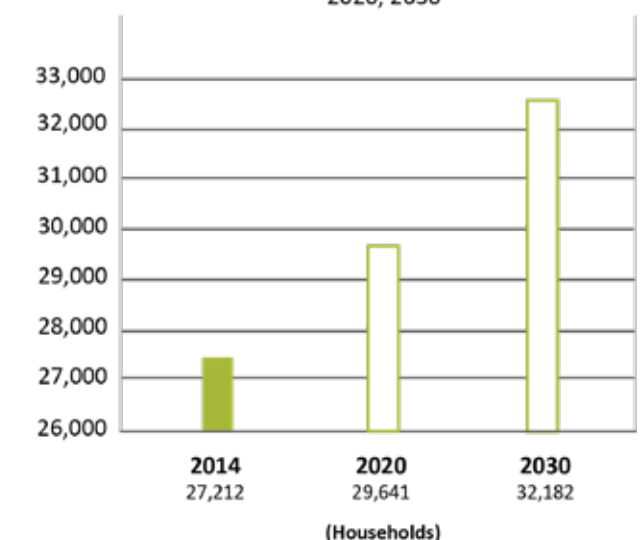
Source: Minnesota Demographer's Office

**Emily Household Projections 2020, 2030**



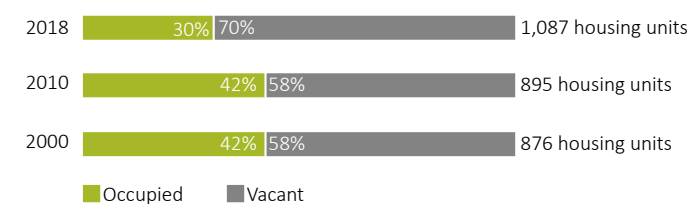
Source: Crow Wing County HRA Housing Study

**Crow Wing County Household Projections 2020, 2030**

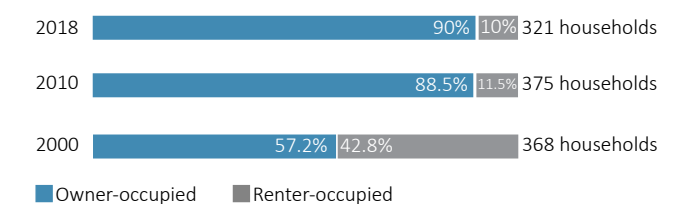


Source: Crow Wing County HRA Housing Study

**Comparison of housing units**



**Occupancy of housing units**





### Affordable Housing Explained:

Housing affordability is relative to the area’s median income. If a home cost is at or below 30% of the area’s median income, it is then said to be “affordable” housing. Most rural communities have at least a few homes that are considered affordable, though some local markets provide housing that is affordable to families earning the median income or below. It’s extremely important to distinguish between affordable market-priced housing and subsidized housing.

Providing affordable housing and locating it within a short walk to necessities and employment centers are key to helping lower-income families in rural areas prosper. Doing so does not need to come at a high cost for local governments.

Even where market prices are affordable to the median income, many rural households earn well below the standard and struggle to find affordable homes, sometimes needing additional assistance. A variety of state and federal programs can meet this need.

### Downtown mixed use:

To establish and maintain a land use district for a mix of high-density residential and commercial uses. Development in this zone relies less on automobile traffic and more on walking, biking, and other similar modes of transportation. Infrastructure must be in place to provide on-street parking and walkways as well as connection to municipal water and sanitary sewer utilities. Downtown mixed-use zones should be clustered to provide the maximum amount of interaction and accessibility among the different establishments.

### TRENDS

With advances in technology, transportation, and flexibility in work options primarily through telecommuting, there are more opportunities for people to relocate and work in their preferred community. Many people have and continue to opt for the beauty and serenity of Minnesota’s Central Lake Region, including the City of Emily. In addition, as the baby boomer generation retires, many retirees, including many who had previously owned “weekend cabins” are choosing to retire in Emily. This has greatly increased shoreland development in and around Emily as the majority of developable lakeshore is built on or subdivided.

### Shoreland development:

Most lakeshore within the city has been developed within the exception of public property, which puts increasing pressure on unincorporated areas of the lake and some marginal lands that may feature wetlands and/or poor soils. As retirees continue to move to the area, the city has seen numerous seasonal lake cottages converted and expanded to larger, permanent homes. This trend has caused the disappearance of many small resorts, a disparity in tax valuations, and impacts on water quality and the appearance of the lakeshore. Off-lakeshore land adjacent to roads and land with views of water and forests continues to be developed.

### Planning for age-friendly communities:

As communities age, cities are analyzing their housing stock and discussing how it can be better prepared to support the transition of aging adults. Housing is a core component of livability, and great communities provide housing options for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities. The city should take action to ensure that everyone can live in a quality neighborhood. By integrating a variety of housing types and ensuring that lifecycle housing is represented, Emily can take active strides in ensuring that people have housing choices as they age.



### Lifecycle housing variety:

Understanding and planning for housing needs in a community relates directly to the demographic profile. Households generally transition through several lifecycle stages that include entry-level households, first-time homeowners, move-up buyers, empty nesters, and seniors. As the area population ages, Emily should plan and promote housing for all income levels and ages. Having a variety of housing options will give Emily economic and housing diversity that will strengthen the community long term.

**Entry-level households:** People within the 18-24 age cohort typically rent a house or apartment as they normally do not have the income needed to purchase a home. Many people in this age category move frequently, making them more hesitant to purchase.

**First-time homeowners:** This group typically includes those in their 20s and 30s who are usually transitioning from renting apartments or joint living conditions. Traditionally they are often young families or single. These homeowners are prone to moving within several years of their first home purchase due to increased financial resources, occupation advancement, and family structure changes.

**Move-up buyers:** Move-up buyers are typically in their 30s and 40s and are transitioning from a small, less expensive home that they had purchased at an earlier time. This is an important age group in terms of an economic growth perspective.

**Empty nesters:** Empty nesters are typically in their 50s and 60s. Often, their children have moved out of their homes, and the square footage is much larger than needed. Empty nesters often want to live in a smaller house, such as a townhome, that requires less maintenance and upkeep.

**Seniors:** Those often in their 70s and older are looking for low-maintenance, manageable, or assisted living housing. As the population ages, Emily should continually ensure that it has adequate housing to meet the needs of seniors.

Maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing stock help maintain quality and aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods. Individual homeowners may find these improvements costly and time consuming and may lack the skills or ability to complete on their own. Many programs are available to remove such barriers and provide the financial and technical support for homeowners who wish to make home and property improvements, including historic preservation and restoration.

## 04 PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION



### OVERVIEW

Offering quality recreational opportunities begins with proper planning. To ensure adequacy and maximum usability, recreation areas and facilities should be developed with regard for the areas they serve and the needs of the people. Planning must take into consideration numerous factors, including, but not limited to, location of existing recreational areas (i.e., proximity to the area served, separation from incompatible land uses), adequacy of existing facilities, site planning for the location of future facilities, access to current and future facilities, provisions for recreation programs, and financing, maintenance, and management of existing and proposed parks, trails, and recreational facilities.

In 2018 the City of Emily adopted a Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan. This plan was developed after community input and steering committee direction. This chapter will only highlight the topic areas as extensive work and data can be viewed in that plan. Please refer to the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan for greater detail.

### COMMUNITY INPUT

Natural capital, such as lakes, rivers, open spaces, and conservation areas, is important in protecting the city's identity as well as for recreational opportunities such as hiking, biking, and walking. This was a very evident leading theme from the community outreach.

There's support to expand pedestrian and multiuse trails throughout the city along roadways, on-street and off-street, and through public lands. Participants are also interested in pedestrian safety improvements, such as crosswalk enhancements and signage for the variety of trail users (both motorized and nonmotorized) throughout the various seasons. Participants noted their support for nonmotorized trail improvement (46%), followed by further ATV, snowmobile, and side-by-side trail enhancements (32%). Active trail options help advance healthy community initiatives and contribute to quality of life

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

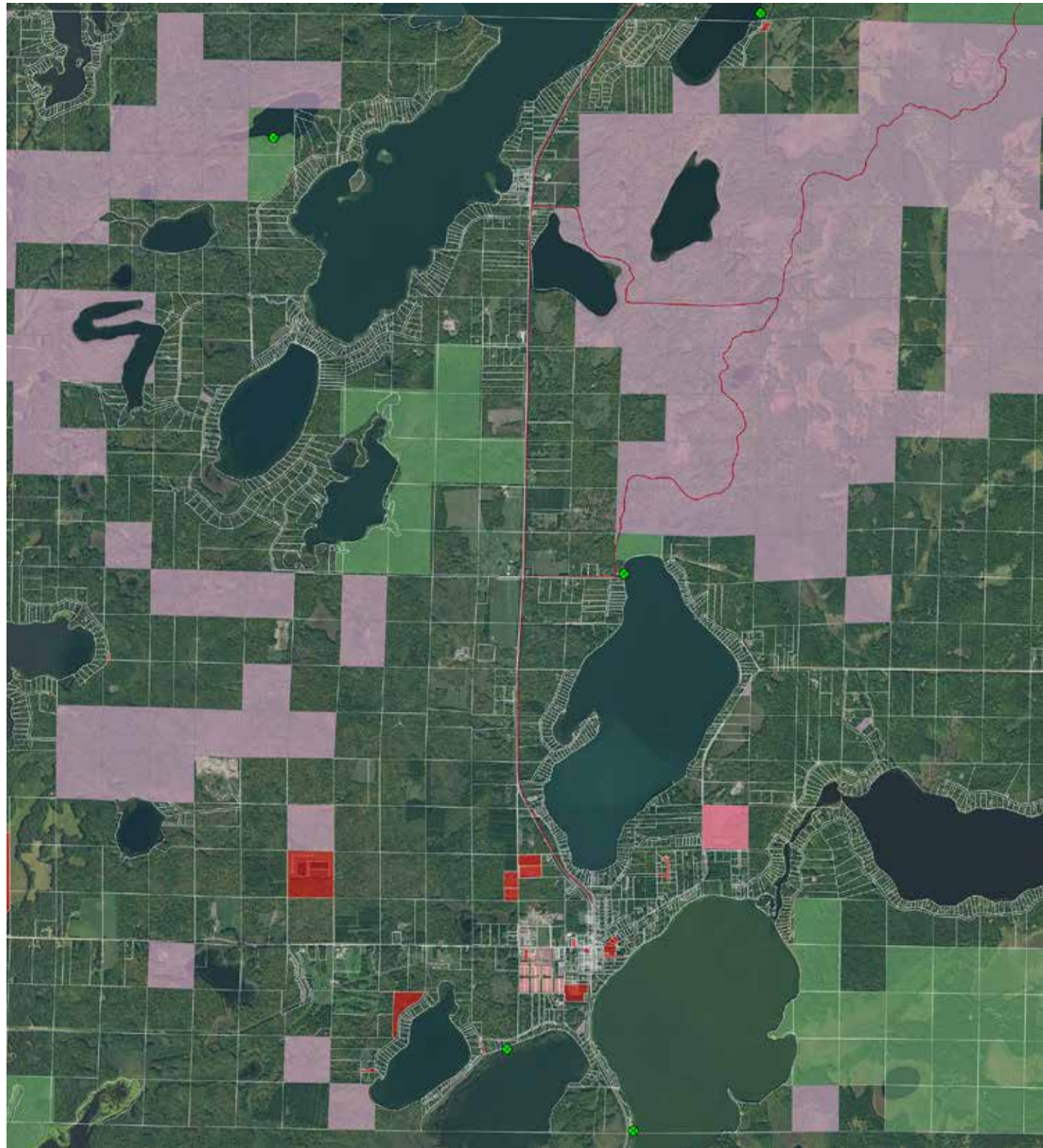
Emily is home to a variety of lakes, streams, wetlands, and heavily forested areas. The City of Emily's rural charm entices visitors and residents with great hunting, fishing, birdwatching, wildlife watching, ATV trail use, and other outdoor activities. Parks have long been considered the front yard of the community and help define the curb appeal of the city to visitors and residents alike. About 50% of the city limits is public land or water. This includes county-managed tax-forfeited land, DNR- and federal managed land, and city parks.

***"LIKE THE IMPROVEMENTS MADE FOR WALKING WITHIN THE CITY ALONG HWY 6. ATV USE WITHIN THE CITY SHOULD BE STOPPED. PROMOTE BICYCLING AND WALKING. THE CITY PARK HAS A LOT OF POTENTIAL AS A SPACE FOR FAMILIES, PICNICS, ETC. DEVELOPING THE PARK TO INCLUDE ACCESSIBILITY TO LAKE EMILY WOULD BE FANTASTIC."***  
-SURVEY RESPONDENT

### GOALS

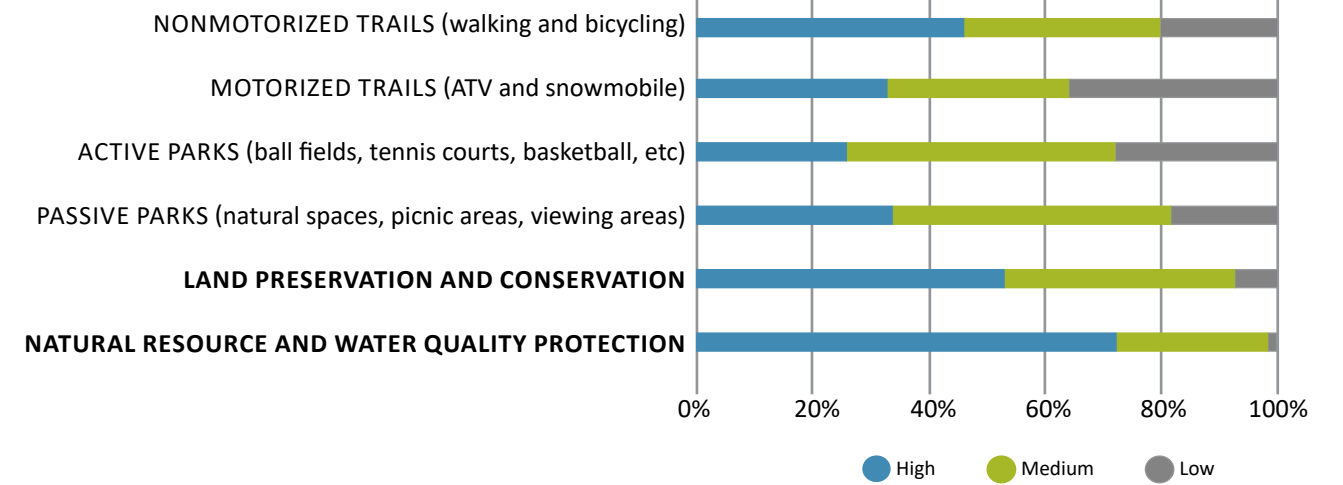
- Goal 1:** Strive to ensure that public outdoor spaces and buildings are accessible for people of all ages.
- Goal 2:** Use the city's parks to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors.
- Goal 3:** Connect people to public lands that contribute to the city's identity and quality of life.
- Goal 4:** Develop a trail system that connects people to environmental features, city parks, open spaces, and greenways.

# City of Emily, Parks, Trails, and Open Space



- Public Access
- State Park Trails Roads
- County Managed Land
- DNR Lands
- City Property

**Q18-** In your opinion, what is your priority for future parks, trails, and open space improvements within the city?



### Parks

**The City Park** is south of East County Road 1. Features of this park include towering pines, new playground equipment, a basketball hoop, pavilion, picnic tables, bench seating, and grills. Also enjoy a photo opportunity with Willy the Walleye and the historical skidder. This park is host to the community’s celebration of Emily Day as well.

**City Ballpark** (west park) area is south of West County Road 1. Features of this park include two regulation and one Little League ballfield, a pavilion, fenced playground, basketball hoop, bench seating, picnic tables, grills, and a tennis court.

**The City Hall Park** is on the grounds of the City Hall (former Emily Charter School). Features include diverse trees, a basketball court, playground, picnic tables, bench seating, open field space, and ample parking.

### Trails

The scenic beauty of the area brings all-terrain vehicles (ATV), and snowmobiling enthusiasts throughout the region and state to the City of Emily. Snowmobiling and ATV use are beloved pastimes for many Emily residents and are dynamic components of local tourism. Via the DNR trail route, running north and south through town, riders have access to hundreds of trail miles throughout the region. Designated parking facilities have been established within the downtown core and the city has authorized ATV use on several roads within the City of Emily.

The use of snowmobiles, ATVs and OHVs have long been a part of the culture in the City of Emily. Motorized recreation offers opportunities throughout all seasons and contributes to the local tourism industry. Recreational trails are an important aspect of the city’s recreation system. The snowmobile trail network is maintained and operated by the Emily-Outing

Snowbirds. Currently the organization maintains and grooms 100 miles of trails throughout the area. Trails traverse through private property and are part of a larger network of motorized trail options. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has established snowmobile and ATV regulations for the operation of motorized vehicles on public rights of way. ATV trails are very popular in the county-managed areas within the city.

### Open space

Defining open space is a challenge. Open space is a place-based term, varying from community to community. Several communities in our region have adopted land use policies that encourage the protection of such amenities. Crow Wing County’s Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan defines open space as having: “some visual, natural resource, or recreational value that distinguishes it from adjacent spaces. Finally, open space can be either public land or private.” Tax-forfeited lands within the City of Emily already provide many recreational trail opportunities for residents. Trails on county-managed lands include hiking, biking, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, off-highway motorcycles (OHMs), all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), equestrian trails, and other forms of recreation. The Emily State Forest and DNR-managed Wildlife Management Areas also provide open space recreational activities but may have restricted uses within the area.

### Recreation

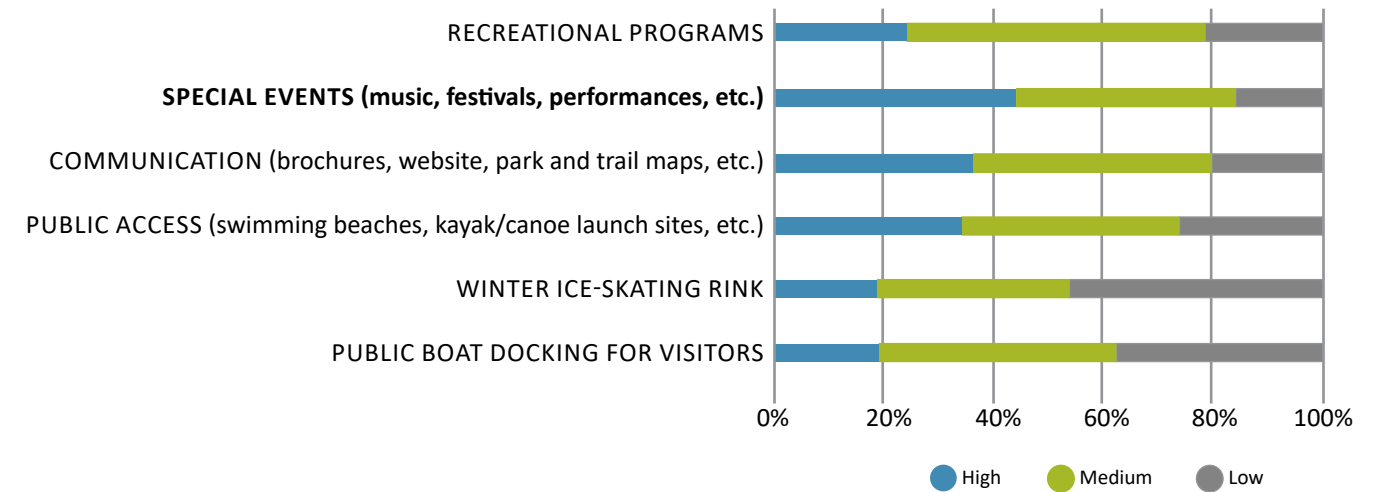
Recreation for Emily involves all four seasons and is one of the major driving forces for tourism. If lakes are included, almost half of the city is publicly owned land available for fishing, boating, swimming, four-wheeling, walking, hiking, snowmobiling, etc. The area’s vast open spaces, high-quality lakes, and snow and four-wheel trails bring significant tourism as well as prompt people to live in the area.

## Proposed Trails and Future Sidewalks



- Potential Trail
- Potential Trail using Roadways
- Future Sidewalk
- Existing Parks
- Existing ATV Trail

**Q19- How would you rate the importance of the following park and recreation elements?**



### TRENDS

Outdoor recreation is a component of physical fitness, and a major focus for preventative care. This leads to a better quality of life physically, mentally, and socially. The exact role public lands, recreational facilities, and outdoor activities will have in the future of health and wellness care is uncertain. However, the view that recreation can be a means of maintaining wellness will be a constant feature of programming and investment in park-related facilities over time.

#### Aging and aging actively

Many people now entering retirement are seeking changes in lifestyle to reflect their lack of childcare responsibilities. They are more physically active with vigorous participation in social, economic, cultural, recreational, and civic affairs. Emily will need to provide opportunities, civic participation, social interaction, and a broad range of active recreational choices.

#### Importance of parks and recreation for families

Parks and recreational opportunities are important for families who look for activities and open space close to home. To attract young families to the area, park and recreational facilities offer sport opportunities, enrichment, childcare options, and simply a place to enjoy the outdoors and move. A strong parks and recreation system, in partnership with a good school district and employment opportunities, is an essential component to attracting and retaining families.

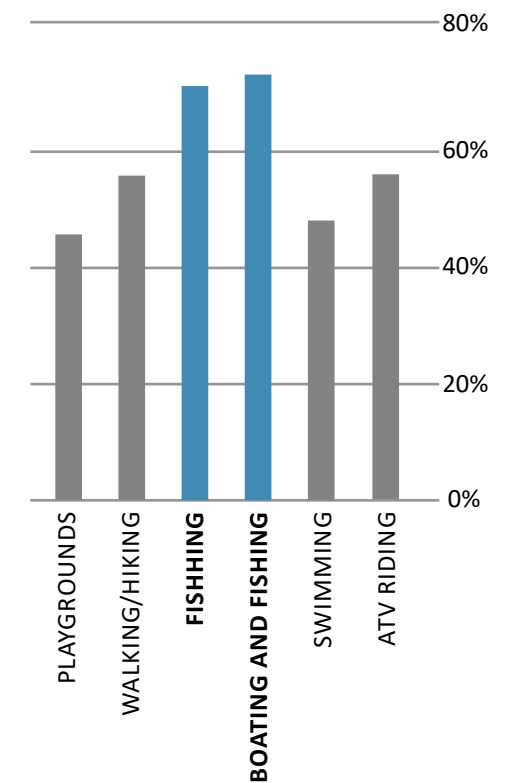
#### Accessibility

More than ever, people with disabilities are searching for and finding ways to live active and independent lives. Many parts of parks and recreation are legally mandated to meet accessibility standards, and those that are not legally mandated to do so are also moving toward greater accessibility, with playgrounds, trails, and athletic facilities being adapted to meet the needs of all citizens.

#### Active living

All age groups are seeing an increase in obesity rates, along with associated health risks, such as high blood pressure and diabetes. As a result, people are paying increased attention to active living, which centers on the idea that physical activity can and should be integrated into daily routines. This trend's demands for parks and recreation include more walking, running, and biking trails, additional senior fitness opportunities, and more ways to integrate the health of the body and mind into everyday lifestyles.

**Q20- Which activities, in Emily, have you or members of your household participated in during the past three (3) years?**





## 05 ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES



### OVERVIEW

The city of Emily is part of Minnesota's Central Lake Region and is set among a mix of lakes, streams, wetlands, and heavily forested areas. Natural resources in and around Emily provide the foundation for maintaining a healthy environment, high quality of life, and growing sustainably. Emily's natural resources are among its greatest assets. Preserving and improving on natural resources will continue to provide a base for recreation and help support the local economy by providing high-quality resources from which to draw.

The concept of sustainable development should provide direction. Sustainable development can be defined as "development that maintains or enhances economic opportunity and community wellbeing while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people and economies depend. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Minnesota Legislature, 1996). The perspective of sustainability calls upon us to invest

our time and energy in efforts that simultaneously strengthen the environmental, economic, and social dimensions of any issue.

The Environment and Natural Resources Chapter provides background information on the City of Emily's physical profile intended to assist in guiding growth and preserving natural resources.

**"PROMOTING & PRESERVING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES & OUR SMALL TOWN FEEL."**  
-SURVEY RESPONDENT

### COMMUNITY INPUT

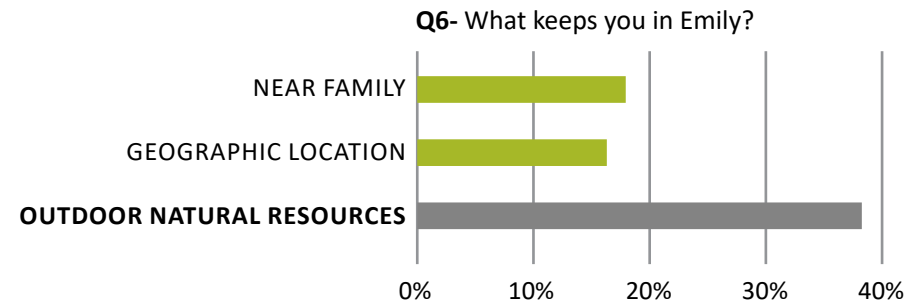
Throughout the community engagement process, it was evident that residents value the attractive setting and natural resources that lie within, and adjacent to, the city. When asked what the greatest assets of the city are, natural resources and open spaces were named by 55% of respondents. Thirty-nine percent of respondents say that outdoor natural resources keep them in the city, and 35% of respondents felt natural resources and the environment should be a key focus for long-range planning.

The lakes serve as an economic driver for the community. Respondents noted the lakes and rivers as the number 1 asset in the community (90%). Preservation and protection are a priority to residents. Seventy-two percent of respondents support natural resource and water quality protection in the

### GOALS

**Goal 1:** Preserve the remaining historical landscapes.

**Goal 2:** Balance open space and environmental preservation with growth and development.



city. The protection of natural vegetation in shoreland areas, especially along lakes and streambanks, is critical to maintaining water quality and wildlife habitat. Good shoreland management requires the protection of natural vegetation in shore impact zone, steep slopes, and bluff areas.

Emily is defined by its natural setting. Natural capital, such as lakes, rivers, open spaces, and conservation areas, are important in protecting the city's identity and recreational opportunities such as hiking, biking, and walking. Residents enjoy the forested environment, surrounded by recreation opportunities in a small community setting. Environmental health is an important component of community wellbeing and success.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Physical profile

The Ecological Classification System (ECS) is a nationwide system developed to manage natural resources on a sustainable basis. The Laurentian Mixed Forest Province (LMF) crosses northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan in the United States. The LMF province in Minnesota consists of large areas of conifer forest, mixed hardwood/conifer forests, and conifer bogs and swamps.

Most of Emily is in the Pine Moraines and Outwash Plains Subsection of the LMF. The subsection is made up of end moraines, outwash plains, till plains, and drumlin fields. The soils are predominantly sands and sandy loams. On outwash plains, excessively drained sands are prevalent, but they are interspersed with numerous wetlands (MN DNR). Pre-settlement vegetation included jack pine with a mix of northern pin oak.

## SURFACE WATER RESOURCES

### Watershed

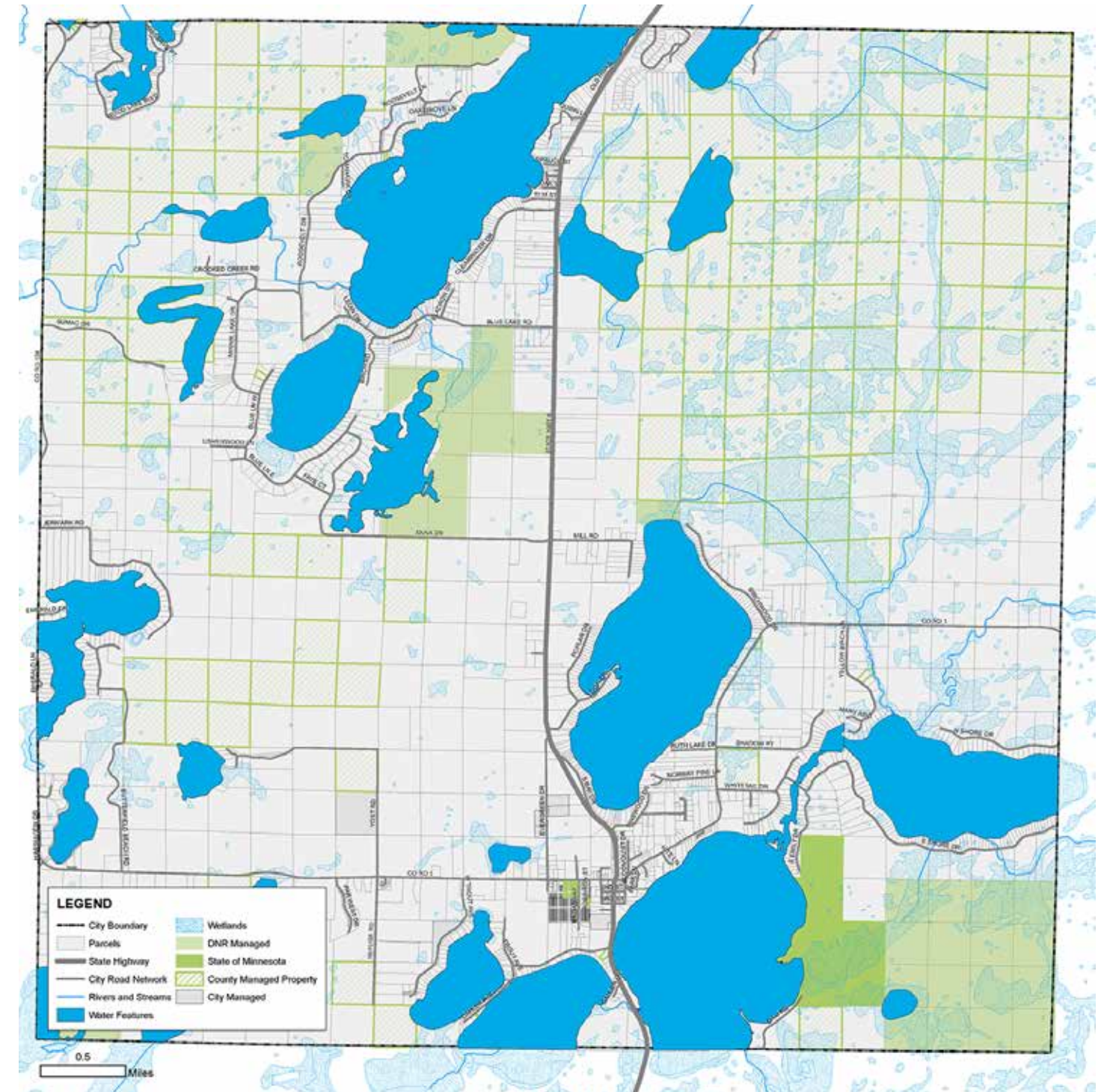
The term "watershed" refers to the entire physical area of a basin drained by a distinct stream or riverine system. Gravity and topography are two major factors that define a watershed. All watersheds in Minnesota are currently going through an intensive watershed approach to restore and protect water quality.

Emily is part of the Pine River Watershed, which finished the One Watershed, One Plan, planning process in 2019. The plan contains more than 500 lakes and has a targeted implementation schedule over the following 10 years. The watershed district covers 502,400 acres spread over four counties (Cass, Crow Wing, Aitkin, and Hubbard). It originates in the wetlands northwest of Backus, MN, to ultimately drain into the Mississippi River.

Emily Lake is one of five lakes in the watershed listed as impaired due to human-related causes (Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District). Goals listed within this plan include protection, phosphorus reduction, pasture and culvert management, maintenance of wetlands, maintenance of subsurface sewage treatment systems, and chloride and nitrate management. Both Ruth and Roosevelt lakes are listed within the protect management focus, geared toward protecting land in the subwatershed. Examples of this protection include private forest management, conservation easements, and maintenance of native vegetation (Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District).

### Lakes, rivers, and streams

Emily is home to 24 state-designated lakes, two rivers, several small streams, and numerous wetlands. Emily, Ruth, and Roosevelt lakes are among the largest. Lakes are an essential resource to the community. Lakes in the city support a high quality of life for area residents and provide people with a range of recreational opportunities and economic gains.



### Wetlands

Emily has an abundance of wetlands throughout the city limits. Wetlands are valuable for storing and stabilizing surface waters to support wildlife habitats and protect against flooding and droughts. Acting as the environment's first defense in cleansing and purifying runoff water by removing nutrients and contaminants, wetlands provide a vital niche to the ecosystem. Knowledge about the general drainage patterns in the community is important when planning for the community's future.

### Floodplain

The City of Emily has adopted the Department of Natural Resources' Floodplain Management Regulations. These regulations are designed to minimize the threat to life, property, public health, and general welfare.



### Native Vegetation

Native plants offer several benefits that turf grass and non-natives cannot. The deep, dense root structures of native plants offer protection and stabilization for shorelines. Having a variety of grasses, sedges, rushes, trees, and wildflowers will not only provide habitat for wildlife, but also will create a mosaic of colors and textures throughout the year. Native plants also play an important role in protecting water quality, as they are able to slow down and filter runoff before it is allowed to enter the lake.

## GROUNDWATER RESOURCES

### Geologic framework

Like most of Minnesota, the City of Emily's landscape and soils are defined by the glacial periods, specifically the Des Moines and Rainy lobes. As the glaciers retreated, they left till of predominantly igneous and metamorphic rocks from the Canadian Shield and outwash (MN DOT). This is the primary surficial geology of Emily.

Manganese is an element used for producing steel and is an essential component of batteries. With the growth of the renewable energy industry, the demand for manganese is expected to increase. The largest geological manganese ore deposit in the United States is located just west of Ruth Lake. Crow Wing Power partnered with North Star Manganese Inc. in 2020 to explore, assess, and evaluate a manganese mining operation (Cooperative Mineral Resources).

### Past management of natural resources

Management practices, regulations, and attitudes toward natural resources have significantly changed over the years. Land use and development in Emily and most northern communities reflect these changes. Many past practices were more harmful to natural resources than today's practices, yet the struggle continues between conservation and exploitation of the environment.

Consequently, some of the natural resources of the region have been degraded. For example, the old-growth forests were cut, wetlands were sometimes filled, habitats were reduced, and vegetation along many miles of lakeshore was reduced as seasonal cabins or permanent homes were built.

Emily and other communities are engaged in a long-term process to mitigate some of these losses; however, it is a long process. Some damage requires many decades of care, while other is irreversible. However, most citizens and their elected officials recognize the importance of better environmental stewardship for the sake of public health, quality of life, and economic development. Many laws and regulations at the local, county, state, and federal levels have institutionalized these views.

Sustainability is now a major goal for communities and land managers. This means that decisions made now regarding the use of our resources will ensure those resources are available in the future. It also reflects an awareness that all-natural resources contribute to the quality of life in the city and beyond.



The planning process can contribute greatly to righting past wrongs, improving future practices, and bringing a better balance to conservation and development. Elements of the plan that can work toward more sustainable management of natural resources are:

- Zoning to regulate development near lakes and streams, in floodplains, and near wetlands.
- Zoning ordinances as they regulate lot size, site development, landscaping, drainage, and tree replacement.
- Wastewater handling, either through the municipal systems or within on-site systems.
- A surface water management plan.
- Forest preservation and management.
- Local regulation of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides on lawns and golf courses; use of low-phosphorus lawn fertilizers.

## TRENDS

Low-impact development and conservation design techniques involve using any of the following to reduce water runoff and boost groundwater recharge by creating a balance among runoff, infiltration, storage, groundwater recharge, and evapotranspiration. With this approach, receiving waters may experience fewer negative effects in the volume, frequency, and quality of water runoff to maintain base flows and more closely approximate runoff conditions. The following list is comprehensive but may not be complete:

- Limit impervious surfaces created by driveways.
- Create natural resource areas.
- Preserve natural depression areas and topography.
- Use vegetated swales, on-site bioretention, wide and flatter swales.
- Maintain sheet flow and clusters of trees and shrubs in the path of water flow.
- Maximize tree preservation and reforestation.
- Use native vegetation that has deeper roots, more water uptake, or better water evapotranspiration.
- Use filter and buffer strips, grass and infiltration trenches, and swales, and encourage the use of rain gardens.

## 06 SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT



### OVERVIEW

This chapter examines social involvement and engagement as key elements in enhancing the community character and sense of place. Finding ways to create a human connection is beneficial to the community and the individual. Well-designed social involvement and engagement can deliver significant value to businesses, area residents, and visitors. This chapter also references some of the strategies that may be used to engage the public to ensure an open and transparent local government.

### COMMUNITY INPUT

Community involvement and engagement were identified as a priority of the community. Sense of community (or community character) and events and social gatherings were ranked as the third and fourth assets of the city, respectively. Residents recognized social connections and celebrations as an important element of the city's social fabric. Throughout the planning process, the community highlighted the desire

for more events and gatherings. Respondents noted that arts and culture can provide an avenue to celebrate, preserve, and support the community identity. To achieve this, partnerships among the city, business community, and residents were emphasized to support opportunities for community involvement and engagement.

Survey respondents highlighted the need for social involvement as a way of promoting community success and fostering personal connections. Residents expressed the desire to expand opportunities for public involvement and to share information. The community highlighted the importance of sharing information through outreach efforts that target a variety of groups to ensure information about local government, volunteer opportunities, and community activities is effectively publicized. Many residents identified email and social media as the most effective ways to share information.

In addition to email and social media, respondents highlighted the desire to create a city newsletter as a way to promote news and upcoming events in the community. Beyond sharing news and events, many suggested a newsletter could be a way to promote the community and share volunteer opportunities in the area.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

A strong sense of community is often hard to describe but intuitively felt. It can be seen through busy parks, sidewalks, trails, businesses, and events. In terms of community events and social involvement, Emily has the annual Emily Day, which is the largest event in the community. This event includes a flea market, craft fair, food booths, kids' games, beer gardens, live music, fireworks, and a pancake breakfast. Beyond Emily Day, much of the social fabric and gatherings focus on the environment. The area is host to lake associations, ATV rides, and clubs. The area is also home to the Lakers Lions Club,

### GOALS

**Goal 1:** Foster community by offering a variety of gatherings and activities throughout the year.

**Goal 2:** Develop a volunteer base that engages residents and makes an impact.

**Goal 3:** Expand opportunities for public involvement and ensure an open and transparent local government.

**Goal 4:** Preserve the historic, natural, and cultural landmarks throughout the city.



which serves the Emily, Outing and Fifty Lakes area. Additional events include: ice fishing contests, the annual Spring Fling, Logtoberfest, and Trunk or Treat. The Outing Area Chamber of Commerce shares and promotes community events for the area.

The city distributes information through a variety of sources, including the Crosby-Ironton Courier newspaper, Northland Press newspaper, city website, and social media platforms. Events and information are also shared by the Outing Area Chamber of Commerce.

### TRENDS

The median age in Emily is 65, one of the highest in the county and indicates Emily is an aging community. Often older adults who can stay socially active and engaged experience a variety of benefits. When older adults connect through activities and community programs it can bring a sense of accomplishment and provide interaction opportunities.

Efforts to promote access to information, including an effective communication system reaching community residents of all ages can be accomplished through oral, print,

online, and social media communication types. The use of social media as the primary method of communication is becoming more common due to its success in reaching all populations. Using social media to share and interact with residents and stakeholders can help individuals feel connected to the community and expand opportunities for public involvement and ensure an open and transparent local government. Constant communication to inform and engage the community can help build trust and increase participation in civic engagement.



## 07 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



### OVERVIEW

Economic development seeks to strengthen a community through the expansion of its tax and employment base. Unfortunately, economic growth today is focused mainly on job creation. Still, staff and cities are involved in many economic development actions, some of which we will cover in this chapter. Ideally, economic development should balance economic vitality with stability, environmental protection, and preservation of Emily's small-town character.

### COMMUNITY INPUT

Several questions relating to commercial and industrial development were included in the community survey to obtain community input on economic development within the city. Community input is essential in developing a community's vision while identifying focus areas and priority initiatives that will lead city officials and staff. The following is a summary of the community's ideas.

#### Explore downtown development options

A vibrant downtown district can help reinforce community identity, serve as the social hub, and increase walkability in the city's core. Residents support a collaborative effort for infill development in the downtown area to help current business owners attract new retail and restaurant establishments, rehabilitate storefronts, and infill vacant properties. The downtown area plays a vital role in the city's identity. Participants seek a concerted and coordinated effort to enhance the physical and social aspects of the central business district.

#### Build a strong, year-round economy

Building a diverse economy that can withstand the ebbs and flows of the business cycle is essential for the city's vitality. Survey participants support efforts to attract new businesses while assisting current business owners.

Retail and restaurant: Participants noted the need for a broader range of retail and restaurant services (highest priority – 45%) within the community. Support for this growth was directed toward the central business district.

Employment opportunities: Participants identified bringing high-quality employment opportunities to the city and creating new jobs as areas where the city should focus. In addition, the city can look to take an active role in economic development through collaboration, existing partnerships, and new strategic partnerships.

***"... HOST A FARMER'S MARKET/FARMSTAND ON WEEKENDS TO SUPPORT LOCAL GROWERS & ATTRACT PEOPLE TO EMILY WHO WILL IN TURN, SPEND THEIR MONEY AT OTHER LOCAL STORES, RESTAURANTS, ETC."***  
-SURVEY RESPONDENT

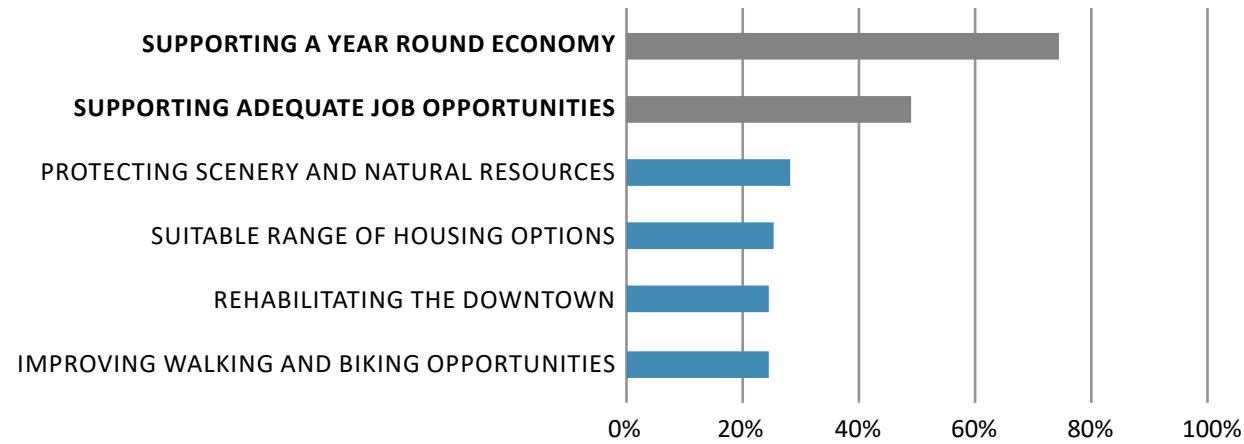
### GOALS

**Goal 1:** Support small business growth and facilitate job creation.

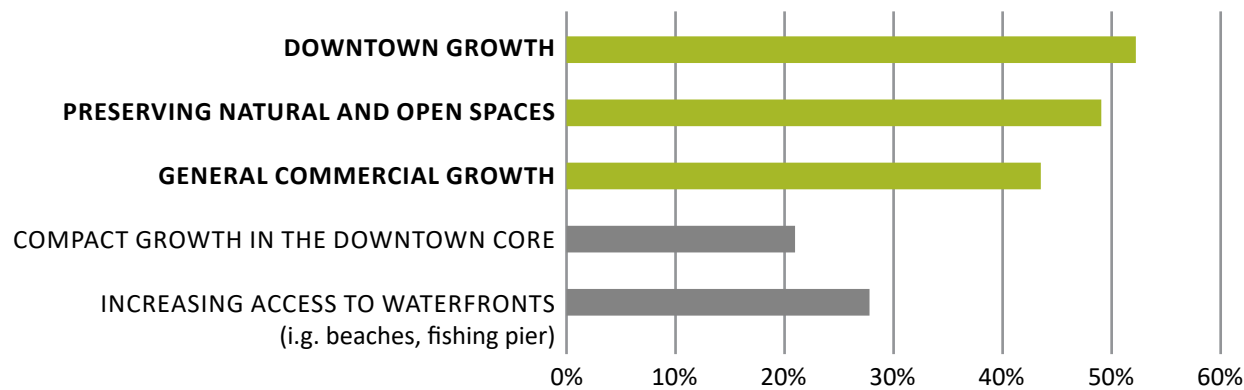
**Goal 2:** Continue to revitalize the downtown area, transforming it into the social and cultural hub of the community.

**Goal 3:** Promote the unique local assets of the city and market the community.

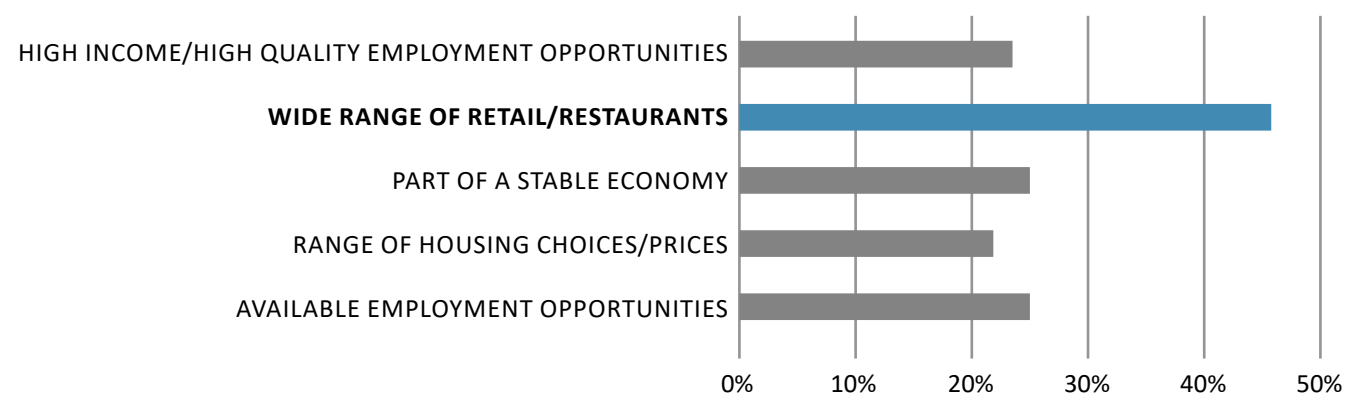
**Q9- When it comes to growth and development, what are Emily's greatest challenges? (Choose your top 3)**



**Q11- What are your highest priorities for future growth in Emily? (Choose your top 3)**



**Q5- What are some things that need the most improvement in Emily? (Choose your top 3)**



### EXISTING CONDITIONS

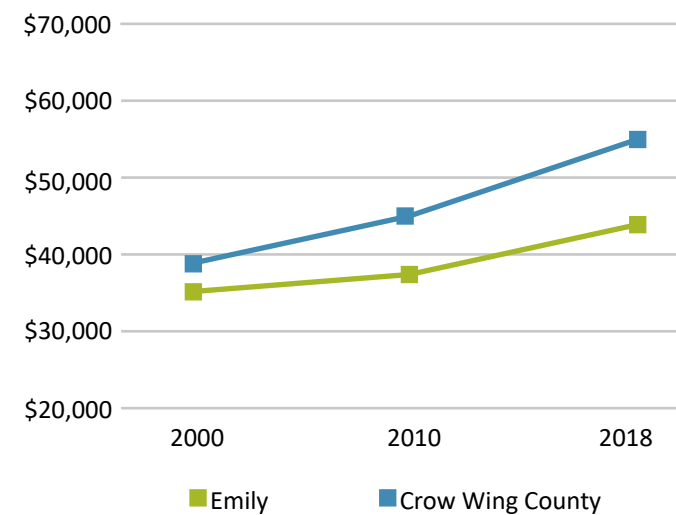
Economic trends can be important indicators of the financial health of the community. The following summarizes several economic indicators, including income, employment, industry, and labor force demographics.

#### Income

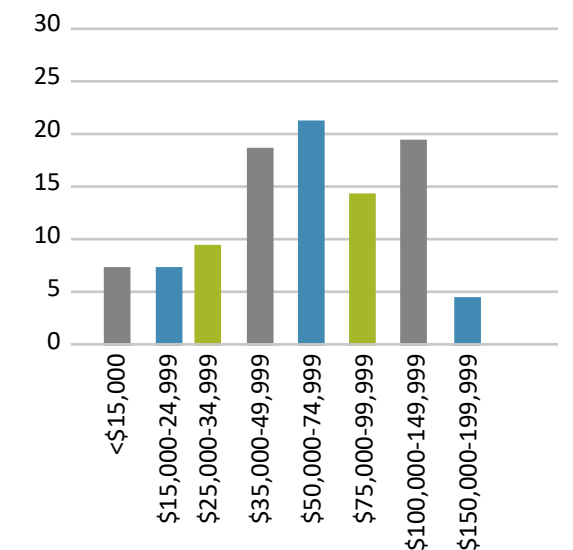
The 2019 American Community Survey estimates a median family income in Emily to be \$48,214. The median income is the amount that divides the overall income into two equal groups, with half having incomes above the median and half having incomes below the median. Median income has increased nearly 10 percent since 2010. The figure below illustrates the income growth in the City of Emily compared to Crow Wing County.

Emily has a wide array of household incomes; however, approximately 22 percent of households make less than \$25,000 per year. Nearly 36 percent of households have an income between \$25,000 and \$50,000. Eighty-seven percent of households earn under \$100,000 per year, so providing housing and service opportunities for the lower-income families needs to be addressed by the community.

Income trends



Household income



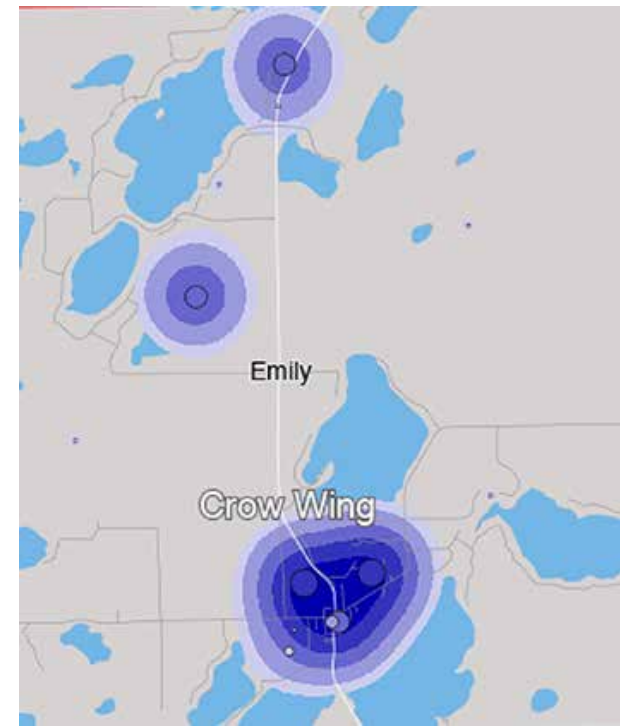
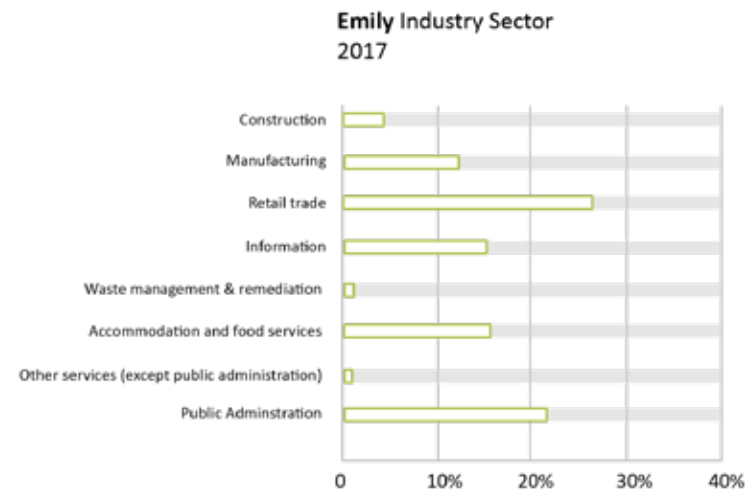
**Employment**

The following figure illustrates the industry provided for Emily residents. The table offers insight into the employment characteristics of employed workers. The information contained in the figures within this section may help determine economic development needs and strategies for recruitment, expansion, and marketing.

Of the total population, 193 are civilian employed and are older than 16. Most residents are private wage and salary workers. Approximately 11% of residents are self-employed.

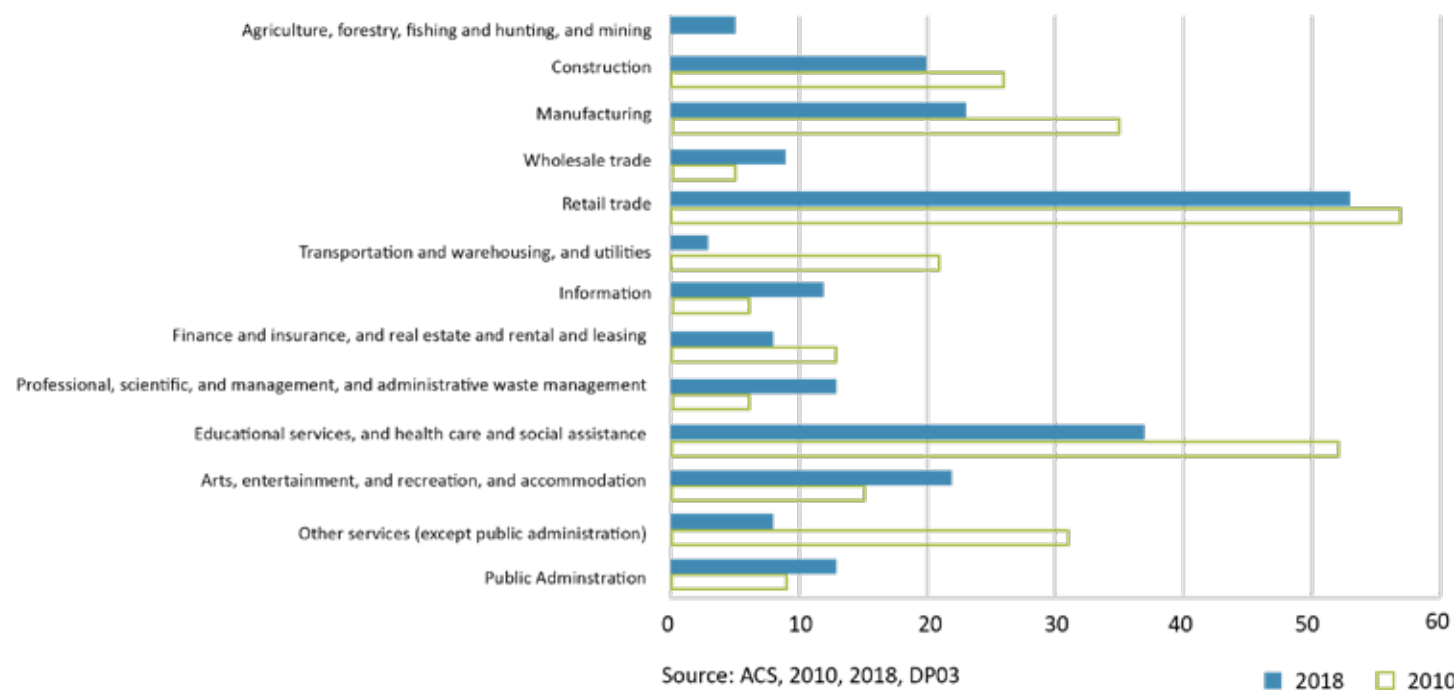
The industry profile illustrates the industries in which Emily residents work. The educational services, health care, and social assistance industry is the leading industry, employing 24 percent of the workforce. The second-leading industry is retail trade, using nearly 17 percent of the workforce. Health care and social assistance and the retail trade industries have seen a slight decrease of workers since 2010. Conversely, five industries have seen an increase since 2010: wholesale trade; information; professional, scientific, and management; and administrative waste management; arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services; and public administration. All other industry categories have experienced a decrease in growth since 2010.

The industry sector profile provides more details and insight into how people work. Most of Emily’s workers are employed in retail trade occupations. The second leading occupation is public administration.



Source: US Census Bureau

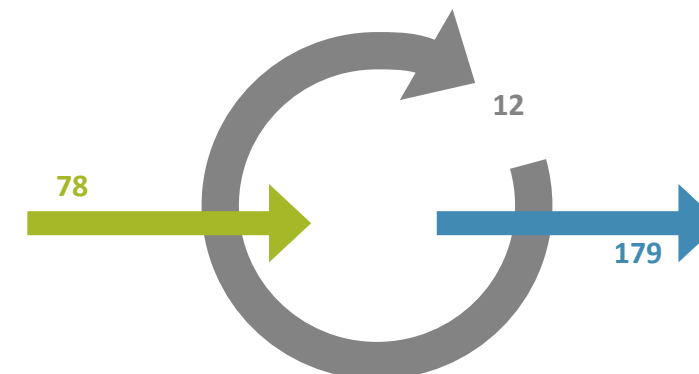
**Emily Industry Profile 2010-2018**



**Jobs and wages**

An inflow-outflow assessment provides insight into the total job counts within the city. For example, 78 workers employed within the town live outside the study area (city limits). A total of 12 people live and are engaged in the selection area. One hundred seventy-nine people live within the city but leave for employment opportunities outside of the study area. This information is critical for the city and economic development staff in evaluating appropriate techniques and practices to advance local programming and initiatives.

**Inflow /Outflow Analysis, 2018**



Understanding the job density and industry within the city, not focusing solely on Emily residents, is also relevant in analyzing existing conditions and identifying trends. Therefore, the map displays the concentration of jobs throughout the county and depicts the number of jobs per node.

**TRENDS**

A multitude of trends and economic impacts has affected the city in recent years. However, the following trends have been successful practices in communities across the nation and are becoming best practices.

**Economic gardening**

An approach to job growth and business development is gaining traction in recent years. The practice of “economic gardening” seeks to grow the local economy by promoting local entrepreneurship and small and local business development. Economic gardening works with what you have in the community to build new opportunities.

**Entrepreneurial environments**

Encouraging entrepreneurship is one of the most effective development strategies for a community. By developing strategies to support entrepreneurs and creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem, communities can bolster entrepreneurship and provide resources to support economic growth and job creation. Entrepreneurship ecosystems support business development, nourish new business startups, and provide access to resources that business owners need to operate in a supportive environment. In addition, this approach can lead to enterprise startups and create a culture of entrepreneurship among community residents.





### Rural cultural economy

Cultural facilities and programming provide a particularly vibrant form of locally oriented growth potential. This approach helps route purchases toward local businesses that support other local incomes. In addition, communities can attract artists who bring their direct export sales, resource-gathering abilities, ideas, and creativity to the area. Tourism attraction is also spurred from this approach. And, if facilities and programming are in historic downtown, revitalization and other retail investments may transpire.

### Trail towns

Through careful planning and partnership, communities realize the full potential of linking trails and businesses. The trail town model of economic development places trails as the centerpiece of a tourism-centered strategy for small-town revitalization. Trails aid in building strong, healthy communities with increased property values for area residents and improved economic opportunities for local businesses.

***“ENCOURAGE BUSINESS IDEAS AND ENTREPRENEURS. SUPPORT TOURISM TO BRING IN MORE DOLLARS TO SUPPORT BUSINESS. ENCOURAGE BUSINESSES THAT SUPPORT THAT.”***  
-SURVEY RESPONDENT

## CORE FRAMEWORK

The following approaches and practices can support the actions in advancing the themes we have heard from residents and assistance staff. The data has been analyzed and collected in implementing the goals and strategies within this chapter. An essential component of this section is focused on asset-based development, where the city should capitalize on its strengths rather than a “needs”-based approach to economic growth.

### Look beyond industrial recruitment

Supporting small business developments can promote the value in economic diversifications. Emily can work toward building a solid existing business program, take collective action to create a current business program that supports the health of local businesses and develop an entrepreneurial development program to foster new business startups. Buy local campaigns can be a worthwhile effort to support existing businesses and those exploring niche markets. By shifting the focus from reaching the next extensive industrial facility to building the capacity of local small businesses, owners can then hire more staff and collectively make a more significant impact than one large facility.

### Transform regulatory barriers

A multitude of tools and incentives hinders business development. These barriers come in ordinances, local regulations, access to capital, and tax and financing obstacles. Engage with local business owners to get an understanding of existing barriers. Analyze local zoning ordinances and make amendments to support multistory, pedestrian-oriented districts designed to help mix small and large commercial spaces. Identify how economic development incentives can be directed to foster local business success and accelerate minority-owned businesses’ growth.

### Rethink downtown vacant spaces – adaptive reuse

Adaptive reuse can help the city fill vacant storefronts and turn vacant historic buildings into new spaces that support new businesses. Look to support adaptive reuse projects and develop a program that assists with permit waivers and a faster review timeline for eligible projects. City leaders should expand the definition from central business districts to central social communities and focus on building the social elements that bring people downtown. As we reimagine our storefronts, staff should study the importance of incubator spaces and business clusters. Ordinances to allow light industrial, such as pottery making, woodworking, glass making, jewelry making, and breweries, downtown can contribute to the sense of place and social aspects of the district.

### See the value in investing in quality-of-life improvements

Both residents and businesses value physical and natural elements that contribute to the community’s identity and spirit. A variety of factors can improve the quality of life, such as continuing to enhance the downtown district with neighborhood-serving shops, restaurants, retail, walking, and bicycling improvements. Cultural and artistic elements can help compete for growth and serve residents, businesses, and visitors. A range of affordable housing types with increased access to open space and recreation is also critical to supporting the existing workforce while attracting new workers and businesses.

### Form partnerships and collaborate

Partnerships are imperative to advancing local economic development. The city should work collectively with various government agencies involved in economic development, community development, and planning. This includes local and regional coordination, leveraging relationships with educational institutions, and promoting those partnerships. Emily should work cooperatively with other governments to combine resources and streamline regulations. Work to create opportunities for networking and communication among typically disconnected groups.



## 7.1 TOURISM



### OVERVIEW

Tourism is perhaps the most impactful economic driver in the City of Emily. During summer months, the arrival of visitors and seasonal residents increases dramatically. This links to a thriving tourist economy, fueling industries such as hospitality, retail, and dining. This also positively impacts other industries such as construction, recreation, storage facilities, real estate, cabin care, dock services, small engine repair, and others. In recent years, returning seasonal visitors are relocating to the city and becoming permanent residents.

Though the influx of visitors and seasonality element of the economy creates a thriving summer environment, a flourishing tourist economy is not without its challenges. The inflow of visitors and seasonal residents adds strain on city services, and places pressure on environmentally sensitive lakes, wetlands, and shorelands. The city should seek to strike a balance between economic vitality and environmental conservation. Emily should also seek to diversify its industry profile, as over reliance on any service can limit economic opportunity and

mobility for residents. Service and hospitality jobs are essential to support the tourism industry. These jobs can provide desirable employment for students, retirees, and others who seek part-time and seasonal employment opportunities.

In 2019, the state of Minnesota started a new tourism campaign — Find Your True North. This campaign is used to highlight key interest segments for those people who have visited the state in the past and those who haven't. The campaign is further refined using the hashtag #onlyinMN. This hashtag allows visitors to personalize their Minnesota experience. In 2020, ad-hoc campaigns were created to accommodate the shifting tourism landscape due to the pandemic, including a support local campaign. The City of Emily can look to these tools that are being developed statewide and refine them to attract visitors.

### LODGING AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations are a basic need for travelers, which is why it isn't surprising that lodging accounts for 20% of travelers' spending. Within the city limits and just outside, an assortment of resorts offers various amenities, including sandy beaches, internet, equipment rentals, and outdoor activities.

An additional option for accommodations is short-term rentals, where visitors stay in private homes or apartments. This option gives travelers additional choices and nontraditional options that may cost even less. Some benefits to residents include allowing property owners to diversify their revenue streams as well as the increased economic activity in town by the additional visitors. By having short-term rentals with a rental license requirement, communities have expanded their options for tourism, while still protecting the sense of community and ensuring safe places to stay.

Large cities have noticed a few drawbacks, including increased housing costs for residents and the loss of tax revenue from traditional lodging taxes after allowing short-term rentals. Source: Economic Policy Institute

***"PROMOTE MORE TOURISM TO SUPPORT LOCAL ECONOMY ENCOURAGE MORE NEW BUSINESSES"***  
-SURVEY RESPONDENT

## 08 TRANSPORTATION



### OVERVIEW

This chapter serves as a guide for developing and improving the City of Emily's transportation system. The city's transportation network consists of different components working together for the movement of people and goods. An effective system relies on more than roads alone. Walking trails, bikeways, sidewalks, and public transit all provide critical components of a properly functioning transportation system. A solid multimodal system that supports the needs of all community members is one of the essential elements of a thriving community.

The Emily area is widely known for its ATV and side-by-side use. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in planning for and integrating vehicles, such as ATVs, side-by-sides, and other similar vehicles, into the transportation system. Recently, Minnesota State Highway 6 in Emily was reconstructed. This project included a new underground storm sewer system and water retention pond, a new curb, gutter and sidewalk, and improvements to other segments of

local roads. The project enhanced traffic operations through the main corridor of the city. It improved safety not only for vehicle traffic but for nonmotorized transportation such as walking and biking too.

Emily's road system provides both mobility and access in and out of Emily. Crow Wing County Road 1 and State Highway 6 are the main corridors that travelers use to reach various destinations. Maintaining and enhancing Emily's road and nonmotorized transportation systems are foundational in serving the needs of its local economy, housing, services, recreation, and tourism industry.

As the City of Emily grows and invests, an emphasis on walking and biking as a form of transportation and recreation should be considered. For many, walking and biking provide an opportunity to experience the outdoors, engage in recreation, and exercise. Others rely on walking and biking simply for transportation. Increasingly, communities and individuals

realize the benefits of incorporating walking and biking into their transportation networks. Thus, investing in walking and biking can serve a dual role, both as a transportation purpose and a recreational purpose.

### COMMUNITY INPUT

The community indicated a strong desire and interest in nonmotorized transportation, such as walking and biking. Participants noted their support for pedestrian and multiuse trails (45%), followed by additional ATV/side-by-side infrastructure (39%) as their top priorities. Participants in the community survey also expressed a desire for pedestrian safety improvements in the downtown core. Improvements such as crosswalk enhancements and signage for various trail users (both motorized and nonmotorized) were highlighted. The community voiced its support to expand pedestrian and multiuse trails throughout the city, along roadways, and on public lands.

### GOALS

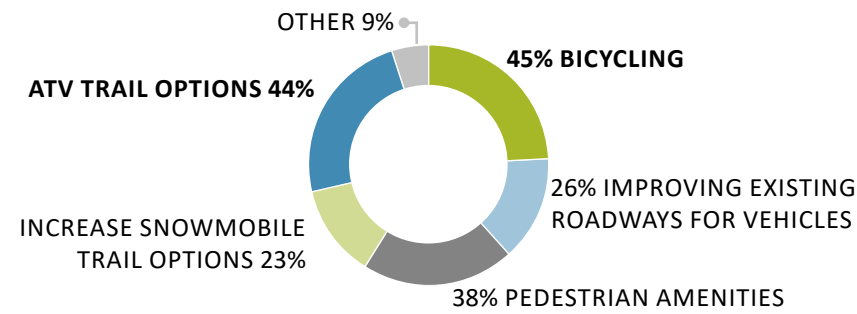
**Goal 1:** Minimize conflicts between traffic and recreational activities.

**Goal 2:** Work to improve safety within the transportation system.

**Goal 3:** Improve the city's roads with enhanced biking and walking opportunities.

**Goal 4:** Form partnerships to develop transit options.

**Q14- In your opinion, what transportation alternatives do you feel the city should invest in? (Choose your top 2)**



Although many community members supported ATV/side-by-side infrastructure, others voiced their concern about the lack of enforcement for recreational-type vehicles in the downtown core and adjacent neighborhoods. In addition, ATV/side-by-side traffic through neighborhoods and driving on sidewalks were identified as concerns by area residents.

Beyond improvements to nonmotorized transportation such as walking and biking, community members supported beautification efforts along Emily's main corridors. Measures such as boulevard trees, flowers, benches, and other amenities were emphasized to make the city more welcoming while improving the walkability of the downtown core.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The primary mode of transportation in Emily is the automobile. The City of Emily covers approximately 36 square miles, with the majority of roadways being local roads. The local roads primarily connect residential houses and neighborhoods to either Crow Wing County Road 1 or Minnesota State Highway 6. Highway 6 is the primary north- and-south road, while County Road 1 serves as the primary east-to-west corridor. The Highway 6 and County Road 1 intersection is considered the downtown core, or main street area of Emily. Recently, State Highway 6 through the downtown core was reconstructed, and many improvements were made. Many of these improvements were focused on pedestrian amenities to encourage safe walkability in the community's core.

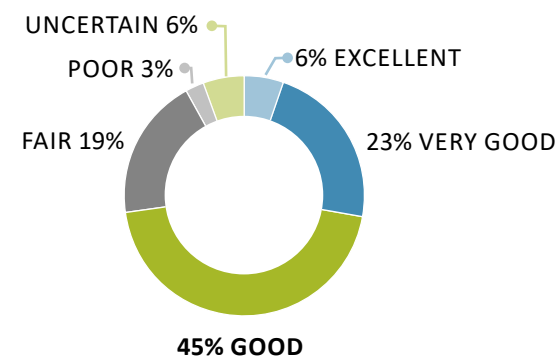
ATV and side-by-side use in Emily has grown in popularity over the years. Many people ride these vehicles not only for transportation but also for recreation. The Emily area is well known for its ATV and side-by-side use. Over the years, many trails and amenities have expanded to support ATV and side-by-side type vehicle use.

**TRENDS**

As rural communities experience seismic demographic shifts throughout the nation, trails are becoming an increasingly prominent feature of many transportation systems. In addition, with approximately 75 million individuals in the baby boom generation in, at, or nearing retirement, demand for retirement and senior housing is on the rise. Often, connection to trails is a feature of retirement communities where the trail provides seniors with healthy, affordable recreational opportunities. Individuals should have affordable transportation options as an alternative to owning and operating automobiles when traveling to and from the trails, and trails provide young and old with healthful, affordable recreational opportunities. Furthermore, studies confirm that trails make communities more sustainable by creating attractive spaces for a broad spectrum of users, thus promoting economic development.

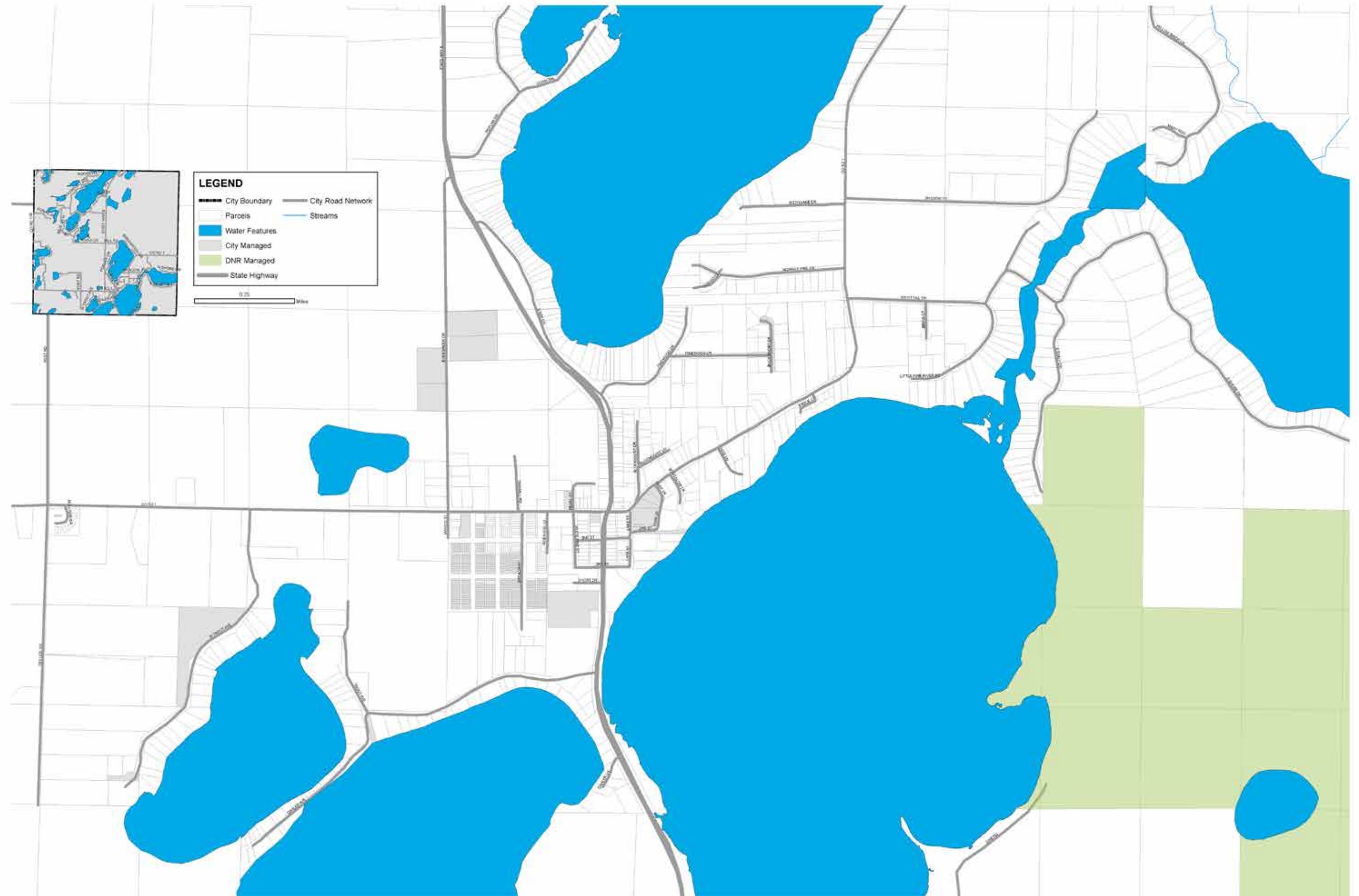
As the use of vehicles, such as golf carts, ATVs, and side-by-sides, increase in popularity, the city may want to draft and adopt ordinances and procedures for these types of vehicles.

**Q15- Outside of Crow Wing County Road 1 and MN State Highway 6, how would you rate the quality of the local roads?**



CITY OF EMILY FUNCTIONAL ROADWAY CLASSIFICATION MAP				
Characteristics	Arterials	Major collector	Minor collector	Local/private street
Roads	State Highway 6, County Road 1 (west of Highway 6)	County Road 1 (east of Highway 6)		All others
Service Performed	Traffic movement with minimal direct access	Traffic movement with limited direct access	Traffic movement with limited direct access	Direct access
Typical Trip	Within state, regional, and inter-city areas	Within city and county	Between and within neighborhoods	Within neighborhoods





## 09 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES



### OVERVIEW

Infrastructure acts as the bedrock of every community. Adequately maintaining and enhancing it impact all aspects of community life and development. Infrastructure refers to any capital asset, such as municipal buildings, including city hall, water and wastewater treatment facilities, the water tower, public works garages, as well as transportation features (roads, bridges, trails, sidewalks, signage).

While a lot of infrastructure is municipally owned, it can also include privately owned capital assets, including electrical networks (generation sites, cable, conduit, and equipment), oil or natural gas pipelines and hookups, and rail lines. Communities are also considering high-speed internet to be akin to a public utility, essential for any community to compete in the global economy.

### COMMUNITY INPUT

Many comments were received from the survey regarding having recycling in town. Although this topic has been reviewed and discussed heavily in past years, it was mentioned several times in the outreach. Exploring options in this area again seems to be a desire of survey takers.

***“IT WOULD BE NICE IF THE CITY OFFERED DIFFERENT SUMMER/WINTER PROGRAMS FOR THE KIDS IN THE AREA. OFFERING THEM AT LITTLE TO NO COST. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE GIVING THESE KIDS OF ALL DIFFERENT AGES OPPORTUNITIES TO KEEP BUSY AND OUT OF MISCHIEF. EXAMPLES: NATURE HIKES, FISHING, MOVIES IN THE PARK, ICE SKATING, ICE FISHING, SNOW SHOEING.”***  
-SURVEY RESPONDENT

### GOALS

#### Community Facilities

**Goal 1:** Provide community facilities to meet the health, safety, education, and leisure needs of area residents.

**Goal 2:** Manage existing and future city parks in a manner that maximizes enjoyment for all residents and visitors by providing a broad range of both active and passive recreational opportunities.

**Goal 3:** Communicate and share information through a variety of methods.

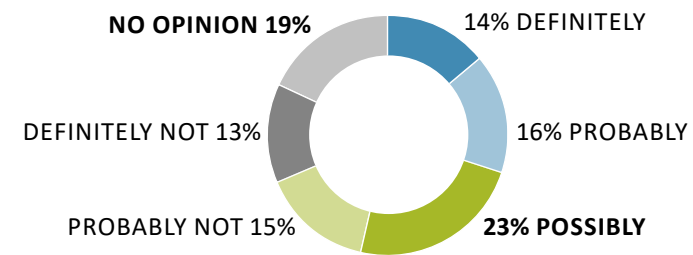
#### Infrastructure

**Goal 1:** Encourage efficient use of existing infrastructure investment and protection of the environment with future development.

**Goal 2:** Utilize best management practices (BMP's) to reduce surface water runoff and control sediments and erosion to protect water quality.

**Goal 3:** Provide reliable infrastructure for existing and future development opportunities.

**Q10-** Would you support the expansion of city sewer so more dwellings could connect to the municipal wastewater treatment plant?



**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

**Sewer**

The city operates a sewer system around the downtown core. Areas once served by private septic systems were removed and a system was constructed in 2006. This system, as of July 2021, has 129 users connected to the sanitary sewer system.

**Water**

There is no public water system as all properties are served by private wells.

**Bridges**

There are three bridges in town: the Emily Dam bridge (over little Pine River), South Shore Drive (over Little Pine River) and Roosevelt Drive bridge (over Crooked Creek).

**Post office**

The Emily Post Office at 20984 County Road 1 serves the City of Emily and several adjacent townships.

**Police Department**

The Emily Police Department covers 36 square miles and is composed of two full-time police officers. The emergency 911 service is coordinated through the Crow Wing County Sheriff's Office.

**Fire Department**

The Emily Fire Department currently has 22 volunteer members. The Emily Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency fire and rescue response services to the City of Emily, contracted municipalities, and neighboring communities as needed.

All members of the department are trained and state certified to a minimum requirement of Firefighter I Level. The Emily Fire Department has an ISO/PPC rating of 9 out of 10.

**Emergency medical service (first responders)**

The City of Emily is served by a nine-person first response unit. The Emily First Response Unit is housed at the same location as the Fire Department and serves the City of Emily, contracted municipalities, and neighboring communities as needed.

**Emily medical clinic**

The City of Emily is home to one medical clinic, Essentia Health St. Joseph's – Emily Clinic, located west of the corner of Country Road 1 and MN-6. The clinic opened in late 2014 in response to a community need. The clinic provides part time primary care for all ages with an option to fill prescriptions onsite.



**COMMUNITY BUILDINGS**

The City Hall building was formerly used as a charter school. This was converted in 2013. The use of the gym, kitchen and some classrooms are still available for the public use today. The rest of the building is utilized for city staff, council chambers, library, and police department.

The city built a new maintenance building in 2019. This houses the road maintenance implements and other city vehicles.

The fire hall is located at 20837 County Road 1 in the downtown area. The facility houses two engines, one tender, one brush/grass rig, and two deep well, high pressure hydrants. The Emily First Response Team also utilizes this space as its base and for equipment storage.

**MUNICIPAL BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES**

The City of Emily has both a City Council and Planning Commission that shape the policies and decisions of city government. The city encourages citizens to volunteer to serve on these entities and provide their input. A brief description of each entity and its duties follows:

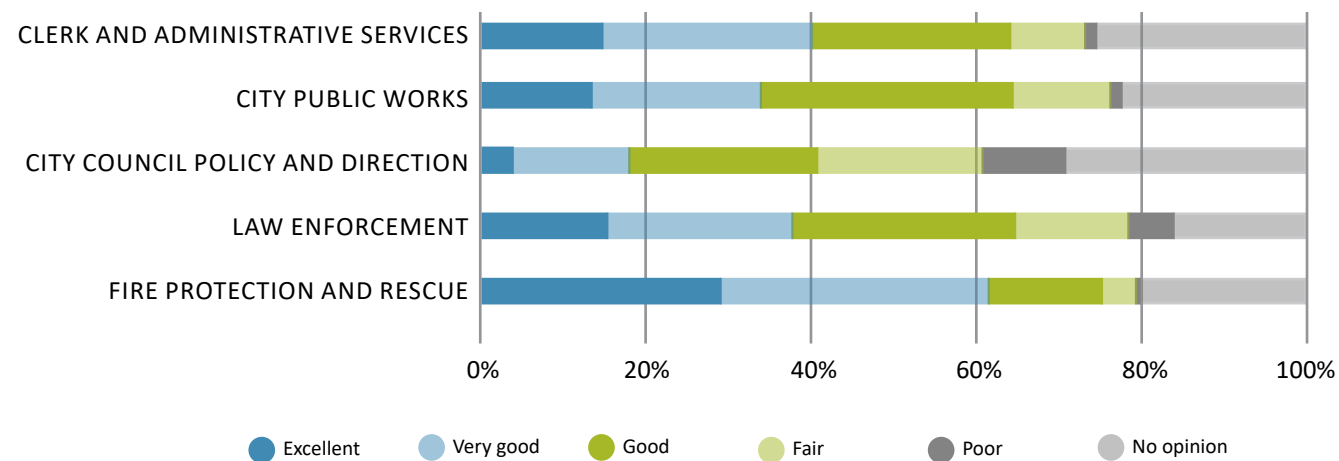
**City Council**

The Emily City Council consists of a mayor who serves a two-year term and four council members who serve four-year terms. The city council meets regularly once per month.

**Planning Commission**

The Emily Planning Commission consists of five members appointed by the City Council. Members serve four-year terms, and the commission acts as an advisory body to the City Council in matters of directing future physical development of the city. The commission, upon request of the council, makes studies, investigations, and recommendations to the council regarding matters affecting zoning and subdivisions. The Planning Commission meets regularly once per month.

**Q8-** How would you rate the overall level of service:



# 10 IMPLEMENTATION



## OVERVIEW

This chapter will serve as the action plan for prioritizing the goals and objectives within each plan chapter. The comprehensive plan is intended to guide many of the decisions made by the city each year.

The implementation schedule provides city staff, committees, and councils recommended timeframes for executing individual projects and initiatives. Ideally, this chapter would be reviewed and revised annually at the budget meeting to align the city's planning priorities with its investment priorities. The tools available include:

- Zoning ordinance
- Capital improvement plan
- Comprehensive plan review and revision
- Implementation matrices

## ZONING ORDINANCE

The purpose and intent of the Emily zoning ordinance is to promote the general health, safety, and welfare of the city's people. To that end, the ordinance is designed to regulate land use for specific purposes, regulate the size of buildings and structures, create minimum health and safety standards, and create an administrative structure for planning and zoning.

The City of Emily's zoning ordinance has been recently updated. The zoning ordinance includes specific regulations governing land use and an official zoning map. The City Council recognizes the comprehensive plan as the policy with the responsibility to regulate land use and development under the guidelines and purpose set forth within the zoning ordinance. The city administers the zoning ordinance on an ongoing basis.

The zoning ordinance is subject to periodic review to ensure consistency with the city's comprehensive plan and overall

goals and strategies as defined by the city. The City Council may amend the ordinance, provided the council adheres to constitutional, statutory, and other lawful procedures.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The City of Emily has a capital improvement plan (CIP) that lists projects, prioritizes expenditures, and identifies sources of funding for the scheduled financing of capital expenditures relative to the implementation and maintenance of public facilities and services necessary for the city's growth. This CIP is currently reviewed and updated annually.

The overall objective of a CIP is to provide for the efficient use of fiscal resources in funding future capital expenses. The CIP should be a flexible and evolving tool the city uses as a guide for the future. The CIP should be updated annually to allow for capital necessity and prioritization changes. Along with anticipated expenditures, the CIP should include proposed

sources of funding, such as special assessments, enterprise funds (water, sewer), state aid, annual levy, etc. Expenditures greater than \$5,000, such as municipal vehicles (police), police and city administration, street and utility projects, park improvements, and the like, should be included. The phasing in of projects that require the same sources of funds can assist in retaining a level annual tax levy.

***"CREATING A WARM AND WELCOMING DOWNTOWN. TREES, BENCHES, SMALL GARDENS, ETC. VERSUS CONCRETE AND BLACKTOP."***  
-SURVEY RESPONDENT





**Benefits of having a capital improvement plan:**

- Quality of life: citizens use many of these items daily, making their quality of life directly tied to these services. Having well-maintained infrastructure can help attract both citizens and businesses.
- Prioritization: Having all capital improvement information in a central location with clear timelines and costs can help the city make decisions and set priorities for the coming years.
- Avoid surprises: By having a clear plan, the city can share the information with residents, gather their feedback, and allow residents to prepare for any increases to taxes.
- Funding: By having a plan with costs and timelines, the city can always look for grants or loans to lessen the financial burden for taxpayers.
- Future preparedness: By knowing the life expectancy of infrastructure and equipment, the city will be less vulnerable to emergency repairs and purchases.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW AND REVISION**

The City Planning Commission should make a yearly review of the comprehensive plan to evaluate if any updates or changes are needed. The commission should create findings for these recommended changes and provide them to the City Council.

# LAND USE

**GOAL 1:** Support development and redevelopment to meet the needs of changing demographics.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Ensure that future land use designations are compatible with adjacent land uses.	Guide development to follow patterns established by the future land use map.	Ongoing
Ensure that any new construction or redevelopment adjacent to the downtown core is consistent with the character of that area.	Encourage landscaping and streetscaping in construction and street projects.	Ongoing
Support the infill and redevelopment of areas within the city to leverage existing infrastructure investment.	Identify, map, and market infill redevelopment opportunities.	Ongoing

**GOAL 2:** Connect residents to destinations and neighborhoods by transportation modes for all ages and abilities.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Integrating transportation and land use planning.	Coordinate community growth with public works and other stakeholders.	Ongoing

**GOAL 3:** Prioritize the protection of natural resources to enhance the overall environmental quality.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Regularly have individual sewer systems inspected as required by the city code.	Review city code to ensure language meets the needs of the city.	Medium
Publicize the impact that improper disposal of household chemicals and petroleum products has on drinking water.	Hold a community clean up event.	Medium

**GOAL 4:** Protect and enhance the character and livability of residential areas.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Encourage the preservation of forested lands and work with property owners to maintain tree cover.	Review proposed developments to maintain existing vegetation.	Ongoing
Identify public land that could be dedicated to parks and open space, for both recreation and environmental protection.		High

**GOAL 1:** Prepare for an aging community with housing options that will keep residents in the community.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Support age-in-place housing to ensure that an adequate supply of housing is available for elderly people. These housing types include apartments, townhomes, cooperatives, accessory apartments, shared housing, and personal care homes.	Promote the development of housing alternatives specially designed for seniors and elderly.	High

**GOAL 2:** Encourage a variety of housing types, densities, and choices to meet housing needs.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Ensure that zoning regulations support residential development to ensure a variety of homes can be built to meet the needs of residents.	Review city ordinances to ensure language meets the needs of the city.	High

**GOAL 3:** Support affordable housing.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Support workforce housing by coordinating with county, regional, and state programs.	Work with the Minnesota Housing Partnership and Crow Wing County to discuss housing opportunities in Emily.	High
Encourage public-private partnerships to support and expand affordable housing opportunities.	Work with developers to expand housing options and to fill in gaps (missing middle) in the housing market.	Medium
	Work with county and regional housing agencies to aid with construction of affordable housing.	High
Encourage rehabilitation and/or replacement of substandard housing.	Seek funding opportunities such as small cities development program for the rehabilitation of homes in targeted areas.	Ongoing

**GOAL 4:** Create a high-quality environment in all new neighborhoods.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Require that new developments provide parks, trails, and/or walkways.	Consider adding trail or walkway performance standards for new developments.	Ongoing
Ensure that new residential development within forested or wooded tracts is designed to preserve the aesthetic and environmental benefits.		Ongoing

**GOAL 5:** Promote the rehabilitation and retention of neighborhoods.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Evaluate the overall condition of the City's housing resources and resolve identified issues.	Perform a housing study.	High
	Enforce and address code compliance issues and examine the feasibility of new regulatory programs to improve and protect the appearance of City neighborhoods.	Ongoing
Support educational efforts to provide homeowners and landlords with information on property maintenance and available resources.		Ongoing

**GOAL 1:** Strive to ensure that public outdoor spaces and buildings are accessible for people of all ages.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Add public green space in a manner that makes it conveniently accessible to all residents and prioritizes function and aesthetics.	Incorporate ADA compliance into designs to ensure they serve all residents.	Medium
Extend and improve trails that connect residents and visitors to the open spaces and natural resources.	Annually budget for trail maintenance and construction.	High
	Conduct an inventory of existing trail conditions to prioritize areas in need of repair or construction of new trails	High

**GOAL 2:** Use the city’s parks to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Develop a 10-year capital improvements plan for the city’s park and recreation system.	Gather data on existing system and build database.	High
Seek sponsors for specific enhancements to the city’s park system.	Identify needed enhancements and seek potential sponsors.	High
Search for opportunities to partner with entities to utilize the park system.	Identify wellness providers to encourage active living to improve community health.	High

**GOAL 3:** Connect people to public lands that contribute to the city’s identity and quality of life.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Promote public access to lakes within and around the city.	Enhance and maintain existing public access points.	High
Support recreational connections across private land.	Work with landowners to ensure coordination of transportation systems and regional trails.	Ongoing

**GOAL 1:** Preserve the remaining historical landscapes.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Protect the historic landscapes through appropriate land use designations.	Review conditions on variances, CUPs, and plats when appropriate to protect natural resources.	Ongoing

**GOAL 2:** Balance open space and environmental preservation with growth and development.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Form partnerships with applicable stakeholders around water quality, land preservation, and conservation.	Coordinate efforts with lake associations, MPCA, and SWCD to align implementation and program efforts.	High
	Ensure boat and river accesses have aquatic invasive species signage and print materials to educate the public on rules and best practices.	High
	Encourage the buffer program and other programs the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) offers. Explore opportunities where these programs could be implemented.	Medium
Encourage modern stormwater management techniques such as rain gardens, bioswales, and other low-impact development practices.	Incorporate green infrastructure into development and redevelopment projects when feasible.	High

**GOAL 1:** Develop a marketing plan for the community.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Build programs and events that celebrate the city's character and sense of place.	Use promotional videos and materials to market the city.	High
Leverage social media to share ongoing and upcoming events and market community attractions.	Use social media to share success stories and attractions.	High
	Develop a marketing campaign and utilize the #onlyinMN and highlight tourist attractions.	High
Advertise environmental and recreational elements of the city to attract residents and businesses.	Create a community branding initiative and market the city by investing in a campaign that builds on quality-of-life attributes that are available within the city.	High

**GOAL 2:** Cultivate a sense of community by offering a variety of gatherings and activities throughout the year.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Promote the year-round recreational activities that occur in and around the city.	Inventory all events and promote them on a community calendar on the city's website.	Ongoing
	Work with organizations, such as Five Wings Art Council and the Initiative Foundation, to learn about programming and funding opportunities.	High

**GOAL 3:** Develop a volunteer base that engages residents and makes an impact.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Enhance and promote volunteer opportunities for older adults.	Promote online volunteer platforms to match organizations with volunteers.	Ongoing
Work with other local agencies to create a centralized list of volunteer opportunities within the community.	Have volunteer opportunities submitted and a website updated weekly with opportunities and contact information.	Ongoing
	Create an "adopt the park" program	Medium

**GOAL 4:** Expand opportunities for public involvement and ensure an open and transparent local government.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Develop a system to communicate with community members about community information.		High
Seek community input in the decision-making process through outreach efforts.	Establish "coffee with council" or similar type of event once a month.	High

**GOAL 1:** Support small business growth and facilitate job creation.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Work with the business community by communicating with them about economic development efforts and seek their input/guidance on ways to advance goals and strategies.	Establish a regular meeting with business owners and work with the Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corp (BLAEDC) to advance business development in the city.	Medium
Support the local tourism industry and continue to attract regional spending and investment.	Develop a weekly/monthly summer activity that promotes economic activity in Emily.	High
Encourage an economic environment that supports and fosters business expansion in the community.	Work with current businesses to see how best to assist them with economic growth.	Medium
	Identify and map development opportunities.	High

**GOAL 2:** Continue to revitalize the downtown area, transforming it into the social and cultural hub of the community.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Reinforce and improve the operational conditions of existing commercial areas in the downtown area.		Medium
Create a vibrant commercial corridor that serves as the center of the community for activities and civic life.		Medium
Plan for and pursue redevelopment opportunities.	Concentrate on new infill development within key development areas of town.	High
Encourage and focus efforts to improve the aesthetics and walkability of downtown and neighborhoods.		High

**GOAL 3:** Promote the unique local assets of the city and market the community.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Utilize pop-up events that will foster creativity, facilitate collaboration, and attract residents to the downtown.	Promote farmers' markets or craft fair events in the downtown.	High
	Collaborate with area chambers of commerce to aid in downtown programming and area tourism.	High

**GOAL 1:** Minimize conflicts between traffic and recreational activities.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Designate and/or establish more off-road trails and walkways.	Support Crow Wing County's efforts to establish designated ATV and off-road vehicle recreation areas.	Ongoing
Develop traffic sign standards to be implemented citywide.	Work with the snowmobile and ATV clubs to develop signs and maps showing appropriate places for recreational vehicle uses.	High
Develop a plan with the ATV Club for designating ATV trails within the city.		High

**GOAL 2:** Work to improve safety within the transportation system.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Develop a partnership with MNDOT to allow for community input on all transportation system improvement projects.	Perform an intersection study to determine if a four way stop sign in downtown Emily is justified.	Medium
	Widen the shoulders of State Highway 6 north of downtown Emily to provide a pedestrian corridor running parallel to the highway.	Medium
	Install traffic-calming signage on city streets to reduce speeds and increase safety.	Medium
Add shoulders to the county roads for bicyclists and walkers.	Identify priority areas for installation and coordinate with Crow Wing County on a future road project.	Medium
Create a road standard for the city.	Establish crosswalks in the downtown area.	Medium
	Install other safety devices to make walking and cycling in the downtown safer and more enjoyable.	Medium
	Explore opportunities for sidewalks with vertical vegetation to act as a traffic buffer and vertical element to calm traffic.	Medium
	Re-examine road standards to ensure that they fit with the context of the neighborhood.	Medium
Ensure that streets, intersections, and sidewalks are well-maintained and well-lit.	Conduct a pavement management study and plan.	Medium

**GOAL 3:** Improve the city's roads with enhanced biking and walking opportunities.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Encourage nonmotorized access to businesses and parks.	Identify priority areas for installation of bike paths.	Medium
	Improve the pedestrian environment by adding signage, lighting, boulevard trees, and shade structures.	Medium
Pursue funding for nonmotorized transportation projects.	Work with Statewide Health Improvement Program and BikeMN on funding opportunities.	Low
	Explore regional transportation funding opportunities.	Low
Improve local pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and parking.	As future street projects are constructed, consider upgrading street lighting to pedestrian-oriented lighting.	Low

**GOAL 4:** Form partnerships to develop transit options.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Determine the transit service needs in the community.	Coordinate with Crow Wing County Transit and other transit service providers.	Medium
	Collect data about served, underserved, and unserved communities.	Medium

**GOAL 1:** Provide community facilities to meet the health, safety, education, and leisure needs of area residents.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Improve the accessibility of and amenities available in indoor and outdoor spaces.	Incorporate ADA compliance into designs to ensure they serve all residents.	Ongoing
	Incorporate an age-friendly focus into new projects or improvements.	Ongoing
	Create programs and policies for designing outdoor spaces and buildings that support utilization by residents and visitors.	Ongoing
Ensure available funds to construct, rehabilitate, and maintain the facilities necessary for delivery of public services.	Evaluate the city's capital improvement plan annually to make sure funding is set aside for these activities.	Ongoing

**GOAL 2:** Manage existing and future city parks in a manner that maximizes enjoyment for all residents and visitors by providing a broad range of both active and passive recreational opportunities.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Investigate ways to add walking, biking and cross-country ski trails, etc. to public lands within the city.	Hold a public meeting to gather input from the public on their ideas for the management of public lands. Invite public land managers from the county and DNR to participate in the meeting.	Low

**GOAL 3:** Communicate and share information through a variety of methods.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Identify the preferred communication methods of different generations within the community.	Review community survey data to rank preferences of information delivery.	Medium
Use technology and electronic means to deliver services and provide information to citizens and businesses.	Utilize the city's websites and social media pages to increase local programming, community connection, and involvement.	Ongoing

**GOAL 1:** Encourage efficient use of existing infrastructure investment and protection of the environment with future development.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Prepare a long-term capital maintenance plan that accounts for all the infrastructure (sewer and roads) currently maintained by the city.	Inventory all assets currently maintained by the city.	Ongoing
Limit any new investments in infrastructure unless they have a sound financial business case, including long term maintenance.		High
Review the city's land use and development regulations to encourage growth in areas with existing infrastructure.	Develop a utility overlay district that would provide for increased development density where sanitary sewer service currently exists.	Ongoing

**GOAL 2:** Utilize best management practices (BMP's) to reduce surface water runoff and control sediments and erosion to protect water quality.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
The city shall require the stormwater management system to comply with all applicable federal, state, and regional regulations and programs.		Ongoing

**GOAL 3:** Provide reliable infrastructure for existing and future development opportunities.

Strategy	Action item	Priority
Promote and support private/public partnerships that fund improved high-speed internet access throughout the region.		Ongoing
Plan new development in proximity to similar existing uses to maximize the efficiency of public services and to protect and reinforce existing land uses, when practical.		Ongoing

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