

## Chapter 2: The Community

### Introduction / Current Conditions:

The City of Isanti has gone through significant change since the 2007 Comprehensive Plan was completed. The plan at that time recognized that residential growth was slowing, but it did not anticipate the Great Recession. The Great Recession effectively stopped residential growth and placed the City in a protective mode, as many single family homes were vacated as a result of foreclosures. At the height of the foreclosure crisis in April, 2010, 171 homes representing 12% of the owner occupied housing stock were at some point in the foreclosure process. Since that time, those homes have been re-sold to new owners and substantial residential growth has returned to the City. Most of the residential lots that were developed in the early 2000's that were still vacant after the Great Recession, have been built on. Development of new residential subdivisions is taking place to add lots. Commercial and industrial development has continued, providing the City with new amenities (ex. Medical Clinic) to serve the growing City and employment opportunities for residents.

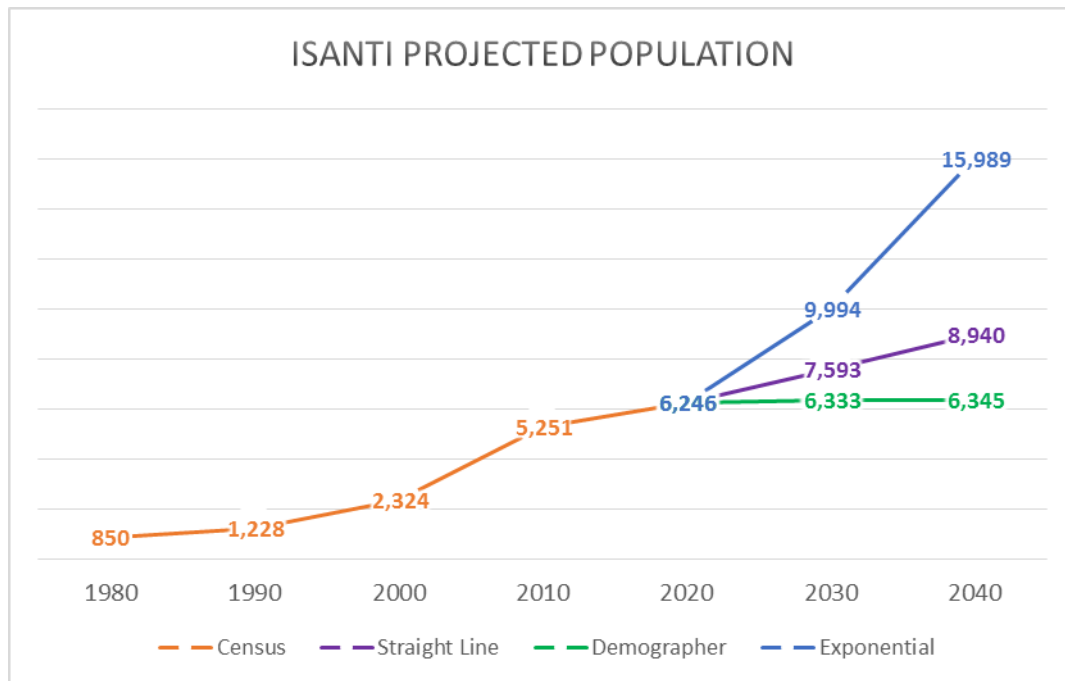
This Chapter focuses on existing conditions and trends with population and households. These projections are used as the basis for comprehensive plan elements to ensure the validity of the plan. The Chapter describes those living in Isanti now and those projected to be living in the City in 2030 through the use of demographics and research. This Chapter also provides updated information on City facilities that serve residents and finishes with a review of intergovernmental relationships that affect the City of Isanti.

### Population Trends:

A review of past populations and future projections summarize what has occurred and what range of growth can be expected for the City of Isanti. In order to get accurate projections, research had to be undertaken to review census and demographic information, coupled with building permit and registered voter numbers. Based on this research, population projections can be made through the next 10 years and beyond.

Below is Figure 2-1, displaying the projected population for the City through 2040. The graph shows the State Demographer's estimates, a straight-line projection, which is a projection based on the average number of people added per decade and a line showing exponential growth, which is based on the percentage of growth per decade, both since 1980.

Figure 2-1



The State Demographer has projected lower growth for the City of Isanti, although the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area is projected to continue fast pace growth, with an increasing demand for housing. Staff believes that the more realistic projection of population is near the straight line projection. The variable will be household size, which is expected to move downward. As with any projection, the number should be updated as new population data becomes available.

### Household Trends:

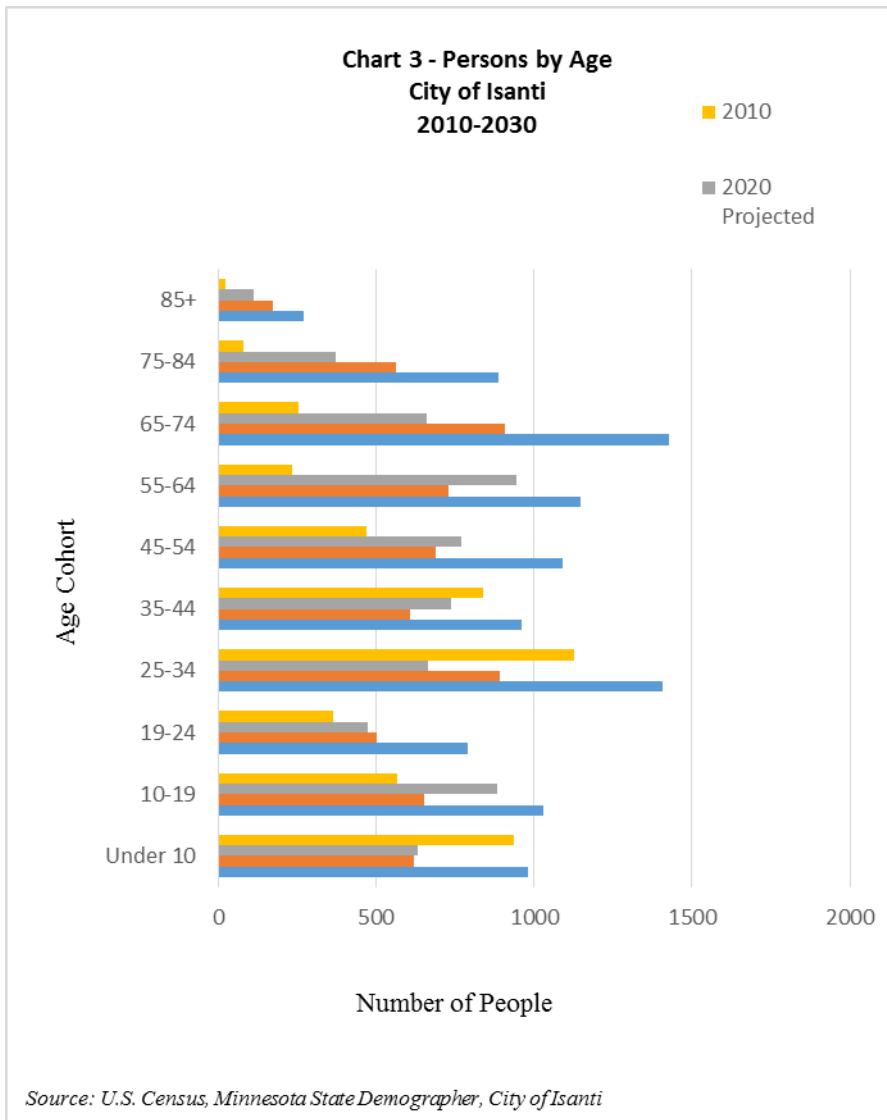
Household size is tied to changing population groups over time, as well as the availability of suitable housing. With Isanti's proximity to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area Highway 65 access, and lower housing prices, make Isanti is a desirable place for young families. This reflects in current higher than average household size. Over time those household sizes will decrease, as there will be an increasing Senior population in the City. The availability of adequate housing for growing families and Seniors will also play a role in ultimate household size. The table below shows our projected range for Persons Per Household in the next 10 years.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Persons Per Household</u>
2005	2.83	1,608
2010	2.79	1,882
2015	2.78	1,977
2020	2.77	2,255
2030 low	2.45	2,585
2030 mid	2.45	3,099
2030 high	2.45	4,079

Using the mid-range forecast, Isanti would gain an average of 84 households per year for the next 10 years.

### Population by Age:

A review of population group ages shows the trend of Isanti's population over time. Below is Figure 2-2 which displays the population age group by age and years. As you see in the blue lines, for the next 10 years, Isanti is projected to retain a large cohort of age grouping that reflects younger families and an increasing Senior population. The increased Senior population reflects the aging of baby boomers. It also reflects in-migration of Seniors to Isanti from rural areas, as they prefer a small town environment yet desire to be closer to their families in the metro area. The graph also reflects the aging of the millennial generation. The development of additional "step-up housing" for millennials will be needed to retain those populations in the City. Additionally, improvement and maintenance of community facilities, such as parks and recreational facilities, will be needed to attract and retain families in Isanti.



### Other Demographic Characteristics:

As Isanti is projected to continue its growth, the City will also become more diverse. Their needs and the emphasis to have an inclusive community should be included in policy considerations. In 2000, the City of Isanti was 97% percent white. That number has decreased to 94.7% in 2018. Hispanics make up the next highest percentage of population (3.2%), followed by those identifying as two or more races (2.3%).

### Goals/Strategies:

Several community goals are listed in Chapter 1 that reflect the changing population and demographics in Isanti. Consideration of the goals will help to build a unique and desirable community to live in and assist in meeting the needs of a changing citizenship. Listed below are those that correlate to the demographic change in the City.

- Recognize the assets of citizens of all ages, incomes, faiths and cultural heritages.
- Continue to find ways to educate the public on cultural, economic, faith, age-based and other diversity issues.
- Encourage increased interaction and communication between citizens of all ages, faiths, cultural heritages and incomes.

### Community Facilities:

The Community Facilities section of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan overviewed public buildings, their functions and services, private and public schools, churches and private services in the City. As the City grows, these facilities need to be reviewed periodically to evaluate the need for expansion or renovations to serve the needs of new residents. A review of the City's demographics over time will also assist in determining if changing needs warrant changes in City services and facilities. This Comprehensive Plan Update will focus on the City's facilities, their current status and what may be required during this planning time period.

### City Hall

Isanti City Hall is located at 110 First Avenue NW and was constructed in 2005. It has a large City Council Chambers that is used for city meetings and related events. The City Offices were constructed to be internally expanded to meet the needs of a growing City. To meet new needs the parking area was expanded in 2014 to include public parking behind City Hall and to connect to an upgraded parking lot at the Isanti Community Center. From a facilities planning standpoint, the existing building should be adequate to house City administrative staff through 2030.

### Community Center

The Isanti Community Center continues to serve as a location for City programs, civic organizations and private events. Activities range from City Movie Nights in the fall/winter, meeting space for service club and youth organizations, to daily Senior Dining. The facility is highly utilized by the community. The community center was renovated in 2014, with interior, building and parking lot upgrades. As those improvements and the building continues to age, capital improvement planning should be done for an needed repairs, with consideration of a future expansion or a new facility. This building, as well as future site land needs, should be evaluated and included in future facility planning.

### Isanti Indoor Arena

The Isanti Indoor Arena was constructed in 2015 and is the home of Rum River BMX. The arena is 73,000 sq. feet in size and developed for bicycle motocross racing. This facility was built by the City based on a partnership with Rum River BMX, which has a long term use lease with the City. It is the premier enclosed bicycle motocross facility in the State. The facility also contains park restrooms for the adjacent Bluebird Park and an ice skating warming facility for the City pleasure rink.

### Public Safety Building

The Isanti Police Department and Isanti Fire District share this building. The Isanti Fire District has a lease with the City for their space, and utilizes it for District administrative offices and housing of emergency response apparatus and vehicles. The Police Department moved into the facility in 2006, with a newly remodeled main staff room and office space. The current Police Department space, while adequate for current operations, is fully used by the current staff. The building itself, constructed in 1982, is structurally sound but is aging with maintenance needs. This building should also be included in future facility planning.

### Public Works Maintenance Building

This building houses the Public Works Department that provides a myriad of services to the City, from snow removal, parks and street maintenance, to utilities that are not located elsewhere. The primary building is over 20 years of age and is in good condition. As operations have expanded and more equipment added; interior renovations have been made to make the building more functional. Also, the need for more heated and cold storage has been planned for and a new building will be constructed on site within the time period of this comprehensive plan update. This building is also planned to serve off-site storage needs for the Police Department.

### Utility Treatment Plants

The City's sewage treatment plant was originally constructed in 1997. It is a combination mechanical and aerated pond facility, and has been recently updated through consolidation of primary treatment operations at the main plant site. While it is anticipated that the capacity of the current plant is adequate for near term needs, the increasing standards for treated water discharge in the Rum River, and potential need for land currently used for treatment ponds for future industrial use are leading to more plant upgrades and consolidation of the facility in a smaller site. That will require upgrading the treatment facility to a full mechanical plant. That project is being planned for within the time period of this comprehensive plan update.

The City's water treatment plant, built in 2009, provides filtration and processing for City water to meet State standards. The facility has had some improvements since it began operations. The plant should provide adequate finished water production for this planning time period. However, as the City expands east and south the need for water pressure and storage may prompt the need for a new water tower. Engineering studies will need to be done to provide guidance on placement of a new water tower.

### Schools in Isanti

Schools included in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan included: Isanti Primary School, Isanti Intermediate School and Isanti Middle School. All are facilities of the Cambridge-Isanti School District. Since that plan was prepared, a facility addition/performance area was added at the Isanti Middle School, internal improvements were made at the Isanti Primary School and parking areas have been modified to improve traffic flow and utilization at all three schools. No additional new District facilities have been developed in Isanti.

### New Schools

#### Arts & Science Academy

The Arts & Science Academy, a K-8 educational facility, was founded at 903 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Court NE in 2014 with 12 classroom. Since then, the Academy added a separate Middle School which includes both classrooms and a combination cafeteria/gymnasium at 1005 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE which opened in 2017. The schools have approximately 360 students. The student teacher ratio is 12 to 1. The Academy partnered with the City of Isanti in development of Academy Park located at 901 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Court NE, which serves the school when in session and is a public park facility for the neighborhood.

### St. Scholastica HSC Academy

St. Scholastica Academy is a private Catholic school with grades 1-12, located at 207 Whiskey Road NW. It opened in 2016 and has approximately 45 students with a student teacher ratio of 8-1. The Academy utilizes classrooms and cafeteria facilities located in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church.

### Churches

Churches in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan included: Elim Baptist, Faith Lutheran, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and Harvest Christian Evangelical. Since then Elim Baptist has become New Hope Community Church. Harvest Christian Evangelical has moved and their facility has been re-opened as The Journey New Life Church.

### Goals/Strategies:

After a review of City facilities and the 2007 plan regarding other community facilities, the following goals/strategies from Chapter One are included here for additional consideration in this planning time period.

- Consider facility planning for future City facility needs. Identify sites for future facility locations
- Create conceptual future master plans for planned growth areas that will identify, map and preserve future utility corridors.

### Intergovernmental Organizations and Relationships

As recognized in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan, City boundaries will continue to grow and change as new residential and commercial/industrial development extends to areas beyond the present corporate boundaries. The City recently completed annexation of a number of residential parcels that were surrounded by City boundaries. It is anticipated that future annexations to the City will be petitioned by their property owners at the time of development. Coordination of such annexations and planning with Township and County officials would be optimal. The City has an orderly annexation agreement with Isanti Township for certain property in the existing Tier 1 zoning area. The City will be moving beyond the Tier 1 area in the future so joint planning with the County and Township is not only desired, but necessary. Expansion of the Tier 1 area should be explored.

Participation with Isanti County, Isanti Cities and the Cambridge-Isanti School District in the Isanti County Initiative on Collaboration, Leadership and Efficiency (ICICLE) organization may also assist with joint development planning. Communication and



relationships will assist in cohesive planning and development in future years. Opportunities for shared services should also be reviewed and considered if they would improve city services to the citizens of Isanti

#### Goals/Strategies:

The following goals/strategies should be considered in light of the information in this Chapter:

- Work with adjacent Townships, municipalities and the County to ensure that planning goals, objectives and policies are understood and accepted.
- Communicate and educate local officials regarding City development projects that affect adjacent townships, municipalities and the County.
- Work with adjacent local governments to identify areas where collaboration and consolidation could reduce overall cost and increase the effectiveness of local government.