



PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

City of Brainerd, Minnesota
City Hall, 501 Laurel Street, Council Chambers
Wednesday, July 15, 2026 @ 5:00 PM

The public is invited to attend these meetings in person.

Attend by Phone: 1-844-992-4726 Meeting Access Code: 888 625 714#

Per MN Statutes 13D.02 Subd 1 Commissioners may participate by interactive technology.

Meetings are broadcast on CTC ch 8, Charter ch 181, YouTube, AppleTV, Roku, and Amazon FireTV

1. **Call To Order**

2. **Roll Call**

___ M. Duval ___ J. Kramer ___ J. Grecula ___ D. Peterson ___ T. Erickson ___ D. Gorham ___
Vacant

3. **Pledge of Allegiance**

4. **New Business**

A. **Comprehensive Plan Update - Bolton & Menk Presentation**

5. **Adjourn**

Visit the City's Website at www.brainerdmn.gov

MISSION

"Provide high quality, cost effective public services and leadership in creating a sustainable city"

MEMO



TO: Planning Commission

FROM: James Kramvik, Community Development Director

DATE: July 15th, 2026

RE: Comprehensive Plan Update

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this 2026 update is to enhance the current Comprehensive Plan: align with current community goals and ensure they are being properly implemented while increasing the threshold in which a mandatory EAW is required for residential development.

Bolton & Menk continue to make progress on the comprehensive plan and will update the Planning Commission on July 15th prior to the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting. The presentation will consist of the following items for the Planning Commission to review and comment on:

- 1) Planning Commission Survey Results
- 2) Public Survey Results
- 3) Updated Demographics
- 4) Map Updates
- 5) Mobility Chapter Update
- 6) Infrastructure Updates
- 7) Implementation Plan



**BOLTON
& MENK**

Real People. Real Solutions.

Brainerd Comp Plan Update

Planning Commission & City Council Workshop

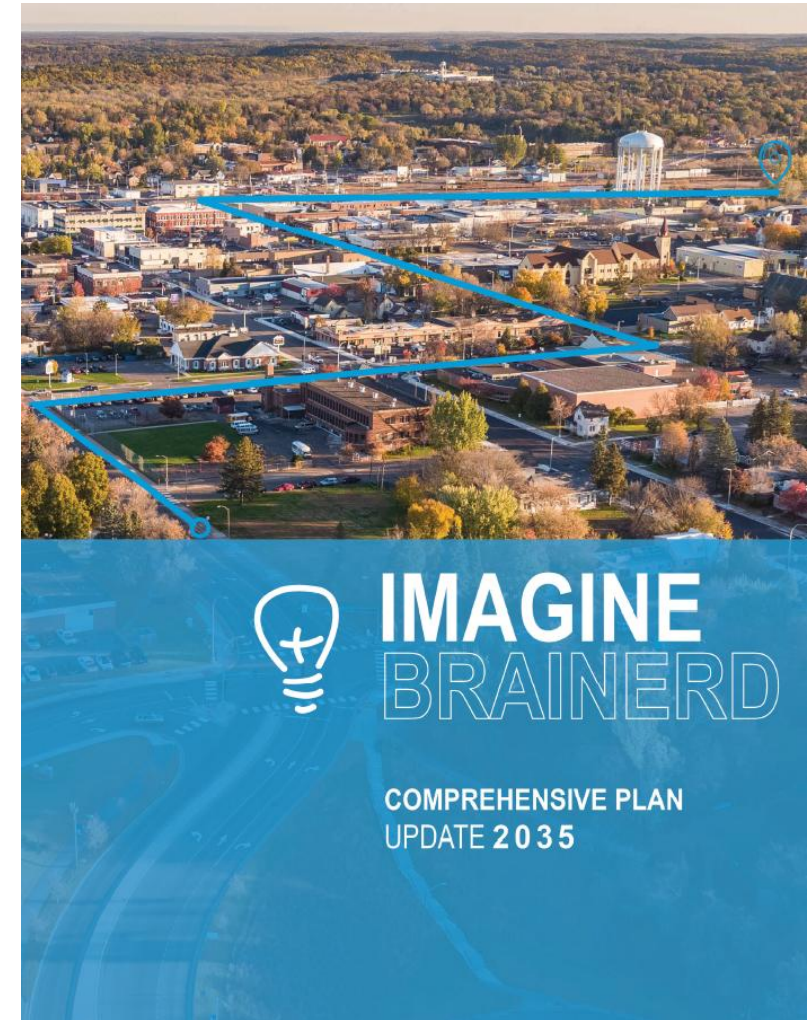
July 15, 2026

Brainerd Comp Plan Update

A comprehensive plan helps the City support thoughtful growth, guide new development, and strengthen infrastructure planning.

The purpose of Brainerd's 2026 Comp Plan Update is to:

- update community data
- increase the EAW threshold for housing development
- refresh the implementation plan



What We've Heard – Planning Commission

- Reorganize and consolidate goals and policies
- Add policies about childcare and industrial development
- Maintain goals around pedestrian and bicycle facilities as part of the Mobility Chapter is critical
- Celebrate our wins

Chapter	Number	Goal or Policy	Completed	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
NR	2.1	GOAL 1: Protect and preserve our waterways, wetlands, and wooded areas, and identify threats to native species within and around the city.		X	X	
NR	2.1.1	Identify corridors along the Mississippi River and other streams or wetlands that could accommodate low-impact developments, such as trails or greenspaces, in order to preserve these natural resources for future generations.		XXX	X	XX
NR	2.1.2	Utilize greenways to connect residents and neighborhoods to open spaces and natural areas.		XXX		XX
NR	2.1.3	Preserve natural open spaces for habitat and scenic recreational qualities of the city.	XX	XX		X
NR	2.1.4	Collaborate with all layers of government on the restoration and management of natural resources	X	X		XXX
NR	2.2	GOAL 2: Increase access to open space.		X		X
NR	2.2.1	In concert with surrounding communities and county government, become a world-class destination by connecting trails, the Mississippi River, history, and culture.		X	X	XXX
NR	2.2.2	Engage in partnerships with local stakeholders and champions that build on the value of the natural resource system.		X	XXX	XX
NR	2.2.3	Develop education and outreach programs that teach residents the importance of preserving our natural resources.		XX	X	XX
NR	2.3	GOAL 3: Comply with environmental regulation requirements in all City codes, policies, and practices.				
NR	2.3.1	Update and maintain the Shoreland, Floodplain, and Mississippi Headwaters Ordinances.				
NR	2.3.2	Update and maintain the policies and procedures related to environmental review for new developments, including the Comprehensive Plan.				



What We've Heard – Public Priorities

- Protect and preserve our waterways, wetlands, and wooded areas, and identify threats to native species within and around the city (NR)
- Support and invest in incremental enhancements of quality of life (LU)
- Enliven the community through intentional community design (CC)
- Ensure quality living conditions for all residents (H)*
 - *Planning Commission priority ranks “Provide a diverse mix of housing choices...” higher*



What We've Heard – Public Priorities

- Support our workforce and help them thrive (ED)
 - *Planning Commission priority ranks “Support infill and redevelopment...” higher*
- Commit to creating remarkable bike and pedestrian connections from neighborhoods to the downtown that are safe, efficient, and aesthetically pleasing (M)
- Maintain a quality parks system that meets the recreational needs of a variety of users (P&R)



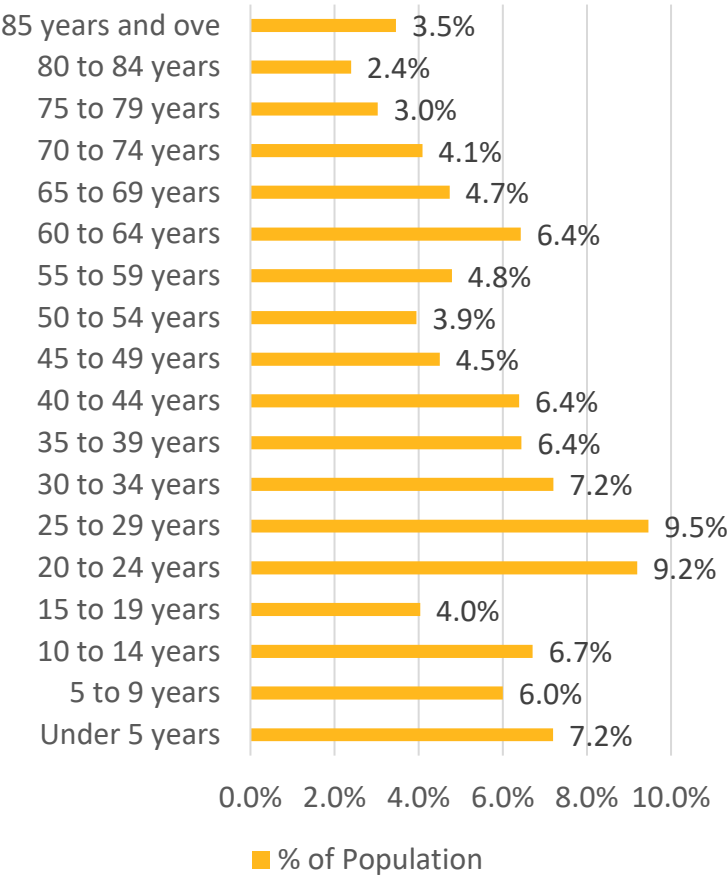
What We've Heard – Public Priorities

- Provide quality water, power, and wastewater systems that support new and existing development and redevelopment while being adaptive to change (F&I)
- Protect and provide for the safety of residents and visitors (PS)



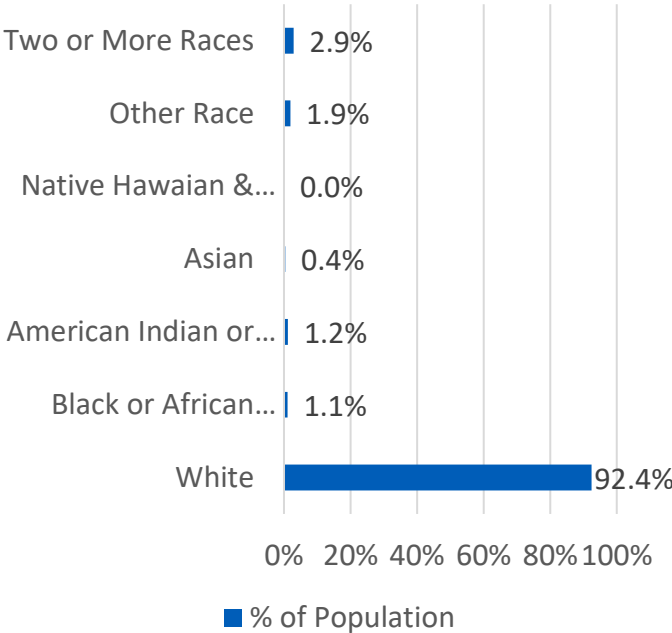
Existing Conditions Update

Age Distribution



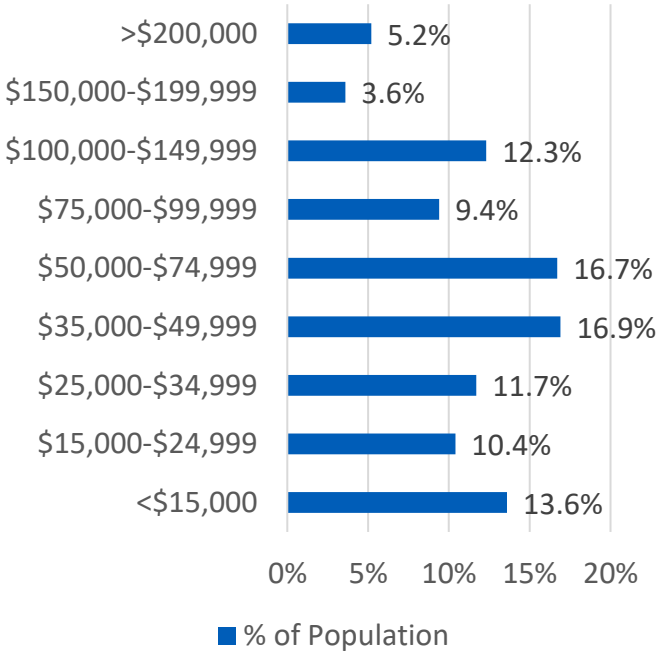
American Community Survey 2024

Race



American Community Survey 2024

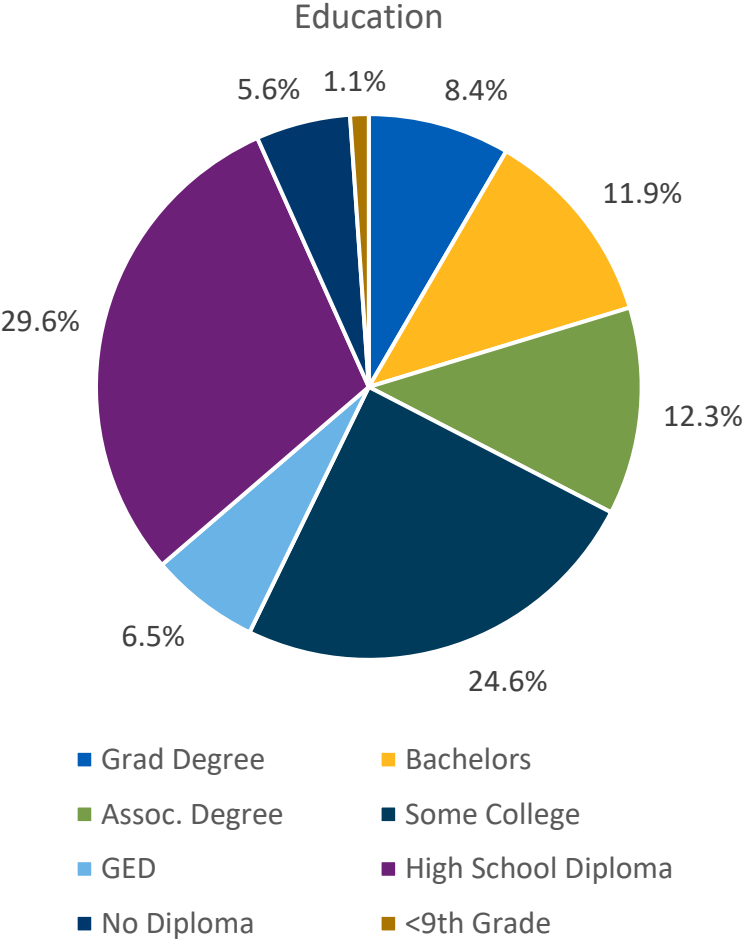
Household Income



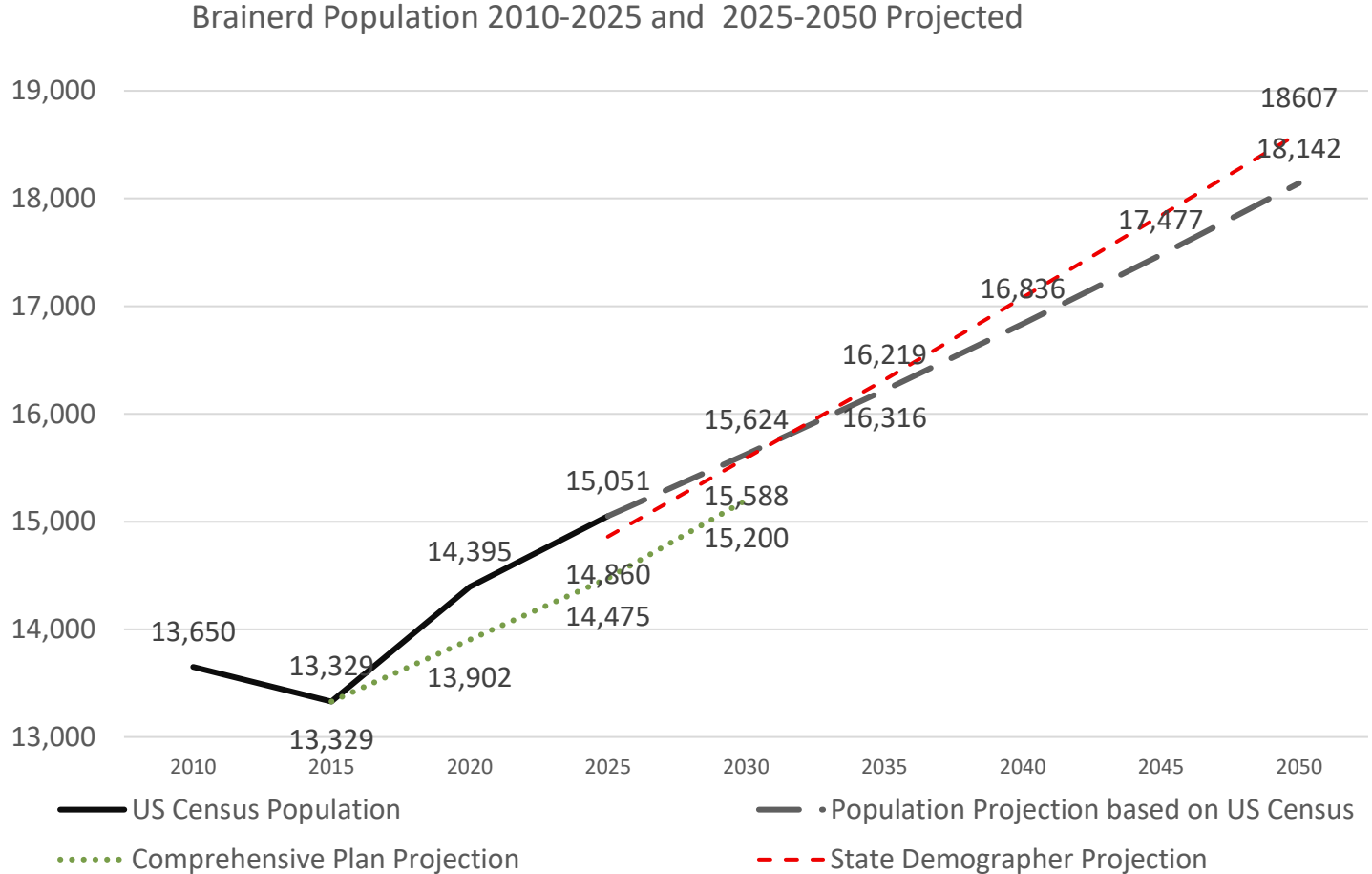
American Community Survey 2024



Existing Conditions Update



American Community Survey 2024



US Census, Comprehensive Plan 2021, and MN DEED State Demographer



Minnesota Rules 4410.4300 Subp. 19.

Minnesota Rules 4410.4300 identify mandatory Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) thresholds.

A city outside of the seven-county metro may **increase their threshold** for residential development if they file certification of a **qualified comprehensive plan** with the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB).

A comprehensive plan must meet all requirements of these rules:

- land use plan
- transportation plan*
- sewage collection system policy plan*
- capital improvement plan for public facilities
- implementation plan*

**Workshop focus*



Land Use Chapter Update

EQB Certification Criteria

“...(1) a land use plan designating the **existing and proposed** location, intensity, and extent of use of land and water for residential, industrial, agricultural, and other public and private purposes;...”

Land Use Chapter Update

Input: Land Use Categories Chart and Narrative – Is there a preference for one or both?

Future Land Use Categories

The following categories introduce the intent behind the various future land use districts. These categories describe the general use, character, form, and offer a variety of descriptions that will influence policy direction for future zoning action, infill development strategies, infrastructure investment, and future planning studies.

CATEGORY	OVERVIEW	DENSITY
Development Reserve	This district takes an active step in preserving land from rapid development. This land use is the lowest density allowed within the community and at the time of annexation or development has limited street connection and on-site septic.	3-4 du/acre <i>Joint Board approved</i>
Low- to Medium-Density Residential	This category contains a blend of low- to medium-density with a mixture of larger to smaller lots to facilitate a variety of housing needs and development. Traditional neighborhoods have grid-like streets, whereas more suburban style residential developments have many layouts and located at the fringe of the community.	4-9 du/acre
Medium- to High-Density Residential	Contains a mixture of medium to high-density residential that are meant to accommodate a variety of housing types and create walkable neighborhoods.	10-20+ du/acre
Mixed Residential	The intent is to promote neighborhoods with a variety of housing types and densities within a single development; not dominated by any singular type.	4-12 du/acre
Mixed Commercial Residential	An intermediate district between Gateway District and Neighborhood Mix. Meant to encourage a blend of medium to high density housing types and commercial uses; where the purpose is focused on walkability and deters auto-oriented commercial uses. Business uses will support the daily needs of residents while providing services to the broader community.	9-20+ du/acre
Neighborhood Mix	This category includes a mix of low intensity business uses and a range of residential densities. Development is comprised of small areas with a mix of uses that are located adjacent to or within residential neighborhoods to provide such amenities in a walkable context.	9-20+ du/acre
Downtown	The intent is to emphasize the core of social, civic, and cultural life in the city. This classification is meant to be a unique, historic, mixed-use district. This district is a place of exploration of local food, culture, history, and a place to live and work.	-



Development Reserve (DR)

3-4 dwelling units per acre or limited to Joint Powers Board

The purpose of this category is to protect currently undeveloped land from rapid growth prior to the availability of urban services. This category should include the lowest density allowed in the city. Secondary uses could include agricultural uses until services are available, forestry, and recreation.



Low- to Medium-Density Residential (LMR)

4-9 dwelling units per acre

This category provides for housing options that include one and two-family dwelling options, such as duplexes (stacked and side-by-side), twin homes, town houses, attached and detached single family dwellings. Low- to medium-density residential could include both older neighborhoods with smaller lots found within the city as well as large, new subdivisions within the city and planned growth areas.



Map Updates

Existing Zoning

Future Land Use

Future Growth Areas**

Parks & Trails*

Shoreland and Floodplains*

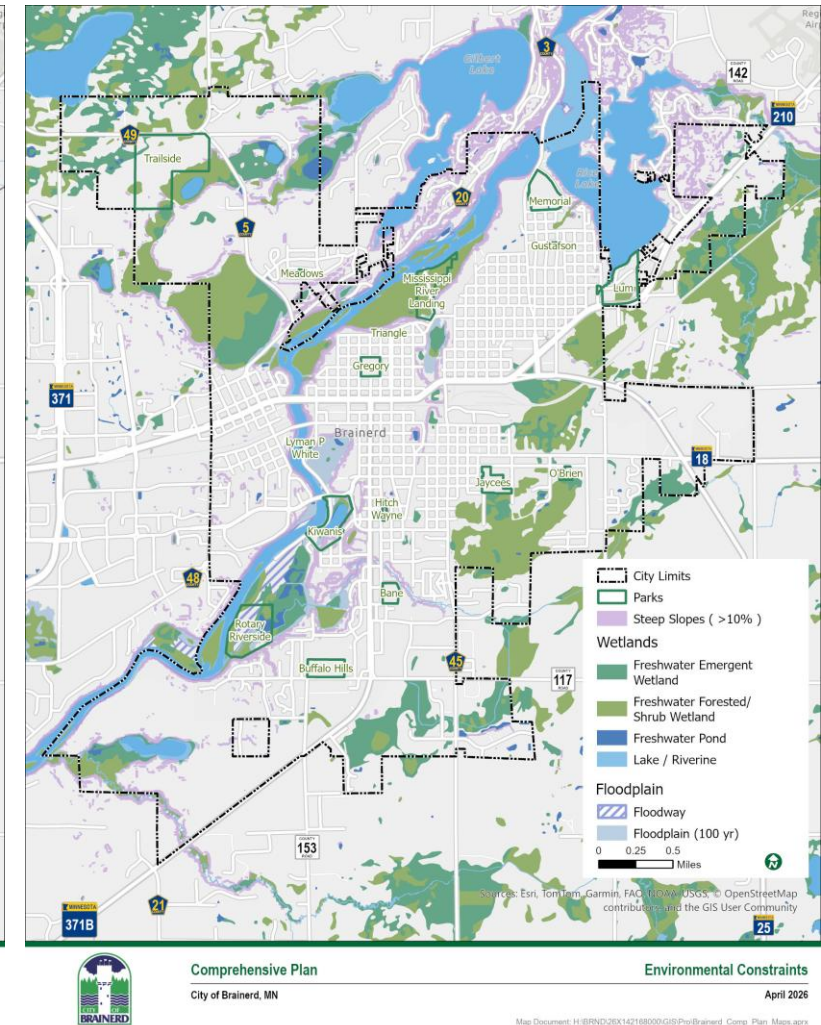
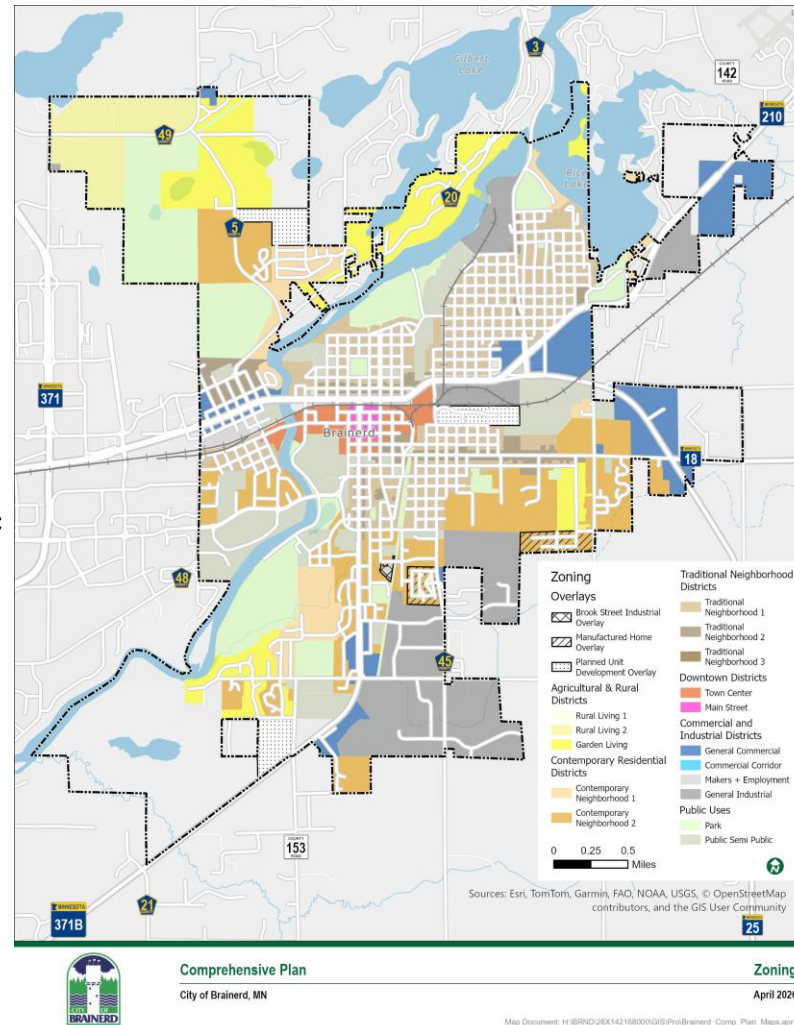
Transportation*

Water System*

Wastewater System*

*New

**No Update



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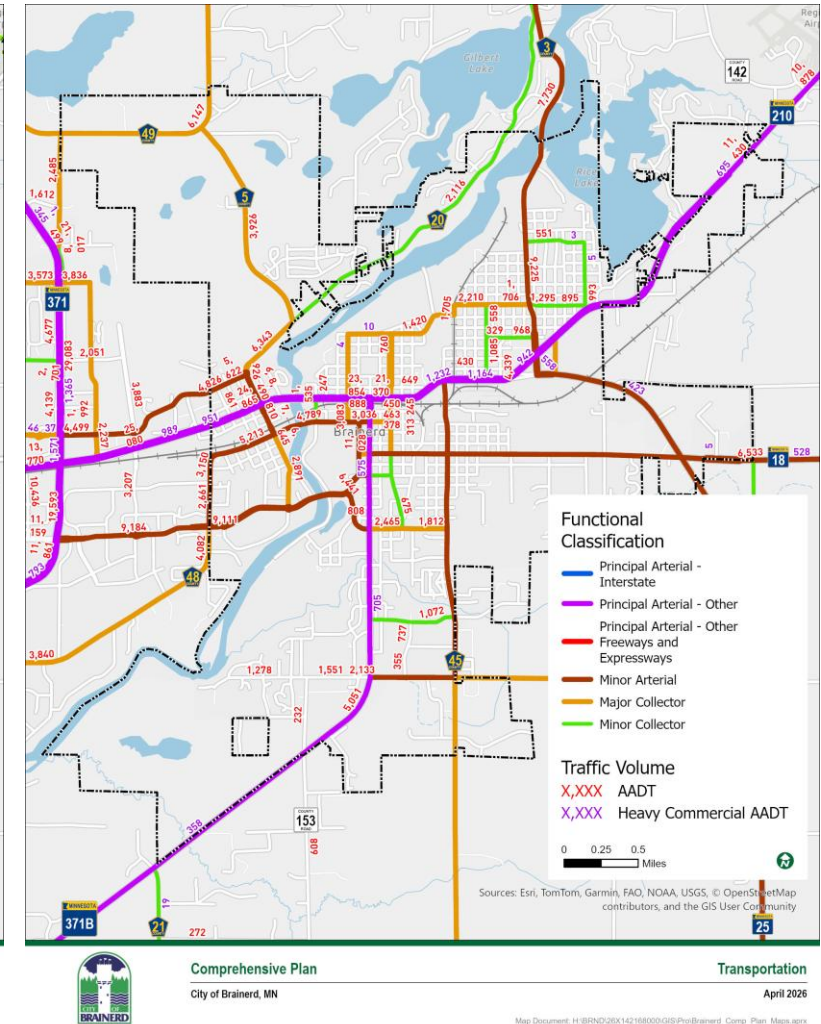
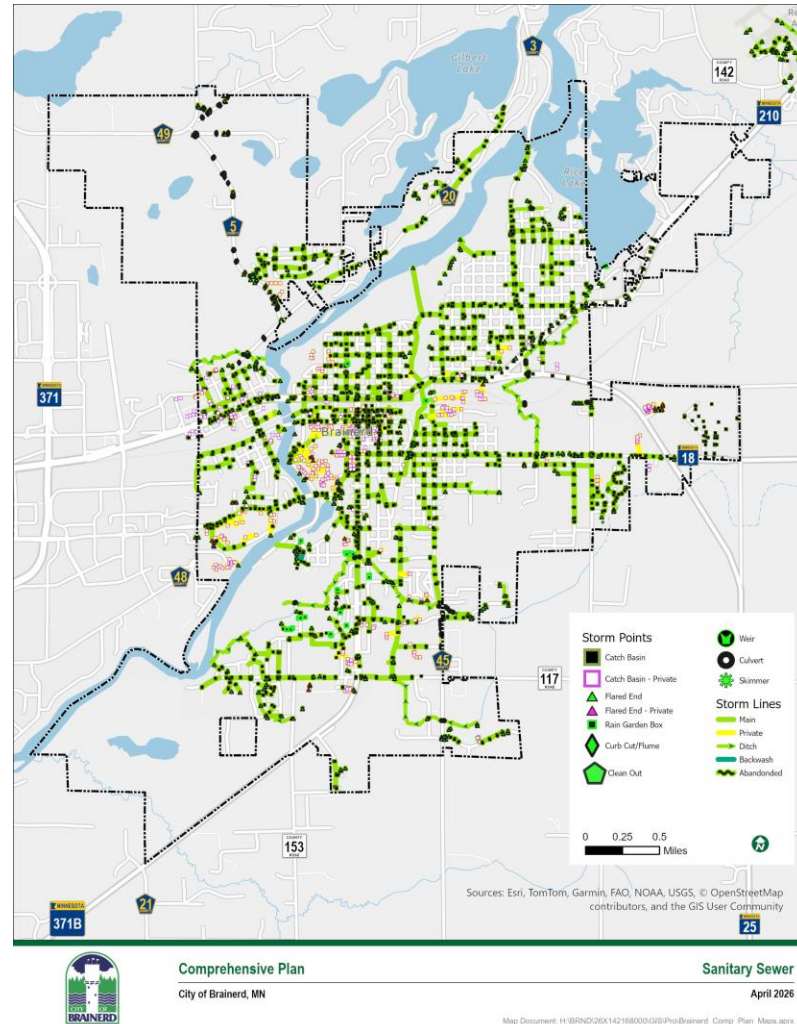
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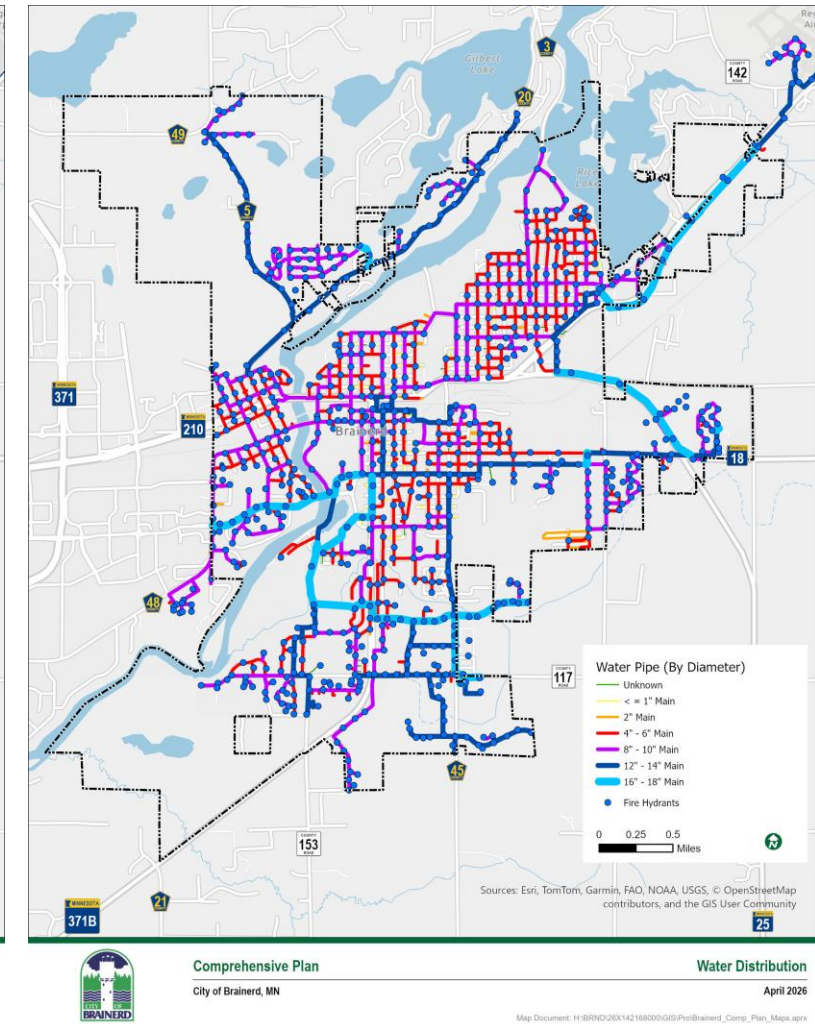
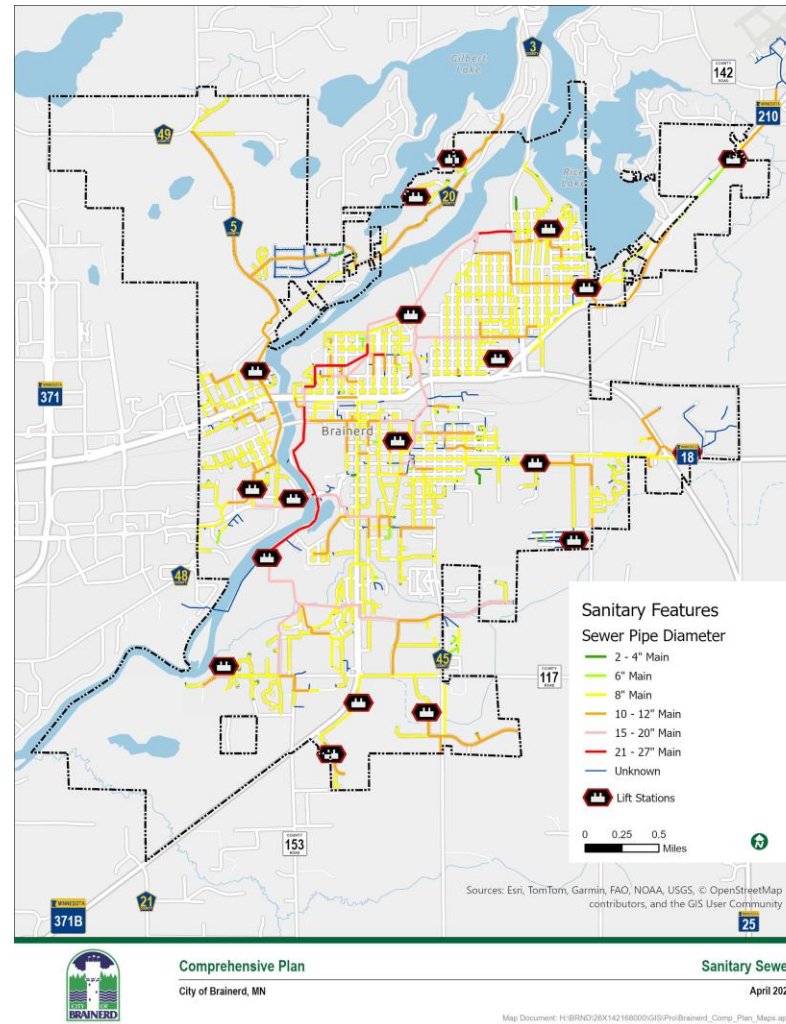
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Map Updates

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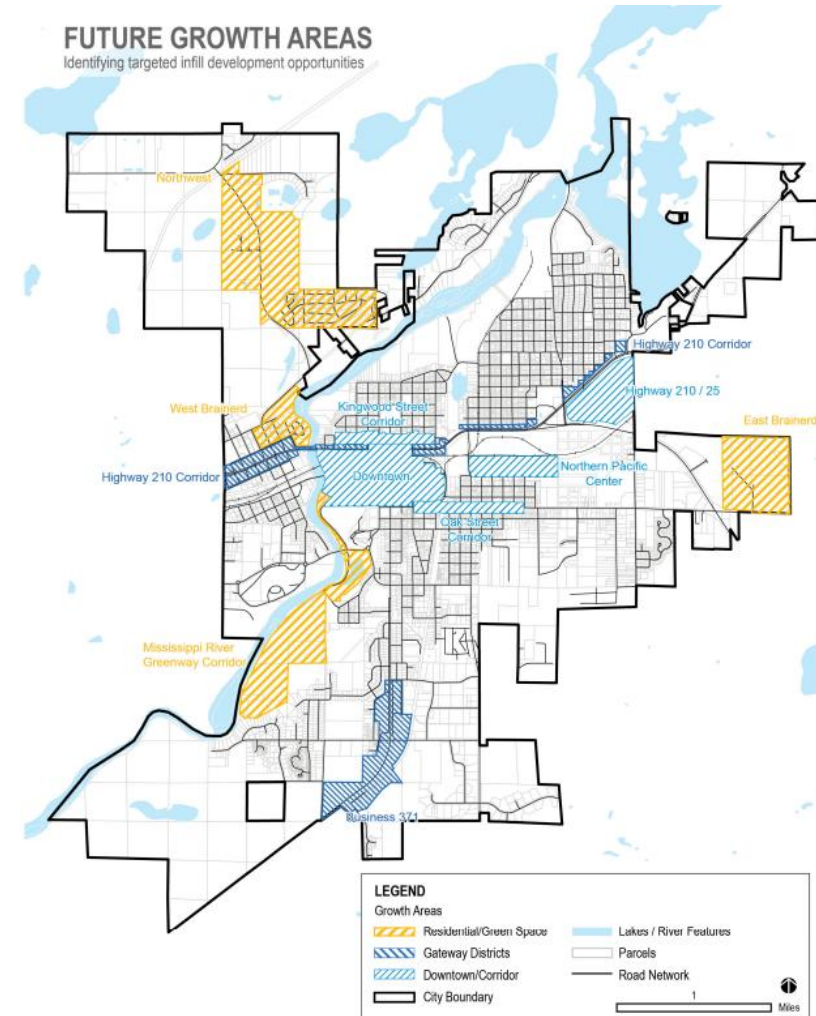
Transportation*

Water System*

Wastewater System*

*New

**No Update



Mobility Chapter Update

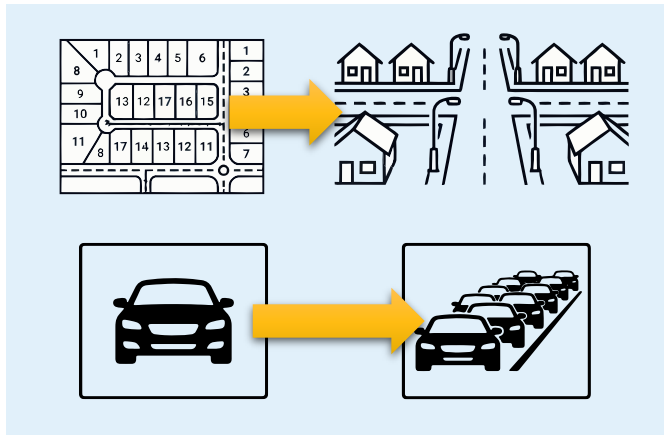
EQB Certification Criteria

“...(2) a transportation plan describing, designating, and scheduling the location, extent, function, and capacity of **existing and proposed** local public and private transportation facilities and services;...”

Mobility Chapter Update

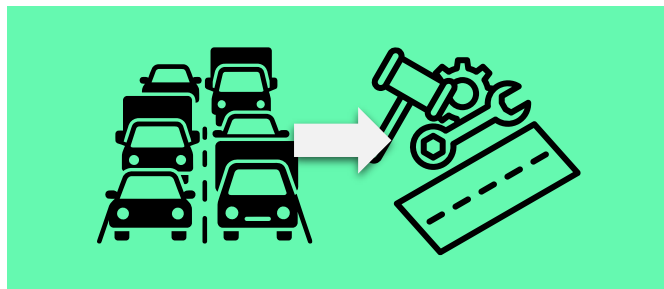
Critical Path: EQB Certification Criteria

This entails:



Basic relationship between growth potential and infrastructure needs

- *Methodology based on travel demand modeling and traffic analysis*
- *Adapted to small-area and corridor focus to understand growth at a more nuanced level*

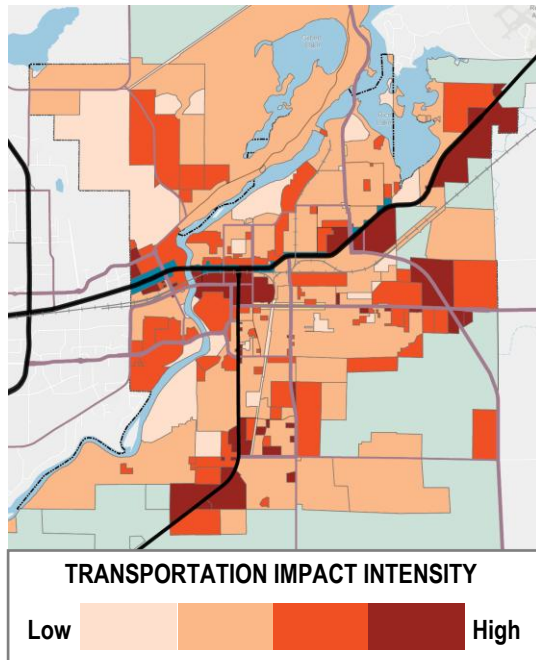


Identifying the future system capacity gaps and where investment could be needed

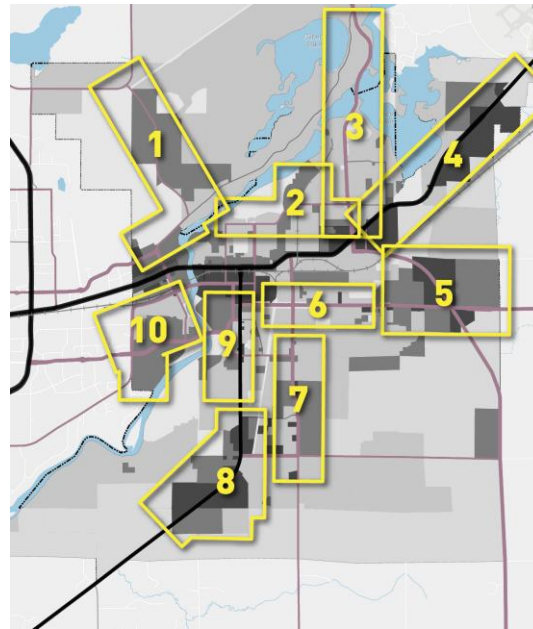
- *Investments primarily for system capacity, but could also emphasize other areas in policy decision-making*

Mobility Chapter Update

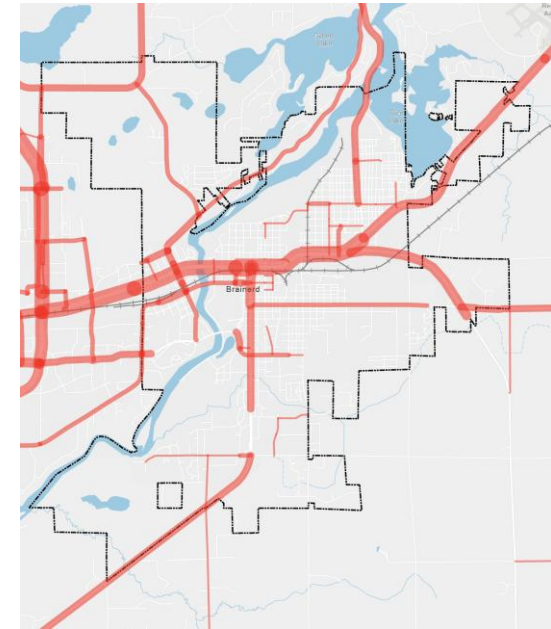
Study and Analysis Methodology



Estimate future travel impacts and needs



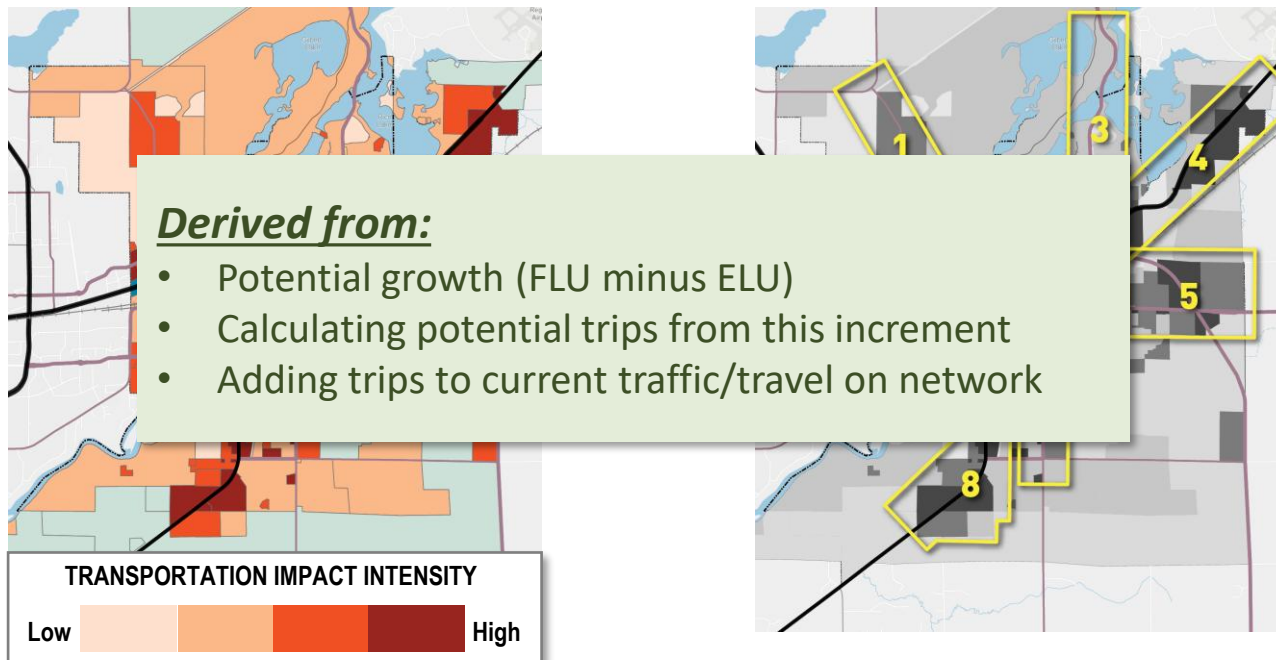
Assign these to transportation network



Prioritize need and investment areas

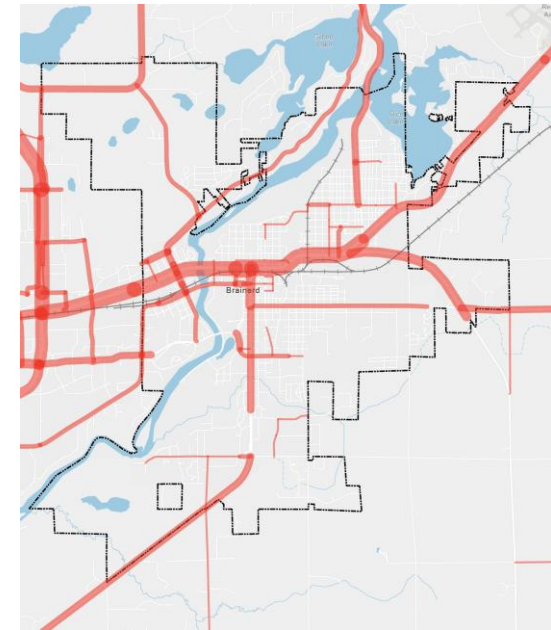
Mobility Chapter Update

Study and Analysis Methodology



Estimate future travel impacts and needs

Assign these to transportation network



Prioritize need and investment areas

Mobility Chapter Update

Outcomes

POTENTIAL INVESTMENT PRIORITY

Low  High

1	Beaver Dam Road	Modernization/Operational Improvements	
2	Bluff-Evergreen-H Street	No Major Investment Needs	Safety and Neighborhood Enhancements
3	Mill Ave-County Hwy 3	No Major Investment Needs	Safety Enhancements
4	TH 210	Modernization/Operational Improvements	
5	TH 25/Oak Street	Potential Capacity Improvements: Mainline Capacity Needs	
6	13th Street/Oak Street	Modernization/Operational Improvements	
7	SE 13th Street	Modernization/Operational Improvements	Safety and Neighborhood Enhancements
8	Buffalo Hills	Modernization/Operational Improvements	Safety Enhancements
9	TH 371B	No Major Investment Needs	
10	High School	Modernization/Operational Improvements	Safety Enhancements
DOWNTOWN PRIORITIES		Special Focus Area and Needs	

Travel Sheds | Prioritized Operational Investment Areas | Secondary Investment Opportunities

by Travel Shed or by Corridor



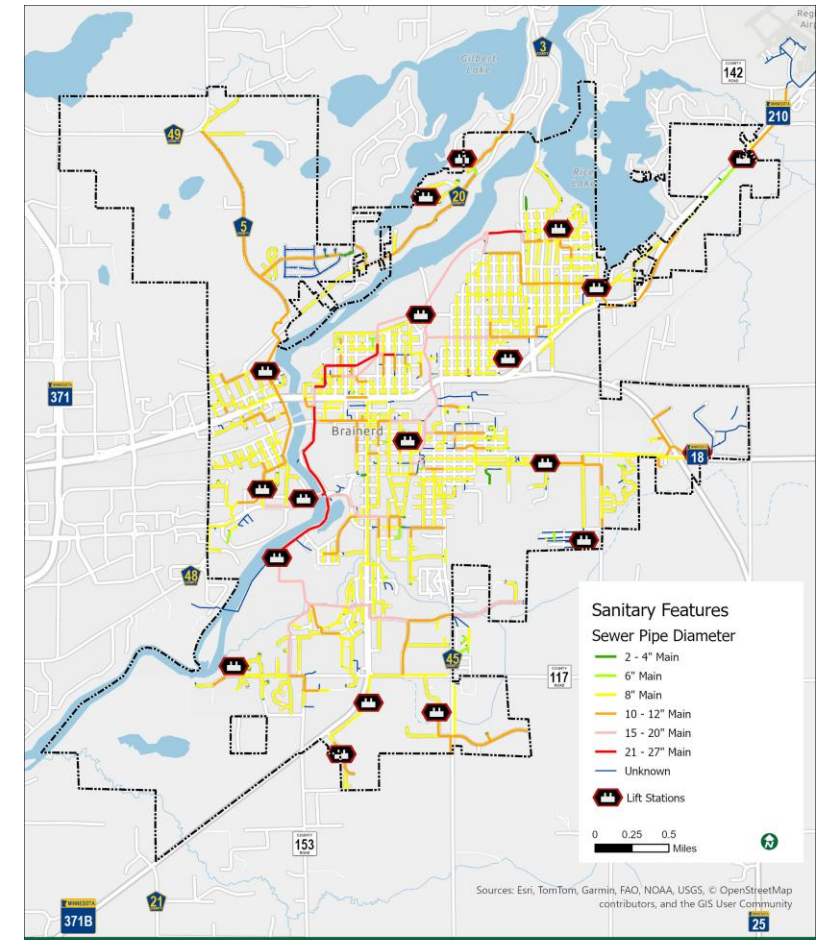
Infrastructure Updates

EQB Certification Criteria

“...(3) a sewage collection system policy plan describing, designating, and scheduling the areas to be served by the public system, the **existing and planned capacities** of the public system, and the standards and conditions under which the installation of private sewage treatment systems will be permitted;...”

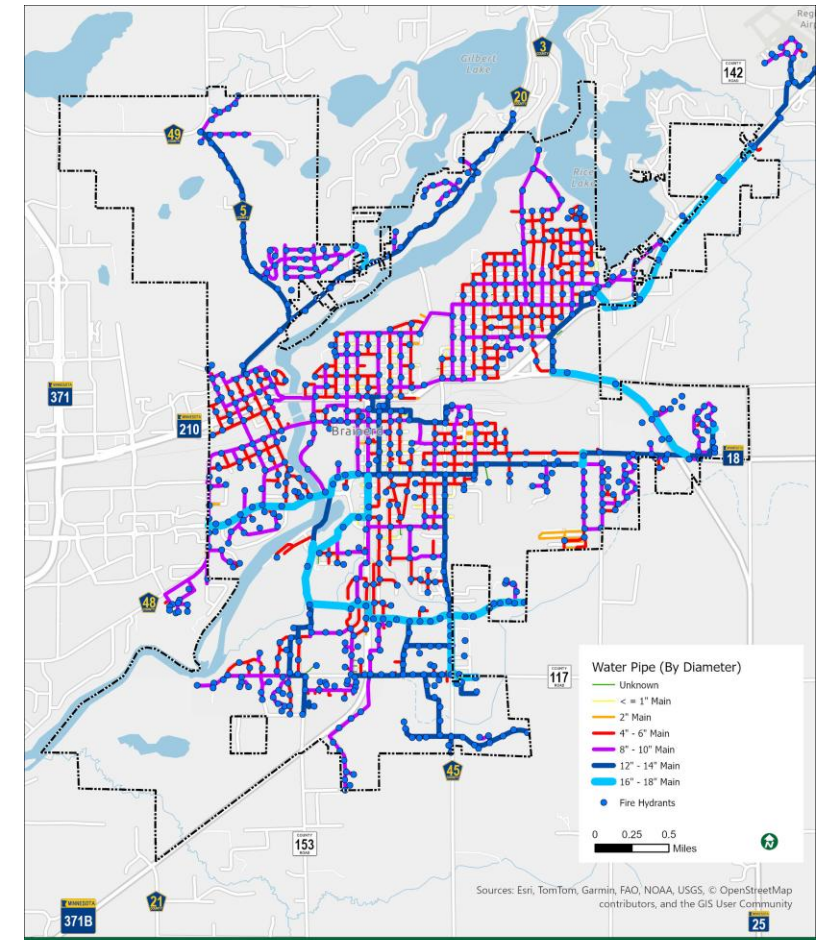
Infrastructure Updates - Sewer

- The Wastewater Treatment Facility was last improved in 2009 with no major improvements since
- The existing facility is operating at capacity and needs upgrades, such as treatment improvements, roof replacement, and electrical system improvements
- The Wastewater Treatment Facility Plan identifies a phased approach to these improvements



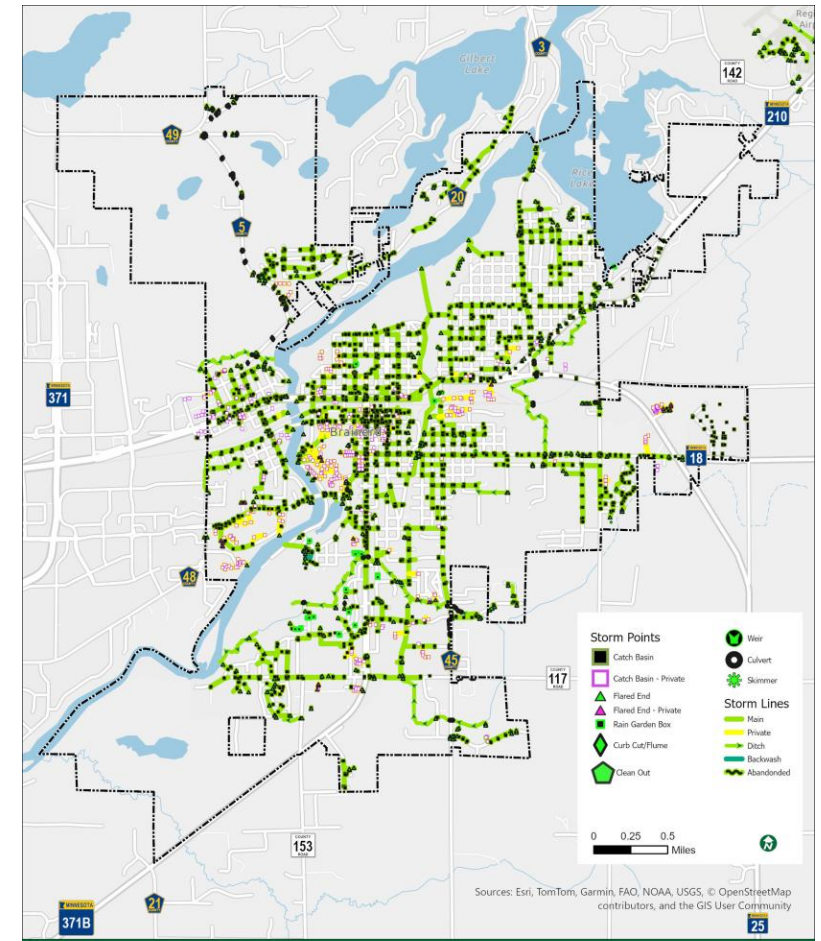
Infrastructure Updates - Water

- Drinking water is supplied through six wells installed between 1938-1983
- Expansion of water supply capacity is needed with growth
- A new Water Treatment Plant is needed, due to age and condition of existing infrastructure



Infrastructure Updates - Stormwater

- Stormwater management and environmental protection need to remain a core focus in the planning process
- Almost all stormwater drains into the Mississippi River



Implementation Plan Update

EQB Certification Criteria

“... (5) an implementation plan describing **public programs, fiscal devices**, and other actions to be undertaken to implement the comprehensive plan, and a **description of official controls** addressing the matters of zoning, subdivision, private sewage systems, and a **schedule** for the implementation of those controls...”

Implementation Plan Update

- Describe official controls for zoning, subdivision, and private sewage systems
- Focus on goals and policies in the Implementation Chapter
- Add **resources** (public programs, fiscal devices), **champion** (lead department or committee), and **priority** (schedule of implementation) to each goal and policy

Chapter	Number	Goal or Policy	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Champion	Resources
LU	3.1	GOAL 1: Support mixed-use development that is focused on integration instead of the separation of land uses.					
LU	3.1.1	Deploy smart growth principles to achieve economic, environmental, and community aspirations	X				
LU	3.1.2	Develop complete neighborhoods that meet the daily needs of all people within a comfortable walking or bicycling distance.	XXX	X			
LU	3.1.3	Allow a mix of land uses in appropriate locations, leading to lively neighborhoods.	XX				

Next Steps

Event or Deliverable	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Task 1: Project Management									
Monthly Check-in Meetings	3/12	4/3	5/5	6/2	7/7	8/4	9/8	10/6	11/3
Task 2: Engagement and Communication									
Planning Commission Workshops		4/15			7/15		9/16		
Communication (2 articles)			Complete						
Survey									
Open House and Public Hearing								PC	CC
Task 3: Diagnose Existing Plan	Complete								
Task 4: Update Plan									
Update Demographics, Pop, HH, and Jobs	Complete								
Land Use Analysis			Reviewing						
Mobility			Reviewing						
Infrastructure (Sewer, Water)				Reviewing					
CIP					Underway				
Implementation Plan					Underway				
Task 5: Solicit Feedback and Update Draft									
Make Edits (1 review and edit cycle)									
Finalize Plan, QA/QC									
Resolution, Notice and Approval									



Thank You

Questions?

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