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Candidates

September 14, 2006

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Sharon Lumby

SUBJECT: St. Croix Valley Area Community Family Center

Please find attached consultant reports on the St. Croix Valley Area Community Family Center for your review.

This item is scheduled to be on the October 3, 2006 City Council Agenda.



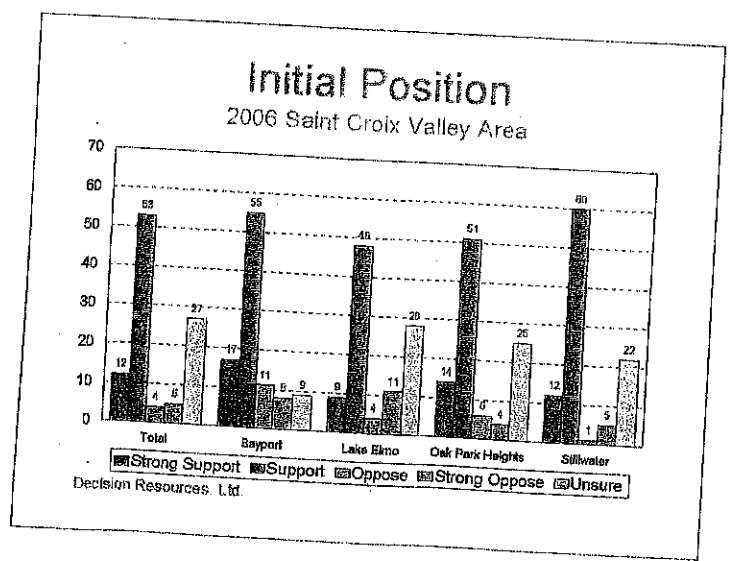
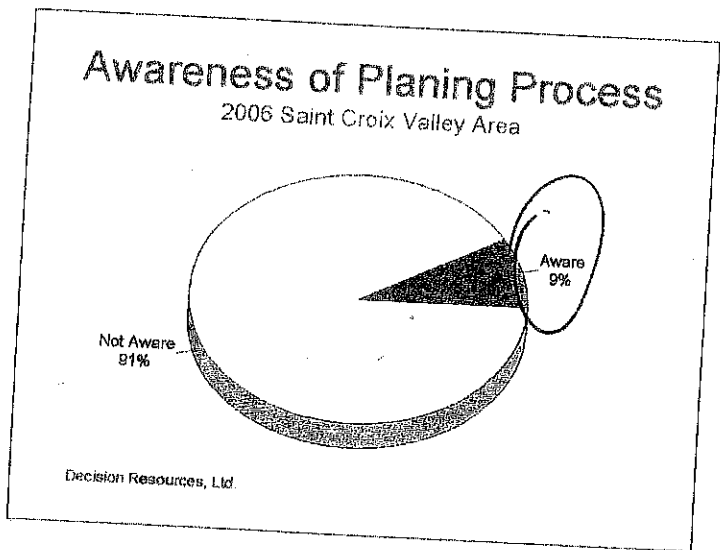
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 Consultants  
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# Saint Croix Valley Area Community Family Center Study

## 2006 Survey of Residential Opinions

Decision Resources, Ltd.

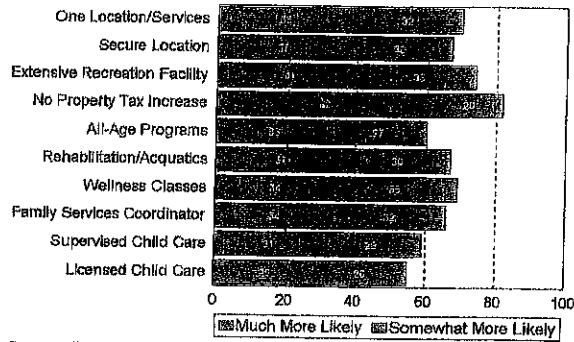
*519 Telephone Interview*





## Center Programming

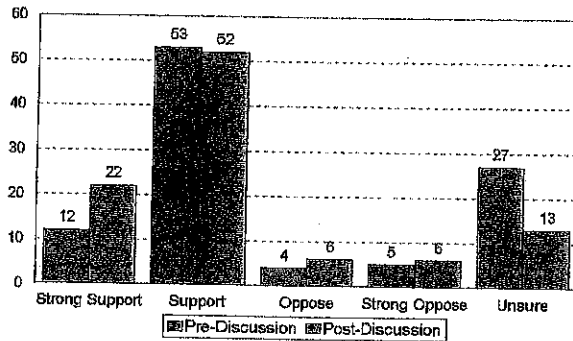
2006 Saint Croix Valley Area



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## Switch in Support

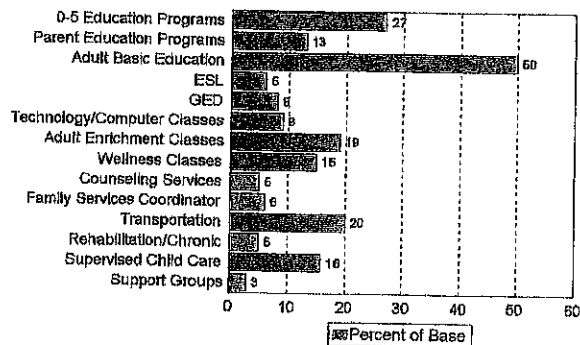
2006 Saint Croix Valley Area



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## Projected Use of Programs

2006 Saint Croix Valley Area

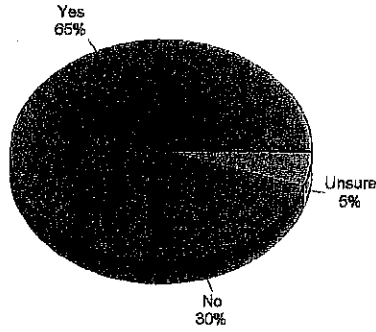


Decision Resources, Ltd.



## Recreational Facilities Meet Needs

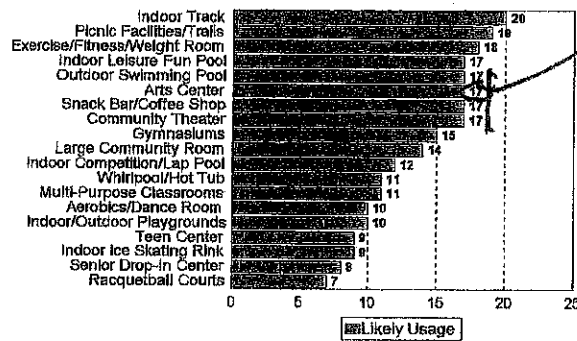
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## Recreational Facilities Potential Use

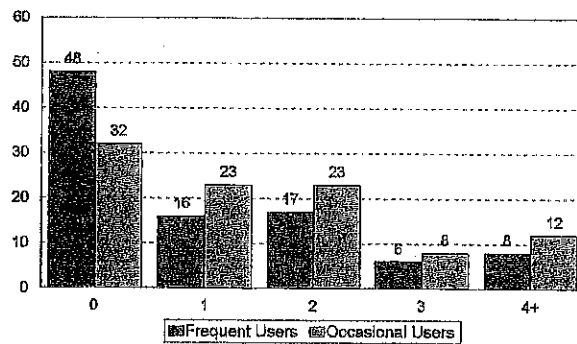
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## Use of Community Family Center

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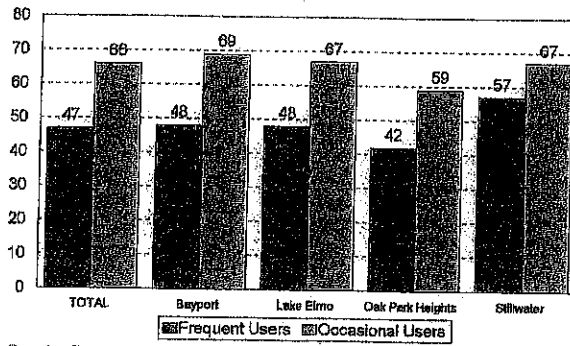
Decision Resources, Ltd.





## Center Use by City

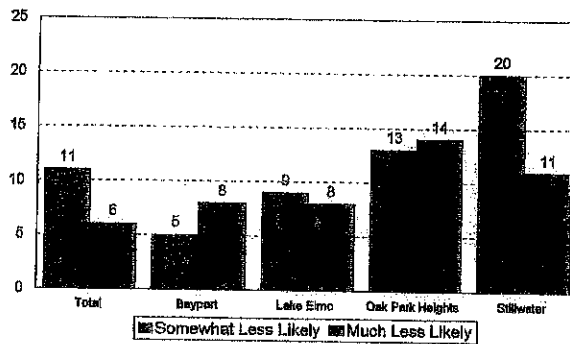
2006 Saint Croix Valley Area



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## Impact of Distance (15 Minutes by Car)

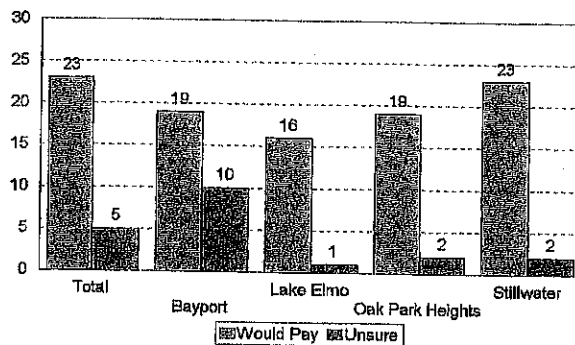
2006 Saint Croix Valley Area



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## \$500 Annual Family Membership

2006 Saint Croix Valley Area



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# Decision Resources, Ltd.

## 2006 Saint Croix Valley Area Community Family Center Preliminary Survey Findings

### Methodology:

The study contains the results of a survey administered to 515 randomly selected adults residing in the Stillwater Area Public School District. This sample contains a base subsample of 250 randomly selected adults in the School District drawn proportionately to the population of each city or township. An additional 265 residents supplement this base to provide 100 household subsamples in Stillwater, Oak Park Heights, Bayport, and Lake Elmo. Professional interviewers conducted the survey by telephone between July 13<sup>th</sup> and August 12, 2006. The typical respondent took 25 minutes to complete the questionnaire. This report focuses on the base subsample of 250 households, in which the results of the study are projectable to all adult Stillwater Area Public School District residents within ± 6.3 % in 95 out of 100 cases.

### Key Findings:

- Awareness of the planning process for a Saint Croix Valley Area Community Family Center is minimal.** Only 9% report any familiarity. Among those reporting some level of awareness, knowledge is very non-specific. Sources of information split between "local newspapers" and "word-of-mouth."
- Support levels for the Family Community Center are high; as more information is provided, support levels increase further.**

	<b>Before Discussion</b>	<b>After Discussion</b>
Strongly Support	12%	22%
Support	53%	54%
Oppose	4%	6%
Strongly Oppose	5%	6%
Unsure	27%	13%

Almost two-thirds of the sample initially support the construction and operation of the Center. After hearing more about the facility, support increases to over three-quarters of the respondents.

One statement is particularly compelling, with 62% saying they are "much more likely to support a Community Family Center after hearing it: "The Community Family Center construction and operation will not require a property tax increase." Next, in order of impact, with 41% indicating they are much more likely to support the facility: "The



Center will contain an extensive recreation facility, for both group and individual activities and programs for all age groups.”

3. *Potential usage levels of services offered at a Community Family Center vary.* The table below indicates the percentage of respondents who will most probably use a service in the next couple of years. Where applicable, the potential use rate is calculated based on the specific audience (e.g., the usage rate of education programs for children birth to five years old is a percentage of households containing children in that age range).

<b>Community Family Center Services</b>	<b>Potential Use</b>
Education programs for children birth to five years old	27%
Parent education programs	13%
Adult Basic Education	50%
English as a Second Language programs	6%
GED programs for those not having graduated from high school	8%
Technology and computer classes	9%
Enrichment classes for adults	19%
Wellness classes	15%
Counseling services on physical and mental health issues	5%*
Family Services Coordinator	6%*
Transportation for the disabled and seniors	20%
Physical rehabilitation and management of chronic conditions	5%*
Supervised child care	16%
Support groups for families and individuals	3%*
<i>* indicates potential use based upon full population in the absence of specific data</i>	

4. *The recreation portion of the facility is the principal component of interest among residents.* Thirty percent report the current mix of recreational facilities available does not sufficiently meet the needs of their households; the suburban norm is 8%, about one-quarter of this level of dissatisfaction.

5. *In thinking conceptually about the Center, the recreational facilities most preferred for inclusion are an outdoor swimming pool, at 17%, fitness/weight room, at 9%, and a gymnasium, at 8%.* More modest numbers also want to see an indoor youth playground center, indoor swimming pool, and classrooms. Activities requests focus on swimming lessons, fitness/exercise programs, senior programs and early childhood programs.

6. *Potential usage levels of recreational facilities also vary.* The table below indicates the percentage of respondents who will most likely use an offering during the next few years.

<b>Community Family Center Recreation Facilities</b>	<b>Potential Use</b>
Indoor ice skating rink	9%
Indoor competition or lap pool	12%
Indoor leisure fun pool with water slide	17%



<b>Community Family Center Recreation Facilities</b>	<b>Potential Use</b>
Outdoor swimming pool with splash area and water slide	17%
Racquetball courts	7%
Exercise, fitness, and weight room	18%
Indoor running/walking track	20%
Arts center	17%
Gymnasiums	15%
Senior citizens drop-in center	8%
Whirlpool bath, steam rooms, and hot-tub facility	11%
Aerobics and dance room	10%
Large community room with attached kitchen	14%
Picnic facility and trails adjoining the Center	19%
Snack bar, soda fountain, and coffee shop	17%
Teen center	9%
Community theater for the performing arts	17%
Multi-purpose classrooms	11%
Indoor and outdoor playgrounds for children	10%

Potential usage levels compare favorably with similar results which were found during the planning phases of the Shoreview, Chaska, and Maplewood Community Centers.

When asked what facilities are most important to them, residents offer the following three: an outdoor swimming pool, an indoor walking-running track, and an indoor playground for children.

7. *There is some confusion among residents – particularly young parents – about the difference between supervised child care and licensed child care.* Even so, 34% of the parents of young children would be apt to use a supervised child care service while at the Center. Twenty-seven percent of the parents of children less than six years old would be apt to enroll in licensed child care offered at the Center.

8. *Seventy percent of the households think members will visit the Community Family Center either occasionally or frequently.* In fact, 47% of the households think at least one member will visit the Center at least weekly. Similarly, 65% think household members will visit occasionally, perhaps monthly.

9. *Distance from the Center is a minor issue for respondents from households with at least one member potentially visiting the facility either frequently or occasionally.* The table below shows the percentage of potential user households who are “much less likely” to do so as their distance from the Center increases.

	<b>Lower Likelihood among</b>	
	<b>Occasional Users</b>	<b>Frequent Users</b>
Located within community	2%	2%
Located five minutes away by car	1%	2%





Located 15 minutes away by car	8%	8%
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Slippage among potential users is not significant, but a 15-minute distance appears to be the threshold before major declines occur.

**10. *The charge of a moderate fee for a daily pass to use the recreational and wellness facilities causes a decline among potential Community Family Center visitors.***

Eighteen percent of occasional users and 19% of frequent users report the fee would significantly decrease their visits to the recreational and wellness facilities. The typical member of both of these groups, though, would pay \$5.00-\$6.00 for a daily pass.

**11. *Family and individual memberships for the use of recreational and wellness facilities drew different levels of interest.*** Only 8% of the sample expresses interest in a yearly individual membership. A majority of this group would pay \$250.00 per year for the membership. In contrast, when informed about cost comparisons, a very solid 23% are willing to pay \$500.00 per year for a family membership to the Community Family Center.

***Implications:***

A. The Committee needs to be much more aggressive in communicating with the public. With less than ten percent reporting awareness of the planning process, familiarity with the Community Family Center has not spread beyond the "community activist core."

B. Potential use levels and willingness to pay for passes and/or memberships are higher than the initial norms for this type of facility. At the outset, these results strongly support taking the planning process to the next level – explicit determination of both facilities and services to be included and the designation of a site. Strong and unified direction will be needed on both of these issues to maintain current levels of support for the project.





August 18, 2006

**MEMORANDUM (Revised)**

**TO: St. Croix Valley Area Community Family Center Site Selection Task Force**

**FROM: Mary C. Bujold  
Maxfield Research Inc.**

**RE: Updated and Revised Assessment of Potential Sites for SCVA Community Family Center**

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***Introduction***

This memorandum discusses and analyzes our findings regarding identification of potential sites for the location of the proposed SCVA Community Family Center.

This memorandum includes the following:

- ✓ Identification of sites and site characteristics currently sponsored by Cities participating in the SCVA Community Family Center process;
- ✓ Identification of sites and site characteristics currently available and marketing in the Stillwater Area, but not sponsored by Cities.
- ✓ Identification of the strengths and weaknesses associated with each of the sites;
- ✓ An analysis and review of projected growth trends in communities in the Stillwater School District (mapping of growth trends);
- ✓ An assessment of the current and projected population and household base within one, three and five miles of each of the sites. Full radii and adjusted areas are shown. The adjusted areas exclude geographies that are outside of the communities located in the Stillwater School District.
- ✓ A summary assessment of the selection criteria of each site based on larger topical areas such as:
  - Access/Visibility
  - Proximity to Major Transportation Arteries
  - Proximity to Population Densities (Current and Future)

*Assessment Revised*

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- Baseline Acquisition Costs
- Additional Infrastructure Costs
- Size of Site and Expansion Potential
- Development Timing
- Proximity to Bus Transit Routes and Walking/Biking Trails
- Current Traffic Counts (Flows) and Projected Traffic Flows
- Possible Environmental Issues
- Political Climate

### ***Base Site Criteria-Group Meeting***

Although each major stakeholder group has a slightly different set of criteria associated with their selection of a site, the following criteria appear generally agreed on by the group and a shared acknowledgement of their importance.

On May 12, 2006, Maxfield Research Inc. met with representatives of the participant communities along with representatives of the key user prospects of the facility. The intention was to frame the discussion relevant to the preferences of the key users and review previous discussions that had already occurred regarding stakeholder needs.

- A location that will be somewhat central to current population and projected growth in the St. Croix Valley Area;
- A location that is within the School District boundaries;
- A location that is relatively convenient to access for potential users;
- A location that would potentially meet the needs and criteria of most, if not all, of the stakeholders.

Specific needs and criteria were mentioned by the YMCA and by the School District. The YMCA indicated a preference for a location that would have convenient access from major thoroughfares and a drive-time of no more than 10 minutes by car. In general, the concerns of the YMCA reflect the need to generate a sufficient number of dues paying members to justify operations costs and development costs of the facility.

A concern was expressed by the group that employees of major employers in the area should be able to conveniently access the Site and that the facility may offer wellness programs. At subsequent discussions, this concern remained present, but has now been relegated to lower concern because many employees currently live in the area and would access the facility as a resident, not just an employee.



The largest employers in the area are:

Andersen Corporation	4,500 employees
Washington County	970 employees
Stillwater Public Schools	920 employees
UFE Mfg.	800 employees
MN Correctional Facility	470 employees

*Laborer Machine and SMC 1000*  
Some large employers in the area but outside of the School District Boundaries include:

3M	13,000
Imation	1,500
The Hartford	712

Most employees are generally within a reasonable distance of their place of employment, although the actual geographic dispersion of employees at these employers has not been identified in addition to those that reside within the School District versus those outside of the School District.

The School District is concerned regarding the availability of a sufficient amount of land to accommodate children's safety and students' access and safety on the site. As such, a site that offers at minimum 13+ acres or capacity to develop a building with approximately 90,000 to 100,000 square feet is projected to be needed. In addition to building capacity, bus and vehicle staging areas, pick-up and drop-off must also be considered in assessing the amount of land required for the facility.

### ***Population and Household Growth Trends***

The following maps outline the boundaries of the Stillwater School District and show the projected growth in population and households as of 2010 and 2030. Also shown are population and household density maps for 2010 and 2030, identifying resident concentrations. This information is used to assist in evaluating the location of sites relative to the projected growth in the Area. Information on growth trends was compiled by Metropolitan Council and cross-referenced to information compiled by the School District in their Enrollment Projections through 2010. In the past, the number of completed homes had fallen significantly below projections. This trend is likely to change moving forward because of a slowing in construction and the amount of "gap" will likely decline.

During our discussions, task force members also requested additional information regarding total population and households within specific radii surrounding each of the sites. The information was compiled and is shown on Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 shows the estimated population and





**TABLE 1  
POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD CONCENTRATIONS  
FULL RADIi  
2006-2016**

Population	Pepperoni Property	Nash/Buena	Neal Avenue	Oak Park Station	Xcel Fly Ash	Bayport Sites	Lake Elmo Villages
<b>Within One Mile</b>							
2006	1,080	1,080	10,225	1,830	6,232	4,182	1,215
2011	1,288	1,288	11,658	2,128	6,455	4,226	2,322
2016	1,418	1,418	13,290	2,468	6,648	4,648	3,650
<b>Within Three Miles</b>							
2006	21,717	21,717	25,808	25,463	27,019	23,237	8,522
2011	23,931	23,931	28,049	27,801	29,149	24,641	9,304
2016	25,845	25,845	30,853	30,581	31,481	27,105	11,630
<b>Within Five Miles</b>							
2006	46,541	46,541	36,208	41,439	44,867	51,775	57,202
2011	50,077	50,077	38,989	44,746	48,648	56,574	61,422
2016	55,000	55,000	42,887	47,431	53,513	62,231	73,707
<b>Households</b>							
<b>Within One Mile</b>							
2006	380	380	3,902	618	1,933	1,035	446
2011	462	462	4,502	729	2,037	1,035	930
2016	545	545	5,402	816	2,098	1,633	1,460
<b>Within Three Miles</b>							
2006	8,297	8,297	9,737	9,461	10,003	8,648	2,875
2011	9,285	9,285	10,773	10,508	10,979	9,320	3,139
2016	10,214	10,214	11,850	11,349	12,076	10,252	3,923
<b>Within Five Miles</b>							
2006	16,788	16,788	13,210	14,913	16,483	19,111	20,658
2011	18,321	18,321	14,461	16,372	18,130	21,177	22,441
2016	21,069	21,069	16,630	18,010	19,762	24,354	26,929

Sources: Claritas, Inc.; Maxfield Research Inc.; Metropolitan Council

household counts by potential site with projections for 2011 and 2016. This information was gathered from Claritas, Inc. and was reviewed in light of Metropolitan Council projections and information gathered from local sources to account for future development that may not have been captured by the Claritas' original projections.

The table shows that within one mile of the site, the Neal Avenue property is in close proximity to an existing population concentration, followed by the Xcel Fly Ash site. Within three miles, the differences between the sites narrow considerably with all properties, except the Lake Elmo site, currently having higher concentrations of population and households. Within three miles, the highest ranking properties are:

- Neal Avenue Property
- Oak Park Station
- Xcel Fly Ash Site
- Bayport Sites



**TABLE 2**  
**POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD CONCENTRATIONS**  
**POLYGON (excludes areas outside of Stillwater School District)**  
**2006-2016**

Population	Bayport Sites	Wisconsin	Near Avenues	Oak Park Station	Xcel Fly Ash	Bayport Sites	Lake Elmo Village
<b>Within One Mile</b>							
2006	1,080	1,080	10,225	1,830	6,232	4,182	1,215
2011	1,288	1,288	11,658	2,128	6,455	4,184	4,115
2016	1,418	1,418	13,290	2,468	6,648	4,648	6,615
<b>Within Three Miles</b>							
2006	21,717	21,717	23,808	24,780	16,389	23,237	8,522
2011	23,931	23,931	28,049	27,108	17,789	24,641	11,222
2016	25,845	25,845	30,853	30,381	31,481	27,105	13,722
<b>Within Five Miles</b>							
2006	34,906	34,906	30,777	34,655	30,463	32,942	9,549
2011	37,698	37,698	33,141	37,592	32,935	35,596	12,349
2016	41,467	41,467	36,455	41,351	36,229	39,156	15,349
<b>Households</b>							
<b>Within One Mile</b>							
2006	380	380	3,902	618	1,933	1,035	446
2011	462	462	4,502	729	2,037	1,035	1,646
2016	545	545	5,402	816	2,098	1,328	2,680
<b>Within Three Miles</b>							
2006	8,297	8,297	9,737	9,547	6,282	8,648	2,875
2011	9,285	9,285	10,773	10,508	6,758	9,320	4,339
2016	10,214	10,214	11,850	11,349	7,265	10,252	5,540
<b>Within Five Miles</b>							
2006	12,591	12,591	11,229	12,505	11,066	11,933	3,233
2011	13,598	13,598	12,015	13,766	12,156	13,093	4,400
2016	14,958	14,958	13,217	17,142	13,372	15,056	5,800

Sources: Claritas, Inc.; Maxfield Research Inc.; Metropolitan Council

Table 2 shows similar information to Table 1, but Table 2's data excludes areas outside of the Stillwater School District in Grant, Oakdale, Woodbury and Wisconsin. The sites that rank the highest in population and household counts within five miles of the subject sites are:

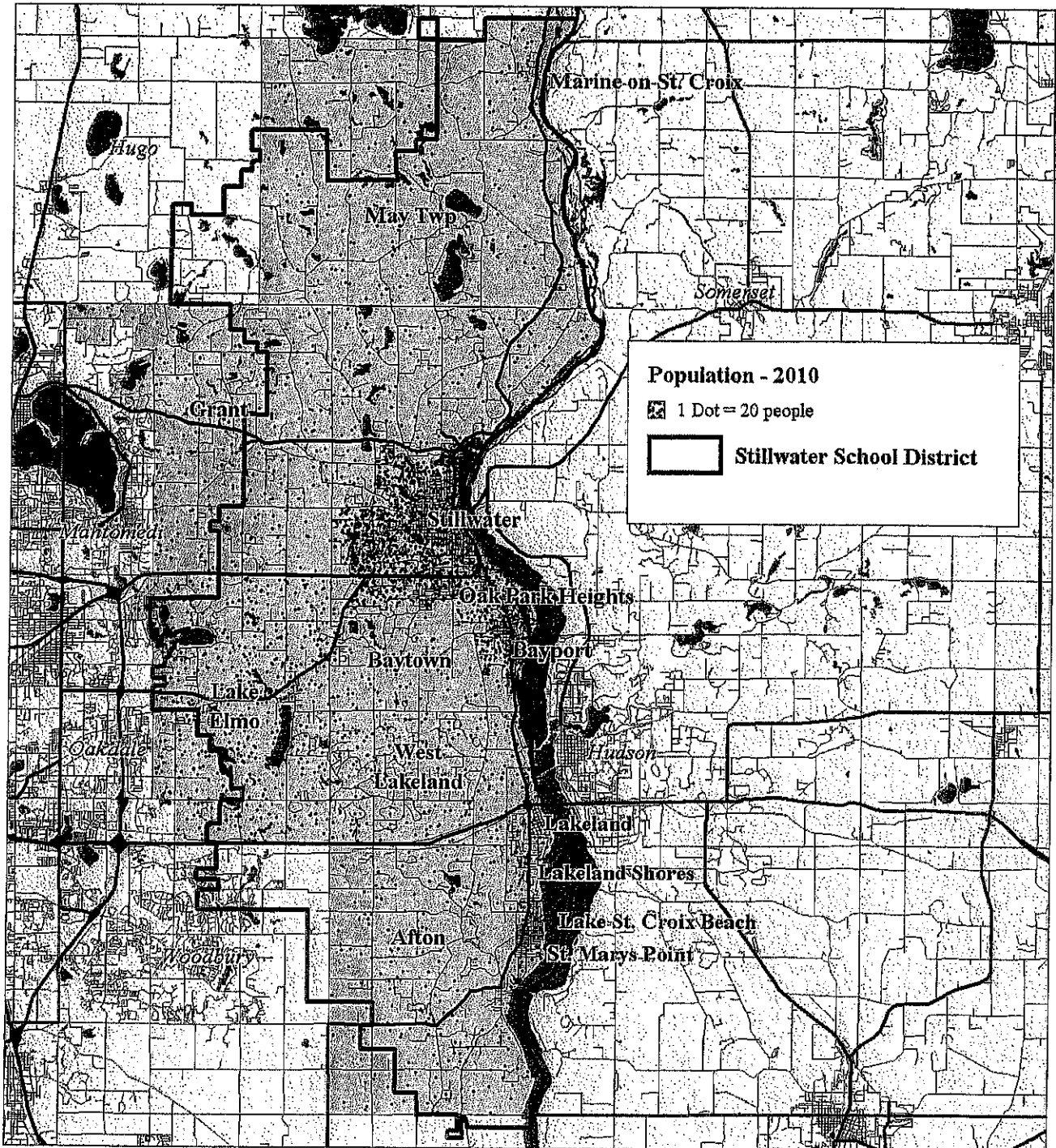
- Oak Park Station
- Bayport Sites
- Xcel Fly Ash Site

The maps on the following pages show that future growth will be concentrated in Lake Elmo because of its recent agreement with the Metropolitan Council regarding increased residential density levels within the community. While Lake Elmo is expected to grow significantly during the next four years and to 2030, growth levels are lower for Oak Park Heights and Stillwater, because of their current status—both are nearly fully-developed. Stillwater is adding new housing units through its orderly annexation agreement with the Township in addition to redevelopment of sites in the Downtown. Oak Park Heights is continuing to build out, but there is a limited amount of land remaining available for new residential development. Bayport is experiencing an increase in residential development due to the new Inspiration master-planned community. In addition, there are other properties adjacent to Bayport's city boundaries that are currently under consideration for annexation into the City.

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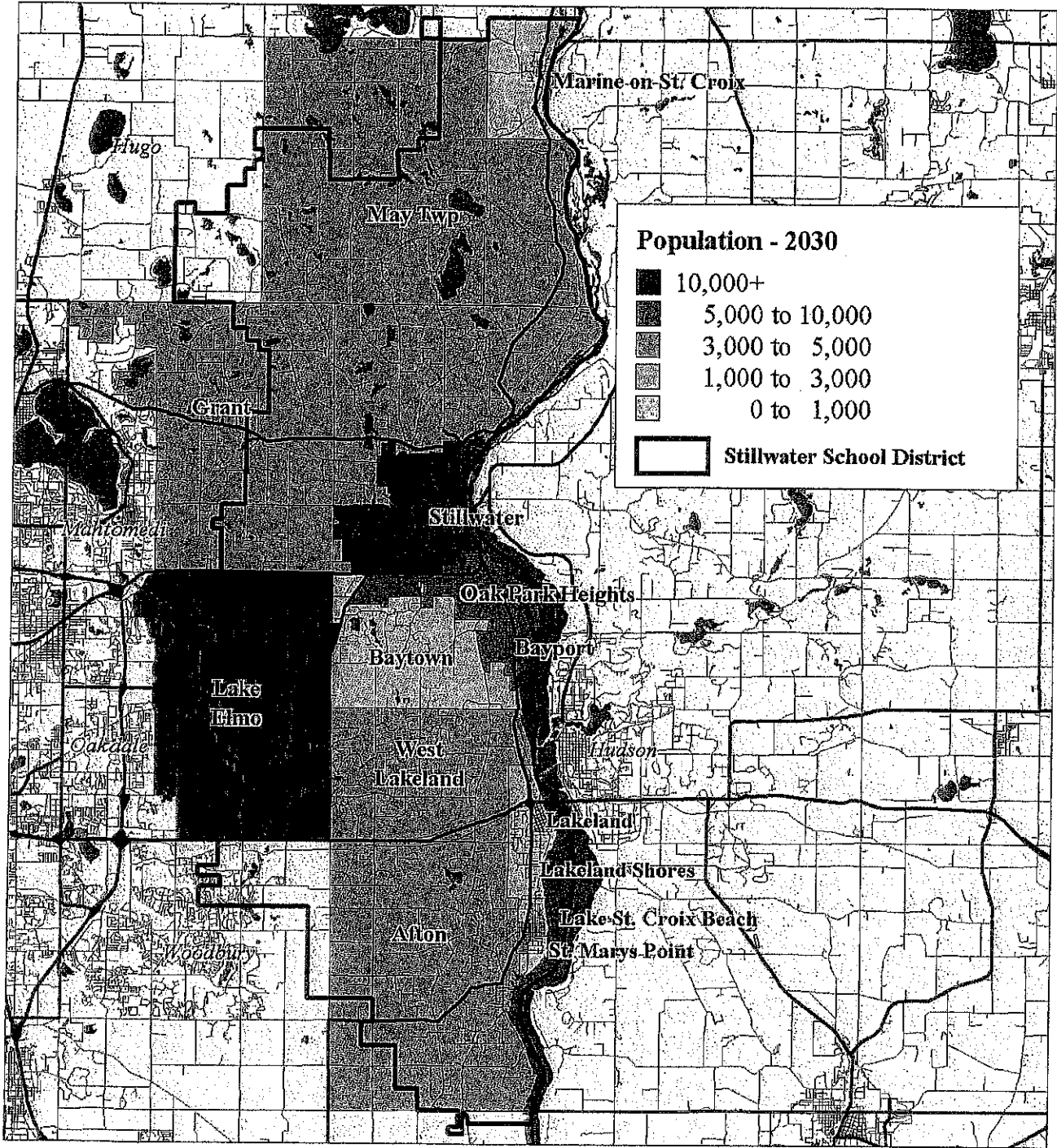
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# Population - 2010





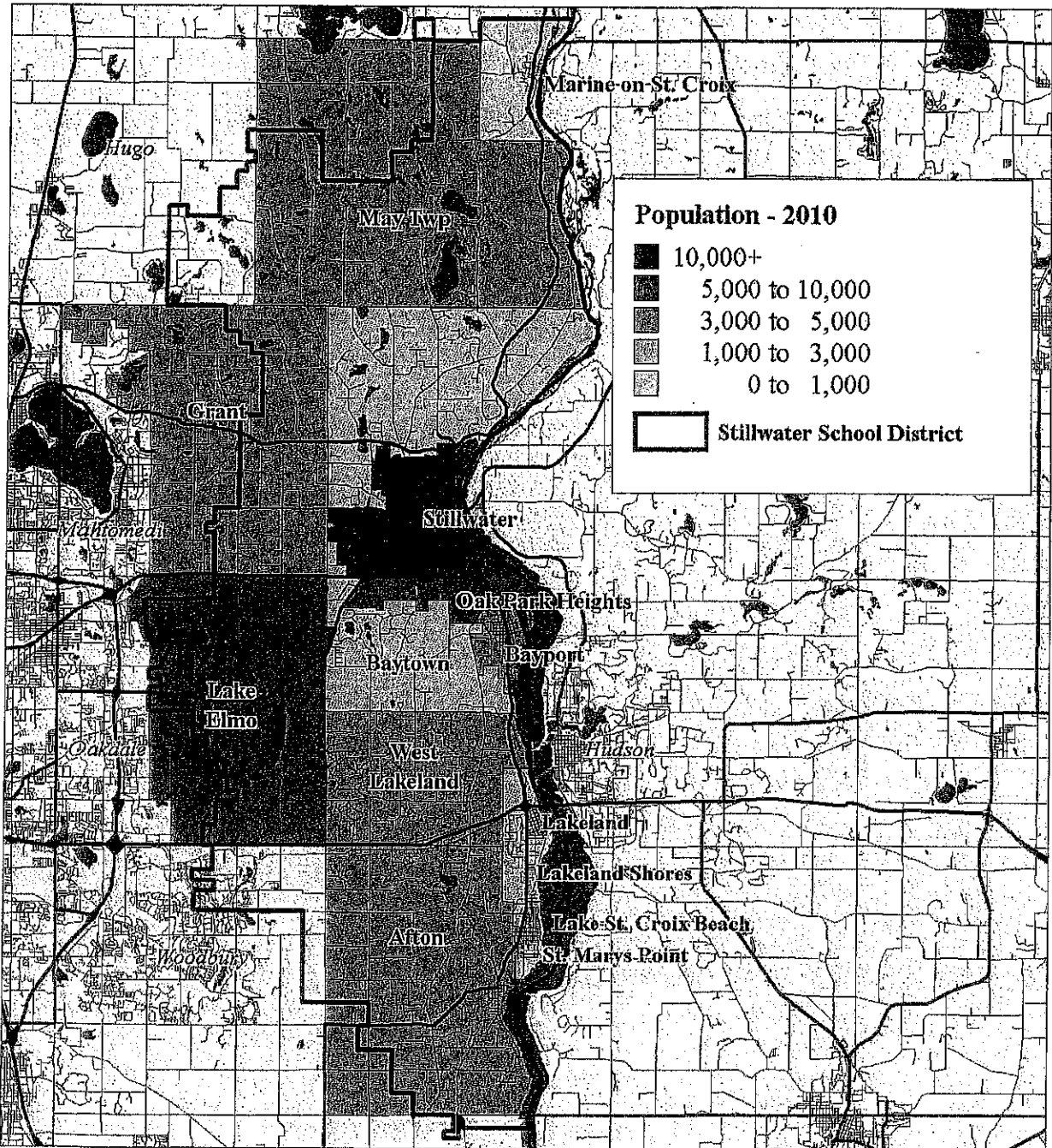
# Population - 2030





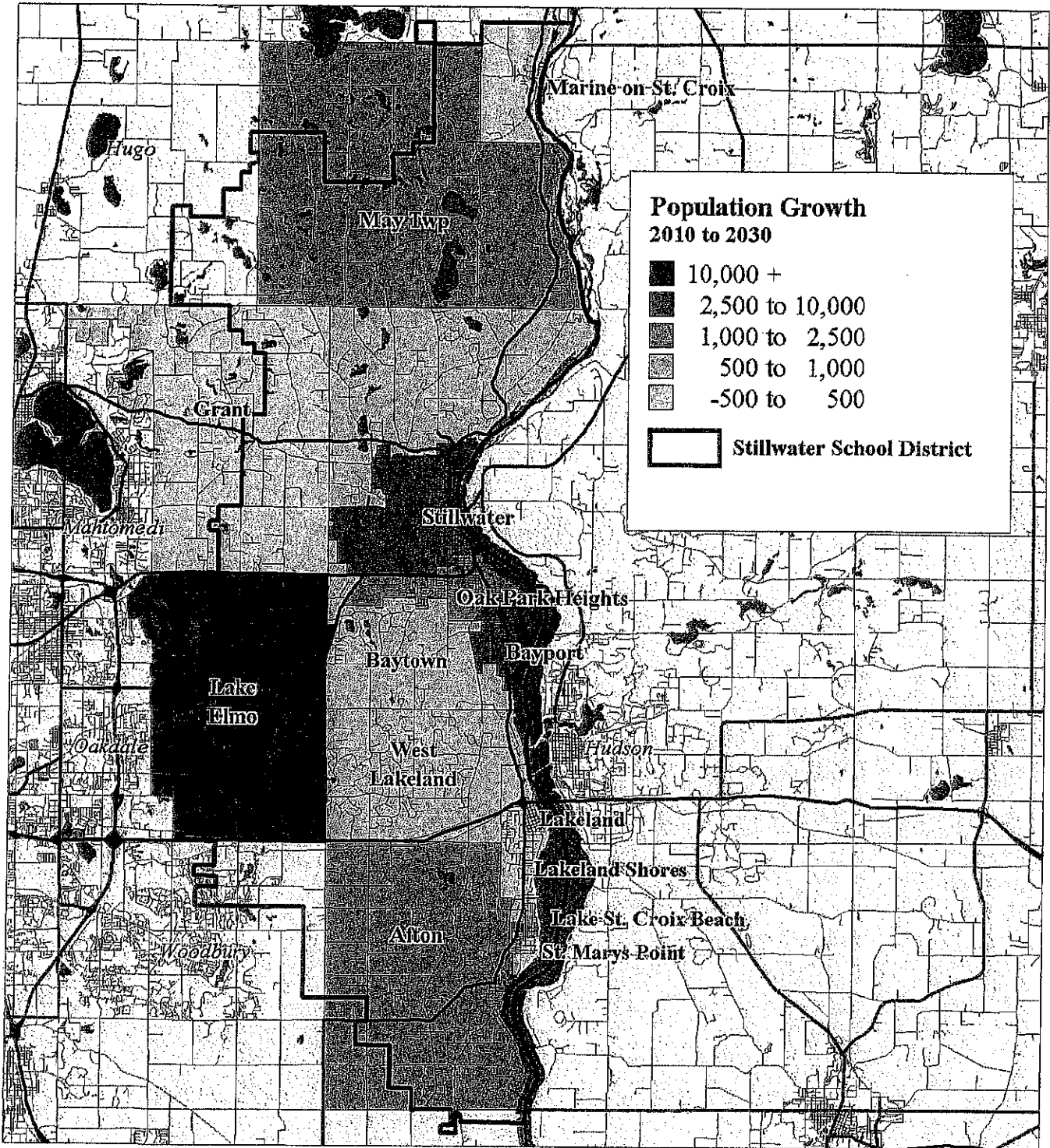


# Population - 2010





# Population Growth, 2010 to 2030





Lake Elmo has been the only community thus far that is required to increase its densities. There are, however, several surrounding communities such as Grant and Afton which have municipality status and also have chosen to remain at very low densities. Should Grant or Afton reach a similar situation in the future with the Metropolitan Council, growth patterns could change dramatically in the St. Croix Valley Area and could shift current population concentrations more to the south or north.

At this time, current estimates identify high concentrations of population and households in the following areas:

Stillwater  
Oak Park Heights  
Lake Elmo

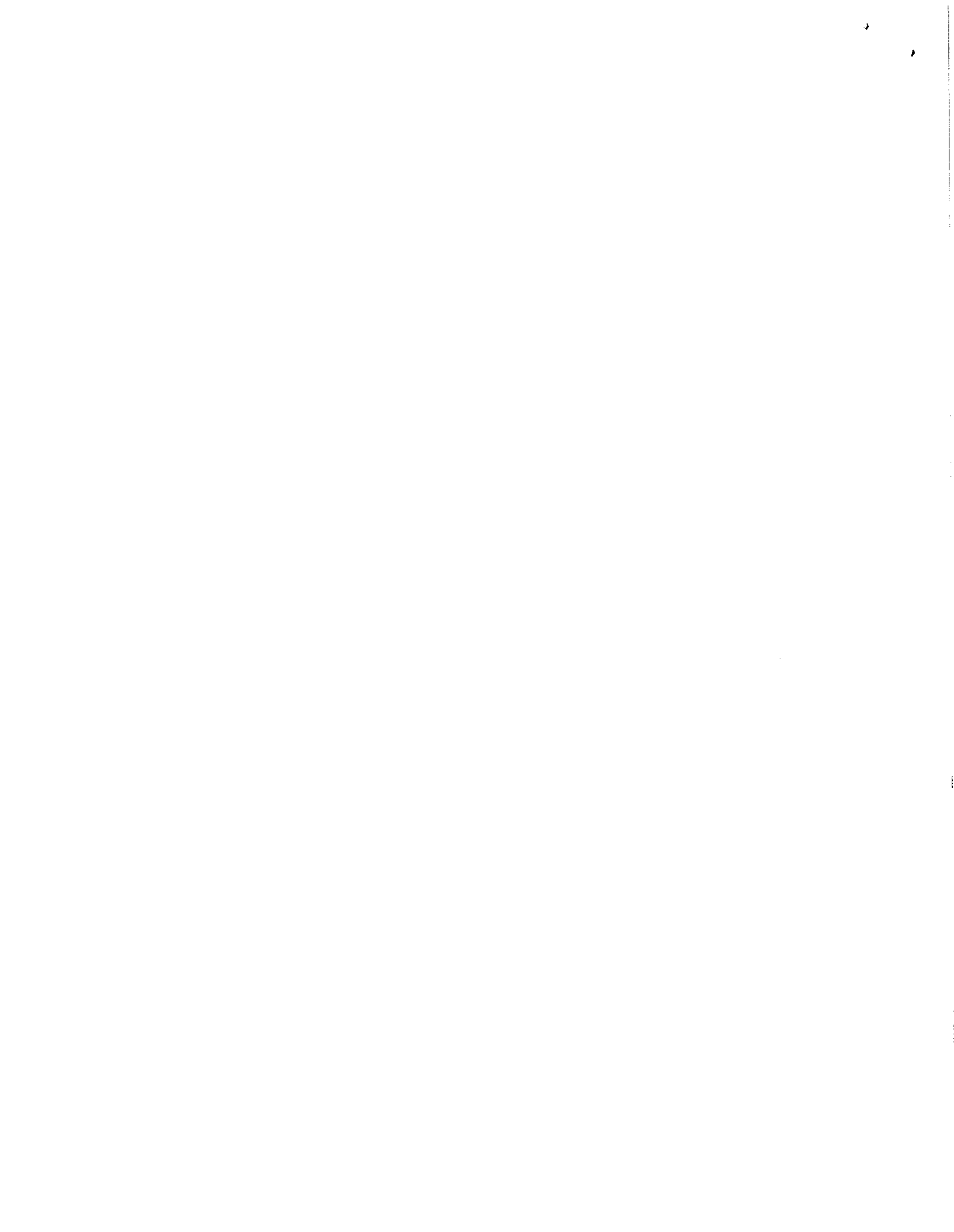
Considering future growth to 2030, concentrations will increase substantially in Lake Elmo and will surpass Stillwater. The combined populations of Oak Park Heights, Stillwater and Bayport however, will remain greater than Lake Elmo (31,600 people versus 24,000 in Lake Elmo). The lower density communities surrounding the major cities are projected to remain as such, certainly through 2010, but also forecast through 2030.

The site criteria analysis which follows utilizes the projected population and household figures as well as projected growth within five miles of each site in assessing the geographic proximity of the various proposed locations to future growth.

As indicated in the enrollment projections report for the Stillwater School District, Lake Elmo is expected to begin its development of the Old Village area in shortly and is forecast to add upwards of 520 new housing units to the area within the next four to five years.

From 2010 to 2030, Lake Elmo is projected to surpass Stillwater in population growth (24,000 versus 19,900). In reaching its required total of 24,000 people, Lake Elmo will surpass Stillwater's population base by 4,100 people by 2030. The combined 2030 populations of Stillwater, Oak Park Heights and Bayport are projected to equal 31,600 people.

From the maps, it is clear that the locus of population density will balance out over the next 20 years, from its current concentration in Stillwater/Oak Park Heights/Bayport to a more balanced situation between Stillwater/Oak Park Heights/Bayport and Lake Elmo. Stillwater, Oak Park Heights and Bayport will continue to have the highest combined concentration of population and households and the commercial district along Trunk Highway 36 will remain one of the dominant commercial shopping concentrations for the region. Lake Elmo will develop a larger commercial base, but initially, it is intending to target smaller neighborhood-oriented goods and services.



***Criteria Analysis for Each Site***

The tables presented in the Appendix present summary information separated by criteria for each Site. Criteria presented include:

- Location of the Parcel
- Approximate Parcel Size
- Potential for Expansion
- Recent Traffic Counts on Major Adjacent Thoroughfares
- Access/Visibility from Adjacent Thoroughfares/Major Thoroughfares
- Proximity to Center of Growth
- Total Population and Household Counts within 5 miles of Site (full radii and adjusted)
- Traffic Counts
- Site Characteristics/Qualities
- Site Availability
- Base Cost of Site
- Infrastructure/Utilities At or Near Site
- Estimated Costs of Infrastructure/Utilities
- Assembly of Multiple Parcels
- Acquisition of Site (Own or Lease Site)
- Current Zoning/Rezoning Required?

Additional information has been gathered for each site and incorporated on these tables.

It is our determination that each Site has some particular strengths, but no one Site overwhelmingly meets all of the criteria. Each Site's strengths and weaknesses address key criteria for locating the SCVACFC including:

- its potential to accommodate the SCVA Community Family Center (physically)
- its potential for the facility to operate at an optimum level in the future given projected population and household growth trends
- consumer travel patterns
- future transportation improvements including highway construction/reconfiguration
- potential future competition for similar goods and services (primarily associated with the recreation component)

Sites are not listed in order of preference and the site numbers do not represent the potential attractiveness of the Site. The Appendix following the Criteria Analysis shows table summaries for each site.





**Site #1 – Oak Park Station (located immediately west of Stillwater Blvd. at 58<sup>th</sup> Street North)***Strengths*

Close proximity to Highway 36

High Visibility from Stillwater Boulevard

Convenient Access to the Site (signalized intersection at 58<sup>th</sup> Street N).

In close proximity to current population/household concentrations, but located just a short distance from projected growth in Lake Elmo;

Immediate availability

Potential to own or lease

Utilities available at the Site; connections to be paid by owner; interior road system to be constructed by owner.

No environmental issues of which we are aware.

Current zoning is B-3 Highway Business; allows institutional uses.

*Weaknesses*

Site may be too small – 13 acres maximum

Parking area may be limited

Base Cost of Site is expensive (minimum \$10.00 per square foot)

**Site #2 – Bergman Property (NE Corner of Highway 36 and Manning Avenue N)***Strengths*

Adjacent to Highway 36

High Visibility from Highway 36 and from Manning Avenue

Convenient Access to the Site (signalized intersection and frontage road)

In close proximity to current population/household concentrations and projected concentrations;

Near-term availability

Own the Site

Utilities and infrastructure available at the Site (assessments to be paid by owner).

Site has ample room to accommodate facility (50 acres with potential for 80 acres total)

Site may accommodate multiple users not solely the SCVA Community Center; costs may be shared among all site users;

Currently guided for research and development/business park use by Stillwater's Comprehensive Plan.

No environmental issues of which we are aware.



*Weaknesses*

Moderately high cost of Site (\$4.50 per square foot) and high cost of special assessments (some may be negotiable (\$600,000 to \$700,000 in special assessments))

Peak traffic on Manning and Highway 36 may create access difficulties during peak travel periods due to stacking of vehicles at signal.

Future planned interchange at Manning Avenue and TH 36 may create future access difficulties and may significantly reduce convenient access to the Site.

Topography is generally flat with some tree cover, but may be difficult due to some low lying areas.

**Site #3 – Neal Property***Strengths*

Located immediately north of County Road 12 (75<sup>th</sup> Street North)

High visibility from County Road 12

Convenient Access to the Site off County Road 12 (future Neal Avenue extension)

In close proximity to current population concentrations

Own the Site

Near-term availability

Utility extensions to the Site are nearby

Site has more than ample room to accommodate the facility (about 40 acres)

Topography is gently rolling or flat, with minimal tree cover

Currently no environmental issues of which we are aware

*Weaknesses*

Under pre-development agreement for rezoning to residential

Adjacent to low-density single-family homes are likely to create difficulties with neighbors

Potential high cost of property, but uncertain

Potential high costs for additional infrastructure (special assessments for roads, utilities)

Annexation required to City; this area is staged for 2015 annexation; petition to annex earlier.

**Site #4 – Xcel Energy-Fly Ash Site***Strengths*

Centrally located in the SW corner of Highway 36 and Beach Road N;

Close proximity to several of the area's major employers including Washington County,

Andersen Windows, Hospital

Potential for improved access via future Stillwater Bridge (current timing estimated at between 2010 and 2015, but not guaranteed)



Site size can more than accommodate facility (total size 45 acres)  
Site would be graded and planned by Xcel and could be according to Client's needs  
Lease from Xcel  
Base cost of site minimal or nothing  
Utilities are available at the Site;  
Hook-up costs should be moderate.  
Site is vacant and bare; no tree cover;  
Site can be built up to accommodate landscaping; must arrange and approve plan with Xcel and with MPCA.  
Currently, MPCA would not have difficulty with locating a community center on the Site.

#### *Weaknesses*

Site availability in 2010; possibility of some use prior to that time; 80% of site is currently covered.  
Must not compromise the integrity of the cover.  
Must carefully plan improvements to the Site, all cleared and handled through Xcel.  
Cost of utility hookups to be paid by client; may be negotiable with Xcel.  
Further distance from future high level population concentrations in Lake Elmo.  
Currently, zoned industrial; proposed community center may be permitted in industrial district; if not, must be rezoned.

#### **Site #5 – Bayport Sites**

##### *Strengths*

Close proximity to population concentrations  
Close proximity to major employers (Andersen Windows and Washington County)  
Availability may be arranged within a relatively short time-frame;  
Convenient Access from County Roads 21 and 14  
Sites are heavily wooded; *maybe*  
Most likely sufficient land area to accommodate facility.  
The 5-acre private property ~~would~~ be donated;  
Could likely negotiate with developer of the 23-acre private parcel to reduce land costs to nominal amounts;  
Large private parcel is currently in negotiations to be annexed to the City of Bayport;  
Utilities would be available at the Site and utility connection fees should be moderate;  
Own the Site.  
No significant environmental issues of which we are aware.

##### *Weaknesses*

Low visibility from major thoroughfares such as Highway 36 or Stillwater Boulevard;  
Lowest traffic counts;



Assembly of parcels required (but may not be especially difficult);  
Less convenient access from major thoroughfares;  
Would require negotiation with several entities for site assembly.

#### **Site #6 – Lake Elmo-Old Village Site (Downtown)**

##### *Strengths*

Annual land lease of \$1.00 as long as Community Center desires;  
Convenient access and visibility from Stillwater Boulevard  
Concentration of households in close proximity to facility (2030)  
Utilities available at site;  
Site is vacant and clear; generally flat with no tree cover.  
Immediate (near-term) availability;  
Site assembly has been completed by the City;  
No significant environmental issues of which we are aware.  
Population concentrations in 2030 most likely to be family dominated  
Potential to co-locate other facilities such as Washington County Library and regional arts center

##### *Weaknesses*

Not as centrally located to total 2030 population concentration (Bayport, Stillwater, Oak Park Heights)  
Potential traffic congestion on Stillwater Boulevard with increase of 520 households by 2010 (additional 5,200 trips per day);

#### **Site #7 – Nass and Buberl Sites**

##### *Strengths*

Adjacent to Highway 36  
High Visibility from Highway 36 and from Manning Avenue  
Convenient Access to the Site (signalized intersection)  
In close proximity to current population/household concentrations and projected concentrations;  
Near-term availability  
Own the Site  
Utilities and infrastructure available adjacent to the Site (assessments for connections to be paid by owner).  
Site has ample room to accommodate facility (15 acres at the north end with potential for roughly 50 acres total)  
Site may accommodate multiple users not solely the SCVA Community Center; costs may be shared among all site users;  
Currently zoned agricultural use.





### *Weaknesses*

Moderately high cost of Site (\$4.50 per square foot)

May also be additional assessments for utilities and infrastructure;

Future planned interchange at Manning Avenue and TH 36 may create future access difficulties and may significantly reduce convenient access to the Site.

Portions of the sites may have some environmental issues because storage and dumping has occurred in the past; no EAW or EIS has been completed to date.

✓ Topography is generally flat with some tree cover.

✓ Rezoning would be required and according to City, would be rezoned for residential use.

### **Other Sites**

Other sites in the area were explored, but are:

- 1) too small in size;
- 2) current zoning requirements severely constrain the ability to consider the proposed use
- 3) the site is too distant from the current and projected population centers

The following section presents a weighting of criteria in order of importance and applies a rating scale to each criteria for each site. The analysis provides a quantitative assessment for each site. Additional qualitative criteria such as political climate is considered, but is not factored into the quantitative assessment.

Maxfield Research Inc. also requested information regarding any potential environmental concerns that may be associated with each of the sites. This information is briefly summarized on the tables and in the strengths/weaknesses segment of the analysis.

### ***Weighting Criteria***

Table 3 shows a weighting assessment for each of the proposed sites. The weighting assessment assigns a weight value to each of several criteria. These criteria may be weighted differently based on the discussions of the site selection task force or additional criteria may be added to this analysis.

Each of the site criteria is assigned a value rating from 1 through 5 with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. These value ratings are shown on the table along with a total that is derived from the value rating alone.

These value ratings are multiplied by the weighting factor to arrive at a weighted total for the criteria which is shown in the highlighted section immediately below the rating for the criteria.



As is shown, the weighting values shift the totals for the sites, sometimes substantially. In reviewing the weighting totals and the criteria, it is our opinion that the current value ranges and weighting criteria reflect the characteristics of the sites based on the perceived value of the criteria.

### ***Conclusions***

The revised weighting assessment ranks the individual sites from highest to lowest as follows:

- 1=Lake Elmo Site
- 2=Oak Park Station Site
- 3=Xcel Fly Ash Site (nearly tied with Oak Park Station)
- 4=Bergman Property
- 5=Bayport Sites
- 6=Nass Buberl Properties
- 7=Neal Avenue Property

In addition to the numerical totals assigned to each of the sites, additional qualitative criteria were noted but not entered into the weighting. Questions were asked of owners/contacts for each of the sites identifying if any environmental issues were known and the extent of those issues/impacts.

Other than the Xcel Fly Ash site, the Buberl portion of the Nass-Buberl properties is the only property that is known to potentially have environmental issues. In further considering the Xcel Fly Ash or Nass-Buberl sites, further detailed analysis and environmental assessments must be undertaken to identify the scope of potential clean-up actions on the Nass-Buberl sites or the potential future responsibilities for environmental issues that may remain with a tenant operating on the Xcel Fly Ash site. In fact, all sites are likely to require additional due diligence to ensure that all existing site conditions are fully understood and analyzed.



TABLE 3  
CRITERIA WEIGHTING ASSESSMENT  
PROPOSED SITES  
August 2006

Sites	Weighting	Oak Park Station	Bergman Property	Neal Ave. Property	Xcel Energy Fly-Ash	Bayport Sites	Lake Elmo-Downtown Village	Nass-Buberal Property
Proximity to Growth Centers Total (Weighting * Rating Scale)	1	5	4	5	5	4	3	4
Access	0.8	5	5	3	4	2	4	5
Visibility	0.5	4	5	4	5	2	4	3
Base Cost of Site	1	2	2	2	5	4	5	2
Availability (Timing)	1	1	2	2	5	4	5	2
Proximity to Major Employers	0	3	3	1	2	4	5	3
Cost of Infrastructure	0.5	4	3	2	5	5	3	3
Land Assembly	0.5	3	2	2	3	3	3	3
Zoning/Guided Land Use	0.2	5	5	4	5	4	5	3
Proximity to Bus Routes	0.2	5	5	3	5	4	5	1
Proximity to Walking/Biking Trails	0.2	5	0	0	0	2	3	0
Political Climate	0.2	3	4	5	5	2	5	4
Total of Weightings	6.1	50	42	33	47	39	50	32
Weighted Totals (Weighting*Rating Scale)	—	24.6	21.6	17.4	24.3	20.3	25.8	18.7
Potential for Environmental Issues		Low to None	Low to None	Low to None	High Under Xcel & PCA Control	Low to None	Low to None	Medium
Major Employers		Lakeview Hosp.	Lakeview Hos.	Lakeview Hos.	Andersen Wash. Co. 36/Beach	Andersen Wash. Co. None	Ination/3M	Lakeview Hos.
Future Transportation Interchange		None	36/Manning	None	36/Beach	None	None	36/Manning Manning-4 Lane

Source: Maxfield Research Inc.



**Related Selection Issues**

While the site weighting and ranking offers a guide to the site selection team, the weighting and ranking is not intended to result in a definitive decision regarding the selection of a site. There are many other factors that can enter into the site selection as the team proceeds with site acquisition, purchase negotiations, among other factors.

While access, base and infrastructure costs, and location in close proximity to population growth centers ranked high in the site selection criteria for the SCVACFC team, these factors are likely weighted much differently from the viewpoint of the potential users. For example, convenient access and limited travel times are likely to rank highest for potential users of the facility in considering a site. Cost of infrastructure and ease of government approvals are likely to rank the lowest. In addition, people will vote for the site of their choice based on their lifestyles, convenience and price sensitivity (entry fees, gas prices, travel time).

While this facility is being considered as a long-term facility, future growth in the area, especially in Lake Elmo, may indicate that once population densities increase sufficiently, a separate facility may be needed to accommodate growth at both ends of the County. Users are likely to patronize the facility that is in closest proximity to their residence or place of employment. This may result in two separate facilities built over time, one toward the east end and one toward the west end. These facilities may be supported through other market niches including organized sports, and other non-profit ventures.

In the interim, there have been concerns raised over the use of the facility by others if the location is too far east or too far west. The development of a new river crossing as early as 2012 may also significantly influence the number of people that would come across the River to use a facility conveniently located off TH 36, thereby adding to the market potential for a location along a major thoroughfare. The Lake Elmo site has the ability to attract users from Woodbury and Oakdale. Although attracting Woodbury and Oakdale residents to the proposed facility will add to projected operating revenues, the mission is to effectively serve community members and employees within the School District boundaries.

In addition, sites that are privately held will be more expensive and will require greater price negotiations than sites that are publicly held or being negotiated on behalf of the SCVACFC team by public entities.

Depending on the timing of making a decision regarding a site, the SCVACFC may be competing with other bidders for the property. The asking price or negotiated price may rise with the presence of competition. In addition, the site may become unavailable if a purchase agreement is signed with another buyer, prior to the SCVACFC committing in writing to a site.

In essence, the selection of a site not only involves choosing a site based on the criteria, but also the successful purchase or lease negotiations for that site to begin the development process. Delays in making a site decision or information that may leak prematurely to others in the community may result in significant changes in the cost and/or availability of certain sites.





We recommend that the site selection team, after reviewing this memorandum and other pertinent data such as the results of the community surveys and focus group sessions make a recommendation to the entire SCVACFC Task Force with the assistance of its consultants.

### ***Recommendations***

We recommend that the SCVACFC Site Selection Team consider the following sites for further critical discussion and final recommendation:

- 1=Lake Elmo Old Village Site
- 2=Xcel Fly Ash Site
- 3=Bergman Property
- 4=Nass-Buberal Sites

It is our professional opinion that these sites offer the greatest potential for successful development, have the highest level of flexibility in size and expansion, are all generally reasonable in costs and pricing (except perhaps for the Bergman Property), and would be considered convenient from a market perspective. The Old Village site in Lake Elmo is the site most likely to be considered the least convenient by a significant number of current community residents. This situation is likely to change in the future, but not for perhaps 15 to 20 years.

The following are the essential key strengths and key weaknesses of each of the sites under further consideration:

#### **1=Lake Elmo Old Village Site**

##### Key Strengths:

- Low Base Cost of Site
- Current zoning and east of site approvals
- Available immediately

##### Key Weaknesses

- Distant from current population densities in the School District

#### **2=Xcel Fly Ash Site**

##### Key Strengths

- Low Base Cost of Site
- Long-term lease and property always controlled by Xcel Energy
- Significant flexibility in negotiating costs for site improvements
- Close proximity to current population densities

##### Key Weaknesses

- Availability may not be until 2010
- Cannot penetrate the existing cover (lining)
- May be subject to access issues with the construction of the River Crossing



**3=Nass-Buberal Site**

Key Strengths

- Available now
- Convenient access from a major thoroughfare
- Visibility is high
- Close proximity to current population densities

Key Weaknesses

- Possibility of environmental issues on a portion of the site (Buberal portion)
- Possibility that price may increase with a non-profit purchase
- Potential interchange on TH 36 could significantly affect this location
- Current zoning is agricultural; rezoning of this property for the community center use is likely to be very difficult.

**4=Bergman Property**

Key Strengths

- Available now
- Convenient access from a major thoroughfare
- Visibility is high
- Close proximity to current population densities
- May be able to share the site with other users to defray costs

Key Weaknesses

- Potential interchange on TH 36 could significantly affect this location
- Infrastructure assessments are high
- Price is moderately high



**APPENDIX**



**SITE:** Oak Park Station  
**SITE OWNER/DEVELOPER:** Local Investor Group-Marketed by United Properties  
**CITY SPONSOR:** None

<b>Location</b>	West of Stillwater Blvd. South of 58th St. N. East of Memorial Drive	<b>Approximate Size of Site</b>	13.0 acres	<b>Potential for Expansion</b>	Limited to None	<b>Recent Traffic Counts Highway 36=</b>	Highway 36= 36,000 AADT Stillwater Blvd.= 20,800 AADT	<b>Access/Visibility</b>	Access= Very Good Visibility=Excellent from Stillwater Blvd.; not visible from Highway 36.	<b>Proximity to Center of Growth</b>	<b>2010</b> Within 3 miles <b>2030</b> Within 3 miles	<b>Site Characteristics</b>	Flat Land-Vacant No trees
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<b>Site Availability</b>	Immediate	<b>Site Cost</b>	\$10.00/sq. ft.	<b>Infrastructure/Utilities</b>	All utilities available at the Site	<b>Cost of Utilities/Infrast.</b>	Hook-ups	<b>Assembly of Multiple Parcels</b>	None	<b>Own/Lease</b>	Own	<b>Current/Zoning/Rezoning Required?</b>	Commercial	<b>Proximity to Bus/Walking/Hiking/Path</b>	Close to existing walking/biking path;
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Not in close proximity to current bus routes;

In close proximity to a planned future route.

Source: Maxfield Research Inc.





**SITE:** Bergman Property  
**SITE OWNER/DEVELOPER:** Bergman Family  
**CITY SPONSOR:** None

<b>Location</b> Corner of Highway 36 and Manning Avenue	<b>Approximate Size of Site</b> 50 ac. Possibility of another 30 ac. acquisition of adjoining parcel.	<b>Potential for Expansion</b> Limited to None	<b>Recent Traffic Counts</b> Highway 36= 36,000 AADT County Rd. 15 (Manning) N. 14,900 AADT	<b>Access/Visibility</b> Access= Very Good Visibility=Excellent from Highway 36. Very good from Manning Avenue.	<b>Proximity to Center of Growth 2010</b> Within one mile	<b>Proximity to Center of Growth 2030</b> Within one mile	<b>Site Characteristics</b> Existing Greenhouse Farmhouse Outbuildings Retail Store and ancillary buildings at corner.
<b>Site Availability</b> Currently in consideration for development; residential development has been proposed for site; was denied.	<b>Site Cost</b>	<b>Infrastructure/Utilities</b> Electric on site.	<b>Cost of Utilities/Infrast.</b> \$665,000 to \$700,000 special assessments for 50 ac site.	<b>Assembly of Multiple Parcels</b> No	<b>Own/Lease</b> Own	<b>Current Zoning/Rezoning Required?</b> Guided as business park/office by comp plan; zoning is commercial agricultural	<b>Proximity to Bus/Walking/Biking Path</b> May be in close proximity to future bus routes; In close proximity to walking/biking trail.

Source: Maxfield Research Inc.



**SITE:** Neal Avenue Property  
**SITE OWNER/DEVELOPER:** Bruggeman Homes (under agreement with owner)  
**CITY SPONSOR:** None

<b>Location</b>	North of County Rd. 12 Adjacent to future Neal Avenue extension
<b>Approximate Size of Site</b>	40 acres
<b>Potential for Expansion</b>	Limited to None
<b>Recent Traffic Counts</b>	County Road 12= 7,100 AADT County Road 15= 14,900 AADT  AADT=Avg. Annual Daily Traffic
<b>Access/ Visibility</b>	Access= Very Good Visibility=Excellent from County Rd. 12; None from Highway 36
<b>Proximity to Center of Growth 2010</b>	Within one mile
<b>Proximity to Center of Growth 2030</b>	Within one to three miles
<b>Site Characteristics</b>	Rolling Land Vacant Minimal Trees

<b>Site Availability</b>	Annexation is currently pending with the City; intended for rezoning to residential; concern on part of representative for other than residential due to adjacent single-family homes.
<b>Site Cost</b>	Not Available
<b>Infrastructure/ Utilities</b>	Electric Available Connections to Water, Storm Sewer and Sant. Sewer necessary
<b>Cost of Utilities/Infrastr.</b>	Unknown
<b>Assembly of Multiple Parcels</b>	No
<b>Own/Lease</b>	Own
<b>Current Zoning Rezoning Required?</b>	Agricultural Annexation into City required, in process Residential rezoning preferred; adjoins single-family homes
<b>Proximity to Bus/ Walking/Hiking Path</b>	In close proximity to walking/biking trails.  Not in close proximity to existing bus routes.

Source: Maxfield Research Inc.



**SITE:** Xcel Energy Fly Ash Site  
**SITE OWNER/DEVELOPER:** Xcel Energy  
**CITY SPONSOR:** Oak Park Heights

<b>Location</b> South of Highway 36/ SW of Beach Road N.	<b>Approximate Size of Site</b> 45 acres	<b>Potential for Expansion</b> Limited to None	<b>Recent Traffic Counts</b> Highway 36= 22,000 AADT Beach Rd. N. = 9,700 AADT	<b>Access/Visibility</b> Access=Good Visibility=Excellent Improvement to Access when Bridge project is complete; timetable uncertain currently.	<b>Proximity to Center of Population Density</b> 2010 Within one mile 2030 Within one mile	<b>Site Characteristics</b> Flat Land-Vacant No trees Remediated Landfill Protective Barrier Must maintain integrity of the barrier
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<b>Site Availability</b> Approximately 2010 Western portion of site might be available earlier  80% of site covered.	<b>Site Cost</b> Nominal or \$0	<b>Infrastructure/Utilities</b> Electric Water Sanitary Sewer Storm Sewer	<b>Cost of Utilities/Infrast.</b> Hookup costs paid for by lessee.  Landscaping plan required; cost may be negotiated w/ owner.	<b>Assembly of Multiple Parcels</b> None	<b>Own/Lease</b> Lease only Xcel Energy must maintain ownership.	<b>Current Zoning/Rezoning Required</b> Industrial Facility may be a permitted use in the industrial zone; if not, City may cooperate with rezoning.	<b>Proximity to Bus/Walking/Biking Path</b> Possible future connection to local transit when bridge is built.  Connected to existing walking/biking trail.
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Source: Maxfield Research Inc.



**SITE: Bayport Sites**

**SITE OWNERS/DEVELOPERS:** Private Property (5 ac), Church Property (10 ac), Private Landowner (23 ac)

**CITY SPONSOR:** Bayport

Location	Approximate Size of Site	Potential for Expansion	Recent Traffic Counts	Access/Visibility	Proximity to Centers of Population Density	Site Characteristics
South of 5th Avenue N. East of CSAH 21 North of CSAH 14	Prvt. Land = 23 ac Church = 10 ac Prvt. Land = 5 ac.	None	County Rd. 21 = 1,800 AADT, N. of 14 County Rd. 14 = 2,450 AADT County Rd. 21, S. of 14 = 3,300 AADT County Rd. 14 = W. of County Rd. 21 6,400	Access = Good Visibility = Excellent from adjacent County Roads, No visibility from Highway 36.	2010 Within 3 miles 2030 Within 3 miles	Majority of Land is Vacant, heavily wooded bluff area on private site; current owner in conversations with developer, may be able to combine other sites to obtain necessary acreage for development. Also to negotiate with developer through the City to obtain appropriate location for facility site.
Site Availability	Site Cost	Infrastructure/Utilities	Cost of Utilities/Infrast.	Assembly of Multiple Parcels	Current Zoning/Rezoning Required?	Proximity to Bus/Walking/Hiking Path
Private 5-acre available immediately; church portion may or may not be available Pvt. Landowner's site available now; must work through City with developer.  Currently working on annexing horse farm property into City of Bayport.	One site would be donated; cost for prvt. Farm site could be negotiated w/ developer possibly for minimal or no cost; church site may be used as possible parking expansion space.  Developer is currently offering \$1.8 million for private site for 50 homesites.	Electric-Available Would require water, sanit. Sewer and storm sewer connections	Hookup costs expected to be modest; negotiated with developer of private parcel "gap cost" to increase size of mains (est. at 5% of total costs).	May be necessary to obtain sufficient buildable area.	Single-Family Estate 16DU/40 acres Private site would be annexed to City; Rezoning would be possible.	Near to current route Express bus route.  Near to walking/hiking paths.

Source: Maxfield Research Inc.





**SITE:** Old Village Area-Lake Elmo  
**SITE OWNER/DEVELOPER:** City of Lake Elmo  
**CITY SPONSOR:** Lake Elmo

<b>Location</b>	<b>Approximate Size of Site</b>	<b>Potential for Expansion</b>	<b>Recent Traffic Counts</b>	<b>Access/Visibility</b>	<b>Proximity to Center of Population</b>	<b>Site Characteristics</b>
South of Stillwater Blvd. East of 39th Street N. extension (new roadway)	40 acres	Potential Expan. Area if desired	Stillwater Blvd= 13,000 AADT	Access - Very Good Visibility=Very Good from Stillwater Blvd.	2010 Within three miles 2030 Within less than 1 mile	Flat Land-Vacant No trees

<b>Site Availability</b>	<b>Site Cost</b>	<b>Infrastructure Utilities</b>	<b>Cost of Utilities/Infrast</b>	<b>Assembly of Multiple Parcels</b>	<b>Current Zoning/Re zoning Required?</b>	<b>Proximity to Bus/Walking/Hiking Path</b>
Immediate within 12 mos.	\$1.00 annually	Electric Water Sanitary Sewer Storm Sewer	Utility hookup costs may be born by the City.	None	Agricultural City will rezone to required use as part of agreement with developer of surrounding property. Will incorporate into master plan document.	Bus transit is located on Highway 5; Will be connected to local trail system.
				<b>Own/Lease</b>		
				Perpetual Lease Annual Rate of \$1.00		

Source: Maxfield Research Inc.



**SITE:** Nass-Buberal Site  
**SITE OWNER/DEVELOPER:** Messrs. Nass and Buberal  
**CITY SPONSOR:** None

<b>Location</b>	East/West of Manning; south of Highway 36
<b>Approximate Size of Site</b>	15-50 acres
<b>Potential for Expansion</b>	High potential for future expansion
<b>Recent Traffic Counts</b>	Highway 36= 36,000 AADT Manning Ave. N=14,900 AADT
<b>Access/Visibility</b>	Access=Excellent Visibility-V. Good  Access off TH 36 onto Manning Ave.
<b>Proximity to Center of Growth</b>	2010 Within 3 miles 2030 Within 3 miles
<b>Site Characteristics</b>	Generally flat land; hill and land fill Potential issues w/ land/soil because of past dumping on a portion of the property.

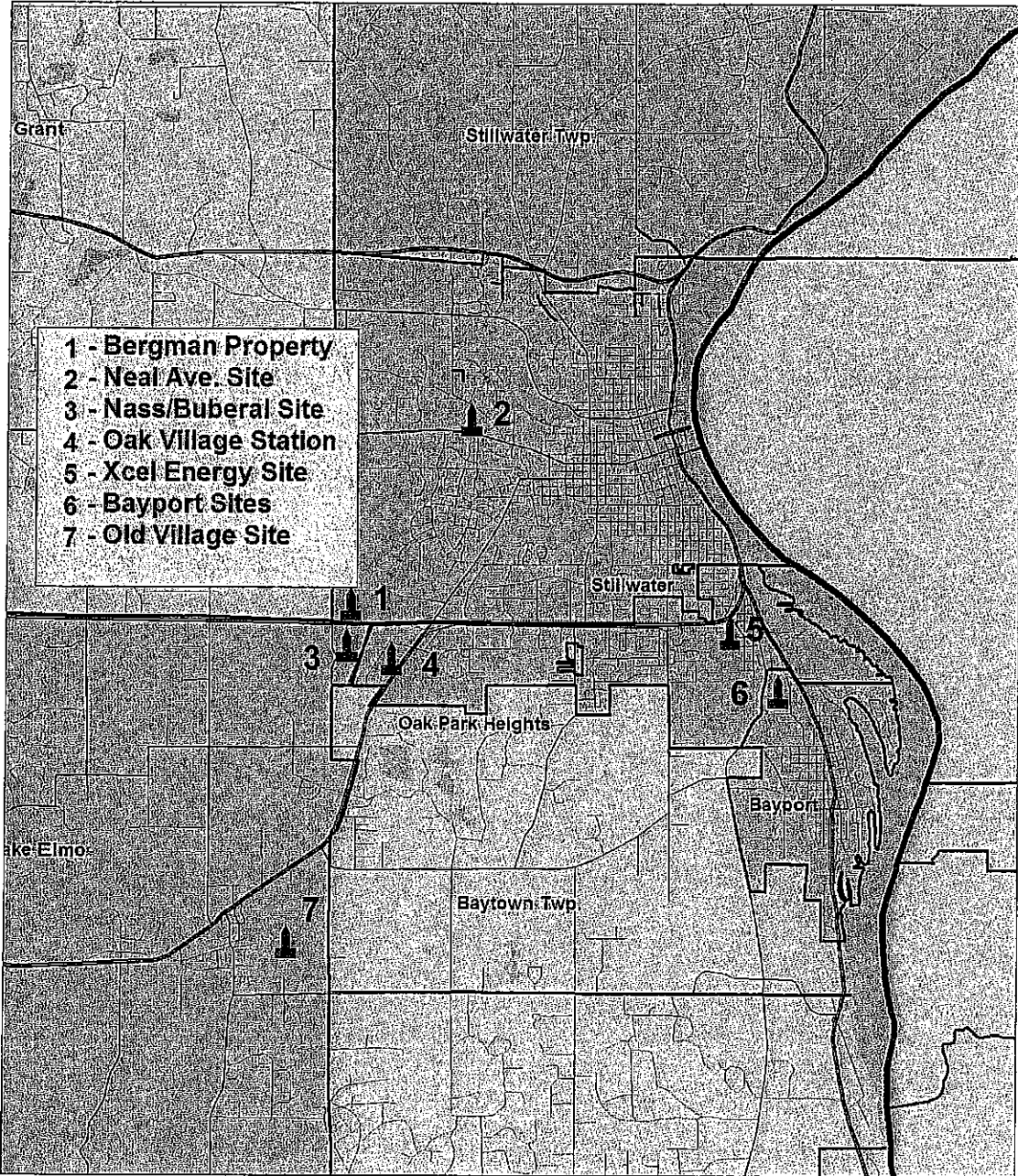
<b>Site Availability</b>	Immediately
<b>Site Cost</b>	\$4.50 per square foot; negotiable.
<b>Infrastructure/Utilities</b>	Electric Water Storm Sewer Sanitary Sewer All Available
<b>Cost of Utilities/Infrast.</b>	Hook-up costs for utilities; Utilities located adjacent to the site from Oak Park Heights.
<b>Assembly of Multiple Parcels</b>	Some assembly; may be difficult to acquire additional parcels.
<b>Own/Lease</b>	Own
<b>Current Zoning Re-zoning Required?</b>	Large lot estate Agricultural  Re-zoning would be required for most of the property. Difficulty re-zoning for community center.
<b>Proximity to Bus/Walking/Hiking Path</b>	Potential for Future Commuter Bus  Could hook up to the existing path/trail system.

Source: Maxfield Research Inc.

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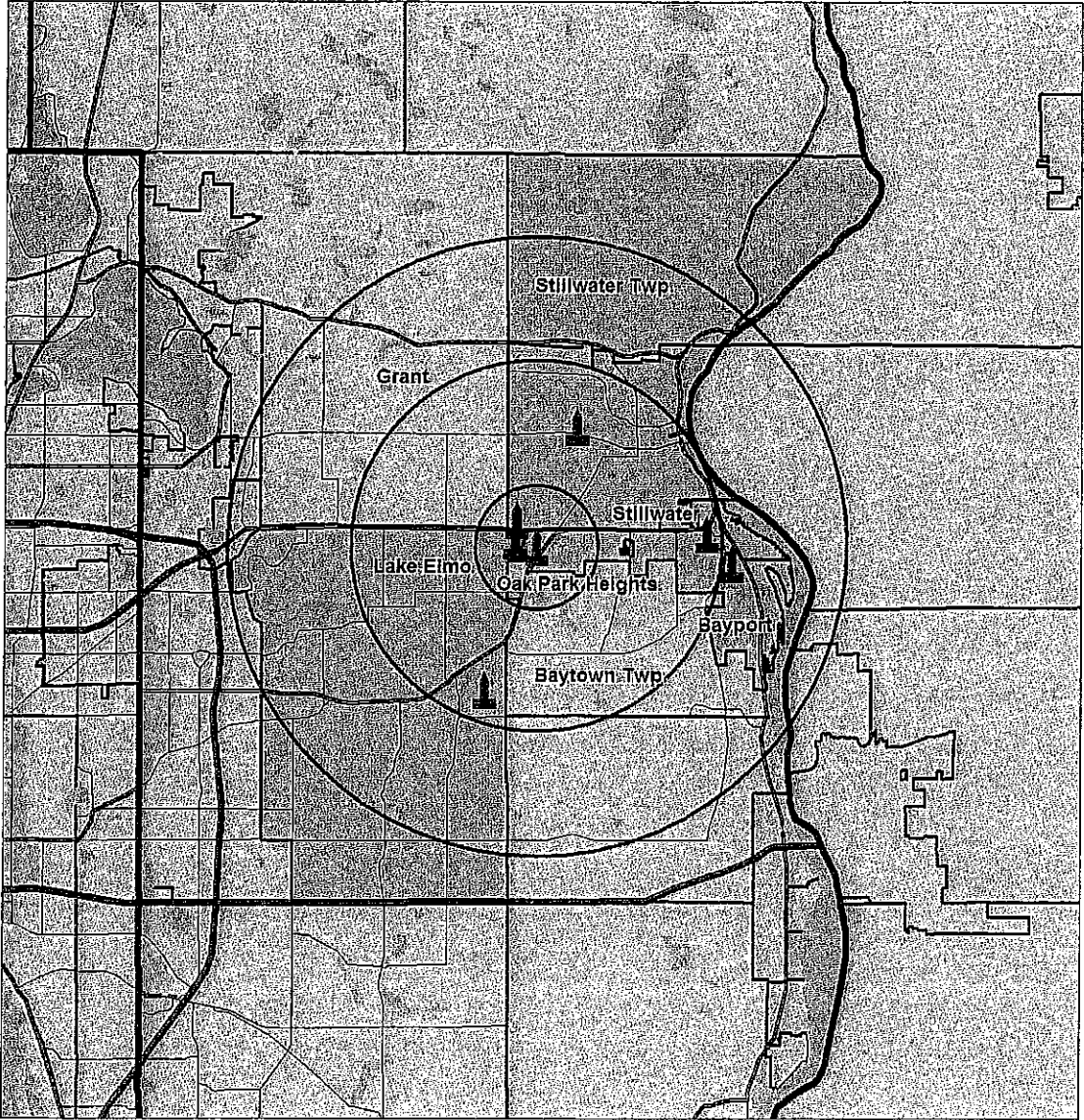
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# SCVA CFC Potential Sites





# One-, Three- and Five-Mile Radius for Oak Park Station

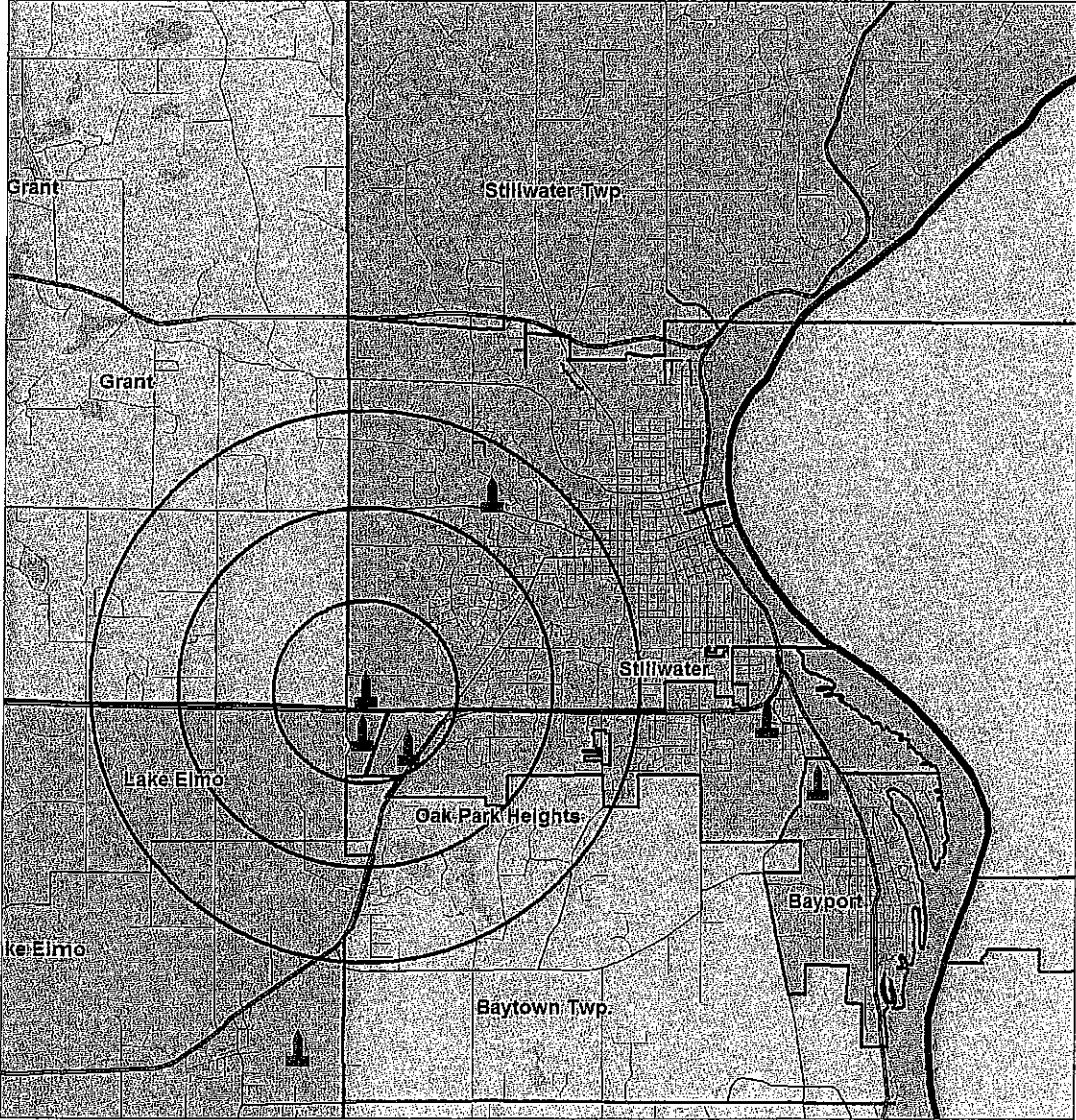


Source: Maxfield Research Inc.





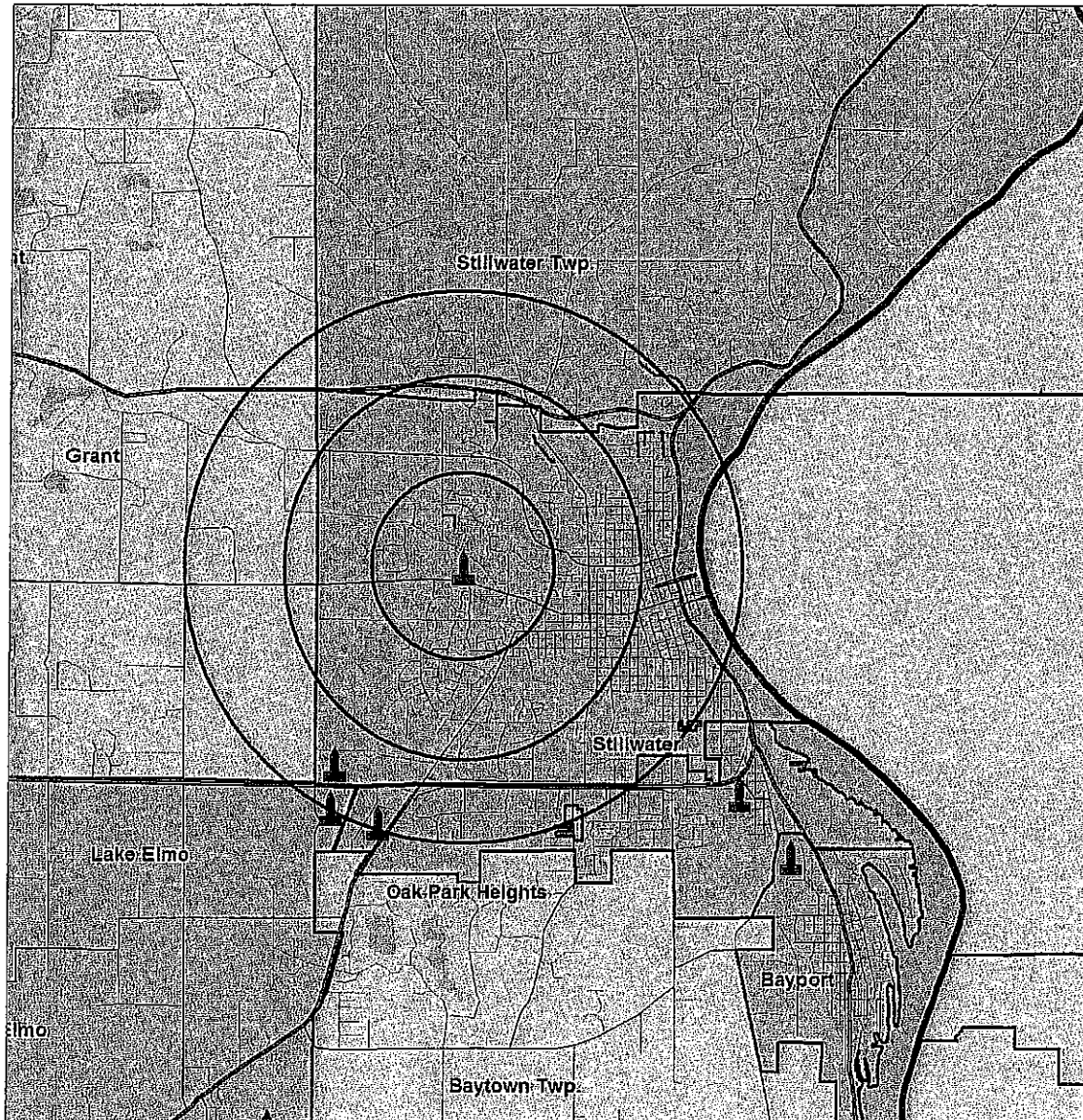
# One-, Three- and Five-Mile Radii for the Bergman Property



Source: Maxfield Research Inc.



## One, Three and Five-Mile Radii from Neal Avenue Property



Source: Maxfield Research Inc.



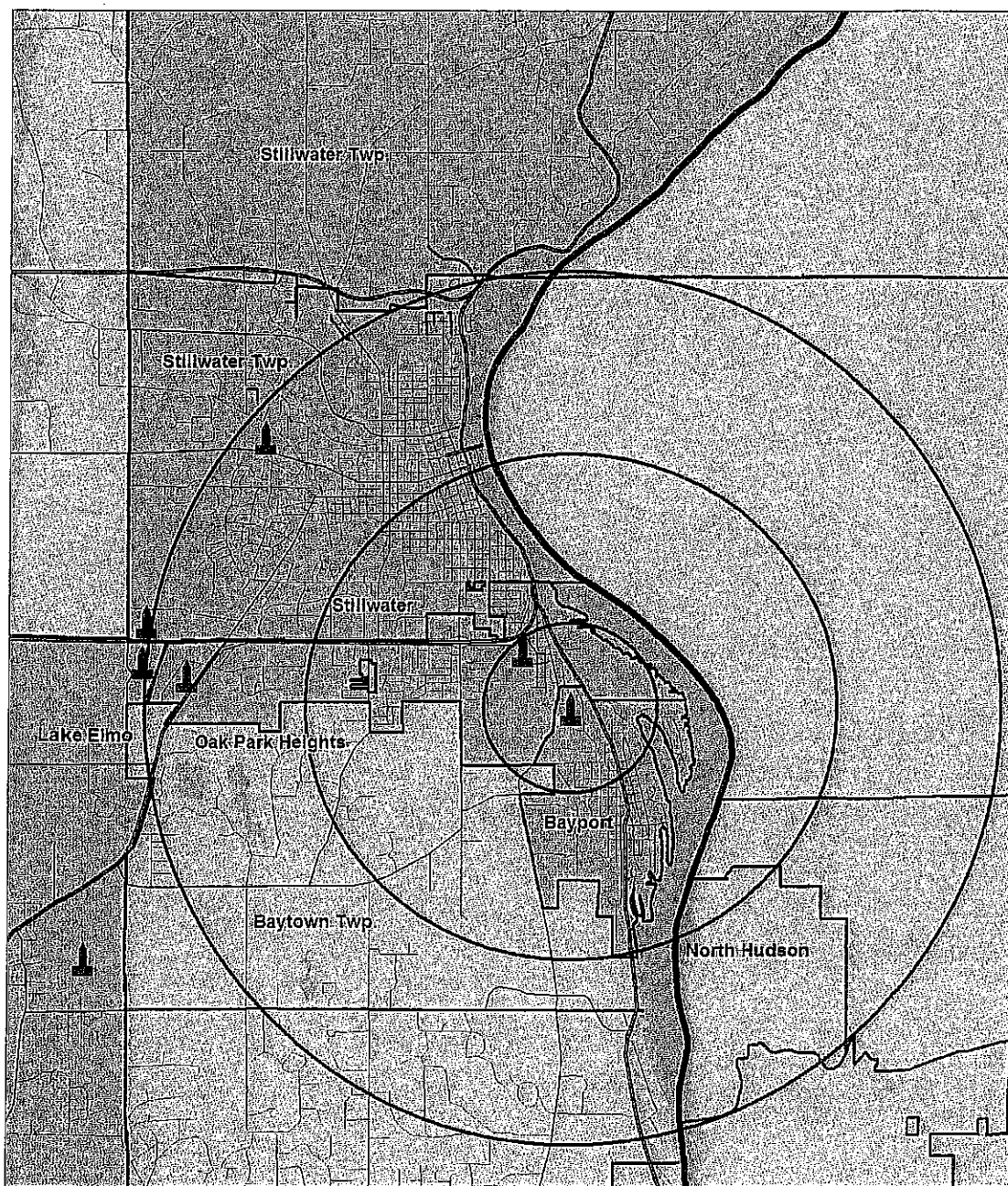
## One-, Three- and Five-Mile Radius for Xcel Fly Ash Site



Source: Maxfield Research Inc.



## One-, Three- and Five-Mile Radius for the Bayport Sites



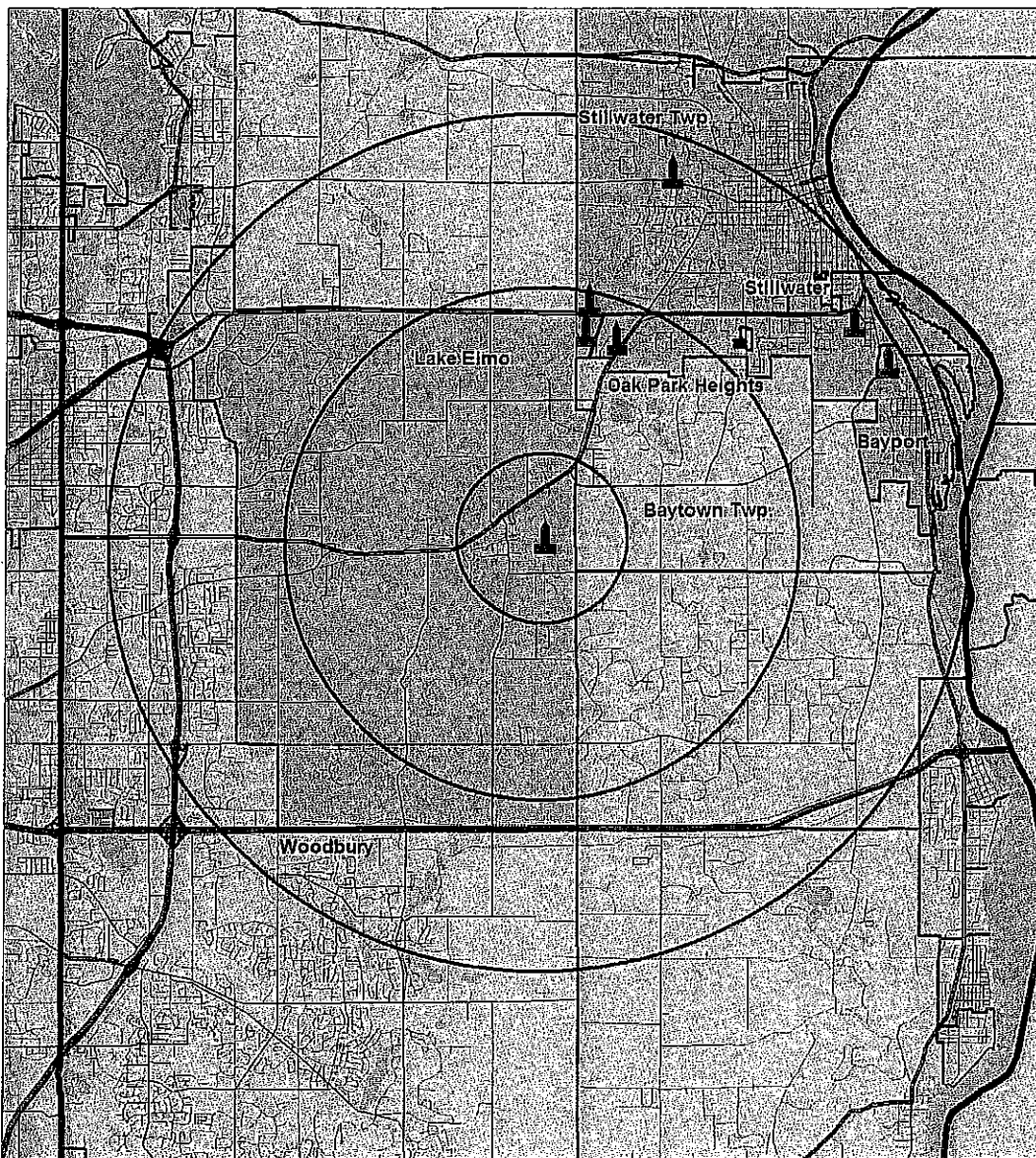
Source: Maxfield Research Inc.

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## One-, Three- and Five-Mile Radii for Old Village Site in Lake Elmo

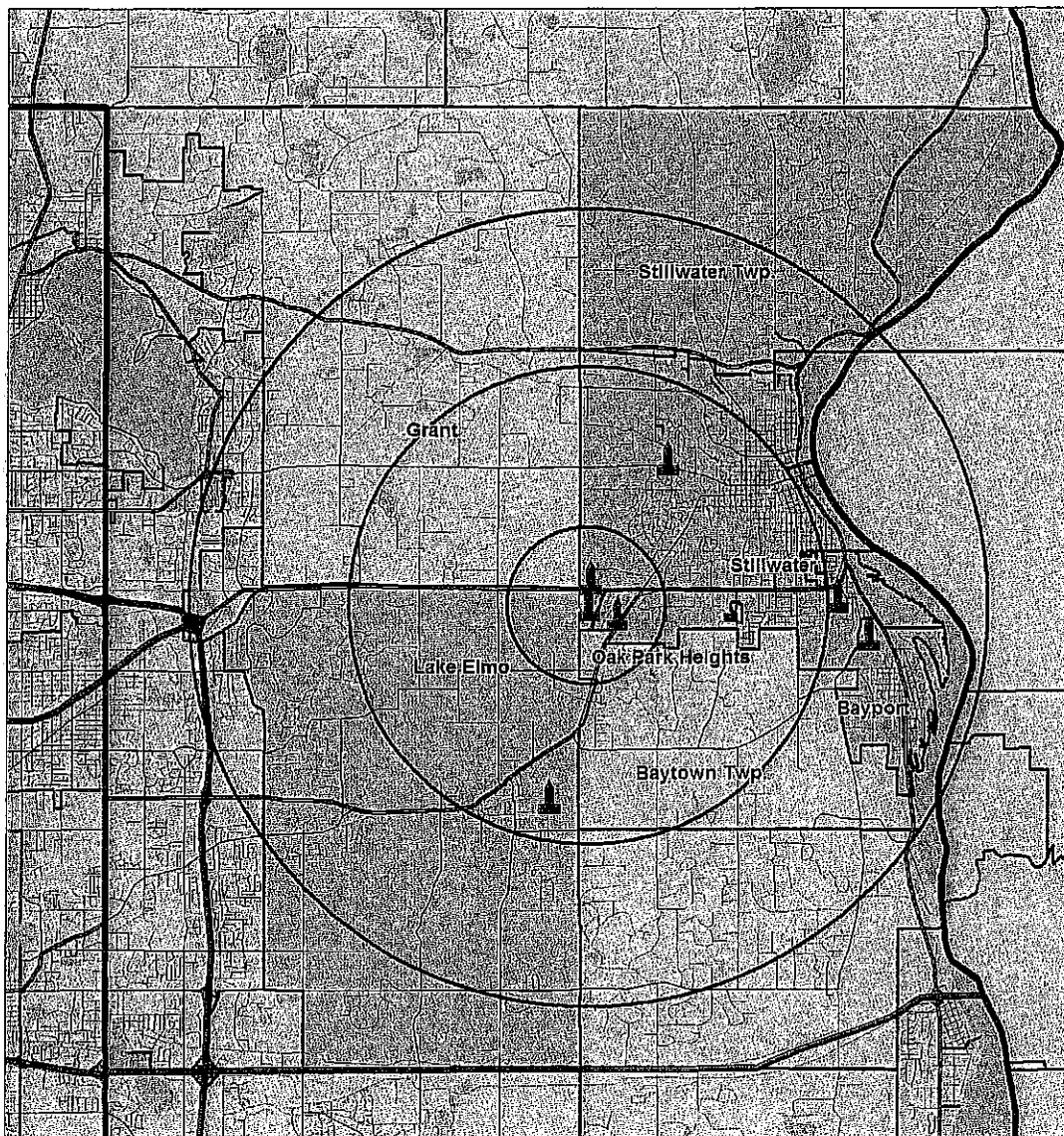


Source: Maxfield Research Inc.

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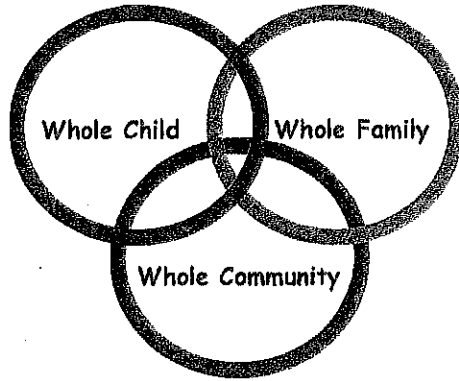
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## One-, Three- and Five-Mile Radii for the Nass-Buberal Property





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**St. Croix Valley Area  
Community Family Center**

**Key Informant Focus Groups  
Key Findings Report  
August 2006**



**Special Needs Key Informant Focus Groups**  
**Key Findings Report**  
**August 2006**

**Introduction**

This document discusses and analyzes the process and key findings of the Key Informant Focus Group sessions that were conducted with 58 participants in Stillwater Area Community Education's Early Childhood Family Education and Adult Basic Education, and Courage St. Croix programs. These individuals were recruited and self identified as interested from among current clients and their parents to participate in the group sessions.

The process was planned, organized and conducted during the months of July and August 2006, by the St. Croix Valley Area Community Family Center's Special Needs Survey Team and Wild City Resources. The team includes Directors and staff of Courage St. Croix as well as Stillwater Area Community Education, Early Childhood Family Education, and Adult Basic Education programs. The team is a subgroup of the Integrated Planning Team, which is the planning authority for the St. Croix Valley Area Community Family Center. The appended data reports were compiled by Community Education, Early Childhood Family Education and analyzed by the Special Needs Team, Decision Resources, Ltd. Wild City Resources. Wild City Resources developed this report.

**Background**

The Key Informant Focus Group sessions were intended to provide a subjective user friendly, method of assessing responses to the same key questions that were addressed in the statistical study conducted in the School District by Decision Resources LTD. These included general knowledge, level of support and preferences for the concept of an Integrated Community Family Center,

The process was developed to provide access to the perceptions of current key special needs clients who could not be effectively reached through a telephone survey. It was initiated in order to assure that the opinions of individuals and families who experience barriers to participation were considered during the planning and decision-making process for the new St. Croix Valley Area Community Family Center.

## Questions and Goals

- Inform participants about the Integrated Community Family Center concept
- Inform participants about the comprehensive nature of existing programs, and the interrelated components that are in place at this time
- Inform the team about participation and perception of programs in which clients and their families are currently participating, or have participated in
- Inform the team about the barriers participants have to participation in programs
- Inform the team about the programs that clients would like to see in a new center
- Generate discussion and provide participants with an opportunity to brainstorm and share their experiences

## Instrumentation and Methods

Fifty-eight individuals participated. Forty-three clients enrolled in Community Education's Early Family Childhood Education, (EFCE) and English as a Second Language, (ESL), and English Language Learners (ELL) Adult Basic Education, (ABE) Programs, participated in three sessions. Fifteen parents of children, who are enrolled in both Courage Center programs for specially challenged children and Community Education Programs, participated in four sessions.

Participants were recruited through phone calls placed by program staff members during early July, 2006. Two or three Team members attended each session. The sessions were opened, guided and concluded by a lead person who was pre-appointed. Generally, the second person observed, took notes and participated in discussion on a limited basis. These same people also participated in the analysis of the process.

Each session lasted about an hour and a half. They followed a planned format and included written, verbal and interactive elements. The sessions lasted about an hour and a half each. Copies of the tools used in administration of the sessions, as well as in compilation of data and analysis of the information are attached in the Appendices.

## Study Limitations

- Because of language and other barriers, the question and discussion components could not be administered equally or consistently from group to group.
- The staff that works with the program participants on a daily basis massaged the presentations to elicit maximum responses and participation in the process.
- While the Key Informant Focus Groups were not intended to produce scientific data, certain interesting parallels can be drawn between both the Decision Resources LTD statistical survey and the Special Needs Key Informant Focus Groups.



## Parallel Trends

- Initial awareness of the program was low
- Support for the program is strong and grows as more information becomes available
- While the issue of a tax levy was not primary, affordability is a key matter
- Recreation is of primary interest to families
- Preference for casual indoor and outdoor swimming as well as a gym and weight room are very strong
- Support for life long learning and whole family education is strong
- Recreation as preference for indoor and outdoor swimming and casual recreation is very strong
- Distance from the facility did not emerge as a strong concern already using the center
- Whole family and parent education, programs and services are of great importance to families

## Summary of Key Findings

- The participants are generally very happy with and appreciative of the current programs they are participating in.
- They were generally unaware of the Community Family Center project.
- They are supportive and welcomed the idea of a new integrated center, yet some were hesitant that such a facility would become "too big", or could lose itself in trying to be all things to all people.
- Access emerged as a strong issue. This may take on various, complex meanings for families and caregivers with multiple needs.
- Time emerged as a key obstacle to participation. Time as an over all issue and the ability to organize time, as well as the availability of programs that would support people in their ability to organize time would increase access for all groups.
- Programs that do not require long-term time commitment would be of great assistance.
- Financial and emotional stress was presented as a major factor for families. Needs based scholarships and sliding fee scales should continue and be made easily available. Parents of children with special needs expressed a general lack of trust in program and services.
- The availability of a community services coordinator and dependable respite will build trust with these parents and increase their program participation.
- The need for support programs for siblings of children with special needs emerged as a strong theme when discussing future program participation.
- There is a definite awareness among participants and parents of needs and services that could enhance available programming.

## Recommendations

- Ease the key barrier of time
- Centrally coordinate programs and services
- Employ an outreach and a family services coordinator
- Serve the whole family, especially school age siblings of special needs children
- Bring health, wellness and educational programs together
- Offer options for respite and childcare
- Maintain affordability of all programs
- Assure continued safety for high risk, vulnerable children in the new multi-program center
- Create an inviting, friendly, well organized space, located close to near-by parking, amenities and services
- Support programs that offer parents the opportunity to network with each other and support and contribute to the Center

## Final Observations

- The Integrated Community Family Center concept is very well received by current users
- There is good indication that families would increase their participation in new program offerings at a new center.
- Participants are eager to support the project, with both affordable financial contributions and through interactive, participatory outreach.
- The results strongly indicate the time is right to actively promote the project widely with a marketing and community engagement strategy

**Appendix**

**St. Croix Valley Area  
Community Family Center  
Key Informant Focus Group  
Key Findings Report**

**August 2006**

**Appendix A**

**PRESENTATION GUIDE**

**St. Croix Valley Area  
Community Family Center**

**KEY INFORMANT FOCUS GROUPS**

**July-August 2006**

## Appendix A

### COMMUNITY FAMILY CENTER KEY INFORMANT FOCUS GROUP PRESENTATION GUIDE

#### Introduction

Thank you for coming today. We have invited you here to talk about an exciting project we are working on. You may have heard about it. A large group of organizations and municipalities in the Stillwater Area has formed a partnership that includes Community Education, the Courage Center and the YMCA. Together, we are planning for the development of a wonderful new Community Family Center.

The partnership directly links our programs. It will allow us to make many expanded, as-well-as new programs and services seamlessly available to you and your family. The Center will provide a wide variety of experiences for families and individuals in the greater Stillwater Area. They will include:

- Early childhood
- Special needs
- Adult education
- Wellness and health
- Recreational

This is an innovative approach to programming, one that serves the needs of all families and individuals especially those with barriers to involvement.

Staff from all the agencies are cooperatively planning the programs. Each of the partners has an area of specialty, which they bring to the partnership. We envision sharing classes, space and equipment and resources. This will allow us to offer opportunities, uniquely shaped to meet your individual and family needs.

#### Today we will

- Review our current programs
- Find out which programs you participate in
- Share with you some possibilities for new programs
- Learn your thoughts and ideas on programs that would be important to you in a new center.

It is very important to us that we plan programs that will meet your family's needs. We will use what we learn from you today, to guide us as we make important decisions for the new Center. There is no right, or wrong answers. We want your ideas.

## Current Programs

1. Here is a list of the programs we are currently providing. Can you please share which of these you or your family members are currently using, or have used in the past.

### Opportunities Community Education Offers to the Community

#### Early Childhood Programs/Services

- **Parent Education** to increase parent knowledge of child development and to develop realistic expectations for parents and young children.
- **Child/parent classes** that include children and parents learning together with a parent education component.
- **Home Visits** for families who cannot attend weekly classes.
- **Family events**
- **Integrated Preschool** for 3 and 4 year olds – Leaps 'N Bounds, Cimarron, Sunny Hill, Head Start
- **Early Childhood Screening** to identify any possible health or learning concerns prior to kindergarten
- **Home-based services** for children birth to three years old who have an identified educational disability.
- **Early Childhood Special Education** in-center classes for children ages 2-5 with Autism Spectrum Disorders
- **Early Childhood Special Education** classes for children with moderate to severe disabilities
- **Speech and Language** classes and individual speech therapy
- **Special support services** such as Adaptive Physical Education, physical therapy, occupational therapy, school psychology and nursing.

#### Adult Basic Education Program/Services

- **ESL Classes** English as a Second Language
- **ABE Classes** Assistance with enhancing reading, writing and math skills
- **GED Program** Test preparation
- **Citizenship** Test preparation
- **Adult Diploma Program**
- **Preparation for employment testing**
- **Preparation for college entrance exams**
- **Basic computer skills**

## **Opportunities Courage St. Croix Center Offers to the Community**

### **Key Programs**

- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy

### **Aquatics, Fitness and Recreation, (partial lists)**

- **Aquatics** group, individual and family programs
- **Fitness** groups for youth
- **Weight Management** for youth

### **Enrichment (partial lists)**

- Handwriting classes, communication classes, etc.
- Horseback Riding
- Water Skiing
- Snow Skiing
- Day and Residential Camps

### **2. Please rank from 1-6 your reasons for not using programs you would like to use.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Time
- \_\_\_\_\_ Physical Access
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lack of Information
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Financial
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

### **For Discussion**

#### **3. Lets talk some more about what the new program will do.**

- This Community Family Center will provide children, families and individuals the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to grow, thrive and make successful life transitions.
- The integrated program provides the support necessary for all children to enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- Early childhood specialists advocate for “whole family - whole child” development and have a program plan that is reflective of that belief.
- Through Community Education, Adult Basic Education and Workforce Education, as well as Family Literacy programs, parents are supported in their

efforts to improve their economic circumstances and to help their children achieve academic success.

- Courage St. Croix and the school district's Special Education staff ensure that children of all abilities are served in an inclusive way and that parents are provided with the support they need.
- The YMCA of Greater St. Paul will provide support for current gaps in programming, such as childcare, special events, recreation, and wellness activities.

4. **Here are some of the programs could be available at the new center. Please rank the top five in order of importance to you and your family. (These could be divided into groups and each group ranked from 1-5).**

- \_\_\_\_\_ An indoor competition or lap pool
- \_\_\_\_\_ An indoor leisure fun pool with water slide
- \_\_\_\_\_ An outdoor swimming pool with splash area and water slide
- \_\_\_\_\_ An indoor ice skating rink
- \_\_\_\_\_ Racquetball courts
- \_\_\_\_\_ An exercise, fitness, and weight room
- \_\_\_\_\_ An indoor running/walking track
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gymnasiums
- \_\_\_\_\_ A whirlpool bath, steam rooms, and hot-tub facility
- \_\_\_\_\_ An aerobics and dance room
- \_\_\_\_\_ Indoor and outdoor playgrounds for children
- \_\_\_\_\_ An arts center, including arts and crafts rooms for classes and instructional programs and a gallery for the exhibition of the works of local artists
- \_\_\_\_\_ A senior citizens drop-in center
- \_\_\_\_\_ A large community room, with attached kitchen, for banquets, parties, organizational meetings, and other rental purposes
- \_\_\_\_\_ A community theater for the performing arts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Picnic facility and trails adjoining the center
- \_\_\_\_\_ Snack bar, soda fountain, and coffee shop
- \_\_\_\_\_ A teen center
- \_\_\_\_\_ Multi-purpose classrooms
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are there any other recreational facilities you would like to see in a Community Family Center? (IF "YES," ASK:) What are they? Make a list?

## Closing

Ask for questions, comments.

That is all for today. Thank you for coming. We will keep you informed on the Center progress.



**Appendix B**

**DATA REPORTS**

**St. Croix Valley Area  
Community Family Center**

**KEY INFORMANT FOCUS GROUPS**

**July 25-August 1, 3006**

# Focus Groups-Area Learning Center

43 Participants of Adult Basic Education

July 18 & 19, 2006

Participation Survey: <i>Early Childhood Programs/Services</i>	Focus #1	Focus #2	Focus #3
• Parent Education	5	0	5
• Child/Parent Classes	3	2	15
• Home Visits	2	2	1
• Family Events	1	1	3
• Integrated Preschool	HS 1	3	4
• Early Childhood Screening	1	1	3
• Home Based Services	2	0	0
• Early Childhood Special Ed classes Autism + moderate – severe disabilities	1	2	0
• Speech and Language Classes		0	
• Special support services Physical therapy, school psychology, adaptive physical therapy	3	1 Language	0
<i>Adult Basic Education Programs/Services</i>			
• ESL Classes	13	10	7
• ABE Classes	1	1	0
• GED Program	3	0	0
• Citizenship	4	2	0
• Adult Diploma	5	1	0
• Preparation for Employment Testing	4	0	0
• Preparation for College Entrance Exams	3	1	2
• Basic Computer Skills	13	10	7

Focus Meetings  
 July 18 & 19, 2006  
 Not administered

Participation Survey: <i>Courage St. Croix</i>	Focus #1	Focus #2	Focus #3
<i>Key Programs</i>			
• Physical Therapy			
• Occupational Therapy			
• Speech Therapy			
<i>Aquatics, Fitness &amp; Recreation</i>			
• Aquatics - group/individual/family			
• Fitness for Youth			
• Weight Management for Youth			
<i>Enrichment</i>			
• Handwriting classes			
• Horseback Riding			
• Water Skiing			
• Snow Skiing			
• Day and Residential Camps			

**Focus Meetings-Courage St. Croix**  
 15 Participants of Courage St. Croix & Early Childhood Special Education  
 July 25, 27, 31, 2006 & August 1, 2006

<b>Participation Survey: <i>Early Childhood Programs/Services</i></b>	<b>Focus #4</b>		<b>Focus #5</b>		<b>Focus #6</b>		<b>Focus #7</b>	
	<b>Pre.</b>	<b>Past</b>	<b>Pre.</b>	<b>Past</b>	<b>Pre.</b>	<b>Past</b>	<b>Pre.</b>	<b>Past</b>
Parent Education	1	2	0	1	1	2	0	1
Child/Parent Classes	2	3	0	2	1	2	1	4
Home Visits	0	2	0	1	0	3	0	1
Family Events	2	3	0	1	3	2	3	3
Integrated Preschool	2	2	0	1	2	1	3	2
Early Childhood Screening	2	3	0	1	0	3	2	4
Home-Based Services	3	3	0	2	0	3	1	2
Early Childhood Special Education/Autism Spectrum Disorders	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Early Childhood Special Education/moderate to severe disabilities	2	0	0	1	2	2	1	2
Speech and Language classes	3	2	1	1	3	2	3	3
Special Support Services	2	3	0	1	1	3	2	2

<b>Participation Survey</b>	<b>Totals</b>	
	<b>Pre.</b>	<b>Past</b>
Parent Education	2	6
Child/Parent Classes	4	11
Home Visits	0	7
Family Events	8	9
Integrated Preschool	7	6
Early Childhood Screening	4	11
Home-Based Services	4	10
Early Childhood Special Education/Autism Spectrum Disorders	0	4
Early Childhood Special Education/moderate to severe disabilities	5	5
Speech and Language classes	10	8
Special Support Services	5	9

# Area Learning Center Focus Meetings

July 25, 27, 31, 2006 & August 1, 2006

Participation Survey: <i>Courage St. Croix</i>	Focus #4		Focus #5		Focus #6		Focus #7	
	Pre.	Past	Pre.	Past	Pre.	Past	Pre.	Past
<b>Key Programs</b>								
• Physical Therapy	0	1	2	2	1	1	2	1
• Occupational Therapy	1	0	1	1	1	1	3	2
• Speech Therapy	0	1	1	1	2	1	2	1
<b>Aquatics, Fitness &amp; Recreation</b>								
• Aquatics	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	3
• Fitness	0	0	0	0	*	0	1	0
• Weight	0	0	0	0	*	0	0	0
<b>Enrichment</b>								
• Handwriting classes, Communication	0	0	0	0	*	0	1	0
• Horseback Riding	0	0	1	1	1	1	3	2
• Water Skiing	0	0	0	0	*	0	0	0
• Snow Skiing	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
• Day & Residential Camps	0	0	0	0	*	0	0	0

\* = future use

Participation Survey	Totals	
	Pre.	Past
<b>Key Programs</b>		
• Physical Therapy	5	5
• Occupational Therapy	6	4
• Speech Therapy	5	4
<b>Aquatics, Fitness &amp; Recreation</b>		
• Aquatics	6	8
• Fitness	*1	0
• Weight	*	0
<b>Enrichment</b>		
• Handwriting classes, Communication	*1	0
• Horseback Riding	5	4
• Water Skiing	*	0
• Snow Skiing	2	2
• Day & Residential Camps	*	0
• Golf	*	0

Others: Social Groups w/kids w/cognitive delays-grade school age, parent support groups

## Area Learning Center Focus Meeting

Barriers	Focus 1 (AM)	Focus 2 (PM)	Focus 3 (Eve)	Comments
<b>Barriers:</b>				
• Time	4	4	7	
• Physical Access	2	4	5	
• Lack of Information	3	2	1	
• Transportation	1	1	5	
• Financial	2	11		
<b>Others:</b>				
• Marketing	1			
• Age of Activities	1			
• Child Care	1	4		

# Courage Center Focus Meeting

Barriers	Focus 4 7-25-06	Focus 5 7-27-06	Focus 6 7-31-06	Comments
<b>Barriers:</b>				Not Circulated
• Time	4	2	1	
• Physical Access	0		2	
• Lack of Information	4		1	
• Transportation			1	
• Financial	4	2	1	
<b>Others:</b>				
• Marketing				
• Age of Activities				
• Child Care	2			
• Dependent on Adult Help		1		
• Fear on Part of Others/Unknown	3	1		
• HIPPA Laws	2	1		

Area Learning Center Focus Groups  
 July 18 & 19, 2006  
 Most Popular New Programs

<i>Which 5 are most important to you and your family?</i>	Focus 1 (AM)	Focus 2 (PM)	Focus 3 (Eve)
• An indoor competition or lap pool	0	2	0
• An indoor leisure fun pool w/slide	5	3	11
• An outdoor swimming pool	1	1	0
• An indoor ice rink	1	2	3
• Racquet ball courts	0	2	0
• An exercise/fitness/weight room	4	4	8
• Indoor running/walking track	1	0	2
• Gymnasiums	4	5	2
• Whirlpool bath/steam room/hot tub	1	1	1
• Aerobics and dance room	4	1	9
• Indoor/outdoor playground for children	0	2	2
• Arts center – classrooms and gallery	3	1	3
• Senior citizens drop-in center	1	0	1
• Large community room – for parties/banquets/meetings	2	3	1
• Community theatre for performing arts	2	0	1
• Picnic facility and trails adjoining center	1	1	0
• Snack bar, coffee shop, soda fountain	4	1	5
• Teen center	0	0	0
• Multipurpose classrooms	2	1	9
<b>Others:</b>			
• Library	3	2	5
• Medical clinic/Nurse – emergency medicine	3		1
• Computer lab			0
• Community Spanish class			0
• Community service area/Information Center	3		1
• Home work/tutor center			0
• Skill Center (job & life)	4		
• Rollerblade track		1	
• Tennis courts (lessons fun)		1	
• Soccer fields		0	
• Ecology/green house		1	



## Courage St. Croix Focus Groups Most Popular New Programs

<i>Which 5 are most important to you and your family?</i>	<b>Focus 4 7-25-06</b>	<b>Focus 5 7-27-06</b>	<b>Focus 6 7-31-06</b>	<b>Focus 7 8-1-06</b>
• An indoor competition or lap pool	0			
• An indoor leisure fun pool w/slide	4	2	3	3
• An outdoor swimming pool	1			
• An indoor ice rink	0		1	
• Racquet ball courts	0			
• An exercise/fitness/weight room	2		1	3
• Indoor running/walking track	2			3
• Gymnasiums	2	2	3	3
• Whirlpool bath/steam room/hot tub	2			
• Aerobics and dance room	2	2	2	3
• Indoor/outdoor playground for children	2	2		2
• Arts center – classrooms and gallery	0		1	2
• Senior citizens drop-in center	2			
• Large community room – for parties/banquets/meetings	0		1	
• Community theatre for performing arts	0			
• Picnic facility and trails adjoining center	0			
• Snack bar, coffee shop, soda fountain	0		1	1
• Teen center	0			
• Multipurpose classrooms	1	2		
<b>Others:</b>				
Day Care	2			1
Adaptive Sports	0			3
Outdoor Pool w/water-park	2			1

