6.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This section of the plan provides valuable strategies, tools and practices that can assist county officials implement the Roadway Systems Plan’s recommendations and make wise long term decisions.

6.1 Roadway Systems Plan Adoption

The first step towards implementation of the plan is for Carver County to adopt it. By adopting the plan, the County Commission will establish priorities and guidelines on which to base future transportation decisions. All jurisdictions in the county should receive copies of the adopted plan to help them support the county’s efforts to implement the plan. Citizens and members of the business community should understand the opportunities or limitations that the plan provides. Giving all affected groups full knowledge of the county’s transportation goals will help them understand how these goals are linked to land use elements shown in the county’s comprehensive land use plan. Copies of the plan should be provided to cities, townships and public libraries in the area, so it can be accessed by the greatest number of people.

The county should periodically review and update the Roadway Systems Plan and its traffic forecasting model, based on estimates of future development, population trends, changing financial resources, and citizen and local government input. Depending on the speed and degree of change, it is recommended that the plan be reviewed at least every five to 10 years.

6.2 Access Management

Access management guidelines provide a means for transportation engineers and planners to balance private property concerns with the need to provide for a safe and efficient transportation system. Standardized guidelines provide a way for clear communications between the agencies and individuals involved (developers, city/county staff, landowners) in the process. The access spacing guidelines that have been developed for Carver County reflect the standards adopted by Mn/DOT. Through this coordination, access in Carver County will be consistent with Mn/DOT best practices.

6.2.1 Benefits of Access Management

Access guidelines are important because they define a starting point for balancing property access, safety and mobility concerns. Transportation agencies regularly receive requests for additional access (e.g. new public streets, commercial driveways, residential and field accesses), which are evaluated by numerous agencies. Because of the number of individuals and agencies involved, it is easy to have an inconsistent access decisions. This can result in confusion between agencies, developers and property owners as well as long-term safety and mobility problems. Standard access guidelines can be used to improve communication, enhance safety and maintain the capacity and mobility of the important transportation corridors. In addition, access guidelines may be used to respond to access requests and to promote good access practices, such as:

- Aligning access with other existing access points.
- Providing adequate spacing to separate and reduce conflicts.
- Encouraging indirect access over direct access on high-speed, high-volume arterial routes.
Providing access management in some form, whether it is through grade-separated crossings, frontage roads or right-in/right-out access, reduces the number of conflicts and results in improved safety. Numerous studies have demonstrated a direct relationship between the number of full access points and the rate of crashes, including FHWA Access Research Report No. FHWA-RD-91-044. Figure 18 documents this relationship.

**FIGURE 18**
Access/Crash Relationship

Access management also plays an important role in maintaining roadway capacity and maximizing mobility, while supporting the jurisdiction’s functional classification system plans. A key challenge facing Carver County and its planning partners is adequately balancing access and mobility on the roadway system. The relationship of access to mobility, in part, determines the road’s functional classification (see Figure 19).
6.2.2 Legal Basis for Access Management

Minnesota State Statutes direct public road authorities to provide “reasonable, convenient, and suitable” access to property unless these access rights have been purchased. Courts have interpreted this to allow:

- Restrictions of access to right-in/right-out
- Redirection of access to another public roadway if the roadway is reasonable, convenient and suitable

In special circumstances, broader authority (police power) has been given to public agencies if the situation is deemed to jeopardize public safety. However, this is a very high standard to meet and is seldom used by public agencies.

In addition to the above, land use authorities may exercise additional authority in limiting access through development rules and regulations. Land use authorities can require:

- Dedication of public rights-of-way
- Construction of public roadways
- Mitigation measures of traffic and/or other impacts
- Change in and/or development of new access points

These types of access controls are processed through local elected officials. Since stronger land use and access controls are available at the county and city level, and these units of government are usually involved at the planning stages, access guidelines and corridor management practices should be focused at this level. However, the potential long-term benefits of access management require support and good communication at all governmental levels.
6.2.3 Carver County Access Spacing Guidelines

Carver County currently has access spacing guidelines in place, which were included in the 1999 Transportation Plan. However, these guidelines were based primarily on the type of roadway facility and traffic loads. In 2002, the Minnesota Department of Transportation developed its own set of access policies and spacing guidelines for the Trunk Highway System based on a roadway’s functional classification and its role in the regional transportation system. Consistent with the Mn/DOT policies, the proposed Carver County access spacing guidelines now use roadway functional classification and proximity to developed/developing areas as the basis for the recommended spacing of access along a corridor. Having access recommendations based on functional classification rather than traffic volumes enables the county and cities to protect access on roadways based on their intended long-term function. Table 15 illustrates the Mn/DOT and Carver County access spacing guidelines. Figure 20 shows the access categories as they have been assigned to the roadway network. It is important to point out that in some cases for critical segments of mobility corridors, the access spacing has been “managed-up,” proposing wider spacing than that expected by the roadway’s functional classification (i.e., TH 5).

On Table 15 for each functional classification category, the recommended full movement as well as conditional secondary intersection spacing is given. In addition, each category identifies signal spacing and the treatment of private access. Regarding roadways most applicable to the Carver County system, it should be noted that the guidelines are more restrictive (exception/deviation) of private access along minor arterials in developing areas than in rural and/or urban core areas (subject to conditions). This is due to the fact that planning should be able to limit private access in these developing areas versus areas that have already been developed (core urban area) and/or areas where there is no other supporting street system (rural).

Because there will be a need to deal with special circumstances, procedures have been developed to address potential problems (Appendix G explains the conditions, exceptions and deviations for private access on roadways that are not part of the Trunk Highway System). For specific information on private access points along Trunk Highways, please refer to Mn/DOT’s Access Management Guidelines in Technical Memorandum No. 02-10-IM-01.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Area or Facility Type</th>
<th>Typical Functional Class</th>
<th>Intersection Spacing</th>
<th>Signal Spacing</th>
<th>Private Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Primary Full Movement Intersection</td>
<td>Conditional Secondary Intersection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>High Priority Interregional Corridors (TH 212)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1F</td>
<td>Freeway</td>
<td>Principal Arterials</td>
<td>Interchange Access Only</td>
<td>Interchange Access Only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A-F</td>
<td>Full Grade Separation</td>
<td>Principal Arterials</td>
<td>1 mile</td>
<td>1/2 mile</td>
<td>INTERIM ONLY By Deviation Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>Rural, Exurban &amp; Bypass</td>
<td>Principal Arterials</td>
<td>1 mile</td>
<td>1/2 mile</td>
<td>By Deviation Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Medium Priority Interregional Corridors (N/A)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A-F</td>
<td>Full Grade Separation</td>
<td>Principal Arterials</td>
<td>Interchange Access Only</td>
<td></td>
<td>By Deviation Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A</td>
<td>Rural, Exurban &amp; Bypass</td>
<td>Principal and Minor Arterials</td>
<td>1 mile</td>
<td>1/2 mile</td>
<td>INTERIM ONLY By Exception or Deviation Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B</td>
<td>Urban Urbanizing</td>
<td>Principal Arterials</td>
<td>1/2 mile</td>
<td>1/4 mile</td>
<td>INTERIM ONLY By Deviation Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C</td>
<td>Urban Core</td>
<td>Principal Arterials</td>
<td>300 – 600 feet dependent upon block length</td>
<td>1/4 mile</td>
<td>Permitted Subject to Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>High Priority Regional Corridors (TH 7)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3A-F</td>
<td>Full Grade Separation</td>
<td>Principal Arterials</td>
<td>Interchange Access Only</td>
<td></td>
<td>By Deviation Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3A</td>
<td>Rural, Exurban &amp; Bypass</td>
<td>Principal and Minor Arterials</td>
<td>1 mile</td>
<td>1/2 mile</td>
<td>Permitted Subject to Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3B</td>
<td>Urban Urbanizing</td>
<td>Principal Arterials</td>
<td>1/2 mile</td>
<td>1/4 mile</td>
<td>Permitted Subject to Conditions</td>
</tr>
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<td>Urban Core</td>
<td>Principal Arterials</td>
<td>300 – 600 feet dependent upon block length</td>
<td>1/4 mile</td>
<td>Permitted Subject to Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Principal Arterials</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4A-F</td>
<td>Full Grade Separation</td>
<td>Principal Arterials</td>
<td>Interchange Access Only</td>
<td></td>
<td>By Deviation Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4A</td>
<td>Rural, Exurban &amp; Bypass</td>
<td>Principal Arterials</td>
<td>1 mile</td>
<td>1/2 mile</td>
<td>By Deviation Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4B</td>
<td>Urban Urbanizing</td>
<td>Principal Arterials</td>
<td>1/2 mile</td>
<td>1/4 mile</td>
<td>By Exception or Deviation Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4C</td>
<td>Urban Core</td>
<td>Principal Arterials</td>
<td>300 – 600 feet dependent upon block length</td>
<td>1/4 mile</td>
<td>Permitted Subject to Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Minor Arterials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5A</td>
<td>Rural, Exurban &amp; Bypass</td>
<td>Minor Arterials</td>
<td>1/2 mile</td>
<td>1/4 mile</td>
<td>Permitted Subject to Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5B</td>
<td>Urban Urbanizing</td>
<td>Minor Arterials</td>
<td>1/4 mile</td>
<td>1/8 mile</td>
<td>Permitted Subject to Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5C</td>
<td>Urban Core</td>
<td>Minor Arterials</td>
<td>300 – 600 feet dependent upon block length</td>
<td>1/4 mile</td>
<td>Permitted Subject to Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Collectors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6A</td>
<td>Rural, Exurban &amp; Bypass</td>
<td>Collectors</td>
<td>1/2 mile</td>
<td>1/4 mile</td>
<td>Permitted Subject to Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6B</td>
<td>Urban Urbanizing</td>
<td>Collectors</td>
<td>1/4 mile</td>
<td>1/8 mile</td>
<td>Permitted Subject to Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6C</td>
<td>Urban Core</td>
<td>Collectors</td>
<td>300 – 600 feet dependent upon block length</td>
<td>1/8 mile</td>
<td>Permitted Subject to Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Specific Access Plan</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>By Adopted Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 20

TH 212 Access
- Approved Interchange Access Locations
- Potential Interchange Preservation Location*
- Local Access Locations*

High Priority Interregional Corridors
- 1F
- 1A-F

High Priority Regional Corridors
- 3A

Minor Arterials
- 5A
- 5B
- 5C

Collectors
- 6A
- 6B
- 6C

Specific Access Plan
- 7

RECOMMENDED FUTURE ACCESS SPACING

- Freeway (Interchange and Local Access Point Only)
- Full Grade Separation (Interchange Access Only)
- Rural, Exurban & Bypass (1 mile full intersection spacing, 1/2 mile secondary intersection spacing)
- Urban Mobility Corridor (1/2 mile full intersection spacing, 1/4 mile secondary intersection spacing)
- Urbanizing Arterial (1/4 mile full intersection spacing, 1/8 mile secondary intersection spacing)
- Urban Core Arterial (300-600 feet depending upon block length)
- Rural Collector (1/2 mile full intersection spacing, 1/4 mile secondary intersection spacing)
- Urbanizing Collector (1/4 mile full intersection spacing, 1/8 mile secondary intersection spacing)
- Urban Core Collector (300-600 feet depending upon block length)

* Refer to section 6.2.5 for definitions

** Source: SRF Consulting Group, Inc.
6.2.4 Access Management Implementation

Carver County is experiencing an increase in population and employment. As discussed at greater detail in Section 2.2 of this document, population is anticipated to double between now and 2030. With growth will come development pressures, which will inevitably lead to requests for access onto the county and local roadway system. However, these pressures should be thought of as opportunities by engineers and land use planners to actively plan for and promote good access practices in both rural and urbanizing areas.

Access guidelines and corridor management practices should be generally implemented at the county and city levels (and by townships with active land use planning programs) because these units of government are usually involved at the planning stages of development proposals. However, long-term benefits of access management require mutual support and effective communication at all governmental levels.

In addition to establishing spacing guidelines, it is important to consider how these guidelines are implemented as part of county planning and development review procedures. The following points are important to consider:

- The guidelines apply primarily to routes with a collector functional classification or above; however, partners may also use the guidelines on some local streets.
- The guidelines should be used as long-term goals, not as absolute rules.
- Maintaining some flexibility is important in promoting access consolidation.
- The approach to implementation is as important as the guidelines themselves.
- Existing physical barriers or constraints need to be considered.

The first step in encouraging better access management is to develop consistent access standards for both rural and urban roadways. Access management efforts in urban areas typically focus on addressing mobility concerns while balancing access needs of local businesses and residents. In existing corridors where significant development has occurred, the number of existing access points will likely exceed access guidelines. Unless significant redevelopment is occurring in along these corridors, access management must be approached differently than in undeveloped rural areas. In urban areas, new access points should be minimized while existing access points are consolidated or reduced as redevelopment occurs.

Best access management practices in urban and developing areas include the following:

- **Encourage shared driveways and internal circulation plans:** If indirect access cannot be achieved during plat reviews, promote internal site circulation using shared access points.
- **Restrict turning movements to reduce conflicts:** If access points cannot be eliminated, consider turning movement restrictions (e.g., left-in only or right-in/right-out only) through the installation of raised median or other channelization or signing. Eliminating a single turning movement can significantly reduce vehicle conflicts and potential crashes.
- **Develop good parallel street systems for carrying local traffic:** Make sure that important arterial routes have a good parallel street system to provide the local access function and to carry shorter local trips.
- **Develop proper setbacks for future frontage roads:** If frontage roads cannot be justified (benefits do not outweigh costs), make sure that proper building and parking lot setbacks are established so that future frontage roads can be installed with minimal impacts.

- **Develop proper secondary street spacing:** When reviewing plats and new development proposals, be sure that they provide proper intersection spacing for future signals. As a guideline, signalized intersections should be limited depending upon the type of street. Collector streets should provide some continuity and connectivity with other street systems.

- **Encourage proper lot layout to minimize access points:** Promote direct residential access points onto local routes, not arterials or major collectors. Direct residential access to arterial or collector routes can result in complaints when traffic levels increase. In rural areas, where farms have one access point per 40-acre entitlement and where they cluster lots in one portion of the farmstead, access should be encouraged off local roads, not high-speed, high-volume state or county roads.

- **Encourage connectivity between developments:** Individual developments should align streets to provide access to existing developments or reserve right-of-way to provide for future connections to adjacent developments. This promotes neighborhood connectivity, good emergency services and more efficient travel for mail, garbage and bus services as well as street maintenance activities.

- **Consider official map process for important corridors:** Important arterial corridors or future interchange areas that are located in development-prone areas can be protected through an official mapping process. Local agencies should revise zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations to provide for dedication of officially mapped corridors at the time of platting.

As noted earlier, within urban areas, access management objectives usually relate to maintaining roadway capacity and mobility, and of course improving safety. However, the rationale for managing access in rural areas differs somewhat from the rationale used in urban areas. Roadways in rural areas almost always serve low-density land uses and usually have volumes well below capacity thresholds. Managing rural access increases safety (i.e., sight distance, number of conflict areas, and severity of crashes when vehicles run off the road) and minimizes operational/maintenance costs (i.e., snow removal, resurfacing and drainage).

To address access in rural areas, Minnesota’s Local Road Research Board (LRRB) has developed the following best management practices:

- Establish an access policy – develop a formal policy that ensures that the agency has processes in place to determine the need for and evaluate the use, location, spacing and design characteristics of the requested access points.

- Encourage coordination during the zoning and platting process.

- Give access permits for specific use.

- Encourage adequate spacing of access points.

- Protect the functional area of intersections.

- Ensure adequate sight distance at entrances.

- Avoid offset or dogleg intersections and entrances.

- Encourage development of turn lanes and entrances.

- Consider consolidating access or relocating existing access.
Encourage good driveway and intersection design characteristics, such as:

- Proper driveway width and turning radii
- Proper corner clearance
- Adequate approach grade
- Alignment of intersections at right angles to maximize sight lines, minimize the time a vehicle is in the conflict area and facilitate turning movements
- Proper grading of entrance in-slopes and culvert openings
- Keeping sight triangles and clear zones free of obstructions

### 6.2.5 TH 212 Access Planning

The current construction of realigned TH 212 in eastern Carver County includes five new interchanges, providing direct access to other Trunk Highways (TH 101, TH 41) and key county ‘A’ Minor Arterial routes (CSAH 17, CSAH 10, CSAH 11). The access plans for each of these was prepared as part of the earlier TH 212 design process and they are currently under construction. These access points are noted on Figure 20.

Additional future access locations along TH 212 are under study. For example, the City of Chaska is interested in establishing an interchange at TH 212 and CR 140 to serve future planned development. This site is noted in Figure 20 as a potential interchange preservation location. Other potential interchange preservation locations along TH 212 that are being proposed by the TH 212 Advanced Design Study include CR 43 and future CR 53 (Market Avenue). These are also identified on Figure 20. It is important to note that any new TH 212 intersection will require the completion of a rigorous access justification evaluation, and will be subject to the full NEPA and Mn/DOT/Metropolitan Council approval process before it can be programmed. Further, the TH 212 Advanced Design Study, which is analyzing the corridor segments between Carver and Norwood Young America, anticipates approximately eight future local access locations. These are defined as long-term full-movement intersections, and are also presented in Figure 20. The County Roadway Systems Plan’s future functional classification map calls for a CR to cross TH 212 between CR 43 and the realigned future CR 53 (sometime after 2030). Currently this roadway is a gravel road under township jurisdiction, therefore the Advanced Design Study is not considering it as a future interchange site within its 20 year timeframe. However, if this connection was constructed in the long range, it may necessitate the need for an interchange to maintain the future goal of a TH 212 freeway to Cologne.

As noted, construction of these future interchanges or intersections will be contingent on various approvals and funding availability, which will require time to secure. Therefore, it may be wise for affected jurisdictions to incorporate access layout planning at these locations into their ongoing land development process. Appendix H provides two typical access layouts, which are taken from Mn/DOT’s Road Design Manual. This information can assist local officials in planning for and preserving sufficient right-of-way for future TH 212 access, thereby preventing encroaching land uses, non-compatible access or local street system development.
6.3 **Right-of-Way**

Right-of-way is a valuable public asset. Therefore, it needs to be presented and managed in a way that respects its intended function, while serving the greatest public good.

Carver County, with its current and anticipated growth will need to reconstruct, widen and construct new roadway segments to meet future capacity and connectivity demands. Such improvements will require that adequate right-of-way be maintained or secured. To assure consistency and wise use of taxpayer dollars, the county has established right-of-way guidelines. Table 16 presents these right-of-way guidelines by functional classification and facility type. Use of these guidelines during the right-of-way acquisition or preservation process will, over time, reduce cost and streamline project development.

**TABLE 16**
Carver County Right-of-Way Guidelines *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional Class</th>
<th>ROW Widths **</th>
<th>ROW Widths Include One Separated Bike/Pedestrian Facility</th>
<th>ROW Widths Include Two Separated Bike/Pedestrian Facilities</th>
<th>Facility Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Arterial</td>
<td>140 feet</td>
<td>155 feet</td>
<td>170 feet</td>
<td>4-lane divided urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220 feet</td>
<td>240 feet</td>
<td>260 feet</td>
<td>4-lane divided rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180 feet</td>
<td>195 feet</td>
<td>210 feet</td>
<td>5-6 lane divided urban</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Arterial</td>
<td>100 feet</td>
<td>115 feet</td>
<td>130 feet</td>
<td>4-lane undivided urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120 feet</td>
<td>135 feet</td>
<td>150 feet</td>
<td>4-lane divided urban</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180 feet</td>
<td>200 feet</td>
<td>220 feet</td>
<td>4-lane divided rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 feet</td>
<td>115 feet</td>
<td>130 feet</td>
<td>3-lane urban</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 feet</td>
<td>120 feet</td>
<td>140 feet</td>
<td>2-lane rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collector</td>
<td>100 feet</td>
<td>115 feet</td>
<td>130 feet</td>
<td>3-lane urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 feet</td>
<td>120 feet</td>
<td>140 feet</td>
<td>2-lane rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 feet</td>
<td>115 feet</td>
<td>130 feet</td>
<td>2-lane urban</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All ROW widths assume no parking on roadway

** Due to certain development conditions or physical features of the site or highway corridor, Carver County may require additional right-of-way width greater than shown in the Right-of-Way Guidelines

6.3.1 **Right-of-Way Preservation**

When future expansion or realignment of a roadway is proposed, but not immediately programmed, agencies should consider right-of-way preservation strategies to reduce costs and maintain the feasibility of the proposed improvement. Several different strategies can be used to preserve right-of-way for future construction, including advanced purchase, zoning and subdivision techniques, official mapping, and corridor signing. Before implementing any right-of-way preservation programs, local agencies should weigh the risks of proceeding with right-of-way preservation without environmental documentation. (Note: Mn/DOT policy requires environmental documentation prior to purchase.) If environmental documentation has not been completed, agencies risk preserving a corridor or parcel that has associated environmental issues.

Appendix I provides typical cross-section examples for some of the two-lane and four-lane facility types noted above.
6.3.1.1 Direct Purchase

One of the best ways to preserve right-of-way is to purchase it. Unfortunately, agencies rarely have the necessary funds to purchase right-of-way in advance, and the public benefit of purchasing right-of-way is not realized until a roadway or transportation facility is built. Most typically, local jurisdictions utilize various corridor preservation methods prior to roadway construction and then purchase the right-of-way if it is not dedicated at the time of design and construction.

6.3.1.2 Planning and Zoning Authority

Local agencies have the authority to regulate existing and future land use. Under this authority, agencies have a number of tools for preserving right-of-way for transportation projects. These tools include:

- **Zoning**
  
  If the property is in a very low-density area (e.g., agricultural district), local agencies should try to maintain the existing zoning classification. Lower zoning classification limits the risk for significant development until funding becomes available for roadway construction.

- **Platting and Subdivision Regulations**
  
  Local platting and subdivision regulations give agencies authority to consider future roadway alignments during the platting process because most land must be platted before it is developed. Cities and counties can use their authority to regulate land development to influence plat configuration and the location of proposed roadways. In most instances, planning and engineering staff works with developers to prepare a plat that accommodates their needs, and conforms to a long-term community vision and/or plans. Local agencies can require right-of-way dedication as part of the platting and subdivision process.

- **Transfer of Development Rights**
  
  In addition to the above strategies, some agencies negotiate with property owners by allowing increased development densities on portions of the parcel if the developer will transfer right-of-way to the jurisdiction for the future roadways needed by the development. This enables the developer to get the same number of lots or units and also enables the agency to obtain the needed right-of-way.

- **Official Mapping**
  
  A final strategy to preserve right-of-way is to adopt an official map. An official map is developed by the local governmental unit and identifies the centerline and right-of-way needed for a future roadway. The local agency then holds a public hearing showing the location of the future roadway and incorporates the official map into its thoroughfare or community facilities plan. The official mapping process allows agencies to control proposed development within an identified area and influence development on adjacent parcels. However, if a directly affected property owner requests to develop his/her property, agencies have six months to initiate acquisition of the property to prevent its development. If the property is not publicly purchased, the owner is allowed to develop it in conformance with current zoning and subdivision regulations. As a result, the official mapping process should
only be used for preserving key corridors in areas with significant growth pressures. In some cases, official mapping key parcels/corridors may increase the agency’s ability to find sources of funds to purchase at-risk parcels.

6.3.1.3 Corridor Signing Program

In addition to land use regulations, some jurisdictions have used an innovative corridor signing program to identify arterial roadways that are planned for expansion projects. This program notifies residents and potential developers that the particular roadway is planned to be upgraded or a new roadway is planned to be constructed. This often makes negotiations with residents/developers easier, since they have been given advanced notice of major roadway expansion projects. Further, this advanced information aids developers plan harmonious land uses and access management measures into their subdivisions. Signs are generally placed along roads on the urban fringe near the city limits or within a city’s extraterritorial expansion area.

Additional information on many of the tools and techniques listed above can be found in Appendix J of Mn/DOT’s Interregional Corridors: A Guide for Plan Development and Corridor Management. This guide also includes information on the environmental review and documentation process as it relates to right-of-way preservation.

6.4 Project Development and the Environmental Process

Depending on the size and type of project, implementing improvements identified in the Transportation Systems Plan may require additional public participation and environmental review. Environmental documents must be prepared if state or federal funding is involved in the project, with the type of document depending on the size of the project. For example, projects that construct more than two-lane roadways and have alignments of more than two miles require more in depth analysis than projects that convert an existing at-grade intersection into an interchange or overpass according to state rules.

Even if no federal or state funding is involved, state environmental review requirements and local ordinances or guidelines may apply. Specific rules on the level of environmental documentation can be found in the Highway Project Development Process Handbook at www.dot.state.mn.us.

In addition to state and federal rules regarding environmental documentation, there are a number of local, state and federal permits that regulate wetlands, water quality, air quality, noise and other environmental and cultural resources. Early coordination with appropriate environmental agencies and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) can reduce delays in the project development process and in acquiring applicable permits.

6.5 Project Development and Wetland Protection

Wetlands are an important component of the county’s landscape. Wetlands provide valuable ecological functions (i.e., water quality protection, surface water storage, wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge and aesthetic/recreational value). There are federal and state regulations that protect these valuable resources. Because Minnesota’s rules are stricter than federal regulations, most county agencies do not have wetland protection requirements that go beyond the state rules.
A full copy of the regulations is available in State Statutes Chapter 8420. The details of Minnesota’s regulations regarding wetlands are rather complicated. In general, the regulations are intended to protect existing wetlands and to increase the quality of those wetlands by increasing their quantity, quality and biological diversity. The law states:

This chapter shall be interpreted to implement the purpose of the Wetland Conservation Act, which is to:

A. Achieve no net loss in the quantity, quality and biological diversity of Minnesota’s existing wetlands;

B. Increase the quantity, quality and biological diversity of Minnesota’s wetlands by restoring or enhancing diminished or drained wetlands;

C. Avoid direct or indirect impacts from activities that destroy or diminish the quantity, quality and biological diversity of wetlands; and

D. Replace wetland values where avoidance of activity is not feasible and prudent.

The Wetland Conservation Act achieves its purpose by requiring persons proposing to impact a wetland by draining, excavating or filling to first, attempt to avoid the impact; second, attempt to minimize the impact; and finally, replace any impacted area with another wetland of at least equal function and value.

As a local road authority, Carver County will be in situations where it wishes to widen or construct new roadways. When looking at options for conducting these types of activities, the county must first look at alternatives that do not impact wetlands. If there are no reasonable or prudent alternatives, the county must work to minimize the impacts to the wetlands. If this is not feasible, the county will be required to construct a new wetland or add on to an existing wetland. The size of the new or expanded wetland must be at least the same size and same quality as the wetland that it is impacting with its project.

6.6 Smart Growth/Growth Management

In communities across the nation, there is a growing concern that current development patterns, dominated by what some call “sprawl” are not in the long-term interest of cities, existing suburbs, small towns and rural communities. Though supportive of growth, communities are questioning the economic costs of abandoning infrastructure in the city and rebuilding it further out. Factors, such as demographic shifts, a strong environmental ethic, increased fiscal concerns, and more nuanced views of growth, are fueling the smart growth movement.

Smart growth concentrates on investing in existing communities. By encouraging growth within communities where people already live and work, smart growth limits the encroachment of new development on farmland and open space and makes existing communities more attractive by creating communities with a mix of housing, restaurants, parks and jobs. Taxpayer burdens are usually reduced because the need for new water, sewer and road infrastructure is minimized.

Carver County is currently experiencing growth, especially along the TH 5 and TH 212 corridors in the eastern portion of the county. While this growth affects all public facilities and services, it is having a profound effect on the county’s transportation system. Citizen input strongly
supports smart growth policies in the county. By investing and focusing growth in urban areas and areas contiguous to the cities, the benefits of existing public infrastructure can be maximized while farmland, wetlands, and open space can be preserved. Smart growth provides many options, but the following common-sense principles will help guide public decisions and achieve desired results:

- **Stewardship** – use land and natural resources wisely to sustain them for the future.
- **Efficiency** – make efficient, integrated public investments in transportation, housing, schools, utilities, information infrastructure and other public services.
- **Choice** – give communities smart growth options and choices.
- **Accountability** – reinforce responsibility and accountability for development decisions.

Carver County should continue its strong proactive planning efforts. The Roadway Systems Plan focuses many of its recommendations on urban areas, or on areas adjacent to existing urban areas. As the county continues to grow, this approach to planning will promote growth within urban areas while protecting the county’s rural areas.