

## 2.1 Overview

Located in east central Minnesota, Carver County is the least populated of the seven counties forming the Minneapolis-St. Paul (Twin Cities) metropolitan area. The county is located just southwest of the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The county is the state's fastest growing county, increasing in population by 29.7 percent between 2000 and 2010 and is expected to double its 91,042 residents by the year 2030. Geographically, it is the smallest of the metro area counties. Carver County is mainly agricultural but is becoming increasingly suburbanized.

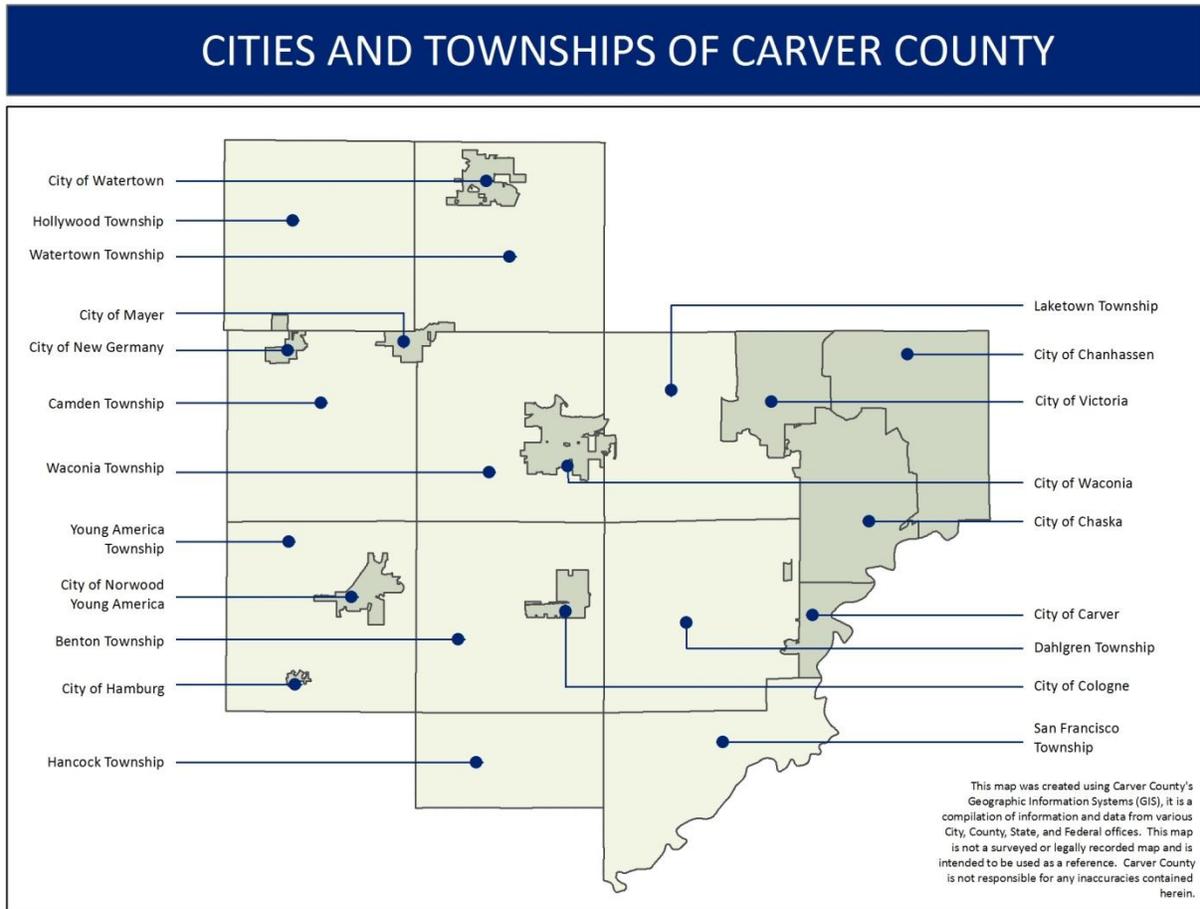
Carver County includes 11 incorporated cities and 10 unincorporated townships. Table 2-1 lists cities and townships that are located within Carver County.



**Table 2-1**  
**Cities and Townships in Carver County**

Cities	Townships
Carver	Benton
Chanhassen	Camden
Chaska (county seat)	Dahlgren
Cologne	Hancock
Hamburg	Hollywood
Mayer	Laketown
New Germany	San Francisco
Norwood Young America	Watertown
Victoria	Waconia
Waconia	Young America
Watertown	

**Figure 2-1  
Municipal Boundaries in Carver County**



In the past 10 years, the population of Carver County has grown 29.7 percent. The majority of the population is located in the eastern cities of Chaska and Chanhassen, which is home to over half of the county's population. Cities in the southwestern portion of the county have not seen the tremendous growth that the northeastern cities have, but with the recent completion of State Highway 212 and the availability of land to the west, newcomers to this area will account for a large percentage of growth in Carver County. Thus, the future of Carver County will be defined by the attempt to balance the pressure of rapid growth and development with the public's desire to retain the sense of community that has drawn people to the area for over 100 years.

## 2.2 Early History<sup>1</sup>

Carver County has been home to many different cultures throughout time. One of the best documented early native peoples is the Woodland Culture, who lived in this region from 1200 BC until 1700 AD. Their nomadic hunting and gathering patterns depended upon the seasons and resources of the land. More recently, the Dakota Indians used the area for hunting and temporary lodging. With the signing of the treaty of Traverse de Sioux, however, this area was opened for settlement by white pioneers.

In March of 1855, Carver County was organized by the Minnesota Territorial Legislature. The county was named in honor of the explorer, Jonathan Carver. The original county seat was San Francisco Township but in 1856 voters moved it to Chaska.

Much of the east central part of Minnesota, including Carver County, was covered by the Big Woods; a dense forest of oak, elm, maple, and cottonwood trees. The density of the Big Woods made it difficult for early settlers to clear the land for farming.

Many of Carver County's initial settlers were from eastern states but by the 1860s most new settlers were immigrants from Germany or Sweden. The Germans founded towns like Hamburg, New Germany, and Cologne while the Swedes settled in East Union and Watertown. Most immigrants became farmers but some living in Chaska became laborers in the brick industry.



Located along the Minnesota River, Chaska had good deposits of clay for brick-making. The cream-

colored brick became a favorite for building houses in Chaska and the surrounding rural area. The bricks were also used in the foundation of the Minnesota Capitol building when it was constructed 100 years ago. Slowly the brickyards closed until the last one shut down in the 1950s.



Farming was the chief occupation of Carver County for 100 years. While many grew crops, others were dairy farmers. Creameries were numerous and the county claimed for itself the title of "The Golden Buckle of the Dairy Belt." Bongards Creameries is still important link to our dairy heritage.

Carver County's most historically important farmer was Wendelin Grimm, a German immigrant who settled in Chanhassen. Grimm planted alfalfa and gathered the seeds from the plants that survived the first winter and replanted every year until he had a full crop. His perseverance paid off when Grimm Alfalfa was recognized as the most winter-hardy strain available. In fact, it was used throughout North America between 1910 and 1940 and is one of Minnesota's leading contributions to the history of agriculture.

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, Leanne. "A Very Brief History of Carver County." Carver County Historical Society. <[http://www.carvercountyhistoricalsociety.org/about\\_us/historypages/History.htm](http://www.carvercountyhistoricalsociety.org/about_us/historypages/History.htm)>.

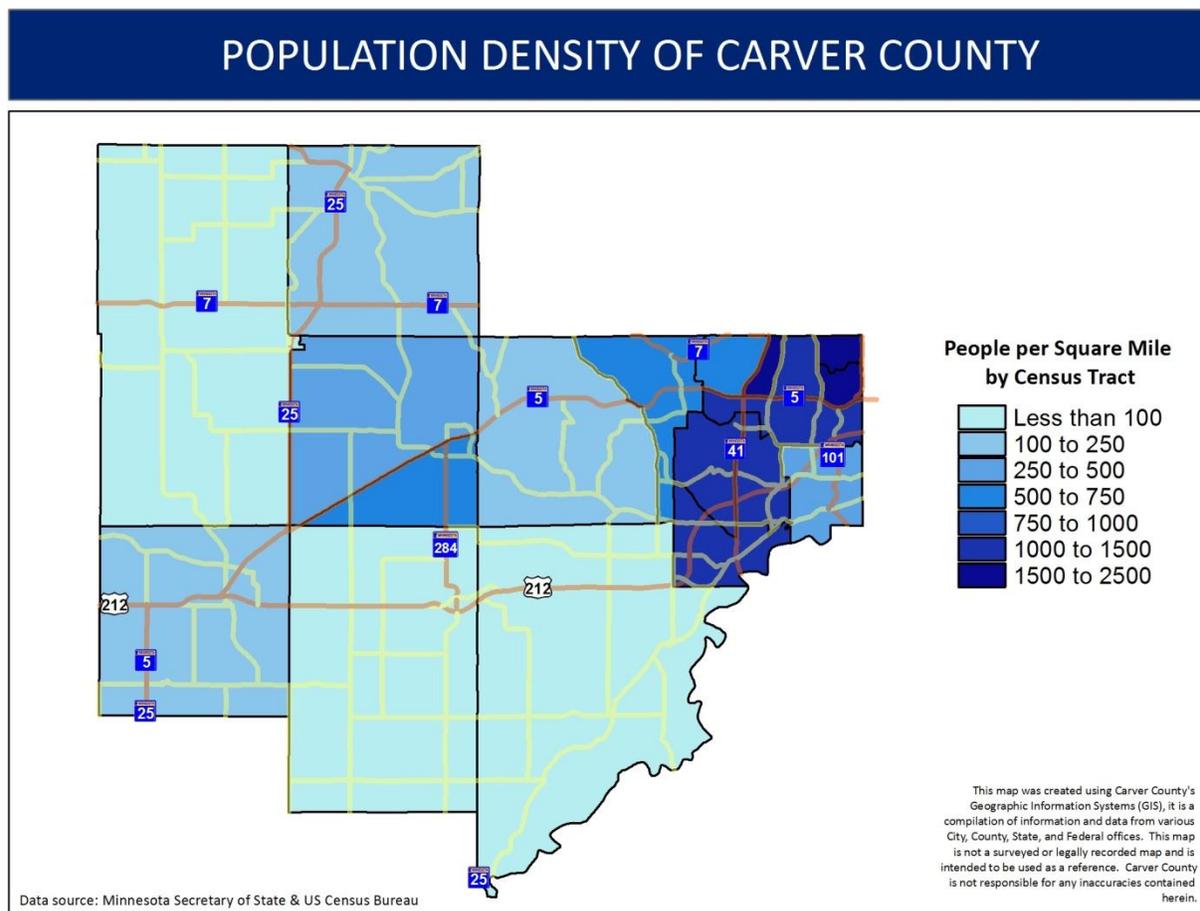
## Section 2

Today, farming is no longer the predominant occupation in the county. Carver County has seen an explosion of residential development in Chanhassen, Chaska, Waconia, Carver, and Victoria. Many now commute to jobs in Minneapolis or its suburbs.

### 2.3 Demographics

With a population of approximately 91,000, Carver County is the least populous county in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region. It has experienced unprecedented growth in the past 10 years, with its population increasing by 29.7 percent. The Carver County 2030 Comprehensive Plan expects this growth trend to increase, with the county's population doubling by 2030. As shown in figure 2-2 the cities of Victoria, Chanhassen, and Chaska represent the densest part of the county. This trend is expected to continue, with these cities experiencing the largest growth throughout the next 20 years.

**Figure 2-2**  
**Population Density of Carver County**

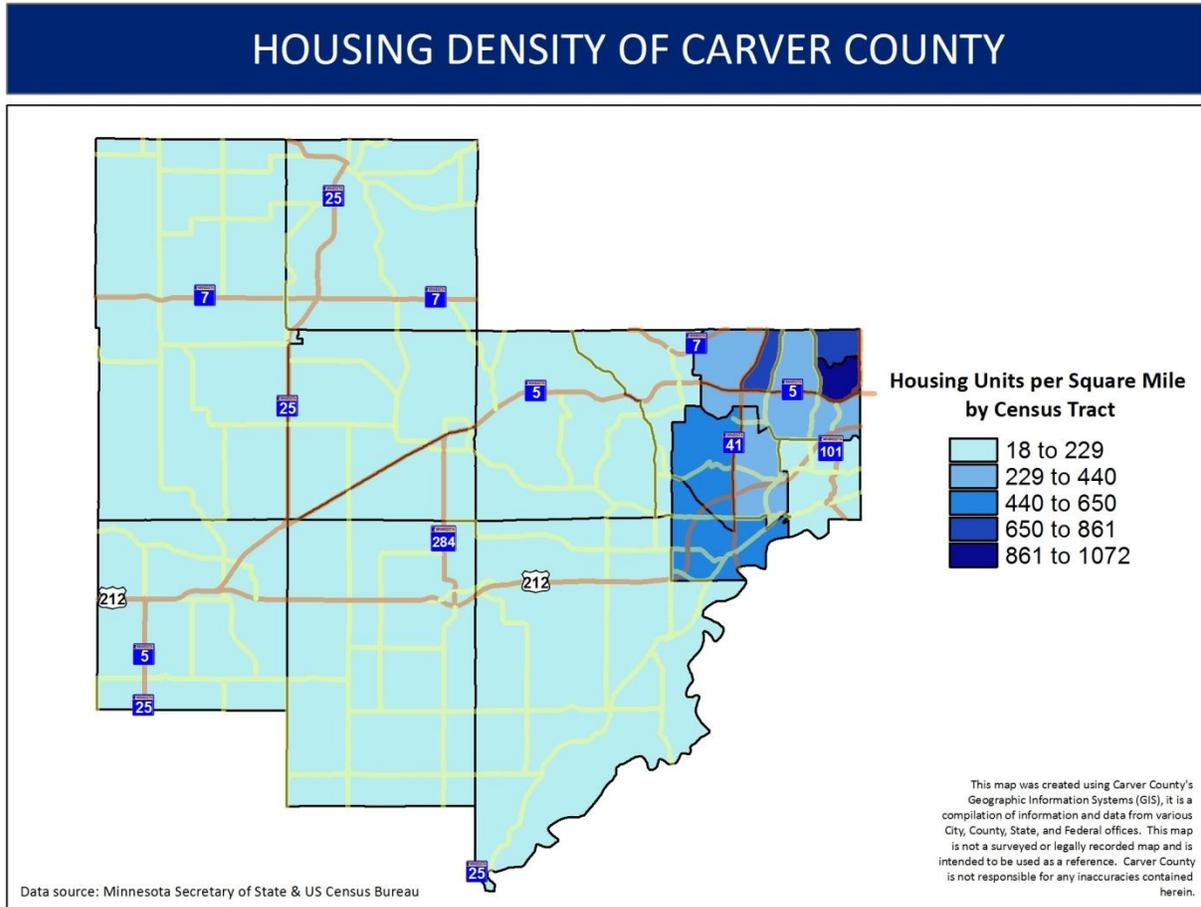


In Carver County, 92.7 percent of residents have a high school diploma and 37.5 percent of residents have a bachelor's degree. The majority of the population is Caucasian, with minority populations representing 3.9 percent of the population. For an overview of other key demographic figures, see table 2-2.

Housing statistics (see figure 2-3) show that there are over 34,000 households in the county, with the densest area being in the northeast portion of the county. The median value of a home is \$284,000

compared to the median value of \$207,000 in the rest of the state. The majority of homes in Carver County are free-standing single family dwellings and account for 90 percent of all housing units.

**Figure 2-3  
Housing Density of Carver County**



## Section 2

Figure 2-4 shows the location of mobile homes within the county.

**Figure 2-4**  
**Mobile Home Locations in Carver County**

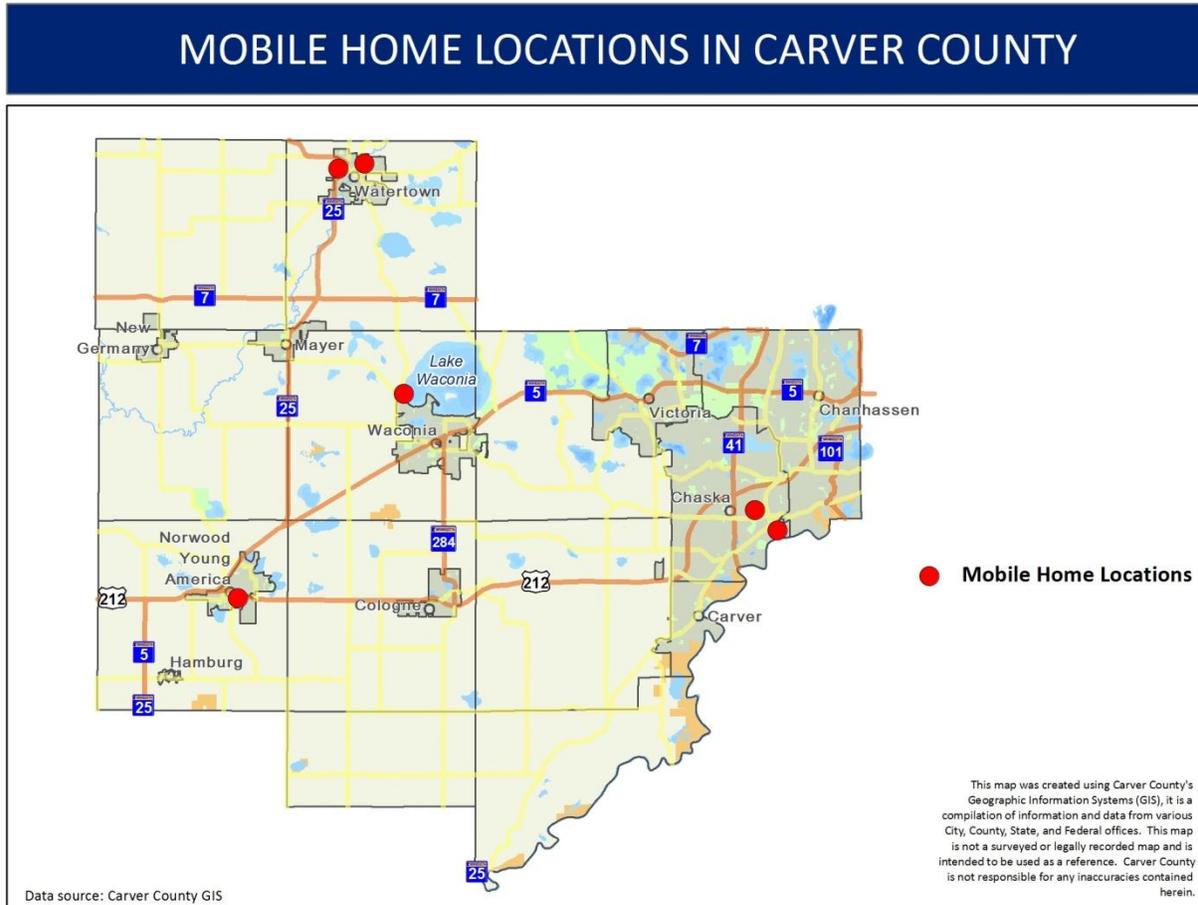


Table 2-1 presents U.S. Census Bureau statistical data on the demographics of Carver County.

**Table 2-2**  
**Demographics<sup>2</sup>**

People Quick Facts	Carver County	Minnesota
Population, 2010 census	91,042	5,303,925
Population, percent change, 2000 to 2010	29.7%	7.8%

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits, Consolidated Federal Funds Report. Last Revised: Tuesday, 31-Jan-2012 16:52:42 EST

People Quick Facts	Carver County	Minnesota
Population, 2000	70,205	4,919,479
Persons under 5 years old, percent, 2010	7.4%	6.9%
Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2010	29.9%	23.9%
Persons 65 years old and over, percent, 2010	8.5%	12.7%
Female persons, percent, 2010	50.3%	50.2%
Caucasian, percent, 2010 (a)	92.8%	85.3%
African American persons, percent, 2010 (a)	1.2%	5.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent, 2010	0.2%	1.1%
Asian persons, percent, 2010 (a)	2.7%	4.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, percent, 2010	0	0.0%
Persons reporting two or more races, percent, 2010	1.6%	2.4%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2010 (b)	3.9%	4.7%
Caucasian, not of Hispanic/Latino origin, percent, 2010	96.1%	83.1%
Foreign born persons, percent, 2010	1.1%	6.5%
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2009	8.5%	9.6%
High school graduates, percent of persons age 18+, 2009	92.7%	91.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 18+, 2009	37.5%	31.2%
Persons with a disability, age 5+, 2006	6,792	679,236
Housing units, 2010	34,536	2,332,916
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2005–2009	\$284,600	\$207,000
Households, 2010	32,891	2,061,882
Persons per household, 2010	2.74	2.45
Median household income, 2009	\$78,346	\$55,621
Persons below poverty, percent, 2009	4.8%	10.9%

\* Includes persons reporting only one race

\* Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories

## 2.4 Economy

Carver County covers 376 square miles. About 75 percent of its land is classified as agriculture. The average home sold for about \$318,900 in 2009. The market value for new construction in the county in 2009 was \$154,710,000. Carver County government operates on a budget of \$93,548,115 (2011 budget). As agriculture diminishes as a land use, Carver County is poised with its growing labor force to meet future economic development.

The state demographer’s office projects Carver County’s labor force will grow by 106 percent between 2000 and 2030. Carver County’s available workforce totals 46,682 according to the Carver County 2011 Annual Budget. In addition to this pool of labor, businesses can draw from the Twin Cities and St. Cloud areas due to proximity to both locations. The partnership has built a network of resources to assist businesses in finding qualified employees, train current employees, and increase productivity. Some of the workforce development resources are Rosemont, Ridgeview Medical Center, I.S.D. No. 112 (Eastern Carver County), Super Valu Corporate, Instate Web Incorporated, Entegris, Beckman Coulter, Inc., Lake Region Manufacturing, Medallion Cabinetry, and I.S.D. No. 110 (Waconia).

Carver County was once better known for agriculture, but is now quietly becoming a major player in manufacturing. Carver County has an outstanding mix of manufacturers who are national leaders in their fields. Because of its location near the two cities, employers are able to draw workers from a large labor pool. Table 2-3 shows economic data for Carver County collected in the U.S. 2010 Census.

**Table 2-3  
Business Facts**

Business Quick Facts	Carver County	Minnesota
Private nonfarm establishments, 2008	2,347	148,845
Private nonfarm employment, 2008	35,282	2,517,356
Private nonfarm employment, percent change 2000–2008	28.1%	5.1%
Nonemployer establishments, 2008	6,960	376,397
Total number of firms, 2007	9,282	496,742
Black-owned firms, percent, 2007	S <sup>3</sup>	2.5%
American Indian- and Alaska Native-owned firms, percent 2007	S	.6%
Asian-owned firms, percent, 2007	F	1.7%
Native Hawaiian- and Other Pacific Islander-owned firms, percent, 2007	F	S
Hispanic-owned firms, percent, 2007	0.6%	1.0%

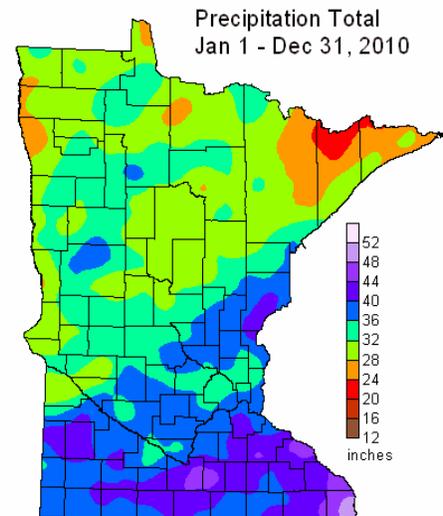
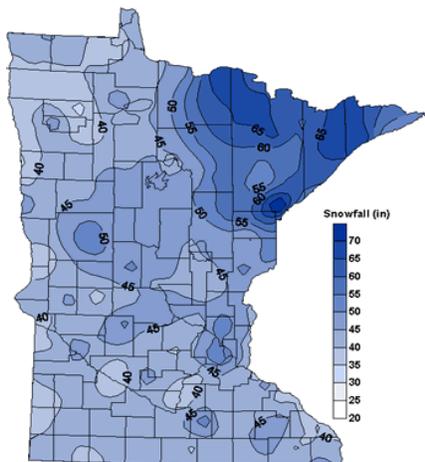
S: Suppressed; does not meet publication standards per U.S. Census  
F: Fewer than 100 firms

Business Quick Facts	Carver County	Minnesota
Women-owned firms, percent, 2007	28.2%	26.8%
Manufacturers' shipments, 2007 (\$1000)	3,149,535	107,563,060
Wholesale trade sales, 2007 (\$1000)	1,484,320	82,878,056
Retail sales, 2007 (\$1000)	807,141	71,384,103
Retail sales per capita, 2007	\$9,139	\$13,751
Accommodation and food services sales, 2007 (\$1000)	91,065	10,423,660
Building permits, 2009	313	9,425
Federal spending, 2008 (\$1000)	289,672	38,245,764

## 2.5 Climate

The Carver County climate is considered continental, with cold, dry winters and warm, sub-humid summers. The county averages 30.44 inches of rain per year and average temperatures range from a high of 85 degrees in summer to a low of 3 degrees in winter. This equates to an average temperature of 44 degrees and consists of warm summers and cold winters. Carver County residents experience four distinct seasons. Weather conditions can be extreme during the winter months. Annual snowfall averages approximately 45 inches.

### Mean Snowfall



DNR State Climatology Office, February 9, 2011

### Recent Event:

On December 10–11, 2010, the fifth largest snowstorm on record for the Twin Cities area occurred. Between 17 and 23 inches fell in the area, marking the largest snowstorm on record for the month of December in the Twin Cities area, including Carver County.

## 2.6 Land Use

### Physical Features

Farmland, rivers, and lakes characterize the landscape of Carver County. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 376 square miles (974 km), of which 357 square miles (924 km) are land and 19 square miles (49 km) (5.08 percent) are water. The people of Carver County value their natural surroundings, demonstrated by the 5,181 acres devoted to parks and recreation. Carver County operates Baylor Regional Park, Lake Minnewashta Regional Park, and Lake Waconia Regional Park. Each park is a natural resource based recreation area situated on Eagle Lake, Minnewashta Lake, and Waconia Lake, respectively. Within these parks, there are swimming beaches, picnic facilities, forests, prairies, trails, playgrounds, boat accesses, campgrounds, picnic shelters, and more. Table 2-4 are the geographic quick facts provided in the U.S. 2010 Census.

**Table 2-4  
Geographic Facts**

Geography Quick Facts	Carver County	Minnesota
Land area, 2000 (square miles)	376	79,610.08
Persons per square mile, 2010	255	66.6
Metropolitan Area	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area	
FIPS Code	19	27

### Current Land Use (See Figure 2-5)

The majority of land outside of cities in Carver County is used for agricultural production and the majority of land within cities is used for residential and commercial properties. The land use pattern is the result of a policy that directed growth to the cities in Carver County while limiting non-agricultural land uses in rural areas. The result is a significant amount of undeveloped open space in rural areas.

### Future Land Use (See Figure 2-6)

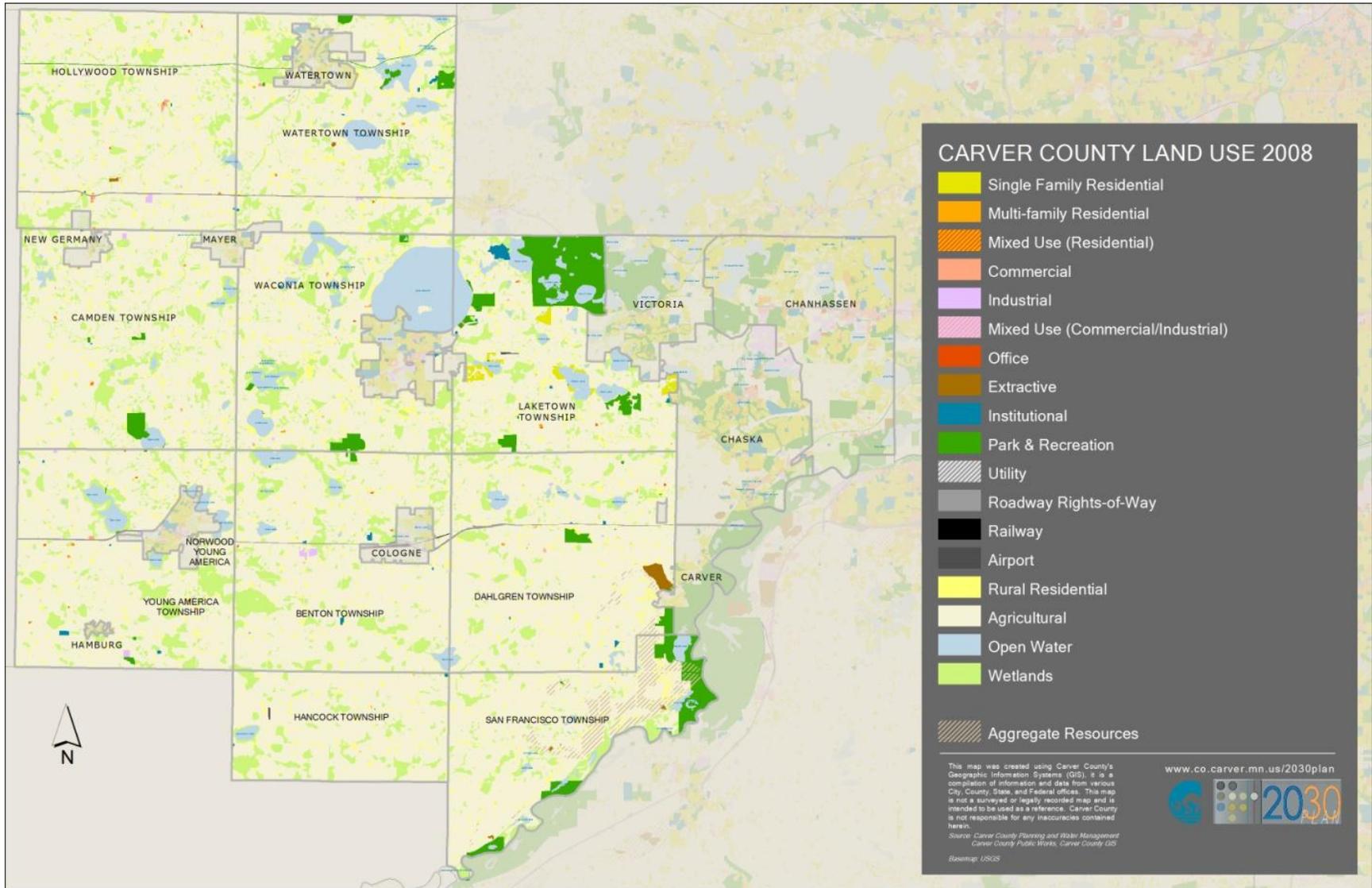
With the population of Carver County expected to grow to 200,000 by 2030 and an increase in commercial and industrial development, there will be a substantial demand for sewer, water, transportation, parks and trails, and other public services.<sup>4</sup> The plan for handling this overwhelming growth is to direct the development toward areas where these services already exist—in the cities in Carver County. Carver County has designated these areas, where urban growth will result in a spillover onto rural land, as transition areas. As the land is developed for residential and commercial use in the areas around the cities, city administrations will need to plan for and guide the extension of public works and transportation systems to these areas. As this occurs, municipalities will be responsible for completing storm water planning and related water management planning prior to development.

Although there is extensive growth predicted in the county, the majority of land will still be used for agricultural production, and policies have been developed to limit the activities of certain commercial

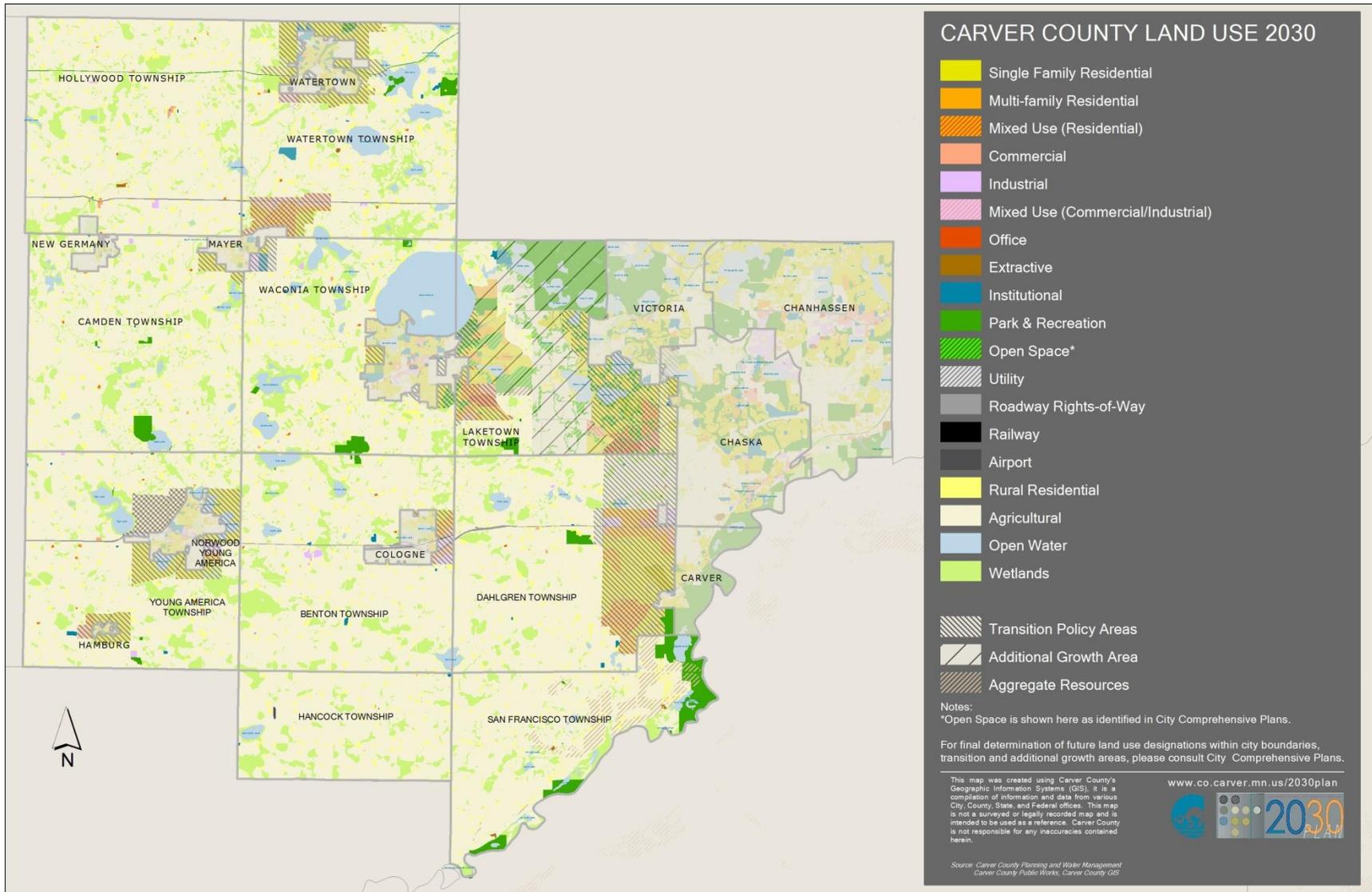
<sup>4</sup> Carver County Comprehensive Plan 2030, Land Use.

uses. Residentially, the density in these agricultural areas is one dwelling per 40 acres. This density will stand, according to the Carver County Comprehensive Plan, in order to maintain the agricultural economy of the county.

Figure 2-5  
Current Land Use in Carver County



**Figure 2-6  
Planned Land Use in Carver County**

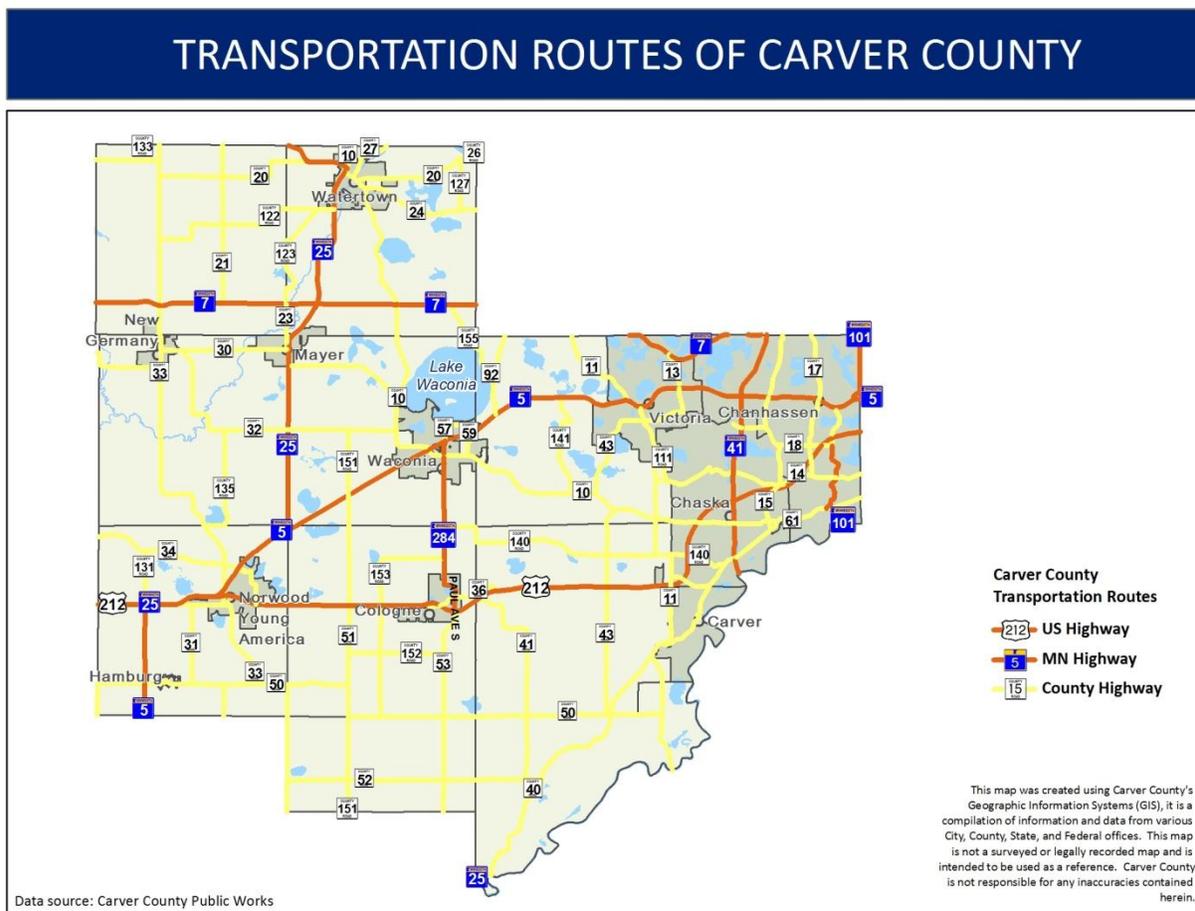


## 2.7 Transportation

### 2.7.1 Vehicle Traffic

Carver County’s transportation system primarily consists of interstate and state highways, arterial collectors, and secondary county roads. State Highways 5, 7, 25, 41, and 284, and U.S. Highway 212 are major transportation routes that carry the majority of passenger and commercial traffic in and out of Carver County. Southwest Metro Transit and Smartlink provides bus service for Carver County.

**Figure 2-7  
Transportation Routes of Carver County**



### 2.7.2 Rail

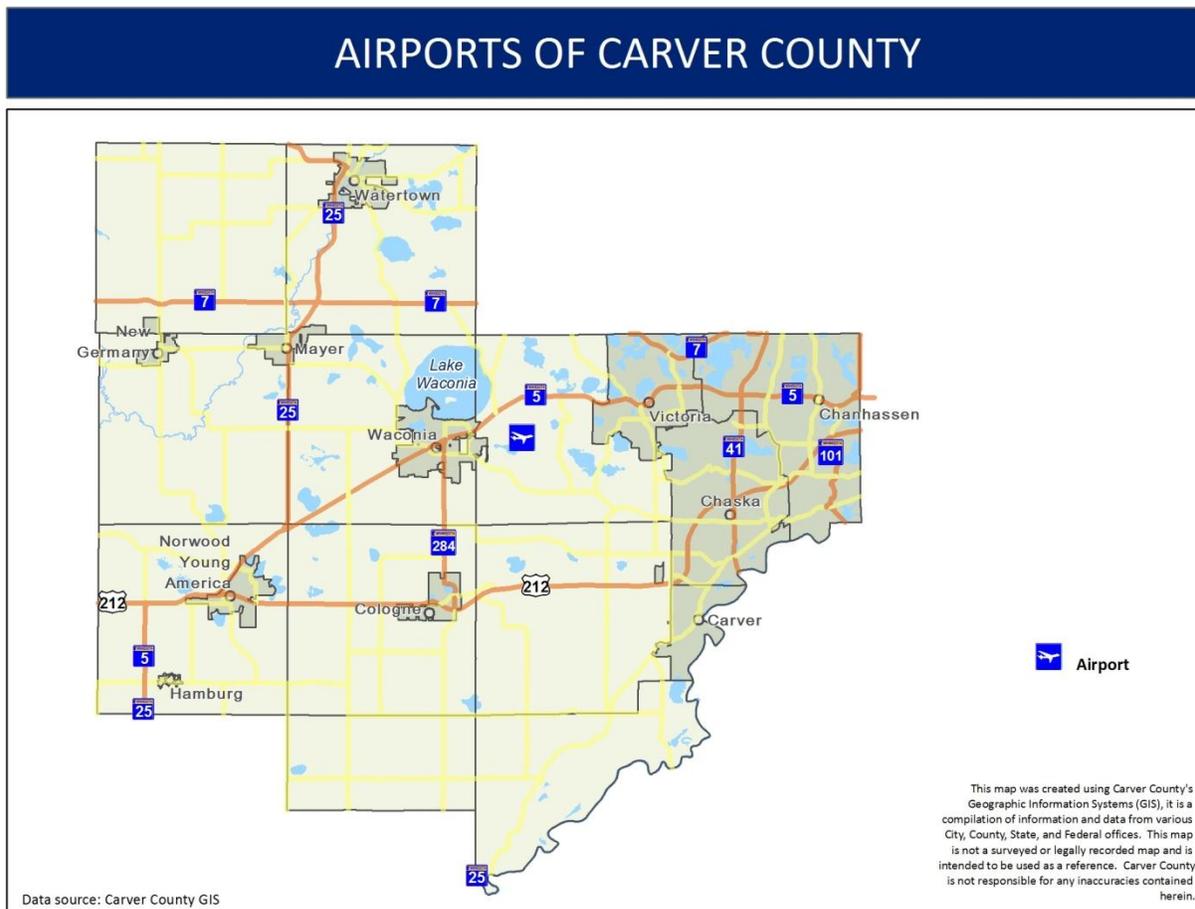
Twin Cities and Western Railroad (TC&W) operates between Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, and Milbank, South Dakota and runs through Carver County. TC&W’s traffic base consists largely of coal, grains (corn, wheat, and barley), soybeans, sugar, beet pulp pellets, lumber and other forest products, canned vegetables, edible beans, molasses, DDGs, fertilizers, crushed rock, and agricultural machinery.

The Minnesota Prairie Line (MPL) is a wholly owned subsidiary of TC&W and operates the 94-mile line that runs through Carver County. Commodities handled by MPL include corn, soybeans, distillers dry grain (DDGs), fertilizer, ethanol, butter, lumber, canned vegetables, biodiesel, tallow, salt (commercial and industrial), aggregates, and rail car storage.

### 2.7.3 Air Service

Light air travel and transport is possible from four Carver County landing strips and seaplane bases. These include Empire Farm Strip, Molnau Airpark, Sell’s Flying Field, and Ziermann Landing Strip. Additionally, Flying Cloud Airport in Hennepin County and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport provide air service to Carver County residents. Figure 2-8 shows the location of airports in Carver County.

Figure 2-8  
Airports of Carver County



## 2.8 Utilities

Internet service is provided through several companies. These include Adelphia, BellSouth, Charter, Comcast, EarthLink, Insight, Mediacom, Sprint, Verizon, and SBC Yahoo DSL.

### **2.8.1 Electricity**

Electric utilities include Xcel Energy, City of Chaska, Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative, Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric, and McLeod Cooperative.

### **2.8.2 Natural Gas**

CenterPoint Energy oversees the natural gas services throughout Carver County. Gas services in Carver County and throughout Minnesota allow for gas marketers to sell natural gas in Carver County. CenterPoint Energy still oversees gas services and is the primary emergency response agency in addition to local public safety agencies.

### **2.8.3 Water**

Carver County has both private and public water systems. There is excellent water supply throughout the county.

### **2.8.4 Wastewater Services**

Most cities have expanded their wastewater treatment facilities or will do so in the near future.

### **2.8.5 Solid Waste**

There are no landfills located in Carver County. Household and demolition waste are taken to landfills in neighboring cities. These include Superior FCR Landfill in Buffalo, DEM CON Landfill in Shakopee, Burnsville Sanitary Landfill, and Spruce Ridge Landfill in Glencoe.

### **2.8.6 Communications**

Carver County's landline phone service, cable, and Internet service is provided by (depending on the community) Frontier, Lakedale Link, Qwest, Sprint, TDS, and Carver-Link. There are backup facilities in Carver County. These facilities provide primary and battery backup phone capabilities. All major cell phone providers have cell towers and capabilities in Carver County.

Carver County public safety agencies currently communicate through a state-of-the-art 800 MHz (ARMER) digital radio system.