



JULY 2020

LAND INVENTORY

RESULTS REPORT



Rebecca Charles, Economic Development
CITY OF RUSHFORD VILLAGE

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Executive Summary/Overview

This land inventory study originated from the dire need for residential development in the City of Rushford Village. It is the goal of this report to provide guidance and data to City Council members and other community leaders that can be used in making the best decisions regarding development for the entire community.

The City of Rushford Village City Council has been in an ongoing discussion on how best to attract new homeowners and businesses to the city. It was recently determined that the city desired a more comprehensive set of data with which to make decisions regarding development of the community. A list of specific questions was agreed upon and approved by the City Council and Planning & Zoning Committee¹. The use of a survey was determined to be the most effective way to acquire the largest return of information. The objective of these surveys was to learn more about what amenities and services that residents are looking for. In addition, the city is working to identify where the city may be able to provide amenities and/or services in the future. Potential development could include a new housing development, commercial space, parks, trails or desired services identified by landowners.

Surveys were mailed out on 15 March 2020 with a request to be returned to City Hall no later than 30 April 2020. The objective of this report is to assist the City of Rushford Village with planning for future needs and development inside city limits. Knowing this information in advance provides the city with appropriate programming, incentives and time to formulate the most cost effective way to prioritize and achieve goals.

The following data will be used to formulate a list of recommendations for the City of Rushford Village to reference when planning for future development.

¹ See Appendix A to view document *Land Inventory Survey*

Approach/Data Collected

The City of Rushford Village, City Council approved a strategic targeting approach to obtaining data for this report. This was in an effort to not only reduce costs, but eliminate any redundancy in the process. Participants for the survey were targeted based on a specific set of criteria agreed upon by the City Council. All landowners selected own a parcel(s) that is not located in a flood zone, South Rushford or majority bluff land² as shown in the Fillmore County Geographic Information System (GIS) through the Beacon™ public access portal³. In the end, 154 surveys were sent out to city residents who were then given a month to complete and return surveys to the City hall via drop box or United States Postal Service. Survey participants and individual responses are all confidential and will not be included in the report.

The survey consisted of 12 questions. The first six questions gathered demographic information and asked residents to give their own thoughts and opinions on future development in Rushford Village. The following six questions were specific to the recipient landowner's property and their future plans. A full color map of the city⁴ was included with request that landowners take a moment to identify locations they felt were appropriate for development, and what kind of development specifically.

² See Appendix C to view document *FEMA & Bluff Land Aerial Map*

³ Beacon™ GIS: <https://beacon.schneidercorp.com/>

⁴ See Appendix B to view document *Land Inventory Map*

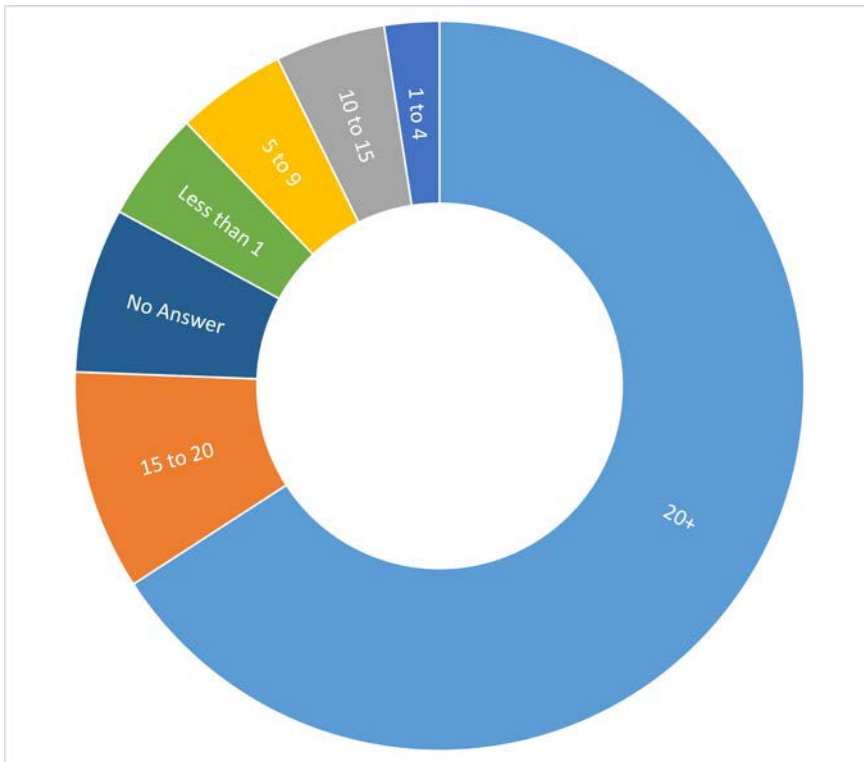
Results

Of the 154 surveys that were mailed out, 29% of surveys were completed and returned.

Total number of parcels that were represented in the 45 responses was 76

Total number of acres represented in returned surveys was 2,597.

1. HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THE CITY OF RUSHFORD VILLAGE?



66% of respondents have lived in the City of Rushford Village for twenty years or more. This shows that residents are not only happy with where they live, but also have a connection to the community and heritage of the area. It should be noted that 18% of respondents stated that the future plans for their property is to hand it down to someone in the family. This implies that for many, the legacy of the land is extremely important. The loyalty to the area and the community is very important to remember when looking to add new amenities and plan for future development.

2. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE CITY'S CURRENT AMENITIES?

Survey participants were asked to rate their satisfaction of city services on a scale of 1-10, with one being extremely dissatisfied and 10 being extremely satisfied. Of the 41 responses, 63% were an 8, 9, or 10. This shows that those who live in the City of Rushford Village are satisfied with amenities that are currently provided.



3. WHAT AMENITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE CITY?

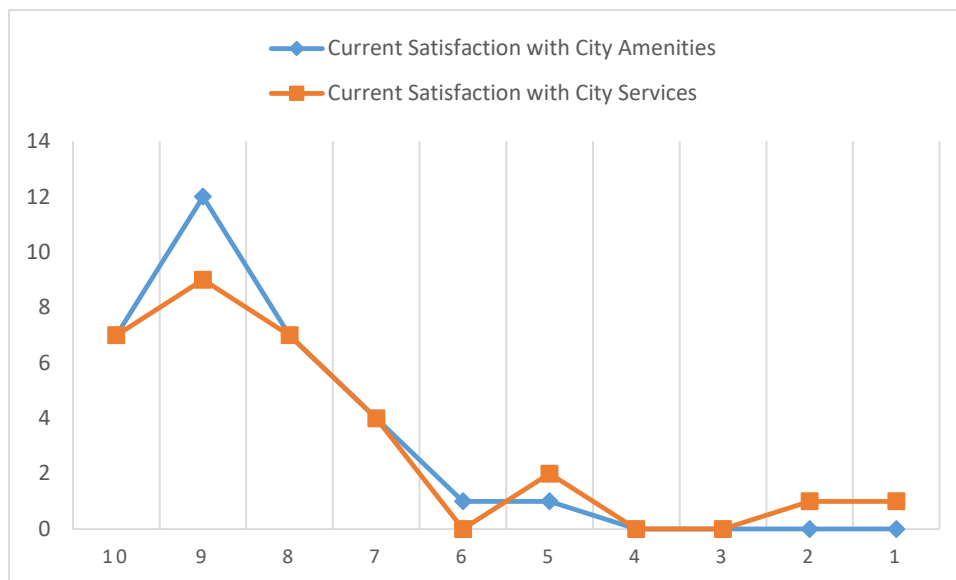
Survey participants were asked to identify any Amenities that they would like to see brought to the area. Residents returned many responses of businesses and amenities that would benefit the local economy. Amenities which were mentioned on multiple surveys are depicted below.



Top desired amenities include additional recreation & trails, 4-wheeling trails, horse trails, snowmobiling trails, auto dealership, new housing subdivision, blacktop County Line Road, lumber yard, city paid pumping for septic systems, medical center, bakery, concert venue and additional jobs & businesses. Recreational trails are a theme that has come up multiple times.

4. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH CITY SERVICES (on a scale of 1 – 10)?

Satisfaction with city services is quite high with satisfaction averaging of 56%, just below the satisfaction level for City Amenities. It appears that there is some confusion amongst residents as to whether they live in a township or a municipality. Many participants included comments that they did not feel that they should have city services because they are not aware that they live in a city and not in a township. This is something that may need to be addressed in some way to encourage consistency and civic pride.



4.5. COMMENTS ON CITY SERVICES

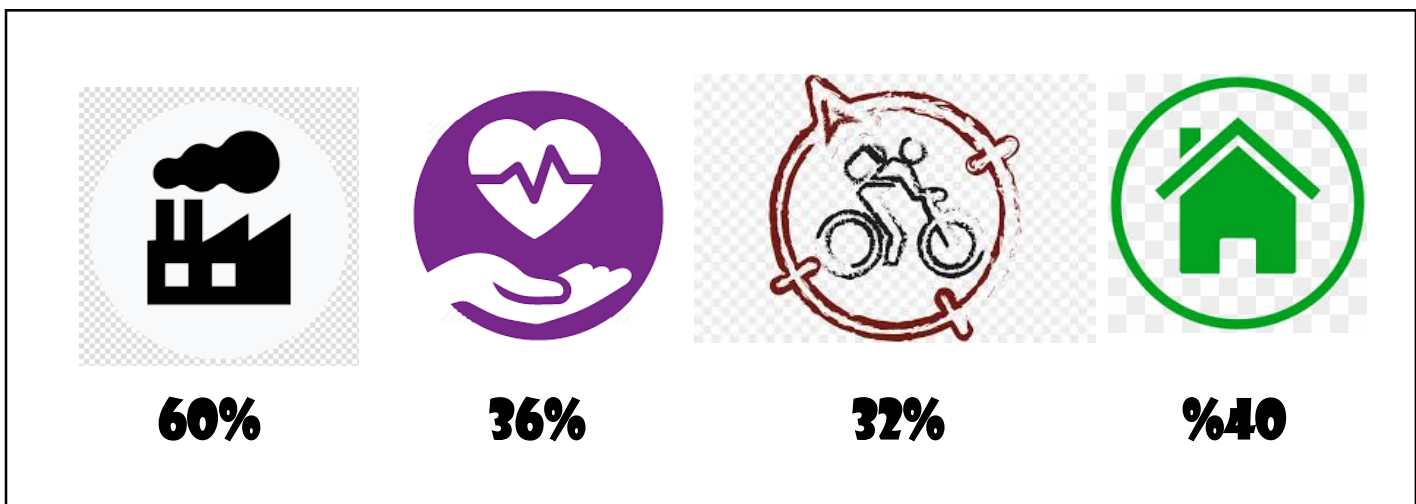
Landowners were asked to identify any city services that they would like to have added or altered in some way. The following items were listed with the number of occurrences in surveys listed behind each item.

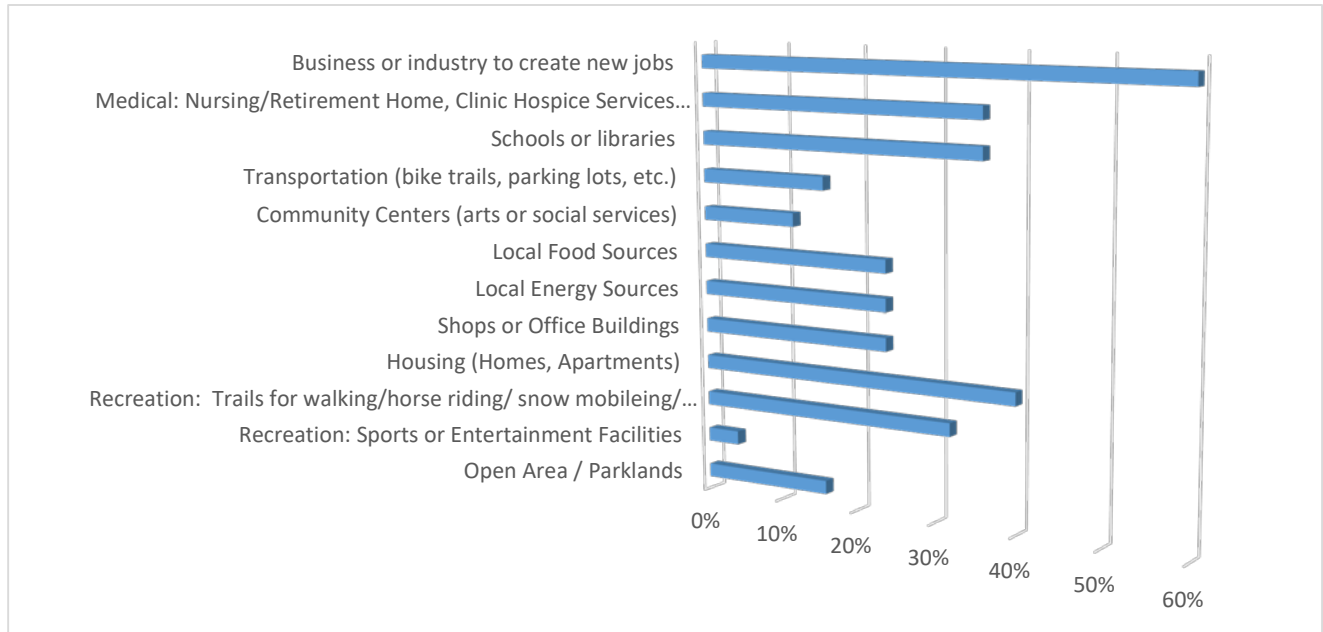
- Snow plowing of roads better (5)
- Hook-Up Fees are too high currently (1)
- Road Maintenance (4)
- Pave County Line Road (2)
- Police & Fire Access (2)
- Ecological Education Opportunities (1)
- Lower Taxes (1)
- Provide a way to pay utility bills electronically (4)
- More natural gas to the area (1)
- Industrial Park (2)
- Affordable Housing (3)
- Place any new or updated power lines underground (1)

5. CITY NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES WITH HIGHEST DEMAND

The following images represent the areas identified most on surveys as a top three need for the City of Rushford Village. 60% of respondents selected 'Business or Industry to create new jobs' as one of the top three most important items.

Survey participants were given a list of 12 categories of potential city needs & opportunities, and were asked to rank from 1 – 10 in order of importance.





6. FOR YOUR TOP 3 CHOICES IN QUESTION 5, WHAT WOULD BE THE IMPACT OF USING LAND THAT WAY? HOW WOULD IT IMPACT THE LIVES OF RESIDENTS?

Potential impact of local development as seen by residents included:

- Encourage people to want to live in, and move to, the City of Rushford Village
- Positive Economic Impact
- Create new jobs
- Increased quality of life

7. APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY ACRES OF PROPERTY DO YOU CURRENTLY OWN?

The total number of acres represented in the responses of this survey is 2,597.4 acres.

8. WHAT IS THE LAND BEING USED FOR NOW?

This question was asked of landowners for planning purposes and identifying viable properties. Additionally, this information will assist in identifying any potential road blocks or benefits to potential development.

9. WHAT ARE THE PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE LAND?

This question was asked of landowners as the selection of parcels for this study was made based on the FEMA flood zone and the bluff land as depicted in the county GIS System. This data will be used to identify any parcels that may not be appropriate for development due to these physical features.

Physical features which were identified include: bluff land or hills, trees or other vegetation, flat grassy areas, ponds, stream, springs, river, crop land, pasture, and unplanted agricultural land.

10. ARE THERE ANY BUDILINGS OR STRUCTURES ON THE PREOPTY?

Information on buildings and structures currently on the property are used for planning purposes only. This information would be used if a property were to be marketed for sale or for potential development.

11. HOW ACCESSABLE IS THE PROPERTY?

This question was asked of landowners as selection of parcels was made based on the FEMA flood zone and the bluff land as depicted in the county GIS System. This data will be used for planning purposes and identifying viable properties.

12. WHAT ARE FUTURE INTENTIONS FOR YOUR PROERTY IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS?

By disclosing future intentions for property, land owners provide the city with information to know which areas of the city are expected to remain farmland, and areas where there is more potential for development. This question included answers ranging from having no plans to change ownership, handing down property to family members, or plans to sell after retirement. Individual responses for this questions are confidential and will not be disclosed.

13. WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN SELLING YOUR PROPERTY?

Of the 45 respondents, there were seven landowners who would be interested in selling their property⁵. This question did not specify any pricing or terms of agreement for such sales. Of the land owners who indicated an interest in selling, a total of sixteen parcels and 581.50 acres were identified.

14. WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING YOUR PROPERTY?

Of the 45 respondents, there were eight landowners who would have an interest in selling their property⁶. This question did not specify any pricing or terms of agreement for such sales. Of the land owners who indicated an interest in selling, a total of fifteen parcels and 497.75 acres were identified.

15. ON ATTACHED MAP, PLEASE IDENTIFY ANY LOCATIONS WHERE YOU FEEL THAT CHANGES SHOULD BE MADE, OR FUTURE TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE LOCATED.

Results to this section are identified and labeled on the *Desired Amenities Map*⁷ that can be found in the Appendix of this document.

⁵ See Appendix D to view document *Development Inventory Map*

⁶ See Appendix D to view document *Development Inventory Map*

⁷ See Appendix E to view document *Desired Amenities Map*

Discussion/Conclusions/Recommendations

All recommendations included in this document are based off the information provided in the survey responses from local landowners. The following conclusions and recommendations are for general information only and are not the official opinion of the City of Rushford Village.

TRAILS & RECREATION

The design of a recreational trail system that can facilitate both summer and winter activities would be best suited to the area. This could include Fat Tire Biking & 4-wheeling in the summer, and snowmobile trails in the winter.

University of Wisconsin, Lacrosse Department of Recreation Management & Therapeutic Recreation Department performs two studies for recreational trail projects each year, one in the Spring and one in the Fall semester. These studies are performed by upper class students to provide the city with recommendations for single-use, or multi-use trails. Students come to these conclusions through community surveys, input sessions, interviews with landowners and research into the areas opportunity and constraints for trail locations. An inquiry into their next available semester would be the first step to take and would allow a more accurate timeline to be created for the planning process.

A local group that would be most suitable to provide a baseline interview for these studies should be with a member of the Bluff Country ATV Club, as they already have some preliminary plans for recreational trails.

This trail research can also include recommendations for pedestrian trails used to connect residential developments with trails or sidewalks to take to school. By including the pedestrian trails with the UWL study, funding may be acquired through an application Economic Impact Grant from the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation. This grant is made available annually each fall. Additionally, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development offers a Safe Routes to school program that can be utilized to create new trails as well as update current trails.

The State of Minnesota owns a substantial amount of bluff land within the limits of the city. In fact, they own a total of 956.85 acres⁸. In the creation of new trails, it would benefit the city to work with the State's Department of Natural Resources to see if there are any areas of potential trail systems where the City and State can work together for trail access and trail construction.

⁸ See Appendix F to view document *State of Minnesota Property Map*

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The need for residential development is a clear demand that the city is struggling to provide. There are a number of road blocks that the city faces in developing residential spaces, not least of which is the limited number of sewer hookups that are available from the city of Rushford, located within the City of Rushford Village's borders, just north of the South Rushford Development.

When looking at a layout for residential development, it would be beneficial to start expanding South Rushford both north towards Rushford, and southwest along the bluffs. This area can be viewed on the South Rushford Map⁹ located in the appendix of this document. By expanding commercial spaces north of the South Rushford housing development, the conversion of the commercial districts of both cities would create a 'twin city' condition with Rushford and City of Rushford Village being mutually beneficial to one another.

In order to induce both residential and commercial development the city will want to look into a water and waste water treatment facility to provide services in South Rushford. This area is where additional expansion will likely occur first and will have the least difficult time of needing to expand water lines. Working with the city engineer, the city should look into the costs and potential financial programs that may assist the city in providing this service to its constituents.

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Both commercial and industrial development were mentioned several times as a need for the area in returned surveys. By providing job opportunities, the city will be able to draw additional residents to the area as well as increase the much needed tax base for pursuing development projects. The city should determine which industries or types of businesses are most desirable, as noted in the survey, and create a list of businesses or industries that can be solicited for business recruitment. A recruitment package could also be assembled with parcel details, development fees, TIF and Tax Abatement options and other relevant documents to assist with business recruitment.

CITY WEBSITE

Add a section for PROPERTY FOR SALE within the Economic Development Page of the City Website. City owned property and locally owned property should be included. Regarding the landowners who indicated an interest in selling or developing, each should

⁹ See Appendix G to view document *South Rushford Map*

be contacted to determine any next steps or to create a timeline for potential future projects and developments.

This Land Inventory Report should be made available to residents both on the website or as a physical copy upon request.

An announcements section should be added to the bottom of the Homepage. This section could include information which would usually be posted with a press release or advertisement. Consistency of posting events, notices and reports will encourage residents to utilize the page regularly.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

It appears that there are many in the city who are unaware that they no longer live in a township. It would be beneficial to ensure that all correspondence and public information refer to the city as the CITY OF RUSHFORD VILLAGE to encourage consistency and community pride. A city logo is another item that can help the city with establishing an identity. This logo should be used on the website, letterhead and other documents where appropriate.

One remark that was made several times and could be a fast and inexpensive win for the city would be to provide an online portal in which to pay utilities on the website. This could also be financed with CARES Act funding as it will allow residents to stay at home to pay city utilities, rather than coming out and potentially spreading the virus. This would additionally be beneficial during the winter when it may or may not be safe to drive from some homes.

Disclosure

This report was generated to provide baseline information and presents a snapshot of land inventory status for only a portion of the privately owned property located in the City of Rushford Village. And, there is information that the survey did not uncover in which future projects may be able to reveal. The survey did not ask for personal details of landowners, nor did it ask for details as to why specific answers were chosen. All participants were given an opportunity to include their own comments on the survey.

Copies of this report can be obtained online at rushfordvillage.govoffice.com or by contacting the City of Rushford Village Hall at 43038 State Highway 30, crv@acegroup.cc, or 507-864-7974.

Appendix

- A. Land Inventory Survey (page 16)
- B. Land Inventory Map (page 17)
- C. FEMA/Bluff Land Aerial Map (page 18)
- D. Development Inventory Map (page 19)
- E. Desired Amenities Map (page 20)
- F. State of Minnesota Properties Map (page 21)
- G. South Rushford Map (page 22)

LAND USE SURVEY

ALL INFORMATION GATHERED IN THIS SURVEY ARE PURELY FOR CITY PLANNING PURPOSES AND WILL NOT BE SHARED WITH ANY THIRD PARTIES. ONCE DATA HAS BEEN COLLECTED, HARD COPIES OF ALL RESPONSES WILL BE SHREADEDED.

Please return survey to the Town Hall no later than Friday, April 3rd.

Name: _____

Property Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

1. HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THE CITY OF RUSHFORD VILLAGE?

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| ____ Less than 1 year | ____ 1-4 years |
| ____ 5-9 years | ____ 10-14 years |
| ____ 15-20 years | ____ 20+ |

2. ON A SCALE OF 1 – 10, HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE CITY’S CURRENT AMENITIES? ____

3. WHAT AMENITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE CITY? _____

4. ON A SCALE OF 1 – 10, HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH CITY SERVICES? _____

PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER _____

5. HOW WOULD YOU RANK THE NEEDS/OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR COMMUNITY FROM 1 TO 10 IN IMPORTANCE?

- ____ OPEN AREA / PARKLANDS
- ____ RECREATION: SPORTS OR ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES
- ____ RECREATION: TRAILS FOR WALKING/HORSE RIDING/SNOW MOBILING/BIKING/ETC.
- ____ HOUSING (HOMES, APARTMENTS)
- ____ SHOPS OR OFFICE BUILDINGS
- ____ LOCAL ENERGY SOURCES
- ____ LOCAL FOOD SOURCES
- ____ COMMUNITY CENTERS (ARTS OR SOCIAL SERVICES)
- ____ TRANSPORTATION (BIKE TRAILS, PARKING LOTS, TRAIN STATIONS, ETC)
- ____ SCHOOLS OR LIBRARIES
- ____ BUSINESSES OR INDUSTRY TO CREATE NEW JOBS
- ____ MEDICAL: NURSING/RETIREMENT HOME, CLINIC, HOSPICE SERVICES HUB

6. FOR YOUR TOP THREE CHOICES ON QUESTION 5, WHAT WOULD BE THE IMPACT OF USING THE LAND THAT WAY?

A. _____

HOW WOULD IT IMPACT PEOPLE’S LIVES? _____

B. _____

HOW WOULD IT IMPACT PEOPLE'S LIVES? _____

C. _____

HOW WOULD IT IMPACT PEOPLE'S LIVES? _____

The following questions refer to your current property within the City of Rushford Village.

7. APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY ACRES OF PROPERTY DO YOU CURRENTLY OWN? _____

8. WHAT IS THE LAND BEING USED FOR NOW?

- FARM
- HOME
- BUSINESS
- PARK
- OTHER _____
- NOTHING

9. WHAT ARE THE PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE LAND?

- BLUFFLAND OR HILLS
- TREES OR OTHER VEGETATION
- STREAMS
- OTHER _____
- FLAT GRASSY AREAS
- PONDS

10. ARE THERE ANY BUILDINGS OR OTHER STRUCTURES ON THE PROPERTY?

- YES NO
- PLEASE DESCRIBE STRUCTURES _____

11. HOW ACCESSIBLE IS THE PROPERTY?

- EASILY ACCESSIBLE
- REMOTE OR DIFFICULT TO ACCESS

12. WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE INTENTIONS FOR YOUR PROPERTY OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS?

- NO PLANS TO MAKE CHANGES IN OWNERSHP IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS
- HANDING DOWN PROPERTY TO CHILD/FAMILY MEMBER
- PLAN TO SELL UPON RETIREMENT
- PLAN TO DONATE LAND TO CITY/STATE UPON DEATH
- LOOKING TO SELL SOON
- PLAN TO DEVELOP PROPERTY INDEPENDENTLY
- WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP PROPERTY, WITH DEVELOPER
- OTHER _____

Would you be interested in selling your property? YES NO

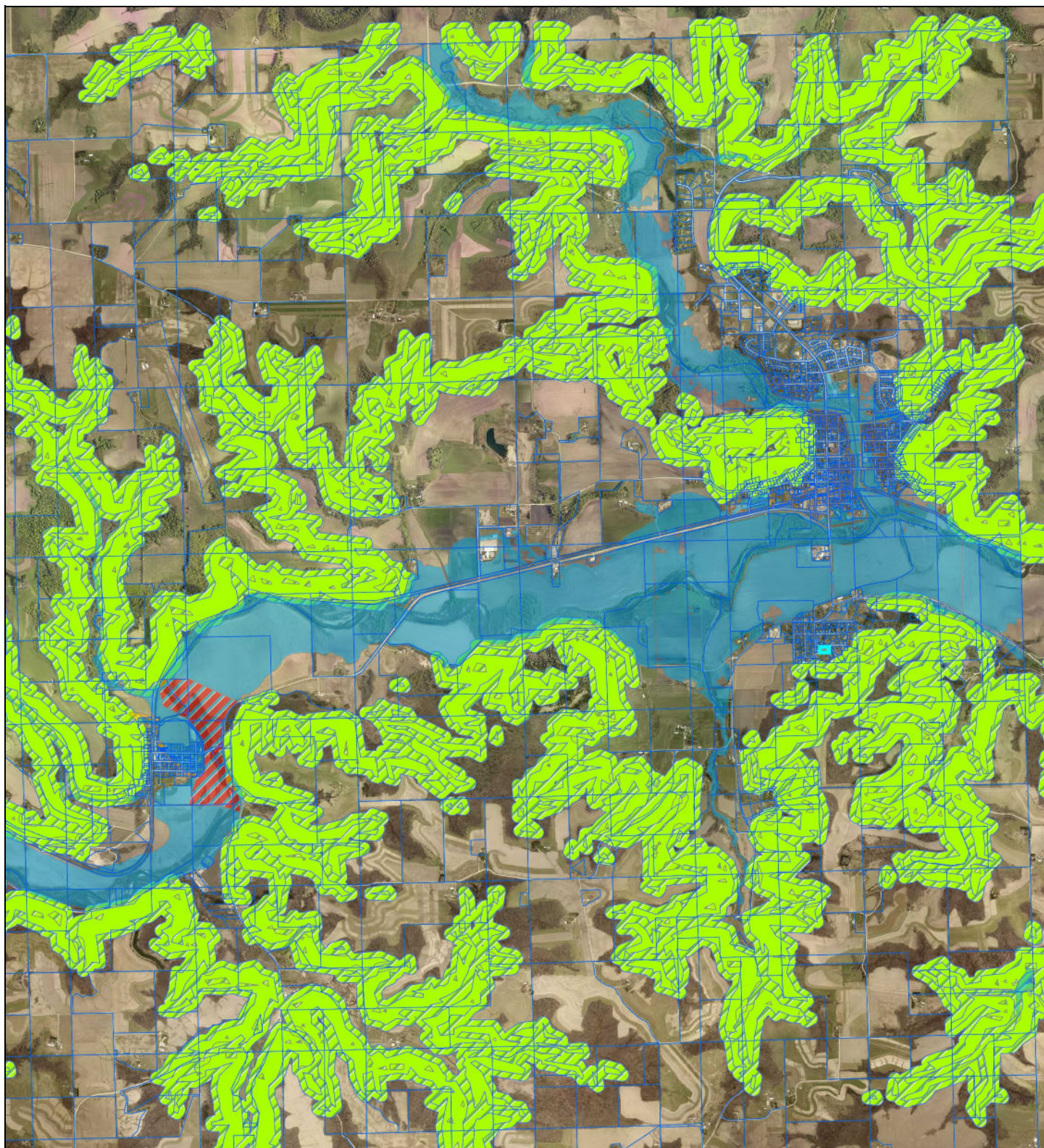
Would you be interested in Developing your property? YES NO

Enclosed, please find a map of Rushford Village. Please feel free to identify any locations where you feel that changes should be made, or future types of development should be located, and return with survey. Surveys can be delivered to the Rushford Village Town Hall or mailed to PO Box 70, Rushford Village, MN 55971.



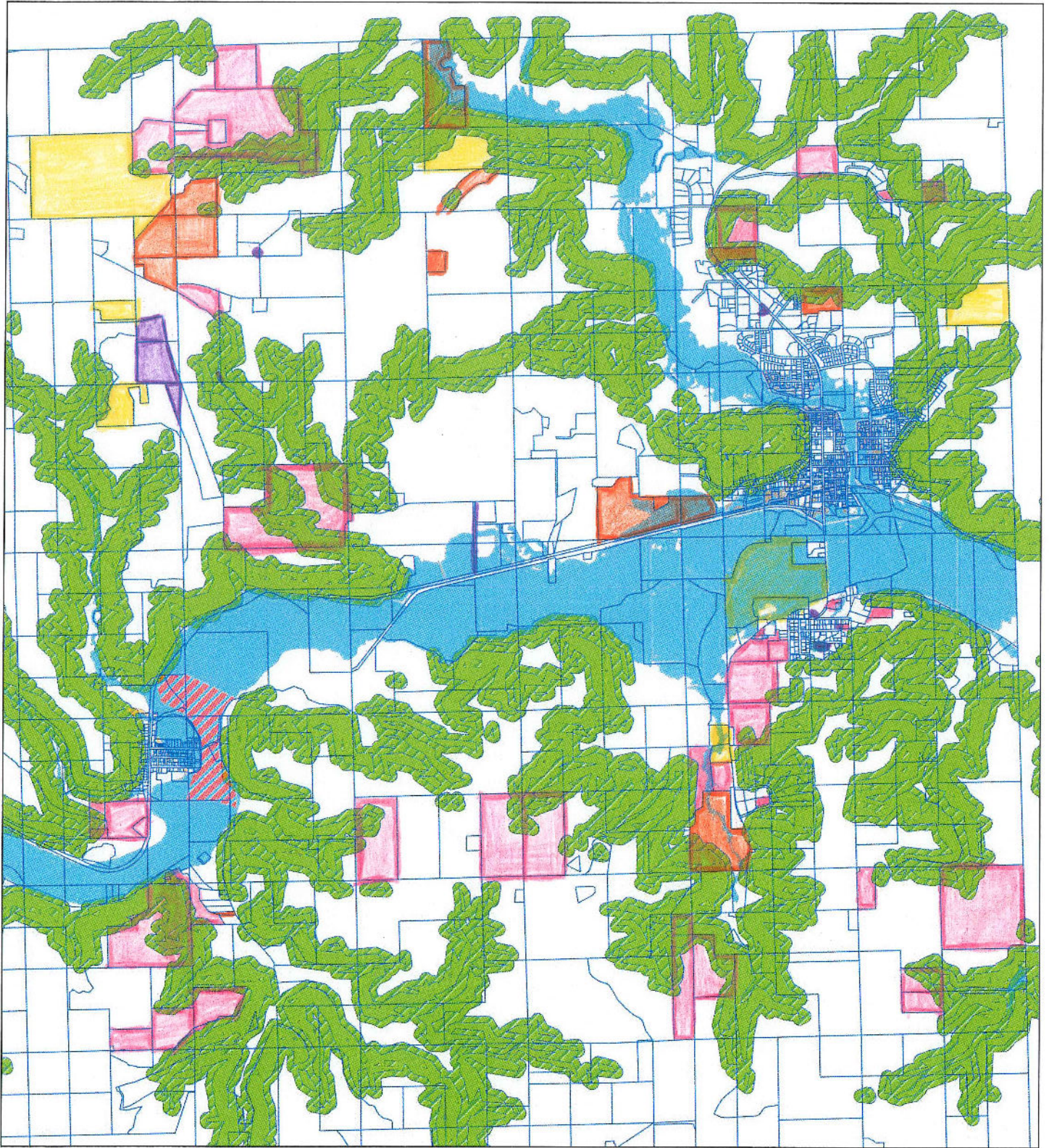
Please mark any locations within the City of Rushford Village where you think that the city should add new amenities like trails & parks, housing developments and commercial/industrial developments. This will assist the city with future planning and selecting projects that the city believes will benefit the community at large. Feel free to make any notes or instructions in the space provided below.

City of Rushford Village



FEMA Flood Plane
Bluff-lands


City of Rushford Village

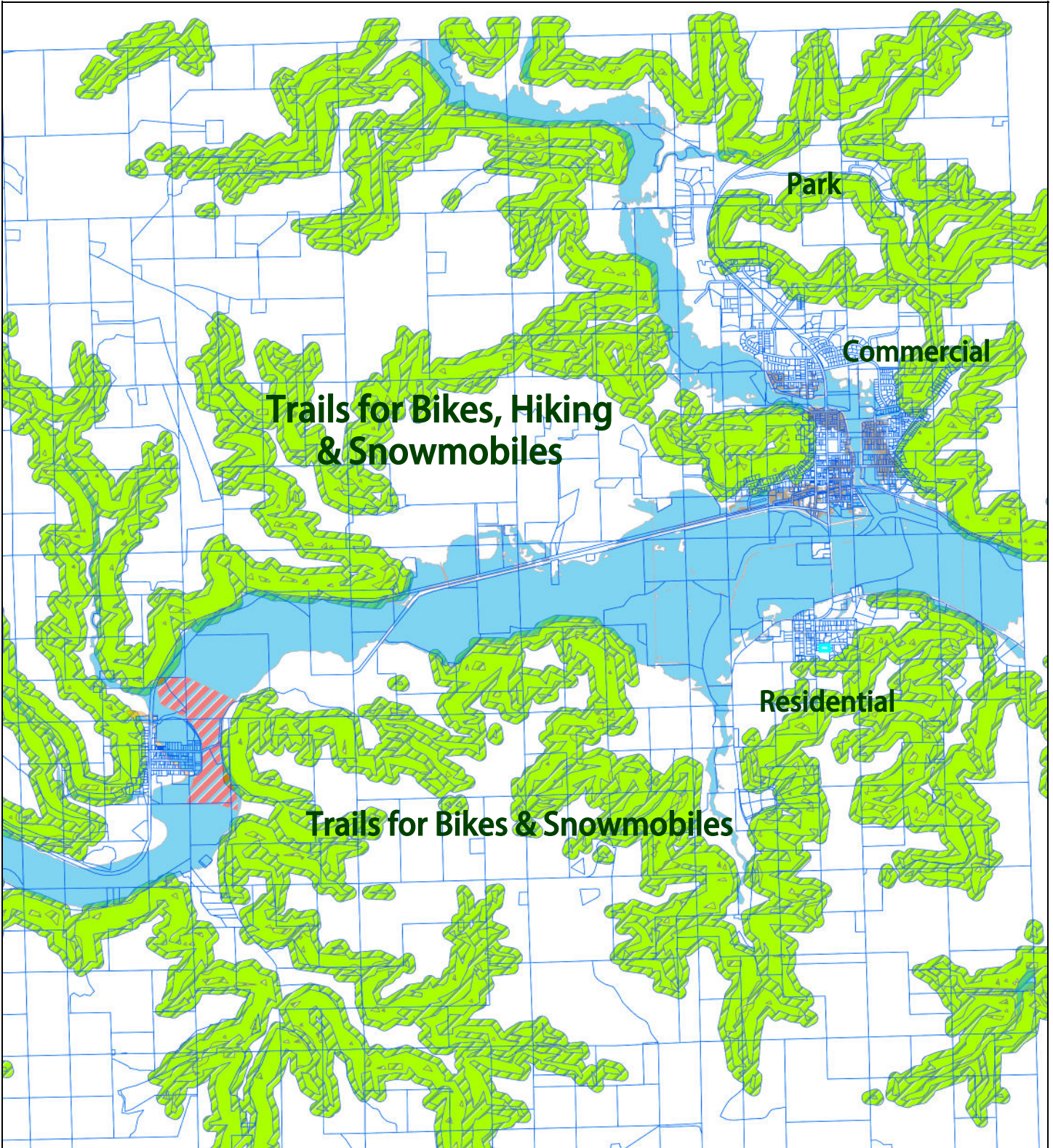


 Indicated No Preference

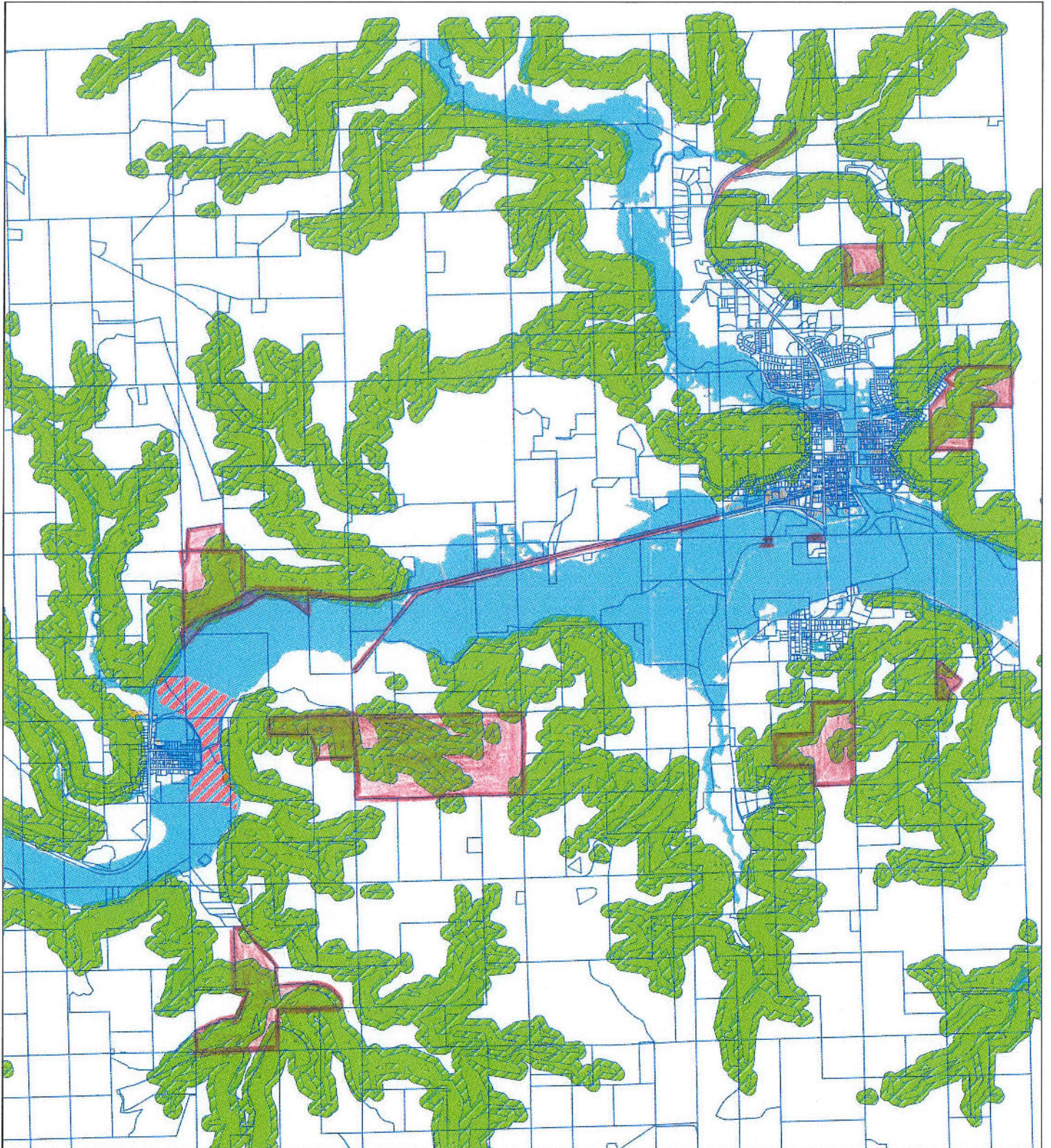
 Interested in Selling or Developing Property

 Not Interested in Selling or Developing Property

 City Owned Property

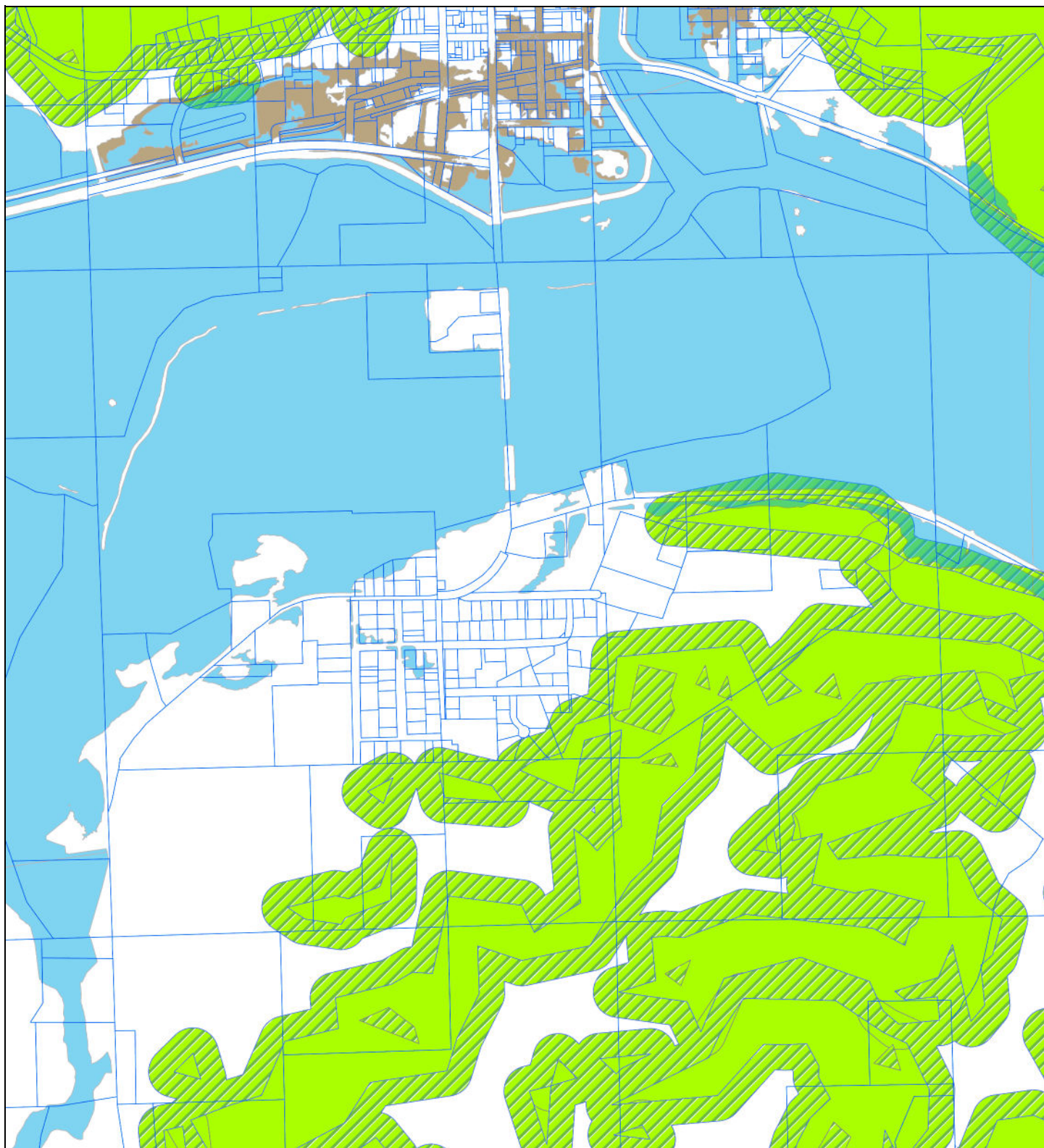


City of Rushford Village



FEMA Flood Plain
Bluff-lands
MN DNR

City of Rushford Village



Bluff-lands
FEMA Flood Plain