

2.0 HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

This section provides a short history and an overview of the City of Blaine and its current transportation systems.

2.1 Background

The City of Blaine is located in Anoka County, Minnesota, in the northern portion of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Blaine encompasses 34 square miles and is approximately 13 miles north of the downtowns of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The current population of Blaine is approximately 45,000. Figure 2.1 shows the location of the City within the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

Blaine was incorporated as a City in 1964 with the adoption of a home rule charter and a growing population of 15,000 residents. At that time Blaine was an outer ring suburb of Minneapolis and St. Paul and the city developed as a fairly typical suburban area through the 1960's and 1970's. Most development was concentrated in the southern and western portions of the City, primarily between Trunk Highway (TH) 65 and University Avenue. While these sections of the City were being developed, much of the eastern and northern portions of Blaine remained in farming and agricultural uses. The Northtown Mall was constructed in 1971 and brought the first major concentration of commercial property to the community.

The City experienced gradual growth through the 1970's and 1980's. Commercial properties continued to develop adjacent to the Northtown Mall along CSAH 10 and University Avenue and at locations along TH 65.

The National Sports Center (NSC) opened in 1990 as one of the largest amateur sports complexes in the world. With 52 regulation size soccer fields, a 13,000 seat stadium, a cycling velodrome, and an indoor track, the NSC is truly unique providing a valuable community resource and an amateur sports facility unmatched anywhere else in the state or the country.

The City of Blaine has recently been experiencing rapid growth and development of residential and commercial properties. The eastern and northern segments of the city are continuing to grow and change in character. Agricultural land is being redeveloped as new residential areas throughout the City. Newer residential neighborhoods in the city include Deacons Walk at TPC, The Lakes at TPC, Club West, Quail Creek, and Partridge Preserve.

The City of Blaine also has a strong and growing commercial and industrial business sector. There are currently nearly 1,300 businesses in the city including approximately 200 industrial locations. Businesses benefit from the excellent highway access that serves the city, primarily TH 65, U.S. Highway 10, and I-35W. The Anoka County-Blaine Airport also provides businesses with access to aviation services.

**Figure 2.1
Location & Regional Context**



In addition to the Northtown Mall, additional concentrations of commercial property are located at the intersection of TH 65 and TH 242/CSAH 14, and at The Village - a new shopping center located just north of the junction of I-35W and Lexington Avenue.

2.2 Existing Transportation Systems

The predominant feature of the existing transportation system in Blaine is TH 65. TH 65 is a major commuting corridor connecting the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area with communities and regional centers to the north including Ham Lake, Bethel, Isanti, and Cambridge. TH 65 currently experiences periods of congestion in the weekday A.M. and P.M. peak hours as well as on weekends. The high-volume, high-speed nature of TH 65 results in a barrier effect separating the east and west sides of Blaine. The existing conditions on TH 65 create safety concerns for all modes of traffic using or crossing the highway.

In addition to TH 65, Interstate-35W and U.S. Highway 10 are the other major roadways carrying high volumes of traffic in Blaine. Other major north-south roadways include University Avenue, Radisson Road, Lexington Avenue, and Sunset Road. Major east-west roadways include 85th Avenue, 109th Avenue, 117th Avenue, and TH 242/CSAH 14.

The Anoka County-Blaine Airport was opened in 1951 and remains an important component of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Airports System. The Airport is owned and operated by the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) and is one of the busiest reliever airports in the MAC system.

Existing facilities for pedestrians and bicycles include 60 miles of sidewalks within and another 33 miles of designated trails or paths.