

2.5 PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

LAKE REGION

Wadena is sometimes referred to as the “Gateway to Lake Country” because of its proximity to countless lakes and resorts in central Minnesota. Outdoor activities such as hiking, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, swimming, boating, hunting, and fishing are not only abundantly available, but are also part of the cultural fabric of the citizens living here. This region has some of the highest density of lakes in the State of Minnesota, if not the country. This area is home to multiple festivals, events, and recreational opportunities that draw visitors from all over the Midwest.

2.6 NATURAL RESOURCES

WETLANDS AND STREAMS

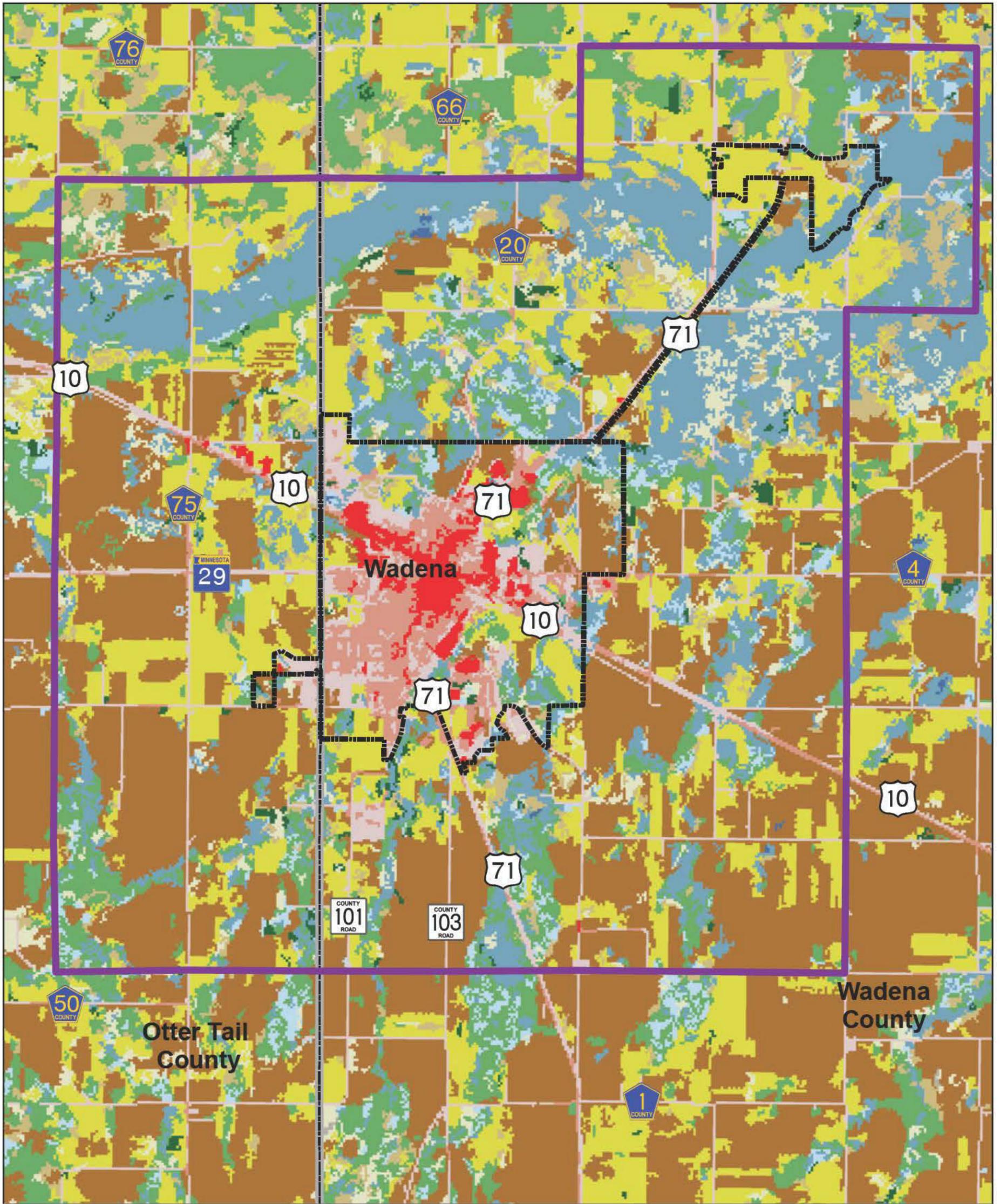
Though Wadena can be referred to as the Gateway to Lake Country, there are no large open water lakes within 15 miles of the community. Rush Lake is the closest to Wadena, located 16 miles to the northwest. During a 2010 survey of Rush Lake, the Minnesota DNR found seventeen fish species, which included Carp, Largemouth Bass, Northern Pike, and Walleye. A countless number of large and small freshwater wetlands are scattered within city limits and the extraterritorial area. These wetlands include freshwater emergent wetlands, freshwater forested/shrub wetlands, and freshwater ponds (see **Figure 2-12**). There are also multiple streams running through the community, including lake and wetland connectors, drainage ditches, intermittent streams, and perennial streams.

WADENA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

The Wadena Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is located four miles east of the City of Wadena. The 56-acre WMA offers deer, small game, and pheasant hunting. Visitors can view wetland wildlife and prairie wildlife while in the area.

LAND COVER

The existing land cover for the City of Wadena and the surrounding area is shown in **Figure 2-13**. A majority of the area inside city limits consists of residential and commercial/industrial. The three land cover designations comprising the most area within the ETA include row crops, pasture or hay, and emergent herbaceous wetlands.



- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Open Water | Mixed Forest | City Limits |
| Perennial Ice/Snow | Shrubland | Extraterritorial Area |
| Low Intensity Residential | Grasslands/Herbaceous | County Border |
| High Intensity Residential | Pasture/Hay | |
| Commercial/Industrial/Transportation | Row Crops | |
| Bare Rock/Sand/Clay | Woody Wetlands | |
| Deciduous Forest | Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands | |
| Evergreen Forest | | |



0 1 2 Miles

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SRE Wadena Existing Land Cover

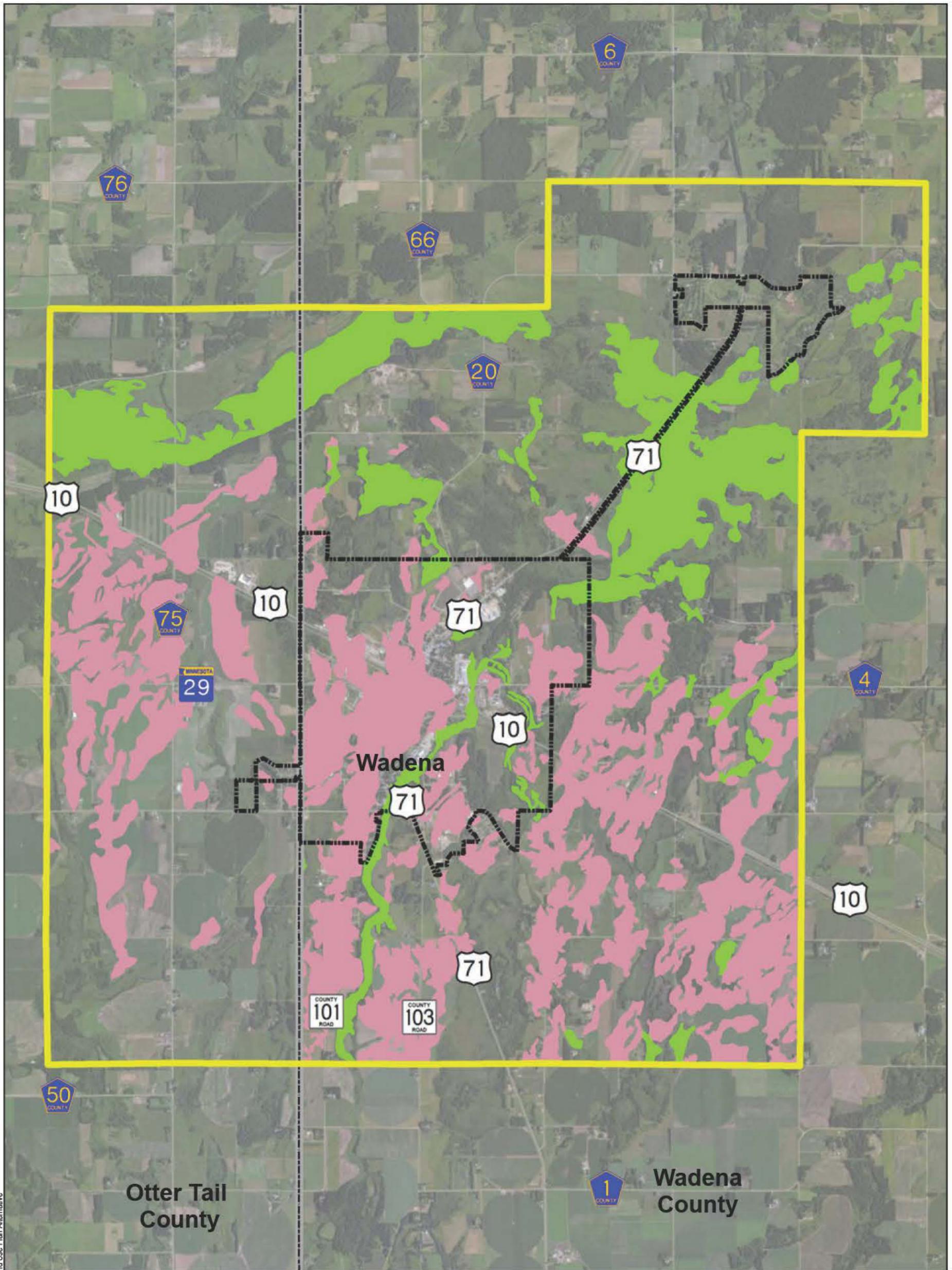
Consulting Group, Inc. Wadena Comprehensive Plan
City of Wadena, Minnesota

Downloaded from the National Land Cover Database on November 1, 2012

Figure 2-13

SOILS

Wadena city limits and extraterritorial area are comprised of 73 different soil types. The most prominent of the types are Verndale Sandy Loam and Markey Muck, as shown in **Figure 2-14**. Verndale Sandy Loam makes up 20.47 percent of the total Extraterritorial Area. This well-drained soil has a moderate organic matter content and has a depth of more than six feet to the water table. Areas of this soil type are currently in use for farm production or have been developed. Markey Muck covers 11.06 percent of the total Extraterritorial Area. This soil varies greatly from the Verndale Sandy Loam as it drains very poorly, has a very high organic matter content, and the water table is one foot above to one foot below the surface.



Soil Types

- Markey Muck
- Verndale Sandy Loam

- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Area
- County Border



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Figure 2-14

2.7 CULTURAL/RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

BUILDINGS ON NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

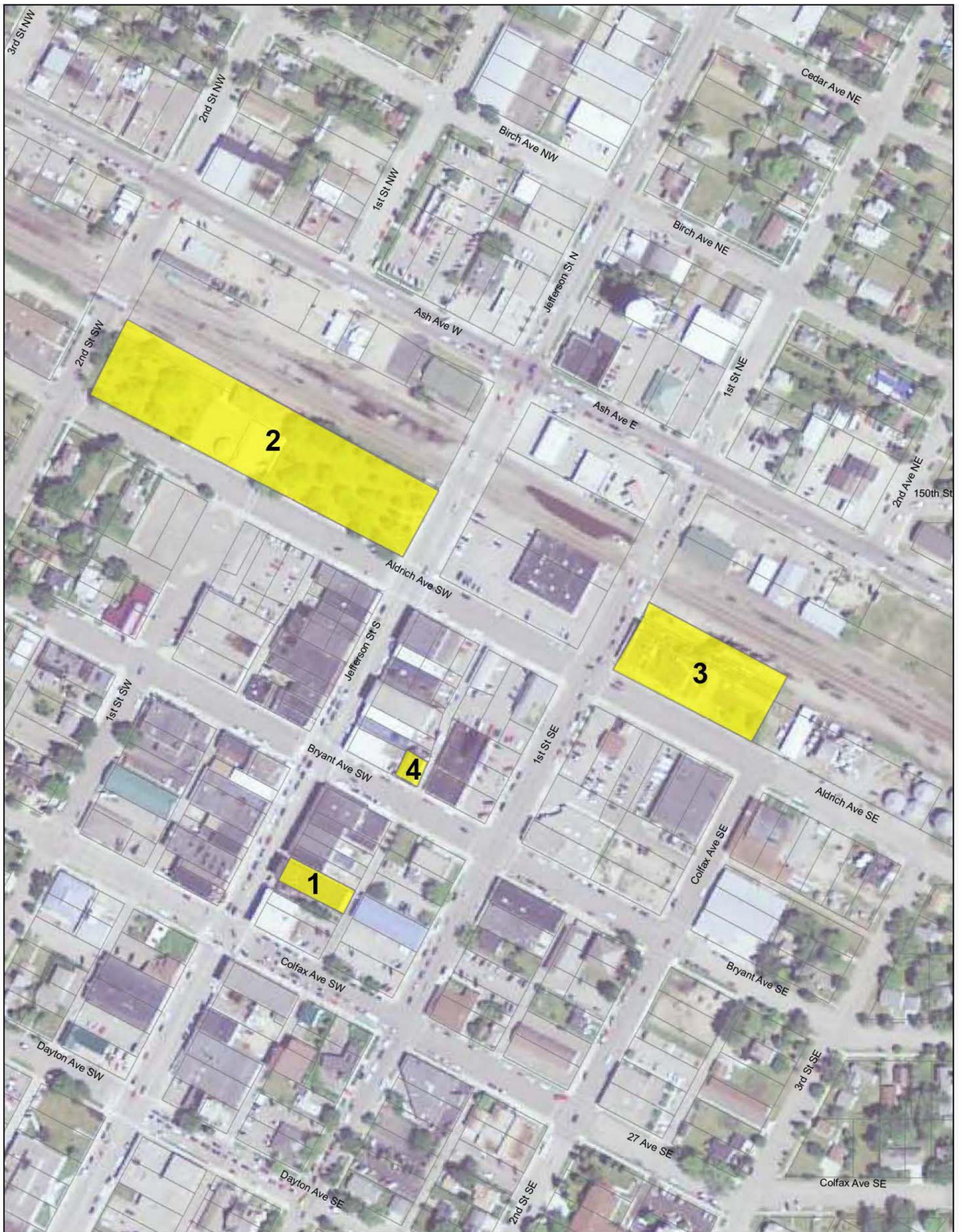
There are four buildings within Wadena's city limits that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. An additional 53 historically significant buildings or places (not listed on the register) can also be found in the City of Wadena. The four buildings included on the National Register are shown in **Figure 2-15**.

The Commercial Hotel was in operation as a hotel from 1900 to 1924. The building was listed on the National Register in 1988, and was renovated to its current state in 1989. The building has been converted to apartments, housing sixteen one and two-bedroom apartments for those 55 years of age and older.

The Northern Pacific Passenger Depot was built in 1915, and continued in operation until 1971. The building was placed on the National Register in 1989, and currently serves as a museum.

The Peterson-Biddick Seed and Feed Company's building was built in Wadena in 1915. After many changes in leadership, the company's operations were moved to a new plant west of Wadena. The building was added to the National Register in 1989.

The Wadena Fire and City Hall was built in 1912, and remained in operation until 1949. The building was placed on the National Register in 1989, and is still owned by the City of Wadena.



- 1. Commercial Hotel - Built in 1900
- 2. Northern Pacific Passenger Depot - Built in 1915
- 3. Peterson-Biddick Seed and Feed Company - Built in 1915
- 4. Wadena Fire and City Hall - Built in 1912



TRAILS

Bike Trails

The Leaf River Trail consists of 10.6 miles of paved shared-use paths in Wadena. Of the eight parks in the city, three are adjacent to the trail, which also connects to the Whitetail Run Golf Course (See **Figure 2-16**). The looped trail provides a recreational opportunity for the residents of Wadena, and provides for other modes of transportation between the city's core and the northern subdivisions.

Red River Trail

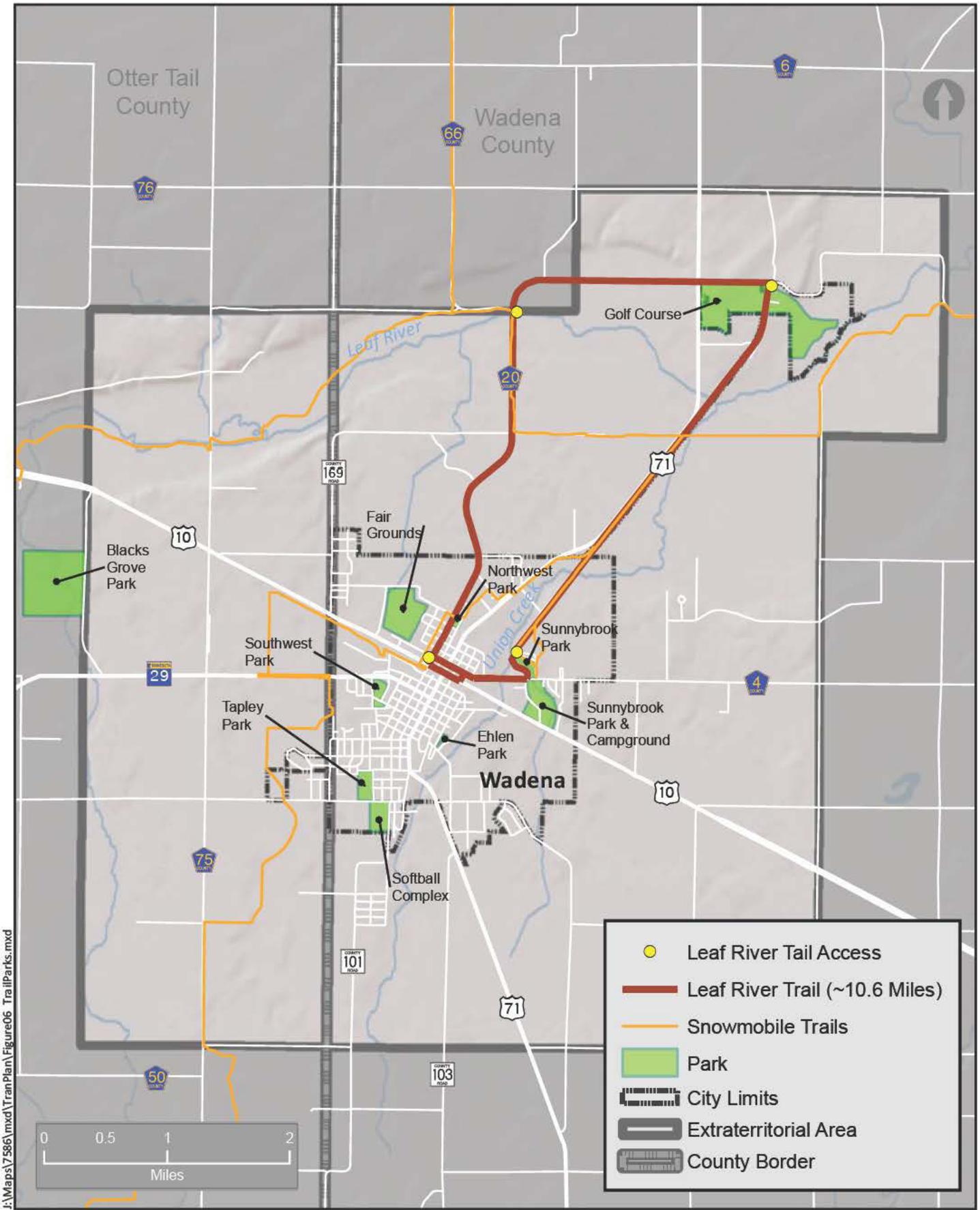
Trade between Canada and St. Paul, Minnesota in the 1840s led to the creation of the Red River Trail. It was one of three such trails providing a route to haul goods by ox-drawn cart up and down the Red River supplying various settlements along the way. This particular trail called the "Woods" trail was created to bypass the hostile Sioux tribes that had attacked the two other trails to the southwest. A memorial placard can be found in Sunnybrook Park between holes one and two of the disc golf course.

Snowmobile Trail

The Wadena Country Trailbreakers Snowmobile Club manages 200 miles of trails throughout the county. The trail runs through Wadena with access to three hotels in the city: Eastwood Inn, Brookside Motel, and the AmericInn. These trails connect to the cities within the county, and expand to Bluffton, Walker, and Park Rapids.

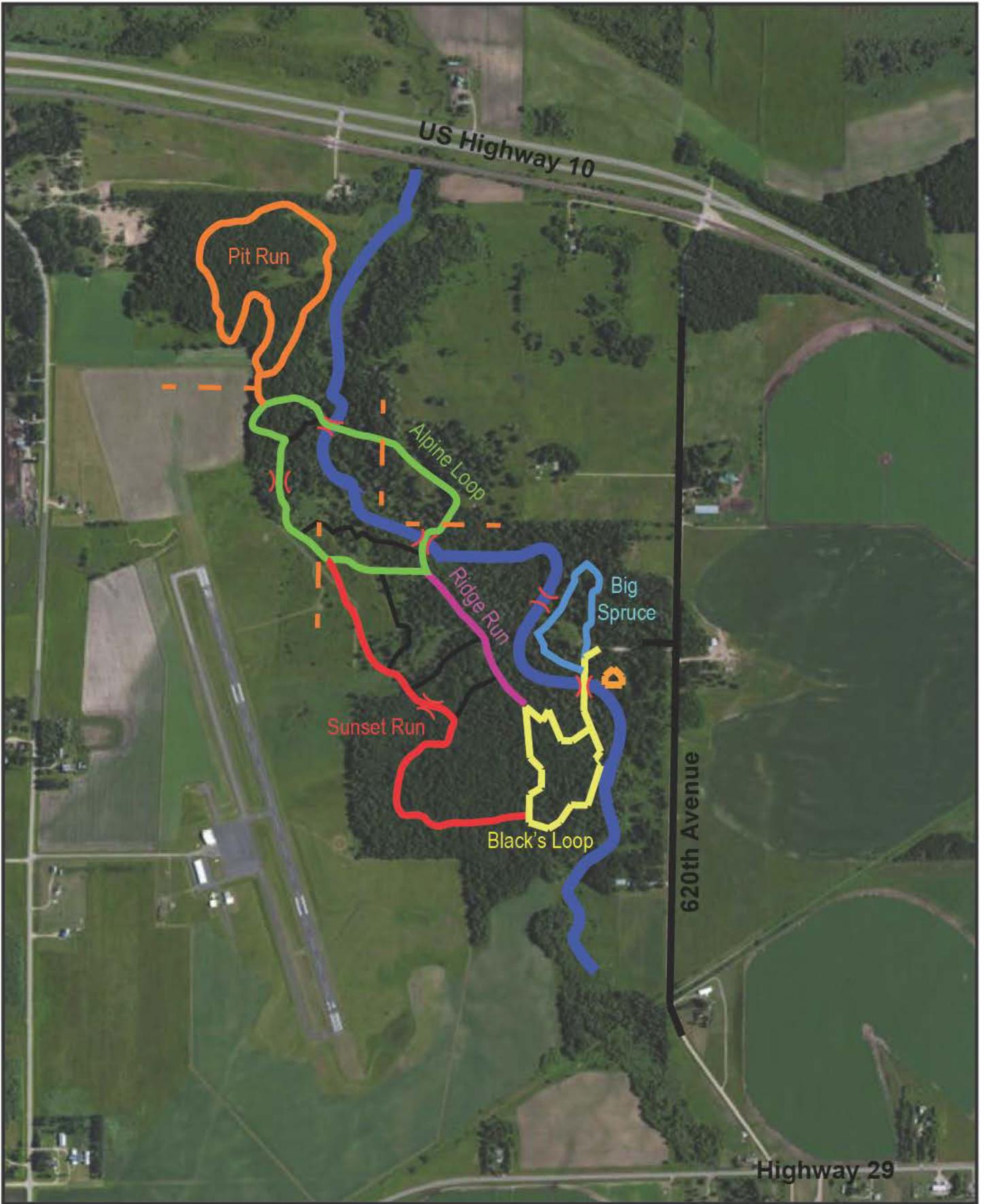
Cross-Country Trails

There are seven connected ski trails located to the west of Black's Grove Park, as shown in **Figure 2-17**. These groomed trails total approximately 5.6 miles, with bridges crossing Oak Creek. These trails are open for hiking, biking, and horseback riding during warm weather months.



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Figure 2-16



NORTHERN PACIFIC PASSENGER DEPOT

Built in 1915, this building served as the iconic center of Wadena due to rail passenger service that once connected Wadena with St. Paul and then the rest of the country. Amtrak still operates along the Empire Builder Line, although the closest stop is either in Detroit Lakes or Staples. The depot is surrounded on two sides by city parks, and is located in Wadena's historic downtown. As mentioned earlier, the depot is among four properties on the National Register of Historic Places as well as 53 other historically significant properties. After passenger service was discontinued in 1971, the building sat vacant for nearly three decades until a local not-for-profit leased the building from the city in 2003 and renovated the building in 2008. Now, the building is used as a community space and offers rail exhibits, tours, special events, area information, refreshments, and a gift shop.

SPORTSMAN'S CLUB

The Knob Hill Sportsman's Club is located two miles east of Wadena on Knobhill Road. The 10-acre site has indoor and outdoor shooting ranges that include one of Minnesota's two running target systems. Membership is required to shoot at the range on most occasions, though shooters outside of the Club are welcome during preseason practice times.

WADENA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Wadena County Historical Society (WCHS) was formed in 1967. The society's "general purpose shall be the discovery, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge about the history of Wadena County and the State of Minnesota". The WCHS has a twelve-member volunteer board, consisting of county residents. The WCHS Museum is located on Jefferson Street in Wadena.

MURALS OF MINNESOTA

Multiple artworks that detail 1,000 years of Minnesota history have been graphically represented on more than 100 oversized puzzle pieces and displayed on buildings throughout the City of Wadena. The murals represent everything from the region's Viking heritage to the space shuttle. The Murals of Minnesota were painted by multiple artists in Wadena. In celebration of Wadena's sesquicentennial, the Murals were bequeathed to the City in 2009. The Murals can be seen on a self-guided walking tour through Wadena's historic downtown.