



Living in the Middle of Everywhere

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THE NARRATIVE



- There's a brain drain
- **We live in the middle of nowhere**
- We are a sleepy town
- Everyone knows one another
- Nobody lock their doors
- The lucky few escape

CHARLES GALPIN *RURAL LIFE*



Parting of the Ways, Wyoming

Galpin, Charles Josiah. 1918. *Rural Life*. The Century Co: New York

Local Newspaper

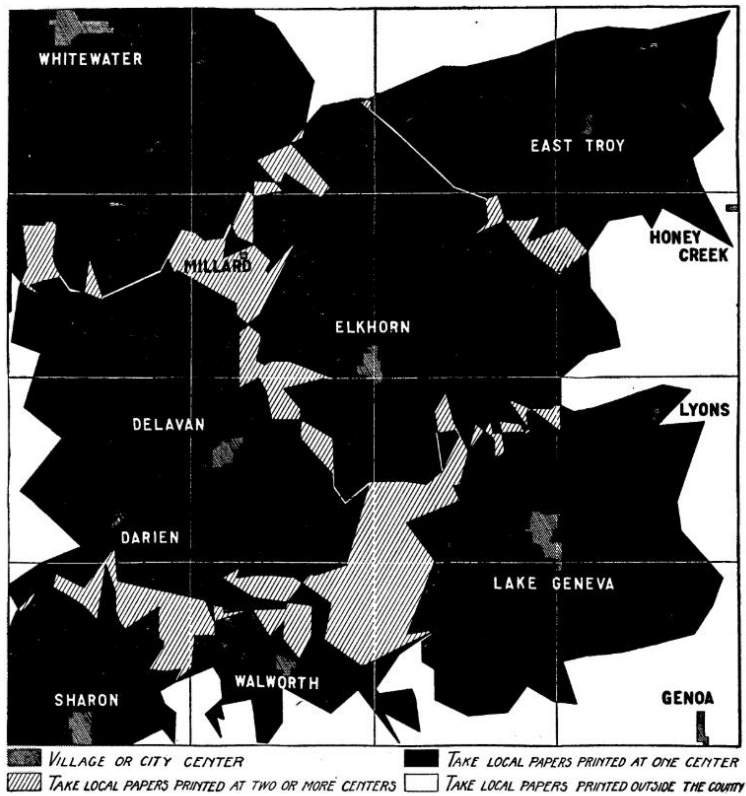


FIG. 4. LOCAL-PAPER COMMUNITIES

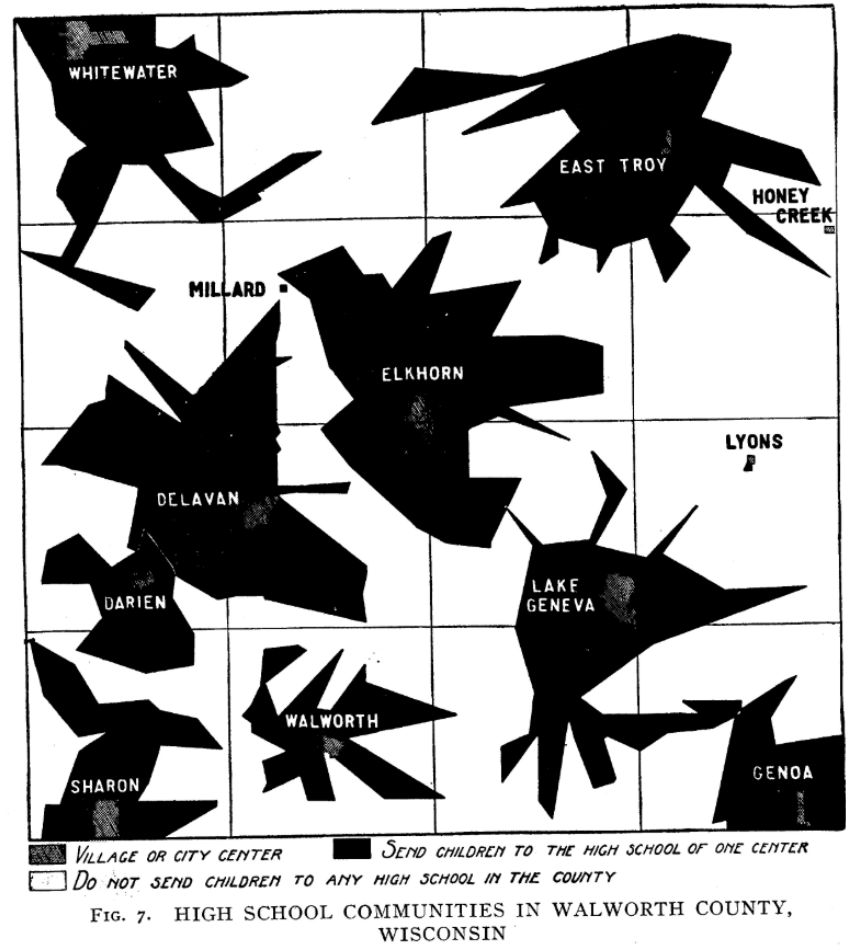
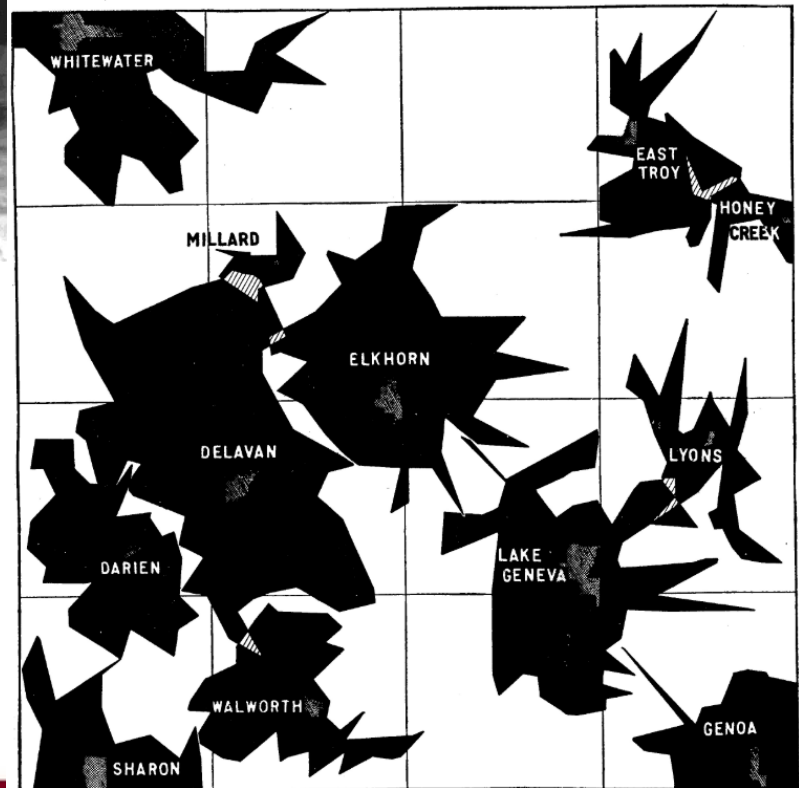


FIG. 7. HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITIES IN WALWORTH COUNTY, WISCONSIN

High School



Milk Market



■ VILLAGE OR CITY CENTER ■ TAKE MILK TO ONE CENTER
▨ TAKE MILK TO TWO CENTERS □ TAKE MILK TO COUNTRY CREAMERIES OR SEND IT OUTSIDE OF COUNTY

FIG. 5. VILLAGE- OR CITY-MILK COMMUNITIES



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

**Nebraska Buffalo Commons
Research 2012**

**Workforce Movers
University of Minnesota,
2004, 2012, 2020**



MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

EXTENSION



MONTANA
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



Montana Movers Study, 2021

Newcomers: Why?

Simpler pace of life



Safety and Security



Low Housing Cost





Newcomers: Who?

- 41% moved primarily for a job
(50% youngest/ 35% oldest)
- 25% lived there previously
- 91% have some college or bachelor's
- 75% household incomes over \$50k
- 47% have children in household
- 21% telecommute!

Source: 2020 University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality. Rural workforce movers study. Funded by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Living in the Middle of Everywhere

"We ended up landing in Roscoe, Illinois because of the location. It's a quick drive to Chicago (90 minutes), Milwaukee (60 minutes), & Madison (45 minutes)"

<http://sprudge.com/snowdrift-coffee-129804.html>

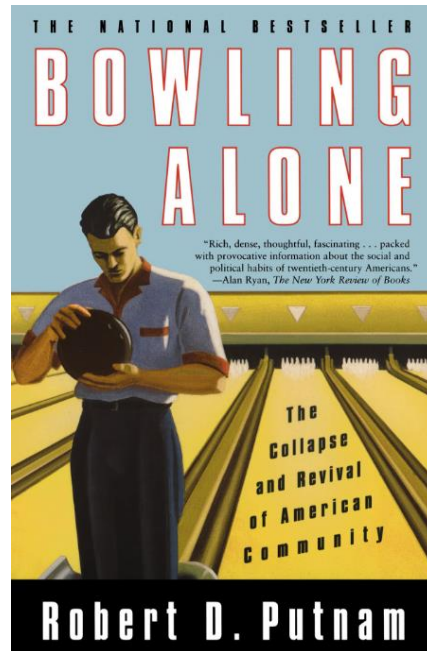
CHOOSING HOME

Newcomers look at 3-5 communities

- Chicken and egg of job/people primacy
- Topical reasoning (local foods regions)
- Assets vary by demographic
- Hedging household economic bets

Middle of Everywhere

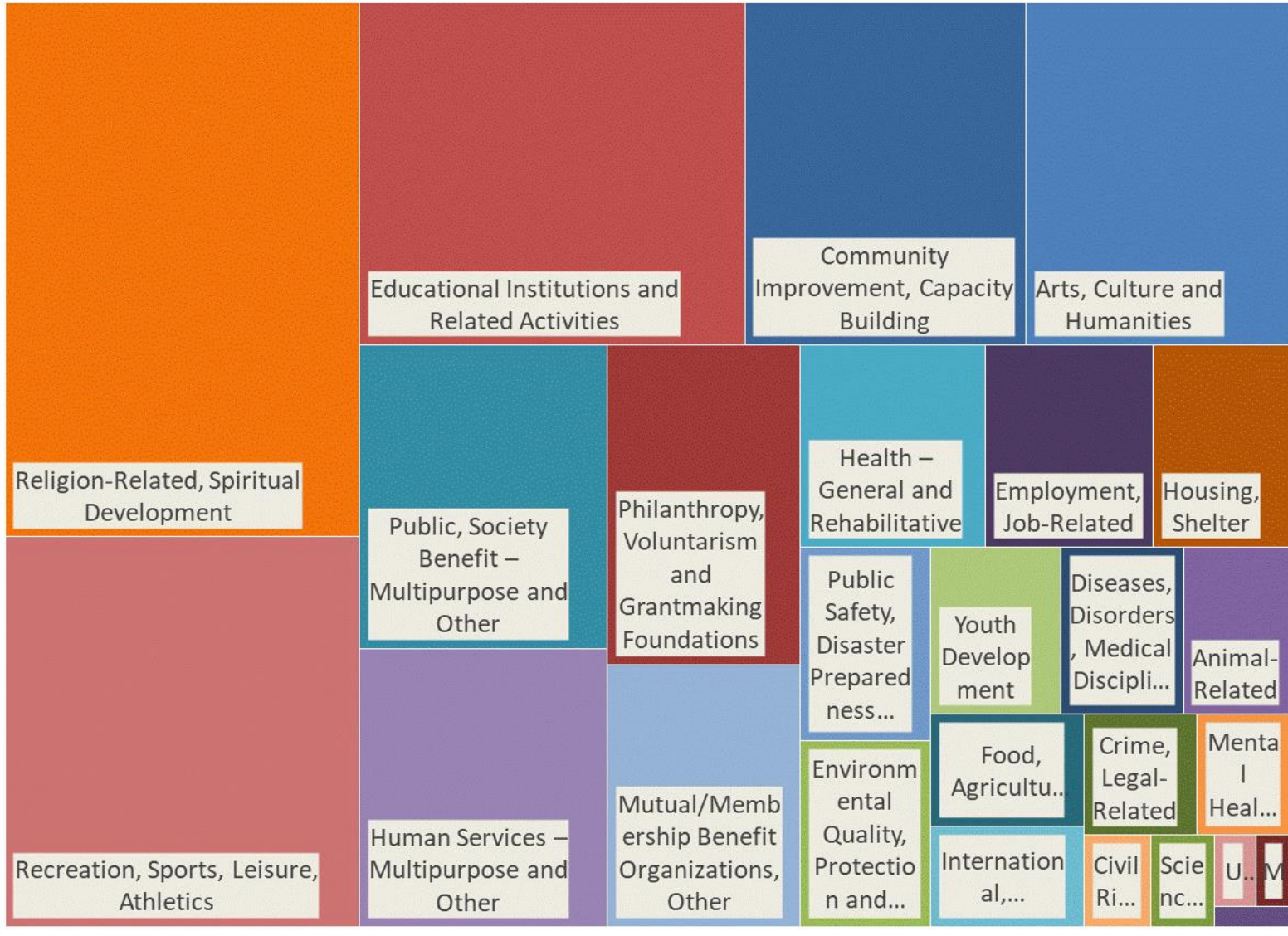
Social Life



Minnesota

Nonprofit NTEE composition

2020

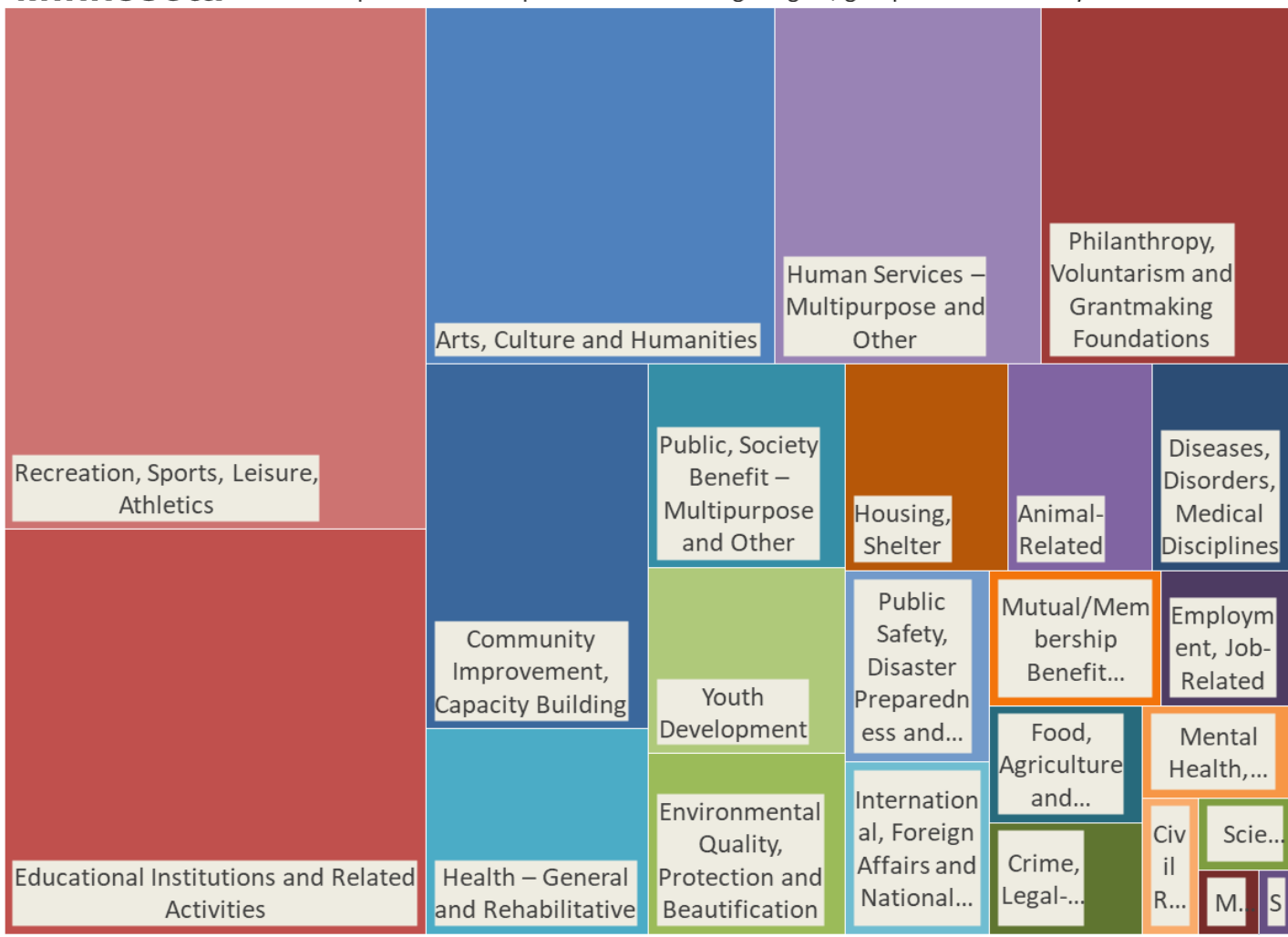


17,753 of the 31,603 (56%) nonprofits were formed in the past 30 years

Legacy Amendment is visible

Minnesota

2020 Nonprofit NTEE composition not including Religion, groups formed last 30 years



The Legacy Amendment increases the state sales tax by three-eighths of one percent beginning on July 1, 2009 and continuing until 2034. The additional sales tax revenue is distributed into four funds as follows: 33 percent to the clean water fund; 33 percent to the outdoor heritage fund; 19.75 percent to the arts and cultural heritage fund; and 14.25 percent to the parks and trails fund.

SHIFT in Engagement

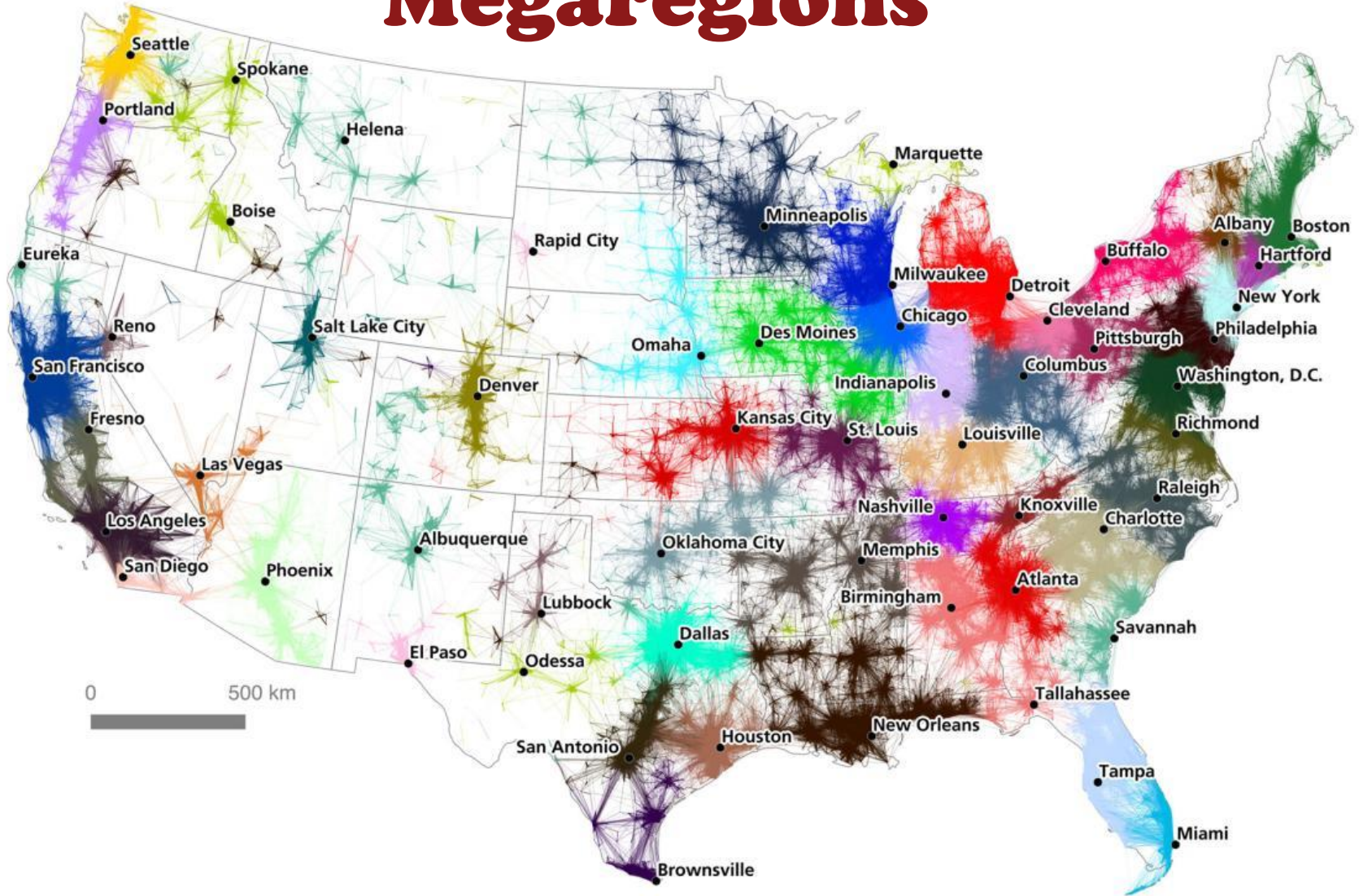


Narrow geography
Broad focus
Action: consensus

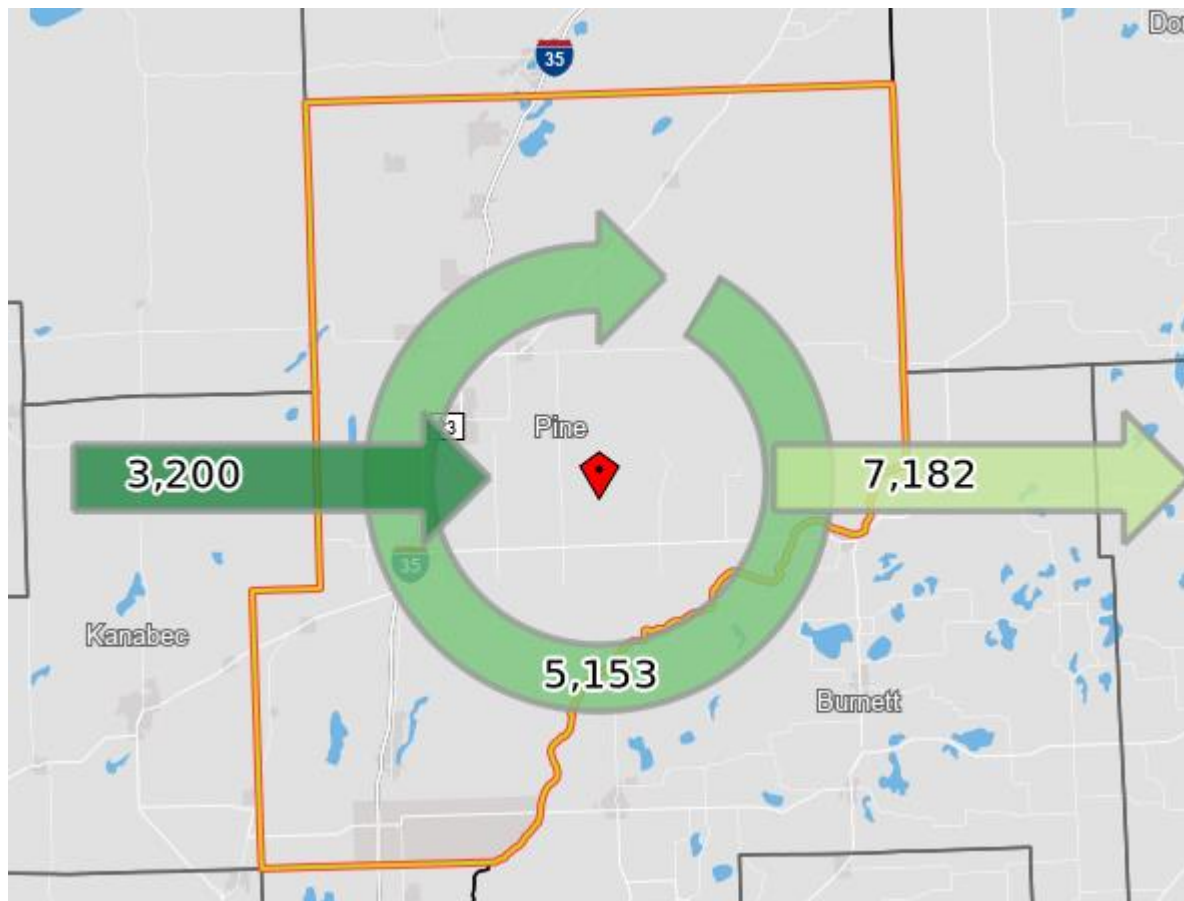
Broad geography
Narrow focus
Action: the small



Megaregions



<http://discovery.dartmouth.edu/megaregions/>



Pine County

Across Minnesota, just 51% work in the county they live.

<https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

**We live in a REGIONAL
COMMUNITY.**



in the Middle of Everywhere

BUILDING COMMUNITIES
FROM THE INSIDE OUT



A PATH TOWARD FINDING AND
MOBILIZING A COMMUNITY'S ASSETS

JOHN P. KRETZMANN · JOHN L. MCKNIGHT

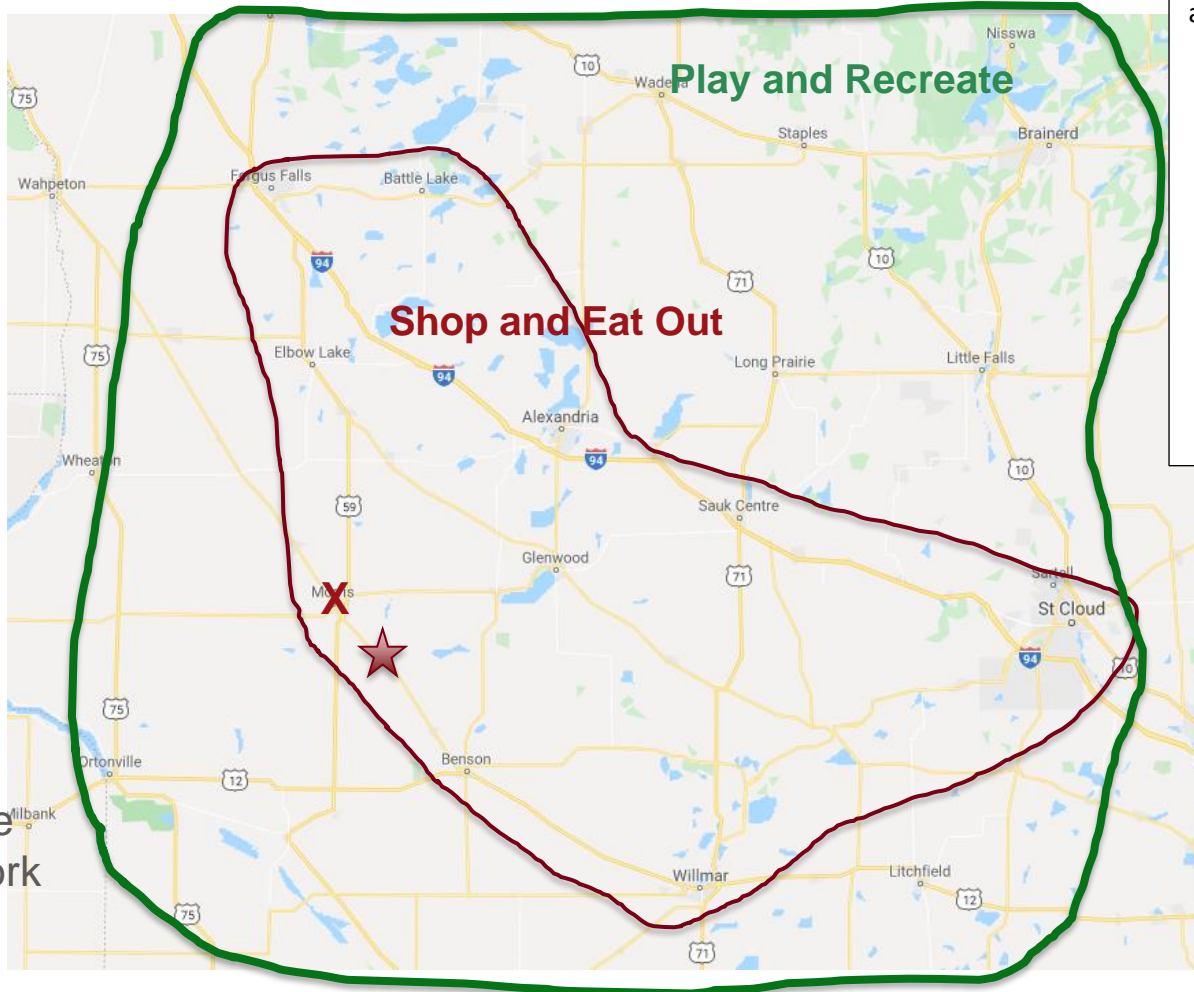
Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets (1993).

By John P. Kretzmann, John L. McKnight

The Middle of Everywhere Exercise

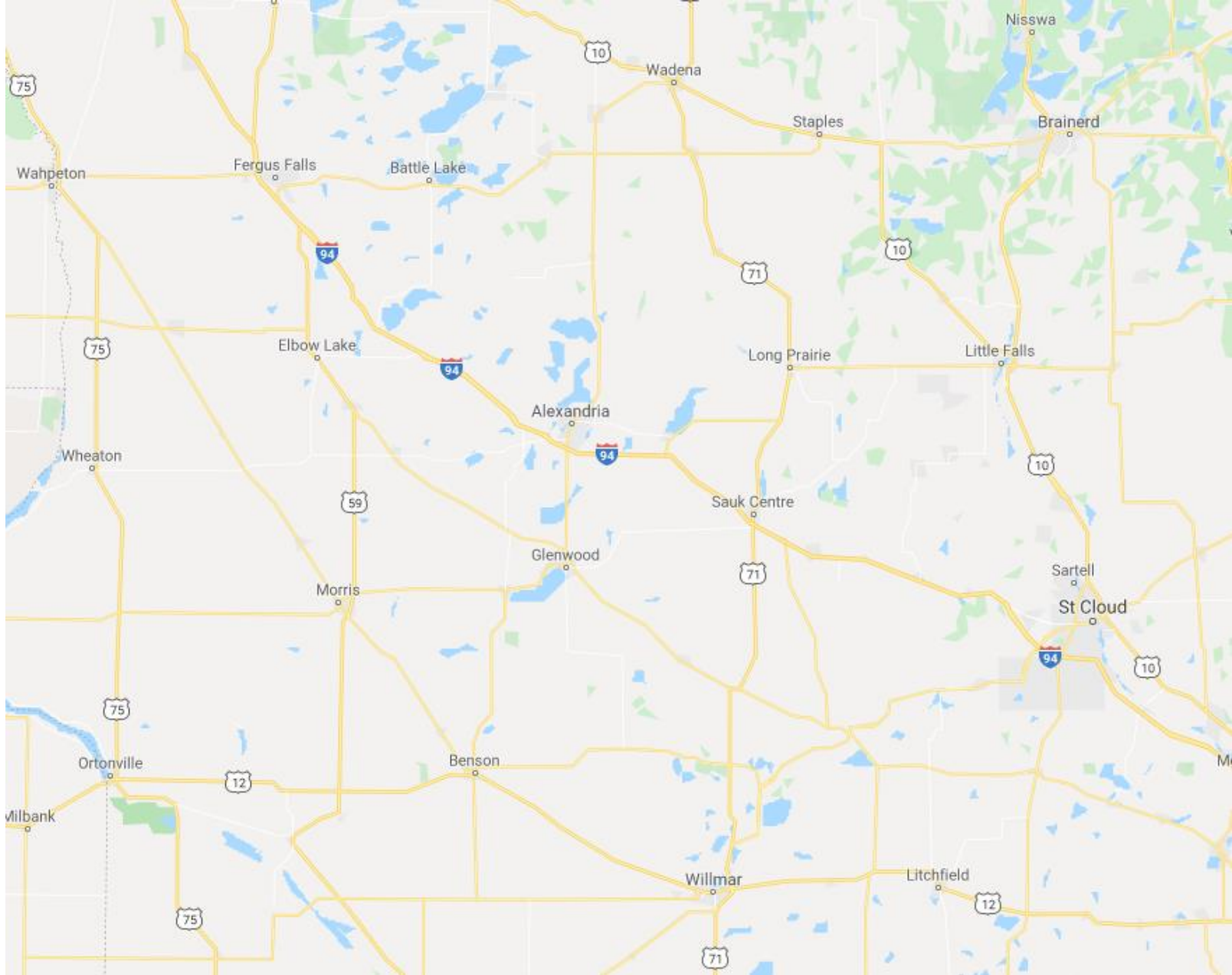
Age: _____'s

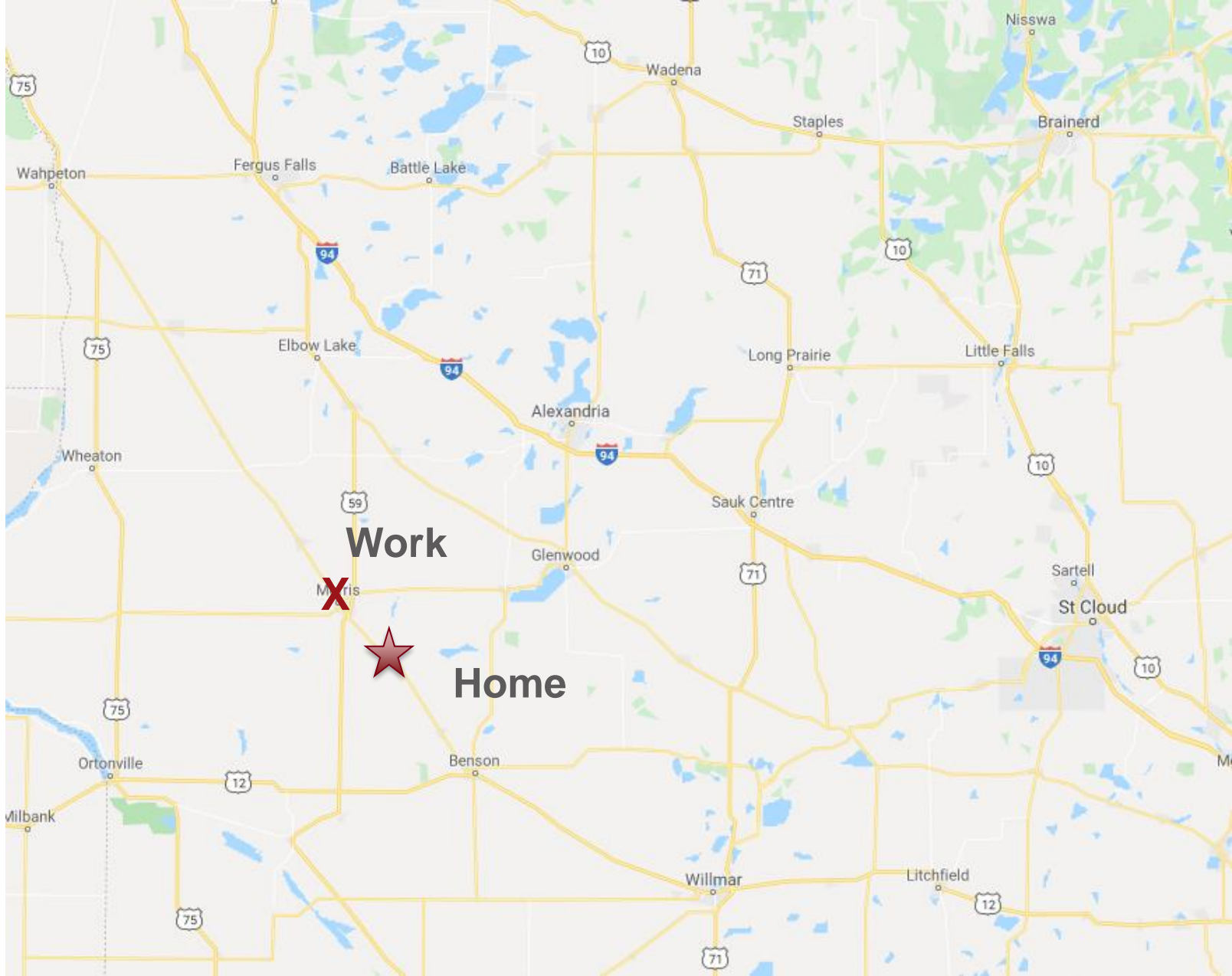
List 3-5 of your favorite assets in your region:



- ★ where you live
- X where you work

- Circle around:
1. Shop / eat out
 2. Play / recreate



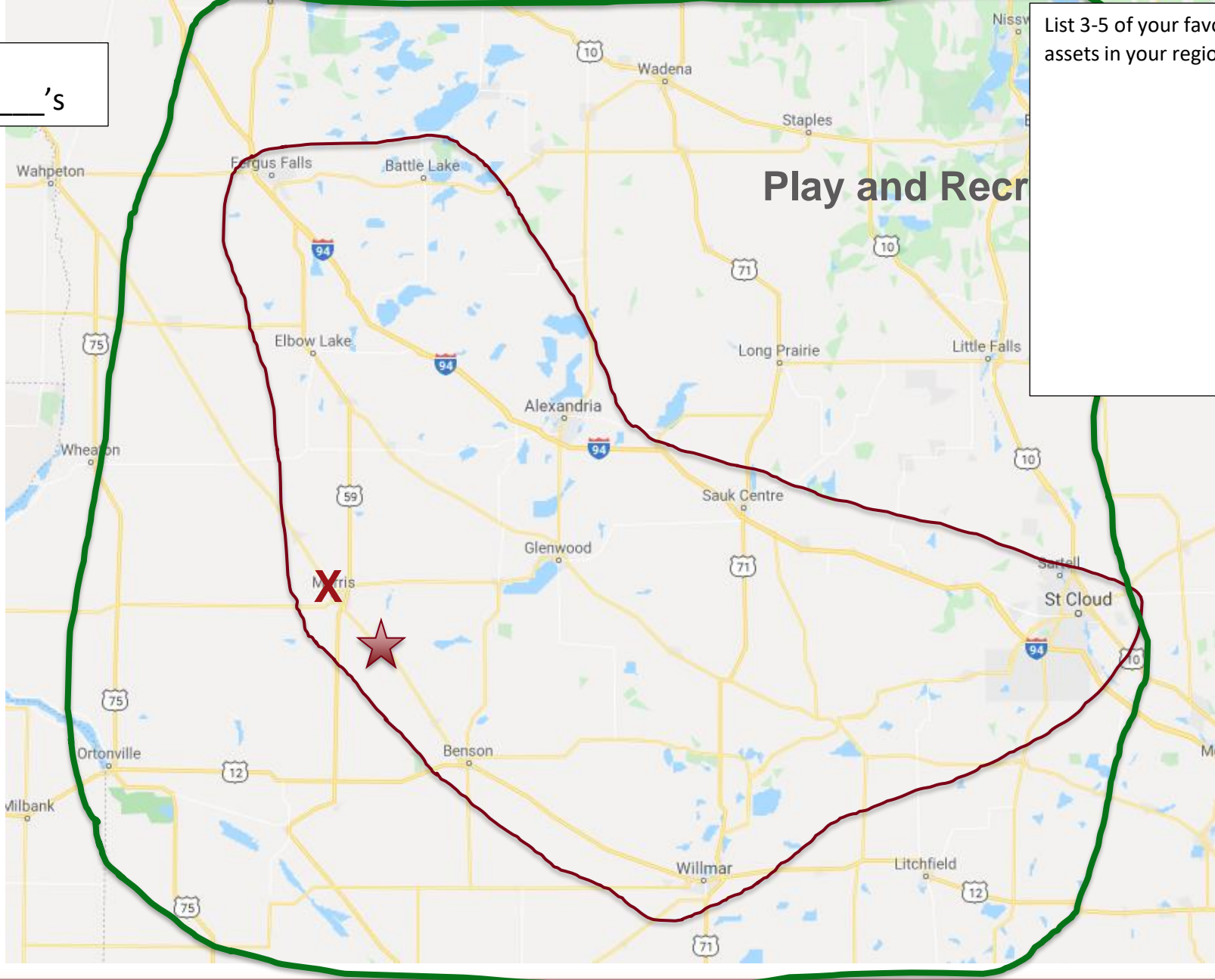




Shop and Eat Out

Age: _____'s

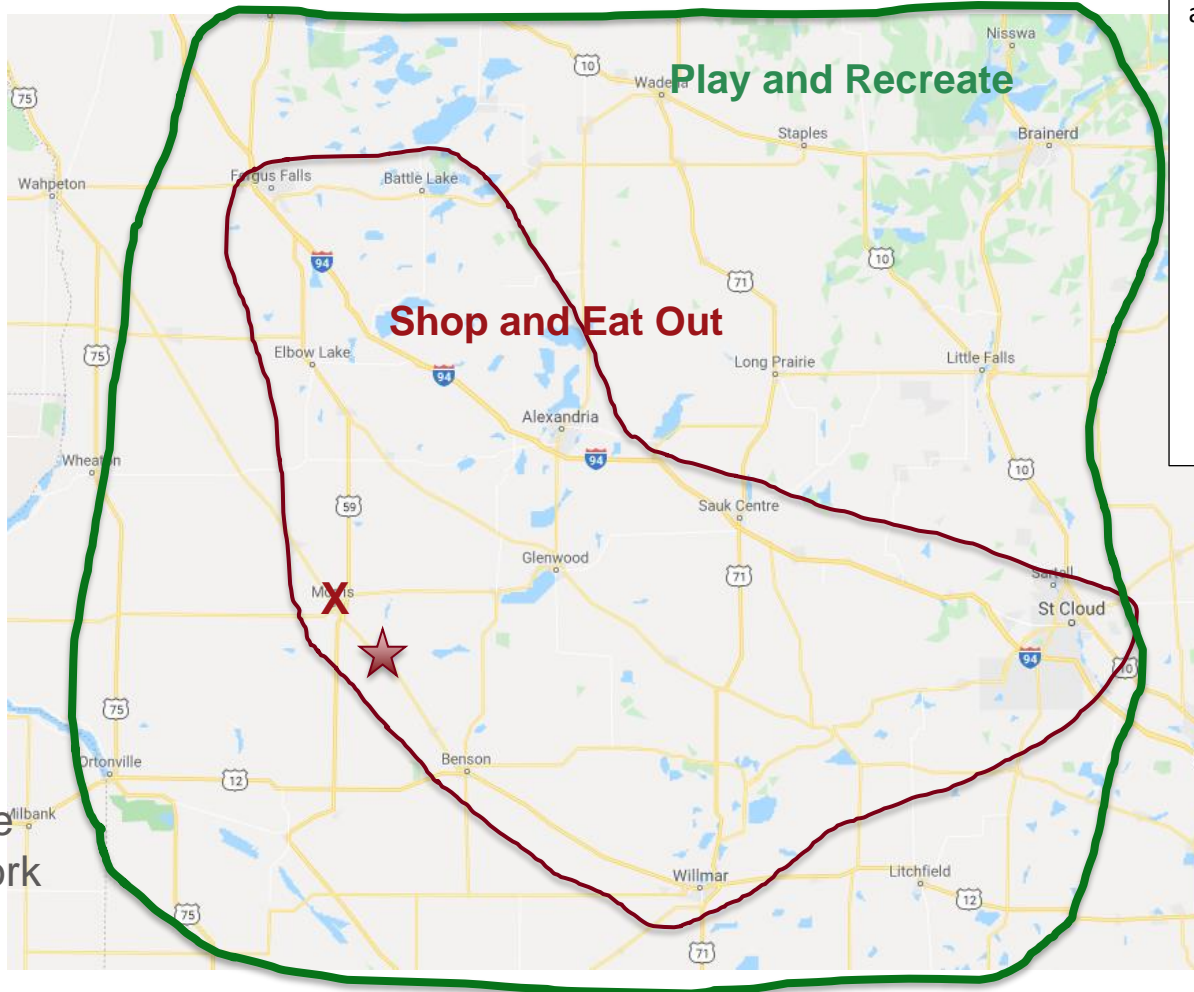
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The Middle of Everywhere Exercise

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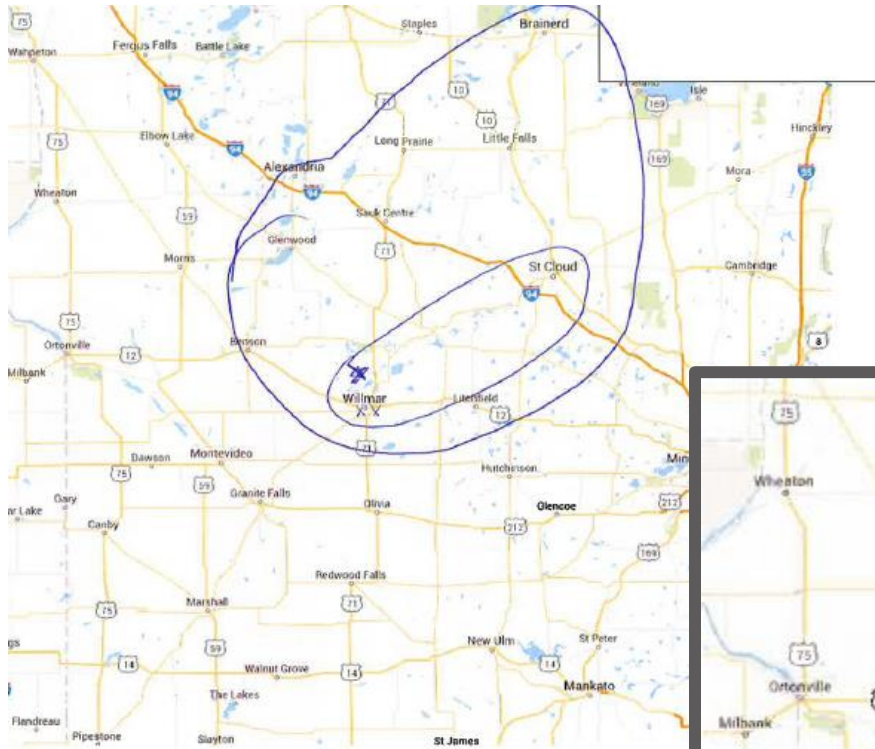
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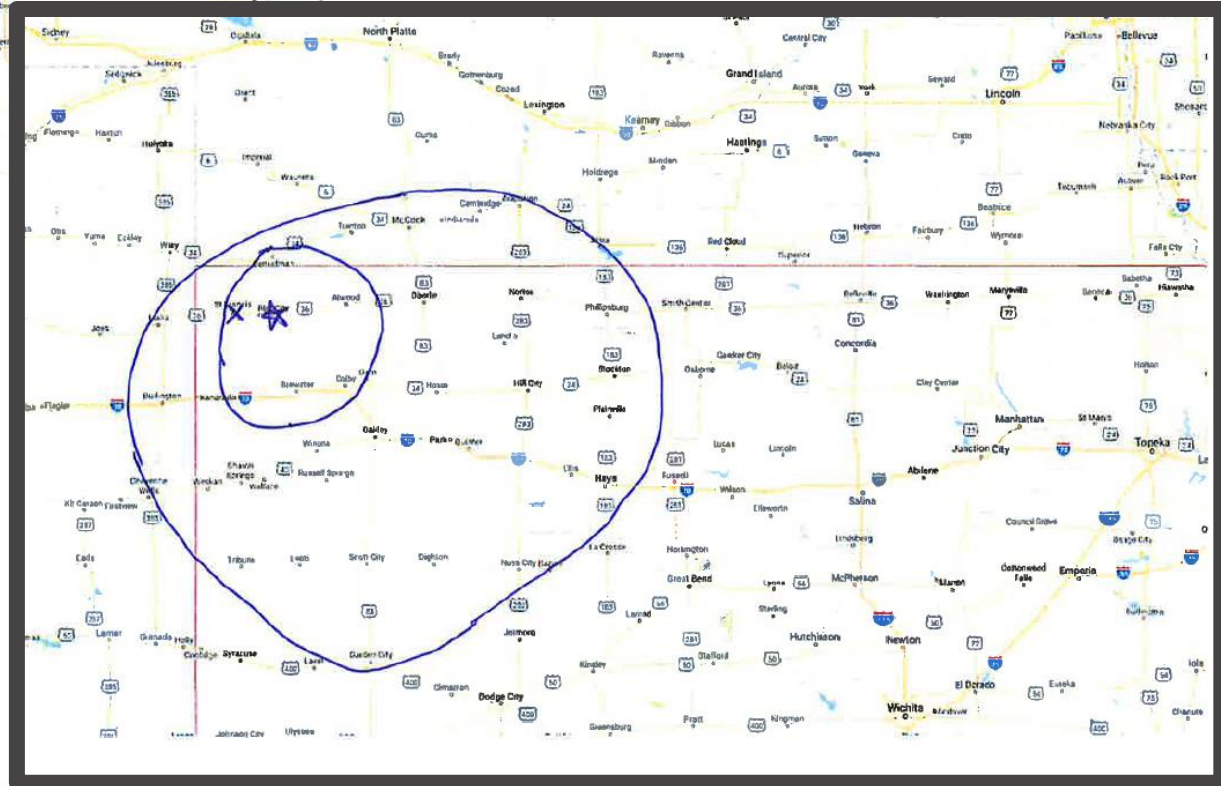
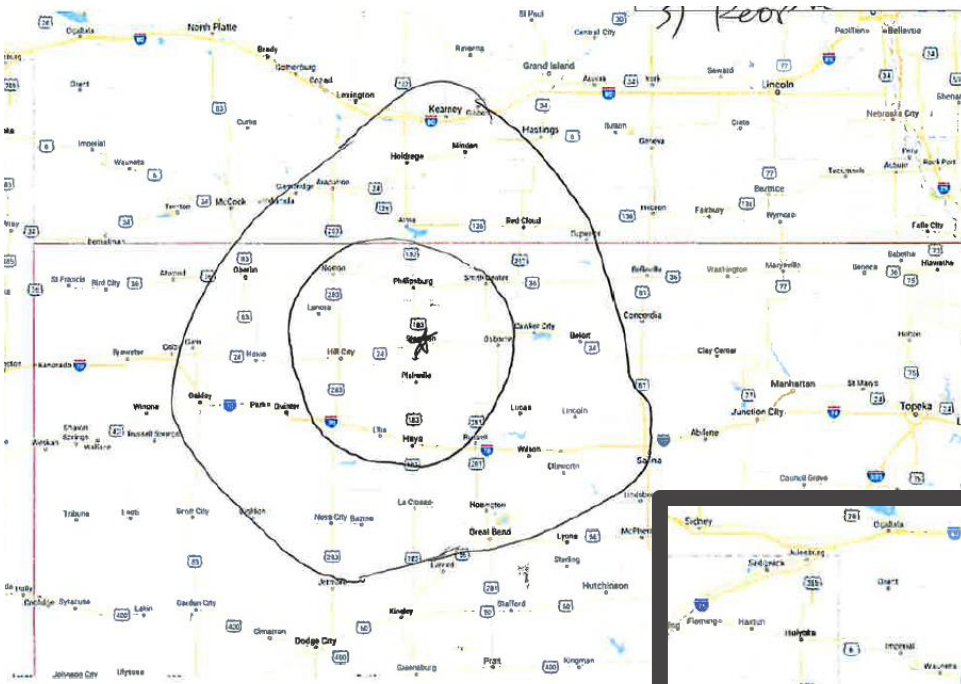
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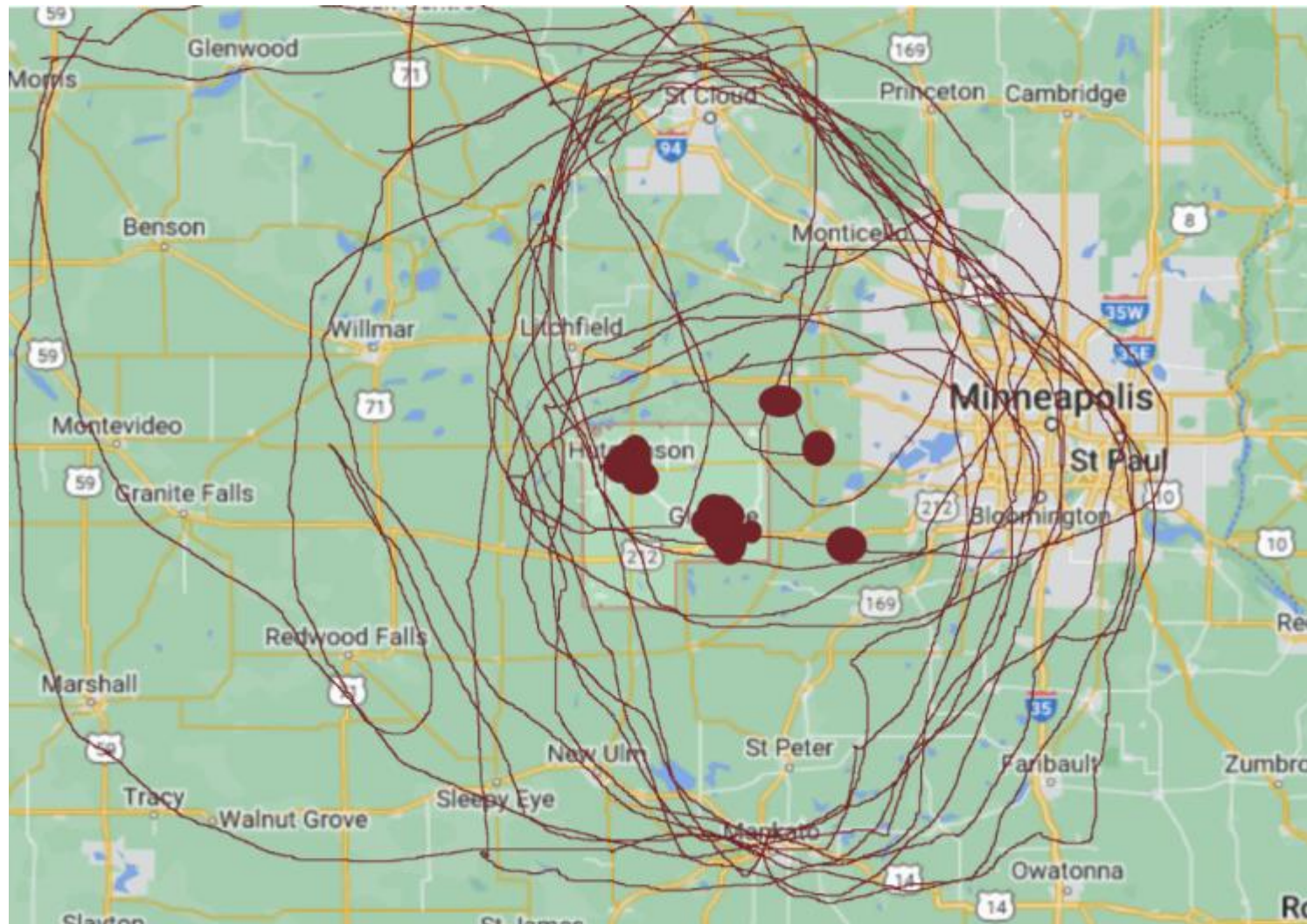
- Put your Age range in the box, such as 30s or 60s
- List 3-5 of your favorite assets in the region. These should be **real places, events**, etc. Not nebulous things like “hardworking people”.

Minnesota



Kansas





<https://www.mcleodfortomorrow.com/living-in-the-middle-of-everywhere/>

MIDDLE OF EVERYWHERE

- No town is a one-stop-shop
 - Home → Work: 30/45 minutes
 - Home → Eat/shop: 45/60 minutes
 - Home → Play – 2+ hours!

MIDDLE OF EVERYWHERE

- Regions expand as you approach 50s
- Assets vary significantly by age

MIDDLE OF EVERYWHERE

How can we make local decisions while at the same time respect the reality of lives?

The REGION is the primary unit of interest

Mayor, how do you market your town if you don't know what's going on around you?

Rural Issues and Trends Webinars

<http://z.umn.edu/ruralwebinar/>

