

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

The Introduction to the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and the planning process provides an overview of the significant changes since the last Comprehensive Plan update and a summary of the key findings and changes.

Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan guides the future development of Medina, reflects the wishes of its residents and sets the City's relationship within the context of its region.

The Plan serves the following constituencies and provides:

- A. **Residents of Medina** - protection from: (1) indiscriminate development; (2) exploitation of resources; and (3) the consequences of unplanned public services.
- B. **Local Governing Body, Advisory Groups, and Staff** - guidelines for making land use and development decisions.
- C. **Landowners and Developers** - guidelines for use, density, transportation, and public services.
- D. **Metropolitan Planning and Implementation Agencies** - projections of anticipated population, traffic, land use, and sewer requirements.
- E. **Other Public Agencies** - (state, county, school districts, and neighboring communities) awareness of plans that may affect their decisions and assurance that local policies will remain relatively constant over a period of years.
- F. **Watershed Districts, the MN Department of Natural Resources, Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** - assurance that the natural functions of wetland and other ecologically significant resources will be protected.

General Benefits Include:

- Providing continuity in land regulations;
- Protecting land values by establishing appropriate use, regulations, access, and services;
- Establishing clearly stated policies; and
- Protecting areas of unique natural or man-made character from untimely change.

Plan Scope

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan builds upon the adopted 2000 Comprehensive Plan and the identified community goals and aspirations for the future. The Plan identifies goals, strategies, policies and standards for growth and development that preserve the rural character, open spaces and natural resources that make Medina a unique place. The Plan sets forth the intentions of allowing reasonable commercial development along the Trunk Highway 55 corridor and the preservation of the small town and rural character of the Uptown Hamel area. The Plan allows for higher density residential development within the portion of the City that will ultimately be served by municipal services.

Planning Period

Medina's Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2000. Municipalities are required by State Statute to update their Comprehensive Plan every 10 years. Medina's 2010 Comprehensive Plan is designed to guide the City's growth until 2030. Recognizing the inevitability of change, the Plan is intended to remain flexible to unanticipated events and opportunities and to reduce adjustments and amendments during the planning period.

Regional Setting

Medina is considered a third-ring suburb of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (TCMA) and is located approximately 20 miles west of Minneapolis, immediately west of the City of Plymouth, and north of the City of Orono. The City of Loretto is a separate local governmental unit located within Medina's borders, is not controlled by Medina, but does cost-share police and fire services with Medina. The City of Corcoran forms Medina's northern boundary and the cities of Independence and Maple Plain lie to its west.

Metropolitan Council's Regional Blueprint

Medina is part of the growing metropolitan area and participates in providing and utilizing metropolitan systems such as wastewater handling and treatment, transportation, airports, and parks. The Metropolitan Council has the responsibility to monitor and coordinate planning of these systems. As metropolitan communities grow and develop, these systems are constantly evaluated by the Metropolitan Council to determine their regional impact.

The 2030 Regional Development Framework was created by the Metropolitan Council under the authority of Minnesota Statutes, section 473.145. This framework serves as a guide to ensure that costly regional services and infrastructure are provided efficiently and that development and growth within the metropolitan area occurs in an orderly and coordinated manner.

The Metropolitan Council designates different strategies for communities based on the types of growth that are expected. These variations are reflected in "Geographic Planning Areas" that are illustrated on the Regional Growth Strategy Map (Map 1-1). This plan designates the northeast portion of Medina as a "developing community" and the remainder of the City as a "diversified rural community."

Developing communities as designated by the Metropolitan Council are those in which more than 15% of the land within the borders is vacant or available for development of urban density with municipal sewer and water facilities. The Metropolitan Council has committed to provide a level of service (average annual wastewater and allowable peak hourly flow amounts) to Medina based on the projected growth of sewer households and employment centers within the City. The Metropolitan Council specifies that areas within the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) develop at a minimum net density of between 3 and 5 units per acre in order to make the infrastructure investment financially practical.

Diversified Rural communities are considered sparsely developed and include a variety of agricultural uses and a mixture of large-lot residential and clustered residential development in limited amounts. These areas are not intended to be served by municipal services and are strongly encouraged by the Metropolitan Council to develop at an average density of no greater than 1 unit per 10 acres.

Changes Since The 2000 Comprehensive Plan Update

Below is a list of significant changes since Medina's 2000 Comprehensive Plan:

The City's total population has increased 17% from 4,005 in 2000 to 4,770 in 2005, while the number of housing units has increased 23% from 1,309 in 2000 to 1,616 in 2005.

- The City has added 293 single family units and 169 multi-family units from 2000 to 2005. The percentage of multi-family housing in the City has increased significantly from 5% in 2000 to 13% in 2005. This increase reflects the overall regional growth in the multi-family housing market attributed to the rising land values and to an increased demand for lower maintenance housing and lifecycle housing options.
- The majority of the residential growth has occurred on sewer lots at suburban densities in the Gramercy, Medina Highlands, Bridgewater, Keller Estates, and Wild Meadows developments.
- New commercial and industrial development along the Trunk Highway 55 (TH 55) corridor has added to the City's tax and employment base. Approximately 150 businesses are located in the City. The employment forecasts based on planned land uses will also add a significant amount of employment opportunities to residents over the next 20 years.
- Economic growth has occurred from expansion of existing businesses as well as the location of new employers into the City, including a Target retail complex and the Polaris corporate headquarters.
- The City created a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district in 2004 to provide public improvement incentives for the redevelopment of properties within and around the Uptown Hamel area. Redeveloping the Uptown Hamel area into an attractive, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use town-center is a high priority of the City.

- The population of Medina and the Metropolitan Area is aging. As the population continues to age the demand for senior lifecycle housing and activities within Medina will increase. An 87-unit senior cooperative facility recently built in the City reflects that trend.

Community Vision, Goals and Strategies

The Community Vision, Goals and Strategies chapter describes the City's goals and aspirations for the future.

Maintaining rural character and the rural heart of the City was a high value and was seen as important to the quality of life that residents enjoy in a 2006 survey of Medina residents.

The City plans to grow in a way that preserves its rural character, but allows new residents to enjoy its beauty. The 2010 Goals and Strategies support compact and orderly growth near existing and planned infrastructure to allow preservation of the rural areas in the community. All development within the City will be sensitive to the environment.

Community Background

The Community Background chapter provides an inventory of existing conditions on demographics, employment and other facts that influence the future land use planning.

This section includes reference to natural areas and open spaces that affect future development in the community. The City recognizes that once these resources are depleted it is difficult, if not impossible, to replace them. The natural areas and open spaces are high priorities in all plan chapters presented in this document.

Housing and Neighborhoods

This chapter reinforces a strong rural development pattern throughout the City and recognizes the newer developments with suburban densities.

The housing and neighborhoods section supports the need to diversify the housing types and styles throughout the community. The data demonstrates that the majority of housing development has been focused on larger, single-family residential homes. The City has structured the Future Land Use Plan and the goals and strategies to support more diverse housing.

Land Use and Staging

The Land Use and Growth chapter describes the future development and land use patterns anticipated in the community. The chapter starts with an existing land use inventory to quantify existing types of development that will influence future growth.

The Future Land Use Plan (used interchangeably with Guide Plan) is based on the Existing Land Use inventory. The Guide Plan demonstrates a desire by the community and city officials to grow

strategically to allow development that is compatible with existing development, compact, efficient and adjacent to existing services. The Guide Plan shows that the rural heart of the community will be preserved through this planning horizon. The Plan guides growth along the TH 55 corridor due to infrastructure planning, transportation accessibility and water and sewer availability. The urbanizing area, as described on Map 5-2, will allow a balance of land uses that includes opportunities for residential and commercial development.

The Staging Plan responds to future infrastructure availability in urbanizing areas and to capital improvement planning. The general trend of the Growth Plan is an east-west staged development pattern along the TH 55 corridor. The staging plan shows 5-year flexible staging areas that permit growth outside each staging period by one increment when the proposed development demonstrates consistency with the City's planning and infrastructure goals. In the implementation section, the City has committed to develop a system that will evaluate potential developments outside of the 5-year staging increments to ensure that consistent standards are applied throughout the community.

Infrastructure: Transportation, Sewer and Water Plans

The infrastructure plans include Transportation, Surface Water, Water and Sewer Plans for the community. These studies were completed by the City's Engineer and are appended to this document in their entirety. These reports are highly technical and will help provide support for land use and growth decisions in the community.

Parks, Trails and Open Space

This chapter builds upon the 2000 Comprehensive Plan and was updated to reflect new trails or parks in the community since the last planning process. The chapter plans the future trail system most of which includes roadside trails. However, some cross-country trails are designed to link the trail system with regional parks such as Baker Park Reserve and Wolsfeld Woods Scientific and Natural Area (SNA). In addition to parks and trails, a large amount of land is protected as open space due to the expansive amount of water and wetlands in Medina that helps to maintain the rural and natural qualities of the community. This chapter provides general parks, trails and open space that can be used in future parks and trails planning efforts in the community.

Implementation

The implementation chapter is critical to the overall success of the Comprehensive Plan and includes reference to the capital improvement plans associated with water and wastewater. This section also includes a discussion of how the community intends to update its official controls, and which tools the community would like to explore further to help implement the goals and aspirations identified in the Plan. A detailed implementation section regarding open space planning is also included in this section to further support the Open Space Report, which is not part of this plan but is available for review at the City of Medina City Hall.

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