

Chapter 2: COMMUNITY VISION, GOALS & STRATEGIES

The Vision, Goals and Strategies chapter is the heart of the Comprehensive Plan and provides the foundation from which City officials make consistent and supporting land use decisions. This chapter includes a set of general community goals and strategies that set forth standards for intergovernmental coordination, land use, growth, housing, community facilities, natural resources, transportation and other community issues.

The concepts in this chapter are some of the few static elements of the Comprehensive Plan. If land uses change or other infrastructure varies from the Plan, decisions will be founded in the goals and strategies set forth below. The goals and strategies are supported by the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Panel (the "Advisory Panel"), City officials, and residents of Medina.

Land use designations are subject to strong social and economic pressures to change. Accordingly, it is appropriate that such systems be periodically evaluated in light of changing social and economic conditions. As development evolves, the goals and strategies will provide the guidance for accomplishing the vision for the future of the community even when changes are necessary to the land use plan.

Detailed objectives and recommendations are contained within each of the subject chapters of this plan.

Creating Goals and Strategies

The residents, the Advisory Panel, City officials and staff participated in the planning process for the Plan. A series of public participation meetings were conducted in 2006 to introduce and solicit information from the residents of Medina. A community survey was also part of the process in 2006 to gain a greater understanding of the community. The Advisory Panel held work sessions that focused on integrating the concerns and desires of the community together with accommodating growth and regional impacts.

In addition to land use and growth planning, the City implemented open space, natural resources, and infrastructure planning. The goals and strategies developed in this process are integrated into this chapter.

Each element of this plan was developed with assistance from city officials and a diverse group of community stakeholders producing a truly representative plan. The City made a conscious decision to emphasize natural resources and open space conservation. This Plan includes the goals, strategies and recommendations of an Open Space Task Force created to recommend a program for open space and natural resources. In addition, a Citizens Advisory Committee recommended a Facilities Master Plan that was accepted by the City. Lastly, the City will be completing a long-term Financial Management Analysis in 2008 to stabilize and equitably distribute the tax burden on Medina taxpayers.

Establishing Vision, Goals and Strategies

To establish goals and strategies, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis exercise gathered valuable insight into the aspirations of the community. The Advisory Panel was asked to brainstorm the SWOT list. The top 5 items from each category are identified below and are listed in declining order of importance:

Strengths

Natural resources/rural nature
Heritage and history: people, community and small town feel
Rural character
Governance: participatory in nature
Tax base

Weaknesses

Increasing traffic
Ripe for development
Community in transition
Inability to control traffic
Lack of “turf” trails

Opportunities

Natural resources protection plan
Cluster development, open space planning, shared amenities
Plan for traffic which does not fragment or destroy the City
Great opportunity to protect the heart of the City
Better, “more creative” residential development

Threats

Demands from developers
Metropolitan Council’s aggressive ambition for Medina’s density
High land values and potential for increase
Actions of adjacent communities
Entrenched personal issues

The responses from the SWOT exercise were used to develop a vision statement and a set of goals and strategies.

Community Vision

The following statement provides a vision of the community for the future and the resultant goals and strategies.

The City of Medina Shall...

Maintain its rural character in which natural infrastructure is the dominant feature while planning for new business and residential areas, where highway access is available and where the City of Loretto and neighborhood of Uptown Hamel already exist, to create a healthy, cohesive community for all ages in which to live and work.

Protect natural resources and natural corridors. Residents will be able to enjoy the natural environment with planned trails and connections. Healthy living for all residents will be encouraged and supported through availability and proximity to activities such as horse-riding, bicycling and walking.

Plan neighborhoods using innovative design techniques to ensure a high quality of life for residents. A diversity of housing will exist to support and promote the livability of the community. Neighborhoods will be planned in proximity to Uptown Hamel, Loretto and other urban areas as they develop and will provide walkable, pedestrian friendly accessibility. Development will be focused along the TH 55 growth corridor where more dense residential areas and businesses will be located.

Community Character and Livability

1. Maintain the rural quality and small town feel of the community.

Strategies:

- Encourage development that preserves open spaces and creates linkages with natural areas.
- Maintain the rural heritage and history of Medina.
- Develop Uptown Hamel as a livable, pedestrian friendly town center within the City of Medina.
- Maintain and enhance the quality of development in Uptown Hamel through the creation of design and performance standards.
- Encourage a sense of community by maintaining and creating distinct neighborhoods.

2. Maintain areas of solitude and quiet that contribute to the rural character of the community.

Strategies:

Preserve the rural heart of the community through open space planning and low impact development.

- Preserve natural areas and make them accessible where appropriate.
- Develop tools to support the reduction of noise and light pollution.

3. Preserve natural resources, rural vistas and rural quality of the community.

Strategies:

- Support open space planning as a guide for future development.
- Create a land use plan that supports the preservation of natural resources and rural vistas.
- Educate and encourage residents to maintain and preserve significant natural areas on their properties.
- Develop a program to educate and encourage community awareness and involvement focused on preservation of natural resources and vistas throughout the City.

4. Encourage innovative and creative approaches to planning, engineering, and city governance.

Strategies:

- Support the development and testing of alternative solutions such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building standards and Low Impact Development (LID) to typical engineering and planning problems.
- Research and use innovative planning methods including open space planning, conservation and other low impact development techniques.
- Encourage methods of Low Impact Development.
- Require developers to consult with staff before plans are presented and maintain open communication for problem solving between staff, decision-makers and the public to find the best solution to planning and engineering issues.
- Encourage staff to monitor land planning approaches in other communities and government bodies for innovative solutions facing the City.

5. Maintain the characteristics of the community and its land through thoughtful planning.

Strategies:

- Create a future land use plan that is compatible with existing land use patterns.
- Identify areas within the community that could benefit from innovative planning, or more study.
- Identify areas that have conflicting land uses and develop solutions to mitigate current and future problems.
- Develop and create safe road patterns and traffic control measures to establish safety for all modes of transportation.
- Maintain the rural quality of the community despite proximity to the Twin Cities and adjacent suburban areas.

Land Use and Growth Goals

1. Manage and support planned, compact orderly growth in designated areas.

Strategies:

- Create a staging plan to support well-planned and orderly growth within the designated growth areas.
- Identify areas to support higher density opportunities.
- Use existing land use plans to help guide consistent development throughout the community.
- Preserve and respect existing character and development, while accommodating and serving new development in an environmentally friendly and economically sustainable way.
- Encourage growth in areas with proximity to infrastructure, including transportation corridors, water, wastewater and community facilities.
- Work with developers to create neighborhoods and development that support the staging and land use plan.

2. Maintain a diversity of land uses that allows for the preservation of rural and agricultural lands.

Strategies:

- Prepare a flexible land use plan that encourages rural and agricultural lands while allocating areas for more intense development.
- Prepare and adopt a land use plan that designates compatible land uses to minimize conflicts as development occurs.
- Require transitions between rural and more urban areas through zoning and other performance standards.

3. Support the development of a land use plan that responds to regional growth strategies while maintaining the rural character and vision of the community.

Strategies:

- Create a land use plan that considers adjacent land uses of neighboring communities.
- Work with adjacent communities to identify areas of linkage, particularly those areas where natural resources and open space connections can be made.
- Identify regional growth strategies to determine areas that can support and enhance such strategies and goals.

4. Encourage innovative, environmentally friendly development in all growth areas to promote a sustainable land use pattern.

Strategies:

- Identify areas that are suitable for innovative and conservation development.
- Support open space planning and use it to develop tools and techniques to support conservation development and other low impact development alternatives.
- Work with land owners, developers and stakeholders to identify land that can contribute to green corridors, trails and storm water management areas.

5. Enhance and update the zoning ordinance to support the goals and visions of the community.

Strategies:

- Develop land use and zoning ordinance categories that directly respond to the natural resources in the City.
- Utilize county, state or federal programs to encourage retention of the natural features within the City.

Neighborhood Pattern and Housing Goals

1. Provide a diversity of housing at a range of values to support a sustainable community.

Strategies:

- Encourage developments to include a variety of housing types including single family and multifamily.
- Provide housing options that workers in Medina can afford.
- Work closely with local lenders, builders and other organizations to help Medina meet the housing goals related to workforce housing options.
- Explore zoning methods that allow neighborhoods with mixed housing types and other appropriate uses within residential areas.
- Create and maintain a level of affordability options in the community's housing stock.
- Create ordinances that support well designed and maintained housing at all levels.
- Encourage development of neighborhoods compatible with adjacent land uses.

2. Maintain and enhance diverse neighborhood patterns conducive to residence, work and leisure.

Strategies:

- Encourage methods of subdivision design to protect and enhance environmental features in rural residential areas.
- Maintain a road system designed to accommodate Medina residents in a manner consistent with identified goals and strategies.
- Create and strengthen the appearance of City gateways and key transportation corridors through street scaping, design standards, zoning, trails, lighting, sidewalks, signage, and other tools.
- Develop and enforce design, performance, development and site planning standards, incentives and resources to ensure quality development.
- Encourage development to provide a variety of housing types within a single development.
- Create a high quality neighborhood environment in every development.
- Update the zoning ordinances and other development standards for consistency with the housing goals defined in this plan.

3. Promote increased density along the development corridor including compact, walkable neighborhoods in proximity to Uptown Hamel.

Strategies:

- Encourage the integration of multi-modal access including parking, sidewalks, bike paths and pedestrian crossings within new developments.
- Enhance and maintain Uptown Hamel design standards that support a livable, pedestrian friendly community.
- Allow mixed-use development within Uptown Hamel.
- Ensure that residential neighborhoods have adequate access to parks and trails and that parks and green space are integrated into the Uptown Hamel development areas.
- Encourage higher density development along Hamel Road east of County Road 115 (locally known as Pinto Drive) to help define the area as a pedestrian friendly, attractive urban area for residents and businesses.
- Create linkages between neighborhoods, parks and businesses within Uptown Hamel to promote the walkable character of the area.
- Encourage a retail center in the development corridor to provide shopping and work opportunities to residents.
- Maintain commercial development at the intersection of TH 55 and CR-19.

Transportation Goals

1. **The City of Medina supports a transportation system that balances the interests of Medina with those of the region and local residents.**

Strategies:

- Design access points to the roadway system and traffic controls that are compatible with the roadway's function and traffic speed.
- Create wider shoulders for recreational uses of residents and the region.
- Continue to require dedication of right-of-way for future trails as properties develop.
- Support and coordinate with the surrounding communities on transit and transportation services and facilities.
- Explore the potential of expanding or developing various means of transit services and facilities with the Metro Transit Authority.

2. **Create a transportation system that is efficient and safe for all residents of the community and the region.**

Strategies:

- Create safe access points at the correct size and capacity for planned growth areas, particularly at major intersections.
- Participate in planning for the TH 55 corridor improvements.
- Create transportation connections with adequate spacing, visual access and traffic control measures to ensure the safety of residents.
- Design roadways to support all modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and horses-riders.
- Encourage the use of public transportation and create appropriate park and ride locations, and coordinate with the adjacent communities (including Plymouth, Corcoran, Independence, Loretto, Long Lake, Maple Plain, Orono, and others) in sharing or funding similar services and facilities.
- Encourage and support pedestrian crosswalk connections across state and/or county roadways in locations that allow the greatest opportunity for pedestrian access within a one-half mile walking distance of principle destinations (i.e. parks, retail centers, commercial services, etc.).

Parks, Trails and Open Space

- 1. Improve and expand existing facilities, improve handicapped access where possible, correct problems or conflicts where they occur, and provide expanded recreational opportunities where appropriate.**

Strategies

- Development of trails that provide for multiple recreational uses will be given preference over those that do not.
- 2. Finalize and maintain the community park/playfield facility, Hamel Legion Park, located near the east boundary of the City, where most significant urban land uses exist and are proposed.**
 - 3. Provide a variety of recreational opportunities, through park, trails and open-space acquisition and development, to serve its residents.**

Strategies

- Provide community and neighborhood parks in appropriate urban land use areas as these areas are developed.
 - Provide mini-parks and trails, where appropriate, to serve sub-neighborhood population concentrations.
 - Provide a multi-use trail system, coordinated with the regional, county, and adjacent cities' plans, emphasizing trail uses most desired by City residents.
- 4. Guide development, obtain easements and purchase land within the City to ensure that additional parks and trails are appropriately located as the City grows.**
 - 5. Provide funding for park, trail and open space planning, acquisition, development, and maintenance.**

Strategies

- Trails should connect points of interest that are prioritized by periodic review by the City Park Commission and City Council.
 - Monitor and partner with Three Rivers Park District to protect and enhance the regional parks and trails system.
- 6. Maintain cooperative/collaborative relationships with governmental units and recreational organizations both within and adjacent to the City.**

Intergovernmental Coordination Goals

- 1. Work with adjacent jurisdictions and regulating agencies to promote a collaborative approach to planning.**

Strategies:

- Include and invite participants from surrounding jurisdictions in planning activities that have implications for their future.
 - Continue to explore and actively pursue opportunities to share services with surrounding jurisdictions to improve efficiency, reduce costs and avoid unnecessary duplication.
- 2. Provide opportunities for community and resident involvement in all aspects of the planning process.**

Strategies:

- Inform residents and community members of important community events through publication in the local newspaper, on the City website, in City publications and in other forms of media.
- Encourage participation at community meetings including planning commission, parks commission, and City council.
- Hold community events that focus on the City's decision-making particularly as it relates to land use and development.