

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan establishes Medina’s vision as a community and sets goals and objectives which guide future decisions and policies. The Plan guides future growth and development within the City, informs investments in City infrastructure and services such as natural resources, parks/recreation, transportation, and water resources. The Plan reflects the wishes of its residents and sets the City’s relationship within the context of its region.

This chapter describes the purpose of the Plan, introduces how the Plan is organized and provides contextual background for the Plan.

The Plan serves the following constituencies and provides:

- A. **Residents of Medina** - opportunity to guide the future of the City, expectation of future land use changes which are anticipated, and protection from: (1) indiscriminate development; (2) exploitation of resources; and (3) the consequences of unplanned public services.
- B. **City Council, Advisory Groups, and Staff** - guidelines for making land use and development decisions and capital investments.
- 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. **Watershed Districts, the MN Department of Natural Resources, Army Corps of Engineers** - assurance that the natural functions of wetland and other ecologically significant resources will be protected.
- F. **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.

Plan Scope

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan builds upon the 2010-2030 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, providing opportunities for projected residential growth of various housing types in locations throughout the community.

Planning Period

Medina's Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2009. Municipalities are required by State Statute to update their Comprehensive Plan every 10 years. This Comprehensive Plan is designed to guide the City's land use planning and growth through 2040. 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. The City of Loretto is a separate local governmental unit located within Medina's borders, is not governed by Medina, but does cost-share police and fire services with Medina. The City of Corcoran forms Medina's northern boundary, the City of Orono is located to the south and the cities of Independence and Maple Plain lie to its west.

Metropolitan Council's ThriveMSP2040 and System Statements

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.

ThriveMSP2040 and the 2040 Systems Statements were created by the Metropolitan Council under the authority of Minnesota Statutes, section 473.145. This document 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 land use changes that are expected. These variations are reflected in "Community Designations" that are illustrated on the Community Designation Map (Map 1-1). This plan designates the northeast portion of Medina as "Emerging Suburban Edge" and the vast majority of the remainder of the City as a "Diversified Rural."

ThriveMSP2040 describe these Community Designations as follows:

- Emerging Suburban Edge communities include cities, townships and portions of both that are in the early stages of transitioning into urbanized levels of development. Emerging Suburban Edge communities are expected to plan for forecasted population and household growth at average densities of at least 3-5 units per acre for new development and redevelopment. In addition, Emerging Suburban Edge communities are expected to target opportunities for more intensive development near regional transit investments at densities and in a manner articulated in the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan.
- Diversified Rural communities are home to a variety of farm and nonfarm land uses including very large-lot residential, clustered housing, hobby farms and agricultural uses. Diversified Rural communities are expected to plan for growth not to exceed forecasts and

in patterns that do not exceed 4 units per 40 acres. In addition, Diversified Rural communities are expected to manage land uses to prevent the premature demand for extension of urban services, and so that existing service levels will meet service needs.

Planning and Public Participation Process

The City conducted an extension process for residents, business owners and other interested parties to help guide the Comprehensive Plan from September 2015 through December 2016. This included eight community meetings, a business forum, and an online forum. In addition, the City Council and Planning Commission discussed the various aspects of the Plan at three concurrent meetings, a Steering Committee was appointed and discussed at a series of thirteen meetings, and the Planning Commission held a formal Public Hearing on December 13, 2016.

A summary of the process including meeting notes and comments are available upon request.

Changes Since the 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update

Below is a list of significant changes from Medina's 2010-2030 Comprehensive Plan:

- The City experienced substantial residential growth during the approximately six years since adoption of the 2010-2030 Comprehensive Plan. There were 446 new homes constructed within the City, an increase of over 20% in just six years. Communities adjacent to and further north and west of Medina also experienced substantial growth over this period, and the collective growth resulted in substantial concerns over the capacity of local school districts and regional transportation networks to support the growth.
- While substantial residential growth occurred over the past six years, the Metropolitan Council has projected that future population growth will slow within Medina. Population and household growth within Medina are projected to be 40-50% lower than forecast a decade ago.
- To maintain consistency with Metropolitan Council population projections and also to further the objectives of protecting natural resources and preserving open space and rural character, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan reduces property planned for residential development when compared to the 2010-2030 Plan.
- Opportunities for new commercial, office, and business development continue to be provided near Uptown Hamel and along the Highway 55 corridor. Some property previously planned for residential development is now planned for business development.

Outline of Comprehensive Plan

Vision and Community Goals

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

Maintaining open space, preserving rural vistas and protecting natural resources are consistently raised as strong interests of residents in the community and one of the primary contributors to the quality of life in Medina.

Community Background

The Community Background chapter provides an inventory of existing conditions on demographics, employment and other facts that influence 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 describes the existing housing stock of the City and establishes objectives for residential development and redevelopment within the community.

The housing and neighborhood 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 shows that the vast majority of the land within the City will remain rural. The Guide Plan demonstrates a desire by the community and city officials to grow at a sustainable pace allowing for efficient expansion of infrastructure services while also creating development which is compatible with adjacent uses and not concentrating development within a geographical area during a particular timeframe.

Parks, Trails and Open Space

This chapter builds upon the 2010-2030 Comprehensive Plan and was updated to reflect new trails or parks in the community since the last planning process. The chapter plans future parks to serve planned residential growth in the City and also substantial expansion of the trail system.

The parks, trails, and open space plan also discusses existing regional parks and natural areas such as Baker Park Reserve and Wolsfeld Woods Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) which offer significant recreational opportunities in the City.

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.

Infrastructure: Transportation, Sewer, Water, and Surface Water Plans

The infrastructure plans include Transportation, Surface Water, and 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 support the land use and growth decisions in the community, describe necessary capital investments, and provide a basis for establishing relevant policies and fees to support the expansion of the systems which are necessitated by new development.

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