

CHAPTER 9: IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

Formal adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is the first step in the planning process, rather than the last, because it establishes the policy direction for the community, describing its objectives and methods to achieve them. Without continuing action to implement and update the Plan, City efforts will have little lasting impact. Goals, strategies, principles and other recommendations are contained throughout this Plan. This chapter outlines further steps to put this Plan into action.

To effectively implement the Comprehensive Plan, Isanti should:

- Review and revise several of its official controls that can enforce the Plan's policies and recommendations, such as the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.
- Create, utilize, and amend a Capital Improvements Program, implementing the most important public improvements on a priority system, while staying within budgetary constraints.
- Work with surrounding townships, cities and Isanti County to plan for the orderly development of the planned growth areas.
- Actively involve local residents in ongoing planning discussions and decisions.
- Review and update the Comprehensive Plan, as needed, to reflect local aspirations and changing opportunities.

Zoning Ordinance

Zoning is a governmental unit's primary regulatory tool for implementing planning policies. It consists of the official zoning map and supporting ordinance text. The official map divides the community into a series of zoning districts, and the text describes regulations for the use of land within these districts including permitted uses, lot sizes, setbacks, density standards, etc. It can also include design and property maintenance controls. New future land use designations of mixed use, neighborhood commercial and recreational commercial have been created. New zoning districts should also be shaped in accordance with these land uses and standards developed that fulfill the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Implementation Steps

- Prepare and adopt an official Zoning Map, which will establish specific zoning districts to effectuate the intent of the adopted Future Land Use Plan map.
- Review, update and refine the Zoning Ordinance to implement and enforce the guidelines of the updated Comprehensive Plan.
- Consider additions and modifications to the ordinances to support such objectives as the provision and maintenance of affordable housing and the establishment and enhancement of the multi-purpose greenway corridors that have been identified.

Ordinance modifications may include, but are not limited to density bonuses, density transfer, flexibility in lot sizes and dimensions, clustering and mixed uses.

Subdivision Regulations

The Subdivision Ordinance regulates the division of land and the provision of public facilities within the community. Properly enforced subdivision regulations, coupled with zoning, can ensure proper physical development and adequate public facilities within the City and its growth areas. They normally prescribe standards for street improvements, lot layouts, water and sewer facilities, fees and other development standards. Subdivision regulations can also ensure that the costs of public improvements within growth areas are borne by the developers and the new residents as appropriate rather than by the established community. Isanti's subdivision regulations should be reviewed against the recommendations of the new Comprehensive Plan, and revised and modified where necessary.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Another important tool for implementation is the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which establishes schedules and priorities for major public improvements within a five-year period. The City first prepares a list of all public improvements that will be required in the next five years, including transportation and community facilities projects. Once all projects are reviewed, priorities are assigned, cost estimates prepared, and potential funding sources identified. The City can determine which projects should be financed through annual tax receipts, which require public borrowing, and which may be eligible for outside sources of assistance.

The CIP allows the City to provide the most critical public improvements, yet stay within budget constraints. Many of the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan can be articulated in a CIP. The discussion of transportation, utilities, community facilities, and land use in this Plan will be helpful in determining capital priorities.

Implementation Steps

- Develop a CIP that includes elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Priorities may include an adequate transportation system in the growing areas of the community, funding to support affordable housing, adequate and up-to-date City buildings, downtown redevelopment funds and multi-use trail facilities.

PLANNED GROWTH AREAS

The City of Isanti anticipates further residential, commercial and industrial development. The City also recognizes that the natural systems, drainage corridors, wildlife habitat and similar features extend beyond its corporate limits. Therefore, the City has conducted a comprehensive inventory and analysis of natural features beyond the City boundaries and through the adoption of this Plan has conservation corridors that should be protected. Likewise some of the local streets within Isanti should be extended beyond the City limits to ensure safe and efficient access and mobility. The City wishes to work with surrounding townships and Isanti County to ensure that the growth that occurs in these areas is compatible with the goals and strategies adopted through this comprehensive planning process as some of this area may eventually become part of the City when it can be served by a full range of City services.

Implementation Steps

- Work with surrounding townships and Isanti County to explain the proposed multi-purpose greenway corridors and future street configuration and establish common strategies for land use administration.
- Designate the City's planned growth areas for very low density residential and agricultural uses until such time as development is imminent and services can be provided.

TEN-YEAR HOUSING ACTION PLAN

One of the unique parts of this comprehensive planning process has been the sponsorship by the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund (GMHF). In addition to supporting sound community planning, GMHF has specifically required the preparation, adoption, implementation and maintenance of a Ten-Year Housing Action Plan. This Plan identifies the current conditions and anticipated demand for different housing types to meet the City's diverse housing needs. This Plan contains numerous goals for affordability and housing diversity and identifies and commits to utilizing a variety of tools, strategies and funding sources to accomplish these goals.

Implementation Steps

- Officially adopt the Ten Year Housing Action Plan and commit to its implementation.
- Explore the potential approval of a model neighborhood project to be sponsored by GMHF, which will contain a diversity of housing types and styles, within a cohesive neighborhood design and will be strategically located to support the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Periodically monitor and update the Plan and take valuable/important steps to modify the approach to respond to changing conditions, or new opportunities.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

The comprehensive planning process was intentionally structured to involve as many citizens as possible. Wide publiCity has been given to this Comprehensive Plan to inform the public and encourage and facilitate their participation. The Plan is better from this involvement and public input. The Comprehensive Plan will affect everyone in the community and everyone should have the opportunity to contribute to its implementation.

Implementation Steps

- Ensure that copies of this Plan are available for public review and discussion. This may include making copies available for review at City Hall, the County Courthouse, the public library, and on the City's web site. Individual sections of the Plan may be suitable for dispersal to those interested in moving to or doing business in the City.
- Ensure open zoning, subdivision and CIP processes.