



## Meeting Notes

March 1, 2018 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee  
Rice County Environmental Services  
[www.co.rice.mn.us/planning](http://www.co.rice.mn.us/planning)

### Steering Committee Members – Attendance

Jake Gillen, District 1 County Commissioner – Absent  
Galen Malecha, District 2 County Commissioner – Present  
Dave Miller, District 3 County Commissioner – Absent  
Steve Bauer, District 4 County Commissioner – Absent  
Jeff Docken, District 5 County Commissioner - Present

Tom Sammon, Planning Commission Chair - Present  
Preston Bauer, Planning Commissioner - Present  
Michael Streiff III, Planning Commissioner - Present  
Charlie Peters, Planning Commissioner – Present

### Staff Attendance

Julie Runkel, Environmental Services Director  
Nicole Bonde-Jones, Environmental Services Planner  
Anna Aguilar, Administrative Coordinator  
Trent McCorkell, Zoning Administrator

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee met on March 1, 2018 in a special meeting at 6:00 p.m. Staff facilitated an hour long work session to get consensus on land use action items. Staff distributed a land use goals, strategies, and action items outline to assist with the discussion. The following topics and comments were gathered at the meeting.

#### 1. Land Use Statistics

Staff shared statistics on new homes built in Rice County between 2004 and 2016. Statistics included number of new homes by Township by year, number of new homes for the County by year, and total number of new homes per Township for the entire 2004-2016 time frame.

Staff also shared statistics on population changes within Rice County from 2000 to 2016. Statistics included population per Township and per City in 2000 and 2016.

It was discussed that the graphs presented for new homes and populations changes as very similar in size and shape to the TDR trend graphs presented at the February 20, 2018 meeting.

#### 2. Land Use Action Items

Staff provided the Steering Committee with the following Land Use Goals, Strategies, and Action Items Outline and members were asked to review and provide feedback on the proposed Action items. Discussion notes are documented in red. If no discussion is noted under an Action item, the Steering Committee supported the Action Item and nothing was discussed.

## Land Use

### Goals, Strategies and Action Items Outline

Based on the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, the community forums and community survey, and the Land Use Goals survey conducted on February 1, 2018, the following proposed Goal, Strategy and Action Items combinations were identified.

#### Goal 1: Support and Encourage Orderly Growth and Development.

- **Strategy 1:** Support land use planning which encourages orderly growth and sustainable development and redevelopment.

- One member suggested adding “maintenance” to the strategy wording.
  - **Action Item 1:** Coordinate infrastructure expansion with development; and encourage development where the infrastructure is adequate to serve that growth.
  - **Action Item 2:** Support the provision of joint services among jurisdictions.
  - **Action Item 3:** Remain apprised of expected future urban growth areas.
  - **Action Item 4:** Emphasize staging of development, avoiding a discontinuous and inefficient ‘leapfrog’ pattern.
    - One member mentioned they would like to use a word other than ‘leapfrog’.
- **Strategy 2:** Encourage a diverse economic mix for Rice County by promoting existing assets and identifying new opportunities.
    - **Action Item 1:** Create commercial/industrial zones to promote employment and generate tax base in Rice County.
      - One member asked if there are any cities that have municipalities in or near our current Highway Commercial/I-35 area. It was discussed, if there are municipalities outside of the cities, who manages them. Another member mentioned that his Township currently manages four different municipalities in that Township.
    - **Action Item 2:** Identify appropriate areas for commercial and industrial developments, including along the I-35 corridor.
    - **Action Item 3:** Promote agriculture and associated businesses.
    - **Action Item 4:** Identify and protect areas with sand, gravel and aggregate deposits.
      - It was discussed that the wording needs to be adjusted. As it is currently worded, you don’t know if it means areas will be protected from mining or if the areas are being protected so they can be mined.

It was mentioned that Strategy 2 and 3 seem to overlap and could possibly be combined. It was decided to leave the strategies as is for now.

- **Strategy 3:** Identify additional areas for mixed-use development and further support urban growth.
  - **Action Item 1:** Continue to evaluate and implement urban growth zones where municipal infrastructure is likely to extend.
    - It was discussed that the Urban Reserve zoning distance is not set in stone. The County decides on what the distance the Urban Reserve will be, whether it is two miles, one mile, or a half mile.
  - **Action Item 2:** Continue to have zoning districts for the unincorporated villages to allow for mixed-use development encouraging the development of municipal type water and sewer services.
- **Strategy 4:** Promote the opportunity to lead active and healthy lifestyles through the coordinated development of infrastructure or supporting programs which promote active lifestyles.
  - **Action Item 1:** Develop connections between existing communities, parks and other destinations to promote safe and active options.
  - **Action Item 2:** Create land use regulations to improve local proximity to healthy food and support local healthy food-related businesses and activities.
    - It was discussed if the committee felt the current healthy food trend would last and there was a general agreement that they did not see the want for healthy food sources and options going away any time soon.
  - The Steering Committee feels there are Action Items missing and left it to Staff to think over and bring additional Action items before the committee at a later date.
- **Strategy 5:** Support and further develop land use patterns that encourage alternative modes of transportation.
  - **Action Item 1:** Identify and map concentrations of compact residential and employment development that has potential to be served by transit.
  - **Action Item 2:** Identify existing land uses and travel corridors in the county that could be transformed into transit-friendly corridors.
  - **Action Item 3:** Encourage local planning for mixed land use areas in or adjacent to transit corridors.
  - **Action Item 4:** Continue to expand existing partnerships and look for new opportunities to collaborate on providing alternative modes of transportation.
  - There was a lot of discussion surrounding possible alternate modes of transportation in Rice County. One member mentioned it is a good idea to use trails to connect the cities in the county but need to find appropriate funding for it. Another member agreed and stated the County needs to use money where it is needed first. Another stated that it is not about whether the alternate modes of transportation will be used,

but that they will provided an increase to the quality of life in our area. Staff, again, reminded the Steering Committee that “alternative modes of transportation” does not just mean bike trails and that this was a common theme at the public forums. The committee was reminded that it is ok not to support this strategy and if they do not, they can choose to remove it. Other alternate modes of transportation discussed were ride-share lots and bus systems.

## **Goal 2: Preserve Agricultural Land and Natural Resources.**

- **Strategy 1:** Minimize conflicts between agricultural, residential and other uses.
  - **Action Item 1:** Adopt land use regulations that control density and development in agricultural and open spaces, to protect and preserve agricultural land and environmentally sensitive areas
  - **Action Item 2:** Continue to allow for the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) within a township.
    - It was discussed that this Action Item could be either combined with Action Item 5 or removed. The committee agreed this Action Item could be removed.
  - **Action Item 3:** Develop management methods for accommodating diverse types of agricultural activity.
  - **Action Item 4:** Allow complementary commercial or industrial uses.
  - **Action Item 5:** Protect and promote agriculture by preserving large tracts of land by encouraging clustering of rural residential development though use of transfer of development rights.
  - **Action Item 6:** Promote higher density housing development in cities and unincorporated villages that can provide municipal or municipal type water and sewer services rather than in the agricultural districts.
  
- **Strategy 2:** Preserve, protect and improve the surface and underground waters including, but not limited to, rivers, streams, lakes, groundwater and aquifer recharge areas.
  - **Action Item 1:** Encourage development to comply with wellhead protection zones.
  - **Action Item 2:** Develop and employ land use regulations and other techniques for natural resource protection, including transfer of development rights or density, best management practices, and public acquisition.
    - One member questioned whether the wording “public acquisition” should be removed or not.
  - **Action Item 3:** Recognize the relationship between land use and water quality, and continue to support water quality improvements through land use plans and regulations.
  - **Action Item 4:** Encourage shoreland protection and restoration methods such as vegetative buffers.
  - **Action Item 5:** Continue to address wastewater treatment and water quality through watershed plans, funding opportunities and various collaborations and partnerships.
    - It was mentioned that “collaborations and partnerships” seemed redundant wording. It was discussed that not all collaborations are partnerships. It was decided to leave the wording as is for now.
  
- **Strategy 3:** In working through land development, the potential for air, water and land contamination will be considered and minimized throughout the entire process.
  - **Action Item 1:** Encourage conservation design to preserve natural and scenic values.
    - One thought this Action Item could be moved under Goal 2, Strategy 1.
  - **Action Item 2:** Support and implement state and federal regulations that pertain to environmental review.
  - **Action Item 3:** Define, by GIS overlay, and preserve environmentally sensitive areas and other open space by allowing only compatible land uses and development.
  - **Action Item 4:** Recognize that soil conditions may limit development potential.
  - **Action Item 5:** Coordinate with Local, State and Federal agencies and organizations to encourage landowners and tenants to implement and maintain good soil erosion practices.
    - One member proposed adding “and soil health” after soil erosion because this includes additional soil practices aside from those related to erosion.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 20<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 am (COW).