



Meeting Notes

February 1, 2018 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
Rice County Environmental Services
www.co.rice.mn.us/planning

Steering Committee Members – Attendance

Jake Gillen, District 1 County Commissioner – Absent	Tom Sammon, Planning Commission Chair - Present
Galen Malecha, District 2 County Commissioner – Present	Preston Bauer, Planning Commissioner - Present
Dave Miller, District 3 County Commissioner – Present	Michael Streiff III, Planning Commissioner - Present
Steve Bauer, District 4 County Commissioner - Absent	Charlie Peters, Planning Commissioner – Present
Jeff Docken, District 5 County 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 February 1, 2018 in a special meeting at 6:00 p.m. Staff facilitated an hour long work session to get consensus on a vision statement for the comprehensive plan as well as initiate discussion of land use goals. Staff distributed a land use goal survey to assist with that discussion. The following topics and comments were gathered at the meeting.

Staff shared a calendar with future meeting dates for the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. Staff shared a copy of the notice that will be published in the local newspaper, as well as, posted to the Rice County Comprehensive Plan Facebook and County web pages.

1. Finalize Rice County Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement

Staff presented a revised version of the Comprehensive Plan Vision statement based on discussion from the January 9 Committee of Whole (COW). All present were in agreement of the revised wording:

As Rice County grows and evolves into the future, we will support and encourage orderly growth and a diverse economy that will continue to create jobs and a high quality of life for our citizens. We will aspire to maintain the small town feel of our cities and preserve our agricultural heritage.

2. Rice County Land Use Maps & Statistics

Staff presented Land Use maps and data from 1990 and 2000 created by the University of Minnesota using remote sensing technology. Also presented were maps from the 2004, 2015 and 2017 Rice County Parcel Classification report completed by the Rice County Assessor's office.

Discussion included the difference in the maps and having more current and specific data. The Steering Committee was specifically interested in more detailed Agricultural data. It was recommended to contact the US State Farm Agency and Ag Census for Rice County to get an understanding of land changes that may be due to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and/or the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program.

Data on rural housing and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) will be presented at future meetings.

3. Rice County Land Use Goals

Members of the Steering Committee were asked to take a survey prior to the meeting to assist in deciding which Land Use goals to focus on. Seven of the nine Steering Committee members participated.

In the survey, members were asked to rate nine Land Use related goals on a scale of Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Below is a summary of the results from the survey and what was discussed for each Land Use goal presented.

Support and encourage orderly growth and development.

- 5 Strongly Agreed
- 2 Agreed
- One comment submitted: "Plan has to allow for flexibility as things change but needs control".
- No discussion as all agreed this was an important goal for the county.

Preserve agricultural land and natural areas.

- 6 Strongly Agreed
- 1 Agreed
- One comment submitted: "Fortunately we are not too rural & not too urban".
- No discussion as all agreed this is an important goal for the county.

Support land use patterns that encourage alternative modes of transportation.

- 1 Strongly Agreed 1 Agreed
- 5 Neither agreed nor disagreed with this goal.
- One comment submitted: "We know what works in Rice County, MN. Improve and maintain current systems!"
- Discussion: Concern was raised on focusing efforts on bike paths when many county roads need updating or widening. A response to this concern was that this goal is not only for additional bike paths but could mean local bus routes or transit, recreational paths in rural development areas, or county roads could be updated and widen to include a bike lane. Staff reminded the Steering Committee that this was a common theme of importance voiced at the Community Forums. It was decided to leave this goal as is for now and to think more about it.

Create and maintain County ordinances and zoning regulations to encourage orderly development.

- 4 Strongly Agreed 3 Agreed with this goal.
- One comment submitted: "Communication between all entities. Urban Reserve needs to be re-evaluated due to non-development by cities & restrictions by zoning it as such. Cluster developments belong there & only under certain discretion in the Ag district for many reasons which will be discussed".
- Discussion: This relates to the first goal surveyed and could possibly be an objective of that goal as that goal is broader and this one is more specific.

Identify areas for mixed use development and support urban growth.

- 2 Strongly Agreed 3 Agreed
- 2 Neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.
- One comment submitted: "Bigger Question: Is our growth projection really accurate?"
- Discussion: There was some discussion on what this goal meant and the conclusion was it means supporting and encouraging higher density, more condensed growth in urban areas, looking at urban reserve areas and allowing compatible mixed uses. Staff again reminded the Steering Committee that this was a common theme that arose at the Community Forums.

Promote the opportunity to lead active and healthy lifestyles through the coordinated development of infrastructure or supporting programs which promote active lifestyles.

- 1 Strongly Agreed 4 Agreed
- 2 neither agreed nor disagreed.
- One comment submitted with this goal on the survey was, " Need safer county roads first for bikers/walkers & motorists. Widen them & pave them to the edge. We can build all the trails we want & people will still use the road. Put the money in the right spot!"
- Discussion: Focused on how this goal also ties to economics with supporting business and infrastructures that promote healthy lifestyles, as well as create jobs and healthy workers.

Minimize conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses.

- 5 Strongly Agreed 2 Agreed
- One comment submitted: "Plenty of gray areas here".
- Discussion: There was discussion on minimizing these conflicts by planning like land uses next to each other, but that there will always be conflicts.

Preserve, protect and improve the surface and underground waters including, but not limited to, rivers, streams, lakes, groundwater and aquifer recharge areas.

- 2 Strongly Agreed 4 Agreed
- 1 neither agreed nor disagreed.
- One comment submitted: "Everyone need to be accountable, from Wal-Mart to farmers".
- Discussion: This facilitated a discussion on how we all want clean water but there are other ways to do this other than having large buffers that the State encourages. Areas & projects similar to Roberds Lake are good examples of this.

Minimize the potential for air, water and land contamination and pollution that could result from the development process.

- 3 Strongly Agreed 3 Agreed
- 1 neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.
- One comment submitted: "Can't be crazy but is there a cheaper way to require an environmental study for more projects?"
- Discussion: There was a question raised as to what is meant by "development process" in this goal and Staff explained it means all development processes, big and small, urban and rural, and how different types of development affect our County resources.

Members were asked if there are any specific goals related to land use that might be missed. All decided they would like more time to really think on these & how all fits together. Staff will refine for next meeting along with additional information on land use and transfer of development rights.

Tentative Next Meeting : Tuesday, February 20th at 8:30 am (regularly scheduled Committee of Whole.