



Date: June 2, 2008

Project Name: Update to The Minneapolis Plan, the comprehensive plan for the City of Minneapolis

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Ward: all

Neighborhood Organizations: all

Background and Public Process

Upon adoption, The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth will be the City's comprehensive plan. It updates the existing Minneapolis Plan, adopted in 2000. The plan provides long range policy guidance for the entire City.

On August 12, 2005 the Metropolitan Council issued the 2030 Regional Framework revised forecasts. On September 12, 2005, the Metropolitan Council issued a "system statement" to the city of Minneapolis. The System Statement is intended to help a community prepare or update its comprehensive plan, as required by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act:

Within three years following the receipt of the metropolitan system statement, every local governmental unit shall have prepared a comprehensive plan in accordance with sections 462.355, subdivision 4, 473.175, and 473.851 to 473.871 and the applicable planning statute and shall have submitted the plan to the Metropolitan Council for review pursuant to section 473.175.

The Metropolitan Council reviews comprehensive plans for conformance with metropolitan system plans, consistency with Council policies, and compatibility with adjacent and affected governmental units.

The issuance of the System Statements by the Metropolitan Council in 2005 triggered the update process for the city's comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan addresses housing, jobs, transportation, parks and open spaces, and water resource management; the updated plan will also include a future land-use map. The comprehensive plan is a long-term vision for the growth and physical development of the city, a policy framework that guides planning, zoning and development decisions.

The Comprehensive Plan provides guidance to elected officials, City staff, developers and other businesses, neighborhood groups and other community stakeholders to ensure progress toward a common vision. The City of Minneapolis refers to the plan when:

- Designing and implementing a wide variety of City policies and programs;
- Developing and adopting neighborhood, small-area and citywide plans;
- Reviewing and approving project-specific site plans and land-use applications;
- Reviewing and approving public land-acquisition and disposition proposals;

- Planning and prioritizing capital improvement and infrastructure projects; and
- Determining priorities for public financing of projects and programs.

The City's primary objectives for this update of the Comprehensive Plan are to:

- Strengthen and clarify the City's existing policy framework for future planning, zoning and development decisions;
- Frame issues to guide new policy development in three specific topic areas: sustainability, heritage preservation and urban design;
- Complete a future land-use map that reflects the City's vision and policies; and
- Simplify and improve the format of the plan to make it easier for elected officials, City staff, developers and other businesses, neighborhood groups and other community stakeholders to understand and use.

Inter-departmental work groups have been meeting since June of 2006 to review the City's existing Comprehensive Plan and related policies, begin work on the future land-use map, and implement the public participation process for the update.

Community Forums: Round I – April/May 2007

A first round of community forums focused on the three topics mentioned above: sustainability, heritage preservation and urban design. City staff provided background information, presented current policies and possible future directions, and engaged community stakeholders in discussion about each topic. Over 100 people attended these meetings and provided comments. Following these meetings an online survey was made available, wherein the same questions were asked as those at the open house. Over 1,200 individuals participated in the survey.

Completion of Draft Comprehensive Plan – June/July 2007

City staff incorporated the results of these forums into the draft Comprehensive Plan, along with the future land-use map and other elements of the plan. City staff also reviewed the draft plan with planning professionals, government peers, and other stakeholders who may not have been adequately represented in the community forums or alternative input processes.

Focus Groups – June-December 2007

Focus groups included Realtors, environmental advocates, builders, neighborhood groups, architects, heritage preservationists, and NRP staff. One specific group that met a number of times was the Downtown Task Force, which focused on policies for Downtown. Updates were also provided to standing boards and commissions with citizen members, including Heritage Preservation Commission, Minneapolis Arts Commission, and the City Planning Commission. An additional focus group was held in early 2008 for Hispanic/Latino residents and was conducted entirely in Spanish. These focus groups provided in-depth insights into specific elements of the plan, again related to the three main themes identified during the visioning phase.

Release of Draft Plan for Public Review – December 2007

The Draft Comprehensive Plan, with the future land-use map, was released in December. The draft plan was also circulated to neighboring jurisdictions for the required six-month review, and made available at neighborhood organization offices, public libraries, City offices, and online.

Open Houses – January 2008

Six open houses took place in January 2008 during the 45-day public comment period. City staff presented and invited discussion of the entire draft plan, including the future land-use maps. As in the first round, the City made this information available online and in alternative formats, so those who could not attend these forums had the opportunity to participate. Approximately 450 people participated in meetings during this phase, and 250 individual comments or surveys were submitted. Since the comments were more specific to plan content, they were compiled and responded to individually. A copy of this summary of comments and responses are attached in the appendix.

Revision of Comprehensive Plan – February/March 2008

City staff revised the draft plan to reflect the results of the open house events. City staff also reviewed the draft plan with planning professionals, government peers, and other stakeholders who may not be adequately represented in the community forums or alternative input processes.

Presentation of draft Comprehensive Plan to City Committees – April/May 2008

Staff presented the draft Comprehensive Plan to the City's boards, commissions and committees.

Submission of Plan for Approval – June/July 2008

The completed Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed by the Minneapolis City Planning Commission, the Minneapolis City Council and the Metropolitan Council before final adoption by the City Council in 2008. Each of these steps provides additional opportunities for public review and comment.

Public Comments

Comments to the draft comprehensive plan are available for review on the Planning Division's website. Most comments were affirming of the language, tone, direction, and policy statements in the plan. Changes to the draft text, based upon public comment and comments received from City boards, commissions and committees are reflected in the current draft document; highlighted in yellow. Several significant issues were raised during plan review. The Commission will need to examine these to ensure that there is a clear, consistent policy for the City:

Land Use Chapter: Future Land Use Map: The draft future land use map is consistent with adopted policy in the Above the Falls Master Plan (adopted by Council in 2000) and the Industrial Land Use and Employment Policy Plan (adopted by Council in 2006).

Economic Development: new implementation step added to strengthen link between infrastructure and economic vitality of downtown:

4.13.8 Continue to improve Downtown infrastructure to meet the needs of businesses, residents and visitors.

Open Space and Parks: New implementation step added acknowledging Minneapolis as a winter city.

7.1.8 Encourage the development of open spaces that provide amenities for year round use.

Arts and Culture: Changes to existing city policy as adopted in the Minneapolis Plan for Arts and Culture (adopted by council in 2006)

9.3.1 Identify a dedicated ~~public~~-funding mechanism with the priority for supporting small and mid-sized arts organizations and individual artists .

Change to narrative: The city funds public art through a ~~voluntary allocation of 2 percent omitted~~ an allocation of the annual net debt bond, the exact amount determined annually by the Capital Long Range Improvement Committee. The public art program is administered by Cultural Affairs staff in the Planning Division of CPED, and overseen by the Minneapolis Arts Commission. In addition, the Minneapolis Public Library Board has a public art program, the Department of Public Works has initiated a number of projects, and Neighborhood Revitalization Program funding has been used for public art.

9.4.3 Fund public art with ~~at least 2%~~ a portion of the annual net debt bond as part of the city's annual Capital Long Range Improvement Plan.

Urban Design: Added policy language regarding urban design in a winter city.

Policy 10.23 Promote climate-sensitive design principles to make the winter environment safe, comfortable and enjoyable.

10.23.1 Consider solar access, shelter from wind and snow storage and removal in site design.

10.23.2 Locate pedestrian places on the sunny sides of streets and buildings to shelter from the wind and utilize the sun's warmth.

10.23.3 Consider building context, placement, and height to manage wind speeds.

10.23.4 Encourage snow removal and storage practices that promote pedestrian and bicycle activity and safety.

10.23.5 Utilize pedestrian lighting, seasonal lighting, and furniture to increase comfort and safety so that streets become places for people.

10.23.6 Encourage street tree plantings to reduce wind speed and provide separation between pedestrians and cars.

10.23.7 Consider topography and site grading so that snowmelt is directed away from roads and pedestrian areas to avoid icy conditions and from basements to avoid snowmelt infiltration.

10.23.8 Develop guidance that encourages climate-sensitive design for residential and commercial buildings, parking lots, and open spaces and parks.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING DIVISION:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council adopt and approve submittal of the City's new comprehensive plan, The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth, to the Metropolitan Council for review.