

Chapter III. Overall Policies and Growth Strategy

The policy plan chapter is designed to provide guidance to the city to reach decisions affecting land use and the delivery of city services in the coming years. The foundation for the policies within this chapter is the 2030 strategic vision and goals found within Chapter I of this plan.

The policies set the city's intentions for the 2030 land uses, future services (storm water management, transportation, parks/open space, city utilities, administrative, etc.), the implementation strategies of the comprehensive plan, and future service planning activities. The policies, in turn, will assist in the designation of future land uses, the implementation strategies of the comprehensive plan and future service delivery activities. Further, the overall policies provide the framework for more detailed policies and strategies included in other comprehensive guide plan chapters such as land use, transportation, stormwater management chapters, and city service and management programs.

Policy Development Process

A. Issues/Priority Development

The policies have been developed based upon the issue/priority discussions held by the steering and staff services committees. The purpose of these discussions was to review and confirm topics for the development of comprehensive plan policies.

The issues/priorities were developed from:

- a. Information included in Chapter II - background information pertaining to current demographics, land use, housing and natural resources characteristics.
- b. An overview of city services including stormwater management programs, parks and open space facilities and management programs, transportation facilities, utilities and public works services/programs, public safety and other city services.
- c. Exercises to develop issues/priorities conducted by the steering and staff services committees.
- d. Input from various community groups including a community leader's survey and city boards and commissions.
- e. Public input obtained at city open houses and community events, and website feedback in response to community newsletter articles and background information (found in Chapter II) information.
- f. Comments of the topical focus groups that convened to examine the following topics, as discussed further in this chapter:
 - senior housing,
 - senior services,
 - housing and
 - families/schools/social services.
- g. Study sessions held with the steering committee, city council, park board, economic

development authority, planning commission and staff services committee.

B. Focus Groups

Focus groups were utilized to obtain comments and concerns, and learn about needs for certain topic areas. The purpose of these groups was to obtain additional information about the influence of changing demographics and cultural changes on the city housing stock, existing and potential services, partnerships and business environment that may influence city services in the future.

The following lists the various focus groups and the primary findings:

- a. Senior/“Boomer” Services
 - “Senior Citizens” covers a group having a 40-year age span (55-95)
 - Connections among age groups are important for the community—benefiting youth to seniors
 - Access is an issue: from sidewalks/trails to rides to doctor/dentist
- b. Senior/“Boomer” Housing
 - No common housing preference, from staying in family home to in-town activity to senior living to more rural places
 - Aging in place can cause difficulties without a continuum of care
 - Minnetonka lacks choices in senior housing
- c. Housing
 - Need for affordable housing will persist
 - Families choose Minnetonka for good schools, likable neighborhoods, location (easy access to work/downtown)
 - Maintain the quality of existing housing stock as it ages
- d. Families/Schools/Social Services
 - Growing immigrant population has an increasing impact on schools/services
 - Ready access to programs is affected by language, transportation and affordability
 - Schools/cities/service agencies can improve coordination and avoid duplication
- e. Minnetonka MOMS Group
 - Families like park/recreation opportunities, but really need indoor play areas for winter
 - Really need better sidewalk/trail continuity for families/kids
 - Promote opportunities for intergenerational connections/relationships

C. Staff Services Committee

The staff services group has served as an important on-going focus group. This group has reviewed steering committee information and has been involved in various exercises to anticipate changes to future city services in response to comprehensive guide plan policies and implementation strategies.

Policy Use and Definitions

A. Policy Use

The policies included in this chapter collectively guide the development of the content of the subsequent chapters of the comprehensive guide plan. The use of the policies included in this chapter and subsequent chapters are critical in the city decision-making process. The policies are designed to be used by city on a regular basis to provide guidance regarding city development, and facility and service planning activities.

In some instances, one or more individual policies will need to be balanced by city policymakers, especially in the consideration and review of:

- land use changes,
- the intensity and residential density of development and redevelopment activities,
- the delivery of city services and programs, and
- the review of various comprehensive guide plan implementation strategies.

In addition, the strategic vision and the policies provide the “underpinnings” for city development controls, including the zoning and subdivision ordinances as well as other city programs and planning activities. Therefore, the policies need review and adjustment, as appropriate, by the city on a regular basis to determine consistency with the overall strategic vision and to reflect changes to the strategic vision over time.

B. Definitions

The following section includes definitions that are unique to certain terms used in the policy statements. The purpose of including the definitions is to provide clarity and direction for key concepts in the policy statements.

- a. **Buffers:** the use of land, topography, open space or landscaping to visibly separate, screen, or “filter” the views of a use of property from another adjacent or nearby use. In some instances, buffers are used to separate major transportation facilities from adjacent properties such as the sound/visual barriers along portions of I-494.
- b. **Connections:** various means to connect or provide a relationship between different parts and services within a community. Connections can be transportation and recreational facilities such as trails, roads, greenways, for example or other links such as open space, environmental features or design elements such as landscaping.
- c. **Green technology:** applications to conserve the natural environment and resources, and to mitigate the negative impacts of human involvement in the built environment. Examples include the use of solar panels, incorporating plants and landscaping on portions of buildings, and the use of renewable energy sources.
- d. **Natural communities:** vegetative natural communities defined by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and analyzed by the Hennepin County Conservation District for Minnetonka that includes forest, woodland, shrubland, herbaceous wetland and upland grassland types identified in the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS).
- e. **Mixed use:** the development of property or an area with two or more different uses such as residential, commercial, and office, or with residential uses of different densities in an integrated manner.

- f. Sustainability/sustainable development: the use of natural environmental, economic and social resources to plan and accommodate healthy and equitable development without compromising natural resources for future generations.
- g. Village: a compact and recognizable area in Minnetonka with a core of various commercial and service uses of a variety of scale and function. In some areas of the city, a village contains mixed use and higher residential densities, connected by human and natural features such as pathways (including sidewalks and trails). The various village areas are defined by function in Chapter IV - Land Use Plan.
- h. Wheel-ability: the ability of a transportation or recreational route to accommodate a variety of motorized and non-motorized vehicles, and other means or accessories of travel containing wheels such as cars, bicycles, baby stroller, wheel chairs, walkers, wagons, etc.

Policies

A. Overall City Growth Strategy and Services Policies

Community Values: We will

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| * vigorously protect and manage our natural surroundings. | * be responsible metropolitan citizens. |
| * work hard to maintain a feeling of safety and security. | * embody a proud past and a promising future. |
| * support well-planned, reasonable development of the community. | * encourage community involvement to strengthen our social fabric. |
| * foster open communications. | * provide appropriate, effective and exceptional City services. |
| * be careful stewards of our financial resources. | |

Minnetonka is a community of choice where people come together to live, work and play in a natural and beautiful environment. There is a need to recognize and maintain awareness of the balance between community service requirements, support for residents and businesses and protection of natural resources. Likewise, it is important for the city to participate and provide leadership as a responsible “partner” in the region.

The city has adopted an overall growth strategy that incorporates the recognition of several strategies, based upon the past pattern and function of urbanization activities, along with new efforts to encourage continued vitality, a “sense of community” and responsive delivery of city services for the coming years. The overall growth strategy includes recognizing the importance of established neighborhoods in the city and maintaining the natural resource preservation efforts of the past. However, it is recognized that new partnerships in local and regional facilities, and revitalization of land uses in certain areas of the city, and local and intercommunity “connections” are needed to accommodate the demographic changes that will occur in Minnetonka in the future.

Figure III-1 graphically depicts the overall themes of the city’s future growth strategy, as described below:

Please Refer to the Overall Growth Strategy Map (Figure III-1)

These themes include the following:

- * Preservation of major corridor settings, that reflect the city’s past and present development values and policies;
- * Recognition and support of the I-394/Ridgedale and Opus areas as regional centers of the city that provide the widest range and variety of services, shopping, employment and higher density housing opportunities for residents;
- * Support for maintaining and/or promoting vitality for the variety of “villages” (as described in Chapter IV - Land Use Plan)
- * Improved connectivity between areas within the city, and access to regional facilities;
- * Preservation and enhancement of important natural resources; and
- * Continued investment in park and recreational facilities.

Further explanation of the implications of future land use and city service requirements of the growth strategy including more detailed policies are included in the Chapter IV - Land Use and other subsequent chapters of the 2030 comprehensive guide plan.

Policy No. 1: Provide services that support residents and businesses to maintain attractiveness as a balanced community that is economically diverse.

Policy No. 2: Plan for and recognize the changing diversity of residents and businesses and anticipate the need for different city services.

Policy No. 3: Plan for city services, facilities and programs that reinforce the "sense of community" unique to Minnetonka.

Policy No. 4: Initiate technology improvements to respond to evolving service requirements of residents, businesses and government.

Policy No. 5: Provide city services and collaborate with outside agencies and the private sector to leverage additional services that reinforce the city's values.

Policy No. 6: Promote public involvement by residents and businesses, and actively communicate city values and services.

Policy No. 7: Provide regional leadership in promoting community facilities, programs and land uses that are diverse, inclusive, and supportive of residents and businesses.

Policy No. 8: Deliver city services in a responsive manner and accessible (in a variety of formats) to residents and businesses.

B. Attract, Support and Retain Residents and Families

Community Values:

- * promote activities that encourage understanding & involvement
- * embrace our proud history while valuing diversity & inclusiveness

The city recognizes that the future quality of community land uses and services is dependant upon the ability to retain existing residents, and attract families to Minnetonka. Historically, the city has provided relevant services and programs to accommodate existing residents,

including senior and youth needs. To remain competitive in the region, the city will need to continue to embrace activities and services that support the needs of a more diverse population.

In particular, the city will need to direct services and land uses towards young families, requiring continued collaborations with school districts in the city and other agencies, and to an aging population, that includes seniors (age 62+) within the community. This may require allowing, for example:

- redevelopment activities that expand housing choice and introduce vitality and new services into certain areas of the city,
- encouraging expanded and new types of connections, such as LRT and additional trail linkages, and
- new public facilities, such as recreation centers that serve the needs of young families.

Policy No. 1: Provide activities and services that support and foster quality living and healthy living environments for residents.

Policy No. 2: Support and accommodate new residential land uses and housing types that will appeal to a variety of residents.

Policy No. 3: Encourage retail, service and other destination businesses/uses that are utilized by families and other age groups in the city.

Policy No. 4: Provide access to services, parks and open space facilities, and natural resources.

Policy No. 5: Support and collaborate with schools, agencies, non-profits and others that support diverse lifecycle and cultural services and programs for residents.

Policy No. 6: Support families with children by encouraging opportunities for connections with schools, community facilities and programs, and transportation/transit facilities.

C. Land Use, Development and Redevelopment

Community Values

- * guide development & redevelopment to ensure community vitality
- * balance individual property rights with the public interest
- * promote use of green technology & sustainable development
- * respect the natural environment while managing growth
- * facilitate open space preservation
- * promote a quality and affordable life-cycle housing stock

Overall Land Use

Development in Minnetonka has resulted in a well-balanced land use pattern that provides areas for residential housing choice, business locations and employment opportunities, park

facilities and open space opportunities. At the same time, city development policies have allowed for the enhancement and preservation of transportation and greenway corridors dominated by the appearance of natural resource areas integrated with urban land uses and services.

The overall land use policies are designed to continue the land use patterns that have been established by the city in the past but recognize the need to provide new opportunities for housing, business and services that reflect changing demographics. Generally, this means maintaining the low density nature of the existing residential neighborhoods; encouraging higher density residential uses, retail and service uses within the commercial areas of the city; and supporting office and light industrial growth within the existing business parks.

However, it is recognized that to remain competitive in the region and meet future community needs, additional land use related initiatives are required or need further development to accomplish the following:

- encourage increased vitality in the commercial centers of the city;
- distinguish the function of the various regional, community and neighborhood commercial areas;
- encourage sustainable development practices in various land uses;
- provide needed transportation and pedestrian connections between commercial centers, parks and public facilities and other areas; and
- Continue to establish buffers between conflicting land uses to protect property values, to capitalize on natural resource protection and visibility, to provide identification, and to promote aesthetically pleasing development.

To this end, policies are aimed at promoting a “village” concept that supports land uses, amenities and design requirements that reinforce a unique character for neighborhood commercial areas and the community centers in the city. It is recognized that the function of the various neighborhood and community villages is varied and reflect historical growth patterns and development. The purpose of the village concept is to provide development and redevelopment opportunities to:

- * encourage vitality,
- * promote identity, and
- * improve livability

within commercial areas by allowing well-planned mixed uses where additional higher density housing opportunities can coexist with retail and service uses as further discussed in Chapter IV - Land Use.

Policy No. 1: Encourage a diversity of land uses within the city to ensure a broad range of housing and employment choice, shopping and other services for residents and businesses.

Policy No. 2: Encourage a greater density/intensity and mix of land uses where access is available and supported by regional transportation systems (such as LRT).

Policy No. 3: Anticipate and balance the impacts of new land uses and development on surrounding neighborhoods, the local and regional transportation system and city services.

Policy No. 4: Encourage land uses and development that incorporate conservation-oriented

and sustainability principles.

- Policy No. 5: Allow flexibility in the application of development controls to preserve important natural resources, and/or encourage affordable housing and/or other public facilities and benefits.
- Policy No. 6: Require the use of conservation-oriented design in new development and redevelopment projects, as appropriate, when special consideration is requested from the city.
- Policy No. 7: Support existing commercial areas and encourage new development techniques that contribute to the vitality and diversity of the area.
- Policy No. 8: Encourage the use of buffers between different land uses to:
- lessen negative off-site impacts, and
 - preserve and enhance natural features including wetlands, floodplains, slopes and high quality natural communities.
- Policy No. 9: Balance the requirements of new development and redevelopment to preserve natural resources and promote aesthetically pleasing development.

Residential Land Uses

Residential land uses comprise nearly half of the Minnetonka land area in 2008. Although low-density residential land uses comprise the majority of residential land area, medium and high-density residential properties underwent significant development over the last thirty years. Few vacant or underdeveloped properties remain for residential uses resulting in limited opportunities for new development.

It is anticipated that the city will continue to be attractive to high quality residential land uses due to its location in the region, the transportation system, natural setting, and property values. City practices have been and will continue to be oriented towards protection and support of the established residential neighborhoods.

During the last two comprehensive guide planning periods, the city has modified residential density development policies and requirements to balance the recognition of rising property values with the need to:

- preserve existing neighborhood patterns,
- provide a wider variety of housing opportunities to respond to changing demographics and lifestyles, and
- continue to preserve important natural resources.

For example, the medium density and high density residential densities have been increased to allow more multiple family residential density opportunities. In low density residential districts, smaller lots may be permitted in transition areas and certain neighborhoods for single family homes. Further, land development requirements have been modified to recognize changing lifestyles and non-traditional living environments with the inclusion of standards for accessory apartments, group homes and home occupations within residential areas of the city.

Challenges for the city include attracting new residential new land uses, and housing types to meet changing demographics, yet are appropriate and compatible with existing

neighborhoods and nearby services. An important strategy is to locate higher densities of residential development near shopping and employment concentrations, and access to existing/planned transportation systems including trails.

- Policy No. 1: Maintain, preserve, and support the character of established residential neighborhoods.
- Policy No. 2: Provide areas in the city where increased residential densities may be accommodated.
- Policy No. 3: Encourage residential home construction that is compatible with established neighborhood character.
- Policy No. 4: Establish programs and strategies to encourage the preservation of affordable and middle-income homes.
- Policy No. 5: Encourage land uses within the city that will accommodate changing demographics yet preserve existing residential neighborhoods.
- Policy No. 6: Encourage residential development projects to include provisions for housing choice, where appropriate, and require when special consideration, such as financial assistance, is requested from the city.

Housing

The city is dominated by very good quality single-family homes on large lots. Single family home values are high due to regional location, natural areas and high land values. As a result, few single-family homes are affordable to moderate-income families and the majority of affordable for-sale units include condominiums and townhomes. Further, most rental units are not currently affordable to low and moderate income families since over 90% of the 4,400 rental units are market-rate. Of the 390 subsidized and affordable rental units in the city, there were no vacancies as of June 2007.

A mixture of housing types is needed in the city to maintain and attract families, seniors and housing for employees of Minnetonka businesses. For example, only one market rate rental housing project (currently under construction) is available for “active” seniors in Minnetonka.

The city recognizes the difficulty to encourage affordable and middle cost single-family housing because of land values and the lack of available land. To meet the future housing challenge, it is important to preserve the limited diversity of housing affordability, and work to maintain the existing housing stock. This may require the future investigation into single family maintenance requirements, similar to practices of other cities in the metropolitan area. Secondly, the city will need to continue to support affordable housing programs and investigate opportunities and incentives for housing programs that benefit families and seniors.

Redevelopment remains one of the major tools for the providing additional multi-family housing units. Other initiatives include encouraging developers to provide or facilitate a reasonable mixture of housing type and cost to maintain and attract families, seniors and others.

- Policy No. 1: Support and encourage housing options that are attractive to a wide variety of age and income levels of residents.
- Policy No. 2: Support families by encouraging the preservation and development of mid-

priced housing opportunities.

- Policy No. 3: Promote housing maintenance programs that improve the livability of existing residential dwelling units in a cost effective manner.
- Policy No. 4: Support and participate, as appropriate, in programs and techniques to provide and maintain opportunities for senior and affordable housing developments near community facilities, services and appropriate transportation facilities.
- Policy No. 5: Ensure the longevity of affordable housing through city housing programs and partnerships with other public, non-profit, and private entities.

Redevelopment

Since Minnetonka is nearly fully developed, it is likely that redevelopment activities will grow as buildings and land uses become older and functionally obsolete. The city's role will be to encourage private redevelopment activities, support and leverage funding for qualified projects, participate in infrastructure improvements and provide advice to potential developers. However, at the same time, the city will work to actively protect residential areas by balancing the impacts of redevelopment with adjacent neighborhood identity and assets. In some instances, this may require difficult choices by decision-makers in order to allow a reasonable level of redevelopment to meet overall city policies yet provide a responsible level of neighborhood protection when changes are planned in certain areas of the city.

Areas of the City that are presently undergoing redevelopment include Glen Lake and the southeast corner of I-394/CR 73 area. Generally, these redevelopment efforts have focused upon the conversion of older commercial and residential buildings to higher density residential/business uses. In addition, rehabilitation of several existing businesses in Glen Lake and the Minnetonka Boulevard/CR 101 area has occurred. The result of these activities has encouraged the full utilization of the property, private and public reinvestment, broadening the tax base, and increased shopping and housing opportunities.

Further redevelopment activities within the city should be dependent upon the following:

- * Sufficient land area to create an attractive and economically viable new project
- * Ability to incorporate higher residential densities or alternative housing types that provide opportunities for lifecycle housing
- * Proximity to regional transportation corridors, transit hubs/facilities
- * Proximity to commercial services and employment centers and transit facilities.

In several older commercial areas of the City, detailed master planning efforts are needed to facilitate overall redevelopment activities. The master planning efforts should introduce new land uses, provide site planning principles and define geographic growth limits. Candidate redevelopment locations include the TH 7/101 area located south of TH 7 and older commercial clusters along the I-394 corridor. These are areas where a mixture of uses and appropriate design can contribute to business and residential vitality, share facilities and invigorate activity within the larger geographic setting.

The upgrading of existing services is necessary in certain areas of the city as redevelopment occurs. Transportation analyses, measuring the impact of redevelopment on the surrounding roadway system, and utility system analyses are requirements to ensure that higher intensity

business development and higher density residential redevelopment can be accommodated. Further, analysis of how required improvements are funded and the effect of the improvements on nearby existing developments is needed. When transportation facility improvements or additions are controlled by the county or the state, the city should exercise all available power in influencing the timing of improvements, especially if developments are proposed, or phase the developments to coincide with the completion of such systems.

Certain areas planned or proposed for rehabilitation and/or redevelopment require detailed study and broad consideration by the city. Generally, areas proposed for redevelopment may include transitional area or older single-family homes that have experienced deterioration due to adjacent incompatible or changing land uses, or private and public disinvestment. Additional study by the city within these areas will help determine the potential effects of redevelopment of the property and surrounding area. Factors that need examination include parcel characteristics, adjacent land uses, environmental features, transportation facilities, the loss of affordable housing and the extent of public improvements.

- Policy No. 1: Encourage redevelopment projects that include mixed income housing, including affordable units, while balancing density and the preservation of natural resources.
- Policy No. 2: Anticipate and require or accommodate changes in infrastructure with redevelopment projects.
- Policy No. 3: Review and anticipate the effects and implications of redevelopment projects on the pre-existing land use, surrounding neighborhood and city infrastructure and facilities.
- Policy No. 4: Pursue redevelopment opportunities that incorporate higher density housing and development intensity near transit hubs and corridors that allow access to employment and services.
- Policy No. 5: Provide incentives or other reinvestment techniques to encourage the redevelopment or rehabilitation of buildings and/or land uses.

Business Support and Development

The city values businesses in Minnetonka and recognizes the role of business in support of all aspects of community growth and development. The city's proximity to and convenient access to downtown Minneapolis and the airport has attracted many office, light industrial and commercial developments resulting in an assessed valuation of \$1.7 billion (2007) and an estimated 45,700 employees in 2006.

Land for future new business growth is limited and there are few vacant parcels remaining in existing business parks. Therefore, continued business development is likely to take the form of expansion or redevelopment.

The city continues to utilize a conservative approach to attract and assist business development. Tools used to assist businesses include industrial development revenue bonds, and advocacy and assistance with programs sponsored by state agencies and other groups. Further, the TwinWest Chamber is a valued partner in the support of businesses in Minnetonka. In addition, the city continues to work with Minnetonka business employers to engage employees in recreation and other programs sponsored by the city.

- Policy No. 1: Support existing businesses and collaborate with businesses to determine

services, employee housing and transportation needs.

Policy No. 2: Facilitate connections between local businesses and various programs that provide incentives and financial assistance for business retention and recruitment.

Policy No. 3: Facilitate local workforce participation in city programs and facilities.

Policy No. 4: Maintain a partnership with the TwinWest Chamber and collaborate with other agencies to recognize existing and new businesses.

D. The Natural Environment

Community Values:

- * protect & improve our water resources & woodlands
- * facilitate open space preservation
- * respect the natural environment while managing growth
- * promote use of green technology & sustainable development

General

The preservation of natural resources has attracted development, resulting in attractive home sites and business developments. Natural resource protection has been a major initiative in community development and restoration activities throughout the city since the early 1970s. The natural resource protection and enhancement measures have evolved over the past 40 years and the city has been recognized as a leader in preservation techniques and programs.

Continued efforts are needed to protect, manage and enhance important natural resources. While the city continues to balance natural resource protection efforts while respecting individual property rights, as part of the development process, recent initiatives towards education of residents and businesses about conservation, resource enhancement and long-term stewardship complements resource planning activities.

Emphasis on resource planning activities on a neighborhood ecological level is needed to protect a variety of natural resources. These resources include:

- numerous areas of steep slopes (over 12 % and 18 %),
- over 225 natural community vegetative remnants of varying ecological quality,
- approximately 2,439 acres of Type 1 - 7 wetland and floodplain areas, and
- 643 acres of lakes and creek basins.

Incentives and programs will be used to protect, enhance and improve natural resources. Emphasis will be placed on the preservation and enhancement of water quality and quantity, water resources and significant vegetation. The city will be an advocate/facilitator in the education, use and incentives for “green” technology.

Stormwater Management

The emphasis on the management of water quality and quantity is important from both a local and regional perspective. The drainage system in the city relies on natural drainage ways and storage areas within four watersheds (Minnehaha, Riley-Purgatory, Nine Mile and Basset Creeks) that eventually drain through numerous communities to the Minnesota River.

Stormwater management offers opportunities to control development impacts by establishing regulations for the use of new or existing resource areas for water storage and filtration. Water quality and quantity management requires the use of a variety of techniques to reduce phosphorus and nutrient loads, incorporate sustainable design techniques to encourage infiltration, and reduce erosion and sedimentation with private development projects and new public facilities.

Green Technology

Since the early 1990s the city has incorporated “green” technologies and techniques to conserve and reduce reliance on nonrenewable energy sources. Current “green technologies” utilized and encouraged by the city include recycling, use of solar energy, and non-toxic cleaning methods for utility and facility management.

Policy No. 1: Support, promote and facilitate environmentally sensitive development.

Policy No. 2: Continue to provide leadership in integrating natural resource preservation and cost-effective and practical “green technologies” in community facilities and the delivery of city services.

Policy No. 3: Provide education and programs to residents and businesses to encourage natural resource protection, enhancement, stewardship, the control of invasive species and the use of “green technologies”.

Policy No. 4: Require new development and redevelopment to preserve and enhance important natural resources including natural communities, woodlands, wetlands, floodplain areas, shorelands and slope areas.

Policy No. 5: Require land uses, development and redevelopment to:

- comply and be consistent with the City of Minnetonka Water Resources Management Plan
- comply with existing and new city and watershed requirements for non-degradation of water quality.

Policy No. 6: Encourage the use of technologies, including solar access and other or new forms of renewable energy, oriented towards energy conservation and efficiency.

E. Parks, Open Space and Recreation

Community values:

- * promote activities that encourage understanding & involvement
- * expand & increase usability of our trails & sidewalks

Over the last 50 years, the city has responded to the residential demand for community and neighborhood parks by constructing nearly 50 parks throughout Minnetonka. In addition, the community value of natural resource preservation has resulted in the acquisition of significant open space for use as passive recreational activities, especially along creek corridors. In the future, the acquisition of park land for active and passive recreational activities will not be as significant as it has in the past since the city has obtained numerous acres for park, open space and recreation purposes. However, further limited acquisition of property may be required in certain locations to meet park development and stewardship needs.

Park activities for Minnetonka, in the future, will primarily focus upon facility development and improvements, and connectivity between parks, neighborhoods and activity centers. Over the past 20 years, city park facilities have expanded from solely city-owned facilities to partnerships with schools, athletic associations, other public agencies and unique public/private partnerships. For example, current efforts to develop an implementation and stewardship plan for the Upper Minnehaha Creek corridor with the County, watershed district and the city are a model that will likely be initiated for park and open space development and stewardship in the future.

The changing demographics of residents will affect the Minnetonka park and recreation system more so in the future than continued development and redevelopment. The trend towards an aging population and the need to continue to attract families to the city will likely require facilities that reflect “healthy living” objectives, accommodate “wheel-ability” (i.e. wheel chairs, bikes, baby carts, etc.) that extends throughout the lifecycle and new or redesigned facilities that accommodate a range of activities and encourage accessibility.

Further, park and open space activities aimed at environmental stewardship and interaction with natural resources, such as nature center development and trail connections need accommodation within the overall park system. The city will continue to investigate additional open space opportunities and acquisitions under public ownership or other controls.

Policy No. 1: Provide city parks, and recreational facilities and programs to meet the needs of Minnetonka residents and businesses:

- Upgrade existing facilities or provide new facilities that appeal to the changing demographics of residents.
- Provide new neighborhood parks where access to existing park facilities is inadequate, or is underserved.

Policy No. 2: Manage city parks, facilities and programs to accommodate the effects of environmental changes, and the changing needs of residents, businesses and employees of Minnetonka businesses.

Policy No. 3: Collaborate with schools and other organizations to promote “healthy living” activities and programs.

Policy No. 4: Extend and manage the trail system as a recreation and “pathway” corridor throughout the city.

F. Transportation

Community values:

- * enhance resident & business mobility with quality roads & transit
- * meet local & regional needs through leadership & collaboration
- * expand & increase usability of our trails & sidewalks

Land use planning requires coordination with transportation facilities (roadways, transit and trails) and needs to ensure adequate and safe access from existing and new development to the local and regional roadway system. The lack of consideration of land uses and development on the city’s transportation system leads to unplanned congestion, confusion for the motorist, safety issues and unanticipated capital expenditures for the city, county and

state.

Overall roadway circulation within the city is limited, unlike many large communities in the metropolitan area. Several state and county roadways are characterized by access limitations that segment Minnetonka; significant topographical changes and existing environmental protection areas; and a “parcel by parcel” development pattern have all led to a discontinuous roadway system.

The lack of a continuous roadway system causes difficulty in planning a transportation system that supports residents and businesses in the city. Roadway segments can become congested, forcing drivers to find alternative routes, such as local roads, that are not designed or located to carry higher traffic volumes. Currently, the local roadway system has operated efficiently and within capacity, and it is important to preserve the function and design of local streets as population increases and congestion worsens in order to protect residential neighborhoods.

As development and redevelopment continue, pressure on the overall transportation system will intensify without commensurate levels of roadway and facility improvements. Therefore, it is important to identify areas, before development or redevelopment occurs, where anticipated congestion will affect the overall transportation system.

The transportation system needs to be planned to:

- support the villages and the Ridgedale/Opus regional areas, and
- to accommodate public travel and recreational needs.

Opportunities for multi-modal transportation facilities are available or planned in the Ridgedale, Opus (Southwest Corridor LRT) and community village areas where major transportation corridors exist. Therefore, more intense and higher density development and redevelopment should be planned and designed to gain additional or reasonable access to these transportation facilities. Further, planning should include the provision for non-vehicular corridors (trails, pathways, sidewalks) and facilities to safely access land use and transportation facilities within these areas. Continued collaboration with the County and State is needed to ensure that commensurate roadway and transit improvements are available for planned areas of more intense development in the city and expanding resident service needs.

Trails and other non-vehicle corridors serve a dual purpose to provide overall connectivity to village centers, public facilities and other community activity centers. The Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail and the proposed CR 101 regional trail (local trail from the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail to TH 7) serve regional trail, connectivity and “greenway” needs as well as local Minnetonka needs. The completion of the overall trail plan will assist in providing connectivity throughout the city and the surrounding area as well as support “healthy living” and recreational objectives.

Policy No. 1: Provide a safe and integrated transportation system.

Policy No. 2: Recognize the interrelationship of land use and transportation, and anticipate impacts of the location and intensity of planned land uses on the transportation system.

Policy No. 3: Provide and promote convenient and accessible transportation systems to residents and employees of Minnetonka businesses.

Policy No. 4: Manage the impact of new development upon the local transportation system and encourage the use of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and

other traffic management techniques.

Policy No. 5: Anticipate, plan for and collaborate with other agencies for local and regional transportation improvements and programs to lessen the impacts of congestion.

Policy No. 6: Encourage the expansion of multi-modal and transit services in the city with other government agencies to support resident and business transportation needs.

Policy No. 7: Plan for trails and pedestrian ways as a transportation mode and provide a network of trails and pathways connections to:

- schools,
- commercial areas,
- parks,
- activity centers and
- access to transit services.

Policy No. 8: Encourage appropriate “traffic calming” techniques within and near residential neighborhoods that are impacted by congestion, excessive traffic volume and speed.

G. Municipal Utilities and Facilities

Community values:

- * provide value: quality services at a reasonable price
- * manage for the long-term
- * protect & improve our water resources & woodlands
- * promote innovative service delivery

The construction of sewer and water facilities are among the most costly of all services provided by local governments. Further, local sewer and water facilities impact the region as a whole since sanitary sewer effluent outlets to the Minnesota River, after treatment, and the public water supply is drawn from an aquifer that serves as the primary water source for many communities in the metropolitan area. Therefore, not only is it necessary to maintain the investment in local facilities, but it is also important to manage and utilize facilities as a responsible “partner” in the region.

Future growth and redevelopment in the Opus and north Ridgedale area will provide opportunities to replace aging sanitary sewer infrastructure. The planning and cooperation of phasing infrastructure replacement with private development activities should result in cost-effectiveness while minimizing the length of any disruption of service to area residents and businesses.

Inflow and infiltration of the sanitary sewer system reduces the efficiency and cost of the local sewer system and contributes unnecessary use of the regional system. Maintenance, rehabilitation and management of the local sanitary sewer system to control the amount of inflow and infiltration provide local benefits for efficiency and responds to regional concerns by reducing flows to the regional treatment facility.

Increased growth in the city has required the installation of new wells to provide an adequate water supply and improve firefighting capabilities. At the same time, concerted efforts are

underway by the city and the region to promote water conservation with the goal of decreasing demands on the public water supply. Although the city has sufficient water supply to meet 2020 growth forecasts, increased water conservation efforts are necessary to manage expansion of the water supply system efficiently and cost-effectively into the long-term future.

Policy No. 1: Maintain the quality and efficiency of municipal water and wastewater systems, and other associated city facilities:

- Implement programs to maintain, rehabilitate and replace aging infrastructure.
- Incorporate cost-effective techniques and technologies to increase longevity and energy conservation of aging municipal facilities.

Policy No. 2: Maximize the efficiency and capacity of the sanitary sewer system by continuing to implement programs to minimize inflow and infiltration.

Policy No. 3: Provide a responsible water conservation program to reduce impacts on the city and regional public water supply.

Policy No. 4: Provide education to residents and businesses aimed at reducing water consumption.

H. Fire and Police Services

Community values:

- * provide value: quality services at a reasonable price
- * provide excellent customer service
- * enhance personal & business safety
- * foster community involvement & individual responsibility
- * ensure hometown security by collaborating with others

Over time, the city public safety services (police, fire and emergency response) have evolved to respond to situations that are reflective of a suburban community. The demands for police and fire services are likely to change in the coming years however, as land uses change, development continues to intensify, the population of Minnetonka ages and becomes more diverse, and business employment continues to grow. For example, a greater concentration of employees and residents in the Opus and I-394 areas of Minnetonka, may eventually require the need for additional or expanded services including the siting or relocation of public safety facilities.

Continued sophistication of technology, additional homeland security requirements, and expanded resident needs for emergency response are likely to result in new programs and services that the city has not experienced in the past. The city needs to maintain strong public safety services to ensure that City residents and businesses are secure and safe. To maintain cost effectiveness, the city needs to anticipate future conditions that impact public safety service delivery and continue to collaborate with other service providers.

Policy No. 1: Maintain and provide services, programs and facilities for effective police and fire departments that are responsive to changes in demographics and land uses, and provide expertise in emerging issues.

- Policy No. 2: Manage the delivery of public safety services with consideration of the location and intensity of land uses, congested roadways and an intermodal transportation system in a regional setting.
- Policy No. 3: Provide programs and services to maintain and enhance neighborhood safety.
- Policy No. 4: Provide programs and practices that ensure the security of city information and services.
- Policy No. 5: Provide education and training to residents to encourage personal safety and practices.
- Policy No. 6: Collaborate with other agencies to ensure effective emergency response services to residents and businesses.

I. City Communication, Cooperation and Partnerships

Community values:

- * foster community involvement & individual responsibility,
- * foster open communication within the community,
- * promote activities that encourage understanding & involvement

Effective communication, cooperation with other public service priorities and partnerships with other organizations continues to be a primary goal in the delivery of city services. The expanding diversity of Minnetonka residents coupled with quickly evolving changes in technology require greater efforts to provide effective communication tools between the city and residents. As cultural diversity and the technological capabilities of residents expand, current communication methods will need adjustment to ensure that residents continue to receive access to city services and notification of public involvement activities.

Excellent schools are a sign of strong and healthy communities. The city of Minnetonka includes three school districts (Hopkins, Minnetonka and Wayzata school districts) within the municipal boundaries; thus efforts to support, cooperate and partner with the districts to provide appropriate services and activities is time consuming and requires consideration of each districts specific needs. The city and school districts need to continue to collaborate on programs and activities that support educational excellence for Minnetonka residents.

Partnerships with other agencies and non-profits that support a variety of services and programs (including housing and transportation) are also necessary to attract and retain families and seniors in the city. Continued initiation and participation in collaborative efforts to leverage funding and services is an important city activity that benefits residents and businesses.

Government requirements and programs continue to grow and affect residents, as well as city services and activities. Often times, the variety and source of government information and requirements are confusing and redundant. As a result, local governments, including the city, become the entity that must “sort out” and respond to resident questions and concerns. Continued efforts are needed to partner with other government agencies to deliver cost effective services and activities that benefit a greater public, provide common understanding and reduce service duplication.

- Policy No. 1: Provide a variety of communication services that utilize relevant technology and are accessible to city residents and businesses.

- Policy No. 2: Encourage active participation of all residents and businesses in public processes.
- Policy No. 3: Support school district initiatives that improve educational accessibility for city residents.
- Policy No. 4: Partner with school districts to provide services, facilities and programs in a cost-effective manner to residents.
- Policy No. 5: Collaborate with other governmental agencies to facilitate information exchange and reduction of redundancy.
- Policy No. 6: Investigate and partner with other government agencies to provide cost-effective services that may be shared and beneficial to customers.