



New Brighton Comprehensive Plan

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan is a tool used to guide the physical and socio-economic change within a community. It is intended to be broad in scope while establishing general objectives and policies for such elements as land use, surface water management, public infrastructure (sewer and water supply systems), transportation, housing, redevelopment, park and open space and environmental protection. The plan is different from the zoning ordinance in that the plan is visionary and general whereas the zoning ordinance is much more specific and detailed. The zoning ordinance is a tool to implement the comprehensive plan and is amended to reflect the vision set out by the plan after the planning process has been completed. The primary users of the comprehensive plan are the City Council, Planning Commission and City Staff who must use the plan to guide the day to day decisions of local government. But the plan is intended for everyone including New Brighton residents. Public participation through a series of neighborhood meetings and town meetings helped make the comprehensive plan what it is, and similar participation is of critical importance to future planning endeavors as well.

Authority to Plan

In 1976 under the Minnesota Land Planning Act (MLPA), communities in the Metropolitan Area were required to develop a Comprehensive Plan to address the interdependence of local units of government within the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The MLPA requires the adoption of coordinated plans and programs in order to "...protect the health, safety and welfare of the general public...and to ensure coordinated, orderly and economic development."¹ This legislation gave the local planning commission the authority to prepare the plan and submit it to the governing council for approval and adoption. In preparing the plan, the planning commission is required to work with other City agencies, adjacent communities, school districts and counties in order to ensure coordinated regional planning. A 1995 amendment to the MLPA required the Metropolitan Council to prepare a comprehensive development guide for the metropolitan area. The Metropolitan Council adopted a "2030 Regional Development Framework" in January 2004, which provides direction on how to plan for growth including transportation, water resource management, and regional parks. Adoption of that plan then requires local governments within the seven county metropolitan areas to update their local comprehensive plans to ensure consistency with the goals and policies established for the region.

¹ Minnesota Statutes 473.851, *Copyright 1996 by the Office of Revisor of Statutes, State of Minnesota*



An On-going Effort

Following the establishment of the MLPA, New Brighton completed its Comprehensive Plan in 1980. Since then, the Comprehensive Plan has been updated twice, once in 1988 and again in 1998. The Comprehensive Plan is now 20 years old and needs to be updated to reflect progress made thus far. Planning is an on-going process that attempts to anticipate and guide future change so as to maximize efficiencies and minimize unexpected socio-economic or physical changes to the community. Over the next 20 years, New Brighton will see change in many areas including physical development of mainstreet, also known as the Old Highway 8 Corridor, and is likely to see redevelopment of older strip centers or heavy industry and a growing connection to the environmental community. While New Brighton can certainly control some aspects of change, others are beyond the City's grasp. However, reaction to these uncontrollable forces can be directed by a sound community-based vision that the City of New Brighton has established.

A Regional Perspective

The City of New Brighton is a near fully developed suburb of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Being near fully developed, the community of New Brighton must focus its efforts primarily on preservation, renewal and redevelopment rather than on new growth. However, it must not lose perspective of its location in a major metropolitan area. Communities in metropolitan areas need to work together to accommodate the pros and cons that accompany large population growth. The City of New Brighton sits at the intersection of two major interstates providing excellent access to both Minneapolis and St. Paul. As an inner-ring suburb, New Brighton will play an important role in encouraging and promoting private infill development fully utilizing existing infrastructure, a policy consistent with the goals and policies of the Metropolitan Council's Regional Blueprint. The City has recently seen successful private redevelopment with Applewood Pointe and Lakes Run.

Principles Guiding Redevelopment

The City of New Brighton has had the opportunity to embrace concepts of mixed-use development within areas of the community that are in need of redevelopment. This comprehensive plan continues to reinforce mixed use directions on land use, originally envisioned as part of the 1998 Comprehensive Plan, particularly within the area known as the Northwest Quadrant. Both this update and the 1998 update contain strategies on ensuring a quality supply of life-cycle housing and details a well-developed park and recreation system with connections that link places to live with places to play and work. This plan continues to address a different approach to traffic control through traffic-calming devices, which create a safer roadway system. While recognizing more people will still desire to drive the automobile, the plan provides alternatives to driving through travel demand management and telecommunications. New to the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update are the visions and goals established by the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Strategic Plan adopted in May of 2006. These objectives are all part of community based visions that remain part of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan (see Figure 1-1).

Redevelopment of the Northwest Quadrant is an effort that will last an additional ten years or more. During this time most of the city's resources will be focused on this effort. In general, the City will rely on private parties to realize redevelopment goals in the future.

Figure 1-1 Vision Plan Image

