

Chapter 1: Introduction

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to serve as a vision and roadmap for where the community is headed. The ideas and goals expressed in this plan are intended to be a reflection of the community’s values and the desire for what North Mankato is to become. Each chapter of the Comprehensive Plan provides the “big picture” of several important topics that are intertwined and have an impact on quality of life in North Mankato. It is the intention that this plan will be used on a day-to-day basis by city staff, the City Council, and other commissions and stakeholders to help inform important policy decisions, such as decisions involving infrastructure and development, the acquisition and sale of public land, capital improvements, zoning and regulatory changes, and communicating a consistent vision. It is anticipated that residents may use the plan to determine property use, understand decisions made by the City, and make improvements to property in a manner consistent with the plan. Developers may use the plan as a way to make decisions based on the goals and identified improvements.

The plan is intended to cover approximately a 20-year time period and may be amended and updated from time to time as conditions change.

PLANNING PROCESS

The 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update began in 2021, using the inaugural 2015 Comprehensive Plan as a starting point. Staff updated chapters of the 2015 Plan with the latest data and new information referenced from the many plans guiding community development. Many of the major plans, studies, and efforts referenced during the development of this plan are listed to the right.

Valuable input was also gathered from those in the community through virtual and in-person open houses, a booth at the community Farmer’s Market, and focused outreach to specific stakeholders within the City. Input was also gleaned from other planning efforts running simultaneously with this update process including the Lookout Drive Corridor Study and the Lookout Drive Area Plan.

Major Plans, Studies, and Efforts Guiding the Development of this Plan:

- North Mankato Comprehensive Plan (2015)
- Parks Plan (2015)
- Belgrade Avenue Master Plan (2017)
- Commerce Drive Area Development Plan (2019)
- North Mankato ADA Transition Plan (2019)
- Nicollet County Comprehensive Plan (2020)
- Mankato/North Mankato (MAPO) 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (2020)
- Northwest Growth Area Plan (2020)
- Webster Avenue Area Plan (2021)
- North Mankato Housing Study (2021)
- Highway 169 Corridor Study (2022)
- Future Transportation Preparedness Study (2022)
- Highway 14 Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study (2022)
- Lookout Drive Area Plan (2023)
- Brewing New Ideas for North Mankato (2023)
- Greater Mankato 2040: Transforming Tomorrow Together

As each chapter of the plan was developed, drafts were individually presented and commented on at Planning Commission meetings. The plan was reviewed by both the Planning Commission and City Council at their respective regular meetings in mid-2023. The Plan was adopted by the City Council on September 5, 2023.



Figure 1-1. In-person public open house held in late May 2023.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan provides a “big picture” look at several important areas that have an impact on quality of life for North Mankato. The Comprehensive Plan covers the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction – This chapter provides an overview of what the Comprehensive Plan is and its purpose. It discusses the process for developing the plan and how it is organized.

Chapter 2: Vision – This chapter outlines the vision for the community that is intended to be expressed through all other chapters.

Chapter 3: Land Use – This chapter establishes existing and future land use for all property in the City. It also identifies future growth areas.

Chapter 4: Housing – This chapter provides an overview of existing housing conditions and a plan for maintaining and developing quality future housing stock.

Chapter 5: Economic Development – This chapter provides an analysis of the existing economic climate and opportunities for economic growth and redevelopment areas.

Chapter 6: Transportation – This chapter analyzes the existing transportation system and future improvements, mostly as it relates to auto-oriented transportation. Non-motorized transportation is discussed further in Chapter 8: Parks, Trails, and Recreation.

Chapter 7: Utilities – This chapter examines the existing system and future improvements to public utilities as it relates to the water, wastewater, and stormwater systems.

Chapter 8: Parks, Trails, and Recreation – This chapter examines the existing park and trail system, as well as recreational opportunities and establishes planning criteria, guidelines and standards for future development of these amenities.

Chapter 9: Business District Redevelopment – This chapter examines opportunities to reimagine the impact business districts throughout North Mankato can have and discusses redevelopment of underutilized parcels, an improved pedestrian realm, parking availability, and a healthy business mix.

Chapter 10: Community Design – This chapter addresses how people perceive and interact with the built environment. Community design addresses topics such as scale, architecture, and development patterns.