

CHAPTER 2: VISION, GOALS AND DECISIONS

GUIDING DECISION MAKING

The City of North St. Paul's elected and appointed officials use this Plan as a guide when making decisions about not only land use, but housing, transportation, infrastructure, and overall quality of life. More than just a Comprehensive Plan, the vision, goals and measurables presented here lead the overarching policy for the City.

The vision, goals and objectives described in this Chapter are based on previous planning efforts, input from the general public through the Community Cafes held during the Planning Process, online forums, as well as City officials.

WHAT WE HEARD

Community Cafés and Online Surveys

Six community café events were held to solicit feedback from community members on what they wanted the Plan to prioritize. Survey questions were also posted online with the mySidewalk website. Some citizens chose to respond to these online posts. While feedback was solicited in varied ways, broad themes emerged and are summarized below.

Community Café 1: Development and Redevelopment

- Preserve and invest in **existing recreational spaces**, parks and lakes.
- North St. Paul needs new **multifamily housing within walking distance** of popular destinations to support commercial activity.
- **Commercial activity** itself should be **clustered** so that the businesses can feed off each other.
- **Transit** is important. The City should focus on accessibility and explore new modes. Easy transit to both downtowns is desired.

Community Café 2: Housing and Neighborhoods

- **Parks, open spaces and trails** draw people to neighborhoods. Parks should include **quality community spaces** while bike infrastructure and racks should be increased to spur an increase in trail usage
- Residents appreciate the character of the city and its **small-town feel**. How can this character be leveraged to attract young families?

- There should be **different types of housing, including town homes and new rental buildings**, to cater to seniors looking to downsize, and young people looking to live small.
- Focus on **high quality infrastructure**. The city should balance its investments and also focus on things like schools, public transportation, and commercial development.

Community Café 3: Housing and Neighborhoods

- **Sidewalks** need to be more prevalent and connected to each other. Walking trails around the parks and lakes are a great idea.
- Housing is not available at all price points or styles.
- **Older houses** are showing signs of age, while new housing is not being constructed in styles that are appealing to younger people.
- There should be a purposeful vision for how to house and transport seniors who may not be able to drive. They are currently isolated.

Community Café 4: Business and the Economy

- The **downtown area needs a variety** of business types, including family-friendly restaurants and activities.
- The city should capitalize off its proximity to **Century College**, drawing students into the area.
- North St. Paul should **brand** itself by promoting the historic walking tour, supporting volunteerism and exploring public art. Overall marketing of the city should be a priority.
- The **car show** is a beloved staple of the community and should be continued.

Community Café 5: Active and Sustainable Living

- Key destinations within the City, like schools, churches, parks and the downtown should be connected with sidewalks or trails. That includes creating **connections** from the Gateway Trail.
- A **park** or activity space is needed **downtown**.
- The City should be more **walkable**. Overall the City should focus on creating better walking and biking connections between destinations; there are too many places where sidewalks end abruptly.
- **Water quality** (including Silver Lake), keeping the water source local, and encouraging **solar energy** are important sustainability priorities.

Online Survey

- The downtown needs a better variety of businesses, including more restaurant destinations.
- Both young and old people need to be provided for.
- Future development should be purposeful and promote economic growth.

VISION

The North St. Paul *Strategic Plan: 2015-2020* laid out a vision for the City, building from the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The primary objective of the North St. Paul City Council and staff is to establish a consensus-based direction for the City and then actively pursue implementation of strategies to achieve that direction. The Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan will work together to support that initiative. They are both tools for city leaders to identify priorities, programs and services, and assimilate them into common elements (strategies and goals) by organizing them into one document that serves as a valuable resource and guide for the future. These plans are a means for the City Council to ensure that resources are applied in an optimal manner.

VISION

North St. Paul is your favorite small town. We promote community stewardship through an involved and informed citizenry. We preserve neighborhood value with diverse and maintained housing and active neighbors. The city engages in creative placemaking that fosters an environment of economic and employment opportunity. North St. Paul builds systems that connect people to places and promote active lifestyles.

GOALS

The following goals will inform the Comprehensive Plan. North St. Paul strives to take a fair and balanced approach to planning, while being cognizant of the needs and desires of its citizens. These goals show that the City acknowledges the diverse aspects that make North St. Paul a desirable place to live and work, and that the City is committed to building on its strengths and identifying areas with more room for growth. Note that additional detail on objectives and implementation of these goals will be developed in the following chapters of the Plan.

When making decisions, North St. Paul leaders will ask if the option chosen furthers at least one, if not several, of the goals below, while not damaging the others. Measures are also included here so that the City can determine if progress is being made toward these goals.

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Community engagement & communication:</u> Promote community stewardship through an involved and informed citizenry</p>	<p>Does this action help communicate with everyone in the community?</p> <p>Were all members of the community told about deliberation of this action in an accessible way?</p> <p>How will the results of this action be shared with the community in an accessible way?</p> <p>Is communication infrastructure maintained and enhanced?</p> <p>Is the City maintaining relationships to communicate to groups throughout the City?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Level of attendance at City and community events to improve interaction with the community. ○ Continued change in demographics of community, supporting and enhancing cultural differences. ○ Integration of cultural diversity into community events ○ Increase in the quality of information made available to the community. ○ Community awards programs and volunteer appreciation events. ○ Number of community-based educational programs for youth, students and adults ○ Citizen feedback regarding level and quality of services delivered

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Residential Character & Neighborhoods:</u></p> <p>Enhance neighborhood value with quality housing options and types at all price points.</p> <p>Improve the quality and mix of the City's housing so that there is a wide variety of housing available for people of all incomes, ages, cultures and abilities. Consider new forms of housing where redevelopment is necessary.</p> <p>Revitalize and enhance the quality of the housing stock so that it is attractive and appropriate for new buyers.</p>	<p>Does this action preserve, improve and/or create viable, safe, affordable homes?</p> <p>Does this action preserve/create variety in housing products in terms of size (square footage and/or # of bedrooms) and ownership/rental type?</p> <p>Will this action result in the continued maintenance and care of existing residences?</p> <p>Do residents, especially young adults and seniors, have the ability and/or resources to maintain their homes?</p> <p>Will this action preserve or create housing that is needed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Participation in education, engagement and home preservation initiatives. o Number of permits issued for housing repair and renovation o Number of permits issued for the construction of townhomes, multifamily homes and apartment buildings. o Continuance of the City's GreenStep Cities designation. o Ordinance amendments to allow new types of housing and/or a mix of housing densities. o Number of blighted, aging or outdated homes removed or renovated.

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Business & Economic Development:</u></p> <p>Possess a progressive image for redevelopment while maintaining a sense of the community heritage.</p> <p>Engage in creative placemaking that fosters an environment of economic and employment opportunity so that residents can work, shop and play near their homes.</p> <p>Foster a strong and diverse business base with planned and organized growth, timely allocation of resources and investment of public dollars.</p>	<p>Does this action welcome new business to the City?</p> <p>Will this action contribute to the unique sense of place that is North St. Paul?</p> <p>Does this action allow for or encourage a new type of business or development to occur that is different or complimentary to what the City has already?</p> <p>Will this action create employment opportunities for “good jobs” (i.e. jobs with livable wages, benefits, and steady hours) for North St. Paul residents?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creation of a community marketing strategy. ○ An increase in density/intensity for residential, office, commercial, entertainment and industrial uses in areas identified in the future land use plan. ○ Growth in and diversity of the city’s tax base. ○ Redevelopment of the Anchor Block site, the Commerce Park site, and other key sites identified in the Redevelopment Master Plan ○ Reduction in unemployment ○ Increase in average wages

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Downtown:</u> Establish and implement a Downtown Improvement Plan that enhances the character of the downtown as a distinctive place that embodies the heritage of the community.</p>	<p>Does this action increase the diversity in the business mix of the downtown? Does this action compliment or enhance the historic character of the downtown? Will this action create places for people to gather downtown? Will this action increase activity downtown?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Completion and implementation of the Downtown Master Plan o Adoption of revised Downtown Design Manual o Creation of a downtown marketing strategy o An increase in the mix of uses in downtown o Increase in residential density adjacent to downtown o Improvement of public gathering spaces downtown o Connections between downtown and the Gateway Trail

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Transportation:</u> Achieve a functional, aesthetic, and balanced system which includes pedestrian friendly sidewalks and trails, local streets, collectors, arterials, a freeway and transit.</p>	<p>Does this action increase non-motorized connections?</p> <p>Will this action make key destinations more accessible for residents and visitors?</p> <p>Will this action increase transportation options for those who live, work or visit North St. Paul?</p> <p>Does this action enhance the walkability of the City?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Reduction in sidewalk gaps throughout the city o Incorporation of pedestrian and bicycle amenities in street reconstruction projects o Measurement of stormwater runoff rate from roads and yards o Transit ridership statistics for trips originating or ending in North St. Paul o Number of upgraded transit shelters constructed o Commute mode share for trips originating or ending in North St. Paul o New connections to the Gateway Trail

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Urban Design:</u> Enhance community character through visual design and functionality of the public realm.</p> <p>Develop themes, prepare plans, and implement plans which will enhance and improve the image and livability of the City in Downtown, Highway 36 Corridor, and in each of the City's residential neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Does this action contribute to North St. Paul's sense of place?</p> <p>Does this action improve North St. Paul's image?</p> <p>Does this action improve the appearance and condition of North St. Paul's neighborhoods?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incorporation of design standards and enhancements at key entry points into the city ○ Use of innovative and creative street design ○ Use of cohesive street design throughout the community ○ Feet of utilities moved underground ○ Implementation of design standards for downtown development and residential development
<p><u>Parks, Open Space and Trails:</u> Enhance and expand the parks, trails and open space system to ensure that all have access to quality community facilities.</p>	<p>Will this action preserve important natural features?</p> <p>Will this action connect existing parks and open spaces?</p> <p>Does this action improve or preserve access to North St. Paul's parks and open spaces?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Usage of parks and trails ○ Number of new parks created ○ Amount of open space and trail in the Highway 36 Corridor ○ Establishment of new trails connect schools, parks, commercial areas and downtown ○ Connections to the Gateway Trail

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Resilience and the Environment:</u></p> <p>Protect and enhance the lakes, wetlands, woods and wildlife and promote actions, practices and developments which will sustain the environment.</p> <p>Become more resilient to climate change through climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p>	<p>Does this action preserve significant natural resources or habitats?</p> <p>Will this action reward or encourage alternative energy?</p> <p>Will this action improve or preserve surface water quality?</p> <p>Does this action help protect North St. Paul residents against the effects of climate change?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ City solar and wind energy capacity ○ Measurements of pollutants in natural drainageways ○ City recycling rate ○ Percentage of total impervious surface in the City ○ Trends in greenhouse gas emissions ○ Implementation of an emergency preparedness plan for severe weather events including prolonged heatwaves, with particular attention to vulnerable populations.