



Comprehensive Municipal Plan

Easton, MN

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1. Introduction

As stated in MN Statutes 462 as amended; municipalities are faced with mounting problems in providing means of guiding future development of land so as to insure a safer, more pleasant and more economical environment for residential, commercial, industrial and public activities, to preserve agricultural and other open lands, and to promote public health, safety, and general welfare. Municipalities can prepare for anticipated changes and by such preparations bring about significant savings in both private and public expenditures. Municipal planning, by providing public guides to future municipal action, enables other public and private agencies to plan their activities in harmony with the municipality's plans. Municipal planning will assist in developing lands more wisely to serve citizens more effectively, will make the provision of public services less costly, and will achieve a more secure tax base.

The Planning and Zoning Department has been working towards updating the Faribault County Comprehensive Land Use Plan. In that process, it was presented to the cities as part of the planning process for the county, a "baseline plan" that would be consistent with the minimum obligations of a "Comprehensive Municipal Plan" be developed on behalf of each community.

A "Comprehensive Municipal Plan" means a compilation of policy statements, goals, standards, and maps for guiding the physical, social and economic development, both private and public, of the municipality and its environs, and may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Statements of policies, goals, standards;
- Land use plan, including proposed densities for development;
- Community facilities plan;
- Transportation plan, and recommendations for plan execution;
- Capital improvement program;
- Official map of the city;
- Details identifying any urban growth areas.

The Municipal Plan will work in conjunction the Faribault County Comprehensive Plan. By consolidating these plans, the communities within the county will have a true all-encompassing plan. These two plans work side by side, various sections in the main body of the plan refer to the addendums and the municipal plans refer to sections in the main Comprehensive Plan.

1.1 Process Used

Putting together a plan of this type is a task for any community, let alone communities the size of those in Faribault County. As the County embarked on the updating of the existing 1967 Faribault County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, it only made sense to provide all of the communities with a baseline plan. Organization of the document could not have been done without the help of city staff, public officials and local landowners.

A baseline workbook established to be utilized as a Municipal Plan. Cities were presented with the workbook and were responsible for supplying the Faribault County Planning and Zoning Department with the needed information. All information received was incorporated into the Municipal Plan.

The general Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats (SWOT) analysis done for the County as a whole was utilized for the completion of the Municipal Plans. Cities can progress further than

the baseline plan by conducting their own SWOT analysis for a more personalized plan. To keep the main document as up to date as possible, any modifications made to the Municipal Plan need to be forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Department.

1.2 Sections of this Plan

According to MN Statute 462 as amended; each municipality is encouraged to prepare and implement a community-based comprehensive municipal plan. Any municipality that prepares a plan shall coordinate its plan with the plans, if any, of the county and the municipality's neighbors both in order to prevent the plan from having unfavorable impact on the other jurisdictions and to complement the plans of the other jurisdictions. Under the joint exercise of power provisions in MN Statute 471.59, a municipality may establish a joint planning district with other municipalities or counties that are geographically adjacent to adopt a community-based comprehensive plan for the district. At a minimum, plans must address any urban growth areas identified in a county plan and may establish urban growth areas for the municipality. The plan must establish a stated process for boundary adjustments to include the urbanized area within city limits as the urban growth area is developed and provided municipal services. Within the urban growth area, the plan must provide for the staged provision of urban services, including, but not limited to; water, wastewater collection, wastewater treatment, and transportation.

The following sections are included in this plan and once fully completed will meet the needs of MN Statute 462 to serve as a municipal plan.

Each section, excluding the Community Profile, of the plan will include an Introduction, Data (what currently exists and what is needed) and Actions (how the municipality desires move forward).

- Community Profile
- Community Facilities
- Transportation
- Land Use
- Capital Improvement Program
- Funding Options

1.3 Plan Review Process

Before a community-based comprehensive municipal plan is incorporated into a county's plan under MN Statute 394.232, subdivision 3 as amended; a municipality's plan must coordinate with adjacent municipalities in the county. As soon as practical after the development of a community-based comprehensive municipal plan, the municipality shall provide a copy of the draft to adjacent municipalities within the county for review and comment. An adjacent municipality has 30 days after receipt to review the plan and submit written comment. If a city does not plan for growth beyond its current boundaries, the city shall submit its plan to the county for review and comment. A county has 60 days after receipt for review and comment. As provided in MN Statute 394.33, the town plan may not be inconsistent with or less restrictive than the county plan. The town may amend its plan based on the county's comments.

1.4 Approval Process

If a city plans for growth beyond its current boundaries, the city's proposed community-based comprehensive municipal plan and proposed urban growth area must be reviewed and approved by the county before the plan is incorporated into the county's plan. The county may review and provide comments on any orderly annexation agreement during the same period of review of a comprehensive plan.

2. Community Profile

2.1 History

City of Easton: Easton is located between Delavan and Wells along the Southern Minnesota rail line. Having heard of the rich lands, Conrad Ruff came from Illinois in 1868 and purchased land. Ruff and Carl Rath each donated 10 acres for the establishment of Lura Station, later named Easton; after Jason C. Easton. The town site was surveyed and staked out in 1873 and was incorporated on March 9, 1874. Easton saw its peak population of 411 in 1960.

2.2 General Overview

As you approach the City of Easton from either Hwy 109 or County Road 19, you will see a horizon dominated by a towering church steeple, groups of massive grain elevators, and Ag-chemical storage facilities. Surrounded by acres of some of the richest farmland in Southern Minnesota, Easton is a good place for rural families and Ag-related businesses to grow and flourish.

The site for the City of Easton was decided in the early 1870s when Colonel Thompson of the neighboring City of Wells undertook the building of the Southern Minnesota Railroad from the Mississippi River west to the City of Winnebago.

The early history of Easton really begins with the settlement of Wesner's Grove in Barber Township. After the railroad was complete, several families from Illinois heard about the rich soil along the railroad and bought farmsteads near present day Easton. The City of Easton was incorporated on March 9, 1874 and by 1890 the population of Easton was 318 people.


2.3 Adjacent Townships

Barber Township was named in honor of Chauncey Barber, who actually lived in Minnesota Lake. Andrew Wesner and John Bocher were the first to settle the area, and it became known as Wesner's Grove. Located at the fork of the stage coach trail that ran from Albert Lea northwesterly to Winnebago and south to Blue Earth, the area became an important stage stop. A store, post office, Catholic Church, parsonage, cemetery, hotel and a number of homes were established in the area. When the railroad was constructed three miles north, Easton was established and Wesner's Grove all but disappeared. Today St. Mary's (Our Lady of Mt. Carmel) Cemetery remains as a landmark.

Lura Township was incorrectly named. Early commissioners didn't have very accurate maps and were under the impression that Lura Lake was in Lura Township; in fact the lake is located in Delavan Township. The population of the township was just 20 in 1860 and grew at a rapid pace to 628 by 1880. Part of the population boom was due to the establishment of the Village of Easton in 1873 by Jason C. Easton and Conrad Ruf. Easton. Jason was a prominent financier of his day, said to be the most extensive banker and land owner in the state.

2.4 Adjacent Municipalities

The closest geographic municipalities to Easton are Delavan to the west, Wells to the east and Minnesota Lake to the northeast.

	Population (2013)	193
	Population Forecast (2018)	195
	Households (2013)	83
	Labor Force (2012 Q2)	117
	Education (Completed High School)	94.37%
	Education (Bachelor's Degree or Higher)	26.06%
	Median Household Income (2010)	\$53,499

3. Community Facilities

A Community Facilities Plan is a compilation of policy statements, goals standards, maps and action programs for guiding the future development of the public or semipublic facilities of the municipality such as recreational, educational and cultural facilities.

3.1 Introduction

Community facilities play an important role in defining the community and shaping its development. Several elements relate directly to community facilities.

- Community facilities help define the City of Easton. In many cases, community facilities are keepers of the city's history and heritage.
- Municipal buildings, libraries, schools, churches, health care and a variety of other elements all form the mixture of what residents want and need in the community.
- Residents place value on the quality and variety of educational opportunities available, schools or school districts may become the focal point of the community.

Community facilities also house services and activities provided by government, non-profits or other similar entities. Planning for community facilities is important for several reasons:

- These facilities represent important community services;
- Community facilities are often the locations for community events;
- Facilities should be accessible to residents and visitors;
- These facilities often represent significant elements of the community's heritage and identity;
- Community facilities may influence the pattern of traffic and adjacent land use; and
- The future growth of any city may lead to the expansion of the existing facilities and the need to build new facilities.

3.1.1 Cultural Facilities

Located half-way between the communities of Wells and Easton, stands the **Little Pink Schoolhouse**. The schoolhouse was built in 1896 and served students in School District #40 until 1952. The schoolhouse utilized a one room and one teacher system to educate children in kindergarten through eighth grade. The Pink Schoolhouse has become notable because of its color. The original color of the school was red but when it came time to repaint, a mixture of buttermilk and ochre was used. During the process of mixing, the ochre was tipped over and spilled on the ground changing the intensity of the color. The new combination created the pink hue that became the trademark of the old District 40 schoolhouse. For several years in the 1950's, the schoolhouse was painted white but residents were not happy with the change and it was repainted back to its 'original' pink. In 1952, District #40 consolidated with the Wells Public School System and the schoolhouse was closed. In 1953, the Pink Schoolhouse was sold to Walnut Lake Township to be used as their town hall. Today, it is used for monthly meetings and annual township meetings for residents.

3.2 Actions

The process of preparing this plan lead to the following action goals. These initiatives are actions to be undertaken by the City of Easton to achieve the policy objectives related to community facilities.

1. Planning for facilities should occur in conjunction with ongoing management. A proactive approach allows the City to explore solutions and find the most economical and effective option.
2. County and State facilities are important parts of a local economy. Strong working relationship and on-going communications encourages successful operations and retention of facilities.
3. The City needs to assess the city's critical infrastructure, such as water supply lines, waste water, and stormwater. Updates and reconstruction should be done as needed.
4. Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades are needed.
5. Updating of city utilized equipment is needed.

4. Transportation

A transportation plan is a compilation of policy statements, goals, standards, maps, and action programs for guiding the future development of the various modes of transportation of the municipality and its environs, such as streets and highways, mass transit, railroads, air transportation, truck and water transport, and includes a major thoroughfare plan.

4.1 Introduction

Simply stated, transportation is the movement of people and goods. However, modern day transportation systems have evolved into intricate inter-modal networks that provide multi-dimensional service. Transportation contributes to the value-added of goods and services, facilities, economic scales, influences land (real estate) value. Transportation provides links between regions, economic activities and populations, which makes it one of the most important of all human activities. Transportation and its infrastructure is an indispensable component of the economy and can stimulate growth and development. Consequently, transportation systems have a strong influence on the growth patterns and urban form of a city. Therefore, careful consideration is needed in regard to transportation planning.

The transportation plan identifies the location, character and capacity of transportation facilities which are compatible with the planned land uses in the city. Road and street plans should encourage optimal community development while allowing for transit in a safe, fast and efficient manner. The transportation network must accommodate the planned pattern of employment, shipping and institutional related facilities. At the same time, transportation improvements should not be construction which produces severe and lasting impacts on the city's residential and commercial areas. Each street improvement should be given careful design attention to ensure compatibility with the scale and quality of the city and its neighborhoods. Heavy through-traffic can be a nuisance and a distraction from an otherwise quiet and safe neighborhood. Advance knowledge of the designation and location of major traffic arteries can result in greater neighborhood stability in which residents have the assurance that traffic conditions will remain relatively consistent in future years.

Early knowledge of planned major streets and their locations permits the proper arrangement of other elements so the Municipal Plan. This includes the prescription of the land uses and provisions of public facilities such as schools, parks, and utility improvements. Thus, the public sector and private developers must know the future locations of streets and highways in order to proceed intelligently with individual project plans.

4.2 Actions

The process of preparing this plan lead to the following action goals. These initiatives are actions to be undertaken by the City of Easton to achieve the policy objectives related to transportation.

1. An Assessment for the City streets should be conducted and schedule repairs and upgrade as needed.



City of Easton Official Transportation Map

Insert city logo here

5. Land Use

A Land Use Plan is a compilation of policy statements, goals, standards, maps, and action programs for guiding the future development of private and public property. The term includes a plan designating types of uses for the entire municipality as well as a specialized plan showing specific areas or specific types of land uses, such as residential, commercial, industrial, public or semipublic uses or any combination of such uses. A land use plan may also include the proposed densities for development.

5.1 Introduction

Zoning allows a city to control the development of land within the community; both the type of structures that are built and the uses to which the land is put. Most buildings in a community is done by private individuals and businesses seeking to develop property for their own private use; whether this is residential, commercial or industrial. Zoning is one important tool for guiding this private development, so that land is used in a way that promotes both the best use of the land and the prosperity, health and welfare of the city's residents.

Zoning is normally accomplished by dividing the land in the city into different districts or zones and regulating the uses of land within each district. Generally, specific districts are set aside for residential, types of commercial and various industrial uses. The city can also use zoning to further to agriculture and open space objectives.

By creating zoning districts that separate uses, the city assures that adequate space is provided for each use and that a transition area or buffer exists between distinct and incompatible uses. Adequate separation of uses prevents congestion, minimizes fire and other health and safety hazards, and keeps residential areas free of potential commercial and industrial nuisances such as smoke, noise and light.

Zoning regulations may also constrain the types and locations of structures. The regulation must be the same within each district, but may vary from district to district. These regulations often control:

- Building location, height, width, bulk
- Type of building foundation
- Number of stories, size of buildings and other structures
- The percentage of lot space which may be occupied
- The size of yards and other open spaces
- The density and distribution of population
- Soil, water supply conservation
- Conservation of shorelands
- Access to direct sunlight for solar energy systems
- Flood control

6. Capital Improvement Plan

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a community planning and fiscal management tool used to coordinate the location, timing and financing of capital improvements over a multi-year period – usually 4-6 years. Capital improvements refer to major, non-recurring physical expenditures such as land, buildings, public infrastructure and equipment. The CIP includes a description of proposed capital improvement projects ranked by priority, a year-by-year plan schedule of expected project funding, and an estimate of projects costs and financing sources. The CIP is a working document and should be reviewed and updated annually to reflect changing community needs, priorities, and funding opportunities.

Preparation of the CIP and annual budget are closely linked. The first year of the CIP, known as the capital budget, outlines specific projects and appropriates funding for those projects. Plans are usually adopted in conjunction with the annual operating budget. Projects and financing sources outlined for subsequent years are not authorized until the annual budget for those years is legally adopted.

A CIP is a powerful tool for implementing a community's municipal plan. Capital investments such as utility extensions, highway improvements, and the purchase of parkland or environmental corridors can have a substantial impact on patterns of growth and development.