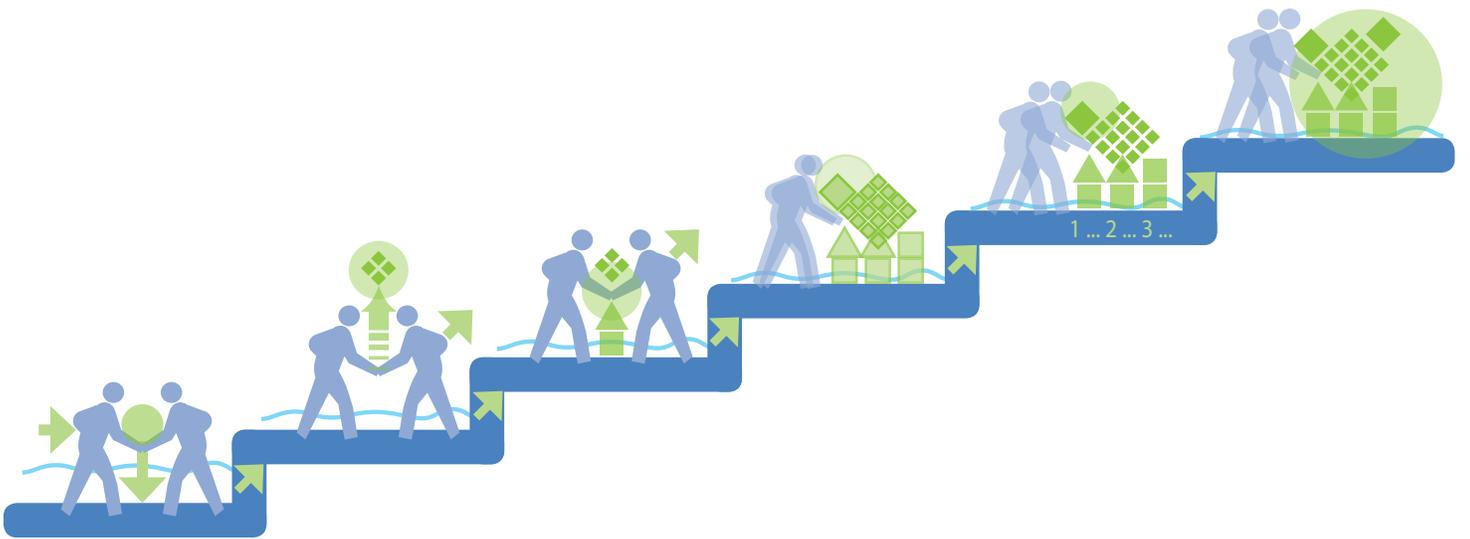


CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



1 INTRODUCTION

The City of East Grand Forks is located in Polk County in northwestern Minnesota. The community is part of the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks metropolitan area. The Red River of the North provides the boundary between Minnesota and North Dakota, also dividing the communities of East Grand Forks and Grand Forks. This chapter provides an introduction to the East Grand Forks 2045 Land Use Plan.



1.1 LONG RANGE PLANNING HISTORY

As a member of the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the City of East Grand Forks is a contributing member of various long range land use and transportation planning efforts throughout the region. Recent projects outside the scope of this plan include the Bygland Road Corridor Study and the East Grand Forks Northwest Street Network Study. These planning efforts provide thoughtful input for the MPO to use within the region, while providing achievable implementation measures at the local level.

The City of East Grand Forks and the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks MPO have worked together to update the city's land use plan on a five-year cycle. The last update occurred in 2010 with the adoption of the 2040 Land Use Plan. These plan updates serve the needs of both the city and MPO. The land use plan, goals and polices, implementation measures, and other plan elements serve as tools that can be referenced on a regular basis by city staff and elected officials as decisions are made. The MPO utilizes the outcomes of each land use plan update to inform other regional planning activities. Primarily, the projected growth that is calculated and located within the planning horizon of the document is used in the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) updates, which occur on a similar five-year cycle.

1.2 STATE AND LOCAL BASIS FOR PLANNING

The City of East Grand Forks revised their City Charter in November of 1997, outlining the form, name, boundaries, and powers of the City. The charter states that a Mayor-Council plan of government will be utilized within the city with the authority to create departments, divisions, bureaus, commissions and boards for the administration of the city's affairs. The Council is provided the ability to enact local legislation and determine policies subject to the limitations imposed by the constitution or statutes of the State of Minnesota and by the charter. The Charter does not specifically address the power to zone or subdivide land; therefore all subdivision and zoning authority for the City is defined within state legislation as described below.

Minnesota state law allows for the creation of municipal governments, such as the City of East Grand Forks. State legislation provides municipalities the power to regulate land within the municipal limits as well as a defined area outside of city borders. These powers are conferred to cities through Minnesota State Statues (as updated in 2006). The State of Minnesota created a



policy statement to explain the conveyance of such powers to cities, which provides a good explanation of the importance and necessity of planning. The policy states,

“The legislature finds that 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 the 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.”

The City of East Grand Forks, like all Minnesota cities, receives its power to prepare plans, zone properties, and subdivide land in a single body of law found in Chapter 462 – Housing, Redevelopment, Planning and Zoning. Specifically, Chapter 462.353 Subdivision 1 states:

“A municipality may carry on comprehensive municipal planning activities for guiding the future development and improvement of the municipality and may prepare, adopt and amend a comprehensive municipal plan and implement such plan by ordinance and other official actions in accordance with the provision of sections 462.351 to 462.364 (Minnesota State Statutes).”

The provisions of the sections listed in the quoted paragraph above reference the enumeration of the individual powers conveyed to municipalities as well as regulations for using them. A provision of Subdivision 1 of Chapter 462.357 – Official Controls explains that an adopted zoning ordinance provides municipalities the ability to extend land controls a distance of two miles in any direction beyond its municipal limits, when certain criteria are met. Subdivision 1 of Chapter 462.358 provides cities with the authority to extend subdivision authority within two miles of the city limits when the surrounding town does not have adopted regulations. The City of East Grand Forks has enabled all appropriate legislation by ordinance and resolution for the extension of subdivision regulations within two miles of city limits.

The entirety of Chapter 462 – Housing, Redevelopment, Planning, and Zoning, provides the rational basis for planning, whereas Chapter 473.859 – Comprehensive Plan Content, details the specific elements of a plan required in order to adequately address all functions of municipalities. Some of the required elements of a plan, as outlined in this statute, include a land use plan and implementation plan. These elements have been included within this document.

1.3 PURPOSE FOR UPDATING THE PLAN

The process for updating a plan provides a community with an opportunity to assess recent changes in the community as well as strengths and weakness of the previous document. Updated long range planning efforts allow municipalities to get a broad overview of current conditions as they relate to desired outcomes identified by community goals. The current conditions are analyzed against the goals and polices set forth by the municipality to determine future courses of action.

This comprehensive plan includes a few basic elements that should be used to guide future decision making. A major component that most recognize as a prime function of municipal government is



the land use plan, designating how land should be used in the future. Municipalities plan future land use in order to best organize the environment for future conditions and to protect the health, safety and welfare of their citizens. The update of the land use plan and phasing plan ensures that future plans reflect current conditions, recent changes and new information that impacts or reflects future land use and other growth related policies. The adoption of this plan does not necessarily call for immediate action of all implementation measures. Specifically, plan adoption does not mandate the immediate rezoning of properties to conform to the land use plan. Rather, the adoption of the plan provides an updated guide for city leaders and staff to use as future decisions are made.

1.4 PLANNING PROCESS

The elements within the 2045 Land Use Plan were developed and refined over a nearly year long planning process. The overall process includes four main steps:

- 1) Public Involvement/Issue Identification
- 2) Alternative Development
- 3) Element Refinement
- 4) Plan Adoption and Implementation

Public Involvement/Issue Identification

The public involvement and issue identification process is a key piece of the overall planning process. Public outreach and research about the existing community allow existing issues to be identified and potential solutions to be discussed and considered. A majority of the plan's public involvement activities (i.e. community survey, public meetings, etc.) as described within Chapter 4, were conducted within this phase. This first step concludes with an understanding of the existing community and potential alternatives to consider moving forward.

Alternative Development

With an understanding of the existing conditions and desires for the future, solutions and improvements can begin to be developed and analyzed. During this phase of the planning process, alternative solutions were developed for various elements of the plan. For example, two future land use plan alternatives were developed and refined within this phase. The development of alternatives generates an active conversation between stakeholders that can energize the planning process and inform the outcome. Many plan elements were presented to the public and project steering committee for conversation and analysis. This phase focused on the initial development of elements included in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 of this document.

Element Refinement

The final step of the planning process focuses on the refinements of the preferred alternatives defined within the alternative analysis process. The major elements of this plan including the future land use plan, phasing plan and implementation measures are refined during this phase for inclusion in the overall document. These elements serve as the primary tools to be used when making future decisions.



Plan Adoption and Implementation

Following the adoption of the East Grand Forks 2045 Land Use Plan by the Planning Commission, City Council, and MPO Policy Board, the real work will begin. Plan adoption puts the vision and policy in place for the implementation of the plan to begin.

