

CHAPTER 5

GOALS AND POLICIES



5 GOALS AND POLICIES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Good planning is goal-oriented. Goal setting captures community values, a fundamental step in the public planning process. A statement of goals can reinforce planning activities that are going well and provide a point of departure where change is desired. The goal statements in Chapter 5 were refined from the previous version of the East Grand Forks 2045 Land Use Plan to include recent public input, as discussed in Chapter 4, and to reflect changes in the city's climate. These goals and policies should be revisited again at the next land use plan update. By setting goals now and reviewing them periodically, the City can track its progress toward implementation of the 2045 Land Use Plan.

The purpose of developing policies is to guide how a community acts. A policy is a specific procedure or tool to be applied in a standard situation. It formalizes the city's intent to plan, design, and operate in a given way. Most policies which shape the built environment are codified in a city's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. Others may involve a unique set of tactics, such as Complete Streets or Safe Routes to School, which must be adopted in some form to meet a recognized standard. Good policy language is necessary to clarify expectations for developers, administrators, and other stakeholders involved in the process of managing growth in East Grand Forks.

The goals and policies are intended to assist the community as it works to improve the livability of the community while improving access to employment, goods and services. Livability principles can generally be tied to the goals of the National Ladders of Opportunity Initiative including access to affordable housing; access to work, life and play within neighborhoods; safe and convenient transportation options; clean environment; access to quality health care; civic engagement and social involvement; and opportunities for inclusion and possibilities. The need to continually improve these principles throughout the community was highlighted in the public input received. The goals and policies outlined within this chapter are intended to keep forward momentum on improving the quality of life for all residents. For example, policies were developed with the goal of diversifying neighborhoods, both housing diversity and land use diversity. These policies aim to improve access to affordable housing, work and play using various transportation options. Goals and policies of this chapter were used to guide the development of the future land use plan, plan strategies, and implementation plan which provide guidance for city staff, city leaders, and the community to continue to improve the livability for all residents.

The goals and policies are organized by eight topics:

- General Land Use
- Growth Management
- Residential Area
- Commercial/Industrial Area
- Urban Expansion Area
- Natural Resources
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Government and Administration



Occasionally, broad themes are addressed in multiple sections. These goals warrant special consideration as they have the potential to affect the community in multiple ways. A summary of recurring objectives is included at the end of Chapter 5.

5.2 GENERAL LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

The general land use goals and policies outline the manner in which the City should manage future development. The policies promote compact and thoughtful development that considers the logical extension of city services and expansion of the transportation system. These growth considerations should be promoted while maintaining the existing character of the city.

1. Develop and implement a cohesive city-wide land use pattern that ensures compatibility and functional relationships between all uses.

- a. Employ transparent development policies and regulations in a consistent and uniform manner, to the maximum extent possible.
- b. Allow for continued public participation through the planning and development process.
- c. Implement a development review system to actively educate and inform the applicant of the ordinance standards and the Planning Commission's expectations prior to the public hearing.
- d. Build on existing strengths throughout the City, such as park amenities, a vibrant downtown area, strong industrial and commercial areas, recreation and entertainment facilities, high quality local government, and excellent schools, to maintain the existing image of the City.
- e. Update the geographic land use designations and zoning classifications when it can be demonstrated that such modifications are in the best long-term interest of the City. Such changes shall occur only when they will promote land use compatibility, are appropriate in location and timing, and meet the goals and policies of the land use plan.
- f. Incompatible and inappropriate land uses shall be properly regulated and slowly redeveloped when possible, so that conflicts are minimized. This shall be achieved through the use of natural and man-made physical barriers (i.e., topography, drainage ways, transportation routes, etc.), landscape screening, and/or property physical orientation of lots and buildings.

2. Advocate development that is accompanied by a sufficient level of support services and facilities (roads, utilities, infrastructure, storm water management systems, parking, access, sidewalks, etc.).

- a. Encourage development within the appropriate growth term as defined within the land use plan to ensure it is supported by existing or planned public infrastructure.
- b. Create a highly efficient transportation system by promoting connectivity enforcing access management and utilizing other transportation planning practices throughout the development review process.
- c. Plan public infrastructure improvements in a manner that is compatible with the planned near, mid, and long term growth timeframes of this plan.



- d. Promote infill development of vacant or underutilized properties within the core of the City with access to existing public infrastructure.

3. Maintain, protect, and upgrade the character of individual neighborhoods, commercial, and industrial areas.

- a. Encourage the establishment of neighborhood organizations throughout the community to support the identification of neighborhood areas and strengthen neighborhood identities.
- b. Utilize the future land use plan to provide direction for land use transitions and buffering of incompatible land uses.
- c. Encourage the redevelopment or replacement of substandard, obsolete or blighted properties or incompatible development through public action and private means.
- d. Enhance the unique character of all neighborhoods by promoting existing elements and investing in new improvements, such as “complete streets,” to establish healthy, safe, vibrant, and walkable neighborhoods throughout the community.
- e. Target funding toward existing neighborhoods through strategies like transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling in accordance with the land use plan.
- f. Maintain a balanced relationship between the investments in land development, roads, natural features, and maintenance of properties to protect property values of existing and future development.
- g. Foster a sense of place and community engagement throughout the city by incorporating opportunities for public art and other public activities.

4. Plan for the current and future transportation needs of the community as growth occurs.

- a. Encourage, to the extent possible, the implementation of measures outlined in the adopted Long Range Transportation Plan for the region.
- b. Reserve roadway right-of-way based on the transportation needs of the City, as identified in the adopted Long Range Transportation Plan, if possible through the platting process.
- c. Promote roadway connectivity through the implementation of the East Grand Forks future road map.
- d. Provide opportunities for residents to utilize a variety of transportation choices through the investigation or review of complete streets guidelines to be possibly implemented in the development of safe, reliable, and economical transportation systems.
- e. Continue the installation of sidewalks along new roadways in accordance with existing ordinances.
- f. Promote the use of varied forms of transportation by all age groups by developing walkable neighborhoods which incorporate pedestrian and bicycle connectivity consistently with Safe Routes to School and other transportation initiatives. Use “complete streets” policies as a guide for developing safe, reliable, and economical transportation systems that support travel by a variety of means.



5.3 GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The goals and policies developed within the growth management section focus on policies for providing and allowing for fiscally responsible development. This includes the promotion of compact, infill development and responsible greenfield development.

1. Manage growth and development in a manner that is fiscally responsible.

- a. Support the extension of municipal services within the city that capitalizes on in-place utilities and service investments.
- b. Utilize the near, mid and long term growth scenarios to direct future development to areas that allow for the logical and cost-effective extension of existing utilities into new service areas.
- c. Incentivize infill development of vacant lots within the core of the city by establishing financing requirements for infrastructure improvements in new subdivisions.
- d. Maintain a five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that is updated on an annual basis, along with the current year's budgeted capital improvements, to allow the City to properly finance public improvements to support growth, in the near, mid, and long term growth timelines.
- e. Promote contiguous development that is compatible with the land use plan, future transportation network, and infrastructure and public improvement planning. Premature subdivisions or development plans lacking compatibility with future planning efforts shall not be approved.

2. Promote increased density and compact development within East Grand Forks.

- a. Develop an incentive program for infill development or redevelopment projects on existing lots.
- b. Pursue zoning ordinance amendments that incentivize compact development, such as bonus densities and parking reductions when other modes of transportation are provided.
- c. Promote the concept of building up instead of building outward.

3. Provide municipally run utilities and services in a fiscally responsible manner.

- a. Promote planning and coordination for the rational extension of public utilities within redevelopment areas and the urban expansion area in accordance with the near, mid, and long term growth timeframes.
- b. Discourage premature development or land use patterns that may obstruct the logical future extension of utilities or services into new growth areas.
- c. Require agreements from property owners and/or developers for the assumption of assessments associated with the cost of extending services to their property.



5.4 RESIDENTIAL AREA

The residential area goals and polices are intended to support the development of a diverse housing stock with options suited for all portions of the city's population.

1. Promote the development and expansion of neighborhoods with individual character and sufficient access to urban services.

- a. Support residential growth within existing and planned residential areas that are logical extensions of existing infrastructure and functional land use compatibility, mirroring a grid development pattern where applicable.
- b. Support infill residential development to maximize the use of existing infrastructure.
- c. Expand access to affordable housing, particularly for housing located near transit facilities.
- d. Promote equitable, affordable housing by expanding location and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities.
- e. Encourage the development of diverse neighborhoods which include a variety of housing styles and types.
- f. Utilize mixed-use development and properly scaled neighborhood commercial areas to provide everyday uses to neighborhoods.

5.5 COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL AREA

The commercial/industrial area goals and polices focus on continued economic growth for the community. Polices are intended to support business retention and attraction, in a manner that is fiscally responsible for both the city and the developer/business owner.

1. Encourage investments that support economic development.

- a. Promote commercial and industrial development in accordance with the land use plan, where storm water management, transportation connectivity and other support services are considered.
- b. Minimize land use conflicts with lower intensity land uses that would impede the future expansion of commercial or industrial uses.

2. Diversify the local tax base and promote local employment opportunities by attracting, retaining, and expanding businesses within areas where urban services are available.

- a. Encourage for the development of new commercial and industrial uses within appropriately defined areas according to the land use plan, provided that all traffic, infrastructure, storm water management, and compatibility issues are addressed.
- b. Locate and design commercial/industrial areas that are accessible by a variety of transportation choices.
- c. Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.



- d. Reserve land for future commercial/industrial development until urban services can be extended into the area or supplies of existing vacant land slated for commercial/industrial development are substantially depleted.

3. Maintain and, where necessary, upgrade the aesthetics within the commercial and industrial land use areas, especially along the city’s major corridors.

- a. Provide access to information regarding regulations, programs, or incentives that may assist property owners in the maintenance or renovation of existing development.
- b. Promote the development of commercial/industrial buildings with high-quality design and architectural features that fit within the context of the surrounding area.
- c. Support private redevelopment of commercial/industrial properties which display deteriorated building conditions, obsolete site design, incompatible land use arrangements and/or under-utilization of the site, especially in the highly visible corridors.

4. Promote the continued development, where municipal services exist, of high quality, high value industries that enhance the economy through an improved tax base and expanded employment base for City residents.

- a. Support collaborative actions to promote East Grand Forks as a great place to locate industries and job producing businesses.
- b. Transitions between distinctly differing types of land uses shall be accomplished in an orderly fashion that minimize negative impacts (economic, social, or physical) on adjoining developments.
- c. Enhance economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.

5.6 URBAN EXPANSION AREA

These goals and polices emphasize logical development within the plan’s near, mid and long term planning timeframes. These polices outline mechanisms for planning and managing future growth.

1. Plan for a logical expansion of urban growth beyond the existing municipal service boundaries.

- a. Utilize the near (2025), mid (2035), and long (2045) term growth timeframes to plan for the local extension of development and municipal services beyond the existing municipal boundary.
- b. Utilize the existing flood protection system as an interim growth boundary for the city when considering future development patterns and densities, and employ growth management strategies within it.

2. Preserve the urban growth expansion area for future urban development.

- a. Promote areas of urban growth to vacant parcels or undeveloped parcels of land contiguous to existing development.



- b. Utilize the rural service district to preserve undeveloped areas within the flood protected area for future development. Review the boundaries of the rural service district on an annual basis.
- c. Coordinate planning efforts with rural electric and rural water for the coordinated purchase of utilities and urban development that occurs within existing rural service areas.
- d. Promote compact development within contiguous growth areas with increased densities or clustered development to maximize the use of flood protected areas.

5.7 NATURAL RESOURCES

The health of our natural resources is important for the overall vitality of a community. The goals and polices of this section strive to protect and enhance these resources through various development practices.

1. Maintain surface water quality and the integrity of the storm water conveyance systems.

- a. Review the locations of all natural wetlands, existing artificial drainage systems, hydric soils, ponding areas, and drainage ways in the concept plan review of the subdivision process.
- b. Approve developments that consider the effects to the existing environment and are designed with nature (i.e. managing storm water runoff volumes on-site).
- c. Restrict development in wetlands, natural conveyance systems, and other natural features that perform environmental functions.
- d. Prohibit development along or alteration of the natural environment where it adversely affects the storm water conveyance systems.

2. Improve groundwater quality and protect it from degradation by surface water contaminants.

- a. Identify and protect groundwater recharge areas for existing and proposed municipal wells.
- b. Promote ground water recharge of adequately treated storm water runoff rather than discharge into major bodies of surface water.
- c. Assist in the environmental review of existing or proposed facilities or systems that may contribute as a source of groundwater contamination.

3. Promote innovative storm water management techniques for new developments.

- a. Encourage the utilization of innovative storm water management techniques (swales, rain gardens, detention/retention ponds, porous/permeable pavement, green roofs, and open space development) as site amenities throughout all stages of development review.
- b. Support the development of trainings and workshops that educate the public about innovative storm water management techniques.
- c. Investigate potential funding sources for the implementation of storm water management projects for the public and private sectors.



- d. Consider innovative storm water management areas when developing new city facilities.
- e. Promote the development of integrated storm water management areas into new developments in a manner that provides a destination, provides additional open space functions and positively contributes to the aesthetics of the surrounding area.

5.8 PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

The parks, recreation, and open space goals and policies strive to promote opportunities for active and passive recreation within the community and greater region.

1. Provide a coordinated system of City, County, and State park and recreation open space facilities and services which meets the needs of current and future East Grand Forks area residents.

- a. Maintain cooperative efforts with the State to promote continued utilization of the existing State Recreation Area and associated facilities.
- b. Recognize that the provision of active and passive recreation opportunities and programs are fundamental for residential development areas.
- c. Work with townships to provide opportunities for active and passive recreation independently or in association with the city or other townships.

2. Maintain a sufficient park and trails system to provide adequate passive and active recreation opportunities for the current and future residents of East Grand Forks.

- a. Ensure connectivity for multiple transportation modes between recreational facilities.
- b. Incorporate opportunities for public art and civic engagement through the development of public spaces.
- c. Require the dedication of park fees or property with new development as needed to serve new population areas. The City's Park and Recreation Department will work with the Community Development Office on proposals for the dedication of park land.
- d. Continue future planning efforts with the development of a park system master plan for additional park facilities and enhancements to existing park and open spaces.
- e. Support the implementation measures of the Greenway Plan, Parks and Recreation Plan, and adopted Long Range Transportation Plan.
- f. Monitor residential growth patterns to ensure the population has adequate access to various levels of park services. The Community Development Office and Park and Recreation Department shall work together to monitor access as future development occurs.
- g. Promote the development of integrated storm water management areas into new developments in a manner that can be incorporated into the City's park system.



5.9 GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Successful implementation of a plan requires an understanding of a community's vision and its residents' goals. The following goals and polices aim to provide elected officials and city staff with the tools to successfully implement the vision of this document.

- 1. Ensure that all developments and/or redevelopments that occur within the jurisdictional areas of the City are in accordance with the goals and policies of this plan.**
 - a. The East Grand Forks Land Use Plan shall be reviewed at least every five years to ensure that it is current and reflects the City's interests and changing needs.
 - b. Ordinances, codes, and polices will be updated to reflect the goals and polices of the Land Use Plan, also in full compliance with existing and updated legislative requirements.
 - c. Address planning issues, code enforcement, and nuisance complaints raised by the citizens and local businesses in a proactive, efficient manner.

- 2. Operate the City with a fiscally sound philosophy.**
 - a. Monitor available federal, state, and regional programs that provide resources for the implementation of the Land Use Plan.
 - b. Review the Capital Improvement Program on an annual basis to account for any changes over the prior year.
 - c. Annually review the City's financial position and debt services to ensure proper fiscal programming and management.
 - d. Promote a development review processing procedure that assign the cost of any and all related project costs to the applicant in a cost-effective and timely manner.

- 3. Maintain high standards for proactive communication with residents and businesses on municipal issues and services.**
 - a. Implement the goals outlined within the Strategic Leadership Plan, and continue to update the plan every five years.
 - b. Maintain strong and open lines of communication between the City Council and advisory commissions/committees, township boards, Polk County, and other jurisdictions.
 - c. Provide continuing education opportunities for advisory commissions and committee members through seminars and presentations.
 - d. Maintain good communication with City residents and businesses through direct contact, open meetings, the City's website, outreach programs, and news releases.
 - e. Remain proactive in the pursuits and utilization of new technologies and methodologies that may contribute to increased effectiveness of City operations and services.



4. Pursue coordination of land use, facility, and service planning with the townships, county, school district, and other municipalities to avoid duplication and provide for the cost-effective delivery of services.

- a. Promote cooperative arrangement to share facilities and services with the townships, county, and adjoining communities to avoid duplication and to economize on limited financial resources.
- b. Encourage townships to submit proposed projects that could potentially impact future urban development for the City of East Grand Forks for review by Planning Department staff. A joint powers agreement may be considered in the best interests of resolving land use issues around the periphery of the city.
- c. Coordinate development review and long range planning efforts with the School District to allow for the development of share facilities for parks and open spaces.

5.10 GOALS AND POLICIES SUMMARY

Many goals have been listed under more than one section. Repetition not only emphasizes the significance of some goals compared to others, but indicates an opportunity to achieve multiple objectives through a variety of ways. For example, a desire to enhance the use of mixed-use development has been expressed throughout the planning process. The development of mixed-use residential/commercial structures in strategic locations would accomplish many stated aims, including: creating compact neighborhoods through vertical building orientation, increased housing density, and potentially reduced parking; addressing incompatible land uses by applying a transitional land use as a buffer; supporting non-automotive modes of transportation through walkable community design; enhancing neighborhood character; and ensuring accessibility to goods and services by designing these features into residential development.

Likewise, the goals and policies repeatedly demonstrate a core value of diversity. Continued emphasis is placed on providing a diversity of choices for residential selection and transportation mode, as well as developing a diverse economy that generates a variety of goods and services, expands the tax base, employs local labor, and attracts investment. Again, expanding the diversity of available housing and improving neighborhood selection can be accomplished by incorporating higher density and mixed-use development, among other tactics.

Multiple goals highlight the importance of utilizing the future land use plan as a tool to manage growth and improve coordination with private developers and utilities, city administrators and internal departments, and regional planning entities. In particular, the three-tiered growth framework should be actively referenced to plan for the logical extension of utilities and infrastructure. Furthermore, the land use plan provides the framework for addressing incompatible land use through rezoning, buffering, landscaping, etc. East Grand Forks' goals and policies, together with the area concept plans detailed in Chapter 6, provide the basis for dictating land use through zoning, rezoning, and granting variances. Like the overall plan, the values expressed in this section can be referenced during those procedures.

Finally, the goals and polices emphasize the promotion of certain ideals, especially those concepts that may be new to many community members. These include, again, the goal of creating more compact neighborhoods and the concept building up, not out; promoting infill of vacant lots and



redevelopment as a means to avoid costly extension of roads, utilities, and services and capitalize on existing development; applying innovative storm water management techniques; and promoting newer policies and programs such as Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School. Promotion may be achieved through outreach and education. While promotion is a necessary component of achieving many goals, follow-through is needed to generate momentum. Chapter 8 provides greater detail for achieving community goals through a series of implementation measures.

