

City of Coon Rapids

2040 Plan Executive Summary

The Coon Rapids 2040 Plan is an update to the City's Comprehensive Plan, which guides future development, transportation, housing, water resources, parks and other public facilities through the year 2040. The *2040 Plan* contains those elements required by the Metropolitan Council as well as additional sections needed to provide guidance and information regarding the development and decision-making processes in the City of Coon Rapids. By 2040, Coon Rapids will be a community with a slowly growing population of about 72,000 people, and will successfully adapt to challenges in the areas of housing, schools, jobs, transportation (specifically along Coon Rapids Boulevard) and natural areas. The following sections provide a high-level preview of each chapter of the *2040 Plan*.



Land Use. The chapter of the *2040 Plan* regarding Land Use provides direction and policies to maintain **sound existing development** and to achieve desired change in the city through 2040. Generally, the Land Use Plan influences the future physical character of the city to enhance existing positive aspects, produce future characteristics compatible with sound existing conditions, and **enrich the overall quality of the community**. The City has proposed the following goals as a framework for future city land use decisions:

- » Maintain complete and balanced neighborhoods that include a variety of housing resources, supporting commercial development, and adequate open space and recreation opportunities.
- » Maintain a diversified economic base and a climate that encourages economic development, redevelopment, and ongoing business activity.
- » Protect and enhance the city's natural resources for the community's long-term benefit.
- » Maintain community character and ensure that new development is well designed.
- » Provide distinctive commercial districts that serve neighborhood, community and regional consumers.
- » Improve the appearance and function of Coon Rapids Boulevard, ensuring that it gradually redevelops with a variety of housing types, supporting commercial uses, and urban design amenities.
- » Eliminate blighting influences throughout the city and encourage redevelopment of underutilized land.

Again, the Land Use chapter sets a framework for future city development, with an overlying assumption that by 2040, the City projects to have a population of 72,100 in 29,300 households. To accommodate for that projection, the City wishes to **convert presently vacant and underutilized land to residential and mixed uses** at various densities and to concentrate commercial and high-density residential development along Coon Rapids Boulevard in a handful of **mixed-use nodes**, called Preservation or Renovation Tracts (or PORTs, i.e. Port Evergreen, Port Riverwalk, Port Campus Square and Port Wellness).



Transportation. The Transportation chapter of the *2040 Plan* provides direction and policies to maintain a safe, efficient and multi-modal transportation system in Coon Rapids through 2040. This component of the overall plan provides a framework for future city development based on those aspects of transportation that most influence community development, while simultaneously **ensuring the rational and economic development of the regional transportation system**. Goals making up that framework include:

- » Promote safe movement of traffic within the community.
- » Promote efficient movement of traffic in a manner that respects neighborhood context.
- » Redesign Coon Rapids Boulevard traffic flow, road layout to ensure compatibility with new residential uses along the street.
- » Promote sustainable street and highway designs that accommodate multiple modes of transportation.
- » Provide transit system service to key points in the community, adjacent communities, and to downtown Minneapolis and Saint Paul.
- » Continue growth and maintenance of a trail and sidewalk system that allows for safe pedestrian and bicycle movements throughout the city, and provides access to transit stops, parks, and other open spaces for residents of all ages.
- » Ensure long-term sustainability in the city's pedestrian and bicycle system.

Generally, the City wishes to **balance urban development with considerations for community amenities, welfare, and environmental protection**. Priorities include the alleviation of congestion on Highway 10, the prioritization of the Northstar Commuter Line, and the maintenance of streets, sidewalks and trails.

 **Housing.** This chapter of the *2040 Plan* describes the City's housing stock and programs, and also states the City's goals and policies for **maintaining the existing housing stock**, adding a variety of **new housing units**, and addressing **affordability** needs:

- » Maintain a high-quality living environment, preserve stable residential neighborhoods and, where necessary, upgrade the existing housing stock in the city.
- » Provide a variety of housing types and designs to allow all people a housing choice.
- » Create housing opportunities at a cost low- and moderate-income individuals and families can afford without compromising essential needs.
- » Advocate for equal opportunity in home ownership and renting.

With limited developable land in the city, much of the effort to expand housing will come from the **redevelopment of older stock**, or development of mixed-use residential units on presently underutilized land. Other priorities for the City include the **preservation of existing affordable housing units**, as well as the **creation and expansion of a housing supply** with between 20% and 25% of all units affordable to families at 60% AMI (Area Median Income).

 **Water Resources.** This chapter of the *2040 Plan* includes plans for protecting the city's water supply and delivering drinkable water, plans for **upgrading and maintaining the wastewater system**, and a plan for the **management of surface water and storm water**:

- » Provide high quality drinking water to residents and businesses in the community in the most fiscally responsible and reliable manner possible.
- » Protect the water resources to the extent possible through the continued use of an emergency preparedness program.
- » Comply with local and regional standards for wastewater management.
- » Implement public education programs addressing various issues dealing with wastewater, including service connections and maintenance responsibilities, among others.
- » Maintain or improve the quality of water in lakes, streams or rivers within or immediately downstream of the city.
- » Continue an active storm sewer system maintenance and inspection program, especially in reviewing and addressing existing ponds and outlet structures lacking adequate easements for maintenance.

The City will continue to adequately fund the operations and maintenance of its water supply system through its annual operating budget, which is funded by user fees (which also fund capital costs incurred). In addressing wastewater issues, the City will focus **on lining RCP pipe, upgrading lift stations, and establishing VCP service connections**. Finally, the City will address stormwater issues by allocating funds from the **Storm Water Drainage Utility**.

 **Parks & Open Space.** This chapter of the *2040 Plan* provides direction and policies to **preserve open space, maintain existing parks, and augment the city's park and open space system**. The city's park system has been built over a period of about 60 years, and the last major comprehensive review (the *Parks, Trails & Open Space System Plan Update*) was completed in 2012 and adopted in 2013. It is expected that the *Parks, Trails & Open Space System Plan* will be updated again before the next Comprehensive Plan update, and will refine general policies established by this chapter, including:

- » Establish, maintain, and promote parks and preserved natural areas for recreational uses that provide visual and physical diversions from the developed residential, commercial, and industrial environment, and as a means to maintain the character, ambiance, appearance and history of the community.
- » Preserve and conserve ecological systems and natural resources within the city.
- » Develop an interconnected trail and sidewalk system for transportation and recreation purposes and as a means to tie divergent parks and open space with the broader community.
- » Provide opportunities for all community residents to participate in recreation activities and programs through effective, accessible, and inclusive recreation programs.

Recreation and open space is a vital component of the city's environment, which serves to provide **recreational resources, protect natural resources**, and effectively **structure urban development**. While the City will make few additions to the parks system in the future (except for the acquisition of land for trail expansion and the possible acquisition of natural areas), it will continue to use a combination of **regulations, routine maintenance, and capital improvements** to implement the *Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Plan*.



Economic Competitiveness. Regional economic competitiveness is a core element of the region's sustained prosperity. Collectively, the region must **provide great locations for businesses to succeed**. While some policies will be specific to the aforementioned PORTs or individual development sites, this chapter of the *2040 Plan* establishes policies for both **business development activities and redevelopment activities** in Coon Rapids, including:

- » Incite a wide range of employment opportunities for residents within the city's targeted industries.
- » Promote efficient land use and increase the city's tax base.
- » Foster a high-quality, diverse business climate that is sustainable and resilient to short-term economic trends.

The city's employment base has expanded by about 6% since 2011, however, many residents still work outside of Coon Rapids. With this significant regional commuting, continuous **transportation investments** are key to remain economically competitive. Further, **stimulating private investment** will help to both ensure an adequate housing supply for employees and lead to investment in infrastructure. **Prioritizing existing businesses** through **increased business outreach** will also be key for the City's economic development service efforts.

Coon Rapids Boulevard. The Coon Rapids Boulevard corridor, stretching from the Blaine border on the east to the Anoka border on the west, has undergone several changes in recent years. While the corridor used to include a majority of the city's commercial and institutional uses, it has been transformed due to the out-migration of many principal users to newer or more accessible commercial developments. The transformation has meant that existing buildings have been **converted to lower value uses, redeveloped** to new uses, or **remained vacant** for extended periods of time.

The land use recommendation for Coon Rapids Boulevard is primarily associated with the concentration of businesses in a limited number of nodes, or **PORT Districts**. Land uses within each PORT are dictated by adopted master plans, and development within each respective PORT must adhere to the adopted master plan. Areas along Coon Rapids Boulevard in between PORTs are planned for primarily **moderate density residential development**, with limited neighborhood commercial development to provide an overall mixed-use corridor in between PORTs.

In keeping with the Transportation plan, the City will redesign the traffic circulation system along the corridor to **provide adequate capacity**, as well as **convenient access to businesses** that complements the community orientation of the corridor. This system will include a complete sidewalk and trail system, with linkages to the Mississippi River throughout.

Finally, the City will develop a **unifying urban design theme** along the corridor, with individualized themes for each node that coincide with a well-landscaped, pedestrian-friendly environment. These public enhancements will include **consistent signage, public art, underground utilities** and **well-maintained properties**.



Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Protection (MRCCA). MRCCA is a joint state, regional and local program that provides coordinated **planning and management** for the **72-mile stretch of the Mississippi River corridor** that passes through the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. A total of 30 communities, including Coon Rapids, have land within the MRCCA. This chapter of the *2040 Plan* updates the MRCCA Plan first adopted by Coon Rapids in 1979 and last updated during the 2008 Comprehensive Plan process.

Few significant changes are likely to occur within the Coon Rapids portion of the MRCCA, as the city and the riverfront is essentially fully developed. The riverfront location does present an opportunity for **high-value homes**, and **improvements to existing homes** may also occur over the next decade. **Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park** is a highly valued asset for the community, which presents an opportunity to maintain this invaluable resource of river access, views, and recreational opportunities.

Maintaining environmental quality will also continue to be a challenge as new development and other changes occur in the MRCCA. While future natural occurrences that impact the MRCCA are presently unknown, proper **planning**, ongoing **maintenance**, and a focus on the **restoration of vegetation and the shoreline** can protect the health of the river and preserve it as a natural and cultural resource.

