

IMPLEMENTATION

I. Introduction

This section will identify methods in which the City may implement the Comprehensive Plan and accomplish the goals and assist in addressing challenges identified by the community. The tools available include:

- Zoning Ordinance
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Orderly Annexation Agreement
- Comprehensive Plan Review and Revision

A description, implementation information and recommendations for each of the City's local controls follows.

II. Zoning Ordinance

The original City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance was adopted by the City Council in 1977 with revisions adopted from time to time as warranted. The Zoning Ordinance includes specific regulations governing land use and an official zoning map. The City Council recognizes the Comprehensive Plan as the policy with the responsibility to regulate land use and development in accordance with the policies and purpose set forth within the Zoning Ordinance. The City administers the Zoning Ordinance on an on-going basis.

Purpose:

The purpose and intent of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance is to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community and its people through the establishment of minimum regulations governing development and use. The regulations are established to:

- Protect use areas
- Promote orderly development and redevelopment
- Provide adequate light, air, and convenience of access to property
- Prevent congestion in the public right-of-way
- Prevent overcrowding of land and undue concentration of structures by regulating land, building, yards, and density of population
- Provide for compatibility of different land uses
- Provide for administration the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance
- Provide for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance
- Prescribe penalties for violation of Zoning Ordinance regulations
- Define powers and duties of City staff, the Board of Adjustment and Appeals, the Planning Commission, and the City Council in relation to the Zoning Ordinance

Local controls relative to the Land Use portion of the Comprehensive Plan and provided by the Zoning Ordinance include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Title and Application
- Definitions of terms used within the Ordinance
- General Provisions relating to non-conforming buildings, structures and uses; general building and performance requirement; yard requirements; area and building size regulations; off-street parking requirements; land reclamation; mining; airport zoning; home occupations; performance standards; administrative standards and bed and breakfast facilities.

- General District Provisions including the establishment of districts, the official zoning map for the city, annexed territory and zoning district boundaries
- Overviews of the purpose, permitted uses, accessory uses and conditional uses for the Zoning Districts
- Administration and Enforcement which defines duties of the Administrative Officer, Zoning Administrator, Building Inspector and Administrative Standards.
- Administration of Amendments and Conditional Use Permits and the procedure, initiation of amendments, lapse of conditional use permits by non-use and requirements for certified copies
- Signs, review and administration
- Variance and Appeals including the Board of Adjustment and Appeals, findings of hardship and fact, limitations to variances, procedures and lapse of variance or appeal
- Administration - Certificate of Occupancy
- Administration – Fees
- Violation and Penalties
- Environmental Review Program
- Adult Entertainment Uses and Establishments
- Wireless Telecommunication Towers and Antennas including siting requirements, shared use/co-locations, additional standards and nonconforming towers and structures

Implementation:

The Zoning Ordinance is reviewed and subsequently administered by Planning Staff; other local, county, state, etc. entities as appropriate; the Planning Commission; and the City Council.

The Zoning Ordinance is subject to periodic review to ensure consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan and overall goals/objectives as defined by the City. The City Council may amend the Ordinance provided the Council adheres to constitutional, statutory, and other lawful procedures. The Zoning Ordinance and amendments thereof are implemented on an ongoing basis.

Recommendations:

1. The City, upon review and recommendation, may wish to adopt building and design standards for commercial development as well as establish a Design Review Committee responsible for the implementation.
2. The City may wish to review the Commercial and Business Districts expanding upon the intent and allowable uses to conform with the future land use map.
3. The Future Land Use Map identifies several areas as appropriate for new mixed use development in the future. The City may wish to adopt a mixed use district ordinance to regulate the variety of compatible uses and maintain the vitality of such areas.
4. To encourage beautification, especially at the entrance to the community from I-94, the City may wish to amend the zoning ordinance to include landscaping requirements for commercial and industrial development prior to the development of this corridor.
5. Promotion of the Highways 29 and 27 corridors as high-quality, aesthetically pleasing gateways to the City which create a distinctive impression of the City. The City can promote the aesthetic quality of the corridor through:
 - Limiting the extent and placement of outdoor storage; requiring screening of outdoor storage.

- Promoting the employment of high quality landscaping techniques for front yards, entryways, parking lots, sidewalks, screening of loading docks/overhead doors and the like.
 - The clustering of commercial uses in 'nodes' separated by greenspace and/or greenways as opposed to continuous strip commercial development.
 - The preservation of existing environmental features such as woodlands, lake shore, wetlands and surface waters.
 - The implementation of uniform and/or decorative lighting standards.
 - Promotion distinguishing architectural designs and/or high quality exterior building finishes especially for building facades facing public rights-of-way.
6. The Planning Commission and Council may wish to include requirements for internal and/or external storm shelter requirements to protect the safety of residents who reside in slab-on-grade homes or townhomes.
 7. The Planning Commission and Council should consider expanding the section relating to home occupations to include a list of permitted and special home occupations and conditions for approval and license renewal to protect the integrity of residential neighborhoods as well as the commercial business district.
 8. The Planning Commission and Council should review other sections of the Zoning Ordinance to ensure consistency with state statutes (e.g. non-conforming uses).

III. Subdivision Ordinance

The City of Alexandria Subdivision Ordinance regulates the division or platting of land within the City's corporate limits for the purpose of sale into two or more lots, parcels, or tracts, with minor exceptions.

Implemented on an ongoing basis, the Ordinance includes provisions that:

1. Dictate procedures for filing, submittal and review: including the required contents of and conditions for a preliminary plat final plat and replat.
2. Establish and ensure design standards including: blocks, lots, streets and alleys, erosion and sediment control, drainage, steep slopes, subdivisions in Wetland, Shoreland and Flood Plain Management Districts, planned unit developments and other standards which promote the public health, safety, and general welfare.
3. Define parks and open space requirements
4. Require improvements according to City standards for general improvements, streets, sanitary sewer and water distribution and public utilities.
5. Require registered land surveys
6. Allow for variances from this Ordinance provided unique circumstances exist; and
7. Provide for enforcement of and penalties for violation.

Purpose:

A Subdivision Ordinance has been adopted to safeguard the best interests of the City and to assist the subdivider in harmonizing the subdivider's interests with those of the City at large. The Ordinance is intended to prevent the piecemeal planning of subdivisions which could result in an undesirable, disconnected patchwork or pattern of development or fiscal misemployment. The Subdivision Ordinance is correlated to the City's Comprehensive Plan and consistent with a goal of promoting unified community interests.

The Subdivision Ordinance is designed to establish certain regulations and requirements for the platting of land within the City which ensure the public's health, safety, and general welfare is provided for, and to:

- Provide for and guide the orderly, economic, and safe development of land and urban services and facilities;

- Encourage well-planned, efficient, and attractive subdivisions by establishing adequate standards for design and construction;
- Facilitate adequate provision for streets, transportation, water, sanitary sewer, storm drainage, schools, parks, playgrounds, and other public services and facilities;
- Assure a reasonable portion of any proposed subdivision is dedicated to the public or preserved for public use as streets; roads; sewer; electric, gas, and water facilities; storm water drainage and holding areas or ponds; and similar utilities and improvements;
- Assure public improvements are constructed to adequate standards;
- Place the cost of improvements against those benefiting from their construction;
- Secure the rights of the public with respect to public land and waters;
- Assure new subdivisions are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and overall development objectives of the City;
- Achieve a more secure tax base; and,
- Set the minimum requirements necessary to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Implementation:

The City Council approved a revised Subdivision Ordinance on February 8, 1993. The Subdivision Ordinance is reviewed and subsequently administered by Planning Staff; other local, district, county, state entities as appropriate; the Planning Commission; and the City Council.

The Subdivision Ordinance is subject to periodic review to ensure consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan and overall goals/objectives as defined by the City. The City Council may amend the Ordinance provided the Council adheres to constitutional, statutory, and other lawful procedures.

Recommendations:

1. Review/update/expansion of plat data requirements (e.g. submission of environmental review (if required by state law), submission of a proposed pedestrian/open space/park plan, submission of a phasing plan, submission of a build out plan or ghost plat for all abutting lands under the ownership or control of the developer, submission of a natural resources inventory (identification of greenspace, woodlands, wildlife corridors, surface waters, etc.), submission of a landscaping plan, submission of a grading plan, submission of a stormwater/drainage plan, etc);
2. Review/update/expansion of design standards, including but not limited to, rear lot minimum width, cul-de-sac length, cul-de-sac turn around width, maximum and minimum block lengths, easement widths for municipal utilities, right-of-way widths, portions of the right-of-way to be paved, street grades, vertical and horizontal curves, street names, street lighting, required signage and required storm sewer facilities;
3. Review/updating of plat review standards relative to sidewalk and trail requirements;
 - Requiring a ghost plat/build out plan for subdivisions including large outlots and/or adjacent property under unified ownership which may reasonably be anticipated to be subdivided in the future;
 - The City's Subdivision Ordinance should be amended to further define the design standards for each type of road classification including access control, traffic control, right-of-way widths, lanes and function of the roadway;
 - Addition of enabling language:
 - Requiring the execution of a development agreement with the Subdivider.

- Allowing the City to be reimbursed for costs associated with the review of the request for subdivision.
- Requiring a financial guarantee to ensure improvements are installed as required in a timely manner.

IV. Capital Improvement Plan and Debt Management Study

The City of Alexandria has instituted a Capital Improvement Program that allows identification, prioritization and sources of funding for the scheduled financing of capital expenditures relative to the implementation and maintenance of public facilities and services and necessary for the City's staged growth. The overall objective of the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is to provide for the efficient use of fiscal resources in funding future capital expenses. The City's Capital Improvement Plan is a flexible, evolving tool the City uses as a guide for the future. The CIP is updated annually to allow for capital necessity and prioritization changes.

Please note the CIP includes expenditures for the following:

- Airport
- Fire Department
- General Government
- Highways
- Liquor Stores
- Parks
- Police
- Runestone Center
- Sanitary Sewer
- Storm Sewer
- Streets, and
- Water System

Sources of funding include:

- Funds which are levied annually to establish a capital improvement fund and equipment fund
- Minnesota State Aid funds for maintenance and construction of streets and highways
- Federal aid
- State Highway Department funding
- Utility funds
- Issuance of revenue bonds
- Special assessments
- Airport Development fund
- Hanger grant
- Development District fund and
- Alexandria Light and Power

Implementation:

The condition of the City's existing infrastructure, equipment, buildings, and other facilities are identified, and the future needs of each department are analyzed to determine the most effective and efficient means of providing required services.

Items identified in the Capital Improvement Planning process are placed on a timeline for implementation and funding sources are assigned following input from staff and City Consultants. The City Council has final approval of all decisions relative to the Capital Improvement Plan, including prioritization of items therein contained. Appropriate CIP items are included per allotment schedule in the City's annual budget.

As previously indicated all provisions of the Zoning Ordinance are subject to periodic review to ensure consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan and overall goals/objectives as defined by the City. The City Council may amend the Capital Improvement Plan. The capital expenditures identified are implemented on an annual basis.

Recommendations:

1. The City should continue analyzing the appropriateness of the Airport at its current location. If it is determined the Airport should be relocated in the future, expenditures included in the capital improvement plan should be reviewed to determine if temporary structures or improvements could be made.
2. Future water system improvements should be coordinated with ALP and included with future capital expenditures.
3. The City should continue to include the cost for the preparation of a surface water management plan in the capital improvement plan.

V. Growth Areas and Annexation

The City of Alexandria, through its comprehensive planning process, has identified land use needs to accommodate additional residential, commercial and industrial development both within the existing corporate limits as well as in potential annexation areas included in the various planning districts. The 16 planning districts include areas the City has identified for planned growth to occur in the next 25 years. The placement of appropriate land uses, extension of infrastructure; including water, sewer and streets, should be planned for within this area before the growth occurs. The City and Alexandria Township have developed an orderly annexation agreement.

Recommendations:

1. The City and Lake Mary, LaGrand and Hudson Townships should continue to work together to develop and adopt Orderly Annexation Agreements for areas that are urban or about to become urban.
2. The City of Alexandria and its residents should take an active role in the review and provide comments on the future Douglas County Comprehensive Plan as it relates to transportation systems, land uses, and regional trail and park plans which may impact the City of Alexandria.

VI. Comprehensive Plan Review and Revision

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide the growth of the community. As events and circumstances within the community change, the Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed and updated, as appropriate. Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan should not occur without public notice, a public hearing conducted by the Planning Commission and City Council final review and approval. Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan should be considered if there have been changes within the community or issues which were not anticipated by the Plan. The Comprehensive Plan may be amended upon petition from the public, initiation by the Planning Commission or direction from the City Council. A 2/3 affirmative vote of the City Council is required to amend the Plan.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended the Planning Commission and City Council review and update the Comprehensive Plan at five year intervals to ensure it is a current reflection of the City's growth patterns, community goals and land use needs.

2. It is also recommended that on an annual basis that staff report to the Planning Commission and City Council (re) development issues which have occurred as they relate to the Comprehensive Plan, proposed projects which have an impact on the accuracy on the Plan projections, and a list of implementation goals identified within the Plan and the individuals or agencies identified as responsible for the implementation.