

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Minnesota State Statute 462.353 give cities the authority to plan to guide future development and improvement, as well as authorizing the implementation of the plan through ordinance and other official actions such as budgeting. The Comprehensive Plan provides a view of the future and sets forth public statements that provide direction and guidance in the decision-making process.

**Alexandria 2040**, the City's draft Comprehensive Plan, will guide City decision-making for the next 20 years, with an eye toward the year 2040. After 10 years, the City will likely update the Plan again in accordance with State Statute, although the Plan may be revised at any time via either implementation or amendment, as has been the case since the adoption of the City's 1995 Comprehensive Plan.



**Alexandria 2040** is a set of interconnected vision and policy ideas that the community lifted up during the more than two-year engagement process. These community ideas helped the City establish priorities and will guide how our community develops over the next 20 years. The document includes 15 goals that articulate the Plan's intent with an

overarching theme: Alexandria's growth must be managed so the city works for everyone.

The Plan features eight policies and four areas of focus outlining ways to achieve these goals. It also features additional goals specifically relating to land use, transportation, and community facilities.

The Future Land Use map guides land use for every parcel in the city. Any changes to the use of land must be consistent with the guidance of the Future Land Use Map. Other planning maps include Parks and Trails, Community Facilities, etc. Following adoption of **Alexandria 2040**, the City of Alexandria will update its Zoning Ordinance and Zoning map to reflect the guidance of the Future Land Use and other planning maps.

## **What are the visions outlined in Alexandria 2040?**

The Alexandria Planning Commission recommended seven vision statements at the beginning of the planning process using feedback from the public. The vision statements are intended to state the Plan's intent as clearly as possible. They include:

### **The City of Alexandria is a place where...**

- People of all ages are attracted to live and be members of a community that is economically viable now and into the future (economically sustainable).
- Parks, the natural environment and its resources are significant assets of the community and will be preserved and protected as integral to the way of life here.
- A variety of neighborhoods will provide for different needs and lifestyles for year-round and seasonal populations including traditional residential and mixed-use areas with accessible service and recreational amenities available.
- A variety of services, businesses and industries are located in appropriate areas of the city providing jobs and a strong tax base.
- Services and infrastructure provide for sustainable growth of the local economy and housing in a cost-effective manner.
- A local transportation network provides businesses, residents and visitors with multiple options for mobility throughout the Community and connects the City regionally.
- The Central downtown district is a vibrant place for community gatherings, commercial activities and places for people to live and work.

## **What is the timeline for Alexandria 2040?**

The revised draft of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan was released in Fall 2019 for consideration by the public, and by the Planning Commission and City Council.

The Planning Commission reopened the public hearing process on October 21<sup>st</sup>. The public hearing process will remain open until December 16<sup>th</sup>. Email comments may be sent to City Planner Mike Weber at [mweber@alexandriamn.city](mailto:mweber@alexandriamn.city) through November 29<sup>th</sup>. The Planning Commission will finalize the hearing process and consider a recommendation to present the Plan to the City Council at the Commission's December 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Council may consider adoption by resolution at the Council meeting on December 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## **How much community engagement has there been?**

The final draft of the Plan is the product of a thoughtful effort spanning more than two years to meet with people across the community. It integrates exchanges/conversations/ideas collected during the more than 20,000 opportunities for such exchanges during the community engagement process. Engagement activities have included community workshops, community dialogues, planning consultant and City staff presence at Art-In-The-Park, Douglas County Fair, and Community Night Out, and online engagement via Social Pinpoint. This feedback made this Plan stronger and more reflective of our community's values.

## **How will the City use the comprehensive plan?**

**Alexandria 2040** will guide future growth for the city. It is not an instruction book, but rather a tool to frame our growth, set direction, and give high-level guidance. This Plan will be used to inform future ordinances, zoning code revisions, and our strategic Plan, among other items.

## **How does Alexandria 2040 address housing affordability?**

Alexandria is growing faster than it has since the 1970's. The City's recent Housing Study estimates that between 2010 and 2018 the community added over 150 newly constructed housing units per year and the City's population has grown by nearly 2900 residents in that time, an increase of 26%. With this growth comes increased demand for housing and an associated increase in housing costs and rents. As a result, housing units that were once affordable no longer are, and less housing is available for low- and middle-income residents of Alexandria.

**Alexandria 2040** calls for allowing more housing options. Proposed policies also call for creating and maintaining housing that will be diverse in type and size, appealing to all income levels, needs, and lifestyles

## **When does Alexandria 2040 take effect?**

**Alexandria 2040** policies and action steps will not officially be used for City decision making until the City Council and Mayor act to finalize the document - likely at the Council's meeting on December 23<sup>rd</sup>. The effective date of the Plan will be set by resolution and may be set for January 1, 2020. Until that time, the City's current Comprehensive Plan at <https://alexandriamn.city/comprehensive-plan/> should be referenced for questions regarding such things as proposed development and future land use.