

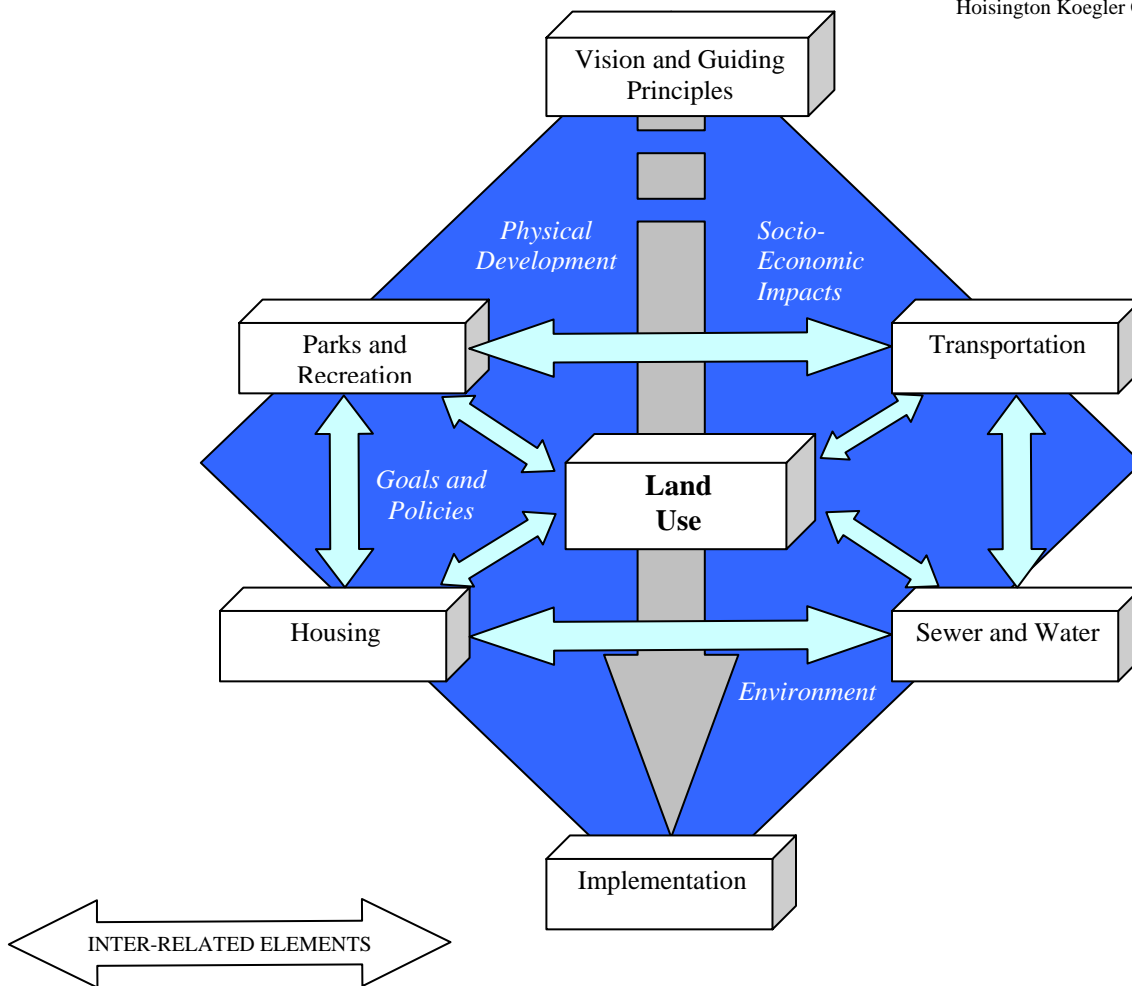
# Preface

## *The Comprehensive Plan*

The Comprehensive Plan is a planning tool intended to help guide future growth and development of the community. It is comprehensive in that it ties together the various elements that make up “the city” including land use, housing, transportation, environment, public facilities and parks and recreation. It is intended to be both a physical and social plan, covering such topics as the locations and character of commercial or residential development (land use) to the affordability of housing (life-cycle housing) and the diversity of jobs. It is a plan because it contains goals, policies and strategies that all work together, looking to the future and working towards achieving a community wide vision. Finally the comprehensive plan is an implementation tool that is used to set goals and measure progress towards community betterment.

**Figure 1 The Inter-related Elements of the Comprehensive Plan**

Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc.



## ***The Purposes for a Comprehensive Plan***

Comprehensive Planning is done for many reasons, but the two primary reasons are to provide the decision-makers of the community with policy directives that are consistent with a community driven vision and to adhere to state mandates relative to regional planning.

The Minnesota Land Planning Act (MLPA) of 1976 required communities within the metropolitan area to develop comprehensive plans in order to help the metropolitan region plan for regional infrastructure and regional transportation needs. Planning must be an ongoing process in order to adapt to unexpected or expected changes. As such, the MLPA has been amended over the years to address these changes. The Metropolitan Council is the planning organization authorized by the legislature to spearhead this regional planning process. They are responsible for reviewing local community's plans and ensuring consistency with regional growth goals and policies that are described in the *Metropolitan Development Guide (MGD)* adopted by the Metropolitan Council in December of 1996. A 1995 amendment to the MLPA requires that local governments bring their existing comprehensive plans and official controls up to date to be consistent with regional growth goals and policies.

Comprehensive planning, however, is often done without the required legislative mandate. The plan is a good tool to help the decision-makers in making the day to day decisions that affect the growth, development and quality of life in the community. The planning process brings together the community in developing a collective vision. The vision is supported by a set of goals and policies that when implemented lead to achievement of various elements of the vision. In addition the plan establishes strategies to be employed by the community in an attempt to resolve problems or improve less than desirable elements of the community.

## ***Utilizing the Comprehensive Plan***

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to support the general public's inherent wants and needs. Its goals and policies are established to help guide the community in a direction that best supports the collective vision. The Comprehensive Plan strategies are intended to resolve critical issues and problems. The plan can be utilized in many ways including:

### **For Policy Direction**

A primary responsibility of the City is to ensure the safety, health and welfare through the regulation of physical development in the city. This is primarily done through ordinances. It is the city staff's responsibility to provide volunteer commissioners and elected officials with the information relevant to the issues in order for them to make informed recommendations and decisions. The policies in the plan will help guide staff recommendations. Policies as set forth in the comprehensive plan provide the staff, volunteers and officials with community-supported directives better enabling them to make decisions for the betterment of the whole community. The policy statements found in the plan should be used to support community decisions. These policies will provide direction to community decision-makers when making difficult and often controversial decisions.

## **For Setting Annual Goals**

The City of Fridley establishes goals and objectives on an annual basis. The comprehensive plan should be used to help formulate those goals as well as to measure what has been accomplished in previous years.

## **For Establishing Budgets**

The City of Fridley also establishes an annual budget that allocates funding sources to various programs and City departments. The comprehensive plan establishes various strategies that must be carried out by various departments and as such requires funding allocations. The process of budgeting should consider the goals and strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

## **For Community Marketing**

The City of Fridley (known as “Friendly Fridley”) has a lot to offer to perspective residents, employees and businesses. In today’s global economy, the City operates in a highly competitive environment where it is important to be able to present the City in a favorable light to preserve the City’s integrity and attract quality new development and redevelopment. The comprehensive plan can be used to provide new and existing residents and businesses with a snapshot of the community and to share the City’s vision with those interested in become a part of the community.

## ***The Planning Process***

The process for developing the comprehensive plan included many steps beginning with building an inventory of previous and current planning studies such as the 1982 Comprehensive Plan Draft, environmental studies, community surveys and housing studies. Much of the information within these studies provided background information that was presented to the public at the community wide vision meetings held *May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1998* and *June 25<sup>th</sup> 1998*. Various survey information was gathered to evaluate the findings of the vision session and a vision statement and guiding principles were drafted to direct the preparation of the draft.

During the drafting of the plan, meetings were held with city commissions and staff to evaluate goals, policies and strategies.

The draft was presented to adjacent communities, Anoka County and the various school districts so they could comment on relevant impacts that the plan may have on their respective jurisdictions.

The draft was presented to the general public for review and comment at an open house on *November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1999*.

The Fridley Planning Commission held a formal public hearing in December of 1999 and the City Council authorized submittal of the draft plan to the Metropolitan Council for formal review.

Work on the plan continued into the spring of 2000. The plan was formally approved by the City Council in the Spring of 2000.

