



IMAGINE OWATONNA 2050 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Vision 2050:

Owatonna – where the extra mile takes you – is strategically located at the crossroads of I-35 and US 14, where there are housing opportunities for all. Residents and businesses thrive, with easy access to work, shopping, high quality education, and recreation. We are better together – we are welcoming and diverse with a quality of life unparalleled in Southern Minnesota.

Guiding Values

- Owatonna strives to be a community with opportunity for all to live happy, healthy, successful lives.
- Owatonna is both traditional and progressive, keeping its historic strengths and embracing new opportunities.
- Our city is innovative and supportive of its residents and businesses, helping all to succeed in Owatonna.
- Owatonna residents are determined and passionate about the city as a place to live, work and play.

Land Use – Draft Goals

- 1) Explore developing a regional destination community center to include an indoor swimming pool, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, meeting rooms, city services, and other integrated uses.
- 2) Improve housing opportunities and neighborhoods in Owatonna.
 - a. Provide areas for a mix of housing densities and types throughout the City.
 - b. Identify and zone new neighborhoods and neighborhood nodes on the east side of the City to include commercial and high density housing to serve as focal points for new development.
 - c. Encourage mixed use development near the new Owatonna Senior High School in southeast Owatonna to include commercial and high density residential uses.
 - d. Continue to explore growth opportunities outside current city limits to expand housing and commercial opportunities.
- 3) Support Owatonna's economic development through land use plans and policies.
 - a. Continue to invest in and support downtown Owatonna as the economic and social center of the City – a destination to live, work, and play.
 - b. Explore mixed use development near the Straight River as an amenity and resource.
 - c. Continue to build on Owatonna's historic buildings and character in land use and development decisions.
 - d. Explore adding residential, mixed use, and open space areas to the industrial park area along with improved connections to the rest of Owatonna.

Transportation/Mobility – Draft Goals

- 1) Improve transportation connections within Owatonna.
 - a. Explore a new east-west vehicle and bicycle/pedestrian connections including a new river crossing to connect the east and west sides of the City.
 - b. Explore a new north-south vehicle and multi-modal connection on the east side
 - c. Include traffic calming on roadway segments and intersections where pedestrians are present.
 - d. Continue to prioritize road maintenance throughout the City.

- 2) Improve multimodal transportation options in Owatonna.
 - a. Explore expanded transit within the City to provide increased access for workers and shoppers.
 - b. Explore expanded transit options between Owatonna and nearby cities.
 - c. Provide bike lanes and sidewalks on key roadways.

Parks and Trails – Draft Goals

- 1) Improve park, trail and recreation programming in Owatonna.
 - a. Follow the recommendations of the Owatonna *Parks and Trails Master Plan* and regularly update the Plan to address changing needs in the City.
 - b. Provide adequate park and trail facilities to all of Owatonna, including active park space within one half mile of all residents wherever possible, and sidewalk or trail links between Owatonna neighborhoods and key destinations and services.
 - c. Continue seeking regional park status for the combined properties of Kaplan's Woods, Lake Kohlmier and a portion of the Straight River public land as a regional park.
 - d. Continue to make all City park and recreation facilities accessible to all ages and abilities.
 - e. Continue to work cooperatively on park and recreation programs and facilities with Owatonna Public Schools.
 - f. Continue using a master planning process to best determine correct use of park space, trail connections, amenities and to ensure accessibility standards are met before park facilities are constructed.
 - g. Integrate park and recreation facilities into a planned community center.
 - h. Explore a park land dedication ordinance.
- 2) Improve connections within the park and trail system in Owatonna.
 - a. Explore new east-west trail connections between Downtown, across the Straight River, across I-35, and the industrial park.
 - b. Continue focusing on trail development, trail safety, and maintenance of existing trails on the community.

- c. Continue to pursue including Owatonna's trail system in the regional trail system defined by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC), providing both north-south and east-west trail connections to regional destinations.
- d. Continue to establish relationships with Steele County and neighboring communities (Clinton Falls, Medford, Claremont) to partner on regional trail opportunities in order to best secure future grant funding of these amenities.
- e. Continue to pursue funding and implementation of the Safe Routes to School program in Owatonna.

Housing – Draft Goals

- 1) Provide an appropriate mix of housing types in Owatonna.
 - a. Explore programs and opportunities to develop a range of affordable housing in Owatonna.
 - b. Explore programs and opportunities to develop senior housing in Owatonna, both independent and assisted living.
 - c. Develop policies and programs to ensure that the City's existing housing stock is safe, attractive, and well-maintained.
 - d. Maintain and enhance policies and programs to license and regulate rental housing in the City.
 - e. Encourage and support sustainable and climate resilient design in new and existing housing.
 - f. Update the City's housing market study regularly to understand the evolving housing needs in Owatonna.
- 2) Guide residential land use in appropriate locations in the City.
 - a. Encourage new housing development in and near downtown Owatonna.
 - b. Encourage a mix of housing opportunities in southeast Owatonna near the new high school.
 - c. Support multi-family residential in areas with proximity to major thoroughfares, commercial areas, open space or other amenities, or in areas that are an extension of existing multi-family use.
 - d. Require street and sidewalk/trail connections among all new and existing housing developments wherever possible.
 - e. Support annexation of land when there is less than a five-year supply of lots based on recent land consumption or if there are other benefits to the City for annexation.

Economic Development – Draft Goals

- 1) Continue to support and expand the work force in Owatonna.
 - a. Continue to work with the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce and other business interests to attract and retain businesses in Owatonna.
 - b. Work with Owatonna Public Schools, Riverland Community College, and other educational organizations to develop educational programs that will meet Owatonna's workforce needs.
 - c. Work to identify and implement activities, services, and community features that will attract and retain young people in Owatonna.
 - d. Continue to identify and develop amenities and services that will attract and retain employees and businesses in Owatonna.
- 2) Continue to support business development in Owatonna.
 - a. Explore improvements to the existing business incubator program such as hiring a full time staff person and expanding services provided.
 - b. Work to reduce any actual or perceived regulatory barriers to development in Owatonna.
 - c. Continue to build and invest in the vibrancy of Downtown Owatonna.
 - d. Explore opportunities to expand transit within Owatonna and to surrounding communities to provide increased access for workers.

City Services/Leadership – Draft Goals

- 1) Continue to develop City leadership at all levels.
 - a. Commit to transparency and inclusion in all City decisions and actions.
 - b. Embrace diversity as a strength and work to ensure city leadership is representative of this diversity.
- 2) Continue to provide City services at the highest level.
 - a. Plan for efficient and effective growth of City infrastructure and services.
 - b. Maximize efforts to incorporate energy savings, renewable energy, resilience, and sustainable practices in all areas of City services.
 - c. Continue to be fiscally responsible through careful stewardship of City resources and staff.
 - d. Create a communications hub of events and resources for new and existing residents.



Sustainability – Draft Goals

- 1) Continue sustainability efforts for activities and environments in Owatonna.
 - a. Continue efforts to plant, preserve and manage trees within the City including Tree City USA, Shade Tree Committee, Emerald Ash Borer management.
 - b. Continue efforts to ensure clean water including partnership with the Straight River Cleanup – Clean Rivers Partners (CRP) and through the City's Clean H2Owatonna program.
 - c. Continue public works objectives to provide and operate a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), provide and properly manage a yard waste compost site, protect the environment through administration of programs and permits, maintain a healthy and diverse urban forest.
 - d. Continue to embrace the city's status as a Pollinator Friendly City and explore ways to include native plantings in parks and new developments.
- 2) Continue efforts to be sustainable in City regulations.
 - a. Explore participation in the GreenStep Cities program to encourage city-led sustainability actions.
 - b. Explore the adoption of a shoreland ordinance to establish shoreline buffers, address erosion issues along the city's waterways and protect waterways from pollution.
 - c. Continue 2022-2024 strategic plan goals for flood mitigation and emergency management.

Utilities – Draft Goals

- 1) Work with Owatonna Public Utilities to maintain the existing water supply system and plan for expansion of this system as the city plans for growth.
- 2) Continue to plan for expansion of the wastewater system as the city plans for growth and implement actions from the 2023 Wastewater Collection System Study or subsequent updates to this plan.
- 3) Continue to enforce the city's Stormwater Ordinance and MS4 permitting through the MPCA. Continue the city's Clean H2Owatonna stormwater management program.
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