

Citizen's Guide to St. Cloud's Comprehensive Plan - 2003

Introduction

This is a summary of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of St. Cloud, Minnesota. The Plan sets forth the basic guiding principles that have been embraced by the City to shape its future. It evolved through the interchange of information, analysis and response among citizens, community leaders, local organizations, staff and public officials of St. Cloud and surrounding jurisdictions through a planning process undertaken from 2001 to 2003.

This Plan replaces the 1993 Comprehensive Plan. This update was necessary for two primary reasons. First, there has been considerable growth and change within the community over the past decade. The City's growth has in many places surpassed the boundaries of the 1993 Comprehensive Plan. The 1993 Plan was intended to guide development through 2003, and now it is necessary to assess what changes must be made today to prepare for tomorrow. St. Cloud desires a plan to guide development within the City and adjacent areas in a logical and efficient manner and to protect growth and transportation corridors and natural resources.

Second, this update was necessary to implement the St. Cloud Joint Planning District Plan adopted in 2000. The "District Plan" is the product of a cooperative planning effort involving the cities of Sartell, Sauk Rapids, St. Cloud, St. Joseph and Waite Park; as well as Benton, Sherburne and Stearns Counties. It serves as a framework to guide these communities in their local comprehensive planning and growth management efforts. Each local unit of government involved is responsible for updating its local plans, ordinances and other documents to carry forth the vision and recommendations of the District Plan.

In addition to the major topic areas of the Plan, such as Goals, Land Use Parks, Transportation, and Community Facilities, there are several components that address specific locations within the city and its planned growth areas. These are divided into two categories: Master Plan areas and Target Area Plans. There are six Master Plans: Downtown, the Haven Township Growth Area, the Minden Township Orderly Annexation Area, the Airport Area, the I-94 Corridor, and the 33rd Street South Corridor. The Downtown Master Plan comprises its own chapter. There are four Target Area Plans: Community Gateways, the Northstar Collision site, the West St. Germain Street Corridor, and Transit Orientated Development (TOD).

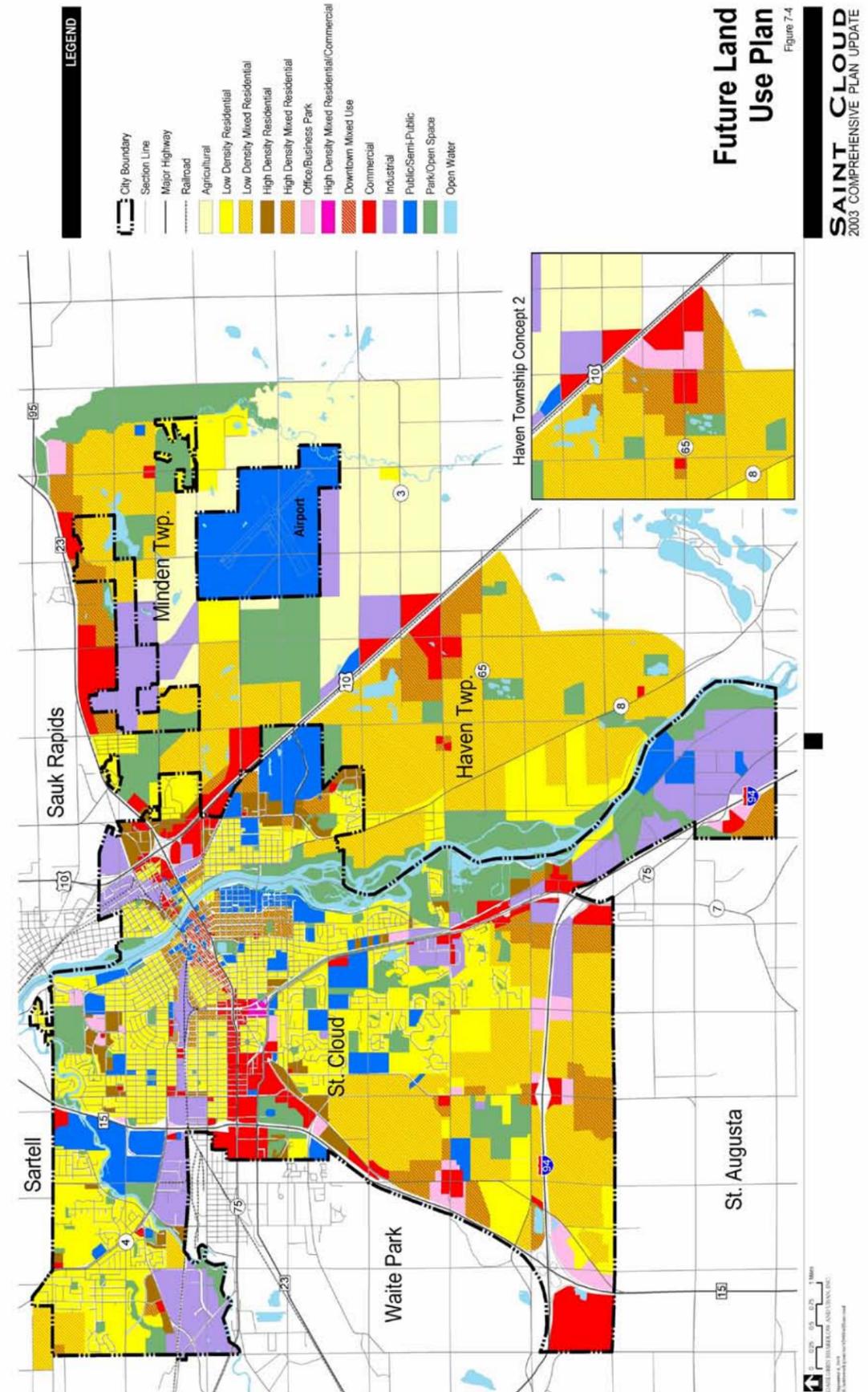
This project required the participation of many stakeholders. A group of citizens, staff, elected officials and other stakeholders whose members were appointed by the City Council made up the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC). Members represented a broad cross sections of interests and perspectives throughout the city as shown below. This group reviewed and commented on all work products and focused on preparing and recommending a complete set of goals, strategies and long range plan recommendations for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan. The areas of interest represented on the PAC included:

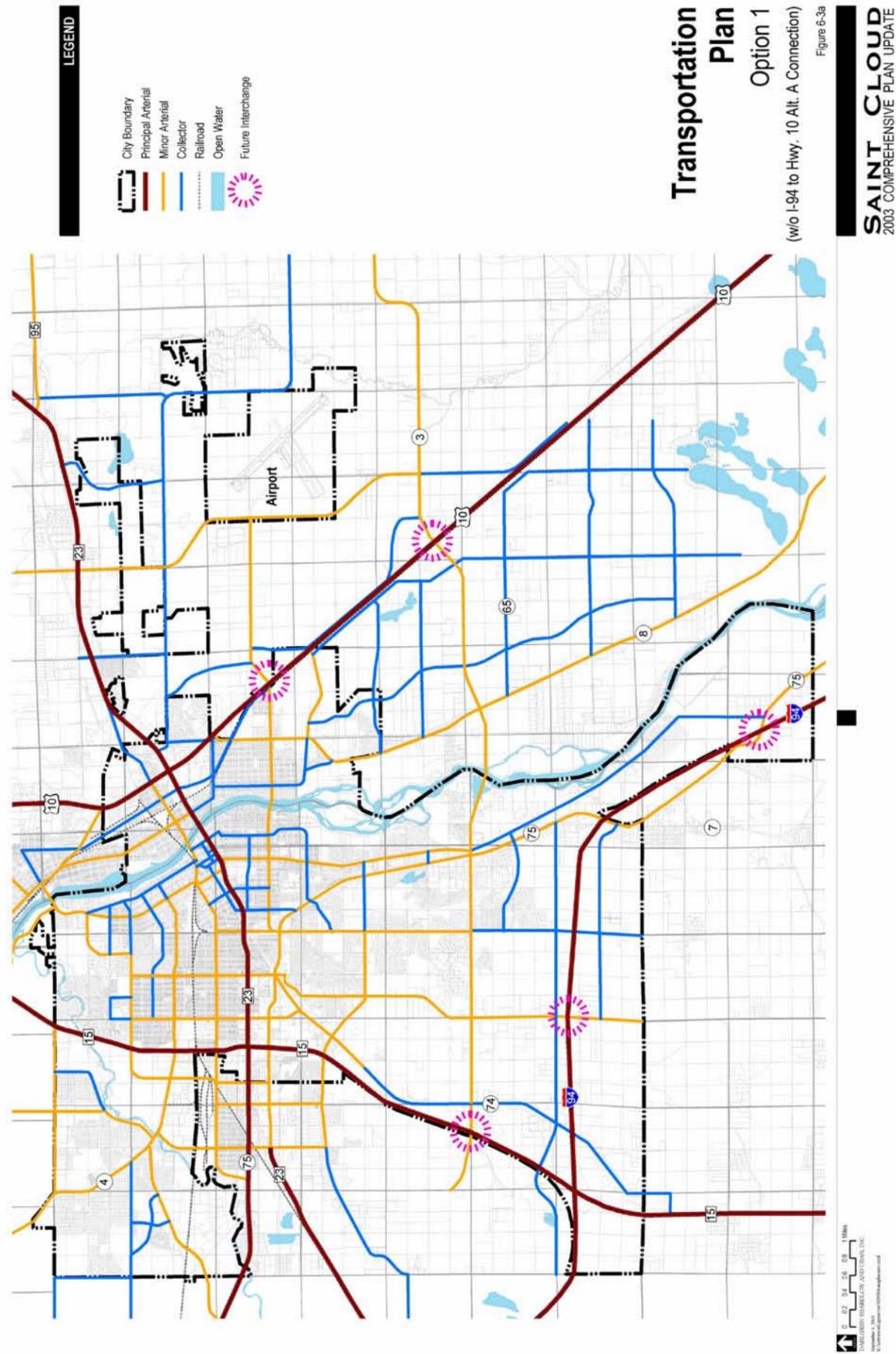
- City Council (5)
- Planning Commission (7)
- Benton County
- Sherburne County
- Stearns County
- Healthcare Industry
- Chamber of Commerce
- HRA
- Park Board (2)
- APO
- Development Community (3)
- General Citizens (4)
- Youth Commission (4)
- Public Schools
- Private Schools
- Historic Preservation
- Higher Education – Administration
- Higher Education – Students
- Environmental Council
- Faith Community
- Seniors
- Non-Profit Organizations

Key Outcomes of the St. Cloud Comprehensive Plan

1. Planning for compact, orderly and cost-efficient growth
2. Master planning growth areas outside of the City
3. Planning future roadways to ease congestion and bottlenecks, accommodate development, and provide alternative transportation options
4. Conserving, restoring and enhancing natural resource systems and open space
5. Creating a strong, integrated, inter-connected local and regional park and trail system
6. Providing a framework for continued investment and reinvestment in downtown
7. Taking advantage of regional commuter rail
8. Supporting a broad range of housing types, styles and densities
9. Balancing land use to insure economic growth
10. Protecting and enhancing existing neighborhoods

To facilitate even greater opportunities for community involvement and interaction with surrounding jurisdictions within each of the Master Plan areas, special subcommittees were established for each. A subcommittee was also established for the Northstar Collision Target Area Plan; the St. Cloud Parks and Recreation Advisory Board served as a subcommittee for the Parks, Recreation and Open Space element of the Comprehensive Plan.





See Chapter 6 of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan for information on Option 2 or other transportation related topics.

THE CITY OF ST. CLOUD SHALL BE...

A Place Where Natural Resources are Preserved

The community recognizes the need to preserve the natural resources of the area, including rock outcroppings, woodlands, steep slopes and rare and sensitive environmental features in the area. These resources add value to the community and should be protected.

A Place that Recognizes the Importance of the Mississippi River

Most cities, including St. Cloud, have historically turned their backs on the rivers and streams. The Mississippi's designation as a Wild and Scenic River should make it a scenic corridor through the community. The community will open the views and recreational opportunities of the Mississippi River whenever possible.

A Place Where Development is Compatible with the Environment

Most residents see growth and change as continuing through the next decades. Residents also recognize the need to ensure that "growth for the sake of growth" does not become the theme for the community. The community must remain mindful of the need to balance growth and environmental preservation.

A Place With Economic Opportunity

St. Cloud has seen economic prosperity for the past decade and the city is a leading employment and trade center in Central Minnesota. The community supports local and regional efforts to expand and diversify the economic base of the city and region.

A Place with a Strong, Diverse and Growing Downtown

The Downtown has historically defined the community's character and was the place where the community congregated to worship, recreate and conduct business and create the sense of community that made St. Cloud a regional center. The Downtown should strive to function as a focal point for government operations, arts, entertainment, community activities, commerce and recreation.

A Place that is Aesthetically Pleasing

Development should not only be sensitive to the natural surroundings, but also consider the impact it has on the built environment. The community desires to improve the quality of development through careful consideration of building materials, signage and scale, placement of public art, landscaping and vegetation and attractive and harmonious streetscapes.

A Place of Quality Neighborhoods

The city must remain a safe, clean and friendly community. Strong neighborhoods, community facilities and community schools will preserve the quality of life for all parts of the city.

A Place of Recreational Opportunities

The city will strive to create and maintain a community with abundant trails, walking paths, parks and other recreational facilities and activities for people of all ages.

A Place Accepting of Diverse Populations and Opinions

Like other communities in Minnesota, St. Cloud continues to become more diverse. Changing demographics will challenge the community to value and welcome other populations and opinions. The community will work to create an understanding of and meet the needs of new diverse communities within the city.

A Place Where an Effective Public/Private Transportation System is Available

The city will strive for the most effective safe and coordinated transportation system possible. The community expects effective roads, airport facilities, regional commuter rail, public transit, sidewalks and trail systems that offer alternative modes of moving people and goods around and through the city. The city recognizes its place as a regional economic center and that the transportation network must support the economic activity of the region.

For additional information on the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, please go to the City's website www.ci.stcloud.mn.us or contact the Planning Office at (320) 255-7218.

GENERAL COMMUNITY GOALS

- 1: Promote community spirit, unity and diversity.
- 2: Encourage a variety of experiences and opportunities in terms of community activities, learning, recreation and social interaction.
- 3: Encourage citizen participation and education in all aspects of city government, planning and community life.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION GOALS

- 1: Promote ongoing shared planning among governments within the tri-county area that:
 - Advances the region as a whole;
 - Balances the interests of all in the region;
 - Maintains both the identity of individual communities and local control for local issues.
- 2: Actively explore opportunities for all jurisdictions, agencies and public organizations in the area to share services and resources to reduce or eliminate duplication and improve efficiency.

LAND USE GOALS

- 1: Manage and support planned, compact and orderly growth of the city.
- 2: Plan land uses and implement standards to promote quality development and minimize land use conflicts.

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE AND LIVABILITY GOALS

- 1: Maintain and enhance the appearance, integrity, heritage, identity and local character of the city's built environment.
- 2: Enhance community and neighborhood livability.
- 3: Maintain adequate active and passive open space to meet the needs of the community.

HOUSING GOALS

- 1: Promote a variety of housing types in St. Cloud for all of its citizens.
- 2: Create a high-quality environment in all residential neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOALS

- 1: Work to provide city services in an equitable and cost-effective manner.
- 2: Promote the expansion and development of the community's green infrastructure which consists of parkland, environmentally sensitive areas, river and stream corridors and trail facilities throughout the city and its planned growth areas.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

- 1: Provide a safe, efficient and adequate transportation system that serves and balances both access and mobility needs.
- 2: Maintain a transportation system that is coordinated and cost-effective.
- 3: Coordinate transportation with land use planning and environmental protection.
- 4: Promote alternative transportation such as bicycling, walking, transit and rail.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 1: Recognize the need to create jobs and increase tax base by both ensuring commercial and industrial growth and maintaining existing businesses.
- 2: Promote efficient, planned commercial and industrial expansion within the city's growth areas, accessible to public infrastructure and transportation.
- 3: Enhance the character of the city's commercial and industrial development.

ENVIRONMENT GOALS

- 1: Protect, conserve and enhance natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas within the city and its planned growth areas for the community's long-term environmental and economic benefits.
- 2: Recognize the Mississippi and other rivers as major recreational, environmental and aesthetic assets to the community.

