

Implementation Action Steps

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Implementation Action Steps are an essential component of our Comprehensive Plan for Albert Lea. This section identifies how the Plan is to be implemented, essentially serving as our “to do list” for the next several years. It recommends action steps to achieve the community’s Vision and the many good ideas that have resulted from the processes leading up to our plan: Albert Lea Listens, The Minnesota Design Team and the efforts of our Land Between the Lakes Action Teams. These actions work collectively with the guiding principles and policies identified throughout the Plan.

In this section of our plan, we describe a number of actions. Some of these actions will be clearly defined projects with an obvious start and end point. Other actions might be ongoing, recurring action steps focused on measuring progress and resetting the standards. Therefore, our plan is not a static plan. It is dynamic. We must be willing to change and amend the plan; but we must hold true to our vision and guiding principles. Implementation of our plan requires a coordinated effort from our community. Not just those who live within the corporate limits, but also those who rely on Albert Lea for services, recreation, schools, jobs and entertainment. Our plan can’t be carried out by only a few individuals. It must be embraced by the community. It must transcend economic, cultural and generational barriers in order to achieve the level of diversity we envision.

This implementation strategy focuses on the near term (one to five years.) The plan must be updated after the first five years (if not done sooner), and new implementation action steps would follow. The action steps that follow include a basic dialogue to set the stage. Following each action step, a summary matrix illustrates the general time frame, core responsibilities and general cost identifier (if reasonably known) for implementation. As annual goals and work programs are established, these action steps should be updated, expanded upon and checked off when completed.

Community Action steps are identified to provide an ongoing dialogue regarding planning for the future of Albert Lea with clear and explicit directions for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The action steps should serve as

The Land Between the Lakes Action Team

This volunteer group was organized to implement the visions presented in Albert Lea Area Listens and the Minnesota Design Team visit. Since the early 2000s, this group has been meeting regularly to mobilize around key action steps.

Our Action Steps are identified as priority projects for:

Immediate (1-2 years)

Mid range (3-5 years)

or

Long range (5+ years)

a tool and direction for City Council, staff and advisory boards in setting annual work programs, goals and budgets. Finally, action steps provide a means for general citizenry to continue to be engaged in shaping community growth and development through volunteerism and community involvement.

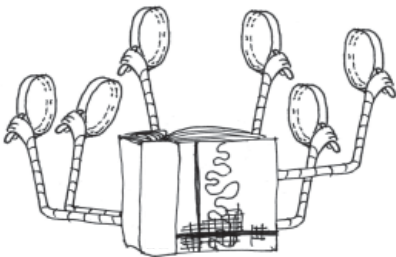
Action Step #1: Be willing and open to change



Over the next few decades, Albert Lea will experience a number of changes, some of which are foreseen in the Plan and some of which will be entirely unanticipated. Adapting to those changes will require flexibility. Since not all ideas and proposals will conform to the specific directions within the Plan, the Vision and Guiding Principles serve as “yardsticks” to assess those ideas and proposals for consistency with the bigger picture. Decision makers may find a proposal to be compatible with the Vision; and therefore, find changes to the Comprehensive Plan to be appropriate. New data and information about our community will be made available from time to time as new measurements are made and new technologies emerge. All of our planning efforts should be formally reviewed on a regular basis (annually or biannually) to assess progress on attaining the community’s Vision and to continue a dialogue about the community’s future. The annual review should focus on both the success and failures, if any, of the Plan. The results of this dialogue should lead to potential modifications or amendments to the plan. Annual review of the Comprehensive Plan should include widespread community participation, allowing Albert Lea to continue to benefit from its active citizenry. The Planning Commission should serve as the principle entity charged with this review.

1. Be willing and open to change - Conduct annual progress report on action steps and determine plan modification needs.	
Time Frame	Annual
Core Responsibilities	Leadership Staff - Planning Commission
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Action Step #2. Understand Available Financial Resources



Implementation of our plan will require a combination of public and private actions. Public actions require a public investment and some private actions will require a partnering financial effort as well. When possible, public investments should seek to leverage private investments. While there is not a bottomless pot of money to tap into, there are a variety of financial resources available to undertake community development projects and action steps. However, the tools of today may become outdated and should be reviewed on a regular basis. City staff and decision makers will need to retain a current working knowledge of all of the tools that can be used to create specific implementation strategies and

apply those resources to the appropriate strategy when advising decision makers. A financial “toolbox” should be developed identifying available resources such as: state and federal grant and loan programs, foundation grant and loan programs, city operating budgets and capital improvement program funding, tax increment financing (TIF), tax abatement, philanthropic opportunities, special taxing districts, special service districts or business improvement districts, bonding or borrowing, local option sales tax, referendums, etc. We must also remember our guiding principles “Create new tools to solve old problems” and partner with our state legislators to think beyond the box and create new tools to address our unique challenges. The City should subscribe to newsletters and database organizations that match grant programs with community interests. One such program is the Minnesota Sustainable Communities Network, or MnSCN (www.nextstepminnesota.org).

2. Understand Available Financial Resources	
Time Frame	Annual
Core Responsibilities	Staff
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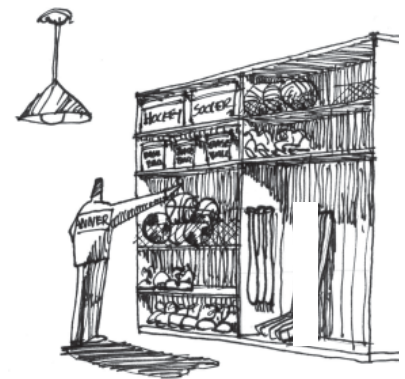
Action Step #3. Use the Comprehensive Plan Daily

An effective Comprehensive Plan is one that suffers from excessive use as demonstrated by worn edges, coffee stains and scribbled notes in the margins. As this Plan takes a new approach to comprehensive planning, its benefits will only be seen with frequent consultation, review and evaluation. The Plan should be used not only by the community’s planners, but by other city staff, decision makers, advisors and developers. The Comprehensive Plan can be used as a:

City Staff Resource – The Plan should be used most often by our City Staff. The Plan is a guide for staff’s recommendations and responses to inquiries from the community. It is the responsibility of City Staff to ensure that the Plan is being kept current, and when inconsistencies arise, to facilitate resolution through a community forum and a public process.

Guide and educational tool for other community organizations –The growth of Albert Lea is facilitated by many community interests, including the school district, business community, ALEDA, Shell-Rock Watershed, Freeborn County, developers, and other special interest groups. The Plan should be promoted to these groups, not simply as a marketing tool, but as a resource in the development of their own plans which articulate the community’s Vision and direction.

Policy Guide to Decision Makers and Advisors – Advisory Boards, particularly the Planning Commission, and City Council members but also the Economic Development and Port Authorities and Businesses are charged with making recommendations and decisions about the growth and development of our



community. The Comprehensive Plan’s vision, guiding principles and policies should be the “yardstick” to which innovative ideas are measured as to how well they achieve the community’s shared vision (see Chapter 2 Vision and Guiding Principles).

Basis for Setting Annual Goals and Work Programs – The community’s advisory boards, commissions, civic groups/organizations and City Council establish goals and work programs on an annual basis. The Comprehensive Plan, and particularly the Action Steps, serve as a basis for identifying future projects and directions.

Guide for Ongoing Regulatory Changes – Following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance will be reviewed for consistency with the directions outlined in our Comprehensive Plan. Our land use patterns are purposely broad so that we can respond to changing market conditions. However, the policy statements enable us to enact regulations that shape the design of future development so that it meets our needs for sustainable development. Regardless of the degree of change, future requests to amend official tools will be brought forth. We must use the plan as a tool to evaluate and guide this change toward the community’s vision.

3. Use Comprehensive Plan Daily	
Time Frame	On-going
Core Responsibilities	Technical Staff Boards/Commissions City Council
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Action Step #4. Update/Modify Official Tools and Regulations and establish orderly annexation agreements.

The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance are the official regulatory tools to implement the Land Use Plan and its policies. The Comprehensive Plan provides the “nexus” to the specific laws in the City’s ordinances and allows implementation of ideas that help the City reach goals outlined in the Guiding Principles. The judicial system has often cited inconsistencies between the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance when siding against the community in a zoning dispute. The Zoning Map and its supporting text are the primary sources for implementing the Land Use Plan. In general, the Zoning Ordinance Map and the new Land Use Plan should be thoroughly reviewed for consistency.

The current zoning code contains relatively flexible districts and bulk standards. Application of the districts should be evaluated relative to the land use plan. A key area that should be explored in depth includes future growth areas. How does the City wish to influence development patterns in areas outside of City



boundaries that are anticipated to develop, but maybe not for several years? This is an important question that can only be answered through collaborative planning and cooperation between the City, Freeborn County and the Townships. Part of our zoning modification should be the development of orderly annexation agreements with Albert Lea, Bancroft, Pickerel Lake and Manchester Townships. Our land use planning completed for the comprehensive plan update enables us to be more informed of the economic and fiscal impacts annexations might have on our greater community.

While our current zoning regulations can function within the context of our comprehensive plan, we might begin to explore the idea of using our zoning regulations to focus more on shaping the form and character of buildings in our community. A ‘form based’ zoning approach puts design at the forefront of regulation, whereas the traditional approach to zoning is to regulate a particular use on a site. With a form based zoning district, the form of the development is dictated by the type of street front it sits on. So long as the yard and front of the building can adhere to the form requirements, its use is generally very flexible. The end result is more flexibility with the type of use on the site and a stronger connection with the context of the neighborhood and street. A form based zoning approach is not appropriate in all areas of Albert Lea. We might start by considering it in downtown or along our corridors.

4. Update/Modify Official Tools and Regulations and Orderly Annexation Agreements	
Time Frame	1 year
Core Responsibilities	Technical Staff Planning Commission/Board of Zoning Appeals/City Council
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Action Step #5. Conduct Focus Area Plans for Growth Areas and Transforming Areas

As new development continues, a detailed planning process will enhance the coherency of development patterns, and will present the greatest likelihood of guiding development consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan and the City’s Vision. A key purpose of conducting focus area plans is to establish more detailed land use plans that illustrate how a larger area with multiple property owners develops in a manner consistent with our Plan. Focus Area Plans go beyond land use to ensure appropriate design character, streetscape, open space systems and public infrastructure systems that accommodate development and redevelopment but also maximize the ability to leverage quality private investments. Use of Focus Area Plans will help the City meet its goals of implementing quality land development, a part of the guiding principles of this Plan.



Steps in preparing Focus Area Plans

Establish Objectives for Plan

Prepare team of experts

Engage stakeholders in defining barriers and opportunities and exploring solutions and directions

Prepare the plan

Seek approvals of the plan (buy in)

Adopt and implement the plan



Completion of a Focus Area Plan could be triggered by one of two events. One reason would be a community decision to direct new development or redevelopment to a certain area of the community where there exists a need for improvements to infrastructure systems. A public need could be associated with economic development, telecommunications, transportation, the environment or schools. A second trigger for a Focus Area Plan would be a developer or landowner who wishes to plan a development project that should be considered in a larger context, for example a development project on the edge of our community that might require expanding beyond our boundaries.

Each Focus Area Plan would be completed under the direction of City staff and Council with direct involvement from the advisory boards, commissions, community groups and the general public. The Focus Area Plan would also involve developers or developer representatives and landowners or landowner representatives within the defined neighborhood. Priority Focus Area Plans would be funded by the City, carrying the costs until such time that development occurs. As development occurs, City costs would be re-captured through public improvement assessments. In some cases, where plans are requested by land owners or developers, planning costs should be fronted by the landowner/developers. Sharing costs with land owners and developers could also offset the public cost. Depending upon what is being addressed in the planning process, regional or state agencies may also participate in the cost of such planning efforts providing a regional issue is being addressed.

Focus Area Plans are adopted as amendments to the Comprehensive Plan so that they add greater significance relative to land use and zoning decisions. Once a focus area plan is adopted by the City, it serves as a guiding document for future development. As preliminary and final plats are submitted to the City, they would be checked for consistency with the overall comprehensive plan and the focus area plan.

Priority Focus Area Plans

Downtown Albert Lea: A Redevelopment Focus Area Plan--Downtown is the heart and soul of our community. We have done a lot of thinking and planning around the Blazing Star Landing site in the last few years. What we are clear on is that the site needs to redevelop to a use that compliments our downtown and does not draw vitality away from downtown. At a time when our community wants to see something happen on the BSL site, we must not forget about our downtown. A planning process surrounding downtown Albert Lea should focus on identifying redevelopment opportunities, not necessarily designing what the redevelopment should look like, but identifying new development opportunities and determining the necessary infrastructure systems that must be in place to facilitate such development. This infrastructure includes both the “grey” systems (storm sewer, sanitary sewer, potable water supply, telecommunications, streets,

trails and sidewalks) as well as the “green” infrastructure (public open space, plazas, streetscapes, storm water management systems). Our public spaces and infrastructure systems must set the example for private investment and re-investment. We might first work with our downtown community to help frame the core objectives of this focus area plan and establish a plan to determine how we fund such and effort. This would parlay into a funding strategy that ultimately builds identified public improvements.

A plan for Downtown should be an immediate priority.

Southwest Greensward: The Southwest Greensward was a big idea that has generated excitement and intrigue. Through the Comprehensive Planning process, we have only brushed the surface. A detailed plan to determine future alignment and specific redevelopment opportunities would be the logical next step for our community. This process would directly engage the part of our community most impacted by the idea and would seek to turn a vision into reality.

A plan for the Southwest Greensward should be an immediate to mid-range priority and should be connected to the plan for Downtown.

EcoVillage—Bath Road Interchange: The EcoVillage concept (also referred to as the Bath Road Interchange area) has been a point of discussion for several years. It was mentioned in the 1996 Comprehensive Plan and has been the subject of an Interchange Access Study that determined that while it might be allowed by the Federal Highway Administration and MnDOT, it is seen as a development driven interchange and would likely not be eligible for significant federal or state funding. The Comprehensive Planning process explored the idea of a development that establishes a unique theme with a focus on alternative energy sources. A number of issues were raised in this process that will require further planning: annexation and extension of growth north of I-90 to facilitate local funding of an interchange; traffic impacts on Richway Drive; funding for extending sanitary sewer systems or exploration of alternative treatment systems and the impact on existing commercial areas. These issues require a more focused dialogue with affected agencies.

Exploration of the EcoVillage concept is a longer range priority.



Downtown Albert Lea aerial photo from 2006.



Southwest Greensward.

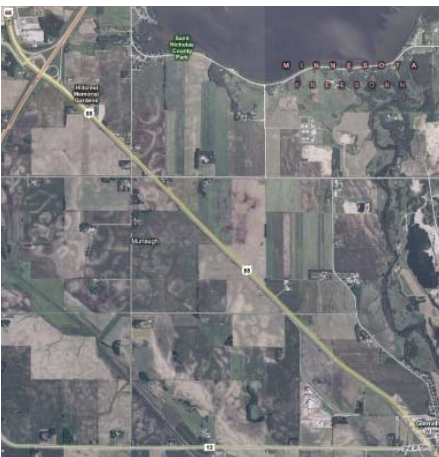


EcoVillage Concept.

Bridge Avenue—Land Use and Redevelopment: Traffic flow on Bridge Avenue has been studied and a plan for roadway improvements has been prepared (see pages 74 and 75). We all know that the traffic challenges with Bridge Avenue will only grow in the future. Moving forward with a plan to address those challenges requires difficult decisions that will have significant impacts on some. Immediate benefits may not be easily recognized, but in the long term, thoughtful planning will have significant paybacks to the community and the businesses that rely on access to the corridor. An approach to implementation has been developed by the City and County Engineering staff. This approach is one that involves the long term acquisition of some parcels to secure right-of-way for future improvements to Bridge Avenue which will alleviate traffic problems and enhance the corridor. As our principle suggests “Encourage new while planning the old...” we must understand the opportunities that correcting a traffic problem presents. Bridge Avenue’s traffic problems are bearable today, but in twenty years they may not be. A long term plan for acquiring parcels for road improvements should be guided by or based on a plan for redevelopment of remnant lands. Returning remnant lands to taxable uses can serve as an investment tool for offsetting some of the costs to improve the corridor.

Redevelopment planning along Bridge Avenue should be an immediate to mid-term priority.

Glenville Corridor: We are a center piece to a larger rural community. We are somewhat of a lifeline to smaller towns that surround us, providing jobs, government services and recreational opportunities. Within the last decade, agricultural industries have located along Highway 65 towards Glenville and more continue to express interest. The benefit of these industries to our community is many; jobs, regional tax base, and economic development opportunities. Sanitary Sewer service from Albert Lea has been extended to serve this corridor because we have the capacity and ability to do it. We need to recognize the opportunities presented by this emerging critical mass of industry, and collaborate with the regional entities that have the abilities to serve this development with needed infrastructure and transportation systems. We might explore plans for regional transportation impacts (impacts on local roads and access to the regional transportation systems), opportunities to enhance rail service to the corridor and possibly relocate railroad uses located near downtown Albert Lea to a more functional setting, infrastructure systems (sanitary sewer and potable water), and a unique taxing structure that balances the impacts and the benefits with the many jurisdictions that have a stake. Our guiding principles state “Create new tools to solve old problems.” This would appear to be a great opportunity to collaborate as a community, develop a plan that addresses land use, transportation and infrastructure delivery and position our greater community to develop an emerging industry.



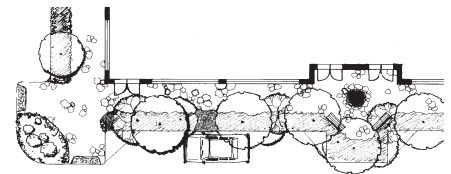
The Glenville Corridor is an important regional economic opportunity for Albert Lea. Regional planning must consider regional impacts and needs including traffic on key transportation corridors (TH 65 and County Highway 13).

A plan for the Glenville Corridor is an immediate to mid term priority.

5. Conduct Focus Area Plans	
Time Frame	1 per year to be prioritized at annual goal-setting workshops
Core Responsibilities	Technical Staff Boards/Commissions City Council-Townships-Freeborn County and Glenville
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Action Step #6. Develop a plan for streetscaping, gateways and wayfinding along key Corridors

The image of the community was raised as a key issue at various public meetings throughout our Albert Lea Listens process and through our Comprehensive Plan Update. It was such a concern that a Steering Committee with the title of Appearance and Attitude was created as an outcome of Albert Lea Listens. Code enforcement (the stick approach) can only go so far in improving our community’s appearance. Other approaches (the carrot) might prove more beneficial. Our transportation corridors contribute greatly to our community’s appearance. Streetscapes along heavily traveled roadways and gateways into the community should be enhanced to express our community’s identity. We must also think beyond the streetscapes at how development fronts on our corridors. While the temptation to market goods and services to travelers is always going to be present, our need is to let the public know there is a destination here, not that a particular product is on sale. Signage along our corridors should be well thought out and meet the needs of local businesses but should not be the dominant feature of a corridor. Building architecture should present a strong public presence. Access should be coordinated to allow clear and safe entry to business districts. Streetscape features can go a long way toward enhancing a community’s image at key “gateways” into the community or into specific districts. Another idea that was raised through the planning process is the notion of “wayfinding.” Wayfinding is a means to direct people to our downtown, our lakes or key shopping areas through signage or identity markers.



A plan for streetscaping, gateways and wayfinding is a mid to long range priority.

6. Prepare streetscape plan for corridors and community gateways that incorporates a wayfinding system.	
Time Frame	2-5 years
Core Responsibilities	Technical Staff
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Action Step #7. Develop a Park and Recreation System Master Plan

Our Comprehensive Plan establishes a broad framework for our park and recreation system. It embraces the fact that our Park infrastructure and Recreation programming serves a community that extends well beyond our boundaries. We focus on a park system that provides active and passive recreation opportunities. But our park system also provides a significant enhancement to our overall quality of life. Our guiding principles focus on creating neighborhoods as a way of providing great housing; and we suggest that parks are the common ground of our community. Our energies need to be prioritized on maintaining our park system and making sure that they continue to serve our needs even as our neighborhood needs change. A park master plan that inventories our current park facilities and establishes a replacement/upgrade program will be established to guide our park investments. We must also look at where we anticipate future growth, and be prepared to guide our future development opportunities in land acquisitions for future parks. A park master planning process will enable us to explore new tools for ongoing park maintenance challenges and ways in which we can turn underutilized resources into stronger community assets.

A Park and Recreation System Master Plan is an immediate to mid-term priority.

7. Develop Park and Recreation System Master Plan	
Time Frame	1-3 years
Core Responsibilities	Technical Staff Park Board City Council School District (Community Education) YMCA and other recreation program and facility providers
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Action Step #8. Participate in State Legislative Efforts

State legislative actions often have an impact on how local communities conduct day to day planning administration of their community. Good governance relies on officials who are informed and committed to finding opportunities for constituents and their community. Legislative actions relative to the environment, economic development, energy, regulation of the provision of municipal services, annexation, state transportation, planning and zoning rules are continually being discussed and amended during legislative sessions. We should continue to



take a proactive approach to engaging our House and Senate representatives to represent our City’s interest in these regional issues. Cooperation with adjacent jurisdictions is also a critical component when advocating or lobbying for particular legislation.

8. Participate in State Legislative Efforts	
Time Frame	On-going
Core Responsibilities	Staff
	City Council
	City Leaders
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Action Step #9. Maintain and Update Capital Improvement Plan

Another tool for implementation is the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which establishes schedules and priorities for projects generally over a five year period. The City first prepares a list of all public improvements that will be required in the next five years, including transportation and community facilities projects. Then all projects are reviewed, priorities are assigned, cost estimates prepared, and potential funding sources identified. The City can determine which projects should be financed through annual tax revenues, which require public borrowing, and which may be eligible for outside sources of assistance.

The City’s financial resources will always be limited and there will always be competition for community resources. The CIP allows the City to provide the most critical public improvements, yet stay within budget constraints. The City has recently developed a CIP which is annually updated. Through the CIP, recommendations can be prioritized, budgeted and programmed into the City’s decision making process.

9. Maintain and Update Capital Improvement Plan	
Time Frame	Annual
Core Responsibilities	Staff
	Council
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The city has a history of partnering with the Albert Lea School District (staff involvement with courses and student internships) and Riverland Community College (Leadership training.)

These partnerships can serve as models for future endeavors.



Action Step #10. Pursue Public / Private Partnerships

Often a means to achieve a desired objective that has a public benefit but is something more often (or better off) done as a private initiative is the formulation of partnerships. Partnerships may be formed with public sector (government), private or not for profit entities. A first step in establishing a public private partnership is to determine the organizational aspect of the partnership. Is it led by the private, the public or a not-for-profit entity? Three areas of potential partnerships that could be explored include:

Public Arts (see related action step #11)—objectives might include:

- Develop a community wide public arts strategy.
- Facilitation of a public art works review board.
- Lead the effort to commission community art works.
- Provide a physical space for functions or activities.
- Ensure an on-going financial resource for public arts.

Environmental Stewardship Program—objective to promote environmental stewardship:

- Provide outreach and education—schools, developers, businesses, etc.
- Provide a funding mechanism for demonstration projects promoting environmental design, sustainability and green infrastructure.
- Build sustainable best management practices into public improvement and operational activities.

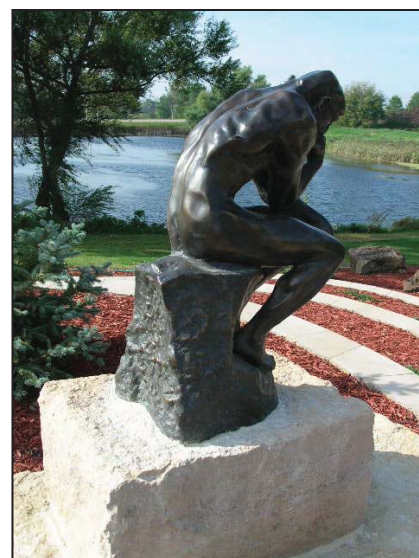
Historic Preservation (HPC with private preservation focused entities)—objective to preserve the rich cultural and historic resources of the built environment:

- Continue to research and survey Albert Lea’s rich historic and archaeological resources
- Review and administration of historic conservation districts.
- Education and promotion of restoration programs, techniques and resources.
- Lead the effort to commission interpretive design elements in public and private improvement projects.
- Explore on-going financial resources for historic preservation and interpretation.

10. Pursue Public/Private Partnerships	
Time Frame	3-5 years
Core Responsibilities	Staff
	HPC LBL Action Team
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Action Step #11. Increase Awareness and Implementation for Public Art

Our Vision notes that we are a community “that tells its story through arts, community activities and the design of its buildings and public spaces...” We should investigate eligible sources of funds for public art, including allocations from the capital budgets of various departments, general fund allocation for program management and maintenance, special service districts, and fund raising strategies for augmenting city resource fees, including grant requests to government, foundation, corporation, and other appropriate entities, as well as private fund raising activities (such as allowing citizens to make gifts dedicated to memorials or new art projects). The city should also leverage funds or actions of private developers, and state and county agencies involved in public improvement projects in Albert Lea.



Public art sites should be selected based on their public access (visual or actual) and their ability to accommodate another aesthetic voice in the architectural design, after which a variety of artwork possibilities can be suggested. For example, a public plaza, particularly one in which people may sit, is often a prime site for artwork. If the budget is fairly small, the artwork might use elements already included in the construction budget, such as pavers or landscaping. If the budget is more substantial, freestanding artist-fabricated elements (sculpture or custom seating) might be possible.

11. Increase Awareness and Implementation for Public Art	
Time Frame	1-3 years
Core Responsibilities	Staff
	Art programs/organizations
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Action Step #12. Develop a Means to Measure Success / Community Indicators

The methods of defining success related to our plan must go beyond the physical projects that have been conceptualized. The underlying goal is to make Albert Lea a more sustainable community, and to foster public and private action steps

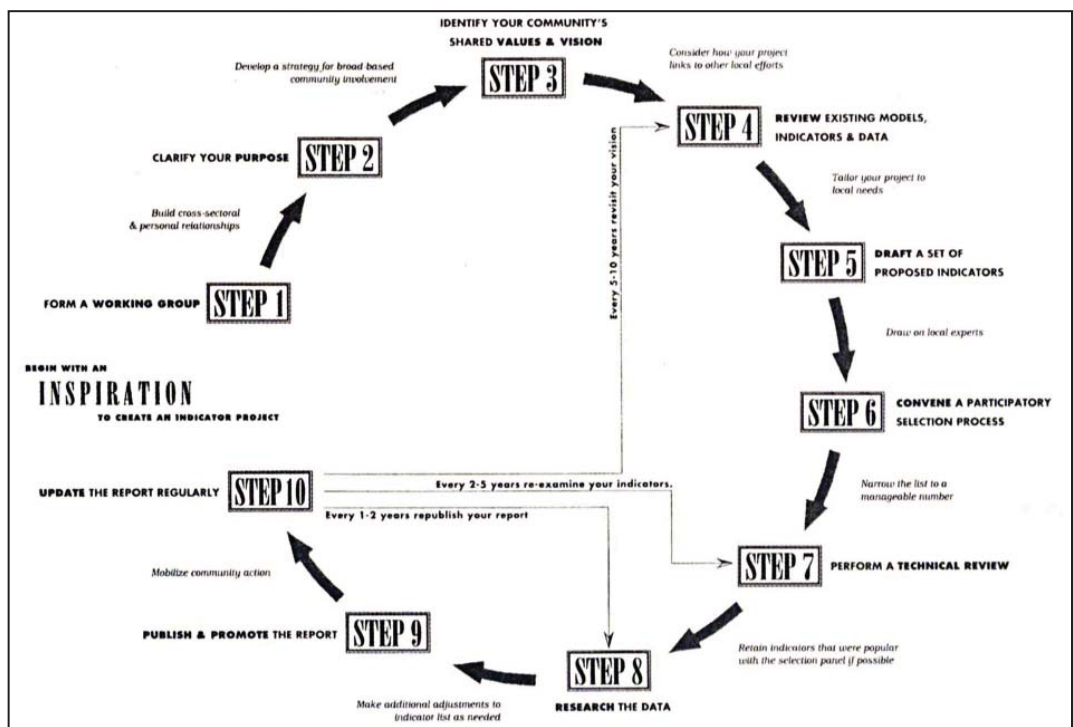
that recognize and celebrate Albert Lea's character and qualities. "Checking off" projects as they are completed are one measure of success, but it is important to look beyond that.

Many of the policies and action steps of this plan are long term oriented and it will seem like progress is waning as the community awaits the next big project to be "checked off." Patience is important as the nature of a Comprehensive Plan is evolutionary and long term.

Through this new Comprehensive Plan, we have begun assembling a "baseline" of quantitative and qualitative information about our community using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology. GIS allows for the spatial representation of information, or more simply said, the ability to map various qualitative and quantitative features relative to geographic relationships. This information can be characterized as "livability" or "community" indicators. Over time, as we build our data and track our progress, we enable greater informed decision making. We are able to use this information to refine our public policy ensuring effectiveness.

At the beginning of this process, we discussed a set of community indicators. Action Step #12 is the beginning of establishing base line community indicators and a system to track and measure our progress in these areas. The first step is to develop a baseline from which we can begin to develop goals around. Step two happens after we have a year or two of data that we can use analyze and base our goals or standards on.

A process for identifying community indicators as outlined in Planning Advisory Service Report #517, published by the American Planning Association.



The following might be used as indicators for success:

Economic Development

Average wages

Job growth

Number of start up businesses

Unemployment rates

Sales volumes

Hotel stays

Growth in taxable valuations

Growth in lease rates for commercial and office uses

Vacancy rates for commercial, industrial and office spaces

Absorption

Ratio of jobs to square feet of building space

Number of households and businesses with access to high-speed internet

Housing

Community reinvestment/investment (annual building permits by permit type and value)

Median housing prices

Median Household Income

Mix of new housing types developed-overall mix

Housing affordability (tied to economic development)

Education

High school graduation rates

Percent of student enrollment (elementary, middle, high)

Mobility (how many students start school year enrolled but don't finish or start midway)

Diversity of student enrollment

Percentage of higher education

Test scores

Average class size
Youth involvement in community activity
Library service measurements

Health and Wellness

Birth rates
Medical admittance
Walkability/bikeability
Social health and family services

Governance

Candidates running for election
Voter participation
Collaborative projects/partnerships
Development project approvals
Citizen satisfaction surveys
Crime rates by type and location

Human Relations

Demographic diversity
Language immersion in schools
Immigrant work force
Crime rates
Number of hours contributed by volunteers
Number of volunteer service clubs

Natural Resources Protection

Air quality
Water quality
Resource Conservation
Energy consumption

Water consumption

Amount of recycled materials used in new construction

Amount of household and business waste reduction

Preservation or loss of agricultural lands

Land Use and Development

Land consumption

Land redevelopment (net increase in units or market value)

Population/housing/employment density

Impervious surface coverage

Infrastructure services (homes and businesses served by technology)

Mobility

Miles of sidewalks

Miles of multi-purpose trails

Accessibility of businesses to sidewalks and trails

Lane miles of roadways by functional class

Traffic delays

Traffic crashes (by type/severity)

Pedestrian/vehicle crashes

Mode Split (trips by car, bike, transit, walk, boat)

Vehicle ownership by household

Infrastructure

Age of improvement (lift station, pipe, well, etc...)

Feet of replaced pipe and new infrastructure

Number of breaks or leaks in system

Level of inflow or infiltration

Peaking patterns of usage

Remaining capacity within system

12. Develop a Means of Measuring Success	
Time Frame	On-going
Core Responsibilities	Technical Staff Boards/Commissions/City Council ALEDA/LBL Action Teams and other Citizen Volunteers
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This action step is listed as an on-going action step. Many of the indicators are already being measured in one form or another by our City staff. However, no coordinated effort exists to be able to analyze the results of the various measurements against one another. This action step is a significant step, and although we don't expect to see immediate results, we will over time be well positioned to tell a better, more accurate and more compelling story of Albert Lea.

Action Step #13. Infrastructure System Master Planning

Our plan envisions a future that includes growth. As we grow, our community infrastructure system must be maintained to accommodate existing and future development. Our policy position guides our public investments towards maintaining and improving our currently in-place and aging infrastructure system. This Action Step is aimed at developing a the detailed system plans that direct our future public infrastructure investments. System plans typically have a shorter shelf life than the broader comprehensive plan. These system plans are dependent also on a sound understanding of the existing infrastructure including age of system component, capacity, service areas, usage and unused capacity among other features.

Using the growth management policy areas and future land use plan information, we can guide where future infrastructure investment goes. System master plans help determine what improvements are necessary in those locations.

13. Infrastructure System Master Planning	
Time Frame	On-going
Core Responsibilities	Technical Staff
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