

Parks, Open Space and Recreation Plan

May 31, 2019

To: Stearns County Park Commissioners

From: Gabrielle Grinde, HKGi

Subject: Stearns County Comprehensive Plan Update

Stearns County is embarking on an update to their Comprehensive Plan. Stearns County has partnered with Hoisington Koepler Group, Inc. (HKGi) and Civicbrand to update the plan.

The Comprehensive Plan sets a path for achieving the County's vision for the future (the year 2040). This document is used by county staff and county leaders as they make future decisions regarding land use regulations and development, natural resources, economic development initiatives, roads, parks and trails, and other community resources. The last plan was adopted in 2008. The Comprehensive Plan is typically updated every ten-years to reaffirm the County's goals and policies, while evaluating community needs and growth projections.

HKGi will lead a discussion at the June 12 Parks Commission meeting. This meeting is intended to present and discuss updates to the ***Parks, Open Space and Recreation Plan*** chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Please review the enclosed information in this memo and the attachments prior to the meeting and come prepared to offer your input. The presentation and discussion will focus on the following items:

- Overview of the Planning Process & Schedule
- Assessment of the Existing System & Past Plans
 - Existing System
 - 2008 Comprehensive Plan
 - Community Input Summary
 - Park Classification
 - Park Access & Coverage
- Discuss Emerging Trends
- Confirm Recommendations for Plan Updates

Planning Process & Schedule

The planning process started in February 2019 and is anticipated to end in late 2020. As part of this effort, Stearns County has established a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee who will oversee the planning process with periodic “check-ins” to discuss plan elements.

Community engagement during the planning process will be used to help identify community needs and interests, and explore ideas for the future. Community input will shape the overall Comprehensive Plan, which is intended to guide long-term decisions over the next twenty years. A community engagement plan has been prepared for this effort and attached for your reference. This is a living document and will be updated on a regular basis.

The title “Shape 2040 Stearns” was selected by the project team in an effort to create a “brand” and “identity” for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. A project website has also been launched to keep residents and stakeholders informed and engaged (shapestearns.com).

Assessment of the Existing System

HKGi has started its assessment of the existing system and past planning efforts. The following items provide a snapshot of this assessment and will be discussed in greater detail at the meeting.

Existing System

Stearns County’s existing system of parks, trails, and open space includes seven (7) parks, four (4) regional trails, six (6) special features, and two (2) open space areas. The County system is supplemented by a number of State forests, Scientific and Natural Areas, and Wildlife Management Areas, as well as city parks and trails. HKGi is working with County staff to verify a more detailed inventory of the County parks and trail system.

2008 Comprehensive Plan

The Parks, Open Space and Recreation Plan chapter of the *2008 Comprehensive Plan* has its origins dating back to the *1989 Recreation Plan*. For example, the *1989 Recreation Plan* is referenced on many occasions and refers back to its park classification system and standards. Our efforts will focus on updating the parks classifications system and standards to better align with today’s best practices and trends.

Community Input Summary

The most recent public survey completed in the fall of 2017 for Stearns County residents includes the following relevant input regarding county parks and trails:

- Quarry Park and the Lake Wobegon Trail are the most popular facilities with over a third of respondents saying they have visited both facilities. Mississippi County Park and Warner Lake Park are close behind with 25% and 16% saying they have visited the parks, respectively.
- Over 90% of respondents indicated the quality of county parks and trails as good, very good, or excellent.

Park Classification

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan has embraced a park classification system from the 1989 Recreation Plan. Park classifications are commonly used to help articulate the type of recreational uses within a county. Table 1 has been revised from the version in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. The local or municipal park classifications have been removed and there are suggestions for combining and removing other classifications. This approach will help align the County’s park and trail system with current classification standards.

Questions for Discussion: Do you agree with the classification of the parks and trails system?

Park Access & Coverage

County and regional parks are typically provided within a 15-30 minute drive, or a 30-45 minute bike ride, of residents. Stearns County has identified the distance of ten miles as a standard for providing park access to residents. The attached **Stearns County Parks, Trails, and Open Space Map** shows that most of the county residents are located within ten miles of a county park or trail. Residents in the western part of the county are located more than ten miles from a county park, which may indicate the need for additional park land in that area. As there has been growth in the Sauk Centre area, this may be the primary location to consider for an additional county park.

Stearns County Park Acreage

Standard	Current Acres (2018)	Estimated 2016 Population	2018 Park Acreage Needs	Projected 2050 Population	Projected 2050 Park Acreage Needs
20 acres per 1,000 population	2,042.34 acres	153,661	3,073.22 acres	161,161	3,223.22 acres
25 Acres per 1,000 population	2,042.34 acres	153,661	3,841.53 acres	161,161	4,029.03 acres

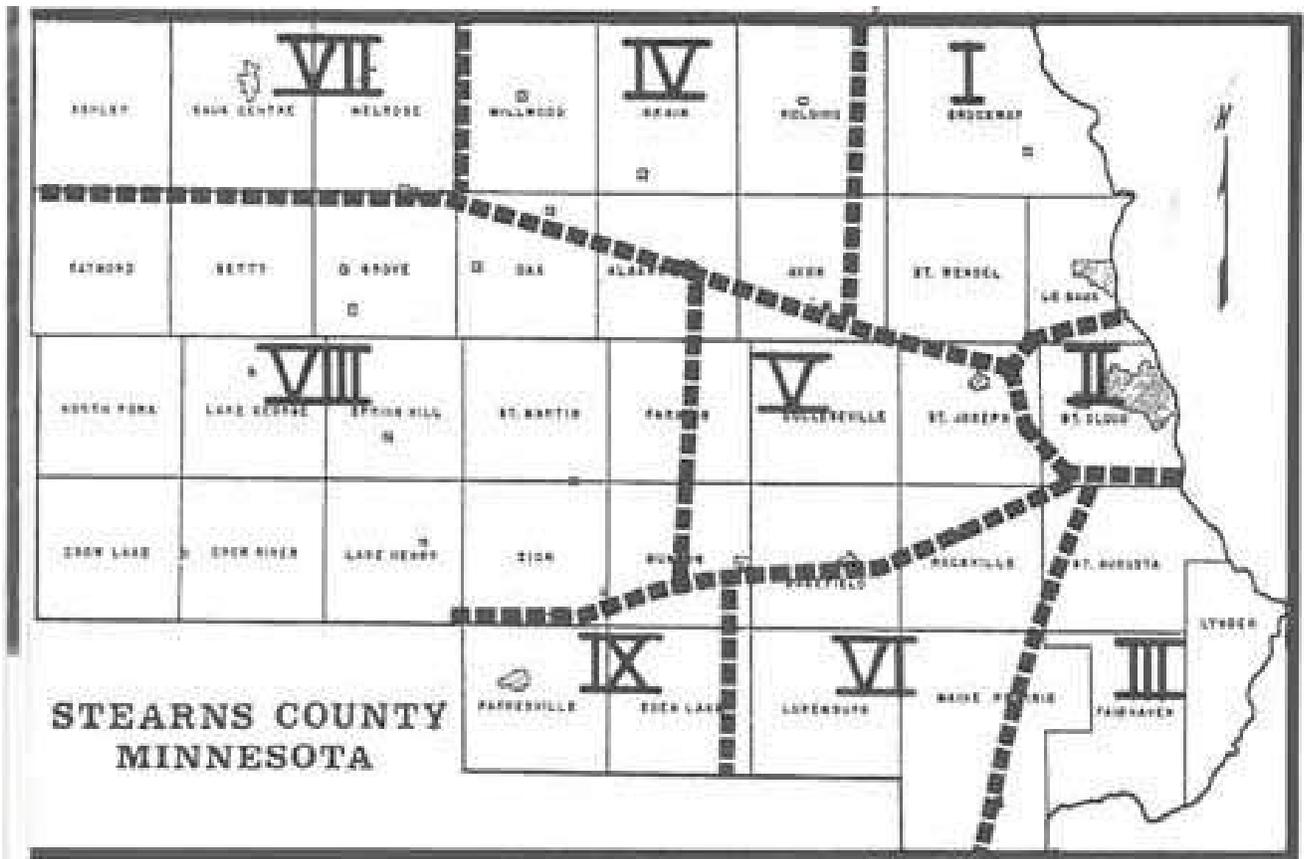
Based on the above evaluation of current park acreage compared to standards for 20 - 25 acres of park land per 1,000 residents, Stearns County needs to add over 1,000 acres of park land to its system to meet current needs. In the next 30 years, this need will grow to 1,200 – 2,000 acres, depending on which standard is used.

Table 1: Revised Park Classification System

Classification	Use	Service Area	Size	Attributes/ Location	Existing Facilities
Linear Park / Greenway / Trail	One or more modes of recreational travel	--	Sufficient width to provide maximum resource protection and use; adequate length for use		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Wobegon Trail • Beaver Island Trail • ROCORI Trail • Dairyland Trail
Special Features	Area for specialized or single-purpose activities – i.e., golf course, nature center, arboretum, historic site, canoe access, wayside, boat landing, etc.	--	As needed for specific purpose	Appropriate to purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Spunk Lake County Park • Fairhaven Mill Park • Lake Sylvia Wayside • St. Martin Canoe Access • Heims Mill Canoe Access • Miller Landing • Clearwater River Canoe Access
County Park	Area of natural or scenic quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation	3-5 communities or 10-mile radius	100 – 500 acres	Complete natural setting, preferably contiguous to water resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarry Park and Nature Preserve • Warner Lake County Park • Mississippi River County Park • Lake Koronis Regional Park • Kraemer Lake Park • Rockville Park • Spring Hill County Park
County Park Reserve	Area of natural or scenic quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation, including significant wildlife habitat and trail access	Countywide	1,000+ acres	Diversity of natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Open Space	Area preserved as natural buffer within urbanizing environment	Community	Variable	Where resource provides relief from contiguous urbanization'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Rivers Lake Park site • Oak Township Park site (New Munich River Wayside)
Conservancy Land	Area of natural quality, preserved for environmental or aesthetic benefits; to avert negative consequences of development	Community	Variable	Significant resources which merit preservation	None – suggest combining this category with County Park Reserve

Below is a copy of the park service area map from the 1989 Recreation Plan, which identifies a need for more park acreage in several service areas, including Service Area VII, where Sauk Centre is located.

Questions for Discussion: Are the 1989 park service areas still relevant or valid? Which standard should Stearns County use to determine how much park land is needed (20 or 25 acres per 1,000 residents)?



Emerging Trends

The following list includes trends that have emerged locally and nationally over the last ten years that serve as potential opportunities for Stearns County. Whether the trends are on the rise or in decline, they are worth discussing as they may affect how Stearns County plans for the future.

National Trends

The *National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) 2019 Agency Performance Review* indicates that in the coming years, park investments will grow compared to the last ten years. This is in comparison to the depressed spending following the 2008 economic downturn. In addition, local government agency tax revenues have been increasing, which provides park agencies with greater economic resources for recreation investments.

Nationwide there has been an increased use of technology for providing recreational services, monitoring use and performance, and collecting data. Impacts can be seen in parks agencies through the use of:

- beacon counters to measure park use
- autonomous vehicles to move people through parks and open spaces
- georeferencing and GPS technology to monitor users and facilities
- drones that photograph facilities as well as deliver food and beverages to park users, assist with public safety monitoring, and mapping natural areas

Changing climate and an increase in severe weather events globally and nationally has had an impact on our environment and outdoor spaces. It is important to recognize this issue and plan for future changes in the climate and environment to reduce economic impacts, mitigate where possible, and adapt as necessary.

Other national trends include a desire and interest in healthy living and access to local foods; an increased concern in the amount of time spent in front of screens and lack of time spent outdoors; and an increased interest in mental health.

Statewide Trends

The *2014-2018 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*, published by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR), gives outdoor recreation decision-makers and managers a focused set of priorities and suggested actions to guide them as they make decisions about outdoor recreation. The *SCORP* outlines outdoor recreation trends, challenges and issues including protecting existing natural resources, sustaining existing facilities, promoting healthy lifestyles, connecting people with nature and an increasing demand for a diverse range of recreation opportunities based upon population changes.

Some challenges identified in the *SCORP* include low population growth in Minnesota compared to the rest of the nation, with the majority of the population growth in the state occurring in the metro area, and especially between Rochester and St. Cloud. This concentrated growth in the more densely populated areas of the state compared to low growth in the rural areas correlates with more interest in

nature-based activities such as fishing and boating, and less interest in activities such as hunting, snowmobiling, and ATV use.

The Minnesota State Demographer states that recent population growth in Minnesota has been increasingly coming from immigration. “While both the U.S.-born population and foreign-born population have grown since 1970, the foreign-born population has swelled more quickly. Minnesota had about 113,000 foreign-born residents in 1990, but that number had more than quadrupled to about 457,200 residents by 2015.”

The *Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission* provide a new funding stream for out-state regional parks and trails by designating State Legacy Funding to be allocated to specific projects. Stearns County has five regionally designated facilities: Kraemer Lake Park, Lake Wobegon Trail, Rockville Park, Quarry Park, and Warner Lake Park.

Regional/County-wide Trends

Emerging trends in regional and county parks and recreation facilities include a continued growth and interest in trails and linear recreation, such as biking, walking, and running. This interest in trails is expected to continue to increase in the coming years. Regional destination trails with amenities and facilities, such as trailheads, campsites, views/overlooks, cultural interpretation, and connections to local breweries and eateries, are becoming more popular statewide.

Physical and mental health have been recognized as important considerations for parks, trails, and recreation programming with county-wide active living plans and Safe Routes to School investments. With an increase in obesity and mental health issues, regional parks have been tasked with providing facilities and programs that help people lead healthier lives.

Counties are dealing with a variety of demographic changes, such as increasing diversity, an aging population, and smaller households and families. These changes indicate a greater need for parks and recreation providers to be flexible in terms of programs and facilities that they are offering to meet the needs of their residents.

In addition to the above trends, a number of recreation facilities and programs are becoming more popular for regional park agencies to provide in their systems:

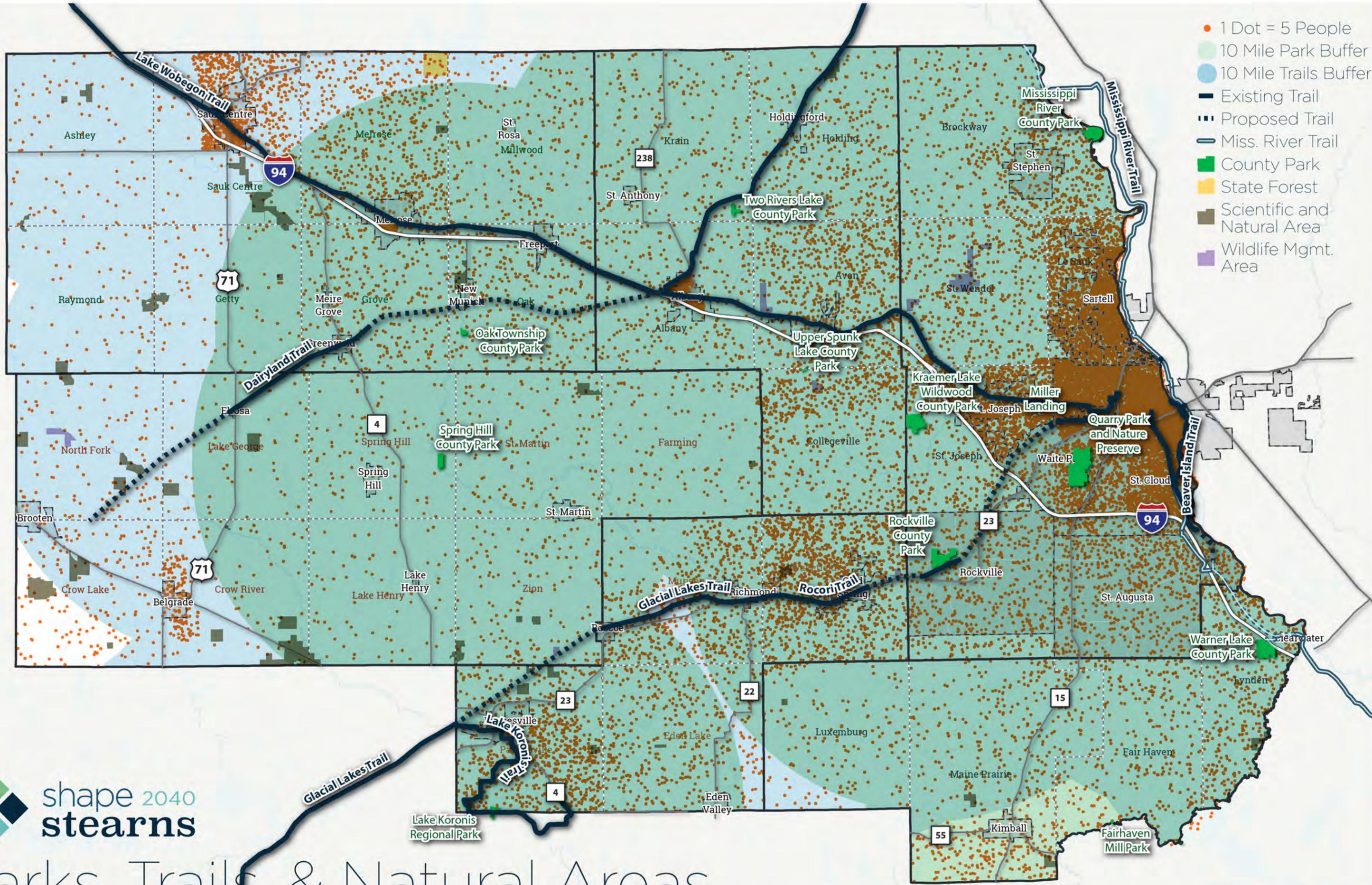
- Outdoor events - trail runs, adventure races
- Aquatic facilities - splash pads, swim ponds, beaches
- Events and experiences - amphitheaters, outdoor wedding facilities, family reunions, festivals
- Efficient operational models – public private partnerships
- Environmental learning - camps, nature centers, naturalist-led programming
- Cultural and natural interpretation – sign panels, overlooks and views, plant identification, arboretums
- Natural resources preservation and restoration - prairies, oak savannas, woodlands
- Adventure recreation - rock climbing, mountain biking
- Unique amenities - off-leash dog parks, disc golf, archery
- Camping - camper cabins, yurts, RVs/campers
- Winter recreation - snow shoeing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling
- Outdoor activities - fishing, boating, canoeing/kayaking

Question for Discussion: What are you seeing or hearing about in terms of recreation trends that should be addressed or considered in Stearns County?

Recommendations for Plan updates

Based on your input tonight and our evaluation of the past comprehensive plan chapter, we will work with staff to make the following updates to the *Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Plan*:

- Update maps and tables with current facilities and information
- Expand information about trends and most recent public input survey
- Remove redundant information
- Remove recommendations that have been completed
- Revise and simplify Goals and Objectives, Policies and Action Items



- 1 Dot = 5 People
- 10 Mile Park Buffer
- 10 Mile Trails Buffer
- Existing Trail
- - - Proposed Trail
- Miss. River Trail
- County Park
- State Forest
- Scientific and Natural Area
- Wildlife Mgmt. Area



Parks, Trails, & Natural Areas

Source: U.S. Census, 2012-2016 ACS, Stearns County



Community Engagement Plan

Stearns County Comprehensive Plan Update

Introduction

Stearns County has partnered with Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc. (HKGi) and Civicbrand to update the current Comprehensive Plan, which was last updated in 2008. The Comprehensive Plan is the guiding document that helps the County grow and develop in a manner that meets the needs of the County and its residents. The plan will serve as a basis for making decisions on future land use regulations and development. A Comprehensive Plan helps to guide residential and economic growth within the County, while also accommodating environmental and agricultural needs. The Stearns County Comprehensive Plan is a county-wide effort that engages residents, townships, business leaders, and other important community partners to help establish a common vision, develop priorities and identify the necessary steps that will help ensure the County reaches its full potential in years to come.

Primary Points of Contact

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Purpose of the Community Engagement Plan

The purpose of the Community Engagement Plan is to define the public engagement process that will support the development of the Comprehensive Plan update. The Community Engagement Plan is centered on an inclusive process that encourages everyone to participate and to motivate those who are not usually engaged to become engaged. Effective public engagement that meets the needs of various stakeholders and provides a meaningful outcome for decision makers is an important step in the overall planning process and will be incorporated from start to finish during the project. The Community Engagement Plan will be updated on a periodic basis.

Community Engagement Objectives and Approaches

Stearns County staff will work with the consulting team (HKGi and Civicbrand) to meet the overall community engagement objectives. Community engagement during the planning process will be used to help identify community needs and interests, and explore ideas for the future. Community input will shape the overall Comprehensive Plan, which is intended to guide long-term decisions over the twenty years.

Community Engagement Objectives:

- Develop branding principles and a project website.
- Utilize effective communication tools accessible to a broad and diverse audience.
- Engage community leaders and underserved populations.
- Ensure the community outreach strategies align with the sequence of project tasks, including key decision points, so that input gathered can meaningfully inform the work products that are developed.
- Include community-based events and activities in locales where Stearns County residents and stakeholders typically gather, including community festivals like the Minnesota Bluegrass Festival and the Stearns County Fair.
- Incorporate online community engagement platforms including, but not limited to, email broadcasts, project website, cable TV, and social media.
- Incorporate electronic outreach tools including Social Pinpoint and Survey Monkey.
- Specifically identify the list of outreach efforts that will occur during the project.



Stakeholders

Stakeholders are defined as all individuals with an interest in the Stearns County Comprehensive Plan update. Included in the group are elected and appointed public officials, community residents, community business owners and employees, and others with a genuine interest in the community. The following section identifies some of the key stakeholders who will be engaged as part of the planning process.

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Stearns County has established a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee who will oversee the planning process with periodic “check-ins” to discuss plan elements. The Steering Committee will also be responsible for “broadcasting the happenings” of this project by promoting the project website and public engagement activities. Steering Committee members will be asked to attend one pop-up event in their community and help distribute materials for informational displays/kiosks. Members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee include:

Name	Association
Tarryl Clark	County Commissioner-District 1
Leigh Lenzmeier	County Commissioner-District 2
Jeff Mergen	County Commissioner-District 3
Joe Perske	County Commissioner-District 4
Steve Notch	County Commissioner-District 5
Jason Weinerman	Planning Commission-District 1
Shawn Blackburn	Planning Commission-District 2
Jason Kron	Planning Commission-District 3
Ken Massmann	Planning Commission-District 4
Mike Proell	Planning Commission-District 5
Richard Blenkush	Planning Commission-At Large
Jeff Bertram	Planning Commission-At Large
LeRoy Gondringer	Agriculture/Feedlot Operator
George Fiedler	Township Official- Brockway (metro)
Gerry Jennissen	Township Official-North Fork (rural)
Tom Schneider	City Administrator- City of Albany
Heidi Stalboerger	Township Zoning Administrator-Wakefield
Jim Bartelme	Coalition of Lake Association President
Mike Williams	County Administrator - Stearns County

The following is a tentative list of anticipated Steering Committee meeting dates.

Meeting	Date	Agenda Topics
Meeting #1	Monday, April 1, 2019	Introduction and orientation to comprehensive planning, the Stearns County Comprehensive Plan update process, branding principles, and the approach to community engagement. Introduce the group to the existing goals and policies.
Meeting #2	Monday, June 24, 2019	Review draft goals and policies, existing conditions, emerging trends, and issues and opportunities.
Meeting #3	Monday, August 5, 2019	Discuss land use and housing elements.
Meeting #4	Monday, October 28, 2019	Discuss parks and natural resource elements.
Meeting #5	Monday, December 2, 2019	Discuss implementation items and priorities.
Meeting #6	Monday, February 24, 2020	Finalize plan and celebrate success.

County Board of Commissioners & Planning Commission

The County Board of Commissioners and the Planning Commission will be updated and engaged during the planning process at various points. Preliminary meeting dates are noted below.

Meeting	Board	Date	Agenda Topics
Update #1	Board of Commissioners	April 23, 2019	Introduction and orientation to comprehensive planning, the Stearns County Comprehensive Plan update process, branding principles, and the approach to community engagement
Update #2	Board of Commissioners	August 20, 2019	Update on the public process and a summary of proposed changes to the plan (e.g., goals and policies).
Update #3	Board of Commissioners	December 10, 2019	Update on the public process and Draft Plan.
Update #4	Planning Commission	March 19, 2020	Review and recommend approval of the Draft Plan.
Update #5	Board of Commissioners	April 9, 2020	Review and approve Draft Plan.

Parks Commission

A total of two meetings will occur with the Parks Commission. The first meeting is anticipated to occur on June 12, 2019. The meeting will focus on emerging trends pertaining to county facilities and exploring how to respond to today’s issues and needs. The final meeting will occur in September. This be an opportunity for the Parks Commission to provide feedback on the draft Parks Plan.

Community Stakeholders

Stakeholders are those individuals or groups who have a vested interest in, or might be interested in or impacted by the outcomes of the Stearns County Comprehensive Plan Update. More importantly, the Stearns County Comprehensive Plan update needs to include historically underrepresented populations, including people in poverty, people of color, recent immigrants and other non-English speakers, children and youth, renters, people with disabilities, young adults, and others.

In order to incorporate a wide spectrum of Stearns County residents in the planning process, the project team and the County will collaborate with community groups and organizations that are focused on serving and representing historically underrepresented people, and build partnerships to help provide the resources needed to fully engage all stakeholders in the plan. Community stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Residents
- Youth
- Faith Community
- Seniors
- Businesses
- Service Clubs
- Underrepresented Stakeholders
- Regional Agencies

Community Engagement Opportunities

Not all stakeholders will be impacted to the same extent or have the same level of interest in the Comprehensive Plan. Identifying the broad range of Stearns County stakeholders will help shape appropriate engagement techniques. The effectiveness of specific engagement methods can vary considerably from one audience to another (see table below). Major groups to engage and methods of engagement most likely to be successful include the techniques discussed throughout this section.

Groups to Engage/Methods	Community Open House	Pop-Up Events	Listening Sessions	Digital Engagement	Media and Print	Informational Displays	Personal Contact
Residents	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Youth		X		X	X	X	
Faith Community	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Seniors	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Businesses		X	X	X	X	X	X
Service Clubs			X	X	X	X	X
Underrepresented Stakeholders		X	X	X	X	X	X
Regional Agencies	X				X		X

Community Open House

A community open house will be held near the end of the planning process. The meeting will be held in a location central in the County, and at a time convenient for most residents. The open house may consist of a combination of large group presentations, small group activities, informational handouts, paper questionnaires, display boards, and staff and consultants available for conversation.

Community Pop-Ups

Community events are one of the most effective forums for engaging residents in the planning process. This approach provides our team an opportunity to be part of the community, while engaging a larger audience that is not typically achieved through a traditional open house format. Therefore, we will look for opportunities to have a booth at community events. The consultant team’s work plan includes time to attend six events. County staff and Steering Committee members are encourage to attend other events. The consultant team will provide the tools and materials for others to attend these meetings. Types of engagement at the booth may include questionnaires, activities, handouts, and poster displays. Planned or potential events include:

- March 7, 2019: Stearns County Farmers Fair (Waite Park from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.)
- August 8 – 11, 2019: Minnesota Bluegrass Festival
- June – August, 2019: Summer by the George!
- August 2019: Boni-Fest: Church of St. Boniface Parish Festival, Cold Spring
- August 2019: Heritage Days, Clearwater
- Church of Seven Dolores Church Bazaar, Albany
- August 2018: Barley Days, Greenwald
- Stearns County Fair, Sauk Centre
- Holdingford Days, Holdingford
- Church of St. Benedict Parish Festival, Avon
- St. Cloud Area Fireworks, St. Cloud
- Liberty Day Block Party, St. Cloud
- Cold Spring Fire Festival, Cold Spring

Pop-ups will be scheduled and tracked using the table below. Please note a pop-up needs to be coordinate and approved by the event organizer.

Pop-Up Events

Community Event	Date and Time	Location	Attendee(s)	Policy Area
Earth Day 5K	4/19/2019	SCSU	Parks Staff	Metro Area
Stearns County Breakfast on the Farm	6/1/2019	Mill Creek Dairy, Main Praire	Lance Bernard, BethyJo Juetten, Chelle Benson	Agricultural/Limited Growth
SummerTime by George	Wednesdays: 6/12-8/28. Up to 2	St. Cloud/Lake George	TBD	Metro Area
Stearns County Fair	7/31, 8/1, 8/2, 8/3, 8/4	Sauk Centre Lake Wobegon Trail (Sauk Centre)	TBD	I-94 Corridor
Caramel Apple Ride	9/14/2019	Albany	TBD	I-94 Corridor
Pioneer Days	9/13, 9/14, 9/15	Albany	TBD	I-94 Corridor
Living in the Avon Hills	February (tentative)	St. Johns	TBD	Avon Hills Natural Resource Area/I-94
Business Event	Date and Time	Location	Attendee(s)	Policy Area
Blattner Energy	TBD	City of Avon	TBD	Avon Hills Natural Resource Area/I-94
Jennie-O	TBD	City of Melrsoe	TBD	I-94 Corridor
Rotochopper/Arnolds Equipment	TBD	City of St. Martin	TBD	Agricultural/Limited Growth
Bayer Built	TBD	Crow River Township	TBD	Southwest Area
Cold Spring	TBD	Wakefield Township	TBD	Highway 23 Corridor

Listening Sessions

Specific groups may be targeted to learn more about specific topics or issues. Listening sessions will be identified and scheduled on an as needed basis with County staff.

Event	Date and Time	Location	Attendee(s)	Materials Needed
Stearns Municipal League	May 21		Jennifer Buc	
Dairy Advisory Committee	May 1		Angie Berg	

Digital Engagement

The project website will serve as a cornerstone for informing and engaging the public. Online engagement is expected to focus initially on general information and general community input; at the mid-point of the planning process, the emphasis will shift to gaining feedback on concepts and ideas; and near the conclusion of the planning process, it will focus on obtaining specific comments on draft sections of the plan.

It is important to recognize digital engagement will need to be balanced with traditional public engagement methods (e.g., meetings and open houses) to capture audiences that do not have access to the internet or a computer.

Online tools will include:

Project Website

The URL for the project website is <http://shapestearns.com/>. The project team has also secured the URL shapestearns2040.com.

Social Pinpoint

Social Pinpoint will be used to engage people who prefer to participate electronically. It features an interactive map that will allow users to offer comments on a number of topics. Three phases of Social Pinpoint are anticipated.

Social Pinpoint Web Link: Pending

Social Media

From time to time, County staff will update the County's Facebook page(s) with Comprehensive Plan information, such as public meeting notices and online engagement links.

Social Media Web Links:

- www.facebook.com/StearnsCounty/

Email Updates

Email updates will be sent to interested parties throughout the project. Email addresses will be collected through the project website and during community events through sign-in-sheets.

Media and Print

The County will use internal communication tools and work with local media outlets to distribute information on the comprehensive plan process and to promote dates and times for in-person and digital engagement opportunities.

Press Releases

For key events during the planning process, a press release will be distributed to various media outlets. The press release will provide general information about the project, encourage local interest and support, and urge interested parties to visit the project website, attend public engagement, events and participate in online questionnaires.

- St. Cloud Times Contact: Jenny Berg, Neighborhoods/City Issues Reporter - jberg@stcloudtimes.com
- West Central Tribune Contact: Carolyn Lang (CLange@wctrib.com)
- Cold Spring Record Contact: csrecord@midconetwork.com
- Albany Enterprise Contact: (320) 845-2700
- Melrose Beacon Contact: (320) 351-6579
- Sauk Centre Herald Contact: (320) 352-6577

County Newsletter

The County's newsletter will be used to provide information about the Comprehensive Plan process, key activities and available engagement opportunities. Deadline dates for the newsletter are as follows:

- Spring (April) 2019: Deadline March 9, 2019
- Fall (September) 2019: Deadline August 9, 2019
- Spring (April) 2020: Deadline March 6, 2020

Business Cards

The consultant team will provide County staff, Steering Committee members, and elected officials project business cards. The business cards can be distributed at their discretion to help promote the project. The business cards will include the project website link and contact information.

Cable TV

Cable television may be used to provide information about the planning process. Content could air on Charter Cable Channel 8 and 10, and US Cable Channel 10. Other opportunities may include St. Cloud State University’s UTVS.

Radio

Radio ads may be used to provide information about the planning process. Content could air on KVSC 88.1, KCLD 104.7, WWJO 98.1, KLZZ 103.7, and KZPK 98.9. This strategy will need to be explored further. Radio ads typically cost a fee.

Informational Display at Gathering Places

Posters and other project information may be displayed at various convenient locations including but not limited to the following:

- High schools, Middle Schools, and Elementary Schools
- Retail Centers (e.g., malls, department stores or grocery stores)
- Faith Based Institutions
- Parks
- County, City and Township Government Offices
- Restaurants

Materials will be provided to County staff and Steering Committee members to leave at public gathering places. Steering Committee members will be responsible for targeting at least one location. The posting of materials should be coordinated and approved by the property owner.

Location	Posted By	Date Posted	Date Removed

Personal Contacts

Input from some stakeholders may be solicited best through individual contacts such as phone calls, emails, and meetings. These stakeholders may include individual businesses, public and private schools, and adjacent communities. Outreach to these stakeholders will occur as needed throughout the project to inform them about the project, solicit input on issues and needs, and seek input on potential code sections. These personal contacts will also be used to inform stakeholders of opportunities to participate in focus groups/stakeholder meetings and open houses. Personal contacts need will be coordinated between the project team and County staff.

Community Engagement Schedule

We anticipate the community engagement activities to occur during three phases:

- **Phase 1 (General Information Gathering): April/May 2019**
Participants will be asked to weigh in on what they consider to be the strengths of the community, challenges that may need to be addressed, and opportunities that will make Stearns County a better place in the future. Specific comments will be sought regarding rural/agrarian lifestyles, parks and recreation, housing and county assets.
- **Phase 2 (Explore Ideas): August/September 2019**
Participants will be offered the opportunity to review emerging ideas and concepts and to offer comments. Specific topics are yet to be determined.
- **Phase 3 (Review Implementation Strategies and Draft Plan) – January/February 2020**
Near the end of the planning process after a draft Comprehensive Plan has been completed, participants will have the opportunity to review and comment on the draft. Feedback will be used to help refine the final plan.

Project Logo and Branding

The title “Shape 2040 Stearns” was selected by the project team in an effort to create a “brand” and “identity” for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Materials and documents prepared as part of this project will be required to use the project logo, font style, and color palette described on the next page.