

## **6.0 LAND USE GUIDE PLAN**

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### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Independence Land Use Guide Plan is a result of four decades of municipal planning activity, citizen's involvement and reasonable decision-making. This plan responds to the variety of social, economic and environmental forces at work in the City. The Plan is multi-faceted in that it considers regional, state and county plans; coordinates with adjacent municipal, watershed and government agency plans; balances competing forces of development, environment, private citizen and community wide needs; and serves as a principal local decision making tool.

In order to accomplish this broad range of purposes, the City has developed guidelines for local development, enacted protective regulations for environmentally sensitive lands, completed studies and plans for future transportation and utility needs, and made a commitment to continue as an active participant in shaping the growth of the community.

The Plan utilizes two basic planning areas in the City, a rural residential area and a rural reserve area. The Plan recognizes certain evolving trends and eventualities:

- Independence is a growing community.
- Growth is placing new demands on City transportation facilities and City services

The plan is built on a series of priorities that evolved through public participation and issue development. These basic Plan tenets are:

- Protect environmentally sensitive areas
- Protect local agriculture
- Expand local opportunities of commerce and industry
- Expand housing opportunities
- Empower the local community to control its future
- Diversify the local tax base
- Utilize in-place infrastructure and systems whenever possible

The Comprehensive Land Use Guide Plan will function to define the relationship of natural resources and land use development decisions as well as coordinate with zoning laws and other regulations to provide logical, efficient and effective decision-making. The Plan is also an intergovernmental document, coordinating the City's plans with regional, county and adjacent municipal planning activities. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan is shown on Figure 7.

Figure 7: Comprehensive Land Use Plan

## **6.2 GENERAL LAND USE**

The Land Use Plan map is projected to 2030 and is very similar to the two previous comprehensive plan maps. An exception is that the westerly Rural Residential line has been moved approximately one-fourth mile to the west to allow for additional growth by changing the designation of about 750 gross acres from Agriculture (Rural Reserve) at one unit per 40 acres to Rural Residential at one unit per five acres. Moving the line also puts all contiguous property holdings of landowners in one designation. To offset the expansion of the Rural Residential, there is approximately 1,500 acres of Agricultural Preserve (1 residence per forty acres) that will remain east of and within the Rural Residential area.

The map defines the preferred future development pattern for the City. The plan designates two primary planning areas. The agriculture (rural reserve) area is planned to protect agriculture as an ongoing way of life. It encourages a rural character by utilizing large lot development, cluster development design, protection of environmentally sensitive areas and no extension of urban services. The map is meant to provide a graphic guide when considering rezoning, planned unit development, conditional use, subdivision and other land use requests.

### **Land Use Allocation**

Table 18 provides data showing existing land use and planned land use in five-year increments, based on the land use plan:

**Table 18**  
**Current and Future Land Use, Independence: 2007 – 2030**

Urban Uses (Sewer)	Allowed Density Range Housing Units/Acre		Existing (2007)	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2007- 2030
	Minimum	Maximum							
<b>Residential Land Uses</b>			<b>326</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>363</b>
Low Density Residential			326	326	371	416	461	506	180
Urban Residential	4.1	7	0	0	15	31	76	183	183
<b>C/I Land Uses</b>	Est. Employees/Acre		<b>115</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>178</b>
Commercial/Industrial	1.5 per acre existing		115	115	145	174	203	233	118
Urban Commercial	20 per net acre sewer		0	0	15	30	45	60	60
<b>Public/Semi Public Land Uses</b>			<b>3,272</b>	<b>3,272</b>	<b>3,269</b>	<b>3,267</b>	<b>3,265</b>	<b>3,262</b>	<b>-10</b>
Institutional, Parks and Rec			2,135	2,135	2,132	2,130	2,128	2,125	-10
Roadway Rights of Way			1,137	1,137	1,137	1,137	1,137	1,137	0
<b>Rural Uses</b>	<b>Minimum lot size</b>	<b>Maximum lot size</b>	<b>Existing (2007)</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2007- 2030</b>
Rural Residential	less than 5	5 acres	1,664	1,664	1,674	1,684	1,694	1,704	40
Rural Residential 5-39 acres	5 acres	40 acres	7,403	7,403	7,642	7,880	8,108	8,313	910
Agricultural 40 acres+	40 acres	none	7,531	7,531	7,279	7,026	6,773	6,520	-1,011
Undeveloped			671	671	572	474	357	201	-470
Open Water, Rivers, Streams	--	--	1,418	1,418	1,418	1,418	1,418	1,418	0
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>18,687</b>	<b>18,687</b>	<b>18,585</b>	<b>18,482</b>	<b>18,350</b>	<b>18,156</b>	<b>-470</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>22,400</b>	<b>22,400</b>	<b>22,400</b>	<b>22,400</b>	<b>22,400</b>	<b>22,400</b>	<b>0</b>
Wetlands	--	--	6,108	6,108	6,108	6,108	6,108	6,108	0

Source for 2007 Existing Land Use: City of Independence Assessor; Hennepin County

**Table 19**  
**Future Land Use, Independence: 2010 – 2030**

Existing and Future Land Use (Acres)		
	2010	2030
Agriculture	7,531	6,520
Rural Residential	9,393	10,523
Urban Residential	0	183
Commercial/Industrial	115	233
Urban Commercial	0	60
Public/Semi-Public	3,272	3,262
Open Water	1,418	1,418
Undeveloped	671	201
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,400</b>	<b>22,400</b>

## **6.3 INDEPENDENCE LAND USE CATEGORIES**

### **Agriculture (Rural Reserve) District**

Agriculture, horse ranches, hobby farms and landscape operations will continue to be a principal land use component in the City. Agriculture including grain crops, truck farms and the raising of beef, swine and turkeys will be encouraged to remain a vital component in the local mix of people and commerce. It is anticipated that the number and amount of agricultural operations will continue to diminish due to ongoing socio-economic trends and rising land prices. However, it is the belief that it is the best interest of the citizens of Independence to engage in specific measures to protect the local agricultural community.

The area guided for agriculture places commercial agriculture as the highest land use priority that is supplemented by uses that preserve large expanses of permanent open space. Those secondary uses include golf courses, nature preserves and public parks. Property owners are encouraged to place their land in agriculture preserves or green acres. No restrictions on non-commercial agricultural operations concerning dust, odor or hours of operation will be applied to these lands.

To preserve long-term agricultural operations, the Plan allows a 1 per 40-acre maximum density of development in the Agriculture District. This allows owners the option of enrolling in the Metropolitan Agricultural Preserves Program. Any farm requesting designation as an agricultural preserve property must file for such status with the City, and the land will be so designated.

### **Rural Residential District**

The rural residential comprises approximately the eastern one third of the City. Land in this district will be used and developed so as to preserve its open, scenic and natural characteristics as well as its ecological and economic functions. A majority of this low-density residential area is located around Lake Independence, Lake Sarah and adjacent to Maple Plain.

Unlike the predominance of land being utilized for agricultural operations in the west, this area has been developing with a large lot estate character. While on-going agricultural operations and hobby farming are encouraged to continue in this area, it is anticipated that the aesthetic amenities of eastern Independence will continue to draw persons desiring a more spacious residential lifestyle.

To accommodate this growth, residential development is planned to occur at an “8 per 40” density. Traditionally this would translate into 5-acre lots. The City is a proponent of a more creative subdivision process, which would include clustering of homes on no less than 2-1/2 acre lots, but with open space and scenic viewshed components incorporated into the subdivision design. Within the Rural Residential District there is approximately 1,500 acres of land that is currently in the Agriculture Preserve program. Consistent with past plans, land designated Agriculture Preserve will have a minimum density of 1 unit per 40 acres. Agricultural Preserves are protected by State Statute at a maximum density of 1 unit per 40 acres. At the petition of the

owner, the land within the Agriculture Preserve area can be removed from the Agriculture Preserve in accordance with all applicable program standards. Following the removal of property from the Agriculture Preserve program, the underlying land will be guided for Rural Residential.

Single-family residential development should be located adjacent to existing residential concentrations, filling in any previous “leap frog” developments. In this way growth can be guided in conjunction with logical and economic extensions of urban services.

The City of Independence is endowed with an abundance of natural resources including many natural lakes. These lakes are under siege and the three largest, located partly in the City of Independence, are classified as impaired because they fail to meet one or more federal water quality standards. Lake Rebecca Regional Park surrounds the portion of Lake Rebecca in Independence but the land in Independence along the shores of Lake Sarah and Lake Independence is largely privately owned. Many of the single-family dwellings along the shores of Lake Sarah and some along Lake Independence are connected to the metropolitan sewer system but a number are serviced with individual septic treatment systems.

To eliminate and prevent further contamination of Lake Sarah and Lake Independence, as well as the streams and groundwater around the portion of these lakes in Independence, the area around the lakes is informally being designated as the Environmental Protection Residential area. Lots with individual septic treatment systems that are not in compliance with current state and local requirements will be encouraged to connect to an approved community sewage treatment system or, if already available, to the metropolitan sewer system (See Figures 10 and 11). All connections to the metropolitan sewer system will be required to follow the Metropolitan Council’s revised Municipal Urban Service Area Guidelines. Lots of record will be allowed to develop at existing densities but new construction will be required to comply with the Shoreland Management Ordinance.

### Urban Residential District

Single-family detached residences comprise 98% of the housing in the community. Currently there is a mix of starter homes (modest cost entry level housing), mid-range and executive homes. There are few vacancies and a limited number of rental units in the community. While this housing serves the needs of current residents of the City it does not provide for people’s housing needs as they move through different phases of their lives.

It is the intention of the plan to encourage at least 5% low and moderate income housing, a mixture of types and styles, and, to a degree, a mixture of densities. To encourage alternative types of housing to accomplish the goals of providing life cycle housing and affordable housing a medium density residential area is being designated immediately north of Maple Plain that would be serviced with utilities from the either Medina, Maple Plain or a combination of the two. The city anticipates that a more detailed land use study and plan will be prepared to facilitate the development of this urban residential area. When this occurs, the City will be able to more accurately determine the projected demand that this area will have for services and how and from where the services will be provided. Services to be studied will include utilities, transportation

and public services. The City has received preliminary feedback from the adjacent communities who have conceptually agreed to the proposed land use. The greater part of development in this area will occur between 2020 and 2030. This approximately 200 gross acre area is designated for medium density ranging from 4.1 to 7 dwelling units per acre and presents the City with sensible locations for affordable and alternative housing opportunities. This area is not intended to compete with redevelopment of downtown Maple Plain, but rather compliment the proposed land uses and business district. A zoning district that implements this land use designation will need to be developed to provide further specifics including limits on actual density and structure type as well as setbacks, design parameters and staging.

### Commercial/Industrial

Much of the area identified on the Guide Plan map for commercial and industrial use is presently undeveloped. Rather than designating a specific area as industrial or commercial, the City recognizes new business development can be most effectively accomplished through a planned development design process. Technology industries are many times best suited in mixed-use business parks. Given the environmental constraints common throughout Independence, design flexibility is a key component to achieving the employment base, local services and environmental protection the City desires.

While the City will encourage development and intense utilization of the buildable land in the designated commercial/industrial area, several design factors are included in the development process:

- Development must appropriately address surface runoff and potential groundwater contamination.
- Development must meet high standards of landscaping and building design.
- As development occurs, new development should relate building design, which is complimentary to existing structures, landscaping, and circulation design.
- Business should be kept in good physical repair including exterior appearance and appropriate landscaping.
- Direct access to T.H. 12 should be kept to a minimum, joint use of parking areas and access driveways are strongly encouraged.

Three factors govern the site selections for local industry: adjacent land use, transportation access, and site conditions. Proper locations of industry are imperative to ensuring a safe, healthy and economically sound community. The requirements for roadways, appropriate parking facilities, building/land relationships, setbacks, and environmental safeguards are all exceedingly important in choosing proper site locations for industry. New industrial sites should be part of an orderly progression of land use. “Clean and quiet” industrial uses should be especially encouraged to locate in the area.

The City’s has approximately 120 acres of land available to develop for industrial use. This industrially guided land is anticipated to meet the community’s industrial land use needs to 2030.

## Urban Commercial

A 60-acre area along T.H. 12 in the western part of the City is designated as urban commercial to allow for the natural extension of commercial services from the shopping areas to the west in Delano. No other community commercial services are provided within the municipal limits of Independence to avoid duplication of existing and future services provided in the City of Maple Plain and Delano. This area will be master-planned and served with sanitary sewage treatment, water and storm sewer from an on-site system or connection to an adjacent community.

No convenience commercial centers (gasoline station, repair, laundry, dry cleaning, superette, etc.) are specifically designated on the plan. However, they may be located in areas designated for highway/industrial commercial development. Spot or strip commercial development of this nature shall be discouraged.

## Public/Semi Public

This planned land use category includes institutional facilities used for religious, governmental, educational, social and health care purposes as well as land used for parks, recreation, open space, utilities and railway.

## Housing

The Metropolitan Council has identified new affordable housing needs for all cities and townships within the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area for the period from 2011-2020. The housing plan element of local comprehensive plans is required to reflect the allocated portion of the forecasted demand for affordable housing. The City's share of this allocation is 40 affordable housing units.

Independence is fortunate to have some inventory of existing affordable housing within the community. In order to accommodate the additional affordable housing needs, a new Urban Residential zoning district will be established directly adjacent to the City of Maple Plain. Independence will incorporate a set of tools and regulations into the new zoning standards for this district to promote housing affordability. The tools that will be incorporated into the new Urban Residential zoning district in the City include the following:

- Planned Unit Development—to allow more flexibility to develop multiple unit types on a range of lot sizes and with varying price points.
- Density bonuses—to promote higher quality development at more affordable prices.
- Existing Housing Stock – Independence will continue to support the maintenance of the existing housing stock.

As growth continues to occur within the City, a substantial inventory of both new and existing affordable housing units should be maintained. A large portion of this inventory will be found in

existing housing stock. Independence will be able to accommodate the projected demand for 40 additional affordable new housing units during this planning period. Independence anticipates using the aforementioned tools to promote the development of affordable housing within the community. The City should consider working with existing owners to maintain and enhance the existing housing stock. The City may consider applying for grants and looking for other funding mechanisms and partners (Minnesota Housing) that could promote the maintenance and enhancement of existing structures.

## **7.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

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The community facilities improvements planned for the City in the next decade are focused on maintenance and upgrading of existing facilities. Recent residential growth has caused an increase in service demands by local residents, which can only be met by expanded service capability.

### **7.1 TRANSPORTATION**

The Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan is a vital ingredient in the mix of components directing land use in the City. The transportation system of the City should meet the needs of local citizens without creating unnecessary negative impacts on the community. Transportation planning involves predicting future development, traffic analysis, safety considerations, maintenance and repair needs and interagency cooperation. The Transportation Plan is shown on Figure 8. Hennepin County is projecting 2030 traffic for many roadways in the County and, when completed, those projections will be shown on the plan. All the land area in the City of Independence is in the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Analysis Zone 638.

The Transportation Element of the Plan joins local, county and regional transportation planning efforts. It is interactive with proposed land use changes. There is recognition that the region is not planning any new major arterials and that state and federal monies are less readily available than in the past. Therefore a primary component of the local plan is to remain respectful of in-place infrastructure and rely on the backbone system of County and State roads. To this end the transportation component minimizes any expansion of this local system and includes projected County plans.

#### **Functional Roadway Classification System**

The Metropolitan Council functional classification system consists of five classes of roadways:

##### **Principal Arterial**

The principal arterial system is the foremost element in the roadway network. Principal arterials are used to connect the sub-regions in the Urban Service Area with each other as well as connect the Metro Area to outstate centers. Principal arterials should not connect to collectors or local