

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Independence is located in western Hennepin County, 20 to 25 miles west of Minneapolis. The gently rolling terrain, rural residential and agriculturally oriented land use patterns are perhaps the two most distinguishing features of the community. Interspersed throughout the community are lakes, streams and wetlands.

The City was organized in 1858 as rural township. The tradition of farming has continued to the present and the raising and keeping of livestock, particularly horses, is increasing. There has been an on-going conversion of land in the City to rural residential use. Properties surrounding Lake Sarah, Lake Independence and adjacent to the City of Maple Plain have been subdivided into residential home sites. The result is a blend of commercial agriculture, large lot residences, hobby farms and a modest amount of commercial/industrial development.

T.H. 12 bisects Independence southeasterly by northwesterly. The City of Maple Plain is surrounded on three sides by Independence and acts much as a local downtown for many residents. The growing community of Delano and Franklin Township are west of Independence in Wright County. With these cities adjacent to Independence, few large industrial or commercial businesses have located within the City. The cities of Greenfield, Medina, Orono and Minnetrista abut Independence on the north, northeast, southeast and south, respectively.

Independence planning efforts and zoning controls over the last several decades coupled with more recent planning of the Metropolitan Council to preserve land for urban development have forestalled "leap-frog" urban sprawl development. The orderly development prescribed in the past has helped retain agriculture and facilitated the location of hobby farms and large lot residential development. These controls were originally chosen by the community to retain its rural character and small town, neighborly charm.

It is against this historical background of the city as a farming community in a growing urban county that this Comprehensive Plan is written. Suburbanization of the Twin Cities metropolitan area has focused growth pressure on the outer ring communities. Independence has affirmed that it wants a high standard of environmental quality, clean water and air, abundant open space and beneficial economic growth. By refining plans which direct and control growth in specified areas of the community, the City will be able to maintain its present beauty and promote an environment that is beneficial to the health, prosperity, and welfare of all residents.

This plan for the growth of Independence is a guide and should be changed as changing circumstances dictate. The citizens of Independence will determine what their future development should be, by suggesting plans and alternatives that they and their public officials can put into action.