

Meeting Notes

Forest Lake Task Force Meeting #1

May 23, 2017

6:30 pm – Introduction and Icebreaker Activity

6:40 pm – Role of the Task Force and Comprehensive Plan

6:50 pm – Current Conditions

7:20 pm – SWOT Analysis

8:10 pm – Review of and Suggestions for Community Survey

8:30 pm – Schedule Task Force Meeting #2 and Adjourn

Questions and Concerns about Current Conditions

- Concern with population projections being too high, especially after the optimistic projections last comprehensive planning cycle and the Recession
- Millennials not acting like their parents, not going for large lots like models suggest
- How to plan for the current 45-55 population? This is currently a large portion of Forest Lake's population that will be aging up. Need to address services in the City.
- The school district the largest employer in the City? Not all jobs located within the City, spread out across the district and cities so it doesn't show in our employment data.
- Housing make-up is a holdover from township and annexation; multifamily housing was discouraged in township zoning.
- Not overly concerned about meeting housing affordability goals
 - Arbor Ridge will have 73 units , naturally affordable
 - Workforce housing in development pipeline
- Some concerns with population and household growth with current on-call fire department

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Unique restaurants and water front dining
- I-35 above the split is a regional hub, good proximity to amenities and access to region
- Vibrant Chamber of Commerce
- Area hub for businesses
- Lakes
- Wildlife habitat and scenery
- Regional and state park
- Good schools
- Multi-generational
- Small town feel
- Approachable government
- Development moving toward a lively downtown
- Close proximity to Running Aces
- Great community organizations
- Strong community
- Events in City bring community together
- Airport in town, and it's growing
- 3 golf courses

Weaknesses

- Downtown not walkable
- Access to I-35 (need additional access)
- Annexation history
- Mass of wetlands, development is expensive
- Wetlands limit commercial expansion
- Limited property for redevelopment on Broadway
- Age, location, and distribution of existing sewer and water infrastructure
- Access to cheap gas
- Traffic patterns on 12th
- Need large amounts of land to develop due to need for water quality ponds
- No shopping within walking distance of Highway 61/Clear Lake
- Reluctance to spend government money (oppose everything)
- Willingness to spend government money no matter what (approve everything)
- Size of lots in business park are too small
- Not enough space for bigger development
- Lack of overnight lodging
- Internet and Broadband

Opportunities

- Regional stormwater ponds
- State and County regional parks and trails
- Additional access to I-35
- New land use patterns near potential I-35 access
- Expand depth of commercial designation on Broadway
- Getting people to live downtown
- Downtown redevelopment, lengthen 61 and extend west to create a downtown personality
- Trails in the eastern half of City
- Staycation destination
- Clear transition of housing types, potential development with MUSA south of headwaters (Fenway), north/south corridors
- Fenway Avenue connection to Oneka Parkway in Hugo, good access and growth
- Active city role
- Burger and beer casual dining option, preferably near/on lake
- Expansion of transit and adjacent commercial area
- Growth in neighboring communities to strengthen commercial/retail
- Workforce training and education matching to build and strengthen workforce
- Higher education options
- Medical industry, connections with Fairview Regional Hospital
- Amenities to appeal to people working from home
- Spend public funds wisely
- Embrace lake side of business as entrance

Threats

- Poor lake quality
- Keeping Wildlife Management Areas open
- Housing relative to Broadway potential expansion
- High gas prices limiting growth

- Not enough young families to keep school district strong
- Lack of workforce
- Intermittent Internet and cable
- Aging population, lack of housing
- Conflicting transit and mobility service (jurisdictions and county boundaries limit mobility and connections)
- Lack of parking

Suggestions for Community Survey

- Review comments from April Open House to help form community survey with questions and prompts
- Gauge interest for various amenities
- List attributes within 15-20 miles, assess what residents use
- Entertainment options, especially for younger generations and non-lake users
- Proposed questions
 - “Do you see yourself living in Forest Lake when you are in your 40s? 50s? 60s?”
 - What would keep you/your kids in Forest Lake?
 - What barriers do you/your kids have to staying in Forest Lake?
 - “Why did you chose to move to Forest Lake?”
 - Have you considered moving? If so, why?
 - What was the last reason you left Forest Lake (excluding work and school)?
 - Does Forest Lake do enough to preserve water resources?

Comprehensive Plan Task Force Meeting #2
June 27, 2017
6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
Forest Lake Conference Room, City Hall
Meeting Minutes

- I. Introductions – 6:30
- II. Review Meeting Notes from May 23, 2017 – 6:35
 - a. Millennial trends: cannot paint a broad picture. Note difference between not wanting large houses vs. not wanting large lots
 - b. Clarifying on-call fire department concerns – volunteers need to live within 6 miles of fire station (limiting who can be a volunteer). As population grows, another fire station may be needed
 - c. Strength and Opportunity in City parks too
 - d. Weakness of no walkable **grocery** shopping near Highway 61 or Clear Lake **or downtown**
 - e. Lack of workforce across the board, not focusing on any specific industry or occupation
- III. Review S.W.O.T Analysis Results – 6:45
 - a. Lack of walk and bike on 97, 61 and 50
 - b. Opportunity for tourism, allow B & Bs, Airbnb
 - c. Washington County has lower unemployment rate than the state average
 - d. Poverty rates that high? – Reviewed last meeting’s PowerPoint slide
 - e. Weakness of limited downtown development: What do you consider downtown? Tenure in Forest Lake may dictate what you consider downtown. The Imagery of Downtown area will only carry so far.
 - f. Comparison to White Bear Lake economically? Is this what we want?
 - g. Backside of downtown businesses (facing lake) are “dumpy” and is a parking lot.
- IV. Community Survey – 7:00
 - a. Some concern online “pop-up” survey has not been well publicized or promoted
 - b. Some concern about community survey not going to be mailed – some discussion of mailing postcards with website link instead
 - c. Task force to think about publicizing about the survey and encouraging responses.
 - d. Jane marked up survey in real time with edits, will format in the coming week

- V. Next Task Force Meeting - 8:45
 - a. Slated for September, after survey closes
 - b. Another meeting will be scheduled in the fall too, focus on goals and policies

Comprehensive Plan Task Force Meeting #3
October 17, 2017
Forest Lake Conference Room, City Hall
Meeting Minutes

- I. Introduction – 6:30
- II. Review of Meeting Notes from June 27, 2017 – 6:35
- III. Summary of Community Survey Results – 6:40
 - a. Jane provided highlights and summary of community survey, detailed results included in meeting agenda.
 - b. Some surprise and disappointment over low number of respondents.
 - c. Discussion of how survey results will influence and be incorporated into comprehensive plan.
 - d. Discussion about how to encourage more participation in future engagement and upcoming comprehensive planning efforts.
- IV. Review Vision and Goals – 7:10
 - a. Read through and discussed preliminary language for overall comprehensive plan/community vision for the future, comprehensive plan guiding principles, and overarching goals.
 - b. Instant polling was used to gauge overall opinion towards goals, help guide more detailed discussion of edits and concerns.
 - c. Jane and Sarah took notes of edits and will update document to reflect discussed changes, change verb tense/tone to present or future.
 - d. Updated document will be sent to task force to mark-up and return before the next task force meeting.
 - e. Most discussion about vision, comprehensive plan guiding principles, and overarching land use and housing goals.
 - i. “Regional hub” – what do we mean by this?
 - ii. Downtown personality
 - iii. Physical downtown/historic downtown vs. commercial corridors
 - iv. “Accessibility and mobility” to be key in transportation goals, provides flexibility and encompasses all transportation modes.
 - f. Survey of priority for City in the next 10 year – Task force voted pretty evenly across all categories presented; slightly higher for commercial growth and lower for park development. Noted that industrial/manufacturing development was missing from options.
- V. Mapping Exercise – 8:10

- a. Large maps of future land use and roadways/transportation were spread out on the table. Markers were provided to mark-up, draw, and make notes on the boards.

VI. Next Task Force Meeting and Adjourn – 8:30

- a. Last meeting will be in 3 to 4 weeks.
- b. Jane will send out Survey Monkey poll with a couple potential dates. Task force will vote on which dates work best with their schedules.
- c. Jane will send out Metropolitan Council housing criteria required for the comprehensive plan.

Comprehensive Plan Task Force Meeting #4
November 28, 2017
Forest Lake Conference Room, City Hall
Meeting Minutes

- I. Introduction – 6:30
- II. Review of Meeting Notes from October 17, 2017 – 6:35
- III. Review Vision and Goals – 6:40
 - a. Jane did not receive many comments through email between task force meetings. One mark-up was returned at the meeting.
 - b. Concern about housing goals being too vague
 - i. Want to include more specific language about affordable, senior home ownership options. Proposed objective: “expand affordable, senior owner-occupied housing options”
 - ii. Concern about ratio of rental to ownership properties.
 - 1. Sarah will double check data, making sure to include single family rentals alongside multifamily: US Census data has about 75% owner occupied/25% renter occupied.
 - c. Want to incorporate more healthy living and food access goals
 - i. Can include in parks and trails section (healthy living/activity) and maybe economic development (food access, grocery stores and/or supporting local food sources)
 - ii. Will work with Jamie at City to draft healthy living goals and objectives
 - d. Desire to include some stronger language to protect agricultural land. Suggestion to preserve “ecologically and agriculturally significant areas/resources” in existing natural resource and land use goals
- IV. Mapping Exercise – 7:00
 - a. The task force broke out into two small groups. Large maps of MUSA (sewer) extensions, future land use, and roadways/transportation were spread out on the table. Marked changes were based on conversations in previous task force meetings and regional coordination. Markers were provided to mark-up, draw, and make notes on the boards.
 - b. MUSA
 - i. General consensus to extend 2040 MUSA south to 180th Street.
 - ii. Western expansion would largely match 2030 MUSA lines (meeting or just east of Harrow Ave, in most cases).
 - iii. Support for MUSA expansion north of Forest Lake off of 235th Street and south of 97, east of the golf course.

- iv. Discourage MUSA expansion through golf course, don't want to encourage development of golf course
- v. Discourage Scandia sewer connection through southeast corner of the city. This is area city wants to preserve for agriculture and rural uses. More interest in having tie-in at 97/Manning intersection since sewer already extends here.

c. Land Use

i. Broadway to Highway 8/61

- 1. Mixed use south of Broadway to Menards, se corner of Broadway and 232nd Street
- 2. High density residential west of Everton, south of Menards to 19th Street SW
- 3. Rezone water tower to public or make park
- 4. Extend business/commercial along Broadway ½ block south and 1 block north. Leave houses fronting 1st Ave South as residential.
 - a. Marked as B1, Broadway Business, in current zoning map, commercial in Future Land Use
- 5. Keep downtown commercial along Hwy 61

ii. CR 32/11th Ave & Headwaters Mixed Use area

- 1. Leave future zoning as is at intersection of I-35 and CR 32
- 2. Land south of 11th Ave and north of Highway 97 adjacent to 61 rezone to commercial (currently mixed use)
 - a. Check ownership of far south parcels – what's ROW?
- 3. NE corner of Hwy 61 and CR 50, split to be mixed use adjacent to Hwy 61 and medium density residential behind
- 4. Leave SE corner of Hwy 61 and CR 50 as is?
- 5. Land swap near sports center, Headwaters. Will update future land use map to reflect current changes.

iii. South of Headwaters/Airport to 180th Street

- 1. South of 190th, east of Hwy 61: commercial from 61 about 500 feet east, leaving existing residential at 184th (will zone as such, currently zoned Ag District)
- 2. **Disagreement about business park or commercial east of 61 and business park or mixed use south of Headwaters**
- 3. Mixed Use along Headwaters Pkwy, about 2/3 depth of parcel. Remaining 1/3 adjacent to golf course to be low-medium density residential. Residential surrounds golf course, buffering Hwy 61.
- 4. Reexamine golf course boundaries.
- 5. Low medium density residential to extend south of 190th.
- 6. Mixed Use west of 61, both north and south corners of 190th.
- 7. Industrial park for whole area south of golf course, from Hwy 61 to Elmcrest Ave.

- iv. East of Highway 61
 - 1. Low density residential in MUSA extension area off of 235th.
 - 2. Leave parcel next to future fire station as neighborhood commercial. Want flexibility to allow convenience store, which would require change to zoning ordinance.
 - 3. Low density residential west of North Shore Trail, park space adjacent to public boat launch further north.

d. Transportation

- i. Desire for shared access at I-35 with weigh station a no-go with MnDOT. Desire for shared access at I-35 with rest stop also a tough sell.
- ii. An analysis is currently being conducted in Columbus for the Highway 97/Hornsby Intersection. Based on the analysis, it will either become a roundabout or signalized intersection. Construction is anticipated for 2019.
- iii. Roundabout at Highway 97 and Fenway Ave likely to make access safer, more reliable.
- iv. Desire to connect Fenway Ave to Oneka Pkwy in Hugo.
- v. Discussion of straightening CR 50 with bike/ped trail.
- vi. Desire to connect Headwaters Pkwy to current CR 50 alignment. If making this connection, may not want to straighten CR 50 (and vice versa – if straightening CR 50, may find other or no connection to Headwaters Pkwy)
- vii. No alt. route for 97.
- viii. Business frontage north of Hwy 8 not likely, area not served by sewer.
- ix. Desire and discussion of county frontage road in city to I-35.

V. 180th Street Interchange Discussion 9:15

- a. The meeting minutes from a November 20, 2017 meeting regarding I-35 interchanges were discussed. Currently, Anoka County has an interchange planned for 170th Street in the county's 2030 transportation plan. However, this would impact a regional park. An interchange at 180th would avoid this impact and more directly service Forest Lake. It was agreed at that meeting that Forest Lake should include the 180th Street interchange in the 2040 comprehensive plan update as an additional interchange and begin discussions with neighboring communities. This interchange would be for 2040 or beyond.
- b. Task force supported this plan. Encouraged to think of additional benefits of the 180th location and ways to address drawbacks.

VI. Adjourn – 9:30

- a. Next steps will be to write a draft plan
- b. Small workshops with planning commission and city council
- c. Public open house this spring based on task force discussions and council and commission workshops
- d. All future figures will draw and label roads to avoid future confusion