



**Joint City Council and Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting**  
**Tuesday, March 20, 2018**  
**5:00 – 6:30 PM**  
**City Hall – Raspberry Room**

- 1. Arrival & Dinner**
- 2. Draft Goals & Policies – Haila Maze, Bolton & Menk**
  - Overview of Draft Goals & Policies
  - Discussion
- 3. Next Steps – Haila Maze, Bolton & Menk**



# MEMO

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council  
Planning & Zoning Commission  
2040 Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

From: Haila Maze, Senior Urban Planner and Jason Lindahl, City Planner

Date: March 20, 2018

Subject: Cultivate Hopkins Comprehensive Plan Update

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## Overview

The purpose of this meeting is to provide an overview of draft recommendations coming out of the Cultivate Hopkins planning process and to ensure they are consistent with the goals and preferences of City elected and appointed leadership. As you review this memo and attached policy statements, please consider the following questions:

- Are the main topics we are focusing on the most important ones to the future of the City?  
Are we missing anything?
- Do you have any concerns about the proposed policy directions?
- What are the most important things you think this plan could accomplish?

## The Story of Hopkins

The story of the City of Hopkins is one of reinvention and renewal, while still maintaining the place's core identity and unique character.

Like many small towns, the first settlement in this location sprung up as a modest clustering of housing and businesses along a railroad line, serving local farmers and factory workers. The distinctive direction for Hopkins is that it chose to embrace change, without erasing its past. Decades of growth and investment have added a wide range of housing, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses to the original core settlement. However, the original layout and form of the traditional small town has remained at the heart, instead of being swept away in the name of progress. This has meant continual efforts to reinvent and renew older areas, so that they can accommodate change.

The result is a community that has managed to merge old and new, bringing together the classic charm of a small town with modern amenities. The faces of Hopkins reflect this continuum as well, with households tracing their history back to its origins (and indigenous people who originally inhabited this area) alongside those that are new to both the city and even the nation.

This experience and history translates into a built-in understanding of the principles and values of sustainability – a long term perspective of how to sustain a community successfully over time. As the past has shown, this process is a continuum, not a destination, and change will continue to happen even in places that remain essentially the same.

The 2018 Comprehensive Plan further explores the concept of sustainability – and the related concept of resilience – and what it means to plan for the future of the city with this in mind. As outlined below, this has implications for all elements of the community environment: built, natural, social, and economic. These concepts are summarized in the Cultivate Hopkins tagline: “Rooted. Vibrant. Connected. Resilient.”

## Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this plan update is to provide long range guidance for growth, development, and investment in the City of Hopkins. It will replace the City’s current comprehensive plan which was adopted in 2009. This comprehensive plan envisions the growth and change the community will see by 2040, and creates a framework for what the City needs to do to get there. To do this, the plan interweaves guidance from City-established goals, public comments and feedback, past plans and initiatives, and analysis of data and trends.

As a community within the seven county Twin Cities metropolitan region, Hopkins is required by state statute to update its comprehensive plan every ten years, as part of an overall regional planning cycle managed through the Metropolitan Council. This plan will fulfill all requirements of this cycle.

Over the next ten years, the City will make numerous decisions related to development, infrastructure, public services, budgeting, and many other topics that need to be aligned with its overall goals. This plan provides a framework for this decision making process – to ensure consistency, and progress toward longer range goals.

## Vision and Goals

The foundation for the citywide vision guiding this plan is found in the 2018 Hopkins City Council Goals and Strategic Plan, adopted by the City Council in 2017 at the start of the comprehensive plan update process. While these goals do not provide detailed guidance for every area covered by the plan, they focus attention on the most important elements for consideration and action.

The mission for the City is “Inspire. Educate. Involve. Communicate.” The vision and goals provide a picture of the city as a place that people can call home, connect with one another, and explore on foot, bicycle, or transit. It focuses on inclusion of everyone – in community events, governmental services, and decision making processes. This spirit has been modeled in the planning process for the comprehensive plan, as well as its goals, policies, and priorities.

## What’s New?

The vision and goals also contributed to the decision during the planning process to go over and above what is required in a comprehensive plan, to include some new elements not previously featured. These sections, detailed on the following page, will include:

- New element on quality of life in Hopkins, facilitated through cross-sector and cross-discipline collaboration, including safety and emergency preparedness, community facilities and infrastructure, and public health
- New element on sense of community, exploring equity, race, and social connectedness, and the role of the city in addressing disparities and encouraging engagement and connections.
- New details related to natural resources and environmental responsibility, including renewable energy, climate change and resilience, and sustainable building practices.
- Expanded focus on economic competitiveness, including community economic development, business development, education, and disparities.

## Sustainability Framework

The vision for Hopkins is that of a sustainable community – defined as one that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. It is also envisioned as a resilient community – defined as one that is able to respond to social, economic, and environmental changes and disruptions while maintaining its integrity and purpose.

The City of Hopkins consulted several best practice materials to shape and inform the framework for the comprehensive plan update. The primary source was Sustaining Places: Best Practices for Comprehensive Plan (American Planning Association, 2015). This document details national best practices for creating a sustainable, resilient and complete community. Traditionally, comprehensive plans were developed from a top-down approach with separate stand-alone chapters focused primarily on land use and physical development. By comparison, Hopkins is using the Sustaining Places document to further enhance the City’s existing work and ensure the new comprehensive plan fully embraces the topics of resilience, system thinking, community engagement, equity, adaptation and measurable implementation practices. To supplement this framework, the following resources will be used to provide more detailed information, implementation strategies and performance matrix in specific topic areas.

- **STAR Community Rating System.** The Sustainability Tools for Assessing and Rating Communities (STAR) system, developed by STAR Communities, is used to rate community performance on a range of topics related to promoting local sustainability.
- **GreenStep Cities.** Minnesota GreenStep Cities is a voluntary program for cities that helps them achieve goals in sustainability and quality of life.
- **Regional Indicators Initiative.** Hopkins has participated in the Regional Indicators Initiative, which helps participating communities to benchmark their status on a range of metrics, to measure progress against itself and peer communities.
- **Climate Resilience Workshop Series.** In early 2017, Hopkins participated with six other cities in a workshop series designed to identify opportunities to build resilience related to local climate change.

## The Four Environments

Sustainability may be new to comprehensive planning but not to Hopkins. The City Council Goals and Strategic Plan and many of the City’s existing practices and planning documents incorporated various aspects of sustainability. The Cultivate Hopkins 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update seeks to fit together

the City’s existing vision, goals and policies with comprehensive planning best practices in a more relatable, interconnected and measurable comprehensive plan for the future of Hopkins. Rather than traditional individual chapters focused on land use and physical development, the Cultivate Hopkins plan looks at the community’s through four environments detailed below.

## Built Environment

The built environment is defined as all human-made elements of a space where people live, work, and play. It includes sections on land use and development, multimodal transportation, and housing and neighborhoods. This is the most traditional element of city planning – and the land use map and supporting descriptions are at the hub of the planning framework.



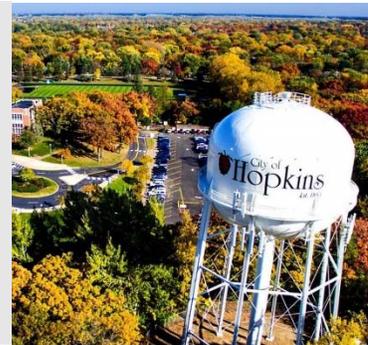
## Social Environment

The social environment is defined as human interaction and engagement in the community. It includes sections on public services and facilities, education, public health, community connections, equity, and arts and culture. Much of the content for this element is new to the Hopkins comprehensive plan this time around, motivated by the City’s focus on related issues as citywide priorities.



## Natural Environment

The natural environment relates to natural systems and resources, including land, water, air, habitat, and ecology. In addition to addressing policies around these specific systems and resources, it includes direction for practices that are specifically aimed at protecting or improving the natural environment, including guidance for parks and open space, renewable energy, and climate change resilience.



## Economic Environment

The economic environment covers the economy, jobs, businesses, income and poverty, and affordability. This section includes economic development and competitiveness, and guidance for Downtown Hopkins (as the city’s economic hub). Issues related to affordability and poverty are covered in overlapping sections in the built environment (housing) and social environment (equity).



## A Plan for the Whole City

As is traditionally the case for comprehensive plans, the task of developing the document is being led by the planning staff of the City. However, as this is a plan for the **entire** City, there are elements which apply to the work of all City leadership and staff. Ways this plan will be used across the entire City include:

- Provides support for any major new initiatives or investments
- Guides priorities for capital project budgeting
- Puts short term implementation in context of longer term goals
- Establishing a framework for making decisions

As such, we are meeting in advance with department heads across the City to ensure that the direction presented here adequately represents their area of expertise.

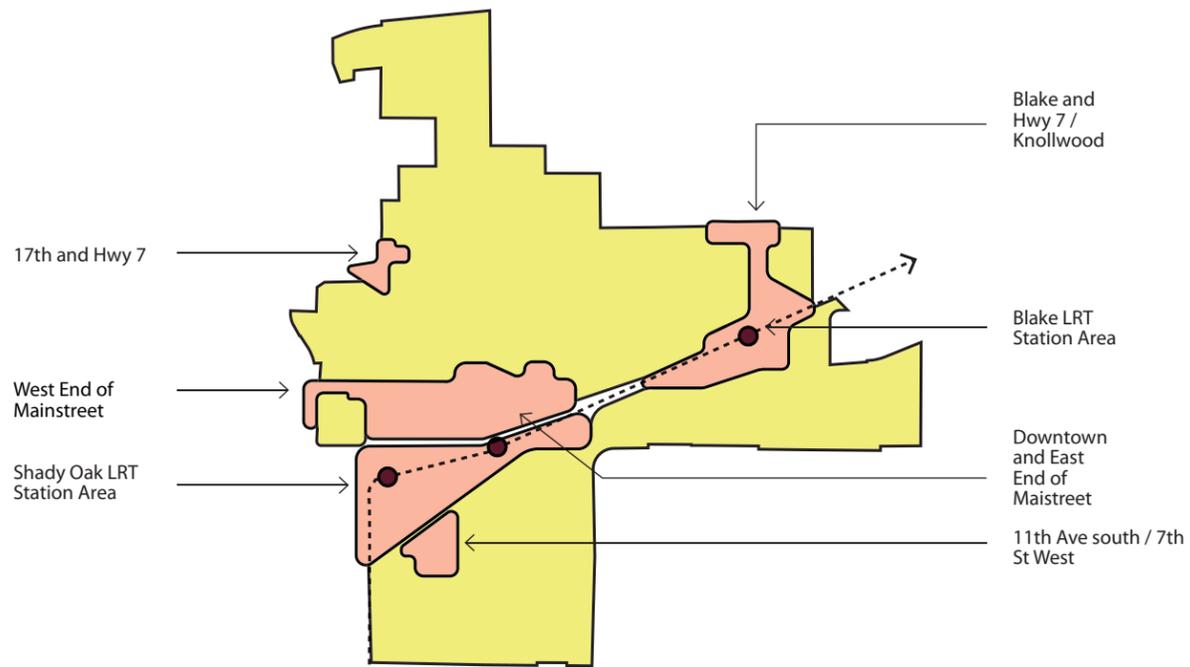
## Work Session Discussion

There has already been significant outreach and research as part of the comprehensive plan update process, including regular meetings of the Advisory Committee. At this point, a set of draft goals and policies have been drafted that will form the main substance of the plan update – along with a full documentation of the existing conditions, trends and challenges, analysis of data, and public input that inform the development and refinement of these goals and policies.

At this point, it is vital to have City Council and Planning Commission feedback on the following questions:

- Are the main topics we are focusing on the most important ones to the future of the City?  
Are we missing anything?
- Do you have any concerns about the proposed policy directions?
- What are the most important things you think this plan could accomplish?

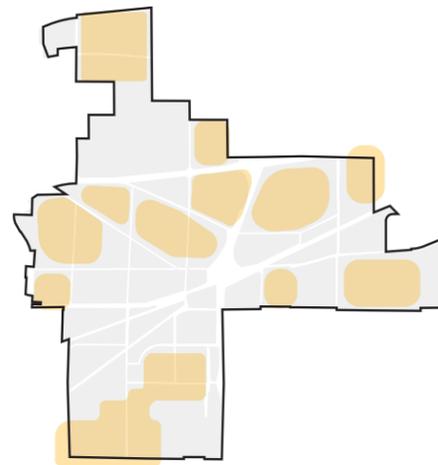
## Areas of Change and Stability



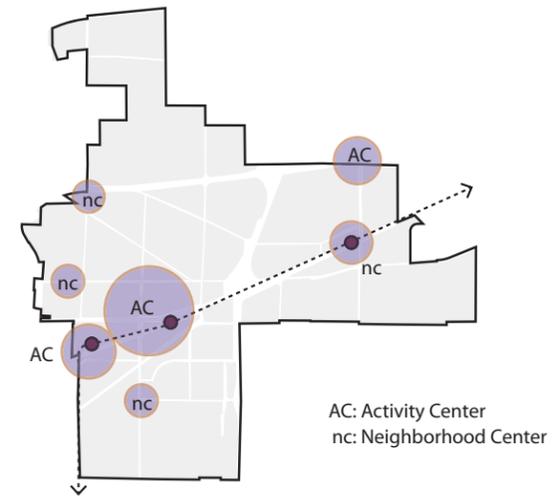
- Transportation Changes
- Undervalued and Underutilized Land
- Incompatible Uses
- Changes in the Market
- Developer Interest
- Already guided for change

## Framework of Neighborhoods, Districts, Centers and Corridors

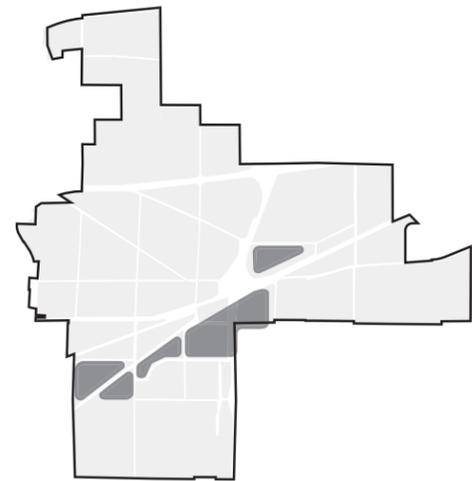
### Neighborhoods



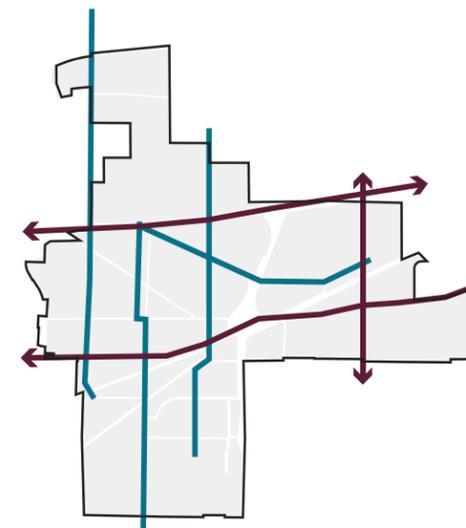
### Centers



### Districts



### Corridors



### Greenways and Parks

