

Chapter 5

Action Plan

The action plan is a checklist of strategies and actions to accomplish the goals of this plan. Community Initiative 7 in the Comprehensive Plan established the initiative to develop a strategy for open space preservation. The action plan seeks to accomplish this with a series of goals, strategies, and actions. The goals are broad and overarching, the strategies are more specific and identify steps to reach the goals and the actions are specific tasks the City can check off to accomplish the strategies and goals of the Plan.

Green Infrastructure System

Goal: Proactively preserve areas identified in the green infrastructure system.

Strategy: Work collaboratively with owners of priority properties that contain multiple cultural and/or natural resources to preserve portions or all of those sites.

Action: Establish and continually update a map that identifies areas with the most cultural and natural resources in the green infrastructure system that should be preserved as soon as possible.

Action: The City should use, where possible, one of the following means to hold or acquire identified valuable open space.

- Place a permanent deed restriction when selling City-owned land limiting activities on the land.
- Accept and hold conservation easements on land from landowners.
- Increasing the requirement for property dedication for park purposes through the normal subdivision process.
- Encourage landowners to contact Minnesota Land Trust or other similar agencies to hold easements on their land.

- Purchase development rights using grants, matching funds or other funding sources.
- Preserve open space as part of transportation or other infrastructure project.

Strategy: Use Best Management Practices (BMP) and proper public process with efforts to protect and preserve green infrastructure.

Action: Site visits should be made to make sure the lands fit into the green infrastructure system.

Action: Suggested lands acquired by the City must be approved by City Council.

Action: Public process should occur in appropriate situations.

Action: Publicly acquired or held lands should allow incorporate public access whenever appropriate.

Action: Make site-specific plans for trails built adjacent to patches or in greenways without damaging important natural and cultural resources, such as natural communities and archaeological sites.

Action: Search for innovative ways to build trails reducing the effects the trails have on the environment, such as reducing runoff.

Action: Post signage along paths that clarify what is private and public land.

Action: Lands acquired near areas of development should be considered possibly as an addition to the Red Wing park system.

Action: Make trails accessible for special populations such as disabled persons, young populations, senior citizens.

Action: Make trails usable for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized uses where appropriate.

Action: Community trails should be constructed, including: Riverfront trail connecting Bay Point Park to Colvill Park, Prairie Island to the Cannon Valley Trail, Spring Creek Trail and Spring Creek, trail connections to the Red Wing High School and a connection to Frontenac State Park along Highway 61.

Strategy: Establish more local, state and national designations of cultural resources.

Action: Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) should consider nominating lands of archaeological sites 96, 163 and 169 to the National Register of Historic Places.

Action: HPC should consider local designation for all National Register sites and districts.

Strategy: Make roadways in the City greener.

Action: Amend the subdivision code in reference to the standards that address the goal of making the roadways in the City greener.

Action: Identify roadways where medians and right-of-ways can be made greener or for trails.

Action: Before new roads are built, environmental impact studies should be performed identifying areas where underpasses can be made for wildlife movement.

Action: Establish a trail connection to Frontenac State Park along Highway 61 right-of-way.

Action: Develop partnership with Minnesota Department of Transportation and other partners to improve landscapes along major highways.

Strategy: Pursue Public/Private Partnerships.

Action: Acquire lands within the city which are owned may be disposed of by other governmental agencies.

Action: Cooperate with privately owned open space owners to ensure public trespassing does not occur.

Action: Work with land trusts, foundations, developers, utility companies, private individuals, and companies and others from public and private sectors by encouraging land dedications, donations and easements for open space preservation.

Strategy: Evaluate the following funding tools the City can use for Open Space Preservation.

Action: Establish a committee to evaluate proposals that would increase funding resources to be used for open space acquisition or easements. These proposals should include the concept to pursue legislative authority from the State to put a referendum on the ballot for a sales tax increase for open space preservation or put a general obligation bond on the ballot funded by property tax for open space preservation.

Action: Planning Commission annually develop a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for open space acquisition and management.

Action: Actively seek funding from a wide variety of local, state and federal public and private sources.

Action: Write grants proposals for open space preservation to appropriate organizations.

Strategy: Expand funding for all aspects of open space.

Action: Funds should be used for acquisition, management, stewardship, education and incentives for private companies and individuals related to open space.

Action: Work with DNR, Minnesota Land Trust, or other agencies in help creating these documents. Management plans should include providing public access while maintaining and improving the habitat for plants and animals and other appropriate measures. Natural communities and waterways should be emphasized for the highest protection in the plans. Guidance on natural communities can be obtained from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, “Guidelines for Managing and Restoring Natural Plant Communities along Trails and Waterways.” Management plans should address short-term needs versus long-term needs. Short-term needs examples are fence removal, signage and trash removal. Long-term needs examples are habitat improvement, controlled burns and pollution control improvements.

Strategy: Implement management plans.

Action: The City’s Public Works Department should maintain responsibility for implementation of the management plan. The Department should designate duty to an appropriate employee.

Land Stewardship and Management

Goal: Establish a land stewardship program for all city owned or held lands in open space preservation.

Strategy: Establish management plans for all city owned or held properties.

Action: Outsource and fund the upkeep to an appropriate agency or appoint duty to an appropriate employee.

Action: Use appropriate environmental techniques when protecting and restoring lands. Techniques include performing controlled burns in appropriate habitats, planting native vegetation, reforesting slopes where clear-cutting has occurred, using herbicides and pesticides as little as possible, and other appropriate techniques.

Action: Make site visits and use aerial photos at least once a year documenting the land's status. Documenting the land entails citing improvements that may be made, resource inventories, checking to see if diseases are killing any plant life and making sure no clear-cutting, building, or any other human harmful acts are damaging the integrity of the open space.

Action: Annually report the status of the public lands.

Action: Review and update management plans every five to ten years.

Strategy: Enforce violations.

Action: City held or acquired open space lands should be preserved in perpetuity. The City should decide on the

enforcement action to whoever damages the lands. These actions could involve fines, land dedications, court actions or other appropriate measures.

Strategy: Work with county, state or private land trust to ensure a management plan exists on their lands.

Action: Contact each agency and obtain documents on their management plans.

Strategy: Work with private landowners on management.

Action: Provide assistance and referral to landowners who want to improve habitat on lands or remove invasive species.

Strategy: Acquire funding for land stewardship and management.

Action: Evaluate funding sources identified in Strategies for Preservation Chapter related to land stewardship and management.

City Regulations and Policies

Goal: Evaluate strategies for updating City Regulations and Policies to encourage and enforce open space preservation.

Strategy: Develop incentives for voluntary dedications of land from landowners and developers.

Action: Allow for cluster and other innovative developments that permanently preserve open space. The open space should be designed in a way so it connects with other open space outside of the development.

Action: Work with Goodhue County to encourage property tax reduction to landowners that voluntarily donate conservation easements.

Strategy: Develop incentives for developers or businesses to locate their development in activity centers or areas targeted for growth in the Comprehensive Plan.

Action: Provide tax increment financing, tax abatement and other financial incentives to developers or businesses locating in these areas.

Action: Allow density bonuses for developers or businesses locating in these areas.

Action: Make public investment or infrastructure improvements in these areas.

Strategy: Establish new stewardship policies.

Action: Amend zoning regulations requiring a 100-foot building setback from all archaeological sites whenever possible.

Action: Consider revising the development standards that relate to buffer and development setbacks involving designated wetland areas.

Strategy: Evaluate the possibility of establishing an impact fee with other existing fees.

Action: The fee pays for the impacts the development has on the community. The fee should be based on the development's stormwater runoff potential, infrastructure and service needs and improvements, open space needs, and any other appropriate burden placed on the City and its taxpayers.

Strategy: Improve water quality.

Action: Planning Commission consider creating stricter regulations requiring stormwater retention ponds or infiltration beds in developments in previously undeveloped areas.

Action: City Council consider the establishment of a water quality improvement program to help pay for storm water management.

Strategy: Establish a green roof regulation.

Action: Research green roof requirements for all new public buildings and buildings located in commercial zones based on building size, stormwater runoff potential, energy use potential and any other relevant data.

Action: Consider green roofs on top of public buildings to be open to the public and promote them as a tourist site.

Action: Hold a green roof contest with cash prizes encouraging residents to build green roofs willingly.

Action: Educate and provide funding as part of open space preservation for private landowners to build green roofs.

Strategy: Focus new plats in and around Activity Centers.

Action: Discourage new final plats located outside of activity centers.

Strategy: Revise floodplain regulations.

Action: Use the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, “Sample Floodplain Management Ordinance” as a guide.

Strategy: Evaluate and establish one or more of the following overlay districts.

Action: Establish a green infrastructure district in areas identified in the green infrastructure system requiring a large percentage of land donated in permanent conservation easement.

Action: Establish a scenic/gateway overlay district in areas identified for their gateway and scenic qualities in the resource inventory. The purpose of the district would be to maintain community identity and establish special design character for the area.

Action: Establish an agricultural overlay district in areas identified as quality soils in the green infrastructure system limiting only agricultural uses.

Action: Establish Cannon River, Spring Creek and Hay Creek overlay districts requiring greater setbacks from the water than allowed in underlying zoning.

Action: Establish a Franconia-St. Lawrence Edge overlay district in areas identified in the Resource Inventory.

Regional Approach

Goal: Think regionally about preserving open space.

Strategy: Work with neighboring municipalities, townships, organizations, County and State governments to make more green infrastructure connections.

Action: City and County Planning Commission should meet together to consider different growth management policies that protect the region's green infrastructure system. Commissions should also work on extending Open Space Priorities map outside of Red Wing city boundaries.

Action: Work with Cannon River Watershed Partnership to protect and restore areas in need along the Cannon River.

Action: Work with Friends of Mississippi River and other NGOs to protect and restore areas along the Vermillion River and Mississippi River.

Action: Work with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to extend trails through their lands, obtain management plans, and inquire about possible funding and acquisitions.

Action: Work with Goodhue County, neighboring townships, and municipalities to extend trails and preserve valuable open space threatened by development.

Action: Work with Army Corps of Engineers to acquire additional data on cultural and natural resources.

Strategy: Establish a Transfer of Development Rights program by working with the County.

Action: Identify parcels in the county as sending areas or areas in threat of development and important for green infrastructure to trade development rights to receiving areas or areas in need of development within the city. Sending areas should be areas identified in the green infrastructure

map as priorities and they should result in a permanent conservation easement. Receiving areas should be areas identified as activity centers in the Comprehensive Plan.

Strategy: Establish an urban growth/service boundary by working with the County.

Action: Consider establishing a boundary based on population projections, service and infrastructure needs while incorporating all previously platted developments.

Action: Do not provide any infrastructure or services to any new developments located outside of the boundary.

Action: Target open space acquisitions on the rural side of the boundary.

Action: Update the boundary every 5 to 10 years as population increases.

Strategy: Protect the views along the Mississippi River in Wisconsin.

Action: Encourage the voluntary dedication of land to a local land trust from landowners along the Wisconsin side of the River.

Action: Work with Red Wing Area Fund to continue acquiring Trenton Island properties to maintain scenic views.

Strategy: Research what other communities in Minnesota and the country are doing in terms of green infrastructure.

Action: Attend conferences related to green infrastructure.

Action: Make contacts with appropriate staff in cities where a green infrastructure plan is in place.

Educational Programs

Goal: Establish a program educating citizens on green infrastructure, nature and proper stewardship and conservation techniques.

Strategy: Provide public information for lands important in the green infrastructure system.

Action: Provide web links on the City website to the Open Space Preservation Plan and maps.

Action: Use the City newsletter and Channel 6 to educate and update the public on open space.

Action: Provide web link to allow public access to Geographic Information Systems showing all city, county, or state owned lands in the City.

Strategy: Educate youth on the importance of the environment.

Action: Support the Red Wing Environmental Learning Center in its efforts to provide programming to educate youth about the importance of the environment. Annually have an environmental education day where volunteers take youth around the city showing important areas in the green

infrastructure system. This can be coordinated with Earth Day activities

Strategy: Educate population on techniques they can achieve at their own home or business.

Action: Hold workshops on rainwater harvesting, green roofs and other innovative conservation techniques.

Strategy: Educate population on the importance of natural communities.

Action: Hold workshops on the problems associated with planting exotic or invasive species and tree removal.

Strategy: Educate population on Red Wing's archaeological importance.

Action: Continue working and encouraging professional archaeologists to survey and study the City.

Action: Make site visits to areas educating people on the proper stewardship of mounds and sites as well as giving history lessons on native peoples.

Action: Frequently publish in City newsletter the laws against harming archaeology and the importance in preserving sites.

Action: New City annexed land should seek to preserve all important cultural and natural resource areas.

Strategy: Acquire funding for education.

Action: Evaluate funding sources identified in Strategies for Preservation Chapter related to education.

Strategy: Update resource inventory annually.

Action: Acquire all relevant data and implement into GIS.

Action: Contact county and state agencies to acquire data.

Action: Locate resources not identified by county or state agencies.

Update and Review

Goal: Update and review Open Space Preservation Plan

Strategy: Make sure the goals of the plan are being accomplished.

Action: Write an annual report summarizing the Open Space funding, acquisitions and successes and failures of the Plan.

Action: Allow for amendments to the Plan as new threats become known, new funding sources become available, new tools become known, new State legislation is passed and opportunities arise, such as tax foreclosure properties.

Many of the actions mentioned in the plan need an organization and a staff person to ensure the proper implementation of the Open Space Preservation Plan. The City needs an organization or committee to manage the plan because plans often are misused or used too little when there are no bodies to hold the person implementing the plan accountable. This organization will be responsible in overlooking the acquisition process and the management of lands, making suggestions on amending the plan and making recommendations on steps the City Council should seek. The City has different alternatives for the responsible organization. Three logical choices include:

- Planning Commission
- Joint Powers Recreation Board
- Environmental Commission

The first two entities could take on the extra responsibility. The Environmental Commission would be a new commission formed. Another possibility is to create an Environmental Committee as a subcommittee of the Planning Commission.

A staff person is essential for the implementation of the plan. The staff person will be involved in the day-to-day work. This work will entail

working with landowners on potential open space areas, deciding on the proper tool to acquire the land, managing the land, and presenting information to the assigned committee and City Council on annual reports, management plans and funding options for open space preservation. The City could hire a permanent or temporary planner with experience in the field, appoint a current staff member from planning, public works, or administration departments to perform these tasks, hire a land stewardship agency to manage the lands or a combination of any of the three.

