

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | <u>Page No.</u> |
|--------------|---|-----------------|
| Section I. | Introduction | 1 |
| Section II. | Background Data/Forecasts | 1 |
| | Organizational Structure | 2 |
| | Community Demographics | 2 |
| | Profile of I.S.D. #763 | 4 |
| | Housing Characteristics | 4 |
| | Public Facilities | 6 |
| | Forecasts | 10 |
| Section III. | Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats | 15 |
| Section IV. | Vision Statement | 16 |
| Section V. | Land Use Plan | 17 |
| | Neighborhood Residential | 18 |
| | Town Centre | 18 |
| | Business Park | 18 |
| | Regional Market Place | 19 |
| | Mixed Use | 19 |
| | Open Space | 19 |
| Section VI. | Implementation Plan | 19 |
| Section VII. | Exhibits | 21 |

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION.

“The site is almost an ideal one as to beauty and sanitary considerations, for aside from the pleasing landscape presented by the winding river between the bluffs on the east side, the drainage is good, the hills on the east and west afford shelter from storms, and the ground occupied by the village is level enough to make handsome streets and driveways. At one time in its history, Medford was the most important town in the county, and still does its full share of business, but many of its citizens are men who have retired from the business world or from the active management of large farms to take life easy in this cozy retreat, which gives the town rather a quiet, dignified appearance. Medford Village enjoys all the advantages in a commercial and social way that any prosperous, well regulated village of its size could desire, including express, telegraph, telephone, and good train service in the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, not to enumerate specially the excellent store and other business places.” Source: Owatonna City and Steele County Directory of 1899.

Although much has changed in Medford since 1899, in many respects the community image has been preserved. Today, many of the nearly 1100 residents are apt to renew the argument that Medford is, in fact, the most important place in Steele County.

Just as it was some 100 years ago, Medford continues to be a desirable place to live, to work, to recreate and to retire. As a result of the many attributes which Medford enjoys, the community is growing and expanding. The **Comprehensive Plan** has been prepared to serve as a guide for the future growth and development of the Medford Community.

Pursuant to the Minnesota **Municipal Planning Act**, Chapter 462.351, the **Comprehensive Plan** for Medford includes a representation of community goals and plans for future development of the City of Medford and adjoining tracts of land.

The current corporate limits of Medford are identified in **Section VII – Exhibit A**.

SECTION II. BACKGROUND DATA / FORECASTS

Utilizing a variety of sources, **Section II** provides information relating to organizational structure, community demographics, Independent School District (I.S.D.) #763, housing characteristics, and public facilities. In addition, certain forecasts are offered to further facilitate the efforts of the City of Medford to effectively anticipate and plan for the future growth and development.

Organizational Structure

The City of Medford operates as a statutory city (Fourth Class) under Minnesota State Statute and is governed by an elected Council of five representatives. Appointed staff that assist the City Council with the management of municipal business include the City Clerk-Treasurer, City Attorney, City Engineer, and Fire Chief. Standing committees which offer advice to the City Council members in matters dealing with the development of Medford include the Planning and Zoning Board, Park Board, Economic Development Authority, and Well Head Protection Committee.

The City of Medford's full-time employees include the City Clerk whose time is divided between city responsibility (two-thirds time) and bookkeeping for the Municipal Liquor Store (one-third time); Municipal Liquor Store Manager; Maintenance Personnel. These individuals are required to be self-starters and problem solvers in meeting the demands of daily operations. Additionally, there are numerous part-time employees at the Municipal Liquor Store, city office and seasonal park employees responsible for maintenance, swimming pool operations.

Community Demographics

Unfortunately, the most current and comprehensive demographic information that is available for Medford is now nearly 7 years old. Although the **2000 Census** data is somewhat dated, it does provide a reasonable representation as to population and housing conditions in Medford. The following statements describe **demographics characteristics** of the Medford population in accordance with the **2000 Census and 2005 estimates** finding:

1. Total **population** of Medford – 984 persons (Census 2000) 1135 (2005 estimate).
 2. Predominant **ancestries** include German, followed by Norwegian, Irish and Swedish.
 3. Of all persons age **25** years and older, nearly **43%** have obtained a **high school diploma**.
 4. A total of 377 households claimed Medford as their principle residence. As a percentage of total households, the number of persons per household was distributed as follows:
-

| <u>Persons per Household</u> | <u>Percentage</u> |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 21.75% |
| 2 | 35.54% |
| 3 | 18.04% |
| 4 | 14.33% |
| 5 or more | 10.35% |

On average, each household was comprised of 2.69 persons.

5. For family (related) households, **50.66%** were comprised of households headed by persons **age 25 to 54**; **35.01%** were comprised of households headed by persons **age 25 to 44**. Approximately **8.49%** of family households were headed by persons **age 65 or older**.
6. The **median** household income (1999) was **\$50,000**. Almost 49.9% of Medford households had incomes of less than \$50,000. About **31.7%** of all households earned less than **\$35,000**. In all, 29.1% of the reporting households in Medford recorded annual incomes ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000.
7. Of all workers age 16 and older, nearly **74.90%** require under **20 minutes** to travel to work; over **55.70%** of these workers travel 10 to nearly **20 minutes** time to work. Nearly **81.8%** of **commuting** to work is done alone by a single driver with no passenger.
8. Of employed persons age **16** and older, predominant **occupations** include jobs in manufacturing, production activities, retail trade, administrative support positions and various types of service businesses.

The **2000 Census** also provides information relating to **housing** conditions, types and costs. A brief synopsis follows:

1. A total of **388 housing units** were identified in 2000. At that time, **377** of the inventoried units were occupied. Of the occupied units, nearly **84.9%** were **owner-occupied** housing units.
2. All of the housing units in Medford were served with **public sewer and water** services and nearly **90%** derived their primary heating source from natural gas.
3. About **25.8%** of all housing units in Medford were built **prior to 1940**. Nearly **53%** of all housing units were constructed **before 1970**. From the year 2000 to 2004 an additional 77 residential units were built for an

average exceeding 15 units a year. Currently in Medford only 32 single family lots are available for residential development.

4. Around **71.5%** of the homes in Medford were constructed with **2 to 3 bedrooms**; about **8.1%** with only **1 bedroom**.
5. Of the occupied housing units, **14.9%** of the occupants moved into their home during the **1980's**; slightly less than 12% moved into their home prior to 1970.
6. In 2000, the median monthly mortgage was **\$869** and the median monthly rent was \$308. The maximum reported monthly mortgage was up to \$1999 and the maximum reported monthly rent was up to **\$649**.

Profile of I.S.D. #763

Independent School District (I.S.D.) #763 encompasses the existing corporate limits of Medford and portions of Deerfield, Medford, Clinton Falls and Merton Townships in Steele County, parts of Walcott and Richland Townships in Rice County and part of Blooming Grove Township in Waseca County. A map of I.S.D. #763 is included in **Section VII – Exhibit B**.

All of I.S.D. #763 facilities are located in Medford. The District provides educational services for pre-school children and for students kindergarten through grade twelve.

During the not too distant past, I.S.D. #763 has experienced unstable and declining enrollment. The prior trends have been reversed in part as a result of new development and growth in the Medford area. The addition of a new facility opening in the year 2003-2004 has secured that District #763 will continue to provide exceptional educational experiences for the youth in the Medford area for years to come. School Administrators believe that existing facilities are capable of accommodating further growth in enrollment of perhaps 30-40 students in grades kindergarten through grade twelve. The current enrollment for 2006/2007:

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Kindergarten – Grade Six | 427 students |
| Grade Seven – Grade Twelve | <u>307</u> students |
| | 734 total students |

Housing Characteristics

A general profile of housing conditions, types and prices has been described in the Community Demographics narrative of Section II. That description references 2000 Census Data. The data suggests a community with the majority of homeowners residing in houses with 2-3 bedrooms that have been built before 1970. Most homes are single family detached dwellings.

In 2005 and 2006, Steele County last completed a **reassessment** of home values in Medford. Approximately 95% of all residential properties in Medford were inspected by County assessors. A summary of findings and results follow:

1. Nearly 75% of all homes maintained their existing value or increased in value.
2. Overall, an inflationary increase in values of approximately 2.7% was recognized.
3. From January, 2003 through December 31, 2004, 63 homes were sold with an average sale price of **\$167,559**. The sale prices ranged from \$100,000 - \$288,382 and included homes built between 1875 and 2004. Lot sizes ranged from 6,160 square feet to 47,916 square feet.

During the same period, 1 **lot** was sold at the price of \$27,570. Standard lots sizes on average range from 10,800 square feet to nearly 13,000 square feet.

The sales ratio from January, 2003 thru December, 2004, based on 54 sales, indicated a ratio of 87 %, slightly below the state law required 90.0%. The adjusted ratio, with the added valuation, is now slightly over 97%.

New construction in 2003 and 2004 added \$4,267,216 in residential value for the 2003 and 2004 assessment. Thirty-five homes were started in 2003 - 2004 resulting in a total of 465 dwelling units in Medford. Twenty new parcels were added during 2003 (Oakridge Bluffs fourth Addition) bringing the total number of parcels in Medford to 404.

In 1998, the **Community Housing Assessment Team (CHAT)** completed the "Housing Strategy for Steele County". The report provided background information and strategies for future housing development in Steele County and Medford. Matters dealing with future projections and strategies are referenced within the **Forecasts** narrative of **Section II**. A summary of background information offered by the report for **Steele County** (unincorporated areas) follows:

1. By 1990, owner occupancy housing had increased to over **85%** of the total housing stock.
 2. Since 1990, an average of **15 units** per year of new housing has been built (includes replacement housing).
 3. In 1990, the median housing value for owner occupied housing in Steele County was **\$55,977**.
-

4. Based upon survey data, the study found that an unmet demand for housing priced **less than \$100,000** exists for homes priced between \$60,000 and \$80,000.

For rental property, 90% of the survey respondents felt that an undersupply of units renting for **less than \$400** per month exists.

5. The survey respondents also suggested that the existing housing market is not meeting the **needs** of families with children, young couples without children, single professionals, and the special needs of the senior citizens.

Public Facilities

Sanitary Sewer System

The City of Medford is served by a sanitary sewer system which includes a thirty nine (39) year old mechanical treatment plant, three (3) lift stations and associated forcemains and a collection system. Originally, the sanitary sewer system served mainly the area west of the Union Pacific Railroad track and east of the Straight River. The system expanded to the west in the early 1990's to serve the commercial growth along Interstate Highway No. 35 (I-35). A few years later, the system expanded to the east across the Union Pacific Railroad track to serve new residential development occurring along the river bluff and the new school facility.

The present treatment plant has served the community beyond its twenty (20) year design life. A **Facility Plan** was completed and approved by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. It addresses the condition, capacity, useful life, etc. of the existing treatment facility and identifies improvements that will be needed to serve the community for the next twenty years. Various treatment options were analyzed in this **Facility Plan** to meet the future needs. Phase I of the wastewater treatment plant upgrade improvements is now underway with the remaining improvements scheduled sometime in the future. The collective system will also undergo changes and extensions in the future to meet the growth occurring in the community, including the possibility of new river crossings and/or upgrading of the two existing river crossings. These improvements will be designed to meet the needs of the community outlined in the **Comprehensive Plan**.

Water System

The city water system (East system) consists of wells, an elevated storage facility, a booster station and the water distribution system. Both chlorine and fluoride treatment are provided to the potable water supply in compliance with State Statutes. No further treatment of the drinking water is currently taking place; however, the City will be addressing certain water quality issues with a number of improvements in the next three (3) years. The project is currently in the planning/design stage to finalize the improvements to be constructed.

The original water system included only one pressure zone throughout the city. As development occurred in the east river bluff area, additional pressure zone was needed to service these higher elevations. A booster station was constructed to provide this additional pressure and is located east of the Union Pacific Railroad along County State Aid Highway No. 12. A pressure tank has been included in this station until an elevated tank can be constructed in the future.

The Medford Outlet Center development west of I-35 constructed their own private water system (now Medford water system) in the early 1990's. The system includes two wells, an elevated storage facility and distribution system.

In 2001, the City of Medford took over ownership of this private water system. Some improvements will be needed including a pumphouse and chlorination and fluoridation treatment. This water system has remained independent from the present community water system (East system) until a future date when a river crossing is constructed to connect the two systems. No treatment of this water system is currently taking place.

Expansion of the municipal water system is planned as continual development and community needs warrant them.

Storm Drainage System

The Straight River is the main receiving water for the community. The river flows from south to north outleting into the Cannon River in the City of Faribault. Therefore, the Medford area is part of the Cannon River Watershed.

The main contributing water ways to the Straight River are Crane Creek on the southwest, Mud Creek on the northwest, Rush Creek on the northeast and Medford Creek on the east/southeast. A number of small basins also exist and are depicted in **SectionVII – Exhibit C.**

Medford is served by a drainage system which includes storm sewer in certain locations and percolation basins in other areas. As time goes on, more and more of these percolation basins are eliminated by permanent storm drainage facilities. The city has recently initiated storm water ponding as part of their overall storm drainage system to improve water quality and reduce the outflow rate to the receiving waters. Additional ponding will be provided as part of the future storm drainage improvements in the community.

Street System

The City of Medford is served by an interstate highway, I-35, which runs in a north-south direction through the western portion of the community. A Round-A-Bout interchange exists at the CSAH No. 12 crossing which provides ingress/egress in all directions for the Medford community. The bridge is currently a two lane facility.

The street system involves a number of Steele County roads including: CSAH No. 12 running east-west, CSAH No. 45 running north-south, CSAH No. 1 (Cedar Avenue) on the east side, CSAH No. 9 on the south side and CSAH No. 22 and 23 on the west side. These roadways provide good access to the neighboring communities as well as agricultural properties surrounding Medford. A map of the transportation system is located in **Section VII – Exhibit D**.

Local streets include both urban sections with concrete curb and gutter and semi-urban streets without curb and gutter. All new streets are being constructed to the city's standard urban section.

In addition, the present semi-urban streets are being upgraded consistent with the long-term policy of the city to reconstruct streets.

The Straight River, I-35, the IM Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad provide certain barriers to the overall transportation system for the community. However, an overall I-35 corridor study has been in process to address future transportation needs for the Medford area including these major points:

1. .Adjoining frontage roads.
2. CSAH No. 12 Straight River crossing.
3. Pedestrian movements.
4. Northerly extension of the west frontage road.
5. Additional interstate access north of Medford.

Other improvements being studied include the CSAH No. 45 alignment north of the city as it pertains to the IM Railroad, distance from I-35 and potential access to I-35 in the future.

Pedestrian System

The original downtown area includes sidewalks for pedestrian movement. The residential development on the east side has also included both sidewalks and bituminous trails to accommodate pedestrians. Sidewalks now exist along CSAH No. 12 east of the Union Pacific Railroad, Fifth Avenue SE from the IM Railroad to the Union Pacific Railroad and along Fifth Street SE.

Additional sidewalks/pathways are intended throughout the city to provide a safe place for pedestrian movements to adjoining neighborhoods, businesses, schools, parks, and scenic areas. A comprehensive pedestrian system is being discussed in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan and the I-35 corridor study. One of the main elements of future pedestrian improvements will be the railway system along the Straight River.

Parks

The community has a major park facility along the Straight River, appropriately named the Straight River Park. It includes a shelter, parking facilities, restroom facilities, tennis courts, swimming pool, play equipment and a softball field. Improvements to the park have been ongoing as deemed necessary thereby maintaining a quality park facility.

The Girl Scouts also own a wooded property along Fifth Avenue SE. The possibility of joint recreational facilities on this property have been discussed thereby involving the Girl Scouts, School District #763 and the city.

The School District also maintains a significant amount of land for their school activities. The cooperation between the school district and city has existed for many years and is expected to continue with respect to recreational development and youth activities.

One of the main goals of the community is the retention and use of the open space along the Straight River. This goal would include both passive and active access including trails, canoeing, fishing and related activities. Discussions have been ongoing with the property owner of the mining areas north of the city with regard to future reclamation of the area. Similar goals also are expressed for the remainder of the Straight River corridor. Cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is also underway to achieve these open space goals.

Public Buildings

The city has a combined city/fire station facility on the city-owned property on Second Avenue SE. This facility built in the late 1970's and remodeled/expanded in the 1990's reflects the pride and community spirit of Medford. A public works maintenance facility also exists on this location along with one of the city wells.

The municipal liquor store is located in the downtown. Major external renovations were completed in 1998 on this building as well as extensive internal improvements.

Airport

Medford is served by airports in Faribault and Owatonna. The airport in Owatonna is located approximately three (3) miles to the south and has recently undergone major reconstruction which lengthened its paved runway to 5,500 feet to permit corporate jets to use this airport. Navigational aids include VOR/DME, ILS and Beacon. The second airport is located north of the city approximately twelve (12) miles in Faribault. Both of these airports are adjacent to I-35 with easy access from the interstate highway.

Railroads

The Union Pacific Railroad has been the predominant facility running north-south through the community. Recently, the I&M Railroad has again initiated rail service

which also travels north-south. These two (2) railroads have a number of daily trains passing through the Medford community.

Forecasts

The “**Housing Strategy for Steele County**” (CHAT Report) provides background data and projections for the unincorporated areas of Steele County. A number of the findings and conclusions are pertinent to Medford and its adjoining areas. The following information has been excerpted from the CHAT Report:

1. *Between 1990 and 2010, Steele County should generate a demand for about 590 units, or an average annual demand of 30 units.*
2. *Current trends suggest that Steele County’s population of people over age 55 will continue to increase to the year 2000; including those over age 75.*
3. *Steele County outside of Owatonna exhibits a demand for about 30 units of additional senior housing to the year 2000.*
4. *A steadily increasing population will increase housing demand between 2000 and 2010. Steele County should plan for development of about 342 units between 2000 and 2010.*
5. *The Steele County region is booming economically. Owatonna’s diverse businesses and industries provide about 17,000 jobs.*
6. *Medford, Blooming Prairie and Ellendale have a significant attraction for older adults. They could develop the 30 units of new senior housing that is referred to in #3; housing which offers an attractive setting for independent seniors in a single-level townhouse or cottage house design.*
7. *Medford, Blooming Prairie and Ellendale should establish themselves as places of housing opportunity to young households in the region.*

The **Office of Minnesota Planning-State Demographic Center** develops long range projections for the State of Minnesota, including demographic analysis and projections. In the past year, the office prepared projections for the period 2000-2030 for the State of Minnesota and its 87 counties.

For the State of Minnesota, the Office of Minnesota Planning offers the following projections through the year 2030:

1. *Minnesota’s population will be about 6.3 million, compared to 4.9 million in 2000.*
-

2. *More than half the population will be over age 40.*
3. *Roughly 16 percent of Minnesota's population will be African American, Asian, American Indian or Hispanic.*
4. *Minnesota's population projected to grow 27% from 2000 to 2030.*
5. *The 65-plus age group is projected to grow by almost 700,000 between 2000 and 2030, a growth rate of 117%.*

In the future, Minnesotans will be on average considerably older than they are now. The aging of the population will have important consequences for education, medical care, business, the tax system and many other aspects of life.

6. *Growth will be the greatest in Twin Cities area suburban counties. The St. Cloud and Rochester areas and the lakes area of north central Minnesota will also see strong growth throughout the next 30 years. Many counties in western Minnesota will continue to lose population, though the losses will be moderate in most cases.*

The Office of Minnesota Planning has also projected population trends for Minnesota counties, various regions and for Steele County alone. Pertinent conclusions for the period between 2000 and 2030 follow:

1. *Over the 30 year period metropolitan areas are projected to grow 30 percent compared to 21 percent for non-metropolitan areas.*
 2. *Approximately 13 counties are projected to have a lower population in 2030 than in 2000.*
 3. *The child population age birth to 14 overall will grow about 10 percent over the next 30 years.*
 4. *The number of people in the prime working-age group, 25 to 54, will decline in the majority of Minnesota counties.*
 5. *Most counties will have a large increase in the retirement-age population, 65 and older.*
 6. *The total population of Minnesota is projected to grow 14.2 percent between 1995 and 2025. Nine suburban counties of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan area will be the main drivers of the growth. These counties- Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Isanti, Scott, Sherburne, Washington and Wright – are projected to account for 72 percent of the state's growth from 1995 to 2005 and 87 percent from 1995 to 2025.*
-

7. *The strong growth projected for the Minneapolis-St. Paul, St. Cloud and Rochester areas reflects an expectation of continued strong employment and housing growth in these areas.*
8. *The population in southeastern Minnesota generally will remain stable or grow. The diverse economic base in this region will provide jobs and help attract or retain residents.*
9. *Counties adjacent to the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area – including Rice, Goodhue, LeSueur, McLeod, Mille Lacs, Sibley and Pine – are projected to experience more development in the next 30 years as growth spills over from the current outer-ring suburbs.*

The Office of Minnesota Planning projects further growth for those Counties lying north and east of Medford and modest population increases for Steele County. Most likely, the overall population within Steele County in the future will be proportionately less than neighboring Counties directly to the north and east due in part to the smaller geographic size of Steele County. Projections for Rice, Goodhue, Dodge and Steele Counties follows:

| | Estimated Population 2000 | Projected Population | | | | | | Percent Change | | |
|---------|------------------------------|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2000-2010 | 2000-2025 | 2000-2030 |
| Dodge | 17,731 | 18,790 | 19,860 | 21,070 | 22,250 | 23,400 | 24,450 | 12% | 32% | 38% |
| Goodhue | 44,127 | 45,540 | 47,140 | 48,820 | 50,430 | 51,810 | 52,890 | 7% | 15% | 20% |
| Rice | 56,665 | 60,680 | 64,540 | 68,580 | 72,430 | 76,320 | 80,010 | 14% | 35% | 42% |
| Steele | 33,680 | 35,120 | 36,390 | 37,580 | 38,630 | 39,550 | 40,330 | 8% | 18% | 20% |

Steele County is categorized as part of the Southeast Region (Region 10) which includes the Rochester area. Projected population trends for this Region follow:

| | Estimated Population 2000 | Projected Population | | | | | | Percent Change | | |
|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2000-2010 | 2000-2025 | 2000-2030 |
| Southeast | 460,102 | 480,500 | 500,500 | 521,200 | 540,800 | 559,200 | 575,900 | 9% | 22% | 26% |

For the City of Medford, the **Office of the State Demographer** has recorded the following statistics for the years 2000 and 2005:

| | <u>2000</u> | <u>2005</u> | <u>Percent Change</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Population | 984 | 1135 | 15% |
| Households | 377 | 443 | 18% |
| Person Per Households | 2.6 | 2.55 | -2.00% |

Trends from 2000’s suggest that Medford’s population and number of households are increasing and household sizes are decreasing slightly.

From 2000 through 2003, the population of Medford increased by more than 9%. During 2002 and 2003, a total of 37 new single family homes were built in Medford. In 2004, a supply of buildable lots exists to accommodate further construction of new homes. Recent development history strongly suggests that Medford will continue the growth trends of the 2000’s. The unanswered question relates to the degree of population and household growth to be expected.

Medford is situated between the larger and expanding communities of Faribault and Owatonna. Like Faribault and Owatonna, Medford’s growth and development will continue to be strongly influenced by its proximity and access to Interstate 35. The Office of Minnesota Planning projects that Rice and Steele Counties will continue to experience population increases through the year 2025, in part resulting from impacts associated with proximity to an Interstate highway.

Geographically, Owatonna is located closer to Medford than Faribault. Owatonna offers a larger employment base compared with Faribault. Between the two, Owatonna tends to influence the growth and development patterns in Medford to a greater degree than does Faribault.

The Medford-Owatonna area is expected to continue to grow into the future. During the 1990’s, Owatonna had experienced a population increase of almost 16%. By 2003, Owatonna had grown to an estimated population of 23,379. During 2003 and 2004, a total of 332 single family dwelling units were built in Owatonna. The expectation is that Medford will capture a reasonable share of future growth that occurs within the area.

Many variables will influence the **future growth of Medford** including mortality, fertility, migration rates, economic conditions, public policy, social trends and other related factors. Projections for Medford have assumed that the mortality and fertility assumptions concluded by the Office of Minnesota Planning – State Demographic Center for Steele County are generally reasonable. That is, area residents are likely to live longer and family sizes in general are expected to decline. However, as a result of strong economic conditions, public policy, social trends and related factors, growth projections offered by the **Comprehensive Plan** are less conservative than those offered by the Office of Minnesota Planning and others. Projections for Medford anticipate that net migration rates, that is the difference between in-migration and out-migration, will exceed the expectations of others. In part, this judgment is predicted upon current trends that in many cases have not been recognized by other demographers. These trends include the recent surge of new housing starts in Medford, plans for further expansion of

the Medford Outlet Center, growing within School District #763, the general growth and development activities that are taking place along the Interstate 35 corridor and the continual residential and economic growth of neighboring communities, in particular Owatonna.

Rapidly changing social, economic and technological factors further limit the accuracy of today’s predictions. As advances are made throughout the world and populations become increasingly mobile, highly reliable forecasts are less probable compared to days past. More than at any previous time, people have the opportunity and in many cases the desire to be transient. While many signs evidence this reality, even the “experts” have been forced to acknowledge that the past trends adjusted mainly by mortality and fertility assumptions have in many cases proven to be poor predictors of future human behavior. As noted previously, the Office of Minnesota Planning had to revise their assumptions which were made in 1993 when they prepared new projections in 1998 because growth had **exceeded** the anticipated rate of growth – this within a period of only 5 years!

A **twenty (20) year** planning period beginning with the base year of 2003 is used to project a future population for Medford. **Near-term (2003-2008)** projections are expected to be influenced by fewer variables compared to long-term **(2015-2025)** forecasts.

With the previous acknowledgments in mind, the following population scenarios are offered through the year 2025:

| Near-Term Scenario | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
| Population | 1077 | 1102 | 1135 | 1161 | 1192 | 1220 |
| Households | 418 | 432 | 443 | 459 | 473 | 486 |
| Person Per Household | 2.56 | 2.55 | 2.55 | 2.53 | 2.52 | 2.51 |

Through 2015, Medford’s historic growth trend is projected to continue. More families are likely to discover and desire the many attributes offered by Medford including a “recognized” public education system, a range of housing alternatives and considerable employment opportunities in the area. The scenario also anticipates that the aging residents of Medford will find alternative housing within the community to serve their changing desires and special needs.

| Long-Term Scenario | | | |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|
| | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 |
| Population | 1571 | 1822 | 2073 |

The population scenario from 2003 through 2015 suggests that Medford could experience population growth during the planning period. It is possible that the community could grow beyond a population of 1,571 before the year 2015. However, the more aggressive scenario will be dependent upon any efforts that Medford may choose to make to encourage and facilitate growth, the economic future of the region and State of Minnesota, the timing for completion of needed improvements to the wastewater treatment facility and other related matters that influence personal decisions pertaining to lifestyles and preferences.

Population projections suggest what the future will become assuming certain rates of birth, death and migration and numerous other factors. Accuracy of any projection will depend in part upon the underlying assumptions and their ultimate validity.

For planning purposes, the **Comprehensive Plan** has identified a geographic area which could be served with municipal in future years. See **Section VII – Exhibit E**.

SECTION III. STRENGTHS – WEAKNESSES- OPPORTUNITIES – THREATS

During the Fall of 1997, citizens of Medford initiated a community planning process which included a discussion designed to identify local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT's). Through this effort, a rather lengthy list of **SWOT's** were identified and discussed.

In conjunction with the preparation of the **Comprehensive Plan**, **SWOT's** as previously recorded were presented to Council Members, City Staff and the general public for further review and **prioritization**. The results obtained through this exercise follow:

Predominant Strengths and Opportunities

1. The City of Medford is a free-standing developing community that benefits from its proximity to larger growing communities and by its direct access to Interstate 35.
 2. The residents of Medford are proud of their heritage, are enthusiastic, and are committed to future growth and continued prosperity.
 3. Medford residents enjoy good quality community services, including those provided by I.S.D. # 763.
 4. Opportunities for new development exist along the Interstate 35 Corridor (Business) and in a number of locations throughout the City of Medford (Residential). "Opportunities" includes market demand and land available for development.
-

5. The City of Medford and Medford Township have executed an Orderly Annexation Agreement that provides for expansion of the Medford corporate limits. Currently, the Agreement is effective until June 8, 2009
6. The Medford area enjoys a natural setting which offers rolling terrain, woods, a picturesque landscape and the amenity of the a Straight River.

Predominant Weaknesses and Threats

1. The ability of Medford residents to effectively manage growth, new development, and redevelopment activities is significantly impacted by the lack of a Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvement Program.
2. The existing mobile home park is a community eyesore and does not provide suitable housing for the residents.
3. The community suffers from a lack of rental housing for individuals, working families and seniors.
4. The continued expansion of Owatonna and Faribault will further limit the ability of Medford to effectively plan for its future growth and development.
5. The City of Medford lacks the necessary infrastructure to facilitate new growth along the Highway 35 Corridor. Although Medford is continually looking at improving the corridor remaining issues do need to be addressed in the future.

The **SWOT's** identify issues which will impact the future growth and development of Medford and the surrounding area. The **Comprehensive Plan** promotes activities that are compatible with and complementary to the predominant strengths and opportunities and/or which are designed to either mitigate, minimize, or eliminate weaknesses and threats. Over time, **SWOT's** are subject to modification and revision as progress is made to implement actions which are recommended by the **Implementation Plan, Section VI** and as physical, social and economic conditions change.

SECTION IV. VISION STATEMENT.

The future of Medford will be determined by decisions and actions that are made and taken each day by the residents, including City Officials, and by others that may have a personal or property interest in the area. Although it is impossible to predict what decisions and actions might occur and when, it is possible to influence such matters before they happen. Daily decisions can be influenced and many times directed to compliment a preconceived notion of future desires. A vision statement can portray the desires of a community and offer a general perspective of aspirations and intentions.

The comprehensive planning process included steps directed at defining a vision for Medford and the surrounding area. Essentially, the visioning process sought public input

to help describe in written form what Medford should “look like” in the future. The essential components which define the **Vision Statement** for Medford follow:

1. Improved and expanded park and recreation development that reflects the natural setting of Medford and the amenity of the Straight River (trails, golf, community center, camping and recreational vehicles, rest-stop, tourism activities, etc.).
2. Affordable housing options for seniors.
3. Rental housing for individuals and working families scattered throughout the community.
4. A growing school district and facilities.
5. Continued growth of single family residential development that offers a variety of housing options to satisfy market demands.
6. Expansion of employment opportunities in the City of Medford.
7. Further business development along the Interstate 35 corridor including improvements that are designed to promote traffic movement from Interstate 35 to and from Medford proper.
8. Improvements throughout the downtown area including redevelopment of the mobile home park and the development of multi-family housing. Creation of a vibrant and active commercial core that will offer a variety of goods and services to satisfy residents needs and includes offerings that will attract visitors.

The Medford **Comprehensive Plan** represents a compilation of information, guidelines and recommendations relating to the physical, social and economic development future of the community.

The **Vision Statement** offers a contextual representation which defines certain outcomes upon successful implementation of the **Comprehensive Plan**.

SECTION V. LAND USE PLAN

The **Land Use Plan** offers a guide and conceptual perspective of desired land use and development for the Medford area. Section V provides a generalized description of land use designations and a map which graphically illustrates desired land use patterns.

The **Land Use Plan** has been prepared to recognize existing conditions and land use patterns, local **SWOT's** (Section III), and Medford's **vision** for the future as outlined in Section IV. Consistent adherence to the guidelines represented by the **Land Use Plan** and map will enable City Officials to more effectively influence future development in a way that is responsive to community goals.

Land use designations define a general terms the desired outcome for future development within identified geographic areas. The geographic areas and land use designations are represented by the **Land Use Map**. See **Section VII – Exhibit F**. Land use designations are generally characterized as follows:

Neighborhood Residential

Neighborhood Residential areas encourage the development of single family housing, detached or attached, and lower density multi-family residential development. A **maximum density of 5 dwelling units per acre** may be allowed subject to issuance of a Conditional Use Permit.

Development objectives to be achieved within the Neighborhood Residential area include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Preservation and enhancement of existing natural features such as waterways, vegetation, woodlands, bluffs and similar topographic conditions.
2. Creative, cost-effective and market responsive site design and residential development.
3. Planned integration with neighboring land uses; including existing, proposed and probable developments.
4. Smooth, safe and efficient transportation system, including allowances for pedestrian movements.
5. Creation, retention and expansion of open spaces.

Commerce and Industry

Commerce and industry land use includes three distinct subsections designed to differentiate among desired and planned business uses. Land use designations include the **Town Centre**, the **Business Park** and the **Regional Market Place**. Desired characteristics of each designation are generally defined as follows:

The **Town Centre** includes areas in and around existing downtown. Permitted land use within the commercial core includes those which offer basic goods and services which are required by Medford residents, professional office and related services, retail and entertainment businesses that promote visitor traffic, and higher density residential development.

The **Business Park** designation located along the East frontage road of Interstate 35 permits a blend of commercial and service business uses which desire freeway visibility but do not require immediate access. In addition, the allowable business enterprises must

be able to successfully integrate their operations and site development plans to compliment the adjoining Residential Neighborhood classification. Development proposals will require careful planning to assure that the objectives for the Business Park classification will be met.

Within the **Regional Market Place** designation, certain commercial developments already exist, including the Medford Outlet Center. Existing and future development will continue to rely upon traffic and market demands that originate far beyond the City of Medford. Further commercial development will be permitted within the Regional Market Place that is designed to compliment and enhance existing land uses, including those that have developed along the Interstate 35 corridor beyond the corporate limits of Medford.

Mixed Use

The mixed use classification encourages and provides for more creative development of land than is possible under traditional zoning controls. Properties which are designated for mixed use development evidence existing conditions which also suggest that flexible land development tools will likely be needed to effectively integrate these areas into the future plans for Medford.

Open Space

Considerable area has been designated as Open Space by the Land Use Map. These areas may be publicly or privately owned. Limited land development will be permitted within these areas as a result of existing or future regulatory standards, environmental protection provisions, access limitations and/or similar conditions that will impact development rights and alternatives. Generally stated, development will be restricted to **limited recreational purposes** and other passive land uses that are designed to compliment and preserve existing conditions, and prohibit those which may create negative impacts.

SECTION VI. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

The **Comprehensive Plan** offers a general description of Medford today and what it may become in the future. Implementation efforts are designed to guide future actions towards achievement of predetermined goals and desired outcomes which are represented by the **Comprehensive Plan**. The **Implementation Plan** is purposefully general yet written to clearly identify activities that are to be initiated pursuant to the **Comprehensive Plan**.

Planning Activities:

1. The City of Medford is a growing community which has existing infrastructure that requires ongoing maintenance and replacement and a need for new infrastructure to accommodate current and future growth. A **Facility Plan** has been completed for the wastewater treatment and sanitary sewer system. Interim improvements to the wastewater treatment facility will be constructed in 2007.
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- The City of Medford should also initiate the preparation of a detailed **Capital Improvement Program** which is directed at infrastructure replacements and extensions that are designed to improve the existing systems and to accommodate growth.
2. A detailed plan and strategy for development of the **Town Centre** should be prepared. The plan must include a general land use concept, assignment of responsibilities, timeline and financing program.
 3. The Medford **Comprehensive Plan** highlights the natural features of the area and promotes the careful planned enhancement and use of these resources. A detailed plan and strategy designed to preserve, enhance and protect the Straight River corridor and tributaries should be initiated. The plan should integrate existing park and recreational facilities with other planned or operating regional systems including those envisioned by the **Minnesota Design Team**.
 4. The Planning and Zoning Board should continue efforts to draft regulatory standards, including zoning controls that are designed to provide enforcement mechanisms to further assure that future land development is consistent with the **Comprehensive Plan**, infrastructure capabilities and related plans.
 5. The City of Medford has initiated considerable discussion with other jurisdictions that have an interest in the development future of the community. Planning for the expansion of Medford's current boundaries should continue and the current policy of **open communication** with the adjoining Township officials, County officials, applicable State and Federal agency representatives and landowners should be maintained.

Development Activities

1. The **2000 Census** reports that nearly 75% of the homes in Medford are now more than 30 years old. While the existing housing stock is generally good, many homes have reached the age when rehabilitation improvements are needed. In some instances, conditions are such that cost-effective rehabilitation can not be justified and removal is warranted.

Relatively few smaller homes designed specifically for **seniors** exist in Medford. In 2000, the Census found that approximately 8.5% of households in Medford were occupied by persons age 65 and older. Since nearly 85% of households in Medford in 2000 were homeowners, not renters, one would assume that a majority of seniors that live in Medford own their own home.

Efforts should be made to survey the community-wide need for housing rehabilitation and alternative housing for the existing senior population of Medford, including rental housing. A development program should then be pursued to satisfy the identified needs.

2. Efforts should continue to foster further development of **new single family homes** to meet the needs of young and maturing families. This market includes “affordable” housing and “move-up” housing.

The City of Medford should investigate all available forms of public financing that may be available to facilitate the construction of affordable housing and pursue those sources that are determined to be useful and effective in meeting the market needs and desires of the community.

3. Few residential **rental** opportunities are currently available in Medford. Potential sites for rental properties should be identified and plans for development initiated and pursued. Prior to development, it will be critical that market demands be fully understood and that any development program is carefully designed, including financing.

SECTION VII. EXHIBITS.

- Exhibit A. Corporate Limits
- Exhibit B. School District #763 Boundary.
- Exhibit C. Drainage Basins.
- Exhibit D. Transportation Map.
- Exhibit E. Urban Service Area.
- Exhibit F. Land Use Map.