INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The City of Montgomery Comprehensive Plan is a dynamic planning tool intended to guide the future growth and development of the city. The Comprehensive Plan is based on local and regional historical facts, trends, and governmental planning standards. This document presents the Comprehensive Plan for Montgomery, Minnesota; reflective of the community planning process conducted in 2013 and 2014. The City last adopted Comprehensive Plans in 1995 and 2005. With changes in the economy the City has identified a need to proactively plan for infill, redevelopment and future development.

The Comprehensive Plan identifies the type, amount, and pattern of growth that has taken place within the City and utilizes this information to plan for future growth. Accordingly, the Comprehensive Plan provides a base for instituting a hierarchy of policies that will assist the community in implementing the long range plan. The plan includes both land within as well as land outside of the city's current corporate boundaries. This does not require this land to be developed but establishes policies and recommendations to guide the development if and when it does occur. While the plan is intended to serve as a 25+-year guide, it should be reviewed and updated as needed to adequately address development as it occurs.   It is recommended the Plan be updated no less than every ten (10) years.

SCOPE OF PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan encompasses ten (10) general categories of information:

1. This **Introduction** includes the purpose of the plan, the scope of the plan, the history and regional setting of the community. The **Planning Framework** identifies the methods employed to obtain information for the Comprehensive Plan including statistical data and community input.

2. The **Physical Profile and Natural Resources Chapter,** inventories the geographical nature of the community in terms of a regional context along with an evaluation of the physical aspects of the City such as soils information, topographical elements and physical barriers to development.

3. **The Demographic Characteristics and Projections Chapter** contains historic and current data as it relates to population, age characteristics, education, occupation, and income levels of current residents. This information, along with State Demographer data is used to project future population and demographic data to enable the City to plan for future residents.

4. **The Land Use Chapter** inventories existing land uses, identifies potential infill or redevelopment areas and includes recommendations for future land uses. This chapter also discusses the **Municipal Boundary Expansion** and defines a growth area outside of the current municipal limits in which future growth is anticipated, and where the city is able to service growth with future utilities. This section also includes policies for boundary expansion or annexation.

5. The **Housing Chapter** evaluates the current housing stock, identifies housing issues relating to the city's demographics, evaluates housing trends, reviews land use options and establishes housing objectives and policies.

6. The **Economic Development Chapter** provides an overview of economic trends, tools to encourage further economic development, the community's input related to the topic and goals and policies for the future growth and redevelopment of Montgomery's commercial and industrial sectors.

7. The **Transportation Chapter** includes information on the current transportation system, categorizes the current street system, identifies future collector streets, and establishes access management policies as well as overall transportation policies for future transportation planning.

8. The **Chapter on Community Facilities and Public Services** includes information relating to government, health care, churches and educational facilities. A summary of public commissions is included along with objectives and policies for community facilities and public services.

9. The **Parks, Trails and Recreation Chapter** includes an inventory of existing park and recreational amenities. It also includes an analysis of future parks, trails and recreational needs and policies relating to these quality of life amenities.

10. The **Utilities Chapter** includes an overview of sanitary sewer, water, electrical, gas and storm water utilities as they relate to the city's ability to service current and future growth area and capital improvements required to support redevelopment and growth.

11. Finally, the **Implementation Chapter** includes a review of local controls pertaining to land use including the City's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and Capital Improvement Planning. It contains recommendations to assist in implementing the City's 2014 Comprehensive Plan.

HISTORY AND REGIONAL SETTING

HISTORY

"The town of Montgomery, MN was named for General Richard Montgomery, a British military man born in Ireland. Montgomery led American forces in the November 13, 1775, capture of Montreal. At the same time, Benedict Arnold was leading American troops into Quebec under orders from General George Washington. Montgomery and Arnold met up and joined forces, but were not as successful in their second foray as Montgomery had been in Montreal. Montgomery was killed in the December 31, 1775 attempt to overtake Quebec. Seriously injured, Arnold retreated to New York."[1]

Historic Downtown Montgomery - circa 1910

Between 1856 and 1860, Bohemian, Czech, German and Irish families began to settle in the Montgomery area. In 1880, the City of Montgomery's population was 261. By 1900, the population increased to 979. According to the Library of Congress, "The number of Czech pioneers settling here made the township the largest Czech-populated area in Minnesota." [2]

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[1] www.cityofmontgomerymn.com & Library of Congress
[2] www.cityofmontgomerymn.com & Library of Congress

Events such as the annual "Kolacky Days", in July, continue to aid the community in celebrating its Czechoslovakian heritage. The first Kolacky Day was held on October 1, 1929. "The Kolacky Day spirit reigned supreme from early Tuesday morning until a comparatively late hour Wednesday morning. More than 1,600 of the celebrated delicacies were devoured," according to a *Montgomery Messenger* account from the following week. Events at the first celebration included a trap shooting tournament, a parade, sports and races…"[3] The event was later changed to a two-day celebration, and moved to July, in 1975. The community celebration continues to draw residents and tourists to the city for a variety of events.

The City of Montgomery has grown to a City of an estimated 2,957 residents (2012 State Demographer Estimate). While the size of the community has grown its Czechoslovakian heritage remains strong.

REGIONAL SETTING

Located in Le Sueur County, the City of Montgomery is approximately 45 miles southwest of Minneapolis. The City is within 15 miles west of Interstate 35, with MN State Highways 13 and 21 serving as major transportation routes within the community.

Area communities include New Prague to the north, Kilkenny to the south, Lonsdale to the east and Le Center to the west. The nearest major city is Fairbault, which is approximately 21 miles away.

Le Sueur County, which was once more rural in nature, began to experience more urban development and growth in the early 2000. With the great recession in the past decade, growth slowed in the County as in the state.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Montgomery 2014 Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide the growth and (re) development of the City, taking into consideration *where* the city develops and *how* it develops. In order to ensure the vision of the community is represented within the vision, guiding principles and goals and objectives, a variety of techniques were employed to ensure public input in the planning process. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan is the product of several processes including:

- A community survey which was available to the public at City Hall and on-line from October 31, 2013 to November 18, 2013. The City received 114 responses of which 94 were from residents in the City and 19 were from individuals located outside the City limits. It is estimated that 7.9% of occupied households in the City responded;

- Historical data from the City of Montgomery, Le Sueur County, the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development, MN State Demographer's Office and the U.S. Census;

- Review of City Ordinances and specific studies;

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[3] Wikipedia

- Public meetings, including a community visioning session held January 2, 2014, meetings with the Housing Redevelopment Authority, Economic Development Authority and Park Board;

- Review of the 2005 Montgomery Comprehensive Plan;

- Review of the Le Sueur County Comprehensive Plan;

- Review of statistical data; and

- City staff participation.

COMMUNITY INPUT- S.W.O.T

Through an on-line and printed survey, participants were asked to identify the best aspects of day-to-day living in Montgomery, or the most positive attributes. Following are the most common responses received through the survey:

# of responses	Category or Response
49	Education/Schools
37	Small town atmosphere/ values/ character
20	Businesses- leaders, US Steel, Seneca, Green Giant, Dollar Store, Subway, jobs, etc.
16	Its people/neighbors
15	Community & community involvement & events
13	Safe
12	Heritage/history/culture traditions
10	Friendliness
10	Kolacky Days
8	Location/ proximity
5	Health care, medical
5	Fire Department
5	Churches
4	Affordable
3	Mayor
2	City Council/local govt.
3	Senior hsg/asst. living
3	Police Department
2	Golf course
2	Library
2	Ambulance
2	Quiet

In addition fourteen individuals attended and participated in a January, 2014 Visioning Session. Photos of Montgomery's greatest assets as well as opportunities were viewed.   Assets identified included:

- Educational opportunities at Tri-City United Public Schools and Most Holy Redeemer Catholic School;
- The Montgomery national Golf Club;
- The Montgomery Public Library;
- The Park System with Memorial Park, North Side Park, Veteran's Memorial Park and West Side Park;

- Public Facilities including water tower, water treatment plant and wastewater treatment plant to serve the current and future growth of the city;
- Senior Housing including Assisted Living at Park Manor and Traditions of Montgomery;
- Healthcare with Mayo Clinic Health Systems;
- A local grocery store: Fred's Market Place;
- Jobs – Local Economy with USP Structural Connectors, Seneca Foods, and a diverse business base;
- Civic Organizations/Civic Pride including but not limited to Home of Miss Czech Slovak, Montgomery Historical Society, Arts & Heritage Center, Montgomery Community Club, American Legion, American Auxiliary, Titans Booster Club, Kolacky Days, various sports clubs, etc. ;
- Tourism/Destinations/Places of interest including Big Honza, Curtain Call Theatre, Next Chapter Winery, Montgomery Brewing Company, Montgomery Orchard, Franke's Bakery, etc; and.
- Proximity to Lake Pepin and ability to coordinate with the County, DNR and Sportsman's Clubs.

Needs or Opportunities identified included as a part of the Visioning Session included:
- Road improvements;
- Vacant residential lots available for infill;
- Public facility needs including Fire Hall and Police Department;
- Redevelopment site opportunities;
- Opportunity to expand the industrial park to the south or by the WWTP;
- Downtown revitalization and filling of vacant buildings;
- Establishment of a Chamber of Commerce; and
- Utility rates

Following are additional challenges survey participants identified:

# of responses	Category or Response
38	Business recruitment, additional industry/jobs
	Downtown improvement
15	City management and finances. Keeping tax rates affordable.
13	Improving streets
5	Locations (land availability) for new industry and businesses. Planning for future zoning.
4	Visual appeal of the city
2	Economic growth
2	School growing
2	Location
2	Bettering our park system
1	Aging population
1	Housing
1	Noise pollution/odor
1	Bedroom community. Need reasons for people to be in town.
1	Lack of vision. Too much planning for the now.
1	Promoting Montgomery
1	Surviving
1	Not losing the small town feel
1	Cost of water bills

As a part of the survey, residents were asked what one major improvement they would like to see in the City in the next five years. Responses varied; however the primary themes that carried through included:

- Recruitment of more businesses and jobs including industrial and commercial/service.
- Downtown revitalization and filling of vacant buildings.
- Improvements to streets and a street improvement plan.
- Improving the aesthetics of the community or cleaning up areas in the city.
- Reduction in water bills.
- Additional playgrounds and parks, including dog parks
- Additional housing
- Sidewalk improvements
- An emergency service building
- City Administration (filling the vacancy with a competent administrator) and involved staff.
- Promotion of Montgomery
- New church facility.
- Improved snow removal
- Something to draw people to the community (mid-income families)

VISION STATEMENT

The City of Montgomery has adopted the following Mission Statement,

"To provide a positive environment where families thrive."

As a part of the Visioning Session and Committee meetings, the Vision for the City was discussed in detail.   Key phrases which the participants identified as prominent now and/or desirable in the future included:

- Vibrant
- Small town atmosphere
- Family-oriented but welcoming to all
- Strong traditions
- Historic downtown
- Quality education system
- Promising future
- Easy to access
- Quality of Life

As a result, the City of Montgomery adopted the following Vision Statement for the Comprehensive Plan and the future growth and redevelopment of the community. The Vision Statement reads,

"Our Vision is to provide the opportunity to thrive in a community with a proud past and promising future."