

SECTION 1. OVERVIEW

Purpose

A city's Master Plan can be defined as a long-range planning tool that is intended to be used by City staff, decision-makers and citizens to direct the growth and physical development of a community for ten years, twenty years or an even longer period of time. It is a vision of what the community can become and is a long-range statement of public policy.

The primary objectives of the Master Plan are to:

- Ensure efficient delivery of public services
- Coordinate public and private investment
- Minimize conflict between land uses
- Manage growth in an orderly manner
- Increase the cost-effectiveness of public investments
- Provide a rational and reasonable basis for making decisions about the community

As a vision of the City's future physical form, the Master Plan sets forth a generalized pattern of land use areas and transportation corridors. It represents a long-range statement of public policy with respect to how the community should grow, develop and mature over time. It includes policies and recommendations relative to the development of various physical elements within the community such as transportation, land use, housing, parks and recreation, and urban design. It provides for the distribution and interrelationships of various land uses, as well as a basis for future development recommendations. These aspects of the Plan are supported by a set of goals and objectives drawn from the desires and aspirations of citizens and business leaders, and are intended to help Saint Hedwig create an attractive living and working environment.

Benefits to Saint Hedwig

It is clear to the citizens and civic leaders of Saint Hedwig that improvement of their community and its quality of life does not happen by chance but instead requires strategic planning. By adopting policies and guidelines set forth in the Master Plan, Saint Hedwig can implement a strategy to shape its desired future to the benefit of its citizenry. The Master Plan is a guide for decision-makers and a tool for managing community change to achieve this desired quality of life.

Master planning helps to ensure that, as size and population characteristics grow and change over time, the community continues to develop in a manner which reflects the objectives and values

of the community's property owners, decision-makers and citizenry. The product of a municipal planning program is generally a Master Plan document (and associated maps), which is sometimes referred to as the community's "Master Plan". The Master Plan should function as a long-range guide for the future growth, and (re)development of the community. It should accurately reflect what is in the best interest for the City of Saint Hedwig, as perceived by citizens within the community. It should illustrate and represent a master "vision" of what the community can become and should be utilized as a long-range statement of public policy.

The Master Plan serves several important roles in the City's decision-making process. Its primary purpose is to permit the City to consciously consider and shape its own future. It serves as a response to existing problems and as a means to address future issues in a more proactive way. It can be used to identify areas or features that need to be protected and establish a framework for doing so. Although the Master Plan focuses primarily upon the community's physical form and environment, it is closely tied to socioeconomic factors as well. In many ways, the physical layout and design of the community affect the daily lives of those who live and work in it.

The Master Plan, once adopted, becomes the official policy of the City. It will help guide zoning and development decisions and will serve as a basis of future capital expenditures for public facilities. It is important to emphasize that the Master Plan is not a rigid policy but rather a guide. It is intended to be flexible and provide latitude for more detailed analyses that are commonly a part of zoning and development decisions. These decisions should be consistent with policies established within the Master Plan.

Planning is a continuous and ever-changing process. The City will undoubtedly encounter future development proposals that are inconsistent with the Plan. Some of these proposals may well be in the best interest of the City and worth further consideration. As community conditions and priorities change over time, the City's Master Plan should be amended to take advantage of new opportunities and to respond to new needs and circumstances. Thus, the Master Plan itself is not intended to be a static document; it is intended to be a dynamic, adaptable guide to help citizens and officials shape Saint Hedwig's future.