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## INTRODUCTION

*“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.” - Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

### Our City

We began as a close-knit settlement in picturesque natural prairie lands and river bluffs. The Minnesota River, forested ravines, and flat expanses of grasslands created our “beautiful prairie” as observed by Territorial Judge and Belle Plaine Homesteader Andrew Chatfield in 1853.

We are a growing rural center midway between Minneapolis and Mankato which has retained tangible reminders of our natural setting, history, and cultural roots. We have a variety of attractive places to live from apartments to executive homes to retirement communities. We have a pedestrian friendly downtown core that preserves its heritage as a gathering space for residents. We have U.S. Highway 169, a designated corridor of commerce, traversing the City and bringing welcomed activity and visitors to retail and service venues. We have access to the Minnesota River, miles of trails, and plentiful park and recreation areas reflecting our active lifestyles and love of the outdoors.

We will be a perpetually sustainable, complete, and livable City for all people, seasons, and generations.

## What Drives This Plan

### **Belle Plaine's Sought After Results**

Through previous comprehensive planning efforts core values, tenets, and ideals were defined and embraced. *Destination Belle Plaine 2040* honors the efforts of those previously participating in comprehensive planning efforts and commits to the following chosen outcomes as sought after results across all plan elements. Policies, plans, and projects balancing all five outcomes will, over time, create positive change.

#### *Stewardship*

Belle Plaine believes that we, the community, are the managers of what our ancestors trusted to us and the protectors of that which future generations will inherit. We define stewardship as the responsible planning and managing of finite resources, including the environment, natural resources, public financial resources, community health & safety, property, public infrastructure, and information.

#### *Long-term Economic Prosperity*

Belle Plaine believes every community member should find our City a distinct, flourishing place open to business opportunities for all with an abundance of available jobs, solid infrastructure, and a variety of places to live. We define economic prosperity as a general feeling of successful economic well-being.

#### *Social Equity*

Belle Plaine believes in building a rightful and just City where every resident, employee, and business has equal access to resources, opportunities, and outcomes that improve quality of life and enable them to reach their full potential. We define social equity as the fair, just, and equitable management of all institutions serving the public; the fair and equitable distribution of public services; the fair and equitable implementation of public policy; and, the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy.

#### *Livability*

Belle Plaine believes access to a high quality of life is an indispensable right of every community member and the very foundation of a healthy local economy. We believe livability doesn't come about by chance, but, rather is intentionally created through a concerted community effort and investment. We define livability as factors adding up to the City's quality of life including but not limited to: access to the built and natural environments; access to a variety of housing options; access to a variety of places through a variety of means from walking to transit; access to superior educational systems; and access to cultural, entertainment, and recreation possibilities.

#### *Sustainability*

Belle Plaine believes our choices and actions today are consequential and will permanently impact choices and actions available in the future. We believe sustainable development is more of a necessity than a choice. We define sustainability as promoting development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

## Major Themes

### *Balancing good places and new spaces*

- Plan land use patterns and integrate land use and transportation, quality of life, water resources, housing choice, and economic strength and competitiveness
- Purposefully manage community appearance and design
- Provide complete housing choices – a multitude of types, values, and sizes fit for every stage of life
- Preserve and respect the old while inviting new
- Encourage revitalization, reuse, infill, and redevelopment
- Protect and preserve natural and fiscal resources

### *Creating a prosperous and resilient City*

- Achieve equitable economic vitality for the common good of all
- Prepare for, adapt, and rally in the face of adversity
- Confront challenging, complex issues and have the courage to collectively take responsibility for our place and future generations
- Understand, acknowledge, and act on the interrelatedness of local systems: land use, physical resources, quality of life amenities, transportation, housing, economic development, and fiscal resource realities
- Understand, acknowledge, and act on global issues: climate change, security threats, redefined economies, and information-based society
- Be open to fundamental transformation in instances where adapting is not sufficient

### *Creating a complete City*

- Enhance quality of life for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes through integrated planning solutions grounded in complete streets, complete housing, and complete infrastructure
- Commit to community health and safety for all
- Champion, nurture, and support ample variety in places at which to shop, work, create, educate, and innovate
- Respect, sustain, and appreciate our natural resources, environment, and special places
- Treasure, preserve, and protect historically significant sites, structures, assets, stories, and intangibles

### *Being an authentic City that is genuinely a great place*

- Inspire emotional connections to public places and spaces
- Optimize operational efficiency and effectively
- Complete the right tasks at the right times
- Reflect on and learn from successes and disappointments
- Truly understand, appreciate, and respect differences
- Be open to change; be open to new
- Provide responsive governance and regional leadership

## Belle Plaine's Managing Principles

*Destination Belle Plaine 2040* employs three principles to achieve sought after outcomes.

### *Integration*

Efficient public resource use and strategic public investment can be maximized through a deliberate and purposefully integrated approach to project delivery and public service. The intentional combining of related activities, strategic deployment of resources, and seamless coordination between multiple stakeholders, organizations, and systems streamlines operations and delivers multiple benefits at reduced costs.

### *Collaboration*

Working together across multiple departments, committees, and jurisdictions promotes stakeholder and project accountability, innovation, and increased efficiency. Resource limitations, increasing demand for services, and complex community expectations create multifaceted challenges and opportunities that are simply best addressed collaboratively as opposed to going it alone. *Destination Belle Plaine 2040* is a collaborative effort in the present as it is being developed and in the future as it is being implemented.

### *Accountability*

*Destination Belle Plaine 2040* contains measures to promote accountability across multiple plan elements by, for and to multiple stakeholders. The City is committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of policies, practices, and plans created to achieve shared outcomes. The City accepts responsibility for actions resulting from *Destination Belle Plaine 2040* and is committed to adjusting course as needed to improve delivery of outcomes and/or affect change.

# Destination Belle Plaine 2040

## Who The Plan Will Serve

Over the next twenty years Belle Plaine is required to plan for:

Year	Population	Households	Employment
2020	7,800	2,900	2,600
2030	10,100	3,860	2,950
2040	12,600	4,900	3,300

## Approach to Plan

While *Destination Belle Plaine 2040* must be consistent with regional planning efforts, its highest priority is to provide guidance at the local level and to address challenges and opportunities.

During the last Comprehensive Plan update participants defined values, described preferences, and designated a future course for our City. Since that time development has occurred consistent with the values, preferences, and future course established ten years ago, albeit not at the pace envisioned. The Great Recession transformed economies nationwide and, while Belle Plaine weathered the recession better than most, growth slowed for a period of time around 2010. Building and development continues to rebound from the recession evidence of our resilient nature and community resolve.

*Destination Belle Plaine 2040* honors and embraces the vision and primary conclusions contained in the previous Comprehensive Plan. It also respects the coordinated regional planning approach established by the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council in Thrive MSP 2040 and associated policy plans.

## Local Planning Framework

*Destination Belle Plaine 2040* describes the future we envision for Belle Plaine and the strategy to make it happen. The Plan is a legal document and it meets specific state and regional requirements for content. The preeminent purpose of *Destination Belle Plaine 2040* is producing a healthy, livable, vibrant, and sustainable community for all ages and abilities.



City leaders will use *Destination 2040* to evaluate land use changes and budgetary decisions. City staff will employ *Destination 2040* when making decisions and recommendations regarding building and development. Community members will use *2040* to understand long-range plans and proposals for specific areas.

*Destination 2040* is organized as a principal land use plan with supporting policy plans for housing, transportation, water resources, parks/trail, economic development, and overall plan implementation. All elements contain a combination of narrative statements, exhibits, and maps. Goals, objectives, and strategies are contained in each element.

## Twin Cities Metropolitan Council Regional Growth Plan and Associated Plan Elements

In 1967 the Minnesota Legislature created the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council to oversee regional growth issues. The Council is responsible for planning and coordinating the region's growth and setting policies to deal with regional issues. The Metro Council develops a comprehensive development guide at least once a decade following updates to the long-term forecasts which follow the decennial Census.

The Metropolitan Council's *Thrive MSP 2040* is the policy foundation on which regional systems and policy plans, development policies, and implementation strategies are based. The Council is required to develop transportation, water resources, and regional parks policy plans. In addition, the Council has established a regional housing plan.

The Metropolitan Land Planning Act requires local jurisdictions to update comprehensive plans to be consistent with the Council's regional planning documents. The Council reviews local plans to ensure consistency. *Destination 2040* is intended to be consistent with regional plans.

Orderly & Efficient Land Use
Natural Resources Protection
Water Sustainability
Housing Affordability & Choice
Access, Mobility, & Transportation Choice
Economic Competitiveness
Building in Resilience

### Scott County Comprehensive Plan

The Metropolitan Land Planning Act requires counties adopt Comprehensive Plans consistent with Twin Cities Metropolitan Council plans. *Destination Belle Plaine 2040* respects county-wide policies and plans as represented in the 2040 Scott County Comprehensive Plan.

### Implementation

*Destination Belle Plaine 2040* is a plan driven by five outcomes, organized around four major themes, and guided by three managing principals. The plan provides a strong framework for decision-making, but often doesn't provide specific solutions. The plan is implemented more specifically through local controls (e.g. land use, subdivision) and approved functional plans. For example, a new mixed use development will have to be consistent with this plan but will be further subject to subdivision and land use codes. Furthermore, where connections (utility, transportation, recreation) are made will be subject to specific system plans.

The City plans for its future, but the private sector and other government agencies help shape the built environment in significant ways. The City must maintain relationships and partner with these entities to help make them make decisions which best serve the City's vision.

## Defining and Measuring Success

*Destination Belle Plaine 2040* provides vision and direction through the year 2040, but the City will likely continue to grow beyond 2040. Cities should and will always be able to find ways to improve to meet changing needs and address concerns. Because change is inevitable and the future unpredictable, the success of *Destination 2040* is not whether or not the plan is exactly executed; rather, the success of the Plan should be judged by whether or not the City is moving in the planned direction.

The City shares the Metropolitan Council's commitment to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of policies and practices toward achieving stated outcomes. The City further shares the Metropolitan Council's commitment to adjusting course to improve performance if necessary.

Since *Destination 2040* spans several policy plans and topics, monitoring progress on a task by task basis would be too time-consuming. In addition, the City's relatively small population makes demographic analysis potentially problematic due to small sample size. Therefore, to measure *Destination 2040's* effectiveness and implementation success we will look at certain indicators:

- New housing starts by type, value, and location.
- New lots created by type, value, and location.
- Housing affordability, especially for cost-burdened renters and retirees.
- Available housing choice by type and value.
- Market value for residential and commercial/industrial properties.
- Percentage of total market value made up of residential versus commercial/industrial uses.
- Number of jobs created/retained.
- City's progress under the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's GreenStep Cities Program.
- Park use; community miles walked/biked.
- Safe City ranking.
- City's capital investment in infrastructure and facilities – new and retained value.

## Updating This Plan

*Destination Belle Plaine 2040* is intended to guide the overall growth and redevelopment of the community. As events and circumstances within the community change, *Destination 2040* may be reviewed and updated. Changes to the *Destination 2040* require Metropolitan Council approval and a super-majority local vote of approval.