

What is the Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is a document adopted by the City Council. It describes how Des Moines will continue to provide necessary facilities and services to accommodate job and population growth. Most importantly, it is a statement of the kind of community Des Moines wants to become, envisioned by those who live, work, recreate and visit here. The Comprehensive Plan includes a Vision Statement—a verbal snapshot of our desired character over the next 20 years—and general Framework Goals to implement that Vision.

Why is the Comprehensive Plan important to me?

The Comprehensive Plan is used as a guide to decide where housing and business growth should occur, what transportation system we will have to support the growth, what types of businesses and jobs we want to encourage, what types of housing we should have in the community, how we can protect our environmentally sensitive areas and what values we want reflected in the character of our community. The Plan is the basis for zoning, which in turn guides development permits in the City. Therefore, it is important to be involved in the formation of the Plan to influence decisions on future development activity.

How is the Comprehensive Plan used?

The Plan sets the framework for the City's land-use pattern and what uses are allowed where. It also provides for the basis of building height, landscaping, sign standards, protection of streams and wetlands, and other development regulations. It is the foundation for the City's zoning and other code regulations and the Zoning Map. The Plan is also the policy basis for decisions in reviewing development projects under the State Environmental Policy Act. Mitigation of impacts for a development proposal under the State Environmental Policy Act can be based on policies in the Plan.

Who decides what the Plan says?

The City engages the community to develop a shared vision based on common values, desires and goals. Public meetings and hearings are held to get public comments on the draft Plan. The City Council approves the final Plan.

What topics are addressed in the Comprehensive Plan?

The State Growth Management Act specifies “required” elements – those that must be included in the Comprehensive Plan; and “optional” elements – those that can be included by a jurisdiction if desired.

Below is a list of the **elements** required under Growth Management Act (*) and additional optional elements contained in Des Moines Comprehensive Plan:

- General Planning
- Land Use*
- Transportation*
- Conservation
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space*
- Capital Facilities, Utilities, and Public Service*
- Housing*
- Community Character
- North Central Neighborhood
- Marina District
- Pacific Ridge