

# MEMORANDUM

Hoisington Koegler Group Inc.



**TO:** Wahpeton Planning Commission and Staff

**FROM:** Jeff Miller & Rita Trapp, Consulting Planners (HKGI)

**DATE:** April 14, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Progress Report on Comprehensive Plan Update Project

This memo is intended as a brief update for the Planning Commission regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update project. We have made a lot of progress on the plan. Our focus has been on developing future projections (population & number of households), identifying a proposed land use map, analysis of public infrastructure needs, and pinpointing redevelopment potential. We plan to present our Comprehensive Plan recommendations to the Planning Commission at your May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. After discussion and receiving the PC's input, we will move forward with completing a draft of the updated Comprehensive Plan in June for review by the PC and at a community meeting.

## **Purpose of Future Land Use Plan (Comprehensive Plan) vs. Zoning Ordinance**

Wahpeton has two primary tools for guiding future land use and development within the City: the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. The Comprehensive Plan is a big picture policy plan that guides how the City would like land use and development patterns to evolve long-term. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be future-oriented and visionary with general policies for guiding future changes in the City. A Future Land Use Plan map that looks out 20 years into the future is a key component of the Comprehensive Plan. The Zoning Ordinance contains the City's more detailed land use and development standards, such as requirements for property uses, lot sizes, building sizes and locations, parking, etc. The Zoning Map is a key component of the Zoning Ordinance.

According to the North Dakota Planning Handbook, the starting point for the establishment of a City's land use regulations is the Comprehensive Plan. A Comprehensive Plan is described in the North Dakota Century Code as a "statement in documented text setting forth explicit goals, objectives, policies and standards of the jurisdiction to guide public and private development within its control." While there are not specific elements required to be within a Comprehensive Plan, it typically includes a future land use map which designates the general locations of differing types of land uses and, if needed, a phasing plan that designates some areas to be developed before other areas. It also includes guidance on community systems including transportation, parks, open space, and utilities.

In contrast to the visionary focus of the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Ordinance focuses on regulating the specific use and the construction of structures on a specific piece of property. This is accomplished by dividing the community's properties into districts based upon land uses and establishing regulations for each district that are applied uniformly across the district but not necessarily

consistently from district to district. The regulations developed for a particular district must be developed in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. Since zoning regulations are more detailed, often there are many more zoning districts than there are land use plan categories. In addition, a specific zoning district may be considered consistent with more than one land use categories.

Once a Comprehensive Plan is adopted, communities' focus often reverts back to the Zoning Ordinance in their day-to-day decision making. However, the Comprehensive Plan's vision, goals and policies should be equally used when evaluating whether a proposal is consistent with the community's intent for future land use and development. Both the North Dakota County Attorney General and court system have opined that communities which permit development that is contrary to the Comprehensive Plan are being arbitrary. In using both documents for decision-making, it is important to keep in mind its function as described below:

<b>Future Land Use Plan Map</b>	<b>Zoning Map</b>
Visionary	Regulatory
General	Detailed
Blueprint	Implementation Tool
Focuses on areas/districts	Parcel specific

### **Approach for Projecting Future Population & Number of Households**

In order to prepare an effective long-term Comprehensive Plan for the City, it is necessary to establish projections for the City's population and number of households in 2030. In particular, the City needs to identify the general range of additional households that are anticipated between now and 2030 to be able to guide an adequate quantity of land and locations for residential land uses to accommodate the anticipated housing growth needs. Our approach to this task is essentially as follows:

- analyze the trends in Wahpeton's/Breckenridge's population, number of households, and average household;
- understand existing 2030 projections that are relevant to Wahpeton, such as the 2010 Housing Study for Wahpeton/Breckenridge and U.S. Census Bureau projections;
- understand trends and available projections at the county and state level;
- develop alternative population projection scenarios between now and 2030;
- develop alternative projections for number of households and average household size;
- identify quantity of residential land needed for the projected number of households;
- identify the preferred land development areas to accommodate the anticipated housing growth.

### **Findings/Assumptions**

1. The 2010 Wahpeton/Breckenridge Housing Study estimates population loss from 2000 to 2009 for Wahpeton (-15.3%), Richland County (-10.9%), Breckenridge (-9.7%), and Wilkin County (-12.6%).

2. Wahpeton's population (annual change) has been declining on average since 1990:

	20-Year Trend	15-Year Trend	10-Year Trend	5-Year Trend
Annual Change in Number of Residents	-49	-92	-82	-73
Annual Change in %	-0.6%	-1.1%	-1.0%	-0.9%

3. In line with the ongoing rural-to-urban migration trend in the U.S., Richland County has been generally losing population since 1940 while Wahpeton continued to grow until the 1980s. Since 1990, Wahpeton's population loss has been pretty similar to that of Richland County.
4. In spite of Wahpeton's population loss from 1990 to 2000, the number of households continued to increase. However, from 2000 to 2010, the continued population loss also resulted in a decrease in the number of households.
5. Average household size has been decreasing in Wahpeton and Richland County, in line with national trends.
6. Based on the 2010 Wahpeton/Breckenridge Housing Study, population and number of households will continue to decline through 2015.
7. U.S. Census Bureau is projecting North Dakota's population to continue decreasing through 2030; -0.8% (2000-2010), -1.0% (2010-2020), -3.7% (2020-2030).
8. The North Dakota State Data Center (NDSDC) projected that Richland County's population will continue to decrease through 2020 by -2.0%. Based on the significant 2000-2010 decline in population for Wahpeton (-9.6%) and Richland County (-9.3%), this projection made in 2003 may be a bit conservative.
9. The NDSDC identifies three leading trends that are influencing the state's future population: rural-to-urban migration, out-of-state migration of young adults & young families, and an increasing proportion of elderly residents. Based on the demographic findings in the 2010 Housing Study, all of these trends appear to be impacting Wahpeton.
10. Based on local, regional and national population trends and projections, Wahpeton should plan for its population to decline somewhat or possibly stabilize between now and 2030.

### **2030 Residential Land Needs**

Since the 2030 projections indicate that the number of households will probably be less than or equal to the current number of households in the City, the need for additional residential land should not be based on any growth in the City's overall number of households. Rather, the focus should be on identifying the residential land needs for adding housing for the specific age groups that are projected to grow – 25 to 34 years old and 55 to 74 years old – or the community's housing gaps. Extrapolating from the 2010 Housing Study's numbers for 2015, we have calculated housing growth needs of approximately 90 to 109 additional acres of land for residential development between 2010 and 2030. This need breaks out to approximately 47-60 acres for single-family/detached housing and 43-49 acres for multi-family/attached housing. Keep in mind that this calculation does not account for the current vacant housing units within the City. The projected residential land needed could be met by a combination of

vacant land within the City, redevelopment land within the City, and undeveloped land at the edge of the City. In general, it is recommended that the Higher Density Rental Housing be located within the City near community services and amenities, ideally near downtown.

### **Preliminary Recommendations for Updating City's Comprehensive Plan**

1. Plan for 2030 population to be in the range of 7,400 to 8,800 residents, essentially the same or fewer residents than today. Plan for 2030 number of households to be in the range of 2,800 to 3,500 households. Since the 2010 Housing Study estimated that the City had 3,566 housing units in 2010, the City's future needs for additional housing and residential land should not be based on any significant growth in the number of households in the City.
2. Single-Family/Detached Housing: Development of additional residential land for single-family or detached housing should target the projected needs for certain types of single-family housing: higher priced "trade-up" houses, low-maintenance townhouses/twinhomes, and affordable homes for first-time homebuyers.
3. Multi-Family/Attached Housing: Development of additional residential land for multi-family or attached housing:
  - a. Consider guiding undeveloped land adjacent to cemetery west of 11<sup>th</sup> Street (approx. 20 acres) for Attached Residential since this site is located near downtown's services and amenities.
  - b. Consider guiding additional land in south side industrial area for Attached Residential in order to create a cohesive residential area west of 6<sup>th</sup> Street that becomes an extension of the south side neighborhood east of 6<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - c. Target downtown redevelopment sites for opportunities to meet future needs for additional higher density rental housing in both mixed-use buildings and stand-alone residential buildings.

### **Draft Future Land Use Plan**

Using the future projections and the guidance from the January visioning sessions, a proposed future land use plan map has been drafted. This draft is intended to be a starting point for discussion about the City's vision for the various areas of the community. As noted previously, the future land use plan map is intended to be visionary and focused on guiding land uses on an areawide basis rather than individual parcels. Included for your review are the descriptions for the fourteen (14) proposed land use categories. In addition, a summary highlighting the key components of the proposed future land use for the Highway 210, Downtown and Southwest focus areas has been provided.

Please feel free to contact Jane Priebe or me with any questions, concerns, or suggestions for the key stakeholder meetings/interviews. I can be reached at [jmiller@hkgi.com](mailto:jmiller@hkgi.com) or 612-252-7123.

We look forward to meeting with you in person on Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, at your regular Planning Commission meeting. Thanks!