

# INTRODUCTION

## I. PURPOSE

The City of Osakis 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 Osakis, Minnesota; reflective of the community planning process conducted in 2005-2006.

Planning begins with vision. This vision focuses on what a desirable future would include. When looking at the development of a community, a desirable future includes the availability of jobs and business opportunities, the quality of natural resources, the availability of affordable housing, the accessibility and adequacy of public utilities, parks and recreation, schools and protective services, the condition of streets and highways, and the strength of communities. These are, in summary, some of the basic elements, which contribute to a positive quality of life.

Planning concepts must be integrated with background information to develop a Comprehensive Plan. An understanding of existing land uses, natural features, the transportation system and community facilities are required for developing a Comprehensive Plan which preserves valuable natural resources, provides for orderly development, and maximizes the efficiency of the transportation system and the delivery of services. In addition, population and employment trends and projections must be analyzed to determine future land use, transportation and facility needs.

The Comprehensive Plan is based upon local citizen input and careful consideration of significant natural and cultural resources. As a means of discerning, classifying, and analyzing historical information this inventory of pertinent data has been compiled. The Comprehensive Plan identifies the type, amount, and pattern of growth that has taken place within the City and utilizes this information for the planning of future growth. Accordingly, the Comprehensive Plan provides a knowledge base for instituting a hierarchy of policies that will assist the community in processing a variety of development issues on a defined policy level. This information and policy base will allow decision-makers to evaluate and guide proposals benefiting the residents of Osakis, and fulfilling the City's goals and objectives. While the Plan is intended to serve as a 25-30 year guide, it should be reviewed as needed to adequately address development and changes within the community as they occur.

## II. SCOPE OF PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan encompasses twelve (12) 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.
2. A review of the **Planning Framework** which identifies the methods employed to obtain information for the Comprehensive Plan including statistical data and community input.
3. A review of **Demographic Characteristics and Trends** contains historic and projected population information as it relates to growth, age characteristics, education, occupation, and income level.
4. A review of the **Natural Resources** which indicates 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.

5. The **Land Use Section** includes elements that inventory existing land uses, identify potential infill or redevelopment areas and evaluate future land use. This section also categorizes the City into various land use districts for more detailed land use planning. This chapter also discusses an **Urban Growth Area** and defines a growth area outside of the current municipal limits in which future growth may be anticipated, and where the City is able to service growth with future utilities.
6. A **Housing Section** evaluates the current housing stock, identifies housing opportunities, establishes policies for future housing development and identifies housing financing programs to achieve the goals established.
7. A section on **Transportation** includes information on the current transportation system; goals and policies for future transportation planning and a transportation plan.
8. A section pertaining to **Utilities**. This section includes an overview of sanitary sewer, water 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 growth.
9. A section on **Community Facilities and Public Services** includes information relating to government and community facilities and services.
10. The **Parks, Trails and Recreation Section** includes an inventory of existing park and recreational amenities an analysis of future needs and policies relating to the future parks, trails and other recreational offerings.
11. An **Economic Development Section** details Economic Development policy statements relative to Agriculture, Commercial, Industrial and Housing growth.
12. An **Implementation Section** describes and summarizes local controls pertaining to land use; the subdivision of land, orderly annexation, Capital Improvement Planning and implementation strategies.

### III. HISTORICAL AND REGIONAL SETTING

#### A. History

Formed by the receding of at least four major glaciers nearly 20,000 years ago, the Osakis area features plentiful lakes and rivers, forests, meadow, prairie and rolling hills. The City contains geographical, topographical and historic features that create one of Minnesota's most scenic regions with abundant natural resources.

History reveals the area was a main camping ground for the Chippewa or Ojibwa, Dakota, and Sauk Native Americans who relied on the abundant fish and wildlife found in and around area lakes. The City was named after the lake it lies alongside; Osakis is a Chippewa Indian name Oh-Zau-Kees which means "place of the Sauk" for the Sauk Indians who had earlier lived in the area. Osakis and the surrounding areas have a long history rich with Native American tradition and legend.

The City of Osakis was founded in 1857 and incorporated in 1881. The railroad arrived in 1877 which provided the major way for transporting goods and passengers. In these days, Osakis was a thriving trade center, however, this market declined with the automobile and roadway system. Tourism has always been a main staple of industry for the City which borders the south end of Lake Osakis, a 6,300 acre fishing and recreation destination.

In addition to rich soils and waterways, the City also features historical sites. The following are included on the National Register of Historic Places:

**Johnson, John B., House** (added 1977 - Building - #77000730) also known as the Cyclone House U.S. 52, Osakis

**Osakis Milling Company** (added 1993 - Building - #86001407) Also known as Pollard's Mill and Elevator Lake St. and Central Ave., Osakis

## B. Regional Setting



Osakis lies partially in Todd County along the southwestern border and also in Douglas County where it is the second largest community. The population of the area nearly triples with the influx of tourists during the summer months. Osakis, population 1,567<sup>1</sup>, is located about 11 miles east of Alexandria on State Highway 27 East. From Minneapolis and St. Paul, it is 115 miles along on Interstate 94. Traveling from the west, it is situated 112 miles from Fargo, North Dakota and traveling from the east it is located 200 miles from Duluth. Important traffic corridors include nearby 1-94, Highways 27 and 3.

Osakis is contained within the Sauk River Watershed District and within the political boundaries of US Congressional District 7 and MN Legislative District 11B. The City is bordered by Osakis, Gordon and Orange Townships.

<sup>1</sup> Source: 2000 Census

**Figure 1-1  
Regional Setting**

