

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Osakis has been a municipal corporation since 1857. Osakis is a Standard Statutory City and operates with a "Clerk-Treasurer Plan". The City of Osakis is committed to serving the public in an efficient, effective and professional manner. The purpose of this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is to review existing services and facilities and reflect on the impact of forecast growth upon said facilities and services. Contents include:

- An overview of existing municipal facilities;
- An overview of other community facilities;
- A description of municipal boards and commissions, and
- Objectives and Recommendations for Community Facilities and Public Services.

II. EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

City Hall/Police Department/Water Treatment Facility

The City's Administrative Offices and Police Department are located in a combined structure which includes the water treatment facilities and municipal wells at 14 Nokomis Street East. Approximately 80 percent of the space is used for water treatment and facility purposes while the remaining 20 percent is administrative office and police office space. Staff members for administrative functions include a Clerk-Treasurer and Deputy Clerk. The City contracts building inspection services. Currently administrative space needs are adequate; however, as the city continues to grow additional office space and personnel is anticipated to be needed.

The Police Department is comprised of three full-time officers including the Police Chief and two patrol and two part-time patrol officers. The emergency 911 service is coordinated through the sheriff's departments of the respective counties with the primary dispatch through both Douglas and Todd Counties.

Fire Hall

Located at 20 Nokomis Street West, the Osakis Fire Department is comprised of 20 volunteer members. The Osakis Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency fire and rescue response/accident extrication service to the entire City of Osakis as well as the cities of Nelson and West Union and several neighboring townships. The City has a fire rating of five. The Osakis Fire Department responds to approximately 55 calls each year and covers approximately a 125 square mile radius.

As of 2005, all members of the department were trained first responders and all but one were State Certified at the Firefighter I Level. The Department meets on a weekly basis in the Fire Hall for training, drills, maintenance and operational meetings.

Department apparatuses include:

- 1,500 gallon pumper truck (1000gal /min)
- 1,000 gallon pumper truck
- 1,500 gallon (750 gal/minute)
- 2,000 gallon tanker truck
- 1,500 gallon/ 2,400 foot large hammer hose tank/hose truck
- Fully equipped rescue vehicle with extraction tools, rams, jaws, air bottle, air tanks etc.

- 275 gallon Grass rig (one ton pickup)

The fire hall facility includes four double deep bays and was recently equipped with new open lockers. The facility has upgrades as needed with the most recent being a new exhaust system. The Osakis Fire Department was successfully awarded a FEMA grant for personnel equipment in 2004 which included full gear and turnout sets. The Fire Department has applied for another FEMA grant for a backup generator to serve the Fire Hall and Community Center.

Emergency Medical Service (First Responders)

The City of Osakis is served by a volunteer First Responder Team comprised of 18 to 20 volunteers. Most of the volunteers are certified First Responders with the remainder as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's). The group is equipped with one First responder rig. Medical direction comes from North Ambulance of Alexandria. The Osakis First Responders also work with neighboring Ambulance Services such as Long Prairie and Sauk Centre. Osakis had provided full ambulance coverage until July 2004, however, a shortage of volunteers to fill the daytime hours restricted the service and it became a First Response Service.

Short and long-range needs of the First Responders include that of updating equipment. The First Responders meet on a monthly basis and all equipment and meeting facilities are located within the Fire Department.

Public Works/Streets/Park Maintenance

The Osakis City Public Works Building is located at 2nd Avenue and West Nokomis. The building is used for the storage of street maintenance vehicles and equipment. The City public works department includes, one superintendent and one full-time and one seasonal employee.

Osakis Community Center

The Ed Pollard Community Center is currently located at in the same building as the Fire Department. The facility includes kitchen facilities and meeting space for up to 250 persons. The facility is used by many service and community groups within the community including the Nutrition Center which provides meals for Seniors, Wellness Services for Seniors and meeting space for groups such as the Women's Association, Boy and Girl Scouts and large meeting needs of the City. Upgrades have been made periodically as needed and recent improvements have included new flooring and tile board in the kitchen.

Osakis Municipal Liquor Store

The Osakis Municipal Store is located on Highway 46 East and dispenses on and off sale. Employees include one manager and two full-time and one part-time employee. The Liquor Store has undergone several updates over the past several years which have included re-siding, re-roofing, floor replacement and new equipment.

Osakis Information Center (Visitor and Heritage Center)

The Osakis Information Center is located at 801 East Nokomis Street. This facility serves as the "Public Relations" hub of the community and is home to the Chamber of Commerce, Osakis Resort Association, Osakis Area Heritage Society, Osakis Onward and Osakis Economic Development Corporation. Most of the Center's working groups and committees meet on a monthly basis. The building is owned by the City of Osakis, however, the staffing and maintenance expenses are paid through funding from private donations and the combined Osakis Information Center working groups. The Chamber has one full-time employee and one part-time seasonal employee.

The Information Center was relocated from its Highway 27 location in April of 2004 to its current downtown location, allowing immediate access to the heart of the community, the trail and public access. The Center also serves as the focal point for the Central Lakes Trail Head.

The building is in good condition, however, the addition of handicap accessible restrooms and a rear ramp entrance were needed improvements as of 2005. The Center provides the only downtown public restroom.

Education

School District #213 serves the community of Osakis as well as residents in neighboring communities. Independent School District #213 serves about 700 K-12 students. It has provided students with education for more than 100 years. The new building, completed in 1992, houses the district office, the elementary school and office, the high school office and a few classrooms, a gym, support staff offices and a vaulted media center stocked with books, tapes and computers. Osakis also has one parochial and one charter school within its corporate limits.

Post Office

The Osakis Post Office located at 60 Main Street West serves the City of Osakis and several adjacent townships with routes going halfway to Long Prairie, Carlos, Alexandria, Sauk Centre and to the Pope County line. The Osakis Post Office has approximately 1,750 postal patrons. There are no plans to re-locate the facilities or to upgrade/expand as the current needs are being met by the existing facilities.

Osakis Medical Clinic

The Osakis Medical clinic is a satellite office of the Alexandria Clinic and located at 811 3rd Avenue East. In 1995, the Osakis Clinic was doubled in size to accommodate four physicians. Osakis Medical Clinic physicians provide multi-specialty care as well as time for urgent care visits on an unscheduled basis.

III. MUNICIPAL BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

The City of Osakis has several boards, commissions and committees that shape the policies and decisions of City government. The City encourages citizens to volunteer to serve on these entities and provide their input. A brief description of each entity and its duties follows:

City Council

The Osakis City Council consists of a mayor, who serves a two-year term, and four council members who serve four-year terms. The City Council meets regularly once per month.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission consists of five members appointed by the City Council. The Commission serves four-year terms and acts as an advisory body to the City Council in matters of directing the future physical development of the City. The Commission, upon request of the Council, makes studies, investigations, and recommendations to the Council regarding matters affecting zoning and subdivisions. The Planning Commission meets regularly each month.

Economic Development Authority

The Osakis Economic Development Authority was formed in April of 1997 with the purpose of

promoting economic development, managing the Industrial Park and improving the housing market in Osakis. A seven member board oversees the operations with funding provided by the City of Osakis and donations by the Osakis Economic Development Corporation. The EDA meets on a monthly basis.

Osakis Onward

As a result of a 2002 visit by the Minnesota Design Team Osakis Onward was formed to carry on the illustrated tasks the Minnesota Design Team presented to the community of Osakis. This organization is made up of Board of Directors with ten members and the support of numerous volunteers. Osakis Onward meets on a monthly basis. A number of tasks have been identified which include those related to: Waterfront, Downtown Master Plan, Natural Systems & Trail Linkages and Downtown Design.

Osakis Economic Development Corporation (OEDC)

The OEDC was established in 1985 to promote economic development. The OEDC has a charitable gambling license with all proceeds donated back into community to enhance economic development opportunities, scholarship establishment and to fund downtown storefront renovations. There are approximately 105 stockholders. The OEDC meets on a monthly basis.

IV. PUBLIC INPUT

A community survey completed in conjunction with the updating of the Comprehensive Plan requested input from community members regarding municipal facilities and services. Respondents were asked a number of questions. A summary of results relating to community facilities and services follows.

- When asked if there were public utilities or healthcare or social services lacking in the community the majority of respondents indicated that an ambulance service (10%); expanded clinic (4%) and dental facility (4%) were most needed in the community.
- When asked if there were any programs, services or resources that are not located in Osakis that would be beneficial the following responses were received: AA Meetings, Exercise Program, Teen Center, Senior Center, Eye Doctor, Social Services, Help finding jobs, Halfway House for Women, Service for Teen and Single Parents and Home Health Care.
- Respondents were split as to whether they felt they were informed about City Council decisions; 40% indicated they did not feel informed of decisions and 37% felt they were while the remaining 23% were undecided or did not respond.
- Those surveyed were also asked whether or not they felt community organizations worked together. Of those responding to the survey, 32% said 'yes'; 33% said 'no' and 35% were 'undecided' or did not respond.
- When asked if local government was responsive and services provided equitably, 41% percent of those responding to the survey answered affirmatively, 23% negatively and 36% were undecided or did not respond.
- When asked 'how well is Osakis facilitating ethnic and racial diversity' the majority (46%) thought the city was doing an 'excellent' to 'good' job of facilitating diversity. An additional 15% labeled thought the city was doing a 'fair' to 'poor' job facilitating diversity. The remaining 39% thought the question was undecided or did not respond.

V. PROJECTED GROWTH

The population is forecast to increase from 1,682 people in 2005 to 2,289 people within the next 25 years based on the projected population. The projected growth will reasonably require the expansion of existing administrative and protection services. Such services will not only result in a demand for increased public employees, but also increased facility space and increased capital equipment costs. The expansion of administrative facilities and capital equipment purchases should be included in a capital improvement/equipment program in view of the following:

- Increases in staff: utility billing, roadway maintenance, etc. contracted or municipal staff.
- Increases in office space for expanded staff and equipment (e.g. maintenance, water/wastewater treatment operator, etc.)
- Increased need for police protection services either contracted or municipal staff.
- Increased need for fire equipment and facilities.

VI. MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES OBJECTIVES AND RECOMENDATIONS

A. Municipal Facilities and Services Objectives

1. To provide for adequate facilities and staff to operate and maintain the essential services for current and future residents and businesses in the community.
2. To continue to serve the citizens of Osakis in an efficient, friendly, and cost effective manner.
3. To continue to update and maintain facilities and operations.
4. To continue to evaluate technology and the need to incorporate technology in carrying out the functions of the city (e.g. public access television, web page development, internet/email).
5. To provide citizens the opportunity to participate in local government as well as inform citizens of municipal activities.

B. Municipal Facilities and Services Recommendations

1. Upon receiving concept plans, the City shall review its provision of services including, but not limited to, public administration and public protection services such as police and fire service to ensure said services which are reasonably necessitated by proposed subdivisions and must be provided at public expense, can be reasonably provided within two (2) fiscal years of approval of the proposed subdivision. If said services cannot be reasonably provided, the subdivision may be deemed premature.
2. The City should forward copies of all plats to the Transportation Director and Superintendent of Schools in the Osakis Public School District.
3. The City should continue to work in cooperation with the school district and other taxing entities to coordinate public facilities, if feasible, to minimize the impact on taxpayers.
4. The City should continue working with Douglas and Todd counties and Osakis, Orange and Gordon townships to ensure coordinated growth of land uses, transportation systems and regional recreational areas and trails.
5. The City should continue to provide a web site with current information as a means of informing and updating community members and/or access to city email.

6. The expansion of administrative facilities and capital equipment purchases should be included in a capital improvement/equipment program in view of the following:
 - Need for increases in staffing level: utility billing, roadway maintenance, etc.
 - Need for increases in office space for expanded staff and equipment (e.g. maintenance, water/wastewater treatment operator, etc.).
 - Need for increased public/police protection services.
 - Need for increased fire equipment and facilities.
7. The City shall continue to monitor and assess the condition and adequacy of existing municipal structures. The City shall establish long-term solutions to anticipated building/office space needs. Routine maintenance and repair costs should be allotted for in the annual budget. Reconstruction, remodeling and/or construction of facilities should be addressed in a Capital Improvement Plan.
8. The City shall continue to strive to clarify roles, build trust, communicate openly and work productively together at the departmental level and the elected and appointed official level.
9. Informational meetings between the City Council, EDA and Planning Commission to discuss important projects should be held routinely.
10. The City shall provide maximum cooperation and assistance to other public agencies in planning and developing facilities and programs to provide a high level of service and avoid duplication of services and/or facilities.
11. New municipal and administrative constructions shall be developed to the same high standards required for the development of private property and shall be subject to review by the Planning Commission and City Council.
12. The City should initiate and organize an annual open meeting with representatives from each City department, elected officials (local and state), representatives from City Boards/Commissions, Osakis, Orange and Gordon townships, Douglas and Todd Counties, School District 213, City Consultants, leaders of active community organizations and other representatives as appropriate. The purpose of the meeting is to share information, build rapport and update each other on issues, plans and goals at the forefront for the following six-month period.
13. City leaders shall strive to lead all staff, public officials, residents, neighborhoods, and the business community in recognizing and embracing existing social, racial and economic diversity within the City of Osakis.