

A photograph of children participating in an Easter egg hunt on a grassy field. In the foreground, several young boys are running, some carrying yellow buckets. In the background, a crowd of people is watching, and a yellow caution tape is strung across the field. The scene is bright and festive.

Introduction

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Legal Authority for the Master Plan:

Missouri Revised Statutes 64.816 states. “The official master plan shall be developed so as to conserve the natural resources of the county, to insure efficient expenditure of public funds and to promote the health, safety, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants.”

INTRODUCTION

Warrenton has had a Comprehensive Plan (Plan) to guide decision-making since 1966. An update to the Plan was done in 1982 and 2000 due to annexations and changes in the residential market place. Post recession activity has necessitated an update to the Plan.

Plan Purpose

For Warrenton to remain economically competitive it needs a vision for how it will grow, how it will protect its natural resources, and how it will provide jobs, affordable housing and mobility. Managed well, growth can be a boon for a community, adding value to its businesses and neighborhoods and quality of life. Managed poorly, growth can result in housing prices soaring or dropping, traffic congestion, the loss of open space, and degradation of environmental quality. The issue of where and how Warrenton should grow is the purpose of this Plan. The challenge is finding the right balance of new growth that does not come at the expense of losing the sense of place that makes the community of Warrenton a desirable place to live.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Creating A Vision

Planning for future city growth and development is full of uncertainties and unforeseen challenges. Failing to plan, on the other hand, ensures lost opportunities and the chance to become a better place for future generations is difficult to achieve. Warrenton is a community wanting to seize its prospects and position itself as a place of enduring value and character.

This Plan has been developed with the expectations that Warrenton will balance the interests of a growing community with the desire of preserving its small town character. This will not be an easy task in a world of market-place driven residential and commercial development that does not always value what the community believes is important and worth protecting. Regardless of future challenges, Warrenton defined a set of guiding principles and a future land use plan for achieving their vision of the future. The premise of the vision is simple: build a quality place that people view as desirable to live and work.

Implementing this vision is not uncomplicated because it involves creating a place where natural assets are protected and integrated into the community. It involves working with developers to take the extra steps to create a pedestrian-friendly environment or respecting community character over corporate design practices. It also means private and public investments are judged for their value in what they contribute to the quality of life and economic strength of the community.

Who Uses The Plan?

The Board of Aldermen uses the Plan to evaluate and apply policies, act on land use decisions, and make funding and budget decisions. City staff and the Planning Commission use the Plan to evaluate land use, building and development and make recommendations on proposed projects. Builders and developers use it to understand the uses and intensities planned for their properties. Citizens and neighborhood groups use it to understand the City’s long-range plans for different community areas. The Plan provides the basis for the City’s development regulations and the foundation for its Capital Improvements Program.

Common Misconceptions

In practice, there is often confusion or blurring of the distinction between the role of the Comprehensive Plan and the role of the Zoning Ordinance. The Plan is a “general” policy document that guides community growth and development decisions. The Zoning Ordinance, and its associated zoning map, is a legal instrument that defines the permitted land uses and associated development standards (e.g. setbacks, height, scale) for every property within the city. Confusion between the two very different roles is likely attributed to the legal requirements that Zoning Ordinance amendments and zoning map changes must conform to the generalized goals and policies of the Plan.

Many people struggle with a common misconception that the Plan is merely the Land Use Map. For many development decisions, it is true that land use appropriateness is the focal point of discussion. However, this view will typically disregard many interrelated issues such as transportation, infrastructure concerns, quality of development, and the community's economic strategy. The best community decisions are those that recognize and address these interrelated issues.

Legal Basis

Missouri law delegates authority to City governments to regulate land uses within City limits. At present, cities do not have control over land use or subdivision of land outside their corporate boundaries. Because there is continued growth in the Warrenton area, coordination between the County, City and other governmental agencies can result in better management of development. Clear and consistent plans and standards need to be developed in order to successfully manage growth and development.

Decision-Making

This Plan should generally guide the direction of growth, but at the same time be a dynamic tool that accommodates changes in market demands and style of living. The projections herein do not indicate or imply that proposed development shall have any right to develop at the greatest density possible. Rather, the land uses projected are defined in general terms including anticipated uses and general density ranges. When considering proposed zoning district changes, plats and development plans, each application should be considered in the context of this Plan as a whole as well as in relation to site specific details. Ultimately, the character of development in the community will be determined through regulatory approval processes, including zoning, platting and site planning.

See the Land Use Framework and Implementation chapters for more on decision-making factors.

PLAN STRATEGY

This Plan presents a future land use pattern for the community of Warrenton and areas defined as "urban reserve area". The urban reserve areas delineate what the City leaders' view as the logical growth area of their city. This Plan goes beyond guiding land use decisions and defining what the City considers its logical growth areas. The Plan incorporates a series of frameworks, goals, policies and design principles that spell out how Warrenton envisions their community growing and developing.

This Plan also identified specific areas that require additional attention and detail due to unique challenges they face, opportunities they present, and their ability to help attain community goals and objectives. In Warrenton, the commercial areas are critical in defining the character and identity of the community. This Plan includes three priority development areas for Warrenton.

City leaders desire to build partnerships with land developers to ensure that Warrenton becomes a unique and special place by the year 2035. Quality of life and livability are taken seriously in Warrenton and city leadership defines a vision of how they would like their city to be for future residents and businesses. Through the interpretation and enactment of this Plan, Warrenton leadership charts a course to promote continued growth and guide new development in hopes of creating a competitive and livable community for the next generation.

This comprehensive plan IS -

- » A visionary road map, expressing Warrenton's values and vision for the next 20 years.
- » A set of community-wide goals.
- » A decision-making guide for quality development and programs.
- » A guide for managing change.

This comprehensive plan is NOT-

- » A zoning ordinance.
- » A rigid or static document.
- » A city budget.
- » Just a "land use map".

PLAN GOALS

Goals are qualitative statements regarding Warrenton’s vision for its future and are broad in nature. Implementation of these goals is further detailed through the Future Land Use Map and Policy Frameworks that follow. The goals are organized into the following categories:

Coordination & Planning

1. Work together to identify logical growth areas and growth patterns within the County that preserve environmental resources, and provide efficient and effective distribution of infrastructure and services.
2. Work together to identify consistent criteria for level of service, design and improvement standards, and annexation requirements and procedures.

Quality Growth and Development

1. Promote a compact pattern of land development that reduces the need for road and utility improvements.
2. Promote a mix of compatible land uses to achieve a balanced mix of residential and non-residential development throughout the city.
3. Support housing development and redevelopment that includes a variety of housing types and opportunities for a range of age groups, incomes, and lifestyles.
4. Reinvest in and maintain the character and identity of existing residential neighborhoods
5. Achieve a balanced growth pattern between revitalizing and redeveloping the city grid and beginning new development on the outer reaches of town.
6. Achieve a balanced mix of commercial and residential development to promote fiscal sustainability, ensure sufficient tax revenues, and support public services.
7. Encourage quality development that respects the environment.

Transportation

1. Provide an efficient, safe and cost effective roadway network that meets mobility needs in a manner compatible with fiscal and environmental constraints.
2. Provide a transportation system that integrates multiple modes of travel for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists, where feasible. Investigate and adopt a “Complete Streets” approach on targeted streets.
3. Reduce traffic congestions through innovations in roadway design such as assess management, roundabouts, signalization, etc.....

Parks, Trails & Open Space

1. Provide and maintain a diverse, safe and affordable system of parks, trails, and recreational facilities for all ages and abilities.
2. Provide a system of interconnected trails through the preservation of streams and natural areas that connect to existing parks, neighborhoods, services, and adjacent development.

Infrastructure & Services

1. Leverage past capital investments by directing development and redevelopment to areas where adequate basic services presently exist or are planned to be provided.
2. Growth should pay the fair share of associated costs for facilities and services to mitigate negative impacts.
3. Develop logical public/private funding of utility extensions, transportation facilities, and emergency services, to match planned growth.

PLAN STRUCTURE

The Plan presents a series of frameworks, policies, strategies and recommendations for Warrenton and for the “urban reserve areas” within the unincorporated area. Taken together, these elements are intended to guide decision-making and serves as the policy plan for the City of Warrenton only. These Frameworks establish a basic direction and approach to guide the future growth and development of Warrenton through 2035. The Framework chapters include:

- Community Snapshot**
This chapter includes a “snapshot” of the City, intended to establish a foundation of facts, documenting important issues and factors that may affect the development potential of land and development context.
- Policy Direction Framework**
This chapter includes the Policy Direction Framework including policies to guide future growth patterns through not only the traditional methods of land use and density, but also to provide design guidance on how to preserve community character and create a sense of place through directing future building form and character.
- Land Use Framework**
How and where Warrenton wants to grow is defined by the Land Use Framework chapter. The Land Use Framework is a strategy to guide future growth and development within and beyond the City limits by outlining recommended land uses and densities.
- Parks & Trails Framework**
This chapter includes a Parks and Trails Framework for a system that connects Warrenton’s urbanized areas with future growth areas and the preservation and restoration of its natural systems and environment for the continued fitness of its citizens.
- Form & Character Framework**
This chapter includes Principles and Guidelines to define ways to make Warrenton’s desired future happen. They provide guidance for land use decisions by describing the form and character of development that is desired in the future.
- Neighborhoods Framework**
This chapter includes a Framework for existing and future neighborhoods. This section of the Plan seeks to reinforce the physical qualities that should be pursued as existing and future livable neighborhoods evolve and develop over time.
- Transportation Framework**
Best connections within and surrounding Warrenton are defined by the Transportation Framework chapter. The New Direction for Warrenton places an emphasis on providing mobility choices, getting more out of the existing street system, and enhancing the transportation framework.
- Infrastructure Framework**
The primary purpose of the Infrastructure Framework chapter is to build upon existing infrastructure studies, and therefore, define and plan for new infrastructure systems to serve the community through 2035.
- Implementation Framework**
The intent of the Implementation Framework is to stay simple, by allowing users to obtain a “big picture” reference point and indication of priority actions for the future. The implementation matrix summarizes key actions.



Better Streets.



Families.



Poster.



Facebook.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

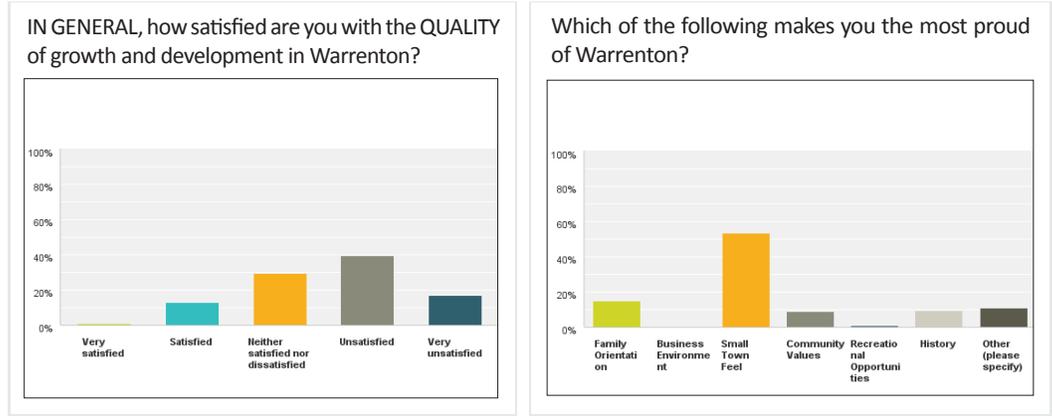
From March 2015 to June 2016, the City of Warrenton, Missouri launched an important period of public input for the Warrenton City Comprehensive Planning Campaign. Referred to as, "Moving Forward. Ideas In Motion." this process solicited feedback from residents and stakeholder groups regarding community issues and needs towards development of several alternative "what if" future scenarios, and a preferred "New Direction" that describes how the community might develop by 2035.

Building flexible opportunities for participation was key to reaching as many participants as possible. Therefore, a variety of ways were designed for the public to be involved. Participants could choose the length and depth of participation, with options ranging from taking an on-line survey to participating in a two-hour workshop. Opportunities were available for face-to-face contact at public workshops or on-line participation that did not require direct interaction. Throughout these methods of engagement Warrenton asked residents to help us identify community issues, needs and prioritize policies and tell us about the trade-offs they would be willing to support to reach their goals. Highlights follow.

Community On-line Survey

The web-based survey was accessible to respondents utilizing "Survey Monkey" between April 10th and Memorial Day, 2015, for a total of 46 days. A postcard was sent to all Warrenton households with instructions on how to access the survey, and offering a promotion to win a FREE family pool pass for those who participated. The City of Warrenton also issued a news release, which was covered by the local newspaper. Additionally, the survey was promoted on the City's website and social media account; boosted twice to over 7,000 contacts. Postcards and posters were distributed at local public outlets, city pool party and local ball tournaments. Hard copies of the survey were available for distribution at City Hall. The results of the survey informed all future phases of the planning process. Areas of agreement or disagreement were identified. Positive ratings focused the development of planning and design goals and helped define the most appropriate, as well as inappropriate, uses, characteristics and strategies for the future.

Example Community Online Survey Results

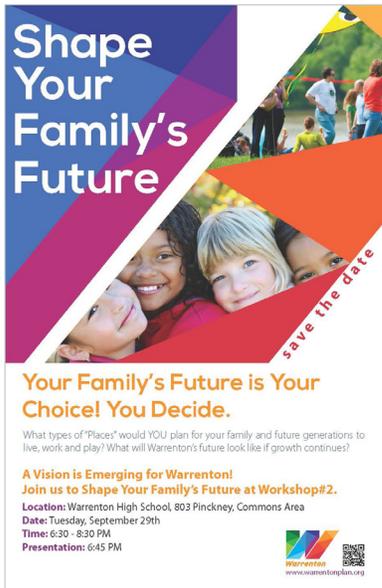


Stakeholder Interviews

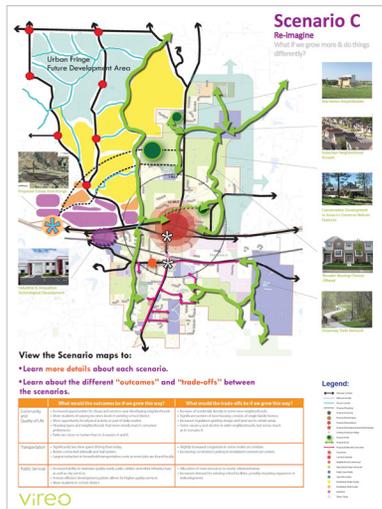
In the month of March and April, 2015, Vireo conducted a series of individual interviews or discussions with 8 to 10 individuals identified by the City. Their role was to meet one time to identify key issues early in the process to inform the perspective group discussions and public outreach efforts. Specific questions were used to gather feedback. Discussions ranged from 30 - 60 minutes, based upon group size.



Postcard.



Poster.



Public Workshop #2.

Fall Festival Booth

Vireo hosted a booth for a full day during the Fall Festival to obtain public input and to promote Public Workshop #2. Promotional drawings, sponsored by the City, were held every half-hour. A final drawing was held at 7 p.m. during the intermission between bands for two larger prizes. To be eligible for the drawings, participants completed a survey, or “Money Game,” where they were provided an allowance to spend by depositing their bills as they wanted into four jars, each representing different issue.



Fall Festival Booth



Fall Festival Booth

Public Workshop #2 - Forecast the Future

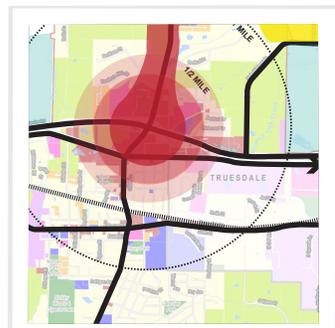
This workshop asked participants to provide feedback on three “What if Scenarios”. Each was illustrated in a “workbook” with its’ own map and story to tell for the future of Warrenton. Each showed a different way Warrenton could absorb more people, implement different land use patterns, provide mobility options, and manage change over time. Participants assessed how well they believed each scenario addressed a series of seven value-based questions.

- Overall, Scenario A – Business As Usual, received the fewest votes.
- Scenario B – Reinvest, received twice the number of votes of Scenario A.
- Participants overall, were more supportive of Scenario C – Re-imagine, for 6 of the 7 qualitative criteria.

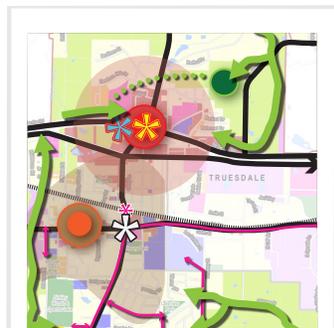
Participants also evaluated draft Plan Goals by selecting all the goals they believed set the appropriate “New Direction” for Warrenton. Areas of “General & Majority Agreement” will direct development of refined goals, draft policy direction, and draft urban design criteria. Higher ranked goals influenced implementation strategies.

For those individuals who were not able to attend the workshop, an online-survey was provided which included materials similar to those presented at Public Workshop #2.

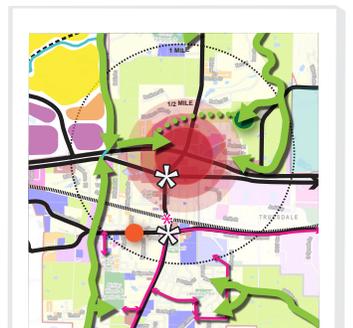
Three “What if Scenarios”



Scenario A - Business As Usual



Scenario B - Reinvest



Scenario C - Re-imagine