

City of La Prairie– Comprehensive Plan Update

Revised Recommendations

Vision Statement Drafts

“La Prairie will continue to be an attractive, independent, predominantly residential suburban community located within the greater Grand Rapids area, offering a variety of residential options including access to educational resources, public utility and community services and facilities, while providing opportunity for commercial growth while preserving the small town, neighborhood atmosphere of the community.”

Goals and Objective Recommendations

Housing Goal:

La Prairie will strive to provide housing that offers a selection of sustainable, affordable, and aesthetically pleasing housing options including large and small lots, rental and ownership options for both current and perspective residents.

Housing Objectives

Objective H1: Promote the maintenance of the existing housing stock

- H 1.1: Collaborate with existing organizations/grant programs to create incentives for home maintenance.
 - Potential Partners include: The Itasca County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, KOOTASCA Community Action Program, IRRRRB, Minnesota Small Cities Development Grant program, and others (see Community Planning Toolkit) for a variety of improvements including home maintenance, energy efficiency, exterior improvements, and others.
- H 1.2: As a City, continue to strive to make investments in streets, sidewalks, water/sewer systems, and other infrastructure to encourage private investment in commercial and residential properties alike.
- H 1.3: Continue to enforce existing zoning and blight ordinances to preserve quality of existing housing stock

Objective H 2: Maintain the existing character of the established neighborhoods

- H 2.1: Ensure that new commercial and industrial development is well buffered from residential areas and will not increase adverse effects on neighborhoods.

Objective H 3: Encourage smart growth by planning for emerging residential market trends/expected growth and promoting ‘aging in place’ concepts as demand increases.
Reference attached Walkability Institute Document

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- **H 3.1:** Revise residential zoning ordinance to allow for smaller sized residential lots within the community.
- **H 3.2:** Designate and map areas for residential expansion including both single family and multi-family options in close proximity or assimilated to increase density.
- **H 3.3:** Incorporate a blend of single and multi-family development designated for both market rate as well as low/moderate income levels in order to enhance availability to a multitude of people of different socio-economic backgrounds while still providing an aesthetically pleasing appearance.
- **H 3.4:** Consider adopting housing development and/or subdivision standards that address design for future residential units and lots that encompass lifestyles of users of all ages and mobility. (Design elements may include: development of smaller, affordable housing units in compact multi-house developments, supported by commercial facilities (i.e. grocery store/pharmacies, etc. accessible by walking/biking)

Objective H 4: Further explore need for Rental Housing Management Licensing ordinance to insure adequate rental facilities are being provided in community.

Objective H5: Explore feasibility of exclusive student only housing facilities in the community.

Transportation Goals:

La Prairie will provide a safe, effective transportation system that provides opportunities for various modes of transportation (auto, bike, pedestrian, transit, etc.) to connect to local and regional destinations while making transportation investments that boost local real estate values.

Transportation Objectives

Objective T1: Include complete street elements such as sidewalks, non-motorized trails, ADA compliant curb-cuts, and other engineering and policy tools into improvements and new development of transportation system.

- **T 1.1:** Enforce standards addressing walkability and bicycle safety regarding new developments both residential and commercial to incorporate all modes of transportation in future development.
- **T 1.2:** Consider requiring bicycle facilities (parking, ease of access, setbacks) as part of commercial zoning and/or subdivision ordinances.

Objective T 2: Connect existing and new neighborhoods, public facilities, park, school and other community destinations with the City’s sidewalk and trail system(s).

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- T 2.1: Map existing sidewalk (and roadside) system in order to identify existing conditions and potential gaps/obstacles within the system.
- T 2.2: Identify most critical/dangerous crossings and intersections in community.
 - *Action Steps 2.2.1:* Collaborate with MnDOT, Itasca County, and other entities to implement a solar beacon or other safety infrastructure on La Prairie Avenue.
 - *Action Steps 2.2.2:* Collaborate with Itasca Community College, MnDOT and other entities to improve crossing on highway 169.
 - (Currently, not official crosswalk and not connected to sidewalk)
 - *Actions Steps 2.2.3:* Work with MnDOT and other entities in order to improve safety via infrastructure improvements (signage, painted sidewalks, etc.) at other areas.
 - (*Reference attached Walkability Institute Document for additional components to include in design*)
- T 2.4: Explore designating established bike route(s) within community, connecting neighborhoods with destinations including recreation and basic necessities/services
 - *Actions Step 2.4.1:* Utilize public engagement meetings to open discussion with stakeholders regarding desirable routes within the City.
 - *Actions Step 2.4.2:* Consider incorporating bicycle facilities like painted lanes, sharrows, designated signs, and others to improve the accessibility and safety of the overall system.

Objective T 3: Maintain local streets, sidewalks and on a routine established schedule to continue to provide an efficient transportation system within the community.

- Action Step 3.1: Develop a street improvement program that identifies and prioritizes road maintenance and improvement needs and integrate this with the City’s Capital Improvement Program
- Action Step 3.2: Work with the County and MnDOT as needed on addressing County and State Highway maintenance and improvement needs.

Objective T 4: Incorporate traffic calming measures in identified problem areas, specifically in proximity to residential and recreational facilities to preserve/protect the characteristics of existing neighborhoods and enhance the overall walkability of the community.

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- **T 4.1:** Pilot mini-circle implementation on Fraser Street using tactical urbanism techniques in partnership with Get Fit Itasca in summer of 2015.
- **T 4.2:** Explore utilizing traffic calming techniques like reducing the speed limit, implementing mini circles, curb extensions, or painted intersections at identified critical intersections. (*See T 2.2*)
 - **Action Step 4.2.1:** Conduct a walking audit with local stakeholders to discuss applicability of traffic calming efforts in targeted locations in order to enhance walkability and gain political/community support.
- **T 4.3:** When possible, utilize temporary materials when implementing improvements to minimize costs and test improvements prior to investing in full infrastructure improvement(s).

Objective T 5: Promote and support public transit opportunities.

- **T 5.1:** Work with surrounding communities and other partners to help improve transit availability.
- **T 5.2:** Review transportation options, specifically for those in wheelchairs and with limited mobility, and collaborate with potential partners to enhance available services.

Objective T 6: Improve ‘gateways’ of entering the City of La Prairie from all sides to create a sense of arrival to residents and visitors alike. Improvements can include signage, art, natural environment enhancement, or others to improve aesthetics and sense of place.

- **Action Step 6.1:** If possible, utilize local volunteers to make enhancements while minimizing cost.

Objective T 7: Develop long term vision for highway(s) intersection with designs for pedestrian movement for next opportunity to improve corridor. (*Reference attached Walkability Institute Document*)

Objective T 8: Develop policy when building new streets which incorporates multiple modes and enhances walkability where desirable.

- **Components that may be included in policy:** 24’ wide streets, broad stripes 3’ on each side of street, no center strip, no manhole in intersection for potential mini-circle construction if necessary. (*Reference attached Walkability Institute Document*)

Objective T 9: Collaborate with Railroad entities to explore opportunities for improving safety concerns, including extended blocked intersections and whistle requirements.

