



# Saint Louis County Comprehensive Land Use Plan

## Where Are We in the Process?

### TIMELINE OVERVIEW



## Comprehensive Plan vs. Zoning

A Comprehensive Plan is a document that provides recommended policy and plans for future land use.

St. Louis County's plan will be focused primarily on land use, which is the reason for the title "Comprehensive Land Use Plan." A Comprehensive Plan is not legally binding, but is intended to show local consensus on future land use and serves to inform all future land use decisions made by the Planning Commission and County Board. All zoning and related ordinances (such as subdivision) are legally binding and intended to be consistent with what is provided in the Comprehensive Plan.

It may be helpful to think of an analogy such as cooking food when it comes to the difference in scope between comprehensive planning and zoning. The planning out of meals for the week and what needs to be purchased can be compared to comprehensive planning. The specific prepping and cooking of each meal can be compared to zoning. More directly, a Comprehensive Plan identifies general areas for different land uses and what is expected with each land use. The zoning ordinance details permitted and conditional uses of land and buildings, controls the density of land use, and the sizes and locations of buildings.

## Townships Subject to County Zoning

### Incorporating Township Desires into the Plan

Many townships subject to county zoning currently have land use plans that serve as a Comprehensive Plan. While some townships do have recently updated land use plans, many of these township plans were created in the 1970s or 1980s and have not been updated. The intent of the county-wide Comprehensive Land Use Plan

is to reflect the desires of each township in the following ways:

- ✓ **Use of Common Themes:** Review of all township plan policy language to identify common themes. These common themes will be brought forward into the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
- ✓ **Zoning Overlay Districts:** Several township land use plans include a finer level of detail than what is appropriate for county-wide planning. A potential follow-up to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan will be the creation of zoning overlay districts to provide special guidance for particular land uses in townships that may desire such an approach.
- ✓ **Clarity Regarding County and Township Zoning Authority:** From the many public meetings held throughout the county in August 2017, it became apparent from township input that the path to either take back zoning authority from the county or to relinquish such authority was not clear. The Comprehensive Plan will clearly outline these paths if either direction is desired.



### Township Outreach

A multifaceted approach to township outreach is involved in this project:

- ✓ **Email:** All township contacts are included on all project-related email blasts.
- ✓ **Letter:** Hard copy letters are sent to township contacts ahead of all public meeting opportunities.
- ✓ **In-Person:** County staff will attend county township association meeting to be held March 28, 2018 at the Cotton Community Center, Cotton Minnesota. County staff will be available to meet with individual townships separately at later dates, if desired.
- ✓ **Public Open House Meetings:** There will be another set of meetings in four areas of the county in July 2018. All townships will be notified when and where the meetings will be held at least one month prior to the meeting.