

### Community Development Committee

Meeting date: January 20, 2015

**Subject:** Local Planning Handbook Update

**District(s), Member(s):** All

**Policy/Legal Reference:** Minnesota Statutes Section 473.191

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Angela R. Torres, AICP, Senior Planner (651) 602-1566;  
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**Division/Department:** Community Development, Local Planning Assistance

#### Proposed Action

Information item only. No action required.

#### Background

The Committee was provided with an overview of the plans to develop the Local Planning Handbook in July 2014. A progress update and demonstration of the website will be shared with the Committee on January 20th. The discussion and demonstration will cover Plan Elements, Community Pages, Community Highlights, and Schedule.

#### Plan Elements

Minnesota Statute requires certain topics to be included in local comprehensive plans. The Local Planning Handbook is organized around these Plan Elements and provides guidance on how to meet requirements within these planning areas. Other Plan Elements are identified as issues of regional importance and are reflective of Thrive MSP 2040's policies. The Plan Elements are:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Water Resources (Wastewater, Surface Water, Water Supply)
- Park and Natural Resources
- Housing
- Resiliency and Sustainability
- Economic Competitiveness
- Plan Implementation

Each plan element includes three sections. The **minimum requirements** section provides information to submit a complete plan to the Council for review. In the **how to get more out of your plan** section, we provide ideas on optional elements that help to plan beyond the minimum requirements, get a better planning result, or implement a best practice. Plan Elements also identify specific ways that **we can help** communities complete planning requirements. We've worked to create maps, provide data, compile plan examples, write up fact sheets, organize a resource library, customize individual community information, and create online mapping, status tracking, and online submittal tools to assist local planning efforts.

The demonstration will show the online design, layout, and organization of the Land Use Plan Element.

## *Community Pages*

In an effort to customize information as much as possible, we have created individual webpages for each jurisdiction required to submit a comprehensive plan update (181 communities and 7 counties). Each jurisdiction has their own page where they can access checklists, maps, data, and other resources specific to them. This is also where they can access the status tracker (new), online submittal (new), and interactive mapping tool (new).

The demonstration will walk through one community's webpage and describe much of the content on these pages.

## *Community Highlights*

We are showcasing communities that are implementing good planning practices throughout the region with a Community Highlight. These highlights cover a range of topics from successfully implementing affordable housing to modern approaches to community engagement, from new sustainability efforts to protecting natural resources in rural areas. The purpose is to gather examples of diverse and effective planning efforts that demonstrate planning successes, identify valuable lessons learned, and share good planning work that may help other communities.

The demonstration will walk through one of our Community Highlights.

## *Schedule*

The Local Planning Handbook will roll out in September 2015 to coincide with the distribution of System Statements.

We will begin our Testing Phase of the Handbook in March with internal users. Internal testers include Sector Representatives, Local Planning Assistance Staff, and our Council-wide Technical Reviewers. External testing will roll out to our Planners Focus Group in April. These groups will review:

- 1) Web navigation
- 2) Community pages, online submittal, and registration
- 3) Interactive mapping
- 4) Process
- 5) Content and resources

The Planners Focus Group will be active from April through August. The Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) will also serve as an external testing group. Updates and improvements will be made as feedback from the focus groups are received and evaluated. After September, we will continue to add resources, make improvements, and maintain the site.

We plan to report back to the Community Development Committee in August, prior to roll out of the site.