CITY of EDEN VALLEY Comprehensive Plan

City of Eden Valley
Making a difference together.

MMDC
MID-MINNESOTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Table of Contents

What Is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a tool used by communities to help guide decisions, including how a city can best use financial and other resources. It is meant to be a shared, long-term vision without becoming rigid or overly prescriptive. It is important for a comprehensive plan to be designed as a flexible document. One that can be updated as conditions or situations change over time or as new opportunities are brought forward.

A Comprehensive Plan Does Three Things:

1. It gives residents the opportunity to create a shared vision for their community.

2. It provides guidance for community leaders (e.g., City Council, City Planning Commission, City Economic Development Authority).

3. It provides a legal basis for a community's land use regulations.

The City of Eden Valley's Comprehensive Plan is a dynamic tool created to guide the future growth and development of our community. The authority to create and implement this plan is provided by state statute (Minnesota Statute, Section 462.351 to 462.364). Eden Valley's Comprehensive Plan was written with great consideration of local and regional history, current trends, modern governmental planning standards, and local public input. This document presents Eden Valley's Comprehensive Plan, which is reflective of the community's planning process, conducted in 2022 – 2023 and approved in _____(month) 2023.

Eden Valley's Comprehensive Plan is designed as a framework to guide future community development, redevelopment, and enhancement. By integrating social, physical, economic, and broader environmental perspectives into the community's decision-making, the Comprehensive Plan provides direction on matters that will improve the everyday lives of Eden Valleys' residents, workforce, and visitors. Ultimately, this comprehensive plan will help Eden Valley's leaders shape future growth, protect local values and assets, and create an even more attractive, sustainable, and welcoming community.

Various chapters of the Eden Valley Comprehensive Plan include goal statements and strategies. Goal statements should be thought of as idealistic statements. They are intentionally general and aspirational. Strategies, on the other hand, outline specific actions the City of Eden Valley can take to support goal achievement. This comprehensive plan will be judged not only by the quality of its content but by the extent to which strategies are implemented and goals are attained over time.

The City of Eden Valley undertook this planning process with intent to provide the community a vision of what might be possible. They also wanted to create a guide for City leaders and staff. Something to which they could refer when making important decisions affecting current and future stakeholders.

Implementation Plan

Eden Valley's comprehensive plan is meant to be a working document that results in enhancements to the city. In a sense the plan presents a blueprint for action that provides direction and assist decision makers with short- and long-term goals and strategies.

Implementing the strategies identified in each chapter is crucial to achieving the goals of the plan and improving the quality of life for all Eden valley stakeholders.

This section should be used as a framework to prioritize projects and plans that will benefit the community short and long term.

Goals – A general Idealistic statement that shares what the city wants to work towards

Strategies - An Action used to achieve the overarching goal or goals. These strategies can be used as a general policy guideline of what the community wants to do.

This comprehensive plan was developed for the next 10, 15, and 20 years. It is set up to easily be updated so the city can remain flexible, and utilize the strategies laid out. It can be used as a guiding document and a document the city uses regularly.

- ◆ **Annually -** The City should review the Strategies once a year and choose 10 that are reasonable to implement that year.

- ◆ **Every 2-3 years -** The City should Briefly review the Vision, Goals, and Strategies. Has anything changed significantly? It is okay to Revise your strategies accordingly.

- ◆ **Every 5-10 years –**

  - · Update the entire plan and utilize new census data.

  - · Engage the Public.

  - · Update Opportunities and Issues.

  - · Review the Vision Statement, Goals and update as needed.

  - · Update Strategies.

Prioritization

During Prioritization it is important to gather more information that will help the city determine where to focus its efforts and resources. Determining Impact and Effort will serve to help prioritize, but factors such as timeline, project lead, and funding source may also affect the process and decision making.

Impact

High Impact- would really make a difference / is necessary

Medium Impact

Low Impact – optional projects

Effort/Cost

High Effort/ Cost - $25,000 +

Medium effort/ Cost- $5,000- 24,999

Low Effort/Cost -$0- $4,999

Priority

Once you have determined impact and effort it is time to rank them to help determine priority projects:

1. High Impact/Low Effort: Top Priority- this is a "no brainer"
2. High Impact/ High Effort: Second Priority and start soon- "Major Project"
3. Low Impact/ Low Effort: Third Priority- easy to do, but low impact- "Quick Win"
4. Low Impact/ High Effort: Fourth Priority- optional

A timeline and completion date should also be factored into the decision

• A set time or,

• ongoing.

Prioritization

Once a project list is determined, it is important to include the party or parties responsible for completing the activity whether it is the city staff, planning commission, EDA, private entity, or a collaboration of public private partnership. Identify specific goals, deadlines, and anticipated outcomes.
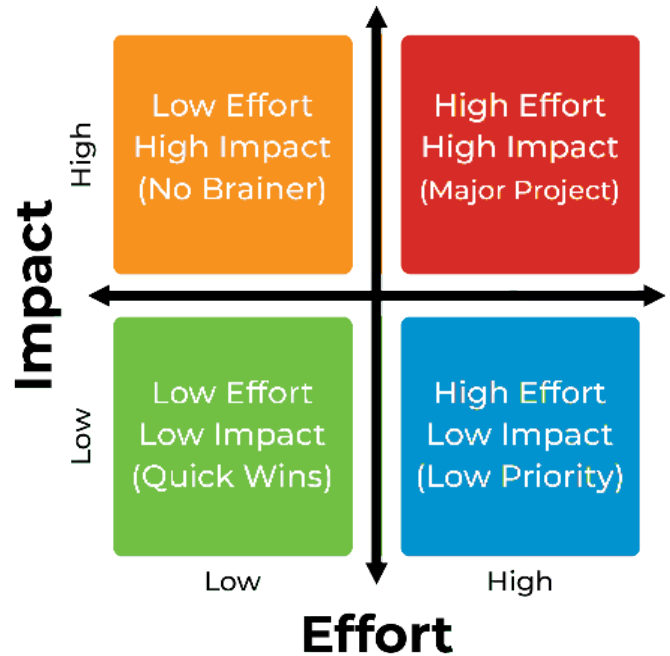
Eden Valley's Comprehensive Planning Process in 10 Steps

Step 1: Eden Valley's elected officials and staff recognize a need for comprehensive planning to help guide future decisions and commit people, time, and money to craft the new comprehensive plan and engage the services of a professional community planner. For this plan, Mid-Minnesota Development Commission, the regional planning commission serving Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties, was selected.

Step 2: The City assembles a Comprehensive Planning Task Force to guide plan development. A roster of Task Force members can be found on page __

Step 3: The Comprehensive Planning Task Force assists the contracted community planner with the development and implementation of a public engagement strategy to gather input from residents, businesses, and other visitors.

Step 4: The community planner creates an initial plan draft, which includes goals and strategies that are based on input gathered from public engagement, independent research, and conversations with City leaders and staff. The Comprehensive Planning Task Force reviews this work and provides input and direction, as needed.

Step 5: The comprehensive plan draft is further-refined, with additional public input gathered when needed and as new ideas or questions come to light.

Step 6: The most complete draft of the comprehensive plan is presented to the Comprehensive Planning Task Force for their approval and final revisions.

Step 7: Once the Comprehensive Planning Task Force's final revisions are incorporated, the plan is made available for public review via presentation and/or public posting.

Step 8: Input received during the public review period is incorporated by the community planner, as appropriate, and the Comprehensive Planning Task Force, or a representative of that body, brings a recommendation for approval and adoption to the City Council.

Step 9: The City commits staff, time, and money resources to begin plan implementation, ensuring continuous progress toward goal achievement over the course of the coming 10 to 20 years.

Step 10: City leaders and staff regularly review the new Comprehensive Plan to ensure adequate progress.

Eden Valley: 2033 (A Vision for the Future)

Eden Valley takes great care to link our present and future with tradition, by recognizing the importance of our history and the progress we have made as a community over the course of time. While our community has enjoyed modest growth in both size and population, we've taken care to preserve the small-town flavor of our city.

Our downtown corridor showcases a revitalized, pedestrian-friendly business district that strategically celebrates our heritage while also reflecting our communities evolving culture. The downtown area is our community's business and social hub. The City has dedicated all available space to strategically accommodate commercial, residential, and other community needs. Our residents now have opportunity to take care of the bulk of their shopping and service needs locally. A new grocery store provides access to local meat, fresh produce, and other local and regional products, giving us all the chance to spend locally in an environment where the grocer knows our name and goes above and beyond to provide quality products, with relatively reasonable price points, and top-notch service.

The Eden Valley-Watkins Public School district remains healthy and well-regarded, with positive student body growth and strong performance. Our school continues to be a leading source of community pride and a magnet for families. Our district's academic and athletic/extra-curricular achievements are respected statewide. Students feel supported and their families enjoy being involved in their learning and development.

Eden Valley has been intentional to ensure a high standard of living for all residents, regardless of age. We have worked to contribute to solutions that address both child and elder care needs. We have been intentional to support our care providers and others who wish to serve these populations. This has helped us to minimize care-related barriers to local workforce participation.

Our community encourages and supports a variety of art, recreation, leisure and volunteer-focused activities. These activities provide enrichment for young children, youth, and adults of all ages. Our residents are happy and feel connected to their community. We now have a stronger social network than most adults can remember - a sense of "neighborhood" and of "community." This revival has helped us draw the workforce and families our community requires for long term resilience.

To attract and retain residents, our City has worked to encourage housing development and redevelopment. This includes supporting the addition of new and the rehabilitation/renovation of older homes that are attractive to workers, families, and seniors. This effort has also included assisting property owners with ordinance compliance, achieved through education, volunteerism, and, only on rare occasion, more punitive enforcement. This has helped our community put and keep our best foot forward for businesses, individuals, and families interested in considering Eden Valley as a potential home.

Our roadway, pedestrian, and utility infrastructure, including broadband infrastructure, is well-maintained and positioned to support additional growth and redevelopment. Our taxpayers continue to receive a good return on their infrastructure investment. Drivers, walkers, and bicyclists can safely navigate our community with ease. Local efforts have encouraged walking and bicycling as part of everyday life, at least to the extent weather allows, and this has created opportunities for healthy living and increased interaction among residents. Despite the relatively recent diversification of power sources and increased reliance on renewable energy, utility disruptions are rare, and our community's capacity for expansion remains adequate. Streets are in good repair and our Streets & Public Works Department quickly responds to reports of maintenance needs.

Despite modest growth, our town has kept crime to a minimum. We enjoy a safe and generally quiet atmosphere. Law enforcement is highly responsive and goes to great lengths to ensure approachability and foster good relationships with all who live in or visit our community. Neighbors also look out for one another and, like our school, service clubs, and other local organizations, our emergency medical services enjoy a strong volunteer base. Eden Valley remains small, and we like it that way. We understand that we don't need to be large to be vibrant.

This vision can guide our local leaders as they consider potential development initiatives both public and private.

Public Engagement

Eden Valley's ambitions are expressed using goal statements, which reflect the needs, values, and desires of our residents, as determined through public engagement. Public engagement, asking our residents and other visitors (e.g., our workforce, students, etc.) what they'd like to see, is an essential part of the comprehensive planning process. There is better opportunity for goal attainment when there is broad, if not universal, consensus surrounding which developments the City's leadership should support. For Eden Valley, the community engagement process included an extensive community survey. Additionally, the development of the comprehensive plan has been guided by a ten-member Comprehensive Planning Task Force, comprised of representatives of various community entities and population segments (e.g., youth, seniors, business owners). The Eden Valley Community Survey - 2022 and a summary of responses can be found in Appendix A of this document.

Goals and Strategies – Explained

For each stated goal one or more strategies for goal achievement have been provided. Without these strategies, the plan would fall short, as it would fail to provide a pathway to success. However, in addition to those strategies listed, it should be noted that new strategies for goal achievement may be developed or added to achieve community goals as new opportunities come to pass or new ideas come to light. This should not be discouraged.

Examples

Many people have a personal goal to become healthier individuals. Strategies to achieve that goal might include: the incorporation of healthy food into one's diet; participation in regular physical and mental exercise; and scheduling regular visits to the doctor and dentist.

Communities may adopt a goal of increasing housing options and availability. For illustrative purposes, one strategy to achieve this goal might be to explore tax increment financing and/or other opportunities to incentivize housing development or redevelopment. Another could be to consider the incorporation of less restrictive zoning that is more friendly to housing development (e.g., incorporating allowances for accessory dwellings for seniors, individuals with disabilities, or other individuals related to the property owner).

Longer-term goals and strategies, those with timelines of more than 10 years, for instance, may seem like distant tasks. However, City leadership must plan well into the future to properly manage resources and achieve desired community outcomes.

The goals and strategies found in this comprehensive plan should be thought of as statements of community policy - recommendations of what is to be achieved and how this will be accomplished. Strategy implementation will occur as Eden Valley's leadership commits City resources (i.e., dollars, staff time, equipment, materials) and adopts regulations to support goals and strategies.

Background

Eden Valley is located on Minnesota State Highway 55, approximately 90 minutes west/northwest of Minneapolis. Originally established as a rail town, the community remains bisected by the Canadian Pacific Railway, which runs east and west, roughly parallel to Highway 55. The City is located just south and west of both Eden Lake and Vails Lake. However, more than a dozen lakes can be found within a 10-mile radius of Eden Valley including Lake Koronis, Rice Lake, and the famed Horseshoe Chain of Lakes.
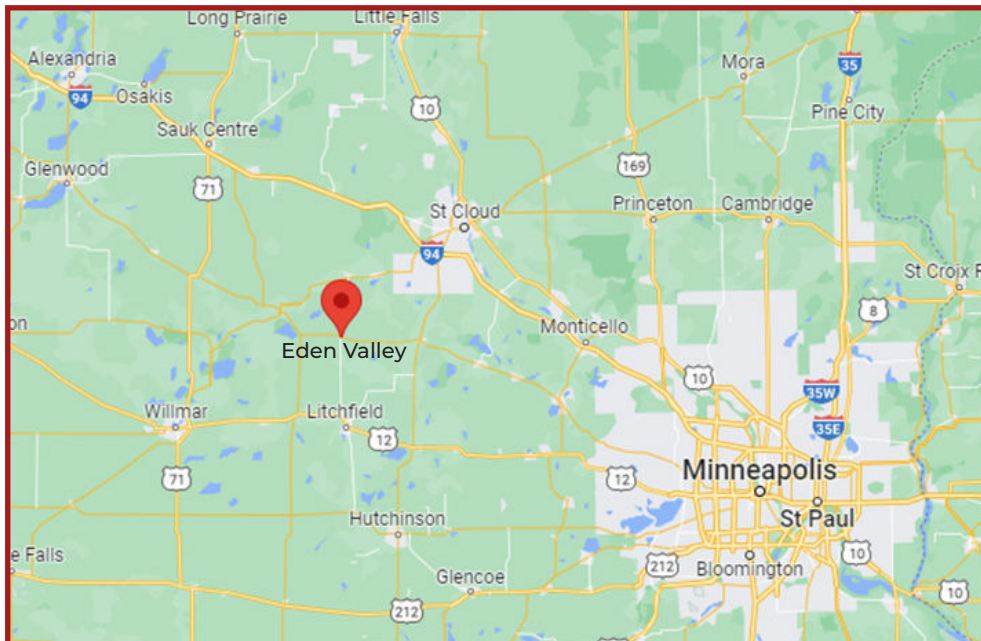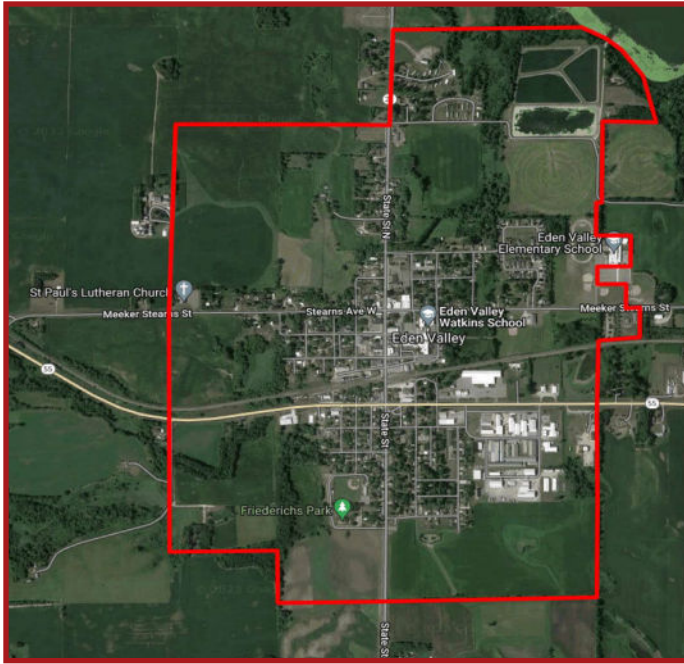
City	Time (Estimated)	Miles
St. Cloud	37 Minutes	31 Miles
Paynesville	13 Minutes	10 Miles
Litchfield	15 Minutes	14 Miles
Minneapolis	85 Minutes	82 Miles
Willmar	42 Minutes	37 Miles

Relatively unique is the fact that the City's footprint is found in two Minnesota Counties. While the bulk of Eden Valley's developed land is located within Meeker County, the northern portion of the City is within Stearns County.

History

While it wasn't incorporated until 1894, the Eden Valley community was first platted by railroad officers in 1886. A post office was established and businesses soon opened, largely to serve railroad contractors. During these early, prosperous days the community became home to thriving roller mills, three hotels, and an opera house. Local residents boasted of lakes that could produce a boat full of fish in just a matter of hours. By the early 1900s, the town's population had swelled to about 1,000 residents. While there have been population ebbs and flows since that time, Eden Valley remains home to 1,076 residents according to 2020 data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Eden Valley's Main Street North (1912)

The City's major employers include the Eden Valley-Watkins School District 463, Schlangen's Custom Cabinets, and RIE Coatings, among others, and the local industrial park has welcomed several new businesses during the past decade.

Eden Valley Buisnesses/Attractions

Other businesses and attractions found in and around Eden Valley include:

- IsoNova Technologies
- Eden Valley Area Library
- American Legion Post 381
- Eden Valley Lumber & True Value
- Lost and Found
- Jack's Companies Inc.
- Farmers and Merchants State Bank
- Valley Inn
- EV-W Voice
- Tri-County News
- Mary Lou's Theraputic Massage
- Eden Valley Citizens 4 Progress
- EleVate Nutrition
- Expressive Hair
- County Line Engraving
- Blues Towing and Recovery
- Sherrie's Signs
- Schlangen Cabinets
- Garlock Safety System
- A & T Storage
- BEFitness
- Suds Hut Laundromet
- Tom's Carpet Kingdom
- Manhattan Toy

- Glow Store LLC
- Specialized Truck Equipment
- Rico's Repairs
- Dollar General
- Meyer Auto Sales
- Joanne's Place
- Linda's Magic Mirror
- Eden Valley Veterinary Clinic
- 4.0 Bus Services
- Andy's Hometown Tavern
- A maze'n Farmyard
- Eden Valley Motel
- Interiors by Cait
- Fresh on 55
- Eden Valley Lions Club
- RIE Coatings
- Riverwood Realty
- Schmitt Farms Seed
- Theilen Machine and Welding
- Thrivent
- Valley Liquor Warehouse
- Wealthcare Inc.
- Williams Dingman Family Funeral Home

- Eden Valley's Park System
  - Friederichs Park
  - Veterans Memorial
  - Eden Valley Water Tower Park
  - Eden Valley Baseball Park

Eden Valley's Significant Developments

- City Hall was built in the 1970's

- Water Treatment plant built in 2001.

- Water Tower purchased used and put up in 1930's

- Prior to that the Water Tower was made of Wood

- Fire Hall was Built in 2007.

- New High School Gym was added in 2012

New First-Response Vehicle

...of the Eden Valley Lions'Club as well as several other local con-

Eden Valley at a Glance:

Population : 1076

Median Age :33.9

Median Household Income $45,938

Median Property Value $117,800

Number of Households: 444

Meeker County Stats:

Population : 23,149

Median Age :41.8

Median Household Income $63,841

Median Property Value $175,600

Number of Households: 9,220

Stearns County Stats:

Population : 159,788

Median Age :34.8

Median Household Income $63, 244

Median Property Value $193,244

Number of Households: 59,600

State of Minnesota Stats:

Population : 5,600,000

Median Age : 38.1

Median Household Income $73,382

Median Property Value $235,700

Number of Households: 2,201,000

Eden Valley data collected by the Minnesota State Demographic Center: https://mn.gov/admin/demography/

Education

Most of Eden Valley's youth receive education services and instruction from the Eden Valley Public School District (Independent School District 463). This district has a history of providing youth with high quality education services, competitive sports programs, and other enriching experiences. The district works with various institutions of higher learning to ensure EV-W students have opportunities to embark on solid pathways to postsecondary training and education.

Eden Valley also benefits from its reasonable proximity to both Ridgewater College (Hutchinson and Willmar, MN) and St. Cloud Technical and Community College (St. Cloud, MN). Additionally, Saint Cloud State University (St. Cloud, MN), St. John's University (Collegeville, MN), and the College of St. Benedict (St. Joseph, MN).
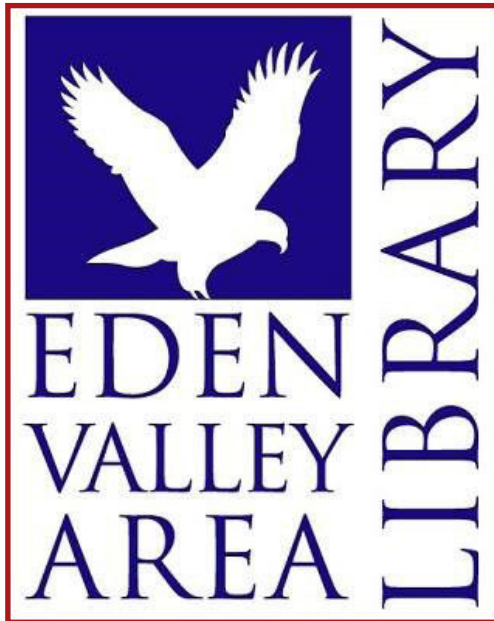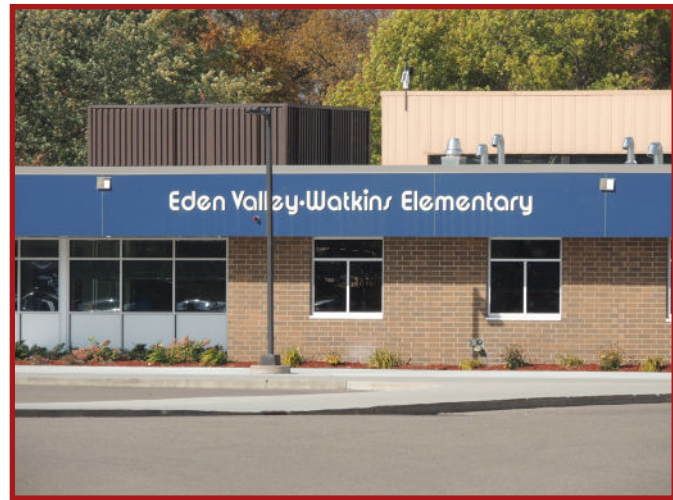
Eden Valley Area Library, Inc (EVAL) EVAL is a vibrant and passionate entity that has served as a great addition to the Eden Valley Area. There are roughly 13-15 dedicated volunteers who make this a possibility. Due to the unique location of Eden Valley, it was decided by these volunteers that another library option would be beneficial. The library is operated thanks to grants and the generosity of local citizens. This independent library started over ten years ago has created several opportunities for everyone.

Community Leadership

In addition to the City's elected leadership and staff, Eden Valley benefits from a wealth of volunteerism. This is evident in the number of local volunteer firefighters and first responders as well as in the high degree of participation in several of the community's service organizations (e.g., Eden Valley Lions Club, Citizens for Progress) and City committees (e.g., Economic Development Authority, Planning Commission, Comprehensive Plan Task Force) Many residents have taken the opportunity to contribute their unique talents, time, and other resources to the betterment of our community.

Public Safety

Thanks to Eden Valley's volunteer spirit, the community has been able to maintain its own emergency services. Eden Valley Fire & Rescue provides firefighting and ambulance service to the community. This department also serves more rural areas and neighboring communities, when needed.

Unlike many communities of similar size, Eden Valley continues to maintain its own police department.
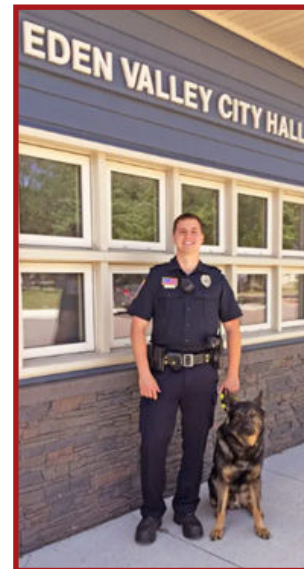
When asked "What does the City of Eden Valley need more of?" the top five responses included

1. Things for young people to do: 59.8%.

2. Restaurants/restaurant variety: 55.74%

3. Retail stores/shops: 54.39%

4. Entertainment/leisure options: 42.91%

5. Parks, trails and green spaces: 37.5%.

It is noteworthy that 180 respondents (over 60%) indicated they believed Eden Valley needs more housing of some type (e.g. single family, affordable, mid-range, or senior housing).

Note: Full survey results can be found in Appendix.

What Does Eden Valley Need More Of?
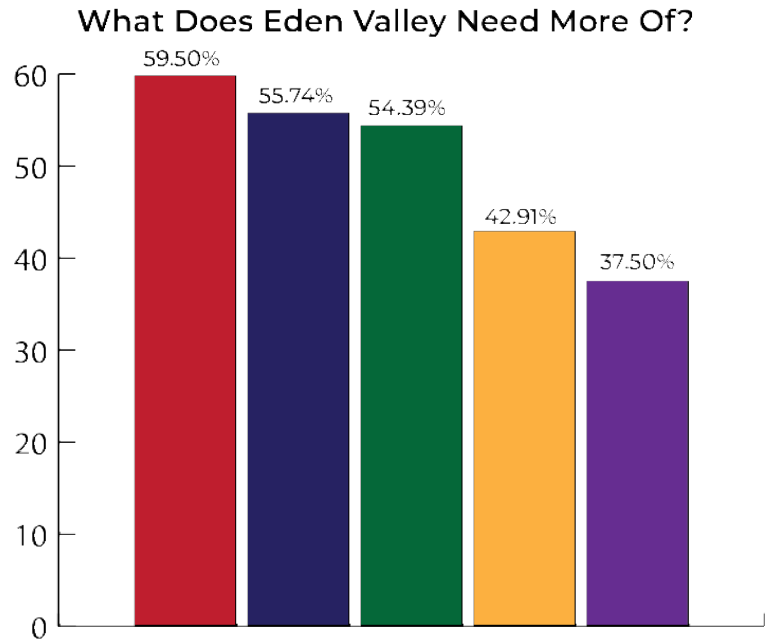
When asked their opinion on the best things about Eden Valley, an overwhelming number of respondents (73.42%) pointed to the Eden Valley-Watkins Public School District. This indicates a tremendous amount of pride and may also give insight into a potential competitive edge for both Eden Valley and Watkins, when seeking to attract businesses, working age adults, and younger families.

The top five "Best things about Eden Valley" selections included:

1. Eden Valley-Watkins Public School District: 73.42%

2. Low crime: 50.5%

3. The people of Eden Valley: 44.52%

4. Ability to safely walk or ride a bicycle without fear: 43.85%

5. Eden Valley's proximity to other places: 28.9%

Note: Full survey results can be found in Appendix.

What Are The Best Things About Eden Valley
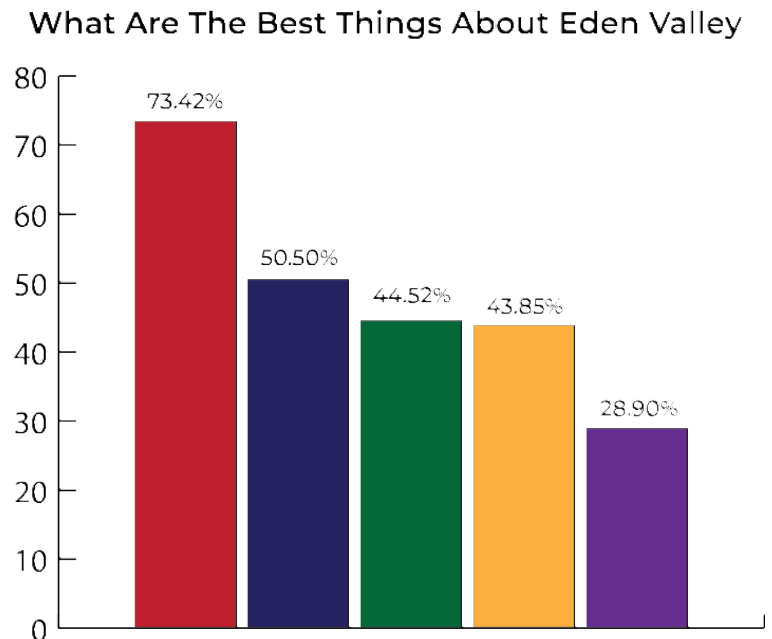
OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

A major aim of Eden Valley's community and economic development efforts is to ensure adequate and appropriate housing for our residents. Therefore, housing is an important topic of our community's comprehensive plan. Our community's aging population and evolving regional workforce poses significant challenges. We must protect existing housing stock while also stimulating new residential construction. This while balancing the need to protect our natural resources and support our business community, as these are assets that make Eden Valley's unique to our region.

Public Input

Input received during the process of public engagement suggests that many of Eden Valley's residents believe there is a need for more housing and a greater variety of housing options within the community. A desire for more single-family housing quickly rises to the top of the list of housing wants and needs. This might be achieved through the rehabilitation of existing homes, construction of new single-family dwellings, and/or by creating options for those who wish to leave the higher costs and maintenance of a single-family residence behind. For example, seniors may be interested in selling their current single-family homes if they have quality, local, one-level and maintenance free housing options to consider. This may create a housing opportunity for those more interested in and able to maintain a single-family home. While it is important to provide housing options for new residents, it is equally important that our community retain our more senior residents so they can continue to enrich our city.

Throughout the public engagement process, community members, business owners, and the City's committees have indicated desire to incorporate housing development that supports a healthy, vibrant community. This includes ensuring both ownership and rental options for retirees, young and growing families, and area workers. By maintaining a quality mix of housing, the city will also attract and retain a quality mix of people without creating an unintended degree of exclusivity that might price a single professional, growing family, or retiree out of Eden Valley's housing market. It is important to embrace the fact that, while some may choose to work in a neighboring community, many would prefer to make Eden Valley their home and spend the bulk of their dollars locally. Eden Valley is well-positioned to be a residential community of choice within our region, provided the opportunity to make that choice is available (no available housing = no choice). Additionally, given its various assets, Eden Valley has terrific potential to attract those who work on an increasingly remote basis (i.e., telecommuters), assuming high-quality/high-speed broadband service is available (100+ mbps download/20+mbps upload).

It was indicated by survey respondents that one of the best things about Eden Valley is its close proximity to other places. Many stakeholders wish to remain or move to Eden Valley because of its overall atmosphere. An increased effort in Housing Development will ensure sustainable growth while maintaining its safe small town feel.
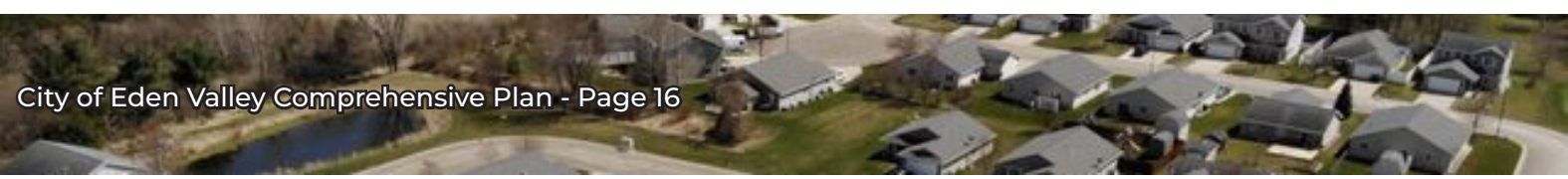
Housing Definitions

The following housing-related definitions are simply meant to provide clarity and a framework for common understanding as the City of Eden Valley plans for future housing development or redevelopment.

Affordable Housing: Dwellings that a household can obtain for 30 percent or less of its gross income (before taxes and other withholding). Utilities (e.g., electricity, water, sewer, gas, phone/internet) should be included as part of the housing expense when making this calculation.

Market-Rate Housing: Dwellings with prices that are based on existing area market values and demand, rather than any sort of subsidy or government assistance.

Subsidized Housing: Dwellings for which occupants receive some form of financial assistance from the government. This may be through the use of operating subsidies, tax credits, or rent assistance, the goal of which is to provide safe, quality housing for low-to-moderate income households. This housing is often also referred to as "low-income housing".

Workforce Housing: Dwellings that are affordable for workers and reasonably close to their place of employment.

Executive Housing: Dwellings that are intended to provide occupants with higher-than-average levels of comfort, quality, and convenience. This is often a marketing term for a moderately-large and well-appointed house, typically with a premium price.

Senior Housing: Dwellings that are suitable for the needs of an ageing population. Senior housing may range from independent living to 24-hour care. Typically, senior housing provides emphasis on safety, accessibility, adaptability, and longevity that conventional housing options may lack. The need for resident-provided maintenance is usually low.

Vacation Housing: Secondary dwellings that owners use for recreational purposes such as weekends, vacations, and holidays. These dwellings may or may not be shared between multiple families or rented out for shorter periods through vacation rental platforms (e.g., Airbnb, VRBO)

Single-Family Home: A free-standing residential building designed to be a used as a single-dwelling unit (for one household).

Duplex: A residential building that has two units. Units may share one or more common walls, but their floor plans may vary. Units can also be arranged either side-by-side or stacked on top of one another.

Triplex: A residential building that has three units. As with duplexes, units may share one or more common walls, but their floor plans may vary. Units may be arranged side-by-side or stacked on top of one another.

Fourplex: A residential building that has 4 units. As with duplexes and triplexes, units may share one or more common walls, but their floor plans may vary. Units may be arranged side-by-side or stacked on top of one another.

Patio Home: A dwelling that shares at least one wall with another home and usually doesn't rise higher than one-and-a-half stories tall, though most are one level. For practical purposes the terms "garden home" and "twin home" can be used interchangeably with "patio home"

Town House: A dwelling that is generally two or three stories and is attached to other dwellings by shared walls on either side of the unit (or both sides). Often, these homes are built taller and narrower than single family homes or patio homes. They are often used in planned unit developments or clustered housing.

Row House: Row houses, like town houses, are generally two or three stories and attached to other dwellings on either side of the unit (or both sides). They differ from townhouses because they often look exactly the same as all of the surrounding units. They have a very uniform look to them with a common façade. Rather than appearing as separate units entirely, they may appear to be one uniform building with multiple entrances.

Apartment: A rented residential unit that is part of one (or several) residential buildings. It may also be a separate dwelling within a single-family home, though often times, from the street, there might be little or no indication of the home containing more than one dwelling.

Condominium: This type of dwelling, often abbreviated to "condo," is a privately-owned individual unit within a community of other units. In general, the interior of the condominium is owned by an individual household and the structural components of exterior walls. Condo owners jointly own shared common areas within the community and share exterior maintenance costs.

Housing Cooperative: More common to larger cities, this model of homeownership involves a building that is jointly owned by a corporation made up of all of its residents. When a person buys into a housing cooperative, they are not purchasing a piece of property. Instead, they are buying shares in a nonprofit corporation that allows them to live in the residence.

Accessory Dwelling: An accessory dwelling is a smaller, independent residential dwelling located on the same lot as a stand-alone single-family home. They are often referred to as "granny flats," "secondary suites," or simply "apartments." Often, they are used to house family members (especially adult children, aging parents, or a family member with a disability) but may also be used as housing for students or for those who work locally but maintain a residence in a far-away area.

Low-Density Residential District: A designated area within a community, in which each residential building is designed to house one to two households (e.g., single-family homes, twin homes, duplexes).

Medium-Density Residential District: A designated area within a community, intended to allow both single-family structures and multi-family structures which can accommodate up to four separate households. These areas may permit mobile home parks and other compatible activities if certain space and other requirements are met.

High-Density Residential District: A designated area within a community, intended to allow for both single-family structures and multi-family structures which can accommodate more than four separate households. Like medium-density residential districts, these areas may permit mobile home parks and other compatible activities if certain space and other requirements are met.

Commercial/Residential Mixed-Use District: A designated area within a community, intended to allow for a mixture of medium and high-density residential dwellings along with limited retail and commercial uses, in a manner which complements both types of use. This is often the district designation of a community's central business district (i.e., "downtown" area).

Lifecycle Housing: An approach to housing that focuses on providing as many housing choices as possible in every neighborhood, to ensure appropriate dwellings for every stage of life.


Entry-Level Households: A category of home occupant, or aspiring home occupant, who able to comfortably afford housing on the lower-price end of the housing spectrum. This group will typically include younger adults. However, this group may also include older adults who have been through major life changes (e.g., separation or divorce, death of spouse, major career change). Because it includes younger people in greater number, this group is often more mobile (people in this group often move/relocate more frequently), which may influence them to be more interested in renting a home, rather than purchasing.

Note: It is estimated that 25 percent of Eden Valley, 21 percent of Meeker County and Stearns County 28 percent of residents fit into the 20 to 39 age categories. It should also be noted that Eden Valley's population falls into the 10-29 age category, along with Meeker at 25 percent, and Stearns County with 32 percent.

First-Time Homeowners: Members of this group are usually, though not always, in their 20s and 30s. As they purchase a home of their own, they are often making a transition from renting or joint living conditions. Typically, this group includes single individuals or young families but, less often, it may include older couples or families (e.g., those exiting military careers or other vocations where housing may have been provided or more mobility was required). If other, larger and/or more comfortable homes with more amenities or in more desirable locations are available, these homeowners are often inclined to move within several years of their first home purchase. This is because they often have larger gross incomes due to job advancement and/or because they need more space due to the addition of children or other family members.
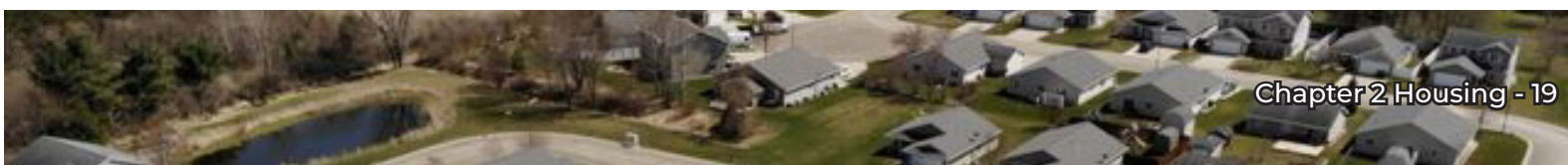
Move-Up Buyers: People or families who already pay a mortgage on a current home but are eager to buy and move into a new home (often bigger, better-located, or with more desirable features and amenities). These buyers are typically, though not always, in their 30s or 40s and are ready to transition from their first, less-expensive home. From an economic growth perspective, this is an important group, especially given that some households will upgrade their homes several times during the course of their lifecycles.

> *Note: It is estimated that nearly 44 percent of Eden Valley's, 36 percent of Meeker County, and 34 percent of Stearns County population falls within the age category of 30 to 59. People in this age category make up a large part of the of Region.*

Empty Nesters: This group is made up of older adults, typically in their upper 40s or older. Their children have moved out of their homes, and this often means that the size of their home is larger than they need or want to maintain. Many from this group enjoy greater ability to travel or participate in new activities. Therefore, they may appreciate smaller homes which require less maintenance. This could include smaller single-family dwellings but often includes patio homes, townhomes, and condominiums.

> *Note: It is estimated that 25 percent of Eden Valley's and 28 percent of Meeker County and 23 percent of Stearns Counties population falls within the age category of 50 to 69. People in this age category make up a large part of the empty nester group. However, this group also includes those who are aged 65 and older. About 14 percent of Eden Valley's and 26 Meeker of County, and Stearns County's population are aged 65 or better.*

Affordable Housing

The availability of affordable housing – housing with total home-related expenses (rent or mortgage, including all tax, insurance, and utility expenses) at less than 30 percent of a community's median household income – is foundational to helping lower-income households thrive in rural areas. To support younger professionals (e.g., teachers, nurses, welders, technicians), young families, and seniors, municipalities should work to add affordable housing to their residential mix to the extent possible. This can be supported by adjusting ordinance to accommodate smaller lot sizes and/or things like approved accessory dwelling units. When making adjustments and allowances, it is important to include parameters to ensure new dwellings and developments, though different, are complementary to their surrounding neighborhood and community.
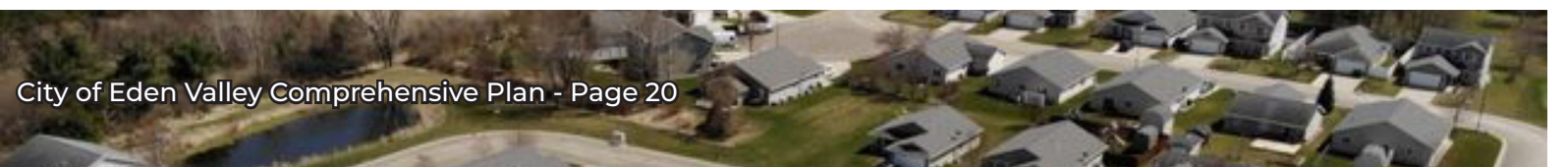
Housing Incentives

Communities like the City of Eden Valley can also consider Tax Increment Financing (TIF) - and other financial incentives (e.g., discounted or free utility hook-ups) to support infill or other development.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) allows local governments to invest in public infrastructure and other improvements up-front. Local governments can then pay later for those investments. They can do this by capturing the future anticipated increase in tax revenues generated by the development. This financing approach is possible when a new development is sufficiently large and when its completion will result in a large increase in the value of surrounding real estate, so that the resulting tax revenues generated by the new project can support the bond issuance. TIF bonds have been used to fund land acquisition, sewer and water upgrades, environmental remediation, construction of parks, and road construction, among others. However, it is important to note that there are very specific regulations which cities must follow when using TIF financing.

In addition to TIF, state and federal programs may be available to assist cities as they reduce financial burdens to residential development and ensure sufficient levels of affordable housing (again, this is not the same as low-income or subsidized housing). The availability of these programs may vary depending on state or federal economies or agendas.

Maintenance and Rehabilitation: Maintenance and rehabilitation of a community's existing housing stock is another, more cost-effective way to ensure sufficient access to quality housing and aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods. However, homeowners who lack time, money, know-how, or physical ability may find home improvements difficult to accomplish on their own. The City of Eden Valley could assist by developing programs that help local homeowners overcome these barriers by providing financial or even technical support. This might include creating small grants or forgivable loan opportunities, providing a limited amount of consulting services, enlisting volunteers willing to help homeowners with basic maintenance, or connecting residents to other programs available to help them improve the efficiency of their home.

Redevelopment: Redevelopment can be challenging for any city. However, a variety of programs and strategies can be employed to support infill and other redevelopment efforts:

◆ Communities can develop a thorough understanding of the current housing market and the community's needs.

◆ Communities can identify and work with developers to target gaps identified during market analysis.

◆ Communities can actively market redevelopment opportunities through marketing platforms, incorporating assistance from community partners such as a county's Economic Development Authority or Regional Development Organization.

◆ Communities can look for partners with common goals (e.g., housing agencies or authorities, business partners) to accomplish redevelopment goals and initiatives.

◆ Communities can market opportunities and resources (e.g., grants, TIF, utility hookup discounts) that might help to support redevelopment, infill, historic preservation, and restoration.

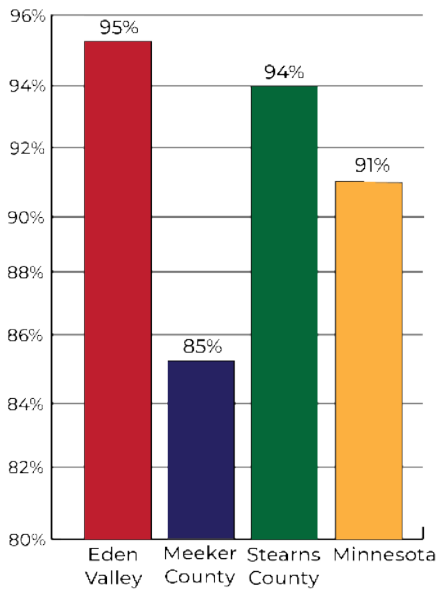◆ Communities can pursue new strategies to encourage, fund, and facilitate redevelopment projects.
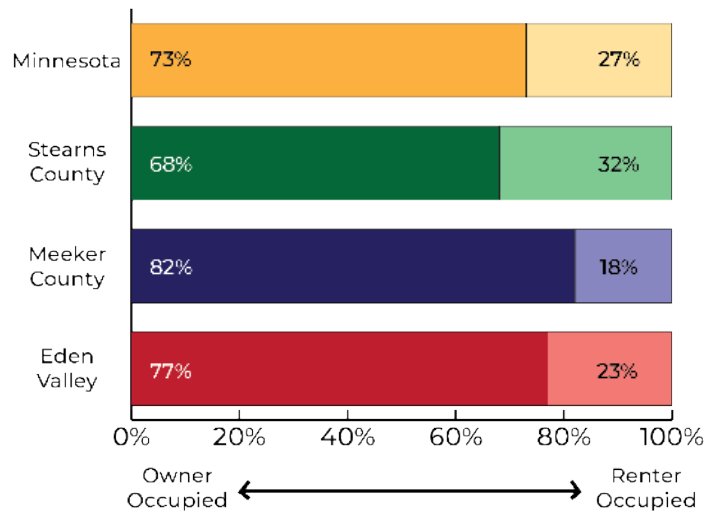
Convenient Access

While it is essential to ensure affordable housing, it is also important to ensure that housing is located within reasonable walking distance of necessary services, stores, and places of employment. Decreasing transportation requirements is one way to make a city more affordable and keep traffic levels more manageable. It also promotes healthy living through exercise (walking, biking, etc.) and increases opportunities for positive community interaction. For instance, while walking to the library, restaurant, store, etc. a resident might enjoy conversations with neighbors they see along the way. These interactions can lead to deeper neighborhood relationships that will help communities improve resiliency. This can be especially beneficial during emergencies (e.g., fires, tornados) and other difficult times.

Ensuring appropriate housing as well as important traffic and pedestrian infrastructure, recreation amenities, utility services, etc., for all community residents at all stages of life should remain a top priority for the City of Eden Valley. While the community is not immune from the housing crisis currently facing our state and much of our nation, Eden Valley's willingness to be proactive and consider new housing opportunities can continue to set it apart from other cities who are in competition for the same residents.
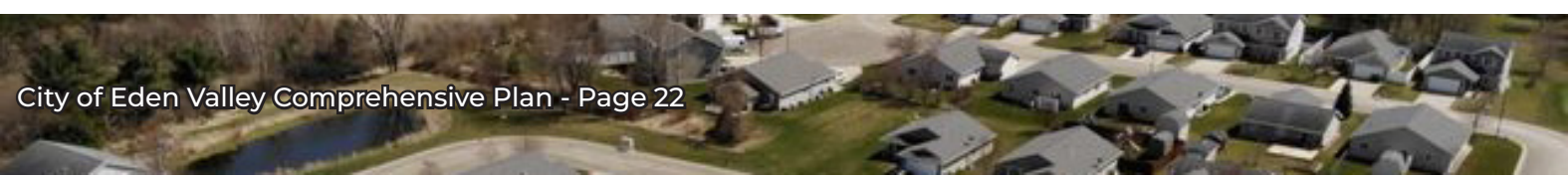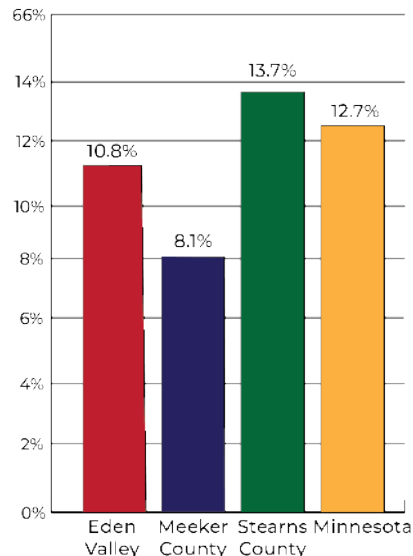
Percentage of Housing Occupied

- Eden Valley: 95%
- Meeker County: 85%
- Stearns County: 94%
- Minnesota: 91%

Percentage Owner-Occupied vs. Renter-Occupied

	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
Minnesota	73%	27%
Stearns County	68%	32%
Meeker County	82%	18%
Eden Valley	77%	23%

Owner Occupied ← → Renter Occupied

Median Value of Owner-Occupied Homes

- Eden Valley: $130,000
- Meeker County: $186,400
- Stearns County: $233,900
- Minnesota: $285,400

Percent of Residents Who Moved in Past Year

- Eden Valley: 10.8%
- Meeker County: 8.1%
- Stearns County: 13.7%
- Minnesota: 12.7%

Housing Goals

Goal 1 - The community of Eden Valley offers a wide variety of safe, quality housing choices that meet the needs of all residents, current and future.

Strategies

1. Encourage an adequate supply of housing in a wide range of prices, types, and locations.

2. Encourage a variety of life-cycle housing including accessible housing, and accessory units to accommodate older residents and those with disabilities.

3. Encourage preservation, rehabilitation and on-going maintenance of the existing housing stock and reduce substandard housing in the community.

4. Encourage welcoming neighborhoods with sidewalks and trees for shade and walkability, and homes that are well maintained.

5. Involve residents, developers funders, and local, state, and federal agencies in the development and implementation of housing strategies.

Goal 2 - Preserve and Improve Existing Housing Stock.

Strategies

1. Actively encourage the updating and renovation of existing housing stock to fit with current housing demand.

2. Enforce Zoning Ordinances and building code regulations and remove dilapidated homes.

3. Partner with Meeker and Stearns Counties' Housing and Redevelopment Authorities to develop a housing plan with local, state, and federal agencies, utilizing programs (e.g., United States Department of Agriculture Housing Assistance Programs) to address low- and moderate-income housing needs.

4. Strongly consider applications for Small Cities Development (SCDP), every 3 to 5 years, to gain funds that will help low-to-moderate income homeowners and rental unit owners rehabilitate their buildings.

5. Promote programs that assist with home ownership.

6. Promote programs that enable aging homeowners and/or homeowners with disabilities to remain in their homes safely, comfortably, and affordably.

7. Consider ways to address the financial gap (created when construction costs are much higher than home values and rents) for middle income residents and rental unit development.

8. Develop and maintain a list of available of available lots for housing so that developers and potential home builders can easily learn what is available.

9. Pursue senior housing that offers services to older residents with special needs (e.g., housekeeping or meal service, bathing assistance, memory care services).

**Goal 3 -** Encourage the Development of New Housing Development.

Strategies

1. Promote and encourage development of new housing that can be used by all community residents, regardless of age, size, ability, or disability.

2. Create a plan to quickly accommodate workforce housing needs, should a large employer wish to relocate or expand to Eden Valley or a neighboring community.

3. Collaborate with nonprofit and for-profit developers to achieve a mix of long-term rental housing (market rate, affordable, and workforce housing) through strategic development and redevelopment.

4. Strive to achieve a rental vacancy rate of between 5 and 8 percent, to ensure quality rental units are available for incoming workers and families.

5. Partner with non-profit and for-profit developers to develop new housing for owner occupancy.

Goal 4 - Plan for Future Housing Needs.

Strategies

1. Conduct a housing study and inventory every 4-5 years to analyze the City's housing supply and its capacity to meet future needs. A housing inventory and map, highlighting areas of potential housing development or redevelopment, should be included as part of this study.
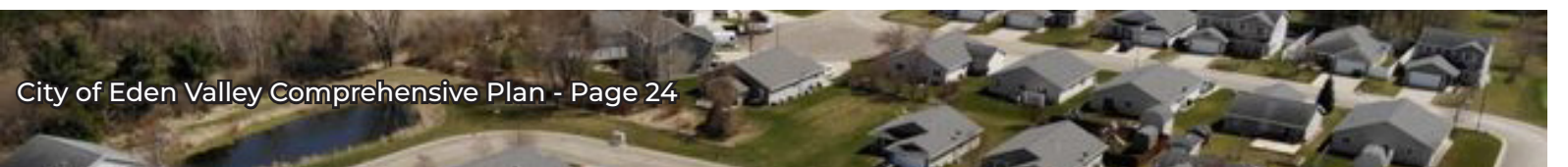
CHAPTER 3. TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

Transportation should always be thought of as a system that includes all modes of transportation. Not only personal vehicles but also freight and commodity haulers, agriculture-related vehicles and equipment, trains, transit buses, bicycles, electric mobility scooters and wheelchairs, and even one's own two feet. An effective system of transportation – that is to say, an effective means of moving people and goods – is crucial to the success of any community. Residents, institutions, and businesses require an effective transportation system – both infrastructure and services – to meet mobility needs efficiently, effectively, and safely.

Quality transportation infrastructure – roads, sidewalks, trails, railroads, etc., supports connections between producers and consumers. More importantly, it supports connections between people, and connects communities to their region, state, and areas beyond. Quality infrastructure, or a lack thereof, also impacts current and future land use and value.

With regard to transportation infrastructure, Eden Valley is well connected. The city lies at the intersection of two major roadways, Minnesota State Highways 22 and 55. Meeker Stearns Avenue provides access to the City from the east and west while also marking the border of Meeker and Stearns Counties. Most of Eden Valley's other streets lie in an efficient grid pattern. These roadways are often tree-lined and narrow, as compared with the main highways. They typically enjoy more modest traffic levels and are conducive to a quiet neighborhood atmosphere.

Another feature of Eden Valley's transportation infrastructure is the Canadian Pacific Railway, which runs roughly parallel to Minnesota State Highway 55, dividing north and south sides of the Eden Valley community. A valuable rail spur can be found within town. This provides potential for commercial rail access should a current or future Eden Valley business require it.

Transportation services can refer to the movement of people or goods from place to place. While, like most Greater Minnesota Communities, most Eden Valley residents' primary mode of transportation is their personal vehicle, there is a significant portion of the population that is unable to drive. In rural areas, providing transportation to these non-drivers (e.g., nondriving seniors, people with disabilities, children/youth) can be expensive and challenging. However, without transportation services, many residents would be excluded from full community participation. They might have difficulty attending work, school, or worship services, struggle to get to the grocery store, health appointments, or pharmacy, or miss out on opportunities for socialization with friends and family. This is a detriment not only to the transportation-limited individual but also to others who might benefit from their contributions.

Major transportation providers within the City of Eden Valley include Central Community Transit (CCT) and Eden Valley Watkins Bus Service. CCT provides public transit bus service within town and between Eden Valley and neighboring communities. A typical one-way fare is $3.00, though fares may run higher for longer trips. The company's bus service is supplemented by a volunteer driver program, which helps seniors and other qualifying nondrivers get to health appointments and other engagements. Unfortunately, due to a shortage of paid and volunteer drivers, CCT service within the Eden Valley community is quite limited.

Eden Valley Watkins Bus Service primarily provides school-related transportation for Eden Valley-Watkins Students. Additional transportation services may be offered to qualifying individuals by other entities, such as the Stearns or Meeker County Veterans Service Office. In addition to supporting all of these providers, it is important to ensure that pedestrian infrastructure is safe and adequate for those who often have no option but to walk or bike to their local destinations.

Traffic

Eden Valley's overall traffic volume ranges from low to medium. While the City's narrower residential streets tend to encourage lower vehicle speeds, safety could be improved with the incorporation of additional signage and other traffic mitigating measures at busier intersections.   (Will have traffic map included)
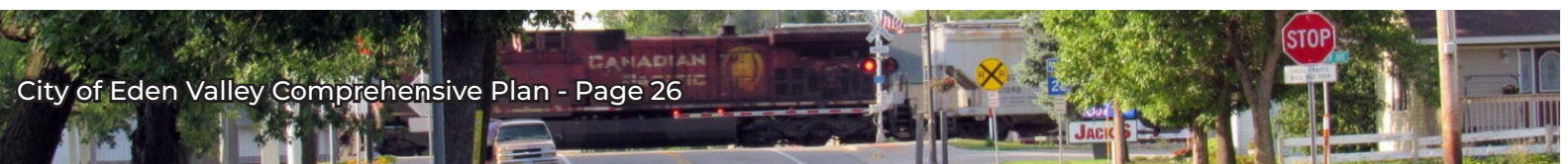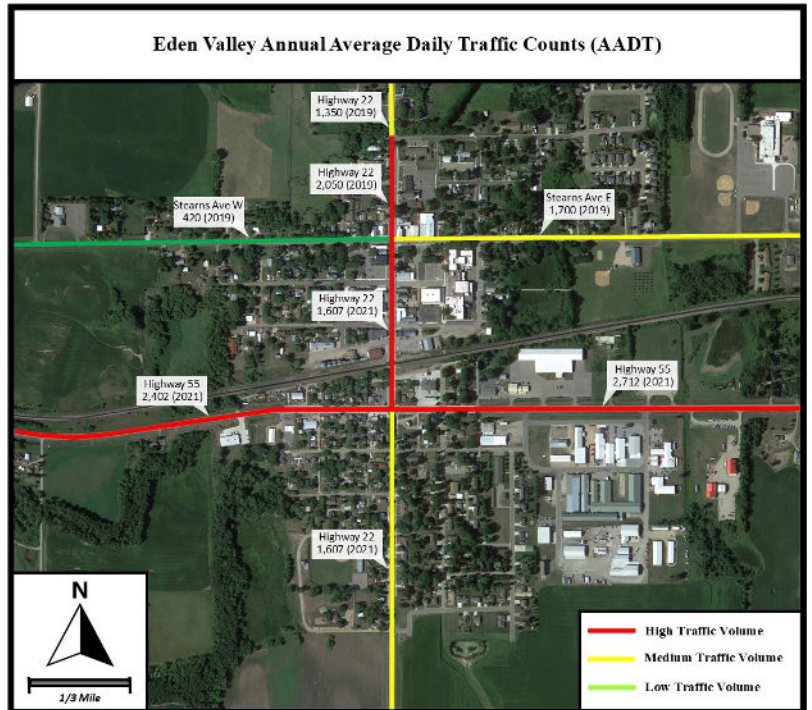
Public Input:

Residents of Eden Valley have repeatedly expressed a need to maintain a "safety-first" approach to navigation along and across Minnesota State Highway 55, the City's busiest road. Pedestrians may be challenged to safely cross Minnesota Highway 55 and the Canadian Pacific Railway, and this may limit access to the City's commercial area for those who live in the southern portion of town, or to the City's beautiful Friederich's Park area for those who live in the City's northern half. Pedestrian safety and visibility could be improved with the incorporation of additional pedestrian beacons and/or improving lighting. Additionally, fencing along the railway may help filter walkers, including students interested in purchasing a quick snack from the community's convenience store (Jack's) to the approved rail crossing. All measures that improve safety for those crossing Minnesota State Highway 55 and the Canadian Pacific Railway will improve connectedness between the cities north and south sides. Some Eden Valley residents also indicated desire for safe walking and bicycling infrastructure that connects key community destinations and encourages active living.

Several key destinations have been identified.

They include but are not limited to:
- Jacks of Eden Valley (the community's convenience store)
- Eden Valley-Watkins High School
- Eden Valley-Watkins Elementary School
- Eden Valley's City Hall
- Dollar General
- Friederichs Park
- Eden Valley Community Center

Note: Larger traffic count map can be found in Appendix.

Eden Valley Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts (AADT)

Highway 22 1,350 (2019)
Highway 22 2,050 (2019)
Stearns Ave W 420 (2019)
Stearns Ave E 1,700 (2019)
Highway 22 1,607 (2021)
Highway 55 2,402 (2021)
Highway 55 2,712 (2021)
Highway 22 1,607 (2021)

High Traffic Volume
Medium Traffic Volume
Low Traffic Volume

1/3 Mile

Goals and Strategies for Active Living

It will be important for Eden Valley's leaders to consider the inclusion of elements that support active living when considering street, path, and sidewalk projects. The City of Eden Valley is intentional in supporting active, healthy living.

Eden Valley's Active Living Goals and Strategies

Goals

1. Allow for safe and adequate access to every public and private destination within the City.

2. Improve mobility for residents, visitors, and businesses by providing a transportation system that considers motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

3. Design transportation infrastructure according to its intended service function and within the context of its neighborhood.

4. Minimize the unintended impacts of Eden Valley's transportation infrastructure, including unnecessary congestion, vehicle emissions, and safety hazards.

5. Support healthy living and reduce motor vehicle dependence by supporting safe, adequate, and appealing walking and bicycling infrastructure (e.g., trails).

6. Invest in the infrastructure needed to support residents, visitors,' and businesses' electric vehicles (e.g., public charging stations) and other common transportation and transportation-related technologies that yet have not been identified.

7. Engage all segments of the community and solicit their input when considering transportation-related issues.

8. Identify new and existing sources of transportation infrastructure funding by seeking to partner, where feasible, with federal, state, regional, county, and adjacent community sources.

9. Minimize barriers to support the effective and efficient operation of public and private transportation providers (e.g., Central Community Transit, Jefferson Lines, school bus companies, ride-hailing services, specialized transportation service providers) to improve a ccess to those with transportation/mobility barriers.

10. Give citizens and businesses background on transportation issues affecting the City allowing them to be informed on reasoning behind decisions by City staff and elected officials regarding transportation.

Strategies:

1. Provide essential infrastructure that makes physical activity and active transportation an easy, accessible, and enjoyable option.

2. Raise awareness of the benefit of a healthy lifestyle and improve overall health and safety of residents of the City.

3. Promote implementation of policies and practices that create active community by increasing opportunities for non-motorized transportation and access to community recreational activities.

4. Generate community wide support for active living and collaborate with key partners to drive changes in the community.

5. Provide the necessary safety education of citizens to ensure walking and bicycling in the community can be enjoyable, and safe.

6. Improve and enforce the City's ordinances and planning documents that will support the culture of an active living community.

7. Utilize City committees in taking the lead role in promoting and educating the citizens about improved transportation plans and increase local "buy in."

Roadway Sign Policies

Commercial and other signage, along highways and streets can be a distraction to drivers and can leave a cluttered, unappealing impression of the local landscape. While it is important to avoid running afoul of first-amendment rights, the location, size, shape, and color of signs can be regulated through a carefully crafted sign ordinance, implemented and enforced by the City.

Future Roads and Streets

The construction of Eden Valley's future roadway and pedestrian infrastructure should be consistent with the City's Land Use Map (refer to page 40). Construction decisions should also include consideration of the location of other necessary development infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, retention ponds, etc.).
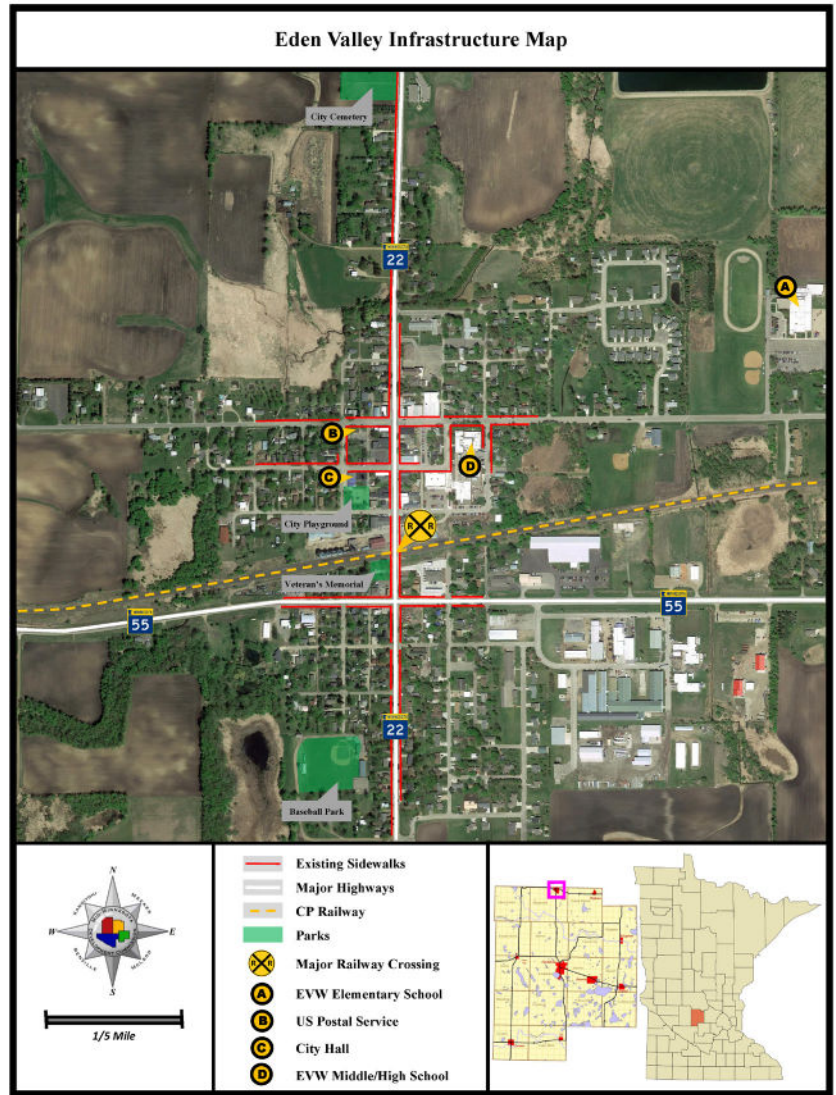
Capital Improvement Plan

A community's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) is a planning and management tool used by City officials. It is a short-range plan, which identifies capital projects and equipment purchases, providing a planning schedule and, when possible, identifying options for project/purchase financing. These plans give City leaders opportunity to plan for future financial commitments while avoiding the financial stress of paying for those projects all at once and/or on short notice.
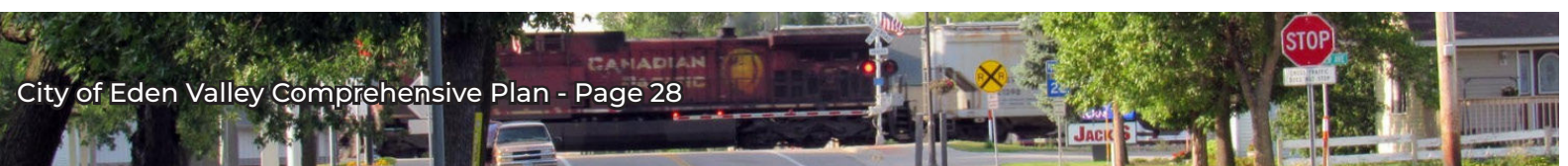
Benefits of a Capital Improvements Plan (Please see CIP Plan in Appendix__)

- Acts as a project and financial planning tool

- Keeps citizens and the City Council abreast of future needs

- Prioritizes projects based on City need

- Mitigates the need for municipal tax rate increases

- Manages a City's spending in a way that avoids extreme financial changes and burdens

- Allows a City to be less reliant on long-term debt (bonding) and provides the ability to pay for greater portions of projects as they occur

- Organizes projects from multiple City departments,

- Better equips cities to create financial reserves for contingencies and emergencies and prevents a City from over-borrowing.

Note: Larger infrastucture map can be found in appendix.

A Capital Improvments Plan Should:

- Cover multiple years

- Should be reviewed annually to determine if new additions are justified, monitor progress, and make inform budgeting recommendations.

- Identify specific projects, including significant maintenance projects (e.g., roadway and utility maintenance).

Eden Valley 's CIP is primarily focused on its roadways and utilities infrastructure.

Infrastructure Goals and Strategies

Goal 1 - Eden Valley residents and businesses enjoy a quality system of transportation and utilities infrastructure, the result of continuous and fiscally-responsible improvements. The community's infrastructure meets current needs and is well-positioned to serve future generations through measured, responsible growth and enhancement.

Strategies:

1. Preserve and utilize rail access

2. Consider and evaluate all potential modal (i.e. automobiles, heavy commercial vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, trains, ATV, golf carts, etc.) impact for each transportation project.

3. Provide safety and accessibility for all users, of all ages and abilities when planning for and designing improvements to the transportation system.

4. Work with surrounding townships, Stearns County, Meeker County, MnDOT, FHWA, railroads, and private stakeholders when maintaining and upgrading roads to maximize efficiencies.

5. Develop transportation services and infrastructure that are consistent with local land use plans that encourage employment growth and fosters economic growth and competitiveness.

6. Consider the inclusion of amenities such as crosswalk lights, sidewalks, lighting, land scaping, and other enhancements to the transportation system, especially during highway and street construction.

7. Work towards curb accessibility throughout the city.

8. Implement a sidewalk plan to accommodate both pedestrian and vehicular needs in street design to ensure a walkable and bike friendly environment throughout the community.

9. Fund existing and future sidewalks with assessments.

10. Work with the public to prioritize the community investment of street, sidewalk and trail improvements and determine a sustainable financial plan.

11. Continue to develop multi-year road improvement plan as part of any Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which includes maintenance, lifecycle cost, safety improvements, paving and construction work, etc. prioritized by year, cost, and method of financing.

    a. This plan identifies resources and strategically invests in infrastructure for both the short-term and long term.

    a. Identify and preserve current and planned rights-of-way for transportation improvements.

CHAPTER 4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

Economic development is a process by which a community is strengthened by ensuring both financial well-being and quality of life for its residents. This process often includes working to retain and attract businesses, as well as the workers who will operate them and the customers who will patronize them, by ensuring their needs can be met within the community. These needs may include:

◆ Transportation and utility infrastructure (i.e., water, sewer, power, broadband)

◆ Housing

◆ Parks and trails

◆ Education and health services

◆ Leisure and enrichment opportunities

While Eden Valley has several positive attributes that are attractive to many employers (e.g., small town atmosphere, strong school system, and low crime rate) City leaders must be diligent to ensure our town can effectively compete with other communities, from within the surrounding region and beyond. This will include active involvement of the City's Economic Development Authority, the Eden Valley Chamber of Commerce, Eden Valley residents and business owners, and regional partners (e.g., Meeker and Stearns EDA, Mid-Minnesota Development Commission).

Public Input:

This section of Eden Valley's Comprehensive Plan provides a summary of economic development related input as well as findings resulting from analysis completed as part of the comprehensive planning process. A process of stakeholder engagement was performed. This included discussion with Eden Valley residents, staff, and the Economic Development Authority (EDA). A community survey was also developed and promoted. The information that was gathered has been incorporated into this plan.

Housing

Like surrounding communities, Eden Valley is experiencing a housing shortage. While some housing has been added in recent years, there remains a lack of available housing stock at all price points. While many potential residents would find Eden Valley to be a safe, friendly, desirable place to put down roots, it may be challenging for them to find local rental units or homes available for purchase. Single-family properties that offer low maintenance "turn-the-key and go" options, often attractive to retirees and other busy people, are in short supply. This poses a barrier to the Eden Valley community's ability to attract and retain residents, including workers (e.g., teachers, nurses, mechanics, machinists, entrepreneurs, public servants) families and active retirees.
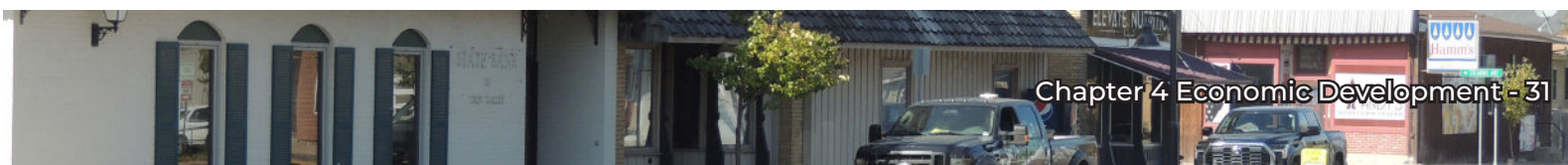
Throughout the public engagement process, community members, business owners, and the City's committees have indicated a desire to foster more housing development, as well as the redevelopment of existing but aging housing stock, to support a healthy, vibrant community. The city should consider opportunities to stimulate housing development while also considering the needs of those individuals the community would like to attract or retain. This could include ensuring rental and ownership options for those not interested in maintaining single-family homes in addition to options for young and growing families and area workers. By ensuring a quality mix of housing, The City will support a quality mix of people. This will help the city avoid an unintended degree of exclusivity that might price a young professional, growing family, or retiree out of the local housing market.

For more detailed housing information and goals, visit the Housing Chapter of this plan.

Business Expansion and Retention in Eden Valley

While the number of eating and drinking establishments within Eden Valley is on par and even slightly exceeds that of most Minnesota towns of similar size, there is desire for greater variety among eating and drinking establishments.

There are also several retailers and specialty shops who have created a loyal customer base by providing quality products and services. Many stakeholders support efforts to foster and encourage more of this entrepreneurship in the hopes of diversifying retail and restaurant options.

Eden Valley can support all businesses and entrepreneurs, via the organization of collective marketing by making them aware of financing and grant opportunities, and by providing local incentives (e.g., forgivable loans) for the improvement of commercial properties.
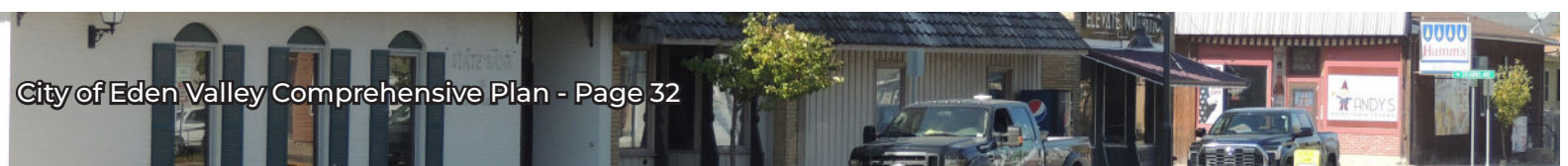
Childcare

First Children's Finance is a nonprofit organization focused on addressing the business and finance needs of childcare by:

1. Building the financial sustainability of childcare entrepreneurs.

2. Partnering with communities to preserve and grow their childcare supply; and

3. Influencing state and federal systems to provide support and investments needed to sustain childcare businesses.

In April of 2020, FCF led the development of a Meeker County Rural Child Care Innovation Program (RCCIP) action plan
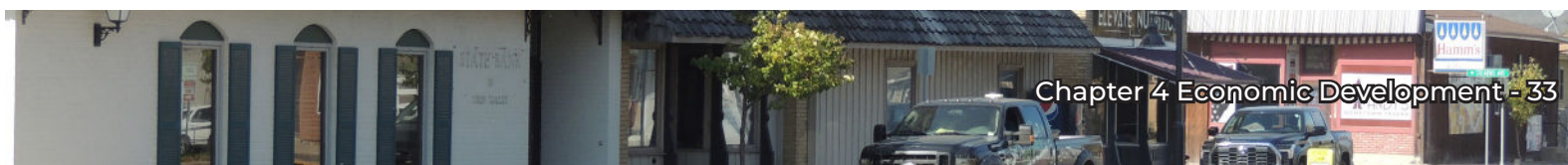
 (https://www.firstchildrensfinance.org/app/uploads/2021/04/Meeker-County-CSAP.pdf).

This plan included six goals, specifically:

- Maintaining the Core Team beyond RCCIP grant period.

- Eliminating the licensing fee for providers renewing their childcare licenses

- Creating an interactive and comprehensive website for childcare programs within Meeker County's website.

- Identifying free local training opportunities and increasing the number of approved trainings providers.

- Building partnerships that include providers, schools, businesses, and community members to increase the number of childcare slots within the county.

- Creating a community fund to financially support new and existing childcare programs.

Current information on Meeker County's childcare providers, including providers within the City of Eden Valley, can be found at: https://www.co.meeker.mn.us/498/Child-Care. This site also includes information for those interested in learning more about childcare licensing requirements, etc.

In 2022, as reported in FCF's Child Care Need Summary for Southwest Minnesota *(https://www.ruralchildcare.org/_files/ugd/fdb178_cafba683785a4767861a1587bad7052d.pdf)*, the Eden Valley community had a childcare deficit of 10 slots. That is to say that there were 10 more Eden Valley children under the age of five than there were childcare slots for them within the community. The same report indicated that the neighboring Watkins community had a 69-slot deficit in 2022. While Eden Valley's childcare deficit is small, it is noteworthy that it would grow quickly if just one or two childcare providers were to close their doors and cease operation.

It is noteworthy that when answering the survey question "Do you think Eden Valley has enough childcare providers/options?" over three times as many respondents answered "No" (36.03%) than answered "Yes" (11.11%). The remainder of respondents (52.86%) provided an answer of "I'm not sure."

Does Your Household Use Childcare/Daycare Services?

Category	Value
Other	~4
My Household Depends on Friends and/or Family to provide childcare	~7
My Household Send One or More Children More Then 10 Miles Away For Childcare	~2
My Household One or More Children to a Childcare Provider Within or Very Near Eden Valley	~11
My Household Does Not Currently Use Childcare Services But Needs them Now or in the Future	~4
My Household Has No Need for Childcare at This Time or in the Near Future	~78

While most respondents currently have no need for childcare, over 20% indicated their household currently uses childcare now or expects to in the foreseeable future. This may indicate the issue should be considered as part of any broader strategy to attract young families or working age adults to the Eden Valley community.
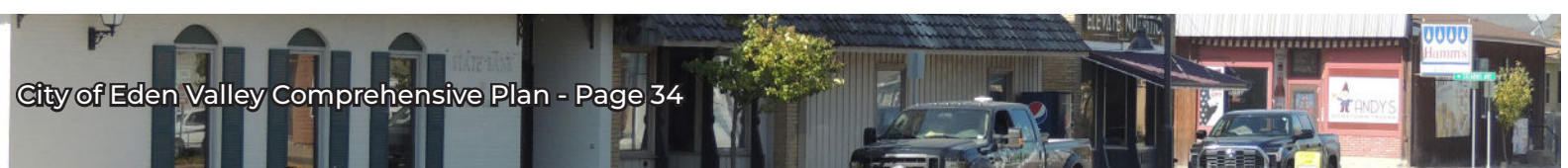
All Things Being Equal, Would You Prefer to Send Your Childcare-Age Children to an Eden Valley Provider, Rather Than an Out-of-Town Provider?
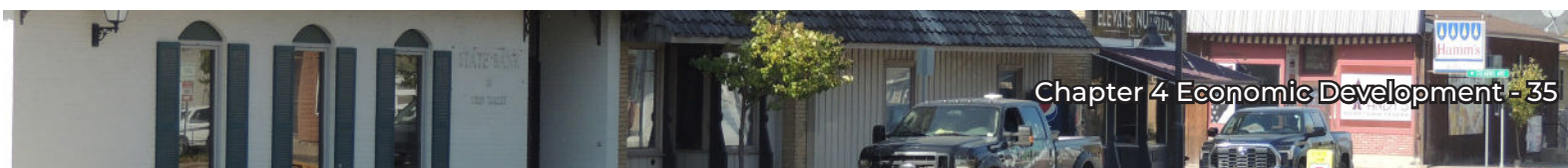
7.46%

23.05%

69.49%
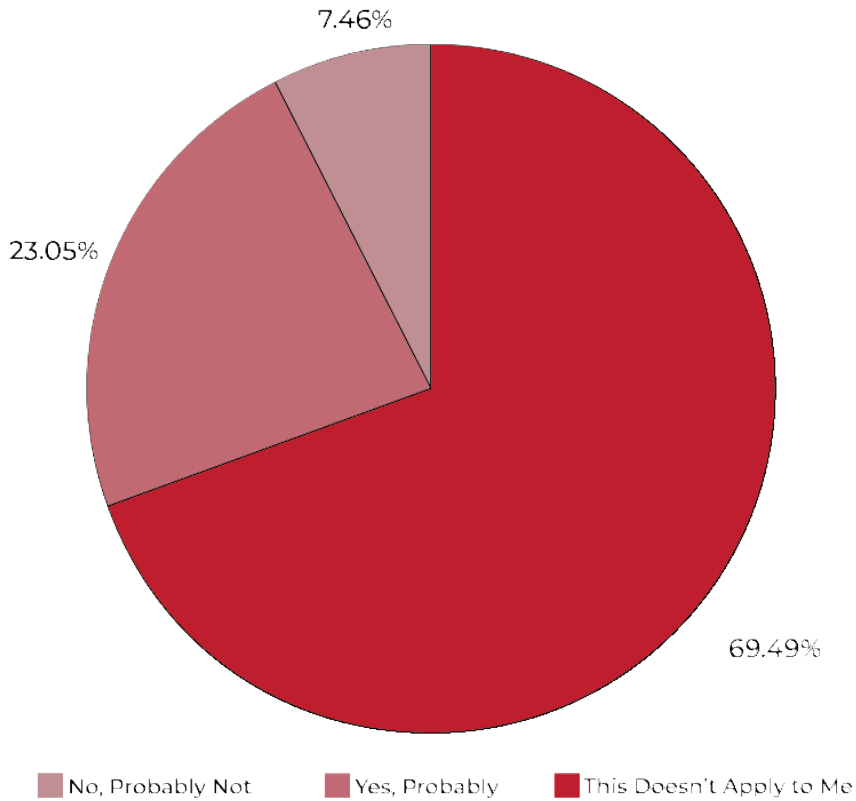
While this question didn't apply to most respondents, of those for whom the question did reply, the great majority indicated they would prefer to send their childcare age children to an Eden Valley provider, all other things being equal. This seems to indicate both desire and opportunity for more in-town childcare providers.
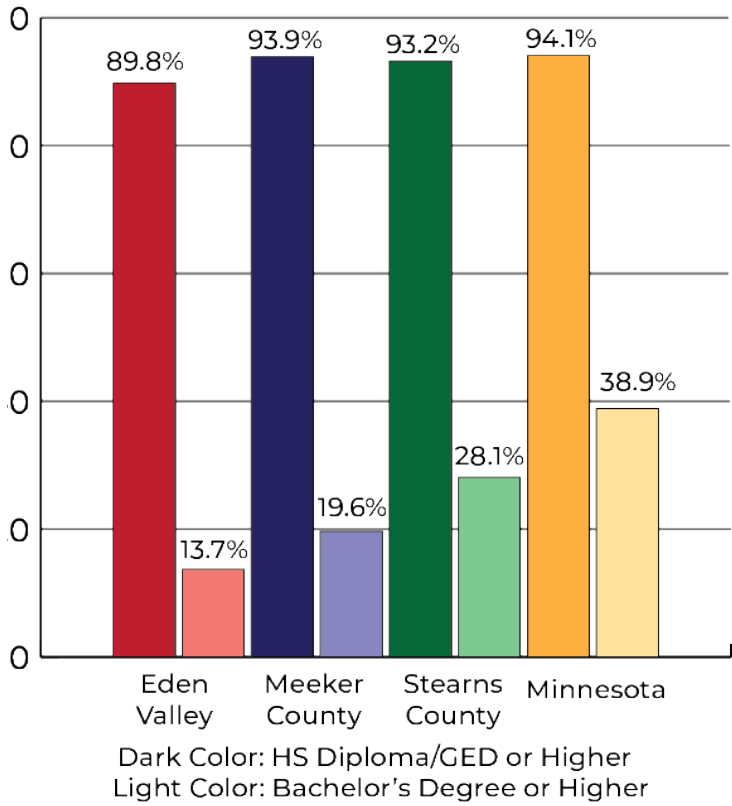
- No, Probably Not
- Yes, Probably
- This Doesn't Apply to Me

Do You Think Eden Valley Has Enough Childcare Providers/Options

7.46%

23.05%

69.49%
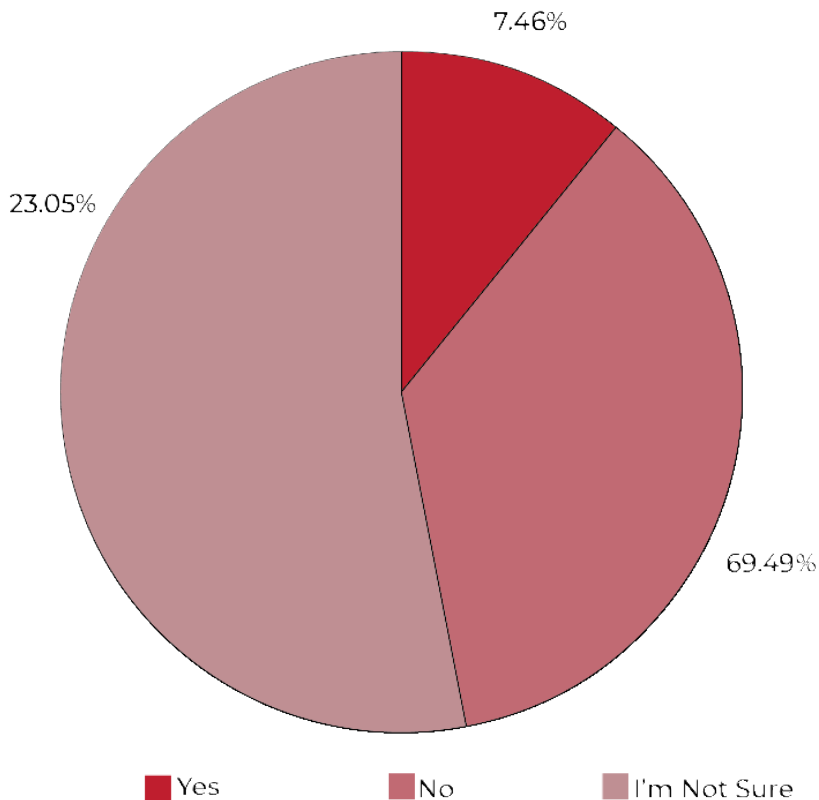
While the majority of survey respondents indicated they were unsure, only 11% indicated their belief that Eden Valley currently has enough childcare providers to meet the community's need.
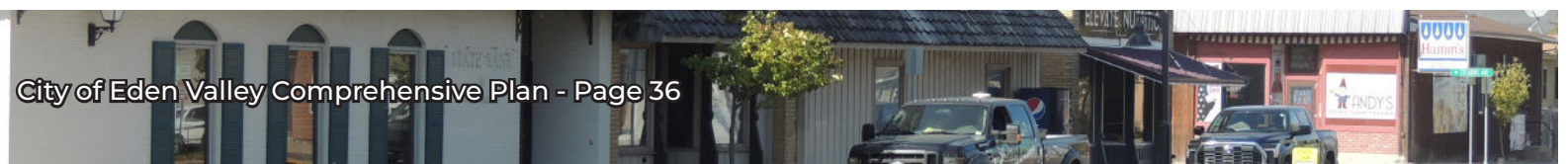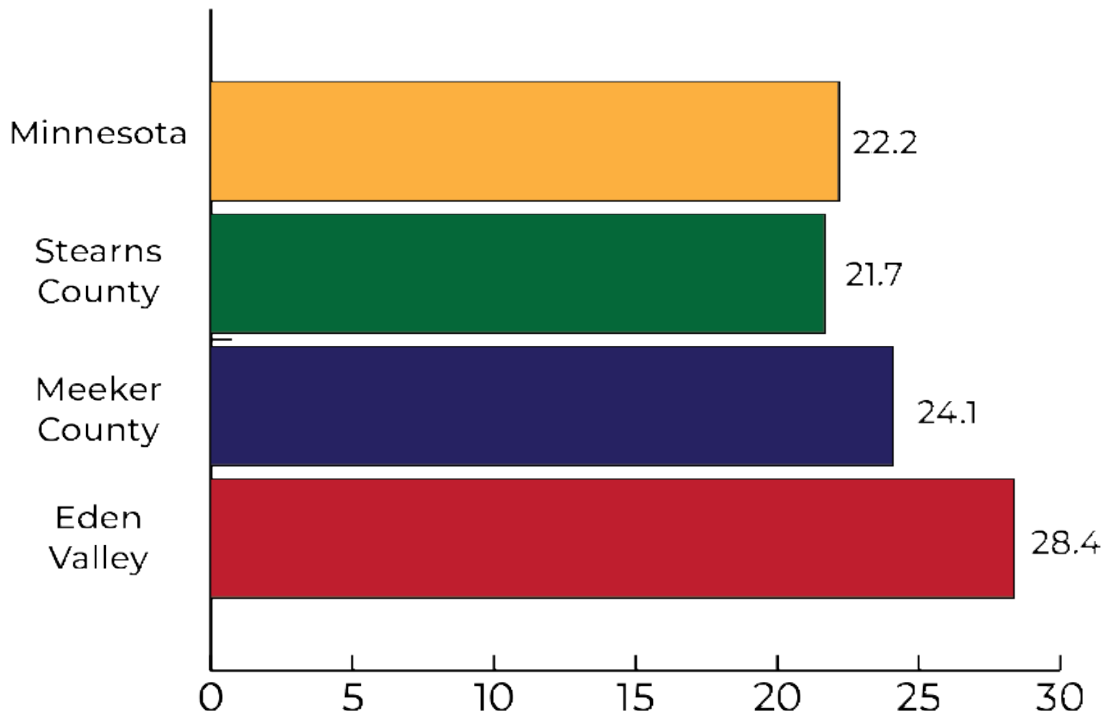
- Yes
- No
- I'm Not Sure

Education

Dark Color: HS Diploma/GED or Higher
Light Color: Bachelor's Degree or Higher

- Eden Valley: 89.8%, 13.7%
- Meeker County: 93.9%, 19.6%
- Stearns County: 93.2%, 28.1%
- Minnesota: 94.1%, 38.9%

Percentage in Poverty

- Eden Valley: 13.6%
- Meeker County: 7.7%
- Stearns County: 15.7%
- Minnesota: 9.3%
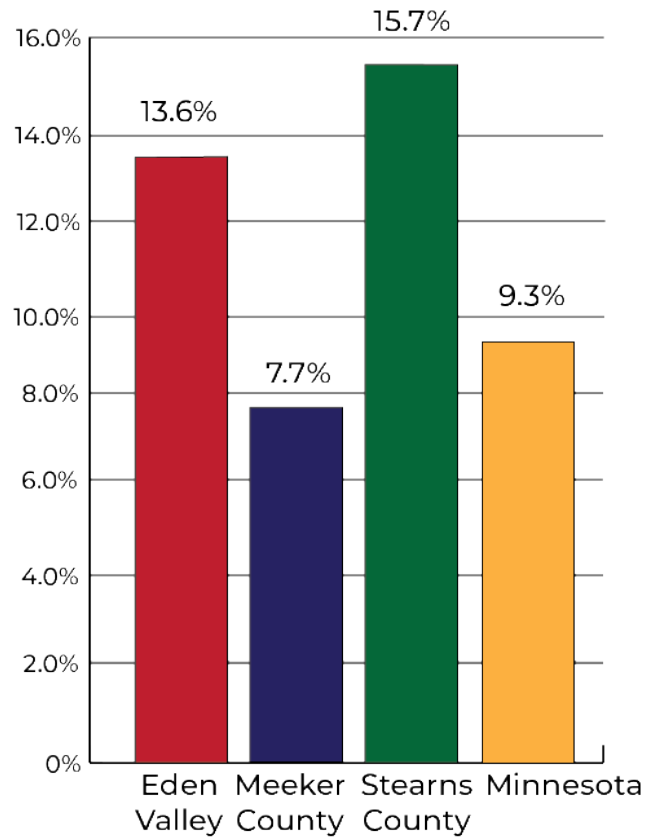
Average Work Commute
(In Minutes)

- Minnesota: 22.2
- Stearns County: 21.7
- Meeker County: 24.1
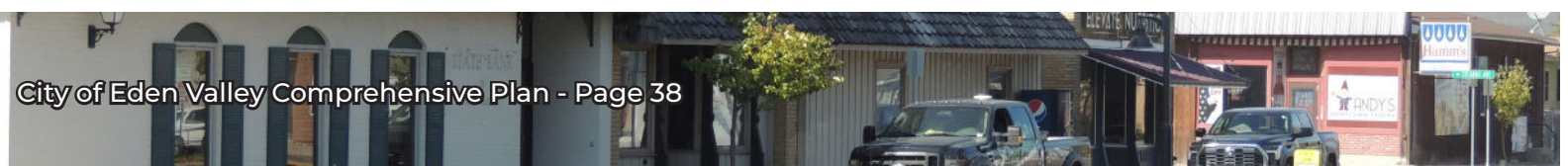- Eden Valley: 28.4

Economic Development Goals and Strategies

Goal 1 - The City of Eden Valley will support a diverse, vibrant, and thriving business community.

Strategies

1. The City of Eden Valley will apply for a Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) grant, offered by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, every three to five years to rehabilitate current commercial properties. These grants may be used for economic development activity consisting of loans from the grant recipient to businesses for building rehabilitation related to façade improvements, code violations, and health and safety issues.

2. The City of Eden Valley will partner with service providers and pursue state and federal funding to extend fiber optic-based broadband access throughout the city and surrounding areas.

3. The City of Eden Valley will, as appropriate, use and access financial tools such as tax increment financing, tax abatement, revolving loan funds, State and Federal programs, etc. to support existing businesses and new business development.

4. The City of Eden Valley will enforce zoning ordinances and building code regulations to ensure properties are kept in good condition and, when necessary, force the condemnation and removal of dilapidated commercial structures.

5. The City of Eden Valley will identify long-term economic development projects (e.g., downtown revitalization, industrial park expansion) and incorporate these projects into the City's Capital Improvement Plan.

6. The City of Eden Valley will identify potential acreage for future industrial development and incorporate this acreage into a Future Land Use Plan.

7. The City of Eden Valley will create a Downtown Business District Revitalization Plan, which may:

   a. Encourage business variety.
   b. Assess, maintain, and improve the condition of existing downtown buildings.
   c. Discourage the inappropriate use of downtown buildings (e.g., using commercial spaces as storage facilities)
   d. Incorporate signage and advertising standards.
   e. Ensure adequate directional signage.
   f. Improve continuity of business hours.
   g. Assess and improve roadway, pedestrian, and utility infrastructure.
   h. Identify opportunities to preserve and enhance the character, design, and identity of the downtown area, including through the incorporation of public art and streetscape.
   i. Provide a listing of financial resources area businesses.
   j. Assess the availability of parking, including parking for people with disabilities.
   k. Encourage walkability/active living.
   l. Preserve historic assets and characteristics.
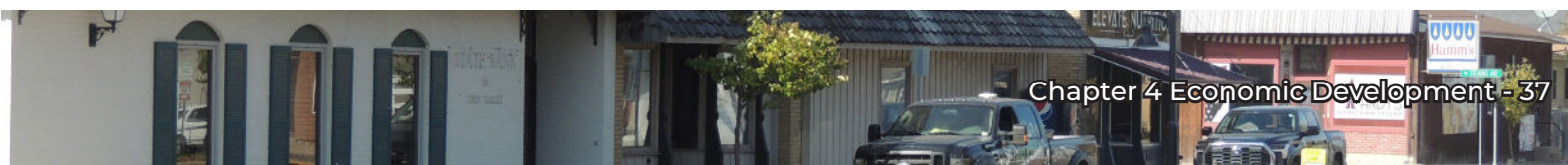
8. The City will promote its Highway Commercial District by promoting businesses and business opportunities along its two major highways. This could include the incorporation of well-placed signs as well as other marketing of available industrial properties, with emphasis on easy highway and potential rail access.

9. The City will work to ensure significant and coordination between the Eden Valley's elected leadership and staff, Economic Development Authority (EDA), Planning Commission, Chamber of Commerce, and Citizens 4 Progress organization when working on the following economic development initiatives:

   a. Maintain and improve the city website – a potential economic development marketing tool.

   b. Highlight Eden Valley's recreation, housing, and transportation and other amenities that have potential to draw workers to the community.

   c. In collaboration with neighboring communities and area development organizations, encourage younger workers to return to their home community to live, to work, and to start and raise their own families.

   d. Maintain updated community profile information and promotional materials which may be used to attract prospective businesses and residents.

   e. Promote the patronage of local businesses.

   f. Maintain a current inventory of existing business and commercial and industrial property available for sale.

   g. Foster opportunities for businesses to regularly connect with one another by facilitating training and opportunities which have potential to lead to increased business cooperation.

   h. Work with local businesses to understand their current and future needs and create plans to address those needs.

   i. Educate the local business community about available financing, including gap financing from Meeker EDA, Mid-Minnesota Development Commission, and Southwest Initiative Foundation.

   j. Pursue collaborative relationships with neighboring communities to better market the area to site selectors and increase business interest.

10. The City of Eden Valley should ensure availability of a wide range of housing types that are affordable for prospective residents at all income levels.

11. The City of Eden Valley should develop a streamlined permitting process for businesses interested in investing in existing commercial or industrial developments, especially locations for infill development (deveolpment of lots with existing infrastructure).

12. The City of Eden Valley should support renewable energy as a potential industry and as a potential low-cost energy source for local businesses.

13. The City of Eden Valley, Eden Valley EDA, and Planning Commission should consider business size, type, wages, utility demand, and compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods and natural resources when considering new business and industrial development

14. The City of Eden Valley and Planning Commission should first consider redevelopment and renovation of existing commercial and industrial spaces, and the City's downtown area, before the creation of new developments outside of areas already served and supported by transportation and utility infrastructure.

Goal 2 - Promote Eden Valley as a great place for business, commerce, family, and living.

Strategies:
1. The City of Eden Valley should contract to develop a community branding strategy that builds on the City's positive attributes, including the strong school district, friendly residents, small town atmosphere, etc.

2. The City of Eden Valley should work to preserve distinctive assets and elements that make the community unique.

**Goal 3 -** Eliminate childcare deficits by supporting current and prospective childcare providers.

Strategies:
1. The City of Eden Valley should find ways to thank and recognize local childcare providers for the important service they provide to support area workers and businesses.

2. The City of Eden Valley should work to connect existing and prospective childcare providers with resources necessary to bolster business operations.

3. The City of Eden Valley should consider using financial incentives/tools to assist with facility improvements and encourage new or continued childcare operation.

4. The City of Eden Valley can coordinate with local businesses, whose workers require childcare, to support providers by guaranteeing payment for childcare slots. Providers could be paid directly by businesses, who could then withhold all or part of the funds from employee paychecks, to ensure payment continuity for providers.

Goal 4 - Increase median resident/household income.
Strategies:
1. The City of Eden Valley and Eden Valley's EDA should prioritize incentives to businesses that provide family-sustaining employment, with median or higher wages and healthcare benefits.

2. The City of Eden Valley should maintain contact with graduates of the Eden Valley-Watkins School District so they may have the opportunity to inform them of local employment opportunities related to their post-secondary experiences.

3. The City of Eden Valley should promote workforce training opportunities offered by Minnesota's Career Force System partners.

4. The City of Eden Valley should encourage businesses to connect with Eden Valley-Watkins District students to develop positive relationships and ensure they feel valued by the City's business community.
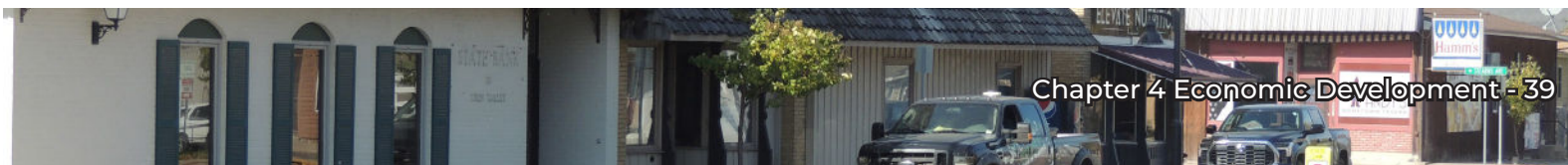
OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

How the City will use and develop its land resources is an integral part of this comprehensive planning process. This chapter provides Eden Valley with goals and strategies to ensure effective and efficient use of the land within its current and future borders. It provides directions on how to prioritize city resources (i.e., time, money, and staff) to accomplish land use goals. This includes the development and redevelopment of land, the addition or upgrade of facilities or utilities, and the maintenance of items that are already serving the community well. This chapter will also provide a suggested set of policies for land use planning.

Public Input:

Gathering input from community stakeholders (e.g., residents, businesses) is essential for effective planning. Those who are going to be affected by the plan should have the opportunity to influence it. Several strategies were employed to engage the Eden Valley's stakeholders to solicit input. They include.

1. A community survey, which was distributed both online and in person at community locations.

2. In-person meetings between the contracted planner/plan author and Eden Valley's Economic Development Authority (EDA), Planning Commission, and Comprehensive Plan Task Force, all of which included residents, and business leaders.

3. One-on-one conversations with Eden Valley's residents, leadership, and staff.

ZONING MAP
JUNE 2022
CITY OF EDEN VALLEY
MEEKER/STEARNS COUNTY, MINNESOTA
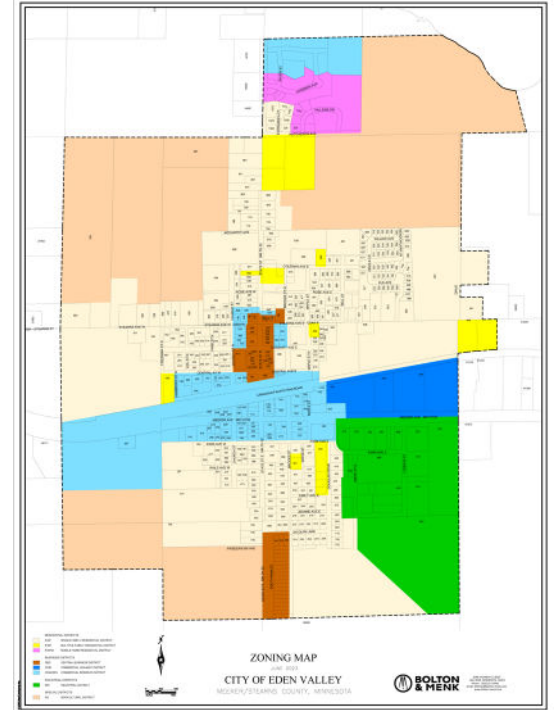
Stakeholder input (i.e., comments, suggestions) has been incorporated throughout this plan. Common themes included a desire for more housing, to support residents at all life stages, as well as a desire to better capitalize on the potential of Eden Valley's downtown district.

Current Land Use:

Land use planning is the process of regulating the use of land by an authority, in this case the City of Eden Valley. Usually, this is done to promote more desirable, harmonious spaces and an efficient use of community resources.

Mixed Land Use:

Mixed-use zoning allows for multiple land uses within a given neighborhood or area. It allows for commercial, residential and, in some cases, even light industrial use within the same building or area. Regulations surrounding this mixed use often incorporate stipulations that ensure balance and compatibility. For instance, a business might be restricted from participating in noisy activities after a certain time of day or night. However, residents may be restricted from on-street parking during
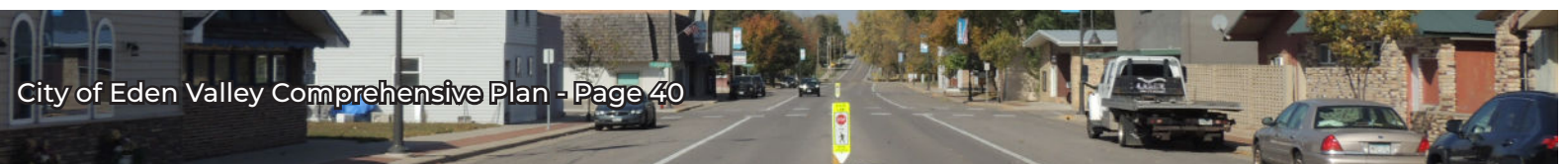
Accessory Dwelling Units ADU:

This could include allowing for Accessory Dwelling Units. An Accessory Dwelling which is usually just called ADU's. It is a secondary housing unit on a single-family residential. These can include Detached new construction, Garage Conversion, Above Garage, Additions, Basement conversion, and Internal ADU's.

Future Land Use:

A future land use plan presents a vision of how a community could grow in an area. It serves as a basis for major zoning ordinance revisions and other land use regulations. It also influences the community's capital improvement plan. Eden Valley's future land use plan should strike a balance between the need to preserve the community's rural character and natural resources with the need to allow opportunity for present and future growth.

Annexation:

Annexation is the process by which cities grow. It is accomplished by adding unincorporated, adjacent areas. As the community's population or land needs change and/or increase, it may become necessary to expand Eden Valley's services beyond current municipal boundaries. This growth should be intentional to maximize benefits to housing and industry while protecting the City's surrounding natural resources. New costs should be distributed fairly among those who will benefit from any expansion. Adequate development density should be maintained to boost the value of added infrastructure and services. This can be accomplished through sound land use planning.

Districts:

Even small cities and towns are typically divided into multiple district types. These districts often include the following.

Agricultural District (AG):

Agricultural districts are designed for areas within the city that may presently be used to produce row crops. Agricultural districts provide for existing agricultural uses prior to their development for more urban uses as specified in a city's comprehensive plan.

Single – and Two-Family Residential District (RSF):

As the name implies, single and two-family residential districts provide space for low–density, single- and two-family residences and other complimentary uses (e.g., parks)

Multiple-Family Residential District (RMF):

Multiple-family residential districts provide an area for multiple-family residences (buildings which hold more than two households, such as apartment buildings). In addition to these structures, single and two-family residences are typically also allowed, as is other complimentary development.
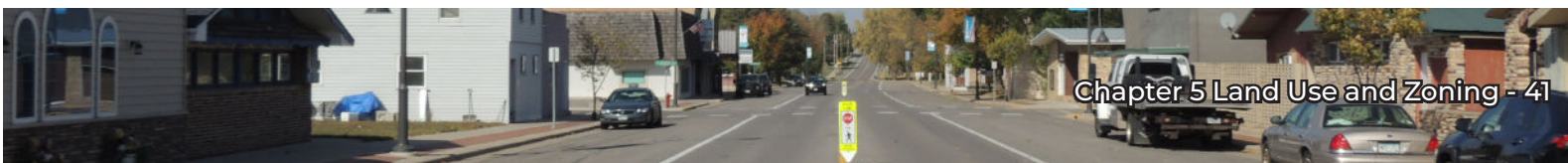
Manufactured Housing Residential District/Manufactured Home Park:

The purpose of a manufactured housing residential district is to provide an appropriates pace for one or more manufactured homeparks within a specified area. To maintain quality housing stock and prevent blight, communities should ensure that no manufactured home be moved into the city unless it meets the requirements of all state, county, and city codes governing the installation of plumbing, heating, and electrical systems. Some communities also choose to restrict unit age and/or require that certain design standards (e.g., minimum roof pitches) be met

Highway Commercial Business District:

Highway commercial business districts provide space for establishments who offer accommodations or other services to those traveling by motor vehicle. They provide non-pedestrian-oriented retail, wholesale, service, and repair activities which do not contribute to the creation of overcrowded, unsightly, and unsafe roadways.

Central Business District (CBD):

A community's central business district is commonly referred to as its "downtown area". Eden Valley's central business district was established to encourage a vibrant downtown by providing quality space for retail sales and services, office spaces, entertainment facilities, and both public and semi-public uses. Regulations are in place within this message to help manage and support higher-intensity commercial use. .

Industrial District (IND):

The purpose of the industrial district is to establish, preserve, and regulate space for manufacturing, processing, assembly, fabrication, storage, warehousing, and other industry-related uses. It willbe important for Eden Valley to maintain a high level of performance and appearance witin industrial districts. This includes maintaining sufficient open space and landscaping that includesopen spaces and landscaping and encouraging development that is compatible with abutting districts
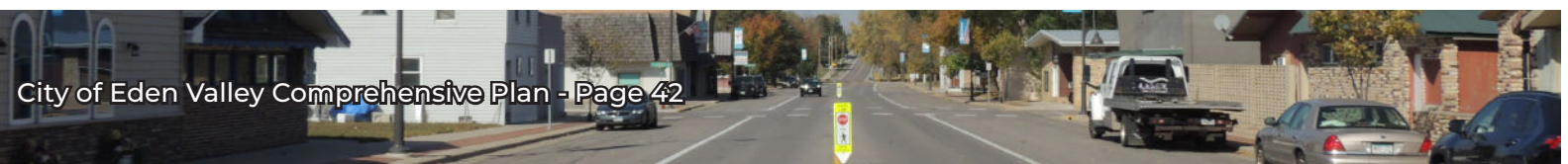
Goals and Strategies:

Goal 1 - Eden Valley benefits from sustainable, orderly development that contributes to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the community. Districts:

Strategies

1. The City of Eden Valley should consider innovative and adaptive land use solutions and avoid restrictions when able to do so without compromising surrounding spaces.

2. The City of Eden Valley should prioritize the development of areas already served by or adjacent to existing municipal utilities and infrastructure, to minimize public costs.

3. The City of Eden Valley should refer to a regularly reviewed and updated land use map when staging new development, prioritizing infill development opportunities as appropriate.

4. The City of Eden Valley should obtain input from and partner with stakeholders (i.e., existing residents and business owners) when considering land use issues.

5. The City of Eden Valley should conform to the current and future land use map when annexing additional land for City development.

6. The City of Eden Valley should encourage a downtown area/central business district that provides a mix of residential, office, commercial and retail space, creates a vibrant City center, and encourages investments that capitalize on the existing infrastructure.

7. The City of Eden Valley should work to preserve structures and spaces that possess conservation, scenic, historic, cultural, or archeological features, when possible, to do so.

8. The City of Eden Valley should balance the needs of individual property owners with the needs of the community when developing or implementing plans and controls related to land use.

9. The City of Eden Valley should review City zoning annually and update as needed to ensure continuity with the City's comprehensive and land use plans.

10. The City of Eden Valley should monitor, encourage compliance with, and, when needed, enforce zoning ordinances and regulations to prevent and eliminate nuisances and pollutants.

11. The City of Eden Valley should work to promote the infill development of vacant residential lots where infrastructure already exists.

12. The City of Eden Valley should maintain an inventory of "shovel-ready" properties that are ready and available for commercial, industrial, and/or residential development.

13. The City of Eden Valley should permit and encourage a wide variety of residential development, including a variety of multi-family units, to meet the wide-ranging needs of the community's current and future residents.

14. The City of Eden Valley should permit and encourage quality industrial development that is compatible with adjacent areas and minimizes negative impacts, environmental and otherwise.

15. The City of Eden Valley should protect and promote rail access to remain attractive to commercial and industrial site selectors.

16. The City of Eden Valley should annually review community needs and priorities (e.g., senior housing, industrial land) to prioritize uses for available land, especially where infill development opportunities exist.

17. Market the land use assets of the city and be flexible with land use.
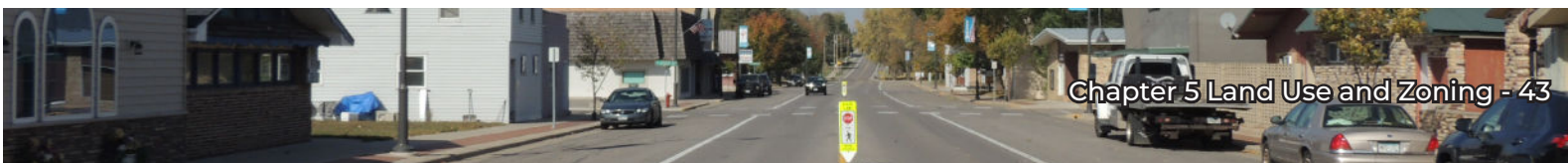
OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

This section of the Eden Valley Comprehensive plan recognizes that all planning components are related and interconnected. A strong community's greatest asset is its people. It is important to acknowledge that, to create an atmosphere where there is a strong sense of community and long-term vitality, we must provide space and support for residents to contribute. This includes those residents who are at different life stages and those who are from different backgrounds.. Involved residents have the ability to create an environment of safety, comfort, and vitality. A community that is a source of lasting, and even growing, pride.

It is apparent that Eden Valley benefits from a strong sense of volunteerism. When opportunities are provided and efforts are coordinated, individual volunteers and volunteer/service organizations have great potential to help the City execute strategies and achieve identified goals. Assistance from the following existing groups should be considered as opportunities for community improvement are identified:

Local Groups and Organizations:

Eden Valley Economic Development Authority
Eden Valley Planning Commission
Eden Valley Chamber of Commerce
Broader Eden Valley Business Community
Eden Valley Citizens 4 Progress
Boy Scout Troop/ Cub Scout Pack 363
Eden Valley Lions Club
Eden Valley's Church/Worship Communities
Wat-Kim-Valley VFW Auxiliary Post #5640
Eden Valley-Watkins Public School District #463
Eden Valley Food Shelf
Eagle Booster Club
American Legion Posts 381
Eden Valley Hawks Amateur Baseball Team
Knghts of Columbus Council 17349

Regional Groups and Organizations:

University of Minnesota - Extension
Southwest Initiative Foundation
Mid-Minnesota Development Commission
Meeker County Housing and Redevelopment Authority
Regional Foundations and Nonprofits
Minnesota State Departments
Meeker Development Corp.
Neighboring Communities and Rural Residents
Stearns County Housing and Redevelopment Authority
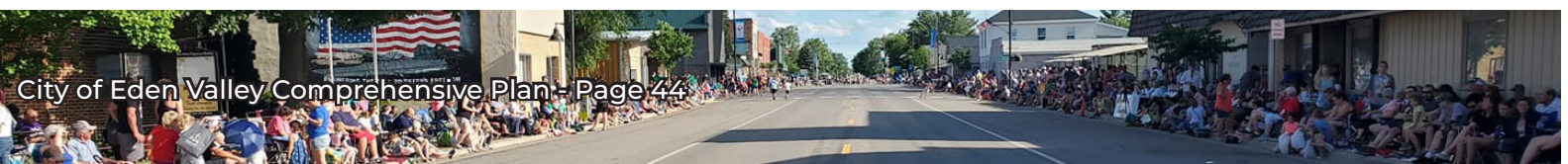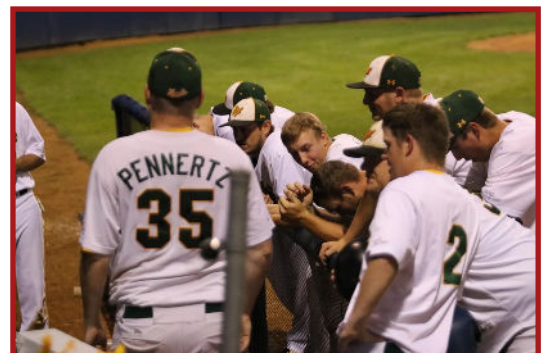
Public & Community Art, History, and Beautification Projects

Eden Valley can increase resident involvement and enhance public spaces with community art and/or history-focused projects. Examples of these projects include but are not limited to:


- Development of "Memory Trail," providing residents and visitors a window into Eden Valley's past.

- The addition of flags, banners, benches, bicycle racks, clocks, decorative lighting and other attractive aesthetic features contribute to positive impressions among community visitors and passersby.

- Design and creation of permanent or canvas murals within the downtown corridor or other spaces in need of visual interest. Addition of a public sculpture that represents the Eden Valley community and/or its history.

- Addition of various trees and other landscaping (this should be done strategically to ensure no negative impacts on local infrastructure).

Local Events

Community events provide an opportunity for residents to gather, socialize, and become better acquainted. The end result is often a tighter-knit community. This effect is often enhanced if event planning includes residents of different backgrounds and from different age groups. Examples of these events include:

- The Valley Daze town festival

- Summertime Music in the Park events

- Eden Valley's Business Expo

- Community education programming

- Sporting events

- Youth Activities

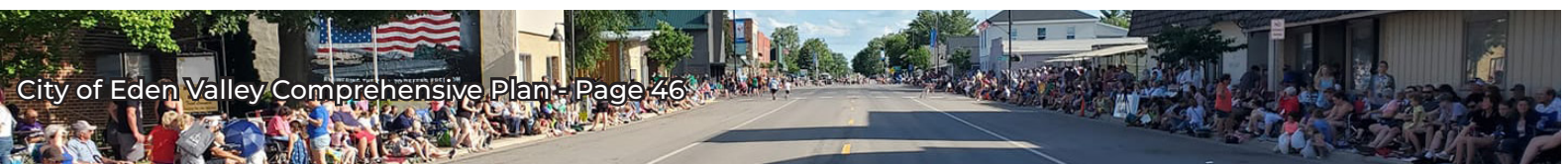- Local club or organization events and fundraisers

- Church festivals
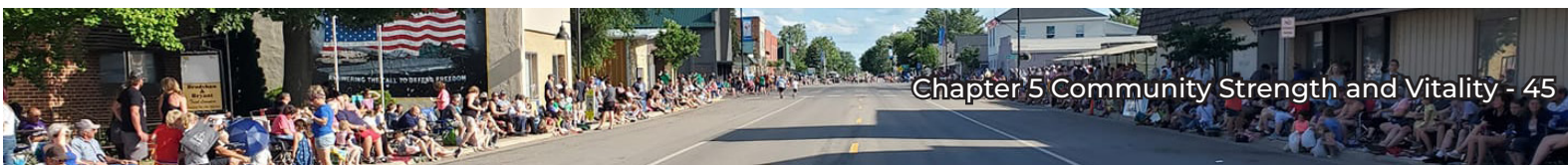
What Do You Think About the Quality of Living For Eden Valley's Older Individuals (i.e., Senior Citizens)?
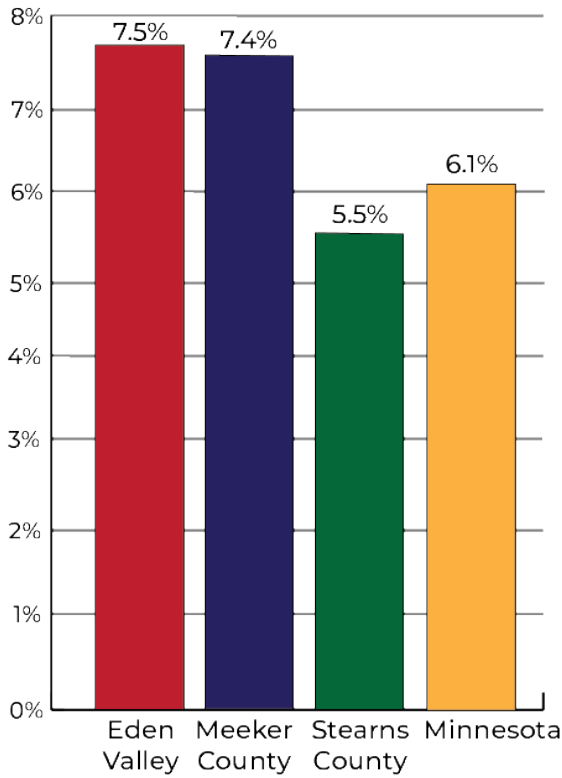

9.51%

21.67%

68.82%
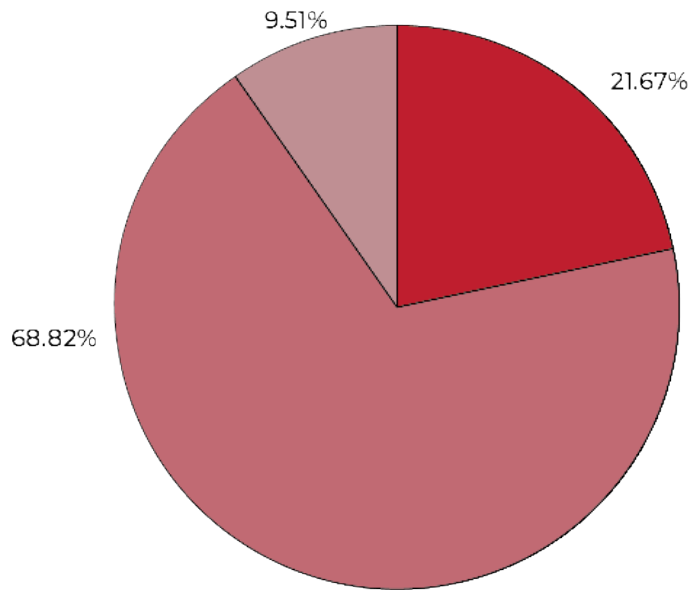
■ Eden Valley Does a Fantastic Job Providing a Safe, Affordable, Nurturing, and Supportive Environment for Seniors

■ Eden Valley Does a Okay Job Providing a Safe, Affordable, Nurturing, and Supportive Environment for Seniors

■ Eden Valley Does a Poor Job Providing a Safe, Affordable, Nurturing, and Supportive Environment for Seniors

When asked what they thought about the quality of living for Eden Valley's older residents (i.e., senior citizens), most respondents (68.82%) indicated that Eden Valley does an "okay" job of providing a safe, affordable, nurturing, and supportive environment for its seniors. Over 20% indicated they thought the Eden Valley community does a fantastic job of this and just under 10% indicated the community does a poor job. This seems to indicate that, while there is a good foundation upon which to improve in this area, there is certainly room for some improvement. It will be important for the City of Eden Valley to include meaningful discussions with older members of the community when considering potentially impactful decisions about the community's development.
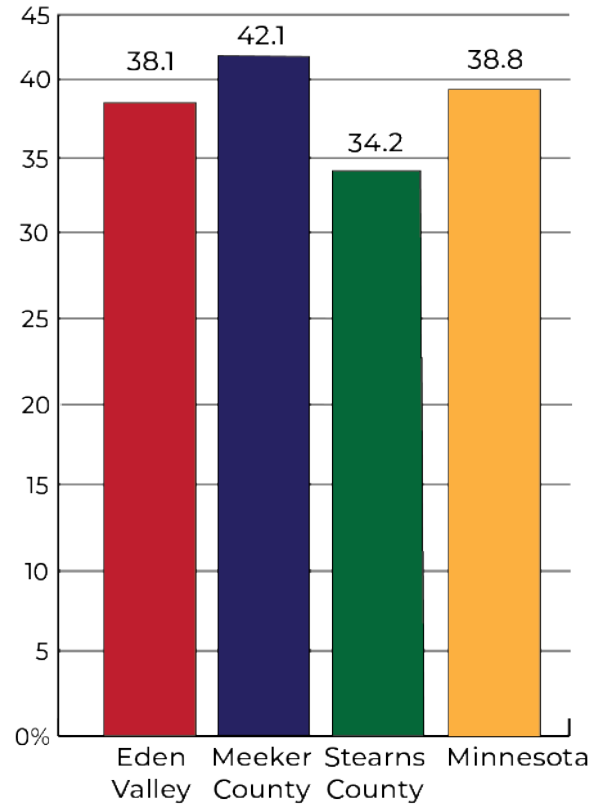
Eden Valley enjoys more U.S. Military Veterans than either of the surrounding counties or the State of Minnesota as a whole. This is no surprise, given the sense of volunteerism found among many residents. It would be wise for Eden Valley leaders, formal and informal, to keep this group in mind when considering various projects, as military service veterans often have a wide, varied skill set and a "get things done" approach.
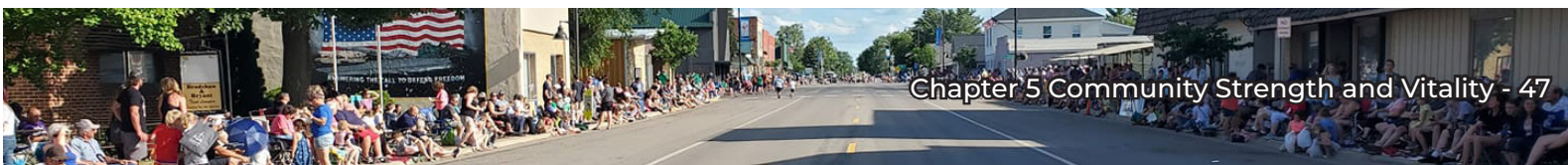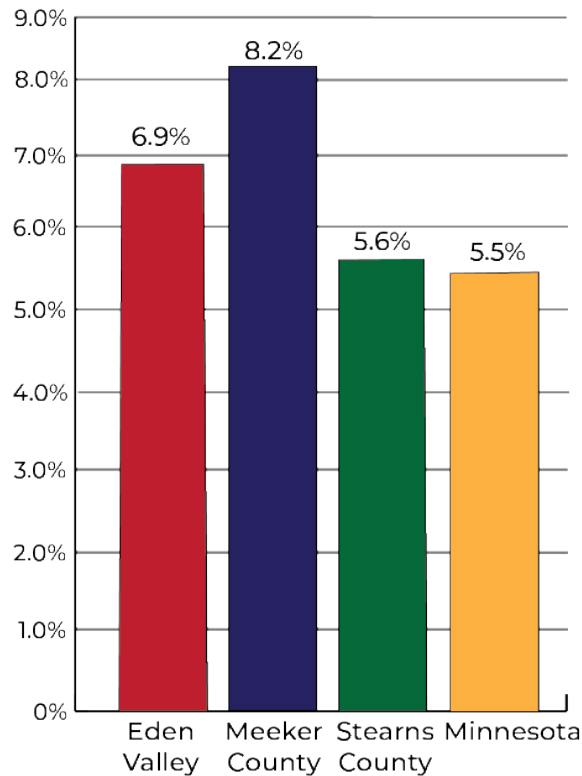
Veteran Status
(By Wartime Service)

Eden Valley: 7.5%
Meeker County: 7.4%
Stearns County: 5.5%
Minnesota: 6.1%

Median Age

Eden Valley: 38.1
Meeker County: 42.1
Stearns County: 34.2
Minnesota: 38.8

Percent of Women Ages 15-50
Who Gave Birth During the Last Year

Eden Valley: 6.9%
Meeker County: 8.2%
Stearns County: 5.6%
Minnesota: 5.5%

While the median age of Eden Valley residents is very close to the state average, the birth rate for the community does have a healthy birth rate. While lower than that of Meeker County, the community's birth rate is measurably higher than birth rates for both Stearns County and the State of Minnesota as a whole. While it is important to plan for all age groups, this reinforces the notion that it will be important to consider the needs of young people when planning community programs or development/redevelopment. The birth rate also provides some assurance that the Eden Valley – Watkins School District has potential to see healthy class sizes in coming years. This provided young parents are motivated to stay in the community and have the various resources, and opportunities (personal and professional) they need to thrive locally.

Eden Valley: Youth Impressions

To enhance this comprehensive plan, the Eden Valley Comprehensive Plan Task Force agreed that it would be valuable to include a message from its two youngest members, to capture their perceptions of their home community.

One of the first things someone thinks of when they think of Eden Valley is the community. Living in such a small town means knowing a lot of the people and always being able to recognize at least one person while out in town. Many people just think of how small the community is but, as you get closer to the people, you realize that this small community has a strong bond that holds everyone together. The community of Eden Valley is centered around generosity and togetherness, which is something that I have found very comforting as I grew up in this town.

I have seen our community at work in a variety of ways. Whether it is at a church event at Assumption Catholic Church, at our annual Valley Dazes, or at the many school events at the high school, you can see the community coming together to support each other. Besides the main events, you can always find people in the community who are willing to help you with anything. They greet you with a smile and kind words, whether they just met you or watched you grow up for years..

Eden Valley is small, but the community holds a large amount of kindness and compassion for others. I am very proud to come from such a great community. This community has always impressed me with the way they act around friends and family, as well as with new members of the community. I love my hometown because I have made many friends, not just in school but around the community, and it's fun to see them at events and catch up with them. I also lovethe small town feeling because it feels like one big family. I hope to come back to this great town after graduating college, when I hope to continue to experience the Eden Valleycommunity and even help keep that legacy going.
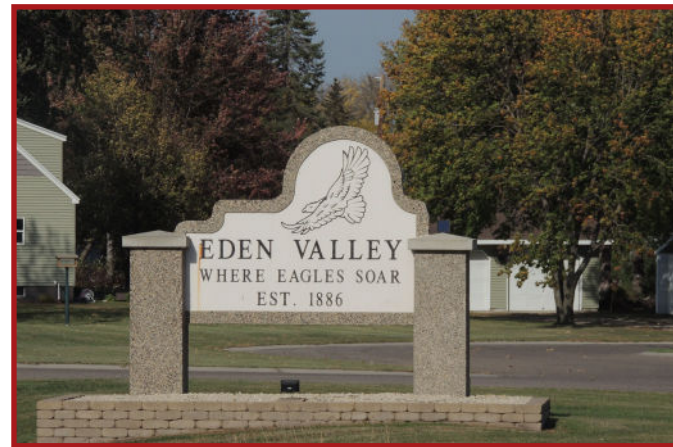
    – Ava Blonigen, Eden Valley-Watkins High School Student and Eden Valley Comprehensive Plan Task Force Member
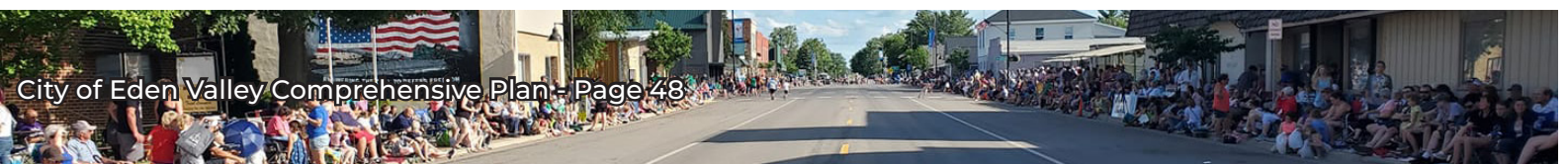
I've always tried to involve myself in the community of Eden Valley. I've been enrolled in EVW schools since preschool, my family has attended church in Eden Valley for years, and I work in Eden Valley as well. As a result of this involvement, I've been fortunate enough to see the community of Eden Valley from a direct and unique perspective.

Eden Valley is a very small community and many would assume it lacks the resources that larger communities would offer. However, Eden Valley offers an array of opportunities for residents, including a well-rounded and academically strong school district with a wide variety of resources for students, a diverse and thriving business community, several local organizations that contribute a multitude of services, and events to support the area and bring the community together.

The closeness of Eden Valley is a distinct and significant aspect of the community. With such a small population, Eden Valley easily embodies the phrase "everyone knows everyone." This encourages a unique environment that is supportive and neighborly, and we frequently see the community coming together to offer this support whenever needed. This adds a level of security and reliability, two things that define a community and two reasons that residents are proud to claim Eden Valley as their home.

I've always been proud of Eden Valley and the progress it has made and continues to make and plan for the near future. I've always valued my part as a community member: to contribute to this progress. Involving myself in Eden Valley and being fortunate enough to have my own role as a local citizen and resident not only benefits the community itself but has also benefited me personally. I've learned a lot about Eden Valley, personal and community growth, and the importance of a close-knit community. These are lessons that have impacted me and my way of thinking and acting. They will continue to impact me for as long as I continue to invest my time and energy in Eden Valley, which will be for as long as I can.

- Megan Blonigen, Eden Valley-Watkins High School Student and Eden Valley Comprehensive Plan Task Force Member

Goals and Strategies:

Goal 1 - The City of Eden Valley will continue to support a strong sense of community, volunteerism and long-term vitality.

Strategies

1. Consider and employ mixed land uses that encourage and support affordable and life-cycle housing, green spaces, bicycle and pedestrian ways, and enhanced aesthetics to create a vibrant environment that accommodates a wide variety of resident needs.
2. Prioritize accessibility for all City projects and commercial districts.
3. Support a healthy, involved retirement community to encourage people to stay in Eden Valley post retirement.
4. Continuing efforts that support broad participation in community events, increase positive attitudes about Eden Valley, and encourage relationships and collaboration between residents and neighbors.
5. Ensure transparency by strengthening efforts to involve people in City planning and decision-making processes.
6. Encourage stakeholders to bring solutions and respond to opportunities.
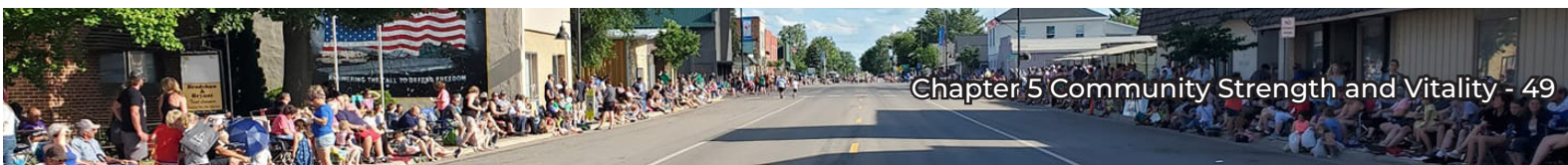
7. Continue to support and maintain local emergency services (e.g., police, fire and rescue) while maintaining positive, helpful relationships with neighboring emergency service providers.

8. Look for ways to continue and increase collaboration with the Eden Valley-Watkins Public School District, as the district is highly regarded by most local residents and is among the community's greatest assets.

9. Improve the ease with which residents can get more involved with their community by providing information on volunteer opportunities and events on the community's website, in local newspapers, etc.

10. Employ multiple strategies to ensure residents, including those with language or access barriers, are informed of City needs, ordinances, and positive developments.

11. Promote activities and programs that help young people mature into productive, responsible adults and give them avenues to positively impact their community.

12. Use taskforces and committees to address specific problems, issues, and opportunities.

13. Cooperate with governmental entities, including townships, neighboring cities, the school district, the county, the region, and the State to work toward the most efficient and effective development and delivery of services.

14. Encourage cooperation between local and regional organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce and The Chamber Serving the Meeker County Area) to avoid duplication of efforts, ensure efficiency, and maximize effectiveness.

15. Help connect regional employers with local educators so they may develop new strategies to meet current and future workforce needs.

16. Create public spaces that are functional for people of all age, ability, and income groups.

17. Use public art and history to enhance the aesthetics and interest of public spaces.

18. Prioritize the improvement of the downtown business corridor with focus on creating a clean, orderly, and attractive environment that encourages business development while also providing comfortable spaces for residents and visitors.