



INTRODUCTION



Maryland Heights is a vibrant city in the heart of St. Louis County, Missouri. The City is home to approximately 28,000 residents with over 50,000 people employed in Maryland Heights. Major employers include Edward Jones, Spectrum, World Wide Technology, and Magellan Health Services. Maryland Heights attracts millions of visitors each year to regional draws such as Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park, Hollywood Casino and Amphitheatre, Centene Community Ice Center, and St. Louis Music Park. Incorporated in 1985, Maryland Heights is a relatively young community that continues to grow and change. Change is inevitable and preparing for it is vital.

PURPOSE

This Comprehensive Plan is a document designed to guide the future actions of Maryland Heights. The Plan presents a vision for the future, with long-range goals and objectives to achieve that vision. Furthermore, the Plan provides guidance on how to best approach public and private land development proposals, the expenditure of public funds on infrastructure and parks, regionally cooperative efforts, and issues of pressing concern, including public health and neighborhood preservation.

This Comprehensive Plan's functions are aptly described by Gary Taylor, JD, of Iowa State University as follows:

- The Plan provides continuity across time, and gives current and future residents and business owners a common framework for addressing a variety of issues.
- The Plan acts as the intermediary, balancing competing interests while prioritizing the greatest benefits for individuals and the community.
- It protects the City's public investments. It is more efficient and sustainable to provide orderly and phased development patterns.
- The Plan encourages conservation of valued resources through the identification and recommendation of sustainable development strategies.
- The Plan provides guidance for shaping the character of the City, by setting forth policies that foster a distinctive sense of place.
- It promotes economic development. The Plan and the associated Data Book contain valuable information that help drive the location decisions for new and growing businesses.
- Perhaps most importantly, this Comprehensive Plan provides justification for decisions. The Plan provides a factual and objective basis to support zoning decisions and will be used by residents, businesses, and City staff to make appropriate development decisions based on known goals, objectives, and actions.



ADOPTION

In Missouri, the Comprehensive Plan is adopted by each city's Planning Commission, a volunteer board comprised of citizens appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. With regard to the Plan's adoption, the Missouri Revised Statutes (89.360 RSMo) state:

The commission may adopt the plan as a whole by a single resolution, or, as the work of making the whole city plan progresses, may from time to time adopt a part or parts thereof, any part to correspond generally with one or more of the functional subdivisions of the subject matter of the plan. Before the adoption, amendment or extension of the plan or portion thereof the commission shall hold at least one public hearing thereon. Fifteen days' notice of the time and place of such hearing shall be published in at least one newspaper having general circulation within the municipality. The hearing may be adjourned from time to time. The adoption of the plan requires a majority vote of the full membership of the planning commission.

While the Comprehensive Plan is drafted by City staff and adopted by the Planning Commission, it is based on input from residents, landowners, business representatives, and other stakeholders such as school districts, public agencies, and public utilities.





ORGANIZATION

From an organizational standpoint, the Comprehensive Plan has nine chapters, plus the associated Data Book. These chapters are:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Land Use and Development Strategies
- 3) Healthy and Vibrant Neighborhoods
- 4) Open Space, Parks, Recreation, and Wellness
- 5) Quality Community Services
- 6) Hazard Mitigation and Resiliency
- 7) Economic Vitality
- 8) Active Community Engagement
- 9) Maryland Park Lake District Future Land Use Plan

Each chapter is organized around goals, objectives, and actions (or strategies). For the purposes of this Plan, these are defined as follows:

- ⇒ **Goal:** the purpose toward which an endeavor is directed
- ⇒ **Objective:** attainments that can be achieved by following a certain number of steps
- ⇒ **Action (strategy):** specific steps taken to achieve the goals and objectives

Each chapter contains the goals, objectives, and actions related to the chapter's subject matter. For quick reference, the Plan also includes a table with the goals and objectives. The table is included in the Plan's appendix.



ORGANIZATION

Generally, all of the goals, objectives, and actions in this Plan apply citywide. The exception is the portion of City known as the Maryland Park Lake District. This 12.7 square mile area represents a unique opportunity for future development and redevelopment but also presents challenges due to its unique stormwater management, transportation, and infrastructure constraints. As early as 1969 (well before the City's incorporation), St. Louis County developed a plan for the area then known as the Missouri Bottoms. The City's plan for this area has evolved over time as infrastructure improvements have been constructed, including the Howard Bend Levee, Missouri Route 364, and Missouri Route 141 (Maryland Heights Expressway). The Maryland Park Lake District Future Land Use Plan is included as Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan. The intent of this chapter is to chart the course of future development within the Lake District, adding the specificity needed for development review and approval in this area.

Finally, the City's Data Book is a collection of information regarding various aspects of the Maryland Heights community including a brief history of the City, location, population, demographics (income, race, age, gender, household composition, etc.), as well as the status and condition of housing stock (age, size, construction type). The document also assesses community amenities including school districts, fire protection, roadways and transportation access, and city services. The Data Book will be updated independently over time to ensure that the latest information and data are reflected. Updates will occur at a maximum of every ten years, when new U.S. Census data is available.



IMPLEMENTATION

Without implementation, the Comprehensive Plan is just an image of what might be. To make it a reality, it is vital to put its policies into practice. This is done through a number of ways:

- **Zoning Code** – The Zoning Code controls the development and use of private land to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare. The Comprehensive Plan can be implemented by adopting zoning regulations that further the goals and objectives of the Plan. The Maryland Heights Zoning Code has a strong relationship with the Comprehensive Plan as it requires potential development projects to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The City Planner and Planning Commission must make such determination before the project can be approved for construction.
- **Subdivision Code** – Similar to the Zoning Code, the Subdivision Code promotes the public health, safety, and general welfare of the City by regulating the division and re-division of land. Subdivision regulations can be adopted that further the goals and objectives of the Plan as they relate to neighborhood design.
- **Capital Improvement Program** – Adopted each year, the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a plan for the City’s capital investments over the next five (5) year period. The CIP allows the City to project all capital costs, funding and timing. Each year the CIP is reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council within the context of ongoing City, County and State planning, programs and policies, as well as the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Economic Development Program** – The City can encourage redevelopment and adaptive reuse projects that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan by selective use of incentives through the Economic Development Program. An explanation of such incentives is included in Chapter 7, Enhancing Economic Vitality.
- **Other Programs** – The Comprehensive Plan can also be implemented through other programs which seek to empower citizens to be more active in their community. Such programs include Maryland Heights University and the Citizen Police Academy. These programs are intended to cultivate the next generation of volunteers including future Planning Commissioners and City Councilmembers.