



Chapter 3  
Vision & Guiding Principles





## Introduction



The Community Vision and Guiding Principles for the City of Rogers embody our values and vision for the future of our community. The underlying emphasis of our Vision will be goals and outcomes that guide development and growth necessary to make wise use of our land, sustain the health of our people and landscapes, enhance the quality and livability of our neighborhoods, and expand economic opportunities for our residents and businesses. The City shall partner with land owners and the development community to ensure development is done in a manner that is efficient and sustainable; compact, compatible and connected to its surroundings; and sensitive to its environmental context.

This chapter identifies the vision for the City of Rogers into 2040, which is supported by five guiding principles and associated strategies. The overall **community vision** is our ideals for what the community of Rogers shall strive to exemplify. The **guiding principles** support those ideals by identifying the key elements that the City shall focus on to achieve the vision. The **strategies** defined within each guiding principle establish the plan of action or policy designed to achieve each principle. The basis of all decisions made by the City shall be grounded in these guiding principles and strategies to ensure the decision supports the vision for Rogers. Additionally, these three elements are directly tied to the specific goals and action steps outlined within the Implementation Plan in Chapter 11.

## The Vision for Our Community



Rogers is a **community of choice** for living and learning with attainable housing for all persons, vibrant neighborhoods, and academically inclusive schools.



Rogers is a **community of equal economic opportunity** with a creative workforce and diverse employment options, and linked transport systems that enable job mobility for workers close to home.



Rogers is a **community of quality environments** with treasured places and distinct open spaces that enrich our heritage and life experiences and contribute to our physical health and shape our social connections.

## Guiding Principles Discussion

The **guiding principles** described here represent a broad philosophy of the community. Although communities are ever-evolving, these principles represent both a starting line and the checkered flag for what the community will look like in 2040 as it implements this Comprehensive Plan. These **guiding principles** shall guide the City through this planning continuum in all circumstances, irrespective of changes in goals, strategies, type of work or decisions. These **guiding principles** shall create opportunities for our City leaders, together with residents and businesses, to implement the vision for our community. And, these **guiding principles** shall also create understanding as to the “why” decisions are made, especially financial, by City leaders and staff at all levels of the organization.

Recurring themes remained prevalent as the Rogers 2040 Comprehensive Plan was assembled – notably the identity of Rogers in relation to its rural context and open spaces and its urban environment and amenities, and the importance of those places to the livability and economic prosperity of the community. Thus, the **guiding principles** capture those values, and discuss them relative to current day Rogers, trending issues, and challenges and opportunities before the community now and in 2040.



## Build Neighborhoods and Livability



Housing in Rogers is predominantly traditional residential subdivisions, comprised of single-family detached homes. Today's residential development pressures and the City's location on the fringe of the Twin Cities metropolitan area dictate continued single-family home construction. Yet, the recent growth of the Rogers employment base around manufacturing and distribution has triggered a need for workforce housing to support existing community businesses to keep employees and families living local. That need is further evidenced by a surging Twin Cities market for apartments and more attainable housing options. Based on population projections, changing demographics and labor force, and desire for youth to remain in the community as they age and raise families, Rogers shall work toward a full array of lifecycle of housing options at varying prices – notably multi-family living and viable housing, and preservation of older, existing homes and neighborhoods.

Satisfying basic housing is one community livability factor. Healthy environments and healthy living are a major influence of where people decide to live. In our residential areas, this means compact development that integrates natural landscapes and developed open space within the built environment, and improving resident mobility by connecting neighborhoods to places people want to go. Enriching the livability of Rogers requires investment in growth strategies that broaden community diversity and involvement, develop recreational opportunities that are attractive, accessible and affordable to all persons, and invest in and strengthen our schools.

### Strategies

1. Supply a range of housing options that promote a diversity of ages, races and incomes.
2. Support equity of youth and families of our schools by providing an environment for attainable housing, accessible health and recreation, quality education and efficient transportation.
3. Invest in a parks system that enhances economic value to the community, promotes health, and enriches the quality of life for all persons.



## Foster Economic Opportunity and Prosperity



Amongst other factors, economic prosperity for Rogers depends on strong linkages between jobs of varying skills and wages. Rogers benefitted from changing consumer markets, experiencing significant job growth as location, land and labor availability made it a hub for manufacturing and distribution. Yet, with an average household income well above the median average for the Twin Cities, job growth areas and related wages generally do not match the job needs and incomes of the greater population. As a result, Rogers is experiencing significant outmigration of higher wage earners as they commute elsewhere for work, taking with them critical disposable income. Achieving a better wage balance within the employment base will diversify the workforce, which will help recruit and retain business, and create job mobility opportunities for workers.

At the core of the Rogers economic engine is downtown – a traditional Main Street with quintessential historic buildings occupied by small retail shops. Economic stability for the community depends on re-energizing downtown by blending public and private investments to create a diverse and vibrant mix of business and employment opportunities, residential living and community activity that offers an authentic experience. Previous business growth outside of downtown left Rogers with smaller pockets of remnant, vacant land. With limited land available for new business or business expansion, sustainable economic growth and job creation aimed at improving employment options, especially attracting higher paying jobs, will require a concerted focus on compact development strategies through redevelopment, infill and reuse to assemble a supply of land necessary to attract the types of businesses that will enrich the employment base and satisfy the needs of a growing community.

### Strategies

1. Enhance the economics of the commercial and employment districts of Rogers by emphasizing smart growth strategies through compact development.
2. Rejuvenate downtown as a vibrant Main Street District destination for commercial enterprise, residential living and signature community events.
3. Expand housing options that support existing business and workforce employees and enhance economic growth and competitiveness by attracting new employment.



## Broaden Community Connections



For Rogers, growth is a delicate balance between its diverse ecosystems and the environmental, economic and societal needs of its future. Today, sustainability is not only critical to the livability and prosperity of the community, but also to its resiliency. As an attractive community, it will be necessary to integrate the places people live and work to the experiences offered by the natural resources, and to create bionetworks that are safe and clean, and promote healthy, active living and social interaction.

Well-planned, designed and constructed transportation systems are essential for commuting and commerce. The City shall build systems that enable multiple uses – pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular and mass transit – create connections necessary to enrich the community experience and the quality of life. Where possible, the City will redesign transport systems that link neighborhoods to shopping, local and regional destinations and areas of employment, and encourage physical activity in daily routines. In addition to physical and mental health benefits, such systems also reduce transportation costs, improve air quality by reducing carbon emissions, and build safer, stronger communities. As development pressures continue, the City shall balance major strategic investment in transportation and infrastructure and core services with ongoing financial stresses and rising construction costs.

### Strategies

1. Create distinctive public spaces and pedestrian zones that are safe, accessible and inviting.
2. Encourage community health and active lifestyles by integrating physical activity and social interactions into daily living through our built environments.
3. Increase community mobility through safe, networked transportation systems that balance the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, commuters and transit riders and interconnect neighborhoods to local and regional places of employment, recreation and shopping.



## Create Lasting Value



Rogers seeks to maintain its status as a community of choice by preserving its historic charm and celebrating the geographic, demographic and generational differences that exist and will exist in the community. Although a growing urban community, Rogers will take advantages of its rural landscapes and natural resources by balancing land consumption for development with the value of those resources necessary for community goods – production, public health and enjoyment, ecosystems and climate change. Key to the long-term viability of Rogers is water quality. Water impacts every resident and business in Rogers daily. The ability to supply clean, reliable drinking water, and protect groundwater and surface water resources, in a sustainable manner through concerted management efforts and public education will foster and support new growth. Urban revival combined with open space and natural resource preservation will capitalize on the strength of its existing community resources to guide growth and enrich the local economy. In short, Rogers will use its built and natural environments that create access to opportunities and experiences that strengthen community value and sense of place by connecting all people to all places.

### Strategies

1. Invest in places of historical, cultural and environmental significance to preserve the physical characteristics of the community.
2. Manage land resources in a manner that balances community growth pressures with the availability and expansion of municipal services and transportation systems.
3. Protect water resources in a manner that ensures and conserves a clean, reliable and sustainable drinking water supply and wastewater collection system for future generations.
4. Capitalize on opportunities to improve the handling of storm water and quality of surface waters and aquatic resources through community investments and development and redevelopment projects.
5. Develop a Natural Resource Stewardship Plan that promotes an ecosystem-based approach to managing natural systems and balancing land pressures of a growing community.
6. Build Rogers social and physical brand identity to solidify a sense of place.