

INTRODUCTION

I. PURPOSE

The City of New Prague Comprehensive Plan is a dynamic planning tool intended to guide the future growth and development of the City. The Comprehensive Plan is based on local and regional historical facts, trends, and governmental planning standards. This document presents the Comprehensive Plan for New Prague, Minnesota; reflective of the community planning process conducted in 2004 as well as the major updates in 2012 (Demographics, Housing, Land Use and Transportation) and 2013 (Parks). The City previously updated its comprehensive plan in the year 2000. With projected growth within the area, the City of New Prague has identified a need to proactively plan for areas beyond the City limits and ensure utilities, transportation, parks and various land uses are planned accordingly.

As a means of classifying and analyzing historical information this inventory of pertinent data has been compiled. The Comprehensive Plan identifies the type, amount, and pattern of growth that has taken place within the City and utilizes this information for the planning of future growth. Accordingly, the Comprehensive Plan provides a knowledge base for instituting a hierarchy of policies that will assist the community in processing a variety of development issues on a defined policy level. This information and policy base will allow decision-makers to evaluate and guide proposals benefiting the residents of New Prague, and fulfilling the City's goals and objectives. The plan includes proposed land uses outside of the City's current corporate boundaries. This does not require this land to be developed but establishes policies and recommendations to guide the development when it does occur. While the plan is intended to serve as a 25-year guide, it should be reviewed and updated as needed to adequately address development as it occurs. Within growing cities, such as New Prague, this may be required every five to ten years.

II. SCOPE OF PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan encompasses eleven (11) general categories of information:

1. This **Introduction** includes the purpose of the plan, the scope of the plan, the history and regional setting of the community.
2. A review of the **Planning Framework** which identifies the methods employed to obtain information for the comprehensive Plan including statistical data and community input.
3. **Demographic Characteristics and Trends** contains historic and projected population information as it relates to growth, age characteristics, education, occupation, and income level.
4. A review of the **Natural Resources**, which indicates the geographical nature of the community in terms of a regional context along with an evaluation of the physical aspects of the City such as soils information, topographical elements and physical barriers to development.
5. **The Land Use Section** includes elements that inventory existing land uses, identify potential infill or redevelopment areas and evaluates future land uses. This chapter also discusses the **Municipal Boundary Expansion** and defines a growth area outside of the current municipal limits in which future growth is anticipated, and where the City is able to service growth with future utilities. This section also includes policies for boundary expansion or annexation.
6. A **Housing Section** evaluates the current housing stock, identifies housing issues relating to the City's demographics, evaluates housing trends, reviews land use options and establishes housing objectives and policies.
7. A section on **Transportation** includes information on the current transportation system, categorizes the current street system, identifies future collector streets, establishes access

management policies as well as overall transportation policies for future transportation planning.

8. The **Parks, Trails and Recreation Section** includes an inventory of existing park and recreational amenities, an analysis of future needs and policies relating to the future parks, trails and other recreational offerings.
9. A section on **Community Facilities and Public Services** includes information relating to government, health care, churches and educational facilities. A summary of public commissions is included along with objectives and policies for community facilities and public services.
10. A section pertaining to **Utilities**. This section includes an overview of sanitary sewer, water, electrical and storm water utilities as they relate to the City's ability to service current and future growth area and capital improvements required to support growth.
11. An **Implementation Section** describes and summarizes local controls pertaining to land use; the subdivision of land, Capital Improvement Planning, orderly annexation and implementation strategies.

III. HISTORY AND REGIONAL SETTING

History

(Taken in part from the City's Historic Context Study dated December 2013)

At the advice of Catholic Bishop Rev. Joseph Cretin, Anton Philipp, a native German, first settled within the present limits of New Prague. In 1856 Philipp purchased 160 acres in Helena Township, Scott County. Philipp did not make an official plat of the town but began selling lots that same year, marking the beginning of New Prague. Several Bohemian families came to the area shortly after Philipp arrived.

New Prague's early development was not spectacular for a variety of reasons. First, during the Civil War years, 1861-1865, European immigration almost stopped as European immigrants were naturally wary of the U.S. Civil War. Second, located in the middle of the Big Woods, the enormous challenge of clearing fields proceeded at a slow pace.

The town was known as Praha from 1872 to 1879. On March 1, 1877, state of Minnesota approved the incorporation of Praha as a village. In 1879 the name was changed to Prague.

One of the most important developments in the new village occurred in 1877 when the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway (M & St. L) reached New Prague. The arrival of the railroad era expedited agriculture as New Prague's most important industry. A link with the outside world enabled farmers to send their commodities to markets and created a conduit to bring inventory to the village's businesses. Just four years after the M & St. L reached New Prague, the first grain elevator and flour mill were completed, marking the beginning of New Prague earning its nickname, the "Flour City."

Czech immigration to the United States (U.S.) reached its peak during the 1880s with 62,000 coming to the U. S. during this decade. Along with Montgomery, which is approximately eight miles south of New Prague, New Prague was becoming the center of "The Bohemian Triangle" of Minnesota covering parts of Scott, Le Sueur and Rice counties, which are neighboring counties. Through the decades since 1856, Le Sueur County has had more Bohemians than any other county in the state.

Construction was booming in the 1880s. The town's first bank opened in 1883, the Czech-Slovak Protective Society (C. S. P. S.) Opera Hall was built, the New Prague Foundry started business, the second public school was built, and two hotels were constructed.

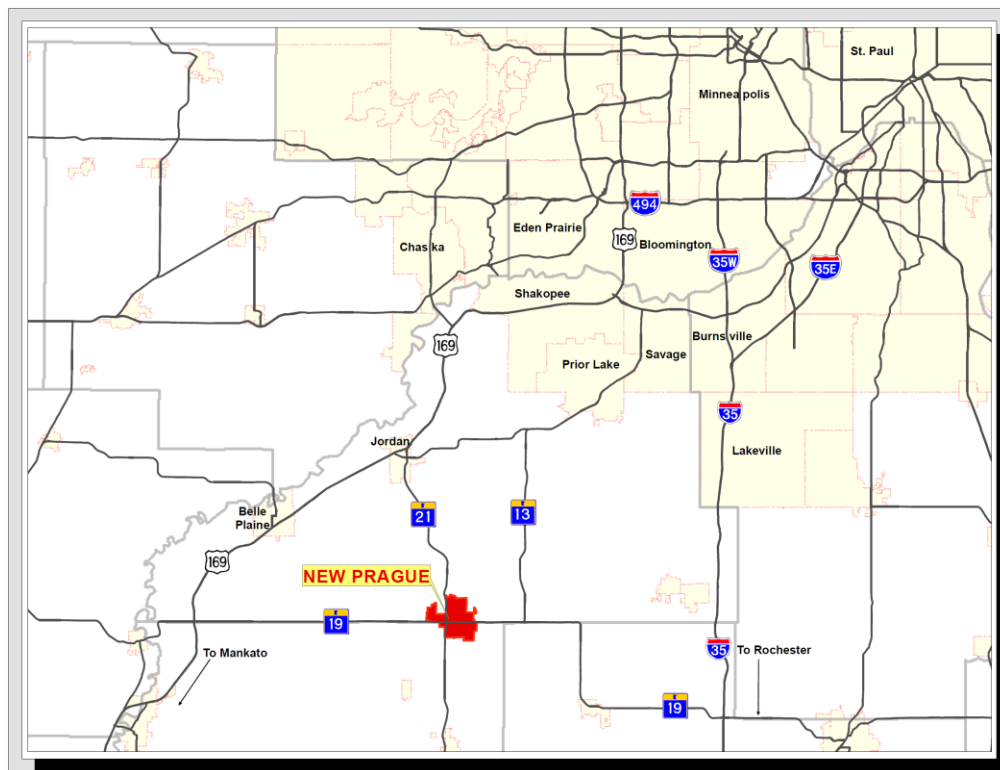
The village's name was changed from Prague to New Prague on February 25, 1884.

The 1890s were probably New Prague's heyday decade. The town was becoming a major market for farm produce and was providing goods and services for growing numbers of farmers and villagers for miles around. Streets were being graded and wooden sidewalks built along the streets. New Prague was incorporated as a City on April 4, 1891. New Prague Flouring Milling Company completed its mill in 1895. Electric lights were installed in the City in 1895, and telephone lines were installed in 1898.

Similar to the rest of the state, the 1880s and 1890s were two decades with the greatest growth in population. New Prague's population more than tripled during that 20-year period going from 384 residents to 1228, while the state's population more than doubled during that same period.

Original businesses outgrew their original log and wood-frame storefronts. A large commercial district filled with solid brick, stone, and wood-frame commercial structures developed along Main Street.

New Prague continued to grow in the early 1900s. By 1920 and in the early 1930s the population had increased to over 1,500. Similar to the rest of the state, growth in New Prague slowed during the 1930s and 1940s as a result of the Great Depression and World War II. During the 1940s industrial growth occurred within the community. Population growth rebounded in the 1950s and 1960s as new businesses were locating in New Prague. Additional businesses were established including a movie theater, a hospital, a golf course and a variety of stores. In 1962, Minnesota Valley Engineering opened (now known as Chart Inc.). Over the past 50 years, the number of residential, commercial and industrial facilities has continued to increase. The State Demographers Office estimated a population of 7,419 as of April 1, 2013. The Chamber of Commerce reports membership, as of 2012, of just over 200 businesses.



Regional Setting

New Prague is located approximately 45 miles southwest of Minneapolis, approximately 20 miles west of Interstate 35 and 10 miles south of U.S. Highway 169. State highways 13, 21 and 19 serve the City. Main Street, which is State Highway 19, is the dividing line between Le Sueur County (to the south) and Scott County (to the north).

Scott County has been identified as one of the fastest growing counties in the nation in the recent past. Scott County is included within the seven-county metropolitan area, and as a result is within the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council. Le Sueur County is outside of this area. Although the northern portion of the City is located within the Metropolitan Council geographic area, the City of New Prague, through special legislation (M.S. 473.121, Subd. 2), is outside the Metropolitan Council review area/approval jurisdiction. The City of New Prague has been experiencing growth at rates more comparable to the more urban Scott County. Le Sueur County, which was once more rural in nature, is beginning to experience more urban developments and growth.