

Chapter 1: Introduction





The Comprehensive Plan outlines a vision for how the community should develop based on current and projected conditions. It provides a statement of policy for land use and growth management decisions. It is important to emphasize that a Comprehensive plan is a policy guide. Unlike codes and ordinances that are legally enforceable, the Comprehensive Plan will be an advisory tool to be consulted by the Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council, staff, and other officials when land use changes or other projects are considered. It is long-range in orientation and intended to express general community aspirations.

Keeping Mt. Vernon's Comprehensive Plan current and ensuring that it maintains a central place in the City's public decision-making process is an ongoing process. Involving residents in the development of the Comprehensive Plan (through members of each sub-committee, surveys, and public discussion forums) was the first step in educating the public about issues facing the City, making the Plan available to residents is the second. However, the most important strategy will be for elected and appointed officials to refer to the Plan, and make a conscious effort to use its policies and recommendations in their decision-making.

It is further recommended that the Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council, and staff undertake a full review of the Comprehensive Plan every five years. The intent of this review is to make sure that the Comprehensive Plan addresses changed conditions and that the goals, objectives, and official Future Land Use Map remain an effective community planning tool, both mechanically and legally. The Plan must provide opportunities for periodic adjustment, as new trends and opportunities emerge, and address new challenges as they arise. Continuing to be proactive in planning for the future will improve the chance for success in achieving Mt. Vernon's community goals.



With proper planning and guidance, the City of Mt. Vernon can manage its growth and fulfill its envisioned destiny. Preparing for growth can help Mt. Vernon's leaders maximize the future benefits of that growth for its citizens. The product of this comprehensive planning effort that the City, its staff, and concerned citizens have undertaken will be a *Comprehensive Plan 2019* document that the City can use in the years to come to effectively manage and maximize its ever-changing environment.