

INTRODUCTION

What is a comprehensive plan?

The best description of a comprehensive plan is the name itself. Local governments such as the Village of Dunlap must serve many functions and address many different issues to become vibrant, attractive places and help residents attain a high quality of life. Planning is necessary to achieve these outcomes. Thus, a comprehensive plan is a document created by a local government that addresses a variety of community topics and concerns and puts forth recommendations for community improvement. This particular plan addresses the future of Dunlap for the next twenty years.

Historically, comprehensive plans are closely associated with recommending desired changes in land development. While future land use is an important topic that comprehensive plans address, it is just one topic. A comprehensive plan can address a variety of issues, and it should address the issues that are of greatest concern to an individual community. Therefore, a “one size fits all” approach to comprehensive planning does not work; a useful, well developed comprehensive plan addresses a community’s most pressing issues in order to reflect the unique situation of that community.

Because a comprehensive plan is a document focused on community improvement, it outlines a vision for what the community wants to be in the future. This vision is expressed through the statement of **goals**. Goals are broad aims that the community wants to achieve in the future. When goals are accomplished, community improvement is realized.

Because goals are broad aims, specific tasks need to be identified that, when accomplished, will lead to the achievement of goals. The specific tasks that result in the achievement of goals are **action items**. The goal-action item framework employed in this comprehensive plan identifies the individual steps the village needs to take to achieve significant change and village improvement.

As discussed above, a comprehensive plan addresses land use and the land use impacts of relevant topic areas such as parks and recreation and economic development. A vital product of a comprehensive planning process is the **future land use map** that identifies the areas within and near the community where specific land uses are proposed to achieve an orderly development pattern. This comprehensive planning process yielded a future land use map for Dunlap.

Why did Dunlap create this comprehensive plan?

The reason that Dunlap created this comprehensive plan is simple: village officials want Dunlap to be a great place to live, work, and visit. The more appropriate question may be *why is Dunlap creating this comprehensive plan now?* To answer that question, the village’s current situation must be placed in historical context.