

Section 3: Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Articulating a community natural resources vision is an important first step to creating goals, objectives, and policies which will support and bring the communal vision to life. While the vision provides a detailed expression of the community's aspirations for the future of Golden Valley's natural resources, the goals, objectives, and policies provide direction for natural resource policy and decision making in the future. Specifically each can be defined as:

Goals: General statements of desired outcomes of the community that can be assessed whether progress has been made in achieving them.

Objectives: More specific statements that are a subset of a goal and provide measurable strategies.

Policies: Are "operational" action statements that a community should or will undertake to meet the goals and objectives.

Vision Statement

Golden Valley is a beautiful, healthy city that preserves its balance of natural and urban spaces where residents, government, businesses, and developers work together to preserve, protect, restore and enhance the community's natural resources.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Protect, Preserve, Restore, Enhance and Acquire Natural Areas and Open Space

Rationale: A community needs to provide and maintain high quality natural resources through its management and acquisition of natural areas and open spaces, which can provide healthy wildlife habitats, nature-oriented recreation and educational experiences, and heightened quality of life for residents.

Objectives

- Preserve and protect natural areas and open spaces to maintain and attract desired wildlife species and provide “non-developed green space” for community residents.
- Obtain high quality ecologically diverse land for preservation, conservation, and enhancement.
- Apply an adaptive natural resources management approach to protection, preservation, enhancement, and acquisition of the City’s natural areas and open spaces.
- Restore degraded forest, woodland, grassland, and wetland habitats.
- Preserve existing wetlands within the city, and protect them from development.
- Adequately buffer high quality natural areas and open spaces to protect wildlife habitat and water quality.
- Provide passive and nature-oriented recreational opportunities within the Nature Areas and Greenbelt Corridors.
- Balance the need of providing quality public open space for current and future residents with best use of the land.

Policies

- The City shall develop criteria for identifying and prioritizing natural areas and open spaces for protection, restoration, enhancement, and acquisition to ensure preservation of desired habitats, which support unique plant and animal species.
- The City shall continue to engage in cooperative efforts with Metropolitan Parks Commission, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to protect and preserve endangered and threatened plant and animal species.
- The City shall enforce no-net loss of wetlands within jurisdictional limits through administration of the Minnesota Wetlands Conservation Act.
- The City should continue to specify native plants, and native plant materials for projects located on City property.
- The City should develop master plans for high priority nature areas, as budget allows.
- The City should develop and adopt Sign and Amenity Design Guidelines to provide for Nature Area identification and wayfinding, along with visual and design continuity between Nature Areas.

- The City should use an Adaptive Natural Resource Management approach on publicly-owned open space and Nature Areas that includes program monitoring and evaluation within its framework.
- The City should update natural resource related ordinances to protect nature areas and open spaces from intentional or unintentional personal use.
- The City should use of Best Management Practices to improve the effectiveness of natural resource management.
- The City should protect nature areas and open spaces from unnecessary encroachment or damage from neighboring properties.
- The City should use site planning, construction, and maintenance techniques on publicly owned lands to minimize negative impacts to the natural environment.

Definition: *Wildlife habitat:* physical environmental factors, including but not limited to vegetation needed for species survival and reproduction.

Goal 2: Control Existing and Emerging Invasive Plant Species, Pests and Diseases

Rationale: As native plant communities have been greatly impacted or destroyed through cultivation or development, they have been increasingly replaced by invasive non-native plants. Also challenging for natural resource management has been the introduction of pest-related diseases, e.g., oak wilt, Dutch elm disease, and anticipated pests, i.e., emerald ash borer. Recognition of the problem and identification of the non-native plant species, pests, and diseases are essential to controlling, eradicating, or stopping their spread and associated destruction they cause

Objectives

- Eradicate the occurrence of invasive species within high quality habitats.
- Control the spread of invasive species in low to moderate quality habitats.
- Prevent, control, and anticipate the spread of pest infestations and disease of susceptible plant species.

Policies

- The City should educate private property owners on how to protect and maintain natural resources on their property
- The City should create and adopt a Buckthorn Management Program

- The City shall continue to take a proactive approach in efforts to identify and monitor existing and anticipated threats of disease and insect infestations in a timely manner.
- The City should create and adopt a City Shade Tree Pest and Disease Management Program.

Goal 3: Protect and Manage Wildlife

Rationale: As communities develop, wildlife habitat is lost or can become degraded. Wildlife, like humans, depend on three primal components – water, food, and cover to survive and will take great risks to attain them. Learning to balance the need to protect and conserve urban wildlife, while not contributing to their over-population and demise, is essential to a friendly and meaningful co-existence.

Objectives

- Control and deter growth of nuisance wildlife populations.
- Educate private property owners on ways to attract, protect, and conserve desired wildlife species
- Educate private property owners on ways to deter nuisance wildlife, e.g., removal of wildlife food, water or cover sources, habitat modification, etc.

Policies

- The City shall use the most humane and effective management approach to controlling over-population of nuisance wildlife.
- The City should provide educational materials, City website access, and workshop opportunities on ways to attract beneficial or desired wildlife and deter nuisance wildlife.

Goal 4: Provide Access and Connectivity

Rationale: Visual and physical access to Nature Areas and useable open spaces are necessary for residents and visitors to readily enjoy the benefits of these areas. Contiguous linear open space corridors also provide for the movement of urban wildlife and native plant communities.

Objectives

- Provide easy/controlled access to and within the City of Golden Valley Nature Areas and open spaces
- Provide controlled access to water bodies within the nature areas
- Provide contiguous linear corridors between patches of open space and natural areas to provide for movement of wildlife and native plant communities.

Policies

- The City should evaluate visual and physical accessibility to and within Nature Areas.
- The City shall maintain and develop natural corridors to foster eco-system continuity and provide connections to parks and open space.
- The City should provide, maintain, and develop public access to water bodies within Nature Areas.

Goal 5: Maintain and Monitor Natural Resources

Rationale:

Objectives

- Plan for realistic time frames when scheduling maintenance work.
- Provide adequate and well-trained maintenance personnel.
- Periodically survey conditions within each Nature Area in order for staff managers to effectively and efficiently schedule routine maintenance projects.
- Gather data on what has been successful, and what has not. Employ adaptive management strategies to refine the implementation of the management plan.

Policies

- The City should respond in a timely manner to current and future natural resource based conditions and issues.
- The City should consider periodic training of maintenance personal on current natural resources Best Management Practices.
- Update the natural resource inventory every ten years, and incorporate findings into management plan.

Goal 6: Support and Provide Public Outreach and Education

Rationale: Building public support through outreach measures and education is essential to implementing a successful natural resource management plan. Raising awareness of nature areas, and the importance of wildlife within a community, is crucial to developing a strong sense of stewardship among residents. A community that is well-informed on natural resource issues will be more likely to support decisions to protect, preserve, restore, and enhance natural resources within the City.

Objectives

- Protect the City's natural resources through public outreach and education.

- Instill in property owners the desire and knowledge of restoring and maintaining natural resources on their property.
- Increase awareness about similarities and differences between nature areas and active recreation parks.

Policies

- The City should employ a range of social media (website, newsletters, Facebook, Twitter, ect.) tools to inform and educate the public about the City's natural resources, nature areas and stewardship and volunteer opportunities within the City.
- The City should develop volunteer programs that will encourage community members to care for their natural resources while providing them additional hands-on experience.
- The City should provide educational opportunities and information on how to protect, restore, enhance, and maintain natural resources on their property using a range of outreach tools.

Goal 7: Foster Partnerships and Inter-governmental Cooperation

Rationale: Working with private and public partners including state, county, adjacent communities, land owners on natural resource-related projects may result in cost and information-sharing opportunities.

Objectives

- Develop strong partnerships on natural resource related preservation, protection, restoration and enhancement projects that may multi-jurisdictional or regional benefits
- Maintain regulatory authority at the local level while recognizing the role of other local, state and federal entities and complying with specified programs and requirements.

Policies

- The City shall collaborate with other agencies, communities and organizations on natural resource based projects that will provide a multi-jurisdictional, regional, or state benefit.