

[City column – February 2016]

By Mayor Bill Droste

[As submitted for publication in the February 25, 2016 issue of the Independent-Town Pages]

As Mayor of Rosemount, I consider one of my most important duties to be preserving and improving the quality of life in our community. Those are the qualities that people mention to me when they explain why they've moved here and why they intend to stay. In city government, we're about to embark on a critical project to look ahead and to protect the things all of us value about Rosemount.

Work is beginning this winter on an update to Rosemount's Comprehensive Plan. That long document lays out what we plan to do to meet the challenges of the next two decades. It's a vision for Rosemount and a strategy to achieve that vision.

State law requires all metro communities to update their plan every ten years. You can see Rosemount's current version at www.ci.rosemount.mn.us/comp. The next revision is due in 2018. We hope to hear from as many people as possible about what the new plan should contain.

The Minnesota League of Cities lists several factors that should go into a Comprehensive Plan. It's a way to preserve natural resources. It can help ensure growth that makes the community "better, not just bigger." It can support sustainable economic development, and protect property rights and values.

The Plan will cover several areas, including parks, transportation systems, community facilities, and capital improvements. It's also the justification for zoning rules that determine where growth can occur as well as its type and size.

In Rosemount, we have selected three areas for a closer look: Downtown, the southeast corner of the city, and what we call the "north central" area – roughly, the land north and east of South Robert Trail and Bonaire Path. These are areas that may see the biggest changes between now and 2040. We will be asking the existing residents and business owners whether any planning changes make sense as part of this update process.

Our neighboring communities get to look at our proposed Plan, and we get to see theirs, in case there are any conflicts. All the plans are reviewed by the Metropolitan Council to see if they fit into the overall vision for the Twin Cities. In fact, we are required to base our plan for housing, roadways, and the rest

on the Met Council's projections of what Rosemount's population will be 24 years from now – no more and no less.

The law requires one public hearing before the Plan is approved. But as you can tell from the importance of this document, more input will make this Plan better for all of us. My colleagues on the City Council and I are committed to engaging the community in this process.

We hope to come to some of our parks during the warm weather to offer information on the choices Rosemount will face planning for the future, and to hear your comments on those options. We also will be recruiting people who are stakeholders in specific areas that could be affected by the changes likely to occur in the next 20 years.

It's a tall order to try to project two decades ahead. And almost certainly some of those plans will change by the time the next update comes ten years from now. But putting the energy and the wisdom of our community into this process is the best way to preserve and protect Rosemount's quality of life. I hope you will join us in this work.

###