Planning for the future of Woodbury does not occur on a blank slate. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan builds on the existing built and natural environment, responds to the changing population, and considers how trends and emerging technologies will influence the City’s future. A wide range of information was collected and reviewed through the planning process. In addition to highlighting trends and emerging technologies, the Community Context chapter highlights the key physical, demographic and economic factors that shape the Comprehensive Plan.
COMMUNITY HERITAGE

Woodbury is one of Minnesota’s fastest growing cities and was the 9th largest community by population in 2018 with more than 70,000 residents. And while we continue to grow, it is important to acknowledge and reflect on our history. When Woodbury became a city in 1967, there were fewer than 5,000 residents. In spite of its rapid growth, Woodbury has worked diligently to maintain a sense of community and to recognize the contributions of Woodbury’s earliest settlers. The community is characterized by people who value family, friendships, and community involvement, as illustrated by national recognition as a great place to live and numerous other awards.

The first settlers came to Woodbury in 1844. Most of the area’s early settlers migrated from the eastern states and from Germany. Early immigrants also came from Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, Scotland and Denmark. Over the years Woodbury’s settlement patterns have transitioned away from multiple-acre farms to the suburban community that it is today.

Originally named Red Rock, after a sacred stone painted by the famous Dakota Chief Little Crow, the town was renamed in 1859 when the state legislature discovered another Red Rock Township in Minnesota. Woodbury was named after Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire, a friend of the first town board chairman. Town meetings were held in the homes of various residents until 1876, when the first town hall was built.

In 1967, residents approved village incorporation and chose the mayor-council form of government. With the new government came planning and park commissions, resulting in new steps to guide development and construction. The City’s first comprehensive land use plan was developed in 1967 and a new city hall was constructed in 1975, approximately 100 years after the construction of the first town hall. In 2017, the City held a wide variety of community events to celebrate Woodbury’s first 50 years as a city.

As the interstate freeway system was developed and 3M built and then expanded their world headquarters nearby, Woodbury became known as a bedroom community. In recent decades, the community has established itself as a destination for retail and health care and we continue to draw new residents from all around the world. The community has long committed to housing choice and residents are drawn to a wide variety of housing options with an excellent park and recreation system and access to high quality education. While the ensuing chapters of this comprehensive plan do not discuss the community’s heritage in depth, it is important to note that the City acknowledges its past and its culture as it plans for its future.
PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Woodbury’s physical setting forms the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan. Among the key physical characteristics of Woodbury are:

» Woodbury’s location provides excellent accessibility.

» Existing land use patterns influence the type and location of future development.

» Housing is the largest land use and a defining characteristic.

Location

Woodbury lies in Washington County in the eastern portion of the seven-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. It is approximately 11 miles from downtown Saint Paul and less than 20 miles from Minneapolis (see map in Figure 2-1). Woodbury enjoys the benefits of a unique location in the region. Two major regional highways (I-94 and I-494) connect Woodbury with employment centers and amenities in the Twin Cities. These highways also provide local businesses with excellent access to customers, employees and shipping.

Existing Land Use

Woodbury contains approximately 22,800 acres (approximately 36 square miles). Table 2-1 contains the estimated area in each land use while the map in Figure 2-2 shows a snapshot of land use in 2016. The map uses an interpretation of property tax data to determine existing land use. The purpose of this map is not to precisely specify the use of each parcel, but to illustrate the overall pattern of development.

Some key aspects of the existing land use pattern include:

» Low density residential is the dominant land use. This form of housing occupies almost one-third of Woodbury’s total land area.

» Commercial and industrial uses are primarily concentrated along highway corridors.

» Undeveloped land guides future residential development into the eastern and southern sections of the community.

» The last large area of undeveloped land with freeway frontage is located in northeast Woodbury.

Other physical characteristics influence the future growth and development of Woodbury. These characteristics are captured in each chapter to provide the context needed to understand the direction identified.

» Public objectives for Economic Development Chapter 6 influence the use of land for commercial and industrial purposes. As existing land uses age, the need for reinvestment and the opportunity for redevelopment will increase.

» Characteristics of the natural environment are integral factors in the development pattern of Woodbury. Natural features create amenities that attract development. Some natural features (wetlands, slopes, soils) limit where development can occur. Woodbury seeks to manage development in a way that preserves key elements of the natural environment, for more information see Chapter 9, Natural Resources.

» Parks, Trails and Open Space influence the form of development and the quality of life in Woodbury, for more information see Chapter 8.

---

Table 2-1. Estimated Land Area by Existing Land Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Land Use Type</th>
<th>Estimated Acreage</th>
<th>% Total Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped</td>
<td>6,169</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family Residential Detached</td>
<td>6,700</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family Residential Attached</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential (1-3 Dwelling Units / Acre)</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Density Residential</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential (4+ Dwelling Units / Acre)</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public / Semi-Public / Institutional</td>
<td>4,011</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>1,099</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Utilities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-of-Way</td>
<td>3,129</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake / Open Water</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>22,809</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2-2. Existing Land Use (2016)

Existing Land Use

- Undeveloped
- Single Family Residential - Detached
- Single Family Residential - Attached
- Residential 1-3 Units
- Medium Density Residential
- Residential 4+ Units
- Public/Semi-Public/Institutional
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Xcel Energy Substation
- Lake / Open Water
- Woodbury Boundary

NOTE: Parcels in map depict 2018 data.
» Major street corridors are an important factor in organizing land uses see Chapter 7. Transportation for more information.

» The extension of a regional sanitary sewer interceptor provides the capacity for land to be developed, see Chapter 10. Sanitary Sewer for more information.

» The municipal water system provides safe drinking water and support for fire suppression. The understanding of the extent and impact of ground water contamination with perfluorobutanoic acid (PFBA) and the implications for future development were evolving during the planning process see Chapter 11. Water Supply for more information.

» Stormwater management systems are required to support development, but also become defining physical features See Chapter 12. Surface Water for more information.

Housing

Housing is the single largest form of built land use. Housing shapes the form and character of the community. It influences who lives in Woodbury today and in the future.

Although somewhat dated, the 2010 Census provides some useful descriptions of the housing stock. Where available, the 2010 Census data has been updated with information from the 2012-2016 American Community Survey or other sources as noted. Here and elsewhere in this Comprehensive Plan, significant amounts of data are drawn from the American Community Survey which will be abbreviated as the ACS.

The number of housing units in Woodbury has increased by 11 percent from 2010 to 2016. The Census reported 2,479 new housing units in Woodbury over this six year period (see Figure 2-3).

Single family detached housing is the most common type of housing in Woodbury. This type of housing is occupied by a single family and is not physically connected to any other housing unit. It made up 58 percent of all housing units in 2016. New single family detached housing units accounted for more than 50 percent of the growth from 2010 to 2016.

Figure 2-3. Housing Units in Woodbury

Source: ACS (2012-2016) 5 Year Estimates
As shown in Figure 2-4, multi-family housing accounted for 40 percent of the housing growth in the last six years. In 2010, 14 percent of all housing units were multi-family (two or more units in a structure). By 2016, this share had increased to 16 percent, adding 860 new housing units.

**Figure 2-4. Tenure by Unit**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Own</th>
<th>Rent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 unit detached</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>4,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 unit attached</td>
<td>2,185</td>
<td>13,723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 9 units</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 or more units</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>1,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Source: ACS (2012-2016) 5 Year Estimates_

Most housing in Woodbury is owner-occupied. The 2010 Census reported that 85 percent of all housing units were occupied by the owner. The 2012-2016 ACS suggests that this percentage has decreased since 2010 and that the home ownership rate in Woodbury is now approximately 78 percent. Almost half of rental units in Woodbury were multi-family (Figure 2-4).

While the vast majority of Woodbury’s housing stock has been built since 1990, Figure 2-5 below illustrates the residential construction patterns over time, broken out by owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units.

**Figure 2-5. Age of Housing Stock**

_Source: ACS (2012-2016) 5 Year Estimates_
Development Trends

Building permit data provides another means of examining community growth trends.

The chart in Figure 2-6 shows annual new housing starts (based on building permit data). This chart makes several important points about residential development trends in Woodbury:

» 9,359 new housing units were built between 2000 and 2017.

» New residential development fell each year from 2004 (1,287 units) to 2009 (255 units). This trend was primarily related to the City’s growth management policies with declining market conditions playing an increasing role in 2007 and beyond. New residential development rebounded after 2009 and has continued to be steady through 2016. New housing permits jumped to more than 600 in 2017.

Figure 2-6. New Housing Starts

Woodbury has also experienced significant commercial and industrial development (see Figure 2-7). As of 2018, Woodbury was home to more than eleven million square feet of commercial and industrial square footage. As the community ages, redevelopment will become an increasingly notable component of Woodbury’s growth.

Figure 2-7. New Commercial Construction
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION

A comprehensive plan focuses most closely on the physical aspects of community - land use, parks, streets and utilities but the physical and social aspects of community are intertwined. The land use and development pattern of a community influences:

» Characteristics of people who live there
» Where people work
» Where people obtain goods and services
» Places for interaction among residents

In turn, the characteristics of the population influence many aspects of the community:

» Demand for goods and services
» Demand for public services (public safety, recreation, social services, education)
» Economic capacity to support both private businesses and local government

This section examines aspects of the demographic, social and economic characteristics of the community. The data in this section comes from the 2010 Census. While Woodbury has changed since then, the Census provides the best available data on the characteristics of the population. More recent data is included from the 2011-2015 ACS where available.
Age

Aging of the population will be one of the primary demographic trends over the life of this Comprehensive Plan. The State Demographic Center projects that the number of Minnesotans turning 65 in this decade will be greater than the past four decades combined. By 2030, more than one in five Minnesotans is projected to be an older adult, including all Baby Boomers.

In 2016, 11 percent of Woodbury’s population was of the age 65 or older. This is a slight increase from 2010 when only eight percent of the population was of the age 65 or older. The 2016 65+ population of Woodbury is smaller than Washington County (13 percent) or the Twin Cities region (12 percent) (see Figure 2-8). This comprehensive plan will frequently refer to the sixteen county region as the “Twin Cities MSA”.

While the overall population will grow older, it is more difficult to predict what this trend means for Woodbury. Several questions highlight the challenge of forecasting the aging of Woodbury’s population:

» How long will current “middle aged” residents of larger two-story houses choose to stay in these homes?

» Will more senior citizens opt to live alone, with family or with peers?

» Will senior citizens have fewer economic resources and if so how does this economic capacity affect the community?

» Will Woodbury offer the housing options and services that attract senior citizens?

These questions show how the built environment influences the characteristics of the people that live in Woodbury.

Figure 2-8. Age of Population

Source: ACS (2012-2016) 5 Year Estimates
Mobility

Mobility statistics point to important factors for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan:

» Many Woodbury residents have lived in the community for less than a decade. As such, the sense of community history may have a short time horizon in many residents’ minds.

» Will Woodbury continue to offer the “quality of life” that has attracted new residents? The future faces increased competition for an aging population with a slower growth rate.

» Will people stay in Woodbury? This question is vital to understanding the future characteristics of the population. Keeping people in Woodbury means that the overall population will grow older. More mobility would suggest a demographic profile more similar to the current population.

According to the 2012-2016 ACS, 87 percent of Woodbury’s population (1 year and older) lived in the same house one year ago (see Figure 2-9) compared with 89 percent for all of Washington County and 85 percent for the region. People moving to Woodbury from a different house in Washington County made up four percent of the 2016 population. Five percent (five percent) of Woodbury’s 2016 population lived outside of Washington County. This portion of the population is comparable to Washington County (five percent) and regional (five percent) populations. These statistics suggest that Woodbury was in track with other cities in attracting people relocating to the Twin Cities.

Figure 2-9. Previous Residence

Source: ACS (2012-2016) 5 Year Estimates
Income

Income influences many aspects of community. Income provides the capacity to acquire housing (own or rent) and to purchase goods and services from local businesses. Income influences the demand for and the capacity to support public services.

The 2012-2016 ACS data shows that Woodbury is an affluent community. Median household and per capita income are above county and regional levels (see **Figure 2-10**). **Figure 2-11** uses 2012-2016 ACS data to compare Woodbury with other cities in the Twin Cities region. Median family and per capita income levels fall somewhat below the highest tier of comparable cities.

**Figure 2-11. Metro Area City - Median Income Comparison**

Source: ACS (2012-2016) 5 Year Estimates
Education

As local income levels suggest, Woodbury has a well educated population. In 2016, 84 percent of the population (age 25 and older) had attended college. Less than three percent of the 2016 population did not graduate from high school.

The chart in Figure 2-12 compares educational attainment in Woodbury with Washington County and the region. A significantly higher portion of Woodbury’s population has earned a college degree (bachelor’s and graduate). Fifty-nine percent of Woodbury’s population had earned a bachelor’s degree or higher as compared with 42 percent for the County and only 40 percent the region.

Figure 2-12. Educational Attainment

Source: ACS (2012-2016) 5 Year Estimates
Diversity

Woodbury’s population is becoming more racially diverse. In 2000, 90 percent of the population was white. The 2012-2016 ACS reported that 80 percent of Woodbury’s population identified itself as white. Washington County and the region are also becoming more diverse. In 2016, 87 percent of Washington County residents were white versus 89 percent in 2010. Metro-wide, 80 percent of residents were white in 2016 versus 82 percent in 2010.

Another factor in understanding race data is the reporting of the Hispanic population. People who identify their origin as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino are not classified as a separate racial category. They may be of any race. In the 2016 ACS, 3,321 people were reported as Hispanic or Latino (of any race) representing five percent of the total population. The Hispanic or Latino (of any race) has more than doubled in Woodbury since 2000.

School enrollment data collected and reported by the Minnesota Department of Education provides a more current look at the racial composition of Woodbury’s population. For the 2017/2018 school year, the six elementary schools located in Woodbury reported that 21 percent of total enrollment was a race other than white. The chart in Figure 2-13 shows the racial composition for each school. While some of these schools have attendance areas outside of Woodbury, this chart shows the diversification of the population in and around Woodbury.

Note: Data for the new Brookview Elementary was not available.

Figure 2-13. Population Diversification (Enrollment Trends)

Source: Minnesota Department of Education (2017)
Employment

Employment touches many aspects of community life. Jobs provide the income to pay for housing and to purchase goods and services. The location of jobs influences the amount of time Woodbury residents are in the community each day. Commuting decisions impact transportation systems.

Figure 2-14 compares the occupation of Woodbury’s population with the County and region. Woodbury stands out with over one-half of the working population employed in managerial and professional occupations. Woodbury tends to be home to fewer people employed in construction, production, transportation, and service occupations.

Figure 2-14. Regional Occupation Comparison

![Regional Occupation Comparison](Figure2-14.png)

Source: ACS (2012-2016) 5 Year Estimates

The 2014 On the Map (OTM) data, shown in Figure 2-15, indicates about 21 percent of the individuals working within the City of Woodbury also live within the city, while 79 percent of Woodbury workers commute into the Woodbury for work. The largest contributors to Woodbury workers are St. Paul (11 percent), Cottage Grove (seven percent), and Oakdale (five percent). Data from the Census Bureau’s 2014 On the Map application also shows about 11.5 percent of all working Woodbury residents work within the city, while 88.5 percent commute out of the city for work. When commuting to work, most Woodbury residents commute to St. Paul (16 percent), Minneapolis (13 percent), or Maplewood (10 percent).

Figure 2-15. Cities Where Woodbury Employees Live

![Cities Where Woodbury Employees Live](Figure2-15.png)

U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2014)
Woodbury’s biennial community survey indicates that a growing number of Woodbury residents are also working in Woodbury. In 2017 20 percent of residents both lived and worked in Woodbury, up from 15 percent in 2009 and 12 percent in 1999.

According to the 2017 survey, 54 percent of Woodbury residents worked in Washington County (including Woodbury) and Ramsey County. This has remained consistent since 2009. While Saint Paul has historically been shown as the largest employment destination, the 2017 survey found that Minneapolis was the next largest employment destination after Woodbury at 19 percent.

Travel to work data from the ACS shows a very automobile dependent pattern. Eighty-three percent (83 percent) of workers drove alone to their job (see Figure 2-16). The number of Woodbury workers driving alone to work was relatively similar from 2000 (84.4 percent) and 2016 (83.2 percent). The use of public transportation increased from 1.5 percent in 2000 to 3.5 percent in 2016. The percentage of individuals working at home also increased slightly from 4.0 percent in 2000 to 5.3 percent in 2016.

![Figure 2-16. Commuting Patterns](source: ACS (2012-2016) 5 Year Estimates)
Households

Household characteristics lend support to the idea that Woodbury is family oriented (see Figure 2-17):

» Seventy-four percent (74 percent) of Woodbury households are family households. This amount is slightly higher than the entire county (73 percent), and the overall Twin Cities region (65 percent).

» Sixty-two percent (62 percent) of all Woodbury family households include a married couple.

» Forty-three percent (42.7 percent) of all households include children under the age of 18. Only 32.6 percent of all households in the region contained children.

It is important to note the flip side of this coin. Woodbury has a smaller proportion of non-family household than the region as a whole (26 percent to 35 percent). Woodbury’s non-family households consist largely of the householder living alone (79 percent of non-family households).

The Census shows several trends about the size of each household:

» Household size is getting smaller. From 2000 to 2016, the average size of all Woodbury households dropped from 2.76 people to 2.73 people, consistent with regional and national trends.

» The average household size in Woodbury (2.73) is slightly larger than Washington County (2.68) and the Twin Cities SMSA (2.55).

Figure 2-17. Household Type

Source: ACS (2012-2016) 5 Year Estimates
FUTURE GROWTH

Growth trends and projections are critical elements of the Comprehensive Plan:

» Woodbury has experienced significant growth since its incorporation in 1967. Historic trends describe how current conditions evolved and may offer insights about future development.

» Looking to 2040, Woodbury will continue to grow as a place to live, work and shop. Projections of future development determine the demand for land, the need for infrastructure and municipal services.

» The ability to reasonably predict the amount and pace of future development is complicated by a variety of economic, demographic and societal factors.

Population Trends

Population growth is a critical planning consideration in Woodbury. In the years between 1970 and 2010, Woodbury’s population increased by more than 55,000 residents from 6,184 to 61,961. Table 2-2 shows historic trends and future projections for population and households. (Census definitions of household types can be found in box on page 3-11.) Over the next twenty years (2020 to 2040), the most recent forecasts by the Metropolitan Council project the population will increase by 15,300 people. These forecasts are used as the basis for all land use, transportation and utility plans contained in the Comprehensive Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Percent Change (Households)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>3,014</td>
<td>1,764</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>6,184</td>
<td>1,399</td>
<td>-20.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>10,297</td>
<td>3,232</td>
<td>131.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>20,075</td>
<td>6,927</td>
<td>114.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>46,463</td>
<td>16,676</td>
<td>140.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>61,961</td>
<td>22,594</td>
<td>35.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>72,500</td>
<td>26,800</td>
<td>18.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>80,500</td>
<td>29,500</td>
<td>10.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>87,800</td>
<td>32,100</td>
<td>8.8 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2-2. Thrive MSP 2040 Population and Household Projections*
Community Designation - Thrive MSP

The regional long-range plan for the Twin Cities region produced by the Metropolitan Council characterizes Woodbury as a “suburban edge” community. Suburban edge communities are defined by the Metropolitan Council as those areas of the region with land uses that currently have or are projected to be served by regional sewer infrastructure. Per the “Checklist of Minimum Requirements for Woodbury”, the City is required by the Metropolitan Council to include a map (Figure 2-18 below) acknowledging Woodbury’s designation by the Metropolitan Council as a “suburban edge” community. The City is also required to acknowledge the expectation that future residential growth will occur with residential densities ranging from three to five units per net acre.

*Figure 2-18. Met Council Community Designation for the City of Woodbury*
Housing Forecasts

A study of future housing needs in Washington County provides insights on future development in Woodbury. This 2017 study was prepared by Maxfield Research Inc. for the Washington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority. The results of the study are discussed in greater detail in the Housing Chapter 5.

The study makes several points about the housing market in Woodbury:

» Woodbury is the largest submarket in Washington County and is projected to maintain the largest household, population, and employment base.

» Demand for housing will be driven by an expanding employment base and close proximity to job centers in the Twin Cities core.

» The study not only forecasts the amount of housing demand, but also the type of housing that will be needed. Figure 2-19 and Figure 2-20 show a breakdown of demand for general occupancy and senior housing through 2020.

Limitations of Projections

Projecting future populations and growth rates is a challenge. Although the projections in this chapter offer an optimistic estimate of future growth, a variety of factors will influence the actual outcomes, including:

» State and regional population and job growth/loss

» Overall economic and housing market conditions

» Housing styles

» Energy costs

» Aging of the population and other demographic changes

» Competition from other communities

An important element of implementing the Comprehensive Plan will be to monitor these changes and implications for the future of Woodbury and to adjust the Plan as necessary through amendments. In particular, the community may want to revisit its projections once data from the 2020 Census is available.
FUTURE TRENDS AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

A key component of any comprehensive plan is an analysis of future trends and emerging technologies that may affect the intersection of land use and infrastructure planning that constitutes the majority of this long-term planning document. This 2040 Comprehensive Plan recognizes that both technologies and personal preferences will continue to evolve as time moves forward. Rather than speculate on how or when these technologies and trends will impact the future of Woodbury, this plan intends to lay the policy framework to be adaptive, aware and forward thinking as clarity on these trends and technologies occurs.

The following paragraphs identify several emerging technologies and trends that will impact what Woodbury looks like in the future. There are certainly other trends that will emerge over time, and this plan will provide guidance as the City continues to grow as a leading community in which to live, work and thrive.

Changing Community Demographics

Woodbury values the diversity of its residents, and looks to sustain and improve a sense of community where all residents feel welcome, safe and connected. This document plans for a city that continues to be family-friendly with a younger median age and larger household size than the region as a whole. It also recognizes that demographics are shifting, the City is increasingly multicultural, and household size and composition is changing.

Perhaps the most predictable demographic shift will be the aging of residents. As Woodbury’s age structure changes, there will be impacts to the social characteristics of the community including changing demands for transportation services, park and recreation amenities, and housing options.

The City has long supported the goal of providing a variety of housing types that accommodate people at any stage in their life, and this Comprehensive Plan continues that commitment. As demographics change, the City will need to consider how housing, transportation and recreation options will meet the changing needs of residents. While the precise impacts of these and other demographic changes will only be known with time, the City is committed to responding to and supporting the changing needs of its residents.

EMBRACING DIVERSITY

Woodbury embraces its growing diversity and has decades of experience adapting to change, having evolved from a quiet, largely agricultural community in the 1960s, into a bustling, diverse, economic hub of the East Metro today. It is important to retain and enhance all the great qualities and characteristics that have attracted so many people to Woodbury in the first place, while also realizing that “community” means something different to everyone. As Woodbury continues to grow and becomes more diverse, fostering an inclusive and welcoming community is paramount to the City’s continued success. It is important that everyone feels welcome, safe and connected in the community. The City also is committed to providing the best public service possible to people of all backgrounds and is taking proactive steps to ensure City staff has an understanding of all forms of diversity.
A Market Shift Toward Higher Density Living

A housing trend has developed that indicates an increase in the number of households who will inhabit higher density housing options as a lifestyle choice. These choices are occurring as the market delivers projects with a higher level of commercial to residential integration, increased multimodal design that stresses connectivity and an increase of transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities. Housing preferences change with time and Woodbury’s long-term commitment to housing choice will continue to evolve along with these preferences. Woodbury will need to continue to use its municipal housing and redevelopment authority (HRA) powers and tools while growing its partnerships with developers, non-profit groups and the Washington County Community Development Agency (WCCDA).

The most relevant information about the future of housing in Woodbury can be seen in the Housing and Land Use chapters of this plan. This plan adds additional mixed-use areas to the Existing Land Use (2016) map in response to the future trends in housing and retail. These mixed-use areas are located at future high traffic volume intersections and will offer the City the opportunity to be flexible in the future as housing preferences may demand more walkability to Places to Work as well as Places to Shop. Furthermore, beginning groundwork is provided within the Land Use chapter regarding TOD designs and housing products in conjunction with the proposed Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), with specific guidelines and standards to be generated in the future when more clarity is available.

Expansion of Transportation Options

It is clear that transportation alternatives are on the cusp of changing. It is anticipated that within the lifespan of this document ride-sharing, autonomous vehicles and increased access to public transportation will change how future generations move about the region. However, at the time of the authoring of this plan these innovations are merely exciting concepts without tangible and concrete examples of how they will impact the routines, lifestyles and habits of future residents. This 2040 Comprehensive Plan does not attempt to envision how the world will be different if and when these new transportation options are implemented. Instead, it attempts to provide analysis and policy direction in the area of transportation planning based on existing multi-model options. These options include driving, biking, transit and walking. Evidence of this is found in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space and Transportation chapters of this plan, which highlight the way in which Woodbury’s existing and future neighborhoods will be connected via a robust network of trails to provide for non-motorized transportation.
Impact of Online Commerce

Retail technologies and preferences are changing and online retail now constitutes a larger share of shopping in the United States than in previous years. As this online trend grows, real estate investments connected to retail will need to adapt accordingly. While this comprehensive plan does envision a community where retail commerce is more digital in nature than today, this document envisions there will still be a strong demand for brick and mortar shopping opportunities. In addition to the areas of the community guided for Places to Shop, the Future Land Use map adds a handful of new mixed-use parcels in Woodbury based in large part on the assumption that today’s desire for convenience is a trend that is here to stay. As such, providing areas for future development where flexibility is intentionally built into the design process will serve the City well.

Water Resources

External factors, as well as impacts from Woodbury residents and businesses, will continue to affect the City’s natural resources. The City of Woodbury recognizes the connection between surface water, groundwater and drinking water, and how important it is to consider all three of these together when making policy decisions. Woodbury’s “One Water” vision leads us to look at quality, quantity and planning for the future.

First, new groundwater and drinking water technologies will likely lead to enhanced capabilities both to test for and react to potential contamination. With increasing dialogue around water quantity, Woodbury continues to explore how to ensure adequate water supply for our community into the future. It is unknown how federal and state agencies will react to these water concerns and what new regulations may be proposed. The City will need to be able to respond to changing conditions or controls to ensure that residents have safe and reliable access to water.

Second, as of the time of the drafting of this 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the City has adjusted its infrastructure standards to align with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration’s Atlas14 precipitation frequency model. The modeling that the City’s engineers employ suggests that Woodbury can expect to see a greater frequency of more intense storm events in the future. This type of modeling is an evolving science and the City will closely monitor the topic. Woodbury’s response to Atlas14 has been to improve flood storage through pond upsizing when technically feasible. Woodbury continues to plan for effective management of surface water quality through its infrastructure systems and maintenance. The chapters on Water Supply, Surface Water and Natural Resources address these topics in the most depth.