



## Chapter 1: Introduction

The City of Manchester Comprehensive Plan is a product of community, city staff, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Board of Alderman input. This document reviews, discusses, and identifies important community opportunities. It reflects the values and needs citizens voiced during the planning process.

In March 2002, the City of Manchester initiated the current planning process with an announcement of the project and selection of HNTB Architects Engineers Planners as the city's planning consultant. The city mapped out an extensive public participation program. As a result, the plan goals, objectives and policies were drafted and refined over an 18-month process.

The process to create this plan was inclusive, starting with public forums, focus groups, and a community-wide survey, and eventually channeling into an intensive collaborative effort between the Board of Aldermen, Planning and Zoning Commission, and city staff. Manchester residents provided input and feedback regarding local issues and future development alternatives, leading to goals and policies and the future land use map.

Perhaps most importantly, this Comprehensive Plan establishes policies to guide elected and appointed officials in making decisions that affect the community's future. It also serves as a resource for responsible growth and development in Manchester for residents, builders, developers and businesses owners.

The focus of the plan is to maintain and improve the quality of life for all residents within the community.

This document includes a comprehensive set of goals and objectives as well as a set of land use recommendations and development policies that frame and describe Manchester's approach to future decision-making. The city must now move this plan forward and guide redevelopment to meet the community's vision.

### **Plan Context: A Look Back at Manchester**

Manchester was founded in 1795 and is one of the oldest communities in the region. According to the 1960 *City Plan for Manchester, Missouri*:

*"Whatever may be the controversy about Manchester being an older town than Saint Louis, it is certain that the*

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*fascinating history of this city began in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This place was first known as Hoardstown, but in 1825 an Englishman, who came from the city of Manchester, England, christened his new home with the name of his former abiding place.*

*The original settlement took place on both sides of Manchester Road, east and west of the present Creve Coeur Road. Manchester Road, which was graded and rocked in 1849, opened the way farther west for wheeled carts and was frequently used by pioneers passing through the town. Consequently, Manchester became a trading as well as a resting place. A few buildings remain as witnesses of this period.*

*From the very beginning, the economic base of Manchester was industry and trade rather than agriculture. Some of the original settlers were engaged in trade with neighboring Native Americans, while others were busy in manufacturing horse saddles, shoes, boots and so forth. Handmade brick was a Manchester product in 1822.”*



Manchester City Hall

Manchester was incorporated as a village in 1951. The village was designated as a fourth-class city in 1959. The first citywide plan was completed a year later, in 1960. The plan, now a classic example of planning for the era, identified and discussed a number of issues that still face the city today, including:

- Development of Manchester Road to a major commercial area with maximum revenue advantage for the city
- Protection of existing residential neighborhoods

At the outset it notes: “The city is now at a good stage in its development to adopt a Comprehensive Plan; however, it must be prepared to enforce a somewhat different pattern for additional development than that of the past.”

The *City Plan* was updated in 1977 with the *City Development Plan*. Almost 20 years later, Manchester had grown and changed:

*“As a part of the Saint Louis suburban community, the City of Manchester has grown significantly over the past decade and a half since the City Plan for the City of Manchester was adopted by the Board of Aldermen in 1960. At that time, the population of the city was approximately 3,000 persons and only a few commercial enterprises were along Manchester Road. Today the city population is*

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*estimated at 6,550 persons, and Manchester has a booming commercial area with major commercial outlets located along Manchester Road and residential subdivisions throughout the remainder of the city. There are only a few large development parcels left in the city although a number of smaller developable parcels exist. However, like almost all suburban communities, Manchester is not without problems. Located at the major intersection of Highway 141 and Manchester Road, the community is burdened with heavy traffic volumes as well as problems with circulation and access. The city is working to improve this situation through construction of Grand Glaize Drive and other similar projects. Despite these problems, Manchester exists as a key suburban community in the Saint Louis metropolitan area with a relatively strong tax base and a high quality life for its residents.”*

Another significant planning effort was the *Master Plan for Historic Manchester*, completed in 1983. This plan focused on: 1) identifying historic structures; 2) proposing a Historic District boundary; and 3) establishing criteria for restoration of historic structures and criteria for non-historic structures.

### **Manchester Today and Tomorrow**

In 2004, Manchester is once again updating its Comprehensive Plan. The community is an interesting dichotomy of old and new, which is reflected in the city motto, “A Proud Past A Bright Future”. The city has a proud history which makes it unique among its

neighbors. The city is also fortunate to have quality neighborhoods, good schools, and ample parks and recreational amenities. However, there are several issues of concern, including: traffic congestion; lack of a clearly identified town center; and the growing trend of in-fill development within residential neighborhoods. These issues have caused the city to revisit its vision for the future and its methods of achieving that vision.

Progressive and proactive measures have been identified in this Comprehensive Plan to allow Manchester to continue to attract new businesses and employment while maintaining a desirable quality of life for its residents.