

Eureka Township Citizen Task Force Completes Two-Year Envisioning Study

The Eureka Township Envisioning Task Force has finished work on a two-year citizen envisioning project to investigate the potential effects of growth and development on the small rural community, which is located in southwest Dakota County. The project, undertaken with assistance from Dakota County and 1000 Friends of Minnesota, offered a unique opportunity to use a new geographic information systems (GIS) software product called CommunityViz, which is designed to help communities evaluate the impacts of development.

The Envisioning Task Force was created by the Eureka Town Board of Supervisors in July 2001 as a discussion and educational group. The original charge to the task force was to formulate a variety of possible growth scenarios for the township; learn about the potential impact of each growth scenario on a variety of indicators, including water quality, agriculture, wildlife, infrastructure, and resident quality of life; and educate citizens of Eureka about the group's findings at the conclusion of the project.

The task force has just completed an 80-page written report that presents the results of the project. The report was unanimously accepted by the Eureka Board of Supervisors at their September 2003 meeting. Reference copies of the report will be available soon at the Eureka Town Hall and at the Lakeville and Farmington libraries. The task force also created a condensed 24-page summary version of the report. Both the full and summary report are available for purchase in hardcopy or on CD, and the summary report will soon be available online at the township's website.

A public open house was also planned to present results of the project and provide an opportunity for public feedback. The open house was November 20, 2003 at the Dakota County Extension Office in Farmington.

Eureka Township is a small rural community of approximately 1500 residents located in the southwestern corner of Dakota County, Minnesota, roughly 25 miles south of Minneapolis–St. Paul. Although it lies within the Twin Cities metropolitan area, Eureka is a largely agricultural community and the township is currently designated as a permanent agricultural district by the Metropolitan Council.

The Eureka Envisioning Project was made possible through grants from the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance, Concern Inc., the Laura Jane Musser Fund, the Carolyn Foundation, the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), and 1000 Friends of Minnesota.

More information about the task force and its work is available by contacting task force chair Mike Greco at curaweb@umn.edu or by visiting the township's website at <http://eurekatownship-mn.us/taskforce/envisioning.html>. More information about CommunityViz can be found online at <http://www.communityviz.com/>.