



What Is an Indicator?

An indicator is a feature of the Township (e.g., population, miles of roads, demand for services, or amount of farmland) that could be impacted by future development in a way that is statistically predictable and measurable. Indicators allow comparison of the impacts of various growth scenarios (see Fact Sheet No. 5) on issues of concern to Township residents.

The Envisioning Task Force used indicators to answer the question, "How would specific aspects of Eureka Township change under each growth scenario?"

Overview

The Envisioning Task Force originally brainstormed a list of more than 50 indicators (listed on the back of this handout) that they considered important to analyzing the impacts of growth and development. For the purpose of this study, the list was narrowed down to 15 indicators based on (1) how important the indicator seemed in measuring the impacts of development, (2) the ability to quantify or measure the indicator, and (3) the availability of Dakota County data for the indicator. Results for these 15 indicators are presented tonight at Station Three.

Considerations

Although the concept of indicators can be difficult to define, indicators are used frequently in real world situations. As explained above, indicators allow comparison of the impacts of development on key issues. For instance, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 85 more people living in Eureka Township in the year 2000 than there were in 1990. The number of new residents measured by the Census is an indicator of current population growth rate in the Township. Because each scenario presented tonight assumes a different amount of growth, the number of potential new residents in the Township will be different under each scenario. Data on the number of potential new residents that a scenario would produce makes it possible to compare and contrast the likely impacts of each scenario on the population of Eureka. Similarly, measuring the amount of farmland in Eureka Township as an indicator for each scenario allows us to look at the ways different development patterns could impact the broader township. A decrease in the amount of farmland implies a shift in the traditional economy of the township, as well as a change in the overall character of the community.

Although indicators are useful tools, they cannot possibly address all of the issues of concern that accompany land use change. Some indicators—such as rural character or community aesthetics—are very difficult to quantify. Indicators also tend to be overwhelming if too many are measured and compared. It is important to realize that indicators are meant to help citizens see broader impacts of land-use change and provide common points of comparison from which they can engage in reasoned debate over how their community should or should not change.

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Envisioning Task Force Indicators

Below is the initial list of indicators that the Eureka Envisioning Task Force developed. Although it has not been possible to study all of these indicators during the course of this project, many of these indicators were included and results for these indicators are presented at Station Three. This list also provides a useful starting point for further citizen discussion about Eureka's future.

I. Land Use Impact

- A. Forested areas
- B. Prairie/grassland areas
- C. Riparian vegetation
- D. Greenways (contiguous natural areas)
- E. Farmland—threat to prime ag areas
- F. Farmland—threat to contiguous areas
- G. Farmland—proximity of residential to
- H. Aggregate resources

II. Environmental

- A. Wildlife populations
- B. Wildlife habitat
- C. Wildlife corridors (contiguous habitat)
- D. Surface water quality
- E. Ground water quality
- F. Chub Creek watershed water quality
- G. Vermillion watershed water quality
- H. Erosion impacts
- I. Impervious surfaces/surface water flows

III. Quality of Life

- A. Population density
- B. Nearest neighbor
- C. Traffic/congestion (commute time)
- D. Noise pollution
- E. Crime rate
- F. Traffic accidents
- G. Street safety

IV. Aesthetic Resources

- A. Open space—amount of and proximity to
- B. Utility lines/towers—amount of and proximity to
- C. "Rural character"
- D. Scenic viewsheds—roadway views

- E. Scenic viewsheds—homeowner views
- F. Scenic viewsheds—diversity of
- G. Light pollution
- H. Commercial signage
- I. Architecture—suburban-style vs. rural-style housing
- J. Architecture—farmsteads, barns, and historic buildings

V. Services

- A. Schools
- B. Fire
- C. Police
- D. EMS
- E. Solid waste disposal
- F. Government (level of)
- G. Commercial—demand/expectations for

VI. Infrastructure

- A. Roadways—classification upgrades
- B. Roadways—new
- C. Natural gas lines
- D. Sewer lines/treatment plant
- E. Parks and trails (demand for)

VII. Economic

- A. Assessed property values
- B. Residential market land values
- C. Agricultural market land values
- D. Housing affordability
- E. Property tax rates
- F. Insurance rates (home, auto)

VIII. Recreational Index

- A. Snowmobile trails
- B. Bike access
- C. Hunting land
- D. Parks and Trails (access to)