

# **City of Silver Lake**

## **Comprehensive Plan - 2019**



**Adopted: January 21, 2020**

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### **Mission Statement:**

**To make the best use of our community's resources to provide and deliver quality services that are flexible enough to address the many needs and desires of the citizens of Silver Lake, our customers.**

Our approach to achieving our mission will be through limiting barriers while facilitating positive and orderly growth through long range planning. We will be proactive with our customers, promoting their involvement while building trust and accountability in the success of our community. We will balance growth of the community with the protection of our natural surroundings. We will provide a positive environment to empower our employees; to ensure that they will plan, develop and deliver quality services.

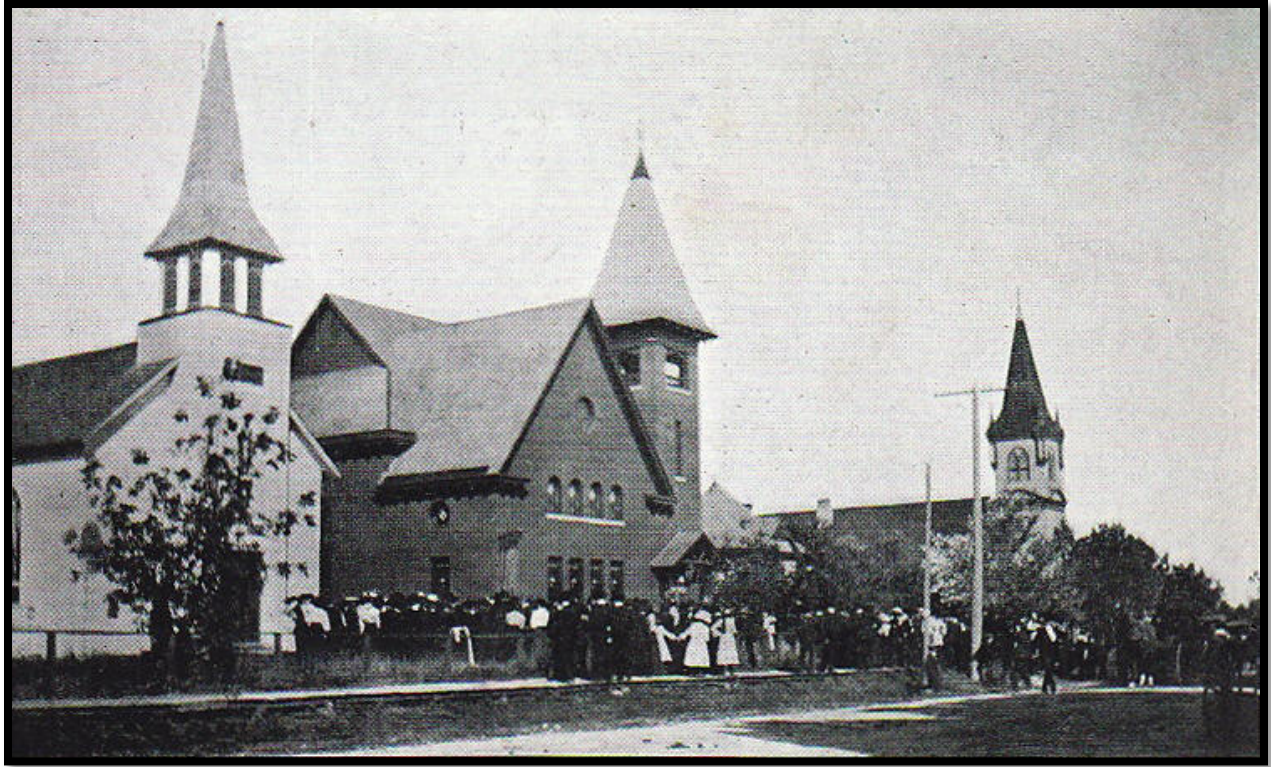
## Section One: Silver Lake, Minnesota, Community Profile

### A. Location and Community Highlights

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Location:</b>       | Northeast McLeod County, Minnesota   |
| <b>Population:</b>     | 837 based on 2010 Census   |
| <b>Transportation:</b> | State Highway 7 (10-ton capacity)<br>McLeod County Road 2 (9-ton capacity)                                   |
| <b>Government:</b>     | Statutory City with four City Council members and one Mayor.   |
| <b>Education:</b>      | Public school serving grades 3-6 at Lakeside Elementary in Silver Lake, K-12 located in Glencoe.             |
| <b>Topography:</b>     | Flat to gently rolling, surrounded by farmland.  |
| <b>Trails:</b>         | Silver Lake is located adjacent to the Luce Line State Trail (paved) and the Dakota Rail Trail (undeveloped) |

The City of Silver Lake is located on the northeastern edge of the rich farmland of south-central Minnesota. A few miles to the north and east the physiologic features give way to more hills, lakes and originally, a wooded landscape. Silver Lake was platted in 1881 and incorporated as a city in 1889. Nationalities of the early residents were predominantly Czech and Polish. State Highway 7 provides quick access to the Twin Cities Metro area, to the east, with the western metro suburbs as close as 25 miles. Hutchinson is located 8 miles west of Silver Lake on Highway 7 and Glencoe, the McLeod County Seat, is located 10 miles south on County Highway 2.





A view of former churches along Main Street.

## B. Population

The population of Silver Lake has grown steadily since 1930 with growth in the 1980's at 9.5%, the highest rate in fifty years. In 1995 an annexed territory on the western edge of the city increased the estimated census to 800 persons. In 2000 additional undeveloped land was annexed with plans for up to 67 homes.

|             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| Census Date | 1930 – 477 |
|             | 1940 – 604 |
|             | 1950 – 603 |
|             | 1960 – 646 |
|             | 1970 – 694 |
|             | 1980 – 698 |
|             | 1990 – 764 |
|             | 2000 – 800 |
|             | 2010 – 837 |

## C. Housing

Housing in Silver Lake is in generally good repair. Utility accounts total 343 residential accounts and 53 commercial accounts. The commercial accounts include apartment buildings, two townhome complexes and an assisted living facility. The assisted living facility, Cedar Crest, includes 40 assisted living units with 10 memory care units. All these facilities increase the total number of housing units to over 379 as reported on the 2010 census.

The opinion of the City of Silver Lake is that there is still a need for additional residential and commercial development in the City. This position is based upon demographic trends as seen in the last ten years, results of a housing study completed in 2018, the market turnover of housing, low vacancy rates of rental apartments, conversations with local realtors and surveys done in Silver Lake. Affordable housing has been recognized as a critical need across the State of Minnesota since the mid-1990s. The City extended water and sewer lines under Highway 7 in three strategic locations for possible future expansion to the west and north.

#### **D. Utilities**

Water and Sewer services are supplied through the Municipal Water and Sewer system. Water is supplied from two wells with a pumping capacity of 500 gallons per minute. This is adequate to supply the present and limited future needs of the city. The water supply is treated according to all Department of Health standards and required tests have shown the supply to be well under any critical health standard thresholds. City Wide surveys in 2004 and 2014 identified the need to address secondary water quality issues associated with Iron and Manganese.

In 1990 a new wastewater pond system was built. This system is still meeting the needs of the city, but expansion requirements should be explored if the population dramatically increases as the system is designed for a maximum capacity of 1000 residents as compared to the current 837 residents of the city.

In 2013 the City completed a street reconstruction project in which the City replaced one half mile of water, wastewater, and storm sewer mains; replacing some of the City's oldest infrastructure. The City has also submitted an inflow and infiltration (I&I) maintenance plan to the MN Pollution Control Agency laying out how the City intends to address I&I through annual televising of sanitary sewer mains and lateral connections to find sources of pipe failure and illegal connections.

#### **OTHER UTILITY PROVIDERS**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Garbage Pickup:</b>   | Waste Management (Contract is renewable every three years)                     |
| <b>Recycling:</b>        | McLeod County Environmental Services (contracted with West Central Industries) |
| <b>Electric:</b>         | Xcel Energy  |
| <b>Cable TV:</b>         | Mediacom   |
| <b>Telephone:</b>        | Century Link   |
| <b>Natural Gas:</b>      | CenterPoint Energy   |
| <b>Propane/Fuel Oil:</b> | Lakes Gas  |

#### **E. Public Safety**

The three major components of the City's Public Safety system are the Police Department, Volunteer Fire Department and Volunteer Ambulance Service.





Fire Protection Area includes the Incorporated City Limits and the following Townships (or part thereof as defined by Fire Protection Contracts) all of Hale Township, the northern half of Rich Valley Township, and approximately two sections of Winsted Township and one section of Hassan Valley Townships. These agreements permit a sharing of costs for equipment, building costs and the Fire Relief Association. Currently, the fire insurance rating within Silver Lake is at 6, which is excellent for a small community.

A Chief, one full-time and a small number of part-time officers provide police protection.



The Ambulance Service is a BLS service with backup paramedic units available for call through the Allina Ambulance Service. The City owns the ambulance unit and operates with paid on-call EMT-B's to provide 24-hour coverage. In addition, the Fire Department has developed a first response unit that can assist the ambulance and at times respond more quickly. With the closest clinics and hospitals approximately 10 miles away in Glencoe and Hutchinson, maintenance of a medical unit within the immediate area is very important. A continued working relationship with the townships and receipt of their donations is important in maintaining the service.

A formal city emergency operations manual is on file in the City office in fire-proof files for any natural disasters such as tornado or major fires that might occur. The City is not in a major flood plain.

## F. Business and Industry

The City of Silver Lake has developed an Economic Development Authority. The City has identified a need to address redevelopment in its Central Business District (B-1). The City's Highway Business District (B-2) has been identified as a potential area for significant development opportunities. A Business Subsidy Policy is in place to assist businesses with startup and expansion goals as well as provide possible Tax Abatement. Further funding options for the redevelopment and expansion of Commercial opportunities need to be explored.

## **G. Parks, Trails, and Open Space**

The City currently has three parks with another planned within the future housing development near Century Lane on the east side of the City.

**Lions Park:** A quiet park located on County Road 2 overlooking Silver Lake. Includes a fishing pier and parking on a one-way street running along the north shore of the lake.



**Silver Lake Veterans Memorial Park:** A large park in the center of the City on Main Street. The land was donated to the City by the American Legion Post 141 for the creation of a public park. This park offers a playground, open spaces, a public band shelter, restroom facilities, an open picnic shelter, and a Veteran's Memorial.

**Recreation Area:** Located on the western part of the City is an approximately 40-acre area which offers the following facilities:

- Fishing Pier along Silver Lake (northwest shore)
- Softball/Baseball field
- Clay Horseshoe pits
- Tennis and Basketball Courts
- Sand Volleyball Courts
- Picnic Shelter and Playground

- Bruce Maresh Aquatic features a swimming pool with zero depth, beach style entry, play features for young children, diving board, 30-foot waterslide and large deck with umbrellas and sun chairs.

**Luce Line State Trail:** The trail runs along the northern border of the City. This 63-mile trail extends from Plymouth to Cosmos with a 30-mile stretch of paved trail running from Winsted, through Silver Lake and to Hutchinson.

**Dakota Rail Trail:** An undeveloped trail running along the southern border of the community. This trail extends from Hutchinson to Wayzata. McLeod County is currently working on securing funds to develop the trail.

## **H. Miscellaneous Information**

All significant City-owned streets were paved in 1997 through a bond project. Continuous maintenance of City streets (approximately 2.9 miles) includes annual crack filling and complete seal coating on a five-year revolving schedule.

The City Auditorium underwent some major renovations from 2013-2015 including a handicap accessible entry with a lift, new windows, new restroom, flooring & paint. The auditorium currently hosts numerous private and public events and houses the City Council Chambers.



## **Section Two: Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

### **ARTICLE 1: PUBLIC SERVICES**

**GOAL:** The city should provide and support a balanced range of public services that provide for a quality of life for its residents including that of typical city public works, recreation, schools and public safety that matches the primary city profile.

**Objective:** Maintaining a quality school system within the City is an important service that additionally supports community development.

- A. **Strategy:** Quality communications and coordination between City and School officials need to be maintained to ensure effective uses of public resources and to avoid duplication of public services.
- B. **Strategy:** Encourage representation from City residents in the GSL District decision making process.

**Objective:** Maintain a responsible and effective public works department.

- A. **Strategy:** Budgets need to contain provisions to provide for equipment that permits the personnel to do adequate work in an efficient manner.
- B. **Strategy:** A Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan needs to be maintained and annually updated to ensure the City has schedule of Capital Purchases of equipment and the funding necessary when those purchases are needed.
- C. **Strategy:** Maintain stability of employment for public works employees as their training is specialized in certain areas and the best service is offered by experienced employees.
- D. **Strategy:** Develop an Electronic Data System capable of documenting maintenance of facilities and equipment.

**Objective:** Maintenance of an effective public safety system (Fire & Rescue, Ambulance and Police) in all its forms is necessary to the well-being of all City residents and those in the surrounding area.

- A. **Strategy:** Continue effective relationships with surrounding Townships and utilize Fire Protection Contracts donations to provide needed funding for the support of Fire and Ambulance protection.
- B. **Strategy:** Initiate and maintain efforts to recruit and retain the trained personnel required for the operation of the various departments.
- C. **Strategy:** Continued support of City Employees that are also members of the public safety departments is necessary.

- D. Strategy: A Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan needs to be maintained annually updated to ensure the City has schedule of Capital Purchases of equipment and the funding necessary when those purchases are needed.
- E. Strategy: Retention of experienced employees serving in these capacities is to be considered a priority.

**Objective:** Recreational activities, parks and open spaces need to be maintained for the general well-being of City residents and as an attraction for visitors to our community.

- A. Strategy: Recreational activities need to be continually defined and redefined such that alternatives to outdoor sports may be considered as alternative activities for City facilities.
- B. Strategy: Donations from the local charitable organization will continue to be important to sponsor youth recreational activities which should be continued within the City.
- C. Strategy: A Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan needs to be maintained and annually updated to ensure the City has schedule of Capital Purchases of equipment and the funding necessary when those purchases are needed.
- D. Strategy: Develop recreational opportunities and facilities for the lake.
- E. Strategy: Continue to work with local organizations and the MN Dept. of Natural Resources to develop opportunities to make Silver Lake more accessible and appealing.

**Objective:** The City Auditorium offers an important focus for community events and should be maintained for that purpose.

- A. Strategy: Continue to make the facility open and accessible to local organizations to provide an answer to their needs in exchange for their support in the upkeep and care of the facility.
- B. Strategy: Successfully market the facility for revenue generating opportunities for both public and private events.
- C. Strategy: Use of the building for alternative activities could be explored.

## **ARTICLE 2: PUBLIC UTILITIES**

**GOAL:** Basic Public Utilities are to be provided to all City residents and businesses.

**Objective:** Public Utilities will be maintained at a safe and reasonable level of quality for City residents.

- A. Strategy: Water system quality shall be maintained as high as economically feasible above the safety standards as required by the MN Dept of Health. This shall include clarity and other control of harmless but undesirable mineral and chemical contents.
- B. Strategy: Any future system designs of any public utilities, should incorporate cost effective methods to maintain quality standards.
- C. Strategy: Safety considerations include factors such as adequate water supply for firefighting, maintenance of drainage systems to control flooding and sewage backups.
- D. Strategy: Consider Water Treatment Facility plans to address secondary water quality issues.
- E. Strategy: Continue to implement Well Head Protection Plan to ensure a clean and healthy water supply.

**Objective:** Public Utilities will be maintained at an adequate level to supply for the needs of City residents.

- A. Strategy: Usage fees will be structured to cover the operating costs of the Public Utility System and base fees will be structured to cover certain fixed costs as well as any debt incurred to provide adequate Capital Improvements to the Public Utility System.
- B. Strategy: While system limitations should not interfere with plans for immediate future expansion, should the City start to grow significantly, measures will have to be incorporated in new and existing business and housing units to meet any expansion requirements of any Public Utility System.
- C. Strategy: Any rural entities that request connection to the Public Utility System must follow Statutory requirements for annexation into the City's Incorporated Boundary.

**Objective:** Measures should be taken, where economically feasible and practical, to extend any public utilities across barriers to development such as state highways, county roads, DNR trails, etc.

**Objective:** Any extensions or expansions of systems for any future industrial or large commercial needs must be reviewed on a case by case basis in terms of the entities needs and the economic effects on current residents.

### ARTICLE 3: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**GOAL:** Community Development shall encompass any economic development activities and is to be focused on the preservation or increase in the tax base, improvement of the living conditions within the city and elimination of blighting factors for the improvement of the City as a whole.

**Objective:** Develop a comprehensive Marketing Campaign to attract the development of Rental Housing, Commercial & Industrial expansion.

- A. **Strategy:** Promote the City with local, regional and statewide organizations that assist businesses in start-up and expansion.

**Objective:** Revitalize and maintain the "downtown" commercial district.

- A. **Strategy:** In specific cases the City may have to consider direct redevelopment of blighted buildings.
- B. **Strategy:** Land use planning should be flexible enough to accommodate new uses that would permit development or improvements in the district that would not significantly compromise existing residents and businesses.
- C. **Strategy:** Develop programs or pursue funds from other government agencies that would assist the owners in restoration of the buildings.

**Objective:** Business attraction activities need to be reviewed as to current demographic needs and special circumstances for a particular building.

- A. **Strategy:** The City should pursue avenues of alternative financing for starting businesses through coordination with other government agencies.
- B. **Strategy:** Consider a special City fund to assist in business startups in districts targeted for blight removal.
- C. **Strategy:** Recognize the importance of "home" businesses in residential districts and their possibility of growth.
- D. **Strategy:** Zoning should be flexible enough to permit home business endeavors and yet protect the nature of the residential district.

**Objective:** Help to assure the adequate availability of housing in a range of prices, types and locations that meet the needs of the area.

- A. **Strategy:** Systems of support are to be in place for development of housing by the private sector.
- B. **Strategy:** Zoning Ordinance should be flexible enough to permit housing development economics and still maintain a reasonable level of aesthetics and quality of life.



- C. Strategy: Recognition of the need for housing for low to moderate income persons should not be neglected and should be addressed according to current recognized economics of the area.
- D. Strategy: Incentives for new housing should not compromise quality of construction.

**Objective:** Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of existing housing stock.

- A. Strategy: The maintenance of existing neighborhoods should have prime importance in development of land use ordinances and transportation policies.
- B. Strategy: Removal or prevention of blight should be of primary importance to existing neighborhoods.
- C. Strategy: Collaboration with other government agencies may be beneficial in obtaining housing renovation funding.

**Objective:** New housing development should have minimal cost impact for existing residents.

- A. Strategy: As a rule, the Planning Commission recognizes that concentrated housing development within City limits is a better situation for the area than in the townships due to City infrastructure and conservation of land resources.
- B. Strategy: Periodic review of policies for new housing development should be in place to evaluate the impact of the developments on current City systems, personnel needs, etc.
- C. Strategy: Each new housing development is be reviewed as a separate entity from any previous developments as to its contribution to the City.
- D. Strategy: Utilize Housing Study completed in 2018 to promote need for all areas of housing within the City as outlined by the study.

**Objective:** Industrial development of a type compatible with the residential nature of the City needs to be pursued.

- A. Strategy: The Highway #7 corridor through the City needs attention for possible industrial and commercial development.
- B. Strategy: Industrial land and space availability needs to be addressed with the possibility of creating an industrial park.

#### **ARTICLE 4: NATURAL RESOURCE AND LAND USE MANAGEMENT**

**GOAL:** Through proper land use management the City seeks to maximize the access and enjoyment of the area's natural resources as an attraction to promote growth and development.

**Objective:** The City has developed a Zoning Ordinance with five distinct Zoning Districts. These Zoning Districts define land use activities specific to that district. Through cooperative efforts with McLeod County and Hale & Rich Valley Townships, the City seeks to create land use strategies for future expansion of City boundaries.

- A. **Strategy:** Encourage City, County, and Township involvement of a Joint Planning Commission aimed towards the development of an orderly annexation agreement.

**Objective:** Through a coordinated effort with McLeod County and the MN DNR, develop a master plan for Silver Lake to reclassify it as a recreational lake.