

Chapter 2

Community Background

- ◆ Historical Background
- ◆ Current Demographics

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photo from City archives

Section 1: Historical Background

GOLDEN VALLEY is a dynamic city located immediately west of downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota. As a first-ring suburb, Golden Valley balances the tranquil nature of suburban life with the style and amenities of an urban setting. Residents enjoy the conveniences of city living combined with the quiet peacefulness of wide open spaces. This high quality of life is not by accident. Golden Valley has had a long history of community spirit that establishes its character and charm.

The Village of Golden Valley was carved out of former Minneapolis Township in 1886, and it included most of the City of Golden Valley's current boundaries. A Village Council was established to administer laws and protect the interest of citizens, who at the time were mostly farmers. The Luce Line Railroad served as Golden Valley's first form of public transportation. The railroad provided limited passenger service to the City of Minneapolis.

Golden Valley remained a primarily rural village into the early 1900s. In 1908 the first village hall was erected on the northwest corner of Winnetka Ave and Golden Valley Rd. This small, two-story building would serve as the center of Golden Valley's civic affairs for the next 50 years. During this time, more people begin to move west from Minneapolis to enjoy a more rural way of life. In 1935, Highway 100 was constructed as the first beltline freeway around the Twin Cities.



photo from City archives

As more and more people moved west from Minneapolis, Golden Valley spawned suburban-style growth.

This four-lane highway, complete with cloverleaf interchanges and wayside rest stops, brought many new people through Golden Valley. The Boulevard of Lilacs, as it was termed, was closed occasionally to allow parades and other community-organized events to occur on the road. As years went by, the highways in Golden Valley spawned suburban-style growth along their corridors.

By the 1950s, suburban growth was in full-swing in Golden Valley. The Village Hall was no longer able to accommodate the large number of people wishing to attend meetings, leading to construction of the current City Hall in 1959. Previously called the Golden Valley Civic Center, this new, large

building reflected the changing urban demographic of the area.

During this time commercial development also began to expand in Golden Valley. The Golden Valley Shopping Center, which still exists in its original format, and many other suburban shopping destinations were built throughout town. The population had also swelled to 20,000 people.

In 1972, the Minnesota Legislature mandated that all villages become statutory cities. The Village of Golden Valley became the City of Golden Valley and quickly acquired the reputation of being a quality place to live, work, and visit. Golden Valley's Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) was created in 1978 to preserve

the quality of its housing and commercial areas and to prevent and correct problems of blight and decay. Since that time, the HRA has followed the Comprehensive Plan to ensure logical growth patterns and encourage fair, affordable, and quality housing for its residents. 📈



photo by City staff

Section 2: Current Demographics

T ODAY, Golden Valley is home to 20,281 residents and is designated as a “developed” community by the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council. Golden Valley is expected to grow to more than 24,000 residents by 2030 (Figure 2.1). The City of Golden Valley anticipates this number could be higher based on future higher density housing developments. For that reason, the City is focusing on accommodating growth by reevaluating land uses and identifying areas for increased density.

Figure 2.1: Population Forecast

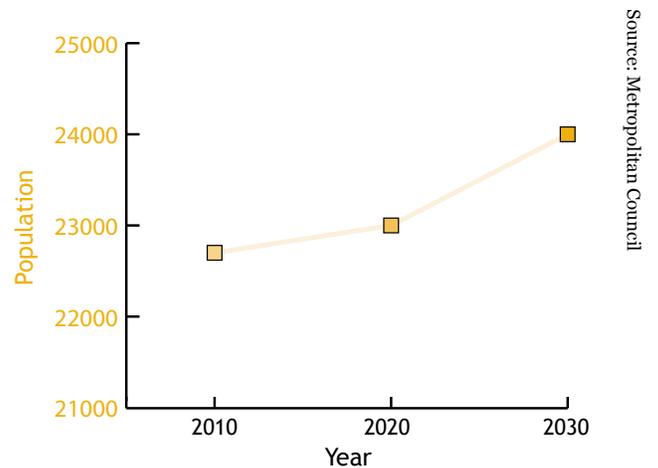
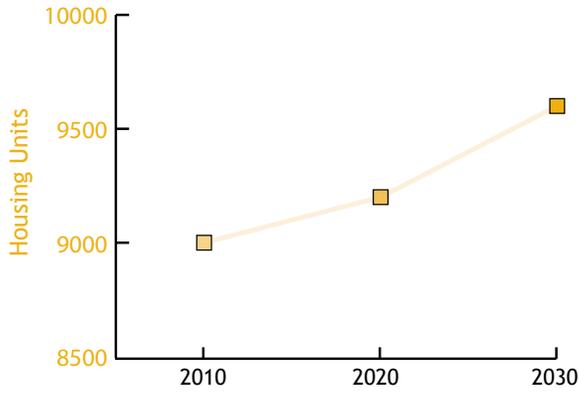
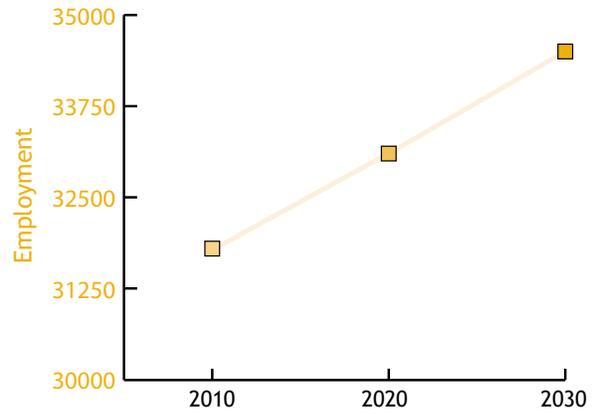


Figure 2.2: Housing Forecast



Source: Metropolitan Council

Figure 2.3: Employment Forecast



Source: Metropolitan Council

The Metropolitan Council’s anticipated trends for Golden Valley also project growth in the numbers of homes (Figure 2.2) and employment (Figure 2.3).

Considering the anticipated population growth and changing lifestyle trends and needs, Golden Valley expects to add primarily townhomes, apartments, and condominiums to its housing stock in the future.

Golden Valley is comprised of 10.5 square miles of land. With its easy access to major freeways and downtown Minneapolis, it is a gateway to the West Metro. Most significant land use changes are expected to occur along major transportation corridors.

Looking to the future, Golden Valley will preserve its built and natural environments through sustainable development. Though growth trends and preferences change with time, one thing will remain consistent—Golden Valley will uphold standards of development that will foster urban style and suburban tranquility for years to come. 🌿

Table 2.1: Golden Valley Forecasts

	2010	2020	2030
Population	22,700	23,000	24,000
Households	9,000	9,200	9,600
Employment	31,600	33,100	34,500