

# Leading Foley into the Future: A Summary of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan

## Introduction

Foley stands at a pivotal juncture. With its population rising rapidly and demographic trends shifting toward an older median age, the City faces mounting pressures on housing, transportation, infrastructure capacity, and open space. The *2025 Comprehensive Plan* responds to these challenges with a robust, future-ready strategy that aligns land use, mobility, public investment, and community identity within a coordinated framework. Unlike a traditional land-use approach, this plan employs a Place Type framework that emphasizes form, character, and context to support strategic, sustainable, and predictable development.

## Historical Foundations and Planning Legacy

The conventional development model, characterized by disconnected subdivisions and wide arterial roads, results in sprawling, automobile-oriented growth. These developments often sacrifice walkability, visual coherence, and a sense of place. The 2025 Plan introduces a Place Type framework that emphasizes form, character, and context as the guiding elements for growth. This approach reflects Foley’s own planning legacy, rooted in the early 1900s, when the City was platted around the railroad depot using compact blocks, central civic spaces, and a walkable street network. Those historic patterns, visible today in Downtown, serve as a model for future development. By acknowledging the City’s heritage and re-establishing the importance of coherent block patterns, active streets, and connected public spaces, the plan preserves Foley’s character but adapts it to modern needs.

## Guiding Vision and Principles

The plan’s guiding principles (Quality of Life, Sense of Place, Transportation and Connectivity, Sustainable and Balanced Growth, Environmental Stewardship, and Transparent and Predictable Development) provide a clear value structure to steer both private investment and public decision-making. Quality of life emerges as the central pillar, emphasizing the creation of well-planned neighborhoods where parks, schools, and services are accessible to people of all ages. A renewed emphasis on sense of place calls for architecture and streetscapes that reflect Foley’s identity through context-sensitive design, traditional proportions, and the intentional placement of civic buildings. Meanwhile, the transportation framework shifts the City toward Complete Streets that accommodate pedestrians and cyclists alongside vehicles for safer, more inviting movement throughout the community.

<b>PLACE TYPE CATEGORIES</b>	
<b>Neighborhoods</b>	Core, General, Suburban, Rural Edge
<b>Nodes</b>	Downtown, Village Center, Neighborhood Center
<b>Corridors</b>	Commercial, Suburban, Rural
<b>Overlay Districts</b>	Multiple districts coordinated with the <i>Zoning Ordinance</i> .
<b>Special Use Districts</b>	Multiple districts coordinated with the <i>Zoning Ordinance</i>

## The Place Type Framework: A Modern Blueprint

At the heart of the plan is a shift from use-based zoning to a Place Type model that categorizes the City’s physical form into Neighborhoods, Nodes, Corridors, Overlay Districts, and Special Use Districts. Rather than focusing solely on use, the Place Type approach defines the desired character, scale, and function of future development. This structure allows Foley to transition seamlessly from its urban core to its rural

outskirts, providing clarity for developers and preserving the City's unique charm. The plan includes a Place Type Map, an updated future land use map that provides a spatial reference to guide decisions about land use, zoning changes, development proposals, capital investments, and new initiatives (refer to page 3).

**Demographic and Housing Realities Driving the Plan**

A key strength of the new *Comprehensive Plan* is its recognition of Foley’s demographic realities. The population is rapidly increasing while also aging, with the median age trending upward and the dependency ratio rising significantly. These changes place pressure on housing availability, healthcare access, transportation options, and social services. The plan responds by identifying the need for approximately 8,500 additional housing units by 2035 and encouraging a diverse mix of housing typologies that support every phase of life, from young adults seeking affordable rental options to older residents looking to downsize or access supportive living arrangements. Through the Place Type framework, each housing type is strategically located where it best fits the surrounding context, ensuring that development feels cohesive and enhances neighborhood character.

**A Stronger, Connected Public Realm**

The 2025 Comprehensive Plan underscores how streets, parks, greenways, civic buildings, and public infrastructure shape community identity. It introduces rigorous standards for:

- Civic building placement
- Connectivity and street hierarchy
- Park accessibility and visibility
- Greenways and trails
- Context-sensitive infrastructure sizing

This ensures that future public investments support walkability, aesthetics, and long-term fiscal health.

**Economic and Regional Strategy**

Foley’s future economic resilience relies on:

- Establishing mixed-use nodes along major corridors
- Redevelopment of aging commercial centers
- Enhanced tourism assets
- Attraction of younger workers through employment centers, diverse housing options, and civic amenities.

The Place Type framework supports these goals by encouraging redevelopment at strategic locations and promoting high-value land uses.

**Conclusion: A Blueprint for Foley’s Next Generation**

In conclusion, the *2025 Comprehensive Plan* is both a visionary document and a practical tool. It acknowledges Foley’s past, confronts its present challenges, and sets a clear trajectory for a future built on connection, identity, sustainability, and quality of life. As a living document, the plan calls for ongoing evaluation and annual reporting to keep the City accountable and responsive to changing needs. Through its Place Type framework, demographic awareness, public realm standards, and emphasis on orderly,

context-sensitive growth, the plan ensures that Foley will not simply absorb growth but shape it. In doing so, Foley positions itself as a community that honors its heritage while embracing a thoughtful, resilient, and inspiring path forward.

References: City of Foley. (2025). *Comprehensive Plan 2025*.

