

# CHAPTER 6

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES 2045

Goals and objectives are the heart of the 2045 Clay County Comprehensive Plan, expressing in detail the county's aspirations for the future. They serve to link the other chapters of this plan and describe different strategies by which Clay County hopes to implement its vision and principles.

As noted in the Vision section, Clay County held a number of community engagement events, meetings, focus groups, and other outreach efforts throughout the planning process of the comprehensive plan. These efforts were intended to elicit views on strengths, challenges, issues, and opportunities in the county to help create goals and objectives for the county to rely on.

With the adoption of the comprehensive plan, it will be important that goals and objectives are reevaluated periodically to determine if they are being fulfilled and how they may fit with changing social, economic, and environmental conditions. Through these periodic examinations, the county can be sure that the community's goals and objectives continue to communicate the aspirations of its citizens and the county will see the progress in how it is fulfilling its vision.

## Community and Resilience

1. Promote personal and community health for all residents.
  - a. Pursue opportunities to address barriers to mental health needs.
  - b. Support individual and community health behaviors that reduce the risks of chronic disease.
  - c. Encourage practices and activities to achieve healthy food access for all residents.

2. Collaborate with childcare providers to provide access to quality and affordable care.
  - a. Maintain and explore opportunities to support existing and new childcare providers, including licensing assistance or the identification of space.
3. Maintain and improve community preparedness and emergency response capacity to ensure public health and safety.
  - a. Promote cooperation and assistance to other emergency response agencies in Clay County.
  - b. Continue to improve emergency preparedness through emergency preparedness plans, training, and facility enhancements.

## Housing

1. Support additional options that give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable, and affordable homes
  - a. Explore standards that promote a diversity of housing types for new housing development throughout the county.
  - b. Promote local jurisdictions that have established standards and programs that promote housing diversity.
  - c. Consider utilizing housing programs that support investment in and maintenance of the existing housing stock.
  - d. Regularly review and update existing standards to ensure they are supporting a range of housing types.
2. Promote a diverse housing supply to provide residents with a range of housing options for those in need.

- a. Provide support to homeless households and those at risk for homelessness through the County HRA.
  - b. Provide assistance to vulnerable and low-income populations through the County HRA.
  - c. Support underserved populations to be successful homebuyers and homeowners through the County HRA.
3. Safeguard the physical quality of housing to promote healthy living environments.
- a. Assist lower-income homeowners with home repairs.
  - b. Promote the proper maintenance, repair, or replacement of residential subsurface sewage treatment systems.

## Land Use

### Agricultural

1. Recognize and Protect the agricultural character of Clay County.
- a. Support agricultural operations against nuisance complaints when such operations are being conducted according to generally accepted farming practices through “right-to-farm” provisions.
  - b. Protect prime agricultural soils from commercial, industrial, and residential development.
  - c. Preserve large tracts of farmland while allowing farmland owners to benefit from development through the use of transfer of development rights (TDRs) for concentrated residential development.

### Residential

1. Promote and encourage quality and diversified residential development in the incorporated communities of Clay County.

- a. Encourage residential growth to occur in the county’s incorporated communities and planned urban growth areas when public services can be provided.
  - b. Encourage non-farm residential development to occur in small lots around unincorporated communities.
2. Provide opportunities for quality rural residential development in Clay County.
- a. Implement residential density standards that allow for rural residential development while retaining the rural character of Clay County.
  - b. Encourage the development of agricultural and conservation subdivisions that cluster residential development on small lots and provide for shared open spaces.
  - c. Permit large lot nonfarm residential development if a portion of the property is preserved or converted to a use that retains the rural character of the land.
  - d. Avoid or mitigate residential development on or near environmentally sensitive lands or lands with high-quality natural resources.
  - e. Promote the use of community or cluster wastewater systems for residential development clusters.
3. Recognize the diversity of living and working arrangements in the unincorporated areas of Clay County.
- a. Allow for home occupations in unincorporated areas that are in harmony with the rural character of Clay County.
  - b. Recognize multi-generational and temporary agricultural worker living arrangements by permitting accessory dwelling units on properties that can adequately provide for water and sewer.

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## Commercial and Industrial

1. Encourage commercial and industrial development that is in harmony with the agricultural and rural character of Clay County.
  - a. Promote value-added agricultural commercial and industrial development in Agricultural Service Center areas and along transportation corridors and hubs.
  - b. Avoid or mitigate against commercial and industrial development in and near environmentally sensitive areas.
  - c. Avoid or mitigate against commercial and industrial development that increases the potential for land use conflicts with rural residential or agricultural uses.
2. Promote the incorporated communities of Clay County as prime locations for commercial and industrial development.
  - a. Encourage commercial and industrial development to locate within the incorporated communities of Clay County.
  - b. Encourage commercial and industrial development that is in harmony with future land use plans or city leadership to occur in future urban growth areas of incorporated communities.

## Transportation System

1. Maintain and Operate an accessible, safe, and efficient transportation system for the movement of people and goods throughout Clay County.
  - a. Continue to monitor the quality and safety of Clay County transportation infrastructure and coordinate with applicable local, state, and federal agencies to improve the transportation system across Clay County.

- b. Adopt transportation management policies that preserve the rural character and reliable transportation system for Clay County residents such as updated and clear access management guidelines, especially as they pertain to urban-type development or agriculture; implement ROW acquisition strategies on an as-needed basis; utilize the guidance of corridor management strategies to help respond to growth and development pressure but to preserve the rural and small town character Clay County is known for.
- c. Maintain and operate a transportation system that enhances the economic development objectives of the county, providing a good balance of access and mobility for people and goods to travel from farm to market.
- d. Monitor and update the Transportation Plan to identify major future transportation infrastructure and guide investment through project prioritization framework, future spending goals, and potential funding sources.
- e. Prioritize preservation and maintenance of the current transportation system over expanding the transportation system.
- f. Educate residents about existing and upcoming transportation infrastructure provided in the county by including up-to-date information on the Clay County website.
- g. Integrate multi-modal considerations into projects in order to provide a transportation system that accommodates passenger vehicles, transit, bicycles, pedestrians, freight, tractors, farm equipment, and other important modes of transportation used in Clay County.

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity

1. Increase biking and walking throughout rural portions of Clay County.
  - a. Consider the feasibility of bicycle and pedestrian improvements with each roadway project. Pursue discretionary or competitive funding sources for eligible bicycle and pedestrian projects to help offset costs.
  - b. Consider on-street facilities such as wide paved shoulders in rural parts of the county and prioritize off-street facilities near small towns.
  - c. Continue to ensure the safety and recreation of existing and future bicyclists and pedestrians across Clay County roadways or other facilities.
  - d. Connect future bike and pedestrian infrastructure to other existing bike and pedestrian infrastructure.
  - e. Continue to collaborate and partner with land owners and local, state, and federal agencies on the final planning and preliminary design of the Heartland Trail and other priority bike and pedestrian routes.
  - f. Provide education on how walking and biking infrastructure may also enhance agriculture and farm operations in Clay County for example: wider shoulders may also improve/enhance farm equipment safety and mobility; connecting people to appreciate rural areas of the county may lead to increased preservation of the character of said areas.

## Freight

1. Support the movement of freight across Clay County roadways.
  - a. Coordinate with local jurisdictions and use proper planning and zoning methods to locate industrial and commercial developments on or near roadways that

can handle heavy commercial truck traffic.

- b. Monitor seasonal freight traffic, commodity movement, FM Diversion construction traffic, and associated transportation infrastructure to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the system. Prepare for increased maintenance along roadways with heavy commercial truck traffic.
- c. Collaborate and Partner with Clay County Sheriff, MN State Patrol, and other applicable agencies to enforce roadway weight restrictions or other freight-related regulations, especially during periods of time when a lot of commodities or freight may be traveling from adjacent counties and states.

## Transit

1. Increase opportunities for rural transit in Clay County.
  - a. Educate residents about existing transit opportunities and resources that may be available to them.
  - b. Increase participation and build better partnerships with existing organizations such as MATBUS, Productive Alternatives, Region 4 Rural Transportation Coordinating Council, Rural Enrichment and Counseling Headquarters, and additional partnerships to better understand and better serve Clay County residents' transit needs.
  - c. Monitor evolving and new technologies and other methods that may make rural transit services even more efficient and accessible to Clay County residents.

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## Streetscaping and Safety

1. Enhance the character and quality of transportation infrastructure within Clay County.
  - a. Coordinate with local jurisdictions to identify community interest corridors and subsequent roadway projects and partnerships that encourage local involvement to improve or upgrade streetscape elements of the roadway such as streetlights, street furniture, stamped pavement, and community branding.
  - b. Explore partnerships and collaborative efforts with farmers and other stakeholders that may increase the safety and efficiency of multi-modal transportation across Clay County including: living snow fences, field access points, and paved shoulder widths.

## Agriculture

1. Support the long-term protection of the County's strong and diverse agricultural economy.
  - a. Maintain an environment that supports agriculture at all scales throughout the County.
  - b. Recognize and support the agricultural character of the county in all planning efforts.
  - c. Ensure that all new development is compatible with the character and quality of the County's agricultural areas.
  - d. Promote regenerative practices, such as cover crops, reduced tillage, and livestock incorporation on cultivated cropland with the highest erosion potential to increase soil health.

## Natural Resources and the Environment

### Aggregate Resources

1. Recognize the importance of aggregate resources to Clay County and the region.
  - a. Continue to protect quality aggregate resources from the encroachment of incompatible residential, commercial, and industrial development.
  - b. Implement policies and standards to ensure sound stewardship of aggregate resources and natural biotic resources.
2. Foster a balanced approach to aggregate resource extraction that is compatible with the natural resources and the rural character of Clay County.
  - a. Require adequate buffering and landscaping for new mining operations when adjacent to existing residential areas as well as when an existing operation expands or is substantially modified and would negatively impact existing land uses in the surrounding area.
  - b. Avoid or mitigate against impacts to groundwater, surface water, native prairie, woodlands, and wetlands for new or expanding mining operations.
  - c. Require phased-end reclamation plans and bonds to ensure mines are reclaimed as mining progresses.
  - d. Consider the cumulative impacts of existing nearby mining operations for new or expanding operations on the environment, agricultural lands, residential areas, and transportation infrastructure.

## Environmental Health

1. Ensure affordable, efficient, safe, and environmentally sound individual and community wastewater management for the benefit of Clay County property owners.

- a. Encourage the use of community or cluster wastewater treatment systems in residential subdivisions or areas with failing or potentially failing systems.
- b. Utilize soil suitability information in planning new development.
- c. Continue to monitor and inspect residential and commercial properties with on-site sewer systems.
- d. Continue to use soil suitability data for the placement of individual or community sewer treatment systems as part of the permitting process.

2. Reduce nuisance conditions in Clay County caused by blight, pollution, and unsightly land uses and practices.

- a. Protect scenic views through regulation of billboards, signs, junkyards, and other unsightly land uses.
- b. Control negative environmental and health impacts of pollution from contaminated soils, demolished structures, illegal dumping, and other hazardous materials.
- c. Control impacts of noise pollution from non-exempt land uses and practices.

3. Protect groundwater resources in Clay County to ensure safe and clean drinking water as well as adequate supply for people and agriculture during times of drought.

- a. Continue to implement land use controls to guide development over or near major aquifers.

b. Recognize the impact of surface water quality on groundwater resources, particularly in the Buffalo River and Buffalo Aquifer systems.

c. Recognize groundwater goals and implementation actions in the Buffalo-Red River and Wild Rice Watershed Districts Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans.

d. Coordinate with municipalities and entities with Wellhead Protection Plans on land use controls and decisions.

## Floodplains

1. Foster a community resilient to the impacts of flooding through targeted mitigation planning and implementation for the benefit of Clay County residents, agriculture, and industry.

- a. Discourage inappropriate development in flood hazard areas.
- b. Continue to assess flood risk by determining past and future damage potential.
- c. Coordinate with FEMA and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, watershed districts, and other entities on flood mitigation efforts.

## Prairies and Woodlands

1. Protect and enhance remnant tracts of native prairie and forests for the benefit and enjoyment of Clay County residents and visitors.

- a. Continue to identify major woodland and prairie tracts in Clay County for preservation.
- b. Protect native and high-quality prairie and woodland tracts from residential, commercial, and industrial development.

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- c. Educate and encourage private landowners to protect native prairie and woodlands through conservation easements, property tax incentives, and land acquisitions.
- d. Support conservation policies and strategies that preserve the tax base of Clay County and Townships.
- e. Consider adding existing right-of-way prairies into the Prairie Passage roadway corridor system to protect and restore prairie remnants.

2. Grow and restore prairie and woodland areas in Clay County for the benefit and enjoyment of Clay County businesses, residents, and visitors.

- a. Encourage agricultural, commercial, industrial, and residential development to establish prairie and/or woodland areas on properties to provide ecosystem services such as erosion and flood control, through assessment, permitting, tax, and zoning programs and incentives.
- b. Partner with agencies and organizations to establish native plantings on County-owned properties.

## Resource Recovery and Solid Waste

1. Foster an integrated waste management system that protects the public health and environment of Clay County in a manner appropriate to the characteristics of the waste stream.

- a. Continue to prioritize source reduction of waste materials.
- b. Enhance and expand public outreach and education about solid waste management in Clay County, especially pertaining to waste reduction, recycling, and composting.

- c. Continue to implement household hazardous waste, problem materials, recycling, and yard waste composting waste diversion programs.
- d. Operate the municipal solid waste landfill and participate in the regional waste-to-energy facility in Perham.
- e. Develop and identify opportunities to reuse, recover, and market waste as a resource.

## Shoreland and Stormwater

1. Protect and enhance the health and vitality of Clay County surface waters including lakes, rivers, and streams for the benefit and enjoyment of Clay County residents and visitors.

- a. Reduce development pressure on natural environment lakes in Clay County.
- b. Maintain and enhance riparian areas of public waters, especially within shore impact zones.
- c. Continue to enforce shoreland regulations on Clay County lakes, rivers, and streams.
- d. Require new development to comply with applicable stormwater management regulations, plans, and policies, with an emphasis on the urbanizing areas of Clay County.
- e. Recognize surface water goals and implementation actions in the Buffalo-Red River and Wild Rice Watershed Districts Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans.
- f. Educate and encourage citizens to adopt stormwater mitigation practices.
- g. Educate citizens on the importance of surface water quality and recreational opportunities on Clay County lakes and rivers.

## Wetlands

1. Recognize the importance of wetlands for the services they provide and protect wetlands from encroachment, development, and degradation.
  - a. Support Clay SWCD with the Enforcement of the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA).
  - b. Continue to incorporate wetland evaluations and studies as part of the land development permitting process.
  - c. Avoid or mitigate impacts to wetlands from residential, commercial, and industrial development.

## Public Open Space

1. Maintain and enhance County lands acquired through FEMA Hazard Grant Funding to serve the community and the greater region.
  - a. Encourage recreational uses such as hunting, fishing, hiking, and other nature-based activities.
  - b. Prioritize the establishment of native plants and prevent the establishment of noxious weeds on county-owned properties.
  - c. Coordinate with local, state, and federal entities on promoting outdoor recreation and stewardship of public lands and water trails in Clay County.

## Economic Development

1. Ensure a quality workforce and explore efforts to attract new and support existing businesses and industries that provide a living wage.
  - a. Promote and market the quality of life, rich diversity, and assets of the County.
  - b. Collaborate with public and private partners, and provide leadership where the County can make the most difference when called.

- c. Invest in high-quality education and promote opportunities for skills and training programs.
    - d. Collaborate with existing businesses to understand workforce, development, and infrastructure needs.
    - e. Provide resources to help entrepreneurs through all stages of business life.

## Intergovernmental Coordination

1. Encourage ongoing communication, coordination, and cooperation among local and state partners.
  - a. Support and continue existing joint planning ventures in the areas of watershed management, transportation planning, and other areas of multijurisdictional concern.
  - b. Coordinate with partners to achieve goals included in other planning studies including the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, watershed management plans, and other studies.
  - c. Maintain communications, and collaborate where appropriate, with state agencies involved in planning issues that affect the County, including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation, Pollution Control Agency, Department of Health, and others, as well as corresponding state agencies in North Dakota when applicable.
2. Establish comprehensive growth management strategies in coordination with local jurisdictions to preserve the rural character of Clay County and encourage healthy and vital communities.

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- a. Coordinate with the cities and townships in Clay County to facilitate orderly growth of Planned Urban Growth Areas through the use of orderly annexation agreements.
- b. Promote the use of Joint Powers Areas and Agreements to facilitate commercial and industrial growth in the Cities and Townships of Clay County.
- c. Partner with cities and townships on the planning and development of Planned Urban Growth Areas.