



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

INTRODUCTION  
INVENTORY & ANALYSIS  
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LONG RANGE PLAN  
IMPLEMENTATION

# **GOALS & POLICIES**

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## **CLAY COUNTY COMMUNITY-BASED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Goals and Policies chapter is the heart of the Comprehensive Plan, expressing in detail the County's aspirations for the future. It serves as the bridge between the background chapters, which are used in the formulation of the goals and policies, and the actual plan, which describes the County's strategy to implement those policies and thereby achieve its goals.

Experience has shown that no system of land use designation can survive strong economic pressures to change. Therefore, it is appropriate that such systems be periodically reevaluated in light of changing social and economic conditions. Consequently, it is from precisely this realization of the inevitability of changing conditions that a community's goals and policies derive their true value because it is in the goals and policies section of the Comprehensive Plan that the County has the opportunity to communicate its aspirations regarding the type of living environment that its citizens strive to achieve. Therefore, while external factors influencing land use will change, these goals and policies will continue to provide the best perspective from which to view proposed land use changes.

### **FORMULATION OF GOALS, POLICIES AND COUNTY VISION**

To help guide the background studies and to formulate a County vision and goals and policies, the County hosted a series of workshops in March and April of 2000 to elicit resident views on issues, opportunities and threats facing the County as well as its strengths and weaknesses. In addition, a planning Task Force, formed to oversee the development of the Plan, was engaged in a visioning exercise at a project kickoff meeting in February. The ideas generated at these meetings combined with the findings of the background studies serve as the basis for the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies.

Participants at each of the issues workshops and the project kickoff meeting listed and then ranked the issues, strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities facing the County in order of importance. The key responses from each meeting (those that received the highest priority by the participants) are summarized below. A comprehensive listing of all issues raised throughout the County is provided in an appendix to this report. It should be noted that the listed ideas are only the opinions and perceptions of the residents who participated in the visioning exercises.

#### **Planning Task Force Workshop**

On February 2, 2000 a project kickoff meeting was held with the Planning Task Force for the Clay County Comprehensive Plan. The issues receiving the highest priority by the Task Force are as follows:

Issues receiving the highest priority:

- Sprawl
- Support business growth in County
- Natural resource protection and preservation
- Inability to attract new industry
- Maintain strong ag. base (feedlots and ag-business)
- Solid waste disposal and new laws on recycling
- Balancing commercial/industrial growth with agricultural resources
- Planned utility corridors

Weaknesses and threats receiving the highest priority:

- Inaccurate perceptions of taxes and regulatory environment (public perception)
- Lack of higher paying jobs to retain youth
- State-funding and mandates
- Governmental focus on regulation - not cooperation
- Lack of interest from state government to Greater Minnesota

Strengths and opportunities receiving the highest priority:

- Ag land
- Ag industry - specifically Sugar beets
- People (quality)
- Educational opportunities/facilities
- Variety of geographic resources and original, native landscape
- Technology existing - human resources and potential (GIS) retain students
- I-94/I-29 corridor potential for international trade

**Barnesville Workshop**

On March 23, 2000 an Issues Workshop was held at the Barnesville Senior Center in Barnesville, Minnesota for the Clay County Comprehensive Plan. People attending were from Barnesville, Hawley, and surrounding townships.

Issues receiving the highest priority:

- Land-Use Conflicts
- Agricultural preservation
- Gravel mining practices
- Survival of small town businesses
- Water Quality & Conservation

Weaknesses and threats receiving the highest priority:

- Poor agricultural economy
- Lack of affordable housing
- Conflict between aggregate mining and native prairie
- Lack of interest and support from State Capitol

Strengths and opportunities receiving the highest priority:

- Natural resources variety: gravel, land & native prairie, diverse soils
- Recreation areas - County, State & Township parks
- Colleges and technical colleges
- Transportation system- railroad, airports, interstate highway
- Good work ethic

**Dilworth Workshop**

On March 30, 2000 an Issues Workshop was held at the Dilworth Depot in Dilworth, Minnesota for the Clay County Comprehensive Plan. People attending were from Dilworth, Moorhead, Hawley, Glyndon, and surrounding townships.

Issues receiving the highest priority:

- Recognize townships and their ordinances
- Urban sprawl
- MPCA feedlot permit rules too restrictive
- Agricultural land use conflicts (right to farm issues)
- Better distribution and representation for county decision-making

Weaknesses and threats receiving the highest priority:

- Conflict between planning and financial gain
- Inadequate land use plan
- Getting people interested in local government, not only in times of crisis
- MPCA Feedlot rules too stringent - lack of local control and voice
- Lack of concern for land owner rights & preserving property values

Strengths and opportunities receiving the highest priority:

- Law enforcement: low crime rate, safe place to live, cooperation between ND and MN
- Quality of life
- Good school system
- People
- A Republican Senator
- Lack of vacant farmsteads in Cass County, ND - MN people would move there because of lower taxes.
- Prairie resources on public and private lands including Clay County lands

## **Ulen Workshop**

On April 4, 2000 an Issues Workshop was held at the Ulen VFW in Ulen, Minnesota for the Clay County Comprehensive Plan. People attending were from Hawley, Hitterdal, Ulen, Moorhead, and surrounding townships.

### Issues receiving the highest priority:

- Public land doesn't pay taxes
- Eastern half of County doesn't get road development/maintenance equity
- Land Use conflicts: Residential vs. Feedlots
- Gravel mine reclamation
- Residential housing and other uses taking over prime ag land
- Lack of economic development in the small towns

### Weaknesses and threats receiving the highest priority:

- Better plans for feedlots
- Lack of tax base because of publicly-owned land, ie. DNR, etc.
- Mining reclamation enforcement
- Need more open, honest communication with County Dept. heads
- Difficult for young people to get into farming
- Better cross-section representation of the County on committees, etc.

### Strengths and opportunities receiving the highest priority:

- Law enforcement
- Clean air
- Good area to raise families
- Good agricultural land
- Close to FM area for medical, educational, manufacturing and businesses

This input combined with the background study findings and the subsequent goals and policies was used to draft a land use plan and related policies for the County.

## **County Vision**

At all of the workshops, participants were asked to complete a vision statement. These statements were summarized into general themes that are described below:

***Strong Agricultural Base.*** Maintaining Clay County's agriculture and its attendant rural area was a common theme expressed throughout the vision surveys. An ideal Clay County twenty years hence would encourage agricultural development and diversity and its continued importance in the County's economy and way of life.

Visions included the hope that: agriculture will continue to be economically viable; the County's

farmers will continue to be able to compete in a changing and diversified farm economy; the County will have a strong agriculture/agribusiness base; the County will support continued, planned growth of its urban areas while protecting rural agricultural lands and farming operations; and programs or assistance will be provided to encourage young people to stay on the farm. Some of the respondents predicted that the number of farms would continue to decline. Protecting Clay County's rural character was also a theme among some respondents. Zoning regulations would be amended to better regulate and allow land uses that are compatible in the rural areas. Open, rural areas would be preserved and cluster development would be encouraged to maintain rural areas.

**Planned, Sustainable Growth.** Most of the workshop participants felt positively toward growth and development as long as it is managed, well planned and sustainable. Respondents envisioned that: the County will continue to have a strong agricultural base with increased development of existing cities; commercial and industrial growth will be concentrated in Moorhead with residential development being concentrated in "suburban" areas of Moorhead and outlying cities; employment, retail and educational facilities will be focused within urban areas with good rural to urban transportation systems; development will be well planned, especially in rural areas; and the transportation system will accommodate safe, efficient travel as the County grows. The County would also take steps now to preserve future major transportation corridors to accommodate future growth. One respondent envisioned a County with one large urban area with satellite bedroom communities in outlying areas and another foresees the majority of development occurring in the western portion of the County. Other respondents were concerned about delineation between urban and rural land uses and feel that development needs will need to be balanced with preservation of natural areas, open spaces and agricultural lands. One participant suggested utilizing cluster development as a means of preserving rural areas.

Recycling efforts would increase greatly to help decrease the land needed for landfills. Serious environmental consideration will be given when siting a new landfill for the County.

**Strong Economy.** It was generally felt that Clay County's need to maintain a strong economic base, including strong commercial, industrial and agricultural sectors. An ideal Clay County will have a strong workforce and full employment. The County will have jobs and businesses that provide ample opportunity for residents to live and work in Clay County and not have to move to the Twin Cities.

Jobs will be available with wages that allow families to thrive on one income. The need to maintain a strong farm economy was also noted. Other visions included the growth of businesses and industry along the Highway 10 and Interstate 94 corridors; the ability to compete with Fargo; appreciation of home values; and more development opportunities in rural areas. Some suggested strategies for economic growth included the development of a convention center, making use of the County's natural resources (such as gravel and agricultural lands), and a comprehensive redevelopment of the riverfront to include boat docks, food services, clothing shops and other retail establishments.

The community would capitalize on the educational industry that exists in the area and develop

complementary and service industries to expand opportunities related to the institutions of higher education. Some respondents said that the Fargo-Moorhead area would unite their efforts for economic growth, finding strength in working together, rather than competing.

***Responsive, Cooperative Government.*** According to the workshop participants, Clay County needs a strong, responsive, visionary government, premised on cooperation and coordination. Some participants envisioned a County that enforces its well-planned codes and ordinances on all levels. For them, an ideal Clay County, in 20 years would: adopt County-wide zoning ordinances that, among other things, minimize aesthetic degradation; approve only a limited number of variances and conditional use permits consistent with thorough zoning standards; educate its citizens on land use and zoning principles and regulations; enforce its regulations; and make efforts to correct past land use decisions. Others felt that there should be an emphasis on cooperation rather than regulation. There would also be less competition and more cooperation and collaboration among cities and other communities within the County. Government would also provide important community services and infrastructure. Some specific visions for future County services included the development of a municipal/county water system to serve the Moorhead/Dilworth areas; the development of a transportation system around Fargo/Moorhead; and the provision of services that would allow elderly to stay in their own homes.

***Preservation of Natural Resources, Open Spaces and Recreational Opportunities.*** Participants generally envisioned a future in which natural resources are both protected and utilized for recreational and community facilities. The desire for resource protection and the preservation of open space was reflected in respondents' desires to convert some rural lands into wild grass and prairie flowers; preserve both rural and urban open spaces; have more open space in public ownership; and balance growth and development with the need to protect natural resources and maintain opportunities for future generations. Some suggested opportunities for passive and active recreation included: fully utilizing the Buffalo River Park and Conservancy for activities such as hunting, bird watching, cross country skiing, etc.; and developing recreational areas along all of the County's rivers (not just the Red River).

***High Quality of Life.*** Respondents expressed a desire to preserve and enhance Clay County's high quality of life. A high quality of life in Clay County 20 years from now would include: strong community pride; residential areas that are attractive, peaceful and welcoming places to live and raise families; and communities that are safe place to live, work and raise families. Many respondents also see a healthy school system as an important determinant to a high quality of life. In an ideal future schools would be community-based and increases in families would lead to increased school enrollments.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

### DEFINITIONS

The terms "Goal" and "Policy" are subject to a wide range of interpretation and application. Since it is desirable to have a common frame of reference, the following definitions are included:

**Goal**: A general statement of community aspirations and desired objectives indicating a broad social, economic, or physical state of conditions that the community officially agrees to strive to achieve in various ways, such as through the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Policy**: An officially adopted course or method of action intended to be followed to implement the community Goals.

The Goals and Policies spell out various roles and responsibilities for the County. To better understand the County's role for each Goal and Policy, a number of key terms are defined below with the County's corresponding responsibility:

**Create**: Bring about the desired goal, usually with County staff involved at all levels from planning to implementation. May involve County financial assistance.

**Continue**: Follow past and present procedures to maintain desired goal, usually with County staff involved at all levels from planning to implementation.

**Encourage**: Foster the desired goal through County policies. Could involve County financial assistance.

**Endorse**: Subscribe to the desired goal by supportive County policies.

**Enhance**: Improve current goal to a desired state through the use of policies and County staff at all levels of planning. This could include financial support.

**Identify**: Catalog and confirm resource or desired item(s) through the use of County staff and actions.

**Maintain**: Keep in good condition the desired state of affairs through the use of County policies and staff. Financial assistance should be provided if needed.

**Recognize**: Acknowledge the identified state of affairs and take actions or implement policies to preserve or change them.

**Prevent**: Stop described event through the use of appropriate County policies, staff actions, and finances, if needed.



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Promote: Advance the desired state through the use of County policies and staff activity at all levels of planning. This may include financial support.

Protect: Guard against a deterioration of the desired state through the use of County policies, staff, and, if needed, financial assistance.

Provide: Take the lead role in supplying the needed financial and staff support to achieve the desired goal. The County is typically involved in all aspects from planning to implementation to maintenance.

Strengthen: Improve and reinforce the desired goal through the use of County policies, staff, and, if necessary, financial assistance.

Support: Supply the needed staff support, policies, and financial assistance at all levels to achieve the desired goal.

Sustain: Uphold the desired state through County policies, financial resources, and staff action to achieve the desired goal.

Work: Cooperate and act in a manner through the use of County staff, actions, and policies to create the desired goal.

**GENERAL GOALS AND POLICIES**

**General Goal #1: Maximize the potential of Clay County as a thriving center for agriculture, business, and recreation, while maintaining and enhancing its livability.**

Policies:

1. Promote the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Plan that effectively plans for agricultural protection, land use, transportation, housing, economic development and environmental protection for Clay County.
2. Review the Comprehensive Plan annually and amend as necessary to ensure its usefulness as a practical guide for current and future development. Adhere to this Plan, which shall guide all zoning changes, as closely as possible to ensure consistent development policies.

**General Goal #2: Provide, maintain, and enforce standards for development that will enhance public health and the maintenance of a high quality standard of living.**

Policies:

1. Plan for land uses that support and enhance Clay County's ability to attract and direct quality development.
2. Formulate and enforce County ordinances to ensure development in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION/PUBLIC EDUCATION GOALS AND POLICIES**

**Citizen Participation/Public Education Goal #1: Encourage citizen participation in all aspects of County government, planning and community life.**

Policies:

1. Encourage volunteerism, participation in community activities and acceptance of community leadership positions.
2. Actively encourage and utilize resident participation in the local decision-making processes.
3. Explore the option of establishing an on-going citizen's advisory committee to oversee the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan. The committee would be "keepers of the vision" by having the responsibility for monitoring and informing the Clay County Board of Commissioners and Planning Department of the implementation progress and ongoing challenges facing the Plan.
4. Seek out creative ways to communicate this Plan's overall goals, policies and recommendations, as well as other County government activities and information, to the public through means such as newsletters, a web site and public cable access.

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION GOALS AND POLICIES**

**Intergovernmental Coordination Goal #1: Encourage on-going communication, coordination and cooperation among local governments within and surrounding Clay County that balances the interests of all in the region while maintaining both the identity of individual communities and local control for local issues.**

Policies:

1. Recognize the impacts surrounding jurisdictions have on planning and growth issues within Clay County, especially the Fargo-Moorhead urban area, in all County planning efforts.
2. Support and continue existing joint planning ventures in the areas of watershed management, transportation planning, libraries and other areas of multi-jurisdictional concern.
3. Pursue new collaborative planning efforts with regard to land use, education, transportation, parks, natural resources, public safety services, public facilities, sewer, water and other issues of multi-jurisdictional concern.
4. Maintain communications, and collaborate where appropriate, with state agencies involved in planning issues that affect Clay County, including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation, Pollution Control Agency, Department of Health, and others, as well as the corresponding state agencies in North Dakota when applicable.

**LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES**

**Land Use Goal #1: Establish a comprehensive growth management strategy for Clay County that promotes orderly and efficient growth of residential, commercial and industrial development while preserving the County's rural character.**

Policies:

1. Work with cities and Townships within Clay County to identify Planned Urban Growth Areas through this planning process around cities that have the potential to be served with an appropriate range of public services in a cost effective manner within which efficient and orderly growth can be facilitated over the next 20 years.
2. Maintain dialogue with affected local governments so that timely modifications to urban growth areas is accomplished.
3. Work with Cities and their adjacent Townships to facilitate orderly growth of the Planned Urban Growth Areas through the use of orderly annexation agreements.
4. Through this planning process, work with affected local governments to jointly identify proposed land uses in urban growth areas, and update as boundaries are modified.

5. Discourage development from occurring at unsewered urban densities outside of cities until urban services can be provided in an orderly and efficient manner.
6. Work with Cities to extend urban services to the Planned Urban Growth Areas in a timely fashion when economically feasible.
7. Work with cities within the County to create conceptual master plans for the identified Planned Urban Growth Areas that will identify, map, and preserve future transportation and utility corridors, areas for open space, and the preservation of natural resources.

**Land Use Goal #2: Support the long-term protection of agriculture in the County.**

Policies:

1. Recognize and support the agricultural character of the County in all planning efforts.
2. Establish clear and distinct zoning districts outside Planned Urban Growth Areas that provide for long-term agriculture and limit residential density in the agricultural areas of the County.
3. Allow and promote density transfers to permit cluster design techniques for non-farm, residential development as a means to concentrate development in less agriculturally productive areas and preserve large tracts of farmland, while still allowing farmland owners to benefit from development. (See Appendix A)
4. Explore the use of transfer of development rights, pre-mature subdivision restrictions, capital improvements planning (planning for staged, orderly urban services), conservation easements, purchase of development rights, a Land Evaluation Site Assessment (L.E.S.A.) program, and other unique zoning or other techniques outlined in the to protect the County's agricultural areas. These and other options are outlined in A handbook for Local Government and Planning for Agricultural Land Preservation in MN: A handbook for Planning Under MN Statute, Chapter 40 put out by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.
5. Support agricultural operations against nuisance complaints when such operations are being conducted according to generally accepted farming practices through "right-to-farm" provisions, requiring setbacks for/from animal agriculture operations, and limiting non-farm residential development in agricultural areas of the County.
6. Utilize soil survey information in planning for the best use of the land in rural areas.
7. Identify prime agricultural areas and develop effective strategies to ensure their preservation and viability.
8. Encourage the enrollment of prime agricultural areas in the state's Green Acres Program, Agricultural Land Preservation Program and/or other federal, state or local conservation programs.

9. Examine tax policies and practices that keep taxes on land used for farming in line with its value for that use.

**Land Use Goal #3: Plan for the orderly and efficient growth of residential development in the County.**

Policies:

1. Encourage residential growth to occur in an orderly and compact manner in and around cities within the Planned Urban Growth Areas so that new developments can be effectively served by public utilities and the character and quality of the County's agricultural areas can be maintained and enhanced.
2. Require urban overlay plats to be filed along with large-lot subdivisions within the Planned Urban Growth Areas.
3. Outside of the Planned Urban Growth Areas, encourage non-farm residential development to be clustered on small-lots in and around unincorporated rural communities and in areas that are considered marginal for agricultural use.
4. Encourage the use of community wastewater treatment systems, or "package plants", for residential clusters.

**Land Use Goal #4: Plan for the orderly, efficient growth of commercial and industrial development in the County through the application of appropriate zoning districts and regulation.**

Policies:

1. Encourage new commercial and industrial developments that require public sewer and water to locate within the County's cities in accordance with their Comprehensive Plans.
2. Encourage commercial and industrial developments, which do not need public sewer and water, to locate within Planned Urban Growth Areas in locations with adequate road service.
3. Allow for home occupations in agricultural areas and small, community-based retail in the County's unincorporated rural communities.
4. Provide appropriate access management for commercial and industrial development along Highways 10, 336, 9, 32, 34 and Interstate 94 at areas preferably near major intersections with County Roads and each other.
5. Avoid environmentally sensitive areas and/or ensure mitigative measures are taken when siting commercial and industrial development within the County.

**Land Use Goal #5: Plan land uses and implement standards to minimize land use conflicts.**

Policies:

1. Prepare and adopt a land use plan that designates land use areas to ensure desirable land use patterns and minimize conflicts.
2. Require adequate transitions between different land uses through appropriate land use planning and zoning standards.
3. 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.
4. Require phased end-use reclamation plans as a condition for a gravel-mining permit so that areas are reclaimed as they are done being mined.
5. Protect the County's aggregate resources from encroachment of incompatible residential and urban development through appropriate zoning and buffering requirements.
6. Encourage the location of commercial and industrial development in areas that avoid adverse impacts on residential areas.
7. Locate and design industrial and commercial developments to avoid truck traffic through residential or other potentially adversely affected areas.
8. Strengthen the County's land use ordinances related to feedlots in a manner that allows these uses in the agricultural areas, while protecting groundwater and surface water resources and mitigating potential adverse effects on surrounding properties.
9. Buffer areas between agricultural uses and potentially impacted surface waters.

**HOUSING GOALS AND POLICIES**

**Housing Goal #1: Maintain a high quality living environment in all residential areas and upgrade those in need of improvement.**

Policies:

1. Encourage the development of a balance of housing types throughout the County to meet the needs of all citizens, including young adults and senior citizens.
2. Establish a housing task force to identify housing needs, issues, goals and resources.
3. Work closely with Federal, State, and local agencies and organizations that can help the County meet its housing goals.
4. Encourage public-private partnerships to expand affordable housing and housing rehabilitation opportunities in the County.
5. Provide information to residents on the “This Old House”, “Habitat for Humanity” and other housing programs.
6. Develop and enforce the necessary codes to ensure the continued maintenance of the housing stock.
7. Explore expanding the role of the County HRA by allowing it to participate in housing development and redevelopment activities.

**PUBLIC FACILITIES GOALS AND POLICIES**

**Public Facilities Goal #1: Maximize public service efficiencies both through effective planning and management practices, and by exercising sound fiscal responsibility.**

Policies:

1. Continue to maintain community facilities and identify areas of improvement in a Capital Improvement Plan.
2. Promote maximum cooperation and assistance to other governmental agencies in planning and developing facilities to provide a high level of service and avoid duplication of services or facilities.
3. Continue to improve and update the County’s staff capabilities through the use of training, upgraded facilities and equipment, and improved management practices.

**Public Facilities Goal #2: Maintain adequate active and passive open space to meet the needs of the County.**

Policies:

1. Identify and map locations within Clay County that have both natural beauty and the existence of unique environmental, plant, animal, social, or historical features and focus any future park and open space areas in those locations.
2. Develop a park and open space plan that establishes policies and strategies for the long-term protection and recreational use of the County's natural areas.
3. Continue to support and implement pertinent recommendations from the FM COG's Metropolitan Bikeway/Pedestrian Plan.
4. Explore the development of County walking, bicycle, snowmobile and other recreational activity trails.
5. Adopt official controls to ensure that appropriate open space is provided with new development.
6. Promote the sharing of recreational facilities among area communities.
7. Continue to support funding for recreational and/or community education activities.

**TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND POLICIES**

**Transportation Goal #1: Provide and maintain a safe, convenient and efficient County transportation system for the movement of people and goods.**

Policies:

1. Continue to cooperate with MnDOT, Clay County Cities, Townships, the Fargo-Moorhead Council of Governments, and other agencies involved in transportation planning, to provide the most effective transportation system for Clay County.
2. Adopt and support FM COG and MnDOT Access Management Guidelines.
3. Maintain a transportation system that reinforces economic development objectives and provides for the efficient flow of people and goods from farm to market.
4. Prepare and continually update a transportation plan that identifies and designates all future roadways within the County by their functional classification, identifies and prioritizes transportation system improvements, and identifies potential funding sources for road construction and maintenance.
5. Extend local roads in an efficient manner consistent with the County's Transportation Plan.



6. Plan for necessary access improvements in the Transportation Plan to avoid congestion in areas planned for development.
7. Maintain funding for rural, low-volume roads and bridges.
8. Continue support for rural transit programs in conjunction with the Metropolitan Area Transit system.

**Transportation Goal #2: Enhance the aesthetic character and functional qualities of the transportation networks within the County.**

Policies:

1. Enhance major corridors into the County by encouraging local jurisdictions to upgrade unsightly areas by adding lighting, landscaping, directional signage and community identification signage.
2. Maintain the rural character of the County's State and County highway system by minimizing commercial and industrial development along those roadways outside of Planned Urban Growth Areas.
3. Locate and design industrial and commercial developments to avoid truck traffic on roads that are insufficient to handle capacities of such traffic.
4. Explore the use of "living" snow fences as a means to improve highway safety, reduce maintenance costs and improve roadway aesthetics.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POLICIES**

**Economic Development Goal #1: Cooperatively utilize existing and new resources for economic growth in the County.**

Policies:

1. Promote an on-going cooperative effort among the County, its Cities and Townships, the HRA, local Economic Development Authorities, local Chambers of Commerce, WCI, state agencies, local builders, business owners and residents to pursue a wide range of economic development opportunities.
2. Continue to support efforts to retain existing business and industry and facilitate their expansion as well as recruit additional ones.
3. Market the County aggressively to attract and expand diversified businesses.
4. Encourage value-added agricultural industries and businesses to locate in the County.

5. Encourage commercial and industrial development that is ancillary to agricultural uses and/or supports the County's agricultural economy (such as seed manufacturers, implement dealers, etc.)
6. Recognize the need to upgrade and expand existing County infrastructure to support and promote continued development.
7. Ensure that Clay County continues to have access to state-of-the-art telecommunication and essential utility infrastructure.
8. Promote the sustainability and health of small towns
9. Support small communities in retaining their local schools.
10. Continue to identify and tap into local and federal resources to enhance economic development.
11. Establish a task force to examine the County's role in economic development activities.

**Economic Development Goal #2: Ensure a quality labor force  
and promote living wage jobs.**

Policies:

1. Encourage and support training to maximize human resources and growth.
2. Encourage the availability of a range of housing types and values to accommodate and ensure an ample labor force.
3. Promote coordination of the educational system and the business community to ensure the availability of qualified workers.
4. Prioritize and match economic incentives to development commensurate with the living wage jobs and other economic benefits that it brings to the County.

**NATURAL RESOURCES GOALS AND POLICIES**

**Natural Resources Goal #1: Identify, protect, and preserve the County's high quality  
natural, scenic, cultural and open space areas.**

Policies:

1. Identify major woodland and prairie tracts, wetland areas, steep slopes, significant historic sites and other sensitive environmental areas within the County.
2. Develop strategies for the protection, preservation and/or acquisition of identified significant natural and historic areas where appropriate through a number of means such as conservation easements, land acquisition, grants, donations, etc.

3. Educate the public on tax incentives that are available for wetlands, prairie areas, etc..
4. Protect scenic values by controlling billboards and regulating signs, auto junkyards and other potentially unsightly land uses and practices.
5. Continue to monitor and inspect residential and commercial areas with on-site sewer systems to ensure that they function properly.
6. Continue to review and consider soil suitability for the placement of individual sewer treatment systems before the issuance of a permit.
7. Promote the utilization of private community sewer districts in areas with failing or potentially failing systems.
8. Utilize soil suitability information in planning new development.
9. Require all new development to comply with applicable storm water management plans and policies.
10. Promote the proper enforcement of wetland mitigation legislation, and support individual landowners efforts in the re-establishment of pre-existing wetlands by utilizing the wetland banking system. Replacement wetlands should be located outside of the same watershed only as a last resort.
11. Cooperate with appropriate watershed management organizations to develop strategies for the protection of the County's water resources.
12. Recognize the impact of surface water quality on groundwater resources, particularly in the Buffalo River and Buffalo Aquifer systems.
13. Continue to enforce shoreland regulations on the County's lakes, rivers and streams.
14. Continue to work with the Soil and Water Conservation District to update and implement the County Water Plan.
15. Continue to work to promote the effective management of solid waste and recycling; expand product development and markets.
16. Establish and utilize criteria for siting a new landfill that ensure any new facility has adequate access to appropriate roadway infrastructure, minimizes environmental impacts and minimizes impacts to other land uses.
17. Promote the proper use, storage, handling, recycling, disposal and application of chemicals throughout the County.
18. Discourage inappropriate development in flood-prone areas.

19. Balance the preservation of native prairie areas with mining of the County's gravel resources.
20. Evaluate fiscal impacts and long-term maintenance issues when deciding whether or not to support the acquisition of land for environmental protection purposes.
21. Enact a wetland ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Wetland Protection and Management Plan upon final review and adoption of that plan.
22. Adopt by reference the goals and policies of the County's Water Plan.
23. Coordinate and cooperate with other local units of government in developing wellhead protection plans, including identifying appropriate land use and pollution mitigation measures in wellhead protection zones.

**Natural Resources Goal #2: Develop flood hazard mitigation planning and implementation steps.**

Policies:

1. Identify and map flood hazard areas.
2. Determine past and future damage potential.
3. Identify all current mitigation efforts including gaps in current efforts.
4. Identify and evaluate actions that could be taken to reduce losses and eliminate hazards.
5. Coordinate with other entities and governments conducting mitigation efforts.
6. Select and prioritize actions the County should take including incorporating the hazard mitigation plan steps and strategies into the Comprehensive Plan.
7. Develop a detailed implementation strategy for hazard mitigation efforts.

**Natural Resources Goal #3: Protect and Enhance the County’s Rivers and Streams for Wildlife/Fish Habitat, Human Recreation, and Erosion Control.**

Policies:

1. Remove or modify low head dams on the Red River and tributaries to allow for fish passage to up stream-spawning sites.
2. Maintain or establish native vegetation and riverine forests along ditch, stream and riverbanks to run-off, reduce erosion and provide wildlife cover.
3. Support the “Greenway on the Red” initiative to create greenways along the Red River.
4. Support the re-establishment of sturgeon in the Red River tributaries.
5. Increase stream fishing opportunities by developing an access plan for the Red River and its tributaries. Develop partnerships with local government to secure more bank fishing sites.
6. Establish boat accesses with paved ramps and parking areas about every twenty-river miles apart along larger rivers.
7. Build/Maintain bank fishing facilities (Piers, Modified Bridges) in areas of historic use, especially near towns and bridge crossings.
8. Establish canoeing facilities along several navigable rivers, including carry-down accesses spaced for a variety of trip length options, portage trails and warning signs around dams and other hazards and well spaced primitive campsites.
9. Develop a system of paved and unpaved trails along rivers (greenways) for a variety of recreational uses (biking, running, walking, roller-blading, x-country skiing, snowmobiling, etc.)