

CHAPTER 2: County Vision Statements

Every plan begins with a vision of the desired end-state. The Comprehensive Plan Task Force considered the issues and opportunities facing the County in the foreseeable future and developed a set of Vision Statements that articulate a shared sense of direction for the County. These are broad statements that paint a “Big Picture,” for which the plan policies and implementation steps become the details. The Vision Statements interconnect and overlap; many of the recommendations presented in the topical plan chapters serve more than one Vision Statement.

The vision for Renville County is expressed in three overarching themes:

- Growth and Economic Vitality
- Community
- Unique Character

Vision Statement 1: Growth and Economic Vitality.

In Renville County, land will be utilized, employment opportunities developed, public investment made, and natural resources managed in ways that encourage growth that will be economically and environmentally viable over the long-term.

The vision of *growth and economic vitality* includes:

- **A diversified economy**, providing stability through changes in the rural economy, by
 - Developing tourism potential.
 - Capitalizing on other County resources.
 - Creating non-agricultural business and industry opportunities, such as information technology and alternative energy.
 - Encouraging and facilitating educational opportunities for the local labor force tailored to industry needs, including ag processing.
- **Increase in the population**, achieved by
 - Attracting living-wage jobs that retain and attract young people and support families.
 - Maintaining the existing stock of good value housing and increasing the availability of housing options.
 - Making quality of life investments in schools and recreation and other family support and amenities.

- **Energizing agriculture** to create major business opportunities, by
 - Preserving agricultural land through land use planning and zoning.
 - Investing in economic activities that add value to agriculture products.
 - Practicing sound management of agriculture-related environmental issues.
- **Prudence in new public investment**, including
 - Making efficient use of existing transportation and utility capacity.
 - Providing facilities and services needed to support economic activity.
 - “Right-sizing:” practicing good stewardship of public financial resources in the provision of public services.
- **Responsible use of land**, by
 - Locating new development in appropriate areas (considering efficient use of public services, compatibility with other uses, protection of agriculture and natural resources).
 - Practicing sound management of development-related environmental issues.

Vision Statement 2: Community.

In Renville County, citizens will take pride in calling the entire County their community, one where each city is a unique County “neighborhood,” where there are strong physical and perceptual connections between places and people, and where people take care of each other.

The vision of *community* includes:

- **Preservation of the small town, rural quality of life**, by
 - Supporting the strengths of individual communities including their Main Streets and neighborhoods.
 - Preserving a good school system.
 - Improving quality of life as needed: affordability, housing maintenance, environmental quality, selection of goods and services.
- **Support for community development** activities of individual cities, with a focus on what is best for the County as a whole, achieved by
 - Monitoring economic development efforts to help ensure best use of resources.
 - Developing Countywide planning and support for business development and retention, focused on shared information and joint marketing.
 - Seeking ways to share the benefits of local economic development throughout the County.

- Focusing Countywide efforts on developing non-traditional economic development opportunities such as housing and tourism.
- **Good connections between people and places**, achieved by
 - Continuing to provide well-maintained roads for safe and convenient movement of people and goods.
 - Maintaining and developing transit to meet evolving needs of persons with mobility limitations, i.e. growing elderly population.
 - Improving telecommunications infrastructure and access.
 - Providing good public information about resources and services, employment and business opportunities, community and recreational resources, etc.
- **Sustaining of families**, by
 - Supporting living wage job opportunities.
 - Promoting affordable housing, including resources for maintenance.
 - Ensuring access to health, education, and other services.
 - Engaging youth in civic life.
 - Increasing opportunities for intergenerational activities and support.
- **Providing for growing elderly population**, by
 - Expanding the range of housing choices, i.e. smaller, low-maintenance housing; transitional housing; assisted living.
 - Ensuring affordability of housing.
 - Providing access to clinics and other health services; outreach.
 - Providing good transit.
 - Seeking opportunities for intergenerational activities and support.
- **Involvement of migrant and other new resident families** as part of the County community, including
 - Addressing issues of adequate and affordable housing.
 - Designing transit to meet the variety of needs.
 - Tailoring service outreach and delivery to special population needs.
 - Building bridges across cultural differences.

Vision Statement 3: Unique Character.

In Renville County, the scenic beauty, natural and historic resources, and tremendous recreational opportunity that are particularly, but not only, associated with the Minnesota River Valley, will be understood, treasured, and protected; the potential of these special attributes for tourism, as well as for enjoyment by County citizens, will be fully realized.

The vision of *unique character* involves:

- **Protected and improved water quality**, particularly that of the river, by
 - Reducing non-point pollution.
 - Protecting and restoring shoreland.
 - Promoting best management practices.
- **Defined and developed recreational and other visitor destinations**, achieved by
 - Planning with particular focus along the river, but including and making connection to other opportunities in the County and through the region.
 - Developing a use plan for each park, best suited to its characteristics.
 - Identifying and promoting the County’s historic resources.
 - Recognizing the potential of agri-tourism in the County.
- **Trail development** to provide recreation and connect resources, by
 - Focusing on river and other key destinations.
- **Development of the potential of the Minnesota River Scenic Byway.**
- **Coordination** of recreational and other tourism development with land use planning, and other economic development efforts.
- **Marketing of County resources**, by
 - Identifying, packaging, and communicating County’s amenities and assets to appropriate audiences.
 - Coordinating with neighboring counties, communities on marketing and tourism.