

CHAPTER 3: Land Use

The **Growth and Economic Vitality** Vision theme calls for agriculture development, economic diversification, agriculture preservation, and responsible use of land as a way to encourage growth that is economically and environmentally viable over the long term.

The **Community** Vision theme supports the vitality of the small town, rural quality of life as a source of County pride and ownership.

The **Unique Character** Vision theme directs that land planning be done in concert with environmental protection and the development of the potential of the river and the County's other special features.

The land use goals and policies below serve these elements of the Vision for Renville County. Figure 6 depicts the Renville County Generalized Land Use/Zoning Map.

PLANNING/GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Goal 1: *Develop a cohesive Countywide land use pattern that ensures compatibility and functional relationships among activities and between jurisdictions.*

Policies

1. Build on strengths throughout the County such as prime farmland and livestock industries, recreational facilities, industrial base, quality rural communities, open space, and strong local governments. Renville County has many valuable resources. New development should be compatible with existing conditions, existing land uses, and designed for the protection of the environment.
2. Provide for and encourage opportunities for public participation in land use decisions.
3. Coordinate land use planning between the County, the townships, and the 10 municipalities.
 - a. Provide periodic forums and meetings to encourage communication among County and township officials related to land use planning.
 - b. Encourage the use of orderly annexation agreements between cities and townships to allow for urban expansion consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan*.
 - c. Explore options for developing a system for cities and townships to submit, for review by County staff, those proposed projects that potentially could have impacts outside of the local jurisdiction.

Figure 6—Generalized Land Use/Zoning Map

4. To the extent possible, apply *Zoning Ordinance* development policies and regulations consistently and uniformly.
5. Approve changes to geographic land use designations and related zoning classifications only when it can be demonstrated that such modifications are in the best long-term interest of the County. Said changes shall occur only when they will promote land use compatibility and meet the goals and policies of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

Goal 2: *Plan for growth by regulating land use to accommodate a logical and compatible extension of urban and rural growth patterns.*

Policies

1. Examine requested land use changes in relation to adjoining land uses, site accessibility, storm water management systems, availability, and consistency with the *Comprehensive Plan* and policies.
2. Require adequate lot sizes and quality buildings for all types of development. Lots requiring on-site sewage systems and wells must be adequately sized to allow for the development and potential expansion of the use proposed. Quality construction promotes higher property values and fewer issues with premature replacement and blighted conditions.
3. Make orderly transitions between distinctly differing types of land uses that do not create a negative (economic, social, or physical) impact on adjoining developments.
4. Regulate incompatible land uses so that conflicts are minimized. This shall be accomplished through the use of natural and man-made physical barriers (i.e., topography, drainageways, transportation corridors, etc.) open space, landscape screening, and/or physical orientation of lots and buildings.
5. Implement the performance standards of the *Zoning Ordinance* to ensure the compatibility of land uses within the County.

Goal 3: *Locate new development where it will stabilize communities, respect the natural environment, and be served in a fiscally responsible manner.*

Policies

1. Support infill urban development within existing city boundaries to maximize the use of land and take advantage of in-place municipal infrastructure.
2. Accommodate future growth within designated urban growth expansion areas for each municipality.

- a. Establish the urban growth expansion areas in the *Land Use Map*, sized to accommodate growth through 2020, configured to reflect the service capacity of the County, including public sewer, water, and roadways, and located at the boundaries of Renville County cities where public services and utility infrastructure exists or can be expanded to address future land use needs.
 - b. Permit development within urban expansion areas at a density that preserves buildable land for future development and is consistent with the adjacent cities' requirements and public service expansion capabilities.
 - c. Reserve urban growth expansion areas for urban land uses intended to be served by public utilities and services.
 - d. Allow residential land uses within the urban expansion areas only in development patterns that facilitate urban growth and extension of public utilities. The *Land Use Map* and *Zoning Ordinance* shall allow for an urban expansion district with densities of residential dwelling units to not exceed one dwelling unit per 10 acres. Additionally, the density of residential dwelling units could be increased to four dwelling units per 10 acres if a master subdivision plan is submitted and approved showing how each lot could be re-subdivided into lots meeting the minimum lot standards of the adjacent city when public sewer becomes available.
3. Promote compatible land use boundaries or shared boundaries between urban and rural areas as a means of protecting future urban expansion areas.
 4. Integrate new residential, commercial, and industrial development with the natural characteristics of the Minnesota River Valley through proper land use planning, implementation of the *Zoning Ordinance*, and preservation of attractive natural amenities.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

Goal: *Maintain and enhance the character of the established rural residential neighborhoods.*

Policies

1. Develop and implement zoning performance standards to require adequate maintenance and investment in residential properties.
2. Allow for reasonable growth and subdivision within rural residential development consistent with the character of the area.

3. Ensure that development is consistent with the zoning standards established in the Rural Residential or the Urban Expansion Districts.

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL

Goal 1: *Support the industry of agriculture and related business and industry as a major contributor to the economy of the County.*

Policies

1. Prioritize the business of agriculture and agricultural-related industry as the focus of the County's economy.
2. Provide locations for agricultural-related business and industry within those areas designated as "A," Agricultural District. Direct ag-related industrial development to sites that offer a degree of isolation from less intensive land uses and to allow the industries to operate without providing environmental or nuisance concerns.
3. Direct commercial and industrial development to locations that are consistent with and complement commercial agriculture operations.
4. Site commercial/industrial development so that it does not adversely impact natural or scenic resources, such as rivers, creeks, or lakes.
5. Coexistence with agriculture will be a priority in locating non-agricultural land uses in areas of highly productive farmland.

Goal 2: *Support and work to develop rural and small town business and industry as a way of maintaining the small town, rural quality of life.*

Policies

1. Promote appropriate business and industry development in rural areas and cities as a means of enhancing the quality of life and prosperity of County residents.
2. Work with officials of the 10 cities in coordinating land use development, transportation projects, and community facility improvements in ways that enhance main streets, business areas, and industrial development areas.
3. Focus land use, housing, and economic and community development efforts to build communities, sustain and grow the population base, and to make Renville County a safe, attractive, and prosperous place to live and work.

Goal 3: *Create a land use plan and development regulations that support economic and community development.*

Policies

1. Encourage commercial and industrial development that is consistent with the County's land use plans and environmental regulations.
2. Direct appropriate commercial and industrial development into those areas designated as "CI," Commercial/Industrial District.
3. Work with the officials of the 10 cities in directing the development of business and industry that requires urban service connections into appropriate municipal locations.
4. Promote commercial and industrial development in planned areas and provide for storm water management, transportation, and other support services. Minimize land use conflicts that would unduly impede commercial and industrial growth in areas planned for those uses.
5. Allow home businesses/occupations provided they are accessory to the residential use and are consistent with the zoning performance standards.
6. Develop and implement zoning performance standards to require adequate separation, maintenance, and investment in commercial and industrial properties.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Goal: *Ensure that development is accompanied by a sufficient level of supportive services and facilities (roadways, storm water management systems, public services, etc.).*

Policies

1. Deny any premature development or subdivision that:
 - a. Is inconsistent with Renville County's *Comprehensive Plan*.
 - b. Lacks necessary adequate local roads to serve the subdivision or residence.
 - c. Lacks adequate sewer and water capabilities.
 - d. Lacks adequate storm water drainage or storm water treatment facilities.
 - e. Is inconsistent with Renville County's environmental protection regulations.

2. Require infrastructure improvements associated with new development to be financed by the developer.
3. Allow commercial, industrial, or other large institutional uses provided that all traffic, infrastructure, storm water management, and compatibility issues are addressed.
4. Require that new development provides sufficient land area to accommodate a replacement soil treatment and dispersal area for replacement of the proposed sewage treatment system.
5. Maintain and update as necessary the Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) inspection and maintenance program for residential, commercial, and industrial properties.
6. Develop and implement an ongoing five-year capital improvement plan, which allows the County to properly finance public improvements to support growth.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT/FARM PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION

Goal 1: *Maintain a strong agricultural base in the County that is economically and environmentally sustained and enhanced.*

Policies

1. Protect agricultural producers from development that results in the significant loss of farmland, potential land use conflicts, or complaints from residential neighbors.
2. Promote the use of concentrated or clustering development concepts to encourage the preservation of natural features and prime agricultural land.
3. Promote the use of agricultural best management practices, such as conservation cropping systems, conservation tillage, nutrient management, pest management, terraces, waste management systems, water and sediment basins.

Goal 2: *Minimize the conflicts between farming operations including animal livestock facilities and existing rural residential or urban development.*

Policies

1. Promote compatible land use patterns on shared boundaries between urban and rural uses as a means of protecting future urban expansion areas and rural development.
2. Cluster residential uses in areas which are less productive and which do not conflict with the primary land use.

3. New or expanding livestock operations shall be governed by the regulations of Renville County and the State of Minnesota as applicable to ensure compatible land uses and for environmental protection.

Goal 3: *Protect active farming operations from the encroachment of conflicting residential land uses through the use of land use planning and zoning regulations.*

Policies

1. Maintain the prime agricultural land in the areas designated as “A” Agricultural District where the density of residential dwelling units shall not exceed one dwelling unit per 40 acres in a quarter-quarter section.
2. Allow for limited rural residential development in the *Land Use Plan* and *Zoning Ordinance* of not more than eight dwelling units per 40 acres in a quarter-quarter section in acres of non-productive land or areas with natural amenities and features so as not to conflict with active farming operations.

Goal 4: *Support state and federal programs designed to assist farming operations to stay economically viable.*

Policies

1. Support state and federal programs that maintain agricultural use in areas so designated by the County.
2. Support conservation and natural resource management programs provided by the Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District.
3. Support educational and public informational services provided by the University of Minnesota Extension Service.