

CHAPTER 10: Implementation

The *Comprehensive Plan* presents a common vision for Renville County focused on the three themes of promoting **growth and economic vitality**, celebrating and enhancing the sense of **community** among its citizens, and realizing the potential of the **unique character** found in its natural resources. To achieve this vision, the Plan establishes a framework for guiding development in the areas of land use, community development, transportation, housing, community facilities, natural resources, and parks, trails, and historic resources.

This Plan will be implemented through regulatory controls, public investment and management, communication and incentives.

REVIEW AND REVISION

The County will review proposed changes to the plan seeking active citizen comment making amendments where appropriate through the following actions:

1. All *Comprehensive Plan* amendments should be submitted to the Planning Commission for review. After a Public Hearing has been held, the Planning Commission should make a recommendation to the County Board who then makes a final decision. The County Board may hold another Public Hearing before deciding to approve or disapprove the *Comprehensive Plan* amendment. Criteria to use when deciding upon the acceptability of a plan amendment: include (a) a mistake in the *Comprehensive Plan*; or (b) changes in the community or issues that were not anticipated by the Plan.
2. At five or seven-year intervals, the entire *Comprehensive Plan* should be reviewed and modified to ensure that it continues to be an up-to-date expression of the County's goals and intentions.

REGULATORY CONTROLS

The County will use its regulatory authority to protect and improve existing assets through the following steps:

1. **Amend and implement official land use controls.** These controls, adopted by the County in 2001, as amended, relate to zoning, subdivision, sewage and waste treatment, Minnesota Wild and Scenic River, shoreland, mining, feedlots, flood plains and essential services. Much of the implementation of land controls will take place as development proposals come forward. Effective implementation of the updated SSTS controls will require use of County, state, and federal funding sources to provide programs for the continuing update of existing systems that have failed or are in need of repair and maintenance to conform to County regulations. The County may consider allowing neighborhood managed and maintained communal sewage systems if an adequate program is established for the ongoing maintenance and repair without the need for

County involvement. These systems may be appropriate for cluster housing developments in the County.

2. **Commit to enforcement of codes and ordinances.** The *Comprehensive Plan* specifically identifies code enforcement related to housing maintenance, nuisances, and public safety to maintain and improve the quality of life throughout the County. It also identifies the need to maintain law enforcement in parks, including addressing off-trail activity, use of motorized vehicles in prohibited areas, and other inappropriate behavior, as part of the strategy to promote park usage, preserve natural resources, and ensure public safety. The County can investigate cost-effective ways of increasing enforcement, such as seasonal intern programs and joint service delivery with municipal enforcement officers.
3. **Develop new ordinances or ordinance amendments.** Recommended are:
 - a. Zoning Ordinance amendment to address goals and policies of the *Comprehensive Plan*.
 - b. Subdivision ordinance amendments to:
 - i. include requirements to support denial of premature subdivisions, including consistency with the *Comprehensive Plan*, adequate access, ability to serve the property with central or individual sewer systems, adequate stormwater facilities, and consistency with environmental protection requirements.
 - ii. incorporate access control consistent with the access control guidelines outlined in the *Comprehensive Plan*.
 - c. Public right-of-way management ordinance to control the impact of utilities, telecommunications companies, and contractors on County-owned property. The Association of Minnesota Counties has developed a model ordinance that the County can use as a starting guide.
 - d. Development of signage controls and performance standards for business development along the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway. The timing of this would depend upon progress on promotion and use of the Scenic Byway.
 - e. Review and amend the Solid Waste Ordinance to address goals and policies of the Solid Waste Management Plan.
4. **Develop additional tools for land use management.**
 - a. Promotion of additional urban growth expansion areas. The County should work with municipalities in developing growth boundaries beyond current city boundaries and encourage them to develop their own comprehensive plans. The

current *Land Use Map* includes the urban growth expansion areas created by the cities of Olivia and Bird Island through their own comprehensive planning processes.

- b. Promotion of orderly annexation agreements. The County can facilitate discussion between municipalities and townships in developing orderly annexation agreements that identify future growth areas, define the criteria for annexation, and manage land use in the interim period between the adoption of the agreement and the actual annexation. Assurances to both cities and townships as to the location, timing, and land use provided for in the agreement can avoid costly, disputed annexation hearings. Creation of urban growth expansion areas by each of the cities in the County would be the final step in defining future development areas in the County.
- c. Consideration of the use of natural resource protection overlays. The County may utilize natural resource protection overlays to preserve significant rock outcroppings, view sheds, tree stands, or habitat areas that are not already protected within the County. A district could be created and added to the County *Land Use Ordinance*. The regulations could prevent or limit development and mineral extraction from areas that are identified as a part of a natural resources inventory.
- d. Potential commercial/industrial development site identification. The current *Land Use Map* designates no areas for future commercial and industrial developments. The County should cooperate with local governments to identify potential siting areas based upon a set of criteria. Sites for differing types of manufacturing, industrial, or business warehousing uses would be focused in areas within or around municipalities based upon the need for sewer and water services. Identifying sites provides a tool to direct development where it will have the least amount of impact but will be adequately served with access, utility, and other siting needs and would assist in business attraction and retention efforts.
- e. Transfer of development rights to protect natural areas or prime agricultural land and allow for compensation to landowners for restrictions on development. This concept allows for the County to establish districts that would be set aside as sending and receiving sites for development rights. In order to preserve open space or important natural features and view sheds in the Minnesota River Valley, areas would be identified and the property owner could sell the right to develop to a property owner in a receiving site. The purchased rights would be used to build a more dense development than what would have been otherwise permitted. Once development rights are sold, a deed restriction or covenant is attached to the title of the property prohibiting future non-agricultural or open space land uses. The market will regulate the value of development rights. The receiving sites could be designated within existing and future Urban Expansion Districts. The transfer of development rights could also be used in conjunction with cluster developments as discussed below.

The County may utilize transfer of development rights as one of the tools to protect natural areas or prime agricultural land. An ordinance would need to be adopted and implemented by the County to formalize the process. While such an ordinance may not be needed at this time, it may serve as an important tool if development pressures continue, especially in the Minnesota River Valley.

- f. Cluster development ordinance to allow for grouping residential structures on a portion of the development site while maintaining the remainder of the site as open space. The number of allowable units would be set in the ordinance but would be based on a desirable density for a particular area. The physical layout of the development could be based on the physical constraints of the property, opportunities of the site, and the ability to preserve natural and open spaces. This concept could be effectively used within the Minnesota River Valley to provide groupings of homes in a concentrated area while preserving significant open space and natural areas. The cluster development concept would also work with both transfer of development rights in that the cluster could be a receiving area for more density.

The County could allow a cluster development at this time with the Planned Unit Development provisions of the *Land Use Ordinance*. The County may need to develop a cluster ordinance to address specific development and density issues if a number of cluster developments are proposed in the County.

The developed portion of a cluster project would need to be constructed at a density in which subsurface sewage treatment systems will function properly and in conformance with the County regulations. A density of four dwelling units per 10 acres is a common cluster density that is now utilized in the Urban Expansion District. The County may also consider allowing neighborhood-managed communal sewage systems if proper allowances for ongoing maintenance and repair are provided as part of the development agreements.

INVESTMENT AND MANAGEMENT

The County will be strategic in how it makes expenditures and manages public resources, taking the following actions:

1. **Develop an annual, multi-year capital improvement program (CIP).** The CIP should include all County departments that make significant capital expenditures, including infrastructure, facilities, equipment, and vehicles. It should identify expected improvements over a period of five years, including costs and funding sources. During preparation of the CIP, opportunities for interdepartmental coordination and cost-saving should be identified. For information and coordination purposes, the CIP can include or reference major investments (such as trails or highway improvements) being made by

other governmental entities in cases where they will affect County facilities. The CIP would be prepared in advance of the annual budget.

Projects recommended by the *Comprehensive Plan* that should be programmed include:

- a. Infrastructure in support of economic development projects.
 - b. Improvements to County roads and bridges.
 - c. County facility improvements.
 - d. Improvements to County parks.
 - e. Paving of the Scenic Byway.
 - f. Trail development, including trailhead improvements.
2. **Develop an overall policy direction for allocation of capital resources** that sets priorities for public investment and identifies the appropriate use of available fiscal tools. A capital allocation policy can provide informal guidance to staff preparing the CIP and to the County Board as it reviews staff recommendations, or it can be a formal tool for ranking proposed improvements. The policy should include conformance with the *Comprehensive Plan* among the criteria for inclusion of a project in the CIP.
 3. **Establish operating budget policies that**
 - a. Provide for on-going employee training and professional development.
 - b. Ensure staff has access to current public management technology. Up-to-date software for budgeting, finance, taxation, management of resources such as roads and ditches, and GIS-based property records and management, among other County duties, allows for cost-effective service delivery.
 - c. Carry out a long-term plan for staffing. For example, the *Comprehensive Plan* identifies an eventual need for a parks manager as the parks are developed and use increases. Other recommendations which have implications for staffing are building code administration, increased law enforcement in parks, and aggressive pursuit of outside funding for improvements.
 4. **Develop performance measures** for County services and conduct periodic reviews. Continued fine-tuning of service delivery will maximize resources and contribute to the desired quality of life in the County.
 5. **Adopt the functional classification map.** The functional classification plan will then be used as a basis for investment and access control.

6. **Consider the potential road jurisdictional transfers** as described in the Plan and develop a priority listing and timetable for entering into discussion with the appropriate townships. This could be a topic of discussion at a County/municipal retreat. Following initial exploration, the first formal step is to create a Memorandum of Understanding among affected parties outlining the process for negotiating jurisdictional changes.
7. **Develop a manual of road management policies** reflecting Best Practices and covering topics including, but not limited to, parking control, traffic control, special interest signs, traffic markings, lighting, road closings and detours, snow removal, and dust control.
8. **Review and update the housing study** based upon the 2010 Census and including input from social service and other appropriate agencies to inventory the current housing supply and needs. This study will provide a baseline of data from which decisions relating to housing can be made. This would address:
 - a. Assisted-living housing arrangements for elderly residents.
 - b. Quality affordable rental units for elderly residents.
 - c. Future housing needs for seasonal laborers.
 - d. Special needs housing for persons with physical or development disabilities.
 - e. Affordability for working individuals and families.

This would support coordination among the HRA/EDA, municipalities, private sector, and non-profits in the development of housing to meet identified needs.

9. **Continue use of the natural resources inventory focused on the Minnesota River Valley.** The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has prepared both a biological survey and an aggregate study of Renville County. The County should work with the DNR to build upon these studies to prepare and fund a thorough natural resources inventory focused on the Minnesota River Valley. This inventory should be the basis for developing regulatory tools, a GIS map layer, incentives, and funding toward the protection/management of lands that may become attractive for development and/or mining. Appendix C lists funding resources for natural resource study and protection.
10. **Engage appropriate parties in development of park projects.** The Plan identifies park and trail development as priorities for public investment. Specific recommendations which will require proactive coordination with others are:
 - a. Investigation of opportunities for development and management of trails.
 - b. Coordination with federal and state agencies and non-profit groups and partnerships including the DNR, the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS),

municipalities, and Tatanka Bluffs on joint development opportunities including the Green Corridor Project and the Minnesota River Waterway Trails Project.

- c. Consultation with the DNR and SWCD on vegetation management and protection during park development.

11. **Aggressively seek funding for identified improvements.** The Plan recommends new levels of investment in housing, parks, trails, and natural resource protection. The HRA/EDA will be the key agency in identification of funding sources and development of revolving loan funds for programs that will have the most impact for economic and community development. Appendix C includes listings of resources appropriate to these areas. The County should evaluate the need for devoting additional staff resources to grants writing.

COMMUNICATIONS

The County will make better use of its existing resources and promote successful project development through enhanced communication and coordination, including the following actions:

1. **Maintain a County commitment to annual meetings and/or retreats with municipal and township elected officials and staff.** Retreats not only allow officials to focus on key issues of interest but also can be effective forums for surfacing opportunities for coordination and cost and/or facility sharing. Depending upon issues, participation in a retreat can be broadened to include other agencies involved in public health, education, natural resource protection, etc. Potential retreat topics identified through the comprehensive planning process include land development, business attraction, housing (especially for older residents), diversity, health care, and youth.
2. **Establish processes for early coordination between municipalities and the County on development and public investment planning.** Coordination efforts would include incorporating opportunity for municipal review and input to the County's annual CIP and budget and developing a systematic way in which the cities notify the County during the planning phase of all public works projects planned within communities that may impact the County. This early coordination would allow for investigation of opportunities for cost-sharing, facility-sharing, effective project scheduling.

There should also be a system whereby all comprehensive plans, annexation proposals, rezonings, or site plans of project within one-half mile of the boundaries of municipalities are shared and reviewed, allowing the County or adjoining jurisdictions to make comment and provide input before or at the appropriate public hearing. Coordination on land development planning should also involve review and input by utilities.

3. **Be proactive in committing staff resources to interagency efforts that forward County objectives.** For example, the County should make active involvement in the

Scenic Byway Alliance by appropriate County staff a high priority. Continued involvement in the TH 212 planning is another example.

4. **Coordinate community development activities.** The HRA/EDA, in cooperation with Renville County's municipalities, should coordinate its community development efforts, especially as they relate to attraction and retention of business and industry. The goal of the jurisdictions should be to work as a team to attract industry to Renville County not as separate entities competing for the same business. The HRA/EDA will need to determine its role and how the process will be coordinated in determining appropriate business and industry locations. Additionally, the HRA/EDA will need to research a program of corporate cost and review potential sharing arrangements among the jurisdictions of the County to alleviate the issue of competition for the same business.
5. **Convene a series of discussions among representatives of the County, municipalities, and state and regional officials related to coordination of housing issues and programs with the County.** This would be more focused and action-oriented than a broad housing discussion that might be the focus of an annual retreat. The purpose would be to determine how to best coordinate the provision and administration of housing programs to reduce redundancies and help define roles. It would also help the County develop a legislative agenda related to housing.
6. **Establish agreement on roles and responsibilities among the variety of agencies involved in natural resources.** Natural resource protection and management emerged as a high priority during the *Comprehensive Plan* development process. The County, the SWCD, the watershed districts, and the DNR are among the agencies that bear responsibility for natural resources within Renville County. A clear understanding of roles will be very helpful in moving forward in a cost-effective manner. Some opportunities for consultation among agencies include the development of stormwater management efforts, transition from Project Riverbend to Wild and Scenic River designation, the recommended natural resources inventory, and natural resource protection during park development.
7. **Build on existing examples of multi-agency cooperation,** including the Human Services PACT 4, business and school partnerships, and multi-county public health planning.
8. **Initiate a meeting with the many telecommunication service providers to present concerns and establish an action strategy regarding telecommunication service.** Telecommunication service is critical to the competitiveness of the County. Renville County should be assertive in bringing concerns to the providers in an organized manner and to campaign for infrastructure that supports high-speed internet and other information technology, including legislative and regulatory strategies, in order to keep the County competitive for business development and resident service.
9. **Educate County residents, business interests on new ordinances.** The County could create a summary of new and amended ordinances and provide the information through

newspaper articles or a newsletter that would be sent to all residents of the County with the summary. Copies of the ordinance will need to be provided for view at the County offices and on the web. The County should also create a developer's packet of ordinance information and applications to assist in facilitating the development process.

10. **Develop a citizen communications plan** with the objectives of advertising County services and increasing local knowledge of and use of County resources such as its parks, historic resources, transit, natural resource protection programs, housing rehab assistance, and economic development tools. Recommended are:
 - a. Continued development and use of a County newsletter circulated within the County.
 - b. Continued development and promotion of the County's web page.
 - c. Hosting of periodic "neighborhood forums" throughout the County, each focused on a topic of common interest but also used as an opportunity to provide information about County services, parks, and other resources.
 - d. Providing a County presence at significant public gatherings such as the County fair and local celebrations to advertise services, communicate regulations, and promote use of parks and other facilities.
 - e. Developing a resident satisfaction survey to help plan service improvements.
11. **Develop a tourism plan** to promote the natural amenity of the Minnesota River Valley, the Scenic Byway, historical sites, the proximity to Upper Sioux Agency and Fort Ridgely State Parks, and the opportunities for year-round recreation in the County parks. The plan could be developed in conjunction with the County, municipalities, the Renville County Historical Society, the Lower Sioux Indian community, and others.

The County should work with the Minnesota Office of Tourism for assistance and placement of County sites and facilities on the Experience Minnesota web site. The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) also provides opportunities for promotion and financial assistance. The DEED programs related to tourism are found in Appendix C.

12. **Develop and implement an annual legislative agenda** to communicate with congressional and state representatives Renville County's priorities for laws, programs, and appropriations. The *Comprehensive Plan* recommendations to which a legislative agenda would be particularly appropriate include funding for housing, transit, and trails; special projects such as the Minnesota Valley History Learning Center; laws governing provision of telecommunication services; incentives for health care providers to locate in rural areas; and natural resource protection, including Wild and Scenic River designation.

INCENTIVES

The County will encourage positive action by the private sector through provision of incentives by continuing to do the following:

1. **Provide technical assistance for business retention and attraction.** A primary role of the Renville County HRA/EDA has been and will continue to be providing technical assistance to existing businesses looking to expand in the County, start up businesses, and in attracting businesses and industry to the area. Projects will require the coordination of local, state, regional, and possibly federal officials and programs in which the staff of the County will need to play the central role.
2. **Provide financial assistance for existing and potential business and industry.** The Renville County HRA/EDA can focus on two methods of providing financial assistance to existing and potential business and industry. One is to create a County business loan program and the other is to provide assistance in developing financial packages through local banks and the programs of the Department of Trade and Economic Development and the Southwest Minnesota Foundation.
3. **Provide programs to train and develop workers to fit business and industry needs.** The County, in order to facilitate economic development efforts, must be prepared to offer programs to train and develop workers to fit business and industry needs. HRA/EDA staff will need to work with local school districts and educational institutions in the region to provide opportunities for community education and linkages to higher education. The high schools can continue to enhance school-to-work programs and develop community education programs that address the needs of the work force. The County can also facilitate training programs to accommodate expanding or potential business in the County that require specialized skills or experience.
4. **Provide programs for housing rehabilitation and development.** The HRA/EDA works with County municipalities to most effectively use limited resources for improving housing quality and supply.
5. **Promote available programs for natural resources protection.** There are numerous programs to assist landowners in carrying out conservation efforts on their land. The County and other agencies will continue to administer these. Advertisement of availability should be incorporated into communication efforts, as funding permits.

RECOMMENDED PRIORITIES

The County should establish a one-year action agenda, focused on an achievable list of desired accomplishments, and should update this agenda annually. This will allow the County the necessary flexibility in implementing the *Comprehensive Plan* as new issues and opportunities result in changed priorities. It will also give clear direction to staff and ensure accountability and commitment to Plan implementation.

The following is a list of key recommendations from which to establish an action agenda:

1. Adopt a functional classification plan and continue road and bridge improvements.
2. Continue involvement in the Highway 212 planning.
3. Institute a Capital Improvement Program that includes a capital investment policy.
4. Amend the Solid Waste Ordinance.
5. Incorporate agricultural development goals into the County HRA/EDA development plan.
6. Review and update the housing study based on the 2010 census.
7. Develop a tourism plan.
8. Begin discussions regarding potential roadway jurisdictional transfers.
9. Develop a road management policy manual.
10. Expand transit service.
11. Investigate opportunities for a separate ATV facility.
12. Continue implementation of recommended improvements in County parks.
13. Increase involvement in and support of the Scenic Byway Alliance work; participate in trail initiatives.
14. Work with telecommunication providers to improve high-speed Internet access and telecommunication services to all Renville County residents.
15. Continue to identify and initiate roadway jurisdictional transfers.
16. Promote housing development and rehabilitation based upon a housing study.
17. Promote rural/farm career/lifestyle opportunities through promotion, support, and advocacy of agriculture and agri-business.