

LAND USE PLAN

This section of the Plan describes the proposed objectives, recommendations and policies which have been developed for McLeod County in response to the issues, concerns, and goals identified during the review and analysis stages of the planning process. The following pages are intended to serve as a guide for the future development of land in the County and as a reference for the amendments to the zoning and subdivision regulations which will be necessary. The goals, objectives and policies have two purposes: (1) to link the issues to the solutions of the plan and (2) to guide the County officials in future land use planning decisions that are not explicitly stated in this plan document.

Figure 4 illustrates a pattern of the land use planning areas described in the following goals, objectives and policies. The map includes the following elements, which are to be regulated according to the policies set forth below and the County zoning and subdivision regulations.

- Cities
- Urban Expansion Areas
- Agricultural Protection Area
- Conservation Areas
- Wildlife Management Areas
- County Parks
- Rural Housing Concentrations
- Commercial and Industrial Concentrations

Not illustrated on Figure 5 because of the scale of that map are three areas:

- **Floodplains:** Boundaries are defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and development regulations have been written by McLeod County in a manner consistent with model ordinance of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.
- **Lake and River Shorelands:** Land within 1,000 feet of any lake or 300 feet of defined streams. The County has written land development regulations consistent with the model ordinance of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.
- **Wetlands:** Wetlands are defined and regulated by the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and McLeod County through the Wetland conservation Act of 1991.

The Plan contains policies that address these areas.

The goals, objectives and policies have been organized into three categories to coincide with the identified planning issues as follows:

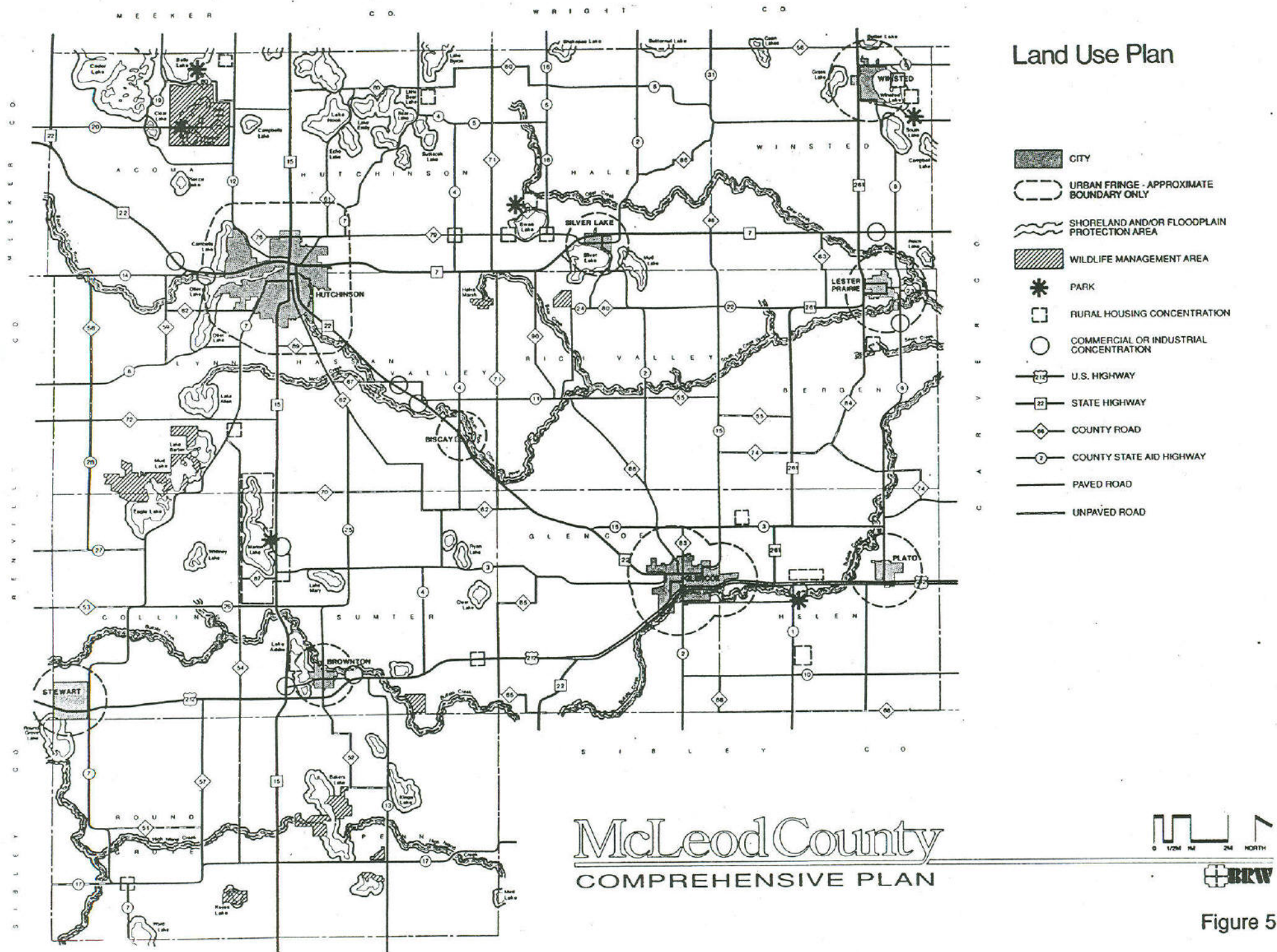
1. Growth Management

Goal 1: Promote cost-efficient and attractive urban development in the cities and agricultural, agriculturally-related or very low-density housing development in the townships.

Goal 2: Make the most efficient and economical use of public funds and investments.

Goal 3: Preserve the long-term agricultural use of the more productive soils in the county.

Goal 4: Administer the Land Use Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance in a clear, consistent and equitable manner.



2. Environmental Protection

Goal 5: Promote the wise use of land, water, and other natural resources along with significant historic and archaeologic resources for the long-term benefit and enjoyment of County residents.

3. Economic Development

Goal 6: Promote good-quality, fiscally-responsible economic development in McLeod County through land use planning.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Growth Management

Goal 1: Urban and Rural Areas.

Promote cost-efficient and attractive urban development in the cities and agricultural, agriculturally-related or very low-density housing development in the townships.

Objectives:

- A. *Encourage residential, commercial, and industrial development within municipalities, where services are available.*
- B. *Encourage residential, commercial or industrial development on the fringes of the cities in a manner which:*
 - 1. *Is consistent with city plans for street and drainage rights-of-way.*
 - 2. *Is consistent with city land use planning.*

3. *Does not economically preclude eventual extension of city sewer and water lines.*
- C. *Preserve rural character.*
- D. *Protect the fiscal health of the county, townships, cities and school districts.*
- E. *Help the cities become or remain economically vibrant, physically attractive and safe places to live.*

Goal 2: Fiscal Responsibility.

Make the most efficient and economical use of public funds and investments.

Objectives:

- A. *Avoid the duplication of facilities or services at all levels of government -- state, county, city, township and school district.*
- B. *Avoid the premature or unwarranted replacement or enlargement of public facilities.*

Goals 1 and 2, along with their supportive objectives, are the heart of the McLeod County Land Use Plan. While non-farm housing development is only a small concern in McLeod County at this time, it has the potential for becoming more serious. Proper planning and regulation at this time could help avoid many problems down the road.

It is important to recognize that there are aesthetic, social, fiscal and economic benefits to be realized by keeping a clear distinction between the purpose of the cities and the purpose of the townships.

Aesthetic and Social Benefits. If the townships remain truly rural and do not try to compete with the cities as low density suburbs, it will be apparent that the cities are independently located in a rural area rather than being part of the western sprawl of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Both township and city residents would benefit from this, as the city residents would feel that their towns have a greater sense of place and that the country is only a short distance away; township residents

would benefit by retaining more of the open, quiet, natural beauty of the country that they have long enjoyed. In addition, a smaller township population size would help maintain the rural social structure and form of government.

Economic Benefits. There are economic benefits to both city and township of not blurring their roles. The experience of similar townships has shown that an extended pattern of very low density housing (1 to 5 acre lots) can be very damaging to the budgets of the township, county and school district since the tax revenues are not sufficient to cover the increasing demands for services and facilities. Rarely can areas without sewer and water services, adequate fire and police protection or other services capture enough commercial or industrial development to make up the shortfall from the very low density housing. A better fiscal strategy is to keep costs low by not creating demands for services and facilities so that a small tax base is sufficient.

It is essential that the cities not be precluded from growing efficiently and economically on their fringes, which occasionally happens when poorly planned large lot housing is allowed to be built there. Cities, with their better roads, utilities, compact size, police and fire, etc., are better positioned to attract and maintain high quality commercial and industrial development.

It is critical that the cities are successful economically as they are the engines that will drive the entire county economy, provide jobs for many of the people who reside in the townships, and pay the great majority of the taxes for the county and school districts.

Everyone gains if the various units of government can be efficient and wise in their planning and construction of facilities and provision of services.

For instance, the provision of urban-type services in rural areas is very expensive and unnecessary for the primary land use in the rural areas -- agriculture. Residents who move to rural areas should expect to adapt themselves to the rural lifestyle and not expect the community to change to suit their needs.

Another example could involve roads -- probably the most expensive single type of facility provided by state, county and local governments. Care must be taken that the function of a given roadway, whether a "local" two-lane road or a four-lane highway, not be ruined by improper land use planning that leads to unwise design changes (e.g., new intersections) or too much traffic. In a similar vein, it also makes

sense to not create more urbanized areas than necessary as numerous small cities would be less economical than a lesser number of somewhat larger cities.

Policies

1. **Coordination between Cities and Townships.** To ensure the highest quality future development, there will be close communication and coordination between the cities and the townships in the development of the areas adjacent to existing city limits.

The County will continue to invite City review of subdivision requests within the Urban Expansion Area to encourage coordination.

Municipalities will initiate contact with the adjacent Township boards to discuss growth and development issues of mutual concern. Meetings between these governmental bodies will be held at least annually.

2. **Urban Expansion Area.** The existing Urban Expansion Area of the McLeod County Zoning Ordinance will be revised to better facilitate its intended purpose of coordinating the transition between urban and rural areas of the County.

The zone would generally encompass all areas within one mile of the city limits of Hutchinson and all areas within 1/2 mile of the city limits of the other cities in the County. The boundaries will be set through agreements between each City and the appropriate Township. If the City and the Township cannot agree, the County Board will establish the Urban Expansion Area boundary.

Cities and Townships will be encouraged to jointly develop plans for land use, zoning and the extension of collector and arterial streets, drainage ditches, and utilities within 1/2 mile. Township development will respect and not encroach on these identified future rights-of-way.

3. **Permitted Uses in the Urban Expansion Area.** Permitted land uses in the Urban Expansion Area would include farms and non-farm residential uses.

4. **Minimum Lot Sizes in the Urban Expansion Area.** The minimum lot size in the Urban Expansion Area would be 1-1/4 acres. Any new lot must prove through a percolation test that there are suitable locations for a primary and a replacement septic tank drainfield.

Before any land can be subdivided in the Urban Expansion Area (whether through platting or a metes and bounds description) the City and Township must conduct a review of the seller's entire contiguous property to ensure that the land division will not interfere with nor render economically burdensome the possible future extension of public streets or utilities. Each new lot must have a shape and width that allows easy resubdivision if or when city utilities become available in front to it.

5. **City-Township Planning Committees.** Committees will be formed to advise the County Planning Commission and County Board of Commissioners on matters of land use planning, zoning and public improvements in each Urban Expansion Area. These committees will be composed of representatives of the affected city and township(s). The Committees will agree upon land use plans, zoning district boundaries and the alignment and priority of future roads, ditches and utility extensions. The committees will be advisory to the County Planning Commission in matters of planning and development application review.
6. **Annexation.** Municipalities will continue their present practices of considering annexations only when petitioned, although plans will be in place for the delivery of municipal services to areas adjacent to the city.

Goal 3: Agricultural Preservation.

Preserve the long-term agricultural use of the more productive soils in the county.

Agriculture is an important component of the regional economy and farm operators will be protected, to the extent possible, from development which may contribute to land use conflicts and/or nuisance complaints.

Objectives:

- A. *Protect agriculture and farm operators from development which may contribute to the loss of farmland and land use conflicts and/or nuisance complaints.*
- B. *Discourage subdivision of the county's best farmland for housing and other non-farm uses.*
- C. *Allow limited non-farm development provided that the impacts on agricultural land and activities are minimized.*

A significant portion of the McLeod County economy and lifestyle is based upon farming. This county is among the top in the state in terms of crop production and has a high percentage of its soils rated as prime for agriculture.

It is essential to remember that once farmland is converted to some other use, such as housing, it will never again be devoted to crops. Housing, or other urban land uses, can occur in many locations, however. American farmland is an important resource to be guarded for future generations.

It is beneficial to acknowledge that agriculture is an important industry in McLeod County (and elsewhere) and that farming and very low-density rural land uses are legitimate and permanent activities in their own right and not just holding zones for urban development. With a proper agricultural preservation effort, there will still be plenty of land devoted to residential growth for the county to capture its share of regional expansion.

Policies

The County's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations will be amended to reflect a commitment to the preservation of its prime agricultural resources, while also allowing for limited non-farm development.

1. **Agricultural Protection Area.** An Agricultural Protection Area will be created for the all areas outside the Urban Expansion Area except locations regulated by the County Shoreland or Floodplain zoning districts.

The McLeod County Planning Commission believes that an Agricultural Protection Zoning District should be created for the area outside the Urban Expansion Area, however, they wish to retain zoning districts currently established except the Conservation Zoning District.

The principal land uses in the Agricultural Protection Area would include farms and farm housing. Agriculturally-related development such as feedlots or grain elevators may be allowed under conditional permits.

2. **Housing Density in the Agricultural Protection Area.** The basic allowable housing density in the Agricultural Protection Area would be 1 house per Quarter-Quarter Section (40 acres). A higher housing density would be allowed on sites that are "difficult to farm." (See Policy 5, below.) See also policy 4 regarding existing land parcels.
3. **Minimum Lot Size in the Agricultural Protection Area.** The minimum lot size for each home site would be 1-1/4 acre. However, before a building permit is issued for any parcel, it must be demonstrated that the soils are suitable for a septic tank and drainfield and a back-up drainfield site. (Refer to Policy 12, page 59.)
4. **Existing Land Parcels.** Any recorded parcel of land existing at the date of the adoption of a revised zoning ordinance will be allowed at least one housing unit if access and sewage requirements are met.
5. **Parcels Difficult to Farm.** McLeod County wishes to attract housing to those areas that are not good for agriculture so as to reduce the pressure for non-farm development on prime agricultural land. Therefore, the County will consider allowing smaller lot sizes than would otherwise be allowed if a parcel has any of these characteristics:
 - Small and physically isolated from other farm fields by roads, steep hills, ditches or similar features
 - Wooded (this word will be defined during the amendment of the County Zoning Ordinance)

6. **Siting of Houses.** During the subdivision review process, the Zoning Administrator will encourage the siting of the buildable lots and/or building envelopes in locations which will provide for minimal loss of prime agricultural land.
7. **Clustering.** When more than one lot is created, either simultaneously or at a later date, every effort will be made to provide for contiguous (clustered) residential lots where appropriate. McLeod County will encourage clustering of dwelling units, preferably on sites with woodland or less-productive soils, to preserve as much land as possible for agriculture, to minimize visual intrusions on the rural environment, to aid school bus pickups, and to respond sensitively to the diverse characteristics of the landscape. Minimum lot sizes and septic tank siting and performance requirements must still be respected, however.
8. **Farm Residences.** The McLeod County Zoning Ordinance should, of course, continue to allow for one primary farm residence on each farm. This residence would count as one of the allowed housing units on the Quarter-Quarter Section upon which it is located. A second home for family members would continue to be allowed on farm parcels, although the owner will be encouraged to site it in such a way as to facilitate its later sale as a separate non-farm residence.
9. **Commercial and Industrial Development in the Agricultural Protection Area**

McLeod County will allow commercial or industrial development adjacent to existing commercial or industrial development and along a county or local road, or in locations consistent with a City land use plan. Agri-businesses are often appropriate in the Agricultural Protection Area. Appropriate commercial developments are those that serve only the local, not county-wide, market (e.g., convenience grocery store). Such developments may be allowed by rezoning.

All rural commercial or industrial development must have proper landscaping, access, parking, visual screening for outdoor storage, and building facade. Rural industrial development should be a type that does not generate high amounts of traffic. Commercial and industrial development must submit a site plan for review and approval by the County Planning Commission.

Commercial and industrial development in the Agricultural Protection Area should have these characteristics:

- Access must be from a paved road
- Should not require city sewer or water service
- Should not compel widening or paving of County Roads
- Needs a spacious and isolated location
- Would not adversely affect nearby housing or farming.

The location of a commercial or industrial access driveway must receive approval by the County Engineer or appropriate Minnesota Department of Transportation engineer.

If access is provided by a County Road or County State-Aid Highway, the suitability and width of the road surface for the types of vehicles anticipated must be approved by the County Engineer.

10. **Commercial and Industrial Concentrations.** Several locations are noted on the Land Use Plan Map, Figure 4, in which there are concentrations of businesses in the Agricultural Protection Area. These are appropriate locations for additional commercial or industrial development if the other criteria listed in Policy 10, above, are met and the development conforms with the County's regulations for the siting, design and maintenance of on-site sewage systems.
11. **Rural Housing Concentrations.** The locations noted as Rural Housing Concentrations on the Land Use Plan Map, Figure 4, would be appropriate locations for additional housing if the minimum lot size of 1-1/4 acres is met and all County regulations for on-site sewage systems are satisfied. These locations may be useful for keeping the housing density in other parts of the Agricultural Protection Area low by clustering the development activity. Other such existing concentrations of housing may be identified by the County Planning Commission.
12. **Urban-Generated Land Uses.** McLeod County will allow certain urban-generated land uses in the rural area provided they are served by adequate public services and, to the extent possible, do not interfere with agricultural activities.

The County acknowledges that certain facilities exist in the rural areas that require isolated and spacious locations but are intended to serve the urban or entire county public. These facilities may

include campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks, trails, waste disposal installations, gun clubs, mining sites, landfills and similar facilities that are often public or semi-public in nature.

13. **Utility Easement Conflicts.** The County will examine the extent to which agricultural resources are impacted by the conversion of above-ground utilities to underground utilities along easements which traverse agricultural lands. If necessary, strategies will be developed to address the issue.

14. **Home Occupations**

McLeod County will allow home occupations in the rural residential zoning district if the work is done totally inside the house or garage, there is not outside storage of goods or materials, no buildings are erected or enlarged that would not normally be allowed for, no more than one outside employee is engaged, and there are no nuisances for the neighbors. Home occupations in the agricultural protection district will also be allowed in a similar manner to include accessory building. Home occupations in accessory buildings exceeding 2,000-square-feet or more than one non-resident may be allowed by conditional use permit.

Goal 4: Land Development Regulation.

Administer the Land Use Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance in a clear, consistent and equitable manner.

Objectives:

- A. *Clearly define the relationships between, and the responsibilities of, the townships and the County in the administration of the subdivision and zoning regulations.*
- B. *Modify existing policies and regulations, and develop new programs as necessary, to address land use and development concerns, improve administrative efficiency, and protect the health and welfare of the County's residents.*

Policies

1. **Use of Plan and Zoning Ordinance.** McLeod County will utilize the County Land Use and Zoning Maps to maintain separation of incompatible land uses.
2. **Landsplits.** McLeod County will review any landsplit to determine any possible conflict with the County Land Use Plan.
3. **Zoning Ordinance Update.** McLeod County will update its zoning ordinance to implement this new comprehensive land use plan.
4. **Administration of Ordinances.** Administration of the Zoning and Subdivision regulations will be divided among the County and the Townships based upon the following Administrative Responsibilities, Table 5.
5. **Development Fees.** The County and Townships will develop a fee structure that reflects: the administrative responsibilities outlined above; the level of staff effort required for each task; the type of project/land use; and the value of the project.
6. **Application Forms.** County officials will review the various application forms and submission requirements with the Planning Commission and town board members to determine what improvements might be made in the forms themselves.

TABLE 5
ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Subject Area	Responsibility	
	Townships	County
Subdivision Approvals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Plan • Town Board makes recommendation to County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist applicants • Collect fees • Planning Commission reviews • County Board approves • Inspect work
Zoning/Land Use Approvals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance to applicants • Issue permits • Collect administrative fees • Inspect work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance to applicants • Assist township zoning administration when requested • Review plan for code compliance • Assign address • Collect plan review fee
Conditional Use Permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Board makes recommendations to County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Commission reviews plan • Assist applicants • Collect fees • Review plan • County Board approves
Rezoning Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Board makes recommendation to County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Commission reviews plan • Assist applicants • Collect fees • Review plan • County Board approves
Zoning Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate complaints • Refer complaint, findings, and recommendation to the county zoning administrator • Inspect construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County takes appropriate action

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Subject Area	Responsibility	
	Townships	County
Shoreland and Floodplain Regulations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist applicants • Collect fees • Review plan • Issue permits • Inspect construction
Individual Sewage Treatment Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue permits • Inspect construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance to applicants • Review plan • Collect fees • Assist township administrators as requested
Zoning Variance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review plans • Town Board makes recommendations to County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist applicants • Collect fees • Review plan • Board of Adjustment Approval

7. **Training Programs.** The County will develop training programs for Township Zoning Administrators, Planning Commission members, members of the Board of Adjustments, and Town and County Board members to familiarize them with:

- The zoning text
- Its relationship to the Comprehensive Plan
- The project review and approval process
- The procedures for conditional use permits, variances, and rezoning applications.

The County Zoning Administrator will hold meetings at least annually with Township Zoning Administrators to review problems and to provide refresher courses on administration of the ordinance.

8. **Individual Sewage Treatment System Permitting.** Responsibility for individual sewage treatment system permits and inspections will rest with the townships. The County will provide assistance to applicants in designing systems and will review the plans. The County will implement an ISTS permitting system and continue to review legislative changes that may be required.
9. **Shoreland and Floodplain Development.** The County will be responsible for the review, approval and monitoring of all development proposed within the shoreland protection or floodplain areas to assure compliance with state and federal laws.
10. **Mobile Homes Parks.** Mobile home parks (courts) must be served by municipal sewage facilities.
11. **Salvage Yards.** Salvage yards will continue to be allowed as a conditional use in the Agricultural Protection and Industrial Zones. Salvage yards will be required to include a landscaped buffer along the front lot line and along side yards adjacent to residential and/or agricultural zones or uses. The operations will be required to be conducted behind an opaque fence of at least eight and not more than ten feet in height.
12. **Zoning Ordinance Format.** The organizational structure of the Zoning Ordinance will be revised to provide for better readability and coherence.

Other concerns expressed over the provisions of the zoning code will be addressed through training and education programs/materials developed by the County and made available to local officials and the general public.

13. **Setbacks.** The County zoning ordinance should be amended to establish these setbacks for buildings and trees or shrubs:

Type of Road	Setback from Centerline of Road	
	Building	Trees and Shrubs
State Highway	130	100
County Road	130	75
Township Road	100*	60

* Decreases to 60 feet in the Urban Expansion Areas.
Building/Trees and shrubs shall comply with municipal setbacks in the Urban Expansion Area.

The County will use the official mapping process to protect future rights-of-way in areas where major road improvements are planned or proposed.

14. **Site Plan Review.** To encourage protection of agricultural and environmental resources and to preserve the aesthetic quality of the rural landscape, site plan review criteria will be developed for commercial, industrial, and non-farm residential developments to include:

- Topography
- Soils
- Woodlands
- Major wetlands
- Proximity to the floodplain
- Surface water runoff
- Sewage treatment system location
- Setbacks
- Relationship to adjacent lots
- Landscaping

The standards will be incorporated into the existing subdivision review process and be administered by the County Zoning Administrator.

15. **Subdivision Regulations.** The County's Subdivision Regulations will be completely revised and updated to include: improved illustration and explanation of the street design criteria; mandatory dedication of all new public rights-of-way; improved parkland dedication provisions within the urban expansion area; and a revised organizational structure for improved readability and ease of use.
16. **Zoning Definitions.** In order to implement the recommendations contained in this Plan, and to assure that the uses permitted under each zoning classification are compatible, revisions to the existing definitions of agriculture and farming are needed. The definition of agriculture will exclude agriculturally-related industrial development.

Agriculture: The cultivation of land for crops with the intention of making a cash profit. May also include animal husbandry, tree nurseries and orchards.

Farm: A farm is a forty-acre or larger parcel of land used primarily for commercial agricultural production, except that it does not include non-farm Agricultural activities. A farm will include related structures required for the agricultural operations and the secondary processing, selling, storing, or transport of the farm produce.

Environmental Protection

Goal 5: Resource Stewardship.

Promote the wise use of land, water, and other natural resources along with significant historic and archaeologic resources for the long-term benefit and enjoyment of County residents.

Objectives:

- A. *Promote the proper management of natural resources of McLeod County (surface water, ground water, woodlands, farmland, wildlife, and varied topography) for future generations.*

- B. *Protect the natural scenic qualities of McLeod County while accommodating low-density rural development.*
- C. *Provide adequate solid waste collection and recycling programs for County residents.*
- D. *Reduce the negative impacts of landfill and gravel pit operations on County residents.*
- E. *Achieve orderly development of mineral resources through sound mining management practices, mitigation of adverse environmental impacts, and planning for the re-use of the sites.*
- F. *Preserve evidence of the cultural and social history of McLeod County.*
- G. *Minimize air and water pollution.*
- F. *Promote the goals and objectives of the McLeod County Comprehensive Water Management Plan. Specifically, protect the county's water resources through programs and policies that address agricultural runoff, surface water management, and wetland, shoreland, and floodplain protection.*

McLeod County is endowed with numerous lakes, streams, and wetlands areas, mineral deposits, prime agricultural lands, and varied topography which enhance the quality of life and provide opportunities for the economic development of the region and its municipalities. Proper management of these resources, to include adequately addressing solid and hazardous waste issues, will assure that future generations will find McLeod County an attractive place to settle.

One of the reasons many people moved to McLeod County or continue to live and work here is the high quality of the natural environment. The relevance of this subject can be expected to increase, not decrease, as time goes by and the population becomes even more aware of its importance.

Policies

To address the above concerns, the following policies have been developed.

1. **County Landfill.** Local officials will continue to work with the landfill operators to assure that the facility is properly maintained and that the most sophisticated environmental protection methods are employed in any areas of future expansion.

County officials will work with officials from adjacent counties and the State to determine the extent to which the landfill will continue to serve as a regional facility.

2. **Gravel Pits.** Mining operations will be required to submit and adhere to plans for the environmentally sensitive operation and restoration of the pits. The zoning provisions pertaining to gravel pits will be revised to provide for:

- Setbacks from adjacent property
- Protection of groundwater or surface water resources.
- A description of proposed haul routes
- Identification of who is responsible for maintenance of the site and impacted roads
- Expiration of permits, with provisions for renewal.

3. **Demolition Landfills.** A Conditional Use Permit will be required to deposit demolition solid waste in a gravel pit.
4. **Rural Density.** The density of development in rural areas will be kept very low so as to help protect groundwater from septic tank pollution, maintain open, natural views, and protect woodlands, wetlands, steep slopes and other natural features.
5. **Conservation Areas.** The County will revise its zoning ordinance to protect these locations of high water table, extensive wetlands and lakes. A minimum residential lot size of approximately 5 acres will be considered. Sewage system siting, design and maintenance requirements will, of course, be enforced in the Conservation Area as they will be throughout the county.

6. **Wildlife Management Areas.** The County will cooperate with the public agencies or private groups that own and administer the nine natural open space areas.
7. **Shorelands.** McLeod County has incorporated into its Zoning Ordinance management standards for land development within 1,000 feet of all lakes and within 300 feet of rivers. These standards meet or exceed the requirements of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The minimum riparian lot sizes are:
 - Natural Environment Lakes: 2 acres
 - Recreational Development Lakes: 1 acre
 - General Development Lakes: 1 acre

The minimum riparian lot size along a river is 1 acre.

The ordinance also contains standards for setbacks, shoreland alterations, storm water management, agriculture, mining, sewage treatment and land subdivision.

8. **Wetlands.** Wetlands will be recognized for their many benefits: aesthetics, water purification, groundwater recharge, water runoff control, wildlife propagation, and property value. McLeod County will use its zoning regulations and building permit power to protect wetlands and will cooperate with the efforts of state and federal agencies. Development or agriculture will not be allowed that would diminish the natural qualities or hydrologic functions of wetlands except as allowed by state or federal regulations. The County Zoning Environmentalist will become administratively knowledgeable of the wetland protection regulations resulting from the Wetland Conservation Act of 1991.
9. **Floodplains.** The provisions of the County floodplain regulations will continue to be enforced. These regulations and the geographic area of protection will be updated as warranted.
10. **Other Features.** Steep slopes, unstable soils, woodlands and other sensitive environmental features will be protected as far as practical in the natural, stable state. Development in or near such areas may be required to provide larger lot sizes, enhanced setbacks or other conditions to protect the sensitive features.

11. **Site Disturbance.** The County Planning Commission, when reviewing residential plats and commercial or industrial site plans, will aim to ensure that the designs are adapted to the natural setting and disturbance is minimized. While some disturbance is always involved in land development, it should be kept to a reasonable minimum.
12. **Septic Systems.** McLeod County will work to protect groundwater through proper siting, design and maintenance of all septic systems. Development in rural areas will only be allowed where tests indicate that the soils are suitable for on-site treatment systems over the long-term. Septic tank sites and their design will meet the requirements of Minnesota Rules Chapter 7080 and MPCA regulations. A site proven suitable for a backup (replacement) leaching field for all septic systems will be required. Septic systems should be required to meet minimum standards when property is sold or transferred by mortgage, contract for deed or other device.

The County's on-site system ordinance should contain application and review procedures and requirements for the issuance of on-site system permits. All applications should include subsurface testing. Subdivision preliminary plats should be approved only upon a determination that the soils in the platted area generally are suitable for the installation of on-site systems consistent with the ordinance requirements. The ordinance should contain installation, inspection and acceptance procedures. The County ordinance should include inspection and maintenance requirements. The program should also provide for recordkeeping, remedial action, enforcement, public education, and the bonding and licensing of installers.

The McLeod County Individual Sewage Treatment System (ISTS) Committee will continue to review the county's compliance with the 1994 Minnesota ISTS Act.

13. **Surface Water Drainage.** McLeod County will coordinate the provision of proper surface water drainage through the *McLeod County Comprehensive Water Plan*. Site planning and land use patterns will be regulated to protect the quality of runoff consistent with the guidelines of the County Water Quality Plan. Natural watercourses will be utilized to the extent feasible while minimizing alteration of their course or character. Detention ponds shall be used to reduce peak runoff to streams and ditches as well as to improve the quality of runoff water. Existing county ditches will be mapped and maintained.

14. **Agricultural Runoff.** In agricultural areas, the County will promote careful use of all farm chemicals and soil conservation practices. The location and operation of feedlots will continue to be carefully monitored to protect against ground and surface water pollution and general nuisances.
15. **Contaminated Soils.** The spreading of soil contaminated with petroleum must be approved by the Township Board of Supervisors before being spread in that Township.
16. **Historic Preservation.** Promote the preservation or study of historic and archaeologic features and artifacts through reconnaissance of development sites having high potential for such features and through cooperation with the programs of the state and county historical societies.

Economic Development

Goal 6: Growth Promotion.

Promote economic development in McLeod County through sound land use planning.

Objectives:

- A. *Increase the tax-base of the county in order to reduce the burden on individual tax-payers.*
- B. *Help provide more and better job opportunities for county residents.*
- C. *Reduce the need to commute outside the county for employment.*
- D. *Diversify the local economy.*

One of the best ways for a city or a county to promote economic development is create a well-planned, efficient and attractive community. Important siting criteria for industry are desirable places for the owners and employees to live, an adequate supply of properly educated or trained employees, streets and

utilities that meet needs, and fire and police protection. County and local land use planning can help address these needs so that the attractive attributes of the community can be used in the promotion efforts of economic development groups.

Policies:

1. **Land Use Plan.** The McLeod County zoning ordinance and map will designate locations suitable for commercial or industrial development.
2. **Locations Encouraged.** McLeod County will encourage commercial and industrial development where city services (water and sewer) are available or can be economically extended.
3. **Planning Coordination.** McLeod County will coordinate its land use plan with the land use plans of the cities within the county.