

## 3: GOALS AND POLICIES

The establishment of a plan intent, goals, and policies is an important step in the long-range planning process for the county. When developed with public input and supported by stakeholders, these statements can be used to effectively guide growth and development decisions for Nicollet County into 2040. This chapter outlines an overall plan intent statement for the Comprehensive Plan, which is supported by goals and policies specific to each of the plan's elements.

The **Plan Intent Statement** was used to guide the development of the plan, and should be referenced as long-range decisions are made. The goals and policies for each element support the plan intent and can be used as decision-making tools.

The goals and policies of this plan were developed to help guide elected and appointed officials, county staff, residents, and other stakeholders as decisions are made. Each **Goal Statement** provides an outlook for a desired condition in Nicollet County. This may be represented by existing conditions that should be preserved, or by changes that may be needed to achieve that goal. **Policy Statements** provide a course of action that should be considered during decision-making. Policy statements outline considerations that should be applied to the decision-making process, and do not necessarily identify specific actions.

The goals and policies are broken into five categories: Long-Range Planning, Land Use, Transportation, Natural Resources, and Parks and Trails. While these categories set a specific direction for the respective topic, all categories should be referenced during the decision-making process.

### Comprehensive Land Use Plan Intent Statement

**Nicollet County is a community built from its agricultural heritage, sense of place, and cooperative spirit that will be forward thinking while planning for the future. The county will lead efforts to be sustainable, inviting, and proactive as it works with residents and stakeholders to guide development. Nicollet County will work to preserve infrastructure, the natural environment, and access to a high quality of life through thoughtful planning and innovative actions for the benefit of all residents, current and future.**

## Long-Range Planning Goals and Policies

### Goals

- A. Maintain a collaborative and inviting approach with all county stakeholders.
- B. Provide ways for everyone to be engaged throughout the planning process.
- C. Conserve the high-quality resources within the county, including, but not limited to, drinking water, the Minnesota River, bluff lands, agricultural lands, creeks, and wetlands.
- D. Employ land use practices that provide for the most appropriate use of land and minimize conflicts with existing and future development.
- E. Provide a connected transportation system that considers all modes of transportation, such as vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation, in appropriate locations throughout Nicollet County. Collaborate with local jurisdictions and the Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization (“MAPO”) to identify the county’s role in multimodal transportation.
- F. Utilize policies and regulations that provide opportunities for future development that meets the needs of county residents and protects existing investments.

### Policies

- A. The county will work collaboratively with its local government partners to achieve its long-range planning goals. As policies and regulations are created and implemented, the county will seek input from its partners. The county will collaborate with local governments in their growth planning efforts.
- B. The county will collaborate with local municipalities in growth planning efforts in urban fringe areas. Efforts should be mindful of the planning responsibilities of each jurisdiction, while assessing growth in the urban fringe areas.
- C. The county will maintain relationships with all government levels and public agencies to identify and implement long-range planning solutions.
- D. The county will be proactive in planning efforts to increase its readiness for future trends and development.



*Swan Lake*

## Land Use Goals and Policies

### Goals

- A. Support the preservation of agricultural land within the county.
- B. Encourage sustainable agriculture practices to ensure the longevity of agriculture as a land use and viable economic activity in the county.
- C. Only allow for development in unincorporated areas that minimize impacts to resources, infrastructure, municipal growth and planning, and overall quality of life.
- D. Work collaboratively with local jurisdictions to implement future land use planning goals and policies.
- E. Promote the development of a housing stock that meets the needs of residents and is in areas that support the growth goals of the county and municipalities.

### Policies

- A. The county will support the preservation of highly productive agricultural land within the rural areas of the county.
- B. The county will establish and abide by standards that create future development opportunities and encourage high quality development that serves as an asset to the county and its residents.
- C. The county will consider the character of the land, its suitability for development, and the preservation of natural, cultural, and water resources as part of the development review process.
- D. The county will ensure that land is used in the most appropriate manner, by minimizing conflicts between land uses, fostering principles of sustainability, and providing for the health, safety, and welfare of residents.
- E. The county will incorporate the growth planning of each municipality into the county's long-range planning efforts.
- F. The county recognizes that agriculture will be a permanent use in some areas and a transitional use in others. In the transitioning areas, agricultural and rural uses will be planned in a manner that anticipates future changes to more intense uses. These future uses should be developed in a manner that is orderly and compact, minimizing impacts to surrounding areas.
- G. The county will guide residential development to areas within the county that can adequately support the proposed density and development types, while providing access to utility and transportation infrastructure and limiting impacts to county and municipal resources.

## Transportation Goals and Policies

<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Pursue federal, state, regional, and local funding opportunities to maintain, expand, and modernize the county’s transportation network.</li> <li>B. Work with partners to identify and coordinate transportation system improvements to accommodate growth and development.</li> <li>C. Support pavement preservation programs to maintain the structural integrity of roadways and maximize investments in the transportation system.</li> <li>D. Continue to utilize access management practices to maintain the intended balance of access and movement on county roadways, providing for safe and efficient transportation movement.</li> <li>E. Provide a connected transportation system that works with local and state systems to provide mobility options for all.</li> </ul>
<b>Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. The county will plan, build, and maintain an interconnected and accessible transportation system that considers all users and modes of travel.</li> <li>B. The county will ensure its roadway network is built and maintained in a manner that safely provides for the needs of all residents.</li> <li>C. The county will maintain and enforce access management standards along county roadways to provide safe and efficient transportation movement.</li> <li>D. The county will monitor and analyze its roadway system to ensure that roads are owned and operated at the right jurisdictional level, so resources are allocated in a manner that best serves residents.</li> </ul>

## Natural Resources Goals and Policies

<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Preserve, protect, and conserve resources in Nicollet County, including, but not limited to, drinking water, agricultural lands, the Minnesota River, lakes, creeks, wetlands, bluff lands, and wooded areas.</li> <li>B. Provide for quality water resources to protect human and environmental health.</li> <li>C. Ensure a sufficient supply of clean water to support human use and natural ecosystems, for current and future generations.</li> </ul>
<b>Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. The county will collaborate with state, regional, and local agencies to preserve natural resources and to ensure that the supply of natural resources is adequate for projected growth in the county.</li> <li>B. The county will prevent future groundwater contamination by ensuring sound management of solid and hazardous waste within the county.</li> <li>C. The county will collaborate with other jurisdictions and agencies to facilitate the preservation of natural resources for future generations.</li> <li>D. The county will support landowner rights to sell or convert land for natural resource and conservation purposes.</li> </ul>

## Parks and Trails Goals and Policies

### Goals

- A. Plan, build, and maintain parks and recreational opportunities that meet the needs of county residents, while also limiting the impact to taxpayers of the cost of these assets.

### Policies

- A. The county will engage the community in recreational planning, stewardship, and programming, through strategic planning and outreach efforts.



*Cattle Pasture in Nicollet County*