

## **A. Policy Statements**

The major goals discussed in Chapter I serve as the framework within which this plan must be reviewed, and used as a decision making tool. Certain policy statements flow from these goals to serve as more specific guidelines. In most cases, the policy statements are an obvious complement to the goal, as it was reviewed and explained in Chapter I. In other cases, inherent assumptions and discussion of the policy is necessary, as follows.

### **MAJOR GOAL: TO MAKE THE MOST EFFICIENT AND ECONOMICAL USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS AND INVESTMENTS.**

#### **Policy Statements**

- ◆ An expensive level of urban services will not be provided outside incorporated areas by County or Township governmental units unless absolutely necessary to protect the public health or safety.

The provision of urban-type services in rural areas is prohibitively expensive, and unnecessary for the primary land use in the area, which is 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.

- ◆ Land uses which require or should be served by a high level of urban services will be encouraged to locate within cities or the Major Growth Areas, and prohibited in Agricultural and rural areas.
- ◆ Land subdivisions and other development activities in the Major Growth Areas should be developed in such a way as to provide for future service provision and potential "re-division" in case annexation into the adjoining city takes place in the future.
- ◆ "Strip development" and development with multiple access points will not be allowed along major highways. Frontage roads or other measures will be required where development does take place next to major highways. Location next to a major highway shall not be automatic justification for commercial, industrial or high-density residential development.

Public roads and highways are perhaps the most expensive service provided by the various governmental units. The public pays a substantial

price for good roads, and adjoining landowners are compensated for lands lost to major highway construction. This public investment should not be used as automatic justification for intense development along all such highways by adjoining landowners. Such development inevitably leads to safety problems, intensifying traffic levels and demands for further, very expensive road improvements. The road improvements lead to further pressure for more intense development, and a counterproductive cycle ensues. The cycle can only be broken if strip development is restricted and developers are required to pay for traffic and safety improvements as development takes place.

- ◆ All new lots created must have frontage on a public road as determined by the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations.
- ◆ When new subdivisions (and other activities which requires public services) are proposed, the developer will be required to provide the necessary roads, and may be required to meet other conditions to off set the need for public services.

**MAJOR GOAL: TO PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT.**

Policy Statements

- ◆ The County will encourage cities and townships to cooperate on development plans for the Major Growth Areas, and encourage urban and suburban development of these areas.

While cities and townships are traditionally at odds over annexation issues, cooperation in the planning for areas adjacent to existing cities is essential to future growth in the County. Many cities are nearly fully developed within their corporate limits, and can have reasonable expectations for growth which can only proceed smoothly with township help. Cities, on the other hand, must realize that townships have legitimate concerns about their tax base, much of which is often located in developed areas next to the cities. City demands for annexation should be tempered by an analysis of their reasonable need for land. Development proposals in unincorporated Major Growth Areas should consider the potential problems which future annexation may pose.

- ◆ Development will only be allowed in accord with the Land Use Plan as outlined in Chapter IV.

At first glance, this statement may seem to conflict with the goal, but this

should not be true over the long run. As detailed in Chapter II, the plan provides ample opportunity for a wide variety of growth and development. By adhering to the plan, the County can provide a certain stability and ensure that a wide variety of lifestyles and land use areas will be available. Farmers in agricultural areas can gain assurance that they will be able to continue to farm, and perhaps expand their operations, without fear of being surrounded by residential development. Developers and purchasers looking for rural home sites can be assured that there are other areas which can be developed. The variety and uniqueness of different areas can best be maintained through adherence to the plan. Without any such guidance, and difference between rural areas, the entire County is left open to potential development, most likely in a checker board pattern which will eventually fill in to become a uniform rural sprawl.

## **MAJOR GOAL: TO PROTECT AGRICULTURAL LANDS FROM ENCROACHMENT BY INCOMPATIBLE LAND USES.**

### Policy Statements

- ◆ The County will not adopt rules or ordinances which restrict normal farm practices in Agricultural districts unless directly related to public health or safety.
- ◆ In Agricultural Districts, existing County policy of maintaining an overall density of one residence per 40 acres will be maintained.

Farming is a risky business, with high capital costs, especially for young farmers without land, or anyone trying to expand or start an operation. A stable environment is essential for farming, as major investments cannot be made without some assurance that the agricultural nature of the area will not change in the short term. Farmers cannot compete with speculators and developers for land, so it is essential to provide areas where it is known that development will not be allowed.

- ◆ The County will enact a Farmland Preservation Property Tax Credit program in accord with the Minnesota Agricultural Land Preservation Policy Act.
- ◆ "Spot Zoning" and scattered residential subdivisions will not be allowed in Agricultural Districts.

As has been demonstrated throughout this plan, there is no need for development in Agricultural Districts. Not only does this plan provide ample opportunity for development in the County, but most of the development which occurs is related to employment in the Twin Cities metropolitan area,

which also has ample room for future growth.

- ◆ The County will discourage the provision of expensive urban services, and especially those which are financed by special assessments on land, in Agricultural Districts unless essential to the protection of public health and safety.

**MAJOR GOAL: TO PROTECT, PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, AND REQUIRE DEVELOPMENT TO TAKE PLACE IN A MANNER WHICH MAKES WISE USE OF NORTHEASTERN WRIGHT COUNTY'S RESOURCES WITHOUT DEGRADATION.**

Policy Statements

- ◆ The County will promote the use of soil conservation management principles by all landowners. Farmers who obtain tax benefits under the Farmland Preservation program and all development proposals will be required to abide by sound soil conservation principles.
- ◆ Residential development in rural areas will only be allowed where on-site hydrologic and soil tests substantiate the suitability of the land for sewage treatment systems over the long term. Where tests indicate that only mound systems or other nonstandard systems will function properly, larger lot sizes may be required or, in severe cases, proposals may be denied.
- ◆ Steep slopes, wetlands, unstable soils and other sensitive environmental features will be protected, as far as is practical, in their natural, stable state. Development on or near such areas may be required to provide larger lot sizes, enhanced setbacks or other conditions to protect the sensitive features.
- ◆ Unless otherwise provided in the Land Use Plan (Chapter IV) only one-tier (riparian) of lots will be permitted on lakes suited to residential development.

Lakeshore and shoreland areas are very desirable for residential development due to the scenic vistas and recreational opportunities. Second tier and multi-tiered development around the lakes are developments which create non-riparian lots near the lake with or without direct access to the water. Such development leads to crowding on the lake, potential pollution from over use, a concentration of sewer systems and destruction of the scenic values which made the area attractive in the first place.

- ◆ Development of lakeshore property shall abide by State Shoreland Management rules to maintain, as far as practical, a natural shoreline and natural views of

shoreland areas from the lake's surface.

- ◆ The intensity of development in rural areas shall be restricted so as not to overload natural surface drainage systems. Where development is proposed which will add significant impervious surface areas or interfere with natural drainage systems, the developer will be required to provide facilities to compensate for any negative impacts.
- ◆ Mining and other commercial or industrial endeavors shall be required to shield adjoining property from deleterious effects.
- ◆ In accord with County policies and regulations, the use of planned unit development (P.U.D.) and residential P.U.D. concepts will be encouraged where such developments provide enhanced environmental protection, protect natural features and result in a better overall design than would result from standard subdivision practices.
- ◆ In general, development activity should take place in harmony with the existing, stable, natural environment. Development proposals should be adapted to suit the natural landscape, rather than altering the land to suit the development.

It is impossible for any development to occur without some alteration of the land. It is often possible, however, through innovative or alternative design considerations to better suit any development to existing natural conditions. Unnecessary alteration is expensive, and can lead to a variety of unforeseen problems through the disturbance of natural soil, drainage or other systems.

**MAJOR GOAL: To enhance the strength of the Northeastern Wright County economy by supporting local industry and attracting quality jobs, enhanced tax base and new capital to the region.**

#### Policy Statements

- Support existing industry and assist them with expansion opportunities when applicable and implement a business retention and expansion process.
- Work to attract new industry to the community by actively marketing the Northeast Quadrant of Wright County.
- Work cooperatively with townships and cities in the Northeast Quadrant to attract to business to the area.

**MAJOR GOAL: To make improvements to the transportation system that balance travel, desired land uses and environmental factors by facilitating movement to and from regional highway facilities and support current and planned land use patterns.**

Policy Statements

- Coordinate and plan road improvements with appropriate road authorities including identification of jurisdictional responsibilities and collaborative financing mechanisms.
- Require new development to provide an adequate system of local streets while limiting direct access to major thoroughfares in order to maintain safe and efficient operations on these roadways.
- Require the dedication or preservation of right-of-way consistent with appropriate right-of-way standards when property is platted or subdivided, and work with landowners/developers during the site planning and platting process to implement safe and efficient roadway design.
- Plan, design, and construct transportation improvements that respect the natural environment and reflect the aesthetic character and values of the citizens of Northeast Wright County while managing and shaping growth consistent with the land use policies of the comprehensive plan.
- Plan an infrastructure improvement, maintenance, and replacement program that maintains the existing roadways, while promoting orderly development in new areas.