

Chapter 7

Implementation

The Benton County Comprehensive Plan sets a number of goals for the county to achieve or strive to achieve over the next ten to twenty years. Goals, policies and initiatives referenced throughout the plan can be implemented through a series of public and private actions.

The Comprehensive Plan will be implemented in a number of ways. On a daily basis, the document is used by County staff to help frame recommendations to the County Board and other advisory commissions. It is also used by residents and developers to understand the County's intentions for the use of land, the provision of housing, infrastructure needs, and planned park and open space improvements.

County's Role in Implementation

Benton County's role in achieving its vision and addressing the trends affecting it can be thought of as a continuum of increasing involvement, expense and commitment. In some cases the County's role is clear; in others the role is variable and yet to be determined. The following guiding principles should be considered when implementing this plan.

- **Study:** Identify trends and issues, research, monitor, analyze for policy development, and conduct pilot studies.
- **Inform and Educate:** Share information to increase awareness of issues, protect public safety, provide technical assistance, and motivate sustainable behavior.
- **Advocate:** Promote policies in local, regional, state and federal government that will benefit the people of Benton County.
- **Collaborate and Facilitate:** Work in partnership with others, coordinate activities and relationships to achieve more than could be done unilaterally.
- **Operate and Lead by Example:** Manage County facilities and run programs to higher standards that will demonstrate both the County's commitment and potential best practices.
- **Regulate:** Administer ordinances and laws through permitting, inspection and enforcement.

Implementation by Topic

Each chapter provides guidance in how to achieve the Comprehensive Plan's vision over the next twenty years. The following is a summary of the implementation measures discussed throughout these chapters.

Agriculture & Economic Development

- Partner with USDA, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, and local community development agencies to explore programs that facilitate farm-to-table, farm-to-restaurant, and farm-to-school programs between Benton County farmers and communities.
- Study ways to support existing small-scale farmers and to help newcomers establish small-scale farms.
- Take an active role in assisting the State of Minnesota achieve its goal of providing high-speed Internet access to all County residents by 2022 and businesses by 2026.

Mobility & Transportation

- Plan for trails and other facilities that connect destinations and create a network across the County, providing recreational opportunities as well as transportation alternatives for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-vehicle users.
- Continue to support and maintain the network of safe and efficient County roads that provide transportation routes for rural residents throughout the county.

- Prioritize transportation improvements that provide mobility benefits in moving goods (e.g., crops and livestock) between farm and final destination (farmers market, school, processing facility or grocery store).
- Explore ways to increase transportation access for aging rural seniors, connecting them to services and their communities.
- Schedule all County Roads to be upgraded to 10-ton load limit to accommodate the increasing weight of freight and farm equipment.
- Utilize the Regional Active Living Plan as a metric when making transportation decisions.
- Update the Transportation Plan to identify and designate future roadways within the County by their functional classification and to prioritize system improvements.
- Refer to the St. Cloud APO Long-Range Transportation Plan when identifying future transit needs within the County.
- Follow Transportation Guidelines for various land uses listed within “Balancing Transportation Needs with Land Use” on page 81

Land Uses

- Adjust zoning and subdivision ordinances to promote land use patterns that provide alternatives to motorized transportation in order to promote active living.
- Review the Comprehensive Plan annually and amend as necessary to ensure its usefulness as a practical guide for current and future development.
- Formulate and enforce county ordinances to ensure development remains in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Facilitate cooperation between cities and their surrounding townships when making land use decisions.

Public Health & Food Access

- Integrate a “health-in-all-policies” approach to County decision-making and implementation measures.
- Adopt zoning code regulations that support healthy food infrastructures.
- Explore programs that preserve land for food production and provide access to that land for interested newcomers.
- Update County website to include an expanse of resources to information and services to assist vulnerable populations in the County.
- Continue to work toward creating an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan and Inventory and follow its implementation strategies.

Parks and Trails System

- Create better access to rivers and lakes, both as recreational amenities and as natural resources to be preserved
- Enhance and protect natural resources and water quality by adopting surface water management and design best practices when establishing greenway corridors within the County
- Consider Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards when designing and investing in future parks
- Explore opportunities to better connect potential park users accessing County parks by bus, bicycle, or foot.
- Maximize park dedication funds by working closely with Townships.
- Implement the Ten Year priorities.

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