

Development Principles

Development principles guide decisions makers as they interpret the comprehensive plan. They are more specific than goals, but not as detailed as objectives. These broad statements can be used as justifications for decisions made by plan commissioners and other local leaders. The development policies that primarily affect Washington County's land use decisions areas are:

Land Use Planning

We believe that **without some regulation, the future will bring changes that could damage our community's rural character.** Recognizing that this will be Washington County's first land use plan, we are advocating a process that is incremental and flexible.

Environmental Protection

Conserving Washington County's natural resources means protecting, its lakes, rivers, floodplains, forests, karst topography and other environmental features.

Agricultural Protection

Because we value the county's prime agricultural, we believe that most residential and commercial growth should be steered only to where there is the existing infrastructure to support it.

Economic Development

We are committed to creating opportunities for job growth in appropriate areas of the county. In general, higher density commercial growth should be limited to existing commercial areas or to places that have the infrastructure to support it. Industrial development should be directed away from residential areas and toward areas with compatible nearby uses.

Transportation

Our community wants to keep its railroads open as well as promote other forms of alternative transportation.

Housing

More work is needed to develop Washington County's options across the full spectrum of housing types, including well designed manufactured homes.

Land Use Goals

Goal 1: Indicate areas of the county most suitable for specific types of development, such as residential, commercial or industrial uses.

Tools

- Future Land Use Map
- Zoning Map
- Zoning Code

Goal 2: Maintain the county’s rural way of life.

Tools

- Agricultural Preferred zoning district
- “Right to Farm” nuisance waivers for new residential subdivisions
- Conservation subdivisions instead of traditional subdivision design
- Parks Master Plan

Goal 3: Protect the most fragile parts of the county’s environment, particularly the lakes and water systems.

Tools

- Education campaign
- Regulate development in a watershed
- Regulate development on steep slopes
- Regulate development in area of karst topography

Goal 4: Discourage incompatible land uses from creating conflicts with property owners.

Tools

- Education campaign
- Zoning Map
- Zoning Code

Goal 5: Prevent private development practices that result in net costs to county taxpayers.

Tools

- Subdivision Code
- Zoning Code