

JACKSON COUNTY LAND USE POLICY

GOALS

The fundamental goals of land use planning and regulation in Jackson County are to enhance the quality of life of our residents, to utilize and conserve land and other natural resources to the best advantage and to provide a desirable level of facilities and services as economically and efficiently as possible.

LAND USE OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS

1. Objective: Accommodate anticipated growth by providing optimum locations for residential, commercial, industrial, public and semi-public land uses.

- A. Residential land use in the rural area of the county should consist of single-family dwellings.
Multi-family dwellings or high density development should be encouraged to locate near the population centers where an adequate level of municipal facilities and services as well as streets, schools and other facilities are available.
- B. Commercial development in the county should be limited primarily toward highway-oriented uses and agricultural services. Major retail shopping centers should be encouraged to locate in urban areas.
- C. Industrial development should be encouraged to locate along major transportation arteries and at locations where adequate utilities and services exist or can be readily supplied.
- D. Locations for public and semi-public uses must be selected with regard for agricultural land, woodland and other natural resources as well as proximity to major streets and highways, users and effects on the environment.

Commentary: Land is a limited resource and once committed to development it is not likely to be restored to a natural state.

Similarly, land committed to a particular use, such as industrial, may discourage conversion to another use, even though only limited or scattered development may have occurred.

Since the category of land use has certain specific requirements in terms of location, topography, utilities, transportation, services, soil conditions, compatibility and numerous other factors, locations of each future use should be based on the most nearly optimum combination of these requirements. Land needed to accommodate future growth must be evaluated before development occurs and policies developed to protect its future availability, while preserving agricultural land.

2. Objective: Encourage future growth and development to occur in a compact and orderly manner.

Commentary: Urban sprawl and scattered urban development often results in the inefficient use of land and introduces numerous problems which cannot be economically resolved.

It is far more economical to serve compact development with roads, sewers, water and other utilities and services than if development is scattered.

3. Objective: Protect valuable natural resources from incompatible uses or other uses that would make their future utilization difficult or impossible.

Commentary: Resources, consisting primarily of soil, sand, gravel, limestone, the surface water of rivers and streams, ground water, and woodlands, must be recognized where they occur, and their present and future availability protected.

Agricultural cropland is one of the greatest single natural resources. Because good agricultural land is usually of uniform to gently rolling topography, it is also the easiest to develop for other uses. Where the best soils exist, development should be discouraged.

The mineral resources are used primarily in road construction and other building projects. Their value lies primarily in the proximity to the building site. Their future use may be hampered or prohibited by permitting development too close to the sand, gravel, or limestone deposits.

Water is a basic requirement of all life. Over development of land and inadequate provisions for waste disposal may pollute surface and groundwater supplies.

Woodlands play an important role in the hydrologic cycle, provide valuable recreational areas and wildlife habitat, and, to a minor extent at this time, provide fuel and lumber. They should be protected from unnecessary development.

4. Objective: Encourage urban development to take place near cities and towns where municipal facilities, such as sewers and water, are or will ultimately become available.

Commentary: It is usually more economical to extend sewer, water, or other facilities and services than to implement new systems. Development in rural areas almost always must rely on septic tank systems, which if present in high concentration, may pollute ground and surface water. Scattered rural development may tend to disrupt normal farming operations; non-farm residences generating complaints against normal farm odors are only one example.

5. Objective: Future development should be coordinated with existing and proposed transportation systems.

Commentary: Traffic-carrying capacities of major streets and highways should be protected by limiting frequency of access points, requiring appropriate yard requirements, and encouraging major potential traffic generators to locate along existing major routes, thus minimizing the county's burden of upgrading and maintaining existing and proposed roads and bridges.

6. Objective: Flood plains must be protected from encroachment.

Commentary: To assure the retention of adequate flood ways, the land use policy must recognize existing limitations of the flood plains. Regulations are set forth by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Corp of Engineers as a means to diminish hazards to life and health, to protect existing and future structures from flood damage, and to limit the inconveniences imposed by flood waters.

7. Objective: The natural beauty and historic treasures of the county should be conserved and enhanced for the benefit of the population of Jackson County and the entire region.

Commentary: The county is blessed with many natural and historic elements which help determine the essential nature of this place. Rivers and their bluff lands, clean cool-water streams, hardwood forests, and ample open space are increasingly rare in this region and support a rich diversity of wildlife. Likewise, the county has many traces of the lives of our human predecessors in this place, ranging from the stone constructions of European settlers to the campsites and graves of millennia past, which are significant cultural assets. Together, these features enhance our quality of life and provide a notable resource for recreation and tourism. Ironically, this relatively "undeveloped" condition attracts development. Care should be taken that any development respects and enhances our natural and cultural heritage.

This need for preservation is particularly acute along the Mississippi River and Great River Road corridor, which has minimal industrial and commercial use and where the recreation and tourism industries are well established and have great potential. The highest priority should be given to protecting the esthetic, natural, and cultural assets of the area.

8. Objective: The land use plan must have sufficient flexibility to permit private enterprise to operate freely in an open market.

Commentary: In order to prevent monopolizing land designated for various categories of urban development, it is essential that an adequate amount of land be designated for each of the various types of urban uses in order that a developer may exercise freedom of choice in site selection. Considerable care must be

taken however, to prevent an excessive amount of land from being designated for a specific type of urban development.

Zoning an excessive amount of land for a particular category of land use can result in scattered, strip and premature development, the results of which often produce a considerable amount of transitional area (area where incompatible uses join one another) and produces adverse effects on existing and future development.

9. Objective: Accommodate existing development without encouraging its continued growth in inappropriate areas.

Commentary: Investments in development made in good faith before zoning occurred have both personal and financial value that should be honored and conserved. Those developments which are found to conflict with reasonable use of the land must be allowed to continue but their expansion should be controlled.

10. Objective: Encourage home-based enterprise which does not conflict with neighboring uses.

Commentary: Home-based businesses are often the most efficient economic activity available to rural residents and offer relatively low-investment opportunities to test skills and markets. Sufficient flexibility should be maintained to allow such enterprises to operate, but controls are necessary to prevent conflict with other objectives.

Reference: Resolution #485-02-17-98, as amended by Resolution #116-09-09-03,
of the Jackson County Board of Supervisors