

Comprehensive Planning Process

This Comprehensive Plan update was prepared under the direction of the Le Sueur County Board of Commissioners, the Le Sueur County Planning Task Force, and County Environmental Staff. Preliminary data and a list of County issues were assembled with the aid of County staff. County Commissioners appointed two persons each from their districts to serve on a Planning Task Force. In addition, two representatives from the Le Sueur County Planning Commission also served as members on the Planning Task Force. The Task Force met ten (10) times between July, 2005 and January, 2006, formulating rough policy positions and land use recommendations. A two day open house was held in the County Environmental Services building to allow for public comment. This open house was held on January 9th and 10th, 2006. Eight (8) follow-up meetings were held with the County Commissioners to refine land use policy statements and ordinance change directions. These meetings were held between April, 2006 and October, 2006. A public hearing was held on February 27th, 2007 to take comment on the final draft of this Land Use Plan.

The following section contains the specific and practical guidelines for improving existing conditions and controlling future growth.

Land Use Goals and Policies

Le Sueur County will adopt and enforce the following land use goals and policies to enhance land use regulation efficiencies, use County resources to meet County residents' needs, and protect County residents' health, safety, and welfare.

Goal 1: Le Sueur County contains some of the most productive agricultural soils in Minnesota and should adopt and enforce land use goals and policies that conserve and protect agricultural resources and uses.

Objective 1: The County will protect the best of its agricultural land as a resource for long term agricultural use.

Objective 2: An adequate supply of healthy livestock is essential to the well being of Le Sueur County. The location of livestock feedlots and non-feedlot uses too close to one another can cause conflicts. An effort to combine local needs with state feedlot regulations will ensure local involvement in this issue, help provide minimal disruption to existing agricultural businesses, and help provide rules to protect the environment.

Implementation:

Objective 1:	Responsible and Participating Agencies	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Benefit
Action 1: The County will continue using an Agricultural District with the ultimate aim being to preserve large contiguous agri - cultural land tracts for agricultural use.	Environmental Services	2007– 2015	\$ 0	Agricultural Producers & County Taxpayers through reduced County costs.
Action 2: The County will eliminate the Agricultural Residential District from its zoning ordinance.	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007 – 2008	\$ 30,000 (for zoning update)	Agricultural Producers & County Taxpayers through reduced County costs.
Objective 2:	Responsible and Participating Agencies	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Benefit
Action 1: Le Sueur County should adopt the suggested changes to the County's feedlot ordinance, as drafted by the Feedlot Task Force Committee.	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007 – 2008	\$ 30,000 (for zoning update)	Agricultural animal producers & neighboring non-producers

Goal #2. Le Sueur County should adopt and enforce land use goals and policies that conserve and restore its natural resources, bring protections to the ecological systems of the natural environment, and prevent the premature development of natural resource areas.

Objective 1: The County should continue its preservation of significant bluff areas and river valleys through its use of a Conservancy Zone.

Objective 2: Utilize shorelands on Recreational Development Lakes (RD) for housing, but with a focus on development design that protects the resource.

Objective 3: Preserve shorelands on Natural Environment (NE) Lakes and Tributary Rivers as open space or wildlife areas.

Objective 1:	Responsible and Participating Agencies	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Benefit
Action 1: At the time the County amends its zoning map, the County will add to the Conservancy District new wildlife management areas and county park areas that are not currently contained in the District.	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007 – 2008	\$ 30,000 (during zoning ordinance update)	Ordinance cleanup
Action 2: The County should continue using a lot size requirement of five (5) acres, however, the 'buildable land' requirement in this district for the 5 acre lot will be 1 ½ acres.	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007 – 2008	\$ 30,000 (during zoning ordinance update)	Environmental sensitive resource areas
Action 3: Amend the County's Zoning controls to require all structures to meet a 30' minimum setback from the top of a bluff.	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007 – 2008	\$ 30,000 (during zoning ordinance update)	Protection of scenic river valley bluff areas

Objective 2:	Responsible and Participating Agencies	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Benefit
Action 1: Continue utilizing the minimum state shoreland regulations to determine housing densities and development design.	Environmental Services	2007-2015	\$ 0	Recreational Development Lakes
Action 2: Adopt the water quality protections standards and design standards specified under goal #3, actions #1 & #2 to protect lake water quality.	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007 – 2008	\$ 30,000 (during zoning ordinance update)	Recreational Development Lakes
Objective 3:	Responsible and Participating Agencies	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Benefit
Action 1: Use the agricultural zone density controls for housing development standards in Natural Environment Lake special protection areas and tributary rivers.	Environmental Services	2007– 2015	\$ 0	Natural Environment Lakes and river resources
Action 2: On Natural Environment Lakes where land is zoned residential, continue using the larger lot sizes and water setback standards that were set in the 1996 amendments.	Environmental Services	2007-2015	\$ 0	Natural Environment Lakes

FEMA Floodplain, Protected Basins, Streams Map

Goal #3. Improve water quality in Le Sueur County.

Objective 1: The County will undertake actions to help protect groundwater as well as surface water features.

Objective 1:	Responsible and Participating Agencies	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Benefit
<p>Action 1: The County will adopt and implement the goals, objectives, and actions of the County's Local Water Management Plan.</p>	<p>LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services</p>	<p>2007</p>	<p>See water plan</p>	<p>County's water resources</p>
<p>Action 2: The County will take leadership in initiating a wastewater or septic replacement program in areas of the County if petitioned to do so by a majority of the residents living in the area. If petitioned, the County will undertake the activities specified below:</p>	<p>LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services</p>	<p>2007-2015</p>	<p>unknown</p>	<p>County's water resources & residents along water resources</p>
<p>Strategy #1. Undertake fact-finding activities to establish needs and/or authorize Preliminary Engineering Report;</p> <p>Strategy #2. Determine course of action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. septic replacement program in areas with space to accommodate this type of improvement program; b. cluster systems and community collection for areas in which space and proper soils characteristics are available for large drainfields; c. collection system and forcemain to urban treatment plant; d. other alternate designs. 				

Strategy #3. Establish subordinate service district to fund improvements, reimburse County for planning and design work, collect fees to pay for Operation & Maintenance of system.

<p>Action 3: Le Sueur County will undertake a septic compliance inspection whenever a property owner requests a zoning permit for work that would increase the housing building footprint.</p>	<p>LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services</p>	<p>2007-2015</p>	<p>Permit fees charged to permit applicant</p>	<p>County groundwater and surface water resources</p>
<p>Action 4: The County will establish a septic loan program through the sale of bonds (MS chapter 115). Septic owners needing to access funding for septic improvements could apply for the funds through the County with loan payments paid back to the County through the assessment process.</p>	<p>LeSueur County Board</p>	<p>2007 – 2009</p>	<p>\$ 25,000</p>	<p>County homeowners & County groundwater & surface water resources</p>
<p>Action 5: The County will draft educational materials for distribution to shoreland property owners encouraging residential property owners in shoreland areas of the County to observe the Urban Best Management practices in regards to the use of</p>	<p>Environmental Services</p>	<p>2007 – 2009</p>	<p>\$ 5,000</p>	<p>County surface water resources</p>

fertilizers, phosphorus, and herbicides. Phosphorus free products should be one of the educational recommendations.				
Action 6: In addition to traditional stormwater designs, the use of new technologies in dealing with on-site stormwater should be reviewed and considered for use, such as:	Environmental Services	2007-2015	\$ 0	County surface water resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use of individual on-site rain gardens; b. Permeable pavers for use in traditionally large impermeable surface areas; c. Other new technologies, as identified. 				

Goal #4. Le Sueur County should adopt and enforce land use goals and policies that provide a wide range of opportunity for Urban and Rural Housing Development.

Objective 1: Le Sueur County should allow non-farm development to occur in agricultural areas, but with guidelines meant to reduce conflicts with agricultural operators.

Objective 1:	Responsible and Participating Agencies	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Benefit
Action 1: The <i>minimum</i> housing lot size in the agricultural zone should remain at 1½ acres of buildable land area.	Environmental Services	2007– 2015	\$ 0	County groundwater resources

Action 2: The County will define and use the term “buildable land” in its zoning ordinance for determining whether applicants have sufficient land area to build upon.	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007 – 2008	\$ 30,000 (during zoning ordinance update)	County groundwater resources
Action 3: The County should continue with a density limit of 16 dwelling units per section of land in the agricultural district.	Environmental Services	2007– 2015	\$ 0	Agriculture Producers & Non-farm residents
Action 4: Single Family housing development in the agricultural district should be encouraged to develop in a clustered fashion rather than as scattered single sites.	Environmental Services	2007– 2015	\$ 0	
Action 5: The 1996 zoning ordinance housing siting criteria should be replaced with new criteria for scattered single family dwelling development, including the following:	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007 – 2008	\$ 30,000 (during zoning ordinance update)	Agricultural land owners & non-farm housing developers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Single family dwelling lots and their driveways, when created, should be located such that farm fields are not divided by the newly created parcel or their driveways; b. Single family dwelling parcels, when created, should not result in placing further restrictions on existing feedlots. 				
Action 6: Adopt a Transfer of Development Rights component to the zoning ordinance in which a property owner could transfer one development right from a ¼ ¼ to an	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007 – 2008	\$ 30,000 (during zoning ordinance update)	Agricultural land owners & non-farm housing developers

adjacent ¼ ¼.				
Action 7: This type of residential development will require a rezoning request from agricultural (“A”) to urban/rural residential (“R1”). The intent of this goal and policy is to permit owners of marginal or poor agricultural land to sell or develop their land for this use.	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007-2015	\$ 0	Agricultural land owners and housing developers
Action 8: The urban/rural residential (“R1”) district should have a minimum lot size standard of 40,000 square feet of buildable land area.	Environmental Services	2007 – 2008	\$ 0	County groundwater resources
Action 9: The County will eliminate the Agricultural/Residential District (“AR”) from its zoning ordinance since higher density housing proposals for the rural area will now be dealt with through rezoning proposals.	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007 – 2008	\$ 30,000 (during zoning ordinance update)	Agricultural land owners
Action 10: Rezoning requests for land in the “A” district to urban/ rural residential “R1” shall be tested by the following development guidelines:	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007– 2015	\$ 0	Agricultural land owners and housing developers

- a. Whether the land is marginal agricultural land or not:
 - i. Land proposed for rezoning is on an irregular parcel;
 - ii. Land soils are poor production quality, including highly erodible lands;
 - iii. Treed or forested areas; and
 - iv. Soil suitability ratings are good for urban type development.
- b. Is the rezoning request for land that is adjacent to another high density housing development area?
- c. Is the rezoning request for land that has access to a suitable public road, as determined by the appropriate road authority?
- d. Does the land proposed for rezoning intrude onto valuable natural resource areas, such as aggregate resource deposits, wetland areas, or other natural areas deemed to be worth protecting?
- e. Is the land proposed for rezoning too remote and/or the development threshold too large or too small for cost efficient public service delivery? This would include police, fire, emergency vehicles, and school district services.
- f. Is the rezoning request for land and the type or scope of development proposed too close to existing feedlot operations?
- g. Is the bulk of the development cost for construction of access, management of stormwater, and other development related issues paid for by the developer and not the public?
- h. Is the development occurring on land that is shown to be a potential source for aggregate resources (see aggregate resource map)? If it is and the area under consideration for development is not in an aggregate protection overlay district, the County should require test borings on the potential site to more firmly identify the quality of the aggregate resource.

Urban Growth Map

Goal #5. The County needs to establish closer land use planning efforts with its urbanized cities for reasons of economic efficiencies and to reduce conflicts and confusion.

Objective 1: The County will work with each of the Cities to establish an urban growth boundary that will graphically represent the growth intentions of each City by defining its future urban service area for some specified future time period.

Objective 1:	Responsible and Participating Agencies	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Benefit
Action 1: Within one year of this plan's adoption, the County will meet with each City in the County to determine a future urban services growth area boundary. This will become an officially recognized separate district with land use issues administered jointly by both the County and City.	LeSueur County Board, Planning Commission & Environmental Services	2007 – 2008	\$ 10,000 + \$ 30,000 (for zoning update)	County and Cities that participate
Action 2: The County will work with each City to establish a joint planning committee to draft and administer land use controls that will apply to land contained within the urban growth district.	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007 – 2008	\$ 7,500 yearly	County and Cities that participate
Action 3: The County will adopt the airport zoning overlay district	LeSueur County			

standards to apply to lands within Le Sueur County that are impacted by the expanded Mankato Airport runways and to protect runway areas of the City of LeSueur's airport.	Board, Planning Commission & Environmental Services	2007 – 2008	\$ 30,000 (for zoning update)	
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Goal #6. Aggregate resources are a finite resource that is directly impacted by scattered site development. The County should protect its aggregate resources from premature development.

Objective 1: The County should adopt an aggregate resource protection ordinance.

Objective 1:	Responsible and Participating Agencies	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Benefit
Action 1: The ordinance adopted should protect areas that have been identified on the Le Sueur County Aggregate Resource Map. The ordinance should contain standards for preserving these areas from development pressure, and set up standards for reclamation of the mining site once closed.	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007 – 2009	\$ 30,000 (for zoning update)	County aggregate resource areas
Action 2: An aggregate resource ordinance would also be useful for dealing with existing mining operations	LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services	2007 – 2009	\$ 30,000 (for zoning update)	County aggregate resource areas

<p>that have been negligent in undertaking reclamation actions on pits that are no longer active. Once reclamation is accomplished on these older pits, other land uses could be considered for these reclaimed sites.</p>				
<p>Action 3: The County should require developers to take soil borings in areas identified on the Aggregate Resource Map as containing aggregate resources to determine the quality of those potential aggregate resources during the information stage of the development process. This information will add to the County's knowledge data base on aggregate resources.</p>	<p>LeSueur County Board & Environmental Services</p>	<p>2007 – 2009</p>	<p>\$ 30,000 (for zoning update)</p>	<p>County</p>

Aggregate Resource Map

Pit Map

Goal #7. Parks and other County owned open spaces are valuable resources that need to be improved and developed to serve County residents.

Objective 1: The County Board will request the Le Sueur County Park Board to become more active in being an advocate for County Park improvements.

Objective 1:	Responsible and Participating Agencies	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Benefit
Action 1: The County Board will request that the Le Sueur County Park Board perform the following tasks:	LeSueur County Board	2007 – 2008	\$5,000	County park users
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a report listing existing park facility deficiencies; b. draft a report specifying future park facilities improvements as well as a plan for making the appropriate park improvements; and c. draft a report identifying future park and open space acquisitions and specifying their future uses. 				

Goal #8. As part of the County’s responsibility to protect the public health, safety, and welfare, the County will consider adopting the Uniform Building Code.

	Responsible and Participating Agencies	Timeline	Cost Estimate	Benefit
Action 1: The County Board will place the issue about adopting the Uniform Building Code on the voting ballot.	LeSueur County Board	Fall, 2008	Permit fees paid by building permit applicants	County housing owners