

IMPLEMENTATION

LYON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In many ways, formal adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is the first step in the planning process, rather than the last, because it establishes the policy direction for the community, describing its objectives and methods to achieve them. Without continuing action to implement and update the Plan, County efforts will have little lasting impact.

To effectively implement the Comprehensive Plan, Lyon County should:

- Review and revise several of its regulatory measures that can enforce the Plan's goals, policies and recommendations, such as the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations;
- Continue to utilize its Capital Improvements Program, implementing the most important public improvements on a priority system, while staying within budgetary constraints;
- Work with affected cities and townships to plan for the orderly development of the Planned Growth Areas;
- Actively involve local residents in ongoing planning discussions and decisions;
- Make continued public education efforts relating to the land use planning, sustainable development and other goals, policies and recommendations of this Plan;
- Continue ongoing planning dialogue among jurisdictions in the county as well as with surrounding jurisdictions and the state;
- Review and update the Plan itself as needed to reflect local aspirations and changing opportunities.

Each of these requirements is briefly discussed below.

ZONING REGULATIONS

Zoning is a governmental unit's primary regulatory tool for implementing planning policies. It consists of the official zoning map and the supporting ordinance text. The official zoning map divides the community into a series of zoning districts, and the text describes regulations for the use of land within these districts, including permitted uses, lot sizes, setbacks and density standards. It can also include design and property maintenance controls.

During the Comprehensive Plan implementation, the current zoning map should be compared to the adopted Future Land Use map and text in order to clearly document valid discrepancies between the two, and updated as needed. The second step will be to review, update and refine the county's zoning regulations to implement and enforce the guidelines of the updated Comprehensive Plan. The County should begin this process immediately upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and complete the update within nine to twelve months.

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Subdivision controls regulate the subdivision and development of land and the provision of public facilities within the community. Properly enforced subdivision regulations, coupled with zoning, can ensure proper physical development and adequate public facilities within growth areas. They normally prescribe standards for street improvements, lot setbacks and layouts, and sewer facilities. Subdivision regulations can also ensure that the costs of public improvements within growth areas are borne by the developers and the new residents as appropriate rather than by the established community. Lyon County's subdivision regulations should be reviewed against the recommendations of the new Comprehensive Plan, and revised if necessary.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Another potential tool for implementation is the Capital Improvement Program, which establishes schedules and priorities typically within a five-year period. The County first prepares a list of all public improvements that will be required in the next five years, including transportation and community facilities projects. Once all projects are reviewed, priorities are assigned, cost estimates prepared, and potential funding sources identified. The County can determine which projects should be financed through annual tax receipts, which require public borrowing, and which may be eligible for outside sources of assistance.

The Capital Improvement Program allows the County to provide the most critical public improvements, yet stay within budget constraints. Some of the elements outlined in this Comprehensive Plan can be articulated in a Capital Improvements Program (CIP), particularly the planned roadway improvements identified in the Transportation chapter.

The County should continue to maintain a Capital Improvements Program that includes elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Priorities may include an adequate transportation system in the growing areas of the community and adequate and up-to-date county buildings.

PLANNED GROWTH AREAS & ANNEXATION

Several of the cities in Lyon County anticipate further residential, commercial and industrial development and, in order to accommodate that growth, have designated areas outside of their current city limits as “Planned Growth Areas”. For the most part, land use plans and policies have already been established for these areas either within the adjacent city’s Comprehensive Plan, through joint planning agreements between cities and townships, or through orderly annexation agreements. Where this is not the case, cities should work cooperatively with the county and surrounding townships to plan the land uses for these additional areas. Even where land uses are already identified for the Planned Growth Areas, cities, townships and the county will have to continue to work cooperatively to manage growth and development in these areas and to prevent premature development so that adequate streets, infrastructure and services can be provided in a cost effective manner. The two most useful means to do this are through joint powers agreements and/or orderly annexation agreements.

Properties within the Planned Growth Areas should be annexed into the adjacent city when urban development is imminent and sewer, water and other urban services can be provided in an orderly, efficient, cost effective manner.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

This Plan was built upon a strong foundation of citizen involvement. Citizens should be involved not only in the local planning efforts undertaken to implement this Plan, but in future updates to this Plan as well. This Plan will affect everyone in the county, and everyone should have the opportunity to contribute to its future planning decisions.

To ensure active, ongoing citizen involvement, a Citizen’s Advisory Board (CAB) should be established and charged with managing the Plan’s progress, particularly with respect to the established Goals and Policies. The CAB would be “keepers of the vision” by having the responsibility for monitoring and informing the county of the implementation progress and ongoing challenges facing the Plan. The CAB should develop, in coordination with and approval of the County, a system to measure the Plan’s success. The CAB should be composed of a mix of individuals appointed by the County Board who are representative of major stakeholders within the county similar to the composition making up the Comprehensive Planning Task Force for the development of this Plan. The CAB should be established and undertake its first review of the Plan’s implementation 2 – 3 years after its adoption.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Ongoing public education will be an important component to successfully implementing this Plan. The county and its cities and townships should seek out creative ways to communicate the Plan’s overall goals, policies and recommendations to the public. It will be particularly important to express to the public the importance of planning and to educate them on the sustainable development and growth management concepts embodied in this Plan.

At a minimum the County should make copies of this Plan available for the public to review and discuss. This may include copies for review at the County Courthouse, city halls, public libraries, the university and on the county's web site.

REVIEW AND REVISION

Comprehensive planning is a continuous process and thus the Plan should be monitored and updated when necessary. The Planning Commission and County Board should carefully review proposed changes and their implications and actively seek citizen comment on such proposals. If changes are found to be appropriate, they should be formally added to the Plan by legal amendment. In addition, every five years, the entire Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed and modified, if needed, to ensure that it is an up-to-date expression of community goals and intentions.

In addition to a wholesale review of the Plan every five years, the County should review and make updates, if needed, as things having major planning impacts occur.

ONGOING, SHARED PLANNING

This planning effort has established a healthy dialogue among local jurisdictions within the county. These jurisdictions should continue this dialogue in the implementation and maintenance of this Plan, managing the Planned Growth Areas, and planning future infrastructure.

The County should also continue to work cooperatively with local jurisdictions, adjacent communities and state agencies on issues of mutual concern. These may include issues such as transportation, surface and ground water management, flooding, agricultural preservation, economic development and other issues.