INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Lyon County's landscape is diverse, ranging from mid-sized cities to small towns and thriving farms. Balancing the needs of each of these sectors is, and will continue to be, an important challenge for the county. The geographic area of Lyon County encompasses approximately 722 square miles, or about 462,084 acres, and consists of 11 cities and 20 townships. In addition, there are a number of rural service centers located throughout the county. These are locations, usually at the crossroads of two major highways or county roads, which are not incorporated but still have a commercial establishment or two, sometimes a church and a handful of residences. These areas often provide very limited, but still important, local goods and services.

In Lyon County, urban growth emerging from the Marshall area poses many land use challenges. The strain between urbanization and the traditional agricultural character of the county is at the forefront of this struggle. As cities grow and urban land uses extend into the neighboring townships, development pressure is placed on the surrounding agricultural areas. Thus, agricultural preservation, environmental protection and annexation dynamics have become increasingly important for the county. This makes careful consideration of the county's future land use very important.

LAND USE INVENTORY

The purpose of a land use inventory is to quantify and analyze existing development within a community. An examination of current land uses should reveal development patterns, densities and other land use scenarios that can provide direction for future development and redevelopment. This inventory, combined with other background information, is used to suggest where, at what intensity and, in some cases, when growth should occur. The inventory can also help to classify areas that should remain undeveloped or preserved.

The existing land uses for the unincorporated areas of the county are shown on Figure 8-1, *Existing Land Cover map*, while the corresponding acreages for each land use category are shown in Table 1. The land uses for this map came from 1989 LMIC (Land Management Information Center) land cover data and was derived from aerial photograph interpretation. Each land use category is described following the table.

Although the county has a wide range of land uses, clearly the most predominant use of land is for agriculture. Table 8-1 illustrates that approximately 84 percent of the county is agricultural. This includes cultivated and transitional agriculture land. The next largest land use category is grassland, which amounts to approximately 9 percent of the county's total area, followed by forest areas. Farmsteads and rural development comprises just under 2 percent of the county, with urban and industrial areas comprising another 1.1 percent. Open water, including lakes, rivers and streams, comprises about 1.3 percent of the county's area.

Land within municipalities comprises approximately 10,850 acres, or 2 percent of the county's total area. These land uses are largely urban in nature and include residential, commercial, industrial, public uses and parks and recreation.

Table 8-1
Lyon County Land Cover

Land Cover Category	Acres	Percent of Total
Urban and Industrial	5,002	1.1%
Farmsteads and Rural Development	6,980	2%
Cultivated and Transitional Agricultural land	388,385	84%
Grassland	40,454	9%
Deciduous Forest	12,300	3%
Open Water	5,894	1.3%
Wetlands	2,795	0.6%
Gravel Pits and Open Mines	252	0.1%
Exposed Soil, Bare Rock, Sand bars and Sand Dunes	22	0.0%
Total	462,084	100%

Source: Land Management Information Center, Minnesota Planning

URBAN AND INDUSTRIAL

This category includes cities, towns and villages with place names. Small residential areas without USGS (U.S. Geological Survey) topographic map place names are classified as rural residential developments. (See category below.) The *Urban and Industrial* category also includes commercial, industrial or urban developments that are included within, or are directly associated with, an urban area. Examples include: manufacturing and processing plants, power plants, urban airports and waste treatment plants.

FARMSTEADS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

This category includes the *Farmsteads, Rural Residences* and *Rural Residential Development Complexes*, and *Other Rural Development* LMIC categories. *Farmsteads* include farmhouses and adjoining farmyard areas. Farmsteads also include buildings such as machinery storage areas, grain storage facilities and corrals and livestock holding and feeding areas directly associated with the farmyard area.

Rural Residences are non-urban residences other than farmsteads. Rural residences include the residence, associated structures such as garages and sheds, and the associated landscaped area. This category includes from one to four residences in close proximity, with no distinguishable, intervening, non-residential features.

Rural Residential Development Complexes, on the other hand, include rural residences, as defined above, in a complex that includes five or more residences in close enough proximity to be mapped as a single unit.

Other Rural Developments include *Commercial and Industrial*, *Cultural and Recreational* and *Agricultural Developments* not directly associated with urban areas. *Commercial and Industrial Developments* include substations, communications facilities, power plants, small private airstrips, junkyards, landfills, storage maintenance yards, businesses, factories, lumber mills, commercial livestock and poultry operations, and grain operations. *Cultural and Recreational Developments* include built-up factories and service areas associated with parks and rest areas, camp grounds and golf courses. It also includes churches, cemeteries, community halls and rural schools. *Agricultural Developments* include those agricultural facilities not directly associated with farmsteads. It includes machine storage areas, grain storage areas, barns and corrals, and isolated buildings. It also includes isolated farmsteads that no longer have apparent road access.

CULTIVATED AND TRANSITIONAL AGRICULTURAL LAND

This category includes both the *Cultivated Land* and *Transitional Agricultural Land* LMIC categories. *Cultivated Land* includes those areas under intensive cropping or rotation, including periods when a parcel may be fallow. It represents land planted to forage or cover crop. The units exhibit linear or other patterns associated with current or relatively recent tillage.

Transitional Agricultural Land includes areas that show evidence of past tillage but do not now appear to be continuously cropped or in a crop rotation. Parcels in this unit include fields that are idle or abandoned and may or may not have been planted to a cover crop. In addition to displaying some evidence of past tillage, they usually are relatively uniform in vegetation. Land in active pasture use is also included in this category.

GRASSLAND

This category includes both *Grassland* and *Deciduous Shrub-Tree Complexes*. The *Grasslands Complex* includes herbaceous plants in addition to grassland areas. It may contain up to one-third shrubs and/or tree cover. Areas may be small to extensive, and range from regular to very irregular in shape. They are often found between agricultural land and more heavily wooded areas, and along right-of-ways and drainages. These areas may be mowed or grazed, and range in appearance from very smooth to quite mottled.

The *Deciduous Shrub-Tree Complex* includes a combination of grass, shrubs and trees, in which the deciduous tree cover comprises from one-third to two-thirds of the area, and/or the shrub cover comprises more than one-third of the area. This complex is often found adjacent to grassland or forested areas, but may be found alone. These areas are often irregular in shape and vary greatly in extent.

DECIDUOUS FOREST

This classification includes areas with at least two-thirds of the total canopy cover composed of predominantly woody deciduous species. It may contain coniferous species but it is dominated by deciduous species. It includes woodlots, shelterbelts and other planted areas.

WATER

This category includes permanent water bodies, including lakes (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Lacustrine System 'L'), rivers, reservoirs, stock ponds and permanent palustrine open water (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service POWH). Intermittently exposed palustrine open water areas (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service POWG, POWJ, POWZ) are included in this open water category when the photo evidence indicates that the area is covered by water the majority of the time.

WETLANDS

This category includes wetlands visible on the aerial photography with an area of at least 2 acres. Wetlands boundaries are delineated from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory (NWI) data. In cases where these boundaries have changed (such as for drained wetlands), the boundaries are determined from the current photography.

The NWI types included in this category are semi-permanent palustrine emergent wetlands (PEMF and PEMY categories) and areas of semi-permanent palustrine open water (POWF) associated with PEMF through PEMY wetlands, as defined in the NWI. These categories represent basins with deep-water emergents (primarily cattail, bulrush and whitetop) and open water inclusions. Where U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service data are not available, wetland classification is based on the distribution of visible deep-water emergents and open water inclusions.

Temporary, saturated, seasonal and intermittently exposed palustrine wetlands will, in most cases, be mapped according to dominant cover type visible on the photography (e.g., open grassland, cultivated, grass-shrub-tree complex, etc.) rather than as wetlands.

GRAVEL PITS AND OPEN MINES

This category includes areas stripped of topsoil with exposed substrate. Gravel pit areas that have been reclaimed either naturally or artificially are classified as the current cover type.

EXPOSED SOIL, BARE ROCK, SAND BARS AND SAND DUNES

This category includes the LMIC *Bare Rock* and *Exposed Soil, Sandbars and Sand Dunes* classifications. *Bare Rock* includes areas of rock outcrops that lack appreciable soil development or vegetative cover. *Exposed Soil, Sandbars and Sand Dunes* includes areas lacking appreciable plant cover that are not gravel pits or bare rock.

AGRICULTURE

Since the European settlement days and the plowing under of the native prairie in the mid to late 1800's, agriculture has been the predominant land use in Lyon County. Today, about 88 percent, or 368,115 acres, of the county continues to either be cultivated or used for pasture/hay lands. Although the county has seen some rural development along with urban expansion, the land area dedicated to farming has actually increased in the past decade from 368,115 acres in 1987 to 403,001 acres in 1997. Although it is impossible to know from the data, this may be attributable to land previously enrolled in state conservation reserve programs being converted to farming and/or the conversion of previously wooded land for crop production. As cities have grown, the market demand for large-lot residential and commercial development has increased around the population centers. Today, land use conflicts are increasing between residential and agricultural land uses.

The average farm size in 1987 was 355 acres compared to 433 acres in 1997, as shown in Table 8-2. Corollary to this, the total number of farms decreased during the same period from 1,036 to 937. Individual or family farms have decreased as well from 920 in 1987 to 814 in 1997. The average age of farmers has risen from 45 years old in 1987 to 50 in 1997.

Table 8-2
Agricultural Statistics
Lyon County
1987-1997

Agricultural Statistic	1987	1992	1997	1987 - 1997 Change	1987 - 1997 % Change
Number of Farms	1,036	947	931	-105	-10%
Farms Under 10 acres	94	65	51	-43	-46%
Farms 10 to 49 acres	91	81	93	2	2%
Farms 50 to 170 acres	201	156	183	-18	-9%
Farms 180 to 499 acres	389	338	296	-93	-24%
Farms 500 to 999 acres	208	233	224	16	8%
Farms 1,000 acres or more	53	74	84	31	58%
Average Size of Farm (acres)	355	417	433	78	22%
Land in farms (acres)	368,115	395,023	403,001	34,886	9%
Cropland harvested (acres)	336,818	360,644	365,967	29,149	9%
Land in farms as a % of total land	81%	86%	88%	8%	9%
Individual or family farms (#)	920	831	814	-106	-12%
Individual or family farms (acres)	308,838	324,594	329,916	21,078	7%

Source: MN Department of Agriculture

The following Table 8-3 illustrates the different types of crops grown in Lyon County. Corn, soybeans and wheat are the predominant crops grown. The number of acres used to grow corn and soybeans has

increased from 1987 to 1997, while the numbers of acres of wheat, barley, oats and hay/alfalfa have seen large decreases in acreage during this time period.

Table 8-3
Crops Grown
Lyon County
1987-1997

Crop	Acres			1987 - 1997	
	1987	1992	1997	Change	Percent Change
Corn for grain or seed	107,532	151,049	154,986	47,454	44%
Wheat	16,003	9,492	5,140	-10,863	-68%
Barley	746	370	161	-585	-78%
Oats	8,356	4,762	1,637	-6,719	-80%
Soybeans	114,841	140,841	163,984	49,143	43%
Hay, Alfalfa	16,490	11,447	11,428	-5,062	-31%

Source: USDA

Table 8-4 illustrates the overall decline in the number of livestock farms from 1987 to 1997. In each animal category, except beef cows, a decline was seen during those years. The most drastic decline (-63 percent) was seen in layers & pullets, dropping from 35 farms in 1987 to 13 farms in 1997. Dairy farms also saw a large decrease of 58 percent during the same period. However, the overall livestock count in the county rose 10 percent and in each category the number of farms declined at a greater rate than the livestock count. This reflects a trend toward larger and fewer operations.

Table 8-4
Livestock Farms
Lyon County
1987-1997

Livestock	1987	1992	1997	1987 - 1997 Change	1987 - 1997 % Change
Cattle and Calves					
Number of Farms	368	347	313	-55	-15%
Number of Livestock	39,267	40,032	43,614	4,347	11%
Beef Cows					
Number of Farms	150	156	156	6	4%
Number of Livestock	5,898	5,915	5,847	-51	-1%
Milk Cows					
Number of Farms	89	61	37	-52	-58%
Number of Livestock	3,602	3,050	2,280	-1,322	-37%
Hogs and Pigs					
Number of Farms	334	306	218	-116	-35%
Number of Livestock	110,551	136,032	176,014	65,463	59%
Sheep and Lambs					
Number of Farms	98	69	46	-52	-53%
Number of Livestock	5,377	6,447	2,866	-2,511	-47%
Layers & Pullets 13 weeks old and older					
Number of Farms	35	15	13	-22	-63%
Number of Livestock	41,931	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Broilers & Other Meat-Type Chickens					
Number of Farms	11	7	8	-3	-27%
Number of Livestock	1,165	2,235	1,888	723	62%
Total					
Number of Farms	1,085	961	791	-294	-27%
Number of Livestock	207,791	193,711	229,509	21,718	10%

Source: MN Department of Agriculture

In 1987, crop sales accounted for about 44 percent of the market value of agricultural products sold while livestock sales accounted for approximately 56 percent of the market value. In 1997 this shifted slightly, with about half of the market value of agricultural products sold coming from crop sales and half from livestock sales. From 1987 to 1997, the average per farm market value of agricultural products sold increased 75 percent from $90,136 to $ 158,058. Table 8-5 illustrates the market value, production costs and net cash return of agricultural products from 1987 to 1997. The average net cash return per farm from agricultural sales rose 79 percent, or an average of 7.5 percent per year.

Table 8-5
Crop Sales Information
Lyon County
1987 to 1997

	1987	1992	1997
Average market value of ag products sold per farm	90,136	116,443	158,058
Average total farm production expenses per farm	68,024	93,184	120,240
Average net cash return per farm from ag sales	19,386	22,245	34,741

Source: Mn Department of Agriculture

PRIME AGRICULTURAL LANDS

The continued economic viability of agriculture is an important consideration for most rural Minnesota counties. Soil quality is the foundation of agricultural productivity and land health. In Minnesota, two government agencies, the Soil Conservation Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, classify soils in terms of their ability to support agriculture into two categories: *Prime Farmland* and *Statewide Important Soils*, both of which are shown on Figure 8-2, *Important Agricultural Land* map.

Soils that constitute prime farmland in Minnesota are defined by the Soil Conservation Service as those that have the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops. It must be available for the following uses: cropland, pasture land, forest or some other land use that is not urban, built upon or water. Prime farmland has the soil quality, growing season and needed moisture supply to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. To be designated as prime, land cannot be urbanized, developed or comprised largely of water areas.

Prime farmland soils must have among other things:

- Available water capacity within a depth of 40 inches;
- A mean annual temperature higher than 32 degrees F at a depth of 20 inches;
- A pH that is between 4.5 and 8.4;

- No water table or a water table that is at a sufficient depth during the growing season;
- The conductivity of the saturation extract is less than 4 mmhos/cm and the exchangeable sodium percentage is less than 15;
- The product of the erodibility factor and the percent slope is less than 2.0 and the product of the soil erodibility and the climactic factor does not exceed 60;
- The permeability rate is at least 0.06 inches per hour, and;
- Less than 10 percent of the surface layer consists of rock fragments coarser than 3 inches.

Soils of statewide importance include those that are not quite as productive as prime farmlands but still produce high economic yields. They usually require more intensive land management techniques to produce those yields. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NCRS) offices performs this classification.

The list of prime farmland soils reflects the most current concepts and criteria for the designation of farmland as outlined in the National Soil Survey Handbook, section 622.03. Therefore, these soils, as indicated on the *Important Agricultural Land map*, may not be classified as they are in the soil survey report for a given county. The statewide important soils lists are available in the Field Office Technical Guide for each county.

The majority of Lyon County's land is considered "prime farmland" with approximately 360,576 of the county's 456,190 acres of land classified as such. Seventy-nine percent of the county's land is considered prime agricultural. An additional 40,962 acres are of statewide importance. Prime farmland soils are fairly evenly distributed throughout the county. Statewide important soils are somewhat more concentrated in the western portions of the county, although they are present throughout.

Prime farmland is a very valuable natural resource and, like other natural resources, is finite and nonrenewable and should be considered when making land use decisions. Increased urban growth and rural, non-farm residential development poses challenges relating to conserving this important resource while supporting the growth and development needed to provide homes, jobs and goods for area residents.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The majority of the county's residential growth has been concentrated around the primary urban centers, particularly Marshall. The following table shows a breakdown of single-family residential building permits for the unincorporated areas of the county.

Every township in Lyon County experienced at least some new residential development between 1995 and 2000 as shown in Table 8-6. Lake Marshall Township had the most new residential building permits issued during this period with 26 new, single-family homes. Fairview and Lynd townships followed with 14 new, single-family homes each. The three townships showing the highest number of new, single-family homes are located within the Marshall area.

Table 8-6
Single Family Housing Construction Trends
Lyon County
1995-2000

Township	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total	Avg Per Year
Amiret	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0.3
Clifton	0	1	1	1	0	1	4	0.7
Coon Creek	3	0	0	0	1	1	5	0.8
Custer	2	0	1	2	0	0	5	0.8
Eidsvold	0	1	1	1	1	1	5	0.8
Fairview	1	4	0	2	3	4	14	2.3
Grandview	1	2	0	0	1	0	4	0.7
Island Lake	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0.3
Lake Marshall	2	1	3	5	8	7	26	4.3
Lucas	0	0	3	1	1	0	5	0.8
Lynd	1	1	1	3	3	5	14	2.3
Lyons	1	0	1	2	0	2	6	1.0
Monroe	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0.3
Nordland	1	0	0	1	1	0	3	0.5
Rock Lake	2	0	1	1	1	1	6	1.0
Shelburne	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0.3
Sodus	0	2	1	1	1	0	5	0.8
Stanley	2	1	2	0	0	0	5	0.8
Vallers	2	0	0	1	0	0	3	0.5
Westerheim	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.3
Total	23	13	18	21	22	23	120	20

Source: Lyon County

LAND USE CONTROLS

Lyon County currently administers countywide zoning, which guides the use of property within the unincorporated portions of the county. The County also administers a subdivision ordinance that regulates the division of property. The zoning ordinance establishes seven primary categories of zoning districts to meet the county's planning, development and preservation needs:

- Agricultural
- Conservation
- Suburban Residence
- Urban Expansion
- Highway Commercial-Industrial
- Industry
- Floodplain

Most of the zoning within the county is considered *Agricultural*, which is intended to preserve and promote the use of land for agricultural purposes and to protect it from scattered non-agricultural, rural development. Single-family, non-farm dwellings are allowed in this district per each quarter-quarter section. Commercial, recreational and other uses are allowed on a limited basis as well.

A *Conservation District* has been established in Lyon County to protect environmentally sensitive and scenic areas, conserve major areas with native ground cover, and preserve water resources. This district is delineated based on topography, woodlands, soil conditions and other environmental features. This district permits parks, wildlife refuges, forest preserves and similar uses owned by a governmental agency. Agriculture is also allowed in this district as are single-family dwellings subject to approval of a site plan. Commercial recreational uses are also allowed subject to conditions.

The county's *Suburban Residence District* is intended to accommodate small, unincorporated villages and low-density rural residential subdivisions with on-site utilities where public services are not available. Currently, the only area zoned Suburban Residential is a residential subdivision just south of TH 23 outside Marshall.

Urban Expansion Districts have been established for the purpose of allowing limited urban growth. This district provides areas immediately adjacent to existing municipalities where urban development can take place and where urban services can be readily extended. Currently there are no areas actually zoned Urban Expansion.

The county's *Highway Commercial-Industrial District* accommodates highway-oriented businesses outside of cities along major transportation routes. Limited areas along TH 23 and TH 59 are zoned for these uses. The *Industrial District*, on the other hand, is intended to accommodate industrial uses that due to their size, intensity or nature would not be appropriate for the Highway Commercial-Industrial District. An industrial area along TH 59 south of Marshall has been zoned as Industrial.

The *Floodplain Districts* are intended to control development in areas prone to flooding in order to minimize the losses associated with such disasters. The largest areas of floodplain in Lyon County occur within the city of Marshall as well as along the Redwood River and Meadow Creek in the eastern portions of the county.

The Floodplain District includes three sub-districts into which flood prone areas are divided. These districts are laid over existing zoning districts to ensure that appropriate development occurs in these sensitive areas. For example, in the Floodway District (FW), some of the permitted uses are farming, grazing, parking, golf courses, parks, residential lawns and other low intensity uses. In the Flood Fringe District (FF), all permitted uses of the underlying zoning district are allowed with special requirements placed on structures with regard to elevation and flood proofing. In the General Floodplain District special site planning requirements are placed on potential developers.

The county includes eleven incorporated municipalities and twenty townships within its borders. None of the townships have adopted their own zoning ordinances but all of the cities administer zoning within their boundaries.

ISSUES

As part of the Comprehensive Planning process, the County hosted a project kick-off meeting on April 12, 2001. Meeting participants were led through a number of exercises to elicit Task Force and resident views on the issues, opportunities and threats facing the county as well as its strengths and weaknesses. Participants listed and then ranked their ideas in order of importance.

Participants in the workshop identified a number of positive land use patterns, uses and opportunities in Lyon County:

- High Quality of Agriculture (10)
- Good Farm Land (8)
- Parks and Natural Resources (2)
- Natural Resources and Recreational Opportunities (2)

However, participants also identified a number of issues related to land use, development and growth:

- Urban Sprawl (16)
- Lack of Groundwater/Water Resources for Expansion (14)
- Areas of Conflicting Land Use (8)
- Urban Pollution (2)
- Unplanned Growth (1)
- Agricultural Use versus Rural Living
- Collision of Rural and Urban Interests

POLICY PLAN

Lyon County recognizes the importance of planning for growth and accommodating and protecting a variety of land uses in appropriate places. Following are the goals and policies of Lyon County to address land use, growth and development issues.

LAND USE GOAL #1: ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR LYON COUNTY THAT PROMOTES ORDERLY AND EFFICIENT GROWTH OF RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT WHILE PRESERVING THE COUNTY'S RURAL CHARACTER.

Policies:

1. Work with cities and townships within Lyon County to identify Planned Growth Areas around cities that have the potential to be served with an appropriate range of public services in a cost effective manner within which efficient and orderly growth can be facilitated over the next 20 years.

2. Work with cities and their adjacent townships to facilitate orderly growth of the Planned Growth Areas as shown on the Future Land Use Map through the use of orderly annexation agreements.

3. Discourage development from occurring at unsewered urban densities outside of cities, their planned growth areas and rural residential areas until urban services can be provided in an orderly and efficient manner.

4. Work with cities to extend urban services to the Planned Growth Areas in a timely fashion when economically feasible.

5. Work with cities within the county to create conceptual master plans for the identified Planned Growth Areas that will identify, map and preserve future transportation and utility corridors, areas for open space and the preservation of natural resources.

LAND USE GOAL #2: SUPPORT THE LONG-TERM PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURE IN THE COUNTY.

Policies:

1. Recognize and support the agricultural character of the county in all planning efforts.

2. Establish clear and distinct Agricultural Preservation zoning districts outside Planned Growth Areas, Rural Residential Areas, Conservation Areas and Rural Service Centers that provide for long-term agriculture and limit density.

3. Allow density transfers and promote cluster design techniques for non-farm, residential development as a means to concentrate development in less agriculturally productive areas and preserve large tracts of farmland, while still allowing farmland owners to benefit from development. See Appendix D.

4. Support agricultural operations against nuisance complaints when such operations are being conducted according to generally accepted farming practices.

5. Utilize soil survey information in planning for the best use of the land in rural areas.

6. Identify prime agricultural areas and develop effective strategies to ensure their preservation and viability.

7. Encourage the enrollment of prime agricultural areas in the state's Green Acres Program, Agricultural Land Preservation Program and/or other federal, state or local conservation programs.

8. Examine tax policies and practices that keep taxes on land used for farming in line with its value for that use.

LAND USE GOAL #3: PLAN FOR THE ORDERLY AND EFFICIENT GROWTH OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTY.

Policies:

1. Encourage residential growth to occur in an orderly and compact manner in and around cities within the Planned Growth Areas so that new developments can be effectively served by public utilities and the character and quality of the county's agricultural areas can be maintained and enhanced.

2. Require urban overlay plats to be filed along with large-lot subdivisions within the Planned Growth Areas.

3. Outside of the Planned Growth Areas, encourage non-farm residential development to be clustered on small lots in and around unincorporated rural communities and in areas that are considered marginal for agricultural use.

4. Encourage density transfers and clustering techniques for non-farm rural residential development to preserve prime agricultural areas.

5. Encourage density transfers and clustering techniques for non-farm rural residential development to preserve environmentally sensitive or significant areas.

LAND USE GOAL #4: PLAN FOR THE ORDERLY, EFFICIENT GROWTH OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTY.

Policies:

1. Encourage new commercial and industrial developments that require public sewer and water to locate within the county's cities in accordance with their Comprehensive Plans.

2. Encourage commercial and industrial developments, which do not need public sewer and water, to locate within Planned Growth Areas in locations with adequate road service.

3. Guide other commercial and industrial development to areas along arterial roadways near major intersections with other arterials.

4. Allow for home occupations and limited rural businesses on farmsteads in agricultural areas as well as small, community-based retail in the county's unincorporated rural communities.

5. Define and regulate or limit the types of commercial and industrial type uses that can be operated under the definition of a farm/agricultural use.

LONG RANGE LAND USE PLAN

This Long Range Land Use Plan and associated map (Figure 8-3) describe the different future land use designations for the county. The designations govern zoning and the county's future land use form. They provide a general framework for growth and development within Lyon County over the next 20 years. The Plan text provides the policies, standards and principles to guide the county's future physical form and function and serves as the basis for updating the zoning ordinance and other development controls that are enforceable under the County's police powers. The Future Land Use map illustrates the land use categories for which the policies will apply.

The Land Use Plan accomplishes several objectives: (a) it reflects existing development and generalized land use patterns, (b) it supports the continuation of rural land uses, (c) it recognizes the natural environment, and (d) if necessary, it addresses the need to plan for the orderly expansion of urban development into the neighboring rural areas. The land use and growth recommendations contained in this Plan provide for a balance between these components and were derived from careful consideration by the planning Task Force on a range of alternative approaches.

Six unique land use categories have been identified to guide growth and development within Lyon County. Below, each land use designation category is described. These are shown on Figure 8-3, *Future Land Use*. Also, a more detailed discussion of land use within key highway corridors in the Marshall area is provided in the Growth Corridor Sub-Area Plan chapter of this document.

PLANNED GROWTH AREAS

Planned Growth Areas are those areas that lie outside of existing urbanized areas and are in the direct path of urban growth. It is expected that these areas will be largely developed within the next 20 years and must be protected against development patterns that may hinder their ultimate transition to urban use. Future development in these districts should be at urban densities and occur in as orderly and contiguous a manner as possible.

Land uses within the *Planned Growth Areas* are generally identified in the respective city comprehensive plans. Development and land uses within these areas should be carefully coordinated with respective adjoining cities to ensure it follows planned growth patterns and is provided with the appropriate urban services.

New residential development in advance of annexation in these areas should be at densities of one unit per twenty acres or lower to protect these areas for future urbanization. New commercial and industrial development should be consistent with the land use plan of the adjacent city and provided with adequate infrastructure. Appropriate commercial and industrial development in advance of annexation would include those businesses not requiring urban services.

Some of the land within the *Planned Growth Areas* is already within an established orderly annexation area. Where this is not the case, cities and townships should work cooperatively to manage and service, as appropriate, the development of these areas. Orderly annexation agreements should be considered and are encouraged.

A more detailed discussion of the Planned Growth Areas around Marshall and Lynd is included in the Growth Corridors Sub-Area Plan chapter.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS

These areas are primarily intended to accommodate agricultural uses as well as rural, non-farm residential development in growth areas of the county outside of the Planned Growth Areas. The base density in these areas shall also be maintained at one unit per twenty acres, but higher densities may be accommodated through a Planned Unit Development or similar process that encourages clustering to preserve open space, natural features or farmland.

Commercial and industrial development is not appropriate for these areas. This is not intended to exclude home occupations.

Rural Residential Areas are in locations where city services are not expected to be extended in the foreseeable future, but where there exists development pressure due to the presence of high resource amenities, the rural setting and proximity to jobs and commerce. Development should be sited to avoid prime agricultural land when possible and retain natural features and open space.

CONSERVATION AREAS

The *Conservation Areas* are intended to provide a district, which based on topographic, wooded and soil conditions, will protect environmentally sensitive and scenic areas; retain major areas of natural ground cover for conservation purposes; and deter abuse of water resources and conserve other natural areas of the county. These areas are primarily along rivers and streams. Many of these areas possess rolling or steep topography and extensive ground cover, especially forested areas, and provide recreational opportunities for county residents and visitors. These areas should be protected and preserved.

The principal future use of land in the Conservation District is the preservation of land in a natural condition. However, agriculture is also an appropriate use on land that is suitable for farming, and low-density residential development may also be appropriate. Residential development in these areas should be at densities not to exceed eight units per forty acres. Any use should not conflict with existing agricultural operations or threaten environmentally sensitive areas.

Because land in this district is often along rivers and streams, a large portion of these areas are currently regulated under the County's shoreland and floodplain districts and regulations. Any use in these areas should be consistent with those districts and regulations where applicable.

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AREAS

These areas are primarily intended to accommodate agricultural land uses and supporting services. Low-density rural, non-farm residential development will also be accommodated in the Agricultural Preservation Areas at maximum densities of one unit per eighty acres. Density transfer is encouraged for residential development to accommodate the siting of dwellings on less productive farmland soils, allow clustering and promote shared accesses.

Only limited commercial and industrial development should be permitted in the Agricultural Preservation Areas. Appropriate industrial development for these areas would include those businesses not requiring urban services and which benefit from an isolated or spacious rural location. Appropriate commercial development would include those businesses not requiring urban services and which primarily serve a local market or support agriculture. Commercial and industrial development should be directed to areas along arterial roadways. In addition, commercial and industrial or quasi- commercial and industrial uses operated in conjunction with an agricultural use should be defined and regulated or limited so as to not negatively impact the rural character of the area, negatively impact surrounding agricultural operations and to not place excessive burden on rural road systems. This is not intended to prohibit small-scale operations conducted in conjunction with an agricultural operation, but those uses reaching the threshold of an independent commercial or industrial use should be regulated, limited and located as such.

All development should be sited to avoid prime agricultural land unless a need for the use is demonstrated and other suitable locations are not available.

RURAL SERVICE CENTERS

The *Rural Service Centers* encompass established, unincorporated rural centers. These areas may be appropriate for additional residential development on smaller lots as well as commercial establishments that serve the local market. However, these areas should remain relatively small and low-density so that they do not require sewer service or road improvements beyond normal maintenance.

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENTS

Planned Unit Developments (PUD's) are a method of development designed to:

- Encourage design that is sensitive to the environment.
- Depart from the strict application of required setbacks, yard areas, lot sizes, minimum house sizes, minimum requirements, and other performance standards associated with traditional zoning in order to maximize the development potential of land while remaining sensitive to its unique and valuable natural characteristics.
- Allow a variety of land uses, housing types and densities within a single development.

- Cluster project density, basing density on number of units per acre instead of specific lot dimensions.
- Promote efficiency through the consolidation of areas for open space and, by clustering the development, reductions in street lengths and other utility related expenses.

Planned Unit Developments will act as a "floating" zoning district within the Rural Residential and Planned Growth Areas. PUD's are intended to allow development at densities higher than would otherwise be allowed in these areas while preserving open space and rural character. By rezoning to a PUD, densities of up to sixteen units per forty acres may be achieved if development is clustered and community sewer systems are utilized. In addition, PUD's may allow a mixture of land uses appropriate to the underlying district and compatible with surrounding land uses; and consistent with future city plans if located within a Planned Growth Area. The PUD can provide a greater level of coordination with city plans for higher intensity development within the Planned Growth Areas than could be achieved under conventional county zoning districts. PUD's may be also considered in Rural Service Centers if it is demonstrated that doing so will best preserve natural resources, agricultural land or rural character.

A "floating zone" is an unmapped district where all the general zone requirements are contained in the ordinance and the zone is fixed on the zoning map only when an application for development, meeting the zone requirements, is approved. This method of zoning is most often used in rural areas, such as the unincorporated areas of Lyon County, where large tracts of land may be converted from a rural designation (such as Rural Residential or Planned Growth Areas) to a higher use development in accordance with planned development regulations (such as in a PUD). A discussion of open space development and PUD's is contained in Appendix E.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

For each of the above land use classifications, the County should consider issues such as siting of dwellings to preserve good farmland, how to count farm dwellings in density calculations, whether or not to allow additional farm dwellings on a farm site, and thresholds at which clustering/density transfer must be done by CUP and/or at which it must be done by PUD. These should be incorporated into the respective zoning regulations for each category.

INSERT FIGURE 8-1, EXISTING LAND COVER

INSERT FIGURE 8-2, IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL LAND

INSERT FIGURE 8-3, FUTURE LAND USE