

CHAPTER IV

MERCER COUNTY LAND USE GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The goals and policies regarding land use are the core of the Land Use Policy Plan. Decisions made regarding planning and zoning should be made with consideration of the land use goals and policies. For the purpose of this plan, goals are desirable points to be reached. Objectives are general avenues of approach which will lead to achievements of the goal statements. Policies are specific guidelines for action to help meet the objectives.

I. GOAL A: THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY BY PRESERVING FARMLAND AND AGRICULTURALLY RELATED INDUSTRIES

OBJECTIVES

1. Strictly regulate the type, number and location of commercial, residential and industrial developments in agricultural areas.
2. Use soils according to type and regulate nonfarm development according to soil suitability and type.
3. Prevent rural areas from becoming dump grounds for uses not wanted elsewhere.
4. Insure a stable economic base by promoting and encouraging the growth of agriculturally related industries.
5. Encourage the stability of the family farm by promoting family members to take up residence on the family farmstead.

II. GOAL B: PROMOTE WELL PLANNED RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL GROWTH THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY

OBJECTIVES

1. Prohibit incompatible land uses from locating in close proximity to one another unless adequate buffers or green spaces are provided.
2. Encourage growth to existing vacant areas in communities and subdivisions before new areas are approved for development.
3. Discourage nonfarm development in areas where soil is most suitable for agricultural purposes.
4. Encourage industrial and commercial development to locate on primary roads.
5. Prohibit nonfarm development within the 100 year floodplain unless the developer meets certain conditions.

**III.GOAL C:PROMOTE USES OF THE LAND THAT CONSERVE THE NATURAL
RESOURCES OF THE AREA**

OBJECTIVES

- 1.Discourage nonfarm development in areas where soils are most suitable for agricultural purposes.
- 2.Discourage land use practices or uses which contribute to or are the causes of wind and water erosion, loss of topsoil, loss of or adverse impact to wetlands and streams, and loss of trees and scrubs.
- 3.Insure that natural and/or steep slopes are subject to development only when the natural topography is not altered in a manner which will create or promote drainage problems and wind and/or water erosion.
- 4.Insure that proper measures are taken to reduce runoff and retain natural vegetation at construction sites.
- 5.Insure that potentially polluting land uses are sited, constructed and operated so as to minimize the degradation of air, soil, water and scenic resources.

**IV.GOAL D: PROMOTE GREATER PARTICIPATION BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN
THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

OBJECTIVES

- 1.Maintain a continuing program of citizen participation activities in order to keep the land use goals of the county constantly before the public.
- 2.Regularly solicit public involvement and comments on local land use considerations and during the preparation of revision of plans and ordinances.
- 3.Make all important documents available for review by the public.
- 4.Assure that all procedures follow the required publication and hearing processes.
- 5.Develop and follow clear and understandable procedures for changes and amendments to plans and ordinances.

V.GOAL E:PROMOTE THE WISE USE OF LAND

OBJECTIVE

- 1.Encourage land use development with relation and orientation to the advantages of existing facilities such as utilities and transportation.
- 2.Encourage residential development in existing residential areas.
- 3.Encourage commercial and/or industrial development to locate in existing commercial and/or industrial areas.

**VI.GOAL F:PROMOTE AN INTEGRATED INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY**

OBJECTIVES

- 1.Insure a well maintained farm-to-market system of roads in the county.
- 2.Promote the continuation of rail service within the county.
- 3.Promote the coordination of transmission line routes through the county.

**VII.GOAL G:PROVIDE ADEQUATELY FOR THE RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF THE
PUBLIC**

OBJECTIVES

- 1.Insure the availability of recreational needs of the public by cooperating with and encouraging the cities in recreational area development.
- 2.Promote tourism by enhancing local features of interest by conserving the natural beauty of the area.
- 3.Preserve the intrinsic value of the county's scenic areas, especially when development is occurring.
- 4.Preserve and enhance the historic, scenic, recreational and valuable natural and wildlife areas in the county.
- 5.Promote the development of existing recreational areas and facilities before new lands are acquired and developed.

VIII. POLICIES

1. To assure fair and consistent actions, all motions to approve, disapprove or modify any request under the Mercer County Zoning Ordinance or any amendments should include reference to applicable goals, objectives and policies.
2. No consideration to approve a variance within the agricultural district should be considered unless it can be demonstrated that:
 - a. No conflict would exist with surrounding or existing uses.
 - b. A majority of the property would be used for agricultural purposes.
 - c. Enforcement of the zoning ordinance would create a hardship.
 - d. The property has proper access for the intended use.
 - e. No extension of services would be required.
 - f. The soil type is proper for the intended use.
3. No rezoning or conditional use to permit a nonfarm residential use in agricultural districts shall be approved unless an extraordinary need can be shown. Additionally, all of the following points should be met:
 - a. Access to the property should be from a well graded and regularly maintained road.
 - b. The use will not require an extension of services.
 - c. The use is in close proximity to other nonfarm uses.
 - d. The use will not conflict with existing or surrounding agricultural uses.
 - e. The use will not take good farmland out of production.
4. Prior to approving rezoning, a variance or a special use permit to allow a commercial or industrial use in a noncommercial or non-industrial area, all the following points must be met:
 - a. The area should be suitable for all uses permitted under the new zoning classification, not just for the use being proposed.
 - b. Existing roads can adequately and safely handle changes in traffic patterns or types of vehicular traffic as a result of the new zoning classification.
 - c. The applicant must be able to show that no suitable property is already developed or any suitably zoned areas are available.
 - d. The rezoning will not require any extension of services, or that any cost resulting from the extension of services will be offset by additional income to the county as a result of the proposed use.
 - e. The commercial or industrial use will not conflict with

existing uses.

5.No subdivision plat shall be approved unless need can be demonstrated. Serial or domino subdivisions shall be prohibited. The applicant must be able to show:

- a.That the proposed plat location will not conflict with the goals, objectives and policies of this plan.
- b.That all zoning district and subdivision requirements have been met.