

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter 7

This section addresses steps necessary to implement key provisions of the Douglas County Comprehensive Development Plan.



INTERLOCAL COOPERATION

The Douglas County Comprehensive Plan is designed to provide land use policies that preserve the special character of the county's landscape. However, growing communities with annexation programs mean that municipal planning jurisdictions are likely to change over time. In the near term, a decision in the Elkhorn and Omaha annexation case will produce a change in the jurisdictional boundaries of the county. Any decision in Omaha's favor would extend their three mile ETJ (extra-territorial jurisdiction) well past the Elkhorn River. Douglas County and the City of Omaha (or other county municipalities) should avoid conflicts in policies that can produce undesirable development results. Therefore, Douglas County should act as a convener to establish inter-local partnerships that guide development in rural areas in the county and at the fringes of extra-territorial jurisdictions. To do this the county should promote inter-local cooperation agreements among its municipalities that:

- Establish consistent policies regarding development of rural areas, without restricting the ability of municipalities to exercise local zoning control within their jurisdictions.
- Establish an ongoing system of consultation and cooperation among the county's various planning jurisdictions.
- Provide a basis for the City of Omaha's extension of interceptor sewers into Urban Development Districts.
- Define the ultimate jurisdictional boundaries of each community in Douglas County.

LAND USE REGULATIONS

Updated land use regulation is a key area of plan implementation. The county should review current zoning and subdivision regulations and modify these ordinances in order to be consistent with the recommendations of the comprehensive development plan. Specific areas of review include:

- Revising permitted densities to be consistent with the land use categories established in the future land use plan. As a part of this process

the county has already modified minimum lot size in agricultural districts to 20 acres, ensuring that large scale acreage development does not impede future urban growth. Typical densities within each of the policy districts will be:

- In the environmental Resources District, conservation development will be mandatory, requiring a maximum 1 unit per 2 acres gross density. The overall gross density can be increased to 1 unit per 1 acre if 50-percent or more of the development remains in common open space. Low-density residential, open or agriculture will be the ultimate uses without prospect of transition to higher density.
- Greater than 1 unit per acre with maximum lot sizes of 20,000 square feet or less in Urban Development Districts.
- 20 acres per unit minimum down to 10 acre lot sizes with lot clustering in floodplain districts.
- 20 acre per unit minimum, with reductions of minimum lot sizes to 5 acres with Build-Through Acreage standards in the Urban Reserve district.
- 20 acre per unit minimum in the Resource Extraction district for developments outside lakefront projects. Typical lakefront developments would have a maximum gross density of 2.5 units per acre.
- Continuing to circulate new subdivision applications for review and comment by such service providers as schools, public safety services, and other public service providers. Comments should continue to be included in staff recommendations to the Douglas County Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners.
- Establishing design guidelines for designated corridors in the county. Guidelines can address building materials and orientation, landscaping, lighting, and signage.
- Requiring environmental resources inventories for all new developments within the Urban Development, Environmental Resources, Re-

require appropriate buffering around major environmental resources such as wetlands and prairies, and require that major environmental features be preserved and incorporated into all development designs.

- Developing new ordinance language for conservation development, build-through acreages, planned developments, and use of best stormwater management practices.
- Reviewing regulations for conservation subdivisions including establishment of a park dedication requirements.
- Extension and implementation of the Suburban Parks Master Plan.
- Implementing an Arterial Street Improvement Program in areas outside Omaha's jurisdiction.
- Establishing required use of BMPs through the subdivision review of grading and erosion control plans.
- Establishing required use of BMPs in subdivision and development design through the project review process.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Proposed transportation improvements will require substantial capital investment. Funding sources for construction include:

- Extension of the Arterial Street Improvement Program
- User fees such as wheel taxes
- General obligation bond proceeds
- Federal funds for financing improvements on major highway systems and development of the trail system.

Trail development in the Omaha metropolitan area has generally been funded by local bond proceeds, Federal Transportation Enhancement funds, and County or Natural Resources District funding. The Western Douglas County Trails Plan has also been funded through \$5 million in earmarked funds in the 2005 SAFETEA-LU bill. Trail projects associated with major transportation corridors should be considered

as part of the overall project budget, typically using Surface Transportation Program funds.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The county should undertake the following steps to implement the park and open space recommendations of the plan:

- The County should work with the cities of Elkhorn, Omaha and Bennington to extend a master parks plan into adjacent areas. This plan should establish criteria for the development of neighborhood and community parks at a level that at least matches existing service levels in these communities.
- The process of implementing the Elkhorn Preserve concept should begin with the creation of an Elkhorn Preserve study committee, as proposed by the 1998 Douglas County Comprehensive Plan. This committee would be charged with developing a management plan for this important natural resource. Since 1998 the preserve has been incorporated into the Elkhorn and Omaha parks plans but further action could be taken. The committee should include Douglas County; private property owners; the cities of Waterloo, Elkhorn, and Omaha, whose planning jurisdictions include some parts of the preserve; and the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resource District. The objective of any plan for this area should be the creation of a diverse network of ownerships, united toward protecting private property rights while maximizing conservation and public use of the river corridor.
- The County should work with the Natural Resource District to develop canoe access points along the Elkhorn River and corresponding trail linkages to these areas.