



Credit: Washington County

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive Planning: 2005-2009

In 1999 the Wisconsin Legislature enacted a comprehensive planning law, which is set forth in Section 66.1001 of the *Wisconsin Statutes*. The requirements supplement earlier provisions in the *Statutes* for the preparation of county development plans (Section 59.69(3) of the *Statutes*) and local master plans (Section 62.23 of the *Statutes*), and provide a framework for the development, adoption, implementation, amendment, and update of comprehensive plans in Wisconsin. The law includes a “consistency” requirement, whereby zoning, subdivision, and official mapping ordinances adopted and enforced by counties, cities, villages, and towns must be consistent with the comprehensive plan adopted by the county or local unit of government.

To address the State comprehensive planning requirements, a multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning process was undertaken by Washington County, 11 local government partners, UW-Extension, and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) from 2005 through 2009. As a result of the multi-jurisdictional process, comprehensive plans that satisfy the planning requirements set forth in Section 66.1001 of the *Statutes* were developed for the County and each local government partner. The County’s first comprehensive plan is documented in the previous edition of this report, which was also adopted by the Town of Germantown as the Town comprehensive plan. A plan report for each of the other 10 local government partners was separately documented and adopted by the Town or Village Board.

Local government planning partners for the 2005-2009 planning effort are listed in Table 1.1, which also includes the adoption date for each comprehensive plan adopted as part of the original planning process. Plan amendments have been adopted by several local governments in the County, including the Towns of Addison, Kewaskum, Polk, and Trenton; the Villages of Germantown, Newburg, Richfield, and Slinger; and the Cities of Hartford and West Bend. The Village of Richfield adopted a 10-year comprehensive plan update in 2014 and the Village of Slinger adopted a plan update in 2017. The Village of Newburg adopted a major amendment to its plan in 2014, although the amendment is not specifically identified as the 10-year plan update required by the *Statutes*. The Towns of Polk, Trenton, and Wayne adopted 10-year updates in 2017 and the Town of Farmington adopted a 10-year update in 2018. Appendix G to Chapters 11 and 12 provides details regarding the status of other partnering community 10-year plan updates as of January 24, 2019.

Table 1.1**Comprehensive Plan Hearing and Adoption Dates for Units of Government that Participated in the Washington County Multi-Jurisdictional Planning Process: 2005-2009**

Participating Unit of Government	Public Hearing	Plan Commission Approval	County, Town, or Village Board Adoption
Washington County	March 31, 2008	April 2, 2008 ^a	April 15, 2008
Town of Addison	May 21, 2009	June 4, 2009	June 18, 2009
Town of Barton	March 26, 2008	April 7, 2008	April 15, 2008
Town of Erin	June 2, 2008; June 16, 2008 ^b	June 2, 2008	June 16, 2008
Town of Farmington	May 12, 2009; January 19, 2010 ^c	April 28, 2009	January 19, 2010
Town of Germantown ^d	May 12, 2008	May 12, 2008	May 14, 2008
Town of Hartford	February 16, 2009	April 1, 2009	April 13, 2009
Town of Kewaskum	September 28, 2009	October 19, 2009	October 19, 2009
Town of Polk	September 1, 2009	September 1, 2009	September 8, 2009
Town of Trenton	April 21, 2009	March 10, 2009	April 21, 2009
Town of Wayne	March 17, 2009	March 17, 2009	March 18, 2009
Village of Kewaskum	November 5, 2009	November 5, 2009	November 5, 2009

Note: Washington County and the Towns of Addison, Kewaskum, Polk, and Trenton have amended their comprehensive plans since the original adoption date.

^a Date plan approved by the Washington County Planning, Conservation, and Parks Committee. The Committee is now known as the Land Use and Planning Committee.

^b The Town of Erin held separate public hearings before the Plan Commission and the Town Board.

^c The Town of Farmington made several changes to its draft plan following the May 2009 public hearing, and held a second public hearing prior to adopting the plan.

^d The Town of Germantown adopted the multi-jurisdictional plan as the Town comprehensive plan. All other local governments adopted an individual comprehensive plan.

Source: SEWRPC

The Washington County Board adopted three amendments to the County plan in 2013 and one in 2014. Amendment 2013-1 made updates to the County land use plan map to reflect the recommendations of the new County farmland preservation plan, incorporated updates to the land use plan maps in local comprehensive plans adopted through February 18, 2013, into the County land use plan map, and updated County goals, objectives, policies, and programs. Amendment 2013-2 incorporated the Washington County farmland preservation plan as Appendix T of the comprehensive plan. Amendment 2014-1 made changes related to the removal of secondary environmental corridors from the County plan. These amendments are available on the County website,¹ and are included in this plan update if still applicable.

The Village of Newburg, which is located in both Washington and Ozaukee Counties, cooperated in the multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning efforts of both Counties in 2005-2009, and partnered with Ozaukee County in applying for a grant to prepare the initial Village comprehensive plan. The Village participated in the development of the initial Washington County plan by serving on the plan Advisory Committee. The Village of Newburg also served on the Advisory Committee for this plan update.

The Village of Jackson and Town of Jackson worked with UW-Extension to prepare and adopt a joint comprehensive plan in 2009. Both the Village and Town chose to participate in the County multi-jurisdictional partnership to prepare updated individual plans.

Comprehensive Plan Update: 2016-2019

Section 66.1001(2)(i) of the State's comprehensive planning law requires that comprehensive plans be updated no less than once every 10 years. Plan updates are considered plan amendments. Washington County entered into a contract with SEWRPC in mid-2016 to update the multi-jurisdictional plan adopted by the County Board in 2008, which serves as the County's comprehensive plan. The update is documented

¹ Available at www.co.washington.wi.us/departments.iml?mdl=departments.mdl&ID=PLN.

in this report. Local governments that partnered with the County and SEWRPC as part of the original comprehensive planning effort, or worked with UW-Extension to prepare a local plan, were invited to work with SEWRPC to update their local comprehensive plan and to serve on the Advisory Committee that guided the preparation of this update. Local governments opting not to work with the County and SEWRPC to update their local comprehensive plan could either update their plan in-house or work with a private consultant to update the plan. Local governments that did not work directly with SEWRPC and the County were asked to provide updated population and employment projections and an updated land use plan map for inclusion in this updated County plan.

The following local governments participated in the update of the County plan and served on the Advisory Committee that guided the plan update:

- Town of Addison
- Town of Barton
- Town of Erin
- Town of Farmington
- Town of Germantown
- Town of Hartford
- Town of Jackson
- Town of Kewaskum
- Town of Polk
- Town of Trenton
- Town of Wayne
- Village of Jackson
- Village of Kewaskum
- Village of Newburg

1.2 STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

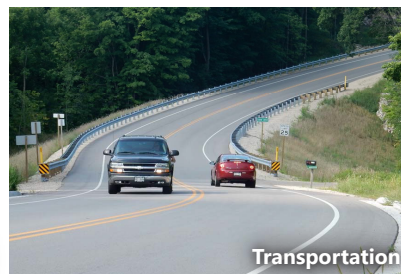
The multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan presented in this report provides a long-range guide for Washington County officials, staff, and citizens to effectively address future development and natural resource protection in the County through the year 2050, and sets forth County planning goals, objectives, policies, and programs. The County Board and affected committees of the County Board should refer to the comprehensive plan as a matter of course in their deliberations on planning issues and give the plan due weight when making decisions on such matters, particularly with regard to the statutory requirement for consistency between the County comprehensive plan and the County shoreland and floodplain zoning ordinance and the County subdivision ordinance. In addition, the comprehensive plan is intended to increase intergovernmental cooperation and the general awareness and understanding of County and local government planning goals and objectives by residents, landowners, developers, the business community, and other private interests, and among the many units, levels, and agencies of government with land use related responsibilities within the County.

Local government comprehensive plans also provide long-range guides for local government officials and citizens to address future development and natural resource protection in their respective communities. Local plan commission members and members of local governing bodies should refer to local comprehensive plans in the course of deliberations on local planning issues, particularly with regard to the statutory requirement for consistency between the local comprehensive plan and local zoning, subdivision, and official mapping ordinances. As the County comprehensive plan is intended to increase intergovernmental cooperation, local comprehensive plans address areas of mutual concern with the County and with adjacent local governments. Local comprehensive plans also set forth local planning goals, objectives, policies, and programs.

Nine Elements of the Comprehensive Plan

The multi-jurisdictional plan documented in this report includes the nine elements required by Section 66.1001(2) of the *Statutes*:

1. Issues and opportunities element
2. Land use element
3. Housing element
4. Transportation element
5. Utilities and community facilities element
6. Agricultural, natural, and cultural resources element
7. Economic development element
8. Intergovernmental cooperation element
9. Implementation element



Comprehensive Plan and Ordinance Consistency

Section 66.1001(3) of the comprehensive planning law requires county and local government general zoning, shoreland zoning, land division, and official mapping ordinances to be consistent with the comprehensive plan adopted by the county or local government. An exception is the approval of conditional use permits, which are exempted from the consistency requirement by Section 66.1001(2m) of the *Statutes*. Washington County has updated the County land division and shoreland/floodplain ordinances and refined the comprehensive plan goals, objectives, policies, and programs through plan amendments to maintain consistency between the plan and County ordinances. The County has also updated its ordinances to reflect new or revised State requirements and floodplain mapping. Additional information regarding County ordinances is included in Chapter 2.

Public Participation Plan

Section 66.1001(4) of the *Statutes* requires that the governing body of any County or local government preparing or amending a comprehensive plan adopt written procedures that are designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, in every stage of the preparation or amendment of a comprehensive plan. Proposed plan amendments must be widely distributed, and opportunities must be provided for written comments to be submitted by the public to the governing body. A procedure for the governing body to respond to those comments must also be identified.

A public participation plan (PPP) for plan amendments, which includes this plan update, was adopted by the County Board on January 12, 2010. The public participation plan seeks to enhance public awareness of the planning effort and its importance; educate citizens about current and past growth trends that have occurred in Washington County; and provide opportunities for citizen input. Techniques to secure public participation include news releases, newsletters, social media, information on the County website, display exhibits, a plan Advisory Committee, public open houses and other meetings to convey information and promote an exchange of ideas, and public hearings. The public participation plan is included in Appendix A.

Plan Review and Adoption

Section 66.1001(4) of the *Statutes* requires that a comprehensive plan or plan amendment be adopted by an ordinance enacted by the County Board. The law further requires that at least one public hearing be held prior to adopting the plan or plan amendment. Following adoption, the *Statutes* require that the comprehensive plan or amendment be sent to all governmental units within and adjacent to the County, the Wisconsin Department of Administration, the regional planning commission (SEWRPC), and public libraries serving the County.

1.3 COMMITTEE REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT

The preparation of this plan update was coordinated through the Washington County Land Use and Planning Committee of the County Board. The Land Use and Planning Committee provided oversight of the County planning effort and approved an updated comprehensive plan for consideration for adoption by the full County Board.

A Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee was established by the Land Use and Planning Committee to guide preparation of this plan update. The Advisory Committee is comprised of one representative from each local government partner, two members of the County Board, interest group representatives, and one citizen member. The members of the Advisory Committee are listed on the inside front cover of this report.



A meeting of the Multi-Jurisdictional Advisory Committee.

A Technical Workgroup (formerly known as the Technical Advisory Committee) was formed to assist in the development of the original multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan, and has continued to meet periodically to monitor implementation and to review amendments to the plan. The Workgroup, whose members are listed on the inside front cover of this report, is comprised of staff from several County departments. The Workgroup provided comments for consideration by the Advisory Committee and Land Use and Planning Committee during the plan update process.

1.4 THE PLANNING AREA

The planning area includes all of Washington County and those portions of the City of Hartford and Village of Newburg that extend outside Washington County. Washington County encompasses a total of 278,757 acres, or about 436 square miles. About 53 acres of the Village of Newburg extend into Ozaukee County, and about 338 acres of the City of Hartford extend into Dodge County.

The Village of Kewaskum owns about 60 acres in the Town of Auburn in Fond du Lac County, which is considered part of the Village. The site is a former landfill and is leased to Wings over Wisconsin as a bird sanctuary. The site will not be developed.

The County is bordered on the north by Fond du Lac and Sheboygan Counties, on the west by Dodge County, on the south by Waukesha County, and on the east by Ozaukee County. Milwaukee County is located to the southeast.

1.5 REPORT FORMAT

This planning report consists of 14 chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 describes existing land use-related plans and ordinances and Chapter 3 presents population and employment trends and projections. Chapters 4 through 13 present the nine required plan elements. The plan is summarized in Chapter 14. One significant departure from the report format of the first edition of the plan is the reorganization of the plan goals, objectives, policies, and programs into Chapter 12, Recommendations Element, instead of including goals, objectives, policies, and programs in the individual element chapters. This was done in response to the County Board adoption of a Vision, a Mission, and five Strategic Goals in 2015, which were updated in 2018 (shown in Figure 1.1). The reorganization of the comprehensive plan goals, objectives, policies, and programs is discussed further in Chapters 4, Issues and Opportunities Element, and 12.

In addition to this multi-jurisdictional County comprehensive plan report, individual comprehensive plans adopted by each local government partner as part of the original planning effort were updated to the extent requested by the community, with the exception of the Town of Germantown. The Town of Germantown adopted the multi-jurisdictional plan as the Town comprehensive plan in 2008, with supplemental information included in Appendix K of the first edition of this report. The Town is expected to adopt the County plan update after it is adopted by the County Board. Supplemental plan update information for the Town is included in Appendix E to Chapter 4 of this report.

1.6 REGIONAL CONTEXT

Washington County is one of the seven counties that together make up the Southeastern Wisconsin Region. Several significant urban centers are within 100 miles of the Region including the Chicago area; Madison area; Fox Cities-Green Bay area; and the Janesville-Beloit-Rockford area. The Region itself encompasses 2,689 square miles and includes the Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, and West Bend urbanized areas and a portion of the Round Lake Beach urbanized area, which includes portions of Kenosha and Walworth Counties in Wisconsin and portions of Lake and McHenry Counties in Illinois. In 2010, the Region had a population of about 2.02 million residents. Washington County is in the northwest portion of the Region, and contains a mix of urban areas, small villages, and extensive areas of farmland and natural resources. Washington, Ozaukee, Waukesha, and Milwaukee Counties together make up the four-County Milwaukee Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) established by the U. S. Census Bureau.

Pursuant to statutory requirements, SEWRPC has prepared and adopted a series of regional plan elements, including a regional land use and transportation plan, the recent update of which is known as VISION 2050. SEWRPC has also prepared regional water quality and water supply plans, a regional natural areas plan, a regional park and open space plan (comprised of the seven individual park and open space plans for each County), and a regional housing plan. Each of these plans is summarized in Chapter 2 of this report. Together, these plans provide a framework for development of the County plan. The regional plan elements were refined and detailed by County and local comprehensive plans.

Figure 1.1

WASHINGTON COUNTY

MISSION, VISION, VALUES

SEPTEMBER 21, 2018

VISION

Washington County strives to cultivate its rich heritage, vibrant economy and attractive communities through the distinct values that define us.

OUR BUSINESS VALUES

QUALITY OF LIFE is why we come and why we stay. Our communities are safe. Our schools are outstanding. With cultural and recreational opportunities at our back door, our quality of life is simply better for residents, businesses and visitors.

COMMUNITY is the tie that binds us together. We are hardworking, strong and resilient. As residents, businesses, local governments, churches and community organizations, we support one another toward a more prosperous future.

INNOVATION defines us. We are a community of leaders, thinkers and doers from all backgrounds and disciplines. Our ideas and passion power our future for economic growth.

An **ECONOMICAL** mindset is what sets us apart. We are a vibrant community that offers unwavering support for local businesses and economic development.

OUR RESIDENT VALUES

SAFETY is fundamental. Washington County ensures a secure community where families are raised, visitors feel at home and businesses prosper.

EDUCATION is our community cornerstone. From our high-quality school systems to our abundant community resources, we strive to create the environment that families need to grow.

OUR ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

We believe in **RESPECT** for all, treating one another with dignity and honoring individual rights.

Our **OPTIMISM** and positive attitude guide us. We are empowered by our sense of well-being through our willingness to work hard and be engaged.

We maintain **INTEGRITY** through transparency, strong moral principles and honesty.

Our success is rooted in **INNOVATION**, which comes from our creativity, willingness to take risks and dedication to new ideas.

We demonstrate **COMPASSION** by being empathetic and caring for those we serve.

COLLABORATION is essential to success. We listen, share and are constantly focused on creating, maintaining and improving effective partnerships.

MISSION

We create an environment for residents and businesses to enjoy our authentic quality of life through a well - governed and administered county dedicated to safe and secure communities; economic growth and vitality; effective mobility and reliable infrastructure; and access to basic needs.

Figure 1.1 (Continued)

STRATEGIC GOALS

The County Board established the following strategic goals for County services that are provided directly to citizens along with a set of practices designed to achieve each goal.

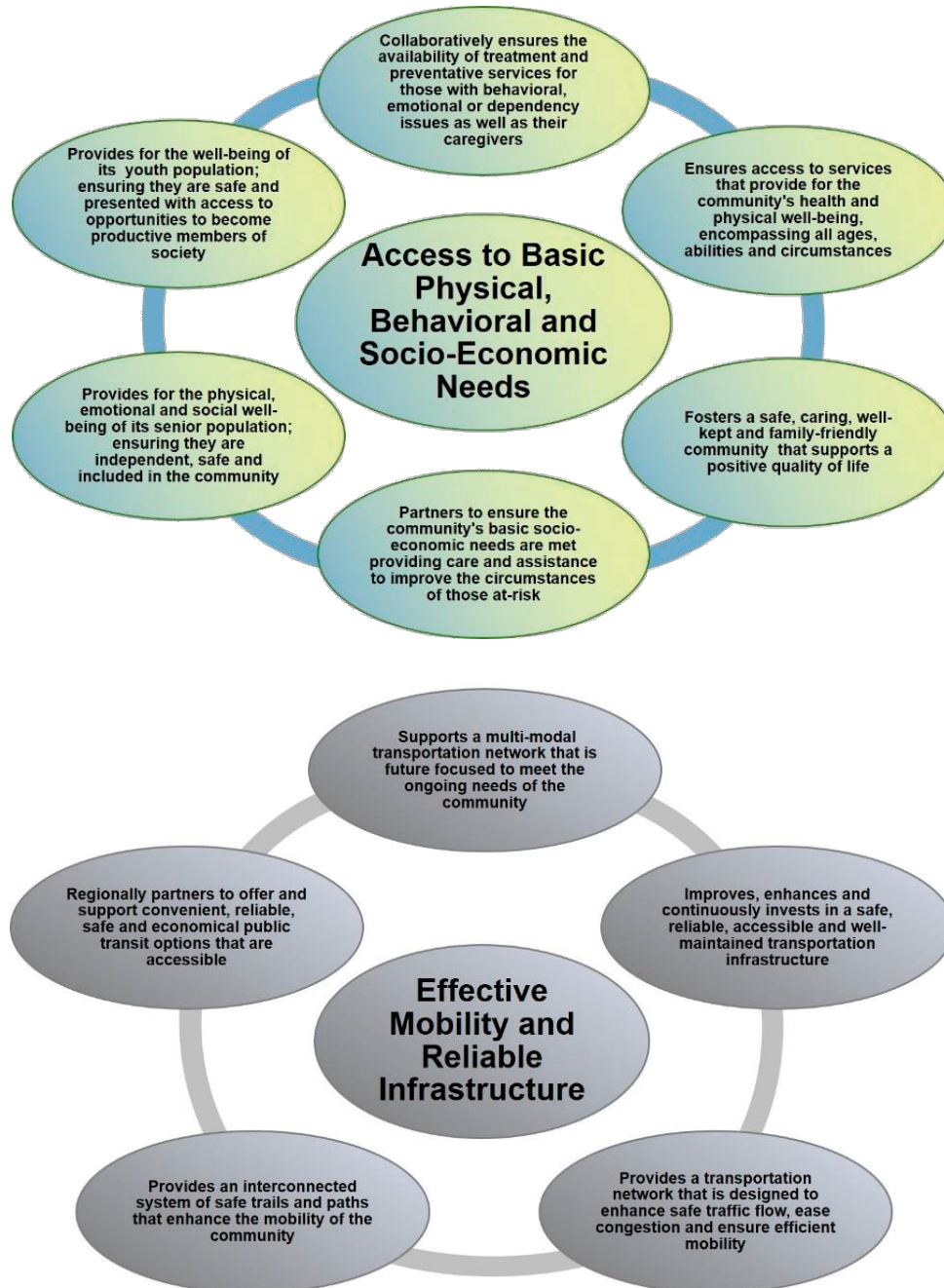
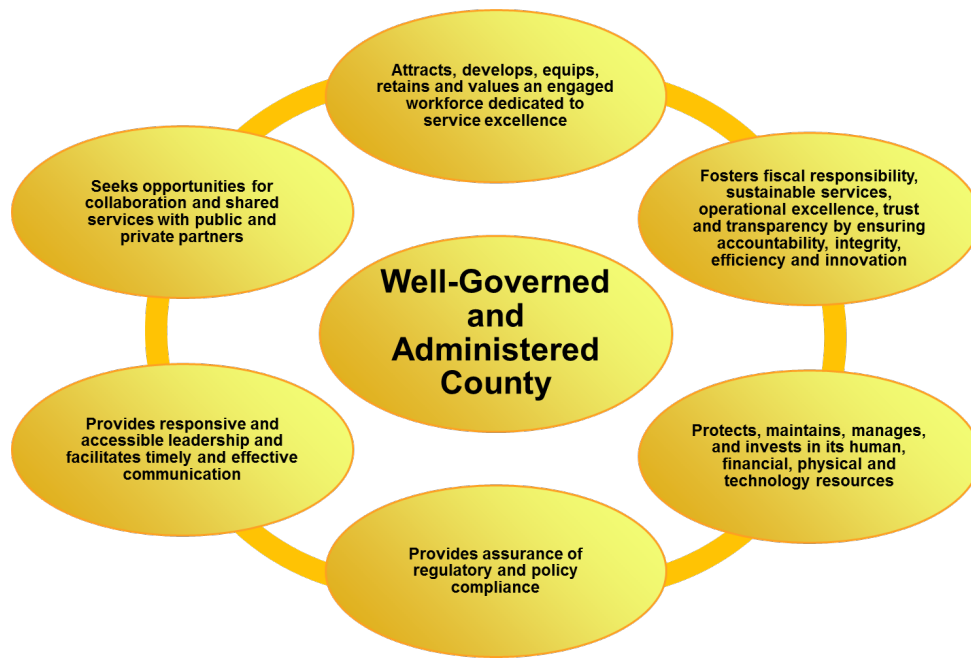


Figure 1.1 (Continued)



Figure 1.1 (Continued)

The County Board also established a goal and related practices for programs that do not provide direct services to citizens, but that support the direct services provided by other County programs. This governance result is shown below.



The need for comprehensive planning has been sparked by many things, including the demand to construct and expand transportation facilities and the rate and location of new urban development.

1.7 NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Washington County has experienced growth and increased urbanization in recent decades, which has been accompanied by a variety of development issues. Some of these development issues include the rate and location of new urban development; the need to construct and expand utilities, public facilities, transportation facilities, and other essential urban services and, in some cases, to coordinate efforts in multiple jurisdictions; the availability of affordable housing; protection of the natural resource base, including surface and groundwater quality and quantity; the preservation of farmland and open space; and conflicts between towns and adjacent cities and villages relating to annexations and exercise of extraterritorial authorities. This plan update takes into account these issues in addition to projections and trends, including a projected increase in County population and employment, a projected increase in the percentage of elderly residents, a projected decrease in the percentage of working-age residents, and the continued trend of planning and development issues crossing jurisdictional boundaries. The County worked with participating local governments and SEWRPC to update this multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan in order to address these development issues and satisfy Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law, in the context of satisfying the strategic goals established by the Washington County Board.

1.8 BENEFITS OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

In addition to addressing the development, timing, and growth issues specific to Washington County, there are general positive results of thoughtful comprehensive planning from which Washington County, and each community participating in the plan update, may benefit, including the following:

- **Planning Helps Define the Future Character of a Community**

The physical design, setting, and arrangement of land uses can make it possible for people to carry out their daily lives and activities in an attractive and safe community environment. Land use planning and design can foster a distinctive sense of place. Planning allows a community to identify, preserve, and build upon the defining features of the community.

- **Planning Helps Protect Natural and Cultural Resources**

Planning can help protect environmental features like wetlands, woodlands, and stream corridors, which provide important public benefits such as providing areas for stormwater storage, groundwater recharge, and recreation. Such resources would be difficult and expensive to replace if lost or damaged. Planning can also help identify and preserve prime agricultural soils, nonmetallic mining resources, and historic, archaeological, and other important cultural structures and sites.



Planning can help protect environmental features like wetlands, woodlands, and stream corridors that provide important public benefits, such as storm water storage and groundwater recharge areas and recreational opportunities.

- **Planning Can Provide a Rational Basis for Local Decisions**

Plans provide a factual and objective guide that can be used by public officials and citizens to make informed decisions about land use and development. Planning is a process that can help a community anticipate and prepare for change rather than react to it.

- **Planning Can Provide Certainty Regarding Future Development**

Plans and related maps show land owners and developers the location and type of development desired by the community, which can save individuals time and money when developing plans for future land uses. Planning can help increase the consistency and fairness of the development review and approval process while protecting the established property interests of existing residents.



Well-planned, orderly, and phased development patterns are less expensive for a community to provide public services and infrastructure than low-density and scattered development patterns.

- **Planning Can Save Money**

Well-planned, orderly, and phased development patterns are less expensive for a community to provide with public services and infrastructure than low-density and scattered development patterns.

- Planning Can Promote Economic Development**
 Planning can provide information about existing businesses and industries and help determine desirable types of new businesses. Planning can also help determine if the existing and projected workforce is sufficient to staff existing and proposed businesses and whether local services and housing are adequate to handle the impacts of new economic development.
- Planning Can Promote Public Health**
 Finally, well planned development patterns and transportation options can make recreational, educational, and commercial facilities accessible by walking and biking. The ability to safely walk or bike to these facilities promotes physical health and community interaction.



Planning can help determine if the existing workforce is sufficient to staff particular employment sectors and whether local services and housing are adequate to handle the impacts of new economic development.

1.9 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

While planning provides many important public benefits, it is important to recognize that an adopted plan is not an “end result,” but rather offers recommendations for future action. Plan recommendations will be fulfilled over time in generally small, incremental steps. A comprehensive plan provides a foundation and guide for many implementing tools, which may include community zoning ordinances and maps, subdivision ordinances, capital improvements programming, detailed facilities planning, and other County and local ordinances, programs, and policies. The implementation of new programs identified in the plan will require the review and approval of appropriate County Board liaison committees and the County Board of Supervisors through the annual budget process. In some cases, as the plan is implemented, recommendations for new programs may be modified, deleted, or added through periodic review and amendment of the plan, including refinements to reflect the strategic goals established by the County Board.



The ability to safely walk or bike to recreational, educational, and commercial facilities promotes physical health and community interaction.