

# **Scott County Comprehensive Plan**

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## **CHAPTER 11: MECHANISMS FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

The Scott County Comprehensive Plan contains plans and proposals of what is believed to be necessary to make the County function better and to be a better place to live. On the basis of the plan, thousands of dollars worth of local, state, and federal funds will likely be spent for transportation and various other county facilities, both public and private. Those facilities have been intended to serve the planned pattern of residential, commercial, and industrial development. The efficiency with which future development is served will depend on the coordinated implementation of all elements of the plan.

### ***Use of the Comprehensive Plan***

The analysis and proposals contained in this Plan guide present and future decisions. They are to be used by county and city officials, other groups, and private individuals interested in the future development within Scott County. The Implementation Strategies section of the plan indicates what actions or activities must be done to implement the plan or to ensure that the plan is followed on a day-to-day basis as decisions concerning land development are made.

If planning is to be effective with the goal of improving the County, the Comprehensive Plan must be prepared in concert with a zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, official map, building and housing codes, utility specifications, and a capital improvements program or other project programming tools. The County's plans and ordinances governing development are interrelated. If the ordinances are varied to allow development to occur differently than proposed, then streets, county facilities, and utilities may not be adequate to meet County needs.

Carrying out the plan is the responsibility of the County Board of Supervisors. An official map can be used to reflect all proposed streets, parks, schools, and other public facilities indicated in the Comprehensive Plan. The zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations are designed to guide development of land according to the plan. A capital improvements program outlines major County expenditures according to priorities and locations specified by the plan. A building code, and utility specifications promote high quality development and guard against deterioration of the residential developments. These development tools are adopted by ordinance and as such become law, whereas the "Comprehensive Plan" and the "Capital Improvements Program" documents are adopted as advisory documents and support decisions related to the ordinances that might be legally challenged. The Comprehensive Plan should be used as the manual for relating all items pertaining to the development of County. Awareness that a plan exists is the first step in gaining the broad support, without which any plan is rendered ineffective.

The plan should be reevaluated periodically to maintain a realistic relationship between the plan and current trends of development. Revisions may be required as unforeseen development opportunities occur or more thorough analysis of development issues become available.

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## ***Coordinated Use of Development Controls***

A zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, storm water and erosion control regulations, official map, building code, and utility specifications are commonly referred to as development controls. The adoption and amendment of these controls are the responsibility of the County Board of Supervisors, which acts after reviewing recommendations from the County Planning Commission. Administration of the regulations is entrusted to an administrative officer.

The importance of administration of development controls cannot be over-emphasized. Even the best regulations are meaningless without strong enforcement. The County and future County residents have much to lose from improper lot layout or substandard construction of structures, streets, or utilities. The best way to avoid such problems is for the County Board of Supervisors to retain a knowledgeable person to coordinate the enforcement of all development controls and to assign that person sufficient resources to carry out these responsibilities.

**Zoning Ordinance.** The purpose of a zoning ordinance is to eliminate conflicts between land uses and to prevent over-building on a particular building site. Lot size, building height, building setbacks, parking requirements, and a list of permitted uses are specified in the ordinance for each of a series of internally compatible zoning classifications called districts.

The zoning ordinance, unlike many other ordinances, requires constant attention to its administration. The individual primarily concerned with the day-to-day administration of the zoning ordinance is the zoning administrator.

It is important that the Planning Commission and County Board of Supervisors evaluate requested zoning changes in light of the Comprehensive Plan. The County's plans for traffic circulation and other services and for regulation of water supply and wastewater disposal have all been based on the Comprehensive Plan. Any deviation from that plan might lead to septic systems, water supplies, or streets being inappropriately sized or misplaced. Zoning changes not in conformance with the plan will require revisions of the entire plan or an amendment and may result in increased cost to the County due to these land use changes. If the Planning Commission feels a requested change is in the best interest of the community and consistent with the plan, it recommends that the County Board of Supervisors adopt the proposed change.

The County Board of Supervisors, after review of Planning Commission findings and recommendations, then makes decisions on requested zoning revisions. Special zoning regulations are applied to development in a flood plain to reduce flood hazards. Flood plain zoning is a special type of ordinance, or can be a set of provisions that can be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance or stand alone. The provisions include the designation of floodways for overland flow of floodwaters and for other limited uses that do not conflict with that primary purpose. The regulations also provide that development outside the floodway, but still within the flood plain, must be constructed above a designated elevation.

Since Scott County has many watersheds, a flood plain zoning ordinance and its provisions are important to enforce in order to protect property and ensure public safety.

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**Subdivision Regulations.** A subdivision ordinance typically applies to new growth and specifically applies to land that is being platted or divided into lots. The primary objectives of a subdivision ordinance are threefold. First, the subdivision ordinance clearly outlines the basic standards to be employed in the preparation of the subdivision plat. Second, the design standards for planning the subdivision are provided so that the general intent and purposes set forth in the Scott County Comprehensive Plan can be carried out. Third, standards for required public improvements such as street surface, curb, gutter, sidewalk, sewer, and water are referenced and discussed.

Under the procedures outlined in the subdivision regulations, a developer first submits a sketch plan, then a preliminary plat, and finally a final plat to the Planning Commission and the County Board of Supervisors showing the intentions for the land development.

When reviewing the sketch plan and preliminary plat, the Planning Commission should check the County's official map to determine whether any projects have been proposed in the area intended to be subdivided. If such a project has been proposed, the Planning Commission should inquire whether the responsible agency, such as the County Board of Supervisors, city or school board is interested in the site or has comments on the development. If the agency is interested in the site, and if the subdivider and the agency can reach a mutually acceptable agreement, the Planning Commission will have been successful in its advisory and coordinating capacity.

**Official Map.** Planned public improvements may be indicated by ordinance on an official map. The primary objective of the official map is to improve the coordination of planned projects and subdivision growth and to accomplish this on a sound basis. Frequently, a very carefully located site for proposed storm drainage trunk line or major road site is lost because development proceeds too rapidly for responsible agencies to begin acquisition efforts.

The official map gives the County adequate time for the appropriate governmental agency to acquire the particular site and thereby implement the plan, or to inform the subdivider that the agency is no longer interested in acquiring the site. The fact that such projects are indicated on an official map can restrain the subdivider from developing the proposed project site for a period of one year (from time of application for subdivision approval), during which the agency responsible for such project has the opportunity to commence negotiations or proceedings to acquire the site.

In review of a subdivision, one of the first responsibilities of the Planning Commission is to determine whether any projects indicated on the official map fall in the area of the proposed subdivision. In some cases where an additional right-of-way may be needed for a major street improvement in the future, or where a planned project may be located within a proposed subdivision, the Planning Commission can require the additional right-of-way to be designed in such a manner so as to leave the site available for acquisition by the appropriate agency.

**Building Code.** A building code establishes good development standards and ensures minimum standards for residential, commercial, and industrial development. A building code is needed to

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properly regulate building materials and structural conditions. Building codes deal with the structural arrangements of materials, and the codes apply to all new construction in the County.

**Utility Specifications.** Detailed policies and specifications relating to the design and construction of streets, sanitary sewers, water lines, storm sewers, and sidewalks are needed to supplement subdivision regulations. These standards should be in the form of specifications uniformly applied throughout the County. The only way residents of Scott County can be assured of uniform high quality roadway and utility construction is to adopt and enforce standards that are applicable to all development.

## ***Programming of Capital Improvements***

While development controls are effective in guiding private development, they do not provide for construction of public facilities indicated in the plan. An important means of guiding future development of public facilities is a capital improvements program. A capital improvements program is a suggested schedule for construction of public improvements and the financing of proposed projects. Capital improvements programming carries the Comprehensive Plan projects toward the construction of public facilities proposed by the plan. The program is a tool for translating long-term objectives and plans into implementation; whether they are roads, public safety buildings, parks, libraries, schools, or other public facilities.

A capital improvement program, when used by County officials, assures that attention is being given to the community's needs and that logical steps will be taken to satisfy these needs. Some of the advantages of capital improvements programming include: stabilization of the tax rate over a period of years, provision of adequate time for planning and engineering of improvements, assurance that projects will be carried out in accordance with predetermined needs and the community's ability to pay, and coordination among all agencies having responsibility for public facility construction.

For the capital improvements program to be effective, it must be updated annually. This should occur prior to the consideration of the County's annual budget, so that information contained in the program can be utilized in making decisions on items proposed for inclusion in the budget. Annual updating will assure greater accuracy and will also allow a continuous schedule of public improvements. As projects listed in the capital improvements program approach a construction date, the County Board of Supervisors should initiate detailed planning and feasibility studies. In order to promote the construction of public facilities in a manner that best serves the needs of the people of Scott County, it is strongly recommended that the County Board of Supervisors, with the assistance of the Planning Commission, establish procedures for continuing the Capital Improvements Program in future years.

## ***Cooperation and Assistance of Other Governmental Agencies***

A number of agencies must cooperate in order to implement the Scott County Comprehensive Plan. The County, school districts, fire districts, drainage districts, municipalities, adjacent counties, and state and federal officials should be aware of the interdependency of each jurisdiction of government and the benefits that cooperation holds for all area residents.

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The County should pursue plan implementation assistance available from various governmental agencies. Federal financial assistance is available for roads, park development, and public safety among other programs. Monies available under such programs will vary over time and the responsible agency should be contacted for specific project eligibility.