

PREFACE

Dear Residents of Clinton County:

As members of the Clinton County Planning Commission, we are pleased to have been a part of the development of the 2002 Clinton County Comprehensive Plan and present this document as a guide for planning and land use decisions within Clinton County.

In the development of the Comprehensive Plan, public input was essential to the planning process and provided the vital information from which the resulting goals were developed and policy recommendations were made. Outstanding public attendance at three public forums showed a definite interest in the process and the resulting plan. Meetings and workshops with various interest groups, such as agricultural, business and environmental, further echoed this interest. The members of the Planning Commission also made a concerted effort to solicit input from the 13 non-charter townships throughout the planning process and finally in presentations to each of these township boards.

To create the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission members weighed the need for development with the desire to preserve the County's rural character. An important aspect of the plan development is the acknowledgement that Clinton County is an integral part of the Lansing Metropolitan area, but has its own unique values and characteristics. We believe that the development of a plan that emphasizes open space preservation and cluster development affords a community the opportunity to be pro-active in the future shape and

form of their community. The Comprehensive Plan builds the foundation to guide intensive growth and development away from rural lands and preservation areas into existing built environments that offer the infrastructure and levels of services necessary to support higher densities and intensity of uses.

Although the development of this document has provided us with a sense of satisfaction, our work as a Planning Commission and community is far from over. The Comprehensive Plan serves as the initial step in a broader process to update the Clinton County Zoning Ordinance. The goals and policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan and reflected in the Future Land Use Map (Map 7) need to be implemented through the update of the Zoning Ordinance. We will continue to work with local township and municipal officials and county residents to produce a Zoning Ordinance that meets the needs of the community and the goals and policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. As this process continues, we encourage and ask that county residents continue to be involved in the planning process. Participation is essential to guiding the future of Clinton County with a common vision.

Sincerely,

Members of the Clinton County Planning Commission,

James Ostrowski, Vice-Chair
 Russel Bauerle, BOC Representative
 James Squires
 Ernest Sakrasa, Chair
 Jerome Spitzley
 Harold Rappuhn, Secretary
 Stephanie Ward

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Comprehensive Plan establishes a coordinated set of policies to guide Clinton County's physical development over the next twenty years. As a decision-making guide, the Plan ensures that future public and private investment decisions are consistent with the long-range vision of what the community wants Clinton County to become. The Plan also outlines a specific implementation program for reaching stated objectives and is meant to be a dynamic document that should evolve and respond to changing conditions.

The Clinton County Comprehensive Plan was produced by and for its citizens. The Plan integrates their ideas, concerns and expressions of preference into statements of how the County should be developed, what development regulations should accomplish, what facilities and service levels are needed, and how publicly funded improvements should support these objectives. Although the Plan looks only 20 years into the future, the visions and values expressed in this Plan extend beyond the 20-year planning horizon to safeguard Clinton County's quality of life for future generations. The Plan will be reviewed every 5 years to consider possible changes in conditions or the vision of the County's citizens.

This Comprehensive Plan is the official policy statement of Clinton County. The Plan is not a regulatory tool, but rather, it provides a long-range policy framework to guide citizens, County government, private agencies and service providers in their planning, design and location decisions about growth, land uses, conservation of natural resources and major capital facility expenditures. The goals and



Second Public Forum

policies in this Plan direct future decisions on land use actions, ordinance amendments, capital expenditures, procedures and programs. This Plan replaces the County's existing Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 1994.

The Clinton County Comprehensive Plan is a tool for agricultural land preservation, economic development, environmental conservation, and land use policy in this rapidly growing County. The Plan recommends methods to accommodate projected growth that will preserve and enhance the quality of life for all Clinton County residents. It establishes broad principles for County action and incorporates an implementation plan to support those principles.

Importantly, the plan includes the representation of citizens, business and community leaders that work and live in the County. Approximately 450 citizens participated

in three public forums and generated broad public input for the development of the vision and policy actions. Additionally, during 1999-2002 Clinton County (with Eaton and Ingham Counties and 75 local jurisdictions) participated in the Tri-County "Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future" project. Clinton County's Plan is consistent with the visions, goals and objectives of this Regional study.

The Plan reflects the goals (shown in Table 1.1) which the Planning Commission and the public placed emphasis on the need for implementation by the County. Plan policies are designed to accommodate up to 70,000 new residents, as many as 30,000 new dwellings and possibly 17,000 to 25,000 new jobs by the year 2020. These increases are commensurate with projected 2020 growth trends in the Tri-County Region.



Third Public Forum

Table 1.1: Guiding Clinton County with Common Vision

<p>VISION STATEMENT The vision of the Clinton County Comprehensive plan is to promote a high quality of life and continued commitment to preserve and enhance the unique and diverse character of the County through policies and programs to promote intergovernmental cooperation, preserve open space, agricultural and natural resources, provide recreational opportunities, ensure efficient and safe transportation network, desirable economic development, and active public participation.</p>	
<p>GOVERNMENT Communicate openly and efficiently coordinate all governmental efforts to ensure efficient and non-duplicative services to all residents of the County.</p> <p>QUALITY OF LIFE Promote and maintain a high "Quality of Life" for current and future residents of the County.</p> <p>AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION Emphasize on the preservation of agricultural and open space land through zoning, regulatory controls and other mechanisms such as PDR, TDR and PA-116.</p> <p>LAND USE Promote a development pattern that preserves the rural character of the County and that is focused near existing cities and villages.</p> <p>PARKS & RECREATION Establish a countywide approach to providing Parks and Recreation services to residents that emphasize the natural resources of the region.</p>	<p>COMMUNITY SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE Provide adequate, desirable, and quality services to residents in an efficient, equitable, and cost-effective manner.</p> <p>NATURAL RESOURCES Promote, educate, and protect natural and non-renewable resources found in the County.</p> <p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Work with organizations to foster a County that has vibrant, diverse, strong, and healthy environment for providing sustained service to, and employment of, current and future citizens.</p> <p>TRANSPORTATION Ensure an efficient, safe, and multi-modal transportation network throughout the County in cooperation and coordination with the County Transportation Authority, Clinton County Road Commission, Michigan Department of Transportation, Capital Area Transportation Authority, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, and local jurisdictions.</p> <p>PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT Encourage planning programs that include formalized, facilitated and broad-based public involvement processes.</p>

Smart Growth Policies Encouraged

The manner in which new residential and commercial development is accommodated must be significantly different from practices of recent years, which were characterized by sprawl, loss of open space, loss of agricultural land and reliance on inadequate infrastructure.

The Plan calls for the concentration of new growth as extensions and infill of existing developed centers, along connecting roadways and at sites serviced by highway access. Examples of centers where growth will be consolidated are urbanized sections along the southern border of the County including Dewitt, Bath, and Watertown Townships and the City of Dewitt and around the City of St. Johns in Bingham Township. Principal corridors are lands along US-127, I-96, US-127 Business Route, and M-21, which also are locations where water and sewer utilities can be expanded. This is particularly important regarding commercial growth.

To avert sprawl, the Plan encourages municipalities and residential developers to compact anticipated residential growth around existing developed communities. These would be extensions or infill of centers, cities and villages. In rural and transitional areas, the Plan proposes accommodating low to moderate density residential development. Incentives would be implemented to encourage the use of Planned Unit Development (PUD), Cluster Zoning, and Conservation Easements to provide open space. Shared septic facilities, drinking water and storm drainage systems would be permitted where municipal infrastructure is unavailable.

New commercial and industrial developments are focused near existing growth areas along major road corridors.

Example of Cluster Zoning



Source: Natural Lands Trust

Transportation

Clinton County is well serviced by the existing interstate, freeway and roadway network. The Plan calls for developing access management standards along County arterials and collectors. Policies would also preserve the rural character of roadways. Additionally, new bicycle and pedestrian pathways would be developed to support the compact growth concept.

Infrastructure

The Plan calls for municipal and County efforts to consolidate, interconnect, and limit the expansion of existing water and sewer systems. Close cooperation with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Health Department, Waste Management Office and Drain Commission on environmentally sound, watershed-wide storm water and waste disposal strategies is essential.



Downtown St. Johns



Clinton County Roadway

Open Space & Agricultural Preservation

Recognizing the need to protect and preserve agricultural land, the Plan calls for programs to be created and funds to be identified for an agricultural Purchase of Development Rights Program (PDR). Additionally, other mechanisms such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) would be created to protect open space and environmentally sensitive areas from development. Additional mechanisms, such as conservation easements and Natural Feature Protection regulations should also be considered.

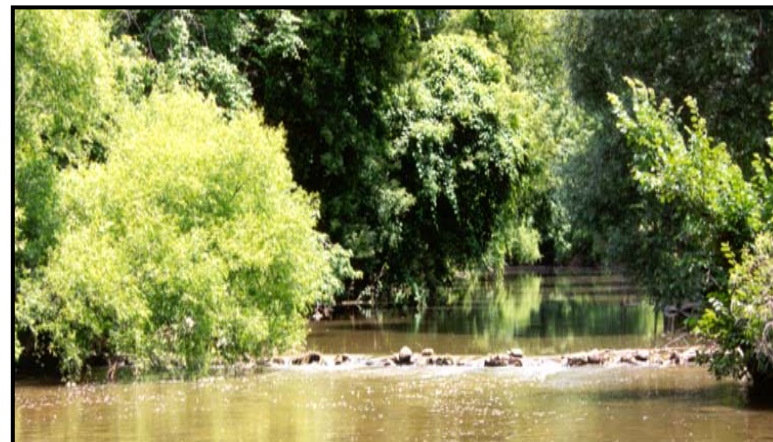
Implementation

Particularly important is Clinton County’s commitment to implement the Plan through public involvement and coordination with local jurisdictions and Charter Townships.

Partnerships could be strengthened with state agencies such as Department of Transportation (MDOT), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Department of Agriculture and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), to bring their resources to bear on County issues. It is also important that the County provide incentives for Townships and municipalities to take appropriate action through financial and technical assistance. These include planning staff assistance, open-space funding, park and recreation facilitates, assistance in obtaining grants, and making the County’s Geographic Information System (GIS) available as an aid to information gathering and decision making.



Sleepy Hollow State Park



Looking Glass River