

# Itasca County Comprehensive Land Use Plan



Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Tools

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## Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Tools

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## Itasca County Profile

Itasca County, located in north central Minnesota, is an area of abundant lakes, rivers, forests and farms. The beauty of the County attracts permanent residents as well as many part-time residents and visitors. Itasca County's economy has historically been driven by timber harvesting, taconite mining, and tourism. The historic map preceding this section, printed in 1923, highlights all three of these activities as well as lakes, rivers and other attractions.

Itasca County is currently home to 42,446 permanent residents. Population projections for the next twenty years vary from the population remaining flat to an increase of up to 9,000 new residents. The high projection would result in 3,642 new households, an average of 173 per year. The average age in Itasca County is rising, meaning a larger percentage of the population is over 55 years of age.

The economy of Itasca County continues to include timber harvesting, mining and tourism. The future growth of the economy, however, will also include technology-based businesses, home and cottage businesses, and small manufacturing.

Because of the beautiful, productive natural amenities in Itasca County, the future of land use will be defined by competition over differing uses of land and resources. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan sets forth a set of policies as developed by citizens of Itasca County to guide the balancing of competing interests.

A full set of background studies was conducted and presented as part of the planning process and is presented in a separate document.

## Purpose and Scope

A comprehensive plan is the policy framework Itasca County will use to guide its land use activities over the next twenty years. Unplanned development often results in conflicting land uses or undesirable impacts on natural resources. This Comprehensive Land Use Plan describes the priorities and choices made by Itasca County residents during an eighteen-month participatory process. The plan sets broad policies to direct the future growth and development of the County in the following areas: natural resources, housing and settlement patterns, agriculture, commercial and industrial development, recreation, transportation, and governmental cooperation.

The policies set forth the vision of stewardship for the natural, cultural and human resources of Itasca County as described by the residents of the County during the development of the Plan. The Plan seeks to enhance the existing character of the County while preventing the type of haphazard development patterns that has beset many growing areas to the south of the County.

For each issue area, the plan presents policies that reflect the desired conditions to be achieved during the plan. A set of objectives, intermediate steps undertaken to achieve the policies, are included for each policy. Finally, implementation tools and techniques are identified for each objective.

## Statutory Authority

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan is the legal basis for land use controls. The State of Minnesota gives counties the authority to adopt comprehensive plans under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 394. Counties exercise authority under this statute to promote the health, safety, moral and general welfare of the community. Counties may develop a comprehensive plan and implement the plan through a variety of means. These means include adopting official controls, such as zoning ordinances, an official zoning map, and other ordinances, as well as establishing incentive programs, educational programs, and changing spending priorities. Land use ordinances and programs must be consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan. The goals and objectives included in the Itasca County Comprehensive Land Use Plan will be implemented

through a variety of means. Many implementation tools, methods and techniques are included in the Plan. These tools direct changes in existing ordinances and the adoption of new ordinances and programs.

## Use of the Plan

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan contained in this document was developed over a period of two and one-half years. However, the work of the plan does not stop here. It is not a document that should be read once and revisited at the end of twenty years. The plan was developed with considerable input from the public and the Plan should be viewed as a guide for Itasca County staff and elected officials in providing service to residents and others on land use questions. The Plan reflects the current vision and choices of the Itasca County community.

The Planning Commission and County Board should become educated about the Plan after its adoption, and should be refreshed on the plan yearly. New members should receive copies of the Plan as part of an orientation packet. In working with the Planning Commission and County Board on land use issues, the County staff should explicitly connect recommendations directly to policies and objectives in the Plan. The Plan should be referred to often since it is the basic policy document supporting land use decisions.

## Review and Updating

The Plan must be reviewed and updated periodically. The County Board should adopt a schedule and process for reviewing and updating the plan to keep it current. Much of the demographic data contained in the background materials were based on 1990 U.S. Census data. As new Census data is available, it should be analyzed and compared with the Plans assumptions that were based on the 1990 data.

It is suggested that one issue area be reviewed every other year. The review should take into account new background data (e.g. new census data, mining area mapping, water quality information), the successes and challenges of implementing the plan, and changes in public opinion. Just as the Comprehensive Plan was created with public input, the reviews and updates should involve the general public as well as elected officials and County staff. Local governments within

the County, cities and townships, and interest groups should also be involved.

## Land Use Goals

Following are the land use goals for Itasca County for the next twenty years. These goals were developed during through the public participation process. They address the primary land use issues facing Itasca County. The goals describe the County's desired future. They are the long-term ends toward which programs, activities, and decisions are directed. Goals are general statements that outline what will be achieved if the objectives are met.

### ***Natural Resources Goal***

Itasca County will promote land and water uses that result in the sustainable use of natural resources, balancing development and environmental commitment to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and resources of the County for this and future generations.

### ***Housing and Settlement Patterns Goal***

Respect the unique settlement characteristics of each area of the County and encourage diversified housing development that maximizes the use of infrastructure including roads, sewer, water and other public services.

### ***Agriculture Goal***

Encourage agriculture as the primary use in historically farmed areas as part of a diverse economy and respect the settlement characteristics of agricultural areas.

### ***Commercial/Industrial Goal***

Encourage a sound and diverse economy that meets the needs of Itasca County residents and visitors for employment and services.

### ***Recreation Goal***

Develop an integrated green space and recreation system within Itasca County that provides diverse, developed and undeveloped, recreational opportunities for all residents and visitors while protecting unique scenic and natural areas.



***Transportation Goal***

Maintain and enhance a transportation system that meets the local and regional access needs of Itasca County residents, industries and visitors.

***Governmental Cooperation Goal***

Encourage cooperation between governmental jurisdictions regarding efficient land use, economic development, and the management of natural resources.

## Objectives and Implementation Tools

For each land use goal, Itasca County developed several objectives and implementation tools, methods and techniques. Objectives are more measurable, intermediate ends that mark progress towards a goal. Objectives are the strategic steps required to reach the County's goals. Each objective is followed by a series of specific implementation tools, methods or techniques. These are the step-by-step way in which the goals are reached.

During the planning process, five planning areas were defined in Itasca County. The planning areas differ from each other in minor and major ways; population density, natural resources, land ownership, etc. The planning areas are illustrated on the Generalized Land Use Map included in this section.

Two series of public meetings were held in each planning area to discuss goals, objectives and implementation tools. In some cases, residents of different planning areas supported objectives and implementation tools that did not apply to other planning areas. In the following section, the objectives and tools that apply only to specific planning areas are labeled by that planning area.

### **I. *Natural Resources Goal***

Itasca County will promote land and water uses that result in the sustainable use of natural resources, balancing development and environmental commitment to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and resources of the County for this and future generations.

**A. *Water Quality Objective*** - Maintain high water quality of Itasca County's abundant lakes, wetlands and waterways, and develop mitigation efforts for lakes and waterways at risk of degradation.

1. ***Baseline data*** - Establish the current baseline quality of lakes and rivers.
2. ***Updating and enforcement of ordinances*** - Update the existing ordinances and plans relating to water quality where appropriate, and enforce ordinances equally and consistently.
3. ***Standards for variances and conditional use permits*** - Develop narrowly defined standards for variances and conditional use permits that promote the protection and enhancement of natural resources in general and water quality specifically.

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4. ***Lake carrying capacities*** - Develop carrying capacities for various types of lakes, then update the existing shoreland management ordinance to incorporate carrying capacity limits.
5. ***Lake waste disposal*** - Educate lake users on the proper disposal of waste.
6. ***Septic systems*** - Require septic systems that meet high performance standards.
7. ***Septic upgrades encouraged*** - Create and promote a low-interest loan program to encourage landowners to upgrade individual septic systems.
8. ***Alternative waste treatment*** - Encourage alternative waste treatment methods. that meet or exceed current septic performance standards.
9. ***Wellhead/watershed protection*** - Work with municipalities on their wellhead protection plans, including identifying areas within watersheds where development should be limited because of potentially negative impacts on water quality.
10. ***AREA 1 - Sewer service to lakeshore areas*** - Evaluate the feasibility of providing sewer services to fully developed lakeshore areas with significant septic failure rates and where not currently available.
11. ***AREA 2 , AREA 4 and AREA 5 - Development locations and lot sizes*** - Use performance zoning or overlay districts within the area to guide development locations and lot sizes.

## **I. *Natural Resources Goal***

Itasca County will promote land and water uses that result in the sustainable use of natural resources, balancing development and environmental commitment to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and resources of the County for this and future generations.

12. ***AREA 3 - New river management plans*** - Develop and adopt management plans for the Swan River and other important rivers that addresses the land use and natural resource goals of the County.
13. ***AREA 3 - Cluster development standards*** - Create cluster development standards that ensure long-term maintenance of combined wastewater treatment systems, permanently preserves buffer areas along lake shores, and prevents backlot development that exceeds the capacity of lake watersheds.
14. ***AREA 4 - Incentives to protect undeveloped lakeshore*** - Create tax incentives that allow private lakeshore owners not to develop, subdivide, or plat undeveloped lakeshore or environmentally sensitive areas.
15. ***AREA 4 - Designate lakeshore residential expansion areas*** - Designate areas for expansion of lakefront housing consistent with current shoreline, wetland, and septic ordinances.

- B. ***Sustainable Management Objective*** - Support sustainable management of privately owned lakeshore and environmentally sensitive areas.
  1. ***Lakeshore vegetation*** - Encourage private stewardship activities to protect and restore natural aquatic and shoreland vegetation, for example by establishing buffer areas in and along lakes and waterways.
  2. ***Protection of buffers and environmentally sensitive areas*** Support Blue Waters legislation and local programs that encourage private landowners to protect natural buffer

## **I. Natural Resources Goal**

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areas and environmentally sensitive areas along lakes and waterways.

3. **Incentives** - Create tax incentives that encourage private lakeshore owners not to develop, subdivide, or plat undeveloped lakeshore or environmentally sensitive areas.
- C. **Air Quality Objective** - Maintain or improve air quality.
1. **Establish Baseline** - Monitor air quality to establish a baseline of information.
- D. **Lake and Road Buffer Objective** - Preserve existing forest and other buffer areas around lakes and along scenic vistas, and encourage restoration of altered areas.
1. **Design standards** - Adopt landscape design standards for lakeshore area and along scenic roadways.
  2. **Big Tree program** - Participate in developing a Big Tree program for the establishment of tree-lined buffers along transportation corridors with the Izaak Walton League, MnDOT, and other organizations.
  3. **Lakeshore restoration** - Develop tax incentives for restoration of indigenous landscaping along lake shores.
  4. **Reduce visual impacts** - Create and distribute materials that educate lakeshore owners on methods for screening accessory buildings from the lakeshore and on ways to reduce the visual impact of docks, boat-lifts, canopies and other shoreline structures.
  5. **AREA 4 - Highway 46 Scenic Byway** - Support designation of Highway 46 to Northome as a National Scenic Byway.
- E. **AREA 2, AREA 3 and AREA 5 - Public Ownership Objective** Maintain current level of public ownership of shoreland, including river banks, and forested areas, and identify environmentally sensitive areas.
1. **Restrict conversion** - Restrict conversion of public shorelands to private ownership.
  2. **Identify key parcels for protection** - Develop lake-specific or watershed-based management plans that identify and prioritize key parcels for environmental protection.

3. ***Environmentally sensitive land*** - Prioritize the public acquisition of privately-held environmentally sensitive lands.
4. ***AREA 2, AREA 3 and AREA 5 - No net loss*** - Adopt a policy of no net loss of publically-owned land, allowing the sale of parcels that are less appropriate in public ownership and the acquisition of a similar number of parcels or acres that are more appropriately under public protection.



## **II. *Housing and Settlement Patterns Goal***

Respect the unique settlement characteristics of each area of the County and encourage diversified housing development that maximizes the use of infrastructure including roads, sewer, water and other public services.

1. ***Housing development*** - Support the improvement of existing housing, redevelopment of housing, and infill development.
  2. ***1999 Housing Study*** - Work with Itasca County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, cities and townships to implement the recommendations of the 1999 Itasca County Housing Study.
  3. ***Housing funding*** - Identify and pursue funding for housing improvement programs.
  4. ***Private Investment*** - Encourage private investment in housing improvements.
  5. ***Rental housing standards*** - Recommend and encourage, with the municipalities and townships, minimum safety and health standards for all rental housing.
- E. ***Multi-family housing*** - Encourage the development of adequate multi-family housing within or adjacent to developed areas.
- F. ***Lake Backlot Development Objective*** - Limit backlot development around lakes.
1. ***Lake suitability for development*** - Establish a hierarchy of lakes suitable and not-suitable for further development, based on the carrying capacities developed under the Natural Resources Goal.
  2. ***Road improvements*** - Limit County investment in road improvements that would encourage backlot development.
  3. ***Tax incentives*** - Create tax incentives encouraging private lakeshore owners not to develop, subdivide, or plat undeveloped lakeshore or environmentally sensitive areas.
  4. ***Buffers required*** - Require large buffers between lakes and any allowed cluster developments, permanent restrictions on development in the buffer area, and joint maintenance or bonding to ensure maintenance of septic system(s) within the buffer area.
- G. ***Lakeshore Development Objective - AREA 2 - Single-family homes*** - Limit new lakeshore development to single-family homes.



## **II. *Housing and Settlement Patterns Goal***

Respect the unique settlement characteristics of each area of the County and encourage diversified housing development that maximizes the use of infrastructure including roads, sewer, water and other public services.

- H. ***Lakeshore Development Objective - AREA 5 - Large lot and cluster development*** - Allow a combination of large lot zoning and cluster development around lakes.
  - 1. ***AREA 5 - Cluster development standards*** - Develop cluster development standards that permanently preserve lakeshore buffers, mandate joint management and/or bonding for group septic systems, and prevent backlot development.
  
- I. ***Private Road Objective*** - Discourage year-round residential development on private roads.
  - 1. ***Education on options*** - Educate landowners on the options for development and the private and public costs of development on private roads.
  - 2. ***Conversion of private roads*** - Establish stringent standards for conversion of private roads to public.
  - 3. ***Large lot sizes*** - Require large minimum lot sizes for residential development in areas with private roads.

### III. *Agriculture Goal*

Encourage agriculture as the primary use in historically farmed areas as part of a diverse economy; and respect the settlement characteristics of agricultural areas.

- A. ***Basic Industry Objective*** - Recognize and support existing agriculture as a valuable basic industry that diversifies the economy of Itasca County.
  - 1. ***Residential development*** - Direct non-farm residential development away from agricultural areas by requiring large minimum lot sizes.
  - 2. ***Taxes*** - Create taxing structures that encourage ongoing sustainable agricultural land uses, while retaining the net positive tax benefit of agriculture.
  - 3. ***Use of marginal land for agro-forestry*** - Encourage conversion of marginally productive agricultural land to agro-forestry.
  - 4. ***Use of marginal land for development*** - Use performance criteria (soils, slopes, native vegetation) to distinguish between productive agricultural land and marginal land, and allow development of marginal land adjacent to developed areas.
  
- B. ***Water Quality Objective*** - Educate farmers on methods for minimizing the impact of agricultural practices on the quality of lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands.
  
- C. ***Animal Feedlot Objective*** - Develop and adopt a county-wide policy on the location and design of animal feedlots that minimizes the impact of feedlots on neighboring land uses and protects natural resources.



#### **IV. Commercial/ Industrial Goal**

Encourage a sound and diverse economy that meets the needs of Itasca County residents and visitors for employment and services.

3. **Gravel mining** - Create and adopt guidelines for visual screening and other methods to reduce the visual, dust, traffic and other impacts of gravel mining operations on neighboring land uses.
- D. **Major Event Objective** - Develop contingencies for an increase in housing and commercial development needs related to a substantial resurgence of mining activity in the Western Mesabi Range.
1. **Mining expansion areas** - Identify potential areas for industrial development related to mining expansion, including identifiable mining resources, lean ore storage areas, areas for industrial facilities, and other land needs of the mining expansion.
  2. **Housing and commercial expansion areas** - Work with cities and townships to designate housing and commercial expansion areas around existing urban areas in Planning Areas 1, 3 and 5.
  3. **Fiscal impact analysis** - Develop fiscal impact standards for new development that considers both capital investment of new sewer, water, and road infrastructure and long term maintenance of new facilities.
- E. **Recreation Industry Objective** - Encourage new commercial and industrial development related to the recreation industry, including resorts, services, and products.
1. **Resort development standards** - Create standards for resort development or expansion linking development to existing infrastructure capacity; the preferences of Planning Area residents; and the environmental risks posed by development on lakeshores.

#### **IV. Commercial/ Industrial Goal**

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- F. **Tourism/Recreation Objective** - Develop additional recreational opportunities for tourists and visitors.
  - 1. **AREA 3 - Mississippi River** - Protect recreational and open space potential along the Mississippi River corridor.
  - 2. **AREA 4 - Primary Lakes** - Develop the recreational and open space potential along primary lakes in Area 5: Winnebigoshish, Squaw, and Island lakes.
  - 3. **AREA 4 - Promotion** - Develop coordinated promotional efforts among tourism-focused businesses, and to promote scenic Highway 46.
  
- G. **Labor Objective** - Support efforts to develop and provide a trained workforce through increasing educational opportunities, experiential opportunities, and new technology.
  
- H. **Industrial Location Objective** - Locate industrial development in areas that minimize conflict with other land uses and protect natural resources.
  
- I. **Infrastructure requirement** - Direct industrial uses to existing industrial parks or areas that have or will develop transportation, sewer and water infrastructure.
  - 1. **Industrial zones** - Work with cities and townships to define and establish industrial zones.
  
- J. **Economic Development Efforts Objective** - Encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses and industries, and the development of new businesses and industries to increase economic diversity.
  - 1. **Technology expansion**- Support the expansion of investment in state-of-the-art information technology, including telecommunications, and promote the county-wide availability of information technology.
  - 2. **Sustainable forestry** - Promote long-term sustainable forestry practices to ensure forest-based industries have a steady supply of materials for value-added manufacturing.
  - 3. **Economic development groups** - Support the work of existing organized groups involved in economic development efforts.

#### **IV. Commercial/ Industrial Goal**

Encourage a sound and diverse economy that meets the needs of Itasca County residents and visitors for employment and services.

4. **Value-added** - Target economic development efforts toward the development of value-added industries.
  5. **Home-based and cottage industries** - Allow and encourage the creation and operation of home-based and cottage businesses by reducing barriers; supporting the expansion of communication technology; and developing programs to help growing home-based or cottage businesses relocate into designated commercial areas.
  6. **AREA 2 - Economic development coordination** - Coordinate economic, community, and infrastructure development efforts with existing goals and plans of the Northern Itasca Joint Powers Board.
  7. **AREA 4 - Economic development coordination** - Develop cooperative economic development efforts between the County and local communities of Squaw Lake, the Island Lake area, and Northome (in Koochiching County).
  8. **AREA 5 - Economic development coordination** - Coordinate economic, community, and infrastructure development efforts with the Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board.
- K. **Economic Expansion Effects Objective** - Recognize the links and potential conflicts between economic expansion in different industries such as timber harvesting and tourism.
1. **Viewshed protection** - Practice viewshed protection in timber harvesting on County managed lands, and provide tax incentives for meeting viewshed protection performance standards on private lands.
  2. **Identify harvest/extraction areas** - Identify prime resource areas for natural resource harvest or extraction (forest, gravel, minerals) and limit tourist-oriented development in these areas to natural resource recreation such as trails, hunting, and snowmobiling.
  3. **AREA 2 - Scenic Byway** - Allow tourism related commercial uses at designated crossroads along Scenic Byway/Highway 38, and limit non-tourist commercial or industrial development along Highway 38.

#### **IV. Commercial/ Industrial Goal**

Encourage a sound and diverse economy that meets the needs of Itasca County residents and visitors for employment and services.

- L. **Commercial Development Objective** - Direct commercial development to existing commercial nodes and areas with adequate transportation, sewer and water infrastructure.
  - 1. **Redevelopment of existing commercial areas** - Encourage the redevelopment of commercial areas in viable town centers through private investment in existing or new buildings.
  - 2. **Identify commercial needs** - In conjunction with local residents and businesses, identify appropriate sizes and kinds of businesses to meet the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors in each Planning Area.
  - 3. **Location of commercial development** - Discourage commercial development of lakeshore, and encourage commercial development in existing commercial areas and designated areas with adequate transportation, sewer and water infrastructure.
  - 4. **Promote existing downtowns** - Develop a coordinated downtown or Main Street promotions and investment strategies to emphasize the vitality and existing resources of the commercial areas in Itasca County cities and towns.
  - 5. **Adequate wastewater treatment** - Require proposed new commercial development outside of municipal boundaries to demonstrate adequate wastewater treatment plans.
  - 6. **Resort development** - Create performance criteria (soils, managed/bonded group septic, visual buffers) for resort development or expansion along lakes or in sensitive watersheds.

## **V. Recreation Goal**

Develop an integrated green space and recreation system within Itasca County that provides diverse, developed and undeveloped, recreational opportunities for all residents and visitors while protecting unique scenic and natural areas.

- A. **Diversity Objective** - Maintain a diversity of recreational opportunities.
  - 1. **Needs assessment** - Work with cities and townships to identify recreation needs and deficiencies.
  - 2. **Designate areas** - Designate separate areas for passive and active recreation, including areas for motorized recreation.
  - 3. **AREA 4 - Chippewa National Forest** - Work with U.S. Forest Service on recreation planning, ensuring a diversity of recreational opportunities in the Chippewa National Forest.
  - 4. **AREA 4 - Recreation outside National Forest** - Identify opportunities for complementary recreational development to those available in the National Forest.
  
- B. **Existing facilities Objective** - Enhance existing active recreation facilities.
  - 1. **Priority to existing facilities** - Invest in maintenance and improvement of existing facilities, based on current use and identified needs, before investment in new facilities.
  - 2. **AREA 2 - Scenic Byway** - Support existing management and investment plans for the Edge of the Wilderness Scenic Byway.
  
- C. **Expansion Objective** - Evaluate opportunities to expand the recreation system to meet needs not met by the current system.
  - 1. **New facilities** - Invest in the development of new facilities to meet identified need, including public lake shore access.
  - 2. **AREA 4 - Campgrounds** - Develop additional campground capacity along lakes where there is adequate infrastructure.



## **V. Recreation Goal**

Develop an integrated green space and recreation system within Itasca County that provides diverse, developed and undeveloped, recreational opportunities for all residents.

3. **AREA 5 - ATVs and dirt bikes** - Develop designated ATV and dirt bike trails to reduce trespassing on private lands.
- D. **Trail System Objective** - Develop an integrated county-wide recreational trail system that connects residential areas, commercial areas, job centers and natural areas.
1. **Connection opportunities, public lands** - Review the parks and recreation plans of the County, cities, US Forest Service, DNR and commercial forest land for opportunities for connections.
  2. **Connection opportunities, private lands** - Encourage new subdivisions and private recreational developments to connect to the trail system.
  3. **Trail easements** - To the extent possible, acquire permanent easements over existing and new trails.
- E. **Funding Objective** - Investigate and support equitable methods for funding the maintenance and expansion of the recreation system.
- F. **Sensitive Areas Objective** - Identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas.
1. Sensitive area identification - Prepare an inventory of environmentally sensitive areas.
  2. **Protection of sensitive areas** - Prioritize identified environmentally sensitive areas for protection by purchase or acquisition of development rights; coordinating with other governmental entities and private land protection organizations on prioritization and acquisition.

3. **Limit trail development** - Limit trail development through environmentally sensitive areas.

## **VI. Transportation Goal**

Maintain and enhance a transportation system that meets the local and regional access needs of Itasca County residents, industries and visitors.

- A. **Coordination with State Objective** - Consistently work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to incorporate local needs and preferences in Mn/DOT's plans for improvements and new roadways.
- B. **AREA 1 - Diversity Objective** - Increase diverse transportation opportunities (walking, transit, rail, air).
  1. **AREA 1 - Transit** - Invest in transit improvements to meet the needs of transit-dependent populations such as the elderly and low-income households.
  2. **AREA 1 - Bicycle Lanes** - Incorporate bicycle lanes into roadway improvement projects.
  3. **AREA 1 - Airport** - Complete the study of airport expansion needs and possible relocation options.
- C. **Commercial/Industrial Objective** - Improve transportation access to regional commercial and industrial markets for businesses.
  1. **Connector roads** - Improve connector roads between commercial and industrial areas and the regional transportation network.
  2. **AREA 1 - Highway improvements** - Support the improvement of highways 2 and 169.

## **VI. Transportation Goal**

Maintain and enhance a transportation system that meets the local and regional access needs of Itasca County residents, industries and visitors.

3. **AREA 3 - Highway improvements** - Support the improvement of highways 2, 65 and 169.
  4. **AREA 5 - Highway improvements** - Identify transportation problems with Highways 65 and 1 (the primary north/south and east/west routes), and invest in new infrastructure as needed.
- D. **Residential Objective** - Connect residential areas to retail centers, job centers, and public facilities.
1. **Public facilities location** - Consider ease of access from residential areas in making locational decisions for public facilities.
  2. **AREA 1 - Existing street grids** - Require new developments in urban expansion areas to connect to the existing street grid.
  3. **AREA 5 - Highway improvements** - Improve transportation connections to Hibbing and other areas of Itasca County.
- E. **Service Roads Objective** - Work with local communities to design service roads parallel to major highways to reduce the number of driveway intersections.
- F. **Private Roads Objective** - Set priorities and standards for converting private roads to public.
1. **Standards for conversion** - Establish stringent standards for conversion of private roads to public by defining specific conditions for converting private roads to public, including roadway standards, consistency with all goals of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and fiscal limits that

## **VI. Transportation Goal**

Maintain and enhance a transportation system that meets the local and regional access needs of Itasca County residents, industries and visitors.

consider both increases in tax revenues and increases in ongoing maintenance and rebuilding costs.

- G. **Tourism and Recreation Objective** - Consider tourism and recreational uses of the County road system in road design, road improvements, and road management.
  - 1. **Flexible standards** - Adopt flexible road designs standards to increase the attractiveness of routes serving tourist destinations.
  - 2. **Bicycle routes** - Incorporate bicycle routes in roadway improvement projects to encourage tourist and recreational use.
  
- H. **Scenic Roads Objective** - Enhance the beauty of Itasca County roadways for residents and visitors.
  - 1. **Modify standards** - Codify scenic road development standards, designating those areas of flexibility in limiting right-of-way and pavement widths, sight-line standards, speed limits, and other safety considerations.
  - 2. **Roadside vegetation** - Develop vegetative management plans for roadsides of scenic roads, including planting and/or maintaining long-lived trees along the edges of road right-of-ways.
  - 3. **Signs** - Limit the placement and number of advertising signs along scenic roads.
  - 4. **Scenic easements** - Consider the use of scenic easements when appropriate to control development adjacent to scenic roads.
  - 5. **Berms** - Install berms along scenic roads when appropriate to screen incompatible uses.
  - 6. **Power lines** - Investigate how to minimize the visual impact of power lines along scenic roads.
  - 7. **AREA 2 - Highway 38 success** - Continue the ongoing cooperative process for redesigning scenic Scenic Byway/Highway 38, and expand scenic considerations to the redesign or improvement of other highways in Area 2.
  
- I. **Community Transportation Plans Objective** - Update existing community transportation plans and develop new plans where appropriate.

## **VII. Governmental Cooperation Goal**

Encourage cooperation between governmental jurisdictions regarding efficient land use, economic development, and the management of natural resources.

- A. **Planned Growth Objective** - Develop and implement planned, staged growth strategies for residential, commercial and industrial development.
  1. **AREA 1 - Orderly annexation agreements** - Work with cities and townships to develop and formally adopt orderly annexation agreements.
  2. **AREA 1, 3 and 5** - Work with the Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board to stage housing, commercial, and industrial development associated with mining investment.
  
- B. **Coordination with Tribal Governments Objective** - Obtain input from the Tribal governments, Leech Lake and Bois Forte, on land use, natural resource and economic development efforts.
  1. **Regular forum** - Establish regular forums for discussions with Tribal representatives.
  
- C. **Natural Resource Management Objective** - Encourage natural resource management practices that balance economic, habitat, and recreational uses.
  1. **Forest management practices** - Formally establish a forum with the U.S. Forest Service, the state, and private forest managers to discuss forest management practices.
  2. **Sustainable management** - Educate forest managers on the Forest Resources Council's voluntary management guidelines or other generally accepted sustainable management practices.
  
- D. **Water Quality Coordination Objective** - Coordinate with other governmental entities and joint powers boards on the prioritization, acquisition, or other protection of environmentally sensitive lands, lakeshore areas, river corridors, and watersheds.
  
- E. **Joint Powers Boards Objective** - Support the efforts of existing planning entities, and encourage the creation of new joint powers boards to address efficient and prudent intergovernmental land use, economic development and the management of natural resources.

- F. ***Recreation Objective*** - Coordinate with other governmental entities on recreation planning.
  - 1. ***AREA 4*** - Work with the U.S. Forest Service on recreation planning, ensuring a diversity of recreational opportunities in the Chippewa National Forest and throughout Area 4.