

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nobles County is authorized to prepare and implement a Comprehensive Plan pursuant to Chapter 394 of Minnesota Statutes, Planning Development, and Zoning. The County Board has the power and authority to adopt the plan by ordinance upon recommendation by the 2025 Committee and the Planning Commission. When so adopted, the Comprehensive Plan is required to be the basis for such official controls as the zoning and subdivision ordinances.

Nobles County has recognized that numerous changes have occurred over the past 15-20 years to warrant the update of the County's Comprehensive Plan. With funding from Minnesota Planning and the Southwest Minnesota Foundation, the County began to undertake activities found within the Community Based Planning (CBP) Act. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to identify problems, opportunities, issues and needs and organize public policy to deal with them in a manner that serves the best interests of the greatest number of people. Among other things, the advantages that go along with CBP, include:

- A stronger support for the plan and its implementation through broad involvement of citizens in the process
- A coordinated involvement of local governments and assistance from Minnesota Planning in getting greater involvement and help from state agencies
- A greater predictability to city and rural residents about when development will occur and when services will be provided through identification of urban growth areas
- An assurance that orderly annexation agreements will be developed prior to development and with the participation of the city, county and township
- A higher eligibility for funding for planning and technology activities

Nobles County recognized the importance of citizen participation in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The 2025 Committee was established with 30 members representing cities, townships, other various committees, and individuals from the broader community. The expectations of this committee consisted of:

- Attending all required meetings
- Reading CBP updates
- Listening to the concerns of Local Units of Government and the public
- Helping out the facilitator during meetings
- Promoting issue discovery and discussion
- Visualizing future problems and possible solutions
- Reviewing what the people of Nobles County want and need
- Communicating conclusions to the Committee and doing the best possible job to insure that the plan accurately represents the conclusions of the Committee

A description of the comprehensive planning process is included in the following Introduction Section.

Each chapter contains data that serves as the foundation on which the Plan is based. This data includes projections, which are reasonable, however, they are estimates and are subject to conditions of change. Because of this change, the Comprehensive Plan should be viewed as a dynamic document, which should be examined and amended periodically. The following is a list of the Plan's chapters containing relative background data:

- Demographics
- Land Use
- Infrastructure and County Facilities
- Conservation, Parks & Recreation
- Historic and Cultural Facilities
- Industrial/Economic Development
- Community Development
- Housing

The primary objective of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a coordinated set of goals and policies that will guide decisions regarding land use by both the public and private sector. Decisions made in the past and in the future will have an effect on the need for public expenditure and taxes, environmental quality, the consumption of energy and land, and other resources. Stability of property values can also be impacted. The Goals and Policies that follow each background section are the result of a great deal of citizen involvement. It will be important to review these Goals and Policies in order to respond to changes in area conditions, needs, and policies.