

McHenry County 2030 Vision Statement

A preliminary vision statement for the McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan has been created based upon several reports issued by the Regional Planning Commission. These reports highlight the various aspirations the Commission holds for the future of McHenry County. The topics covered by these reports include: Agriculture, Open Space, Environmental and Natural Resources, Water Resources, Economic Development, Community Character, Infrastructure, and Intergovernmental Coordination. The Vision Statement is a forward-looking narrative on the condition of McHenry County in 2030 that describes the improvements that will be made to the County after the adoption of the McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan in 2009. The Vision Statement represents a collective summary of the preliminary goals and objectives identified by the Plan Commission. In conjunction with a Land Evolution and Impact Assessment Model (LEAM) analysis, a set of finalized Goals and Objectives for the Comprehensive Plan will be derived from this Vision Statement and used to lead McHenry County until 2030 and serve as a basis for all future decisions, actions, and policies.

McHenry County Vision Statement

The adoption of the McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan will be the first of many positive steps taken by the County, its townships, and its 30 municipalities over the next 20 years. Governments within the County will increase their overall coordination with one another and overlapping plans will be integrated into a cohesive plan for action. Improvements to roads, communications, multi-modal transportation systems and other infrastructure will be made and new businesses from emerging industries will be attracted to McHenry County as a result. The overall community character and quality of life of McHenry County will be enhanced by providing a variety of housing options, supporting the school system, and promoting various design principles. Clean water resources will become more plentiful throughout McHenry County and offer many recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Open space, agricultural lands, and environmental resources will be protected, bringing about an essential balance to the economy of McHenry County while enhancing the quality of life for County residents.

Over the next 20 years McHenry County will...

...continue to recognize the important role farming and other agricultural practices play in the County's economy and the benefits they bring to the area. The County will accomplish this by...

- Adopting a "land first" approach to planning to discourage the premature development of agricultural lands.
- Utilizing the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) System to identify and protect the most productive farmland.
- Promoting and diversifying the agricultural sector of the local economy through the encouragement of specialty crop enterprises.
- Promoting the regional agri-tourism industry and attract visitors from surrounding communities.

...continue to recognize the importance of natural resources and provide beautiful and clean natural areas throughout McHenry County for residents and visitors to enjoy. The County will accomplish this by...

- Making land use decisions that preserve environmentally sensitive areas.
- Instituting county-wide public education programs highlighting the benefits natural resources provide to a community.
- Promoting conservation-oriented land use planning.
- Improve infrastructure to support various modes of alternative transportation.
- Creating a network of greenways and trails to connect areas like parks, historic sites, and communities throughout the County.
- Effectively managing and continually expanding upon recreational areas in proportion to the growing population.
- Preserving sensitive Wildlife habitats.

...continue to recognize that water is to be treasured as a resource and not treated as a waste product. The County will accomplish this by...

- Adopting "land first" planning principles and a watershed-based approach to development and land use changes.
- Implementing various regulations that steer intensive development away from recharge areas and other sensitive areas.
- Minimizing damages incurred from flooding by limiting new development in floodplain areas.
- Decreasing stormwater runoff by minimizing the amount of impervious surfaces throughout the County, preserving open space, and protecting farmland.

...continue to recognize that a well-balanced and diversified economy must accompany residential growth. The County will accomplish this by...

- Emphasizing intergovernmental coordination in the effort to retain existing businesses and industries as well as attracting new firms to the area.
- Identifying and developing key commercial and industrial corridors with high degree of access to major transportation routes.
- Facilitating the construction of the necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of both targeted and interested businesses and industries.
- Working with local governments to create development incentive tools that make selected areas more attractive to prospective businesses and industries.
- Attracting expanding industries including multiple green technology firms, health care facilities, and businesses researching and developing alternative energy sources.
- Constructing and expanding education facilities in conjunction with the arrival of new firms to provide the necessary training and knowledge to McHenry County's workforce.
- Developing of a wide variety of workforce housing options.
- Promoting recreation, tourism, agri-business, and agri-tourism and improve the image of McHenry County as a destination of natural beauty to be explored.

...continue to improve infrastructure and provide ample and reliable services to residents, businesses, and industries. The County will accomplish this by...

- Identifying stable funding sources to finance significant improvements.
- Updating and expand the roadway system.
- Creating a communications network that provides county-wide high-speed internet connections.
- Educating residents on the benefits of multi-modal transportation systems connecting car, train, and bus services.
- Reducing vehicular travel and minimize roadway infrastructure costs and air pollution levels.
- Concentrating new residential, commercial, and industrial development in areas with preexisting networks of infrastructure.

...continue to recognize the importance of coordination between the County, townships and municipalities. The County will accomplish this by...

- Facilitating communication between municipalities and coordinate planning activities.
- Creating boundary agreements that help avoid redundant activities within the overlapping or adjacent jurisdictions.
- Creating accurate population projections that allow for the various entities within McHenry County to better plan for growth in their respective communities.
- Providing local governments with LEAM analysis assistance in order to better understand the impacts of local growth within a regional context.
- Aiding municipalities in crafting well-informed land use plans that detail locally desired patterns of growth.

All of these accomplishments over the next 20 years can only be made possible through cooperation and coordination amongst dozens of local entities that have the foresight to work toward the common goal of creating a balanced and viable regional community. Through this collective effort, the actions of the County and its many municipalities will successfully accommodate growth and development, while maintaining the County's rural character, natural resources, economic well-being, and overall quality of life enjoyed by their residents.