CHAPTER 4: Community Development

The Growth and Economic Vitality Vision theme is a strong statement for business diversification, including tourism, job growth, and support for agriculture.

The Community Vision theme recognizes the economic activities of individual cities as the foundation for the broader County prosperity and sees economic opportunity as key to sustaining families.

The Unique Character Vision theme views the river and other special qualities found in Renville County as major opportunities for tourism.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Goal 1: Expand and retain existing business and industry while trying to attract new business and industry as a priority for diversifying the local tax base and providing local employment opportunities.

Policies

1. Identify specific planned areas with appropriate standards for infrastructure and aesthetics where business and industry can locate within the County.
2. Allow commercial and industrial uses only where they will be compatible with existing and planned uses.
3. Continue to facilitate the retention and in-place expansion of commercial businesses and industry.
4. Encourage commercial and industrial development where city services such as sewer and water are available or can be feasibly extended.

Goal 2: Utilize tourism as a significant community development tool centered on the natural amenities, park facilities, industry, and historical assets of the County.

Policies

1. Develop tourism as a key industry in sustaining and enhancing the 10 communities and the County as a whole.
2. Develop facilities and infrastructure to support tourism activities in County parks and historical sites. Encourage development of recreational, entertainment, and support services such as restaurants and lodging in the 10 communities and the County as a whole.

3. Assist groups in the County with development of a Minnesota Valley History Learning Center and tourism activities related to farming and industry in the County.

4. Utilize the Scenic Byway and County parks and historic sites along this roadway as the centerpiece of tourism promotion and development.

5. Create year-round opportunities for recreation within the County to include winter activities such as cross-country skiing/snowmobile and summer activities such as bicycling, camping, horseback riding, canoeing, and fishing.

6. Develop a tourism plan with the involvement of the Renville County HRA/EDA, the 10 communities, the Renville County Historical Society, and the Lower Sioux Indian community. The plan should have the following priorities:
   a. Market to County residents.
   b. Market to visitors.
   c. Build resources for tourism.

7. Implement the policies in Chapter 8 that improve the water quality of the Minnesota River and other County lakes, rivers, and streams as a way of enhancing the natural environment for tourism and quality of life of County residents.

**Goal 3: Strengthen and diversify the agricultural economy.**

**Policies**

1. Strive for and support higher farm profitability and family farm stability including encouraging creative agricultural diversification of crops and products, vertically integrated operations with direct access to local markets, and certified production that has a higher market value.

2. Capture an increasing share of the opportunities for value-added agriculture in food industries utilizing agricultural products as a feedstock.

3. Create opportunities for new investment in agricultural operations and support industries.

4. Create opportunities for the development of bioscience-related industries that promote scientific advances in human health, animal health, and plant sciences.
Goal 4: Promote sustainable development initiatives.

Policies

1. Encourage and promote the use of “green” architecture design principles that minimize impacts to the natural and cultural environments and reduce long-run risk to businesses.

2. Encourage the appropriate development and use of renewable energy sources including wind power, solar energy, biofuel, and geothermal energy as a means of substituting underutilized local renewable resources for non-renewable, non-local energy sources.

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AND QUALITY

Goal 1: Promote the continued development of high quality, high value industry with living wage jobs that include both agricultural processing and non-agricultural related business.

Policies

1. Promote high quality commercial and industrial construction to insure building durability and an aesthetically attractive appearance.

2. Require industrial development in Renville County to meet site and building performance standards.

3. The County shall encourage site upkeep and maintenance through code enforcement to promote a positive commercial and industrial image.

4. Remove obsolete or deteriorating buildings to create buildable sites for new business or industrial opportunities.

Goal 2: Work to balance County regulations with the needs of business and industry to preserve the natural environment while providing an economically viable business environment.

Policies

1. Examine and modify County development regulations within environmental regulation parameters as a means of providing site design flexibility for new construction or to accommodate in-place commercial and industrial expansion.
2. Locate commercial business and industry with consideration to environmental issues and compatibility with neighboring land uses.

BUSINESS RETENTION AND ATTRACTION

Goal 1: Encourage the development and retention of business endeavors to provide jobs and services throughout the County.

Policies

1. Promote the continued viability of the 10 cities within the County as agricultural and commercial service centers that provide opportunities for jobs and housing.

2. The Renville County HRA/EDA shall work with community leaders in the promotion of and attraction of business and industry in their communities.

3. Emphasize technical assistance as a key strategy to retain existing business and help them grow.

4. Encourage the development of cultural, educational, and health care services.

Goal 2: Develop and maintain an adequate infrastructure of roadways, rail, communications, and public services to support community development.

Policies

1. Ensure that the County roadway systems and rail systems are in place and maintained to adequately serve community development efforts.

2. Work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, township officials, and with owners of private rail lines to assure continued service and expanded access for business.

3. Locate commercial and industrial development, especially resource-based industry, in areas of high accessibility.

4. In evaluating commercial and industrial sites, consideration shall be given to the physical implications related to traffic generation, public service demands, rail needs, environmental uses, and compatibility with neighboring land uses.

5. Implement policies in Chapter 5 that are designed to ensure adequate telecommunications and information technology infrastructure to support existing education, service, and business environments and as an aspect of business attraction.
**Goal 3:** Promote labor force education and training.

**Policies**

1. Encourage business/school partnerships to strengthen school-to-work connections and support education.

2. Work with local schools and educational institutions in the region and state to provide enhanced community education and opportunities for higher education for residents of the County.

3. Implement the policies in Chapter 4 which seek to define the County as a place of high quality, lifelong education.

**MARKETING/ADMINISTRATION**

**Goal 1:** Market the assets of the County through aggressive County communication and promotion programs.

**Policies**

1. Continue and enhance programs for marketing and promotion through the HRA/EDA.

2. Establish a community development strategic and marketing plan that outlines a program for communication and promotion.

3. Provide support to community development efforts by providing adequate staff and funding for marketing and administration.

**Goal 2:** Coordinate community development activities of the 10 cities with the County HRA/EDA programs to define roles and avoid redundant efforts.

**Policies**

1. Be proactive in working with officials of the 10 cities in coordinating community development and strategic planning efforts.

2. Determine the HRA/EDA’s role in attracting and locating potential commercial/industrial development.

3. Research a program of cooperative cost and revenue sharing arrangements among cities, townships, and the County to promote community development.