

Agriculture and Natural Resources

1. To encourage the creation of a sustainable environment that successfully balances urban growth and development with ecological constraints.

- 1.1. Encourage expansion and recruitment of environmentally conscious businesses.
- 1.2. Encourage existing businesses to incorporate sustainability efforts into their operations.
- 1.3. Maintain and plan for biodiverse green space as development and public improvements occur.
- 1.4. Identify, preserve, and promote linkages or connections of open/green spaces.
- 1.5. Promote programs and enforce ordinances that minimize soil erosion.
- 1.6. Promote outdoor lighting practices that minimize light pollution.
- 1.7. Encourage existing businesses and residential subdivisions to add retention basins and/or on-site infiltration systems to further control flooding and runoff.
- 1.8. Promote appropriate lifestyles and infrastructure changes to reduce causes and impacts of global and local climate change.
- 1.9. Identify and plan for future locations for active and passive park and recreation areas that protect natural places that are unique to Dubuque County.
- 1.10. Develop more recreational trails around natural and wetland areas to preserve and utilize these areas.
- 1.11. Encourage active, physical mobility (bike, walk, mass transit) to areas of daily living.
- 1.12. Create and maintain urban forest inventories and plan for planting of diverse native species of trees throughout the county.

2. To promote the protection, preservation, and enhancement of the region's bluffs, prairies, wetlands, waterways, scenic views, vegetation, wildlife, and all natural areas.

- 2.1. Prevent the degradation of environmentally sensitive natural resources such as stream banks, flood plains, steep slopes, slide prone areas, natural forests, wildlife habitat, areas containing shallow soils, karst areas, and endangered plants and animals.
- 2.2. Promote identification, restoration, and protection of rare, native, and sensitive habitat (including prairies and woodlands), and areas that contribute to the natural character of the region with concern to the evolving understanding of expertise in current management techniques.
- 2.3. Encourage protection and restoration of sensitive areas as development and redevelopment occurs, including along the riverfront bluffs.
- 2.4. Encourage environmentally appropriate public use of, and access to, the region's bluffs, wetlands, and waterways.
- 2.5. Partner with community groups to demonstrate and educate the community on best management practices for sustainable design.
- 2.6. Encourage reduction of non-native, invasive plant and animal species and maintain an appropriate balance of native species.

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- 2.7. Promote preservation of private and public lands which contribute to the area's natural character, through connecting green belts, wildlife refuges, or passive recreational areas.
- 2.8. Encourage owners of land which contains environmentally sensitive natural resources or contributes to the natural character of the region, to preserve these areas by conservation easement, lease, deed restriction, or other formal method.
- 2.9. Obtain conservation easements for the preservation of agricultural land near the Mississippi River, such as the Farmland Protection Program available through the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.
- 3. To recognize agricultural land outside the urban fringe areas as an important natural resource of the region, and to preserve agricultural soils that have historically exhibited high crop yields and are considered most suitable for agricultural production.**
 - 3.1. Discourage development of productive agricultural soils by nonfarm uses in the non-fringe areas.
 - 3.2. Research the possibility of using the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (*LESA*) system and a Corn Suitability Rating of 45 to be applied by the County for the preservation of agricultural land areas designated on the Future Land Use Development Map on sites proposed for non-farm development.
 - 3.3. Consider other factors besides Corn Suitability Rating to determine whether agricultural land preservation is appropriate; such as, physical characteristics and topography of the property, location of the property and the compatibility of surrounding land uses, Land Capability Classification, and historic yields per acre of the property.
 - 3.4. Support economic development efforts to diversify the farm economy through "value added" products, organic farming, and alternative crops and livestock.
- 4. Encourage farming techniques and soil conservation practices that will protect and conserve top soil and prevent degradation of water resources.**
 - 4.1. Encourage landowners to work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Dubuque Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to install conservation practices that protect soil loss and water quality.
 - 4.2. Educate and inform landowners of both federal and state cost-share programs, which provide incentives for landowners to enroll in conservation programs and implement conservation practices.
 - 4.3. Support the Dubuque Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners by partnering on watershed projects and/or conservation practices throughout the community.
 - 4.4. Promote the protection of wetlands, and/or sensitive areas, which play a crucial role in our local and global ecosystem.
 - 4.5. Encourage landowners to leave adequate buffers between agricultural land and waterways.
 - 4.6. Encourage landowners to not fragment land, but rather leave fencerows, timber areas, and riparian areas for wildlife and waterway protection.

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5. To minimize the conflicts between agriculture and non-farm rural development.

- 5.1. Discourage non-farm uses from locating outside of urban areas, or limit such uses to areas that are appropriate for the development, are least disruptive to the area's natural character, and are designed to blend with the area's natural character as much as possible.
- 5.2. Provide appropriate environmentally sensitive transition areas between agrarian or natural areas and developing areas.
- 5.3. Discourage non-farm development in agricultural areas that may hinder efficient farming practices, agricultural operations, and the ability of the agricultural community to maintain and expand agriculture activity.
- 5.4. Permit agricultural services, businesses, and industries that serve the local agricultural community in rural areas if compatible with adjacent uses, and located along a road that is adequate to support projected traffic demand.

6. To promote conservation practices that result in responsible use of non-renewable natural resources.

- 6.1. Consider the potential for open space in any actions relative to land use.
- 6.2. Promote awareness and use of alternate, renewable resources.
- 6.3. Remove barriers to, explore incentives for, and encourage green building and landscaping principles.
- 6.4. Promote programs to improve energy efficiency.
- 6.5. Promote planting and preserving trees to reduce energy use.
- 6.6. Promote walking, mass transit use, and cycling through infrastructure development to reduce energy consumption and to improve citizen and community health.
- 6.7. Encourage public organizations to lead by example by purchasing and using energy and fuel efficient vehicles.

7. To educate citizens about environmental issues affecting their lives and their community.

- 7.1. Partner with educational institutions and media to report status of environmental indicators trends to the community.
- 7.2. Encourage ongoing environmental education programs for people of all ages, including but not limited to the human health effects of environmental issues and problems.
- 7.3. Encourage coordination of community organizations concerned with environmental issues and local ecosystems.

8. To protect and preserve existing water and air quality and ensure that future water and air quality is safeguarded.

- 8.1. Identify and develop potential controlling measures to safeguard existing and future water and air quality.

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- 8.2. Ensure that all new development meets the applicable standards for water and air quality controls and investigate improvements to standards when necessary.
 - 8.3. Protect, control, and maintain water distribution systems to preserve water quality and meet or exceed state and federal mandates.
 - 8.4. Promote ground water protection and adequate water quality and quantity of our streams and rivers by expanded infiltration.
- 9. To assure appropriate control, collection, disposal, and per capita reduction of stormwater, wastewater, solid wastes, and household hazardous wastes.**
- 9.1. Promote reduction and proper disposal of business and household hazardous waste, including purchasing alternatives.
 - 9.2. Promote reduction, proper collection, and disposal of solid wastes in accordance with environmental and aesthetic standards.
 - 9.3. Prevent toxic waste discharge into the wastewater treatment system and/or the environment through education, monitoring, and enforcement.
 - 9.4. Support the Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency's various materials diversion programs.
 - 9.5. Promote a safe and sanitary environment along streets, alleys, and other properties.
 - 9.6. Promote implementation of best management practices in the collection and disposal of stormwater and wastewater.
 - 9.7. Encourage natural infiltration from rainfall and snow melt to replenish groundwater and recharge springs and aquifers.
- 10. To promote residential and business programs that reduce, reuse, recycle, and safely dispose of the community's discard stream.**
- 10.1. Expand recycling efforts through increased participation and new materials, e.g. electronics.
 - 10.2. Promote use of recycled content products, e.g. compost and environmentally preferable purchasing.
 - 10.3. Expand food scrap and backyard composting options and awareness.
 - 10.4. Educate the community concerning recycling and other materials management and solid waste minimization methods.
 - 10.5. Promote reuse of existing buildings, deconstruction and alternative uses rather than disposal for construction/demolition materials.
- 11. To promote community clean-up and beautification efforts through public and private partnerships.**
- 11.1. Educate the public on litter prevention and illegal dumping and enforce existing laws.
 - 11.2. Encourage clean-up, beautification, and landscaping for the public, private, and business sectors, i.e. parkland, roadway, and shoreline adoption programs.

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- 11.3. Encourage plantings of native species conducive to urban native wildlife, i.e. birds and butterflies.
- 11.4. Encourage community and neighborhood clean up and beautification efforts.
- 11.5. Encourage balancing the advertising and identification needs of businesses, industries, institutions, and organizations with on-premise and off-premise sign regulations that protect scenic vistas, minimize sign clutter, and are consistent with local, state, and federal sign regulations.

12. To meet or exceed all federal, state, and local regulations for environmental quality.

- 12.1. Gain knowledge of and promote compliance with regulations.
- 12.2. Support federal and state entities in their monitoring and enforcement of their regulations.
- 12.3. Enforce laws on illegal dumping and littering.