

**Williston Comprehensive Plan
Draft Goals and Objectives
March 13, 2009**

Housing, Residential Development, and Neighborhoods

Goal 1: Provide an adequate housing supply for the existing and future citizens of Williston.

Objectives:

- a. Based on the findings of the housing study, work with the public housing authority and developers to construct approximately 125 dwelling units per year, being sensitive to the local and regional economy and the continued need for additional employees in the Williston area.

Goal 2: Provide a wide range of housing options and price levels to ensure affordable and desirable housing for all socio-economic and age groups within the community.

Objectives:

- a. Monitor the average price of homes and rent prices compared to wage and income levels in the community.
- b. Work with developers to ensure that proposed residential developments include a mixture of housing styles and affordability levels.
- c. Maintain and follow land use plan and zoning districts that provide for a variety of housing styles.

Goal 3: Maintain or improve the quality of the existing housing supply.

Objectives:

- a. Establish a rental housing inspection program.
- b. Establish a home improvement loan program for neighborhoods where the quality of housing is deteriorating.

Goal 4: Allow and encourage mixed use residential developments (residential, commercial, and public or institutional land uses).

Objectives:

- a. Maintain and follow a land use plan that identifies transitions between residential neighborhoods and commercial/industrial areas. This could consist of mixed use development, landscaped buffer areas, or high density residential land uses.
- b. Establish a zoning district that allows mixed use, subject to certain criteria.

Goal 5: Promote active living through the design of neighborhoods, blending of land uses, and provision of pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Objectives:

- a. Require a complete network of sidewalks along all city streets.
- b. Connect neighborhoods to parks, regional trail systems, and commercial sites and through pedestrian and bicycle connections.
- c. Interconnect neighborhoods through pedestrian and bicycle connections.

Goal 6: Promote and facilitate redevelopment of residential units in existing neighborhoods.

Objectives:

- a. Prepare an inventory of existing dwelling units and non-residential buildings that are vacant or under-utilized. Identify those that could be redeveloped or rehabilitated for residential use.
- b. Use financial tools such as tax increment financing (TIF) to make redevelopment of under-utilized or blighted properties financially feasible. [Note: Consider including a text and graphic educational piece about TIF in the Comp Plan.]

Goal 7: Assist rental property owners in their efforts to maintain their buildings and provide a safe living environment.

Objectives:

- a. Provide a “safe rental housing program” that allows rental housing owners to work with the police department to conduct background checks on potential tenants.

Goal 8: Encourage compact forms of subdivision and neighborhood designs rather than sprawling or scattered development patterns.

Objectives:

- a. Maintain or create zoning districts that allow compact forms of development.
- b. Work toward maintaining or increasing the citywide average number of dwelling units per acre.

Goal 9: Maintain and create aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods.

Objectives:

- a. Avoid placement of residential land use along county or state highways or along arterial streets unless a buffer is provided.
- b. Avoid the creation of residential lots with frontage on arterials and collectors. If unavoidable, provide access from another route or consolidate access points.
- c. Establish requirements for buffer areas and “transitional land uses” between residential areas and new industrial and major commercial developments to ensure land use compatibility in and around neighborhoods.
- d. Promote the “ReLeaf” Program to encourage replacement of boulevard trees in existing neighborhoods.
- e. Ensure the planting of boulevard trees in new neighborhoods.
- f. Enforce tall grass and weeds ordinances, junk ordinances, dilapidated building ordinances and others as needed to maintain aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods. Modify or establish ordinances if necessary to aid in successful enforcement.
- g. Review the open space and landscaping requirements for attached housing and multiple family residential development, to ensure the code contains adequate provisions for aesthetically pleasing living environments.

Goal 10: Minimize the cost of infrastructure and services for residents of the city.

Objectives:

- a. Avoid leapfrog development by concentrating new residential growth in locations contiguous to existing development with city water and sewer infrastructure, police and fire services, and school availability.
- b. Use the long range land use plan as a guide for installation of water and sewer mains to avoid the need for premature installation of larger facilities.

Housing, Residential Development, and Neighborhoods Policies:

Commercial Land Use and Development

Goal 1: Promote the development of a full range of commercial activities necessary to serve and support the area's existing and projected population. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal)

Objective:

- a. Maintain a land use plan that identifies an adequate supply of future commercial land use in a variety of locations varying in size, according to the location.
- b. Maintain a range of commercial zoning districts to ensure that neighborhoods may have the convenience of nearby commercial without the risk of incompatible land uses.
- c. Establish buffering requirements between commercial and residential zoning districts.
- d. Meet more of the community's needs for goods and services within Williston.

Goal 2: Encourage the preservation and improvement of the central business district. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal)

Objective:

- a. Work with property owners to fully utilize the Renaissance Zone, providing tax incentives to redevelop buildings and sites within the zone.
- b. Ensure that property owners and potential investors understand the benefits of the Renaissance Zone.
- c. Encourage a mixture of commercial, office, and residential land use at a high density in the central business district.

Goal 3: Promote attractive commercial development that enhances the aesthetics of the community.

Objective:

- a. Create, maintain and enforce on-site landscaping and boulevard tree planting requirements.

- b. Ensure the provision of a boulevard through sidewalk placement which is appropriately set back from the street.
- c. Update the city's zoning ordinance relative to signs to ensure the use of signs does not create visual clutter, sight distance limitations, or impacts to residential neighborhoods.
- d. Enforce tall grass and weeds ordinances, junk ordinances, dilapidated building ordinances and others as needed to maintain aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods. Modify or establish ordinances if necessary to aid in successful enforcement.
- e. Establish a Gateway Overlay District which requires higher commercial development standards and apply it to sites along Highway 2 and other existing and future gateways to the community to ensure that future development and redevelopment contributes to a positive image of the community.

Commercial Land Use and Development Policies:

Industrial Land Use and Development

Goal 1: Promote the development of a wide variety of industrial businesses to create an on-going, long term supply of jobs in the community. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)

Objectives:

- a. Designate an adequate supply of industrial land within the land use plan and zoning map.
- b. Scale the amount of future industrial land to the community's need and appropriately consolidate it at locations compatible with surrounding land uses. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)
- c. Separate industrial areas from other uses either through the use of transitional zones or by some form of buffer such as a highway, floodplain, or other physical or natural barrier. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)
- d. Provide a variety of lot sizes and locations to suit a variety of industrial needs.
- e. Recognize the currently higher than usual demand for industrial land and locate industrial land use in a manner that 1) provides an adequate amount of industrial land, and 2) protects the community from the truck traffic, noise, and potential odors that often accompany industrial development.
- f. Discourage isolated industrial locations in the rural agricultural area as they may result in environmental deterioration or disruptive travel patterns. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)
- g. Protect the coal reserves in Stony Creek Township from surface development that would preclude mining of the coal in the future. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)

Goal 2: Promote attractive industrial development that enhances the aesthetics of the community.

Objectives:

- a. Develop industrial performance standards to regulate the adverse environmental effects of industrial operations. These standards should restrict the amount of odor, smoke, noise, light and waste water discharge in addition to other possible harmful agents. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)
- b. Identify physical features that would improve the appearance of existing development at the gateways to the city, and work with property owners to implement these features.
- c. Establish ordinances that address energy development within the city and the ETA to ensure that structures such as oil wells, wind turbines, etc. do not limit future development options or detract from the attractiveness and quality of life of the community.
- d. Establish a Gateway Overlay District which requires higher industrial development standards and apply it to sites along Highway 2 and other existing and future gateways to the community to ensure that future development and redevelopment contributes to a positive image of the community.

Industrial Land Use and Development Policies:

Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Goal 1: Establish on-going, constructive coordination and communication between the City of Williston, Williams County, the Park District of the City of Williston, and the School District

Objectives:

- a. Facilitate and participate in the development of a Park Master Plan to ensure the City, County, Park District, and School District are working toward common goals for park locations, sizes, amenities, and funding.
- b. Collaborate with the Park district of the City of Williston and Williams County to establish a bicycle/pedestrian trail plan and establish a management plan for maintenance of existing and future bicycle/pedestrian trails.

Goal 2: Maintain and expand the system of parks and open space to meet the recreational needs of all residents. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)

Objectives:

- a. Ten percent of residential land should consist of parkland and open space.
- b. Subdividers shall dedicate acceptable, developable park land or cash-in-lieu of land to develop parks where land is already available. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)
- c. Seek opportunities to acquire and develop park land in established neighborhoods lacking adequate parks. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)
- d. Drainage areas may be acceptable as dedicated park open space in new subdivisions; however, if dedicated and designated for open space and accepted in fulfillment of park dedication requirements, the characteristics of the land must render it useable for recreation activities. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)
- e. Preserve 100-year flood plains in presently undeveloped areas as open space. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)

- f. Work with the Park District to establish a range of park designations ranging from small neighborhood parks, medium sized city parks, and large regional parks to meet a wide range of open space and recreational needs.
- g. Locate parks and open space within a 10-minute walk of at least 80 percent of residential lots within the city to promote active living.
- h. Seek opportunities for the establishment of pocket parks to increase the availability of open space to city residents. Consider privately owned and maintained parks as acceptable options, provided maintenance and ownership are clearly defined in recordable documents.
- i. Establish a requirement for convenient connections (through neighborhood design or through easements and trail connections) between neighborhoods and parks or open space.
- j. Establish a routine replacement and maintenance schedule for all playground equipment in city parks.
- k. Provide playground equipment for a variety of age groups in city parks (toddlers through elementary school).
- l. Where possible, the park district and school district should collaborate to ensure that school grounds meet the recreational needs of both the school and the surrounding neighborhood.

Goal 3: Designate open space and parks in a manner that complements the physical characteristics of the area. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)

Objectives:

- a. The city and park district should collaborate to identify the most optimal locations for parks and open spaces, considering recreational needs of the community and other designated and potential land uses.
- b. Avoid placement of parks adjacent to primary arterials and highways, which are generally the best locations for taxable land uses of high value.
- c. As the city grows, acquire land along creeks for the establishment of public greenways with trails.

- d. Connect trail systems with existing trails and designated pedestrian/bicycle routes.

Goal 4: Protect appropriate natural, historical, and archaeological resources of the community. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)

Objectives:

- a. Maintain an inventory of existing sites of historical and archaeological significance. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)
- b. Support local efforts to register historic sites and historic districts with the North Dakota Historical Society and the National Register of Historic Places. Provide assistance in obtaining State and Federal funds to restore identified historic buildings and historic districts. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)
- c. Designate land with steep topography, particularly along creeks, as future open space to protect these areas from future land uses that will detract from their natural beauty and cause environmental impacts such as erosion.
- d. Designate the Little Muddy River Corridor, in particular the portion owned by the Army Corps of Engineers, as a natural open space and recreational area. Seek cooperative efforts and resources to enhance this area for the mutual benefit of the public.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Policies:

Public Facilities and Services

Goal 1: **Ensure that land is available to provide for economical and efficient construction, operation, and maintenance of the public facilities and services in both existing and future developments.** (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)

Objectives:

- a. Develop a public facilities and services plan to determine land needs and location requirements for public facilities. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)
- b. Work with property owners and developers to identify optimal locations for a satellite fire station west of the Hwy 2 West Bypass.
- c. Develop a comprehensive surface water drainage plan to minimize potential flood damage and the amount of land within floodplains. (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)

Goal 2: **Extend urban services in such a way as to facilitate the achievement of other goals of the land use plan.** (Note: Wording similar to existing Comp Plan Goal.)

Objectives:

- a. Amend city codes as needed to ensure that new subdivisions and major building projects have storm drainage and detention systems designed and constructed to prevent downstream changes in runoff velocity, quantity, or characteristics and conform to Engineering Department requirements. Ensure that codes require the developer to take responsibility for necessary drainage improvements.
- b. Restrict urban development in areas not adequately served by the City's water and sewer system until new facilities are constructed to provide adequate services.

Public Facilities and Services Policies:

Environmental Preservation

Goal 1: Maintain or improve the quality of land, water, and air resources in and around Williston.

Objectives:

- a. Designate fragile lands with steep topography, creeks, and fragile plant communities as future open space.
- b. Seek funding to purchase designated open space areas, or acquire them during the development process.
- c. Establish and enforce land development regulations and city practices that prevent erosion and dust, such as parking lot paving requirements, city street sweeping schedules, and requirements for living ground cover.
- d. Encourage xeriscaping to reduce dependency on city water to maintain landscaped areas. Provide information to the public about plant materials with low water needs.

Goal 2: Encourage city growth to be designed in a manner that reduces the public and private consumption of energy.

Objectives:

- a. Establish a mixed use zoning district which allows a combination of residential, commercial and office land uses.
- b. Apply mixed use zoning in locations where it will serve as both a convenience to surrounding neighborhoods and a buffer from more intense land uses or adjacent roadways.
- c. Develop walkable neighborhoods, with parks and neighborhood commercial uses within a 10 minute walk of most residential lots.
- d. Provide and maintain a complete system of sidewalks and bike trails.
- e. Seek compact forms of development that are adjacent to existing developed areas.

Goal 3: Establish municipal services and practices that are environmentally friendly and take advantage of new technological advances.

Objectives:

- a. Seek opportunities to incorporate wind energy and/or biodiesel energy to power city facilities or vehicle fleets.
- b. Consider curbside recycling service to increase the rate of recycling and reduce the amount of material being placed in the city's landfill.
- c. Seek opportunities to sell methane gas produced by the city's landfill as a source of fuel for nearby industries east of the Little Muddy River.
- d. Collaborate with local businesses to encourage the use of reusable bags, thereby reducing the consumption of plastic bags.
- e. Seek opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of city facilities.
- f. Promote a business plan involving the recycling of junk vehicles and discarded or abandoned oil field equipment.
- g. Require the use of new oil drilling techniques, such as horizontal drilling, to access oil reserves in areas that are environmentally sensitive or in close proximity developed areas.

Goal 4: Encourage the citizens of Williston to engage in environmentally friendly practices. [Alternate wording – Encourage the citizens of Williston to practice environmental preservation.]

Objectives:

- a. Consider curbside recycling service.
- b. Consider incentives to property owners who install renewable energy heating and cooling systems, such as solar.
- c. Establish a program of boulevard tree planting to increase the amount of shade and cooling of homes, businesses, streets, and parking areas.

- d. Emphasize that on-site landscaping plans should incorporate designs that reduce energy consumption to heat and cool buildings.
- e. Facilitate events such as farmers markets and land uses such as community gardens to increase the amount of food produced locally.
- f. Work with local growers and food producers on publicity efforts about the value of consuming locally grown food.

Goal 5: Establish review criteria for zoning change and conditional use applications to ensure that environmental impacts are considered, understood, and addressed.

Objectives:

- a. Establish a finding of fact that ensures adequacy of city services and water supply to a proposed land use change or development.
- b. Establish a finding of fact that addresses the adequacy of the city's storm sewer system and storm water management facilities to handle additional run-off from a proposed land use change or development.
- c. Ensure that city zoning districts require an adequate amount of permeable surface to aid in the absorption of storm water.
- d. Establish requirements for erosion control during construction, on developed properties, and on vacant properties.
- e. Establish standards for industrial land use relative to air quality impacts.
- f. Establish thresholds for noise impacts of industrial and commercial development.

Goal 6: Avoid inefficient and premature development of prime agricultural land and environmentally sensitive areas to conserve valuable land and water resources for the future.

Objectives:

- a. In city growth areas, prevent the development of large lot rural residential subdivisions.

- b. Set aside wetlands and surrounding transitional areas to ensure filtering of water from impermeable surfaces such as streets and parking areas.

Environmental Preservation Policies:

Transportation

Goal 1: Ensure on-going consistency between the Comprehensive plan and Transportation plan.

Objective:

- a. Updates to either the Comprehensive Plan or the Transportation Plan will be reviewed to determine if a change to one creates the need to change the other.

Goal 2: Establish a hierarchy of streets.

Objectives:

- a. Plan for and implement continuity of collectors and arterials.
- b. Focus on efficiency of travel movements on arterials.
- c. Design residential land uses to take access off local streets.
- d. Design the street system and adjacent land uses to avoid the impact of non-residential traffic on residential streets.
- e. Adopt and enforce access management guidelines.

Goal 3: The city's transportation system should complement and support the land use plan to promote economic development.

Objectives:

- a. Industrial land use should be supported with roads designed to accommodate heavy freight and vehicles with large turning radii.
- b. Commercial land use should be supported with roads of adequate capacity and traffic control to handle peak period traffic volumes at an acceptable level of service (generally LOS C or better).

Goal 4: Seek non-city funding sources for maintenance and improvements to arterials and collector streets, especially those impacted by industrial and mining activities outside city limits.

Objectives:

- a. Ensure that land uses which generate a significant amount of truck traffic are located such that they have access to a truck route. If this

is not possible, arrange a funding partnership to ensure appropriate design and construction of streets leading to truck routes.

Transportation Policies:

Youth and Young Families

Goal 1: Retain the youth of the community and attract young families

Objectives:

- a. Educate community leaders about the characteristics that attract youth and young families to an area.
- b. Involve youth and young adults in committees and task forces that are charged with setting priorities for community improvements.
- c. Seek out and encourage diversity.
- d. Coordinate youth and young family issues with the Park District, School District, and Williston State College.