

# Blount County Policies Plan

June 24, 1999

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Adopted June 24, 1999 by the  
**Blount County Planning Commission**

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# Blount County Policies Plan

**Guiding Policy 1: The rural, small town and natural character of the county should be preserved.**

**Guiding Policy 2: Land use and development should be managed and regulated in order to preserve the quality of our growing county.**

**Guiding Policy 3: The guiding policy in any government actions in relation to the use and development of land should be to limit regulations to specific public health, safety and welfare objectives balanced with responsible freedom in the use of land.**

**Guiding Policy 4: County roads should be improved and maintained to a level consistent with present development and expected future development.**

**Guiding Policy 5: Growth and development should be appropriately matched with provision of adequate infrastructure such as utilities, roads and schools.**

## INTRODUCTION

The basic guiding policies for this plan were adopted after a three year planning process started formally in April of 1996. After general discussions on the need for a plan to guide decisions on land use and roads, the County Commission adopted a resolution directing that a planning process commence. The Planning Department acted as staff support to the process, initially involving the Planning Commission and the Public Service and Intergovernmental Committees of the County Commission.

### **Population Growth.**

First activities were focussed on population analysis and projections. Analysis of past population trends from 1950 to 1990 showed continuous growth in the county, but with different dynamics in each decade. The decade of the 1950's was characterized by the "baby boom" resulting in a large natural increase, being the difference between births and deaths. This was countered by a large net outmigration, with more people leaving the county than coming in. This resulted in a low population increase of 2,834 persons, from a population of 54,691 in 1950, to 57,525 in 1960.

The decade of the 1960's was characterized by the end of the "baby boom" and a reduction in the natural increase. The movement of people into and out of the county was almost the same, with

a minimal net migration. This resulted in a modest population increase of 6,219 persons, based almost exclusively on natural increase, to a total population of 63,744 in 1970.

The decade of the 1970's showed a strong growth in population, fueled by a very high net immigration of 10,403 people. Along with a natural increase that had declined from the decade before, this resulted in an overall increase of 14,026 people to a total population of 77,770 in 1980.

The pace of population growth slowed in the 1980's, but still showed a strong net immigration of 5,205 people. Along with a continuing decline in natural increase, this resulted in an overall increase of 8,199 people to a total population of 85,969 in 1990.

Estimates of population growth in the 1990's showed that the county was growing faster than at any time in its history. Net immigration for just eight years of the decade was estimated to be about 13,600 persons, with projected net immigration expected to be 17,000 persons for the decade by the year 2000. This would be a net immigration 63 percent greater than the last peak in the 1970's. Blount County reached a population of 100,000 sometime in the year 1997, showed an estimated population of 101,295 by July of 1998, and was expected to grow to a population of about 104,000 to 105,000 by the year 2000. Based on assumptions of continued strong net immigration, population was projected to continue increase into the future, to 123,000 by the year 2010, and 138,000 by the year 2020. The fast pace of growth in the 1990's, and the expectation of continued fast growth into the future, were considerations in formulating this plan.

Population growth results in demand on land and public facilities. Farms and other rural areas are being converted to housing lots and other uses at a greater pace than in the past. The character of the county is changing. Once pristine rural areas are feeling the pressure of suburban development, second home and recreation housing, and the demands of tourism. Roads once used only for farm access, are now being pressed into service for suburban types of development. The network of major roads show continuing concentration of traffic, often to the point of congestion.

Some of the dynamics of population growth are external to the county, and some are internal. The county as a whole is becoming more and more linked to the growth dynamics of the larger economic region around Knoxville and Knox County. The cities of Alcoa and Maryville are becoming stronger centers of local growth. The lakes, rivers, mountains and rural character of the county are some of the many attributes sought by those settling in the region.

**Citizen input - What is good about Blount County which should be preserved in the future? What needs to be changed in Blount County to make a better future?**

These were the two questions that fueled a second phase of the planning process. In early 1997, the Planning Commission and the County Commission decided that the planning process should be opened up to encourage the citizens of the county to participate directly in setting the agenda for the future. The two questions were posed at 17 citizen input workshops held at sites throughout the county from April to June of 1997, with 253 citizens participating. The detailed results of that round of citizen input may be found in separate documentation.

### **Citizen input - a proposed set of policies.**

Planning Department staff formulated a proposed set of policies to reflect the results of the first round of citizen input. This set of policies was discussed in the Planning Commission and the Intergovernmental and Public Services Committees of the County Commission. It was again decided that citizens should have a direct say on which policies should be included in setting the planning agenda for the future. Consequently, the proposed set of policies were presented at 17 citizen input workshops, at the same sites as the first round of workshops throughout the county. The workshops were conducted from September to November of 1997, with 459 citizens participating. The detailed results of that round of citizen input may be found in separate documentation.

### **Plan for Mountain Areas.**

In response to impending developments in the mountain areas late in 1997, and a strong concern expressed by many citizens, the County Commission requested that a plan for mountain areas be first on the agenda for further planning. The Planning Department staff developed a proposed "Blount County Land Use Plan: A Plan for Mountain Areas" using results of the citizen input workshops as a guide, and in consultation with the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed plan on March 9, 1998, and voted to approve the plan. The plan was certified to the County Commission, and considered by them at their March 1998 meeting. The County Commission decided at that time to suspend all implementation activities for the mountain area plan, and continue development of a complete policies plan for the whole county, including recommended implementation.

### **Citizen Advisory Committee – focussed citizen input.**

The Planning Commission and the Intergovernmental and Public Service Committees of the County Commission were consulted, and they decided that citizen input should be continued in the process, but that a more focussed group approach was needed. In May of 1998, a call went out for volunteers to sit on a Citizen Advisory Committee. A pool of 62 volunteers responded, of which 11 were selected by the County Commission by Commission district. The Citizen Advisory Committee met from July of 1998 to January of 1999, and formulated a set of recommended implementation strategies. The report of the Citizen Advisory Committee may be found in separate documentation.

### **Planning Commission – synthesizing the policy plan.**

"It is the function and duty of a regional planning commission to make and adopt a general regional plan for the physical development of the territory of the region" (Tennessee Code Annotated 13-3-301). The Planning Commission has final responsibility for formulating a plan for the county. All activities leading to final adoption by the Planning Commission are informational, advisory, and deliberative. The Planning Commission considered four main inputs into the plan.

First was a wealth of analysis supplied by the "Blount County: 1990 Land Use Plan & Policy," approved in 1976. The analysis of the physical properties of land in the county was accepted as

general background information from the 1976 plan. Most effort was placed on revising the population information in the light of the two census counts since 1976, and a series of population estimates from 1990 to 1998 (see separate documentation on population analysis).

The second source of input was results of the citizen input workshops. The overall policy agenda came directly from second round results, with additional input from a separate canvass of policy preferences measuring opinions from the appointed Planning Commission members, and the County Commission and the appointed Citizen Advisory Committee (see separate documentation on the policy preference canvass).

The third source of input was the report of the Citizen Advisory Committee on recommended implementation strategies. These strategies were put into context of the policy agenda provided from the second round of citizen input workshops (see separate documentation on the initial integrated policy agenda and implementation strategy recommendations).

The last source of input to the plan was the policies section from the 1976 plan. The policies were reviewed at the beginning of the planning process in 1996, and were reconsidered for inclusion in this plan after all other advisory policies and recommendations were considered.

The Planning Commission began a concentrated series of deliberations to synthesize the plan beginning in March of 1999. Staff prepared a set of “policy backgrounder” reports collating and summarizing much of the previous information by issue and policy group (see separate reports). The Planning Commission also completed a paper ballot on the set of prospective policies and implementation strategies. This ballot was used to identify areas where there was a division of opinion, and helped focus deliberations on means of reaching a consensus. Meetings were held on March 4, March 11, March 25, April 8, April 13, April 22, May 4 and May 13, 1999 to consider long range planning issues and the final content of the plan. All meetings were noticed in the local newspaper, and time was allocated for continued citizen input (see separate documentation reports of deliberations and citizen comments, and results of preliminary ballot).

The Planning Commission considered a draft version of the plan at its May 27, 1999 meeting, at which time a public hearing was set for June 15, 1999. The public hearing was not a statutory requirement, but was considered to be a final opportunity for direct citizen comment on the plan. The Planning Commission met for final action on the plan at its June 24, 1999 regular meeting.

### **Time horizon and geographical coverage.**

The nominal time horizon for this plan is 20 years, or to the year 2020. Population projections were prepared to that target date. However, there was no formal effort to link specific policies to a target date. The policies and implementation recommendations contained in this plan are intended to be applicable for the entire period.

The geographical coverage of the plan is the whole county. This is explicitly allowed in Tennessee Code Annotated 13-3-301. However, the main focus of the policies are for territory outside the corporate boundaries of the six municipalities in the county, being Maryville, Alcoa, Louisville, Friendsville, Rockford and Townsend. Both Maryville, and Alcoa had planning

regions outside their corporate limits at the time of adoption of this plan. The two municipal planning regions are explicitly included in the geographical coverage of this plan.

### **The policy and implementation agenda.**

The remainder of this plan sets forth the results of a three year planning process culminating in decisions by the Planning Commission on policy and implementation directions for the future. There are six levels of planning agenda:

- Guiding Policy – overall guidance to decisions in the future, akin to a goal.
- Objective Policy – more detailed statement of guidance, akin to an objective.
- Implementation strategy – a statement of principle and a statement of action.
- 1976 Plan Policies carried forward to this plan.
- Specific implementation actions for the near future.
- Monitoring and maintenance.

The first three levels are reported as part of the primary policy agenda intended to give detailed decision making and implementation guidance. The fourth level is reported as a secondary policy agenda intended to give enriched decision making guidance. The fifth level is intended to provide an agenda for immediate implementation actions to commence in the near future. The sixth level provides intent to monitor and maintain the plan.

## **PRIMARY POLICY AGENDA**

The following are five sets of policies along with implementation strategies, generated mainly from the advisory process of citizen input workshops and Citizen Advisory Committee recommendation:

### **Guiding Policy 1: The rural, small town and natural character of the county should be preserved.**

#### **Objective Policy 1A: New development should be designed to fit into the rural character of the county.**

- (1) Rural character should include trees and natural vegetation, open space, and natural features.

Implementation: Encourage subdivision design incorporating open space, and preservation of areas of unique vegetation and natural features such as springs, creeks and wetlands.

- (2) Encourage and support efforts of the Tuckaleechee Cove Advisory Board to formulate a plan along with input from the citizens of Townsend and Tuckaleechee Cove.

Implementation: Continue membership and support of area planning activities.

- (3) Professional literature on designing new developments to fit into the rural character of the county should be reviewed to provide alternatives as part of identifying and formulating specific implementation activities.

**Objective Policy 1B: Farmland should be preserved both for open space and to conserve prime agricultural production areas.**

- (1) Encourage private conservation groups or the establishment of a private Blount County Farm Trust to accept voluntary donations of land, and to accept money contributions for purchase of development rights.

Implementation: Any program would be voluntary and purely private with no government input.

- (2) Pursue possible grant and other funding sources for purchase of development rights.

Implementation: Formulation of a strategic plan to preserve farmland and rigorous search for alternative funding sources not requiring separate local fees or taxes.

- (3) Professional literature on preserving farmland should be reviewed to provide alternatives as part of identifying and formulating specific implementation activities.

**Objective Policy 1C: Our beautiful and scenic environment should be protected, including commonly shared viewscapes, ridge tops, lakeshores and river banks.**

- (1) Formulate regulations to address engineering, geological, soils and public safety issues of development design in mountain areas. Encourage development design in mountain areas that minimizes visual impact.

Implementation: Incorporate the above into county regulations and guidelines for development.

- (2) Encourage a type of construction for communications towers which would blend in with the natural surroundings.

Implementation: Adopt regulations to require that communications towers be disguised in such a manner to blend in with the natural surroundings.

- (3) Encourage co-location of telecommunication facilities on existing towers.

Implementation: Adopt regulations requiring an effort to co-locate facilities and show specific reasons for lack of feasibility if not feasible.

- (4) Businesses should keep their property in proper upkeep voluntarily.

Implementation: Guidelines for voluntary compliance with incentives such as public recognition or monetary awards for well kept businesses.

- (5) Professional literature on preserving scenic views should be reviewed to provide alternatives as part of identifying and formulating specific implementation activities.

**Objective Policy 1D: The lakes, rivers and streams in the county should be protected as a part of our natural environment and drinking water resource, and as part of our scenic and recreational resource.**

- (1) Conduct a study of pollution sources of the Little River, and formulate a county wide pollution prevention program.

Implementation: Coordinate a study of pollution sources with other agencies, such as TVA, and create an advisory committee to formulate a pollution prevention program.

- (2) The county should undertake a county-wide sewer study and plan.

Implementation: Create a task force to study the feasibility of creating a county sewer system.

- (3) Protect the health of the citizens of Blount County, and protect the quality of water in the county.

Implementation: Formulate and consider more stringent septic field standards specific to Blount County (revision of existing minimal state standards). Pursue more stringent enforcement for violation of septic disposal standards. The County should develop a water and pollution prevention program of its own.

- (4) Protect detention areas and drainage ways in a natural state to enhance drainage capabilities.

Implementation: Amend subdivision regulations and any other development related regulations to require retention of natural cover for drainage facilities, require additional ground cover for degraded drainage facilities, and require minimization of disturbance and compaction during construction phase.

- (5) Formulate a county-wide drainage plan by drainage basin, addressing quantity of runoff as well as quality of runoff, such plan to form the basis for judging needed drainage requirements of individual new developments.

Implementation: Appoint a committee with professional technical help to formulate a plan.

**Objective Policy 1E: New commercial development in Townsend and Tuckaleechee Cove should be consistent with the small town and Appalachian heritage look of the area.**

- (1) Encourage and support efforts of the Tuckaleechee Cove Advisory Board to formulate a plan along with input from the citizens of Townsend and Tuckaleechee Cove.

Implementation: Continue membership and support of area planning activities.

**Objective Policy 1F: Preservation and provision of formal open space for parks and recreation should be encouraged.**

- (1) Formulate a county-wide parks and recreation plan, including utilization of existing public facilities such as schools.

Implementation: Appoint a working committee composed of representatives from the Parks and Recreation Commission, the School Board and citizens.

**Guiding Policy 2: Land use and development should be managed and regulated in order to preserve the quality of our growing county.**

**Objective Policy 2A: Zoning and other land development regulations should be formulated and adopted.**

- (1) Adopt an updated land use plan for the county, including workable implementation strategies.

Implementation: Integrate and update the analysis sections of the 1976 Plan, accepting most of the physical analysis as unchanged. Produce a present land use map to show existing geographical structure of development in the county. Pursue the present land use and roads planning process to conclusion, including definitive implementation actions.

- (2) The County should develop a zoning plan that recognizes the need for mixed uses and emphasizes an open and public process of setting zones and rezoning if needed.

Implementation: Formulation and adoption of a zoning ordinance within an open process with provision for public review and input. Explicit provision for notification of neighboring property owners of any rezoning requests.

- (3) A mechanism for relief for undue impact on property values should accompany any regulation of land use.

Implementation: As part of any land use regulations, establish a grievance, review and relief or variance process for property owners whose land value is substantially affected by county regulation of land use.

- (4) Existing uses and structures should be treated fairly if any land use regulations are adopted.

Implementation: In a land use regulation situation where a use or structure is made non-conforming, the non-conforming use or structure should be allowed to continue in its present state unhindered. A non-conforming use should be allowed to reestablish to the same use, or a similar use of less local impact, after vacating up to a reasonable maximum time. In a situation where the structure housing the non-conforming use is totally destroyed, the use is not considered to be discontinued, but rebuilding of structure

should conform to any applicable regulations. Applicable state statutes exempting commercial, industrial and agricultural structures and uses from regulation shall apply.

- (5) Manufactured homes are an acceptable housing type, but should be regulated when designed in multi-unit developments (parks), or at densities greater than two units per acre.

Implementation: Adopt regulations addressing density of development consistent with present subdivided development densities. Manufactured home parks should be required to design for buffering from surrounding uses, minimum paved internal streets at least 16 feet wide, safe access to public roads, drainage, off street parking, common open space, and provision for fire and emergency service, and garbage service. Location of higher density developments should be limited to areas with adequate provision of utilities and services.

- (6) Multifamily residential is an acceptable housing type, but should be regulated for consistency with overall density characteristics in the county.

Implementation: Adopt regulations addressing density of development. Multi-family developments should be required to design for buffering from surrounding uses, minimum paved internal streets at least 16 feet wide, safe access to public roads, drainage, off street parking, common open space, and provision for fire and emergency service, and garbage service. Location of higher density developments should be limited to areas with adequate provision of utilities and services.

- (7) Higher density development should be limited to the cities or near to the cities along major arterial and collector status roads with sewer. Lower density development should be encouraged farther from the cities, and especially in situations where there is no sewer and limited road capacity.

Implementation: Regulate density of development, with different regulations for areas close to the cities and areas farther away from the cities, and with different regulations for areas adequately served by high capacity infrastructure (especially sewer) and areas not adequately served by infrastructure (especially rural roads). Commercial development should be allowed throughout the county with performance standards when adjoining residential areas.

- (8) Encourage developers to build with innovative designs, allowing mixed uses, and providing for pedestrian friendly, esthetically pleasing, and livable neighborhoods.

Implementation: Review Subdivision Regulations and any land use regulations to encourage such design of new developments.

**Objective Policy 2B: Development on mountains and ridge tops should be regulated to protect sensitive areas of slope and viewscapes.**

- (1) Formulate regulations to address engineering, geological, soils and public safety issues of development design in mountain areas. Encourage development design in mountain areas that minimizes visual impact.

Implementation: Incorporate the above into county regulations and guidelines for development.

**Objective Policy 2C: Development in flood plains should be regulated to allow county residents the opportunity to purchase flood insurance.**

- (1) Adopt flood plain regulations under the zoning authority provisions of Tennessee Code Annotated 13-7-101.

**Objective Policy 2D: Junk on private property should be regulated.**

- (1) Groups such as Keep Blount Beautiful, Blount County Sheriff's Department Litter Crew, and other groups concerned with litter should be given more support.

Implementation: Increase support in the form of equipment and enforcement.

- (2) Individuals who want to dump a small, non-recurring amount of trash at the land fill need some sort of consideration.

Implementation: Possible no-fee days for general citizenry, and/or reduced fee at all times for small loads of trash dumped by general citizenry. This should be recommended to the Solid Waste Authority.

- (3) Provide more opportunities for toxic waste disposal.

Implementation: Schedule more days each year for hazardous/toxic waste disposal at a central site in the county. Provide handling facility/drop-off point for more routine hazardous/toxic waste products from households.

- (4) Take steps to control garbage/refuse in the county.

Implementation: Reintroduce the former resolution on the collection and storage of garbage, litter, refuse, and rubbish for consideration by the County Commission.

**Objective Policy 2E: The safety and quality of buildings should be insured through regulation.**

- (1) Study and consider options for building codes under authority of Tennessee Code Annotated 50-20-102.

**Objective Policy 2F: Billboards, signs, towers and other structures which could impact the views of the county should be regulated.**

- (1) Adopt sign regulations.

Implementation: Use Maryville sign regulations as a starting point for formulating county regulations.

- (2) Encourage a type of construction for communications towers which would blend in with the natural surroundings.

Implementation: Adopt regulations to require that communications towers be disguised in such a manner to blend in with the natural surroundings.

- (3) Encourage co-location of telecommunication facilities on existing towers.

Implementation: Adopt regulations requiring an effort to co-locate facilities and show specific reasons for lack of feasibility if not feasible.

**Guiding Policy 3: The guiding policy in any government actions in relation to the use and development of land should be to limit regulations to specific public health, safety and welfare objectives balanced with responsible freedom in the use of land.**

**Objective Policy 3A: Any public regulation of land use and development should be in accordance with constitutional principles on rights to private use of land as interpreted by state and federal courts.**

**Objective Policy 3B: Any regulation of land use or development should be based on a clear relationship to public health, safety and welfare.**

Note: the following implementation strategies apply to 3, 3A and 3B as a group.

- (1) Education of public officials on constitutional provisions and basic decisions of the courts on land use issues.
- (2) Explicit requirement that any regulation have a clear relationship to plan objectives in support of health, safety, and/or welfare.
- (3) A mechanism for relief from undue impact on property values should accompany any regulation of land use.

Implementation: As part of any land use regulations, establish a grievance, review and relief or variance process for property owners whose land value is substantially affected by county regulation of land use.

**Guiding Policy 4: County roads should be improved and maintained to a level consistent with present development and expected future development.**

**Objective Policy 4A. The county should make plans to widen existing roads with substantial development and traffic to at least 18 feet of paved width.**

**Objective Policy 4B. As traffic warrants, the county should make plans to widen existing major roads (arterial and collector roads) to greater than 18 feet of paved width to accommodate present and projected traffic.**

Note: the following implementation strategies apply to 4, 4A and 4B as a group.

- (1) To improve roadways functionally and structurally so that they meet today's traffic needs.

Implementation: Conduct a formal objective study of road capacity and constraints, for road segments and intersections, and for present traffic with expected growth. Formulate a prioritized capital improvements budget for roads. Funding for improvements may come from existing gasoline taxes and shared revenues (with effort to change sharing formula at state level), with possible new sources from local wheel tax and property tax.

- (2) To ensure that roadways and intersections can handle traffic that is generated from all types of development in the county.

Implementation: Adopt a minimum standard of 18 feet of paved road width as condition precedent for high or moderate density or intensity of development, if the right of way exists or can be obtained. Adopt a minimum standard of 16 feet of paved road width as condition precedent for low density or intensity of development and for minor subdivision plats, if the right of way exists or can be obtained. Require a formal traffic impact study for subdivisions or other developments that would generate at full development 1000 or more trips per day (approximately 100 lots in a subdivision). Require as a design standard that developments provide adequate sight distance at all directly accessed intersections of public or private roads (including driveway entrances serving more than one house or serving any commercial establishment).

- (3) Encourage more appropriate siting of utility structures in relation to private driveways and in relation to sight distances at public road intersections.

Implementation: General oversight by the County Executive to inform utilities of concerns and public complaints.

- (4) Encourage development of alternative transportation modes.

Implementation: Study and support alternative modes of transportation such as mass transit busses, demand responsive vans, and bicycle routes.

**Guiding Policy 5: Growth and development should be appropriately matched with provision of adequate infrastructure such as utilities, roads and schools.**

**Objective Policy 5A. Development should be encouraged to locate in those areas where adequate utilities and infrastructure already exist or can be economically extended.**

- (1) Higher density development should be limited to the cities or near to the cities along major arterial and collector status roads with sewer. Lower density development should be encouraged farther from the cities, and especially in situations where there is no sewer and limited road capacity.

Implementation: Regulate density of development, with different regulations for areas close to the cities and areas farther away from the cities, and with different regulations for areas adequately served by high capacity infrastructure (especially sewer) and areas not adequately served by infrastructure (especially rural roads). Commercial development should be allowed throughout the county with performance standards when adjoining residential areas.

- (2) To ensure that the current and proposed schools will be able to handle anticipated growth.

Implementation: The Planning Department should develop estimates of new students generated by each new subdivision, and should report these estimates along with location and number of lots created to the school board. The school board should determine the need for redistricting schools to make the best use of existing facilities and transportation options.

- (3) The County should formulate a growth plan under Public Chapter 1101 that is mutually consistent with the general county policy plan, both to be used as guides for decision making on land use and development matters.

**SECONDARY POLICY AGENDA – continuity with the 1976 Plan**

The following are select policies that the Planning Commission determined were appropriate to continue from the previous plan adopted in 1976, as an enriched guidance to decision making for the future of the county. No attempt has been made to identify specific implementation strategies. The policies are presented under their original headings.

**INDUSTRIAL:** (for substantial industrial and manufacturing)

Industrial and manufacturing activities should take place at sites having access to major transportation facilities such as railroads and major highways.

Industrial and manufacturing activities should provide ample off-street parking facilities for employees.

Industrial and manufacturing activities should take place on relatively level, well-drained, flood free land that is not adjacent to scenic natural resources, historical sites or surface water resources.

Particular caution should be taken in assessing the land's capability of supporting certain industrial and/or manufacturing activities.

Industrial and manufacturing activities should be located where adequate sewage collection and treatment systems are provided. Under no circumstances should industrial wastes be dumped directly into surface water resources.

Industrial and manufacturing activities having recognized negative impact on air quality should be de-centralized in order to facilitate dispersal of harmful pollutants.

Significant industrial and manufacturing concerns should be buffered by forested or landscaped area of natural topographic features. Greenbelts or similarly designated open space areas should be used to minimize the visual and environmental impact of obnoxious industrial or manufacturing activities.

New industry and manufacturing concerns should be encouraged to locate in the County and expand in order to broaden employment opportunities and bring further economic diversification and prosperity to the area.

#### COMMERCIAL CENTERS:

Commercial land uses should be centrally located to higher population densities and provisions should be made for the following two types of commercial use and their respective planning criteria:

“Urban support centers” consisting of intensive and wide variety of consumer-oriented, retail activities should be located in areas that are served by the full range of urban services. Parking and circulation systems – both pedestrian and auto – should be carefully planned to facilitate safe and easy entry and exit, and to insure that pedestrian-auto circulation conflicts will be minimized.

“Rural support centers” of a service and convenience nature should be centrally located to higher population densities in the outlying areas of the county. Expansion of designated “rural support centers” is not recommended unless warranted by future market demands.

Tourist and convenience-oriented development along scenic highways should be tastefully designed and inconspicuously located at sites that do not encroach upon scenic vistas or productive agricultural lands.

In areas where economic pressure exceeds the need to protect highways from the negative safety and visual impacts of “strip commercial” development, provision should be made for marginal access roads and ample off-street parking.

## SPECIAL AREAS OF CONCERN:

Resource extraction and processing activities should be buffered from adjacent land uses in order to minimize impact on the visual environment.

New sites proposed for any significant mining or other extractive process should be reviewed by the planning commission in order to assess probable impacts on the environment and especially land erosion and water quality.

Extreme care should be taken in the location of residential uses near quarry operations to insure that ground water resources are safe. This is particularly important in the areas of the county which are geologically hazardous.

## TRANSPORTATION:

The development of land should be carefully planned and coordinated with the development of the street and highway system.

“Strip commercial” development along all major highways should be discouraged unless adequate provisions are made for marginal access or frontage roads which will help minimize traffic hazards.

New road construction in the county should be consistent with the standards prescribed by the Blount County Highway Department as well as the standards set forth in the Subdivision Regulations.

The developer should be required to pay for and install all necessary traffic control devices in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices prior to the Highway Department acceptance of dedication.

Off-street parking areas should be provided as an alternative to the hazards and congestion that result from on-street parking.

In areas of extreme slope, design and construction of roads should be such that storm run-off can be accommodated with minimal impact on land and water resources.

**AIRPORT HAZARD AREA:** (the following will be subject to review based on the new plan for the airport area)

Future growth and development in the airport hazard area should be in accordance with the limitations imposed by flight path obstruction hazards.

Any development proposal of questionable height should be reviewed by the planning commission to insure public safety.

Plats of new subdivisions in the airport hazard area that are reviewed by the planning commission should include a notation that advises potential buyers of the dangers associated with the area.

Future noise-sensitive developments within the high noise contours of the airport should be discouraged.

Future development within the high noise contour of the airport is not advised unless adequate provisions are made to acoustically insulate structure in order to lower indoor noise levels to acceptable standards.

Airport hazard area land use controls are recommended in accordance with airport-induced constraints and nationally recognized standards in order to protect the safety and welfare of county residents.

#### EDUCATION:

The Planning Commission should work with the Board of Education to insure coordination of urban development and educational facilities.

The multi-use of school facilities for community recreation opportunities during off-school hours should be encouraged and planned and designed accordingly.

#### HISTORICALLY AND ARCHITECTURALLY SIGNIFICANT SITES AND STRUCTURES:

Building and construction activities in the vicinity of the historically and architecturally significant sites should respect the presence and importance of these sites.

#### FIRE PROTECTION:

The Planning Commission should work closely with the fire protection officials to carry out effective fire protection objectives for the county.

Future fire protection facilities should be located in or near high growth areas and within easy access to significant public facilities such as schools.

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT:

The Planning Commission should work closely with law enforcement agencies in order to continue careful analysis regarding the increase in development to determine the expansion and improvements of law enforcement services in Blount County.

#### UTILITY SYSTEM EXPANSION:

Suburban development should only be encouraged in those areas which have soils and geologic characteristics what are suitable for septic systems, or where central sewerage service is provided.

Effort should be made to coordinate all utilities extensions and improvements between the various utility districts, the Blount County Health Department and the Planning Commission.

Public water systems should be designed in order to maintain adequate flow and pressure throughout the entire service area.

In an effort to conserve the natural beauty of the area, developments in which electric and telephone lines are installed underground should be fostered and encouraged.

#### **FLOOD HAZARD AREAS:**

In the interest of public safety and in order to lower insurance costs of owners of structures located in flood hazard areas, the Planning Commission endorses the County Commission's adoption of flood hazard area management measures in accordance with the National Flood Insurance Program.

### **IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA**

The intent of the Planning Commission is to work cooperatively with the County Commission and other appropriate agencies and groups to make the implementation of this plan a reality. One of the hallmarks of this plan has been citizen input in identifying the planning agenda. As details of implementation are undertaken, citizen input should also be encouraged on an ongoing basis so that the content of implementation will benefit. Further activities in pursuit of the implementation agenda will require consideration of priority, timing and resources outside the scope of this plan. The following is a summary of recommended implementation activities.

Review and revise the county Subdivision Regulations.

Many policies and recommendations give direct guidance to future efforts needed to revise the present county Subdivision Regulations. The Subdivision Regulations will be revised under authority granted in Tennessee Code Annotated Sections 13-3-401 to 411. The Planning Commission has final authority in the matters of subdivision regulations.

Formulate a zoning plan, including regulations and zoning map.

Many policies and recommendations suggest adoption of zoning regulations for proper implementation. Zoning regulations will be formulated under authority granted in Tennessee Code Annotated 13-7-101 to 117. The Planning Commission provides advice and recommendation on zoning adoption, and the County Commission has final authority to adopt a zoning ordinance.

Provide education to public officials on constitutional provisions and court decisions on land use issues.

The need for education on constitutional and legal issues of land use was recognized from the citizen input workshop process. It is incumbent on all officials concerned with land

use regulations to be informed on the prospects and limits for such regulations. Planning staff will have the main responsibility for facilitating this activity.

Review professional literature on design guidelines for preserving rural character, preserving farmland, preserving scenic views, and other matters pertinent to further refinement of implementation strategies.

Professional literature can provide a wealth of information to assist in thinking on the details of issues as implementation activities proceed. Planning staff will have the main responsibility for this activity.

Formulate voluntary design guidelines for preservation of open space, preservation of natural features, minimization of visual impact, and other design elements not appropriate for formal regulation.

The Planning Commission recognizes that there are some aspects of development in the county that will not be appropriate for regulation. However, there are desirable designs for development that should at least be encouraged by informal guidance or guidelines. The Planning Commission and staff will have the main responsibility for this activity.

Study and consider options for building codes.

The county has authority to adopt building codes under Tennessee Code Annotated 50-20-102. The County Commission will have main responsibility for this activity.

Continue involvement in the Tuckaleechee Cove Advisory Board.

The county has been actively participating in planning for the Cove by membership of two County Commissioners and the Director of Planning for more than five years. The Planning Commission supports continuation of this involvement.

Encourage establishment of private farm and open space conservation groups.

The Planning Commission supports private, voluntary efforts at farm and open space conservation.

Formulate a strategic plan for preservation of farmland and open space and pursue grants for purchase of development rights.

The Planning Commission supports pursuit of grants to preserve farmland and open space, so long as such grants do not require local government funding. Planning staff can assist in this activity.

Conduct study of pollution sources of the Little River and formulate a pollution prevention program.

The Planning Commission supports a cooperative effort with other agencies to study the main source of water supply for the county, and recommends formation of a committee to formulate a pollution prevention program.

Study the feasibility of a county-wide sewer system and formulate a plan.

A task force or committee should be formed to undertake this activity.

Review existing septic field standards and consider more stringent standards and greater enforcement effort.

The County Commission should review existing standards for septic system approvals, consider more stringent standards if needed, and consider mechanisms for greater enforcement. The County Environmental Department should assist in this activity.

Study and formulate a county wide plan for drainage.

A committee should be formed to undertake this activity with professional assistance.

Formulate a county wide parks and recreation plan.

A committee based mainly on the Parks and Recreation Commission, but with membership also from the School Board and concerned citizens, should be formed to undertake this activity. Initial efforts were underway at the time of this plan.

Increase support for groups concerned with litter control.

Groups such as Keep Blount Beautiful and the Sheriff's Litter Crew should receive greater support in the form of equipment and enforcement.

Review procedures to accommodate small private household dumping in the land fill.

The Solid Waste Authority should consider this as part of their ongoing management oversight of the land fill.

Provide more opportunity for hazardous waste collection and disposal.

The Solid Waste Authority should consider this as part of their ongoing management oversight of the land fill.

Consider regulations for collection and storage of garbage, litter, refuse, and rubbish.

The previous proposed resolution should be revised and reintroduced for County Commission consideration.

Conduct a study of county roads, formulate a roads plan and a capital budget for roads.

The County Highway Superintendent had started a roads planning process at the time of this plan. The effort should be continued to the level of a capital improvements budget for roads and the Highway Department.

Study alternative modes of transportation for the county.

A committee should be formed to address this activity.

Formulate a growth plan under Public Chapter 1101 that is consistent with the general county plan.

Public Chapter 1101 of 1998 provides for a separate planning process and coordinating committee to identify urban growth boundaries, planned growth areas, and rural areas. Although addressing mainly issues of annexation, the law has implications for general land use planning in the county. The growth plan for the county should be consistent with this general policy plan.

## **MONITORING AND MAINTAINING THE PLAN**

Action is needed to implement this plan. An effort is needed to keep the action agenda on track. The Planning Commission suggests that the Planning Department monitor all implementation activities and report progress on a yearly basis to the Planning Commission and the County Commission.

Time and implementation experience often change the context of planning and the plan. The Planning Commission suggests that this plan be formally opened for review and revision at least every three years. The process should involve both the Planning Commission and the County Commission, and should also involve direct citizen input on the scale of the citizen input workshops used in formulating this plan.

CERTIFIED as adopted by action of the Blount County Planning Commission on June 24, 1999.

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Gene Brown - Chairman and Secretary