

III. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives for the Tunica County Comprehensive Plan were developed through meetings with the County Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors and personnel, other County agencies and organizations, landowners and citizens.

A. Goals

- Promote the health, safety and general welfare of the community and improve the quality of life for existing and future County residents
- Promote coordinated physical development in accordance with present and future needs
- Promote the growth of the tourism industry in the County
- Increase the permanent resident base in the County
- Set, follow and maintain high standards for future development
- Balance the differing needs of the tourist-oriented portions of the County and the agricultural portions of the County
- Obtain a wider range of commercial goods and services in the County
- Promote a mix of land uses that will be appropriate for and compatible with the desired character of Tunica County

B. Objectives

Long- and short-range objectives were divided into the following categories: residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural development, economic development, airport area development, tourism, utilities, environment and natural hazards, community facilities, parks and recreation, public schools, public safety, aesthetics and transportation.

1. Residential Development

- Develop or support programs to rehabilitate and maintain the existing housing stock and protect the character of long-standing neighborhoods and communities
- Form partnerships with local housing organizations to promote residential development
- Explore opportunities for the development of retirement housing
- Provide opportunities for a variety of residential development to encourage a balanced housing market with increased housing availability and choice
- Link plans for housing to plans for tourism and economic development
- Discourage development (except at very low densities) where public sewer service is not available
- Coordinate locations for residential development with existing and proposed locations for community facilities and infrastructure

- Incorporate residential development plans of private landowners into the Land Use Plan as much as possible and encourage implementation of their plans

2. Agricultural Development

- Encourage the continuation of agricultural operations and the maintenance of agricultural character in the County
- Designate certain areas of the County that will be primarily for agricultural uses to protect an important component of the local economy and to minimize future conflicts with residential development
- Discourage the conversion of prime farmland for non-agricultural development

3. Commercial Development

- Designate areas around the proposed I-69 interchanges for future commercial development
- Promote opportunities for commercial development in the Airport area
- Continue to market Tunica County to major retailers to increase the availability of goods and services
- Protect existing neighborhood commercial uses that provide goods and services to residents; designate areas for additional neighborhood commercial development to occur.

4. Industrial Development

- Identify areas in the County for immediate and future industrial use
- Provide necessary infrastructure improvements to the Airport area to encourage industrial development
- Recruit new users for vacant industrial space and areas where the appropriate infrastructure and access is available

5. Economic Development

- Support the continued development of the gaming industry and improvements to casino facilities
- Work to expand tourism opportunities in the County and extend the stay of casino visitors
- Encourage industrial development to broaden the economic base and provide non-gaming job opportunities for County residents; explore other opportunities to diversify the economic base
- Support the continuation and expansion of agricultural operations
- Work with industries to hire local residents

6. Airport Area Development

- Make necessary improvements to the Airport facility to attract commercial passenger service
- Create a defined area for industrial development

- Make necessary improvements to encourage commercial and industrial development in the defined area
- Provide convenient access from the Airport to County tourist destinations
- Plan for access to the Airport from I-69
- Keep new residential development away from the industrial area and the 75-decibel noise contours for the airfield; buffer existing residential uses as much as possible

7. Tourism

- Encourage compatible land use and development in the casino area by creating a special district in northern Tunica County
- Encourage continued improvements to casino facilities
- Continue to promote existing tourist facilities; coordinate with the Town of Tunica on tourism efforts
- Broaden the selection/availability of tourist activities in the County to increase the length of stay for visitors
- Explore opportunities to develop cultural tourism activities related to the blues music heritage, cotton, Mississippi River or Native American history of the County
- Improve directional signage to casinos and other tourist destinations in the County

8. Community Facilities

- Identify areas where new fire stations will be needed to serve residential areas and businesses
- Distribute community facilities where they are not drawing from the same population
- Build a convention center to expand the visitor base for the casinos and other tourist activities

9. Parks, Recreation and Open Space

- Develop the proposed Mississippi River Park
- Develop the proposed public golf course and tennis complex
- Explore other opportunities for activity along the riverfront
- Provide parks and recreational facilities throughout the County that will serve existing residents and be attractive to potential residents
- Require developers to dedicate parkland in new subdivisions
- Develop a Park Master Plan to guide the development of neighborhood and regional parks for current and future residents
- Designate areas on the wet side of the levee to allow RV parks and camping facilities

10. Public Schools

- Encourage citizens of the County to become more involved with the public school system
- Promote better communication and coordination between the School Board and other County agencies
- Plan for new schools in areas where residential growth is anticipated or where existing schools are near capacity

11. Public Safety

- Provide proper emergency response facilities at the Airport
- Identify areas of the County where new fire stations will be needed to serve future growth
- Implement the proposed reverse 911 system to warn citizens of emergency situations
- Implement lighting improvements and other safety measures in the North Subdivision
- Work with citizens to develop a plan of action to reduce crime and improve safety in existing neighborhoods

12. Environment & Natural Hazards

- Strengthen and enforce flood hazard regulations to protect people and property in flood-prone areas

- Collect more accurate data on the extent of flood-prone areas of the County
- Limit new development in flood hazard areas
- Continue implementation of the County drainage ordinance to minimize development impacts on downstream properties
- Continue County-wide drainage improvement projects to improve the protection of flood-prone areas during storm events
- Identify areas that could be used for area-wide detention and protect them from development as much as possible
- Discourage residential development on unsuitable soils and where possible protect prime agricultural land from conversion

13. Transportation

- Build consensus on a desired alignment of I-69 through Tunica County and show the desired route on the Future Land Use and Transportation Plans
- Limit development in the desired I-69 corridor to avoid conflicts when right-of-way acquisition and construction begin
- Identify areas within the County where roadway and intersection improvements are needed and develop an action plan for implementation

- Work to improve access between casinos and other tourist facilities
- Study the feasibility of a light rail system to link the Town and the Airport to the casino/resort area

14. Utilities

- Continue efforts to bring utility improvements to unserved areas of the County and make necessary repairs to existing infrastructure; prioritize delivery of service to areas with septic tanks on under-sized lots
- Determine and plan for infrastructure needs in areas where residential growth is expected
- Identify areas where infrastructure improvements could be made to encourage commercial or industrial growth

15. Aesthetics

- Form a committee of landowners, casino operators, County agencies and citizens to address sign issues in northern Tunica County
- Implement signage and entrance improvements to identify and promote Tunica County
- Develop a sense of arrival at entrance points to the County with signage, lighting and landscaping
- Develop appropriate sign regulations for the County
- Incorporate landscaping requirements into the regulations

- Provide lighting along Highway 61 in the casino area of the County
- Consider the development of design guidelines for the northern part of the County

C. Short Term Action Plan

This section identifies projects and activities to be undertaken in the first five (5) years of the planning period associated with the Comprehensive Plan.

1. Residential Development

- Update the 1996 Housing Study
- Evaluate existing housing programs in the County and work with housing providers to identify opportunities for housing partnerships

2. Agricultural Development

- Work with the USGS staff to identify areas with prime agricultural soils

3. Commercial Development

- Continue marketing efforts to attract major retailers (no additional cost—use existing staff and resources)

4. Industrial/Economic Development

- Continue efforts to recruit industrial users and diversify the economic base

5. Airport Area Development

- Construct a rail spur from the existing line near Highway 3 to the airport area
- Identify areas where buffering and noise protection for existing land uses will be needed

6. Tourism

- Complete construction of the River Park
- Complete construction of the golf course & tennis complex
- Complete construction of the convention center
- Initiate entrance signage and landscaping projects
- Improve directional signage to tourist destinations

7. Parks & Recreation

- Complete construction of the River Park
- Complete construction of the golf course & tennis complex
- Initiate improvements to existing neighborhood park facilities
- Implement parkland dedication requirements for new residential developments
- Develop a Master Parks Plan

8. Transportation

- Actively participate in any meetings regarding I-69
- Complete short-range roadway improvements identified on the Major Road Plan (see Chapter V)

9. Public Safety

- Work with the Highway Patrol to improve safety on Highway 61 in the casino area
- Implement the reverse 911 system county wide
- Initiate lighting improvements in the North Subdivision

10. Environment & Natural Hazards

- Continue to implement and enforce flood regulations and drainage ordinance
- Limit new development in flood hazard areas
- Initiate a study to determine suitable areas for area wide detention
- Initiate a County-wide flood study

11. Utilities

- Complete sewer improvement projects in Dundee, Hollywood, White Oak and the Cutoff
- Plan/budget for any needed infrastructure to the Airport area

12. Aesthetics

- Resolve issues related to reader board signage for the casinos
- Initiate entrance signage and landscaping projects
- Consider the development of design guidelines for the Resort Area (see Chapter V)
- Complete Highway 61 landscaping improvements
- Initiate Highway 61 lighting improvements

13. Public Schools

- Increase the level of communication and coordination with the School Board

More information on the timing and budget for the capital (construction) items on the list will be provided in Chapter VI (Community Facilities Plan) and Chapter VIII (Implementation Strategies).