

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

The intent of the Tunica County Comprehensive Plan is to serve as a guide for future growth and development. The implementation strategies are an important step to ensure that the recommended plans and projects are carried out in accordance with the goals and objectives of the community.

The Comprehensive Plan will be implemented primarily through the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is also important in terms of the timing and funding of projects.

A. Capital Improvements Program— Five-year Action Plan

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) represents an inventory and evaluation of the potential projects to be undertaken within the planning period and their priority. The CIP considers project relationships and financial requirements and selects the projects to be undertaken within a five-year period. The currently approved CIP and budget were included with the discussion of the Community Facilities Plan in Chapter VI.

B. Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance that was developed in conjunction with this Plan included general updating and the inclusion of recent zoning amendments. Sections were added where needed to deal with special issues such as adult businesses, wireless communications towers and flood hazard areas. It is

intended to regulate land use in accordance with community plans. Specific changes include the following:

- The agricultural zone was divided into two (2) zoning districts
- The range of uses allowed in agricultural districts was reduced
- A separate Casino zoning district was created; casinos were removed as an allowed use from the Preservation Recreation zoning district
- A Resort Area zoning district was created to promote tourism development in the northern County area through massing and the regulation of uses
- A Rural Residential zoning district was created to fit between the A-1 Agricultural district and the R-1 Low Density Residential district
- Adjusted locations of Highway Commercial zoning districts were proposed to limit conflicts with the Resort Area district

C. Subdivision Regulations

Changes to the Subdivision Regulations included the following:

- Definitions were updated, revised and coordinated with the Zoning Ordinance
- Provisions for the approval of Minor Subdivisions were added

- Provisions allowing administrative approvals were added
- Additional provisions pertaining to the naming of streets were added
- Additional provisions pertaining to curb cuts and driveways were added
- Language pertaining to the suitability of land was added
- The list of items required on plats was revised
- The section pertaining to access management was revised to encourage shared access and cross easements

D. Sign Regulations

Changes to the Sign Regulations included the following:

- Definitions were updated and revised to coordinate with the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations and other documents
- Ordinance language was simplified and clarified throughout the document
- Provisions to allow time and temperature signs were added
- Provisions for informational signs for churches and nonprofit organizations were added
- Provisions for “dual-fuel” businesses were added (more than one business in the same building with

no wall separation—usually a gasoline station and a fast food establishment)

- Special regulations for the Resort Area were added
- Provisions for electronic message boards for the casinos were added

E. Community Appearance Study

Community appearance includes entryways, streetscapes and attractive signage. A Community Appearance Study for Tunica County and the Town of Tunica was conducted by Dalhoff Thomas Daws in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan. Even though it stands as a separate document, the Community Appearance study has been an integral part of the process for the Comprehensive Plan, particularly for recommending future projects. Because of its importance to the Comprehensive Plan, the Community Appearance Study will be summarized in the following paragraphs. A copy of the study in its entirety is available from the Tunica County Planning Department.

Overall, the entrance points to the County are not well defined and would benefit greatly from landscape and signage improvements to improve the first impression of visitors, promote a sense of arrival and increase the level of interest in what the County has to offer.

The advantages of enhancing community appearance are many, including:

- ❖ Creating a sense of pride among citizens

- ❖ Creating an attractive “community home”
- ❖ Encouraging new business development
- ❖ Attracting prospective residents
- ❖ Increasing property values
- ❖ Visually unifying and defining major thoroughfares
- ❖ Promoting a sense of place
- ❖ Encouraging pedestrian circulation

Implementation of community appearance improvements can be accomplished through specific projects and changes to the regulatory system, as described below.

1. Enact and Enforce Ordinances

In the past, the aesthetic appearance of projects in Tunica County was given little thought and very few, if any requirements were placed on developers in terms of landscaping, site design or sign control. However, to truly improve the appearance of the community, provisions have to be placed in the system of subdivision and/or site plan review. Standards have to be consistently and fairly applied to every case, until community appearance becomes an integral part of the process. A higher aesthetic standard is possible for Tunica County and the benefits are immeasurable. The problem with implementing the new standards is that the results are not always readily apparent and the community needs reassurance that the stricter requirements will benefit them over the long term. Some of the specific areas where community appearance regulations should be enacted or improved are listed below.

- a. Landscape Requirements
 - b. Sign Regulations
 - c. Outdoor Lighting Standards
 - d. Architectural Guidelines
2. Establish Public Improvement Requirements (in commercial and higher density residential areas)

Though it is still very much a rural environment, certain areas of Tunica County (mainly where there are commercial or high density residential uses) would benefit from public improvements such as curb, gutter and sidewalks. These improvements would provide more definition to commercial properties. Open ditches can become unattractive and in some high visibility areas, curb and gutter would substantially improve the aesthetics.

3. Conduct Demonstration Projects

Numerous examples of demonstration projects were provided in the Community Appearance Study, including the following:

- ❖ Around U.S. Highway 61 at the northern Tunica County entrance
- ❖ Around U.S. Highway 304 at the eastern Tunica County entrance
- ❖ Beat Line Road east of U.S. Highway 61 (future route to/from the Airport)

The proposed treatments or improvements vary slightly in each location

but include a variety of landscaping, signage and lighting recommendations.

4. Develop a Public Information Campaign

A public information campaign would help to inform and involve citizens and property owners of the County about the issue of community appearance. Through a public information campaign, the County could work with existing businesses and properties toward voluntary compliance—encourage business owners to make improvements on their own even though they are not required.

Each of the tools discussed in the above paragraphs may be appropriate in a particular area of development. However, the recommendation of this Plan is to take a comprehensive approach in order to implement the broadest possible level of enhancements. Community enhancement is an evolving process that will take time, commitment, diligence and funding from all levels of government. The long-term benefits of an enhanced community will far outweigh the short-term sacrifices.

F. Other Implementation Measures

The recommendations in this section are more general things for the County to do to enhance the implementation and effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Conduct regular review and evaluation of policies and regula-

tions to determine if changes are needed.

- Development proposals and rezoning requests should be approved or disapproved by the Boards and Commissions in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan and accompanying regulations. Approval of such things as “spot” zoning requests or incompatible development should be discouraged.
- Approval of development proposals where proper infrastructure is not in place should be discouraged.
- Variances from the Ordinance should only be granted in cases of legitimate hardship
- Reasonable and proper enforcement of the regulations by County personnel should be encouraged. Development standards should be consistently and fairly applied to all applicants
- Public and private participation in the review, evaluation and implementation of the plan should be encouraged
- Allow the Town of Tunica to review rezoning and development cases in the vicinity of the Town limits