

2. LEWIS COUNTY 20-YEAR VISION

Introduction

A community vision statement is one of the first steps in preparing a Comprehensive Plan. The vision statement is the foundation for long-term goals, policies and land use patterns. A vision of the future enables community leaders to direct economic development, plan for housing, business centers and open space/parks, and provide adequate public services and capital facilities as growth occurs. Sticking to a vision often keeps decision-making focused on long-term needs rather than short-term gains which may contradict the long-range vision. A vision also can support quick decisions, the purchase of park land for example, that contribute to the long-term plan.

Through the development of a vision for Lewis County we look to the future and imagine how we want the county to be twenty years from now. As a result of the visioning process goals, objectives and policies have been developed that are intended to guide the community toward this vision. Reaching these goals and holding to the vision outlined in this plan will require commitment and resolve on the part of the governing bodies in the County, as well as its citizens.

Visioning Process

The county-wide vision was derived from citizen input obtained during two rounds of visioning workshops. The first round of workshops focused on brainstorming ideas about the future of Lewis County. The second round of workshops focused on the development of a 20-year vision statement. Each round of workshops was conducted in three locations on three separate days to provide increased opportunity for public participation.

The intent of the first round of visioning workshops was to:

1. Educate citizens about the comprehensive plan;
2. Focus on the 20-year vision by comprehensive plan element; and
3. Identify issues and opportunities by comprehensive plan element.

Participants were broken out into small groups to brainstorm about how they envision Lewis County twenty years from now. The discussion was organized to cover each of the elements of the comprehensive plan. Participants reflected on the following themes for each element:

1. Issues/opportunities,
2. What to change/what to keep the same; and
3. Strengths/weaknesses.

Participants then completed a companion survey designed to gauge each individual's opinion on a range of quality of life, land use, traffic, and facilities/services concerns. The results of this survey were tabulated and used to help develop a vision statement for each of the plan elements.

The intent of the second round of workshops was to:

1. Continue to educate citizens about the comprehensive plan; and
2. Review and comment on draft vision statement.

Participants were again broken out into small groups. Each group reviewed and commented on whether they supported the draft vision statement as is or would like to see it modified or completely changed.

The deliberation of each group was recorded and the results were assimilated into a revised draft vision statement. The revised drafts were reviewed and finalized by the joint Lewis County Planning Commission and the Comprehensive Plan Citizen's Committee during a public meeting.

Declaration of Customs, Culture and Economic Stability

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan visioning process, the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners adopted a Declaration of Customs, Culture and Economic Stability (Resolution No. 97-504) in September of 1997. This document, included as Appendix C, outlines the history, customs and culture of Lewis County which are an important part of the community vision.

Lewis County Vision Statement

It is the vision of Lewis County that over the next twenty years we will:

- Promote the rights of private property ownership. The right to obtain private property and enjoy its uses is priority one in Lewis County. Along with this right, is the responsibility to ensure that the individual activities of one property owner do not adversely affect another property owner's rights.
- Experience growth and change, but will remain a predominantly rural/resource land based county. Through implementation of the county-wide vision, growth will be planned for and guided. Growth will be encouraged in those areas which are supported by infrastructure and which minimize conflicting or incompatible land uses.
- Optimize our urban, rural and natural resource and open space areas. Development within these distinct areas of the county will respect and enhance these characteristics.
- Be an attractive, safe and desirable place to live and work.

Urban Growth Areas

- Lewis County will have well-defined urban areas. Urban areas include everything within urban growth boundaries, both incorporated and unincorporated. Urban areas will serve as centers of employment and services, and will be contained within the areas for which adequate urban level public facilities and services can be provided.

Rural Areas

- Rural areas will continue to provide residents of Lewis County with the quality rural lifestyle. Development within these areas will be of a character and density that is largely self sufficient. Within the rural areas, will be the opportunity for clustered and rural development, which preserves the overall rural character, but allows for more efficient use of land. Existing rural settlements will be preserved and enhanced as the continued centers of opportunity for a business and services in the rural areas.

Natural Resource Areas

- Lewis County will have well-managed natural resource areas that continue to provide opportunities for natural resource based industries, like agriculture and timber, into the future. Natural resource areas are also the focus of Lewis County's recreational and tourist activities. These activities are encouraged, but also well-managed with respect to the overall preservation of our important natural resources.
- Environmental and resource protection will be encouraged in order to preserve the quality environment enjoyed in Lewis County for future generations. The open lands, forests, river and stream corridors are essential resources which provide the fish and wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, scenic beauty, and aesthetic qualities that make Lewis County an attractive place to live.

Housing

- Lewis County will promote a wide range of safe, sanitary, affordable housing for its residents. Future generations will be able to find affordable housing and have the opportunity for home-ownership.
- Lewis County will strive to create the opportunity for both rural and urban living, with a variety of appropriate housing types.
- Rural areas will allow for a variety of residential types, (e.g. rural settlements to cluster developments to extremely low density self-sufficient settings). Housing in rural areas will be primarily single family, except in the rural village areas which traditionally provide a broader mix of land uses and services.
- Urban areas will accommodate a range of densities and housing types and will be the focus of most of the new higher density residential development.

Transportation

- Lewis County will be served by a multi-modal transportation system that allows for the safe, efficient flow of people, goods and services.
- Lewis County will have an integrated transportation system with coordinated construction and maintenance standards between local, county, state and federal governments.
- Centers of employment and residential development within Lewis County will be connected by convenient public transit service. Lewis County will plan for linkages to major metropolitan centers to the north and south.
- Opportunities for pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian trail networks will be encouraged.
- Alternative transportation modes will play an increasing role in the multi-modal transportation system, and land use around existing transportation hubs will consider future expansion of these services.

Capital Facilities and Utilities

- Growth must be supported by adequate public services. Service expansion will be carefully guided to those areas that will be the focus of development.
- The level of services provided to urban and rural areas will reflect the distinct differences in land use and development patterns. Technologies will be encouraged where they provide logical solutions to Lewis County's utility service needs.
- Lewis County residents will have access to adequate park lands and facilities.