

# **Northeast Planning District**

## **How Will The Northeast District Plan Be Used?**

The Northeast District Plan is intended to be a general guide to future development within the district. As the County reviews subdivision and rezoning requests, the plan will be used to help ensure that new development fits into the surrounding environment in a safe and efficient manner. The County will refer to the Plan when setting funding priorities for public projects and services. Property owners, developers and others may also use the plan when making decisions regarding investment in the Northeast District. Continued citizen input will be important during the implementation of the plan. Private investment and area initiatives to enhance or improve residential and commercial areas and to protect valuable environmental and agricultural assets will be essential to the implementation of the Northeast District Plan.

### **Northeast District Plan – Location**

**The Northeast District is defined as that portion of Henry County bounded by the North and East Highway Corridors and the borders of Washington, Louisa and Des Moines Counties.**

### **Northeast District Plan – Existing Conditions**

**The Northeast District is dominated by highly productive agricultural land. The incorporated town of Winfield and unincorporated Mt. Union lie in this District. New London has an influence on the southerly edge of this District.**

**Access to Highway 78 from population centers is by County paved and gravel roads. Other direct access points onto Highway 78 are agricultural and farm-related residential points, at a density of about one every half mile.**

**Non-farm Residential development is generally limited to incorporated Winfield and unincorporated Mount Union.**

**Outside those centers, there is minimal residential subdivision in the Northeast District.**

**Highway 78 and County roads serve the Northeast District. Commercial and industrial uses are concentrated at Winfield and Mount Union.**

## **Northeast District Plan - Planning Principles**

After examining existing conditions in the Northeast District and identifying what is currently consistent with the expressed vision of County residents and what needs improvement, a set of planning principles was generated to guide future development. Once adopted, future development in the Northeast District should conform to these principles. The Northeast District planning principles are intended to support and complement the goals and strategies of Henry County's Comprehensive Plan.

### **Residential**

Maintain and enhance existing housing while encouraging and facilitating new housing development that are in close proximity to existing municipal infrastructure, while insuring development patterns protect agricultural areas, and is affordable to people of all incomes and ages.

- Retain the low-density single-family character of rural residences not in close proximity to municipal infrastructure.
- Encourage clustered, conservation design housing development to preserve agricultural land and minimize traffic conflicts on the four lane expressways.
- Encourage open space as a component of residential development.
- Locate medium-density housing, including townhouses, condominiums, and apartments in areas with good access to municipal and commercial service.

Encourage the redevelopment, improvement or removal of housing that is not in good condition.

## **Commercial and Industrial Uses**

Enhance commercial diversity and activity by encouraging a business mix that provides goods and services that rely on regional transportation network when development is adjacent to the four lane expressways and provide for more local services at the secondary road level. Promote industrial development in or adjacent to municipal infrastructure sufficient to support the activity.

- Focus regional commercial activity along the four lane expressways at predetermined nodes along the highway corridors.
- Require developers to mitigate any negative impacts on surround traffic conditions.
- Commercial developments close to the borders of Henry County should be especially aware of their Gateway status in representing and promoting a positive image of the County.
- Encourage commercial and industrial site design that is sensitive to adjacent residential areas and promotes a positive image of Henry County to the traveling public.
- Discourage strip commercial development.
- Discourage rural industrial development.
- Require that all commercial development have direct access to County secondary roads or access by frontage roads.

Encourage commercial activities that provide local goods and services to locate on secondary roads and promote the use of paved roads to minimize conflict with agricultural operations and improve safety.

## **Transportation**

Improve the street system to increase safety and accessibility for all modes of transportation, including automobiles, transit vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

- Work with developers and Iowa DOT to upgrade existing intersections to address safety issues and proper accessibility for commercial and residential land uses.
- Develop safe and accessible commuter parking areas

- Encourage sidewalks and trails that will connect developments with nearby or planned pedestrian/bicycle networks within the district.
- Plan for possible interchange locations in the event that the expressways are improved to full interstate status.

Facilitate coordination between new development and the regional transit authority to explore possible enhancements to the transit system.

## **Parks and Open Space**

As residential development becomes more densely concentrated, explore the need for parks, trails, and open space to meet the future needs of area residents, with an emphasis on protecting and enhancing the District's unique natural areas.

- Protect sensitive environmental features.
- Enhance and develop more public space in unincorporated Mount Union.
- Create pedestrian/bicycle links from Highway District developments that are adjacent to municipal infrastructure of existing system.

Examine the use of an open space buffer between the four lane expressways and residential development.

## **Advertising**

Billboards and signs have a significant visual impact along highway corridors. Nearly all-existing commercial areas suitable for billboards have been utilized for this purpose.

- In the future billboards should continue to be clustered near the commercial nodes.
- Standards for size, placement, and in the case of onsite commercial signs development of a standard theme to enhance the visual impact and promote a common plan.

Examine existing billboards and signage for compatibility with newly developed standards.

## **Northeast District Plan – Land Use Scenarios**

The Northeast district is likely to remain agricultural with minimal residential development outside the incorporated cities of Winfield, and New London and the unincorporated city of Mount Union. Plans and projections for the City of New London are included in the Highway District Plan for the East corridor.

Preservation of highly productive agricultural land should be a priority when evaluating development activity in the Northeast District.

Paved intersections in the Northeast District are limited to the intersections of rural County roads with other County roads and State Highway 78. There are few sites that conform to the commercial node scenario. It is likely that existing commercial centers associated with incorporated and unincorporated cities will continue to be locations for commercial activity in the future. Industrial development will likely be in proximity to the City of New London where there is ready access to main transportation routes.

Proposed commercial development that does not fit the node scenario should be studied carefully and decisions made whether these should be allowed.

The majority of residential development is taking place in incorporated centers. This pattern should be encouraged to continue in the future.

### **Winfield**

Winfield is a small town, serving the rural population of the Northeast quadrant of the Northeast District. According to the US Census 2000, the population is composed of about 1,131 people. That figure represents a 6% increase since the 1990 Census.

There are about 468 dwelling units in town. The town features basic services such as gas stations, a grocery and a downtown business district.

It is likely that Winfield will continue to be a viable rural city in the Northeast District in the future. The relative distance to other town centers together with the active commercial base will likely continue to support the population and serve the rural farmsteads for the time scale of this Plan.

## **Mount Union (Unincorporated)**

Mount Union is a small population center on the eastern side of the Northeast District. Unincorporated Mount Union is served by County Roads H28 and Racine Ave. It once supported a small commercial Main Street. Today, Mount Union has a Post Office, a branch Bank and a volunteer Fire Department. There is a commercial grain elevator in town.

The population of Mount Union was 132 persons at the time of the 2000 Census. That figure represents a decline of 8% from 140 people counted in the 1990 Census.

It is likely that Mount Union will continue to be a residential settlement in the future. Because of the limited opportunity for employment nearby and rising transportation costs, Mount Union will likely see a stable but declining population in the future.

