

GOALS & POLICIES



08

This revised version of Chapter 08 supersedes and replaces the previous version in its entirety, as resolved by the Blount County Regional Planning Commission on February 26, 2026

The public engagement process identified four areas of focus for the residents of Blount County. These four topics represent shared ideas and concerns that came out of the survey, meetings and listening to public input. They are considered the Guiding Principles of the Comprehensive Plan: key ideas held in common by citizens that participated in the process. The following goals and policies of the Plan have been tagged to identify which Guiding Principle they address.



Environmental Stewardship



Affordable Housing



Rural Character



Balanced Growth

FUTURE LAND USE

Goals and Associated Policies	Timeframe			Capital Projects	Guiding Principles
	Short	Med	Long		
FLU GOAL 1: PRESERVE THE RURAL, SMALL-TOWN, AND NATURAL CHARACTER OF THE COUNTY					
FLU 1.1: The following Future Land Use categories, along with their intended uses, are described: a. Airport: The McGhee-Tyson Airport is recognized as a unique regional transportation resource. Airport operations are an integration of air traffic, governmental, military, commercial, and industrial uses. It is expected that the area of airport operations, including all uses directly connected to the runways and terminal, will develop as an integrated whole under semi-autonomous direction of the Airport Authority b. Commercial. The commercial within this category is intended to accommodate primarily a low and moderate intensity of commercial uses along arterial and collector roads. c. Industrial. This designation applies to the development of industrial areas primarily surrounding the airport.			✓		

d. National Park. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Foothills Parkway are unique regional resources under control of the National Park Service. It is expected that there will be no development in the usual sense of the term, and that the areas will be conserved or open for limited recreational purposes. f. Rural 1. Medium density residential development is expected to occur on land suitable for septic fields, which allows gross densities of 0.2 to 1.33 units per acre. Low density residential development is expected to occur on land with greater constraints to development. Only limited commercial activity is expected along arterial and collector status roads. g. Rural 2. This land use category identifies areas in the County where land development is highly constrained by natural factors and infrastructure, and where low-density development is expected. The majority of development in the area is expected to be residential at densities of no greater than 0.2 units per acre. h. Suburbanizing 1. The majority of development in the area is expected to be residential and agricultural. High density residential development is expected to occur on public sewer, which allows gross densities of greater than 3 units per acre. Medium density residential development is expected to occur on land suitable for septic fields, which allows gross densities of 1-1.5 units per acre.					
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i. Suburbanizing 2. The majority of development in the area is expected to be low to medium density residential, conservation, and agricultural. Low density residential development is expected to be 1-1.5 units per acre on land suitable for septic fields and 2-3 units per acre for property on public sewer.					
FLU 1.2 Encourage development and redevelopment that fits the small-town character, preserves natural and cultural resources, enhances quality of life, is consistent with the County's ability to provide adequate public services and infrastructure, and is consistent with adequate road and transportation service that will ensure reasonable commute times.			✓		   
FLU 1.3 Amend the County's development regulations relating to development in rural areas that emphasize the inclusion of natural features, trees and vegetation, open space, minimal environmental impact and subdivision entrances that contain open space treatments.		✓			  
FLU 1.4 Special attention should be given to ensure compatibility in transitional areas between land uses.			✓		

FLU 1.5 The zoning regulations should be reviewed to determine if adequate setbacks and buffers are required between uses and/or districts.	✓				
FLU 1.6 Promote a high-quality land development pattern by focusing growth in areas with existing infrastructure and available capacity.	✓				  
FLU 1.7 Review the County's regulations to identify conflicts between the regulations and the Comprehensive Plan.	✓				
FLU 1.8 Review the percentage of usable open space standard in subdivision regulations and zoning to determine if this is adequate.	✓				
FLU 1.9 Amend subdivision regulations and zoning to require retention of natural cover and minimize land disturbance during construction.	✓				

FLU 1.10 Focus new development into the Suburbanizing 1 land use category to avoid encroachment outside of the urban growth boundary.			✓		   
FLU GOAL 2: ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR PROGRAMS THAT DIRECTLY PRESERVE PRIORITY RURAL LAND IN THE COUNTY					
FLU 2.1 Farmland should be preserved both for open space and to conserve prime agricultural production areas.			✓		  
FLU 2.2 Evaluate creating a Farmland Preservation Plan with strategies for potentially modifying regulations to relax any restrictions on uses that will support agriculture as well as promoting Blount County as a place to farm. This may also include supporting agritourism and innovative food processing facilities.	✓			✓	 
FLU 2.3 Provide a land use pattern that protects farmland and directs growth to areas of existing or proposed infrastructure		✓			 
FLU 2.4 Evaluate the land development regulations to establish or enhance Conservation Easements, <u>greenbelts</u> , and other regulatory conservation actions.		✓			 

FLU 2.5 Encourage and support training programs for small and beginning farmers.	✓				
FLU 2.6 The County staff should stay current with rural preservation methods including rural preservation best practices in order to amend the County regulations as needed.			✓		
GOAL FLU 3 - PROTECT NATURAL, CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES, AND OPEN SPACE OF BLOUNT COUNTY.					
FLU 3.1. Survey and maintain a list of cultural & historic assets and coordinate the list with the Tennessee Historical Commission to ensure protection of resources.			✓		
FLU 3.2. The significant historical sites and buildings in the County should be preserved and protected as they contribute to the rural, small town, and natural character of the County.			✓		
FLU 3.3 Preserve scenic views and vistas throughout the County and consider the impacts of views when reviewing development applications.			✓		 

FLU 3.4 Modify the County's regulations where appropriate to ensure preservation of views and vistas.	✓				 
FLU 3.5 When considering development applications, the County should evaluate water quality impacts carefully and support design that is sensitive to the unique nature and landscape of Blount County.	✓				  
FLU 3.6 Adopted flood plain regulations should be maintained and enforced to continue participation in the National Flood Insurance Program that allows county residents opportunity to purchase flood insurance.	✓				 
GOAL FLU 4 - ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING WITH THE MUNICIPALITIES WITHIN THE COUNTY TO PROPERLY PLAN FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND POTENTIAL ANNEXATIONS.					
FLU 4.1. Build cooperative partnerships with local organizations, agencies and municipalities to achieve the goals and policies of the County's Plan.			✓		
FLU 4.2 Partner with the County School System to coordinate development to ensure school capacity is maintained.		✓			
FLU 4.3 Recognize the development in the municipalities and consider the impact large development projects may		✓			

have on the County. Update the projections in the comprehensive plan regularly as a result of these projects.					
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HOUSING

Goals and Associated Policies	Timeframe			Capital Projects	Guiding Principles
	Short	Med	Long		
GOAL H 1 – ENCOURAGE THE PROVISION OF A VARIETY OF HOUSING FOR ALL RESIDENTS TO ACCOMMODATE A RANGE OF AGES, LIFESTYLES AND INCOME LEVELS.					
H 1.1. Prioritize the preservation and enhancement of established neighborhoods while providing for housing stock to accommodate the needs of Blount County citizens.			✓		  
H 1.2. Encourage cooperation with utility providers to coordinate new water and sewer infrastructure with the demand for new housing.			✓		
H 1.3. Seek to eliminate substandard dwelling conditions through appropriate programs and regulations, and to encourage the maintenance and repair of the existing housing stock.	✓				 
H 1.4. Support the viability of older established neighborhoods to maintain an affordable housing stock.			✓		  

H 1.5 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).		✓			  
GOAL H 2 – SUPPORT HOUSING FOR ALL SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS WITHIN BLOUNT COUNTY.					
H 2.1 [DELETED]					
H 2.2 The County should encourage opportunities for providing workforce housing and affordable housing options in order to ensure that individuals from all socio-economic backgrounds have housing opportunities.		✓			
H 2.3 The County shall maintain consistency with Federal Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity requirements to the extent required by law.	✓				

H 2.4 The County shall periodically review the established policies and procedures, ordinances, land development regulations, and adopted local government comprehensive plans and their impact on the provision of affordable and workforce housing in the County. The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee would recommend specific actions or initiatives to encourage or facilitate affordable housing while protecting the ability of the property to appreciate value.	✓				 
H 2.5 The County shall continue to seek state and federal funding where infrastructure improvements are needed to support affordable residential development and enhance existing residential areas in need of infrastructure improvements as a way to preserve affordable neighborhoods.		✓			  
H 2.6 The County shall review and update, as needed, land development regulations to assure clear and concise land development regulations that minimize uncertainty and undue delay in approval of affordable development applications.			✓		

TRANSPORTATION

Goals and Associated Policies	Timeframe			Capital Projects	Guiding Principles
	Short	Med	Long		
GOAL T 1 - ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF WELL-DESIGNED STREETS THAT ARE SAFE, CONNECTED, AND ENSURE ADEQUATE THROUGHPUT.					
T 1.1. Encourage the provision of sidewalks or other pedestrian pathways to connect neighborhoods to businesses and connect businesses to each other where appropriate.		✓		✓	 
T 1.2. County roads should be improved when needed and maintained to a level consistent with present development and expected future development.			✓	✓	
T 1.3. Partner with the Knoxville TPO and East Tennessee South RPO to encourage and coordinate necessary infrastructure improvements.	✓			✓	 
T 1.4. Carefully manage access along major thoroughfares and road entranceways, to protect public safety and road function.	✓				 

T 1.5. Provide an adequate transportation system that supports new land development in the most appropriate places, keeps pace with the County's growth, decreases congestion, increases mobility for people and goods, and provides a network of interconnected streets, sidewalks, and greenways.			✓	✓	 
T 1.6. Evaluate new roadway projects for opportunities to achieve these goals and policies and support the future land use map.			✓	✓	 
T 1.7. Review the Thoroughfare Plan annually to determine if roadway classifications on the Plan should be modified.		✓			
GOAL T 2 - SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREENWAYS, TRAILS AND BICYCLE PATHS TO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION AND ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY.					
T 2.1. Encourage the connection of neighborhoods to parks, schools, and other community-oriented uses through a network of sidewalks, greenways, and trails.			✓	✓	 
T 2.2. Partner with the Knoxville TPO and East Tennessee South RPO to prioritize multimodal projects where appropriate.			✓		  

T 2.3. Actively participate in regional transportation discussions to coordinate projects and information about transportation initiatives for the County to be involved at a regional level.			✓		 
T 2.4. Pursue grant funding opportunities relating to greenway and trail development.		✓		✓	
T 2.5 Adopt subdivision regulations to allow sidewalks and/or greenways that interconnected with each other and the road system.		✓			 
T 2.6 Evaluate the need for a bicycle and pedestrian study to enhance non-vehicular, safe travel throughout the County.		✓			 

GOAL T 3 – REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION.

T 3.1. Consider the establishment of a coordinating committee or other body by which the municipalities and the County can work together to:

- A. Pursue funding opportunities for necessary transportation infrastructure in Blount County;
- B. Study, plan, and coordinate transportation infrastructure improvements to reduce congestion and decrease commute times for all Blount County residents;
- C. Track metrics with regard to traffic congestion, travel and commute times, and modes of transportation used.
- D. Work with Knoxville TPO and East Tennessee South RPO, and evaluate participation in each with regard to its effectiveness in advancing Blount County transportation priorities



T 3.2. Work to increase connectivity among the existing roads in the current road network to increase the number of alternate routes available to Blount County residents.



T 3.3. Establish a long-range capital plan (for Planning Commission and County Commission use) for new roads to be constructed over the next twenty to thirty years	✓				
T 3.4. Establish a plan to periodically conduct or commission a roadway needs study on a set schedule	✓				

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Goals and Associated Policies	Timeframe			Capital Projects	Guiding Principles
	Short	Med	Long		
GOAL I 1 - INVEST IN PUBLIC UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WILL IMPROVE EFFICIENCIES AND DIRECT GROWTH ACCORDING TO THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP.					
I 1.1. Coordinate with the Blount County School District to evaluate and update student generation rates resulting from new residential development. Revisit the school analysis included in the Comprehensive Plan annually.			✓		
I 1.2 Provide information to the Blount County School District when requested relating to building permits and development applications for the purpose of school planning.			✓	✓	
I 1.5. Encourage expansion of sewer service in the Suburbanizing 1 Category to support and direct development in this area rather than in other areas.	✓				 

RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

Goals and Associated Policies	Timeframe			Capital Projects	Guiding Principles
	Short	Med	Long		
GOAL R 1 - PRIORITIZE BLOUNT COUNTY’S NATURAL RESOURCES AND BEING THE GATEWAY TO THE SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK					
R 1.1 Ensure that new development does not obscure vital sightlines of the smoky mountains.			✓		  
R 1.2 Encourage environmentally sensitive design options that reduce energy usage and ensure that managers of County facilities consider the use of these same elements, if applicable.			✓		 
R 1.3 Work with regional agencies to promote regional efforts to preserve agricultural lands, biodiversity, natural habitat, forests, riparian zones, wetlands, scenic views, hillsides and waterways with a focus on connectivity. Consider pursuing a regional dark sky ordinance and urban forestry initiatives as part of this effort.			✓		  
R 1.4 Educate property owners on the benefits of resource protection and environmentally friendly behaviors.			✓		

GOAL R 2 - SEEK OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARKS AND TRAILS TO PROVIDE RECREATIONAL AMENITIES FOR THE RESIDENTS OF BLOUT COUNTY.					
R 2.1. Investigate grant funding opportunities for the acquisition and development of parks and open space.			✓	✓	
R 2.2. Prepare a parks and trails master plan to identify and address current deficiencies and potential locations for new recreation facilities and amenities throughout the County.			✓		
R 2.3. Encourage new subdivisions to provide connections to proposed greenways and trails.	✓				
R 2.4. Evaluate amending development regulations to offer incentives for new subdivisions to provide park and trail amenities within the neighborhood and require recreational facilities in larger and planned communities.	✓				

R 2.5. Encourage the development of residential conservation subdivisions where appropriate.					 
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CONSERVATION

Goals and Associated Policies	Timeframe			Capital Projects	Guiding Principles
	Short	Med	Long		
GOAL C 1 - PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND RESTORE NATURAL RESOURCES FOR THE BENEFIT AND ENJOYMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.					
C 1.1. Educate citizens on the importance of water quality protection.			✓		
C 1.2 Encourage developers to utilize development models to provide open space and avoid disturbance in environmentally sensitive areas.			✓		   
C 1.3. Bolster water quality protection and enhancement initiatives by coordinating growth management efforts with the County and surrounding municipalities through regional coordination.		✓			 
C 1.4. Consider revising existing development ordinances for strong and enforceable regulation that protects the community	✓				 

from excessive noise, light, and vibration by including requirements for adequate setbacks, buffers and dark-sky lighting in the appropriate zones.					
C 1.5. Support efforts to protect local farmland through development of new, diverse markets for local foods and produce, such as additional farmers' markets, grocery stores, community-supported agriculture programs, farm-to-institution programs, etc			✓		 
C 1.6. Ensure development design respects the area's environmental assets and resource base, including watershed protection areas, unique landscapes, and mature trees, especially where there is potential for greenway development.			✓		  
C 1.7. Coordinate with outside agencies to leverage conservation areas and nature preserves for passive recreation – seeking trails/facilities/amenities.		✓			  