

# VISION STATEMENTS and KEY VISION IDEAS

(that relate to agriculture, from any section of the existing Portage County Comprehensive Plan)

<b>AGRICULTURE</b> (Section 5.4)	<p><u>Portage County Rural Area Vision Statement Related to Agriculture</u> (Adopted 6-26-02 by the Portage County Comprehensive Plan Rural Area Steering Committee)</p> <p>In 2025, the agricultural industry in Portage County is healthy and thriving. Development has been directed away from productive agricultural land, giving farmers, both large and small, ample space and freedom to be productive and efficient. A variety of agricultural commodities are produced for direct sale in local markets and for marketing worldwide. Farmers value the environment with practices that are sustainable, using methods that protect air, soil, and water resources. Agriculture remains an integral part of the Portage County economy, providing enjoyable employment opportunities and livable wages for their employees.</p> <p><u>Key Vision Ideas for Agriculture</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farms, both large and small, are integral part of the local economy due to their direct link to retailers and consumers, and diversified offering of product.</li> <li>• Sustainable agriculture exists through sensible regulation and a partnership between farmers, their neighbors and local units of government.</li> <li>• The Agricultural industry in Portage County is strongly supported and the farm land that it relies on is protected from development.</li> <li>• Agricultural practices are environmentally sensitive, using practices that protect air, soil, and water resources.</li> </ul>
<b>OVERALL</b> (Section 1.6)	<p><u>Key Vision Ideas for Quality of Life</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural character is preserved through planned development in agricultural regions.</li> </ul>
<b>HOUSING</b> (Section 2.4)	<p><u>Key Visions Ideas for Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential growth in rural areas is limited to low-density, large lot single-family developments, where land is not suitable for agricultural, to ensure that rural landscapes and character are maintained.</li> </ul>
<b>ECONOMIC</b> (Section 6.8)	<p><u>Key Vision Ideas for Economic Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and support the role of agribusiness in the economy of our community.</li> </ul>
<b>LAND USE</b> (Section 8.4)	<p><u>Key Vision Ideas for Land Use</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural areas have planned residential developments that are buffered from agricultural uses, preserve open space, and are in areas less suitable for farming or forestry.</li> <li>• Development takes into consideration the protection of: groundwater recharge areas, air quality, agricultural land, forested lands, wetlands, surface water, and fragile habitats/ecosystems.</li> </ul>

# ISSUES and CONCLUSIONS & Potential Land Use Conflicts, Needs and Solutions

<b>AGRICULTURE</b> (Section 5.5)	<p>1. Agricultural-based industries and businesses are important to the existing and future County economy. At the same time the County’s rural residential population continues to increase, creating an increasing type and number of land use conflicts. <b>How can agriculture be protected from these conflicts?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>When future residential development occurs next to agricultural uses, new residential land owners should be made aware of the agricultural operations that take place and incorporate a buffer between residential and agricultural uses. Please see each individual Towns buffer requirements.</i></li> <li>• <i>Educational programs should be developed to inform landowners and town officials of the issues related to ag use/non-ag land use conflicts.</i></li> <li>• <i>Educational programs should be developed to inform landowners and town officials of the issues related to groundwater protection, particularly regarding nitrate and pesticide levels.</i></li> </ul> <p>2. Changes in the economics of agriculture have put great pressures on the need to produce income from the sale of land for non-agricultural purposes. <b>To what extent will local municipalities place a value on protection of productive agricultural lands?</b></p> <p>In many areas of Portage County, development potential is pressuring the agricultural potential. <b>How will those increased demands for residential use be weighed against the loss of productive farmlands?</b></p>
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<b>HOUSING</b> (Section 2.5)	<p>1. <b>How can conflicts between residential development and agricultural uses be mitigated?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A desired setback for residences, specified at either the Town or County level, could be added as a covenant to the parcel. This needs to be further reviewed. Please see the Agricultural, Natural, Cultural Resources Element of this Plan, as well as the individual Town Comprehensive Plans for further information.</i></li> </ul>
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<b>TRANSPORTATION</b> (Section 3.4)	<p>1. <b>How can damage to roads associated with any use that is non-standard</b> (heavy truck traffic, heavy farm equipment, snowmobiles etc.) <b>be reduced?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>This has been identified as a local issue but it could be a County issue if municipalities would require or want the County to facilitate the requirement of bonds through the Board of Adjustment. The County could monitor and ensure that the Towns are getting paid. There would be assistance from the County in obtaining a financial guarantee through the approval process.</i></li> </ul> <p>8. <b>Should consideration be given in the design of roadways to minimize impacts on agriculture?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Consideration should be given in the design of roadways, especially in consideration of new highways, to minimizing impacts on agriculture.</i></li> </ul>
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<b>LAND USE</b> (Section 8.3)	<p><u>Potential Land Use Conflicts, Needs, and Solutions</u></p> <p>A. <u>Potential Land Use Conflicts</u></p> <p>1. Conflicts between non-farm housing and agricultural uses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconveniences, such as aerial spraying, dust, noise, odors, etc. that come from agricultural operations and aren’t a threat to public health or safety, shall not be considered a nuisance.</li> </ul> <p>B. <u>Land Use Planning Needs</u></p> <p>3. Protect important farmland and farming activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelterbelt trees and other vegetation should be maintained and enhanced, and potential for wind erosion minimized. Use of Best Management Practices is encouraged.</li> </ul> <p>C. <u>Land Use Planning Opportunities</u></p> <p>8. Identification and preservation of good sites conducive to agri-processing industries as one means of helping realize the economic potential of the County’s significant vegetable growing resources.</p>
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# Guiding Goals and Policies

<b>AGRICULTURE</b> (Section 5.6)	<p><u>Guiding Principle for Agriculture:</u> Sustain an economically viable agricultural industry.</p> <p><u>Agriculture Preliminary Goals:</u> (adopted 10-23-02 by the Rural Area Steering Committee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The agricultural community is economically viable.</li> <li>• Agricultural practices are unencumbered by development.</li> <li>• Educate the public about the operations and activities of the agricultural community.</li> <li>• Develop a process where the general public shares in the cost of protecting agricultural resources.</li> <li>• Utilize agricultural practices that are environmentally sensitive and protect air, soil, water and wildlife resources.</li> <li>• Preserve productive agricultural land county-wide.</li> </ul>
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<b>OVERALL</b> (Section 1.7)	<p><u>Community Goals and Policies</u></p> <p>2. Ensure that newly developed areas are compatible with existing uses of land.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">B. Policies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Portage County should implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure the County remains a desirable place to live and work, to encourage the development of balanced agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and recreational land use patterns and to provide areas adequate for future growth.</li> <li>4. Portage County should establish cooperative land use control procedures in conjunction with incorporated community governments to ensure harmonious development beyond the corporate limits of the communities.</li> </ol>
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<b>ECONOMIC</b> (Section 6.10)	<p><u>Economic Development Preliminary Goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and preserve productive agricultural land Countywide.</li> </ul>
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<b>COOPERATION</b> (Section 7.6)	<p><u>Intergovernmental Cooperation Preliminary Goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve productive agricultural land Countywide.</li> </ul>
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<b>LAND USE</b> (Section 8.5)	<p><u>Portage County “Overall Development” Goals</u></p> <p>B. <u>Overall Policies for Development Issues of Countywide Importance</u></p> <p><u>6. Important Farmlands.</u> Good farmland is an irreplaceable natural resource having long-term value locally, nationally, and internationally. Economic and political factors combined with weather patterns and increasing population can be expected to increase the need for good farmland on a long-term basis. It is, therefore, a policy of this Comprehensive Plan to support the preservation of the County’s important farmland, and the protection of these lands capable of conversion to good farmland, all consistent with other land use policies and plans, and other growth needs identified in this Plan. It is acknowledged that some existing and potentially good farmland lies in the path of needed and logical non-agricultural growth, but the loss of such land should be kept to a minimum.</p>
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# **General County-Wide Land Use Goals**

## **Agriculture Goals and Policies (Section 8.6.B)**

**GOAL 1:** Preserve productive agricultural land in Portage County.

- a. Identify existing productive farmland and potentially productive farmland and encourage agricultural and related uses on these lands.
- b. Utilize land use planning to ensure preservation of valuable farmland.
- c. Discourage the division or conversion of valuable farmland for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes.
- d. Support large, contiguous blocks of farmland as a desirable land use pattern.
- e. Recognize for preservation, farmlands which have previously been identified for exclusive agricultural use through land use planning programs at the Town, Village, and County levels.

**GOAL 2:** Maintain a viable agricultural economy in the County.

- a. Support the continuation of a diversified agricultural base throughout the County.
- b. Encourage agri-business and agri-industry which support area farming and provide local jobs.
- c. Allow for the expansion of the agricultural sector and related growth of agri-business and agri-industry.

**GOAL 3:** Avoid conflicts between agricultural land uses and nonagricultural uses such as nonfarm housing.

- a. Discourage the location of non-farm land uses directly adjacent to agricultural lands.
- b. Protect farm operations from the encroachment of incompatible land uses such as housing, which may hamper agricultural production due to nuisance and health related problems, or resulting legal actions.
- c. Utilize appropriate planning procedures within areas of urban expansion to anticipate future development and reduce conflicts arising from adjacent land uses.

**GOAL 4:** Encourage sound soil conservation practices.

- a. Encourage the use of Best Management Practices, and support the Resources Conservation Program recommended in the “Land and Water Resources management Plan” of the Portage County Land Conservation Department.
- b. Encourage conservation practices in agriculture and forestry which minimize soil loss and help assure the long term productivity of those soils.
- c. Encourage the retention and development of windbreaks in the sand plain.

**GOAL 5:** Better utilize the opportunities afforded by rural villages to accommodate certain commercial, industrial, and residential developments.

- a. Recognize the advantages of the orderly growth of high density residential developments within a rural village.
- b. Support the efficient extension of appropriate infrastructure into area identified for planned growth and development.
- c. Identify institutional, recreational, and cultural facilities that are supported primarily by rural villages while being utilized by the community at large.

**GOAL 6:** Protect the quality and quantity of the surface and groundwater resources of Portage County.

- a. Support efforts to identify point and non-point source pollution of surface and groundwater associated with agricultural activities.
- b. Recognize the potential for groundwater contamination due to agricultural practices, particularly irrigated agriculture, as well as nonfarm activities, and stress the need for continuing education and study of this problem.
- c. Maintain the County’s natural surface and groundwater supplies at levels consistent with agricultural needs.

**GOAL 7:** Conserve significant environmental, cultural, and historic areas and resources, consistent with agricultural needs.

- a. Identify unique or valuable environmental areas for preservation, including wildlife habitat, wetlands and shoreland areas.
- b. Favor the preservation of adequate open spaces for recreational purposes.

**GOAL 8:** Encourage orderly, planned urban growth which is consistent with the efficient use of tax dollars.

- a. Encourage infill and expansion of existing urban population centers and lands identified as “transition areas” in this Plan, to avoid “leapfrog” type development into surrounding agricultural areas.
- b. Allow for public facilities and services in a cost and energy efficient manner, consistent with federal, State, and Local public facility plans.
- c. Maintain an adequate supply of land for residential, commercial, industrial, and infrastructural needs.

**GOAL 9:** Encourage public participation and citizen input in the development of this Plan.

- a. Initiate public participation in the planning process amongst farmers, local officials, and other citizens.