

Chapter Five: Goals, Objectives, and Policy Guidelines

This section of the Comprehensive Plan establishes the City of Litchfield’s goals, objectives and policy guidelines. They will be used to help make land use and planning decisions by everyone responsible for Litchfield’s future. The goals have been organized into eight topic areas. The goals are used as a framework for the objectives and policy guidelines. The policies, in turn, provide specific information on what values and issues are important to Litchfield’s residents. More importantly, the objectives and policies clearly identify how decisions should be made by Litchfield’s officials on a day-to-day basis.

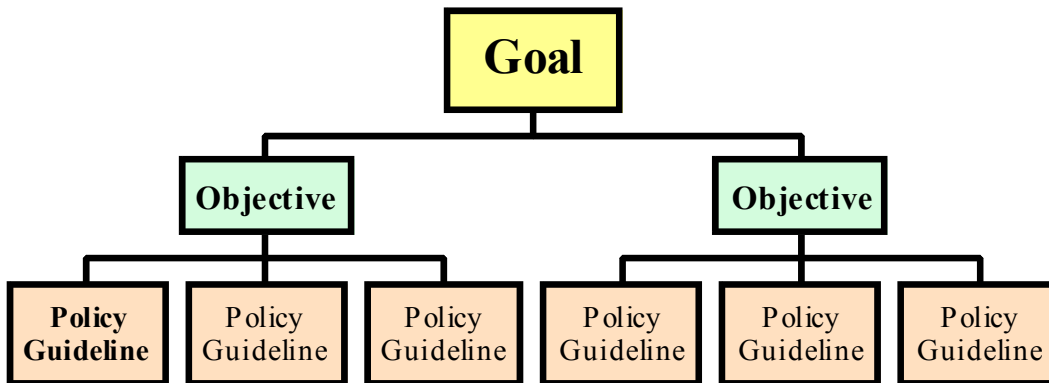
Throughout the Comprehensive Plan, goals, objectives, and policy guidelines are defined in the following way (also see Figure 5A):

Goal: This is an idealistic statement intended to be attained at some undetermined future date. Goals are purposefully general in presentation.

Objective: Objectives are action-oriented and can be measured if a date, dollar amount, etc., is clearly identified. Objective statements always begin with an action verb and there may be more than one for each goal.

Policy Guideline: These statements support the action of the objective. The statements are recommendations qualified by the word “should”. Policy guidelines can also be converted into action work plans.

**Figure 5A:
Goal, Objectives,
and Policy Guidelines Hierarchy**



Goal One: Citizen Participation and Intergovernmental Cooperation

To promote cooperation among citizens, governmental units, and agencies to work toward the most efficient, cost-effective, and successful delivery of services.

Objective A: Keep the public advised of important planning issues and events.

Policy 1: A Planning Commission should be used to advise the governing body on issues of growth and development.

Policy 2: Radio, television, newspaper, and internet should be used to explain issues of community importance.

Policy 3: The Council should provide a “State of the City” report annually highlighting the accomplishments of the past year while laying out the goals for the upcoming year.

Objective B: Appoint special committees, task forces and use open forums to address specific problems, issues and opportunities.

Policy 1: Task forces should be given specific tasks with clear expectations and time limits.

Policy 2: Task force members should be selected based on expertise, credibility, and their ability to be objective.

Objective C: Meet with adjacent units of government and governmental agencies as needed.

Policy 1: Meetings should be held as needed with adjacent units of government and governmental agencies to discuss important planning issues and to determine what opportunities exist to cooperate.

Policy 2: The city should encourage input from adjacent units of government and governmental agencies on major land use decisions.

Policy 3: The City and School District should work cooperatively on addressing key planning issues.

Policy 4: Ordinances should be cooperatively developed and consistently applied between neighboring units of government.

Goal Two: Economic Development

To create sustainable economic development strategies that retain, enhance, and create economic opportunities throughout the city.

Objective A: Encourage suitable expansion, continuation, and development of business to protect and enhance the city's economy.

Policy 1: The City should identify current and future business needs for inclusion in the State of the City report.

Policy 2: Redevelopment and renovation of existing commercial and industrial properties should be emphasized.

Policy 3: Recruitment of new business and industry should take into consideration the size, type, wage, jobs, utility demand, and compatibility with existing land use and natural resources.

Policy 4: Attempts should be made to attract business and industry that would complement the services and products produced by existing businesses.

Policy 5: The use of the Litchfield Municipal Airport should be promoted.

Objective B: Promote a favorable image of the City as a place to develop business and industry.

Policy 1: Networking and partnerships should continue between county, regional, and State economic development agencies.

Policy 2: Financing tools such as tax increment financing, revolving loan funds, and State and Federal programs should be considered for businesses and made available, when possible.

Policy 3: The City should utilize an updated community profile which can be used to encourage new growth and development.

Objective C: Promote economic development that will be beneficial to the community, including safe access, adequate parking, and enhanced aesthetics.

Policy 1: Industrial and commercial land uses shall be located in areas where the adverse impact on surrounding land uses is minimized.

- Policy 2:** Encourage commercial property owners to maintain and upgrade their existing buildings and land through proven design standards and maintenance ordinances.
- Policy 3:** Vacant properties should meet proper property maintenance standards.
- Policy 4:** The impact on parking should be examined prior to making land use decisions.
- Policy 5:** Industrial sites should have proper access to utilities and transportation routes.
- Policy 6:** Business should not create an adverse impact on the environment.
- Policy 7:** Environmental concerns should be mitigated.
- Policy 8:** Promote green space and outdoor amenities by incorporating them into commercial and industrial development plans.
- Policy 9:** Expand and promote tourism opportunities throughout the greater Litchfield area, including the use of our extensive trails, lakes, and parks.

Goal Three: Natural Resources

To protect, preserve, and enhance the area's natural resources.

Objective A: Create and support reasonable regulations that adequately protect and enhance the area's natural resources.

- Policy 1:** The City should work proactively to preserve natural resources throughout the area.
- Policy 2:** The city should promote and properly implement its Wellhead Protection Plan.
- Policy 3:** Development should not be encouraged near wetlands, flood plains, and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Policy 4:** Litchfield's Shoreland Ordinance should be periodically reviewed and updated.
- Policy 5:** Ground water quality should be closely monitored with Minnesota Department of Public Health.

- Policy 6:** Promote water management policies and programs to enhance the quantity and quality of key water resources in the community.
- Policy 7:** Wastewater treatment facilities should have sufficient reserve capacity to adequately treat domestic and industrial waste.
- Policy 8:** Point and non-point pollution sources should be identified and abated.
- Policy 9:** Use natural resource information, including soils data, as a basis for determining the direction of future expansion of the City and for public open space acquisition programs.
- Policy 10:** New and existing developments should be encouraged to plant trees and other natural amenities where appropriate.
- Policy 11:** Stormwater and erosion management should be required and closely monitored.

Objective B: Support providing open space and recreational opportunities.

- Policy 1:** Recreational opportunities should be provided to fulfill the needs of all residents of the City.
- Policy 2:** Areas best suited for future parks, open space, and trails should be identified and preserved.
- Policy 3:** Open space and recreational facilities should be periodically evaluated, maintained, enhanced, and developed.
- Policy 4:** Park and recreational facilities designed to serve newly developing areas should be required.
- Policy 5:** Walking and bike trails should be developed and/or enhanced for transportation, recreational and safety purposes. The City's Trails Plan should be implemented (2008).
- Policy 6:** The City should meet with local organizations periodically to discuss tourism issues and strategies.
- Policy 7:** Efforts should be made to monitor and improve the recreational opportunities provided by Lake Ripley.
- Policy 8:** The City should work with Meeker County, townships, and the DNR on obtaining grants for parks, trails, and recreational sites.

Goal Four: Housing

An adequate supply of affordable life-cycle housing for people of all ages and incomes should be available.

Objective A: Establish and ensure an adequate and affordable housing supply that provides a convenient, safe, and aesthetically appealing living environment for all residents.

Policy 1: An adequate supply of housing in a wide range of prices, types, and locations should be encouraged.

Policy 2: The character of residential neighborhoods should be preserved.

Policy 3: Housing developments should be constructed so they are compatible with existing land use.

Policy 4: Establish and maintain development standards that support land use development while protecting adjacent property values and people's quality of life.

Policy 5: Zoning and subdivision ordinances and building code regulations should be enforced and updated as needed.

Policy 6: Nuisance ordinances should be regularly reviewed, updated if needed, and consistently enforced.

Policy 7: Adopt measures to help ensure that property owners provide the highest quality of living quarters for renters.

Policy 8: The Meeker County Housing and Redevelopment Authority and Federal and State housing agencies should be consulted on key housing issues and programs.

Objective B: Promote continued cooperation between the public and private sector.

Policy 1: An adequate supply of suitable land appropriately zoned for development should be identified.

Policy 2: Existing public facilities, services, and infrastructure should be used to guide development.

Policy 3: New approaches for development should be encouraged by incorporating them into subdivisions and other land use regulations.

Policy 4: Ensure that housing meets all applicable code requirements.

Policy 5: Identify and properly remove dilapidated and/or public nuisance properties. All costs incurred should be absorbed by the existing or future property owner unless public assistance is available.

Objective C: Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of existing housing stock.

Policy 1: Rehabilitation and preservation should be primary considerations with condemnation being used only as a last resort.

Policy 2: Property assessment and taxation policies should be designed to minimize negative effects on rehabilitation efforts.

Policy 3: The City should promote rehabilitation, code enforcement, and public investment programs in quality older housing.

Policy 4: The City should encourage the reuse of existing properties by adjoining landowners.

Goal Five: Transportation

To provide and preserve a balanced mix of transportation options that safely and efficiently move people and goods.

Objective A: Achieve a balanced transportation system that encompasses highway, street, air, transit, and rail systems that economically move people and products safely and efficiently.

Policy 1: Develop a transportation plan that properly balances considerations of safety, cost, accessibility, and environmental protection.

Policy 2: Develop a functional classification system that meets State guidelines and designates each street to its proper level of service.

Policy 3: The planning and implementation of the transportation system should meet the City's social and economic needs.

Policy 4: Accessibility should be improved through the construction or improvement of key links in the roadway and trail systems.

Policy 5: Ride-sharing programs and public transportation should be promoted.

- Policy 6:** The needs of the children, elderly, and handicapped should be of primary consideration in transportation planning.
- Policy 7:** Encouragement should be given for the use of bicycles and other energy effective means of transportation to reduce roadway traffic, increase energy efficiency, and promote improved air quality.
- Policy 8:** Programs or projects with the potential for reducing damage to highways and streets caused by frequent heavy loads should be encouraged and supported.
- Policy 9:** Programs or projects designed to lessen highway and street congestion should be considered.
- Policy 10:** Implement traffic mitigation measures to minimize pedestrian and vehicle traffic conflicts.
- Policy 11:** Highway and street improvements should include consideration for walkways, paths, lighting, and beautification.
- Policy 12:** Cooperation between Litchfield, MnDOT, and Meeker County should be encouraged to provide programs or projects designed to improve highway and street safety.
- Policy 13:** Safety improvements and physical maintenance should be supported at railroad crossings where the improvements are warranted.
- Policy 14:** Work with MnDOT and Meeker County on reviewing and establishing the Litchfield Transportation Plan.
- Policy 15:** Work with MnDOT on identifying a safe truck bypass or alternative route around the City.

Objective B: Develop and implement access management guidelines to protect the integrity of the designed roadway system.

- Policy 1:** Work with MnDOT and Meeker County on developing reasonable and safe access management provisions.
- Policy 2:** Land use guidelines, zoning ordinances and subdivision ordinances should be amended to include access management standards for sight distance, spacing of curbs, and geometric design for entrance ways and driveways.
- Policy 3:** All new developments should mitigate impacts directly related to new access.

Objective C: Invest strategically in transportation infrastructure to enhance the City.

- Policy 1:*** Develop a transportation system that stimulates economic development and provides for the efficient flow of goods.
- Policy 2:*** Priority should be given to improvement and maintenance of the existing transportation system.
- Policy 3:*** Current and planned right-of-ways for transportation system improvements should be identified and preserved.
- Policy 4:*** The City should work with area townships, cities, Meeker County, and MnDOT to plan for an orderly transportation system.
- Policy 5:*** Transportation services should be developed that are consistent with local land use plans as well as with other development plans.
- Policy 6:*** A transportation system should be provided that encourages employment growth, economic productivity, and fosters economic competitiveness.
- Policy 7:*** Public and private partnerships in transportation investments should be encouraged.
- Policy 8:*** Growth around the Litchfield Municipal Airport should be compatible and should allow for the future expansion.
- Policy 9:*** Programs or projects that meet the airport needs of the community should be encouraged and supported.

Objective D: Develop a financially responsible transportation plan that best allocates available resources.

- Policy 1:*** Create a roadway management system with a consistently updated comprehensive inventory of highways, streets, alleys, and bridges to assist in the prioritization of projects.
- Policy 2:*** A multi-year road improvement plan should be created as part of a capital improvement program to include maintenance, safety upgrading, paving, and reconstruction work prioritized by year, along with costs and methods of financing.
- Policy 3:*** Current and future land uses should be examined to ensure the carrying capacity of nearby roads are not exceeded.
- Policy 4:*** The location of commercial and industrial development should be encouraged in areas that avoid through traffic in residential areas.

Goal Six: Land Use Planning

To establish a community-based land use process that recognizes that we have the responsibility and tools to shape good land use decisions, while setting clear guidelines and treating people fairly.

Objective A: Encourage a balanced and compatible use of land consistent with natural features and socio-economic factors.

Policy 1: The Council and Planning Commission should periodically update and adopt a Comprehensive Plan to establish a framework within which governmental, public, and private interests can effectively follow established policies.

Policy 2: Control land use development at intersections to avoid compromising the safety, accessibility, and function of the streets involved.

Policy 3: Efficient and orderly municipal growth and development should be encouraged.

Policy 4: The City should identify urban growth boundaries in cooperation with Meeker County and the surrounding townships.

Policy 5: Orderly annexation should be pursued in conformance with current and future land use plans.

Policy 6: Meeker County and adjoining townships should be consulted on mutual land use issues.

Policy 7: Regulations for nuisances and pollutants should be closely monitored and enforced in an effort to provide for a safe, pleasant and healthy living environment for all residents.

Policy 8: Subdivisions that tie into existing public services should be encouraged.

Policy 9: Work with the adjacent townships and Meeker County on addressing sewer and water concerns.

Policy 10: Wetland areas and natural corridors should be preserved for ground water recharge, surface water conservation, recreation, and wildlife.

Objective B: Create a comprehensive and accurate Geographic Information System (GIS) database for Litchfield to assist in land use decisions.

- Policy 1:** The City of Litchfield should maintain a comprehensive GIS database, including parcel information and a variety of useful maps.
- Policy 2:** The City's current land use, zoning, and urban growth boundary maps should be regularly updated in the GIS database.
- Policy 3:** The City should cooperate with Meeker County on creating and sharing GIS data, including Meeker County's parcel map database.

Goal Seven: Public Investments

To account for the full environmental, social, and economic costs of public investments while making the best use of existing infrastructure to minimize costs.

Objective A: Provide basic infrastructure and services without creating any substantial economic or environmental problems.

- Policy 1:** The condition and capacity of the sanitary sewer, storm sewer, water supply, water treatment facilities, telecommunication services, and local roads and streets should be periodically analyzed to determine public investment needs.
- Policy 2:** The City should support upgrading and extending telecommunication services throughout the City in order to enhance its competitive stance for social and economic development.

Objective B: Conduct capital improvements programming and budgeting to achieve desired types and levels of public facilities and services.

- Policy 1:** Plans for proposed new, upgraded or expanded services and facilities should be coordinated with applicable units of government and agencies.
- Policy 2:** A capital improvements plan analyzing short- and long-term needs should be updated periodically.

Goal Eight: Sense of Community

To continue and enhance being a safe place to live, with strong social and cultural bonds throughout the greater Litchfield community.

Objective A: Network with local, state, and national agencies to promote a healthy environment for the citizens of Litchfield.

- Policy 1:** Work with Meeker County Public Health to address issues with disease outbreaks, epidemics, and natural disaster issues.
- Policy 2:** Address state emergency preparedness issues.
- Policy 3:** Review FEMA plan for natural disasters as needed (to decrease the time it would take to redo it if there was a natural disaster that incapacitates us).
- Policy 4:** Maintain an awareness and relationship with American Red Cross and Salvation Army.
- Policy 5:** Continue to participate with Meeker County on developing and implementing an All Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Objective B: Maintain and expand quality of life issues in the Litchfield community.

- Policy 1:** Maintain Central park in its natural state.
- Policy 2:** Maintain and expand the GAR Hall and other historical buildings in the community when appropriate.



*The GAR Hall in Litchfield, Minnesota
For more info, visit www.garminnesota.org*

- Policy 3:*** Maintain and expand the Litchfield Public Library when appropriate.
- Policy 4:*** Work with the regional library system board for library services.
- Policy 5:*** Work with the Watercade Board to promote and provide support for the Litchfield's summer festival.
- Policy 6:*** Work with Litchfield Golf Club to provide for and expand, when appropriate, the Litchfield Golf Course.
- Policy 7:*** Development and redevelopment should be encouraged to add to the beauty and historic character of Litchfield.
- Policy 8:*** All public and private structures should be kept in a safe and non-hazardous condition.
- Policy 9:*** Land and structures that possess scenic, historic, or archaeological significance should be recognized, expanded and/or preserved if feasible.

Objective C: Network with local, state, and national agencies that provide for the enforcement of illegal drug activities.

- Policy 1:*** Implement ordinances to enable stricter controls on illegal activities.
- Policy 2:*** Adjust law enforcement staff to address drug use and trafficking.
- Policy 3:*** Provide training for law enforcement, fire department, and rescue squad related to illegal drug activity.
- Policy 4:*** Provide equipment and/or secure co-operative agreements for adequate protection for EMS staff.
- Policy 5:*** Network with groups that provide drug prevention strategies and activities.

Objective D: Provide facilities and equipment to support City EMS staff, law enforcement, and volunteers.

- Policy 1:*** Conduct an annual fire, EMS, and law enforcement facility and equipment needs assessment.
- Policy 2:*** Work with Meeker County and adjoining townships on equipment needs.
- Policy 3:*** Work with Meeker County to prevent duplication of services and to expand services when necessary.

Policy 4: Work with state agencies to provide training and resources for law enforcement and EMS.

Policy 5: Help ensure that law enforcement has all the proper means to monitor and deal with illegal activities.