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R E S O L U T I O N # 9 4 - 5

Resolution for Approval and Adoption

of the

Divide County Comprehensive Plan

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Divide County have appointed the Divide County Planning and Zoning Commission and charged said Planning and Zoning Commission to prepare a comprehensive plan, pursuant to Chapter 11-33 of the North Dakota Century Code, and

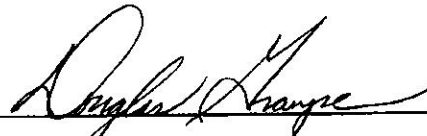
WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Divide County desire a framework with goals and objectives to help guide the decisions affecting the future growth and development of the county, and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission has worked with various local township, city and other county officials in the development of such a framework identifying goals and objectives and strategies for future development into a document known as the Divide County Comprehensive Plan, and

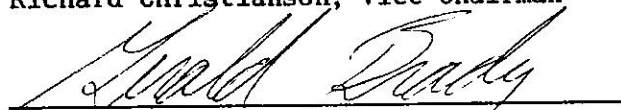
WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners will use the Comprehensive Plan to guide public and private development within its control, so

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Divide County Board of Commissioners hereby approves and adopts the text of the Divide County Comprehensive Plan and accompanying County Existing Land Use Map to be known as the Divide County Comprehensive Plan to serve as a guide for future development in the County.


BY ORDER OF THE Board of Divide County Commissioners this 1st day of November, 1994.



Douglas Graupe, Chairman


Richard Christianson, Vice Chairman
Gerald Brady, Commissioner

ATTEST:


Laila Pederson, County Auditor

**DIVIDE COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Adopted by

**DIVIDE COUNTY BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

November 1, 1994

Divide County Comprehensive Plan

prepared by

Divide County Planning and Zoning Commission

Doug Graupe, Crosby, Chairperson

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and

Audrey Boe Olsen, Fortuna

Planning Consultant

and recommended to

Divide County Board of County Commissioners

Gerald Brady

Richard Christianson

Doug Graupe

adopted by the Divide County Board of County Commissioners

November 1, 1994

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PURPOSE

The Divide County Comprehensive Plan has been prepared by the Divide County Planning and Zoning Commission in accordance with provisions of Chapter 11-33 of the North Dakota Century Code and reflects the values and desires of the residents of this county. The Comprehensive Plan is a statement of public policy concerning future land use, transportation, and public facilities.

The Plan establishes goals, objectives, and strategies to guide future development in the County. It is to be used by the elected and appointed officials of Divide County when they are making decisions affecting land use, transportation, and public facility development. These decisions include land use regulation such as zoning, road construction and maintenance, and provisions for other public services. No part of this plan shall be construed as prohibiting or restricting the use of any lands or buildings for farming purposes.

INTRODUCTION

This is not the first planning effort for the County. In March of 1976, county officials prepared and adopted the Divide County Overall Economic Development Plan. While the focus of that document was economic development, sections of the plan discussed various land use, transportation and public facilities issues. In 1977 a General Plan for the City of Crosby and Divide County was prepared and adopted by the Divide County - City of Crosby Joint Planning Commission. That document was a broad policy plan that covered such elements as agriculture, the natural environment, circulation and transportation, land use in the City of Crosby, economic development, housing, community services, education as well as health and safety. The sections that related to the City of Crosby were updated and revised in 1985. The sections relating to the rural activities in the County had not been updated and the Joint Planning Commission became inactive.

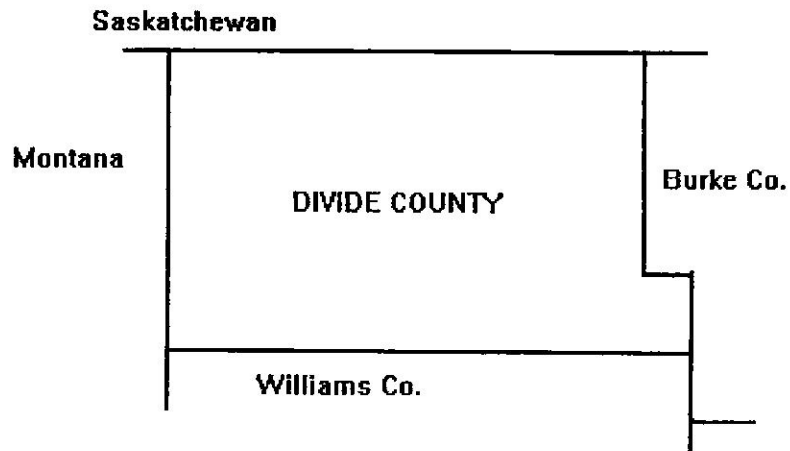
The current County Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed these documents and in this Comprehensive Plan the Commission has updated the conditions found in the county and reflected the changes in goals and objectives for the County.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Location:

Divide County has an area of approximately 1,300 square miles and is located in extreme northwestern North Dakota. It is bordered on the north by Saskatchewan, Canada; Montana on the west; Burke County on the east; and the south by Williams County. Prior to North Dakota's statehood Divide was part of Williams County. In 1910 citizens of the area voted to divide this large county into two parts. The northern portion of the area became Divide County. Crosby was chosen as the county seat in 1912. See Figure 1 for the county's location.

Figure 1



Geographic Characteristics:

Divide County is characterized by its rolling topography and lies within two major geographic provinces. The larger part, about 1,000 square miles in the southern and western part of the county are within the glaciated area of the Missouri Plateau. This area is characterized by large tracts of steep-sided hills and depressions commonly referred to as sloughs or prairie potholes. The northeastern part of the county lies within the Drift Prairie section of the Souris River drainage basin. Drainage in the Drift Prairie generally is toward Long Creek, the largest waterway in the county.

Maximum topographic relief in the area exceeds 550 feet. The highest elevation is more than 2,400 feet and found in two locations, one on the summit of a hill in Daneville Township (section 12, T161-R102) and the second in the southeastern edge of the county in Border Township (section 25, T 161-R95). While the lowest area is about 1,840 feet in the Long Creek channel where the creek leaves Divide County into Saskatchewan north of Noonan.

Historical Snapshot:

The first settlers and homesteaders to the area arrived in the early 1900's, with the eastern two-thirds of the county dotted with homestead claim shacks by the winter of 1903-04. Prior to this time the area was traversed by Assiniboine Indians in their annual summer buffalo hunts and French-Canadian fur traders who traveled through the area from Canada to the Fort Union Trading Post at the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. This earlier civilization is evident by scattered occupation sites and teepee rings found located around the county. Evidence of even earlier occupants of a somewhat higher culture is found in the famed Writing Rock, now a state historic site, in the western part of the county.

Agriculture has been the predominant land use of the county since settlement. The original native vegetation in the county as mixed prairie grasses. These grasses remain in areas that are grazed or pastured. Few native trees existed. In areas of high water table, scattered small stands of aspen, willow and cottonwood can be found. Trees around farmsteads and in shelterbelts have been planted. Native shrubs, including wolfberry (buckbrush), prairie wildrose, the western wildrose, and buffalo berry, as well as low cactus and dwarf sagebrush can also be found throughout the county.

Climate:

The climate of the area is continental and semi-arid, characterized by long cold winters and short warm summers. January is the coldest month of the year when temperatures are often below zero degrees Fahrenheit. About 75 percent of the precipitation falls during the growing season (average of 110-120 days) from late April through September. The summers usually are warm with maximum daily temperatures generally ranging from 78 to 84 degrees Fahrenheit, although temperatures exceeding 90 degrees F. are not uncommon.

Population:

In 1920 the population of the county was 9,637, the largest ever recorded. More recently, since 1970 the population has seen a decline of 36.48% from 4,564 residents in 1970 to 2,899 in 1990. Part of the decline during this time period was the closure of the United States Air Force Radar Station west of Fortuna. The North Dakota Census Data Center estimated the population for the county in 1992 at 2,662, indicating a continuing decline (see Table 1.) This decline has occurred in the rural areas as well as in the cities and towns of the county. The population density of the county in 1970 was 3.5 persons per square mile, in 1980 it was 2.7, and in 1990 it was 2.2.

Table 1
DIVIDE COUNTY POPULATION

<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1992*</u>
6,015	9,637	9,636	7,086	5,967	5,566	4,564	3,494	2,899	2,662

Source: US Census Bureau reports & *ND Census Data Center estimates.

The median age of the population of the county is increasing. The median age of county residents in 1970 was 33.0 compared to 26.4, the median age of all North Dakotans. In 1990 the median age of the county was 43.9, significantly higher than 32.4, the median age of all state residents. In 1993 the Divide County School District completed their most recent five year pre-school census. This census, while not covering the entire county, recorded 97 children ages 0-4. This low pre-school census, when combined with decreasing enrollments at the elementary and high schools operated by the Divide County School District (see Table 2), are additional indications of out-migration.

Table 2
DIVIDE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENTS
1974 - 1984 - 1994

	<u>1973-74</u>	<u>1983-84</u>	<u>1993-94</u>
Enrollment in the schools of the District	872*	509	464

Note: * 1973-74 enrollment was grades 1-12, for the remaining years enrollment figures were for grades K-12.

Source: Divide County School District Office and Divide County Supt. of Schools, August 1994.

Out-migration effects are seen in the county as the population grows older and the younger population leaves the area mainly for urban settings. The combination of declining and aging population will have a serious impact on future public facilities and community services provided by the local governmental entities, be it county, city, townships or school district.

Population projections from the Agricultural Economics Department of North Dakota State University completed in 1992 indicate a continued decline in Divide County for the next twenty years. With the continued out-migration, low birth rate and few job opportunities, these projections could prove accurate. With an aggressive attitude for a diversified economy and increased job opportunities in the northwest region the county and the area could become more competitive and contradict these severe population projections. See Table 3.

Table 3
PROJECTED POPULATION

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	% Change 1990-2000
Divide	2,899	2,698	2,489	2,294	2,122	-14.1%

Source: Department of Agricultural Economics, NDSU, Fargo, 1992. North Dakota Demographic Projection Model.

Unemployment in the county is low. Since 1980 the county's unemployment figures have been below 3.5%. Many residents however are under-employed, or those that have the skills or education for a more advanced position but the county and area lack the job opportunities. The unemployment statistics do not reflect those individuals holding down more than one job to supplement their income. Some farmers have taken on a side-line agricultural related business as a means to supplement their farm income. This situation has resulted in some commercial sector activities taking place on property that was formerly strictly dedicated to production agriculture.

LAND USE

Divide County's land use is predominantly agricultural with a few scattered commercial activities around the county. These various non-agricultural land uses, that existed at the time of the Plan preparation, are shown on the accompanying Existing Land Use Map. All of the non-farm rural residences have not been shown on the map. This map indicated the general location of the non-agricultural land uses and is not meant to be a specific acreage siting. It is intended to show land use relationships.

Properties included on the map may be generally know or may have been identified by the County Director of Tax Equalization from assessment records. The map does not show the location of all underground or buried cables, electrical lines or pipelines. The County Register of Deeds office maintains a quick reference card file on all the townships giving locations of buried cables, lines and pipeline. This card index should be used as reference with the Existing Land Use Map.

Agriculture:

Since homesteading days the predominant land use in the county has been production agriculture. Production of cash grain and livestock, along with the businesses directly relating to these activities, such as grain marketing, fertilizer sales and farm supplies, are the prime economic activities in the county. There is no full scale farm implement dealer located in the

county at this time. Most of the agri-businesses are located within the four incorporated communities, however a handful of farmers conduct agri-businesses from their farms around the county. These include commercial aerial crop sprayers, commercial grain cleaners, feed and equipment sales and distribution, and farm machinery repair.

Cash grain crops of spring wheat and durum, as well as livestock production, are the principal sources of farm income. Production agriculture is dependent upon fluctuations in the weather conditions and market prices. With the area experiencing a dry cycle in the 1980's the number of farms decreased in the county. Agricultural diversification has taken place in the area. Some farmers are raising alternative crops such as dry peas, lentils, canola, and sunflowers. In 1993 Quality Pork Cooperative, a commercial hog farrowing operation to provide weaner pigs to area farmers for feeding and finishing, opened it's facility. This has resulted in a number of farmers diversifying their operations to include hog production.

Since the introduction of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), enacted by Congress in 1985, over 97,700 acres of Divide County's agricultural land has been set-aside from active crop production. This represents approximately 13.3% of the land in the county in the CRP program. Eligibility requirements of the CRP program included highly erodible or light soil types that must have grass vegetative cover for a period of 10 years. A side benefit from the increased acres of grass cover in the county has been an increase in game bird and waterfowl production. This has caused an increase in interest in the area by outside hunters, bringing tourism dollars into the area during the fall months. Within a the next two year period the first acres enrolled in the program will be released from present set-aside controls, and it is not know whether these acres will return to production agricultural use or if they will remain in grass.

In 1992 the U.S. Soil Conservation Service completed a detailed soil survey for Divide County. While the field work for this county-wide soil identification and mapping is complete, the final written report and published maps are expected to be released in 1995. As part of the soil survey the SCS defines prime farmlands as "land that is best suited for production of food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and also available for these uses. The land could presently be used as cropland, pasture land, range land, forest land or other land, but not urban built-up land or water. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops economically when treated and managed, including water management, according to modern farming methods." Protection of any identified prime farmlands in the county should be considered when considering future development plans.

Commercial Land Uses

Commercial activities in the County are, for the most part, related to the oil industry or agriculture. Those other land uses will be briefly described. Three U.S. Ports of Entry are located at the international border crossings on state or federal highways north of Noonan, Ambrose, and Fortuna. Recently a duty-free store opened on U.S. Highway 85 near the Port of Entry north of Fortuna. Another new commercial venture, a convenience store with gas

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pumps and liquor establishment opened in 1992 at the highway junction of US 85 and ND 5 in Gooseneck Township. Several rural bed and breakfast facilities have been developed in the past year and a half; and there are a scattering of "hunter" cabins that are leased as temporary housing during the fall hunting season. Most of the hunter cabins are located on old abandoned farmsteads on maintained county or township roads.

The U.S. Air Force maintained a Radar Station west of Fortuna in Elkhorn Township for a period of approximately 28 years. This facility opened in 1951 and reached peak occupancy of 270 servicemen plus dependents in 1969. The main site was closed in 1979, and the entire facility was shut down in 1983. Many of the structures and infra-structure remain on site in a deteriorating condition. The federal government has completed asbestos removal from the site, however no alternative use for the facilities has been identified.

A gas plant and salt water treatment facility are located in Ambrose Township in the north central portion of the County. Intra-county oil or gas pipelines connect several of the oil fields to the gas plant and are shown on the map.

The largest agricultural related commercial facility is the Quality Pork Cooperative, a commercial hog farrowing operation located south of ND 5 in Blooming Valley Township. This facility became operational in 1993. Other agricultural related commercial activities are shown on the map. Agricultural feedlots or concentrated livestock feeding operations are also listed due to concerns for water quality protection and compatibility with neighboring land uses. Feedlots and concentrated feeding operations are regulated by the Water Quality Division of the North Dakota State Department of Health and Consolidated Laboratories under the Water Pollution Control Act of 1967. Rural commercial air strips are also shown on the map.

Mineral Resources:

Petroleum: Mineral production in Divide County at the present time is limited to crude oil and natural gas recovery with oil production occurring in both the northwestern corner and the eastern one third of the county. Oil production in the county began in 1956. Since that time seismo-graphic exploration, leasing for oil mineral rights, and drilling of new wells has been rather cyclic. Over the past four years the county and it's political subdivisions has seen a decline in the oil and gas revenue received, indicating that cyclic nature of development and production.

Table 4

OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION TAX Received by Divide County 1985 - 1995

1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994*	1995*
\$376,251	228,252	283,820	165,195	294,808	354,817	342,885	309,762	260,627	180,000	180,000

Note: These figures do not reflect the tax payments received by the municipalities or school districts in the county.

* estimated revenue used by Board of County Commission for budgeting purposes.

Source: Divide County Auditor's files, August 1994.

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The North Dakota Geological Survey records thirty one separate oil fields as having produced or currently producing oil or gas in the county as of June 30, 1994. This data includes estimates of oil and gas reserves, however, Survey staff will not say what length of time those reserves might remain. Therefore, it is important for the County to guide oil and gas development in an orderly fashion to extend the life of the reserves into the future.

While the oil and gas industry is regulated at the state level by the Oil and Gas Division of the State Industrial Commission, there is concern about having adequate information at the county level to guide compatible land use and energy development. In the past there have been problems with seismographic exploration where drill holes have not been filled properly or where shallow water veins have been disturbed or opened. County and township roads in parts of the county have extensive oil truck traffic which causes additional maintenance concerns for the public entities. More recently with the advent of oil transport pipelines and the concept of salt water pipelines for oil recovery, pipeline placement and it's relationship to neighboring land use and future development is an issue. Local officials are also concerned about the potential for production of hazardous waste and hazardous gases from the producing oil and gas wells. Therefore, it is important for the county to guide oil and gas development in an orderly fashion that is compatible with existing land uses.

Lignite Coal: Since homesteading days small amounts of lignite coal were mined in the county. The North Dakota Geological Survey maintains records on available lignite resources which indicate much of the western one-third of the county is underlain with coal reserves. This is in addition to the known coal resources in the eastern portion of the county. Over the past four years there has been some renewed interest in the county's coal reserves with limited coal test wells drilled. The exact depth and extent of these reserves is uncertain since exploration records are proprietary information of the company holding the mineral rights.

The largest commercial mining operation was located directly east of Noonan. The Baukol-Noonan Coal Company, the last operating mining company in the county, ended their operations near Noonan in the early 1960's, moving their active mining operation east into Burke County. Lignite reserves remain underlying the northeastern part of the county, and active lignite mining remains directly north across the border into Saskatchewan, south of Estevan, just 16 miles north of Noonan. The lignite mined north of the border - directly north of Noonan - is used to fire two electrical generating plants operated by Sask. Power at the Boundary Dam Power Station. While this is a major industrial facility, the North Dakota State Department of Health and Consolidated Laboratories, Environmental Engineering Division, does not maintain any air quality monitoring stations in Divide or neighboring Burke County on this coal fired electrical generating plant nor does it have data on air quality monitoring that may be conducted by the province of Saskatchewan.

Future development of the lignite reserves of the county is questionable at this time, since current use of lignite in North Dakota is for mine-mouth coal fired electrical generation. Without significant water resources for used in cooling at these generating stations, Divide

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County is at a disadvantage for mine-mouthed coal production. The Energy and Environmental Research Center at the University of North Dakota continues to conduct research on uses of lignite coal, therefore, limited coal production still remains a future opportunity for the county. Much like the oil and gas reserves, orderly development of coal reserves that is compatible with existing land uses is encouraged.

During the early strip mining period in North Dakota the state did not require full reclamation of mined lands as is now regulated by the Public Service Commission. Most of the strip mined areas of Divide County remain in an un-reclaimed coal spoil piles state. In 1976 the Northwest Solid Waste Management Council opened a sanitary landfill in a portion of the un-reclaimed coal spoils and operated that facility until regulatory changes forced it's closure in mid-1994. In the 1980's the North Dakota Game and Fish Department obtained 1,425 acres of the old coal spoils from the Baukol-Noonan Coal Company for wildlife habitat, which included the area around the landfill site. More recently the City of Noonan has purchased 160 acres that included the old landfill site for continued waste management activities, which will be discussed further in a later section of this plan. Most of the old coal spoils have not been reclaimed and serve strictly as unimproved wildlife habitat. The Baukol Noonan trout dam will be discussed in the section of water resources.

Gravel: Sand and gravel production is the third largest mineral industry in North Dakota. Most of the gravel in Divide County is glacial in origin, which means it tends to contain carbonate and shale, making it less desirable as aggregate. Gravel deposits are more prevalent in the western areas of the county, and very sparse in the eastern area. The area directly east of Crosby, north to the Canadian border in Fillmore township, also contains some gravel deposits. Finding good quality gravel to meet road maintenance needs could be an issue for the County Road Department and the townships in the future.

Potash: Potash in the form of the mineral sylvite is found interbedded with sodium chloride underlying the county in the Prairie Formation of the rocks of the Devonian age. Depth to the formations containing this mineral is approximately 9,000 feet in northern Divide County. The solution method is the only feasible method of mining potash at depths at which it exists in this area. Wells would need to be drilled and constructed, with casing and tubing, down into the potash formation. This would allow water to be pumped into the wells and the potash dissolved into a brine for recirculation back to the surface where the potash would be separated and processed. Presently there is no commercial potash production in North Dakota. At least one Saskatchewan company is mining potash, where the depth of overburden is shallower than the reserves in the county, and has used the rail service at Northgate, in neighboring Burke County, for loading of unit trains to ship this mineral. Little is known about the amount of the reserves of potash at this time.

Sodium: Salts in the form of sodium chloride and sodium sulfate also exist in Divide County. Sodium chloride has been mined by the solution method at Williston in neighboring Williams County. the mines at Williston were reportedly the deepest salt mines in world, according to

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the North Dakota Geological Survey's Report of Investigation #62, prepared in 1977. Sodium sulfate, or Glauber's salt occurs as lake deposits in extreme western Divide County from the Canadian border south to the Grenora area in northwestern Williams County. The ND Geological Survey estimated reserves of Glauber's salts in the two counties, in the above referenced Report of Investigation #62, at 19,502,000 short tons. There is no production of sodium sulfate in the area, however, the material is used extensively in the kraft paper industry, the making of glass, detergents, paints, textiles, medicines and a variety of chemical processes.

Again, like oil and gas reserves or lignite development, orderly development of these minerals that takes into consideration the existing land uses of the area is encouraged.

Water Resources:

Ground water resources supply all of the domestic and most of the livestock demands of the county. Protection of the ground water resources in the county is vital for future generations. Divide County supports the efforts of the North Dakota State Department of Health and Consolidated Laboratories in their efforts to establish standards of quality for waters of the state, particularly the new ground water quality standards.

Ground water resources in Divide County are primarily derived from glacial drift and alluvial aquifers with some water production from the uppermost members of the Tongue River, Fox Hills, and Hell Cree Formations of the Cretaceous System of bedrock aquifers. The most productive aquifers consist of buried sand and gravel deposits in the ancestral Yellowstone River channel that extends northeastward across the county near the central part. Test drilling and other data from the State Water Commission and the North Dakota Geological Survey indicate that individual well yields of more than 500 gallons per minute are obtainable in places from these deposits.

Wells in the Skjermo Lake aquifer in the northwestern part of the county can also provide yield of more than 250 gallons per minutes. This appears to be associated with a buried pre-glacial channel of the Missouri River. Water in the Skjermo Lake aquifer generally is of better quality than that in most of the other glacial drift aquifers of the county. Irrigation practices are used in the western portions of the county where the waters of the Skjermo Lake aquifer and the soil types are suitable for this type of agriculture. The buried sand and gravel deposits in the ancestral Missouri River channel in the western part of the county extend southward to include the Grenora aquifer. The West Wildrose aquifer in the southern part of the county is probably hydraulically connected to the Little Muddy aquifer, an extension of the Yellowstone River valley range. Both aquifers in the southern part of the county can have wells that having varying yields.

The water from the glacial drift aquifers ranges greatly in quality and production capacity. Generally the water is very hard and of a calcium bicarbonate type. Water in the Tongue River, Fox Hills and Hell Creek Formations consists of two types: a soft sodium bicarbonate

water, and a hard, sodium sulfate water. Generally the Tongue River Formation water is too saline for human consumption or irrigation.

Many farms have problems finding quality water for domestic and livestock use, resulting in the need by a number of county residents to haul water to their farms and rural residences. Writing Rock Rural Water Users was formed in the early 1970's to address the issue of delivery of quality water to rural residents, however the feasibility of such a system was cost prohibitive at that time.

Water quality has been an issue for the communities in the county also. Crosby constructed a water treatment plant that provides iron and manganese removal in the 1960's to provide a better quality water to residents. This plant, while being well maintained and operated, will need to be renovated or replaced in the future if the city continues their own water supply and treatment facility. Crosby's water quality meets all the primary drinking water standards but exceeds the secondary maximum contaminant levels for total dissolved solids and sodium. Noonan and Fortuna's community systems use only chlorination for treatment at the present time. Fortuna's water quality, while meeting primary drinking water standards, exceeds secondary maximum contaminant levels for total dissolved solids, manganese, sulfates and sodium. Noonan's water quality also exceeds some secondary maximum contaminant levels for total dissolved solids, fluoride and sodium. Ambrose does not have a community water system. Having sufficient quantities of quality water continues to be an issue for the cities and rural residents of the county.

Divide County has been included in the study area for the State Water Commission's Northwest Area Water Supply (NAWS) program. Each of the three cities with public water systems have indicated an interest in connecting to the NAWS supply line when it might be available. Action to create a separate governing authority for NAWS is expected in the 1995 Legislative Session. Rural residents might still be able to obtain quality water and be served by a rural water system in the future as part of the NAWS system.

Divide County is underlain by the various deeper bedrock aquifers which is too saline for any human or animal consumption. Since the expansion of the oil industry in the county in the late 1970's and 1980's the deep water aquifers underlying the county are being used as source water for secondary recovery in oil and gas production and salt water disposal. The Oil and Gas Division of the North Dakota Industrial Commission has regulatory authority over the oil industry and the use of water from these formations for these purposes.

Protection of the water resources of the county is vital. Surface and ground water supplies are tied in the hydrologic cycle. Surface activities and some land uses may cause ground water pollution. This might include improperly located septic tanks and drain fields, chemical spills, underground storage tanks, improper disposal of used motor oil, exploration wells or other improper development. Another source of ground water pollution is abandoned or improperly constructed wells that can form direct conduits to an aquifer. Abandoned wells that need proper closure are an issue in the county with the number of vacant farmsteads scattered around the county.

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Recreation:

Surface water resources of the county include Long Creek, a tributary of the Souris River that flows into the county from Canada in Blooming Prairie Township northwest of Crosby and exists the County in Mentor Township north of Noonan. Skjermo Lake in Elkhorn Township and the Baukol Noonan Trout Pond east of Noonan are the only two recreational bodies of water in the county. The Divide County Park Board maintains the recreational facilities at Skjermo Lake while the Noonan Sportsman's Club maintains the Trout Pond in conjunction with North Dakota State Game and Fish Commission.

Recreational fishing has been limited on Long Creek dependent on weather conditions and water flows from Canada. While both Skjermo Lake and the Trout Pond provide year round recreational fishing opportunities, the lakes and fisheries need improved management by State Game and Fish. This might include aeration devices to prevent winter-kill in years with heavy snow cover and stocking of additional species of fish for an improved fishery.

Writing Rock State Historic Site in Section 7 of Writing Rock Township and Section 12 of Daneville Township was established in 1938 and is maintained by the County Park Board in conjunction with the North Dakota State Historical Society. The park gets its name from a large gray granite boulder, known as the Writing Rock, found at the site. This stone, together with a smaller stone, found approximately 150 feet southwest of the main rock, contain ancient petroglyph engravings. In 1956 a native stone shelter was constructed over the rock to protect it from the elements and vandals. The smaller rock was moved to the University of North Dakota for study for a number of years, but is now relocated in the shelter at the park. Exact origins of the engravings have not been determined, although the rocks have been studied by researchers from the Smithsonian Institution and various universities. Picnic shelters, primitive camping, playground equipment, and comfort stations are available at the site for visitor use. Although the site has a rather remote location, it does receive frequent use during the summer months. With additional promotion by the State Historical Society and an improved access road this site could become a more significant tourist attraction for the entire northwest area of the state.

The Divide County Historical Society and Museum maintains Pioneer Village on the outskirts of Crosby. Numerous historic buildings from around the county have been moved onto the Village site and are being maintained. For twenty five years the County Historical Society has hosted an annual threshing show on the third weekend of July when all of the buildings and museum are open together with a large collection of antique tractors and automobiles on display or in actual use for old time threshing demonstrations. This annual celebration has been a major tourist attraction for the entire county as well as an opportunity to preserve the area's prairie heritage.

Environmental Management & Protection:

Solid Waste Management

The Northwest Solid Waste Management Association's (NSWMA) sanitary landfill in the Baukol Noonan coal spoils, discussed earlier in the Plan, was operational until September 1994. The City of Noonan has recently purchased 160 acres, which includes the sanitary landfill, for use as a permitted inert landfill for the community. The acres previously used for disposal of municipal solid waste are being covered and capped to meet state regulations. A portion of the city's acreage is being leased to a private operator for a regional solid waste transfer station to serve Divide, Burke and northern Williams counties. Another portion of the acreage will be the location of a scrap metal recycling yard, also leased to a private scrap operator.

Prior to the creation of the Northwest Solid Waste Management Association's landfill in 1977 each of the four cities maintained their own open dump grounds relatively close to the community. Each of these dump grounds ceased receiving municipal solid waste by 1980. Crosby continued to maintain a portion of their old dump ground site as an inert landfill for burnable wood waste, demolition materials and rubble until 1993, when the entire site was closed and covered. The State Department of Health and Consolidated Laboratories established landfill closure requirements in 1976 that required the covering of the open dumps at the three smaller communities, however there was no follow-up to see that these sites were landscaped, covered and seeded for vegetative growth.

The State Water Commission and the State Geological Survey have recently completed a ground water assessment and background monitoring program at the NSWMA landfill. This was conducted as part of a statewide assessment of all sanitary landfills mandated by the State Legislature in 1991. The reason for discontinuing use of the municipal solid waste landfill near Noonan was a water quality concern with small lignite coal seams, which are water bearing structures, in close proximity to the working face of the landfill. To undertake a complete hydrogeologic evaluation of the site would have been cost prohibitive for the rural communities it served.

With the closure of the regional landfill near Noonan, the former operator of the site is planning the development of a municipal waste transfer station. This facility would serve the communities of Burke and Divide county to consolidate waste for the transport to a landfill outside of the two counties. Development of this facility is encouraged to consider the impact on the county highway system and any increased traffic patterns or traffic loads it might generate.

Solid waste disposal and the landfiling of waste has been the predominant waste management technique used in the county. In 1993 a group of interested citizens organized a recycling drop off program for the four cities. Fish Salvage, a local firm, provided collection of the recyclable materials until early spring 1994 when the Crosby site was closed. Community

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volunteers in Ambrose and Fortuna are continuing to man drop-off recycling locations and to provide private transportation of materials to larger recycling programs in Williston or Minot. Resident interest in recycling continues, however none of the local governing bodies have determined that recycling is a community or public service requiring public support or financing at this time.

The City of Noonan has been working with Fish Salvage to relocate his recycling and scrap metal processing facility to a location near the municipal solid waste transfer station in the old coal spoils. At present this business maintains a salvage yard outside of the Noonan city limits, north of ND Highway 5. This salvage yard is not screened or fenced and detracts from the visual access that the community is trying to promote with its new 17.4 acre tree planting directly south of Highway 5 along the city's access road to Main Street.

Chemical Waste Management

Almost all agricultural, commercial or industrial activities produce waste. Responsible waste handling and disposal is of concern for the county, be it in the agricultural sector, energy development or a rural business operator. The oil industry is regulated by the Oil and Gas Division of the State Industrial Commission, however periodic complaints of improper waste management at exploration sites is reported to local officials. Site and water contamination are of major concern in these incidents.

Farm operators have alternative disposal and recycling opportunities for agricultural chemicals and chemical containers through programs conducted by the North Dakota State Department of Agriculture. The 1991 Legislature passed legislation that created the Environmental and Rangeland Protection Fund, which increased the annual registration fees for pesticides used in the state. These fees fund a program called Project Safe-Send for disposal of un-usable pesticides. The county office of the Cooperative Extension Service acts as the local contact for pre-registration forms and collection site information. County farmers are encouraged to participate in this no-cost program that provides safe disposal of old farm chemicals. Another program available from the Department of Agriculture is the pesticide container recycling program. One of the farm chemical companies provides a shredder at site locations around the state for triple-rinsed plastic pesticide containers. Again, this is a safe alternative to open burning or burying of these bulking containers.

Historical and Culturally Sensitive Areas

The only major inventory of cultural, historic or paleontological resources conducted in the county was done in 1938 as part of a federally supported Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. Records at the ND State Historical Society list the sites inventoried at that time as well as other more recent listings. In total, only 292 cultural or historic sites are listed for Divide County on the state inventory. To some readers of the Plan this will seem like a large number, however it is relatively small when considering the overall state inventory of over 40,000 sites. The National Historic Preservation Act now required federal agencies or

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others undertaking development with federal dollars, or on federal lands, to conduct a historical and cultural resource inventory before a project can commence. Over time this will allow for limited sites to be added to the county's inventory.

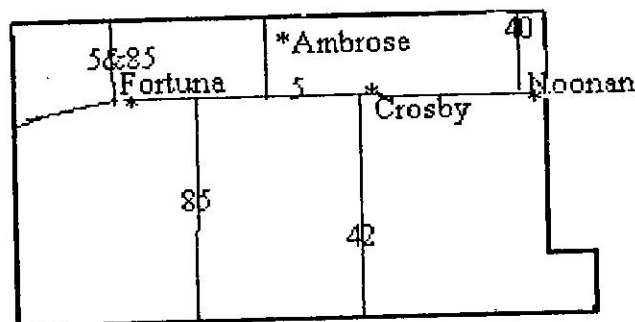
There are areas of the county that remain in their natural state of native prairie grasses, other wild vegetation, or wetlands. These undisturbed acres have a high probability of containing areas or properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Historic sites can also be found in cultivated acres, where the main occupation site can be located below the plow zone. Identification and documentation of additional historic, cultural and paleontological resources or properties in the county should be undertaken. The significance of Writing Rock and the importance of this area to ancient cultures is unknown; however additional study into the county's pre-history may prove to be a valuable economic factor in the future.

TRANSPORTATION

Highway System

The existing road system in the county includes federal and state highways, county roads and township roads. Divide County is served by three major state and/or federal highways. US Highway 85, also known as the Can-Am Highway, runs north and south through the western half of the county providing access to the major cities of Regina, Saskatchewan and Williston, North Dakota. North Dakota Highway 40 provides access from Noonan to Estevan, Saskatchewan in the northeastern corner of the county. North Dakota Highway 5 enters Divide County at Westby, Montana and travels through the county, past Fortuna, Crosby, and Noonan and continues across northern North Dakota to the eastern border of the state. North Dakota Highway 42 is located just east of Crosby providing a southern access for county residents and continues west and north to Ambrose and the border station into Canada.

Figure 2



A Can-Am Highway Association has been formed to promote trade along U.S. Highway 85 from Mexico to Canada. Part of this route is also designated for the U.S. Legacy Tour which promotes various tourism attractions from Theodore Roosevelt National Park in the southwestern part of the state to Fort Union National Historic Site in neighboring Williams County. Improvements to this federal highway and further tourism promotions will assist in bringing more people through the county. Continued county participation in the Can-Am Highway Association is encouraged in order that the communities and businesses in the county might have spin-off economic benefits from the traveling public.

Divide County maintains approximately 212 miles of county roads, 24 of which are paved, and has established a County Farm to Market and Federal Aid Program for the county-wide road system. A County Farm to Market tax levy was approved by county voters in 1962 and was most recently amended in 1992. Changes in traffic patterns prompted the change in the priority system for improvements. The county road system is shown on Figure 3 below. Since the number of farms and rural residents in the county has declined the cost of maintaining and improving roads has become more difficult to finance.

Figure 3

The County road crew also provides contract maintenance for requesting townships. Snow removal and damage to the road due to transport of heavy equipment in wet periods create a financial burden for the townships and county highway department both. While it is impossible to forecast weather conditions for an entire season, it is possible to require transporters and developers to provide transportation routes for movement of heavy equipment across the county. It is also possible to establish setback requirements for new structures, as well as tree rows, from county and township roads to aid in snow removal during the winter season. The Board of County Commissioners has established tree setback requirements that the local Soil Conservation District follows in tree plantings. These requirements are as follows: 165 feet from the center of the road on the north and west side of a road, 100 feet from the center of the road on south and east sides of a road. This aids in winter road maintenance.

It is important for Divide County to have a network of well maintained roads to all rural land uses. However, this does not require that all existing roads be maintained at the same level. Some roads can be maintained at a lower level while access to all rural land uses is maintained. The Board of County Commissioners and Township Boards of Supervisors are encouraged to establish a road priority system for road maintenance. If there is a need or desire to expand the county road system, the new development or land uses served should be responsible to finance that expansion. The school districts operating buses in the county are encouraged to work with the County Road Department in establishing bus routes to the roads that have regularly scheduled maintenance.

Railroad Service

Noonan and Crosby are served by two rail lines, the Burlington Northern and the Dakota Missouri Valley & Western (DMVW) Railroad. The Dakota Missouri Valley & Western rail line continues west from Crosby through the county providing rail service to Ambrose and Fortuna, continuing into Montana. Dakota Missouri Valley & Western is a small regional rail company operating in North Dakota on lines formerly owned by the Soo Line Railroad. The major users of both rail lines are the local grain elevators for shipping small grains and to receive bulk agricultural chemicals. It is important for the continued viability of the local grain elevators to have rail access for marketing their commodities. The continuation of the regional carrier and maintenance of the lines by both companies is encouraged in order that service will continue to all communities in the county.

Communications Network

The new information highway is becoming just as important as the bituminous roadways and railroads that have served the county for years. Access to fiber optic cables, direct dial telephone service, and on-line computer access will move residents of the county into the communication super-highway of the next millennium. Each of the four cities of the county have advanced telephone service and access currently available; and various offices at the county courthouse are connected to a statewide computer network allowing a direct link to the rest of the state. The Divide County School District is encouraged to continue and expand it's computer technology education programs for all students in grades K-12 and to continue to offer adult education opportunities in this field.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development efforts for the county are being spear-headed by four different groups or agencies. This section of the County Comprehensive Plan will discuss each of these four groups and hereby defers questions on economic development issues to them.

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Tri-County Economic Development Council

Divide County is one of three area member counties of Tri-County Economic Development Council, a joint powers authority created to assist local governmental entities with promoting and developing new economic development ventures in northwestern North Dakota. Tri-County maintains their office in Williston, and provides outreach services in the areas of economic and community development issues to the area. Tri-County also provides contract services to the District I Solid Waste Management Board, providing coordination of solid waste planning and implementation of new solid waste management facilities within the area.

Crosby Economic Development

The City of Crosby has hired an economic development director who is responsible to the City Council. The Crosby City Council, recognizing that development in the entire county has positive impacts for the city, has allowed the economic development director to focus county-wide. This individual assists requesting individuals or businesses with business planning, marketing research, identifying and applying for financial assistance, and creating awareness of economic development issues and opportunities, as well as promoting Crosby and handling the processing of applications to Crosby's Spirit Fund. The Spirit Fund is a local capital pool set aside from a one cent city sales tax collection in the City of Crosby earmarked for economic development, approved by a vote of city residents in the fall of 1992. The one cent sales tax began collection in 1993 and is scheduled to terminate on December 31, 1998. A six person Spirit Fund Board that screens projects and applications to the Spirit Fund was appointed by the Crosby City Council. The City Council retains final approval on all Spirit Fund Requests. Crosby's economic development director acts as a local resource in the development arena for all county residents.

Divide County Economic Development Corporation

This corporation has been existence for approximately twenty years and whose members were key participants in the planning process for the 1976 Divide County Overall Economic Development Plan. In the recent year and a half the board has determined their structure is inadequate to cover a broad scope of development efforts and was instrumental in promoting and getting passed the one cent sales tax which created the Spirit Fund for economic development in Crosby. Another effort in which this group has played a roll is the recent creation of a Divide County Jobs Development Authority. With the establishment of the Spirit Fund and the Divide County Jobs Development Authority, the future of the Divide County Economic Development Corporation is uncertain.

Divide County Jobs Development Authority

The Board of County Commissioners formed the Divide County Jobs Development Authority in April 1994 and the Authority held it's organizational meeting in July 1994. The Authority is made up of eleven members: two county commissioners, a representative of the largest city in the county - Crosby, one representative for the smaller cities, two representatives from the townships, with the five remaining members appointed at large. The Authority, while working on identifying their mission statement and goals, intends to be pro-active in identifying an industry or development concerns for the county.

COMMUNITIES AND HUMAN RESOURCES

This section serves as the public facilities plan for Divide County. Many of the public facilities provided to county residents are provided by other units of government such as cities, school districts, fire districts, the hospital district and park districts. The purpose of including the communities and their infrastructure needs in this plan is in order to provide for overall coordination of public facility needs in the county.

City Infrastructure Development

Crosby

Crosby is the county seat and the largest municipality in the county with a 1990 population of 1,312 persons. Crosby maintains and operates 2 city water wells, a lime softening water treatment plant which in 1993 produced an average of 173,000 gallons of water per day, and an elevated water storage tower with the capacity of 55,000 gallons and a distribution system for approximately 600 connections. Average daily water use in the community is estimated to be 185,000 gallons. The city experiences occasional water main breaks throughout the community on an annual basis. Age of the distribution together with the type of pipes used indicate that a main replacement schedule is needed. While Crosby's public water system is adequate to meet current demand and to comply with current state and federal regulations, the Crosby City Council is considering a Water Purchase Agreement with the State Water Commission for purchase of water from the Northwest Area Water Supply Project. With the uncertainty of new regulations and requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act, the city is considering the NAWs project to share in the cost of future water treatment and testing.

Crosby operates a sewage collection system, three lift stations and a two cell sewage treatment lagoon. The overall system provides adequate capacity for the community, however the age of one of the lift stations indicate replacement may be necessary within the next ten years.

Crosby maintains a network of asphalt streets throughout the community. The city is working to develop a scheduled plan for re-surfacing of the streets and roadways. This work will need to be coordinated with any water and/or sewer main replacement projects in order that the least amount of traffic disruption takes place.

Noonan

Noonan is the second largest municipality in Divide County with a 1990 population of 231. The city operates a public water system serving between 110 and 115 connections that consists of 2 wells, chlorination treatment, and an elevated storage reservoir. Average daily water use in Noonan is estimated at 11,000 gallons. In 1992 Noonan signed an Agreement of Intent to participate in the Northwest Area Water Supply Project and is currently considering signing of a Water Purchase Agreement. Like Crosby, the uncertainty of future regulations under the Safe Drinking Water Act and the cost to meet those regulations, are the reasons Noonan is considering joining the regional water supply project. Future renovations and/or replacement needs of the water distribution system have not been identified at this time.

Noonan operates and maintains a gravity flow sewage collection and two cell treatment lagoon that provides adequate capacity for the current population. Like in the water system, future renovations and/or replacement needs have not been identified at this time.

Fortuna

Fortuna is the third municipality in the County with a 1990 population of 53. Fortuna operates a public water system, serving 44 connections that consists of one well, chlorination treatment, a 20,000 gallon storage tank and distribution system that is approximately 30 years old. Average daily water use in the community is estimated at 4,000 gallons. Like Noonan, Fortuna has signed an Agreement of Intent to participate in the Northwest Water Supply Project and is currently considering signing a Water Purchase Agreement. The ever increasing testing and monitoring requirements alone, make it very expensive and almost prohibitive for a very small community to operate their own public water system.

Fortuna has a community sewage collection system and operates a single cell sewage treatment lagoon. Capacity of the system is adequate to meet current demand, and no future renovations and/or major repairs have been identified at this time. The only hard surfaced street in Fortuna is three blocks of Main Street which is in need of re-surfacing. All other streets are graveled without curb or gutter.

Ambrose

Ambrose, once the largest city in the county is now the smallest with a 1990 population of 48. Ambrose does not operate any municipal facilities at this time. Residences have private wells or cisterns and individual on-site sewage disposal systems. Due to the very small population of the community, no future public services are planned. Individual residences and businesses expressed interest in being served by Writing Rock Rural Water, a rural water system proposed in the county over 15 years ago. There remains a possibility of water delivery to the rural water system from the Northwest Area Water Supply Project in the next ten years.

Residences and businesses in all four communities have municipal solid waste collection service from a private hauler, Lund Sanitation of Noonan. Each of the cities are members of the Northwest Solid Waste Management Association which has provided a consolidated contract for waste collection and disposal. With the closure of the NSWMA landfill near Noonan and the development of the transfer station, final disposal will be out of the county at either the City of Williston landfill or a private facility near Sawyer, ND. The cities and collection contractor are no longer providing pick-up of yard wastes. Individual residences are responsible for disposal of their yard wastes and tree trimmings. The cities of Crosby and Noonan are in the process of getting sites for an inert landfill permitted by the Waste Management Division of the North Dakota State Department of Health and Consolidated Laboratories.

There continues to be interest in establishing a county-wide recycling program from area residents. The City of Fortuna has provided a location for warehousing of recyclables on a subscription drop-off basis. Community volunteers have been responsible for transport of stored materials to a regional processor in either Williston or Minot. Ambrose residents also operate a volunteer recycling program, utilizing a vacant private building in the community for storage of materials. Noonan City Council is working with Fish Salvage to expand his recycling collection and processing facilities in order that he might be able to serve the entire county in the future.

Public Services

Fire protection in the county is provided by five organized fire districts at Fortuna, Grenora, Alamo, Wildrose, Westby, Mt., and the City of Crosby volunteer fire department that provides contract services to the cities of Ambrose and Noonan as well as a number of townships in the central and eastern portion of the county. Residents are served by the Divide County Ambulance District which is staffed by trained emergency medical technicians and other trained volunteers. At this time the county has not installed a centralized 911 telephone emergency calling system.

In the 1946 general election county residents approved a tax levy for a county library. This was the first county tax supported library in the state. The current Divide County Library, located in Crosby, is constructed adjacent to the Divide County Elementary School and is a combination public - public school facility serving the elementary school. Again, this was another "first" in the state, as it was the first time a new building was planned and built to house a combined school and public library. This facility opened in 1974. One unique feature at the Divide County Library is a planetarium, used mainly by the elementary school children. This 38,000 plus volume repository is governed by a five person library board appointed by the County Commission. The County Library has complete audio-visual sectors as well as direct computer access to the State Library in Bismarck and can network with other libraries across the state and nation.

The County provides tax support to the Divide County Council on Aging and the various senior citizen clubs serving residents of the County. Clubs receiving support are located at Alamo, Wildrose and Grenora in Williams County, and Crosby, Fortuna and Noonan, here in Divide County.

The St. Luke's Hospital and Crosby Clinic, the Good Samaritan Centers at Crosby and Noonan, and the Divide County School District facilities at Crosby will complete the discussion on public services. These five facilities and service industries provide the major non-farm employment opportunities in the county and are major economic factors to consider in the future of the County.

The first hospital in the community was built in 1917 as a private facility and operated by the local doctor. In 1942 the Benedictine Sisters of Sacred Heart Academy of Minot acquired the building and operated the facility as St. Luke's Hospital until May, 1986 when the Sisters sold the hospital facilities to the community and a community hospital board was established. The original two and a half story building was located just south of the present hospital building and was demolished earlier this year in 1994. Construction of the single story present facility was begun in 1964.

St. Luke's currently operates a 27 acute care beds, together with 24-hour emergency room service, complete laboratory, radiology and x-ray services, physical therapy department, and the facilities for general and orthopedic surgery and diagnostic services. Crosby Clinic maintains their facility in downtown Crosby. The Hospital and Clinic, while under separate management, work closely together and share services. Two resident general practitioner/surgeons together with a physician assistant/nurse practitioner together with support staff provide physician care at the hospital and clinic. Outside medical specialists schedule appointments at either the Hospital or Clinic regularly to better serve residents. Recently the Northwest Hospital Tax District was established in the county to provide continued financial support for St. Luke's Hospital.

Both the Good Samaritan Centers of Crosby and Noonan are affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, a religious, charitable, non-profit corporation. Each center, however are operated independently by an administrator and local board of directors. The Noonan Good Samaritan Center building dates back to the 1920's when the original facility was used as a hospital. In 1953 the city of Noonan donated the building to the Good Samaritan Society when it became a permanent residence for the elderly and infirmed. The building was expanded in 1965 and currently serves as a 32 bed basic care facility.

The Crosby Good Samaritan Center was built in 1968 as a 51 bed facility. The Center was expanded in 1970 to a 81 bed home. Currently it is licensed as a 80 bed skilled care and Medicare approved nursing facility. These facilities are currently at maximum occupancy possible due to staffing limitations. The Noonan and Crosby Good Samaritan Centers are major economic forces in the County providing employment for over 90 full-time equivalent positions. Recruiting and maintaining trained and qualified staff to meet state and federal requirements continues to be difficult for both centers.

Education

The Divide County School District is the largest district in the county and maintains two buildings in Crosby, a grades K-6 elementary school and a grades 7-12 junior and senior high school. The tier of townships along the southern edge of the county are within the Tioga, Wildrose, and Grenora school districts. Townships in the extreme western edge of the county are within the Grenora district. Past enrollment figures and pre-school census for these outlying districts was not included in the population discussion on page 6 or shown in Table 2 on page 6.

At one time the county's population was great enough to support four-year high schools operating in Alkabo, Ambrose, Colgan, Fortuna and Noonan, as well as Crosby. Numerous country elementary schools and two-year high schools were operated in the townships. With the population decline all of these facilities have closed leaving a reduced enrollment in one large district centered at Crosby. Noonan and Fortuna schools were the last to close, closing in 1986.

Education is a life-long process that does not stop with graduation from the local high school. The Divide County School District has in the past allowed some adult education classes to be held at their facilities. The District is encouraged to consider the technical and vocational training needs of adults within the district as the School Board reviews enrollment projections, curriculum development and facility renovations. In order for the County to continue to be competitive in the national and world economy a structured life-long education process is needed.

HOUSING

According to the 1990 Census data, Divide County had 1,667 total housing units with 28.4 percent of the units vacant. The vacancy rate in Crosby was 21 percent and in Noonan it was 34 percent in 1990; the two cities where the majority of the housing units exist. This is another indicator of the out-migration of the county. The overall housing stock in the county is old, with Census data reporting 43.3 percent of the housing stock older than 1939. Many housing units need rehabilitation to meet safety standards. This is an important factor for the cities and county to address. The City of Crosby is making application to the Community Development Block Grant Program in 1994 for a housing rehabilitation grant. Consideration should be given to make this effort a county-wide program in the future.

Most of the housing units in the county are detached single unit homes. Mobile homes account for 6.6 percent of the total stock while multi-family units account for 10.2 percent of the total housing units. Fortuna, Noonan and Crosby each have multiple unit structures for elderly or rental-assisted housing.

The major type of housing lacking in the county is what is known as congregate housing. Congregate housing is provided in a multi-unit structure, often attached to a larger facility where nursing, laundry or meal service can be provided to residents. The boards of the Crosby Good Samaritan Center and St. Luke's Hospital have discussed this housing need from time to time over the past ten years, however have not been able to identify an appropriate funding mechanism to see the project to construction. With the advanced aged of the population and the concern to keep residents in their own residence for all long as possible, there continues to be a need for this type of transition housing.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This section lists the goals and objectives of the Divide County Comprehensive Plan. The goals and objectives provide a description of what the county is trying to achieve. Goals are generalized statements of commonly held values of county residents. Objectives are similar to the goals; however, they are more specific and further describe the goals. As stated in the Purpose at the beginning of this document, the goals and objectives have been written to help guide future development in the County.

GOAL #1: Increase the effectiveness of government decisions in order to improve the county's physical, social and economic development.

Objectives: 1. Emphasize a sound planning process as a means of managing future county development in the most rational and efficient manner possible.

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2. Emphasize environmental consideration as major factors in the decision making process for the siting of waste management facilities.
3. Encourage the various state, county and city departments to work closely together in planning for future park and recreation areas.
4. Establish guidelines, in conjunction with the cities, for managing new development outside of existing city limits.
5. Treat all development applications equally with the county's best interests of primary importance.

GOAL #2: The protection and conservation of the natural and man-made environment for orderly development of the county's natural resources.

- Objectives:
1. Maintain the proper balance between development and conservation of the area's natural resources.
 2. Identify and preserve important natural and historic features in the County.
 3. Plan and construct public services to guide development patterns.
 4. Coordinate the master planning of all roads within the county for the movement of people and material goods with maximum efficiency, comfort, and safety.

GOAL #3: Develop land use patterns which preserve and improve the aesthetic character of Divide County.

- Objectives:
1. Minimize conflicts between different land uses through the zoning ordinance.
 2. Encourage the maintenance, conservation and rehabilitation of existing farmsteads and their structures.

3. Encourage rural residential development to locate on existing farmsteads and in areas presently served by roads which can accommodate the traffic load.
4. Discourage any use which will substantially depreciate the surrounding land values or generate high traffic volumes.
5. Encourage the planting and maintenance of trees and natural vegetation in rural residential development.

Strategies for the Future

Planning is a process and a Comprehensive Plan cannot be a static document. The existing conditions of the County will continue to change over time, as they have over the past ninety years since settlement. No one on the Planning and Zoning Commission has a crystal ball to foresee the future; therefore, the County Commissioners will want to provide for a review of the strategies for future development on at least an annual basis.

Implementation of this Plan can be accomplished in several ways. Adoption of zoning regulations and development controls, as well as capital expenditures, are means of implementation. The County, and the townships, should not help finance road construction or support other public facilities that would encourage the development of land uses that are not in conformance with this plan.

The strategies for future development, that follow, are the basis for policies, resolutions, ordinances or actions by the County and its political subdivisions to be considered for the next two years. The strategies for the future of Divide County are as follows:

1. Develop a county zoning ordinance.

Zoning is a long established regulatory tool that units of local government use to control how their land is used. For the most part zoning is used to control change in land use, and consequently, only changes in land uses are usually subject to the requirements of the zoning ordinance. North Dakota law states that no regulation or restriction in county zoning shall prohibit or prevent the use of land or buildings for farming or any of the normal incidents of farming.

A purpose of a zoning ordinance and/or development controls is to encourage compatibility among various land uses. Zoning is a tool that protects people from land uses which would be injurious to them or their property. A zoning ordinance is an enforceable set of land use regulations, including penalties for violations, that provides a public process for development.

The Divide County Zoning Ordinance would be used to guide new development to existing built up areas within or adjacent to the county's municipalities, existing farmsteads, or along maintained county and township roads. The Zoning Ordinance would take prime agricultural land designations into consideration when a change in agricultural land use is proposed.

The Planning and Zoning Commission will take all existing land uses into consideration when proposing the zoning district boundaries on the Zoning District Map to the Board of County Commissioners.

2. The County supports the development of a municipal solid waste transfer station and inert waste landfills at Crosby and Noonan.

With the closure of the Northwest Solid Waste Management Association's sanitary waste landfill near Noonan, this is the first time in the history of the county that there is not a local facility for disposal of municipal solid waste. Construction efforts are underway for development of a private municipal solid waste transfer station near Noonan. Cities are encouraged to work together and use this facility for consolidation of their waste for transport to an approved facility outside of the county. Cooperation and consolidation should lead to cost and energy efficiency in waste management.

3. Protecting the water resources of the county is critical for future generations.

The Divide County Water Resource Management Board is encouraged to proceed with developing a program of identification and closing of abandoned wells in the county. Such a program will help to protect the ground water resources for future generations. The Water Resource Management District is also encouraged to be the county's liaison with the ND State Department of Health and Consolidated Laboratories, Division of Water Quality, in the efforts to establish ground water quality standards for the state and the designation of classifications of the ground water resources underlying the county.

The County Road Department is encouraged to establish a used motor oil collection site as a disposal site for farmers and community residents looking for proper disposal alternatives for this material. It is estimated by the American Petroleum Institute that only 10 percent of those people who change their own motor oil take care that is properly disposed of or recycled. According to the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, used oil from a single oil change can ruin a million gallons of fresh water - which they estimate as being a year's supply for 50 people. EPA lists used oil as a major source of oil pollution in our nation's waterways.

All municipalities are encouraged to sign Water Purchase Agreements as part of the Northwest Area Water Supply project. The County Water Resource Management District and the steering committee of the Writing Rock Water Users are encouraged to work together to form a rural water association or district to help deliver quality water to interested farmsteads and rural residences. Having quality water will be a factor in the future economic viability of the county.

4. Economic diversification is necessary for continued vitality of the county.

Economic diversification can take several forms in Divide County. Continued agricultural diversification by resident farmers maintains a stable farm population. Provisions for allowing compatible agricultural-related businesses in the Agricultural District of the Zoning Ordinance are being developed.

Continued development of energy resources that is compatible with neighboring agricultural lands and water resources is encouraged. Large scale development activities for oil or gas reserves, lignite or minerals such as potash or sodium will need to take surrounding agricultural land practices as well as surface and ground water resources into consideration. Provisions in the Zoning Ordinance will guide this type of development.

Recreation expansion and enhancements are encouraged at existing developed sites such as Skjermo Lake, the Baukol-Noonan Trout Pond, Crosby's Long Creek Park, and Writing Rock State Historic Site. Tourism dollars are currently a relatively small portion of the county's new wealth, however, expansion in this area is encouraged. This is evident with the development of several small commercial bed and breakfast type establishments in the rural areas of the county.

While economic diversification is necessary for growth, residents of the County need to recognize the importance of the local hospital and nursing home as major economic forces in the county. Efforts to support these facilities such as the Northwest Hospital Tax District and continued education support for trained staff is critical.

5. Preservation of the county's historic and cultural resources and prairie heritage is important for future generations.

The Divide County Historical Society is encouraged to continue their efforts at restoration and preservation of historic structures and resources at Pioneer Village at Crosby.

The County is encouraged to consider the establishment of a Historical Preservation Commission, under the National Historic Preservation Act, to assist in identifying county historic and cultural resources for documentation and/or preservation.

Ancient cultural resources and paleontological sites have never been extensively identified or studied in Divide County. The presence of Writing Rock and its petroglyphs indicate the existence of a very ancient culture in the area. Efforts should be made to identify these areas for documentation and possible study. The Culturally Sensitive Overlay District of the County Zoning Ordinance is a means by which to document these sites.

