

**BLOUNT COUNTY POLICIES PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA
REPORT ON PROGRESS -- JULY 1999 TO JUNE 2003**

The Blount County Policies Plan was adopted in June of 1999. Planning staff was directed to report on implementation progress each year. The following is a summary of implementation items and progress to end of June 2003. The first part of each item is reproduced from the implementation agenda in the plan (smaller print), followed by a report on progress (larger print).

1. Review and revise the county Subdivision Regulations. Many policies and recommendations give direct guidance to future efforts needed to revise the present county Subdivision Regulations. The Subdivision Regulations will be revised under authority granted in Tennessee Code Annotated Sections 13-3-401 to 411. The Planning Commission has final authority in the matters of subdivision regulations.

The process progressed to formulation of a draft set of revised regulations. The process is now at the stage of detailed consideration by the Planning Commission, and should proceed to final consideration of a completely revised set of subdivision regulations by the Planning Commission within the next year.

2. Formulate a zoning plan, including regulations and zoning map. Many policies and recommendations suggest adoption of zoning regulations for proper implementation. Zoning regulations may be formulated under authority granted in Tennessee Code Annotated 13-7-101 to 117. The Planning Commission provides advice and recommendation on zoning adoption, and the County Commission has final authority to adopt a zoning ordinance.

Zoning Regulations were adopted June 15, 2000, and became effective September 1, 2000. A Building Commissioner was appointed to administer the regulations, and a Board of Zoning Appeals was formed. The County was accepted into the National Flood Insurance Program on October 30, 2000, based on adopted flood plain management regulations. County citizens are now eligible to purchase flood insurance under that program. The Planning Commission was active in the past three years, recommending several amendments to the zoning regulations. The major issue in the past year was the accommodation of commercial uses along arterial roads in the rural parts of the county, and particularly the Rural Arterial Commercial zone.

3. Provide education to public officials on constitutional provisions and court decisions on land use issues. The need for education on constitutional and legal issues of land use was recognized from the citizen input workshop process. It is incumbent on all officials concerned with land use regulations to be informed on the prospects and limits for such regulations. Planning staff will have the main responsibility for facilitating this activity.

This activity was incorporated into the planning process leading up to adoption of the Policies Plan in 1999. Training of Planning Commissioners in the past year included a brief overview of this item.

4. Review professional literature on design guidelines for preserving rural character, preserving farmland, preserving scenic views, and other matters pertinent to further refinement of implementation strategies. Professional literature can provide a wealth of information to assist in thinking on the details of issues as implementation activities proceed. Planning staff will have the main responsibility for this activity.

This item is in progress, but is intermittent as staff time allows. Planning Staff is collecting books on this subject for the department library.

5. Formulate voluntary design guidelines for preservation of open space, preservation of natural features, minimization of visual impact, and other design elements not appropriate for formal regulation. The Planning Commission recognizes that there are some aspects of development in the county that will not be appropriate for regulation. However, there are desirable designs for development that should at least be encouraged by informal guidance or guidelines. The Planning Commission and staff will have the main responsibility for this activity.

There has been no progress on this item.

6. Study and consider options for building codes. The county has authority to adopt building codes under Tennessee Code Annotated 5-20-102. The County Commission will have main responsibility for this activity.

There has been no progress on this item.

7. Continue involvement in the Tuckaleechee Cove Advisory Board. The county has been actively participating in planning for the Cove by membership of two County Commissioners and the Director of Planning for more than five years. The Planning Commission supports continuation of this involvement.

The Advisory Board met on an irregular basis for the last several years. Under the Public Chapter 1101 growth planning process, the County agreed to work more

closely with the town of Townsend to coordinate planning in the Tuckaleechee Cove area. The Director of Planning is a member of the Board. The Board turned its attention mainly to incorporation of the Cove as a town in the past year.

8. Encourage establishment of private farm and open space conservation groups. The Planning Commission supports private, voluntary efforts at farm and open space conservation.

Planning staff is member of a group looking at options for preservation of farms and open space. The Blount County Chamber of Commerce is facilitating the group.

9. Formulate a strategic plan for preservation of farmland and open space and pursue grants for purchase of development rights. The Planning Commission supports pursuit of grants to preserve farmland and open space, so long as such grants do not require local government funding. Planning staff can assist in this activity.

Planning staff is member of a group looking at options for preservation of farms and open space. The Blount County Chamber of Commerce is facilitating the group.

10. Conduct study of pollution sources of the Little River and formulate a pollution prevention program. The Planning Commission supports a cooperative effort with other agencies to study the main source of water supply for the county, and recommends formation of a committee to formulate a pollution prevention program.

The Tennessee Valley Authority, with cooperation of Blount County, initiated and completed an Integrated Pollutant Source Identification (IPSI) project, that included interpretation of aerial photographs for probable pollution sources, production of a geographical database and a set of tools to aid in planning for pollution control, and projection of probable pollution impacts based on population projection. Total funding for the project was \$145,000, with Blount County contributing \$30,000, TVA contributing \$65,000, and federal NPS 319(h) grant monies contributing \$50,000 of the total. The IPSI coverage was county-wide.

The Tennessee Growth Readiness project included Blount County along with the Cities of Alcoa and Maryville and Knox County as pilot communities for education on nonpoint source water pollution. The Tennessee Valley Authority provided lead agency support for project development. The pilot communities were involved in the formulation of education modules geared to decision makers, interest groups, and general citizens. Funding for the project came from a 319

EPA grant through the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Nonpoint Source Program.

In conjunction with the IPSI and Tennessee Growth Readiness (TGR) projects, the County undertook a county-wide planning process to address water quality issues. The planning process involved the Planning Commission and the County Commission, and also citizens through a set of 22 citizen input workshops. The main TGR education module was presented to the County Commission, Planning Commission and citizens attending the input workshops. A Citizen Advisory Committee was formed to support the planning process. The planning process culminated in adoption of the Blount County Water Quality Plan in April 2003. The plan may be accessed at www.blount.state.tn.us/planning/ .

11. Study the feasibility of a county-wide sewer system and formulate a plan. A task force or committee should be formed to undertake this activity.

There has been no progress on this item.

12. Review existing septic field standards and consider more stringent standards and greater enforcement effort. The County Commission should review existing standards for septic system approvals, consider more stringent standards if needed, and consider mechanisms for greater enforcement. The County Environmental Department should assist in this activity.

This item was part of the subdivision regulation review process, and revised standards to provide greater protection from failing septic systems are under consideration. See also under Item 1 above.

13. Study and formulate a county wide plan for drainage. A committee should be formed to undertake this activity with professional assistance.

The Phase 2 Storm Water program of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requires that the County formulate a plan for addressing storm water discharge in urbanized areas. However, the County chose to address the whole county jurisdiction in the Water Quality Plan (see item 10 above). The County is exploring possibilities of coordination and cooperation with the cities of Maryville and Alcoa. The formal application for the Phase 2 Storm Water program was presented to the State in March 2003. The program includes commitment to a county-wide plan for storm water management, including regulations. The Phase 2 program has an implementation horizon of five years. A new personnel position to administer the program was budgeted for 2003-04.

14. Formulate a county wide parks and recreation plan. A committee based mainly on the Parks and Recreation Commission, but with membership also from the School Board and concerned citizens, should be formed to undertake this activity. Initial efforts were underway at the time of this plan.

The Parks and Recreation Commission has coordinated planning of parks and recreation facilities with construction of new county schools.

15. Increase support for groups concerned with litter control. Groups such as Keep Blount Beautiful and the Sheriff's Litter Crew should receive greater support in the form of equipment and enforcement.

The County administers a litter grant in support of the litter crew. Beverly Collins (retired) of the Planning Department won a state-wide award for administering the grant in 2000. The Sheriff's Department now administers the program.

16. Review procedures to accommodate small private household dumping in the land fill. The Solid Waste Authority should consider this as part of their ongoing management oversight of the land fill.

The Solid Waste Authority undertook a study and review of operations, including procedures on household dumping. There were no changes in existing policy.

17. Provide more opportunity for hazardous waste collection and disposal. The Solid Waste Authority should consider this as part of their ongoing management oversight of the land fill.

The County holds household hazardous waste days as funding permits. The state provided funds for two hazardous waste collection days in the past year.

18. Consider regulations for collection and storage of garbage, litter, refuse, and rubbish. The previous proposed resolution should be revised and reintroduced for County Commission consideration.

The County Commission adopted provisions of TCA 5-1-115 on April 17, 2001. The new regulations allow requirements for upkeep of property, removal of trash and removal of dilapidated buildings. The regulations apply only to property not owner occupied. The Building Commissioner was appointed to administer the regulations.

19. Conduct a study of county roads, formulate a roads plan and a capital budget for roads. The County Highway Superintendent had started a roads planning process at the time of the Policy Plan adoption. The effort should be continued to the level of a capital improvements budget for roads and the Highway Department.

A Blount County Roadway Needs Study was completed December 2000. Funding implications were considered in 2001. The County Commission studied wheel tax, impact fees and other possibilities for funding, but no clear indication for future funding was identified.

20. Study alternative modes of transportation for the county. A committee should be formed to address this activity.

There has been no progress on this item at the local level. However, a regional effort to address transit needs includes Blount County as part of the study area.

21. Formulate a growth plan under Public Chapter 1101 that is consistent with the general county plan. Public Chapter 1101 of 1998 provides for a separate planning process and coordinating committee to identify urban growth boundaries, planned growth areas, and rural areas. Although addressing mainly issues of annexation, the law has implications for general land use planning in the county. The growth plan for the county should be consistent with this general policy plan.

The County declared an impasse in the 1101 planning process, having substantial differences with the cities on urban growth boundaries and inclusion of the airport in the Alcoa urban growth boundary. The process went to a three judge panel for mediation, and then for arbitration by the panel. The panel substantially supported the cities urban growth boundary proposals. However, the Local Government Planning Advisory Committee (LGPAC) amended the plan to exclude the airport from the urban growth boundary of Alcoa. The plan was under litigation in the past year.

There were some discrepancies between the final 1101 growth plan and the county land use and zoning plans in relation to the final urban growth boundaries. The 1101 law requires that land use decisions be consistent with the final growth plan. The County may thus need to review and revise certain aspects of the land use plan and zoning plan in the near future. The County Major Road Plan may also need to be reviewed and revised to account for contraction of the Maryville and Alcoa planning regions to the new Urban Growth Boundaries.