

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAMAR COUNTY PLAN

In 2006 the Lamar County Board of Supervisors succeeded in obtaining passage of a local and private bill (House Bill 1661) by the Mississippi Legislature which allowed the County to enact zoning for portions of the unincorporated County. The bill allows the Board of Supervisors to enact zoning regulations for such unincorporated portions of the County "...for the purpose of promoting the health, safety, morals or the general welfare of its citizenry, including, but not limited to, the height, number of stories and size of buildings and other structures, the percentage of a lot that may be occupied, the size of the yards, courts and other open spaces, the density of population, and the location and use of buildings, structures and land for trade, industry, residence or other purposes." The bill further states: "In the exercise of the authority granted by this act, all of the provisions of Chapter 1, Title 17, Mississippi Code of 1972, shall be applicable, except that such zoning ordinances, regulations and requirements *need not be made in accordance with a Comprehensive Plan embracing the entire county but may be made in accordance with a plan applicable to any part or portion of the county, including one or more supervisor's districts or beats, or part or portion thereof, or any other clearly defined geographic area of the county* (emphasis added)."

Following passage of the bill, the Board of Supervisors executed a contract in June, 2006, with the Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District (SMPDD), the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD), and Eco-Systems, Inc. (ESI) to prepare a Comprehensive Plan, a Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map for the County.

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Lamar County Board of Supervisors recognizes that in order to make both effective and economically sound decisions for the future, some type of policy must govern the decision-making process. The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to serve as a policy guide for the physical and economic development of the County. The Plan will serve decision-makers as a means of orderly development for the county at a minimal cost to the county.

COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN

Section 17-1-1 of the Mississippi Code defines a Comprehensive Plan as follows: "... a statement of public policy for the physical development of the entire municipality or county adopted by resolution of the governing body..." A Comprehensive Plan must include a minimum of four components in order to comply with the statute. These components are long-range goals, objectives, and policies, a land use plan, a transportation plan, and a community (public) facilities plan.

The goals and objectives of a Comprehensive Plan are made with respect to the future. Long-range development plans help a county identify what it desires to achieve in the following decades. Section 17-1-1 of the Mississippi Code requires that the goals and objectives section of

the plan address residential, commercial, and industrial development as well as parks, open space, and recreation. Additionally, street or road improvements, public schools and community facilities must be considered.

The second part of a Comprehensive Plan is the Land Use Plan. This plan designates, in map form, the proposed distribution and extent of land use for residential, commercial, industrial and recreational lands, as well as public and quasi-public facilities and open space. The Land Use Plan chapter contains projections of population and employment as the basis for land use projections.

The third part of a Comprehensive Plan is the Transportation Plan. The Transportation Plan presents a "Thoroughfares Plan" that includes the classifications of all existing and proposed streets, roads and highways; these are depicted in map form as an integral part of the Land Use Plan. The plan identifies arterial, collector and local streets, and roads and highways, as defined by minimum rights-of-way and surface width requirements. The Transportation Plan also addresses other transportation needs, such as general aviation airport needs.

The final portion of the Comprehensive Plan is the Community (or Public) Facilities Plan. Used as a basis for making capital improvement decisions, the Community Facilities Plan includes twenty-three year projections (to 2030) of needs for: parks and recreation, public buildings and facilities, utilities and drainage, schools, and housing. The capital improvements program, *which is not a part of this Comprehensive Plan*, schedules these improvements by priority and cost for five or six-year time periods.

The Board of Supervisors of Lamar County recognizes that the quality of life in developing areas is affected by the quality of development. People and businesses are attracted to higher quality developments. In fact, other areas around the country have discovered that ***quality development breeds more quality development***. All development should be examined as to its effect on the county's image, because it is the county's image that is at stake. It is a well-known fact that one of the factors a business/industry considers in determining a location is the quality of life in a community. Quality of life includes such amenities as shopping, cultural and recreational opportunities, good schools, and attractive business and residential areas.

A community desperate for development without regard to the quality of that development will not be able to successfully compete with communities that are more concerned with the quality of development and other quality of life issues. Therefore, the County intends to foster those policies that will make this a more competitive community.