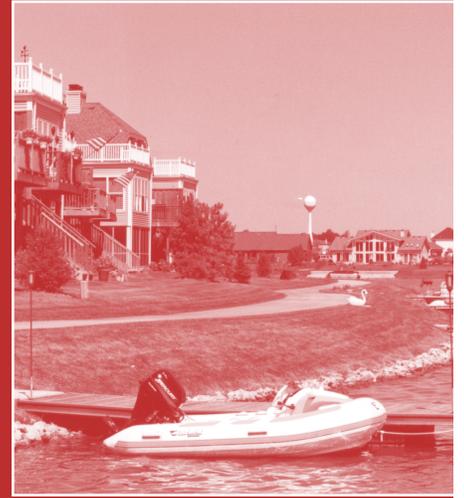
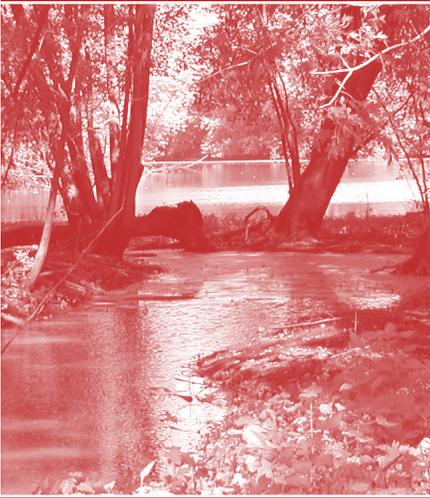


# Principles of Balanced Growth



## *Winnebago County Balanced Growth Initiative*



By  
Teska Associates, Inc.  
and the  
Metropolitan Planning Council

# Winnebago County Balanced Growth Initiative



by

**Teska Associates, Inc. and the Metropolitan Planning Council**



Sponsored by an  
**Illinois Department of Transportation**  
**Illinois Tomorrow Planning Grant**



## INTRODUCTION

Webster’s definition of growth is “increase; expansion; progressive development; evolution.” Most communities and metropolitan areas exhibit many or all of these characteristics. In fact, most communities and metropolitan areas aspire to grow, albeit at different paces. Winnebago County and its municipalities are among those that do want to grow.

### Local Context

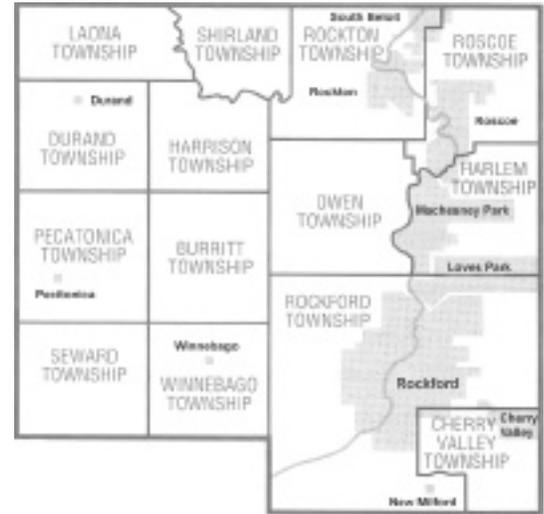
As the world entered a new millennium in the year 2000, Winnebago County was witnessing an era of growth, not experienced in recent years. The county experienced a 10.9% increase in population during the decade of the 1990s. After several decades of very modest growth, it also experienced a decade of progressive development in unincorporated areas, corresponding with a decade of cultural and technological evolution across America and throughout the county. The only constant in the scenario is change, and it can be expected that change will occur at an even faster pace in the 21st century.

The county’s growth and evolution have already changed public opinion and the agendas of local public and private decision-makers. The emphasis is moving from stimulating quantifiable growth to encouraging qualitative growth. Hence, a significant number of local public and private initiatives have been undertaken since January 1, 2000.

These include;

- WinGIS system development
- the Winnebago County 2010 and 2020 Plans
- the Rockford 2020 Plan
- the Regional Initiative for Community Excellence
- the Council of 100 Regional Vision Project
- the RATS 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan
- the West State Street corridor plan
- the River District Plan
- Mayor Scott’s Regional Network meeting

Briefly stated, Winnebago County is on the move.



Population Growth	1990	2000
Cherry Valley	1,617	2,191
Durand	1,100	1,081
Loves Park	15,642	20,044
Machesney Park	19,033	20,759
New Milford	463	541
Pecatonica	1,760	1,997
Rockford	139,426	150,115
Rockton	2,928	5,296
Roscoe	2,079	6,244
South Beloit	4,072	5,397
Winnebago	1,840	2,959
Total Incorporated	189,960	216,624
<b>Total Unincorporated</b>	<b>63,135</b>	<b>61,377</b>
Total County	253,095	278,001



Excerpts from *The Third Wave* by Alvin Toffler

The “Third Wave” is that which follows the agricultural society and the industrial society. Among the characteristics Alvin Toffler assigns to a Third Wave society are:

- Holistic approaches
- High tech, high touch, interactive communications
- Information/knowledge essential to success
- The university will replace the factory as the central institution of tomorrow
- Downsizing; small business; home-based business; networking
- Increased diversity; decentralization; niches
- Heightened moral pressure on corporations
- The need for meaning in work
- New concentration on “community”
- The only constant is change

## National Context

Throughout the nation, a complex wave of cultural change is occurring due in part to technology and globalization. Demographics, lifestyles and values are also changing. Americans are increasingly concerned with sense of place, the environment, sustainability, and other quality of life factors. They are supporting, even demanding, more effective management of growth, more judicious use of tax revenue, more aggressive acquisition of open space, higher aesthetic standards for development of all types, additional mobility options, more pedestrian- and child-friendly design, and better security, to name but a few aspirations.

As a result, the concept of smart growth has entered the mainstream of American thought, civic dialogue, private development, and governance. Organizations such as Smart Growth America have emerged, and many other public and private organizations have added “smart growth” to their agendas and their Web sites.

## Illinois Context

Here in Illinois, the trend is similar. In 1998, the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) established the Campaign for Sensible Growth, working with the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission. Due to effective dialogues with gubernatorial candidates and legislators in 1998, newly elected Governor Ryan formed a Balanced Growth Cabinet by executive order and the General Assembly formed a Growth Task Force.

Governor Ryan’s Balanced Growth initiative has been guided by five core principles:

- Reduction of traffic congestion;
- Preservation of open space;
- Reinvestment and redevelopment;
- Quality of life; and
- Local government partnership.

The Growth Task Force issued its final report in February, 2002. It articulated the following findings and principles:

- People across the state have concerns about growth policy;
- The State has a role in guiding development policy;
- Illinois' current practice is an uncoordinated, inefficient, distributive decision-making model that frustrates all participants;
- Raising the technical resources and decision-making capacities of citizens, land owners, planners, policy-makers and legislators should be a priority for the State of Illinois;
- Key State and local entities that impact growth are reluctant to share or coordinate resources and authority;
- There is broad-based support for open space preservation.

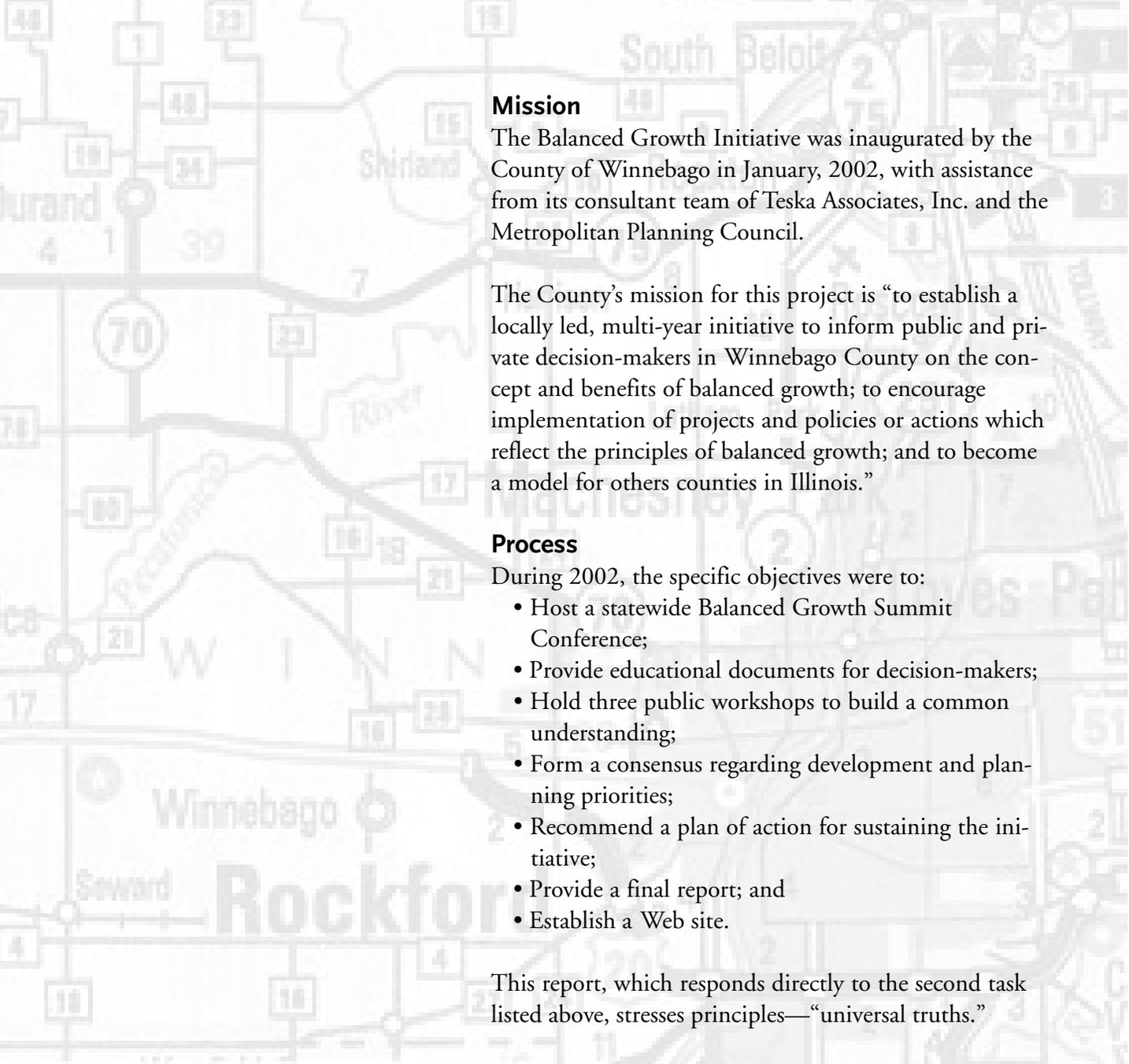
During Governor Ryan's term in office, the Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DDCA) have issued grants-in-aid to counties and municipalities to undertake initiatives and planning projects related to balanced growth. IDOT issued such a grant to Winnebago County to undertake a Balanced Growth Initiative.

### **Smart Growth, Sensible Growth, Balanced Growth**

Whether called smart growth, sensible growth or balanced growth, proponents do agree on one vital message: we can guide the growth of our communities more effectively in the future than we have in the past. They also agree on principles, objectives and strategies. The constructive approach, therefore, is to build on their commonalities, rather than on their limited differences.

Check out these Web sites related to growth management:

[www.growingsensibly.org](http://www.growingsensibly.org)  
[www.sustainable.org](http://www.sustainable.org)  
[www.smartgrowth.org](http://www.smartgrowth.org)  
[www.smartgrowthamerica.net](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.net)  
[www.sprawlwatch.org](http://www.sprawlwatch.org)  
[www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org)  
[www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)  
[www.NAHB.com](http://www.NAHB.com)  
[www.nga.org](http://www.nga.org)  
[www.cnt.org](http://www.cnt.org)  
[www.nga.org/Center](http://www.nga.org/Center)



### **Mission**

The Balanced Growth Initiative was inaugurated by the County of Winnebago in January, 2002, with assistance from its consultant team of Teska Associates, Inc. and the Metropolitan Planning Council.

The County's mission for this project is "to establish a locally led, multi-year initiative to inform public and private decision-makers in Winnebago County on the concept and benefits of balanced growth; to encourage implementation of projects and policies or actions which reflect the principles of balanced growth; and to become a model for others counties in Illinois."

### **Process**

During 2002, the specific objectives were to:

- Host a statewide Balanced Growth Summit Conference;
- Provide educational documents for decision-makers;
- Hold three public workshops to build a common understanding;
- Form a consensus regarding development and planning priorities;
- Recommend a plan of action for sustaining the initiative;
- Provide a final report; and
- Establish a Web site.

This report, which responds directly to the second task listed above, stresses principles—"universal truths."

First and foremost, this is an educational document to explain the concept of Balanced Growth. Second, the principles and best practices described herein can be utilized to update local community development plans, regulations, and action programs. Third, the same principles and best practices can be utilized by real estate developers, builders and property owners in the preparation of plans for various forms of development. Fourth, this document provides a checklist to be referred to by all public and private decision-makers prior to making a singular decision on specific issues related to growth.

Those committed to Balanced Growth are likely to find many other effective ways to utilize the contents of this document to encourage and/or manage growth and change in ways that will benefit Winnebago county now and in the future.

### **Steering Committee**

At the outset of this initiative, a steering committee was formed to advise the consultant team. The steering committee was representative of both the public and private sectors and met seven times between January and October 2002. It also participated actively in the Balanced Growth Summit and the three public workshops. Its members are:

Polly Berg, Winnebago County Board, District 7  
Jack Finlen, Prarie Hill D.C.S.D. #133  
Terrie Hall, Rockford Area Association of Realtors  
John Holmstrom, William Charles Investments  
Ed Johnston, U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service  
Elizabeth Kinsinger, City of Rockford Community Development  
Bob Levin, Council of 100  
Barb Nelson, Community Foundation of Northern Illinois  
David Noel, City of Loves Park  
Mike Olson, Rock River Water Reclamation District  
Kristen O'Neill, Council of Neighborhood Organizations  
Jerry Paulson, Natural Land Institute  
Roger Rocke, Illinois Department of Transportation  
Brad Roos, Zion Development Corporation  
Ruth Roth, Winnebago County Health Department/Ecosystem partnerships  
Gary Shedd, Winnebago County Farm Bureau  
Bob Soltau, Illinois Department of Transportation  
Dennis Sweeney, Home Builders Association  
Patti Thayer, Winnebago County Board, District 4  
Ron Waldschmidt, Laona Township Supervisor  
Bernie Walsh, Winnebago County Farm Bureau

### **Web Site**

A Web site for the Winnebago County Balanced Growth Initiative was established and continues to be maintained by the Metropolitan Planning Council at [www.growingsensibly.org](http://www.growingsensibly.org). This site is linked directly to the County's own Web site.

On this site you can learn of current news about the initiative and review materials prepared by the consultant team throughout the year.

### **Ex-officio members:**

Kristine Cohn, Winnebago County Board Chairman  
Judith Barnard, Winnebago County, Deputy Administrator  
Charlene Coulombe, Winnebago County Regional Planning and Economic Development Director  
Tom Kalousek, Winnebago County Forest Preserve District Director  
Rick Strader, Rockford Park District Planner  
Joe Vanderwerff, Winnebago County Highway Engineer

### **Consultants:**

Scott Goldstein, Metropolitan Planning Council  
Robert Teska, Teska Associates, Inc.

### Examples of Best Practices

- A single source or network of sources for data, research, and knowledge about regional conditions and trends, including a readily accessible geographic information system.
- A regional economic development vision representing a broad-based consensus and commitment to sustainable growth.
- An effective and well-balanced recruitment and retention program for business, industries and labor force, including appropriate incentives.
- Direct economic development partnerships with institutions of higher education.
- A program to preserve appropriate sites provided or potentially provided with adequate infrastructure.
- Commitment to high standards for the protection of new investments from the adverse impacts of others.
- Fair and predictable planning principles, municipal regulations and permitting processes.
- Financial and technical assistance to start-up businesses and industries.
- Coordinated regional branding.

### Benefits

- Global competitiveness.
- Economic security for future generations.
- Increased income for employees and profits for employers.
- Attraction and retention of desired businesses and industries.
- Enhanced tax base for local governments and school districts.
- A greater array of goods and services to support local residents.
- Revitalization of mature communities.

A top priority of metropolitan areas today is economic development. That challenge becomes ever greater as the competition for global markets intensifies. Yet, local economic development leaders can never take their eyes off the basic and subtle needs of the local market place.

### Principles

1. Successful local economies are those that serve today's market demands, anticipate tomorrow's market demands, and can shift gears effectively with minimum disruption.
2. Diversification is essential to sound economies and regional communities. Appreciation for all local economic forces, such as business, agriculture and tourism, is necessary.
3. Good schools and institutions of higher learning are essential catalysts for economic development.
4. Marketable experiences, in addition to goods and services, are a distinct economic offering.
5. An appropriately educated, skilled, trainable and dependable labor force is a prerequisite.
6. Major corporations require an accessible network of supporting businesses, industries, energy, and interregional transportation facilities.
7. The lack of readily available sites and infrastructure will deter desirable businesses and industries.
8. The lack of preferred living accommodations and other quality of life amenities, including culture, recreation and entertainment, will influence the locational decisions of management, its employees and their families.
9. The character, standards and commitment of local governments, including intergovernmental relations, are of strategic importance.

## FISCAL STABILITY

Fiscal stability is for the public sector what economic development is to the private sector. In fact, they are closely related, and together are attributes of healthy communities. However, whereas economic development can be very entrepreneurial, the fiscal conduct of local government is enabled and restricted by State of Illinois statutes and administrative procedures.

### Principles

1. Citizens expect and deserve the most effective utilization of their taxes to provide the highest level of service affordable.
2. Public education is the most costly and important public expenditure.
3. Local units of government, including school districts, must balance expenditures and revenues, preferably with as little borrowing as possible.
4. Local tax revenues can be augmented with grants from other units of government and funding from other legal public and private sources.
5. Substantial fiscal disparities between municipalities and school districts can be inequitable and adverse to the interests of the region as a whole.
6. Land-use planning and intergovernmental cooperation can reduce fiscal disparities, make effective use of limited resources, and avoid redundancy.
7. Extended deferral of needed capital improvements, maintenance and programs can have adverse financial consequences at a later date.
8. Growing communities need a reliable fiscal forecast and strategy related to an adopted comprehensive community (or tax district) development plan.
9. The private sector can have a key role in achieving public fiscal stability.

### Examples of Best Practices

- Integration of local governmental bodies and/or services.
- Sharing of local governmental services and/or tax revenues.
- Medium-range (3-6 yrs.) forecasts and operating budgets.
- Fiscal impact studies related to growth and related issues.
- Community foundations to supplement governments.
- Equitable dedication ordinances and impact fees.
- User fees.
- Special service areas.
- Joint developments.
- Public-private ventures.
- Grantmanship.

### Benefits

- More equitable cost sharing.
- More effective governmental expenditures.
- Smaller disparities between taxing districts.
- Greater confidence in governmental decision-making.
- Positive sense of “return on investment.”
- Less adverse impact on future generations.
- Lower taxes or greater ability to extend services with existing tax base.

**Examples of Best Practices**

- Ecosystem planning and partnerships.
- Open space acquisition and conservation.
- Wetland and woodland protection ordinances.
- Stormwater runoff and erosion control ordinances.
- Floodplain protection ordinance.
- Separation of stormwater and wastewater sewer systems.
- Reduced use of chemicals, pesticides and insecticides.
- Well protection ordinance.
- Conservation easements.
- Impervious surface standards in urban areas.
- Wastewater reclamation.
- Use of native plant materials.
- Wildlife management.
- Conservation design for new development.
- Environmental education center(s).
- Use of alternative forms of energy.

**Benefits**

- Good physical and mental health.
- Enhanced leisure, recreation and tourism.
- Greater attraction for desirable businesses and industries, as well as new residents.
- Support for agriculture and rural lifestyles.
- Increased property values.
- Improved urban form.
- Source of regional pride.
- Positive legacy for future generations.

History has clearly demonstrated that the quality of life and sustainability of human settlements is dependent on the stewardship of natural resources. This is also true for Winnebago County, where natural resources are plentiful but also in jeopardy.

**Principles**

1. Clean air is a precious resource, and pollution may extend beyond the boundaries of states, nations and even continents.
2. Clean surface waters are a fundamental component of regional infrastructure, amenity, property values and economic attraction.
3. Erosion is a principal cause of surface water pollution and loss of productive top soil.
4. Wetlands act as filters to purify water runoff and provide valuable wildlife habitat.
5. Ground water, especially potable ground water, is a valuable but finite resource worthy of protection, sensible use, and conscious recharge.
6. The preservation and conservation of native vegetation, especially forests and woodlands, is beneficial.
7. Native wildlife and aquatic life are to be respected, especially because they are often the indices of environmental quality for human beings.
8. Endangered species of all types deserve reasonable protection.
9. Productive soils, seemingly in surplus in Illinois, but absent in much of the world, are of global importance.
10. Natural beauty at all scales offers a respite to the stress of daily life.
11. Nearby natural resources offer educational opportunities to persons of all ages.
12. Conservation of energy resources, especially fossil fuel supplies, is of strategic importance.

Agriculture has had an established presence in the area for over 150 years, even prior to urban settlement. It remains an integral part of the economic and social fabric of Winnebago and surrounding counties. The northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin regions benefit significantly from the proximity of food production, and the world at large depends on the surpluses (beyond local need) of production yielded by the rich soils and technology of this particular farming region.

### Principles

1. Agriculture is the largest industry in the county and supports a lifestyle of historic and future importance; farmlands are not simply a holding zone for future urban development.
2. Agricultural productivity depends on the scale and connectivity of activities and landmasses; encroachment of incompatible land uses reduces productivity.
3. Agriculture requires a sensitive application of regulations to control adverse impacts, yet not unduly restrict productivity.
4. Crop farming is especially dependent on the protection of prime agricultural soils and the application of soil conservation practices.
5. Livestock production requires special attention to provide for safe disposal of solid and liquid wastes.
6. Rural roadways and traffic management patterns should reflect priorities for farm implements and characteristics of the countryside.
7. Rural character and farming are growing in traditional values that are worthy of continued public support.
8. Agriculture proximate to the central city and its suburbs offers a counterpoint to the stress of urban living.

### Examples of Best Practices

- A long-range vision and economic development strategy for the agriculture and agri-business industry.
- A historic inventory of farms, farming, farm buildings, and rural institutions.
- Reasonable and effective agricultural zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Conservation design for new development.
- Revitalization of rural communities.
- Purchase of development rights or conservation easements.
- Adoption of compatible rural road standards.
- Viable county fair.
- Agricultural features incorporated into tourism and educational programs.
- Encouragement of bed and breakfast homes and country inns to supplement farm income.
- Planned grazing and waste management.
- Windbreaks, filter strips and critical area planting.
- Crop rotation and residue.
- Nutrient and pest management.

### Benefits

- Perpetuation of agriculture as a viable economic industry and lifestyle in Winnebago County.
- Extended life of family farms.
- Compact, cost-effective urban form.
- Less conflict leading to enhanced driving experience on rural roads.
- Reduced impact of farming on air, waterways and wildlife.
- Reduced pressure on rural schools and other public facilities and services.

### Examples of Best Practices

- Greenway and green infrastructure plans.
- Public open spaces: e.g., forest preserves, trail systems, parks, arboretums.
- Conservancies and conservation easements.
- Private land trusts and covenants.
- Land dedication requirements and impact fees.
- Stormwater detention and retention requirements.
- Joint use of open lands, e.g. schools and parks.
- Effective utilization of public and quasi-public rights-of-way.
- Community gardens.
- Cluster subdivisions and planned units.

### Benefits

- Enhanced quality of life for local residents, especially recreational opportunities.
- Increased property values for nearby properties.
- Natural and scenic resource conservation.
- Increased tourism.

Open space in this context is intended to be a committed use of land consistent with the growth vision of the region and the activities of its citizens. Although directly related to the stewardship of natural resources and agriculture, it is responsive to other human needs as well.

### Principles

1. Dedicated open space is an element of the regional development framework and provides the land mass for many community facilities and services, especially recreation; it is an element of green infrastructure.
2. Open space is most effective when it is coordinated as a system of public, quasi-public and private lands and waters planned for a range of active and passive uses or for the conservation of natural and scenic resources.
3. Effective open space systems often parallel or take advantage of waterways, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, utility rights-of-way, or road rights-of-way in order to provide continuity for trails and pathways.
4. Many types of real estate development have an obligation to provide for and will benefit from open space, whether for stormwater detention or retention, recreation or amenity.
5. Open space and education are closely related, e.g. parkland incorporated into school sites, or educational programs conducted in the field.
6. Active and passive local open space is integral to livable neighborhoods and communities as common ground and to enhance “sense of place”.
7. Open space of high quality and usefulness is best identified and protected well in advance of actual need; once lost it may never be recovered.

“Community” is the key word, i.e. people having common interests; common possession or enjoyment. In this sense, a community may function at any scale, from neighborhood (or less) to regional, and may be a part of or transcend political boundaries, although they too represent a level of common interest. Communities, therefore, can exhibit social, economic and physical characteristics.

### Principles

1. Establishing a common interest in an environment of increasing diversity is an on-going challenge.
2. Communities are enhanced by broad consensus on a common vision for the future.
3. A “sense of place” is inherent to all viable communities, from hamlet to village, town, city, county and region.
4. Communities benefit from a functional form, based on centers, corridors, neighborhoods, open spaces, and definable edges.
5. A viable regional community provides affordable housing options for its citizens in all income ranges.
6. Accessibility to opportunity is enhanced by a compatible mixture of uses in proximity to each other to minimize the need to travel.
7. Vehicular traffic in residential neighborhoods is best limited in volume and speed.
8. Supporting businesses, services and community facilities (especially schools) can be compatible elements of viable and livable communities.
9. Infill development is frequently more cost-effective over time than peripheral development.
10. Housing diversity in style and price is desirable when blended into the fabric of a community.
11. Design excellence is a worthy pursuit; character counts.
12. Landscaping is integral to community character.

### Examples of Best Practices

- Neighborhood planning.
- Coordinated location and use of schools and parks as centers of community activity.
- Pedestrian friendly design; riverwalks; sidewalks; plazas.
- Business district and commercial corridor revitalization.
- Housing assistance; live near work program.
- Community-assisted infill development.
- Appearance review regulations.
- Mixed-use zoning.
- Traffic calming.
- Tax increment financing and development.
- Historic preservation and adaptive reuse.
- Brownfield site cleanup and development.
- Art in public places.
- Attractive landscaping.

### Benefits

- Happy citizens; less burden on local governments.
- Successful businesses.
- More effective use of land.
- Reduced vehicular travel per capita.
- Less traffic congestion; improved safety.
- Increased equalized assessed value.
- Improved housing.
- Greater harmony.

**Examples of Best Practices**

- Green infrastructure.
- County-wide stormwater management strategy.
- Arterial corridor plans, including transit service.
- Transit passenger shelters.
- Continuing, comprehensive metropolitan transportation planning.
- Demand-oriented traffic signal timing.
- Access controls.
- Bicycle system development.
- Underground utilities.
- Annexation, zoning and subdivision standards.
- Communication tower location and design standards.
- Percentage for art policy adapted to enhance the design of public facilities.

**Benefits**

- Less costly; better coordinated public investments.
- Enhanced urban form and amenity.
- Increased mobility.
- Sound public health.
- Reduced flooding.
- More pleasant travel experiences.
- Stronger sense of place; orientation.

Infrastructure includes the physical elements of development that directly influence the form, function, and quality of growth. They include the broad categories of utilities, transport and other public facilities, most of which represent a substantial and long-term investment and many of which are underground and, therefore, often unseen and overlooked.

**Principles**

1. It is essential that all infrastructure, despite being provided by separate agencies, be planned in concert with a single vision of county or regional growth and development.
2. A dependable system of safe domestic water sources, treatment and distribution is fundamental.
3. Stormwater management incorporates a coordinated system of waterways, wetlands, detention and retention facilities, sewer pipes, site design, and runoff control, including landscaping, to minimize flooding.
4. Wastewater management incorporates a coordinated system of sewer pipes, treatment facilities, on-site systems, and agricultural practices to minimize point and non-point pollution of the region's water ways and ground water supplies.
5. Energy systems can be planned, designed and maintained to support growth, protect against power outages, avoid the disruption of desired land-use patterns, and minimize adverse environmental or visual impact.
6. Advanced communications technology is critical to economic development and quality of life in the region, and can be planned, designed and maintained to avoid disruption of desired land-use patterns, and minimize adverse environmental or visual impact.

7. An effective intra-regional transportation system provides options to enhance the mobility of people, goods and services, and will include pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities, public transit, a system of roadways, intermodal transfer facilities and passenger terminals.
8. Public transit options are especially important to those who do not have access to private automobiles or prefer not to drive, and to reduce congestion by minimizing the number of single passenger automobiles on the road.
9. All roadways are intended to serve designated functions as part of a regional system of roadways.
10. Roadways are but one element of a system of corridors that can be planned and designed to coordinate traffic, pedestrian movement, abutting land-use and access thereto, and amenity to create a safe and desirable experience for all travelers and others who occupy the corridor.
11. Contemporary traffic management practices can effectively increase the capacity of roadways as an alternative to more expensive construction options.

**Examples of Best Practices**

- Regional geographic information system (GIS).
- Coordinated regional vision statement and growth strategy.
- Comprehensive county plan and coordinated municipal plans adopted.
- Intergovernmental agreements.
- Unified development ordinances.
- Public-private partnerships.
- Annual “state of the region” conference.
- Leadership training programs.

**Benefits**

- Stronger regional community.
- Less conflict; more accomplished.
- More cost-effective public investment.
- More sensible use of land and infrastructure.
- Greater legacy for future generations.
- Model for other counties and regions.

As implied in many of the foregoing principles, the ultimate expression of smart growth, sensible growth, and balanced growth is coordination among and between the myriad of decision-making persons and organizations in the county or region. Such coordination is both the cause and effect of a successful regional community.

**Principles**

1. Common ground is the essence of “community” at any scale.
2. Common ground at the regional scale is dependent on a reliable mapping and information system, an open and encompassing dialogue, and a broadly supported vision of the future.
3. A regional vision is most effective if implemented through the coordination of all state and local governmentally initiated planning programs and fiscal policies.
4. Joint governmental projects and funding produce cost-effective results.
5. Public-private cooperation in pursuit of balanced growth principles will enhance economic development and quality of life in the county and region.
6. Uniform or at least compatible zoning, subdivision and building standards and procedures can influence a more equitable development process and reduce undesirable competition between local units of government.
7. Coordination of civic organizations and citizen resources will establish a strong “community spirit” and will supplement the efforts of local government and private industry.

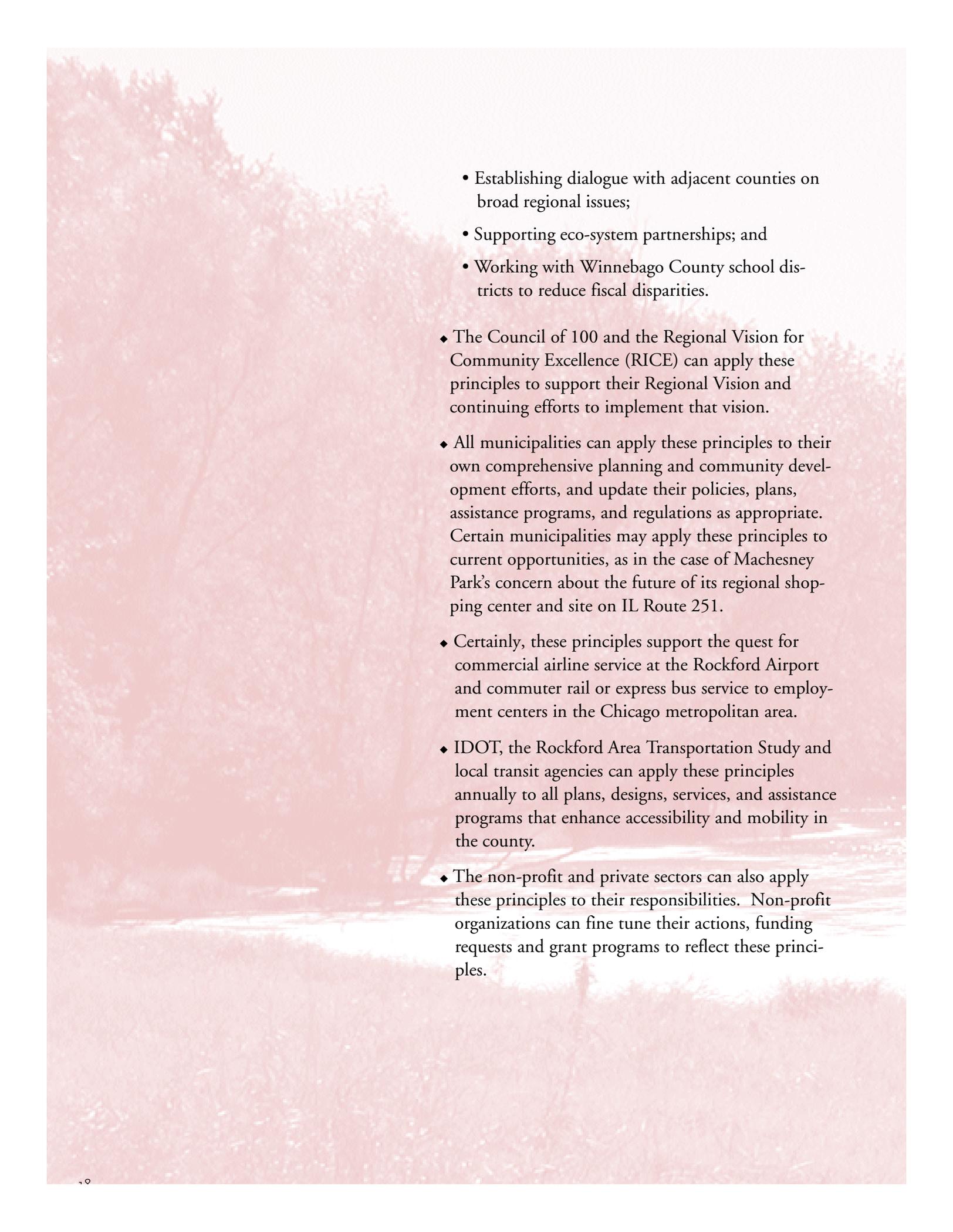
## APPLICATIONS TO WINNEBAGO COUNTY

All of the foregoing principles are applicable to Winnebago County to varying degrees. In some cases, these principles are already being exhibited in current projects, which underscores the wisdom of the projects' proponents. They deserve support and encouragement to continue achieving the benefits of these principles.

They can be incorporated without delay into many of the public and private planning and development projects currently underway or to be initiated in the near future.

- ◆ Winnebago County itself can apply these principles in many ways:
  - Enhancing the effectiveness and utility of the WinGIS;
  - Strengthening its economic development programs;
  - Updating its county highway and rural road program of planning, design and construction;
  - Coordinating its land-use policies and highway programs more closely with the Rock River Water Reclamation District;
  - Engaging in growth management dialogues with all municipalities regarding unincorporated areas adjacent to their borders;
  - Preparing a state-of-the-art comprehensive plan for the county;
  - Updating the county's zoning, subdivision and related ordinances;
  - Training staff and appointed officials;
  - Improving and clarifying development application review procedures;



- 
- Establishing dialogue with adjacent counties on broad regional issues;
  - Supporting eco-system partnerships; and
  - Working with Winnebago County school districts to reduce fiscal disparities.
- ◆ The Council of 100 and the Regional Vision for Community Excellence (RICE) can apply these principles to support their Regional Vision and continuing efforts to implement that vision.
  - ◆ All municipalities can apply these principles to their own comprehensive planning and community development efforts, and update their policies, plans, assistance programs, and regulations as appropriate. Certain municipalities may apply these principles to current opportunities, as in the case of Machesney Park's concern about the future of its regional shopping center and site on IL Route 251.
  - ◆ Certainly, these principles support the quest for commercial airline service at the Rockford Airport and commuter rail or express bus service to employment centers in the Chicago metropolitan area.
  - ◆ IDOT, the Rockford Area Transportation Study and local transit agencies can apply these principles annually to all plans, designs, services, and assistance programs that enhance accessibility and mobility in the county.
  - ◆ The non-profit and private sectors can also apply these principles to their responsibilities. Non-profit organizations can fine tune their actions, funding requests and grant programs to reflect these principles.

- ◆ Private housing organizations, real estate developers and home builders can apply these principles to site selection, site design, and architecture for new projects.
- ◆ Farmers can upgrade their practices and stewardship, and formulate future plans in harmony with these principles.
- ◆ Private citizens can dedicate or sell conservation easements on their property, or form land trusts to preserve natural resources or farmland.
- ◆ Corporations can apply these principles to their own properties or to their support of other entities, e.g. schools and other institutions of learning.
- ◆ Finally, the public schools and other institutions of learning can incorporate these principles into their educational programs.

In summary, these principles can guide the decision-making of virtually all Winnebago County governmental, civic and business leaders.

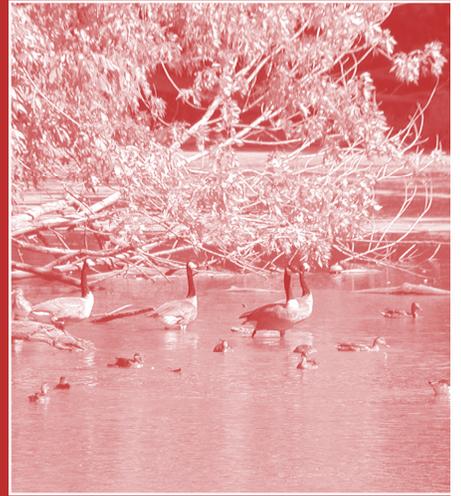
**For more information** regarding the Winnebago County Balanced Growth Initiative, visit [www.growingsensibly.org/winnebago](http://www.growingsensibly.org/winnebago) or contact:

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