

FORWARD



KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

VISION STATEMENT

Kosciusko County, and our local communities, are full of opportunities. Working together, we will use these opportunities to improve our public health, safety, and support services, enhance our lakes, waterways, natural areas and recreational amenities, and support growth in our local businesses, industries and tourism destinations so that our local residents and their communities can continue to thrive.

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PEOPLE GOAL STATEMENT

Moving forward all of Kosciusko County will work together to cultivate a community that:

- 1) Ensures the safety, wellness and success of our local residents, employers and business owners.
 - a) We will **EMBRACE** our strong sense of community and our growing cultural diversity.
 - i) Development programming which assists new residents with entering and becoming part of the community.
 - ii) Increase collaboration and sharing of resources between each community in order to continue annual festivals and other events.
 - iii) Create partnerships between the cultural and religious based organizations within the county to help provide programming for those entering the community.
 - iv) Support local arts and theater initiatives within the community which promote and enhance local culture.
 - b) We will **STRENGTHEN** our local communities and residents by providing increased opportunities for housing, education, child care, workforce development, recreation and personal health and well-being.
 - i) Determine how childcare can be supported from a local government level through funding or policy.
 - ii) Identify the transportation needs of the county's workforce and partners with local industries and organizations to help traffic people to and from their place of employment.
 - iii) Work with developers to construct more workforce housing (\$100k - \$200k) within the county to fill the needs of new home buyers and those working, but not living, within the county.
 - iv) Incentivize the development of housing which caters towards individuals looking to downsize and age-in-place.
 - v) Partner with local organizations and healthcare providers to promote grocery stores and fresh food markets within each community to improve access to produce and shrink food deserts within the county.
 - vi) Create connections between local farmers and schools within the county to increase the availability of fresh produce for students.

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- c) We will **ATTRACT** new residents by providing thriving residential neighborhoods, vibrant commercial and retail destinations, high quality business areas and active civic places.
 - i) Focus commercial development and redevelopment within existing downtowns and commercial corridors within each community.
 - ii) Push for the repurposing of existing industrial sites and downtown buildings through local funding opportunities and zoning incentives.
 - iii) Partner with local employers to identify demanded housing types for the current workforce and incentivize development within each community.
 - iv) Promote the community as a great place to live due to quality amenities, strong community, and low cost of living.
 - v) Coordinate with local emergency services (police, fire, EMS) to expand coverage, if needed, as development occurs and new residents enter the county.

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PLACES GOAL STATEMENT

Moving forward all of Kosciusko County will work together to cultivate a community that:

2) Provides for balanced, planned and orderly growth. (Places)

a) We will **VALUE** our historic and historically significant resources, districts and structures.

- i) Consider updates to local zoning regulations to ensure redevelopment of historic buildings and sites remains consistent with existing neighborhood character and historic context.
- ii) Promote local funding opportunities and educational resources for property owners looking to rehabilitate or preserve their historic structures and storefronts.
- iii) Continue to market the community's historic assets through collaboration between local organizations and governments within the county.
- iv) Identify new locations within the county which could be designated as historic sites or districts in local, state, or national databases.

b) We will **GROW** our mix of land uses to include various housing types, employment opportunities, hospitality facilities and residential support services.

- i) Incentivize housing development which fits the demands of the county's current and future workforce.
- ii) Identify healthcare types not easily accessible for residents living within rural areas of the community and work with local providers to expand access.
- iii) Update zoning and subdivision regulations to allow for mixed-use and higher density residential developments within each community and support the availability of a greater range of housing types and sizes (single-family, duplexes, multi-family, etc.).
- iv) Increase the capacity of code enforcement within each community to ensure compliance with updated maintenance standards.
- v) Identify properties within each community which would benefit from redevelopment or demolition to maintain existing neighborhood character.
- vi) Streamline the application process for individuals or developers looking to build within the county.
- vii) Consider updating land use regulations to allow for alternative housing types such as tiny homes, accessory dwelling units, and manufactured/modular housing to improve housing affordability and availability within the county.

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- c) We will **BALANCE** the needs of our County’s agricultural industries by protecting prime farmland from incompatible development.
 - i) Create new regulations which encourage the conservation of prime agricultural lands within the county.
 - ii) Encourage building practices and infrastructure improvements which limit stormwater runoff and preserve farmland and natural areas.
 - iii) Partner with local organizations, developers, and land owners to develop a set of agricultural regulatory standards for the county which protect farmland and encourage smart growth.
 - iv) Form partnerships between local organizations, educational institutions, and farmers to identify current innovations and sustainable practices for agricultural uses and push for their implementation within Kosciusko County.
 - v) Development and promote tools for the conservation of prime agricultural lands within the county.

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SYSTEMS GOAL STATEMENT

Moving forward all of Kosciusko County will work together to cultivate a community that:

3) Plans for effective public services and facilities.

- a) We will ensure that public and private utility and systems are maintained, improved and modernized so that they can adequately **SERVE** current and future residents and businesses.
 - i) Work with local providers to expand the availability and reliability of broadband services within both urban and rural areas of the county.
 - ii) Ensure each community's water and wastewater infrastructure is able to support growth and development of residential, commercial, and industrial development.
 - iii) Partner with local utility partners to encourage expansion of utilities into underdeveloped areas prime for new industrial development.
 - iv) Encourage each community to complete their responsibilities outlined within the Capital Improvement Plan and identify future infrastructure and facility projects which should be added to future revisions of the plan.
 - v) Identify areas for the strategic extension or expansion of infrastructure capacity to expand the inventory of infill and greenfield shovel-ready sites.
- b) We will maintain and improve our vehicular transportation system to safely and efficiently **MOVE** residents and visitors.
 - i) Continue partnering with local, regional, and state partners to ensure funding for future transportation projects matches the current needs of the community.
 - ii) Partner with INDOT to improve safety along state roadways traveling through the communities.
 - iii) Continue to support the U.S. 30 Corridor study and follow through with implementation of projects and priorities outlined within the study which will improve access and safety throughout the corridor.
 - iv) Continue to repair and enhance high-traffic county roads which connect residents and visitors to employment centers and amenities within Kosciusko County.
- c) Through new routes and facilities, we will **LINK** residents, visitors and communities to one another.
 - i) Develop transportation alternatives, such as bike infrastructure and trails, which can connect to communities outside the county and draw visitors.

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- ii) Build upon existing pedestrian infrastructure to increase pedestrian accessibility within communities and connect residents to destinations.
- iii) Decrease the number of residents within the community who do not have access to broadband.
- iv) Consider implementing complete street policies within the county to encourage the creation of safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure during planned roadway improvement projects and new development.

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DESTINATIONS GOAL STATEMENT

Moving forward all of Kosciusko County will work together to cultivate a community that:

- 4) Creates and nurtures unique destinations for local and regional enjoyment.
 - a) We will **PRESERVE** our unique waterways, natural features and environmentally sensitive areas.
 - i) Consider updates to local zoning ordinances which place higher standards on developments within or adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas.
 - ii) Reinforce the community's rural character through focused development and preservation of natural assets.
 - iii) Identify waterways within the county which may need clearing or other forms of maintenance to ensure they remain usable by the public in the future.
 - iv) Work with IDNR, Grace College, and other local, state, and federal agencies to progress ongoing efforts of environmental preservation within the county.
 - v) Locate waterways within the county which could be used for more active recreation purposes.
 - b) We will develop new opportunities for **ENJOYMENT** by creating, enhancing and activating local parks and open spaces.
 - i) Form a County Parks Board who can take control of initiatives within this plan and guide future projects.
 - ii) Support the creation of local and regional park facilities which fulfill the needs of residents.
 - iii) Collaborate with local parks boards to develop new programming within the communities which will support local needs and attract new visitors.
 - iv) Create new connections between park spaces within the community which allow for pedestrians to access multiple sites without the need of a vehicle.
 - c) We will highlight, **PROMOTE** and educate the community on the unique experiences and features found throughout Kosciusko County.
 - i) Promote the educational opportunities offered by Grace College for residents and visitors interested in exploring the county's natural features from an educational standpoint.
 - ii) Highlight each community's unique assets in promotional campaigns which tie into a county-wide marketing effort.

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- iii) Begin to utilize digital platforms to market what each community has to offer and attract new residents.
- iv) Support the efforts of Clearly Kosciusko and their goal of coordinating county-wide promotional initiatives.
- v) Support local farmers markets within the community and encourage them to expand and include agrotourism related goods and services.

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PARTNERSHIPS GOAL STATEMENT

Moving forward all of Kosciusko County will work together to cultivate a community that:

- 5) Collectively manages local resources and plans for continued reinvestment throughout the County.
 - a) We will **COLLABORATE** with one another to better understand our local assets, concerns and goals.
 - i) Identify resources which can be shared between towns to cut costs for events, utility maintenance, or administrative support.
 - ii) Create a monthly meeting for community leadership to gather and discuss and form possible solutions to the present issues of the community.
 - iii) Encourage community engagement and increased communication between residents, businesses, town staff, and community leaders.
 - iv) Facilitate collaboration between municipalities, transportation agencies and organizations to facilitate the expansion of existing transportation systems and inform residents of their progress and availability.
 - v) Create partnerships between transportation and healthcare providers in order improve facilities within the community and improve resident accessibility to hospitals, doctors' offices, and other healthcare needs.
 - b) We will **SUPPORT** the goals of the County and local communities by providing resources and assistance.
 - i) Continue to strengthen partnerships between towns and county, regional, and statewide governmental bodies which can provide administrative assistance or funding.
 - ii) Recognize the achievements and ongoing actions of community members who are progressing the vision of this plan within their community.
 - iii) Maintain a centralized directory of local organizations within each community who provide support services to residents and can assist with the initiatives outlined within the comprehensive plan.
 - c) We will **INVEST** in policy, programs and capital improvements that support the shared success of our local communities and Kosciusko County.
 - i) Follow the 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan outlined within this document to plan for and implement future facility and infrastructure improvement projects.

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- ii) Update zoning and subdivision regulations to lower barriers to new development or redevelopment within each community.
- iii) Identify and enact policies which will help preserve the county's rural nature and protect natural assets.
- iv) Evenly distribute resources throughout the county so no individual community is unable to progress their future initiatives.
- v) Develop programming in coordination with local schools to introduce students to civic leadership and encourage them to enter leadership roles within their communities.