



**DRAFT**

# Meade County

## Comprehensive Plan



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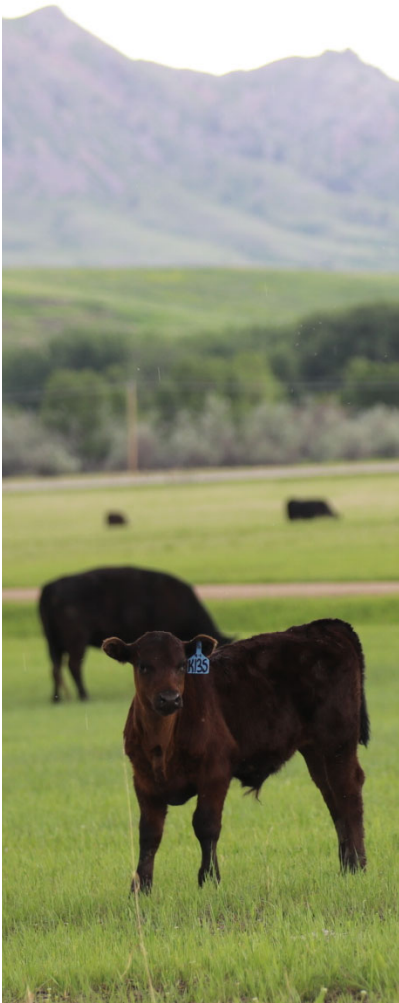
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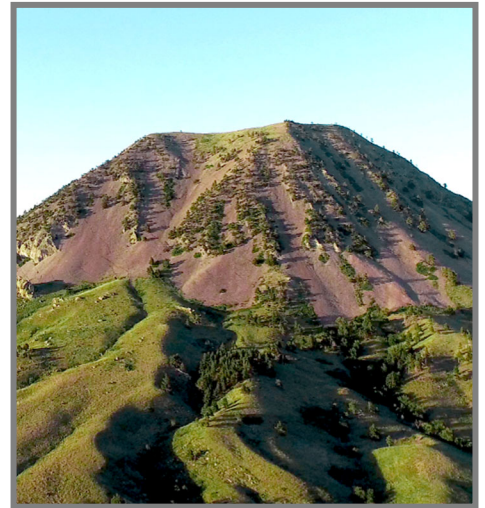
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## Introduction

### This is Meade County

Located on the western side of South Dakota, Meade County is comprised mainly of natural prairies and touches into the eastern section of the Black Hills National Forest. Meade County is the largest county by area in South Dakota with a total of 3,483 square miles and includes five incorporated communities: Box Elder (which resides in both Meade and Pennington County), Faith, Piedmont, Sturgis, and Summerset, with populations ranging from around 350 to slightly over 7,000.

Meade County was established in 1889 as part of the western-eastern division of Lawrence County, and received its name from the Fort Meade Cavalry Post, established in 1877. The post was named after General George C. Meade, who served as a union commander at the Battle of Gettysburg.<sup>1</sup> Part of the original Fort Meade area now houses the Black Hills National Veterans Administration and training facilities for the South Dakota Army National Guard and the Army National Guard Officer Candidate School.<sup>2</sup> Other parts of the original fort are managed by the Bureau of Land Management as the Fort Meade Recreation Area, including the Fort Meade Cavalry Post, Old Fort Meade Museum, Fort Meade Post Cemetery, and a portion of the Centennial Trail.<sup>3</sup>

The Ellsworth Air Force Base is also an important feature in the county. Established in 1942, the base resides in both Meade and Pennington County, and serves as one of the only two bases for the B-1B Lancer.<sup>4</sup> In 2019, it was announced Ellsworth AFB would be the home of the B-21 Raider. As of 2022, an estimated total of 7,728 active military, spouses, children, and civilian contractors were associated with the Base. It is anticipated the B-21 Raiders will increase this number by roughly 2,500 by 2035.

Meade County has several prominent features and attractions. One of the most notable features is Bear Butte, a site which holds spiritual and cultural importance to Native Americans and also offers a place for various recreational activities. To the western part of the county, the Black Hills National Forest adds to the area's scenic beauty and provides several opportunities for outdoor recreation. The internationally renowned Sturgis Motorcycle Rally attracts approximately half a million visitors to the region each year.

The county also has a strong agricultural heritage. The landscape is primarily dominated by native grasslands, making it ideal for farming and ranching. Urban growth has been steadily increasing, welcoming new residents and businesses into the county. The mix of history, natural assets, vast prairies, and suburban areas attribute to the unique identity of Meade County.

## **Purpose of a Comprehensive County Plan**

*“The comprehensive plan shall be for the purpose of protecting and guiding the physical, social, economic, and environmental development of the county; to protect the tax base; to encourage a distribution of population or mode of land utilization that will facilitate the economical and adequate provisions of transportation, roads, water supply, drainage, sanitation, education, recreation, or other public requirements; to lessen governmental expenditure; and to conserve and develop natural resources.”*

**-South Dakota Codified Law 11-2-12**

### **Purpose of Plan**

The Meade County Comprehensive Plan serves as a long-range guiding document for growth and development. This Plan aims to address a variety of challenges and opportunities in Meade County through the creation of goals and actionable steps. The Meade County Comprehensive Plan should be considered as a living document to be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects changes in the county. The Plan is also designed to be user-friendly and is intended to provide direction and support for decision-makers, the general public, and developers, in a shared vision for Meade County.

This Plan does not serve as a regulating document such as ordinances, zoning, building codes, or capital improvement plans. Rather, these regulating documents should be created and implemented based on guidance of the comprehensive plan.

### **Creation of the Plan**

The creation of this Plan was directed by input received from the public throughout the planning process. The broad range of stakeholders and community members involved in the planning process helped to create a plan that is reflective of the wants and needs of those with a vested interest in Meade County. During the drafting of this Plan, other local planning documents were taken into consideration including Meade County Comprehensive Plan 2010, Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) Study 2008, Meade County Transportation Plan 2022, Meade County Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2009, Meade County Mitigation Plan 2021, and Meade County Ordinances.

## **Planning History**

Meade County began initiating land use planning in the 1970s and continued expanding on different planning mechanisms thought out the years. Some of the key planning tools used to help direct growth and development are the County’s ordinances. Meade County’s Subdivision Ordinance, created in 1980, serves as one of the primary land use planning tools throughout Meade County. To enhance their planning efforts, the County began utilizing geographical informational systems (GIS). Meade County continues to update plans and ordinances as growth and development continues. Most recently, the Meade County Transportation Plan 2016 was updated and formally adopted in 2022. Additionally, the incorporated communities of Box Elder, Piedmont, Sturgis, and Summerset utilize their platting jurisdiction, contributing to land use planning in Meade County.

## The Process

In the fall of 2021, discussions began regarding the need to update the County’s Comprehensive Plan due to the various challenges from the ongoing rapid growth in the county. In November 2021, the Meade County Board of Commissioners voted to enlist the help of Black Hills Council of Local Governments (BHCLG) in updating the County’s Comprehensive Plan.

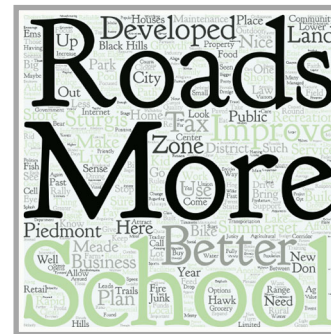
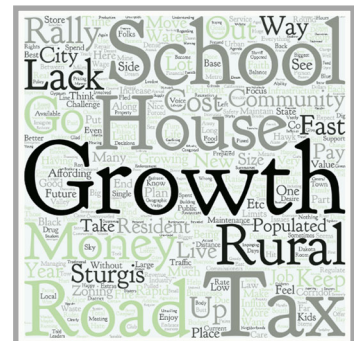
Throughout the process, BHCLG worked with the Meade County Planning Commission and the County’s Equalization and Planning Department. BHCLG provided updates to the Planning Commission during their regularly scheduled meetings. The project website was created to serve as a resource providing the public with updates on the planning process. Work on the comprehensive plan began the winter of 2021 -2022. The kick-off of the plan update involved a presentation outlining the plan’s purpose, process, and timeline.

From May 2, 2022, through June 30, 2022, the Comprehensive Plan Survey was made available to the public. The purpose of the survey was to gather public input regarding opportunities and challenges facing Meade County. The survey touched on several topics such as County services, housing, transportation, and land use. A total of 292 stakeholders participated in the survey.



**What do you like most about Meade County?**

**What are the biggest challenges facing Meade County?**



**What improvements would make Meade County even better?**



From mid-May to early June of 2022, BHCLG hosted community meetings around the county including Box Elder, Faith, Piedmont, Sturgis, and Union Center. These meetings included an informative presentation on the purpose and planning process for the comprehensive plan. Participants were asked to share their input on various topics, such as what should be preserved and identifying challenges and opportunities in Meade County. A total of 52 stakeholders attended these meetings.



In October 2022, a profile of the county was presented to the Planning Commission. The purpose of the profile was to provide an overview of the current conditions in Meade County. The profile consisted of a collection of data on Meade County, including trends in demographics, housing, industry, employment, incomes, and education. The data made comparisons with surrounding counties and South Dakota to examine the changes in the last decade.



The Visioning Meetings were held in November of 2022, in Sturgis, Piedmont, and Faith, with a total of 48 attendees. Participants were presented with an update on the comprehensive plan, a brief overview of the survey results, and asked to share ideas on their vision for the future of Meade County.



A draft of the comprehensive plan was presented to the public for review in the winter of 2024. Meetings were held in Sturgis, Piedmont, and Faith to receive public comments on the draft. Comments were given to the Planning Commission to discuss any needed revisions. On April 1, 2024 and again on June 3, 2024, with revisions requested by Meade County Board of Commissioners, the plan was presented to the Meade County Planning Commission to make a recommendation of approval to the Meade County Board of Commissioners. The Meade County Board of Commissioners formally adopted the Meade County Comprehensive Plan on [date].





## Growth

Since the 1960's Meade County has experienced increased growth. From 2010 to 2020, Meade County's population increased 17%, making it the second highest rapidly growing county in South Dakota.<sup>5</sup> With the exception of Faith, all incorporated cities in the county have seen an increase in population over the last decade.

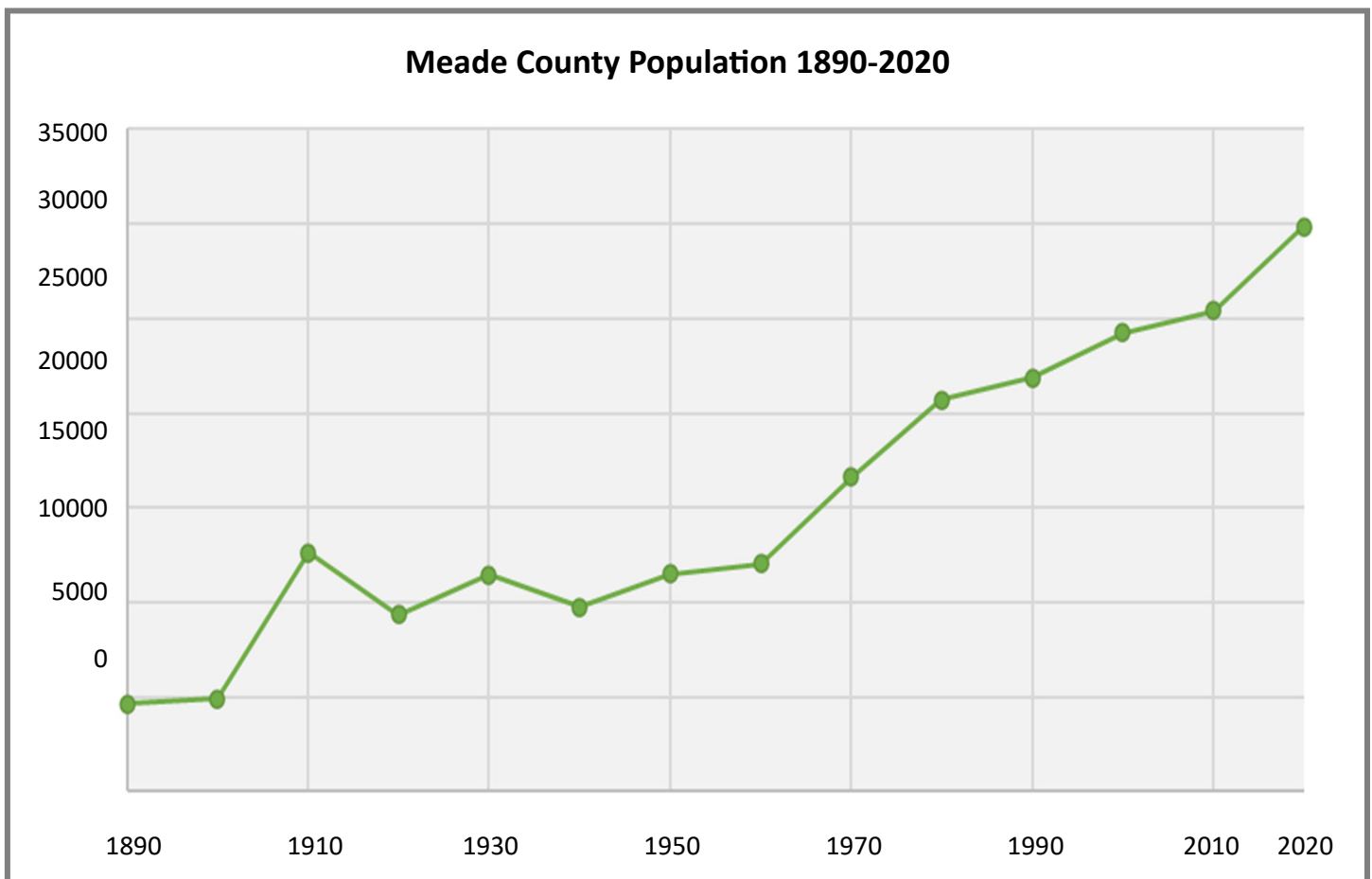
A majority of residents reside on the western side of the county, near the communities of Box Elder, Piedmont, Sturgis, Summerset, and north of Rapid City, making up around 53% of the county's total population. Rapid City, located in Pennington County, has greatly influenced growth in the southwestern part of the county. Black Hawk, Meade County's largest unincorporated community with a population 3,026, is located along Interstate 90 just south of Summerset and north of Rapid City. This community has seen a 4.6% increase in population over the last ten years.<sup>6</sup>

Population Increase 2010-2020				
Meade County	Pennington County	Lawrence County	Butte County	South Dakota
17%	8%	7%	1%	9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Decennial Census 2020

Unincorporated and Incorporated 2020 Population Totals	
Meade County Unincorporated	14,145
Box Elder (in Meade County)	4,377
Faith	367
Piedmont	971
Sturgis	7,020
Summerset	2,972
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>29,852</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Decennial Census 2020

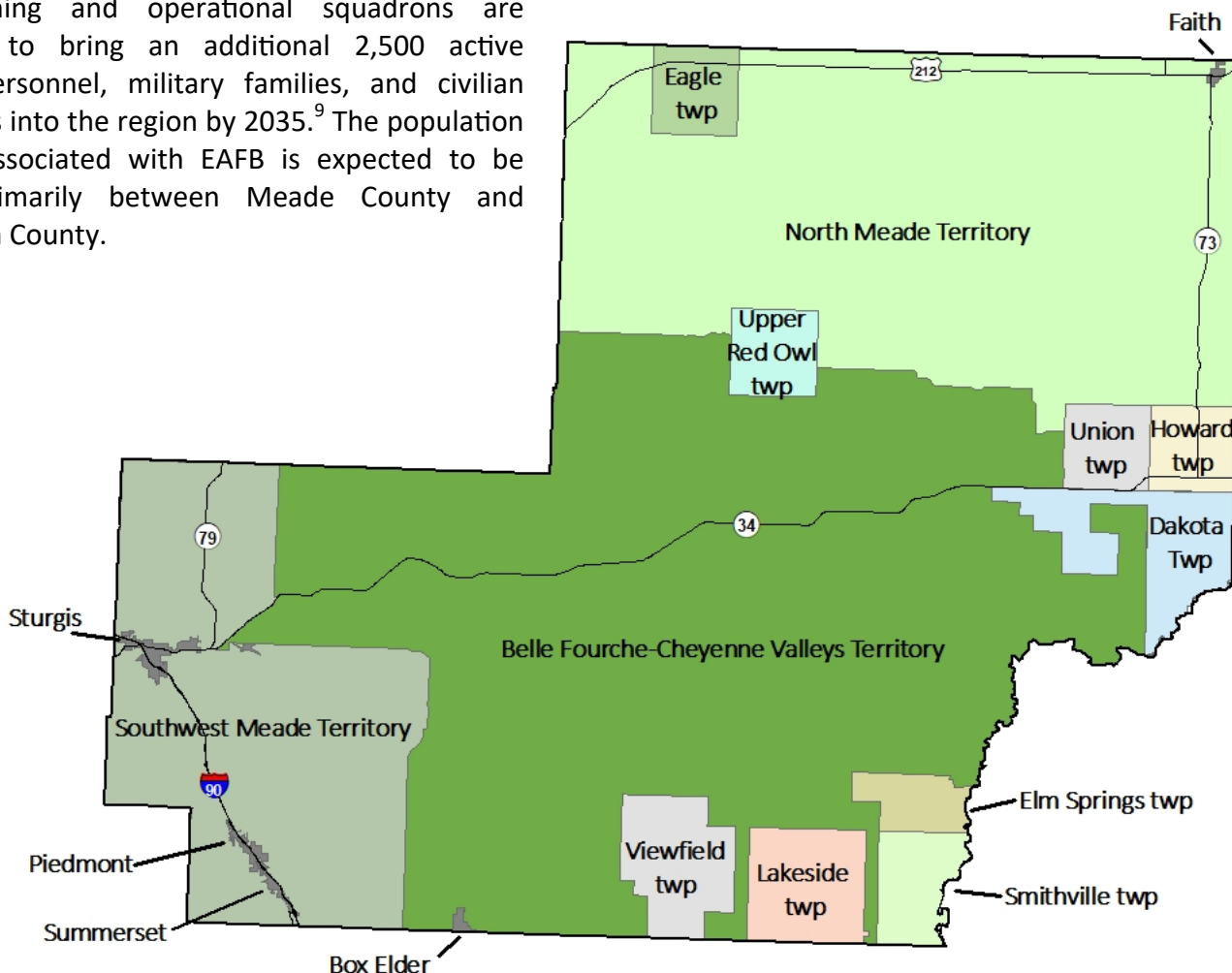


Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Decennial Census 1890-2020

There are a total of twelve organized townships in Meade County. The Census Bureau also recognized three unorganized territories in Meade County, which were used for statistical data in this plan. The Southwest Meade Territory located along the western side of Meade County, makes up 37% of the overall population. The remaining parts of Meade County including the other territories, townships, and the city of Faith, are sparsely populated making up around 10% of the total population. While Faith has seen a modest decrease of 12.8% in population from 2010 to 2020, it is estimated based on territory and township populations, growth has increased in these areas by 1%.<sup>7</sup>

Meade County’s population growth is expected to continue, adding between 2,100 to 6,270 people over the next decade. The projection of growth is based on the anticipated rate for the State of South Dakota (7%) and Meade County (21%).<sup>8</sup> In addition to these projections, Ellsworth Air Force Base (EAFB) is also expected to impact these numbers. The new B-21 training and operational squadrons are estimated to bring an additional 2,500 active military personnel, military families, and civilian contractors into the region by 2035.<sup>9</sup> The population increase associated with EAFB is expected to be shared primarily between Meade County and Pennington County.

Townships and Unorganized Territories 2020 Population	
Dakota Township	53
Eagle Township	17
Elm Springs Township	23
Howard Township	14
Lakeside Township	71
Smithville Township	25
Union Township	18
Upper Red Owl Township	11
Viewfield Township	NA
Belle Fourche-Cheyenne Valleys Territory	2,394
North Meade Territory	402
Southwest Meade Territory	11,117
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Decennial Census 2020	



## Growth Challenges & Opportunities

It is evident based on the continued population growth, that Meade County is a desirable place to live. As people continue to be drawn to the area, it is important to consider the different challenges and opportunities associated with growth. As Meade County continues to grow and develop, there is the potential to attract new businesses and industries into the region. However, the increase of growth and development can also lead to various issues such as inadequate infrastructure and services, loss of open spaces, unaffordable housing, environmental degradation and sprawl pattern development often associated with low-density residential development, lack of town centers, and car-dependency with road networks with poor access from place to place.

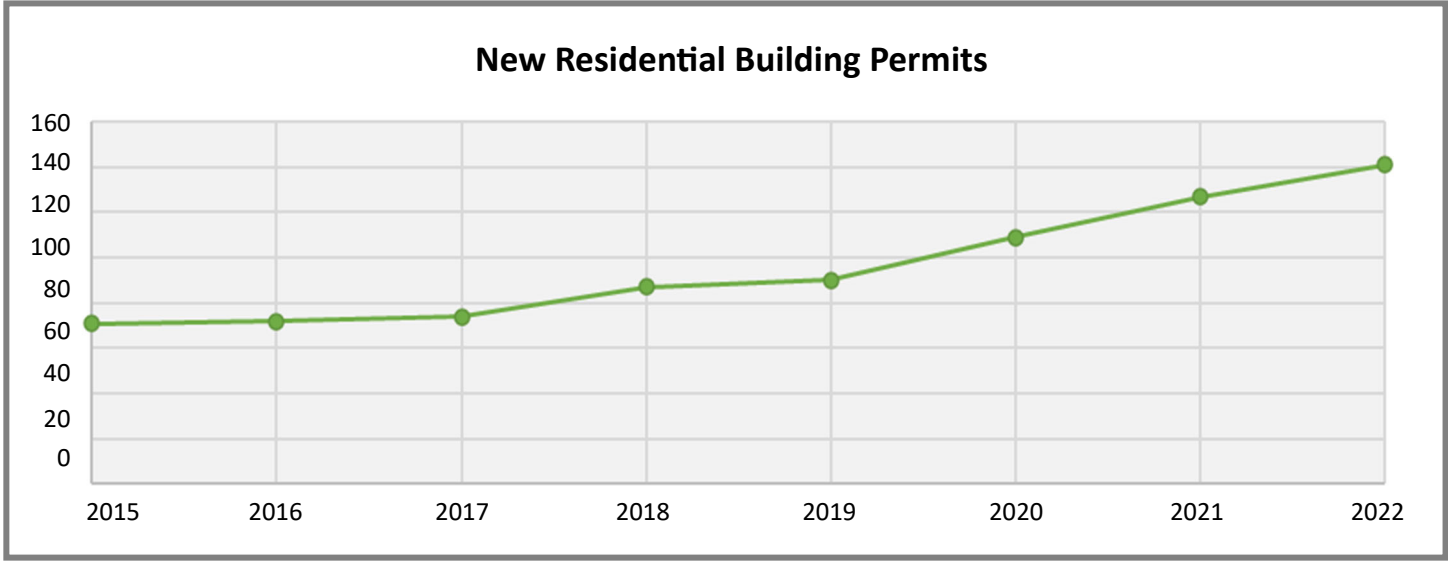
#1 Reason you live in Meade County	
Access to nature	People
Rural	Amenities
Beauty	Peace and Quiet
Diverse: Rural & Urban	Welcoming
Four Seasons	Safe & Security
Rec Opportunities	Family Friendly
Responses received from Community Meetings	

As an area experiences growth, the demand on infrastructure increases. Roads, public services and facilities, sewer or septic systems, and water supply play an important role in many aspects of growth and development. Growth brings the opportunity to attract new businesses and job opportunities. Lack of infrastructure can hinder growth by creating higher costs for new development and discourages new businesses from locating to the area.

**Urban Sprawl:** the spreading of urban developments (such as houses and shopping centers) on undeveloped land near a city.  
-Merriam-Webster Dictionary

As new development occurs it will expand on undeveloped lands which can serve as valuable areas for agricultural, recreation, and ecological resources, and help provide clean air and water. Development can also create a higher risk of negative impacts from natural hazards such as flooding, wildfire, and building on unsuitable geological features and soil types.

Rapid growth can also put a strain on the supply and demand of housing. Public input revealed one of the greatest challenges facing Meade County is the lack of housing. From 2010 to 2021 there was an increase of 1,443 households but only 1,256 new units were added. Since 2015, Meade County has seen a steady increase in the total number of new residential building permits issued, nearly doubling the number from 2015 to 2022.<sup>10</sup>



Meade County, like much of the United States and South Dakota, is facing issues with a lack of affordable housing. As of 2021, Meade County had the seventh highest median home value in South Dakota. The median home value in Meade County was slightly less than Pennington and Lawrence County, but higher than both Butte and South Dakota. Meade County residents also saw a higher median rent than all surrounding counties and South Dakota.<sup>11</sup>

Rapid growth without a plan can jeopardize the values people love most about Meade County. Planning for future growth and development contributes to the overall wellbeing of residents, supports economic prosperity, helps to protect the environment, and preserves the character of Meade County. As Meade County develops, it is imperative that its assets are protected.

**Housing Cost-Burdened:** A household is considered “housing cost-burdened” when 30% or more of their household income is spent on housing costs, including rent, mortgage payments, and other housing costs.

-Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

High housing costs can impact residents’ overall well-being and quality of life. In 2022, the median sales price for homes in Meade County was \$365,310. Areas with higher housing cost-burden may experience a reduced overall well-being due to financial hardships.<sup>12</sup> When compared with surrounding counties, Meade County has an overall lower percentage housing cost-burden for households with and without mortgages. However, compared with overall South Dakota, Meade County homeowners had a higher percentage considered housing cost-burdened. Similarly, renters in Meade County saw a lower percentage of those considered housing cost-burdened compared to surrounding counties, but slightly higher compared to South Dakota.<sup>13</sup>

Meade County Homes Sales 2022	
	Median Sale Price
<b>Residential</b>	\$365,310
<b>Mobile Home</b>	\$36,750

Source: Meade County Dept of Equalization

Median Home Value and Rent 2021		
	Median Home Value	Median Rent
Meade County	\$214,600	\$1,002
Pennington County	\$259,400	\$975
Lawrence County	\$237,200	\$837
Butte County	\$160,000	\$896
South Dakota	\$187,800	\$809

Source: 2021 ACS 5-year Estimate

Housing Cost Burdened			
	Housing Cost Burdened as Percent of Renters	Housing Cost Burdened As Percentage With Mortgage	Housing Cost Burdened As Percentage Without Mortgage
Meade County	39.2%	28.6%	17.7%
Pennington County	42.2%	34.5%	18.1%
Lawrence County	40.5%	33.3%	15.2%
Butte County	42.9%	35.1%	16.5%
South Dakota	38.9%	21.4%	10.3%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-year Estimate

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## Meade County is known for its...

Character: Safe and welcoming communities, independent spirit, and rural way of life.

Assets: Desirable living, access to amenities, and having room to grow.

Environment: Vast and natural landscapes, environmental assets, and wide-open spaces.

## Meade County envisions a future where...

Rural charm and agricultural traditions are maintained through minimizing negative impacts on natural resources, pristine prairies, and healthy forests.

Infrastructure and services can support growth and prosperous economic opportunities.

Quality of life is sustained by balancing preservation and growth.

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## Vision

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The purpose of the vision statement is to provide a common long-term vision of the future of Meade County. The vision provides the framework for the aspirations and values of Meade County and helps serve as a roadmap for future growth and development. The vision statement was crafted through input received from the public throughout the planning process, to create a vision that embodies the shared values, wants, and needs for Meade County.



Courtesy: Talbot Wiczorek

# Economic Health

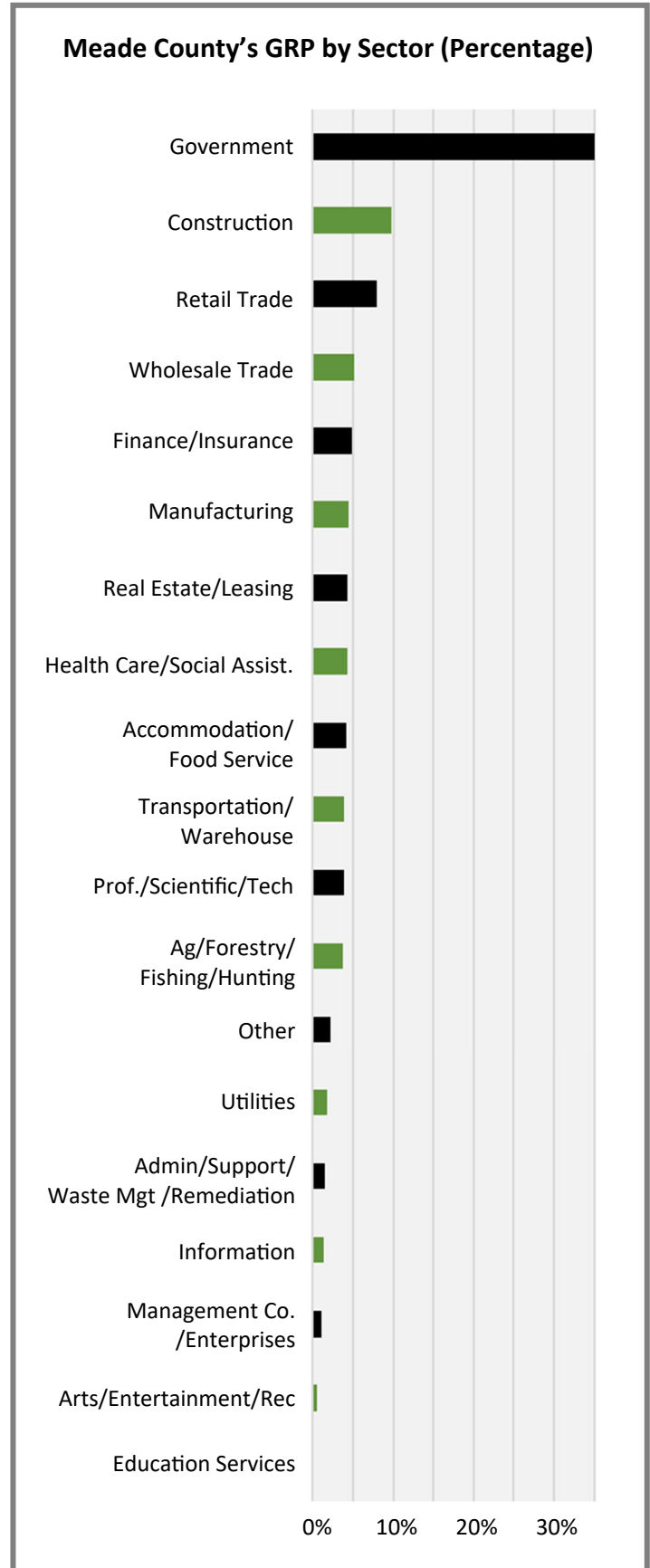
Growth brings the potential of creating economic opportunities, such as attracting new businesses and industries, creating more jobs, and the expansion of existing businesses. A healthy economy is important for the overall well-being and prosperity for Meade County residents. A robust economy also helps generate revenue for public services and infrastructure and attracts investment into the area.

## Foundations

When working to develop a healthy and sustainable economy, consideration must be given to both the diversification and supporting of existing sectors. Meade County's sectors such as agriculture, government, and tourism have helped shape the county's history and character, and serve as solid foundations for the county's economic health.

In 2022, the sectors with the top three highest number of jobs, working full-time and part-time, were government, construction, and retail trade. In 2022, government was listed as the top sector by gross regional product (GRP), making up 35% or \$384.2 million of the county's total GRP. By comparison, the second highest by GRP, construction, makes up only 8% or \$107.1 million of the total GRP in Meade County.<sup>2</sup>

Jobs classified under government were noticeably higher, making up 34% of the overall number of jobs in Meade County. Government includes any federal, state, or local government, and excludes any privately owned industries. This category also includes any local educational facilities that are not privately owned. This is proportionally higher than the national average.<sup>1</sup> Two of the top five employers in Meade County fall into the category of government: Fort Meade Veterans Administration and Ellsworth Air Force Base.



Source: Lightcast 2022

The Black Hills National Forest provides various recreational opportunities and attracts tourism to the region. The Black Hills is estimated to bring in around three to four million visitors annually. In 2022, Meade County saw roughly \$56.2 million in visitor spending.<sup>3</sup> One of the greatest draws to the county is the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. The event takes place over ten days every year in August and brings around half a million visitors from all over the world.

Despite the tourism industry’s reputation of producing a large amount of seasonal, part-time, and low-wage jobs, it still serves as an important industry in the county. Meade County's landscapes, historical sites, and recreational opportunities will continue to attract tourism to the area. Public input received during the planning process revealed an interest of expanding this industry beyond the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. The tourism industry has potential to promote and boost other industries such as agriculture, cultural heritage, or recreational activities. The County should encourage partnerships between tourism stakeholders and local businesses to help display the county's unique offerings.

The agricultural industry plays an important role in shaping the county's economy. In 2022, the agricultural industry (including farming, ranching, forestry, fishing, and hunting) provided around three percent of the county’s gross regional product (GRP),<sup>4</sup> and in 2021, comprised eight percent of the total workers in Meade County.<sup>5</sup> A majority of Meade County's land is utilized for agricultural use. The conversion of these lands for suburban development can lead to a decrease of agricultural productivity and activities, and has the potential to impact the agricultural economy of the county. Considerations should be given to help reduce the negative impacts development can have on these productive agricultural lands.

The agricultural industry in Meade County is deeply rooted in the county's identity. Farmers and ranchers have continued their traditions and way of life through many generations. The younger generation’s notable declining involvement is a

concern of those within the agricultural community. This trend could be correlated in part to rising costs associated with starting and operating an agricultural business, especially with the increasing costs of available agricultural lands. As development continues to expand, those seeking to acquire agricultural land often find themselves priced out of the market.

To help preserve and support this industry for future generations, Meade County should create a supportive environment for young farmers and ranchers. This can be achieved through methods such as encouraging collaboration between federal, state, and local partners to provide support through education, financial assistance programs, and land preservation.

### Economic Diversity

Industry diversity in the county can bring several advantages as it helps reduce dependency on a single industry and lessens the impact of economic downturn. Some of the economic challenges facing Meade County are retaining youth, lack of high-paying professional jobs, availability of infrastructure to attract businesses, proximity to larger urban areas, and unaffordable housing.

Meade County is in a unique position in that a majority of the population resides within a reasonable commuting distance to larger urban cities, Rapid City and Spearfish, both of which are located outside of the county. In 2021, fifty-five percent of Meade County residents worked outside of the county, which is a considerably higher percentage than that of the surrounding counties.

<b>Working Outside County of Residence</b>	
Meade County	55%
Pennington County	3%
Lawrence County	17%
Butte County	35%
Source: 2021 ACS 5-year Estimates	

<b>Attracting Business and Industry in Meade County</b>	
<b>Workforce Housing</b>	Housing costs can play a role in the ability of businesses to attract and retain employees.
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Availability and quality of infrastructure, such as transportation and utilities, can impact the desirability of the county.
<b>Skilled Workforce</b>	A skilled workforce helps to provide necessary expertise and talent needed to attract businesses and buildup the regions economic growth.
<b>Quality of Life</b>	Quality of life is an important consideration when businesses look to locate in an area. Factors such as recreational opportunities, cost of living, schools, and safety attribute to the desirability of the county.

Several cities and surrounding communities in Meade County have been referred to as bedroom communities. This is a term used to describe a residential area where a significant amount of residents work or access services outside of their communities. Some factors often seen behind the creation of bedroom communities is the lack of well-paying jobs, limited job opportunities, and desire for a rural lifestyle.

The job market in bedroom communities is often limited, with fewer high-skilled or high-paying job opportunities, often leading to skilled and professional workers seeking employment opportunities elsewhere. Working to encourage and attract industries aimed toward higher-paying jobs, such as innovation or tech hubs, could help to retain the county’s workforce, especially in bedroom communities.

When considering where to locate a business or industry, many companies take into consideration the area’s overall quality of life. For this reason, it is important to create an environment that can attract potential investors into the area, such as a skilled-workforce, available and updated infrastructure, access to amenities, and a reasonable cost of living.<sup>6</sup>

The overall cost of living can be impacted by the lack of workforce housing. With limited affordable housing options, it can become challenging to attract and retain employees. The County should encourage diversity in housing options, especially workforce housing.

The development of a skilled workforce through training programs and with a supportive environment for entrepreneurship can also help to promote economic growth in Meade County. This not only helps to attract business and industry into the county, but also encourages younger generations to stay in the area.

The availability and quality of infrastructure plays a role in attracting business and industry. Promoting economic development towards areas with established infrastructure can help to attract businesses by reducing development costs.

Having a diverse economy also has the potential to create jobs and business opportunities and attract investment into the county. Meade County should work not only with economic development groups to utilize their expertise, but also make a collaborative effort with educational institutions, community stakeholders, and government agencies to attract investment and business growth into the county.



# Goals & Policies

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**GOAL I:** Meade County will work to establish a strategic and supportive approach for economic development to attract investment, create well compensated jobs, and ensure economic prosperity.

**Policy 1.1:**

Pursue a comprehensive economic approach by pursuing both diversification and retention to sustain existing businesses and attract new industries into Meade County.

**Policy 1.2:**

Explore options to create a supportive environment for the next generation of farmers and ranchers through local, state, and federal partnerships.

**Policy 1.3:**

Invest in infrastructure to attract and support new businesses and industry to the county, in locations best suited for economic growth.

**Policy 1.4:**

Continue to collaborate with economic development groups, education institutions, stakeholders, and local jurisdictions to build a thriving economic environment for the county.

**Policy 1.5:**

Support housing that is geared towards providing stable and affordable housing options to attract and retain a diverse workforce.

**Policy 1.6:**

Encourage entrepreneurship and training programs to support a skilled work-force to meet the needs of high-paying jobs in the county.

# Infrastructure and Services

Meade County provides a range of infrastructure and services to meet the needs of its residents, businesses, and visitors. While the type and amount of infrastructure and services provided directly from the County is limited, Meade County does work closely with private companies and various government agencies in providing access to clean water, maintained and well-connected transportation networks, and efficient emergency services. These resources contribute to the livability and functionality of the county.

Infrastructure and services are important parts of the county's overall well-being and economic success. Current residents and businesses may experience a decrease in their quality of life if existing facilities are strained or unable to accommodate growth and development. As the county continues to grow, it is essential that infrastructure and services can keep up with growth.<sup>1</sup>

It is important for the County to evaluate the associated costs and benefits of services and infrastructure as it pertains to urban sprawl.<sup>2</sup> While additional costs associated with urban growth are often offset by new taxpayers, investments in infrastructure and services should be realistic and recoverable within a reasonable timeframe to ensure costs are not placed on current taxpayers. Meade County should work with developers to ensure they contribute to the costs of infrastructure and services. The County should also encourage growth in or near existing developed areas to utilize existing infrastructure and services.

## Satellite Services

Meade County works to provide service to all residents. Due to the size of the county, access to certain services for more rural communities can be challenging. For this reason, the City of Faith currently serves as a satellite office for title and licensing for the County. This service allows better access to county services for rural communities, which would otherwise need to travel over an hour

in some locations. The County should continue to provide satellite services to rural communities. As growth and development continues, further assessment for the need of future services or satellite locations may be needed.

## Water & Wastewater

As per South Dakota State Law, counties cannot own a water or wastewater treatment or distribution system. In addition, Meade County does not have a water district. A majority of residents receive their water supply from community/public water systems, rural water systems, or private wells. The Madison Aquifer serves as the primary source of public water supplies. A majority of residents rely on septic systems for their wastewater needs.

The County works to protect the water quality and quantity through various ordinances and state and federal regulations. The County's Ordinance 52 Storm Water Management and Water Quality and Ordinance 33 Wastewater Treatment and Water Systems serve to help protect water quality from contamination. Additionally, County Ordinance 20 requires certain subdivision densities to have a central sewage system and community public water system. Similarly, some subdivisions must also provide a water and wastewater capacity plan, which maintain South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SDDANR) compliance, and show technical, managerial, and financial capacity.

Water supplies and conditions do not recognize boundaries, it is recommended Meade County collaborates in a regional effort with surrounding jurisdictions and SDDANR to address shared water challenges, and improve resource utilization and water management.

## Emergency Services

Emergency services are vital to ensuring the safety and well-being of residents and visitors of Meade County. These services include the sheriff’s office, fire, and ambulance. Meade County has a total of eight fire districts, eighteen fire response areas, and eight ambulance response areas. Meade County provides services for emergency management and law enforcement. The County’s Emergency Manager coordinates and oversees emergency efforts for preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. Other services such as fire and ambulance services are volunteer based.

A concern facing the region for emergency service roles is the lack of volunteers, especially in the younger generations. Growth and development in the county will cause higher demand for these essential services, causing longer response times and lower quality of safety. The sustainability of emergency services must be considered when considering new growth and development in the county, in order for emergency services to provide adequate services.

The Sturgis Motorcycle Rally also presents various challenges for public safety in Meade County. While the Rally is focused within Sturgis city limits, the impacts are felt throughout the Black Hills. Meade County also has several large campgrounds and entertainment venues which are often fully utilized during this event. The sudden influx of visitors in the area creates a higher demand for emergency services. Meade County should continue to ensure the safety of residents and attendees of this event, while also working to limit government expenditures directly related to the Rally.

## Educational Institutions

Rapid growth and sprawl can place strain on existing school facilities, creating overcrowding and inadequate resources. Sprawl development patterns can create longer commuting distances for students. Location and capacity need to be carefully considered to ensure accessibility and adequate educational resources. The County should work with the school systems to evaluate the need and location of future facilities.

**Public Transportation:** Meade County does not provide any countywide public transportation system. Members of the community are served through a non-profit organization, Prairie Hills Transit, which mainly serves the western side of Meade County.

## Transportation

Transportation is a vital element in providing safe and efficient mobility options for goods and people in Meade County. A transportation system should aim to be sustainable, well-maintained, and meet the needs of all users. Meade County currently has 1,969 miles of roads throughout the county, of which roughly 48% are maintained by the County. The remaining roadways include federal, township, city, road district, and state-maintained roadways. Meade County’s projected 2023 budget for the highway department accounted for roughly 36% of the grand total County expenses. This percentage has continued to steadily increase over the years with a 38% increase from 2010 to 2023.

Meade County Fire Response	
Black Hawk VFD	Mud Butte VFD
Box Elder VFD	Nemo VFD
Doty VFD	New Underwood VFD
EAFB Fire Dept.	North Haines VFD
Elm Springs VFD	Opal VFD
Enning VFD	Piedmont VFD
Faith VFD	Sturgis VFD
Ft. Meade Fire Dept.	Vale VFD
Hereford VFD	Whitewood VFD

Meade County EMS Response	
EAFB Ambulance	Piedmont Ambulance
Enning Ambulance	Rapid City Ambulance
Faith Ambulance	Sturgis Ambulance
Newell Ambulance	Wall Ambulance



The pattern of growth and development can impact the cost, availability, and quality of provided services.<sup>3</sup> Meade County is currently experiencing sprawl pattern development near the I-90 corridor and expanding eastward, creating an increased need for the development or improvement of roads, road maintenance, demand for snow removal, and longer response times for emergency services.

The need for more efficient snow removal, enhancement of safety, and road and bridge maintenance are leading concerns for Meade County. For the areas of Meade County experiencing little to no growth, particularly areas east and north of Box Elder, improvement for road maintenance is the top priority.

To help lessen the burden on existing transportation systems as the county experiences growth and increased amounts of traffic, transportation infrastructure and services must keep pace. Several issues arise, such as the inability to maintain existing systems or the need to expand or increase a system's ability to handle increased traffic needs brought on by new developments. Directing growth towards existing development and working to avoid sprawl pattern development can help to alleviate costs and strain placed on transportation infrastructure and various services.

Some older developments in the county are also a concern. The County's Ordinance 20 currently requires subdivisions with 20 or more lots to have secondary access and egress. However, there are several older subdivisions in Meade County that were established prior to the ordinance's update, leaving many without secondary access. This can create increased congestion and impact evacuation routes. Older subdivisions should be encouraged to develop secondary or emergency access.

The County is a participant of the Rapid City MPO, and works with surrounding jurisdictions to provide safe and reliable transportation systems and services. To help address challenges presented by growth in the area, it is important for Meade County to continue working with surrounding jurisdictions to better coordinate growth management efforts.

**Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO):**

Meade County is part of the Rapid City Metropolitan Planning Organization. This organization works with various transportation agencies and stakeholders, including members from both Pennington and Meade County. The MPO boundary includes the southwestern part of Meade County, including Box Elder, Summerset, and Piedmont.<sup>4</sup>

In 2022, the County worked to update the Meade County Master Transportation Plan, designed to guide transportation policy through 2045. The Master Transportation Plan was created through collaboration between Meade County, South Dakota Department of Transportation, and the Rapid City Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Master Transportation Plan focuses primarily on the unincorporated areas in Meade County but does consider other transportation systems outside of the County’s jurisdiction where appropriate.

The Master Transportation Plan and the Meade County Comprehensive Plan are important planning documents used to help guide development and growth of the county. The Master Transportation Plan specifically focuses on transportation infrastructure and systems. To create a cohesive and integrated approach to planning, the goals and strategies outlined in the Master Transportation

Plan should be complementary to the Meade County Comprehensive Plan. Funding for transportation projects can also be a challenge. The County should explore alternative funding sources such as grants for projects listed in the Master Transportation Plan.



**Listed are the goals provided in the Meade County Master Transportation Plan. More detail on the strategies associated with each goal can be found in the Master Transportation Plan.**

<b>Meade County Master Transportation Plan 2022 Goals</b>	
<b>1. Safety</b>	<b>Goal:</b> Create a transportation system that incorporates safety and security throughout all modes and for all users.
<b>2. System Preservation</b>	<b>Goal:</b> Proactively preserve and maintain existing transportation system infrastructure.
<b>3. Mobility, Reliability, &amp; Accessibility</b>	<b>Goal:</b> Create a transportation system that optimizes mobility and connectivity, allowing users to move from one place to another in a direct route with minimal travel times and delays.
<b>4. Economic Vitality</b>	<b>Goal:</b> Create a transportation system that supports economic competitiveness, vitality, and prosperity by providing for the efficient movement of people and goods.
<b>5. Environmental Sustainability</b>	<b>Goal:</b> Prioritize environmental stewardship in the development, maintenance, and operation of the transportation system.
<b>6. Innovative Transportation Technologies</b>	<b>Goal:</b> Utilize new and innovative transportation technologies to create new opportunities and increase mobility and access.

# Goals & Policies

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**GOAL II: Meade County will continue to assess and improve its infrastructure and services to create an environment that promotes the well-being and prosperity of all individuals.**

**Policy 2.1:**

Ensure infrastructure and services adequately support increased demands for growth and development.

**Policy 2.2:**

Encourage developers to invest in infrastructure and services associated with new developments.

**Policy 2.3:**

Continue support for rural communities by maintaining the use of satellite services and periodically evaluating the need to expand services or locations to meet demands.

**Policy 2.4:**

Work with surrounding jurisdictions and state partners in a collaborative regional effort to protect the region's water quality and quantity.

**Policy 2.5:**

Consider the sustainability of emergency services when planning for new growth and development to maintain adequate services.

**Policy 2.6:**

Maintain the safety of residents and attendees of the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, while implementing measures to manage government costs associated with the Rally.

**Policy 2.7:**

Coordinate with the school systems to evaluate the needs and locations of future facilities to accommodate growth and development.

**Policy 2.8:**

Promote the placement of new growth in or near existing developed areas to leverage existing infrastructure and services.

**Policy 2.9:**

Encourage secondary access and egress for older subdivisions with 20 or more lots.

**Policy 2.10:**

Integrate the Meade County Master Transportation Plan to ensure a unified and coordinated approach to transportation and comprehensive planning.

**Policy 2.11:**

Explore alternative funding opportunities such as grants to help fund projects listed in the Meade County Transportation Plan.

# Open Space & Environmental Protection

Natural resources and open spaces are some of Meade County's greatest assets. Growth and development can pose several challenges to open spaces. As development expands, it can encroach on ecologically sensitive areas, such as forests, wetlands, and grasslands. These areas serve to help protect important natural resources such as air and water quality, provide recreational opportunities, and help to shape the overall character and well-being of the county's residents and visitors.

## Rural Character

Meade County is prized for its natural beauty, rural character, and natural resources. Preserving these features can prove to be challenging with the increased pressure from growth and development in the area. The expansion of development into rural areas diminishes the economic and environmental benefits that the forest and natural grasslands provide.

**“The natural beauty of the area is a huge reason to want to stay in the area”**

Meade County Comprehensive Survey Result

The county's aesthetics are a large draw for residents and visitors. Preserving the rural landscape is an important factor for the county's quality of life. As these natural landscapes are transformed, the sense of openness and connection to nature decreases. Appropriate regulation of development can help protect against the loss of natural assets, workable agricultural lands, recreational opportunities, and open spaces to help preserve Meade County's rural character.

## Recreation

The County does not maintain recreational resources. Any sites open to the public for recreational purposes are to be maintained by either a homeowners associated or a governmental taxing entity. Many recreational opportunities are federally and state-owned lands, contributing to

slightly less than ten percent of the county's total land use. These lands provide a wide range of recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of Meade County, including motorized and non-motorized trail systems, fishing and hunting, and historical and cultural sites.

A major concern facing recreational opportunities is the loss of public access to many of these public lands. This can occur when public land is completely surrounded by private land with no public access. The loss of access is associated with a loss of recreational opportunities and a potential economic impact, as visitors are forced to go to other locations. Private landowners also can be impacted by people trying to access public lands through private property routes, either intentionally or unintentionally. Private property rights and privately maintained roadways are sometimes utilized by unauthorized visitors, creating costs to landowners.

To help address issues of access, Meade County should work with federal, state, and local agencies to identify areas where public access is restricted. The County, in conjunction with federal and state agencies and private landowners can explore options for acquiring land, purchasing easements, cost-share agreements, or changing access routes for public use.

Popular Recreation Areas
Black Hills National Forest
Bear Butte State Park
Fort Meade Recreation Area

## Wildfire

Natural disasters can severely impact the county's services, infrastructure, and the well-being of individuals. Meade County is susceptible to forest fires and prairie fires, with most historical fires occurring near the Black Hills National Forest and around the hogback (a long narrow ridge of hills running east of I-90 from Sturgis to Blackhawk). The forested areas of Meade County, while highly sought after for their beauty and seclusion, are also at a higher risk for wildfire.

Special consideration should be given to subdivisions having an average slope greater than 10% in regards to the threat of wildfire. The County's Ordinance 20 Subdivision Ordinance requires mountainous subdivisions to have lean, clean, and green space 100' from any structure. The County should also consider requiring subdivisions in forested areas to provide a wildfire mitigation plan as part of the platting submittal process.

The County also works with the Bureau of Land Management to provide FireWise education and works with private landowners through a cost-share program to reduce hazardous fuels in an effort to help mitigate risk of wildfire. Meade County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan, which identifies priority areas for fuel reduction, should be updated regularly to ensure high risk areas are reflective of development trends.

## Natural Resources

Natural resources, such as clean air and water, play a critical role in maintaining the health and prosperity of those who reside and visit Meade County. Throughout the planning process, having and maintaining air and water quality and quantity was listed a top priority through community feedback.

Certain environmentally sensitive areas work to help maintain vital resources. Wetlands and riparian areas are critical to maintaining water, soil, and air resources. Wetlands and riparian areas act as natural filters, removing pollutant and sediments from stormwater runoff. They also help in reducing the risk of flooding and help recharge groundwater



supplies. Efforts should be made to reduce negative impacts on these areas.

Stormwater management plays an important role in resource protection. Development and loss of permeable surfaces have the potential to impact aquifer recharge and increase the probability of flooding issues. Additionally, stormwater runoff often carries different types of pollutants that can infiltrate water systems if not properly managed. The County should encourage stormwater management practices such as low-impact development, green infrastructure, and soil erosion controls.

Meade County can work to protect and preserve water resources by working with local, state, and federal partners to implement and enforce air and water quality and quantity measures, promote water conservation efforts, especially during periods of prolonged droughts, encouraging proper stormwater management, and protection of wetlands and riparian areas.

As Meade County continues to grow and develop, considerations must be given to reduce the potential negative impacts that development can have on the environment and the county's open spaces. Construction activities carry the risk of polluting water and soil resources. The County should work to mitigate the negative impacts development can have on the environment through prioritizing the preservation of natural habitat and environmentally sensitive areas.



## Floodplain

Meade County has effective FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), to help provide a system for managing the floodplain, and currently participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The County continues to enforce their Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, and is one of the few jurisdictions in South Dakota participating in the Community Rating System (CRS). The CRS program recognizes floodplain management practices surpassing the minimum NFIP requirements. These programs work to promote floodplain management and reduce the impacts of flooding in Meade County and should continue to be utilized.

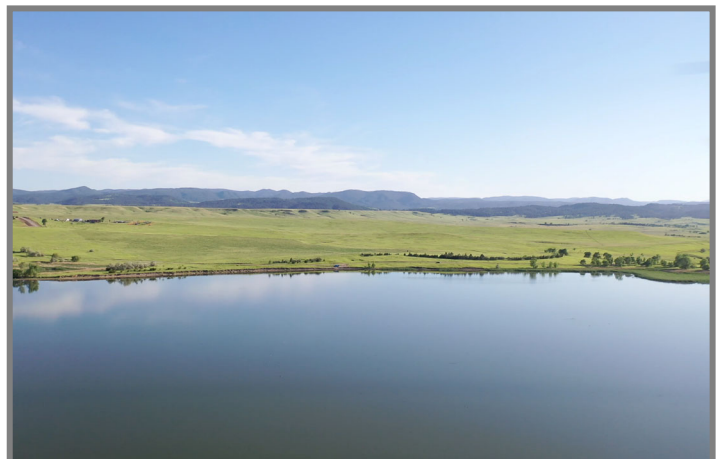


While a fair amount of the developing areas in the county have effective FEMA FIRM maps, a majority of the county is classified as *not printed*. This classification is either considered to be entirely one flood zone or having no floodplain. Some of these panels in Meade County are labeled as Zone D, which is classified as an area with the potential for moderate to high risk of flooding, but the probability is undetermined.<sup>1</sup> Due to the overall lack of knowledge of the locations of the flood risk, there is the possibility development can occur in areas of floodplain.

Meade County does address these concerns through various ordinances. Ordinance 52 requires any non-agriculture related ground disturbance greater than 0.5 acres but less than 1 acre to submit an Earth Disturbance permit. Under the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, a permit is required for surface soil

disturbance of 1 or more acres. Part of the County's permit requirements include a drainage study completed by a professional engineer. Furthermore, Meade County Ordinance 9 requires the submission of a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) in cases where development is shown to cause an elevation increase more than one foot in the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) near a body of water with no designated floodway. This requirement occurs when the area has undergone a study resulting in the determination of a specific BFE.

The County can also require developers to create and map out engineered floodplains in areas of potential risk. Any areas identified as floodplain are subject to the County's Ordinance 9. To further the efforts currently taking place at the County to protect life, property, and infrastructure from flood hazards, the County should continue to work to proactively identify locations of flood risk within areas of current and anticipated development classified as Zone D through various tools such as engineering studies, Lidar data, HEC RAS analysis, and drainage studies. Meade County can collaborate with state and federal partners, such as South Dakota Office of Emergency Management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Dakota Silver Jackets, and FEMA to assist in the identification of at-risk areas.



# Goals & Policies

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**GOAL III: Meade County will work preserve its rural character, natural resources, and open spaces for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.**

**Policy 3.1:**

Promote the preservation of open spaces for recreational and agricultural opportunities, with their role in supporting the well-being of residents and visitors.

**Policy 3.2:**

Collaborate with local, state, and federal agencies to determine locations where public access to public lands is restricted and explore options to create public access.

**Policy 3.3:**

Consider implementing provisions for wildfire mitigation plans for subdivisions located in forest areas.

**Policy 3.4:**

Continue efforts to mitigate threats of wildfire by ensuring the County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan is updated at least every 10 years.

**Policy 3.5:**

Promote the implementation of stormwater management practices to mitigate negative impacts associated with stormwater runoff.

**Policy 3.6:**

Mitigate potential negative environmental impacts through promotion of sustainable development practices.

**Policy 3.7:**

Protect air and water resources through responsible management and collaborative efforts with local, state, and federal partners.

**Policy 3.8:**

Continue participation in the National Flood Insurance Program and ongoing efforts in the Community Rating System program, including working with state and federal partners in identifying at-risk flooding areas.

# Land Use

Land Use is intended to help guide future growth and development in the county. Planning for future growth and development helps to protect the county's assets and values, helps decision makers know areas to focus spending for services and facilities, and discourages development on or near incompatible land uses.

## Development Trends

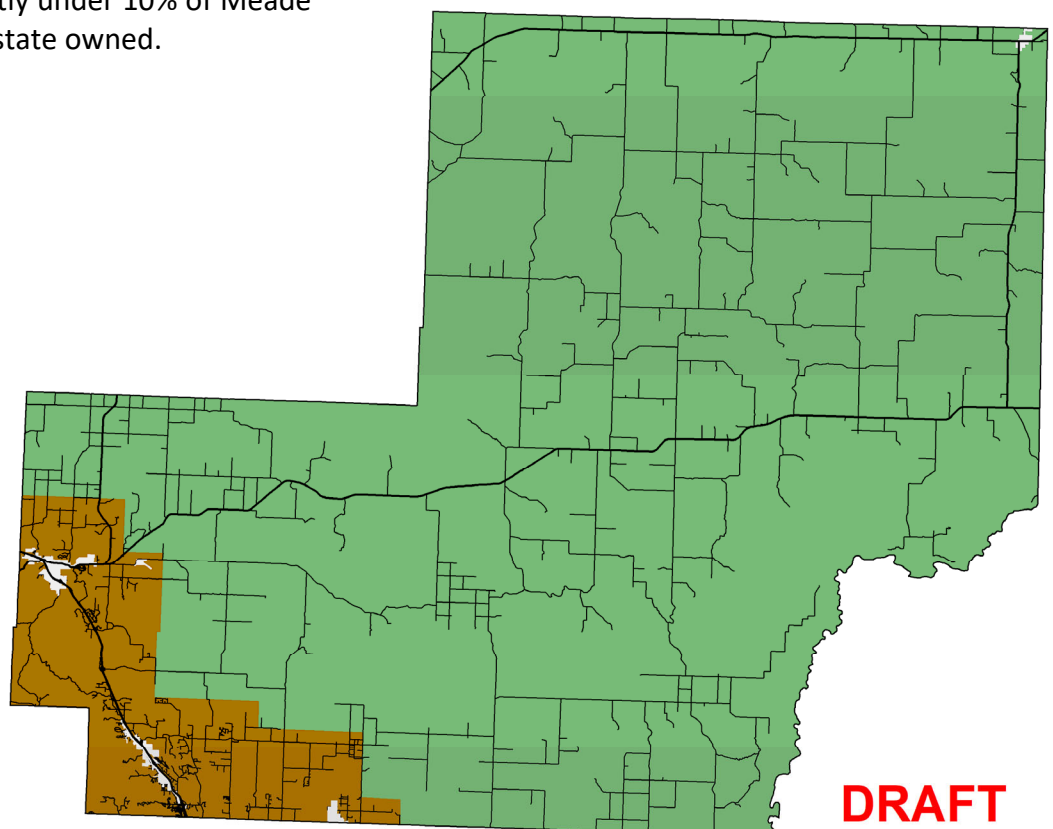
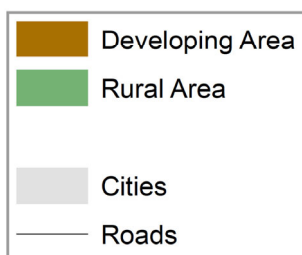
Many of the challenges facing Meade County are related to not only related to increased growth, but also sprawl development patterns. A majority of growth and development is occurring near the communities of Box Elder, Piedmont, Sturgis, Summerset, and north of Rapid City, with the rest of the county east of Box Elder remaining mostly undeveloped for agricultural uses.

Meade County is South Dakota's largest county by area, with a total of 3,483 square miles. Most of the county is comprised of private land ownership used mainly for residential, commercial, and agricultural uses. Roughly 93% of privately owned land is 40 acres or greater in size. Slightly under 10% of Meade County is either federally or state owned.

Meade County is experiencing two different types of trends in development. To help address future land use patterns, areas classified as 'developing area' and 'rural area' were used. These areas were partially created from input received from the Vision Meetings. Participants were provided a map of Meade County and asked to draw a line depicting rural Meade County. A majority of results showed the *rural area* encompassed most of the county with the exception of areas surrounding the I-90 corridor and portions north of Rapid City and Box Elder.

Land Uses	
Forest	2.0%
Grassland	88.0%
Shrubland	0.9%
Mixed Cropland	8.0%
Water	0.1%
Urban	0.1%

Source: Headwater Economics Land Use Profile



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## Developing Area

The *developing area* of Meade County encompasses areas along I-90, and northern Box Elder and Rapid City, and amounts to roughly 9% of the county's total area. Growth in these areas has been highly influenced by proximity to I-90, the Black Hills, and Rapid City. A majority of the County's building permits have taken place in this area and have steadily increased over the years. Meade County also continues to see a rise in the number of subdivisions being developed in the County.

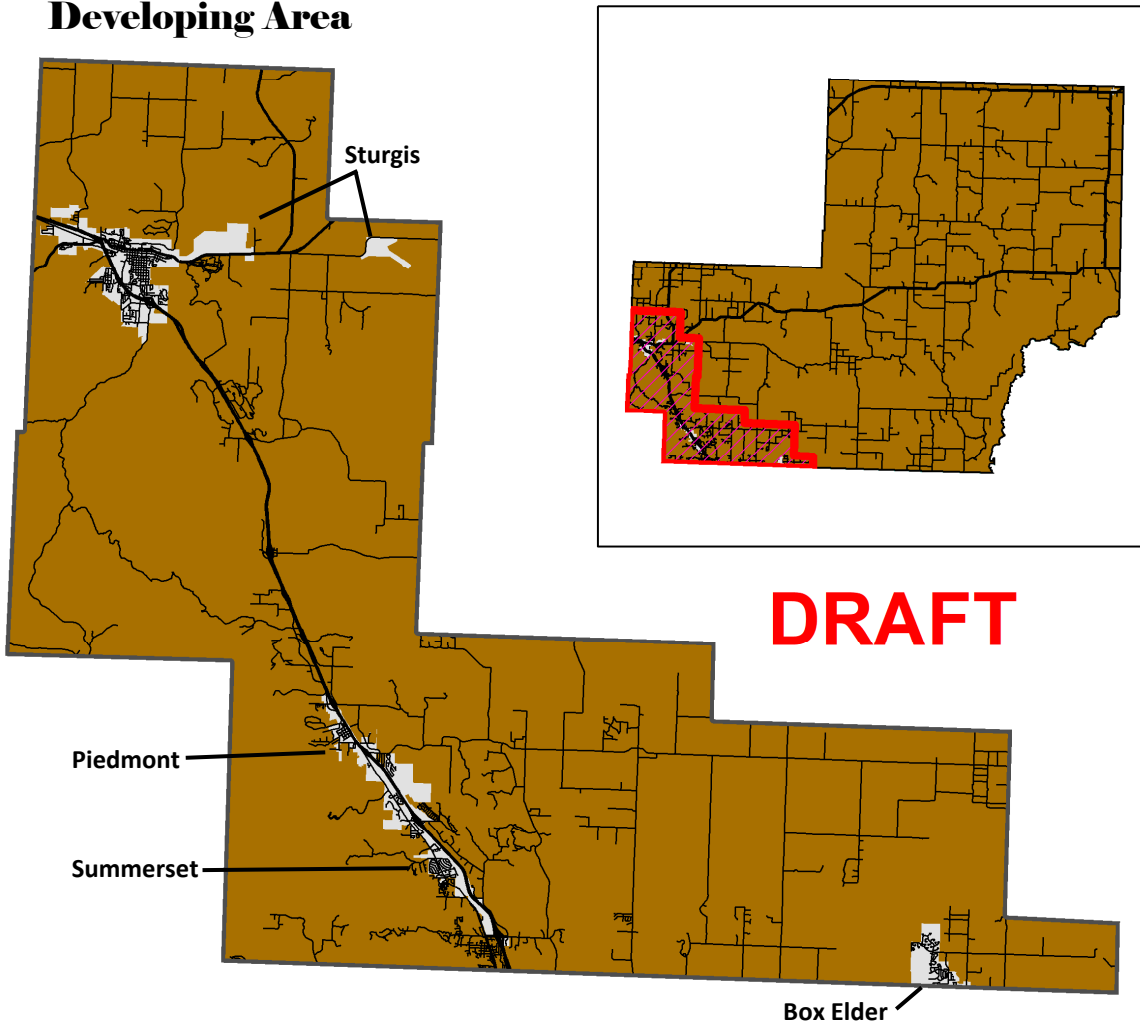
While it is suggested to focus development on this location, it should be done in an organized and planned manner to reduce sprawl. New development should be encouraged towards incorporated areas. This area should also consider a mix of residential density sizes to direct growth while also allowing residents the opportunity to have residential lots.

## Developing Area Lot Density Recommendations

Higher density development in the *Developing Areas* should be highly encouraged in or near incorporated areas. Medium density should be encouraged in areas where it can act as a transition between higher and lower density development. Low density and rural development density should be encouraged towards the *Rural Area*, to help encourage the preservation of open space, agricultural lands, and maintain the rural feel.

Commercial/Light Industrial should also focus on locations with good transportation connectivity to facilitate the movement of goods and services. Accessibility to transportation networks will help to reduce transportation costs and improve logistic efficiency for business. Additionally, access to adequate water/sewer services should be considered.

## Developing Area



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## Rural Area

Agricultural lands comprise most of the county's land uses, with 96% of land classified as grassland or mixed crop lands. The western section of the county has seen the most development, with an increase in subdivisions on historically agricultural lands. The eastern part of the county has seen fewer major changes in development.

Many people are drawn to wide open spaces, which has caused an increase of sprawl into the rural areas. Encroachment into undeveloped areas can have an impact on the agricultural businesses and community. The loss of land for agricultural use can result in the loss of prime farm/ranching lands, fragmented agricultural lands, impact water resources, and affect the ecosystem. The *rural area* of Meade County should focus on maintaining support for rural communities by protecting agricultural lands from non-agricultural uses.

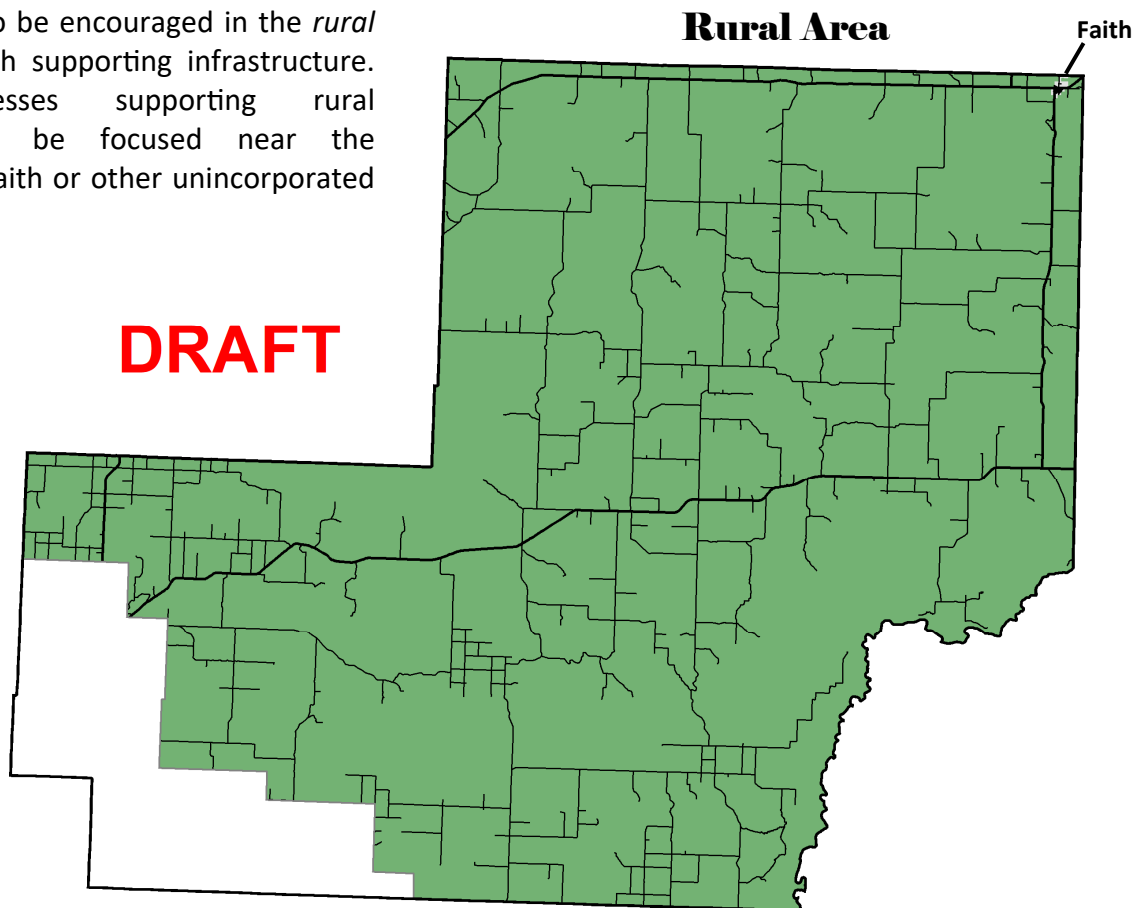
The *Rural Area* is not expected to see much development. Low density development should be encouraged in this area. Agricultural supporting businesses should also be encouraged in the *rural area*, in locations with supporting infrastructure. Commercial businesses supporting rural communities should be focused near the incorporated city of Faith or other unincorporated communities.

## Rural Area Lot Density Recommendations

Higher density development should be highly discouraged in this area with the exception of areas in or near the city of Faith. Medium density development should be discouraged in this area with the exception of the city of Faith and unincorporated communities with existing infrastructure. Low density and rural residential should be encouraged in the *rural area* to promote agricultural activities and help provide open-spaces.

Commercial/Light Industrial should also focus on locations with good transportation connectivity to facilitate the movement of goods and services. Commercial/Light Industrial uses supporting agricultural communities should be encouraged in the *rural area* in areas most suitable for development and do not impede workable agricultural lands.

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## Land Use Tools

Guiding growth and development is an important factor in achieving the overall vision for Meade County. Planning for future growth and development creates a framework for sustainable development, promotes compatible land uses, and helps preserve community character.

Effective growth management relies on various planning tools such as zoning regulations and various ordinances. Utilizing planning tools helps to provide a framework for sustainable and responsible growth and development. Continued collaboration and planning efforts with the municipalities will ensure that development occurring near city limits is compatible with the municipality's development standards, such as transportation, services, and infrastructure.

While Meade County does not currently have zoning, it does utilize various ordinances for the guidance of growth and development. Ordinance 20, which addresses subdivision, serves as the one of the primary planning tools. The County coordinates platting authority in the extraterritorial jurisdictions with the incorporated areas of Box Elder, Piedmont, Sturgis, and Summerset .

In the last decade, Meade County has experienced significant growth and is projected to continue seeing population increases. During the planning process survey, results showed people favoring additional planning methods to address growth.

One of the more commonly used planning tools to address land use is zoning. Zoning allows the regulation and control of land use, helps prevent incompatible land uses, protects environmentally sensitive areas, promotes overall health and public safety, and can assist in protecting property values. One of the greatest criticisms of zoning is that it places restrictions on property rights, creating limitations for private property owners.

The Meade County Comprehensive Plan Survey asked participants if they would support the adoption of zoning as a possible means to help encourage compatible land uses and manage future growth and development. Of the respondents, 63% said they would support some type of zoning, with 29% in support of countywide zoning and 34% in support of zoning in special zoning areas. Of the respondents, 17% were against any form of zoning in the county, with the remaining responses either opposing, not sure, or other.

Survey Results	
<b>Meade County has experienced significant growth over the past 10 years and is projected to continue growing rapidly in the future. To help moderate the effects of growth, what planning method(s) do you prefer Meade County consider utilizing going forward? Check all the apply.</b>	
Additional requirements pertaining to the subdivision of land	35%
Adoption of land use regulations, such as zoning	42%
Concentrate growth in and around incorporated municipalities	40%
More public investment in county infrastructure and services	33%
None of the above	3%
Not Sure	20%
Other	8%

The survey results were further analyzed to show the responses based on areas experiencing high growth and development, and the areas with little to no growth. Findings showed areas experiencing higher rates of growth were generally more in favor of some type of zoning, while those areas with less growth and development were mostly opposed with the exception of higher percentages in favor of zoning for special areas in the county.

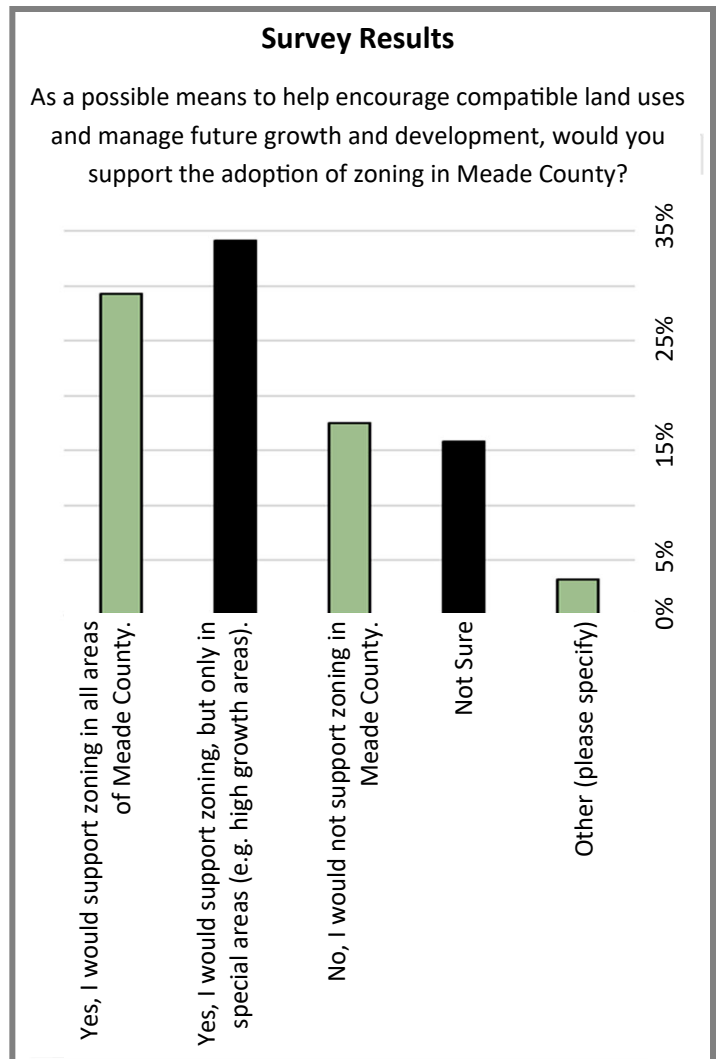
South Dakota has several codified laws that address different planning mechanisms which can be utilized by counties. South Dakota Codified Law (SDCL) 11-2-13 allows the adoption of a zoning ordinance for counties for the purpose of promoting health, safety, and the general welfare. This would permit the adoption of countywide zoning for Meade County. Another potential alternative method would be using special zoning as addressed in SDCL 11-2-37. This would allow for special zoning areas for counties with an adopted comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.

Another potential planning tool is through a joint comprehensive plan and zoning powers between a county and incorporated jurisdictions that would allow for joint zoning powers up to six miles outside of city limits under SDCL 11-6-10. This method would require collaboration and agreements from both the County and participating municipalities. This tool would require the County to adopt zoning ordinances in order to have joint zoning with participating cities.

Working together with municipalities to form zoning in joint jurisdictional areas can be a useful tool in addressing growth and development concerns in the *developing area*. This tool is especially helpful to encourage development designs appropriate for future annexation of lands into city limits. A risk associated with special zoning areas is that development can be drawn away from these areas in favor of locations with less regulation. If this planning tool is utilized, it would be essential for areas not under the joint jurisdiction to be evaluated for the need of more requirements. This could assist in reducing the potential for increased sprawl into open spaces and agricultural lands.

Zoning isn't the only tool for land use. Meade County's ordinances are also powerful tools to help guide growth and development and protect the quality of life for its residents. These ordinances, specifically Ordinance 20, could be updated to address lot density requirements, or more requirements for high or medium density lots.

Additional ordinances could be adopted such as a Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO). The role of a APFO is to ensure public infrastructure and services can adequately support new development. This typically involves assessment of transportation systems, water and sewer services, schools, jails, and other public amenities. This type of ordinance would work to ensure necessary services and infrastructures for new growth, while preventing strains on existing resources.<sup>1</sup>



## Development Considerations

In both the *developing area* and the *rural area*, development in areas with safety and environmental concerns should be restricted or regulated. Discouraging development or regulating these areas will help protect quality of life, sensitive ecological areas, and protect people and structures from hazards such as flooding, wildfire, and aircraft accidents. This includes environmentally sensitive areas, flood prone locations and floodways, high decibel noise zones, and high hazard prone areas.

Ellsworth Air Force Base (EAFB) plays an important role in land use in Meade County. The nature of the Base provides challenges for development: noise issues, height restrictions, and accident potential zones. The Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ Study) 2008, was consulted for guidance on land use in Meade County.

This study provides suggestions for land use in relation to noise pollution, height restrictions, and Accident Potential Zones (APZ). The AICUZ study

expresses the importance of land use compatibility, as well as consideration for the recommendations provided in the study for land use planning.

With the addition of the B-21 Stealth Strategic Bombers, it is highly likely data on noise may be updated to incorporate the new bombers and land use should be re-evaluated as new information is made available.



Environmental Considerations	
<b>Wetlands and Riparian Areas</b>	Meade County has various riparian and wetland areas throughout the county. Both wetlands and riparian areas are important habitats and are vital to healthy watersheds. A wetland is an area of land that is covered either seasonally or permanently by water. Riparian areas are lands that occur along the edges of river, streams, lakes, and other water bodies. Wetlands and riparian areas play important roles in the ecosystem. Development in and around these areas can cause habitat loss, impact water quality, and create alterations to water flows.
<b>Floodplain</b>	Meade County has areas of identified floodplain. A floodplain is an area of land that is susceptible to inundation by floodwaters. Land located in the 100-year special floodplain hazard area should continue to be highly discouraged for development, as per County Ordinances 9 and 20.
<b>Stormwater</b>	Meade County mostly utilizes natural drainage and maintains the drainage on county roads and barrow ditches. Development should not impede natural drainage paths.
<b>Geological Constraints</b>	Meade County has various geological constraints such as incompatible soils for development. Areas containing steep slopes, expansive soils, shale, and evaporates should be discouraged from development or require proper mitigation measures to be taken.
<b>Noise Pollution</b>	Parts of Meade County have areas impacted by high noise decibels, 65-85+, from Ellsworth Air Force Base. Areas of high noise pollution should be left as open space unless the type of land use is compatible with the AICUZ's land use compatibility guidelines for APZs and Noise Zones.
<b>Accident Potential Zones</b>	EAFB has identified Accident Potential Zones located in Meade County. Accident Potential Zones are locations where aircraft accidents are more likely to occur. These areas are generally located near the end of the runways. Land use located in the APZ should be left undeveloped as open space unless compatible with the AICUZ's land use compatibility guidelines for APZs and noise zones.



## Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map serves as the vision of how the county may utilize and develop land in the future. The map provides a spatial representation of the suggested land use throughout the county. It encompasses a range of land use types and their general uses. There are no zoning regulations associated with this map, rather it serves as a planning tool to help guide future growth and development. Meade County does not currently have zoning or a zoning map.

### Land Use Map vs Zoning Map

While both Land Use Maps and Zoning Maps may look similar, they serve different purposes and independent uses.

#### Future Land Use Map

A land use map serves as a planning tool to guide future land use decisions and promotes compatible land uses. This map should be used to help policymakers make informed decisions regarding development, infrastructure, and resource allocation.











#### Zoning Map

A zoning map is a regulatory tool used for land use planning, serving as a visual representation of different zoning districts. This map is used to promote compatible land uses and promote orderly growth patterns.

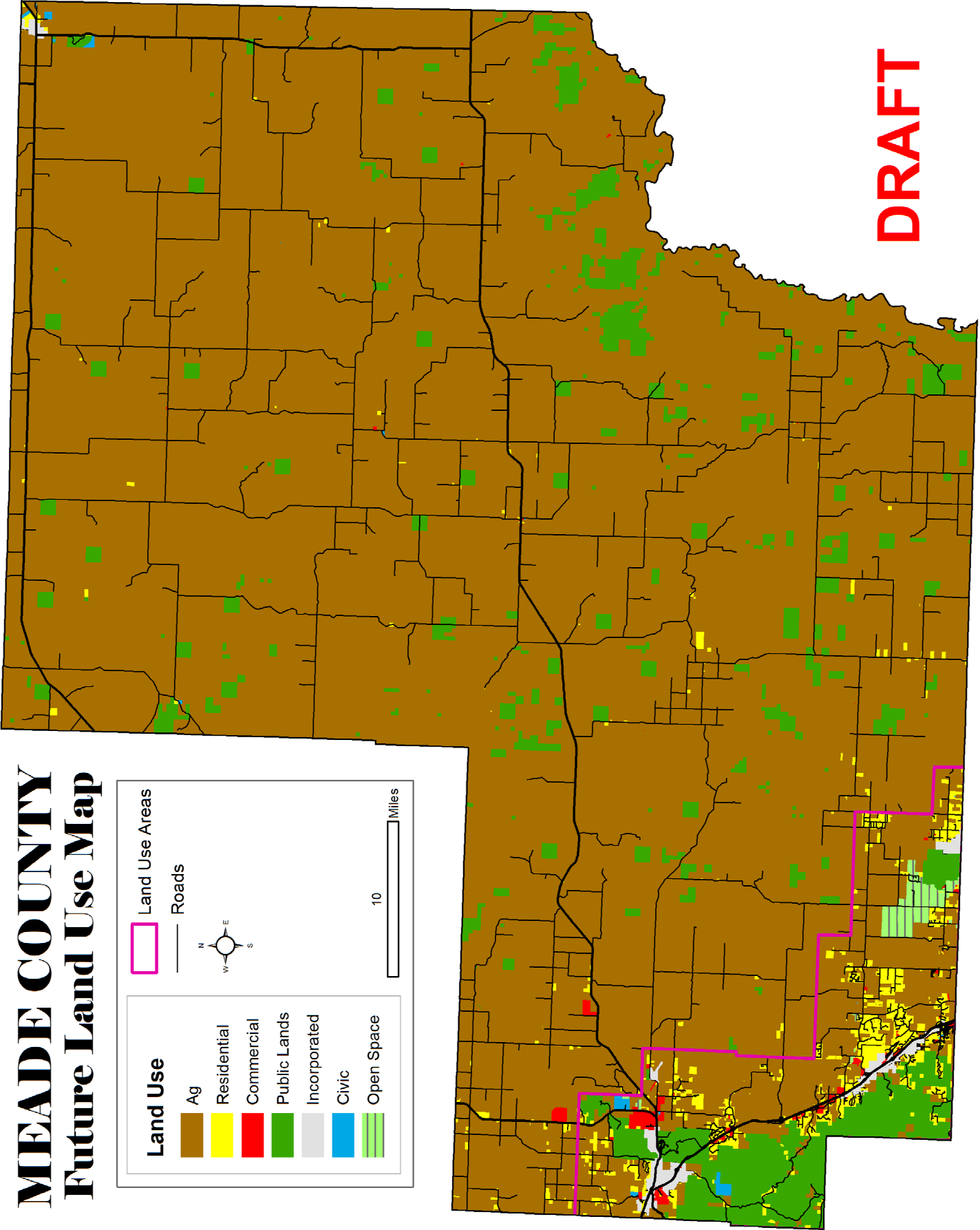
\*Meade County does not have zoning or a zoning map.

Land Use Types	
<b>Agricultural</b>	Land used for agricultural activities, such as ranching and farming. This land use also includes low density residential.
<b>Residential</b>	Land is used for housing purposes, including single-family, multi-family, townhouses, manufactured homes, and other dwelling types.
<b>Commercial</b>	Land used for commercial or light -industrial uses, such as manufacturing, distribution, offices, stores, or campgrounds.
<b>Public Land</b>	Federal and State-owned properties, including ownership from USFS, BLM, Fort Meade, EAFB, SD Game, Fish & Parks, SD School Lease Lands. Some of these lands are available for public use for recreational activities.
<b>Incorporated</b>	The incorporated cities of Box Elder, Faith, Piedmont, Sturgis, and Summerset
<b>Civic</b>	Land owned by incorporated cities but not within city limits.
<b>Open Space</b>	Land designated for environmental protection and conservation, for uses such as floodways, environmentally sensitive areas, hazard prone areas, and high decibel noise zones.

# MEADE COUNTY Future Land Use Map

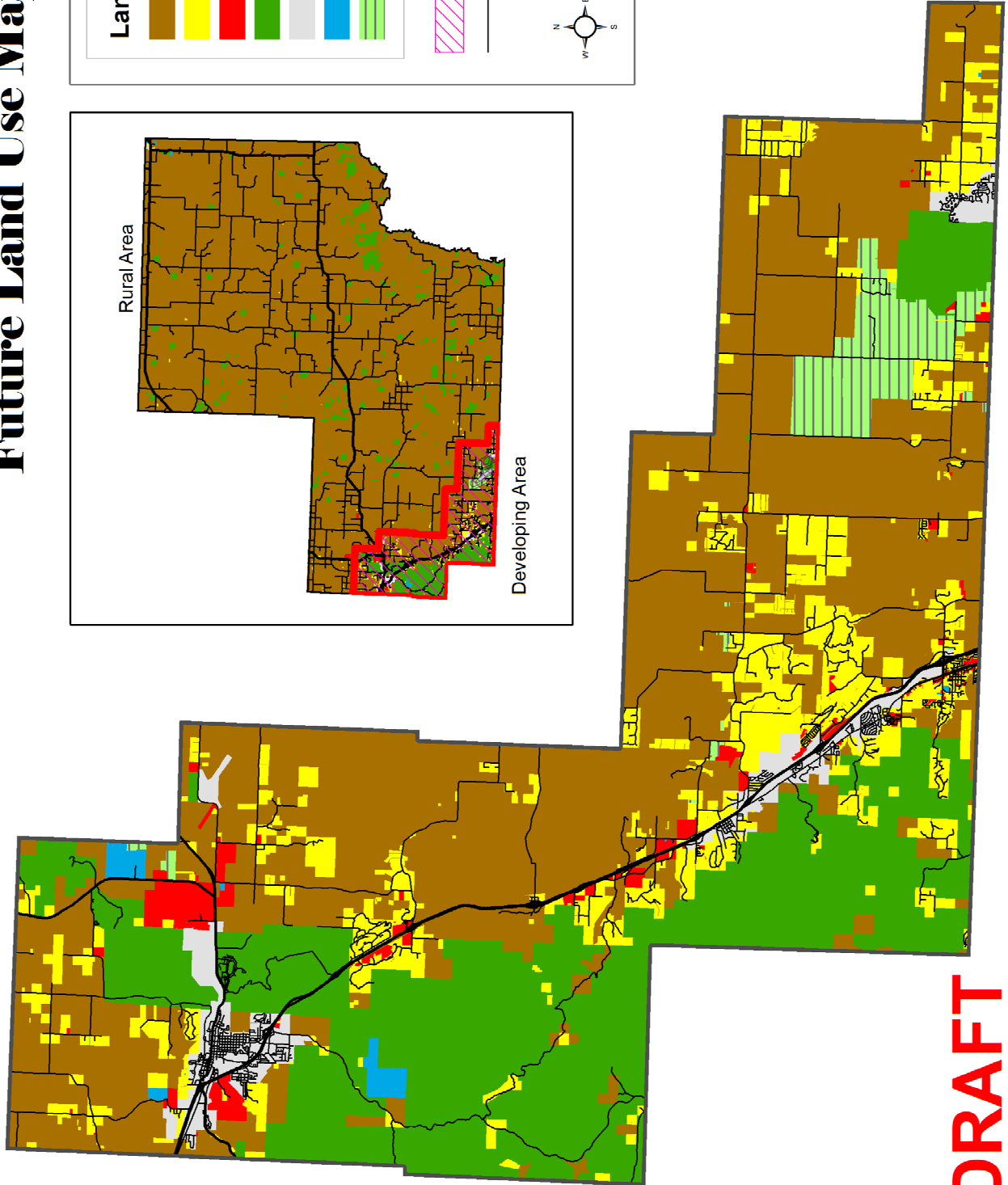
Land Use		Land Use Areas	
	Ag		Land Use Areas
	Residential		Roads
	Commercial		
	Public Lands		
	Incorporated		
	Civic		
	Open Space		

10 Miles



**DRAFT**

# MEADE COUNTY Future Land Use Map



**DRAFT**

# Goals & Policies

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**GOAL IV:** Meade County will work to preserve its character and identity by developing and implementing strategies to manage sprawl through compatible land uses.

**Policy 4.1:**

Direct new development in the *developing areas* towards incorporated areas, guiding lot density in strategic locations to support responsible and sustainable growth patterns.

**Policy 4.2:**

Optimize the placement of commercial and industrial development by considering transportation connectivity and supporting infrastructure.

**Policy 4.3:**

Maintain the functionality of rural areas by promoting land use practices prioritizing residential and agricultural activities.

**Policy 4.4:**

Promote the development of commercial and industrial uses that support the agricultural communities in suitable rural areas, while ensuring the preservation of productive agricultural lands.

**Policy 4.5:**

Encourage collaborative planning efforts with municipalities to establish mutual standards for development occurring within the extraterritorial jurisdictions.

**Policy 4.6:**

Adopt suitable planning tools to support sustainable growth and compatible land use patterns.

**Policy 4.7:**

Restrict or regulate development in areas with safety and environmental concerns.

**Policy 4.8:**

Utilize the Future Land Use Map as a planning tool to guide growth and development to promote compatibility of land uses.



## Implementation

The Meade County Comprehensive Plan is intended to act as a guide for investing in future community projects. The Plan provides a framework for the development and growth of Meade County by providing guidance for future planning, regulation, adoption and revision, developing programs, and maintaining partnerships.

The vision and corresponding goals within the comprehensive plan should be a guide for the county's growth and development. In order for this to be effective, specific programs may require alteration or implementation. The implementation of specific projects and priorities are subject to the discretion of Meade County. It is possible for decisions to be influenced by not only the future financial setbacks, but also the availability of staff to implement projects and the demand for other projects throughout the county.

This comprehensive plan is a living document, meaning it is flexible to change. It is essential to evaluate and monitor the recommendations within this comprehensive plan. The Planning Commission should review the goals and strategies annually to ensure progression towards accomplishing the plan's vision.

The Meade County Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed by Meade County at least every 5 years, with due consideration to comments and suggestions from the public and any community organizations interested in the evaluation process. Any proposed amendments must be reviewed and considered, utilizing the same processes and procedures which were required to adopt this plan. If adopted, the changes will be incorporated into a revised document.

### **Monitoring & Evaluations**

#### **Annual Review**

Regular Evaluation & Monitoring

#### **Every Five Years**

Major Review & Evaluation

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