

GLENWOOD TOWNSHIP
COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

Originally Adopted
April 19, 1993
Revised and Readopted
January 12, 2021

GLENWOOD TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

I. LEGAL AUTHORITY

The authority to develop and execute a comprehensive municipal plan for Glenwood Township (“Township”) by the Glenwood Town Board of Supervisors (“Township Board”) is granted in Minnesota Statutes, sections 462.351 through 462.364, and specifically in Minnesota Statutes, sections 462.355 and 462.356.

II. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan (“Comprehensive Plan”) is intended to review the history of the Township, identify current trends and concerns and to identify the Township’s goals for the future. The Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and goals of Township Residents. This information should serve as the basis for making decisions and evaluating decisions that will preserve and protect the identity and uniqueness of Glenwood Township.

In March 1993, the Township adopted the “Glenwood Township Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance.” The Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance was amended in May 1994 and April 1997. However, in 2019, the Township Board began reviewing the Township’s land use and zoning concerns, in general, and specifically began reviewing community solar gardens, mineral extraction/gravel pits, and the parallel land use and zoning regulations imposed by Pope County (“County”). As a result, on February 11, 2020, the Township Board unanimously passed an interim ordinance and moratorium (“Interim Ordinance”) to protect the planning process and study legal, planning and zoning issues of concern within the Township. The Interim Ordinance specifically placed a moratorium upon the establishment, creation or expansion of solar energy facilities and mining operations in the Township in order to allow sufficient time for the Township Board to study and determine whether the Township should engage in additional planning and zoning with regard to those uses and to study and determine any other issues that may have an impact on the Township’s zoning regulations.

The Township Board conducted its study and concluded that it would proceed with amending and updating the Glenwood Township Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance. In an effort to gather information directly from Township residents, the Township also conducted a community survey addressing various planning and zoning topics, including Township demographics, Township infrastructure and services, and the Township’s short and long-term vision and land use and planning goals. The community survey revealed the following:

- Township residents desire to protect, preserve and enhance the rural nature of the Township and to balance residential, commercial and industrial development in a manner that does not significantly impact the Township’s rural and agricultural history.

- Township residents desire to protect and preserve the water quality of Lake Minnewaska and other bodies of water in the Township.
- Township residents are not opposed to the development of solar energy facilities and gravel pits, but they desire regulations ensuring they do not significantly affect the environment or rural nature of the Township, particularly with regard to gravel pits.
- Township residents have concerns with regard to additional annexation of Township property by the City of Glenwood, and its effect upon the Township's finances and rural nature.
- Township residents expressed concerns with regard to additional uses of property in the Township, including increased commercial development, access to broadband internet, and short-term/vacation rentals in the area of Lake Minnewaska.

The Township has the authority under Minnesota Statute 462 to conduct planning and zoning activities. The Township is governed by an elected Township Board of Supervisors, consisting of three members, each elected for three-year terms by the Township electorate. Township Clerk and Treasurer are also elected positions by the Township electorate.

III. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to identify problems, opportunities, issues and needs and organize public policy in a manner that serves the best interest of the greatest number of people in the Township. The Comprehensive Plan is generally acknowledged as a tool with which to guide growth. In rural Minnesota, townships must guide rational decision-making in the face of limited resources and limited growth, and specifically with regard Glenwood Township and its location adjacent to the City of Glenwood, the Township seeks to balance residential, commercial and industrial development with agricultural and recreational uses and with development in the area of Lake Minnewaska.

The Comprehensive Plan is no more or less than a statement of public policy based on a common vision, with goals of where the Township wants to go and how it intends to get there. It is a general plan, which is intended to portray policies, objectives, concepts and relationships. It must have a degree of flexibility to be helpful in making decisions.

The Comprehensive Plan addresses future growth with land use, quality of life, community facilities, environment and economic development. The Comprehensive Plan represents the backdrop upon which future land use may develop in a rational manner.

The plan itself is one stage of the planning process that a community undertakes. Following the adoption of the comprehensive land use plan, the Township Board will amend the zoning ordinance to put the plan into effect. The difference between the comprehensive land use plan and a zoning ordinance is that the former sets forth the objectives and goals of the community with respect to land use, while the latter is a regulatory device through which the plan's goals and policies are carried out or achieved.

The Comprehensive Plan is not infallible. Circumstances change and the plan must change also. It will therefore, need to be reevaluated periodically. If an amendment is proposed, it will be considered in light of its potential impacts on the environment, the neighborhood, the Township, the County and public services.

IV. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Glenwood Township is located in Pope County, Minnesota. It is located in Township 125 North, Range 36, 37, 38 West. It is bordered by Leven, Grove Lake, Chippewa Falls, Barsness, Blue Mounds and White Bear Lake Townships. The Township is adjacent to and shares significant borders with the City of Glenwood.

A. History of Glenwood Township

Glenwood Township, located on the southeast side of Lake Minnewaska, was named for the great glen or valley occupied by this lake and for the woods around its shores, contrasted with the prairies that the far greater part of this county. The city of Glenwood, the county seat at the northeast end of the lake, in Glenwood and Minnewaska Townships, was first platted in part on September 26, 1866, was incorporated as a village on February 23, 1881 and as a city in 1912. This name is also born by cities in Wisconsin and Iowa, and by villages and townships in twenty other states.

B. Demographics

According to 2010 Federal Census Data, the Township had a population of 1058 people living within 40.2 square miles of land. The 2019 population estimate prepared by the Minnesota State Demographer places the Township’s population at 1,093. While the Township’s population has remained steady since 2000, it has grown at a faster pace than other townships in Pope County. Between 1900 and 2016, the Township’s population increased by 26%, or 216 residents, primarily due to its location adjacent to the City of Glenwood.¹

The 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates 503 total housing units and a population of 1,167, and the survey provided the following additional economic and housing information:

Data Item	Number	Percent
Median Household Income	\$37,177	
Median Age	52.7	
<i>Population Age Range</i>		
0 to 14 years	204	17.5%
15 to 24 years	77	6.6%
25 to 34 years	133	11.4%
35 to 44 years	94	8.1%
45 to 54 years	102	8.7%
55 to 64 year	246	21.1%

¹ Pope County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2018), p.13.

65 +	311	26.6%
<i>Employment Status</i>		
Education and Health Care		25.0%
Manufacturing		20.6%
Retail		10.7%
Information/Finance/Insurance/Real Estate		8.5%
Other/Public Administration		7.0%
Professional/Scientific/Administrative and Waste Management Services		6.6%
Other Services		6.4%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation/Accommodation and Food Services		6.3%
Construction		5.0%
Agriculture/Forestry/Hunting and Fishing/Mining		2.4%
Wholesale		1.3%
Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities		0.4%
<i>Vehicles Available</i>		
No Vehicles Available		0.6%
1 Vehicle Available		6.9%
2 Vehicles Available		34.3%
3 or More Vehicles Available		58.3%
<i>Education -- Persons 25 and Over</i>		
Less than High School		1.9%
High School Degree		26.0%
Some College or Associate's Degree		38.8%
Bachelor's Degree		21.7%
Graduate or Professional Degree		11.6%
<i>Housing Units</i>		
Owner-Occupied		91.7%
Renter Occupied		8.3%
Households with One or More Persons Under 18 Years Old		22.9%
Households with One or More Persons 60 Years Old and Over		57.9%

Housing units within the Township are served by individual sewage treatment systems that are regulated by Pope County under Minnesota Statute and Rules.

C. Natural Environment

1. Climate. The average July high is 82 degrees, and the average January low is 1 degree. Annual precipitation for Glenwood Township is 26 inches of rain and 43 inches of snow. Glenwood Township averages 199 sunny days each year.

2. Water Resources. The lakes in Glenwood Township include:

- Lake Minnewaska
- Amelia Lake
- Alice Lake
- Marlu Lake
- State Lake
- Camp Lake

The East Branch Chippewa River is also located in the Township.

Glenwood Township contains adequate groundwater resources for domestic use throughout the area, and the majority of the County has enough water for irrigation purposes. Approximately two-thirds of the Township is located in the Bonanza Valley irrigation area. This area is situated over a large underground aquifer and contains the Estherville-Muck soil association. Large amounts of land in the region are very well suited to irrigate. Future development of this irrigation potential may drastically change the agricultural practices in the Township.

The lakes in the Township contain significant areas of shoreland suitable for residential development. Although these shoreland areas are regulated by the County, the Township intends to encourage residential development into these existing communities and prevent non-agricultural uses from developing in areas best suited for agriculture.

The Township also contains a substantial amount of marshland areas. The value of these areas is not yet fully understood. However, it is recognized that they do provide areas for groundwater recharge and/or discharge and are essential to waterfowl reproduction. In recent years, drainage of these areas has become popular to bring more land into agricultural production. In the future, a more critical examination of areas to be drained must be undertaken to help ensure that the projects will not have long-term adverse effects on the environment.

3. Soils. According to the 1971 Soil Conservation Services Soil Survey of Pope County, there are three general soil associations within the Township. One consists of a Barnes-Langhei-Svea association and is located primarily in the southeast and south-central portions of the Township. The topography of this area is described as undulating to rolling. There is a fair-to-good layer of topsoil and subsoil which is generally suitable for use for septic tank filter fields, except where excessive slope makes seepage a problem. The second soil association is located primarily in close proximity to the shoreline of Lake Minnewaska. This is a Langhei-Barnes-Waukon-Sioux association and its topography is hilly and steep. The top soil of this area is generally fair-to-good, except where the Sioux type is abundant. There are limitations with respect to septic tank filter fields in this area. Seepage occurs on nearly all slopes and can be severe on slopes of over 12%. Pollution hazards could result if septic tanks were allowed in this area. Isolated exceptions may be found in areas where the Barnes soil type is dominant.

The final major soil association in the Township is found in the central and eastern regions and covers the majority of the Township. It is called the Estherville-Muck association. This association is characterized by soils which are level and excessively drained. The topsoil is shallow over sand or gravel or is very poorly drained organic soil. The topsoil quality ranges all the way from poor to good in this area. There are severe limitations on septic tank filter fields in this association. In some parts of the area, the water table is at depths of less than two feet, and seepage can be severe on slopes over 12%, thereby creating a pollution hazard.

The bearing capacity of the soil for building sites in the Township has only slight limitations except for areas where the slope is too great. Also, where the Muck soil type is prevalent, there is a flooding hazard and wetness occurs.

4. Wildlife. The Glenwood area is known for its many shallow lakes that provide excellent waterfowl hunting opportunities. It's also well known for its pheasant hunting. Deer and wild turkey hunting is especially good in the eastern portion of the Township. Furbearing species include the usual farmland species such as raccoons, mink and muskrats and in the last decade fisher and river otter have become fairly common.

V. ROADS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

There are approximately 48.46 miles of Township roads. The following State and County Roads go through the Township: State Highways 55, 28, 29 and 104 and County Roads: 17, 18, 21, 22, 25 and 29. State Highways 55, 28 and 29 serve as the primary arteries in and out of Pope County and the Township.²

Electrical power is offered by Runestone Electric Association, Agralite, and Excel Energy. Telephone central offices are located in Glenwood and Starbuck. Fire service is provided by the City of Glenwood. Natural gas is provided in select areas by Center Point Energy. The Sheriff's office is located in the City of Glenwood. The First Responders are also from Glenwood. The Town Hall is located at 19731 195th Avenue, Glenwood, Minnesota.

VI. UNIQUE FEATURES

The Township's unique and distinguishing features include the following:

- Lake Minnewaska
- The American Craftsman-style Peters Sunset Beach Hotel is a historic resort on the southern shore of Lake Minnewaska and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

² Pope County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2018), p. 10.

- Rolling Forks Winery
- Glenwood Municipal Airport
- Pezhekee National Golf Course
- CHS Prairie Lakes Cooperative, CF Industries, Fast Global Solutions
- South Pointe RV Park / Lazy Pines RV Park
- Areas currently zoned by Pope County for industrial use (NW corner between Highways 55 and 29) and commercial (along Highway 28)

VII. CURRENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Glenwood Township Estimated Market Values						
	Year	Total EMV	Agricultural	Residential	Commercial	Industrial
	2020	314,083,200	71,596,20	134,001,600	104,519,100	3,966,300
% of Total		100%	23%	43%	33%	1%

New residential homes continue to be built within the Township, particularly in the residential areas near Lake Minnewaska and near the City of Glenwood. Commercial development also continues within the Township, primarily in the area along State Highway 28. However, agricultural land is the majority of the tax base because of high values of agricultural land. The Township has lost some property annexed into the City of Glenwood. Since 2000, the City of Glenwood has annexed a total of approximately 235 acres of property.³

VIII. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TREND

The majority of future growth in Pope County and the Township is projected to take place along its two primary transportation corridors – State Highway 55 and State Highway 28 – and in the area of Lake Minnewaska.⁴ As a result, it is anticipated that residential, commercial and industrial development will continue in the Township.

Residential development is a concern in the Township. Many individuals seek the natural environment and shoreland areas of Glenwood Township to build homes. There is a certain amount of “sprawl” spilling over into the Township from the City of Glenwood and additional development in the area of Lake Minnewaska, which creates conflicts between the historically rural character of the Township and the increased residential development. On the one hand, there is a history of agriculture providing the livelihood to the citizens. On the other hand, some citizens have purchased property and increased the tax value of the Township by building new homes. Greater population density, however, does not always create adequate tax revenue for townships to cover the added expenses for all of the services that people may want, such as better

³ Pope County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2018), p. 13.

⁴ Id.

roads, fire and ambulance services, police protection and more community services in general. The Township acknowledges this conflict and the need to balance it.

The future use and development of property for uses such as gravel pits and solar energy facilities needs to be planned carefully and responsibly to 1) protect human health, public safety and the environment at and near solar energy facilities and gravel pits and 2) to accommodate local government needs and desires for land use with consideration for health and safety requirements.

Commercial and industrial uses currently exist in the corridors along State Highway 28 and State Highway 55. Development can significantly impact the environment, the quiet of the Township, water quality and quality of life in general. However, growth and development of commercial industrial uses within the Township is not all negative. Such development can create new tax base and have an impact upon the vitality and positive perception of the community. As is the case with residential development, the Township acknowledges the conflict such uses may create and the need to balance that conflict.

Overall, it is critical to balance the conflicts between the rural character of the Township and the potential for increased residential, commercial and industrial development. In order to do so, it will be necessary to maintain our high quality of life without threatening the safety, health, and welfare of citizens or damaging Township roads.

A proper mix of agricultural, residential, business and industrial uses is the best direction in which to lead the Township's growth.

IX. TRENDS IN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Production agriculture is the largest industry in Pope County and its supporting industries are strong and growing. Agriculture in Pope County includes a variety of animal production systems from pasturing to confinement. Crop production consists of forage, feed grains and vegetables grown on dry ground and irrigated acres. The natural resources supporting this industry should be protected for the future.

The Township's location near the City of Glenwood creates another set of conflicts and opportunities. The City continues to grow and people find Glenwood an ideal place to live. The additions of non-farm residences, and industrial/commercial land uses have removed agricultural land from production. These complexities are part of what encouraged residents to consider land use planning within the Township.

X. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES

It is the goal of the Township to protect the public health, safety and general welfare of Township residents and to retain the Township's rural character. To do so, it is necessary to balance development interests and ensure that land use is developed such that it is compatible with the natural environment. The goal is to conserve and protect the unique natural, historic and physical resources of the Township and to continue to provide an excellent quality of life for Township residents. It is a goal to maintain agricultural quality land as agricultural land where possible.

A. Development

Much of our land in the Township is currently used for agriculture. The Township's goal is to maintain agriculture as a use in the Township, and to control residential, commercial and industrial development as deemed appropriate.

The following policies shall be considered to meet these goals:

1. Protect and preserve the rural character and history of the Township;
2. Discourage development that can create a nuisance or is injurious to public health and safety, which is not consistent with the rural character and future plans;
3. Encourage the expansion of rural housing in higher density residential areas while limiting the unnecessary removal of prime agricultural land from production; and
4. Employ appropriate setback requirements for housing and commercial/industrial related uses in a manner to balance residential, agricultural, business and industrial uses.

B. Environmental Protection

The optimum quality of life for Township residents is sought by protecting the natural environment, preventing pollution, and meeting the needs of current residents and owners of land without compromising the ability of future generations. The Township's goal is to conserve and protect its unique and sensitive natural and cultural landscapes.

The following policies shall be considered to meet these goals:

1. Protect water and air quality and livability by appropriate setbacks on development;
2. To protect wildlife habitat areas through orderly development;
3. Encourage farm practices that protect soil and prevent water degradation.

C. Transportation and Roads

Glenwood Township will continue to maintain Township roads and protect, preserve and maintain roads and right-of-ways in a manner consistent with safety and efficiency.

The following policies shall be considered to meet these goals:

1. Organize commercial traffic to direct it to areas and roadways most able to withstand such use.

2. Ensuring that maintenance costs are shared fairly among all road users.
3. Providing maintenance and improvements as needed to ensure safe and efficient travel.

XI. IMPLEMENTATION

The Comprehensive Plan, as noted in the introduction, is merely the planning tool for the Township to follow for the future physical growth and development of the Township. Zoning is a legal device used to implement the plan policies and goals.

It is the Township's intent to enact an amended Zoning Ordinance to control certain land use issues, while protecting roads, minimizing nuisances, providing safety measures, and protecting property values through setbacks and other zoning tools. The mission of the Township in preparing the Comprehensive Plan and proposed amended Zoning Ordinance is to help ensure local control over land uses, by developing a land use plan and ordinance to retain the rural character of the Township. The Township should balance competing interests to continue a high quality of public health, safety and welfare for its citizens.

Glenwood Township and its citizens understand that a proper balance must be achieved between adopting such procedures and measures to protect the environment and the necessity of fostering a strong, healthy, and sustainable economy in the Township, including the production of livestock and grain, and other activities, whether the endeavors are accomplished by its private citizens or public entities.

The Glenwood Township Comprehensive Plan and any proposed amended Zoning Ordinance is deemed to provide such a balance of interests and is designed to support and effectuate these goals and policies.

Adopted on this 12 day of January, 2021.

BY THE TOWN BOARD

Chairperson

Attest: _____
Clerk

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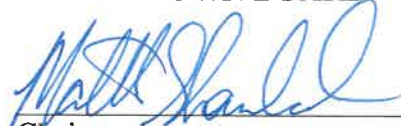
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