

**ROYALTON TOWNSHIP  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
Pine County, Minnesota**

**Royalton Township Board**

Leslie Orvis: Chairman  
John Kemen: Supervisor  
Terry Lind: Supervisor  
Wendy Tchida: Treasurer  
Roberta Folkestad: Clerk

**Royalton Township Planning Commission**

Leslie Orvis: Chairman/Member  
Terry Lind: Member  
Duane Swanson: Member  
Nancy Dahlin-Teich: Member  
Roberta Folkestad: Clerk/Member

**Planning Consultant**

East Central Regional Development Commission

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to provide a means of guiding the present and future development of the Town so as to insure a safer, more pleasant and more economical environment for agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and public activities, to preserve open land, and to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare, in accordance with authorities granted in Minnesota Statutes 462.351 through 462.356. This plan replaces the most recent Royalton Township Comprehensive Development Plan dated October 1989.

The Comprehensive Plan sets forth a unified group of basic goals and objectives, and general proposals which will enable the Town Board, the Planning Commission, and the citizens to review current and future issues and proposals against a clear picture of what has been decided as the most desirable plan for the future physical development and future character of Royalton Township.

### Elements of the Comprehensive Plan

1. Brief history of Royalton Township
2. Survey and Analysis: assesses those factors which have and will continue to influence development. These factors will usually include the following; population, economy, physical and natural resources, land use, housing, public facilities and transportation system. The survey and analysis stage involves not only gathering of background data about the community, but also an analysis of any problems or deficiencies in the existing system which should be corrected.
3. Goals and Policies: represent the values and desires of the citizens of the community relative to the growth and development of their community. The goals and policies establish public positions to guide the decisions of the Planning Commission and Township Board concerning growth and development.
4. Development Plan: a generalized future plan which reflects the existing conditions identified in the Survey and Analysis section and the goals and policies of the community. This section includes a future land use plan map which geographically locates the desired future land uses and development densities within the Township.

This Comprehensive Plan represents the desired future state of the physical development of the Town. It provides the rationale and legal basis for the institution of official controls. These official controls which may include a zoning ordinance will act to implement the goals, objectives and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Finally, the Comprehensive Plan needs to be re-evaluated on a periodic basis and updated or amended, if needed. There are several reasons why: one is a change in conditions in the community brought about through recent development. Second, there may be changes in the goals and objectives of the community. The Comprehensive Plan should also be consistent with any official controls in effect. At any time the official controls are amended, the Comprehensive Plan should also be amended to maintain consistency. A good indication of the need to update the plan and official controls is when the plan or controls are subject to frequent amendments.

## II. SURVEY AND ANALYSIS

### Royalton Township History

For centuries, Native Americans had used the area that would become Royalton Township. The Snake River, which bisects the township, served as a transportation route and as a source of food. After the land cessions of 1837, the land became available for logging and eventual settlement. Elam Greeley settled near the Snake River in 1849. His settlement in section 15, complete with hotel and farm, was taken over by Royal C. Gray in 1854. Small scale lumbering provided most of the economic activity.

Pine County was established in 1856 and was divided into four townships in 1874. What became Royalton was first part of Pine City Township and later in 1874 it became part of Rock Creek Township. On March 17, 1880, the county board of commissioners established Royalton Township, with the boundaries that exist today.

European immigrants began to arrive after the Civil War, with Germans settling in the far south, Danes in the southwest, and Swedes in the east central part of the township. By the 1870s, the northeast section of the township had attracted many Germans; Swedes continued to settle throughout the township. Lumbering gave way to agriculture, specifically general farming with concentration on dairy cattle by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The small communities of West Rock in the east central part (with a creamery, general store and Presbyterian, later a Lutheran, church), Greeley in the southeast (with a creamery, general store, and a Swedish Baptist church), and Clint in the southwest (with a general store, sawmill, and Swedish Methodist Episcopal church) provided economic and social activities. Settlers in the northeast were oriented to Pine City and in the northwest to Grasston.

Seven country schools existed in the township: District 7 (Royalton or Bobtail School) in section 4, District 12 (West Rock School) in section 24, and District 124 (Stumne or Oak Hill School) in section 1 all eventually consolidated into the Pine City school system; District 14 (Clint School) in section 29 and District 41 (Hay Creek School) in section 17 joined with the Braham system; District 17 (Greeley School) in sections 27 and 34 became part of the Rush City school system; and District 63 which operated a school in the township on the north side of Snake River merged into the Grasston system and eventually became part of the Braham system.

By the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century agriculture still forms a substantial part of the township's economy and its ethos, but most of the township's residents find employment outside the town's boundaries.

## Location

The Township of Royalton is located in southwest Pine County and is two miles west of the City of Pine City (Map 1). The Township is approximately sixty miles north of the Minneapolis – St. Paul metropolitan area and one hundred miles south of Duluth.

## Population

An important factor in planning for future land uses and services is the demographics of the Township. An analysis of past population trends and the projection of future populations can provide an insight into factors which have influenced past growth and those which will impact future growth. The past and projected population for Royalton Township is shown in Table 1.

**TABLE 1**

PAST AND PROJECTED POPULATION OF  
ROYALTON TOWNSHIP AND PINE COUNTY  
1930 – 2010

YEAR	ROYALTON TOWNSHIP	PINE COUNTY	ROYALTON TWP. AS % OF PINE COUNTY
1930 (1)	840	20,264	4.1
1940 (1)	783	21,478	3.6
1950 (1)	608	18,223	3.3
1960 (1)	599	17,004	3.5
1970 (1)	560	16,821	3.3
1980 (1)	688	19,871	3.4
1990 (1)	790	21,855	3.4
2000 (1)	976	26,530	3.7
2010 (2)	1,157	28,079	3.4

(1) Bureau of the Census

(2) ECRDC Population Projections based upon 2000 Census and State Demographer's projections.

Table 1 indicates that Royalton Township and Pine County have experienced steady growth since 1970. That growth is projected to continue. The 2000 Census shows an increase that is continuing at the present time. The Table indicates that Royalton Township has been assuming a greater percentage of the total county population. This trend is projected to continue.

**TABLE 2**

POPULATION CHANGE (PERCENT) FOR PINE COUNTY AND  
ROYALTON TOWNSHIP, 1940 – 2000

	<u>1940-60*</u>	<u>1960-70*</u>	<u>1970-80*</u>	<u>1980-90**</u>	<u>1990-2000**</u>
Pine County	-7.9	-9.8	18.1	8.7	24.8
Royalton	-7.6	-9.3	22.6	14.9	11.7

Source: \*U.S. Census, 1940, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000  
\*\*ECRDC population projections based upon 2000 Census and State Demographer's projections.

Table 2 shows that Royalton Township had a 22.6 population increase from 1970 -1980, and is projected to continue to grow during the next twenty years. The data in Tables 1 and 2 indicates that Royalton Township is expected to grow at a faster rate than Pine County. This projection is made for reasons of the location and physical characteristics of the Township. Growth and development has been increasing in areas close yet outside of the City of Pine City. In recent years, an increase in housing development and platting has occurred in the Township. The presence of a significant amount of shoreland is also a factor in the projections as these areas are attractions to development. The population projected for Royalton Township for the year 2010 is 1157.

**TABLE 3**

YEAR-ROUND HOUSING UNITS BY YEAR BUILT

Year Built	Total	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
1999-2000	06	06	0
1995-1998	29	29	0
1990-1994	46	44	2
1980-1989	59	56	3
1970-1979	55	46	9
1960-1969	23	21	2
1950-1959	21	15	6
1940-1949	18	18	0
1939 or earlier	92	88	4
Totals	349	323	26

Owner-occupied housing	314
Renter-occupied housing	26
Seasonal/recreational/occasional use vacant homes	62
For sale	5
Other vacant	12

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Housing

An analysis of housing characteristics is part of the community's planning process. This is because housing is an essential service needed by residents and the availability of housing stock is an important factor in the local environment and quality of life.

The majority of housing units in Royalton Township are newer units, built since 1960. Table 3 indicates the year that the year-round housing units were built.

**TABLE 4**

**HISTORICAL, PRESENT, PROJECTED HOUSING UNITS  
IN ROYALTON TOWNSHIP AND PINE COUNTY**

	1970 Pop/Hsg. Unit	1980 Pop/Hsg.Unit	1990 Pop/Hsg.Unit	2000 Pop/Hsg.Unit
Royalton Rwp. (2.85)	192 (3.2)	270 (3.3)	302 (3.1 )	419
Pine County (2.67)	7,102 (2.7)	10,299 (2.8)	11,033 (2.7)	15,353

Source: 1970 and 1980 -- U.S. Census Bureau

Source: 1990 and 2000 - 1980 pop./housing

ECRDC Projections based on 1980 population and number of housing units, and population projections.

Table 4 indicates that Royalton Township had a total of 419 housing units, including seasonal dwellings, in 2000. The average number of persons per household is 2.85. The number of housing units in Royalton Township is expected to increase.

**TABLE 5**

**Change (Percent) of Housing Units  
Of County and Royalton Township**

	1970-80	1980-90	1990-2000
Royalton Township	40.6	11.8	12.2
Pine County	45.0	7.1	10.5

Table 5 shows the change in percent of housing units in Royalton Township and Pine County. The table indicates that between 1980 and 2000 the number of housing units increased for the entire county with Royalton Township experiencing a greater rate of increase.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Economic Characteristics**

The economic base of Royalton Township is diversified. Economic activities within the Town are primarily agricultural with only limited commercial or industrial activities. The employment of the residents, however, is distributed across the occupational classifications. Private for profit wage and salary workers are the most common occupations according to the 2000 Census. The average travel time to work for those not working at home was 34.6 minutes. Table 6 indicates the occupations of the population.

**TABLE 6****OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYED PERSONS 16 AND OVER IN 2000**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</b>		
<b>Population 16 years and over</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>100.0</b>
In labor force	528	73.2
Civilian labor force	528	73.2
Employed	509	70.6
Unemployed	19	2.6
Percent of civilian labor force	3.6	(X)
Armed Forces	0	0.0
Not in labor force	193	26.8
<b>Females 16 years and over</b>		
<b>Females 16 years and over</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>100.0</b>
In labor force	236	67.6
Civilian labor force	236	67.6
Employed	232	66.5
<b>Employed civilian population 16 years and over</b>		
<b>Employed civilian population 16 years and over</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>OCCUPATION</b>		
Management, professional, and related occupations	132	25.9
Service occupations	63	12.4
Sales and office occupations	86	16.9
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	12	2.4
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	111	21.8
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	105	20.6
<b>INDUSTRY</b>		
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	44	8.6
Construction	79	15.5
Manufacturing	116	22.8
Wholesale trade	11	2.2
Retail trade	50	9.8
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	26	5.1
Information	4	0.8
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	8	1.6
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	22	4.3
Educational, health and social services	89	17.5
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	34	6.7
Other services (except public administration)	5	1.0
Public administration	21	4.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

TOTAL EMPLOYED PERSONS:

329

**TABLE 7****FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 1999**

Subject	Households	Families			Nonfamily households
		Total	Married-couple families	Female householder, no husband present	
<b>Total</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>80</b>
Less than \$10,000	19	3	3	0	16
\$10,000 to \$14,999	14	7	0	5	7
\$15,000 to \$19,999	27	19	13	4	10
\$20,000 to \$24,999	21	14	14	0	8
\$25,000 to \$29,999	19	12	11	1	7
\$30,000 to \$34,999	19	24	15	2	0
\$35,000 to \$39,999	35	20	16	2	15
\$40,000 to \$44,999	27	21	14	1	4
\$45,000 to \$49,999	21	16	12	4	4
\$50,000 to \$59,999	27	27	25	0	2
\$60,000 to \$74,999	43	43	40	3	0
\$75,000 to \$99,999	42	34	33	0	4
\$100,000 to \$124,999	17	16	14	0	0
\$125,000 to \$149,999	6	4	4	0	0
\$150,000 to \$199,999	3	0	0	0	3
\$200,000 or more	6	6	6	0	0
Median income (dollars)	43,000	49,318	53,500	31,250	24,167
Mean income (dollars)	52,633	56,490	60,201	32,923	33,516

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The median and mean incomes for households in 1999 were \$43,000 and \$52,633 respectively. The family and household income for 1999 is shown in table 7. Approximately 4.6 percent of the population is below poverty level with 73.2 percent of Royalton's population 16 years and over employed compared to 63.9 percent in the entire country's population.

## Physical Development

### A. Soil

The soil characteristics of the Township often influence the land use patterns and level of development. Much of the Town's soils consist of the Cushing-Alstad series. The next most common series is the Greenwood-Loxley-Besemen. Considerable Omega-Nemadji series soils are found in the northwest areas of the Township. Peat is also commonly found, the majority being located along the waterways of the Town.

Of the soils found in Royalton Township, certain series have physical properties not conducive to structural development. These soils may be subject to flooding, have low strength, poor percolation, frost action or other characteristics which make them hazardous to buildings or roads constructed upon them. Soils in Royalton Township where development should be discouraged include peat, alluvial, and freer series.

### B. Shorelands

Shorelands, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, is the area 1,000 feet from the ordinary high water mark of a lake and 300 feet from the ordinary high water mark of a river. The Minnesota Shorelands Management Act determines minimum lot sizes, building setbacks, and establishes other provisions to protect the quality of waters and adjacent lands. For this reason, the shorelands of the Township are identified as environmentally sensitive areas requiring special management. Major Shoreland areas exist in the Township as a result of the presence of the Snake River.

### C. Shoreland Management Ordinance for Pine County Minnesota

Dated: October 1, 1993

Microfilm #336988, Pine County Recorder's Office, and amendments thereto

## Existing Land Use

The existing land use of Royalton Township is an important characteristic which will be considered in determining the type of future land uses and densities that are desired. The Existing Land Use Map indicates generalized land uses and land cover of Royalton Township. This map indicates the dominant land use/land cover per 40 acre parcel. Cultivated and forested land constitutes the major land area with pasture/open land making up the rest of the Township's land area. Cultivated and pasture/open space uses are generally found in the central and east part of the Township. A majority of the forested land is located on the west side of the Township. The plat map indicates residences and land ownership patterns. The most intensive development exists adjacent to Snake River and consists of year-round and seasonal residences.

## Public Facilities/Service

There are no public water or sewer systems within the Township. All existing water and sewer systems are on-site systems. The Town Hall official address is: 6052 Royalton Road; Braham, MN 55006; and is located off State Highway 70. Public facilities consist of a town hall building and maintenance facility. The hall and maintenance buildings are used for meetings of the public, Town Board, and Planning Commission and these facilities are used as a voting poll for county, town, Federal, and State elections.

Fire service is provided through contracts with Pine City, Braham, and Rush City Volunteer Fire Departments. Law enforcement is provided through the Pine County Sheriff Department. Planning and Zoning services are provided for the Township through the Board of Supervisors with the assistance of the Town Planning Commission and a Zoning Administrator.

## Transportation

The transportation system of Royalton Township is shown on the Official Township Road Map. This map indicates the jurisdiction of roads and road surface.

Of the approximately 71.4 miles of roads within Royalton Township, 6.4 miles are state trunk highway; 17 miles are county state aid roads; 21 miles are county roads; and 27 miles are township roads. 23 miles are paved or of a bituminous surface and 48.4 miles are gravel or soil surface. The township owns and operates its own maintenance equipment - road grader and truck, and has part time employees for summer grading, snow removal, etc.

Most of the Township is well served by the present road system. The present level of roads is appropriate due to the fact that the area is sparsely developed and is planned for limited development.

## **Fire Districts**

Pine City Fire Department  
Braham Fire Department  
Rush City Fire Department

# **I. GOALS AND POLICIES**

## Natural Environment

- A. Goal: To preserve and protect from development unique features and environmentally sensitive areas.

### Policies

1. Development should be prohibited from areas with significant environmental or ecological vulnerability or for which development would be hazardous.
2. The quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater resources should be preserved by the appropriate regulation of all development activities which have the potential of impacting the water resources of the Township.
3. The importance of the forests, lakes, streams, and other natural features or characteristics on the quality of life shall be recognized and appropriately managed to be preserved for future generations.
4. The Township's unique, natural, scenic and historical areas should be identified, protected and developed for public use and enjoyment with the primary purpose of preservation of these resources.

## Physical Development of the Community

### Land Use

- A. Goal: To identify areas suitable for development and establish land uses and development patterns appropriate for the level of services and facilities available.

### Policies

1. No structural development such as construction of commercial, industrial, or residential structures should be permitted on soils with severe or very severe limitations unless acceptable engineering safeguards are employed. These limitations include:
  - a. Slope in excess of 12 percent,
  - b. Wetlands, peat and muck areas,
  - c. Areas of exposed bedrock (soil depth less than six feet)
  - d. High water table,

- e. Soils subject to severe wind and water erosion,
  - f. Soils of low permeability.
2. Development shall be limited in those portions of the Township which have significant areas of unsuitable soils or topography for buildings.
  3. The open storage or accumulation of materials, equipment, or vehicles shall be limited to prevent nuisances or prevent a depreciative effect on adjacent properties, or threaten the health, safety and welfare of the public.
  4. Development should be encouraged in those areas that have potential for providing an appropriate range of public services, including transportation, at the most economical cost to the County, Township and School District. Developments which result in a negative fiscal impact to property values, the Township and all government entities due to increased service requirements, etc., shall be discouraged.
  5. The majority of development occurring in the Township shall be guided to the areas adjacent to the major transportation facilities to the Town.
  6. Agricultural and residential land uses should be the primary land use within the Township and all other uses shall be considered as secondary or conditional. Agricultural uses shall occur on lots of adequate size so as to not adversely impact adjacent lots.
  7. Residential, commercial, and industrial development may be accommodated, consistent with the needs and desires of the Township and shall be located on existing, maintained roads and not adversely impact any existing land uses.
  8. The Township will encourage quality housing for its residents by establishing standards for dwellings.

### Public Services and Facilities

- B. Goal: To provide for a cost-effective, suitable level of services consistent with the rural characteristics and land use goals and policies of the Township.
1. The Township shall maintain a limited level of public services and facilities, consisting primarily of fire protection and road maintenance. The Township's public service and facility standards shall be maintained and improved only when necessary to accommodate existing and planned development.
  2. Development will be encouraged to maintain the rural character of the township. Development in remote areas or development patterns which
  3. require additional services and facilities, including new roads, will be discouraged. The investment and mobility of the existing transportation system should be protected by instituting appropriate land use, density, building setback, and access controls so as to not exceed the capacity or reduced the function of the system.

#### IV. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

##### Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan outlines the future land use patterns and development densities desired by Royalton Township. The plan is based on the issues and factors discussed in the Survey and Analysis Section and the Township's desires and values stated in the Goals and Policy Section.

The Land Use Plan identifies the entire township as agricultural/residential except for the Shorelands Area.

##### A. Agricultural/Residential Area

The Agricultural/Residential Area is characterized by mixed agricultural and residential uses as well as forests and lowland. A portion of the area consists of soils not conducive to development.

Commercial and industrial uses will be accommodated as secondary uses under special conditions.

##### B. Shoreland Area

The Shoreland Area is that area in the Township within one thousand feet from the ordinary high water of lakes and three hundred feet from rivers. This area is subject to special management under the Shoreland Management Ordinance for Pine County. Any development activities and restrictions have to conform to Pine County and State Regulations.

##### Public Service Facility Plan

The existing level of public services and facilities are planned to be maintained, but not expanded. The existing transportation system generally will be maintained, but no new roads are planned. Services such as public water and sewer systems are not planned for the foreseeable future.

In summary, the public service and facility plan indicates that the Township will continue to provide a minimum level of services to maintain the rural character of the township. Development proposals will be limited to the capability of the existing level of public service.

## **EFFECTUATION**

SEC. 1 A statutory hearing to amend the Comprehensive Plan was held by Royalton Township Planning Commission on November 24, 2009.

SEC. 2 The Town of Royalton Planning Commission recommended to the Royalton Town Board of Supervisors by written recommendation dated December 15, 2009, that this Comprehensive Plan be adopted as the official municipal plan for the Town of Royalton.

SEC. 3 Nancy Dahlin-Teich moved the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, and Duane Swanson duly seconded the motion and it was adopted on the following vote:

Yeas: Leslie Orvis, Terry Lind, Duane Swanson, Nancy Dahlin-Teich, and Roberta Folkestad

Nays: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

SEC. 4 This Conditional Plan shall take effect and be in full force on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2009, upon its adoption by the Town Board of Supervisors for the Town of Royalton.

This Comprehensive Plan was declared adopted by the Town Board of Supervisors on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2009.

**RESOLUTION NUMBER 001-2009**

**ROYALTON TOWNSHIP  
COUNTY OF PINE  
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE ROYALTON TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, Royalton Township wishes to adopt a Comprehensive Plan to promote orderly and economical development within the Township;

**AND WHEREAS**, the Township Board deems it necessary to adopt a Comprehensive Plan to promote the health and welfare of the Township residents, and protect and preserve the environment and the quality of life in Royalton Township;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**; that the Royalton Township Board hereby adopts the Royalton Township Comprehensive Plan.

Adopted this 26<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2010 by the Royalton Township Board

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Leslie Orvis, Chairman

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John Kemen, Supervisor

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Terry Lind, Supervisor

Attest:

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Township Clerk: Roberta Folkestad

Introduced: November 24, 2009

Adopted: January 26, 2010

Posted: December 15, 2009

Drafted by: Royalton Township Planning Commission

6052 Royalton Road

Braham, MN 55006