

County Comprehensive Plan and Township Plans support this ordinance

CLUP are on file for Alma, Buffalo, Belvidere, and Milton townships as well as for the cities of Nelson, Alma and Cochrane.

These plans support enhancements and protections of the scenic values. Surveys in the LUP's overwhelmingly said that people live in Buffalo County because of the natural beauty, small town atmosphere and agricultural base and that economic development must be balanced with these characteristics.

The Village of Cochrane's CLUP describes concerns about the possibility of any rail load out on the BNSF rail. Nelson Township's survey reveals that most are opposed to industrial development. The Township of Alma wants to promote tourism and protect the natural beauty. Others raise concerns about building on bluff tops, prime farmland or in floodplains.

Suggestions for the future from the plan

- Buffalo County should integrate the many state, federal, county and city, parks and wildlife areas that attract visitors and citizens into a plan for economic development.
- A central education/ recreation center / county park along the Great River Road that draws people to the area and shows them what animals, birds and fish live here.
- Alma has land available for a park that was never built and land that could include a hiking trail to the bluff that was never developed.
- The county has plans for a bike trail connecting Buffalo County to the Great River State Trail that have been languishing for 10 years.
- Many of the natural attractions are not identified for visitors and even citizens do not know about them. Parking lots, trails, boat launches and camping areas are needed to make them accessible.

Purpose of the Great River Road Tourism and Recreation Overlay District

1. Create a more attractive, cohesive and safe environment for citizens and visitors.
2. Safeguard the heritage by preventing the despoliation of scenic views.
3. Preserve, protect and enhance areas of high tourist and visitor visibility
4. Provide motorists and bicyclists with attractive and safe viewing and driving opportunities
5. Stabilize property values
6. Protect capital investments and infrastructure
7. Implement the goals of city and townships along the GRR/NSB by protecting the ability of the citizens and tourists to safely use and capitalize on the county's natural tourist attractions such as the many Wildlife Areas and Refuges for hiking, bird watching, canoeing, hunting and fishing etc.

The Buffalo County Outdoor Recreation Plan supports the need of a Great River Road Recreation and Tourism overlay district.

This plan contains valuable information about the goals and objectives of the County and how the plan should / could provide a single source for a county wide inventory of existing outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities.

Goals that are addressed by this ordinance include:

Maintain an outdoor recreation program that protects the natural environment and responds to the outdoor recreation needs of the residents and visitors of the county"

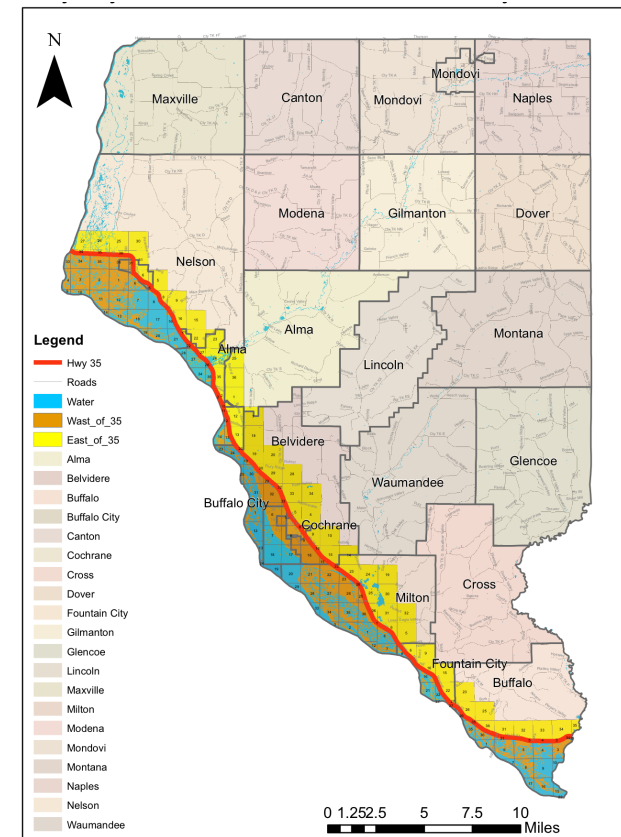
Consider the impact of the local economy of the many visitors and tourists in the area that utilize the county and municipal outdoor recreation facilities.

Tourism: Recognize that Buffalo has attracted and will continue to attract tourists for a wide variety of activities that include, biking, hiking, fishing, hunting, canoeing, birding etc.

Buffalo County

Great River Road / National Scenic Byway Tourism and Recreation Overlay District

The Driftless Area Recreation - Tourism - Natural Beauty



The Great River Road is a National Scenic Byway

This designation means that the road, and its associated corridors, has exceptionally high quality or uniqueness in at least one of six different intrinsic qualities: Archeological, Cultural, Historic, Natural, Recreational or Scenic.

Buffalo County's part of the GRR-NSB has all 6 of these qualities.

State Hwy 35 was designated in 1938 by President Roosevelt as part of The Great River Road, managed by the Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC).

State Hwy 35 was Wisconsin's first State Scenic Byway. The State of Wisconsin created the program "to recognize state highways that offer travelers numerous scenic and/or historical attributes whose promotion can serve to boost a region's attractiveness as a tourist destination." County officials may think that they are only impacting this State Scenic Byway in Buffalo County, but our section is located in the middle of this 250-mile route in Wisconsin and could impact all 33 river towns located along its route.

State Hwy 35 is Wisconsin's only National Scenic Byway, established in 1991. The vision of the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byways Program is "to create a distinctive collection of American roads, their stories and

Archeological Qualities

Buffalo County is in the beautiful "Driftless Area" which is unique in the world. It's call that because the ice didn't "drift" over this area. The historic Twin Bluffs in Nelson has been preserved through the Nature Conservancy. The Wisconsin Historical Society recognizes it as an important site once used by American Indians.

Cultural and Historic Qualities

There is a rich heritage of immigrants along the river settling Alma, Fountain City, and Nelson. A fine place to learn about this is the Prairie Moon Museum in Milton Township.

The Great River Road runs directly through the City of Alma's Main Street, a National Historic District, first settled in 1848 as part of the logging boom in an area called Beef Slough. In 1982, 346 acres and over 200 buildings were protected as important when included in the designation of the City of Alma as a National Historic District. Several buildings are individually protected as well and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Most of these historic buildings are just feet from State Hwy 35.

Fountain City is the oldest settlement in Buffalo County with an important home on the Historic Register. The Fugina House was built in 1916 in the Prairie Style made popular by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Natural Qualities

Rivers and wetlands and bluffs make up the unique "Driftless Area" habitat of the County. Eagle Bluff in Fountain City is the tallest bluff on the Mississippi. Buena Vista Park at 500 feet is the largest natural balcony over the Mississippi and is widely known as one of the best views along the GRR.

The Chippewa and Buffalo Rivers empty into the Mississippi and contribute these important Buffalo County wetlands as well:

- **Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge** 15,112 acres
- **The Nelson Trevino Bottomland** 3,100 acres
- **Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge** 2500 acres
- **Whitman Dam State Wildlife Area** 2,173 acres
- **Lower Chippewa River State Natural** which includes the **Tiffany Wildlife Area** 12,723 acres, 8,823 acres

Note: This ordinance only applies to new permits, not existing businesses

Other concerns with increased truck traffic

Public Safety

Due to the size constraints caused by the Mississippi River on one side and the bluffs on the other, in Alma and Fountain City, there is no room for city parking other than parallel and a few parking spots on side streets. Most residential and commercial sites do not have an area for parking other than on the street. Difficulty in parallel parking is already a concern.

Reduction of Property Values, Taxes and Economic Revenue

Farmland and communities are all negatively impacted by increased truck traffic but the impact of a haul route that passes directly through two of the county's oldest main street communities, Alma & Fountain City is significant. These centralized communities will be negatively impacted by loss of property value and local government will experience negative financial impacts with the loss of property value.

Environmental and Pollution Issues

Residents of these cities will experience many adverse impacts living 15 feet away from State Hwy 35; substantial traffic increases, noise pollution and exhaust pollution are just a few. Quality of life for thousands of county citizens will diminish dramatically. Property value will decrease.

Infrastructure Impacts

Public utilities for the City of Alma are buried under State Hwy 35, including community water lines and sanitary & storm sewers constructed years ago. Wear and tear on this road by heavy truck traffic will result in eventual damage to the entire city's utility infrastructure.