

# **AGRI-TOURISM LAND USE PLAN**

**A Master Plan Amendment  
for the southwestern portion of St. Charles County**

Prepared by  
Department of Community Development  
St. Charles County, Missouri  
August, 2012

# AGRI-TOURISM LAND USE PLAN

## A Master Plan Amendment for the Southwestern portion of St. Charles County

August, 2012 Revision 1

### Background

The southwestern portion of the county has long been considered one of the most beautiful rural areas in the county, coupled with its distinction of being an area with rich historical significance. This rural, historic and beautiful landscape has been a main ingredient in facilitating the winery businesses that have developed in this area and the tourism that has been generated to come to this area of the county. There have been increasing interest in further promoting tourism to this area and if that is to occur, it is imperative that it is accomplished in a manner that protects and preserves the special character of this area that is stimulating those interests.

The St. Charles County Master Plan “Envision 2020” includes the following goals and strategies.

#### Economy

**Goal:** Utilize the land use policies of the county to enhance opportunities of economic development.

**Strategies:** Increase focus on tourism as an economic factor throughout the county.

#### Land Use

**Goal:** Plan for land use development and growth in a sustainable way.

**Strategies:** Create an exclusive agricultural zoning district that supports and preserves actual agricultural uses.

This planning effort is intended to enhance tourism activity and to lay the ground work for a more exclusive agricultural zoning district to support and preserve actual agricultural uses.

### Plan Objectives

The intent of this Agri-Tourism Land Use Plan is embodied in the following objectives:

- To preserve a cultural asset of vast significance in southwestern St. Charles County.
- To protect and preserve scenic vistas and rural landscapes.
- Aid in the continuing expansion of tourism and economic development within this portion of St. Charles County.
- To protect and preserve agricultural lands within this scenic area.
- To assist with the promotion of historical preservation in the area.
- To provide for non-residential and non-agricultural development in the area which is both buffered and non-obtrusive.
- To provide for the protection and enhancement of natural resources along area roadways.

## Area Planning Boundaries

The area along Highway 94 South, beginning at a point east of Hwy DD where the property lines of Weldon Spring Conservation Area and the University of Missouri Conservation Area properties intersect Hwy 94 South and extending to the Warren County boundary was included in this examination. Highway 94 South was considered the baseline for any area to be established by this plan as it is the main transportation arterial into and through this area.

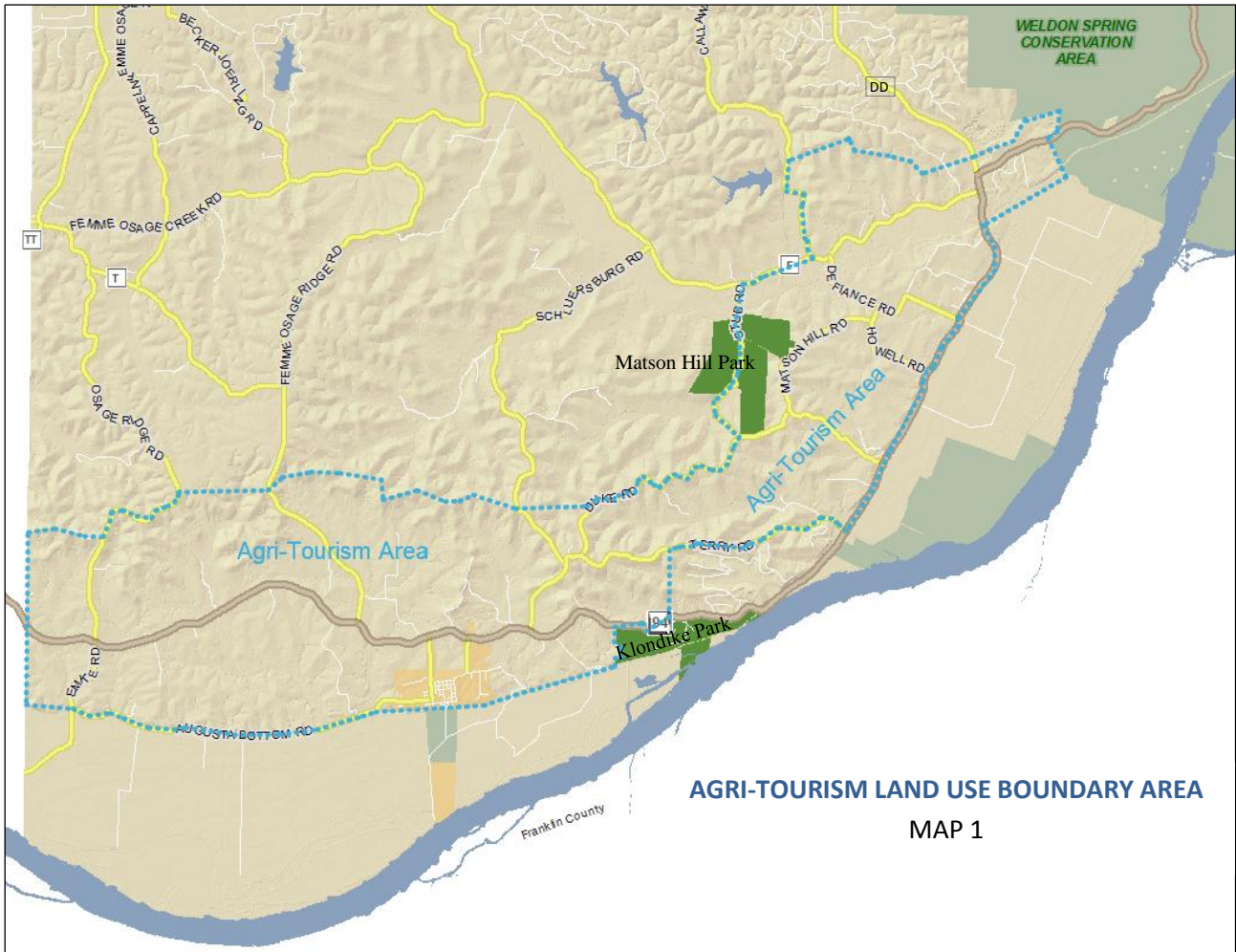
The corridor between the state and university properties east of Highway DD and Klondike Park is variable in the views from the highway. They range from heavily vegetative areas extending up to the right-of-way, large open expanses of farm land within the 100 year flood plain, hills and the village areas of Matson and Defiance. While specific planning for these two villages is not included in any detail within this plan, it is assumed that these villages could grow over time and contribute to economic growth, tourism and convenience for area residents. Such growth should be governed by traditional zoning tools.



The area between Klondike Park and the Warren County line is characterized by rolling hills in farm, pasture and vineyards, forested hillsides and ravines. Vistas in this area are some of the most expansive in the corridor.



In establishing the boundaries for this plan, an examination of what can be seen from the roadway from a driver's perspective, an examination of topographic maps, an evaluation of existing vegetative cover and ease in identifying an area were included in deciding on a planning area boundary. These boundaries are shown on Map1. The area around and including Augusta Shores was excluded as it is already developed as single-family residential.



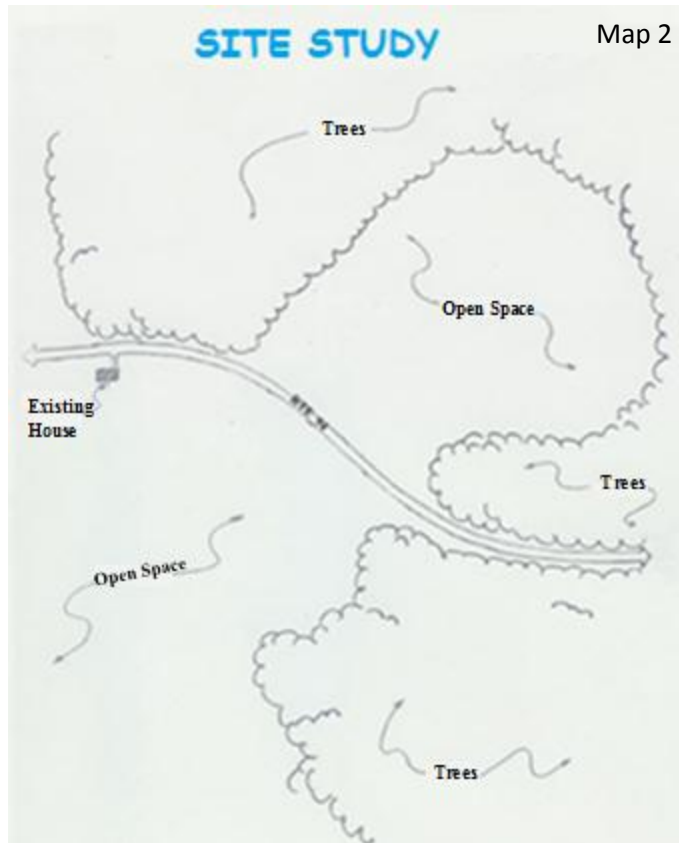
## Plan Development Elements

In order to facilitate the expansion of tourist types of development within this area and still maintain the rural and open character of the area, certain development elements applied to such uses should be considered. These elements include clustered development patterns, setbacks from area roadways, hillside preservation areas, and existing roadside vegetation preservation.

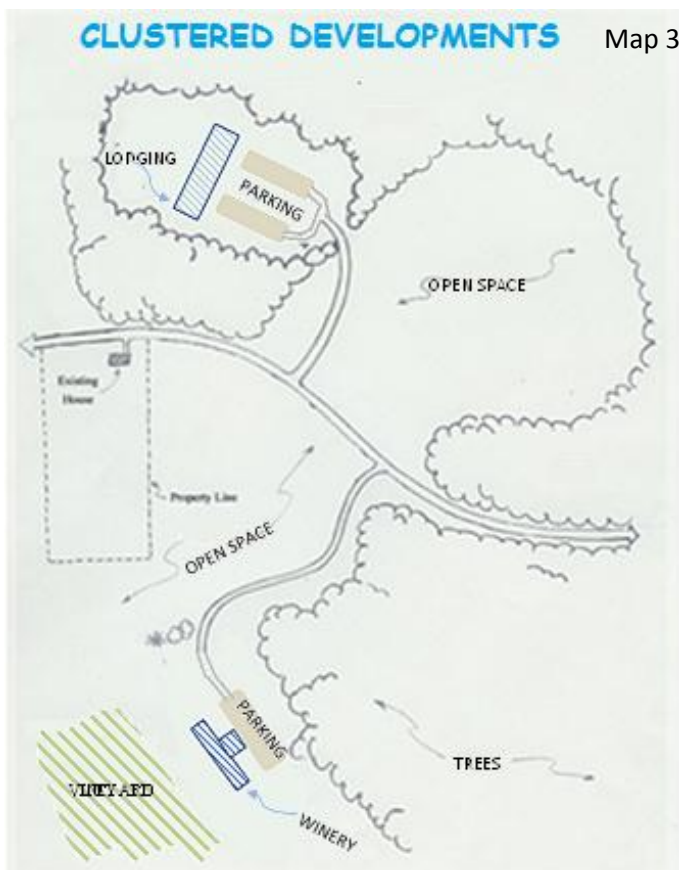
## Clustered Development Patterns

The single most important element needed to preserve the scenic and rural character of the area is to manage development in a way that avoids development that occupies a significant percentage of the land area. In order to maintain the rural and open character of the area, development should be clustered on the site and only occupy a small percentage of the total area. The portion of the site that is not developed should remain in agricultural or open space/natural setting. In order to integrate non-agricultural uses into the area it will be necessary that the basic site contain a significant number of acres so that the predominate use of the land area is agricultural or open space. For example, a site area of 40 acres and development clustered on no more than 7 percent of the site should provide the ability to develop the site, buffer the development and still maintain the open and rural character of the site and area.

Applying this development method to the Site Study shown on map 2 could result in a development depicted on map 3. Vistas are preserved and the character of the corridor will retain its serene, open and rural character.



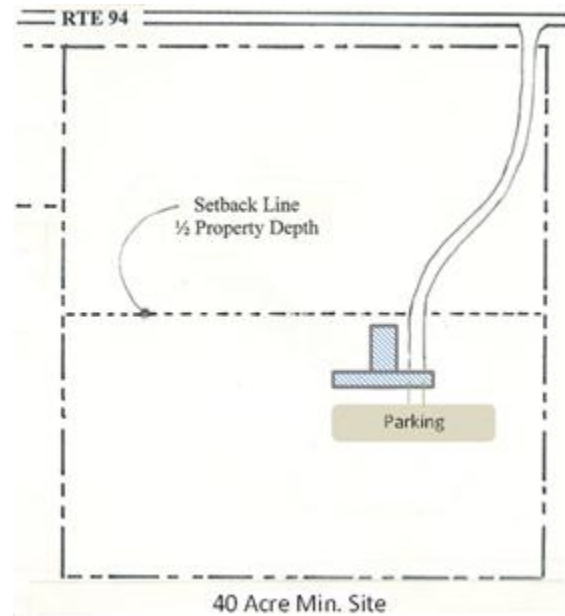
Map 2



Map 3

## Setbacks

There are a significant number of parcels that have been created over time that have frontage on area roadways. Some are already developed with homes, others are undeveloped. As development continues to occur on these existing parcels the open and scenic vistas will be negatively impacted. In order to maintain a degree of openness to the character of the area, development setbacks for non-agricultural uses greater than what are currently required in an Agriculture district for traditional uses (50 feet) are needed. In many cases, individuals will place their developments further back than required in order to obtain more privacy, to reduce the noise and commotion from the highway and to capture scenic vistas. A set back of one-half the depth of a property will facilitate an open feel and preserve vistas. This setback still provides ample room to develop the parcel. These setbacks would preserve both the look and the experience of driving through this scenic area by protecting scenic vistas and the rural landscape of the area.



Map 4

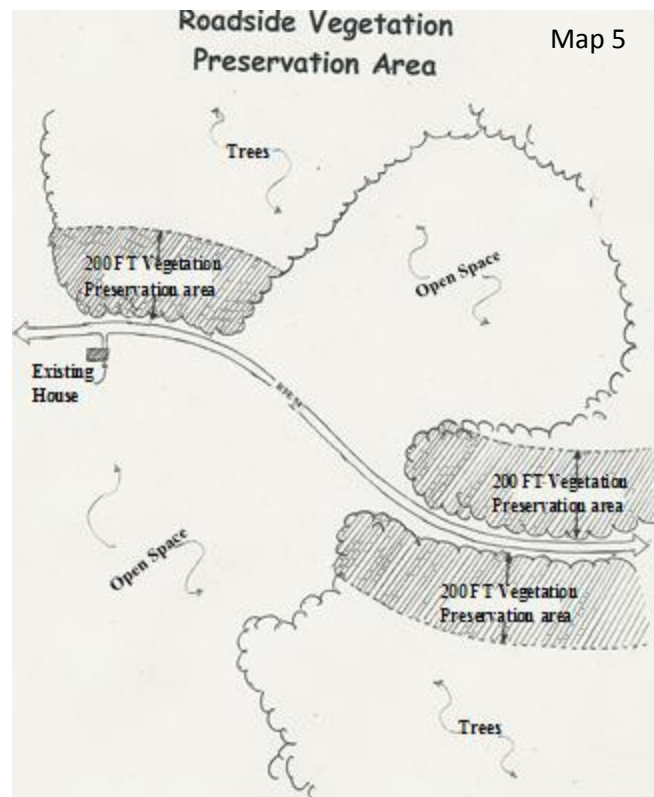
## Hillside/Forest Preservation Areas

A requirement to cluster development on hillsides and in heavily vegetated areas could impact the retention of the scenic nature of those features. It will be important to retain the vegetative cover on these hillsides and forested areas for both environmental and scenic reasons. The plan therefore seeks to conserve hillside and forested areas and restricts the degree of slope (< 30%) that may be built upon and the amount of vegetative cover that can be removed i.e. sites should not be clear cut. Existing mature vegetation should be incorporated into the development plan. The primary objectives of the hillside/forest preservation development standards are: to protect watershed, natural waterways, and to minimize soil erosion; to ensure that all new development is free from adverse drainage conditions; to encourage the preservation of existing landscape by maximum retention of natural topographic and vegetative features, and; to minimize the scarring of hillside construction.



## Existing Roadside Vegetation Preservation

The character of the area is in part determined by the presence of heavy vegetation which adjoins the roadway. If this vegetation is maintained, development occurring beyond is out of sight and thereby has little impact on the character of the area as seen from the road. Heavy vegetation having a depth of 200 feet will totally obscure anything further or greatly mute the view depending on the season.



## Village Developments

Small villages or towns in rural areas provide convenient day to day needs of the residents of the surrounding areas. They provide a meeting place and a small town environment for its residents. Defiance and the town of Augusta are examples of these villages within the corridor.

Matson is much smaller and has fewer elements usually contained within a small village, but can be viewed as an emerging area that could develop into a village over time. This plan will not focus on Augusta as it is an incorporated area but it will be designated as a village/town on the plan. Due to the fact that Matson and Defiance are already served by a central water system, St. Charles County Public Water Supply District No. 2, the addition of a sanitary sewer system with a package treatment plant could provide a basis for expanded development in both areas. With the development of such a system, development opportunities to provide convenience and tourist related commercial developments and smaller lot in-town residential subdivisions will be enhanced.

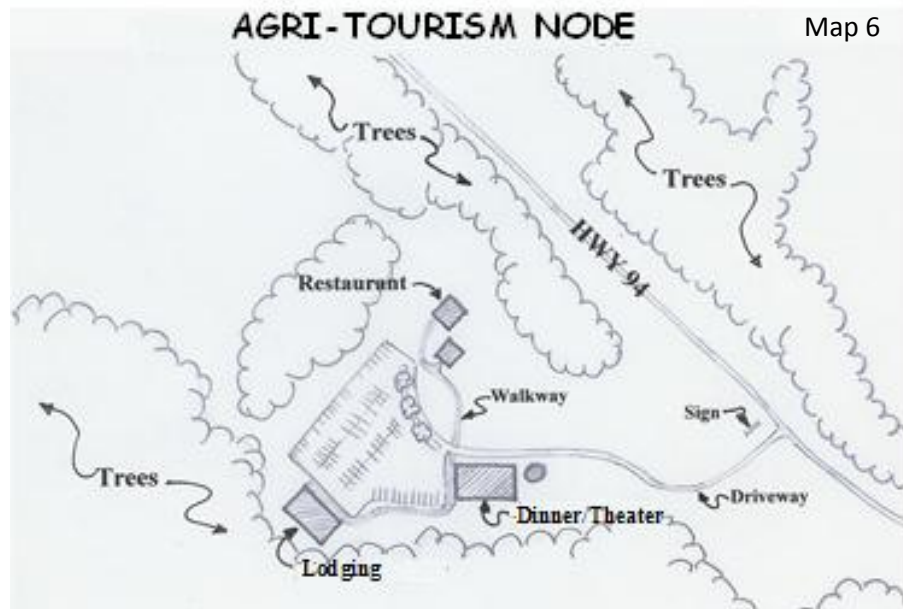
In both locations the small village look could be incorporated into new developments proposed thereby expanding upon the village concept. The quaintness and visual appearance of both areas would be retained. Matson and Defiance are therefore designated village developments within the planning boundaries of the plan. The intent of these village developments is to provide development opportunities within defined areas on the Plan that reflect traditional village design. The characteristics sought include: compactness and tight form, residential densities of 2-4 units per acre, with the highest densities closest to the village center along Route 94; village centers containing street edge buildings, public buildings, parks, gathering places; commercial uses meeting everyday needs and tourist related uses, residential neighborhoods close to the village center, civic open spaces within and rural open space at edges, Pedestrian-friendly but also auto-accessible streets scaled for typical uses.

While no specific architectural theme is proposed for these developments other than the character description above, opportunities to create a unique village theme exist and could create a beneficial development tool to enhance the village's attractiveness for commercial and residential purposes.

## Agri-Tourism Nodes

All endeavors that find this area a desirable location may not be able to develop within the village centers. While no specific location for these agri-tourism nodes are indicated on the plan; it is anticipated that there will be a limited number of nodes that would be considered for this area. These nodes predominately

cater to the tourism and agricultural tourism needs of an area. Specific uses considered permissible include winery, restaurant, dinner-theater, bed and breakfasts, museum, lodging facilities, microbreweries and rural recreational activities such as corn mazes and hay rides. In order to provide opportunities for this type of development



in a manner that will not negatively impact the scenic and rural nature of the corridor, the plan proposes that these nodes adhere to a design theme that will blend the developments into the context of their setting. An Agri-Tourism Node is a cluster or assemble of buildings having an agrarian architectural theme (farm homestead) or other architectural theme that blends the development into the area and produces a quality design which is massed on a very small percentage of a site. Agri-Tourism developments should be permitted as a conditional use in an Agricultural type of zoning district to afford the ability to review and approve the specific architectural and site planning design for each development.

## Land Use Plan Amendment

In order to accomplish the objectives of this plan it is necessary to amend the current master plan by adding an additional land use category as follows:



## Agri-Tourism

The area illustrated as agri-tourism in the county contains significant undeveloped areas and areas in various forms of agricultural use. It also contains the town of Augusta and the villages of Matson and Defiance. It is the intent of this land use category to continue to promote farming and agricultural use in these areas, but also to incorporate non-agricultural uses and uses related to agricultural which cater to tourism activities in a manner which will not detract from its essential rural and open character.

## Agri-Tourism Design Ideals

This land use category is intended to promote the continued use of property for agricultural and open space purposes. If development that is non-agricultural is to occur, it should minimize its impacts on natural areas and on nearby farming and agricultural operations. The following design ideals are appropriate for all agri-tourism development that occurs outside of the Urban Service Area:

1. Minimize cut and fill for roads and site grading.
2. Steer development away from geologic features, such as rock outcroppings or steep slopes.
3. Use significant setbacks, and the clustered placement of non-agricultural uses and structures.
4. Require large acreage minimum site areas with a small percentage of the site that can be devoted to non-agricultural uses.
5. Non-agricultural uses should be spaced one from the other in order to avoid concentrations which will disrupt the agricultural character of the area.
6. High quality of architectural design and site planning utilizing design themes that blend structures into the rural open space character of the area.

## Agri-Tourism Category

### Appropriate uses

#### **Primary Uses**

Farming and other agriculturally related uses, including raising farm animals, equestrian activities, breeding and boarding facilities.

#### **Secondary Uses**

Agricultural tourism businesses such as wineries and other tourism businesses that promote tourism subject to strict site planning and architectural design standards that blends the development into the rural and agricultural character of the area. Residential on large lots (e.g., 5 acres or greater)

### Desired Characteristics and Location

Development related to agri-business/ tourism should minimize its impacts on natural areas, open space, and agricultural operations. These uses should not be concentrated next to each other but

should be concentrated in an area of the county in order to generate symbiotic relationships between these uses and to have sufficient concentration to further generate and promote tourism activity. The location for this land use category is designated on Map 7 of this plan. It should be noted that the area acceptable for this land use category does not imply that all properties within this area would be appropriate for such uses.

*Applicable Zoning District: AT Agri-Tourism District (PROPOSED)*

## LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan identifies the area for Agri-Tourism land use. Within this area, consideration could be given for a new zoning district that would implement this plan. Not all properties within the Agri-Tourism area will be suitable or meet the regulations of a new implementing zoning district.

