

Economic Development Insight

Greene County Planning Process

Last week, the Greene County Plan Steering Committees for the Greene County Comprehensive Plan that includes the Tourism Plan, Bloomfield Comprehensive Plan and the I-69 Corridor Plan met on Wednesday evening to review the results of the entire public input received to date.

The consultants, Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates, had compiled the input and prepared a series of draft documents that the steering committee reviewed and edited in preparation for the upcoming open houses scheduled.

Concerns were raised, not so much about the planning activities, but about the potential for land use controls, should they be subsequently developed and adopted. This was a subject that was extensively discussed by the Greene County group and some clarifications provided relief from unfounded fear for some participants.

One such clarification is that the Greene County plan only pertains to the unincorporated parts of the county. The incorporated communities have separate and distinct governments, which each determine what, if any, land use controls are necessary in their particular jurisdiction. However, the Greene County plan will consider the information provided by any existing community plans, such as the Linton Comprehensive Plan, and especially the Bloomfield and I-69 Corridor plans also currently being developed.

Also, a discussion on pros and cons of land use controls focused on the need for land owners consent for some moderate external control in exchange for the protection of their property and its current use.

Next week, a series of public “open houses” will be held so Greene County residents can inspect and comment on the three plans being developed. The first is the “Future Vision for Bloomfield” on Tuesday, August 26th from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Bloomfield Junior/Senior High School in the cafeteria (501 W. Spring St., Bloomfield, IN 47424). Then, on Wednesday, August 27th from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Eastern Greene High School in the library (State Highway 445, Cincinnati, IN 47424), the “Goals and Guidelines for the I-69 Corridor in Greene County” will be showcased. Finally, the “Future Vision for Greene County” on Thursday, August 28th from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at 4-H Center (State Highway 54, Switz City, IN 47465).

In addition, copies of all three draft plans are available at both the city/town hall and public library in Linton and Bloomfield, and in the Greene County Assessors office. For your convenience, additional copies are available at either the town hall or public library in other communities.

This is your opportunity to see the plans’ development to date and to provide your comments and suggestions.

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Many people think of a comprehensive plan as only a future land use map. Although the map may be one of the end products, the foundation of the comprehensive plan is the future vision for the community as expressed in goals, objectives, principles, policies or guidelines.

While these objectives and policies are the foundation for the comprehensive plan, the plan typically includes several other elements, including a land use development plan or future land use map, a transportation/thoroughfare plan, a utilities plan, a community facilities plan, an open space and recreation plan, tourism plan and an environmental plan.

The plans currently being developed create a vision for 2030 and, at the conclusion of the planning activities, a plan commission may be formed that would provide a mechanism to review and change individual parcel classifications, if and when the need occurs, although it should be noted that most communities update their plans about every 5 years.

Why do we need to plan? Typically, we want to accomplish or achieve something or we want to avoid something. To prepare, we use whatever facts available to help us make our best choices and chart the most practicable steps to accomplish our goal.

So, who decides what the government's goals and desires are that are to be planned for? You, the public. Specifically, the residents of Greene County. After the public has been given opportunity to provide input, the steering committee, plan commission (if any) and ultimately the council/commissioners must decide on what goals, policies, land-use arrangements, etcetera, best embody a consensus of public opinion tempered with good judgment.

Greene County Economic Development Corporation, as the coordinator for the various planning activities, encourages you to check out the work done so far and provide your feedback. On behalf of the steering committees, we truly appreciate your input.

Joan Bethell is the executive director at Greene County Economic Development Corporation and can be reached at (812) 847-4500 or jbethell@gcedc.us.