

# Owen County Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Steering Committee Meeting 5 • Aug. 11, 2022 • Owen County Family YMCA

## Note

More information on this meeting – including the PowerPoint presentation - and other components of this planning process can be found at <https://owencountycompplan.com/>.

## Attendees

**Steering Committee Members:** Cassie Abrell, Corbin Abrell, Steve Fox, Sean Huss, Marce King, Aaron LaGrange, Anton Neff, Kurt Rosenberger, Larken Seymour, Mary Skinner, Clint Sturgeon, Colin Sturgeon, Matt Sward and Norm Warner.

After objections were made that the steering committee did not include representation from the agricultural community, new members (listed above) were added. In addition, the general public was invited to attend the meeting and some took part in the discussions.

The meeting was facilitated by Scott Burgins, of SB Planning & Research and Rachel Christenson, of HWC Engineering.

## Review of Planning Process

The committee reviewed the basics of the comprehensive plan, how it differs from zoning regulations and upcoming events.

## Discussion on Rural Preservation

The future land use map on page 50 of the comprehensive plan draft (dated 6-29-2022) has drawn the most comments so far, particularly the land use category called “Rural Preservation.”

- At first the group discussed just cutting the whole category, then discussed clarifying its intent and changing its name (Rural District, Rural Homestead District).
- There were concerns that the local emergency services and the school system was unprepared for all the new houses already approved, but Plan Commission President Warner said that both local emergency service directors and the school corporation superintendent said that they could support the growth.
- **Key concerns:**
  - Plan and map does not include forest, a key product of Owen County.
  - In preservation category, land that wasn't being farmed would lead to eminent domain and the farmer's land being used for parks, river put-ins, etc. Government could connect all that 'underutilized' land and take it away from farmers.
  - Vacant and foreclosed property should be the focus of new development and not allowing large subdivisions.

- \*Upset land lady north of Spencer.
  - We need definition of 'Protection.'
  - We need definition of "grandfathering."
  - New code *must* have requirement to notify adjacent landowners of zoning changes.
- **Key Questions:**
    - Do we need a forest or timber category?
    - Do forest-y communities like Brown County have ordinances we can use?
    - Is there a federally recognized airstrip west of Spencer in an area we have marked for subdivisions?
    - What are these 5-acre lots next to state forest on Fish Creek and Delphi roads? Are they a model for preservation category? Asked by Plan Commissioner Pursell.
- **Final decision:** This is unclear to me. After agreeing to included everything in a well-defined Agricultural District, there was some pushback and confusion that cutting the category would leave the community *less* protected. They asked for clarification through example, scenarios, etc.).

## Next Steps

- ☐ Tuesday, Aug. 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the courthouse, plan commission meeting to propose changes to the draft and talk about next steps in the planning process. You're invited to attend.
- ☐ On Thursday, Aug. 25 at 6:30 p.m. at Owen Valley High School, we will hold a public meeting to discuss the plan. For more information or if you have questions, contact Scott Burgins at [scott@sbresearchandplanning.com](mailto:scott@sbresearchandplanning.com).