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Comprehensive Planning Newsletter

This newsletter is intended to keep Washington County citizens, elected officials and other interested persons current on the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Planning (Smart Growth) process in Washington County.

In this issue:

- Gain insight on the different levels of detail for the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan.
- Review the latest changes to the comprehensive planning law.
- Learn more about the 14 planning goals.
- Get an update on the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Planning process.



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 This newsletter is also available on the Planning & Parks Department website:
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Debora Sielski
 Assistant Administrator for Planning

Washington County Multi-Jurisdictional

Comprehensive Planning Newsletter

This newsletter provides an opportunity for Washington County residents to gain insight into the process of planning the future of our County.

The Purpose of this Newsletter

The aim of this quarterly newsletter is to keep Washington County citizens, elected officials and other interested persons current on the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Planning (Smart Growth) process in Washington County.

This newsletter will have information on upcoming meetings and contain articles and statistics related to planning issues.

The newsletter is also available on the Washington County Planning and Parks Department web site. To add a name to this mailing list, please write or contact the Department.

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Different Levels of Detail

Because both the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) and Washington County must complete comprehensive plans under the state law, some local officials wonder whether these plans will override local decision-making. Tom Larson of the Wisconsin Realtors Association addressed this concern recently when he said, "This law embraces local control. It's about people having a voice in how their community grows". Is Larson right? To gain more insight, let's examine the depth of detail contained within comprehensive plans at different levels of government. As it turns out, SEWRPC, the County, and local municipalities do indeed deal with many of the same issues—but usually at different scales.

Take a look at economic development for example, one of the required nine elements in a comprehensive plan. All three plans—SEWRPC's, the County's, and the local municipality's—will address economic development in some manner. SEWRPC's plan will look at economic trends for the southeast Wisconsin region as a whole. The plan may make useful recommendations related to which job sectors the region ought to emphasize, for example. Nevertheless, though these recommendations might be very effective in coordinating the region's future strategies, in the end, the County can follow the recommendations or ignore them.



If the County follows the recommendations, it may decide to apply for certain grants, set up a revolving loan fund, or pursue other such appropriate programs and activities. However, the County's plan will not pinpoint specific locations where new businesses must go or which communities, for example, must pursue tourism related jobs. Even if it did, local municipalities would not be bound by such directives.

It is the local municipality's plan that makes recommendations for setting aside general locations or industry sectors within the community for certain types of economic development activities. Only the local municipality has the power to rezone lands if needed. (Continued on page 3).

Changes to the Comprehensive Planning Law

AB 608-Act 233 This Act reduces the number of programs or actions with which a comprehensive plan must be consistent. Under this bill, the only actions which must be consistent with a comprehensive plan are official mapping, local subdivision regulation, and zoning ordinances, including zoning of shorelands or wetlands in shorelands. The bill also reiterates that a Regional Planning Commission's comprehensive plan is only advisory in its applicability to a political subdivision (city, village, town or country), and a political subdivision's comprehensive plan.

AB 728 Before a comprehensive plan may take effect, a local government unit must provide written notice to all owners of property and leaseholders who request to be notified and who have an interest in property pursuant to which the persons may extract nonmetallic mineral resources, and must create written procedures that describe the methods the local government unit will use to distribute elements of a comprehensive plan to owners of property, and to other persons who have certain leasehold mining interests in such property, in which the allowable use or intensity of use of the property is changed by the comprehensive plan.

Signed into law
by Governor on
4-22-04

14 Planning Goals - Continued

While local governments continue to control their own planning and decision making, state law identifies 14 local planning goals that provide a vision for state and local land use and planning programs, policies, infrastructure, and investments. The first four goals were covered in the March 2004 newsletter. Goals 5-8 are briefly described below.



5. *Encouragement of land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state and utility costs.*

Clustering development, for example, can mean shorter roads and utility corridors, which lower construction and maintenance costs. Land uses that are appropriate for the level of existing services are more likely to strengthen the local tax base.

6. *Preservation of cultural, historic and archaeological sites.*

Preserving important aspects of the past gives a community a sense of continuity and meaning. Washington County is rich in culture and history. Ongoing preservation and restoration efforts have built community pride in several Washington County communities and have even lead to economic development, such as tourism.

7. *Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.*

There are 2 cities, 5 villages, 13 towns, 12 school districts, 2 technical college districts, several lake and sanitary districts, and numerous law enforcement and fire protection agencies within Washington County. Realizing that boundaries are in one sense artificial borders, several local communities have already signed agreements to share certain services or coordinate land use changes. This goal encourages such initiatives to continue.

8. *Building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.*

While some communities in the area may be losing their identity, others have taken proactive steps to retain or build their identities. This goal recognizes that in an age of national franchises and generic development patterns, determined efforts are needed to create a unique sense of place.

Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Planning Process

Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Planning Work Group

The Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Planning Work Group has held four meetings since January 2004 to start preparing the documents necessary to apply for a joint state comprehensive planning grant in November 2004. The group has reviewed a draft multi-jurisdictional work program which defines how the County, partnering communities and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) will work together over the next 4 years to complete the County and local comprehensive plans. The work program defines the relationship and responsibilities of the partners, delineates the committee structure and provides an estimated timeline in which the plans will be completed.

County staff and SEWRPC are currently meeting with each partnering community to customize their work program to meet special needs or desires of that community. A copy of the draft Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Washington County and Local Government Partners is available on the County website at www.co.washington.wi.us/landuse.

The May 24, 2004 Multi-Jurisdictional Work Group meeting will review the draft Public Participation Plan. On June 8, 2004, the Multi-Jurisdictional Work Group will hold a public informational/input meeting as an opportunity for the public and specific stakeholders to provide comment on the draft Public Participation Plan. This will be held at the Washington County Public Agency Center, Rooms 1113A/1113B at 7:00 p.m. This plan describes the local outreach efforts that will engage, inform and educate the public throughout every step of the comprehensive planning process.

A copy of the draft Public Participation Plan for Washington County and Local Government Partners is also available on the County website at www.co.washington.wi.us/landuse.

Please join us at the
Washington County
Multi-Jurisdictional
Comprehensive Planning
Work Group Meeting.

Meetings are held every 4th
Monday of the month, thru
October 2004 at 7:00 p.m.

Location:
Washington County
Vehicle Maintenance Facility
900 Lang St. West Bend, WI.

Different Levels of Detail (Continued from page 1)



This framework is the same for all of the nine elements, although there are some possible exceptions. First, in the case of extraterritorial platting or zoning jurisdiction, local control in a town may be subject to the local control of a nearby city or village. (This is a result of previously existing statutes, not the comprehensive planning law). Second, a County plan may make some very specific recommendations for property or facilities it owns within a town. Third, a County regulation, such as the shoreland zoning ordinance or County subdivision ordinance may impact the development.

However, this is nothing new—the County historically has had authority to enforce certain land use regulations, such as shoreland zoning and subdivision control, and will continue to have that authority.

The comprehensive planning law did not change the legal relationship between cities, towns, villages, and the County. All units and levels of government continue to have the same powers and authority over land uses that they had before the law was passed. The comprehensive planning law did not address the legal relationship between the plans of various units of government. Conflicts between the plans and implementing ordinance of different units of government may well occur, as they do now and did prior to passage of the comprehensive planning law.