

## **2045 Comprehensive Plan Update Work Session Notes**

June 13, 2023

Planning Commission Members: Mike Shepp, President; Wade Louthan, Secretary; Jack Hefestay, Tim Smith, and Aaron Howell, were present in person. Matt Knott, Vice President; was present via ZOOM. A quorum of the Planning Commission was present for the Work Session.

Staff: Jennifer Brockman, Chief County Planner; Luke Seigfried, County Planner; Michelle Evers, Planning Clerk, and Joe Guttmann and Shenan Ragle, Comprehensive Plan Staffers were present in person.

### **Executive Summary**

On 6/13/23 the Planning Commission held a work session to hear the presentation by representatives of Ranson. Planning Commission also discussed the first Public Input Meeting results, and reviewed and approved the final draft of the Goals and Objectives survey. Dates were suggested and approved for the Second Public Input Meeting and the public release of the Goals and Objectives survey.

### **Agenda**

1. Municipality Presentations
  - a. Ranson
2. Community Outreach Preparation
  - a. Staff Presentation of Public Input Session Findings
  - b. Staff Presentation of Survey Questions
3. Livability Profile
  - a. Staff Presentation of Community Data

### **Item 1: Municipality Presentations**

Duke Pierson, Mayor, and Todd Wilt, Ranson City Manager represented the Corporation of Ranson. The municipality is in the process of updating its comprehensive plan with the firm PlaceMakers. Mayor Pierson outlined the important aspects of Ranson's growth in the last decade, including the addition of an industrial facility and residential developments with various single family dwellings, townhouses, and some apartment complexes. Mayor Pierson also expressed concern for the infrastructure of Ranson as it continues to grow. It was noted that the price of utilities will rise significantly in light of the sale of Jefferson Utilities to WV American Water. Mayor Pierson conveyed that "big box" retail stores would be expected to decline in the future as well.

Todd Wilt elaborated on the information presented by Mayor Pierson, giving statistical information regarding the growth of Ranson compared to the rest of the county: Ranson has experienced a 20% population growth since its last comprehensive plan compared to a 7%

population growth of Jefferson County. Ranson has also increased its tax base by 12%, versus the 45% tax base increase seen across the whole of Jefferson County. The need to further improve Ranson's tax base and the ongoing construction of various residential developments within the municipality were mentioned as two major priorities of the updated comprehensive plan for Ranson.

Both Mayor Pierson and Mr. Wilt expressed that the preferred industrial growth for Ranson is light industry such as data centers. They also stated that expanding the professional complexes and introducing more office space buildings into the community is a goal. Ms. Brockman asked if there were any plans for future development along Powhatan Blvd., and the representatives explained that development was planned but the contract fell through before signing. The land remains ready for development with utilities hookups in place, and Mayor Pierson was confident that new development contracts for the area would soon be in place. Commissioner Howell provided some thoughts on the redevelopment of vacant properties in the town. Commissioner Louthan pointed out the importance in writing broad definitions to not unintentionally miss certain developments. Commissioner Hefestay inquired if there was an interest in high rises and senior living establishments in Ranson and the representatives noted that while developers had not mentioned high rises, apartments have been discussed. Commissioner Shepp asked if there was a model price point for what constitutes affordable housing. Mr. Wilt responded that various numbers have all come up dependent upon who is asked.

## **Item 2: Community Outreach Preparation**

Staff briefed the Commissioners about the 1<sup>st</sup> Public Input Meeting that occurred on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Mr. Guttmann and Ms. Ragle presented the trends, findings, and analysis of the data gathered at the meeting, including the top strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities discussed in each group. This also included the "red dot" votes that indicated particular importance in the data. Commissioners Hefestay and Louthan commented on the apparent conflict in the interest expressed by the participants, particularly regarding the desires to discourage development but also increase the tax base. Mr. Seigfried then elaborated on the main themes pulled from the responses to the exit survey given out at the end of the meeting, all of which paralleled the results presented prior.

Staff then presented the final draft Goals and Objectives survey questions for the approval of the Planning Commission. All twenty questions were approved, as was the change in wording of the demographic question about zip code. Staff also presented the zip code map of Jefferson County and explained its future importance in the analysis of the data from the survey.

## **Item 3: Livability Profile**

The organizational priorities of the AACAJC and JCCVB were not presented due to time constraints and have been moved to the July work session.

Staff notified Planning Commission that additional work sessions may be necessary in July, August, or September to discuss and present the information from ongoing projects, such as the Goals and Objectives survey findings, drafting the goals and objectives, preparation for the County Fair, and the first draft of the Future Land Use survey.

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Planning Commission agreed to move the 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Input Meeting to September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and set the release date for the Goals and Objectives survey to June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

These notes were prepared by Shenan Ragle.