



## **HENRY COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN Steering Committee Meeting**

April 11, 2017

At this meeting, the Steering Committee discussed the following:

### **PLAN COMMISSION INPUT SESSION DEBRIEF**

The Structurepoint team shared a few takeaways from an input session that was held with representatives from the Henry County Plan Commission, as well as other elected and appointed officials and staff. Topics of discussion included:

- The information and feedback received to-date, including the need to be aspirational, proactive, remove blight, recognize that agriculture is an industry rather than a place holder/open space, and enforce the county’s existing zoning and building codes, among others
- The public communications plan and process, including some analytics from the project website
- The community-wide vision statement, and the direction that the comprehensive plan should take
- The team’s approach to prioritizing the various components for the final plan
- The team’s approach to drafting the final plan, including maintaining and enhancing the quality of life, mitigating the negative effects of population decline/stagnation, and becoming more resilient, for example
- Next Steps, namely the upcoming public open house on May 17

Key sentiments shared by many in attendance included:

- Strive for a robust economy
- Be rural, but welcome commercial (business), industrial, retail - - development
- Adopt a both: and proposition, rather than an either: or proposition, or “us” vs. “them” attitude
- Henry County has already reversed its population decline; this plan should be more about seizing the momentum that is currently being felt by many
- Blight is the norm so people aren’t nearly as upset about the blight that exists – this is an issue
- In Henry County, there is an appropriate place for most land uses

As one last order of business, the Structurepoint team inquired about the future of wind farms within Henry County. All agreed that the Henry County Comprehensive Plan should not be silent on the issue; rather, the Henry County Comprehensive Plan should not just better guide development decisions with respect to WECS, but also other types of commercial and industrial development.

### **COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

The Structurepoint team shared updates on their continuous social media campaigns with area partners, with great success. They reminded everyone that the project website is intended to serve as a clearing house for the project and is regularly kept up to date. Using Google Analytics, the Structurepoint team shared that there have been nearly 600 (unique) sessions, with the average session lasting longer than

previous months, adding that over 70% of the people that have viewed the project website since the previous Steering Committee meeting in February have been new visitors.

The Structurepoint team shared a few infographics that illustrate the results of two recent poll questions: “If you had to pick one, what do you wish Henry County had more of?” and “What are you most proud of in Henry County?” Regarding the former, nearly 30% of respondents said that they wished Henry County had more shopping/retail. The rest of the responses were pretty evenly distributed among the other categories that included: festivals/events, nightlife/entertainment, restaurants/café’s, hospitality/lodging, and parks/trails. Regarding the latter, 30% of respondents are most proud of the parks, 27% of agriculture, and 21% of the people. The Structurepoint team shared how they will use this information to inform the plan’s development.

### **PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

The Structurepoint team shared two working documents for discussion: an updated copy of the community profile, and a draft annotated outline for the final plan. All agreed to review the revised portions of the community profile as a way to inform and provide preliminary feedback on the contents of the final plan. All agreed that the draft annotated outline will serve Henry County well in terms of how the content will be organized. Many steering committee members supported the proposed “People, Places, and Prosperity” structure of the plan proposed in the outline. They believe this will be an effective way to create a final document that is useful to a variety of end users.

### **MAY PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE PREVIEW**

The Structurepoint team previewed the plans for the first public engagement meetings. All agreed to the open house format, as well as the various “stations” proposed by the Structurepoint team. Chief among them will be: a welcome station; vision & values station; an opportunity to identify issues and opportunities; a place to share where people live, work, and play; as well as a place for people to roll up their sleeves and help to determine where different types of development and redevelopment might go.

With attendance as a key goal of the public outreach, it was suggested that we gauge the attendance (total number of people) and reach (the townships represented) of the May 17 public open house to determine the need and possibility of holding another set of open houses in another part of Henry County at a later time. All agreed.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The Structurepoint team challenged members of the Steering Committee to invite 5 people to accompany them to one of the open house sessions. They reviewed the immediate next steps of preparing materials and supplies for the May 17 open houses and firming up the dates for the August public open houses where participants will be able to see some of the recommendations that are being formed as a part of this process. It is anticipated that the next Steering Committee meeting will be held in late June.