

SECTION ONE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, GENERAL COMMENTS

The NY Times article reprint on page 4 closely parallels Kansas and Marion County. It causes one to wonder if our planners aren't stuck in the 60's, insofar as their thinking about "Sense of Place" and their AFT reprints are concerned. The former is different for every generation and cannot be quantified except as a desire to keep the "Status Quo" by those who have the most to gain by keeping things as they are now, even though a generation or two ago, this place was quite different. And it was even more different prior to 1850. The latter are tracts exemplifying "Eastern & Coastal" thinking, which are far different from our problems and needs.

In Chapter 1, the prejudices of the planners against rural people not engaged in agricultural production is pervasive. Page 5 contains the following:

"Many people perceive the countryside as....." implying that of course they are mistaken.

"What are the implications...if urban development is allowed to spread across the countryside?" Implying that it will do so.

"Rural advocates seek to sustain the vitality of economic activities..." Implying that "economic" is all they are into.

"..over time the scatter of houses can add up to ... problems..(and).conflicts.."
Implication is "will", not "can", and "scatter" connotes disorder.

"Rural roads and bridges need millions..in investment." The farms here now need the larger bridges and better roads for their larger loads and machinery, but the implication is that they are needed for rural non-farmers.

Chapter 2. The demographic trend is stagnant, and perhaps our "graying" needs a more proactive stance for development in the planning, rather than a status quo approach, if we want to encourage vitality in our institutions & communities.

Chapter 3. These gleanings from the public meetings are mostly genuine and laudable. However regarding the 5-acre sell-off, I did not hear the "paved corridor" requirement voiced by any of the public at either of the meetings.

Chapter 4. See above. Also the roadway descriptions may fit Butler & Sedgwick Counties, but "Local Roadways" describes most of the County Road System.

Chapter 5. Site assessment probably needs another factor weighting the final score. It seems present use and condition ought to be taken into consideration, along with presently used factors. Unused, or overgrown, or rocky, or "waste" land should have a bearing on the final score, also.

SUGGESTIONS

Chapter 4, page 41. Net density ratio is OK, but remove the “abut paved roads” requirement and require a deed restriction and covenant on any parcel sell-off of less than 40 acres such as:

Grantee acknowledges that this land is served by a Marion County road that is not paved, and that Marion County will not further improve the road regardless of any subsequent improvement and/or property tax increases assessed to said land as a result of said improvements. Grantee takes subject property knowing that dust, odors, herbicides, pesticides, and/or vegetative residue resulting from nearby agricultural operations or from the public roadways may drift onto said property, and that no damages resulting therefrom will be allowed, and no changes in operations on said agricultural lands, or public roadways can be enforced.

A similar restriction should also be required for homesites of less than 40 acres On Paved Roads, with the additional proviso that the Board of County Commissioners may at anytime convert the road from a paved road to a gravel road without liability to the grantee.

SECTION TWO COMMENTS ON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

1. Cities should be allowed to regain their control of areas of urban influence. These areas need to have planning and zoning which reflect future plan of expansion of city, other than to meet objectives of protecting “agriculture” as their plans designate. These areas should be subject to building codes as adopted by the city so they meet “codes” in preparation for future annexation.
2. LESA evaluations should have points assigned in such a way to allow for development.
3. The plan should encourage population increase rather than limit possibilities.
4. The plan should allow for development around lakes, but with enforceable rules regarding infrastructure and development for the area to protect water resource. The lakes are our greatest resource for economic development. The pollution in the reservoir has been caused by improper ag methods, not housing.
5. Small acreage is desirable by young families to encourage population growth. The plan must be flexible enough to allow for development on land parcels that are small, manageable and are definitely rural settings – not clustered along paved, busy roads as the plan now indicates. This county must have population growth to support services within cities. Also, development adds to tax base so mill levy could be reduced.
6. We must acknowledge that the world is changing and we are part of the global economy, and yes we would like to “protect agriculture” but we must allow for our population to return to the numbers that we had 80 years ago when there were many homesteads per square mile.
7. Please review strategy plan completed in 1999. The comprehensive plan should reflect the goals listed in the strategic plan.

**SECTION THREE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, GENERAL COMMENTS**

PAGE 8, R3

Consider adding underlined part in section:

The Marion County plan defines prime farmland primarily based on soil type and ability to produce at high levels without excessive cost or management in relation to production, as provided in Chapter Five.

PAGE 9, FIGURE 1.1

To help complete the summary add lines to report direct government Ag subsidies and amount of average subsidies in 1999.

PAGE 9, R1

This whole paragraph is full of faulty reasoning based on unproven assumptions and nostalgia. Just as strong a case could be made for the current perceived problems of agriculture in Marion County being based on government policy and the economies of scale that exist. Nostalgia could just as easily cause me to look favorably on open range and cattle drives.

PAGE 30, SECOND ACTION STEP

Change paved corridors to improved corridors. Also modify net density restriction to reflect the third point of this action step.

PAGE 41

Modify net density of not less than one house per 40 acres. This one house per 40 acres is a plan to drop houses through out the county in a random way to insure maximum exposure of residence to Ag.

Group additional houses where houses already exist and continue to have 40 acre requirements where houses do not exist to reduce the exposure in other areas. Once you have a house the Ag nature of the site is already violated.

PAGE 53, FIRST SENTENCE

Requirement for a registered professional on all site plans needs to be reasonable in relation to the size of the project.

Example: I want to convert a farm building across the road from my farmstead into a part-time body shop to supplement my farm income. A professional site plan would be a sizable increase in the cost of a modestly priced project.

Perhaps give the zoning administrator some authority to allow flexibility.

PAGE 54, ITEM L

Allow some flexibility or discretion. How large would a golf course site plan be? How necessary would it be to leave it at this detailed level?

PAGE 56

Perhaps elimination of all three uses of the words “and consent” should be considered because it gives the idea that a veto by the cities exist where none is intended.

PAGE 60 AND 67, LAND EVALUATION

This whole section appears meaningless. Reference is made to soil groups and relative values however no listing of soil groups or relative value is provided.

Page 20 of this plan introduces soil classes with definitions and discussion. Perhaps these eight classes could be the basis of land evaluation. It appears to be based on productivity.

Page 20 also states that class 1 and class 11 soils should comprise the primary soils protected for farming in the LESA evaluation. Make the land evaluation test reflect this by assigning a relative value below 50 points for some classes.

PAGE 60-67 SITE ASSESSMENT

Can live with site assessment section if a provision is established that recognizes the existence of established uses that already affects the agricultural nature of the site.

For example:

For residential sites a section such as:

- 20 pts no houses within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile
- 10 pts 1-2 houses within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile
- 0 pts 3 or more houses within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile

For commercial sites:

- 20 pts 3 or more houses within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile
- 10 pts 1-2 houses within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile
- 0 pts no houses within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile

Add 20 points to all 3 groups in both site assessment and combined LESA scores.