

Special Meeting Minutes

August 19, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Attendee	Title	Status
Janis Seavolt	At Large	Present
Tammy Woods	Third Ward	Present
Mel Severns	Councilman	Present
James Mahan	First Ward	Present
John Ruckman	Second Ward	Present
Bruce Hawkins	President	Present
Amber Keener	At Large	Absent
Mike Miller	Fourth Ward	Absent

Keener and Miller were absent. Also present were the Clerk and Mayor Matthew Starr.

KNOX COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- 08-19-24 Together Knox

During the working session and in preparation for the Meeting in a Box associated with the Knox County Comprehensive Plan, Mayor Matthew Starr explained that the City has a major role in the plan, and that consensus-building isn't the goal so much as learning what stakeholders are telling us, aiding community leaders in their decision-making. He added that the plan will be used along with the City's Strategic Plan to help drive policy for the next seven to 10 years.

Council members began the exercise by identifying what they consider to be the treasures of the City. Mentioned were safety, recreation/parks, services, relatively affordable housing, schools, people, farms, trees, conservation of the downtown, community events, neighborhoods, local businesses, history, nature, small-town feel and walkability.

Next, Council identified strong and weak areas of the City on a map. Identified as strong areas were Ariel~Foundation Park, downtown, Hiawatha Water Park, Memorial Park and the educational corridor. Identified as weak were the west side, the North Sandusky Street corridor, truck traffic downtown, Columbus Road, traffic on Coshocton Avenue and no shopping on Harcourt Road.

Ariel-Foundation Park was identified as strong because of its walkability, events, aesthetics and lakes. Downtown was identified as strong because of its attractiveness, parking and the Woodward Opera House. Memorial Park was identified as strong because it attracts people and because of the bike trail. Hiawatha Water Park was identified as strong because it attracts people and is an option for low-income residents. The educational corridor was identified as strong because of its walkability and because it's an example of entities working together.

The North Sandusky Street corridor was identified as weak because of its appearance. The West High Street corridor was identified as weak because of its appearance and empty store fronts. Columbus Road was identified as weak because of blight, trailer parks and the intersection at South Main Street. Coshocton Avenue was identified as weak because of traffic.

Next, Council identified desired outcomes. These included better economic opportunities, more infrastructure improvements, improved entry corridors, more restaurants and retail, fresh-looking businesses, more investment in parks, better traffic patterns, dimmer street lights, less noise, fewer trucks downtown, less blight, and retail in places other than Coshocton Avenue.

Mayor Starr noted that the last data collection for the Knox County Comprehensive Plan will be on Aug. 23, that at least 1,000 responses are desired, and that more responses from the 25-34 age group would be helpful. He added that the plan draft will be presented in October or November, with completion by year's end.

ADJOURN AT THE CALL OF THE PRESIDENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Bruce E. Hawkins, President of Council

Todd Hill, Clerk of Council

CD on file/th



Welcome!

This meeting is an opportunity to learn about Together Knox, a process to create a new Comprehensive Plan for Knox County. The meeting will be conducted in a small group and includes the following components.

GETTING STARTED

Please sign in on the sign-in sheet provided and make a name tag for yourself. Introduce yourself to the others at the table. Wait for instructions from the facilitator before beginning!

ACTIVITIES

1

Treasures

The facilitator of the meeting will ask what you treasure in Knox County.

2

Mapping Perspectives

You will be given a map and have the opportunity to provide how you feel about places in Knox County. The facilitator will lead a discussion on why everyone chose these places.

3

Outcomes

The facilitator of the meeting will ask you what you would like to see in the future of Knox County.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Tell us a little about yourself and what you thought about this meeting with an exit questionnaire. The responses you provide will help us plan future public engagement activities. See the Frequently Asked Questions on the back of this sheet for more information about Together Knox!

Thank you for participating today!
Tell others to get involved at TogetherKnox.org

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Together Knox?

Together Knox is a process to develop a comprehensive plan for Knox County and Mount Vernon that will help guide how we grow and develop. A large part of Together Knox is a community-driven effort. Your voice matters and will be a driving force in the goals and recommendations that will be provided in this plan update.

What is a comprehensive plan?

A comprehensive plan is the broadest public policy document a community can create for its future physical development considering the input of citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders. The plan is a tool to prepare for change and acts as a guidebook for decision-makers. The plan is not a legally binding document, but it can serve as a foundation for land development regulations, zoning ordinances, budgeting decisions, and more.

Why does Knox County need a new Comprehensive Plan?

The County exists in one of the most dynamic regions in the country. The last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2018. Since then, the County and the region have experienced growth and change. An updated plan is needed to reflect current trends and priorities while being focused on the future. Regular comprehensive planning represents good stewardship and establishes a foundation for well-supported policies to create the best possible future.

How does this relate to other county and municipal plans?

The planning process includes reviewing all relevant plans and policies from the County and its jurisdictions. Existing plans and policies may inform the Knox County Comprehensive Plan. The research and analysis from Together Knox may also yield new policy ideas that jurisdictions could incorporate into their local plans and policies.

Will the community be able to participate?

Yes! This is an open and inclusive process. There will be two series of public input opportunities held during the planning process, which will include both in-person and online engagement opportunities. Anyone who cares about the future of Knox County will be able to participate and contribute their ideas and insight.

Do I need to be an expert to contribute ideas?

No! You are an expert if you live or work in Knox County. Who knows the community better than someone who lives or works here?

How long will the process take?

The planning team will be working to have the plan substantially complete by the end of November 2024, with the expectation that the adoption process will occur in early 2025.

Where can I learn more?

For more information about this exciting opportunity please visit the project website at togetherknox.org or contact Jeff Gottke, President of the Area Development Foundation, Inc. at Jeff@knoxadf.com.