

Overview

Plan Purpose

Kentucky Revised Statutes, Chapter 100, requires a local government to adopt a comprehensive plan, in order to apply land use regulations – zoning and subdivision regulations. This requirement discourages the arbitrary application of land use regulations. It encourages a local community to devise a vision of its future, and to apply land use regulations as tools to implement that vision.

The *Comprehensive Plan for Owensboro, Whitesville and Daviess County* is predicated on the belief that each community resident should have a suitable living environment that provides the opportunity to achieve his or her potential. A significant measure of quality of life is in the form and function of the physical community. Therefore, our overall vision is a community that has a good form, a logical layout; and a community that functions efficiently, where public service costs are minimized.

The primary purpose of the *Comprehensive Plan* is to detail the vision described above. The functions of the plan are dependent on two important concepts. First, because the *Comprehensive Plan* is intended to serve as a coordinating device for specific development plans, it must be updated and refined periodically. This includes refining zoning and subdivision regulations so that they are consistent with the objectives of the plan. The second concept is the **flexibility** of the plan. This is accomplished by keeping the plan general in its content while at the same time providing a stable, reliable basis for determining public and private development policies.

Plan Content

This document serves as the official *Comprehensive Plan for Owensboro, Whitesville and Daviess County*. The full versions of the technical plans and reports that are used in the preparation of this plan are considered to be adopted elements of the *Comprehensive Plan*, even though only excerpts or summaries are included. When detailed analysis is required, the full version of a plan or report should be consulted. Whenever technical plans or reports conflict either with each other or with other parts of the *Comprehensive Plan*, then the most recent and duly adopted plan should take precedence with respect to the specific conflict, especially in the case of land use recommendations. A listing of incorporated plans follow.

OVERVIEW

Incorporated Technical Plans and Reports	
ALPHA - A Natural Environment Analysis	Water Works Facilities for Owensboro Municipal Utilities
Strategies for Tomorrow	201 (Sewer) Facilities Plan for the Owensboro Metro Area
Kentucky State Data Center Population Forecasts	201 (Sewer) Facilities Plan for Whitesville
Downtown Owensboro Action Plan	201 (Sewer) Facilities Plan Update – RWRA
Scarborough-Riverside & West End Plan	RWRA Capital Improvements Program
East End Plan	Owensboro-Daviess County Drainage Implementation Plan
Eastside Master Plan	City of Owensboro Storm Water Master Plan 1999
United Neighborhoods Central Area Plan	Daviess County Solid Waste Management Plan
Baptisttown Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan	Daviess County Flood Insurance Study – FEMA
Old Germantown District Redevelopment Plan	Owensboro Riverfront Master Plan 2001
Mechanicsville Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan 2010-2014	City of Owensboro & Daviess County Combined Parks and Recreation Plan 2012 (2002)
Housing Market Analysis	State of the Workforce Report for the Green River Area Development District, GRADD
Owensboro Urban Area Long-Range Transportation Plan	GRADD County Health Report Card 2006
Owensboro Urban Area Transportation Improvement	Healthy Kentuckians 2010
Owensboro Transit System Development Program	Bring Back Baseball Market and Feasibility Study 2006
Airport Master Plan	Proposed Sports Arena Market and Feasibility Study 2006
Community Connections	Proposed Parking Garage Study 2001
Daviess County Public Schools Facilities Plan	Downtown Owensboro Place Making Initiative – Illustrative Master Plan and Report, 2009
Owensboro Public Schools Facilities Plan	

Plan Implementation

This section addresses the approaches that need to be heeded in order for effective implementation to occur. The ***Comprehensive Plan*** is purposely designed to provide **flexibility** whenever and wherever possible. The intent of the OMPC is to achieve a coordinated and joint effort of public and private activities, so as to minimize unwise and costly allocation of our scarce monetary and natural resources.

While plans are sometimes viewed as being utopian or unrealistic, the ***Comprehensive Plan*** can be the mortar that binds the bricks of the community’s activities. It can serve as a focal point for true community cooperation to achieve common goals. Good plans are developed by a concerted effort that includes all areas of the community’s desires, needs and goals.

For these proposals to become reality there must be a tremendous amount of cooperation and effort in the realm of governmental actions, private actions, and government-imposed actions on private enterprise in the public interest. Subdivision Regulations, Zoning Ordinance, Public Improvement Specifications, and Building and Environmental Codes and Property Maintenance Codes should be thoroughly reviewed in light of community plan proposals.

Environmental Review

The ***Comprehensive Plan*** includes a broad range of proposals for the future improvement and development of our community. The implementation of these proposals will result in unavoidable impacts on the environment, the significance of which will depend on one's definition of environment. How do we minimize the environmental impact of urbanization?

OVERVIEW

"Planned growth" is our best hope

Owensboro, Whitesville and Daviess County citizens have chosen the only logical alternative: a policy of "planned growth." By anticipating population growth, we can adopt and implement community plans and environmental standards to guide where and how urban development and enhancement occur. Community planning provides our best hope of accommodating the necessities of urban living (streets, housing, schools, parks, business centers, industrial sites, etc.) while striving for the best possible long-term compatibility between the natural and built environments, *smart and sustainable growth*.

Community Development History

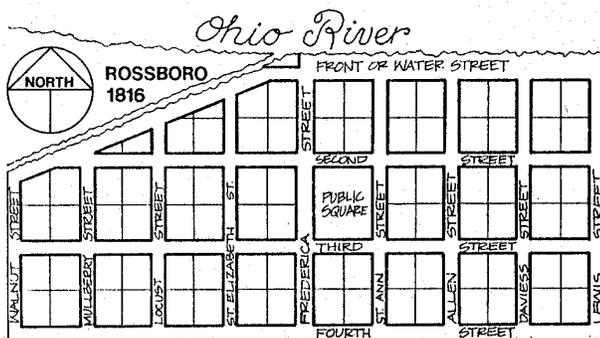
The first settler at the present site of Owensboro was Bill Smothers (or Smeathers). A single man, he lived with his unmarried sister where a ravine joined the Ohio River, near the present site of the VFW. Smothers supported himself and his sister by hunting wild game and providing supplies to river boatmen. It was 1800.

By 1810 a modern store had been built, which provided a stopping point for travelers from Virginia, Maryland and the Carolinas. By 1815 the small community boasted a population of over 100 settlers. The community was called Yellow Banks.

In January of 1815, Daviess County was formed by an act of the Kentucky General Assembly. Yellow Banks was chosen as the new county seat and was renamed Rossboro in 1816. Subsequently, Rossboro was incorporated by the General Assembly in 1817 and renamed Owensborough in honor of Colonel Abraham Owen. The name was later shortened to the current spelling, Owensboro.

The original Town Plat oriented the streets in north-south and east-west directions. Rossboro contained 74 acres and remains to this day the center of Downtown Owensboro. Its gridiron pattern was to be the norm for city expansion until about 45 years ago, when curvilinear subdivision layout came into vogue.

Frederica Street was allotted an 80-foot right-of-way. The minimum street right-of-way was 66 feet. Another 120-foot right-of-way was left between Rossboro and the Ohio River. This has largely eroded, but a remnant remains as Smothers Park.



The early wisdom and foresight of the town founders was exhibited by their concern for the widths of streets. Frederica Street, named after David Ross's daughter, was the main street, the terminus of a buffalo trail.

The growth of the new town was slow, but by 1830 its population was 229. In 1850 it had increased to 1,215 people. In the next ten years, from 1850 to 1860, Owensboro took on new life and doubled in population.

OVERVIEW

The Civil War halted the rapid growth experienced in the 1850s, as residents moved to more secure surroundings and men joined the two, armed camps. Confederate guerrillas raided the town several times and the then new Court House, built in 1858, was burned in 1865.

Following the turn of the century, the tempo of the city quickened. The principal industry at this time was the distilling of whiskey. Tobacco also came in for its share of attention and, for a time, cellulose was manufactured in large quantities.

The Kentucky Lamp Company, later absorbed by General Electric, provided the impetus for rapid growth in the 1920s and 1930s. Peak employment grew to over 3,500 persons by 1940. With this company came a rapid growth in the housing and service industries.

The 1950s were a time of rapid growth in Owensboro-Daviess County, as for the nation. The post-war period saw the "baby boom," expanding suburban areas, and rapid creation of jobs.

The number of manufacturing jobs declined over the 30-year period from 1960-1990. However, since 1990, manufacturing jobs have recovered and stabilized. From 1990 to 2000, manufacturing jobs actually increased by 5.7% but again declined slightly in the last decade. Between 1960 and 2010, the number of non-manufacturing jobs in the service industry and in government has significantly increased.