

**November 2025**

**DRAFT edits to the Ohio Revised Code for Counties, Townships, and Cities to define the term “comprehensive plan” and outline the basic goals and enumerate the minimum elements of such plans.**

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**Counties**

303.02 - County commissioners may regulate building and land use in unincorporated territory.

(A) Except as otherwise provided in this section, in the interest of the public health and safety, the board of county commissioners may regulate by resolution, in accordance with a comprehensive plan, the location, height, bulk, number of stories, and size of buildings and other structures, including tents, cabins, and trailer coaches, percentages of lot areas that may be occupied, set back building lines, sizes of yards, courts, and other open spaces, the density of population, the uses of buildings and other structures, including tents, cabins, and trailer coaches, and the uses of land for trade, industry, residence, recreation, or other purposes in the unincorporated territory of the county. Except as otherwise provided in this section, in the interest of the public convenience, comfort, prosperity, or general welfare, the board, by resolution, in accordance with a comprehensive plan, may regulate the location of, set back lines for, and the uses of buildings and other structures, including tents, cabins, and trailer coaches, and the uses of land for trade, industry, residence, recreation, or other purposes in the unincorporated territory of the county, and may establish reasonable landscaping standards and architectural standards excluding exterior building materials in the unincorporated territory of the county. Except as otherwise provided in this section, in the interest of the public convenience, comfort, prosperity, or general welfare, the board may regulate by resolution, in accordance with a comprehensive plan, for nonresidential property only, the height, bulk, number of stories, and size of buildings and other structures, including tents, cabins, and trailer coaches, percentages of lot areas that may be occupied, sizes of yards, courts, and other open spaces, and the density of population in the unincorporated territory of the county. For all these purposes, the board may divide all or any part of the unincorporated territory of the county into districts or zones of such number, shape, and area as the board determines. All such regulations shall be uniform for each class or kind of building or other structure or use throughout any district or zone, but the regulations in one district or zone may differ from those in other districts or zones.

**ADD NEW PARAGRAPH TO SECTION 303.02**

**For the purposes of adopting zoning as outlined in ORC 303.03 through 303.11, the term comprehensive plan shall mean a plan that divides all or any part of the unincorporated territory of the county into districts or zones based on a future land use plan prepared and adopted by the board of county commissioners. The land use plan, which may be a component of a larger comprehensive plan, at a minimum shall include a map of the area to be zoned that recognizes both existing and future land uses anticipated to meet the needs of the community.**

For any activities permitted and regulated under Chapter 1513. or 1514. of the Revised Code and any related processing activities, the board of county commissioners may regulate under the authority conferred by this section only in the interest of public health or safety. A zoning resolution authorized under this section shall provide for the activities that are permitted and regulated under Chapter 1514. of the Revised Code, and any related processing activities, as either a permitted use or a conditional use through the board of zoning appeals in any district or zone when such activities are to be added to an existing permit issued under Chapter 1514. of the Revised Code

#### **ADD NEW SECTION**

#### **303.66 – Comprehensive Plans**

**A board of county commissioners may adopt a comprehensive plan for all or part of the county.**

**A comprehensive plan is a set of defined goals, policies, standards, and values intended to guide the legislative authority to accomplish a coordinated and compatible development of land and improvements in accordance with present and future physical, social, and economic needs and resources. A comprehensive plan is the basis for which a jurisdiction's regulations are enacted and governed. A comprehensive plan should address the following goals:**

- A. Promote fiscal responsibility.**
- B. Foster coordination and efficiency among government bodies within a community and collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions.**
- C. Reflect the values and insight of community members through public input.**
- D. Include technical analysis that represents the community's existing conditions and future opportunities.**
- E. Facilitate implementation of recommendations by building capacity for and commitment to decision-making.**

**When a board of county commissioners adopts a comprehensive plan, at a minimum, it shall be formally adopted by resolution of the county and include the following elements:**

- A. Land Use and Character: To manage the distribution and general location of various uses of land, and to promote a built environment that supports a high quality of life.**
  - B. Community Services: To support transportation, utility needs, and emergency services.**
  - C. Housing: To meet the housing needs of present and anticipated future residents.**
  - D. Economic Development: To promote workforce development and employment, the retention and expansion of existing businesses, and recruitment of new businesses.**
  - E. Community Resources: To protect natural, cultural, agricultural, open space, and other community resources.**
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### **Townships**

519.02 - Board of township trustees may regulate location, size and use of buildings and lands in unincorporated territory.

(A) Except as otherwise provided in this section, in the interest of the public health and safety, the board of township trustees may regulate by resolution, in accordance with a comprehensive plan, the location, height, bulk, number of stories, and size of buildings and other structures, including tents, cabins, and trailer coaches, percentages of lot areas that may be occupied, set back building lines, sizes of yards, courts, and other open spaces, the density of population, the uses of buildings and other structures, including tents, cabins, and trailer coaches, and the uses of land for trade, industry, residence, recreation, or other purposes in the unincorporated territory of the township. Except as otherwise provided in this section, in the interest of the public convenience, comfort, prosperity, or general welfare, the board by resolution, in accordance with a comprehensive plan, may regulate the location of, set back lines for, and the uses of buildings and other structures, including tents, cabins, and trailer coaches, and the uses of land for trade, industry, residence, recreation, or other purposes in the unincorporated territory of the township, and may establish reasonable landscaping standards and architectural standards excluding exterior building materials in the unincorporated

territory of the township. Except as otherwise provided in this section, in the interest of the public convenience, comfort, prosperity, or general welfare, the board may regulate by resolution, in accordance with a comprehensive plan, for nonresidential property only, the height, bulk, number of stories, and size of buildings and other structures, including tents, cabins, and trailer coaches, percentages of lot areas that may be occupied, sizes of yards, courts, and other open spaces, and the density of population in the unincorporated territory of the township. For all these purposes, the board may divide all or any part of the unincorporated territory of the township into districts or zones of such number, shape, and area as the board determines. All such regulations shall be uniform for each class or kind of building or other structure or use throughout any district or zone, but the regulations in one district or zone may differ from those in other districts or zones.

**ADD NEW PARAGRAPH TO SECTION 519.02**

**For the purposes of adopting zoning as outlined in ORC 519.03 through 519.11, the term comprehensive plan shall mean a plan that divides all or any part of the unincorporated territory of the county into districts or zones that is based on a future land use plan prepared and adopted by the board of township trustees. The land use plan, which may be a component of a larger comprehensive plan, at a minimum shall include a map of the area to be zoned that recognizes both existing and future land uses anticipated to meet the needs of the community.**

For any activities permitted and regulated under Chapter 1513. or 1514. of the Revised Code and any related processing activities, the board of township trustees may regulate under the authority conferred by this section only in the interest of public health or safety. A zoning resolution authorized under this section shall provide for the activities that are permitted and regulated under Chapter 1514. of the Revised Code, and any related processing activities, as either a permitted use or a conditional use through the board of zoning appeals in any district or zone when such activities are to be added to an existing permit issued under Chapter 1514. of the Revised Code.

**PROPOSED NEW SECTION**

**519.27 – Comprehensive Plans**

**A board of township trustees may adopt a comprehensive plan for all or part of the township.**

**A comprehensive plan is a set of defined goals, policies, standards, and values intended to guide existing and future physical, social, and economic development of a jurisdiction. A comprehensive plan is the basis for which a jurisdiction’s regulations are enacted and governed. A comprehensive plan should address the following goals:**

- A. Promote fiscal responsibility.
- B. Foster coordination and efficiency among government bodies within a community and collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions.
- C. Reflect the values and insight of community members through public input.
- D. Include technical analysis that represents the community's existing conditions and future opportunities.
- E. Facilitate implementation of recommendations by building capacity for and commitment to decision-making.

When a board of township trustees adopts a comprehensive plan, at a minimum, it shall be formally adopted by resolution of the township and include the following elements:

- A. Land Use and Character: To manage the distribution and general location of various uses of land, and to promote a built environment that supports a high quality of life.
- B. Community Services: To support transportation, utility needs, and emergency services.
- C. Housing: To meet the housing needs of present and anticipated future residents.
- D. Economic Development: To promote workforce development and employment, the retention and expansion of existing businesses, and recruitment of new businesses.
- E. Community Resources: To protect natural, cultural, agricultural, open space, and other community resources.

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## Cities

### **ORC 713.02 – Planning commission – powers and duties**

The planning commission established under section 713.01 of the Revised Code shall make plans and maps of the whole or any portion of the municipal corporation, and of any land outside thereof, which, in the opinion of the commission, is related to the planning of the municipal corporation, and make changes in such plans or maps when it deems it advisable. Such maps or plans shall show the commission's recommendations for the general location, character, and extent of streets, alleys, ways, viaducts, bridges, waterways, waterfronts, subways, boulevards, parkways, parks, playgrounds, aviation

fields and other public grounds, ways, and open spaces; the general location of public buildings and other public property; the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned or operated, for water, light, sanitation, transportation, communication, power, and other purposes; and the removal, relocation, widening, narrowing, vacating, abandonment, change of use of or extension of such public ways, grounds, open spaces, buildings, property, utilities, or terminals. With a view to the systematic planning of the municipal corporation, the commission may make recommendations to public officials concerning the general location, character, and extent of any such public ways, grounds, open spaces, buildings, property, utilities, or terminals. As the work of making the whole plan progresses, the commission may from time to time adopt and publish any part thereof, and such part shall cover one or more major sections or divisions of the municipal corporation or one or more of the functional matters to be included in the plan. The commission may from time to time amend, extend, or add to the plan. This section does not confer any powers on the commission with respect to the construction, maintenance, use, or enlargement of improvements by any public utility or railroad on its own property if such utility is owned or operated by an individual, partnership, association, or a corporation for profit.

The planning commission may accept, receive, and expend funds, grants, and services from the federal government or its agencies, from departments, agencies, and instrumentalities of this state or any adjoining state or from one or more counties of this state or any adjoining state or from any municipal corporation or political subdivision of this or any adjoining state, including county, regional, and municipal planning commissions of this or any adjoining state, or from civic sources, and contract with respect thereto, either separately or jointly or cooperatively, and provide such information and reports as may be necessary to secure such financial aid.

The commission may control, preserve, and care for historical landmarks; control, in the manner provided by ordinance, the design and location of statuary and other works of art, which are the property of the municipal corporation; control the removal, relocation, and alteration of any such works; and control the design of harbors, bridges, viaducts, street fixtures, and other public structures and appurtenances.

Whenever the commission makes a plan of the municipal corporation, or any portion thereof, no public building or structure, street, boulevard, parkway, park, playground, public ground, canal, river front, harbor, dock, wharf, bridge, viaduct, tunnel, or other public way, ground, works, or utility, whether publicly or privately owned, or a part thereof, shall be constructed or authorized to be constructed in the municipal corporation or planned portion thereof unless the location, character, and extent thereof is approved by

the commission. In case of disapproval the commission shall communicate its reasons therefor to the legislative authority of the municipal corporation and to the head of the department which has control of the construction of the proposed improvement or utility. The legislative authority, by a vote of not less than two-thirds of its members and of such department head, together may overrule such disapproval. If such public way, ground, works, building, structure, or utility is one the authorization or financing of which does not, under the law or charter provisions governing it, fall within the province of a municipal legislative authority or other municipal body or official, the submission to the commission shall be by the state, school, county, district, or township official, board, commission, or body having such jurisdiction, and the commission's disapproval may be overruled by such official, board, commission, or body by a vote of not less than two-thirds of its membership. The narrowing, ornamentation, vacation, or change in the use of streets and other public ways, grounds, and places shall be subject to similar approval, and disapproval may be similarly overruled. The commission may make recommendations to any public authorities or to any corporations or individuals in such municipal corporation or the territory contiguous thereto, concerning the location of any buildings, structures, or works to be erected or constructed by them.

#### **PROPOSED NEW SECTION**

##### **713.021 – Comprehensive Plans.**

**The planning commission may develop a comprehensive plan for all or part of the municipality.**

**A comprehensive plan is a set of defined goals, policies, standards, and values intended to guide existing and future physical, social, and economic development of a jurisdiction. A comprehensive plan is the basis for which a jurisdiction's regulations are enacted and governed. A comprehensive plan should address the following goals:**

- A. Promote fiscal responsibility.**
- B. Foster coordination and efficiency among government bodies within a community and collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions.**
- C. Reflect the values and insight of community members through public input.**
- D. Include technical analysis that represents the community's existing conditions and future opportunities.**
- E. Facilitate implementation of recommendations by building capacity for and commitment to decision-making.**

**When a planning commission adopts a comprehensive plan, at a minimum, it shall be formally adopted by resolution or ordinance of the municipality and include the following elements:**

- A. Land Use and Character: To manage the distribution and general location of various uses of land, and to promote a built environment that supports a high quality of life.**
- B. Community Services: To support transportation, utility needs, and emergency services.**
- C. Housing: To meet the housing needs of present and anticipated future residents.**
- D. Economic Development: To promote workforce development and employment, the retention and expansion of existing businesses, and recruitment of new businesses.**
- E. Community Resources: To protect natural, cultural, agricultural, open space, and other community resources.**

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