



**COLUMBIA CITY/WHITLEY COUNTY
JOINT PLANNING & BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

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To: Code Development Committee
From: Nathan Bilger, Executive Director
Re: Common Issues presented by and for the Code Development Committee
November 15, 2017

Thank you to everyone for putting in the obviously immense amount of time and effort in your responses. Jen and I worked through the issues and comments and have come up with the following as the most commonly stated issues. They were stated in many ways, of course, but this is getting down to the basic nature:

1. **Promotion and protection of agriculture and its growth.** In part by determining appropriateness of residential development throughout the county, preventing small parcel splits, promoting agri-tourism, and agricultural diversity. 12 responses fell into this category.
2. **Protection of the environment.** Included in this were responses about the impact on water quality from CFOs, fertilizer and manure runoff, and sediment runoff; impacts of residential development [sprawl?]; and control of manure application to protect field productivity. 9 responses.
3. **Stricter regulations for CFOs.** This includes determining where they are appropriate, appropriate setbacks, odor regulations, financial impact fees, management practices, and others. 9 responses.
4. **Protection of property rights.** This was perhaps the most “bipartisan” response, with agricultural and residential property rights being mentioned. Also included were responses that permitted uses should not be taken away, and one response that asked how to best allow the free market to determine land values without overly restricting uses. 8 responses.
5. **Narrowing/changing the definition of CFOs.** Some stated to consider CFOs industrial operations, while others desire to make a bigger distinction between farms with CFOs and without. 6 responses.
6. **Align the zoning ordinance with the Comprehensive Plan.** Responses differed in level of detail here, but all stated that the problem is that the zoning and Comp Plan do not match. 5 responses.
7. **Promotion of quality of life.** 4 responses.
8. **Identifying and separating state- and federally-regulated issues from the county-regulated ones.** Manure and environmental management. One response also discussed the impact of foreign or corporate farms on the local economy. 4 responses.
9. **Promotion and protection of Residential Development** in appropriate areas. 3 responses (these somewhat overlapped with property rights responses—this category deals with new development only).
10. There were more responses that did not fall into these categories, though most of them were related. One of the more unique responses posed these questions that the Committee might consider going forward: What does intense agriculture look like? What could it look like? What does intense residential look like, or should look like?

While some of these issues may look partisan (e.g. ag interests vs. environmental interests), there was a lot of commonality among the respondents.

The next step will be to prioritize these categorical statements and refine them into the problem statement(s) we can then work on.

For reference, here is a nice, and concise, guide on drafting a problem statement:

<http://www.ceptara.com/blog/how-to-write-problem-statement> (a link is also on the website)

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