



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce Calls to Amend the Proposed Monroe County Comprehensive Plan

Bloomington, IN – December 20, 2010 – The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce issued a statement today calling for significant amendments to the proposed draft of the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan, the 20-year visioning document that provides guidelines for the County’s land use policies.

“This is a central planning document with specific implications for the business community and our ability to grow and retain jobs. We have raised concerns with the Plan Commission that this plan is prohibitive to expanding economic vitality in our community over the 20-year planning period,” said Morgan Hutton, director of advocacy for The Chamber. “Additionally, little has been done to address the concerns brought forth by community representatives and landowners in the most current proposed draft.”

The Plan Commission is expected to take a final vote on the current draft of the plan at the upcoming meeting on Tuesday, December 21st at 6:00 p.m. at the Monroe County Courthouse. At the time of this release, the draft plan was not accessible on the County Planning Department website. Once the Plan Commission votes to approve the plan, according to state statute, the County Commissioners must adopt a resolution approving, rejecting, or amending the plan.

“As the plan moves forward we intend to be actively engaged in the process,” said Chamber President & C.E.O., Christy Gillenwater.

Position Statement: Proposed Monroe County Comprehensive Plan

The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce recognizes the importance of comprehensive land use planning as well as the statutory requirement to set forth objectives and policies for future development by the adoption of a comprehensive plan. A considerable amount of work has been undertaken by Plan Commission members to carry out these responsibilities with the development of the proposed November 2010 draft of the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan. Over the past 14 months, The Chamber, other community organizations, and Monroe County citizens have raised significant concerns regarding the Plan’s lack of attention for and resulting limitations on economic development and job creation, the impact on subdivision of private property, and general real estate ownership rights and enjoyment.

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The Chamber supports responsible economic growth that is sensitive to our unique environmental constraints in Monroe County. We support an approach to development that balances these constraints with appropriate technologies that mitigate certain restrictions to development. We feel that this Plan fails to utilize such a balanced approach and will result in unnecessarily prohibitive planning policies.

The Chamber recommends that the proposed Plan be rejected and amended to include language that balances preservation, personal choice and jobs.

Our major concerns are as follows:

- Limitations on economic development, future job creation and retention
- Unprecedented restrictions on private property use
- Increased cost and difficulty of making minor changes to property
- The Plan will create hardship on landowners, devaluing property
- Specificity of the language is more appropriate for an ordinance rather than a 20-year visioning document
- The complexity of the Plan necessitates a thorough economic impact study to determine the cost that will be incurred by the county to process and administer the Plan including any additional planning staff needed, as well as the overall impact on property values in the county. Prior to adoption, funding and a strategy to implement must be identified.

About the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce:

The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce is a nonprofit membership organization serving as our community's leading advocate for business. We offer unique leadership opportunities, meaningful volunteer activities, and exclusive business-building programs focused on critical economic, civic, and social priorities. Chamber members support each other and community initiatives, sharing information and resources to help create economic opportunity and community well-being. At the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce, we believe that better business leads to a better community.

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