



PLANNING & PARKS DEPARTMENT

Andrew T. Struck, Director

<https://ozaukeecounty.gov/540/Planning-Parks>

MEETING AGENDA
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING BOARD
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2025 AT 10:30 A.M.*
**(OR 10 MINUTES FOLLOWING CONCLUSION OF THE COUNTY BOARD MEETING, WHICHEVER IS LATER)*
OZAUKEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATON CENTER, ROOM A-200
(121 West Main Street, Port Washington, WI 53074)
 Agenda Packet: <https://ozaukeecounty.gov/2107/Comprehensive-Plan-Board>

Bruce Ross, Chairperson
Thomas Richart, Vice-Chairperson
Rob Holyoke, and Timothy Maguire
Dan Vogel (Alternate)

1. Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Comprehensive Planning Board (CPB) was held at the Ozaukee County Administration Center in Room A-200. Chairperson Ross called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
B. Ross	Chairperson, Supervisor, District 19	Present	10:21 AM
T. Maguire	Supervisor, District 15	Present	10:00 AM
R. Holyoke	Supervisor, District 22	Present	10:16 AM
T. Richart	Vice-Chairperson, Supervisor, District 12	Present	10:12 AM
D. Vogel	Alternate – Supervisor, District 10	Present	10:19 AM

Staff present: Andrew Struck, Director – Planning and Parks Department; Brittany Whyte, Conservation Biologist (Planning) – Planning and Parks Department

Others present: Robbie Robinson, Senior Planner – Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC); Miranda Page, Planner – SEWRPC; Natalia Minkel-Dumit, SEWRPC Commissioner.

2. Assurance that the Meeting has been Properly Noticed / Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Struck provided assurance that the meeting was properly noticed.

3. Public Comments, Correspondence and Written Communications

Chairperson Ross asked if there were any public comments.

Mr. Struck stated that no written communication or correspondence was received.

There were no additional public comments at the meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes (August 20, 2025)

Motion made Supervisor Holyoke, seconded by Supervisor Vogel, that the August 20, 2025, minutes be approved. A voice vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

5. REVIEW, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – Final Draft of A Farmland Preservation Plan for Ozaukee County: 2050 (3rd Edition)

a. Review, Discussion and POSSIBLE ACTION – CHAPTER 4, Public Involvement for A Farmland Preservation Plan for Ozaukee County: 2050

Chairperson Ross introduced agenda item 5a.

Mr. Struck stated that the full draft Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP) has been posted online for public viewing. The link to the plan is on page 10 of the agenda packet pdf. The draft is pending any public comments or input received at the public hearing or input from CPB members. After any input, the draft version will be advanced to the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) for certification. An executive summary will be created and presented to the CPB at the next meeting and will be part of the draft FPP.

i. Public Informational Meetings

Mr. Struck stated that there will be a discussion about the public informational meetings included in the FPP. Supervisor Maguire and 2 AmeriCorps members attended yesterday's public informational meeting at Hawthorne Hills County Park. The AmeriCorps members were very interested in learning about the topics. Overall attendance was low at the public informational meetings; however, there were some competing public information meetings simultaneously at the Town level regarding the proposed new electrical distribution lines for the data center development in the City of Port Washington. The FPP will summarize that the meetings were available for the public to attend.

Mr. Struck noted that he received a message that he still needs to return from a resident who is a landowner and farmer in the Town of Fredonia with farmland-related concerns. Mr. Struck will follow up with her.

Mr. Struck stated that Chapter 4 was already approved by CPB, so no action is needed at this time and the draft plan will be updated with the information on the public information meetings.

b. Review, Discussion and POSSIBLE ACTION – CHAPTER 5, Farmland Preservation Areas (FPAs) for A Farmland Preservation Plan for Ozaukee County: 2050

Mr. Struck noted that the farmland preservation areas were discussed at the last CPB meeting and conditional approval was given by CPB. Mr. Struck hasn't heard anything further from the Town of Belgium, who originally said they were interested in participation, so the Town of Belgium FPA is included in the final draft plan. The Town of Belgium FPA is the only township included in this plan. Mr. Struck introduced Map 5.2 and Map 5.4 (located on pages 326 and 328 of the FPP draft), noting that all tan colored areas on Map 5.2 are designated Farmland Preservation Areas. Map 5.4 shows existing and planned land uses, as well.

Mr. Struck stated that Ozaukee County is required to adopt the FPP as an amendment to the County comprehensive plan. There will be a resolution and an ordinance that adopts the FPP as an amendment to the Multijurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Ozaukee County: 2035. There are relatively minor changes, but the main change to the County comprehensive plan will be with regard to the planned land use map. The entire FPP will be adopted as a stand-alone plan and as an amendment to the County comprehensive plan. At CPB's next meeting, on October 15th, the FPP will be recommended for adoption as a stand-alone plan to the County Board. After that, the FPP final draft will be sent to DATCP for their review and certification. Mr. Struck hopes to receive DATCP's comments before the November 2025 CPB meeting for incorporation before the amendment to the County comprehensive plan is recommended to County Board. The deadline for the comprehensive plan amendment is the end of 2025. The FPP (and resolutions and ordinance) will be advanced to the Ozaukee County Board of Supervisors in December 2025.

Chairperson Ross asked if there will be a County Board meeting mid-month in October.

Mr. Struck stated that he believes that there will be a County Board meeting given that typically the County budget is presented but is not certain. After today's public hearing and the next CPB meeting (October 15th) the FPP final draft will be advanced to DATCP. The resolution will be included in the Plan appendices (along with the resolution and ordinance adopting the County comprehensive plan amendment).

Mr. Robinson noted that some chapters of the FPP final draft were already submitted to DATCP in early August. DATCP has not provided feedback yet.

Mr. Struck stated that if comments are received from DATCP after the December 2025 County Board meeting, the FPP may need to be re-adopted in January 2026. There is a checklist that DATCP needs to follow for the inventory chapters, so it's good that those chapters were sent for review early.

Mr. Struck stated that Department staff found some historical farmland maps; posters were available to view at the meeting (as well as at the public information meetings). Mr. Struck showed a map preceding 2005 that showed all parcels that were participants in the FPP at the time. Mr. Struck showed another map of participating parcels in 2005; less parcels were included than prior. Mr. Struck also showed a map of FPP designated areas in 2010, which displayed multiple towns participating, including the Town of Port Washington, the Town of Cedarburg, the Town of Fredonia, the Town of Belgium, and the Town of Saukville. Then Mr. Struck showed a map of participating parcels in 2025; these parcels are only in the Town of Belgium and there are not many, comparatively. There are multiple factors influencing landowner participation. Mr. Struck then showed a map of active agricultural land in 2000, followed by a map of active agricultural land in 2020; there was notably less than in 2000, and agricultural land is more limited in southern and west areas of Ozaukee County. Active agricultural land doesn't necessarily mean the landowners are collecting tax credits though.

Supervisor Vogel asked what might be happening on the western side of Ozaukee County to cause these results.

Mr. Struck noted that he thinks a lot of land on the west side of Ozaukee County is being purchased for large estates, hobby farms and residential development.

Chairperson Ross stated that the maps and data Mr. Struck discussed are pretty stark; trends are visible. Chairperson Ross asked what Ozaukee County has done to change the trend, and what feedback has been provided to the state. If Ozaukee County wants to preserve farmland, it needs to be in ways in addition to the state program. Farmland is not being preserved in Ozaukee County, and the County's actions are not even slowing it down.

Mr. Struck stated that he thinks Ozaukee County needs to use different tools. There still is agricultural land in Ozaukee County, but actions need to be taken quickly to establish programs and tools. It seems clear that the tax credit alone is not an effective tool for Ozaukee County to preserve farmland. Mr. Struck showed a poster of the Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) map from 2007; Mr. Struck thinks this map still holds up well. It considers soils/agricultural productivity (Land Evaluation – LE) and other site assessment factors (Site Assessment – SA) like proximity to sewer service areas, contiguous agricultural acreage, etc. Darker green areas on the map have higher quality farmland per the LESA. Mr. Struck thinks a tool (perhaps purchase of conservation easements) is needed to implement the LESA study.

Supervisor Maguire asked what the tools would be.

Mr. Struck stated that he thinks Ozaukee County needs to work directly with landowners to voluntarily purchase agricultural conservation easements. Many of Ozaukee County's residents and agricultural landowners/farmers are aging, so there isn't a younger generation coming along to farm the land. There may be younger farmers not currently living in Ozaukee County that could farm the land in Ozaukee County if it was affordable. Conservation easements buy the development rights for a parcel and generally are in-perpetuity. There may be other tools to use as well, but Mr. Struck knows that the tax credits alone aren't working for Ozaukee County.

Supervisor Vogel asked if conservation easements would provide significant payments to the landowners.

Mr. Struck stated that conservation easements allow landowners to be paid for their development rights, a one-time payment for the easement value (generally based on an appraisal of the land value). Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District has applied for federal grants (in the past) and has had some success securing funding and purchasing conservation easements from landowners. Ozaukee County also has the North Branch Milwaukee River Wildlife and Farming Heritage Area, where the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources can invest funds and has had success in protecting agricultural lands through conservation easements. There were still some programs and funding available, just not through DATCP and the State Farmland Preservation Program (at this time). That might need to be where Ozaukee County focuses efforts and potential resources.

Mr. Struck also noted that there are many other factors that influence whether farmers continue to farm their

land. The Ozaukee County Land and Water Management Department works with farmers on various sustainability and conservation practices. Map 2.43a, “Soil and Water Conservation Plans and Practices in Ozaukee County: 1965-1982” on page 210 of the draft FPP as well as the update of data for 2023-2024 shows fairly widespread participation and many farmers participating and receiving grant funding to conduct conservation practices. To receive tax credits, landowners/farmers need to comply with the state conservation standards. Of course, land value overall is a challenge in Ozaukee County.

Mr. Struck noted that the Port Washington data center annexation will impact high quality farmland as designated on the LESA map; the LESA study will be updated to take into account recent annexations (to cities and villages since 2007). The data center situation is unique; Ozaukee County doesn’t usually see that much agricultural land annexed at one time. The data center annexation (approximately 1,600-2,000 acres) is equivalent to about a decade of “average” annexation for Ozaukee County.

6. PUBLIC HEARING (*at 11:00 AM*) – Final Draft of A Farmland Preservation Plan for Ozaukee County: 2050 (3rd Edition).

At 11:00 AM, Chairperson Ross formally opened the public hearing.

Chairperson Ross asked if there were any public comments for the public hearing on the Farmland Preservation Plan for Ozaukee County. No public comments were received. SEWRPC Commissioner Natalia Minkel-Dumit was also in attendance.

Chairperson Ross formally closed the public hearing at 11:05 AM.

Vice-Chairperson Richart mentioned the possibility that Ozaukee County could buy land for cheaper or buy development rights along land with the future power lines for the data center.

Mr. Struck noted that he has heard concerns about power lines going over farmland with livestock, particularly in the Town of Saukville. Power lines may be less of a direct concern for other farmers growing row crops.

5. REVIEW, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – Final Draft of A Farmland Preservation Plan for Ozaukee County: 2050 (3rd Edition)

c. Review, Discussion and POSSIBLE ACTION – CHAPTER 7, Implementation for A Farmland Preservation Plan for Ozaukee County: 2050.

i. Program Prioritization (from Chapter 6 Programs) – Revised Results from CPB Member Responses and Ranking Methodology

Mr. Struck mentioned that he had previously emailed the program prioritization tables found on pages 15-26 of the agenda packet to CPB members in September. Some revisions have been made since the last CPB meeting. The tables can be adjusted if desired. In Chapter 7, three tables were chosen to include. Table 7.1, on page 399 of the FPP draft includes the highest 35 scored programs. Table 7.2, on page 401 of the FPP draft, includes programs that received a score of 14 and up, just from CPB members this year; this table doesn’t include weighting that favors agricultural programs. Table 7.3, on page 403 of the FPP draft, displays the overlap between Table 7.1 and 7.2 with the responsibility columns included. The list of programs in Table 7.3 is being highlighted directly in the chapter, starting on page 374 of the FPP draft. The full table of all 112 programs is included in the appendices on page 655 of the FPP draft; this table also shows the responsibility columns. Mr. Struck noted that if there are any issues or comments on the tables, CPB members comment.

Vice-Chairman Richart stated that staff did a good job with the priority tables and representing the CPB’s comments and desires.

There were no other comments from CPB members.

7. Other Business

Chairperson Ross asked if there was any other business to discuss today.

Mr. Struck provided a schedule recap. There will be an October 15, 2025 CPB meeting to recommend adoption of the Farmland Preservation Plan as a stand-alone Plan. This will give DATCP assurance that Ozaukee County

is on board with the final draft plan that was submitted to DATCP (along with certification by the County Planning Director and Corporation Counsel). Staff hope to receive comments back from DATCP in November. Then, there will be a November 19, 2025, CPB meeting, where CPB will recommend adoption of a resolution and ordinance for the required amendment to the Multijurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Ozaukee County incorporating the Farmland Preservation Plan for Ozaukee County: 2050. There may also be a presentation to the County Board on the Plan at the November 19, 2025 County Board meeting. Then, at the December 3, 2025, County Board meeting, the Farmland Preservation Plan for Ozaukee County: 2050 will be adopted as a stand-alone plan and an amendment to the comprehensive plan by resolution and ordinance. This timeline should meet the grant deadline and plan certification deadline, make the Town of Belgium eligible to proceed with farmland preservation zoning, and allow Town of Belgium landowners to claim tax credits. The only unknown is when DATCP will send their review comments back to the County. It is anticipated that these comments will be received in November.

Chairperson Ross asked if CPB should write a letter to the Ozaukee County Board and a letter of concern to DATCP; what should be the timeline.

Mr. Struck stated that a letter could be prepared before the plan is sent to the County Board for adoption. The full plan goes in front of the County Board as a comprehensive plan amendment on December 3rd. Public involvement and public hearing requirements have now been met.

There was no other business brought before the CPB.

8. Next Meeting Date(s) – October 15, 2025

CPB will meet next on October 15th.

Mr. Struck noted that this meeting date could be moved, if needed.

There were no current schedule concerns from CPB members.

9. Adjournment

Supervisor Vogel made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Supervisor Richart. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.