



CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

Land Use Planning in Champaign County

"The County has not entered a planning mode in recent history... This process will be a new venture with important consequences for the future."

*-- Barbara Wysocki, LRMP Steering Committee Chair
correspondence dated August 24, 2007 to Steering Committee*

Countywide Land Use Planning

Accounts of land use planning on a countywide basis begin in 1935 with the establishment of the first Regional Planning Commission of Champaign County. The Commission produced a series of studies and reports, including *A Regional Planning Program for Champaign County, Illinois* in March, 1937 calling for the further study of "... how extensive the local land use problems are" and outlining local land use problems such as "... inappropriate alien land uses, industrial lots in residential areas [and] .. unregulated exploitation."¹ The Commission published a report in July, 1941 entitled *Urgent County-Wide Planning Needs in Champaign County, Illinois*, supporting the development of county zoning, and calling for "... intelligent thought [to be] given to guidance and prevention. .. As in other developing difficulties, here too foresight is likely to be more economic and effective than hindsight."²

In 1947, a group of citizens from Champaign and Urbana formed the Community Housing and Development Council, with an interest in comprehensive planning at the regional level. The Council retained the consulting firm Swanson Associates of Bloomfield, Michigan to prepare a comprehensive development plan for the metropolitan areas of Champaign and Urbana.³ In April, 1951, the Urbana City Council adopted the portion of the Swanson comprehensive development plan "... so far as it affects the City of Urbana."⁴

Over the next two decades, further countywide land use planning efforts lagged while local land use planning at the municipal level moved forward. In 1966 the Champaign County Board re-established the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) to prepare and administer a regional plan for the County.⁵ The RPC initiated its regional planning program in 1971, serving as planning agent for the cities of Champaign and Urbana as well as for Champaign County.⁶ Local units of government needed to show written planning efforts in order to benefit from many the federal programs that resulted from a national emphasis on land use planning beginning in 1968 and throughout the 1970s. Municipalities were required to have written comprehensive plans, whether or not they were formally adopted. These plans included such elements as: land use, housing, human resources, water and sewer systems, and open space design.

An early major planning document produced and adopted by the RPC was *A Preliminary Statement of Areawide Goals and Objectives*, containing goals and supporting objectives regarding planning concerns of the County.⁷ This set of goals and objectives provided a foundation for additional planning studies completed during 1972 and 1973.

Additional in-house reports adopted by the RPC in May, 1972, included: *Open Space Element*, *Water/Sewer Element*, *Initial Housing Element* and *Land Use Element*. By September, 1972,

the RPC was certified as an areawide planning organization by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development with Champaign County as its designated planning jurisdiction.

These regional planning studies were expanded and updated by the RPC and in June 1973, the RPC adopted the revised policy statement and five elements comprising the Comprehensive Plan for Champaign County. The elements of that Plan with their dates of adoption by the RPC are indicated in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1: Comprehensive Plan for Champaign County Adopted by the RPC

Comprehensive Plan Component	Date of Adoption by RPC
A Preliminary Statement of Areawide Goals and Objectives	February 1972
Open Space Element: Areawide Open Space-Recreation Plan and Program	May 1972
Water/Sewer/Drainage Element: Areawide Water and Sewer and Drainage Plan and Program	June 1973
Housing Element: Housing Policy Plan and Program	June 1973
Human Resources Element: Population and Economic Base Study	June 1973
Land Use Element: Land Use Policy Plan	June 1973

The *Land Use Element* adopted in June 1973 (as noted in Table 1-1 above) consisted of:

- a land use policy framework to guide land development decisions in the County;
- a synthesis--from the other Plan elements--of all recommendations relevant to land use and development in the County;
- a future land use map to the year 2000; and
- a review of potential means to implement the land use policies.

The RPC proposed to the Champaign County Board that they adopt the prepared Comprehensive Plan for Champaign County, but the County Board declined to adopt the Plan as presented.

Review and debate regarding countywide land use policy continued over the next few years. The RPC and the Champaign County Bicentennial Commission organized the “Town Meeting for Tomorrow” public forums that occurred during 1976 as an effort to develop a community consensus on growth and other land use issues. In March 1977, the Champaign County Board Environment and Land Use Committee (ELUC) began its review of the *Champaign County 1980 Interim Land Use Plan Report*.⁸ Major discussion items included: growth policies; public input during Town Meeting forums; and development criteria for residential, commercial and industrial land use types. After an initial review of alternate land use plans, ELUC focused its review on the set of land use policies to be used to guide County land use decisions. In November 1977, the County Board adopted the *Champaign County Land Use Goals and Policies*.⁹

Meanwhile, RPC programs expanded to include transportation planning with the formation of the Champaign-Urbana Urbanized Area Transportation Study (CUUATS) in 1975. CUUATS

staff, with public input and input from local, state and federal transportation entities, cooperatively prepare and update comprehensive long range transportation plans for the Champaign-Urbana-Savoy-Bondville urbanized area.

Municipal Land Use Planning

Twelve of the 24 municipalities in Champaign County have developed and adopted a comprehensive land use plan that covers their incorporated territory, with the adopted plans for all of these municipalities extending into the unincorporated area located within 1-1/2 miles of their corporate limits.

The larger central cities of Urbana and Champaign were the first in the County to adopt comprehensive plans during the early 1950's. Over time, ten other municipalities in Champaign County have adopted comprehensive land use plans: Rantoul, Mahomet, Savoy, Tolono, Fisher, Ogden, St. Joseph, Philo, Sidney and Bondville.

As illustrated in Figure 1-1, as of June 2007, these 12 adopted municipal comprehensive plans cover approximately 29.2% of the total area of the County. An estimated 80% of the County's population resides within the corporate limits of the 12 municipalities with an adopted comprehensive plan, with an additional significant percentage of the total County population residing within the ETJ areas covered by these plans.¹⁰

Land Use Planning by Other Governmental Units

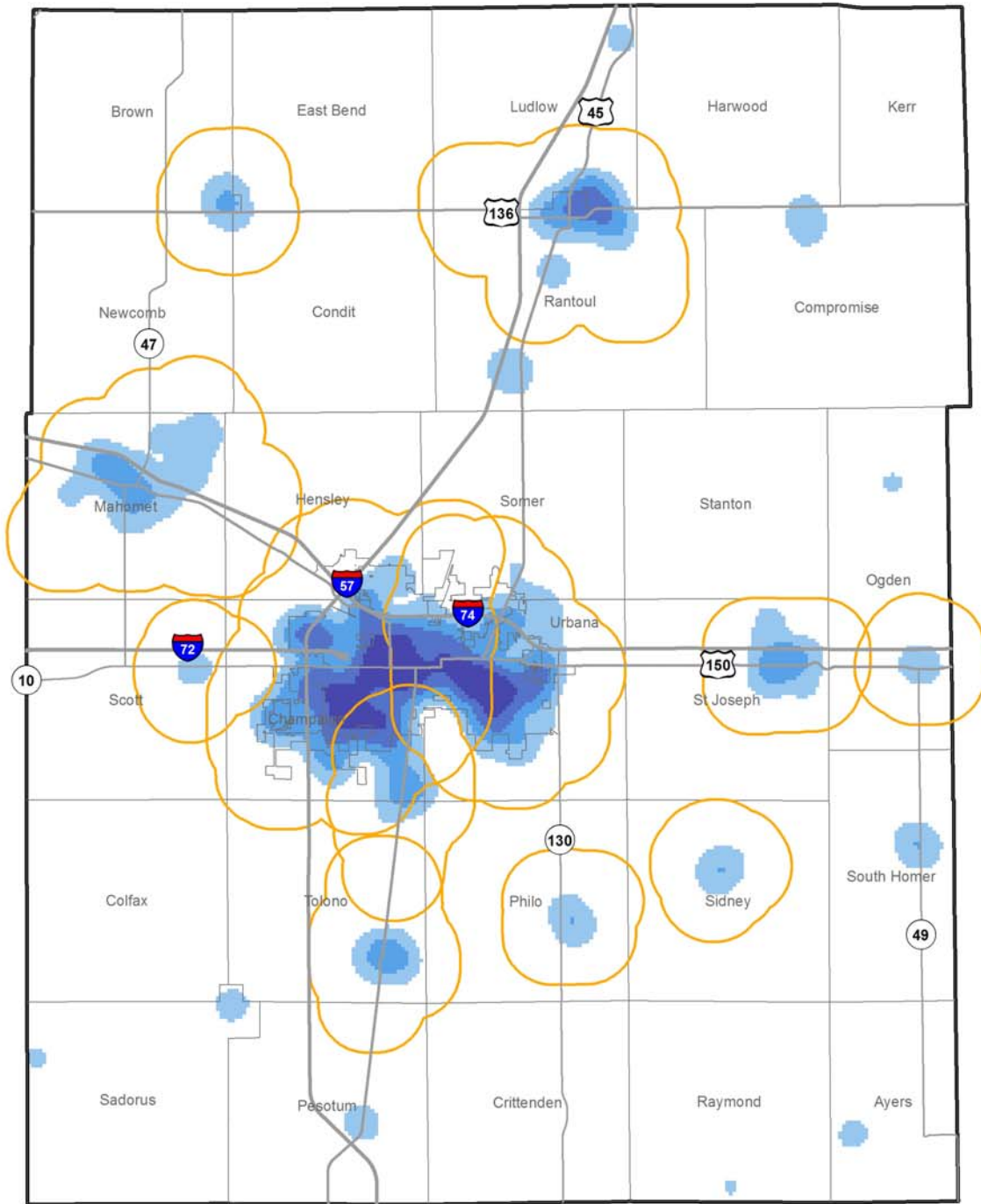
The University of Illinois (the state land-grant university) and other agencies (e.g., Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District) have adopted special purpose plans that are relevant to the development of a countywide land resource management plan. An overview of those plans and a preliminary analysis of associated relevant land use policies is provided in Chapter 2.

Mahomet Aquifer Consortium

The Mahomet Aquifer Consortium (MAC) is a not-for-profit organization begun in 1998 with the goal of further studying the Mahomet aquifer on a regional basis and to develop options for the management of the Mahomet Aquifer, the major groundwater resource for east-central Illinois.¹¹ The MAC is named as principal investigator of a state-funded project underway to develop a regional water supply plan for the Mahomet Aquifer, with project completion expected in June, 2009. Illinois State Water Survey and Illinois State Geological Survey scientists serve as technical advisors to MAC. Key issues to be addressed in the project include:

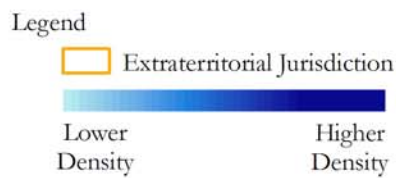
- determine water availability, including how much and where water can be withdrawn safely from the aquifer and rivers;
- develop scenarios of water demand to 2050;
- determine impacts of additional withdrawals on existing wells, rivers and streams and the aquifer; and
- determine whether aquifer water supplies are resistant to drought and possible climate change.

Figure 1-1: Adopted Municipal Comprehensive Plans and Population Density



Adopted Municipal Comprehensive Plans and Population Density

Champaign County



Date Map Prepared:
 October 2007

Need for a Countywide Land Use Plan

Over the past several years, the desire for a regional or countywide comprehensive land use plan has been expressed by many parties in the County including the Champaign County Farm Bureau, the County Board-appointed Blue Ribbon Panel on the Environment, and participants of the recent big.small.all community visioning initiative.

As the County entered the beginning phases of its comprehensive zoning ordinance review project in 2001, the Champaign County Farm Bureau provided input regarding land use policy and encouraged the Champaign County Environment and Land Use Committee to develop a comprehensive land use plan.¹²

Blue Ribbon Panel

In May, 2002, the Champaign County Board appointed a 7-member panel to provide an overall 'state of the environment' assessment for the County. The Blue Ribbon Panel reported on six primary environmental issues impacted by County government and requiring early attention, including comprehensive planning:

"Current development patterns in Champaign County are not sustainable. They are taking some of the world's most fertile soil out of production, damaging the County's natural environment and compromising its economic viability."¹³

The Panel made the following recommendation:

"The County needs to take the lead, along with municipal & community involvement, in instituting a visioning process to develop a county-wide set of goals based on public input. This process should result in the completion of a Champaign County comprehensive plan."¹⁴



big.small.all. Champaign County Community Visioning Initiative

In 2004, the Champaign County Board formally requested that the RPC develop a visioning project as a community initiative not tied to the organizational capacity or legal authority of any unit of government or other organization. The purpose of the visioning project was: "... to look beyond Champaign County's immediate concerns to create a positive vision of a shared future reflecting common aspirations and building on our strengths and unique opportunities."¹⁵

By August 2005 the "big.small.all" community visioning project was underway. The visioning process included a community dialogue, a community assembly, and a series of community workshops. In March 2007, the vision document entitled *our.future.here: A Vision for Champaign County*, was released. The fourth and ongoing phase of the community visioning initiative involves implementation of the action strategies identified in the vision document.

our.future.here: A Vision for Champaign County establishes a framework of five strategic elements, with 12 goals and 35 supporting objectives--all addressing conditions within a time span of 20 years. The goals and objectives were developed based on input from over 1,100 residents of Champaign County.¹⁶ Appendix 1 contains the text of the Strategic Elements and Goals contained in *our.future.here: A Vision for Champaign County*.

Decision to Develop a Countywide Land Resource Management Plan

Ten-Point Plan to Streamline County Government

In early 2007, Champaign County Board members discussed a 10-point strategic plan for the County that included the development of a County comprehensive land use plan. Over the next few months, the Champaign County Environment and Land Use Committee (ELUC) reviewed the RPC proposal to develop a countywide land resource management plan.

RPC Proposal for Development of a Comprehensive Land Use Plan

ELUC reviewed and identified preferred alternatives regarding the development of a comprehensive land use plan for the County, including type of land use plan and organization of the project. On June 21, 2007, the County Board adopted Resolution No. 6051, both supporting the development of a countywide land resource management plan and asserting that the plan will serve as an important source of guidance to the County in making land use related decisions.¹⁷

Legal Authority to Develop a Plan

Local Land Resource Management Planning Act

Under the authority of the *Local Land Resource Management Planning Act* (50 ILCS 805/3.B), hereinafter referred to as the *Act*, the County Board may adopt a local land resource management plan which may include 'goals and procedures for resolving conflict' for a wide range of objectives, including objectives pertaining to: agricultural preservation; air and land resources quality; natural resources; governmental cooperation, among others. The *Act* provides a means whereby a local land resource management plan may be regarded as 'joint or compatible' provided that a joint resolution is approved by each affected jurisdiction or provided that the review comments submitted by each affected jurisdiction are duly considered and specifically addressed in a resolution of the adopting jurisdiction. The *Act* empowers the County to adopt ordinances to implement a local land resource management plan.

Plan Requirements

The *Act* defines a local land resource management plan as maps of existing and generalized proposed land use and a policy statement in the form of words, numbers, illustrations, etc. that is adopted by the County. The *Act* stipulates that a plan: "... shall include but not be limited to sewer and water systems, energy distribution systems; recreational facilities, public safety facilities and their relationship to natural resources, air, water and land quality management or conservation programs within its jurisdiction."

Purpose of the Plan

The Champaign County Land Resource Management Plan is intended to constitute a land use and development policy framework for the County. The Plan will be used to guide land use related decisions of appointed and elected County officials with respect to administering regulations, extending incentives, capital spending and inter-governmental relations over a 20-year projected timeframe. Generally, the Plan will be inclusive of all areas of the County except lands that are located within corporate limits of a municipality or lands that are designated for non-rural land use in an adopted municipal comprehensive plan; final boundaries will be

determined prior to completing the Policy Framework in Stage 2. The County Board, its committees, the Zoning Board of Appeals, County staff, and residents of Champaign County will use the Plan.

The development of a Champaign County Land Resource Management Plan will help shape a shared understanding of issues among key players. A County Land Resource Management Plan is expected to provide:

- a baseline of information regarding existing conditions and land use trends in the County;
- a frame of reference to assess County trends;
- a policy framework for making specific decisions related to land use in the County
- a principled basis for County participation in land-use decisions made by others;
- a means of educating opinion leaders and the general public regarding conditions and land use trends in the County; and
- advance notice to landowners and developers of County government preferences, expectations and policies regarding land use and development.

Planning Process

Steering Committee

Work to develop a Champaign County Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) is conducted under the supervision of a Steering Committee appointed by the County Board.¹⁸ The Steering Committee is comprised of 18 persons plus a Chair and Vice-Chair, selected on the basis of criteria developed by the County Board, including a minimum of eight Steering Committee members meeting the following requirements:

- Two Steering Committee members who are elected, appointed or former officials or commissioners from townships designated as metropolitan townships (Champaign, Urbana, Somer, Hensley);
- Two Steering Committee members who are elected, appointed or former officials or commissioners from townships designated as rural river corridor townships (East Bend, Newcomb, Mahomet, St. Joseph, Sidney, South Homer);
- Two Steering Committee members who are elected, appointed or former officials or commissioners from townships designated as and rural prairie townships (Brown; Ludlow; Harwood; Kerr; Condit; Rantoul; Compromise; Stanton; Ogden; Ayers; Raymond; Crittenden; Philo; Tolono; Pesotum; Sadorus; Colfax, or Scott);
- One Steering Committee member who is an elected or former township highway commissioner from the metropolitan townships of Champaign, Urbana, Hensley or Somer;
- One Steering Committee member who is an elected or former township highway commissioner from the rural townships consisting of all townships other than the townships of Champaign; Urbana; Hensley or Somer.

Additionally, Steering Committee members were chosen on the basis of whether they were considered representative of one or more of the following interests or perspectives:

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| a) commodity crop producer | i) environmentalist |
| b) livestock or specialty crop producer | j) rural public school |
| c) former ZBA Chair | k) property rights advocate |
| d) agri-business (seed, fertilizer, equipment, elevator, etc.) | l) fire/emergency services provider |
| e) non-farm rural business | m) economic growth |
| f) farmland preservation | n) racial/ethnic minority |
| g) historical/cultural resources | o) low income advocate |
| h) park and recreation | p) rural homebuilder/realtor |
| | q) higher education administration |

Steering Committee voting membership is weighted to meet a rural- to-urban ratio of 2:1. For purposes of calculating this rural-to-urban ratio, Steering Committee members residing within the corporate limits of one of the seven most populated municipalities (i.e., Champaign, Urbana, Rantoul, Mahomet, St. Joseph, Savoy or Tolono) are designated as 'urban' and Steering Committee members residing in other areas of the County are designated as 'rural'.

The Chair or former Chair of the Champaign County Environment and Land Use Committee (ELUC), in his or her personal capacity, is appointed as Chair of the Steering Committee. The Vice-Chair or former Vice-Chair of ELUC, in his or her personal capacity, is appointed as Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee.

Champaign County Environment and Land Use Committee

All Champaign County Environment and Land Use Committee (ELUC) members serve as ex-officio members of the Steering Committee. As ex-officio members of the Steering Committee, ELUC members are non-voting members. ELUC members will review the four major segments of plan development at key points of the plan development process and authorize continued work on the plan. ELUC will make its recommendations regarding approval each stage of LRMP development to the County Board, prior to County Board consideration of the plan. Public comment regarding the LRMP will be welcomed at each ELUC meeting throughout the LRMP review process.

RPC Planning Staff, Champaign County GIS Consortium, and County Staff

The RPC planning staff will provide project management and oversight and perform the administrative and planning tasks associated with development of the Champaign County Land Resource Management Plan. The Champaign County Planning & Zoning Director will review and provide input throughout the plan development process. The Champaign County GIS Consortium, a program of the Champaign County RPC, is contracted by the RPC to provide mapping services as needed throughout the four plan development stages.

Public Participation

Public input will be sought through the Steering Committee, interviews with representatives of townships and municipalities; a large-scale public workshop; and a public meeting. A webpage for the project will provide for public comment as input.

Ad hoc committees comprised of key stakeholders or technical experts will be established as needed to address specific issues.

Cities, villages and townships will have opportunities to provide input throughout the process, along with sanitary districts, Soil and Water Conservation District, drainage districts; and other public bodies.

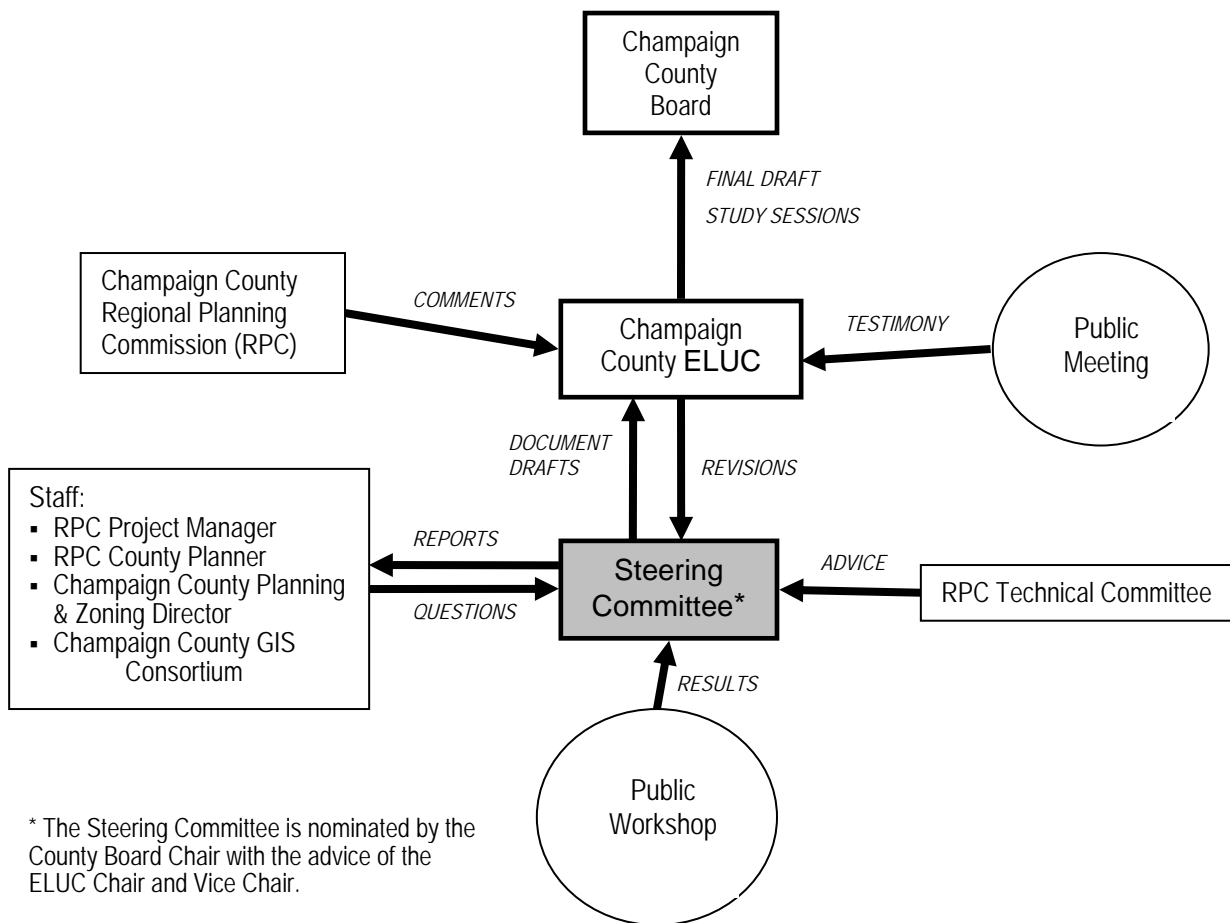
County Board Review

Efforts will be made to inform the 27 elected officials of the Champaign County Board throughout the planning process. Prior to the completion of each of the four major segments of the plan development process, a study session will be offered to the full County Board to provide information, answer questions, and solicit feedback. Ultimately, the County Board will be the voting body to consider approval of the plan.

Project Organization

Figure 1-2 describes the plan development process in flow-chart form.

Figure 1-2: Project Organization Diagram



Stages of Plan Development

Distinct stages of the LRMP plan-making process are:

- Pre-Planning Stage
- Stage One: Conditions and Trends
 - Current conditions and trends
 - Local policy and plan review
 - Threats, opportunities and issues
- Stage Two: Policy Framework
 - Land use development and resource policies
- Stage Three: County Future Land Use Map(s)
 - Land Use Plan and Policy maps
 - Revisions to policies as required
- Stage Four: Implementation
- Public Meeting
- County Review & Approval

LRMP Components

Results will be included in one or more reports issued at each stage of the plan development process. These will collectively constitute the LRMP. The plan will also be presented in a short executive summary and in a brochure for wide distribution in the County.

Table 1-2 lists LRMP components produced by each stage of the plan-making process.

Table 1-2: Staging of LRMP Components

Project Stage	Product
Pre-Planning	Steering Committee Agenda and Detailed Project Workplan
1) Conditions and Trends.....	Existing Conditions and Trends Report
2) Policy Framework.....	Policy Framework Report
3) County Future Land Use Map.....	County Future Land Use Map
4) Implementation.....	Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation Program Component of LRMP
Public Meeting.....	Report to ELUC Regarding Comments Received at Public Meeting
County Approval.....	Champaign County Land Resource Management Plan

Project Timetable

Work on the project commenced in June 2007. During the planning process, there were 31 Steering Committee meetings. Updates to ELUC and the County Board occurred at key points throughout the plan development process. The timetable was structured to avoid holding the Steering Committee meetings or public meetings during the primary planting and harvest months (mid-April through May and mid-September through mid-October) or during the summer vacation season (June through mid-August).