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## Designing the Future: Richland County, Mansfield, and Shelby Launch “RICHLAND UNITED 2050” to Shape the Next Quarter-Century

Leaders from Richland County, Mansfield, and Shelby officially launched “RICHLAND UNITED 2050, Smart Growth, Planned Well,” a joint effort to create a Comprehensive Land-Use Plan for the county’s growth over the next twenty-five years.

While “land-use planning” may sound like technical jargon, its impact is felt daily by every resident. It determines where new homes are built, how traffic flows through local streets, and which natural green spaces are preserved for future generations.

“The benefits of a Joint Land Use Management Plan include ensuring resources are used effectively and preventing land-use conflicts,” said Shelby Mayor Steve Schag. “It signals to prospective developers and residents alike that our governmental entities are prepared for—and welcome—desirable future growth.”

The Richland County Regional Planning Commission is partnering with Richland County, Mansfield, and Shelby leaders to facilitate the plan. This collaboration ensures that the entire region grows in harmony with a shared cohesive vision.

“In the absence of a comprehensive land-use plan, Richland County’s growth and economic development would be fragmented and haphazard,” stated County Commissioner Cliff Mears. “This plan provides the stability and predictability needed for the county’s continued physical, social, and economic progress.”

Once complete, the Plan will establish long-term goals and serve as a guide for decision-makers and the community. It provides a clear framework for prioritizing land use, housing, infrastructure, and conservation across Richland County and its cities. Ultimately, it answers the foundational questions: “What kind of community do we want to be, and what do we want it to look like 10, or even 25 years from now?”

How can the community get involved?

The steering committee, comprised of local elected officials, community stakeholders, and residents, wants to hear from everyone, not just experts.

“The decisions we make regarding land use will impact our community for decades,” said Mansfield Mayor Jodie Perry. “This comprehensive planning process gives citizens, businesses, and government officials a chance to

have a meaningful conversation about Mansfield's future. We all want meaningful development with high-paying jobs, quality housing, and active green spaces—this is the opportunity to ensure that outcome."

Over the next few months, members of the steering committee and the project team will be active throughout the region, attending local community events and holding public open houses. These gatherings offer a unique opportunity for citizens to share their ideas, view potential maps, and weigh in on critical priorities. By participating in these events and responding to online surveys, residents can directly help shape a vision for how the County and Cities will grow and evolve over the coming decades.

To learn more about the project, view the schedule of upcoming public meetings, or contact the project team, please visit: <https://wix.to/vADzx9S>

Richland County Comprehensive Plan "Smart Growth, Planned Well":

The new comprehensive plan is a collaborative planning initiative between Richland County, the City of Mansfield, and the City of Shelby. Facilitated by the Richland County Regional Planning Commission, the project aims to create a comprehensive strategy for sustainable growth, economic development, and conservation through the year 2050.

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