

Local Governments Adapt Land Use Models to Fit Local Needs

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In April 2007 the Indiana Land Resources Council (ILRC) finalized recommendations for model agricultural zoning ordinances. These recommendations were distributed throughout the state to local governments as tools for agricultural zoning in their counties. These recommendations are not required by law.

In the 8 months since the ILRC finalized recommendations for model agricultural zoning ordinances, several local governments have implemented these concepts. As the ILRC had hoped, these tools enable local government leaders to adapt the recommendations to their community needs. ISDA has worked with the following counties to advocate use of the model ordinance principles and advise on the legality of proposed regulations:

- **Grant County.** ISDA assisted Grant County in using technical analysis and scientific data when developing local regulations. Through the Geographic Information System (GIS), Grant County was able to collect and analyze geographic data on the impact of a proposed setback regulation. This analysis prompted Grant County to reassess their proposal.

In addition, once the Grant County Area Planning Commission learned about the ISDA *Local Officials and Regulating Livestock Production* document they requested to help to assess the legality of proposed regulations. ISDA also assisted the county in evaluating an odor setback tool.

- **Marshall and Porter counties.** These counties created an agricultural clause ordinance. This means that individuals who choose to move into an agricultural zone must sign a document indicating they are aware that they may experience noise, dust and odor associated with general farm practices. This agreement is used as a condition to residential development in an agriculture zone.
- **Rush County.** This county has been especially progressive and incorporated both multi-tiered agriculture zones and established a site scoring system.
- **LaGrange County.** This county was proactive and requested the *Local Officials and Regulating Livestock Production* document to assist with their proposed livestock regulations. ISDA worked with the local officials to assess the legality of their ordinances and identify to which operations the new rules would apply.
- **LaPorte County.** ISDA advised on the legality of their proposed livestock regulations. ISDA also provided information on state regulation to protect human health, animal health and the environment, following the principle that local regulations should complement existing state and federal regulation.
- **Wells County.** This county is looking into a site scoring system and a final decision is expected in 2008.

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- Delaware County. This County has traditionally been a progressive agricultural community and in the last two years created their own multi-tiered ag concept with an Agricultural Bio-Enterprise Zone to “enhance marketing and utilization of farm products grown in Delaware County and beyond.” In 2007 ISDA met with the Delaware County CAFO Task Force to discuss the model ordinances.
- Wabash County. This county has recently made changes to their zoning to allow a Bio-Ag Enterprise Industry in an agricultural zone through a Special Exception which included detailed objective standards for review. ISDA also advised Wabash County on the legality of local actions related to livestock farms.
- Washington County. ISDA advised on the ability to apply new regulations to an applicant and whether they can implement setbacks with no zoning.

Many people worked hard to make these model ordinances possible. ISDA would like to recognize the hardworking members of the ILRC, as well as Indiana Farm Bureau and the Growing Indiana Agriculture team who have encouraged counties to adopt these agriculture zoning concepts.