

Public Comments - Proposed Code Enforcement Ordinances

Initials	Ordinance	Source	Resident Feedback	County Response
AB	Abandoned Vehicle	Website Comment Form	It seems almost humorous that this draft bill will be funded by the metal price of abandoned vehicles. Dismounted vehicles taken from private property based on its aesthetic affect on surrounding properties sounds an awful lot like judicially sanctioned theft.	Any costs recovered shall be credited against the costs of removal and disposal of the vehicle.
JB	Abandoned Vehicle	Website Comment Form	It shouldn't be just about abandoned vehicles, it should also address vehicles parked in your yard (not on driveway) like the South Bend Code ordinance does. Also you shouldn't be allowed to keep unlicensed, non-running vehicles in your driveway. Obviously you want property values as high as possible to increase property tax dollars, but when you allow vehicles without plates and 4 flat tires, tore apart, half covered to sit in plain view in a person's drive or front yard, that doesn't cut it.	Any vehicle that has been determined to be "abandoned" under the ordinance will be investigated. Parking on lawns cannot be enforced presently as part of this ordinance.
ML	Abandoned Vehicle	Website Comment Form	I'm excited to see the county do something about Abandoned vehicles I own 3 different property's in Clay township and I welcome this ordinance .	Comment in support
SW	Abandoned Vehicle	Website Comment Form	So are you saying as long as abandoned (inoperable) vehicles are stored on an owners lot that's acceptable? We have two homes by us with several inoperable vehicles. I believe you need to be more specific. * Also, we have a vehicle in our subdivision that IS operable but constantly has a flat tire and is NEVER driven but appears to have an up-to-date plate and sits on the street which means snow plows must go around it when plowing the street. Do you consider an abandoned vehicle inoperable only?*	The Code Enforcement Inspectors will follow up on complaints of abandoned vehicles on private property. If a vehicle is determined to be abandoned under the Abandoned Vehicle Ordinance, it would be enforced as a violation. Vehicles on the street or on public property shall be referred to the Sheriff.
KB	Abandoned Vehicle	Website Comment Form	An old RV that has been in a driveway for years Has never moved since it was first put in the driveway. An eyesore, but also dangerous for neighbors on either side to pull out of their driveways. This same residence has the entire driveway full of junk that has never been moved.	Per the zoning ordinance, RVs presently cannot be parked/stored in front of the front line of the primary structure. Additionally, the Code Enforcement Inspectors will follow up on complaints of abandoned vehicles on private property. If a vehicle is determined to be abandoned under the Abandoned Vehicle Ordinance, it would be enforced as a violation.
PP	Abandoned Vehicle	Website Comment Form	I strongly support this code and all the codes being proposed for the county especially for people living in sub-divisions. We pay taxes, yet have had no one to turn to for help when having issues with neighbors or something in the neighborhood that might affect our property value. This is long overdue!!!!	Comment in support

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MP	Abandoned Vehicle	Website Comment Form	I support this code/ordinance being proposed for the county especially for people living in sub-divisions. We pay taxes, yet have had no one to turn to for help when having issues with neighbors or something in the neighborhood that might affect our property value. This complaint is something that you should be able to do anonymously, with the understanding that since you are not giving your name, you would not receive any follow-up on your complaint. This would avoid confrontations between neighbors, which no one wants to happen. These county code ordinance proposals are long overdue!	Comment in support
PP	Abandoned Vehicle	Website Comment Form	I think it is important to be able to have the option to report a violation anonymously and not have it rejected because the name/address field must be filled in if you are doing an online complaint. I think not being able to do it anonymously would stop people from reporting a violation that they might otherwise report - fearing retribution from their neighbor, especially if you live in a sub-division.	Comment in support; we are still finalizing internal processes and if complaints can be submitted anonymously.
SC	Abandoned Vehicle	Website Comment Form	This is a much needed ordinance. As a Realtor, I see many nice homes that are passed over because of neighboring homes that have abandoned vehicles and/or parts. And when the home does sell, it is likely for much less than it should have.	Comment in support
JA	Abandoned Vehicle	Website Comment Form	Code enforcement should have jurisdiction in the county for abandoned Vehicles. This brings down home values.	Comment in support
BD	Public Nuisance	Website Comment Form	I am VERY pleased the County is going to create a Code Enforcement Dept. for the County. It is something that has been badly needed for many years. I can give you at least three problems right along US 20 in New Carlisle: 1. what used to be the trailer park in New Carlisle (inside the town limits) that was purchased by the county for a proposed South Shore Station (or something that Mr. Schalliol had planned). There are STILL trailers there that are falling apart and providing a habitat for wild animals, etc. It's been over two years and needs to be resolved! 2. A house and buildings in the 2800 area of US 20 on south side of road - no one has lived there for years, vehicles, etc. get added and the house is falling apart with broken windows for animals to inhabit. He does come and mow once in a while. 3. House on the north side of US20 more in the 2700 area - believe it may be a car repair business in a residential area. Can be up to ten vehicles parked in driveway and beside it at any time and several vehicles parked in the back yard. PLEASE look into this. We pay our taxes, try to maintain our property and it is time we receive the same benefits as the city of South Bend.	Comment in support; please submit addresses of properties so the Code Enforcement Inspectors can follow-up

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ML	Public Nuisance	Website Comment Form	<p>I believe this is a good idea , however I have concerns about the time given to property owners to comply with violations</p> <p>H. a statement that if the landowner fails to pay the removal costs for the Public Nuisance, plus an administrative costs, within ten (10) days after the Zoning Administrator serves the landowner with an invoice of the removal costs thereof, plus administrative costs, the amount claimed shall be placed on the tax duplicate against such property affected by the work, and the amount shall be collected as delinquent taxes are collected. The notice must allow at least ten (10) days from the time when notice of the order is given to accomplish the required</p> <p>I would like to see this changed to 30 or 45 days , with a way a homeowner can file for extension if needed. People may have age related or medical issues or other handicaps or financial restrictions (SSI fixed income) that would prevent them from taking care of the violation in a timely manner and these same folks may need extra resources to help them comply</p> <p>I would hate to see someone not be able to pay their property taxes because of fines incurred when they may need extra help with that change I would support this 100%</p>	Revising the ordinance to include language allowing for homeowner to contact dept with a proposed plan of action and timeframe for completion for staff consideration.
ES	Public Nuisance	Website Comment Form	<p>Long over due and highly support! One person with no self respect for themselves or there neighbors can drive the appearance and value of a neighborhood down with household junk such as bed mattresses and trash frown in the front yard with no intention of ever removing. This is exactly what has happened in our neighborhood when one individual moved in.</p>	Comment in support
S	Public Nuisance	Website Comment Form	<p>The amount of gun violence is not only a public nuisance but a health crisis. The public is not even safe in their own homes as bullets are now hitting houses and injuring people. Guns are everywhere! Get them off the streets. Drive by shootings are a daily occurrence. How about having a police stop cars on various streets randomly and check cars in areas with high shot spotter hits.</p>	Gun violence is not an issue that can be addressed in the proposed code enforcement ordinances
JF	Public Nuisance	Website Comment Form	<p>While no longer a resident of St. Joseph County, I applaud the addition of Code Enforcement ordinances and a team to make sure they are enforced. I lived in Granger for over 30 years and dealt with a property just a few houses away that chose not to finish an addition to the home and those around them had to watch it deteriorate over the years. It was located at an entrance to our neighborhood which made matters even worse. Not a positive influence on property values. Calls to the County were of no help because there was nothing in place but I feel confident that going forward, there will be more opportunities to encourage people to care for their property in a positive way which will ultimately help the community as a whole.</p>	Comment in support

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KB	Public Nuisance	Website Comment Form	<p>I live in a low lying area so we constantly have standing water in our clay soil so you're telling me that every time I have standing water from a rain we're going to be fined including all my neighbors.</p> <p>We have been working on trying to take care of standing water for years and it is an ongoing battle in this low lying area. Ten days is insufficient time for most of my neighbors who are retired and disabled to take care of any notice that they get in a fine of \$2500 is over a fourth of their income. I wish the county was more interested about working with its inhabitants instead of scaring us out of the area. I chose to live in Saint Joe county instead of Elkhart County because they pick and choose who they attack and who they leave behind is that going to be what happens here? I moved to the county so that I would be away from all the Hoa regulations. In this time of mental health due to Covid and everything else I thought the county would be more understanding but instead they're pushing many of my neighbors to stress and more confusion of what's going to happen to them and their property.</p>	<p>Naturally occurring standing water is not a violation of this ordinance, however, the ordinance refers to wastewater and the collection of water due to the obstruction of its natural flow.</p> <p>Staff is working on a SOP regarding the use of allowed discretion as written.</p>
PP	Public Nuisance	Website Comment Form	<p>I strongly support this code and all the codes being proposed for the county especially for people living in sub-divisions. We pay taxes, yet have had no one to turn to for help when having issues with neighbors or something in the neighborhood that might affect our property value. This is long overdue!!!!</p>	<p>Comment in support</p>
PP	Public Nuisance	Website Comment Form	<p>I strongly support this code/ordinance and all the codes being proposed for the county especially for people living in sub-divisions. We pay taxes, yet have had no one to turn to for help when having issues with neighbors or something in the neighborhood that might affect our property value. This is long overdue!!!!</p>	<p>Comment in support</p>
MP	Public Nuisance	Website Comment Form	<p>I support this code/ordinance being proposed for the county especially for people living in sub-divisions. We pay taxes, yet have had no one to turn to for help when having issues with neighbors or something in the neighborhood that might affect our property value. This complaint is something that you should be able to do anonymously, with the understanding that since you are not giving your name, you would not receive any follow-up on your complaint. This would avoid confrontations between neighbors, which no one wants to happen.</p> <p>These county code ordinance proposals are long overdue!</p>	<p>Comment in support</p>

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PP	Public Nuisance	Website Comment Form	<p>Noise is something else I would like to see addressed and be able to report to Code Enforcement, instead of having to call the County Police. Perhaps just a letter from County Code Enforcement detailing the date and time of the offense reminding them of the time curfew for noise would be enough to help discourage habitual offenders of loud music and parties. If they chose to ignore the letter and an additional complaint was made, perhaps they could be fined.</p> <p>I think it is important to be able to have the option to report any violation anonymously and not have it rejected because the name/address field must be filled in if you are filing an online complaint. Not being able to do it anonymously would stop people from reporting a violation that they might otherwise report - fearing retribution from their neighbor, especially if you live in a sub-division.</p>	We are still finalizing internal processes and if complaints can be submitted anonymously. Noise violations are best handled by a 24/7 department like the Sheriff.
SC	Public Nuisance	Website Comment Form	In agreement with this ordinance 100%. Much needed and long overdue. Excited to see these changes. Homeowners should take pride in their properties, landlords should want to encourage community participation of keeping our areas clean and safe. Nuisance properties lower home values and they can create issues with rodents.	Comment in support
JA	Public Nuisance	Website Comment Form	Code enforcement should have jurisdiction in the county for public nuisance. This brings down home values.	Comment in support
	Weed and Rank	Website Comment Form	Please supply some documentation to support the idea that weeds and tall grasses are in fact a public health concern, the correlation seems only to be circumstantial and seems only to be enforced under such understandings to satisfy a minority of St Joseph citizens. I would also like a clearer definition of "unsightly wood piles" again such terms are defined by in large from personal perspective. Any biology student could account for the benefits of decaying wood for native species and soil health.	The state legislature has allowed for counties to control weed and rank vegetation.
NN	Weed and Rank	Website Comment Form	I am against enforcing ridiculous 'weed' ordinances. Lawns are bad for the environment.	The exceptions listed in Section I. of the Weed & Rank Vegetation have been expanded to allow flexibility in landscaping. Landscaped areas and gardens containing trees, ornamental grasses, native grasses, flowers, wildflowers, agricultural crops, bushes and shrubberies are not to be considered weed and rank vegetation.

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CC	Weed and Rank	Website Comment Form	<p>Please make sure that native wildflower plots are clearly acceptable under the new ordinance. They can sometimes look a bit "weedy," especially in fall and winter, but proper maintenance of such plantings for wildlife habitat includes allowing plants to go to seed to feed birds and allowing dried stems to stand over the winter to provide hibernation sites for animals and insects.</p>	<p>The exceptions listed in Section I. of the Weed & Rank Vegetation have been expanded to allow flexibility in landscaping. Landscaped areas and gardens containing trees, ornamental grasses, native grasses, flowers, wildflowers, agricultural crops, bushes and shrubberies are not to be considered weed and rank vegetation.</p>
AM	Weed and Rank	Website Comment Form	<p>I strongly oppose this ordinance in its current form.</p> <p>This suggested ordinance would actually reduce health. 2 acres of manicured lawn is horrible for the health of neighbors: gas-powered mowers and leaf blowers are noise and fume nuisances (especially in more densely populated areas -their use can exacerbate allergies and asthma); lawn treatments - especially fertilizers - contribute to lower water quality and increased toxic algal blooms. Overgrown nuisance vegetation may contribute to increased animal populations, such as skunks or turkey vultures, but the health hazards from these are much less threatening than air and water pollution. In fact, opossums can help reduce tick populations, providing a definite health benefit to people and their pets, so reduction of animal populations is not a good metric for community health.</p> <p>The ordinance should change to apply only to properties less than 0.5 acres or, if 2 acres is maintained, it should allow exemptions for native or natural landscapes. The owner's dedication to the natural, eco-friendly landscape could be determined by assessing the amounts of non-native shrubs (Russian Olive, honeysuckle, Bradford Pear, tree of heaven, etc.) that contribute to native yards, as a responsible homeowner should be working to remove these species from the landscape. Thank you for considering all of the aspects of your proposed ordinance instead of bowing to aesthetic concerns</p>	<p>Two acres refers to the size of parcels subject to enforcement, not stating that a homeowner needs to maintain up to 2 acres of manicured lawn. This is a starting point that can be changed in the future. In addition, the exemptions have been expanded to allowed flexibility.</p>

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KB	Weed and Rank	Website Comment Form	So the area that I have turned back to nature for trees to go and after speaking with the DNR team to help with some of my drainage issues because we have clay soil and we live in a low lying area can be deemed in violation of the vegetation ordinance where I am leading trees and natural Indiana vegetation grow in a section of my yard because it is over 9 inches which I am trying to turn back to a wooded area or would that be considered a flower bed and in saying that something is aesthetically appealing or unappealing is subjective to one's belief and leaves too much into interpretation which I don't like because it is opinion and not factual. This leaves all the residence open to a personal attack instead of embracing that everyone has different beliefs and views nature and it's beauty in different ways. The area I have is by no way hurting anyone or is a risk to anyone's health. Unlike what these ordinances are achieving of splitting neighbors apart I speak to my neighbors and ask them for feedback before I do any landscaping or any decision on my property as to if it offends them or will bug them. This is what the county should be striving for is to get neighbors to work together for some of us are physically disabled and can only limit how much we can accomplish in our flowerbeds and our gardens because health conditions do arise in these ordinances they leave little for anyone that had a sudden health condition arise or is physically limited in the amount of time they want things changed or will fine you. Maybe it's instead of passing ordinances the county should look at ways to help each other because I know there is many schools looking for volunteer opportunities in the community and this would be better served like a unity garden as a way to support and uplift our neighbors.	Staff met with the DNR on 2/14/2022, and any property under an approved federal or state restoration program would be exempt. Code enforcement staff will have the ability to contact DNR staff in the future to review intentionality and efficacy of proposed landscaping deviations.
KB	Weed and Rank	Website Comment Form	Residence at 22116 silver springs drive rarely cuts grass and never rakes leaves. Back yard is full of trees, some planted, others that just sprouted on their own. Don't believe residents could get out back door in case of fire. Roof covered with branches and pine needles. Even a tree growing out of roof! Negligence for many years on this property.	Staff will investigate once ordinances are in effect and will refer any building code issues to the Building Department.
MP	Weed and Rank	Website Comment Form	I support this code/ordinance being proposed for the county especially for people living in sub-divisions. We pay taxes, yet have had no one to turn to for help when having issues with neighbors or something in the neighborhood that might affect our property value. This complaint is something that you should be able to do anonymously, with the understanding that since you are not giving your name, you would not receive any follow-up on your complaint. This would avoid confrontations between neighbors, which no one wants to happen. These county code ordinance proposals are long overdue!	Comment in support
PP	Weed and Rank	Website Comment Form	I have seen this problem in my subdivision. I think it is important to be able to have the option to report a violation anonymously and not have it rejected because the name/address field must be filled in if you are doing an online complaint. I think not being able to do it anonymously would stop people from reporting a violation that they might otherwise report - fearing retribution from their neighbor, especially if you live in a sub-division.	Comment in support

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SC	Weed and Rank	Website Comment Form	A much needed ordinance. As a homeowner in the county, I do not want to have the eyesore of overgrown and unkempt yards. They also attract rodents. And as a Realtor, I know these homes affect the values of homes around them.	Comment in support
JA	Weed and Rank	Website Comment Form	Code enforcement should have jurisdiction in the county for weeds and out of control grass, etc. This brings down home values.	Comment in support of Weed & Rank Vegetation
DR	All	Public Meeting 1/12/2022	In favor of this initiative. Has been a problem in past, and is definitely needed.	Comment in support
JH	All	Public Meeting 1/12/2022	This could be used in a punitive way, doesn't care about tall grass and is concerned about the railroad containers on his property not being allowed.	Each report of violation will be investigated and evaluated by the Code Enforcement Inspector(s) on a case-by-case basis.
LJ		Public Meeting 1/12/2022	1st picture in the PowerPoint is in her neighborhood, it has been an eyesore for 26 years, is hoping this will finally be addressed	Comment in support
JM	All	Public Meeting 1/12/2022	Is concerned about neighbors that do not mow their yards.	Comment in support
WL	All	Public Meeting 1/12/2022	Concerned about cars up on blocks and appliances in yards	Comment in support
LS	All	Public Meeting 1/19/22	Lives in the county for privacy and space, but neighbors need to be respectful. Appliances/garbage/vehicles/furniture/mattresses in the yard can lead to health issues and attract animals. We need some type of an ordinance - if vehicles are leaking into the driveway, I have a problem with that.	Comment in support
BM	All	Public Meeting 1/19/22	I have lived in my house for 17 years. People in neighborhoods causing property values to go down; allowing clippings to be piled up by a shed and abandoned cars being shuffled around, or with seen mold, grass, leaves in their yard. I shouldn't have to build a fence to not see it. We need to hold people responsible.	Comment in support
MB	All	Public Meeting 1/19/22	General question on how this affects businesses	Zoning classification will affect what types of activities are permitted on properties.
MJ	All	Public Meeting 1/19/22	Comments on the 1st picture, windows broken out, vagrants living in the building, House has been abandoned for 26 years, door has been kicked in and the roof had a tree fall on it. This house should be condemned.	Building code violations are handled by the Building Dept.
TL	All	Public Meeting 1/19/22	Centre Township Board Member - has gotten complaints in the township on this kind of thing. This is long overdue. I applaud you.	Comment in support

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GB	All	Public Meeting 1/19/22	From 1970-2010, St. Joseph County had a population growth less than Elkhart and Allen Counties. After reading the code enforcement documents doesn't say it is complaint driven. If someone turns in someone else, there is no provision to confront complainant in a hearing or court of law. What happens if someone is constantly turning in the same neighbor? The County failed at leaf pick-up. Why waste more tax dollars. Don't want city services. To use increased property values is false. Only way to increase property values is to increase living wages.	The proposed ordinances for St. Joseph County were modeled after Elkhart County Ordinances. Due to staffing levels and budgetary constraints, enforcement will operate on a complaint-driven basis.
JG	All	Public Meeting 1/19/22	What happens if someone just drives through and calls in a bunch of complaints? Would you investigate every one? Have friends who are in racing. Will they be tagged? What happens in winter?	Reports of possible violations will be investigated by the Code Enforcement Inspectors. If there is a violation, the inspector(s) will notify the property owner and work on a plan of action to bring the property into compliance. All properties will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
JK	Public Nuisance	Website Comment Form	I am definitely in support of all three ordinances. We need these so that people don't use their properties for junkyards.	Comment in support
DM	All	Public Meeting 1/26/22	What happens if someone doesn't pay the bill for the labor? What is the relationship between Code Enforcement and the Health Department?	Monies will be recouped in accordance to state law. As is already in effect with existing zoning issues, the Health Department will continue to work closely with Code staff.
WF	Weed and Rank	Public Meeting 1/26/22	Concerned about people who don't mow or take care of "trash trees". Add parking cars in the yard. Can't do it in the city. If you want to live with nature, go do it. There shouldn't be flat beds or campers in yards.	Comments in support
TZ	All	Public Meeting 1/26/22	Not in favor of code enforcement. Lots of variables and people do different things. How effective is code enforcement in the city of South Bend? Why can't it be enforced through zoning?	Comment in opposition. The new ordinances allow the county to remedy problems itself, rather than continually fining a property owner for non-compliance, as that is the only tool afforded to zoning staff.
JM	All	Public Meeting 1/26/22	Good habitat is good habitat. Log piles can be wildlife habitats.	Staff met with the DNR on 2/14/2022, and any property under an approved federal or state restoration program would be exempt. Code enforcement staff will have the ability to contact DNR staff in the future to review intentionality and efficacy of proposed landscaping deviations.

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JC	All	Public Meeting 1/26/22	What really bugs me is the trash in ditches between Laurel Rd and Laurel Wood Ct.	The Code Enforcement Inspectors will investigate this after the program is operational
CG	All	Public Meeting 1/26/22	If a vehicle is not abandoned and just not working how is it defined as abandoned. Can the complaints remain anonymous to avoid retribution.	Abandoned Vehicle definitions were taken from state code; we are still finalizing internal processes and if complaints can be submitted anonymously.
CG	Public Nuisance & Abandoned Vehicle	Email	My main areas of concern are to get an entire property in a subdivision covered as called out in the Public Nuisance proposed ordinance F#12, which specifically states "front yard", and to make sure the back yard is included. Does wording need to be added in the public nuisance ordinance about allowing code enforcement to access a complaining neighbor's yard to view someone's yard to photograph the violations in a back yard? I would also like to see something added to an ordinance regarding how many vehicles, trailers, boats, etc. may be kept on a subdivision property and the length of time those items can be on the property. Some properties look like storage lots. I realize a subdivision property should be treated differently than a rural or farm property with acreage.	The Public Nuisance Ordinance is currently written to include all yards, with the exception of wood piles, parts of trees, or other brush that cannot be located in the front yard only. The current Zoning Ordinance and proposed Abandoned Vehicle Ordinance do not address the number of operable vehicles on the property.
AR	All	Public Meeting 1/26/22	I live in woods. I like it. I maintain the woods. I am concerned that a neighbor might not like my preferences. Garbage is garbage...but what is a "trash" tree? All trees have value. I have all the trees on my property. I don't compost, but people do. Couple of suggestions: 1. 9" for weed and rank is arbitrary. Dandelions don't often get over 9". Deviation between people who lived in an area for a while then a new subdivision is developed next door. Should they get to dictate to the guy who has lived in the area before the subdivision? 2. the Notice should include the process for appeal. 3. Will the people mowing pick up the fly litter before mowing an area?	Comment in opposition.
JM	All	Public Meeting 1/26/22	I am the vice president of the Izaak Walton League and a biologist. I understand with nature, reducing the forest and wanting it to come back. But dirty diapers, appliances, degrees of frustration of who to call. I think this conversation is about trash.	Comment in support
DZ	All	Public Meeting 1/26/22	I assume there will be a handbook to compare a fallen tree in a wooded area to a fallen tree in a subdivision. If someone files an appeal, how long can that appeal process take?	The appeal process is outlined in the ordinances
GB	All	Public Meeting 1/26/22	I have 10 questions: 1. Where is the funding coming from? 2. Will this result in higher taxes? 3. Why do we have to different departments enforcing this? 4. Special allowances for elderly or disabled? 5. What happens if the owner is unavailable or unreachable? Need a better way to notify people. 6. Why isn't there a way to reimburse the homeowner if they win the appeal?	Questions were answered at the 1/26/2022 public meeting
SL	All	Public Meeting 1/26/22	Thank you! If you live next door to someone with dead animals or trash, you understand the reasons for these ordinances.	Comment in support

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AY	All	Public Meeting 2/9/2022	If you have a neighbor that just doesn't like how you are doing your landscaping, can they just call and report you? Who makes the determination that something is really a violation?	Reports of possible violations will be investigated by the Code Enforcement Inspectors. If there is a violation, the inspector(s) will notify the property owner and work on a plan of action to bring the property into compliance. All properties will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis
ES	All	Public Meeting 2/9/2022	I am in favor of this. Most of our neighborhood is in favor of this. Without these ordinances, you can have a great neighborhood, and then have one person move in that has no respect for the neighborhood, and litter their front yard with trash and couches, maybe mow their lawn once a year. Without these ordinances, the County can't do anything. It sounds like you have thought these through and they are well drafted.	Comment in support
TA	All	Via email 1/15/2022	<p>Thank you for bringing (county) code enforcement to light again. Hoping that this is finally a WIN for responsible homeowners (and the county) in 2022. Below is a portion of the letter that I mailed to your offices in 2016.</p> <p>Excerpts from my letter: We have lived in Osceola for 25 years and code enforcement is music to my ears. Our neighborhood is very residential but not within town limits, so...we have lived among blight and property negligence for many years because some homeowners feel since they do not live in the city...code enforcement is irrelevant and non-existence to them. With Penn High School within a mile and many businesses, medical offices, banks, a public library, restaurants, grocery (and more) surrounding our neighborhood, I think it is past time to clean it up. It would be a win-win not only for these businesses, but for the responsible homeowners as well. My husband and I have worked many years taking pride and ownership in our home only to live among individuals that don't have to or care for theirs. Many of these individuals are raising children that likely may follow the example of non-responsibility, making our community regress instead of progress. Code enforcement is necessary to protect and safeguard neighborhoods from blight, crime, and negligence.</p> <p>I do have a concern regarding the article that appeared in SB Tribune on January 6, County attorney Michael Misch said, the county would not go as far as cities by prohibiting residents from parking operable vehicles in their yard. I have reported a neighbor several times for having 11-12 cars on his small property. Some are junk, some look street operable, as there are individuals visiting his property looking at these cars, I would imagine he is selling because different cars appear after one goes away. The cars are parked behind the house, on both sides of the house and in the front yard. It is very unsightly and embarrassing to neighboring homeowners. This junk yard/car lot should not be allowed in a residential neighborhood. I certainly hope something can be done in situations like this. By the way there is approx. 11 cars sitting in his yard now. This allows the mindset of "if he can do it - I can do it" among</p>	Comment in support

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BK	Weed and Rank	Online Comment Form	<p>Please consider changing the wording used to define "weeds and rank vegetation." In efforts to combat climate change and restore ecological stability there is a significant number of citizens who are choosing to forgo traditional lawns in favor of a yard that supports native wildlife. These yards are often significantly more beautiful than surrounding yards but are an, "extreme deviation from the aesthetic appearance of the surrounding neighborhood."</p> <p>In my experience rarely is code enforcement called on these lawns. With guidance from resources like Indiana Native Plants Society North Chapter, Wild Ones South Bend, St. Joseph Soil and Water Conservation, and the example of the VPA encouraging native plants (think Howard Park), "native yards" are a non-issue. But worded as-is they could be subject to code enforcement if a misunderstanding neighbor were to take umbrage. I would like to suggest consulting South Bend's Ecological Advocacy Committee to assist wording the ordinance to avoid any future issues. Thank you so much for taking this into consideration and taking the time to request community input on the matter.</p>	The exceptions listed in Section I. of the Weed & Rank Vegetation have been expanded to allow flexibility in landscaping. Landscaped areas and gardens containing trees, ornamental grasses, native grasses, flowers, wildflowers, agricultural crops, bushes and shrubberies are not to be considered weed and rank vegetation.
MF	Weed and Rank	Online Comment Form	We need to protect against invasive species, learning about native plants. We also must stop the rampant poisoning of lawns that pollute our water sources and our air, and threaten people with cancer and other ills. Lawns are not beautiful, when one understands what it takes to "make" them.	The exceptions listed in Section I. of the Weed & Rank Vegetation have been expanded to allow flexibility in landscaping. Landscaped areas and gardens containing trees, ornamental grasses, native grasses, flowers, wildflowers, agricultural crops, bushes and shrubberies are not to be considered weed and rank vegetation.
KL	All	Email	<p>For what it is worth, please keep in mind there remains a difference between 'city and country folk'. The ordinances are drafted such that many things could be considered violations. One (regarding weeds) has some quantification to it, but much of the rest allows for some subjective enforcement. Is there no mechanism to check / balance the enforcers, from outside the enforcement agency? As a reminder to all, tall grass and brush piles encourage wildlife - so let's not inch any closer to tidying up country spaces; they are not the manicured lawns one sees in subdivisions. I encourage you to run the proposed ordinances by environmental organizations, including the local Audubon Society.</p> <p>Thanks for the effort. I'm sure it will be welcomed by the citizens who live next to true eyesores.</p>	As presently written, the Weed & Rank Vegetation Ordinance only applies to residential properties two acres or less in area. Many things that are violations in the incorporated cities (like parking on grass) are not presently proposed in the current ordinances, as enforcement in the County will not be as robust as in the cities.

Public Comments - Proposed Code Enforcement Ordinances

Initials	Ordinance	Source	Resident Feedback	County Response
SS	Weed and Rank	Online Comment Form	<p>I am writing today to express my dissatisfaction with the wording of Bill 3-22 and urge to Council not to advance the bill without first amending and clarifying the language. Specifically, I am deeply concerned with the words "unless they constitute an extreme deviation from the aesthetic appearance of the surrounding neighborhood." In my opinion, this phrasing is far too subjective, discriminates against landscaping with native vegetation, and puts code inspectors into the impossible position of judging what is "status quo" for the neighborhood. Vague and subjective language such as this will likely lead to confusion and neighbor versus neighbor disputes.</p> <p>In my 30 years in St. Joseph County, I have served in numerous environmental organizations, including as chapter president of the Indiana Native Plant Society, as a director of the South Bend and Indiana Audubon Societies, and as a member of the Shirley Heinze Land Trust Advisory Council. I am currently the president of Indiana Nature LLC, a small business devoted to environmental education. I have also served on the South Bend Board of Park Commissioner's Ecological Advocacy Committee for six years, including five as chair. I was also the primary author of the two ordinance changes adopted by the South Bend Common Council. One of which gained national attention by being one of the most progressive of its kind.</p> <p>I can state from experience that St. Joseph County residents concerned about ecological sustainability are finding that traditional horticultural landscaping is not beneficial to species diversity and harms quality habitat in our region. Increasing numbers of people are landscaping with native plants, such as milkweed, which is the only larval food course of the monarch butterfly. Although this bill doesn't prohibit the use of native plants, it makes conformity within the loose definition of a "neighborhood" the metric for compliance. For the past ten months, Indiana Nature LLC has been working with the assistance of a fellow from the Indiana University Sustainability Development Program to study and analyze Indiana's county</p>	<p>Abby Wiles, Savhana Pletcher, and Steve Szaday met with Steve Sass 2/23/2022 to discuss his concern. Steve Sass sent some additional feedback and proposed revisions via email to staff on 2/25/2022. Staff then consulted with Evie Kirkwood, former Director of SJC Parks, and rewrote the weed and other rank vegetation definition.</p>
SF	Weed and Rank	Online Comment Form	<p>Please allow composting of vegetative matter including food waste, leaves, grass and other compost materials that will be used for fertilizers for lawn and gardens. These materials are not supposed to go to landfills.</p> <p>Will you allow piles of leaves since the county no longer picks up or allows burning? The county is very different than the city and allowing some cut trees and branches should be allowed for a longer period of time before mulching or disposing.</p>	<p>Consulted Steve Sass, who has ties to several local environmental groups, then rewrote the definition of weed and other rank vegetation. Also, added composting bins as an exception in the public nuisance ordinance.</p>