

# The Future of Jerome County

Navigating Energy Development and Farmland Preservation.



An overview of proposed zoning changes  
and the JTown Beacon Community Survey.

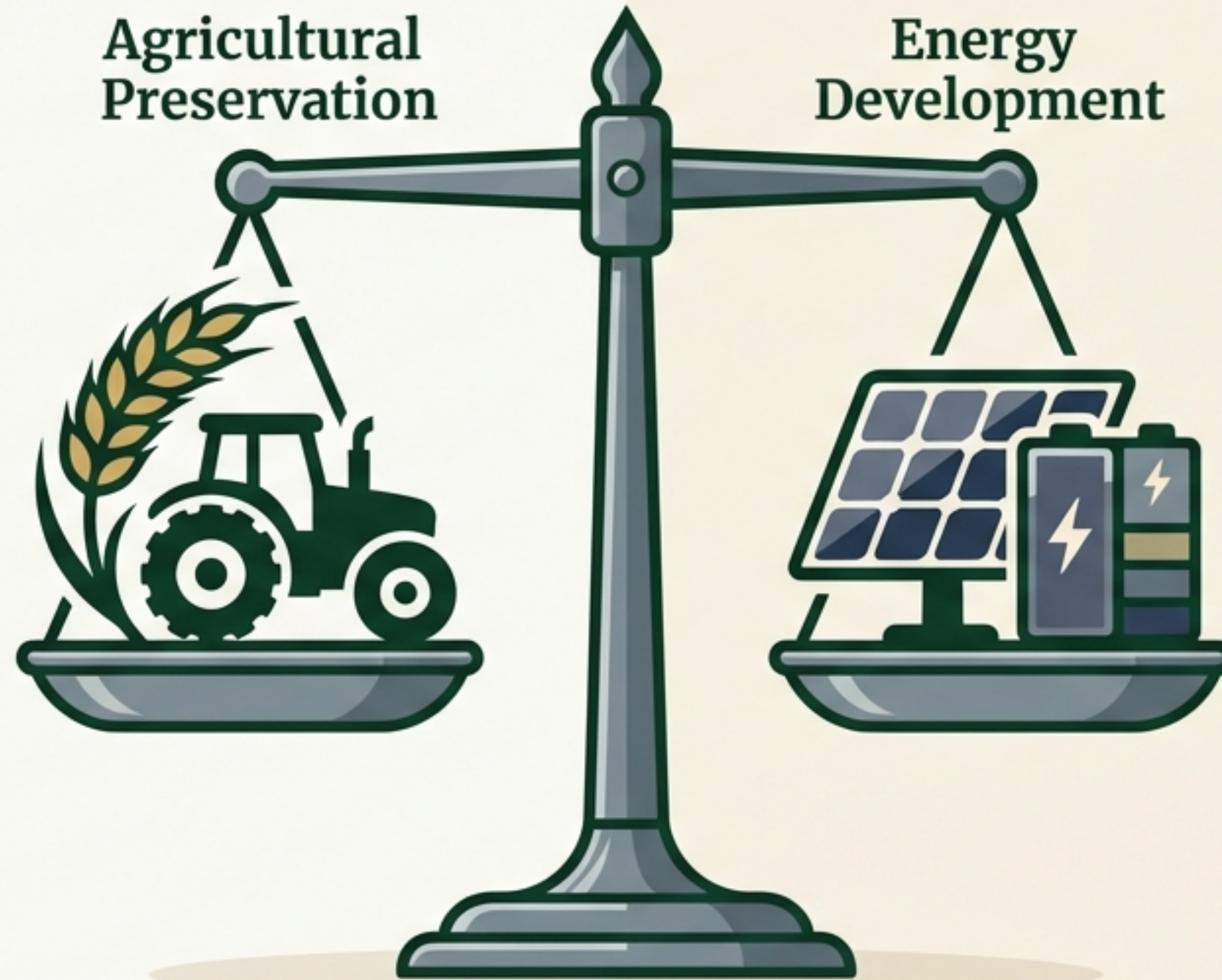
# Jerome County faces a critical crossroads in rural land management

## The Situation:

County Commissioners and the Planning and Zoning Commission are considering proposed amendments to local zoning ordinances.

## The Shift:

These changes would adjust existing regulations in ways that may favor expanded large-scale energy development in the unincorporated, rural areas of the county.



## The Technologies:

- Wind turbines
- Solar installations
- Lithium Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)



# Three distinct policy updates are currently under review



## **Pillar 1: Chapter 11 (Energy Facilities)**

A newly proposed chapter establishing specific standards for wind, solar, and BESS projects.



## **Pillar 2: Chapter 7 (Conditional Use)**

A proposal to repeal and replace the outdated Special Use chapter with modernized standards.



## **Pillar 3: Comprehensive Plan Updates**

Proposed long-term guidance for how the county views rural land development.

# The ordinances draw clear lines between small and large-scale energy

## Small-Scale Energy Facilities



**1–10**      **up to 60**

Megawatt-hours (MWh)

acres of land

- **Context:** Installations serving individual homes, farms, or businesses for on-site use.

## Large-Scale Energy Facilities



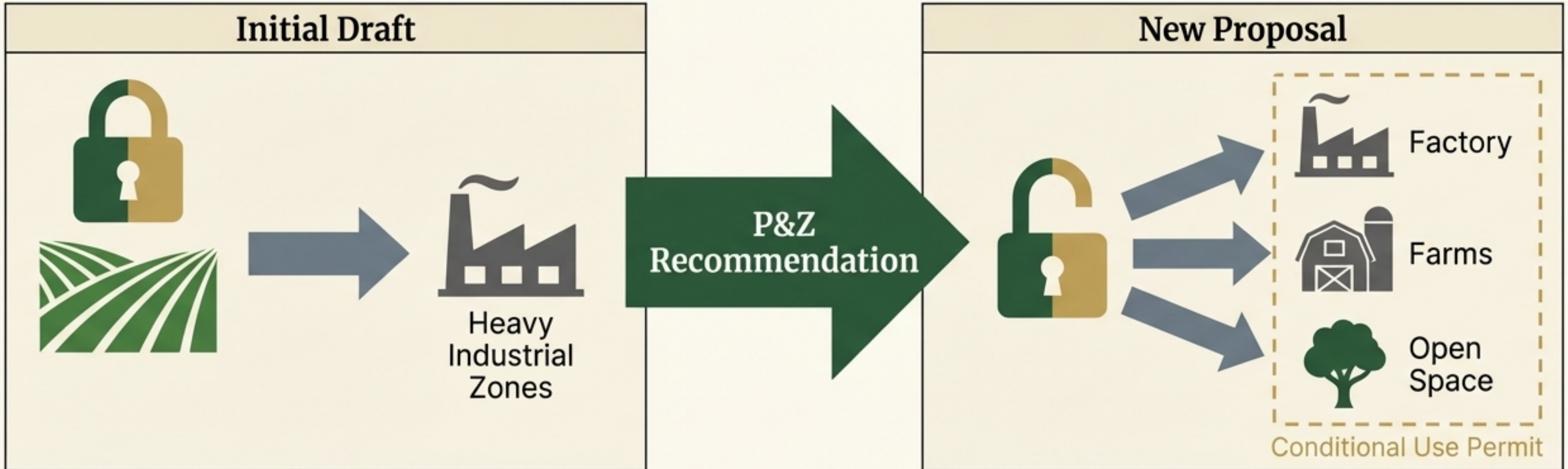
**>10**      **> 60**

Megawatt-hours (MWh)

acres of land

- **Context:** Utility-grade wind, solar, or BESS installations connected to the wider grid.

# Chapter 11 proposes shifting how and where large facilities are permitted



Originally, the draft restricted large-scale energy facilities strictly to Heavy Industrial (IH) zones. They were not permitted in Agricultural or Residential zones.

The Planning & Zoning Commission recently recommended removing the Heavy Industrial restriction. Large-scale energy would be allowed outside industrial zones via a Conditional Use Permit process.

# Chapter 7 modernizes the rules for conditional use permits

-  **Out With The Old:**  
Repeals the outdated Special Use chapter.
-  **In With The New:**  
Updates terminology to Conditional Use.

## Key Upgrades:

- Clarifies application and review standards.
- Establishes new permit duration and expiration standards.
- Ensures projects remain compliant with modern regulations over time.



# Comprehensive Plan updates signal long-term support for rural energy



## The Comprehensive Plan

The overarching document that guides future land use and development decisions in Jerome County.

## The Proposed Language Update

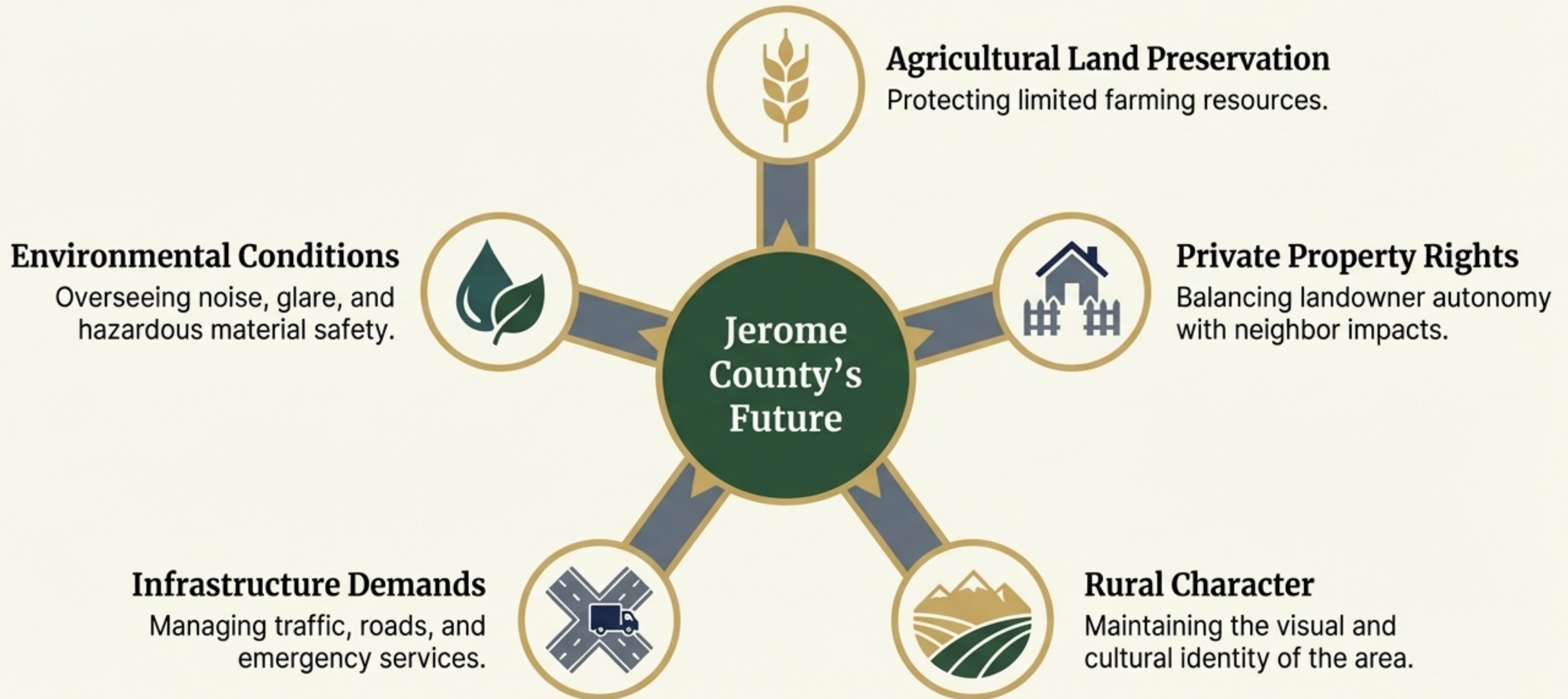
Introduces new wording that actively signals increased long-term support for energy development in rural areas.

## The Scope

This supportive language applies to both small-scale (**1-10 MWh / <60 acres**) and large-scale (**>10 MWh / >60 acres**) energy facilities.

# These policy shifts carry lasting impacts for our community

These decisions go beyond immediate zoning—they will shape the long-term trajectory of our county in **five key areas**:



# The JTown Beacon Survey captures your perspective before decisions are finalized

## The Goal:

Ensure residents, agricultural producers, landowners, and community members have a voice.

## The Outcome:

Survey results will be shared publicly to reflect community viewpoints and encourage informed participation by county leadership.

## The Topics:

The following pages break down the core themes of the survey, preparing you to share your informed stance on Jerome County's future.



# Theme 1 examines the tension between agricultural land and energy zoning

Survey Questions  
1, 2, 3 & 4

**Core Question:** Agricultural land in Jerome County is a limited resource, much like water. How should it be prioritized?

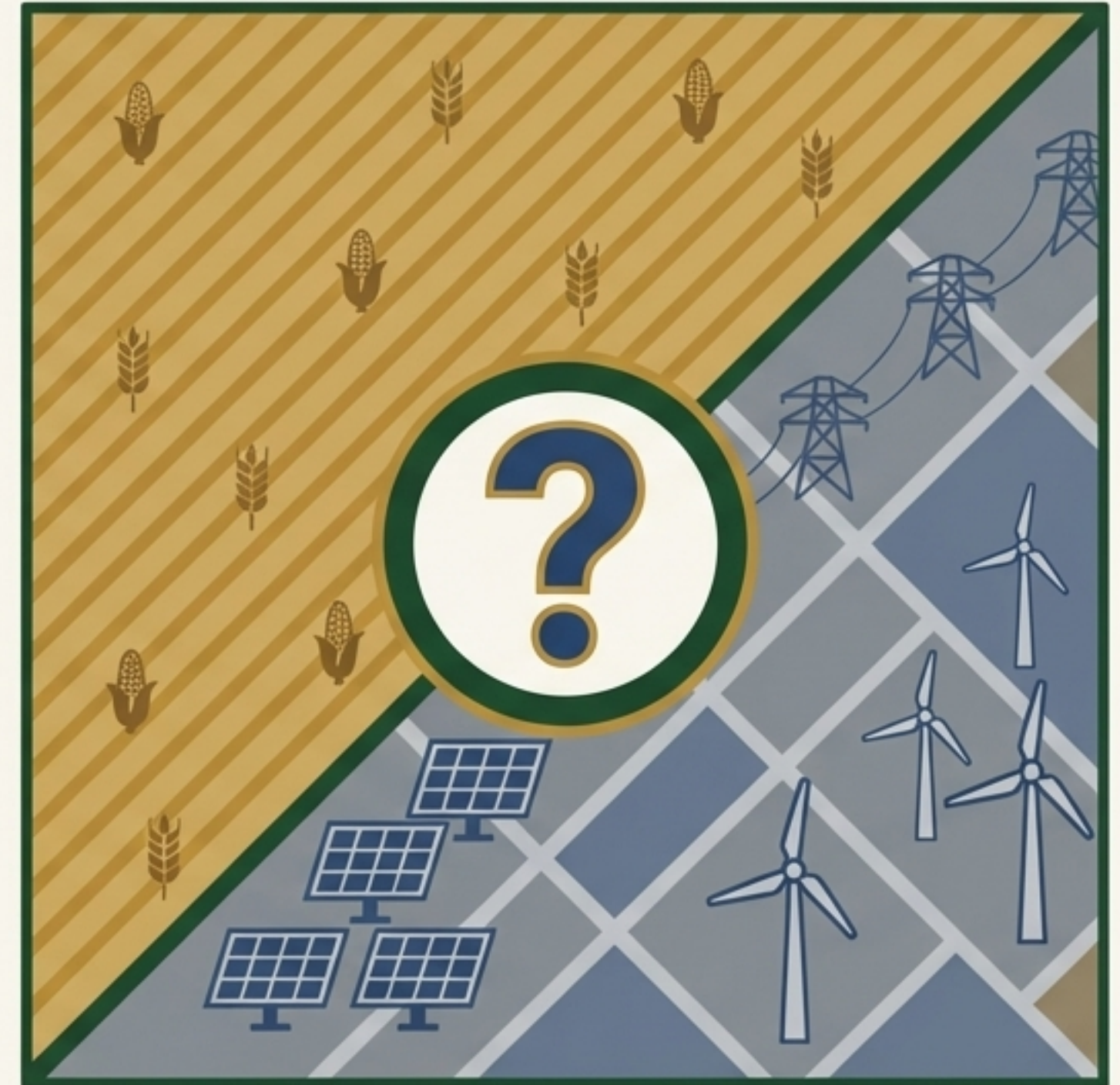
**What the Survey Asks You to Decide:**



**Zoning Limits:** Should large-scale facilities be restricted strictly to Heavy Industrial zones, or allowed in Agricultural zones under certain conditions?



**Small-Scale Support:** Do you support small-scale, on-site renewable energy (serving individual homes/farms) within Agricultural zones?



# Theme 2 addresses the safety and environmental requirements of new technologies

Survey Questions  
5 & 6

**The Core Question:** As Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) are planned for Southern Idaho, what level of oversight is required?

**What the Survey Asks You to Decide:**

- **Lithium BESS Safety:** Your level of concern regarding the safety and environmental risks of hazardous battery storage facilities.
- **Impact Studies:** Whether current guidelines for noise, glare, traffic, stormwater, and emergency response studies are sufficient, appropriate, or not strict enough.



# Theme 3 questions the current standards for transparency and accountability

## Survey Questions 7 & 8

**The Core Question:** Who gets a say, and who cleans up if a facility closes?

**What the Survey Asks You to Decide:**

- **Public Notification:** Currently, Planning & Zoning only requires notifying property owners within a 1-mile radius of a proposed large-scale facility. Should all county residents be notified?
- **Decommissioning:** How important is it that operators provide financial assurance up-front to guarantee facility removal and land restoration after closure?



# Theme 4 asks you to weigh the ultimate economic and cultural balance

**The Core Question:** Does allowing energy development anywhere in rural Jerome County strike the right balance?

**What the Survey Asks You to Decide:**

- **The Trade-Off:** Should energy development be expanded to increase county tax revenue at the expense of agriculture land? OR should it be limited to protect current county tax revenue at the expense of agriculture land? OR should it be limited to protect farmland and rural character?
- **The Overall Verdict:** Is the proposed approach well-balanced, or does it need significant revision?



# Your preferred method of public participation matters

As these policy updates move forward, the county needs to know how you want to be involved.  
The survey asks you to select your preferred participation methods:



**Informal Open Houses**



**Facilitated Public Workshops**



**Formal Public Hearings**



**Online Comment Forms**



**Virtual Meetings (Zoom)**



**Written Mail Comments**



**Small Group  
Stakeholder Meetings**

# Take the JTown Beacon Community Survey Today

We need input from all perspectives:

- ✓ Agricultural Producers
- ✓ Rural & City Residents
- ✓ Business Owners
- ✓ Property Owners



Link: [\[Insert Survey URL Here\]](#)

*Your voice will help ensure that Jerome County's policies reflect the will of its community.*