



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. **What is Plan-it Allen?**

Plan-it Allen! is the citizen-powered initiative to develop a new Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan for Allen County and the City of Fort Wayne – the first-ever, joint effort in our community's history. 2007 will see the culmination of this once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape the future.

### 2. **Why do we need a Comprehensive Plan?**

The County's current Plan is nearly 30 years old; the City's is well over 20 years old. It's time. Our community has changed dramatically. Our lives are interconnected and interdependent. By working together, we can build a healthy, livable and competitive community as a whole, in all its parts and for all our citizens.

### 3. **What does Plan-it Allen! mean to us? Why is it important for our community?**

Plan-it Allen! defines a new vision and an inclusive roadmap for our community's future growth and development. It will give us an up-to-date policy guide for encouraging high-quality development and for preparing our community for the changes the future will bring.

Equally significant, as we change, the Plan will help us preserve our distinct and diverse community character – all the things that make our cities, towns, suburbs and rural areas unique and desirable places to live, work and raise our families. The Plan will be a fundamental tool to realizing our dreams.

### 4. **What is the Plan's purpose?**

Plan-it Allen! is about building community one unique and lasting neighborhood at a time. The Plan's purpose is to lay out a path to sustainability, to preserve and enhance our quality of life and natural environment, and to position Allen County and Fort Wayne as regionally strong and competitive in the global economy.

### 5. **Who has shaped Plan-it Allen?**

Throughout every step of the process, Plan-it Allen! has been shaped by the people of Allen County and Fort Wayne. In hundreds of community meetings, open houses, workshops, speaking engagements, focus groups and surveys; through the Web site, personal conversations and media coverage; the ideas and insight of the public – you – have been continually gathered. The process itself has been directed by the 16-member community steering committee. In addition, 10 panels of community experts worked to add specialized knowledge to each of the Plan's chapters.

### 6. **What is the role of the Plan?**

Plan-it Allen! is **advisory** in nature. It lays out a vision for the future growth and development of the community, what the community will be like and look like in the future. At the vision and policy level, it will serve as a guide for community decision making. It addresses both where we will grow and how we will grow.

**7. What Plan-it Allen! is not.**

Plan-it Allen! is not a plan for government consolidation, a program plan, a financial plan or a business plan.

**8. How will the Plan affect me?**

As a taxpayer, the shared vision and coordinated goals of the Plan will mean more cost-effective, responsive community decision making. As a homeowner, the Plan's Conceptual Development Map will promote informed choice for homebuyers and protect lifestyle options. For project developers, the Plan will foster efficient project coordination and growth that is desirable for the community long term. For businesses, the Plan will create an environment in which businesses and good jobs can grow and thrive.

**9. How will the Plan be used?**

When adopted, Plan-it Allen! will be used by the community as public and private decisions are made concerning development, redevelopment, capital improvements – including community utility-system improvements, economic incentives, and other matters affecting the growth of the community.

**10. What are the next steps in the Plan-it Allen! process?**

October – December 2006	Stakeholder group meetings to discuss the draft Plan
October – December 2006	Draft Plan content finalization
January 2007	Community meetings to introduce the draft Plan to the public
January – March 2007	Draft Plan design, layout and format preparations
February – March 2007	Adoption Process: Plan Commissions, City and Town Councils, County Commissioners
Following Adoption	Plan production and distribution; begin Plan implementation

**11. When the Plan is adopted, how will we ensure that things get done, that we actually see results?**

An Implementation Matrix outlining action steps for all of the goals, objectives and strategies contained in the Plan is being prepared. The Matrix will be the tool to manage and ensure the Plan is used. Along with the action steps, the Matrix will identify the lead department or agency, timing and budget for each entry. Ongoing review by an Implementation Task Force, to be appointed, is also recommended. Periodic progress reports to the public will also be issued.

**12. How will the Plan be kept current?**

The Plan will be updated every five years. If community circumstances change more rapidly, an update may be initiated in a shorter time frame.

**13. How will the community's physical environment be different when the Plan is in place? How will we grow differently?**

The Plan's principles, goals and objectives offer real guidance for land use and development decisions – how we will grow. The Plan's Conceptual Development Map gives clear geographic direction on land use and development decisions – where we will grow. Together, the two components of the Plan present a new approach to growth. The end result: a more proactive, dynamic approach to growth, one in keeping with contemporary lifestyles, yet constantly anticipating demographic changes and trends, and investing in our economic vitality while honoring the natural environment and community characteristics that give us pride of place.

**14. How is this Plan different from the ones that preceded it?**

For the first time in our community's proud history, the public and private sectors literally will be working off the same page – a common Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan. The Plan's shared vision and policy framework will create a unified approach to infrastructure expansion, economic development and neighborhood enhancement efforts. It won't alter the character or integrity of our small towns, rural countryside or urban neighborhoods, but it will reduce jurisdictional differences in planning and development that cost time and money. It will also send a message to the world around us: this is a community that is ready to grow in a way that builds on our strengths and our most appealing attributes.

**15. How will the community's development process be different when the Plan is enacted?**

Plan-it Allen! brings an integrated approach to planning and development. Often in the past, land use and development decisions were made in isolation, one jurisdiction from another, one department from another. A road project might have been built for safety and efficiency, without considering the impact on surrounding neighborhoods, the environment, utilities, the sense of place, pedestrian movement and other factors. Now each project will be examined through the filter of all the Plan's goals, principles and its elements; how they interconnect and relate not just to one project, but to our greater community.

**16. When the Plan is adopted, what will be different the day it goes into effect?**

For the first time in our history, Allen County and Fort Wayne will have a shared vision and goals for the common ground that is our home. Moving forward, the Plan will help us establish the policies that will ensure we can achieve our goals, to actually create the community we envision. The full impact, however, will be seen over time as the implementation process begins to unfold. Already the concepts contained in the Plan have begun to influence decision making. We're already working to make our community more walkable, more connected, more welcoming, better able to compete for good jobs and new businesses.

**17. Will the Comprehensive Plan Committee be involved moving forward?**

Yes, the steering committee will help to guide the Plan through the adoption phase. Because the members have helped to create the Plan, they are its most effective ambassadors. Following adoption, an Implementation Task Force will be created to make sure the Plan is carried out. Members of the steering committee are ideal candidates to join this group, as well as new members from the community.

**18. Why has the process taken as long as it has?**

Plan-it Allen! has been a pioneering venture for Allen County and Fort Wayne. It is not a one-size-fits-all initiative. It is a first in our collective history, and it must work for all jurisdictions. It has been a huge endeavor. This kind of groundbreaking initiative deserved the time required to "do it right." **The overall process has taken a few years, but the Plan-writing took only one.** The framers also wanted to make sure that the community was involved in every phase, that the process was open and that full discussion on the critical issues took place. A Plan that will work for all of us is worth every moment invested in its development.

**19. Has Plan-it Allen! stayed on budget?**

Yes, in fact, the project is under budget at present.

## **20. What is a Comprehensive Plan?**

- A Comprehensive Plan is a land use and development plan. It lays out the “vision” for the future growth and development of the community, what the community will be like and look like in the future. It then serves as a guide for community decision making, and provides policy and program direction to help realize the community’s vision.
- A Comprehensive Plan is a document, or series of documents, prepared under the leadership of a Plan Commission or Plan Commissions, with input from citizens and community leaders. The Plan sets forth policies for the future development of the entire community. It is based on inventory, analysis and evaluation of issues such as land use, population, economy, community facilities, housing, natural resources, utilities and transportation.
- Indiana State law says that the primary goal of a Comprehensive Plan is the “promotion of public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, or the general welfare, and for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of development.” [Indiana Code 36-7-4-501]

## **21. What are some of the major benefits of a Comprehensive Plan?**

- A clear community vision created through community consensus, one that captures the values, goals and objectives of the community.
- An up-to-date policy guide for encouraging quality physical and economic development.
- A competitive community prepared for the changes the future will bring.
- Preservation of our community character.
- An enhanced quality of life.
- Efficient, coordinated use of public resources.
- Advancement of actions that will be in the long-term best interests of the community.
- Application of innovative planning, development and growth concepts.

## **22. What should a Comprehensive Plan do?**

A typical Comprehensive Plan attempts to forecast community needs, define a 20-year community vision and establish policies to achieve our goals. It should be reviewed and updated every five years.

## **23. What should be included in a Comprehensive Plan?**

In Indiana, a Comprehensive Plan is required to include three elements: 1) A statement of objectives for future development; 2) Statement(s) of policy for land use development; and 3) Statement(s) of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures and public utilities.

## **24. How can I learn more about Plan-it Allen?**

- Come to all the Plan-it Allen! public events and contribute your ideas.
- Invite a Plan-it Allen! speaker to your group or organization. Call Jane Yoh at 427-2175.
- Talk with your friends and neighbors about how to make our community the best it can be.
- Find out more about Plan-it Allen! on the project Web site: [www.PlanYourCommunity.org](http://www.PlanYourCommunity.org).