



**DRAFT**

**Allen County/Fort Wayne  
Comprehensive Land Use & Development Plan**

**January 2007**

# Table of Contents

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**Executive Summary**

**Guiding Principles**

**Chapter 1: Land Use**

**Chapter 2: Economic Development**

**Chapter 3: Housing and Neighborhoods**

**Chapter 4: Transportation**

**Chapter 5: Environmental Stewardship**

**Chapter 6: Community Identity and Appearance**

**Chapter 7: Community Facilities**

**Chapter 8: Utilities**

**Chapter 9: Grabill, Huntertown, Monroeville, and Woodburn**

**Chapter 10: Implementation**

# Executive Summary

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*“Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir people’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember that your children and grandchildren are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty.”*

*Daniel H. Burnham, 1910*

*Architect, City Planner and Author: The Plan of Chicago*

## Introduction

Plan-it Allen! is our 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. This once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape the future culminates in 2007.

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the official policy document for addressing issues relating to growth and development in Allen County, its cities, towns and communities; and the City of Fort Wayne. The Plan provides a framework for future decision making grounded in extensive community involvement and a solid analysis of major changes to the area’s natural, man-made and cultural environments, as well as the demographics of the area.

## Comprehensive Plan Mandate and Description

To better understand what a Comprehensive Plan is and why Allen County and the City of Fort Wayne undertook this effort, the formal mandate and description for it are presented:

- 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 upon 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.
- 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.
- A typical Comprehensive Plan attempts to forecast community needs, define a 20-year community vision and establish policies to achieve our goals. It is not a plan for government consolidation, a program plan, a financial plan or a business plan. It should be reviewed and updated every five years.

## The Contents of the Plan

Plan-it Allen! is organized into 10 chapters. Each chapter reflects one of the Plan elements or subject areas: Land Use; Economic Development; Housing and Neighborhoods; Transportation; Environmental Stewardship; Community Identity and Appearance; Community Facilities; Utilities; Grabill, Hometown, Monroeville and Woodburn; and Implementation. The individual chapters outline topic-related recommendations, and each is organized into the following sections: Policy Foundation of the Plan, Key Findings, Goal, and Objectives and Strategies.

## A Plan Shaped by Community Involvement

Throughout every step of the process, Plan-it Allen! has been shaped by the people of Allen County, its cities, towns and communities; 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 and incorporated into this Plan.

Plan-it Allen! has been the culmination of a three-year planning process that included the participation, collaboration and consensus of Allen County, the City of Fort Wayne, local city and town government officials, boards and commissions, and citizens throughout the community.

The process itself has been directed by the 16-member community steering committee known as the Comprehensive Plan Committee. Its members were selected specifically to be representative of Allen County's and Fort Wayne's many unique constituencies and diversity of voices.

Four series of public meetings, nearly 60 in total, have been held countywide over the course of the process to engage residents and to ensure opportunities for full involvement. These meetings generated thousands of comments, ideas and suggestions that, in turn, became the basis for the Plan.

Amplifying participation opportunities, a 150-member Vision Work Group was called together for several sessions to help craft the Plan's vision and goals.

To build the Plan's baseline of in-depth research and statistical analysis, 10 panels of community experts, the Element Work Groups, worked to add specialized knowledge to each of the Plan's chapters both in the existing conditions phase and throughout the writing of the Plan. Upon completion of the draft Plan, nearly 40 meetings with key stakeholder groups took place to refine and align the content.

Throughout the process, the Plan-it Allen! Web site and Speakers' Bureau also have been continually available to make the project accessible to the public at all times. The Web site will remain a key informational tool moving ahead: [www.PlanYourCommunity.org](http://www.PlanYourCommunity.org).

## Why Allen County and Fort Wayne Need a New Plan Now

Allen County's current Plan is nearly 30 years old and the City of Fort Wayne's Plan is well over 20 years old. It is 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.

## The Purpose of Plan-it Allen!

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.

## What This Plan Means to Us

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.

For the first time in our community's proud history, the public and private sectors will be working off the same page – a common Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan. The Plan's shared vision and policy framework will establish 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.

The Plan's benefits are many:

- 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.

## The Impact of the Plan

As a taxpayer, the cohesive 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 management and growth that is desirable for the community long term. For businesses, the Plan will cultivate an environment in which businesses and good jobs can grow and thrive. For every resident, the Plan's thoughtful stewardship of the land will enhance our quality of life, preserve and protect our natural resources, and strengthen our physical surroundings.

## How the Plan Is Different

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. It presents a shared vision and goals for the common ground that is our home. But it also recognizes the variety and unique character of the community's many parts. It is a Plan that is designed to work for all jurisdictions.

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 signify a new approach to growth. The end result: a more proactive, dynamic form of growth, one in keeping with contemporary lifestyles, yet constantly anticipating demographic changes and trends; one that invests in our economic vitality while honoring the natural environment and community characteristics that give us pride of place.

## Why We Choose to Grow in a New Way

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 of the Plan's elements, principles and goals; how they interconnect and relate not just to one project, but to our greater community.

With its communitywide perspective, moving forward, the Plan will help us institute the policies that will ensure we can accomplish our goals, and 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. Even now, we are working to make our community more walkable, more connected, more welcoming, better able to compete for good jobs and new businesses.

## The Role of the Plan and How It Will Be Used

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.

Communities should strive for concurrence with the Plan in rezoning or development approvals. Plan-it Allen!'s goals and policies aim for an "ideal scenerio." These high aspirations mean that sometimes different objectives and strategies may conflict with one another, requiring careful balance. As such, this Plan supplies guidance in the decision-making process, but it is not the final word.

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

The Plan plays five primary roles to help our community achieve its goals:

1. **Negotiation Agent.** Land use and development decisions often require finding solutions between conflicting or competing interests, for example, the needs of an individual property owner versus the desires of the surrounding residents, or the aspirations of one jurisdiction or department over another. Through its direction, the Plan will create a path to reaching negotiated decisions.
2. **Policy Recommendation.** Local elected officials are frequently called upon to make land use and development decisions. In its guidance role, the Plan will aid in the setting of public policy by providing support, assistance, recommendations and counsel to decision makers.
3. **Information Management.** As our society becomes increasingly more complex, both the demand for and the supply of data have grown exponentially. Demographic, social, economic, land use and environmental trends and statistics are crucial to reaching informed, objective choices. Through the Plan and the support of the professional staff administering it, the collection and management of information can be effectively handled, making this key resource to decision making more accessible, useful and meaningful.

4. **Change Agent.** The Plan can aid the community in anticipating change and preparing for the future. Whether in the identification of trends that may have an adverse effect on area quality of life or in spotting opportunities to increase our economic growth, the Plan can be used as a catalyst to support leaders as they seek to spur action. This change agent role is especially important within our highly competitive global economy.
5. **Program Management.** The healthy, sustainable physical development of the community often necessitates significant investment of public dollars or the development of collaborative public-private sector projects. The Plan serves as a tool to guarantee that public dollars are spent wisely and that the programs engendered are effectively organized and executed to meet community goals and needs.

## Key Findings

The existing conditions analysis forms the Plan's factual foundation for building future policy. It serves as the intelligence-gathering phase of the planning process and has been designed to inform the more intuitive public input. This component is more than a snapshot of the community's current situation or an elaboration of key indicators of variance. It paints a picture of how Allen County and Fort Wayne have changed, what the patterns of change are and what trends are emerging. It also compares both jurisdictions to other peer jurisdictions throughout the country to better understand relative similarities or differences. An important note: Current circumstances and trends tell us what is, but they do not indicate the only direction each jurisdiction can take. They give insight and reveal opportunities to change course and fashion a better future through more strategic decision making.

The existing conditions analysis is composed of nine separate components corresponding to the elements of the Plan: Demographics, Land Use, Housing and Neighborhoods, Economics, Transportation, Utilities, Environmental Stewardship, Community Facilities, and Community Identity and Appearance. A summary of each element's Key Findings appears within each Plan chapter.

A brief summary of the Existing Conditions Report, completed in 2005, is as follows:

- In 2025, there will be a nearly equal number of people in every age group.
- Residents age 65-plus have increased 45.5 percent since 1970.
- Foreign-born residents are the fastest-growing community segment.
- When it comes to economic development, in a comparison with peer communities, we are holding our own.
- Agriculture occupies 65.3 percent of our total land area in the county. Single-family housing occupies 14.7 percent.
- The combined total land area needed in 2025 for the three, major land uses will be just over 22,500 acres. By category, residential is 25,790 housing units or approximately 12,100 acres, industrial is 28,330,000 square feet of industrial building area or approximately 2,400 acres, and commercial and institutional are 81,746,000 square feet of building space or an estimated 8,000 acres.
- Per household land consumption is nearly three times more outside the City of Fort Wayne than within it.
- In 2025, Allen County's population is projected to be 410,349 persons.
- Non-family households (no spouse or dependent children) represent 33 percent of all households.
- From 1990 to 2000, for every new household created, builders produced 1.35 new housing units.
- Female-headed households with children and no spouse grew 37 percent over the past 10 years.
- Most of the forested river corridors in the county have been removed.

- Our three rivers are our primary character-defining feature, the one item that ties city and county together.
- Utility availability, especially sanitary sewer service, is the key driver for new land development.
- Water quality, stormwater drainage and sewage issues recognize no political boundaries and need regional coordination.
- Transportation improvements lag behind development, creating challenges.
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are inadequate and not readily accessible.
- By 2025, Allen County/Fort Wayne will need 1,223 more acres of parkland.
- School choices often motivate housing choices, affecting both.

### Guiding Principles

Part of the Plan's overarching structure, the guiding principles are statements of purpose to help in determining the quality, pattern and character of future development. They describe a new approach to development. As such, the principles, summarized below, are touchstones to aid in decision making:

- The visual character, historic features and natural assets inherent within the community should be retained and enhanced.
- Contiguous development and compatible patterns of development delineated by sound planning are the preferred forms of growth.
- Land use planning should shape the community's development framework with utilities, transportation, infrastructure and institutional decisions coordinated to support those land use objectives.
- Neighborhoods, downtowns, commercial centers and towns should be compact, pedestrian friendly and mixed used; and districts of single use should be the exception.
- Housing with a diversity of values and types should be encouraged to provide housing choices within neighborhoods and throughout the community.
- Infill development and revitalization initiatives should be encouraged.
- Mature neighborhoods should be stabilized, maintained and enhanced; and new suburban development should be encouraged to develop as planned neighborhoods.
- Civic, institutional and commercial activity should not be isolated in single-use districts, but be integrated into the neighborhood fabric.
- The use of open spaces, such as parks, plazas and squares, should be encouraged to promote gathering places within neighborhoods, downtowns, commercial centers and towns.
- Corridors and trails should be used to define and connect neighborhoods, commercial centers, downtowns and towns.
- A connective framework of transit, pedestrian and bicycle systems should be provided that allows alternative modes of travel in addition to motorized vehicles.
- Many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance of most dwellings, allowing independence from driving as the only means of travel.
- The interconnection of existing and new residential, commercial and industrial development should be encouraged.
- Each community or cluster of neighborhoods should have a well-defined edge and be interconnected wherever possible.
- The continued agricultural use of the county's most productive farmland should be encouraged.



## Goals

The Comprehensive Plan has three key layers of policies: goals, objectives and strategies. Goals are the broadest policy statements and state a desired outcome in general terms. The goals have been developed by the Comprehensive Plan Committee and were derived from the ideas generated by the public through its wide-ranging participation. The Goals frame the development of the objectives and the subsequent strategies.

Objectives denote a more specific policy direction and help organize strategies. Strategies are detailed actions necessary to initiate or complete an objective – such as a program or project. Within the Plan, there are multiple objectives for each goal and multiple strategies for each objective. The recommendations for each element of the Plan contain all three policy layers. The Plan goals are as follows:

### **Land Use**

*Carefully planned, sustainable growth and efficient use of land resources through coordinated and quality development, revitalization and redevelopment which leads to improved community well-being.*

### **Economic Development**

*A vibrant, innovative and diverse economy that balances existing business growth and new business attraction in a manner that produces secure, well-paying jobs; provides infrastructure improvements needed for economic development; promotes downtown revitalization; fosters operational efficiencies; and increases utilization of the airports.*

### **Housing and Neighborhoods**

*Neighborhoods that are stable and diverse, providing a wide range of housing options, linking residents to a variety of land uses which meet the needs of the community.*

### **Transportation**

*An integrated transportation system that ensures accessibility, safe and efficient movement and connectivity through all parts of the county and region; and accommodates a range of transportation choices such as public and paratransit, high-speed rail, pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular and horse-drawn.*

### **Environmental Stewardship**

*A healthy, sustainable, and enjoyable environment with clean air and water, greenways and open spaces for residents, habitats for wildlife, protection from flooding, utilization of rivers, protection of other environmental assets (farmland, woodlands and wetlands), and promotion of a strong ethic among residents and businesses to control pollution and support environmental stewardship efforts.*

### **Community Identity and Appearance**

*An attractive, vibrant community with a positive image and physical appearance in its rural areas, small towns, neighborhoods and downtowns that celebrates its heritage, diversity and waterways through ongoing quality development, historic preservation and neighborhood revitalization.*

### **Community Facilities**

*Quality facilities that promote recreation and cultural enjoyment, ensure public health and safety, provide educational opportunities, and encourage tourism and investment; collectively building a thriving, accessible and welcoming community for all ages and backgrounds.*

## Utilities

*Safe and abundant drinking water and regionalization of interests for improving regional water quality – such as reduction of failed septic systems and improved performance from sanitary sewers and stormwater facilities – that is expandable to meet demands and support community plans for growth.*

## Implementation

The success of a Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan is measured in terms of its implementation. Only when the recommendations in the Plan are translated into actions can the goals and policies within the Plan be realized.

To that end, an Implementation Matrix outlining action steps for all of the goals, objectives and strategies contained in the Plan has been 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 is also proposed to monitor activity and maintain public accountability. Periodic progress reports to the public also will be issued along with ongoing communication efforts to keep residents, businesses and stakeholders involved throughout the life of the Plan.

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

This Plan is to be used by the community as public and private decisions are made concerning development, redevelopment and capital improvements, including: community utility-system improvements, economic incentives and other matters affecting the growth of the community. The Plan will be employed in the development, evaluation and application of annual work programs and budgets, development approvals, coordinated capital improvement plans, economic incentives, and private development decisions, and to aid in the future interpretation of major issues that may arise, but are not explicitly addressed in the Plan.

## Learn More About Plan-it Allen!

The Plan-it Allen! Web site: [www.PlanYourCommunity.org](http://www.PlanYourCommunity.org) contains complete information about the entire process along with all project documents and reports. The full Plan is posted there for public review.

Groups and organizations interested in learning more about Plan-it Allen! may request a speaker by contacting: (260) 427-1127.

# Guiding Principles

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## Introduction

Principles are statements of purpose intended to describe the direction and form of future development and revitalization efforts in Allen County and the City of Fort Wayne. The principles focus on the quality, pattern, form, character, and organization of development and address a desire to strengthen the quality of the physical environment.

The principles apply to already established neighborhoods with infill and revitalization opportunities as well as the developing towns, suburban and rural areas of the County. As stated above, the principles express the intended direction for land use.

The following principles are grouped into four specific planning categories: urban, suburban, rural and city and town. Several of the principles will apply in more than one category while some of the principles will apply exclusively to a particular planning category.

Numerous meetings with City and County Plan Commissions, the Comprehensive Plan Committee and Work Group members, citizens and planning staff have been conducted to provide input to draft the following principles.

## Fort Wayne Urban Area

1. Retain and enhance the visual character derived from existing natural features.
2. The pattern of future new and infill development should be compatible with the character of existing development, including historic and natural features.
3. Discourage development that is not served by a sewer system.
4. Utility system improvements should be coordinated with proposed and current land uses as identified in this plan and its amendments.
5. Infill development and revitalization initiatives should be encouraged.
6. Development contiguous to urban areas should be encouraged and organized as commercial centers and neighborhoods integrated with the existing pattern.
7. Ensure coordination between major civic and institutional organizations and local planning departments.
8. Primary and middle schools should be provided within neighborhoods and planned at a neighborhood scale with provisions for safe pedestrian and bicycle access.
9. Civic, institutional, and commercial activity should be integrated into the neighborhood fabric.
10. Neighborhoods and downtown areas should be compact, pedestrian friendly, and mixed-use.
11. Housing with a diversity of values and types should be encouraged to provide housing choices within neighborhoods.
12. Mature neighborhoods should be stabilized, maintained and enhanced.
13. Mixed-use commercial centers and neighborhoods should be the preferred pattern of development and districts of single use should be the exception.
14. A range of open spaces, including parks, plazas, squares, etc. should be encouraged within commercial centers and neighborhoods as gathering places.
15. Transportation improvements should be planned and necessary land reserved and/or acquired in coordination with proposed and current land uses as identified in this plan.

16. Corridors and trails should be encouraged to define and/or connect neighborhoods, commercial centers and downtowns.
17. A connective framework for transit, pedestrian and bicycle systems, including sidewalks and pedestrian paths should be provided to allow for alternative modes of transportation.
18. Many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance of most dwellings, allowing independence from driving as the only means to travel.
19. Higher building densities of residential, commercial and work place uses should be provided within close proximity to transit stops.
20. Encourage interconnection of existing and new residential, commercial, and industrial development.

### Suburban Areas

1. Encourage the retention of the natural and visual character derived from areas such as woodlands, wetlands and riparian corridors.
2. The pattern of future new and infill development should be compatible with the character of existing development, including historic and natural features.
3. Utility system improvements should be coordinated with proposed and current land uses as identified in this plan and its amendments.
4. Discourage development that is not served by a sewer system.
5. Infill development and revitalization initiatives should be encouraged.
6. Development contiguous to developed suburban areas should be integrated with the existing pattern where it contributes to an outcome that is in conformance with the goals and policies of this plan.
7. Ensure coordination between major civic and institutional organizations and local planning departments.
8. Primary and middle schools should be designed at a neighborhood scale with provisions for safe pedestrian and bicycle access.
9. Civic, institutional, and commercial activity should be integrated into the neighborhood fabric.
10. New suburban development should be encouraged to develop as a planned neighborhood.
11. The preferred areas for new suburban development area those that are contiguous to existing developed areas.
12. Housing with a diversity of values and types should be encouraged to provide housing choices within neighborhoods.
13. Mixed-use commercial centers and neighborhoods should be encouraged as the preferred pattern of development.
14. A range of open spaces, including parks, plazas, squares, etc. should be planned for and distributed within commercial centers and neighborhoods as gathering places.
15. Mature neighborhoods should be stabilized maintained and enhanced.
16. Transportation improvements should be planned and necessary land reserved and/or acquired in coordination with proposed and current land uses as identified in this plan.
17. Encourage planned development along regional transportation corridors and at interchanges with adequate roadway design and infrastructure.

18. Each community or cluster of neighborhoods should have a well-defined edge and be interconnected wherever possible.
19. Corridors and trails should be used to define and/or connect neighborhoods and commercial centers.
20. Higher building densities of residential, commercial and work place uses should be provided within close proximity to transit stops.
21. Compact, pedestrian friendly and mixed-use neighborhoods should be encouraged.
22. A connective framework for transit, pedestrian and bicycle systems, including sidewalks and pedestrian paths should be provided to allow for alternative modes of transportation.
23. Many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance of most dwellings, allowing independence from driving as the only means to travel.
24. Encourage interconnection of existing and new residential, commercial, and industrial development.

#### Rural Areas

1. Encourage the retention of the natural and visual character derived from areas such as woodlands, farmlands, wetlands and riparian corridors.
2. Discourage development that is not served by a sewer system.
3. Utility system improvements shall be planned in coordination with proposed and current land uses as identified in this plan.
4. Infill development and revitalization initiatives should be encouraged.
5. Encourage the continued agricultural uses of the county's most productive farmland.
6. As the suburban area expands into rural areas, residential development should be contiguous to existing commercial and/or residential development and be served by existing or planned public services.
7. The pattern of future new and infill development should be compatible with the character of existing development, including historic and natural features where it contributes to an outcome that is in conformance with the goals and policies of this plan.
8. A connective framework for transit, pedestrian and bicycle systems should be provided that allows alternative modes to automobile use.
9. Transportation improvements should be planned and necessary land reserved and/or acquired in coordination with proposed and current land uses as identified in this plan.
10. Encourage planned development along regional transportation corridors and at interchanges with adequate roadway design and infrastructure.

Grabill, Huntertown, Monroeville, Woodburn

1. Retain and enhance the visual character derived from existing natural features.
2. New development in existing non-sewered unincorporated towns should be strategically planned.
3. Infill development and revitalization initiatives should be encouraged.
4. Development contiguous to established incorporated and unincorporated towns should be integrated with the existing pattern where it contributes to an outcome that is in conformance with the goals and policies of this plan.
5. The pattern of future new and infill development should be compatible with the character of existing development, including historic and natural features where it contributes to an outcome that is in conformance with the goals and policies of this plan.
6. Housing with a diversity of values and types should be encouraged to provide housing choices within neighborhoods.
7. Mature neighborhoods should be stabilized maintained and enhanced.
8. Cities and incorporated and unincorporated towns should be compact, pedestrian friendly, and mixed-use.
9. Civic, institutional, and commercial activity should not be isolated in single use areas.
10. Transportation improvements should be planned and necessary land reserved and/or acquired in coordination with proposed and current land uses as identified in this plan.
11. Corridors and trails should be used to define and/or connect neighborhoods, commercial centers, towns and downtowns.
12. Encourage interconnection of existing and new residential, commercial, and industrial developments.
13. Civic, institutional, and commercial activity should not be isolated in single use areas.

# 1. Land Use

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## Introduction and Overview

This chapter outlines the recommendations for addressing land use in the overall community, and is organized in the following sections:

1. Policy Foundation of the Plan;
2. Key Findings;
3. Policy Implications;
4. Growth Projections;
5. Alternative Development Trends;
6. Conceptual Development Map;
7. Goal; and
8. Objectives and Strategies.

## Policy Foundation of the Plan

The foundation of the Plan was shaped by an extensive community involvement and planning process (see Executive Summary). The Comprehensive Plan has three key layers of policies: goals, objectives and strategies. Goals are the broadest policy statements that state a desired outcome in general terms. Objectives indicate a more specific policy direction and help organize strategies. Strategies are detailed actions necessary to initiate or complete an objective – such as a program or project. There are multiple objectives for each goal and multiple strategies for each objective. The recommendations for each element of the Plan contain all three policy layers.

Other plans and studies completed prior to the preparation of the Plan and relevant to the Land Use Chapter include:

- The Southwest Allen County (SWAC) Study, adopted in 1986;
- The Airport Expressway Amendment to the SWAC Study, adopted in 2001;
- The Downtown Blueprint, adopted in 2003;
- The Downtown BlueprintPLUS, completed in 2005;
- The West Central Neighborhood Plan, adopted in 2004; and
- The East Central, Packard Area Planning Alliance, and Bloomingdale/Spy Run Neighborhood Plans, each adopted in 2005.

The land use related goals and recommendations of these plans can be found in the Appendix.

## Key Findings

A summary of key findings derived from the existing conditions analysis related to land use in Allen County and Fort Wayne is outlined below. For a more detailed explanation of each finding, see the Land Use Chapter of the Existing Conditions Report.

### **Developed Land: Pattern and Utilization**

- Next to agricultural uses at 65.3 percent, single-family residential uses at 14.7 percent occupy the second largest amount of the total land area in the County.
- Over 50 percent of the County's developed land area is residential.
- Land uses within Allen County and the City of Fort Wayne have become more spatially segregated.
- All incorporated Allen County communities have similarly distributed land uses.
- Residential land use occupies the most land of the total land area (35.3 percent) within the City of Fort Wayne.

- Population density, according to the U.S. Census, has declined from ten to less-than-five persons per acre as development has located outward from the City of Fort Wayne’s core.
- Growing Allen County communities surrounding the City of Fort Wayne have comparable densities.
- Over the past 16 years, the amount of land within the City of Fort Wayne has experienced a 62.7 percent increase in developed land area while the population increase was calculated at 27.5 percent.
- The amount of land consumed per household in the City of Fort Wayne (including recently annexed land) has increased by 27.3 percent since 1987.
- Population density has declined in the City of Fort Wayne by 21 percent since 1987.
- Per household land consumption is nearly three times more in the area outside the City of Fort Wayne than within the City.

### **Undeveloped Land**

- Agricultural land with “prime” characteristics covers over 93.6 percent of the undeveloped land area in the County.
- Hydric soils (soils that have high moisture content) make up over 46.4 percent of the undeveloped land area in the County and City.
- Preserve and reserve lands, which include some agricultural land, make up over 11.2 percent of the County’s total land area.

### **Development Capacity**

- Allen County is projected to grow to approximately 410,349 persons (Holts) by 2025.
- Development densities, or persons per developed acre, vary by location within the County, and range from 5.99 persons per developed acre within the area of Fort Wayne developed prior to 1950 to 0.70 persons per developed acre within the rural area.
- At densities representing the post-1950 area (2.77 persons per acre), the amount of land necessary to support future population projections is equal to 10 percent of the remaining developable land.

### **Policy Implications**

Based upon the existing conditions assessment and the key findings, the following implications should be considered when formulating planning policies:

- Strong regional commuting links mean more people today live “regionally.”
- Declining population densities mean an increase in infrastructure costs and public services.
- Spatially segregated land uses mean an increase in vehicle miles traveled, energy consumption, and pollution from automobile emissions.
- Development through single-use zoning districts typically leads to segregated, separated land uses and does not encourage the mixing of uses.
- Lower population densities in developed areas means greater amounts of land consumed at the periphery; this can also lead to a loss of rural character, and encroachment on environmentally sensitive land.
- Lack of coordinated incentive programs that encourage infill and redevelopment over greenfield development, especially in and around Fort Wayne’s urban center, means continued higher levels of investment in development at the periphery.
- Investment in the urban center has a direct return to the entire regional economy.



## Growth Projections

The following estimates of developed land needed to support future growth or growth potential are based on both population and employment projections for Allen County for the next 20 years. For projection purposes, the anticipated developed area is divided into three major land use categories: residential, commercial and institutional, and industrial. The projections account for additional growth as well as the number of residential units and nonresidential building areas that need to be replaced over the next two decades. The amount of land needed to accommodate this growth is based on current development densities. The following outlines the projection methods and the results, as well as the amount of land area necessary to support the increase in population and employment at current densities.

### Residential Land Use Projections

**Method:** To establish baseline figures for population and housing units, data from the 2000 Census was used. Population projections reported in the Land Use Chapter of the Existing Conditions Report were used to calculate the additional population and housing unit increase during the next twenty years. In addition, the number of residential units lost between 1990 and 2000 were used to calculate the average annual rate of future housing unit loss.

**Projections:** In 2000, Allen County's population was 332,673 persons. Projected population for Allen County in 2005 was 345,307 persons and in 2025 the projected population is 399,991 persons (projection by Holts). This equates to a population increase of 54,684 persons during the next two decades. This population is anticipated to need an additional 22,890 units over the next twenty years (.4186 units per person). In addition, it is anticipated that another 2,900 units will be needed over the next 20 years to replace units lost to demolitions, fire, etc. In summation another 25,790 residential units will be needed during the next twenty years to accommodate new residential growth as well as the replacement of existing units (see Appendix for detailed calculations).

**Land Absorption:** The average residential (single and multiple family) gross density in Allen County was 2.13 units per acre, as noted in the Land Use Chapter of the Existing Conditions Report. Hence, the additional 25,790 housing units which will be needed to support the 2025 projected population will require approximately 12,108 acres of land.

### Commercial and Institutional Land Use Projections

**Method:** Commercial and institutional development includes retail and office buildings, and buildings within large institutions. The number of workers in Allen County in commercial and institutional facilities for 2000 was based on extrapolation figures calculated by Economy.com, Inc. The square feet per worker (from the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration (EIA) Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey for 1999) was used to determine the estimated square feet for 2000. The average annual rate of loss was calculated by the EIA for the Nonresidential Buildings Energy Consumption Survey and was applied annually to the square feet estimated in Allen County for 2000. Worker estimates for 2000 were then extrapolated to 2025 using a linear regression model.

**Projections:** It is anticipated that there will be another 46,100 workers in Allen County during the next 20 years. Based on this figure and assuming that the number of square feet

per worker does not change, Allen County will need an additional 81,746,332 square feet of building by 2025 to accommodate employment growth in commercial and institutional land uses and replace lost square feet (see Appendix for detailed calculations).

**Land Absorption:** It is estimated that an average ratio for the square feet of building to amount of square feet of lot size is approximately .23. Therefore, for commercial and institutional development, the amount of land needed for future commercial and institutional uses (based on employment projections and building square foot estimates of 81,746,000 square feet) is estimated to be 8,000 acres.

### **Industrial Land Use Projections**

**Method:** The demand for industrial development is much more subject to changes in technology and markets than residential or commercial and institutional development, because as manufacturing becomes more automated, the amount of space per worker increases. Even though fewer workers will be needed, more machinery will be required to produce more goods and services. For Allen County, the industrial land use projections were based on the number of workers for 2000, an estimated extrapolation calculated by Economy.com, Inc. The estimated square feet per worker was based on data provided by the Society of Industrial and Office Realtors on industrial space which was then divided by the number of workers in 2000.

**Projections:** In 2000, Allen County's industrial workers consumed about 61.4 million square feet of industrial space. Industrial space is unique because it has the lowest life space of buildings of all major land uses considered and has the highest rate of replacement. The average annual rate of loss for Allen County was based on the data regarding the State of Indiana. Projections for the amount of industrial space needed in 2025 were based on calculations similar to those for commercial space. Between 2000 and 2025, about 28.3 million square feet of industrial space will be built in Allen County (see Appendix for detailed calculations).

**Land Absorption:** It is estimated that an average ratio for the square feet of building to the amount of square feet of lot size is approximately .27. Therefore, the amount of land needed (based on employment projections and a corresponding 28,330,000 square feet of industrial building area) is approximately 2,400 acres.

### **Land Use Projections Total**

The combined total land area needed in 2025 for the three, major land uses (or most of the developed land area) will be just over **22,500** acres.

### **Alternative Development Trends**

A community type is an historic form of settlement/development pattern that varies in size and scale with the intensity of the public roadway network (from widely spaced, rural roads to tightly spaced urban streets) and the corresponding intensity (units or square feet per acre) of adjoining private development.

During the past 10 to 15 years, and recently largely due to the work of the Congress for the New Urbanism, a number of alternative development patterns have been proposed, and as a result certain

alternative development trends have been created. The following alternative, more compact, mixed-use, and pedestrian-oriented types of development are described below:

- **Neighborhood Center:** A development type usually attributed to its location on a transportation corridor, main road or crossroads. It can include a mix of uses, but is primarily commercial with a civic component.
- **Town Center:** A development type that is a community consisting of several neighborhoods, sharing a substantial, mostly mixed-use center with a civic component. Town Centers are typically located at major intersections and can serve as the location of shopping and employment for several traditional neighborhood developments.
- **Traditional Neighborhood Development:** A basic unit of town planning. This development type is a compact, urbanized area containing a balanced range of human activities. The neighborhood district is designed to support the development of human scale, walkable areas where residences, business and commercial uses are within walking distance of one another. It should always contain a balanced mix of dwellings, workplaces, shops, civic buildings and parks. Regardless of size, the pedestrian-oriented nature of the district is reinforced by human-scaled buildings which relate to the street, provide safe pedestrian access, and create a distinct district identity.

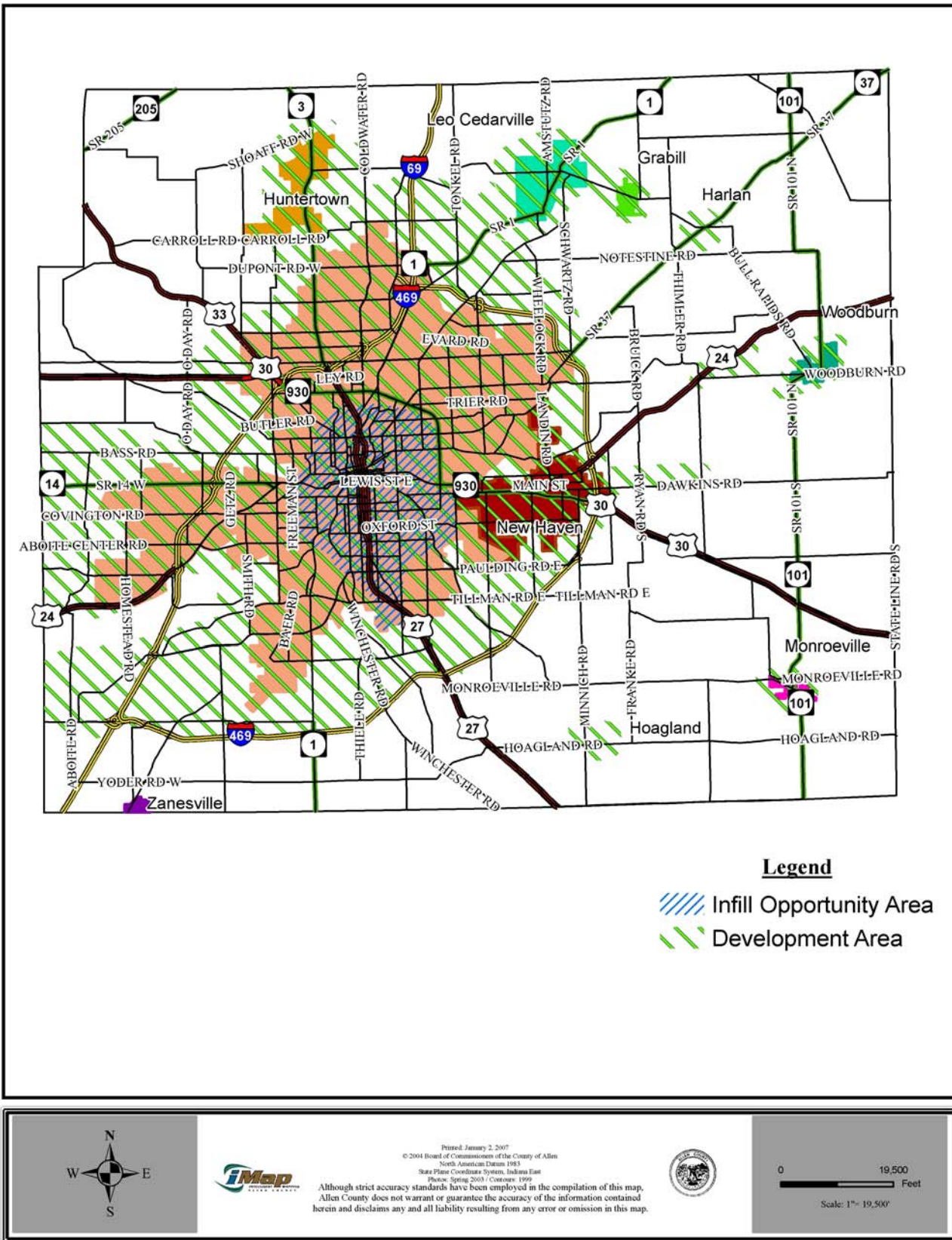
One of the keys to implementing any alternative type of development pattern is through updated zoning and subdivision control development regulations. Current zoning typically divides areas into separate use districts that, as noted in the Land Use Existing Conditions Report, tend to add to the segregation and separation of uses, creating issues relative to connectivity, transportation options, the need for significant infrastructure improvements on the periphery of the community, and a diminished relationship to the surrounding context of existing development character, or existing natural and environmental characteristics. New zoning districts, or updated standards in existing zoning districts could be created that focus instead on the **type** of growth that is desired, such as urban, suburban, or rural, and the corresponding **development pattern** that is appropriate, such as neighborhood or town centers, compact or mixed-use development, cluster or conservation developments, or traditional neighborhood development.

### Conceptual Development Map

As noted earlier, land in the community is being consumed at an increasing rate to accommodate all land uses. To reduce land consumption while accommodating growth requires a more efficient use of land. Using land more efficiently requires that land be developed in a way that is different than the highly dispersed and segregated development pattern characteristic of the past 40 years. This will also require a modification to the way the community is currently growing.

Rather than growing primarily in greenfield areas (where land is inexpensive and utilities may not be readily available), attention should also be given to developing vacant and underutilized land in existing developed areas and taking advantage of already available infrastructure. Greenfield areas meet could then be developed, in a more compact, walkable pattern with a mix of uses that allows residents to their daily needs without adding to the number of vehicles miles traveled.

Map 3.1: Conceptual Development Map



**Infill and Redevelopment.** Areas suited for infill and redevelopment include the incorporated portions of towns and cities on underutilized or vacant sites with access to existing infrastructure. Infill and redevelopment can take place in the form of town centers along high-capacity roadways, or in smaller-residential and mixed-used areas on underutilized sites within existing neighborhoods. This area is shown as light green within existing towns and cities as well as unincorporated towns on Map 3.1.

**Incented Infill and Redevelopment.** Incented infill and redevelopment areas would include the more urbanized portions of Fort Wayne on underutilized or vacant sites with access to existing infrastructure. This type of development would be the target of specialized programs to encourage infill and redevelopment in areas where there is considerable disinvestment. This development can take place in the form of town centers along high-capacity roadways, traditional neighborhood developments, or smaller-residential and mixed-used areas on underutilized sites within existing neighborhoods. This area is shown as magenta on Map 3.1 and lies within the urbanized areas of Fort Wayne.

#### Goal

The following goal for land use was developed by the Comprehensive Plan Committee based upon citizen input:

*Carefully planned, sustainable growth and efficient use of land resources through coordinated and quality development, revitalization, and redevelopment which leads to improved community well-being.*

#### Objectives and Strategies

Objectives and strategies, based on the land use goal, to guide land use decisions in the community are outlined below. Where necessary, the specific areas or community type where the objectives and strategies apply are also identified.

#### **OBJECTIVE LU1.**

#### **ENCOURAGE CAREFULLY PLANNED GROWTH BY UTILIZING THE CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT MAP AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY'S LAND USE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.**

Carefully planning growth means providing a framework for Allen County communities to make informed long-range decisions about how and where growth will take place. One of the intents of this plan is for community growth to occur in ways that follow the recommended Conceptual Development Map; support economic development and job creation and retention; create strong neighborhoods with a range of housing, commercial, and transportation options; and achieve a healthy living environment. The Conceptual Development Map (see page 6) should be used as a guide to making future land use decisions in the community.

#### **LU1.A Recommend the adoption of the Conceptual Development Map by the appropriate legislative bodies, boards, and commissions, and periodically review and update the Conceptual Development Map.**

Once the Conceptual Development Map is completed as part of this Plan, it should be presented along with the Plan for adoption by the community's legislative bodies. The Map should also be presented for adoption by other appropriate community boards and commissions, including the City

of Fort Wayne Board of Public Works. In order for the Map to continue to be an effective tool for planning growth, the Conceptual Development Map will need to be formally reviewed and updated as necessary. A joint process should be established and implemented for this review and update.

**LU1.B Update and coordinate the community’s land use review tools and criteria by formally incorporating the Conceptual Development Map, and the objectives and strategies of this Plan, as part of the review of rezoning requests and development proposals.**

Once the Conceptual Development Map is adopted as part of this Plan, it should be incorporated directly into the review process for rezoning requests and development proposals. It should be used by the appropriate City and County staffs in project and proposal reviews and recommendations, and be made available to the development community and the public for review as a guide to decision making.

**LU1.C Coordinate community infrastructure improvements and expansions within the Conceptual Development Map growth areas.**

One of the key findings of the Land Use Chapter of the Existing Conditions Report was that the availability of adequate infrastructure, particularly sanitary sewer systems, is the primary driver of new development. In light of this, it becomes very important to coordinate community infrastructure improvements and expansions. Staff review of proposed utility and transportation system improvements, and school district facility expansions, should be continued to help plan and coordinate those improvements with existing and proposed land uses.

**LU1.D Significant utility, service area, and infrastructure expansions should be encouraged inside the Conceptual Development Map growth areas.**

A key feature of the Conceptual Development Map is to provide a framework for growth and development. The Conceptual Development Map provides a focus for development efforts and incentives as well as infrastructure improvements. By encouraging infrastructure improvements and expansions inside the Conceptual Development Map growth areas, service provision efficiencies can be realized by the community. An annual review of the Conceptual Development Map will be established to track development areas and to identify areas that have potential for development. Staff review of proposed utility and transportation system improvements, and school district facility expansions, should be continued.

**OBJECTIVE LU2.**

**USE LAND RESOURCES MORE EFFICIENTLY BY ENCOURAGING NEW DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT MAP GROWTH AREAS WHICH ARE ADJACENT TO EXISTING DEVELOPMENT.**

For many years, Allen County has used the principle of “adjacent growth” as one of its primary means of determining whether to support new development proposals. There are many economic-efficiency advantages to such a policy. Following this principle, infrastructure and community facility improvements and expansions can be done in coordinated and incremental ways. Continuing to use this policy throughout the community in conjunction with the Conceptual Development Map should provide additional guidance for the land use decision-making process. A clear, detailed definition of adjacent growth is critical to the implementation of this objective.

**LU2.A Endorse improvements to and extensions of infrastructure in areas adjacent to existing development.**

Staff review of proposed utility and transportation system improvements, and school district facility expansions will help to plan and coordinate those improvements with existing and proposed land uses. The Plan Commissions should endorse those improvements and extensions proposed in areas which are adjacent to existing development.

**LU2.B Discourage extensions of public municipal or private corporate sanitary sewer and water facilities for development proposals that are not adjacent to existing development.**

Availability of adequate sanitary sewer infrastructure is the primary driver of new development. Therefore, it is important that significant sanitary sewer infrastructure expansions do not take place in areas which would require other significant community infrastructure or facility investments unless a community decision has been made to make those investments in those areas.

**LU2.C Encourage rezoning petitions for properties that are adjacent to existing development.**

To better take advantage of the economic-efficiency advantages of an adjacent growth development policy, and to make it clear that there are limits to new development capacity within the identified Conceptual Development Map growth areas, it should be understood that the staff will typically recommend in favor of rezoning petitions for properties that meet the Plan's defined adjacent growth policy, and recommend against rezoning petitions for properties that do not meet the policy.

**OBJECTIVE LU3.**

**USE LAND RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY BY ENCOURAGING NEW DEVELOPMENT, REVITALIZATION AND REDEVELOPMENT IN AREAS ALREADY SERVED BY INFRASTRUCTURE.**

There are currently a number of incentives which favor greenfield development at the edges of the existing developed areas of the community over infill development and redevelopment in existing communities. Lower land costs, simpler large-parcel assembly, lower tax rates, easier construction staging and access, fewer existing residents to accommodate, and perceptions of better schools and lower crime rates can all serve as incentives. Finally, the cost of this development is often indirectly subsidized by the community through the extension of sanitary sewer, water, and roadway systems, and through community initiated or supported construction of new or expanded community facilities to serve the development. During the post-World War II era, Fort Wayne in particular experienced rapid expansion at its edges and witnessed disinvestment in the urban core and inner suburbs as they were left behind for newer, lower-density, dispersed developments on the urban fringe. This pattern of development has had dramatic effects on the social and economic vitality of the City and as a result, the overall community as well.

Existing neighborhoods and communities can often accommodate some of the growth that communities require through infill development, brownfield redevelopment, and the rehabilitation of existing buildings, thus reducing the pressure to develop greenfield properties. A range of options exists to help direct new investment to strengthen the urban core and existing neighborhoods. Efforts to increase development in existing communities must be implemented with the intent of creating growth that improves the quality of life for existing residents, as well as creating benefits for new investors. As more developers learn of the profitable experiences that other developers have had with

infill development, the private market will increasingly identify ways to direct resources to existing neighborhoods. The following strategies are designed to address some of these issues and to provide local government officials with ideas and tools to direct development toward existing communities.

**LU3.A Support new development, revitalization and redevelopment in areas currently served by adequate existing public municipal or private corporate sanitary sewer and water facilities.**

Adequate sanitary sewer system service is a primary driver of new development, as previously noted. One way to encourage new development, revitalization and redevelopment in areas currently served by adequate infrastructure would be to work with public municipal and private corporate sanitary sewer and water providers to identify and publicize areas with adequate existing service. Another tool could be to develop and adopt updated regulations to encourage cost effective development in areas with existing infrastructure.

**LU3.B Within the Fort Wayne Incented Infill Area as shown on the Conceptual Development Map, establish and/or expand economic incentives to promote revitalization and redevelopment in areas served by adequate existing infrastructure.**

There are a number of tools that Fort Wayne could use as economic incentives to promote revitalization and redevelopment in targeted areas. These include tax-increment financing, tax abatements, grants or loans from dedicated bond issues, and other similar incentives. The community could also encourage civic and institutional buildings and uses to be centrally located in existing urban area neighborhoods. Public funds could be a powerful tool in guiding and directing new development into existing neighborhoods. Priority funding areas (PFAs) or model blocks can be developed to efficiently target public investments.

Under the PFA approach, a governmental entity designates a geographic area as a “priority area” for receipt of infrastructure funding. This designation serves as an incentive to attract and retain market capital. This system could have several advantages as the City prioritizes areas for future funding. These priorities send clear signals to the market as to where development will be supported, adding predictability to the development process. Taxpayers also benefit through the more strategic use of public funds, which can increase return on investment and/or reduce costs.

As noted above, another tool along these lines is to encourage that civic and institutional buildings be centrally located in existing, designated infill areas. Public investment in civic buildings, including historic structures, can be a critical factor in the future development of the community. The placement of public and civic buildings indicates the community’s development priorities, and this placement determines residents accessibility to the services that these buildings house. Furthermore, a range of private services, such as legal and advocacy services, benefit from close proximity to public buildings, such as courthouses and legislative offices.

By locating public buildings such as libraries, government buildings, and schools in areas with existing infrastructure a message is sent to the rest of the community that these areas are worthwhile investment opportunities. Public buildings can act as harbingers of revitalization in distressed areas where few employment opportunities exist or where a lack of services persists. They also represent opportunities to go beyond merely maintaining the quality of public services in an area by adding services that were previously unavailable or inaccessible to local residents.



**LU3.C Encourage a “fix-it-first” approach that establishes priorities for upgrading existing public facilities and infrastructure within the City of Fort Wayne.**

Public expenditures on infrastructure, such as streets, highways, water and sewer systems, street lighting, schools and other civic buildings constitute a significant share of public expenditures each year. By not fixing this infrastructure in the core area of Fort Wayne and other mature neighborhoods, a larger fiscal problem is created that increases each year as maintenance issues are not addressed. “Fix-it-first” policies direct resources to support the maintenance and upgrading of existing structures and facilities. This helps to maintain the value of improvements made to attract private investment in new construction and rehabilitation. A challenge of infrastructure management is to balance the maintenance and upgrading of existing public facilities with the construction of new or expanded facilities. The City should develop coordinated policies to establish priorities for upgrading existing public facilities and infrastructure and recommend the approval of those policies by the Fort Wayne Board of Public Works. The City should then use those policies to prioritize public funding to promote revitalization and redevelopment in the designated infill areas.

**OBJECTIVE LU4.**

**DISCOURAGE UNPLANNED GROWTH IN AREAS NOT CURRENTLY SERVED BY PUBLIC MUNICIPAL OR PRIVATE CORPORATE SANITARY SEWER FACILITIES.**

Piecemeal individual development which is not coordinated development as set forth in this Plan often creates adverse long-term impacts. The current Allen County zoning ordinance has generous provisions allowing single-lot sell-offs that result in the creation of many individual, low-density home sites with no coordinated oversight for storm drainage, access, and sewage disposal facilities. Other rural areas have also seen similar unplanned, nonresidential development over time. In rural areas where growth may be more appropriate, planned development could be permitted in a more limited pattern, concentrated at higher-traffic roadway intersections. Such a planned concept could potentially accommodate two scales of development in those areas: larger-scale development that corresponds to a higher-capacity adjoining roadway, and smaller-scale development that is located along intermediate capacity roadways.

**LU4.A Develop and adopt updated regulations that allow for the creation of minor subdivisions in areas not currently served by public municipal or private corporate sanitary sewer facilities.**

A study completed in early 2005 by the Allen County planning staff notes that from 1995 through 2004, nearly 17,000 acres were used for metes and bounds housing development, averaging approximately 8.7 acres of land per home. Centralized sewer systems are not feasible at this density, thus requiring on-site sewage treatment. Placing limits on the number of metes and bounds lots that can be split from an original parcel would help reduce the number of these lots and mitigate the potential negative impacts. It is likely that there will continue to be a market for limited, low-density residential development outside of designated growth areas, or in areas not currently served by sanitary sewer systems. To deal with this issue in a more controlled manner, the County should explore regulations allowing for the creation of minor plats.

**LU4.B Develop and adopt Plan Commission policies to address development in unincorporated communities not currently served by public municipal or private corporate sanitary sewer facilities.**

There are several unincorporated communities within Allen County which are not currently served by sanitary sewer systems (examples are Maples, Poe and Yoder). Since it is likely that these areas will still want to have certain levels of additional growth and development, the County Plan Commission should develop and adopt policies to specifically address development in these areas.

#### **OBJECTIVE LU5.**

#### **ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND QUALITY DEVELOPMENT, REVITALIZATION AND REDEVELOPMENT BY INCREASING AND ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY.**

In the past 40 years, dispersed development patterns and the separation of uses have led to an increased reliance on personal automobiles and the elimination of many characteristics that support walkable, connected communities. Today, arguments that sidewalks either will not be used or “won’t go anywhere” leave many new streets without sidewalks or with sidewalks on only one side. A need to reduce costs during roadway improvement projects have often led to similar results, even after significant improvements have been made.

One significant potential weakness of a community development pattern where uses are largely segregated from one another is an absence of adequate connectivity. A result of this is the need to rely almost exclusively on automobiles to get to destinations. On the other hand, a result of building a community one mixed-use neighborhood at a time is that people are given the opportunity to walk to their destinations, thereby using vehicles less frequently and also working exercise into their daily lives. Less frequent use of automobiles also can result in reduced air pollution and the reduction in the need for large paved surfaces to accommodate parked cars.

Sidewalks by themselves will not induce walking. Other pedestrian-friendly features also need to be present, such as an appropriate mix of densities and uses, compact street intersections, and neighborhoods that are more pedestrian in scale. Neighborhoods can be built so that walking to destinations is a viable alternative, thereby improving access to services for the third of the population that is unable to drive due to age, health or economic reasons.

Land use and community design play a pivotal role in encouraging pedestrian environments. The community can increase the number and quality of walkable areas by building multiple destinations and uses within close proximity of one another. This type of development pattern helps ensure that streets and sidewalks balance all forms of transportation and that the buildings and corridors are properly sized and scaled.

#### **LU5.A Encourage consistent community standards for pedestrian, vehicular, bicycle, and other similar connectivity situations.**

Communities need many links to facilitate pedestrian and other nonvehicular travel. Even when residential and commercial areas are in close proximity to one another, without adequate connections community residents are discouraged from substituting walking for short vehicle trips.

Recent land use patterns and development designs have typically resulted in a street network with few, or no through streets and walkways. In contrast, older street networks typically have shorter blocks and numerous through streets, providing pedestrians with multiple routes by which to reach their destinations.

Better streets and sidewalks require standards that are consistently applied throughout the community. Sidewalks need adequate widths, buffers, continuity, connectivity and edges to ensure that the needs of pedestrians are met. Also, as is currently the case in Allen County, sometimes jurisdictions have standards that are not coordinated. Through the use of consistent, coordinated design standards, regular public investment, and updated development and subdivision design, communities can provide citizens with secure, convenient and connected streets and sidewalks.

Parking lot design standards should also be reviewed. Poor parking area layouts may force pedestrians to take unsafe routes between parked and moving cars to reach nearby destinations without sidewalks. The design of large surface parking lots in urban centers may cause pedestrians to walk further to access nearby buildings. Large parking areas located in front of buildings separate pedestrian traffic from businesses and may leave walkers isolated. Well-designed parking can actually add convenience and accessibility for those on foot. Parking that incorporates sidewalks, crossings, signs, and other pedestrian-scaled features and is situated in proximity to multiple destinations can provide a connection to a variety of activities, instead of making it difficult to go from place to place.

Once consistent standards are in place, communities will then need to look at retrofitting conventional street networks, so that they can have or approach the connectivity exhibited by traditional street networks. One way to retrofit an area is by using existing natural or man-made features—such as utility corridors, waterways and other open spaces—to link existing walkways and destinations.

#### **LU5.B Encourage development proposals that enhance area connectivity.**

Shops, offices, public facilities and other nonresidential uses are destinations as well as community assets. Diverse streetscapes with retail shops, restaurants, public art and other amenities encourage people to linger. A lively and inviting street is safe and attractive, whereas an empty street can convey abandonment or danger. Building design features that isolate people and discourage pedestrian activity include “faceless” buildings without windows or doors at eye level, buildings with no first-floor retail, or buildings that are set back a great distance from the street. Increasing pedestrian traffic in these areas requires that buildings incorporate designs that create a sense of place and security. There are several tools to make commercial developments and areas more walkable, including design guidelines and updated zoning standards. Design guidelines or zoning standards for new development proposals and construction can look at issues such as: ground-floor space that faces the street, street-level retail in appropriate areas, structures built closer to front lot lines, and open building fronts that incorporate the placement of doors and windows. In addition, zoning and street standards can be used to ensure that blocks are kept short, encouraging sidewalk commerce. Development proposals that conform to these design guidelines or enhance connectivity and pedestrian orientation in other ways should be encouraged.

#### **LU5.C Encourage development proposals that provide neighborhood commercial, civic, institutional and other similar uses, designed to allow adequate access for pedestrians and bicycles, in close proximity to housing.**

Conventional subdivisions with cul-de-sacs and winding streets force residents to drive into their development and then drive out again whenever they need to shop for even the smallest item. The location of daily living activities within walking distance of residential development can cut traffic and air pollution, make the neighborhood more convenient, and give neighbors another opportunity to socialize.

Developments can be designed to bring destinations and origins closer together and provide more incentives for people to walk. Research has demonstrated the importance of densities in promoting walking and transit use. Higher densities and a mix of uses mean more residents or employees are within walking distance of transit stops. It also means that streets have more activity, interest and security by having more people around. Finally, mixed-use development and higher densities lead to a greater propensity to walk or use transit and to lower auto ownership rates. However, in most communities, local zoning ordinances often prohibit the mixing of land uses in new or infill

development. These laws can limit the location of public and private services within walking distance of home, work, and transit. As set forth herein, creating and adopting updated development regulations that allow for and encourage mixed land uses can help to address many of these issues.

According to the Centers for Disease Control Health Styles survey, less than 20 percent of the nation's children currently walk to school. Students living far away from school must be bused or driven to and from school and extracurricular activities. Fort Wayne and Allen County school districts can make it easier for students to walk to and from schools in local communities by building or rehabilitating smaller schools one mile or less from the surrounding neighborhoods. Larger, centralized suburban schools may offer larger facilities and more programs, but neighborhood schools offer more efficient land use and closer walking proximity for students, ultimately translating into improved interaction among students, schools, parents and other citizens. The surrounding community can benefit from the joint use of sports fields, gyms, computer centers, libraries and other resources during nonschool hours. Smaller schools also can be located close to facilities that provide daycare, sports, music, and other after-school activities to supplement schools' formal programs and provide additional convenience for parents and caregivers. Moreover, as residents see their neighbors' children walking to school, they provide eyes on the street to enhance the safety of those children.

**LU5.D Encourage development proposals that provide housing, designed to allow adequate pedestrian and bicycle access, in close proximity to existing neighborhood commercial, civic, institutional and other similar uses.**

An important building block of a healthy community is the strength of its neighborhoods. Providing a variety of housing options in one neighborhood means that residents will be able to continue living in the same neighborhood as they age, without having to move to a more suitable location, and without having to sever close community ties.

Building neighborhoods that provide housing within close proximity to a range of shopping, employment and service opportunities gives residents an alternative to traveling by car. This approach will be most successful where these neighborhoods are compact, allowing everyday activities to take place within one-quarter mile of the neighborhood's center, and where they are well connected with adequate and safe pedestrian/bicycle paths or sidewalks that lead to destinations.

**OBJECTIVE LU6.**

**ENCOURAGE CAREFULLY PLANNED SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND COORDINATED DEVELOPMENT BY ENCOURAGING MIXED LAND USES.**

Mixing land uses—commercial, residential, institutional, recreational, educational, and others—in neighborhoods or places that are accessible by bicycle and on foot can create vibrant and diverse communities. In large part, a mix of uses attracts people to shop, meet friends and live in certain neighborhoods. Mixed land uses can be critical to achieving great places to live, work and play. Current development patterns typically create a separation of land uses. However, conventional suburban development—which is primarily low-density, single-use development—is a significant departure from the way communities were developed and grew during the early 20th century. While the separation of land uses was originally intended to protect communities from polluting industries and incompatible businesses, it has led to a pattern of land development in which stores, housing, schools, and other uses important to daily life are often placed so far apart that they can be reached only by car.

When homes are located within walking distance to uses such as grocery stores or quality employment centers, alternatives to driving such as walking or biking can once again become viable,

thereby enabling more community residents to take advantage of this different lifestyle. Mixed land use can enhance the vitality and perceived security of an area by increasing the number of people on the street. Furthermore, a mix of land uses helps streets, public spaces and retail stores again become places where people meet, thus helping to enhance and revitalize community life.

Mixed land uses can also convey fiscal and economic benefits. Commercial uses in close proximity to residential areas often have higher property values and therefore help raise local tax receipts. Businesses recognize the benefits of being associated with areas that attract people because of different uses. More economic activity exists when there are more people in an area to shop.

Urban and suburban areas can both realize the benefits of mixing land uses, especially for those developments that combine residential and commercial uses in close proximity to each other. This form of mixed-use development can be particularly attractive because it can provide more sales opportunities for local merchants, convenience for residents and nearby housing for retail workers. As a part of this type of development, the provision of a diversity of housing types offering housing choices within neighborhoods can also be encouraged.

#### **LU6.A Inform and educate the public and appropriate community stakeholders about compatible, quality mixed-use development alternatives.**

As has been noted earlier, land is being consumed in the community at a faster rate than the population is growing. This rapid land consumption is due in large part to the growing size of homes and retail space on a per capita basis. But it is also a result of a development pattern that keeps different uses substantially separate from one another. Low-density, single-use land consumption is less efficient and economical. One way to use land more efficiently is to combine different uses within the same development. However, it should not be assumed that all mixed use development will automatically be compatible with existing development. In particular, it is likely that there will continue to be neighborhood concerns about possible negative impacts from new retail development on existing residential areas. As part of encouraging more mixing of land uses, it will be important to educate the public and appropriate community stakeholders about quality, mixed-use development alternatives that will be compatible with existing development and beneficial to community well-being.

#### **LU6.B Develop and adopt updated regulations and other tools to encourage compatible mixed land uses.**

A number of zoning tools can be used to encourage mixed-use developments. One of the most important tools would be to simply update existing zoning regulations and standards to allow for and encourage mixed-use development. Other tools that could be considered would include overall development plans that create a mix of uses. These overall plans would allow Plan Commissions to evaluate the nature and location of uses and buildings on an entire site, and could provide for flexibility in zoning requirements. These plans could also be implemented with complementary design guidelines. Having design guidelines or specific development standards would be one way to help create compatible mixed use developments. These guidelines would establish clear standards and expectations for nonresidential uses, especially retail uses. Another possible tool would be overlay zoning districts that could permit a special application of land use and building design standards in a targeted area. Political support for mixed-use developments would also be important to help overcome some of the project-approval burdens that can be associated with mixed-use development requests.

#### **LU6.C Encourage the conversion of vacant or underutilized properties into compatible mixed-use development areas.**

Underperforming shopping centers are often one of the largest sources of land holdings in existing communities. These “grayfields” constitute prime opportunities for infill development. Left vacant or underutilized, these areas not only represent a significant loss of potential tax revenue, but may also signal the disinvestment in and decline of the surrounding community. Recycling these valuable sites helps maximize the use of existing resources and previous investments, and capitalizes on existing advantages: access to a ready market; working water, sewer, and road infrastructure; and proximity to existing transportation networks.

Underutilized office and retail developments can be made more desirable by integrating complementary uses into the site. The addition and integration of residential, civic, retail, office, education or hotel uses into single-use facilities is needed to build effective mixed-use developments, so that the uses can truly interact. Local communities should encourage developers to retrofit retail and office centers into true mixed-use communities. The vitality and sense of community that accompanies 24-hour centers can only come from a balanced mix of office space, housing and retail that are accessible to each other.

#### **LU6.D Support carefully planned, coordinated, compatible mixed-use development.**

There are many advantages of mixed-use development. As part of encouraging more mixing of land uses, it will be important for the community to develop and adopt updated regulations and other tools to try to ensure that new mixed-use development will be compatible with existing or future development. Once this is completed, mixed-use commercial centers and neighborhoods should be the encouraged as the preferred pattern of development, and developments of single use should be the exception.

### **OBJECTIVE LU7.**

#### **ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY CONSERVING NATURAL FEATURES AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LAND WITH SIGNIFICANT VALUE.**

One goal of many different communities throughout the country is to encourage a “sense of place” within the community. One way to do this is to emphasize and celebrate the existing features of the community that make it stand out from other communities. One feature that the community has are natural features, and environmentally sensitive lands with significant value, primarily floodplain and wetland areas. As noted in the key findings for this chapter, hydric soils (soils that have high moisture content, and which are often indicators of wetlands) make up over 46.4 percent of the undeveloped land area in the community. Preserve and reserve lands as shown on the Conceptual Development Map, which include environmentally sensitive land, make up over 11.2 percent of the County’s total land area.

#### **LU7.A Define “significant value” in terms of natural features and environmentally sensitive land.**

The community has numerous natural features, along with environmentally sensitive land like floodplain and wetland areas. There are a number of ways to conserve natural features and preserve environmentally sensitive land; however, it will not be feasible to conserve every natural site feature, or preserve all environmentally sensitive land. The community should provide input on those natural features and sensitive lands that have the most significance, and are in special need of careful protection. This could include significant woodlands, creeks, and wetlands; critical watershed areas

and corridors; and other similar features. Once this is completed, the community's development regulations could be updated.

**LU7.B Encourage development proposals that are sensitive to preserve or reserve areas.**

Preserve areas, including parks, wetlands, floodway areas and other dedicated open spaces, are currently protected in a number of ways by a variety of organizations. Reserve areas include those areas that could, but have not as yet, been officially designated as preserve areas – areas such as floodway fringe, steep slopes, woodlands, and riparian corridors.

**LU7.C Identify and implement additional floodplain- and watershed-management tools, and update existing floodplain- and watershed-management tools as needed.**

For many years, the community has had floodplain regulations as part of the City and County zoning ordinances. Both also participate in the Community Rating System (CRS), a federal incentive program to lower flood insurance rates for homeowners. The community should continue to participate in the CRS and should continue to update the community's floodplain-management tools. The Indiana Association of Floodplain and Stormwater Managers has recently launched a No Adverse Impact (NAI) initiative, which promotes a more holistic approach to floodplain management. The NAI initiative is organized around the principle that the actions of one property owner should not adversely impact other property owners from a flooding standpoint. The NAI initiative promotes planning tools and approaches to improve upon the typical piecemeal approach to floodplain regulation, which generally consists of reviewing and permitting individual projects on a property-specific basis. The Maumee River Basin Commission is in the process of developing a basin-wide NAI program.

Other floodplain-management tools can include open space preservation and watershed management. Open space preservation should include sites in the watershed both inside and outside of the floodplain to control runoff that adds to flooding. Areas that need to be preserved in a natural state should be listed in land use and capital improvement plans. Watershed management can help reduce runoff of storm water and snowmelt throughout the watershed. Land use management techniques can protect drinking water sources. Strips of vegetation along streams and around reservoirs can provide important buffers, decreasing the amount of pollution entering the water system. Tree and shrub roots hold the bank in place, preventing erosion. Grasses slow the flow of runoff, giving the sediment time to settle and water time to percolate, filter through the soil and recharge underlying groundwater. By identifying and preserving critical ecological areas, the community can continue to take active steps to preserve and enhance water quality and supply.

Other floodplain-management tools include the acquisition of existing structures. The acquisition of flood-prone or flood-damaged property is undertaken by a government agency, so that the cost is not borne by the property owner. Locally, that agency is typically either the City of Fort Wayne in conjunction with the Maumee River Basin Commission, or FEMA. After the existing structures are removed, the land can then be converted to a public use such as a park, or allowed to revert to natural conditions. Fort Wayne should continue to expand its local floodplain-structure acquisition program.

**LU7.D Inform and educate the public and appropriate community stakeholders about sustainable-development alternatives that conserve natural features and preserve environmentally sensitive land.**

There are a number of different approaches to the development of land that can conserve natural features and preserve environmentally sensitive land more effectively than typical development

approaches. Some examples are conservation/cluster development and compact development. Conservation development is generally an overall contiguous area of land proposed to be developed as a single entity. In these developments, housing units are laid out usually according to more flexible or compact building location or setback standards than what would normally apply under single-family district regulations. This approach allows for the flexible grouping, or clustering, of houses in order to conserve natural features and preserve environmentally sensitive land by permitting higher concentrations of development on a smaller portion of land. Conservation subdivisions have become a popular tool to preserve open space. However, this approach should be used with care as it may lead to leap-frog development, which further consumes land.

Similarly, compact development can also offer environmental benefits, including improved water quality. By consuming less land, compact development can leave land free that would otherwise be developed – land that can continue to perform other ecological functions. For instance, a 1995 study by the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League examined the water-quality impacts of two development alternatives. The results concluded that the conventional low-density scenario consumed eight times more open space and generated 43 percent more runoff, four times more sediment, almost four times more nitrogen, and three times more phosphorous than the more compact scenario.

However, compact development can adversely impact critical environmental areas if not located properly. Best management practices can mitigate development impacts on adjacent environmental resources and reduce pollution originating from a developed area. There are many best management practices available to communities, including buffer zones, narrower residential streets and tree planting. When incorporated into compactly designed areas, these practices can address many pollution issues.

Trees are also important components of a community's green infrastructure. A healthy population of trees offers substantial environmental benefits, including cleaner air and water, quieter streets, cheaper energy bills, cooler temperatures and wildlife habitat. In addition, trees can provide numerous economic advantages, such as increased property values and lower air and water remediation costs.

Another technique is the use of incentive zoning. This allows builders to create a greater number of lots than normally allowed in a development in exchange for dedicating additional open space. Communities across the country have successfully used these types of alternative development approaches to preserve natural features or environmentally sensitive lands throughout a community.

Regardless of the development approach chosen, other best management practices can mitigate developmental impacts on adjacent environmental resources and reduce pollution originating from a developed area. There are many best management practices available to communities, including buffer zones, narrower residential streets, and tree planting. Another management practice that is effective where applicable is wetlands protection. Wetlands is the collective term for marshes, swamps, bogs and similar areas found in flat, vegetated areas, in depressions in the landscape, and between dry land and water along edges of streams, rivers, lakes and coastlines. Wetlands filter runoff and adjacent surface waters to protect the quality of lakes, bays and rivers, and protect many of our sources of drinking water. They can store large amounts of floodwaters, slowing and reducing downstream flows. They can protect shorelines from erosion. Wetlands serve as a source of many commercially and recreationally valuable species of fish, shellfish, and wildlife. When incorporated into conservation or compactly designed areas, these other best practices can help address a number of potential impacts on environmentally sensitive land.



**LU7.E Collaborate with nongovernmental entities and organizations to acquire and/or protect significant natural and environmentally sensitive land.**

Foundations, land trusts and other public and nonprofit entities often have a fundamental interest in preserving properties with natural, cultural or historic value. Such entities can be particularly helpful with building coalitions, assisting on land-use legislation and making policy recommendations to communities. The community should support these organizations to improve civic awareness about their missions.

In addition, these organizations can help with the acquisition of open space. Land trusts operate at the local and regional level to acquire and protect land of significant ecological, open space, recreational and historical value. The nonprofit status of land trusts and some other nongovernmental organizations can also allow landowners to receive tax breaks when they sell their property below market value.

**OBJECTIVE LU8.**

**USE LAND RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY BY ENCOURAGING COMPACT DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES IN INFILL AREAS WHERE UTILITIES AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE CURRENTLY EXIST.**

As is described in the key findings, land is being consumed in the community at a faster rate than the population is growing. In fact, over the past 16 years, Fort Wayne has experienced a 62.7 percent increase in developed land areas while the population increase was calculated at 27.5 percent. This rapid land consumption is due in large part to the growing number of new homes, and the size of those homes, along with an increase in retail space on a per capita basis. As more land is used for construction of homes and retail uses, less is available on a regional basis for other uses such as recreation, or for agricultural production. Low-density land consumption is also less efficient and economical. One way of using land more efficiently is building in a more compact manner. By using smaller building footprints for new construction and retaining open space, compact design leaves undeveloped land open to absorb and filter rainwater. Those methods in turn reduce flooding and storm water drainage needs and lower the amount of runoff pollution. Furthermore, compact neighborhoods require fewer linear feet of utility lines—like water, sewer, electricity, phone service and others—than dispersed communities do. As a result, it is less expensive to provide and maintain many services to compact communities.

As the public becomes more informed about compact development and the benefits that can come with it, the following strategies should be useful in incorporating compact building design into the community.

**LU8.A Inform and educate the public and the appropriate community stakeholders about compatible, quality, compact design alternatives.**

Developers who propose compact development may face opposition from a public that is unfamiliar with high-quality compact development. The public needs to be aware of the benefits of compact building, and how it can create convenience, privacy, recreation opportunities and more manageable traffic. Public involvement and education is the key to increasing community support for compact neighborhoods.

Another way to use land resources efficiently is to encourage the location of major civic and institutional uses and activities within or near existing neighborhoods. Along with that, the community could encourage any new buildings that accommodate these uses to utilize green building technologies to encourage even more sustainable growth. Information on these updated building technologies could be incorporated into community informational and educational materials.

#### **LU8.B Encourage compact design.**

Current zoning requirements and standards set minimum lot sizes, setbacks and parking requirements in a way that often makes it impermissible or difficult to construct compact buildings. Additionally, zoning standards can limit the density in conventional new developments and commercial centers to a level that does not automatically permit development that would be considered compact. Rather than being encouraged, developers who want to build compact developments may instead need variances to the existing requirements. Some jurisdictions may be unaware of the extent to which their current zoning requirements, or lack of certain specific standards, limit or even prevent compact communities.

#### **LU8.C Inform and educate the public and the appropriate community stakeholders about compatible, quality, higher-density design alternatives.**

As with compact development, developers who propose higher-density development may also face opposition from a public that is unfamiliar with high-quality, higher-density development. The community needs to be made aware of good, high-density building design and its benefits. Again, public involvement and education about the process are key to community support for higher-density development. Community education can help show that the determinant of development acceptability is not how dense it is, but how well designed it is.

#### **LU8.D Use land resources efficiently by encouraging high-density development where appropriate in infill areas where utilities and other infrastructure currently exist, and by establishing criteria to identify areas where higher-density development, redevelopment and revitalization should be encouraged.**

Although higher density development can be more efficient and more economical to provide services to and amenities for, it will not be appropriate in all areas of the community. Criteria and policies for identifying those areas where higher-density redevelopment and revitalization should be encouraged.

### **OBJECTIVE LU9.**

#### **ENCOURAGE IMPROVED COMMUNITY WELL-BEING AND QUALITY DEVELOPMENT BY ALIGNING THE COMMUNITY'S DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS.**

One of the primary reasons for doing a joint community Comprehensive Plan is to look at overall community development and growth issues in a comprehensive, coordinated manner. The City and County Plan Commissions' staffs have previously identified the need to align the communities zoning and development standards wherever possible, and have also identified the primary areas where those standards are not currently aligned. To encourage quality development in both jurisdictions and also throughout the community, a logical next step will be to align those development standards as much as is practical.

#### **LU9.A Encourage consistent community development standards.**

The City and County Plan Commissions' staffs have identified the areas where development standards are not currently aligned. The objectives included in this part of the Plan identify several other areas where updated community standards and development regulations should be developed and adopted. Some of the issues to be addressed are connectivity, mixing of land uses, conserving natural features and environmentally sensitive land, and compact and higher-density design.

Another example of aligning development standards would be to incorporate Fort Wayne International Airport flight-zone restrictions into development regulations. Development near both airports is restricted in several ways by federal standards and guidelines, including limitations on height and location. In order to ensure that development does not encroach on airport flight zones, specific standards should be incorporated into community development regulations that are compatible with and support federal guidelines.

Another example would be large format retail development. Large format (“big box”) stores typically range in size from 90,000 to 250,000 square feet, and are typically characterized by windowless, standardized, one-story buildings with an ample supply of parking. These uses often have a shorter useful life-span and can be difficult to convert to other uses when they are vacated. The community could consider additional design standards for this type of commercial use.

The development and adoption of these updated, aligned standards should be done in a way that allows for joint review and approval of those standards, establishing them as community standards where possible.

### **OBJECTIVE LU10.**

#### **ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY PROMOTING QUALITY, COMPATIBLE INFILL DEVELOPMENT, REVITALIZATION AND REDEVELOPMENT IN THE FORT WAYNE URBAN AREA.**

The cost of redeveloping land and rehabilitating or revitalizing buildings is not only driven by the cost of materials and labor, it is also influenced by the developer’s profit motive. In communities around the country, thousands of local community development corporations (CDCs) or other community-based organizations (CBOs) function as developers of residential and commercial property with no profit motive. As a result, these organizations are able to create viable, affordable projects by using public, private and in-kind contributions. These nonprofit organizations have developed significant expertise in development at the neighborhood or block level. They are often capable of putting together complex financial development transactions, involving many different financial sources, which few profit-minded developers are willing to undertake.

Continued support for these community organizations in the form of financial resources, technical assistance or other stakeholder involvement ensures that public resources are used for cost-efficient and community-oriented projects. This support improves the chances that public resources are used in projects that demonstrate a community’s own development priorities. CDCs and other CBOs are often responsive and accountable to community members in a way that few other entities are. Board members and staff of these nonprofits often live in the neighborhoods themselves, thereby ensuring that the activities that the organization seeks to complete help to achieve an improved quality of life for all residents of the neighborhood.

#### **LU10.A Create or expand incentive programs to encourage private reinvestment within existing neighborhoods.**

Rehabilitation of existing homes represents a fundamental approach to strengthening existing neighborhoods. Creating tools and incentives for home owners and building owners (such as investors in rental property) to upgrade their properties can bring about visible new improvements to accommodate changing needs, and allow for those homes to remain in place as long-term stabilizing forces in the community. Furthermore, rehabilitation and renovation represent large and generally stable parts of the local economy, particularly during slower economic periods. To encourage property renovation and upgrading, the community can provide grants, low-cost loans, tax abatements or other incentives to property owners for rehabilitating their properties. They may also

consider evaluating current building codes to ensure that they constitute a reasonable approach to ensuring safety in all building types. Some communities have found, for example, that existing building codes made renovation of older properties often unfeasible, and adopted a building subcode that applied specifically to rehabilitation.

Business improvement districts (BIDs), like the one already active in downtown Fort Wayne, are also frequently used as tools to encourage revitalization and investment in targeted areas. Most BIDs are designed according to a common set of principles. Characteristically, local governments work closely with commercial property owners to form a special district within the community. The local government or an independent, nonprofit organization then levies a special fee from the businesses. The proceeds from this levy are used to supplement existing public services and foster improvements for businesses within the BID. A board of directors comprising business and local government leaders generally governs the BID. Usually, BID activities include some form of maintenance or beautification, security improvements and marketing of the district. The BID's basic purpose is to enhance or revitalize the district and to foster additional business activity. The usefulness of the BID model is not confined to urban areas. There is already an existing familiarity with this tool in many smaller communities.

#### **LU10.B Promote the use of asset-driven market analysis to encourage commercial investment in underserved areas.**

Many areas within the Fort Wayne urban area have lost commercial and retail investment, leaving existing markets underserved. This is largely the result of conventional market analyses that conclude that older communities with higher concentrations of moderate- to low-income households lack the buying power to support stores and businesses. These analyses often fail to take the population density of urban areas into account, focusing instead on average household income. In fact, retail is currently overbuilt in many suburban areas around the country, while urban centers are an important untapped market.

The urban market is underserved for everyday shopping needs and represents an opportunity for retailers. National retailers are beginning to realize this and acting accordingly. Urban populations do not always have a high per-capita income, but they represent a large net-buying power. Some overlooked assets of older, centrally located neighborhoods include: strategic location, local demand, and available human resources. These assets, when properly packaged, are key to educating commercial and retail interests on the latent opportunities of central cities and older-ring suburban markets. The central location of many older communities within the area affords unique advantages for commercial interests, such as access to skilled labor markets. Such information can attract investment and assist community leaders in overcoming obstacles to new business development.

#### **LU10.C Encourage infill or redevelopment of existing nonresidential single-use developments with compatible housing and retail uses where appropriate.**

In certain Fort Wayne urban areas there are isolated areas of commercial (often office) or industrial development surrounded by parking lots and open space, linked to other similar single-use developments by service roads or other parking areas. Disconnected from other community services and amenities, these places require that workers drive to get lunch or run other errands. Separating office or other employment activity from residences and commercial areas can create a jobs-housing imbalance. The consequences of this are readily apparent: commuters spend lost-hours in traffic to reach isolated work destinations, arterial roadways are busier at lunchtime, and workers have no nearby amenities. To deal with these issues and to create a more inviting environment for employers

and employees, companies around the country are looking at more integrated approaches in the development of office parks and other similar single-use developments. They are connecting job centers to nearby feeder buses. As an example, office parks are becoming places where people can shop and live nearby, as well as work. Rather than building detached, single-story office buildings, companies are seeing the advantage of locating in more compact areas that support a range of amenities. This can lead to opportunities for encouraging infill or redevelopment of these existing areas with compatible retail and also housing uses, where appropriate.

**LU10.D Create and adopt updated development regulations and other tools to encourage quality, compatible infill development and redevelopment.**

Two of the primary areas often cited as factors in either making infill development cost-prohibitive, or making compatible infill development very difficult, are storm water requirements and parking standards. Developers in urban areas often find that requirements stipulating that storm water be managed on the project site are a barrier to redevelopment, construction of infill or more compact projects. Land for onsite storm water management is often not available, or the required management techniques are prohibitively expensive. In addition, codes that limit the amount of impervious surface that can be built on a site discourage both development in urban areas and compact development. Inflexible storm water regulations applied in urban areas can have the unintended effect of worsening water quality by forcing development to undeveloped fringe areas.

Fortunately, there are innovative options that foster redevelopment and control storm water, including offsite mitigation. The possibility of offsite mitigation makes smaller infill projects more feasible and provides an opportunity to locate mitigation facilities in a way that can serve multiple projects. Fort Wayne will need to become more involved with identifying the locations, and perhaps even facilitating the construction of these larger scale storm water management facilities.

With regard to parking standards, while compact building design and higher development densities can increase the viability of other modes of transportation, such as public transit, bicycling, and walking, this community is still highly dependent on the automobile, and will still need to accommodate parking. But in urban areas, parking needs to be evaluated in different ways. Conventional approaches to parking, typically large, surface parking areas between the street and the front door of the business or home, not only represent inefficient uses of valuable urban land (there are estimates that indicate that one-third to one-half of urban land is dedicated to the driving and parking of vehicles), but also undermine the walkability that compact communities would otherwise support. Several tools can be used to better plan for parking and reduce the need for surface lots, including allowing on-street parking to qualify towards the amount of parking a building owner needs, or encouraging buildings that need parking at different times of the day to share parking spaces.

**LU10.E Encourage infill development and redevelopment which is compatible with the character of existing development, including historic features.**

Two of the primary factors that draw people to urban environments are the character of the existing structures, in particular, historic structures; and the higher levels of community- and pedestrian-oriented design found there. Conventional, new development patterns and building designs are usually not automatically compatible with either the character of the existing historic structures or the pattern of the existing development. However, new infill development and redevelopment can be made compatible, with additional attention to the building layouts and designs. Adopted neighborhood or area plans can also be used to further identify underutilized properties and encourage compatible infill development in those areas.

## **OBJECTIVE LU11.**

### **MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS BY MINIMIZING URBAN, SUBURBAN AND RURAL CONFLICTS.**

Maintaining agricultural operations deserves attention for a variety of reasons. Most of the land that is under the greatest development pressure is agricultural land surrounding rapidly growing residential areas. Most of the agricultural land in Allen County would be considered “prime,” because this farmland consists of the highest quality soils. Prime soils cover over 93 percent of the undeveloped area in Allen County. Given this definition, the preservation of all “prime” agricultural land is not necessarily, feasible or desirable. Other factors greatly influence the viability of agricultural operations in Allen County. The maintenance of large, contiguous blocks of land, proximity to markets and transportation networks, and the absence of conflicts with neighboring land uses can contribute to the vitality of the agricultural community. These factors become even more important given the demand for residential and commercial development in greenfield areas.

#### **LU11.A Encourage discussion on the value of exclusive agricultural-zoning districts.**

Public discussion of the benefits of agricultural production in the community, including the value of and need for creating exclusive agricultural-zoning districts in certain areas, should continue. This will involve coordination with other agencies, nonprofit organizations and landowners to promote the continued viability of agricultural uses and lifestyles in Allen County.

#### **LU11.B Identify the full range of tools available to promote the continued viability of prime agricultural land and existing agricultural operations.**

There are a number of tools available, including: supporting farming outside of growth areas; permitting limited small-scale, farm-based businesses; formally protecting the right of farm operators in designated agricultural areas to continue farming operations and practices; updating and adopting review provisions for individual property sales to maintain large agricultural parcels; and promoting a minimum lot size that is large enough to sustain farm enterprises.

#### **LU11.C Encourage the continuation of agricultural uses by protecting agricultural areas from incompatible land uses.**

Nonagricultural land uses are impacted when those uses are within close proximity of agricultural operations. These uses can also influence the conversion of this resource due to the availability and proximity of utilities and other urban infrastructure. Ways to protect agricultural areas from incompatible land uses include: working cooperatively with local planning entities to discourage nonagricultural land uses in agricultural areas; limiting rural residential development; encouraging compatible rural residential development; and reviewing ordinances that allow rural development.

## **OBJECTIVE LU12.**

### **MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF SIGNIFICANT STRATEGIC COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSETS BY MINIMIZING LAND USE CONFLICTS WITH THOSE ASSETS.**

Maintaining the quality, and in some cases, the viability of existing, significant community and economic development assets can be more important than efforts to attract new economic development activities. Many factors influence the quality of community facilities like airports, major educational institutions and industrial facilities, and hospital/medical campuses. These facilities are

described in more detail in the Economic Development Chapter, but land use conflicts that could have a negative impact on these community facilities should be minimized.

**LU12.A Identify the full range of tools available to promote the continued quality and viability of significant strategic community and economic development assets.**

There are a number of tools available, including: identifying and encouraging uses that would be compatible with these community facilities and uses; identifying and discouraging uses that would not be compatible with these uses; proactively rezoning properties in the vicinity of these uses to allow for possible future expansions; meeting with community use leaders to identify existing barriers to continued operations; and updating development regulations to carry out these objectives

**LU12.B Encourage the continued quality and viability of significant strategic community and economic development assets by protecting these uses and areas from incompatible land uses.**

As noted above, one of the tools available to promote the continued quality and viability of significant, strategic community and economic development assets is to discourage incompatible uses from locating near these uses or areas. One of the best examples of this would be to not permit new residential development in airport affected areas. Current development regulations should be updated to incorporate airport flight zone and other airport-related development restrictions.

**OBJECTIVE LU13.**

**IMPROVE COMMUNITY WELL-BEING BY ENHANCING THE VITALITY AND IDENTITY OF THE COMMUNITY'S TOWNS AND CITIES.**

Each of Allen County's incorporated areas is unique. Their histories, development patterns, strengths, as well as their goals and plans are significant to each community's future. Coordination between public and private groups can ensure the continued vitality of each area.

**LU13.A Strengthen the coordination with Allen County's incorporated areas.**

Even though each incorporated area has jurisdictional responsibilities to its constituents, sometimes different county and state functions cross those jurisdictional lines. Increased communication and early coordination with incorporated areas can maximize resources, as well as enhance the quality of life in each town.

**LU13.B Recognize the uniqueness of Allen County's incorporated areas in formulating recommendations on development proposals.**

Across-the-board development standards and zoning ordinance requirements do not always take into account the existing built environment, or local perspectives and needs. Sometimes going beyond minimum standards will be necessary when development is proposed to ensure a quality, compatible development that respects a community's cultural and historical heritage.

**OBJECTIVE LU14.**

**ENHANCE THE USE AND PRESENCE OF THE THREE RIVERS.**

Allen County spans the drainage divide between waters flowing east toward Lake Erie, and those flowing west toward the Mississippi River. This divide runs roughly north/south through the western portion of the County. The Eel River, Seegar Ditch, Aboite Creek, Robinson Creek, Little River (or Little Wabash River), and Eight Mile Creek are the principal streams in the western part of the County that flow to the Mississippi. In the eastern two-thirds of the County, the Three Rivers (St.

Joseph, St. Mary's, and Maumee Rivers), and Flatrock Creek are the principal streams draining to Lake Erie. Cedar Creek, a principal tributary of the St. Joseph River, runs across the north/central part of the County and joins the St. Joseph just below Leo-Cedarville. These corridors can be accessed and enjoyed by the public if the appropriate planning is conducted and adequate facilities are provided. Enhancing the use and presence of the County's waterways, particularly as alternative transportation and recreation corridors, is the focus of the strategies that follow.

**LU14.A Continue to coordinate with existing, adopted river-oriented plans and strategies, such as the Rivergreenway Master Plan, the Maumee River Basin Master Plan, and other existing and future plans and strategies.**

Like the Rivergreenway Master Plan, the most successful completed greenway projects have all begun with a thorough and detailed comprehensive planning and project development process. Issues involving the design and construction of a trail can be resolved early and the development process can proceed with few interruptions when a thorough planning process occurs first. These plans are also extremely helpful in the fundraising and grant application process. Public participation should be an important phase of each corridor planning process. Each greenway corridor should have a comprehensive development plan prepared prior to major construction activity occurring.

Installed trails should be evaluated and additional amenities such as site furniture, parking, drinking fountains, call boxes, bike racks, landscaping and signage should be installed as needed. Street crossings should be monitored for safety and improvements made when warranted. Compliance with current Americans with Disabilities (ADA) standards should be continually monitored.

Additional greenway corridors are needed particularly in Allen County in areas where dense residential and commercial developments have given rise to public demand for nonmotorized, alternative transportation routes. As more greenways are developed and added to the system, it is critical that the maintenance crews continue to provide good service. It is also critical that funding is provided for adequate staffing and equipment.

The Greenway Consortium, a citizen-led advisory board, has been a valuable asset as the greenway system has evolved and should continue to be kept involved with and informed of greenway activities, and actively involved in policy decisions. Other partnerships with neighborhood groups, private individuals and local businesses should also be pursued to provide the means to acquire various amenities that may not otherwise be available due to budget or manpower restrictions. Partnering also develops strong advocates within the community and strengthens the ties with the neighborhoods along the greenway corridors.

Educational opportunities exist on each greenway corridor. Local schools, universities and advocacy groups can provide cultural and natural science "self-directed sites" along the greenways for educational activities to occur.

The safety of users on the greenway trails will continue to be a major issue in the development of new trails. Park Rangers, Fort Wayne Police Department, Allen County Sheriff's Department, and volunteer trail monitors should all be involved in the safety of trail users within the greenway system.

**LU14.B Encourage additional appropriate river-related development in the Fort Wayne urban core.**

Similar to the past treatment of downtown rivers in many older urban areas, the City of Fort Wayne currently does not utilize its existing river areas as actively or as effectively as it could. But many cities, such as San Antonio, Cincinnati, and Louisville, have shown how taking a more active



approach to downtown river development can bring many benefits in terms of enhancing an active, walkable, safe downtown area.

As recommended in the Downtown BlueprintPLUS, a recent update of the 2003 Downtown Blueprint, the existing trails should be improved and expanded so that Lawton Park becomes the central hub of the network of trails throughout the region.

## 2. Economic Development

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### Introduction

As Allen County enters the 21st Century, its economy is in the midst of a fundamental and gradual transition moving from a long-standing dependence on its industrial base to the knowledge-based economy. This transition has many significant implications for the community, its workers and its residents. The relationship between comprehensive planning and economic development is certainly affected by this shift. Previous Plans have almost always equated economic development with industrial development, concentrating on planning for future industrial sites. We can no longer view the relationship in such narrow terms.

The economy of this century most assuredly will involve a new set of locational issues and infrastructure demands. Reorienting our thinking away from just industrial development to a more complex set of business development issues will not be easy or straightforward.

What is economic development? Don Iannone of Donald T. Iannone and Associates – a consultant engaged to assist in the preparation of this chapter, defines economic development as follows:

“Economic development refers to those actions taken by local, regional, and state public and private sector organizations to encourage and foster high-quality industry, business, job, income, and tax base growth in the Allen County/Fort Wayne area. These activities include policies and services aimed at: 1) helping existing businesses grow and expand; 2) attracting new companies to the area; 3) assisting entrepreneurs to start new businesses; and 4) strengthening the local and regional climates to foster future economic development.”<sup>1</sup>

An underlying principle has guided our community’s economic development efforts – the same principle used by nearly every community, region or state in their respective economic development activities. Generally referred to as economic base theory, this principle suggests that, with only a few exceptions, proactive efforts to incentivize economic activity should be aimed at businesses, jobs and development which increase the net collective wealth of the community. The *Economic Analysis of Allen County*, prepared by the Department of Planning Services in 1996, clearly states this principle:

“The Economic Base Theory asserts that any local economy is structured to include two broad classes of economic activity – the basic sector which produces and distributes goods and services for export outside the local area; and the nonbasic sector whose goods and services are consumed within the given local area. The underlying assumption in this theory is that only the basic sector of the local economy brings new money into the community and therefore creates net new growth.”<sup>2</sup>

From an economic development perspective, Allen County has traditionally viewed itself as one of many northeast Indiana counties competing for jobs and business investment, frequently in the manufacturing sector. Certainly Allen County is geographically larger and significantly more populous than other nearby counties, but there has been a traditional atmosphere of competition with these surrounding counties nevertheless. More recently, it has become much clearer that geographic

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<sup>1</sup> *Economic Development: Creating Competitive Community Economic Foundations*; working paper prepared by Donald T. Iannone and Associates; Cleveland, Ohio; August, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> *Executive Summary - An Economic Analysis of Allen County, Indiana*; Allen County Department of Planning Services; 1996, p 5.

and economic regions across the globe are in competition with each other and that communities throughout an individual region perform unique roles within their given region. Competition has shifted from community versus community to region versus region.

Fort Wayne and Allen County serve as the regional center for northeast Indiana. In many respects, we share in the economic opportunities and challenges of the entire northeast Indiana region. In other cases Fort Wayne's role as the regional center and as one of the 100-largest cities in the United States will be much different than that of any other community in northeast Indiana. The Comprehensive Plan must reflect both that regional perspective and the uniqueness of being the regional center.

In recent years, there has also been a growing recognition of the need for improved cooperation in delivering economic development services within Allen County. For many years this responsibility was split between the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce, the City of Fort Wayne, Allen County government and several other municipalities throughout the County. Creation of the Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance in 1999 is perhaps the most tangible evidence of an improved level of cooperation and coordination. The adoption of a joint Allen County-Fort Wayne Comprehensive Plan is another important step toward a better marshalling of our resources and aligning of our strategies to improve our economic opportunities.

Having defined again the activity known as "economic development"; restated economic base theory, the underlying principle that guides our local economic development efforts; reinforced the broader-than-industrial-development scope of economic development in today's world; and recognized the important duality of a regional perspective coupled with Allen County/Fort Wayne's role as regional hub, the current economic situation in Allen County and Fort Wayne can be explored.

## Overview

Allen County, northeast Indiana and the entire state have experienced a gradual but steady decline in their wealth creation capacity compared with national averages. Average annual wages in Allen County dropped from just over 95 percent of the United States average in 1997 to 88.5 percent of the United States average in 2004.<sup>3</sup> This affects the community in many ways: the relative standard of living of our citizens; the appreciation of housing values; and our collective ability to support the investments in our community that create "quality of place". As the United States economy continues its transition from a manufacturing focus to a service and knowledge-based economy, Allen County's competitive position in the global economy can no longer be taken for granted. We are going to have to continue to work to attract and retain outside investment and quality employment opportunities for our citizens. How we plan for the future physical environment of Allen County will be an important component in meeting this competitive challenge. The Comprehensive Plan must not only seek to improve the quality of life for our current and future citizens, it must also be a tool to enhance the competitive position of the community in a worldwide economy.

This economic reality is recognized by the residents of Allen County. In the Plan-it Allen! Survey released in August of 2005, 56 percent of the respondents stated that creating and keeping jobs was the issue that would have the most important impact on the quality of life in Fort Wayne and Allen County. That topic garnered more than five-times-higher the percentage of responses than any other issue.

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<sup>3</sup> Based on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages prepared by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

A substantial amount of detail regarding economic conditions in Allen County was presented in the 1997 Allen County Department of Planning Services report entitled *An Economic Analysis of Allen County, Indiana*, and in the Economics section of *A Comprehensive Plan for Allen County and Fort Wayne – Existing Conditions Report*. An extensive review of regional economic conditions can be found in the *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for 2003-2008* as prepared by the Region III-A Economic Development District and Regional Planning Commission, and in the “Overview of Northeast Indiana Strategic Skills Initiative Project” section of the report *Rebuilding Our Technological Heritage* recently prepared by the Northeast Indiana Workforce Investment Board.

This chapter outlines a series of recommendations for addressing those economic development issues related to land use and public infrastructure within Allen County and Fort Wayne. It is organized into the following sections:

- Policy Foundation of the Plan;
- Goal;
- Key Findings;
- Economic Development Opportunity Areas; and
- Objectives and Strategies.

#### Policy Foundation of the Plan

The current Comprehensive Plan for the City of Fort Wayne planning jurisdiction is *The Fort Wayne Comprehensive Plan*, adopted by the Fort Wayne Common Council in May of 1982. The current Comprehensive Plan for the jurisdiction of the Allen County Plan Commission is *The Comprehensive Plan of Allen County, Indiana*, adopted by the Board of Commissioners in April, 1975. Each jurisdiction has subsequently modified their respective Plans on several occasions. The most significant of those modifications relate to the areas surrounding the Fort Wayne International Airport, the General Motors Truck Assembly Plant and the Airport Expressway.

The Comprehensive Plan now being prepared has been informed by the body of public information and formal public policy that has evolved since the last Comprehensive Plans were adopted. Public policy related to land use, infrastructure and economic development normally develops in an incremental manner. Therefore, it is meaningful to briefly examine what has already been discussed and, in many cases, decided in the public arena.

#### **Fort Wayne Urban Enterprise Zone**

The delineation of Fort Wayne’s Urban Enterprise Zone, established in 1983 and with the subsequent boundary modifications that have occurred since its creation, represents a policy statement by the Fort Wayne Common Council in support of extraordinary steps to promote business and community revitalization within the designated, historic industrial core of Fort Wayne.

In 2005, the Fort Wayne Common Council adopted a resolution endorsing the continued existence of the Fort Wayne Urban Enterprise Zone through its current reauthorization period (December 31, 2013).<sup>4</sup> Under current enabling legislation the Enterprise Zone there will be no further opportunity for subsequent extensions of the Fort Wayne Zone beyond 2013.

#### **Allen County Overall Economic Development Plan**

In 1985 Fort Wayne and Allen County prepared a complete update and revision of the *Overall Economic Development Plan* (OEDP) that had originally been adopted in 1977. This update had been

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<sup>4</sup> Fort Wayne Common Council Resolution R-05-09-06.

suggested in the 1982 *Fort Wayne Comprehensive Plan*. That was, however, the last extensive and comprehensive revision to local economic development policies until preparation of the *Economic Development Action Plan for Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana* in 2000. The 1985 OEDP was that last broad-based economic development strategy to be formally adopted as public policy in Allen County.

### ***Southwest Allen County Land Use Study (1985)***

At the time the Allen County Plan Commission recommended the rezoning of approximately 1,000 acres from an agricultural to an industrial classification for the General Motors Truck Assembly Plant project, it concurrently directed the staff to prepare an update to the *Comprehensive Plan of Allen County*. This update was intended to provide a long-range plan for the area surrounding the General Motors facility, the Fort Wayne International Airport, and the land between. It was recognition of the significant change the General Motors rezoning would have on the existing Comprehensive Plan. The City of Fort Wayne became a partner in this study and ultimately agreed to adopt identical modifications to the City's Comprehensive Plan. The resulting joint document was entitled the *Southwest Allen County Land Use Study*. It included numerous recommendations regarding land use regulation, public utility improvements, highway improvements and economic development policy.<sup>5</sup>

### ***An Economic Analysis of Allen County, Indiana (1996)***

In the mid-1990s the Allen County Department of Planning Services prepared an extensive examination of the local economy. This study was originally intended to set the foundation for preparation of a new economic development strategy for the community to replace the 1985 *Overall Economic Development Plan*. While the subsequent strategy did not materialize, the *Analysis* did document several insightful observations regarding the changing nature of the local economy:

“The five analyses undertaken by the County's economic development staff are related and have significant implications for the future development of the community. Common themes include the fact that most of the manufacturing employment growth will come from smaller operations. The community's major employers will not be significant job generators and certain major employers are in industries that are projected to decline in the future. Also, if the community is going to position itself to facilitate the location and expansion of smaller manufacturing operations, it must have a wide variety of ready-to-develop industrial parks and sites.”<sup>6</sup>

### ***The Intergovernmental Memorandum of Understanding to Fund Infrastructure Improvements in Southwest Allen County (1996)***

The 1977 *Allen County Comprehensive Plan* identifies the area surrounding the Fort Wayne International Airport as one of the key potential industrial development locations in the community. In 1996, the City of Fort Wayne, Allen County and the Fort Wayne-Allen County Airport Authority entered into a Memorandum of Understanding<sup>7</sup> to fund certain infrastructure improvements in the

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<sup>5</sup>*Recommendations for Improving the Inventory of Industrial Sites in Allen County – Airport Area Presentation*; PowerPoint presentation prepared by the Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance; Winter 2000-01; pp. 8-9.

<sup>6</sup>*An Economic Analysis of Allen County, Indiana*; Allen County Department of Planning Services; Fort Wayne, IN; 1996; page 15.

<sup>7</sup>“Intergovernmental Memorandum of Understanding to Fund Infrastructure Improvements in Southwest Allen County”; City of Fort Wayne, Allen County, and the Fort Wayne-Allen County Airport Authority; December, 1996.

area adjacent to and surrounding the Fort Wayne International Airport. The preamble of that document notes the need for this community to take a more proactive approach to ensure an adequate supply of ready-to-develop industrial sites. Implementation of this MOU has resulted in over \$7 million in sanitary-sewer and public-water improvements serving 2,000 acres of industrially zoned land in close proximity to the airport.

### **Economic Research Associates Report and Recommendations (1997)**

In the early 1990s a growing concern again emerged that our community was losing its competitive advantage because of a perceived lack of quality industrial sites. That concern was pushing local economic development practitioners toward recommending that the public sector become more involved in the ownership and preparation of industrial parks and sites. It was determined, however, that before such a recommendation could be properly substantiated, an objective analysis of our needs as perceived by the marketplace should be undertaken. In 1994, the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce and the City of Fort Wayne jointly engaged Thorne Consultants, Inc. to perform a two-phase analysis of the industrial land needs in northeast Indiana, with a particular focus given to the needs in Allen County. Building upon the preliminary work undertaken by Thorne Consultants, Economic Research Associates (ERA) was subsequently engaged to identify a viable long-term industrial development strategy for the Fort Wayne metropolitan area. Their final report was released in 1997. The ERA report contained several recommendations relative to potential industrial/distribution/business sites.

### **Recommendations from *Improving the Inventory of Available Industrial Sites***

In 1997 the Allen County Department of Planning Services prepared an analysis of the existing stock of industrial sites in the community to assist in guiding the activities of the Allen County Redevelopment Commission. This report made a number of findings and recommendations regarding the current inventory and steps that could be taken to make improvements:

“Allen County is no longer competitive in the race to attract new industry. Other communities, many of them smaller, have surpassed Allen County. They have positioned themselves so they are able to provide ready-to-develop sites when industries want them. Their efforts show us what we have to do to put Allen County and its cities and towns back in a competitive position.”<sup>8</sup>

“Ready-to-develop property entails a complete package. Water and sewer service must be available at the edge of the site and adequate to handle the demands of a manufacturing facility. Electric and natural gas lines also must be near the site and of sufficient capacity. The road or roads providing access to the site must be of sufficient width and depth to handle large trucks with heavy loads in a safe manner. Some sites must also be available with rail service. The property must be properly zoned for industrial use. Steps must also be taken in advance to address physical concerns of the property such as drainage and the presence of floodplain or wetland areas. Also, a sufficient amount of property must be assembled and in the hands of a willing seller. And finally, there must be professional marketing efforts of the land. Prospective industries must know that we have land available and its characteristics.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Improving the Inventory of Available Industrial Sites*; prepared by the Economic Development Division of the Allen County Department of Planning Services; December, 1997; p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

## **Significant Improvements in the Delivery of Economic Development Services**

In the late 1990s, this community restructured the manner in which it is organized to nurture, retain, expand and attract jobs and investment. As was noted previously, the creation of the Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance was a collaborative effort on the part of the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce, the City of Fort Wayne and Allen County to significantly upgrade and consolidate the job retention, expansion and attraction efforts. The creation of a single “point of contact” for existing and potential businesses has provided for a more focused use of our collective resources. It has also been the conduit for the allocation of additional resources aimed at enhancing our competitive efforts. By consolidating and increasing resources, the Alliance has provided a more sophisticated and aggressive approach to local attraction and retention efforts. The Alliance has also spearheaded local efforts to approach long-term economic development through a cluster-based strategy with the current focus being placed on seven sectors of economic activity: advanced manufacturing (including vehicle production); agriprocessing (food and nonfood products); aerospace and nonaerospace airport-related development; communications and defense contracting; financial services; life and materials sciences; and logistics.<sup>10</sup> There is now synergy among all units of government and the private sector in Allen County supporting the Alliance’s efforts to package economic development incentives in the most competitive manner possible.

The late 1990s also witnessed the creation of the Northeast Indiana Innovation Center (NIIC). This organization was formed after several years of study by a Chamber of Commerce committee. Its purpose is to foster high-tech entrepreneurship to assist in advancing the region’s economy. In 2001, NIIC began operating an incubator in a surplus office building owned by Raytheon in the Interstate Business Park. The available space was quickly filled with startup endeavors. In 2003, ground was broken on the newly completed NIIC facility on Stellhorn Road. This facility was opened in the Fall of 2005.

In 1998, the Allen County Economic Development Income Tax rate was increased from 0.2 percent to 0.4 percent, with a substantial portion of the new revenues accruing to both the City of Fort Wayne and Allen County and allocated to a variety of economic development initiatives. This additional revenue has allowed for an increase in support of economic development organizations such as the Alliance and NIIC; for additional investment in infrastructure to support development sites; and in an enhanced ability to fund competitive incentive packages.

More recently, the State of Indiana has restructured its economic development activities under the newly created Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC). This organization has established a regional office for northeast Indiana that is located in downtown Fort Wayne. The IEDC staff works closely with the Alliance and with NIIC, as well as many other regional economic development organizations. The activities of the IEDC will be guided in the future by the recently released economic development strategy document entitled *Accelerating Growth*.<sup>11</sup>

Lastly, efforts are currently underway to create a regional economic development marketing organization in northeast Indiana. This organization, established in 2006 as the

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<sup>10</sup> *2006 Operations and Marketing Manual*; Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance; p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> *Accelerating Growth: Indiana’s Strategic Economic Development Plan*; Indiana Economic Development Corporation; April, 2006.

Northeast Indiana Regional Marketing Partnership, will engage in external prospect development activities in support of all the local economic development organizations throughout the nine-county region.

### ***Economic Development Action Plan for Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana***

A new comprehensive economic development strategy for the community was prepared in 2000 under the direction of the “Steering Committee on Economic Development,” appointed by Fort Wayne Mayor Graham Richard. The Steering Committee oversaw the work of nine, subject-area task forces, that in turn recommended approximately 40 action plans aimed at accomplishing the goal of “increasing the wages and salaries per job in northeast Indiana to above the national average.” The resulting product of this process was the *Economic Development Action Plan for Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana*, released in September of 2000. This plan had an entire task force devoted to actions necessary to ensure that the community has a competitive inventory of industrial and business sites. These recommendations are contained in the Economic Development Extended Report. In 2005, the City of Fort Wayne and the Fort Wayne–Allen County Economic Development Alliance engaged the Center for Community and Economic Development at Ball State University to prepare an update of the 2000 *Action Plan*.<sup>12</sup>

### Key Findings

Early in the process of preparing this Comprehensive Plan, Donald T. Iannone and Associates prepared a section of the Existing Conditions Report<sup>13</sup> examining the economy of Allen County. A brief summary of the findings from that report is presented below to properly frame the remainder of this element of the Plan. For a more detailed explanation of each finding, see the Economics Chapter of the Existing Conditions Report.

“A major conclusion of the *Existing Economic Conditions Report* is that the economic bases of Fort Wayne and Allen County have experienced sweeping changes over the past quarter century or more. The major drivers of these changes are industry and corporate restructuring, major demographic shifts, globalization, accelerated technological change, and changing local (Fort Wayne/Allen County) and regional (northeast Indiana) residential and business location patterns. While many of these issues are driven by external factors outside the Fort Wayne/Allen County area, they still must be dealt with by local leaders and citizens, as best they can.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Key Findings in the Review of Local Economic Conditions**

- 1. Strengthening the Regional Business/Economic Center Role.** “Fort Wayne/Allen County is the central hub of the northeast Indiana economy and will remain the region’s chief business and economic center in the foreseeable future.”<sup>15</sup> In 2003, 27,260 Allen

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<sup>12</sup> *Fort Wayne Economic Development Action Plan: Update 2005*; prepared by the Ball State Center for Economic and Community Development for the Fort Wayne–Allen County Economic Development Alliance and funded by the City of Fort Wayne; 2005

<sup>13</sup> *Existing Conditions Report, A Comprehensive Plan for Allen County and Fort Wayne*; prepared by ACP – Visioning & Planning, LTD. And Donald T. Iannone & Associates; Columbus, Ohio and Cleveland, Ohio; 2004, Economics section.

<sup>14</sup> *Economic Development: Creating Competitive Community Economic Foundations*, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 3.



County workers resided in another county and commuted into Allen County to work. This represented 11.7 percent of Allen County’s total workforce.<sup>16</sup>

2. **Coping with External Drivers of Local Economic Change.** “The major local economic change drivers for Fort Wayne/Allen County are external forces, such as globalization and industry restructuring, which have a major defining impact on the area’s business and industry growth patterns.”<sup>17</sup>
3. **Counteracting the Area’s Slow Industry Growth Mix.** “Fort Wayne/Allen County’s economic base growth is slowing, especially as a result of plant closings and business cutbacks and the slow pace of new business investment in the area to replace these losses.”<sup>18</sup> “Manufacturing employment declined from 22.5 percent of the Fort Wayne metro area’s total jobs in 1990 to 17 percent of the area’s total in 2004. This decline reflects again the drag that manufacturing places on local employment base growth. These losses also reduce local incomes by removing good-paying jobs from the local economy.”<sup>19</sup>
4. **Manufacturing Competitiveness.** “The manufacturing sector continues to lose ground from a local employment standpoint, but it remains vitally important to the area’s economic base. Many of the area’s better paying jobs are in manufacturing companies and industries. The area’s current mix of manufacturing industries is dominated by slow-growth industries such as automotive, machinery, and other old-line industries. Allen County’s manufacturing sector is expected to see a 1.8 percent decline during the 2004-2013 period, according to industry forecast data prepared by Economy.com for this project.”<sup>20</sup>
5. **Long-Term Economic Diversification.** “In light of the current structure and growth of the area economy, economic base diversification must be treated as a top priority. Area leaders should promote and assist the creation of a new local industry mix over time that includes increased representation by faster-growing manufacturing and service industries.”<sup>21</sup> “The Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance and the Northeast Indiana Corporate Council have advocated for the adoption of an industry cluster-based strategy to guide future economic development efforts across Allen County and northeast Indiana. If done properly, a cluster-based strategy could help contribute to the long-term diversification of the economies in Allen County and northeast Indiana.”<sup>22</sup> “The Comprehensive Plan could play a helpful role in fostering the growth of these clusters by ensuring that there are competitive locations within the City and County where businesses in these clusters can locate and operate.”<sup>23</sup>
6. **Spread of Business and Economic Growth across the Region.** “Economic growth is spreading across the northeast Indiana region, which is an aspect of the larger regional development process. The major issue in this regard for Fort Wayne and Allen County is to encourage productive and sustainable growth that is fiscally sound. To succeed in this regard, Fort Wayne and Allen County officials should communicate with officials in surrounding northeast Indiana counties about the recommendations of the new Comprehensive Plan and their implications for regional development.”<sup>24</sup> “While local

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.; p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.; p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.; p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.; p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.; p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.; pp. 10-11.

government must ensure that business comply with applicable rules and regulations, it is also important for Fort Wayne and Allen County to work at maintaining reasonable costs of doing business compared to competing locations within the region.”<sup>25</sup>

- 7. Accessing and Developing the Local/Regional Workforce.** “Fort Wayne/Allen County’s labor market is regionalizing, which means people are traveling longer distances on a daily basis to reach their jobs. In-commuting to Allen County from surrounding counties is the primary trend line at this point in time. This could change if more high-quality jobs take root in surrounding counties. The strategy to avoid greater worker out-commuting from Allen County is to encourage high-quality jobs to develop in the targeted industry clusters.”<sup>26</sup>
- 8. Commercial & Industrial Site and Area Competitiveness.** “While Fort Wayne and Allen County have many “commercial and industrial development areas,” a number of these areas currently lack the competitive advantages to make them attractive to expanding local businesses and out-of-town businesses searching for locations for new business facilities.”<sup>27</sup> “The Land Use Element of the Plan projects that Allen County will need an additional 8,000 acres of commercial land and 2,400 acres of fully positioned industrial land to accommodate the growth of the County’s commercial and industrial sectors between 2000 and 2025.”<sup>28</sup>
- 9. Crucial Economic Role of Downtown Fort Wayne.** “While Downtown Fort Wayne has experienced its share of economic decline over time, it is revitalizing in many ways and remains a major economic generator for Fort Wayne and Allen County.”<sup>29</sup> “Several plans and studies have been developed for Downtown Fort Wayne – all point to the economic and social importance of the downtown area as an economic generator. The *Blueprint for the Future* and the *Blueprint for the Future Plus*, the *Downtown Destination Projects Initiative*, and *Downtown 2020* identify numerous strategies to tap this potential.”<sup>30</sup> “Some progress has been made toward implementation of these plans, but more is needed. The Comprehensive Plan should give an added boost to these efforts. There is no shortage of ideas about what needs to be done. Sustained public- and private-sector investment in the right catalytic projects coupled with an ongoing focus on market-building is crucial to moving Fort Wayne’s downtown forward.”<sup>31</sup>
- 10. Gearing Up for the Talent and Technology Economy.** “Because of the pronounced role of human talent and technology in propelling business and economic growth locally and nationwide, the Comprehensive Plan should contain policies and strategies that promote and assist the increased use of talent and technology as future economic growth engines for the area.”<sup>32</sup> “The growth of knowledge workers and knowledge-based jobs should be a major priority for Fort Wayne/Allen County. Fort Wayne metro level data on knowledge jobs (management, professional, and technical occupations) indicates that knowledge jobs actually declined from 61,600 in 1999 to 60,469 in 2003.”<sup>33</sup> “Communities must increase the capacity to grow and use human talent and technology. Ensuring that Allen County communities are adequately served by advanced-information technology (IT) infrastructure

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.; pp. 11-12.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.; p. 12.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.; p. 13.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.; p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

is one step in this direction. Another is ensuring the right knowledge skills exist in the local labor market. A third need is to strengthen the area's network of resources to connect people in the new technology-based global economy.”<sup>34</sup>

### **Geographic Concentrations of Industrial and Business Sites for Future Development**

The Economic Development Extended Report examined the evolution of several centers of existing and potential employment throughout Allen County. Several of the findings and observations of this analysis are presented below:

- Perhaps the most dramatic influence on the location of industrial and office activity in our community occurred with the construction of Interstate 69 in the early 1960s and the increasing dependence upon the trucking of goods rather than dependence on rail transport that was occurring at the same time.
- The completion of Interstate 469 has the long-term potential to rebalance development by providing substantially improved automobile and truck accessibility to the eastern side of Allen County. The upgrading of U.S. Highway 24 (the Fort-to-Port project) may also assist in reopening eastern Allen County to new development.
- Allen County has a significant amount of acreage zoned for industrial use and a number of relatively small industrial parks. The quality of this inventory of sites has been examined, analyzed and critiqued by several studies over the past 30 years.<sup>35</sup> These studies have pointed to some of the assets that this inventory offers to the community. They have also noted some of the serious deficiencies when the inventory is viewed from a national competitive perspective, including a lack of identity, a lack of control over ownership of many sites, poor accessibility and visibility from the interstate highway system, a lack of supportive infrastructure, and a lack of “development readiness” in many instances.<sup>36</sup> A cooperative approach to having ready to build industrial sites has emerged through the Shovel Ready Committee. Sites have been prioritized to pursue the shovel ready designation from the Indiana Economic Development Corporation.
- As a community we have had a long-standing philosophical debate regarding the appropriate and acceptable roles for the public, the not-for-profit, and the private sectors in the ownership and development of industrial parks and sites. Too frequently, we have been more concerned with philosophy than with results. The reality is that for significant periods we have found ourselves limited in economic competitiveness by a lack of adequate “product.” As competition for quality jobs becomes more intense, this issue becomes even more critical.<sup>37</sup>
- We have tended to view our site inventory as a disparate collection of individual parcels and small industrial parks. We have seldom seen this inventory as a collection of unique clusters positioned to serve segments of the overall market. The fragmented approach has not been conducive to coordinated marketing efforts; rather, at least until the Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance was created. Historically, marketing of industrial

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 14

<sup>35</sup> See *Industrial Sites in Allen County: An Overview* prepared by the Allen County Plan Commission in 1980; *Executive Summary: Industrial Site Analysis for Allen County, Indiana* prepared by the Fantus Company for the Allen County Redevelopment Commission in 1986; and the *Fort Wayne Regional Industrial Development Strategy* prepared by Economic Research Associates in 1997.

<sup>36</sup> Substantial portions of this text are taken from a July 12, 2001 memorandum prepared for the Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance; p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

sites has been left almost entirely to the individual owners and their respective real estate brokers. Our product needed, and needs, simplification, clarification and image upgrading.<sup>38</sup>

- We have too frequently not viewed potential industrial or office sites as prime community resources important to our long-term economic well-being. On several occasions we have allowed incompatible land uses to locate in the immediate vicinity of our industrial inventory. Our comprehensive planning should consider the best of these site “clusters” as unique community resources. The recent planning work for the Airport Expressway Corridor, as undertaken by the Allen County Department of Planning Services, is a good example of this later approach.<sup>39</sup>

## Potential Opportunity Areas

### **Downtown Fort Wayne**

Downtown Fort Wayne is the historical economic, cultural and civic core of the Allen County community. It has served many significant roles for the community over the past two hundred years – retail hub, manufacturing center, office center, entertainment destination and residential location. While its role and purpose have changed several times over many decades, the downtown continues to play an important economic role and, in many respects, it serves as the psychological barometer of the community. The health of a downtown is frequently used by both locals and those from outside the community as a measuring stick of both a respective community’s economic vibrancy and its collective civic pride. This relationship extends beyond the Fort Wayne community to the entire region. It takes a healthy regional economy to support a vibrant downtown in its regional center. Conversely, a strong and active downtown is the gauge by which many will judge the vitality of the entire northeast Indiana region.

### **Fort Wayne’s Older Industrial Railroad Corridor**

Much of the industrial development in Allen County which occurred prior to the completion of Interstate 69 was concentrated in a crescent across the midsection of the community closely following the major rail lines. This industrial corridor was generally anchored by the General Electric complex on the west and the East End Industrial Area on the east. Industries which once played very significant roles in the local economy, such as Tokheim, Fruehauf, Wayne Pump, and the Falstaff brewery, were all located along this corridor. In the past 40 years many of the firms closed business operations or have dramatically reduced their local employment levels. As a result, the community has been left with many obsolete facilities and underutilized industrial sites. In response to this situation, the City of Fort Wayne initiated a Brownfield Revitalization Program in the mid-1990s, providing support and incentives to clean up these abandoned sites and to encourage new development thereon. The private sector has responded in the last several years in significant investment in such properties as the Falstaff Brewery and Indiana Tech. In addition, significant investment has taken place along the Taylor Street corridor by BAE, Superior Essex, and Val Bruna.

This older industrial corridor will continue to present significant rehabilitation challenges to the community in the years ahead, particularly to the immediately adjacent residential areas. There are no easy solutions to create viable reuses for many of these sites and buildings. Local and state government will be called upon continually to find vehicles for regulatory flexibility, financially feasible environmental cleanup, continued infrastructure reinvestment, and tax incentives to deal with this challenge. Indiana Enterprise Zone legislation, which has now been in place for more than 20

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-2.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

years, was intended to be such a tool. We now recognize that the market forces leading to the massive disinvestment that has continued within the zone are indeed extraordinarily strong.

### **Cook Road (Northwest) Industrial Area**

The area has good accessibility to Interstate 69 at both the Lima Road and the U.S. Highway 30 interchanges. Much of the basic infrastructure needed to support additional industrial development is already in place. Much of the area has been designed as either an urban renewal or economic development area which would allow future tax increment to be utilized to fund additional infrastructure improvements as needed. There are a substantial number of ready-to-development industrial park lots available in the area in both private industrial parks and in Summit Park II.

### **U.S. Highway 30 West Corridor**

U.S. Highway 30 between Merrillville and Fort Wayne represents one of the stronger economic development corridors in Indiana. The orthopedic industry cluster in Warsaw, the Steel Dynamics (SDI) mini-mill in Whitley County, and the Sweetwater Sound Headquarters represent three jewels of economic vitality along this corridor. There has been considerable discussion regarding the role that the portion of the corridor located in Allen County, between the Whitley County line on the west and Interstate 69 on the east, may play in the future.

Sites along the U.S. Highway 30 West Corridor offer good visibility and easy access to Interstate 69. Utility capacity west of the SIRVA facility is a significant barrier to further development moving westward. There is potential for development also to occur along U.S. Highway 30 immediately east of the Allen/Whitley County line and just east of the SDI mini-mill if sewer utility service limitations can be overcome. Extending sanitary sewer interceptors from Fort Wayne out to this area would involve a very substantial financial investment.

### **Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne/IVY Tech Community College Northeast/Northeast Indiana Innovation Center/Certified Technology Park Complex**

The concentration of the Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne and IVY Tech campuses, the NIIC facility and the Certified Technology Park designation form the basic elements around which an Allen County education-technology center can emerge. Efforts continue to improve both visual and physical connectedness to the continued development of this center. The Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council is developing a sub-area plan to ensure pedestrian as well as vehicular connectivity exists. The ability to attract the public and private financial resources necessary to enhance the capital facilities are already in place.

Allen County has significant work ahead to make this location a truly competitive technology center compared with efforts which have been underway in many other communities. We can look to Kalamazoo's Business Technology and Research Park<sup>40</sup> and the Michigan Automation Alley Smart Zone and Technology Center<sup>41</sup> as two examples of sustained community and state efforts along these lines.

Continued development of these entrepreneurial and educational support centers is critical to Allen County's ability to transition to the knowledge-based economy. The area needs a focused identity, improved access and improved connectivity. Many of the most important physical assets

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<sup>40</sup> See [http://www.kalamazoocity.org/portal/econdev.php?page\\_id=262](http://www.kalamazoocity.org/portal/econdev.php?page_id=262) for information regarding the Kalamazoo Business Technology and Research Park

<sup>41</sup> See <http://www.automationalley.com/autoalley/Automation+Alley> for information regarding the Michigan Automation Alley SmartZone and Technology Center

are already in place – land for expansion and utility capacity. Extension of the Indiana I-Light ultrahigh-capacity broadband network would be a valued addition to the asset base.

### **East End Industrial Area**

This industrial complex, originally nestled between the communities of Fort Wayne and New Haven (with portions of the area now located within the corporate boundaries of each of these municipalities due to annexation) was, at its zenith, one of the strongest economic engines in the state of Indiana. The complex was initiated with, and for most of its history anchored by, the International Harvester truck plant.

A number of both local and national trends were in play post World War II that greatly impacted the location of economic activity in Allen County. Changes in industrial production techniques favored newer one-story facilities and a shift from rail to truck for the movement of production inputs and outputs gave significant advantages to proximity to the interstate highway system. The completion of Interstate 69 on the western side of Fort Wayne in the early 1960s was the most important single factor in influencing manufacturing development trends in Allen County. The local economic dominance of the East End Industrial Area declined with the closing of International Harvester. We continue to see these forces at work today – witness the recent sale of the Phelps Dodge operations, now part of the expanded Rea Magnet. The ever-changing nature of economic-activity location within and throughout our community does indeed have very significant ramifications for both our citizens and the governmental institutions supported by the property tax.

Retaining employment and investment activity in the East End section of the community, given the very different locational dynamics in play today compared with those at work when the area was at its apex, will continue to be an ongoing challenge for the community and the governments of Fort Wayne, New Haven and Allen County.

### **Dupont Road/Interstate 69 Complex**

The area surrounding the Interstate 69/Dupont Road interchange has represented an opportunity for the community since the interchange opened in the 1960s. The 1977 Comprehensive Plan of Allen County recommended that the area be developed as low-density residential. By the late 1980s interest in the area as a site for uses other than residential and highway-related commercial began to grow. The northeast quadrant was rezoned for a mixed-use development, including office uses.

While this area remains attractive to a relatively wide range of office/medical/service employers, there are few large tracts of land remaining that can support a large-scale technology park that is relatively close to the interchange.

### **Hursh Road/Interstate 69 Proposed Interchange**

The *2030 Transportation Plan* for the Fort Wayne-New Haven- Allen County-Whitley County-Huntington County Metropolitan Planning Area proposes that a new interchange on Interstate 69 be constructed at Hursh Road. The new interchange is intended to provide relief to the Interstate 69/Dupont Road interchange. The *2030 Plan* suggests that the new interchange be completed in the 2010-2019 timeframe,<sup>42</sup> although project funding has not yet been identified.

Given the relative lack of developable land at other Interstate 69 interchanges in Allen County, this area may offer a new opportunity to develop a business/technology area with both Interstate 69 visibility and accessibility. There is already some land speculation occurring in the area in

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<sup>42</sup> *2030 Transportation Plan for the Fort Wayne-New Haven-Allen County-Whitley County-Huntington County Metropolitan Planning Area*; Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council; April, 2005.

anticipation of the new interchange. However, development of the area may be limited due to environmental considerations related to the protection of the Cedar Creek watershed. Metes and bounds development occurring in the area has also left limited areas for right-of-way and widening of existing roads.

All prior and current infrastructure and land use plans indicate that this area will continue to remain low-density residential. Therefore, it will require some serious consideration in this Plan to suggest a major change in policy to identify this future interchange area for business/technology use.

### **State Road 37/Interstate 469 Interchange**

The State Road 37/Interstate 469 interchange has developed with mostly retail uses on the west of the interchange. Large tracts of undeveloped land exist on the east side of the interchange. Issues at this interchange include availability and capacity of public utilities, interstate elevations which make it difficult for certain types of development to occur on the east side of the interchange, and the impact of development on the nearby Amish population. This interchange serves as a gateway to the northeast quadrant of the City and therefore land use decisions should be made carefully to set a positive community image.

### **Industrial Area East of Interstate 469 between U.S. Highway 24 and U.S. Highway 30**

The *New Haven Comprehensive Land Use and Strategic Economic Plan* includes the following commentary regarding portions of this area:

“Casad Depot contains a tremendous amount of land that is classified as industrial uses as shown in the Final Land Use Map. Once the home of the military, the land is now being reclaimed by the local jurisdictions. This area provides more than enough industrial land to last the City several decades, more than the time frame of this Plan. The City and County have made significant investments in infrastructure to prepare the site for future development. This site is currently outside the planning jurisdiction of the City, and in the future, a strategy should be developed for incremental annexation into the City to recover some of the costs of upgrading infrastructure. Additionally, the City, working jointly with the County, should look at establishing an industrial park for the specific location of these uses. This will protect this area from the development of residential uses. Primary industries that should be targeted for this area include heavy industrial uses, manufacturing and processing, warehousing, open storage, and distribution.”<sup>43</sup>

In 1997 the Allen County Redevelopment Commission designated 106 acres as the Casad East Economic Development Area. The plan prepared in conjunction with that designation noted both the opportunities the area offers and some of the infrastructure issues that must be addressed if substantial development is to occur:

“The new interstate (Interstate 469) has opened up several areas of Allen County for development. One of the areas made more attractive for potential development by Interstate 469 is located east of New Haven near the New Haven Depot (former known as the Casad Depot). This area is ideally suited for industrial growth as it has interstate access, rail service is available, the land is largely undeveloped, and much of this area has been zoned industrial for many years. Certain other features make this area attractive, such as its location near U.S. 24 and U.S. 30 (where the Interstate 469) interchanges are located.”

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<sup>43</sup> *New Haven Comprehensive Land Use and Strategic Economic Plan*; pp. 82-83.

### **Fort-to-Port Corridor**

The Fort-to-Port road project will provide a more efficient connection between Fort Wayne and Toledo. By improving U.S. Highway 24, more development could occur along this corridor. Many issues must be resolved before development can occur. Right-of-way must first be acquired not only for the road but also for the three planned interchanges. Interchange construction is critical before additional commercial and industrial development can occur. The State Road 101 corridor will become a more recognized north-south corridor, anticipating increased traffic. There is potential for additional development in the Woodburn Industrial Park as it is in close proximity to the proposed State Road 101/U.S. Highway 24 interchange.

### **Adams Township Industrial Area**

The area between the State Road 930 and Interstate 469 along the Adams Center Road corridor offers several opportunities for general industrial and transportation-related development. The 1997 ERA report noted both the potential for and some current limitations for future development of this corridor:

“Heavy industrial development appears well-suited for the area just inside of Interstate 469 in the area bounded by Paulding and Adams Center Roads. Although this area has rail service and proximity to a Chemical Waste Management Facility, the area would need to have sewer and water service extended to facilitate development.”<sup>44</sup>

The Adams Center Hazardous Waste Landfill represented a focal point of significant conflict in this community for nearly 20 years. Landfill operations were suspended in 1998, with the facility subsequently being closed. The facility was capped under U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulations. In March of 2004, 328 acres of land held in ownership by Chemical Waste Management, Inc. (CWMI) which had not been used for landfill operations were formally donated to the Fort Wayne Redevelopment Commission for use as an industrial area. The Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance markets the property for industrial purposes on behalf of the Redevelopment Commission. In 2005, Watkins Motor Lines began construction of a regional trucking terminal as the first project on the Redevelopment Commission property, and its development will serve to open more of the area to the availability of public infrastructure.

The 1.25-mile extension of Maplecrest Road south across the Maumee River and connecting with Adams Center Road will significantly improve highway accessibility to and from this area.

### **Bluffton Road Corridor**

The Bluffton Road Corridor has good accessibility to both Interstate 469 and the Fort Wayne International Airport. Sites along the corridor are flat in topography; and many are in large acreage parcels, and are therefore relatively easy to develop. The area is adequately served with both public water (a looped system) and sanitary sewer. Much of the area has already been zoned for industrial use and has been designated as an Economic Development Area by the Allen County Redevelopment Commission.

### **General Motors Area**

Perhaps no single economic development project has had a greater impact on the landscape of Allen County since the current Fort Wayne and Allen County Comprehensive Plans were adopted

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<sup>44</sup>*Fort Wayne Regional Industrial Development Strategy: Final Report*; p. 16.



than the location of the General Motors Truck Assembly Plant in rural Lafayette Township. The recently announced, new facility for Vera Bradley Designs on the southwest quadrant of the Interstate 69/Interstate 469 interchange represents a significant change for this area and an important economic development opportunity for Allen County. In addition, it places another “landmark” business in a highly visible location both with respect to this specific industrial/business area and for the entire community.

The *Southwest Allen County Land Use Study*<sup>45</sup> prepared in 1985 after the rezoning approval for the General Motors Truck Assembly Plant, and in response to the changed planning conditions that it represented, contained several policy statements regarding land use in the immediate vicinity of the plant. As was noted previously, the recommendations contained in this study would ultimately be formally amended into both the Allen County and City of Fort Wayne Comprehensive Plans. With the exception of the Interstate 69/Airport Expressway interchange (formerly identified as the Interstate 69/Lower Huntington Road interchange) which is covered by the 2001 Airport Expressway amendment to the Allen County Comprehensive Plan, the policies outlined above are still in effect as part of the amended Comprehensive Plan.

### **Air Trade Center Area**

In February 1992, the Allen County Plan Commission initiated the rezoning of approximately 593 acres to the I-2(P) category. In July 1992, the Board of Allen County Commissioners gave final approval to the rezoning. During consideration of this rezoning the Board of Commissioners and the Fort Wayne-Allen County Airport Authority reached an informal agreement that sites in the Air Trade Center be reserved for airport-related projects; including: 1) air cargo, aircraft maintenance, aircraft manufacturing; 2) transportation-related businesses; 3) aeronautical-related companies; and 4) light manufacturing with a need for air transportation.

Ground was broken on the Air Trade Center in October 1996, and American International Freight (AIF) located an air cargo operations facility in the Trade Center in May 1997. That facility is now home to the Kitty Hawk Fort Wayne facility. To date, it is the only project in the Trade Center.

In conjunction with the AIF project, the Air Trade Center was designated as an Airport Development Zone in 1998. This designation provides some tax increment financing options to the Airport Authority (as of 2006, TIF has not been implemented at the Trade Center) and certain tax credits to businesses located within the Zone. Allen County assisted in the project by upgrading Coverdale Road and thereby improving access from the Trade Center to the Airport Expressway.

Economic Research Associates urged local officials to place emphasis on both the Air Trade Center and other industrially zoned properties surrounding the Fort Wayne International Airport in its 1997 report:

“South of Fort Wayne, the Baer Field industrial area and the newly developed Air Trade Center also have vacant land available for development, with funding mechanisms in place (TIF) to help offset sewer and other infrastructure costs. The Baer Field area has attracted several high profile users, who have made significant investments in the existing park area. The Air Trade Center, a 450-acre airport-related industrial park, has recently attracted its first tenant, an air cargo firm. City and County officials should encourage maximal industrial development in the

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<sup>45</sup> *Southwest Allen County Land Use Study*; Allen County Plan Commission, Fort Wayne Division of Community Development and Planning, and the Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council; Fort Wayne, Indiana; 1985.

existing Baer Field development area as well as the Air Trade Center, particularly over the short term.”<sup>46</sup>

The 2000 *Economic Development Action Plan* recommended that, “The community needs to leverage the public investments made by the City and County in the area surrounding the Fort Wayne International Airport, by attracting private industrial park developers which would complement the regionally unique assets that the airport area offers.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Airport Expressway**

The previously mentioned *Southwest Allen County Land Use Study* contained a strong endorsement for the construction of a new highway connecting the Interstate 69/Lower Huntington Road interchange (constructed as part of the infrastructure to support the General Motors Truck Assembly plant) with Dalman Road near the Baer Field airport. The “Dalman Road” roadway extension was ultimately completed in 2001. At the time the Airport Expressway, as it was ultimately named, was opened to traffic, it became clear that it was also time to reexamine the land use policies guiding future development decisions along the corridor. The report on industrial development prepared by Economic Research Associates in 1997 foreshadowed this rethinking even before the road was completed:

“The light industrial/distribution project could be planned for the area surrounding the Fort Wayne International Airport, possibly incorporating land north and south of Dalman Road (now known as the Airport Expressway) moving west toward the interstate from the Coca Cola bottling facility.”<sup>48</sup>

Upon the completion of the Airport Expressway (formerly referred to as Dalman Road Extended), the Allen County Department of Planning Services initiate a new subarea plan for the corridor. That plan was prepared in 2001 and a series of policies arising from the plan were subsequently adopted as a formal amendment to the *Comprehensive Plan of Allen County* in August 2001 by the Board of Allen County Commissioners. The formal amendment includes the following policy (more detailed specific policies related to the Expressway are also included in this amendment and are presented in the Economic Development Extended Report):

General Policy: Planning for the development along the Airport Expressway has four goals: 1) maximize the economic benefit to the community; 2) establish a well designed “gateway” to Fort Wayne and the International Airport; 3) showcase high-quality development; and 4) protect the residents of this traditionally rural residential and agricultural area from the impacts of development along the corridor.

The Airport Expressway Corridor certainly offers great access to both the Fort Wayne International Airport and to Interstate 69. There is sewer and water capacities located at both ends of the corridor, but some limitation with capacity in the middle due to the current capacity of the Robinson Creek lift station and the lack of water distribution lines. The area is not encumbered with existing incompatible land uses and there are several parcels of significant size available for development. However, much of the corridor is not presently zoned for industrial or office use, most prime potential sites are currently in private ownership and the willingness of the current owners to sell is unknown

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<sup>46</sup>*Fort Wayne Regional Industrial Development Strategy: Final Report*; p. 17.

<sup>47</sup>*Economic Development Action Plan for Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana*; p. 12.

<sup>48</sup>*Fort Wayne Regional Industrial Development Strategy: Final Report*; p. 16.

## **Area North of the Fort Wayne International Airport**

At the eastern end of the new portion of the Airport Expressway sits over 400 acres of industrially zoned land, most of which has ready access to basic public infrastructure such as sanitary sewer and water. Completion of the Airport Expressway now affords these sites the direct access to Interstate 69 that had long been a key missing ingredient for their development. The 1997 ERA study identified the area surrounding the international airport as “the primary near-term opportunity development area in the Fort Wayne Region.”<sup>49</sup>

The area includes several industrial parks, including the Airport Business Park and land being developed by the Fort Wayne-Allen County Airport Authority as the James E. Kelley Aero Commerce Park. An application is being submitted to the Indiana Economic Development Corporation to have it designated a shovel ready site.

## **Industrial Parks in Grabill, Hometown, Monroeville and Woodburn**

The communities of Woodburn, Monroeville, Hometown and Grabill have taken proactive steps over the past fifteen years to create quality industrial parks and sites within their jurisdictions providing employment opportunities for their residents and increasing their respective tax bases. The ability of these communities to continue to attract industrial development is an important component in their strategies to remain diversified, freestanding, economically strong communities. The “Woodburn spur” of the Norfolk Southern railroad offers an excellent opportunity to provide outstanding rail access to sites in the Woodburn area.

## **Goal**

The following goal for economic development was developed by the Comprehensive Plan Committee based upon citizen input:

*A vibrant, innovative and diverse economy that balances existing business growth and new business attraction in a manner that produces secure, well-paying jobs, provides infrastructure improvements needed for economic development, promotes downtown revitalization, fosters operational efficiencies and increases utilization of the airports.*

The economic development vision for this community, as expressed in the *2005 Update to the Fort Wayne Economic Development Action Plan*, is:

“In 2015 the many high-wage, high-growth companies that have located and or expanded here form the foundation of our regional innovation economy. The high skill levels and educational attainment rates of our workforce continue to draw businesses to the region. The Fort Wayne region is a model for quality, community-based economic development.

Our high quality of life, including our excellent schools, has attracted workers and their families. With a safe and healthy environment, the economy of Fort Wayne and northeast Indiana has blossomed over the past 15 years.”<sup>50</sup>

Five basic economic development objectives were recommended by Don Iannone in the report *Economic Development: Creating Competitive Community Economic Foundations*.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Fort Wayne Regional Industrial Development Strategy*; p. 16.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 5.

<sup>51</sup> *Economic Development: Creating Competitive Community Economic Foundations*; p. 3.

1. **Quality Jobs:** create the next generation of well-paying and secure jobs for local citizens in both existing and new industries;
2. **Balanced and Sustainable Growth:** balance future economic growth across existing and new industries and businesses, but work steadily toward creating a more diverse local economy with stronger roots in the global economy;
3. **Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Creativity:** stimulate increased local economic vitality through business innovation and entrepreneurship, especially in new industries and business sectors with bright economic futures; strengthen the “creative sector” of the local economy by coupling the arts, cultural resources and entertainment with economic development;
4. **Strategic Infrastructure and Services:** invest in strategic infrastructure and public services to support and guide future local economic development within the City and across the County; increase utilization of the airports and provide efficient permitting services; and
5. **Competitive Development Areas and Business Sites:** develop competitive business locations and sites (downtown, neighborhoods, and commercial and industrial development areas) for existing business expansion, new business attraction, entrepreneurial development, and entertainment and tourism growth.

The last two of these five objectives are most directly related to the land use and public infrastructure planning that is at the heart of the policy recommendations normally contained in a Comprehensive Plan.

## Objectives and Strategies

Objectives and strategies, based on the economic development goal and designed to support the integrated goals of the entire Comprehensive Plan, are outlined below.

### **OBJECTIVE ED1.**

#### **PLAN, INVEST AND DEVELOP COMPETITIVE LOCATIONS AND SITES FOR EXISTING BUSINESS EXPANSION, NEW BUSINESS ATTRACTION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT.**

##### **ED1.A Consider process improvements to better coordinate policies for improving the industrial/business site inventory.**

While the community has many “industrial development areas,” some of these areas may lack the competitive advantages to make them attractive to expanding local and nonlocal businesses searching for new business facilities. Local community leaders must consider clear priorities to determine which areas will receive future public improvement investments.

This community needs a consistent, ongoing effort to ensure that we have an adequate site inventory in place. We need to eliminate the peaks and valleys such as those we have experienced over the past 30 years in the availability of an adequate inventory of sites meeting differing demand characteristics. This effort must be lead by an entity that: 1) can ensure a long-term focus on this goal; 2) is provided the adequate resources to accomplish its mission; and 3) has the organizational capacity, legal authority and community mandate to do the job correctly. As this work is undertaken we must be sure to focus on the site-inventory needs of the future and not be caught attempting to make up for the lost opportunities of the past.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> July 12, 2001 Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance memorandum; p. 2.

### **ED1.B Adopt an integrated planning framework for each industrial development area.**

A subcommittee of the Shovel Ready Committee would be a logical entity to be assigned this mission. To be successful, however, it would need the full support of its public-sector partners. Increased importance should be placed on the coordination among: 1) the planning and zoning functions of the Fort Wayne and Allen County Plan Commissions; 2) the tax increment financing abilities of the Fort Wayne and Allen County Redevelopment Commissions to fund supportive infrastructure; 3) the public infrastructure capabilities of the Fort Wayne Board of Public Works and the Board of Allen County Commissioners; and 4) the marketing role of the Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance. This entity should become the ongoing forum for organizing collaborative infrastructure efforts such as the Memorandums of Understanding for Southwest and Northwest Allen County, for discussing joint land use policies for industrial and business development, and for refining a shared philosophy on the use of tax increment financing for on- and off-site infrastructure.<sup>53</sup>

### **ED1.C Create a process for identifying “Class 1 Business and Industrial Sites.”**

As was noted in the General Observations regarding the current inventory of industrial and business sites, we have an abundance of adequate sites but few truly outstanding sites. It is simply not economically feasible or physically possible to bring all of our sites up to an outstanding level. One method for improving the focus and quality of our site inventory would be to select a limited number, perhaps between five and ten sites, to be considered “Class 1 Sites.” Particular focus should be placed upon these selected sites to bring them up to “shovel-ready” status (as that term is being defined by the Indiana Development Finance Authority). Subsequent actions should include assurances that all necessary supporting infrastructure is place in advance of development opportunities. Land use planning and regulatory actions should be taken to: 1) resolve as many regulatory issues as possible prior to development; and 2) ensure land-use decisions recognize the importance of preventing incompatible uses nearby. Lastly, proactive efforts should be taken to make certain that land-control issues are resolved in advance of development opportunities. If such a process is recommended, then it will be necessary to determine with whom and how this selection can be undertaken.

### **ED1.D Protect the Fort Wayne International Airport from future nearby incompatible land uses.**

The Fort Wayne International Airport represents an economic development asset that is not duplicated elsewhere in northeast Indiana. The amount of community investment in this facility is enormous and every reasonable effort should be taken to protect that investment. Toward that end, zoning policies should seek to reduce the potential for development of uses incompatible with aircraft operations in the vicinity of the airport.

### **ED1.E Develop a Sub-Area Development Plan for the Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne/IVY Tech Community College Northeast/Northeast Indiana Innovation Center Education-Technology Complex which includes plans to invest in specialized facilities for new advanced technological industries.**

The academic and entrepreneurial support activities concentrated in the Coliseum Boulevard/ Crescent Avenue area represent the highest concentration of technology-related facilities anywhere in northeast Indiana. Currently these facilities are more of a grouping of facilities in close proximity rather than a collaborative complex. The only Certified Technology Park in northeast Indiana is also

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

located in this activity cluster.<sup>54</sup> The City of Fort Wayne should work with IPFW, IVY Tech and the NIIC to plan and implement the off-site transportation, information-technology and signage improvements that can help create the image for the area as the Technology Complex of Northeast Indiana. The investigation of the development of a high-technology business park as was recommended in the *2000 Action Plan* should also be a priority. The recommendation for creating high-quality industrial park facilities can be traced back at least to the 1982 study prepared for this community by The Fantus Company:

“Fort Wayne is at a stage in its development where it requires a master-planned, high-quality industrial park. It is likely that a future emphasis of the community’s industrial promotion program will be on high-technology-oriented industry. These types of operations generally prefer a location in an attractive and environmentally controlled setting. At the present time, Fort Wayne does not offer such an alternative.”<sup>55</sup>

**ED1.F Plan and invest in creating competitive business areas and sites that can accommodate the growth of a balanced mix of existing and new business.**

We must recognize the growing importance of the office park as the employment center of the 21st Century. Preservation of quality sites with great interstate (Interstate 69 and Interstate 469) visibility and accessibility for future development should also be a priority.

**ED1.G Plan and invest in specialized facilities and resources, including incubator facilities, which can add a competitive advantage for developing new advanced technology industries.**

The Northeast Indiana Innovation Center is a start toward implementing this objective, not an end. Plans for constructing additional technology-oriented incubators should begin in the very near future.

**ED1.H Land bank key office, technology, and industrial park locations.**

The number of potential business sites with exceptional accessibility and visibility to the interstate highway system in Allen County is very limited. Yet these sites may be critical to the future attraction of the service and knowledge-based businesses of the “new economy.” Efforts should be taken to land bank sites preserving opportunities that may yield the highest economic return to the entire community.

**ED1.I Support the development of a logistics/distribution complex near the Fort Wayne International Airport.**

Several studies of our industrial site inventory have noted that the area surrounding the Fort Wayne International Airport has many of the attributes necessary to support advanced logistics and distribution-related development: good rail, air cargo and interstate highway accessibility; supportive public infrastructure; an abundance of available open land; and the centrality of location offered by a northern Indiana site. However, to date only the 800,000 square-foot distribution facility has located in the area. There has been some speculation that the lack of a developer of national scope is the missing ingredient. Consideration should be given to entering a public-private partnership with a

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<sup>54</sup> For more information about Indiana Certified Technology Parks I.C. 5-28-10

<sup>55</sup> *Recommended Strategies for the Fort Wayne Economic Development Program*; The Fantus Company; Chicago, IL; May 21, 1982; pp. 9-10.

national developer to share the initial risk involved with creating a logistics complex of significant magnitude.

**ED1.J Discourage the “next adjacent parcel” syndrome.**

It has not been unusual for the community to spend significant public-sector resources to provide adequate highway access and utilities to make a site “development-ready,” only to discover the asking price of that site has increased dramatically. As a result, prospects have, at times, sought to locate at another nearby site which does not have these supporting facilities, but does have a significantly lower price per acre. The public sector is then expected to, at public expense, provide the needed infrastructure. This is poor land use management, poor use of limited public dollars and poor planning. A willingness to “write down” land costs as part of an incentive package would greatly reduce this situation from reoccurring.

**ED1.K Downzone industrial sites that no longer have realistic potential for development and/or are not consistent with the land use section of this Comprehensive Plan.**

One example of a way to implement this strategy would be to encourage the Allen County Plan Commission to review the zoning classifications on unused, rural, industrially zoned land along the Maumee River in Maumee Township.

**OBJECTIVE ED2.**

**INVEST IN STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES TO SUPPORT AND GUIDE FUTURE HIGH-QUALITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**

**ED2.A Use both tax increment financing and County Economic Development Income Tax revenues for public infrastructure supporting quality industrial/business sites.**

Continue to utilize tax increment financing and County Economic Development Income Tax revenues to ensure a full range of infrastructure is available to a selected number of targeted industrial and business sites. Target a greater share of Fort Wayne’s and Allen County’s short- and long-term infrastructure improvement funds toward supporting the economic development priorities in the Comprehensive Plan.

**ED2.B Complete the infrastructure projects outlined in the *Intergovernmental Memorandum of Understanding to Fund Infrastructure Improvements in Northwest Allen County*.**

Several highway and utility projects outlined in the Memorandum are yet to be implemented. They are important to fully supporting the Cook Road/Northwest Industrial Area.

**ED2.C Undertake detailed assessments of infrastructure needs in advance of development opportunities.**

Work with local economic development officials to conduct a thorough assessment of the infrastructure needs of the industry clusters selected for future development attention. The Shovel Ready Committee should take the lead in this activity with the support of their respective local government partners.

**ED2.D Prepare a unified City-County Annual Capital Improvement Program.**

Coordinate the annual Capital Improvement Program prepared by the City of Fort Wayne with a similar program to be prepared by Allen County government.

**ED2.E Seek additional public-sector funding for proactive infrastructure investments to support economic development.**

Explore the value of implementing a Countywide infrastructure funding mechanism.

**ED2.F Use public sector resources to induce the development of a business/technology complex.**

Create and implement a bold, aggressive development plan with publicly financed infrastructure for a new business center: 1) along the Airport Expressway; 2) on the east side of Interstate 469 at the State Road 37 interchange; or 3) other appropriate locations. Explore the Noblesville Corporate Campus as one model for such an initiative.

**OBJECTIVE ED3.**

**COORDINATE AND WORK WITH THE FORT WAYNE-ALLEN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE, THE NORTHEAST INDIANA CORPORATE COUNCIL, THE NEW ALLEN ALLIANCE, AND OTHER LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS TO GROW COMPETITIVE BUSINESSES.**

Economic growth is spreading across the northeast Indiana region, which is an aspect of the larger regional development process. The Allen County community must encourage productive and sustainable growth that is fiscally sound. To succeed in this objective, local public officials from Allen County must communicate and interact with their counterparts in the other counties of northeast Indiana. In 2000, researchers from the Community Research Institute at IPFW examined growth trends throughout northeast Indiana between 1970 and 2000. This analysis points to the major role of the transportation system, especially Interstate 69, in spawning regional growth.

**ED3.A Support “cluster-based economic development” initiatives.**

We should support efforts by the Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance, the Northeast Indiana Corporate Council, the Northeast Indiana Workforce Investment Board and the proposed new regional marketing partnership to identify and grow competitive industry clusters that will create more skilled and knowledge-based jobs in northeast Indiana. The Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance should be the lead organization involved in cluster-based strategies impacting Allen County. Fort Wayne and Allen County should assist these efforts with targeted, supportive infrastructure investments as identified by respective cluster-industry participants.

**OBJECTIVE ED4.**

**ENCOURAGE EXISTING BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION, AS WELL AS THE REUSE AND REVITALIZATION OF EXISTING INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES AND AREAS.**

Given the more competitive nature of economic development, both within and beyond northeast Indiana, we must continue to evaluate our planning and review processes and procedures for their ability to be efficient and responsible to those seeking to make basic-sector investments in our community. Recognizing that there must be a balance among and between the many objectives contained in this Plan, procedures that create uncertainty and unnecessary delay in the development approval process do not improve our competitive position. Conversely, development that lowers our “quality of place” also detracts from our long-term competitive position. The Comprehensive Plan should create a better understanding within the development community about what types of development will be encouraged and “what incentives under what circumstances” local governments will provide to accomplish this desired goal.



**ED4.A An efficient and consistent regulatory system supports development efforts.**

The regulatory process should strive to balance the needs of flexibility, equitable treatment, efficiency and consistency in the review of development proposals.

**ED4.B Maintain existing infrastructure investments.**

Public sector infrastructure such as roads located within or serving our existing industrial parks must be properly maintained, and periodic reinvestment must occur to reduce the potential for the decline of these areas.

**ED4.C Continue support of the Fort Wayne Urban Enterprise Zone.**

We should support revitalization of the “industrial crescent” through programs such as the continuation of the Urban Enterprise Zone. The Fort Wayne Urban Enterprise Zone should prepare a new strategic plan to guide its long-term activities, now that the Zone has been reauthorized through 2013 and re-endorsed by the Fort Wayne Common Council.

**ED4.D Develop a reuse plan for the Taylor Street/General Electric industrial complex area.**

In concert with General Electric, a sub-area plan for these industrial buildings should be prepared. The size and location of the complex on Broadway north of Taylor Street, and its potential impact on surrounding neighborhoods, is significant. A proactive plan for its reuse and redevelopment could serve to reduce negative impacts and to find productive reuse of these assets. Residential and business incubation are two potential uses of the site.

**ED4.E The visibility of the Fort Wayne Brownfield Program should be elevated.**

Take maximum possible advantage of state programs that support reinvestment in brownfields and previously developed industrial areas.

**OBJECTIVE ED5.**

**TREAT DOWNTOWN FORT WAYNE AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOCATIONS.**

Given the relatively current nature of the *Blueprint for the Future* planning process and recent completion of the *BlueprintPLUS* action plan; it would be redundant to repeat the recommendations contained in these two downtown plans here. Rather, it is assumed that they will be incorporated into the final Comprehensive Plan.

**ED5.A Aggressively pursue the strategies recently presented in the *BlueprintPLUS* Final Report and Action Plan.**

Every effort should be made to act upon the recommendations outlined in the *BlueprintPLUS* in a timely manner.

**ED5.B Support the initiatives of the Downtown Improvement District.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County governments must be proactive partners with the Downtown Improvement District in providing the sustained leadership necessary for the successful implementation of the *BlueprintPLUS* action plan.

**OBJECTIVE ED6.**

**PLAN FOR THE FUTURE GROWTH OF ALL ALLEN COUNTY COMMUNITIES.**

Employment opportunities are critical to the continued ability of the smaller communities in Allen County to be self-sufficient. They also represent a development asset, as numerous businesses seek locations near, but not within, the urbanized area of a larger, central city such as Fort Wayne.

**ED6.A Ensure industrial sites are adequately served with public infrastructure.**

Industrial areas within the smaller, incorporated communities in Allen County must be provided adequate public-sector utility capacity and highway access to make them viable development options.

**ED6.B Aggressively market development opportunities in smaller communities.**

The industrial sites and their supporting infrastructure located within smaller communities in Allen County represent important economic development assets. These assets must be included in local, regional and state site-marketing initiatives.

# 3. Housing and Neighborhoods

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## Introduction

The demand for housing is a direct result of the changing characteristics of the population. For instance, as pointed out in the Housing Chapter of the Existing Conditions Report, the traditional family (a household headed by two-parents) is no longer the norm in this community. Singles without children or empty nesters, whether young or old, are a growing segment of the population. They have distinctively different housing needs than families with children. They require units with convenience, easy maintenance and immediate access to goods and services. They are also interested in neighborhoods that provide a wide range of housing and other amenities, allowing them to move up or down in housing type and size without moving out of the neighborhood to find suitable housing. This, and many other factors, will have a profound impact on meeting housing needs in the future.

## Overview

This chapter outlines the recommendations for addressing housing needs of a diverse population within Allen County's and Fort Wayne's neighborhoods. It is organized into the following sections:

- Policy Foundation of the Plan;
- Key Findings;
- Housing Growth Potential;
- Goal; and
- Objectives and Strategies.

## Policy Foundation of the Plan

The foundation of the Plan was shaped by an extensive community involvement and planning process (see Executive Summary). Each element of the Comprehensive Plan has three key layers of policies: goals, objectives and strategies. Goals are broad policy statements that describe a desired outcome in general terms. Objectives indicate policy directions. Strategies are organized by objective and indicate more specific policy directions necessary to initiate an objective. As a part of the Plan implementation phase, it is intended that a detailed matrix be developed that outlines the action steps necessary to implement the strategies.

Other plans and studies completed prior to the preparation of the Plan and relevant to the Housing and Neighborhood Chapter include:

- Downtown BlueprintPLUS, completed in 2005;
- Allen County/Fort Wayne Historic Preservation Strategy, completed in 2005;
- Hometown Master Plan, completed and adopted in 2005;
- City of Fort Wayne Housing Strategy, completed and adopted in 2003;
- Airport Expressway Amendment to the Southwest Allen County Study, adopted in 2001; and
- Southwest Allen County Study, adopted in 1986.

The housing-related goals and recommendations of the plans listed above can be found in the Appendix.

## Key Findings

As part of this planning process, an extensive analysis of existing conditions and trends was conducted. Listed below are a summary of the key findings related to housing in Allen County and

Fort Wayne. For a more detailed explanation of these findings, see the Housing and Neighborhoods Chapter of the Existing Conditions Report.

### **Increase in Number of Nonfamily Households**

From 1970 to 2000, the number of nonfamily (no spouse or dependent children living with householder) households in the County increased by 26,206 and represented 33 percent of all households, compared to 19 percent in 1970. The growth of nonfamily households accounts for 61 percent of the total increase in households during this 30-year period. Nonfamily households will continue to grow faster than family households so long as life expectancy is high and housing remains affordable to individuals in their early twenties.

### **Homeownership Rates**

Homeownership rates vary dramatically within the County, from below 50 percent in parts of the central City to 90 percent in the post-1950 areas and rural areas. There has been a trend of declining homeownership rates within the 1950 Fort Wayne boundary while homeownership is stable or on the rise in the rest of the County. The area affected by declining ownership is similar to the area experiencing increased vacancy and declining home values.

### **More Houses than Households**

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of new building permits for housing in Allen County exceeded the number of new households by 35 percent. In other words, for every additional household, builders produced 1.35 new housing units. Under healthy growth conditions, more homes are built than households are created to live in them. If the surplus in housing becomes too severe, however, it produces two conflicting effects: 1) It facilitates the “up and out” homebuyer preference with improved home quality located farther from the center of the City; and 2) it contributes simultaneously to rising vacancy rates, increased abandonment and declining home values.

### **Increase in Female-Headed Households**

Between 1990 and 2000, both the County and the City experienced a significant increase (nearly 37 percent) in female-headed households with child(ren)/no spouse. In Allen County, there were 2,974 more single mothers by 2000. Of that total, 81 percent of them lived in the City of Fort Wayne. Between 1970 and 2000, the number of households headed by single mothers in Allen County has increased from 3,641 to 10,036. This represents a significant and growing component of the local housing market.

### **Housing Growth Potential**

In the Land Use Chapter, estimates of developed area needed to support future growth or growth potential are presented for three major land use categories: residential, commercial and institutional, and industrial. These estimates are based on both population and employment projections for Allen County for the next 20 years.

For the purposes of this chapter, the housing projections account for additional demand, as well as the number of residential units that will need to be replaced over the next two decades. It is projected that Allen County will need to build an additional 25,790 housing units requiring an additional 12,108 acres of land at current densities.

There are a variety of ways in which many of the 25,790 housing units projected over the next 10 years could consume less than the estimated 12,108 acres of land. One example is developing underdeveloped and vacant sites within the existing urbanized areas. These sites could be developed

at densities comparable to surrounding development which is often higher than housing being developed at the fringe, and conserve even more land.

## Goal

The following goal for housing and neighborhoods was formulated by the Comprehensive Plan Committee based upon citizen input:

*Neighborhoods that are stable and diverse, providing a wide range of housing options, linking residents to a variety of land uses which meet the needs of the community.*

## Objectives and Strategies

Outlined below are objectives and strategies to guide decision making related to housing and neighborhoods in Allen County and Fort Wayne.

### **OBJECTIVE H1.**

#### **ESTABLISH A PROCESS FOR INCREASED COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION.**

Intergovernmental cooperation in land use planning gives Fort Wayne and Allen County communities the opportunity to promote common goals, plan for major developments that will impact a wider area, collaboratively preserve open space, participate in tax revenue- and fee-sharing, and potentially permit transfers of development rights across municipal boundaries. Such cooperative efforts can also be used to advance the creation of mixed-used districts.

##### **H1.A Organize community forums to address housing strategies and opportunities.**

Community forums would provide an excellent opportunity for education and information-sharing regarding programs, policies and trends that support a diverse housing market. It could also spur collaboration among stakeholders.

##### **H1.B Provide ongoing educational outreach regarding housing market and development trends.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County can play an important role in building public awareness about national trends that may impact the local housing market, the benefits of managing growth and promoting infill, and the advantages of various lifestyles (urban living, smaller cities and towns, rural, downtown, etc.).

### **OBJECTIVE H2.**

#### **PROMOTE ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS.**

Residents of Allen County are interested in creating and maintaining attractive neighborhoods that foster pride. A recent communitywide survey further documented the high priority Allen County residents place on community appearance. The following strategies suggest tools and programs that will aid in the realization of this objective.

##### **H2.A Continue to develop tools and establish guidelines that will ensure that new development complements existing neighborhood character and historic buildings, and creates an accessible, pedestrian-friendly environment.**

Tools such as architectural design guidelines can serve to preserve small-town character, ensure that new development complements historic buildings, and create an accessible, pedestrian-friendly environment. Besides addressing fundamental issues such as building height, width and setbacks, design guidelines can also focus on elements such as signage, materials selection, streetscape improvements and landscaping.

## **H2.B Promote street tree plantings, community gardens and similar public landscape features.**

Greening efforts can have profound and positive effects on a community and the environment. Tree planting improves public spaces and increases property values, while providing shade and reducing water runoff. Pocket parks and community gardens can transform vacant lots into community assets, offering green space and recreational opportunities for neighborhood residents.

## **H2.C Promote beautification efforts to define streetscapes in order to create a distinct sense of place and destination within communities and neighborhoods.**

The establishment of streetscape guidelines and beautification programs can help communities maintain a distinct character and ensure that new development respects existing historic and natural elements. Regulations regarding building scale and design, sidewalk and bicycle lane specifications, street lighting, landscaping, public art and placement of utilities can help a community define its corridors and create a unique sense of place.

### **OBJECTIVE H3.**

#### **BUILD ON THE ASSETS AND STABILIZE EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS.**

By reinvesting in downtowns, town centers, older suburbs and other interior neighborhoods, communities can reinvigorate their cores and begin to reverse the development trends that contribute to the loss of farmland, abandoned urban housing, longer commutes and higher levels of pollution. The following strategies suggest mechanisms, opportunities and programs to help build and stabilize our existing neighborhoods.

#### **H3.A Develop mechanisms to allow for residential adaptive reuse in existing neighborhoods.**

By encouraging residential adaptive reuse through more flexible zoning regulations, jurisdictions can generate more housing, diversify housing stock, offer compatible mixed-use opportunities, preserve historic character, and restore underutilized or deteriorating buildings to a useful purpose. Many different kinds of buildings can be converted to residential use, including old school buildings, hotels, hospitals, warehouses and factories. Reuse of abandoned or underutilized buildings can augment local tax rolls. Historic preservation tax credits and programs can sometimes be used to help fund conversions of historically or architecturally significant buildings. The Downtown BlueprintPLUS vision for downtown Fort Wayne specifically promotes adaptive reuse via loft conversions along Harrison Street North, and suggests incentives for encouraging such reuse.

#### **H3.B Identify appropriate locations for compatible infill housing that would replace vacant or underutilized sites in existing neighborhoods.**

Architecturally compatible infill housing development provides communities with an alternative to continually growing outward. By focusing investment and energy on the downtowns of existing towns and cities, infill developments can often catalyze revitalization in neglected cores. Infill housing development can lead to higher densities, better access to jobs through proximity to mass transit, greater affordability and more tax dollars for local governments. Several strategies can be used to spur infill development, including upgrading core infrastructure and amenities, such as parks; and zoning changes to permit mixed-use development and higher-maximum dwelling unit densities.

**H3.C Identify older and abandoned structures in need of preservation, stabilization, repair or demolition.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County should consider a program to identify older and abandoned properties, and work toward their improvement.

**H3.D Market local neighborhood improvement success stories and communicate techniques.**

By publicizing and promoting neighborhood success stories, Fort Wayne and Allen County communities can recognize local leaders and accomplishments, encourage continued revitalization efforts, and develop a mechanism for sharing expertise and innovations across jurisdictions.

**H3.E Promote preservation and restoration of historic structures.**

Public education and information sharing is particularly important for owners of historically significant homes who want to rehabilitate their properties while maintaining the original historic/architectural character of the building. Booklets, pamphlets, brochures or even Web sites can provide this information in a form that can be distributed to local historic preservation boards and advocacy groups.

**H3.F Market redeveloped residential properties.**

Homebuyers sometimes need education and assistance in order to obtain financing to meet their needs. By offering specific financial incentives, such as low interest loans for investment in redeveloped properties, homeownership rates can be increased and neighborhoods can be revitalized.

**H3.G Evaluate the impacts of current code enforcement policies and practices on neighborhood stabilization.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County communities should review their code enforcement policies and practices. In doing so, successful policies can be identified and promoted, as well as problem areas pinpointed where code enforcement needs to be reassessed or reinforced.

**OBJECTIVE H4.**

**PROVIDE HOUSING CHOICE WITHIN NEIGHBORHOODS.**

As demographics shift and family structures change, communities need housing options that can accommodate a variety of household sizes. Housing choices should also be available in a range of locations, types, and prices to meet the needs of all local residents. The following strategies suggest ways to diversify the local housing stock through incentives and the introduction of a larger variety of housing types.

**H4.A Create programs which provide incentives to developments which provide a diverse supply of housing.**

Communities should encourage diverse housing development. A diversity of housing types include new and rehabilitated detached and attached single family, duplexes, multiple family, cooperatives and condominiums. Incentives can be used to target specific types of development and enhance housing options in many communities.

**H4.B Explore options for allowing multigenerational housing.**

Many terms are used to describe multigenerational housing, including granny flats, garage apartments, carriage house apartments and ancillary units. Accessory apartments and additional

single-family structures can take a variety of physical forms and offer many benefits. These varied options merit examination.

**H4.C Encourage private builders to work in partnership with not-for-profit organizations to develop innovative housing designs that promote architectural-diversity and affordability within neighborhoods.**

Private and not-for-profit housing developers can form partnerships to create new and rehabilitated housing developments and projects that contain both affordable and market-rate units, with both types of housing seamlessly meshed. Such partnerships can allow a project to access tax credits and support for federal and state housing funds, while creating more income-diverse and inclusive communities.

**OBJECTIVE H5.  
PROVIDE CONNECTIVITY.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County communities can promote connectivity through a number of different approaches. The strategies outlined below focus on providing alternatives to automobile transportation, and linking neighborhoods, schools, shopping and other amenities through greenways and trails. The strategies also offer policy reforms that can improve the local jobs-housing balance, and suggest methods for cooperative transportation management among multiple jurisdictions.

**H5.A Provide incentives for locating development along and in the vicinity of existing or proposed bus routes.**

Modified parking requirements and other incentives can be used to encourage denser, mixed-use developments near transit stops. Over time, this pattern of development can reduce reliance on automobile travel, contribute to the creation of more vital and diverse communities, and improve transportation options for residents of all ages and incomes.

**H5.B Establish plans for transit and transportation-related enhancements to make communities safer, to reduce congestion and to reduce motorized-vehicle conflicts with pedestrians and bicycles.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County communities should work together to establish plans for transportation-related enhancements, with a focus on transit, pedestrian movement and bicycle lanes. A sound multimodal-transportation plan will promote connectivity and improve transportation safety.

**H5.C Support transit-oriented development and other transportation programs that connect people to jobs and services while reducing traffic congestion, air pollution and other transportation related costs.**

Transit-oriented developments along with other similar programs can save individuals money on gas, parking fees and car repairs while also benefiting the broader community by reducing congestion and air pollution.

**H5.D Promote and comprehensively plan for greenways, bikeways, and trails within new and existing developments.**

Communities can encourage nonvehicular transportation by promoting the provision of walkways and bikeways in new and existing developments. When new developments are constructed near existing or planned greenways and trails, developers can be encouraged to protect, improve or even contribute additional lands to these resources.



**H5.E Encourage parks, walkways and open spaces that link to and between neighborhoods, schools, shopping and other amenities.**

Greenways, parks and open space should be connected throughout Fort Wayne and Allen County communities, in order to increase connectivity between communities, provide recreational opportunities and promote habitat conservation for wildlife. By linking these types of public landscapes, Fort Wayne and Allen County communities can preserve their natural and cultural heritage, and support healthy communities.

**H5.F Encourage the location of sidewalks along arterial and collector roadways.**

In order to safely connect neighborhoods to schools, shopping, and other amenities, areas should be identified where sidewalks would significantly benefit the community. Programs can be developed which would improve existing arterial and collector roadways to accommodate sidewalks at priority locations.

**OBJECTIVE H.6.**

**PROMOTE MIXED USES ALONG WITH PROXIMITY OF USES.**

The strategies that follow outline several different methods for creating mixed-use communities and promoting proximity of different uses, especially of housing with commercial and civic uses. The strategies suggest tools, programs and general initiatives that can contribute to the growth of more vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods throughout Allen County. These strategies for promoting a mix of uses are compatible with those contained in the Downtown BlueprintPLUS.

**H6.A Encourage the retrofit of underperforming shopping centers, indoor malls and strip malls into mixed-use areas.**

Declining shopping centers, indoor malls and strip malls are problematic in communities across the country. Some communities are reinventing them by retrofitting these old malls. These projects may involve converting large retail spaces into multifamily housing, or even reinstating old street grids that could become home to mixed-use developments and walkable neighborhoods.

**H6.B Enable and develop incentives for compatible mixed-use, transit-accessible developments.**

Compatible mixed-use developments strive to create walkable, diverse neighborhoods with a variety of housing types intermingled with educational facilities, civic buildings and commercial establishments. Transit-accessible developments focus on promoting pedestrian and mass transit movement around mixed-use nodes where transit is available. The incorporation of compatible mixed-use and transportation-accessible elements into existing neighborhoods and downtowns can encourage the stabilization and enhancement of existing housing in mature neighborhoods, historic areas and downtowns.

**H6.C Investigate techniques used in the development of successful mixed-use developments and districts.**

Traditional zoning ordinances that strictly regulate zoning districts and seek to keep uses completely separate set up a number of barriers to mixed-use development. Investigating techniques used in the development of successful mixed-use developments and districts may help reveal where zoning regulations may be amended to encourage this type of development.

**H6.D Plan with various stakeholders to coordinate the future locations of public facilities such as schools, libraries and services to strengthen mixed-use areas.**

By working together to assess future needs for public facilities, Fort Wayne and Allen County communities can strategically strengthen developed areas and stimulate growth to occur in closer proximity to public services and amenities.

**OBJECTIVE H7.**

**PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE DOWNTOWN HOUSING.**

Fort Wayne’s Downtown BlueprintPLUS shows that there is an emerging, national market for more compact forms of housing, particularly within urban neighborhoods and downtowns. This market is being fueled by the convergence of the two largest generations in the nation’s history: 82 million “baby boomers” born between 1946 and 1964, and 78 million “millennials” born between 1977 and 1996. According to housing market studies conducted by Zimmerman/Volk Associates, this convergence will peak in the next decade and continue through the year 2020. This trend would indicate considerable demand for downtown housing which should be promoted and encouraged in downtown Fort Wayne, as well as the downtown areas of other Allen County communities.

**H7.A Support Downtown BlueprintPLUS recommendations related to housing development in downtown Fort Wayne.**

The Downtown BlueprintPLUS presents a vision to guide public policy and private investments in downtown Fort Wayne, to identify and prioritize catalyst projects that can leverage public funds and encourage private investments, and to ensure that the downtown returns to its historic role as the vital and vibrant center of the region. The challenge for downtown Fort Wayne is to proactively pursue implementing a mix of entertainment, hotels, housing, restaurants and offices, creating the conditions for a high-quality, urban living alternative not found elsewhere in the region.

**H7.B Facilitate the development of new downtown housing.**

Communities should make it a priority to enable and facilitate downtown housing by creating and/or continuing to market existing incentive programs, investigating emerging trends and best practices, facilitating the location of mixed uses – such as allowing apartments over commercial buildings or creating live-work units, and considering flexible parking standards to promote infill housing opportunities.

# 4. Transportation

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## Introduction

Residents of Fort Wayne and Allen County have a variety of vehicular, public and alternative transportation needs. Ideas generated at the public meetings provided a wide assortment of suggestions from paving gravel country roads, to enhancing vehicular movement through downtown Fort Wayne, to providing additional pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and rail options. Transportation planning in Allen County and Fort Wayne is an ongoing process led by the Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC), which serves as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Development of this Plan required the use of technical data from NIRCC and various transportation providers, coupled with community input. The goal, objectives and strategies discussed within this chapter are closely aligned and compatible with the existing transportation plan developed by NIRCC.

## Overview

This chapter outlines the recommendations for addressing transportation in Allen County and Fort Wayne, and is organized in the following sections:

- Policy Foundation of the Plan;
- Key Findings;
- Goal; and
- Objectives and Strategies.

## Policy Foundation of the Plan

The foundation of the Plan was shaped by an extensive community involvement and planning process (see Executive Summary). The Comprehensive Plan has three key layers of policies: goals, objectives and strategies. Goals are the broadest policy statements that state a desired outcome in general terms. Objectives indicate a more specific policy direction and help organize strategies. Strategies are detailed actions necessary to initiate or complete an objective – such as a program or project. There are multiple objectives for each goal and multiple strategies for each objective. The recommendations for each element of the Plan contain all three policy layers.

Other plans and studies completed prior to the preparation of this Plan and relevant to the Transportation Chapter include:

- Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council, *2030 Transportation Plan Technical Report*, 2005;
- The Fort Wayne – Allen County Airport Authority, *Fort Wayne International Airport Master Plan Update*, 2003;
- Citilink and Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council, *Citilink Transportation Development Plan*, March 2004;
- Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council, *Coordinating Development and Transportation Services, A Guide for Developers, Engineers, and Planners*, 2002;
- Aboite New Trails, *New Trails/Aboite Township Walkways and Shared Use Paths*, October 2003;
- City of New Haven, *City of New Haven Comprehensive Trails and Pedestrian Walkways Master Plan*;
- City of Fort Wayne, *Transportation Capital Improvement Plan*;
- Fort Wayne, New Haven, Allen County: *Access Standards Manual*;
- Northern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council, *Frontage Road Proposal*;
- American Association of Highway & Transportation Officials, *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*;

- Urban Transportation Advisory Board, *Roadway Design Standards*;
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, *A Guide for Achieving Flexibility in Highway Design*, May 2004;
- Fort Wayne Park Board, *Fort Wayne Parks Master Plan*;
- City of Fort Wayne, *Greenway Consortium Trails Plan*; and
- Allen County, *Allen County Parks Master Plan*.

## Key Findings

### **Vehicular Transportation**

Fort Wayne and Allen County have good connections to interstate highway systems that tie the area to major cities in Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Kentucky and beyond. As a result, this is a prime area for truck freight movement. While there are minor congestion issues, the area is relatively free of the severe traffic congestion often found in larger urban areas. Current trends in population and land use indicate that travel patterns will likely become less oriented to the urban core, and more dependent on suburb-to-suburb connections. Future transportation planning decisions will need to take the issue of air pollution into account. Another challenge involves the need to develop context-sensitive roadways that adequately serve new housing, commercial and industrial developments peripheral to Fort Wayne, and integrate the community's character.

### **Public Transportation**

Citilink is the public transportation provider for the Fort Wayne area. Since 1999, Citilink has experienced a significant increase in bus ridership, and it has plans to substantially enhance current service levels. Citilink offers a number of flexible transportation options, including: fixed bus routes; Flexlink routes that can deviate off the standard service routes upon request; and Citilink Access, a complementary demand-response van service for people with disabilities. Several other transportation agencies such as Community Transportation Network (CTN) and Allen County Council on Aging provide and/or coordinate paratransit services for individuals throughout the County. Another significant transportation facility is the Fort Wayne International Airport, which is anticipating steady and significant increases in passenger and cargo operations. As of 2005, Amtrak serves the Northeast Indiana region via its Waterloo, Indiana platform for passenger service and is exploring the possibility of a high-speed rail line from Chicago to Cleveland that will pass through Fort Wayne.

### **Alternative Transportation**

Many parts of Fort Wayne and Allen County lack the necessary infrastructure for safe and comfortable bicycle and pedestrian movement. Providing additional sidewalks, trails and bike paths; promoting multimodal transportation design; and instituting appropriate land use and development codes could greatly expand alternative transportation options. Due to northeast Indiana's concentration of plain sect communities like the Amish, transportation options in applicable rural areas should also safely accommodate horse-drawn buggies. The Fort Wayne Greenway provides nearly 20 miles of hiking and biking trails along the area's three rivers. While the Greenway is in need of maintenance and protection, it serves as an excellent spine from which to create additional bikeways, pathways, trails and/or greenway expansions. As trail development is planned there should be efforts made to coordinate safety issues with various safety agencies in the County.

## Goal

The following goal for transportation was developed by the Comprehensive Plan Committee based upon citizen input:

*An integrated transportation system that ensures accessibility, safe and efficient movement and connectivity through all parts of the County and region, and accommodates a range of transportation choices such as public and paratransit, high-speed rail, pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular and horse-drawn.*

## Objectives and Strategies

Outlined below are objectives and strategies to support transportation improvements in Allen County and Fort Wayne.

### **OBJECTIVE T1. IMPROVE VEHICULAR TRANSPORTATION THROUGHOUT THE REGION WHILE ACCOUNTING FOR AIR QUALITY STANDARDS AND NOISE MITIGATION.**

While Allen County and Fort Wayne have an adequate road system, population changes and environmental issues represent challenges for future vehicular travel. Outward-moving population trends are increasing the number of vehicle miles traveled, as well as the potential for congestion on roads with inadequate capacity. The region's designation as a nonattainment maintenance area for ozone pollution means that future transportation and land use decisions must account for pollution reduction. Communities have also expressed an interest in taking steps to limit highway noise. The following strategies provide recommendations for improving vehicular and other modes of transportation throughout the region by enhancing the efficiency and connectivity of the road network.

#### **T1.A Continue to support cooperation and coordination among local, regional, state and federal transportation authorities to identify and fund priority projects.**

As an important hub for northeast Indiana, transportation decisions in Fort Wayne and Allen County have a significant impact on the broader region. Fort Wayne and Allen County planning agencies should continue to work with regional, state and federal transportation authorities through the Urban Transportation Advisory Board (UTAB) and the Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) to identify priority projects and secure appropriate funding.

#### **T1.B Continue and sustain efforts for new construction/upgrades of U.S. Highway 24 from Interstate 469 to the Ohio state line.**

This project will promote commerce and trade to and from the Port of Toledo. Federal and state agencies have been working with local officials to determine costs and feasibility of this road, and efforts should be maintained until the projected completion date. Allen County and Fort Wayne officials also should take the opportunity to work to adaptively reuse "old" U.S. Highway 24 as a heritage byway with new historical markers and a slower speed limit so bicycles can share the road.

#### **T1.C Develop transportation plans that provides an interconnected road system that connects suburban developments to the urban area and to each other.**

Allen County and Fort Wayne have a radial system of roads, with relatively limited connections between suburban communities. Allen County communities should facilitate the development of an interconnected road system by examining growth trends, land use goals and current road capacities, and use this information to identify key corridors, secure necessary rights-of-way for anticipated future roads, and establish standardized setbacks. These roads should be designed as "complete streets" which move people, instead of just cars by using alternative modes of travel (e.g. transit, walkways, bicycles, etc.).

**T1.D Encourage improved connectivity in new developments.**

When new developments are not well connected with existing neighborhoods they contribute more cars and create greater traffic congestion on collector and arterial roads. When developers are required to integrate new neighborhoods into existing street patterns, sidewalks and trails, and provide a variety of choices for safe movement in and out of the neighborhood, new developments can actually increase connectivity within the region. Fort Wayne and Allen County should encourage well-connected roads and through streets. Options for future connectivity should be considered in new development. Where cul-de-sacs and stub areas already exist, communities should consider plans to extend these streets to improve connectivity when approving adjacent development projects. Likewise, the review of proposed connections should also consider other traffic problems that could develop by interconnecting neighborhoods, namely, vehicular shortcut situations.

**T1.E Revise zoning codes to encourage mixed-use development.**

Mixed-use development can play a role in reducing traffic congestion and vehicle miles traveled. Such development places housing, jobs, retail and services in close proximity to each other, as contrasted with the separate uses or single-use districts required by conventional zoning, giving residents and visitors the option of using alternative or public transportation methods, or traveling fewer miles by car to get from place to place. Allen County and Fort Wayne should revise their zoning codes to support more mixed-use development throughout the County.

**T1.F Ensure that environmental oversight complies with state and federal standards in transportation improvement projects.**

Environmental management and project development principles should be integrated into all routings and programs to support the overall goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Transportation improvements and programs should be planned, developed and implemented in a holistic approach that balances natural and physical environmental values. This approach would include drainage, air and water quality, lighting, wetlands and mosquito protection within adjacent watersheds.

**T1.G Work with the Indiana Department of Transportation to encourage beautification projects at existing interchanges that are compatible with the type of interchange and existing and proposed land uses.**

Interchanges play an important role as gateways into our community, and as such special attention should be paid to how they look. Beautification efforts that take into consideration the type of interchange, along with existing and proposed land uses in the vicinity of the interchange, should be encouraged.

**T1.H Ensure that zoning adjacent to existing and planned interchanges is compatible with interchange type and considers existing land uses in the immediate vicinity.**

New interchanges are a draw for new development. Approvals for rezonings and new development projects at interchanges should be compatible with the type of interchange and existing land uses in the immediate vicinity. Ensuring that this occurs requires coordination between planning agencies and state and local transportation agencies when considering rezoning and new development proposals.

**T1.I Investigate planning solutions that mitigate the impact of highway noise on residential communities.**

Noise from interstate highways and other major roads is a common concern among Fort Wayne and Allen County residents. Planning regulations can be implemented in order to mitigate the impact of highway noise on residential communities. In the case of new development, this may involve the use of buffer zones, so that more intensive uses (industrial, commercial) are placed next to the highway and residential uses are further away. In the case of existing residential communities, sound mitigation options such as earth berms and vegetative buffers should be explored. The impacts of noise barrier (sound wall) policies for new and existing developments should be examined.

**T1.J Consider access-management techniques to improve safety and service levels along roadways.**

Through access-management techniques, the City and County can improve safety with roadway improvements to reduce the number of vehicle crashes, as well as improve the level of service along roadways. Education, signage enforcement and various engineering solutions should also be considered to mitigate accidents on highly traveled corridors.

**T1.J Investigate and monitor the need to upgrade gravel roads in developing areas.**

The need for upgrading gravel roads is particularly apparent in the parts of Allen County that are experiencing significant population growth. While paving and widening gravel roads can represent a substantial cost, many of the benefits resulting from an upgrade can help offset that cost. These benefits include a reduction in the ongoing maintenance required by a gravel road, a reduction in dust, creation of a smoother surface that improves multimodal (including vehicular) efficiency, safety, drainage improvements, redistribution of traffic and a potential increase in the tax base. Local agencies should work with developers to ensure upgrades in a coordinated fashion.

**T1.K Encourage context-sensitive design in the development of roadway improvement projects.**

According to *A Guide for Achieving Flexibility in Highway Design* produced by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials in May 2004, the use of context-sensitive design solutions in transportation project design can help to better integrate roadway improvement projects into the community resulting positive impacts beyond its traffic or transportation function. It accomplishes this through an interdisciplinary citizen-based approach which equally addresses safety, mobility, and preservation of scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources.

**OBJECTIVE T2.**

**WORK WITH APPROPRIATE AGENCIES TO EXPAND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPPORTUNITIES, WITH ATTENTION TO BUS, RAIL AND AIR TRAVEL.**

Public transportation providers in Fort Wayne and Allen County are anticipating substantial increases in ridership, and various expansions have been planned accordingly. The following strategies provide recommendations for ensuring that public transportation initiatives are well planned and are as efficient as possible.

**T2.A Work with Citilink and other local transit and paratransit providers to examine existing bus routes and services in order to resolve potential gaps in service.**

Planning departments should work with transit providers to closely examine the locations of existing public transportation routes and stops to ensure that they meet the needs of major population,

employment and commercial centers. Route scheduling and schedule adherence should also be addressed in order to maximize the convenience of public transportation options. The support in the development of a downtown transit hub will also continue to facilitate improvements in service.

**T2.B Encourage greater use of various public and para-transit transportation alternatives and explore new public transportation alternatives.**

Public transportation offers numerous benefits to the residents and workers of Fort Wayne and Allen County. Transit increases personal mobility and freedom, particularly for youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities and low-income populations. It stimulates the economy and helps create new jobs. It relieves traffic congestion, and it helps the environment and conserves energy.

**T2.C Investigate the provision of public and private incentives to increase the use of public transportation.**

Fort Wayne should consider pursuing a variety of incentives to increase public transportation ridership. Citilink should be encouraged to offer more convenient fare structures and payment systems, allowing more frequent riders to save money on individual trips. A “transit benefit” program could be promoted, in which businesses subsidize their employees’ transit fares in exchange for tax benefits. Downtown parking should be priced strategically, and park-and-ride facilities should be constructed at transit stops to encourage transit use and discourage single-passenger car trips. New development at strategic locations (e.g. exiting transit stops, major employment and commercial centers, etc.) along existing and proposed transit routes should be developed in a more compact pattern oriented toward transit to encourage ridership.

**T2.D Promote development that accommodates viable public transportation options.**

In order to encourage the use of public transportation and reduce automobile traffic, land use and development patterns must encourage higher densities, a mix of uses, and roadway and site design that supports a variety of transit users and providers. Codes and ordinances can be revised to promote infill and direct new development towards appropriate locations and at higher densities to support transit. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) districts/zones should be designated near transit hubs and residential and commercial centers. TOD districts typically have a mix of uses and housing types, are designed for cycling and walking, employ traffic-calming techniques, and make use of shared parking management strategies that reduce the amount of land devoted to parking lots. As this type of development increases, public transit will become more efficient and economical for users as well as providers.

**T2.E Support efforts to lobby for the Midwest High Speed Rail Initiative, and if the project is approved to serve Fort Wayne and Allen County, plan for infrastructure improvements.**

Fort Wayne is one of several cities that may be served by a 3,000-mile long high-speed passenger rail line that will link nine Midwestern states, known as the Midwest Regional Rail System. In planning for this new system, Allen County and Fort Wayne will need to work with both freight and passenger rail, and other transportation partners in determining the necessary setbacks, rights-of-way, and at-grade improvements that are needed to accommodate this new line. The passenger station for this line will also serve as an important transit hub, and efforts should be made to plan for multimodal connections – including sidewalks, bike paths, bus stops and parking facilities – at this station.



**T2.F Work with the Fort Wayne-Allen County Airport Authority to plan for airport expansions.**

Fort Wayne International Airport's 20-year Master Plan incorporates a number of capital improvement projects to accommodate anticipated increases in passenger and cargo services. Expansion efforts will need to account for issues of noise and environmental concerns. New development around Allen County airports should incorporate uses that are compatible with the airport.

**T2.G Protect Allen County airports and proposed airport-expansion areas from incompatible land uses.**

In order to assure that development does not encroach on airport flight zones, specific standards should be incorporated into community development regulations that are compatible with and support federal guidelines. The use of overlay districts should be investigated as a mechanism to protect airport operations and economic viability. Depending on airport characteristics, location and amount of key open space adjacent to airport properties, incompatible land uses may include public assembly/large concentrations of people (number of persons attracted by a use), residential density, intensity of nonresidential development, structure height, hazardous/explosive materials, wildlife hazards, light/glare, air quality and electronic signals.

**OBJECTIVE T3.**

**ENCOURAGE AND PLAN FOR FULLY ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE.**

Allen County communities should expand and enhance alternative, accessible transportation options, so that more residents travel around comfortably and safely without the use of a motorized vehicle. The following strategies address the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and horse-drawn vehicles.

**T3.A Encourage new developments to be pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County should encourage sidewalks within all new developments, as well as the provision of pathways, greenways and trails to connect residents to nearby commercial centers, housing, parks, schools and other institutional areas. When possible, new urban development should provide linkages to any existing or proposed greenways and trails.

**T3.B Work with local transportation agencies to assess existing arterial, collector and local roadways to determine the need for safe pedestrian- and bicycle-compatible improvements in Allen County.**

Many existing roadways should be made more pedestrian and bicycle friendly through the addition of sidewalks, trails, bicycle lanes, crosswalks, good lighting and other amenities. Traffic management and landscaping techniques can also create a safer and more pleasant experience for pedestrians and bicyclists.

**T3.C Develop a community-wide plan for the provisions of sidewalks.**

Public input throughout the development of this plan identified the continued desire for more sidewalks throughout this community. To assure that the construction of new sidewalks occurs in the most appropriate places, a community-wide plan should be developed which identifies areas where linkages are needed. A commitment for the development of sidewalks can then be encouraged at prioritized locations identified in the plan.

**T3.D Work with the Fort Wayne, New Haven and Allen County Parks departments, local transportation agencies, and regional and local greenway and trail organizations to facilitate the expansion of the existing Greenway and proposed area Bicycle–Pedestrian Transportation systems.**

The Greenway provides a system of trails along the St. Mary’s, St. Joseph, and Maumee rivers. It offers a combination of both County and City settings, and provides an excellent way for residents and visitors to explore the region. It serves as a key spine from which additional trails, lanes and paths are proposed. Allen County, Fort Wayne and New Haven parks departments and local transportation agencies should continue to work with the Greenway Consortium and other regional and local greenway and trail organizations to expand and coordinate the development and maintenance of greenways, paths, lanes and trails throughout the County and region.

**T3.E Work with local transportation agencies to establish safe and efficient routes for horse-drawn travel.**

As the population moves outward and car traffic increases throughout Allen County, the roads are becoming less safe for horse-drawn buggies and other nonmotorized forms of transportation. Allen County and Fort Wayne should work to ensure the safety of all forms of transportation through the provision of alternative routes and the regulation of automobile traffic. Safety measures such as reflective markers, speed limit reduction and enforcement, widened shoulders, and provision of additional lanes for nonmotorized vehicles should be pursued as appropriate.

**T3.F Work with community stakeholders to educate the public about the benefits of alternative transportation.**

Alternative transportation infrastructure can generate numerous benefits for a community. Sidewalks, trails and greenways can help to define public spaces and contribute to a sense of community. Recent studies have shown that property values tend to be higher near parks and greenways. When residents make use of alternative transportation options, important environmental and health benefits can also be realized. Fort Wayne and Allen County should undertake efforts to educate the public about the benefits of alternative transportation.

**OBJECTIVE T4.**

**PROVIDE FOR INTEGRATED, INTERCONNECTED MODES OF TRANSPORTATION.**

In order to maximize efficiency, all structures and systems related to moving people and goods must function as a cohesive transportation network. The following strategies offer suggestions on how to create an integrated, multimodal transportation system that meets the needs of everyone who resides, works in and travels through Fort Wayne and Allen County.

**T4.A Encourage the development of rights-of-way that can accommodate all users.**

Multimodal streets accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists and public transportation users, as well as private automobiles. The creation of multimodal streets may involve traffic-calming initiatives, the addition of bicycle lanes and sidewalks, and intersection modifications. Allen County communities should pursue the creation of interconnected, accessible, multimodal streets as a key component of future transportation investments.

**T4.B Ensure that plans for new, large-scale development projects incorporate suitable accommodation for different modes of transportation.**

Improvements made for new, large-scale development projects should include suitable accommodations for different forms of transportation at a variety of commercial, residential and employment centers. Residents and visitors should be able to easily and safely transfer among transit modes at these locations. Park-and-ride facilities, bike racks, bus shelters and benches can be incorporated at these connection points to help facilitate a comfortable transition between different modes of transportation. Current development regulations should be revised to encourage the provision of these facilities.

**T4.C Educate the public to encourage safe road sharing among drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County should engage in efforts to inform the public about the nature of road sharing among multiple transportation users. Education campaigns, signage and wayfinding can improve the public's understanding of safety precautions. Where feasible, Fort Wayne and Allen County should pursue infrastructure investments that visually distinguish appropriate paths for different forms of transportation in order to increase the safety of all users.

**T4. D Encourage the acquisition of former railroad rights-of-way for trail usage and utility easements.**

Acquisition of former railroad rights-of-way is a significant opportunity to provide for extension and connection to existing trail systems. Their potential use for utility extension projects may also mean savings in time and project costs over utilizing local street rights-of-way and private easements.

**T4.E Continue to work with high-speed rail advocates and rail freight service providers on the long-term use and enhancement of the community's rail infrastructure.**

By the early 20th century, this community was a railroad town being served by several lines. Passenger rail service ended in 1990, but talks of a high-speed rail system between Cleveland and Chicago still continue. High-speed rail would help diversify the transportation system by bringing another mode of travel to the community. Freight rail is also important to this area with two rail-service providers, Norfolk Southern and CSX.. Fort Wayne is one of the major passing points of Norfolk Southern trains coming from the southern region heading towards Chicago and Detroit. CSX runs two through-freights west of Fort Wayne that originate/terminate at the Piqua Yard.

# 5. Environmental Stewardship

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## Introduction

Environmental stewardship is a priority for Fort Wayne and Allen County. It is also an overlapping issue that must be dealt with on a variety of policy and planning levels. Land use, transportation and utility initiatives, policies and impacts need to be integrated with environmental policies. Effective environmental stewardship also requires partnerships at federal, state and local levels. The goals, objectives and strategies outlined in this chapter provide a framework for enhancing environmental protection in Allen County and Fort Wayne, focusing attention on a variety of land, water, air and wildlife resources.

## Overview

This chapter outlines the recommendations for addressing environmental stewardship in Allen County and Fort Wayne, and is organized in the following sections:

- Policy Foundation of the Plan;
- Key Findings;
- Goal; and
- Objectives and Strategies.

## Policy Foundation of the Plan

The foundation of the Plan was shaped by an extensive community involvement and planning process (see Executive Summary). The Comprehensive Plan has three key layers of policies: goals, objectives and strategies. Goals are the broadest policy statements that state a desired outcome in general terms. Objectives indicate a more specific policy direction and help organize strategies. Strategies are detailed actions necessary to initiate or complete an objective – such as a program or project. There are multiple objectives for each goal and multiple strategies for each objective. The recommendations for each element of the Plan contain all three policy layers.

## Key Findings

A summary of key findings derived from the existing conditions analysis related to environmental stewardship in Allen County and Fort Wayne is outlined below. For a more detailed explanation of each finding, see the Environmental Stewardship Chapter of the Existing Conditions report.

### **Geology, Soils and Vegetative Cover**

The landscape of Allen County was shaped through the movement of glaciers. This natural history, coupled with the impacts of human settlement, has made the water supply, soils and other environmental features what they are today. Planning related to these resources should take into account the variations and unique vulnerabilities that exist in different parts or ecoregions of the County. While deciduous forests dominated the landscape at one point in time, today most forests have been converted to agricultural or urban land uses. The Cedar Creek corridor and Fox Island Park contain the County's largest remaining contiguous forest areas. Smaller woodlots can be found in rural areas and along streams. Prime farmland soils are an abundant natural resource. A significant percentage of the County's undeveloped land area qualifies as productive farmland. Due to both past and current trends of increased development, a significant amount of productive agricultural land

with prime characteristics is currently at risk of being irrevocably converted to nonagricultural, suburban, residential and industrial uses.

### **Wildlife and Ecological Preservation**

Less than 1 percent of County and City lands have been set aside for ecological preservation. Parklands as a whole, including parks that primarily serve recreational purposes, represent only 2 percent of the land in the County, and 8 percent of the land in the City of Fort Wayne. Residents have indicated strong public support for the preservation of more parklands and open space to achieve both recreational and environmental objectives. There are over 100 rare, threatened and endangered species in Allen County that would benefit from strategic protection initiatives, particularly near unique aquatic communities, along riparian zones and within other linear habitat corridors. Due to their connection to the Great Lakes, Allen County's waterways are susceptible to invasive nuisance species. Over 30 invasive species of plants, fish, and aquatic organisms have been identified and are currently monitored and controlled by the Allen County Parks and Recreation Department and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

### **Groundwater Resources**

The vast majority of residents in Allen County (outside of Fort Wayne) rely upon groundwater systems to meet their drinking water needs. There are three major aquifer systems in the County. The Hometown and Aboite aquifers are near-surface systems formed in glacial deposits and exhibit a high sensitivity to contamination. A bedrock aquifer can be found throughout the County at greater depths and is less sensitive to groundwater contamination. There are currently 107 active public water systems in Allen County. While Wellhead Protection Programs are required for "community" public water systems, no protective requirements apply to small "noncommunity" public systems or individual wells.

### **Surface Water Resources**

The City of Fort Wayne manages the largest water supply system in the County, which relies on surface water rather than groundwater. The health of the County's rivers and streams is essential for protecting this water supply. Many of the County's streams have been modified to improve drainage, at the expense of environmental standards. Channelization, removal of vegetation, and maintenance dredging tend to have adverse impacts on ecological health and represent significant challenges for surface water management. Failed and improperly maintained septic systems represent another significant challenge, and are a potential source of high E. coli levels in various Allen County waterways and wells. Other potential sources include sewer overflows, livestock and natural waterfowl concentrations. Protection of rivers and streams through planning regulations, such as overlay districts, and attention to preserving and expanding riparian buffers should be a top priority for protecting surface water quality in Allen County and Fort Wayne.

### **Wetlands**

Historically considered to be of little value, the majority of the County's wetlands have been drained and converted to agricultural lands. Smaller wetlands are scattered throughout the area, but tend to be concentrated in the northern and western areas of the County. Today, wetlands are recognized as areas of significant ecological importance, which help improve water quality, mitigate floods and provide habitats for wildlife. Protection of existing wetlands should be considered in future planning regulations and development frameworks. The prevalence of hydric soils in the County represents a significant opportunity to restore wetlands, which can be accomplished relatively

easily though interventions that restore natural hydrology, including for example, the removal of drainage tiles.

### **Floodplains**

Flooding is of great concern in Allen County. Since a major flood inundated Allen County in 1982, many structural modifications and policy changes have been implemented to mitigate the impact of floods. Most significantly, the City has pursued buyouts of floodplain properties in partnership with the Maumee River Basin Commission. Acquired properties have been returned to a more natural state, allowing for floodplain mitigation. These areas now offer more recreational and alternative transportation opportunities along waterways. The Association of State Floodplain Managers has recently launched a No Adverse Impact initiative, which provides a holistic approach to floodplain management and should be considered as a guide for future land use decisions within river basins in Allen County.

### **Air Quality**

In 2004, Allen County was designated as a nonattainment area with respect to federal ozone standards. Based on data collected in 2005 and averaged over the 2003 to 2005 time frame, Allen County regained eligibility for maintenance status. Ozone can be attributed to transportation-related emissions from cars and trucks, as well as nitrogen oxide emission from power plants. The transportation element of this Plan provides a number of strategies addressing transportation efficiency, which can lead to reductions in vehicle emissions.

### **Brownfields**

To date, the City of Fort Wayne has completed two successful brownfield cleanup and redevelopment projects: one at the former Bowser Pump facility, located just east of downtown Fort Wayne and one at the former Myers Petro Terminal at University of Saint Francis. Additional opportunities for brownfield redevelopment can be found in Fort Wayne, as well as in other Allen County communities. By coordinating projects through the state's Voluntary Cleanup Program, communities have the ability to leverage financial, legal and technical assistance resources.

### **Goal**

The following goal for environmental stewardship was developed by the Comprehensive Plan Committee based upon citizen input:

*A healthy, sustainable, and enjoyable environment with clean air and water, greenways and open spaces for residents, habitats for wildlife, protection from flooding, utilization of rivers, protection of other environmental assets (farmland, woodlands and wetlands), and promotion of a strong ethic among residents and businesses to control pollution and support environmental stewardship efforts.*

### **Objectives and Strategies**

Outlined below are objectives and strategies to support improving the condition of the natural environment.

#### **OBJECTIVE ES1.**

#### **ENSURE THE CONSERVATION OF SIGNIFICANT LAND RESOURCES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, AGRICULTURAL LANDS, WOODLANDS AND WETLANDS.**

Current development trends have demonstrated the need to protect open spaces in Allen County and Fort Wayne, with particular attention to valuable agricultural and natural resources. Adoption of

the following strategies will help to ensure the conservation of agricultural landscapes, woodlands, wetlands and other natural greenspace.

**ES1.A Coordinate and combine existing maps and inventories of agricultural, woodland and wetland areas. Identify areas of contiguous prime soil, significant agricultural heritage and prime lands for targeted conservation efforts.**

Efforts to conserve agricultural lands should be pursued in a strategic manner, in part because maintaining contiguous agricultural lands is important to the health of an agricultural economy. Contiguous farmlands can support a critical mass of readily available agricultural infrastructure, such as equipment sale and repair, seeds and fertilizer suppliers, without which an agricultural community can become increasingly difficult to sustain. Continuity of farmland also minimizes conflicts between farming and nonfarming neighbors. Agricultural, woodland and wetland areas should be surveyed, mapped, analyzed, noted for agricultural heritage issues and classified in order to identify critical lands for targeted conservation efforts.

**ES1.B Continue stewardship efforts and identify areas for possible expansion of contiguous forested and natural areas (such as the Cedar Creek corridor, Fox Island Park, Eagle Marsh, Little Wabash River Corridor, Black Marsh, and other environmentally significant areas).**

The Cedar Creek watershed represents an important natural corridor, and is designated as an Indiana Natural, Scenic and Recreational waterway. Fox Island County Park contains a nature preserve with diverse marshes, wetlands, deciduous forests and important wildlife habitats. Allen County should continue to work with local environmental groups like the Fox Island Alliance, ACRES, St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative and the Cedar Creek Wildlife Project to continue to protect these important natural areas.

**ES1.C Investigate the value of adopting local wetland protection ordinances and regulations.**

Allen County and Fort Wayne should consider the value of adopting local wetland protection ordinances and regulations in order to preserve and mitigate wetlands. These regulations may concentrate protection efforts along the Maumee, St. Joseph and St. Mary's Rivers, Little River, Cedar Creek, Aboite Creek, and other floodplain/wetland areas.

**ES1.D Pursue wetlands restoration initiatives.**

In many parts of the County, native hydric soils are still in place and represent an opportunity for restoring some wetlands that were previously drained. Allen County and Fort Wayne should collaborate with local environmental organizations and the Natural Resource Conservation Service to target key areas for wetlands restoration, particularly those areas near critical wildlife habitats along natural corridors and in areas where wetland restoration would result in decreased flooding potential.

**ES1.E Consider zoning and subdivision standards to protect natural features and environmentally sensitive land.**

Zoning and subdivision standards can be used as an important tool to reduce human impact on natural areas. Conservation zoning should be investigated as a mechanism to reduce the impact on the development potential of properties that are located within natural resource areas. For example, some communities have used conservation zoning to promote cluster developments, which retain a large percentage of a development site in its natural state or open space.

## **OBJECTIVE ES2.**

### **PROTECT WILDLIFE HABITATS AND LIMIT INVASIVE SPECIES.**

Over time, human actions have transformed and degraded many of the County's original natural habitats. Efforts should be made to conserve and expand remaining habitats in order to protect native plant and animal species. The following strategies recommend ways to protect wildlife and their habitats in Allen County.

#### **ES2.A Collaborate with federal and state agencies and not-for-profit organizations in the protection of endangered species.**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources can serve as important funding and technical- assistance resources in the identification and protection of the County's endangered species. Allen County and Fort Wayne should also enlist assistance from local environmental organizations, particularly those involved in watershed initiatives, to protect the area's unique aquatic ecosystems.

#### **ES2.B Work with local organizations to protect natural habitat areas, particularly along linear riparian corridors and around critical aquatic communities.**

Habitat corridors are important environmental assets. Unlike fragmented natural parcels, these corridors allow animals to move freely and plants to colonize more successfully over a wider area. Allen County, Fort Wayne, local environmental groups, and land trusts should collaborate to protect and expand these critical habitat areas through the acquisition/protection of lands in and adjacent to existing habitat corridors. Particular attention should be paid to rivers and streams in Allen County, which are home to unique aquatic communities that host a variety of rare and endangered mussels, amphibians, and plant species.

#### **ES2.C Work with state and local partners to determine the types of invasive plant species which should be discouraged in project planting plans.**

In an effort to protect native plant species in our region, local planning and permitting agencies should work with state and local partners to determine types of invasive plant species which should be discouraged in project planting plans for new development.

## **OBJECTIVE ES3.**

### **PRESERVE AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF GROUNDWATER AND SURFACE WATER RESOURCES.**

Water is a vital resource that supports agriculture, industry, household needs and recreation opportunities. The following strategies provide recommendations for protecting the County's groundwater and surface water resources. The Utilities Chapter addresses a number of issues related to the protection and preservation of water resources.

#### **ES3.A Encourage Wellhead Protection Plans to cover additional types of wells.**

Wellhead Protection Plans are required for the County's 11 "community" public water systems. These plans identify the wellhead protection area (typically those waters that can travel to the well within five years), identify potential sources of contamination, and develop a plan for minimizing risk from these sources. In order to protect more of the groundwater resources throughout the county, the requirement for developing a Wellhead Protection Plan should be considered for other well types.



Examples of these types include: “noncommunity” systems, large capacity wells, significant withdrawal wells, and those wells that are sited in highly vulnerable areas.

**ES3.B Support and collaborate in the establishment of watershed management plans that recommends actions to address major sources of surface water contamination.**

Based on assessment data from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), which was developed as part of the Total Minimum Daily Load (TMDL) for the St. Mary’s and Maumee Rivers, the overall quality of surface water in Allen County can generally be described as “good to fair.” However, high levels of E. coli, nutrients, PCBs, and mercury in fish have been found in certain segments of the County’s streams. IDEM has designated these segments as “impaired”. Watershed management plans which also address transported sediments may be developed, using a stakeholder involvement process, to address each of these contaminants. Allen County and Fort Wayne should collaborate with local watershed management groups, the Allen County-Fort Wayne Board of Health, and other stakeholders in the consideration of these management plans to address these surface water contaminants.

**OBJECTIVE ES4.**

**PROTECT THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES.**

Over the years, Allen County’s natural green infrastructure in floodplains, and in the watershed in general, have been lost to development and agricultural uses. As a consequence, floods have become more damaging to both the natural and built environment. The following strategies present recommendations for managing floodplains and restoring green infrastructure in a manner that benefits both human and ecological communities.

**ES4.A Using the No Adverse Impact principle as a guide, develop a program to map floodplains, track impacts of floods and enhance green infrastructure in floodplains.**

The No Adverse Impact management principle supported by the Indiana Association of Floodplain and Stormwater Managers implies that any action taken by a property owner should not negatively affect the rights of other property owners, as measured in terms of flooding, erosion and sedimentation. It also looks at floodplain management from a community-based perspective, rather than relying upon regulations imposed by FEMA. Allen County, Fort Wayne, and local watershed groups should use the NAI principle to develop an appropriate floodplain management program. Initiatives may include floodplain mapping, flood tracking and monitoring, introduction of riparian overlay districts, wetlands restoration and the restoration of green infrastructure within floodplains.

**ES4.B Consider tools, such as overlay districts along river basins and streams to encourage the expansion of riparian buffers and enhance public access to waterfronts.**

Riparian zones surrounding rivers and streams help filter sediments and nutrients, and mitigate the effects of storms and flooding. Riparian buffers are also aesthetically pleasing and can lend themselves to recreation opportunities in the form of greenways and trails. The forested corridors that were originally found along waterways throughout the County have been greatly diminished to meet agricultural, development and drainage needs. Allen County and Fort Wayne should collaborate with watershed partners to develop plans for limiting development along waterways, restoring and protecting riparian corridors, and enhancing public access to waterfronts. The Fort Wayne Rivergreenway Overlay District, as well as the local floodplain ordinances, serve as an exemplary

tool for defining and protecting riparian zones, mitigating flooding impacts, and improving human access to waterways. Similar overlay districts may be applied along rivers and streams throughout the County.

**ES4.C Provide education to the public about the natural benefits, protection and restoration of floodplain and wetland areas, and the laws pertaining to floodplain development.**

Educate the public through the provision of information, publications and other materials about the natural benefits of floodplains and wetlands, how to protect and restore floodplain and wetland areas and the federal, state and local ordinances which pertain to floodplain development.

**OBJECTIVE ES5.**

**ENCOURAGE BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT.**

Brownfields are abandoned or underutilized properties that have real or perceived environmental contamination, which may constrain redevelopment potential. While federal funding and tax incentives are available to address these problems, local governments often must take the lead in guiding the cleanup and redevelopment of these sites.

**ES5.A Develop an inventory of brownfields.**

Through a regional brownfield inventory, government and stakeholder groups should work together to identify and characterize brownfields that impact the Fort Wayne-Allen County area in order to better understand the extent of cleanup efforts that will be required.

**ES5.B Set priorities for brownfield redevelopment in the region.**

By prioritizing brownfield redevelopment projects, communities can better target investments, leverage funding for key projects and maximize impacts in terms of economic recovery and environmental mitigation.

**ES5.C Secure resources to assist with assessment, remediation and redevelopment of brownfields.**

Federal, state, and local governments can all provide assistance in the assessment, remediation, and redevelopment of brownfields. This assistance can come in the form of tax incentives, grants, low-interest loans, technical assistance and liability protection. The Environmental Protection Agency offers extensive information on funding and financing opportunities.

**OBJECTIVE ES6.**

**ENCOURAGE UTILIZATION OF GREEN BUILDING TECHNOLOGIES TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

Whenever possible, major civic, institutional and governmental uses and developments should be designed and operated using the principles of the latest “green” building technologies.

**ES6.A Incorporate green building technologies into community informational and educational materials.**

Green technologies are design and construction practices that significantly reduce or eliminate the negative impact of buildings on the environment and occupants in five broad areas:

- Sustainable site planning;
- Safeguarding water and water efficiency;
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy;

- Conservation of materials and resources; and
- Indoor environmental quality.

The U.S. Green Building Council has adopted the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System for the design, construction and certification of the world's "greenest" buildings and developments. The realization of the true environmental impact of building and construction is driving the movement forward.

**ES6.B Support the recommendations of the City of Fort Wayne's "Green Ribbon Commission".**

Early in 2006, Mayor Graham Richard announced the formation of a "Green Ribbon Commission" to help the City develop a comprehensive energy and air quality improvement strategy for the community. The final Report, issued in September of 2006, contains a comprehensive set of recommendations, an action plan, and goals to reduce energy costs reduce energy consumption, and improve air quality. The Report covers the areas of both community energy use (residential, commercial, and transportation), as well as government usage (buildings, vehicle fleets, employee commutes and street lights). Coordination with the recommendations of Plan-it Allen! is encouraged.

# 6. Community Identity and Appearance

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## Introduction

Fort Wayne and Allen County are identified by a range of significant visual landscapes, from the downtown skyline and historic urban neighborhoods to small towns, farmsteads and natural areas. Citizens throughout the County are invested in preserving their unique sense of place, with particular attention to historic preservation, open space and environmental conservation, and the celebration of cultural diversity. This chapter focuses on a number of specific attributes that distinguish community identity and community appearance throughout Allen County and Fort Wayne, and suggests strategies for preserving, enhancing and celebrating the community's defining characteristics.

## Overview

This chapter outlines the recommendations for addressing community identity and appearance in Allen County and Fort Wayne, and is organized in the following sections:

- Policy Foundation of the Plan;
- Key Findings;
- Goal; and
- Objectives and Strategies.

## Policy Foundation of the Plan

The foundation of the Plan was shaped by an extensive community involvement and planning process (see Executive Summary). The Comprehensive Plan has three key layers of implementation: goals, objectives and strategies. Goals are the broadest policy statements that state a desired outcome in general terms. Objectives indicate a more specific policy direction and help organize strategies. Strategies are detailed actions necessary to initiate or complete an objective – such as a program or project. There are multiple objectives for each goal and multiple strategies for each objective. The recommendations for each element of the Plan contain all three policy layers.

## Key Findings

A summary of key findings derived from the existing conditions analysis related to community identity and appearance in Allen County and Fort Wayne is outlined below. For a more detailed explanation of each finding, see the Community Identity and Appearance Chapter of the Existing Conditions Report.

### **Natural Features and Landscape**

The three rivers running through Fort Wayne and Allen County (St. Joseph, St. Mary's, and Maumee) are frequently noted as a key character-defining feature of the community. While these rivers were integral to the historical development of the region, they have suffered from underutilization and neglect in recent years. Concerted cleanup efforts and enhancements to public accessibility throughout the region would be welcomed efforts. The agricultural landscapes in rural parts of the County (including fields, hedgerows, pastures and wooded plots), are also prized as character-defining features. The Fort Wayne Parks system is another key asset, and has the potential to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Other landscape features which help define the community's identity include the Kessler-designed system of boulevards in Fort Wayne, various parks, gardens and greenways.

## **Historic Sites and Cultural Resources**

Fort Wayne and Allen County have a wealth of historic architecture, districts and neighborhoods. Fort Wayne in particular has a substantial number of historic landmarks, Local Historic Districts and properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Whether officially designated or not, these include the Allen County Courthouse, Lincoln Tower, Embassy Theatre, Swinney Homestead, and the West Central and Oakdale neighborhoods, to name a few. The area also is home to a number of character-defining features/places that serve as local landmarks, including the General Electric and Sunbeam Bread signs, Henry's Bar, Cindy's Diner, Coney Island, and the Concordia Theological Seminary. Other place-making buildings and historic corridors are dispersed throughout the County and serve as community identifiers, such as characteristic barns, churches and schools. Without official designation or protections, these sites and corridors are in particular danger of being lost to new development.

## **Community Attractions**

Traditional neighborhood commercial districts can be found throughout the County and attract visitors from the surrounding region. The Three Rivers Co-op and the Southside Farmers Market in Fort Wayne are two examples of the unique shopping experiences available in the County. Various cultural institutions also help to define the community. These include the Allen County Public Library (with its notable genealogy department), the Fort Wayne Museum of Art, and the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo. Sports offerings include the Wizards baseball team and the Fort Wayne Komet's hockey team. Various annual festivals, such as the Johnny Appleseed Festival, Grabill Days Festival, Germanfest, New Haven Canal Days and the Three Rivers Festival attract visitors to the area. Allen County and Fort Wayne also offer cultural diversity, as seen in distinctive Amish settlements and ethnic neighborhoods.

## **Adaptive Reuse**

Fort Wayne and Allen County have a limited history of success in the adaptive reuse of older structures. Community comments indicate that City and County agencies should strive for significant development and redevelopment that reinforces the character of the community, rather than allowing more generic approaches to development. Several potential models for redevelopment efforts already exist. Adaptive reuse of the Troy Laundry Building has brought additional vitality to the Calhoun Street corridor. Club Soda, the Gas House, the McCulloch-Weatherhogg House, St. Peter's School, and the Rolland Center at the University of St. Francis all illustrate how existing buildings can be creatively adapted for new uses. The excellent rehabilitation of historic bridges has returned many character-defining decorative elements that were lost over the years. Building upon a foundation of these examples as well as others, Fort Wayne and Allen County should continue to pursue high quality rehabilitation/redevelopment efforts.

## **Goal**

The following goal for community identity and appearance was developed by the Comprehensive Plan Committee based upon citizen input:

*An attractive, vibrant community with a positive image and physical appearance in its rural areas, small towns, neighborhoods and downtowns that celebrates heritage, diversity and waterways through ongoing quality development, historic preservation and neighborhood revitalization.*

## Objectives and Strategies

Outlined below are objectives and strategies to support maintaining and improving the community identity and appearance of Allen County and Fort Wayne.

### **OBJECTIVE CI1.**

#### **RENEW, PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE RIVERS AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT WATERWAYS THAT DEFINE THE REGION.**

The St. Joseph, St. Mary's and Maumee Rivers, and waterways associated with the Wabash River corridor such as the Little River, define the natural landscape in Fort Wayne and Allen County. They have played a significant role in the historical growth and development of the County. These natural features also play an important role in tying the City and County together. Unfortunately, the rivers also suffer from periodic pollution, a general lack of visibility, and are fairly inaccessible from the standpoint of passive and active recreation opportunities. Particular attention should be placed on waterways to protect them as significant components of the natural and cultural environment.

#### **CI1.A Collaborate with an array of community partners to improve water quality and enhance rivers, streams, corridors and watershed areas.**

National organizations such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service and local groups such as the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative can help monitor progress and suggest methods for protecting the County's rivers. Attention to nonpoint source pollution (such as runoff), enhancements to riparian buffers, and revisions to land use policies can all contribute to creating healthier rivers and protecting important natural resources.

#### **CI1.B Improve public access to rivers and waterfronts.**

Allen County and Fort Wayne should collaborate with parks and recreation departments and other stakeholders who are interested in improving public access to waterfronts and rivers. These groups should identify locations for creating boat launches and docking areas, and examine opportunities for enhancing trails and greenways along riverfronts.

#### **CI1.C Investigate downtown river development and vistas.**

A public/private effort should be developed to clean and improve the three rivers that converge in downtown Fort Wayne, in particular the St. Mary's river. This endeavor requires a complex and multifaceted strategy, including: structural improvements (to improve water quality and regulate water levels); visual improvements (to clean up banks and thin overgrown areas to improve visibility between downtown and the river), and an investigation of appropriate development to increase activities along the river. The effort should include not-for-profit organizations, environmental groups and government in partnership with the private sector.

### **OBJECTIVE CI2.**

#### **PRESERVE RURAL AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPES.**

The plowed fields, pastures, hedgerows, agricultural buildings and structures and wooded plots that define Allen County's agricultural landscapes were consistently cited in residents' comments as being visually and culturally significant features. Due to current trends of outward growth and low-density metes and bounds development, many of these agricultural landscapes are changing. The following strategies suggest ways to sustain these significant community features.

**CI2.A Encourage the preservation of prime agricultural areas that are distinguished by high crop yields and large contiguous blocks of land.**

Exclusive agriculture zoning districts are one way to encourage the preservation of agricultural landscapes. Continue a community discussion on the potential use of these districts. Review current ordinances with local farmers. The use of conservation easements is another way to preserve agricultural landscapes, and they should be investigated.

**CI2.B Encourage the preservation of agricultural uses and structures by protecting agricultural areas from incompatible land uses.**

Nonagricultural land uses are impacted when they are within close proximity of agricultural operations. Nearby nonagricultural uses can also influence the conversion of agricultural lands due to the availability of utilities and other urban infrastructure. Ways to protect agricultural areas from incompatible uses include: working cooperatively with local planning entities to discourage non-agricultural land uses in agricultural areas; limiting rural residential development; encouraging compatible rural residential development; and reviewing ordinances that allow rural development. A balanced perspective is needed when reviewing development in close proximity to agricultural operations.

**CI2.C Develop and adopt updated regulations that place limits on metes and bounds tract property sales and development.**

A study completed in early 2005 by the Allen County planning staff notes that from 1995 through 2004, nearly 17,000 acres were used for metes and bounds housing development, averaging approximately 8.7 acres of land per home. Centralized sewer systems are not feasible at this density, thus requiring on-site sewage treatment. Placing limits on the number of metes and bounds lots that can be split from an original parcel would help reduce the number of these lots and mitigate the potential negative impacts that this type of rural development can have on the agricultural landscape.

**CI2.D Investigate agritourism opportunities as a way to promote and preserve our agricultural heritage.**

Agritourism provides a way of linking the urban and rural aspects of our community. Agritourism enterprises may include: outdoor recreation; educational experiences; entertainment; hospitality services; and on-farm direct sales.

**OBJECTIVE CI3.**

**PROMOTE THE REVITALIZATION OF URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS.**

Downtown Fort Wayne and its surrounding neighborhoods represent a cultural core within the community, offering arts, entertainment and sports opportunities in a compact walkable area that is rich with historic resources. The following strategies suggest ways to create a more vibrant urban community.

**CI3.A Review and update regulations and establish incentives to better support the adaptive reuse of historic and existing structures.**

Reuse and rehabilitation have proven to be effective strategies to adapt buildings that have outlived their original purposes but have retained their historic features. Such efforts reinforce community identity by blending the past with the present, and attract new residents to downtown. Fort Wayne and Allen County should review, and if necessary, amend their zoning ordinances to facilitate reuse and rehabilitation of historic buildings, with a particular focus on promoting such

reuse in order to revitalize urban neighborhoods and towns. Specifically, ordinances should be amended to include special-exception uses and conditional uses that are predicated on the rehabilitation and maintenance of historic features.

Tools and incentives should be established to encourage reuse and rehabilitation. Some examples include tax abatements, shortened review time, tax increment financing, federal funding assistance, and federal tax credits.

### **CI3.B Support distinctive commercial areas and corridors.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County have a variety of commercial areas that offer distinctive shopping experiences, such as the Southside Farmers Market, and numerous historic commercial districts, including Broadway, Calhoun Street, East State Boulevard, Wells Street, and central Waynedale, among others. Fort Wayne should work with local businesses and business alliances in order to actively support these unique shopping locales. They should also examine ways in which improvements to the public infrastructure, such as sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, etc., could increase commercial activity in these areas.

### **CI3.C Educate the public and the development community about community characteristics that should be preserved and enhanced.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County residents have already identified a number of historic structures, architectural qualities, and community institutions that they would like to preserve (see the Existing Conditions Report – Community Identity and Appearance). These preferences must be clearly communicated to the public, and in particular to the development community. Workshops and reference materials that describe community identity and emphasize key characteristics that should be preserved can help to ensure that future development preserves existing structures and complements existing neighborhoods.

### **CI3.D Enhance the pedestrian experience throughout downtown Fort Wayne and other neighborhood commercial areas and corridors.**

Downtown Fort Wayne needs to be reframed as a key destination, rather than a place to pass through. By generating a more pedestrian-friendly environment, downtown Fort Wayne and neighborhood commercial corridors can become more vital places for residents, businesses and visitors. Several recommendations related to this can be found in the Downtown BlueprintPLUS, completed in 2005.

## **OBJECTIVE CI4.**

### **ENHANCE COMMUNITY APPEARANCE AND DESIGN QUALITY.**

Based on community comments, residents of Allen County and Fort Wayne would like to see high-quality, context-sensitive public and private development that is integrated with its surrounding environment. The following strategies provide guidelines as to how this type of design quality can be emphasized, and suggests ways that community appearance could be enhanced.

### **CI4.A Encourage context-sensitive design tools to enhance local character and ensure that new development, redevelopment and roadway improvements are integrated with the community and complementary to existing structures and the environment.**

Downtown Fort Wayne, urban neighborhoods, towns and rural areas all have specific needs in terms of preserving community character through good design. Fort Wayne, Allen County, and subsidiary municipalities and neighborhood groups should consider initiatives to develop context-



sensitive design guidelines, preferably with input from the public and the development community. These guidelines should address issues related to scale, setbacks, suitable materials, connectivity and signage, among others.

**CI4.B Promote property maintenance.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County should seek to aggressively enforce property maintenance standards in order to maintain the appearance of urban neighborhoods, towns and subdivisions. On a periodic basis, housing and building codes should be evaluated to ensure that they are meeting residents' expectations and community needs. Promote property owner responsibility and education.

**CI4.C Undertake improvements to better define the public environment.**

Allen County and Fort Wayne should undertake efforts to beautify public spaces. Specific efforts may deal with landscaping, medians, tree planting, public signage, lighting improvements and streetscape modifications. The Downtown BlueprintPLUS vision provides a number of specific recommendations regarding improvements to the public realm in downtown Fort Wayne.

**CI4.D Promote the integration of public art into improvements to create a distinctive appearance.**

Public art can be an effective way to communicate a sense of community identity, feature the work of local artists, and convey a unique sense of place. As public improvements are funded and constructed, public art should be incorporated to strengthen place-making efforts. Support should be given to public art projects identified in the Downtown BlueprintPLUS.

**CI4.E Protect and enhance tree cover through an urban forestry program.**

Trees are important community assets that can help to define a neighborhood, increase property values and improve the pedestrian experience. Fort Wayne should pursue urban forestry initiatives in urban areas, both in existing neighborhoods and new residential developments throughout the City. The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department could take a leadership role in providing tree planting specifications and guiding tree maintenance. Depending on local interest, such an initiative could actively engage an array of volunteer support and private funding.

**CI4.F Improve community gateways.**

The gateways to a community create initial and lasting impressions. Fort Wayne already has gateway markers at major entrances to the City. Parts of Allen County and Fort Wayne, including distinctive historic neighborhoods and individual towns, should engage in efforts to create gateways through signage, landscaping and/or public spaces that reflect the community's commitment to maintaining a quality physical environment.

**OBJECTIVE CI5.**

**IDENTIFY, PRESERVE, AND PROTECT HISTORIC SITES AND DISTRICTS.**

The protection of historic resources retains the character of a community or region as reflected in its built environment and its landscape. It ensures that the community's heritage and unique character are preserved and passed on to future generations. Historic resources foster a connection to the community and a sense of pride among residents. These resources also provide an awareness of the community's roots and traditions, and they are valuable tools for education and scholarly research. The protection of historic sites and districts can contribute toward guiding redevelopment and

revitalization efforts that in turn, generate economic benefits, attract tourists and maintain a strong community identity.

**CI5.A Partner with preservation organizations to educate the public and the development community about historic resource protection initiatives.**

Information campaigns should be used to build awareness of the unique historic resources of Fort Wayne and Allen County. Protection of these resources can offer a number of benefits in terms of quality of life, community character and tourism. Informing the public about these benefits represents a critical step in securing citizen support for preservation initiatives.

**CI5.B Conduct a thorough review of existing historic resources, and maintain and update historic property inventories accordingly.**

Existing inventories of historic resources in Fort Wayne and Allen County are dated and considered to be incomplete. Fort Wayne and Allen County should work with historic preservation organizations in order to compile and maintain an inventory of historic resources in the County.

**CI5.C Promote recognition of historic properties and resources through National Register of Historic Places designation.**

The National Register of Historic Places acts as an important tool in the recognition of historic resources. This type of designation often changes the way communities perceive their historic resources and gives credibility to efforts to preserve these resources as irreplaceable parts of the community. The benefits of National Register designation include tax incentives for the rehabilitation of income producing properties and tax deductions for donations of easements. In addition, any property listed in or eligible for listing on the National Register is subject to a formal impact review if federal or state funds will have an impact on the property.

Fort Wayne and Allen County have many properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Many more districts and individual properties deserve special historic recognition, but are not currently listed. Considering the region's current trend of outward growth and rapid land consumption, official recognition of historic properties will be essential to preserving the unique character of both rural and urban communities.

**CI5.D Promote Local Historic District designation of historic properties in the City of Fort Wayne.**

Local historic district designation is a tool, provided by the Fort Wayne Historic Preservation and Protection Ordinance, to monitor changes which occur in historic areas. A Local Historic District designation may be applied to a single property or a group of properties. Upon designation, a design review process, prescribed by the ordinance, regulates proposed exterior changes by requiring property owners to apply for and obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness before a building permit can be issued or exterior work begun. In conjunction with independent preservation organizations, local governments should examine ways to confer protected status on key properties and districts that are historically significant.

**CI5.E Enhance mechanisms for encouraging the protection of historic resources throughout Allen County.**

Currently, the City of Fort Wayne has the only preservation review board in the County. Allen County and its communities should explore a process to review historically and architecturally significant resources throughout the County.

**CI5.F Promote the maintenance and rehabilitation of historic buildings.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County should undertake a number of activities in order to assist property owners in the maintenance and rehabilitation of historic buildings. Efforts should be made to provide information about available tax incentives, offer technical assistance regarding building design and the use of appropriate materials, and in some cases provide funding to support more extensive rehabilitation efforts. In pursuing these efforts, governments should engage in collaborations with preservation organizations, including the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana (HLFI), ARCH, and the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society.

**CI5.G Maintain and enhance heritage corridors.**

Several transportation corridors tell the history of the region, including the Lincoln Highway, Maumee River Heritage Corridor and the Wabash and Erie Canal Corridor (which opened up inland portions of the state to commerce and settlements), among many others. Fort Wayne and Allen County should examine ways to highlight these corridors for residents and sightseers through signage, tours, etc., in order to celebrate local history. Identifying and promoting potential heritage areas is a means to foster both historic preservation and economic development.

**CI5.H Promote historic resources to capitalize on their economic, cultural, and recreational values.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County should examine ways to promote the cultural heritage of the region as a key component of its economy. Through partnerships with historic preservation organizations, marketing campaigns and guided tours, Fort Wayne and Allen County can increase public awareness of historical assets among local residents and throughout the broader region. As the popularity of cultural tourism increases, it can play an important role in strengthening and diversifying the local economy, and generating public support for continued preservation efforts.

**CI5.I Encourage the identification, protection and interpretation of Allen County's archaeological sites and the cultural heritage that these sites represent.**

Allen County has an archaeological heritage that shows much evidence of prehistoric peoples and early settlers in what would become Fort Wayne and Allen County. Currently, archaeologists have identified and documented more than 2,080 prehistoric and historic archaeological sites in Allen County. There are more recorded sites than any other county in Indiana. The location and protection of archaeological resources should be considered when determining future growth and development. Fort Wayne and Allen County may support efforts to promote awareness and education about the prehistoric- and historic-archaeological resources of Allen County.

# 7. Community Facilities

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## Introduction

The current trend of outward expansion of growth and development in Allen County and Fort Wayne is having a substantial impact on the community facilities that serve the region. Public safety services must accommodate this expansion, schools must deal with fluctuating enrollments, additional parkland should be acquired, and further efforts are needed to preserve and enhance cultural resources throughout the County. During the public meetings that served as the foundation for this Plan, residents expressed particular concern for issues pertaining to public safety, recreational opportunities, improvements in education, and expansion of the arts, entertainment and cultural events. For many community facilities, full accessibility is a major priority. Facilities planning should involve strategic siting, connectivity of roads, and provision of sidewalks and paths that accommodate a variety of users.

## Overview

This chapter outlines the recommendations for addressing community facilities in Allen County and Fort Wayne, and is organized in the following sections:

- Policy Foundation of the Plan;
- Key Findings;
- Goal; and
- Objectives and Strategies.

## Policy Foundation of the Plan

The foundation of the Plan was shaped by an extensive community involvement and planning process (see Executive Summary). The Comprehensive Plan has three key layers of policies: goals, objectives, and strategies. Goals are the broadest policy statements that state a desired outcome in general terms. Objectives indicate a more specific policy direction and help organize strategies. Strategies are detailed actions necessary to initiate or complete an objective – such as a program or project. There are multiple objectives for each goal and multiple strategies for each objective. The recommendations for each element of the Plan contain all three policy layers.

## Key Findings

A summary of key findings derived from the existing conditions analysis related to community facilities in Allen County and Fort Wayne is outlined below. For a more detailed explanation of each finding, see the Community Facilities Chapter of the Existing Conditions Report.

## Schools

Recently, Allen County and Fort Wayne have been experiencing out-migration trends in terms of school enrollment. To a notable extent, families are choosing where to live based on perceived school performance. The newer schools being built in more peripheral areas tend to be large facilities, situated like other suburban structures (i.e., surrounded by parking, inaccessible to pedestrians). These schools often lack the accessible, neighborhood quality of urban schools, and the vast majority of students must travel via bus or automobile. Another important enrollment trend in local school districts is a recent influx of students who speak English as a second language.

## **Public Safety**

Allen County's and Fort Wayne's public safety services are expanding to meet growing demands. As additional areas are annexed into the City of Fort Wayne, facilities are constructed and personnel are hired to meet the community's needs. Public safety departments have reported increased calls for service. Much of this increase results from new development and the associated population increase and traffic issues, but the aging of the population as underscored in the Existing Conditions Report is another significant factor. While public safety services are meeting community needs, they tend to be hampered in certain areas by the absences of a sense of community, and neighborhood design issues that limit the number of "eyes on the street" (e.g., prominent garages and fences, limited front windows, etc). Improvements to public safety are priorities for residents in Fort Wayne and Allen County. Allen County and Fort Wayne have merged their Homeland Security Departments and Fort Wayne will be building a Regional Public Safety Academy which will provide police, fire, emergency medical services and homeland security training, along with education for professionals and students.

## **Parks and Recreation**

The two primary service providers for parks and recreation are the Allen County Parks and Recreation Department and the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department. Funding for parks and recreation within the City of Fort Wayne has not kept pace with the increasing demand placed on the system by the continued growth of the community, in addition to the need to update existing infrastructure. As growth occurs in Allen County, more active park acquisition should be pursued to meet future needs. According to projections, about 1,200 additional acres of parkland will be needed in the County by 2025. With increasing suburban development using up land, residents have commented that the acquisition of parkland and conservation of open space needs to become a higher priority.

## **Cultural Facilities**

Fort Wayne and Allen County are home to a number of significant cultural institutions. The Allen County Public Library (ACPL) is a Countywide system, widely recognized as a premier community institution. The Fort Wayne-Allen County Convention and Visitors bureau is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enhancing tourism and investment. Currently 5.3 million visitors come to the area each year for shopping, meetings and leisure activities. Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne is a not-for-profit arts group in northeast Indiana. It is the largest single source of financial support for the arts in the region, and manages several facilities, primarily located in downtown Fort Wayne. The Grand Wayne Center and Allen County War Memorial Coliseum attract numerous conventions, trade shows and special events. Residents of Fort Wayne and Allen County have indicated a strong preference to expand and enhance the arts, entertainment and cultural activities.

## **Goal**

The following goal for community facilities was developed by the Comprehensive Plan Committee based upon citizen input:

*Quality facilities that promote recreation and cultural enjoyment, ensure public health and safety, provide educational opportunities, and encourage tourism and investment; collectively building a thriving, accessible and welcoming community for all ages and backgrounds.*

## Objectives and Strategies

Outlined below are objectives and strategies to support the provision of quality community facilities.

### Schools

#### **OBJECTIVE CF1.**

#### **ENSURE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL RESIDENTS.**

Allen County and Fort Wayne are home to four public school districts, various private and parochial schools, and many institutions of higher learning. The following strategies identify ways to improve educational opportunities and establish supportive learning facilities that benefit all residents.

#### **CF1.A Encourage a dialogue to support the continuance of existing Fort Wayne neighborhood schools as needed.**

Fort Wayne should work with school districts to promote the use of existing school facilities. Many of these existing facilities are located within an accessible distance of homes, thus giving students a choice to walk or use their preferred method of transportation. The continued use of these neighborhood school facilities promotes walkability, easy student access, neighborhood identity and stability.

#### **CF1.B Promote and encourage a collaboration between public, private and parochial schools and school systems, and the City of Fort Wayne and Allen County to investigate the viability of developing new neighborhood schools.**

Fort Wayne should work with public, private and parochial schools and school systems; neighborhood associations; and others to examine the continued use and development of new neighborhood school facilities. Neighborhood school facilities may include magnet schools, charter schools and other educational, neighborhood-affiliated facilities.

#### **CF1.C Communicate with local school districts to strategically plan for the placement of new schools in areas where enrollment is projected to increase.**

In selecting the location of new schools, Allen County, Fort Wayne, and the four public school districts should work together to determine which sites would best meet the needs of changing populations. Ideally, new schools should serve multiple functions within the community, offering recreational opportunities and space for community meetings and other activities. New school facilities should also be sited with an emphasis on providing safe accessibility to surrounding neighborhoods. Connectivity and walkability between schools and nearby neighborhoods should also be encouraged.

#### **CF1.D Work with school districts to plan for the appropriate adaptive reuse of school buildings in areas where the school system has eliminated the need for certain facilities.**

School facilities and the land they are on represent important assets for their communities. These sites could potentially be converted to community centers; or sold to private developers for adaptive reuse as educational facilities, residential, commercial or mixed-use facilities. Site plans for vacant

school buildings should incorporate public input so that the buildings can be used effectively to best meet community needs.

**CF1.E Work and coordinate with educational institutions to meet community needs as they impact neighborhoods.**

The growth and expansion of public and private educational institutions can have a favorable effect on the stabilization and enhancement of an area. This is also true when these facilities are located within a neighborhood. However, it is important to provide coordination between neighborhood groups and educational institutions to alleviate potential conflicts and mediate problems.

Public Safety

**OBJECTIVE CF2.**

**ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES, REDUCE CRIME AND IMPROVE PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC SAFETY.**

Maintaining safe and secure communities is of utmost importance to residents, businesses, and local governments alike. The following strategies suggest ways in which Allen County and Fort Wayne can enhance the provision of public safety services, reduce crime and improve overall perceptions of public safety.

**CF2.A Continue coordination between land use agencies and fire and safety agencies.**

Allen County and Fort Wayne land use agencies should continue to work with public safety agencies through development review and long range planning. This coordination helps to alleviate potential design problems and increases access and response times.

**CF2.B Encourage neighborhood design that can help to deter crime (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design – CPTED).**

Improved safety and quality of life can be attained through the implementation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. The four basic strategies of CPTED address natural access control (involving movement of people, shrubs and fences); natural surveillance (including window placement, lighting and landscaping), territorial reinforcement (using sidewalks, landscaping, and porches to distinguish between public and private space and promote stewardship), and maintenance.

**CF2.C Endorse and support community maintenance efforts to improve perceptions of safety.**

In addition to providing necessary public safety services, Fort Wayne and Allen County can support certain maintenance activities to improve public perceptions of safety. Code enforcement, maintenance of public spaces, graffiti removal, neighborhood cleanup programs, and the redevelopment of vacant properties will help to create a better sense of public safety, thereby supporting the development of a more vibrant community life and attracting additional residents, businesses, shoppers and visitors.

**CF2.D Support the Allen County All Hazard Mitigation Plan.**

The Fort Wayne-Allen County Office of Homeland Security's All Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies natural hazards that impact Allen County, identifies actions and activities to reduce any losses from those hazards, and establishes a coordinated process to implement the plan. Allen

County along with the City of Fort Wayne, Town of Grabill, Town of Hometown, Town of Leocedarville, Town of Monroeville, City of New Haven, City of Woodburn, and the Maumee River Basin Commission should continue to support the All Hazard Mitigation Plan.

## Parks and Recreation

### **OBJECTIVE CF3.**

#### **SUSTAIN AND IMPROVE HIGH-QUALITY PARKS AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County have nearly 100 parks that serve the recreational needs of residents. Moving forward, the City and County will need to plan for the acquisition and development of additional parklands. The following strategies recommend ways to improve and expand the park system throughout the County, and pursue strategies for collaborating with the private sector and school corporations, and across municipal boundaries.

##### **CF3.A Pursue strategic collaborations to develop parks and expand recreation opportunities.**

By cooperatively planning for future parks and open space areas, Allen County and Fort Wayne can ensure that their park systems will meet the needs of all residents, and that parks, open space areas and greenways will help to protect the scenic and historic character of the region. Collaborations should be pursued between Allen County Parks and Recreation, Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation, New Haven/Adams Township Park District, other public park agencies and groups, and with private recreation providers and school corporations.

##### **CF3.B Expand and enhance existing parks and improve parks infrastructure.**

Allen County and Fort Wayne should undertake measures to expand parks, greenways and open space areas. Furthermore, Allen County and Fort Wayne should look for strategic opportunities to use existing utility and transportation corridors and acquire additional lands through purchase or donation. They should also seek to enhance existing parks through capital improvements related to landscaping, equipment and additional facilities such as athletic fields and picnic shelters. Fort Wayne should continue to reference and pursue implementation of recommendations within the Cultural Landscape Reports.

##### **CF3.C Encourage parkland and open space conservation.**

Allen County and Fort Wayne should encourage ways to conserve open space and parklands. This strategy is of particular importance in suburban areas, where outward migration and low-density development are rapidly consuming existing land resources; and in areas with unique natural, historic and/or cultural features.

##### **CF3.D Develop greenways and facilities that interconnect parks, schools and key points of interest in the community.**

Allen County, Fort Wayne, and other parks and trail organizations should continue to work together to develop a comprehensive trail system that connects parks throughout Allen County, and potentially beyond. The connectivity of this system will provide alternative modes of transportation for residents as it connects neighborhoods to parks, schools and key points of interest.



**CF3.E Encourage usable open space for new development.**

Allen County and Fort Wayne should encourage developers to set aside a certain percentage of usable land for parks, greenways or open space. Wherever possible, this land set-aside should offer opportunities for and encourage connectivity with existing greenways, trail and park systems. In certain situations when usable open space cannot be set aside, options for developers should be investigated and considered.

**CF3.F Work with cities and towns to promote sustainability of existing and proposed park areas.**

Park and recreation areas are central to many of the cities and towns surrounding Fort Wayne and New Haven. Not only do they provide a recreation function but they also promote civic pride in these communities. As development patterns shift, it is important to maintain and enhance these areas.

**CF3.G Continue to support recreational and sport facilities as vital community and economic resources.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County have a significant number of recreational and sport facilities which allow for active and passive participation. These facilities increase the quality of life of Allen County's residents and support the region's tourism economy. Examples of these significant recreational and sport facilities include, but are not limited to, McMillen Park Ice Arena, Lawton Skate Park, Fort Wayne's aquatic centers, Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, Memorial Stadium, and several golf courses.

Cultural Facilities

**OBJECTIVE CF4.**

**CELEBRATE, PROMOTE AND ENHANCE ARTS, CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL FACILITIES, EVENTS AND TOURISM.**

Residents throughout the County have expressed the desire to participate in more arts, cultural and heritage events and activities. Tourism is a substantial economic driver in Fort Wayne and Allen County, largely due to the quality cultural facilities that exist in the region. The following strategies identify ways to celebrate and enhance arts and culture opportunities, while increasing tourism.

**CF4.A Enhance collaboration among arts and cultural organizations to secure more funding, facility planning and promotion of the arts.**

Under the umbrella of Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne and the Community Arts Council, arts and cultural facilities in Fort Wayne and beyond should continue to work together and pool resources in order to pursue additional funding opportunities and address facilities management, human resource management, program expansion and other common needs.

**CF4.B Support efforts to recognize diversity, and the variety of cultures that exist in the community.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County have a number of distinctive cultural groups and neighborhoods. In order to celebrate the diversity of the region, efforts should be taken to increase public awareness of diversity through cultural festivals and activities, and the support of ethnic shops, restaurants and products.

**CF4.C Continue to support community facilities as vital cultural and economic resources.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County have a variety of essential community organizations and facilities that serve cultural, social, educational, athletic, business and economic needs of the local community, as well as northeast Indiana. Examples of these essential community resources include, but are not limited to, the Allen County Public Library system, the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum complex, the Grand Wayne Center, the Allen County Fairgrounds, the Embassy Centre, the Arts United Center, and other facilities owned and managed by Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne. Other important resources include the community's variety of museums, educational institutions and historic sites, such as the History Center, the Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Science Central, the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo, the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory, the Chief Richardville House, and the Allen County Courthouse. Fort Wayne and Allen County should pay special attention to protecting and meeting the resource needs of vital community facilities.

# 8. Utilities

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## Introduction

In Allen County, the availability of utilities (particularly sanitary sewer) continues to be a key driver in determining locations for new development. Therefore, plans for future utilities expansion must be aligned with future land use and development objectives. This chapter looks at the existing sewer, drinking water, and stormwater management systems in Allen County and Fort Wayne, and provides recommendations for meeting the dual goals of improving regional water quality while extending services to new areas.

## Overview

This chapter outlines the recommendations for addressing the provision of utilities in Allen County and Fort Wayne, and is organized in the following sections:

- Policy Foundation of the Plan;
- Key Findings;
- Goal; and
- Objectives and Strategies.

## Policy Foundation of the Plan

The foundation of the Plan was shaped by an extensive community involvement and planning process (see Executive Summary). The Comprehensive Plan has three key layers of policies: goals, objectives and strategies. Goals are the broadest policy statements that state a desired outcome in general terms. Objectives indicate a more specific policy direction and help organize strategies. Strategies are detailed actions necessary to initiate or complete an objective – such as a program or project. There are multiple objectives for each goal and multiple strategies for each objective. The recommendations for each element of the Plan contain all three policy layers.

## Key Findings

A summary of key findings derived from the existing conditions analysis related to utilities in Allen County and Fort Wayne is outlined below. For a more detailed explanation of each finding, see the Utilities Chapter of the Existing Conditions Report.

### **Sanitary Sewers**

There are 14 separate sanitary sewer systems in Allen County, which serve about 100,000 customers, including households and businesses. There are approximately 18,000 properties on individual septic systems. These systems have a tendency to fail, particularly in the hydric-soil areas prevalent throughout the County. The three main sewer providers are the City of Fort Wayne (serving 80% of the customer base), Aqua Indiana (12%), and the City of New Haven (5%). Many of the small, individual treatment systems were developed during the 1950s, when Allen County planning entities adopted a subdivision control ordinance that required sanitary sewer systems. Today's regional water quality concerns include failed or underperforming septic systems, combined sewer overflows (CSOs), and sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs). Solutions for managing these problems can be costly. Fort Wayne, Allen County, and other sewer system providers must find suitable ways to mitigate existing problems, while expanding sewers to support community developments.

## **Drinking Water**

In a pattern similar to sewer systems, the provision of drinking water is dominated by the City of Fort Wayne (serving 75% of the customer base), Aqua Indiana (18%), and the City of New Haven (5%), with nine small systems meeting the remaining needs. Properties not served by these systems rely on individual wells. All drinking water utilities have designated source water protection areas to preserve raw water supplies. For the City of Fort Wayne and the City of New Haven, this means protecting the St. Joseph River through a variety of watershed initiatives. For other systems, this means creating wellhead protection areas to protect groundwater wells.

## **Stormwater and Drainage Systems**

Unless it is properly managed, stormwater runoff and inadequate drainage can have negative impacts on property, environmental quality and public health. Due to increased public demand for improvements in stormwater management, as well as closer environmental regulatory scrutiny, stormwater runoff has become a key concern for the region. Stormwater management is an interjurisdictional concern, since drainage patterns and aquifer recharge areas do not adhere to political boundaries. Allen County, Fort Wayne, and various stormwater management agencies must look for coordinated strategies related to funding, development standards, and regulations that promote effective stormwater management and drainage systems.

### **Goal**

The following goal for the utilities element was developed by the Comprehensive Plan Committee based upon citizen input:

*Safe and abundant drinking water and regionalization of interests for improving regional water quality—such as reduction of failed septic systems and improved performance from sanitary sewers and stormwater facilities—that is expandable to meet demands and support community plans for growth.*

### **Objectives and Strategies**

Outlined below are objectives and strategies to support the provision of utilities.

#### **OBJECTIVE UL1.**

#### **ENSURE COOPERATIVE DECISION MAKING AND UNIFORM STANDARDS FOR PROTECTING WATER QUALITY THROUGHOUT THE REGION.**

Water resources are interjurisdictional in nature. Groundwater and surface water flow freely between jurisdictions, as do various contaminants and stormwater runoff. Therefore, solutions to protecting water quality should be interjurisdictional and cooperative in nature. The following strategies provide recommendations for addressing water quality issues in a cooperative manner.

#### **UL1.A Consider a collaborative water quality partnership among local governments, stakeholders and utility providers.**

Allen County and Fort Wayne should continue to work with the St. Joseph Watershed Initiative and all water-utility providers to identify opportunities for collaboration. A regional or county-wide water-utility partnership could be created, which could explore the possibilities for coordinating utility services and developing cooperative funding mechanisms.

## **OBJECTIVE UL2.**

### **UTILIZE THE CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT MAP AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY'S UTILITY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.**

The Land Use Chapter of this Plan provides a Conceptual Development Map and accompanying land use principles that will have significant impact on development patterns in Allen County and Fort Wayne. In particular, the Comprehensive Plan calls for future development to be more strategic, compact and contiguous to existing development. Adherence to these development principles will enable utility services to be extended in a more efficient manner, with shorter lines accommodating a larger population.

#### **UL2.A Recommend the adoption of the Conceptual Development Map by City of Fort Wayne Public Works, Aqua Indiana, LLC, and approval by other local utility providers.**

The final Conceptual Development Map should be presented along with the Plan for adoption by City of Fort Wayne Board of Public Works, Aqua Indiana's governing body and approval by the boards of other local utility providers. In order for the Conceptual Development Map and Plan to be an effective tool for planning growth and development, all utility providers will need to utilize the Map and Plan as a guide for the expansion of utilities. Both the Map and Plan will also need to be formally reviewed and updated so that development trends can be incorporated when necessary. A process should be established and implemented for this review and update.

#### **UL2.B Coordinate community utility improvements and expansions within the Conceptual Development Map growth areas.**

One of the key findings of the Land Use Chapter of the Existing Conditions Report was that the availability of adequate infrastructure, particularly sanitary sewer systems, is a primary driver of new development. In light of this, it becomes very important to coordinate community infrastructure improvements and expansions. Staff review of proposed utility- and transportation-system improvements, Certificate of Territorial Authority (C.T.A.) service-areas expansions and school district facility expansions, should be continued to help plan and coordinate those improvements with existing and proposed land uses.

#### **UL2.C Significant utility, service area, and infrastructure expansions should be encouraged inside the Conceptual Development Map growth areas.**

A key feature of the Conceptual Development Map is to provide a framework for growth and development. The Conceptual Development Map provides a focus for development efforts and incentives as well as infrastructure improvements. By encouraging infrastructure improvements and expansions inside the Conceptual Development Map growth areas, service provision efficiencies can be realized by the community. An annual review of the Conceptual Development Map will be established to track development areas and to identify areas that have potential for development.

## **OBJECTIVE UL3.**

### **THE DUAL GOALS, TO PROVIDE INFRASTRUCTURE TO NEW DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTAIN THE EXISTING SYSTEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH FEDERAL STANDARDS, SHOULD BE PLANNED FOR IN A COORDINATED COUNTYWIDE MANNER.**

It remains important to improve the regional water quality through the successful reduction or elimination of failed septic systems, combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and sanitary sewer overflows

(SSOs). Equally important is the ability to provide sanitary sewer capacity for new land development.

#### **OBJECTIVE UL4.**

#### **IMPROVE AND EXPAND SANITARY SEWER SYSTEMS WITHIN THE CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT MAP AREAS.**

The following strategies provide recommendations for monitoring, improving and expanding sanitary sewers in Allen County and Fort Wayne.

##### **UL4.A Encourage improvements to existing sewer systems to resolve sewer overflows.**

Combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) represent a major threat to water quality, environmental quality and public health. Overflow and discharge data should be tracked on a regular basis to identify areas in need of priority intervention.

##### **UL4.B Maximize capacity of existing systems by promoting infill development.**

Infill and redevelopment within areas that are already served by a larger sewer-utility provider (i.e. the City of Fort Wayne, Aqua Indiana, and the City of New Haven, the City of Woodburn and the Town of Monroeville) will help to maximize the capacity of existing systems and minimize the need for additional infrastructure investments.

##### **UL4.C Provide direction for the exploration of alternative sewage-processing methods.**

Alternative means for the processing of sewage should be investigated such as the utilization of wetland clusters. Other nontraditional methods may provide cost effective ways to accommodate the processing of sewage where traditional means are unavailable or too costly.

##### **UL4.D Discourage development on conventional septic systems.**

Soils in Allen County are generally poorly suited to accommodate conventional septic systems. This is of particular concern to the northern part of Allen County where a large concentration of septic systems could generate high E. coli levels.

##### **UL4.E Discourage on-site wastewater package treatment facilities.**

On-site wastewater package treatment facilities have been a concern in Allen County due to the lack of long-term maintenance of these facilities. One objective of the planning process has been to address the existing on-site wastewater disposal problems in the County and prevent reoccurrence in the future. The proposed application of new, more restrictive standards for soil testing and design of leach fields by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management and the State Board of Health may mean fewer septic systems in the future. Where future individual on-site wastewater disposal systems can be utilized, an approach must be applied that ensures proper long-term functioning.

#### **OBJECTIVE UL5.**

#### **WORK WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND OTHER AGENCIES TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS.**

While the majority of drinking water for Fort Wayne is supplied by the St. Joseph River, most residents outside of Fort Wayne rely on groundwater resources to meet their drinking water needs. Strategies for protecting and enhancing drinking water in Allen County and Fort Wayne must address both groundwater and surface-water supply systems. The protection of drinking water systems is also

enhanced by discouraging development on conventional septic systems and discouraging on-site wastewater package treatment facilities, as noted in Objective UL4.

**UL5.A Create a Countywide map of all wellhead protection areas. Encourage efforts to identify and map additional types of wells that could be significantly impacted by contaminated groundwater.**

Wellhead protection areas are defined through hydrogeologic analysis to determine how quickly groundwater (along with possible contaminants) could travel to a well. Currently, only “community” well-water systems are required to develop Wellhead Protection Plans with defined wellhead protection areas. Allen County and Fort Wayne should undertake efforts to identify and map additional wellhead protection areas for other types of wells. Protective land use regulations should be developed within these areas to minimize contamination of groundwater.

**UL5.B Expand and enhance initiatives to protect the St. Joseph, Wabash and Maumee River watersheds.**

The St. Joseph River provides most of the drinking water for Fort Wayne. In the mid-1990s, after tap water samples were discovered to contain nine different herbicides, concerned citizens and stakeholders formed the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative to promote better water quality. Fort Wayne and Allen County should collaborate with this organization and other watershed groups to identify and reduce pollution sources, expand green infrastructure that helps to filter contaminants, and encourage appropriate land use and development guidelines that will reduce river contamination.

**UL5.C Work with local groups to educate the public about practices to protect groundwater and river water in order to maintain drinking-water quality.**

Throughout the County, many suburban and rural residents obtain their drinking water through wells and dispose of their waste through septic systems. Allen County and Fort Wayne should undertake measures to educate the public about ways to maintain clean and well-functioning water and septic systems. They should also collaborate with local environmental groups such as the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative in order to develop messages that inform the public about what they can do to protect the County’s rivers and streams.

**OBJECTIVE UL6.**

**ENHANCE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AND DRAINAGE SYSTEMS.**

Stormwater and drainage patterns are determined by natural and topographic features, rather than jurisdictional boundaries. Therefore cross-jurisdictional, interagency cooperation is imperative to meet stormwater and drainage needs. The following strategies outline recommendations for pursuing cooperative strategies in regulating stormwater management and drainage systems.

**UL6.A Consider a partnership to coordinate stormwater management on a Countywide basis.**

The City of Fort Wayne operates a public stormwater utility that is based on user fees and regulates more than 600 miles of sewer lines, ditches, channels and drains. This utility should collaborate with other stormwater authorities in Allen County to create a partnership that will monitor stormwater and drainage issues throughout the County to ensure that existing systems are meeting the public’s needs and protecting the environment.

**UL6.B Ensure uniform standards for stormwater management and drainage systems.**

Stormwater management techniques are often referred to as best management practices (BMPs). Allen County and Fort Wayne should continue to publish and distribute descriptive guidelines on the practices that they would like to promote throughout the region via the Allen County Stormwater Technical Standards Manual. All new proposals for development and infrastructure should be required to include plans for stormwater management using BMPs to mitigate adverse impacts to the environment.

**UL6.C Encourage the acquisition of former railroad rights-of-way for trail usage and utility easements.**

Acquisition of former railroad rights-of-way is a significant opportunity to provide for extension and connection to existing trail systems. Their potential use for utility-extension projects may also mean savings in time and project costs over utilizing local street rights-of-ways and private easements.



# 9. Grabill, Huntertown, Monroeville and Woodburn

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## Introduction

At a point in each of their histories, the Allen County Towns of Grabill, Huntertown and Monroeville, and the City of Woodburn have been centers of agricultural commerce in the region, each with a discrete development pattern. Then as now, the communities' compact, village-like form marks them as distinct from, but firmly connected to, the open countryside that surrounds them.

Furthermore, each area has a unique character – the qualities that give them a sense of place. These characteristics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Strong sense of community and place among residents;
- Compact development pattern, particularly at the core;
- Discernable downtowns, with street-edge buildings, mixed uses, gathering places, public buildings, parks and other open spaces;
- Residential neighborhoods close to the center and amenities within walking distance;
- Civic open spaces within the community (e.g. schools, town halls, etc.) and rural open space nearby at the edges;
- Both pedestrian friendly and generally walkable in size; and
- Streets scaled to adjacent uses.

The Allen County Department of Planning Services provides planning support to Grabill, Huntertown, Monroeville and Woodburn. Because of this, these four communities are included in this Comprehensive Plan. The City of New Haven and the Town of Leo-Cedarville provide planning services for their incorporated areas. Although they are not part of the adoption of this Plan, both communities have played an important role in its development and will be instrumental in the implementation of these Countywide strategies.

Grabill, Huntertown, Monroeville and Woodburn are similar in population. Each has less than 2,000 persons (based on the 2000 U.S. Census) and varies one from another by only a few hundred residents. Single-family subdivisions have developed at the periphery of these areas with curvilinear street patterns – in contrast to the original, more grid-like street network – disconnected from the historic center. Incremental growth is also occurring outward from the core of each community.

Recent growth within each of the four communities has occurred in the form of single-use areas (e.g. residential, commercial and industrial) that are reinforced by single-use zoning districts. This type of land classification has contributed significantly to the segregated land use pattern (see the Land Use Chapter of the Existing Conditions Report). The resulting form is in contrast to the historic, mixed-use development pattern that occurred prior to zoning. The implications of development patterns are important considerations for communities in planning for the future.

As part of the planning process, a Conceptual Development Plan was prepared that outlines geographic boundaries for growth surrounding each community. The growth boundary surrounding each City and Town within Allen County reflects the amount of land area necessary to support population growth over the next several decades (see Land Use Chapter for Map and further explanation of the growth boundary).

Grabill, Huntertown, Monroeville and Woodburn are encouraged to expand within their respective boundaries, and to do so in a pattern that uses land resources more efficiently. The boundary is not intended to be a hard edge, designed to restrict growth. It is intended to set a direction

or framework in which each community can plan for growth. The boundary reflects where and how much growth is anticipated in the County. The next step is to identify how that growth should occur.

A theme expressed by many involved in the Plan-it Allen! public participation process was the need to preserve the “small-town character” of these communities. Communities that are not experiencing significant population growth can be in danger of losing their distinctiveness. The challenge is to preserve small-town character while also accommodating growth and change.

## Overview

This chapter outlines background information, population statistics, land use data and strategies for Grabill, Huntertown, Monroeville and Woodburn. In addition to recommendations outlined in the overall text of the Plan, strategies for each community are outlined within this chapter to help preserve the character of each community, and at the same time, promote new development.

## Town of Grabill

### **Background**

In 1900, surveying work began on the Wabash Railroad project. The route cut through what are now northeast Allen County and the Joseph Grabill farm. Aptly, the railroad named its newly built railroad station, Grabill. In 1902, the first steam engine rolled through the young community.

Joseph Grabill platted the original Town of Grabill in that same year. A total of 23 lots were established located near the Wabash Railroad. Early investment in the Town included a grain mill, lumberyard, bank, department store, harness shop and other businesses serving this growing community. Telephone service came to Grabill in 1903 and electricity in 1915.

The Town of Grabill incorporated in 1912 to enable it to have its own school and voting place. Joseph Grabill remained active in the early development of Grabill. The Town has since grown to nearly 450 homes. Grabill provides water and sewer utilities with sewage treatment contracted with the City of Fort Wayne.

Grabill can be considered a compact, walkable Town with its neighborhoods in close proximity to the Town center. There is an established network of sidewalks throughout the Town. Most of the land within the Town limits is developed with residential, commercial and industrial uses.

There are two parks located within Grabill. The park in the northern portion of the Town has ball field, and an expansion has been proposed. The Town’s other park is a smaller neighborhood park surrounded by a residential area.

The Town Hall is located off the main roads near a relocated church that has been converted into a museum. The Grabill Branch of the Allen County Library is located on State Street by the fire station. The newer subdivisions are on the north and south sides of Town. Some of the established homes close to the center of Town have been converted into small shops. A sidewalk connects Grabill to Leo-Cedarville along Grabill Road. A majority of Grabill’s industry is located on the east side of Town across the railroad tracks.

Grabill’s commercial needs are increasing as the community continues to grow, and as it works to attract tourists. There is a traditional commercial center on the eastern edge of Town on Main Street. On the western edge of Town there are newer commercial areas including grocery and ice cream stores, a restaurant, gas station with a convenience store, and a car dealership.

### **Population**

The community grew at a steady rate between 1970 and 1990 averaging 15 percent per decade. Grabill’s population reached 1,113 in 2000. The population more than doubled between 1970 and 2000 with the largest increase (over 48 percent) occurring between 1990 and 2000.

**Table 1.0: Population: 1970-2000**

Town Population History								
Location	1970		1980		1990		2000	
	Population	% change	Population	% change	Population	% change	Population	% change
Grabill	570	15.2%	658	15.4%	751	14.1%	1,113	48.2%

Source: U.S. Census

**Land Use**

As Table 1.1 shows, agriculture (15.4 percent), single-family residential (26.9 percent), and industrial (15.5 percent) take up the largest amount of land area. Of the developed land area, single-family residential is the largest land user. Single-family residential growth has taken place at the edges of the community on lots that are larger than in the established residential areas. Grabill supports various industries, several of which make furniture. Some industries utilize the railroad to transport goods. Newer commercial development is occurring along State Street and Main Street.

**Table 1.1: Existing Land Use**

	Grabill	
	Acreage	%Total Area
Agriculture	57.39	15.4%
Single Family	99.98	26.9%
Multi-Family	3.26	0.9%
Commercial	34.26	9.2%
Parks/Open Space	19.71	5.3%
Industrial	57.48	15.5%
Vacant	19.87	5.3%
Other	16.07	4.3%
ROWs and Rivers	63.74	17.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>371.76</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Preserve/Reserve	84.7	22.8%
Undeveloped	50.0	13.4%
Total Developed	237.0	63.8%

Source: Allen County Department of Planning Services

Strategies

Outlined below are strategies to support the future growth and development of the Town of Grabill.

**G1. ALL DEVELOPMENT**

**G1.A** Continue to encourage new growth and development where there is available public sewer and water.

**G1.B** Discourage development where there is a need for septic systems.

**G1.C** Promote the preservation of historic structures.

**G1.D** Building scale for new construction and infill development should be consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.

**G1.E** Building materials, style and height should be consistent with the surrounding buildings.

**G1.F** Provide for street interconnections.

## **G2. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**G2.A** Front porches are encouraged in new construction and infill development to blend with existing residences in the Town center.

**G2.B** Promote street design consistent in size and layout to the residential area south of State Street.

**G2.C** Encourage adjacent residential growth to the north, south and west.

## **G3. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**G3.A** Encourage building re-use and infill development consistent with the character of the Town center.

**G3.B** New commercial development should place buildings closer to the street with parking and services on the side or rear of the building.

**G3.C** Provide for pedestrian sidewalks linking to existing residential areas.

**G3.D** Building-mounted signage should be encouraged in the Town center.

**G3.E** New commercial development should be located at major intersections along State Street, similar in scale to existing commercial development.

**G3.F** Vacant parcels along major corridors should be encouraged to develop prior to expansion along Grabill Road.

**G3.G** Concentrate new commercial development in areas that will enhance existing commercial centers in Grabill.

**G3.H** Encourage mixed-use commercial development to serve the needs of Grabill residents.

## **G4. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**G4.A** Concentrate industrial development adjacent to existing industrial sites on the east side of Grabill.

**G4.B** Encourage building-mounted and monument-style signage with appropriate scale to the existing signage.

**G4.C** Cluster industrial uses and provide a shared access point with interconnection where feasible.

## Town of Huntertown

### Background

The Huntertown area was first settled in 1837 by William T. Hunter, a native of England. He cleared a farm and established a tavern along a heavily traveled road that extended from Fort Wayne north to Lima (now Howe), Indiana. The site of Huntertown was a natural place for settlers to build homes since this was an open area surrounded by forest. The area was referred to as “the opening”. The Town prospered with the arrival of a railroad connecting Huntertown to Fort Wayne and other towns further north.

The building of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad in the area led to the organization and platting of what was already an existing settlement in 1869. After World War II, Huntertown experienced a new growth spurt when people began to build homes in the community. The Town of Huntertown was eventually incorporated in 1967.

State Road 3 provides easy access to Huntertown. Newer commercial development is occurring along this heavily traveled corridor. Residential development is occurring to the south along Carroll Road and also to the east of Huntertown. Two main areas of industrial development are located within the Town. The most visible area is to the south along State Road 3, featuring the Lima Plank Industrial Park as well as other established industrial sites. To the north of Town is an area that also has established industrial users. Huntertown provides water and sewer utilities with sewage treatment contracted with the City of Fort Wayne.

The Town Hall is located on Old State Road 3 in the heart of Town. The fire station, post office and Huntertown Elementary School are located in close proximity. Several offices and commercial developments are also located along Old State Road 3.

### Population

Huntertown’s population has more than doubled since 1970. Huntertown’s total population in 2000 was 1,771. The community grew by 63.2 percent between 1970 and 1980. Between 1990 and 2000, the community grew by another 33.2 percent.

**Table 1.2: Population: 1970-2000**

Town Population History								
	1970		1980		1990		2000	
Location	Population	% change	Population	% change	Population	% change	Population	% change
Huntertown	775	NA	1,265	63.2%	1,330	5.1%	1,771	33.2%

Source: U.S. Census

### Land Use

As Table 1.3 shows, agriculture (49.0 percent) and single-family residential (20.2 percent) take up the largest amount of land area within Huntertown. Vacant land ranks third at 9.7 percent. Of the developed land area, residential is the largest land user. About half of the community remains undeveloped. This undeveloped land – along with the land that is outside the community, but within the growth boundary – is the most susceptible to development not consistent with the community’s unique character.

Most of the residential growth has been at the eastern and southern edges of the community. More recent commercial development on the southern end of Old State Highway 3 exhibits parking in front yards and deep, varied setbacks. This is in contrast to the siting of existing buildings on Old State Highway 3 north of West Gump Road.

In 2005, Huntertown adopted an overall Master Plan for the Town. This plan investigated the land use, infrastructure and environmental issues facing Huntertown. Many of the objectives included in the Master Plan are incorporated as strategies in this Plan.

**Table 1.3: Existing Land Use**

	Huntertown	
	Acreage	% Total Area
Agriculture	1090.20	49.0%
Single Family	450.46	20.2%
Multi-Family	30.44	1.4%
Commercial	161.32	7.2%
Parks/Open Space	15.25	0.7%
Industrial	30.08	1.3%
Vacant	214.83	9.7%
Other	70.29	3.2%
ROWs and Rivers	162.59	7.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2225.46</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Preserve/Reserve	158.36	7.1%
Undeveloped	1083.38	48.7%
Total Developed	983.72	44.2%

Source: Allen County Department of Planning Services

## Strategies

Outlined below are strategies to support the future growth and development of the Town of Huntertown.

### **HT1. ALL DEVELOPMENT**

**HT1.A** Continue to encourage new growth and development where there is available public sewer and water.

**HT1.B** Discourage development where there is a need for septic systems.

**HT1.C** Closely coordinate with Huntertown on the objectives established in the Huntertown Master Plan.

**HT1.D** Huntertown should identify land best suited for meeting future land use needs, and adjacent to the existing municipal boundaries, that can be served by the Town utilities.

**HT1.E** Work with Huntertown to identify potential areas of development that do not require extending existing utilities.

**HT1.F** Building scale for infill development should be consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.

**HT1.G** Provide for street interconnections.

**HT1.H** Work with Huntertown to adopt a Wellhead Protection Plan that will delineate wellhead protection areas.

**HT1.I** Identify appropriate land uses in the wellhead protection areas.

**HT1.J** Promote the protection, preservation and enhancement of existing water courses, floodplains and wetlands as an integral part of new development.

**HT1.K** Land currently located in floodplains or containing wetlands should be considered for recreational uses.

**HT1.L** Work with Huntertown to protect the agricultural areas adjacent to State Road 3.

**HT1.M** New developments along State Road 3 should be setback away from the roadway to retain the rural character of the road.

## **HT2. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**HT2.A** Encourage new residential development in the northeast, east, southeast and west areas of the existing Town.

**HT2.B** Encourage new residential development to provide interconnecting roadways, sidewalks and bike paths.

**HT2.C** Encourage the incorporation of open spaces into residential development design.

**HT2.D** Work with Huntertown to promote connections between proposed new residential development and the existing community.

**HT2.E** Explore options to facilitate the development of infill housing near existing residential areas with available, existing utilities.

## **HT3. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**HT3.A** Commercial developments should be considered in the downtown core district.

**HT3.B** Encourage new commercial development on the north and south sides of Town, along major thoroughfares.

**HT3.C** Encourage a mix of small offices and small retail shops in the historic downtown district.

**HT3.D** Encourage community parking lots for new development in the downtown district to encourage pedestrian usage, as well as to blend with surrounding developments.

**HT3.E** Encourage mixed-use commercial development to serve the needs of Huntertown residents.

## **HT4. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**HT4.A** Encourage industrial development in areas that are adequately served by existing infrastructure.

**HT4.B** Locate new industrial development in a way that will provide efficient access to regional transportation networks and adequate access for employees.

**HT4.C** Encourage new industrial development on the north and south sides of Town, along major thoroughfares.

**HT4.D** Encourage new industrial development in areas that are currently zoned for industrial uses.

## Town of Monroeville

### Background

The Town of Monroeville was platted in 1851 by Jacob and John Barnhart. The area had been an Indian territory. It was surrounded by thick, swampy forests due to poor drainage. As with many other communities, the Town was platted next to a railroad that connected Chicago to Pittsburgh.

For the first 10 years, Monroeville existed primarily as a mail-station stop on the railroad. After the start of the Civil War, the Town experienced rapid growth. There was a great demand for wood products provided by the area sawmills. As the forested land was cleared, the ground was drained for farming. The soil was rich and productive, creating a need for farm-related operations. Grain elevators, feed mills and other businesses began to develop.

Monroeville was incorporated as a Town in 1866. Industries and businesses continued to develop as Monroeville gained in population. At one time, Monroeville was second only to Fort Wayne in population and number of businesses within Allen County.

Currently, there are several civic and recreational opportunities in Monroeville. Monroeville Elementary School is located along Elm Street. A community park and the Monroeville Branch of the Allen County Public Library are also located in Town. Adams County Hospital opened a long-term care facility on the west side of Town in 2000. The Community Park in Monroeville is noted on maps as a resting place for cross-country bicyclists.

The existing street network within the core area and the proximity of neighborhoods surrounding the core create a very compact, walkable area with a mix of civic, residential, commercial and institutional uses. Monroeville Road and State Road 101 provide major access routes to Monroeville. There are a number of opportunities for infill development and redevelopment along the South Street corridor. Public sewer and water are provided by the Town of Monroeville.

### Population

Unlike the other Towns, Monroeville's population has remained stable over the past three decades, with a 10.2 percent loss between 1980 and 1990. Monroeville's total population in 2000 was 1,236. Between 1990 and 2000 the community grew by 0.3 percent. This generally reflects the population growth of the southeast region of the County, where there has been very little change.

**Table 1.4: Population: 1970-2000**

Town Population History								
Location	1970		1980		1990		2000	
	Population	% change	Population	% change	Population	% change	Population	% change
Monroeville	1,353	4.6%	1,372	1.4%	1,232	-10.2%	1,236	0.3%

Source: U.S. Census



## Land Use

As Table 1.5 shows, single-family residential development (31.3 percent) takes up the largest amount of land area. Industrial uses and vacant land rank second and third, at 8.9 percent and 12.4 percent respectively. Most of Monroeville is developed, approximately 14 percent, or about 68 acres within the Town limits, remains undeveloped.

New residential development is located to the west of Monroeville. Most commercial development is located along South Street and State Road 101 through Town. Recent commercial development on West South Street is set back farther and occupies more land area than other commercial uses within the core part of the community near the State Road 101 intersection. The East Allen Industrial Park is located on the northeast side of Town with the CME Corporation as its major development.

**Table 1.5: Existing Land Use**

	Monroeville	
	Acreage	% Total Area
Agriculture	26.43	5.6%
Single Family	147.19	31.3%
Multi-Family	3.90	0.8%
Other Residential	23.01	4.9%
Commercial	8.62	1.8%
Parks/Open Space	21.79	4.7%
Industrial	41.47	8.9%
Vacant	58.30	12.4%
Other	105.44	22.4%
ROWs and Rivers	33.87	7.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>470.02</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Reserve/Preserve	98.34	20.9%
Undeveloped	67.71	14.4%
Total Developed	303.97	64.7%

Source: Allen County Department of Planning Services

## Strategies

Outlined below are strategies to support the future growth and development of the Town of Monroeville.

### **M1. ALL DEVELOPMENT**

**M1.A** Continue to encourage new growth and development where there is available public sewer and water.

**M1.B** Discourage development where there is a need for septic systems.

**M1.C** Work with Monroeville to identify potential areas of development that do not require extending utilities.

**M1.D** Building scale for infill development should be consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.

**M1.E** Provide for street interconnections.

**M1.F** Work with Monroeville to investigate areas of floodplain or undevelopable land along the Flat Rock and Adams-Schlemmer-Baker Ditches that can serve as potential recreational areas.

**M1.G** Work with Monroeville to establish a unified pedestrian network.

**M1.H** Promote infill and redevelopment of the existing Town core.

**M1.I** Infill and redevelopment of existing buildings should be sensitive to adjacent areas with respect to building-materials use, setbacks, height and parking areas.

## **M2. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**M2.A** Encourage new residential development north and south of Villa Nova Estates, between Washington Street and Whittern Road.

**M2.B** Encourage new residential development on the north side of Monroeville Road, west of State Road 101 and east of State Road 101, across from the Community Park.

**M2.C** Interconnect new residential development with existing neighborhoods.

**M2.D** Provide for a pedestrian network with paths, trails and sidewalks linking to the Town's core.

**M2.E** Encourage a mix of residential densities throughout Monroeville.

**M2.F** Provide for open spaces in new residential development.

**M2.G** Blend new residences with existing residences through sidewalks, street layout and design, and setbacks.

## **M3. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**M3.A** New commercial development should be sensitive to adjacent residential uses through controlled lighting, parking lot screening and other site design considerations.

**M3.B** Encourage continued and enhanced commercial development in Monroeville's core area of Town.

**M3.C** A potential area for new commercial development is on the west side of State Road 101 to serve as a gateway to the community.

**M3.D** Encourage mixed-use commercial development to serve the needs of Monroeville residences.

#### **M4. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**M4.A** Encourage new industrial development in and adjacent to the East Allen Industrial Park and the undeveloped parcels west of Town zoned for industrial uses.

**M4.B** Provide for extensive buffering when industrial uses are adjacent to existing residential uses.

**M4.C** Industrial development downtown near the grain storage silos should respect the neighboring residential and commercial areas.

**M4.D** Industrial development downtown should provide for sidewalks to build connectivity throughout the community.

### City of Woodburn

#### **Background**

The City of Woodburn, known for being the smallest city in Allen County, also has been known historically as Phelps Station and Shirley City. Although short-lived, the name Phelps Station refers to the railway station that existed prior to the community's incorporation as Shirley City in 1897. Even today, the railroad remains a dominant presence in Woodburn, bisecting the city from east to west.

While the railway connected the settlement to other communities in the late 1800s, today the City of Woodburn has the benefit of being located on State Route 101, the main north-south route in eastern Allen County, and being within close proximity to U.S. Highway 24. Woodburn is just minutes from New Haven and Interstate 469. The Fort-to-Port transportation project will bring U.S. Highway 24 even closer to the City limits of Woodburn, posing planning opportunities and challenges in the years to come. Another important transportation link to the city is Bull Rapids Road which enters Woodburn from the north to intersect Main Street. This north-south corridor is a well-traveled connection to Harlan and the Grabill/Leo-Cedarville area.

Leave the City of Woodburn along any one of these main routes and there is an abrupt change from developed, compact parcels to agricultural fields. Once the earliest families had cleared the hardwood forest and begun to drain the fertile, muck soil, farming practices flourished in this area of Maumee Township. Large family farms remain active in all directions outside the city limits. There are relatively few metes and bounds parcels in the immediate vicinity, compared with the other incorporated towns. The importance of agriculture to this community is evidenced today by the agribusinesses that flank the railway and main intersections of Woodburn.

Despite the long-held dominance of agriculture in the region, the City of Woodburn has always had, and retains, a diverse mix of businesses in the downtown core. From the west end of Main Street where State Road 101 enters the city to the east end where it turns north, Woodburn displays uses as varied as a grocery store, bowling alley, credit union, eat-in restaurant, salon, florist and convenience store. In addition, retail uses and services are located along Main Street; industrial uses and agribusinesses are concentrated along Front Street near the railroad and State Road 101 North; and residential streets expand out in a grid from Main Street to the north and the south. While this pattern remains today, new development is occurring on the west, north and east edges of the city. The City of Woodburn provides both water and public sewer services to its businesses and residents.

## Population

Woodburn has experienced a steady growth between 1970 and 2000 that has been higher each decade than the aforementioned Towns. The largest increase (45.6 percent) occurred between 1970 and 1980. Woodburn's total population in 2000 reached 1,579.

**Table 1.6: Population: 1970-2000**

Town Population History								
Location	1970		1980		1990		2000	
	Population	% change	Population	% change	Population	% change	Population	% change
Woodburn	688	17.6%	1,002	45.6%	1,321	31.8%	1,579	19.5%

Source: U.S. Census

## Land Use

As Table 1.7 shows, agriculture (30.3 percent) and single-family residential (25.1 percent) take up the largest amount of land area. Commercial land use ranks third at 6.7 percent. Of the developed land area, residential is the largest land user.

Woodburn is much like Monroeville with rail lines bisecting the core part of the community. The existing street network within the core area and the neighborhoods surrounding the core create a very compact, walkable area with a mix of uses.

**Table 1.7: Existing Land Use**

	Woodburn	
	Acreage	% Total Area
Agriculture	191.23	30.3%
Single Family	158.60	25.1%
Multi-Family	2.31	0.4%
Other Residential	13.99	2.2%
Commercial	42.49	6.7%
Parks/Open Space	8.82	1.4%
Industrial	14.93	2.4%
Vacant	30.88	5.0%
Other	85.39	13.5%
ROWs and Rivers	82.18	13.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>630.82</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Preserve/Reserve	52.51	8.3%
Undeveloped	222.11	35.2%
Total Developed	356.20	56.5%

Source: Allen County Department of Planning Services

New commercial development has recently occurred at the west end of Main Street and Woodburn Road, encouraged by the efforts of the City of Woodburn to extend Hickory Street south from Bull Rapids Road to Woodburn Road. This eventual connection will avoid the railroad on the north side of the city. This area is still within walking distant of downtown shops and services.

On the northeast end of the city, the City of Woodburn recently rezoned a large tract of land for single-family and two-family residential development with the intent that adjacent frontage along State Road 101 would develop with retail-commercial uses. The residential proposal included the extension of Ash Street and Maple Street, from Bull Rapids to State Road 101. This plan would provide connectivity for the north side of Woodburn, allowing the residents of existing and new neighborhoods to walk to future shops and services. This area is also within walking distance of the Woodburn Community Park, Woodburn Branch of the Allen County Public Library and City Hall.

The City of Woodburn has invested in an industrial park with a grant from the Rural Economic Community Development Program. Located on State Road 101 and Roemer Road, on the north end of the city, the Woodburn Industrial Park provides over 140 acres of industrial ground with public utility services.

## Strategies

Outlined below are strategies to support the future growth and development of the City of Woodburn.

### **W1. ALL DEVELOPMENT**

**W1.A** Continue to encourage new growth and development where there is available public sewer and water.

**W1.B** Discourage development where there is a need for septic systems.

**W1.C** Building scale for infill development should be consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.

**W1.D** Provide street interconnections.

**W1.E** Discourage the immediate extension of utilities to the U.S. Highway 24 interchange at State Road 101.

**W1.F** Work with Woodburn to enhance the three existing, significant gateway corridors into the City.

**W1.G** Promote infill and redevelopment of the existing City core.

**W1.H** Infill and redevelopment of existing buildings should be sensitive to the adjacent areas with respect to building-materials use, setbacks, height and parking areas.

### **W2. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**W2.A** Encourage new residential development on the west side of State Road 101 north of the railroad and south of Woodburn, west of Fahlsing Road.

**W2.B** Work with Woodburn on additional areas zoned for residential purposes when the Fort-to-Port project is in progress.

**W2.C** Encourage infill development of the existing platted residential lots in Woodburn.

**W2.D** Multiple-family residential development should locate within close proximity to goods and services.

**W2.E** Future neighborhoods should be compact, pedestrian friendly, and mixed use similar to the neighborhoods that surround the core part of the community.

**W3. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**W3.A** Encourage new commercial development at the west end of Main Street and Woodburn Road, where the City of Woodburn is working to extend Hickory Street south from Bull Rapids Road to Woodburn Road.

**W3.B** Encourage mixed-use development to the west end where Hickory Street will be extended.

**W3.C** Promote the use of attractive materials, signage and landscaping for new, expanding and existing business to create compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.

**W3.D** Consider additional small-lot retail development that could be compatible with the existing neighborhoods.

**W3.E** Keep new development compact and adjacent to the current City limits.

**W3.F** Encourage the use of traditional small-community development patterns to help the downtown core stay viable and attractive to local businesses and residents.

**W4. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**W4.A** Discourage the rezoning of additional ground or the extension of utilities outside of the City limits until the industrial park on the north side of Town is developed.

**W4.B** Encourage additional industrial development to the south and west of the existing industrial park. Because of its proximity to the future U.S. Highway 24 interchange at State Road 101, this site will have excellent access to this four-lane, limited-access road.

# 10. Implementation

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## Introduction

The success of a Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan is measured in terms of its implementation. Only when the recommendations in the Plan are translated into actions can the goals and policies within the Plan be realized.

Plan-it Allen! has been the culmination of a two-year planning process which included the participation, collaboration and consensus of and by Allen County, the City of Fort Wayne, local city and town government officials, boards and commissions, and citizens throughout the community. This initiative is historic in that it is the first time City and County governments have joined together to draft a Countywide Comprehensive Plan. Plan-it Allen! includes a community vision and inclusive roadmap for the next 20 years. The intent of this vision and roadmap is to lay out a path to sustainability, preserve and enhance our unique quality of life and natural environment, and position Allen County as regionally strong and competitive in the global economy.

Implementation of Plan-it Allen! should emulate the collaborative spirit of the Plan's formative process and proceed in a coordinated manner. As land use decisions often impact the entire County, partnering among various entities will be critical to successful implementation. Partners involved with implementation will include, but are not be limited to, the following:

- City, Town and County Elected and Appointed Government Officials;
- City and County Staff, including:
  - Allen County Department of Planning Services;
  - City of Fort Wayne Planning Department;
  - City of Fort Wayne Board of Public Works;
  - Utility Departments; and
  - Economic Development Agencies.
- Local Boards and Commissions;
- School Districts; and
- Members of the Community.

## Role of the Plan

Plan-it Allen! is **advisory** in nature and serves as a guide for how and where our communities should grow. Communities should strive for concurrence with the Plan in rezoning or development approvals. Plan-it Allen!'s goals and policies aim for an "ideal scenerio." These high aspirations mean that sometimes different objectives and strategies may conflict with one another, requiring careful balance. As such, this Plan provides guidance in the decision-making process, but it is not the final word.

## How to Use the Plan

This Plan is to 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.

The following is a summary of how Plan-it Allen! should be used.

## **1. Annual Work Programs and Budgets**

Individual departments and administrators within Allen County, the City of Fort Wayne and other cities and towns should be cognizant of the recommendations of the Plan when preparing annual work programs and budgets. Many follow-up studies, ordinance revisions and other activities have been recommended in the Plan. Several strategies can be implemented by incorporating these activities into individual work plans. Emphasis on updating development regulations and processes for Plan review should be a priority. Review of the Plan's proposals, as well as the education of our elected and appointed officials about evolving change brought about by the new Plan, should also be essential work-plan elements.

## **2. Development Approvals**

Administrative and legislative approvals of development proposals, including rezoning requests, development plans, and subdivision plats, should be a central means of implementing Plan-it Allen! Therefore, staff comments should include a statement as to whether or not a request is in compliance with the Plan. Zoning codes should be updated jointly by the City of Fort Wayne and Allen County in response to regulatory strategies presented in the Plan.

## **3. Coordinated Capital Improvement Plans**

Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) should be prepared consistent with the Plan's land use policies and infrastructure recommendations. New, significant community improvements that are not anticipated in the Plan (such as the General Motors facility in the 1980s), and which could dramatically impact the Plan's land use recommendations, should necessitate a review and possible modification of the Plan. It has been suggested that the establishment of a Allen County-Fort Wayne Capital Improvement Board be investigated to coordinate and prioritize capital improvements on a countywide basis.

## **4. Economic Incentives**

Existing economic incentives should be evaluated, and new incentives established, in light of recommendations within the Plan. The development of economic incentives is key to several of the central themes of the Plan which are to encourage infill development, urban reinvestment and create a sense of place within the communities' neighborhoods. These incentives should be integrated with other Plan policies to ensure consistency, particularly with the Plan's land use recommendations. Fort Wayne and Allen County will need to determine appropriate economic and regulatory incentives that could be provided to achieve critical development and redevelopment objectives. These incentives should be awarded to promote implementation of the Plan.

## **5. Private Development Decisions**

It is important that property owners and developers consider the recommendations of the Plan early on in their planning and investment decisions. Public decision makers will be using the Plan as a guide in their development-related deliberations, such as zoning matters, development approvals and infrastructure requests. Property owners and developers should draft proposals which are consistent with the Plan's recommendations.

## **6. Future Interpretation**

As unique situations arise in the future, the Fort Wayne City Council and Allen County Commissioners should call upon the applicable Plan Commissions to provide interpretations of major items that are unclear or not fully addressed in the Plan. The Commissions may call upon outside



experts and other groups for advice. Minor items that require interpretation should be handled by local jurisdictions as they follow the Plan.

#### The Tool – Implementation Matrix

The key to implementation of the Plan is the use of a tool which outlines the steps that should be taken to bring the goals, objectives and strategies to fruition. Some of the outlined steps are very short term in nature and should be taken immediately or within the near term. Many other steps will take longer to accomplish. These long-range actions may take five-or-more years to adequately implement.

The tool that will outline the implementation work plan is the Implementation Matrix. Key implementation steps, along with the identification of the lead department or agency, timing and budget, if needed, are outlined in the Matrix. Action steps included in the Matrix will also be prioritized and ranked. Prioritization is based upon the benefits, relationship to other actions and feasibility of implementation. It is recommended that this Matrix be reviewed monthly by a City/County implementation task force charged to carry out the implementation. This task force will also monitor and evaluate implementation of the Matrix and report on progress to the community and appropriate boards and commissions periodically.

#### Monitoring and Evaluating Plan-it Allen!

Implementation of the Plan will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis using the Implementation Matrix. This will ensure that the Plan is consistently followed and will result in desired changes in the community.

Allen County and Fort Wayne staff will establish an implementation task force to assist with the monitoring and evaluation of the Plan. This group will also assess progress and consider amendments and updates to the Plan. Possible duties include meeting monthly to monitor implementation, educating the public regarding innovative development concepts and providing ongoing input to the Fort Wayne City Council, Allen County Commissioners, local boards, and Plan Commissions. Plan-it Allen! Comprehensive Plan Committee members are excellent candidates for this committee.

#### Updates to Plan-it Allen!

The Plan will be updated on a five-year basis. This is a sufficient time frame to consider major community condition changes that may affect the Plan's policies. If circumstances in the community change significantly prior to the anticipated review, an update could be initiated in a shorter time frame. Fort Wayne City Council and the Allen County Commissioners will initiate the process and establish a new City/County steering committee if warranted.