

1. Land Use

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.

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.