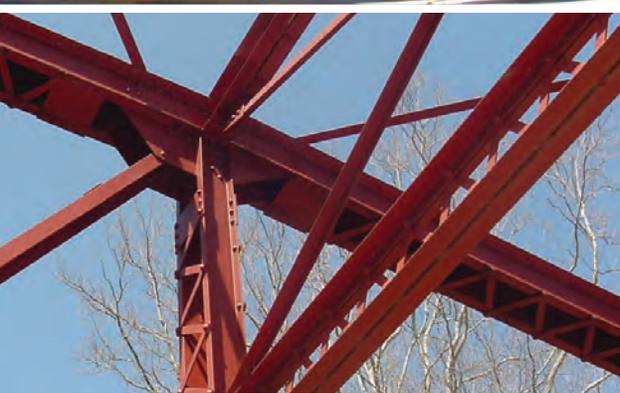




Hancock County Comprehensive Plan



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

HANCOCK COUNTY, INDIANA



RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION BY THE AREA
PLAN COMMISSION ON: JULY 26, 2005

ADOPTED BY THE HANCOCK COUNTY BOARD
OF COMMISSIONERS ON: AUGUST 29, 2005
RESOLUTION No.: 2005-8-3

PREPARED BY:
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PREFACE

*A typical farm field in Hancock County.
Many such fields have become
residential subdivisions in recent years.*

FOREWORD

Built on the strong foundation of its agricultural heritage, Hancock County is currently experiencing growth that presents a challenge to maintaining its rural quality of life. Integrating the long-standing character, values, and infrastructure & service capacities of the County with the diverse needs of the growing population is the issue that sets the stage for an update to the Hancock County Comprehensive Plan.

Since the last Hancock County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1991, much has changed. The population has increased by nearly 25% as new homes have multiplied in the western portion of the county, utilities services have expanded, and traffic volumes have increased. It is the community's desire to manage the impacts of these trends that is the impetus for this Hancock County Comprehensive Plan update.

This Plan serves as a comprehensive guide for County decision-making in areas related to land use and growth. In order to develop such a broad-based document, a variety of information gathering tools were used. Numerous public input workshops were held, key community stakeholders were consulted, in-depth research and analysis was conducted, and a Steering Committee watched over the process closely.



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The Vision Statement is an articulation of the values and aspirations of the Hancock County community. The goals and policies of the comprehensive plan that follow are designed to help the community achieve this broad vision. The Vision for Hancock County was developed by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and is based on the input provided by Hancock County citizens and stakeholders throughout the planning process.

VISION STATEMENT

Hancock County should protect and enhance its unique identity, provide opportunities for all residents to advance their quality of life, and match development with infrastructure capacity.

The following key principles should guide Hancock County's efforts to fulfill this vision:

A UNIQUE COMMUNITY IDENTITY

The special character and heritage of Hancock County should be protected and enhanced for future generations. This includes enhancing the awareness of agricultural activities, supporting the vitality of the many small towns in the county, and carefully managing the important transportation routes in the area.

APPROPRIATELY PLANNED GROWTH

Growth in Hancock County should be carefully integrated into the established community and maintain a balanced mix of land uses. New development should occur in a way that ensures appropriate infrastructure and services are provided.

A STRONG ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

The economy of Hancock County should be enhanced through a coordinated and comprehensive economic development strategy, including the recruitment of high-tech, new economy businesses. At the same time, support for more traditional businesses and industries should also remain strong.

VIBRANT CITIES AND TOWNS

Hancock County should ensure the vitality of each of its cities and towns as unique centers of activity. Each community should be valued and supported within the framework of the overall quality of life of Hancock County.

A SAFE AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Hancock County should have a transportation system with adequate road capacity, safe travel routes, and efficient connections between key destinations. The county should also support alternatives to traditional forms of transportation, such as bicycling and mass transit, particularly as connections with destinations throughout the Indianapolis region.

ADEQUATE PUBLIC SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Hancock County's public services and infrastructure should be of the highest quality possible. The governmental entities in the county should work together to provide these services while minimizing the tax impact that new growth has on residents.

BALANCED HOUSING OPTIONS

Hancock County should offer a diverse array of housing styles, types, and price ranges to best serve the growing residential market. Quality housing options should be accessible to residents of all income levels.

This comprehensive plan is based on community input, existing land uses, development trends, suitability of land uses, economic feasibility, natural land features, and the requirements of Indiana law.

Indiana statute, Title 36, Article 7, as amended, empowers counties to plan. Local government is further charged with the purpose of improving "the health, safety, convenience, and welfare of the citizens and to plan for the future development of the community to the end that:

- highway systems (and street systems) be carefully planned;
- new communities grow only with adequate public way, utility, health, educational, and recreational facilities;
- the needs of agriculture, industry, and business be recognized in future growth;
- residential areas provide healthful surroundings for family life; and
- the growth of the community is commensurate with, and promotive of the efficient and economical use of public funds". (IC 36-7-4-201)

Public law further states that a county may establish planning and zoning entities to fulfill this purpose. (IC 36-7-4-201)

Furthermore, the adoption of comprehensive plan is established by legislative mandate as the basis for zoning and subdivision control ordinances. The Indiana statutes provide for, and require the development and maintenance of a comprehensive plan by each plan commission. (IC 36-7-4-501)

IC 36-7-4-502 and 503 state the required and permissible contents of the plan. Required plan elements include:

- a statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction;
- a statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction; and
- a statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.

The Plan Commission may also compile additional information, permissible by case law, into a Comprehensive Plan. This mandate serves as the foundation for the Hancock County Comprehensive Plan.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The Comprehensive Plan is a community guidebook. It will help guide the Area Plan Commission in its decision-making process. However, it addresses many other community issues as well. When reviewing development plans, making budgets, or setting priorities this document should be used to help guide decisions.

Because of its emphasis on public participation this plan gives county leaders knowledge of what the community wants and needs. This plan:

- can assist the County when considering infrastructure or economic development decisions,
- can provide civic groups with ideas on how to strengthen and enhance the community, and
- serves as the legal basis for protection and conservation of sensitive environmental features, historic sites, and other community resources.

To facilitate the decision making process, the document is organized with the following features:

PREFACE

The preface provides a synopsis of the contents of the plan. It includes a community profile, which provides a snapshot of the community in time and describes recent trends. This profile includes a brief summary of local history and demographics, as well as the public input and other information that serves as the basis for the rest of the document. The preface also identifies the primary issues that were identified during the planning process.

PART I - COMMUNITY GOALS

The goals provide a conceptual response to Hancock County's vision and a direct response to the issues identified in the community. Each goal describes a philosophy of the community and provides a platform for the plan's implementation tools. The community goals section is divided into topic areas, each with its own set of goals and corresponding policies. The policies are composed of more specific directives that suggest means to accomplish each goal. Together, these goals and policies form the foundation that should guide future decision making by the county.

PART II - IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation section provides tools by which the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan may be implemented. Specifically included here are the Land Use Plan and the Transportation Plan. These plans detail the location and type of future growth recommended for Hancock County, as well as future transportation system changes required to serve this growth. The Towns chapter includes detailed information pertaining to the towns that are members of the Area Plan Commission. Specifically, this includes the towns of McCordsville, Fortville, Shirley and Spring Lake.

PART III - SUPPORTING DATA

The supporting data section includes all of the background information and analysis used in the development of the Hancock County Comprehensive Plan. This includes demographic data, public input data, and a series of maps.

The comprehensive plan represents a response to the development trends, public opinions, and physical circumstances that affect Hancock County today, as well as the impact they may have in the future. Over time, these factors could change in a way that affects the comprehensive plan's policies. For this reason, it is important to undertake a regular review of the document to ensure that it contains an appropriate and effective set of policies to guide Hancock County.

WHEN SHOULD THE PLAN BE UPDATED?

Typically, a community will undertake a major update of its comprehensive plan approximately every 5 years. An interim review should occur annually. The interim review should include a discussion of changes in the community since the comprehensive plan was adopted and note amendments that may be appropriate. In addition, the community may periodically choose to revisit only certain elements of the comprehensive plan, particularly if necessitated by a major change in the community. In some cases, a development proposal will cause a community to reevaluate its comprehensive plan policies and consider making changes to the plan that will better inform or address similar types of development.

HOW IS THE PLAN AMENDED?

The process for amending the comprehensive plan is specified in the 36-7-4-500 series of the Indiana Code. The legislative body of the county or any of the member towns of the Area Plan Commission may initiate an amendment to the comprehensive plan. The process is as follows:

- Step 1** **Amendment Requested:** The legislative body sends a written request to the Area Plan Commission to prepare the desired amendment.
- Step 2** **Amendment Prepared:** The Area Plan Commission then has 60 days to prepare and submit the requested amendment. This time frame may be extended by the legislative body as needed.
- Step 3** **Public Hearing & Certification:** The Area Plan Commission holds a public hearing regarding the amendment, at which time the amendment may be approved or rejected. If approved, the amendment is certified to each participating legislative body.
- Step 4** **Legislative Body Action:** Once the amendment is certified, each participating legislative body may adopt a resolution approving, rejecting, or amending the amendment. The amendment is not effective for a jurisdiction until it has been approved by a resolution of its legislative body.
- Step 5** **Return to Plan Commission (if necessary):** If the amendment is rejected or amended by the legislative body, it is returned to the Area Plan Commission with a written statement of the reasons for its rejection or amendment.
- Step 6** **Plan Commission Reconsideration:** The Area Plan Commission has 60 days to consider the rejection or amendment, and to file its report with the legislative body. This time frame may be extended by the legislative body as needed.

Note: A reevaluation of the comprehensive plan most frequently occurs when a rezoning request for a particular use is made in an area where that use is not supported by the plan. It is important that any changes of this nature are carefully considered, and that the best interests of the entire community are kept in mind when making these decisions.

Step 7 **Plan Commission Action:** If the Area Plan Commission approves the amendment in its changed form, then it becomes effective as of the date the Commission files its report with the legislative body. If the Commission disapproves the rejection or amendment, the action of the legislative body on the original rejection or amendment stands only if confirmed by another resolution of the legislative body. If the Area Plan Commission does not file a report with the legislative body within the time frame allotted, the action of the legislative body in rejecting or amending the proposed amendment becomes final.

HOW SHOULD AMENDMENTS BE EVALUATED?

Some criteria that would be appropriate to consider as part of the amendment process are listed below. While these may not be the only criteria to consider, they will help to frame the discussion of each amendment.

- Will the amendment provide an improvement to the comprehensive plan and not be solely for the good or benefit of a particular landowner at a particular point in time?
- Is the amendment consistent with the overall intent of the comprehensive plan's goals and policies?
- Will the amendment affect the livability of the area, or the health, safety, or welfare of present or future residents?
- Will the amendment have an adverse impact on any neighboring lands?
- Will the amendment trigger the need for significant public expenditures for infrastructure or services like roads, sewer, or water?

The comprehensive plan should be a living document. While the plan cannot anticipate every possible land use or policy change in the future, a carefully considered process of review and updates will allow it to remain flexible and responsive to changing conditions. Diligent monitoring and maintenance of its goals and policies will ensure that Hancock County has proper guidance for its future growth and development.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Hancock County Comprehensive Plan is the result of hard work and contributions from many people. A Plan that does not involve those it hopes to serve will not be as successful as one that does. For this reason, the residents of the community put forth much effort, thoughts, and ideas. It is appropriate and necessary to give special recognition to the following people and organizations who were integral to this planning process.

Special thanks goes to the people of Hancock County, particularly those who attended the workshops, completed the surveys, participated in the interviews, and otherwise provided their valuable input into the planning process. Thanks also go to the following people who made this effort possible:

Board of County Commissioners

Armin Apple, *President*
Jack Heiden
Brian Kleiman

County Council

Tom Roney, *President*
William Bolander
Denny Fisk
Jack Leonard
Rosalie Richardson
James Shelby
Walter Waitt

Hancock County Area Plan Commission

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PREFACE

PREFACE

CHAPTER

1

COMMUNITY PROFILE

PREFACE



HISTORY & SETTING

HISTORY

Hancock County was officially created on March 1, 1828. It was named for John Hancock, the first signer of the Declaration of Independence. On April 11, 1828, Greenfield was selected as the county seat. Nearly a half-dozen families had already settled in the area by 1818. The majority of early settlers in Hancock County were in the southern areas, particularly around the Blue River. An early mill, school, blacksmith shop, and general store were located near the Blue River.

The presences of low, wet land areas slowed the growth of some parts of Hancock County until drainage mechanisms were employed more frequently. The wet topography likely accounted for the relatively small Native American population of the county, comprised of Miami and Potawatomi in some northern areas of the county. There were some Delaware villages in Brandywine and Sugar Creek Townships, and many artifacts have been found in Blue River Township.

The original organization of the County in 1828 established three townships, and that number had grown to 13 by 1850. In 1853, the County Commissioners reduced the number of townships to nine. Lacking in any navigable waterways, Hancock County's early settlers were quite dependent on roads. Blue River is the largest of Hancock County's streams, but only passes through its far southeastern corner. While not navigable, it attracted settlement and was used to power small mills, as were many other streams in the County.

Early roads established in Hancock County were Napoleon's Trace and the old State Road that traversed the central portion of the County. The Brookville Road and National Road (U.S. 52 and 40, respectively) were influential on the growth of population and business in Hancock County. The National Road was surveyed through Hancock County in 1827, and was likely opened to travelers around 1835. A portion of the National Road just west of Greenfield was known to travelers as the "Black Swamp" due to the frequency of stagecoach robberies in the area. Around 1850, the National Road was planked, and tolls for use were charged. The first gravel road in the County was the Knightstown and Warrington Gravel Road, established in 1859. The National Road was graveled in 1864, converted to a concrete roadbed in 1921, and eventually became a four-lane highway in the 1950s.

Railroads also played a role in the early development of Hancock County. Center Township had both the National Road and the Indiana Central Railroad running through it, and its population grew more than 530% from 1850 to 1880. The first railroad in the county, known as the Knightstown-Shelbyville Railroad, operated at intervals across the southeast corner of Blue River Township. Numerous

The photo at right shows Shirley's Main Street in the early 1900s. It contained many establishments typical of small towns of that era: a bakery, a drug store, a furniture store, and the Post Office.



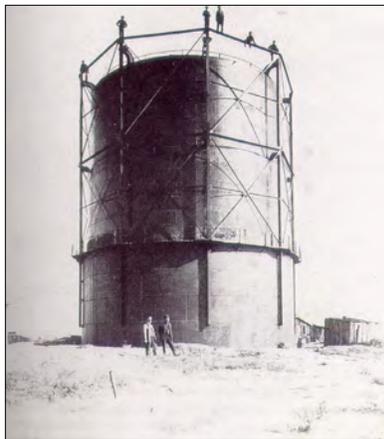
other railroads operated in Hancock County, spurring the growth of many small towns throughout the area. Some of these towns survived, while others faded away as the railroads changed. Many Hancock County towns have undergone several name changes over the years. For instance, James Whitcomb Riley wrote a poem about Tailholt, a community in Brandywine Township which has been known over the years as Kinder, Reedville, Finly, and Carrolton.

Agriculture has also been important to Hancock County. Initially, only the highest ground was cultivated, but as drainage techniques advanced, lower ground was farmed and found to be even richer than the original farmed areas. Early farm products in Hancock County included oats, potatoes, flax, apples, hay, wheat, corn, hogs and cattle. In 1920, the Barnard Sorghum Mill in Green Township produced 1200 gallons per day, making it the largest of its kind in the country.

By 1887, natural gas had been discovered, creating a twenty year growth boom in Hancock County. Over the years, Hancock County has had well over 700 known gas wells. The majority of these were dug in the late nineteenth century and are no longer active. During this growth period, an industrial base was established in the County, including various glass factories that employed many County residents.

When the gas boom began to decline, Hancock County’s population dropped as well. However, the population grew once again after World War II, when the automobile allowed easier access to employment in Indianapolis and Anderson. This allowed commuters to enjoy the rural atmosphere of Hancock County and work in the urban environments of nearby cities.

Hancock County has been home to numerous important and famous historical figures over the years. This includes individuals such as the poet James Whitcomb Riley, artists Wil Vawter and Dick Black, and Reverend Charles O’Connell, who served as president of Notre Dame. An annual community festival celebrates the life and works of Riley.



The photo on the left side of the page shows a massive natural gas storage tank. The first gas company in Hancock County was founded in 1886, and was eventually followed by at least 42 others at the peak of the “Gas Boom”. The boom was over by 1915. The County Courthouse, shown on the right side of the page, was completed in 1897, and is actually the fourth for Hancock County.

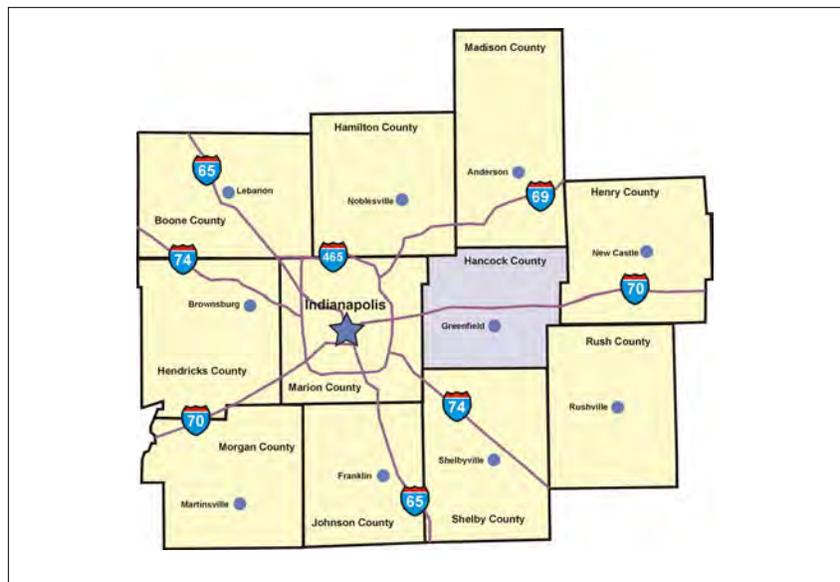
HISTORY & SETTING (CONT.)

SETTING

Hancock County is located in central Indiana, directly east of Indianapolis and Marion County. Interstate 70 runs east and west through the center of the county. In addition, several U.S. and State highways cross through Hancock County, providing it with a multitude of connections to other communities.

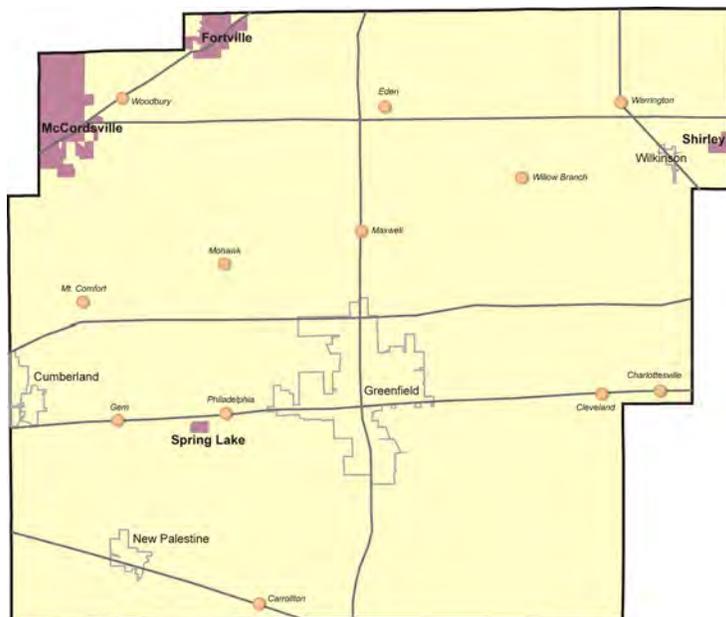
Hancock County is part of the Indianapolis metropolitan area as designated by the U.S. Census Bureau. Due to its geographic and demographic characteristics, the county plays a role in the greater Indianapolis region. In addition, the county is a member of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization, a group that manages transportation projects and funding within the region. In terms of regional growth, Hancock County is one of the last areas to experience the impact of suburban growth from Indianapolis.

The map at right shows the setting of Hancock County in the Central Indiana Region.



JURISDICTION

The Hancock County Area Plan Commission is responsible for planning in the unincorporated areas of the county, as well as for the Towns of McCordsville, Fortville, Shirley, and Spring Lake. The policies in this plan are designed to address the needs of the individual towns within a framework of the overall vision for Hancock County. The county should also maintain an awareness of the planning and growth policies of those communities within the county that are not part of the Area Plan Commission, as well as of the six counties that surround it.



The most clear theme that evolved over the course of developing the Comprehensive Plan is the differences between eastern Hancock County and western Hancock County. It was important that the distinctions between these two areas was recognized so that appropriate land use and growth policies could be created for each. The following is a summary of the main issues that set these two parts of Hancock County apart:

POPULATION

As highlighted in the demographic analysis (see page 1-6 and Chapter 10), the bulk of the County's population is located in the western three townships of Vernon, Buck Creek, and Sugar Creek. Demand for housing, commercial opportunities, and employers is much stronger on that side of the county. Eastern Hancock County has several population centers, but they are significantly smaller than those found to the west.

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

The western portion of Hancock County has much greater access to transportation facilities than the eastern portion. The two interchanges with I-70 are located in the central and western sections of the county, while no such access is afforded to the east. In addition, major state highways provide access routes from the western portion of the county to other communities in the greater Indianapolis region. This level of accessibility makes it more convenient for people to reside in western Hancock County and commute to jobs in places like Indianapolis.

UTILITIES & SERVICES

As illustrated on the Development Constraints map (page 10-31), the vast majority of sewer services available in Hancock County are focused around the western side. Except for areas within towns, eastern Hancock County is largely without such sewer services. The availability of these utilities makes the western side of the county much more attractive to new development. This also results in the western side of the county generating a greater need for the various public services that the County provides. These services & infrastructure are discussed on page 1-10.

INDIANAPOLIS INFLUENCE

The presence of Indianapolis immediately west of Hancock County is a major influence on development patterns. Many Hancock County residents are employed in Indianapolis, affecting traffic volumes and commuting patterns on county roads. Indianapolis also provides a multitude of shopping, recreation, and cultural attractions that Hancock County may not yet offer. Western Hancock County provides an advantageous setting for people who want to live outside the city, but still have convenient access to its amenities. Certainly, such pressure is significantly less on the eastern side of the county.

Detailed demographic information can be found in Chapter 10, Physical Data.

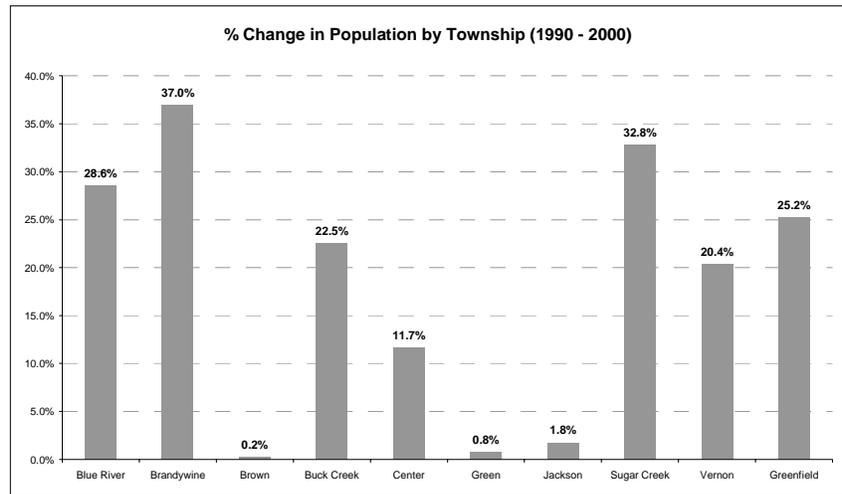
The chart at right illustrates the percentage rate of growth for each township in Hancock County from 1990 to 2000.

DEMOGRAPHICS SUMMARY

While anecdotal evidence of the changing face of Hancock County can be studied, it is important to analyze demographic data to better illustrate the trends affecting the community. Below is a brief overview of the findings of the demographic analysis.

POPULATION

As of the 2000 Census, the population of Hancock County, including Greenfield, was 55,391. This represents an increase of over 9,800, or 21.7%, since the 1990 Census. This growth rate was the 6th highest among all counties in the State of Indiana for that time period. Approximately 63% of the county's population lives outside of Greenfield. Sugar Creek, Vernon, and Buck Creek Townships had the highest percentage growth rates in the county between 1990 and 2000.



HOUSING

Housing growth trends are very similar to the population trends described previously. Excluding Greenfield, the number of housing units in Hancock County in 2000 was 15,301. Almost 64% of those housing units are located in the western three townships. Sugar Creek Township had the highest percentage growth in housing units between 1990 and 2000, with an increase of 40%. Conversely, Brown Township saw an increase of only 1.1% during that period. The county's median home value of \$129,700 ranked 4th among all Indiana counties in 2000.

TRANSPORTATION

Population growth coincides closely with traffic growth, particularly if a significant portion of residents travel outside the county to work. As of 2002, approximately 48% of the Hancock County workforce commuted outside the county to work, mostly to Marion County (39% of the workforce). Between 1990 and 2002, Hancock County experienced an increase in registered vehicles of approximately 45%, far exceeding the State average of 27%.

EMPLOYMENT & INCOME

The unemployment rate in Hancock County has been less than the state or national rates in recent years. Between 1998 and 2002, the unemployment rate averaged around 2.5%, though it was 3.8% for 2002. Median household income as of 2000 was \$56,416, well above the \$41,567 median for the state. In 2000, Hancock County's median household income ranked 2nd among all counties in Indiana.

One of the keys to the comprehensive plan update process was public input. For a comprehensive plan to be successful, it must address the concerns and vision of the community. A variety of public input mechanisms were employed to gather as much information as possible from the county community. A brief overview of the public input process is provided here.

PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

At the outset of the project, a Steering Committee was established to oversee and guide the comprehensive plan update. This committee was composed of 19 members, and provided their input as representatives of the wider county community. The Steering Committee met regularly to ensure that the Plan was on target.

KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

A series of Key Stakeholder groups were identified and invited to personal interviews. This allowed these groups to provide focused, detailed input about their concerns and wishes for the future of Hancock County. Among these groups were builders, Realtors, government officials, school district officials, business owners, property owners, farmers, and many others.

VISIONING WORKSHOPS

Early in the development of the new plan, a series of 6 workshops were held at locations around the County. These workshops were designed to facilitate discussion about the needs and concerns of County residents. This series of events resulted in a preliminary list of issues to be addressed in the comprehensive plan.

PRIORITIZATION WORKSHOPS

In order to gather more specific information and establish a clearer set of priorities for the county's future, a second round of 6 workshops was conducted. This time, several specific issues were reviewed in small group discussions, including land use, transportation, and infrastructure. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to set specific priorities among the needs and concerns identified during the Visioning Workshops.



Detailed information about the Public Input process can be found in Chapter 9, Visioning Data.

At right, participants at one of the "Prioritization Workshops" identify their preferred locations for residential, commercial, and industrial development.

PUBLIC INPUT OVERVIEW (CONT.)

DRAFT PLAN PRESENTATION

Once a draft of the plan was prepared, several presentations of the proposed comprehensive plan were made to solicit feedback. Citizens had the opportunity to review proposed policies, strategies, and maps. Input offered at these presentations was used to fine-tune the Final Draft of the Plan.

COUNTY NEEDS

An important component of both rounds of public workshops was the opportunity for participants to identify and prioritize a list of county needs. These are issues that participants felt the county needed to address in the new comprehensive plan. An initial list of needs was generated after the first round of workshops. Participants at the second round of workshops were then asked to vote on the top 10 needs, further confirming the priorities they placed on each one. The list below shows the results of that voting process.

Detailed voting results are available in Chapter 9, Visioning Data.

Rank	Need
1	Carefully planned and balanced growth to make sure services and infrastructure can keep up.
2	Widened and improved existing roads to accommodate growth and improve safety.
3	Improved drainage systems and patterns throughout the County.
4	Farmland preservation (that also protects property rights.)
5	A balanced and increased tax base with good commercial and industrial development.
6	Improve the aesthetics of new development with better controls over design.
7	More housing in the upscale/custom home market.
8	Upgrade the quality and accessibility of utilities such as water and sewer.
9	Create an additional interchange on I-70 between Mt. Comfort Road and SR 9.
10	Parks and recreational facilities (particularly as part of new development.)

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

As a result of the public input, the research and analysis that has been conducted, and the Steering Committee’s guidance, the county’s key issues have been identified. Strategies for addressing these issues are the focus of the ensuing chapters of this comprehensive plan. While this should not be considered an exhaustive list of all issues discussed in the plan, it represents a starting point for the formulation of more detailed goals and strategies for Hancock County.

PROPERTY RIGHTS & FARMLAND MANAGEMENT

One of the most important issues addressed in this comprehensive plan is that of property rights. The need for policies that promote the quality of life of the entire community should be weighed carefully against their impact on the rights of private property owners. This includes the ability to continue farming without disruption by new residential development. Farmers need the opportunity to continue the way of life that they have long enjoyed, while also preserving the opportunity to modify their operations and sell their land. It is important that any policies or programs that are put into place respect the property rights of land owners and achieve their goals through appropriate, cooperative methods. While property rights should not be the only factor that determines the inclusion of a particular policy or goal, it should be among the elements that help to shape decisions.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

As growth continues, particularly in the western portion of Hancock County, there is increasing demand for open space and recreation amenities to serve these residents. In some cases, this may mean the preservation of certain natural areas. In others, the provision of formal recreation facilities may be desirable. Regardless, it is important to plan ahead for these amenities so that they can be provided as the county grows.

HOUSING BALANCE

A significant issue in the planning process was seeking a balance between the high and low ends of the housing market. The county was perceived to need a wider variety of housing styles and price ranges. In addition, the location of new housing development was an issue, with concern centering on guiding residential development to areas where appropriate infrastructure and services are available.



New home construction in Hancock County continues at a steady pace, particularly in the western portion of the county.

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION (CONT.)

INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES

Meeting the infrastructure needs of a growing community is a challenging prospect. Local government, in conjunction with certain private providers, is responsible for a diverse portfolio of infrastructure and services. Infrastructure and utility issues include the following:

- **Roads & Transportation:** Appropriate roadway capacity and quality to serve increasing traffic must be addressed. While the demand for expanded and connected roads is stronger in the faster growing west side of the county, efficiency and safety throughout the system should be addressed.
- **Sewer & Water:** The service capabilities of the sewer and water utilities in the county have a significant impact on growth patterns. It is important that future growth policies are coordinated with the capabilities of local sewer and water providers. In many instances, long established towns in Hancock County are without these vital services. A strategy to assist these communities in need should be implemented.
- **Drainage:** Drainage was an issue to workshop participants throughout Hancock County. In some areas, it was felt that new growth was having an adverse impact on drainage patterns. In other areas, better maintenance of field tiles and drainage ditches was called for. It is important to continue to ensure the maintenance and enhancement of the County's drainage facilities.
- **Police & Fire:** The location and density of growth have an effect on the ability to provide timely and effective public safety services. Balancing growth patterns with the county and township's respective abilities to protect residents is a key consideration.
- **Schools:** The impact that residential growth has on educational facilities and services cannot be underestimated as the plan is developed.
- **Electricity & Telecommunications:** Electricity is an important service for all types of growth, and telecommunications infrastructure, such as fiber optics, can also enhance economic development prospects. Fiber optic infrastructure can be a key component in the recruitment of high-tech businesses to the county.

Balancing growth with infrastructure will be a key challenge of the new Comprehensive Plan.



ISSUE IDENTIFICATION (CONT.)

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

One of the reasons that people continue to move to Hancock County is the character and quality of life that it offers. It is this quality of life that could be threatened if new growth is not managed appropriately. The many small towns within the county have each established their own unique identity over time, and these characteristics should be protected. Further, the special setting provided by the county’s rural areas must be respected as the community evolves.

COORDINATED GROWTH

While the Area Plan Commission is designed to foster a level of cooperation among the member jurisdictions, a more overarching strategy to coordinate their growth is needed. It is important that all of the small communities within Hancock County have an opportunity to guide their own growth, and it is logical to do so in the context of a strategy that enhances the overall quality of life of the county. In addition, coordination with those communities that are not part of the Area Plan Commission, as well as those counties that surround it, is needed to ensure a well-managed pattern of growth in Hancock County.

THE COST OF GROWTH

As growth occurs, new businesses and residents require services and infrastructure from local government. In many cases, there is a significant disconnect between the cost of providing those services and the tax revenue generated by the new development. The County should seek ways to foster appropriate growth that doesn’t unfairly burden the County or local taxpayers. The county is limited by state law to a maximum increase in the levy each year, so finding an appropriate mix of land uses and an appropriate rate of growth are equally important.

ENVIRONMENT

Included in the discussion of where growth should occur is the notion that some areas of the county should not be developed. Natural features such as streams, wooded areas, wetlands, and floodplain areas function in the drainage system and provide valuable habitat for wildlife. In many cases, these features can also be a threat to development, particularly in flood-prone areas. New development should be sensitive to these features, and find creative ways of preserving or working around them. Further, as such areas are preserved, some may also function as recreational amenities for nearby residents.



The need to construct new schools, such as the one shown at left, is one of the many impacts that growth has on a community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The focus of attention for economic development in Hancock County is shifting away from traditional market sectors, such as large-scale manufacturing facilities. Similar to national trends, there is strong interest in emerging types of business ventures such as biotechnology, life sciences, and other high-tech operations. The county must seek a strategy that attracts these new businesses, while continuing to support the more traditional manufacturing base that has played a significant role in the county's economy over the years.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Several key considerations for the comprehensive plan can be derived from the set of issues outlined in this section. These key considerations are factors that influence all of the goals and policies contained in the ensuing chapters of the plan. These considerations are as follows:

- **Opportunity vs. Infrastructure:** It is important that all property owners be provided with the opportunity to sell and develop their land. The timing and extent of that development should be keyed on the availability of appropriate infrastructure and services to support it.
- **Property Rights & Property Values:** The comprehensive plan does not limit property values & development rights. Rather, it reflects current conditions and matches future growth with what is needed to support that growth. The opportunity to develop is provided, and will be limited only by the availability of infrastructure and services.
- **Quality of Life:** The plan must recognize that “quality of life” means different things to different people. New growth and existing development should be integrated effectively so that the values of county residents are reflected appropriately.
- **Costs of Growth:** The full impact of new growth must be considered, as the funding of infrastructure and services has a significant impact on county finances. Future growth patterns based on availability of appropriate infrastructure are key to limiting the burden to the county.

CHAPTER **2**

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

PART I: COMMUNITY GOALS



INTRODUCTION

This Natural Environment chapter addresses the natural features and systems found throughout Hancock County. The natural environment of Hancock County plays a significant role in determining development patterns. Particularly significant are rivers, streams and other drainage ways. It is important that the environmental systems at work in the county are recognized and accommodated during the development process.

This chapter is intended to provide a framework for addressing the county's environmental challenges. The goals and policies are designed to help the county balance the functional and aesthetic value of the natural environment with the impacts of growth. It focuses both on protecting persons and property and conserving the natural beauty of the county by appropriately managing development. The goals and policies are also intended to remain consistent with others found in the plan, as well as the needs of the larger regional environmental systems of which Hancock County is a part.

Low-lying areas, such as this one where a creek flows through a stand of trees and under a road, should be protected from development.



Protect and enhance the county's land-based natural resources, such as floodplains, wooded areas, riparian areas, and soils.

Policy 1 Preserve the county's natural features and habitats.

Many areas of the county contain significant environmental features that should be preserved from development. In many cases, development can be creatively designed to preserve these areas while still fulfilling the goals of the project. This approach should be encourage for new development in the county.

Policy 2 Protect the county's floodways and floodplains from development impacts.

Floodways and floodplains serve an important function in the effective drainage of water from land in the county. They cannot function efficiently if obstructions exist, impeding the natural flow of the water. The county must carefully manage growth in areas around these drainageways, and should seek opportunities to remove structures that may already be located in floodway and wetland areas.

Policy 3 Seek opportunities to establish regional detention facilities.

Throughout the county, drainage has become a major issue, and it is a key factor in every new development that is proposed. In some cases, a greater benefit would occur if multiple developments could connect to a single, regional drainage feature. The development of this type of facility should be explored in coordination with appropriate local and state agencies as well as private development.

Policy 4 Appropriately manage riparian areas around the county's drainageways.

Drainage problems are often caused by overgrown or obstructed drainage channels. Maintenance practices should strike a balance between providing a clear channel for drainage and selectively preserving desirable forested areas for habitat and erosion control purposes. Private property owners should be educated and encouraged to follow similar practices.

Policy 5 Protect the county's forested areas.

Despite the growth seen in recent years, there are still significant forested areas remaining in Hancock County. Preserving these areas can help to protect vital natural systems and habitats, as well as enhance the aesthetic value of the county. It is important that, as development occurs, the county's woodlands remain protected from growth.

See the Floodplain Management Profile on page 2-5 for more information.

See the Riparian Area Profile on page 2-4 for more information.

GOAL ONE: LAND (CONT.)

Action Step(s)

1 Improve Local Understanding of Drainage Maintenance

Make education material available that provides a practical understanding of best management practices for drainageways. It should provide information on proper techniques for keeping channels clear, as well as recommendations for appropriate trees and landscaping to plant along drainageways.

2 Maintain an Inventory of Natural Features

The County should create and maintain an inventory of significant environmental features. This includes those features that are most important for character and environmental quality. Such an inventory would be a component of the County's geographic information system, and could then be used by developers, the County, and the public as part of the development review process.

What is a Riparian Area?

Riparian areas are also known as streamside forests. They are the wooded areas along rivers and streams. These areas are a complex ecosystem vital to the protection of stream and river water quality. These areas include some of the richest varieties of plants and animals in most regions.

Why are Riparian Areas Important?

Land along waterways has significant ecological and aesthetic value that enhances the natural environment of a community. The presence of riparian areas also adds value to properties with water access, as they are often prime locations for development.

Many communities depend upon local rivers and streams for recreation, drinking water, and natural resource areas. The loss of riparian areas along such waterways is a major cause of decreases in water quality and loss of wildlife habitat.

How are Riparian Areas Identified?

Healthy riparian areas are typically composed of large trees, woody understory trees and shrubs, and smaller flowers, grasses, and groundcovers. Well maintained and managed riparian areas are able to influence the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the stream by:

- 1) Providing food, shelter and natural linkages for a wide variety of plant and animal communities.
- 2) Shading and cooling the stream to enhance aquatic habitats.
- 3) Filtering sediments and pollutants, preventing them from entering the stream or waterway.
- 4) Stabilizing river banks and reducing bank erosion.
- 5) Providing flood control.

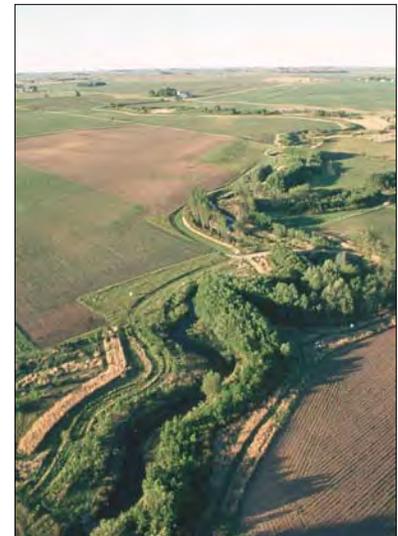
Who Regulates Riparian Areas?

In Indiana, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources has the authority to regulate riparian areas for water quality purposes. Local governments may regulate, to some extent, development or encroachment to riparian areas through planning and zoning controls.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed Conservation Standards for Riparian Forest Buffers (Code 391). These standards are site specific and will vary depending on the size of the waterway and floodplain. Most standards address an area ranging from 35 to 150 feet on either side of the stream. The ideal riparian area includes three zones for management in which development should be restricted. These zones, listed in sequence from the edge of the stream, are as follows:

- 1) Undisturbed Forest - This zone is adjacent to the stream and is ideally 15' in width. Removal of vegetation is not permitted.
- 2) Managed Forest - This zone is ideally 60' in width and harvesting of older vegetation is encouraged to support better filtering/removal of nutrients through younger, faster growing vegetation.
- 3) Runoff Control - This zone is ideally 20' and may be pastured, farmed for hay or mowed for recreational purposes.

A typical riparian forest along a stream surrounded by farmland.



Why Is Floodplain Management Important?

While many areas have flood problems, floodplain lands can be valuable community assets. The natural resources that are contained in these areas, as well as the natural functions of these resources, can contribute to the overall quality of life. When floodplain areas are left in or restored to a natural state, they can not only reduce the severity of flooding, but better handle stormwater runoff and help prevent pollution of the natural water system.

Floodplain or Floodway?

The floodway is the channel of a river or stream and those portions of the land adjoining the channel which are reasonably required to carry and discharge the peak flow of the regulatory (100-year) flood. The areas adjoining the channel which have been or may be covered by the regulatory flood is the floodway fringe. The floodplain includes both the floodway and the floodway fringe districts. Generally, the floodway should be kept clear of structures and other impediments to drainage flow. Floodway fringe areas may have limited development, but it should be carefully managed to ensure minimum impact on drainage and damage to structures.

Floodplain Management Practices

There are many steps that communities can take to manage their flood-prone areas in a way that maintains effective drainage and provides quality of life benefits. This includes:

Preventing Increases in Flood Losses

- 1) Establishing floodplain regulations that limit new construction in these areas.
- 2) Information and education programs for those who live in or near floodplain areas.

Reduce Flood Risk for Existing Development

- 1) Acquisition & Relocation programs for at-risk properties.
- 2) Participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- 3) Structural measures to improve drainage, such as channel alterations, land treatment measures, and on-site or regional detention systems.

Preserve & Restore Natural Floodplains

- 1) Wetland and riparian area restoration projects
- 2) Floodplain and wetland protection regulations
- 3) Develop floodplain areas with complimentary uses such as parks, nature preserves, or other low-impact recreation facilities.

Appropriate floodplain management practices will reduce the long-term cost to the community of clean-up and repair should a major flood event occur.

Protect and enhance the county's water-based natural resources, such as surface water, groundwater, and wetlands.

Policy 1 Support wellhead protection practices.

The county's water providers draw their water supply from various wells located throughout the county. Land use and development practices within wellhead protection areas should be carefully managed to prevent hazardous substances from entering the water supply. This includes not only industrial and commercial practices, but things like roadway design or the disposal of household chemicals.

Policy 2 Encourage high environmental standards for areas around the county's rivers and streams.

The county's waterways often become prime locations for pollutants and debris to enter the local water table – fouling its intended uses. These waterways also serve as habitats for a variety of plants and wildlife. It is important that these areas are protected so that they can continue to provide healthy functions in the county ecosystem.

Policy 3 Promote the protection of wetlands.

Like rivers and streams, wetlands also serve important habitat and drainage functions. Careful management of development around these sensitive environmental features is important to maintaining those functions. Close coordination with state and Federal authorities should be a component of this effort.

See the Wetlands Profile on page 2-7 for more information.

Action Step(s)

1 Establish wellhead protection measures in the zoning ordinance

Create a wellhead protection overlay district in the zoning ordinance. This overlay would establish standards for appropriate land use and development practices within designated zones around water supply wells.

2 Establish development standards that protect rivers and streams

Specific development standards that create a buffer area around rivers and streams should be added to the zoning ordinance. Such standards would help to protect the natural drainage and habitat functions of these areas, as well as add to the aesthetic value of nearby development.

3 Maintain natural drainage courses

It is important that naturally existing drainage courses are protected and maintained. This involves managing the impacts of development, as well as ensuring that improper dumping practices do not cause disruptions in natural drainage patterns.

4 Promote appropriate erosion control practices

Development practices can be a major contributor to erosion and drainage problems. Educational measures should be put in place to promote the use of proper erosion control practices on development sites. Standards for such practices have been adopted by the county, and should be reinforced with changes to the county's Zoning Ordinance.

What is a Wetland?

Wetlands are areas inundated or saturated by surface or ground water throughout the year. The presence of water at or near the surface is the dominant factor that determines soil characteristics as well as plant and animal communities.

Why are Wetlands Important?

- 1) Water Quality - Wetlands purify water by filtering and trapping sediment, chemicals, and excess nutrients before water enters other water bodies or groundwater.
- 2) Wildlife Habitat - Wetlands provide habitat for fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife which use these areas to breed, find food, and protect their young.
- 3) Flood Control - Wetlands reduce flood damages by storing and slowing floodwaters. Wetlands regulate water levels within a watershed.

How are Wetlands Identified?

The general location of wetland areas may be determined using the U.S. Geological Service’s (USGS) National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps. The specific identification of wetlands are typically made by an individual holding a “US Army Corps of Engineers Regulation 4 Jurisdictional Wetland Certification”. The exact boundaries of jurisdictional wetlands can be determined using all three of the following criteria:

- 1) Water Indicator - The area is inundated or saturated to the surface, by a single, continuous episode, for at least 5% of the growing season in most years.
- 2) Wetland Vegetation - The presence of plant species that are typically adapted for life in anaerobic soil conditions.
- 3) Hydric Soils - The presence of soil that is saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the root zone.

A typical wetland area.



Who Regulates Wetlands?

Wetlands along waterways are protected primarily by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), as well as state and local environmental agencies may also regulate wetlands.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Corps, and USFWS have a public policy of “no net loss of wetlands” requiring acre-for-acre replacement of wetlands either on-site or within the same watershed.

Promote the protection and enhancement of air quality in Hancock County.

Policy 1 Support pollution-minimizing forms of transportation.

One off-shoot of the continued suburban development in western Hancock County is the growth of automobile traffic, which in turn results in increased emissions. The county should support forms of transportation, such as bicycling or mass transit, that can reduce these emissions. This includes coordinating with the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization on their regional mass transit study (see page 7-11 for more information).

Policy 2 Encourage development patterns that minimize pollution emissions.

Development can be guided in ways that help to reduce the amount of pollution emitted into the air. Compact, mixed use development patterns reduce the number of vehicle trips as well as the length of many vehicle trips. Directing development to areas around established communities, rather than spread across the county, can achieve a similar effect.

Policy 3 Support air-quality education and initiatives.

The county should support local participation in air-quality improvement programs and initiatives such as ozone reduction days, regional transportation planning, ride-share and mass transit programs, and other innovative programs to reduce air pollution. It is important to education the public about the environmental and economic development impacts of being adjacent to a city, Indianapolis, that is a designated air-quality non-attainment area.

Action Step(s)

1 Require vehicular connectivity in the Zoning Ordinance

The zoning ordinance should contain measures that promote roadway connectivity between developments. This will make vehicle trip shorter and more efficient, resulting in lower emissions into the atmosphere.

2 Promote pedestrian connections in the Zoning Ordinance

Pedestrian connectivity should also be emphasized between developments as a part of the zoning ordinance. Making some trips possible and more convenient by means other than automobiles reduces the number of vehicles trips required.

3 Promote tree preservation

Trees are important not only for aesthetic character and quality, but they aid in the breakdown of certain pollutants in the air as well. The zoning ordinance should contain incentives that would encourage the protection and preservation of trees as a component of new development.

GOAL FOUR: RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Provide high-quality parks and recreation opportunities to county residents.

Policy 1 Seek partnerships for the development of parks and recreation facilities.

As the population of Hancock County grows, the demand for parks and recreation amenities will also increase. While it may not be feasible for the county to establish parks on its own, it may be beneficial to establish partnerships with the communities in the county to share the expense of developing and maintaining such facilities. Similar partnerships could also be pursued with schools, which typically provide some level of outdoor recreational facilities that could be convenient public resources.

Policy 2 Pursue opportunities to create dual-use facilities combining parks and drainage infrastructure.

Passive recreation areas are those that are left largely in their natural state, often incorporating large wooded areas or water features. In some cases, passive recreation areas can double as regional drainage facilities, serving both purposes effectively. Opportunities to create this type of combination should be explored, particularly in growing areas of the county.

Policy 3 Support the development of greenways trails by local communities and developers.

Greenways trails are gaining popularity as recreation amenities. Efforts are currently underway to create a trail along the abandoned Pennsy rail corridor that runs parallel to U.S. 40. While the county is not in a position to develop and manage a trail system, it can support efforts by other local communities to do so. In addition, developers should be encouraged to include trail systems within their developments as amenities for residents.

Many communities are developing recreational pathway systems. The Pennsy Trail, shown in the photo at left, is one such pathway that has been developed in Greenfield.



GOAL FOUR: RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES (CONT.)

Policy 4 Encourage the inclusion of parks and recreation facilities in new development.

Parks and recreation amenities can add to a community's quality of life and enhance the natural environment. New development should be encouraged to include such facilities, as should the individual communities within Hancock County. While the County is not in a position to establish its own parks system, it remains supportive of such amenities being integrated as new development occurs.

Action Step(s)

Establish open space provisions for subdivisions in the zoning and subdivision control ordinances

Create development standards requiring a minimum amount of open space to be reserved at part of new subdivisions. This open space could be used to create a common area for the development, or used as a route for an internal pathway system for residents.

CHAPTER 3

CHARACTER & IDENTITY

PART I: COMMUNITY GOALS



INTRODUCTION

This Character & Identity chapter focuses on identifying, protecting, and enhancing those features of Hancock County that make it a unique and desirable place to live. In a general sense, this includes rural agricultural areas, the small towns that exist throughout the county, as well as areas that are still developing. In a more specific sense, it includes the history and heritage of the county that can be found in things like the National Road (U.S. 40), and the James Whitcomb Riley heritage. All of these features have contributed over time to the character and identity that define Hancock County.

This chapter is intended to provide guidance for protecting historic and cultural features, creating attractive new development in growing areas, and enhancing the overall image of the community. This includes major transportation gateways, small towns, and rural agricultural areas. Overall, this chapter provides a foundation for carrying Hancock County's defining character and identity into the future.

The old farmhouse shown here is symbolic of the rural heritage and character of Hancock County.



HISTORY

One of the historic resources that defines Hancock County’s character is the National Road, which follows U.S. 40 through the county. The development of this road had an impact on the growth patterns and aesthetic characteristics of the areas it passed through, and still has such an influence today.



The 677-mile National Road was the first major road in the country to be built with Federal funds, and was one of the key routes linking the Midwest with the East Coast in the 19th century. It was first proposed by George Washington, funded by the Thomas Jefferson administration, and finally constructed from Richmond to Terre Haute between 1827 and 1839.

Washington’s original impetus for establishing the route was to make sure that a physical link was made to the growing western territories, ensuring that they would not turn to Spain or England. The road was originally referred to as the Cumberland Road, after the town in Maryland where it began. Eventually, as it and the country grew, it became known as the National Road.

CHARACTER INFLUENCES

The National Road is a source of many influences on the physical environment around it. The pattern of development around the road corridor and the aesthetic character of that development have both been impacted by the road. Some of these influences are described below:

- The juxtaposition of small towns against the rural, agricultural backdrop, and the experience of passing through these changing scenes.
- The many elements of historic architecture can be found from different eras of growth.
- The milestones that once lined the National Road to mark distances between cities and towns.
- The farmhouses and rural homesteads that symbolize the pioneering, agricultural areas of the county.



All of these elements combine to create the character of this important corridor. This character should be considered as future development occurs along the National Road.

PROFILE: JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

HIS LIFE

Perhaps the most prominent figure in the history of Hancock County is James Whitcomb Riley, known as “The Hoosier Poet” and “The Children’s Poet”. Riley was born in Greenfield in 1849. He grew up the son of a lawyer, and, after leaving school at age 16, he began to study law before pursuing his literary ambitions. His first professional position was as an editor for the Greenfield newspaper in 1873. During his time there, he published many of his own poetic works on the pages of the newspaper. In 1877, he became an editor at the *Anderson Democrat*.

While working at the *Democrat*, Riley was attempting to get his poems published in eastern periodicals, but without success. Frustrated, he wrote a poem in the style of Edgar Allan Poe, and convinced the editor of the *Kokomo Dispatch* to print it as a long lost work of Poe’s. Upon discovery of the hoax, Riley lost his job in Anderson. He managed to secure a position two years later with the Indianapolis Journal, and was successful in getting a collection of his work published in 1883.

By his death in 1916, he had written over 1,000 poems, and risen to fame as one of Indiana’s most beloved natives. His homes in both Greenfield and Indianapolis have been preserved and are attractions for tourists to this day.

HIS WORK

Much of Riley’s writing was influenced by nature, and his poems were filled with his observances of the natural world around him. He wrote many of his poems in the dialect of rural Indiana, and was said to be a “visionary” due to the dreamlike wanderings of his verse. His ability to reflect the simplicity and richness of life in rural Indiana in his poetry was a key factor in his popularity in the state.

Riley’s vision of the natural beauty of Indiana reflects what he found in Greenfield and Hancock County. Much of this beauty is still evident today, although some is threatened by growth and development. While the life and work of Riley are celebrated with an annual festival in Greenfield, it is important also to recognize the importance of the natural world that he valued so much.



CHARACTER INFLUENCES

Agriculture has been a defining characteristic of Hancock County for many generations. Not only has it remained an important component of the economy, but its aesthetic value has contributed to the character and identity of the area. Many of the elements of agricultural activities help to define Hancock County’s identity. Some of these elements are described below:

Agricultural Structures

Many old barns and similar structures dot the landscape of the county, contributing to its rural character. Records also indicate the presence of an octagonal barn in Brown Township and two round barns in Vernon Township, all significant historic structures.



Farm Houses

The variety of historic farm houses that are scattered throughout the county lend their own character. A number of different architectural styles are represented. There are several excellent examples of Italianate, Prairie-style, and Carpenter-Builder homes to be found.



Agricultural Equipment & Industry

Machinery and facilities also define the identity of agriculture. From tractors and combines to grain elevators, these elements are prominent features of the rural landscape. Many small, rural towns in the county grew up around grain elevators in the area.



Fields & Pastures

The acres of farm fields throughout the county may be the most obvious contributor to the agricultural character and identity. Whether corn, soybeans, or other crops, these fields provide a beautiful backdrop to the daily activities of county residents.



GOAL ONE: GATEWAYS

Enhance the attractiveness of the road corridors that serve as gateways to Hancock County.

Note: The following is a list of key gateways and corridors identified in Hancock County:

- 1) I-70
- 2) U.S. 40
- 3) State Road 67/U.S. 36
- 4) U.S. 52
- 5) State Road 9
- 6) State Road 234
- 7) Mt. Comfort/I-70 Interchange
- 8) Mt. Comfort Road

Policy 1 Recognize the significance of the county’s gateways.

As the “front door” to Hancock County, the major transportation corridors that traverse the county allow thousands of vehicles to visit every day. Most of the time, these entrances and roadways provide the only impression that people have of Hancock County. Special attention should be given to design in these areas so that they can project an attractive image of the county.

Policy 2 Provide special protection for the National Road Corridor.

The National Road (U.S. 40) is not only one of the key gateways to Hancock County, but also a major national historic resource. It is important to recognize and protect this heritage as growth continues in the county. The National Road should continue to be a functional and efficient transportation resource while at the same time remaining an attractive part of the community’s heritage.

Policy 3 Support collaboration in efforts to improve gateways & corridors.

The major transportation routes passing through the county are, for the most part, state roads. In addition, they go through not only Hancock County, but many of the cities and towns within the county. It is thus important that all of these jurisdictions coordinate together on the issue of creating and maintaining attractive gateways and corridors.

Action Step(s)

1 Revise the Corridor Overlay Zoning District.

The county’s existing Corridor Overlay District should be reviewed and updated to reflect the level of design quality that the county seeks for its important gateways and entry corridors. Special consideration should be given to the National Road, possibly to the extent of creating special overlay just for this road. Design standards should include such components as building materials, site design, landscaping, and signage.

2 Develop entrance plans for key gateways to the county.

Some of the key gateways to Hancock County should be studied in more detail to ensure that their unique issues and characteristics are addressed. This includes not only the areas where the roadways cross in to the county, but locations like the Mt. Comfort interchange with I-70, where many travelers first access the county. These small area plans should consider issues such as welcoming signage, access management for development, landscaping, and the design of development around the gateways.

Encourage new development that is attractive and complimentary to Hancock County’s character.

Policy 1 Recognize and promote the county’s rural and small town character.

As profiled earlier in the chapter, many elements of the county’s history and heritage have combined to create its special character. New development that is consistent with these values should be promoted. Elements such as the county’s rural environment and the unique development style of the small towns can all influence the form of new development.

Policy 2 Discourage “threats” to the county’s character.

The county should discourage patterns of land use and development that threaten those elements that define Hancock County’s character. This includes avoiding the continuation of development patterns seen on the east side of Indianapolis, particularly the lack of access control, inconsistent design, and “leapfrogging” of commercial development.

Policy 3 Promote attractive commercial development.

New commercial development should create an inviting and attractive destination for users. Consideration should be given to pedestrian accessibility, appropriate landscaping, efficient traffic circulation, signage, and the use of unique or traditional architecture.

Policy 4 Lead by example.

The development of public facilities should be used as an opportunity to provide an example for design that enhances the character of the county. This includes not only public buildings, but the amenities that are provided when roads are constructed or expanded. These are opportunities to set the tone for the quality that is desired from private development.

Policy 5 Encourage the preservation of the county’s historic and cultural features.

The county should work to preserve the many historic and cultural features that contribute to its character. This could occur through recognition and education programs, including the creation of a program of educational signs posted at key historic sites and structures.

GOAL THREE: RURAL COMMUNITIES

Protect the unique character of the county's many unincorporated rural communities.

Policy 1 Support unincorporated rural communities with appropriate zoning regulations.

Many of the county's rural communities are still viable centers of population, providing a small-town living experience to their residents. The county's land use and zoning designations should support the continuation of the traditional growth patterns in these communities and distinguish them from new "suburban" development.

Policy 2 Provide assistance to rural communities in connecting to utilities services.

Many rural communities in Hancock County are without access to sewer and water services. Eventually, this lack of service will become a health risk to the residents of the community. The county should work to help these communities gain access to utilities so that they can be safe living environments. This could include conducting feasibility studies as well as helping to secure grants to fund infrastructure installation.

Policy 3 Seek out alternative methods of utility service provision for rural communities.

In some cases, Rural Communities which lack utilities services are too far away from existing providers to be connected easily. New alternatives, such as constructed wetlands or package treatment plants, may be more feasible choices. It is important that communities coordinate with the County Board of Health before the implementation of any alternatives.

Support the ability of agricultural areas to remain in farming use.

Policy 1 Recognize agriculture as a land use.

Agriculture should be considered a land use in the same sense as residential, commercial, or industrial uses. It must be recognized that farmland represents an activity to be continued, not just yet undeveloped property. Appropriate measures should be maintained to support the continued viability of farming.

Policy 2 Support compact development

In order for farming to continue, significant tracts of undeveloped land must remain available. This can be achieved through directing development to areas immediately adjacent to existing cities and towns in the county. Compact development patterns such as this allow farming to continue relatively unimpeded by new growth.

Policy 3 Provide opportunities for minor subdivisions in agricultural areas.

Land owners should be afforded the opportunity to divide a limited number of lots to sell as a way of keeping their operations going. This should be differentiated from the creation of residential subdivisions, particularly in the need to provide a certain level of infrastructure. Provisions for subdivisions of this nature could be made in the county's zoning and subdivision control ordinances.

Action Step(s)

Support cluster subdivision design for rural residential development.

Small subdivisions in rural areas of the county should be carefully designed to incorporate natural features and minimize their disruption of farming activities. Cluster subdivision design allows lots to be arranged in small clusters, providing sizable pieces of remaining land that can be preserved or farmed as desired. This raises the values of the home sites as well as protects farming activities in rural areas.

CHAPTER **4**

LAND USE

PART I: COMMUNITY GOALS



INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the comprehensive plan focuses primarily on the accommodation of the diverse land uses in the county. Fostering an appropriate balance of land uses is a challenging prospect for any community. Hancock County, with its mix of rural areas, small towns, and growing suburban communities, is no different. Each of these areas has unique land use characteristics that must be integrated in a way that maintains a high quality of life for all county residents.

It is the intent of this chapter to provide for the orderly, responsible use and development of land in Hancock County consistent with the vision and principles of this plan. The goals and policies of the Land Use chapter are designed to create a balanced land use pattern that best serves the needs of the community. They are also meant to compliment related policies in the plan, particularly those pertaining to growth management and transportation. The guidance provided in this chapter will help the county achieve a land use pattern that supports the high quality of life desired by its residents.

The picture at right shows one of the many recent residential developments on the west side of Hancock County.



Provide a balanced mixture of residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, and agricultural land uses in the county.

Policy 1 Recognize the diverse land use and development needs of the county and plan for them appropriately.

The Future Land Use Plan should reflect the characteristics of the development pressures and infrastructure capacities in each part of the county. The growth pressures and infrastructure capacities that exist on the west side of the county are different than those on the east side. Future development of all land uses should be guided in a way that addresses these characteristics.

Policy 2 Consider the Future Land Use Plan in all community land use decision-making processes.

The Future Land Use Plan has been created to maintain an appropriate balance of land uses to meet the county's future needs. That plan should be consulted whenever a land use change is proposed to ensure that the proposed change maintains the balance that has been established. Careful consideration must be taken before a use that deviates from the plan is approved.

Policy 3 Ensure that uses around the Mt. Comfort Airport are compatible with airport operation.

If the Mt. Comfort Airport is to remain a viable resource for economic development purposes, it is important that compatible land uses are located around it. This means that land development should be guided such that it protects the flight paths for airplanes using the facility. In addition, uses which benefit from access to the airport should be directed to locate in its vicinity, while incompatible uses (such as residential areas) should be kept away.

Note: The County Dynamics section in Chapter 1 (page 1-5) provides an overview of the differing characteristics and needs of the east and west sides of Hancock County.

Note: It is important to consider not only the type of growth desired, but the rate at which that growth occurs. It should happen at a rate that can be served by appropriate infrastructure and that meets the needs of the market.

GOAL ONE: **BALANCE** (CONT.)

Policy 4 Encourage appropriate growth of commercial and industrial uses to balance the county's tax base.

In order to ease the tax burden on the county's homeowners, new sources of tax revenue must be sought. The primary focus of this search is commercial and industrial development. This type of growth can help to offset the costs for services required by continued residential development in the county. This new growth should be consistent with the provisions of the Future Land Use Plan (see Chapter 6).

Policy 5 Ensure the availability of commercial and industrial sites at key locations.

Certain areas of the county can provide key locational advantages for commercial and industrial development. These areas should be identified and set aside so that they are not lost to other uses, particularly residential development. More specifically, areas near the airport and areas with access to the interchange and other arterial roadways are important candidates for such development.

Action Step(s)

1 Evaluate the financial relationship between land use, growth, and infrastructure & services.

It is important to understand the tax impacts of growth in various land use categories, as well as the cost for providing infrastructure and services to that growth. The county should study this relationship to determine the best mix of land uses to sustain a balanced tax base as well as support adequate infrastructure and services. This should be accomplished through the creation of a financial model of the county's tax structure that could be used to evaluate the impact of proposed developments.

2 Regularly update the Future Land Use Plan Map (Chapter 6)

In order to maintain an appropriate balance of land uses in the county, the Future Land Use Map must be regularly revised to reflect changes over time. On an annual basis, the map should be reviewed for changes that may be necessary to reflect recent development patterns. If necessary, the map should be updated to ensure that it continues to meet the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Promote a compact pattern of growth and development in Hancock County.

Policy 1 Prioritize the development of areas adjacent to cities and towns.

Existing cities and towns are best able to serve the infrastructure and service needs of new development. Further, most of the employment, shopping, and recreation resources that residents seek are in these incorporated areas. Development should be directed to these areas first, before more outlying areas are developed.

Policy 2 Support the vitality of existing town centers and downtowns.

While growth will continue in unincorporated areas of Hancock County, it should not occur at the expense of the small towns. In particular, the impact that commercial development in the county has on the viability of the central business districts of these towns must be recognized. A pattern of commercial development that balances the needs of existing town centers with those of growing areas in the county should be established.

Policy 3 Recognize the conceptual challenges of compact development.

It is important to understand that, while compact development patterns provide community benefits, there are inherent challenges to achieving them. These challenges include concerns for property rights, concerns about excessive government involvement, perceived limitations on personal freedoms, and market forces. These concerns should be seen as an opportunity to continue the evolution of planned growth policies through public debate, local consensus building, and learned best practices from other communities.

Policy 4 Support the creation of pedestrian linkages between developments.

One of the advantages of a compact development pattern is the ability to create pedestrian linkages between residential areas and commercial, office, and recreational destinations. These linkages should be supported and encouraged to help reduce the number of trips that must be accomplished by vehicles, ultimately easing traffic volumes on county roads.

Note: In Chapter 6, Land Use Plan, several residential land use designations have been established. Associated with each designation are criteria that help to determine the appropriate location for development of that type. Please refer to that chapter for further details on these criteria.

GOAL THREE: HOUSING DIVERSITY

Provide a variety of housing types, densities, and price ranges in the county.

Policy 1 Support the development of a range of housing densities.

The housing market in the county should not be dominated by one particular style or density of housing. At the same time, some areas of the county are better suited to support certain densities of residential development. A range of densities should be provided, with the highest densities occurring in areas best suited to serve them with infrastructure and services.

Policy 2 Encourage high-quality design and construction for all residential development.

From small “starter” homes to larger custom homes, all residents are seeking high-quality places to live. Regardless of the type, density or price range of a residential development, it should be of high quality in both design and construction. High quality housing options should be available to persons and families of all income levels in Hancock County.

Policy 3 Encourage the development of alternative housing styles.

Hancock County’s residential development largely consists of single-family homes. Alternative styles of development, such as condominiums or townhomes, can provide added options for those seeking home-ownership. These housing styles also lend themselves to higher-density, mixed use development as envisioned in the Future Land Use Plan.

Encourage high-quality commercial growth at appropriate locations within the county.

Policy 1 Concentrate commercial development in centers of activity at key intersections.

As residential growth continues, more commercial development will be needed to serve it. Commercial development should be concentrated in planned centers of activity at major roadway intersections. Guiding commercial development in this way will better manage traffic, raise the quality of site design, and provide a positive alternative to the commercial growth pattern that is currently occurring on the east side of Indianapolis.

Policy 2 Promote high quality design for commercial development.

Commercial development in Hancock County need not detract from the livability of the community. Commercial development should be well designed and thoughtfully planned to provide attractive destinations for shopping and recreation. Design issues that should be emphasized include convenient pedestrian and vehicle circulation, ample landscaping, attractive signage, and quality building materials.

Policy 3 Provide for appropriate scales of commercial development in different areas of the county.

Commercial development should be scaled appropriately as it relates to the level of residential development around it and the market it is intended to serve. The designations of the Future Land Use Plan should provide for multiple scales of commercial development to address this issue. This will allow for context-appropriate design of such facilities.

Action Step(s)

Create improved development standards for commercial areas.

Development standards for commercial areas should be revised in the zoning ordinance to establish a higher level of design quality. Commercial areas should be unique, attractive destinations that respect the values and expectations of Hancock County.

GOAL FIVE: EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

Support the development of a variety of new employers in Hancock County.

Policy 1 Focus economic development efforts on providing a balanced variety of economic opportunities.

As the national and local economies change, it is important to seek an assortment of new employers for the community. The county should seek businesses from emerging markets such as the high-tech, research and development, and life sciences fields while also providing opportunities for more traditional manufacturing businesses.

Policy 2 **Preserve adequate land in the county to accommodate development by new employers.**

The county is currently experiencing growth in residential and commercial areas. It is important that adequate areas of land are designated for business and industrial development so that potential employers can be directed to appropriate sites. These sites should have access to appropriate infrastructure, most notably transportation connections and telecommunications facilities (i.e. fiber optics).

Policy 3 **Encourage environmental sensitivity in the design and development of industrial facilities.**

Part of the attraction of locating in Hancock County is the local environmental setting. It is important that businesses choosing to develop sites in Hancock County are sensitive to the impact that their facilities may have on the environment. These new employers can become partners in the preservation of Hancock County's natural features for future generations.

Policy 4 **Promote county development assets such as I-70 interchanges, the Mt. Comfort Airport, active railroads, and regional highway access.**

Hancock County has many assets that should be promoted in an effort to encourage more commercial and industrial growth in appropriate areas. This includes such things as the Mt. Comfort Airport and convenient access to multiple major highway routes. These resources can play a key role in future business development efforts if they are adequately promoted.

Action Step(s)

1 Explore opportunities for establishing a Certified Technology Park in Hancock County.

The State Department of Commerce has developed a Certified Technology Park program to help build partnerships and provide funding for the development of high-tech employers in local communities. Hancock County should explore the possibility of establishing such a facility in the county as a resource to help attract the development of major employers. Potential sites for a Certified Technology Park should be identified and development partnerships established.

2 Maintain and strengthen the County’s relationship with the Eli Lilly Corporation.

The location of the Lilly Corporation facilities in Hancock County provides significant benefits to the community. Not only are employment opportunities provided, but the company also lends support to many community initiatives. Reinforcing this relationship will ensure that it continues to pay dividends for the county.

3 Use the county’s quality of life as a marketing tool to recruit new employers to the community.

In recent years, the quality of life that a community has to offer has become a major factor in the location decisions of corporations. Hancock County has many elements that could be used to recruit these businesses. A marketing strategy that emphasizes the area’s character, transportation accessibility, quality schools, recreation opportunities, and other advantages would be beneficial.

Please refer to the Certified Technology Parks profile on page 4-10 for more detail on these unique resources.

Note: One way the county has worked with Lilly recently is the closure of certain road segments to allow Lilly to plan for the development of its properties as a whole.



The Mount Comfort Airport is one of several assets the County can leverage in its economic development efforts.

More information on Certified Technology Parks can be found on the Indiana Department of Commerce website at:

www.in.gov/doc/businesses/CertResearchPark_index.htm

One of the most recently established Certified Technology Parks in Indiana is Intelliplex, located in Shelby County. More information on this park can be found on the web at:

www.Intelliplex.org

PROFILE: CERTIFIED TECHNOLOGY PARKS

What is a Certified Technology Park?

Certified Technology Parks are a concept created through an act of the Indiana General Assembly in 2002. This new law, found in Indiana Code 36-7-32, encourages the location of high-technology businesses within areas identified by local redevelopment commissions. These areas are generally designed as planned business parks that can host multiple complimentary high-tech companies. Communities are provided with a number of tools to help bring in high-technology companies that enhance the employment base.

How are Certified Technology Parks Established?

Cities, towns, and counties that have a Redevelopment Commission may be eligible to designate an area as a Certified Technology Park, a process that begins with the submission of an application to the Indiana Department of Commerce. A firm commitment must be demonstrated from at least one business primarily engaged in a high technology activity creating a significant number of jobs. One or more of the following criteria must also be met:

- 1) Significant support from an institution of higher learning or a private research-based institute located within or near the proposed park is demonstrated;
- 2) A significant commitment by the institution of higher learning or private research-based institute to the commercialization of the research produced at the proposed park;
- 3) A demonstration that the proposed park will be developed to take advantage of unique characteristics and specialties offered by the public and private resources available in the area of the park;
- 4) The existence of, or proposed development of, a business incubator within the proposed park;
- 5) A business plan for the proposed park that identifies its objectives in a clearly focused and measurable fashion; and/or
- 6) Sufficiently demonstrated assurance that the proposed park will be developed to principally contain property that is used for a high-technology activity or a business incubator.

What are the Benefits of Certified Technology Parks?

There are a variety of benefits to be accrued by communities that establish Certified Technology Parks. These benefits include:

- 1) **Certified Technology Park Fund:** A special fund can be created to capture certain taxes generated by the businesses within the certified park. This money can be used for things like improvements to public infrastructure or facilities, operation of public facilities, or repayment on financing used for development of the park.
- 2) **Tax Credits:** The Redevelopment Commission may adopt a resolution that establishes a property tax credit for each taxpayer located within the Certified Technology Park.
- 3) **Technology Development Grant Fund:** This fund is available to provide assistance to Certified Technology Parks for capital expenditures and operational expenses. Funding may be awarded in an amount up to \$2 million for leasing, construction or the purchase of capital assets located within the park, and \$2 million for operating expenses.

CHAPTER 5

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

PART I: COMMUNITY GOALS

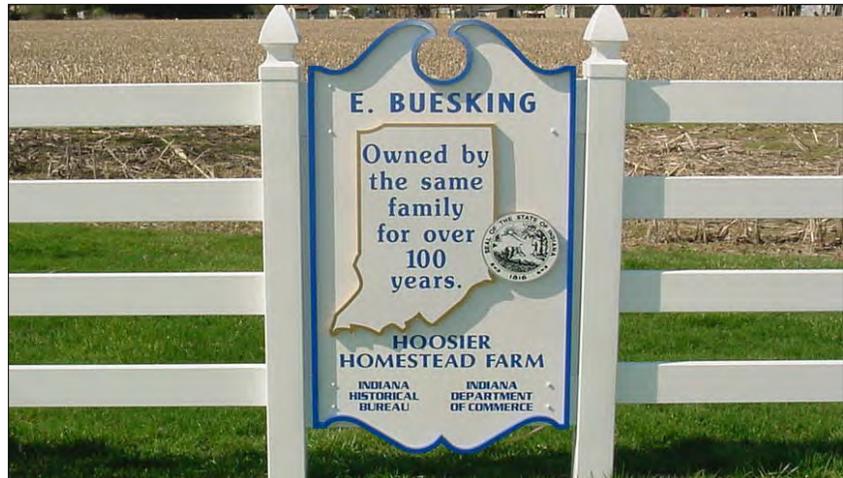


INTRODUCTION

This Growth Management chapter of the comprehensive plan focuses primarily on ways that the county can manage the impacts of growth in a way that maintains and enhances its quality of life. The on-going growth of Hancock County is bringing more people, traffic, and demand for vital services and infrastructure. The county faces the challenge of accommodating growth and providing services and infrastructure both efficiently and effectively. Not only must growth be guided in ways that complement infrastructure availability, but that infrastructure must be appropriately managed to maintain an adequate level of service.

This chapter is intended to provide a framework for managing the impacts of growth over time. While the land use, environment, and character chapters all speak to individual components of growth, this chapter brings them together under a strategy for managing growth over the long term. This includes minimizing the cost of growth to county residents, while maximizing the impact of public investments in infrastructure and services. It is this balance that the following goals and policies are intended to achieve.

Long-time family farms, such as the one noted in the picture at right, are beginning to feel the impacts of nearby growth.



Encourage development to locate in areas with adequate infrastructure and services.

Policy 1 Discourage development in areas where infrastructure is not available to serve it.

Development should be directed to areas that can adequately support it with appropriate services and infrastructure. This is important not only for sewer and water, but for other services like police, fire, and schools. The highest residential densities should occur adjacent to cities and towns and along major transportation corridors, with commercial and industrial uses of appropriate scales included.

Policy 2 Provide land owners the opportunity to develop their land as long as appropriate infrastructure is available.

One of the key issues that helps to set the context for this plan is the recognition of property rights. The county's growth management policies should balance development patterns with the protection of these rights. Growth patterns that reflect infrastructure availability are achievable in the context of property rights protection.

Policy 3 Support continued farming activities.

Farming as a land use has become threatened by continued residential development in some areas of Hancock County. While the county may not enact a formal farmland preservation program, there are other steps it can take to promote continued farming. The county should work to provide education, information, and support for those who choose to practice farmland preservation.

Note: The Farming Protection Profile on page 5-9 describes some tools that could be used to protect farming operations in Hancock County.

GOAL TWO: ADEQUATE FACILITIES & SERVICES

Provide infrastructure and services that support planned future growth.

Policy 1 Ensure adequate infrastructure & services capacity.

The Future Land Use Plan designates the future pattern of growth and development in Hancock County. The county should tailor its infrastructure and services investments to support the Future Land Use Plan. In this way, areas expected to grow will be provided with the infrastructure support they need in a timely and efficient way.

Policy 2 Discourage inconsistent development.

Development that is inconsistent with the Future Land Use Plan should be discouraged. This type of development may negatively impact those areas where growth is encouraged, and could also unnecessarily redirect the county's investments in infrastructure and services.

Policy 3 Support the installation of fiber optic infrastructure.

Fiber optic lines are key assets in terms of marketing the county to high-tech businesses. Efforts to install this infrastructure in strategic locations should be supported in order to make the county a viable option for this type of employer.

Policy 4 Seek alternative infrastructure financing sources.

The county should look for new and creative ways to fund necessary infrastructure improvements. With the uncertainty of the modern economy, it makes sense to be prepared to use alternative funding methods. These could come in the form of grants, taxing districts, or even impact fees charged to new development.

Note: The Impact Fees Profile on page 5-5 describes the methodology for creating impact fees to fund infrastructure improvements.

Action Step(s)

Prepare for the impacts of constructing County Fairground facilities at a new location.

The creation of a new County Fairground has been a topic of discussion in the community. While no final decision on a location or source of funding has been made, it is important that the county prepare for the land use and infrastructure impacts that such a facility would have. If utilities are extended from Greenfield to a new facility outside the city, this could spur additional development of other uses in the area. The traffic impacts of a new fairground, as well as ancillary development in its vicinity, may necessitate road upgrades. These and other factors must be considered as this project continues to move forward.

Development in Hancock County has an ever-increasing impact on the safety and efficiency of the county’s roads. In order to make the road improvements required to accommodate new growth, a source of financing is required. Indiana State Law provides the opportunity for communities to enact Impact Fees on new development to fund infrastructure improvements.

What is an Impact Fee?

An Impact Fee is a fee charged to a developer based on the impact that a development will have on the community. The fees are charged to any development that would require a building permit, whether it is a grocery store or a single family home. If a community wished to fund transportation improvements, it would charge an impact fee for each new vehicle trip that a development adds to the roadway. For example, if a single family home creates 10 new vehicle trips, the per trip fee would be multiplied by 10 to arrive at the total impact fee. The fees collected are then reserved in a special account that is later used to fund the desired improvements.

How Are Impact Fees Established?

The Indiana State Code (IC 36-7-4-1300 Series) defines a detailed process that a community must follow in order to enact impact fees. A general summary of this process is as follows:

- **Impact Zone:** The community must first designate an Impact Zone, the geographic area where the Impact Fee will be assessed to new development.
- **Zone Improvement Plan:** Next, a Zone Improvement Plan must be prepared. This plan specifies the infrastructure improvements that will be made within the Impact Zone with the funds generated by the Impact Fee. The Zone Improvement Plan is then adopted as a component of the community’s Comprehensive Plan.
- **Impact Fee Ordinance:** Finally, an Impact Fee Ordinance must be prepared. This ordinance specifies the exact Impact Fees that will be charged to development. The fees are calculated based on the cost of the improvements that are specified in the Zone Improvement Plan. The Impact Fee Ordinance is then adopted as a component of the Zoning Ordinance.

State law provides specific requirements and standards for the definition of Impact Zones and the content of Zone Improvement Plans and Impact Fee Ordinances.

GOAL THREE: COORDINATION & COMMUNICATION

Work with local and regional stakeholders to coordinate future growth plans.

Policy 1 Maintain working relationships with the cities and towns that are not members of the Area Plan Commission.

All of the communities within Hancock County should work together to protect and enhance the county's quality of life. Coordination between the plans and ordinances of the various communities will provide more seamless transitions between them. In order to do so, the county must maintain an awareness of the policies and plans of the communities that aren't included in the Area Plan Commission.

Policy 2 Maintain communication with the planning authorities of the counties that border Hancock County.

While internal coordination will reap benefits, the county should also remain abreast of the growth and development policies of the counties that border Hancock County. Each county has unique growth issues as well as unique planning solutions to address them. Particularly in the growing western portion of the county, it is important to coordinate development policies at the county's edges.

Policy 3 Coordinate future growth plans with the county's school districts.

Due to the impact that residential growth has on school facilities, the county's school districts need to remain informed about planned growth patterns so that they may program their facilities needs accordingly. This coordination would also allow the county to be prepared for the impact that new school facilities can have on public infrastructure and services.

Policy 4 Enhance coordination between the county and utilities service providers.

There are often times when a community's future growth plans do not match with those of private or public utilities service providers. Coordination with these providers, both public and private, would help to reduce such conflicts, and would help make the development process in the county more predictable. This coordination could take the form of monthly or quarterly meetings with the utilities operators to discuss future plans.

Action Step(s)

Establish liaisons with other plan commissions in Hancock County.

Members of the Area Plan Commission could be designated to coordinate with each of the cities and towns in the county that have their own plan commission. Coordination could mean attending other meetings of the community Plan Commissions or having regular communication with their planning staff about growth and development issues.

Develop a county roadway system that is safe, efficient, and serves future land use patterns.

Policy 1 Develop an arterial roadway system that addresses the county’s future needs.

The traffic growth resulting from the county’s population increases is noticeable on many roadways. The county should develop an effective hierarchy of roadways to serve this new development in the future, paying special attention to the growth patterns established by the Future Land Use Plan.

Policy 1 Example: The establishment of a “frontage road” system along I-70 would better serve local traffic and reduce pressure on the highway. This could be accomplished by improving County Roads 200 North and 300 North, which already parallel I-70.

Policy 2 Reserve adequate rights-of-way for new or improved county roads.

One of the most important components of constructing new or upgraded roads is providing the land needed for the project. With a well planned and designed Thoroughfare Plan, the county will be able to reserve adequate rights-of-way as development occurs, setting it aside for future upgrades. This is a process that will save the county money in the long term, as less right-of-way will need to be purchased before road projects can begin.

Policy 3 Develop a strategy for the long-term upgrade of selective county roads.

While many county roads are likely in need of upgrade due to their age or an increase in traffic volume, it is not physically or financially feasible to undertake these upgrades all at once. The county must have a long term strategy for upgrading roads that meets traffic demands as well as the demands of limited funding resources. This strategy should reflect on-going growth patterns as well as the hierarchy established by the Thoroughfare Plan.

Policy 4 Seek opportunities to create more effective north-south transportation routes in the county.

Most of the major road corridors in Hancock County run east to west, while there is a lack of efficient routes for travelling north and south. It will become more important as growth continues to seek opportunities to upgrade existing roads and make new connections. The connectivity of the transportation system in the county needs to be balanced in all directions.

Policy 4 Example: As the Mt. Comfort Road corridor continues to experience more development, alternative north-south routes providing access to U.S. 40 and I-70 will be needed.

Action Step(s)

Develop access control standards.

In heavily developed commercial areas, the multitude of driveways creates conflicts between through traffic and those trying to enter or exit business establishments. Likewise, a proliferation of residential driveways on more rural county roads causes similar safety hazards. The development of standards that limit driveway access to roads and encourage sharing of access points would greatly increase the safety and efficiency of the county’s transportation system.

GOAL FIVE: ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

Explore opportunities to enhance infrastructure for alternative transportation such as bicycling, walking, and transit.

Policy 1 Encourage site design practices that support bicycle and pedestrian travel.

The design of development can have a major impact on accessibility for bicyclists and pedestrians. The provision of sidewalks in developments is a basic standard that can greatly enhance walkability. In residential areas, providing multiple roadway connections between subdivisions can make them more accessible to all forms of travel.

Policy 2 Provide support for potential future stops along the proposed Indianapolis regional transit system.

Indianapolis is currently studying the feasibility of establishing a regional mass transit system that could potentially have lines extended into Hancock County. If transit stops are designated in the county, there should be consideration given to appropriate land uses and development patterns around them. This includes provisions for commercial development, high-density residential development, and adequate parking for transit riders.

Action Step(s)

1 Address bicycle & pedestrian facilities in the zoning ordinance.

Certain zoning ordinance measures can help to create a built environment that is supportive of bicyclists and pedestrians. This includes the inclusion of sidewalks as well as bicycle parking facilities in new development. In addition, provisions that establish pathways within and between new residential developments are key in this effort.

2 Participate in the Regional Mass Transit study process.

Recognizing the impact that a regional mass transit system could have, it is important that the county maintain a level of awareness and involvement with the transit study process. As a member of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization, Hancock County is in a position to effectively coordinate the results of the study with local land use and development issues.

Farming has been an active part of the economy and a way of life in Hancock County for generations. As development occurs, farming operations are threatened by the impacts of growth. Hancock County farmers should be given every opportunity to keep their operations viable. This profile summarizes a number of techniques that could be considered as the county works to preserve farming.

Agricultural Conservation Easements

Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements programs pay property owners to protect their land from development. The property owner sells or donates the conservation easement to a government entity or private organization, which usually pays the owner the difference between the value of the land as agriculture and the value of its “highest and best use”- typically residential or commercial. The land can continue to be farmed, and the land owners reaps a profit as if the land had been developed. Programs of this nature are typically enabled through state legislation that allows local governments to devise the specific details of the program that are appropriate for their community.

Right-to-Farm Ordinances

Most states, including Indiana, have enacted some form of right-to-farm ordinances. Hancock County is one of many communities that have adopted such ordinances on the local level. These ordinances establish the policy that agriculture is a valuable component of the local economy, and as such, will be given certain protections. Often, a right-to-farm ordinance will require that language be added to the deeds of rural properties that makes potential buyers aware of the noise, dust, odors, and other impacts of nearby farming operations. Some also provide a level of protection to farmers from nuisance lawsuits. Generally, these ordinances are a way of educating residents about the importance of farming, and letting the farming community know that they are supported.

Agricultural Protection Zoning

Agricultural protection zoning creates zoning districts that specifically identify agriculture as the primary allowed use. Such ordinances would protect farming operations and discourage other land uses from occurring in these areas. These ordinances also may address the density of residential development in rural areas, advocating much lower residential densities. This tool often results in a reduction of conflicts between farmers and non-farming neighbors, and can help to keep enough contiguous land in farming so that the operation remains viable.

Cluster Subdivision Design

Local zoning ordinances could be structured to promote cluster subdivision design for rural subdivisions. This design concept allows houses to be grouped close together on small lots to protect open land. The remaining portion of the parcel that is not developed is typically held in a conservation easement. This land can be rented to farmers for continued agricultural use. This tool is most successful when the remainder land is of a size large enough to be economically productive, or when that land is used as a buffer between the residential area and existing agricultural operations.

For more resources on this topic, visit the following websites:

The American Farmland Trust
www.farmland.org

The Farmland Information Center
www.farmlandinfo.org

The Natural Resources Conservation Service
www.nrcs.usda.gov

Indiana Agricultural Statistics Service
www.nass.usda.gov/in/

Hancock County, like other communities, is experiencing challenges in meeting the needs of new growth, particularly in the area of public infrastructure and services. As new residents move to the area, demand grows for infrastructure like roads and sewers, as well as for services like police and fire protection. As it reviews proposals for new developments, the county should investigate the impact of the proposed development on the county's ability to provide the needed infrastructure and services. Fiscal Impact Analysis offers one method of making that assessment.

What is Fiscal Impact Analysis?

Fiscal Impact Analysis is a tool that can be used to determine the fiscal impact that a proposed development will have on the local government's ability to provide needed infrastructure and services to that development. It compares the tax revenue generated by the proposed development with the services it will require, and the resulting public cost of providing those services. In this way, the local government can gauge whether the proposed development would, in effect, pay for itself, or if it would create a fiscal strain on the community.

As an example, suppose a development of 100 homes was to be proposed. The Fiscal Impact Analysis would first estimate the revenue that would be generated by those homes. Next, based on desired levels of service, an estimate of the cost of providing services to these new homes would be generated. If the revenue generated exceeds the cost of services, the development provides a net benefit. If the cost exceeds the revenue, the development does not, in a fiscal sense, support itself.

How is a Fiscal Impact Analysis Created?

It is important to ensure that any Fiscal Analysis is based on the most recent, accurate data possible to ensure that it truly represents the fiscal situation of the community. In general, the following steps are key in performing Fiscal Impact Analysis:

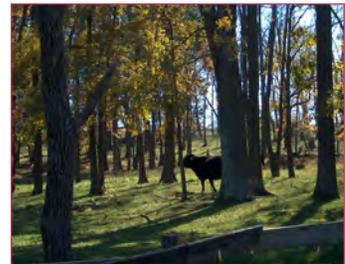
- **Operating Costs:** An estimate of the cost of services provided by the local government must be prepared. This is done by reviewing the operating budget of each government agency to determine what services they provide and the cost of providing them. This can be done on a more detailed level by determining the cost of providing services to different land use types. The result is a series of multipliers that can represent the per acre or per unit cost of providing each community service.
- **Capital Revenues:** On the other side of the equation, an estimate of the revenues that the community would collect from the proposed development would be calculated. This would take into account all local taxing districts, including property taxes as well as such things as school, library, or parks district taxes.

As noted previously, the cost and revenue numbers would be compared to assess the fiscal impact of the development. It should be noted that this is an estimate only, and that it should not be used as the sole decision-making tool when a land use proposal is evaluated. It can, however, prove to be an enlightening process for local officials and the public if implemented effectively.

CHAPTER **6**

LAND USE PLAN

PART II: IMPLEMENTATION



INTRODUCTION

The Land Use Plan describes the primary method of implementing the land use and growth related goals of Hancock County. The following pages detail the future land uses that are planned for the various areas of the County. Each land use designation has a description that includes the types of uses envisioned for those areas, relationships between the land use designations, infrastructure that may be required to support the land uses, as well as a discussion of design features appropriate to each designation. In addition, each land use designation has been assigned a set of criteria that guide its location in the County.

Prior to the land use descriptions, there is a map that shows the areas within Hancock County where each land use would be appropriate. This map has been developed based on the following factors: (1) Hancock County's existing and planned infrastructure, (2) existing land use locations and relationships, (3) analysis of various environmental features and factors, (4) public input regarding desired land use patterns, and (5) the vision, goals, and policies established in the earlier chapters of this Comprehensive Plan. A detailed set of location criteria that were considered as the Future Land Use Map was developed are provided on page 6-6.

PROJECTED RESIDENTIAL LAND NEEDS

The first table below provides a projection of the additional population and residential units for each township in the next ten years (through 2014). Two scenarios are then shown for that projected growth. First, the land area needed for that growth if it was developed as Low Density Suburban Residential was calculated to be slightly over 3,600 acres. The same calculation using the Moderate Density Suburban Residential option results in over 2,500 acres needed. The bulk of this acreage would be required in the western three townships.

The Low Density and Moderate Density scenarios are calculated using the residential density numbers described for these land use designations later in this chapter.

PROJECTED RESIDENTIAL BUILD-OUT

Looking specifically at the Future Land Use Plan Map on page 6-5, approximate build-out data for the areas designated as Low and Moderate Density Suburban Residential can be calculated (see second table below). Approximate acreage within each of those areas was determined on a township basis, then multiplied by the density figures to create projected residential units at build-out. Almost 112,000 residential units would exist at build-out, which is significantly more than the projected need through 2014 as shown in the first table. Based on the average annual number of residential units permitted for each township, an approximate number of years for build-out of these designated residential areas can be created. As the table illustrates, the build-out timeline of these areas, assuming current permitting rates remain constant, would be well beyond the 2014 projections.

PROJECTED RESIDENTIAL LAND NEEDS

Township	Projected Additional Population (2014)	Projected Additional Dwelling Units (2014)	Acreage Needed at Low Density (2.5 du/a)	Acreage Needed at Moderate Density (3.5 du/a)
Blue River	454	158	63	45
Brandywine	541	185	74	53
Brown	350	130	52	37
Buck Creek	10,446	3,731	1,492	1,066
Center	951	379	152	108
Green	310	114	46	33
Jackson	345	123	49	35
Sugar Creek	3,812	1,407	563	402
Vernon	7,454	2,813	1,125	804
Total	24,663	9,040	3,616	2,583

PROJECTED RESIDENTIAL BUILD-OUT

Township	Low Density Residential (2.5 Units/Acre)		Moderate Density Residential (3.5 Units/Acre)		Projected Residential Units at Build-Out	Projected Time for Build-Out (Years)	Projected Population at Build-Out
	Acres	Units	Acres	Units			
Blue River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brandywine	640	1,600	0	0	1,600	107	4,672
Brown	2,560	6,400	0	0	6,400	640	17,216
Buck Creek	6,240	15,600	1,120	3,920	19,520	181	54,656
Center	2,560	6,400	1,920	6,720	13,120	336	32,931
Green	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jackson	320	800	0	0	800	89	2,248
Sugar Creek	10,880	27,200	2,880	10,080	37,280	397	101,029
Vernon	7,360	18,400	0	0	18,400	172	48,760
Total	30,560	76,400	5,920	20,720	97,120		261,512

LOCATION CRITERIA

In developing the Future Land Use Map, a series of criteria were used to analyze land in the county and determine its suitability for development. This set of criteria applies to development as a whole, while each land use designation within this chapter also has a list of criteria that guided its location on the Future Land Use Map shown on page 6-4. The following list is a compilation of those factors used to evaluate land for development:

- **Utilities:** Development should be capable of being served by existing sewer and water utilities, or such utilities should be able to be extended.
- **Transportation:** Development should be served by Collector and Arterial roadways with adequate existing carrying capacity.
- **Communities:** Development should be adjacent to existing towns & cities to facilitate service provision and annexation.
- **Public Input:** Development should be in areas where the public expressed a desire for growth to occur, specifically including the following characteristics:
 1. Concentration of growth around existing cities and towns.
 2. Commercial growth centered on major roadway corridors and intersections.
 3. Residential growth primarily in the western three townships (Buck Creek, Sugar Creek & Vernon) as well as adjacent to Greenfield.
 4. Conservation of environmental features, particularly around stream corridors and in forested areas.
- **Coordination:** Development patterns should coordinate with the long-term growth plans of existing towns & cities.
- **Trends:** Development should reflect existing and projected growth trends.

Hancock County possesses significant natural and environmental features that deserve some level of protection from development. Stream corridors, floodplain areas, wooded lots, wetlands, and other sensitive environmental features not only provide habitats for wildlife and attractive landscapes for viewing, they serve important functions for drainage purposes. It is crucial, then, that these natural features be preserved and managed appropriately.

It should be noted the Conservation areas illustrated on the Future Land Use Map (page 6-5) are generalized representations of the natural features discussed above. They should not be construed as exact, scaled boundaries of such features. In the context of development, further studies should be done to be sure of the location and extent of natural features that may be affected. To this end, the County is currently creating an updated model of its floodplain areas to ensure that the most accurate data is being used in the development process.

RELATIONSHIPS

In most cases, environmental features such as those listed previously are included in the Conservation designation to limit development within or around them. Many of these areas can also serve a dual purpose as recreational opportunities, possibly becoming parks, hunting grounds, or routes for biking and hiking trails. Efforts should be made to incorporate Conservation areas into new developments as assets that also maintain the integrity of the natural features.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Conservation areas will not require significant infrastructure, if any. Natural areas being conserved should remain free of any type of infrastructure. Areas intended for recreation purposes may require some infrastructure and services, such as sewer and water connections, depending on the level of facilities that are to be constructed. Adequate vehicular access will be needed for any facilities open to public use.

DESIGN

Minimal design issues will occur within Conservation areas, as they are largely intended to be undeveloped. In areas planned as recreation amenities, design features will depend on the intended use. Careful integration of active recreation facilities with areas of natural preservation is essential. Areas of potential light and noise, such as parking lots or athletic facilities, should be screened from nearby residential uses. Recreational facilities should have clear sidewalk connections to nearby residential areas to maximize their accessibility.

LOCATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of land for Conservation designation:

- The presence of wetlands.
- The presence of significant forested areas.
- The presence of 100-year floodplain areas (as designated by FEMA).
- The presence of any other stream corridors.

LOCATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of land for Residential development within the Agriculture/Rural Residential designation:

- Soil conditions should be conducive to septic system function (as determined by the County Health Department).
- Access to a sufficiently improved county road should be present.
- A functional water well system should be possible.

AGRICULTURE/RURAL RESIDENTIAL

The Agricultural/Rural Residential designation denotes those areas of Hancock County that are meant to remain largely rural, with uses primarily focusing on farming and other agriculture-related functions. Some residential development is appropriate within this designation, although it should occur at very low densities of less than 1 unit per acre. Uses appropriate for Agricultural/Rural Residential areas, besides traditional farming uses and single-family homes, include agricultural product storage and distribution facilities (i.e., commercial grain elevators), stables, natural preserves, and other animal or food production related activities.

RELATIONSHIPS

Agricultural/Rural Residential areas will typically surround those areas that have been designated for more intense development in the residential, commercial, or industrial categories. It is appropriate that these more intense uses remain focused around specific significant intersections or other nodes so that large expanses of agricultural land can remain uninterrupted by conflicting development. This will also help to avoid roadway conflicts between farming equipment and traffic attempting to access other uses. Rural Residential development is appropriate in areas where septic systems can function efficiently or in areas where natural features or towns are stimulating development. It is important to consider the compatibility of residential development with the agricultural uses that may be nearby. Specifically, each of these land uses can have an impact on the other, and these impacts should be considered before residential development is pursued in an agricultural area.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure needs in Agricultural/Rural Residential Areas should be minimal. Urban infrastructure such as sewer and water utilities are not necessary, as farms and other development should be able to rely on individual well and septic field systems. While high-capacity roads may travel through Agricultural areas, such facilities will not necessarily be required to serve the needs of farming operations. A well-maintained network of secondary roads will assist with the movement of farm equipment as well as shipping agricultural products to appropriate marketplaces. Rural Residential growth in more outlying areas can also rely on individual well and septic field systems if necessary. However, if utilities such as sewer and water are available, they should be used by any Rural Residential development.

DESIGN

Rural Residential development in these areas should range from single lot subdivisions to small groupings of several lots in a cluster subdivision arrangement. Homes should be grouped on small lots (1 to 2 acres), preserving large tracts of land for continued agricultural use.

Low Density Suburban Residential areas are intended to include primarily single-family detached residences. These neighborhoods are distinguished from higher density residential areas by lot size, setbacks, density, and often home size. A diversity of home sizes and styles is encouraged in these areas. The density of development in Low Density Suburban Residential areas should not exceed 2.5 units per acre. Density calculations for residential development will be based on gross acreage, and will not “net out” conservation or infrastructure areas.

RELATIONSHIPS

Suburban Residential growth should be directed to areas with adequate access to utilities services, transportation facilities, and commercial opportunities. Primarily, housing development of this density is most appropriate around the fringes of established cities and towns within Hancock County. Housing should be at its most dense adjacent to the towns, with density gradually decreasing as development moves outward into the County. Suburban Residential growth would be appropriate in proximity to neighborhood or community scaled commercial development that can provide residents with the goods and services they require. It would also be appropriate for Suburban Residential growth to be in close proximity to schools.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Suburban Residential development will require the full array of infrastructure and services. Developments in these areas should be constructed only when utilities services (sewer and water) are available, and should not occur in areas where such connections are not possible. Urban services, such as police, fire, schools, parks and recreation, and others will be needed in these areas, which increases the importance of locating them near established cities and towns. The density of this type of development will have a significant impact on the roadway network, thus requiring careful consideration of roadway connections and improvements as development occurs. As detailed in the Thoroughfare Plan (Chapter 7), a network of Subdivision Collector streets should be created to help funnel traffic from residential developments onto nearby major roadways.

DESIGN

Suburban Residential development should be designed with multiple access points so that traffic is not moving through a single entry and exit point. Sidewalks and street trees provide important functional and aesthetic benefits. Opportunities for the integration of common open spaces within Suburban Residential developments should be pursued. They should have strong vehicular and pedestrian connections to surrounding land uses. Opportunities to preserve and incorporate natural features within Suburban Residential developments should be pursued.

LOCATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of land for Low Density Suburban Residential designation:

- Sewer & water utilities should be immediately available or able to be extended.
- Land should have access to designated Collector & Arterial roadways with adequate existing traffic capacity.
- Land should be in close proximity to existing towns & cities.
- Land should have access to existing or planned schools.
- Land should have access to retail goods & services, or to locations where such uses are likely to develop.

LOCATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of land for Moderate Density Suburban Residential designation:

- Sewer & water utilities should be immediately available or able to be extended.
- Land should have access to designated Collector & Arterial roadways with adequate existing traffic capacity.
- Land should be in close proximity to existing towns & cities.
- Land should have access to schools.
- Land should have access to retail goods & services, or to locations where such uses are likely to develop.

MODERATE DENSITY SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

Moderate Density Suburban Residential areas are intended to include primarily single-family detached residences. These neighborhoods are distinguished from higher density residential areas by lot size, setbacks, density, and often home size. A diversity of home sizes and styles is encouraged in these areas. The density of development in Moderate Density Suburban Residential areas should range from 2.5 to 3.5 units per acre. Density calculations for residential development will be based on gross acreage, and will not “net out” conservation or infrastructure areas.

RELATIONSHIPS

Suburban Residential growth should be directed to areas with adequate access to utilities services, transportation facilities, and commercial opportunities. Primarily, housing development of this density is most appropriate around the fringes of established cities and towns within Hancock County. Housing should be at its most dense adjacent to the towns, with density gradually decreasing as development moves outward into the County. Suburban Residential growth would be appropriate in proximity to neighborhood or community scaled commercial development that can provide residents with the goods and services they require. It would also be appropriate for Suburban Residential growth to be in close proximity to schools.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Suburban Residential development will require the full array of infrastructure and services. Developments in these areas should be constructed only when utilities services (sewer and water) are available, and should not occur in areas where such connections are not possible. Urban services, such as police, fire, schools, parks and recreation, and others will be needed in these areas, which increases the importance of locating them near established cities and towns. The density of this type of development will have a significant impact on the roadway network, thus requiring careful consideration of roadway connections and improvements as development occurs. As detailed in the Thoroughfare Plan (Chapter 7), a network of Subdivision Collector streets should be created to help funnel traffic from residential developments onto nearby major roadways.

DESIGN

Suburban Residential development should be designed with multiple access points so that traffic is not moving through a single entry and exit point. Sidewalks and street trees provide important functional and aesthetic benefits. Opportunities for the integration of common open spaces within Suburban Residential developments should be pursued. They should have strong vehicular and pedestrian connections to surrounding land uses. Opportunities to preserve and incorporate natural features within Suburban Residential developments should be pursued.

Traditional Residential areas are similar in development density to Suburban Residential areas. This land use designation is intended to denote established residential neighborhoods within McCordsville, Fortville, Shirley, and Spring Lake that have been developed in traditional patterns. This refers to the grid-street layout, small lot sizes and street setbacks, sidewalks, and in some cases a system of alleys. This designation also applies to some undeveloped land adjacent to established Traditional Residential neighborhoods where continued growth in a similar pattern would be appropriate.

RELATIONSHIPS

As previously noted, Traditional Residential areas occur largely within the context of established towns. In many cases, they are directly adjacent to established commercial centers at the core of the town. It is appropriate for Traditional Residential areas to be organized around nodes of small to medium scale commercial development, serving the needs of the immediately surrounding residents. Uses such as schools, parks, and other institutional or public facilities would be appropriate adjacent to or within these areas as well.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Like Suburban Residential, Traditional Residential developments require the full array of infrastructure and services. Since these areas are largely already developed, such infrastructure should be in place. New additions to these areas should thus connect to these same services. The grid-style roadway network will help to reduce the impact of traffic from these areas, although a clear hierarchy of roads within such neighborhoods will still be necessary. Traditional Residential areas are pedestrian-oriented, so an adequate sidewalk system within such development is important.

DESIGN

Development design within Traditional Residential areas should be similar to that of existing older neighborhoods that exist around the center of the County’s small towns. Homes should be set close to the street, ample greenspace between the sidewalk and curb should exist, and on-street parking should provide an additional buffer from the street for pedestrians. Garages located at the rear of lots and accessed through an alley system are also characteristic of these neighborhoods.

LOCATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of land for Traditional Residential designation:

- Sewer & water utilities should be immediately available or able to be extended.
- Land should be within or adjacent to an existing Town or Rural Village.
- Land should be in proximity to commercial goods and services, as well as employment centers.
- Land should have access to designated Local & Collector roadways with adequate existing traffic capacity.

Note: See Chapter 8, Town Subareas, for detailed maps showing the location of Traditional Residential areas within the towns.

LOCATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of land for Town Center designation:

- Land should be within the central business district of an existing town.
- Sewer & water utilities should be immediately available or able to be extended.
- Land should have access to designated Collector & Arterial roadways with adequate existing traffic capacity.

Note: See Chapter 8, Town Subareas, for detailed maps showing the location of Town Center areas within the towns.

TOWN CENTER

The Town Center designation is intended to reflect the unique, mixed-use nature of the central business districts of Hancock County's small towns. Specifically, this designation is appropriate for the historic cores of towns like McCordsville, Fortville, and Shirley. The intent of this designation is to recognize and enhance the centers of these towns as vibrant, mixed-use activity centers for the respective communities. These areas include existing development as well as some adjacent land that would be appropriate for development in a similar pattern.

RELATIONSHIPS

Town Centers exist in various forms at the heart of the small towns in Hancock County. These areas should contain a mix of commercial and residential uses, as well as institutional uses such as government offices. The commercial development of the Town Center may be of neighborhood or community-serving scale. These areas will typically be surrounded by neighborhoods developed in the Traditional Residential pattern as described previously. It is important that new commercial nodes designated outside of the Town Centers complement, rather than detract from, these established activity centers.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Town Centers should be served by the full spectrum of infrastructure and services typical of any downtown area. Pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, streetlights, street trees, benches, and landscaping are key to defining the character of these areas. Parking is a crucial element, particularly for commercial development, and should be provided primarily through on-street parking spaces adjacent to the development.

DESIGN

As the central business districts or "downtowns" of the small towns, Town Centers have a distinctive physical style. Buildings should be located at the front of the lot at the sidewalk edge along street frontages, and should be two to three stories in height. New development in the existing Town Centers should strive to be compatible with the existing historic elements found around them. Pedestrian accommodations are important, so connections within the Town Centers as well as to surrounding neighborhoods should be emphasized.

The Mixed-Use Corridor designation is intended to provide an appropriate pattern of development along major transportation corridors within Hancock County. Examples of these areas include the U.S. 40 Corridor west of Greenfield, as well as the Mt. Comfort Road corridor south of I-70. These areas should be a focus of higher-intensity mixed-use development in the future.

RELATIONSHIPS

Uses appropriate to Mixed-Use Corridors include high-density residential (typically in multifamily developments), commercial uses, professional offices, and limited light industrial uses. The high level of accessibility afforded by the nearby transportation corridors provides the opportunity for more intense development in these areas. Mixed-Use Corridors also serve as transitional areas between major nodes of Regional or Community Commercial development, as well as between high-traffic arterials and adjacent residential areas. Commercial and industrial development should occur within or immediately adjacent to these designated nodes, with high-density residential development occurring between the centers. Mixed-Use Corridors should not result in strips of commercial development along the roadways.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mixed-Use Corridor development will need significant infrastructure and services. Utilities infrastructure will be important, particularly if multifamily development is pursued. Transportation facilities also play a vital role due to the focus of this designation on major road corridors. Strong access control standards must be in place for development along these roads, as well as provisions for vehicle and pedestrian access between development sites.

DESIGN

Any development within a Mixed-Use Corridor should be thoughtfully designed with regard to road access, aesthetic elements, and adjacent land uses. The visual prominence of these transportation corridors places a strong emphasis on attractive site design. In particular, the historic significance of corridors like the National Road (U.S. 40) increase the need for diligence in design. Due to the intensity of development likely in these areas, significant buffering should be provided between them and any adjacent residential areas. This should primarily be accomplished through appropriate landscaping provision. Other elements, such as signage, should be carefully managed to protect the aesthetic integrity of these corridors. In addition, strong pedestrian connections should exist between commercial centers and any adjacent residential areas.

LOCATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of land for Mixed Use Corridor designation:

- Land should be within a half mile of a designated Major Arterial roadway.
- Sewer & water utilities should be immediately available or able to be extended.

LOCATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of land for Neighborhood Commercial designation:

- Sewer & water utilities should be immediately available or able to be extended.
- Land should be at the intersection of designated Collector roads or Collector and Arterial roads.
- Land should be within existing towns & cities.
- Land should be located within or adjacent to existing or planned residential neighborhoods.

Note: See Chapter 8, Town Subareas, for detailed maps showing the location of Neighborhood Commercial areas within the towns.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL

Neighborhood Commercial areas represent the smallest scale of commercial development designated within Hancock County. They are intended to serve a limited amount of immediately surrounding residential development. These small commercial centers provide convenience retail goods and services to as well as public gathering spaces in close proximity to neighborhoods. Appropriate uses may include convenience stores, cafes, coffee shops, or other providers of day-to-day convenience goods and services.

RELATIONSHIPS

Neighborhood Commercial areas are appropriate within the context of medium to high density residential development. It should be possible for a significant number of the commercial center users to walk from their nearby homes. Neighborhood Commercial uses may be combined with schools or conservation areas to create a mixed use node of activity and a focal point for the surrounding residential areas. Neighborhood commercial areas should be located at the intersection of Collector roads, or Collector and Arterial Roads.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Neighborhood Commercial areas should be served by the full spectrum of infrastructure and services typical of commercial development. It is appropriate that such development also include amenities like streetlights, street trees, and sidewalks, enhancing the character and usability of the site. Parking and road access will also be key, although the development should be designed such that it does not draw a significant amount of business from beyond the immediately surrounding area.

DESIGN

Neighborhood compatible scale and pedestrian friendliness are key design components of Neighborhood Commercial development. Development should complement the existing character of the surrounding neighborhoods and should serve residents within short distances of the use. As a component of new development, Neighborhood Commercial areas should be mixed-use centers to serve the residents.

Community Commercial developments serve a wider area than Neighborhood Commercial, using their location near significant transportation corridors to attract users. The scale of uses within Community Commercial is also larger, and could include such things as restaurants, retail stores, commercial service businesses, professional offices, and other related uses. Medium-scaled centers containing multiple businesses are also appropriate in Community Commercial areas.

RELATIONSHIPS

Community Commercial areas should be located at major intersections and in proximity to significant residential development. This scale of commercial development should be created as nodes or centers, as opposed to strip development following along the edge of a roadway. It would be appropriate to locate multifamily residential uses within Community Commercial areas. Other land use types such as Business Park, Institutional, or conservation uses would be compatible with Community Commercial as well.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Community Commercial development will need significant infrastructure and services. Transportation infrastructure is key, and should accommodate passenger vehicles, pedestrians, and delivery vehicles. The scale of buildings and pavement typical of this category of development will require more comprehensive drainage solutions.

DESIGN

Community Commercial areas should be designed as coordinated centers of activity. Access and traffic must be carefully managed in these areas. Abundant landscaping and high quality building materials are recommended. Nearby residential areas should be shielded from noise and light impacts of Community Commercial development as much as possible. It is important that strong pedestrian connections exist between commercial centers and nearby residential areas.

LOCATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of land for Community Commercial designation:

- Sewer & water utilities should be immediately available or able to be extended.
- Land should be at the intersection of designated Collector roads or Collector and Arterial roads.
- Land should be in close proximity to existing towns & cities.

LOCATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of land for Regional Commercial designation:

- Sewer & water utilities should be immediately available or able to be extended.
- Land should be at the intersection of designated Arterial roads.
- Land should have transportation access to a wider regional market (i.e. multiple small towns/residential areas).

REGIONAL COMMERCIAL

Regional Commercial areas represent the largest scale of commercial development. This type of development would include major shopping centers and “big box” stores, as well as smaller, complimentary retail facilities. Development of this scale serves a significant portion of the County, and depending on its location, may draw users from other communities as well.

RELATIONSHIPS

Regional Commercial centers share many relationship characteristics with Community Commercial, particularly their location at major intersections. Other land use types such as Business Park, Institutional, or Conservation uses would also be compatible with Regional Commercial. Multifamily or educational uses could also be a component of these developments.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Regional Commercial areas require significant infrastructure and services. Transportation infrastructure is key, and should accommodate passenger vehicles, pedestrians, and delivery vehicles. The scale of buildings and pavement typical of this category of development will require more comprehensive drainage solutions. Convenient pedestrian walkways from parking lots to buildings, as well as between buildings, in these large-scale centers are also needed.

DESIGN

As the largest scale of commercial development, Regional Commercial has significant design challenges. Regional Commercial development should be created as planned, mixed-use centers, designed around a logical internal circulation system and with appropriately designed amenities. These areas should work toward creating a unified design theme for the overall development. Just as with the Community Commercial areas, high quality building materials and landscaping are essential components. Nearby residential areas should be shielded from noise and light impacts of this commercial development as much as possible, but provided with convenient vehicle and pedestrian access.

Industrial development plays a key role in the tax and employment base of Hancock County. It encompasses uses such as manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, production facilities, processing plants, and other similar businesses. Industrial development has occurred, and should continue to occur, within and around established cities and towns. These areas have the ability to provide the infrastructure, services, and employees necessary to support Industrial uses. Additional new Industrial areas outside of these places should be carefully considered based on the factors detailed below.

RELATIONSHIPS

Industrial development is not readily compatible with most other land uses proposed for the County. Business Park uses, as well as some Commercial uses, would be appropriate in proximity to these developments. Industrial uses may be developed as part of planned industrial parks, or as independent sites. New industrial development will likely focus on lighter industrial uses, such as light manufacturing, warehousing, or contractors offices, as opposed to large-scale heavy industries.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Industrial uses require significant infrastructure and services. Again, transportation infrastructure is key, and Industrial development should be located in close proximity to major transportation corridors that can be used to move products to market.

DESIGN

Industrial development should be designed with large lot sizes that can accommodate large-scale facilities as well as future expansion of those facilities. Management of access to the street network will be crucial for the smooth flow of industrial traffic to such facilities. Facilities should be designed to minimize their environmental impact as well as their impact on surrounding non-Industrial uses.

LOCATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of land for Industrial designation:

- Sewer & water utilities should be immediately available or able to be extended.
- Land should have access to designated Collector & Arterial roadways with adequate existing traffic capacity.
- Land should be separated from residential development.
- Land should be in close proximity to existing towns & cities.
- Land should be adjacent to other industrial or business park development.

LOCATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of land for Business Park designation:

- Sewer & water utilities should be immediately available or able to be extended.
- Land should have access to designated Collector & Arterial roadways with adequate existing traffic capacity.
- Land should be separated from residential development.
- Land should be in close proximity to existing towns & cities.
- Land should be adjacent to other industrial or business park development.

Note: See page 4-10 for a detailed profile of Certified Technology Parks.

BUSINESS PARK

The Business Park designation is intended to provide areas for new employment-generating businesses to locate. Businesses typical of this category of development would include life sciences, biotechnology, research and development, corporate headquarters, and other similar uses. These areas are designed to take advantage of emerging trends in technology and economic development, and to capture these new market opportunities for Hancock County. One opportunity the County has is the establishment of a Certified Technology Park, which combines a wide variety of resources to create a place where high-tech businesses can locate and thrive. It would also be appropriate for light industrial uses, such as assembly facilities or warehousing, to locate in Business Park areas. Any such light industrial activities should be wholly enclosed within a building, and should not include heavy industrial, production based uses.

RELATIONSHIPS

Like Industrial development, Business Parks should generally be located within or adjacent to established cities and towns. Business Park development can be compatible with a number of other land use categories. The Business Parks themselves should be well-designed centers that contain multiple businesses on a planned campus. This would allow the various businesses to take advantage of proximity to one another as well as to reduce infrastructure costs by concentrating users. Small-scale commercial uses that serve employees of the Business Parks are appropriate within the development or directly adjacent to it.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Business Park developments, like Industrial uses, require significant infrastructure and services. Transportation access is key, although it would play a larger role in moving employees to and from work than it would for moving products. Technology infrastructure, such as fiber optic networking, would be a key component of any new Business Park development.

DESIGN

Business Parks areas are intended to be large scale, master planned developments which form an attractive campus setting for the development of business facilities. Common design themes should be used for site amenities like signage, lighting, and landscaping. Pedestrian infrastructure is important here, as it provides opportunities for employees to walk within the overall development. It may also be appropriate to include some form of recreation facilities for use by employees as well as the public.

Institutional uses play a key role in the County’s civic and cultural functions. Uses within the Institutional category would include government, educational, and civic facilities that serve the community. Examples would include County offices or properties, water treatment facilities, and airports. Also appropriate to this category are schools, hospitals, and other facilities intended for public service use.

RELATIONSHIPS

Institutional facilities may be located in various areas of the County, although it would be appropriate to concentrate any government offices or social service uses in an area central to the community they serve. These uses are compatible with most commercial development. Institutional areas can include certain noninstitutional land uses, such as professional offices, provided these noninstitutional offices have a direct complementary relationship with the primary institutional use in the area. It may be appropriate to locate certain Institutional uses in close proximity to residential areas, depending on the services they provide and the scale of development required.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Institutional uses should be served by the full spectrum of infrastructure and services. Accessibility by County residents to such facilities is very important, so adequate transportation facilities should be provided.

DESIGN

The design of Institutional development will largely be guided by the specific function of each facility. In all cases, the key role that institutions play in defining the character of the community should be a consideration. High quality building design, landscaping, and site arrangement are crucial in maintaining the aesthetic image of the community. Institutional uses should also strive to be compatible with surrounding uses, particularly if they are in proximity to residential areas.

LOCATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of land for Institutional designation:

- Sewer & water utilities should be immediately available or able to be extended.
- Land should have access to designated Collector & Arterial roadways with adequate existing traffic capacity.
- Land should be within or in close proximity to existing towns & cities.
- Land should be near or within another land use that is complimentary to the specific institutional use being developed (i.e. airport close to business, or schools/parks close to residential).

LOCATION CRITERIA

The following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of land for Rural Village designation:

- Land should be within or adjacent to existing unincorporated small towns.
- Sewer & water utilities should be immediately available or able to be extended.

RURAL VILLAGE

The Rural Village category is intended to preserve and maintain the character of Hancock County’s unincorporated communities. Specifically this designation is given to communities like Mt. Comfort, Maxwell, Philadelphia, and Charlottesville, among the many others. Historically, these small communities have developed around road and rail transportation routes, concentrating commercial and residential activities in a focused area. These villages are no longer significant centers of railroad or commercial activity, but do remain important historic settlements and can provide housing alternatives to the larger towns in the county.

RELATIONSHIPS

Rural Villages are intended to provide a variety of neighborhood commercial services and to allow for mixed residential and commercial activities. Focusing new growth around these communities would reduce the effects of sprawl, maximize public infrastructure expenditures, and protect farms and the environment from conflicts with residences. Rural Villages should contain small-scale commercial uses at their core, located at prominent road intersections. These should be surrounded by high-density single-family residential neighborhoods. It may also be appropriate to locate institutional or limited industrial uses here as well.

INFRASTRUCTURE

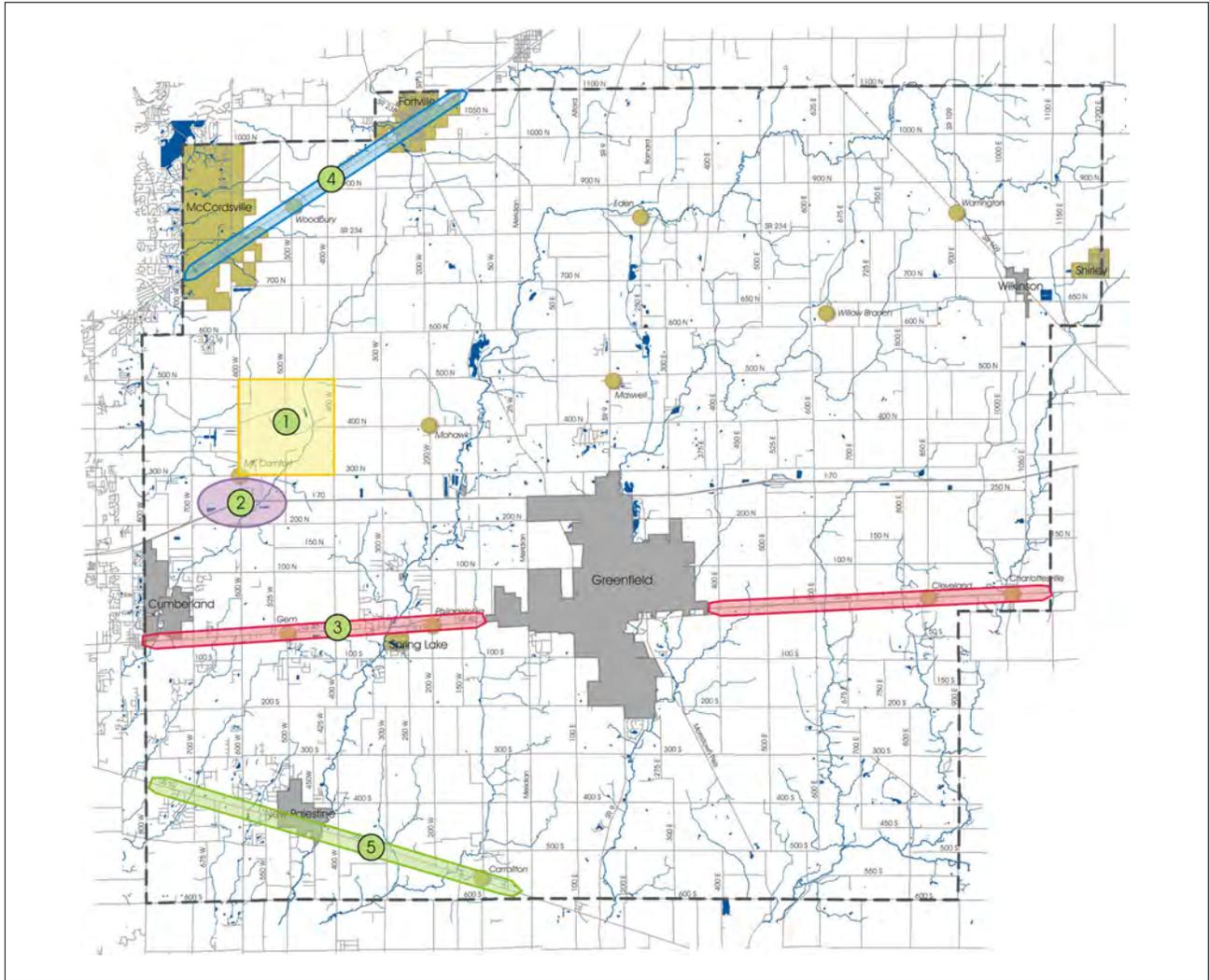
Rural Villages require the full array of infrastructure, but in many cases may currently be lacking sewer or water services. Investment in utility and infrastructure improvements will be important to sustaining the viability of existing Rural Villages.

DESIGN

Rural Villages have been established as mixed use centers, and this theme should be supported and enhanced. The “main street” feel of the commercial centers in Rural Villages provide the guiding design theme for these areas. Residential components should be very similar to the Traditional Residential areas. The scale and design of any new development or redevelopment in these areas should be respectful of the existing development patterns and styles of each particular Rural Village.

Several specific areas of Hancock County have been identified as critical due to their increased significance with respect to land use and development. The following pages detail the key issues of each critical area, and provide guidance for their future development. It is important that the information presented as part of the critical areas discussion be considered in context with other policy and map information from the Comprehensive Plan.

The map below identifies the five critical areas discussed in this section.



The Indianapolis Air Show

Every summer, the Mount Comfort Airport hosts the Indianapolis Air Show. Air Show officials estimate that over 100,000 visitors (over 3 days) make the trip to the show each year. The presence of this special event in Hancock County has a number of significant impacts, including:

- *The need to accommodate a large amount of traffic and parking in the vicinity of the airport.*
- *The opportunity capture additional tourism by marketing other activities & events in the County.*
- *A way to raise the image of Hancock County not only as a tourist destination, but a place with high quality of life for residents.*

For more information on this event, visit www.indyairshow.com.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

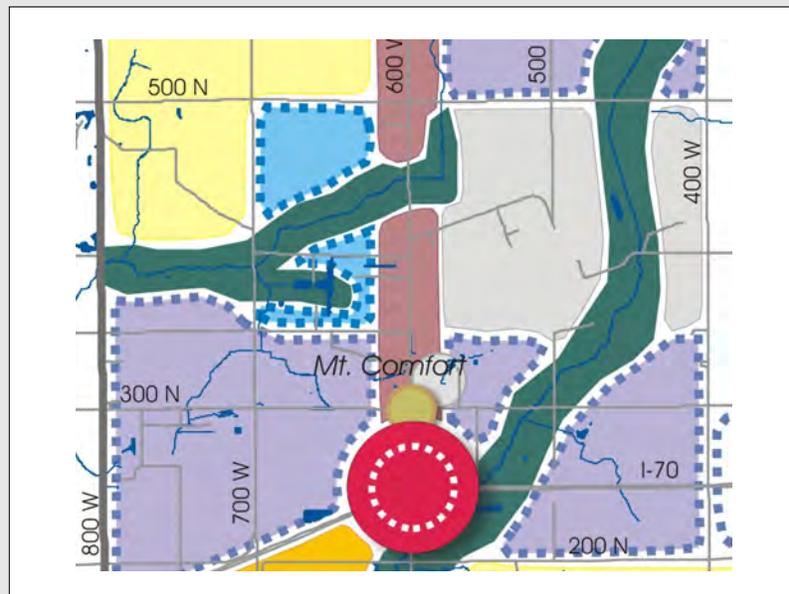
The Mount Comfort Airport has been in operation since the early 1980s, and is managed by the Indianapolis Airport Authority. The airport was originally built for general aviation, particularly to relieve Indianapolis International Airport. Mount Comfort Airport currently has two runways, with a third to be constructed north of the existing hangar area when justified by demand. The Indianapolis Airport Authority currently plans to maintain this airport as a general aviation facility, catering primarily to corporate and other private users.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- **Land Use:** Areas immediately adjacent to the airport should focus on business and industrial uses to capitalize on the available airport and highway access. Small scale commercial uses that serve occupants of the nearby business parks would also be appropriate.
- **Design:** New development should occur in the form of planned business parks, allowing for attractive design themes to be carried throughout the entire site. High standards for building materials, architectural details, landscaping, signage, and other site amenities should be emphasized.
- **Access Management:** Future improvements to the Mount Comfort Road corridor will be key in allowing adjacent development to take advantage of proximity to I-70 and its connection to Indianapolis. This includes additional travel lanes as well as improved drainage infrastructure.
- **Flight Paths:** Existing and future flight paths at the airport should be taken into consideration as adjacent land is developed. Building heights within these areas must be carefully managed to avoid conflicts. The zoning ordinance should be updated to reflect the latest airport development information and the current best practices for managing airport-area development.

LEGEND

-  Conservation
-  Suburban Residential (Low Density)
-  Industrial
-  Business Park
-  Institutional
-  Mixed-Use Corridor
-  Area Plan Commission Towns
-  Other Cities & Towns

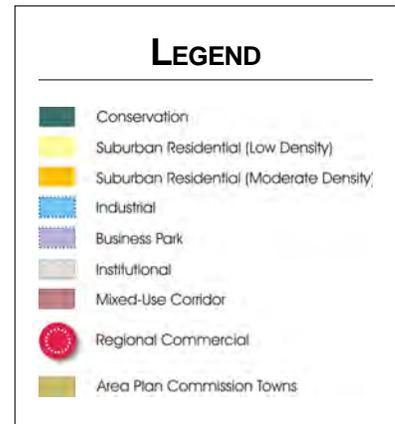
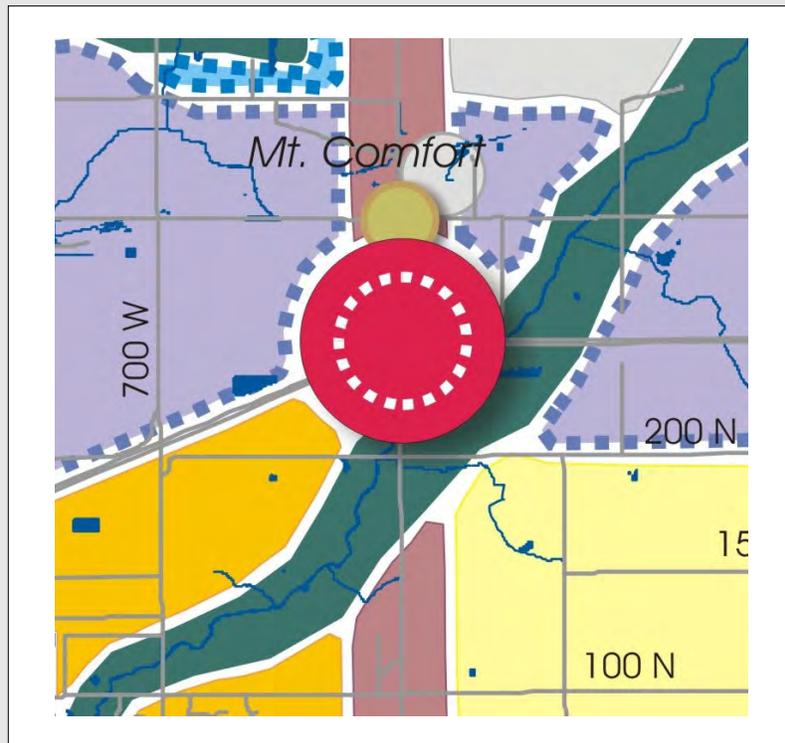


EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Mount Comfort Road interchange with I-70 is poised to become a major center of development in the future. The State Department of Transportation is currently widening the bridge over I-70 and adding capacity to the interchange ramps. I-70 is planned to be upgraded to six lanes east to State Road 9 in Greenfield, a project that is currently projected for construction around 2010. The increased accessibility of the surrounding area will make it a more desirable location for commercial, industrial, and residential development.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- **Land Use:** Commercial uses are appropriate immediately adjacent to the interchange. North of I-70, business park development should occur, leveraging its access to the highway and airport to attract investment. South of I-70, mixed use development should occur along the Mount Comfort Road corridor, including high density residential, professional offices, and some retail businesses.
- **Design:** As a gateway to Hancock County, quality development design is crucial. High standards for building materials, architectural details, landscaping, signage, and other site amenities should be emphasized.
- **Access Management:** Control of access to Mount Comfort Road as development occurs will be key to maintaining the efficiency of roadway. Driveway access to this road should be limited, particularly in close proximity to the interchange. Cross-access between adjacent sites should be emphasized to reduce traffic pressure on Mount Comfort Road.



The National Road

The historic National Road passes through Hancock County, following the U.S. 40 corridor. A profile of this key historic asset is provided on page 3-3. It is important to bear in mind the local and national significance of this resource as development is managed around it.

LEGEND

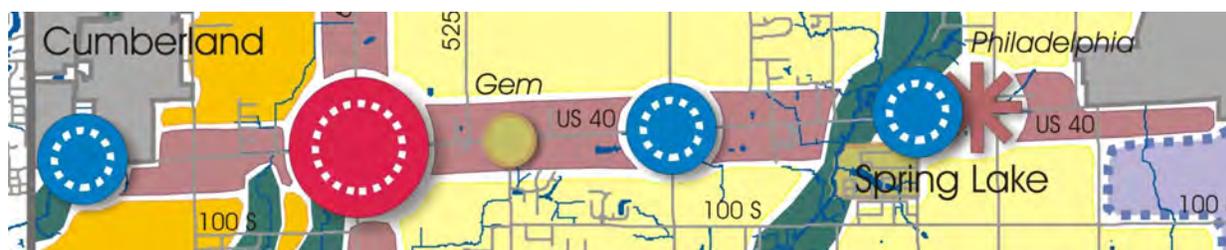
	Conservation
	Agriculture/Rural Residential
	Suburban Residential (Low Density)
	Suburban Residential (Moderate Density)
	Business Park
	Mixed-Use Corridor
	Mixed-Use Corridor (Future - Long Term)
	Rural Village
	Regional Commercial
	Community Commercial
	Area Plan Commission Towns
	Other Cities & Towns

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The U.S. 40 corridor west of Greenfield is gradually becoming more urbanized in character. Commercial growth pressure from Indianapolis is occurring at the eastern edge of the county, while development continues on the west side of Greenfield. Both Greenfield and Cumberland have annexed portions of the corridor, and will likely continue to do so as growth occurs. This segment of the corridor provides a relatively efficient alternative to I-70 for those traveling between Indianapolis and Greenfield.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- **Land Use:** West of Greenfield, more intense mixed-use development along the roadway is appropriate, including high-density residential, commercial, and professional office uses. This development can be used as a transition to lower density residential areas further away from the corridor. Development should focus initially on the designated nodes, and over the long term fill out the corridor between.
- **Design:** This corridor is a significant historic resource as well as a gateway to Hancock County. High standards for building materials, architectural details, landscaping, signage, and other site amenities should be emphasized. A special zoning overlay that addresses the National Road may be appropriate.
- **Access Management:** Development of a frontage road system, or other similar cross-access facilities, would help to ease traffic pressure on the corridor. New driveway access to U.S. 40 should be limited, and any new driveways should align on opposite sides of the corridor to minimize traffic conflicts.
- **Streetscape:** The western segment of U.S. 40 should begin to take on a more urban profile as development continues. As this happens, consideration should be given to streetscape amenities such as sidewalks, landscaping, and lighting. At the same time, design standards should seek to preserve many of the natural elements that make the National Road distinctive.

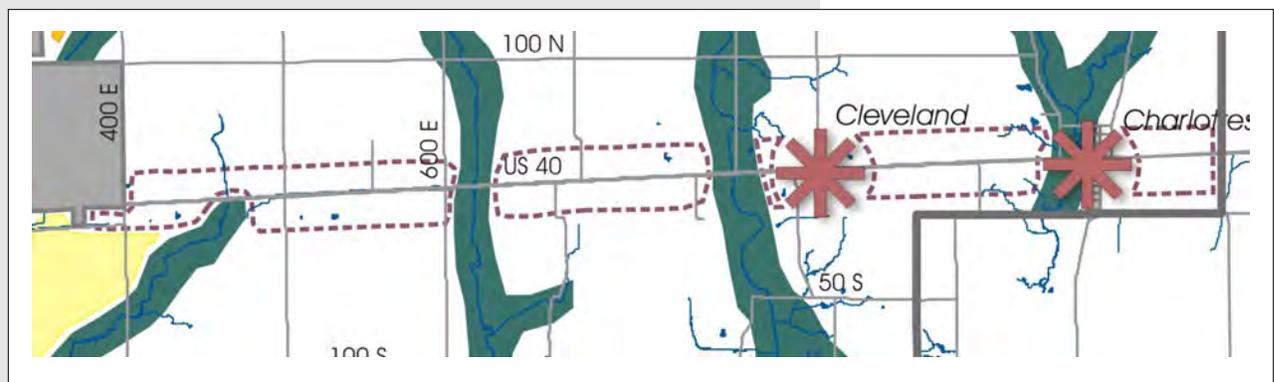


EXISTING CONDITIONS

East of Greenfield to the Hancock County line, the U.S. 40 corridor retains a largely rural setting. Immediately east of Greenfield is limited commercial development, and the unincorporated towns of Cleveland and Charlottesville flank the road at the eastern edge of the county. The corridor’s primarily agricultural setting is equally as important to the character of the county as the more urbanized setting found to the west.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- **Land Use:** East of Greenfield, very limited growth should occur along the corridor, and new development should primarily focus on supporting Cleveland and Charlottesville. In the long term, more intense mixed use development is appropriate as Greenfield grows to the east.
- **Design:** This corridor is a significant historic resource as well as a gateway to Hancock County. High standards for building materials, architectural details, landscaping, signage, and other site amenities should be emphasized. A special zoning overlay that addresses the National Road may be appropriate.
- **Access Management:** The limited level of development anticipated for this segment of the corridor reduces the need for a frontage road system, although it should still be considered for the long term. Still, driveway access should be limited in order to maintain the safety and efficiency of the roadway as a travel corridor.
- **Cross-Section:** Unlike the more urban western segment, the eastern portion of U.S. 40 should maintain its rural cross-section. Natural areas immediately adjacent to the roadway should be preserved as much as possible. Those areas that develop immediately adjacent to Greenfield should be considered for urban amenities discussed for the western segment.

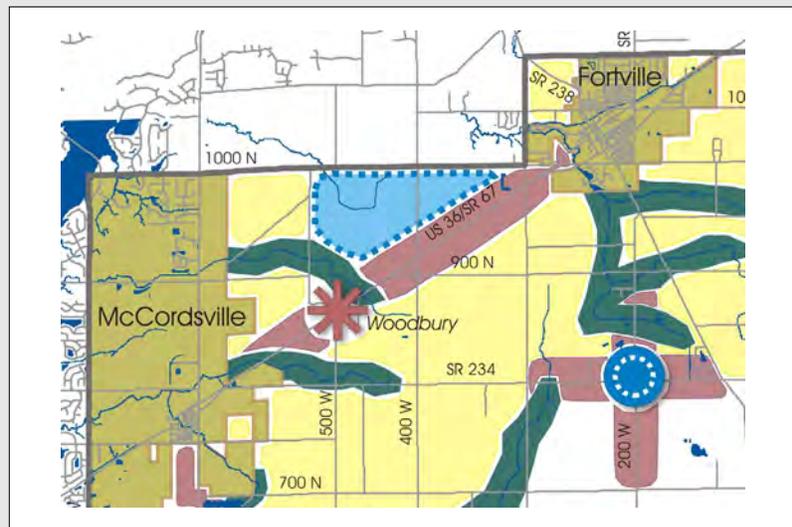


EXISTING CONDITIONS

The U.S. 36/S.R. 67 corridor through the northwest corner of Hancock County is an important link in the regional transportation system. The portion from the western county line to McCordsville is currently being upgraded to a four lane profile. An active rail line runs immediately adjacent to the north side of the highway, presenting challenges to development in that area. Development is heaviest within the two towns, although some industrial, commercial and residential growth has occurred in certain areas along the corridor between them.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- **Land Use:** Development should occur primarily within and around the towns. Adjacent to the corridor, more intense-mixed use development is appropriate as the towns grow outward. Industrial uses should occur north of the roadway to take advantage of the rail service. Business park and residential uses are better placed to the south of the corridor.
- **Design:** As a gateway to Hancock County, high standards for building materials, architectural details, landscaping, signage, and other site amenities should be emphasized.
- **Access Management:** Careful management of highway access will be crucial as development continues so that local and regional travel can be accommodated efficiently.
- **Town Character:** Within McCordsville and Fortville, the corridor should maintain a “Main Street” feel, including improvements such as sidewalks, landscaping, and lighting. The distinctive character of each town should be used to create obvious transitions between the rural and urban profiles of the corridor.
- **Road Improvements:** Future widening of this corridor east of McCordsville would most likely require land from the south side of the road due to the presence of the rail line to the north. Development standards should recognize this through appropriate setback provisions.

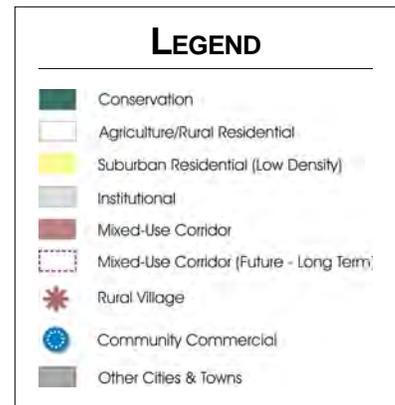


EXISTING CONDITIONS

The U.S. 52 corridor runs through the southwest corner of Hancock County. It passes through the town of New Palestine, a community that is not a member of the Area Plan Commission. A widening of this roadway to four lanes from the west county line to the east side of New Palestine is currently scheduled to occur by the end 2006. Residential development has occurred in the vicinity of the corridor, and larger-scale commercial development is beginning to occur as well. This corridor provides an important linkage between New Palestine and Indianapolis, a relationship that is reflected in the pending roadway improvements.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- **Land Use:** Development should occur primarily within and around New Palestine. Adjacent to the corridor, more intense-mixed use development is appropriate as the town grows outward. Development along the U.S. 52 corridor should focus on the area west of New Palestine in the near future, while the segment east of the town should be reserved for similar mixed use growth over the long term. The main focus of commercial development should be at the intersection of U.S. 52 and Mount Comfort Road.
- **Design:** As a gateway to Hancock County, high standards for building materials, architectural details, landscaping, signage, and other site amenities should be emphasized.
- **Access Management:** Careful management of highway access will be crucial as development continues so that local and regional travel can be accommodated efficiently. Large-scale developments should provide cross-access facilities to reduce traffic pressure on the main corridor.
- **Town Character:** Development along the corridor that is immediately adjacent to New Palestine should reflect the character of the town and have convenient pedestrian connections to existing neighborhoods and the town center.



CHAPTER

7

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

PART II: IMPLEMENTATION



INTRODUCTION

The Transportation Plan describes the primary method of implementing the transportation related goals of Hancock County. The Transportation Plan is comprised of several key elements, including (1) the Hancock County Thoroughfare Plan, (2) a Mass Transit Plan, and (3) a Critical Areas Summary. In addition, there is discussion of Hancock County's role in the regional transportation system, as well as implementation tools for safe and efficient roadways.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

The transportation system of Hancock County is part of a wider regional system that connects area communities with each other and with Indianapolis. It is important that the county remain mindful of its position in this system as it considers transportation investments in the future. This plan focuses on strategies for maintaining a functional transportation system within Hancock County and does not make specific recommendations for regional connectivity issues. These types of projects, such as the proposed State Road 9 bypass, are best addressed through collaboration between the State of Indiana, Hancock County, and local municipal governments.

THOROUGHFARE PLAN

The Thoroughfare Plan describes the planned road network for Hancock County. It establishes a hierarchy of roadway types that will form a safe and efficient system to serve both rural and growing areas of the County effectively. The Thoroughfare Plan takes into consideration not only current road conditions and connections, but those improvements that will be necessary to accommodate future growth.

MASS TRANSIT PLAN

Like the other counties that ring Indianapolis, Hancock County has a large number of residents that commute to work in the City every day. This has placed a growing strain on the transportation system throughout the central Indiana region. Regional transportation authorities have been studying potential routes for a mass transit system to connect the central city with outlying residents.

CRITICAL AREAS

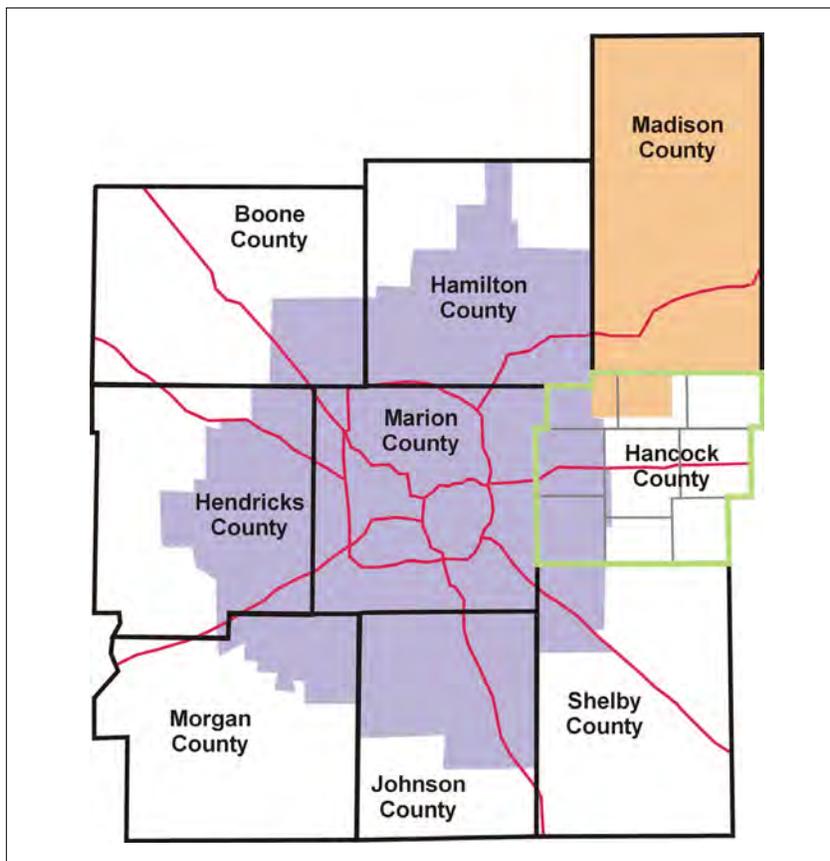
Certain transportation routes, or locations along those routes, are especially critical to the efficiency of the county transportation system. The Critical Areas Summary identifies several of these locations, describes the issues of each area, and provides guidance for future action.

TRAILS PLAN

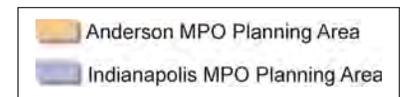
The Trails Plan is a proposed framework for the provision of a multi-use trail system in Hancock County. Part of the Comprehensive Plan's strategy for parks and recreation facilities is encouraging new developments to include trails as a component of their amenities. The Trails Plan provides a system of preferred routes that developers should follow when creating such trails.

Due to its location within the greater Indianapolis urbanized area, a portion of Hancock County is within the planning area of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). In addition, another portion of Hancock County, including the Town of Fortville, is within the planning area for the Madison County Council of Governments, the MPO for Anderson & Madison County. The MPO is responsible for long range transportation planning in the region, as well as managing the finance and coordination of transportation projects. Representatives of local governments within designated Metropolitan Planning Areas coordinate regularly through the MPO on regional transportation issues.

As growth continues, it will become increasingly important for Hancock County to coordinate closely with the two Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Transportation projects within the designated metropolitan planning areas may be eligible to utilize state and federal transportation funding, so maintaining those regional relationships is crucial to ensuring that Hancock County receives its share.



The map at left shows the boundaries of the planning areas for the Indianapolis and Anderson Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Coordination with both planning groups is important for the continued functionality of the regional transportation network.



THOROUGHFARE PLAN

Not every road in Hancock County can accommodate high volumes of traffic efficiently. Constructing a road network where every road can handle the same high volume of use is not physically or financially feasible. It is necessary to create a logical hierarchy of thoroughfare types that can accommodate varying levels of traffic volumes. The Thoroughfare Plan, therefore, proposes that a system of major and minor thoroughfares be established to accommodate future growth in the county. The system is based on establishing a specific function and minimum design standards for each roadway. It is important to note that the Thoroughfare Plan designates not only existing roadways, but recommends future connections that may be appropriate based on projected growth patterns.

The functions and classifications proposed for Hancock County's roadways are detailed on the following pages. In addition, a map is provided here to show the functional classification of each road in the county. In some cases, it may not be practical or feasible to meet the recommended design standards for a particular road. In these cases, every effort should be made to establish the best possible alignment, grade, sight distance, and drainage.

Arterial roadways are at the top of the hierarchy established in the Thoroughfare Plan. These roads are designed to carry high volumes of traffic at reasonable speeds, and over significant distances. These roadways also have the widest typical profile due to their need for high lane capacity. There are three levels of Arterials as designated by this Plan: Freeways, Major Arterials, and Minor Arterials. Each level is described below.

FREEWAYS

There is only one road designated as a Freeway in Hancock County, that being Interstate 70. Freeways are designed as high-speed, limited access corridors that move very high volumes of traffic on a regular basis. There are currently two interchanges with I-70 within Hancock County, one at County Road 600W, and one at State Road 9. Proposals for any new interchanges should be evaluated carefully, considering their impact on surrounding land uses and the traffic capacity of connecting roads. It is anticipated that I-70 will remain the only Freeway in Hancock County.

MAJOR ARTERIALS

Major Arterials designated by this Plan are those Federal or state routes of regional importance. This includes such roads as U.S 40, U.S. 52, State Road 9, and State Road 67. These roadways are intended to move large volumes of traffic between the communities within Hancock County, as well as to surrounding counties. While these roads are not intended to be limited access, like Freeways, access control standards should be utilized to ensure that these corridors remain safe and efficient.

MINOR ARTERIALS

Minor Arterials include several State routes of lesser significance as well as some County roads which serve high volumes of traffic. Examples of these roads would be State Road 234 or County Road 600 West (Mt. Comfort Road). These road corridors should also be subject to access control measures as development occurs along them.

Note: Possible access control measures for arterial roadways could include requiring driveways to be shared by multiple businesses, as well as requiring a minimum distance to be provided between driveways along a road.

THOROUGHFARE PLAN: COLLECTOR ROADS

Collector roads serve an intermediate function in the Thoroughfare Plan’s roadway hierarchy. While they move medium volumes of traffic from one area to another within the County, they also serve to connect traffic from local roads, particularly within subdivisions, to the wider Arterial roadway network. They are recommended to be medium capacity roadways with moderately high rates of speed. It is important to distinguish between rural and urban Collector Roads. Collector Roads that pass through more urbanized parts of the county should include amenities such as curbs, sidewalks, street trees, and lighting. Collector Roads in rural areas do not need these amenities, and would typically be constructed with drainage channels along side them.

MAJOR COLLECTORS

Major Collectors are county roads that play significant roles in moving traffic between Arterial roadways, as well as funneling traffic from residential areas to the greater road network. Examples of Major Collectors in the county would include County Roads 600 East or 300 North. This category also includes roads built within new subdivisions which serve to gather traffic from neighborhood streets and direct it to the larger roads in the system.

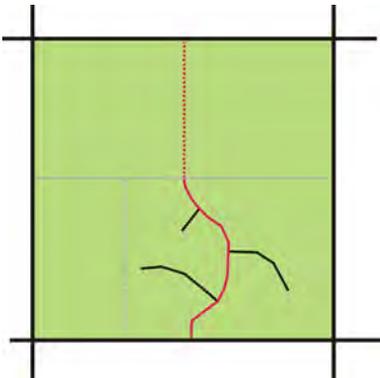
MINOR COLLECTORS

Minor Collector roads serve much the same purpose as Major Collectors, only these roads would experience lower volumes of traffic and have less regional significance in the overall roadway network. Like Major Collectors, these roads primarily serve to connect local roadways to the Arterial Road system. Examples of Minor Collectors in the county would include 1000 North and portions of 400 East. Typical road profile and right-of-way requirements would be lower for these roads than for Major Collectors.

SUBDIVISION COLLECTORS (HALF-SECTION ROADS)

Most existing and proposed collector roads follow the section lines of the county. As development occurs, land within the sections will be filled with a variety of new local roads and land uses. It is important that new Collector level roads are established as these subdivisions are developed. These “Subdivision Collector” roads should occur at least at the half-section distance between two county roads. These intermediate collector roads will help to funnel traffic from within the subdivisions to the existing county road system. Proposed alignments for these roads are not identified on the Thoroughfare Plan map. Rather, they should be designed and built as new development occurs so that conditions specific to each area can be better addressed.

The graphic below shows a typical section of land, with county roads (in black) around the perimeter. The grey lines show property boundaries. The red line is a new Subdivision Collector providing a connection between two existing county roads. The dotted line shows where the remainder of the road would be built by the developer of the adjacent property.



Local Roads are County roads that are not designated as Arterials or Collectors within the Thoroughfare Plan hierarchy. They typically carry low volumes of traffic and driveway access is not strictly controlled. These roads move traffic over short distances at relatively low speeds, connecting travelers with the wider network of roads. This category also includes streets within subdivisions that serve primarily as access points for residential development. Right-of-way standards for these roads are the lowest for any of the categories, although in the case of subdivision streets, more improvements (such as curbs, sidewalks, or street trees) should be required.

THOROUGHFARE PLAN: IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Constructing additional paved surfaces is not the only way to maintain efficient traffic movement. Proper management of land uses, understanding the impact of individual developments on the road system, and the control of roadway access points can maintain efficient traffic flow without significant roadway construction projects.

ACCESS CONTROL

As traffic volumes on roadways increase, the need to control access from abutting properties also increases. The primary purpose of arterials and major collectors is to move traffic from one point to another, not to provide access to individual properties. Access control is needed to facilitate this purpose.

Some methods of access control fall under the scope of the county's Subdivision Control Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance. On county and state roads, the county may regulate access characteristics, including sharing and spacing of access points. Ultimately, it is in the county's best interest to establish site development standards that minimize transportation impacts. This not only ensures the safety and efficiency of the county's roadways, but can also help to manage road maintenance costs over the long term. Some techniques that can be used to control access include the following:

- Regulate minimum spacing of driveways.
- Regulate minimum corner clearance. Provide drivers suitable sight distance to help them execute their turns smoothly and safely.
- Regulate the maximum number of driveways per property frontage.
- Establish minimum frontage requirements for newly subdivided lots.
- Arrange access points so that driveways are immediately across from one another.
- Consolidate access for adjacent properties. Encourage the use of shared driveways and parking.
- Encourage connections between adjacent properties.
- Require adequate internal design and circulation planning.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

The Hancock County Area Plan Commission has direct impact on the future of the county and its roadway system. When asked to review a developer's proposal, they must have a clear understanding of the transportation aspects of that proposal. Some criteria to consider when making decisions concerning the transportation impacts of development proposals are summarized below:

- Does the proposed street system meet the local ordinance requirements for street width, sidewalks, and engineering construction standards?
- Will the proposed street system work well with the roadway hierarchy established in the Thoroughfare Plan?
- Does the proposal assure good on-site circulation?
- Are there safe and convenient connections between proposed new streets or driveways and the existing street system?
- Has the developer considered and planned for the additional demands the new development will place on the existing transportation system?
- Are the needed transportation improvements guaranteed as part of the plan approval?
- Have opportunities for transportation connections to potential future development on adjacent properties been provided?
- Have appropriate pedestrian facilities and connections been provided?

RIGHT-OF-WAY RESERVATION

The final way to implement the standards established in the Thoroughfare Plan is the reservation of appropriate right-of-way as land develops. It is important that as parcels of ground develop, rights-of-way be reserved for potential future roadway improvements. While one development may not adversely affect the efficient operation of the roadway system, several developments concentrated in one area will place a strain on the system. The County must develop a strong policy to reserve adequate rights-of-way in all development proposals. In some cases, the County may choose to vacate segments of a public right-of-way. Any right-of-way vacation is subject to the process specified in the Indiana State Code, including, but not limited to, Chapter 36-7-3.

Note: More detailed information about the Directions study can be found by visiting the following website:

www6.indygov.org/indympo/rapid_transit/rt.htm

The map at right shows the proposed rapid transit routes being evaluated by the Indianapolis MPO as part of the Directions study. The establishment of a transit route along the U.S. 40 Corridor could have a significant impact on county development patterns.



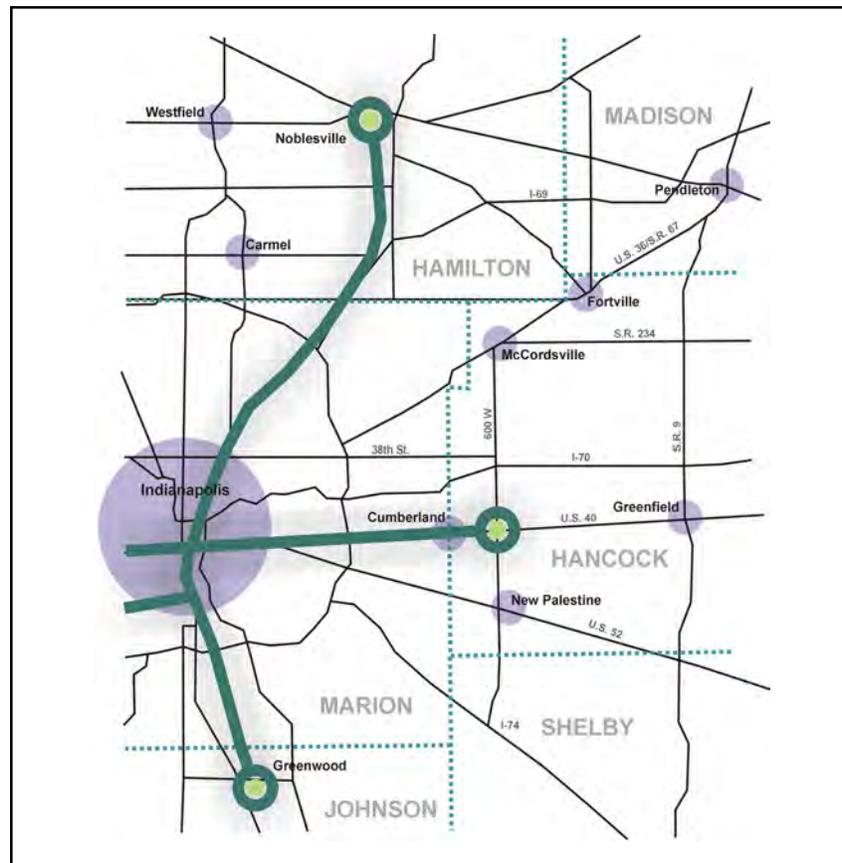
MASS TRANSIT PLAN

REGIONAL RAPID TRANSIT STUDY

In late 2002, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization began a regional rapid transit study, known as “DiRecTionS”. The DiRecTionS project is intended to identify high priority corridors for rapid transit facilities, as well as propose rapid transit technologies for use on those corridors. This could include such technologies as Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail. As of mid-2004, the study is in its 3rd phase, which includes detailed study of the priority corridors identified earlier in the project. According to the earlier phases of the study, Hancock County is in position to be connected to the regional transit system in the long term.

The map below shows the potential rapid transit connection that could be created between Indianapolis and Hancock County. The proposed route follows the U.S. 40 corridor through Cumberland and terminates at Mt. Comfort Road. In the long term, a transit stop at this location could provide a significant focal point for new development. Factors to consider when determining an appropriate site and design for such a transit stop should include:

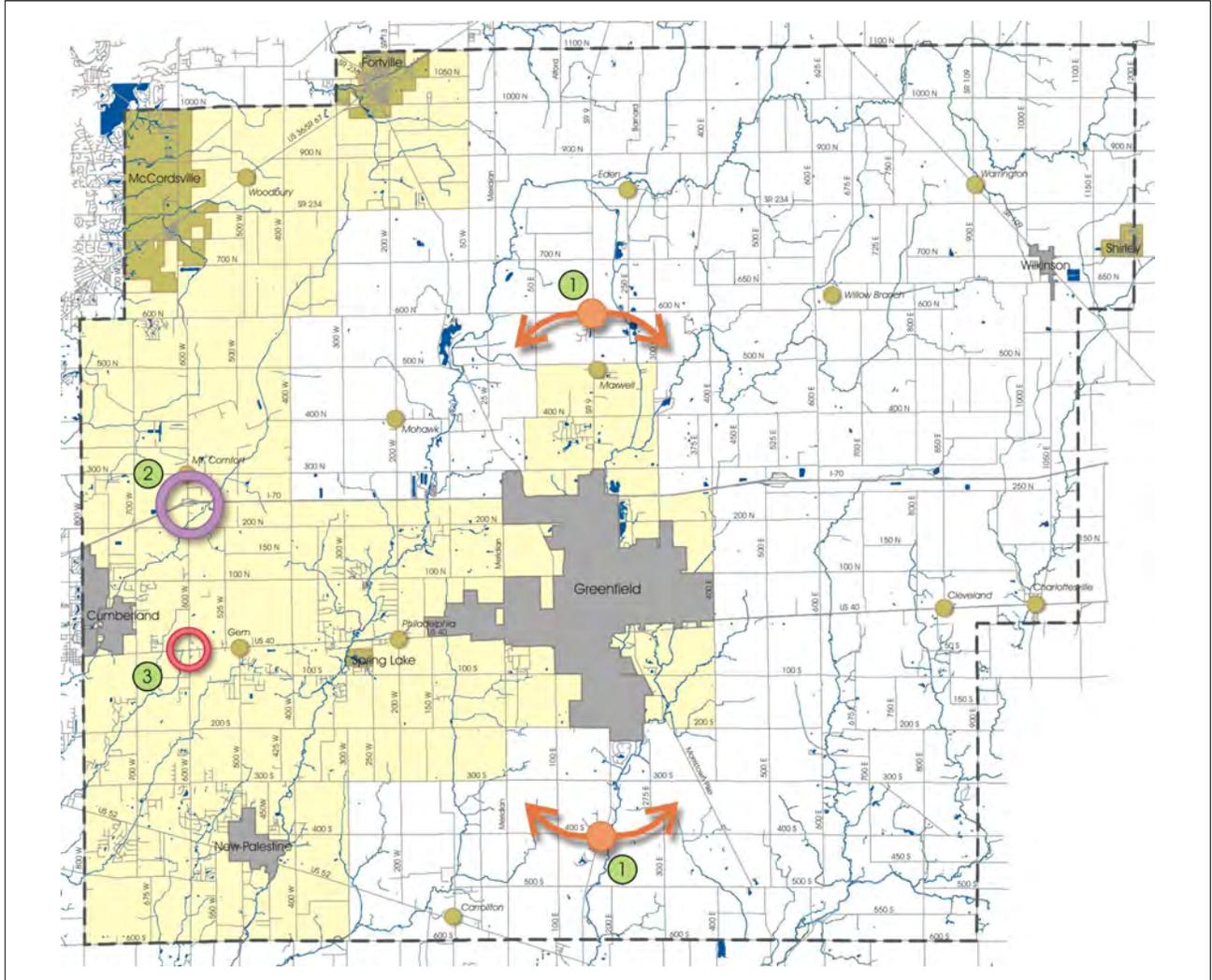
- Land availability
- Proximity to a Regional Commercial node
- Vehicle & Pedestrian Access
- Impact to the Thoroughfare System
- Impact to nearby Neighborhoods
- Impact on the Community Character



CRITICAL AREAS

The critical transportation areas identified for Hancock County are based on issues identified by the public, steering committee discussion, and transportation analysis conducted as part of the planning process. The critical areas listed below should be considered alongside the other contents of this plan. The plan recognizes the relationship between transportation and land use, and it is important that both elements are taken under consideration.

The map below identifies the four critical areas discussed in this section.



CRITICAL AREAS (CONT.)

1) STATE ROAD 9 / GREENFIELD BYPASS

As part of the 1998 Transportation Equity Act passed by Congress, a study of the State Road 9 corridor in Hancock County was commissioned. Specifically this study examined the corridor between State Road 234 and US 52, focusing mainly on the portion running through Greenfield. The study evaluated existing and projected traffic counts and accident data to formulate potential changes to the road corridor. While the study is still on-going, there are a number of alternatives under consideration, including (1) no changes, (2) minor local improvements not funded by the state, (3) state-sponsored minor improvements along the existing road corridor, and (4) construction of a new State Road 9 “bypass” around Greenfield.

The bypass alternative is one that would have a significant impact on the county. Such a facility would not only open up large areas of land for development, but would also raise the possibility of a new interchange at I-70. The county needs to be prepared to address the land use impacts of such a project. The county should coordinate with State and local authorities on the progress of this study. Issues to consider relating to this project include:

- Appropriate locations for commercial development along the corridor;
- Acceptable levels of residential density in the vicinity of the corridor;
- Access control standards for development adjacent to the roadway; and
- Impacts on the traffic patterns of adjoining county roads.

If it is decided that a bypass around Greenfield is the desired solution, it is crucial that Hancock County play a major role in planning such a corridor. Any such road would have a significant impact on traffic and land use patterns in the county. A significant amount of daily vehicle trips would be shifted out of Greenfield and on to county roads, perhaps resulting in a need for upgrades to these roads. The county should be given an opportunity to participate so that it can effectively plan for the impacts on its facilities.

2) I-70 / MOUNT COMFORT ROAD INTERCHANGE

The Mount Comfort Road interchange with I-70 is the only interstate access in the county outside of the State Road 9 interchange in Greenfield. Currently, the state is constructing improvements to the interchange that will widen the bridge over I-70, provide a more efficient traffic flow to and from the interstate, and accommodate a future widening of I-70. The widening of I-70 is projected to occur around 2010, and will result in a 6 lane profile east to State Road 9. The Future Land Use Map (Chapter 6) designates the area around this interchange as a Regional Commercial node, providing the basis for increased commercial development there in the future. Issues to consider at this location include:

- Access control for properties adjacent to Mount Comfort Road;
- Aesthetic standards that reinforce the area’s role as a gateway to the county; and
- Opportunities for the creation of mixed-use development

3) INTERSECTION OF U.S. 40 AND MOUNT COMFORT ROAD

The intersection of U.S. 40 and Mount Comfort Road represents a significant focus of future growth in Hancock County. It is designated as a Regional Commercial node, and will need to accommodate a high volume of traffic as development occurs. In addition, growth from the Town of Cumberland, which currently straddles the western county line, continues to move toward this intersection. It will be important to carefully manage access to both roadways in the vicinity of this intersection so that the safety and efficiency of the intersection is maintained. Further, streetscape improvements planned for a portion of U.S. 40 within Cumberland should be considered for extension to Mount Comfort Road to help create a consistent aesthetic identity for the area.

The intersection of U.S. 40 and Mount Comfort Road is also significant due to the potential implications of mass transit facilities. As illustrated on page 7-12, plans for a future regional transit network may include a station in the vicinity of this intersection. The Mass Transit Plan provides additional guidance for addressing the impacts of such a facility in this area.

TRAILS PLAN

A greenways trail system can provide many benefits to a community. In particular, a trail system can:

- Help to reduce traffic congestion by providing an alternative to automobile travel;
- Increase the accessibility of key destinations in the community;
- Enhance the quality of life of the community;
- Help economic development efforts by making the community more attractive to prospective employers and residents; and
- Protect the environment by reducing automobile emissions and preserving natural areas.

The County encourages developers to include multi-use pathways within new subdivisions, and to locate these facilities outside of the public right-of-way. At some point in the future, the County may choose to construct certain trail segments, but at this time the County prefers that such construction be left to individual developers or to the cities and towns within Hancock County. The concepts illustrated here should be used as a guide by developers as they create trails within their developments. Any new trails built as part of a development should be separated from public roadways for safety purposes.

The Trails Plan Map does not identify specific trail routes. Rather, the map identifies key locations and destinations that could benefit from being connected by trails. Some of those key destinations are:

- Cities & Towns
- Rural Villages
- Commercial Areas, such as designated Regional & Community Commercial Nodes, and Mixed Use Corridors
- Employment Areas, such as designated Business Park and Industrial areas
- Schools

When construction of a trail is undertaken, these key destinations should be considered high priorities for linkage to the trail. While a trail within a single development may not be able to provide a complete linkage, it should be designed within the context of a larger future system. One important opportunity is the use of stream corridors as routes for new trails. These stream corridors are highlighted on the Trails Plan Map, and they provide numerous potential connecting routes between the key destinations.

The Monon Trail in Indianapolis, shown here, has greatly enhanced the quality of life in that community. In addition, it has spurred high-quality commercial and residential growth around it to take advantage of the amenities the trail provides.



CHAPTER

8

TOWN SUBAREAS

SECTION II: IMPLEMENTATION



INTRODUCTION

Hancock County is home to numerous small towns that have established their own identities. Several of these are incorporated municipalities, while others are unincorporated conglomerations of residential, commercial and industrial uses. This comprehensive plan applies to the unincorporated towns as well as to Fortville, McCordsville, Shirley, and Spring Lake, which are members of the Area Plan Commission. It is important that each of these communities is given the opportunity to thrive within the context of the greater Hancock County vision.

Maintaining the individual character of the small towns in Hancock County is a key factor in their ability to thrive as communities. The county should support them as points for focusing development and services in a way that reduces costs and saves land for other uses. This will allow each town to retain its own identity while helping to create a high quality of life for the entire county.

This chapter provides guidance for the future growth and development of Fortville, McCordsville, Shirley, and Spring Lake. In particular, it gives greater detail on the Future Land Use and Thoroughfare Plans that should guide these communities.

Traditional neighborhoods, like this one on the north side of Shirley, are key components of the character of Hancock County's small towns.



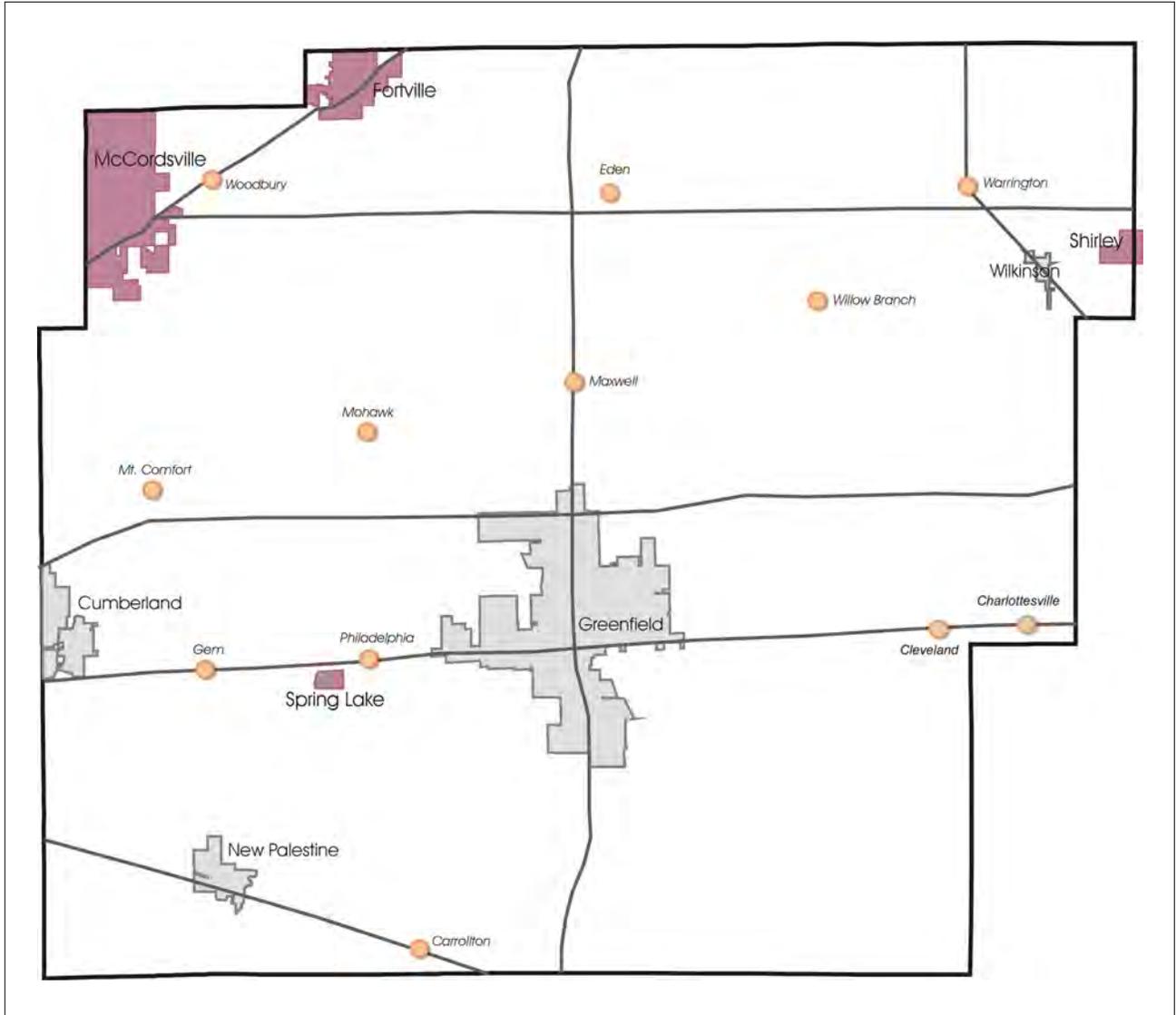
ROLE OF THE AREA PLAN COMMISSION

The Area Plan Commission was established as a partnership between the county and the member towns. This partnership is intended to foster coordination and cooperation between the various jurisdictions, providing for a more logical, cohesive, and balanced land use pattern. It is important that all members of the Area Plan Commission work together to protect and enhance the quality of life of everyone in the county.

Due to the legal structure of the Area Plan Commission, the member towns do not have planning and zoning control over areas beyond their corporation limits, nor do the other communities in the county that are not members. Even so, development adjacent to these cities and towns is likely to be annexed by those communities at some time in the future. The growth that occurs in these areas should reflect the patterns that will best serve the needs of the towns, particularly relating to infrastructure and services. It is important that county development policies in areas immediately adjacent to the towns are supportive of the ability of the towns to annex growth occurring around them.

LOCATION MAP

The map below illustrates the location of the four member towns of the Hancock County Area Plan Commission. The communities in grey have their own Plan Commissions.



McCordsville

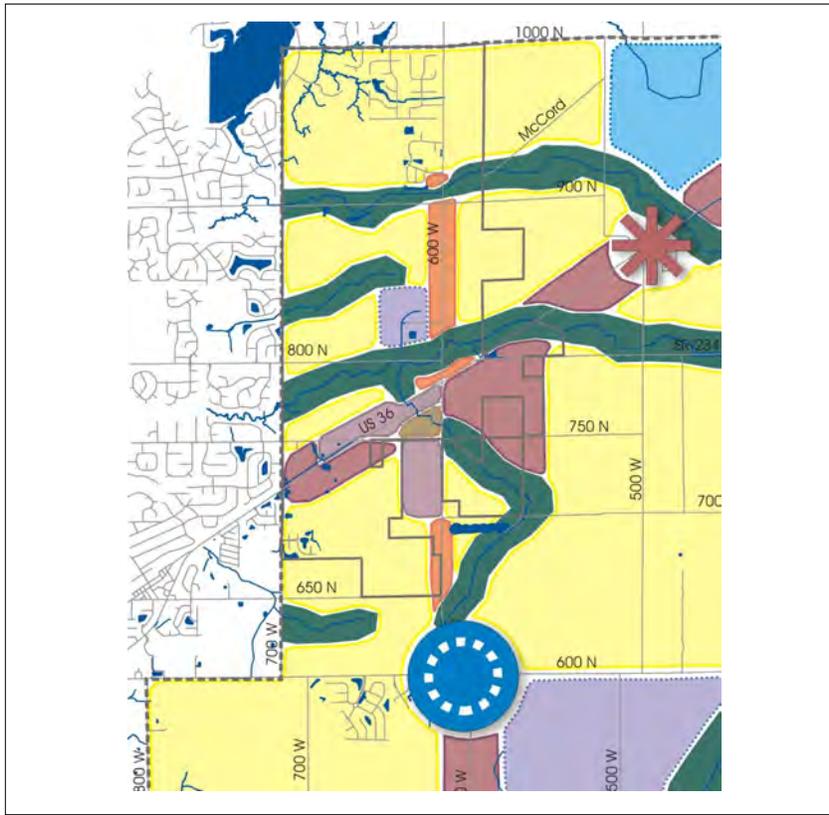
The Town of McCordsville was originally platted in 1865, but was not officially incorporated until 1988. The town draws its name from the McCord family, early settlers in the area. While a small area of the originally platted town remains, much of the land within the current town boundaries is comprised of new subdivisions and undeveloped land. It is this area outside the old town center that is experiencing some of the greatest development pressure in Hancock County.

Although McCordsville is a member of the Hancock County Area Plan Commission, they have also developed their own master plan. This was done to ensure that local needs and issues were represented on a more detailed level. That master plan is founded on three main principles. The first is to grow with a plan, meaning that future land use decisions should be consistent with the master plan. The second is that growth should be concurrent with infrastructure development, meaning that the town should coordinate future growth with infrastructure availability to achieve its development goals. The third principle is that the town should strive to maintain its small town character and spirit as growth continues.

The McCordsville Master Plan should be used for specific guidance on land use & development issues within the town. The Future Land Use Plan and Thoroughfare Plan maps presented here are based on the same maps contained in McCordsville's Master Plan.

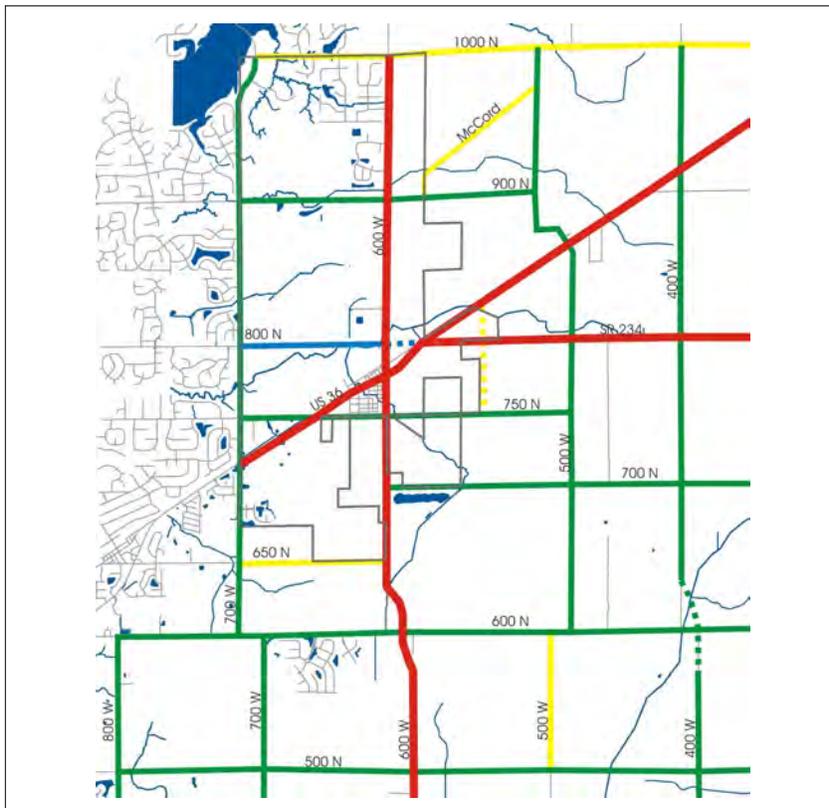
This antique store is one of many local businesses located along the US 36 corridor in McCordsville.





FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

- Conservation
- Suburban Residential (Low Density)
- Traditional Residential
- Town Center
- Business Park
- Industrial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Mixed-Use Corridor
- Rural Village
- Community Commercial
- Town Boundary
- County Boundary



THOROUGHFARE PLAN

- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Minor Arterial (Proposed)
- Major Collector
- Major Collector (Proposed)
- Minor Collector
- Minor Collector (Proposed)
- Local Road

FORTVILLE

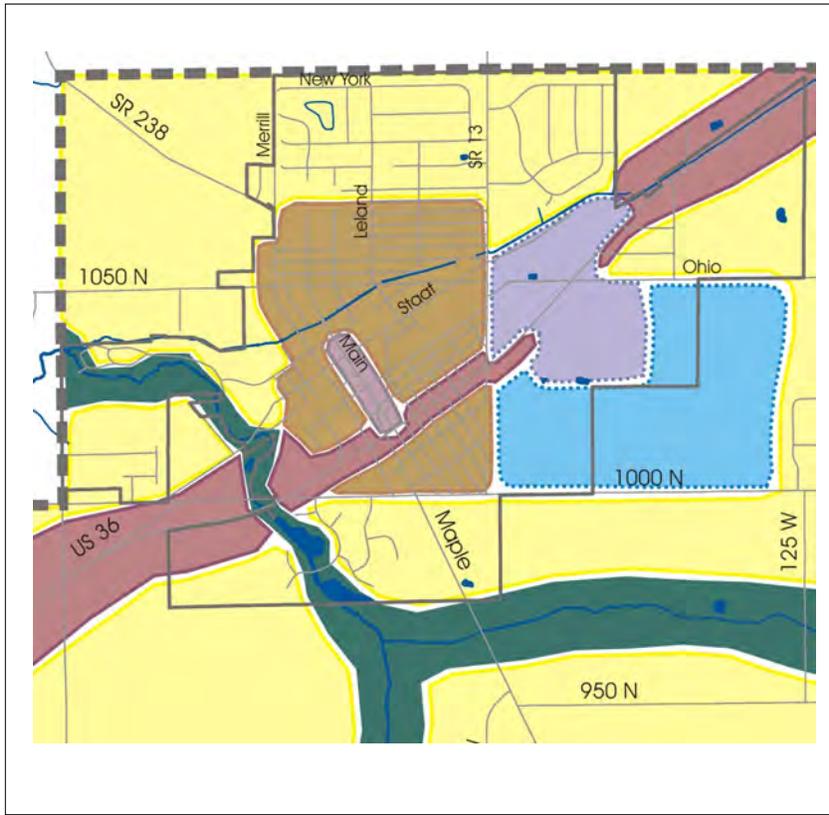
The Town of Fortville is located in the northwest corner of Hancock County, just to the east of McCordsville. The first settlers arrived in the Fortville area in the early 1800s, and the first plat survey of the town occurred in 1849. The town was officially incorporated in 1865 and at that time had a population of approximately 240 residents. Today, Fortville's population is estimated to be nearly 3,500. Unlike McCordsville, there is very little undeveloped land left within Fortville's boundaries. In fact, it is estimated that there is approximately 100 acres of undeveloped land left today.

Fortville has a well-developed town center, having been established since the mid-1800s. This has allowed the town to maintain a unique character and identity over time. As new development occurs, residents of the town want to see that identity maintained. This is why it is important that the needs of the town are supported in the county comprehensive plan, particularly in areas just outside of the towns boundaries.

Like McCordsville, Fortville has undertaken its own planning efforts in order to have a stronger stake in directing its future. In 2000, a plan for Fortville was created by Ball State University. It included a thorough public input process that helped to identify the needs and desires of Fortville residents. The Ball State plan should be viewed as the foundation for the Future Land Use and Thoroughfare Plan that the county comprehensive plan provides for Fortville.

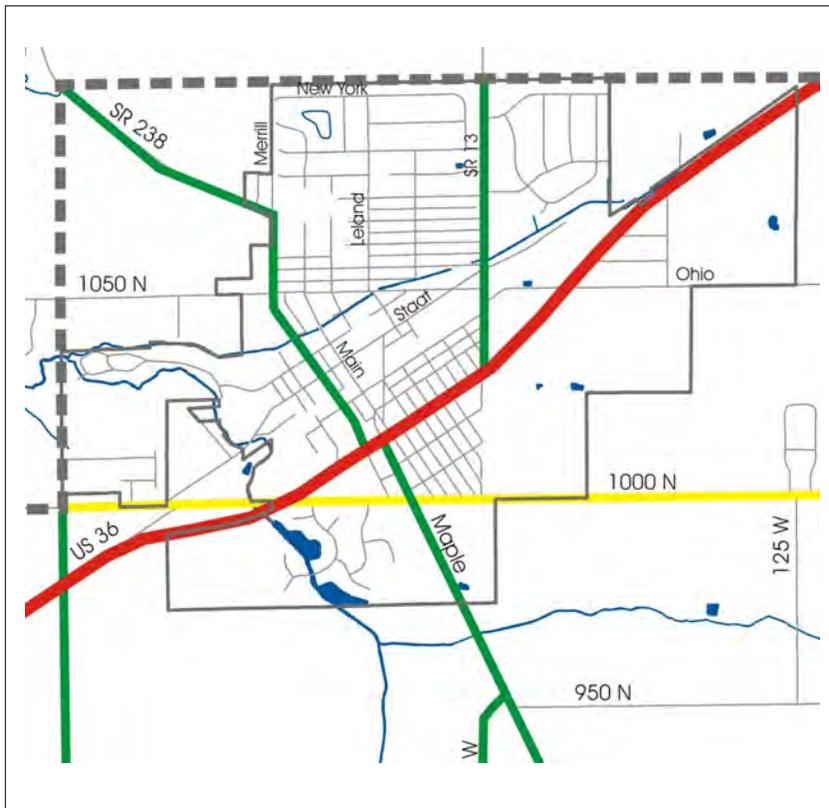
At right is an example of the many historic buildings still existing in Fortville's downtown.





FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

- Conservation
- Suburban Residential (Low Density)
- Traditional Residential
- Town Center
- Industrial
- Business Park
- Mixed-Use Corridor
- Town Boundary
- County Boundary



THOROUGHFARE PLAN

- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Minor Arterial (Proposed)
- Major Collector
- Major Collector (Proposed)
- Minor Collector
- Minor Collector (Proposed)
- Local Road

SHIRLEY

The Town of Shirley was first platted in 1890, at the crossing of two railroad lines in northeastern Hancock County. The town actually lies partially within Hancock County and partially within Henry County, although the town is a member of the Area Plan Commission. It was named after a Mr. Shirley, who was a conductor on one of the railroads running through the town. Its population peaked in 1910 with a total of 1,519 residents as reported by the census for that year. In 1908, a massive fire burned a significant portion of the town, causing the destruction of most of the original town buildings.

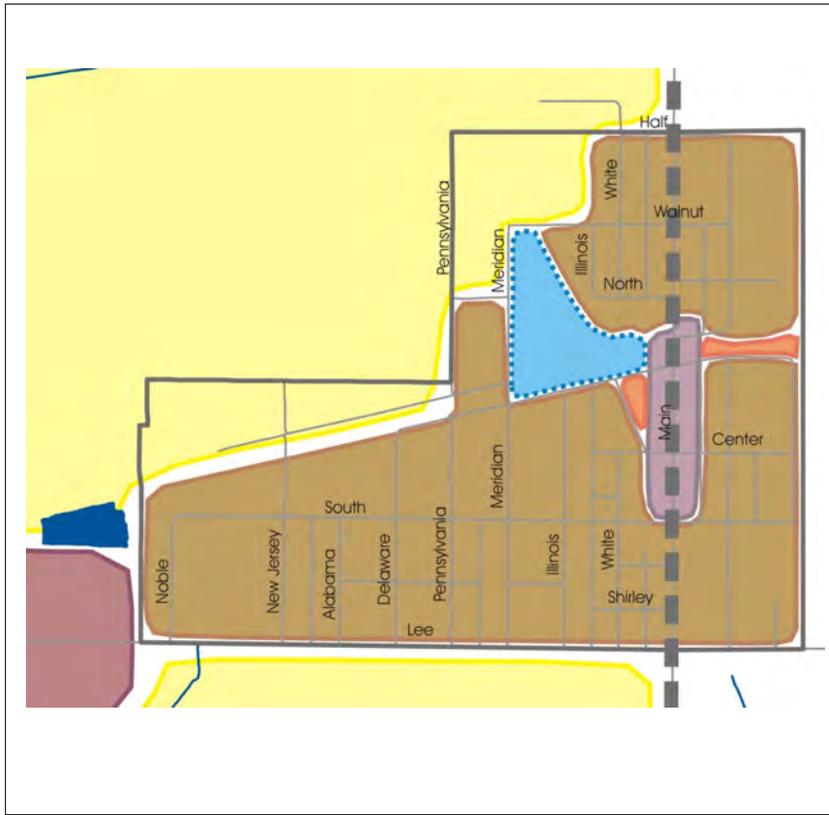
Today, Shirley is home to just over 800 residents. The town recently used a grant from the Indiana Department of commerce to improve its water system, and it provides sewer and water services to the nearby Town of Wilkinson. There is also a historical museum in the town that displays artifacts from the town's past.

The Town's land use pattern is reasonably well established, and the land use designations provided for it are designed to maintain this existing character. The town center and traditional residential patterns are important features that should be preserved. Main Street has been labeled a Minor Collector because although it is a significant travel route for the town, it is not necessary to designate it for additional travel lanes in the future. Such changes would be detrimental to the character of the town's core.

While no additional areas of residential or commercial growth have been identified beyond Shirley's existing town boundaries, the new sewer and water services provide the potential for such growth. Additional growth, should it occur, would be most appropriate in the area between Shirley and Wilkinson. This would allow development to serve both communities and prevent growth from spreading outward into the rural areas of eastern Hancock County. Any new commercial development should be small in scale, serving the immediate area around it. Residential development should continue the traditional neighborhood pattern outward.

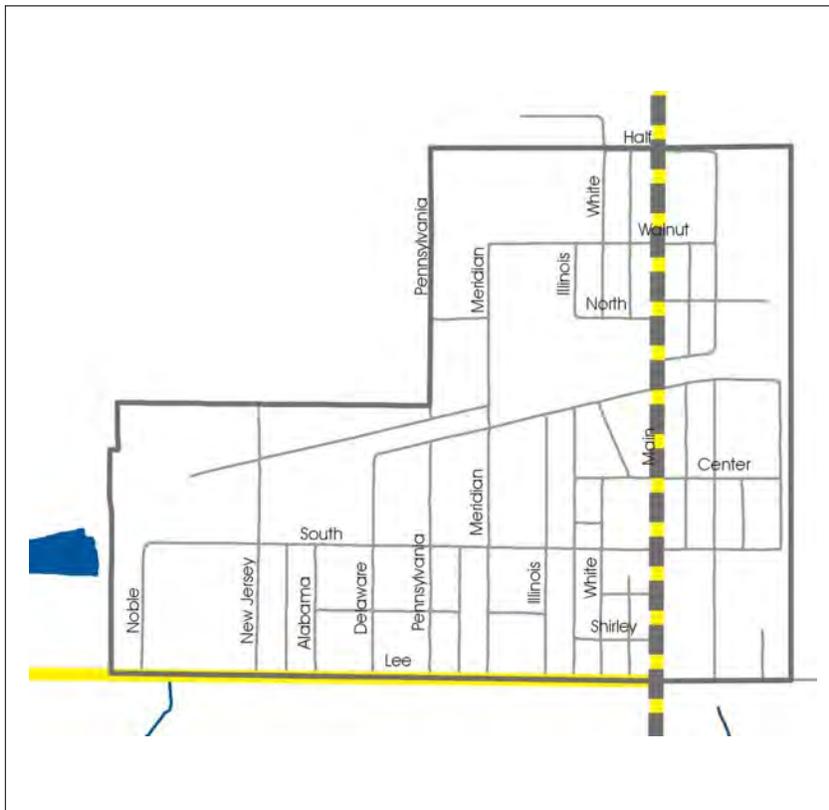
The Shirley Volunteer Fire Department, located in the heart of the town, provides fire protection to the community.





FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

- Traditional Residential
- Suburban Residential (Low Density)
- Town Center
- Mixed Use Corridor
- Industrial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Town Boundary
- County Boundary



THOROUGHFARE PLAN

- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Minor Arterial (Proposed)
- Major Collector
- Major Collector (Proposed)
- Minor Collector
- Minor Collector (Proposed)
- Local Road

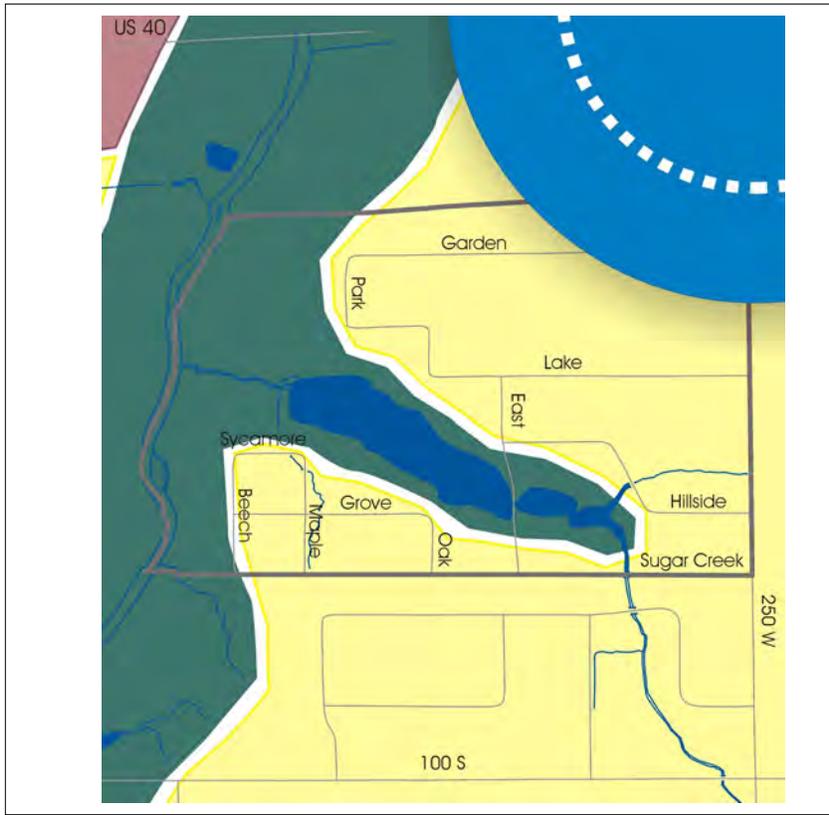
SPRING LAKE

Spring Lake is the smallest of the Area Plan Commission member towns, with a population of approximately 262. It also encompasses the smallest land area of any incorporated town in Hancock County, covering an estimated total of 0.2 square miles. It is made up of a conglomeration of homes centered on Spring Lake, the lake which the town is named after. It is located west of Greenfield, and just south of the U.S. 40 corridor.

It is anticipated that the changes that impact the town will largely be from forces external to it, with the area within the town's boundaries remaining in its residential state. A Community Commercial node is designated along U.S. 40 just north of the town, providing an area that could serve the towns needs, but also increase traffic on nearby roads. Similarly, the Mixed Use Corridor designation along U.S. 40 should provide a buffer between the residential nature of the town and more intense commercial development near the highway.

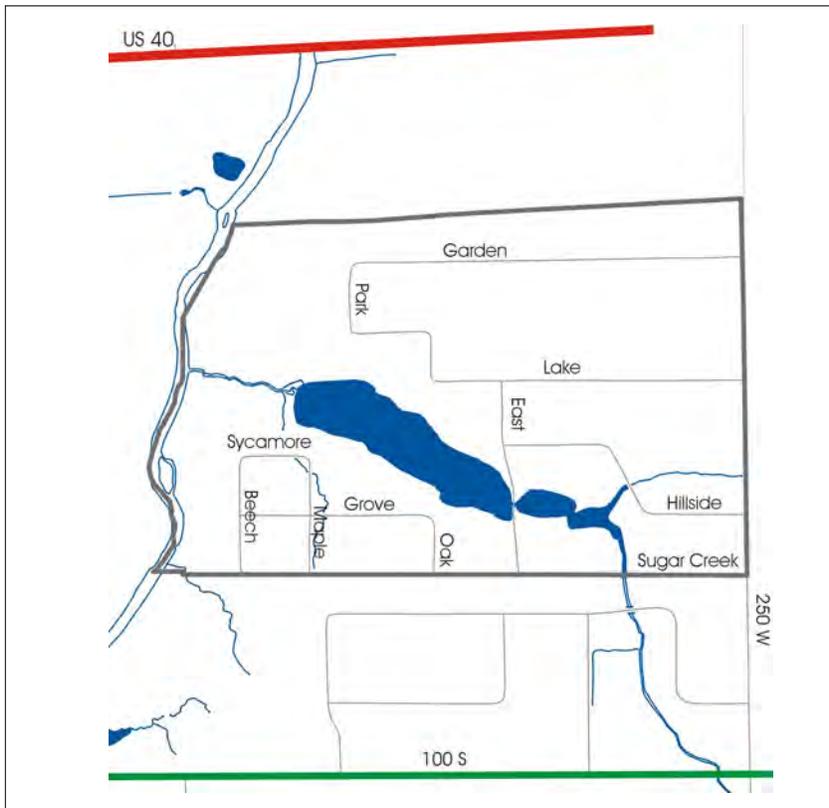
While Spring Lake is the smallest of Area Plan Commission's member towns, it still offers its residents amenities such as the Community Building shown here.





FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

- Conservation
- Suburban Residential (Moderate Density)
- Mixed-Use Corridor
- Community Commercial
- Town Boundary



THOROUGHFARE PLAN

- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Minor Arterial (Proposed)
- Major Collector
- Major Collector (Proposed)
- Minor Collector
- Minor Collector (Proposed)
- Local Road

8

TOWN SUBAREAS

CHAPTER 9

VISIONING DATA

PART III: SUPPORTING DATA



INTRODUCTION

The input of Hancock County residents and stakeholders was a key component in the development of this document. In the course of developing the new Comprehensive Plan for Hancock County, a number of public input methods were used. This included a project steering committee, two rounds of public workshops, a series of key stakeholder interviews, a project website, and public presentations of the draft plan. The following chapter provides a summary of the information gathered as a result of these input activities. For more detailed data related to the public input phases of the project, please refer to the Public Input reports on file at the Area Plan Commission office.

Nearly 600 participants turned out during the two phases of public workshops. Pictured at right is a workshop that took place at the Mt. Vernon Intermediate School.



Many stakeholders play a role in the growth and development of Hancock County. Each of these groups was therefore closely involved in developing the plan that will guide this growth. Two rounds of key stakeholder interviews were conducted early in the planning process. As a result, stakeholders were able to express the concerns, ideas, and plans of the community groups they represent.

COUNTY OFFICIALS

County officials voiced concerns about the mix of housing types available in the County. There seem to be many lower end, production homes but not a variety of more expensive homes. It is especially important to provide higher-end homes to allow people that work in Hancock County to live here also (i.e. Lilly employees). The County is currently challenged by an increasing demand for services despite a limited amount of tax money to support the services. There is a perception that the last comprehensive plan was not followed. It was felt that what is decided through this new comprehensive plan process should then be supported more consistently in the future. One issue noted was the potential for certain areas to be incorporated based on the population density and services being provided. It was suggested that the new plan look in to this issue.

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

This group noted a lack of custom home development in Hancock County. The County needs to have better housing diversity as well as a variety of interesting activities and resources to draw the types of jobs and residents that they are seeking. The attractiveness of the community is important in this effort, and tools need to be in place to make sure that the right kind of development is supported, and undesirable development is prevented. People tend to spend their money outside of the County when they shop, so the County needs to look at ways of keeping people and their money here. The County and the municipalities need to work together to draw good employers to the community.

SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

One of the main issues with the school districts is growth of their enrollment and the need to provide adequate facilities to serve the students. As facilities expand, they need new sewer and water service. It seems to be easier (and less expensive) for them to build their own treatment facilities than to tap onto existing services. Mount Vernon Schools are currently involved in the development approval process, which they see as a positive measure. The school districts meet regularly with local officials to talk about common issues, and there is generally perceived to be good communication happening. The schools are concerned about the condition of roads as they pertain to the school bus routes. The transportation system should be a key factor in the new plan, as it is very important to the school systems.

KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS (CONT.)

MUTUAL AID/EMERGENCY SERVICES

There is good coordination between the emergency services throughout the County. The departments share resources and Hancock County has dispatch responsibilities. They can all communicate with each other through the existing communications system, but it needs to be updated. It is particularly important to do this so that the county departments can also communicate on the same frequency as state officials. In the long term, they would like to see even more coordination and integration (such as in Marion County). Manpower issues are arising due to the rate of development and growth. Greater demand for emergency services by residential and commercial growth is spreading such services somewhat thin at times. Some long term method of providing adequate funding to provide services among the various jurisdictions will be important as growth continues.

TOWN OFFICIALS

There should be greater coordination between the County and municipalities in terms of the zoning standards that they use. The standards should work together and not create conflicts between the jurisdictions. McCordsville is concerned that current County development standards will cause high-density growth around the town and prevent it from evolving in the way it wants to. They are creating their own comprehensive plan to make sure their unique identity is preserved. Most municipalities are requiring that development be annexed before they can have sewer service. Another example of a need to coordinate is along the National Road. Cumberland plans to initiate an overlay zone to protect the character of this area, and this effort should be considered by the County as well so that the development standards don't conflict.

FARM BUREAU

They are concerned about the conversion of farmland to new development in some areas of the County. There is a perception that all of the money and services go to the fast growing areas, and that the rest of the County is left to fend for itself. Farmers are increasingly being faced with residential developments that move in near them, and then raise complaints about farming practices. In addition, it is difficult to move farm equipment in areas where developments and population are increasing. There is also a perception that planning and zoning decisions are only made based on who shouts the loudest, and that what people can do with their land is decided by people other than the land owners. They do not want unchecked growth to overrun the County, and believe that maybe the proposed impact fees should be set significantly higher. They feel that more commercial development needs to be designated so that the tax base can be increased to support schools and other services that are badly needed.

BUILDERS & DEVELOPERS

Since most areas are zoned agricultural, every time a developer wants to do a housing development, they have to get a rezoning. It would make sense to direct development to areas where there are existing utilities services, a policy that should apply to all types of development. It is important to make sure there are adequate areas pre-selected for commercial and residential development, and that the zoning districts are very distinctly defined. There is a concern that the proposed impact fees will hurt both commercial and residential development because people here can't afford the fees like people in Fishers or Noblesville can. Further, Fishers and Noblesville seem to have a more clear connection between their impact fees and the projects they will apply to. It is the amount of the proposed fees that is the real issue. One negative perception is the lack of good north-south transportation routes, particularly with respect to high-density development. This group also sensed a lack of variety of price ranges of homes in the County. Generally, they felt that the new plan needs to be flexible enough to work with where the market goes.

REALTORS

Drainage throughout the County is perceived to be a concern. It has stopped residential development from occurring in some areas. There is concern about the lack of County-wide coordination and oversight of utilities (particularly the private utilities). They feel that there is a silent majority of residents who want farmland preserved, but that they are reluctant to speak out. It seems like most of the vocal farm preservationists are not actual farmers. The Realtors noted a need for more homes in the upper price ranges as opposed to the typical production home development that is currently happening. People want big homes and a few acres of land, but can't find it unless they go out to Hamilton or Shelby County. There seems to be a conflict between where the County wants growth and where some of the towns want growth. It is also important that the plan take in to account the future transportation plans that INDOT has for the County, such as the creation of a SR 9 bypass.

COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Sewer services are an issue in many areas of the County. Charlottesville has some of the most pressing needs in this area, but many of the small incorporated and unincorporated towns are facing similar challenges. The new plan must consider soil conditions when designating land uses for certain areas of the County. Large-scale, PUD development is a concern due to economic and health issues, and many new subdivisions are also being built with septic systems. The new plan and ordinances should seek to reduce "spot" zoning.

COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

The first goal of the new plan should be to locate new development appropriately, and then the thoroughfare plan should design a road system to support that development. It makes sense to be proactive rather than reactive when planning for the County's transportation needs. The Impact Fee Report is going to be incorporated into the comprehensive plan, and should be recognized in the new plan as well. The County's goal is to plan for a level of service of "C" on County roads.

KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS (CONT.)

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

There is concern over the cost of services for new development. Development needs to be guided in a way that reduces the impact on County services. It would make sense for growth to occur near existing cities, where it can use available resources and be easily annexed. Farmland preservation is important, but should not be forced on farmers or take away anyone's development rights. At the same time, as development occurs, the right to continue farming operations needs to be protected.

PURDUE EXTENSION/SOLID WASTE DISTRICT

There is currently no need for a new landfill, but the possibility of needing one in the future should be recognized in the new plan. Guidance for where and how to locate one would be helpful. There is some interest in increasing recycling services, and perhaps establishing a County recycling facility. The new plan and zoning ordinance need to recognize corporate farming and confined feeding as a use different than a smaller, family farm, and deal with it appropriately.

HANCOCK COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Cultural diversity is becoming more important in the County, which has an effect on land use. Lower value homes with lower income residents can often correlate with an increased need for social services. More diversity of homes and incomes is needed so that funding and volunteers for these services is available. The County should not fight growth trends, but rather manage the change in a way that can benefit everyone.

ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION

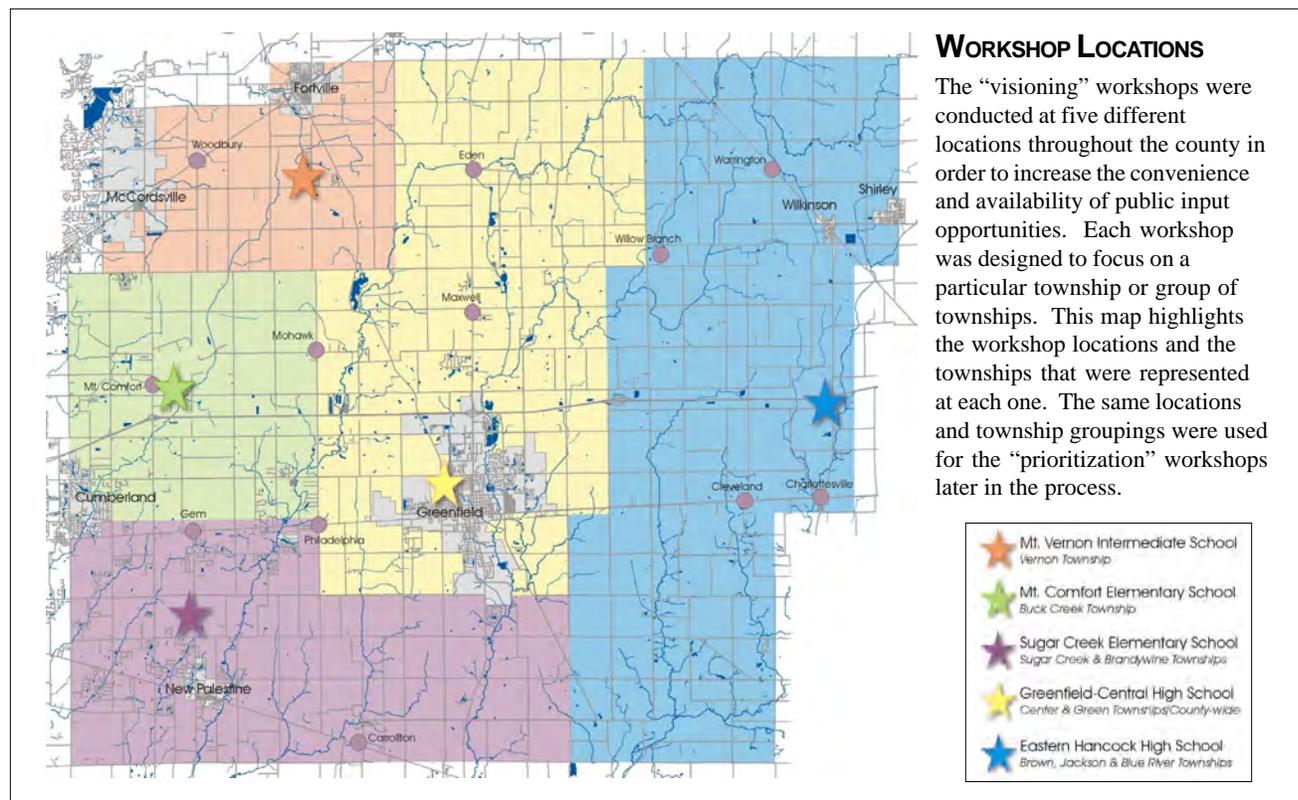
Educational opportunities are becoming a more pressing need for Hancock County as it grows. There is a lack of identity with Hancock County on the west side - these residents tend to identify more with Indianapolis. The National Road is a valuable asset for the County, and protecting the character along this corridor is important. Hancock County needs to follow the example of Intelliplex in Shelby County as a new way of doing business & industrial park development.

OVERVIEW

Six “visioning” public workshops were conducted throughout Hancock County in order to gather a variety of public input. The workshops were designed to be forums where concerned citizens could voice their hopes and concerns for the future of Hancock County. Each of the six workshops was structured and presented in the same format, and was designed to give each township the opportunity to address their individual needs and concerns. All workshops were conducted in local school facilities. The workshops began with an overview of the planning process as well as an educational discussion of the purpose and function of a comprehensive plan and a zoning ordinance.

The majority of each workshop was devoted to allowing participants to discuss their thoughts and feelings about Hancock County. Attendees were arranged in groups of 10 to 12 people for this part of the meeting. The discussion was divided into three components. First was a discussion of the “Assets” of Hancock County. Second was a discussion of the “Needs” of Hancock County. Finally, participants discussed issues and concerns specific to their township. Each group selected one of its members to record the discussion. At the end of the discussion, people were given the opportunity to vote for the most important needs. After the voting, a representative of each group presented their discussion results to the whole gathering.

Overall, the workshops included 419 different participants. The Greenfield Daily Reporter covered each one of the workshops. Many common themes were developed as the input was gathered from each group of participants. These themes guided the development of the format for the next round of workshops, and ultimately the goals and policies of the new comprehensive plan.



The photos below illustrate the activities that took place at the “visioning” workshops.



VISIONING WORKSHOPS (CONT.)

ASSETS SUMMARY

For the purposes of this document, it is efficient to combine the assets listed by participants at all of the workshops into a single summary. As the discussion of Assets focused on the entire county, many of the same themes and issues appeared at each workshop. The following is a list of the Assets noted by workshop participants.

- **Schools:** Participants were pleased with the quality of the schools systems available in Hancock County. They felt the school sizes were appropriate, and were happy with ISTEP performance of the students.
- **Location:** The county’s proximity to Indianapolis was noted by many attendees. People enjoy having easy access to the jobs, shopping, recreation, and cultural activities available around Indianapolis. Many also noted the convenience to other cities afforded by I-70 and other nearby highways.
- **Crime:** People felt that crime in the County was very low and that it was a safe place to raise a family.
- **Community:** Many participants noted the values of County residents and the sense of community in the County as assets. People also valued the work ethic, community involvement, and lack of bureaucracy in the County. The supportive business and philanthropic atmosphere was also noted.
- **Housing:** People viewed low-density housing and the relative lack of housing developments in some areas of the County as assets. Many listed the good selection & quality of housing, as well as its affordability as assets.
- **Parks & Recreation:** People noted the available recreation activities, such as hunting, fishing, athletics, 4-H, golfing, camping, and many other as assets. Several people also noted the Pennsy Trail as an asset of the County.
- **Open Space & Natural Resources:** Participants valued the existing open spaces and wooded areas throughout the County. They listed the clean environment and natural rolling topography of places like Blue River Township as assets.
- **Agriculture:** The County’s agricultural heritage was strongly supported as an asset throughout the workshops. People noted the County’s good soils, available farm land, local agri-businesses, and rural character as assets in this category.
- **Infrastructure & Services:** A wide array of county services and other local institutions were noted as assets during the process. Mt. Comfort Airport, Hancock Memorial Hospital, police & fire services, and local roads were among the assets noted. Also suggested as assets were the library system, access to utility services, and the local newspaper.
- **Historic Resources:** Historic sites & structures were noted as assets generally, with several specific locations being noted during the discussions. Included here as the National Road, the Riley heritage, Round Barns, the Log Jail, and many cultural events that celebrate the County’s history.
- **Taxes:** Taxes were listed as an asset because they are perceived to be low in comparison to places like Marion or Hamilton Counties.

- **Economic Resources:** People felt that access to jobs locally and within a short commute was an important asset. In particular, the Lilly facilities were mentioned repeatedly as an asset to the community. People also noted the quality workforce available in Hancock County.
- **Commercial Businesses:** The variety of local shopping opportunities was seen as an asset. Recent developments that have brought in stores like Lowe's were view positively. In addition, small businesses and the organizations that support them were listed as assets.
- **Growth & Development:** People saw Hancock County as having a great opportunity to plan for the future and learn from other's mistakes before growth becomes overwhelming. The current situation of relatively low population density and a good supply of available land were assets for many participants.
- **Community Character:** Participants were very supportive of the current rural, small-town atmosphere of most of Hancock County. They valued this lifestyle as an alternative to the more urban setting of Indianapolis or other cities. The peaceful, quiet setting of the county was a frequently listed asset.
- **Miscellaneous:** A wide variety of items listed as assets did not fit in to the categories already mentioned. Generally, people listed things like the County's small bureaucracy, County government accessibility, and the need to protect all of those items listed as assets.

The photos below illustrate some of the needs noted by workshop participants. In particular, they highlight the need to continue providing high quality services (such as schools), the need to work together with the small towns, and the need to ensure balance between growth and continued farming practices.



VISIONING WORKSHOPS (CONT.)

NEEDS SUMMARY

The second component of each of the workshops was a discussion of Hancock County's most pressing needs. The following summary is an overview of the needs identified throughout all of the workshops.

- **Drainage:** The most talked about issue was drainage in all areas of the County. People are perceiving flooding problems, and many are attributing this to disruptions in the normal drainage system due to development of housing subdivisions.
- **Housing:** Most participants felt that there was a large supply of starter-homes, but that not enough high-end, custom homes were coming in to the County. There was a strong desire to find a better balance among the sizes, types, and price ranges of housing available to County residents.
- **Infrastructure:** Infrastructure in general, and utilities services in particular, were of concern to County residents. Many small towns throughout the County are dealing with serious sewer issues, and there is continued concern about additional County subdivisions being built on septic systems rather than connecting to a sewer utility.
- **Tax Base:** A large number of participants felt that the tax burden of funding public services fell too greatly on residential development. People were seeking a more balanced tax base which included good commercial and industrial development to share those costs.
- **Growth Management:** Many participants felt that the County needed a new plan that effectively managed growth, rather than allowing it to happen in what appears to be a unorganized manner. People were concerned that the current pattern of growth is hurting the County's ability to provide services and having a negative impact on the County's roads and overall quality of life. There was a strong suggestion that the County must stick to the new plan once it is enacted.
- **Recreation:** Continued population growth, particularly on the western side of the county, is bringing a call for more parks and recreation facilities. In particular, people are seeking parks to serve children in new housing developments, as well as bike and walking paths as a safe alternative to walking or riding in roads.
- **Farmland Preservation:** Preservation of the County's farming heritage was a key issue at the workshops. On one level, people were interested in protecting the land as open space, and on another level there was concern for protecting the right to farm. In all instances, there was recognition of a need to preserve property rights in balance with preserving the land.
- **Transportation:** While accessibility to key transportation routes was seen as an asset, additional access points were a much-discussed need. Specifically, participants noted the need for an additional interchange along I-70 between Mt. Comfort Road and State Road 9. Many also echoed the need for a State Road 9 bypass around Greenfield.

- **Economic Development:** In addition to balancing the tax base, people cited the need to attract new employers to the community to provide high-paying jobs for County residents. Many people recommended that future economic development efforts focus on biotechnology and other cutting-edge technology industry sectors.
- **Development Standards:** In addition to better managing the pace and location of growth, people felt that there should be stronger standards for the quality of new development. They do not want growth to detract from the existing quality of life. People felt that new development should be well designed and should have high quality construction.

Hands-on activities at the second round of workshops helped participants to get specific about land use and infrastructure issues in their Townships.



PRIORITIZATION WORKSHOPS

OVERVIEW

Between March 1 and March 15, a series of 6 “prioritization” public workshops was conducted to gather further, more specific input from the citizens of Hancock County. The locations and groupings of townships for each meeting were identical to the first round of “visioning” workshops conducted in January. This round of public input was designed to build on the first round. Participants were arranged in small groups to facilitate discussion during the activities that were conducted. Three separate activities were provided for the groups, and these activities were repeated at each of the 6 workshops. The activities included:

- **Needs Prioritization:** Participants set priorities among the various County needs identified at the initial round of workshops.
- **Land Use:** Participants made specific recommendations about where development should or should not occur in the County
- **Infrastructure:** Participants identified key infrastructure needs in the County, such as road and drainage improvements.

Overall, the workshops included 179 different participants over the course of the six sessions. Of this group, approximately 55% were people who had attended a workshop during the first round of public input in January. The rest were newcomers to the process. The summary on the following pages details the information gathered during the second round of public input.

NEEDS PRIORITIZATION ACTIVITY

One of the activities that occurred at each of the Prioritization workshops was a survey asking participants to set priorities among the needs suggested at the Visioning workshops. The important distinction was that participants were asked to consider how the list of county-wide needs reflected their particular township. The first question on the survey listed the top ten county needs as voted on during the visioning workshops. Participants were asked to select the three that were most important in their township, and to rank them 1 to 3. To tabulate the final totals, a ranking of 1 was assigned 3 points, a ranking of 2 received 2 points, and a ranking of 3 received 1 point. This method allowed a weighted score to be determined, rather than simply counting the total votes each listed item received. The table at the bottom of this page reflects the voting at each workshop, as well as a total for the county.

A review of the results in the table below helps to confirm many of the issues noted after the Visioning workshops. In the townships on the west side of the county, such as Vernon, Buck Creek, or Sugar Creek, a stronger emphasis was placed on services, amenities, and development aesthetics. Conversely, the emphasis on the eastern side of the county was on preserving the rural quality of life that those residents enjoy. Issues such as road and drainage improvements were noted as needs throughout the county.

	Need	Total	Buck Creek	Center, Green	Vernon	Brandywine, Sugar Creek	Blue River, Brown, Jackson	County-Wide
1	Carefully planned and balanced growth to make sure services and infrastructure can keep up.	183	27	21	40	43	21	31
2	Widen and improve existing roads to accommodate growth and improve safety.	166	24	31	21	42	30	18
3	Improved drainage systems and patterns throughout the County.	137	19	27	27	20	23	21
4	Farmland preservation (that also protects property rights.)	114	23	11	15	11	39	15
5	Balance and increase the tax base with good commercial and industrial development.	104	16	6	27	32	7	16
6	Improve the aesthetics of new development with better controls over design.	84	13	6	13	36	0	16
7	More housing in the upscale/custom home market.	74	22	6	23	12	2	9
8	Upgrade the quality and accessibility of utilities such as water and sewer.	67	3	5	6	33	11	9
9	Create an additional interchange on I-70 between Mt. Comfort Road and SR 9.	53	8	18	6	13	2	6
10	Parks and recreational facilities (particularly as part of new development.)	28	1	7	2	16	0	2

LAND USE ACTIVITY

The second activity at the workshops involved a discussion of land use issues, with participants again focusing on the needs of their particular township. Participants initially filled out a survey that asked whether their township needed more industrial, commercial, or residential development, or if some areas should be protected from development. Generally, western townships were more accepting of additional growth, provided it was well planned and aesthetically appropriate. Eastern townships preferred much slower growth, and were generally content with the level of growth currently occurring in their area of the county.

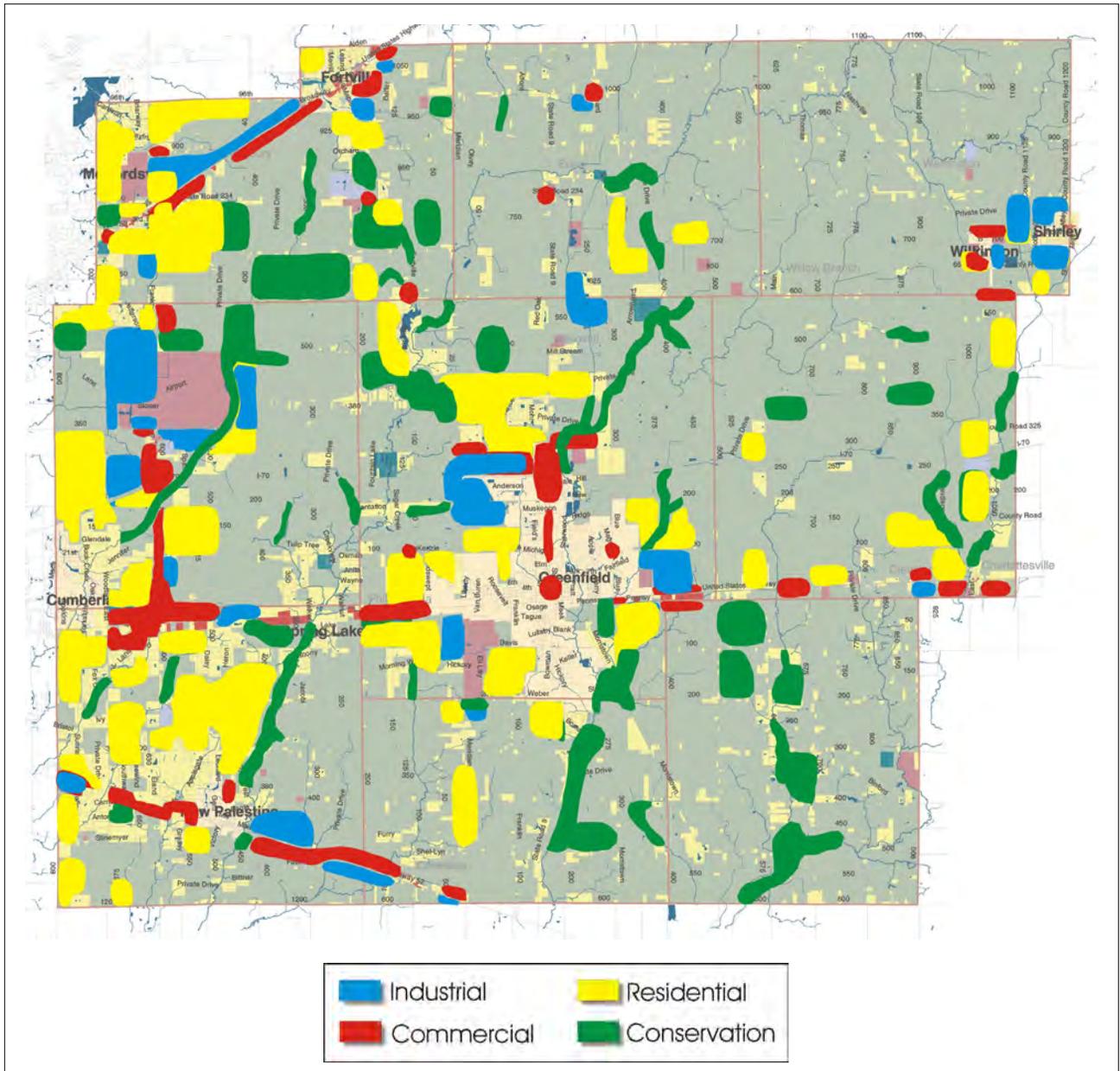
The second part of the survey was designed to help participants better define the characteristics of the new development they identified for their township. Under each category (Industrial, Commercial, Residential, and Conservation), participants were asked to select three items from a list which best characterized the development they would like to see in their township. Results from this portion of the survey are provided in the individual workshop summaries.

The final component of the land use activity was to identify locations within each township that were appropriate for the new development discussed by participants on their surveys. Each participant was provided with a colored dot which represented each of the four types of development discussed on the survey. They were asked to place each dot where they felt that type of development would be most appropriate. The map displayed on the next page is a compilation of all of the maps created during the six workshops.

Several significant land use concepts can be drawn from the results of this mapping activity:

- A continuation of the trend of residential development primarily on the west side of the county, as well as in and around established towns appears to be supported. The map shows general direction for focusing future development on the west side of the county, and keeping any future growth on the east side focused into limited areas around established communities.
- Commercial development is identified primarily around major transportation corridors such as Mt. Comfort Road, U.S. 40, U.S. 52, and U.S. 36, as well as within established communities.
- Industrial development has been identified around Mt. Comfort Airport, near established communities, and near important road or rail corridors.
- Areas identified for conservation purposes primarily focus on creek corridors running throughout the county, as well as certain areas of undeveloped farmland.

LAND USE ACTIVITY MAP



INFRASTRUCTURE ACTIVITY

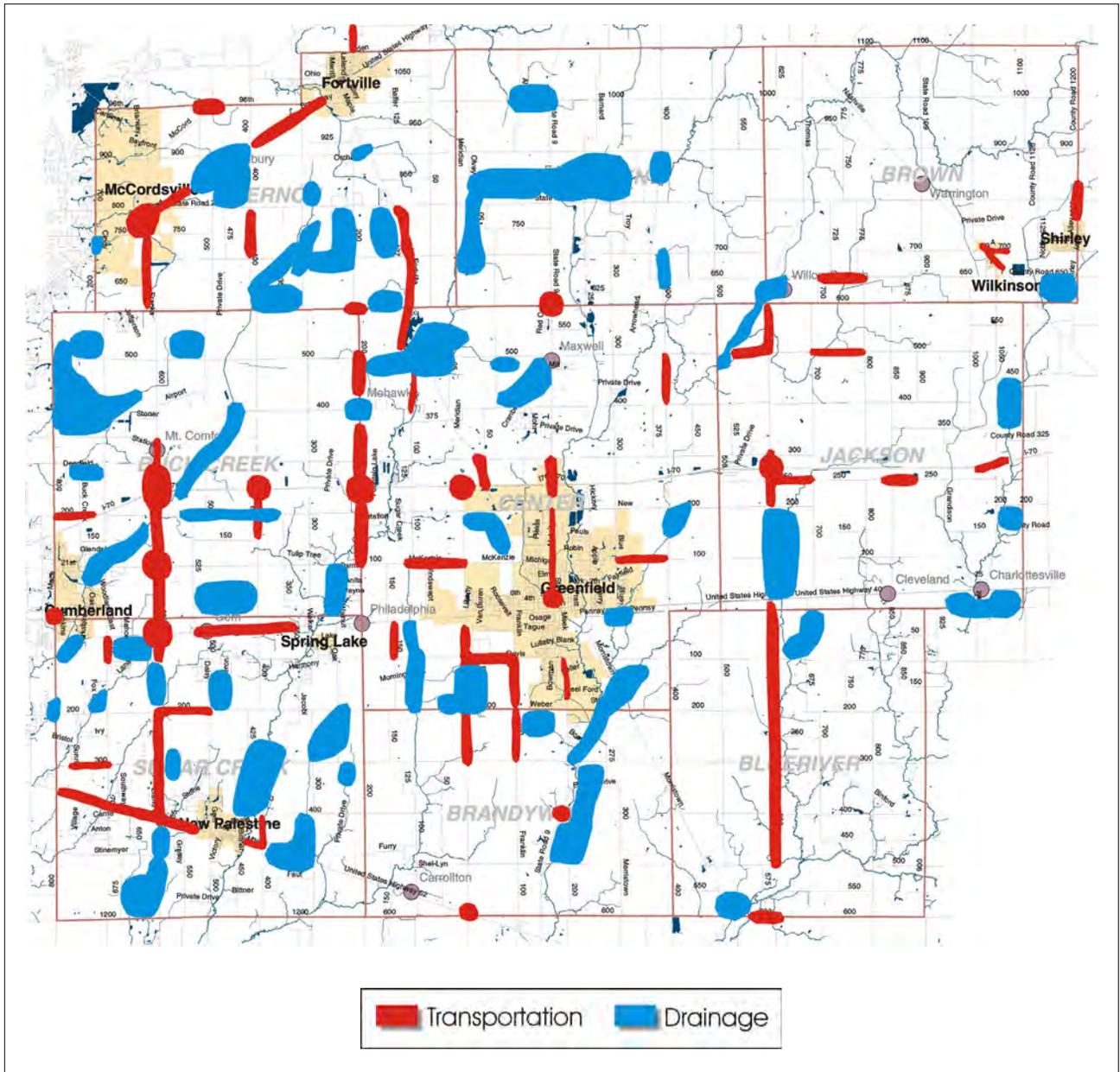
The third activity of the workshops focused on county infrastructure. Specifically, a survey asked questions relating to public facilities and services, transportation, drainage, and utilities. As with the land use activity, participants were asked to consider these issues as they applied to their particular township. In general, roads and drainage were key issues throughout the series of workshops.

Like the land use activity, a map exercise followed the survey and discussion component. Participants were given an additional two stickers to place on a map. In this case, one sticker represented drainage, and the other represented transportation. Participants were asked to place their respective dots in the locations (in their township) where the most important drainage and transportation improvements were needed. The map displayed on the next page illustrates the combined choices of the participants at all six workshops.

While priorities were slightly different for each workshop, some general trends can be identified by looking at the county-wide map for this exercise:

- There was a significant emphasis on improvements to north-south roads throughout the county, with much attention given to Mt. Comfort Road (600 West) as well as 600 East.
- Several state and Federal roads were identified as problems which are being studied for improvements or slated for future work, such as the Mt. Comfort interchange at I-70 and U.S. 52 near New Palestine.
- There was significant discussion about the need for an additional interchange on I-70, with 200 West and 400 West being the most identified locations.
- There was a measure of dissatisfaction with the idea of closing public roads around the Eli Lilly company property near Greenfield.
- There seemed to be no clear pattern to the identified drainage problem locations. In most cases, people felt that there were drainage problems throughout the county due to its relative lack of topography, and that it was difficult to identify just one location where a problem originated.

INFRASTRUCTURE ACTIVITY MAP



CHAPTER 10

PHYSICAL DATA

PART III: SUPPORTING DATA



INTRODUCTION

In addition to gathering input from the public, a thorough physical and demographic analysis of the issues facing Hancock County was necessary. This was done in order to place the needs and dreams of county residents in the context of the facts about the trends affecting their community. These two components of the planning process came together to help shape the vision, goals, and policies of the comprehensive plan.

The first part of the analysis entailed a comprehensive study of Hancock County's demographic composition as well as the trends that are setting the pattern for the county's future. The following demographic profile provides an overview of the social and economic position of the county. Based on the attention that recent growth and development patterns have received, additional analysis was done to project the potential future impacts of the county's current growth trends.

The second part of the analysis involved the compilation of a variety of mapped information. This series of maps provided many layers of information that helped to guide the direction of the comprehensive plan. The information on the maps includes existing land use patterns, utilities service districts, school districts, and many other layers of data. The physical analysis maps are included in the second portion of this chapter.

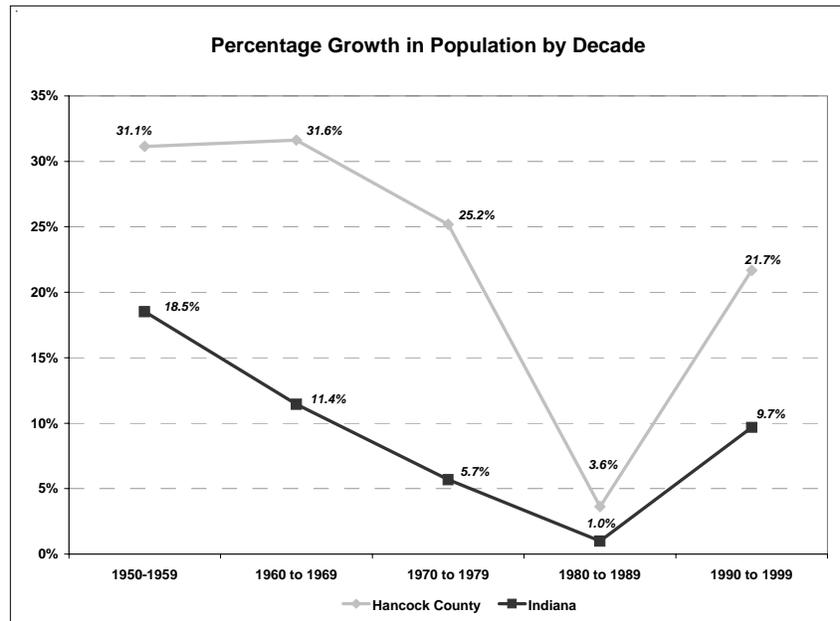
Below is a summary of the key points that emerged from the demographic analysis. The following pages contain more detailed information and commentary on these issues.

- The majority of the population growth occurring in Hancock County is taking place on the western side of the county. The highest rates of growth between 1990 and 2000 were in Brandywine and Sugar Creek Townships.
- The number of vehicles registered in Hancock County has grown rapidly in the last decade, with an increase of nearly 45%.
- Between 1990 and 2000, the number of housing units in Hancock County increased at a rate three times that of the State of Indiana. Overall, Hancock County's population growth rate between 1990 and 2000 (21.7%) was 6th highest in the state. In that time period, Hancock County rose from 26th to 25th in the state in total population.
- According to projections by STATS Indiana, the county is expected to grow to 73,875 residents by 2040, representing an increase of 33.4% over the 2000 population. Hancock County will remain the 5th most populous of the Counties adjacent to Indianapolis.
- Hancock County is 4th in the state and among the counties that surround Indianapolis in median home value at \$129,700.
- The County ranked 4th among the counties surrounding Indianapolis in the number of single family home building permits that were issued in 2002.
- Between 1998 and 2002, Hancock County's average unemployment rate was approximately 2.5%. Indiana's average unemployment rate during that period was 3.8%.
- Approximately 63% of the county's population (excluding Greenfield) lives in Vernon, Buck Creek, and Sugar Creek townships. Of the 9,864 new residents that Hancock County gained between 1990 and 2000 (including Greenfield), 70% lived outside of Greenfield.

HANCOCK COUNTY: GROWTH & AGE COMPOSITION

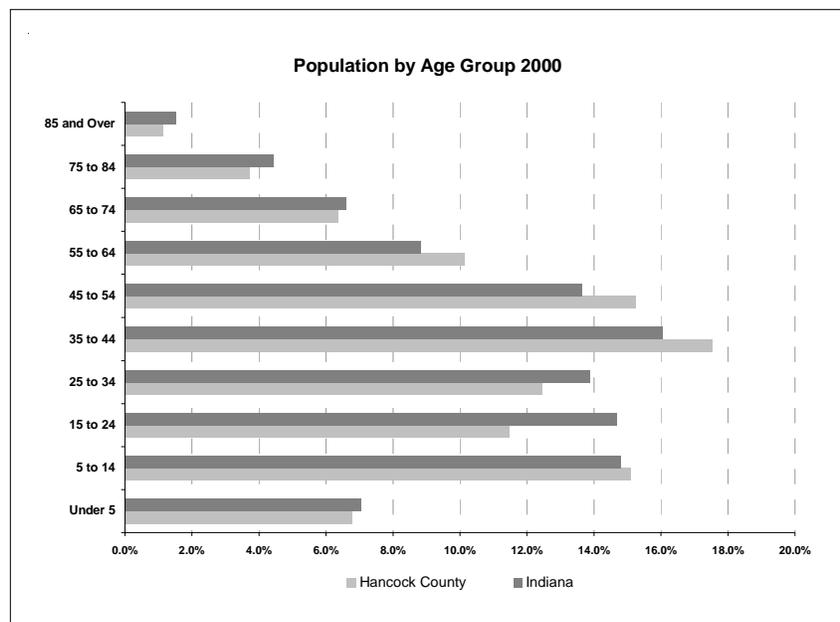
The charts on this page illustrate trends in Hancock County's growth over time. Growth has been steady over the last several decades, although it has not been equally distributed throughout the county. The westernmost townships within Hancock County have received the bulk of the new population in recent years, likely due to suburban growth pushing outward from Indianapolis.

Hancock County's population in 2000 was 55,391, and it has seen strong growth since 1950. As the chart at right illustrates, the County grew by at least 25% every decade, until the 1980s. Growth dropped sharply during this decade, coming in at less than 5%. Growth again exceeded 20% in the 1990s. In each of the past five decades, the County's growth rate has outpaced that of the state.



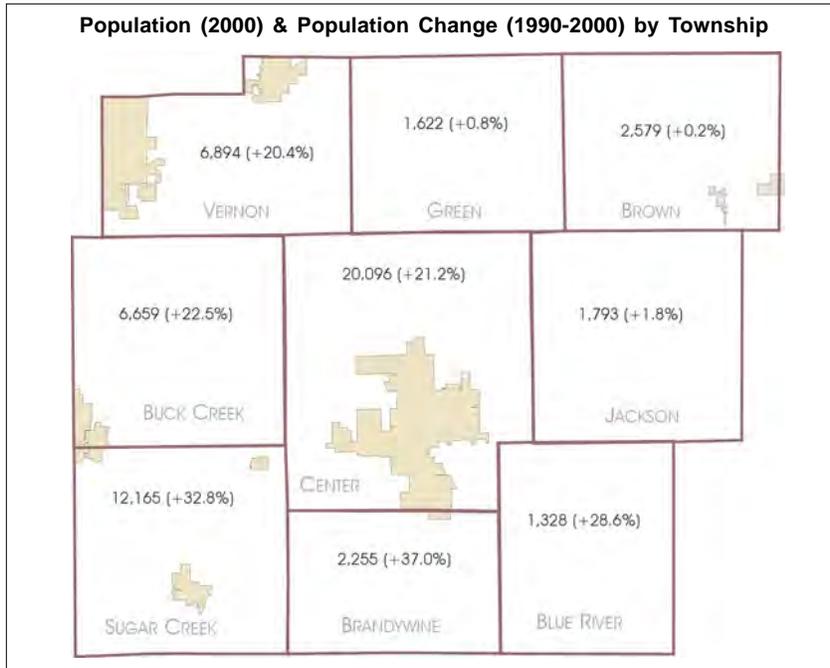
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

The population of Hancock County is similar in age makeup to that of the State of Indiana. In Hancock County, 45.3% of residents were in the 25-54 range in 2000. The State had 43.5% in the same age bracket in 2000.

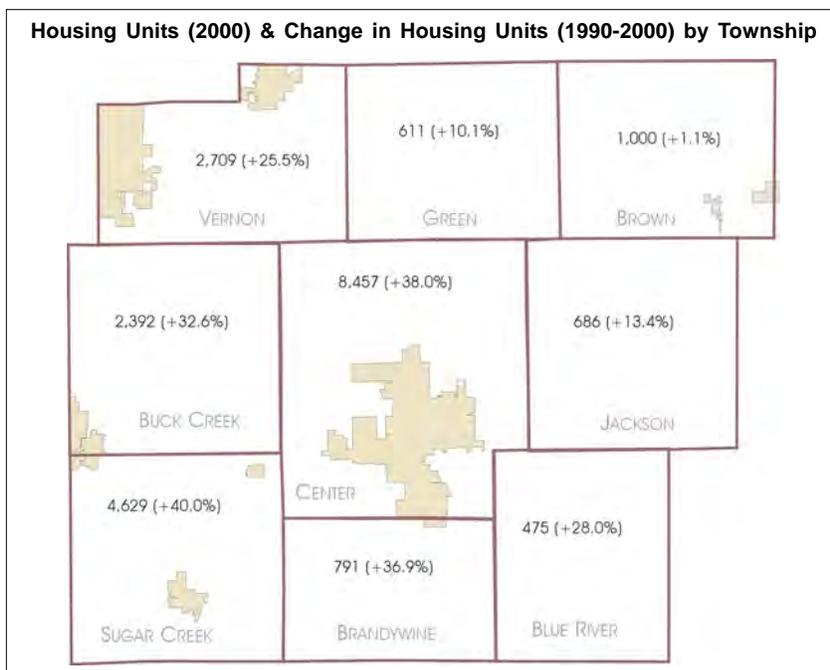


SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

In order to plan for future growth, it is important to understand the existing distribution of population and housing units throughout Hancock County. The maps on this page indicate that the largest portion of the population lives in central and western county, with a significantly lower amount to the east.



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

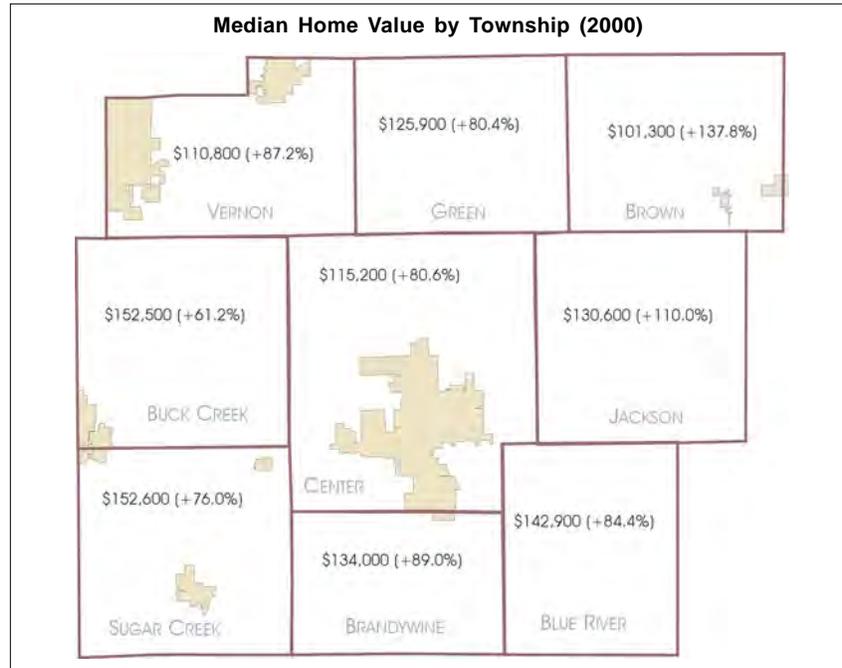
The map at left shows the 2000 population of each township in Hancock County, as well as the percentage population growth for each township between 1990 and 2000. While Center Township, which includes Greenfield, has the highest population, it was Brandywine Township that had the highest growth rate between 1990 and 2000. Brown Township, which saw only a 0.2% rate of growth in the same time period, was the slowest growing of the nine townships.

The map at left shows the total housing units in each township as of 2000, as well as the percentage growth of housing units for each township between 1990 and 2000. Sugar Creek Township had the highest rate of growth, with a 40% gain in total housing units over the decade. Brown Township was again the slowest growing, adding housing units at a rate of 1.1% for the decade. Generally, the western townships showed much higher growth rates than the others during the 1990s.

HANCOCK COUNTY: HOME VALUE & INCOME

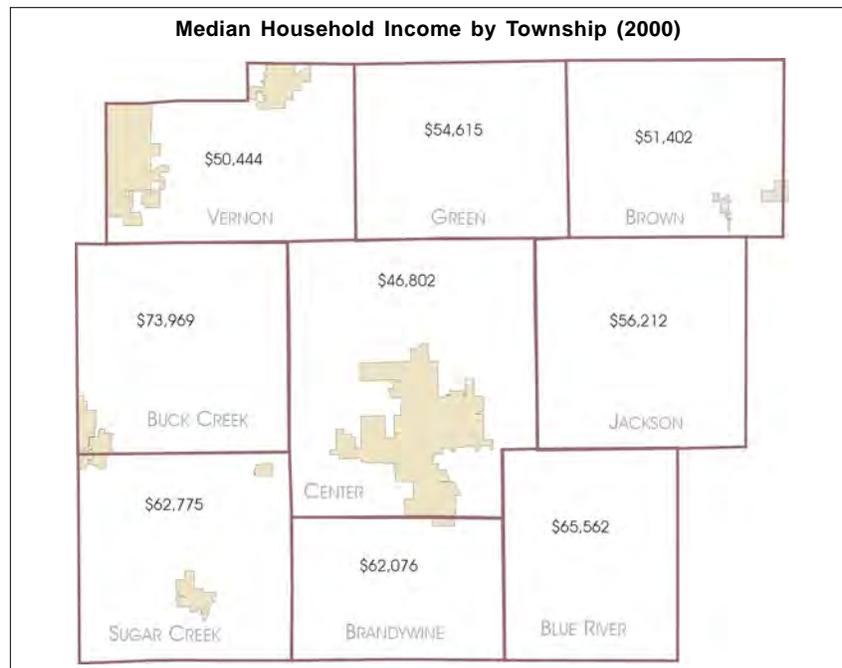
Home value and income have both increased in Hancock County over the period from 1990 to 2000. This information is key in evaluating the needs of the housing market as well as attracting appropriate new employers in the future.

The map at right highlights the 2000 median home value in each township in Hancock County, as well as the percentage growth in that value for each township between 1990 and 2000. Buck Creek and Sugar Creek Townships had the highest median home values in the county, while Brown Township had the lowest. Between 1990 and 2000, the median home value in Jackson Township grew at a much higher rate than any of the other townships, with growth of 110%.



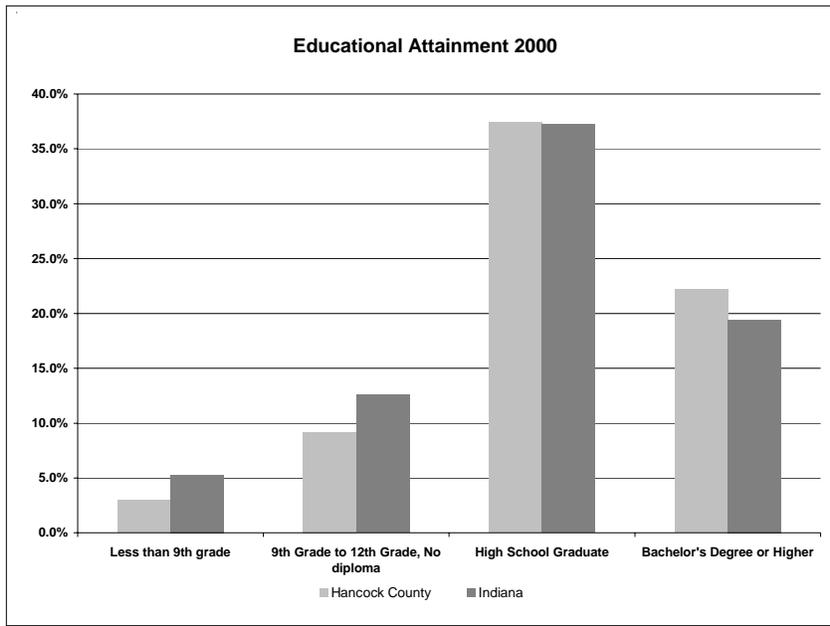
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

The map at right highlights the 2000 median household income in each township in Hancock County, as well as the percentage growth in that income for each township between 1990 and 2000. Buck Creek Township had the highest median household income in the county, at nearly \$74,000. Center Township had the lowest, with a median income of \$46,802.



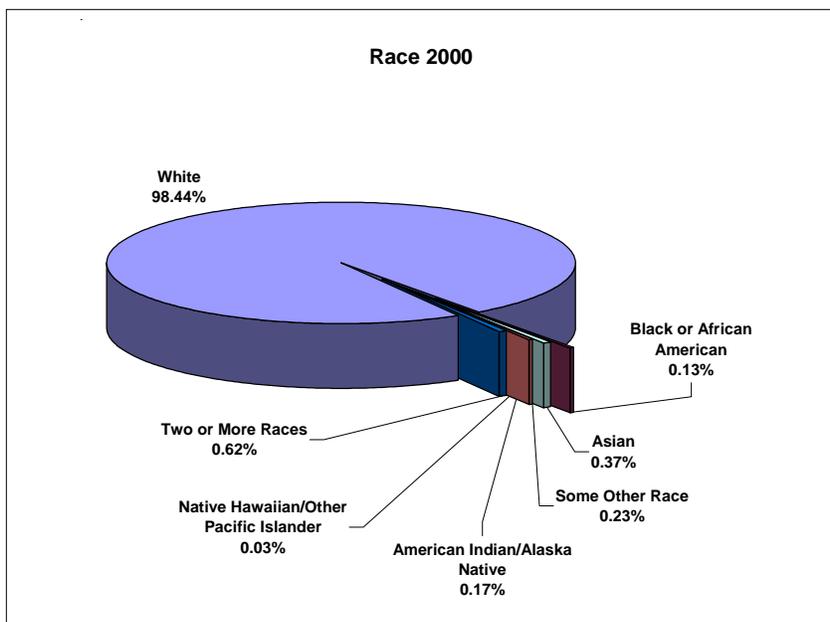
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Education levels in Hancock County are good, with nearly one-quarter of the population possessing a college education. This is an important factor in recruiting new employers to the community. In terms of race, Hancock County has a relative lack of diversity when compared with the state as a whole.



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Hancock County’s education levels have remained consistent with or slightly higher than the State of Indiana. In 2000, 22.2% of the population 25 years and older had achieved a bachelors degree or higher, compared with 19.4% for the state.



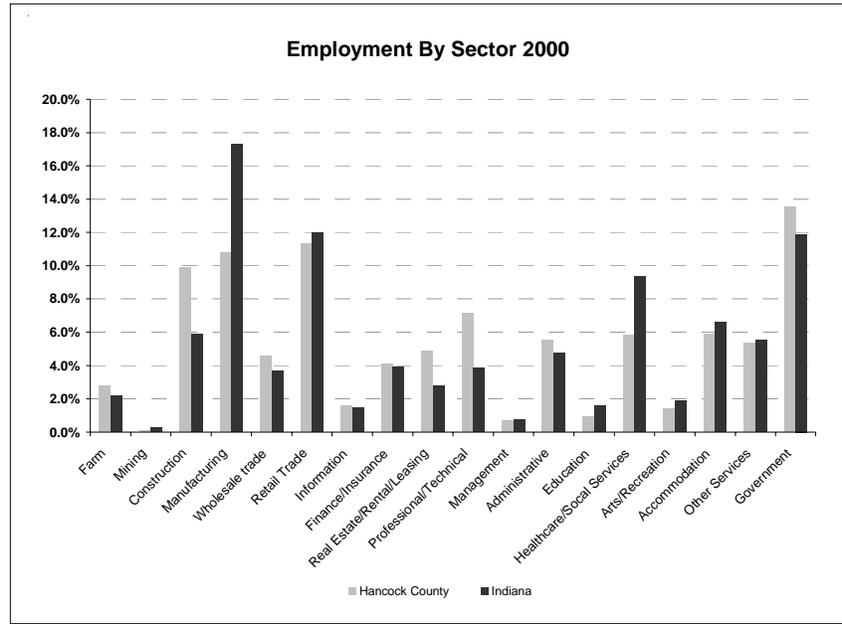
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Hancock County and its communities are not racially diverse, particularly compared with the State of Indiana. Hancock County is over 98% white, while the State as a whole is 88.6% white. African-Americans make up less than 1% of the County’s population, compared to nearly 9% for Indiana.

HANCOCK COUNTY: EMPLOYMENT

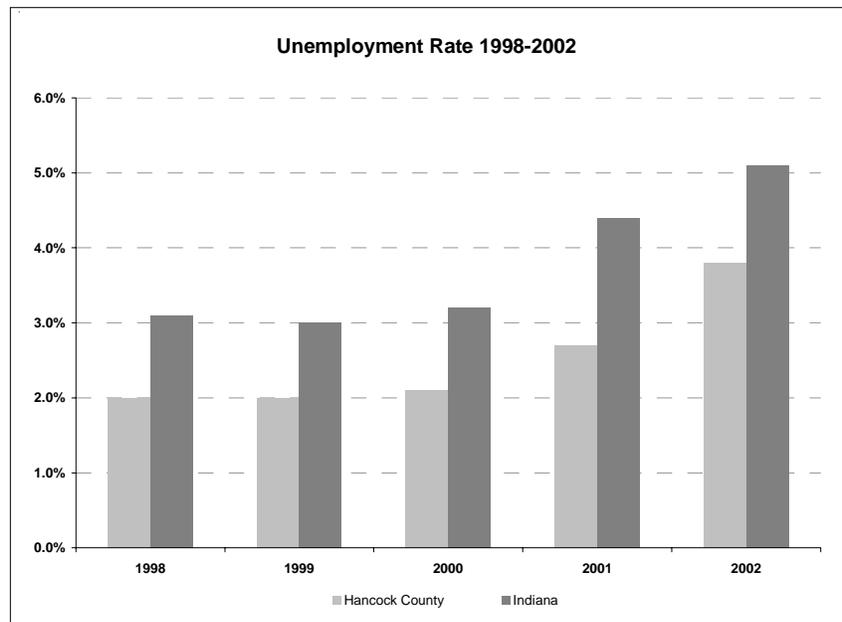
While manufacturing is still a significant base of employment in Indiana, it represents a comparatively smaller segment of Hancock County's overall employment. The County has also seen smaller unemployment rates over time than the state, although those figures have been rising for both groups in recent years.

Hancock County employment is diverse, although it is dominated by the construction, manufacturing, and retail trade sectors. Not including government employment, retail trade employs the most workers in Hancock County at 11.3%. By contrast, farming employs less than 3% of the County's workforce.



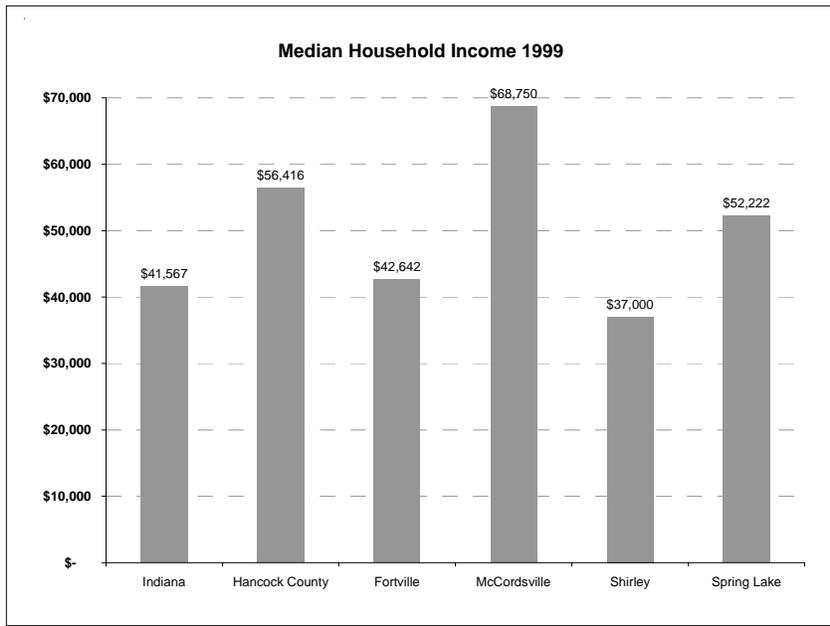
SOURCE: STATS INDIANA

Unemployment in Hancock County has generally been less than the State of Indiana in recent years. Consistent with state and national trends, the unemployment rate in Hancock County has gradually increased over the last five years, from 2.0% to 3.8%. In 2002, the average unemployment rate in Indiana was 5.1%, and 5.8% for the United States.



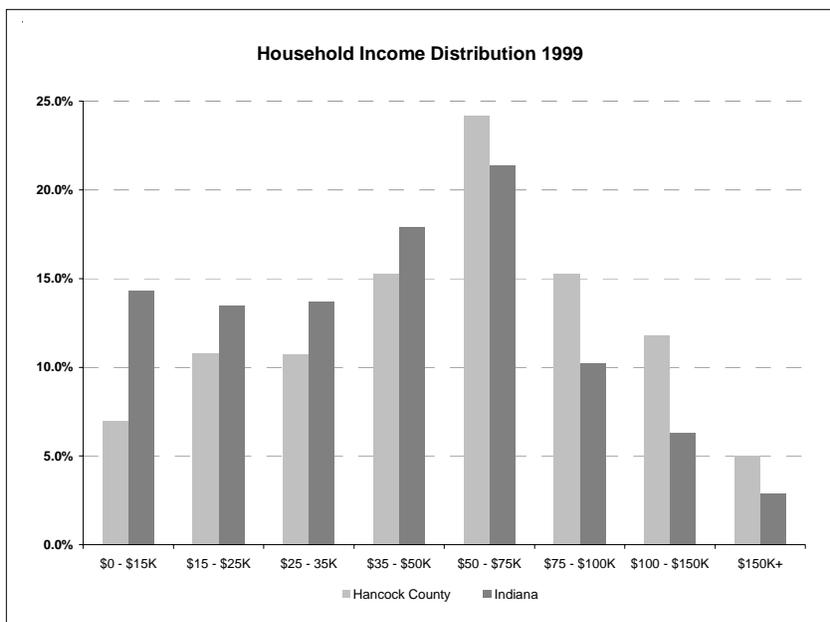
SOURCE: STATS INDIANA

Income levels in Hancock County and its small towns are ahead of state levels in most cases. McCordsville in particular has a significantly higher median income than the county or state. Hancock County in general has more households in the higher income brackets than the state of Indiana.



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Income in Hancock County is significantly higher than the State. At \$56,416, the median household income in Hancock County was approximately 35% higher than the State of Indiana in 1999. Fortville and Shirley were both much closer to the state figures in this category. However, McCordsville had a median household income of \$68,750, a figure that was 65% higher than the State of Indiana.



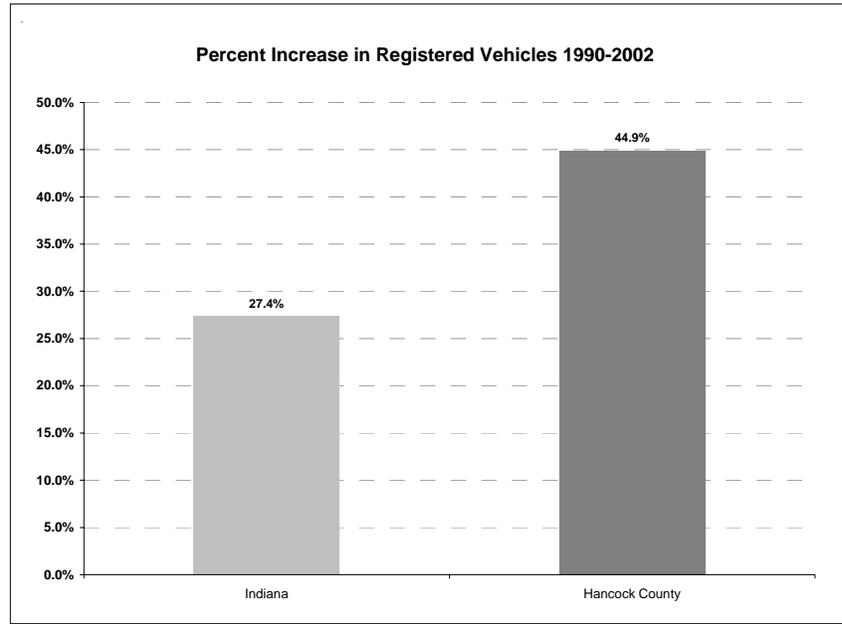
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

When household income figures are broken down further, the differences within the county are highlighted once more. In Hancock County, 68% of households made less than \$75,000 per year. In contrast, nearly 50% of McCordsville's households made over \$75,000 per year. In general, Hancock County has a higher proportion of households in the upper income brackets than the State as a whole.

HANCOCK COUNTY: VEHICLES & COMMUTING

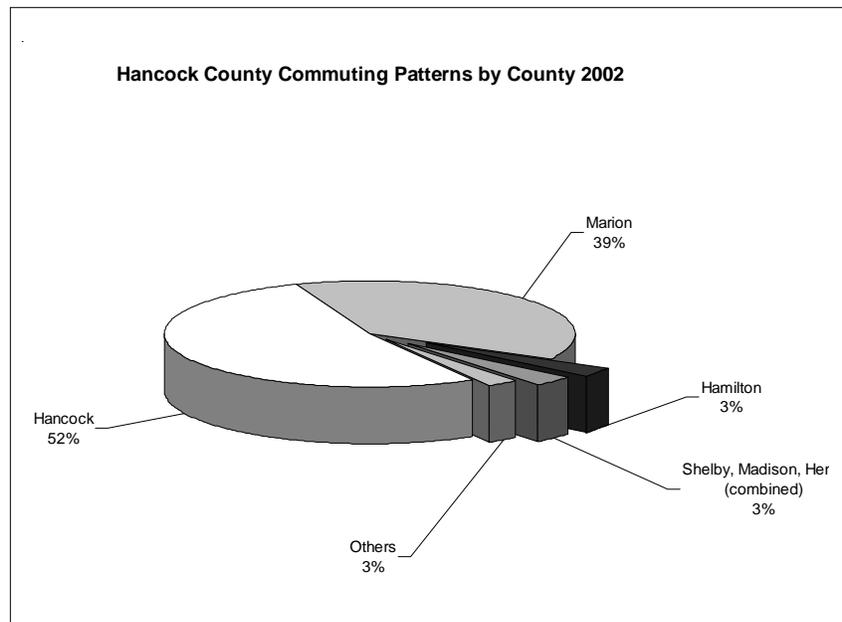
As more people live in Hancock County, the number of vehicles also increases. This means more vehicles on the roads, impacting safety and maintenance. Transportation considerations must be evaluated along with the population and housing issues as the comprehensive plan is developed.

Compared to the state and neighboring counties, Hancock County is experiencing a high rate of growth in the number of vehicles using its roads. Between 1990 and 2002 there was a nearly 45% increase in the number of registered vehicles in Hancock County. Marion County experienced an increase of around 20%, while Hamilton County saw an 89% jump in registered vehicles. The statewide increase during this period was 27.4%.



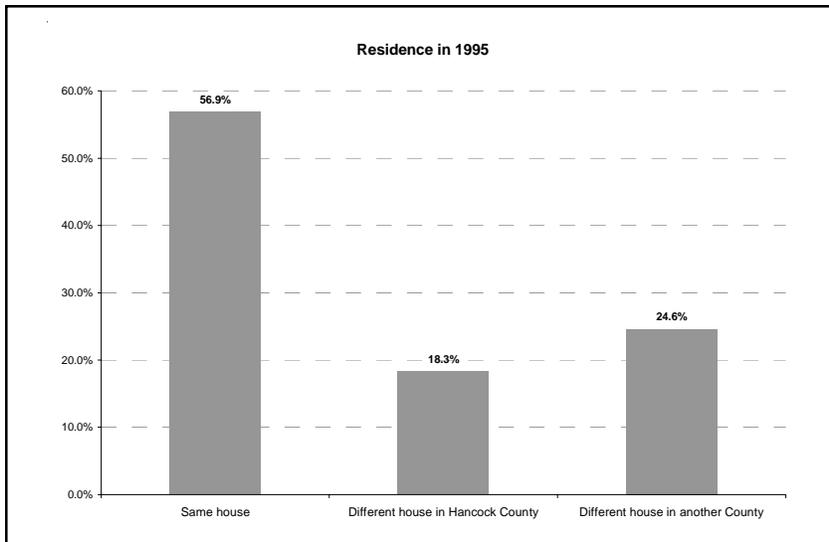
SOURCE: STATS INDIANA

In 2002, just over half of the workforce residing in Hancock County stayed within the County for their jobs. The county that received the greatest amount of commuters from Hancock was Marion, which is home to the jobs of 39% of Hancock County's workforce. The other neighboring counties of Shelby, Madison, Henry, and Hamilton combine to receive about 6% of the workforce of Hancock County.



SOURCE: STATS INDIANA

Another issue that has received attention is the question of where the population growth of Hancock County is coming from. While it is impossible to accurately account for the movement patterns of every individual that chooses to live in Hancock County, some data from Census 2000 can be used to gain a general understanding of migration to the county. Specifically, the Census asks respondents to note whether they lived in the same county as of 1995, five years prior to the Census. The chart below shows that nearly 25% of the Hancock County's 2000 population resided outside the county five years earlier.



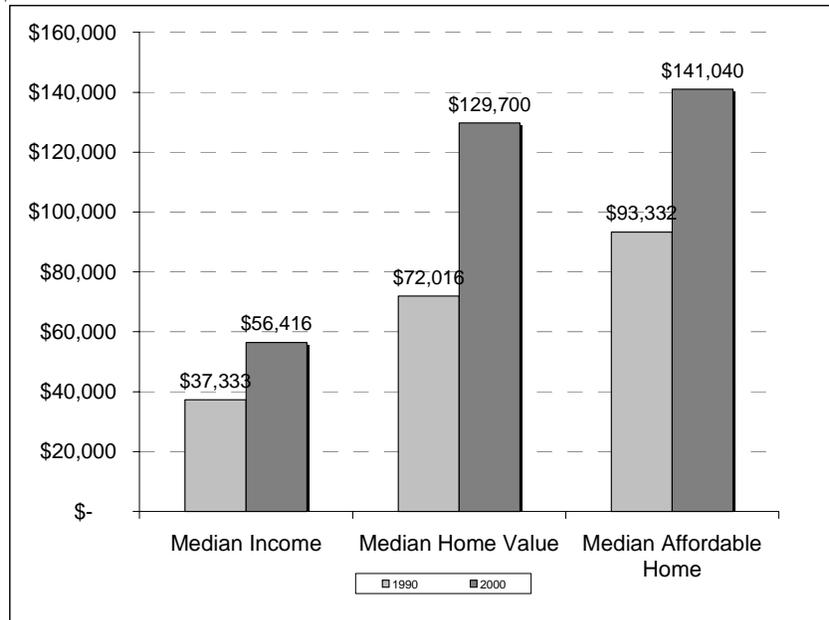
Additionally, a breakdown for the individual townships shows what proportion of their 2000 population lived outside of Hancock County in 1995. The table below shows that significant portions of the population of western Hancock County had only moved there within the five years previous to the Census. This reflects the higher growth rates that have been seen in these areas in recent years.

Residence in Another County (1995)	
Indiana	18.2%
Hancock County	24.6%
Blue River Township	19.1%
Brandywine Brandywine	27.9%
Brown Township	12.2%
Buck Creek Township	21.4%
Center Township	24.3%
Green Township	15.7%
Jackson Township	17.2%
Sugar Creek Township	29.3%
Vernon Township	28.9%

HANCOCK COUNTY: HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The final element considered as part of this analysis was a comparison of income, housing value, and housing affordability. Information on median income and median housing value was taken from the 1990 and 2000 Census data. An additional calculation was performed to determine what price of home that an individual with the median income could afford. Generally, the amount of home that someone can afford is assumed to be 2.5 times their income. A comparison between 1990 and 2000 data was created to show changes in these profiles.

The chart above compares the median income, median home value, and the median home value that a person with the median income could afford. In both 1990 and 2000, the home value that could be afforded was higher than the actual median home value. However, the 2000 number for “affordable” home value was lower than the average value of homes constructed in Hancock County for that year, which was approximately \$159,800. The average construction value for single family homes in 2001 was \$166,600, and in 2002 was \$163,500.



In 1990, Hancock County ranked 26th in the state with a population of 45,527. By 2000, the population had increased to 55,391, and Hancock County's rank moved up by one to 25th in the state. This is a slower rate of growth than most other counties surrounding Indianapolis. Hamilton County grew significantly enough to rise from 12th to 6th in total population in 2000. Morgan County's relative rank in the state did not change, while Shelby County actually fell in the rankings from 30th to 33rd.

1990 Population		
County	Census 1990	
	Total	State Rank
Marion	797,159	1
Hamilton	108,936	12
Johnson	88,109	15
Hendricks	75,717	18
Morgan	55,920	24
Hancock	45,527	26
Shelby	40,307	30
Boone	38,147	34
State of Indiana	5,544,159	N/A

2000 Population		
County	Census 2000	
	Total	State Rank
Marion	860,454	1
Hamilton	182,740	6
Johnson	115,209	13
Hendricks	104,093	16
Morgan	66,689	24
Hancock	55,391	25
Boone	46,107	30
Shelby	43,445	33
State of Indiana	6,080,485	N/A

SOURCE: STATS INDIANA

Looking at the rates of population change for the counties, a similar story unfolds. Six of the top ten fastest growing counties (in population) between 1990 and 2000 were located adjacent to Indianapolis. Hancock County ranked 6th in the state in rate of population growth between 1990 and 2000. Hamilton, Hendricks and Johnson Counties were first, second and third, respectively. Hancock County's percentage change in population during that period was 21.7%. Hamilton County, which had the highest rate of growth in the state, had a 67.7% increase.

Population Change 1990 to 2000			
County	Change	Percent Change	Rank in % Chg.
Hamilton	73,804	67.7%	1
Hendricks	28,376	37.5%	2
Johnson	27,100	30.8%	3
Hancock	9,864	21.7%	6
Boone	7,960	20.9%	8
Morgan	10,769	19.3%	10
Marion	63,295	7.9%	45
Shelby	3,138	7.8%	46
State of Indiana	536,326	9.7%	N/A

SOURCE: STATS INDIANA

CONTEXT: POPULATION

In order to have a complete understanding of the growth trends affecting Hancock County, it is important to project that growth into the future. The tables on this page compare growth projections through the year 2040 for Marion County and the counties that surround it. By the year 2040, Hancock County is projected to have a population of 73,875, which represents a nearly 20,000 person increase over the Census 2000 count.

Population Projections: 2005 through 2040									
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Boone	46,107	52,192	56,319	59,243	61,564	63,401	64,754	65,667	66,217
Hamilton	182,740	246,626	298,642	338,285	369,260	394,025	413,198	427,165	436,636
Hancock	55,391	62,687	67,426	70,515	72,535	73,778	74,352	74,341	73,875
Hendricks	104,093	128,763	146,966	160,295	170,668	179,073	185,614	190,475	193,964
Johnson	115,209	130,258	140,736	148,329	154,389	159,416	163,442	166,518	168,792
Marion	860,454	855,204	866,409	884,329	904,298	925,678	947,055	967,093	985,066
Morgan	66,689	69,652	71,862	73,553	74,844	75,744	76,238	76,312	76,025
Shelby	43,445	43,511	43,934	44,511	45,119	45,716	46,220	46,587	46,841

SOURCE: STATS INDIANA

Looking at the other counties, most are projected to experience similar growth over the next four decades. Hamilton County is expected to see the strongest increase, with a total population increase between 2000 and 2040 of 138.9%. On the other end of the scale, Shelby County is projected to experience an average of 1% growth every 5 years, for a total of 7.8% growth by 2040. According to these projections, all of the counties are going to experience decreasing rates of growth as time goes by. Hancock and Morgan Counties are shown as having negative growth rates between 2035 and 2040.

Percentage Change in Population 2005-2040									
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Overall
Boone	13.2%	7.9%	5.2%	3.9%	3.0%	2.1%	1.4%	0.8%	43.6%
Hamilton	35.0%	21.1%	13.3%	9.2%	6.7%	4.9%	3.4%	2.2%	138.9%
Hancock	13.2%	7.6%	4.6%	2.9%	1.7%	0.8%	0.0%	-0.6%	33.4%
Hendricks	23.7%	14.1%	9.1%	6.5%	4.9%	3.7%	2.6%	1.8%	86.3%
Johnson	13.1%	8.0%	5.4%	4.1%	3.3%	2.5%	1.9%	1.4%	46.5%
Marion	-0.6%	1.3%	2.1%	2.3%	2.4%	2.3%	2.1%	1.9%	14.5%
Morgan	4.4%	3.2%	2.4%	1.8%	1.2%	0.7%	0.1%	-0.4%	14.0%
Shelby	0.2%	1.0%	1.3%	1.4%	1.3%	1.1%	0.8%	0.5%	7.8%

SOURCE: STATS INDIANA

A review of single family home building permits also reveals pertinent growth information about the Indianapolis region. While the chart below shows that most of the counties around Indianapolis had fewer single family homes built in 2002, it still reflects the overall location of most of the growth that is occurring. Not surprisingly, Hamilton County continues to experience the most building permit activity, followed closely by Hendricks and Johnson Counties. The only county in the region that had an increase in single family home permits between 2001 and 2002 was Hendricks County. As for the value of the construction permitted, significant differences are apparent between the counties. In 2002, Boone County averaged a construction cost of approximately \$182,000 per single family home, compared with an average of \$137,000 for Morgan County. Hancock County was in the middle with an approximate average cost of \$152,000.

Single Family Home Building Permits: Growth and Cost						
	Total Units			Total Cost (\$000)		
	2001	2002	% Change	2001	2002	% Change
Boone	438	429	-2.05%	92,223	88,064	-4.51%
Hamilton	3,714	3,479	-6.33%	651,216	633,263	-2.76%
Hancock	944	874	-7.42%	137,291	133,657	-2.65%
Hendricks	2,103	2,424	15.26%	288,963	334,125	15.63%
Johnson	1,388	1,104	-20.46%	214,344	193,076	-9.92%
Marion	5,217	3,872	-25.78%	733,559	559,689	-23.70%
Morgan	502	485	-3.39%	62,587	66,492	6.24%
Shelby	144	143	-0.69%	19,691	20,478	4.00%

SOURCE: STATS INDIANA

Overall, the Indianapolis region has six of the ten highest ranked counties for Median Home Value as of the 2000 Census. Hamilton County ranked the highest in the state with a median value of \$166,300. Hancock County's Median home value was \$129,700, which placed it at number 4 in the state. Marion County and Shelby County are ranked 19 and 20 in the state for this category.

Median Home Value		
County	Median Home Value	State Rank
Hamilton County	\$ 166,300	1
Hendricks County	\$ 133,300	2
Boone County	\$ 131,100	3
Hancock County	\$ 129,700	4
Johnson County	\$ 122,500	6
Morgan County	\$ 116,200	8
Marion County	\$ 99,000	19
Shelby County	\$ 98,600	20

SOURCE: STATS INDIANA

CONTEXT: INCOME & EMPLOYMENT

Hancock County compares favorably to the other suburban Indianapolis Counties when evaluating unemployment data. The county with the lowest average unemployment rate is Hamilton, which in 1998 averaged 1.1% unemployment. Five years later, Hamilton County has an unemployment rate of 2.6%. During the same time period, Shelby County's unemployment rate has gone from 2.8% to 5.0%. Hancock County's unemployment rates have been less volatile, hovering around 2.0% until increasing to 3.8% in 2002.

Unemployment: 5-Year Trend (Annual Average)					
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Boone	1.6%	1.7%	1.7%	2.3%	3.3%
Hamilton	1.1%	1.2%	1.3%	1.8%	2.6%
Hancock	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%	2.7%	3.8%
Hendricks	1.4%	1.6%	1.6%	2.2%	3.5%
Johnson	1.9%	1.8%	1.9%	2.4%	3.6%
Marion	2.9%	2.8%	2.8%	3.8%	5.3%
Morgan	2.8%	2.4%	2.4%	3.3%	4.7%
Shelby	2.8%	3.0%	2.8%	3.9%	5.0%

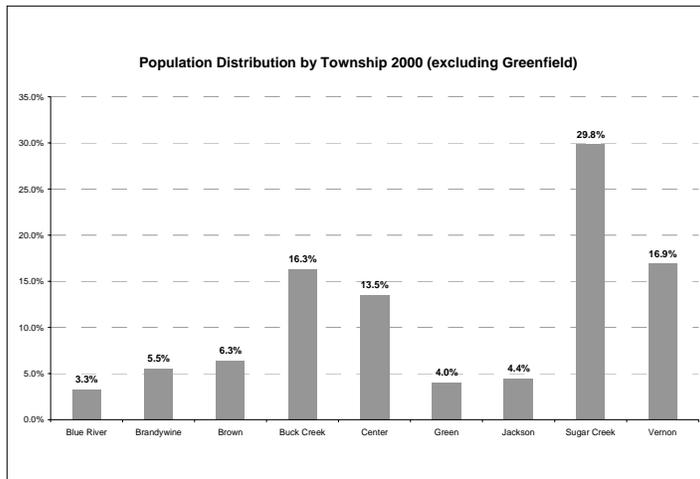
SOURCE: STATS INDIANA

While jobs are important, the income generated by those jobs also has an impact on the economy. The table below shows where the counties around Indianapolis rank in the state in terms of their Median Household Income. Hancock County is 2nd in the state at \$56,416. Hamilton County is again in the top position, with a median household income of \$71,026. That figure is approximately \$30,000 higher than the median household income of Marion County, which is ranked 44 in the state.

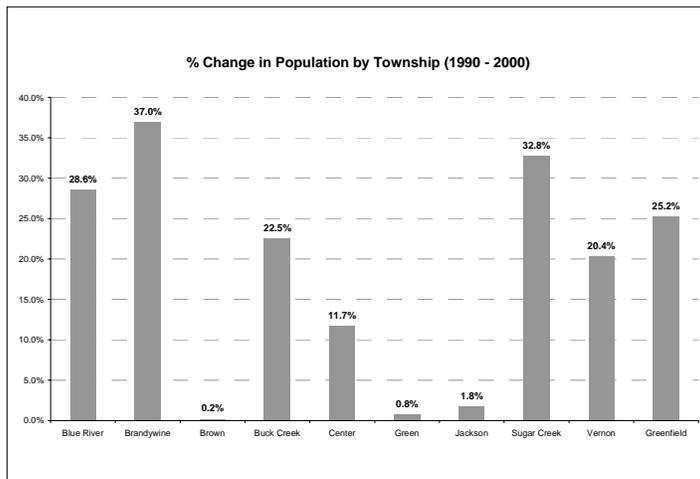
Median Household Income		
County	Median Household Income	State Rank
Hamilton County	71,026	1
Hancock County	56,416	2
Hendricks County	55,208	3
Johnson County	52,693	5
Boone County	49,632	6
Morgan County	47,739	10
Shelby County	43,649	22
Marion County	40,421	44

SOURCE: STATS INDIANA

Excluding Greenfield, the estimated population of Hancock County in July 2000 was 40,791. The first chart below shows the proportion of that population that lives in each of the nine townships. Approximately 63% of the county's non-Greenfield population lives in the western three townships. In fact, the total population of Sugar Creek township (12,165) is only about 2,400 less than that of Greenfield (14,600). The second chart illustrates the rates of population growth in the townships and Greenfield between 1990 and 2000. Three of the nine townships experienced a higher percentage increase in population than Greenfield during that period. In actual numbers, Greenfield increased by 2,943 over the decade, while the remainder of Hancock County increased by 6,921.



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

The table below shows the actual increase in population by township between 1990 and 2000. Greenfield is included for comparison purposes. Note that while Brandywine Township's population increased by 37%, the actual increase was much less than other townships.

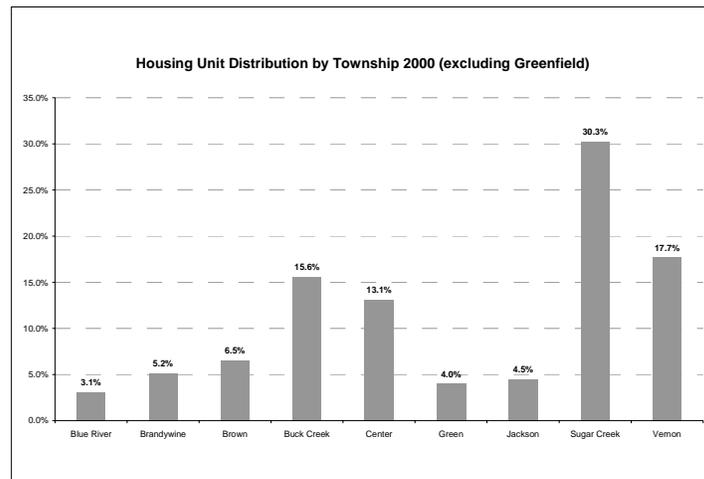
Population Change 1990-2000	
Blue River	295
Brandywine	609
Brown	6
Buck Creek	1224
Center	575
Green	13
Jackson	31
Sugar Creek	3002
Vernon	1166
Greenfield	2943

ADJUSTING FOR GREENFIELD: HOUSING UNITS

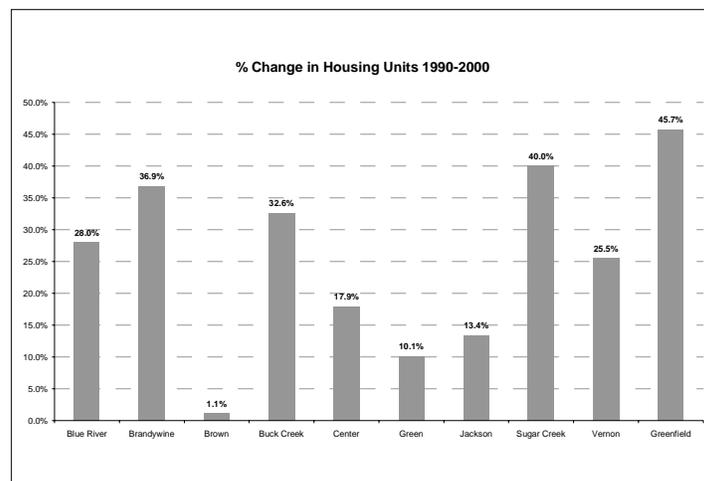
Excluding Greenfield, the number of housing units in Hancock County in 2000 was 15,301. Similar to the population numbers, the great majority of housing units are located in the western 3 townships, totaling almost 64%. In fact, there were more housing units in these three townships (9,730) than in Greenfield (6,449) as of the 2000 Census. Changes between 1990 and 2000 show where growth is occurring in Hancock County. The largest percentage increase in housing units occurred within Greenfield, but outside of that, Sugar Creek and Buck Creek grew fastest. In terms of actual numbers, the largest increase in housing units (not including Greenfield) occurred in Sugar Creek, with an increase of 1,323 units. The other townships all increased by between 11 and 588 housing units.

The table below shows the residential development density (in units per acre) of each township. Overall, densities remain relatively low. The western three townships have seen the largest increase in housing density in recent years.

	1990	2000
Blue River	0.02	0.02
Brandywine	0.04	0.05
Brown	0.05	0.05
Buck Creek	0.08	0.10
Center	0.06	0.07
Green	0.03	0.03
Jackson	0.03	0.03
Sugar Creek	0.14	0.20
Vernon	0.11	0.14



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Earlier in this document, an overview of single family home permits for the Indianapolis region was provided. This page focuses on trends in single family home permits within the townships of Hancock County. The three western townships have consistently seen the most home permits over the last three years. In fact, those townships are seeing significant increases in permit activity while the others remain generally consistent in their numbers. The average construction cost of these homes has varied across the county and over time. Buck Creek Township, which had the highest number of permits issued in 2002, also had one of the lowest average construction costs, at \$138,316. The highest average construction cost in 2002 was in Center Township, which had an figure of \$328,224.

Single Family Residential Permits Issued			
	2000	2001	2002
Blue River	13	6	14
Brandywine	11	13	13
Brown	15	13	3
Buck Creek	144	172	249
Center	31	32	21
Green	9	10	8
Jackson	13	10	4
Sugar Creek	78	94	103
Vernon	45	202	211
<i>Hancock County</i>	<i>359</i>	<i>552</i>	<i>626</i>

SOURCE: HANCOCK COUNTY AREA PLAN COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORTS

Average Single Family Home Construction Cost			
	2000	2001	2002
Blue River	\$ 171,615	\$ 141,747	\$ 185,393
Brandywine	\$ 250,091	\$ 142,423	\$ 268,335
Brown	\$ 127,147	\$ 108,685	\$ 109,633
Buck Creek	\$ 134,782	\$ 142,174	\$ 138,316
Center	\$ 172,690	\$ 161,892	\$ 328,224
Green	\$ 158,167	\$ 186,000	\$ 132,125
Jackson	\$ 177,077	\$ 144,900	\$ 120,000
Sugar Creek	\$ 191,698	\$ 248,100	\$ 218,557
Vernon	\$ 158,243	\$ 156,375	\$ 144,735
<i>Hancock County</i>	<i>\$ 160,028</i>	<i>\$ 166,608</i>	<i>\$ 163,472</i>

SOURCE: HANCOCK COUNTY AREA PLAN COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORTS

To calculate annual population increases, the number of residential building permits issued in each township were multiplied by their respective average household size from Census 2000.

Township	Household Size
Blue River	2.88
Brandywine	2.93
Brown	2.70
Buck Creek	2.80
Center	2.60
Green	2.69
Jackson	2.79
Sugar Creek	2.83
Vernon	2.77

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Hancock County has seen its population grow steadily during the last several years. This has had impacts on land use patterns, particularly in the western townships. Future population growth will also have impacts on these development patterns. In order to create a better perspective on this issue, it is necessary to establish an understanding of the potential population growth that Hancock County could incur in the ensuing decade.

In order to project Hancock County's growth ten years into the future, to the year 2014, an analysis of recent population growth trends was performed. This involved looking at the percentage rates of growth from 1990 through 2002. The growth rate between 1990 and 2000 was calculated using the Census data from the respective years. For the years since 2000, building permit data from Hancock County and average household size data from Census 2000 were used to determine an estimated annual population increase for each township. The new population totals were then used to determine annual growth rates for each township. All of these growth rates were subsequently used to calculate the annual average growth rate by township. The most recent building permit data available at the time of this study was through the year 2002, so projections began with 2003. All projections should be considered as of the end of the given year.

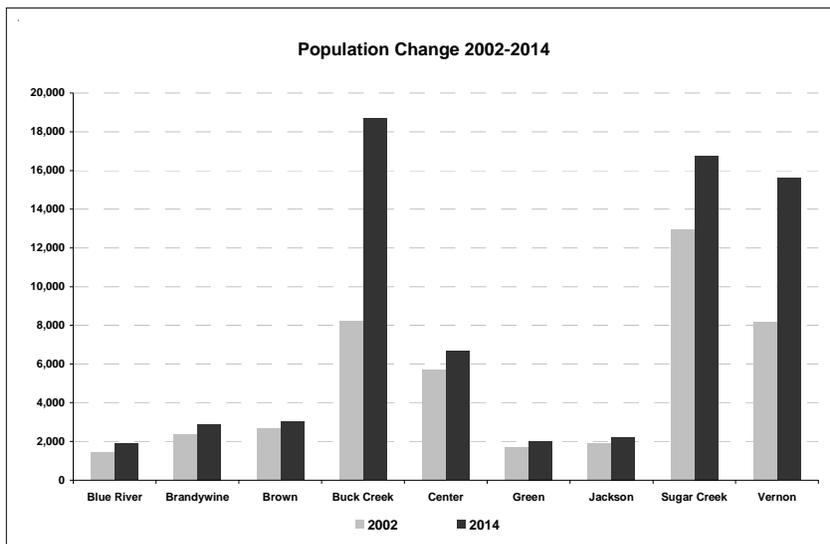
The table below highlights the calculation of the annual percentage increase in population for each township. The final column at right is the average annual percentage increase that was used to project the population for each individual township. Not surprisingly, the western townships of the county have some of the highest average annual growth rates, while townships to the east are growing much slower by comparison.

Township	Census 2000		Year End 2000		Year End 2001		Year End 2002		Average Annual % Increase
	Population	% Increase	Total Population	% Increase	Total Population	% Increase	Total Population	% Increase	
Blue River	1,328	2.9%	1,365	2.8%	1,383	1.3%	1,423	2.9%	2.7%
Brandywine	2,255	3.7%	2,287	1.4%	2,325	1.7%	2,363	1.6%	3.2%
Brown	2,579	0.02%	2,620	1.6%	2,655	1.3%	2,663	0.3%	0.3%
Buck Creek	6,659	2.3%	7,062	6.1%	7,544	6.8%	8,241	9.2%	3.4%
Center	5,496	1.2%	5,577	1.5%	5,660	1.5%	5,714	1.0%	1.2%
Green	1,622	0.08%	1,646	1.5%	1,673	1.6%	1,695	1.3%	0.4%
Jackson	1,793	0.18%	1,832	2.2%	1,863	1.7%	1,874	0.6%	0.5%
Sugar Creek	12,165	3.3%	12,386	1.8%	12,652	2.1%	12,943	2.3%	3.0%
Vernon	6,894	2.0%	7,019	1.8%	7,578	8.0%	8,163	7.7%	2.9%
Total	40,791	2.0%	41,794	2.5%	4,332	3.7%	45,079	4.0%	2.4%

For each township, the average annual growth rate was applied from the year 2003 through 2014, ten years into the future. This is as far as the projections are prudent to take forward, as the assumptions and estimates they are based on would become less accurate over time. It is important to note that these estimates do not include Greenfield, as the plan is focusing on areas outside of that community.

The table below illustrates the results of the population projection. As stated earlier, the average annual growth rate for each township was held constant for every year through 2014. As of 2010, the total population of Hancock County (excluding Greenfield) is projected to be 59,560, reflecting an overall increase of approximately 32% from the end of 2002. By the year 2014, that population is projected to be 69,742, an overall increase of approximately 55% from the end of 2002. Following existing growth trends, the bulk of the increase in population is borne by the western townships of the county.

Based on these projections, Buck Creek, Sugar Creek, and Vernon Townships will become significant population centers over the next decade, which will have implications for county infrastructure and services.



2014	
Township	Population
Blue River	1,877
Brandywine	2,904
Brown	3,013
Buck Creek	18,687
Center	6,665
Green	2,005
Jackson	2,219
Sugar Creek	16,755
Vernon	15,617
Total	69,742

GROWTH PATTERN IMPACTS

The number of housing units needed to house the additional population in Hancock County was evaluated for each township. The year end 2002 population was subtracted from the 2014 projection to determine how many new residents would be living in each of the nine townships. Next, the population change number was divided by the average household size to estimate the number of new housing units that would be required to accommodate these new residents. That information, plus a calculation of the average new housing units that would be required annually, is summarized below.

Township	Population Change	Housing Units Needed	Average New Units Per Year
Blue River	454	158	13
Brandywine	541	185	15
Brown	350	130	11
Buck Creek	10,446	3,731	311
Center	951	379	32
Green	310	114	9
Jackson	345	123	10
Sugar Creek	3,812	1,407	117
Vernon	7,454	2,813	234
Total	24,663	9,039	753

Estimates of new housing units in each township can be used to generate land consumption scenarios. Specifically, the amount of acreage required to develop these new housing units can be estimated using information from the existing Hancock County zoning ordinance. For this estimate, several factors were used to develop alternate land consumption scenarios for the year 2014.

Based on the zoning ordinance, three different rates of land consumption were studied. For the first scenario, the new housing units for each township were assumed to occur on 10 acre lots. The second scenario assumed that new housing units in all townships would be developed in A-1 or R-1 zones with minimum lot sizes of 1 acre. The final scenario maintained the 1 acre lot size for all townships except Vernon, Buck Creek, and Sugar Creek. These townships are projected to grow at much higher rates, and have the best access to utilities services, so they were calculated using the highest residential density allowed in the Zoning Ordinance, R-6, which has a minimum lot size of approximately 0.13 acres.

The table below shows the results of the land consumption analysis. Large differences in land consumption result from the changes in development densities. It is important to remember that actual development patterns are likely to be some combination of the scenarios used here. Still, these numbers help to illustrate the underlying issue. The county’s population will continue to grow, and some accommodation will need to be made to handle the development of additional housing units to serve that growth.

The table below shows the average annual acreage that would be used for new residential development in the county based on the development scenarios used in this analysis.

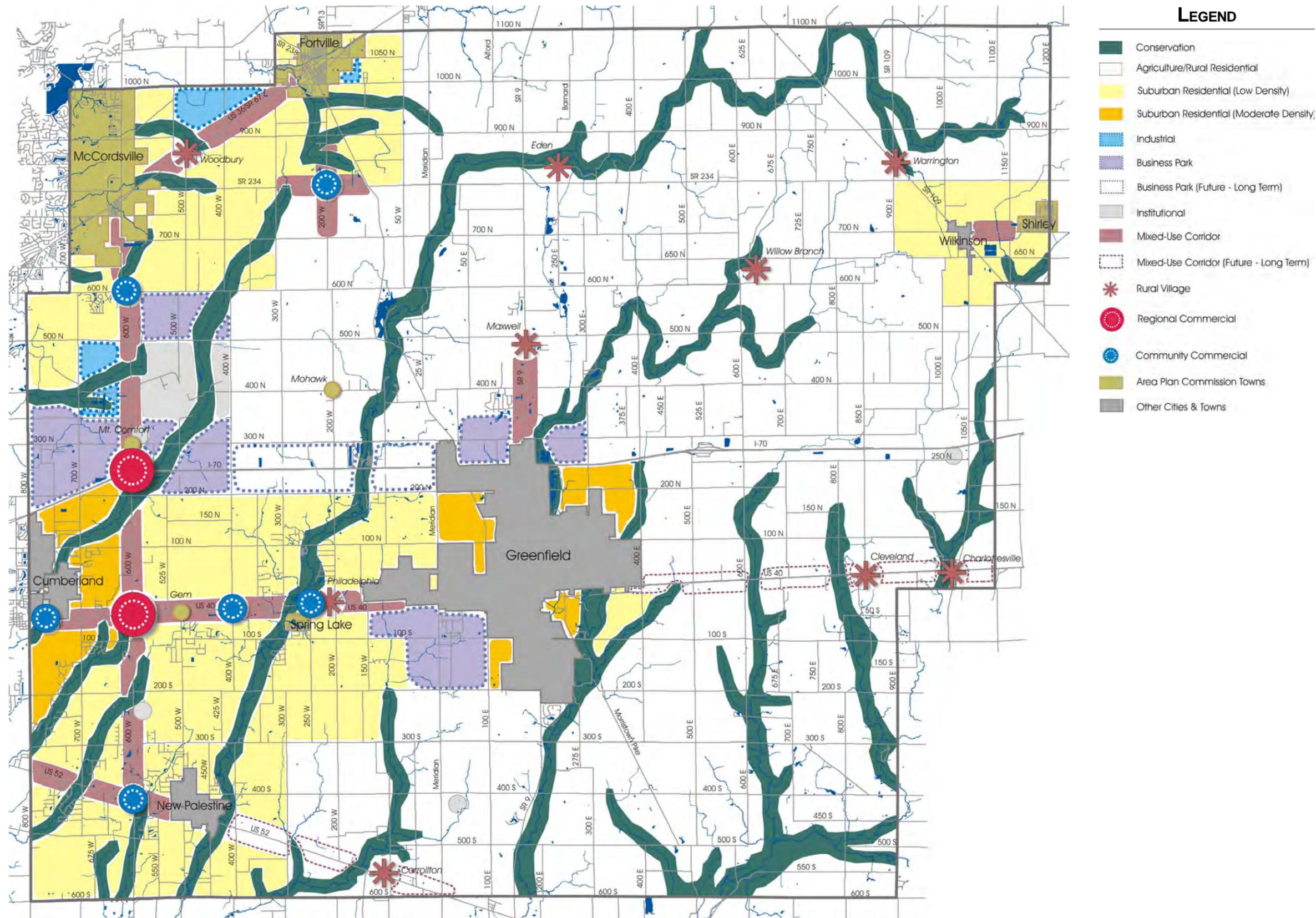
Township	New Housing Units	Acres needed for new housing units		
		10 Acre Lots	A-1/R-1	A-1/R-1/R-6
Blue River	158	1,576	158	158
Brandywine	185	1,853	185	185
Brown	130	1,301	130	130
Buck Creek	3,731	37,307	3,731	485
Center	379	3,789	379	379
Green	114	1,140	114	114
Jackson	123	1,228	123	123
Sugar Creek	1,407	14,066	1,407	183
Vernon	2,813	28,128	2,813	366
Total	9,039	90,388	9,039	2,122

Scenario	Acreage Per Year
10 Acre Lots	7,532
A-1/R-1	753
A-1/R-1/R-6	177

PHYSICAL ANALYSIS MAPS

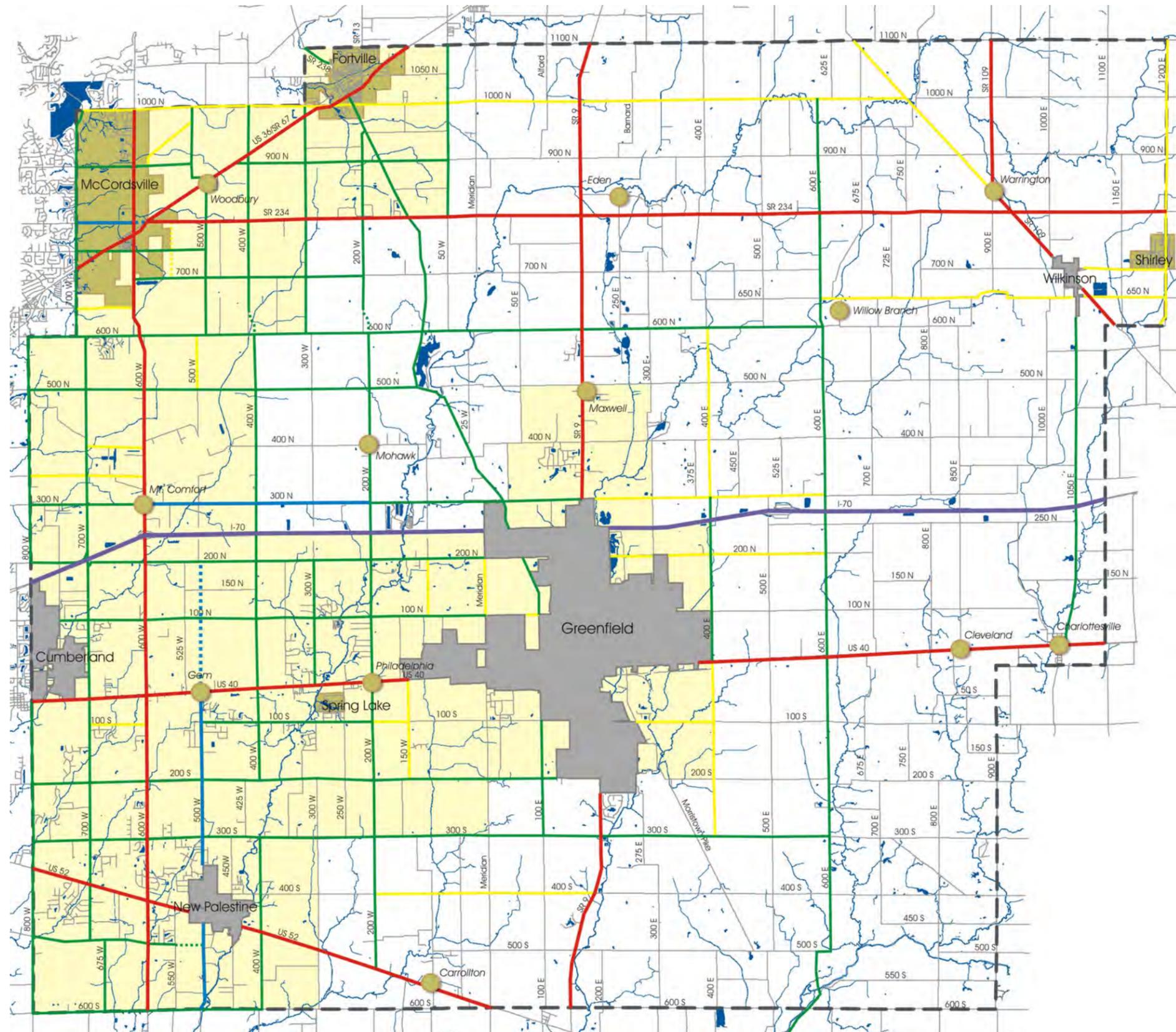
The following pages contain a series of maps used to analyze various physical characteristics of Hancock County. The information presented on these maps was consulted throughout the planning process to assist the Steering Committee in its decision-making process. As a result, the policies and maps in this comprehensive plan have been crafted in a way that reflects the opportunities and constraints that this information presents. The maps that follow include:

- Existing Land Use (1991)
- Existing Land Use (2003)
- Utilities Service Areas
- Historic Sites & Structures
- Natural Features
- Watersheds
- Development Issues & Constraints



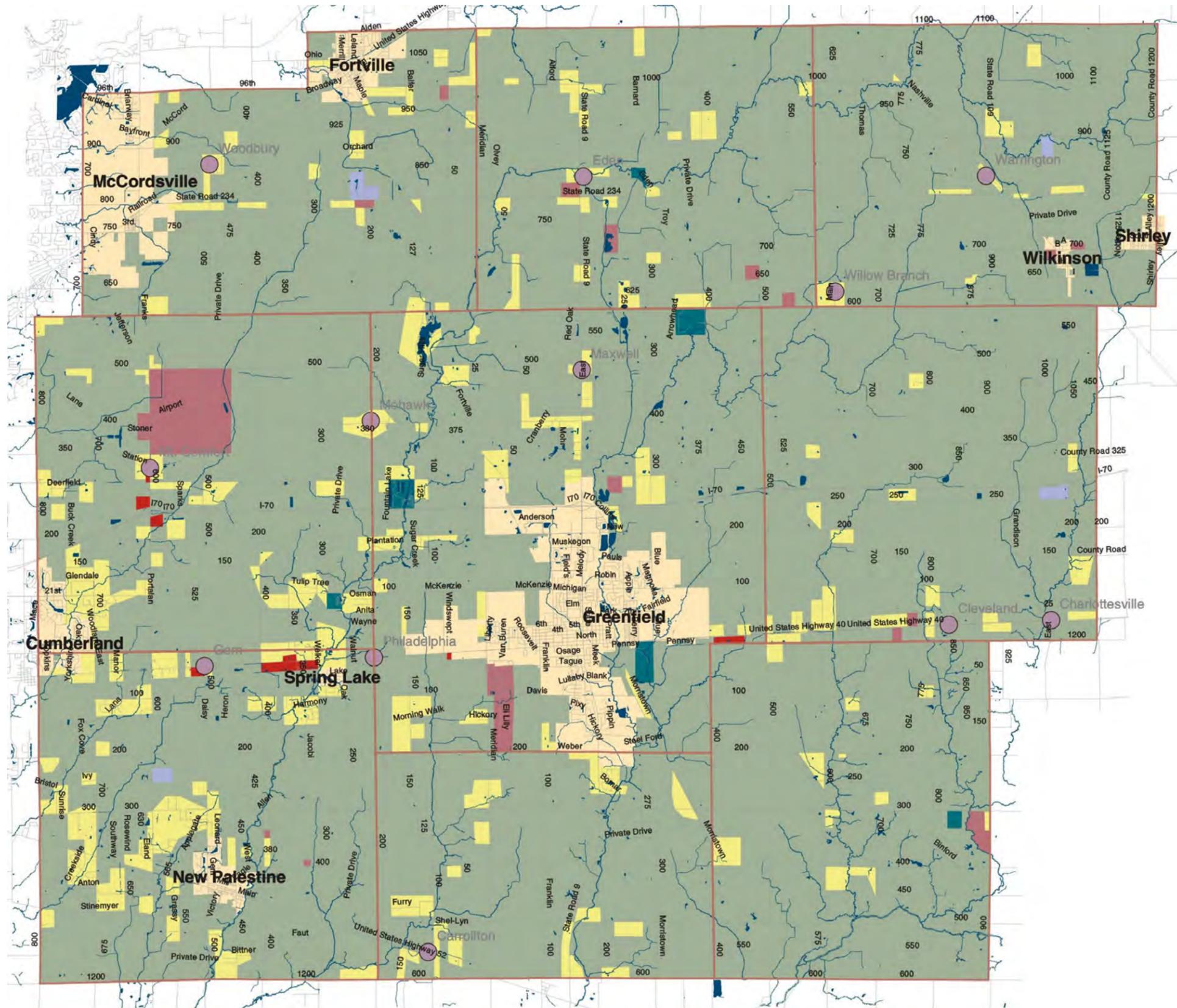
UPDATING THE MAP

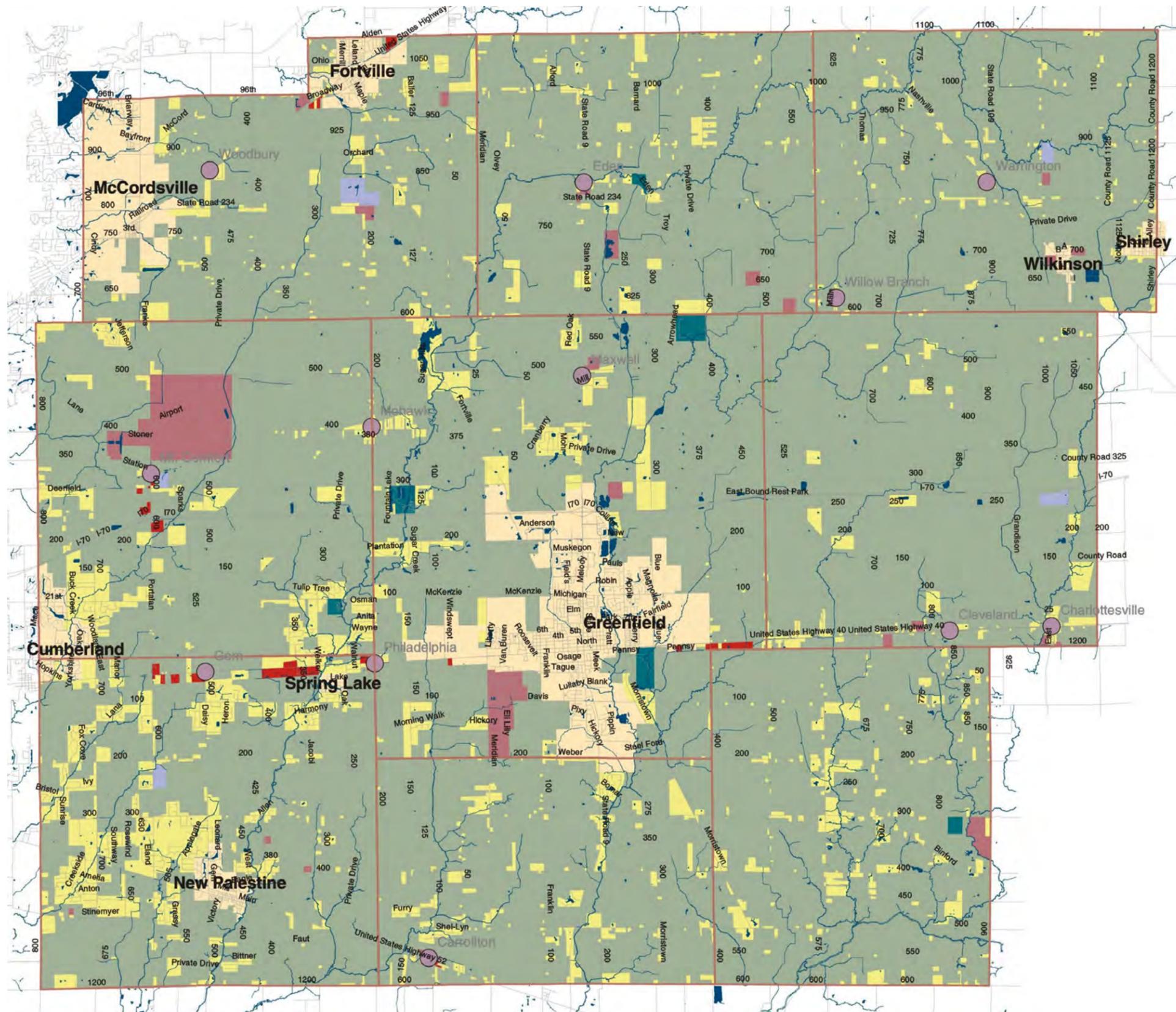
It is important that a thorough review of this Future Land Use Map occur on a regular basis. Not only should issues of appropriate land use patterns be evaluated, but changes to town boundaries and the construction of new roads should be reflected. In this way, the map will always reflect the most current information available. To update this map, the County should take advantage of the Geographic Information System tools at its disposal. This powerful technology is key to maintaining the accuracy of the information on the Future Land Use Map as well as helping the county to evaluate land based on the location criteria for development listed in this plan.



LEGEND

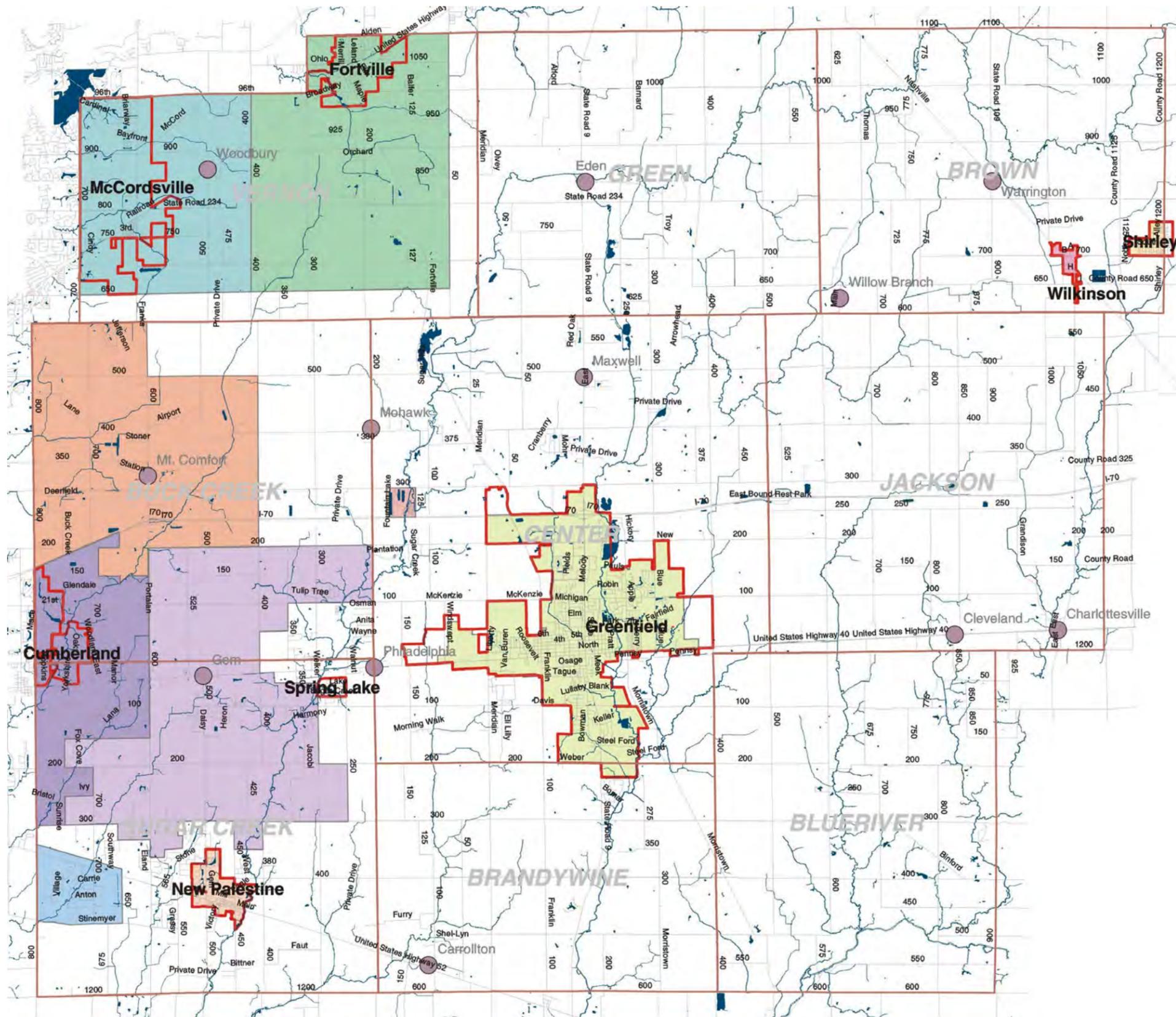
- Freeway
- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- ⋯ Minor Arterial (Proposed)
- Major Collector
- ⋯ Major Collector (Proposed)
- Minor Collector
- ⋯ Minor Collector (Proposed)
- Local Road
- Half-Section Road Area
- Unincorporated Towns
- Area Plan Commission Towns
- Other Cities & Towns





LEGEND

- Agricultural
- Recreation
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public
- Roads
- Streams
- Lakes
- Unincorporated Towns
- Cities & Towns
- Townships



LEGEND

Utility Provider

- Cumberland
- Doe Creek Utilities
- Fortville
- Gem Utilities, Inc.
- Greenfield
- McCordsville
- New Palestine
- Shirley
- Sugar Creek Utilities
- Western Hancock Utilities
- Wilkinson

Roads

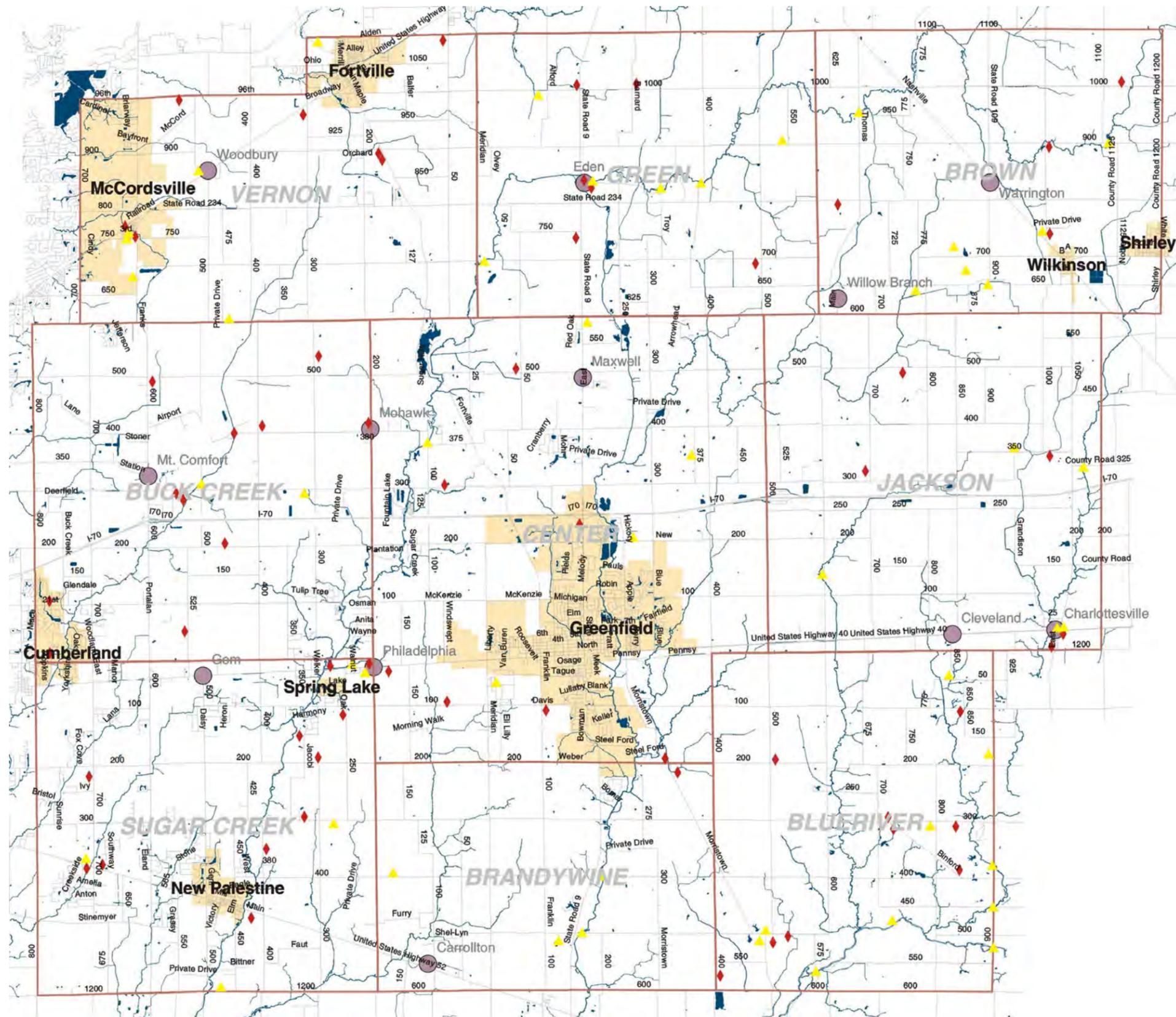
Streams

Lakes

Unincorporated Towns

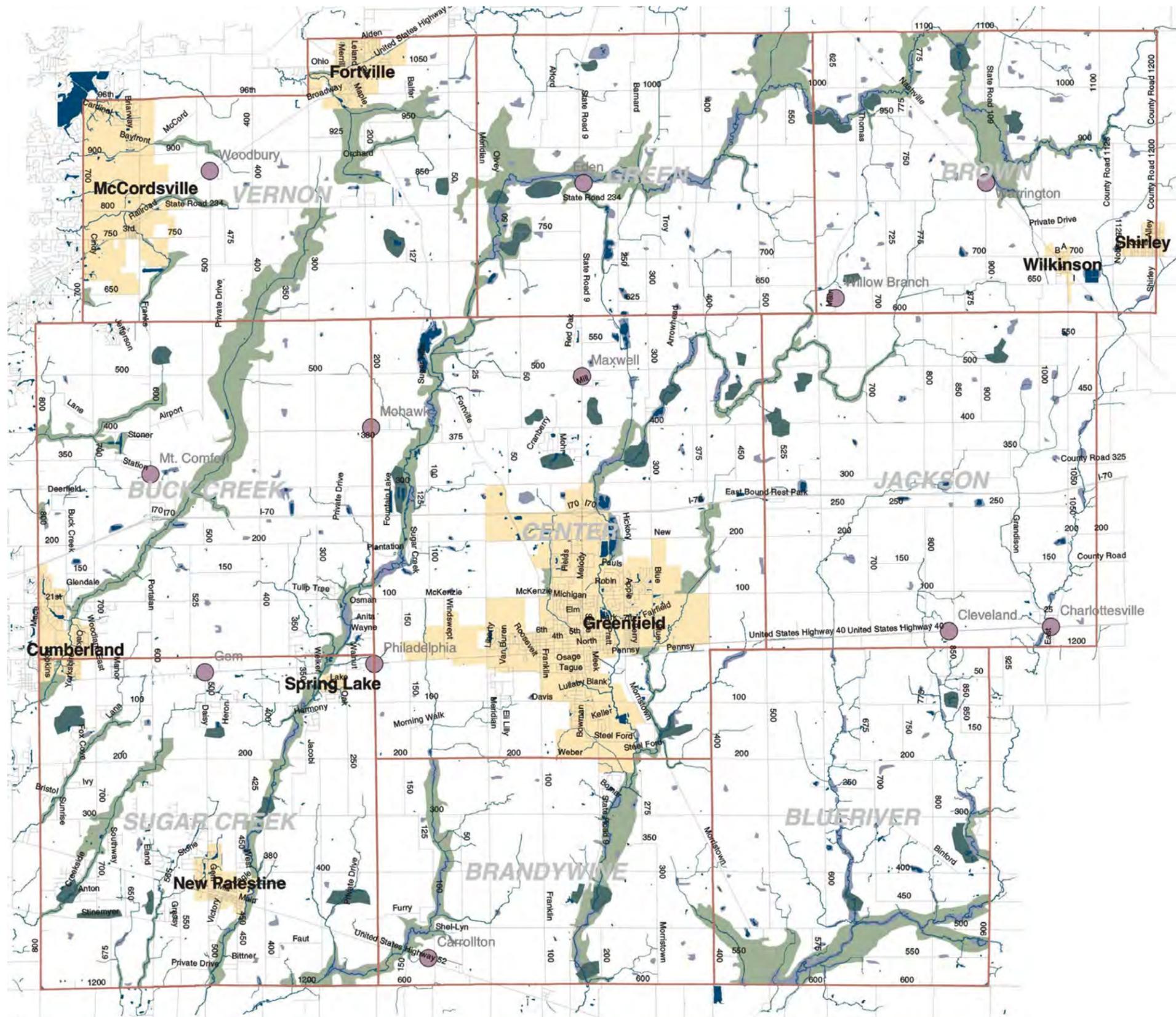
Cities & Towns

Townships



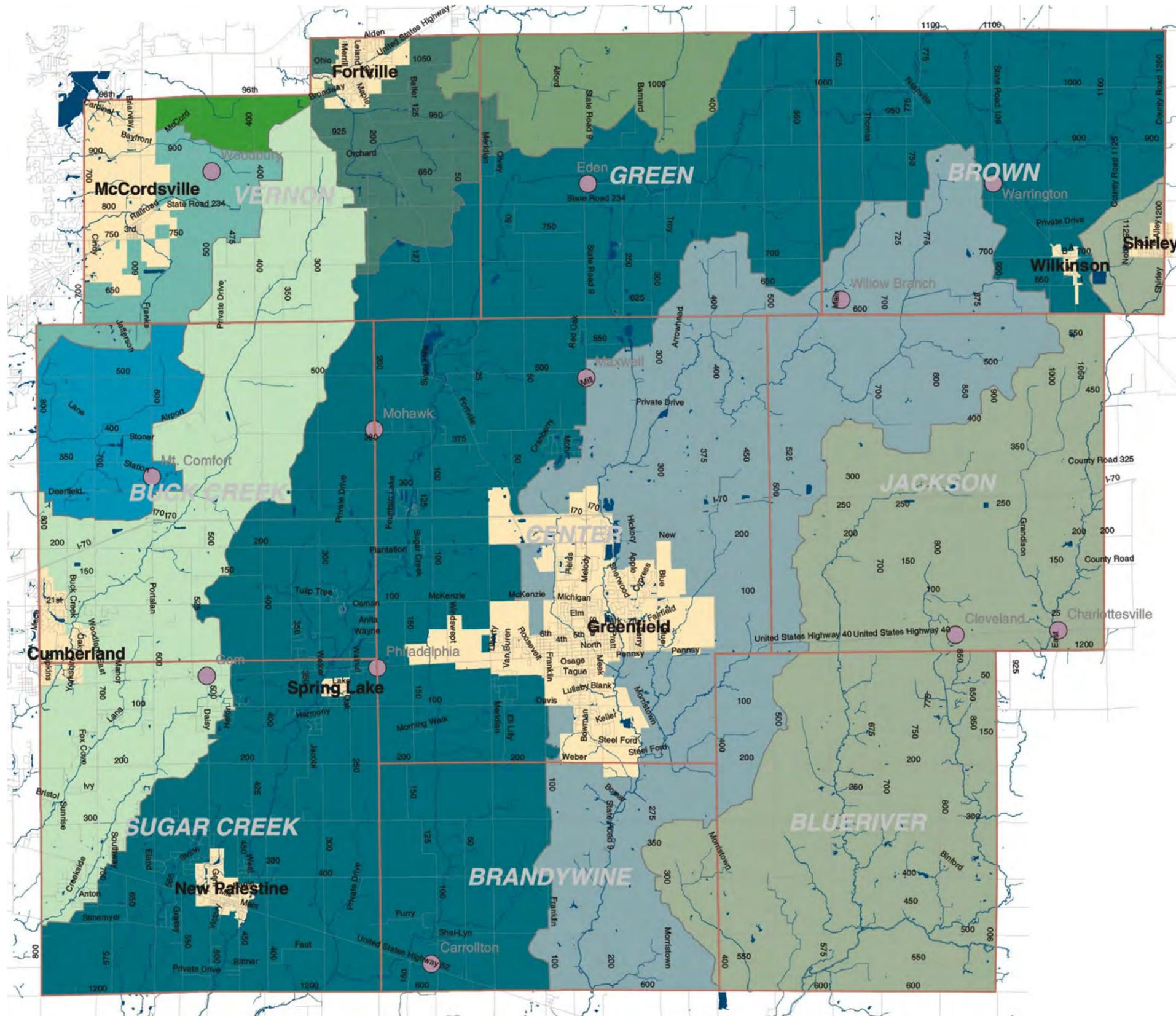
LEGEND

- ▲ Outstanding
- ◆ Notable
- Roads
- Streams
- Lakes
- Unincorporated Towns
- Cities & Towns
- Townships



LEGEND

- Floodplain
- Wetlands
- Forested Areas
- Streams
- Lakes
- Roads
- Unincorporated Towns
- Cities & Towns
- Townships



LEGEND

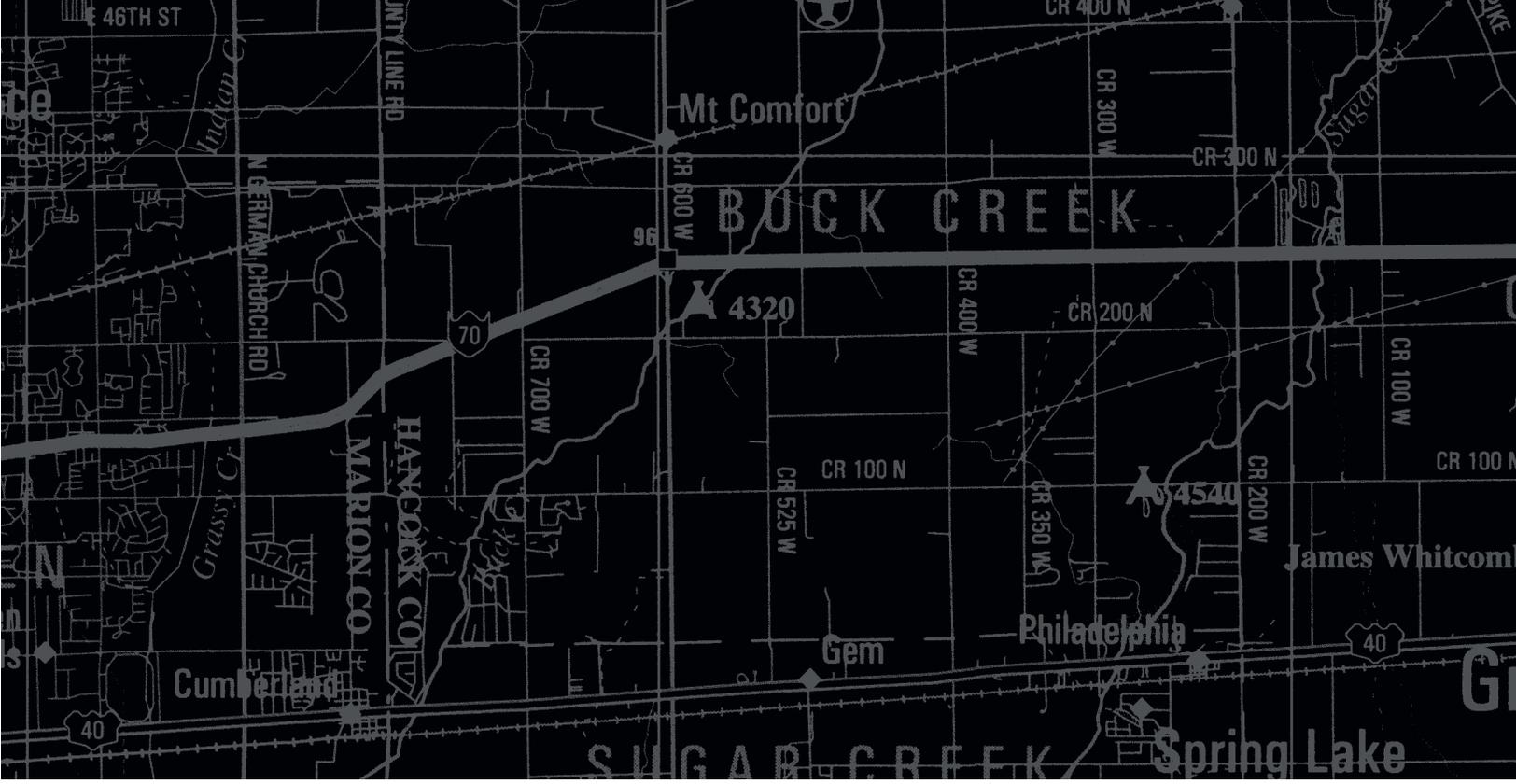
- Roads
- Watersheds**
 - Bee Camp Creek
 - Big Blue River
 - Brandywine Creek
 - Buck Creek
 - Dry Branch
 - Flatfork Creek
 - Indian Creek
 - Lick Creek
 - Sugar Creek
- Streams
- Lakes
- Unincorporated Towns
- Cities & Towns
- Townships

<u>Page</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Size</u>
6-5	Future LU Plan	11 x 17
6-21	Land Use Plan	8.5 x 11
6-22	Critical Area 1	8.5 x 11
6-23	Critical Area 2	8.5 x 11
6-24	Critical Area 3a	8.5 x 11
6-25	Critical Area 3b	8.5 x 11
6-26	Critical Area 4	8.5 x 11
6-27	Critical Area 5	8.5 x 11
7-3	Regional Trans.	8.5 x 11
7-5	Thoroughfare Map	11 x 17
7-13	Critical Areas	8.5 x 11
7-17	Trails Plan Map	11 x 17
8-3	Location Map	8.5 x 11
8-5	McCordsville Map	8.5 x 11
8-7	Fortville Map	8.5 x 11
8-9	Shirley Map	8.5 x 11
8-11	Spring Lake Map	8.5 x 11
9-7	Visioning Wkshps	8.5 x 11
9-15	Prioritization Wkshp	8.5 x 11
9-17	Prioritization Wkshp	8.5 x 11
10-25	Ex. Land Use 1991	11 x 17
10-26	Ex. Land Use 2003	11 x 17
10-27	Utilities Svce Areas	11 x 17
10-28	Historic Sites/Struc.	11 x 17
10-29	Natural Features	11 x 17
10-30	Watersheds	11 x 17
10-31	Dev't Issues/Cons.	11 x 17

Sum of 8.5x11 = 16

Sum of 11x17 = 11

Total = 27



 RATIO

