



To: Mike Dale, Hancock County Area Plan Commission Executive Director
From: Meredith Perks, Associate Planner, Vandewalle & Associates
Date: Friday, January 21, 2022
Re: Future Hancock Comprehensive Plan Update

Below is a progress report regarding the Future Hancock Comprehensive Plan. The items below reflect highlights of recent activity and forecast upcoming actions. Information on the Future Hancock plan can also be found at <https://futurehancock.com/>.

Recent Activity:

Draft Vision and Strategic Framework

Consultants have been working on the development of a Draft Vision and Strategic Framework that incorporates the input received from the public since the kick off of the Future Hancock planning process, as well as input from the Steering Committee, elected officials, and staff and data analysis and observations. The Vision and Strategic Framework will serve as the guiding foundation for the development of the Future Hancock plan elements, including the economic development strategy, thoroughfare plan and comprehensive plan/future land use. The Vision and Framework will be presented in the plan as a text description as well as a concise graphic that is used as an active tool for the development, communication, and implementation of the plan. The Plan Commission will receive a presentation on the draft Vision and Framework at their meeting on January 25th. The Draft Vision and Framework is attached.

Vision and Strategic Framework Elements:

The Vision is an aspirational statement describing the future condition and reality in Hancock County. This is what we want the County to be in 20 years.

Strategic Objectives are key issues and principles that will be addressed in the Future Hancock plan in order to achieve the Vision. These will be major themes throughout the plan and drivers for content development.

Initiatives each Strategic Objective includes a number of initiatives and actionable strategies to achieve the Objective.

Public Open House: Consultants have been preparing an Public Open House for January 25th to present the draft Vision and Framework to the public. The Open House will be a drop in event prior to the Plan Commission meeting where residents can review the Vision and Framework elements and provide input via conversations with consultants and elected officials, interactive activities, and comment forms. All

materials, including the consultant presentation and comment forms will be available on the Future Hancock website for those who cannot attend in person: <https://futurehancock.com/>.

Public Input Review

- Following the Visioning Workshop in November virtual workshop materials were published on the Future Hancock website and made available through mid-December.
- Virtual Workshop materials included a survey and an interactive digital map. Following the closure of the Virtual Workshop materials, input was reviewed by the consultant team for inclusion in the draft Vision and Framework and development of other draft materials.

Additional Stakeholder Focus Groups: Additional focus group discussions were held in December and January on the topics of transportation, agriculture and ag-science/economic development. The feedback received in these discussions has been incorporated into the draft Vision and Framework and will be included in plan development.

Steering Committee Update: A brief update was provided to the Steering Committee on January 7th. A draft Vision and Framework was presented. Steering Committee members were asked to provide input on the draft, including elements of the Vision and Framework that resonated with them as well as elements they felt were missing. This input was incorporated into the draft Vision and Framework being presented at the January 25th Open House and Plan Commission meeting.

Meeting with Staff: The Consultant Team and County Staff leads have established monthly check ins and updates to stay informed on the planning process and progress. A meeting with staff was held to discuss the upcoming Open House, the draft Vision and Framework, and development of preliminary drafts of the Future Land Use Map, Thoroughfare Plan, and Economic Development Strategy.

Future Hancock Website: The project website, <https://futurehancock.com/>, has been updated regularly with new information, including public input event details and online questionnaires. Residents are able to sign up for email updates on the website and provide comments.

Initial Drafts: Work is underway on preliminary drafts of the Future Land Use Map, Thoroughfare Plan and Economic Development Strategy. These drafts are being prepared for initial review by the Steering Committee and County Staff in March.

Upcoming/Ongoing Actions:

- Continue to Build the Email Listserv and Contact List
- Preliminary Draft Development
 - Future Land Use Map
 - Thoroughfare Plan
 - Economic Development Strategy

Attached

- Draft Vision and Strategic Framework

2042 VISION

DRAFT

Hancock County is Central Indiana's community of choice and recognized leader in proactively managing growth to balance and promote its agricultural resources with targeted economic opportunities.

Strengthened by their welcoming residents, Hancock County's vibrant communities, towns, and city offer a range of living and employment opportunities and are united by their outstanding public schools, quality development, high-value amenities, rural landscape, and excellent public infrastructure and services.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

A.
Enhance Intergovernmental Collaboration and Coordination to the Benefit of all County Residents

Strong systems are needed to ensure efficient and effective service delivery and consistent and mutually beneficial decision-making regarding infrastructure investments and policies such as:

- ▶ Working collaboratively with Greenfield and the Towns to identify future growth areas
- ▶ Ensuring compatibility of land uses at jurisdictional boundaries
- ▶ Ensuring adequate public safety facilities and staffing are available to serve new development
- ▶ Understanding the fiscal impacts of development incentives on other units of government
- ▶ Identifying sites for new and expanded public facilities, schools, and rights-of-way
- ▶ Determining the type and location of new recreation facilities

B.
Strengthen the Sense of Community and Identity while Diversifying Lifestyle Choices

Emphasis should be placed on reinforcing a strong sense of community and sense of place while accommodating a greater diversity of living options by:

- ▶ Providing a greater range of public and private amenities including recreation, entertainment, etc.
- ▶ Coordinating with the school districts to ensure their long-term quality and fiscal health as growth continues
- ▶ Working with Greenfield and the Towns to offer a diversity of rural, suburban, and urban lifestyle options
- ▶ Ensuring quality development with high design standards to create a recognizable sense of place
- ▶ Protecting and building on Hancock's rural heritage by promoting compact expansion of developed areas and creating additional ag-related tourism and value-added processing opportunities
- ▶ Identifying and promoting new and expanded businesses to stabilize and enhance the County's smaller communities appropriate to their rural nature
- ▶ Developing a County brand identity as a community of choice in the Indy region to attract families, amenities, services, and employers
- ▶ Developing a framework to be more intentional with types, intensity and location of new development

C.
Diversify Employment to Improve the Live-Work Balance

Attract a wider variety of job opportunities that align with the skills of the resident workforce by:

- ▶ Establishing career pipeline programs to introduce junior/senior HS students to local employers/career opportunities they offer
- ▶ Creating programs to make new employment opportunities known to County residents and encourage and incentivize employers to hire local
- ▶ Attracting and expanding employment opportunities that align with resident skills in areas such as healthcare, education, scientific and technical services, and agbioscience, among others
- ▶ Providing local opportunities for job training, continuing education, and career advancement

D.
Support a Balance of High Quality Housing Densities and Types

Work with a variety of partners, including incorporated communities, to meet population- and job-driven housing demand, by:

- ▶ Creating attainable housing types at a wide variety of price points to support the workforce of growing industries
- ▶ Supporting denser rental and for sale housing products that appeal to both younger and older households
- ▶ Promoting denser housing developments in areas well-served by supporting infrastructure and near amenities
- ▶ Developing strategies to revitalize housing conditions in communities that are experiencing significant housing vacancy

E.
Invest in a Robust and Efficient Transportation System Concurrent with Development

The County's roads enable the safe movement of people and goods across the region; so it is imperative that the County maintain a highly functional, multi-faceted transportation system by:

- ▶ Working with state, regional, and local partners to have a safe, efficient network of roads within the County to improve both freight and passenger mobility
- ▶ Working with the state to make improvements to I-70 and interchanges and state roads
- ▶ Working with IndyGo, CIRT, and HART to create a strong multimodal transportation system that supports Hancock's economic development objectives, that may include: Workforce Connector services, transit expansion, and/or innovative private partnerships to address employer demands
- ▶ Planning for the electrification of all transportation modes by working with public and private entities to strategically locate charging stations
- ▶ Implementing the Hancock County Trails Plan and develop policies for the addition of bike lanes and sidewalks with new development to improve walkability
- ▶ Implementing a Complete Streets approach on new and expanded State, local, and County Roads
- ▶ Coordinating with the Indianapolis Regional Airport to avoid conflicting land uses in growth areas surrounding the Airport

F.
Leverage Broadband Infrastructure to Advance Smart Communities and Attract Internet-Dependent Businesses

Local governments and schools throughout the County should utilize its excellent high-speed broadband backbone infrastructure for:

- ▶ Beginning the deployment of new, integrated technologies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services to residents in areas such as transportation, public safety, water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater utilities
- ▶ Attracting and expanding businesses such as: data and call centers, financial services, web hosting, logistics, research and development
- ▶ Attracting remote workers who desire a more rural lifestyle by exploring strategies such as: incentivizing recruitment through programs and incentives, and marketing the County's competitive and locational advantages

G.
Prioritize Growth Areas and Investments in Supporting Infrastructure and Services

Proactively plan to responsibly balance and manage growth impacts and avoid haphazard development in targeted areas of the County by:

- ▶ Implementing the Mt. Comfort Corridor Plan land use and infrastructure recommendations
- ▶ Leveraging Hancock County's unique position in the region by using the Comprehensive Plan to intentionally and proactively identify the location and timing of other growth areas and those areas to remain mostly rural/agricultural
- ▶ Identifying opportunities to stabilize employment and housing in areas that are stagnant in growth
- ▶ Using the Thoroughfare Plan and Capital Improvement Plan to direct infrastructure investments to growth areas and away from areas where development is not expected or desired, including in rural areas where agriculture is actively practiced
- ▶ Using the Economic Development Strategy and its implementing policies to direct new businesses into identified growth areas and utilize robust funding strategies for the supporting infrastructure and services
- ▶ Evaluating the potential use of development impact fees, development agreements, and similar mechanisms to ensure new development pays its fair share of infrastructure and service costs