



To: Mike Dale, Hancock County Area Plan Commission Executive Director
From: Meredith Perks, Associate Planner, Vandewalle & Associates
Date: Wednesday, October 20, 2021
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:

Public Engagement: Planning and preparation for community engagement events was ongoing in the month of October, with finalization of details for the Public Visioning Workshop, focus group interviews, and pop up community events.

- **Pop Up Community Events** – project team members were present at two county festivals with an informational booth where we provided information about the plan, collected input, and answered questions. The primary goal of our presence at these events is to raise awareness and visibility of the Future Hancock planning process and future input opportunities like the Visioning Workshop and the Future Hancock website, as well as to interact or share information with as many residents as possible.
 - **Riley Festival – October 9th & 10th, Greenfield**
 - 50+ conversations
 - Top Topics Discussed:
 - Reactive infrastructure and development
 - Increased amenities, entertainment, and recreational options
 - Improved roads and traffic flow
 - **Pumpkins & Peddlers Festival – October 16th & 17th, Shirley**
 - 20-30 conversations
 - Top Topics Discussed:
 - Need for more jobs in the Shirley area
 - Zoning and non-conforming uses
 - Building standards in rural areas
 - **Community Questionnaire** – as part of the pop-up events, residents were encouraged to complete the Community



Questionnaire. It was made available in hard copy and [online](#). To date, 100+ questionnaires have been collected and completed. The Questionnaire will remain open until mid-November.

- **Focus Group Interviews** – expanding on the interviews from the project kickoff the Project Team has been arranging virtual and in-person focus groups to gain different perspectives on key issues in the county. These interviews were completed throughout October. Three focus groups are still being scheduled and will be completed this fall. Summaries of focus group discussions are being prepared and will be shared in the future. This feedback will also be incorporated and outlined in the final plan documents. Focus Groups included following:

Completed Focus Groups:

- County Elected Officials
- County Department Heads
- Public Safety Providers
- Tourism & Chambers of Commerce & Main Streets
- Civic & Non-Profit Groups
- City/Town Elected Officials
- Real Estate, Commercial, and Industrial Development
- Schools & Education
- City/Town Planners and Managers
- Indy Partnership
- Indianapolis MPO
- IEDC
- HCEDC

Focus Groups to Be Completed:

- Agricultural Interests
- Transportation, Thoroughfare Plan, & Trails
- Neighborhood Perspectives on Growth

- **Small Town and Unincorporated Community Tours** – Over the 16th and 17th of October, members of the consultant team held a series of informal community conversations in the 14 small platted communities and Towns of Spring Lake and Shirley and also toured the communities. Conversations addressed attendee concerns and questions about the comprehensive plan and issues specific to their community as well as about the county as a whole. Meeting attendees were provided a questionnaire to collect feedback and attendees could also make comments on maps of the county and specific communities. In each conversation consultants provided background information on the comprehensive plan’s purpose and process, took questions and had group and one-on-one discussions with attendees. Feedback received in these conversations will be summarized and provided at a future date.
 - We appreciate the assistance and attendance of County Commissioners, Council members and Plan Commission members who facilitated these conversations, as well as



the community hosts who opened their buildings for us and the attendees who spent part of their weekend with us.

- Top Issues Raised:
 - Sewer and water service territories
 - Stormwater and drainage
 - Rate of industrial development
 - Agricultural preservation
 - Blighted and vacant property
 - Emergency/public services
 - Trails, parks, and county amenities
 - Local serving commercial development in small towns

Upcoming Public Event:

- **Community Visioning Workshop – November 9th from 6 to 8pm, MVCSC Administration Building, MV Alumni Center on the 2nd Floor, Fortville.**
 - The Visioning Workshop is a facilitated, in-person workshop that is **open to the public** and is designed to gather extensive feedback and public input on goals and priorities for the county. This information will be used to build the Vision and Framework that will help guide the development of the plan elements.
 - Advertisement for the event includes distributed flyers, notices in the newspaper, updates on the website, a listserv email blast, distribution at community events and in community locations with the assistance of staff and the steering committee.
 - The Community Visioning Workshop will include a brief background presentation by the Project Team to further educate the public and provide context for the Comprehensive Plan.
 - A digital input component will also be included and posted on FutureHancock.com for people who are not able to attend the workshop in person.

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.

Future Hancock Email Listserv: The first Future Hancock [email blast](#) was sent out in October to make residents aware of the various opportunities to chat with the consultants and learn more about the various ways to provide input in the process.

Data Collection and Base Mapping: The project team has continued collecting background data for analysis of existing conditions in Hancock County. Base maps are being developed and refined for use in the creation of critical plan maps and graphics.

Steering Committee Update: An interim Steering Committee update was provided via zoom to update Steering Committee members on the planning process and public engagement planning.

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.

Upcoming/Ongoing Actions:

- Stakeholder Focus Group Interviews
- Public Information Email Blast
- Continue to Build the Email Listserv and contact list
- Community Visioning Workshop
- Continued Data Analysis

Attachments:

- Visioning Workshop Flyer