



To: Mike Dale, Hancock County Area Plan Commission Executive Director  
From: Meredith Perks, Associate Planner, Vandewalle & Associates  
Date: Thursday, September 23, 2021  
Re: Future Hancock Comprehensive Plan Update

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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:

**Project Kick-Off:** The project team held a series of project kick-off meetings on August 12-13<sup>th</sup> to officially launch the Future Hancock planning process. The Vandewalle & Associates Project Team was in Hancock County for a series of meetings and efforts that gathered meaningful input on the key issues for the Comprehensive Plan update. Kick-Off meetings included:

- Meeting with Hancock County Staff
- County Tour with Mike Dale
- Stakeholder Focus Group Interviews
  1. Elected Officials (County Commission, Council, and Area Plan Commission)
  2. Hancock County Department Heads
  3. Hancock County Town Representatives
  4. Economic Development Representatives
- Steering Committee Meeting #1

These discussions were extremely productive and identified a number of issues for consideration in the Comprehensive Plan. These issues included:

- The importance of the small-town community in Hancock County
- The County is typically an easy place to get around – high accessibility, low traffic
- The County needs more amenities that will enhance quality of life and will bring people to the County and keep them here, particularly young people and families.
  - Amenities include dining and entertainment as well as trails, recreation, and open space.
- The County needs a balance of land uses and geographic distribution of investments in economic development and infrastructure in both the west and east sides.

**Future Hancock Website Launch:** At the project kick-off, <https://futurehancock.com/>, the website committed to housing information about the Future Hancock plan and planning process. The website will be updated regularly throughout the planning process to:

- Provide background information on what a Comprehensive Plan is and address other common questions about Future Hancock
- Share plan materials, including plan drafts
- Advertise public events and opportunities for input
- Collect feedback, input, and answer questions via a “contact us” page
- Collect email addresses and share via email updates on the planning process. The email and contact lists will be continuously updated throughout the planning process.
  - An email blast regarding the project kick off and public events will be going out by the end of September

**Public Engagement Planning and Preparation:** The Project Team has been working with County staff and community partners to identify Pop Up Community Events where team members can interact with the public where they are already gathered and get the word out about the plan. We have also identified a date for the public Visioning Workshop and are preparing Focus Group Interviews.

- **Pop Up Community Events** – existing/previously planned community events where the public will be gathered. Project Team members will be present with a table/booth and will share information about the plan, educate the public about what a Comprehensive Plan is, and collect input. Project Team members will be present at the following community events:
  - Riley Festival – October 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>, Greenfield
  - Pumpkins & Peddlers Festival – Saturday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, Shirley
- **Community Visioning Workshop** – 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. 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.
  - Community Visioning Workshop – November 9<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 8pm, MVCSC Administration Building, MV Alumni Center on the 2nd Floor, Fortville.
- **Focus Group Interviews** – expanding on the interviews from the project kickoff the Project Team is arranging virtual interviews with a number of groups to gain different perspectives. These interviews are being scheduled for early October. Focus Groups will include the following:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Neighborhood Perspectives on Growth</li> <li>○ Schools &amp; Education</li> <li>○ Public Safety Providers</li> <li>○ Tourism &amp; Chambers of Commerce &amp; Main Streets</li> <li>○ Transportation, Thoroughfare Plan, &amp; Trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Civic &amp; Non-Profit Groups</li> <li>○ Agricultural Interests</li> <li>○ City/Town Elected Officials</li> <li>○ Additional Economic Development Groups as part of the Economic Development Strategy</li> </ul>
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- **Small Town and Unincorporated Community Tours** – members of the Project Team will be spending time touring the unincorporated communities included in the Area Plan Commission to

gather information and input on the communities. Elected officials and members of the public will be welcome to join the tours. Additional details will be shared as confirmed. Dates for these tours are targeted for mid-October.

Promotional Future Hancock postcards and 1-page informational sheets have also been created and distributed to County Staff, steering committee members, and focus group participants. These postcards are intended to inform the public about the Comprehensive Plan and direct them to FutureHancock.com for additional information. Mike Dale has additional postcards for distribution as needed. These materials will also be distributed at the Pop Up Community Events.

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

### Upcoming/Ongoing Actions:

- Stakeholder Focus Group Interviews
- Public Information Email Blast
- Continue to Build the Email Listserv and contact list
- Small Town & Unincorporated Community Tours
- Pop Up Community Events
- Community Visioning Workshop
- Continued Data Analysis

### Attachments:

- Steering Committee Meeting #1 Summary
- Future Hancock Postcard and Informational Sheet