



To: Future Hancock Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee
From: Meredith Perks, Associate Planner, Vandewalle & Associates
Date: Thursday, January 30, 2025
Re: Future Hancock Comprehensive Plan Implementation Update

Below is a progress report regarding the Future Hancock Comprehensive Plan Implementation, as reported by County staff and initiative leaders. The items below reflect highlights of recent activity and forecast upcoming actions. The [full tracking document](#) further outlines these efforts.

Recent Implementation Activity Highlights:

Activity 1: Town/City Development Review Coordination

Controlling the spread of unsewered (septic) development with the Town and City sewer service growth areas is critical to preventing sprawl, maintaining a compact development pattern, preserving agricultural land, and saving resources. Coordination between the County and municipalities and utility providers is needed in the development review process to advance mutually agreed on standards, principles, and procedures.

- The Recommendations Report has been shared with local municipalities and utility providers and a group meeting was held in late May to review feedback on the report. The meeting was productive. A final draft with input from County Staff is being prepared.

Activity 4: Update Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to Reformat the Code and Improve Developmental Standards

A Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) is regulation that combines zoning, subdivision, and stormwater ordinances into a single document. Having the streamlined document helps avoid duplicating/overlapping regulations and can make the development process easier for the County and developers. Updating the County's UDO will reformat the code, improve and modernize development standards, improve agricultural regulations, and help manage growth in rural areas as implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Work on the UDO update is ongoing.

Activity 6: Park and Open Space Study and Implementation

As a key part of the Comprehensive Plan's Livability chapter, the County has been working on multiple fronts to investigate and implement brand new County park system opportunities.

- The County has created an Ordinance and appointed our County Park and Recreation Board. Two members, Kayla Brooks and Miriam Shoaff-Rolles, were appointed by the Board of Commissioners.
 - On June 12th, the Council appointed the remaining two members, Hollie Kinker and Heather VanDyke.
- The Board is in the process of appointing an Impact Fee Committee for our parks, with the target date set for July 2nd.
- The Park Board has been working with consultants from PROS Consulting, Context Design, and BakerTilly to discuss our level of service, site master planning, our 5-Year Master Plan, and to assist the Impact Fee Committee in adopting a fee, establishing its use, and diversifying revenue streams for best use.
 - By implementing the above initiatives, the Board aim to be compliant so we can apply for various grants.
- On July 2nd, the Board of Commissioners will be announcing the creation of the Hancock County Parks and Recreation Board and reading a Proclamation Designation of "July as Park and Recreation Month" in our County.

Activity 7: Quality of Place Framework

Advancing quality of place is one of the main themes of the Economic Development Strategy. Advancing implementation of Theme 5 is a long term, multi-faceted effort that is currently in progress.

Community Foundation of Hancock County has a number of programs through their Embrace Our Place initiative that align with this theme.

- The Quality of Place Steering Committee has been selected and has met multiple times to assist the project consultants in data gathering and other input. Input has included the selection of peer communities for comparison on utilities and programs.
- Project Consultants have completed an asset mapping process and completed an asset mapping survey of the Steering Committee.
- Public Workshops are planned to gather addition input. Workshops are planned as follows in the month of June:
 - New Palestine
 - McCordsville
 - Eastern Hancock
 - Community Foundation of Hancock County Thrive Center
- The CFHC completed a Quality of Life Survey to help inform their work and grant pursuits. There was tremendous response to this survey and the data will be incorporated by the Project Consultants into their work.
- A first draft of the Quality of Life Plan is anticipated for November 2024.

Activity 11: Develop a Plan for Proactive Housing Development

In implementation efforts that include both Economic Development Strategy and the Comprehensive Plan elements, HEDC, including its new staff member, have been working on addressing gaps in the county housing market and encouraging development that meets currently unmet housing styles and price points. Addressing shortages is critical in ensuring that Hancock County employees can live in the County.

- HEDC is analyzing data and making outreach connections to identify opportunities to proactively recruit residential developers that will develop the types of housing, including the style, size, and price point, that Hancock County needs.
- HEDC is also looking at infill development opportunities for both residential and commercial as a way to address buildings and housing in need of rehabilitation, encourage turnover in the housing market, and provide opportunities for older residents to age in place.

Activity 16: Solar Panel Pilot Program

Hancock Highway Department is implementing a pilot program to install solar panels on the County Highway Administration Building. If the Solar Panel Installation Pilot program is successful, it will enable the county to reduce its carbon footprint and determine the feasibility of installing Solar Panels on additional county buildings.

- County has a contract with Morton Solar to install the solar panels. The project is in the engineering and permit phase.
- The County has been approved by the US Department of Energy EECBG Voucher reimbursement program.
- The County will seek out the remaining balance for equipment reimbursement from the IRS's "Direct Pay" program.