

Chapter 4

Land Use

Introduction

Planning for the future land use patterns of the community is one of the primary objectives of a comprehensive planning process. This includes developing a future land use map in addition to the goals, objectives, and policies that will help the Plan Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and County Commissioners make land use decisions that help the community achieve its vision. The land use goals and objectives for Decatur County are presented in this chapter.

Goals and Objectives

Goal

Create a range of housing choices in appropriate areas

Objectives

- Encourage cluster development as a means of providing for appropriate rural housing
- Eliminate barriers to upper floor residential and live over work spaces in town centers, while addressing parking
- Encourage housing development where residents can age in place
- Minimize land use conflicts between intensive agricultural uses and residential uses through appropriate site location and design

Goal

Encourage the development of quality neighborhoods

Objectives

- Promote neighborhood design that encourages walkability through provision of pedestrian amenities and destinations
- Promote connectivity between neighborhoods and with public spaces such as parks and schools where the density of the development warrants pedestrian connections
- Support integration of parks, open spaces, and natural areas in new subdivisions (contiguity with other subdivisions, existing or future)
- Support the inclusion of appropriate neighborhood commercial uses in areas where neighborhood commercial centers can serve the day-to-day needs of neighborhood residents

Goal

Protect the county's agricultural resources and promote the expansion of the local agricultural economy

Objectives

- Reduce potential land use conflicts by minimizing the type and quantity of non-agricultural uses in agricultural areas
- Establish a premiere location in the county for the continuation and expansion of agricultural businesses in the form of an agricultural business park
- Establish criteria to define prime farmland and utilize tools to maintain prime farmland in agricultural use
- Promote infill development as a means of limiting residential, commercial, and industrial encroachment into prime agricultural areas

Goal

Encourage commercial and industrial development in appropriate areas that supports continued growth in the community

Objectives

- Protect existing investment in the community by ensuring that new development supports or complements existing development
- Encourage new commercial and industrial development to occur in designated growth areas

Scenarios

Scenarios present extreme development alternatives in order to encourage discussion among stakeholders and determine priorities of the community. The direction provided by the discussion of the scenarios forms the basis of the Future Land Use map for the community.

#1 – Aggressive Growth

- Industrial growth occurs north and west of Honda
- Regional commercial growth is focused around the interchanges, north and south of I-74
- Residential growth occurs near Lake Santee and on the southeast side of Greensburg

The first scenario focuses on commercial and industrial development (See Figure 4.1). In this scenario, industrial growth occurs north and west of the Honda site, on both sides of I-74. The industrial area becomes a significant western gateway for the community and the quality of that development needs to be considered very carefully as it will form the first impression of the community for visitors, investors, and residents approaching from Indianapolis. An agricultural business park is proposed in the west central part of the county.

Regional commercial growth is also very important in this scenario and is focused around the Interstate interchanges, on both the north and south sides of I-74. Again, the development will become one of the gateways to the community, which means that quality of the development will be of the utmost importance.

In this scenario, the residential growth occurs to the southeast of Greensburg and in the Lake Santee area. The development in the Lake Santee area would likely be custom-built executive housing. Development to the southeast of Greensburg would provide for a range of housing opportunities, primarily single family homes. Parks and open space would be incorporated into residential areas.

Implications of this scenario are:

- Need to expand water and sewer westward and north of I-74 to serve new commercial and industrial development
- Need to expand water and sewer to the southeast to accommodate new residential development
- Transportation connectors may be needed to move traffic from the residential areas to employment centers and major transportation arteries
- Industrial development forms the western “gateway” to Greensburg and needs to be managed to present a positive image
- Commercial development forms the northern “gateway” to Greensburg and needs to be managed
- Development in the Lake Santee area needs to be served by water and sewer to protect the lake

#2 – Limited Growth

- New development does not occur north of I-74 during the planning period
- Industrial development occurs around Honda, but remains focused south of the plant
- New regional commercial development occurs along the interstate frontage, south of I-74
- Residential development occurs southwest of the existing boundaries of the City of Greensburg
- Some additional residential growth near Millhousen
- Growth is served by public water and sewer utilities

The second scenario places the growth emphasis south of I-74 and acknowledges I-74 as the traditional northern boundary for urban land uses (See Figure 4.2). Industrial development along the south side of I-74 is a major gateway for the community and needs to be carefully managed. The

same is true for commercial development focused around the I-74/SR 3 interchange.

In this scenario all of the growth is focused around the City of Greensburg. The commercial and industrial growth occurs on the northern side of the community and the residential growth occurs to the southeast and southwest of the current Greensburg city limits.

Implications of this scenario include:

- Need to expand water and sewer westward to serve new industrial development
- Need to expand water and sewer to the southeast to accommodate new residential development
- Water and sewer do not need to cross the interstate
- A southern transportation connector may be needed to move traffic from the residential areas to employment centers and major transportation arteries
- Industrial development forms the western “gateway” to Greensburg and needs to be managed to present a positive image
- Commercial development forms the northern “gateway” to Greensburg and needs to be managed
- No planned growth for smaller incorporated towns
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#3 – *Balanced Growth*

- Growth occurs adjacent to existing urbanized areas, including small towns
- Commercial growth occurs as regional commercial on the north side of Greensburg and neighborhood commercial to serve clusters of residential development
- Industrial development concentrated around Honda
- Growth is served by public water and sewer utilities

The third scenario balances growth by considering growth in several Decatur County communities, but focuses most of the growth near Greensburg, which is better equipped to provide urban services (See Figure 4.3).

The commercial and industrial growth is primarily focused on Greensburg as the county and regional employment center. This regional scale commercial development is concentrated near the I-74/SR 3 interchange, both north and south of I-74. Smaller scale commercial development can expand the ability of people living in the towns to meet their daily needs without significant drives. Industrial development in this scenario is focused around the Honda site and north of I-74 between US 421 and the commercial node at the I-74/SR 3 interchange.

In this scenario the residential development is primarily concentrated to the south of Greensburg, but there is planned residential development in Westport, Millhousen, and Newpoint as well.

Implications of this scenario are:

- Need to expand water and sewer westward and north across I-74 to serve new industrial development
- Need to expand water and sewer to the southeast to accommodate new residential development
- Water and sewer need to be able to serve new residential and commercial development in the towns
- A southern transportation connector may be needed to move traffic from the residential areas to employment centers and major transportation arteries
- Road improvements to Lake Santee would be necessary
- Industrial development forms the western “gateway” to Greensburg and needs to be managed to present a positive image
- Commercial development forms the northern “gateway” to Greensburg and needs to be managed

Future Land Use Plan

The Steering Committee considered the proposed growth scenarios and refined them into a single preferred scenario, which is the future land use plan for Decatur County (See Figure 4.4).

The future land use plan includes significant industrial growth at the Honda site and surrounding areas along US 421, SR 3, and I-74. Commercial uses are shown at the I-74/SR 3 interchange, extending primarily westward, and in several of the existing communities. The commercial and industrial growth does extend north of I-74. Residential development is planned for the south and east of Greensburg, north and south of Lake Santee, and as extensions of the existing communities.

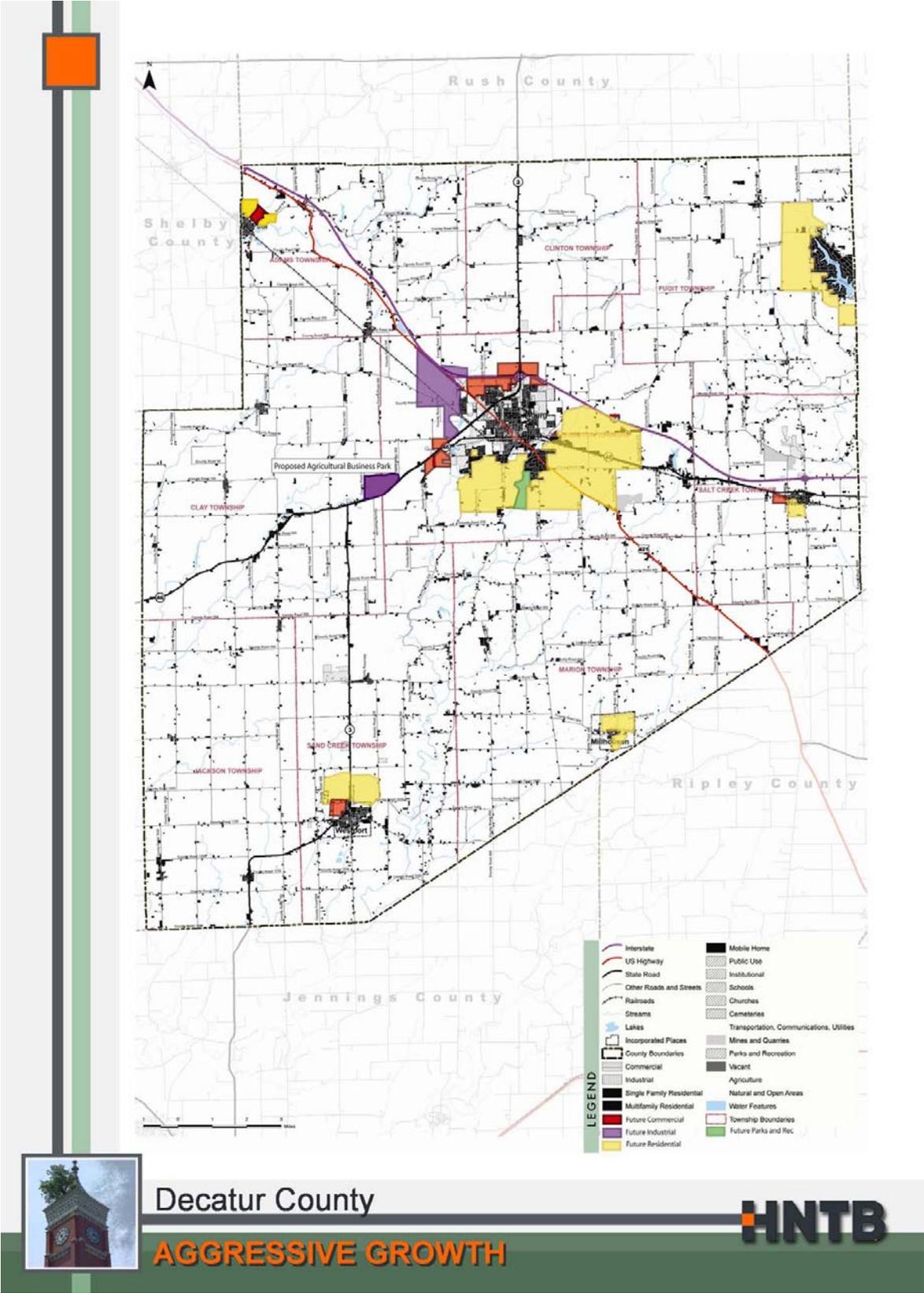
A new park and/or open recreation area is planned for the south side of Greensburg.

Implications of the future land use plan are:

- Need to expand water and sewer westward and north from Greensburg across I-74 to serve new commercial and industrial development
- Need to expand water and sewer to the southeast of Greensburg to accommodate new residential development
- Water and sewer need to be able to serve new residential and commercial development in the towns

- A southern transportation connector may be needed to move traffic from the residential areas to employment centers and major transportation arteries
- Industrial development forms the western “gateway” to Greensburg and needs to be managed to present a positive image
- Commercial development forms the northern “gateway” to Greensburg and needs to be managed
- Development in the Lake Santee area needs to be served by water and sewer to protect the lake
- Road improvements to Lake Santee would be necessary

Figure 4.1: Aggressive Growth Scenario



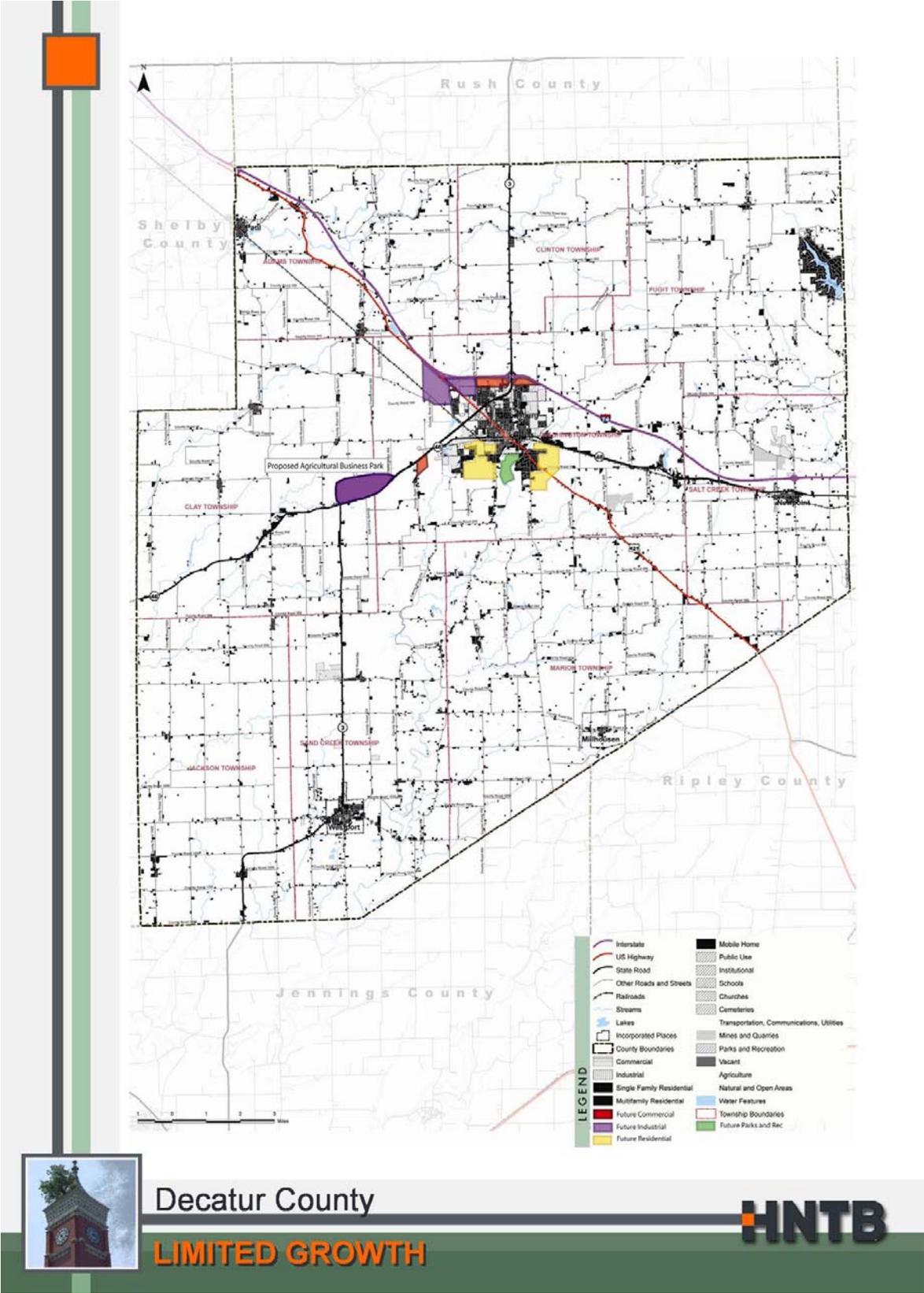
Decatur County

AGGRESSIVE GROWTH



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Figure 4.2: Limited Growth Scenario



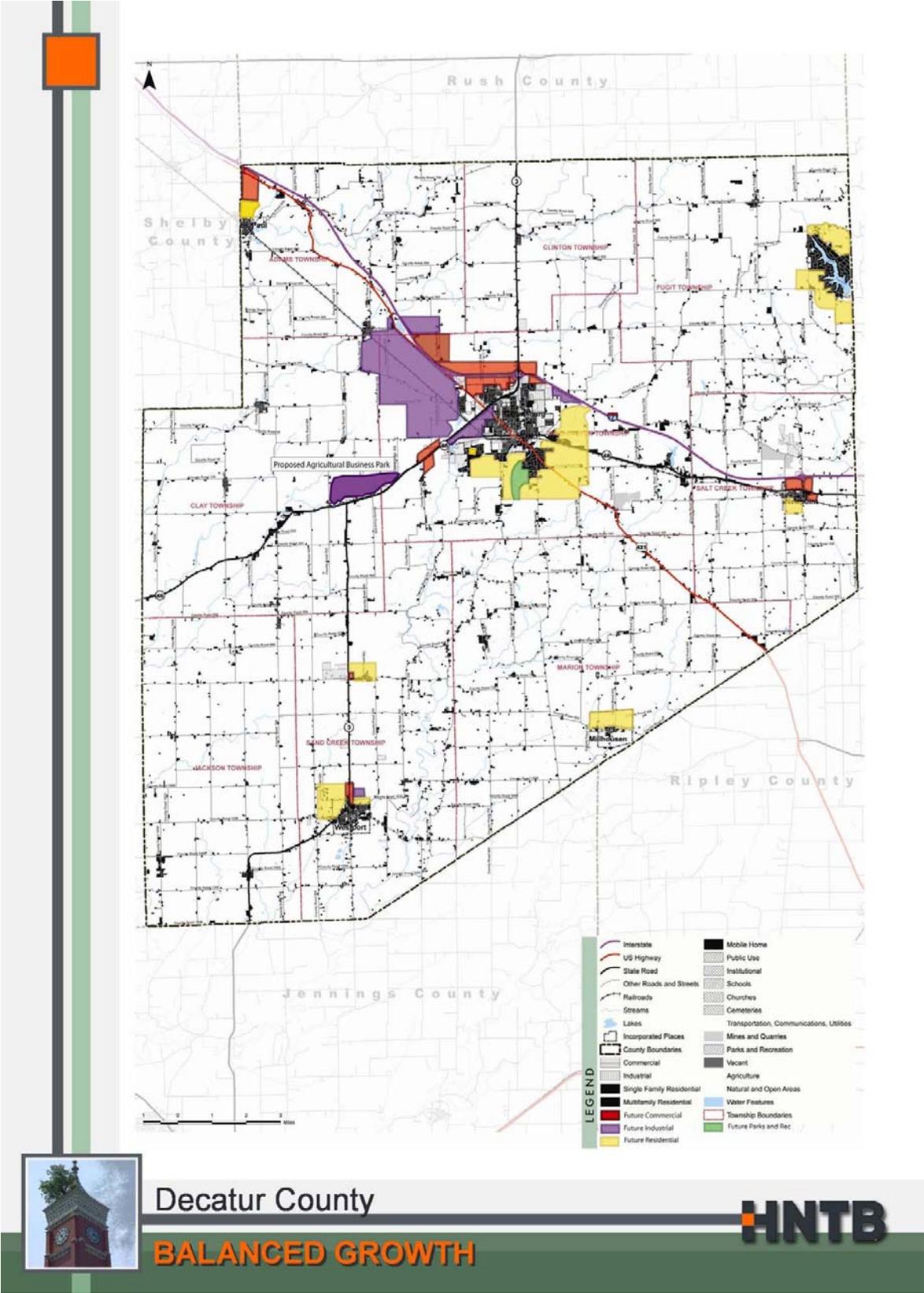
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LIMITED GROWTH



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Figure 4.3: Balanced Growth Scenario



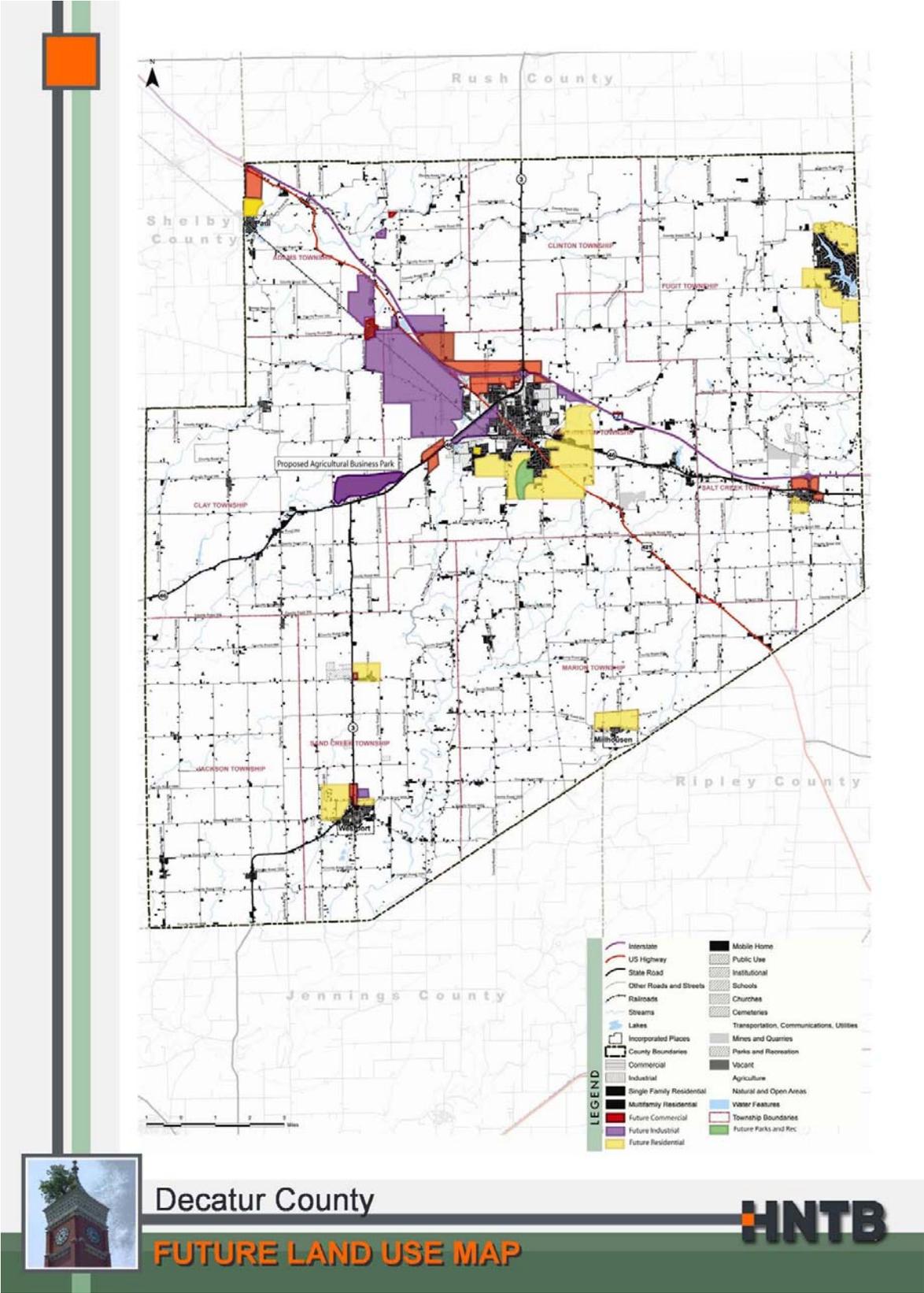
Decatur County

BALANCED GROWTH



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Figure 4.4: Future Land Use Map



Decatur County

FUTURE LAND USE MAP



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Type, Quantity, and Quality of Development

Type of Growth

The current land use pattern in Decatur County has most of the county in agricultural uses and the urbanized land uses predominately within the corporate limits of Greensburg or one of the towns in the county.

Agricultural uses are expected to continue as the dominant land use in the county. Farming will continue to be an important part of the local economy and may expand as agri-business and value added agriculture become a focus of the community.

Growth from the location of Honda will eventually drive the need for additional residential growth in the community. The growth may not happen in the short term as initial employees may commute from the surrounding region. Over time these employees will likely relocate to Decatur County, driving the need for housing. Most of this housing will be single-family detached units. Additional executive housing may be needed as the management at the plant increases and additional businesses develop in the area.

Greensburg currently serves as a regional commercial center and that role is anticipated to increase over time. Regional commercial uses are larger in scale and serve multiple communities. Decatur County will also need additional neighborhood commercial uses to serve the additional residential growth. These uses serve the daily needs of the residential communities adjacent to them.

The Honda plant is not the only industrial growth planned for the Decatur County community. Warehousing and distribution centers are likely to develop in the areas near the Honda plant. While most suppliers will develop 30 to 60 miles from the plant, there will be some operations that choose to locate closer. This industrial development should occur in the vicinity of I-74 and US 421.

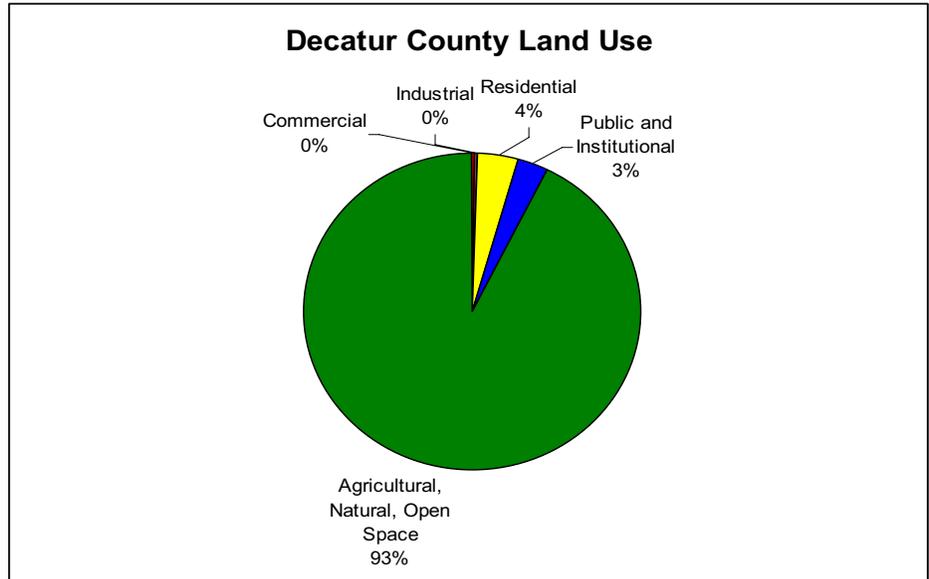
In order to maintain the current quality of life in the community and be attractive to newcomers, investments will need to be made in public and institutional uses such as schools, parks, and churches.

Quantity of Growth

Agricultural uses and natural areas account for 93 percent of the 373 square miles in the county. Residential uses occupy approximately four percent of the land. The third largest land use in the county is public and institutional uses. Currently there are nearly nine acres of agricultural land, one-third of

an acre of residential land, more than one-quarter of an acre of public uses per person in Decatur County. There are also 0.2 acres each of commercial and industrial uses per person in the county.

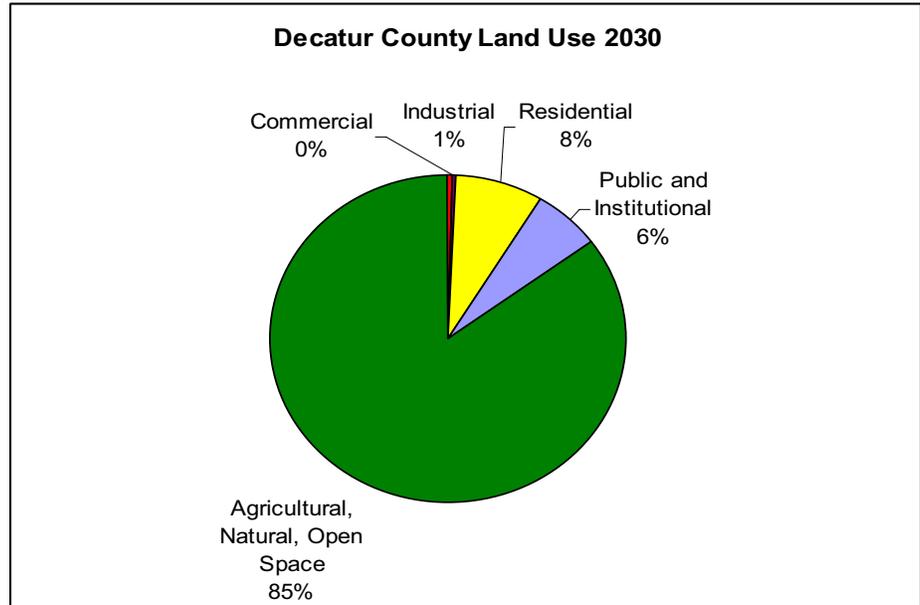
Figure 4.5: Existing Land Use in Decatur County



Source: HNTB

If the current land use per person were to apply in 2030, Decatur County would need an additional 9,652 acres of land for housing; 7,631 acres of public land; 642 acres of industrial uses; and 543 acres of commercial uses. This would result in a reduction of agricultural land of 18,467 acres. In 2030, the land use mix would be as shown in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.6: Future Land Use in Decatur County



Source: HNTB

Quality

One perspective regarding the quality of development in a community is that it is self-regulating and that the quality will be as high as the market in a particular community demands. This is true in communities that have established a certain character through public investments or have some historical or economic factors driving the quality of development.

In many communities, the land use regulations (primarily zoning) need to push the quality of development that occurs by requiring a certain level of standards that must be implemented in order to develop there. This is especially true in communities that have experienced slow growth, but face circumstances that will accelerate the rate of growth in the community. Some of these communities choose to regulate quality to ensure that the character of the community is not lost in the face of rapid development, to ensure that new development will become an attractive component of the community for years to come, and to improve aesthetics in the community.

Standards to ensure quality may take several forms, including landscape and buffering requirements, connectivity and walkability, and architectural design. These standards can be very specific about the type and quantity of materials that are required, or may establish more general requirements as to what is acceptable.

Since Decatur County is in the position of experiencing accelerated growth over the planning period, some level of regulation of the quality of growth

would be prudent. The following recommendations provide direction for those quality standards:

- Instituting or enhancing landscape requirements for commercial and industrial development
- Requiring sidewalks in commercial areas and industrial areas if appropriate
- Requiring open space in residential subdivisions with a density greater than 2.5 units per acre
- Requiring sidewalks in residential subdivisions
- Establishing basic commercial and industrial architectural standards (such as the location of loading areas relative to the public street) along key corridors
- Requiring residential subdivisions to use frontage roads and not have the backs of houses facing public streets
- Requiring housing units to have at least two openings (doors or windows) per side (could be done through covenants)

Location Criteria

General

- New development should be located where it can be served by water and sewer utilities
- New development should avoid areas of prime farmland
- New development should be located adjacent to existing urbanized land uses

Residential Development

- Individual homes should not derive their access from a collector or arterial; frontage roads and subdivisions are encouraged
- Residential subdivisions should be served by public water and sewer utilities
- Residential subdivisions should be developed in a manner that would allow for their expansion as the community grows
- Residential subdivisions should provide appropriate access for emergency vehicles
- Residential development should be buffered from adjacent conflicting land uses

Commercial Development

- Commercial development should derive its access from a collector or arterial
- Shared driveways are encouraged to minimize curb cuts and maintain transportation efficiency
- Commercial development should be served by public water and sewer utilities

- Neighborhood commercial uses should be located to provide daily needs for residential areas
- Regional commercial development should be served by arterials and have good access to state routes and the Interstate

Industrial Development

- Industrial development should derive its access from arterials
- Industrial development should be served by public water and sewer utilities
- Industrial development should be sited and designed as to provide an appropriate “front door” to the community

Agriculture

- Prime farmland should be protected from unmanaged growth
- Educational information about the right to farm should be provided to petitioners for development in the county
- Agricultural businesses should be located in an agricultural industrial park
- Improvements to transportation systems in the county should include providing for appropriate farm vehicle circulation

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