

Preface

Forward

Change is a reality in our communities. It may occur slowly over time, or faster than we seemingly can adjust to it. We can choose to react to change or to anticipate and direct the changes that occur. When communities engage in a comprehensive planning process they are both responding to changes that have happened or are happening, and planning for changes that will likely occur in the future.

Decatur County has recently experienced the beginning of a significant change in the community with the announcement that Honda Manufacturing of Indiana will be building a major manufacturing operation just outside of the City of Greensburg. The new plant will bring jobs to the county and could bring more manufacturing, distribution, retail, and office development to the area in addition to residential growth.

This plan accounts for the changes that are occurring in the county while planning for the changes that will occur in the community over the next twenty years.

Indiana statutes establish the minimum requirements for a comprehensive plan. As stated in IC 36-7-4-502, a comprehensive plan must contain at least:

1. A statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction;
2. A statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction;
3. A statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.

This comprehensive plan addresses these elements in Part II: Policy Plan through the land use plan, transportation plan, sub-area plans, and issue-specific plans. Each of these chapters includes policy statements in the form of goals and objectives.

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Framework

The framework of this comprehensive plan is formed around four key questions that the plan both asks and attempts to answer. These questions are:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- Where do we want to go?
- How do we get there?

The question of “Where are we now?” is addressed in Part I: Context which includes the history and setting of the county, local dynamics, a demographic and economic profile, physical analysis, and key issues. The responses to this question are descriptive and based on published data and observed characteristics.

“Where are we going?” is the question we must answer to determine the current path we are taking. This path is the likely outcome for the future of the community if no changes are made to current policy or programming. The size of the future population, the amount of new development that will be required to serve that population, and the location of new development based on current trends are some indicators that determine the response to this question.

We ask, “Where do we want to go?” to identify the desired community characteristics for the future. Responses to this question are a result of input from the public, the plan’s steering committee, focus groups, and key stakeholders. The response takes the form of land use scenarios, a vision statement, goals, objectives, and planning principles which verbally and graphically depict the desired future for Decatur County.

Finally, responses to “How do we get there?” provide the county with tools to implement the comprehensive plan and shape the community in a way that is consistent with the desired vision of the future. They include action steps, timeframes, potential funding sources, responsible parties, and other details that will assist the community achieve its vision.

How to use this Document

Part I: Context – Describes the existing conditions of the community, both in terms of demographic and economic analysis and through observation and input from key stakeholders. This part answers the questions “where are we now?” and “Where are we going?”

Part II: Policy Plan – Establishes the vision for the community (Chapter 3), and lays out goals for land use (Chapter 4), transportation (Chapter 5), and public facilities (Chapter 6). It also considers sub-areas such as the I-74/US 421 interchange (Chapter 7), and specific issues such as an agricultural business park (Chapter 8). Part II poses and answers the question, “Where do we want to go?”

Part III: Implementation – Provides a blueprint for implementing the plan including action steps, suggested revisions to ordinances, new and modified programs, potential funding sources, etc. This part answers the question, “How do we get there?”

Part IV: Context Report – Summarizes the public participation responses that were received from the public, key person interviews, focus group meetings, and the steering committee throughout the planning process.

Definitions

There are some key terms that are used in the document that are important to understand in order to effectively use the document.

Action plans: Specific steps to be taken to implement objectives and goals if the vision is to be achieved.

Goal: A broad statement that supports the vision while adding a specific area of focus. Goals are lofty, but attainable within the planning horizon.

Key person/Stakeholder: An individual who is in some way responsible for implementing the plan or has a vested interest in the outcome of the plan, whose input should be considered early in the planning process.

Objective: A statement that adds a level of specificity to the goal, without identifying the individual actions that must be taken for implementation. Objectives are generally measurable so that the community can monitor implementation progress.

Planning Horizon: The period of time considered by the plan; a comprehensive plan generally considers a twenty-year period. Review is recommended every five years or as conditions change.

Policy: A definite course or method of action to guide present and future decisions. Policies may be legislative or administrative in nature.

Steering Committee: The group of people, assigned by the Plan Commission, to represent the community and guide the comprehensive planning process. The Steering Committee members serve as a liaison between the community and the consultant during the planning process.

Vision: A broad statement describing the desired future of the city, as shared by members of the community.

Acknowledgements

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