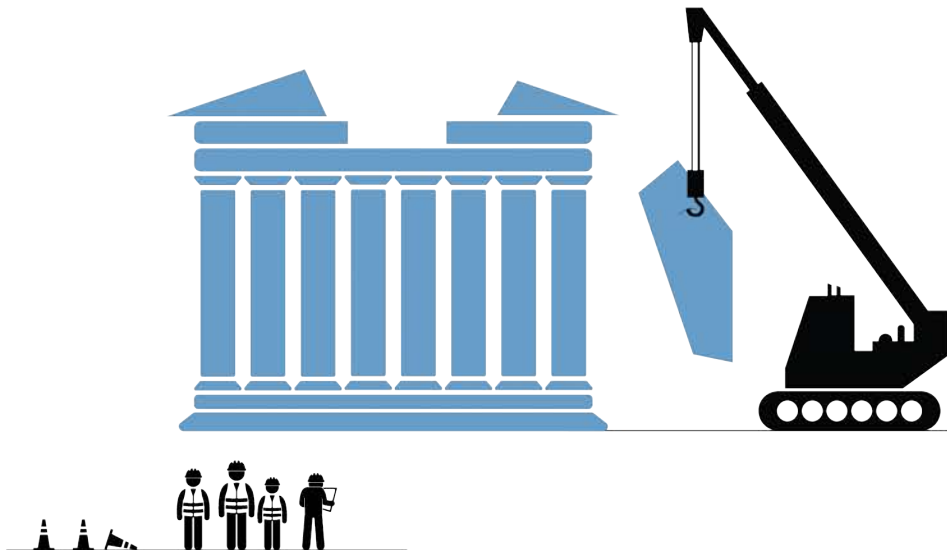
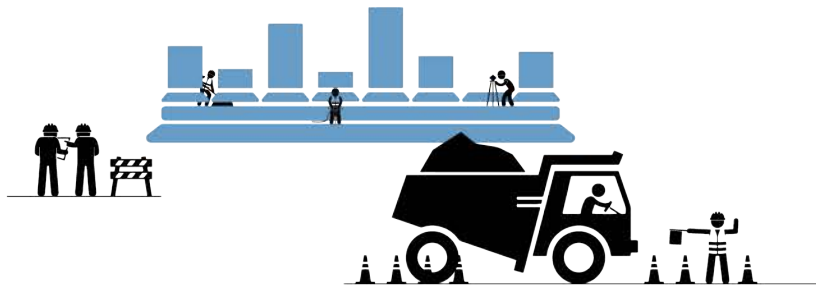


Plan SJC

2045 ST. JOSEPH COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN













INNOVATE.
CREATE.
THRIVE.





CONTENTS

PILLARS
Comprises the goals,
recommendations
and priority areas of
Plan SJC.

	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	8
	INTRODUCTION.....	14
	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	24
	HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS.....	38
	QUALITY OF LIFE AND PLACE.....	50
	ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP	58
	FARMLAND PRESERVATION	70
	GOVERNMENT AND POLICY.....	80
	TRANSPORTATION	88
	UTILITIES	102
	FUTURE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT	110
	IMPLEMENTATION	148

A MESSAGE FROM THE CONSULTANT TEAM

Plan SJC would not have been possible without the participation of residents, business owners, stakeholders, county officials, staff, and other governmental representatives who devoted their time and attention to the development of this document. The consultant team would like to thank each of the Task Force members for their leadership throughout the planning process, County officials, and the staff who made this planning effort possible. The consultant team would also like to recognize the sincere and passionate work of the Working Group members for lending their time, interest, and expertise to help develop the goals and recommendations found in this plan. Your dedication towards creating a better future for the County is inspiring.

County Council

Joe Thomas, District A

Amy Drake, District B

Daniel J. Schaetzle, District C

Rafael Morton, District D

Diana L. Hess, District E

Randall L. Figg, District F

Mark Catanzarite, District G

Bryan Tanner, District H

Mark Root, District I

Area Plan Commission

Adam J. DeVon, President

Robert M. Hawley, Vice President

Dr. Jerry Thacker, Executive Committee

Robert Kruszynski

Eugene Matzat

Molly Hannon, New Carlisle

Tom England, North Liberty

DJ Tavernier, Osceola

Area Board of Zoning Appeals

Robert M. Hawley

Donny Ritsema

DJ Tavernier

Sidney Shafer

Tom Byers

Joe Velleman

Lance Roush

Plat Committee

Sky Medors

Randy James

Ron Melser

Mark Espich

Robert Kruszynski

Task Force Members

Jennifer Betz

DJ Tavernier

Tim Corcoran

Adam J. DeVon

Mike Dobson

Alyson Herzig

Marcy Kauffman

Vicki Kitchen

Kris Krouse

Sky Medors

Will Miller

Ken Prince

Jeff Rea

Donny Ritsema

Emily Rupchock

Tim Sexton

Steve Slauson

Working Groups

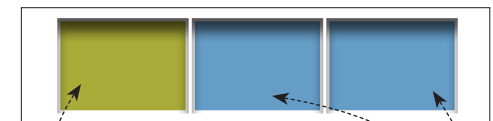
A special thank you to the 200+ residents who participated in the eight Pillar Working Groups.

INTERACTIVE FEATURES

This document includes a number of hyperlinks for the reader's convenience when using Adobe's Portable Document Format (PDF) to view the plan. These links are provided for navigation and cross reference ease; links are also provided to external sources. Links to webpages or online sources may become inactive over time as websites continuously change.

Navigation Bar

Located at the top of most pages in the plan, a navigation bar is provided to quickly jump to other chapters throughout the plan. Each chapter uses an icon to identify its subject. A **green box** indicates the chapter in which the reader is currently located. The icons align with the Table of Contents on the previous page spread. Click any icon in navigation bar to jump to the beginning of the selected chapter.



YOU ARE HERE

YOU ARE NOT HERE

Consultant Team

Rundell Ernstberger Associates (Lead)



CWC Latitudes (Economic Analysis)



Abonmarche (Transportation / Utilities)



Engaging Solutions (Public Engagement)



MAPS, TABLES, AND OTHER FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Organization of the Plan.....	10
Figure 1.2: Pillars of Plan SJC.....	11
Figure 1.3: Future Land Use Map.....	12
Figure 1.4: Pillar Priority Areas Map.....	13
Figure 2.1: Study Area Map.....	18
Figure 2.2: Four-Phase Planning Process.....	18
Figure 2.3: Community Engagement Opportunities	20
Figure 2.4: Online Mapping Activity.....	21
Figure 3.1: Economic Development Pillar Priority Areas.....	29
Figure 3.2: Economic Development Pillar Priority Corridors	30
Figure 3.3: Housing and Neighborhoods Pillar Priority Areas	43
Figure 3.4: Residential Types	44
Figure 3.5: Environmental Stewardship Pillar Priority Areas	62
Figure 3.6: Examples of Native Plantings and Green Infrastructure.....	67
Figure 3.7: Farmland Preservation Pillar Priority Areas	74
Figure 3.8: Transportation Pillar Priority Areas.....	92
Figure 4.1: Future Land Use Map.....	112
Figure 4.2: General Agriculture	113
Figure 4.3: Intensive Agriculture.....	113
Figure 4.4: Parks and Conservation.....	114
Figure 4.5: Low-Density Residential.....	114
Figure 4.6: Medium-Density Residential.....	115
Figure 4.7: High-Density Residential.....	115
Figure 4.8: Institutional	116
Figure 4.9: Light Commercial	116
Figure 4.10: General Commercial	116
Figure 4.11: Mixed-Use	116
Figure 4.12: Light Industrial.....	117

Figure 4.13: Heavy Industrial.....	117
Figure 4.14: Transitional	118
Figure 4.15: Floodway and Floodplain	118
Figure 4.16: Environmentally Sensitive Area.....	119
Figure 4.17: Business Technology and Research Park.....	119
Figure 4.18: Infill and Redevelopment.....	120
Figure 4.19: Interactive Future Land Use Map by Township	121
Figure 5.1: Implementation Matrix Icons	154

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY







INTRODUCTION

Plan SJC is a guide for managing growth and development in St. Joseph County over the next 20 years. The Plan was developed over a multi-year planning effort that involved a broad cross section of the community. Residents, board and commission members, elected officials, and other stakeholders participated in public meetings, stakeholder interviews, working groups, and other forms of engagement. Throughout the three-year planning effort, **more than 800 people participated, more than 1,800 comments were collected, and more than 2,400+ visits were made to the project website.** This document is the product of that planning process. It articulates the County's long-term vision for the next 20 years, with achievable goals and actionable recommendations to help realize the vision.

INDIANA PLANNING LAW

A comprehensive plan is a policy document prepared by a plan commission, with public input, that helps guide the growth and development of a community. Unlike a zoning ordinance, a comprehensive plan is not legally binding. The 500 Series of Indiana Code (IC) 36-7-4-500 and 36-7-4-502, outlines elements that a comprehensive plan must contain, but communities often decide to include more:

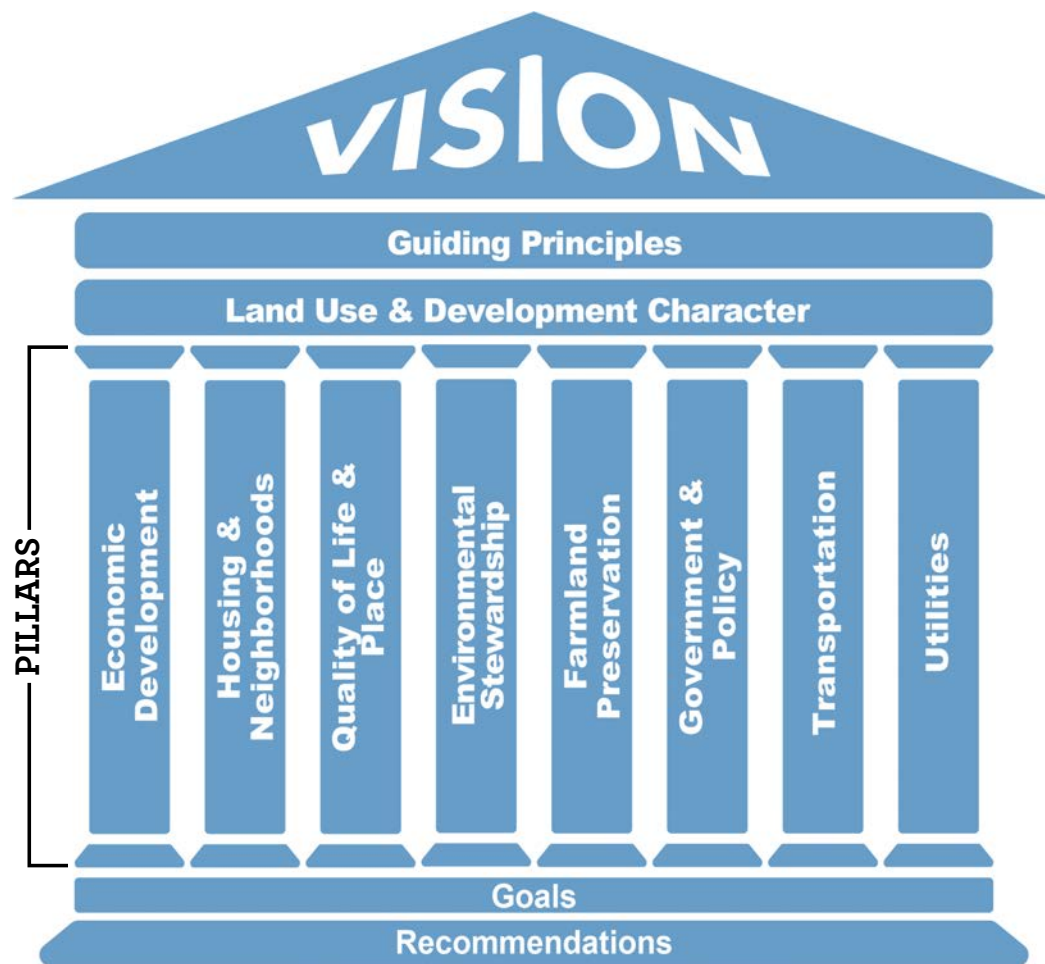
01. A statement of objectives for future development
02. A statement of policy for land use development

03. A statement of policy for developing public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities

Plan SJC provides direction and support to county staff, elected officials, and decisionmakers to capitalize on opportunities, foster responsible growth and development, and continue to advance St. Joseph County

as an exceptional place to live, work, and innovate. Because the plan is a dynamic document, it should be reviewed and amended as conditions evolve in the county and region. It is recommended that County staff update the plan approximately every three to five years to ensure its continued relevance.

Figure 1.1: Organization of the Plan



VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement reflects the shared values of the a community, which provides the overarching inspiration for the planning process, goals, and recommendations. It is the desired outcome of planning and development over the next 20 years. The vision is intended to be realistic, achievable, and flexible to accommodate changing dynamics.

St. Joseph County is a thriving, diverse community with high quality hometowns and is focused on economic development, responsible growth and sustainable development that respects the area's natural features and its rural character.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles help advance the vision and set the tone for the goals and recommendations in Plan SJC. The principles help guide how growth and development should occur in St. Joseph County:

- Focus development and redevelopment to areas with access to readily available utility services.
- Review the impacts of growth and development.
- Promote data-driven decision-making.
- Promote a variety of mixed uses along key corridors and where the County meets city and town jurisdictions.
- Offer a range of housing options.
- Create a strong sense of place.
- Support efficient intergovernmental cooperation to create a range of multi-modal connections.
- Preserve open space, critical environmental areas, farmland, and places of natural beauty that contribute to the quality of life and economic well-being of St. Joseph County.
- Coordinate public investment and find a broad-based way to fund infrastructure.
- Retain, expand, attract, and diversify future economic opportunities.
- Make development decisions predictable, consistent, and cost-effective.

Figure 1.2: Pillars of Plan SJC



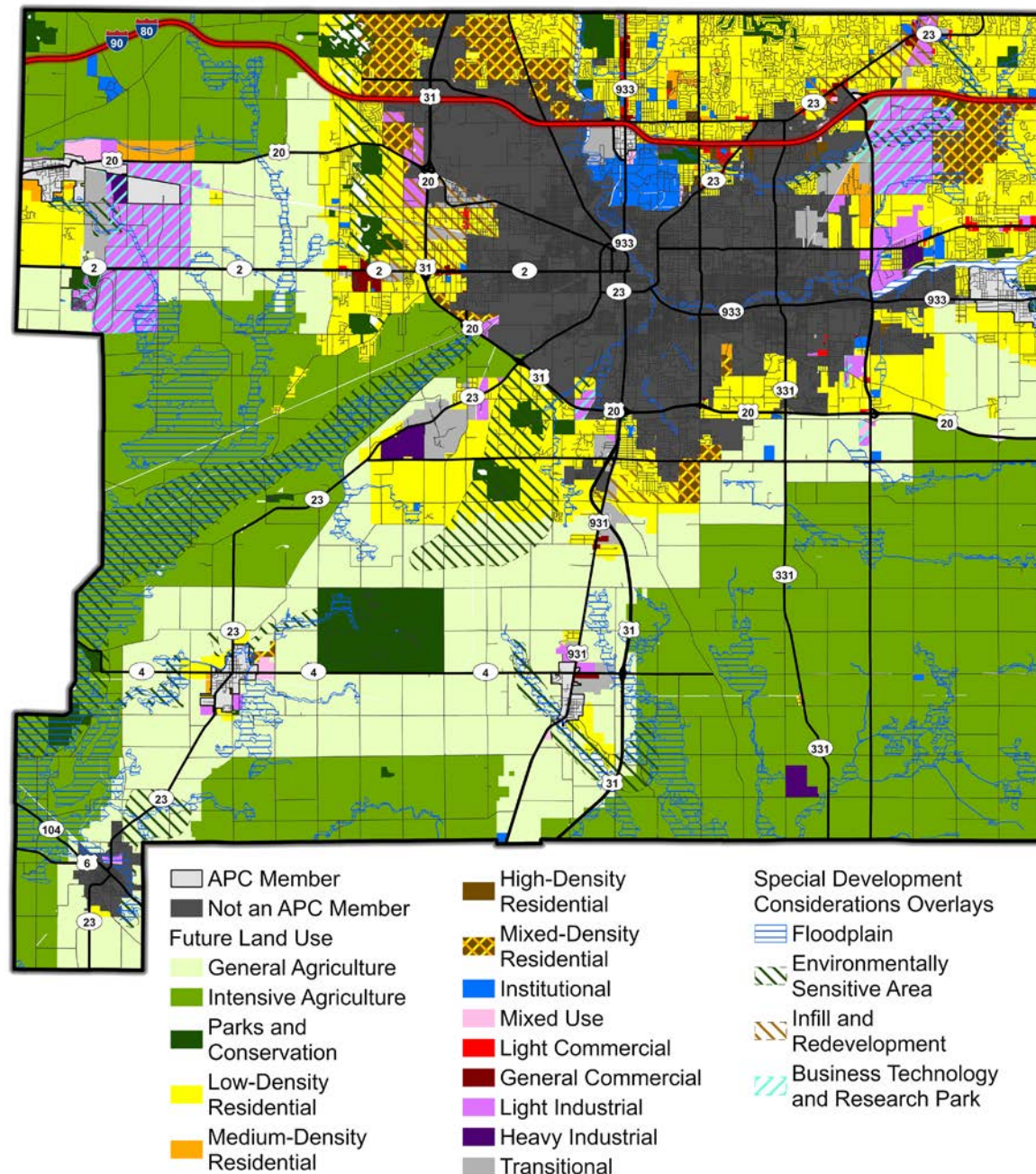
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

Land use planning considers the relationships between land uses and their compatibility with one another. St. Joseph County features a diversity of uses, with varying development intensities and aesthetics, ranging from urbanized cities to rural farmland. Land uses and development character are referenced throughout the plan, as they influence all goals and recommendations.

Future Land Use Map

The future land use map visually communicates the idealized development direction for the unincorporated areas of the county (i.e. the study area) over the next two decades. The future land use map is likely the most frequently consulted work product to come out of the planning process. Because land use planning influences all goals and recommendations within Plan SJC, it is referenced throughout the entire document. Although the future land use map provides the overall direction for growth and development in the study area, it should be reviewed and updated as conditions change in the community.

Figure 1.3: Future Land Use Map



PILLARS

Pillars are thematic focus areas, largely determined through public input during the planning process, with guidance from the Task Force and staff. The pillars should be viewed interconnected and complementary to one another. They also provide structure to the goals and recommendations contained within the plan.

Pillar Priority Areas

The Pillar Priority Areas map works alongside the future land use map. It helps the County further delineate priority areas for growth and development, and where future investment should be directed.

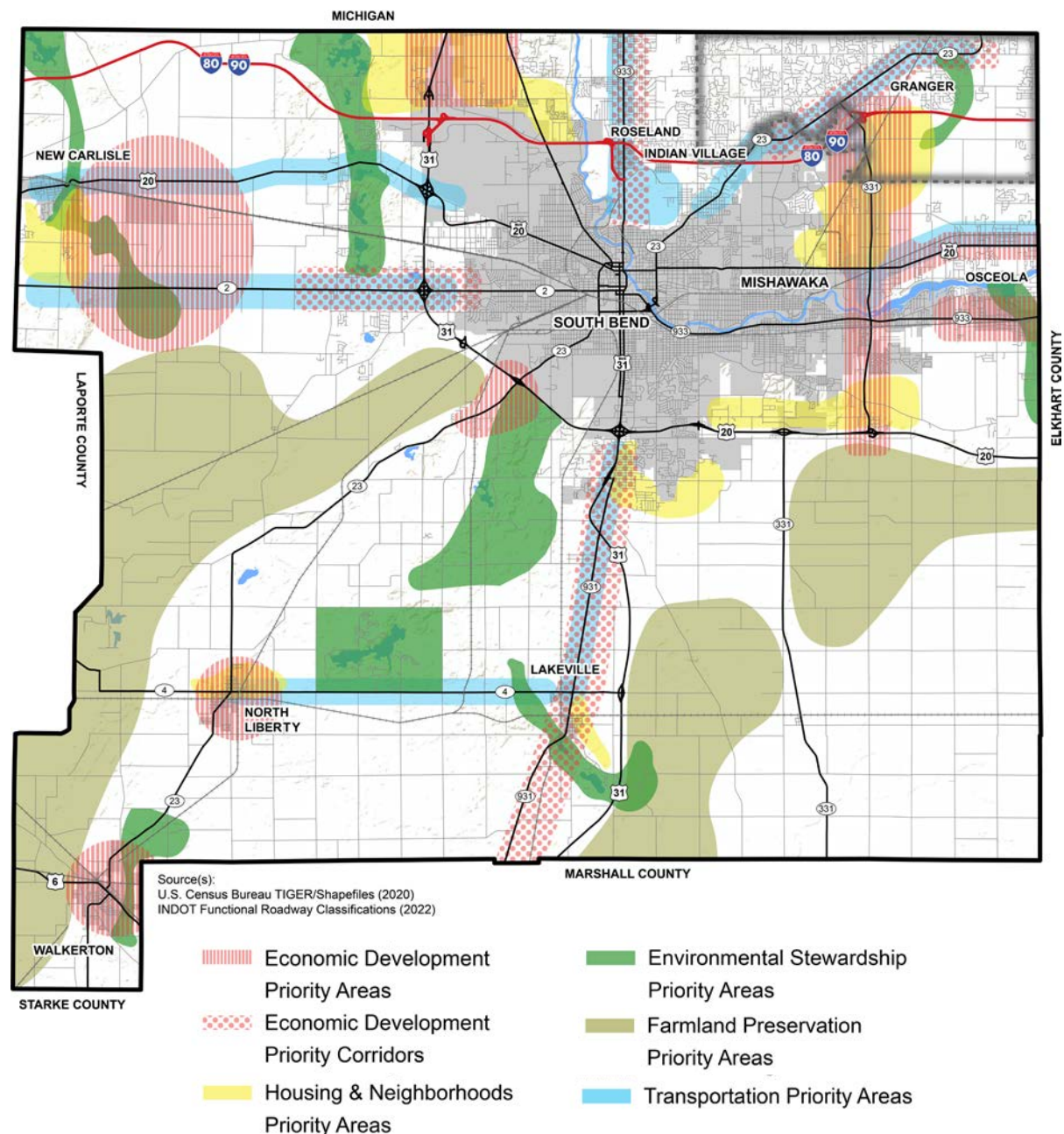
GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A set of goals and recommendations for each pillar were developed by Working Groups, then revised by the Plan SJC Task Force. Goals reinforce the vision and guiding principles. Recommendations outline specific tasks for the implementation strategy.

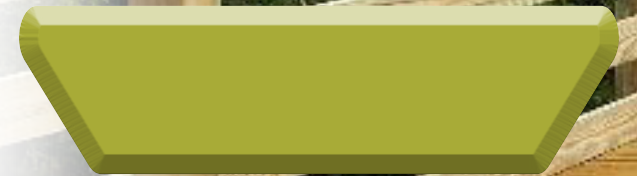
IMPLEMENTATION

Recommendations in the comprehensive plan are evaluated by the estimated time to implement, level of importance, and level of difficulty. An implementation matrix, intended to guide the county in prioritizing the recommendations in the plan, can be found in the Implementation chapter.

Figure 1.4: Pillar Priority Areas Map



INTRODUCTION







Plan SJC was developed over a multi-year planning effort involving a broad cross section of the community. Residents, boards and commission members, elected officials, and other stakeholders participated in public meetings, stakeholder interviews, working groups, and through other forms of engagement. This document is the product of that planning process. It is a manual for managing growth and development in St. Joseph County over the next 20 years. It provides direction and support to St. Joseph County staff, elected officials, and decisionmakers to foster responsible growth, capitalize on opportunities, and continue to advance St. Joseph County as an exceptional place to live, work, and thrive. It is designed to be consulted for day-to-day planning matters, as well as a strategy document for long-term projects and endeavors. Because this plan is a dynamic document, it should be reviewed and amended as conditions evolve in the County and region.

Indiana Planning Law

A comprehensive plan is a policy document, prepared by the Area Plan Commission, with public input that helps guide the development of a community. Unlike a zoning ordinance, a comprehensive plan is not legally binding, but it is a requirement (pursuant to Indiana Code (IC) 36-7-4-601) for amending zoning and other similar ordinances.

The 500 Series of Indiana Code (IC 36-7-4-500 and 36-74-503) outlines specific elements that a comprehensive plan must contain:

01. A statement of objectives for future development,
02. A statement of policy for land use development,
03. A statement of policy for developing public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.

Review of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan

The 2002 Comprehensive Plan for South Bend and St. Joseph County set the direction for two decades of planning and development in the county. At the time of the plan's adoption, the City of South Bend was a member of the St. Joseph Area Plan Commission. In 2019, South Bend departed the County Area Plan Commission, establishing its own plan commission and board of zoning appeals.

During the 2002 public input process, strengths and challenges were identified. With this information, a policy plan was created that included five goals and an accompanying land use plan that served as the key components of the comprehensive plan. The goals of the plan were agricultural preservation, economic development, strengthening residential neighborhoods, environmental conservation, and providing adequate infrastructure. These goals were used to inform the land use plan, which sought to maximize existing urban service areas, while avoiding development encroachment in environmentally sensitive areas and productive agricultural land.



In addition to the five goals, policy plan, and land use plan, the 2002 plan also outlined significant recommendations for future growth and development in South Bend and St. Joseph County. These included:

- Retain the 20-acre per dwelling unit standard for residential uses in the A: Agricultural Zoning District.
- Prohibit septic use in inappropriate areas.
- Target key areas for expansion of municipal services.
- Implement a county-wide sewer and water district.
- Develop and implement a focused neighborhood improvement program based on quantitative measures of deterioration.

In the years following the adoption of the 2002 comprehensive plan, the county was faced with challenges that impeded its ability to progress toward some of the goals. These challenges included increasing failure rates of septic systems across St. Joseph County's unincorporated areas and continued development of prime agricultural land contributing to urban sprawl. The plan's recommendation to retain the 20-acre per dwelling unit standard, thought to act somewhat as a barrier to discourage development in agricultural areas, still allowed for the construction of residential dwelling units in the County's only agricultural zoning district for parcels meeting the size requirement. Despite the 20-acre standard, conversion of agricultural land for residential development continued, albeit at a slower pace, than if there

was no standard or plan recommendation.

Additionally, the 2002 plan projected that St. Joseph County's population would grow from 265,559 (2000 population) to 300,000 residents, with total jobs in the County increasing to 180,000 by 2020. These projections did not materialize. Estimates were based on historical trends of consistent growth between 1950 and 2000 and a belief that this trajectory would continue into the 21st century. However, unforeseen events after the 2002 plan's adoption drastically changed the trajectory of communities across the United States, including St. Joseph County. In particular, the 2008 financial crash and economic recession significantly impacted the Michiana region, and the recovery remains ongoing. More recently, COVID-19 has altered economic conditions, healthcare expectations, work/home dynamics, social norms, and various other customs and practices in American society. With this in mind, the 2045 comprehensive plan, Plan SJC, aspires to support:

- Collaborative and long-term planning efforts to improve the County's resilience toward unforeseen events
- A shared vision that moves the many communities in the County toward the same future, and
- Proactively planning for challenges and opportunities facing the County and its towns and cities for improved resilience.

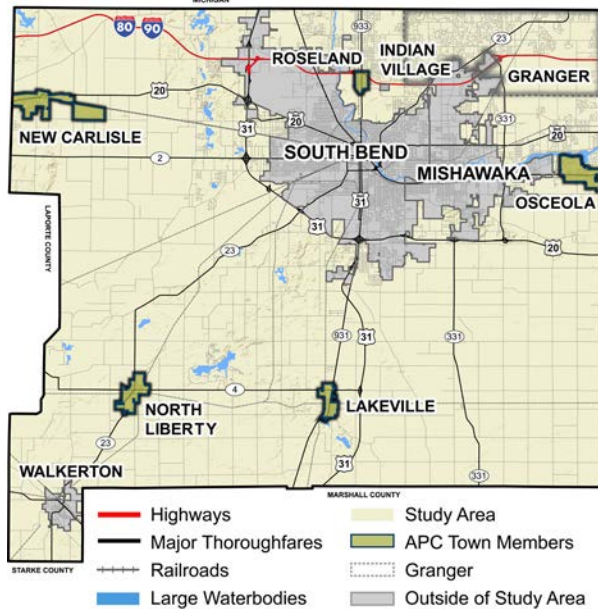
Study Area

Plan SJC's study area is the unincorporated areas of St. Joseph County. Though each APC-member town—Lakeville, North Liberty, New Carlisle, Osceola, and Roseland—has its own comprehensive plan, goals and recommendations that speak to the county's relationship with the towns are included, to ensure that land use and other policies are coordinated and not in conflict with one another.

The study area for Plan SJC does not include the incorporated communities of South Bend, Mishawaka, Indian Village, and Walkerton. Yet, due to the interconnected nature of all St. Joseph County's cities, towns, and unincorporated areas, local and regional intergovernmental collaboration is necessary, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. The recommendations and implementation strategies offered by Plan SJC reference and consider existing or potential collaborations and partnerships and may mention the incorporated cities or towns outside of the APC.



Figure 2.1: Study Area Map



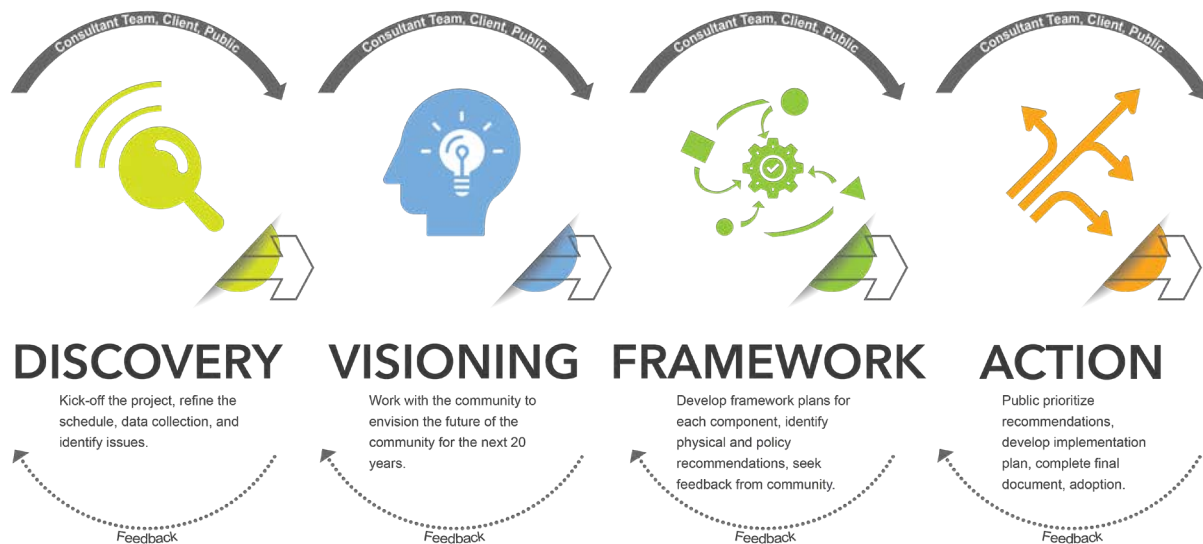
PLANNING PROCESS

In the summer of 2021, the St. Joseph County Board of Commissioners selected the consultant team of Rundell Ernstberger Associates (Indianapolis, IN), with sub-consultants Abonmarche (South Bend, IN), CWC Latitudes LLC (Columbus, IN), and Engaging Solutions LLC (Indianapolis, IN), to facilitate the planning process for Plan SJC. The consultant team organized the planning process into four phases-- Discovery, Visioning, Framework, and Action. Public input was solicited throughout each of these four phases.

Phase I: Discovery

Discovery, which consists of an existing conditions analysis for the study area, is the initial phase of the planning process. This phase includes a review of previously completed reports, studies, and plans, data collection, and an assessment of the physical environment. The consultant team began Discovery with the evaluation of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, noting progress and development trends that have occurred in the study area over the last 20 years. Results from Plan SJC's Discovery phase were summarized and presented to the public during Community Meeting Series #1. At these meetings, participants were asked to contribute to the data collection efforts and assist the consultant team and Task Force in providing historical context, experiences, and opinions related to the conditions in St. Joseph County since the previous 2002 plan was adopted. Community Meeting Series #1 included four public meetings conducted over two weeks in the first quarter of 2022. The meeting results informed the next phase of the planning process.

Figure 2.2: Four-Phase Planning Process





Phase II: Visioning

Visioning involves working with citizens and stakeholders to imagine a best-case scenario for their community's future. The vision statement is a product of the community and declares where St. Joseph County wants to be in 20 years. It is created when residents and stakeholders express, in written form, the community's shared values with an inspirational outlook. plan SJC's vision statement was crafted during this phase of the planning process, with significant contribution and support from the Area Plan Commission, Task Force, focus groups, and public meeting participants. The Visioning phase also produced the plan's eight thematic pillars, providing the organizational structure for the plan's goals, recommendations, and implementation strategy.

Phase III: Framework

Framework is the phase in which goals and recommendations are developed based on the vision and the eight thematic pillars of Plan SJC. Leading up to this phase, reports of the existing conditions presented in the Discovery and Visioning phases were compiled into briefing booklets. These 'briefing' booklets provided an overview of public comments and data analysis relevant to each of the eight thematic Pillars. They were presented to the public at a countywide public meeting named the "Summit." This event provided a progress update on the plan, garnering over 200 attendees and live coverage from multiple news stations.

At this event, residents had the opportunity to sign up for any of the eight Working Groups for the pillars. Online registration was also available on the project website for those who could not attend the event. Local expertise was called upon to help lead the Working Group discussions, which took place over three to four months. Each Working Group met approximately six times, during which the first draft of the plan's goals and recommendations were created. These goals were then reviewed by the Task Force, Area Plan Commission members, and the County Council.

Phase IV: Action

Action is the conclusive phase of the planning process. This phase involved finalizing the goals and recommendations. The recommendations were then organized into an Implementation Matrix which evaluates how to implement the recommendation based on three metrics:

- Time-to-Implement: the estimated time it will take to implement;
- Level of Importance: ranked from low to high, this helps determine when to start implementing a recommendation(s) based on how urgent it is to complete; and
- Level of Difficulty: the relative amount of resources it will take to implement.

In addition to these three metrics, the suggested partnerships to carry out implementation are identified for each recommendation. The Action phase also includes the drafting of the final plan, multiple presentations and meetings with the public for review, and the final adoption of the plan by the St. Joseph County Area Plan Commission and County Council. After adoption, it is then time for the County to begin implementing the plan.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public input was continuously solicited to during the four phases of the planning process. There were numerous opportunities for citizen engagement, including a dedicated website, focus groups, in-person and virtual open houses, community meetings, Working Groups, and a Comprehensive Plan Task Force. Throughout the three-year planning effort, **more than 800 people participated, more than 1,800 comments were collected, and more than 2,400+ visits were made to the project website**, showing how engaged residents of St. Joseph County were to make this a community-driven plan. A complete summary of every meeting and event that took place over the three-year planning process can be found in Appendix B.

Task Force

The Task Force was the backbone of the engagement process. It consisted of community leaders, representatives from the business community, nonprofits, advocacy groups, other jurisdictions, and County staff who provided guidance to the consultant team. Task Force members helped gather and analyze public input, review data with the consultant team, and refine the goals and recommendations that came from the eight Working Groups.

Figure 2.3: Community Engagement Opportunities



PLAN SJC TASK FORCE

- The group consisted of volunteers, staff, government officials, and community leaders
- Responsible for helping direct and guide the consultants when developing the plan's vision statement, and eight Pillars. Helped refine draft goals and recommendations.

WORKING GROUPS

- 200+ participants
- 1 group per pillar (8 total)
- 5 or 6 meetings per group (approx. 45 total)
- Developed first drafts of the goals and recommendations

FOCUS GROUPS

- 30+ participants
- 12 distinct groups
- 11 meetings

GENERAL PUBLIC

- Community Meeting Series #1
- Community Meeting Series #2
- Project website
 - Interactive map
 - Public forums
 - Document library

Working Groups

Working Group meetings were held from September through November 2022. These groups allowed any community member interested in the plan or specific topics to work directly with the consultant team, county staff, and Task Force to develop goals and recommendations. Residents and local experts on various topics were invited to join one or more groups. The plan's identified Pillars informed the creation of eight Working Groups, and six meetings per group occurred bi-weekly, unless otherwise rescheduled. Over 200 people registered to participate.

Focus Groups

Eleven focus groups were held during the first phase of the planning process in January and February 2022. Participants represented the following agencies, organizations, and interests:

- Residents,
- Commercial and Industrial Brokers,
- Transportation,
- Utility service providers,
- Township Trustees,
- Home Builders,
- Farmers and Other Agricultural Interests,
- Environmental and Open Space Protection,
- Regional Water and Sewer Representatives,
- City, Town, and Other Jurisdictions,
- School Superintendents,

Community Meeting Series

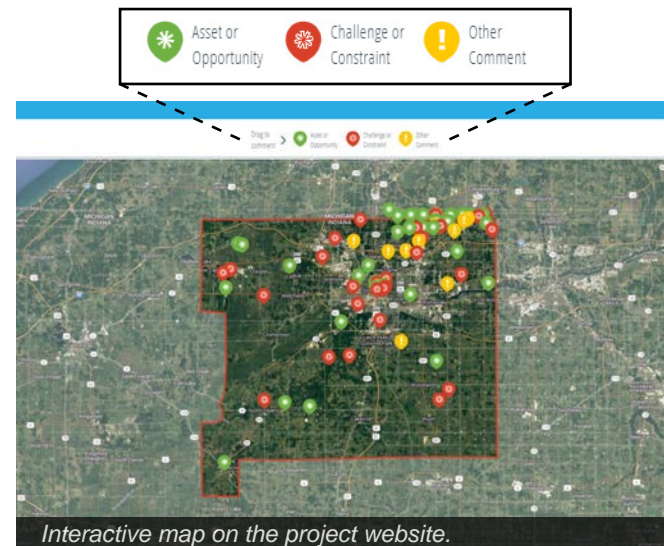
The consultant team and county staff held two Community Meeting Series. The meeting series included presentations, small group activities, and question-and-answer sessions to gather community input. The first series was in March 2022 to review existing trends and introduce the community to the project. A second Community Meeting Series was held in September 2024 to present and review the drafted plan with the community.

Project Website

In addition to in-person public engagement, a dedicated project website (PlanSJC.com) was created for the planning process. This website allowed County residents to engage in the planning process online by:

- Learning about the plan's purpose and background,
- Finding information about upcoming events and updates on the plan,
- Downloading previous presentations, meeting materials, briefing booklets, and other documents that were made publicly available on the website as they were completed, and
- Discussing ideas with other residents and providing feedback via an interactive map and public forums for each Pillar.

Figure 2.4: Online Mapping Activity





DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is an essential part of Plan SJC. From the briefing booklets that informed the Working Groups to examining development trends with focus groups, data analysis has provided a solid foundation for informed decision-making and engagement throughout the planning process. This type of data analysis, qualified by community engagement, enables the creation of long-term strategies like Plan SJC that can provide data-based, publicly-backed solutions for current issues as well as potential issues before they become critical problems. Two key trends are compiled in this section. **The complete data analysis for Plan SJC can be found in the appendices document.**

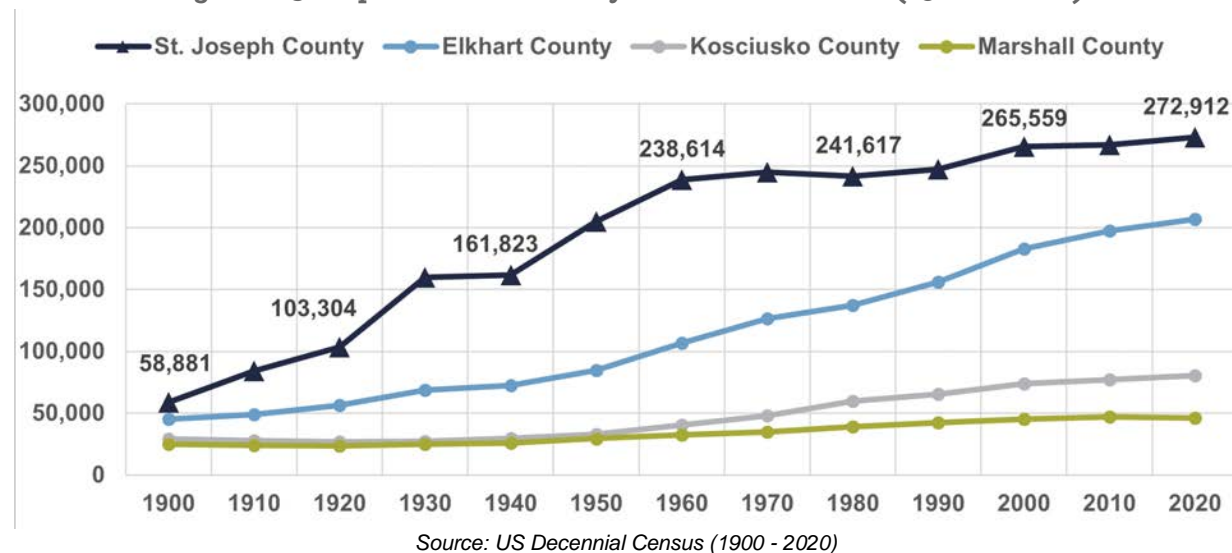


Unveiling of the draft plan in September 2024

KEY TREND #1: POPULATION GROWTH HAS CONTINUED, BUT AT A SIGNIFICANTLY SLOWER RATE COMPARED TO PREVIOUS DECADES.

Between 2000 and 2020, the county's population grew 2.8 percent, according to decennial census counts. The growth rates of prior 20-year periods were 9.9 percent (1980-2000) and 47.5 percent (1940-1960). Additionally, the growth since 2000 has not occurred evenly throughout the county. The Cities of South Bend and Mishawaka, and unincorporated areas of the county have largely remained the same, while the population in towns, such as the Towns of Osceola and Lakeville, has collectively increased by 5.1 percent.

Figure 2.5: Population Counts by Decennial Census (1900 - 2020)



KEY TREND #2: RESIDENTIAL USES HAVE DEVELOPED OUTWARD FROM TOWNS AND CITIES, WHILE AGRICULTURE CONTINUES TO DOMINATE.

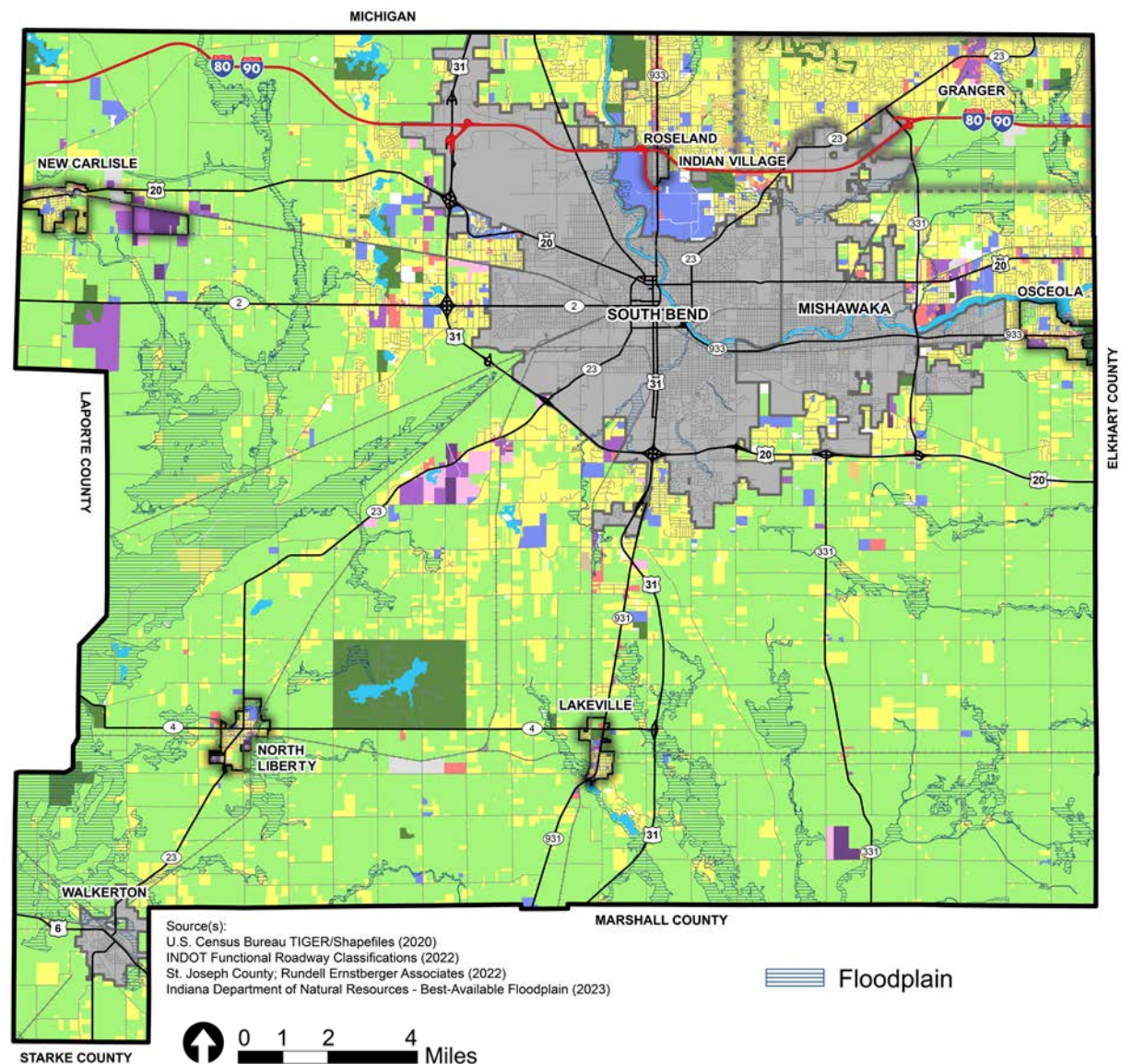
As shown in Figures 2.6 and 2.7, the largest use of land is agricultural, accounting for 71.62 percent of land under the Area Plan Commission's jurisdiction. The second largest is single-family residential (detached, one-unit residences) at 19.34 percent of land. All other land uses account for only 9.04 percent of land. Further analysis found that the existing land use of a parcel generally aligned with the intended uses of the zoning district in which the parcel was located.

Figure 2.6: Land Use Breakdown

Agricultural	71.62%
Outdoor Recreation	3.06%
Single-Family Residential	19.34%
Multi-Family Residential	0.15%
Mobile Home Park	0.04%
Institutional	2.18%
Commercial	0.76%
Industrial (Decommissioned)	0.47%
Light Industrial	1.05%
Heavy Industrial	0.34%
Transportation / Utilities	0.30%
Other	0.67%
TOTAL	100%

Source: Analysis by REA using parcel dataset provided by the St. Joseph County Dept. of Infrastructure, Planning, and Growth (2022) and property tax classifications.

Figure 2.7: Existing Land Use Map (2022)



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT





Tangles Salon

HEALTHIES

Tangles Salon

OPEN



Economic development is a vital component of Plan SJC because it influences quality of life for all County residents. Economic development planning explores the sources of revenue, funding, and implications of the comprehensive plan's decisions and economic growth opportunities. Economic development brings a quantifiable value to this plan, principally defining the required public and private participation needed for implementation. While economic development efforts manifest themselves locally, it is most successful when approached as a regional, national, and global competition for community investment and jobs.

Building and sustaining a strong and resilient economy results in creating a place where people want to live and work. Housing choice, accessible transportation, and amenities coupled with affordability, employment and educational opportunities, and population growth all contribute to and are products of a community's economic development initiatives. Investors want to invest in areas where the economic climate is welcoming, nurturing, supportive, promoted, and complementary.

To ensure that St. Joseph County offers this type of favorable environment, County leaders should focus on the following three directives:

- Policies that foster high employment and sustainable growth.
- Programs and projects that address infrastructure needs like connectivity, transportation, parks, and medical access.
- Policies and programs targeted at fostering a healthy business climate for retention, growth, and attraction, encouraging more housing choices, encouraging environmentally friendly initiatives, and improving technology transfer.

The County will know when its economic development efforts are progressing when the community responds to the improvements in housing choice, business and entrepreneur friendliness, transportation and infrastructure connectivity, and recreation options reflected through higher property values, increased enrollment in schools and lifelong learning programs, gainful employment, lower crime rates, and fewer demands on social services.

PILLAR DEFINITION

Efforts to generate and sustain wealth in the community, advancing its quality of life. It includes the attraction, retention, and expansion of business investment, entrepreneurship, employment opportunities, and the tax base.

There are multiple agencies, boards, and commissions that are directly involved in pursuing and fostering economic development. All these entities work closely and together for the success of economic development efforts. Work done by MACOG with its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Collaborating for Regional Resilience and Economic Growth as well as the Indiana Enterprise Center's Economic Opportunity Analysis provided a guide for examining economic development in St. Joseph County.



A community is never finished with economic development; it is a continual process. The market, community needs and wants, environmental circumstances, and other variables are continuously evolving. As such, St. Joseph County's economic development efforts must continually evolve as well.

INDUSTRIES OF OPPORTUNITY

The following industries are identified as economic opportunities that have the potential to capitalize on St. Joseph County's strengths and conditions for future economic investment success. These industries align with state priorities offering possible collaboration and financial assistance.

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Aerospace and Aviation
- Ag-Bioscience
- Defense
- Life Sciences
- Logistics and Transportation
- Technology

PRIORITY AREAS

Each of the economic development priority areas identified in Figure 3.1 should be the subject of further study and analysis to determine the best economic development strategy that integrates future residential, commercial, and industrial uses within its environmental context and location. Considerations for each area include:

01. Zoning,
02. Sufficient Infrastructure (gas, water, sanitary, stormwater, fiber, and electric),
03. Enhanced Transportation (commercial corridors, roads, rail, air, trails, and walks).

With these contextual land use, regulatory, and infrastructural considerations, new development initiatives have a greater opportunity for compatibility ultimately leading to economic and investment viability.

Area 1: New Carlisle

The New Carlisle TIF district resides within this priority area, as well as the Indiana Enterprise Center (IEC), which was recently expanded in 2023. The County should use the IEC Area Management Plan to responsibly guide growth and development in the priority area. There also should be extensive collaboration with the Town of New Carlisle to ensure that the development and land use patterns identified within the town's comprehensive plan are successfully implemented.

Area 2: Western State Road 2

Located west of South Bend along State Road 2, this priority area contains prime areas for commercial development and redevelopment as the surrounding areas are built out with residential neighborhoods. Commercial development should be easily and safely accessible from surrounding neighborhoods to promote walkability and reduce unnecessary traffic congestion.

Area 3: Portage Prairie

Portage Prairie is a rapidly growing area along the Michigan border, with a mix of commercial, industrial, and residential uses within close proximity of each other. The County should work with the City of South Bend to ensure that future land uses remain compatible with adjacent existing uses, while pursuing initiatives that reduce the overall dependence on on-site wastewater (septic) systems. This priority is also located close to a critical wetland, Mud Lake, from which developments should be sufficiently buffered and water runoff mostly eliminated. More guidance for Mud Lake is available in the Environmental Stewardship Pillar chapter.

Area 4: Northern State Road 931

This priority area contains an essential commercial and active transportation corridor (LaSalle Trail) that connects to neighboring communities in Michigan. The Town of Roseland is also a prominent part of this area, as the town provides a suite of housing options for students of the nearby universities (Notre Dame, Holy Cross, and St. Mary's). This priority overlaps extensively with Priority Area 3 under the Transportation Pillar, which means economic development efforts should include enhancements to safety and accessibility of the transportation network. These enhancements could include midblock crossings and appropriately scaling lighting along the corridor for bikes and pedestrians.



Area 5: State Road 23 in Granger

The Granger area is anticipated to continue growing, with recent investments and plans for more parks and improvements in the active transportation network. For this priority area, the County should focus on quality-of-life and continue improving transportation along State Road (SR) 23 by providing infrastructure for all modes of transportation. These improvements should be accessible to all, efficient, and easy and comfortable to use. SR 23 is also a major commuter corridor that contains many areas that prime for (re)development, such as:

- The north end of Capital Avenue, and
- Surrounding areas where the railroad meets SR 23 around Adams Road and Bittersweet Road.

The County should work extensively with the City of Mishawaka to accomplish recommendations along this corridor, building upon previously completed planning efforts such as the Fir Road Land Use Study, Capital Avenue Corridor Land Use Plan (2003), and the County Connections Plan (2021).

Area 6: Capital Avenue (SR 331) and McKinley Avenue (US 20 Business Hwy)

These two roads are major north-south and east-west connectors, respectively. Both roads have great potential to host additional commercial and density due to planned connections to Mishawaka's water/sewer utilities. Developments along these roads can also take advantage of a high level of transportation access to other areas of the County. As indicated in the Capital Avenue

Land Use Plan and the future land use map, an office park is planned for near the northern end of Capital Avenue. However, Capital and McKinley Avenues are heavily auto-oriented corridors, which means the County should focus on building infrastructure for additional modes of transportation by working with the regional and local authorities, such as Transpo.

Area 7: Osceola

The Town of Osceola is in a prime location on the eastern border of the County between two major cities: South Bend and Elkhart. The County should work extensively with the town to help revitalize its downtown area and provide a greater variety of housing choices. The town is also partially served by Mishawaka's water/sewer utilities, which indicates the potential for denser development. The town also has many natural, or environmentally-based, amenities such as views of the St. Joe River, Baugo Bay, and Ferrettie/Baugo Creek County Park. The County should work to promote and improve these amenities, recognizing the connections between the Economic Development, Quality of Life and Place, and Environmental Stewardship Pillars, in order to better attract people and businesses to the town.

Area 8: State Road 23 Node

Located at the intersection of US 31 and SR 23, this node is prime for development due to its proximity to Four Winds Casino. This priority area could build on the success of the Four Winds Casino to attract tourists to the County. It is also an important gateway into the City of South Bend and connection to the southernly-located Town of North Liberty.

Hence, the County should work to improve the aesthetics of the gateway, which may include improvements to the street, alternative transportation infrastructure, signage, and revisions to the zoning and subdivision codes to better encourage development in the area. Before the County pursues improvements in this priority area, however, planners and officials should collaborate extensively with and involve the Pokagon Tribal Reservation, which owns the casino, and the City of South Bend to coordinate economic development efforts.

Area 9: North Liberty

The County should collaborate with the Town of North Liberty and utilize the town's comprehensive plan to guide development in a way that is desired by the town's residents and government. Economic development efforts for the town could include reforms to the zoning and subdivision ordinances to encourage high-quality and well-connected developments. These zoning reforms should also ensure that residential developments do not conflict with existing agricultural operation in the area. Additionally, greenfield or "leapfrog" developments should be highly discouraged in order to preserve the surrounding farmland and encourage development that is well-connected to the town's existing streets, utilities, and amenities.

Area 10: Walkerton

Similar to Priority Area 9, the County should work with the Town of Walkerton when pursuing economic development efforts around the town. Although the town is not a part of the County's Area Plan Commission, Walkerton serves as important southern gateway into the County and can greatly help efforts to attract investment into the County.

Area 11: State Road 931

Serving as an important transportation corridor between the Town of Lakeville and the City of South Bend, SR 931 has great potential as a multi-modal and recreational amenity that can attract people and investment to the County. Hence, the County should work with MACOG to implement a planned, regional trail for the corridor. However, the County should not seek to encourage major development outside of Lakeville. As indicated in the future land use map, while certain areas are identified as transitional, the corridor should remain mostly agricultural to protect the character of the area. Instead, the County should pursue agritourism as a form of economic development.

Figure 3.1: Economic Development Pillar Priority Areas

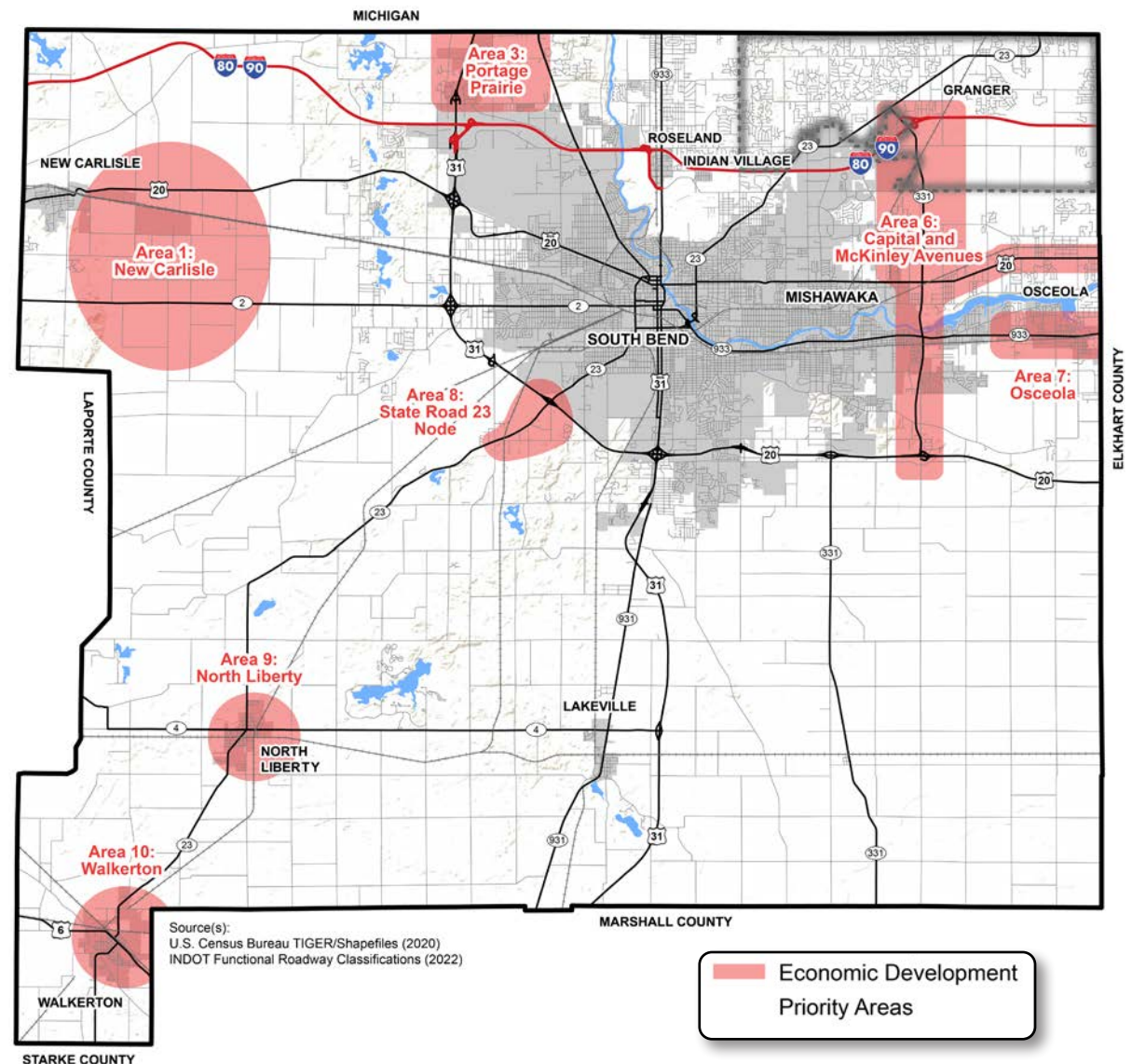
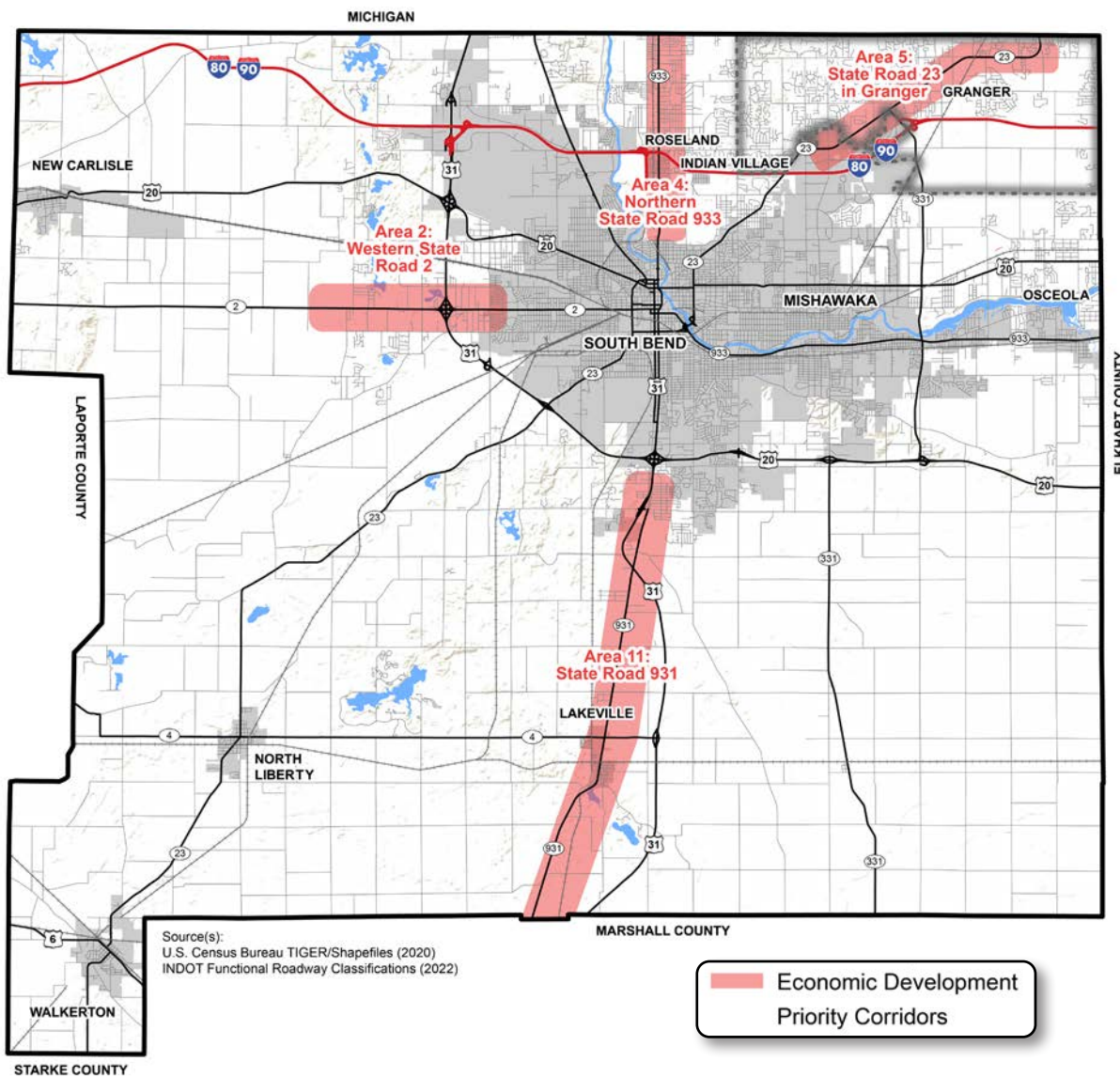




Figure 3.2: Economic Development Pillar Priority Corridors



GOAL #1

PROMOTE THE IDENTIFIED PRIORITY AREAS AND CORRIDORS AS PRIME LOCATIONS FOR NEW INVESTMENT.

Development and redevelopment along transportation corridors with existing infrastructure is sensible, prudent, and sustainable growth. Infrastructure, particularly transportation and utilities, is paramount to future development and prosperity. This comprehensive plan highlights 11 key areas within St. Joseph County that are ready for new investment because of the existing presence of utilities and other infrastructure required for additional residential, commercial, and industrial developments. By focusing investment within these 11 areas, the County will be more deliberate and efficient with its resources. These areas represent strategic locations where economic development should be concentrated to achieve the most meaningful impact on this comprehensive plan's vision for responsible growth and environmental sustainability.

ED.1.A

Pursue “shovel ready” certification for identified key sites to expedite development.

“Shovel ready” certification refers to the completion of initial planning, engineering, infrastructure, and approvals to make a site prepared for immediate construction. Certified sites are featured on Indiana’s Site Selector Database and included in the Economic Development Corporation’s marketing materials.

ED.1.C

Continue to invest resources in and market the Indiana Enterprise Center (IEC) as a premier economic development business park.

As a significant economic asset of St. Joseph County, plans and infrastructure for the IEC must remain up-to-date and continuously improve. This includes, but not limited to, transportation systems, utilities, fiber, marketing and promotions, incentives, and benchmarking leading business parks.

ED.1.B

Continue to invest resources in and develop the Capital Avenue corridor.

The Capital Avenue Corridor Land Use Plan (2003) outlines how the corridor should be developed, including a land use plan that has been translated into the future land use plan of the 2043 St. Joseph County Comprehensive Plan. Strategies and recommendations in this plan should be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure economic development initiatives along this corridor remain relevant and responsive to evolving conditions.

ED.1.D

Establish plans and nonfinancial incentives for priority areas.

Each of the identified economic development priority areas, illustrated on the map in Figure 3.0, should be studied individually to determine the most applicable and appropriate economic development tools and approaches to incite investment.



ED.1.E

Identify opportunities and strategies to leverage transportation networks and utilities for economic development, including rail lines, interstates, and heavy haul routes.

Partnerships among St. Joseph County government, Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG), and mode-specific transportation entities will optimize the county's assets, connectivity opportunities, and logistical efficiency as attractive features in marketing economic development pursuits.

GOAL #2

PROMOTE REINVESTMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT.

Countywide reinvestment and redevelopment of underutilized, declining, or challenging areas is a strategic approach in St. Joseph County intended to stimulate economic growth, enhance the quality of life, preserve cultural heritage, improve environmental conditions, and contribute to long-term resilience and community prosperity. Successful implementation of this goal is envisioned to lead to several of the following outcomes:

- **Economic Revitalization:** Boosting the local economy through businesses attraction and tax revenue increases.
- **Job Creation:** Generating new jobs initially through construction and then more long-term with the industries occupying the redeveloped spaces.
- **Property Value Increase:** Upgrading a property's desirability and usability, strengthening its marketability, increasing market demand, and making it more attractive and valuable to current and future investors.
- **Quality of Life Enhancement:** Creating more livable spaces, improving infrastructure, and providing better amenities and services.
- **Investment:** Attracting new public and private money and development.
- **Economic Resilience:** Adapting to meet the changing needs and dynamics of the market.
- **Public Safety:** Reducing crime through protection and increased activity in previously desolate areas.
- **Urban Sprawl Containment:** Focusing redevelopment within existing urban areas with existing utilities and services, minimizing greenfield development, and eliminating the need for expanded infrastructure.



ED.2.A

Establish a program to focus on revitalization and redevelopment of critical corridors.

This program should be designed and tailored to leverage the unique conditions of each corridor, in particular SR 2, SR 23 (including its intersections with Bittersweet, US31 Bypass, North Liberty, and Walkerton), 931/Old US 31, 933, Capital Avenue, and McKinley Highway.

ED.2.B

Encourage investment for infill and redevelopment or the reuse of vacant, previously used, underutilized, or inefficient properties.

Vacant or underutilized properties can lead to a cycle of decline, where one unkempt lot can negatively influence the image or value of its surroundings and, ultimately, trigger additional blight and disinvestment for an entire block, neighborhood, or municipality. Infill development and redevelopment in economically challenging areas convert liabilities or potential liabilities into assets, creating opportunities for new businesses, housing, or community amenities.

ED.2.C

Target funding and other resources to address code enforcement violations, demolition, and site preparation in critical areas.

Critical areas in transition or that need individualized attention should be assigned appropriate funding and resources to tackle building code violations, structural safety, and/or environmental remediation to clear the path for new development.

ED.2.D

Use available planning tools to address vacant, obsolete, or underutilized nonresidential buildings.

Vacant, obsolete, or underutilized buildings also pose adverse effects on communities. Strategies could involve flexible zoning, tax incentives, grant assistance, or referrals to other resources.

GOAL #3

FOSTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS EXPANSION AND ATTRACTION.

St. Joseph County must create a desirable environment to attract economic investment. The approach should be holistic, with public commitments to support development and providing the necessary infrastructure and resources for businesses to thrive. Additionally, there is an interconnected and symbiotic relationship between a community's quality of life and its economic vitality. Quality of life can include a variety of amenities, access to education and skill building, services, public safety, housing choice, and connectivity. By providing the basic requirements for business success and creating vibrant and desirable communities where people want and choose to live, the outcome is a place where business and its talented workforce want to be.

**ED.3.A**

Encourage opportunities for business expansion and attraction that focus on job creation and tax base growth with diverse residential, commercial, and industrial development.

A variety of residential, commercial, and industrial developments helps to mitigate economic risks, strengthen economic resilience and stability. A focus on job creation ensures that efforts are directed toward offering employment opportunities for the local workforce, promoting economic prosperity for residents, and improving the standard of living for the community.

ED.3.B

Identify and address potential barriers that may discourage investment in St. Joseph County.

St. Joseph County should study why businesses choose to operate or not operate in the County. Any obstacles or challenges to doing business should be identified, evaluated, and mitigated, if appropriate.

ED.3.C

Work with local area economic development officials to market and promote the County through various forms of media.

St. Joseph County's economic development professionals are using a variety of communication tools to strategically showcase the unique attributes, opportunities, and assets of the County to a wide audience. Leveraging various media channels, such as traditional advertising, digital marketing, social media platforms, and public relations efforts, allows the County to communicate its competitive advantages, economic potential, quality of life, and business-friendly environment with the intended outcome of future economic growth and development.

ED.3.D

Direct potential employees and employers to agencies that provide workforce development and attraction efforts to recruit and keep talent in the region.

Workforce attraction and development is a strategic approach for St. Joseph County to meet the evolving needs of industries, maintain competitiveness in a rapidly changing global economy, and advance the education and skill set of residents. Investment in talent and increasing professional opportunities for County residents will keep trained and skilled workers in the community and available to meet the demand for human resources, growing both the local population and the employment base.



ED.3.E

Support the development, growth, and retention of small businesses.

Small businesses are not only the backbone of our economy, but they also contribute to the unique character of our communities. Many resources exist for small businesses in St. Joseph County. The County can promote and connect businesses to these resources. The South Bend Regional Chamber, South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership, University of Notre Dame, City of South Bend, Indiana Small Business Development Center, and others offer programming and resources for small businesses.



GOAL #4

ENSURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS HAVE THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO GROW AND DIVERSIFY THE TAX BASE, AND COMMUNICATE OUTCOMES TO THE PUBLIC.

Providing economic development professionals in St. Joseph County with the necessary tools and emphasizing effective communication with the public are key to fostering a robust, diverse, and resilient economy that benefits the entire community. For these reasons, ensuring that economic development professionals have the necessary tools to grow and diversify the tax base and to effectively communicate outcomes to the public are crucial because:

- **Economic Growth and Diversification:** Identify and seize opportunities for economic growth by attracting new businesses, supporting local enterprises, and retaining industries that diversify the tax base.
- **Transparency and Public Trust:** Trust in local government and economic development initiatives through transparency, educating the public on how economic strategies are benefiting their community and creating champions for investment and efforts.
- **Informed Decision-Making:** Data and analysis used to make informed decisions that are more likely to yield positive economic results for the County.
- **Community Engagement and Support:** Public involvement in economic development processes to consider the needs and opinions of residents, earning community support for development projects and initiatives.
- **Adaptability to Change:** Flexibility to adjust focus and strategy to respond to shifts in market trends, technological advancements, or downturns, ensuring the County remains competitive in a rapidly changing economic landscape.
- **Attracting Investment:** A clear, articulated strategy for growth and development appealing to the needs and interests of potential investors.
- **Enhancing Quality of Life:** Jobs are created through successful economic development. Jobs provide opportunity for livelihoods for community residents, along with quality-of-life attributes and amenities, making St. Joseph County a desirable place to live and work.
- **Long-term Stability and Growth:** A prosperous future for the County and its residents.



ED.4.A

Develop predictable economic criteria/indicators that help prioritize projects that should receive direct investment and incentives.

This recommendation emphasizes the need to establish metrics to guide decision-making and resource allocation. With this understanding and by identifying key areas for investment and incentives, the County can plan for long-term growth compatible with its overall economic development goals.

ED.4.C

Create and publish an annual report informing the Redevelopment Commission of tax abatements and TIF district activity, including project descriptions, relevant tools, project performance, and status of development agreements.

This process promotes transparency, accountability, and the consideration of diverse perspectives.

ED.4.B

Publish specific public policy priorities that articulate economic development efforts.

Communicating the County's priorities creates an evaluation process for economic development initiatives and outcomes, while opening the door for collaborative partnerships.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS







A well-defined housing strategy is essential for St. Joseph County's future growth and development. Housing is a fundamental aspect of people's lives, directly influencing their quality of life. A variety of housing options helps attract businesses, employees, and investors to the area. It provides stability and security for workers, enabling them to live closer to their workplaces and spend less time commuting. This, in turn, helps boost local businesses, encourages entrepreneurship, and contributes to overall economic vitality. A thoughtfully designed housing strategy also considers proximity to essential services, transportation infrastructure, and recreational areas. By promoting connectivity and the integration of urban planning principles, the strategy aims to create complete and cohesive communities where residents live, work, and play.

Government has a critical role to play in meeting the housing needs of the community. By providing safe, affordable, and accessible housing options, the County can foster community, improve public health outcomes, and promote overall well-being. St. Joseph County can establish zoning regulations and

land use policies that encourage affordable housing, provide financial or other incentives to stimulate housing development, and collaborate with the development community to meet the diverse housing needs of the county. Additionally, governmental entities can invest in infrastructure and transportation systems to support housing development. By being proactive in developing and implementing a housing strategy, the County can work to address housing challenges, ensure adequate housing supply, create more livable communities.

KEY FINDINGS

This section compiles key findings of the existing conditions in the county as they relate to the Housing & Neighborhoods pillar. For a complete analysis of existing conditions, see the Housing & Neighborhoods Appendix.

01. St. Joseph County experienced a modest population increase of two percent during the 2010s. However, the county's population is expected to slightly decrease during the 2020s.

PILLAR DEFINITION

**Residential dwelling units,
inclusive of all types.**

02. Countywide, the number of housing units increased 2.85 percent between 2010 and 2020, while the number of vacant housing units decreased from 10.3 in 2010 to 9.2 percent in 2020.
03. In 2022, the average household size decreased to 2.42 from 2.48 in 2010. The average household size is likely to continue decreasing.
04. The 2002 Comprehensive Plan overestimated the 2020 projected population and housing needs. Over the last 20 years, housing developers responded to more accurate market conditions and constructed new housing units that could be absorbed by home buyers within the existing population plus the modest increase.

05. There is a demand and market for new housing. However, this demand does not come from an increase in population. Rather, the demand comes from current residents whose residences are no longer meeting their needs. More units are needed to house fewer occupants.

FROM THE 2002 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 6: Land Use Plans: “Residential Requirements. The preferred scenario has the County’s total population increasing from approximately 265,000 in 2000 to about 305,000 in the Year 2020. Using a projected household size of about 2.45 persons (a decrease from the current 2.65) in the Year 2020 results in a demand for about 16,300 additional housing units (including Mishawaka and other areas not included in the Plan). Also, as the household size of the existing population continues to decrease, another 8,000 units will be required. The total anticipated residential demand is expected to be approximately 24,000 units by the Year 2020, or about 1,200 per year (compare to Chart 3-5 in Chapter 3, which shows that residential building permit activity over the past few years has averaged about 1,000 to 1,500 units per year).”

PRIORITY AREAS

Area 1: New Carlisle and Surroundings

The Town of New Carlisle’s Comprehensive Plan has identified the areas south and east of its downtown as prime for further residential development. The identified developments are within walking and biking distance to job opportunities in the Indiana Enterprise Center (IEC), and infrastructure to support these modes of transportation, such as trails and bike lanes, should be provided as residential development occurs.

Area 2: East of Mud Lake

The Mud Lake wetland is a recreational amenity, but it is also a crucial environmentally sensitive area that exhibits one of the most diverse ecosystems in the County, both in terms of wildlife and plant life. Residential development, especially near the wetland, should be carefully planned to:

- Eliminate the majority, if not all water runoff, which can be accomplished through cluster-style development, conservation subdivisions, and green infrastructure within all developments,
- Preserve existing wildlife and plant life by discouraging destructive land clearing methods, such as clearcutting or stripping away the topsoil of the entire development site,
- Plant native plant life in open spaces while discouraging extensive over-mowing.

Area 3: Portage Road

This priority area is currently agricultural land but is surrounded by existing residential subdivisions and planned for mixed density residential uses in the future land use map. This area has prime access to jobs in downtown South Bend via Portage Road. The county should consider how multi-modal access can be provided and/or improved to this area.

Area 4: Capital Avenue / Fir Road

Due to its prime access to transportation, nearby employment opportunities, and an existing multi-modal trail along Capital Avenue, the County should encourage relatively denser residential developments in this priority area. Furthermore, this priority area has had extensive prior planning efforts by Mishawaka and St. Joseph County culminating in the Capital Avenue Land Use Plan (2003) and the Fir Road Land Use Study. These plans should provide further guidance for residential development, especially in relation to planned commercial and industrial development in the area.



Area 5: Eastern Ireland Road

This priority area has high potential for development and redevelopment with its excellent access to regional transportation corridors, proximity to job centers like downtown Mishawaka, and a mix of commercial and institutional uses along Ireland Road. Higher-density development should be encouraged in this area, working in collaboration with South Bend and Mishawaka, to extend public sewer systems where possible. The US 20 Highway should act as a border at which development should stop in order to preserve prime soil for agricultural operations south of the highway.

Area 6: North Liberty

The Town of North Liberty's Comprehensive Plan identifies areas along SR 4 as prime for development, including a mixed-use corridor on the east side of town. Additionally, there are two regional trails planned to connect North Liberty with Potato Creek, Lakeville, and onward to South Bend along SR 931. The County should support North Liberty in developing this area and encourage residential development to have several connections between subdivisions and to the regional trails.

Area 7: Southeastern Lakeville

The Town of Lakeville's Comprehensive Plan identifies the area southeast of town as prime for development and has excellent transportation access to US 31. Like Priority Area 7: Potato Creek, the regional development authority, MACOG, has regional trails planned for the town to which new residential development should be well-connected. This could be accomplished by providing pedestrian and/or bike facilities on Lake Trail (a street), Patterson Street, or on another nearby street.

Area 8: Gulivoire Park Area

This priority area consists mainly of the Gulivoire Park neighborhood near Forest G. Hay Elementary School. The future land use map identifies several housing opportunities, such as infill sites along Kern Road and US 31, repurposing vacant or abandoned properties, in collaboration with the City of South Bend, for future utility extensions. However, it is important to note that development should be strictly limited from extending south of Madison Rd on the east side of US 31, and south of Roosevelt Rd on the west side of US 31. These boundaries are meant to preserve prime agricultural lands and reduce urban sprawl from converting more farmland or inadvertently damaging nearby environmentally sensitive areas, such as Bowman Creek.

Figure 3.3: Housing and Neighborhoods Pillar Priority Areas

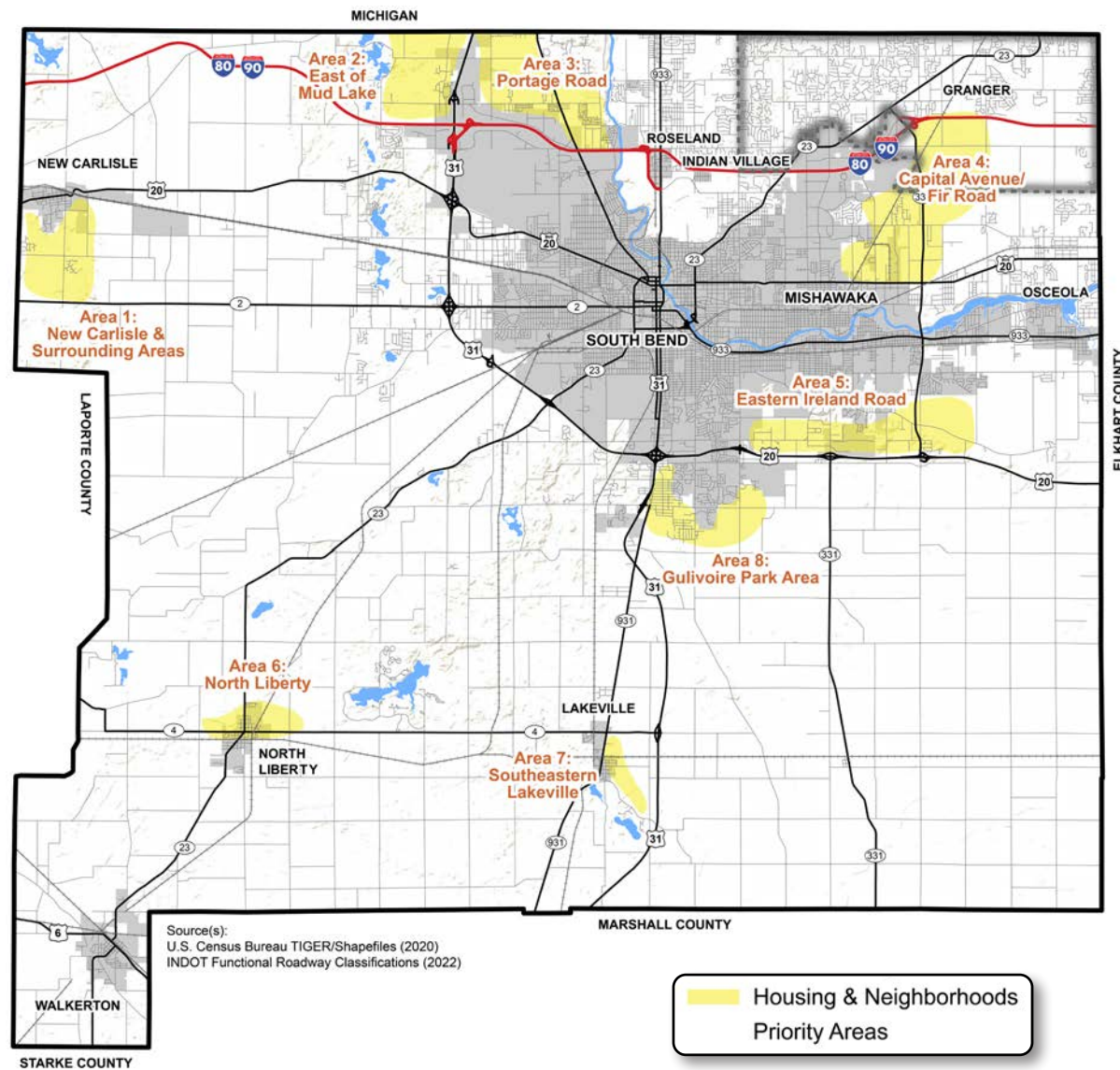
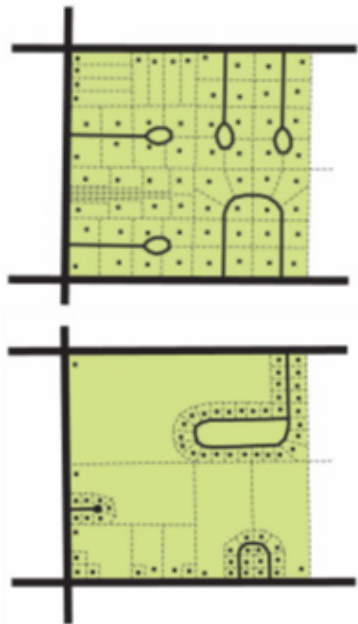




Figure 3.4: Residential Types

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

As the densest of the rural land use categories, suburban residential areas could be developed at a ratio of 1 home per acre of land, as opposed to a minimum lot size of 1 acre.

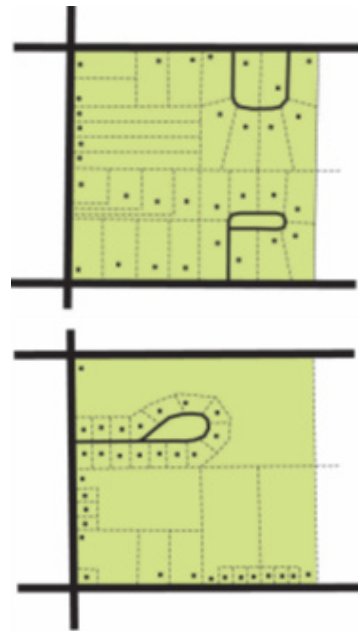


1-ACRE
MINIMUM
LOT SIZE

ONE HOME
PER ACRE

ESTATE RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Estate residential areas should have medium density rural residential development, perhaps at 1 home per 5 acres, as opposed to a minimum lot size of 5 acres.

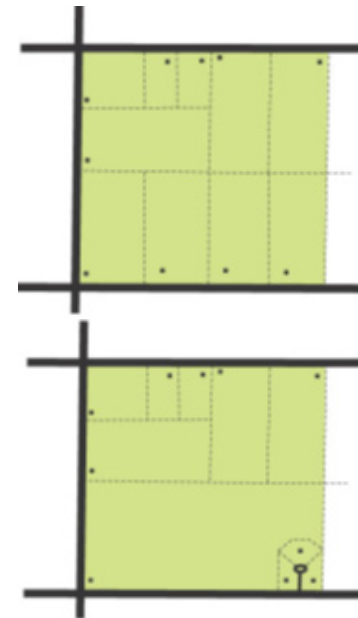


5-ACRE
MINIMUM
LOT SIZE

ONE HOME
PER 5 ACRES

AGRICULTURAL AREAS

Agricultural areas should have very low-density residential growth, preserving as much agricultural land as possible, perhaps at 1 home per 20 acres.



20-ACRE
MINIMUM
LOT SIZE

ONE HOME
PER 20
ACRES



GOAL #1

ENCOURAGE A VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES TO MEET A RANGE OF PREFERENCES AND NEEDS.

The County aims to accommodate the preferences and household compositions of its residents by offering a range of housing options, including single-family homes, townhouses, apartments, and more. Some individuals may prefer a single-family home, while others may seek the convenience and affordability of an apartment. By acknowledging the market demands, the County offers an inventory of housing choices that meet the needs of its residents.

In addition to housing type preferences, this goal also addresses the critical issue of income levels. Housing options that range in price and across income brackets assist in providing opportunity for all County residents, regardless of financial circumstances, to attain safe, decent, and affordable housing. By offering a mix of housing options, the County encourages a balanced and integrated approach to growth and development.

HN.1.A

Update the zoning ordinance to support varying densities.

To increase housing options, St. Joseph County can adjust its regulatory tools to create opportunity for a variety of housing types. Changes to land use regulations to meet housing demand could include increasing allowable densities and permitting Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) on residential lots where appropriate.

HN.1.C

Support the development of new housing units to meet the current and projected needs of the community.

A diverse mix of housing types, tenures, and price points are needed to meet the needs of the community. The county can support the development of new housing, both owner-occupied and non-owner-occupied, by reducing regulatory barriers, providing infrastructure assistance, land acquisition, or other measures.

HN.1.B

Work with partners to assess countywide housing needs.

St. Joseph County can collaborate with local partners to assess the housing needs of the community, identifying gaps and trends in the housing market.

HN.1.D

Support the rehabilitation of existing housing stock.

Home renovation, rehabilitation, and the preservation of existing neighborhoods is a cost-effective and responsible way to maintain and increase the County's housing supply. Repairing and updating older housing stock, in addition to new home construction, advances the goal of a variety of residential options throughout the region. Such rehabilitations could include improvements to increase energy efficiency.



GOAL #2

PROMOTE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT IS CONNECTED TO TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS.

This goal addresses the need to connect residential areas and community destinations to vehicular and non-vehicular transportation systems. Making investments to connect residential areas with transportation infrastructure can result in significant economic and social benefits. These connections increase mobility and access, provide a greater choice of transportation modes, improve safety, enhance the visual appearance of communities and natural landscapes, and organize land uses. Efforts and investments made to connect citizens from where they live to where they need or want to go contribute to their quality of life.

Transportation connectivity is central to a desirable quality of life, which can prompt economic development by making it more attractive for businesses and residents to remain or relocate there. A connected area or community is part of a network, and the number of destinations within a reasonable travel time increases exponentially.

Similarly, attractive transportation routes, offering multiple modes of transportation and amenities, are a source of community pride and help determine a community's identity and reputation.

REGULATORY CHANGES TO INCREASE HOUSING CHOICE

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) – is an additional or secondary dwelling located on the same property as a single-family residence. Often in the form of a basement/ attic apartment, granny flat, in-law suite, carriage house, backyard cottage, or similar. ADUs were common in traditional 20th-century neighborhoods, built to house family members or to provide supplemental income in the form of rent. Both primary and accessory units are located on the same lot and cannot be sold separately.

HN.2.A

Encourage sidewalks, multi-use paths, bicycle lanes, landscaping, and other safety design elements in developed areas where motorized vehicles and nonmotorized pedestrians share a common space.

The inclusion of non-motorized transportation facilities and amenities, such as sidewalks, multi-use paths, and bicycle lanes, expand the mobility choices for County residents. Development standards and subdivision ordinances can encourage the provision of these non-motorized transportation facilities and amenities to provide safe connections between residential communities and vital destinations.



HN.2.B

Prioritize new housing in areas with job growth and safe access via multiple modes of transportation.

By strategically placing housing developments near employment hubs, commuting times, traffic congestion, and carbon emissions are reduced. Pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, well-connected transportation networks, and thoughtful planning allows residents to efficiently access their workplaces.

GOAL #3

ENSURE NEW HOUSING HAS ADEQUATE ACCESS TO WATER AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT FACILITIES.

Residents should have access to safe and reliable water and sanitation facilities. Access to safe water and adequate sewer facilities is crucial for promoting public health, protecting the environment, and strengthening economic growth. Maintaining a reliable water supply free from contaminants, such as harmful bacteria, viruses, chemicals, and pollutants, is essential to preventing the spread of waterborne diseases and maintaining good health. In addition to improving public health, adequate water and sewer facilities are essential for economic growth. Industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism depend on large quantities of water to operate effectively. Contaminated water sources have severe consequences for ecosystems and human health, leading to illnesses and even death in severe cases. Proper treatment and disposal of sewage are crucial for maintaining a healthy ecosystem, preventing water pollution, and ensuring the protection of natural resources.

HN.3.A

Encourage future residential development in the identified housing priority areas.

This plan identifies priority areas in the County that are suitable for new and additional housing development. Planning staff and the Area Plan Commission should evaluate each future housing development proposal carefully, consider the future land use map, and determine which priority area would provide the most reciprocal benefits.

HN.3.B

Limit public sewer system expansion in areas outside of the identified housing priority areas or service areas determined by municipal providers.

St. Joseph County should direct resources to the identified housing priority areas. These areas were selected because future and additional development in these locations is prudent and capitalizes on available resources or momentum currently in place (see Water/Sewer Services Area Map in Appendix J: Utilities).



HN.3.C

Promote conservation subdivisions for developments served by municipal water and sewer.

Conservation subdivisions are designed to preserve natural, agricultural, and historic resources, minimize environmental and visual impacts, harmonize with the surrounding landscape, and provide continuity with open spaces and amenities. Conservation subdivisions reduce or eliminate stormwater run-off due to large preserved natural areas that absorb and filter water.

HN.3.D

Develop a plan to address sanitary and water issues in the Granger area and continue to promote housing development in that area.

For decades, the Granger area has been a highly desirable place for residential development. For housing growth to continue in this area, and for it to remain a desirable place to live, it is necessary to address the community's sanitary and water needs.



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QUALITY OF LIFE AND PLACE



WELCOME TO ME

NORTH LIBERTY

HOME OF

POTATO CREEK STATE PARK



FOUNDED 1836



Quality of life and place refers to the overall well-being and satisfaction of individuals within the context of their surroundings. Access to housing, essential services, economic opportunities, education, health care, shopping and consumer services, recreation and cultural amenities, environmental conditions, and social connections are all factors that impact quality of life. The tangible and intangible relationships among these attributes contribute to a community's character which influences the sense of belongingness, comfort, enjoyment, and pride experienced by residents and visitors. Additionally, civic pride, history, social organizations, and cultural and faith-based institutions help residents find outlets for their leisure time that make the place where they live a home where they feel that they belong.

St. Joseph County's government plays a crucial role in creating an environment that allows residents to achieve a high quality of life. The County is responsible for providing essential services and infrastructure that can "make or break" a citizen's day. For instance, the County's roadway systems ensure that residents can reliably get to work

and to appointments on time and without disruption. The County funds schools, libraries, and educational programs, fostering a knowledgeable and skilled population. The County prioritizes public safety through law enforcement and emergency services, creating a sense of security and protection.

The Quality of Life and Place pillar identifies and addresses community needs, sets goals, and recommends implementation policies, programs, and projects that are intended to positively impact residents' everyday lives and routines. Because the Quality of Life and Place pillar is wide-ranging and includes a broad variety of topics, this chapter emphasizes the relationships to the seven other pillars outlined in Plan SJC.

KEY FINDINGS

Quality of life and place was a common theme mentioned during public engagement process, noted by residents, Task Force members, and focus group participants. Key findings from public engagement include:

PILLAR DEFINITION

A wide-ranging and subjective way a citizen determines if a community is a desirable place to live. Evaluation factors can include (but are not limited to) culture, values, opportunities, education, entertainment, recreation, health, and safety.

- More amenities need to be accessible and connected through a variety of transportation modes,
- Better access to open space and recreational activities should be a priority to improve health and wellness,
- Partnering with the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) is a crucial step to build and fund infrastructure,
- Capacity and availability of schools, public

services, amenities, utilities, transportation networks, and other public support should be adequate for new and existing developments.

- Public investment oftentimes inspires additional investment from the private sector. As the County government continues to provide the essential and fundamental services to prepare for this additional investment, it can expect quality of life and place to improve, and to become more attractive to current and future residents.

Public investment oftentimes inspires additional investment from the private sector. As the County government continues to provide the essential and fundamental services to prepare for this additional investment, it can expect the St. Joseph County quality of life and place to improve, to become more appealing to current and future residents, and to be in a position to declare St. Joseph County as a place where people **want to be**.

GOAL #1

PRESERVE AND ENHANCE ST. JOSEPH COUNTY'S UNIQUE CHARACTER AND SENSE OF PLACE.

St. Joseph County is located in a region with a rich history featuring unique communities with distinct characteristics and identities. Emphasizing this uniqueness and sense of place is central to the quality of life experienced by County residents. By preserving and enhancing the attributes of the County that set it apart from other places, leaders, investors, and decision-makers can direct development and strategies toward the celebration of this local personality and tradition. This goal emphasizes the importance of preserving historic sites, cultural landmarks, natural landscapes, and architectural heritage that tell the story of St. Joseph County.

QLP.1.A

Work with local artists to identify areas where to highlight community identity and heritage.

Art in visible public spaces, such as parks, streetscapes, buildings, and community gathering locations, offers the opportunity to showcase local talent and creativity and affirm St. Joseph County as a distinctive destination.

QLP.1.B

Explore how other communities are utilizing their unique assets to attract new residents and leverage investment.

By learning from peer communities that have successfully utilized their assets to attract and maintain their residential and business populations, County leaders can apply similar techniques and strategies to St. Joseph County's recruitment and retention endeavors.



QLP.1.C

Work with the Historic Preservation Commission and partners to identify and preserve structures and sites that have historical and cultural significance to the County.

Preservation of St. Joseph County's history and historic built environment is critical to its cultural identity. This approach should consider adaptive reuse, context-sensitive design, tourism, housing, and other economic drivers through collaborative and informed decision-making that aligns with future land use and priority area development goals.

QLP.1.D

Support Visit South Bend Mishawaka's efforts to promote St. Joseph County as a tourist destination.

Tourism plays a significant role in driving economic growth, supporting local businesses, and showcasing the County's unique offerings. Support for the VSBM allows the County to:

- Tap into existing resources and networks.
- Utilize research and data related to visitor preferences, market trends, and best practices in destination marketing.
- Assist with marketing initiatives and advertising campaigns that can also be used to attract additional economic development investment, outside of tourism.
- Coordinate a cohesive approach to tourism and economic development that is compatible with Plan SJC and the established 20-year vision.

QLP.1.E

Implement quality-of-life projects in identified priority areas.

New development is encouraged in the priority areas. As such, new or enhanced quality-of-life amenities should complement new developments in these same areas. Directing development to priority areas allows for economies of scale related to infrastructure projects and services, attracting additional investment, meeting the needs of current and future populations, and achieving a desired level of community vibrancy and economic viability.



GOAL #2

WORK WITH AREA PLAN COMMISSION MEMBER JURISDICTIONS TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS PLAN'S VISION AND GOALS

A cooperative Area Plan Commission fosters mutually beneficial relationships among governmental units that work together to implement plan recommendations, ultimately leading to a thriving St. Joseph County.

QLP.2.A

Work with Area Plan Commission member jurisdictions to develop a cohesive strategy to increase St. Joseph County brand awareness across the region.

A St. Joseph County brand development initiative should be created to reinforce a sense of place for the unincorporated areas of the County and its member communities. A brand initiative would familiarize the public with St. Joseph County, creating a cohesive image, that could be used in planning and zoning documents, wayfinding projects, and other print or electronic materials.

QLP.2.B

Coordinate zoning and development to ensure design standards in ordinances reflect the desired character.

Design standards play an important role in shaping the physical development of an area. Staff should work collaboratively with each of the Area Plan Commission member jurisdictions to incorporate design standards into the town ordinances that reflect the desired character of each community, promoting high-quality aesthetics in architecture, landscaping, and the public spaces.



QLP.2.C

Review APC-member and County zoning ordinances to ensure they support the development of community gathering spaces and recreational opportunities.

This review process includes making necessary adjustments to allow for the creation of parks, plazas, and other public gathering spaces that promote a sense of community. Ordinances should also accommodate recreational facilities for leisure and physical activity.

QLP.2.D

Scale vehicular and pedestrian street lighting to minimize light pollution.

Proper street light fixtures are designed to direct light downwards and minimize unnecessary upward light dispersion. Efficient and appropriately scaled artificial light balances safety and visibility with the need for dark skies to maintain natural circadian rhythms.

GOAL #3

ADDRESS THE IMMEDIATE AND FUTURE RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF RESIDENTS.

Parks and recreational opportunities are fundamental to a community's quality of life. Availability of open space and amenities is often a part of the decision-making process when residents choose where to live and where businesses choose to invest. Investing in the County's Parks & Recreation Department supports the health and well-being of residents through physical fitness, environmental stewardship, continuing education, leisure activity, and community engagement. Equally important is connecting parks and open spaces to residential neighborhoods, employment centers, cities, and towns is just as significant to the County's quality of life. A connected network of multi-use paths and trails provides residents with additional opportunities for physical activity and outdoor recreation.

QLP.3.A

Maintain the updated 5-Year Parks Master Plan.

The County's 5-Year Parks Master Plan should remain current. A plan update every five years assures that the programs and projects of the Parks & Recreation Department remain relevant, align with the evolving needs of residents, and inform where to invest public dollars. Regular updates also allow for a comprehensive assessment of the County's park system, identification of areas for improvement, and strategic planning for future development.

QLP.3.B

Support new park development on County-owned land along Anderson Road.

Property along Anderson Road was procured by St. Joseph County Parks in 1999 and land-banked for a future park. A new 115-acre park is planned featuring wetlands, woodlands, and native plant restoration, as well as recreation for children, picnic shelters, and trail connections to Harris Township Park.



QLP.3.C

Identify areas underserved by parkland and acquire property offering unique, endangered, or priority habitat that supports the St. Joseph County Parks & Recreation Department's vision and goals.

The Parks Department should consider additional property acquisition and capitalize on opportunities when they arise. Criteria for strategic park or recreation property acquisition includes procuring property immediately adjacent to existing parks or recreational facilities, pursuing property in areas of the County that are currently underserved, and seeking property that offers unique, endangered, or priority habitat that should be protected.

QLP.3.D

Pursue acquisition of properties adjacent to or near existing County or other parks.

The County has a desire to continue to expand and enhance its park system, delivering more extensive recreational opportunities to residents and visitors. Acquiring properties adjacent to existing parks, greenways, and trails, creates contiguous recreational spaces and systems that can offer a broader range of activities, provide cost savings and economies of scale, and protect natural landscapes and habitats.

QLP.3.F

Consider preserving a portion of land for future park and trail use when evaluating for reinvestment.

When the County acquires land for public use, whether purchased or donated, it has the opportunity to prepare for the long-term recreational and environmental needs of the community. Setting aside land for parks and trails ensures that there will be dedicated spaces for outdoor activities, gatherings, and natural habitats. This forward-thinking approach acknowledges the potential population growth in the County and the increasing demand for parks and recreation as it evaluates proposed investment projects.

QLP.4.E

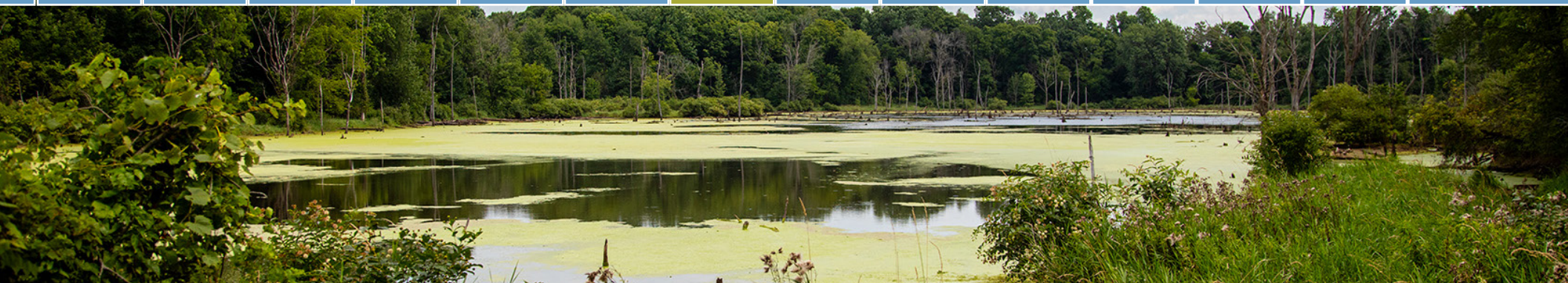
Utilize parks, open spaces, and recreation centers as venues to host community events, recreational activities, and gathering places.

Parks, open spaces, and recreation centers are versatile venues that can be hubs of community activity. Coupling these venues with event and activity programming emphasizes these places as destinations for celebration, social interaction, and civic engagement.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP







Environmental stewardship involves the responsible use and protection of natural, ecological, and physical resources. Plan SJC's Environmental Stewardship pillar focuses on these caretaker responsibilities to ensure the long-term health of the county's natural resources. Being an environmental steward means taking responsibility to protect and preserve the natural environment for future generations. Environmental stewardship includes practices such as reducing waste and emissions, conserving natural resources, and advocating for policies that protect the environment. The county's role in environmental stewardship is to develop the policy standards to ensure a healthy and resilient community. There are several branches of environmental stewardship and various approaches the county can pursue including:

- Protecting natural habitats: Create protected areas, such as parks or wildlife reserves, to ensure that natural habitats and species are not destroyed by development or other human activities.
- Implementing responsible land use practices: Encourage practices such

as low-impact development and green infrastructure.

- Encouraging conservation and responsible use of natural resources: Promote water conservation practices, such as rainwater harvesting, and sustainable forestry practices.
- Implementing environmental regulations and policies: Support environmental laws and regulations, such as those related to air and water quality, and advocate for policies that protect the natural environment at the local, state, and national level.
- Engaging the community: Include local communities in environmental protection efforts by providing education and outreach programs, and by involving them in decision-making processes.

KEY FINDINGS

Through the community engagement process, St. Joseph County community members defined the Environmental Stewardship Pillar as: protecting the natural environment from harmful activity; reducing air, water, and land

PILLAR DEFINITION

Protecting the natural environment from harmful activity; reducing air, water, and land pollution; nurturing biodiversity of species; implementing sustainable development; restoring ecological balance; and promoting climate resiliency.

pollution; nurturing biodiversity of species; implementing sustainable development; restoring ecological balance; and promoting environmental resiliency.

Major waterways in the County include the St. Joseph River and the Kankakee River. Ditches and tributaries mainly feed into these two waterways, which are also part of the St. Lawrence Continental Divide, a significant geographic feature that separates



the Great Lakes from southerly Atlantic Ocean watersheds. A continental divide determines what basin that water drains into. Additionally, large areas of the County have potential to become wetlands if desired, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), including the Kankakee River, southern parts of Granger area, and much of Madison Township. These potential wetlands often follow the outline of the 100-year floodplain and were historically wetlands before they were drained over centuries.

Many of the soil types in the County have characteristics that are prime for long-term and intensive farming. These same soils, however, are largely unsuitable for septic-based development due to their poor drainage characteristics.

These key findings present an overview of the data analysis and community engagement completed that are relevant to this pillar. An in-depth analysis of relevant existing conditions can be found in Appendix D: Environmental Stewardship.

PRIORITY AREAS

Area 1: New Carlisle Area

As the Indiana Enterprise Center (IEC) develops, there is an opportunity to designate land for parks and green spaces. These areas can provide ecological benefits and opportunities for recreation for New Carlisle residents, workers, and visitors to the IEC. Additionally, opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian pathways present a logical and convenient avenue to increase the walkability

of the area and connectivity to natural assets, such as the Bendix Woods and Spicer Lake County Parks.

Area 2: Chain-O-Lakes, Deer Lake, and Mud Lake Ecosystem

The area containing Chain-O-Lakes, found just west of the City of South Bend, as well as Deer and Mud Lakes, extending north toward the Indiana/Michigan State Line, is considered to be one of the most ecologically sensitive areas in the County. Extra caution must be exercised when considering development proposals in and around this area to protect the natural character and ecological benefits this location provides.

Area 3: Wharton Lake and Surrounding Ecosystem

Wharton Lake and its surrounding ecosystem represent a vital ecological zone that supports diverse wildlife habitats and aquatic ecosystems. Conservation efforts here will focus on maintaining water quality and enhancing habitat connectivity. Protecting this area from overdevelopment is crucial to sustaining its ecological health and providing recreational opportunities such as fishing, boating, and wildlife observation for the community.

Area 4: Potato Creek State Park

APotato Creek and the areas adjacent play a critical role in water filtration, flood control, and providing habitat for wildlife. Conservation initiatives will aim to protect riparian buffers, restore native vegetation, and enhance public access to natural trails, promoting both

ecological integrity and recreational use.

Area 5: Lakeville Parks and Conservation

Lakeville is home to several parks and natural areas that offer significant ecological and recreational value and are of great importance to the Town and surrounding community. Conservation priorities include expanding green spaces, protecting existing habitats, and further developing community parks that serve both ecological functions and public enjoyment.

Area 6: Walkerton Floodplain and Emergent Wetlands

The Walkerton Floodplain and its emergent wetlands are crucial for flood mitigation, water purification, and providing habitats for wetland species. Conservation efforts will concentrate on preserving these natural floodplain functions, restoring wetland areas, and preventing encroachment by development. Enhancing these wetlands will also offer educational and recreational opportunities, such as bird watching and nature walks, benefiting the local community.

Area 7: Juday Creek Riparian Corridor

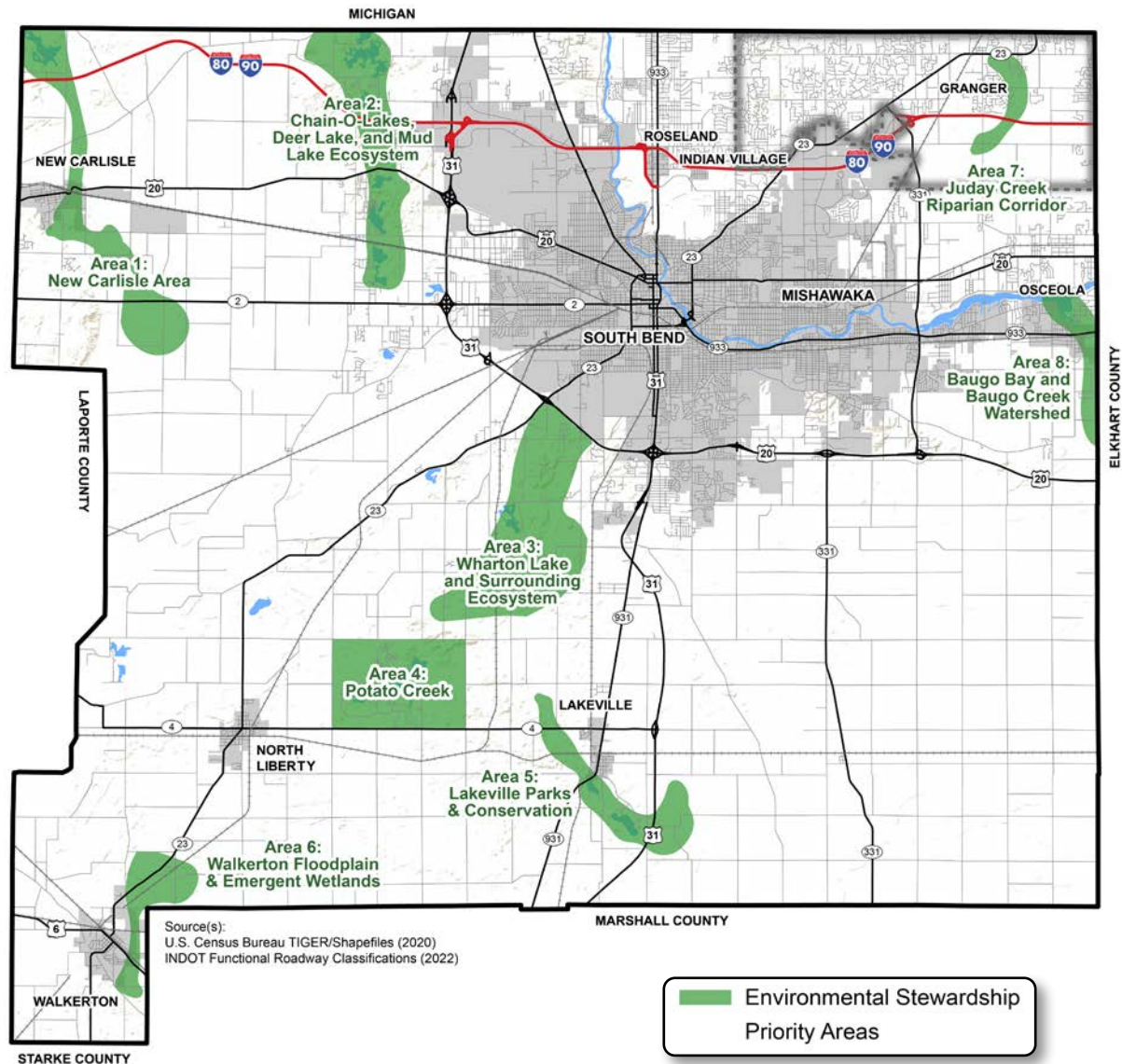
Juday Creek, which originates in northeastern St. Joseph County and discharges into the St. Joseph River in the north central portion of the County, offers unique environmental and economic significance as a cold-water resource.

It is a 12-mile waterway that is legally classified as an open drain, regulated by the St. Joseph County Drainage Board. The creek is a notably a breeding brown trout stream. The riparian corridor along Juday Creek requires targeted conservation to protect water quality, prevent erosion, and maintain its ecological health. To that end, actions may include reducing erosion, establishing buffer strips, reducing mowing on the stream side of vegetation, and ensuring that any future development mitigates impact to the creek.

Area 8: Baugo Bay and Baugo Creek Watershed Corridor

Baugo Bay and the Baugo Creek Watershed Corridor are vital aquatic systems that play a key role in local water quality and biodiversity. Conservation strategies for this area should focus on protecting the watershed from pollution, restoring riparian buffers, and enhancing wetland areas to support diverse wildlife habitats. These efforts will also aim to improve public access for recreational activities such as kayaking, fishing, and hiking, fostering a greater connection between the community and its natural resources.

Figure 3.5: Environmental Stewardship Pillar Priority Areas





GOAL #1

IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF GROUNDWATER AND SURFACE WATER RESOURCES.

Safe and clean water sources are essential for human survival and the overall wellbeing of residents and ecosystems. Groundwater resources of the St. Joseph River Basin are among the most abundant in Indiana. To sustain this abundance and quality, it is crucial to manage these resources thoughtfully.

Groundwater and surface water are two different sources of water that exist in the natural environment. Groundwater exists below the earth's surface, in underground aquifers or porous rock formations, and comes from rain and snow. Surface water is visible on the earth's surface, such as in lakes, rivers, and streams. Groundwater is typically of higher quality than surface water because it is filtered through the earth's layers, removing impurities and contaminants, and is less exposed to human interaction. However, naturally occurring elements like arsenic and animal waste in rocks, soils, and waters can also contaminate groundwater quality. Human activities can impact groundwater quality. Aging lead infrastructure used to transfer water can leak into supply, agricultural runoff, industrial waste, and waste disposal sites can

also diminish water quality. This goal considers the balance between today's use of this vital resource with practices that are intended to preserve its quality and availability for future generations of St. Joseph County residents.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLANS

According to the St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC), "A watershed management plan is a strategy and work plan for achieving water resource goals for a geographically defined watershed." Plans not only include hydrologic delineation and land use information but are developed with multiple stakeholders and public engagement. For example, the Juday Creek watershed management plan was developed in coordination with the University of Notre Dame and the Indiana Division of Soil Conservation. The plan provides agreed upon best practices for the watershed attainment strategies for implementing the plan.

ES.1.A

Incorporate green infrastructure into zoning and subdivision ordinances as options to reduce the amount of pavement and required landscaping.

The use of green infrastructure helps to reduce the burden on stormwater systems, prevent flooding, and improve water quality by filtering pollutants before they reach waterways. Integrating these techniques as options to address County development standards allows the County to promote innovative and efficient practices in new developments.

ES.1.B

Encourage participation in the filter strip program and similar initiatives offered by partners.

Filter strips are areas of permanent vegetation used to intercept sediment, nutrients, and contaminants moving from contaminated areas to bodies of water. Additionally, they can provide valuable winter cover, nest sites, nectar and pollen for pollinating insects, and food for wildlife.



ES.1.C

Employ erosion control strategies in new and existing developments.

Erosion control mitigates runoff to groundwater associated with construction activities and other land development. The employment of specific erosion control strategies, including proper stormwater storage techniques, allows the county to identify the potential sources of runoff and then determine the best technique to address adverse impacts on the natural environment. This may involve working directly with developers to determine the best systems for employing erosion control on projects.

ES.1.D

Incorporate existing Watershed Management Plans into long-term planning efforts and collaborate with other jurisdictions to implement plans.

By embracing existing Watershed Management Plans, the communities of St. Joseph County promote a comprehensive approach and shared responsibility to realizing the goal of improving ground and surface water for residents and businesses. Since issues like these cross jurisdictional lines, future countywide and sub-area planning initiatives should consult these Watershed Management Plans in collaboration with other jurisdictional partners.



WHAT IS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE?

According to U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), "Green infrastructure is any practice that uses or replicates natural systems to achieve a desired outcome. This includes green roofs, bioswales and rain gardens. Green roofs replicate meadows to retain water and restore habitats on the top of buildings. Green infrastructure does not exclusively mean vegetation. Permeable surfaces are considered green infrastructure as well, because they handle rainfall the same way natural landscapes do. Green infrastructure looks to nature for advice, restoring and replicating ecological systems to create human benefits."

Image sourced from BREC.org



GOAL #2

ENSURE THAT THE PROTECTION, CONSERVATION, AND ENHANCEMENT OF ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES ARE CARRIED OUT IN ALL PLANNING AND ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATES.

Natural resources are vital to maintaining a healthy and sustainable environment. By striving to improve and protect ecological resources, through regulatory practices, St. Joseph County demonstrates its commitment to the health, safety, and welfare of its residents. This goal requires implementing zoning, subdivision, and other policy changes to encourage the type of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the environment of the future.

ES.2.A

Explore the feasibility of creating environmental overlay districts to coincide with the priority areas identified on the future land use map.

An environmental overlay may have additional conditions or standards about natural resource conservation and protection that supplement or supersede the requirements of the underlying zoning district. Community engagement with stakeholders and natural resource specialists will be critical in developing an overlay district that protects priority areas.

ES.2.B

Explore zoning incentives to protect environmentally sensitive areas.

Natural resource preservation is tied to the County's and to the region's environmental health. Zoning incentives are tools available to encourage landowners and developers to provide public environmental benefits. These could include tools such as transfer of development rights programs, establishment of green corridors, and bonuses for designated spaces for wildlife and native habitats. In this way, property owners and developers can participate in the conservation and protection efforts of environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife habitats, while still being permitted to develop their properties in appropriate and sustainable ways.

**ES.2.C****Update zoning and subdivision ordinances to incorporate open space in developments.**

Developments that incorporate open space into the overall design have many benefits. Open space can reduce impervious surface, stormwater pollutants, construction costs, and loss of natural areas. This recommendation is intended to be flexible and encourage creativity in open space design and use, creating a relationship between the built and natural environments. Updates to ordinance could include reducing the minimum number of off-street parking spaces to offset open space requirements in the zoning ordinance or updating the subdivision ordinance to encourage open space design that is multifunctional.

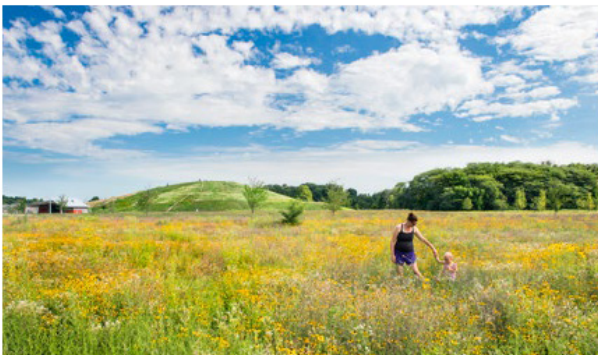
GOAL #3**EMPLOY ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT.**

As more development and urbanization occurs in St. Joseph County, the surrounding environment will experience a level of disturbance. If not correctly managed or accounted for, these disturbances will have long-term damaging impacts on the environment. The County can lead by example by being conscientious in development decisions. To achieve this goal, the County should build on past efforts to reduce energy consumption through audits, grants, and other mechanisms. Promoting development and practices that respects the natural environment also reduces costs for upkeep and lowers maintenance costs. Finally, Area Plan Commission staff can ensure that new development is reviewed through a conservation lens, utilizing more robust data for wetlands, floodplains, and environmentally sensitive areas.

ES.3.A**Explore options to include native plants in the landscapes of County owned properties to reduce maintenance costs.**

Native plants are indigenous to and thrive in their natural environment, thus requiring less care and maintenance. County-owned areas, such as parks, road medians, and green spaces, can feature plants native to the Michiana Region that support biodiversity, provide habitat for wildlife, conserve water, and improve soil health while reducing the need for irrigation, fertilizers, and pesticides.

Figure 3.6: Examples of Native Plantings and Green Infrastructure.



ES.3.B

Build on previous efforts to improve energy efficiencies and reduce costs for development.

Construction with energy efficiency in mind benefits the developer, the property owner, and the community through long-term cost savings and lower overall environmental impacts. Energy efficient developments have lower utility, water, and maintenance costs along with reduced reliance on fossil fuels and lower greenhouse gas emissions. The County can build off previous successes, including updates to county buildings, highway garages, water mains, and streetlights, to improve energy efficiencies and lower budgetary impacts.



ES.3.C

Use the most current data to locate probable wetlands during the development review process.

Wetlands are key in sustaining a water supply and protecting native wildlife. By continually updating and researching the locations of actual and likely wetlands in the County, APC staff and decision-makers can prioritize land conservation practices to protect these important habitats. Prioritization should consider both the economic and ecological values of a development site and its potential environmental impacts during the review process.

ES.3.D

Continue to use the best available floodplain data in the development review process.

This recommendation recognizes the importance of proactive measures to address potential flooding risks and protect valuable water resources at every step of the development review process. With current and up-to-date floodplain data, APC staff, decision-makers, and developers can assess the vulnerability of a site to flooding, identify high-risk areas, and develop effective strategies to mitigate flood impacts.

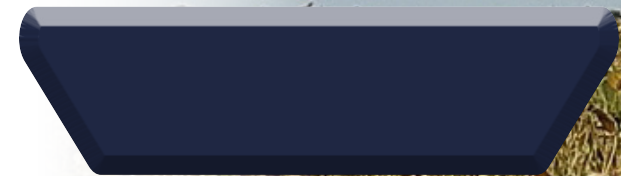
LEADING BY EXAMPLE: GUARANTEED ENERGY SAVINGS PROJECT

St. Joseph County was awarded by the “Most Outstanding Project Overall” award in 2019 by the Indiana Energy Services Commission. The \$10.1 million project guaranteed energy savings that resulted in a net zero budget impact. Building improvements were made to all 11 county buildings and seven highway garages, water conservation measures, and an energy leadership program. This highlights St. Joseph County’s ability to lead by example with program that have tangible results and create real efficiencies.



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FARMLAND PRESERVATION







St. Joseph County has a rich agricultural history. In the nearly two centuries since its founding, agriculture has remained paramount to St. Joseph County's way of life. Preserving productive farmland is critical to the future economy, growth management, and quality of life. Throughout the Midwest, agricultural land has been urbanized, with farmland rapidly converted to residential subdivision and other uses. One of the major impetuses of the plan was the long-term protection of prime farmlands.

The Farmland Preservation Pillar fulfills communal aspirations to maintain vibrant rural landscapes, for respite from urban areas, and to improve quality of life for rural communities. Additionally, it provides economic benefits by helping stem urban sprawl and promoting efficient use of land. Achieving the community vision requires coordination with the other seven pillars of this plan and intergovernmental collaboration for mutually beneficial outcomes.

KEY FINDINGS

St. Joseph County is almost entirely classified by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) as "prime farmland." The USDA defines prime farmland as "land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses. The land could be cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forestland, or other land but not urban built-up land or water." Since the County's 2002 Comprehensive Plan, three trends have continued to impact agriculture:

01. Declining economic viability, especially for smaller farms;
02. Inefficient development patterns (urban sprawl); and
03. An aging workforce.

For a complete analysis the Farmland Preservation Pillar's existing conditions, see the appendix.

PILLAR DEFINITION

Conserving land and rural landscape identified as best suited for producing crops, pasture, or range/forest for agricultural and educational use and enjoyment.



PRIORITY AREAS

Area 1: Kankakee River Basin & Crumstown

Area 1, Kankakee River Basin & Crumstown, contains the County's largest continuous area of **'Farmland of Statewide Importance.'** This area is critical for ensuring that farmland is not disrupted by urban sprawl. The following factors make Area 1 the largest priority area:

01. Sprawl of low-density residential uses along the Crumstown Highway, resulting in the conversion of prime farmland;
02. Large concentration of Prime Farmland of Statewide Importance as identified by the US and Indiana State Department of Agriculture; and
03. The Kankakee River- the second largest waterway in the County and a significant resource for nutrients and supporting surrounding agricultural operations.

In order to counter sprawl and conversion of prime agricultural land, the County should

WHAT IS FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE?

According to the USDA National Soil Survey Handbook, this is land designated by a state agency or agencies that is of statewide importance to agricultural production. This typically includes lands that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed accordingly.

begin implementing the Farmland Preservation goals and recommendations in this and other priority areas. The Farmland Preservation goals and recommendations identify strategies such as encouraging conservation easements, land banking, or zoning amendments.

Area 1 borders multiple townships-Olive, Greene, Warren, Liberty, and Lincoln-which presents an opportunity for the County to partner with various organizations and township trustees to preserve farmland.

Area 2: Yellow River & Tributaries

Area 2, Yellow River and its tributaries, is located east of Lakeville and US 31. They contain several acres of Prime Farmland of Statewide Importance. Wetlands are distributed throughout Area 2, supporting healthy soils and preventing erosion.

There are two transportation projects by the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) that may impact conservation of this prime farmland. These include:

- The 2045 MACOG Transportation Improvement Plan's planned connection of Pierce Rd/SR 4 from US 31 to Bremen Highway/SR 331; and
- The MACOG Active Transportation Plan's rail-to-trail conversion of the defunct railroad between North Liberty and Lakeville into a multi-use recreational trail.

These two initiatives stress the importance of balancing the plan's Pillars – in this case, the Transportation and the Quality of Life and Place Pillars with the Farmland

Preservation Pillar. The County must be proactive in preserving Area 2's farmland as these planned improvements may incentivize farmland conversion. To prevent development leapfrogging away from Lakeville, the County should implement the Farmland Preservation goals and recommendations through partnering with agricultural groups to establish conservation easements and other identified strategies.

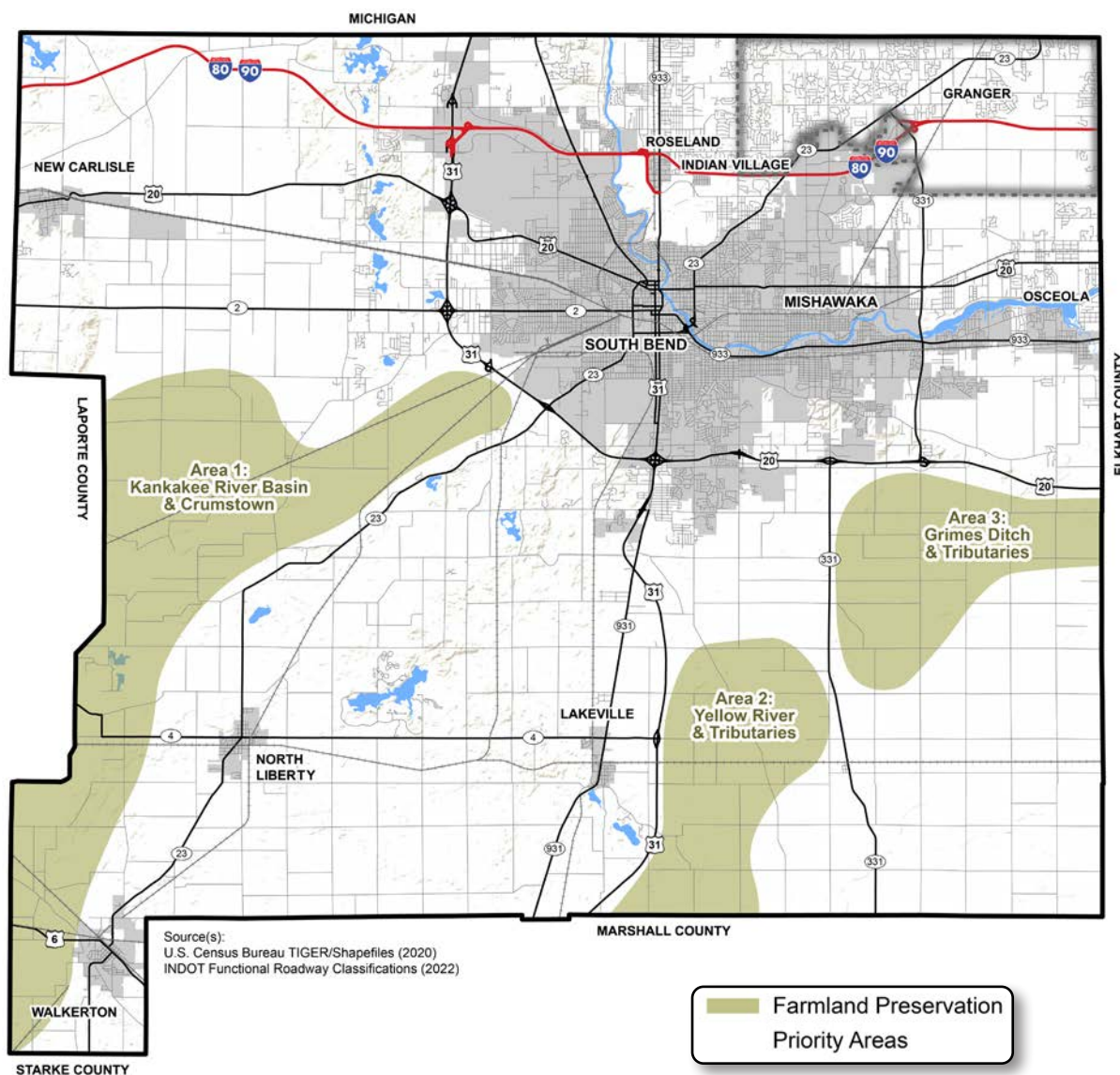
Area 3: Grimes Ditch & Tributaries

Area 3, Grimes Ditch and its tributaries, is located between Madison and Penn Township in east-central St. Joseph County. Grimes Ditch is a prominent natural feature for supporting long-term agricultural practices in the area. The County should prioritize Farmland Preservation this area to slow the recent development of low-density commercial uses south of the US 20 and Capital Avenue/SR 331 intersection.

Development should be limited south of US 20, except for improvements supported by the Capital Avenue Land Use Plan, as adopted in 2003 by the City of Mishawaka and the St. Joseph County Board of Commissioners. Implementation of the Capital Avenue Land Use Plan should be done within the framework of this comprehensive plan- aligning new developments with the Community Vision, future land use map, and the eight pillars. The County should collaborate with the City of Mishawaka to encourage compact and walkable developments to minimize farmland conversion in Madison and Penn Townships and support efficient use of land.



Figure 3.7: Farmland Preservation Pillar Priority Areas





GOAL #1

ENSURE LAND USE AND ZONING PRACTICES SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION OF AREAS DESIGNATED FOR AGRICULTURAL USE IN THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP.

Agricultural operations account for more than 70 percent of the County's land. Farmland preservation is important for:

01. Providing fresh produce to farmers' markets,
02. Maintaining county-wide drainage and ditch systems that alleviate flooding,
03. Providing jobs and supporting the local economy,
04. Supporting rural living, and
05. Directing development to build up existing urban areas.

Farmland preservation must be balanced with land development. This requires alignment of land use policies, zoning regulations, and community values when making development decisions. The future land use map identifies areas for farmland preservation while recommending other areas for development.

The rate at which farmland is being converted to non-agricultural use in recent decades has increased at a rapid pace. The encroachment of

non-agricultural uses into rural areas decreases both the viability of long-term farming and the availability of open space, both of which are essential in preserving St. Joseph County's rural character and agricultural heritage.

FP.1.A

Preserve highly productive agricultural areas identified on the future land use map and Farmland Preservation priority areas map.

The future land use map identifies two agricultural designations—General Agriculture and Intensive Agriculture. The Farmland Preservation Priority Areas Map identifies three priority areas for preserving Prime Farmland of Statewide Importance. These priority areas should be considered when making land use decisions, especially decisions that may affect areas of productive agriculture.

FP.1.B

Maintain the existing zoning standard that permits residential housing at one dwelling unit per 20 acres.

This standard applies to a minimum lot area for a buildable lot in the current A: Agricultural District. This standard has been in effect for more than 30 years and has been successful in preserving agricultural land. This standard should apply to the new agricultural districts of FP.1.C.

**FP.1.C**

Develop two agricultural zoning districts, one focused on Intensive Agriculture uses and one focused on General Agriculture uses.

The creation of two agricultural districts will allow for effective management of non-agriculture uses within agricultural areas and allow the County to apply land use regulations specific to differing rural contexts. The Intensive Agriculture district strictly limits non-agricultural uses, while the General Agriculture district would allow some non-agricultural uses as special exceptions.

FP.1.D

Create a special exception process for residential dwelling units in agricultural districts.

The existing A: Agricultural District covers 73.11% of the Unincorporated County. Single-family dwellings are currently permitted by right in the A: Agricultural District, which has allowed residential uses to be situated on a site without additional consideration. An additional consideration should be allowing residential uses by special exception, which would provide for additional review of the placement of new residential uses to maximum farmland preservation.

FP.1.E

Encourage natural transitions between farmland and other non-agricultural uses through development standards.

Conflicts between agriculture and other land uses can be mitigated through the implementation of development standards and other guidelines in the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. Regulations should support natural and appropriate transitions through larger setbacks, lot sizes, and the establishment of natural areas, such as buffer strips or zones and specialized corridors.

WHAT ARE BUFFER STRIPS?

A vegetative buffer strip in an uncultivated or non-crop portion of land, usually located on the edges of farms, that acts as a barrier between the cropped land and other features. Often, buffer strips are implemented to aid in erosion control or protect sensitive environmental features. From a land use perspective, adding buffer strips or buffer zones can aid in providing a barrier between less compatible uses.



GOAL #2

UTILIZE EXISTING AND NEW TOOLS TO SUPPORT AGRICULTURE.

Agriculture plays a crucial role in the local economy, contributing to food production, employment opportunities, and economic growth. The County can ensure the long-term preservation of agricultural land by promoting existing tools that support farmers and the preservation of agricultural lands.

Additionally, the County and its partners should explore opportunities that support farmers in navigating emerging trends, such as agritourism. This approach diversifies farmers' income opportunities and supports the economic viability of farming while also promoting engagement with agriculture and the connection between consumers and locally-grown products.

FP.2.A

Utilize voluntary programs, such as conservation easements or participation in agricultural land trusts, to encourage preservation of farmland.

Landowners may voluntarily enter into conservation easements, sell, or donate their land to a land bank or land trust to further protect sensitive areas and ensure land remains available for agriculture.

FP.2.B

Encourage participation in programs that reduce financial burdens on farmers and agricultural land.

The County and its partners should promote programs available through the USDA's Department of Agriculture, State of Indiana, and others that provide financial assistance to farmers in the form of loans, grants, and disaster support, as well as explore ways to reduce tax burdens on agricultural lands.

FP.2.C

Expand and promote agritourism.

Agritourism is economic diversification for farmers and others in the agricultural profession, providing the opportunity to earn additional revenue while offering an interesting and engaging service to the experiential tourist market. Agritourism attractions allow members of the general public to view or enjoy rural life for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes.

AGRITOURISM IN INDIANA

According to the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, there are nearly 300 agritourism destinations in Indiana, ranging from farm markets, farm tours, U-Picks, flower farms, Christmas tree farms, wineries, breweries, and others that bring the general public to agricultural activities. St. Joseph County offers many unique agritourism opportunities. Thistleberry Farm, southwest of South Bend, is a favorite fall destination with a corn maze, pumpkin patch, and more.



GOAL #3

CONNECT FARMERS TO EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE THROUGH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS.

Connecting farmers with educational and training opportunities empowers them and supports the long-term viability of farms. These opportunities can offer a wide range of topics related to modern farming. By connecting farmers and other producers to these resources, the County supports their ability to make informed and independent decisions that would lead to improved agricultural productivity.

FP.3.A

Support organizations that promote farming, including Purdue Extension 4-H, FFA, and the Indiana Farm Bureau.

Effective partnerships create mutually-beneficial outcomes for the County and its partners. Farming organizations provide valuable educational resources, technical assistance, and advocacy. County partnerships with these organizations ensures access to resources, expert information, training, and networking to improve agricultural operations.

FP.3.B

Refer property owners to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and the County Health Department's Well Water Resources Advisory Board for technical assistance.

Connecting property owners with specialized agencies that have local knowledge provides valuable resources for land management practices. The NRCS and SWCD have extensive knowledge in soil health, water management, and resource protection. They work with landowners to develop Conservation and Resource Management Plans that lead to improved long-term outcomes.



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GOVERNMENT AND POLICY







Cooperation among all governmental entities is essential for the successful implementation of Plan SJC. Transparency and data-sharing with the public are also critical components of effective government and policy. When the government operates transparently, it allows for public input and engagement opportunities, helps build trust and confidence in the planning process, fosters greater government accountability, and encourages data-driven decision-making. This helps ensure that future development is designed openly and collaboratively.

KEY FINDINGS

- Strategic growth and logical transition between densities and uses were the focal points in almost every public engagement, focus group discussions, and the Task Force meetings.
- Many residents desired a greater level of collaboration between jurisdictions in the County, as well as other jurisdictions in Michigan and regional planning authorities such as the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG).

For a complete analysis of existing conditions that are relevant to this pillar, see Appendix F: Government & Policy.

PILLAR DEFINITION

The process of establishing, administering, and enforcing law, regulation, procedure, and incentive by staff and officials.

It involves coordination among all levels of leadership and with adjacent towns, cities, counties, and state agencies, and is how the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan will be implemented.



GOAL #1

ENSURE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IS WELL-PLANNED, CONNECTED, FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE, AND COMPATIBLE WITH THE SURROUNDING LAND USE CHARACTER.

The purpose and intent of this goal is to ensure that new development in St. Joseph County occurs harmoniously and avoids adverse impacts on neighboring properties. Development that respects and aligns with the existing environmental and land use character of surrounding areas promotes a sense of continuity and visual appeal. Development considerations can include land use compatibility, building height and setbacks, landscaping, pedestrian and vehicular access, parking, and overall site design and layout.

Plan SJC should be the primary resource for all new development initiatives in the County and consulted throughout the development process. Area Plan Commission staff and decision-makers are the safeguards of the plan's vision, goals, and recommendations; it is their responsibility to oversee the translation of the plan into action. Successful implementation ensures consistency and informed decision-making. Future growth and development should occur thoughtfully and inclusively with new projects contributing to the 20-year vision.

GP.1.A

Review the future land use maps against the existing zoning map to ensure consistency, and that land is available for all uses identified in the plan.

Zoning is a critical mechanism to establish appropriate land use patterns and development character to achieve the overarching goal. The County should first focus efforts on the established priority areas for rezonings, as needed. All rezone discussions should involve affected property owners and partner organizations to assure transparency and justification for government actions.

**GP.1.B**

Encourage development standards that better facilitate compatible infill development and redevelopment in priority areas and along key corridors.

Clear and supportive development standards allow Area Plan Commission staff to manage infill and redevelopment in these preferred targeted areas and corridors, while ensuring compatibility with existing surroundings.

GP.1.C

Develop criteria to determine when traffic and water impact studies are needed for industrial and commercial use changes.

The Area Plan Commission needs a set of articulated conditions stating when a new development proposal warrants additional study on its effects on the environment, infrastructure, and services. These specified conditions or criteria will assist in decision-making, particularly with industrial and commercial proposals as they are typically more demanding on resources.

GP.1.D

Discourage leapfrog development throughout St. Joseph County to keep growth contiguous and accessible to existing infrastructure.

Leapfrog development creates a scattered and detached development pattern. It creates inefficiencies, strains services, and should be prevented. Contiguous development maximizes available resources, minimizes the need for costly infrastructure extensions, and enhances the viability of development. By concentrating growth in areas already serviced by infrastructure such as roads, utilities, and public services, the County can better manage its investment, improve connectivity between and among uses, and maintain an organized, functional built environment.

GP.1.E

Consider a concurrency growth ordinance, also known as an “adequate public facilities ordinance,” that balances the availability of public facilities and the capabilities of small developers.

A concurrency growth ordinance typically requires public infrastructure, such as roads, schools, parks, water supply, and wastewater systems, to be in place before new development can proceed. The ordinance considers the challenges faced by small developers by providing flexibility and options that meet their capabilities while still fulfilling the public infrastructure needs and requirements.



GOAL #2

CONTINUE TO COMMUNICATE WITH ADJACENT JURISDICTIONS, AND FEDERAL, STATE, AND REGIONAL AGENCIES, TO COORDINATE PLANNING EFFORTS AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

Plan SJC's success is dependent upon the County's ability to work collaboratively with all levels of government. Productive cooperation among these entities can expedite the implementation, enforcement, and monitoring of the plan's goals and recommendations. Cooperation and coordination are particularly important in addressing the shared consequences of development, such as transportation needs, infrastructure demands, and environmental impacts. By working with unincorporated and incorporated jurisdictions, and neighboring counties, St. Joseph County can align its development plans with the broader regional context, avoiding haphazard growth patterns while achieving an organized approach to land use.

GP.2.A

Coordinate capital facility plans with municipalities, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), and MACOG to better fund road and sidewalk improvements.

Organized and coordinated capital facility planning allows for the deliberate use of funds and other resources. With intergovernmental coordination, infrastructure improvement projects are prioritized based on need and adherence to regional goals. It enables better preparation and execution of projects, minimizes duplication of efforts, and maximizes the return on investment.

GP.2.B

Establish designated growth areas with the input and assistance of cities and towns.

By creating mutually agreed-upon growth areas for St. Joseph County, all parties can better direct countywide growth and development, protect and conserve natural resources and agricultural lands, and target infrastructure investments. This helps to address urban sprawl more effectively, encourages investment within existing developed areas, reduces septic dependency, and makes better use of transportation and utility networks.



GP.2.C

Collaborate with incorporated cities and towns to create suitable development areas for development adjacent to existing built-out areas, incorporated areas, and within priority areas defined by this comprehensive plan.

New development in St. Joseph County should be contiguous and adjacent to existing development. All affected communities, both incorporated and unincorporated jurisdictions, should be consulted and involved in the proactive planning process when responding to or initiating development proposals.

GP.2.D

Continue to prepare the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan to address the impacts from environmental and natural disasters.

A Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) provides a single, comprehensive framework for the management of emergency and disaster events within a given jurisdiction. The CEMP outlines the structure and mechanisms for coordinating local preparedness and response activities. It also acts as a general reference point for local agencies to develop contingencies to meet the needs for communities during emergency or disaster events. By working together and sharing resources to create an Emergency Management Plan, the governments and non-profit organizations within St. Joseph County can better serve their constituents through preparation, response approach, and resiliency.



GOAL #3

UTILIZE A VARIETY OF TOOLS AND METHODS TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC.

Transparency and data-sharing with residents and stakeholders are critical to effective governance and policy development. When government decisions are made with public input and consideration, residents are generally more supportive of resolutions regarding projects, investments, policies, and other publicly funded interventions. The result is accountability, increased trust between citizens and their government, and confidence in County leaders, staff, and their decision-making abilities.

GP.3.A

Create a service that summarizes public hearings and new project proposals.

St. Joseph County should provide a summary of development projects, public hearings, and new projects to residents. This would keep residents updated on important events and allow them to actively engage in the planning process.

GP.3.B

Develop a live link map illustrating ongoing public land use petitions, transportation projects, permit numbers, and violations.

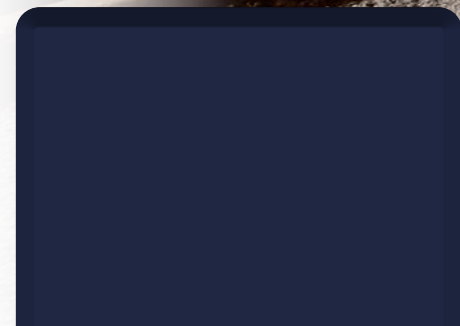
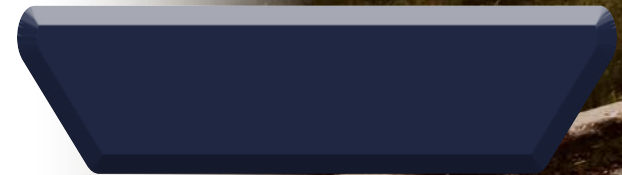
Providing a live-link map that allows access to status updates and information about various countywide development projects and petitions would be an asset for residents and stakeholders. This technology facilitates information sharing and communication, fosters greater transparency and accountability, and encourages public participation.

GP.3.C

Encourage land use petitioners to inform and engage nearby neighbors before filing a petition.

Petitions that propose a land use change to a property are more likely to impact adjacent and surrounding properties than the existing use, especially if the change is remarkable. While the County should encourage a healthy mix of land uses, it should also encourage petitioners to solicit and consider feedback from surrounding property owners before presenting the petition to the Area Plan Commission or other governing bodies. This proactive approach can reduce the time and costs associated with the administrative process and will likely reduce unforeseen opposition during public hearings.

TRANSPORTATION







The connectivity of a transportation network and its accessibility to residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and recreational facilities greatly impacts the quality of life for both residents and visitors. Providing a variety of routes for different modes of transportation can enhance the network, making it more efficient. Residents and visitors should be able to access their destinations safely and conveniently via all modes of transportation.

Development has a significant impact on the transportation system; more people, jobs, and economic success can increase traffic volumes and growth. Because of this, transportation and land use are highly intertwined. Geographically, St. Joseph County falls at a crossroads providing excellent accessibility to larger regional cities, including Chicago, Indianapolis, Detroit, Toledo, and Fort Wayne. All of these locations can be traveled to within 3 hours via interstates and highways such as I-80/I-90, US 31, and US 30. The County's location provides residents with convenient routes for longer travel while benefiting manufacturers and warehouses wanting to transport goods to other parts of the country.

KEY FINDINGS

This section compiles key findings of the existing conditions related to the Transportation Pillar. For a complete inventory of existing conditions, see Appendix I: Transportation.

01. Private vehicles are the most used mode of transportation but efforts to diversify the network are widely supported.
02. MACOG is a key partner in the development of plans to address issues related to congestion, level of service, active transportation, and funding through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
03. The Connect Transit Plan co-sponsored by MACOG and Transpo looks to develop longer-term plans for transit improvement and possible expansion.
04. South Bend International Airport, the second busiest airport in Indiana, provides air passenger service and drives cargo distribution and logistics expansions.

PILLAR DEFINITION

The way of moving of people or goods from one place to another by air, rail, vehicle, water vessel, foot, and bicycle.

05. Active transportation improvements are strongly desired in the community, especially expanded bike and pedestrian infrastructure.
06. IN/MI River Valley Trail is a regionally significant trail with connections to Elkhart County and Southwest Michigan.



PRIORITY AREAS

Area 1: South Bend International Airport to New Carlisle

Area 1 includes US 20, which connects South Bend to the Town of New Carlisle, becoming Michigan Street as it enters the town limits. US 20 is under the Indiana Department of Transportation's jurisdiction. To the extent that it can, the County should work collaboratively with INDOT to discourage truck traffic along this route.

Area 2: State Road 2 Corridor

State Road (SR) 2 is a currently a divided highway that handles large amounts of truck traffic, which is expected to grow with the buildout of the Indiana Enterprise Center (IEC). The County should work collaboratively with INDOT to ensure western segments of SR 2 can accommodate the growth expected from the IEC. Safety and mobility improvements, especially in the eastern segments, are encouraged near the developed commercial and residential areas near US 31.

Area 3: Notre Dame and SR 933

This priority area has a high number of crashes, both vehicular and non-vehicular, in the unincorporated County. Additionally, SR 933 is an existing multi-modal corridor with the LaSalle Trail, which connects the County with neighboring communities in Michigan, and bus service provided by Transpo. For this priority area, the County should focus investments in better connecting surrounding areas to the LaSalle Trail and improving safety, especially at intersections. There are also opportunities

to make SR 933 a gateway for the County, as well as denser, transit-oriented development as transportation improvements are completed.

Area 4: State Road 23 around Granger

State Road 23 (SR 23) is an important commuter corridor that has heavy traffic volumes during peak commuting hours. There are multiple trails and pathways planned for this area, including on Adams Road, Anderson Road, and Brick Road. The County should focus on creating a multi-modal, complete street corridor on SR 23 through the Granger area to Notre Dame University. This corridor will provide facilities for highly desired alternative forms of transportation, such as biking, that connect residences to shops, jobs, and intersecting streets along SR 23.

Area 5: Capital Avenue

As indicated in the Capital Avenue Land Use Plan, published jointly by the City of Mishawaka and St. Joseph County, Capital Avenue (also known as SR 331) has great potential for more office, commercial, and industrial development if utilities become available. The County should continue to invest in multi-modal facilities along the corridor which are comfortable, safe, provide accessible routes to adjacent developments.

Area 6: US 20 Business Corridor

US 20 Business Corridor, or McKinley Hwy, is an important east/west route connecting the east side of Mishawaka and the west side of Mishawaka. McKinley Hwy, which is a mixed-use corridor featuring residential, commercial, and industrial uses, has seen redevelopment

and reinvestment over the last several years, furthering its significance in the local transportation network.

Area 7: Lakeville to South Bend

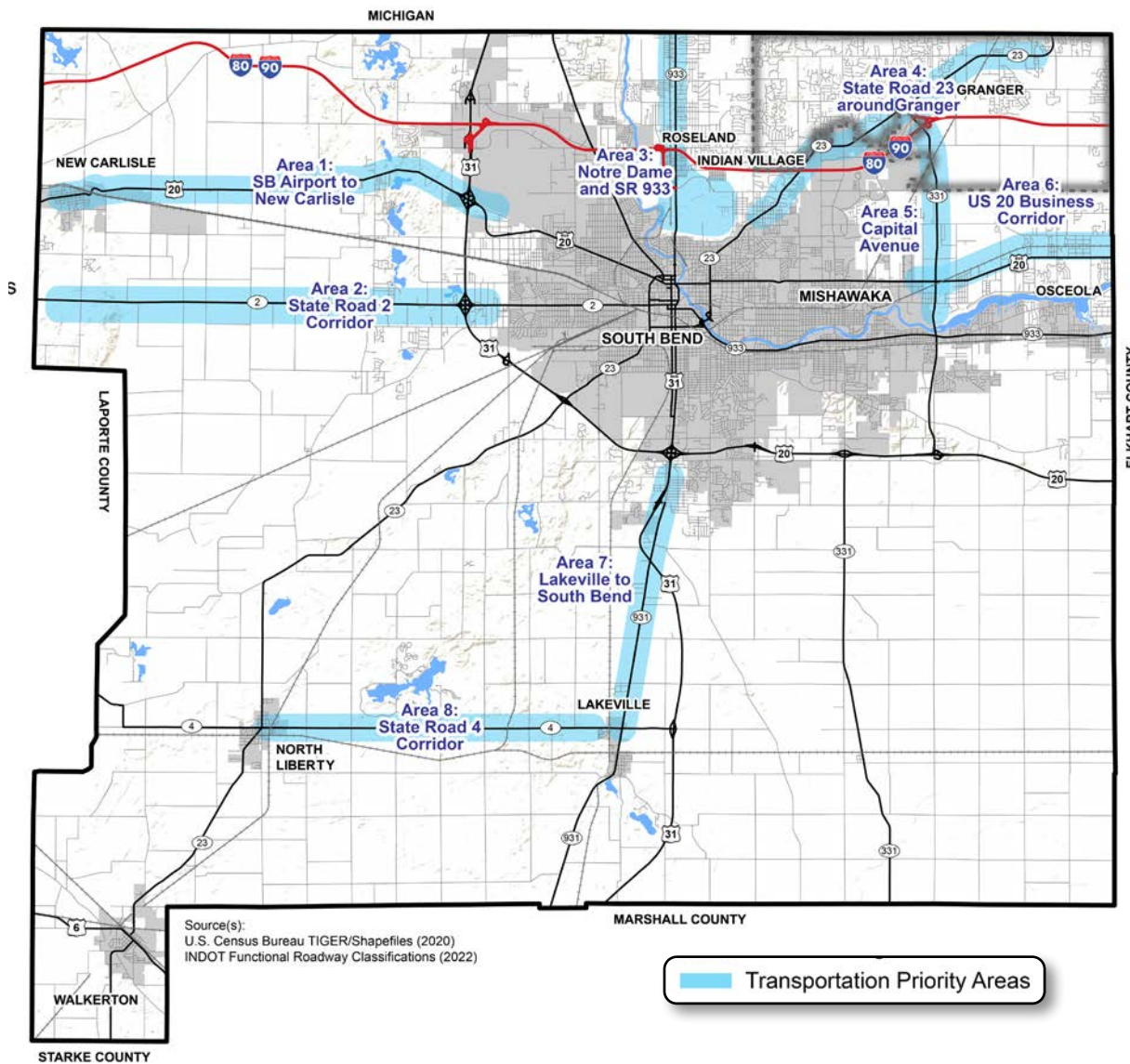
SR 931 is a major north-south, local corridor connecting Lakeville residents to shops and jobs in the urban core of the County, including South Bend and Mishawaka. A multi-use path of regional importance is planned for SR 931 by MACOG. These transportation improvements should build into the planned improvements for SR 4 between North Liberty, Potato Creek State Park, and Lakeville.

Area 8: State Road 4 Corridor

SR 4 connects residents of North Liberty and Lakeville to each town's economic centers and Potato Creek State Park. These improvements should connect seamlessly with planned improvements for SR 931 heading north into South Bend.



Figure 3.8: Transportation Pillar Priority Areas





GOAL #1

ALIGN TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS AND RESOURCES WITH THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND PRIORITY AREAS.

Transportation influences economic success and the viability of a community. Goods and people should travel to and through the County efficiently to support the local and regional economies, while contributing to a high quality of life for residents. Sufficient and effective transportation infrastructure also helps to attract and retain businesses, which in turn, supports the tax base. Transportation projects should be consistent with other comprehensive plan pillars and other identified priorities, such as protecting natural resources and improving the quality of life for residents.

This goal recognizes the interconnectedness between transportation infrastructure and land use planning. By aligning transportation investments with the desired development patterns, the County can promote efficient land use, reduce sprawl, and support sustainable growth. To achieve this goal, transportation infrastructure investments should be strategically targeted towards priority areas identified for the plan's pillars to promote economic vitality, enhance accessibility, and create vibrant and connected communities.

Furthermore, aligning transportation infrastructure investments with the county's development pattern helps ensure that transportation facilities are adequately sized, designed, and located to support anticipated growth and development. It involves conducting thorough assessments of current and future transportation needs, considering factors such as population growth, employment centers, and projected land use changes.

T.1.A

Work with developers to target private investment in areas that have infrastructure capacity for additional development.

This approach ensures that infrastructure capacities align with the demands generated by new projects. This can involve constructing or upgrading roads, utilities, sidewalks, and other essential components to support the development's functionality and mitigate potential impacts on the surrounding community. By collaborating with developers, the County can strategically guide private investment toward areas that are well-equipped to handle new developments, reducing the strain on existing infrastructure.

**T.1.B**

Ensure public investment is matched with private investment in the identified priority areas and/or areas with available infrastructure capacity.

Public investments matched with private investments allows the county to foster a fiscally balanced and strategic development approach that can be sustained for continued improvement of and growth in priority areas and areas with available infrastructure capacity. This approach maximizes the impact of infrastructure investments that can stimulate economic growth, leverage private sector contributions, and ensure that investments are strategically targeted in areas where they can have the most impact economic development and quality of life for residents.

T.1.C

Identify priority transportation corridors where new investment or reinvestment is needed.

By identifying priority transportation corridors, the county can strategically invest its limited funds in transportation projects that will have the highest return on investment. Since growth and development should be expected in these corridors, the county can also proactively ensure that new residents have a high-quality transportation network with adequate spaces for safe, secure, and accessible facilities for all users while improving the lives of existing residents.

T.1.D

Coordinate traffic safety enhancements in priority areas with the Indiana Departments of Transportation (INDOT), Natural Resources (IDNR), and railroad companies.

As areas within St. Joseph County experience growth and development, it becomes crucial to address the associated increase in traffic volumes and the potential safety concerns for both vehicular and nonvehicular users. By focusing on priority growth areas, where new developments and population growth are anticipated, St. Joseph County can proactively implement measures to prevent traffic accidents and provide a safer transportation network for all users.



GOAL #2

PROMOTE CONNECTIVITY IN COUNTY ORDINANCES AND STANDARDS.

Throughout the planning process for Plan SJC, stakeholders showed support for more connectivity in the county, especially through alternate and active modes of transportation. Investments and policies regarding connectivity include proactively conversing and/or securing land to fill in gaps in the transportation network, especially between residential subdivisions, commercial areas, and employment centers. This can also include updates to the county's subdivision ordinance, requiring or encouraging developers to allocate a small portion of developments for interconnected trails and sidewalks to facilitate alternate and safer walking and biking routes. Improvements to the transportation network, such as new roadway construction or reconstruction, should consider improvements different modes of transportation, including walking, biking, and public transit. The general objective of this goal is to provide residents with viable alternative transportation options that are convenient and efficient, while still maintaining the ease of vehicular access.

T.2.A

Require dedication of right-of-way along identified routes for multi-use paths and non-motorized users.

By dedicating and maintaining rights-of-way for active transportation, the County can proactively plan for and accommodate the expansion of trails, while ensuring safety for all road users and connectivity between major destinations. This helps the County avoid barriers that may arise as growth and development occurs.

T.2.B

Review proposed projects to ensure infrastructure accommodates multiple modes of transportation, including vehicles, buses, trucks, emergency vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians, where feasible.

Proposed projects should ensure that any changes to the transportation network accommodate multiple modes of transportation where possible. By considering the needs of all modes of transportation, the County can create a multimodal, safe, and efficient transportation network that ensures mobility for people across all incomes and abilities.



GOAL #3

PLAN FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION.

Among County stakeholders, there is steadfast support for active transportation and transit planning to connect people and places throughout the county and region. It is widely recognized that active transportation, by way of walking, biking, or rolling, not only provides the opportunity for individuals to travel to/from destinations, but also promotes healthy lifestyle choices, creates quality of place, and supports placemaking efforts.

In addition to active transportation, the integration of recreation facilities within priority transportation corridors contributes to enhancing community wellbeing. By incorporating recreational amenities such as parks, green spaces, and walking or cycling trails, these corridors become more than just transportation routes. They become spaces that promote physical activity, social interaction, and relaxation. This approach recognizes that transportation corridors can serve as community assets, providing opportunities for leisure, recreation, and overall quality of life improvement for residents.

T.3.A

Complete a countywide bike and pedestrian plan.

St. Joseph County is a growing and active community dedicated to improving the quality of life for residents by providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities which are convenient, comfortable, and safe. Plan SJC outlines several goals for increased connectivity within the County.

T.3.B

Explore regional trail connections using MACOG's Active Transportation Plan.

MACOG's Active Transportation Plan serves as a valuable resource for identifying and prioritizing trail connections within the region. By leveraging the insights and recommendations of this plan, the County can identify missing trail links and collaborate on funding and financing transportation improvements that extend beyond individual jurisdictions, strengthening regional and intergovernmental collaboration for the betterment of all residents.

T.3.C

Identify opportunities to connect county and regional destinations through trails.

The focus of this recommendation is to create a network of interconnected trails that provides convenient and safe pathways for pedestrians and cyclists. Connecting major destinations through trails not only facilitates recreational activities and tourism but also improves connectivity, promotes physical fitness, and enhances the overall quality of life for residents.

T.3.D

Work with partners to identify gaps in bike and pedestrian connections.

By working with more experienced organizations, governments, and other partners, the County can tap into their expertise and knowledge. These partnerships would allow for a more comprehensive and community-driven approach to improving connectivity, especially within priority areas.



T.3.E

Accommodate all ages and abilities in transportation improvements.

By adopting this approach, the County can ensure that facilities are accessible to everyone, regardless of physical limitations or age.

GOAL #4

IDENTIFY AND EXPLORE FUNDING SOURCES TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE.

One of the County's responsibilities is ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent in a fiscally responsible manner. There are opportunities to seek transportation funding from the State Government, Federal Government, and private grant providers. The County should utilize outside funding opportunities for new transportation projects while also balancing the maintenance needs of existing infrastructure.

BICYCLE ADVOCACY GROUPS

There are a number of bicycle advocacy groups in the Michiana Area. The Bike Michiana Coalition works to create healthy connected communities in Michiana by encouraging and promoting safe cycling for recreation and transportation. The Friends of Granger Paths partners with community residents, businesses and government agencies to advocate for the development of a community-wide multi-use paths and educates the public about health, community building, and environmental benefits of these amenities. Partnerships with partners such as these are vital in advancing active transportation goals in St. Joseph County.

T.4.A

Continue to work with MACOG to leverage state and federal funding for future road extensions and new construction projects.

By consistently engaging with MACOG, both the County and MACOG can tap into an expanded availability of funding at the state and federal levels.

T.4.B

Identify projects with the Redevelopment Commission that could be supported by Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds.

This approach encourages the Redevelopment Commission to allocate funds toward projects that maximize community benefits of TIF funding, extend the lifespan of public improvements, and continue to invest in essential infrastructure projects that contribute to the overall quality of life and place of the community.

**T.4.C**

Investigate funding opportunities to establish a dedicated fund for the repair, maintenance, and rebuilding of infrastructure.

Operating costs, or in other words maintenance, may be the most difficult part of ensuring a high level of service and quality of a community's infrastructure. Hence, establishing a dedicated fund for ongoing infrastructure maintenance, with a particular focus on active transportation facilities, can ensure a reliable and consistent source of financial support for providing essential services and facilities for new and current residents and businesses.

T.4.D

Identify strategies to fund bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Trail maintenance is an essential part of ensuring active transportation networks are a viable mobility option. No matter what strategies are identified, they should all ensure the longevity, safety, and connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian projects.

GOAL #5

**COORDINATE
TRANSPORTATION
INVESTMENTS WITH
PARTNERS.**

St. Joseph County benefits from its numerous road, rail, air, and path connections. INDOT, NICTD, Amtrak, Transpo, and South Bend International Airport are some of the major transportation providers that can continue to be essential partners in this sector. With this comes the need to coordinate with other organizations to achieve the goals of this comprehensive plan. The County should work with the appropriate organizations identified in the following recommendations to create a County that its residents can get to, from, and within easily by whatever means they chose. Many of these organizations have their own plans they are working to achieve, and the County can leverage common goals to create partnerships and potentially ease cost burdens.

T.5.A

Continue the relationship with the County's municipalities to improve connectivity, safety, and maintenance related to transportation infrastructure.

Transportation networks extend beyond municipal limits, necessitating collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions to coordinate and provide a consistent, high-quality, and seamless mobility to all users.

T.5.B

Continue to review the MACOG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to identify projects.

The TIP serves as a comprehensive framework for prioritizing transportation projects in the four-county region of St. Joseph, Elkhart, Marshall, and Kosciusko Counties. By reviewing the TIP regularly, the County can leverage proposed road projects that are in line with priority areas, the future land use map, and other policy goals and recommendations.



T.5.C

Implement the recommendations of the County Connections Plan to better integrate the transportation networks of St. Joseph County and Elkhart County.

The County Connections Plan provides a strategic framework for improving transportation connectivity and promoting regional integration. By building onto aligning efforts and resources with the County Connections Plan, St. Joseph County and Elkhart County can forge stronger connections, promote collaboration, and enhance the mobility and accessibility options for their communities.

T.5.D

Continue to support multi-modal connections to the South Bend Airport.

South Bend International Airport (SBN) is a major driver of economic development in the region. The airport will continue to grow and attract new travelers as new flights are added, as identified in its master plan. As the terminus of the South Shore Line and connection to Amtrak via Transpo Bus, SBN is a critical multimodal hub connecting the South Bend/St. Joseph County region to Chicago, the nation's third largest city, and Chicagoland.

T.5.F

Assess public transportation options within the County to adequately provide service to residents.

By working with transit providers to assess public transportation options, the County can better address the transportation needs of residents in unincorporated areas without access or desire to own a car.

T.5.E

Work with Amtrak, the City of South Bend, and other jurisdictions to explore options for a new station.

Locating and establishing a new Amtrak station offers various advantages, including improved regional connectivity, enhanced transportation options for residents and visitors, and potential economic growth through increased tourism and business opportunities.



GOAL #6

UTILIZE EXISTING AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROJECTS.

As new technologies are developed, they should be evaluated and incorporated into the county transportation network. Policies and processes should include review and evaluation to make transportation decisions that are based on the technology's ability to increase service, efficiency, and/or cost savings.

Integrating emerging transportation technologies involves identifying and implementing solutions such as electric and autonomous vehicles, smart traffic management systems, and mobility-as-a-service platforms. Smart traffic management systems utilize real-time data and analytics to optimize traffic operations and improve overall efficiency. Mobility-as-a-service platforms integrate various transportation options into a single platform, offering users seamless and convenient access to different modes of transportation.

T.6.A

Use GIS and community-driven data to map transportation infrastructure, analyze the motorized and non-motorized transportation systems, identify gaps, inventory conditions, and report safety issues.

Use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and community-driven data to map and analyze the existing transportation system, including sidewalks, roads, paths, and trails. This data-driven approach enables the County to more accurately assess transportation networks, providing valuable insights into connectivity (e.g., sidewalk gaps) and accessibility (e.g. missing ramps), and safety (e.g. potholes).

T.6.B

Continue to work on a signal modernization plan, as resources allow.

A signal modernization plan involves upgrading traffic signal systems with advanced technologies, such as smart sensors, real-time data analysis, and adaptive signal controls. These innovations can detect the presence of traffic, including pedestrians and bicyclists, more accurately optimize traffic efficiency, safety, and overall experience of the transportation network.

T.6.C

Consider new partnership opportunities for shared mobility services.

Shared mobility devices, such as bikeshare programs, offer easy and flexible means of transportation, especially offering essential last mile connections from and to other transportation modes. These services can provide some of the necessary infrastructure to help achieve the other goals and recommendations outlined in this section.



T.6.D

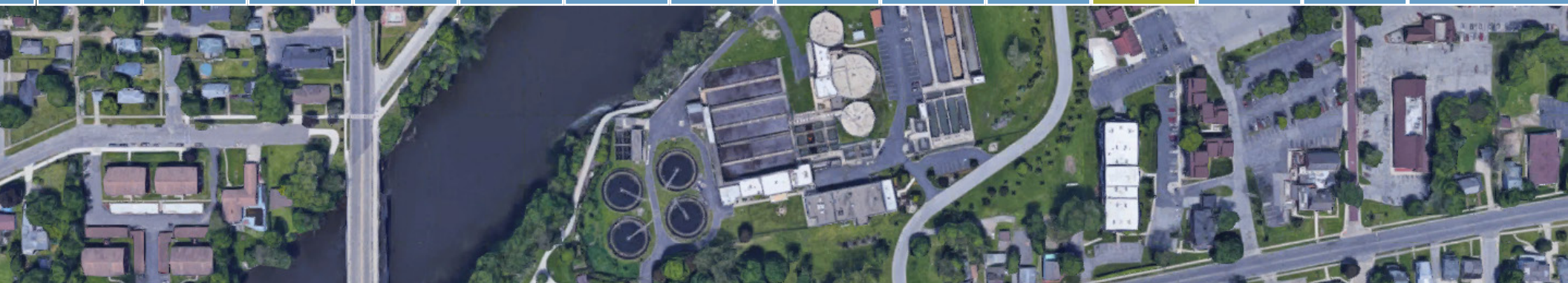
Consider the inclusion of charging stations for electric bikes and vehicles as part of future development projects.

Electric bikes and vehicles are popular alternatives to car trips in communities with supportive infrastructure. Communities can support the growing adoption of electric mobility options and encourage multimodal transportation practices. Providing charging stations in future development projects and at significant destinations throughout the county will contribute to a well-connected and sufficient charging network.

UTILITIES







Existing and planned public and private utility systems are crucial in shaping land use decisions within St. Joseph County. Utilities significantly influence development by affecting the type, density, and location of property construction.

KEY FINDINGS

This section outlines key findings related to the county's existing utility conditions, with a detailed analysis in the appendix.

- Municipal utilities can effectively manage development along the county's periphery while mitigating urban sprawl.
- Access to municipal or managed sanitary sewer systems significantly impacts future development in terms of size, density, type, and location.
- Failing septic systems were a recurring concern, highlighting significant discomfort about their impact on the county's housing stock, livability, and affordability.

- Effective solutions to wastewater management beyond existing municipal service areas are critical for the county's environmental and economic sustainability.
- Expanding and strengthening the communications network is vital for economic development, improving quality of life, opportunities for new jobs, industries, and services for residents.
- Promoting renewable energy sources presents opportunities for consumer choice, economic growth, and compatibility with agricultural land use and applicable zoning districts.

PILLAR DEFINITION

The systems and physical structures, operated by a government or utility company, that manage the community's basic functions, such as electric, gas, water, sanitary sewer, septic systems, stormwater, communications, and streets and roads.



GOAL #1

COLLECT AND ANALYZE INFORMATION TO SUPPORT DATA-DRIVEN DECISION- MAKING FOR DEVELOPMENT PETITIONS.

To support St. Joseph County government's decision-making process, gathering and sharing current, accurate information with elected officials, boards, commissions, and staff is crucial. Data collection and management tools improve as technology advances, offering valuable insights for identifying priority projects and service and infrastructure gaps. Quantitative data, such as permits issued, helps pinpoint future project needs. Additionally, integrating key performance indicators can supplement the understanding and evaluation of existing programs.

U.1.A

Include a feasibility review process for new developments to determine how the proposed project will impact infrastructure and services.

A feasibility review process for new developments ensures that growth aligns with the county's mission to promote high-quality development in a way that protects the community's health and safety. This review process will assess the project's impact on existing and planned infrastructure and services, supporting critical decision-making during planning.

U.1.B

Develop an inventory of septic-dependent subdivisions and understand the future viability of their septic systems to prioritize sewer connection projects.

Proactively working with property owners to collect data regarding their septic systems and the feasibility of repairing or replacing them to meet current standards will help prioritize sewer connection projects and facilitate strategies to address failing septic systems county-wide.

U.1.C

Host a water quality data clearinghouse for individuals to self-report results.

High-quality data is critical for good decision-making, but this process can be very time-consuming and labor-intensive. Establishing a water quality clearinghouse allows individuals to self-report results and streamlines data collection efforts.



GOAL #2

SEEK OUT THE EXPERTISE OF UTILITY PROFESSIONALS AND FORM PUBLIC- PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO EFFICIENTLY ALLOCATE RESOURCES.

While St. Joseph County doesn't control private or municipal utilities, collaboration with providers is essential to ensure adequate utility services across the county. Through strategic partnerships, the county can leverage specialized knowledge, technological advancements, and efficient management practices to address infrastructure challenges and enhance the delivery of utility services. Public-private partnerships enable targeted investments to extend services to underserved areas while amplifying financial resources for infrastructure development. These collaborations alleviate strain on public budgets, allowing for timely upgrades and expansions to utility services. By combining the strengths of both sectors, the goal seeks to improve the overall quality and reliability of utility services.

U.2.A

Work with utility providers to develop a plan that ensures priority areas and other areas targeted for development have access to sufficient and reliable utility services.

To support continued growth, the county should work with local energy providers to develop a utility plan that serves the priority growth areas as identified in Plan SJC.

U.2.B

Encourage the co-location of fiber cables and other utilities in the right-of-way.

To effectively encourage the co-location of fiber and other utilities, the County should work with providers to implement a "one-dig" policy on projects where feasible and develop a policy requiring co-location of services within the public ROW, whenever possible.

U.2.C

Work with internet service providers to develop a plan that ensures all areas of the county have access to high-speed internet.

The county, in partnership with service providers, can develop an internet service plan that would facilitate coordination, provide information to stakeholders, encourage shared infrastructure, and prioritize expansion in priority areas as defined in the Economic Development, Housing and Neighborhoods, and Transportation pillars



GOAL #3

REDUCE OVERALL DEPENDENCE ON ON-SITE WASTEWATER (SEPTIC) SYSTEMS.

The goal of reducing reliance on on-site wastewater (septic) systems is crucial for safeguarding St. Joseph County's potable water resources. Septic systems, prevalent in rural areas, pose contamination risks if not properly maintained or developed. By minimizing dependence on these systems, this goal aims to protect water quality and mitigate the potential for waterborne diseases.

This goal recognizes the potential contamination risks associated with on-site wastewater systems and prioritizes strategies to adopt alternative wastewater management approaches, such as centralized sewer systems and advanced treatment technologies. Achieving this requires thorough planning and collaboration with stakeholders, including local government and water authorities.

U.3.A

Coordinate service providers to install water and/or sewer services in identified areas with public health concerns.

The St. Joseph County Department of Health has effectively worked with public utilities in the county to address health concerns posed by septic failure and well water contamination. As other infrastructure improvements are made, coordination of installation of water or sewer services is critical to reduce costs while addressing failing infrastructure.

U.3.B

Evaluate the possibility of additional sewage treatment plants.

The county, in partnership with utility providers, should consider conducting a feasibility study to identify potential locations for additional sewage treatment plants to serve future development based on the priority area growth maps.

U.3.C

Survey the level of interest of residents living in septic-dependent subdivisions to connect to municipal water and wastewater utilities.

Septic failure is an issue within the county. To address the issue, it is essential to gauge residents' interest in connecting to other utility systems. This can be achieved through targeted meetings with residents in critical subdivisions, where discussions can outline the connection process, costs, and ongoing service fees to support the development of plans connecting these areas to municipal utilities.

U.3.D

Support the Regional Water and Sewer District in addressing wastewater treatment issues.

St. Joseph County should work with the Regional Water and Sewer District (RWSD) to address expansion of wastewater treatment to priority growth areas and those areas plagued by septic failure.

**U.3.E**

Consider alternative wastewater treatment systems, such as cluster septic systems, in consultation with the St. Joseph County Health Department and the St. Joseph County Regional Water & Sewer District, where appropriate and where municipal utilities are not feasible.

Cluster septic systems offer an alternative wastewater solution for areas where traditional municipal treatment is not feasible. St. Joseph County Area Plan Commission staff should work with the Health Department, as well as the St. Joseph County Regional Water and Sewer District, to determine where the use of these systems are appropriate, to effectively manage them, and to seek funding opportunities for implementation.

GOAL #4

**PURSUE INITIATIVES THAT
PROVIDE UTILITIES IN A
MANNER THAT PROTECTS
PUBLIC HEALTH AND
NATURAL RESOURCES.**

St. Joseph County can mitigate health risks and protect communities by integrating public health initiatives, such as ensuring access to clean drinking water, promoting proper sanitation practices, and implementing pollution control measures. Additionally, promoting energy efficiency, water conservation, and renewable energy sources in infrastructure development, along with measures such as habitat conservation, land restoration, and responsible land use practices, reduces ecological impact and supports long-term environmental sustainability.

U.4.A

Encourage the diversification of energy sources to create a more reliable power grid and provide options for residents.

To strengthen community resilience, St. Joseph County should collaborate with energy utilities and consumers to promote the use of diverse energy sources. Diversifying energy sources not only improve reliability but also reduces vulnerability to market fluctuations, ensuring efficient energy delivery for local users.

U.4.B

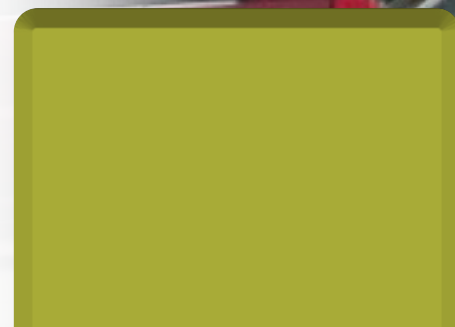
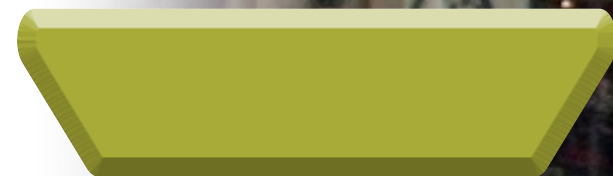
Promote the use of vacant, abandoned, and underutilized parcels for potential alternative energy generation projects.

Innovative revitalization efforts could leverage vacant, abandoned, or underutilized parcels for alternative energy projects. These initiatives eliminate blight and provide jobs and opportunities within the community.



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FUTURE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT



JOHN'S AUSTRIAN
CAFE
GERMAN CUISINE
774-474-0090
MICHIGAN STREET
CATERING
774-474-8944
www.johnscafe.com



THE VILLAGE SHOPPES
FLORIST HOME FURNISHING GIFTS



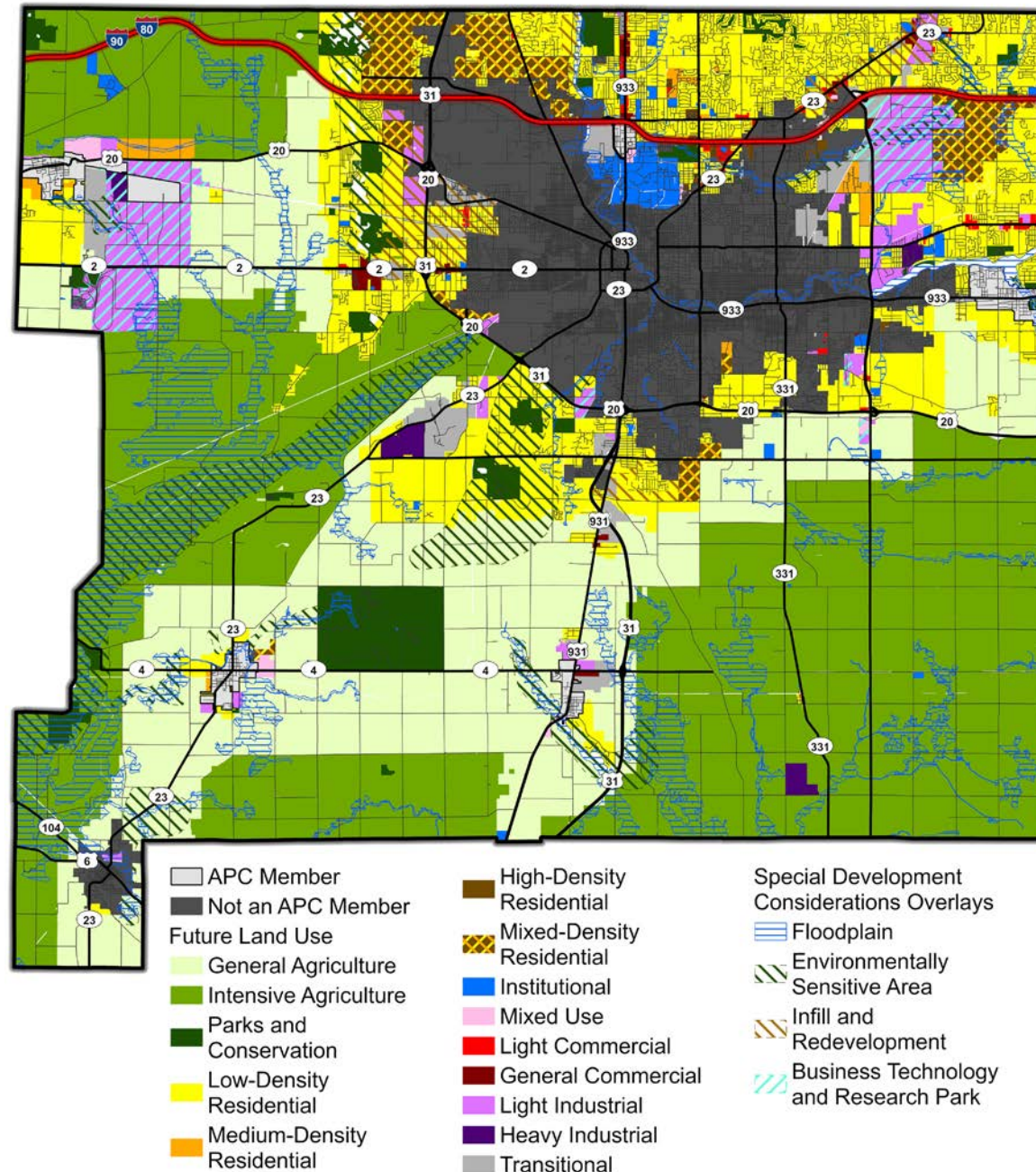


The Future Land Use Chapter provides a vision for where the County should encourage or limit different development types and land uses. The maps contained in this Chapter are intended to assist County staff, officials, developers, and the community in policy and land use decisions, as well as resource planning, to accomplish the comprehensive plan's goals over the next 20 years. Future land use may include types of land uses, building design, development density, and more. Key factors that impact future land use include existing land use, the location of existing and planned roadways, natural features, and the ability to provide necessary infrastructure and public services. Classifications for existing land uses do not necessarily translate directly into classifications of future land uses.

Updates and Implementation

The Future Land Use Chapter and maps should be reviewed every five years, in coordination with a general plan update, to ensure it reflects the County's needs. The future land use map will be largely implemented through amendments to the County's zoning and subdivision ordinances. County officials and staff should begin implementing the future land use map within Pillar Priority Areas, as defined in each Pillar's respective chapter.

Figure 4.1: Future Land Use Map





FUTURE LAND USES

Agricultural Designations

General Agriculture

The General Agriculture designation is intended to serve as a buffer between existing and/or planned areas of development and the Intensive Agriculture designation. These areas should allow both continued farming and established residential uses. General Agricultural areas are not intended to include more intense agricultural uses, such as confined feeding operations. Intense agricultural uses, such as confined feeding operations, are not recommended. Any new residential development, which would be in conjunction with an agricultural use, should be accommodating of adjacent agricultural uses.

Intensive Agriculture

The Intensive Agriculture designation is recommended for traditional farming practices such as crop production, livestock operations, such as grazing and confined animal feeding; and agricultural production and storage centers, such as grain elevators. Agricultural uses may diversify to include research facilities, stables, wineries, and other natural/food production-related activities. Intensive Agricultural areas are mapped to limit frontage on the County's major roads, leaving those frontages reserved for other development. There may be exceptions, such as floodplains or highly productive soils and prime farmlands near a major road.

Residential developments should be discouraged within Intensive Agriculture areas,

with the exception of farmsteads and minor subdivisions that separate existing residential structures from larger tracts of agricultural land. Existing single-family residential lots could incorporate agricultural-related uses, such as stables, small-scale, non-commercial food production, and limited livestock production.

Figure 4.2: General Agriculture



Figure 4.3: Intensive Agriculture



Parks and Conservation

Parks and conservation uses apply to land suited for recreational or ecological activities. Conservation specifically applies to sensitive environments, including wetlands, forests, natural vegetation areas, and floodplains. The parks and conservation designation promotes protection and/or recreational use of undeveloped land. Uses may include sport fields, playground equipment, golf courses, open areas for stormwater detention, walking/hiking/biking trails, and nature conservation—providing vital habitats for plants and wildlife. Parks and conservation areas should incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities connecting to adjacent properties and between parks.

Parks

Parks may be public, private, or non-profit, and include active and/or passive recreational uses. Sports fields, for example, are active uses, while picnic areas and grassy meadows are passive uses. The Future Land Use Map has not mapped all existing parks, but parks are compatible with most land use categories, especially residential and mixed-use. Land use decisions affecting parks and conservation areas should involve the St. Joseph County Parks Department.

The Parks and Conservation designation also includes Greenways, which are trail systems that provide recreation as well as promote public health and active lifestyles. Greenways connect parks, neighborhoods, and urban areas. They can maximize unbuildable land, such as floodplains, environmentally sensitive



areas, or existing utility and access easements. Greenways should be hard-surface trails (asphalt, pavement), where possible, but may incorporate “soft-surface” nature trails (usually dirt or gravel).

Conservation

Conservation refers to lands that are unsuitable for development due to potential negative impacts on the environment, such as pollution, sedimentation, erosion, and habitat destruction. These areas may be owned publicly, privately, or by non-profit organizations. Natural features in a conservation area might include floodways,

wetlands, woodlands, and riparian corridors. Conservation also promotes the safety and protection of property in flood-prone areas or areas with other natural hazards. There should be minimal development in conservation areas. Adjacent uses should have an area of transition or and be buffered from a conservation area.

Residential Designations

Unincorporated St. Joseph County features a range of residential densities, with the majority being low- or medium-density. Residential areas adjacent to or within incorporated communities are considered more appropriate

for moderate densities (two to four dwelling units per acre) to higher densities (more than four dwelling units per acre) due to their proximity to existing utility services and amenities. Residential developments should be highly encouraged in the Priority Areas identified in the Housing and Neighborhoods Chapter, or near established areas where residents have a variety of transportation options. When possible, developments should not rely on well and septic systems to reduce the risk of contamination to groundwater and other environmental concerns. All residential designations may also include institutional uses, such as civic, religious, and educational facilities, where appropriate.

Figure 4.4: Parks and Conservation



Figure 4.5: Low-Density Residential



Low-Density Residential

The low-density residential designation is intended for the development of detached single-family homes, typically less than or equal to one dwelling unit per acre. New developments should build upon existing residential infrastructure and avoid encroaching into agricultural areas. This designation may also include neighborhood institutional uses, such as civic, religious, and educational facilities.

Medium-Density Residential

The medium-density residential designation promotes traditional detached single-family subdivisions with two to four units per acre. Attached single-family dwellings, such as condominiums, duplexes, and triplexes, may be included as part of a larger development if the proposed density reflects adjacent development. Medium-density residential often

serves as a transition between low-density residential and commercial or institutional areas. New developments should connect to open spaces, amenities, and adjacent residential and non-residential uses. They should have adequate access to transportation and connect to public water and sewer utilities. Institutional uses may be included where appropriate.

High-Density Residential

The high-density residential designation allows a variety of housing types, including attached single-family homes, condominiums,

multi-family apartments, and mixed-use buildings. Typical density is four to six units per acre. This designation provides a range of housing options not typically found in the unincorporated areas of the County, especially those areas without readily available public utilities. This designation may buffer between commercial, office, and industrial uses and low to medium-density residential.

This designation generally applies to areas on the outer edges incorporated communities near existing infrastructure, public services, and utilities. These sites offer a wide range of development opportunities, including

small lot single-family housing, zero-lot line developments, townhouses, duplexes, and apartment complexes. New developments should have adequate access to transportation and connect to public water and sewer utilities. Institutional uses may be included where appropriate.

Mixed-Density Residential

Mixed density residential areas should support a mix of housing options that may contain one or more of the following housing types: single-family homes at a range of lot sizes, attached housing types, missing middle, small or other multi-family developments. Areas identified for mixed density residential are ideally master planned developments and are complementary to surrounding area, designed with smooth transitions as residential density increases. Special consideration should be given to connectivity within and to the development, as well as integration of commercial and other amenities serving the area.

Institutional

The Institutional designation includes public or semi-public uses. Examples include government facilities, private and public schools, religious organizations, correctional institutions, libraries, medical facilities, emergency services, and civic or social organizations. It is important to plan for expansions in response to residential, commercial, and industrial growth. New institutional facilities should reflect their area's local character through site planning, architecture, and landscaping.

Figure 4.6: Medium-Density Residential



Figure 4.7: High-Density Residential





Figure 4.8: Institutional



Light Commercial

The Light Commercial designation includes smaller-scale commercial uses, often adjacent to residential areas, as well as office and business uses. Developments within this designation should be carefully planned to mitigate any impacts to adjacent residential areas. The Light Commercial designation is intended to serve as a buffer between residential areas and more intense General Commercial areas.

General Commercial

General commercial uses provide goods and services for the County. Uses may include grocery stores, “big box” retail, multi-tenant commercial centers, and shopping and dining centers. This designation applies to areas of heavy traffic along major corridors or at major intersections. Commercial developments should maintain high-quality development standards for site design, building materials/architecture, landscaping, and signage to preserve the local character. Carefully planned access points, frontage roads, and synchronized traffic signals should be used to mitigate traffic congestion and safety concerns.

Mixed Use

The Mixed Use designation provides for diverse land use combinations, and emphasizes a connected, walkable development pattern. The mixed-use designation may include restaurants, small-scale retail and professional services, offices, multi-family apartments, condominiums, townhouses, and recreational amenities. Characteristics include individual buildings containing a vertical mix of uses

(such as ground floor commercial with upper-floor apartments), or a cluster of multi-tenant buildings with connecting walkways and site amenities.

Mixed-use developments can provide a range of housing types for a variety of incomes, provide connections and infrastructure for walking and cycling, and enhance quality of place. Connections to outdoor green spaces, parks, pedestrian and bicycle amenities, and adjacent neighborhoods and commercial centers are key components of mixed-use development. Buildings should have quality architecture and include active street fronts

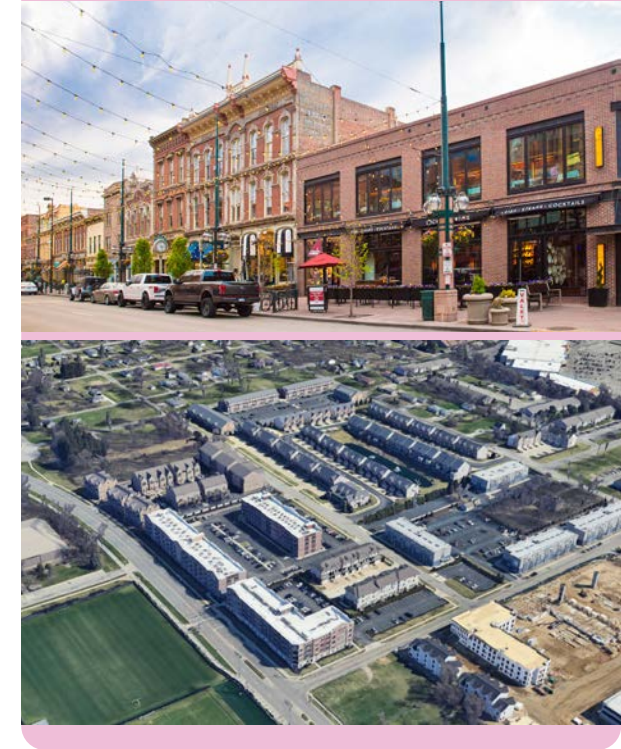
Figure 4.9: Light Commercial



Figure 4.10: General Commercial



Figure 4.11: Mixed-Use





and storefronts. Building heights should range from two to four stories. Front building setbacks should be minimal unless located along a major thoroughfare.

The Mixed Use designation may include components of the Business Technology and Research Park designation to create walkable employment centers, with uses such as offices, research, light industry, small-scale warehousing, and supporting commercial uses. Site development may be campus-style groups of small-scale buildings, or multi-story mixed-use buildings. Building architecture should be compatible with adjacent uses, and all operations should be within enclosed buildings. Business Technology and Research Park (BTRP) mixed uses may serve as transitional “gateways” buffering between low intensity residential uses and heavy industrial or outdoor commercial uses.

Industrial Designations

The industrial designations include Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial, such as manufacturing, processing, and research facilities. Less intense non-residential land uses should buffer the impact of industrial land uses on residential property to preserve property values and quality of life. New or expanding industrial development should have planned access to highways and/or railroads. Special attention should be given to traffic management and road quality, especially for truck traffic. Connection to public water and sewer utilities is required.

Light Industrial

Light Industrial development should be located along major roads and/or in designated areas. Uses within this classification should be well-buffered from residential uses to reduce impacts from traffic, noise, and other effects of operations. Truck parking, loading and service bays, storage areas, equipment, and service areas shall be screened and maintain an orderly appearance.

Heavy Industrial

The Heavy Industrial designation includes intense industrial uses not found in the Light Industrial designation. Heavy industrial and manufacturing uses may include outdoor storage and operations. Site considerations include those in the Light Industrial designation; however, these uses tend to have a greater impact for noise, air quality, odor, and other pollution. These uses should be clustered together along major thoroughfares to reduce their overall land area. Heavy industrial/manufacturing uses should be buffered from residential uses to the greatest possible extent. Screening of all outdoor storage and operations from adjacent land uses and surrounding roadways is required.

Figure 4.12: Light Industrial



Figure 4.13: Heavy Industrial





Transitional

The Transitional designation is applied to areas of the County where conditions and development patterns are changing, suggesting a different land use category than what has historically been established and reinforced through past land use and zoning maps. In many cases, this has resulted from County roads gradually evolving in heavily trafficked corridors, a transition which has diminished the value of adjacent low density residential uses while simultaneously creating a suitable environment for commercial use and spurring demand for more intense development.

Additionally, the designation has been applied to areas where sewer and water service extensions or planned extensions create opportunities for industrial and commercial growth or more dense residential development. As new uses emerge in these areas, care must be taken to protect the ongoing use and value of neighboring established uses through development and design standards.

Figure 4.14: Transitional



SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS OVERLAYS

Floodway and Floodplain

This overlay maps floodplains as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Floodplains contain the floodway and the floodway fringe. The regulatory floodway is the channel of a river or watercourse that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood, while the floodway fringe is the portion of the floodplain outside the regulatory floodway. New development in a floodway can worsen flooding downstream because it decreases the amount of space in which the water can flow. Responsible development in these areas will require thoughtful planning decisions and compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal requirements.

Figure 4.15: Floodway and Floodplain





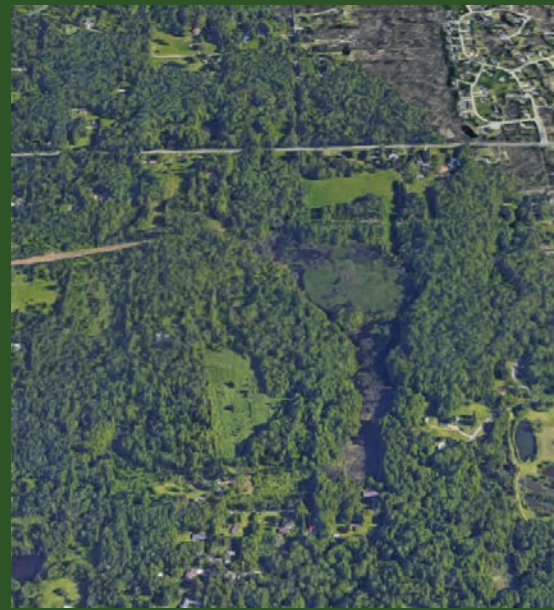
Environmentally Sensitive Area

The Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Overlay was created as part of the suitability analysis, which identifies areas containing critical natural resources and wildlife habitats. The ESA Overlay aims to protect and support healthy ecosystems, improve flood mitigation, and to prevent hazardous development. It should apply to federally/state-protected environments, areas with substantial plant and wildlife, plus land with developmental constraints, such as high-water table, steep slopes, and poor soil conditions. These sites will be required to comply with all applicable local, state, and federal requirements. Examples of environmentally sensitive areas include:

- Federally designated wetlands;
- Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas;
- Identified FEMA floodplains;
- Critical aquifer recharge areas;
- Geologically hazardous areas;
- Other natural resources

All development activities resulting in a land use change or the construction of new buildings in the ESAs should comply with all applicable regulatory provisions of local, state, and federal laws.

Figure 4.16: Environmentally Sensitive Area



Business Technology and Research Park

The Business Technology and Research Park (BTRP) classification designates areas of the County envisioned for master planned business, research facilities, and light industrial, with related office, shipping/distribution, wholesale, and other limited commercial uses. These areas should be master planned campuses with a high aesthetic visible from public streets. Activities predominately occur within enclosed buildings and have very limited outdoor storage and display. Sites should have adequate utilities and transportation access, possibly including rail access. Availability of technology-related amenities, such as high-speed Internet, are crucial for attracting and expanding economic opportunities.

Figure 4.17: Business Technology and Research Park





Infill and Redevelopment

The infill and redevelopment overlays were created in response to the suitability analysis, which identified sites with high development suitability within mostly built out areas.

Infill Development

Infill development is the development of vacant land within urban areas. Infill development supports several community goals: farmland preservation, promoting orderly growth and development, efficiency in use of resources, and leveraging existing infrastructure and amenities. Areas suitable for infill development include properties that are surrounded by existing development but are vacant or underdeveloped. Other important considerations include access to utilities and compatible uses based on the overall Future Land Use Map.

Redevelopment Area

Similar to Infill Development, Redevelopment Areas might have sites or existing buildings that are underutilized, dilapidated, or abandoned. Former uses and buildings might have been of the highest and best use at the time they were developed, but over time, have become incongruous with their surroundings. Redevelopment projects can vary in significance and may include demolishing aging structures for redevelopment or remodeling existing buildings for adaptive reuse. As an example, underused parking lots are prime for redevelopment.

Figure 4.18: Infill and Redevelopment



TOWNSHIP-BY-TOWNSHIP MAPS

The following section breaks down the future land use map into St. Joseph County's 13 townships, providing a detailed and more manageable view of the desired uses and development patterns. Each township will specify a focus area to inform County officials and staff decision-making, and direct prospective developers.

Interactive Elements

The township map (shown right) contains interactive elements that allow readers viewing the online/PDF version of the plan to jump to their township of interest by clicking on the name of township.

To return to this page, readers can click on the mini-map showing the township's location in the County at the bottom left corner.

SELECT TOWNSHIP OF INTEREST

Click on the township's name to explore that township.

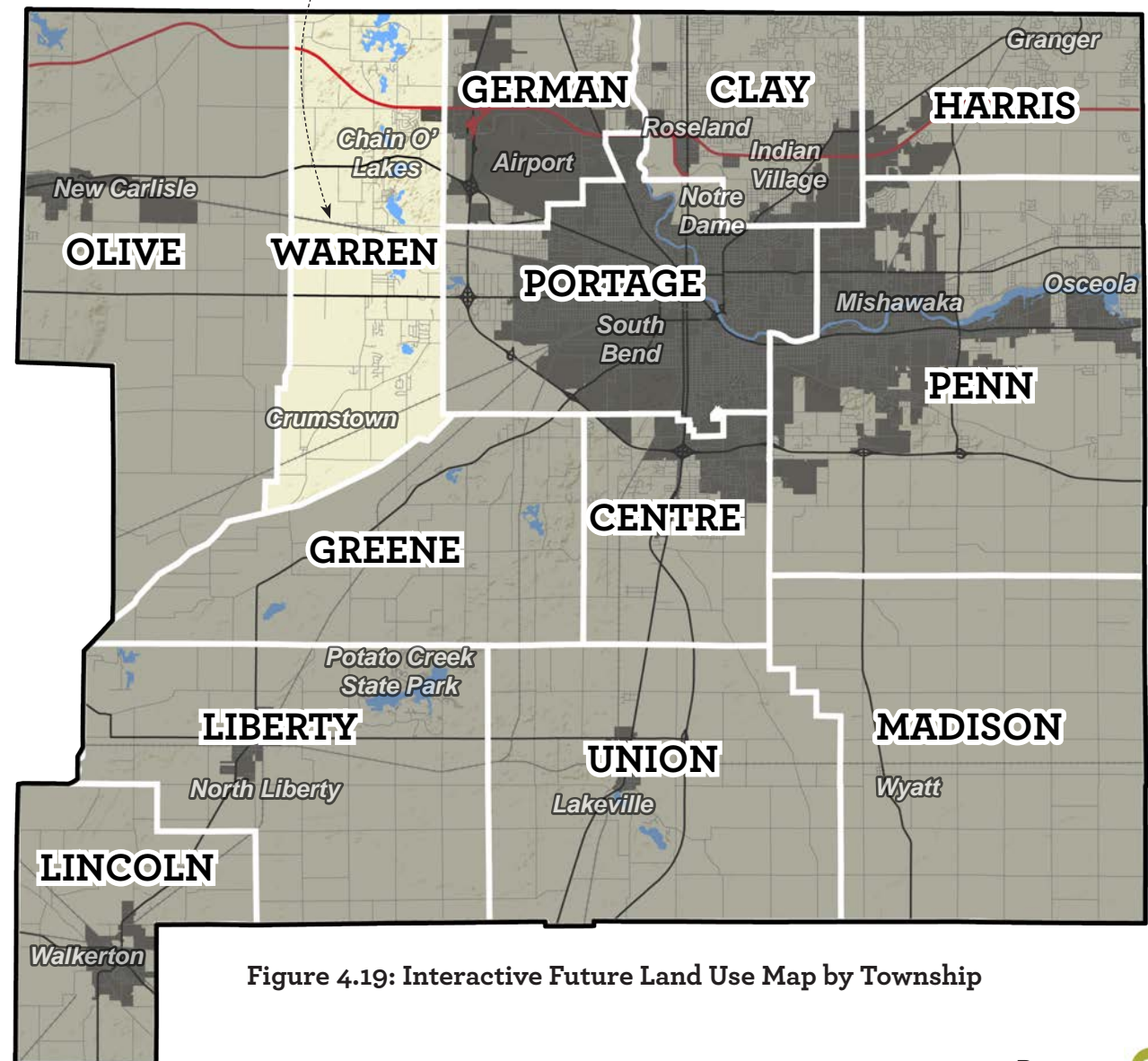
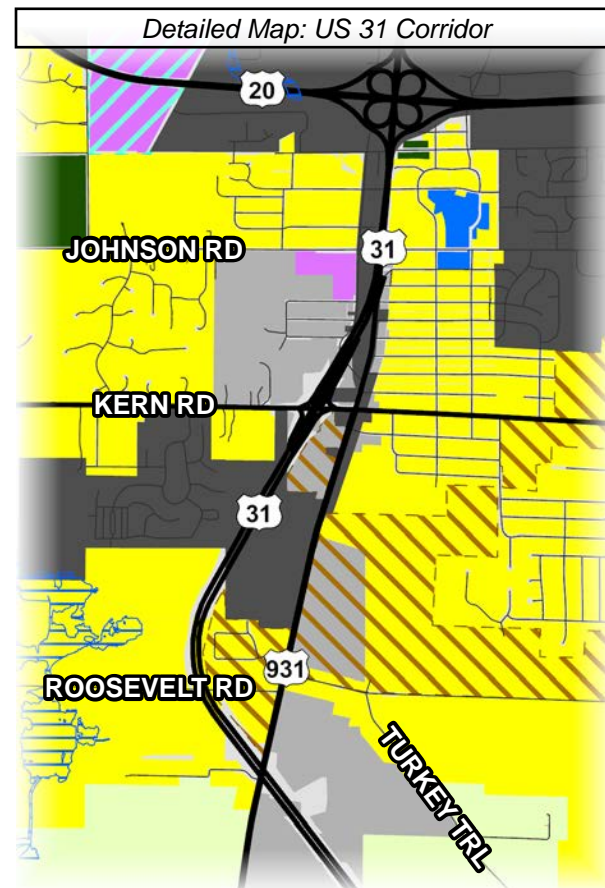


Figure 4.19: Interactive Future Land Use Map by Township

CENTRE TOWNSHIP

Centre Township is transected by several major thoroughfares, including US Highway 20, US Highway 31, and State Road 931. The intersection of US 20 and US 31 is located within the limits of the City of South Bend and provides excellent access for a variety of heavy commercial uses, ranging from hotels, restaurants, automobile-related uses, and more. In the event that development pressure pushes growth southward, an urban growth boundary should be given consideration. An overlay district could be implemented along the US 31 corridor to ensure compatible uses and a consistent character.

South of the US 20 Highway, there are a number of established residential neighborhoods, in both the City and County. Opportunities for residential infill exist at various densities, particularly in those areas adjacent to the City and with access to utilities. The area between SR 931 and US 31 is in transition, as many parcels were reconstructed as part of the US 31 construction and are no longer viable for agricultural uses. The south and southeastern portions of the township are and will continue to be shown as General Agricultural.



EXISTING LAND USE MAP LEGEND*

	Agricultural
	Outdoor Recreation
	Single-Residential
	Multi-Residential
	Mobile Home Park
	Institutional
	Commercial
	Industrial (Decommissioned)
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transportation or Utilities
	Other
	Vacant
	Floodplain

Other significant plans for this area:

- South Bend Comprehensive (Comp.) Plan
- County Parks Master Plan
- MACOG Active Transportation Plan

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

	General Agriculture
	Intensive Agriculture
	Parks and Conservation
	Low-Density Residential
	Medium-Density Residential
	High-Density Residential
	Mixed-Density Residential
	Institutional
	Light Commercial
	General Commercial
	Mixed Use
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transitional

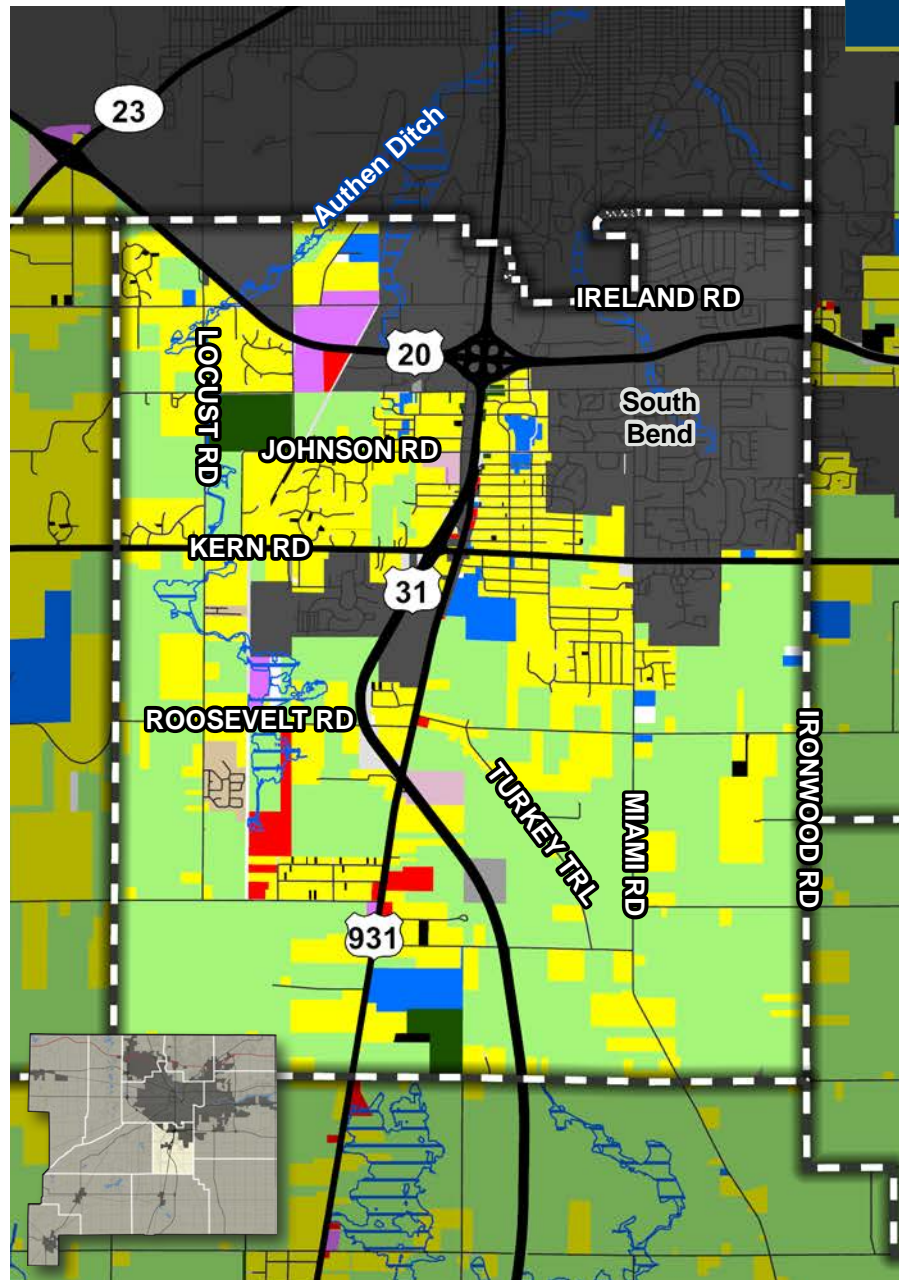
Special Development Considerations Overlays

	Floodplain
	Environmentally Sensitive Area
	Infill and Redevelopment
	Business Technology and Research Park

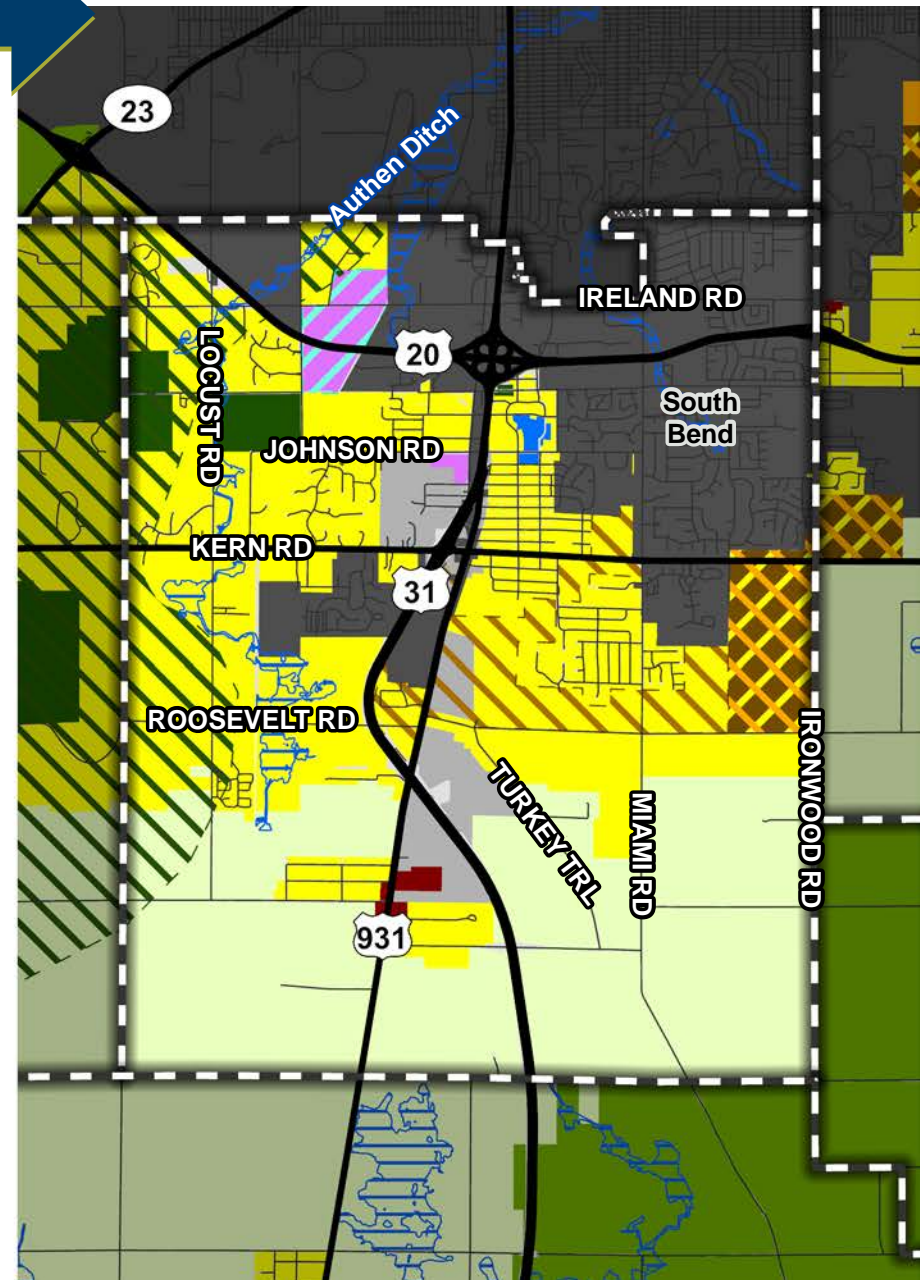
**Existing land use classifications, and their color code on the map, do not translate directly into future land uses*



EXISTING LAND USE MAP



FUTURE LAND USE MAP





CLAY TOWNSHIP

Clay Township is home to the University of Notre Dame, St. Mary's College, and Holy Cross College. These higher learning institutions own a significant portion of the land surrounding the Town of Roseland. Students and faculty, and the workforce in South Bend, are driving demand for high-density residential, office/flex space, and restaurants. This area is ideal for compact mixed-use neighborhoods, which support diverse housing options for County residents and the student population.

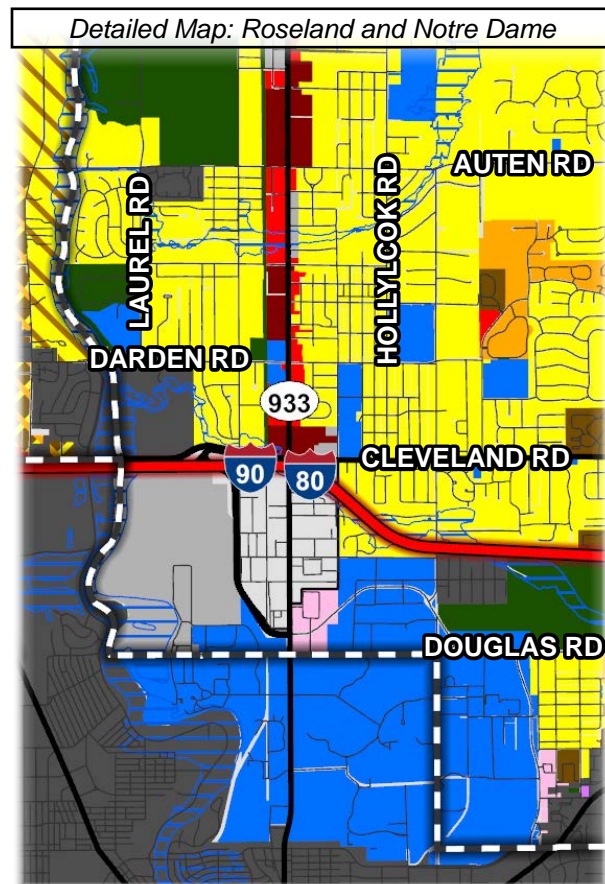
State Road 933 is a key gateway for the County, the Town of Roseland, Notre Dame University, and the City of South Bend. The area east of SR 933 is planned for Mixed Use, introducing residential density with townhomes and mixed unit buildings with upper-story apartment/condo units. First floor commercial uses may include office-flex uses, restaurants and cafes, retail, and convenience markets. Stand-alone hotels and restaurants should emphasize pedestrian connectivity, and human-scaled design. Parking areas should be shared.

Properties north of Roseland along SR 933 will create a Light Commercial and General Commercial corridor. This corridor should prioritize infill and redevelopment. Development along 933 should have controlled access. Synchronized traffic signals will improve the flow of traffic, mitigate congestion, and improve overall safety.

The LaSalle Trail along SR 933 fosters local and regional connections for pedestrians and cyclists. This area should consider high-quality

development standards, including a zoning overlay district. Standards should include site design, building materials and architectural standards, landscaping, and sign standards.

Remaining developable areas are recommended for residential uses, with increased density in areas with access to municipal utilities. Existing single-family housing and multi-family developments should expect residential infill and redevelopment as the housing stock ages.



EXISTING LAND USE MAP LEGEND*

- Agricultural
- Outdoor Recreation
- Single-Residential
- Multi-Residential
- Mobile Home Park
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Industrial (Decommissioned)
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Transportation or Utilities
- Other
- Vacant
- Floodplain

Other significant plans for this area:

- Roseland Comp. Plan
- South Bend Comp. Plan
- Mishawaka Comp. Plan
- County Parks Master Plan
- SR 933 Corridor Plan
- Morningside Neighborhood Plan

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

- General Agriculture
- Intensive Agriculture
- Parks and Conservation
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential
- Mixed-Density Residential
- Institutional
- Light Commercial
- General Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Transitional

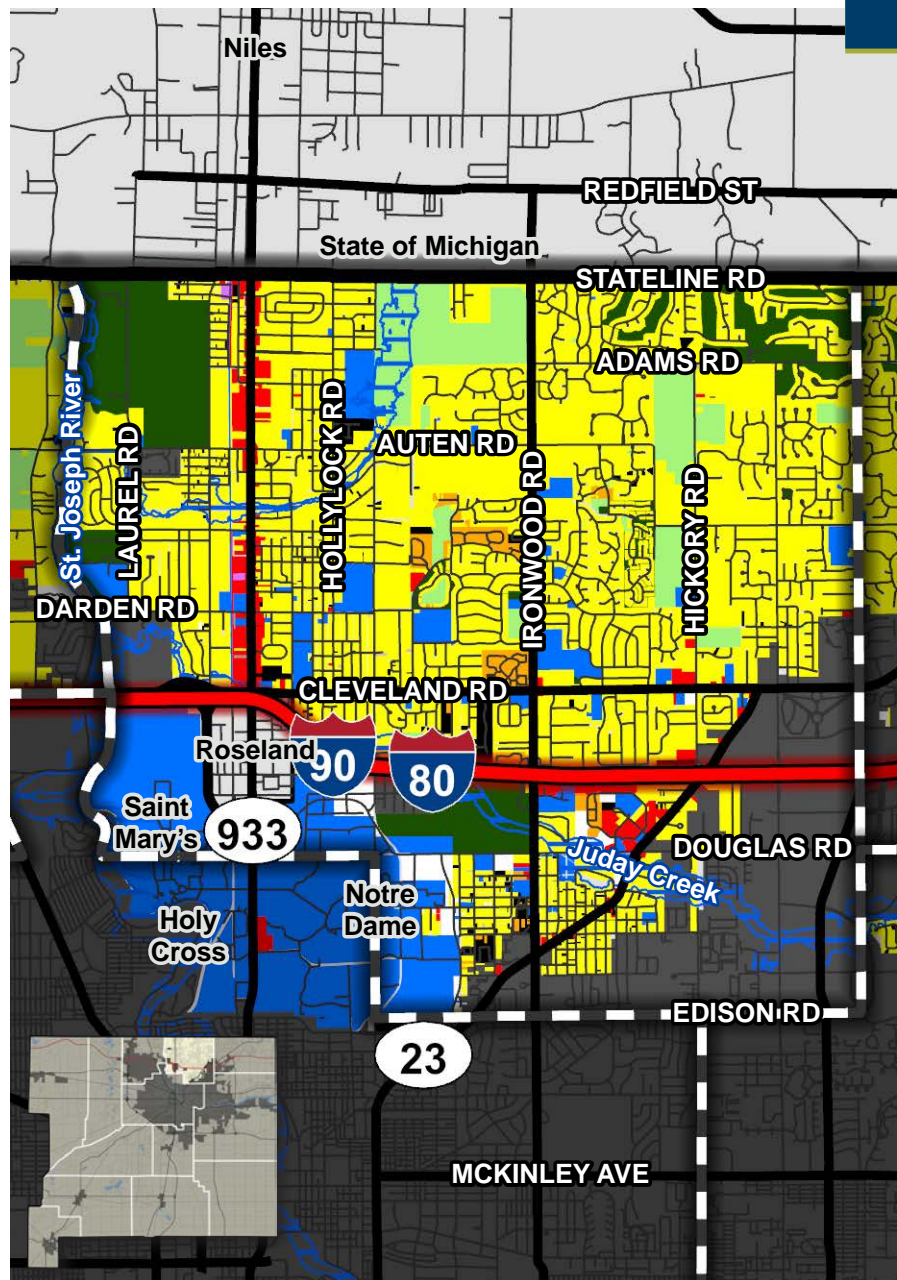
Special Development Considerations Overlays

- Floodplain
- Environmentally Sensitive Area
- Infill and Redevelopment
- Business Technology and Research Park

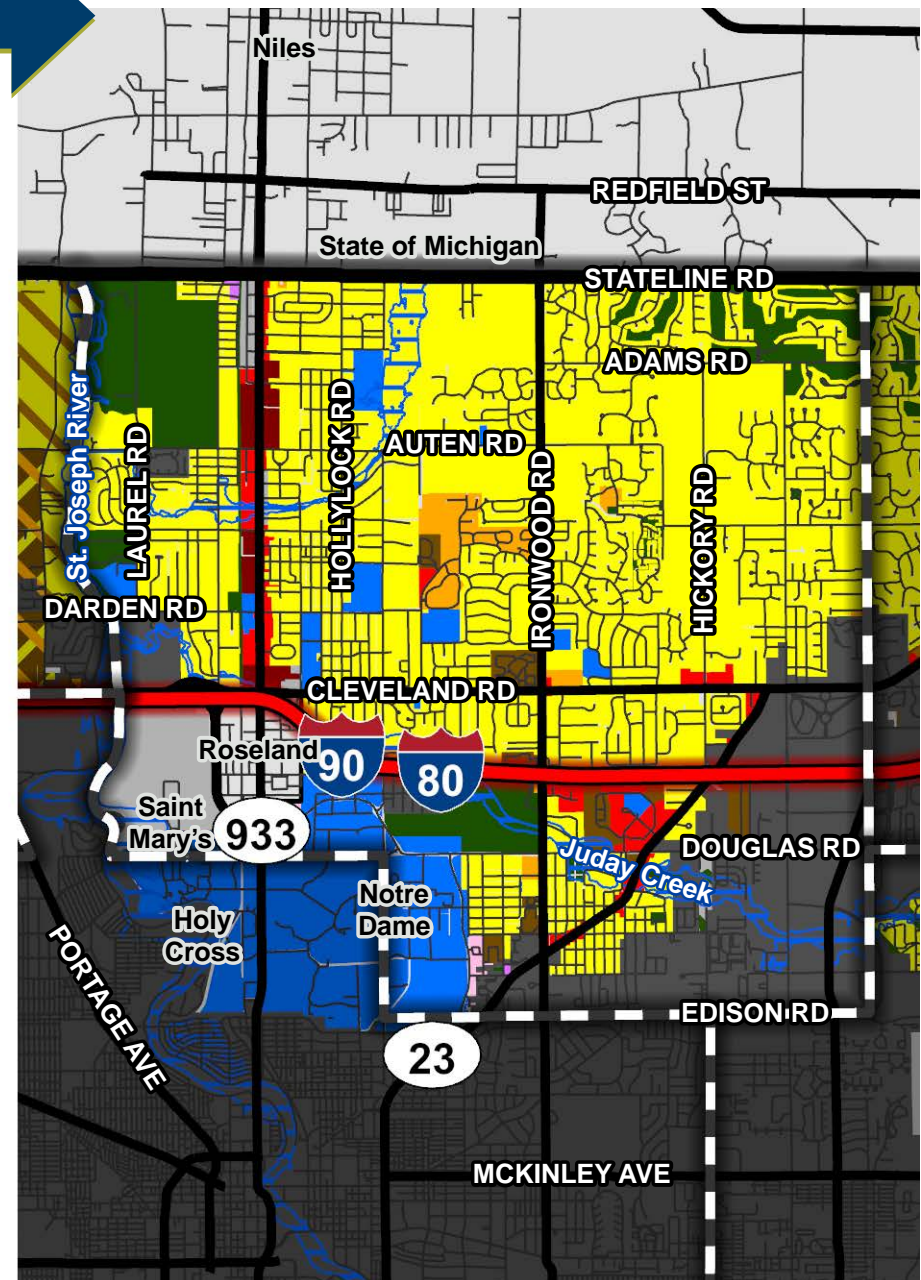
**Existing land use classifications, and their color code on the map, do not translate directly into future land uses*



EXISTING LAND USE MAP



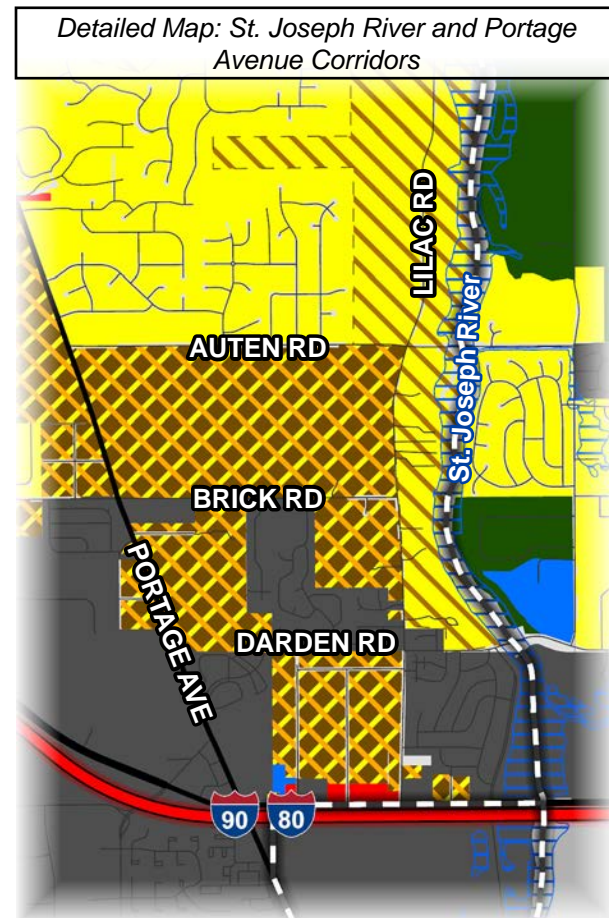
FUTURE LAND USE MAP



GERMAN TOWNSHIP

Bordering the Michigan state line, German Township is located to the northwest of the City of South Bend. The northern portion of the township is predominately low-density residential. Mixed-density, (including a combination of low, medium, and high density), infill residential development, with connections to public sewer and water, should be prioritized in these areas. Mixed density areas should be master planned in conjunction with the City of South Bend, considering neighborhood commercial and business services uses where appropriate.

Opportunities for business and industrial development exist along the east side of Olive Road. This broader area should capitalize on its proximity to the South Bend International Airport for international, national, and regional trade, and the potential for higher-paying jobs. As the airport authority continues to acquire property along US 20/Lincolnway Highway, the Transitional land use category contemplates multiple scenarios. Specific land uses should be defined in the future.



EXISTING LAND USE MAP LEGEND*

	Agricultural
	Outdoor Recreation
	Single-Residential
	Multi-Residential
	Mobile Home Park
	Institutional
	Commercial
	Industrial (Decommissioned)
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transportation or Utilities
	Other
	Vacant
	Floodplain

Other significant plans for this area:

- South Bend Comp. Plan
- MACOG Active Transportation Plan
- Rail Opportunity Plan
- Olive Road Master Planning Study (2017)
- TRANSPO Connect Plan

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

	General Agriculture
	Intensive Agriculture
	Parks and Conservation
	Low-Density Residential
	Medium-Density Residential
	High-Density Residential
	Mixed-Density Residential
	Institutional
	Light Commercial
	General Commercial
	Mixed Use
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transitional

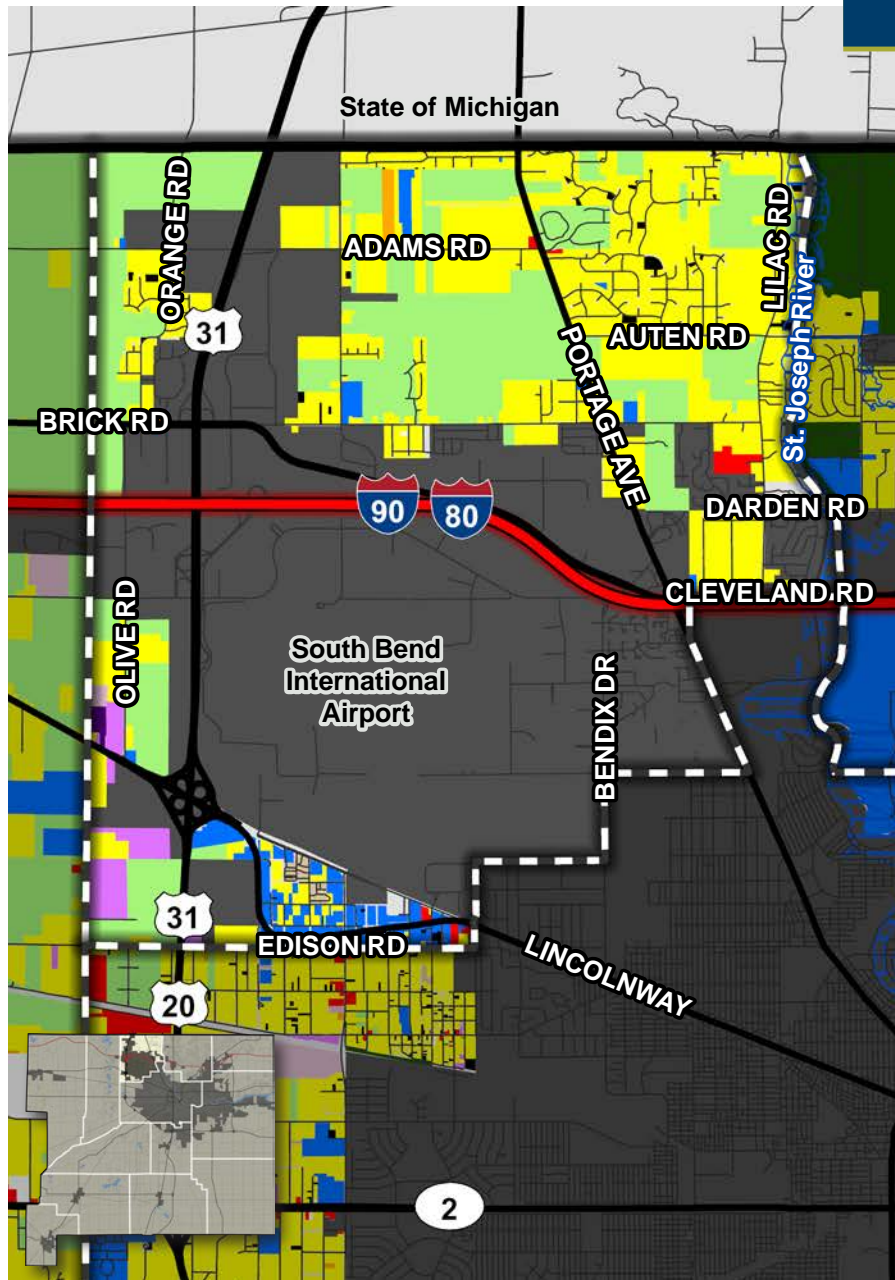
Special Development Considerations Overlays

	Floodplain
	Environmentally Sensitive Area
	Infill and Redevelopment
	Business
	Technology and Research Park

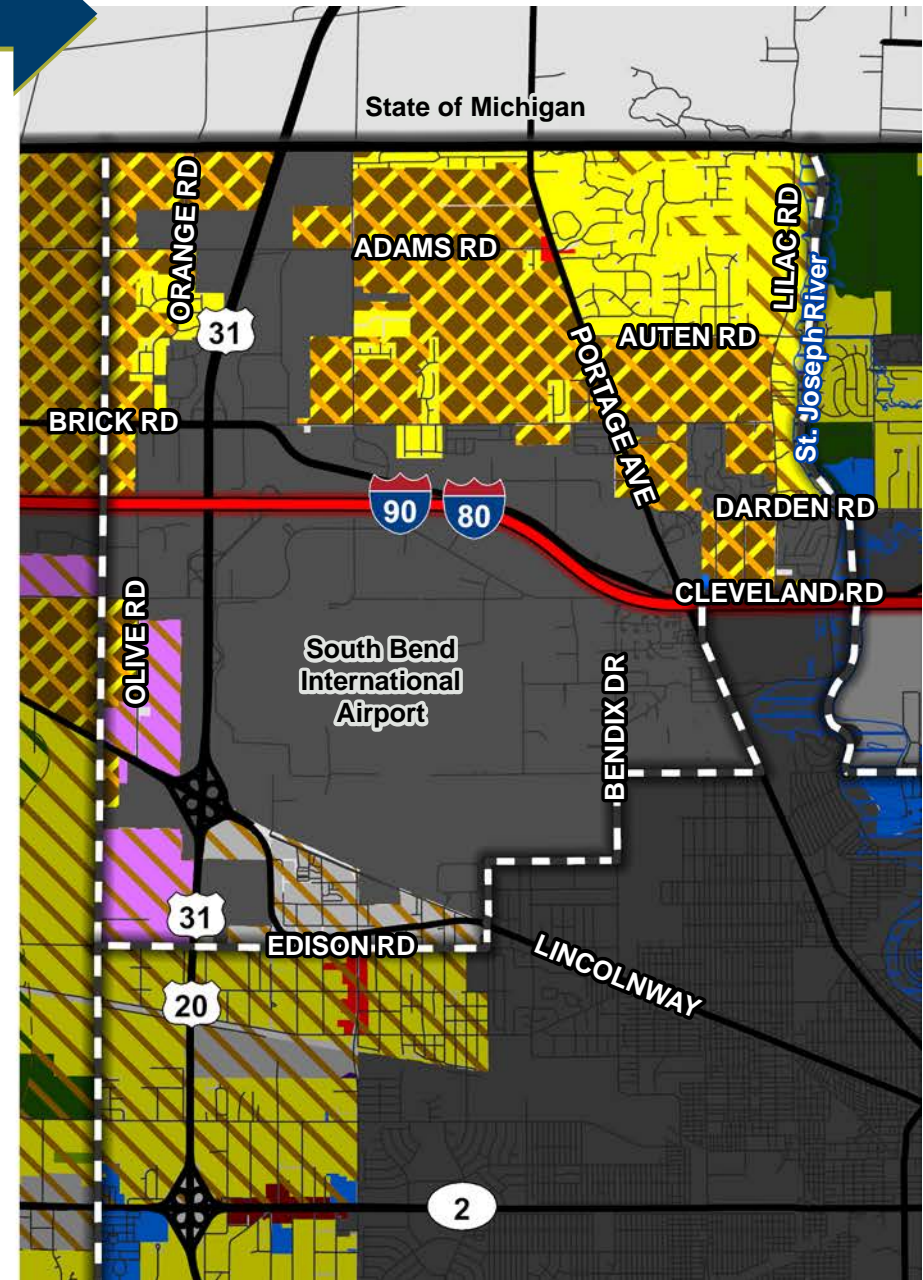
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EXISTING LAND USE MAP



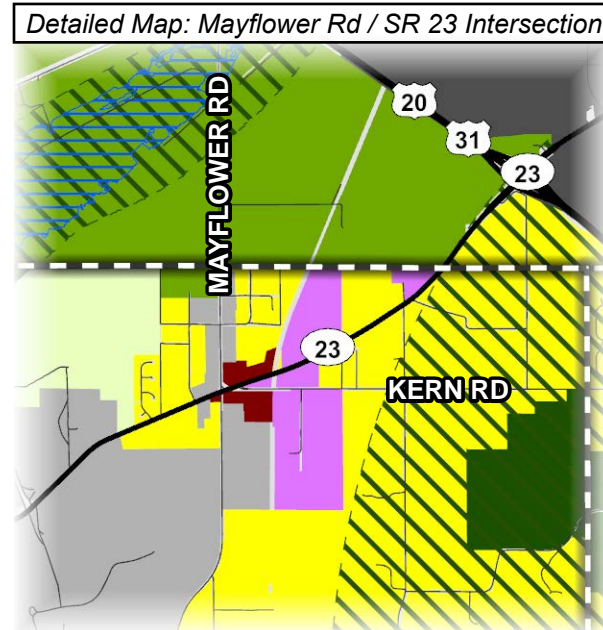
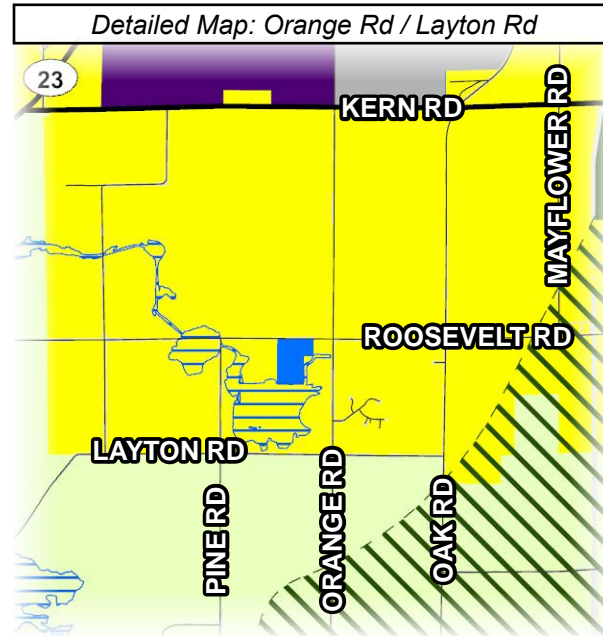
FUTURE LAND USE MAP



GREENE TOWNSHIP

Greene Township is located southwest of the City of South Bend. The northeast section of the township is mostly low-density residential, with environmentally sensitive and conservation areas. A mix of established commercial, business, and light industrial uses can be found along State Road 23 from Ireland Road to Kern Road, while the area south of State Road 23 consists of more intense industrial uses. Additionally, a concentration of development can be found along Mayflower Road, south from the intersection of State Road 23. This area is shown as Transitional in the Future Land Use Map.

Existing farmland should be retained for long-term agricultural use, especially along the Kankakee River and in the floodplain areas. Residential Development should be limited in areas designated for agricultural use and in areas shown as environmentally sensitive.



EXISTING LAND USE MAP LEGEND*

	Agricultural
	Outdoor Recreation
	Single-Residential
	Multi-Residential
	Mobile Home Park
	Institutional
	Commercial
	Industrial (Decommissioned)
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transportation or Utilities
	Other
	Vacant
	Floodplain

Other significant plans for this area:

- MACOG Active Transportation Plan
- County Parks Master Plan
- Kankakee River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

	General Agriculture
	Intensive Agriculture
	Parks and Conservation
	Low-Density Residential
	Medium-Density Residential
	High-Density Residential
	Mixed-Density Residential
	Institutional
	Light Commercial
	General Commercial
	Mixed Use
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transitional

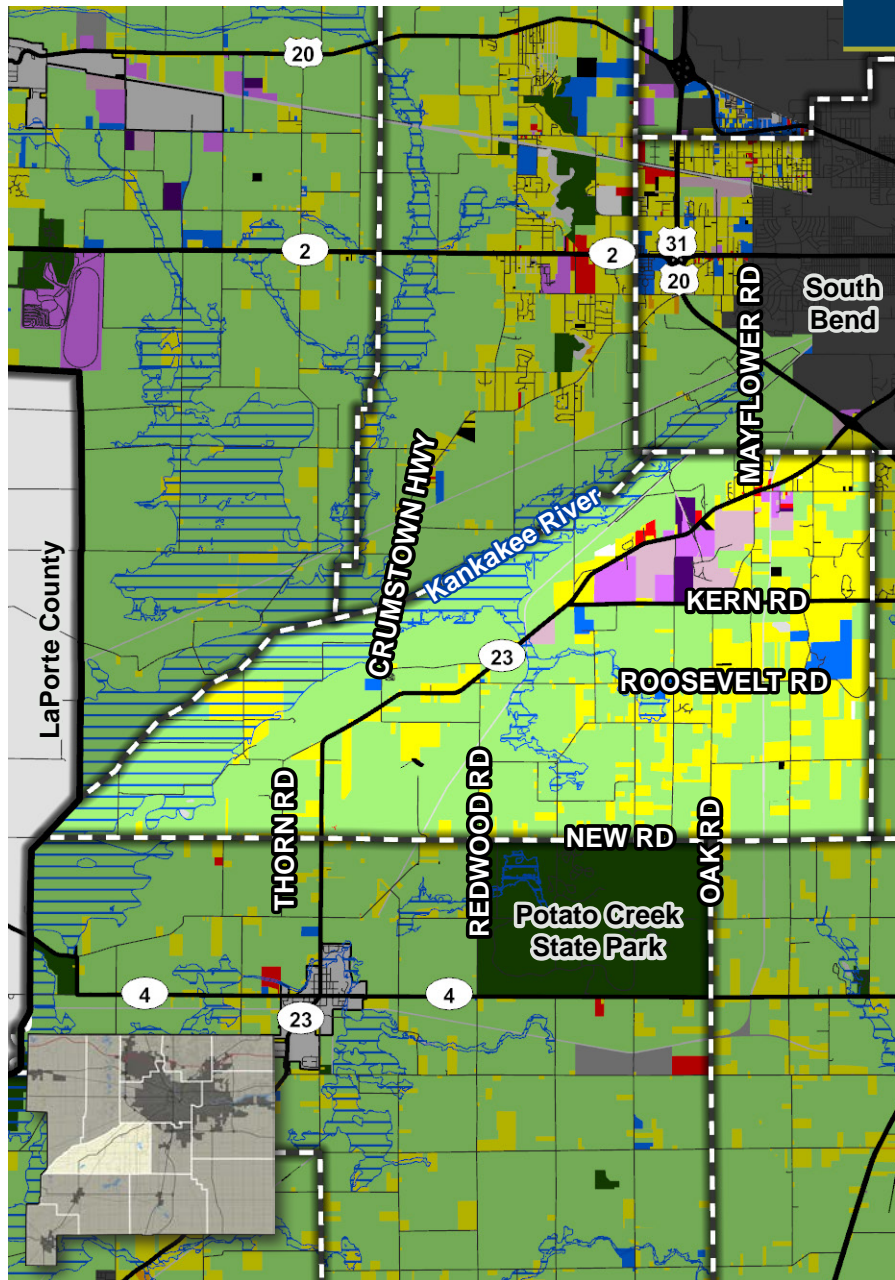
Special Development Considerations Overlays

	Floodplain
	Environmentally Sensitive Area
	Infill and Redevelopment
	Business
	Technology and Research Park

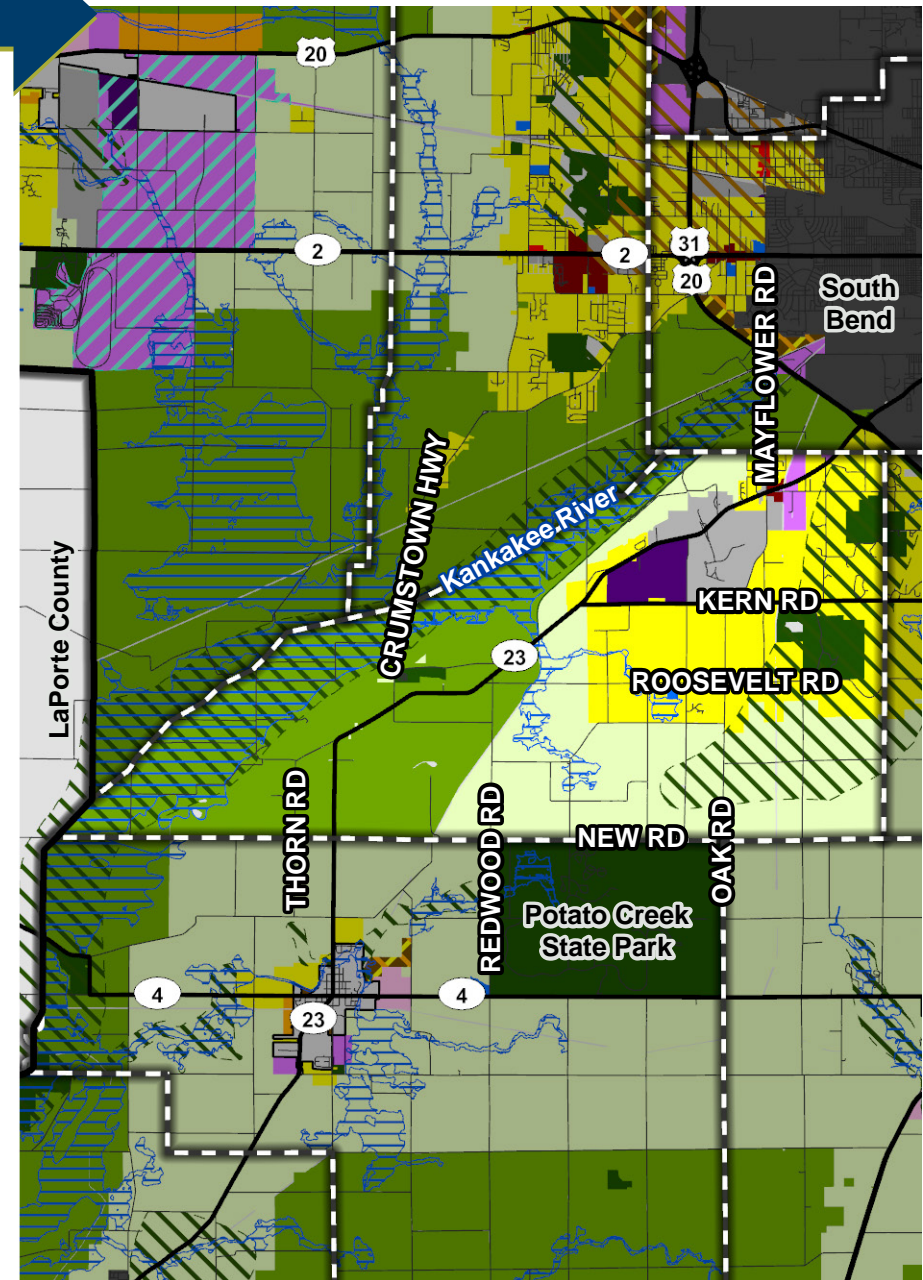
**Existing land use classifications, and their color code on the map, do not translate directly into future land uses*



EXISTING LAND USE MAP



FUTURE LAND USE MAP



HARRIS TOWNSHIP

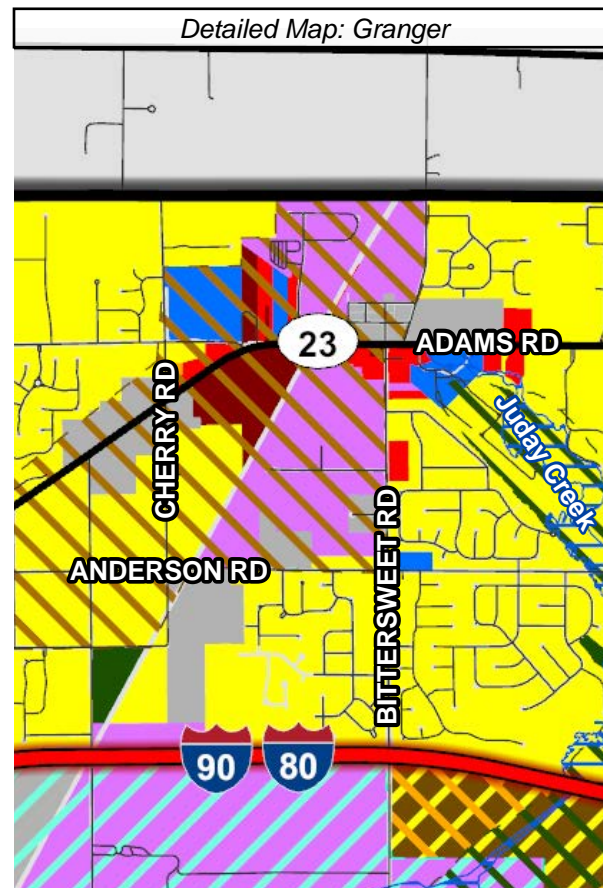
Harris Township is home to Granger, an unincorporated community of approximately 30,337 residents. Granger consists of predominately low-density residential uses, with higher density residential uses where utilities are available. As housing needs and demands continue to grow, it is imperative to plan for the longevity of septic and well infrastructure to help facilitate further residential development given the challenges presented by the lack of availability of municipal water and sewer services.

SR 23 serves as a commercial corridor and employment center, serving the Granger community and surrounding area. This corridor features a range of uses and development intensities, which is reflected in the Future Land Use Map. Light commercial uses are shown where SR 23 leaves the City of Mishawaka limits. More intense commercial uses are shown near the intersection of SR 23 and Fir Road, as well as SR 23 and Bittersweet Road, the latter serving as an economic center for the community. A number of transitional areas are shown along SR 23 to the west and east of the commercial center of Granger.

Reflecting the recommendations in the Capital Avenue Land Use Plan, property south of the I-80/I-90 Toll Road is shown as Business Technology and Research Park. Areas adjacent or in close proximity to the City of Mishawaka limits along Capital Avenue are also shown as Transitional.

A parcel containing approximately 115 acres on

Anderson Road is shown as future parkland. This undeveloped parcel is an ideal location for a new park. A sizeable portion of this parcel is in the environmentally sensitive overlay and partially in the floodplain. A park at this location would protect the existing landscape and expand the area's recreational uses for the surrounding residents.



EXISTING LAND USE MAP LEGEND*

- Agricultural
- Outdoor Recreation
- Single-Residential
- Multi-Residential
- Mobile Home Park
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Industrial (Decommissioned)
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Transportation or Utilities
- Other
- Vacant
- Floodplain

Other significant plans for this area:

- County Connections
- MACOG Active Transportation Plan
- County Parks Master Plan
- Capital Avenue Corridor Plan (2003)
- Juday Creek Watershed Management Plan

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

- General Agriculture
- Intensive Agriculture
- Parks and Conservation
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential
- Mixed-Density Residential
- Institutional
- Light Commercial
- General Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Transitional

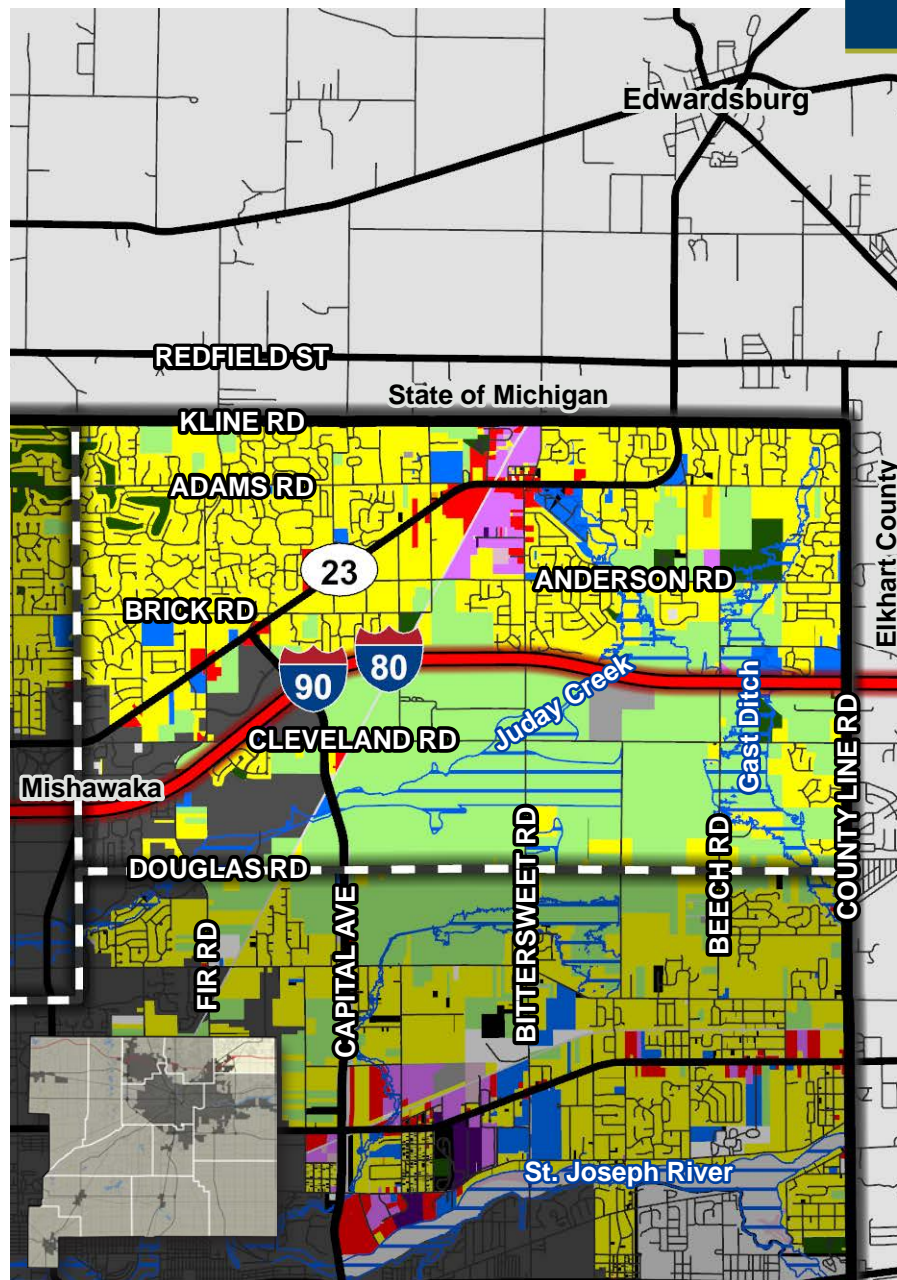
Special Development Considerations Overlays

- Floodplain
- Environmentally Sensitive Area
- Infill and Redevelopment
- Business Technology and Research Park

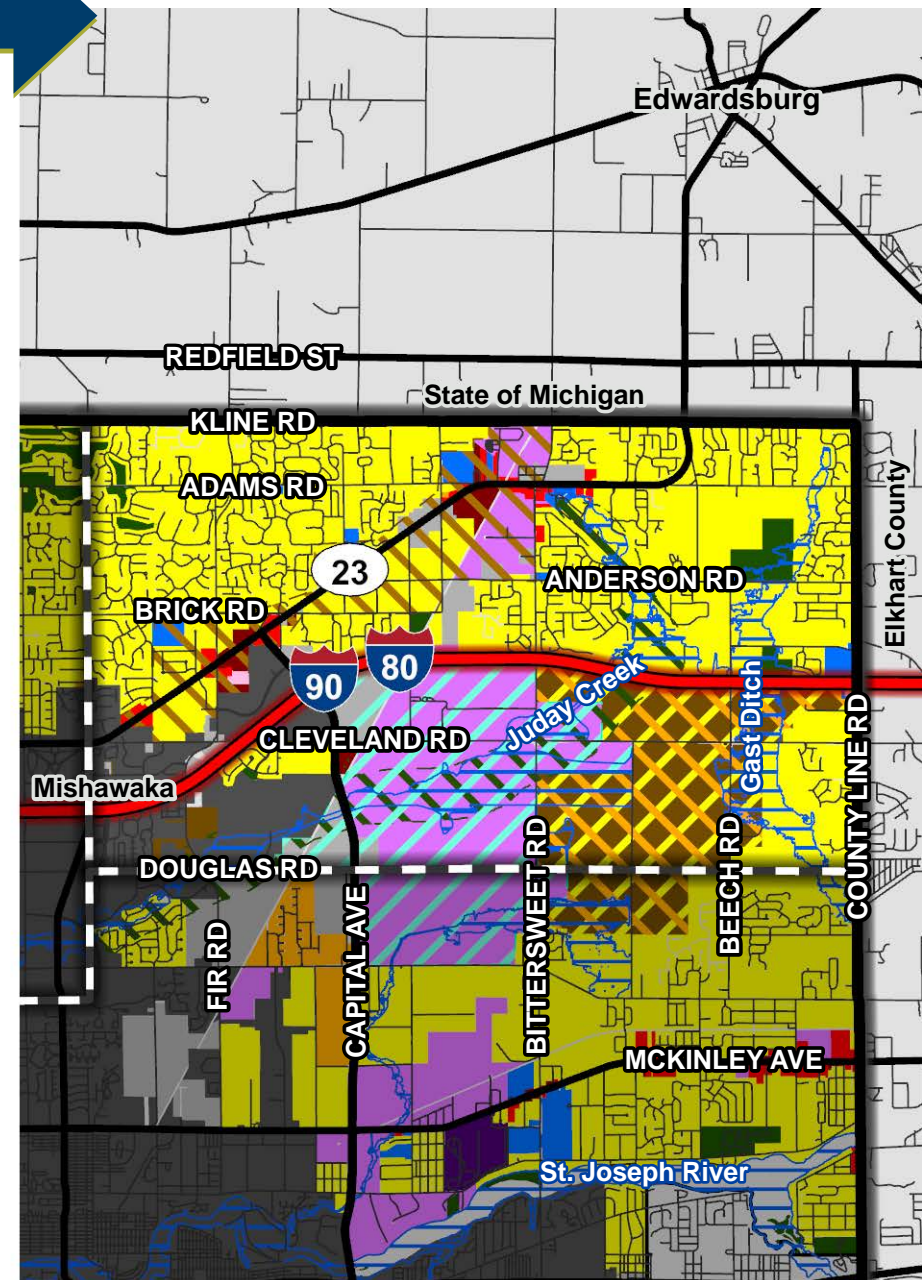
**Existing land use classifications, and their color code on the map, do not translate directly into future land uses*



EXISTING LAND USE MAP



FUTURE LAND USE MAP



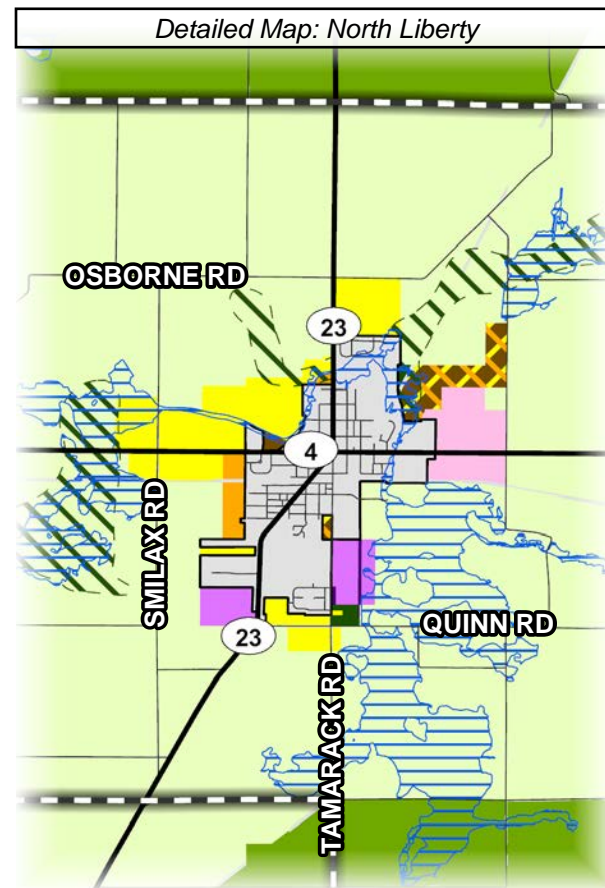
LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

The Town of North Liberty is located centrally in the township, at the intersection of State Road 4 and State Road 23. The land uses shown in close proximity to the Town are taken directly from their 2022 Comprehensive Plan.

Potato Creek State Park is in the northeast corner of the township. Protecting Potato Creek State Park is highly important. The park is a regional destination for outdoor recreation, camping, and plant and wildlife observation. Land use decisions adjacent to the park should carefully consider environmental impacts. The surrounding area is general agricultural, creating a buffer of low-intensity uses.

The mapped Intensive Agriculture areas south of Riley Road and east of Walnut Road contain prime farmland with high-quality soils. These areas should be preserved for long-term agricultural use, and residential homesteads should be strictly limited.

The corridor east of SR 4 and SR 23 is Transitional. This area is primarily single-family residential, but is experiencing increased demand for higher residential density, and commercial and industrial uses. New commercial uses should fit the visual and architectural patterns established by the existing residential character. The Michiana Council of Governments (MACOG) has a planned a regional shared use path, the 4th District of the Wabash Railroad Trail, beginning at North Liberty and terminating at Lakeville in Union Township. Connections to this trail will be vital for adjoining developments.



EXISTING LAND USE MAP LEGEND*

	Agricultural
	Outdoor Recreation
	Single-Residential
	Multi-Residential
	Mobile Home Park
	Institutional
	Commercial
	Industrial (Decommissioned)
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transportation or Utilities
	Other
	Vacant
	Floodplain

Other significant plans for this area:

- North Liberty Comp. Plan
- MACOG Active Transportation Plan

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

	General Agriculture
	Intensive Agriculture
	Parks and Conservation
	Low-Density Residential
	Medium-Density Residential
	High-Density Residential
	Mixed-Density Residential
	Institutional
	Light Commercial
	General Commercial
	Mixed Use
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transitional

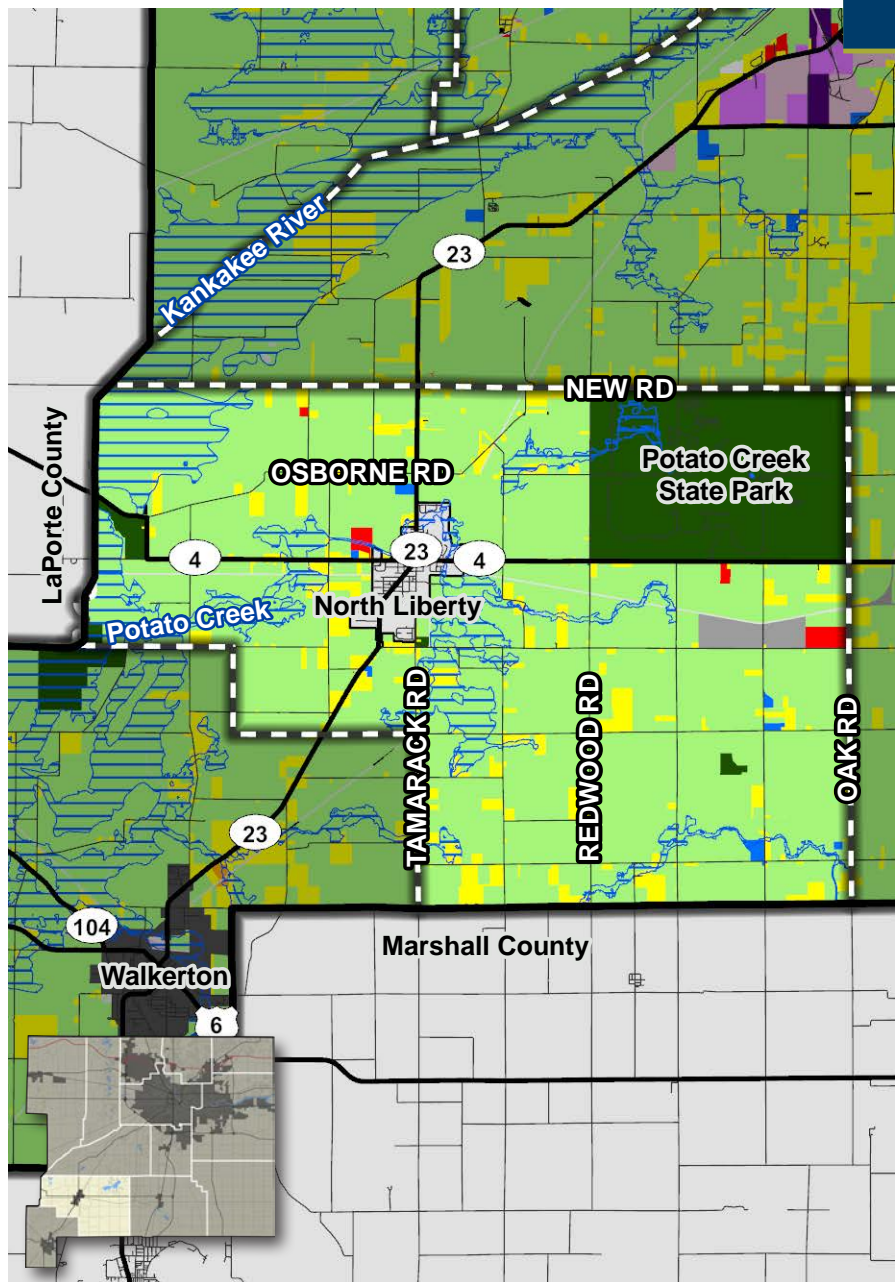
Special Development Considerations Overlays

	Floodplain
	Environmentally Sensitive Area
	Infill and Redevelopment
	Business
	Technology and Research Park

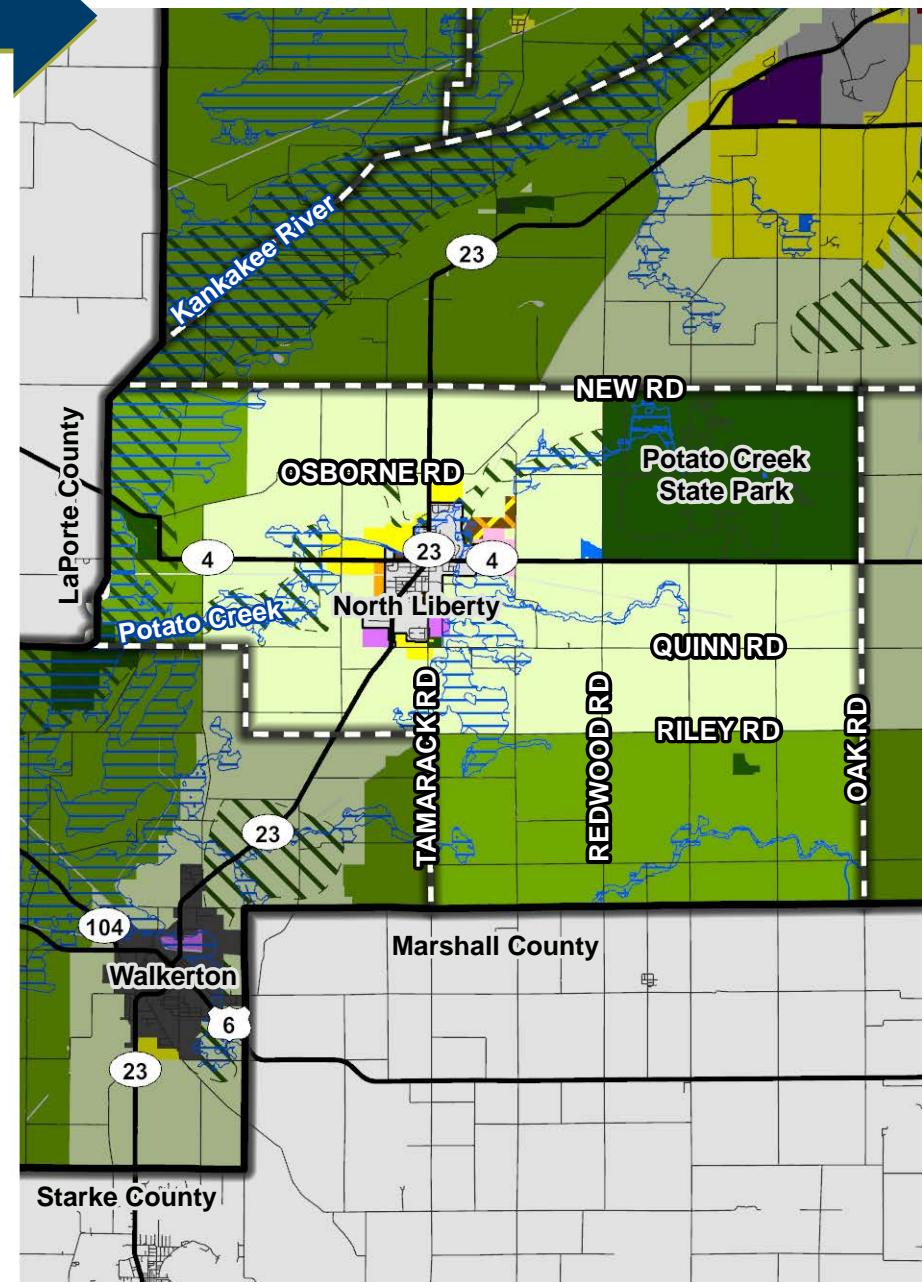
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EXISTING LAND USE MAP

















FUTURE LAND USE MAP



LINCOLN TOWNSHIP

Located at the intersection of US Highway 6 and State Road 23, the Town of Walkerton is the residential and economic hub for Lincoln Township. Multiple wetlands are present to the east and north of the Town limits. These wetlands and the surrounding forests should be protected, as they provide habitats for local plants and wildlife, and reduce flooding. New development should be limited outside the existing town limits or identified priority areas for the Town of Walkerton.















EXISTING LAND USE MAP LEGEND*

	Agricultural
	Outdoor Recreation
	Single-Residential
	Multi-Residential
	Mobile Home Park
	Institutional
	Commercial
	Industrial (Decommissioned)
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transportation or Utilities
	Other
	Vacant
	Floodplain

*Other significant
plans for this area:*

- Walkerton Comp. Plan
- MACOG Active Transportation Plan
- Kankakee River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

	General Agriculture
	Intensive Agriculture
	Parks and Conservation
	Low-Density Residential
	Medium-Density Residential
	High-Density Residential
	Mixed-Density Residential
	Institutional
	Light Commercial
	General Commercial
	Mixed Use
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transitional

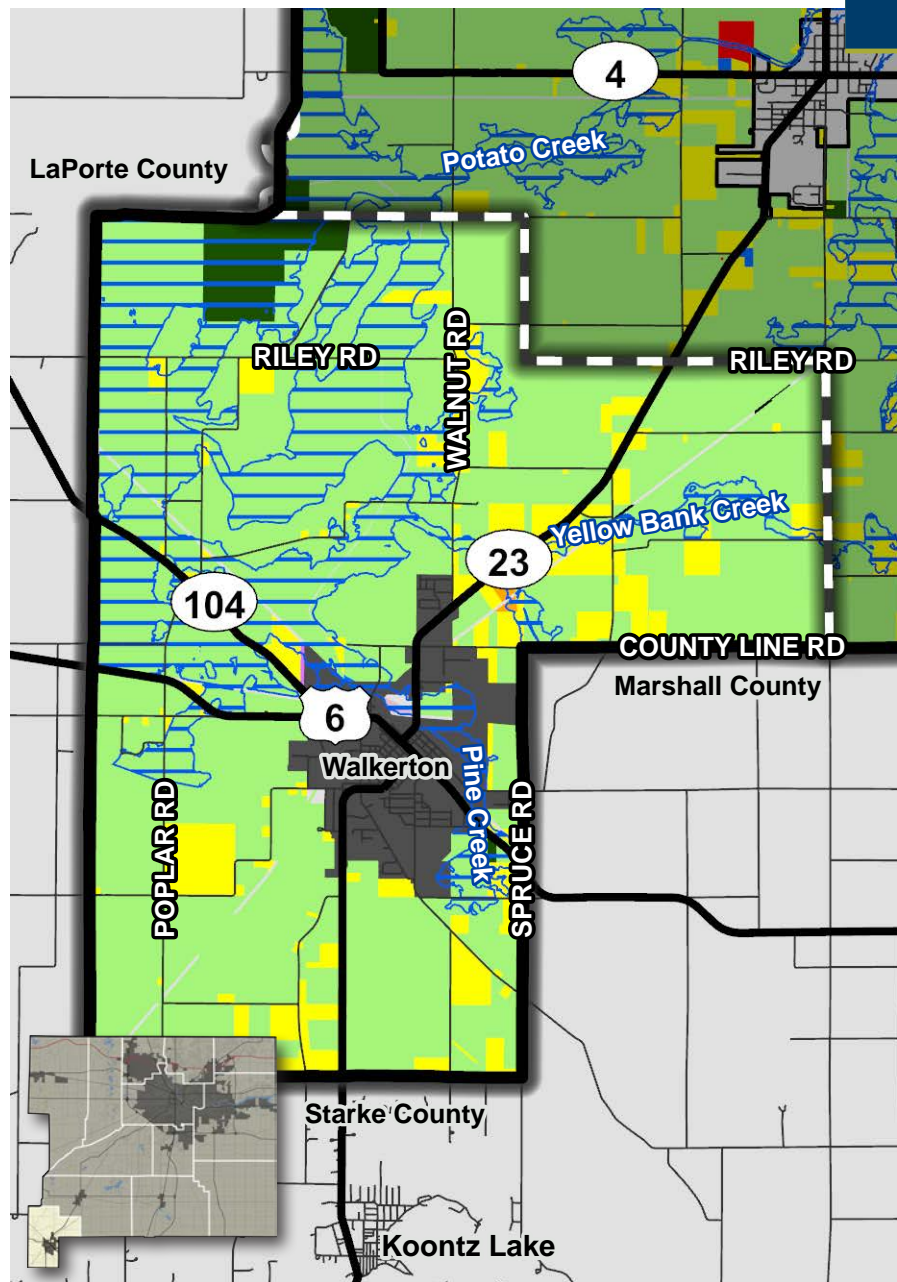
Special Development Considerations Overlays

	Floodplain
	Environmentally Sensitive Area
	Infill and Redevelopment
	Business Technology and Research Park

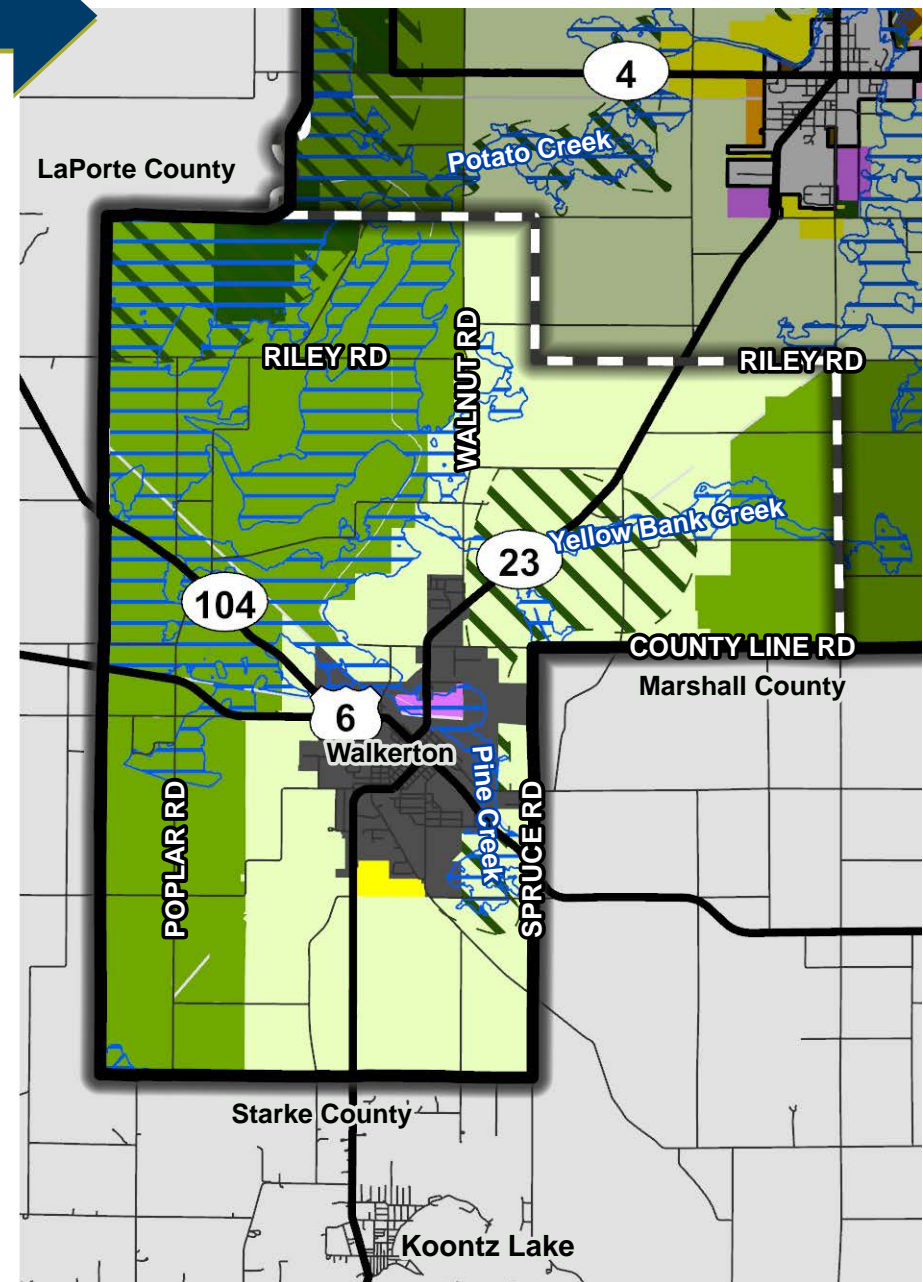
**Existing land use
classifications, and their
color code on the map,
do not translate directly
into future land uses*



EXISTING LAND USE MAP



FUTURE LAND USE MAP

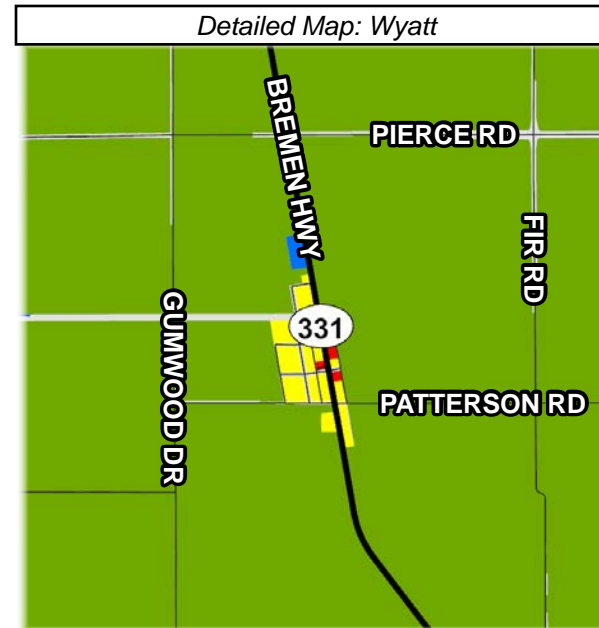


MADISON TOWNSHIP

Madison Township is characterized by sprawling farm fields, agricultural structures, and rural homesteads. The two predominate land uses for Madison Township are Intensive Agriculture and General Agriculture. Established agricultural uses include grain storage, seed production, and raising poultry.

The unincorporated community of Wyatt is the only major settlement in Madison Township; it is home to various businesses that serve township residents. State Road 331 serves as the major road through the township. Development should be strictly limited, as existing public services and infrastructure are at capacity. New residential development should be limited to farmsteads and minor subdivisions that separate existing residential structures from larger tracts of agricultural land, provided adequate street access and public safety services are present.

Several existing religious institutions are within planned Intensive Agriculture areas. These institutions are generally compatible with agricultural uses. These properties are not required to seek land use changes. The Heavy Industrial/Manufacturing near the southwest portion of the township is an existing landfill. This area is also within a tax increment financing (TIF) district.



EXISTING LAND USE MAP LEGEND*

	Agricultural
	Outdoor Recreation
	Single-Residential
	Multi-Residential
	Mobile Home Park
	Institutional
	Commercial
	Industrial (Decommissioned)
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transportation or Utilities
	Other
	Vacant
	Floodplain

Other significant plans for this area:

- MACOG Active Transportation Plan
- MACOG 2045 Transportation Plan

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

	General Agriculture
	Intensive Agriculture
	Parks and Conservation
	Low-Density Residential
	Medium-Density Residential
	High-Density Residential
	Mixed-Density Residential
	Institutional
	Light Commercial
	General Commercial
	Mixed Use
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transitional

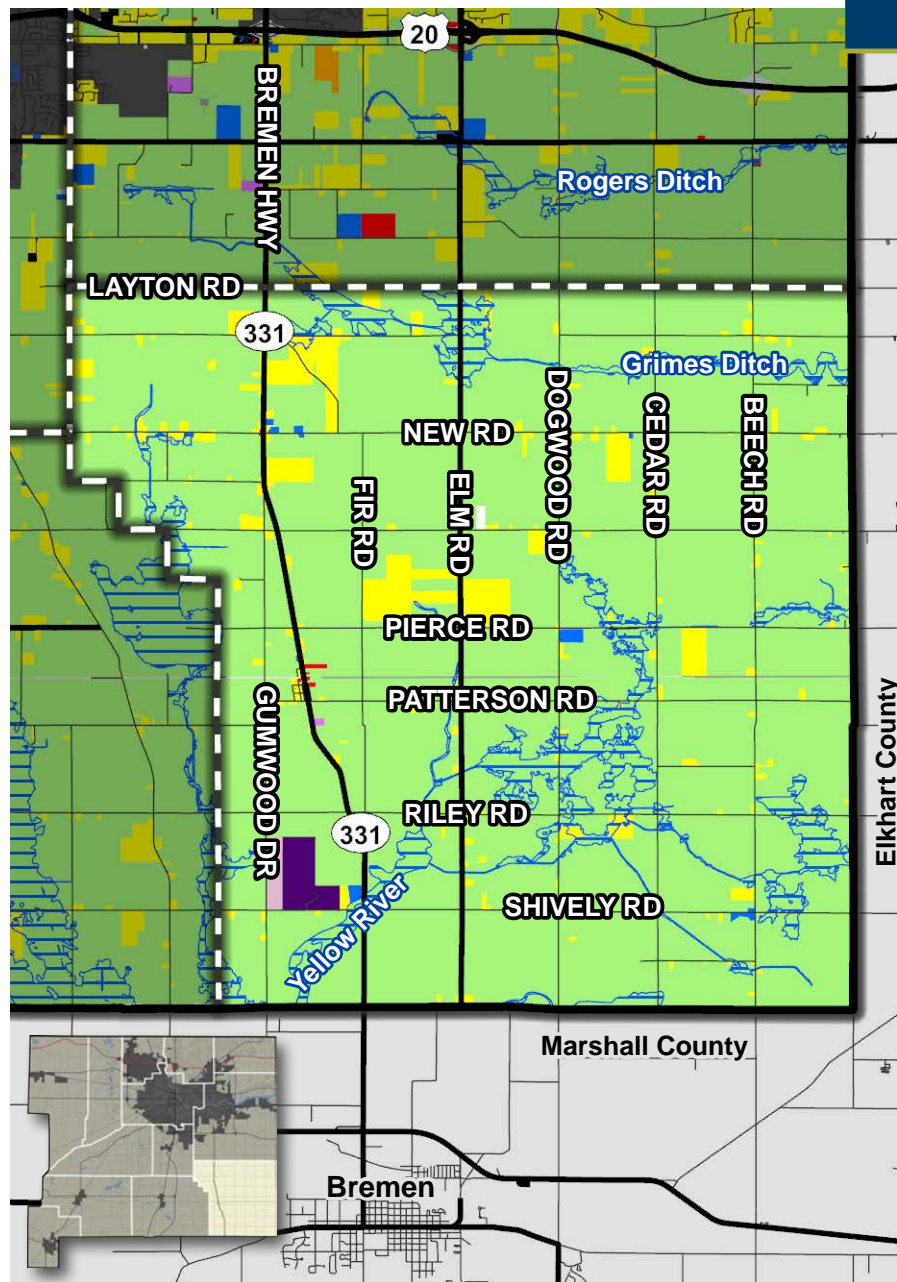
Special Development Considerations Overlays

	Floodplain
	Environmentally Sensitive Area
	Infill and Redevelopment
	Business
	Technology and Research Park

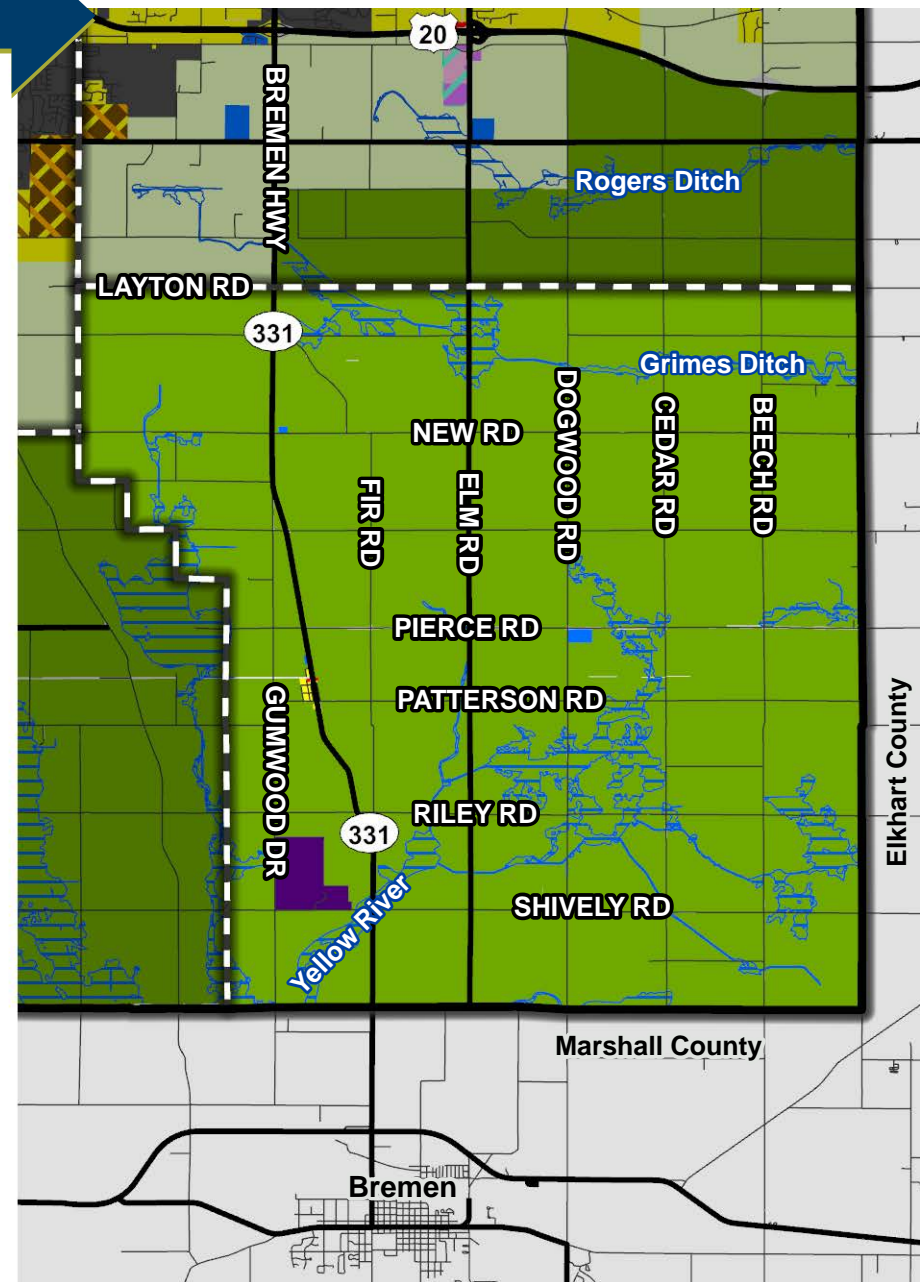
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EXISTING LAND USE MAP



FUTURE LAND USE MAP



OLIVE TOWNSHIP

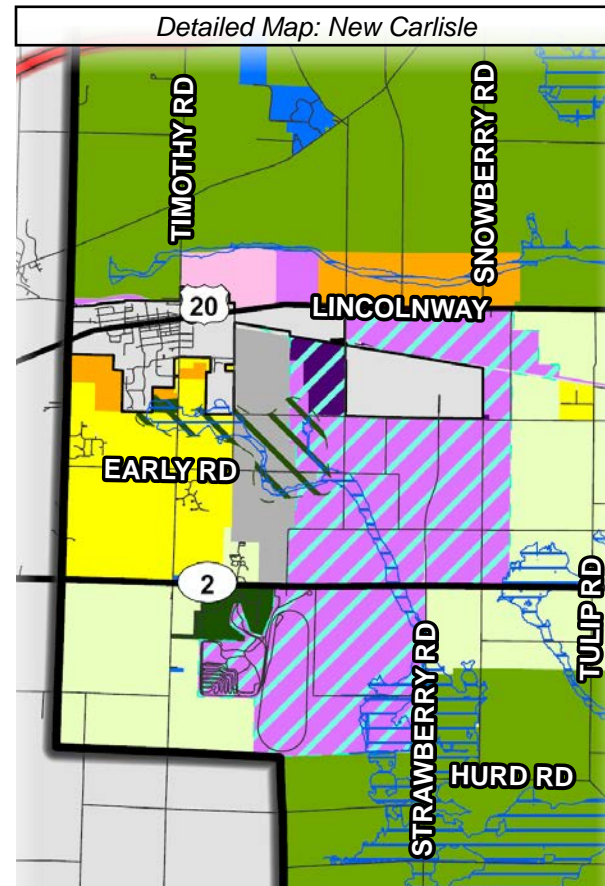
Three major roads run east to west across Olive Township—the Indiana Toll Road/Interstate I-80/I-90, US Highway 20, and State Road 2. Though the Indiana Toll Road runs across northern Olive Township, there is no on/off map providing access from the township. In the future, if a new interchange were constructed at any of the major cross streets—Timothy Road, Spruce Road, or Tamarack Road—it could provide opportunities for Mixed Use development.

The Historic Town of New Carlisle can be found in the western portion of the township, along US Highway 20, north of State Road 2. The Town of New Carlisle's 2040 Comprehensive Plan defines land uses proposed within and around the town's boundaries. As development pressure continues, intergovernmental coordination will be critical to ensure that land use decisions reflect the future Land Use Map.

The Business Technology and Research Park Overlay includes the Indiana Enterprise Center (IEC), limited to the Core Development Area. These uses should maintain a separation buffer from the existing and planned residential uses south of the Town of New Carlisle. Environmental impacts on the Niespodziany Ditch canal and Hooten Ditch should be considered as the planned Industrial and Manufacturing uses found in the IEC expand.

Intensive Agriculture uses are planned in both southern and northern regions of the township. Long-term agricultural use will conserve the 100-year floodplains and retain prime farmland.

Suburban Gardens is an unincorporated community located at the intersection of Tulip Road and Edison Road and should remain sufficiently buffered from the encroaching industrial uses found to the west.



EXISTING LAND USE MAP LEGEND*

- Agricultural
- Outdoor Recreation
- Single-Residential
- Multi-Residential
- Mobile Home Park
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Industrial (Decommissioned)
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Transportation or Utilities
- Other
- Vacant
- Floodplain

Other significant plans for this area:

- New Carlisle Comp. Plan
- IEC Area Management Plan
- MACOG 2045 Transportation Plan
- MACOG Active Transportation Plan
- New Carlisle Station Feasibility Study

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

- General Agriculture
- Intensive Agriculture
- Parks and Conservation
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential
- Mixed-Density Residential
- Institutional
- Light Commercial
- General Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Transitional

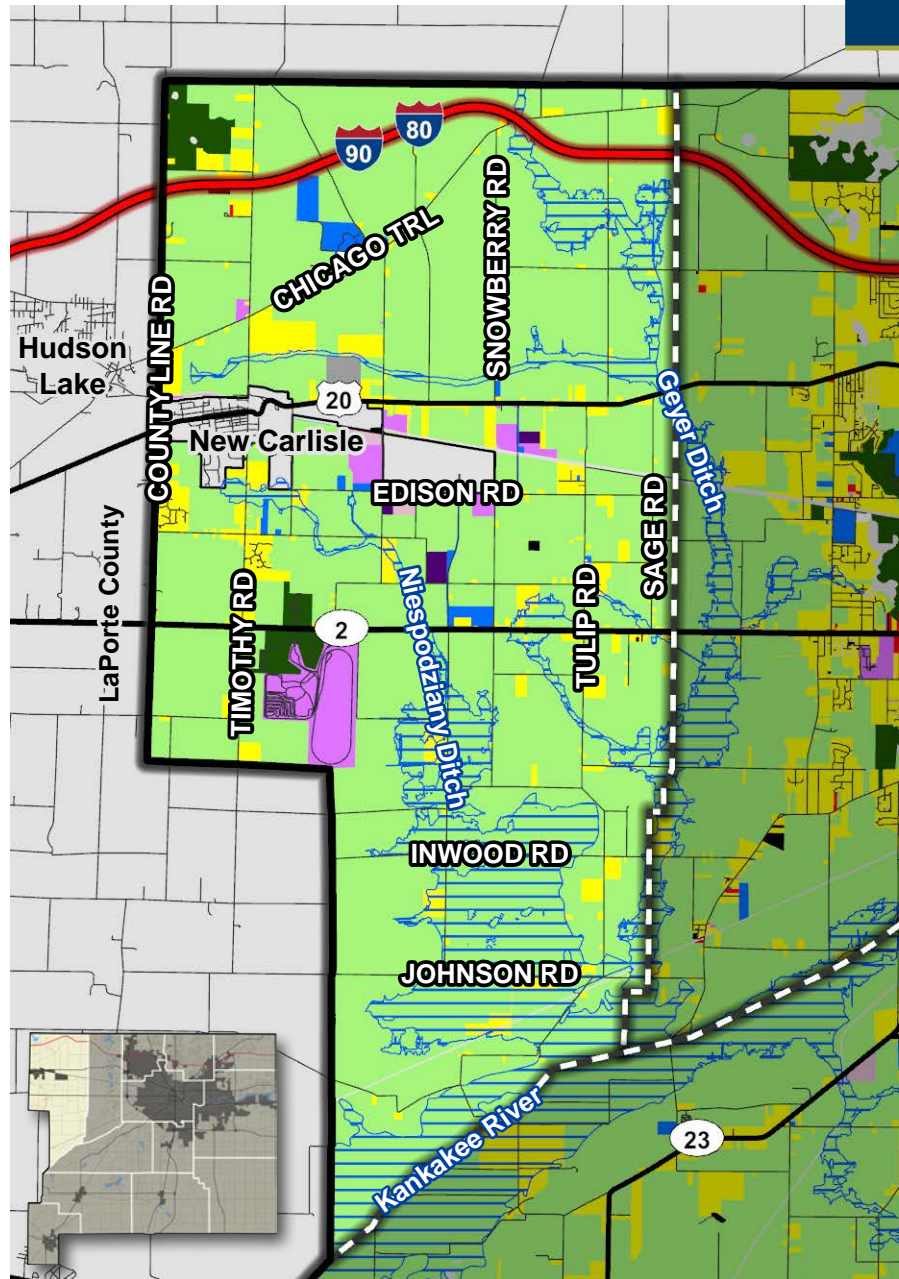
Special Development Considerations Overlays

- Floodplain
- Environmentally Sensitive Area
- Infill and Redevelopment
- Business Technology and Research Park

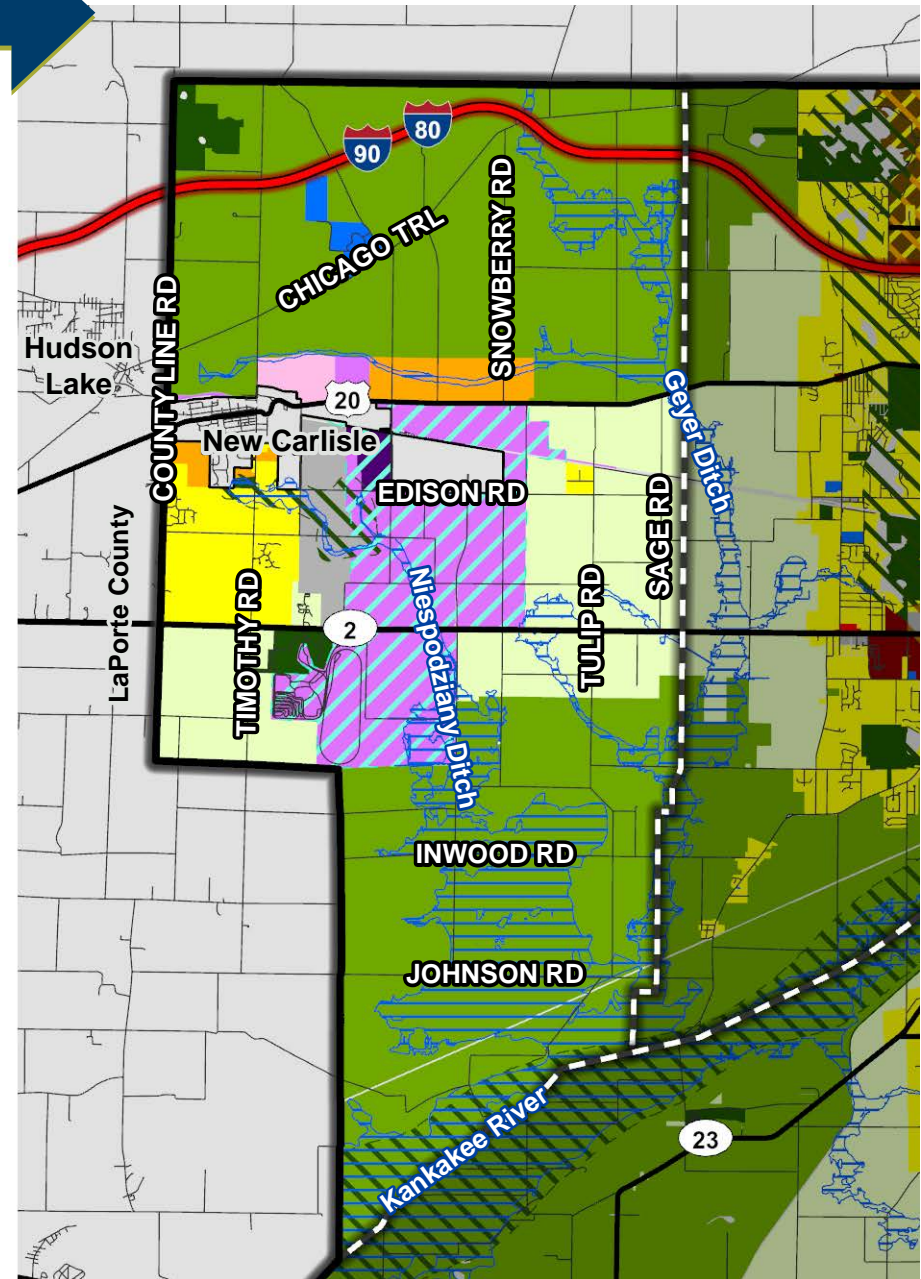
**Existing land use classifications, and their color code on the map, do not translate directly into future land uses*



EXISTING LAND USE MAP



FUTURE LAND USE MAP



PENN TOWNSHIP

Located in eastern St. Joseph County, Penn Township encompasses the majority of the City of Mishawaka and the Town of Osceola. As shown in the Economic Development Priority Area Map, two priority areas are identified in Penn Township—Capital Avenue and Osceola.

The Capital Avenue Plan, jointly completed by the City of Mishawaka and St. Joseph County, provides recommendations and a land use plan for this priority area. Future land use within this priority area reflects the Capital Avenue Plan, showing portions as Business Technology and Research Park, General Commercial, Transitional, and other land use types.

The priority area shown around the Town of Osceola presents opportunities for varying uses and development types. Ferrettie/Baugo

Creek County Park is a gateway into St. Joseph County and the Town of Osceola along State Road 933/Lincoln Way. The revitalization of the SR 933 corridor with commercial uses and transitional areas going west to the City of Mishawaka presents opportunities for development. The area south of Osceola is identified for low-density residential growth.

EXISTING LAND USE MAP LEGEND*

- Agricultural
- Outdoor Recreation
- Single-Residential
- Multi-Residential
- Mobile Home Park
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Industrial (Decommissioned)
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Transportation or Utilities
- Other
- Vacant
- Floodplain

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

- General Agriculture
- Intensive Agriculture
- Parks and Conservation
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential
- Mixed-Density Residential
- Institutional
- Light Commercial
- General Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Transitional

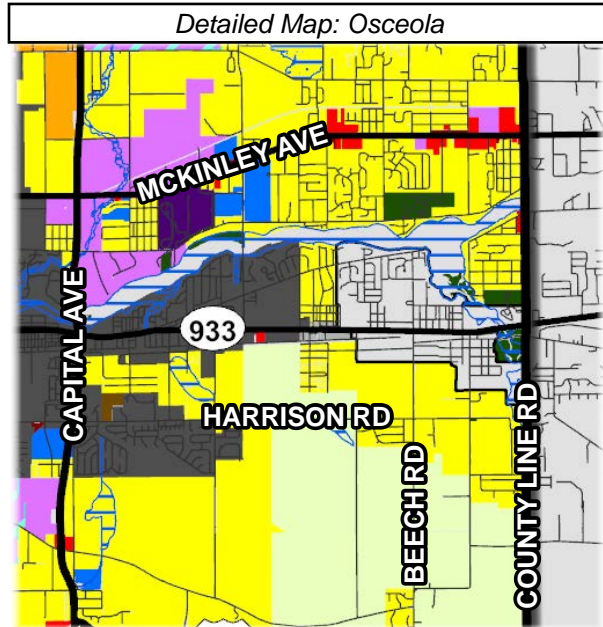
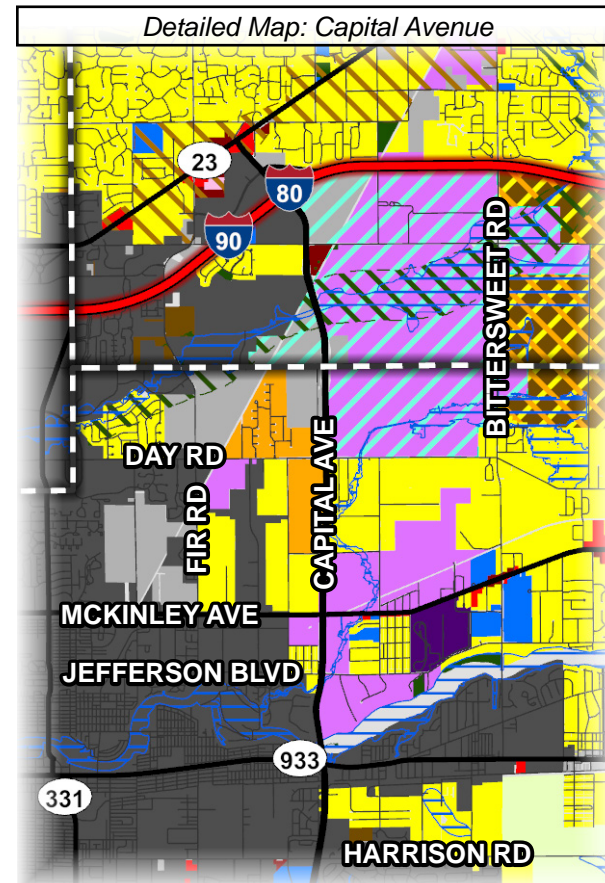
Other significant plans for this area:

- Mishawaka Comp. Plan
- Capital Avenue Corridor Plan (2003)
- Fir Road Land Use Study
- County Connections
- MACOG Active Transportation Plan
- County Parks Master Plan

Special Development Considerations Overlays

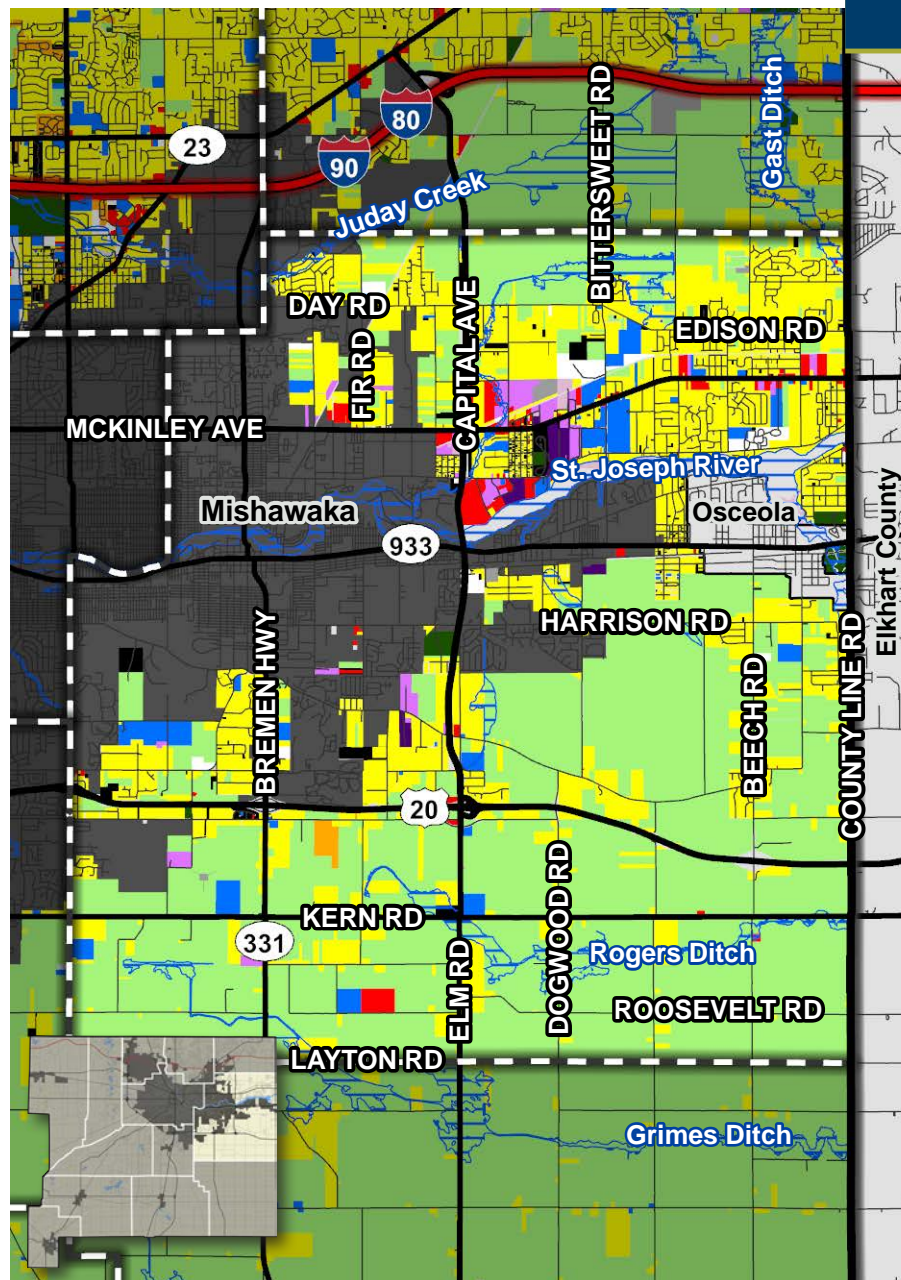
- Floodplain
- Environmentally Sensitive Area
- Infill and Redevelopment
- Business Technology and Research Park

*Existing land use classifications, and their color code on the map, do not translate directly into future land uses

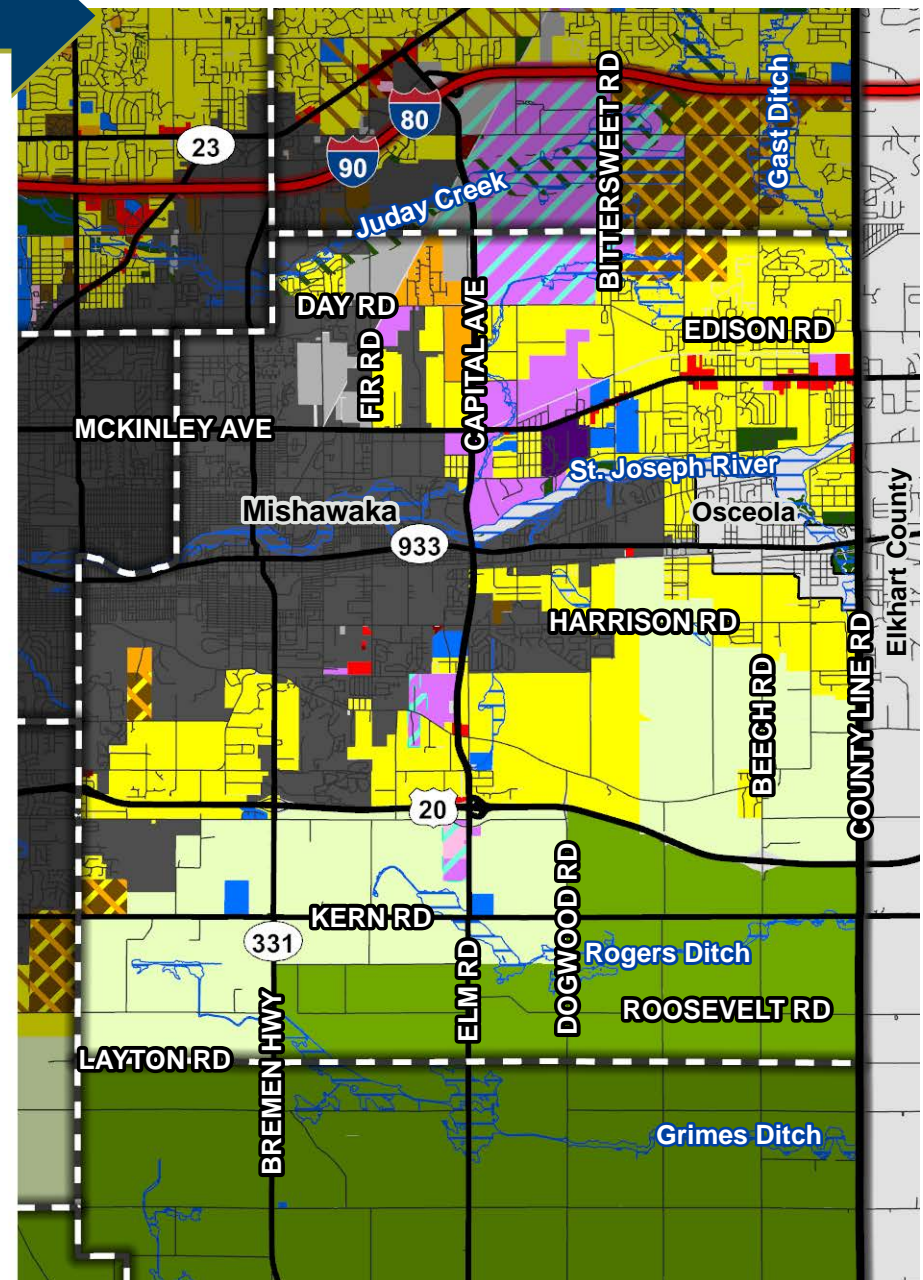




EXISTING LAND USE MAP



FUTURE LAND USE MAP



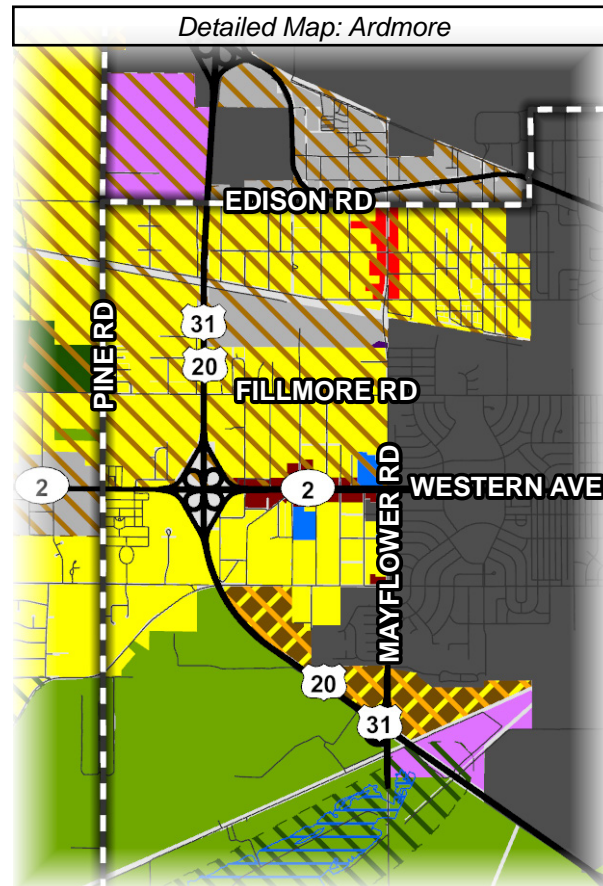
PORTAGE TOWNSHIP

Portage Township contains a mix of commercial services and light industrial uses west of the City of South Bend. A portion of the University of Notre Dame, St. Mary's College, and Holy Cross College are located in the northeastern corner of the Township.

The area west of U.S. 31 features automobile-related uses, as well as light industrial uses. The future land use map in this area recommends General Commercial and lighter Industrial uses.

Residential land use patterns will continue at the northwestern portion of the township. Extending water and sewer infrastructure will provide opportunities for medium to high-density residential development.

Portage Township includes the unincorporated community of Ardmore; properties along Ardmore Trail near the intersection with Mayflower Road act as a local business hub, which has potential for "main street"-style commercial development.



EXISTING LAND USE MAP LEGEND*

- Agricultural
- Outdoor Recreation
- Single-Residential
- Multi-Residential
- Mobile Home Park
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Industrial (Decommissioned)
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Transportation or Utilities
- Other
- Vacant
- Floodplain

Other significant plans for this area:

- South Bend Comp. Plan
- MACOG Active Transportation Plan
- Kankakee River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy
- Rail Opportunity Plan
- TRANSPO Connect Plan

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

- General Agriculture
- Intensive Agriculture
- Parks and Conservation
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential
- Mixed-Density Residential
- Institutional
- Light Commercial
- General Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Transitional

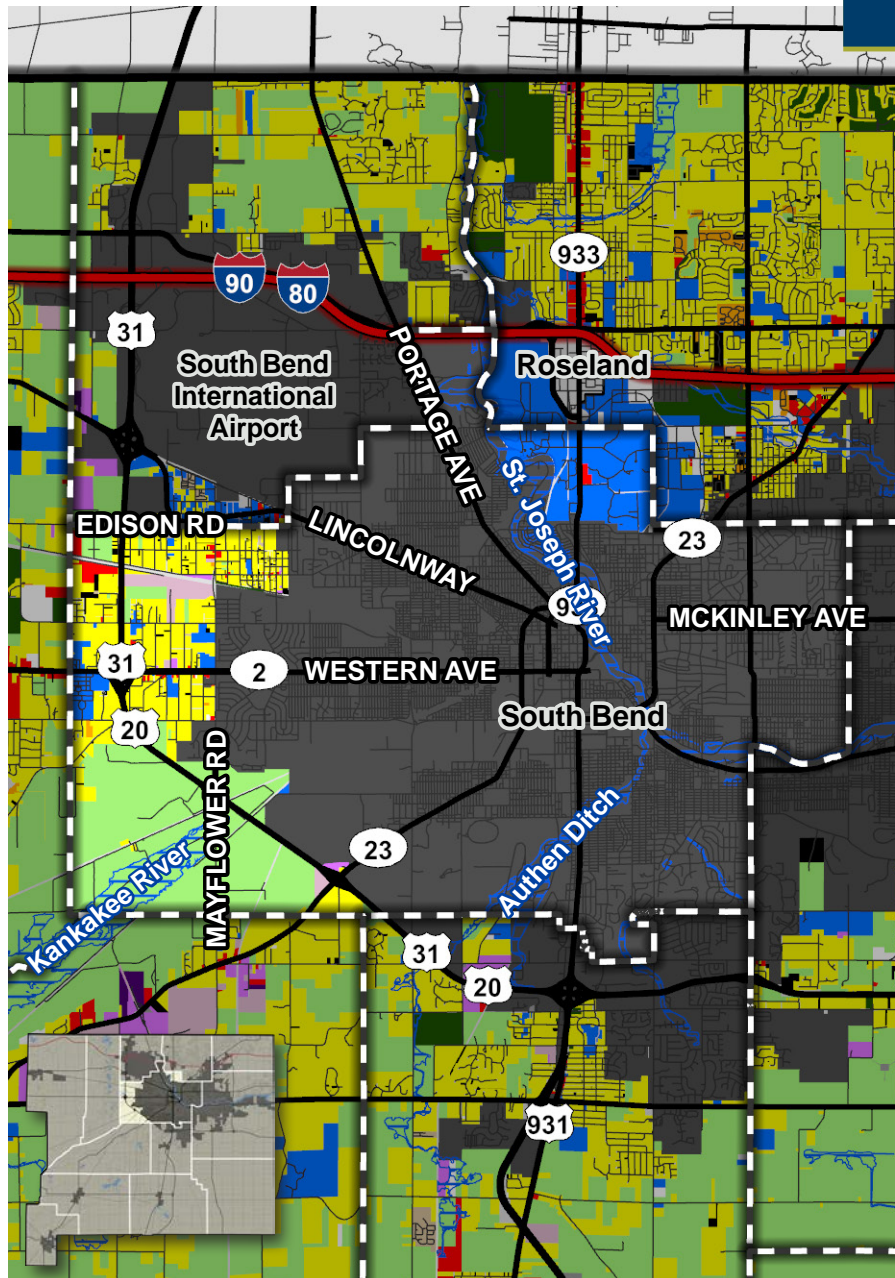
Special Development Considerations Overlays

- Floodplain
- Environmentally Sensitive Area
- Infill and Redevelopment
- Business Technology and Research Park

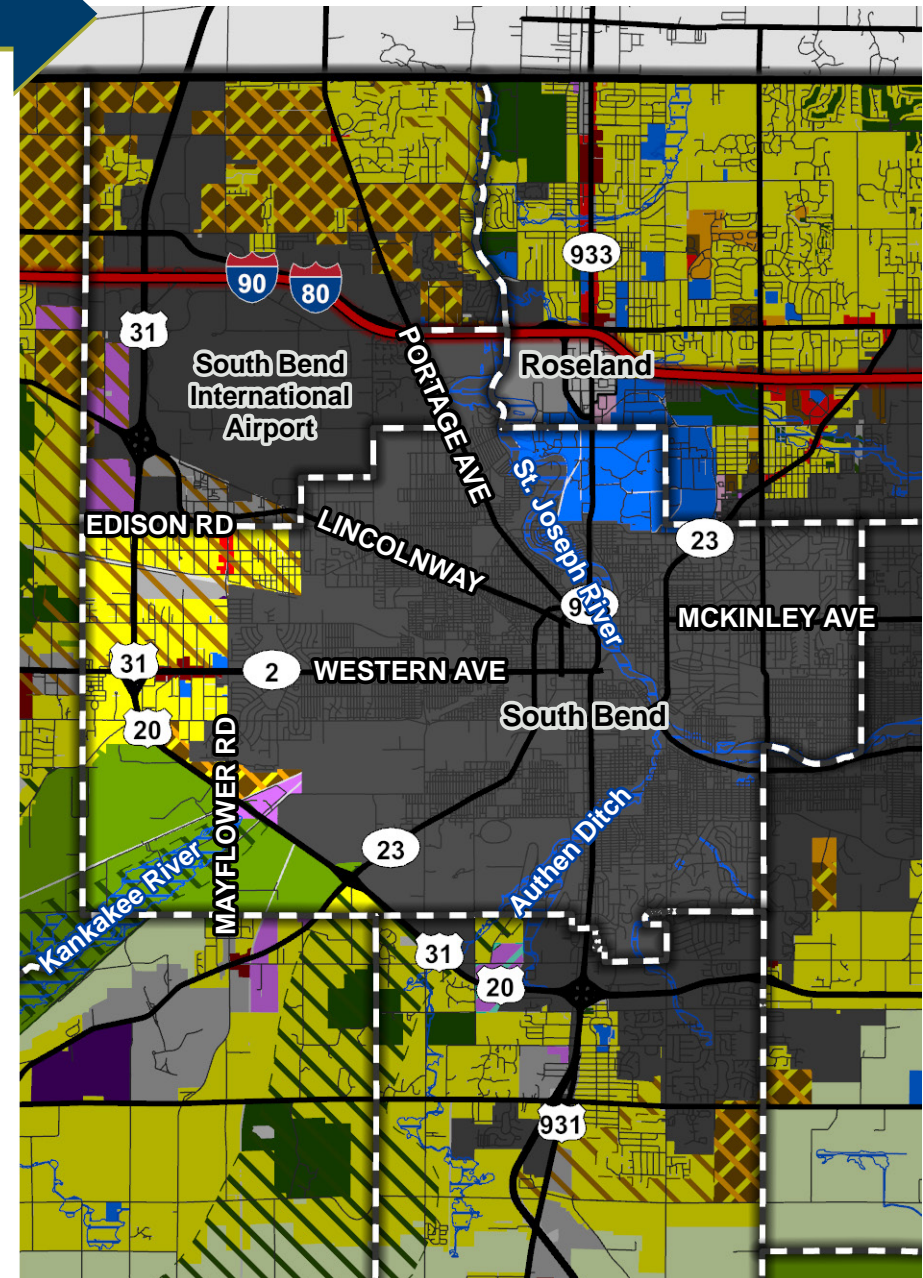
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EXISTING LAND USE MAP



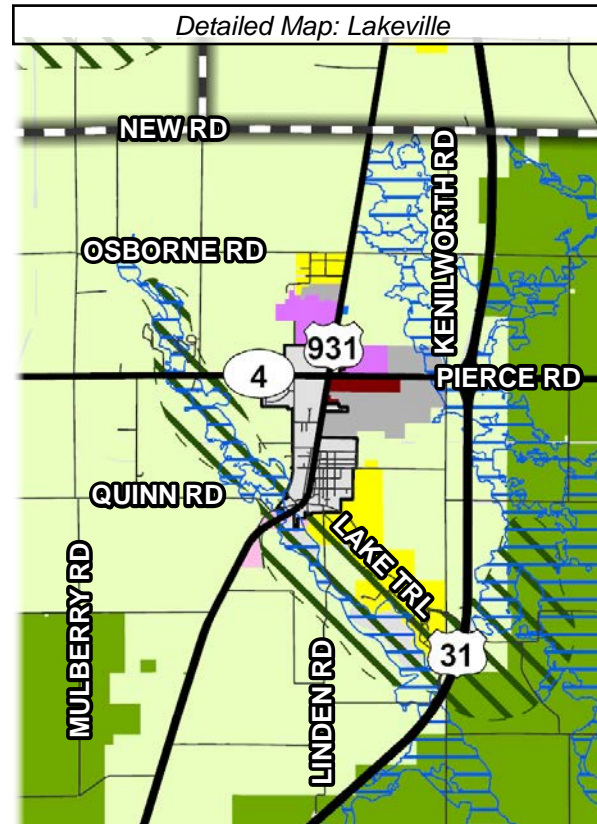
FUTURE LAND USE MAP



UNION TOWNSHIP

The Town of Lakeville is the population center and economic hub of Union Township. The Town's Comprehensive Plan defines land uses within the town limits and in the identified priority areas. State Road 4 is a major east-west connector between SR 931 and US 31, with transitional, commercial, and light industrial shown in the Future Land Use Map. Residential uses are shown to the south of the Town along Lake Trail.

Long-term production agriculture is recommended for the southwest and eastern portion of Union Township. General Agriculture is proposed as a buffer between the production agriculture areas and the developed areas near Lakeville. It is important to consider development impacts on Pleasant, Fites, and Riddles Lakes, as this area is within the Environmentally Sensitive Overlay.



EXISTING LAND USE MAP LEGEND*

	Agricultural
	Outdoor Recreation
	Single-Residential
	Multi-Residential
	Mobile Home Park
	Institutional
	Commercial
	Industrial (Decommissioned)
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transportation or Utilities
	Other
	Vacant
	Floodplain

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

	General Agriculture
	Intensive Agriculture
	Parks and Conservation
	Low-Density Residential
	Medium-Density Residential
	High-Density Residential
	Mixed-Density Residential
	Institutional
	Light Commercial
	General Commercial
	Mixed Use
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transitional

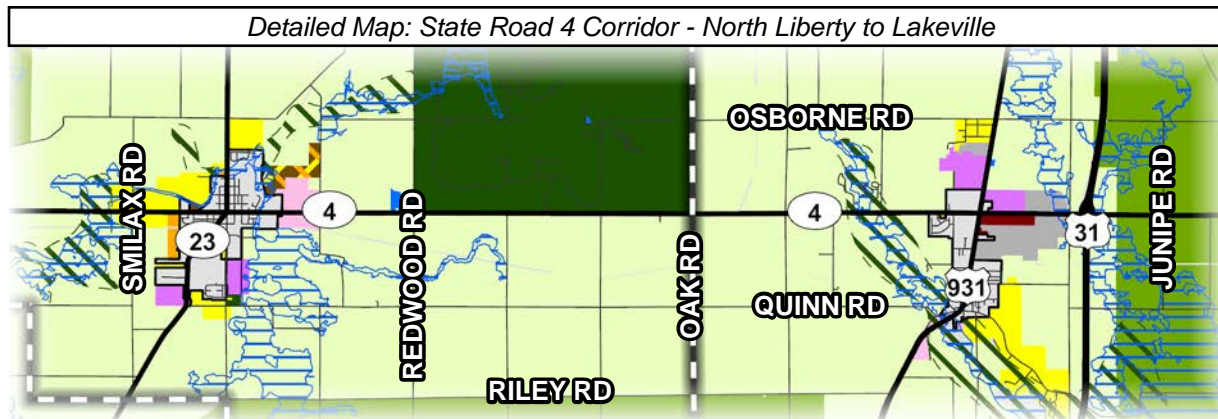
Special Development Considerations Overlays

	Floodplain
	Environmentally Sensitive Area
	Infill and Redevelopment
	Business Technology and Research Park

Other significant plans for this area:

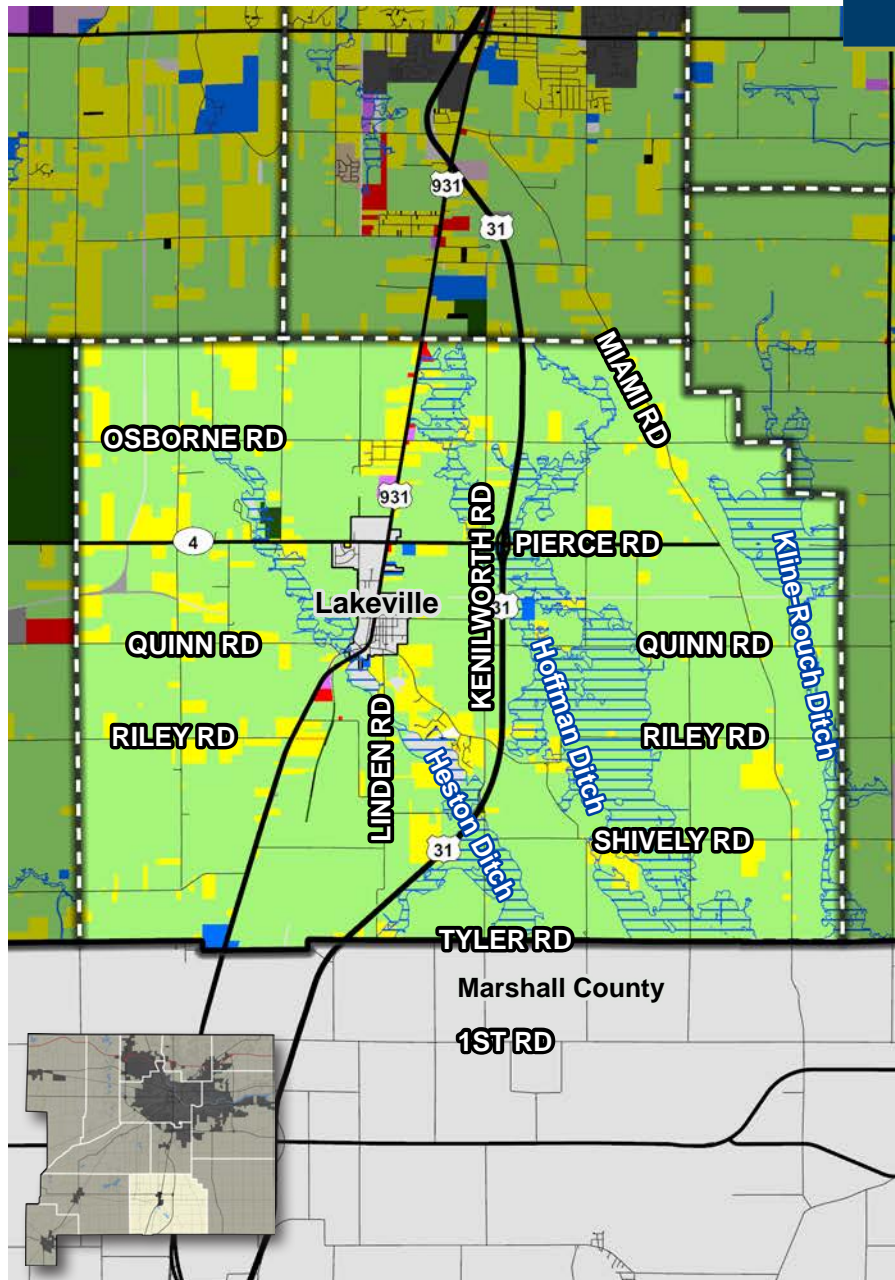
- Lakeville Comp. Plan
- MACOG Active Transportation Plan
- MACOG 2045 Transportation Plan
- Pierce Road Corridor Study

**Existing land use classifications, and their color code on the map, do not translate directly into future land uses*

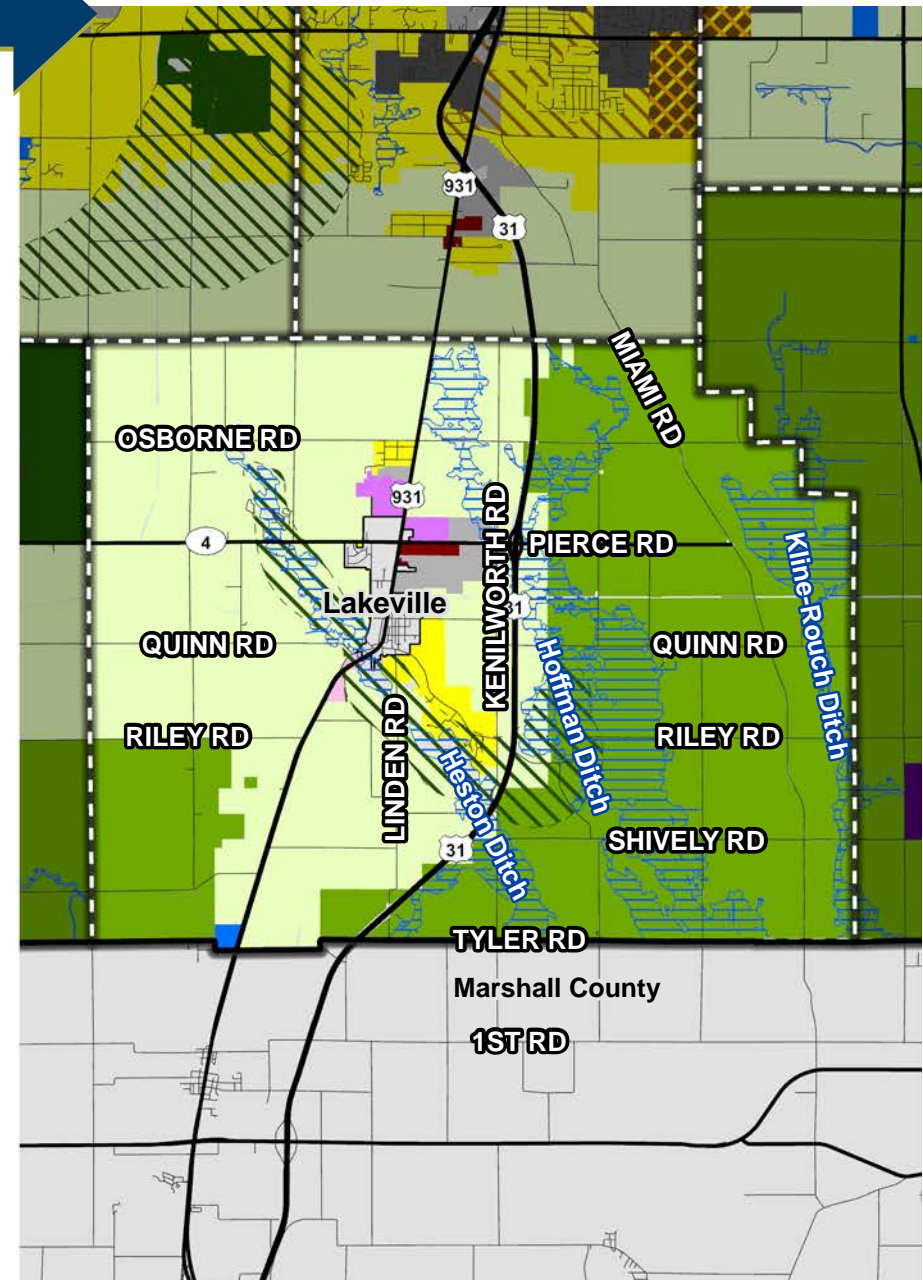




EXISTING LAND USE MAP



FUTURE LAND USE MAP

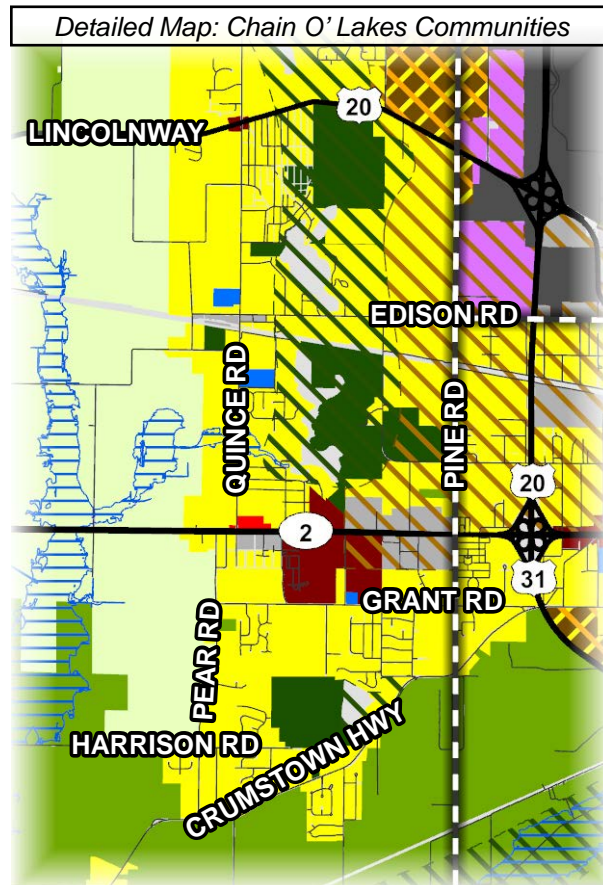


WARREN TOWNSHIP

Located to the west of the City of South Bend, Warren Township is home to the Chain O' Lakes—a regional recreation and tourist destination. Due to their ecological value, these lakes and wetlands are shown within the environmentally sensitive overlay. These areas should be buffered from higher intensity uses, preferably with parks and conservation uses containing natural features to protect the water quality. There is potential for desirable new and infill lakeside residential development, as proximity to parks and conservation areas like Chamberlain Lakes Nature Preserve are also attractive for residential growth. Connection to water and sewer will be critical for the development of this area.

The unincorporated communities of Chain O' Lakes, Lydick, and Westfield are located along Quince Road. These central gathering places have potential for mixed use and increased development density. The intersection at Quince Road and Edison Road could serve as a local "main street" area for Lydick. State Road 2 acts as a commercial and service retail corridor. SR 2 should be developed as a key gateway into South Bend and has and has been labeled transitional on the map.

The area along US 20 presents a prime opportunity for high-density, trail-oriented development. Long-term agricultural uses are planned for Harrison Road and the Crumstown Highway to the Kankakee River. Urban and suburban sprawl should be limited—especially west of Quince Road and south of Crumstown.



EXISTING LAND USE MAP LEGEND*

	Agricultural
	Outdoor Recreation
	Single-Residential
	Multi-Residential
	Mobile Home Park
	Institutional
	Commercial
	Industrial (Decommissioned)
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transportation or Utilities
	Other
	Vacant
	Floodplain

Other significant plans for this area:

- Kankakee River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy
- MACOG Active Transportation Plan
- MACOG 2045 Transportation Plan
- TRANSPO Connect Plan

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

	General Agriculture
	Intensive Agriculture
	Parks and Conservation
	Low-Density Residential
	Medium-Density Residential
	High-Density Residential
	Mixed-Density Residential
	Institutional
	Light Commercial
	General Commercial
	Mixed Use
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Transitional

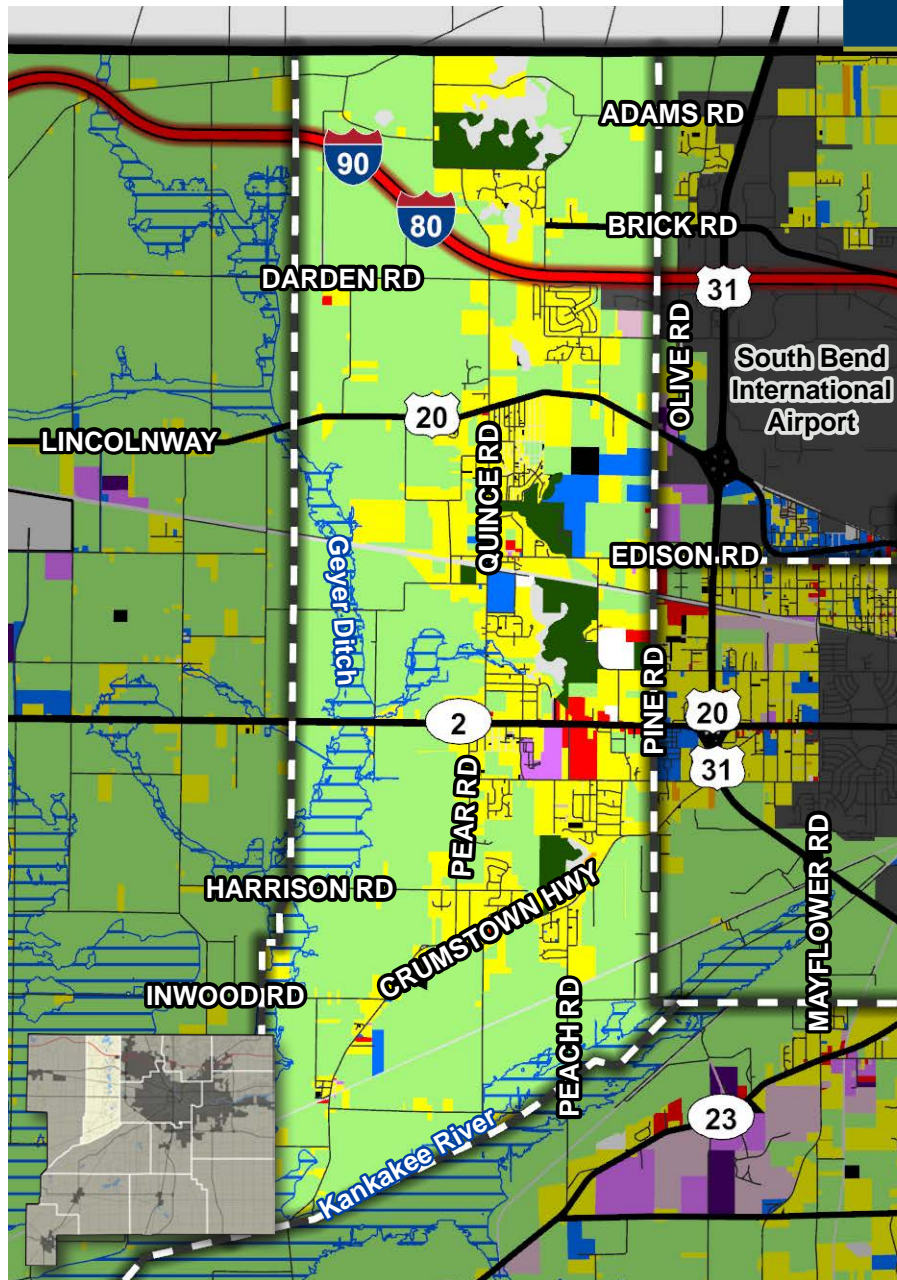
Special Development Considerations Overlays

	Floodplain
	Environmentally Sensitive Area
	Infill and Redevelopment
	Business Technology and Research Park

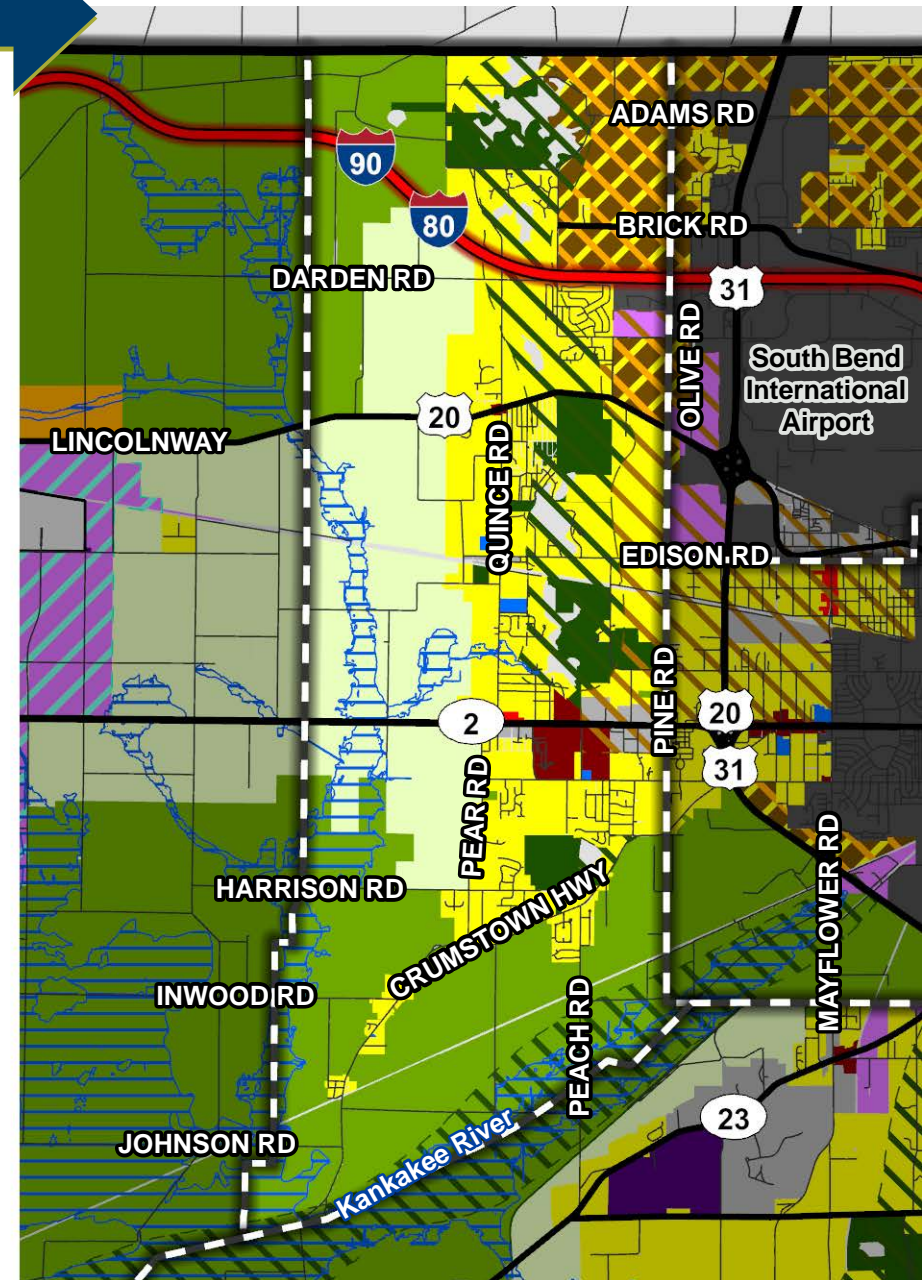
**Existing land use classifications, and their color code on the map, do not translate directly into future land uses*



EXISTING LAND USE MAP



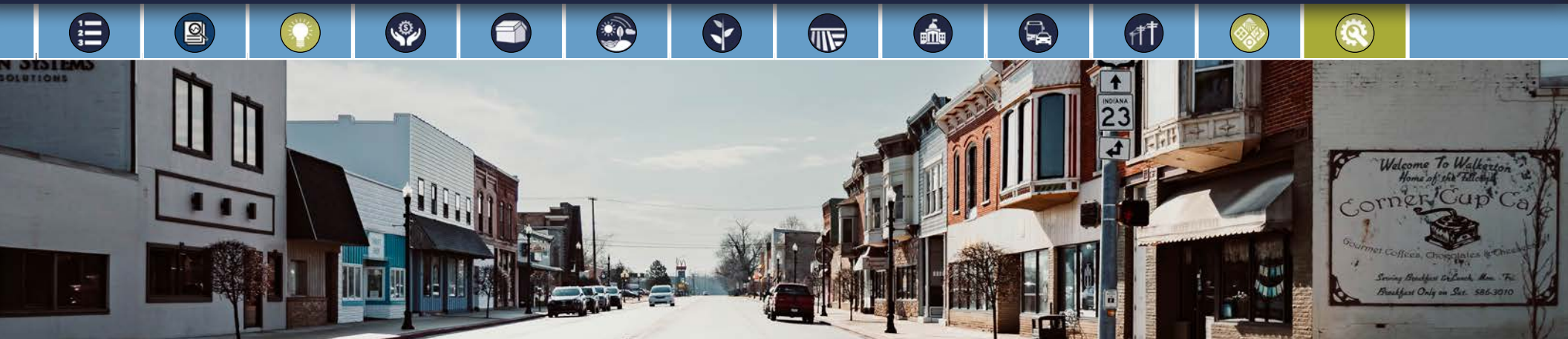
FUTURE LAND USE MAP



IMPLEMENTATION







WHAT IS 'IMPLEMENTATION?'

The Implementation section provides direction to operationalize Plan SJC. Implementation includes using the Plan as a guide for zoning decisions, prioritizing projects, progress reporting, and more.

Implementation translates Plan SJC's vision and goals into meaningful change within the County. The primary initiatives section identifies priority initiatives identified during the planning process. For each goal and associated recommendations, the implementation matrix identifies the timing, importance, level of difficulty, key partners, and relationship to other pillars. While the goals and recommendations are organized under individual Pillars, they are all interconnected to one another. The implementation of this Plan relies on treating each goal and recommendation as a piece of a whole, in order to ultimately achieve the County's Vision.

Extensive discussion occurred with the staff, Task Force, and Elected Officials to ensure the Plan reflects the desired land use pattern for the County. Based on input from the working

groups, the Plan identifies recommendations for the priority areas and the entire County. The 20-year lifespan of this Plan allows adequate time to implement the goals and recommendations in this Plan to achieve the desired land use patterns. It will take that 20-year lifespan to continuously implement tools such as zoning reform, development incentives, infrastructure improvements, and more. A long lifespan enables the County sufficient time to plan for capital improvement strategies and identify funding sources to ultimately achieve the County's Plan SJC Vision.

While the plan is designed to guide the next 20 years of decision-making, it should be treated as a living document that is reviewed annually and periodically updated. Updates are necessary to remain relevant as a guiding document. It is imperative that staff track the Plan's progress and prepare an annual report to the appointed and elected bodies.

PRINCIPLES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Flexible Approach

Plan SJC does not make the decision for the Area Plan Commission or County Council. Instead, the Plan serves as a guide and resource for decision-making by providing valuable data and establishing the County's collective vision for how, where, and how much development should occur over time. In making decisions, staff, elected officials, and appointed officials should reflect on the County's values, and make decisions that align with the intent and spirit of the Plan.

The Plan should inform day-to-day decisions concerning specific petitions that staff review. Staff should use the future land use map, goals, and recommendations to help determine how best to implement Plan SJC in both short-term and long-term planning. The recommendations and implementation strategies in this Plan should not be the only guidance document for the County to make decisions. The Plan cannot account for unknown future development projects that may arise over the next five to



20 years. The Plan is intentionally written with a vision and broad goals to give the elected and appointed officials the latitude to make the best decisions in approving or denying future development projects based on changing conditions and values of St. Joseph County.

Fiscal Responsibility

Although the County intends to administer this Plan with available financial resources, funds may be needed to carry out some recommendations. Additionally, the County should seek funding from federal, state, or local grants, loans or other resources.

Collaboration and Partnerships

Several partners came together to provide input during this process. The implementation of this Plan requires on-going relationships between stakeholders, property owners, business owners, community leaders, the County, and State. Strong partnerships are needed to foster good communication, provide other alliances in implementing some recommendations, and explore funding opportunities.

Open and Nimble to Opportunities

This Plan was created to represent the community's vision for the community's future, and it is unlikely that this Plan has accounted for all types of development that may arise over the next 20 years. In addition to referencing the Plan, County staff, the APC, and County Council must use their best judgment and experience to determine if a project would be beneficial to the community.

Accountability

The County is responsible for implementing the recommendations, reviewing the Plan, updating the Plan, and accomplishing the vision and goals in this Plan. As the needs of the community change, the Plan should be reviewed and updated regularly to align with those changing needs. It is recommended that this Plan is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the vision, goals, and recommendations are still applicable.

PLAN REVIEW & UPDATE

Planning is a dynamic process that responds as conditions change. Plan SJC will need to be revised periodically to ensure it stays consistent and relevant.

Minor updates, such as revising or adding goals, or making minor updates to the future land use map, should occur every three to five years or as necessary. These may include revisions to one or more sections of the plan due to changes within the market, infrastructure, a specific issue/policy change, or change in state law. A minor update may be as small as correcting text or including changes to the future land use map.

Major rewrites should occur every 10–20 years or as necessary. This process should include a thorough review and evaluation of the vision and development policies contained within the Plan. Policies that have been achieved or are not relevant should be changed or removed from the Plan. New policies should be developed, if necessary, to accommodate any changes in conditions and ensure the

Plan is still effective. A plan rewrite should also provide opportunities for public involvement.

An annual review of the plan, as discussed under Primary Initiatives later in this chapter, aids in plan implementation. During the annual review process, it's important to note areas of success to help build support for future planning activities. Identifying less successful components may suggest a need for an update or rewrite of a chapter.

Interpretation

Plan SJC serves as St. Joseph County's guide for land use and development policies to promote orderly growth and development within County limits. The long-range goals, objectives, and strategies, along with the supporting maps, are intended to guide development decisions towards the community's collective vision of the future.

County staff, the Area Plan Commission, and County Council should interpret the goals and objectives as long-term and deliberately broad. County officials cannot anticipate all circumstances. However, the spirit of this Plan should be adhered to in order to ensure that the community's values are maintained. Members of the APC and County Council should interpret the Plan recommendations by saying, "given our long-term goals and changing community conditions, these are the projects and programs that we want to complete in the short-term and long-term, and this is how we plan to accomplish them."

Interpreting the Plan in this way will enable the members of both the APC and County



Council to justify their approval or denial, of any proposed development or redevelopment in St. Joseph County. When a new annexation, rezoning, or subdivision request is filed with the County, staff should review and evaluate the application against Plan SJC and the County's other ordinances. Staff should provide a staff report with a formal recommendation that includes an evaluation of the development and the degree to which the proposed project conforms to the Plan's goals, objectives, strategies, and future land use map. If the APC recommends approval to the County Council for numerous rezoning requests inconsistent with the future land use map, the Plan should be updated, as this is an indication that the County's conditions, issues, or priorities are changing.

Plan SJC does not contain the actual decisions that should be made; however, it serves as a reference and provides guidance of the community's collective vision for the future growth and development of the area, and should be interpreted as such.

IMPLEMENTATION

Zoning and Development Review

Zoning protects the rights of individual property owners while promoting the general welfare of the community. The purpose of zoning is to locate specific land uses where they are most appropriate. In determining the most appropriate zoning designation, the County must consider such things as public utilities, road access, and the existing or established development pattern of the area in which development is proposed. From a

policy standpoint, the Plan provides guidance specifically for changes in land use through rezonings or future land use amendments. The County Council and APC should consider the relevant section(s) of the Plan when reviewing applications and desired changes.

If the application is supported by the relevant sections of the Plan, then the rezoning/amendment should be given favorable consideration. If the application is not supported by the relevant sections of the Plan, then the County Council and APC should either deny the application or approve the application with specific written commitments that would make it consistent with the intent of the Plan. In general, the APC and County Council should support a rezone under the following circumstances:

- When the requested rezoning is consistent with long range land use plans adopted by the County Council.
- When there was an error or oversight in the original zoning of the property.
- When changes have occurred to conditions in the vicinity of the property which prevent the reasonable use of the property as currently zoned.
- When the requested rezoning benefits the community at large. If the APC recommends approval to the County Council for numerous rezones that are substantially inconsistent with the future land use map included in this Plan, then the Plan should be amended. This is an indication that the area's conditions, issues, or priorities have changed.

PRIMARY INITIATIVES

Considering the needs of the County, current conditions data, and ideas discussed throughout the planning process, several initiatives have been identified as priority projects. These primary initiatives and their associated action steps should be used as the first set of work plan items to be prioritized and completed.

Update the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances

Plan SJC is a statement of policy—not a regulatory document. The most common tool for implementing the plan is through the County's zoning and subdivision ordinances, as these ordinances regulate land use and development. The zoning and subdivision ordinances define the permissible uses, size, density, and character of development. Additionally, subdivision regulations help control the construction of infrastructure and utilities that will be dedicated to the County upon completion. Throughout the plan, various goals and recommendations directly reference or allude to changes in policy that could be accomplished by updating the ordinances. Prioritizing updates to the ordinances helps ensure that development and land use are in line with the vision of the plan.



Develop a Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan

The existing conditions analysis uncovered a lack of connectivity within the County and the desire for more pedestrian and bicycle facilities. While this plan contains several recommendations for sidewalks, trails, and street enhancements, the County should develop a more detailed and long-term program to identify, fund, maintain, and construct these quality-of-life projects. The Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan should provide detailed cross sections and preliminary alignment options. The Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan should be developed in coordination with the County Parks and Recreation Department and be updated every five years to stay relevant to the County's residents and project pursuits.

Create a 3-to-5-year Capital Improvements Plan

Capital Improvements Plans (CIP) are documents that cover a time frame of three to five years and are updated annually. CIPs aid in plan implementation by identifying and providing the necessary funding sources for short-range infrastructure and capital improvement projects. The CIP provides guidance and planning for capital improvements throughout the County and allocates financial resources to various community needs. The CIP states the County Council's prioritization of available financial resources for capital projects by identifying which projects should be included, when they should be constructed, and how they will be financed.

A CIP represents the County's tentative commitment to comply with the plan unless circumstances or priorities change in the future. The commitment is more certain in the first year of the CIP and becomes increasingly more tenuous in subsequent years. Nevertheless, the CIP should be used as the County's present plan and priority over the next three to five years. While the CIP is a planning document, it should not be an automatic authorization of the construction of projects, given the procurement process and the allocation of resources.

Prepare an Annual Report for the APC regarding the Status of Each Pillar

An annual report ensures that County staff, officials, and residents remain engaged in long-term planning processes and ensure the County's initiatives are aligned with the goals, priorities, and regulations of the Plan. It should present new data and development trends that may necessitate an update to the Plan to keep it relevant to desired planning outcomes. Additionally, it provides an opportunity to evaluate implemented strategies and incorporate new feedback from the public and elected officials that may have evolved since the Plan's adoption. By completing this report, the County takes a proactive and adaptive approach to planning, effectively responding to emerging trends, and ensuring that future development aligns with the community's vision.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The following matrix provides a framework for the County to partner with organizations and implement the goals and recommendation.

Time-to-Implement Assumptions

- Short-term: 0-5 years
- Mid-term: 5-10 years
- Long-term: 10+ years
- On-going: A recommendation that should be implemented into the daily, weekly, or monthly workflow of the County.

Level of Importance

The level of importance helps the County determine how to prioritize recommendations based on the estimated level of impact to the community. It is important to note that the High importance has all the characteristics of Medium; and Medium has some of the same characteristics as Low.

High Importance recommendations should be some of the first recommendations to be started (not necessarily completed), resources allowing, as they significantly move the community vision along the path to achievement.

Medium Importance recommendations may greatly impact certain areas within, but not the entire, County. They may be highly-interconnected with the success of other recommendations.

Low Importance recommendations are not immediately urgent and could, where possible, be delegated to a willing partner.



Level of Difficulty

Level 1 has no or relatively few challenges or constraints, and in some cases may be completed entirely by partnerships.

Level 2 has relatively minor challenges or constraints such as staff availability or the availability of other organizations to collaborate.

Level 3 has moderate challenges or constraints, such as seeking a grant for funding or coordinating long-term planning efforts between multiple parties.

Level 4 has multiple and significant challenges or constraints, such as financial, but are oftentimes also the most important recommendations to achieve the community vision.

Responsible Parties

Many parties will be identified on the following pages, categorized under primary or secondary responsibilities. County boards, departments, and officials are most likely to be identified

but community organizations are included as well. State and local government entities, non-profits, private consultants, and public-private partnerships may also be identified. The identification of responsibilities allows the County to know who should be involved in order to complete the recommendation.

Organizational Structure

The matrix is organized by Pillar in order of appearance in Plan SJ, starting with Economic Development and ending with Utilities. Each goal and recommendation has by a unique identifier for easier reference, using the identification system below:

[Pillar Initials].[Goal #].Recommendation 'A'

Economic Development Goal #1,
Recommendation A

ED.1.A

INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

For readers viewing the plan online or via PDF, the pillar icons below can be clicked to jump its respective section in the matrix.

Economic Development



Housing and Neighborhoods



Quality of Life and Place



Environmental Stewardship



Farmland Preservation



Government and Policy



Transportation



Utilities



Figure 5.1: Implementation Matrix Icons

Time-to-Implement Assumptions	Short Term <5 years	Mid-Term 5 -10 years	Long Term 10+ years	Ongoing
Level of Importance	Low	Medium	High	
Level of Difficulty	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4

**RECOMMENDATION**

Timeline

Difficulty

Importance

KEY PARTNERS**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT****Goal ED.1: PROMOTE THE IDENTIFIED PRIORITY AREAS AND CORRIDORS AS PRIME LOCATIONS FOR NEW INVESTMENT.**

ED.1.A	Pursue “shovel ready” certification for identified key sites to expedite development.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment Commissions • Utility service providers • SB Regional Chamber
ED.1.B	Continue to invest resources in and develop the Capital Avenue corridor.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Mishawaka • Redevelopment Commissions • MACOG
ED.1.C	Continue to invest resources in and market the Indiana Enterprise Center (IEC) as a premier economic development business park.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment Commissions • Town of New Carlisle • SB Regional Chamber
ED.1.D	Establish plans and nonfinancial incentives for priority development.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB Regional Chamber • MACOG • Community organizations
ED.1.E	Identify opportunities and strategies to leverage transportation networks and utilities for economic development, including rail lines, interstates, and heavy haul routes.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB Regional Chamber • MACOG • Utility service providers

Goal ED.2: PROMOTE REINVESTMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT.

ED.2.A	Establish a program to focus on revitalization and redevelopment of critical corridors.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities and Towns in the County • Redevelopment Commissions • MACOG
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RECOMMENDATION		Timeline	Difficulty	Importance	KEY PARTNERS
ED.2.B	Encourage investment of infill and redevelopment or reuse of vacant, previously used, underutilized, or inefficient properties.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MACOG • Redevelopment Commissions • Indiana Finance Authority, Brownfield Program
ED.2.C	Target funding and other resources to address code enforcement violations, demolition, site preparation in critical areas.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment Commissions • Countywide Land Bank (TBD) • Code Enforcement
ED.2.D	Use available planning tools to address vacant, obsolete, or underutilized nonresidential buildings.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment Commissions • Countywide Land Bank (TBD)
Goal ED.3: FOSTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS EXPANSION AND ATTRACTION.					
ED.3.A	Encourage opportunities for business expansion and attraction that focus on job creation and tax base growth with diverse residential, commercial, and industrial development.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB Regional Chamber • South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership
ED.3.B	Identify and address potential barriers that may discourage investment in St. Joseph County.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB Regional Chamber • South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership
ED.3.C	Work with local area economic development officials to market and promote the County through various forms of media.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit South Bend & Mishawaka • Indiana Destination Development Corporation
ED.3.D	Direct potential employees and employers to agencies that provide workforce development and attraction efforts to recruit and keep talent in the region.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB Regional Chamber • South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership • Local colleges and universities

RECOMMENDATION		Timeline	Difficulty	Importance	KEY PARTNERS
ED.3.E	Support the development, growth, and retention of small businesses.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB Regional Chamber • South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership • US Small Business Administration
Goal ED.4: ENSURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS HAVE THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO GROW AND DIVERSIFY THE TAX BASE, AND COMMUNICATE OUTCOMES TO THE PUBLIC.					
ED.4.A	Develop predictable economic criteria/indicators that help prioritize projects that should receive direct investment and incentives.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB Regional Chamber • South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership • Cities and Towns in the County
ED.4.B	Publish specific public policy priorities that articulate economic development efforts.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment Commission
ED.4.C	Create and publish an annual report informing the Redevelopment Commission of tax abatements and TIF district activity, including project descriptions, relevant tools, project performance, and status of development agreements.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment Commission
HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS					
Goal HN.1: ENCOURAGE A VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES TO MEET A RANGE OF PREFERENCES AND NEEDS.					
HN.1.A	Update the zoning ordinance to support varying densities.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Plan Commission member communities



RECOMMENDATION

Timeline

Difficulty

Importance

KEY PARTNERS

HN.1.B

Work with partners to assess countywide housing needs.



- MACOG
- South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership
- Home Builders Association of St. Joseph Valley
- Nonprofit housing partners

HN.1.C

Support the development of new housing units to meet the current and projected needs of the community.



- Area Plan Commission member communities

HN.1.D

Support the rehabilitation of existing housing stock.



- Area Plan Commission Member Communities
- Nonprofit housing partners

Goal HN.2: PROMOTE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT IS CONNECTED TO TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS.

HN.2.A

Encourage sidewalks, multi-use paths, bicycle lanes, landscaping, and other safety design elements in developed areas where motorized vehicles and nonmotorized pedestrians share a common space.



- MACOG
- Cities and Towns in the County
- County Engineering

HN.2.B

Prioritize new housing in areas with job growth and safe access via multiple modes of transportation.



- MACOG
- County Engineering
- Public transportation Agencies










Goal HN.3: ENSURE NEW HOUSING HAS ADEQUATE ACCESS TO WATER AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT FACILITIES.

HN.3.A

Encourage future residential development in the identified housing priority areas.












- Cities and Towns in the County
- Homebuilders Association of St. Joseph Valley

RECOMMENDATION		Timeline	Difficulty	Importance	KEY PARTNERS
HN.3.B	Limit public sewer system expansion in areas outside of the identified housing priority areas or service areas determined by municipal providers.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Water and Sewer District Municipal Water/Sewer Providers
HN.3.C	Promote conservation subdivisions for developments served by municipal water and sewer.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Water and Sewer District Municipal Water/Sewer Providers Area Plan Commission member communities
HN.3.D	Develop a plan to address sanitary and water issues in Granger and continue to promote housing development in that area.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Water and Sewer District Township Trustees

QUALITY OF LIFE AND PLACE

Goal QLP.1: PRESERVE AND ENHANCE ST. JOSEPH COUNTY'S UNIQUE CHARACTER AND SENSE OF PLACE.

QLP.1.A	Work with local artists to identify areas where to highlight community identity and heritage.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Foundation of St. Joseph County Indiana Arts Council
QLP.1.B	Explore how other communities are utilizing their unique assets to attract new residents and leverage investment.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Planning Division MACOG
QLP.1.C	Work with the Historic Preservation Commission and partners to identify and preserve structures and sites that have historical and cultural significance to the County.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic Preservation Commission Indiana Landmarks



RECOMMENDATION

Timeline

Difficulty

Importance

KEY PARTNERS

QLP.1.D

Support Visit South Bend Mishawaka's efforts to promote St. Joseph County as a tourist destination.



- Visit South Bend Mishawaka

QLP.1.E

Implement quality-of-life projects in identified priority areas.



- Redevelopment Commissions
- South Bend Regional Chamber of Commerce

Goal QLP.2: WORK WITH AREA PLAN COMMISSION MEMBER JURISDICTIONS TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS PLAN'S VISION AND GOALS

QLP.2.A

Work with Area Plan Commission member jurisdictions to develop a cohesive strategy to increase St. Joseph County brand awareness across the region.



- Area Plan Commission Member communities

QLP.2.B

Coordinate zoning and development to ensure design standards in ordinances reflect the desired character.



- Area Plan Commission Member communities
- Cities and Towns in the County

QLP.2.C

Review APC-member and County zoning ordinances to ensure they support the development of community gathering spaces and recreational opportunities.



- Area Plan Commission Member communities
- St Joseph County Parks Department













QLP.2.D

Scale vehicular and pedestrian street lighting to minimize light pollution.



- County Engineering
- County Planning Division
- INDOT

Goal QLP.3: ADDRESS THE IMMEDIATE AND FUTURE RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF RESIDENTS.

RECOMMENDATION		Timeline	Difficulty	Importance	KEY PARTNERS
QLP.3.A	Maintain the updated 5-Year Parks Master Plan.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Parks Department
QLP.3.B	Support new park development on County-owned land along Anderson Road.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Parks Department Harris Township Indiana Department of Natural Resources
QLP.3.C	Identify areas underserved by parkland and acquire property offering unique, endangered, or priority habitat that supports the St. Joseph County Parks & Recreation Department's vision and goals.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Parks Department Shirley Heinz Land Trust Indiana Department of Natural Resources
QLP.3.D	Pursue acquisition of properties adjacent to or near existing County or other parks.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Parks Department Shirley Heinz Land Trust
QLP.3.E	Utilize parks, open spaces, and recreation centers as venues to host community events, recreational activities, and gathering places.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nonprofit partner organizations Visit South Bend Mishawaka
QLP.3.F	Consider preserving a portion of land for future park and trail use when evaluating for reinvestment.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Parks Department Redevelopment Commissions

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



RECOMMENDATION

Timeline

Difficulty

Importance

KEY PARTNERS

Goal ES.1: IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF GROUNDWATER AND SURFACE WATER RESOURCES.

ES.1.A Incorporate green infrastructure into zoning and subdivision ordinances as options to reduce the amount of pavement and required landscaping.



- County Engineering
- County Planning Division

ES.1.B Encourage participation in the filter strip program and similar initiatives offered by partners.



- St. Joseph River Basin Commission

ES.1.C Employ erosion control strategies in new and existing developments.



- Soil and Water Conservation District
- County Drainage Board

ES.1.D Incorporate existing Watershed Management Plans into long-term planning efforts and collaborate with other jurisdictions to implement plans.



- St. Joseph River Basin Commission
- County Drainage Board

Goal ES.2: ENSURE THAT THE PROTECTION, CONSERVATION, AND ENHANCEMENT OF ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES ARE CARRIED OUT IN ALL PLANNING AND ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATES.

ES.2.A Explore the feasibility of creating environmental overlay districts to coincide with the priority areas identified on the future land use map.



- Area Plan Commission

ES.2.B Explore zoning incentives to protect environmentally sensitive areas.






- Area Plan Commission
- Area Plan Commission Member Communities

RECOMMENDATION					Timeline	Difficulty	Importance	KEY PARTNERS			
ES.2.C	Update zoning and subdivision ordinances to incorporate open space in developments.							<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Area Plan Commission• Area Plan Commission Member Communities			
Goal ES.3: EMPLOY ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT.											
ES.3.A	Explore options to include native plants in the landscapes of County owned properties to reduce maintenance costs.							<ul style="list-style-type: none">• County Engineering• County Parks Department			
ES.3.B	Build on previous efforts to improve energy efficiencies and reduce costs for development.							<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development Community• Utility Service Companies			
ES.3.C	Use the most current data to locate probable wetlands during the development review process.							<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indiana Department of Environmental Management• US Fish and Wildlife Service			
ES.3.D	Continue to use the best available floodplain data in the development review process.							<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indiana Department of Natural Resources			

FARMLAND PRESERVATION







Goal FP.1: ENSURE LAND USE AND ZONING PRACTICES SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION OF AREAS DESIGNATED FOR AGRICULTURAL USE IN THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP.

FP.1.A	Preserve highly productive agricultural areas identified on the future land use map and Farmland Preservation priority areas map.						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil and Water Conservation District Indiana Department of Agriculture
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RECOMMENDATION		Timeline	Difficulty	Importance	KEY PARTNERS
FP.1.B	Maintain the existing zoning standard that permits residential housing at one dwelling unit per 20 acres.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area Plan Commission
FP.1.C	Develop two agricultural zoning districts, one focused on Intensive Agricultural uses and one focused on General Agriculture uses.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area Plan Commission
FP.1.D	Create a special exception process for residential dwelling units in agricultural districts.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area Plan Commission
FP.1.E	Encourage natural transitions between farmland and other non-agricultural uses through development standards.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area Plan Commission Area Plan Commission Member Communities
Goal FP.2: UTILIZE EXISTING AND NEW TOOLS TO SUPPORT AGRICULTURE.					
FP.2.A	Utilize voluntary programs, such as conservation easements or participation in agricultural land trusts, to encourage preservation of farmland.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil and Water Conservation Districts Purdue Extension US Department of Agriculture
FP.2.B	Encourage participation in programs that reduce financial burdens on farmers and agricultural land.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indiana Farm Bureau Purdue Extension
FP.2.C	Expand and promote agritourism.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purdue Extension Visit South Bend Mishawaka

Goal FP.3: CONNECT FARMERS TO EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE THROUGH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS.

RECOMMENDATION	Timeline	Difficulty	Importance	KEY PARTNERS
FP.3.A Support organizations that promote farming, including Purdue Extension 4-H, FFA, and the Indiana Farm Bureau.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purdue Extension • Future Farmers of America • Indiana Farm Bureau
FP.3.B Refer property owners to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and the County Health Department's Well Water Resources Advisory Board for technical assistance.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Resource Conservation Service • Soil and Water Conservation District • County Health Department

GOVERNMENT AND POLICY

Goal GP.1: ENSURE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IS WELL-PLANNED, CONNECTED, FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE, AND COMPATIBLE WITH THE SURROUNDING LAND USE CHARACTER.

GP.1.A Review the future land use maps against the existing zoning map to ensure consistency, and that land is available for all uses identified in the plan.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Planning Division • Area Plan Commission Member Communities
GP.1.B Encourage development standards that better facilitate compatible infill development and redevelopment in priority areas and along key corridors.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment Commissions • Area Plan Commission
GP.1.C Develop criteria to determine when traffic and water impact studies are needed for industrial and commercial use changes.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Engineering • St. Joseph County Drainage Board



RECOMMENDATION

Timeline

Difficulty

Importance

KEY PARTNERS

GP.1.D Discourage leapfrog development throughout St. Joseph County to keep growth contiguous and accessible to existing infrastructure.



- Redevelopment Commissions
- Area Plan Commission

GP.1.E Consider a concurrency growth ordinance, also known as an “adequate public facilities ordinance,” that balances the availability of public facilities and the capabilities of small developers.



- Regional Water and Sewer Districts
- Development Community

Goal GP.2: CONTINUE TO COMMUNICATE WITH ADJACENT JURISDICTIONS, AND FEDERAL, STATE, AND REGIONAL AGENCIES, TO COORDINATE PLANNING EFFORTS AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

GP.2.A Coordinate capital facility plans with municipalities, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), and MACOG to better fund road and sidewalk improvements.



- INDOT
- MACOG
- Cities and Towns in the County

GP.2.B Establish designated growth areas with the input and assistance of cities and towns.



- Cities and Towns in the County

GP.2.C Collaborate with incorporated cities and towns to create suitable development areas for development adjacent to existing built-out, incorporated, and within priority areas defined by this comprehensive plan.



- Cities and Towns in the County

GP.2.D Continue to prepare the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan to address the impacts from environmental and natural disasters.



- St. Joseph County Emergency Management Agency

**RECOMMENDATION**

Timeline

Difficulty

Importance

KEY PARTNERS**Goal GP.3: UTILIZE A VARIETY OF TOOLS AND METHODS TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC.**

GP.3.A

Create a service that summarizes public hearings and new project proposals.



- Area Plan Commission

GP.3.B

Develop a live link map illustrating ongoing public land use petitions, transportation projects, permit numbers, and violations.



- MACOG

GP.3.C

Encourage land use petitioners to inform and engage nearby neighbors before filing a petition.



- Area Plan Commission

TRANSPORTATION**Goal T.1: ALIGN TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS AND RESOURCES WITH THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND PRIORITY AREAS.**

T.1.A

Work with developers to target private investment in areas that have infrastructure capacity for additional development.



- Development Community
- Home Builders Association of St. Joseph Valley
- SB Regional Chamber

T.1.B

Ensure public investment is matched with private investment in the identified priority areas and/or areas with available infrastructure capacity.



- Redevelopment Commissions
- SB Regional Chamber

T.1.C






















Identify priority transportation corridors where new investment or reinvestment is needed.



- Redevelopment Commissions
- MACOG
- County Engineering



RECOMMENDATION		Timeline	Difficulty	Importance	KEY PARTNERS
T.1.D	Coordinate traffic safety enhancements in priority areas with the Indiana Departments of Transportation (INDOT), Natural Resources (IDNR), and railroad companies.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Transportation Agencies INDOT Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Goal T.2: PROMOTE CONNECTIVITY IN COUNTY ORDINANCES AND STANDARDS.					
T.2.A	Require dedication of right-of-way along identified routes for multi-use paths and non-motorized users.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Engineering Cities and Towns in the County INDOT
T.2.B	Review proposed projects to ensure infrastructure accommodates multiple modes of transportation, including vehicles, buses, trucks, emergency vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians, where feasible.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Engineering County Planning Division
Goal T.3: PLAN FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION.					
T.3.A	Complete a countywide bike and pedestrian plan.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities and Towns in the County
T.3.B	Explore regional trail connections using MACOG's Active Transportation Plan.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MACOG
T.3.C	Identify opportunities to connect county and regional destinations through trails.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MACOG Cities and Towns in the County Public Transportation Agencies Friends of Granger Paths
T.3.D	Work with partners to identify gaps in bike and pedestrian connections.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MACOG Cities and Towns in the County Friends of Granger Paths

RECOMMENDATION		Timeline	Difficulty	Importance	KEY PARTNERS
T.3.E	Accommodate all ages and abilities in transportation improvements.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MACOG • Public Transportation Agencies
Goal T.4: IDENTIFY AND EXPLORE FUNDING SOURCES TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE.					
T.4.A	Continue to work with MACOG to leverage state and federal funding for future road extensions and new construction projects.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MACOG
T.4.B	Identify projects with the Redevelopment Commission that could be supported by Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment Commissions
T.4.C	Investigate funding opportunities to establish a dedicated fund for the repair, maintenance, and rebuilding of infrastructure.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division of Public Works
T.4.D	Identify strategies to fund bicycle and pedestrian projects.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MACOG • Redevelopment Commissions
Goal T.5: COORDINATE TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS WITH PARTNERS.					
T.5.A	Continue the relationship with the County's municipalities to improve connectivity, safety, and maintenance related to transportation infrastructure.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Plan Commission Member Communities
T.5.B	Continue to review the MACOG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to identify projects.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MACOG



RECOMMENDATION		Timeline	Difficulty	Importance	KEY PARTNERS
T.5.C	Implement the recommendations of the County Connections Plan to better integrate the transportation networks of St. Joseph County and Elkhart County.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MACOG • Elkhart County • City of Elkhart • Town of Osceola
T.5.D	Continue to support multi-modal connections to the South Bend Airport.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Transportation Agencies • INDOT • City of South Bend
T.5.E	Work with Amtrak, the City of South Bend, and other jurisdictions to explore options for a new station.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amtrak • City of South Bend • Town of New Carlisle
T.5.F	Assess public transportation options within the County to adequately provide service to residents.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MACOG • Area Plan Commission Member Communities

Goal T.6: COORDINATE TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS WITH PARTNERS.

T.6.A	Use GIS and community-driven data to map transportation infrastructure, analyze the motorized and non-motorized transportation systems, identify gaps, and inventory conditions, and report safety issues.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MACOG
T.6.B	Continue to work on a signal modernization plan, as resources allow.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Engineering • INDOT
T.6.C	Consider new partnership opportunities for shared mobility services.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MACOG • Cities and Towns in the County
T.6.D	Consider the inclusion of charging stations for electric bikes and vehicles as part of future development projects.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Plan Commission Member Communities

**RECOMMENDATION**

Timeline

Difficulty

Importance

KEY PARTNERS**UTILITIES****Goal U.1: COLLECT AND ANALYZE INFORMATION TO SUPPORT DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING FOR DEVELOPMENT PETITIONS.**

- U.1.A Include a feasibility review process for new developments to determine how the proposed project will impact infrastructure and services.



- Redevelopment Commission
- County Drainage Board
- County Engineering
- County Health Department

- U.1.B Develop an inventory of septic-dependent subdivisions and understand the future viability of their septic systems to prioritize sewer connection projects.



- Regional Water and Sewer Districts
- Municipal Water and Sewer Providers
- County Health Department

- U.1.C Host a water quality data clearinghouse for individuals to self-report results.



- Regional Water and Sewer Districts
- County Health Department

Goal U.2: SEEK OUT THE EXPERTISE OF UTILITY PROFESSIONALS AND FORM PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO EFFICIENTLY ALLOCATE RESOURCES.

- U.2.A Work with utility providers to develop a plan that ensures priority growth areas and other areas targeted for development have access to sufficient and reliable utility services.



- Regional Water and Sewer Districts
- Utility Service Providers
- Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission

- U.2.B Encourage the co-location of fiber cables and other utilities in the right-of-way.



- Utility Service Providers

- U.2.C Work with internet service providers to develop a plan that ensures all areas of the county have access to high-speed internet.



- Utility Service Providers
- Indiana Broadband Office



RECOMMENDATION

Timeline

Difficulty

Importance

KEY PARTNERS

Goal U.3: REDUCE OVERALL DEPENDENCE ON ON-SITE WASTEWATER (SEPTIC) SYSTEMS.

U.3.A Coordinate service providers to install water and/or sewer services in identified areas with public health concerns.



- Utility Service Providers
- County Health Department

U.3.B Evaluate the possibility of additional sewage treatment plants.



- Regional Water and Sewer Districts
- Cities and Towns in the County

U.3.C Survey the level of interest of residents living in septic-dependent subdivisions to connect to municipal water and wastewater utilities.



- County Health Department

U.3.D Support the Regional Water and Sewer District in addressing wastewater treatment issues.



- Regional Water and Sewer Districts

U.3.E Consider alternative wastewater treatment systems, such as cluster septic systems, in consultation with the St. Joseph County Health Department and the St. Joseph County Regional Water & Sewer District, where appropriate and where municipal utilities are not feasible.



- County Health Department
- Regional Water and Sewer Districts

Goal U.4: PURSUE INITIATIVES THAT PROVIDE UTILITIES IN A MANNER THAT PROTECTS PUBLIC HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

U.4.A Encourage the diversification of energy sources to create a more reliable power grid and provide options for residents.



- Indiana Office of Energy Development
- Utility Service Providers



RECOMMENDATION

Timeline

Difficulty

Importance

KEY PARTNERS

U.4.B Promote the use of vacant, abandoned, and underutilized parcels for potential alternative energy generation projects.



- Utility Service Providers
- Redevelopment Commissions



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND POTENTIAL FUNDING

The following is a list and description of agencies and organizations that could potentially provide technical assistance or help fund the implementation of the goals and recommendations of the comprehensive plan. The County should continue to research and monitor funding sources to identify new opportunities. Grants.gov, a federal website that hosts funding and technical assistance programs from every federal department and agency, is an excellent starting point.

LOCAL SOURCES

Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a financial tool that collects new property tax increment generated by new development within a legally defined area. The collected increment helps to pay for infrastructure improvements (streets, sewers, parking lots) in the area near a new development and for targeted property acquisition to support redevelopment purposes. The St. Joseph County Redevelopment Commission manages five Economic Development Areas within St. Joseph County.

Michiana Area Council of Governments

MACOG is a regional planning agency comprised of local representatives from St. Joseph, Elkhart, Marshall, and Kosciusko Counties. They are responsible for intergovernmental collaboration and planning for primarily transportation and economic development projects. MACOG provides

information about and disperses federal and state grants for these projects, including but not limited to public transit, trails, and street improvements. MACOG maintains several plans that guide the regional planning agency on how to allocate funds for projects around the four-county region, including the 2045 Transportation Plan, 2040 Active Transportation Plan (Michiana on the Move), and the Collaborating for Regional Resilience and Economic Growth plan.

St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District

The St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation Partnership is a collaboration of two government agencies, working together to help landowners protect our country's natural resources: The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). The SJC SWCD provides technical assistance and other resources to St. Joseph County residents and businesses.

Community Foundation of St. Joseph County

The Community Foundation is a charitable resource devoted communities in the county. They receive donations that fund grants and scholarships for all sorts of activities such as street renovations, college scholarships, and public art.

Community Loans

A Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) provides capital, credit, and financial services to markets and populations that are underserved by traditional financial institutions. Communities can rebuild their physical environments and help businesses create jobs by accessing the capital and services of a CDFI. There are several CDFIs currently serving Indiana communities.

Additionally, CDBG Friendly South Bend, which is a 501.c.3, serves as a matchmaker between local individuals and businesses looking for capital and CDFIs working in other places, regionally, or nationally.

STATE RESOURCES

Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority

The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) helps communities build upon their assets to create places with ready access to opportunities, goods, and services. They also promote, finance, and support a broad range of housing solutions, from temporary shelters to homeownership. IHCDA's work is done in partnership with developers, lenders, investors, and nonprofit organizations that use their financing to serve low- and moderate-income Hoosiers. Programs may focus on preservation and construction of affordable housing, redevelopment and reuse of vacant and underutilized structures, and down payment assistance directly to borrowers.



Indiana Department of Transportation

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) offers funding to Indiana municipalities through its Local Public Agency Program. Specific funding opportunities and fiscal resources vary by year, but programs are typically in the form of partnerships between INDOT and Hoosier communities, both urban and rural, to invest in infrastructure projects that catalyze economic development, create jobs, and strengthen local transportation networks. Projects that are eligible for funding may include roads, bridges, and active transportation projects such as trails and multiuse paths.

Indiana Arts Commission

The Indiana Arts Commission (IAC) is an agency of State Government funded by the Indiana General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. The Arts Commission advocates arts development opportunities across the state, and stewards effective use of public and private resources for the arts. It stimulates public interest in, and participation with, Indiana's diverse arts resources and cultural heritage. The Arts Commission works to enhance public awareness of the arts, life-long learning opportunities, and arts education programs. They support arts organizations with operational funds as well as fund individual public arts projects.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers programs utilizing both federal and state funds. Program goals and funding cycles vary; past and present programs focus on historic preservation; land conservation; parks and recreation planning, construction, and programming; and trail construction.

Indiana Finance Authority

The Indiana Finance Authority (IFA) offers several financial programs and incentives to businesses, manufacturing facilities and communities. This includes assisting in the redevelopment of brownfield properties; providing low-interest loans for municipal water and wastewater infrastructure; and issuing tax-exempt bonds to lower the cost of financing for manufacturing projects, health care facilities, private institutions of higher education and certain other qualified projects.

Indiana Landmarks

Indiana Landmarks makes grants available to nonprofit organizations to rescue and restore jeopardized historic properties. Some programs will fund professional architectural and engineering feasibility studies and other preservation consulting services, as well as organizational development, while others fund loans to buy and/or restore historic properties. In making loan decisions, special consideration is frequently given to projects that will save buildings listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or located in a National or State Register historic district.

Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) works with Indiana communities to build relevant and economically thriving places where people want to live, work and grow. The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs works with local, state and national partners to provide resources and technical assistance to aid communities in shaping and achieving their vision for community and economic development.

OCRA frequently operates a variety of programs funding many different types of improvements at any given time. Past and present programs have focused on preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties; economic development activities for sites, buildings, and equipment; public facilities; stormwater infrastructure; municipal water and wastewater systems; trails; and broadband infrastructure deployment.

Indiana Humanities

Indiana Humanities offers a competitive grants program which awards funding to Indiana not-for-profit organizations, schools, and other institutions. These grants respond to initiatives from not-for-profit organizations that wish to sponsor public programs such as town hall meetings, workshops, lectures, exhibits, reading and discussion programs, and production of humanities resources.



NATIONAL RESOURCES

U.S. Department of Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers loans, grants, and loan guarantees to support essential services such as housing, economic development, health care, first responder services and equipment, and water, electric and communications infrastructure. Technical assistance is also offered to help communities undertake community empowerment programs.

U.S. Economic Development Administration

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) uses federal funds to establish a foundation for sustainable job growth and the building of durable regional economies throughout the United States. EDA encourages its partners around the country to develop initiatives that advance new ideas and creative approaches to address rapidly evolving economic conditions. EDA works directly with communities and regions to help them build the capacity for economic development based on local business conditions and needs. EDA's grant investments in planning, technical assistance, and infrastructure construction are designed to leverage existing regional assets to support the implementation of economic development strategies that make it easier for businesses to start and grow.





2045 ST. JOSEPH COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN