

The Connersville/Fayette County **Community Vision Plan**



December 16, 2002

Prepared by

McBride Dale Clarion,
and
Dr. James Segedy

Table of Contents

<i>The Future of the Community.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Comprehensive Plan.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Recommended Plan Tasks.....</i>	<i>7</i>
Community Attitudes and Involvement.....	7
Economic Development.....	9
Quality of Life.....	15
Community Growth and Character.....	18
Unified Community.....	24
<i>Future Land Use Recommendations.....</i>	<i>25</i>

Acknowledgements

Many individuals, businesses, and organizations came together to make this project a reality. We thank them for all of their time and effort put forward throughout this entire planning process.

The residents and businesses of Connersville and Fayette County

Connersville City Council
The Fayette County Commissioners
The Fayette County Council

The Connersville/Fayette County
Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Scott Bevington	Jack Burns
Mayor Mauri Connell	Melvin Dice
Max Ellison	Charles Ford
Dick Herbert	Doug Howard
Bill MacDaniel	Roger Mapes
Gary Naylor	Larry Orr
Jeff Powell	Michael Sanders
Kathryn Schlichte	Darrell Smith
Brad Starr	

The Connersville/Fayette County
Comprehensive Plan Consulting Team

McBride Dale Clarion 5725 Dragon Way, Suite 220 Cincinnati, Ohio 45227 (513) 561-6232	Dr. James A. Segedy, AICP Department of Urban Planning Ball State University Muncie, Indiana 47306 (765) 285-5188
--	---

The Connersville/Fayette County
Comprehensive Plan Charrette Team

(provided the many illustrations and photographs throughout this plan)

Brian Bishop	Lohren Deeg
Tom Gallagher	Paul Gilbert
Paul Howey	John Roach
Kevin Todd	

The Future of the Community

The Fayette County/Connersville community is chalk full of history and vitality. The community got its start in 1813 when John Conner first laid out the town of Connersville. Five years later, Fayette County was created by the State of Indiana. From those early years, this community has grown strong and will continue to do so for years.



Like many communities across the state and the nation, this community has suffered through the best of times and the worst of times. "Little Detroit," as it once was known, was the center of automobile and automotive parts manufacturing. In addition, the community had a series of businesses that specialized in the manufacturing of furniture, appliances, and buggies. As times began to change, the Whitewater Canal was abandoned as a mode of transportation and the interstate system helped modify the population and employment centers of the region. These changes led to a decrease in the county's population and an economy that has become less diverse.

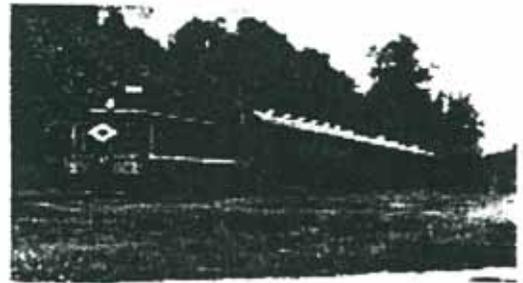
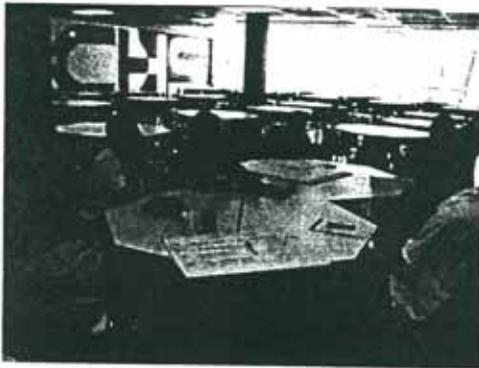
While the downturn in community growth has had a negative affect on some people's attitude toward the community, it has not stopped all citizens from doing whatever it takes to improve the community and make it a great place to live, work, and play. An important step in that process was the decision to jointly fund and participate in the development of this Comprehensive Plan.

The intent of developing this Comprehensive Plan was to outline the steps the community needs to take in order to meet an established vision. In order to establish the future vision of the community, several public input forums were held including a kick-off meeting, community representative interviews, a design charrette, and an elected officials retreat. During the initial public meetings, it became very clear that there

are five core areas of the community that needed to be addressed within the Plan. These core areas included:

- √ Economic Development;
- √ Community Growth and Character;
- √ Community Attitudes and Involvement;
- √ Quality of Life; and
- √ A Unified Community.

This Plan is merely a summary of the entire planning process that occurred from April 2001 through December 2002. Supplementing this plan are other documents that detail information on the community, the planning process, and the community's goals and objectives. It is the intent of this Plan to be an ever-changing document that should be changed every year as Plan Tasks are completed and priorities change. However, simply reading this Plan will not accomplish the work outlined in the following pages. It will take the concerted efforts of all citizens to move the community into its own vision of its future.



Comprehensive Plan

Throughout the planning process, public input was used to outline how the community wants to grow and what they need to enhance the community in the future. These "wants and needs" were used to develop this Comprehensive Plan which must provide answers to the following questions:

- ◆ What actions do we need to take to achieve the wants and needs of the community?
- ◆ What impacts will those actions have on the community in regards to the five Principles of the Plan?
- ◆ Who is responsible for the actions?
- ◆ How long will it take to accomplish these actions? and
- ◆ What do we do first?

What actions do we need to take to achieve the wants and needs of the community?



The core of this Comprehensive Plan is a list of Plan Tasks that should be completed over the life of the Plan. This list of tasks are comprehensive in nature and are not intended to be the only tasks that need to take place over the next twenty years. They are simply a starting point of those tasks that will help address the immediate wants and needs of the community. As time progresses and the Plan is reviewed and updated, this list of Tasks should be revised and added upon to address the changing needs of the community.

What impacts will those actions have on the community in regards to the five Principles of the Plan?

Through the public input stage of the planning process, five major Principles were developed that were the key factors to the citizens. These Principles include Community Attitudes and Involvement, Economic Development, Quality of Life, Community Growth and Character, and Unified Community. These Principles will be affected differently by each completed Plan Task. To the right of each Plan Task is small matrix that is used to simply illustrate if the Task will have a significant impact on one or more of the five Principles. When the abbreviated symbols are highlighted in black, it means that the Plan Task will have a significant impact on those Principles. As an example, the following matrix shows that the Plan Task would have a significant impact on Economic Development, Quality of Life, and Community Growth and Character.

ED	CA = Community Attitudes & Involvement
QL	ED = Economic Development
GC	QL = Quality of Life
	GC = Community Growth and Character
	UC = Unified Community

Who is responsible for the actions?

Following each prioritized Plan Task, the group that will have the responsibility of overseeing that particular task is identified in brackets. The overall responsibility of the Comprehensive Plan lies with four different groups of people:

- √ Elected Officials;
- √ The Plan Administrator;
- √ Departmental Staff; and
- √ Interested Citizens.

Each of these groups has their own role in the implementation of the tasks discussed in this Plan; and all must work together to make sure that efforts are not being duplicated and resources are being efficiently utilized.

Elected Officials

The elected officials of the community were chosen by the citizens for their abilities to jointly guide the future direction of the community. It will be upon them to jointly meet at least twice a year to evaluate the work that has been accomplished and to identify any changes in priorities. As actions are accomplished, the elected officials will

reprioritize new actions and identify how they will jointly fund projects. First and foremost, the elected officials need to sign an intergovernmental agreement that outlines each board's commitment to the project and to future participation in continuously updating the Plan. This Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a fluid document that is constantly being changed, updated, and used as a guide for future decisions.

The Plan Administrator

While the elected officials have the responsibility of ensuring the long-term viability of the plan, there needs to be one person who has the sole responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Plan. The Plan Administrator will coordinate the actions of the various parties responsible for the Plan Tasks and distribute budget dollars toward the accomplishment of those Tasks.

The Plan Administrator may officially be an employee of the City or County but they will act upon the interests of the overall community. Each year the Plan Administrator will review the Plan Tasks that the elected officials have prioritized for the year and provide an estimated budget necessary to work toward the accomplishment of those tasks. The elected officials, will in turn jointly provide funding for the established budget. The Plan Administrator should have the freedom to operate without constant approval of the elected officials provided that they are meeting the goals established in the Plan. All of this may be established as part of the interlocal agreement between the City of Connersville and Fayette County.

Departmental Staff

Several of the Plan Tasks will fall within the roles and responsibilities of existing departmental staff. Like the elected officials, citizens rely on staff to do their part in improving the future of the community. Staff should work cooperatively with members of the community and other departments to accomplish their tasks.

Interested Citizens

Of all of the groups of people responsible for the plan, interested citizens will have the hardest of Tasks. One of the core keystones of the plan is community attitudes and involvement. This will require a fundamental understanding that the only way to make things happen is to pitch in and help make things happen. In the following pages, many of the identified groups responsible for the Plan Tasks are citizen task forces. These are intended to be large groups of individuals who have a definite passion for accomplishing the Task. They must be willing to work long and hard as a group but the outcome will be more than worth the effort.

How long will it take to accomplish these actions?

Some actions that are listed in the following sections are either already underway or will take less than 3 years to complete. Other Tasks will take up to 10 or 20 years to complete. The key part of this plan is having a mixture of those tasks that will be highly visible and completed in a short amount of time with tasks that will be less visible and will take a considerable length of time to complete. Those Tasks that have been prioritized are done so within the following three time frames:

Short-Term = 0 to 3 Years to Complete

Intermediate Term = 3 to 10 Years to Complete

Long Term = 10 to 20 Years to Complete

As future tasks are prioritized, they should be done so with a specific timeframe in mind in order to set a specific goal for completion.

What do we do first?

During the development of the Comprehensive Plan, the Plan Tasks were reviewed and prioritized based on what Tasks needed to take priority over the next few years. This is not intended to mean that any of the other listed tasks or tasks that are not listed in the plan are of no importance, only that they will be reevaluated at a later date when the tasks that took priority are completed. In addition, the purpose of creating a prioritized list was to decide what tasks should receive funding over the next year; nothing in this plan should be inferred to mean that a group of interested citizens could not or should not tackle an unprioritized task provided that they find any necessary funding from alternative sources.

*The Whitewater River
Part of the West Fork
Greenway Project*



Recommended Plan Tasks

The long-term strategy for the Community must be a mix of short-term, visible, and attainable improvements, and long-term systematic changes to the community's institutions and attitudes.

General Tasks - No Priority

- ◆ Maintain the prioritized list of short-term, intermediate-term, and long-term Plan Tasks for each of the five major planning principles (Community Attitudes and Involvement, Economic Development, Quality of Life, Community Growth and Character, and Unified Community).
- ◆ Celebrate any success or completion of a project through special publicity and community events.
- ◆ Jointly fund projects that will benefit the entire community. In some cases, this may only require funding the seed money to match other funding sources.



Welcome Wagon



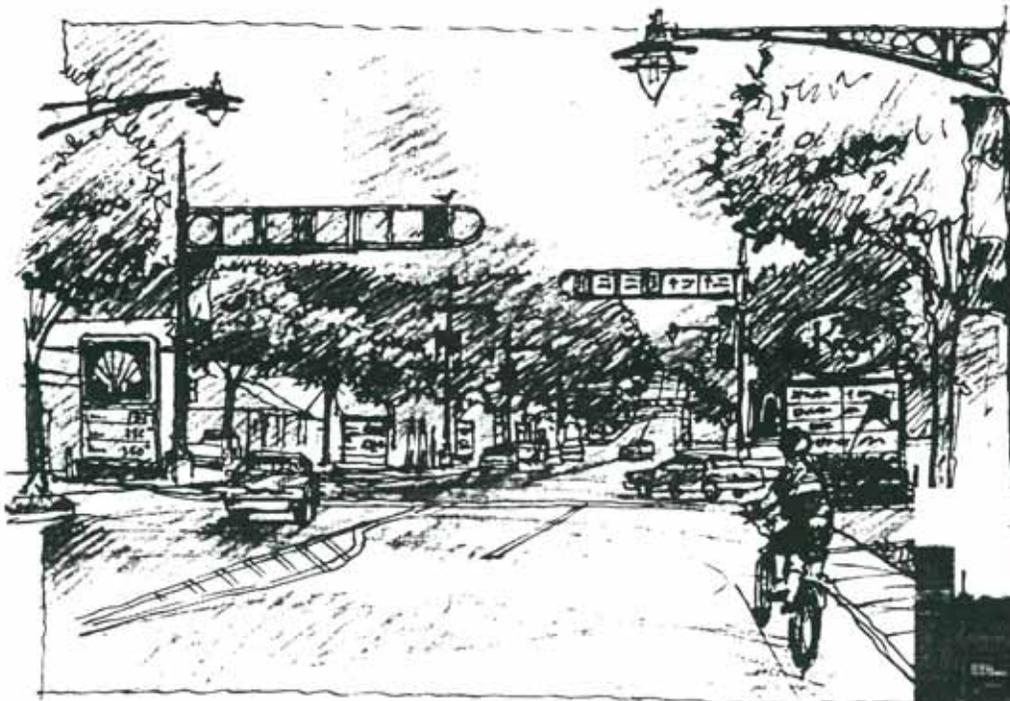
Residential Neighborhood

Short-Term Tasks (0-3 Years)

1. Require all officials, government employees, and task force members to sign a letter of commitment that will formally make them responsible for cooperatively working towards progress. [Elected Officials]	CA UC
2. Develop a database of dedicated and passionate citizens to participate officially through elected positions and as volunteers through committees and task forces. [Plan Administrator]	CA
3. Organize "getting involved" workshops and newspaper articles that highlight opportunities for citizens to participate in the future of the community. [Plan Administrator]	CA GC UC
4. Promote a positive community attitude through posters, flyers, and themes that can be utilized at schools, local events, and community gathering places. [Task Force]	CA ED QL GC UC

Long-Term Tasks (10-20 Years)

1. Follow through on the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. [Elected Officials, Plan Administrator, Departments, and Citizens]	CA ED QL GC UC
--	----------------------



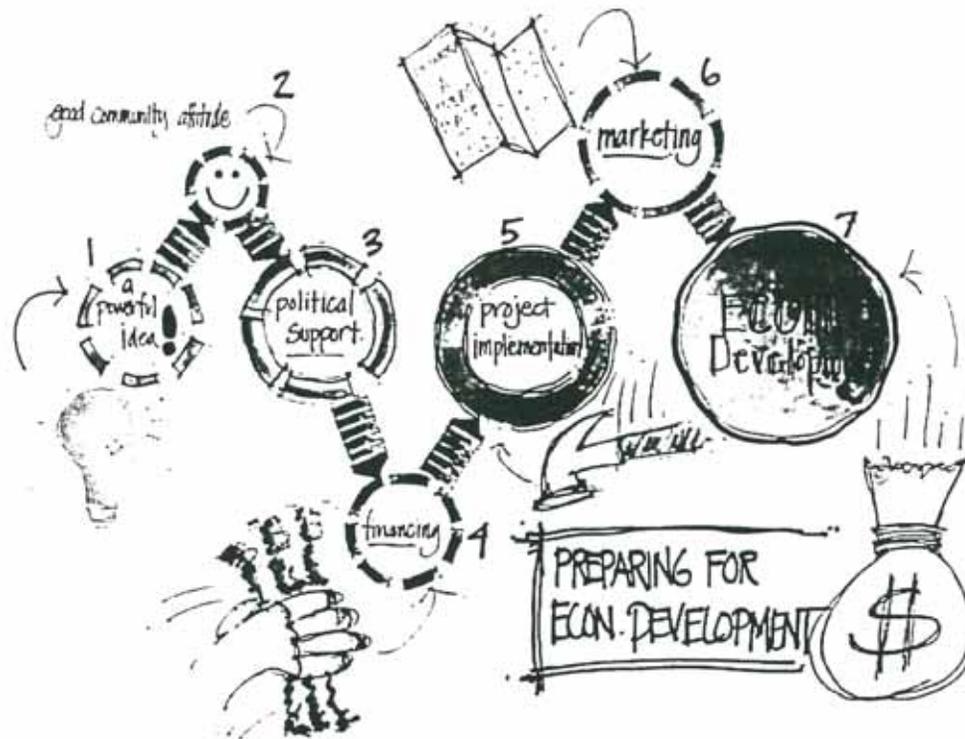
State Road 1
Streetscaping Concept



CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement
QL = Quality of Life
UC = Unified Community

ED = Economic Development
GC = Growth and Community Character

The Community got its start by people with ideas, determination and a vision. The circumstances and the people have changed, but the ideas, determination and vision are still there.



In order to prosper, the Community must work together to reinvigorate (or revitalize) its economy that may mean a redirection of its economic development efforts.

General Tasks - No Priority

- ◆ Continue to meet regularly with individual business owners. Use this as an opportunity for the community to identify potential business expansion opportunities or other business leads.
- ◆ Continuously update the community profile published and distributed by the Chamber of Commerce to ensure that residents, businesses, and visitors all receive accurate information.

- ◆ Continue to develop one-page summaries of available sites or buildings including a photograph, if available. This information should be distributed to appropriate site consultants and the State Department of Commerce as well as distributed through direct mailings or in a marketing brochure sent to prospective businesses.
- ◆ Industry is not only manufacturing. Develop and address leads from retail and service oriented businesses.
- ◆ Utilize resources available through the Indiana Department of Commerce in marketing the area for business development but focus the majority of resources on leads from local and regional sources.

Farmland along the Whitewater River



Short-Term Tasks (0-3 Years)

1. Research and identify viable industrial development or redevelopment opportunities that are available for purchase in the short-term. [Task Force]	ED QL GC
2. Develop a slogan/logo that is clearly identifiable with the community and can be used on websites, government letterhead, t-shirts, hats, and other items. [Task Force]	CA ED QL GC UC
3. Complete market research and implement viable alternative agricultural crops and farming methods. [Departments]	ED GC
4. Create a single community wide web site that outlines the community, government resources, economic development information, tourism, attractions, and other similar items on one site. [Task Force]	CA ED GC UC
5. Work with Ivy Tech, Indiana University East, and other local institutions to develop specialized training programs and workshops that will promote the community as the training capital of the United States. [Task Force]	CA ED QL GC UC

Intermediate-Term Tasks (3-10 Years)

1. Develop value-added agricultural industries that will purchase and process regionally grown products. [Departments]	ED GC
2. Attract, promote, and sponsor events and conferences that will benefit from the regional location and can utilize existing community facilities. [Task Force]	ED QL GC

CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement
 QL = Quality of Life
 UC = Unified Community

ED = Economic Development
 GC = Growth and Community Character

CA ED
QL
GC

3. Develop or expand overnight lodging opportunities within the community. [Task Force]

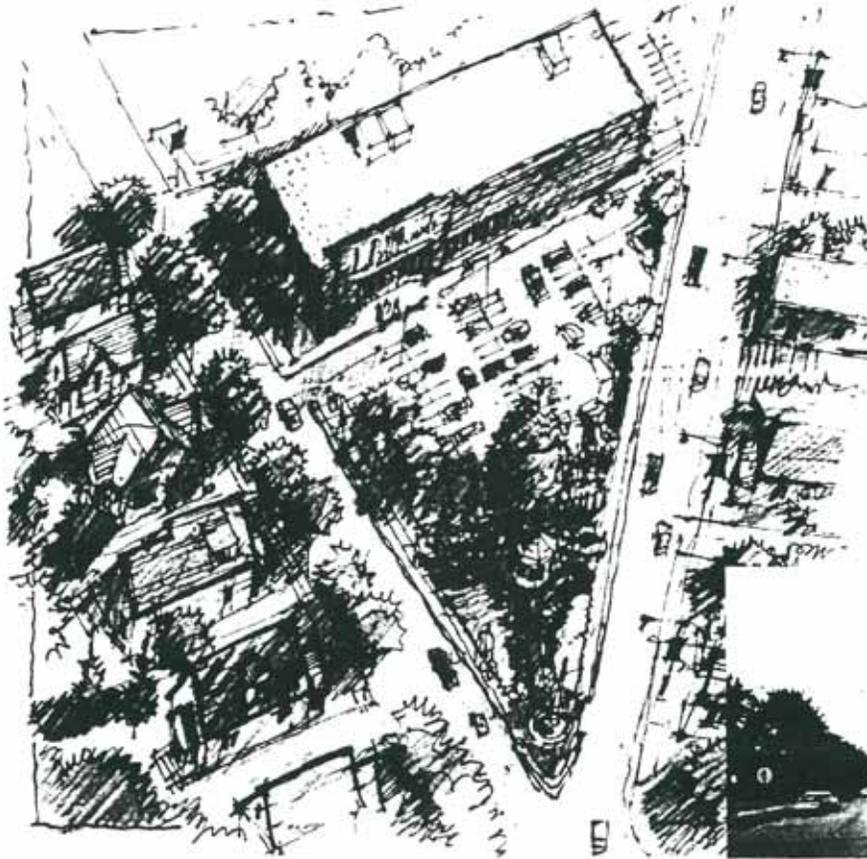
ED
QL
GC

Long-Term Tasks (10-20 Years)

1. Develop a community-wide network of high-tech infrastructure that can serve all businesses and residents. [Task Force]

ED
QL
GC

2. Expand permanent seating in the Amphitheater to accommodate larger regional and national events. [Elected Officials]



The Fountain on the Point
Design Concept



Future Tasks

Local Economy

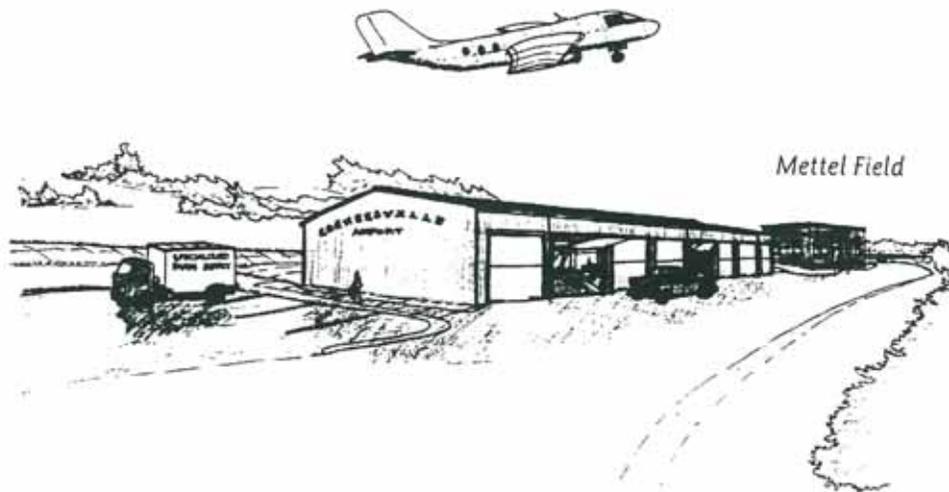
ED

- ◆ Develop local business forums. These are set meetings of, for example, small business owners, who can meet to discuss cooperative opportunities, needed resources, or hear speakers on special subjects. Such business forums should be developed for the industrial, agricultural, retail, and service industries.

CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement
QL = Quality of Life
UC = Unified Community

ED = Economic Development
GC = Growth and Community Character

◆ Continue small business and entrepreneurial counseling along with developing educational materials or work sessions on a variety of small business topics.	ED
◆ Advertise the services of the EDG to encourage people considering opening a business in the area to speak with the EDG on available resources.	ED
◆ Attend trade shows and make trade visits to prospective businesses located out of state and out of the country.	ED
◆ Create a business incubator for small businesses who may share resources and obtain business assistance while they are small, start-up businesses.	ED
◆ Provide free or reduced cost training to unemployed workers.	ED QL
◆ Work with the airport authority to ensure the long-term viability of Mettel Field.	CA ED QL GC



The Connersville Airport has a strong potential to serve an expanded role in supporting area businesses. It also has great potential for recreational uses.

Recreational uses

- ~ General aviation
- ~ Air shows
- ~ Parachuting, paragliding, etc.
- ~ Quality restaurants
(an attraction for recreational pilots)
- ~ Special events...

Business support-

- ~ Expedited product shipping/receiving
- ~ Commercial/charter flights
- ~ General aviation sales and service

CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement
 QL = Quality of Life
 UC = Unified Community

ED = Economic Development
 GC = Growth and Community Character

Tourism

Heritage, environmental, and recreational based tourism offers an opportunity to the community that must be better promoted and developed.

CA ED

- ◆ Hire a tourism director.

CA ED

- ◆ Create a Visitor's Bureau/Historical Museum that is open for regular hours. Investigate working cooperatively with the Whitewater Valley Railroad in establishing exhibits.

ED

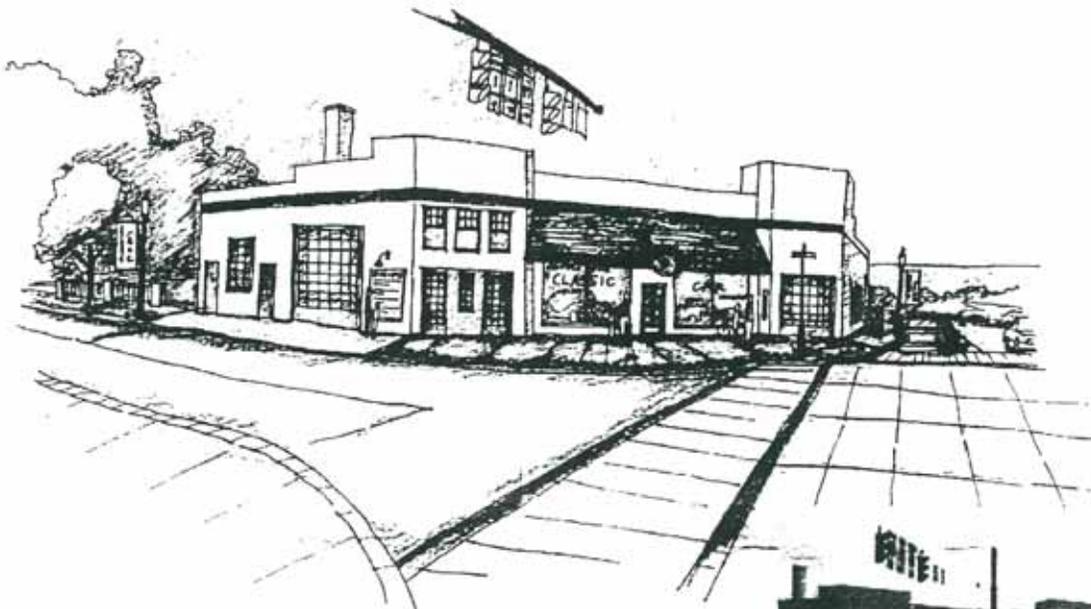
- ◆ Develop a map of sites and activities in the community to distribute through retail stores, at local events, and on the Whitewater Valley Railroad.

ED

- ◆ Work with the Whitewater Valley Railroad to mutually market both the community and the railroad activities.

ED
QL

- ◆ Develop a local network of bed and breakfast establishments.



*Automobile Heritage
Museum Concept*



CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement
QL = Quality of Life
UC = Unified Community

ED = Economic Development
GC = Growth and Community Character

Agriculture

Agriculture is an industry in the Community, not "undeveloped" land. It will require continued investments and community support to succeed in the future. Other related industries such as timber-oriented businesses offer opportunities to be explored.

- ◆ Capitalize on the rural nature of the community. Work with local farmers to create tours of farming activities, develop rural bed and breakfast establishments, and continue to develop rural and more passive activities. CA ED
QL
GC

- ◆ Create marketing and assistance programs for the agricultural industry. This can include a broad spectrum of solutions ranging from general marketing of local goods to reinitiating a cooperative with solid management and participation from local farmers. ED

- ◆ Create a temporary local farmers market to be held at consistent times and in a location that serves visitors and residents. ED
QL

- ◆ Create a permanent local farmers market with indoor and outdoor stalls for the sale of local produce. ED
QL

- ◆ Promote the overall community in order to attract families who can telecommute for a large company in another City or who conduct business out of their home and are not reliant on direct access to an interstate or other amenities that are more often found in major cities. ED
GC



Open Air Market

CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement
 QL = Quality of Life
 UC = Unified Community

ED = Economic Development
 GC = Growth and Community Character

The Community should be a desired regional destination...a place to live, work, and play. This will come with the enhancement of community amenities and quality of life.

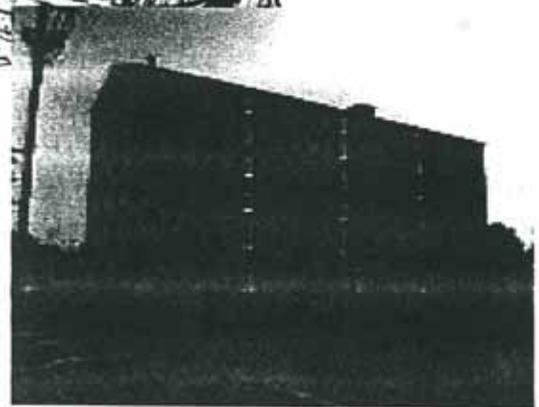
Short-Term Tasks (0-3 Years)

1. Support the development of the Arts and Science Center, Whitewater Valley Recreational Center, parks, and recreational programs to ensure that they all have continued viability and that the programs are available to all members of the community. [Task Force and Departments]

CA ED
QL
GC UC



*Arts and Science Center
Redevelopment Concept*



CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement
QL = Quality of Life
UC = Unified Community

ED = Economic Development
GC = Growth and Community Character

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 2. Develop incentives and programs that encourage children to stay in school while educating them about the opportunities that await them upon graduation. [Community Education Coalition/Task Force] | CA ED
QL |
| <hr/> | |
| 3. Continue to market the community to movie theater companies and restaurants while at the same time soliciting local investors for the revitalization of the existing downtown theater. [Task Force] | CA ED
QL |
| <hr/> | |
| 4. Work with the newspaper and cable company to create brief articles and spotlight shows once a month to highlight different departments, projects, and opportunities for citizens to get involved. [Task Force] | CA |
| <hr/> | |
| 5. Organize an Education Coordination committee or task force that involves representatives from the School Corporation, the Community Education Coalition, Whitewater Valley Technical Center, Ivy Tech, and Indiana University East to ensure that the highest quality programs are being offered and that the efforts are not being duplicated. [Task Force] | CA ED
QL |

Intermediate-Term Tasks (3-10 Years)

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Provide additional adult educational opportunities in a broad range of vocations and create additional workforce development opportunities. This should specifically include programs to encourage residents to obtain their General Equivalency Degree (GED). [Community Education Coalition/Task Force] | CA ED
QL |
| <hr/> | |
| 2. Expand the mentoring program (currently entitled the Masters Program) to identify those people who not only graduated from local schools and have gone on to be successful but also those who have stayed in the community or have come from other communities and were able to find success locally. Identify these residents as role models and encourage continued interaction between students and adults. [Task Force] | CA ED
QL |
| <hr/> | |
| 3. Create a place where the youth of the community can congregate, informally, in a safe and drug free atmosphere that operated during the day and night hours. [Task Force] | CA
QL |



CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement ED = Economic Development
 QL = Quality of Life GC = Growth and Community Character
 UC = Unified Community

In order to develop as a unified community, the City and County must take full advantage of all assets, of which there are many. The community is abundant in historic resources, quality neighborhoods, an attractive environment with excellent recreational potential, a thriving agricultural history, numerous loyal and healthy businesses, and dedicated leadership.

Short-Term Tasks (0-3 Years)

1. Continue to implement the City of Connersville Parks and Recreation 5-Year Master Plan. At the same time, begin to evaluate alternative funding sources and methods of creating a community-wide Parks Department at which time a community-wide Parks and Recreation Plan should be developed. [Task Force and Departments]

CA ED
 QL
 GC UC

2. Develop a property maintenance code for all types of properties along with stronger development standards regarding signage, landscaping, buffering, building design, site layout, and parking. [Departments/Task Force]

CA
 QL
 GC



West Fork Greenway Project Concepts for the Whitewater River



3. Perform additional studies on the Whitewater River to investigate all future potential for the corridor. This includes engineering studies, recreation potential studies, and the development of an overall master plan that will expand upon the 1981 Ball State University study and the recommendations of the West Fork Greenway Project. [Task Force]

CA ED
 QL
 GC UC

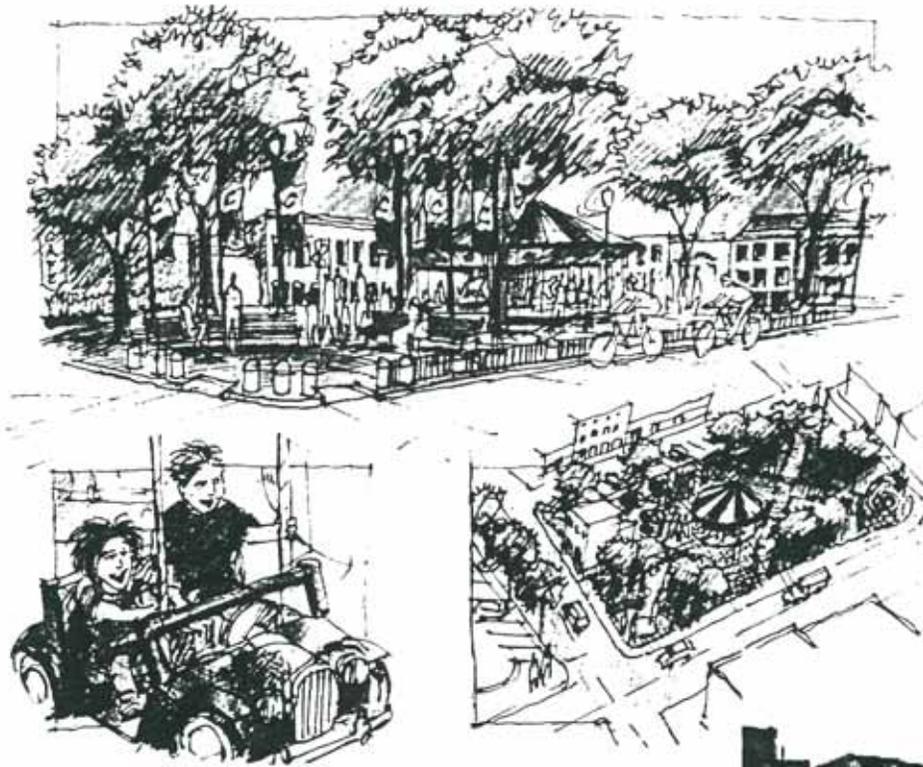
CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement ED = Economic Development
 QL = Quality of Life GC = Growth and Community Character
 UC = Unified Community

4. Sponsor and promote annual activities such as the Babe Ruth World Series, tractor pulls, rodeos, and other regional, national, and international events. [Task Force]

CA ED
QL
GC

5. Develop a plan for downtown that addresses issues specific to the area including defining a specific vision for the future of downtown, future uses, parking, traffic flow, and vacancies. Evaluate the establishment of a Main Street Program as part of this planning process. [Task Force]

CA ED
QL
GC



*Downtown Commons
Concept*



Restore downtown to the mixed-use community center that it once was with a strong retail and office base that is complimented by all types of housing. Downtown should always remain the literal and governmental center of the community.

6. Require departments to develop 5-year plans for changes, projects, and ideals that can be incorporated into a prioritized, community-wide Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). [Departments]

GC UC

7. Ensure that Special Use Permits are indeed "special" by creating specific criteria for which they will be permitted. [Departments]

GC

CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement
QL = Quality of Life
UC = Unified Community

ED = Economic Development
GC = Growth and Community Character

8. Acquire appropriate properties around the 11th Street intersection to create wider turning radii to accommodate truck traffic that must use that bypass to avoid the low railroad overpass on Park Road. [Elected Officials and Departments]

GC

Intermediate-Term Tasks (3-10 Years)

1. Develop a coordinated system of access points to the Whitewater River for all types of traffic including pedestrian, canoeists, bikers, and horse back riders. [Task Force]

CA
QL
GC UC

2. Establish a Special Improvement District (SID) downtown where property owners pay a special assessment, determined by the property owners, to provide funding for streetscape improvements, marketing materials, building repairs, and other improvements that will be mutually beneficial to all properties within the SID. [Task Force]

ED
GC

3. Provide assistance in upgrading and rehabilitating older buildings throughout the community to meet all necessary codes and provide amenities to prospective tenants. [Task Force]

ED
QL
GC

Long-Term Tasks (10-20 Years)

1. Plan and create a unified development along the Whitewater River that will include a mix of retail, office, service, residential, and recreational uses that will be a destination for community residents and visitors from outside the community. [Task Force]

CA ED
QL
GC

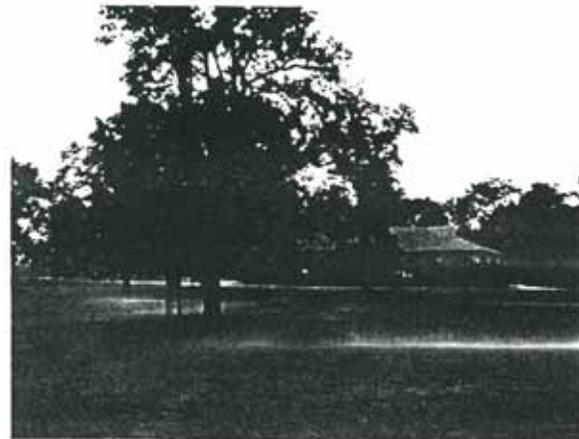
Future Tasks

Parks and Recreation

- ◆ Evaluate the impact of designating the Whitewater River as a National Scenic River. If it will be a positive for the community, begin the process of having the Whitewater River so designated.
-
- ◆ Repair and restore portions of the Whitewater canal for local recreational resources and for tourist activities.

GC

ED



Roberts Park

CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement
QL = Quality of Life
UC = Unified Community

ED = Economic Development
GC = Growth and Community Character

Downtown

- ◆ Create a central gathering place for the community, a so-called "Downtown Commons"(see illustration, page 19). CA ■
QL
GC UC

- ◆ Create a special theme or style for downtown and then develop architectural guidelines for new development and redevelopment within the area. GC

- ◆ Work with downtown property owners on methods of attracting businesses to their buildings and encouraging existing businesses to stay located in downtown. GC

- ◆ Create a variety of housing opportunities through the development of housing units in downtown buildings. QL
GC

- ◆ Provide funding or assistance in locating funds that will match a property owner's investment into maintenance and façade improvements. QL
GC

- ◆ Create "flex" office space and home occupations downtown that are better suited for small office and retail spaces instead of in a residential area. "Flex" office space is office space associated with other businesses in the community. These are often expansion offices that do not need regular interaction with, for example, the manufacturing aspects of the business (i.e. human resource, training, and accounting offices). ED
GC

- ◆ Evaluate the revitalization of the downtown theater to create a destination in downtown. ED
QL
GC

Public Facilities/Infrastructure/Watersheds

- ◆ Evaluate, plan, and finance improvements along major east-west and north-south roadways to ensure better cross-community traffic flow, to help minimize traffic congestion, and to promote safe and efficient pedestrian and vehicular movement. QL
GC UC

- ◆ Develop a long-term transportation plan that addresses safety, traffic flow, public transit and infrastructure issues as they relate to all modes of transport. QL
GC

- ◆ All new roads, road extensions, and road improvements within a utility's service area should be done in a coordinated manner. GC

CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement
 QL = Quality of Life
 UC = Unified Community

ED = Economic Development
 GC = Growth and Community Character

- ◆ Develop a countywide drainage strategy.

GC QL

- ◆ Work with the Indiana Department of Transportation (IDOT) on creating a trucking and vehicular bypass of Western Avenue. This bypass would begin along North State Road 1 and head west and then south to State Road 44.

GC ED
GC UC

- ◆ Support the evolution and growth of the Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to provide technical services to local farmers, forestland owners, developers, and other land users to minimize water quality and natural resource impacts.

GC QL

- ◆ Support the evolution, growth, and longevity of the Community Education Coalition's Environmental Educator to increase understanding and awareness among county residents (children and adults) regarding the direct relationship between human activity and water quality.

GC QL

- ◆ Consider the numerous other strategies outlined in the soon to be completed Lick Creek and Garrison Creek Watershed Management Plans for addressing sprawl, habitat degradation, stream/channel protection, and the preservation of rural character, etc.

GC QL

Zoning

- ◆ Rename the old comprehensive plan, which is a compilation of the zoning and subdivision ordinances, so as not to confuse people between this long-term community plan and the day-to-day regulations.

- ◆ Update the zoning and subdivision regulations to address known irregularities, and problems (i.e. home occupations) as well as creating a community wide set of housing, infrastructure, and subdivision standards.

GC

- ◆ Develop an efficient and significant code enforcement program.

CA
GC QL

- ◆ Reevaluate the use of the A-1 and A-2 zoning districts to ensure that property owners still have the right to sell their land or the development rights on their land to protecting the County's timber and agricultural resources.

GC QL

CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement
QL = Quality of Life
UC = Unified Community

ED = Economic Development
GC = Growth and Community Character

Planning Administration

- ◆ Provide training to all elected and appointed boards and commissions on zoning, planning, and decision-making. Consult with the community attorneys to ensure that all boards and commissions are following statutory rules on proceedings, decision-making, and findings. GC

- ◆ Create checklists for potential residents and potential businesses on what departments they need to speak to about various issues such as building a home, building a deck, starting a small business, tax relief, etc. GC

Planning and Growth

- ◆ Create an effective system of community-wide directional signage. GC

- ◆ Ensure that there is an adequate amount of all types of land available for development, including infill, and provide a variety of lots sizes and housing types to attract people of all incomes and provide some market flexibility. GC
QL
ED

- ◆ Minimize large developments in areas not served by centralized sewer and water through zoning densities and subdivision regulations. GC

- ◆ Utilize incentives, tax increment financing (TIF), and urban renewal to redevelop older, vacant commercial and industrial buildings. GC
ED

- ◆ Develop incentives for developers to create a broad mixture of housing opportunities both in housing types (single-family, duplexes, apartments, and senior housing) as well as housing values. GC
QL

- ◆ Evaluate and implement a redesign of the Park Road Railroad Viaduct to create an attractive entryway into the City. See the conceptual design below. CA
QL
GC



CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement
 QL = Quality of Life
 UC = Unified Community

ED = Economic Development
 GC = Growth and Community Character

The City and County must work cooperatively and aggressively in order to develop as a unified community.

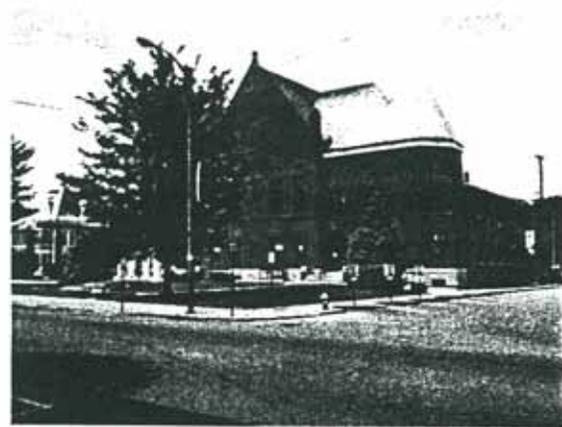
Short-Term Tasks (0-3 Years)

1. Hire a community planner or executive who will serve in the role of Plan Administrator and who has experience in the coordination and implementation of Comprehensive Plans. [Elected Officials]

GC UC

2. Develop twice a year joint meetings of the City Council, County Council, and County Commission. The winter meeting should be used to introduce new officials and evaluate the priorities of the comprehensive plan recommendations. The summer meeting should be used to establish the annual budget to be allocated for planning projects. [Elected Officials]

UC



Fayette County Courthouse

3. Investigate the processes, impacts, needs, and realities of combining City and County Departments including, but not limited to parks and recreation, police departments, fire and emergency medical services (EMS), and administration. [Task Force]

**QL
GC UC**

Intermediate-Term Tasks (3-10 Years)

1. Combine departments and/or resources, where applicable, and as outlined in the analysis task listed above. [Elected Officials]

**QL
GC UC**

2. Hire a County Administrator that will work cooperatively with the Mayor of Connersville to build a unified community and work towards joint progress. The County Administrator will also be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the County. [Elected Officials]

**ED
GC UC**

3. Reevaluate the tax structure in the community. [Task Force]

**CA ED
QL
GC UC**

CA = Community Attitudes and Involvement
QL = Quality of Life
UC = Unified Community

ED = Economic Development
GC = Growth and Community Character

Future Land Use Recommendations

The final core element of a Comprehensive Plan is the question of how are we going to grow in the future? In Fayette County, the question has been why plan for future growth if our population is declining? The answer is that even though the County as a whole has seen a drop in population, it does not mean that the community is destined to continue in such a trend. Also, even though people are moving out of the area, new homes are continuing to be constructed (approximately 80 per year) as some community residents desire new homes and others are looking for larger accommodations than can be found in the central neighborhoods. Assuming that the trend of constructing new homes continues and that the community will see a resurgence of interest in the Connersville and Fayette County as a place to live, work, and play, the community will need to encourage the reuse and redevelopment of existing uses and the creation of additional land for development of homes, businesses, jobs, and recreation.

The purpose of a Land Use Plan is to provide guidance for decision-making regarding new development as well as the redevelopment of older areas. It has been common practice in the past to assign each property in the community with a very specific land use (i.e. single-family detached residential, professional office, light industrial, etc.). While this type of plan provides a very clear definition of how each property should be used, it does not provide a lot of flexibility where special circumstances exist nor does it provide guidance about the character and style of development. This plan recognizes that zoning is the more appropriate tool suited for property-specific regulations and that the land use plan, as part of a total comprehensive plan, provides a realistic, yet flexible, interpretation of the goals and objectives as applied to growth in the community.

The following sections of the Land Use Plan will summarize several "land use concepts" as applied to the City of Connersville and Fayette County in the Land Use Plan Map. This map was created based on

community input, guidance from the goals and strategies, planned public improvements, existing land uses, development constraints, and previous development trends. For each of the land use concepts, there are a series of development guidelines that can serve as a checklist when a development or redevelopment project is being considered.

The future land use plan map included in this report is intended to be general in nature; land use boundaries are intentionally “fuzzy” or non-specific. The reasoning behind such a general plan is that it is difficult to foresee exactly which property will be developed and for what exact use. This plan is merely a tool for portraying the general areas for where uses should be located. The lines and boundaries of the map should not be interpreted as hard and fast but as merely an estimate of where services could or will be provided in the future, and as such, where future development is best suited. The map provides for the general pattern of growth that should occur and outlines specific guidelines for which any future development should follow.

This plan is intended as a flexible and general guideline; it is not intended as a zoning map. Future land use is shown in the categories described below.

Rural Activities

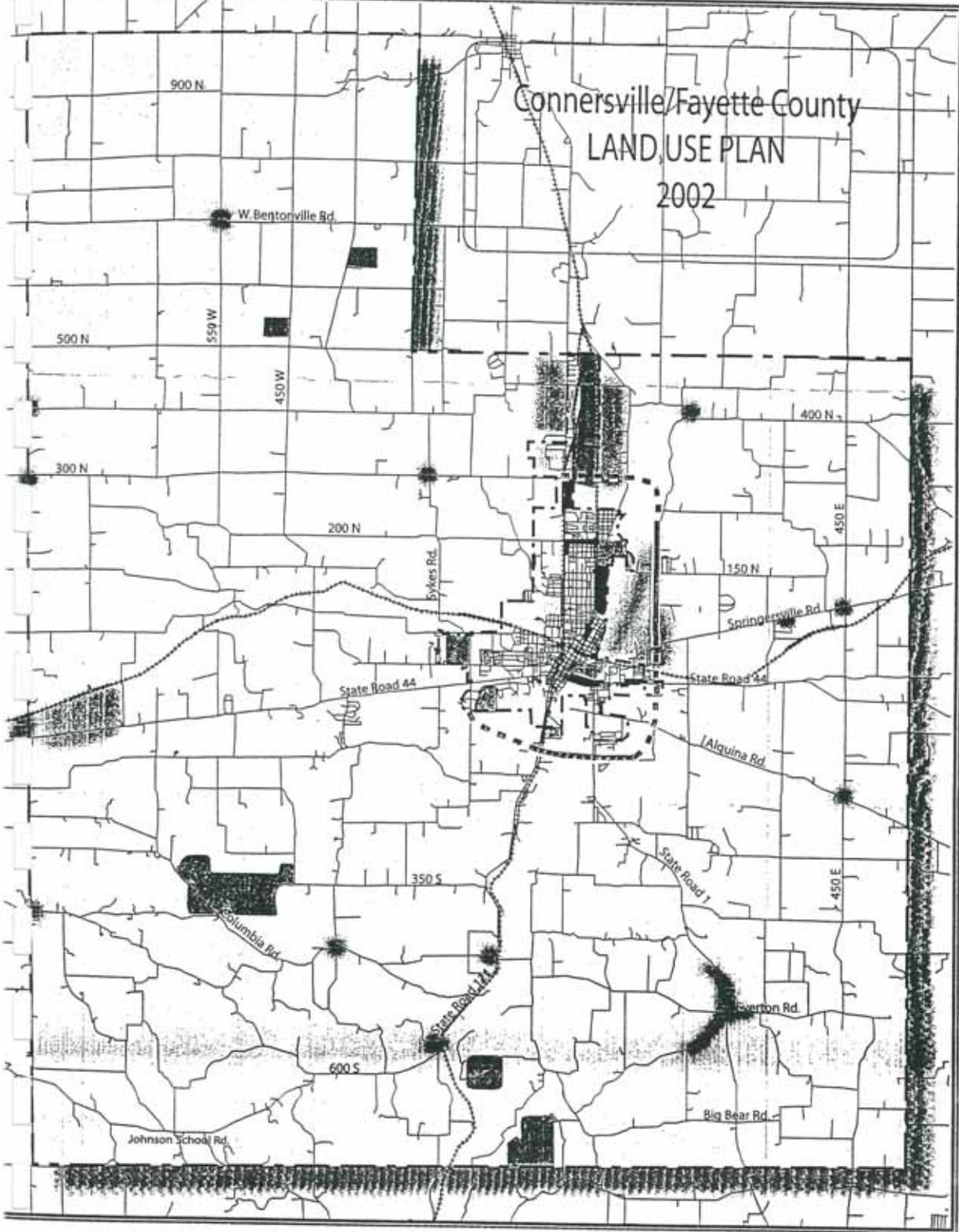
There are large areas of the community that are used for agriculture or are undeveloped but have some potential development. Even with development, these areas will most likely remain as low-density areas with large lot development, clustered subdivisions, and farming operations. This is due to the quality of farmland and timberland as well as the need for septic systems in these areas. These areas could be considered for some types of very low-density development provided that it meets the regulations outlined below.

Land Use Guidelines

- The primary land uses in Rural Activity Areas should be agriculture, forestland, open space, clustered subdivisions, and some limited large lot residential land uses.
- The minimum lot size in Rural Activity Areas should be one unit per ten acres. Special provisions should be provided to property owners to permit the clustering of homes on smaller lots, at slightly higher densities, when it can be demonstrated that adequate water and sewer systems can be provided.



Connersville/Fayette County LAND USE PLAN 2002



LAND USE CATEGORIES

- Rural Activities
- Hamlets
- Residential
- Public/Institutional
- Gateway Commerce
- Commercial/Office
- Downtown Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Parks & Recreation
- Urban River Corridor Development
- Airport

State Road 1 By Pass Conceptual Alignment

- New Road
- Existing Road

Jurisdiction Boundaries

- Connersville Corporate Line
- Fayette County Line

McBride
CLARION



Development Guidelines

- Emphasis should be placed on clustered housing developments to help minimize the need for infrastructure improvements and manage urban sprawl.
- Developers should incorporate the protection of natural resources, including the floodplain and forestland, into the development to create unique neighborhoods while protecting the natural environment.

Residential

A considerable portion of the community is used for residential purposes. While single-family detached homes are the most prevalent forms of residential uses, there are additional residential types including two-family (duplex) residential and multi-family residential units. It is vital that there be an opportunity to develop housing for all income levels and of all types to provide options to residents in whatever type of housing they need or desire.

Land Use Guidelines

- The primary land uses in the Residential Areas should be single-family detached homes.
- Attached housing, duplexes and multi-family housing may be appropriate where it serves as a buffer between lower intensity residential uses and more intense multi-family, non-residential uses or where it can be developed as a compatible use in a planned residential area. Attached housing or multi-family housing is also appropriate when located along a major arterial such as a state highway.
- Convenience retail uses may be appropriate at the intersections of two major arterial roadways.



Development Guidelines

- Densities of new development should reflect those of surrounding uses with a maximum density of 4 units per acre for single-family residential developments.
- New development should occur in areas where water and sewer services are available from public agencies and can meet any additional demand.
- Where water and sewer service is not provided, development shall follow the minimum requirements of Rural Activities.
- General design guidelines should be developed for older neighborhoods in Connersville to ensure that infill development will preserve the character and identity of surrounding homes and uses.

- Provide flexibility in the design and intensity of development to create land use transitional areas and minimize impacts on neighboring uses through increased landscaping, buffering and setbacks. This includes the use of planned unit developments that have a mixture of uses and use intensities.
- Emphasis should be placed on developing new neighborhoods in between existing communities with similar characteristics prior to development along the outskirts of the existing urban area. Such in-fill strategies will help minimize the need for infrastructure improvements and will help manage urban sprawl.
- Developments with a mixture of housing types should be encouraged where the development meets the overall density requirements.
- Developments should be planned to include neighborhood parks and greenspace that provide amenities to local residents and work toward providing a link with the community's existing parks and recreation area in conformance with the parks and recreation plan.
- Developers should incorporate the protection of natural resources, including the floodplain, into the development to create unique neighborhoods while protecting the natural environment.
- Maximize interconnectivity between adjacent neighborhoods and to major roadways through multiple ingress/egress points and connections with existing roadways, sidewalks and trail systems, while discouraging commercial traffic flowing through a residential subdivision.
- The scale and character of attached housing and multi-family housing should take into consideration the character of surrounding developments.
- Promote the development of convenient retail uses in highly developed areas to help serve the day-to-day needs of residents within walking distance of their homes.
- The size and scale of commercial uses in these areas should reflect the character of surrounding uses with a maximum building size of 3,500 square feet.
- Development of areas adjacent to the City of Connersville or in areas likely to be annexed shall be developed to City standards until community-wide standards are developed and implemented.

Hamlets

Located throughout Fayette County are several small hamlets or crossroad communities. These communities are generally located near the intersection of two major roads and historically were the center of farming communities. Many of these Hamlets consist of a high density, older neighborhoods. Some of the Hamlets, such as Everton, have several businesses located at the center of the town center and almost all of the Hamlets have a centrally located church. These areas continue to serve a purpose for the agricultural industry as well as being an integral part of the community character and should continue to be maintained as part of the overall community.



Land Use Guidelines

- Some small-scale commercial development may be located near the intersection of a major roadway with another major roadway or local/ minor roadway, and/or located near the center of the community.
- Light industrial uses that are fully enclosed within a building may be appropriate near the center of the community where they will pose minimal impact on surrounding land uses regarding traffic, noise, lighting, pollution, and other similar elements that create conflicts between land uses.
- Single-family detached homes shall be the predominant use in any hamlet community, surrounding the nonresidential uses.
- Residential densities shall be highest in the locations nearest the commercial/ industrial developments.
- The density of the residential uses shall quickly decline as the community spreads out into the surrounding Rural Activity Areas.

Development Guidelines

- New development should occur in areas where water services are available from public agencies and can meet any additional demand.
- Adequate measures should be taken to ensure proper wastewater disposal and treatment for all new development.
- No development should be permitted if it will continue a problem with groundwater contamination due to the use of wells and septic systems.
- Emphasis should be placed on infill development prior to development along the outskirts of the Hamlet. Such in-fill strategies will help minimize the need for infrastructure improvements and will help manage urban sprawl.
- Developments should be planned to include neighborhood

parks and greenspace that provide amenities to local residents and work toward providing a link with the community's existing parks and recreation in conformance with a park and recreation plan.

- The community should work with the school board and the local churches to assist in providing parks and recreational areas within the Hamlets.
- Developers should incorporate the protection of natural resources, including the floodplain, into the development to create unique neighborhoods while protecting the natural environment.
- Development and redevelopment should take into consideration the density and character of the surrounding properties. In general, lot sizes should be small with homes set closer to the road.
- Sidewalks should be required on both sides of the street within the Hamlet to provide access to community facilities and nonresidential uses.
- The maximum density of housing and minimum lot sizes may vary depending on the availability of services, the location in relation to roadways and the center of the community, the density of surrounding uses and the impact such density will have on the community.

Commercial/Office

Commercial/Office Areas are the service commercial areas and corridors of the community that serve the needs of the local residents. While the primary focus of these areas is retail sales and personal services, some office space may be intermixed. The size of Commercial/Office uses should be controlled to limit expansion of commercial development and the increasing number of vacant buildings while providing flexibility to accommodate changes in the market.

Land Use Guidelines

- The primary land use in these areas should be retail, commercial, personal services and professional office spaces that are targeted toward residential and employees in the community.
- Residential uses, including multi-family housing should be discouraged in these service areas.



Development Guidelines

- Community Services areas should be located along highway corridors to accommodate the large amount of traffic generated by these uses.
- New development should occur in areas where water and sewer services are available from public agencies and can meet any additional demand.
- Developers should be encouraged to develop creative business centers that do not place focal emphasis on the parking areas but on the commercial uses themselves. This can be accomplished by placing some parking behind buildings and internal landscaping throughout the parking areas.
- Signage and lighting should be placed to ensure visibility without creating visual pollution.
- Emphasis should be placed on rehabilitating and adaptive reuse of underutilized properties.
- Where infill development occurs, the density and character of the development should reflect the existing uses that surround the proposed site.
- Commercial/Office uses should be encouraged in areas of the community that lack nearby commercial uses and service that serve the day-to-day needs of residents.

Downtown Mixed Use

"Downtown" Connersville consists of a mixture of uses and development characteristics. However, like many other communities, the downtown area has suffered from an economic decline and the development of large commercial centers in other areas of the community. What the downtown area does have is an outstanding building stock and the potential for a mixture of residential, office, retail, and public uses that will create a very distinct activity area for the community.



Land Use Guidelines

- The community should encourage a mixture of all use types in downtown Connersville.
- The community should develop common areas and greenspaces throughout downtown.

Development Guidelines

- The community should prepare a detailed plan for the downtown area to determine the best use of properties so that the redevelopment of downtown will benefit the entire community.
- The historic character of the existing properties should be maintained.
- Infill development should respect the density and character of the existing uses and buildings that surround the proposed site.
- New development should occur in areas where water and sewer services are available from public agencies and can meet any additional demand.
- All new development should observe the regulations of this Plan and any additional regulations that will be developed as part of the zoning ordinance.
- This area has a mixture of retail, office and residential uses that should be maintained and continued to create an active downtown.
- Buildings should be set to the front property line with parking behind the structure where such development is the predominant pattern in the surrounding area.
- Emphasis should be placed on restoring the facades to the original appearances or replacing buildings that are compatible with the historical nature of the area versus replacement with more suburban style developments.
- The character of a building should reflect that of surrounding properties in design (i.e. window size and placement, structure height, signage, etc.).
- Adequate off-street parking should be provided for all uses in downtown.

Gateway Commerce Centers

Twenty years ago, the concept of an industry brought thoughts of smokestacks, dirt, and pollution. While some of these industries still exist, new office and industrial uses can and are being developed in a way that still provides a diverse economic base while blending in with surrounding residential and commercial areas.

Gateway Commerce Centers are areas that encompass primarily office, warehousing and manufacturing uses in a campus style development. This style of development places buildings on larger lots with landscaping and greenspace that help create an attractive yet integral part of the region.

Land Use Guidelines

- The primary land use in these areas should be light industrial uses that are completely enclosed within a building as well as warehousing or professional office space. Light industrial uses are defined as manufacturing, assembling, and warehousing uses that are completely enclosed within a structure that prevents any noise, odor, smoke, or similar impacts on surrounding uses.
- Heavy industrial uses that have outdoor operations, excessive noise, odors, smoke, or other impacts that will affect nearby residential uses should be considered if located on larger sites with extra landscaping and buffering. In addition, all noise, odor, smoke, and vibrations should be mitigated so as not to be noticed at the property line.
- Retail uses associated with any of the industrial, warehousing or office uses may be appropriate if the retail uses do not exceed 10% of the total building area.
- General commercial uses that serve the businesses and the employees of the Gateway Commerce Centers may be permitted but should be centralized around significant intersections.
- Residential uses, including multi-family housing should be discouraged in these business centers.

Development Guidelines

- New development should occur in areas where water and sewer services are available from public agencies and can meet any additional demand.
- Gateway Commerce Centers should be located along major highways and/or rail lines to accommodate truck, automobile, and rail traffic.
- Where infill development occurs, the density and character of the development should reflect the existing uses that surround the proposed site.
- Larger sites with extra landscaping and buffer strips should be used in areas adjacent to residential uses to provide a transitional area.
- Traffic Impact Studies should be required by the Area Planning Commission for larger projects to help determine what improvements need to be made (deceleration, acceleration lanes, etc.) to minimize traffic congestion.
- Performance standards should be created to regulate noises, odors, light, vibration, and smoke so as not to create a negative impact on surrounding uses.
- Use of exterior storage yards and outdoor assembly or manufacturing should be located as far away as feasibly possible from adjacent residential uses.

Industrial

The City of Connersville hosts several areas of existing, older, industrial uses and areas that are vital elements of the community's economy. Such as manufacturing, assembling, and warehousing uses provide tax revenues and jobs for the region. These uses should be continued and expanded upon in a planned manner to lessen the impact on the public infrastructure and the surrounding land use pattern.

Land Use Guidelines

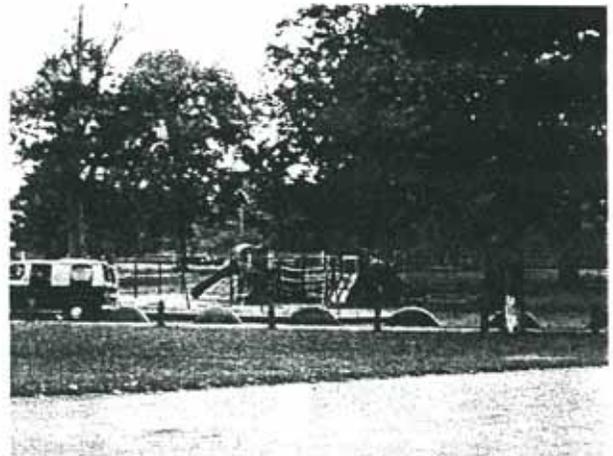
- The primary land use in these areas should be industrial, research and development facilities, and uses that include a mixture of office and industrial uses.
- Retail uses associated with any of the industrial or office uses may be appropriate if the retail uses do not exceed 10% of the total building area.
- Residential uses, including multi-family housing should be discouraged in these industrial centers.

General Development Guidelines

- Development and redevelopment should occur in areas where water and sewer services are available from public agencies and can meet any additional demand.
- Industrial developments should be located near major highways, roadways, and rail lines to accommodate truck, automobile, and rail traffic.
- Where infill development occurs, the density and character of the development should reflect the existing uses that surround the proposed site.
- The community should evaluate methods of reusing older buildings including the potential for an urban renewal plan or the use of state tax credits to assist in the rehabilitation of the older buildings.

Parks/Recreation/Open Space

The community's existing parks, recreational uses and greenspaces are of value to all community residents. These uses include active recreational uses such as ballparks and bike paths, and walking paths as well as passive recreation such as picnic shelters, and greenspaces made up of forests and fields. Not only should these existing areas be maintained but they should also be expanded upon and connected through a series of linear parks, sidewalks and signage to create a regional wide system of parks, recreation and greenspace.



Land Use Guidelines

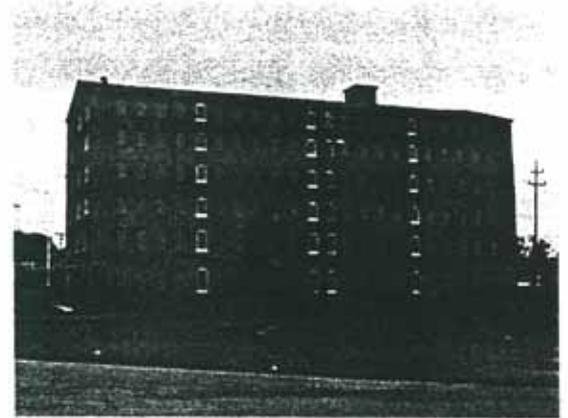
- The primary land use in these areas should be uses including, but not limited to parks, recreational areas, designated greenspace, golf courses, etc. This includes properties that are being held for the future expansion of these public uses.
- Residential uses and nonresidential uses should be discouraged in these areas.

Development Guidelines

- The development of parks, recreational areas and greenspaces should be done in conformance with a parks and recreation plan.
- The City and County should encourage a mixture of active recreational uses such as hike/bike trails and ball fields as well as passive recreational uses such as picnic shelters and green space.
- When evaluating the location of possible new park sites, the community should examine those areas of the region that lack adequate park and recreational space.

Public/Institutional

Public and semi-public uses such as schools, libraries, churches, hospitals government agencies, etc. are located throughout the community. These uses provide services and amenities to local residents creating a better quality of life. Where possible, the community should plan for future public and semi-public uses, including schools, and locate them in areas where they are easily accessed by residents through sidewalks and clear signage. The Land Use Plan map only illustrates larger institutional uses but all institutional uses should be held to the following guidelines.



Land Use Guidelines

- The primary land use in these areas should be public uses including, but not limited to schools, government buildings, churches, etc. This includes properties that are being held for the future expansion of these public uses.
- Residential uses and nonresidential uses should be discouraged in these public/semi-public areas.

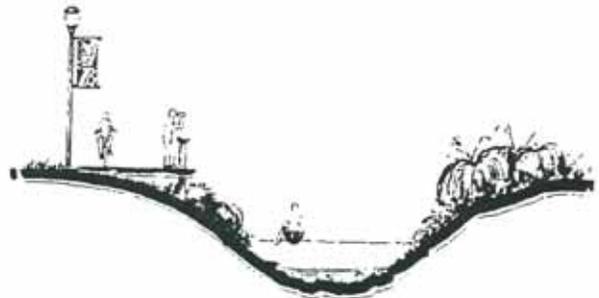
Development Guidelines

- Expansion of existing public/semi-public uses should be allowed where there will be minimal impact on surrounding residential uses.
- Where infill development occurs, the density and character of the development should reflect the existing uses that surround the proposed site.

- Larger sites with extra landscaping and buffer strips should be used in areas adjacent to residential uses to provide a transitional area.
- Large institutional uses that will generate a considerable amount of traffic should be located on major highways or collector roads to minimize the impact on the roadway system. Parking regulations should also be reviewed and revised due to the large number of vehicle trips that many institutional uses can potentially create.

Urban River Corridor Development

There is growing interest in how the community can capitalize on its major natural asset known as the Whitewater River. The West Fork Greenway Project is currently investigating needed improvements such as riverbank stabilization along with recreational opportunities that can be created along the entire river corridor. At the same time, other citizens feel that there is a great potential to create some economic development opportunities along the river in the area around the City of Connersville.



Numerous ideas for the river and surrounding corridor arose throughout this planning process ranging from the creation of a riverfront restaurant to the planning and development of a unified mixed use development that will house residential units, retail and restaurant space, and office buildings. All of these opportunities need to be investigated as part of a long-term plan for the corridor. As a starting point, this plan designates an area of the river corridor that runs to the east of the city as an area appropriate for Urban River Corridor Development. There are large areas of land near the river that are outside of the floodway, and in some instances outside of the floodplain.



In the long term development of this Comprehensive Plan, the community should create a plan for this portion of the river corridor that evaluates how development will impact and/or compliment other planning efforts along the river and proceed with implementing such a plan. A special emphasis should be placed on integrating any developed uses with the natural environs of the river and any recreational uses developed as part of the West Fork Greenway Project.

