

FUTURE HANCOCK

Have a hand in your county's future

HANCOCK COUNTY, INDIANA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



ADOPTED: JANUARY 3, 2023



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Hancock County Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) provides a vision for the County's future growth and development and includes goals and policies for achieving it. The Comprehensive Plan addresses the County's important issues from a high-level perspective to shape Hancock County into the community it hopes to be for the next 20 years and beyond. The following executive summary provides a synthesized version of the Comprehensive Plan. In developing this Plan, the County has identified the core issues that will be central to its future success. Each chapter of this Plan is focused on a specific topic and presents the County's overarching goals, objectives, and policies for that element. These policies are the basis for the recommended implementation strategies that are presented in each chapter. Appendix A details existing conditions and data used throughout the planning process.

This Plan also includes a detailed Economic Development Strategy and Thoroughfare Plan, which provide detailed analysis and recommendations regarding the future of Hancock County's economic and transportation systems. These documents can be read as components of the Future Hancock Comprehensive Plan as well as stand-alone documents.

Specifically, the Future Hancock Comprehensive Plan:

- Establishes a shared community Vision and Framework of strategic objectives that serve as foundations for the goals, objectives, policies, and recommended strategies.
- Identifies areas appropriate for development over the next 20 years and recommends the types and character of future land uses for specific areas.
- Makes recommendations for the preservation and enhancement of natural and agricultural resources.
- Identifies and prioritizes needed transportation and other infrastructure to serve future land uses. These priorities are described in the Hancock County Thoroughfare Plan.
- Presents forward-thinking and adaptable housing strategies.
- Charts a path into a new economic future that produces an exceptional environment for Hancock County residents and businesses in the Economic Development Strategy.
- Directly connects county policies and development choices to support a high quality of life for a diversity of household types.
- Provides detailed action items to implement plan recommendations.

FUTURE HANCOCK VISION AND FRAMEWORK

Based on the planning area's context, extensive public input, and contributions from County staff and officials, the County developed a vision statement that describes the type of community that Hancock County intends to be in 20 years. Hancock County's vision statement serves as a goal that guides and informs the direction of this Comprehensive Plan. Achieving this vision will require the County and the various communities within it to work together and cooperate in confronting and making progress on the issues and opportunities described in this Plan.

Hancock County 2042 Vision

Hancock County is Central Indiana's community of choice and recognized leader in proactively managing growth to balance and promote its agricultural resources with targeted economic opportunities.

Strengthened by their welcoming residents, Hancock County's vibrant communities, towns, and city offer a range of living and employment opportunities and are united by their outstanding public schools, quality development, quiet neighborhoods, rural landscape, high-value amenities, and excellent public infrastructure and services.

HANCOCK COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

A. Enhance Intergovernmental Collaboration and Coordination to Benefit all County Residents

Creating strong systems for communication and collaboration between Greenfield, the Towns, utility providers and Hancock County will improve service delivery and support consistent and mutually beneficial decision-making regarding infrastructure, land use, community growth, and public safety.

D. Support a Balanced, High-Quality Housing Mix

Work with a variety of partners, including incorporated communities, to meet population- and job-driven demand for attainable housing types at a variety of price points.

2042 VISION

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B. Strengthen the Sense of Community with a Diversity of Lifestyle Choices

Reinforce Hancock County's strong sense of place and community by enabling a diversity of living options, from rural to suburban to urban lifestyles, ensuring high design and building standards, protecting existing neighborhoods and countryside, and providing an attractive range of public and private amenities.

E. Invest in a Safe and Efficient Transportation System Concurrent with Development

Use a diversity of partnerships and innovative financial strategies to maintain a highly functional, multi-faceted transportation system of roads, interchanges, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

F. Leverage Broadband Infrastructure for Community and Economic Development

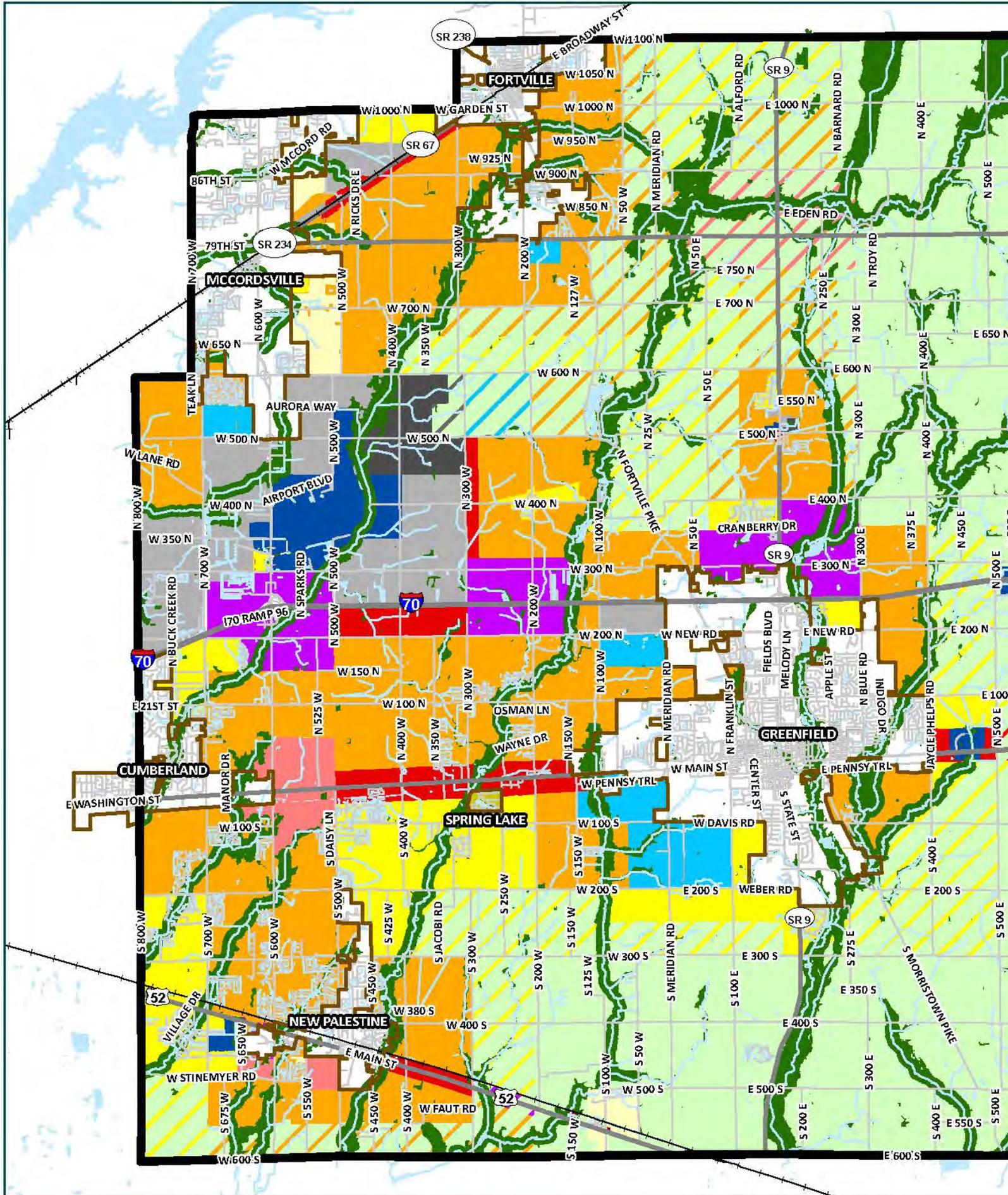
Capitalize on Hancock County's highly wired status to advance smart community, attract internet-dependent businesses, remote workers and entrepreneurs, and propel local governments and schools into the future.

C. Expand Workforce Opportunities to Make Hancock a LiveWork County

Use a data-centered approach to attract a wider variety of job opportunities that align with the skills of the resident workforce to enable people to live and work in Hancock County.

G. Prioritize Growth Areas and Investments in Supporting Infrastructure and Services

Proactively balance and manage growth impacts and avoid haphazard development by targeting growth in areas suitable for development while also stabilizing low-growth areas through planning and consistent plan implementation.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MAP 3: FUTURE LAND USE

LEGEND

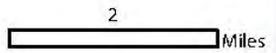
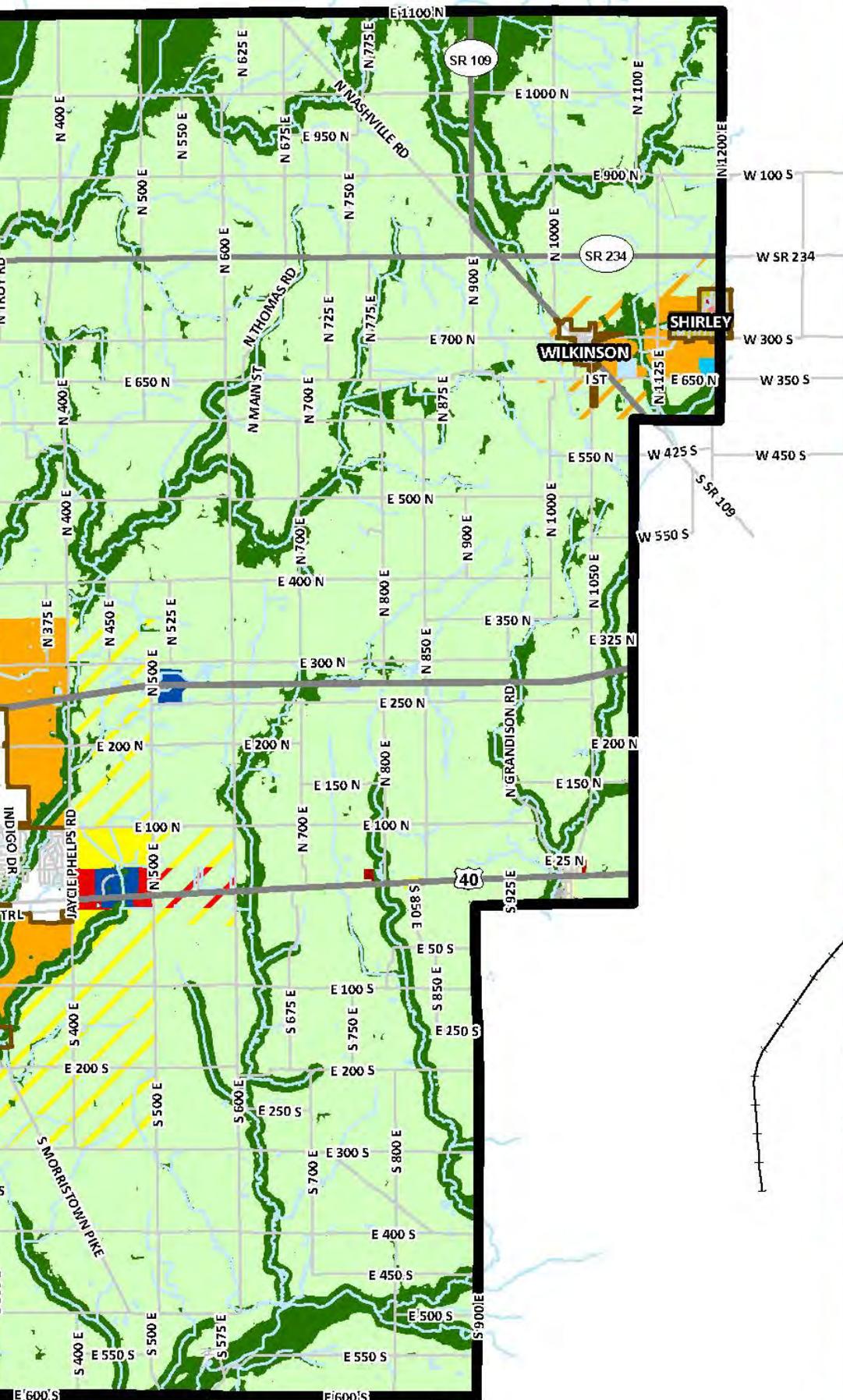
- Hancock County
- City Boundaries
- Rail
- Highway
- Other Road

Future Land Use

- Conservation/Open Space
- Agricultural/Rural
- Institutional
- Rural Residential
- Town Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Planned Neighborhood
- Town Commercial
- Mixed-Use Corridors
- Village Center
- Regional Center
- Business Park
- Industrial
- Manufacturing
- Water
- Right-of-Way

Future Growth Area

- Manufacturing
- Business Park
- Suburban Residential
- Planned Neighborhood
- Mixed-Use Corridors
- Village Center
- Regional Center



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Data Sources: Hancock County, State of Indiana, US Census Bureau



Future Land Use Categories

Conservation/Open Space areas are primarily mapped in environmental sensitive areas such as along creeks and water bodies or areas of large-scale outdoor recreation. They support a diversity of plant and animal species with some also providing important natural functions such as drainage. Natural areas should be preserved and restored to a natural state with minimal development or disruption.

Agricultural/Rural areas are intended to remain largely rural and undeveloped with uses primarily focusing on agriculture and agriculture-related processing and support functions and outdoor recreation uses. Residential subdivisions and development unrelated to agriculture should be kept to a minimum and be located in areas where they will be least disruptive to near-by agricultural operations.

Institutional areas support the full range of public facilities, utilities, and private/non-profit institutional land uses. These typically are mapped as single parcels or as campuses and are located throughout the County in both developed and undeveloped areas. As such, water and sanitary services availability also varies, so uses without such services should be located on lots that are large enough to adequately accommodate on-site systems for an indefinite period. For more intensive uses and those with outdoor components, adequate screening and buffering should be provided from adjacent residential development and along collector and arterial roads.

Rural Residential areas are primarily mapped in existing low-density residential subdivisions serviced by on-site septic systems and wells. Future subdivisions of this type should be kept to a minimum and adjoin existing subdivisions in order to not break-up larger tracts in agricultural production. Further, conservation subdivision designs should be used in lieu of traditional subdivisions. These areas are unlikely to ever have water and sanitary services available, so lots should be large enough to adequately accommodate on-site systems for an indefinite period.

Town Residential areas are mapped in the Towns of Shirley and Spring Lake to reflect existing single-family neighborhoods where platted lots are as small as 7,000sf.

Suburban Residential areas primarily include single family homes on large lots in areas with water and sanitary sewer services.

Multi-Family Residential areas are intended to accommodate a variety of residential uses, including multi-family apartment complexes, condominiums, townhouses, and single and two-family residences, and mobile homes and mobile home parks, all served by public sanitary sewer and water systems. Use of Traditional Neighborhood design and concepts is strongly encouraged.

Planned Neighborhood areas are intended to include large, compact, master planned tracts with a wide range of integrated and compatible uses that provide a variety of housing types, basic services, supporting public facilities, and recreation/open spaces. Use of Traditional Neighborhood design and concepts is strongly encouraged.

Town Commercial areas are mapped in the Town of Shirley, in some of the unincorporated villages, and smaller parcels interspersed throughout County. These consist of a variety of commercial uses in various configurations with specific intensities determined by zoning. Use of this category outside of the Towns or villages should be limited.

Manufacturing areas are intended to support large-scale, employment-intensive uses primarily engaged in manufacturing with all supporting commercial and institutional uses limited to 10% of the area. Due to their associated lower job density and wages, warehousing and logistic uses are allowed only as accessories to a principal manufacturing use on the same site. Outdoor storage and operations should be screened along roads at the periphery, and deep, dense landscape buffers should be provided where Manufacturing areas are adjacent to residential uses.

Mixed-Use Corridors are located along primary transportation links, and the existing character of existing Corridors and housing varies widely across the County including older commercial and housing uses developed when US 40 served as the National Road to small neighborhood commercial parcels in unincorporated villages to vacant land in areas expected to be developed in the future. Most areas currently do not have water and sanitary sewer services, but all are located in designated sewer service areas and are expected to have service extended to them over time. Accordingly, significant new development and redevelopment should be timed with the availability of such services. The Regional Profiles address the future character of each of these areas, but in general, strip-type development should be avoided with a focus more on nodes and internal connectivity and integration among different uses/developments. Appropriate densities, intensities, and mix of uses for a particular Corridor or site will be determined during the development review/zoning process.

Village Centers are located at major crossroads where water and sewer facilities are or will be available and supporting public facilities. These are intended to be compact and highly integrated master planned developments with a range of uses similar to Planned Neighborhoods with more dense and intensive uses. Traditional Neighborhood design principles should be employed to create unique and inviting mixed-use environments that are somewhat self-contained. Each Village Center should include usable public space connected by safe and inviting pedestrian spines that promote walkability to goods and services that meet daily needs of residents. The central core of each Village Center is expected to be more intensive with lower density areas, located closer to the periphery.

Regional Centers are compact, dense nodes offering a mix of uses. Although these areas are accessed primarily by cars, pedestrian movement within a node should be encouraged and accommodated. Critical densities are required to achieve the kind of animation and activity envisioned within these nodes. To accomplish this, uses should be mixed vertically and in progression of scale that allows the built form to transition from highest intensity in the middle to lower scale development that would be complimentary to its adjacent uses at the periphery. Considerations to design should include provisions for open space, Complete Street typologies to support walking and cycling, amenities that support the broader development, and institutional uses such as libraries.

Business Park primary uses include office campuses, research & development, and light industrial while allowing commercial & residential uses. All supporting uses should be limited to 25% of the total area. Any intensive commercial & industrial activities should be conducted within an enclosed building and should not include heavy industrial, production-based uses, or those that generate significant truck traffic. These are intended to be compact and highly integrated master planned developments that create a campus atmosphere with a focus on high quality building designs, materials, and landscaping. Each Business Park should include usable public space connected by safe & inviting pedestrian spines that promote walkability between primary employment & supporting uses.

Industrial areas are intended to support a full range of intensive commercial, manufacturing, and logistics uses with supporting commercial and residential uses. Supporting uses are limited to 25% of the total area. Outdoor storage and operations should be screened along roads at the periphery of an Industrial area, and deep, dense landscape buffers should be provided where Industrial areas abut or are across the street from residential uses. Master planned Industrial areas are preferred that include trails and pedestrian spines that connect to nearby supporting commercial and residential uses.

KEY STRATEGIES

The following is a brief summary of the key strategies in the Plan, organized by chapter. The County invites you to read the full Future Hancock Comprehensive Plan to explore each in greater detail and the context in which they were prepared. Additionally, please review the Hancock County Economic Development Strategy and Thoroughfare Plan for detailed recommendations for the future of transportation and economic development in the County.



Conservation, Agriculture, and Natural Resources

- Develop or Enhance County Regulations to Protect Natural Features and Improve the Natural Quality in Hancock County
- Foster a Compact Development Pattern to Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Agricultural Resources
- Support and Encourage Agriculture Cultural Development and Advancement



Housing

- Provide a Wider Mix of Housing Types, Sizes, and Costs Throughout the County
- Promote Traditional Neighborhood Design Principles
- Implement High-Quality Design Standards



Land Use and Growth Management

- Coordinate with Hancock County Municipalities on Strategic Growth Areas
- Develop a County Impact Fee Policy
- Incorporate Public Safety and Public Facilities into the Development Review Process
- Create and Maintain a Future Right-of-Way and Public Facilities Map



Community Livability

- Expand Community Engagement Opportunities
- Develop Plans to Preserve and Enhance Community Character
- Develop a County Park and Open Space System
- Increase Public Health Awareness and Collaboration
- Continue to Coordinate with Hancock County School Districts on Future Planning Decisions



Intergovernmental Cooperation

- Pursue Intergovernmental Agreements with Hancock County Jurisdictions and Municipalities
- Develop and Expand Opportunities for Intergovernmental Cooperation and Communication
- Advance Coordination within Hancock County Government, Departments, and Elected Bodies
- Coordinate with Public Safety in the Development Process
- Coordinate with Private Utilities in the County
- Collaborate on and Take a Leadership Role in Regional Initiatives
- Contribute to Statewide Initiatives



Implementation (Policies)

- Provide education and training to staff and elected officials on incorporating Comprehensive Plan implementation into their decision making and policy review
- Indicate items or topics relevant to Comprehensive Plan implementation on public meeting agendas
- Incorporate Plan implementation into annual budget and capital improvement plans
- Post and display up to date Comprehensive Plan document and materials on the Hancock County website, in County offices, and other community locations, such as public libraries
- Develop an educational presentation on the Comprehensive Plan to share with the public and local stakeholder groups
- Require that any request for a Zoning Map Amendment be accompanied by an analysis of the amendment's consistency with the goals, objectives, and policies contained in Comprehensive Plan and the recommended Future Land Use
- Track and report progress on the implementation of the Plan to the Area Plan Commission via staff reports and presentations to the Area Plan Commission, Council, and County Commissioners at least twice a year. This should include a review of any previous Zoning Map Amendments that were deemed to be inconsistent with the goals, objectives, and policies contained in the Plan or varied from the recommend Future Land Use and the potential need to amend the text of the Plan and/or Future Land Use Map accordingly