

**DeKalb County
Comprehensive Plan**

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Plan Overview

DeKalb County undertook this comprehensive planning initiative as a step toward proactively planning for the community's future. This plan will enable the community to identify future goals and challenges as well as capitalize on opportunities. Because this document is based on a wide range of citizen input, community leaders can use it to make future decisions.

DeKalb County seeks to balance the inherently conflicting issues of growth, development, economic prosperity, environmental quality, government services, and quality of life. By following this document, the community can balance these interests and discover the best overall solutions for the community.

The DeKalb County Planning Initiative began in June of 2002 with the goal of creating a new Comprehensive Plan for the county. The county had adopted the previous Comprehensive Plan in 1964. This plan was produced shortly after I-69 bisected the community and prior to the development of the County Road 61 Industrial Corridor. Because the community has changed so dramatically over that nearly forty year period, it is appropriate to adopt a document that reflects the current needs and issues of the county. The initial goals and objectives generated by the community in this planning process are intended to be relevant for the next five to ten years. The long term vision for the county over the next fifteen to twenty years will build upon these initial goals.

Beneficiaries

The comprehensive plan is designed to benefit the entire community as a whole, as opposed to a single property owner or single municipality. As a result, from time to time, implementing this plan will adversely affect

a single property owner or a small group of property owners. However difficult or controversial, the greater good of the community will be served through the implementation of this plan. No community has ever successfully improved itself without some controversy, opposition or adverse effects on small numbers of property owners.

The county has committed to implement, to the extent possible, this plan with the greater good of the community in mind. As a check and balance, each project, program, or policy that results from this plan will first be evaluated to confirm that the end result will positively move the community forward. Unforeseen conditions and situations must be considered in respect to where the community is at that time.

Plan Chapters

Each chapter represents a dominant theme or central ideas. The DeKalb County plan contains eight chapters that are used as organizing elements. These chapters are:

- Focus & Manage Growth
- Devise an Efficient Infrastructure System
- Promote a Fiscally Responsible Transportation Network
- Protect Environmental Assets
- Enhance Community Character
- Provide High-Quality Public Services
- Strengthen & Diversify the Local Economy
- Foster Inter-Local Cooperation

Chapters 2-9 of this document contain a detailed description of each theme as well as goals, objectives and implementation measures that relate to it.

Comprehensive Plan Mandate

The State of Indiana, through Indiana Statutes, Title 36, Article 7, as amended, empowers counties to plan with the purpose of improving “the health, safety, convenience, and welfare of the citizens and to plan for the future development of their communities to the end:

1. That highway systems (and road systems) be carefully planned;
2. That new communities grow only with adequate public way, utility, health, educational, and recreational facilities;
3. That the needs of agriculture, industry, and business be recognized in future growth;
4. That residential areas provide healthful surroundings for family life; and
5. That the growth of the community is commensurate with and promotive of the efficient and economical use of public funds” (IC 36-7-4-201)

Indiana statutes state that counties may establish planning and zoning entities to fulfill the purpose (IC 36-7-4-201). The Plan Commission is the body responsible for maintaining the comprehensive plan, which is required by state law to be developed and maintained (IC 36-7-4-501).

Indiana Code 36-7-4-502 and 503 state the required and permissible contents of a comprehensive plan. The required plan elements are listed below.

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

The permissible content stated in Indiana Code Includes:

1. Surveys and studies of current conditions and probable future growth within the jurisdiction and adjoining jurisdictions.
2. Maps, plats, charts, and descriptive material presenting basic information, locations, extent, and character of any of the following:
 - A. History, population, and physical site conditions.
 - B. Land use, including the height, area, bulk, location, and use of private and public structures and premises.
 - C. Population densities.
 - D. Community centers and neighborhood units.
 - E. Blighted areas and conservation areas.
 - F. Public ways, including bridges, viaducts, subways, parkways, and other public places.
 - G. Sewers, sanitation, and drainage, including handling, treatment, and disposal of excess drainage waters, sewage, garbage, refuse, and other wastes.
 - H. Air, land, and water pollution.
 - I. Flood control and irrigation.
 - J. Public and private utilities, such as water, light, heat, communication, and other services.
 - K. Transportation, including rail, bus, truck, air and water transport, and their terminal facilities.
 - L. Local mass transit, including taxicabs, buses, and street, elevated, or underground railways.
 - M. Parks and recreation, including parks, playgrounds, reservations, forests, wildlife refuges, and other public places of a recreational nature.
 - N. Public buildings and institutions, including governmental administration and service buildings, hospitals, infirmaries, clinics, penal and

- correctional institutions, and other civic and social service buildings.
- O. Education, including location and extent of schools, colleges, and universities.
- P. Land utilization, including agriculture, forests, and other uses.
- Q. Conservation of energy, water, soil, and agricultural and mineral resources.
- R. Any other factors that are a part of the physical, economic, or social situation within the jurisdiction.
3. Reports, maps, charts, and recommendations setting forth plans and policies for the development, redevelopment, improvement, extension, and revision of the subjects and physical situations (set out in subdivision (2) of this section) of the jurisdiction so as to substantially accomplish the purposes of this chapter.
4. A short and long range development program of public works projects for the purpose of stabilizing industry and employment and for the purpose of eliminating unplanned, unsightly, untimely, and extravagant projects.
5. A short and long range capital improvements program of governmental expenditures so the development policies established in the comprehensive plan can be carried out and kept up-to-date for all separate taxing districts within the jurisdiction to assure efficient and economic use of public funds.
6. A short and long range plan for the location, general design, and assignment of priority for construction of thoroughfares in the jurisdiction for the purpose of providing a system of major public ways that allows effective vehicular movement, encourages effective use of land, and makes economic use of public funds.

DeKalb County's Fulfillment of the Mandate

DeKalb County has made a significant investment in this Comprehensive Plan through countless staff hours and a financial investment for consulting services. Also, nearly two hundred representatives of the community have volunteered their time and energy to participate in public workshops, interest group meetings, advisory group meetings, and provide reviews of the draft documents prior to adoption.

Out of respect of everything that went into creating this Comprehensive Plan, and for the purest need and desire to manage growth, the county will work hard to utilize, implement and maintain this document. To get the most out of the Comprehensive Plan the county will do the following:

- Make the published Comprehensive Plan available to the public through libraries, web, and purchase.
- Create an executive summary of the Comprehensive Plan for mass distribution (e.g. a poster plan).
- Hold training seminars/retreats with elected and appointed officials.
- Educate the public about the importance of planning and zoning in a community.
- Publish articles that reflect the successes of planning and zoning in the local newspapers.
- Revisit the Comprehensive Plan every 4 to 6 years by holding public workshops and conducting interviews with interest groups. Use these opportunities to confirm the existing content and to introduce new material.
- Add subcomponents to the Comprehensive Plan periodically that add value and refine the future vision for the county (e.g. small area plans, corridor plans, detailed economic development plan, etc).

Acknowledgements

This Planning Initiative was successful because of the large number of people who donated their time, talent and insight to the process. It is evident that the citizens of DeKalb County have pride in their past and look forward to a bright future.

As stated in initial meetings, communities that actively participate in planning their communities have a much greater chance at implementing their plans. This initiative was a true collaboration between the Steering Committee, Advisory Group, Ground Rules Inc., and the citizens of the county.

The Steering Committee would like to personally thank the following people who donated a considerable amount of time to ensure the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan represented the needs and goals of the entire community. You have made DeKalb County the community it is today and will lead it toward an even brighter future.

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Sally Rowe
Brad Stump
Sharon Kline

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Group

Mark Bohler
Phil Brechbill
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County Commissioners

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County Board of Zoning Appeals

Edward Kelham
Sharon Kline
Ruth Ann McNabb
James Pepple
James Stahl
David Kruse, Attorney

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Finally, thanks to all the people who participated in the special interest group and community leader meetings as well as the members of the public who participated in the public workshops.

Consultant Assistance



PREFACE

**Plan Foundation &
Community Profile**

CHAPTER 1

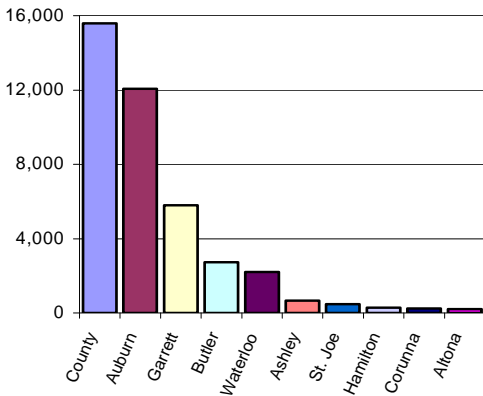
Community Profile

DeKalb County, situated in northeast Indiana, has experienced moderately high growth through the 1990’s. The county is now facing more rapid growth from the south that is expanding the challenges of managing growth. In spite of the growth, the county has remained healthy in terms of many demographic indicators.

Population

From 1990 to 2000, DeKalb County grew by 14% compared to the state growth rate of 9.7%. According to 2000 Census Bureau figures, DeKalb County’s population stood at 40,285 up from 35,324. The largest growth area was Union Township, which grew by 22%. Union Township is primarily composed of the City of Auburn, the county seat, with a population of 12,074.

Figure 1: 2000 Population Distribution



Other cities and towns within the county include Altona, Ashley, Butler, Corunna, Garrett, Hamilton, St. Joe, and Waterloo. Figure 1 displays the distribution of population in the county between the various cities, towns and unincorporated area. Over 61% of the population in the county lives within one of these cities or towns.

Employment & Income

One of the most substantial changes in the county in recent years has been the increase in employment opportunities. Industrial development in and around the County Road 61 Industrial Corridor was one major impetus for this change. Steel Dynamics Incorporated started a trend of major industrial employers locating in the county due to land availability, industrial zoning, cost, and the presence of major rail lines and highways throughout the county. This change is seen in the increase in industrial building permits in the mid 1990s. In 1995, the county issued 49 industrial permits, compared to an average of 9 permits in each of the following years.

Figure 2: Increase in People Commuting to the County

	Number of People Commuting into DeKalb County to Work	
	1990	2000
All areas	4,435	6,818
Allen Co.	1,339	2,926
Steuben Co.	1,065	1,364
Noble Co.	711	1,251

The number of jobs grew nearly 40% in the 1990s from 20,387 to 28,330. This increase in jobs led to a reverse in commuting patterns. In 1990, approximately 1,200 more people commuted out of the county than into the county for employment. By 2000, that trend had completely reversed with almost 1,000 more workers commuting into the county to work. Figure 2 illustrates the increase in commuters to the county from 1990 to 2000.

In addition to the increased employment opportunities, DeKalb County stands out in two other economic areas. First, DeKalb

County ranks 2nd in the state in the percent of manufacturing jobs within the county. In 2000, 55.4% of the jobs within the county were classified as manufacturing. The second area that stands out is median household income. DeKalb County ranks 12th in the state in this category with a median household income of \$44,909 compared to \$41,567 in the state.

Housing

The homeownership rate in the county surpasses that of the state. The number of housing units increased by 19% from 1990 to 2000; and from 13,601 units to 16,144 units. The majority of housing units in the county, nearly 66%, are owner occupied. The median value of housing is \$88,000 compared to the state median of \$94,300.

The number of residential permits issued by the county peaked in the late 1990s and has decreased slightly since that time. In the last ten years, the greatest number of county permits has been issued in Jackson Township. Union Township, the township with the highest population growth, far exceeded the other townships in terms of residential building permits for a short time period in the mid to late 1990's. Since that time, the number of permits issued in that township by the county has declined significantly as those higher growth areas have been annexed into the city of Auburn.

Agriculture

In 1997, the Census of Agriculture reported 785 farms and 162,900 acres of farmland in the county. This constitutes over 70% of the total land area of the county. Although a large number, the total amount of farmland has decreased steadily throughout the century.

Figure 3: Change in Agricultural Land

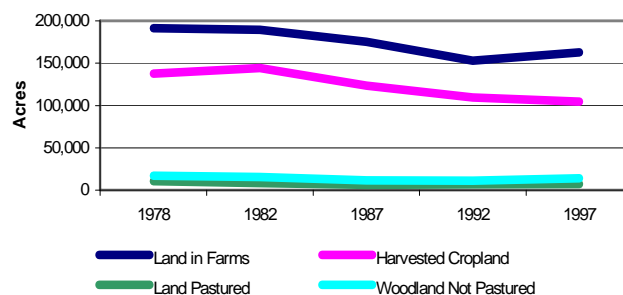
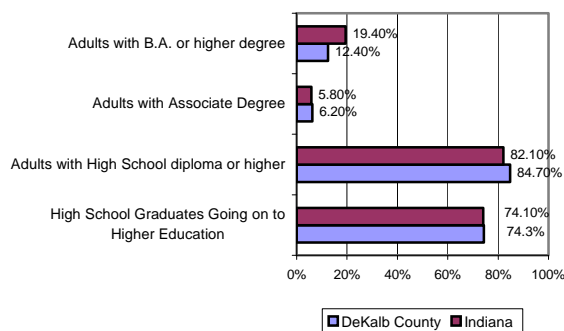


Figure 3 illustrates the changes in agricultural land according to the US Census of Agriculture. In the first fifty years of the century, the amount of farmland in the county decreased by only 2%. In the next fifty years, the amount of farmland decreased by over 25%. While harvested cropland and woodland areas have decreased, a significant amount of land has been taken out of production throughout the last fifteen years.

Education

The DeKalb County community provides a wide range of K-12 education choices. The four school districts provide both large school environments and schools with a small, rural character. In addition to the public school choices, private school choices have increased in recent years. In 2000, nearly 8% of all students in the county attended private schools.

Figure 4: Educational Attainment



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The vast majority (74%) of DeKalb County high school graduates go on to college. The county, in 2000, ranked ahead of the state of Indiana in terms of the percent of adults with a high school diploma or higher with nearly 85% achieving this status compared to 82% in the state. The county did not compare as well in terms of higher education with only 12.4% of adults achieving a 4-year degree or higher compared to 19% in the state.

When factoring in the 6.2% of the population with a 2-year degree, the percentage rises to 18.6% of the county's adult population with some level of college degree. Figure 4 summarizes the educational attainment of the county relative to the state.

Public Input

DeKalb County worked extensively to ensure that any interested citizen had an opportunity to participate in the comprehensive planning initiative. The steering committee chose to greatly exceed the requirements of state statute in order to gain as much public insight as possible. Following is a summary of the different methods used to obtain public opinions.

Interest Group Meetings

Over a series of two days, the steering committee and consultants conducted eight key interest group interview meetings. These meetings attempted to bring together “citizen experts” in a variety of important topics. The focus of those meetings was to obtain preliminary perspectives and insights from a broad range of interests as well as understand what some of the key issues are in the community. Eighty people attended the meetings representing a variety of interests, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Key Interest Groups

Interests Represented at Key Interest Group Meetings
Agriculture/Agribusiness
Cities and Towns
Commercial/Industrial/Economic Development
Emergency Services/Public Health
Environment
Land Development
School Interests
Transportation

The various groups identified several needs in the DeKalb County community including the need for various studies and plans, for new processes, for infrastructure improvements, for economic development,

for increased government communication and cooperation, for environmental protection, for increased parks and recreation amenities and for the protection of farmland.

Community Leader Meeting

A meeting was held following the interest group interviews with the DeKalb County community leaders. The County Council, County Commissioners, Plan Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and other elected and appointed county officials were invited to a meeting to provide perceptions and input needed to begin the comprehensive planning effort.

The county leaders who attended, sixteen in number, shared concerns and issues that should be addressed in the plan. They also shared the obstacles that the consultant and steering committee might face in formulating the plan. The leaders ended the meeting by sharing their dreams for the community.

Public Workshops

Two public workshops were held in the county. The workshops were held at different times, a lunch and evening session, in order to provide opportunities for people to attend when it was most convenient.

A great amount of time and energy was used to publicize the meetings to ensure good turnout. Announcements about the workshops were made at county meetings as well as at the interest group and community leader meetings. Additionally, announcements were mailed to over 100 churches in the county and flyers were posted at many public places. The steering committee also contacted local newspapers to explain the process and importance of the public attending the meetings as well as explain the comprehensive planning process.

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The public participation process far exceeded the requirements for public notification established by the State of Indiana. It also fulfilled the requirements for ADA accessibility. Both workshops were held at Middaugh Hall on the DeKalb County Fairgrounds.

Seventy-six people attended the two workshops which focused on educating the public about comprehensive planning, explaining the process and timeline for the DeKalb County Planning Initiative, and providing a chance for the public to share the liabilities, assets, needs, and dreams (LAND) of the community. After identifying each of the LAND components, each participant was able to vote for the needs they thought were most important. Figure 6 below illustrates the top five needs identified at the workshop.

Figure 6: Top 5 Needs

Top 5 Needs Identified at Public Workshop #1
Infrastructure improvements – maintain and pave roads/airport
Preserve/protect agricultural land
County parks – set asides for preservation
Economic development plan to attract better jobs, high-tech, diversified industry
Better communication/coordination between cities/towns and county

Steering Committee & Advisory Group

Following the public meetings, the steering committee, composed of Sally Rowe, Brad Stump and Sharon Kline established a 13-member advisory group composed of a variety of interests in the community. This group met seven times and discussed a variety of topics including parks and recreation, economic development, land use

and growth management, aesthetics and identity and environment.

Utilizing a comprehensive workbook, the discussion and conclusions of the group are well documented for the county. The Advisory Group discussed broad topics as well as specific ideas and suggestions that arose from the previous public meetings. The steering committee and consultant utilized the input and ideas from the advisory group to formulate and revise the Comprehensive Plan.



Advisory Group Members

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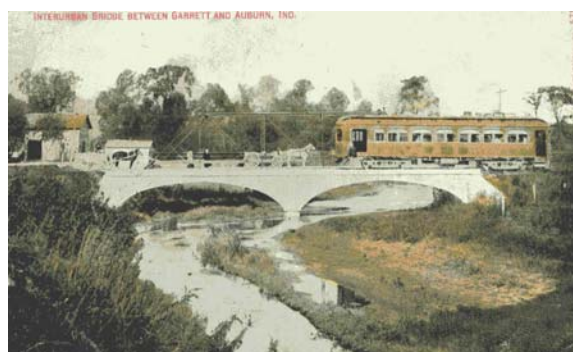
History of Growth & Development

What is now DeKalb County was part of the Northwest Territory established by Congress by the Ordinance of 1787. The Indiana Territory was organized in 1800, and Indiana then became the sixteenth state in 1816. Initially, all of Northern Indiana was “unorganized territory” and was assigned to Knox County for jurisdictional purposes. Gradually, as Indian claims were extinguished by treaty, counties were created by the Indiana General Assembly. DeKalb County was authorized by an Act dated February 7, 1835 and was actually organized by an Act dated May 7, 1837.

The earliest settlement into DeKalb County occurred along the St Joseph River near Spencerville as early as 1825. A water-powered mill was established there in 1839. Other settlements were Orange and Vienna (later Newville). Auburn was platted on Cedar Creek in 1836 by Wesley Park and John Badlam Howe. They succeeded in getting their town named county seat by the Indiana General Assembly in 1837. After 1837 settlement occurred rapidly. The population grew from 1,968 in 1840 to 8,251 in 1850 and to 13,880 in 1860.

Railroads soon replaced rivers as corridors of transportation. The Michigan and Lakeshore Southern Railroad crossed the county in 1858. This resulted in the platting of the towns of Jarvis (later Butler), Waterloo City (later Waterloo), Lawrence (later Sedan), and Corunna. The Fort Wayne, Jackson and Saginaw Railroad from Fort Wayne to Jackson, Michigan, through Auburn, Waterloo, and Summit was established in 1870, followed by the Eel River Railroad between Logansport and Butler through Auburn in 1872. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was built from Baltimore, Maryland to Chicago, Illinois in 1874 and resulted in the platting of St. Joe and Garrett. The Wabash Railroad

established a railroad from Clark, Indiana, to Montpelier, Ohio, in 1890 and platted the town of Ashley in 1892. The Wabash Railroad also established a line through DeKalb County in 1902. This line connected St. Louis to Detroit via Spencerville and Butler. An Interurban Railroad, which later became part of the Indiana Railway System, connected Waterloo, Auburn, and Garrett to Kendallville and Fort Wayne. The interurban was completed in 1906 and continued passenger service until 1930 and freight service until 1945.



The convergence of these railroads in DeKalb County provided transportation for farmers to sell their livestock and grain through favorable markets. Railroads also enabled manufacturers to bring in raw materials and to ship out finished products via rail. This access to markets enabled the buggy and later the automobile industries to grow and prosper. This prosperity resulted in the construction of many outstanding buildings including the DeKalb County Courthouse and County Farm; City Halls in Auburn, Garrett, and Waterloo; and the Auburn Automobile Company Administration Building.

Immigrants into DeKalb County during the nineteenth century were predominantly of English and German heritage. In the first part of the Twentieth Century many Eastern Europeans came into the county to fill jobs at the railroads and factories. As

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mechanization of farming occurred, many farm children entered the industrial and service workforce. While agriculture has historically been the largest industry in DeKalb County, a good mix of industrial uses, particularly grey iron and aluminum foundries, rubber products, and automotive parts, have gradually become predominant. Agriculture has evolved into passive grain farming as compared to livestock farming. In recent years, the museums of the county have fostered an increasing tourism and lodging industry.

After World War II the increasing availability of personal automobiles changed growth patterns throughout rural DeKalb County. Automobiles provided an easier means of travel allowing non-farm workers to move their homes to rural areas farther from their jobs in urban areas. Better road networks allowed for the transshipment of goods by truck rather than train reducing commercial and industrial dependence on the availability of railroads.

As a part of the Federal Interstate system, created by the Federal Highway Act of 1956, Interstate 69 was completed through the county in 1965. This super-highway profoundly changed the county and was a major factor in its continued prosperity. The planned continuation of I-69 as a main link between Mexico and Canada may have a similar effect on the future prosperity of DeKalb County.

The first land use ordinance in DeKalb County was enacted in Auburn in 1935 and divided the city into three land use categories – residential, commercial, and industrial. A more comprehensive ordinance in 1956 created the City of Auburn Plan Commission. There was no regulation of land use at the county level until the DeKalb County Comprehensive Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance was

enacted in 1964. This Master Plan exempted agriculture and mining from regulation but regulated rural residential, commercial and industrial uses.

Since 1964, residential development in rural DeKalb County has consisted primarily of large lot residences. Subdivisions typically contain one or two lots fronting on existing public roads for access. A small number of subdivisions containing a higher number of large lots are typically developed each year; most using public road frontage for lot access with a few including the construction of new public roads for access.

Denser, larger, smaller-lot residential developments with well-developed road networks have historically occurred only in those areas served by municipal sanitary sewer systems. A limited number of these denser subdivisions do exist in rural DeKalb County in areas where no municipal utilities are available. These subdivisions usually were planned before the County adopted the Comprehensive Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance in 1964 and, while they do exist on paper, the reality is they have not been developed due to the lack of public utilities and developed roads. As farming has become a less viable industry in the county, many agricultural lands and farm houses have become desired locations for new residences.

While some commercial development has occurred in DeKalb County since 1965 it has mainly been small, scattered developments often related to an individual's desire to operate a small business on the same land as their home. Exceptions to this trend are the larger commercial developments located near cities and towns or along highly traveled state and federal highways.

As with commercial development, industrial development has also occurred near cities

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and towns, primarily for public utility purposes, or along major roadways. Industrial development since 1965 has occurred more frequently on the west side of the county, in part, because of the transportation opportunities provided by I-69. Some industrial development on the east side of the county has occurred in the Butler and St. Joe areas due in part to US 6, State Road 1, and railroad access.

To provide more high-quality employment and industrial development opportunities, DeKalb County explored the creation of an industrial park in the early 1990's near State Roads 1, 8 and 101. This, it was thought, would be able to take advantage of transportation opportunities provided by the convergence of these state roads. The county did not move forward with plans to create the industrial park for various reasons.

In 1994 Steel Dynamics, Inc. (SDI) requested approval to locate a steel mini-mill on land less than three miles from the previously discussed industrial park site. The site was particularly desirable for industry because it could be connected to three (3) viable railroads – CSX, Conrail, and Norfolk and Southern. Also, the area was served by American Electric Power, which provided electric power availability and favorable rates. Additionally, the State of Indiana constructed a new road from US 6 to the SDI site, later named County Road 61. The provision of sanitary sewer service by the City of Butler to sites along the new corridor and access to both roadway and rail services made this new road the prime location for DeKalb County to create an industrial corridor. The establishment of the County Road 61 Industrial Corridor has caused several other significant industries to locate in DeKalb County.



PLAN FOUNDATION

Focus &
Manage Growth

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

DeKalb County has a strong interest in focusing and managing new growth and development. The county has experienced a relatively high rate of growth and development and can expect to see this pace continue as Fort Wayne and Allen County are further developed. The high quality of life, small town atmosphere, and excellent schools will likely continue to draw people to the community. The county strives to embrace growth while maintaining these valuable traits.



The rural character and abundance of farmland is one of the most important land use attributes of the county. Throughout the public input process, the importance of preserving farmland and the business of farming was stressed continuously. Although many larger farming operations in the county have closed, most of the land in the county still remains in agricultural use. Protecting this land not only requires limiting the development of it, but also limiting the development around it. The increase in residential development in close proximity to farmland has occasionally caused conflicts between common agricultural practices and the new residential neighbors.

Agriculture is not the only land use that is negatively impacted by unmanaged growth. Industrial areas and the DeKalb County Airport also deserve special consideration. The industrial areas within the county, particularly the County Road 61 Industrial Corridor, are the economic lifeline of the community, providing high-quality jobs to residents of the area and attracting people to move to the community. The airport bolsters DeKalb County's prospects of retaining and attracting additional industrial and commercial development. Increasing residential development around these vital areas creates a population to remonstrate against these areas causing consternation for government officials who must weigh their concerns with the best interest of the overall community.

Along with preserving the character of the community, DeKalb County must also realize the costs associated with unmanaged and unfocused growth. The costs of extending public utilities, improving roads, enlarging schools, expanding emergency services, and providing other government services all must be realized. To assure the best fiscal future for the county and municipalities, the county should encourage development in or adjacent to cities and towns, and encourage developers to connect to available utilities. By focusing growth near cities and towns, the cost of providing services will dramatically decrease for both the municipalities and the county, thereby increasing DeKalb County's economic vitality and keeping tax rates low.

The remainder of this chapter contains the goals, objectives and implementation measures (IM used to abbreviate) that will strive to create a balance of land uses and focus and manage growth to the areas where it can be best served and have least impact on the overall community.

FOCUS & MANAGE GROWTH

Goal: Encourage orderly and responsible development of land in order to provide opportunities for community growth and development which results in enhanced quality of life, leads to quality housing, economic vitality and enhanced recreation.

Objective 1: Ensure that land uses meet the community needs in balance with the market demand.

- IM 2.1.1 Maintain, utilize and promote the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan, Thoroughfare Plan and related planning documents.
- IM 2.1.2 Maintain and enforce the DeKalb County zoning ordinance, subdivision control ordinance and related documents and ordinances.
- IM 2.1.3 Recognize that small variances from the goals and objectives of the community will accumulate over time, resulting in significant loss of community quality.
- IM 2.1.4 Update the DeKalb County plans and ordinances regularly to ensure that they adapt to market changes if appropriate.

Objective 2: Ensure that residential land uses are designed to be safe, accessible, sanitary, and aesthetically pleasing.

- IM 2.2.1 Establish policies to require new residential development to connect to public utilities when they are reasonably accessible.
- IM 2.2.2 Review and update subdivision design standards, such as road specifications, to ensure that they encourage the development of subdivisions rather than strip housing.

Objective 3: Strive to protect the vitality of existing agricultural uses from the pressures of development.

- IM 2.3.1 Implement agricultural zoning districts to protect farmers wishing to continue to farm and maintain the rural character of the community.
- IM 2.3.2 Discourage development in predominantly agricultural areas that impedes normal farming practices.
- IM 2.3.3 Incorporate the use of non-remonstrance covenants into the subdivision process in order to allow the farmer to continue customary agricultural practices

Objective 4: Strongly discourage incompatible and conflicting land uses from being adjacent or in close proximity to one another.

- IM 2.4.1 Encourage residential, commercial, industrial, agriculture, parks and open space to occur where planned.
- IM 2.4.2 Encourage that uses of land are sensitive to adjacent environmental features.
- IM 2.4.3 Develop greenspace & buffers between development zones.
- IM 2.4.4 Focus business and industrial development within designated corridors and at the I-69 interchanges.
- IM 2.4.5 Discourage residential development near the airport and industrially-zoned areas to protect the long-term viability of these important sectors of the DeKalb County economy.

Objective 5: Manage and direct growth and development in DeKalb County such that it maintains the highest quality of life for current and future residents

- IM 2.5.1 Focus growth around existing cities and towns where infrastructure can easily be expanded.
- IM 2.5.2 Recognize the relationship between scattered growth and the inefficiency of providing public services and encourage focused growth and development.
- IM 2.5.3 Discourage incompatible growth and development within one mile of the DeKalb County Airport's property.
- IM 2.5.4 Encourage industrial growth where it has excellent access to the interstate or railroads.
- IM 2.5.5 Enhance and maintain the quality of life by preserving the rural and small town character throughout DeKalb County.
- IM 2.5.6 Discourage low density growth near municipalities that can act as a barrier to their future growth.

Background

The following sections provide the background necessary to allocate and distribute land uses throughout the county in order to focus and manage growth. The percentages provided in Objective 6 are based on national studies (i.e. Harland Bartholomew-1955; Eisner and Associates-1985) and are commonly used when determining land use criteria. The actual percentages listed for DeKalb County were adjusted by the county's planning consultant based on community analyses, demographic profile, and employment sectors.

Residential

The residential category is inclusive of all types of housing. It has been the decision of the Advisory Group to keep the land use categories as simple as possible.

Generally, residential uses are to be encouraged in close proximity to an existing municipality and in areas that have growth potential and some demand for residential development.

Although there is relatively strong residential growth pressure to the south of Auburn, some caution is necessary to assure that future residential development is not too close to the airport.



Commercial

It is the concept of this plan to discourage strip commercial development. Instead this plan encourages commercial districts or nodes, strategically located to serve the residents of the county.

The County should discourage the establishment of commercial districts in areas that are not planned for such use in this comprehensive plan or in the plans of each municipality within the county. This is especially relevant when the development is striving to circumvent the costs and regulations associated with developing in the planned commercial districts.

Industrial

Having strong roots in quality industrial uses, DeKalb County wishes to continue to encourage such uses. Thus, the concept of this plan is to promote industrial uses where adequate utilities and public services exist, and where quality access to highways and railways exist.

DeKalb County has already been successful guiding industrial growth into geographic areas that are thriving and nurturing additional commerce.

Agriculture

Through public workshops, interest group meetings, and meetings with the county's leadership, it has been determined that agricultural land should no longer be looked at as "land to be developed". Rather, it has been recognized that standard agricultural practices are adversely affected by random residential development in rural areas.

Primarily "strip housing" is the most significant type of housing development affecting agriculture. Additionally, random business development in rural areas can cause conflicts.

Generally, agricultural uses should be the primary land use beyond the planned growth areas outside of each municipality. Some exceptions to this rule exist. For instance, the CR 61 corridor, areas between Waterloo and Auburn, and the developing State Road 8 corridor between Auburn and Garrett should not be designated for agricultural uses. Additional areas exist between Auburn and the DeKalb County Airport. The County should also consider the potential for another not agricultural corridor along CR 00N between Ashley and Hamilton.

Capital Improvements Plan

Capital improvements include any projects identified and needed in a community. Typically these projects are exceptionally costly and are meant to serve a long-term need in the community. The most common capital projects include major construction of roads, building a public building, acquisition of real property or acquisition of equipment.

For the purpose of this Comprehensive Plan, the capital improvement projects include, but are not limited to, the maintenance and construction of:

- Roads
- Regulated drains
- Storm sewer
- Public buildings
- Parks & Trails
- Sanitary sewer
- Water lines

Because the County does not typically address sewer and water utilities, it should work with cities and towns to implement the necessary systems to support planned growth.

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a timetable or schedule identifying the planned capital improvements to be made over a specified period of time. The improvements are prioritized by importance and given an approximate completion date, cost estimate, and anticipated funding sources.

Typically, a CIP is a five-year program. The first CIP plan creates a schedule for five years into the future. Each year thereafter, the plan is validated, making only minor adjustments as needed. In addition to minor changes, an additional year (the fifth year) of projects is added to the plan. This system ensures the CIP always projects five years of identified projects.

A Capital Improvement Plan is one of the most effective ways a community can focus and manage growth. With a CIP in place,

the community can best sculpt where and when growth occurs within the county. For instance, if primary infrastructure is never extended to an area, growth is less likely to occur. Conversely, where growth is desired, infrastructure can be extended which will likely result in development. The phrase “if you build it, they will come” is true in regard to infrastructure.

Developments being proposed in areas that are not slated for capital improvements should be denied based on the CIP. The developer can choose to install the required improvements as per the municipal standards or wait until that area is provided utilities by the municipality in future years.

It is important for municipalities to follow their CIP, for deviations from it are likely less efficient and beneficial methods for using the limited resources available to communities. Additionally, the CIP should accurately reflect where growth is expected and desired. Therefore, deviations are likely counter to Future Land Use plans.

Public-owned water and sewer are the most critical for steering growth in a community. These two services are required for nearly all new high quality and higher density development. If the county requires public water and sewer for some types of new development, they can effectively focus growth to the cities and towns where public water and sewer are available. Since the county does not provide sewer and water utilities, it will need to coordinate closely with the cities and towns.

The expansion and/or improvement of the county’s road system are additional ways to encourage future growth. Where improvements are not planned, road improvements should be at the expense of the developer or property owners demanding said improvements. When these projects are carried out, the construction must meet the county’s road standards.

Agricultural Zoning

Agricultural zoning is a zoning tool used by communities across Indiana that desire to protect farmland and the industry of farming in their communities. DeKalb County recognizes the importance of not only the larger farming operations in the community, but the smaller, specialty farms as well. The county seeks to not only protect existing agricultural uses, but also encourage and support smaller-scale, niche, and boutique farming operations.

Agricultural zoning also encourages growth and development in and contiguous to municipalities. This development pattern is highly desirable by DeKalb County and is more of the reason for promoting agricultural zoning than any other reason.

In agricultural zoning, one or more agricultural zoning districts could be established with the purpose of protecting and enhancing agricultural operations of various sizes and uses within those areas. Other uses could be permitted provided they are supportive of agricultural operations. Uses that conflict with agriculture such as commercial or residential subdivisions would require a change in zoning or approval through the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Communities who utilize agricultural zoning may be predominantly agricultural or may be developing but desire to retain farming as a land use and as an economic generator for their community. Communities across the State of Indiana and the country utilize agricultural zoning.

Future Land Use Map

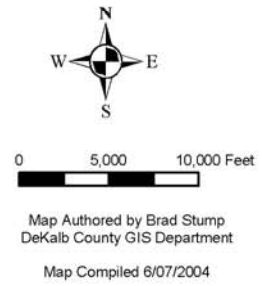
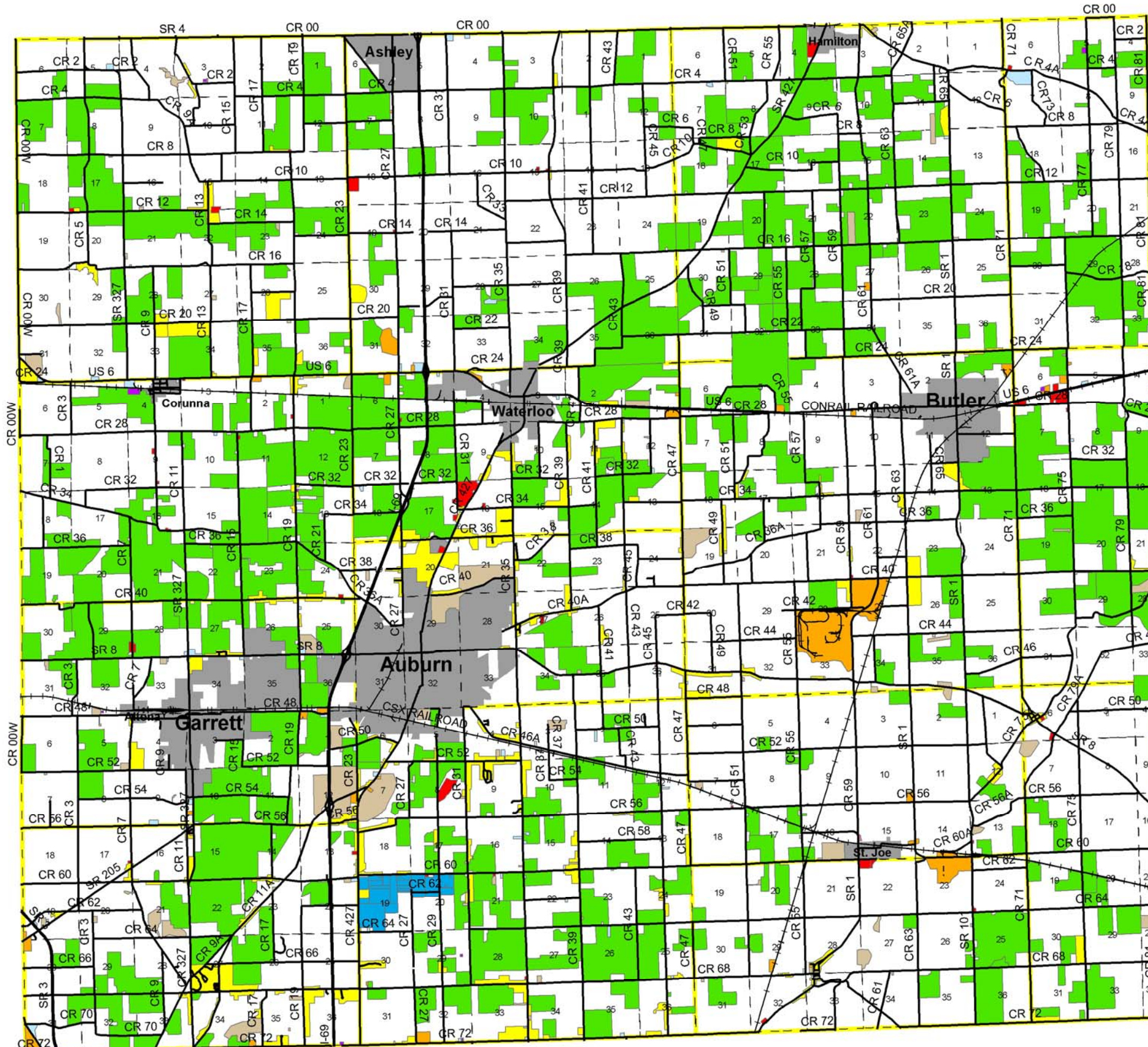
The Future Land Use Map designates the general distribution of land uses that will help focus and manage growth.

The map depicts the community's land use goals in a conceptual manner, not a legally precise location of land use districts. It should be used to support and influence land use decisions and zoning map changes.

Furthermore, the Zoning Ordinance the Subdivision Control Ordinance, and other related ordinances will be the primary method used to implement the concepts and goals represented on the map.

The following pages contain the Existing and Future Land Use Map. The Existing Land Use Map provides a snapshot of land uses within DeKalb County in 2003. It does not depict the zoning or permitted uses on a property and does not depict zoning ordinance violations.

DeKalb County Existing Land Use Map



LEGEND

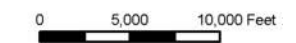
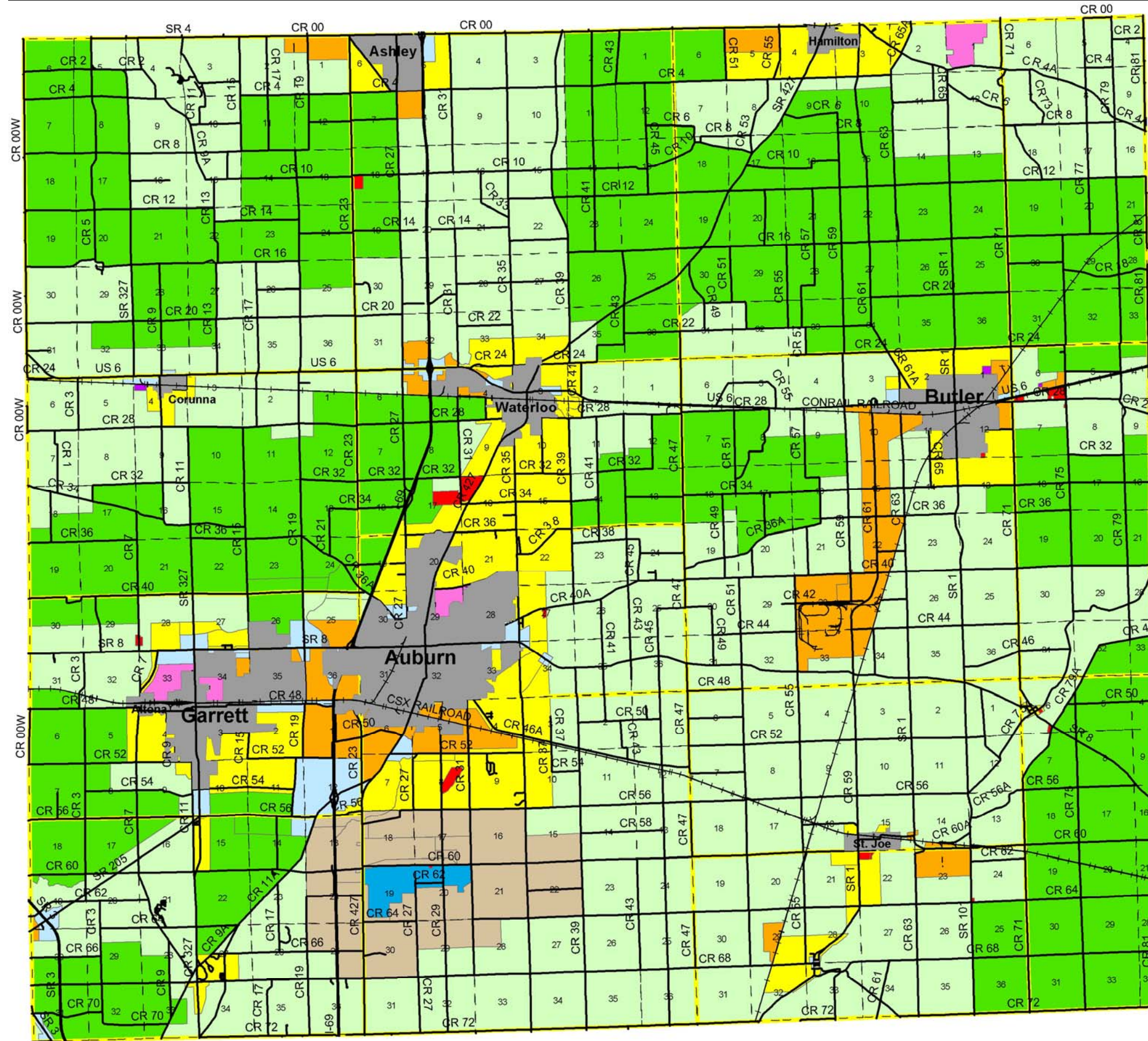
- LandUse_Existing**
- Land Use Class**
- Large Agricultural/Confined Feeding Operations
 - DeKalb County Airport
 - Special Use
 - Commercial Use
 - Industrial Use
 - Public Utility or Telecommunications Facility
 - Park or Open Space
 - Hospital
 - Institutional Use, Church or Cemetery
 - Heavy Residential Area
 - PLSS First Divisions
 - Civil Townships
 - Railroad Track
 - Alley
 - Road
 - Corporate Limits

Note: All areas of rural DeKalb County not identified by the classifications above are classified as Mixed Agricultural/Rural Residential



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DeKalb County Future Land Use Map



Map Authored by Brad Stump
DeKalb County GIS Department
Map Compiled 0/07/2004

LEGEND

- Land Use - Proposed**
- Land Use Class**
- Agricultural
 - Mixed Agricultural/Rural Residential
 - DeKalb County Airport
 - Aviation Compatible Use Area
 - Commercial Use
 - Industrial Use
 - Public Utility or Telecommunications Facility
 - Park or Open Space
 - Hospital
 - Institutional Use, Church or Cemetery
 - Residential Use
 - PLSS First Divisions
 - Civil Townships
 - Railroad Track
 - Street
 - Alley
 - Proposed Roads
 - Corporate Limits



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Devise an Efficient
Infrastructure System

CHAPTER 3

DEVISE AN EFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEM

Introduction

The topic of infrastructure is extremely important in a growing community such as DeKalb County. Infrastructure includes roads, intersections, railroads, public water, public sewer, sidewalks, storm water drainage, off-road pathways, and the DeKalb County Airport. All of the elements of the infrastructure system must be planned and coordinated in order to sustain a fiscally healthy community.

The county, while reaping the benefits from new industrial, commercial and residential growth, also must consider the cost of providing services to these new people and businesses. The county has, to this point, had some success in guiding commercial and industrial growth to areas where the infrastructure is in place to serve it. The county has not had as much success with residential growth and now faces pressures to improve infrastructure as well as fix problems that have arisen due to scattered growth.

In recent years, the number of residences being built in the county has continued to increase due to people moving from Allen County and Fort Wayne to DeKalb County as well as people moving from cities and towns to live in the country. Although poor soils, muck areas, floodplain, and gravel roads in the county would be thought to limit and constrain development, this has not been the case.

People have continued to move out to the county with virtually no obstacles to stop or limit them. Once into the rural areas of the county, these people often demand the services provided by a city or town such as road maintenance and improved drainage facilities. The county also faces the environmental threats associated with a large number of septic systems being placed in poor soils. The combination of these

factors makes it imperative that the county coordinate growth with infrastructure development.

While the county infrastructure is not able to keep pace with growth, the cities and towns within the county have worked extensively to increase their infrastructure facilities and prepare for future growth. Most of the communities within the county have the capacity to accommodate a large amount of the new residential and commercial growth that the county is likely to experience in the next 20 years.

Along with roads and utilities, the DeKalb County Airport is a major infrastructure component in DeKalb County. From 2001-2003 the airport was expanded from 338 acres to its present size of 600 acres with an option to purchase an additional 73+ acres. The land acquisitions provide the property necessary for future capital improvements called for in the Airport's recently adopted 20-year plan. Recent capital improvement projects have attracted additional private and business aircraft to the airport, either as new tenants or as transient operations and have been one factor in an avionics business relocating to the Airport.



DeKalb County should continue to develop the airport in order to provide sufficient services to recreational and business aviation customers within the community. It should be noted that the DeKalb County

DEVISE AN EFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEM

Airport provides services not only to DeKalb County but, along with the Fort Wayne International, Smith Field and Huntington airports, it also services a share of the Fort Wayne metropolitan area. The continuing commercial and residential development occurring in northern Allen County and on the north side of Fort Wayne provides opportunities for the airport to serve an increasing number of private and business aviation needs.

Recent studies have shown that the DeKalb County Airport has a significant economic impact on the community even though the investment of local tax dollars is relatively low. In order to maintain a high economic impact and, therefore, maintain high return-on-investment in the airport the County needs to continue the implementation of the Airport's Capital improvement Program (CIP), especially with regards to those improvements that have higher potential for increasing commercial traffic into and out of the airport or the location of commercial operations to the airport and its periphery. Continuing implementation of the CIP should also allow the airport to provide an increasing level of service and/or availability of facilities to both corporate and private clients.



It is also important that DeKalb County take steps to properly plan for the land use around the airport so as to minimize the possibility that development pressures will prohibit expansion of the airport. Proper planning will also reduce conflicts that often arise when incompatible development is allowed to occur on lands surrounding the airport.

The remainder of this chapter contains goals, objectives and implementation measures (IM used to abbreviate) that stress the importance of coordinating growth with infrastructure development. It also emphasizes focusing growth to the cities and towns where the infrastructure is in place to serve development.

Goal: To the maximum extent possible, require that future growth and development be accompanied by orderly and efficient expansion of all necessary infrastructure.

Objective 1: Provide basic infrastructure such that it supports the other goals and objectives of the community as found in this document.

- IM 3.1.1 Maintain and update the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Control Ordinance and other related ordinances and documents.
- IM 3.1.2 Develop and maintain a funding program to best utilize grants, low interest loans, local resources, bonding capacity, and miscellaneous funding sources.
- IM 3.1.3 Develop and maintain a Capital Improvement Plan for county regulated drains, transportation and infrastructure improvements.

Objective 2: Encourage development practices that minimize public capital burden and debt.

- IM 3.2.1 Require new development to pay the full cost of on-site infrastructure improvements, and where necessary, offsite infrastructure improvements.
- IM 3.2.2 Develop guidelines to determine when and how developments can connect to utilities when located outside the corporate limits.

Objective 3: Promote new development where infrastructure is available to serve it and discourage development where it can not.

- IM 3.3.1 Require new development to connect to public sewers when it is within 300 feet of an existing sewer line as provided by law.
- IM 3.3.2 Require two areas on a parcel to be adequate for an on-site wastewater treatment system prior to issuing a building permit in order to accommodate a septic system if it should fail. Also, prohibit future development of these two areas.

Objective 4: Develop policies that provide for the long-term stability of the DeKalb County Airport.

- IM 3.4.1 Limit residential development around the county airport.
- IM 3.4.2 Adhere to the future land use map in order to promote the most complementary uses near the airport.
- IM 3.4.3 Support and promote the efforts of the DeKalb County Airport.

Background & Essential Information

The following sections provide the background and essential information necessary to devise an efficient infrastructure system.

Sanitary Sewer

Coping with the lack of sanitary sewer infrastructure is a major issue for DeKalb County. Although it is generally understood that a county-wide sanitary sewer system is not realistic in the foreseeable future, growth and development has not declined in the unserved rural areas. The cities and towns within the county have generally well-developed sanitary sewer systems with most having available capacity. The following communities have sanitary sewer service:

- Ashley
- Auburn
- Butler
- Corunna
- Garrett and Altona (south of railroad tracks)
- Hamilton (Hamilton Lake Conservancy District)
- Hudson (on north side of County Line)
- Saint Joe-Spencerville Regional Sewer District
- Waterloo

In a utility service area survey distributed during the comprehensive planning initiative, Waterloo, Hamilton, Butler, and Auburn identified that they had capacity to serve additional households. The combined capacity in these systems is estimated at 4,700 households. However, this estimate does not include additional capacity that will be added to these systems in the near future, or the capacity of other municipalities that did not report their existing capacity. The estimated demand for new homes in the next 20 years ranges from 2,000 to 4,300 households. Therefore, sufficient capacity is

already available to allow these new homes to be built.

Almost all new homes built in rural areas of the county utilize private septic systems. Although the technology related to septic systems has improved, the systems often fail if not maintained. This often results in the state, county or municipal government forcing the repair or replacement of the system to resolve the issue. Failing or inadequate septic systems not only create problems for home owners but are thought to be a major contributor to water pollution.

DeKalb County Airport

The DeKalb County Airport was originally built in 1964 however DeKalb County has actively pursued the development of the airport only since the late 1980's and early 1990's. In the 1990's a new terminal building and new maintenance hangar were constructed, the runway was lengthened to 5000', a full parallel taxiway was added and a new fuel farm was built. Two corporate hangars were constructed with private funds on ground leased from the airport.

The period from 2000 to mid-2003 saw additional improvements such as the installation of a taxiway lighting system, improvements to the fuel farm and the construction of the first new T-hangar building in nearly 40 years. Projects currently in progress include the construction of a second new T-hangar building, the installation of an Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS) and preparation for the construction of another corporate hangar by private investors. Also underway is a sanitary sewer expansion project connecting the airport to municipal services.

The County is also currently acquiring land to expand the existing airport lands by purchasing additional properties as detailed

in their recently adopted 20-year plan. The land acquisitions are needed for future capital improvements and will allow for the installation of an Instrument Landing System (ILS) in late 2003/early 2004, the lengthening of the primary runway by as much as 2000 feet, as well as provide the property needed to allow for possible future construction of a crosswind runway. The airport's 20-year plan includes an aggressive Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) divided into three phases. Phase I covers the first five years, Phase II covers the second five years and Phase III covers the final ten years. The County's progressive approach toward airport development is evident in that, while the airport is only in the third year of Phase I of the CIP, it has either completed or is in the process of completing nearly all of the planned projects for Phase I. Additionally, certain land acquisition requirements from Phases II and III are also either complete or in progress or, in one instance, an option secured for the property in question.

The basing of corporate aircraft at the airport is a testament to the role the airport can play in support of the economic development of DeKalb County. According to the Aviation Association of Indiana's biennial study "Economic Impact of Airports in Indiana" the DeKalb County Municipal Airport had a total annual economic impact to the community of \$7.8 million in 1999, increasing to \$10.3 million in 2001. It is anticipated that the economic impact will again increase upon completion of the installation of the ILS and the AWOS. The planned lengthening of runway 9-27 should also increase the economic impact.

Regulated Drains

The regulated drains throughout the county are considered infrastructure. There is a

need for this system to be managed such that the county remain properly drained.

Promote a Fiscally
Responsible
Transportation Network

CHAPTER 4

Introduction

The transportation network in DeKalb County ranges from narrow gravel roadways to high speed rail lines to limited access interstate highways like I-69. The county is served by a number of large, highly traveled state and county highways. These roads serve cross county commuters and provide routes for the many semi-trucks that travel to the County Road 61 Industrial Corridor. In addition to the extensive road network, three major rail lines serve the county as well. These rail lines connect Toledo and Pittsburg to Chicago; and Cincinnati to Detroit making them major freight routes.



Although traversed by extensive and upgraded transportation routes, many county roads are not paved. These roads serve the residential and agricultural areas of the county. The gravel roadways help to maintain the rural character of the county and, in theory, should serve to limit growth in rural areas. Recent building history suggests that the gravel roads have not inhibited people from moving out to the agricultural areas of the county. Although once living in the “country”, people often demand that the roads be paved and upgraded.

The pressures of these new residents of the county coupled with the growing number of businesses and industries in the county illustrate the importance of having a plan in place to improve the county road network. Currently, projects are done on an as-needed or as-demanded basis rather than being based on a long-term thoroughfare or capital improvements plan. The current thoroughfare plan of the county, adopted in 1964, is severely outdated and is no longer used for prioritizing roadway improvements.

In addition to planning for long-term capital investments in the roadway system, the county also lacks a fully developed, objective system for making smaller infrastructure improvement decisions such as intersection improvement or road paving. Through this process the county is striving to develop a set of criteria and ranking system in order to make these decisions based on the where and how the community desires to grow. Being that this plan is based on significant public input and will be adopted by elected and appointed officials, it is the best vehicle to initiate this system.

PROMOTE A FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Although the major road and rail infrastructure in the county is excellent, the alternative transportation network is non-existent. The county currently does not have county-wide improvements planned to enhance alternative transportation which includes pathways as well as innovative options such as on-demand busses.

Alternative transportation serves walkers, bikers and other groups who often have transportation demands that cannot be met by the conventional roadways. These facilities often are especially valuable for the youth and elderly who may be unable to drive but still require mobility and accessibility to community destinations.

The trails currently existing in the county in St. Joe and between Auburn and Waterloo are seen as valuable assets in the community and should be models for future trail development.

The remainder of this chapter contains the goals, objectives and implementation measures that promote efficient and expansion of the roadway system and set out a long-term plan for thoroughfare improvements coordinated with the community's growth areas.

PROMOTE A FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Goal: Promote a fiscally responsible network for all common modes of transportation and strive to mitigate traffic congestion, unsafe roadways, and intersections.

Objective 1: Maintain adequate automobile access for all citizens of DeKalb County.

- IM 4.1.1 Require accessibility for police, emergency, and fire personnel in new developments.
- IM 4.1.2 Support the development of above and below grade railroad crossings where needed and when feasible.
- IM 4.1.3 Limit private access points along arterials .
- IM 4.1.4 Designate truck routes which will result in the least disturbance to residences and town centers. Exempt local deliveries and agricultural related vehicles.
- IM 4.1.5 Establish and enforce weight limits on county roads to reduce maintenance costs.
- IM 4.1.6 Require road networks within new subdivisions to link to the roads in neighboring subdivisions.
- IM 4.1.7 Require, where feasible, new arterial and collector roads to be constructed as growth occurs around municipalities, especially in areas within 1 mile of the existing corporate limits.

Objective 2: Maintain and improve the condition of existing roadways.

- IM 4.2.1 Develop and maintain a roadway funding program with dedicated funds to best utilize grants, low interest loans, local resources, and bonding capacity.
- IM 4.2.2 Minimize dangerous roadways, intersections, pedestrian crosswalks, trail crossings, and rail crossings.
- IM 4.2.3 Create a ranking/scoring system for roadway improvement projects that reflects the priorities of the community and can serve as a tool for capital improvement planning.
- IM 4.2.4 Establish benchmarks that coincide with density and quality of development to trigger road improvements.

Objective 3: Update and maintain a roadway classification system.

- IM 4.3.1 Require that adequate right of way is preserved for future expansion or improvements to roads.
- IM 4.3.2 Apply and periodically update the Thoroughfare Plan to preserve adequate rights-of-way and maintain the roadway classification system.
- IM 4.3.3 Recognize that the Thoroughfare Plan can serve as a growth management tool by directing new growth and development to areas where road capacity can serve it.
- IM 4.3.4 Incorporate alternative transportation elements such as sidewalks, off-road paths, and on-demand busses into the Thoroughfare Plan where feasible.

Objective 4: Provide a safe and appropriate alternative transportation network throughout DeKalb County.

- IM 4.4.1 Require sidewalks to be installed within new subdivisions that are adjacent to municipalities and be designed to connect to existing sidewalks now or in the future.
- IM 4.4.2 Ensure that adequate right of way is preserved for future expansion or improvements to roads that will allow for pedestrian pathways and/or bicycle lanes within and between communities.
- IM 4.4.3 Encourage alternative transportation linkages to schools, parks, and other public resources.
- IM 4.4.4 Utilize abandoned railways and roads for a countywide trail system.
- IM 4.4.5 Interconnect the parks, recreation amenities, natural areas and public facilities with a network of trails suitable for pedestrians and bicyclists and protect/maintain existing paths and bikeways.
- IM 4.4.6 Improve mobility for youth, seniors, disabled and other residents in need.

Background & Essential Information

The following sections provide the background and essential information relating to transportation improvements that promote a fiscally responsible transportation network.

Roadway Classification System

The thoroughfare plan is based on a road hierarchy, a road classification system based on travel demand, access, speed and purpose. For example, a major arterial such as a state highway has a higher traffic volume and fewer access points compared to a local road that serves neighborhoods. The road classifications for DeKalb County are as follows:

- Limited Access/Interstate – a road with designated access points, high speeds, and high traffic volumes that provides cross county
- Major Arterial – a road with access control and restricted parking that collects and distributes traffic to and from minor arterials.
- Minor Arterial – a road that collects and distributes traffic to and from collector and arterial roads.
- Collector – a road designed to collect traffic from local roads and from several neighborhoods and to distribute traffic to arterial roads. It has lower traffic volumes than major or minor arterials.
- Local – a road designed primarily to provide access to abutting properties and discourage through traffic.

A road may be classified higher than its existing use because the community expects traffic volumes to increase. DeKalb County will encourage future development to occur in areas that can be easily served, or accessed, along appropriate routes.

DeKalb County will utilize a thoroughfare plan to protect neighborhoods, prioritize

projects, and provide an efficient transportation system. Future development should contribute to the county's goal of providing a safe, appropriate and efficient transportation network for vehicles and pedestrians.



Prioritizing Roadway Improvements

DeKalb County should prepare and maintain a system for the evaluation of road conditions. This system of scoring should then be used to prioritize capital improvement projects. This type of system can not only result in the best management of roadways, but also removes political influences on capital improvements.

The county should strive to establish the criteria and scoring system and then add it to this comprehensive plan.

Alternative Transportation Network

An alternative transportation or pedestrian network consists of interconnected paths and sidewalks that link the community's various destinations and neighborhoods together. It can potentially become a secondary transportation system, which is separate from, but links to, the road network.

Because it can provide both recreation and a safe alternative to the automobile for local travel, an alternative transportation network would be beneficial to DeKalb County. Some additional benefits include:

- Reduced traffic on local roads
- Healthier lifestyles and social interaction
- Greater access to natural amenities

Another type of pedestrian network can be found in new residential subdivisions.

While it is not anticipated that small subdivisions in the more rural parts of the county will have sidewalks, it is essential that new subdivisions close to cities and towns with existing sidewalks should install sidewalks in order to create a seamless, community wide pedestrian network. With a developed sidewalk system within cities and towns, it becomes more feasible to connect cities and towns throughout the county with multi-use trails.

The following linkages are the highest priority for sidewalk and trail construction in DeKalb County:

- Schools and parks
- Schools and neighborhoods
- Parks and neighborhoods
- Neighborhoods and shopping/entertainment districts

Thoroughfare Plan Map

On the following page is the Thoroughfare Plan Map. This map indicates the road hierarchy system as it is to exist in 15 to 20 years. It is not a reflection of what the road classification is today.

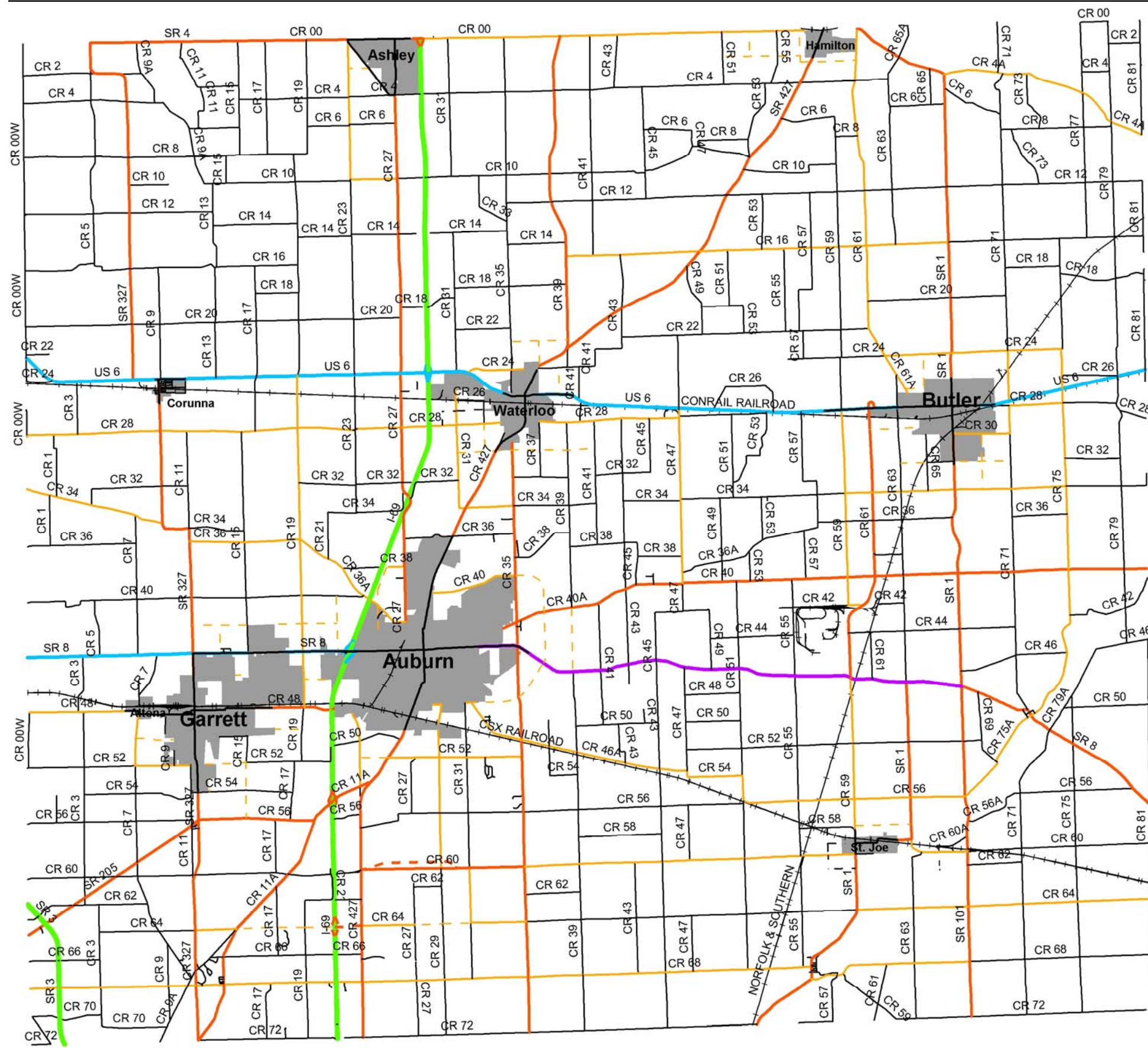
The Thoroughfare Plan Map indicates proposed roads in locations deemed necessary. The exact alignment should not necessarily be interpreted as a straight line as drawn. Rather, the line drawn is a conceptual linkage to indicate a connection from one point to another. Exact alignment should be determined by engineers to avoid poor soils, natural resources and existing structures.

The Thoroughfare Classification system recognizes the following:

- Interstate/Limited Access with 300 feet of right of way.
- Major Arterial-Class I with 150 feet of right of way.
- Major Arterial-Class II with 120 feet of right of way.
- Minor Arterial with 100 feet of right of way.
- Collector with 80 feet of right of way.
- Local with 60 feet of right of way.

PROMOTE A FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

DeKalb County - Thoroughfare Plan Map



0 5,000 10,000 Feet

Map Authored by Brad Stump
DeKalb County GIS Department
Map Compiled 6/07/2004

Legend

- Thoroughfare Plan**
- ThoroughfareClassification**
- County - Interstate/Limited Access (300' r/w)
 - County - Major Arterial - Class I (150' r/w)
 - County - Major Arterial - Class II (120' r/w)
 - County - Minor Arterial (100' r/w)
 - County - Collector (80' r/w)
 - County - Local (60' r/w)
- ProposedRoads**
- ThoroughfareClassification**
- - - County - Interstate/Limited Access (300' r/w)
 - - - County - Major Arterial - Class I (150' r/w)
 - - - County - Major Arterial - Class II (120' r/w)
 - - - County - Minor Arterial (100' r/w)
 - - - County - Collector (80' r/w)
 - - - County - Local (60' r/w)
 - +— Railroad Track
 - Corporate Limits

Any existing road not shown on the Thoroughfare Plan Map or any new road constructed after adoption of the Thoroughfare Plan Map shall be considered a local road with the appropriate right-of-way; until or unless it is classified otherwise by the County Commissioners, County Highway Department or a revised Thoroughfare Plan Map. Please note that the official Thoroughfare Plan Map is stored in the DeKalb County Plan Commission and provided by CoCiGIS



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Protect Environmental
Assets

CHAPTER 5

Introduction

Clean water, clean air, and an aesthetically pleasing environment are as important to quality of life as good schools and high-quality jobs. Although true, the importance of environmental integrity in a community is often overlooked until it is too late. DeKalb County is blessed with a number of environmental resources including Cedar Creek, a portion of which has achieved the designation as a state recreational river. These assets must be maintained and in some cases restored to enhance the quality of life in DeKalb County.

The citizens of the community recognize the natural resources of the community found in the natural rural landscapes and scenic waterways. The community further recognizes the need to protect those assets while keeping in mind the rights of property owners to use their land. Finding the balance between these two sometimes opposing forces can be challenging. The best interest of the community as a whole should be the guiding principle used in determining the best solution to any conflicts that arise.

As the community continues to be developed, the threats to the environment increase substantially. The pollutants typically thought to arise from agricultural operations are now being matched or even surpassed by those generated from failing septic systems. New development near the scenic waterways and floodplain areas causes increased risk of flooding for those in the area and for those living downstream. Flooding not only is a nuisance but also contributes to significant loss of life and property.

Throughout the planning process, various groups suggested that the comprehensive plan incorporate strategies for protecting and enhancing the environment in the county. The environmental features that the community is most desirous of protecting through effective land use, development and conservation practices include:

- Air and Water Quality
- Soil Quality (Erosion)
- Streams, Creeks, and Lakes
- Wetlands
- Woodlands
- Floodplain



The remainder of this chapter contains the goals, objectives and implementation measures that will strive to protect environmental assets in the DeKalb County.

Goal: Ensure the impacts of development do not significantly deteriorate natural systems and features.

Objective 1: Protect the quality and quantity of water in DeKalb County's aquifers, streams, rivers and water bodies.

- IM 5.1.1 Allow the use of innovative methods of storm water management techniques such as natural wetlands, constructed wetlands, and swales.
- IM 5.1.2 Encourage appropriate natural planting on stream banks to decrease erosion, provide shade for the river or stream, filter pollutants, and provide wildlife habitat.
- IM 5.1.3 Reduce discharges from non-point source pollutants through education, storm water management and the reduction of impervious surfaces.
- IM 5.1.4 Reduce discharges from point-source pollutants through education, monitoring, and incentives.
- IM 5.1.5 Protect the drinking water supply by utilizing and enforcing wellhead protection areas.
- IM 5.1.6 Look for opportunities to form joint storm water management districts between the County and the municipalities.
- IM 5.1.7 Ensure that State and Federal laws for wetland protection and mitigation are met when the county's jurisdiction applies.

Objective 2: Protect and enhance the character of the natural environment in DeKalb County.

- IM 5.2.1 Reserve open space for future development of parks and recreation amenities.
- IM 5.2.2 Investigate areas of perceived environmental issues to determine what measures, if any, should be taken to remedy the situation.
- IM 5.2.3 Conserve existing tree stands through development incentives.

Objective 3: Minimize conflicts between growth and the natural environment.

- IM 5.3.1 Discourage development of environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains, large natural wetlands, steep slopes and riparian corridors.
- IM 5.3.2 Enhance public safety around detention/retention ponds by utilizing terraced edges and native planting edges versus steep banks and riprap where appropriate.
- IM 5.3.3 Encourage development where public utilities are available to limit the number of new septic systems in the county.
- IM 5.3.4 Protect environmental assets by maintaining, updating, and enforcing the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Control Ordinance.
- IM 5.3.5 Encourage best management practices that minimize soil erosion and prevent pollution from new development and construction.
- IM 5.3.6 The County should develop guidelines for future development

that minimizes potential contamination of ground water.

- IM 5.3.7 Encourage developers to submit development plans that protect environmental quality.

Objective 4: Reduce damage to life and property from flood and other natural hazards.

- IM 5.4.1 Do not allow any loss of storage capacity in the floodplain.
- IM 5.4.2 Only allow construction within the 100-year floodplain on a very limited basis.
- IM 5.4.3 Allow no development in the floodway.
- IM 5.4.4 Study and map areas in the county not previously studied and update Flood Insurance Rate Maps as needed.
- IM 5.4.5 Accurately map drainage ways and tiles throughout the county, as well as their condition.
- IM 5.4.6 Preserve regulated drains in the county to assure water conveyance.
- IM 5.4.7 Prepare stormwater drainage requirements and a floodplain ordinance, and request that local municipalities adopt them.

Background & Essential Information

The following sections provide the background and essential information necessary to protect environmental assets in DeKalb County.

Floodplain Management

DeKalb County has several areas that are or should be identified as located within a floodplain. Because of past flooding events in the county and surrounding region, DeKalb County adopted a Floodplain Management Ordinance in the late 1980's. Additionally, DeKalb County is a member of the Maumee River Basin Commission, a five-county flood-hazard mitigation organization.

The Maumee River Basin Commission and its member counties strive to reduce flood hazards to life and property by implementing public education and outreach efforts, assisting in the update and adoption of local floodplain management ordinances, working with local communities to improve floodplain mapping efforts, assisting property owners with flood-proofing projects and partnering with local communities in the acquisition and removal of "at-risk" structures within the floodways of major rivers and streams.

DeKalb County must continue its efforts, both independently and in conjunction with other agencies to ensure that development does not occur in flood hazard areas. The purpose is to protect not only those within and adjacent to the floodplain but also downstream properties and the environment.

DeKalb County must update the existing Flood Insurance Rate Maps in conjunction with FEMA and the Maumee River Basin Commission. This cooperative team must also study and map areas not previously studied, especially when those areas have a high potential for development. Some

PROTECT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

floodplain areas could be used for agricultural purposes or could potentially be developed for recreational uses.

When new development occurs, it does not necessarily add to flooding. More specifically, if appropriately sized storm water retention, detention, and mitigation measures are installed, no increase of flooding should occur.

Water Quality

DeKalb County is fortunate to have a high water quantity and quality. Due to this, the county is sensitive to land use practices that could contaminate or otherwise weaken water resources. Designated wellhead protection areas should be located and mapped to avoid potential land use conflicts. In addition, the county should develop guidelines for future development that minimizes any potential contamination to ground water. Refer to the map at the end of this chapter that designates the wellhead protection areas in the county.

Any development that poses an unreasonable risk to ground and surface water should be discouraged unless technologically acceptable measures are used to protect the water resources. The surface water resources are noted on the Waterways Map at the end of this chapter.

To protect water quality, the county will encourage developers to submit development and redevelopment plans that provide for:

- Surface stabilization measures such as tree preservation, retaining walls, and sod
- Runoff control such as swales, small culverts, and vegetative buffers
- Sediment control measures such as sediment traps and filter strips
- Stormwater management practices such as retention ponds and infiltration swales

- Stream protection measures such as stream bank protection and setbacks.

Wetland Conservation

DeKalb County has areas with wetlands, low flow streams/ditches, and wet soils. The county supports the protection of these areas verses quickly resorting to mitigation. When mitigation is necessary, the county will strive to ensure that state and federal laws for wetland mitigation are met when its jurisdiction applies.

The county will also consider ways to limit development in these areas. Some possible alternatives include purchasing property for use as open space amenities and encouraging the use of conservation easements. The county should also consider offering incentives for protecting wetlands within its zoning ordinance.

Woodlot Management

DeKalb County has several medium and large sized woodlots. Woodlots should be managed because of the many benefits they provide. A forest stand can:

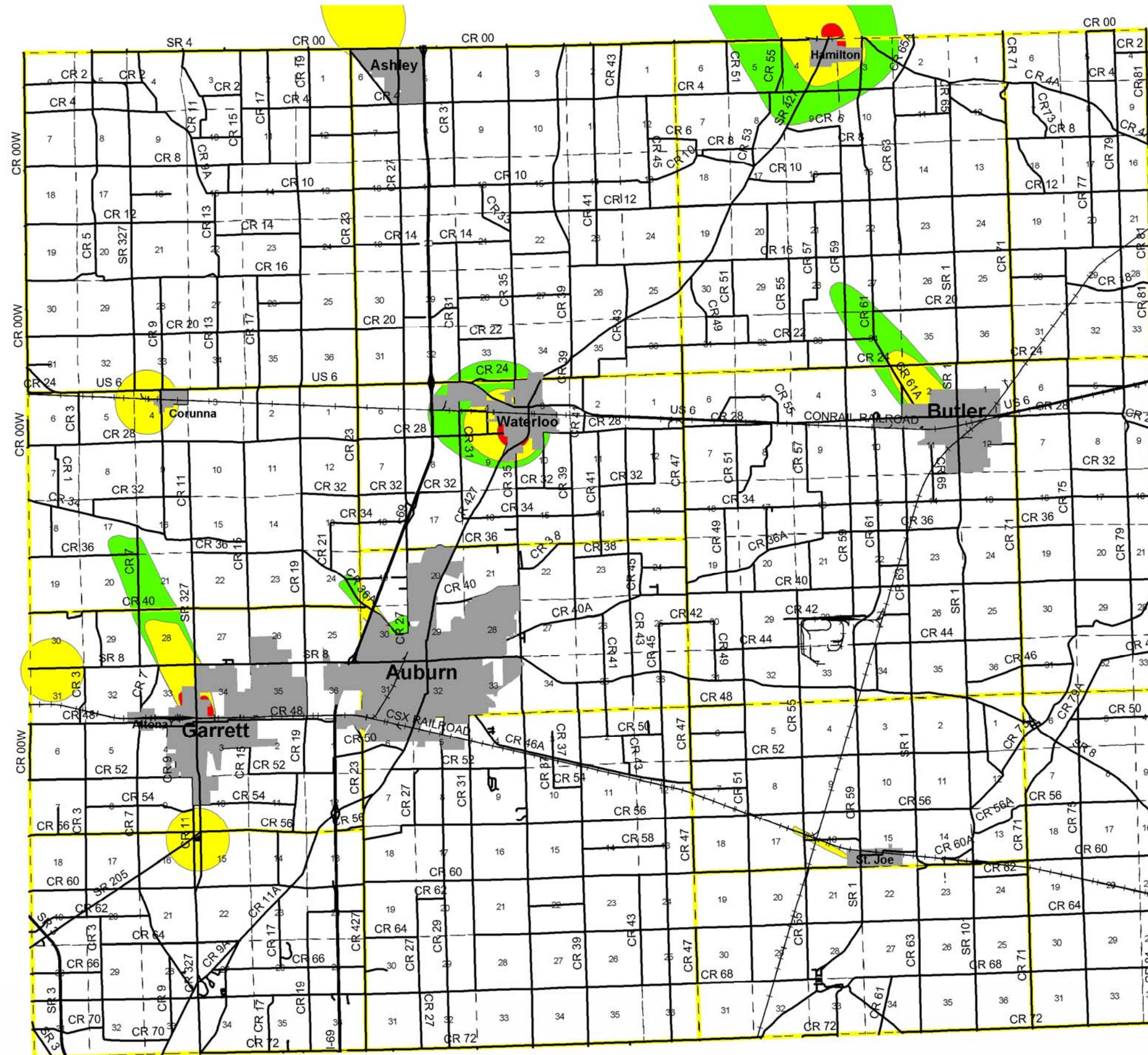
- Reduce air temperatures in the summer by about 10 degrees Fahrenheit
- Reduce wind velocities by 20 to 60 percent
- Provide vital wildlife habitat
- Clean pollutants from the air by absorbing an estimated ten tons of carbon dioxide per year per acre of woodlot
- Reduce the erosion of soil on construction sites

For the property owner, saving trees on site reduces energy bills and increases the value of property.

The county will encourage new development to be designed to minimize the impact on existing woodlots and tree stands through development incentives. Development incentives could include decreasing the lot size or required yards or

increasing the allowed density if significant woodland is conserved.

DeKalb County Well Head Protection Area (WHPA) Map



Map Authored by Brad Stump
DeKalb County GIS Department
Map Compiled 6/07/2004

LEGEND

Well Head Protection Area

TimeOfTravel

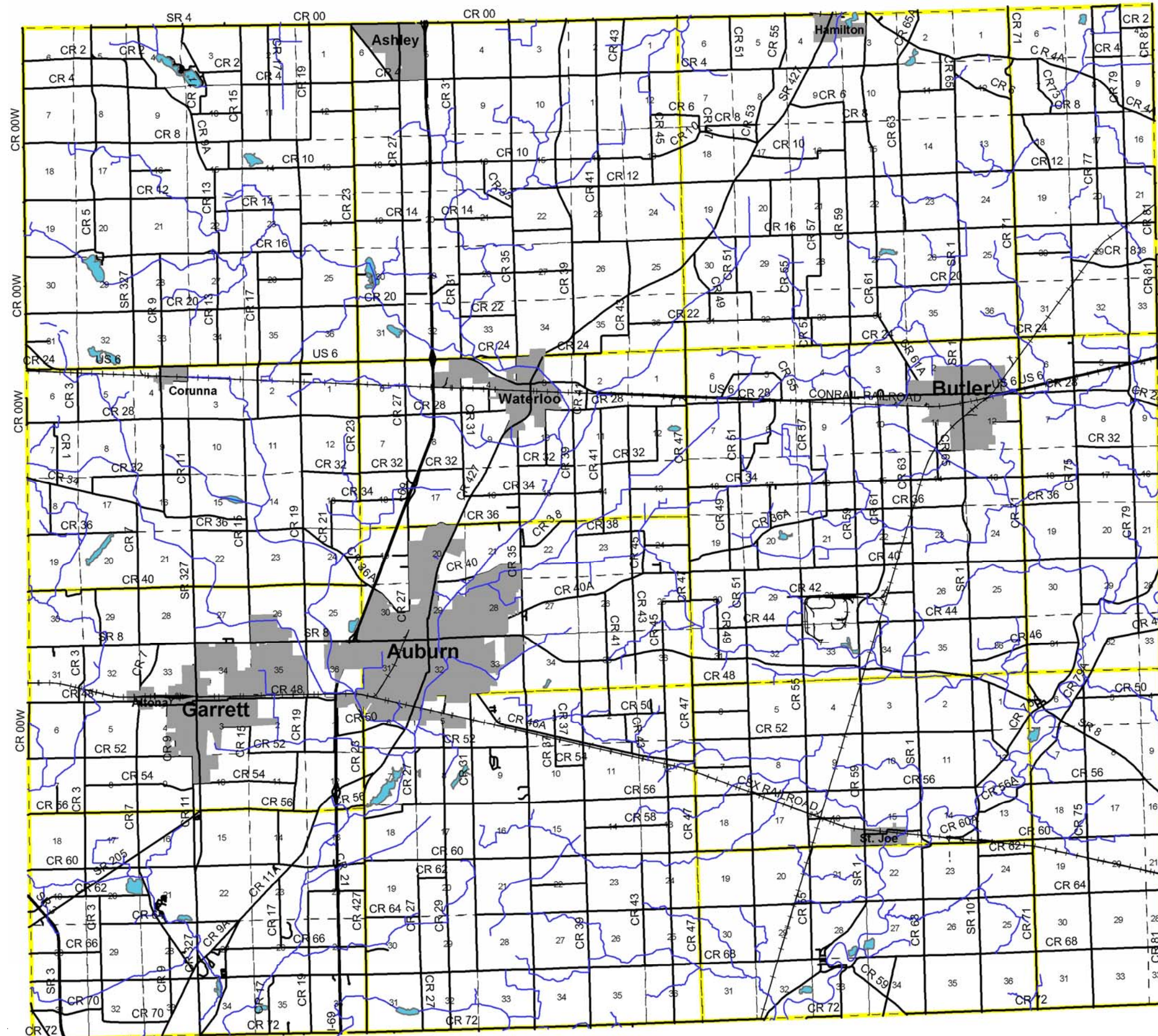
- 1-Year
- 5-Year
- 10-Year

- PLSS First Divisions
- Civil Townships
- Railroad Track
- Street
- Alley
- Corporate Limits



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DeKalb County Waterway Map










0 5,000 10,000 Feet

Map Authored by Brad Stump
DeKalb County GIS Department
Map Compiled 6/07/2004

LEGEND

Waterways

-  Waterways
-  PLSS First Divisions
-  Civil Townships
-  Railroad Track
-  Street
-  Alley
-  Corporate Limits



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Enhance Community
Character

CHAPTER 6

Introduction

DeKalb County's image, identity and character are derived from its history, economy, location and the physical environment. The small town and rural character the community has developed is very important to the residents of the community. There is a strong desire to maintain this character but still allow progress and development in the community.

Community image, identity, and character rely on physical features, community vitality, cleanliness, land use patterns, mix of land uses, cultural amenities and reputation among other factors. By transforming the vision of the community into growth and development policies, a community can set itself apart as a distinctive place to live and work.

DeKalb County strives to maintain the rural character of the community while accepting and encouraging new commercial, industrial and residential growth. The county wishes to maintain the integrity of the small cities and towns within the jurisdiction as well as preserving agricultural character in the very rural areas of the county.

In addition to the small cities and towns and rural areas, the county also possesses a strong industrial corridor on County Road 61 and large commercial and industrial developments along the I-69 corridor. The county wishes to maintain the high-quality business character in these areas to preserve the existing businesses and attract others to locate in these areas.

This chapter of the plan is intended to be an outline for future use and expansion. At the time of preparing this report, other chapters were rightfully deemed more essential. Thus, this section is a placeholder for further

expression of the county's interest in improving its image and identity.

The remainder of this chapter contains the goals, objectives and implementation measures that will help to maintain and enhance the DeKalb County community character.

ENHANCE COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Goal: Develop and maintain a community identity that will promote a positive and appealing image of the overall county and will showcase the uniqueness of individual municipalities.

Objective 1: Preserve and enhance historical and culturally significant amenities.

- IM 6.1.1 Encourage maintenance and enhancement of historic structures and cultural amenities
- IM 6.1.2 Develop guidelines for maintenance and enhancement of historic structures.
- IM 6.1.3 Assure infill and redevelopment in historic and cultural areas is complementary to the surrounding context.

Objective 2: Ensure that new developments utilize high quality materials and design features that advance the character goals of the community.

- IM 6.2.1 Use quality materials for public facilities and structures, including but not limited to buildings, signs, fences, park equipment and sidewalks.
- IM 6.2.2 Adopt subdivision design standards that promote efficiency, create high quality neighborhoods and protect scenic or historic views.
- IM 6.2.3 Adopt zoning regulations that achieve high quality landscaping, lighting, signage and architectural design in important commercial corridors.

- IM 6.2.4 Encourage appropriate lighting to limit light trespass, glare and intensity.

Objective 3: Continually refine, enhance and enforce local zoning and nuisance ordinances.

- IM 6.3.1 Hire a code enforcement officer whose primary responsibility is to enforce the zoning and nuisance ordinances of the county.
- IM 6.3.2 Amend the enforcement and penalties section of the zoning ordinance to be easily understood and encourage faster compliance with the ordinance.
- IM 6.3.3 Adopt telecommunication regulations that will encourage co-location and limit the proliferation of new towers throughout the county.

Objective 4: Enhance the primary gateways into the county.

- IM 6.4.1 Determine which gateways into the county are most significant and develop strategies to enhance those areas.

Background & Essential Information

The following sections provide background and essential information necessary to enhance the community character of DeKalb County.

violations on adjacent properties.

Gateways

A community gateway can be a single element in the landscape, such as a historic building at a highly visible location or a prominent intersection along a heavily traveled route. It can also be as simple as a sign.

Gateways are important because they shape a visitor's first impression of a community and reflect the unique features and values of that community. An attractive gateway can go a long way towards establishing a tourist area or creating a corporate/industrial image. On the other hand a gateway area with unkempt properties and overdone signage can cause a person or business to forego locating in a community even if it contains many of the other elements they are seeking.

Important gateways in DeKalb County include:

- County Road 61 at US 6
- County Road 11A interchange with I-69
- State Road 8 Interchange with I-69
- U.S. 6 Interchange with I-69
- The County Airport
- Tonkle and Coldwater
- U.S. and State Highways as they enter DeKalb County

The county should determine which gateways are most essential to creating a positive community identity. Once identified, an assessment of the current condition of the gateway areas should be conducted to find those most in need of improvement. This improvement may be as simple as erecting a sign to welcome visitors and direct them to important destinations or working to correct zoning and nuisance

**Provide High Quality
Public Services**

CHAPTER 7

Introduction

The provision of high quality public services is one of the main purposes of government. This means providing the most efficient, cost effective and high quality services and facilities possible with the community's limited resources. Services include planning, zoning, libraries, police, fire, emergency services, recreation, and services for special populations such as youth, adults and the elderly. Elected and appointed officials are charged with the responsibility of determining which services are the most important to the community and allocating the necessary resources to meet these needs.

Development services, such as planning and zoning, were a particular area of contention with members of the various interest groups that were interviewed to initiate the process. Because of the high number and lack of coordination of planning jurisdictions within the county, developers find themselves in a state of confusion about who they must report to and which regulations they must follow. The staff and leaders of the communities as well as the county suggested they struggled with the same confusion. Some communities have chosen to expand their planning jurisdiction into their allowed 2-mile extraterritorial area causing an even greater need for coordination and communication.

In addition to planning and zoning services, members within the county government staff have recognized several missing communication links as well. Various agencies within the county often work at competing interests with neither group achieving the desired results. This plan is an attempt to unify the agencies behind a single mission, formalize communication, and convey to one another the goals and objectives of each group.

Emergency services and management programs, while currently thought of as a high quality service in DeKalb County, are another area of concern raised during the various stages of public input. Due to an increase in requirements by the state and federal government for hazardous materials and disaster planning, local governments are continuously struggling to provide the training and equipment needed to keep pace. Dispersed growth has taxed all emergency services in the county. The maintenance of volunteer fire stations in the county has led to areas of duplicate services while leaving other areas without adequate services. Recognizing this is an emotionally charged issue, the objectives call for moving toward consolidation of services where the benefits are most evident.

DeKalb County has an Emergency Management Plan (EMP) covering the four phases of emergency management which include mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The primary responsibility of the plan is to protect the lives and property of DeKalb County's citizens. The EMP has been approved by the DeKalb County Commissioners.

In total, high quality services are a major factor in determining the quality of life for the overall community. Quality of life is becoming one of the primary indicators of a community's long term viability as the economy continues to globalize. Because raw materials and other business inputs are easily transportable, corporations strive to locate in places with a high quality of life that will make it easy for them to attract the most talented employees.

Goals, policies and implementation measures (IM) in this chapter focus on finding areas where the county can improve and/or expand community services to better meet community needs. They also focus on

PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES

streamlining and coordinating services to promote a higher degree of cooperation between the various players.

Goal: Provide responsive, high quality, effective, and efficient public facilities and services for the current and future citizens of DeKalb County.

Objective 1: Develop and maintain an expansion plan for community facilities and services to correspond with county growth.

- IM 7.1.1 Encourage a plan to provide library services or library access to all county residents.
- IM 7.1.2 Support the school districts in their efforts in determining the need, location and timing of future school facilities.
- IM 7.1.3 Study the feasibility of a central community recreation and education facility.
- IM 7.1.4 Study emergency services to more efficiently and equitably serve all residents of the county.
- IM 7.1.5 Study the feasibility of a rural waste collection system.

Objective 2: Enhance public facilities and services for children, young adults, and the elderly.

- IM 7.2.1 Seek additional opportunities for adult education services and facilities.
- IM 7.2.2 Study the creation of a rural on-demand bus system to serve the needs of the elderly.
- IM 7.2.3 Increase educational and recreational programming for the youth and elderly in the community.

Objective 3: Improve communication and relationships between the county and city governments and within county government agencies.

- IM 7.3.1 Establish policies for extraterritorial areas that better define the roles of the agencies involved in the review and approval of new developments.
- IM 7.3.2 Institute quarterly roundtables for all government entities within the county to meet to discuss issues, happenings, and ideas.
- IM 7.3.3 Create a Technical Review Committee composed of the various county and city agencies to review major development proposals.
- IM 7.3.4 Continue to use and promote the county-wide Geographic Information System (GIS).
- IM 7.3.5 Coordinate with municipalities to avoid duplication of programs.

Objective 4: Develop a County Parks Board and County Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

- IM 7.4.1 Protect future park and recreational areas from undesirable, conflicting and potentially hazardous land uses and development.
- IM 7.4.2 Keep the community informed of available recreational opportunities.
- IM 7.4.3 Inform the public about its interest in county parks and encourage donation of land.
- IM 7.4.4 Establish county parks that provide passive recreation.

Parks & Recreation

Parks improve the quality of life by providing a cleaner environment, access to natural resources, and family recreation. By making the community a more desirable place to live, parks are a good investment that attracts new residents, businesses, and visitors. DeKalb County contains many natural features that easily lend themselves to become parks and recreation facilities. In addition, through the public input process many other opportunities for parks and recreation facilities became known.

During the numerous public input sessions held to develop this plan, the public continuously voiced the need to increase recreational facilities and opportunities in the county. Facilities are the places available for recreational activity, from passive picnic areas to active soccer fields. Opportunities are the programs and activities available at the facilities.

Many county residents agreed that a wide variety of facilities were needed in the community. Passive recreation, such as picnic areas, shelters, and natural areas, are essential as well as active recreation facilities. Active recreation includes sports fields such as baseball diamonds and basketball courts. In addition to large park areas, trails and paths connecting parks, schools, communities and other destinations are seen as vital. Several communities within the county have developed park and trails amenities with great success.

Most cities and towns in the county have directed their resources to develop active recreational opportunities. To complement these existing facilities, the county should focus primarily on creating passive recreational opportunities. Several excellent opportunities exist in the county that can serve as catalysts. One is the St. Joseph River Greenway, which can be expanded

PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES

and/or tied into. Additional opportunities for passive recreation include undevelopable floodplain areas that can serve as linear parks and green space.

In addition to wanting more facilities and opportunities, several land owners expressed the desire to preserve their land in the future as a park or open space for public benefit. These people either did not have heirs to continue the farming practices or owned parcels that were no longer feasible or desirable to maintain as agricultural land. It is estimated that approximately 300 acres would be available at no cost to the county for park land.

Although the need is identified and there is evidence that land would be available at little or no cost to the county for park facilities, little has been done to bring this goal to fruition. The main reason for this includes the lack of an advisory county park board and park master plan.

**Strengthen and Diversify
the Local Economy**

CHAPTER 8

Introduction

DeKalb County has been successful in recent years attracting new industries to the community and enhancing the local economy. Although many communities in Indiana experienced job loss and economic decline, the county's employment base grew by 40% in the last decade. Overall, the citizens of the community view the local economy as relatively healthy but recognize the need to work to maintain and enhance this position.



The most important strategy for enhancing the local economy is the need to attract new industries to the community. The County Road 61 Industrial Corridor as well as the I-69 corridor are prime industrial locations. These corridors should be the first priorities for large industrial growth in the community as they are served by adequate transportation and utility infrastructure. In addition to these major corridors, existing industrial and business parks should be considered another primary location for new facilities. The community does not want industrial and commercial growth scattered across the county where utilities and infrastructure are not in place to serve it.



In addition to attracting new industry, the community also wants to promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and industries. These businesses and industries have kept the DeKalb community healthy and vibrant and should be considered in deciding which companies should enter the local economy. The community should strive to attract and recruit new businesses that complement and enhance the existing commercial and industrial mix.

Goals, policies and implementation measures in this chapter focus on strengthening and diversifying the local economy. They focus on business and industrial development as well as strengthening the overall community to make it more attractive to new business and industry.

STRENGTHEN & DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Goal: Strengthen, improve, and diversify the local economy and enhance the standard of living for all citizens of DeKalb County.

Objective 1: Promote orderly economic growth and stability.

- IM 8.1.1 Promote infill and redevelopment of vacant buildings and lots.
- IM 8.1.2 Encourage new businesses and industries to locate in areas zoned for those uses.
- IM 8.1.3 Ensure new businesses and industries are compatible with the character and use of surrounding areas.
- IM 8.1.4 Promote commercial businesses and industries which are suitable, feasible, compatible, and do not conflict with other community goals and objectives.

Objective 2: Encourage and support business and industry that will together strengthen the tax base and enhance the community's vitality.

- IM 8.2.1 Promote and support locally owned and operated businesses.
- IM 8.2.2 Support a mix of commercial and light industry in order to provide employment and adequate services.
- IM 8.2.3 Strive to overcome physical obstacles that prevent business districts from thriving in those business districts designated on the Future Land Use Map.

Objective 3: Position the DeKalb County community to attract new industry and businesses.

- IM 8.3.1 Recognize the relationship between quality of life and economic development and strive to improve or enhance quality of life in the community.
- IM 8.3.2 Focus on improving schools and educational opportunities as high-quality schools and well-educated residents attract employers to a community.
- IM 8.3.3 Market and promote the unique and desirable qualities of the community.
- IM 8.3.4 Recognize and encourage the development of information infrastructure and internet access throughout the county.

Objective 4: Offer incentives to attract new businesses and industry and retain existing businesses and industry.

- IM 8.4.1 Offer, with conditions, abatement of property taxes for new businesses and industry.
- IM 8.4.2 Offer, with conditions, abatement of property taxes for existing businesses and industries that want to expand.
- IM 8.4.3 Use Tax Increment Financing to build infrastructure necessary to attract new businesses and industry.

Background & Essential Information

The following sections provide background and essential information necessary to strengthening, improving and diversifying the DeKalb County economy.

Tax Increment Financing

In order to pay the costs of development and redevelopment including studies, planning, design, land acquisition and construction, Redevelopment Commissions are empowered to utilize Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The Redevelopment Commission can issue bonds based on projected revenue from a TIF district in order to make the necessary improvements to enterprise or redevelopment areas.

In a TIF district, the Redevelopment Commission establishes a base year that, in essence, freezes the property tax revenues received from the property at that level. The base year is set prior to improvement of the property. After improvement of the property, the additional property taxes received in the district, above those received in the base year, are used to pay off bond debt. Once the bonds are retired, the full property tax revenue is distributed normally.

When considering TIF, the county should carefully weigh the pros and cons of its use. Their full impact to schools should be clearly realized before incorporating them as an economic incentive to businesses.

Diversify the Economy

DeKalb County should strive to attract businesses and industries that provide diversity in the economy as the community grows and expands. This is not to say that the existing companies that support the existing economy should not be supported. On the contrary, the county should strive to retain all existing businesses and industries.

The county can strive for diversification by utilizing financial incentives pointedly to

attract specific types of businesses. This means evaluating a potential business or industry by determining if that service is already provided in the community and if so, if there is additional need for that service. The county can also search for new companies that complement and enhance existing companies in the community to create a synergy, such as has been created around SDI on the County Road 61 Industrial Corridor.

Tax Abatements

Many benefits can stem from economic incentives when properly used. In DeKalb County, tax abatements should be used when the short-term and long-term goals and objectives of the county are met by an employer, thus providing reasonable gain for the county.

Abatement offers should be consistent and the process to get them predictable. Predictability and consistency is in fact essential to luring sophisticated industries. These businesses need to know when they are prospecting what to expect. They will often not invest the time and money going through a process to find out what the county can offer.

The best tax abatement program should utilize guidelines and standards necessary to be eligible for tax abatement. These guidelines and standards can also include a formula for calculating a range of abatement applicable to a prospective industry or business. The final determination would be made by the County Commissioners based on unique considerations and commitments made by the industry or business.

When considering tax abatement, the county should carefully weigh the pros and cons of its use. Their full impact to schools should be clearly realized before incorporating

STRENGTHEN & DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL ECONOMY

them as an economic incentive to businesses.

Foster Inter-Local
Cooperation

CHAPTER 9

Introduction

All developments have the potential for affecting the community surrounding them. The positive and negative impacts of development do not stop at jurisdictional lines. Because development is a shared opportunity and a shared threat, communities must work together to provide an environment that enhances the positive impacts while minimizing the negative. Therefore, communication, coordination and inter-local agreements are the key to successful management of growth throughout the county.

Communities plan not because laws allow them to, but in order to better provide for the health, safety and general welfare of their citizens. They also plan in order to assure compatible and fiscally responsible growth. For these reasons, each community has a need to influence growth and development in close proximity and within its corporate limits.

Each community shall participate in, adopt and follow the policies and guidelines necessary to establish cooperative planning. The policies and guidelines must be mutually binding on each municipal jurisdiction to maintain consistency and predictability in cooperative planning.

It is critical that each city and town have an area immediately adjacent to their boundaries within which they exert full control over development (extraterritorial jurisdiction), exactly like they do within their corporate limits; which shall be done by agreement between the correct legal entities in a manner consistent with State Statutes. The county shall include these areas within its comprehensive plan. Reciprocally, the cities and towns shall address these areas within their comprehensive plans, including how they will extend services to these areas once built out.

The size of the extraterritorial jurisdiction must bear relationship to the area which each community can reasonably expect to expand via annexation within the next ten to fifteen years. The extraterritorial jurisdiction must also consider other relevant factors like wellhead protection and utilities. These criteria are necessary to provide a legal foundation for the inter-local agreements.

Development beyond the extraterritorial jurisdiction still affects cities and towns. Therefore, a cooperative planning area should be established to assure that cities and towns have influence over development in these areas, even though the area would remain within the county's jurisdiction.

In these Cooperative Planning Areas the county, and the cities and towns shall together establish future land uses and initial zoning classifications. As requests for rezoning are proposed, the affected city or town shall have means to directly recommend action to the County Planning Commission and County Commissioners. The Commissioners shall take the city/town recommendation into consideration in a manner similar to the consideration given to the recommendation of the County Plan Commission.

The county needs to amend its ordinances to direct development in such a way that it fosters growth of cities and towns as per their comprehensive plans.

The goals, policies and implementation measures in this chapter focus on fostering inter-local cooperation and creating an environment where cooperative planning can occur and protect the interests of each community.

FOSTER INTER-LOCAL COOPERATION

Goal: To encourage cooperation between the county and the cities/towns; and to provide the cities/towns with opportunities to influence development in the areas adjoining their corporate limits.

Objective 1: Improve cooperative relationships between the county, cities and towns.

- IM 9.1.1 Provide frequent opportunities for communication and discussion on shared opportunities and concerns by holding periodic meetings between the planning staffs.
- IM 9.1.2 Minimize differences between procedures and regulations where practical by establishing an inter-local planning committee composed of officials and planning staff from the county, cities and towns.
- IM 9.1.3 Ensure that the County Plan Commission and County Commissioners utilize input from the cities and towns.

Objective 2: Establish Extraterritorial Jurisdictional Areas for the cities and towns wherein they would have jurisdiction over all development matters.

- IM 9.2.1 Cooperatively work to identify new and/or modifications to existing extraterritorial jurisdictional areas around each city and town based on projected growth over a ten to fifteen year period of time and other relevant factors.
- IM 9.2.2 Ensure that the extraterritorial jurisdictional area is incorporated into the comprehensive plan of the county and each city or town

before jurisdictional control is assigned to a city or town.

- IM 9.2.3 Identify issues within the extraterritorial jurisdiction that are important to the county to be addressed within the city/town comprehensive plan or inter-local agreements before jurisdictional control is assigned to the city or town.
- IM 9.2.4 Implement city/town control over the extraterritorial jurisdiction by adopting and maintaining inter-local agreements.

Objective 3: Establish a Cooperative Planning Area outside of the extraterritorial jurisdiction to allow municipalities to advise the county on planning issues that affect them.

- IM 9.3.1 Work with municipalities to identify a cooperative planning area around each city or town.
- IM 9.3.2 Ensure that the cooperative planning area is incorporated into the comprehensive plan of the county and each participating city or town.
- IM 9.3.3 Establish the mechanisms to cooperatively guide development within the cooperative planning area that will foster appropriate growth of areas adjoining each municipality.
- IM 9.3.4 Amend the county's ordinances so that they meet the expectations of both the county and city/town needs, especially in the cooperative planning areas.
- IM 9.3.5 Identify issues within the Cooperative Planning Areas that are important to the respective city/town and address those issues

within the county comprehensive plan or inter-local agreements.

Background & Essential Information

The following sections provide background and essential information necessary to foster inter-local cooperation between DeKalb County and the cities and towns within the county.

Reasons for Fostering Cooperation

Many county, city and town officials throughout DeKalb County recognize that the positive and negative impacts of development do not stop at jurisdictional lines. A good development adjacent to a city or town benefits the community even though it lies beyond the municipality's corporate limits, just as having well-developed cities/towns benefits the county.

A good development may serve as a catalyst for needed infrastructure improvements or it may bring jobs and other economic benefits to the community. In a similar fashion, a poor or inappropriate development can be harmful to an adjacent community. Such a development could possibly create an unreasonable demand for services or cause conflicts with existing developments.

DeKalb County believes that it is in the best interest of the county, as a whole, to partner with the cities and towns within the county to properly guide development within DeKalb County, especially those areas adjacent to city and town limits.

The county, cities and towns shall work together to craft and maintain an agreement whereby each unit of government has the ability to positively influence development in those areas affecting their community and its future growth without adding any unnecessary bureaucracy or hindrances to the development approval process. Once established, these agreements shall be incorporated into the comprehensive plan of the county and of each municipality.

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

One area that most directly affects a city or town is undeveloped sites immediately beyond its corporate limits. Indiana State law recognizes this and attempts to create a mechanism whereby a city or town may exert some amount of influence over development in those areas.

DeKalb County agrees with the need for cities and towns to have influence over patterns of adjacent development. Presently the City of Butler and the Town of Hamilton exercise limited extraterritorial jurisdictional control over some portion of the area surrounding their community. This has been done under the mechanism established by state law.

Because of the shortfalls and ambiguities present in the current laws, planning conflicts have occasionally occurred between DeKalb County and the municipalities. These conflicts have had a detrimental effect on the development community and have strained relations from time-to-time. It is important that these issues be resolved and that future issues be avoided.

It is the desire of the county to resolve the issues mentioned by granting and maintaining areas immediately adjacent to the cities and towns wherein each municipality exerts full control over subdivisions, zoning, permits, enforcement and penalties, just as they do within their municipal limits. The size of such an area will vary from town to town based on historical growth patterns, projected growth rates, and other relevant factors.

In order to create extraterritorial jurisdiction, several steps must occur. They are:

- Begin immediately after the adoption of the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan to establish the criteria for determining extraterritorial jurisdiction. Do this jointly with representatives from each municipality in the county.
- Once the criteria are established the county will formally amend their comprehensive plan to include said language. The criteria shall include a means to determine the appropriate area, minimum development standards for storm water drainage requirements and flood plain management standards, and general terms of the inter-local agreements.
- Upon adoption of the revised comprehensive plan, each community that wishes to be granted extraterritorial jurisdiction shall request it based on the criteria established.
- The county shall work with the municipalities to draft and implement a binding inter-local agreement that defines the extraterritorial jurisdiction and the process for making future modifications to that jurisdiction and the inter-local agreement; which shall be done by agreement between the correct legal entities in a manner consistent with State Statutes. The agreement shall ensure that the ETJ is incorporated into the comprehensive plan of each municipality before jurisdictional control is assigned to a city or town.
- The county and participating cities and towns must then incorporate the extraterritorial area(s) into their future land use map, comprehensive plan, and adjust their utility service plan.
- The county and participating cities and towns must agree to revisit the inter-

local agreements every five years to adjust the boundaries of the extraterritorial jurisdiction.

Cooperative Planning Areas

The county recognizes that development beyond the extraterritorial jurisdictional area can still impact the city or town, although typically to a lesser degree than immediately adjacent developments. For instance, a rural area may be served by municipal sewer or water, or may lie within the city's or town's well-head protection area. These factors may apply even to rural areas lying beyond the statutory two-mile limit currently imposed on extraterritorial jurisdictional authority. Regardless of the distance from the community, if reasonably applicable, any of these factors can support the concept of providing each city or town with a voice in the development process.

The county and participating cities and towns should delineate cooperative planning areas and jointly establish mechanisms whereby the city or town will have an increased influence over development proposals that come before the county. The desire is to work towards creating appropriate procedures, policies, and development standards, when practical, that eliminate regulatory ambiguity that arises when development is proposed in these areas.

The county and the cities and towns should mutually establish land use and zoning classifications. As petitions for changes to zoning classifications are brought to the county, any affected city or town must be allowed to make a recommendation to the County Plan Commission. The Plan Commission shall recognize the city or town's input as a "finding" and give the recommendation of the city or town proper consideration when weighing the factors for approval or denial.

Development in the cooperative planning areas must conform to development standards that meet or exceed the minimum mutually acceptable standards of both the county and the city or town. The county ordinances must be modified to establish these standards so they may be enforced on development as it occurs.

In order to create cooperative planning areas several steps must occur. They are:

- Begin immediately after the adoption of the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan to establish the criteria for determining cooperative planning areas. Do this jointly with representatives from each municipality in the county.
- Once these criteria are established the county will formally amend their comprehensive plan to include said language. The criteria shall include a means to determine the appropriate area and general terms of the agreements.
- Upon adoption of the revised county comprehensive plan, each community that wishes to participate in the cooperative planning areas shall request it based on the criteria established.
- Working together, an area will be established for each participating community based on the established criteria.
- The county and participating cities and towns must then incorporate the cooperative planning area(s) into their future land use map and comprehensive plan.
- The county will then include each of the participating municipalities in their decision-making process as rezoning and development proposals are submitted.

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- The county and participating cities and towns must agree to revisit the cooperative planning area every five years to adjust the boundaries.
- When the county revises its ordinances that apply to the cooperative planning areas it will strive to adopt mutually acceptable minimum standard that continues to meet the requirements of the county yet is compatible with the ordinances of the cities and towns.

**Future Land Use
Map Methodology**

Appendix A

APPENDIX A – FUTURE LAND USE MAP METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The following methodology was used to establish areas of projected land use on the Future Land Use Map of DeKalb County:

- A. Existing land use patterns for DeKalb County were mapped based on field investigations by Members of the Steering Committee (SC). Committee members drove throughout rural DeKalb County over the course of several days and mapped the existing land use on hard-copy maps that were then converted into electronic format via the County's GIS.
- B. The County's GIS was used to create a base map for the Future Land Use Map. The GIS provided corporate limits, roads, railroads and open waterways overlaid upon aerial photography of the County.
- C. Using the County's Airport Layout Plan the area anticipated to be used for future airport development was outlined on the Future Land Use Map.
- D. The SC used the Existing Land Use Map, the County's Existing Zoning Map, and the County's Thoroughfare Map to start delineating areas for future, commercial and industrial uses adjacent to Cities and Towns, existing commercial and industrial uses and/or important transportation sources such as major Thoroughfares, railroads and the airport. Future residential land uses were generally placed near or adjacent to Cities and Towns in areas where they were more appropriate than commercial and/or industrial uses but were still near enough to potentially be served by municipal utilities and police/fire departments. A limited number of residential use areas were indicated in rural areas located away from Cities and Towns where there were relatively larger existing areas of dense residential development.
- E. The SC then met with representatives of all Cities and Towns within the County and discussed the County's Future Land Use Map in relation to future residential, commercial and industrial growth adjacent to Cities and Towns. From these meetings, the Steering Committee revised the Future Land Use Map to depict the compromise between the ideas of the municipalities and of the County to meet the County's Future Land Use goals while providing opportunities for the growth and development of the Cities and Towns.
- F. The Steering Committee met with a USDA-NRCS representative to discuss the soil suitability of DeKalb County and the current farming practices within the County. The SC worked with this representative to establish a list of farmers to contact to discuss the goals for future agriculture uses within the County.
- G. The SC contacted approximately 30 farmers representing many of the larger farming operations within the County. They were asked how many acres they farm (owned and/or rented) and where in the County it is located. They were also asked if they have livestock and, if so, how many they had and where they were located. This information was then placed on County maps. The Steering Committee felt that it was important to focus on providing protection to larger farming operations as they are more likely to continue as farming operations in the future and less likely to take the short term profit gained by selling land for development. Smaller family farms in DeKalb County, while possibly still used for production agriculture, have historically been much more likely to be

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sold for development after Federal CRP programs end or after the landowner passes away and the heirs dispose of the property in the manner that brings them the highest selling price.

- H. In developing the County's future goals for agricultural uses and delineating agricultural land uses, the SC used the County's general land soil map, the information obtained through contacts with the farming community, the Existing Land Use Map and the already completed areas of the Future Land Use Map depicting future commercial, industrial and residential goals. The SC felt it was important to differentiate on the Future Land Use Map between agricultural areas and mixed agricultural/rural residential areas. The SC believed that in the agricultural areas, agricultural operations are or should be the primary land use and therefore should be protected to some extent from conflicts that arise when non-compatible land uses are allowed. In the mixed agricultural/rural residential areas, the SC believed that agriculture operations, while still often the largest land use class from a total acreage standpoint, are mixed with a relatively higher number of other uses such as rural residential uses and/or are in an area rapidly developing with land uses that are generally not compatible with agricultural operations. Because of the mixture of land uses in the mixed agricultural/rural residential areas, providing protection to agricultural operations, the SC believed that providing protection to agricultural operations is possible on only a limited scale.
- I. The SC, in the process of converting the hard-copy Future Land Use Map into an electronic format via the County's GIS,

met again with the USDA-NRCS representative in relation to the agricultural areas. The USDA-NRCS representative reviewed the agricultural areas developed to date and was able to identify additional areas, especially on the East side of the County, to be incorporated into the agricultural areas on the map.

- J. Once the maps were drafted, the SC met to review the map as a whole. This map showed all the areas discussed, including commercial, industrial, residential and agricultural as well as the airport development area. Slight revisions were made to the boundary lines of some areas on the map.
- K. The Future Land Use Map was taken to the Advisory Group for review. After reviewing the Future Land Use Map and receiving an explanation as to how the land use areas were established, the Advisory Group recommended that additional land southeast of the airport be classified as an area of future industrial land use.
- L. The SC met with representatives Allen, Noble and Steuben County Plan Commissions and Highway Departments to discuss how our proposed Future Land Use Map compares in with the current and anticipated future land uses in the portions of their respective counties adjacent to DeKalb County. Their current and future land uses were very similar to DeKalb County's current land uses and those shown on the Future Land Use Map.
- M. The Advisory Group and SC asked Ground Rules Inc, their planning consultant, to review the Future Land Use Map. It was felt that Ground Rules, as an independent observer from outside the community, could objectively look at

APPENDIX A – FUTURE LAND USE MAP METHODOLOGY

the locations and amounts of each land use classification and make any necessary recommendations without any existing bias or preconceived notions. Ground Rules found that the Future Land Use Map contained more area for future commercial, industrial and residential use than should be the case for sustainable development.

- N. The SC met again with several of the Cities and Towns to discuss areas where land shown as future commercial and industrial land use could be changed to other uses. The Future Land Use Map was then updated based on those discussions.
- O. Throughout the planning process the need to protect the Airport from surrounding development was repeatedly stressed by citizens and public officials. The SC and Ground Rules discussed the Airport's 20-year CIP with a member of the Aviation Board. Ground Rules suggested creating a buffer area around the Airport limiting residential development and encouraging aviation-related development. The SC suggested a second buffer area, to include the first and extend beyond it, wherein new development would be required to sign a waiver of right to remonstrate against the lawful operation and development of the airport.
- P. The Advisory Group reviewed the Future Land Use Map and generally felt the map was ready for public review and comment. At the request of The Nature Conservancy, the SC was directed to add the Douglas Woods Nature Preserve to the map. The Advisory Group also discussed the continuing concern regarding development pressure and land-use conflicts around the DeKalb County Airport. It was decided to create an "Aviation Compatible Use Area"

land-use classification to include the area within approximately 1-mile of the Airport property. To address one of the Airport Manager's concerns it also includes a portion of the ILS approach area. New development not generally compatible with the operation of an airport, such as residential uses, should be restricted in this area while new development compatible with the operation of an airport, especially those with a need for or an association with aviation, should be promoted. New development throughout this area should also be required to sign a waiver of right to remonstrate against the lawful operation and development of the airport, similar in concept to the existing waiver for development in noise sensitive areas. Actual guidelines and requirements governing this Airport Development Area will be addressed by the Zoning Ordinances.

**Thoroughfare Plan
Map Methodology**

Appendix B

APPENDIX B – THOROUGHFARE PLAN MAP METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The following methodology was used to classify existing thoroughfares in DeKalb County and to identify the locations where it is anticipated that future thoroughfares would be needed:

- A. The County GIS was used to create a base map for the Thoroughfare Plan Map. The GIS provided corporate limits, roads, railroads, open waterways and water bodies overlaid upon aerial photography of the County.
- B. Members of the Steering Committee (SC) met with the DeKalb County Highway Supervisor, to discuss thoroughfare classifications and proposed rights-of-way widths for each classification. The Federal classification system was used at the suggestion of the Highway Supervisor.
- C. The Thoroughfare Map in the County's existing Major Street or Highway Plan Ordinance, studies/plans by the Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) and the current classification of existing roads under the federal classification system were used to assign classifications on the proposed Thoroughfare Plan Map.
- D. The SC met with the County Highway Supervisor again to review the classifications and made adjustments to the proposed map based on his experience and knowledge of existing traffic patterns.
- E. The Thoroughfare Plan Map was presented to the Advisory Group for discussion.
- F. The SC then requested thoroughfare plan maps from all Cities and Towns within the County. Proposed thoroughfares shown extending into rural areas beyond municipal limits on the City/Town plans were then added to the County Thoroughfare Plan Map. The SC believed that it was in the best interest of the County to provide for the extension of the City and Town thoroughfare plans into those areas to lessen the chance that rural development might disrupt future thoroughfare expansion plans.
- G. Representatives from the SC and the County Board of Aviation met with the Highway Supervisor and a representative from Butler, Fairman and Seufert, an engineering firm used by both the Board of Aviation and the Highway Department. The group discussed road classifications around the airport and the possibility of/need for an interchange on I-69 south of exit 126 to provide some relief to exit 126 and to better serve the airport. The group also discussed the possibility of a public trails system in the County.
- H. The SC met with representatives from Allen, Noble and Steuben County Plan Commissions and Highway Departments to discuss how our proposed Thoroughfare Plan Map compares to the current and anticipated future thoroughfare plans in their respective counties. Their current and future thoroughfare plans were very similar to DeKalb County's current land uses and those shown on the Future Land Use Map. The Executive Director of NIRCC was also present to discuss how the Thoroughfare Plan Map coordinates with NIRCC's transportation plan for DeKalb County.

APPENDIX B – THOROUGHFARE PLAN MAP METHODOLOGY

- I. The SC met with several of the cities and towns a second time to discuss the need for and location of additional proposed thoroughfares in the surrounding rural areas. Ground Rules, Inc. suggested planning for thoroughfares at half-mile intervals rather than the normal square-mile rural “grid” and to focus on the need for the thoroughfare to connect point to point as opposed to the exact location. Ground Rules also provided some guidance with regard to locations for possible “radial” arterials around some of the municipalities. The SC also met again with the Highway Supervisor to discuss the recommendations made by Ground Rules.
- J. The SC updated the Thoroughfare Plan Map to include the information gathered to date.
- K. The Thoroughfare Plan Map was then included in the Comprehensive Plan draft and was made available for review and comment by the Advisory Group Members and the Special Interest Group participants (including the cities and towns).
- L. The Representatives from the City of Auburn voiced concern with the proposed classification for State Road 8 east of the City. The SC discussed the concerns with the County Highway Supervisor, the Executive Director of NIRCC, the Auburn City Engineer and Advisory Group member Mike Kline (based on his service as a former Auburn City Engineer). The consensus was that 150’ was too much r/w but 100’ was too little. The Major Arterial classification was divided into two classes. Roads previously classified as Major Arterials were re-classified as a “Major-Arterial – Class I” (150’ r/w). State Road 8 from Auburn east to the intersection of State Roads 1 & 101 was then classified as a “Major-Arterial – Class II” with a 120’ projected r/w.

APPENDIX B – THOROUGHFARE PLAN MAP METHODOLOGY