3. FINAL LAND USE MAPS

Composite Hamilton County Map

The land use map is a combination of the concepts represented in the various alternatives and input received through the planning process. It is an attempt to prioritize growth and development to locations adjacent to existing development and/or served by regional roadways. The map identifies various land use categories for all of the area within Hamilton County’s planning jurisdiction.

Two key recommendations of this plan are the location of various land uses and planning policy, that is, the descriptions of the various land use categories. One of the most important ways that the issues of sprawl and environmental degradation can be addressed other than the broad step of directed development to certain locations is to encourage conservation or low-impact development techniques and strategies within each of the land use categories.

These strategies are aimed at goals identified as priorities in Hamilton County—reduced land consumption, farmland preservation, reduced automobile dependence, promotion of pedestrian activity, improved air and water quality, improved habitat, and the provision of more livable, sustainable, enduring communities for people of all income levels. The land use categories are as follows:

1. Rural Areas- These areas are most remote from municipal services, roads, and other infrastructure. They are primarily in agricultural uses currently, and are anticipated to stay in agriculture, or be developed with extremely low density, scattered homesites and farmettes.

2. Priority Growth- Residential- These areas are accessible to roadway infrastructure and/or existing towns where new homes and related community infrastructure could be developed to accommodate the anticipated growth in population outside of the existing municipalities. This development should follow conservation practices to minimize environmental impacts and provide a high quality of life for residents.

3. Priority Growth- Mixed Use- These areas are adjacent to high-speed arterial roadways where mixed-use development includes homes and other uses such as schools, shops, businesses, churches, and other uses that benefit from the visibility and access these locations provide.
4. Highway Oriented Business Enterprise- These areas are visible and accessible from State Route 31 and provide the opportunity for business and uses other than agriculture. These sites should be developed in a way that supports the rural character of these portions of the county through setbacks, landscape approaches, signage, and building orientation.

5. Airport Business Enterprise- These areas are adjacent to and provide the unique opportunity of accessibility to Sheridan Airport. Certain business and other uses that would benefit form being served by small aircraft should be directed here.

6. Conservation/Recreation- These are large, contiguous areas where natural landscapes and water elements should be preserved and stewarded in perpetuity as an ecological system. They do not represent all of the areas that should be identified for parks and open space. There should be parks and open space associated within each neighborhood for additional recreation, habitat, and enjoyment.

The final plan reflects citizen input obtained through an initial public planning workshop, two series of planning presentation/workshops held in each of the three townships entirely within the County’s planning jurisdiction, and through mail-in comments. The feedback varied from the participants from each of the three townships.

Adams Township- The participants from Adams Township wanted to continue the policy of encouraging highway-oriented business development along Route 31, as was the case with the previous plan. There is an airport-oriented business zone around the Sheridan Airport as well. This is intended to compliment the growth planned and occurring in the town of Sheridan. It is strongly recommended that there be continued dialogue with the Town of Sheridan to coordinate this development and the provision of services to this portion of the County.

White River Township- Most of the participants from White River Township were opposed to growth and land development, and preferred large parcel residential land use as is currently allowed in the unincorporated portions of the county. While most emphasized the desire to “remain as we are” in a rural, agricultural setting, most also were against land use controls that would limit sales and development of farmland.
Wayne Township (and a portion of Noblesville Township) - Most of the participants in these meetings also preferred to limit growth and development, and were opposed to any planned growth within the township. They also generally preferred large parcels as a strategy to limit growth. However, most people realized that Noblesville municipal boundaries already crossed the township line. The City of Noblesville has developed a draft land use plan for the entirety of Wayne Township, which most of the participants were very opposed to.

Summary

A ten-acre minimum parcel size was generally preferred in both White River and Wayne Townships, with the exception of existing lots that were smaller, or lot splits for family members, etc. While this was perceived as a way to avoid the impacts of growth, it could have the opposite effect to some degree, as homebuyers continue to spread north from the growing municipalities of Noblesville, Carmel, and Westfield. In rapidly growing regions such as Hamilton County, larger minimum lot sizes tend to spread the growth over a larger area, rather than limiting it.

In order to support a land use policy of limited development, but allow large parcel development, while being consistent with the County’s stated goals and objectives relative to traffic, environment, green space, etc., it is essential to be proactive with ecological initiatives. The identification, protection, and maintenance of the County’s valuable remnant resources including wetlands, prairies, and woodlands is critical. Building infrastructure, homes, and businesses in a way that contributes to the health of these systems is also imperative. Included as an appendix in this document is a Sustainable Development Toolbox, which illustrates various green development practices that have been used to great success in other locations. Land owners and developers should be encouraged to follow these practices, as well as the rapidly growing municipalities.

Ultimately, it is important to continue the planning dialogue with the municipalities and citizenry as has been Hamilton County’s policy. The coordinated traffic planning and the unified stormwater management program are two examples of this. These and other initiatives should be pursued in order to ensure the provision of infrastructure, services, and the protection and enhancement of quality of life for all current and future residents of Hamilton County.

In order to more clearly illustrate the designated land uses, the land use map is shown by individual township as well. The current township zoning maps are also included.
WHITE RIVER TOWNSHIP ZONING MAP

(Map provided by the Hamilton County Plan Commission)

The information shown on this map has been abstracted from various departments within Hamilton County, and is believed to be the most accurate data at the time of printing. It is continually updated as new and new accurate information is received, but is not reviewed by the County in being with any accuracy.

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Map provided by the Hamilton County Plan Commission