



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MARSHALL COUNTY, INDIANA

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MARSHALL COUNTY, INDIANA

PREFACE

FOREWORD

Marshall County is a place of change, growth, and evolution. It is a place where farms, forests, rivers and streams, homes and industries coexist in a balance that creates the high quality of life that its residents have come to know. It is the desire to preserve and enhance that quality of life that has driven the process to update the Marshall County Comprehensive Plan.

Much has changed in Marshall County since the last comprehensive plan was adopted in 1974. The County's population has increased nearly 30%, the upgrade of US 31 to 4 lanes was completed, and the US 6 bypass north of Bremen was constructed. Industry has grown while family farms have declined. All of these issues, and more, make the case for a new plan for the future of Marshall County.

The effort to update the Marshall County Comprehensive Plan has been on-going for some time. Public workshops, steering committee discussions, research and analysis were conducted over this period, resulting in the comprehensive plan presented in this document. The specific goals and policies provided in this plan are based on existing conditions, growth trends, and the needs and desires of the residents of Marshall County.

This plan is intended to guide growth in Marshall County now and in the future. It is important to consider the comprehensive plan a living document. It must be evaluated and updated as the community evolves to ensure that its guidance remains valid. The Vision Statement below serves as the foundation upon which the comprehensive plan is constructed.

VISION STATEMENT

We the people of Marshall County believe that:

- We will plan growth in order to protect the County's rural nature, which is comprised of a healthy agricultural base, open spaces, forest lands, and wetlands;
- County and town services will be second to none through cooperation and coordination of County and town resources;
- Our school systems, area colleges, and universities will develop to the utmost the technical and vocational skills of county graduates;
- We will protect the citizens and natural resources of the county from misuse and contamination;
- We will have the most skilled and educated workforce in the State that will promote employment opportunities and a higher quality of life within Marshall County; and
- We will continue to develop a strong industrial economic base in our cities and towns.



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This comprehensive plan could not have been completed without the participation, talents and assistance of many individuals from across Marshall County. Special thanks goes to the people of Marshall County, particularly those who attended the workshops, completed the surveys, participated in the activities, and otherwise provided their valuable input into the planning process.

Thanks also go to the following people who made this effort possible:

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This comprehensive plan is based on community input, existing land uses, development trends, suitability of land uses, economic feasibility, natural land features, and the requirements of Indiana law.

Indiana statute, Title 36, Article 7, as amended, empowers counties to plan. Local government is further charged with the purpose of improving “the health, safety, convenience, and welfare of the citizens and to plan for the future development of the community to the end that:

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

Public law further states that a county may establish planning and zoning entities to fulfill this purpose. (IC 36-7-4-201)

Furthermore, while residents of Marshall County support the comprehensive planning process, such action is required by legislative mandate as the basis for zoning and subdivision control ordinances. The Indiana statutes provide for, and require the development and maintenance of a comprehensive plan by each plan commission. (IC 36-7-4-501)

IC 36-7-4-502 and 503 state the required and permissible contents of the plan. Required Plan elements include:

- a statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction;
- a statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction; and
- a statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.

The Plan Commission may also compile additional information, permissible by case law, into a Comprehensive Plan. This mandate serves as the foundation for the Marshall County Comprehensive Plan.



HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This Plan can best be described as a community guidebook. It will help guide the Plan Commission in its decision making process. However, it addresses many other community issues as well. When reviewing development plans, making budgets, or setting priorities this document should be used to help make decisions.

Because of its emphasis on public participation this plan gives county leaders knowledge of what the community wants and needs. This plan:

- can assist the County when considering infrastructure or economic development decisions,
- can provide civic groups with ideas on how to strengthen and enhance the community, and
- serves as the legal basis for protection and conservation of sensitive environmental and historic areas.

To facilitate the decision making process, the document is organized with the following features:

PREFACE

The preface provides a brief synopsis of the contents of the plan. It includes a community profile, which provides a snapshot of the community in time and describes recent trends. This profile includes a brief summary of local history and demographics, as well as the public input that serves as the basis for the rest of the document. The preface also identifies the primary issues that were explored during the planning process.

SECTION I - COMMUNITY GOALS

The goals provide a conceptual response to Marshall County's vision and a direct response to the issues identified in the community. Each goal describes a philosophy of the community and provides a platform for the plan's implementation tools.

The community goals section is divided into topic areas, each with its own set of goals and corresponding policies. The policies are composed of more specific directives that suggest means to accomplish each goal. Together, these goals and policies form the foundation that should guide future decision making by the county.

SECTION II - IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation section provides tools by which the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan may be implemented. Specifically included as elements of the implementation section are the Land Use Plan and the Thoroughfare Plan. These plans detail the location and type of future growth recommended for Marshall County, as well as future changes to the road network to serve this growth.

SECTION III - SUPPORTING DATA

The supporting data section includes all of the background information and analysis used in the development of the Marshall County Comprehensive Plan.



COMMUNITY PROFILE

PREFACE

1 CHAPTER



INTRODUCTION

The planning area for the Marshall County Comprehensive Plan includes most unincorporated areas within Marshall County, as well as the incorporated Town of Lapaz. Certain unincorporated areas are within the jurisdiction of the cities or towns adjacent to them consistent with Indiana Code 36-7-4-205. The Plan Commission provides planning, zoning, and subdivision control services within the remaining unincorporated areas.

This chapter summarizes the first phase of the comprehensive planning process, which included the collection of data and demographics regarding the county, as well as the public input process and the information it produced.

Demographic analysis is intended to provide a snapshot of the current characteristics of Marshall County as well as display trends over time. Statistical information about Marshall County was compiled through the use of U.S. Census data from 1990 and 2000, as well as other state and Federal sources. Detailed demographic information is provided in Chapter 10, Physical Data.

In addition to demographic data, direct input from county residents was crucial in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The public input process resulted in the identification of a number of important issues. These issues are summarized in this chapter. Detailed information about the entire public input process is provided in Chapter 9, Visioning Data.

Marshall County, Indiana, is home to almost 50,000 residents, and offers a variety of living choices in both urban and rural settings. Marshall County contains ten townships, as well as several incorporated cities and towns, each offering a unique setting and rich history. The largest city in Marshall County is its county seat, Plymouth, which is located in the approximate center of the county.

Located in northwest Indiana, a half-hour south of South Bend and three hours north of Indianapolis, the County boasts excellent proximity to east-west routes U.S. 6 and U.S. 30. U.S. 31 is the main north-south route through the county.

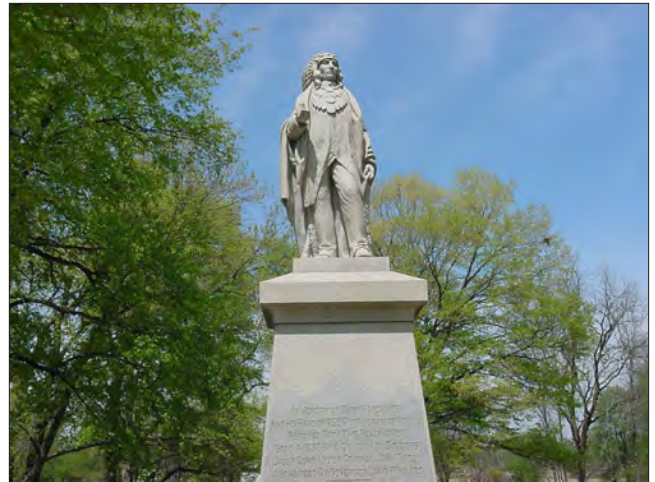
Marshall County was established through an act of the Indiana General Assembly, effective April 1, 1836. The first county elections were held three days later, and Charles Osterhout, Abraham Johnson, and Robert Blair were elected as the first County Commissioners. At their initial meeting in May of that year, the Commissioners divided Marshall County into three townships. What are now Polk, North and German Townships was called North Township; what are now West, Center and Bourbon Townships was called Center Township; and what are now Union, Green, Walnut and Tippecanoe Townships was called Green Township.

By 1838, three of the four area Indian chiefs had agreed to sell their land to the government, with the fourth, Chief Menominee, refusing any offer. The Governor of Indiana eventually authorized the forcible removal of the remaining Potawatomi Indians, sending them on what would become known as the Trail of Death. A monument to Chief Menominee now stands west of Plymouth.

Several communities were established throughout the County in the ensuing years. Bremen came in to being in the late 1830's, originally called New Bremen as result of the German origin of the town's first settlers. Culver was founded in 1844 under the name Union Town, and had to negotiate with another Indiana community named Culver in order to take the name it is known by today. Bourbon was first platted in 1853, and was named after Bourbon, Kentucky, where its organizers originated.

These are but a few examples of the varied histories of all of Marshall County's communities. The Marshall County of today is an especially vibrant place, combining the diverse traits of its cities, towns, and rural areas to provide a high quality of life for its residents.

The monument to Chief Menominee is located in the Twin Lakes area southwest of Plymouth.



DEMOGRAPHICS SUMMARY

The demographic profile of Marshall County demonstrates many of the same characteristics and issues that are true of other Indiana communities. Marshall County's population is becoming more racially diverse as it grows, although at a much slower rate than that of the state as a whole. The overall growth rate for Marshall County was also slower than that of Indiana between 1990 and 2000.

In addition to becoming more diverse, Marshall County's population is aging. Data indicates large segments of the population in the "55 and above" and "14 and younger" age groups. As of 2000, the educational attainment of Marshall County was less than that of the state, with 79.8% of residents having attained a high school diploma.

Although the unemployment rate in Marshall County has been consistently lower than that of the state, recent data indicate that the local unemployment rate is increasing to match state levels. Even so, between 1989 and 1999 the median income for Marshall County increased by over 50%, giving the county a slightly higher median income than the state in 1999. The employment market is diverse in Marshall County, but by far the largest segment of the employed in the community are in the manufacturing sector.

The median home value in Marshall County in 2000 was lower than statewide median. Within the county, median home values are highest in West Township and lowest in Tippecanoe Township, with a difference of \$27,700 between them. Marshall County had a significantly higher proportion of owner-occupied housing units in 2000 than either the City of Plymouth or the State of Indiana.

The broad array of public input and data analysis generated during this process helped to define some core issues that the new Comprehensive Plan must address. A brief summary of these issues is provided below.

- **Farmland & Open Space Preservation**

As growth occurs in Marshall County, more and more land is converted from agricultural use and natural states to residential, commercial or industrial uses. The preservation of natural and agricultural areas is important to maintaining the economy and quality of life of the county.

- **Environmental Protection**

The many lakes, streams, wooded areas and wetlands found throughout Marshall County are important not only aesthetically, but also for maintaining the environmental health of the county. Natural systems are threatened by the impacts of growth such as septic system failures and fragmentation of habitats and some measure of protection must be provided for them.

- **Growth Management**

Growth and change are continually occurring within Marshall County. In recognition of the environmental, fiscal, and aesthetic impacts of growth, strategies for its careful management must be developed.

- **Rural Character & Aesthetics**

Part of Marshall County's quality of life is provided by the character of its rural areas, which risk being lost to continued development. New growth must be balanced with a strategy to preserve those characteristics that make Marshall County an attractive place to live and work.

- **Economic Development**

The modern economy has been characterized by uncertainty and change. Marshall County must have a focused strategy for creating and maintaining jobs, for providing the type of educated and skilled workforce that can fill those jobs, and for utilizing the high quality of life in the county to stimulate investment.

The many lakes in Marshall County provide recreational opportunities as well as add to the character of the county.





LAND USE & GROWTH

SECTION I: COMMUNITY GOALS

2

C H A P T E R



INTRODUCTION

Marshall County will experience continued growth and change in the future. The challenge inherent in this growth is to integrate it with existing development and infrastructure effectively. Impacts on natural features should be minimized, as should impacts on the services that the county must provide to new development. Achieving these aims will help the county maintain a high quality of life for its residents.

As growth occurs, more of Marshall County's rural farm and forest land is threatened with conversion to residential, commercial, or other uses. Natural lands such as these can be protected effectively through a combination of growth policies and creative design techniques.

The rural character that makes Marshall County unique should be protected as new residents move to the area. One of the defining elements of that character is the small, unincorporated rural communities scattered around the county. These villages should be nurtured and supported as a way to focus new growth rather than allowing it to spread through the county at random. Large scale new development should be guided to already established cities and towns within the county to maximize the efficiency of public service provision.

Barns such as this one are symbolic of the rural character of Marshall County.



This chapter establishes goals and policies for future land use and growth in Marshall County. It works in conjunction with the Land Use Plan presented in Chapter 6. This chapter provides a menu of policies which will serve to manage the new development that occurs throughout the county. Specifically, it will help the county to achieve a positive balance of existing and new land uses, preserve needed farm land for continued agricultural use, and guide residential, commercial, and industrial development to appropriate locations. The goals and policies provided here should be used in conjunction with those in the other chapters of this section to serve as a guide for decision making.

Minimize the loss of farm land and forest land to other, unrelated uses.

Policy 1 Establish multiple agricultural zoning districts.

Current development regulations do not adequately differentiate between agricultural uses and residential uses. More specific zoning districts should be created to provide areas for agriculture uses and areas for residential uses. Also, zoning standards that recognize the unique qualities and impacts of large-scale agricultural industries should be developed.

Policy 2 Support cluster subdivision design for rural residential development.

In general, large subdivisions in rural areas should be discouraged. If they do occur, they should take the form of cluster subdivisions. This concept allows for the clustering of housing units in a limited area of the overall property, allowing large areas to remain undeveloped. This design concept can be used to allow appropriate levels of growth in the county without jeopardizing farming operations or natural systems.

Policy 3 Require high density residential development to be served by public sewer and water utilities.

The county's rural areas largely lack the capacity to provide appropriate utility infrastructure. Subdivisions should be directed to the cities and towns in Marshall County that can adequately provide infrastructure and services. This would better protect rural land and help existing communities continue to thrive. The Zoning & Subdivision Control Ordinances could be changed to distinguish between "major" and "minor" subdivisions, with major subdivisions being required to connect to utility systems.

Policy 4 Support the creation of a foundation to receive and administer conservation easements.

The successful development of cluster subdivisions may result in the creation of conservation easements covering the undeveloped portions of new subdivisions. These easements must be managed by an organization with the resources to ensure that they are adequately maintained. A new organization may need to be formed to fill this role, or an existing organization may be able to expand its purview to take on the responsibility of administering such easements.

GOAL TWO: FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT

Focus new development in and around existing cities and towns.

Policy 1

Require municipal sewer and water service for large scale subdivisions.

As time passes, the effectiveness and safety of septic systems diminish. In addition, the ability for residential lots to use septic systems rather than sewer utilities allows growth to occur in areas that may not be appropriate for the long term welfare of the county. It is advisable that sewer and water connections be required for new subdivisions in order to provide high quality services as well as guide growth to existing cities and towns.

Policy 2

Encourage cities and towns in Marshall County to require annexation for infrastructure extensions.

Developed areas that receive utilities services from nearby cities and towns should become a part of the tax base for that particular community. Those communities should require that new development be annexed in exchange for such infrastructure extensions. This would work in combination with Policy 1, above, to create contiguous urban growth that helps to build the community tax base.

Policy 3

Require lot owners in any large scale subdivisions to be responsible for street lights, street signs, and open space.

Many residents of rural subdivisions expect to receive amenities typically found in city residential areas. This includes amenities, such as street lights, that are difficult to fund in rural areas. Requiring the homeowners to fund such improvements would ease the County's fiscal burden as well as potentially direct some homebuyers back to areas in the cities and towns where such services are more readily available.

Policy 4

Consider the county as a whole in efforts to address affordable housing.

The need to provide affordable housing is not unique to a single community or Marshall County. A coordinated effort to provide affordable housing units in all areas of the county should be undertaken. Affordable housing units should be located within existing communities where necessary shopping, services and employment are readily available.

Policy 5

Require high-quality development design in designated commercial areas

Commercial developments often occur at locations that provide "gateways" to the communities of Marshall County. As such, a high level of aesthetic quality should be encouraged in these areas. This includes installing and maintaining landscaping, safe access points, attractive building design, and appropriate lighting.

GOAL TWO: **FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT** (CONTINUED)

Policy 6 **Support the concentration of commercial development in key areas around the county**

Commercial development should be prevented from stringing along transportation corridors and occurring at random in rural areas. This not only puts a strain on utilities and infrastructure, but creates additional traffic problems in rural areas. Instead new commercial growth should be focused on key transportation intersections in the county.

Policy 7 **Rezone land for commercial development only after careful consideration of the potential impacts of such development**

Commercial development has more intense impacts on the land and adjacent uses than agricultural or residential uses. Care must be taken in evaluating sites for rezoning for commercial uses so that short and

GOAL THREE: RURAL CHARACTER

Preserve the unique character of Marshall County's small towns and rural communities.

Policy 1

Support unincorporated rural villages and small towns with appropriate zoning regulations.

Many of the small towns and villages need assistance in sustaining their viability as communities. Customized zoning that emphasizes mixed use village centers and neighborhood-like residential growth would help maintain their character.

Policy 2

Provide assistance in pursuing infrastructure grants to small towns.

One of the challenges of preserving and enhancing the rural towns is their lack of infrastructure and funding to improve that infrastructure. The county could provide assistance in securing that needed funding.

Policy 3

Seek out alternative methods of infrastructure service provision for rural communities.

The isolated location of Marshall County's unincorporated rural communities is an impediment to the provision of utilities infrastructure. New technologies such as package treatment plants as well as constructed wetlands may be a lower cost alternative to more traditional methods of sewage treatment for these communities.

Policy 4

Provide adequate enforcement of property maintenance, nuisance, and health codes in the county.

The attractive rural character of Marshall County can be adversely affected by the accumulation of inoperable vehicles and the presence of unsafe structures. It is important that violations of health, safety and nuisance codes be corrected in order to protect the rural character of the county.

Burr Oak is one of the many rural communities scattered throughout Marshall County.





ENVIRONMENT & RECREATION

SECTION I: COMMUNITY GOALS

3

C H A P T E R



Recreational resources like the Marshall County's lakes must be carefully protected from the impacts of nearby development.



INTRODUCTION

Marshall County has numerous areas of environmental significance. Lakes, streams, forests, and other sensitive environmental features play a crucial role in the ecological systems and aesthetic values of the county. As such, tools and strategies for preserving them must be a component of the Comprehensive Plan. Likewise, these areas can also play a role in providing recreational opportunities for residents of, and visitors to, Marshall County.

Environmental protection is an important issue in Marshall County. As home to many lakes, major river corridors, wetlands, and other environmental features Marshall County has a number of challenges to potential development. It is possible to balance appropriate development with ample environmental protection in order to let both the economy and the natural environment of the county thrive.

Part of the attraction to living in Marshall County is it's many recreational opportunities. While the county may not be in a position to fund major parks facilities, it can play an important role in parks and recreation issues. There is much that can be gained by cooperation among the various cities and towns to provide an abundance of recreational opportunities. It is important that crucial recreational resources like the lakes of the county be protected from overdevelopment and contamination so that they can be enjoyed for years to come.

Along those same lines, as new businesses and industries are attracted to Marshall County and its communities, care must be taken in how they develop their facilities. Strong development standards for such facilities can help in this effort. The county should also closely coordinate with state and Federal environmental agencies to ensure that all regulations pertaining to industries are being followed.

This chapter establishes goals and policies for protecting the environment and providing recreation opportunities in Marshall County. This chapter presents a menu of policies that will serve to manage the growth that occurs throughout the county. Specifically, it will help the county to achieve a positive balance of existing and new land uses; preserve needed farm land for continued agricultural use; and guide residential, commercial, and industrial development to appropriate locations.

GOAL ONE: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Protect natural areas and environmental features from development.

Policy 1 Partner with state and Federal environmental agencies.

In its efforts to protect the environment, Marshall County should coordinate with relevant state and Federal environmental agencies. This will allow them to maximize their efforts while possibly streamlining the environmental permitting process for development.

Policy 2 Prohibit the construction of housing units and other permanent structures in floodplains and wetlands.

Floodplains and wetlands represent some of the most sensitive environmental features to be found in Marshall County. Keeping them clear of development will aid in drainage control and protect valuable habitat areas.

Please refer to the Wetland Profile on page 3-6 for further information

Policy 3 Preserve steep slope areas, wooded areas and floodplains for conservation, public recreation and aesthetic purposes.

These particular environmental features are not ideal for development, so reserving them for other purposes would be convenient. These types of areas are well suited to passive recreation and wildlife preserves, and actions in this direction are recommended.

Policy 4 Encourage high environmental standards for development in the areas around County lakes.

Marshall County's lakes are crucial environmental and recreational amenities, for both residents and visitors. Development around them must meet high environmental standards and also equitably manage recreational access to the waterfront. A strong emphasis must be placed on minimizing pollution through runoff from lawn fertilizer chemicals and similar substances.

Policy 5 Work closely with the Soil & Water Conservation District and Soil Conservation Service on small watershed development and improved water resource management.

These agencies, and others like them, can provide essential information and expertise in water resource management. Forging partnerships with them will make the county's efforts in this area much stronger. Broad participation in their programs must be encouraged.

Policy 6 Enhance drainage patterns through the protection and management of streamside forests.

Streamside forests, also known as riparian areas, are essential components of the natural drainage system for Marshall County's watersheds. It is important that they be protected and carefully managed to ensure that drainage occurs as efficiently as possible. This includes clearing stream channels of debris as well as making sure that

Please refer to the Riparian Area Profile on page 3-7 for further information



GOAL TWO: RECREATION

Promote a variety of parks and recreational opportunities.

Policy 1

Institute a county-wide recreational advisory group made up of local park boards and County representatives to pursue county recreational initiatives

While the county may not wish to establish its own Parks Board, it can still take the lead in coordinating parks and recreation resources throughout the county. Establishing this advisory board would help the various parks programs avoid duplicating services and maximize the benefit to county residents.

Policy 2

Develop an inventory of state, county, and municipally owned parks and open space in Marshall County

Developing such an inventory would assist in the identification of areas where recreational land may be needed. This inventory would help guide the acquisition and preservation decisions of the county.

Policy 3

Identify and pursue multi-jurisdictional recreational opportunities; such as trail systems connecting communities

Many parks and recreation facilities, such as greenway trail systems, cross jurisdictional lines and truly serve multiple communities. The County should pursue projects where equitable and balanced investments by all jurisdictions involved can produce an exceptional recreation amenity. For example, the Town of Culver is currently pursuing the development of a trail network that could become a component of a larger county system in the future if proper coordination

The Marshall County Memorial Forest is one of many areas in the county preserved from future development.



Promote environmentally friendly agricultural and industrial practices.

Policy 1 Open dialogues with local agricultural, economic and government interests

Fostering positive relationships with Marshall County's agricultural and industrial interests is a key to working together to protect the environment. The county should reach out to these organizations in an effort to provide them with information on appropriate environmental practices.

Policy 2 Encourage environmental sensitivity in the design and development of industrial facilities.

The growth of Marshall County's employment base should not come at the expense of the natural environment. While state and Federal regulations govern industrial practices with regard to the environment, the county can implement environmental design standards with regard to the development of industrial facilities.



WETLAND PROFILE

What is a Wetland?

Wetlands are areas inundated or saturated by surface or ground water throughout the year. The presence of water at or near the surface is the dominant factor that determines soil characteristics as well as plant and animal communities.

Why are Wetlands Important?

- 1) Water Quality - Wetlands purify water by filtering and trapping sediment, chemicals, and excess nutrients before water enters other water bodies or groundwater.
- 2) Wildlife Habitat - Wetlands provide habitat for fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife which use these areas to breed, find food, and protect their young.
- 3) Flood Control - Wetlands reduce flood damages by storing and slowing floodwaters. Wetlands regulate water levels within a watershed.

How are Wetlands Identified?

The general location of wetland areas may be determined using the U.S. Geological Service's (USGS) National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps. The specific identification of wetlands are typically made by an individual holding a "US Army Corps of Engineers Regulation 4 Jurisdictional Wetland Certification". The exact boundaries of jurisdictional wetlands can be determined using all three of the following criteria:

- 1) Water Indicator - The area is inundated or saturated to the surface, by a single, continuous episode, for at least 5% of the growing season in most years.
- 2) Wetland Vegetation - The presence of plant species that are typically adapted for life in anaerobic soil conditions.
- 3) Hydric Soils - The presence of soil that is saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the root zone.

Who Regulates Wetlands?

Wetlands along waterways are protected primarily by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), as well as state and local environmental agencies may also regulate wetlands.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Corps, and USFWS have a public policy of "no net loss of wetlands" requiring acre-for-acre replacement of wetlands either on-site or within the same watershed.

What is a Riparian Area?

Riparian areas are also known as streamside forests. They are the wooded areas along rivers and streams. These areas are a complex ecosystem vital to the protection of stream and river water quality. These areas include some of the richest varieties of plants and animals in most regions.

Why are Riparian Areas Important?

Land along waterways have significant ecological and aesthetic value which enhances the natural environment of a community. The presence of riparian areas also adds value to properties with water access, as they are often prime locations for development.

Many communities depend upon local rivers and streams for recreation, drinking water, and natural resource areas. The loss of riparian areas along such waterways is a major cause of decreases in water quality and loss of wildlife habitat.

How are Riparian Areas Identified?

Healthy riparian areas are typically composed of large trees, woody understory trees and shrubs, and smaller flowers, grasses, and groundcovers. Well maintained and managed riparian areas are able to influence the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the stream by:

- 1) Providing food, shelter and natural linkages for a wide variety of plant and animal communities.
- 2) Shading and cooling the stream to enhance aquatic habitats.
- 3) Filtering sediments and pollutants, preventing them from entering the stream or waterway.
- 4) Stabilizing river banks and reducing bank erosion.
- 5) Providing flood control.

Who Regulates Riparian Areas?

In Indiana, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources has the authority to regulate riparian areas for water quality purposes. Local governments may regulate, to some extent, development or encroachment to riparian areas through planning and zoning controls.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed Conservation Standards for Riparian Forest Buffers (Code 391). These standards are site specific and will vary depending on the size of the waterway and floodplain. Most standards address an area ranging from 35 to 150 feet on either side of the stream.

The ideal riparian area includes three zones for management in which development should be restricted. These zones, listed in sequence from the edge of the stream, are as follows:

- 1) Undisturbed Forest - This zone is adjacent to the stream and is ideally 15' in width. Removal of vegetation is not permitted.
- 2) Managed Forest - This zone is ideally 60' in width and harvesting of older vegetation is encouraged to support better filtering/removal of nutrients through younger, faster growing vegetation.
- 3) Runoff Control - This zone is ideally 20' and may be pastured, farmed for hay or mowed for recreational purposes.





COMMUNITY SERVICES

SECTION I: COMMUNITY GOALS

4

CHAPTER



The Marshall County Highway Department is responsible for the maintenance of all county roads and bridges.



INTRODUCTION

Marshall County provides a variety of infrastructure and services that are used by residents and visitors. This includes the county road network, law enforcement, emergency services, and many others. It is important that the county make wise use of the resources available for these services. As a result, the county must take care in managing growth and development in order to preserve its ability to serve all users effectively and efficiently.

Land use, growth and infrastructure issues do not respect political boundaries. It will require a coordinated effort between the county and all of its communities to make sure that growth occurs in a pattern that ensures mutual benefit for all. This includes coordination of plans and ordinances as well as staff resources. In addition, Marshall County must look beyond its own borders, in a regional scope, to coordinate with other governmental entities in efforts to manage growth effectively.

Marshall County must efficiently manage its fiscal and infrastructure resources to best serve the public. Finite fiscal resources must be allocated among many competing needs on an annual basis. The county should strive to carefully plan its capital investments over time to make sure that infrastructure needs are met as they arise.

One important component of the county's infrastructure is its roadway system. Many of these roads are state routes, which means Marshall County has little or no control over their construction or maintenance. However, the county must carefully coordinate with the Indiana transportation authorities to make sure that the county's transportation and economic development needs are met in any state project. Access to a safe and efficient transportation network is crucial for residents of the county.

This chapter establishes goals and policies for community services in Marshall County. This chapter presents a menu of policies which will serve to manage growth and the resulting investments that must be made in community services. It is the intent of this chapter to provide for the responsible use of public funding for essential services.

Work together with cities and towns to coordinate plans and ordinances.

Policy 1 Institute Plan Commission liaisons to and from all Plan Commissions in Marshall County

Growth and its effects do not conform to political or jurisdictional boundaries. It is important for Marshall County to understand how other jurisdictions are managing growth so that a coordinated, not conflicting, effort can be created and sustained.

Policy 2 Evaluate the need for, and feasibility of, a County-wide planning staff

The county and its communities have limited resources to pursue planning activities, and some have difficulty devoting a full time staff person to this effort. The county, cities and towns may be able to pool their resources to create a county-wide planning staff, allowing for more effective coordination of planning activities.

Policy 3 Coordinate the County's grants programs

Funding outside of the County's annual budget is helpful and sometimes crucial to pursuing important planning programs and projects. This may be another area where resources from various jurisdictions could be pooled to retain a skilled grant writer to assist all of them in securing funding sources.

Policy 4 Participate in regional planning activities

As important as it is to coordinate planning within the county, Marshall County is also an important part of a regional planning area. Participation in the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) allows the county to take advantage of expertise and funding for planning projects.



GOAL TWO: **ADEQUATE FACILITIES**

Plan for the long term facilities needs of the county.

See the Capital Improvement Plan Profile on page 4-6 for further information.

Policy 1 Develop long range master plans for County assets and resources; such as the County Farm and Memorial Forest

The County should evaluate the potential uses for properties like the County farm and Memorial Forest. Of primary priority should be preserving them for future generations to enjoy. Whatever the future use of those properties, the county should make measured decisions for the long-range good of its residents.

Policy 2 Initiate a County Capital Improvements Plan

Marshall County makes annual investments in capital projects like roads and bridges. The best way to match infrastructure needs with funding is to create a prioritized program that organizes projects on an appropriate timeline.

Policy 3 Prevent urban-type development from occurring in agricultural areas

Part of providing for the long term needs of the County is ensuring that services are not stressed by growth in inappropriate areas. This includes not only streets and sewers, but police and fire protection, parks and recreation opportunities, and school facilities to name just a few. The county should manage its land resources so that rural areas remain so until existing communities grow to them.

Policy 4 Encourage the use of package treatment plants as a favorable alternative to central sanitary sewer systems

Some areas of the county cannot be easily served by utility extensions from a city or town. Other areas have been developed with septic systems which may not last long into the future. Package plants for sewage treatment should be considered in these areas of existing development. Such systems can be designed to serve a limited number of users, providing adequate services without encouraging further growth in inappropriate areas.

Policy 5 Remain alert for new or improved methods of sewage disposal (both individual and public) which may be devised in the future

Most rural development in Marshall County relies on individual septic systems for sewage disposal, and it is well known that these systems have limited life spans. It is imperative that alternatives to

GOAL THREE: TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Ensure the county's transportation needs will be met in the future.

Policy 1 Provide for intermodal transportation

As the county continues to experience growth, demand for travel on the roadways will also increase. Alternative means of transportation may need to be explored. This could include local bus services or participation in a regional light rail system that connects the county to other nearby cities and other states.

Policy 2 Provide for adequate right-of-way dedication and high-quality street improvements as a component of future development

When new development is constructed, it should provide a minimum level of transportation infrastructure to support the traffic it generates. It should also provide enough right-of-way so that future improvements can be made as required by conditions. Updated construction standards must reflect the best engineering practices available as well as projections for future growth in the community.

Limiting driveway access at major intersections, such as U.S. 6 and U.S. 31, is crucial for the safety and efficiency of the transportation system.

Policy 3 Support the State's limited access program for U.S. 30 and U.S. 31

U.S. 30 and U.S. 31 are important regional and state transportation corridors. It is crucial that a safe and smooth flow of traffic be maintained at all times. The county should be supportive of strong access controls along these highways to ensure optimum travel conditions. Future development around the interchange of these two highways must be carefully designed to control access and manage traffic with a frontage road system.



Policy 4 Provide a high-quality county road (major or minor collector) within a mile of each major traffic generator in the county

Development in Marshall County has become increasingly dispersed, which means transportation between important destinations has become more challenging. It is therefore crucial that a well connected and maintained road network be put in place to serve the residents of the county.

Policy 5 Discourage through traffic and heavy vehicles from using the Local roads and encourage the use of Arterials and Collectors

Local roads are primarily intended for access to homes and properties. In order to protect the rural character and safety of these areas, through

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROFILE

What are Capital Improvements?

Capital improvements are the county's physical projects. For example, the construction and maintenance of roads, drainage systems and government buildings and the acquisition of real property and equipment are capital improvements.

What is a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)?

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a timetable or schedule identifying all planned capital improvements for a period of time, usually 5 years. In the initial year the plan is created, a schedule outlines projects 5 years into the future. Year 1 corresponds to the operating capital budget in the next fiscal year. Years 2 through 5 are a timetable for future projects. The county is not obligated to spend funds on any of the projects listed in years 2 through 5.

Why is a CIP Budgeted?

A capital improvement budget is legally adopted in the operating budget. Each year the county reviews the list of future improvements and makes minor adjustments to the plan as needed. Projects are prioritized by importance, given an approximate completion date and cost estimate, and listed with anticipated funding sources.

Why is a CIP Important?

Benefits of a Capital Improvement Plan include:

- 1) long range financial planning,
- 2) possible opportunity to purchase land before prices rise,
- 3) the handling of long term projects in a coordinated and timely manner,
- 4) the prevention of costly mistakes, such as tearing up a road to improve drainage when that road was resurfaced a year earlier, and
- 5) better management of capital funds.

How does a CIP relate to planned growth?

A Capital Improvement Plan is one of the most effective tools to plan growth. With a CIP in place, the county can decide where and when growth occurs. For instance, growth is less likely to occur in areas without infrastructure. The CIP can also spur growth by extending infrastructure.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SECTION I: COMMUNITY GOALS

5

CHAPTER



INTRODUCTION

Marshall County must continually seek to expand and enhance its employment base. The county provides jobs for local residents as well as people who travel to work from other parts of the Northwest Indiana region. It is imperative that the County have an organized and effective economic development effort.

Economic development can take several forms, and should seek out a diversity of industries. This includes providing opportunities for agricultural, industrial, professional office, and home workshop development in the county. Each type of employer has special needs, and those needs must be accommodated if Marshall County is to attract new businesses.

The county should work to direct new employers to locate in and around established cities and towns. This is where the largest concentrations of populations occur, providing the best job base for businesses. Further, these cities and towns are better equipped to provide the type of utilities infrastructure that industrial uses require. This will also help to preserve rural land in other areas of the county.

Marshall County is also host to a number of large-scale agricultural operations. Provisions for this type of business must be made in the zoning ordinance so that their needs and the needs of adjacent residents can be equitably accommodated. Similar efforts should be made for home-workshops, which often evolve into more substantial businesses.

It is important to recognize the role that the county's quality of life plays in attracting employers. Major employers want to locate in a community that can provide their employees with good schools, diverse parks and recreation opportunities, high quality public services, and a variety of shopping and living choices. In addition to recruitment and retainment strategies, any plan for enhancing the county's economy must also consider protecting its high quality of life.

This chapter establishes goals and strategies for the enhancement of the employment base of Marshall County. It is the intent of this chapter to provide a logical strategy for recruiting and retaining businesses that will provide the economic backbone of the

GOAL ONE: **ATTRACT EMPLOYERS**

Provide support for the recruitment and retention of industrial employers by the cities and towns of Marshall County.

Policy 1

Promote a county-wide view of economic development.

The county should help to coordinate the resources and efforts that all of the individual communities within it are devoting to economic development. This would ensure that efforts are not duplicated and would maximize potential for sharing resources and recruiting major employers. The county could act as a clearinghouse for information regarding available sites in all of the communities, while allowing the individual communities the ability maintain their own policies and strategies for recruitment.

PiRod, Inc., is an example of a local employer located in Plymouth.

Policy 2

Direct new industrial development to established cities and towns.

The county should direct new industrial employers to existing communities. This will reduce the cost of extending roads and utilities to industrial development as well as enhance the tax base of the communities. A strong pool of potential employees will also be provided in close proximity to these new businesses. This could be accomplished by limiting the amount of land zoned for industrial development in the county, causing businesses to look to the individual communities for available sites.



Policy 3

Create land use regulations that balance the needs of large-scale agricultural operations and adjacent land uses.

Large agricultural operations such as farms or confined feeding provide an important source of jobs and tax revenue for the county, yet are often in conflict with surrounding uses. A set of regulations for such uses must be created to both protect surrounding uses from negative impacts and preserve the ability of such businesses to operate.

GOAL TWO: **SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

Encourage “home workshop” businesses that do not impose negative impacts on the surrounding area.

Policy 1

Evaluate existing home workshops in the county.

Many businesses can trace their roots to a workshop in a rural home. The county should evaluate these workshops to gain a better understanding of the type of businesses that can be fostered in this manner.

Policy 2

Update the County’s home workshop regulations.

Like all commercial businesses, home workshops may cause impacts on surrounding properties, especially those that are residential in nature. Existing county home workshop regulations should be evaluated to ensure that the needs of surrounding residents are properly protected at the same time that home workshops are supported.

Policy 3

Establish provisions for retail based home workshops.

Some small retail operations would benefit the economic base of the County community without creating negative impacts on the immediate surrounding area. Zoning standards should identify these low impact retail businesses and permit them as home workshops.

GOAL THREE: **ENHANCE EDUCATION**

Support the growth and enhancement of Marshall County's educational institutions.

Policy 1 **Amend land use controls that unduly restrain the development of educational institutions.**

If educational opportunities in Marshall County are to expand, they must not be impeded by an undue regulatory burden. The county's existing land use regulations should be reviewed and updated to ensure that local educational institutions are given adequate support.

Policy 2 **Partner with educational institutions to provide workforce training programs to local residents.**

New businesses and industries cannot be successful in Marshall County without an adequate supply of properly skilled employees. The county should work to enhance the skill set of local residents as a method of making Marshall County more attractive to potential new employers.

Ancilla College provides high quality educational services in a secluded, wooded setting.





LAPAZ

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

6

CHAPTER



LaPaz has a town center containing a variety of businesses serving local residents and travelers.



The Marshall County Comprehensive Plan includes the incorporated Town of LaPaz, located immediately north of the intersection of US 31 and US 6. LaPaz was originally laid out by Archalaus Hunt in 1873 with the completion of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Over the years, the Town has seen limited growth, and had a population of 561 as of the 2010 Census. This represents a 14.5% increase in population since 2000, when the population peaked at 489.

A key component of the process of developing the new Comprehensive Plan was public input. A workshop was held in LaPaz in the winter of 2013 in order to gather comments and concerns from LaPaz residents. A variety of issues was discussed at the workshop, and this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on strategies to address those issues.

Future land use in LaPaz and the area immediately surrounding it is a crucial issue. A traditional town center still exists, although it is bisected by a four lane highway (US 31). Just south of the town center, where US 31 intersects with US 6, a large amount of commercial development has occurred, focusing mainly on serving the needs of people traveling through the county. With the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) making major changes to the US 31 corridor, LaPaz must be prepared to take advantage of resulting opportunities.

Public services are also important to maintaining the health and welfare of LaPaz. If LaPaz is to enhance its residential base, quality utility systems must be in place. This includes a wastewater treatment plant as well as a public water system. Of course, providing such facilities requires substantial investment, so funding mechanisms must also be sought. Public services also include fire and ambulance services. These must be maintained and enhanced as the community grows to ensure protection of life and property.

LaPaz enjoys a strong sense of community and, due to its location on major highways, can take advantage of amenities found in a number of nearby cities and towns. The goals and policies found on the following pages provide a basis for improving the quality of life of LaPaz. It is important to note that the strategies found in this chapter will be impacted by the State's new route for US 31. The goals and policies for LaPaz should be reviewed and updated to ensure that they reflect the best course of action for the community.



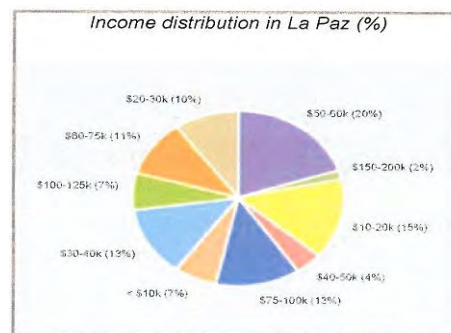
The percentage of people under 18 years (29.4%) is higher than the state average and people over 65 years (11.8%) is lower than the state average.

Age	LaPaz	State Average
Under 18	29.4%	24.8%
65+	11.8%	13.0%

LaPaz is primarily Caucasian (97%) followed by Hispanic (4.2%). The Hispanic population is lower than the state average of 6.01%.

For residents over 25 years old 77.4% have a high school degree or higher, .09% have a Bachelor's degree or higher. No one has a graduate degree or higher. This is lower than the state average of 86.6% with a high school degree or higher and 22.7% with a bachelor's degree or higher.

The medium household income in the LaPaz in 2009 was \$51,438. The state median household income was \$45,424.



The estimated median house or condo value in 2009 was \$89,918 versus the state average of \$123, 100. In 2010 there were 261 housing units in LaPaz with 66.7% being owner occupied and 33.3% being rented. In 2010 5.8% were owner occupied and 6.4% of the rented were vacant .

INTRODUCTION

LaPaz will change greatly due to the new US 31 which will essentially by pass the town. LaPaz will have to use various thoughts and ideas to attract economic, residential, and commercial development to the town.

LaPaz's main downtown district runs along the major north south corridor, US 31. This corridor consists of a restaurant, a local bank, and other shops. It does not display a positive image and an inviting place to stop and conduct business. Side walks are limited and do not extend north and south of the downtown area. Most vehicles pass through LaPaz as quickly as the speed limit will allow.

The area along the intersection of US 6 and US 31 is more appealing with several filling stations, fast food restaurants, and a local grocery store. Thus the majority of the local economic activity does not occur downtown.

Residents enjoy LaPaz because of the following;

1. Small town atmosphere with friendly people
2. Access to US 31 and US 6
3. Park, fire department, and Community Building



SECTION I: COMMUNITY CHARACTER: ENHANCE LAPAZ DOWNTOWN CORRIDOR

GOAL ONE: COMMUNITY CHARACTER: ENHANCE LAPAZ DOWNTOWN CORRIDOR

Policy 1 Improve the Downtown's Character.

Facilities, buildings and infrastructure all need to be improved to attract citizens to the downtown. Downtown improvement grants need to be pursued when possible.

Policy 2 See a balance between the downtown and the US 6 and US 31 commercial areas.

Planning needs to ensure that commercial activity along US 6 and Michigan RD does not distract from the downtown. Downtown commercial could draw upon walkable commercial activity, whereas US 6 and Michigan RD would be conducive to highway traffic.

Policy 3 Create an Attractive, Inviting, and Safe Community

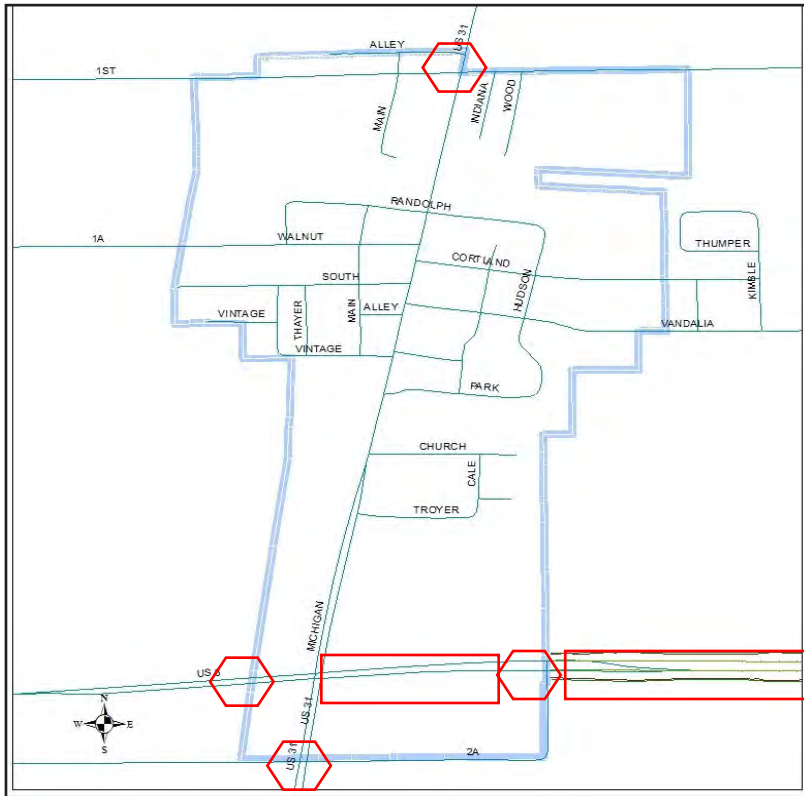
All development (structures and roadways) of a certain density both downtown and in the US 6 commercial corridors should be subject to the same minimum development, design, and construction standards.


Policy 4 Encourage Connectivity and "Walkability".

Maintain safe, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and appropriate lighting in neighborhoods, commercial areas, schools, churches, and/or recreational facilities throughout the corporate limits and surrounding county areas.



GOAL TWO: IMPROVE GATEWAYS AND CORRIDORS



 = Commercial Corridor

 = Gateway

Policy 1 Improve significant gateways to the community.

Enhance the gateways and roadway corridors along US 6 and Michigan Street by incorporating streetscape elements including welcome signage, decorative lighting, curbs and gutters, sidewalks, street trees and other landscaping. Coordination needs to be between INDOT and Marshall County on enhancements.

Policy 2 Enhance Corridor Development.

Consider applying a commercial overlay district to the east from the intersection of US 6 and Michigan RD to Linden RD. This would be a mixed use commercial district. This needs to be coordinated with Marshall County.

Policy 3 Enhance US 31 Exits

With the cooperation with INDOT signage needs to be created to direct traffic to the commercial centers of LaPaz.

SECTION II - LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

GOAL ONE: SUPPORT A BALANCED MIX OF LAND USES TO SUPPORT GROWTH

Policy 1 Use the Land Use Plan in Section VII in all community land use decision making.

The future Land Use Plan should be used to provide the appropriate mix of land uses throughout LaPaz and the surrounding area. It is important the Land Use Plan be used to evaluate all potential new development to ensure the proper mixed land use is maintained.

Policy 2 Coordinate future planning efforts with Marshall County

LaPaz needs to coordinate efforts on annexation, corridor development and road and street development with the major corridor of Michigan RD(Street), and the commercial corridor along east US 6. New development also needs to be connected to the proper utilities.

Policy 3 Proactively plan for the development of the new US 31 re-alignment

US 31 will be realigned and will by-pass LaPaz. There is to be a new US 6/US 31 limited access intersection about a mile east of LaPaz. This will change the traffic pattern and commercial activity in LaPaz. LaPaz needs to plan and focus development at this key intersection and develop strategies to encourage traffic to the LaPaz commercial centers.

GOAL TWO: INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: ENSURE A SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY OF INDUSTRIAL LOCATIONS.

Policy 1 Develop a unified strategy for attracting new business and industry to LaPaz and retaining and expanding existing business and industry.

LaPaz should work closely with the Marshall County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) to focus efforts on a strategy to recruit specific business and industry to LaPaz.

Policy 2 Develop developmental ready sites

LaPaz needs to identify and promote developmental ready sites working with MCEDC's resources. In addition to providing good highway and rail access, LaPaz needs to provide municipal utilities.

Policy 3 Focus on attracting innovative employers to LaPaz

Business recruitment efforts should include attracting the light industry and business to the community. Emphasis should be placed on employers who have higher-paying jobs. If Marshall County Metro-net is established, LaPaz could use it to attract high-tech, research type employers to the community.

Policy 4 Support creative incentives for bringing new employers to LaPaz

LaPaz should visit tax abatement and other tax based tools available to attract new employers. They also need to work with the Marshall County Plan Commission office in streamlining the permit system and support an on-line permit system.

GOAL THREE: COMMERCIAL-MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

Policy 1 Support high-quality commercial development in LaPaz

LaPaz needs to look at development standards for their commercial areas to ensure the first impression portrays a positive image of LaPaz. LaPaz needs to work with the Marshall County Planning Office to develop such standards.

Policy 2 Enhance Corridor Development

Encourage, with Marshall County, a mixed use corridor along US 6 east to Linden RD. This corridor will contain a mixture of commercial and residential development.

GOAL ONE: CORE NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY: UPGRADE THE APPEAL OF LAPAZ'S NEIGHBORHOODS

Policy 1 Improve community infrastructure such as sidewalks, drainage, water, and landscape (trees).

An important factor to attract citizens to LaPaz is the state of its infrastructure. Sidewalks, availability of water, drainage, and trees have a major impact on the well-being of neighborhoods. LaPaz needs to work on improving such infrastructure to improve its neighborhoods.

Policy 2 Support and develop property maintenance codes

LaPaz needs to support and develop property maintenance codes to have property owners maintain safe and attractive structures and properties. LaPaz also needs to work with the Marshall County Plan Commission to develop necessary zoning regulations.

Policy 3 Encourage Connectivity and “Walkability”

LaPaz needs to develop and maintain neighborhood sidewalks that are pedestrian friendly and have appropriate lighting. Sidewalks also need to be developed along Michigan Street (US 31) to provide connectivity between the residential section of LaPaz and the commercial properties to the south.

Policy 4 Encourage Creation of New Quality Neighborhoods

LaPaz needs to encourage the development of new subdivisions of high quality and standards including water and sewer to attract a new population of citizens to LaPaz and the surrounding area.



GOAL ONE: IMPROVE DOWNTOWN'S ROLE AS THE ACTIVITY CENTER FOR THE COMMUNITY

Policy 1 Continue to support the Downtown's retail, restaurants, and commercial development.

Working with the MCEDC, LaPaz needs to work to retain existing downtown commercial and retail businesses. LaPaz needs to work with existing businesses to evaluate existing policies or regulations that would be positive to retain the Downtown.

Policy 2 Provide incentives to encourage new investment in the downtown

LaPaz may want to look at financial incentives (such as tax abatements) to entice new downtown investment.

Policy 3 Provide quality sidewalks, drainage, streets and utilities to encourage development.

Business owners will not invest in a distressed area. LaPaz needs to have the proper infrastructure in place to attract downtown investment. With the new alignment of US 31, LaPaz has an opportunity to develop a boulevard type street through the downtown area to attract individuals to stop in LaPaz. A study should be done to plan the appropriate type of the configuration of Michigan Street.



SECTION V - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL ONE: EXPAND NEW EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

Policy 1 Identify new sites for economic development

With the new intersection of US 31 and US 6, LaPaz working with the MCEDC, should work to identify potential sites for commercial and industrial development to take advantage of this new transportation opportunity. This would be done in connection with a new commercial corridor along US 6.

Policy 2 Provide appropriate infrastructure for existing and new development

Proper infrastructure such as sewer and water needs to be up to date to support existing and new development. Emphasis needs to be placed at the new intersection of US 6 and US 31 to support new development.

Policy 3 Support expansion of broadband and fiber optic services

Broadband connectivity is an important and necessary infrastructure needed to support existing and future economic activity. LaPaz needs to support Marshall County's efforts to bring the Metronet down old US 31 or new US 31. Broadband connectivity at such a level as the Metronet will be an incentive to companies to locate in LaPaz.



GOAL ONE: UTILITY: PUBLIC SERVICES AND INVESTMENT

Policy 1 Ensure community's water supply

LaPaz needs to develop a town water system to provide a safe and adequate water supply to its citizens and commercial business. This is also needed to provide water for fire safety. This will also lower the amount of land needed for development in that wells will not be needed on each property.

Policy 2 Plan for well planned annexation policy

LaPaz needs to complete the annexation of the east side of LaPaz in the area of Thumper TRL and Kimble DR. They also need to develop a plan to annex the area near the US 31 and US 6 new intersection.

Policy 3 Use the Land Use Plan as a guide for utility investment

The LaPaz Land Use Plan is a guide to the vision of growth for LaPaz. Future utility investments should be based upon the LaPaz Land Use Plan.

Policy 4 Require land to be annexed in order to connect to town utilities

It should be required before the expansion of town services that the land be annexed into LaPaz. This will assure the development to be contiguous to LaPaz. This will add to the town's tax base to help fund town services.



**GOAL ONE: UTILITY: PROVIDE ADEQUATE
TRANSPORTATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Policy 1 Work with Marshall County and INDOT to create new attractive streetscapes through LaPaz

LaPaz needs to work with Marshall County Commissioners and INDOT to create and develop Michigan RD and Michigan ST. LaPaz and Marshall County need to prepare for the new traffic patterns which will result with the new limited access US 31. They may want to consider a boulevard type street to attract patrons to the downtown.

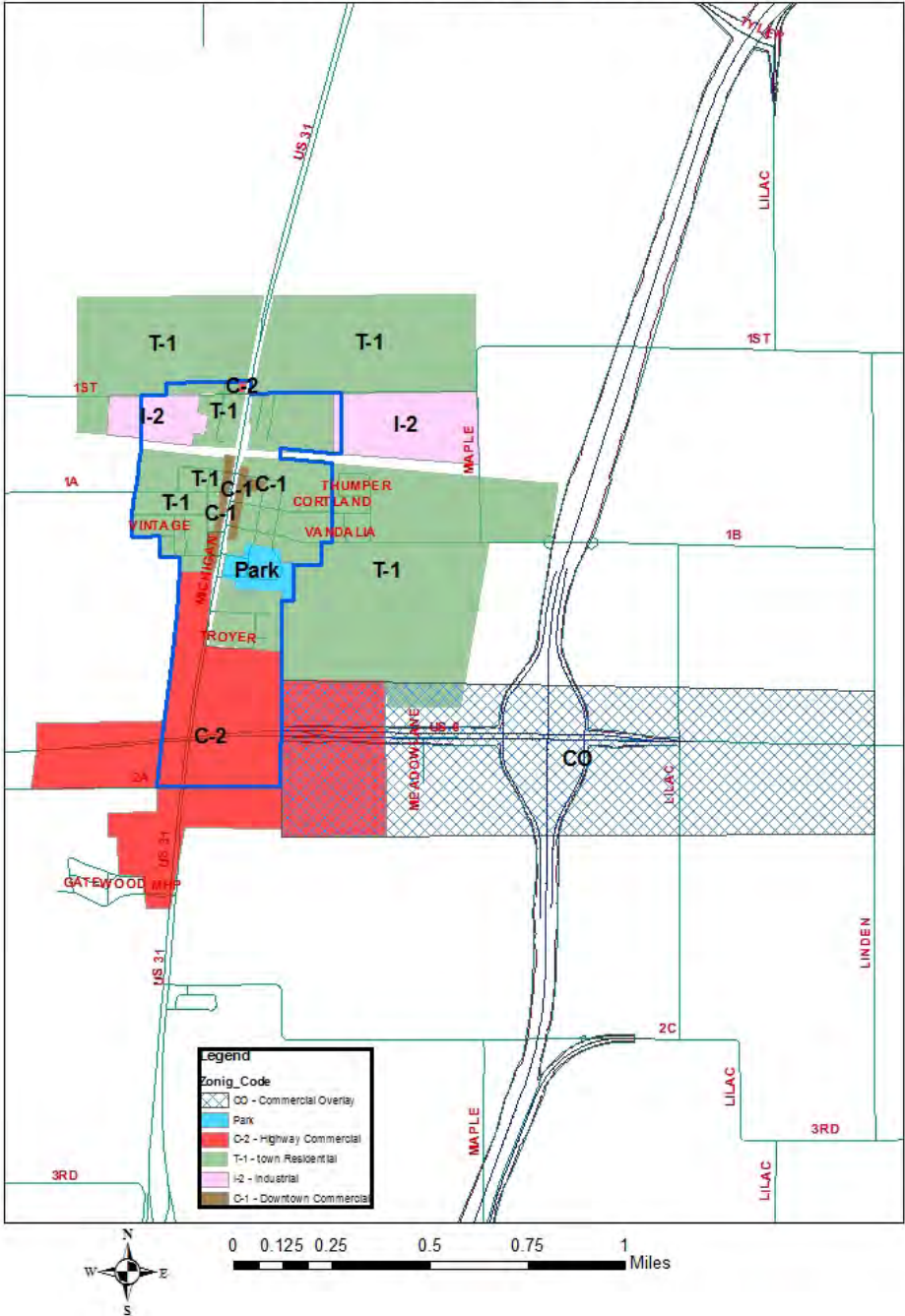
Policy 2 Require the construction of sidewalks in all new development

Sidewalks are an essential component of all new development, regardless of the land use. Sidewalks provide safety, are an alternative to driving, and makes LaPaz assessable to those citizens without a vehicle. It also enhances the neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Policy 3 Develop an annual program of sidewalk maintenance and installation in areas of need throughout the community

Installing sidewalks with new development will not be enough to provide an adequate system. A program needs to be developed to address gaps and deficiencies in the current sidewalk network.

Future Land Use Map of LaPaz



Land Use Descriptions

T-1 Town Residential

The Town Residential District includes the majority of LaPaz's residential areas consisting of older neighborhoods developed prior to the 1960's. They are moderate to high density, with mixed uses near the downtown and are walkable.

C-1 Downtown Commercial

LaPaz's downtown consists of retail, restaurants, institutional, and residential uses in a compact area, some of which is walkable. This area should be the focal point of LaPaz. New and redeveloped structures should be built to the sidewalk, have second and third stories, storefront windows, and signage oriented to the pedestrian.

C-2 Highway Commercial

C-2, Highway Commercial, is intended to provide development along US 6 and Michigan Road. Uses generally include retailers, offices, food services, lodging, entertainment, and health care providers, all of which draw customers from the community and region.

CO - Commercial Overlay

This is a mixed use highway overlay along US 6 east that include retailers, offices, food services, lodging, entertainment, and health care providers, all of which draw customers from the community and region. The designation may also contain medium to high density multifamily residential.

I-2 Industrial

The Industrial designation encompasses such uses as large manufacturing facilities, distribution, warehousing centers (not self-storage), processing plants, and other similar businesses. LaPaz needs to protect the agricultural related industrial uses on the north west.

Park

Park area is designed to support the existing ball fields, playground and community building which all provide activities for all of LaPaz's citizens to better the quality of life.

Organizational Structure

Implementation Agencies

Several different agencies have been assigned to the “Action Items” previously listed in this Plan in order to provide more guidance for implementation. Agencies are broken into Lead Agencies and Supporting or Coordinating Agencies.

Lead Agencies:

TC	LaPaz Town Council
PC	Marshall County Plan Commission
SD	LaPaz Street Department
UD	LaPaz Utility Department
LM	Local Merchants
HS	Historical Society
BZA	Marshall County Board of Zoning Appeals
U	Utility Companies

Supporting or Coordinating Agencies:

MCHD	Marshall County Highway Department
MCS	Marshall County Surveyor
MCEDC	Marshall County Economic Development Corporation
CC	County Commissioners
MACOG	Michiana Council of Governments
INDOT	Indiana Department of Transportation
IDEM	Indiana Department of Environmental Management
MT	Marshall County Tourism

Time Frame

The following action items have been assigned approximate time frames for the implementation of each action item. The time frames, which may vary based on economic development influences and numerous other factors, are:

Quick Wins

Projects that could be undertaken immediately and/or implemented within twelve months of the Comprehensive Plan’s adoption.

Medium Priority Opportunities

Projects that could be initiated within 1-5 years of the Comprehensive Plan

Low Priority Opportunities

Projects that could be undertaken within 6-10+ years of the Comprehensive Plan’s adoption

Section I: Community Character:

GOAL ONE: COMMUNITY CHARACTER: ENHANCE LAPAZ DOWNTOWN CORRIDOR							
Policies	Action Steps	Quick Wins	Medium	Low	Time Frame	Relevant Agencies	Consult/Effect
1. Improve the Downtown's Character.	Facilities, buildings and infrastructure all need to be improved to attract citizens to the downtown. Downtown improvement grants needs to be pursued when possible.	X			1-5 years	TC-PC	
2. See a balance between the downtown and the US 6 and US 31.	Planning needs to ensure commercial activity along US 6 and Michigan RD does not distract from the downtown. Downtown commercial could draw upon walkable commercial activity, whereas US 6 and Michigan RD would be conducive to highway traffic.		X		1-5 YEARS	TC-PC	
3. Create an Attractive, Inviting, and Safe Community.	All development (structures and roadways) of a certain density both downtown and in the US 6 commercial corridors should be subject to the same minimum development, design, and construction standards.		X		1-5 years	TC-PC	
4. Encourage connectivity and "Walkability".	Maintain safe, pedestrian friendly sidewalks, appropriate lighting in neighborhoods, commercial areas, schools, churches, and/or recreational facilities throughout the corporate limits and surrounding county areas.	X	X		1-5 Years	TC, PC, AND UD	

GOAL TWO: Improve Gateways and Corridors							
Policies	Action Steps	Quick Wins	Medium	Low	Time Frame	Relevant Agencies	Consult/Effect
1. Improve significant gateways to the community.	Enhance the gateways and roadway corridors along US 6 and Michigan Street by incorporating streetscape elements including welcome signage, decorative lighting, curbs and gutters, sidewalks, street trees, and other landscaping. Coordination needs to be between INDOT and Marshall County on enhancements.	X			1-5 Years	TC-CC-MCHD-INDOT	
2. Enhance Corridor Development.	Consider applying a commercial overlay district to the east from the intersection of US 6 and Michigan RD to Linden RD. This would be a mixed use district. This needs to be coordinated with Marshall County.	X			1	TC-CC-PC	
3. Enhance US 31 Exits.	With the cooperation with INDOT signage needs to be created to direct traffic to the commercial centers of LaPaz.	X			2-Jan	INDOT	

Section II: Land Use & Growth Management

GOAL ONE: Support a Balanced Mix of LAND Uses to Support Growth

Policies	Action Steps	Quick Wins	Medium	Low	Time Frame	Relevant Agencies	Completed
1. Use the Land Use Plan in Section VII in all community land use decision making.	The future Land Use Plan should be used to provide the appropriate mix of land uses throughout LaPaz and the surrounding area. It is important the Land Use plan be used to evaluate all potential new development to ensure the proper mixed land use is maintained.	X			1-5 Years	PC	
2. Coordinate future planning efforts with Marshall County.	LaPaz needs to coordinate efforts on annexation, corridor development and road and street development with the major corridor of Michigan RD(Street), and the commercial corridor along east US 6. New development also needs to be connected to the proper utilities.	X			1-5 Years	TC-PC-CC	
3. Proactively plan for the development of the new US 31 re-alignment.	US 31 will be realigned and will by-pass LaPaz. There is to be a new US 6/ US 31 limited access intersection about a mile east of LaPaz. This will change the traffic pattern and commercial activity in LaPaz. LaPaz needs to plan and focus development at this key intersection and develop strategies to encourage traffic to the LaPaz commercial centers.	X			1-2 Years	PC	

GOAL TWO: Industrial Development: Ensure a sustainable supply of industrial locations.

Policies	Action Steps	Quick Wins	Medium	Low	Time Frame	Relevant Agencies	Completed
1. Develop a unified strategy for attracting new business and industry to LaPaz and retaining and expanding existing business and industry.	LaPaz should work closely with the Marshall County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) to focus efforts on a strategy to recruit specific business and industry to LaPaz.		X		1-5 Years	MCEDC	
2. Develop developmental ready sites.	LaPaz needs to identify and promote developmental ready sites working with MCEDC resources. In addition to providing good highway and rail access, LaPaz needs to provide municipal utilities.		X		1-5 Years	MCEDC	

Section II: Land Use & Growth Management (Continued)

GOAL TWO: Industrial Development: Ensure a sustainable supply of industrial locations.							
Policies	Action Steps	Quick Wins	Medium	Low	Time Frame	Relevant Agencies	Completed
3. Focus on attracting innovative employers to LaPaz.	Business recruitment efforts should include attracting the light industry and business to the community. Emphasis should be placed on employers who have higher-paying jobs. If Marshall County Metro-net is established, LaPaz could use it to attract high-tech, research type employers to the community.		X		1-5 Years	CC-MCEDC	
4. Support creative incentives for bringing new employers to LaPaz.	LaPaz should visit tax abatement and other tax based tools available to attract new employers. They also need to work with the Marshall County Plan Commission office in streamlining the permit system and support an on-line permit system.	X			1 Year	TC	

GOAL THREE: Commercial-Mixed Use Development							
Policies	Action Steps	Quick Wins	Medium	Low	Time Frame	Relevant Agencies	Completed
1. Support high-quality commercial development in LaPaz.	LaPaz needs to look at development standards for their commercial areas to ensure the first impression portrays a positive image of LaPaz. LaPaz needs to work with the Marshall County Planning Office to develop such standards.		X		1-5 Years	TC-PC	
2. Enhance Corridor Development.	Encourage, with Marshall County, a mixed use corridor along US 6 east to Linden RD. This corridor will contain a mixture of commercial and residential development.	X			1 Year	TC-PC-CC	

Section III: Housing and Neighborhoods

GOAL ONE: Core Neighborhood Vitality: Upgrade the appeal of LaPaz's Neighborhoods							
Policies	Action Steps	Quick Wins	Medium	Low	Time Frame	Relevant Agencies	Comments
1. Improve community infrastructure such as sidewalks, drainage, water, and landscape (trees).	An important factor to attract citizens to LaPaz is the state of its infrastructure. Sidewalks, availability of water, drainage, and trees have a major impact on the well-being of neighborhoods. LaPaz needs to work on improving such infrastructure to improve its neighborhoods.		X		1-5 Years	TC-UD	
2. Support and develop property maintenance codes.	LaPaz needs to support and develop property maintenance codes to have property owners maintain safe and attractive structures and properties. LaPaz also needs to work with the Marshall County Plan Commission to develop necessary zoning regulations.		X		1-5 Years	TC-PC-UD	
3. Encourage Connectivity and "Walkability".	LaPaz needs to develop and maintain neighborhood sidewalks that are pedestrian friendly and have appropriate lighting. Sidewalks also need to be developed along Michigan Street (US 31) to provide connectivity between the residential section of LaPaz and the commercial properties to the south.	X			1 Year	TC-UD	
4. Encourage Creation of New Quality Neighborhoods.	LaPaz needs to encourage the development of new subdivisions of high quality and standards including water and sewer to attract a new population of citizens to LaPaz and the surrounding area.			X	1-5 Years	PC	

Section IV: Downtown

GOAL ONE: Improve Downtown's role as the activity center for the community							
Policies	Action Steps	Quick Wins	Medium	Low	Time Frame	Relevant Agencies	Funder
1. Continue to support the Downtown's retail, restaurants, and commercial development.	Working with the MCEDC LaPaz needs to work to retain existing downtown commercial and retail businesses. LaPaz needs to work with existing businesses to evaluate existing policies or regulations that would be positive to retain the Downtown.		X		1-5 Years	MCEDC	
2. Provide incentives to encourage new investment in the downtown.	LaPaz may want to look at financial incentives (such as tax abatements) to entice new downtown investment.	X			1 Year	TC	
3. Provide quality sidewalks, drainage, streets and utilities to encourage development.	Business owners will not invest in a distressed area. LaPaz needs to have the proper infrastructure in place to attract downtown investment. With the new alignment of US 31, LaPaz has an opportunity to develop a boulevard type street through the downtown area to attract individuals to stop in LaPaz. A study should be done to plan the appropriate type of the configuration of Michigan Street.		X		1-5 Years	TC-UD	

Section V: Economic Development

GOAL ONE: Expand New Employment Opportunities.

Policies	Action Steps	Quick Wins	Medium	Low	Time Frame	Relevant Agencies	Completed
1. Identify new sites for economic development.	With the new intersection of US 31 and US 6, LaPaz working with the MCEDC, should work to identify potential sites for commercial and industrial development to take advantage of this new transportation opportunity. This would be done in connection with a new commercial corridor along US 6.		X		1-5 Years	MCEDC	
2. Provide appropriate infrastructure for existing and new development.	Proper infrastructure such as sewer and water needs to be up to date to support existing and new development. Emphasis needs to be placed at the new intersection of US 6 and US 31 to support new development.		X		1-5 Years	UD	
3. Support expansion of broadband and fiber optic services.	Broadband connectivity is an important and necessary infrastructure needed to support existing and future economic activity. LaPaz needs to support Marshall County's efforts to bring the Metronet down old US 31 or new US 31. Broadband connectivity at such a level as the Metronet will be an incentive to companies to locate in LaPaz.		X		1-5 Years	TC-CC-MCEDC	

Section VI: Public Service and Infrastructure

GOAL ONE: Pubic Services and Investment

Policies	Action Steps	Quick Wins	Medium	Low	Time Frame	Relevant Agencies	
1. Ensure community's water supply	LaPaz needs to develop a town water system to provide a safe and adequate water supply to its citizens and commercial business. This is also needed to provide water for fire safety. This will also lower the amount of land needed for development in that wells will not be needed on each property.			X	6-10 Years	TC-UD	
2. Plan for well planned annexation and policy	LaPaz needs to complete the annexation of the east side of LaPaz in the area of Thumper TRL and Kimble DR. They also need to develop a plan to annex the area near the US 31 and US 6 new intersection.	X			1 Year	TC	
3. Use the Land Use Plan as a guide for utility investment	The LaPaz Land Use Plan is a guide to the vision of growth for LaPaz. Future utility investments should be based upon the LaPaz Land Use Plan.			X	6-10 Years	PC	
4. Require land to be annexed in order to connect to town utilities	It should be required before the expansion of town services that the land be annexed into LaPaz. This will assure the development to be contiguous to LaPaz. This will add to the town's tax base to help fund town services.	X			1 Year	TC	

Section VII: Transportation

GOAL ONE: Utility: Provide adequate transportation opportunities							
Policies	Action Steps	Quick Wins	Medium	Low	Time Frame	Relevant Agencies	
1. Work with Marshall County and INDOT to create attractive new streetscapes through LaPaz	LaPaz needs to work with Marshall County Commissioners and INDOT to create and develop Michigan RD and Michigan ST. LaPaz and Marshall County need to prepare for the new traffic patterns which will result with the new limited access US 31. They may want to consider a boulevard type street to attract patrons to the downtown.	X			1 Year	TC-INDOT	
2. Require the construction of sidewalks in all new development	Sidewalks are an essential component of all new development, regardless of the land use. Sidewalks provide safety, is an alternative to driving, and makes LaPaz assessable to those citizens without a vehicle. It also enhances the neighborhoods and commercial areas.		X		1-5 Years	TC-UD	
3. Develop an annual program of sidewalk maintenance and installation in areas of need throughout the community	Installing sidewalks with new development will not be enough to provide an adequate system. A program needs to be developed to address gaps and deficiencies in the current sidewalk network.		X		1-5 Years	TC-UD	



LAND USE PLAN

SECTION II: IMPLEMENTATION

7

C H A P T E R



INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan describes the primary methods for implementing the land use related goals of Marshall County. The following pages identify the various land uses that are planned for Marshall County in the future. The descriptions of each land use contain recommendations about the types of uses envisioned in those areas, relationships between different land uses, development densities, as well as the infrastructure that may be required to support the land uses. The land uses that are described in this chapter are intended to apply not only to existing developed areas, but to those areas which may develop in the future. The land uses described here will help to guide and shape such development.

The land use categories and land use maps included in this chapter have been developed based on the following factors: (1) Marshall County's existing and planned infrastructure, (2) existing land use locations and relationships, (3) analysis of soil types and their capacities for different land uses, (4) analysis of various environmental features and factors, (5) public input regarding desired land use patterns, and (6) the vision, goals and policies established in the previous chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

Generally, this future land use plan is intended to directly accomplish the following land use goals:

- **Farmland Preservation:** Provide protection for rural agricultural areas to allow farming activities to continue.
- **Environmental Conservation:** Ensure that Marshall County's environmental systems and features are adequately protected.
- **Development & Growth:** Guide new growth to appropriate areas, focusing on matching development with infrastructure capacities and avoiding environmental hazards.

The Future Land Use Plan Maps for Marshall County and the Town of Lapaz summarize the future land use recommendations of this chapter. The land use descriptions are located on the pages following the maps.





RURAL VILLAGE

The Rural Village category is intended to preserve and maintain the character of Marshall County's unincorporated communities. Specifically, this designation is given to the communities of Teegarden, Tyner, Donaldson, Burr Oak, Hibbard, Rutland, Tippecanoe, Old Tip Town, and Inwood. Historically, these small communities have developed at the intersections of transportation routes, concentrating commercial and residential activities in a focused area. Some once held thriving sawmills or gristmills. These villages are no longer significant centers of railroad or commercial activity, but do remain important historic settlements and can provide housing alternatives to the larger towns in the county.

The Rural Village areas are intended to provide a variety of community-oriented neighborhood commercial services and to allow for mixed residential and commercial activities. Focusing new growth around these rural communities will reduce residential sprawl in the county, maximize public infrastructure expenditures, and protect farms and the environment from residential encroachment. The following policies should guide future land use in Rural Villages:

- The County should support the preservation and enhancement of the remaining rural villages through appropriate zoning as well as incentives to encourage the continued vitality of the villages.
- Investment in utility and infrastructure improvements, particularly sewer service, will be important in sustaining the viability of rural villages.
- Rural Villages should contain small-scale commercial uses at their core, located at prominent road intersections. These should be surrounded by high-density single-family residential neighborhoods. It may also be appropriate to locate institutional uses and limited industrial uses here as well.

LAKE COMMUNITY

Marshall County has numerous lakes that provide recreational and residential opportunities. Areas designated Lake Community contain significant residential development focused around a lake. This includes areas immediately adjacent to the lakes, and potentially other areas with a relationship to the lakes. The following policies should guide future land use in Lake Community areas:

- Lake Communities should be residential in nature and should not contain commercial uses that would draw significant traffic from outside areas of the county. Limited neighborhood-scale commercial uses serving the lake communities are appropriate.
- Septic systems should not be encouraged around lakes in order to protect the quality of the water. Sewer systems should be utilized wherever possible.
- Public access to the lakes for recreational purposes is important and should be preserved as residential growth continues around the lakes.



CORRIDOR COMMERCIAL

In certain locations, it is appropriate to provide for the development of a collection of commercial uses serving both county residents as well as those traveling through the area. These locations are most frequently at the intersections of major transportation corridors, and should contain uses such as gasoline stations, convenience stores, restaurants, hotels and other highway-oriented uses. However, major commercial development should be left to occur within established communities rather than at these locations throughout the county. The following policies should guide future land use in Corridor Commercial areas:

- Corridor Commercial uses should be developed in nodes or centers around major intersections rather than extending in a strip along the roadway.
- Driveway cuts onto major roadways should be minimized in order to maintain safety and traffic flow on these routes.
- In the event that Corridor Commercial development is adjacent to residential uses, there should be heavy screening to reduce any light and noise impacts on the residential areas. Care must also be taken to protect residential and agricultural areas from vandalism and litter.
- Corridor Commercial areas should be served with adequate infrastructure, including road access and utilities, to support the expected uses.
- Additional Corridor Commercial areas may need to be identified in response to future changes to the U.S. 31 corridor.

INDUSTRIAL

Industrial development is important to Marshall County as a means of providing needed jobs to county residents as well as supporting the county tax base. Marshall County has a limited number of areas designated for Industrial development due to factors such as lack of utilities. The majority of the designated Industrial areas currently are occupied by industrial uses and should continue to do so in the future. Examples of these are the grain elevator in Lapaz and the mixed light industrial uses east of Bremen. The following policies should guide future land use in Industrial areas:

- Uses in county industrial areas should be limited to light industrial use such as light manufacturing, warehousing, contractor's offices, and small production facilities.
- Industrial uses will require a complete range of infrastructure in order to remain viable. Convenient access to quality transportation facilities is also important.
- Industrial uses should be heavily buffered from adjacent uses, and in general should be separated substantially from residential uses.

Many areas of Marshall County present significant recreation opportunities for local residents. While most of these areas have not been formally developed as parks, the potential remains for them to be used as such. In general, provision of parks and recreation facilities should take place within the individual communities. There are, however, certain areas that could, with some investment, become recreation destinations in the County. Examples would include Mill Pond and the Marshall County Memorial Forest. Some areas designated as Parks & Open Space are already developed as public or private golf courses. The following policies should guide future land use in Parks & Open Space areas:

- Limited rural residential development may be appropriate adjacent to Parks & Open Space resources to take advantage of their aesthetic and recreational qualities.
- Little physical development is required for land in this category. At a minimum, appropriate access roads and shelter facilities may be added at strategic locations.
- Designation of privately owned areas as Parks & Open Space is not intended to require county acquisition of such land nor to require private land to be opened for public access.

CONSERVATION

Marshall County has numerous areas of heightened environmental sensitivity. These include floodplains along rivers and streams, riparian areas, steep slope areas, wetland areas, and significant woodlands. These areas are designated as Conservation areas to recognize their sensitivity and provide them appropriate protection from development impacts. All of these natural areas provide essential amenities to Marshall County. They serve as wildlife habitats, provide natural filtration of water, recharge underground aquifers, and provide open green space with considerable aesthetic and recreational value to County residents. It is for these reasons that such natural areas should be protected from development. The following policies should guide future land use in Conservation areas:

- No infrastructure should be provided to Conservation areas as they are not intended to experience development of any type.
- Very limited rural residential development may be appropriate adjacent to Conservation areas to take advantage of their aesthetic properties.
- In cases where Conservation designations occur in the context of a larger land use designation, development designs should be sensitive to impacts on the areas to be conserved.
- Environmentally sensitive land should be conserved in large tracts where possible to prevent the fragmentation of wildlife habitats.

See the Residential Density Ratios Profile on Page 7-12 for more information.

See the Residential Density Ratios Profile on Page 7-12 for more information.

AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL

The Agricultural Residential designation provides the opportunity for limited housing development in certain areas of the county. This land use is appropriate in areas where septic systems can function efficiently or in areas where natural features or towns are stimulating development. It is also appropriate in areas where soil conditions or topography limit the viability of agricultural uses. One style of rural residential development that should be encouraged is cluster subdivisions, where smaller lots are grouped together to preserve large areas of natural amenities or farmland. The following policies should guide future land use in Agricultural Residential areas:

- Agricultural residential areas should not require urban utilities and infrastructure. They should be constructed in such a way as to rely on individual well and septic facilities.
- Cluster subdivisions should be utilized to maximize rural land preservation and minimize the investment required for roads and other infrastructure.
- New agricultural residential areas, in addition to those designated by this plan, should be created with careful consideration of growth patterns, natural features, agricultural operations and infrastructure capacities.

AGRICULTURAL

The Agricultural designation denotes land that is meant to remain largely rural, with uses focusing on farming operations. The Agricultural land use category is intended to allow for some residential development. Agricultural land use areas are found in locations that are viable for farming but may also be feeling growth pressures from nearby urban communities. The following policies should guide future land use in Agricultural areas:

- Urban-type services and infrastructure should not be provided to agricultural areas. Farms and other development should be able to be served by individual well and septic systems.
- Agricultural uses appropriate for these areas include traditional farming uses, as well as agricultural product storage and distribution facilities (commercial grain elevators), stables, natural preserves, and other animal or food production related activities.
- Cluster subdivisions should be utilized to maximize rural land preservation and minimize the investment required for roads and other infrastructure.
- Small-scale home-based businesses may also be appropriate provided they have minimal impacts on adjacent residential uses.

Agriculture is a key component of Marshall County's economic base and should continue to be so in the future. The Agricultural Conservation land use category is intended to preserve the rural nature of the county and allow large-scale farm operations to continue. Designating land specifically for agricultural uses will help to slow the turnover of land to nonfarm uses, such as residential subdivisions. It is not desirable, and in many cases, not physically or economically feasible to provide the infrastructure required to support such development. Land in the Agricultural Conservation designation should remain in farm use, although very limited rural residential uses may be allowed as well. The following policies should guide future land use in Agricultural Conservation areas:

- Except for areas adjacent to Plymouth and other urban communities in the county, agricultural land should be afforded protection from intrusions by nonfarm uses.
- Urban-type services and infrastructure should not be provided to Agricultural Conservation areas. Farms and other development should be able to be served by individual well and septic systems.
- Agricultural uses appropriate for these areas include traditional farming uses, as well as agricultural product storage and distribution facilities (commercial grain elevators), stables, natural preserves, and other animal or food production related activities.
- Cluster subdivisions should be utilized to maximize rural land preservation and minimize the investment required for roads and other infrastructure.
- Small-scale home-based businesses may also be appropriate provided they have minimal impacts on adjacent residential uses.

See the Residential Density Ratios Profile on Page 7-12 for more information.

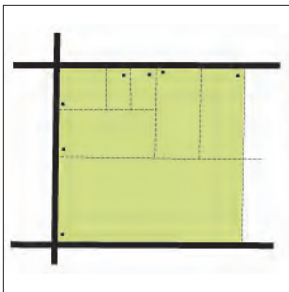
RESIDENTIAL DENSITY RATIOS PROFILE

What are Residential Density Ratios?

Residential Density Ratios provide communities with an alternative means of managing how residential development may occur in a given area. Typically, rural residential development is guided by requirements that home lots be a minimum size, usually a very high acreage in order to limit development. Residential density ratios put residential development in terms of homes per acre while allowing for much smaller lot sizes. This allows for the same number of homes to be built, but in a creative manner that is more effective in protecting rural land.

How Do Residential Density Ratios Work?

The illustrations below provide an overview of how residential density ratios can be used instead of large lot zoning to preserve rural land. The graphics in the left column show a typical piece of land developed with minimum lot sizes, and those in the right column show the same land developed with residential density ratios. Note that with the minimum lot size requirements, the entire section of land is divided into home lots. With the density ratios, large tracts of land still remain and the same number of new home lots are created.



For the examples provided here, a typical section of land (640 acres) has been shown, with existing lot lines and homes as seen above.

Agricultural Residential Areas

As the most dense of the rural land use categories, Rural Residential areas could be developed at a ratio of 1 home per acre of land, as opposed to a minimum lot size of 1

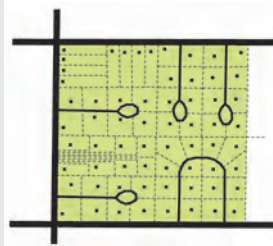
Agricultural Areas

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

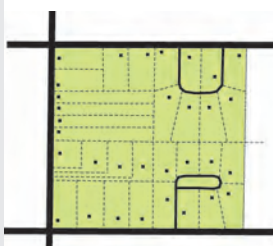
Agricultural Conservation Areas

Conservation land use areas should have very low density residential growth, allowing for the preservation of as much agricultural land as possible.

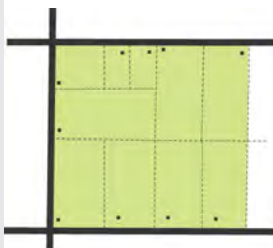
Minimum Lot Sizes



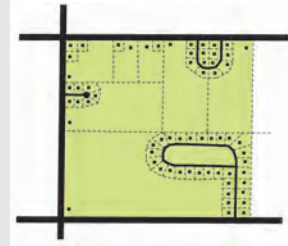
1 acre minimum lot size



5 acre minimum lot size



Density Ratios



One home per acres



One home per 5 acres



TOWN CENTER

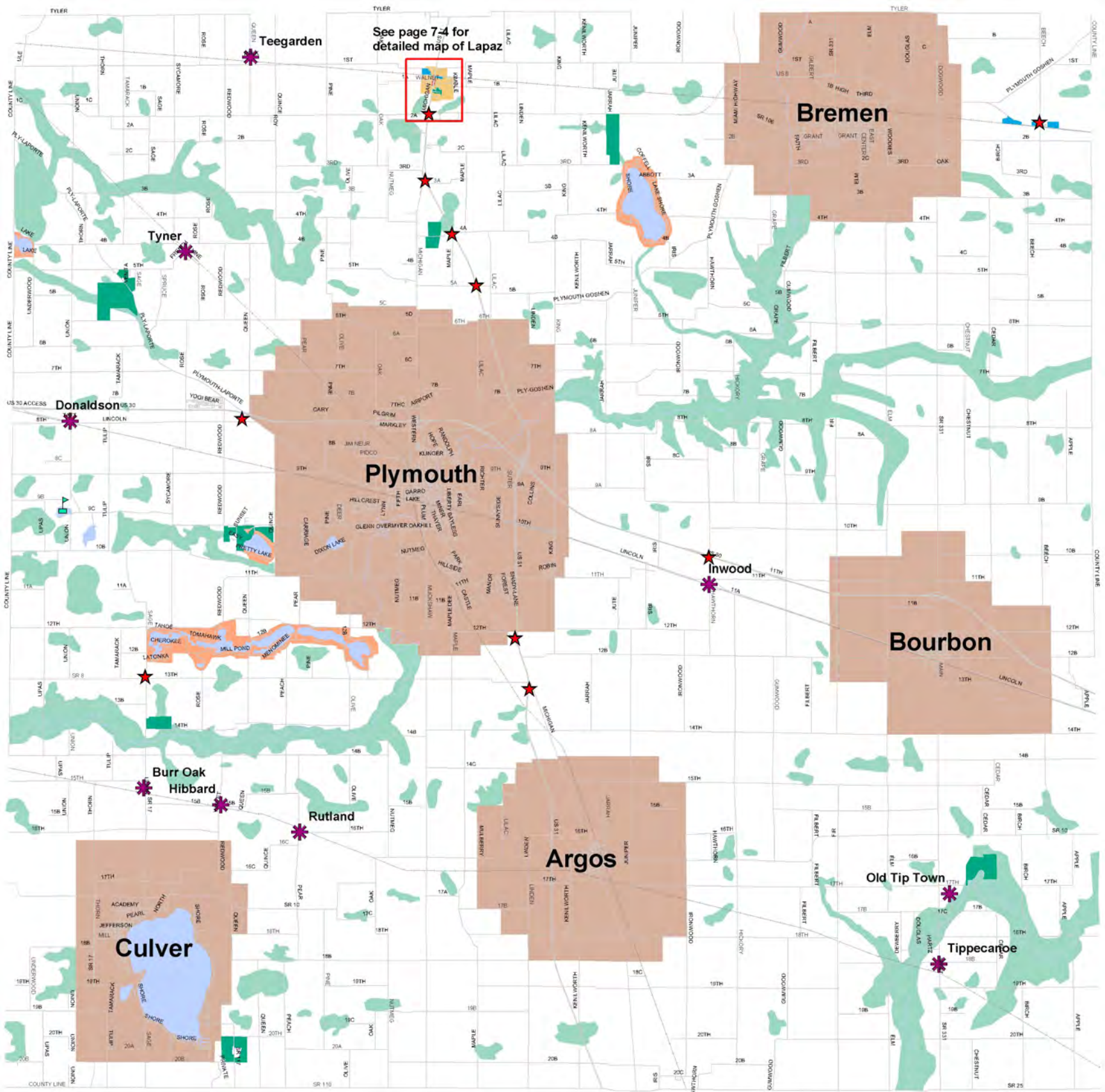
The Town Center category is specifically designed for Lapaz. The Town Center functions as the downtown or central business district of the community. A small collection of retail stores and restaurants exists in the town center today. The intent of this district is to foster the enhancement of the downtown area as a mixed-use focal point for the Lapaz community. Lapaz should seek out unique shops and restaurants to define its town center. The following policies should guide future land use in the Town Center area:

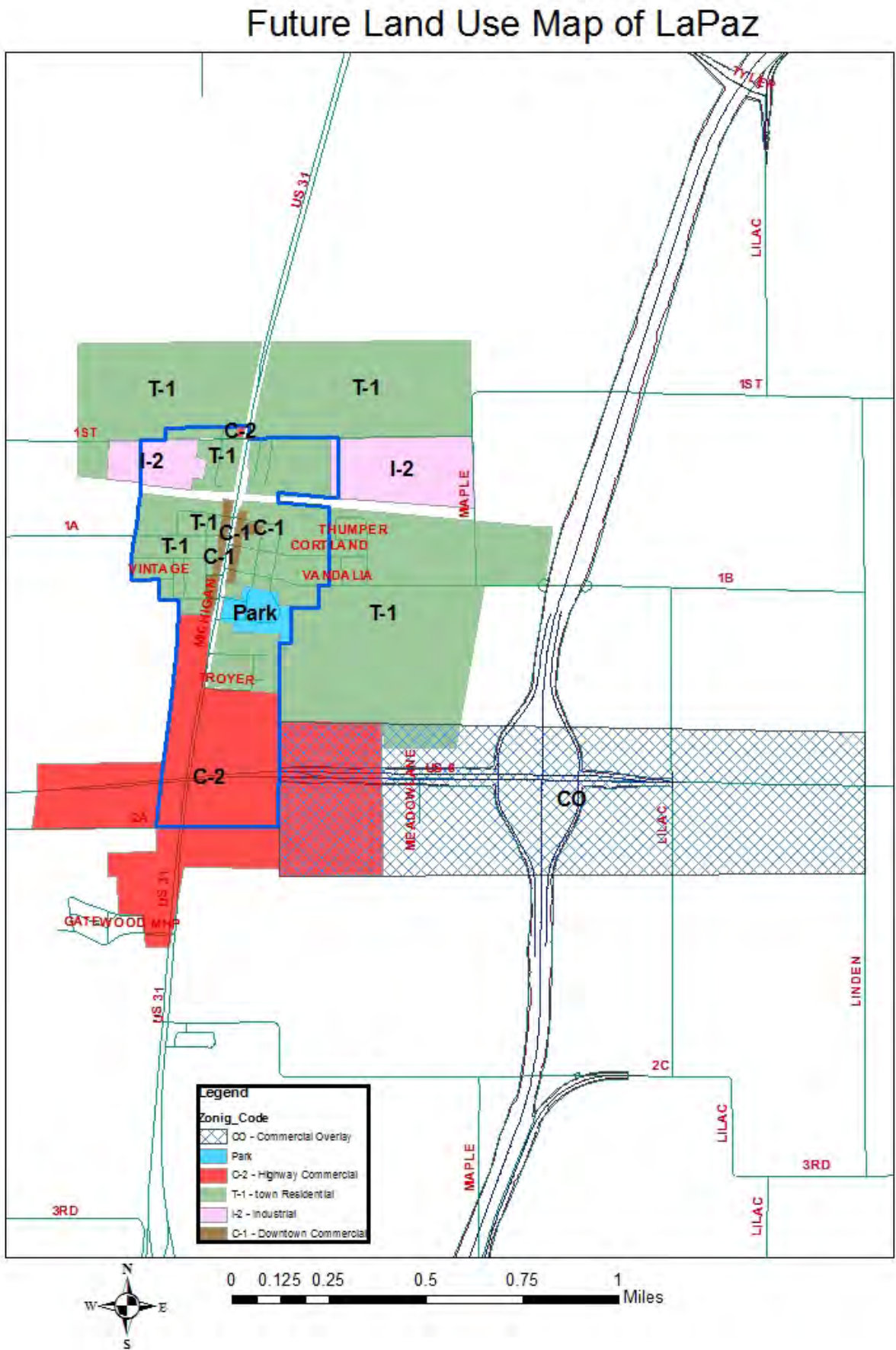
- Development must be pedestrian friendly and maintain strong connections to the established neighborhoods that surround it.
- Opportunities to provide on-street parking adjacent to town center uses should be explored. This will require coordination with the State on issues pertaining to U.S. 31.

TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL

The Traditional Residential designation is designed to apply specifically to Lapaz. Traditional Residential neighborhoods are single-family in nature and are developed at medium to high densities. They are typically developed on a grid street pattern, and in Lapaz they surround the town center along U.S. 31. Homes are set close to the street and a functional alley system serves the rear of many home lots. The Traditional Residential designation also extends to some additional undeveloped land that may experience growth from Lapaz in the future. The following policies should guide future land use in Traditional Residential areas:

- New residential development should continue the grid street pattern established by existing traditional residential neighborhoods.
- Traditional residential areas must have strong pedestrian ties to the Town Center area, primarily through a functional sidewalk network.
- Parks, schools, churches, and other similar uses may be integrated into the primarily single-family residential fabric of traditional residential neighborhoods.







THOROUGHFARE PLAN

SECTION II: IMPLEMENTATION

8

C H A P T E R



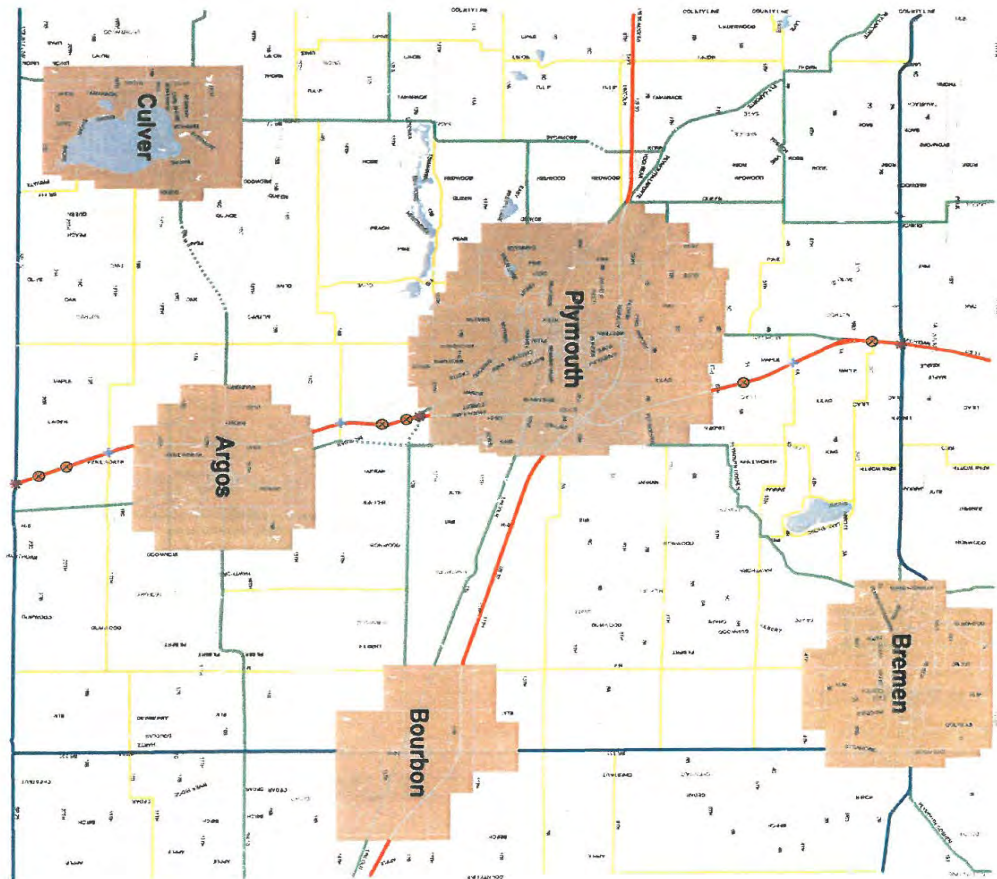
INTRODUCTION

The Thoroughfare Plan describes the planned thoroughfare network for Marshall County. It establishes a hierarchy of road types that will serve to create a safe and efficient roadway network for the rural areas of the county. It takes into account present road conditions as well as those improvements needed to accommodate future growth. The county Thoroughfare Plan is intended to complement that of Plymouth as well as the thoroughfare plans of the other incorporated communities within Marshall County.

Large volumes of traffic cannot be carried on every road in Marshall County with any acceptable degree of efficiency or safety. This arrangement would be physically and financially impossible to sustain. The Plan, therefore, proposes that a system of major thoroughfares be identified that can adequately accommodate future volumes of traffic. The system is based on establishing a special function and certain minimum design standards for each highway and road within the County.

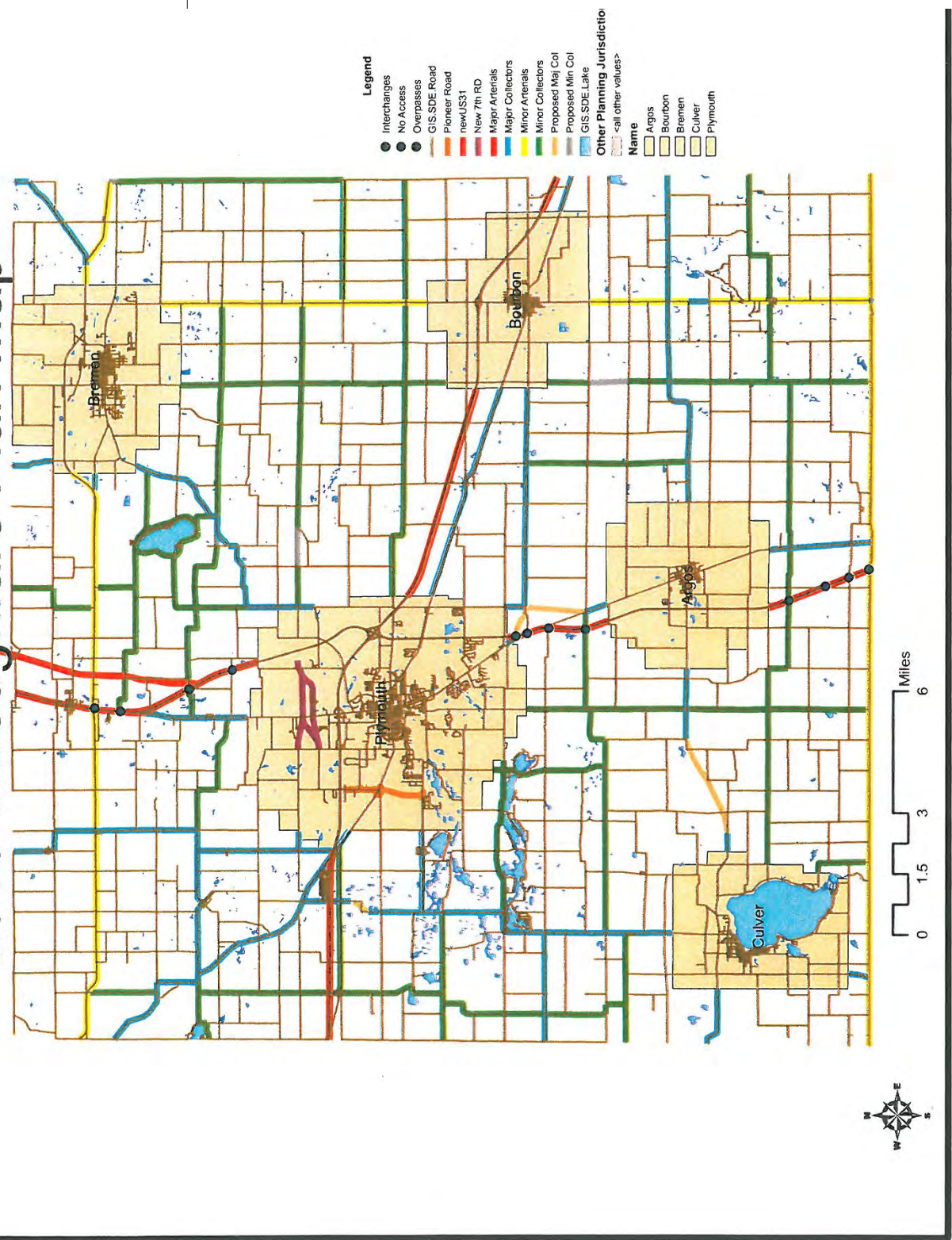
The functions and design standards proposed for Marshall County are explained on the following pages. In some cases it may not be practical or possible to meet these recommended minimum standards. In these cases, every effort should be made to get the best possible alignment, grade, sight distance, and drainage.

THOROUGHFARE PLAN MAP



- Legend**
- Major Arterials
 - Minor Arterials
 - Major Collectors
 - Proposed Major Collector
 - Minor Collectors
 - Proposed Minor Collector
 - Local Roads
 - Interchanges
 - Overpasses
 - No Access
 - Railroads
 - Rivers
 - Lakes
 - Other Planning Jurisdictions

2010 Thoroughfare Plan Map



MAJOR ARTERIAL ROADS

Major arterials are limited-access highways that carry large volumes of interstate traffic and have importance regionally or locally. They often permit a continuous high-speed traffic flow. These highways have a high order of design and construction requirements. They serve nearly all urban areas of 50,000 or more population. U.S. 30 and U.S. 31 are the only Major Arterials in Marshall County and no others are proposed in the future, although both highways may be upgraded to interstate standards at some point.

MINOR ARTERIAL ROADS

The highways proposed as Minor Arterials by the Plan are those Federal and state routes of regional importance. These are high capacity highways moving traffic at fast rates of speed. They provide good continuity between distant points and are constructed to high standards. Arterial Highways provide two to four traffic lanes and should have a median strip wherever possible. Crossing traffic from other roads and access to abutting properties are often controlled. Design standards, such as right-of-way and pavement width and alignment, are lower than for Major Arterials, but higher than for Collector Roads. U.S. 6 across the north part of the County is a Minor Arterial highway.

MAJOR COLLECTOR ROADS

The proposed Major Collector highways have less regional importance than the Arterial highways and more county or inter-county significance. They are recommended to be medium capacity highways moving traffic at relatively fast rates of speed. They include both state designated routes and county roads. Major Collector highways provide two traffic lanes and normally have uncontrolled access. Requirements for right-of-way and pavement width and alignment are lower than for Arterial Highways but higher than for Minor Collector roads.

MINOR COLLECTOR ROADS

Minor Collector highways are similar in significance to the Major Collector roads. However, they are recommended to be lower in capacity and design speed than the Major Collectors. They would serve to collect traffic from Local roads and feed it to the higher capacity collectors and arterials. Like Major Collector roads, Minor Collectors would be two lanes in width and not be subject to any access controls. Right-of-way and pavement width would be somewhat lower than for Major Collectors.

LOCAL ROADS

All county roads not recommended as Arterials or Collectors are designated as Local Roads on the Plan. They are low capacity roads whose function is to provide direct access to homes and property. Through-traffic and heavy use of these roads should be discouraged. Because of light traffic flow, the recommended design and construction standards must be adequate to assure safe, durable and permanent Local Roads. To the extent possible, residence driveways and ingress and egress points should be oriented to the Local Roads rather than to the Arterials or Collectors.



VISIONING DATA

SECTION III: SUPPORTING DATA

9

C H A P T E R



INTRODUCTION

One of the major components of updating the Marshall County Comprehensive Plan was gathering public input. In many ways, this process has been on-going for some time. The Marshall County Plan Commission has sponsored a number of meetings and surveys regarding the comprehensive plan in recent years.

The process began in 1998, when a survey was conducted in conjunction with the Purdue Extension Service. The survey focused on agricultural issues, specifically regarding the impacts of growth on farmland. A second survey was issued by the Plan Commission in 2000. This survey covered land use, quality of life, and county services issues. Also in 2000, a major vision process was undertaken. This process encompassed a series of meetings with a diverse group of county residents that resulted in the creation of a Marshall County vision statement.

In order to reaffirm the results of those efforts and to further develop ideas for the new comprehensive plan, two additional public workshops were conducted. The first workshop was held in Lapaz on October 15, 2002. It focused on county-wide issues as well as issues specific to Lapaz, as Lapaz falls in the County's planning jurisdiction. Approximately 15 people attended this meeting. The second public workshop was held in Plymouth on November 7, 2002. This workshop focused on county-wide issues and attracted approximately 20 participants.

At each workshop, participants were asked to review a set of goals and objectives that were developed by the Marshall County Plan Commission as a result of the original public input process. In addition, participants were divided into groups to participate in activities focusing on Land Use, Transportation, and Environment & Recreation. For the purposes of this document, the results of both workshops have been combined.

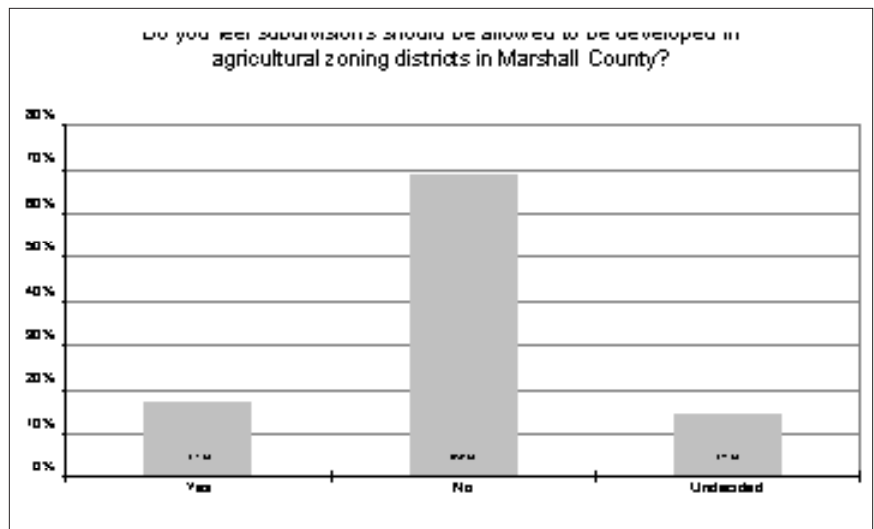
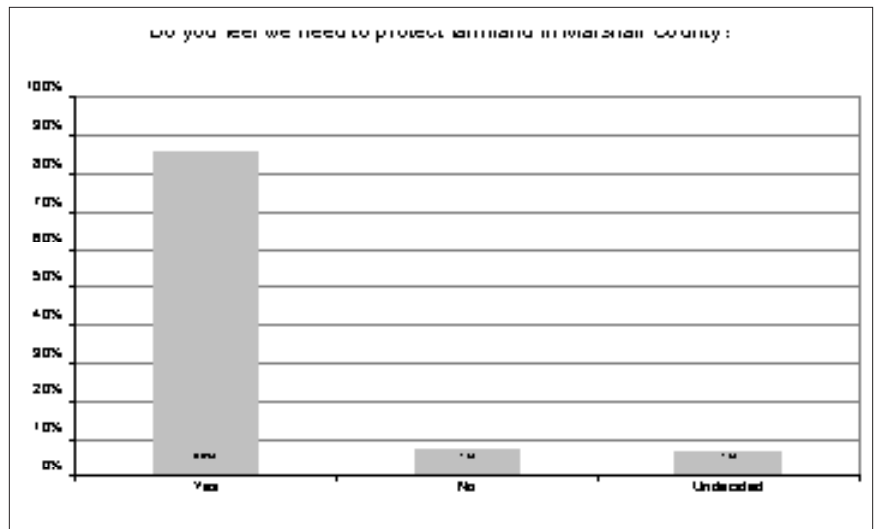
In early 1998, a survey was conducted by the Marshall County Plan Commission in conjunction with the Purdue/Marshall County Extension Service. The survey was mailed to 466 people on the Extension Service mailing list, and was also published in the Plymouth Pilot-News. Of the mailed surveys, 224 were completed and returned, and an additional 30 newspaper surveys were received. The survey consisted of nine multiple choice questions focusing on land use issues in Marshall County. There was also a question at the end of the survey that allowed participants to make any statements they wished about land use in the county.

The first question on the survey concerned residential development in agricultural zoning districts. A majority (76%) felt that there was too much residential development occurring in agricultural areas, while 21% felt that the amount occurring was just right.

The next survey question assessed the need for protection from lawsuits for farmers. Over 80% of respondents felt that farmers with large scale animal operations should have protection. On a similar note, it was agreed that farm practices in general should have some measure of protection against nuisance suits. Over 91% of respondents agreed with that sentiment.

The next portion of the survey dealt with housing and subdivision growth in the County. Participants were asked whether subdivisions should be allowed in agricultural zoning districts, and 69% said no. When asked about the current state of single family residential development along county roads, 64% felt that too much was occurring, while 31% felt that it was just right. Finally, the survey asked if farmland should be protected in Marshall county. Most of the respondents (86%) felt that farmland should be protected.

Well over one hundred individual comments were received as part of the returned surveys. They ranged in size from one sentence to several paragraphs, mainly focusing on the need to further protect farmland from encroachment by urban development. Many people felt that development should be guided by soil suitability so that good farming soils are not developed. There was a general sentiment that housing subdivisions are rapidly consuming the County's rural land.



1998 LAND USE SURVEY (CONTINUED)

Several people were torn between the idea of government helping to protect farmland and their belief that government shouldn't have control over land use. The results of the survey help to define one of the most pressing issues to be addressed during the comprehensive plan development process: the protection of farmland from continued development of residential subdivisions in the rural areas of Marshall County.

A public meeting was in held in March 1998 after the survey results were compiled in order to let Marshall County residents know the outcome. During the meeting, participants held small group discussions and outlined several issues that they felt should be addressed in Marshall County. These issues are:

- reevaluation of the 5 acre minimum lot size to make sure it is the right size to prevent farmland conversion;
- limiting development in the County to areas which are least suited for agricultural production, examining the rate of population growth in Marshall County;
- protecting private property rights; and
- investigating the possibility of increased "freedom to farm" rights.

The participants also agreed that three actions should be taken to address these issues:

- updating the master plan for Marshall County;
- analyzing the 5 acre minimum lot size issue; and
- examining the land use tools available to help achieve the goals for Marshall County.

The Marshall County Planning Department conducted a Comprehensive Plan Survey in 2000 as a part of its on-going effort to develop a new comprehensive plan. There were approximately 45 completed surveys submitted from residents across the county. Survey participants were asked a number of questions aimed at determining their views on the quality of life in Marshall County.

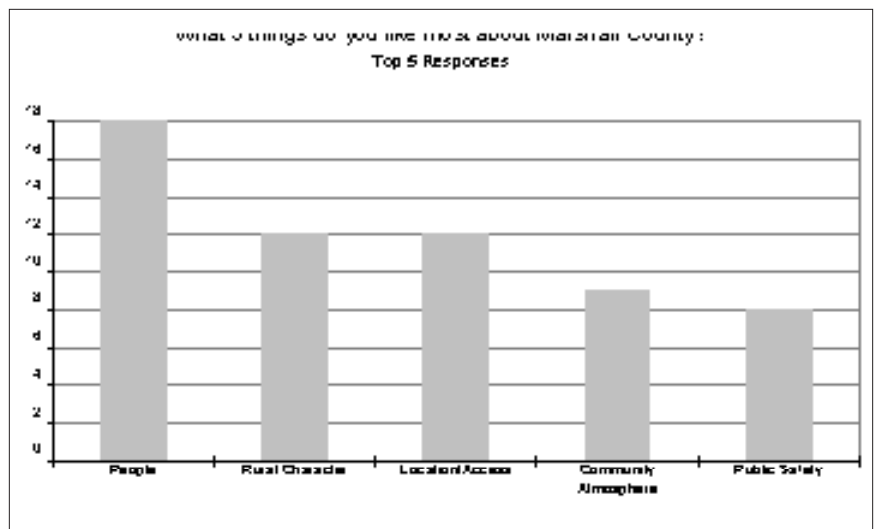
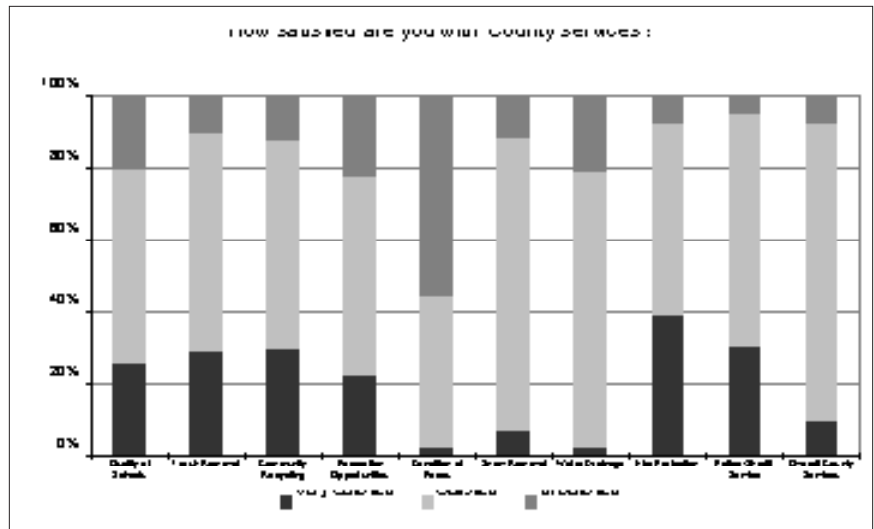
The first portion of the survey was intended to build a basic demographic profile of the respondents. Participants were asked where they lived, how long they'd lived there, whether they owned or rented their home, what their occupation is, and where their job is located.

Participants were also asked their age, and 82% of respondents were above 40 years old, with approximately 40% in the 60 years and over category. Approximately 60% of respondents had lived in Marshall County for more than 30 years, with 42% having lived there for 50 years or more. Over half of the participants came from Center Township, and the only township that did not have at least one respondent was Tippecanoe.

Commuting and shopping patterns were the next items addressed in the survey. Of the respondents, 78% said they worked in Marshall County while 7% travelled out of the county to their workplaces. The survey also asked where people made minor purchases, such as groceries or clothing, as opposed to where they made major purchases, such as vehicles or appliances. An overwhelming majority (96%) responded that they made minor purchases inside Marshall County. For major purchases, 20% went outside the county while 67% stayed local.

Traffic issues were also a major component of the survey. Over 80% of survey participants agreed that there was too much traffic congestion in Marshall County. They were then asked to list specific locations that have serious traffic congestion problems. The three most frequently listed responses were all located in or around Plymouth. These locations were: Michigan Street (generally), the intersection of U.S. 30 and Oak Road, and Downtown Plymouth.

Next, the survey asked for an assessment of County services, such as utilities and fire protection. In general, respondents were largely satisfied with the services listed. The three categories with the most significant responses in the "Unsatisfied" category were Condition of County Roads (53%), Recreation Opportunities (20%), and Water Drainage (20%).



2000 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY (CONTINUED)

Finally, participants were asked to list three things they liked the most about Marshall County, as well as three things they liked least about Marshall County. On the Least Liked list, the top five items were:

- the condition of County roads;
- sprawl;
- poor transportation planning;
- low wages; and
- high taxes.

Traffic congestion, lack of recreation areas, and “good ol’ boy politics” followed closely behind. On the Most Liked list, the top five responses were:

- the people;
- rural character;
- location & accessibility;
- community atmosphere; and
- public safety.

The schools and Centennial Park were also ranked highly.

In February 2000, the Plan Commission formed an ad-hoc, citizen based Comprehensive Plan Committee to work on a new comprehensive plan. Participation on the committee was open to anyone who lived or worked in Marshall County. Fourteen meetings of this group occurred throughout the year 2000. Additionally, twelve community meetings were held throughout Marshall County, with at least one meeting occurring in each township. During these meetings 250 residents participated. The input received at both rounds of meetings was used to develop a county vision and a policy framework for a new comprehensive plan for Marshall County.

One of the activities undertaken by the Comprehensive Plan Committee was to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses and important issues facing Marshall County. Those issues are listed below.

Strengths

- Rural farming base & productive soil
- Access to major highways
- Education (public, private, secondary)
- Parks and recreation opportunities (lakes, parks, golf courses)
- Rail transportation
- Civic leadership
- Industrial diversity
- Countryside (air quality, low population densities, small communities)
- Quality emergency services (police, fire, hospitals)

Weaknesses

- Loss of agricultural land/open space ("5 acre" rule, loss of woodlands, mixture of residential & agricultural uses)
- Water & septic runoff (contamination of lakes)
- Lack of affordable housing
- Low wages
- Lack of government cooperation (County-towns, town-town)
- Lack of hi-tech, vocational job training

Important Issues

- Do we want excessive growth?
- Is there an orderly way to plan growth?
- Population density in rural areas
- Need for cooperation to achieve the common good
- Need to maintain employment base to ensure continued low unemployment
- Roles churches, schools & citizens can play in the community



THE VISIONING PROCESS (CONTINUED)

The Committee was next asked a question to help them focus on their ideas for the future of Marshall County. That question was: If you were to leave Marshall County and five or ten years from now you heard something good about the County, what would it be that you would like to hear? The responses given by committee members are categorized below.

Land Use

- We have retained agricultural and open space
- We have retained property rights
- We have the cleanest county in the state environmentally
- We have produced decent and affordable housing
- The population growth was not among the highest in the state
- The comprehensive plan was a success
- We have the best county park system in the state
- We have prevented pollution and enhance the County's natural resources
- We have enhanced outdoor recreational opportunities

Government

- We have improved the County's educational ranking in the state
- The schools have greatly increased vocational education
- We have received our money's worth out of our schools

Economic Development

- Marshall County has become the high-tech center of the Midwest
- We have increased local opportunities for children and young adults
- We have enabled increased homeownership
- We have increased value-added agricultural industries

Human Development

- Marshall County has the lowest crime rate in the state
- We have increased opportunities for lifelong learning
- We have addressed negative social issues
- Marshall County has become the first drug-free county in the state
- Marshall County has become a culturally attractive place to live

The next step in the process was to analyze the information generated and establish a cohesive Vision Statement for the County. This would provide the County with a single underlying theme upon which to build the various policies that would be required to achieve the Vision.

The first public workshop (in October 2002) took place in Lapaz and devoted the first portion of the meeting to a discussion of issues specific to Lapaz. The attendees were split into two groups and led through an activity designed to gather input on community concerns. The first portion of the discussion covered assets that Lapaz possesses, while the second portion focused on needs of the Lapaz community.

Assets

The participants at the meeting were asked to list the assets of Lapaz. This could be anything that they felt was important or significant to the Lapaz community. Among the responses by the groups were:

- Fire, Police, & Ambulance Services
- Access to Main Thoroughfares (Major Highways)
- Good People/Close-knit Community
- City Park & the Parks Board
- Churches & Schools

Needs

The other portion of this exercise asked participants to generate a list of important needs in Lapaz. Once this list was created, participants were allowed to cast three votes for what they felt were the most important needs that should be addressed in the comprehensive plan. The top five needs based on number of votes were:

- A plan to deal with INDOT's planned changes to U.S. 31
- A town water system
- Improvements to and expansion of the existing sewer system
- An economic development group that could focus on helping Lapaz
- A more active pursuit of funding for projects by the town government

Some additional needs that were listed but did not receive as many votes were improved safety on U.S. 31, a "sit-down" family restaurant, better town representation on the County Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals, and encouragement of home ownership.

VISION STATEMENTS & GOALS

Participants in both of the workshops were asked to review the vision statements and goals developed as a result of the process previously undertaken by the Marshall County Plan Commission. Six broad vision statements for Marshall County came out of the initial process. Under each vision statement, a series of goal statements was proposed. A survey containing these vision and goal statements was provided to the workshop participants. They were asked to determine if they agreed or disagreed with each of the goals, and to provide any additional comments they might have regarding these goals. The results of the survey are summarized below, and are categorized by vision statement.

Vision Statement 1

Marshall County will plan growth in order to protect the County's rural nature, which is comprised of a healthy agricultural base, open spaces, forest lands, and wetlands.

The first vision statement has 6 goals associated with it. Those goals are listed below along with the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each goal:

- Marshall County should minimize the loss of forest land and farm land to other, unrelated uses (such as homes & businesses). (76%)
- Marshall County should prevent nonfarm development (such as residential subdivisions or shopping centers) from spreading across agricultural/open space land at random. (73%)
- Marshall County should preserve the "sense of place" of the area's small towns. (91%)
- Marshall County should encourage agricultural businesses and facilities to be environmentally safe. (94%)
- Marshall County should concentrate redevelopment efforts toward existing neighborhoods and commercial areas. (82%)
- Marshall County should develop county-wide recreational opportunities and facilities. (76%)

Many additional comments were made about this section. It was suggested that parks and recreation should be handled on the local level (within cities and towns) rather than by the County, and that County efforts should focus on preserving natural areas. Growth was also a concern, with many people stating that new growth should stay away from the lakes and rivers, and would be best served by connection to existing city and town services. This meshes with other suggestions regarding preserving farm land and protecting water quality in the County.

Vision Statement 2

County and town services will be second to none through cooperation and coordination of Marshall County and town resources.

This vision statement has 3 goals associated with it. Those goals are listed below along with the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each goal:

- The area towns and Marshall County should work together to coordinate plans and regulations. (91%)
- Marshall County should ensure that the area's transportation needs will be met in the future by prioritizing transportation improvements. (82%)
- Marshall County should focus on plans for the long term needs of the County. (91%)

Many who agreed with this concept cautioned that the County must use common sense

and be careful not to overregulate in the process. Some people also raised concerns about the quality of County roads and suggested that the damage done by very large and heavy farm equipment on the roads must be repaired. Also related to roads, people noted a need to designate and improve important arterial road connections between communities in the County.

Vision Statement 3

Marshall County's school systems, area colleges, and universities will develop to the utmost the technical and vocational skill of County graduates.

Vision Statement 3 has only 1 goal currently associated with it. That goal is listed below along with the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with it:

- Marshall County should amend land use controls that unduly restrain the development of educational facilities and opportunities. (61%)

This goal showed a much lower agreement rate than others because many people weren't sure what the statement meant, or did not think that County land use regulations in their current state were placing an undue burden on educational institutions. As for the schools themselves, people did believe that there should be further development of educational opportunities in Marshall County, and that some form of public-private partnership to that end would be beneficial.

Vision Statement 4

Marshall County will protect the citizens and natural resources of the County from misuse and contamination.

Vision Statement 4 also has only 1 goal associated with it. That goal is listed below along with the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with it:

- Marshall County should identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and wooded areas. (85%)

Most participants agreed with the idea of protecting environmentally sensitive land in Marshall County, and there was a diversity of input on what that meant. Again, common sense was urged in the development of any regulations to protect the environment. While some felt that zoning laws needed to have more "teeth" to make enforcement better, others were wary of regulation becoming an undue burden. It was suggested that development near any of the lakes should be required to have sewer systems to prevent pollution in the lakes. Again, it was stated that development should only occur around existing communities with sewer and water systems.

Vision Statement 5

Marshall County will have the most skilled and educated workforce in the State that will

VISION STATEMENTS & GOALS (CONTINUED)

promote employment opportunities and a high quality of life within Marshall County.

This vision statement does not have any goals associated with it. Participants were asked to comment on the vision statement as well as suggest any ideas for goals that they felt were appropriate for the County. There was a definite preference in the input for attracting high-tech jobs rather than manufacturing jobs to Marshall County. People suggested that Marshall County should further develop its workforce through better education in order to attract those high-skill, high-wage jobs. One important element that was suggested for future economic development strategies was to make sure that new businesses paid living wages so people could afford proper housing and other essentials.

Vision Statement 6

Marshall County will continue to develop a strong industrial economic base in its cities and towns.

Vision Statement 6 has 2 goals associated with it. Those goals are listed below along with the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each goal:

- Marshall County should ensure that the community has sufficient land prepared for industrial expansion. (85%)
- Marshall County should continue to encourage “home workshop” businesses that do not impose negative impacts on the surrounding area. (76%)

More people agreed with the first goal statement than with the second. People were in support of providing ample land to attract new employers, but did have a couple of concerns. First, they wanted to make sure the County did a proper study of existing industrial land so that an accurate projection of future needs can be made. Also, some participants were concerned about what “prepared for industrial expansion” really means. It could refer simply to providing industrial zoning, or it could mean the County should install streets, sewers, and other infrastructure as an incentive. People wanted to make sure the County considered the costs associated with this option and were clear about what was being proposed. Home workshops were seen as an acceptable concept, but there were concerns about the County’s ability to effectively track such businesses and enforce violations of the zoning code regarding home workshops.

The land use subject included issues regarding residential, commercial, and industrial growth, as well as the natural environment. Participants in the land use group completed a survey covering these four topic areas and discussed their choices. This land use input summary is also broken down into these four categories.

Residential Growth

Participants were first asked which types of residential development were most important to the future of Marshall County. Seven options were provided, but three stood out when the survey results were compiled. These 3 housing types were:

- Traditional Neighborhoods (development pattern typical of older city neighborhoods)
- Cluster Housing (small groups of homes on medium sized lots clustered to preserve open space)
- Rural Homes (individual homes located on large lots)

Also receiving several votes were apartment complexes and the more typical suburban style subdivisions. Participants supported cluster housing because they felt it would be more efficient and would prevent the loss of agricultural land. Several ideas were written in as well, including senior citizens housing facilities and the suggestion that housing not be developed in a way that interferes with agricultural areas. Also, there was mention of the need for affordable housing options, as well as a balanced mix of all of the housing options discussed on the survey.

The other question under the residential section asked for locations where new residential growth should occur in Marshall County. The majority of votes went to the following two categories:

- In existing Cities and Towns
- Adjacent to existing Cities and Towns

The options of building homes around natural resources (such as lakes) or scattered throughout the county received only a handful of votes between them. Additional comment on residential growth suggested that any housing around lakes should properly manage public access to the lakes and that development adjacent to cities and towns should be annexed. Participants felt that access to the lakes needs to be managed so that the public can still take advantage of the resources that they provide. Also important to people was ensuring that housing around lakes be connected to sewer and water to avoid contaminating the lakes.

Commercial Growth

The next category on the survey dealt with future commercial growth. Participants were again asked to choose which types of commercial development were most important to the County. The top 3 choices from the list were:

- Professional Offices
- Entertainment Commercial (restaurants)
- Large Retail (Target, Wal-Mart, Best Buy)

LAND USE ISSUES (CONTINUED)

Some participants suggested that the County should simply allow as much commercial growth as the population could support, while others felt that there was already enough commercial and no additional development was needed. One person felt that restaurants will have a hard time starting up because of the current structure of taxes and utility fees. It was also mentioned that the community has to be prepared for how technology will affect professional offices, with one of the potential results being more people working at home.

Participants were next asked to decide the best locations for future commercial development. The top three choices were:

- In existing Cities and Towns
- Adjacent to existing Cities and Towns
- Along major highways (such as US 31)

Much like with residential development, workshop participants felt that commercial development should focus on existing communities within the county. No participants selected the options of developing commercial areas around the interchange of US 30 and US 31 or allowing commercial development to be scattered throughout the county. There was some disagreement about locating commercial growth along highways, as concerns about access management and architecture were voiced.

Industrial Growth

The final type of development to be discussed was future industrial growth. Participants selected the types of industrial development that are most important to Marshall County's future. The top choices from the list were:

- High-Tech Industries
- Small Manufacturers
- Research and Development Facilities

Other types of industrial development that received some votes on the survey included warehouse & distribution centers, agricultural industries, and heavy industry (production facilities). One participant suggested that whatever type of industries come to Marshall County in the future, they must provide higher paying jobs than exist in the county now. Some thought that with the end of the State Inventory Tax, Plymouth and Marshall County could be in a good position to attract new businesses and industries. There was also support for the development of the county's workforce through educational programs. This was thought to be a way to increase the county's attractiveness to employers.

The second part of the industrial section was the choice of the best locations for new industrial development. The top choices were:

- Adjacent to existing Cities and Towns
- In existing Cities and Towns

In general, most participants indicated that new development of all types should be focused in and around existing cities and towns. There was also a strong emphasis on keeping development out of agricultural land. Many felt that the west side of Plymouth would be a logical place to continue developing the industrial base of the county, as much is already located there. They also felt that Marshall County should take advantage of the transportation routes it has to attract and appropriately locate new employers.

Natural Environment

The final section of the survey dealt with natural areas that should be conserved and

protected from development. The following three types of environmental features received the most votes on the survey:

- Lakes
- Rivers and streams
- Wetlands

Also receiving votes were forested areas and floodplains. Participants were generally supportive of protecting environmentally sensitive areas in Marshall County. When asked to list specific areas in the county that should be protected, the following were among the suggestions:

- Yellow River
- Lake of the Woods
- Menominee Wetlands

Another location that received support for protection was the Tippecanoe River and its watershed. In general, there was support for measures to protect all watersheds in Marshall County, possibly through the development of watershed management plans. Protecting these natural elements was also thought to be important to preserving the rural character of Marshall County.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Another of the workshop activities focused on transportation. The survey given to the transportation groups concentrated on types of transportation that were important, as well as connections between different parts of the county that were crucial to residents. Also discussed were elements of transportation infrastructure in Marshall County that were in need of improvement in the future in order to serve the county adequately.

Means of Transportation

The first question on the transportation survey asked participants to choose which means of transportation were most important to the future of Marshall County. The following 3 means of transportation received the most votes:

- County Roads (such as 12th Road or Elm Road)
- State Highways (such as State Road 10 or State Road 17)
- Routes for truck traffic

Participants felt that the county road system was crucial for people to travel within Marshall County, and that the state highway system was important because it connected the county to many important communities in the state. They also felt that truck routes were key to supporting the continued development of industrial areas in Marshall County. There was some discussion of public transit options. The existing system for seniors (Rock City Rider) was seen as an effective service. However, most participants felt that there wasn't a possibility of a true public transit system being successful on a county-wide level. The railroads were not seen as a crucial component of the system beyond their usage as freight lines for industries in the area.

As a follow up, participants were then given the same list of transportation modes and asked which were most in need of improvement. The following were the top three choices from the group:

- County Roads (i.e. 12th Road, Elm Road)
- Routes for truck traffic
- State Highways (i.e. State Road 10, State Road 17)

Participants felt that many county roads should be rehabilitated and in some cases paved where they are currently gravel. Many people felt that existing county roads were not wide enough to accommodate large farm equipment and other traffic at the same time. Safe and efficient routes for truck traffic were seen as limited, even though they were an acknowledged priority. The participants included the U.S. highways in their consideration of the state highways category, and suggested that some form of safety improvements would be important for US 30 and US 31. Bike routes were discussed, and participants felt that they should primarily be for recreation and would probably not serve a role as an alternative to driving. The airport was also brought up as it relates to economic development in Marshall County, and people felt that a long term solution for the location of the airport needed to be determined.

Transportation Connections

The second portion of the transportation survey asked participants to select the most important transportation connections for Marshall County. The most important types of connections as voted by participants were:

- Between rural area homes and places of employment
- Between rural area homes and shopping (grocery store, etc.)
- Between rural areas and Plymouth
- Between Marshall County and South Bend

Participants recognized the need for safe and easy ways for residents to get to their jobs and to places to shop. They also felt that Plymouth was an important destination and that people should be able to get there efficiently. Many people travel to and from South Bend for work and shopping, and participants felt that this connection was crucial. Participants felt that Marshall County was better connected by roadways than most counties around it, considering the network of county roads, state roads, and U.S. highways. It was also mentioned that a very high percentage of the rural roads in Marshall County were paved, which was considered positive.

Much like the first section of the survey, participants were given the opportunity to identify which of these types of connections were most in need of improvement. There were three categories that received a majority of the votes. These categories were:

- Between rural area homes and places of employment
- Between rural area homes and shopping (grocery store, etc.)
- Between rural areas and Plymouth

Again, the list of needed improvements matches the list of highest priorities. Participants believed that the major highways like US 31 were in good condition. The county road system was in most need of improvement in order to provide good service for the high priority trips that they had identified. One improvement that was noted by several participants was the need for safe crossings and interchanges with the major highways running through Marshall County. It was also felt that some rural roads would benefit from widening or realignment of existing curves for safety purposes. One specific connection that participants felt was needed was a better route for people to drive north from Culver to get to places like South Bend.

Future Road Improvements

Participants in the transportation group were given a chance to identify potential future road projects on a map of Marshall County. One of the biggest identified projects is improvement to US 6 through the northern portion of the county in order to accommodate increasing truck traffic. There were also several north-south routes identified for potential improvement. The proposed new State Road 17 connection on the west side of Plymouth was identified, although multiple potential alignments were depicted by participants. Finally, a more direct route from Plymouth to Bremen in the northeastern part of Marshall County was identified.

ENVIRONMENT & RECREATION ISSUES

The final area of discussion at the workshops was the environment and recreation in Marshall County. The county has a diverse array of natural features and recreational opportunities that must be considered as growth continues. The following is a summary of the input received from the group that discussed the environment and recreation.

Recreation

The first element of the survey asked participants to identify which types of recreation were most important to the future of Marshall County. Of the choices provided, the top three selections were:

- Fishing
- Hiking
- Hunting

Also receiving votes were bicycling and golf. There was some discussion of what the county's role and responsibilities should be in the parks and recreation arena. Three main roles were identified. First, they felt the county should act as an information center to let people know about all the parks and recreation opportunities that exist. Second, it was suggested that the County develop trail connections between recreation areas and natural areas. Finally, people felt that the county should be aggressive in seeking grant funding for the development of new parks and recreation facilities, perhaps by hiring or contracting with a professional grant writer.

The second question under the recreation category asked participants to indicate which of the types of recreation facilities are most in need of improvement in the future. The top choices in this category were:

- Bicycling
- Hiking
- Fishing

Residents noted that although bike routes are designated through the county, the roads could be improved. Also, a regional bike trail system was recommended, ideally incorporating abandoned rail beds as a component. The same type of system would also provide improved options for people who wished to hike. People were also concerned that water quality in the lakes be properly managed so that people can fish them safely. The final recreation question asked participants to list what they felt were the most important recreation areas in Marshall County. Some of the places noted were:

- The many golf courses in the county
- The various lakes - notably Maxinkuckee and Lake of the Woods
- The parks in Plymouth - especially Centennial Park
- The Tippecanoe River area

All of these areas were considered crucial to drawing tourists and new residents to the area. One person also mentioned the Amish communities, such as those around Nappanee, as a nearby recreation opportunity that county residents take advantage of.

Environment

The second portion of the survey dealt with the natural environment throughout Marshall County. Participants were asked to consider natural features in much the same context as they had the recreation elements. When asked which types of land and environmental features were most important for the future of Marshall County, the top answers were:

- Lakes
- Wetlands
- Rivers and streams

Water features were brought up frequently in the environment discussion. People felt that such elements were key to the quality of life that Marshall County residents enjoy. When asked which environmental features were the most in need of protection, the same 3 elements were listed as the top 3 choices.

[illegible]

The 1974 Comprehensive Plan for Marshall County provided a variety of recommendations in the areas of Land Use & Development, Transportation, Community Facilities, Parks and Open Space, Utilities, and Implementation.

In the Land Use & Development section, a strong emphasis was placed on preserving farm land and keeping urban development from spreading into rural areas. The plan recommended that the provision of sewer services be used as a tool to guide such growth to desired areas. At the same time, the plan encouraged protection of environmentally sensitive lands as well as flexibility and creativity in design. The Plan also urged caution in rezoning land to commercial, recommending careful consideration of the impacts of such action.

Transportation was a major factor in the 1974 Comprehensive Plan. Specific recommendations such as a U.S. 6 bypass around Bremen were provided. More general policy recommendations were also outlined. These included such elements as ensuring that a high quality county road be available within a mile or two of each residence, controlling commercial development around major interchanges, and keeping heavy truck traffic away from local roads.

Community Facilities, such as fire stations, were also addressed. Fire station recommendations focused on providing high-quality coverage to as much of the County as possible. This included recommendations for the establishment of volunteer departments in several townships. The other main component of the community facilities section was library services. The Plan recommended expanding these services to reach the entire county.

TRANSPORTATION	Remove Old U.S. 31 and U.S. 36 Collector rather than demolish route-494.
	Utilize U.S. 6 as corridor to control development around interchanges along the new U.S. 31 and U.S. 36 corridors.
	Construct a U.S. 6 bypass around the north side of Bremen.
	On the interchange area of U.S. 36 and U.S. 31, develop the preservation of the traffic carrying capacity of the highway and the safety of movement in the interchange area will be of primary concern to county officials.
	There should be a high quality county road (Major or Minor Collector) within a mile or so of each residence or other traffic generator in the county.
	The Minor Collector Road system should have a much higher priority for upgrading and improvement than the remainder of the county road network.
	County and town officials should establish and maintain a prioritized program for the upgrading and improvement of the county road network in the Major and Minor Collector systems.
	Local Roads should have the lowest order and most economical level of improvement of all the high-way and roads within the county.
	Through-traffic and heavy vehicles should be discouraged from using the Local Roads and encouraged to use the Collector and Collectors.
	A satisfactory level of road condition and a minimal level of minor improvement should be provided by developers in all new subdivisions as they occur.
COMMUNITY FACILITIES	The Thoroughfare Plan should provide a unified policy of designating those High-way and road improvements in Marshall County which can be approved to State and Federal High-way agencies.
	State Route 17 and north of West 12th Road is suggested. This route would provide protection to numerous businesses.
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COMMUNITY FACILITIES	To-morrow, 6 a.m. here would also implement the protection from Plymouth in the vicinity of the U.S. 36 and U.S. 31 interchange.
	The Indiana Racing Bureau has recommended a future site in the beautiful part of the north-west side of Plymouth.
	To establish a library in LaPorte to serve both To-morrow and Park To-morrow.
COMMUNITY FACILITIES	County, city and town officials should study the proposal of establishing a county-wide system of public libraries. It is based largely on the principle that it costs less per person to serve many people than it does to serve a few.

1974 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW	<p>The next section of the Plan dealt with Parks and Recreation facilities. Many recommendations were made pertaining to the establishment of a variety of new parks throughout Marshall County. Neighborhood and Block parks were encouraged as components of new residential development. The County was encouraged to secure new park land during the subdivision process. Also, the Plan supported the protection of wetlands and land with other sensitive environmental features through acquisition.</p>
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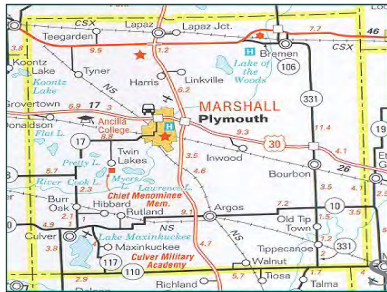
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Following Parks & Recreation in the 1974 Plan is a Utilities component. Fairly specific recommendations for the growth of the County's utilities systems were provided. Most of the policies included a time frame within which they should be accomplished. For example, one of the policies recommended that looped water lines be provided to serve existing and new development in Bourbon in the following five to ten years. Most of the communities in Marshall County were addressed in a similar fashion in the Utilities section.

Implementation was the final element of the 1974 Comprehensive Plan. A wide variety of strategies were laid out in an effort to ensure that the policies enumerated in the plan were put in to action over the ensuing twenty years. It covered such standard actions as adopting a Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Control ordinance to guide new development as recommended in the Plan. A major component of the implementation process was coordination with local and regional units of government to make sure that plans were carried out to the mutual benefit of all communities.

Also included in this section were more specific strategies for Marshall County. These included promoting areas such as the U.S. 30/31 interchange area for intense commercial development, as well as creating a comprehensive property inventory for use as an economic development tool. Finally, the strategy covered environmental issues, ensuring that Marshall County's soil and water were protected from the impacts of development.

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PHYSICAL DATA

C H A P T E R

SECTION III: SUPPORTING DATA



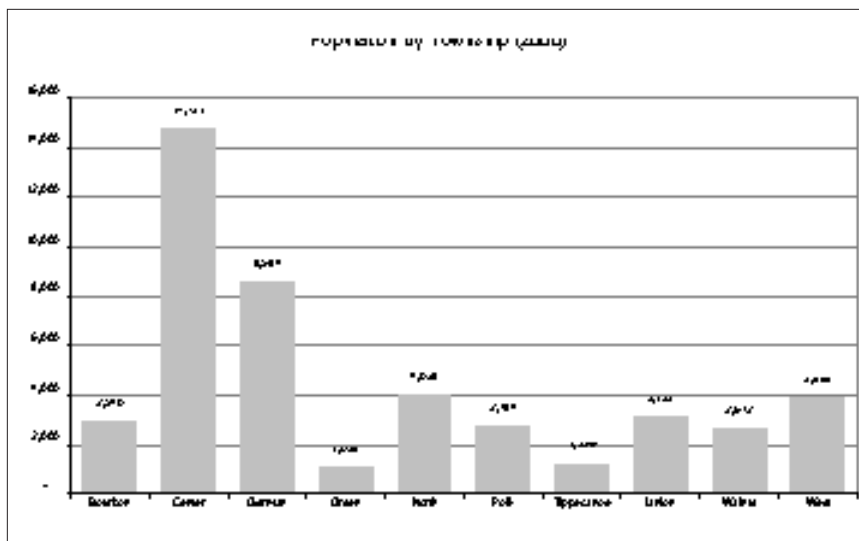
INTRODUCTION

As previously discussed in the plan, a significant amount of demographic analysis was required as a component of crafting a new comprehensive plan. A summary of that analysis was provided in Chapter 1, Community Profile. More in-depth discussion of that demographic information is provided in the first portion of this chapter.

Further, much of the analysis done for the comprehensive plan was done through a series of mapping exercises. The results of these exercises are a collection of maps that have helped in the plan development process. These maps are displayed in the second section of this chapter.

As of the 2000 Census, the population of Marshall County was 45,128. The largest portion of the population was in Center Township, where Plymouth is located. There were also significant concentrations of population in German, West, and North Townships.

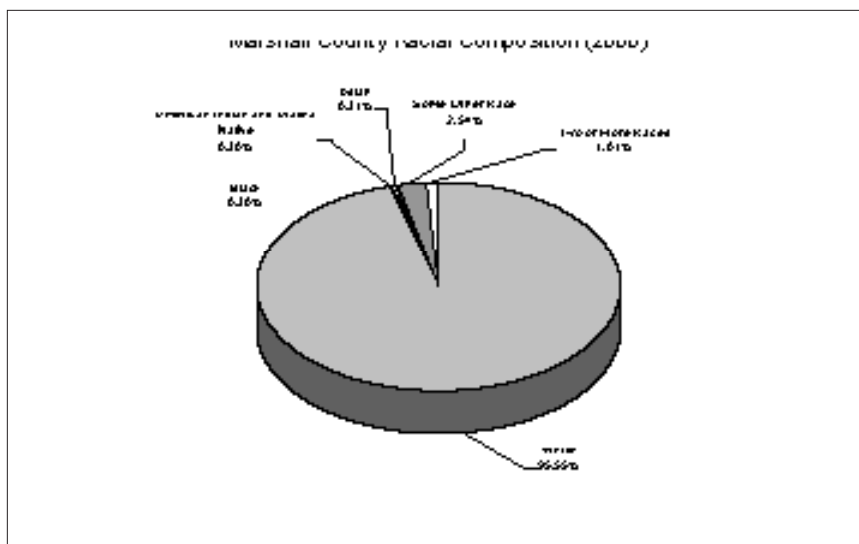
Between 1990 and 2000 the population of Marshall County increased by 2,946 persons, or 7.0%. In the same time period, the population of Center Township increased from 12,501 persons to 14,721, a 17.8% change. In comparison, the Plymouth population increased by 18.5%, and the population of the State of Indiana increased by 9.7% between 1990 and 2000.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

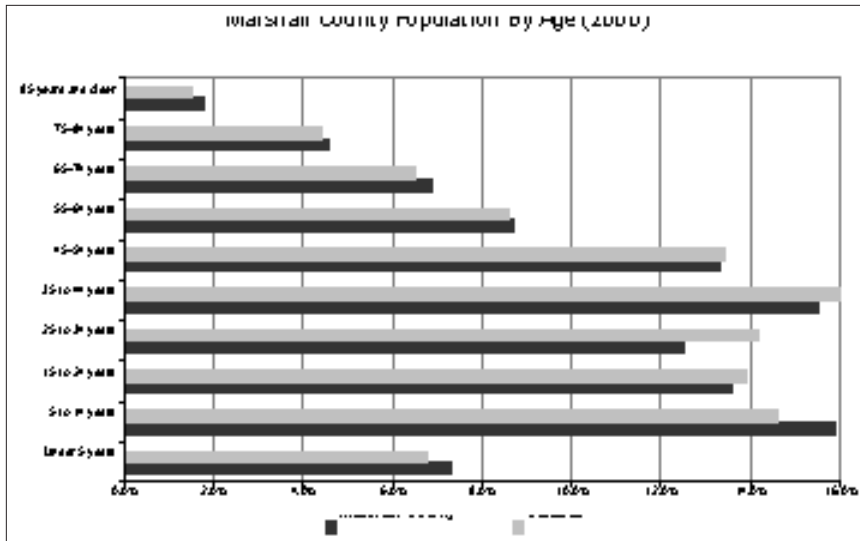
POPULATION - GENDER & RACIAL COMPOSITION

In 2000, the population of Marshall County was 49.7% male (22,415 persons) and 50.3% female (22,713 persons). In comparison, the 2000 population of Indiana was 49% male and 51% female. The 2000 population of Marshall County was less racially diverse than the State of Indiana, with the County being 95.5% White. In the same year, the population of Indiana was 87.5% White. The 2000 Marshall County population was 0.3% Black and 5.9% Hispanic. For the same year, 8.4% of the Indiana population was Black and 3.5% was Hispanic.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

POPULATION - AGE GROUPS

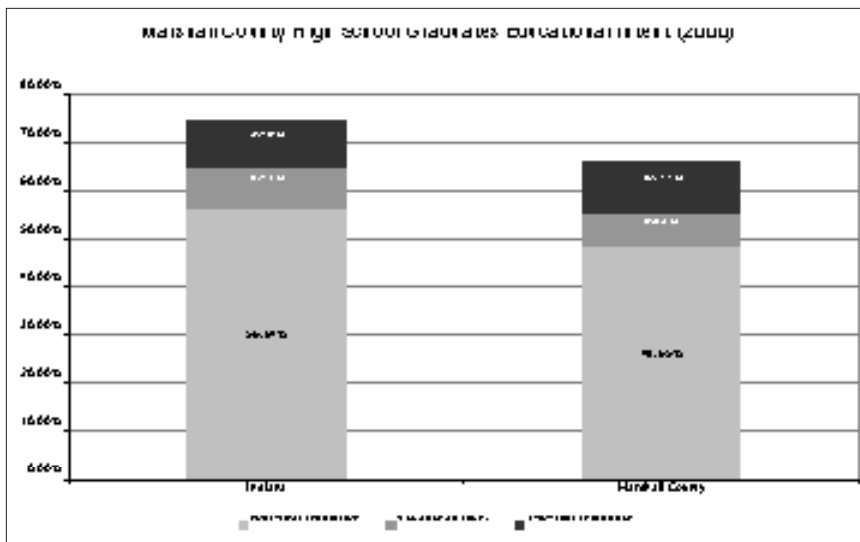


In comparison to Indiana, the 2000 Marshall County population had higher percentages of persons in the age groups representing persons 55 years of age and above. Senior citizens had a significant presence in Marshall County as of 2000, implying that a large portion of the local population is not active in the labor force and may represent both a unique asset and a need for special services in the community.

On the opposite end of the age scale, Marshall County showed higher than State average proportions of the population in the brackets represents 14 years of age and younger. This also represents a unique set of needs that will have to be addressed.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

POPULATION - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



In 2000, a total of 79.8% of Marshall County residents aged 25 and older had earned high school diplomas, compared with 82.1% of State residents.

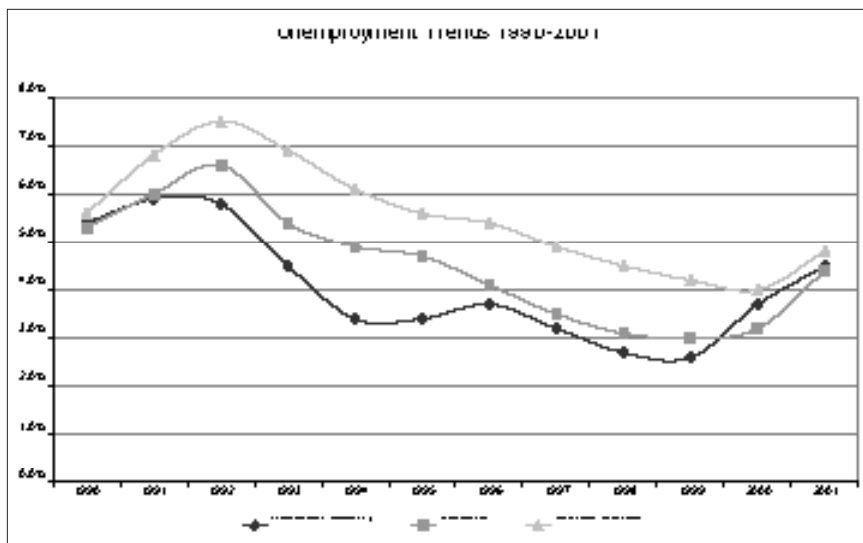
A 2000 comparison of educational attainment for persons over the age of 25 indicated that Marshall County had slightly lower attainment than the State average. In Marshall County, 14.9% had attained a Bachelor's Degree or higher, while the state-wide proportion was 19.4%.

The chart to the right indicates the intent of 2000 Marshall County and Indiana high school graduates regarding higher education. About 66.3% of Marshall County Graduates and 74.5% of Indiana graduates intended to seek higher education.

Source: STATS Indiana

Between 1990 and 2001, Marshall County's unemployment rate has remained consistently lower than that of Indiana or the United States as a whole. The lowest annual rate of unemployment for Marshall County over the last decade was 2.6% in 1999, while the highest was 5.9% in 1991.

The chart at left shows unemployment on an upward climb after a steady decline through most of the 1990s. The most current unemployment figures available show that for June 2002 approximately 4% of the Marshall county labor force and 5% of the Indiana labor force were unemployed.

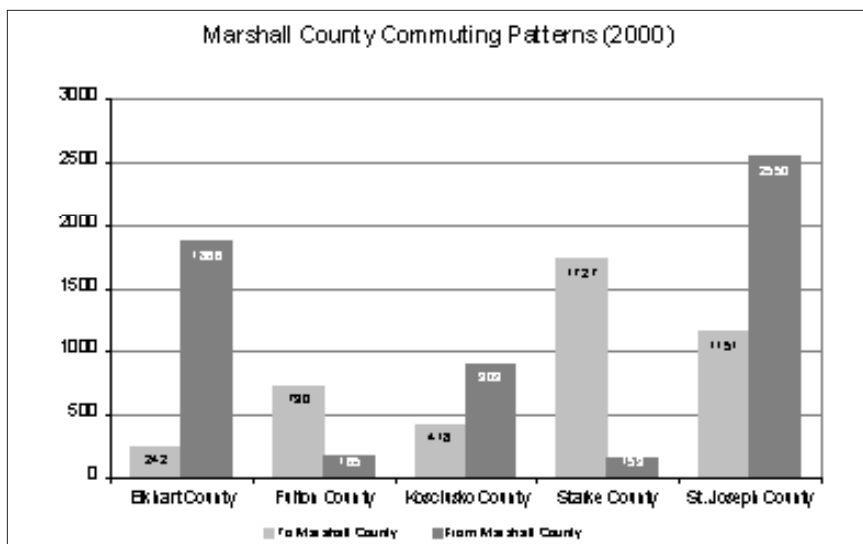


Source: STATS Indiana

COMMUTING PATTERNS

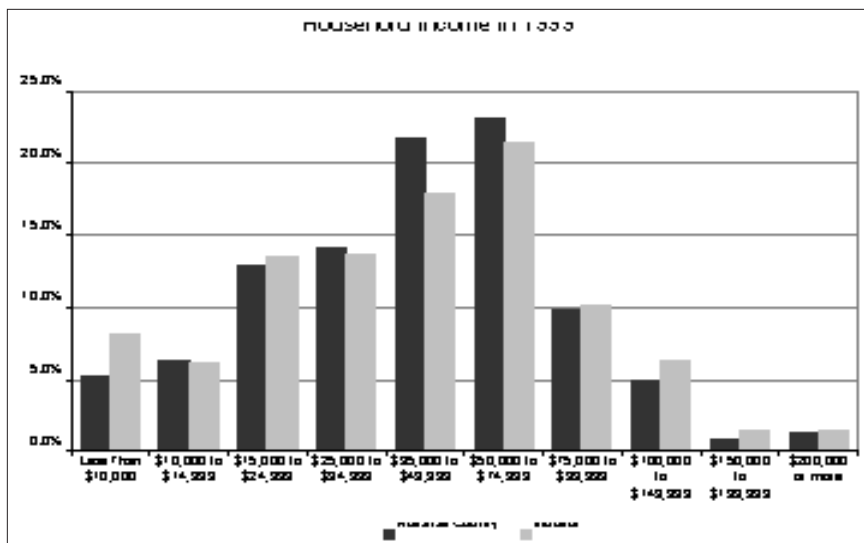
In 2000, a total of 4,965 persons commuted to Marshall County for employment. In the same year, 6,555 Marshall County residents commuted to jobs in other Indiana counties and other states.

The chart at left shows commuting patterns to and from the 5 counties with the highest number of commuters travelling into Marshall County to work. Of those five counties, the largest number of commuters to Marshall County originated in Starke County, located directly west of Marshall. St. Joseph County, to the north of Marshall, received the most local commuters. St. Joseph and Elkhart Counties combined to receive over 67% of those commuting to jobs outside Marshall County.



Source: STATS Indiana

INCOME & POVERTY STATUS

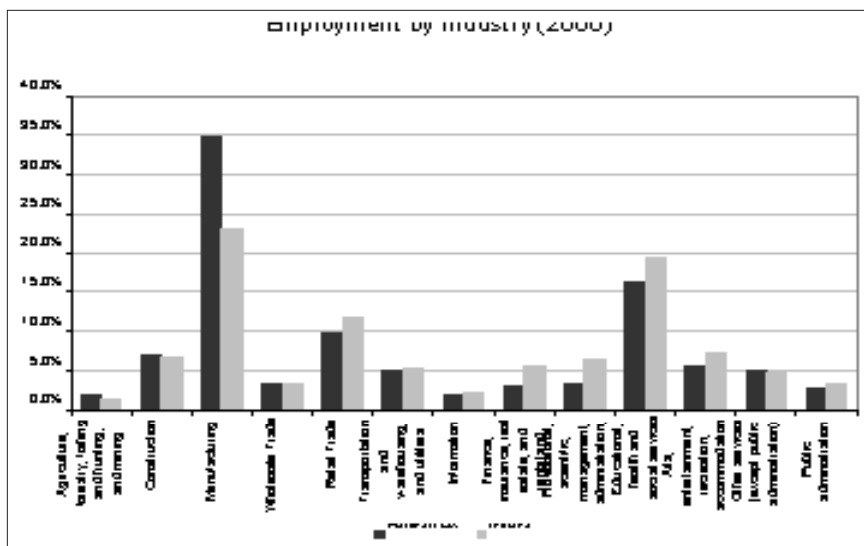


In 1999, Marshall County's median household income was \$42,581, compared to a \$41,567 median for the State of Indiana. Median household income for Marshall County increased by 50.4% between 1989 and 1999, representing a change of \$14,270. This compares favorably to the State, which experienced a 44.3% increase in median household income over the same period.

In 1999, 6.8% of Marshall County's population were living in poverty compared with 9.5% of Indiana residents. Of the 3,017 Marshall County residents in poverty in 2000, 914 (or 30%) were children under the age of 18; and 374 (or 12%) were senior citizens over the age of 65.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY



Employment in Marshall County in 2000 was dominated by the manufacturing sector, which accounted for 34.8% of employment. In contrast, statewide employment in the manufacturing sector accounted for 22.9% of all employment.

Other dominant industries in Marshall County were Educational, Health and Social Services with 16.3% of employees, and Retail Trade with 9.8% of employees. The same three industries were also dominant in the State of Indiana for the year 2000.

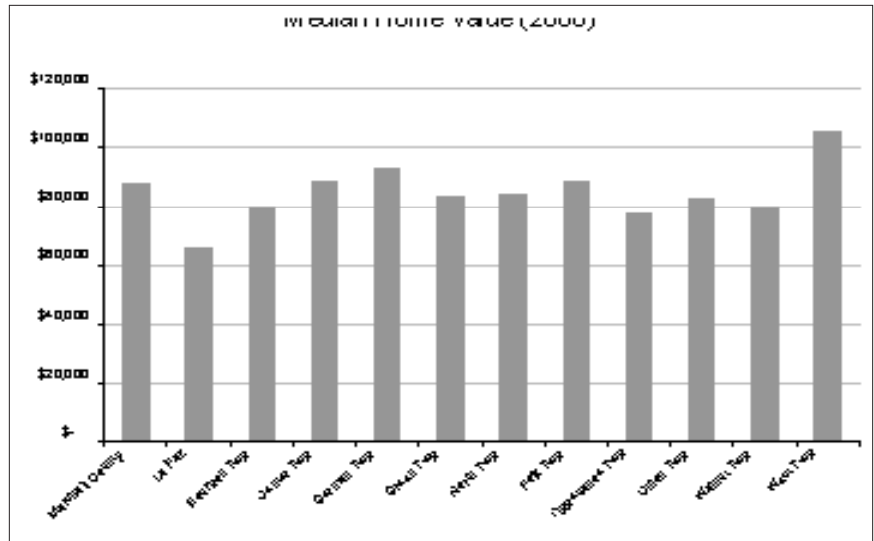
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

MEDIAN HOME VALUE

PHYSICAL
DATA
10

Median home value in Marshall County in 2000 was \$88,100 compared to \$94,300 for Indiana in the same year. Growth in median home value between 1990 and 2000 in Indiana was only slightly lower than that of Marshall County. State-wide median home value increased by 76.3% during that time period, while the Marshall County median increased by 78%.

The chart at left compares median home values across Marshall County's ten townships. West Township shows the highest median home value at \$105,400. The lowest median home value belongs to Tippecanoe Township at \$77,700. The chart also shows the Town of Lapaz, which has a median home value of \$66,100 in 2000.

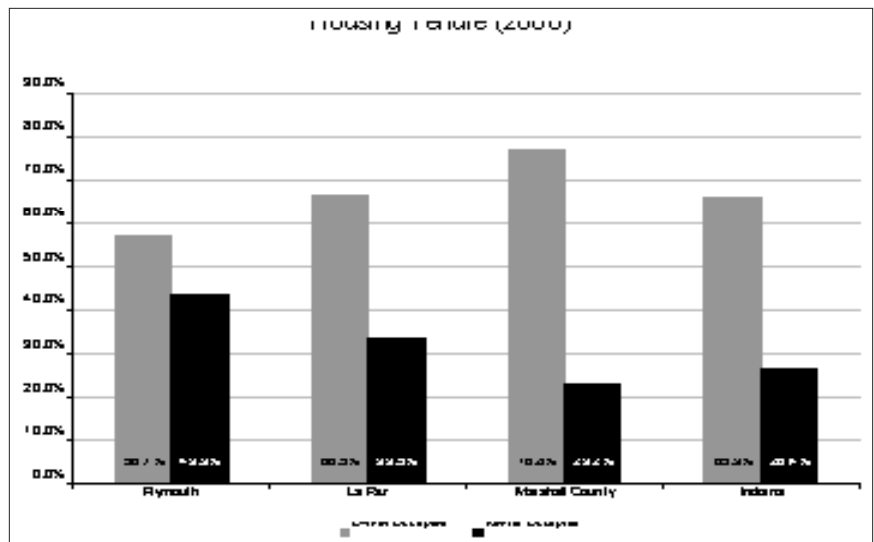


Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

HOUSING - OCCUPANCY & TENURE

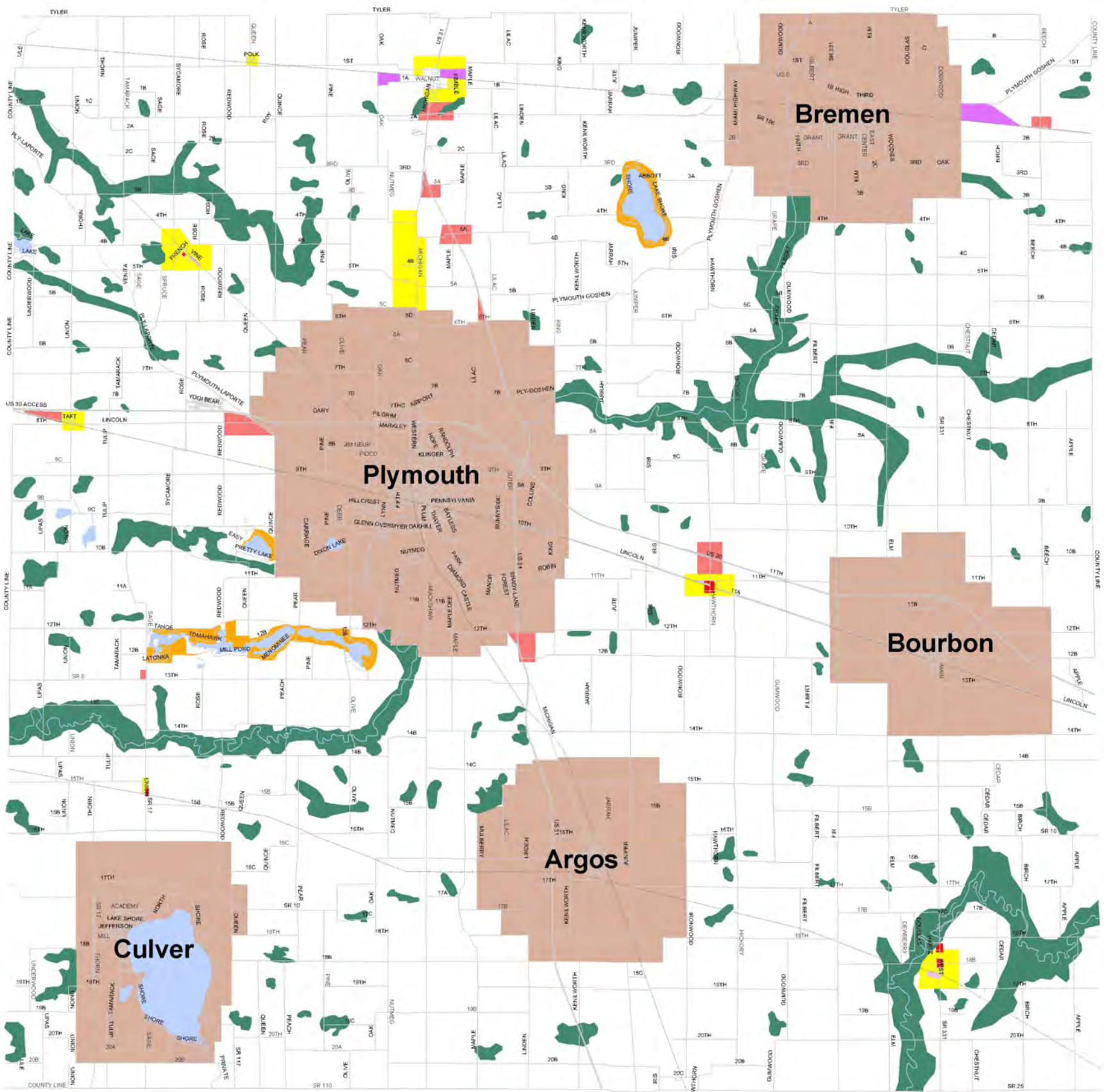
In 2000, the occupancy rates of Plymouth and Center Township were slightly higher than those for Marshall County and the State of Indiana as a whole. Approximately 6% of Plymouth and Center Township units were vacant in that year, compared with approximately 8-9% of Marshall County and Indiana dwelling units.

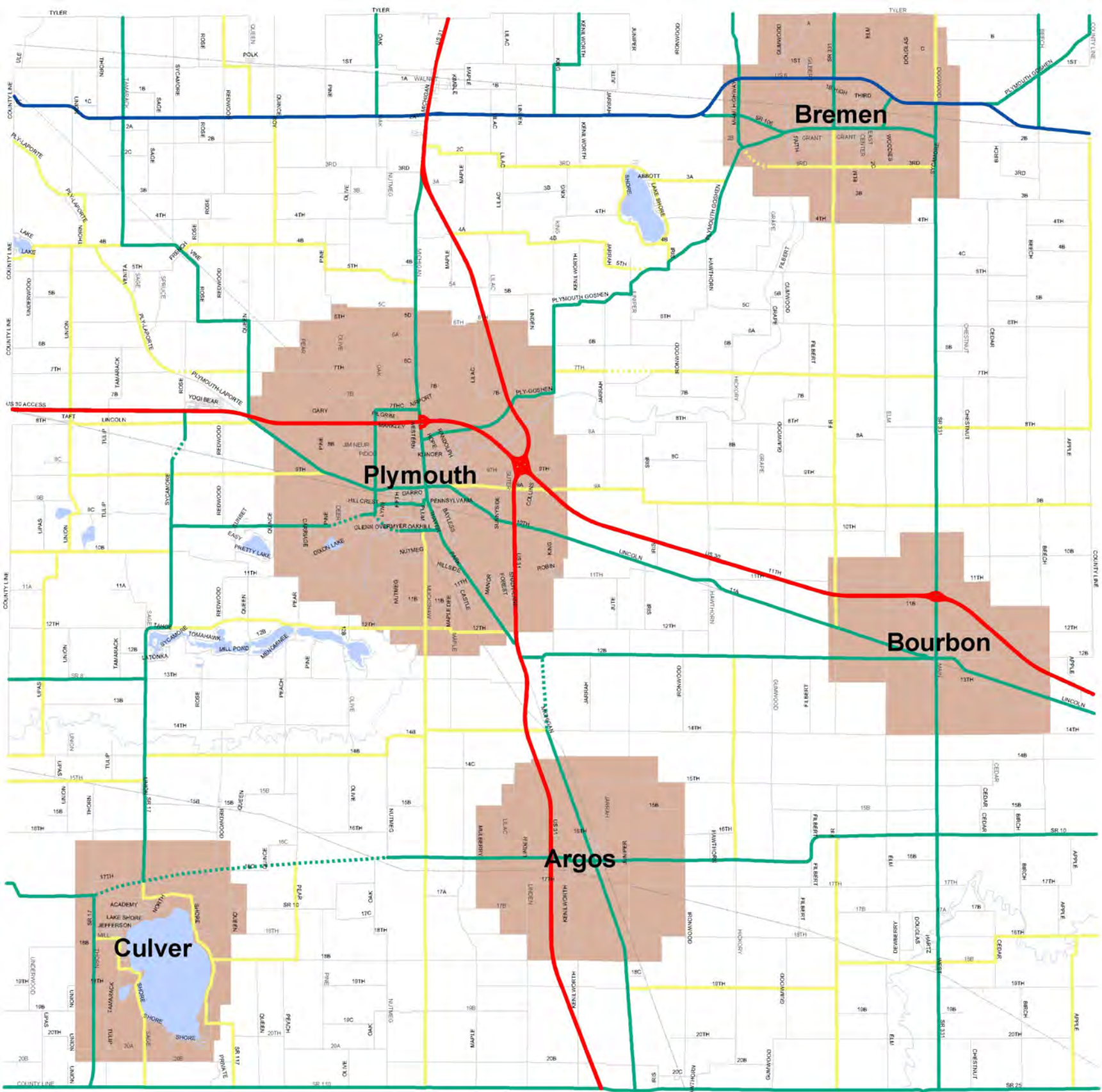
Marshall County had a much lower proportion of rental units than Plymouth or the State in 2000. A total of 3,833 or 23.2% of Marshall County dwelling units were occupied by renters, compared with 26.4% of Indiana units. Lapaz came in higher than the county or state at a rental rate of 33.5%.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

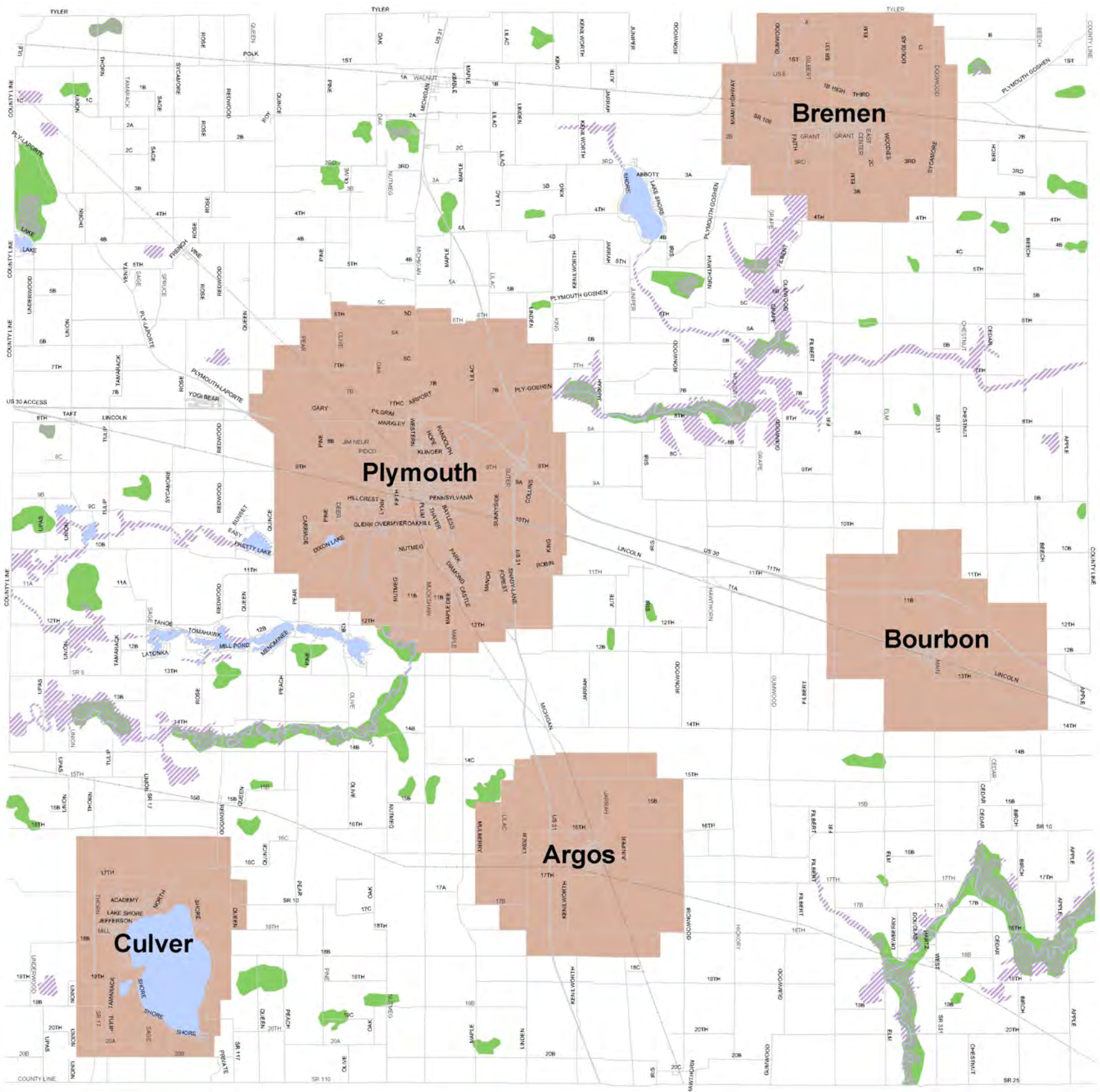






Legend

- Principal Arterials
- Minor Arterials
- Major Collectors
- Proposed Major Collectors
- Minor Collectors
- Proposed Minor Collectors
- Local Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers
- Lakes
- Other Planning Jurisdictions



Legend

- Floodplain & Wetlands
- Forest
- Streets
- Railroads
- Rivers
- Lakes
- Other Planning Jurisdictions

