THE VIEW

Newsletter for the Update of the Indianapolis-Marion County Comprehensive Plan

December 2003

Draft Plans Completed for Washington and Warren Townships

The update of the Indianapolis-Marion County Comprehensive Plan continues to make progress with the completion of the land use planning phase for the Washington Township and Warren Township Planning Areas. Draft Land Use Plans have now been completed for five township planning areas: Lawrence, Pike, Warren, Washington and Wayne townships. The draft Land Use Plan for the eastern two-thirds of the Perry Township/ Beech Grove Planning Area has also been completed.

Washington Township

Over a series of seven meetings, more than 80 Washington Township residents have collectively contributed nearly 300 hours of their time to the planning process.

Conversion of residential properties along major streets to commercial uses was a recurring topic in the Washington Township meetings. These conversions can be detrimental to surrounding homes and often set a precedent that will initiate a chain reaction of further conversions. These discussions resulted in eight of the ten Critical Areas in the township including recommendations for limiting the conversion of residential properties to commercial uses.

In addition to issues regarding the conversion of residential properties to commercial uses, Critical Areas were designated to:

- provide more information about two Village Mixed Use

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Robert Uhlenhake interacts with a group of Washington Township residents

Scenario Planning to Debut in Franklin and Decatur Townships

Scenario planning is one of the many tools available in creating the Indianapolis Insight Comprehensive Plan. Scenario planning involves conceiving alternative land use options, and then evaluating them against a set of criteria. The result should be land use plans that express the Comprehensive Plan's stated values and that enhance the surrounding land uses and the township as a whole.

Scenario planning will be utilized for the first time in the land use mapping phase of the Comprehensive Plan in Franklin and Decatur townships. Their large areas of undeveloped and agricultural land are especially conducive to scenario planning.

A land use planning model from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency known as the EPA Smart Growth Model will be used for the scenario planning. The City of Indianapolis applied for, and was awarded a grant from the EPA to become one of the test sites for the model during its development.

The EPA Smart Growth Model is a computer based

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Draft Plans... *Continued from page 1*

recommendations,

- reinforce preservation of natural areas along White River, Howland Ditch, and Crooked Creek, and
- emphasize pedestrian connectivity where appropriate.

The quantity of parkland was another top land use topic in Washington Township. With more than 80% of the Township's land already developed, identifying suitable parkland is a challenge. Through the planning process, more than 275 acres of additional parkland were designated. In addition to a number of new parks, additions were recommended to Holliday Park, Fox Hill Manor Park, WISH Park and Town Run Park. One of the newly designated park sites has already been partially acquired. A site near Howland Ditch was donated to Indy Parks in late November.

Greenways proposed in the Indianapolis Greenways Plan along Crooked Creek, White River, the Canal and Fall Creek are also designated on the Land Use Maps. Bicycle paths on the Monon Rail corridor, along the Canal and Fall Creek as well as bicycle lanes along Michigan Road, Hoover Road, Westlane Road, Townshipline Road and 75th Street are shown as they are recommended in the Marion County Bicycle Plan.

Warren Township

The Warren Township planning process benefited from a high level of attendance and thoughtful discussion through the series of seven meetings. Participants had concerns about the decline of established retail areas along East Washington Street. Land use recommendations were aimed at reinvestment and modernization. A related concern was the encroachments of commercial uses into stable residential neighborhoods, such as along Post Road. New commercial and office commercial sites were designated at a few major street intersections.

Three Critical Areas concerned parts of the East Washington Street Corridor. One dealt with a Village Mixed Use designation for Eastgate Mall. Two others dealt with refinements to the existing mix of commercial and residential uses around major intersections. This corridor contains both a planned road widening project and an active economic development and redevelopment strategy. The US40/ Washington Street corridor in Marion County was recently designated as an All-American Road under the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byways Program.

The proposed Pennsy Trail was a new topic in this land use update. The proposed trail abuts residential, industrial and commercial areas and requires appropriate linkages to the surrounding neighborhoods. The success of the Monon Trail has given many Warren Township residents optimism that a new eastside trail will stimulate reinvestment along the trail corridor while it adds a valuable recreation, transportation and open space amenity.

Another challenge was to place appropriate land uses and densities along the Grassy Creek and Buck Creek valleys, both of which contain high quality natural woodlands, wetlands and floodplains. Both stream valleys are planned for Greenways.

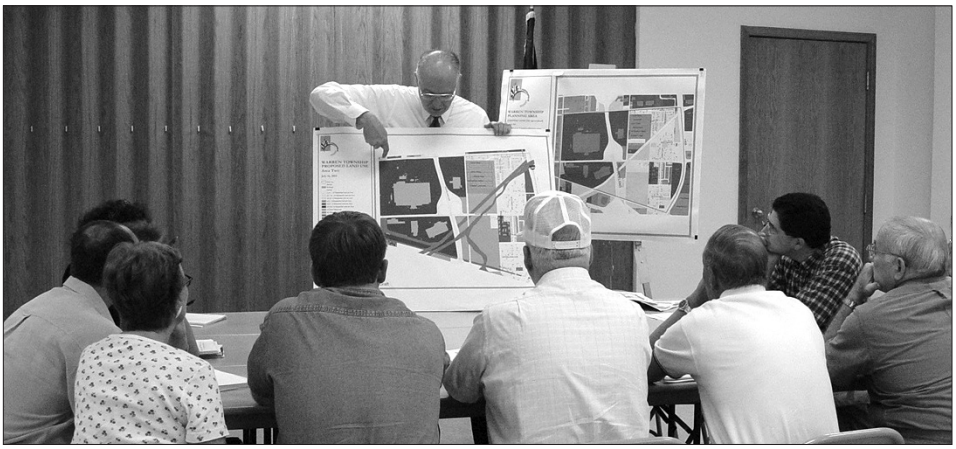
Areas with desirable environmental qualities attract more "move-up" housing developments. The township school system considers this housing option vital to its long-term stability. The school system has secured a number of sites for future schools. This aided the land use planning process by giving an indication where these important community facilities will be in the future. Supportive and compatible land uses could be more readily identified around these sites.

The Warren Township planning area includes parts of adjoining Center Township. The Center Township portion of the planning area was characterized by refining land use recommendations given relatively stable land uses and a lack of large vacant tracts.

Several areas in western Warren Township were built at low residential densities while outside the old city limits. Selected portions of these areas were recommended for higher density residential categories, as sewer and water services have become available in recent years.

The Comprehensive Planning staff will next move on to the Decatur and Franklin Township Planning Areas and will finish up with the western third of Perry Township.

Upon the completion of the Land Use Maps for each of eight Planning Areas the maps will be merged to create a countywide plan. Adoption of the new plan by the Metropolitan Development Commission is expected to take place in late 2004.



Dennis Slaughter explains Land Use proposals for a portion of Warren Township

Affordable Housing: Not a Bad Word

One of the goals of the Indianapolis Insight Plan is to "develop a range of housing types, for owners and renters of all income levels in each township, to support the diverse need of housing in our community and to encourage homeownership." As the community and the planning staff work together to make land use recommendations for the future we must think comprehensively. As both citizen planners and professional planners we have to be cognizant of social as well as economic factors that drive development.

Housing stock in Indianapolis, Metropolitan Statistical Area, (MSA) is considerably more affordable than in other comparable cities. The median home sale price was $116,900, and according to the 2000 census the median family income in Marion County was $55,191. Compare this to Kansas City with a median sales price of $135,700, and median family income $51,624, and Milwaukee with a median sales price $149,400 and median family income of $56,739.

The term "affordable housing" is often misused. The standard definition for affordable housing is a housing unit (owned or rented) that costs a household less than 30% of its gross monthly income. Variations occur in what percentage of income is affordable to a household based on factors such as family size and income. Everyone deserves an opportunity to live in clean, safe and decent housing that meets the minimum legal standards of decency, without spending an excessive proportion of their income.

When referring to "low-income household," the standard definition is a household that is below 80% of the county's median family income (MFI). The following chart details these income levels by relating them to the 1999 Marion County median family income for a household of four and the presumed monthly housing cost that households at each level could afford.

Income Levels	Income Amount (household of 4)	Housing Affordability at 30% of monthly gross income
100% MFI (moderate income)	$49,387	$1,481
80% MFI (low income)	$39,509	$987
50% MFI (very low income)	$24,693	$617
30% MFI (extremely low income)	$14,816	$307
Source: US Census, and The City of Indianapolis, Division of Planning		

A very diverse group of people can be found at each income level. At the 80% MFI for example, it would be easy to find recent college grads, young couples, older adults, as well as traditional families.

There are 352,164 households in Marion County and 40.7% are renter occupied and 59.3% owner occupied. Although Marion County has a lot of affordable housing, there are limited choices for lower income families outside of Center Township. Additionally, the majority of affordable rental units located outside of Center Township will not accommodate a large family. The Indianapolis Housing Agency is responsible for the design, construction, maintenance and management of housing for low-income, elderly and disabled persons. The Indianapolis Housing Agency along with the City of Indianapolis has made a commitment to take steps to increase the number of low income and minority families in the outer townships in Marion County.

It is critical to the economic viability of Indianapolis-Marion County to provide a range of housing choices near employment centers. Some businesses have closed because of a lack of workforce. The number of unfilled positions in the outer townships is directly related to the lack of affordable housing. Another factor linking the workforce to employment is the need for additional bus routes, or other public modes of transportation.

As Indianapolis continues to build

Percentage of Families by Income Level

	Less than $14,999	$15,000 to 24,999	$25,000 to 34,999	$35,000 to 49,999	$50,000 to 74,999	$75,000 to 99,999	$100,000 to 149,999	$150,000 to 199,999	$200,000 or more	Median Family Income
Marion County	**9.11%**	**10.9%**	**12.3%**	**17.7%**	**23.4%**	**12.7%**	**8.8%**	**2.2%**	**2.3%**	**$49,387**
Indianapolis *MSA	**7.3%**	**9.2%**	**10.9%**	**16.7%**	**24.8%**	**14.6%**	**11.0%**	**2.7%**	**2.9%**	**$55,191**
Source: US Census, and the City of Indianapolis, Division of Planning										

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Implementation Committee Prioritizes Zoning Ordinance Changes

The Indianapolis Insight Implementation Committee continues its work of guiding implementation of the recommendations contained in the Indianapolis Insight Community Values Component.

So far the committee has reviewed and prioritized recommendations concerning land use, ordinance and procedure changes, and development methods.

Ordinances and Procedure Changes

The Plan contained 46 recommended ordinance and procedure changes. The four items that received the highest ratings were:

- Provide incentives beyond the cluster option for the conservation of environmentally sensitive areas such as stream buffers, woodlands and native meadows.
- Amend the Wellfield Protection zoning ordinance to ban the construction of new septic systems in wellfields.
- Amend the commercial and industrial zoning ordinances to require sidewalks and standards for pedestrian safety.
- Amend the Zoning ordinances to require preservation of existing dense vegetative cover or the planting of dense vegetative cover along stream and tributary banks for the purpose of erosion control, contaminant capture, water cooling (important for retaining oxygen levels) and habitat preservation.

Development Methods

The Community Values Component also included 35 recommendations pertaining to development methods. The four recommendations that received the highest ratings were:

- Provide sidewalk, multi-purpose paths and other pedestrian mobility infrastructure to improve access to all public transportation.
- Improve paramobility (accessible to persons with disabilities) in the City's transportation plans.
- Reduce disinvestment and the perception of crime by improving the visual image of areas needing redevelopment.
- Develop commercial uses that are appropriately designed and scaled to a pedestrian friendly neighborhood.

The results of the prioritization of the land use recommendations were reported in the previous edition of *The View.*

The committee has one more set of recommendations to review and prioritize. The final set is called Supporting Issues. They are the recommendations that did not fit neatly into one of the other categories, but still have an important impact on the form of the city or the mission of the Department of Metropolitan Development.

Once the committee has prioritized all of the Plan's recommendations the committee members will monitor the progress toward achieving the goals of the recommendations. The Committee may also be involved in instituting some of the recommendations.

The committee is made up of 16 members of the community who represent a range of interests in the development of the city.

Indianapolis Insight introduces Airport Related Mixed Use

The Comprehensive Plan update has assigned a land use designation to be used in areas with airport activity and supporting uses. This land use designation is referred to as Airport Related Mixed Use and consists of commercial and industrial land uses that are considered complementary to airport development, but do not exhibit characteristics that are incompatible with sensitive land uses.

Permitted uses within the Airport Related Mixed Use designation could include, but are not limited to, municipal airports and terminals, aircraft facilities, air research laboratories and cargo handling operations. Appropriate commercial land uses could include, but are not limited to, retail stores within the terminal, restaurants, hotels and motels, car rental and other transportation uses, and parking services. Appropriate industrial land uses could include but are not limited to warehouses, refueling stations and trucking transfer stations. Any type of residential development would be inappropriate within this land use designation.

The Airport Related Mixed Use designation is intended not only for airports, but also for supporting uses that are located around the periphery of an airport to act as a buffer between airport activity and more sensitive land uses. This buffer would provide sensitive land uses such as residential area's protection from the noise, traffic and intense activity that exists in proximity to airports.

Who's TOD? And why is everyone talking about him?

In the past decade, "Transit Oriented Development" or TOD is a term that has come to be frequently used in urban planning. The concept has become more common as communities sought to more successfully link mass transit with land use. This concept looks both to the past and the to future. While no single definition has universal acceptance, several components are shared in contemporary definitions. TOD is associated with urban forms that offer greater convenience, closer destinations and more amenities than those usually found in low density, automobile-dominated development.

This term describes land development that:

- Occurs within one half mile of a transit stop. (Many experts describe this as not greater than a 10 minute walk),
- Is linked to a network of walkable and bikeable street,
- Contains a rich mix of uses retail, residential, workplaces,
- Has appropriate treatment of parking, and
- Has densities appropriate to its setting.*

This form of land development stands in stark contrast to the very familiar automobile-dependent land use patterns. Much of the development of in Marion County since World War II has occurred beyond the range of existing mass transit. Accessibility to transit remains scarce in areas that developed in the past 30-40 years. Streets have been designed with regard only to motor vehicles and excluded the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. Land use practices have often isolated homes from shopping, schools and workplaces. Parking lots dominate many commercial, office and institutional sites. Land has been developed uniformly at such low densities that transit services are not practical.

An example of Transit Oriented Development. Picture of downtown Plano, Texas.

"TOD will not replace more familiar land development approaches. It will offer attractive options for living."

TOD will not replace more familiar land development approaches. It will offer attractive options for living, working and leisure time while integrating transit services into revitalized older neighborhoods and newly developing areas. Locally this definition must be refined to offer alternative land use patterns that bring about all the benefits of compact and efficient land development while making expanded transit more feasible. The local approach to TOD must successfully respond to our population trends, climate, consumer preferences and emerging transit services.

Early in the 20th century, "street car suburbs" grew where transit lines were extended. The future holds a promise that older neighborhood centers can be revitalized where they include modern transit lines. New communities can achieve a high degree of livability if they are planned around compact, walkable centers and are served with quality transit services.

***Fundamentals of Transit Oriented Development**
Hank Dittmar and Shelley Poticha of Reconnecting America's Center for Transit Oriented Development, June 2003

Comprehensive Planners achieve much in 2003

The Comprehensive Planning section of the Indianapolis Division of Planning has had a productive year in 2003. This year staff completed Comprehensive Plan Updates for the Lawrence, Warren and Washington Township Planning Areas and 2/3 of the Perry Township Planning Area (the remaining third is to be completed in 2004). Nearly 300 residents collectively contributed more than 1200 hours of their time to the planning process. The community's time and effort is greatly appreciated and will shape Indianapolis' future for years to come.

The Comprehensive Planning staff was instrumental in establishing the Indianapolis Insight Implementation committee. Committee members are assisting the City in prioritizing the recommendations of the Community Values Component and will then assist with, and monitor, the progress towards achieving the recommendations. Keith Holdsworth, Dennis Slaughter and Russell McClure continue to work with this committee.

The section staff members also worked on a variety of other committees and initiatives. Keith Holdsworth worked on the Tree Preservation/Conservation Policy Committee. This committee formed in 2001 to examine issues of preservation, conservation and restoration of trees and wooded areas.

Comprehensive Planning Section staff members participated in subcommittee meetings for the update of the Regional Center Plan. The subcommittees, made up of nearly 300 community and business leaders as well as concerned residents, met regularly to discuss issues and ideas relevant to downtown Indianapolis.

Russell McClure continues to work on the Marion County Wellfield Education Corporation's Technical Committee that is discussing revisions to the wellfield ordinance.

Alice Gatewood and Dennis Slaughter have been participating in *Directions: A*

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Scenario...

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program that looks at land uses in a large area and determines the outcome of those uses. The model illustrates the outcomes of land use decisions by creating indicators. Indicators are measures of things such as vehicle miles traveled and air pollutants from automobile traffic, proximity to transit, housing density, and average distance to parks and job centers just to name a few. These indicators illustrate the results of the particular land use decisions that have been developed for each scenario. By creating these indicators, the model will help determine the consequences of patterns of development and will assist in choosing the best land use scenario to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

To be suitable, scenario sites must have contiguous vacant or agricultural tracts large enough to accommodate a variety of development patterns. The sites also need a framework of roads classified as arterials under the Marion Country Thoroughfare Plan that will accommodate future growth and potential mass transit services.

For each scenario site, citizens will develop three or four plausible and realistic scenarios. Participants will draw from their own experiences and consider the opportunities and constraints inherent in the scenario sites. The scenarios will then be tested against the values of the Indianapolis Insight Plan by using the indicators and measures listed below.

Value: Balance of Land Uses

Indicator: Job centers in proximity to residential areas

- Measure: % of office and industrial areas within scenario area
- Measure: average distance of residential areas to employment areas

Indicator: Retailing in proximity to residential areas

- Measure: % of retail uses within scenario area
- Measure: average distance of residential areas of a key service amenity

Indicator: Appropriate sites allocated to civic services and facilities

- Measure: % of the facility and service to population ratio met (school sites, fire facilities etc.)

Value: Healthy Environment

Indicator: Contribution to air pollution

- Measure: Vehicle mile traveled per capita
- Measure: Pounds per year per capita of oxides of nitrogen (NOX)

Indicator: Minimization of flooding

- Measure: amount of impervious surfaces

Indicator: Provision of parks and greenways

- Measure: housing proximity to recreation, average distance to a park
- Measure: park acres per 1,000 persons

Value: Transportation

Indicator: Access to mass transit

- Measure: housing proximity to transit
- Measure: employment proximity to transit

Indicator: Traffic congestion

- Measure: level of service (LOS) on primary and secondary arterials, based on vehicle trips (VT) and vehicle miles traveled (VMT)

Value: Strong Economy

Indicator: Appropriate sites allocated to office and industrial uses (near interchanges, rail lines and airport)

- Measure: average distance to interstate interchanges, on a rail line or within 1 mile of an airport with land use recommended for an industrial or travel-related use

Indicator: Availability of jobs and workers

- Measure: jobs to housed workers balance

The scenarios will be developed during a township planning meeting. The computer-generated indicators will then be presented at a later township planning meeting. The land use recommendations will be made after reviewing the resultant data from the indicators. For example; if Scenario A contributes to far greater air pollution than scenario B, it is more likely that Scenario A will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

It is important that stakeholders participate in scenario planning. Participants will have the opportunity to shape alternative land development arrangements and then test the implications of these land use decisions against the plan's stated values. Scenario planning is an effective tool to gather modeled results of land use decisions, and will help to educate all of us during the planning process.

Housing...

Continued from page 3

out, it is important that all townships have a range of housing types and supportive services. Citizens should have the opportunity to live in any community and remain there throughout their life span. As baby boomers start retiring and downscale their lifestyles there will be a need for additional housing options with and without personal assistance. "Move-up" and estate housing are other housing types in short supply in some townships. As we plan for the future we want to provide a full range of housing choices in all areas of Marion County.

***Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)**: *A definition of central Indiana used to report Census information. Counties included in the MSA are Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Marion, Morgan, and Shelby.*

Order Form

Use this form to order the Indianapolis Insight Plan Community Values Component, the Indianapolis Insight Land Use Mapping Handbook or the Indianapolis Development Assets (IDA) book.

The Community Values Component guides development of the second phase of the Comprehensive Plan update and also includes planning principles, value statements and recommendations for new and revised policies, procedures, programs, and ordinances. The first copy is available free of charge. Additional copies are $5.00.

The Land Use Mapping Handbook is a short, user-friendly guide to the land use mapping process. The Land Use Mapping Handbook is available free of charge.

The Indianapolis Development Assets book is an atlas of useful information on the population, economy, natural resources transportation, infrastructure, government, housing and quality of life in Marion County. The IDA book is available for $15.00.

To receive copies of these documents, please return this form to:
Division of Planning, Comprehensive Planning Section
1821 City-County Building
200 East Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Or fax it to the Comprehensive Planning Section at 327-5103.

Name _____

Address_____

City, State Zip_____

_____ Indianapolis Insight Plan, Community Values Component

_____ Indianapolis Insight Land Use Mapping Handbook

_____ Indianapolis Development Assets Book

Planners... *Continued from page 5*

Rapid Transit Study to Improve Regional Mobility.

Russell McClure became AICP certified in May of 2003. AICP (American Institute of Certified Planners) is the American Planning Association's professional institute, recognizing leadership nationwide in ethics, professional development, planning education, and the standards of planning practice.

Dennis Slaughter coordinated, moderated and spoke at the Indiana Planning Association Fall Conference. Dennis's topic was High Speed Rail in Indiana and the Midwest. Dennis serves on the Government Affairs Committee of the Indiana High Speed Rail Association and is a strong advocate for passenger train options.

Staff is looking forward to another exciting and productive year in 2004!

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INDIANAPOLIS INSIGHT

The View: Newsletter for the Update
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Meeting dates set for the Franklin Township and Decatur Township Planning Efforts

The City of Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development is launching the Land Use Mapping Phase of the Indianapolis Insight Plan for the Decatur and Franklin Township Planning Areas. The Division of Planning will host a series of meetings in each township to develop a new land use plan. Anyone with an interest in the future development of the townships (concerned citizens, neighborhood groups, business people and development professionals) is invited. At these meetings, recommended land uses will be proposed for each parcel of land within the planning areas.

All meetings begin at 7 p.m.

The first four Decatur Township Planning Area meetings will be held on the following dates and locations:

- Tuesday, January 13
  Decatur Township High School cafeteria
  5251 Kentucky Avenue
- Tuesday, February 3
  Lynwood Elementary School library
  4640 Santa Fe Drive
- Tuesday, February 24
  Decatur Township High School cafeteria
  5251 Kentucky Avenue
- Tuesday, March 16
  Decatur Township High School cafeteria
  5251 Kentucky Avenue

The first four meetings for the Franklin Township Planning Area will be held as follows:

- Tuesday, January 20
  E.B. Carver Education & Technology Center
  (the new Franklin Township school administration building)
  6141 S. Franklin Road
- Tuesday, February 10
  Arlington Elementary School
  5814 S. Arlington Avenue
- Tuesday, March 2
  E.B. Carver Education & Technology Center
  6141 S. Franklin Road
- Tuesday, March 23
  Acton Elementary School
  8010 Acton Road

Although the planning area meetings are being held on a township-by-township basis, the results from each township will be combined into an overall Land Use Plan for Marion County.

Approximately seven meetings are anticipated for each of the planning areas. However, more meetings will be scheduled if it is determined that the extra meetings are needed to complete the work. The content of each meeting will build upon the outcome of the previous meetings.

The Decatur Township Planning Area coincides with the township boundaries. The Franklin Township Planning Area includes the entire township except for the area covered by the 1997 I-65/County Line Road Strategic Plan, and the City of Beech Grove. Portions of Beech Grove are found in four different townships. Rather than look at the town in fragments, it was studied at one time as part of the Perry Township/Beech Grove Planning Area.