

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

Decisions are made every day in both the public and private sector that have a major impact on our lives. Many of these decisions involve land use changes resulting in alterations to our surroundings, the places we live, play, shop and work. Growth and redevelopment will continue to change our community in the future. The citizens of Evansville and Vanderburgh County have a strong desire for continued growth. This can more specifically be described as a desire for responsible growth that occurs in an orderly as opposed to piecemeal fashion. The community also desires to be prepared for the future, and to maximize the benefits of growth. Based on the many desires, expressed in the development of this Plan, it is clear that Evansville residents have high hopes and aspirations for the future of our community. The basic purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a strategy to make these desires (or community vision) for the future become reality.

Successful long-range planning requires vision. Based on the Plan development process and input from both the private and public sectors a future vision of Evansville and Vanderburgh County has been developed and is presented in the Plan. This process was initiated by establishing a citizen Vision Committee which held a series of meetings in 2003. The Committee was comprised of elected and appointed local government officials and community leaders from the private sector and from neighborhood associations. This group was charged with the task of developing a vision statement for the update of the Comprehensive Plan. Along with many other valuable suggestions and contributions to this planning process, the Committee developed the following Vision Statement:

Vision Statement

“We envision Evansville and Vanderburgh County as a prominent regional center that offers prosperity, growth, and a quality place to live, learn, work, invest and visit.”

This vision is supported by local population, housing, and employment projections, designating appropriate areas for new development in each land use category, identifying the community’s long-range growth objectives, and indicating how the community should develop to achieve these desired objectives. In short, the Plan is a blueprint for the future development of the community, the future land use pattern and for plan implementation.

Comprehensive planning is an ongoing process that requires periodic review to keep the Plan current. This document, which updates the 1996 Plan and the 2000 Plan amendments, is the result of such a review. The 2004 –2025 Comprehensive Plan is anticipated after public review, hearings, to be adopted by the Area Plan Commission, City Council, County Commissioners, and Darmstadt Town Board.

MANDATE FOR THE PLAN

Indiana Code, Title 36, Article 7, Chapter 4, as amended, empowers cities and counties to plan. These units of government are further charged with the purpose of improving the health, safety, convenience, and welfare of their citizens and to plan for the future development of their communities to that end:

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

Public law further states that these units of government may establish planning and zoning entities to fulfill this purpose (I.C. 36-7-4-202). Resolutions by the Common Council of the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County Board of Commissioners establishing the Area Plan Commission of Evansville and Vanderburgh County went into effect on April 10, 1968.

Furthermore, while residents of Vanderburgh County support the comprehensive planning process, such action is required by legislative mandate. Specifically, Indiana statute (I.C. 36-7-4-501) requires a comprehensive plan to be approved by resolution for the promotion of public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, or the general welfare and for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of development. The Plan Commission shall prepare the Comprehensive Plan.

Indiana Code 36-7-4-502 states a comprehensive plan must contain at least the following:

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

Besides the required Comprehensive Plan elements, State statute (I.C. 36-7-4-503) allows for additional contents. The 2004-2025 Comprehensive Plan includes many of these optional items such as studies of current conditions and future growth in the City and County. Other items in the Plan from the list of permissible contents are maps and descriptive materials on the following subjects:

History, population, and physical site conditions
Blighted areas
Air and water pollution
Flood control
Public utilities and other services
Transportation, including rail, bus, air and water
Parks and recreation
Education, including location of schools and universities
Land utilization, including agriculture, forests, and other uses
Conservation of resources
Other physical, economic, and social factors

FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY OF PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Evansville-Vanderburgh County Comprehensive Plan 2004 -2025 is the framework for the ongoing land use planning process. The 2004 Plan updates, re-organizes and expands the scope and content of the 1996 Plan.

The Plan was based upon the following underlying principles:

THAT IT BE COMPREHENSIVE IN NATURE.

The plan should encompass information relative to the entire city and county, addressing all major components of development (e.g., population, land use, environment, housing, utilities, etc.);

THAT IT REFLECTS THE COMMUNITY'S VALUES, NEEDS, AND VISION.

The plan should state the goals, objectives and policies of the community pertaining to growth and quality of life;

THAT IT GUIDES PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT.

The plan should define where development is desired, the scale of development and the areas of the community to be preserved;

THAT IT IS LONG RANGE IN NATURE.

The plan should identify what the community aspires to become in the next 20 years, and anticipate the future to avoid potential problems; and

THAT IT IS THE LEGAL FOUNDATION FOR LOCAL ORDINANCES.

The plan must be approved by the city or county in order to legally adopt a zoning ordinance, and zoning is a prerequisite for adoption of a subdivision ordinance as required by State statute (I.C. 36-7-4-601 and 701).

Comprehensive planning is the dynamic and flexible process of coordinating and guiding physical development and it should not be construed to be a rigid framework for the future. The Plan should be used by both the public and private sectors as a guide for deciding the efficient use and management of the community's resources.

This Plan addresses the entire area of Vanderburgh County which, according to the Census, contains 235.74 square miles or 150,873.6 acres, eight townships, one major incorporated city (Evansville) and one incorporated town (Darmstadt). The planning area and these government jurisdictions are shown on Page 1-5.

In preparing the 2004-2025 Plan, the Area Plan Commission requested information from numerous public and private agencies. The Plan reflects the information obtained through the cooperation of these entities. Information contained within this Plan was compiled from the 1996 Comprehensive Plan, current City and County department reports which detail current facilities and services, and an analysis of current land use. Public participation was also an important element in the development of the Plan. Valuable input was obtained in meetings on the Plan with the Vision Committee, community groups, and government departments. These meetings and the series of advertised public hearings scheduled for the Plan represent a concerted effort to obtain a broad range of community input and support.

PLAN CONTENT AND ARRANGEMENT

The sections in the Plan are arranged as follows: Part A covers the background information and current conditions. Part B contains the land use plan, which includes analysis and policies for each type of functional land use. Part C discusses the supporting community services and facilities. Part D concerns plan implementation.

ACTION PLANS

Statements of goals establish the community's position on growth and quality of life. These goals, in combination with the associated objectives and policies, form action plans which provide a framework for decision-makers and a defined strategy for future development. Action plans have been included at the end of most of the Plan sections. In some cases, the action plans were developed as a portion of that department's planning process such as transportation and recreation.

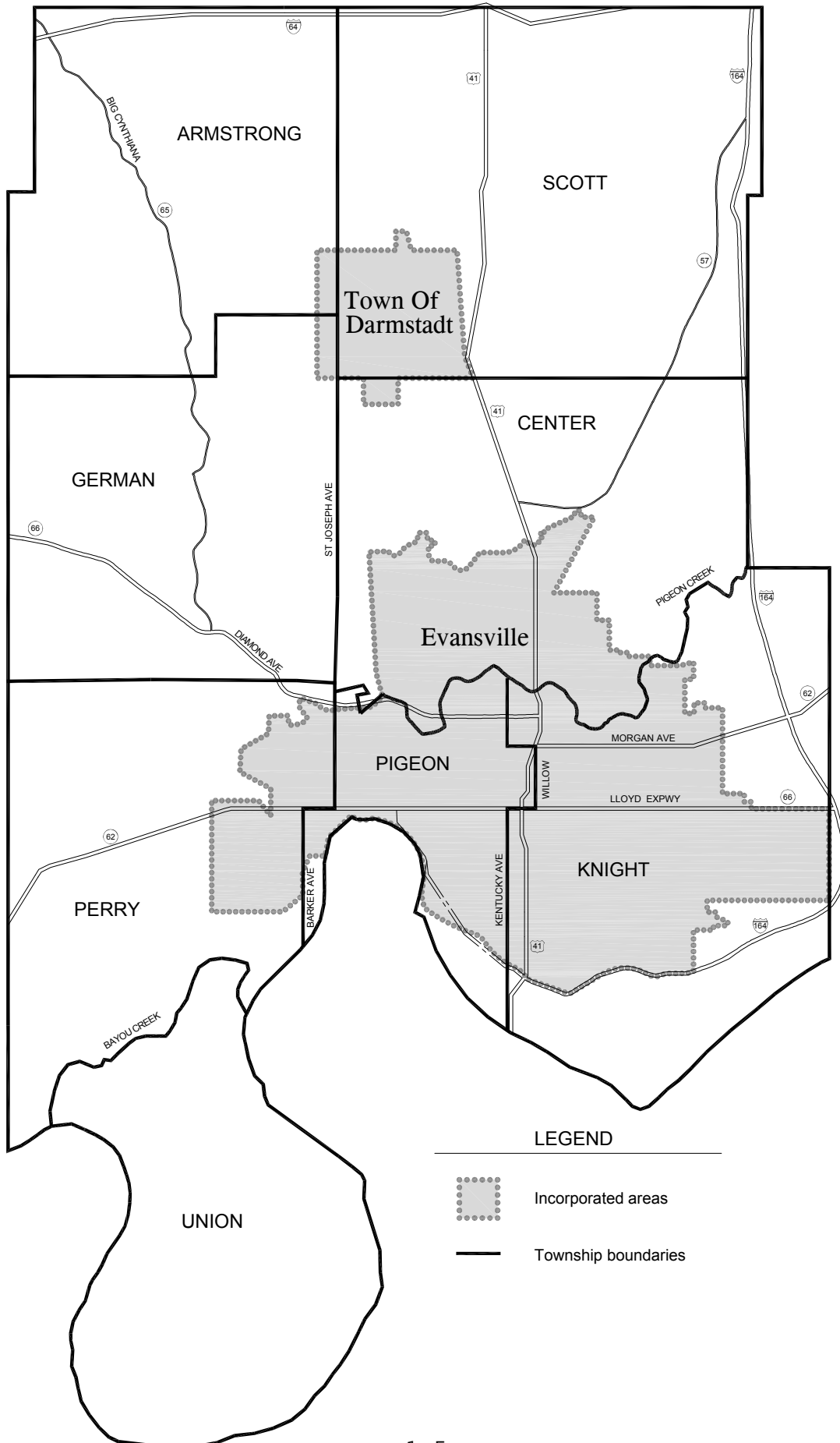
By definition, goals are very general in nature. Thus, they need to be supported by a more precise and measurable indication of intent through objectives and policies. The definitions of terms used in the action plan for each Plan element are as follows:

GOALS describe in general terms the underlying community values and reflect desired ideal situations or achievement. Goal statements are typically broad and long-range oriented.

OBJECTIVES are a more specific statement designed to achieve a particular aspect of a goal. They define a desired end result which then can be measured.

POLICIES are statements that define principles, strategies and actions that are necessary to obtain a goal or objective. The policies represent the primary commitment toward achieving the goals and objectives, and imply a consistency of action.

Government Jurisdictions



The action plans contained in this document are intended to encourage responsible and orderly growth, reflect concerns for the impacts of future development and address the needs of older areas in the City. New areas in the County will urbanize, but should not divert the focus from the future survival of the central city. The thrust of the Comprehensive Plan is to maintain and expand the well-being of the community's residents by capitalizing on the positive aspects of growth, while at the same time, minimizing any negative consequences.

SUMMARY OF PLAN GOALS

The following is a summary of all goal statements in each action plan. This is provided to allow viewing of all the Plan goals together in one section. These summarized statements are arranged in the order they appear in this document.

Land Use Goals

- Arrange land uses to create a pattern of orderly development. (Page 6-6)
- Value neighborhoods & promote an adequate supply and mix of housing. (Page 7-14)
- Promote quality commercial and industrial development that improves the economy and community. (Pages 8-6, and 10-5)
- Create an environment that supports downtown businesses and workers. (Page 9-7)
- Revitalize the Central Business District as a dynamic urban center with a blend of unique uses (Page 9-6)
- Maintain an agricultural sector in the local economy and rural life options. (Page 11-3)

Economic Development Goal

- Promote development that contributes to long-term growth in the local economy by producing jobs, expanding the tax base and improving our standard of living. (Page 12-17)

Quality of Life Goals

- Encourage a variety of recreational, leisure and cultural activities for all ages. (Pages 13-11, and 15-16)
- Aim to have an educational system that provides all citizens opportunities for quality, life-long learning. (Page 13-11)
- Endorse a health care system that maximizes opportunities for healthy lives/lifestyles. (Page 16-15)

Environmental Quality Goal

- Support a clean, healthful & aesthetically pleasing environment and maintain a high level of air, surface and ground water quality. (Pages 14-9, 14-11, 14-12)

Parks Goals

- Connect the City's parks with a system of open space corridors to create the image of a "City within a Park". (Page 15-16)
- Creating quality of life opportunities by providing safe environments and affordable programs to enhance fun, fitness, and education for residents for all ages in our community. (Page 15-16)

Hazard Mitigation Goals

- Minimize fatalities, injuries, damage and disruption caused by hazards. (Page 16-11)
- Aim to have a secure community environment by providing effective police and fire services. (Page 16-13)

Transportation Goals

- Develop a transportation system that safely & efficiently moves people & goods. (Page 17-23)
- Provide a choice of transportation modes for a high level of mobility. (Page 17-23)
- Coordinate land use and transportation planning. (Page 17-23)
- Develop a transportation system that preserves the character of the environment. (Page 17-24)
- Improve accessibility to the transportation system and respond to the needs of low income, minority and elderly persons. (Pages 17-24, and 17-25)
- Involve citizens in development of the transportation system through an extensive public participation program. (17-24)
- Promote development that uses appropriate access and minimizes congestion/conflicts. (Page 17-25)
- Improve the transit system as a frequently used alternative to auto travel. (Page 17-27)

Utilities Goals

- Provide quality water and wastewater service. (Page 19-13)
- Improve the surface collection & capacity of the stormwater drainage system. (Page 19-17)

Plan Implementation Goal

- Ensure effective and equitable plan implementation and administration of the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. (Page 20-12)