

SECTION 6 GENERAL LAND USE

The Comprehensive Plan establishes the desired land use pattern and development goals, objectives, and policies that provide guidance for land use decisions. The land use categories addressed in the Plan are residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses. The underlying principal of the land use plan is to assure that Evansville and Vanderburgh County can reasonably accommodate the expected and desired changes in an orderly manner that meets the needs and vision of the community. Other sections in the Plan (e.g. transportation, parks, environmental quality and urban design) also contain land use related information.

LAND USE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

This land use plan provides a blueprint for the future that can only be accomplished if the needs identified throughout the Comprehensive Plan are adequately addressed and the goals, objectives, and policies in the Plan are implemented. The principles for guiding development location, design and review provided in this Plan should be observed in all future land use decisions and in the preparation of subarea (e.g. neighborhood, corridor) plans.

The plan is based on the following general themes:

- the need for responsible and orderly growth and economic development;
- the need to maintain and revitalize the CBD and Urban Core areas;
- the conservation of natural, cultural, and historic resources; public and private investments; and other unique community assets;
- the need to maintain, protect, and where necessary revitalize Evansville's existing neighborhoods since they are a vital community resource; and,
- the need to maximize the use of the existing infrastructure and undeveloped or underutilized land within the City through infill development.

INFILL DEVELOPMENT can occur in the developed area on vacant lots or on land with dilapidated buildings, or can involve changing the land use of a property from a less to a more intensive use (i.e. from a parking lot to an office building).

These strategies place a strong reliance on existing public infrastructure (roads, utilities, community facilities, etc.) to provide the maximum service feasible before considering new or extended facilities.

Development proposals must be evaluated for consistency with the land use plan. However, the plan is conceptual and is meant to be flexible. There may be development proposals that will arise during the planning period (2000-2025) which do not conform to this land use plan. The justification and rationale supporting such proposals that are responsible and beneficial to

the community but not conforming to the land use plan must be carefully evaluated to determine whether they warrant deviating from the community's land use goals, objectives and policies.

LAND USE SURVEY

The land use survey and inventory is part of the framework upon which a land use plan is built. The field survey was conducted between 1998-1999. The land use classifications measured were: manufacturing, commercial, residential, institutional/government, parks/recreation, rights-of-way/utilities, agricultural and undeveloped.

Data for the current land use inventory are presented on Page 6-3 for Evansville and Vanderburgh County through 1999. This land use survey indicates that agriculture was the most common land use, which accounted for almost 50% of the land in the County. Residential use was the second most common in the County, but was the most predominant use (nearly 50%) in the City. The commercial use category was a distant second in the City land use acreage totals. The third, fourth and fifth most common uses in the County were trees, right-of-way and parks.

DEVELOPING THE LAND USE MAPS

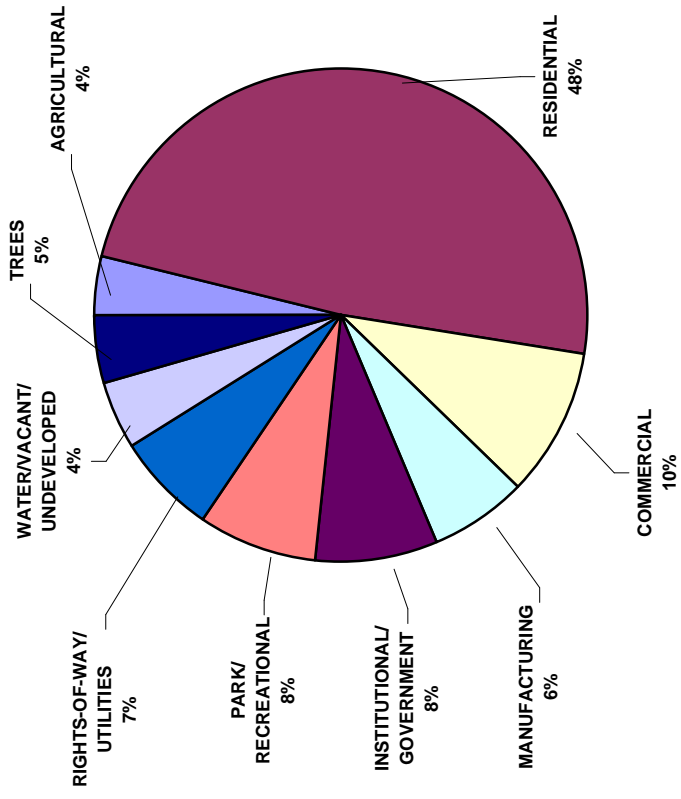
Appendix F contains the maps illustrating the existing land use and the recommended, land uses for 2025. These maps are generalized and are not intended to be site specific. Therefore, the maps should not be used to determine parcel-level land use. The use classifications shown include residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, parks and cemeteries, and government/institutional. A new category has been added for areas that could develop or redevelop with mixed uses. The downtown is an example of an area designated as mixed use. The predominant use mix expected in most of these areas is residential and commercial. However, some light manufacturing could also be included along with other uses where appropriate.

The 2025 map shows some areas that have been designated for different uses than those uses that currently exist. The changed designations imply that these areas are suitable for and likely to contain the proposed new use in the future.

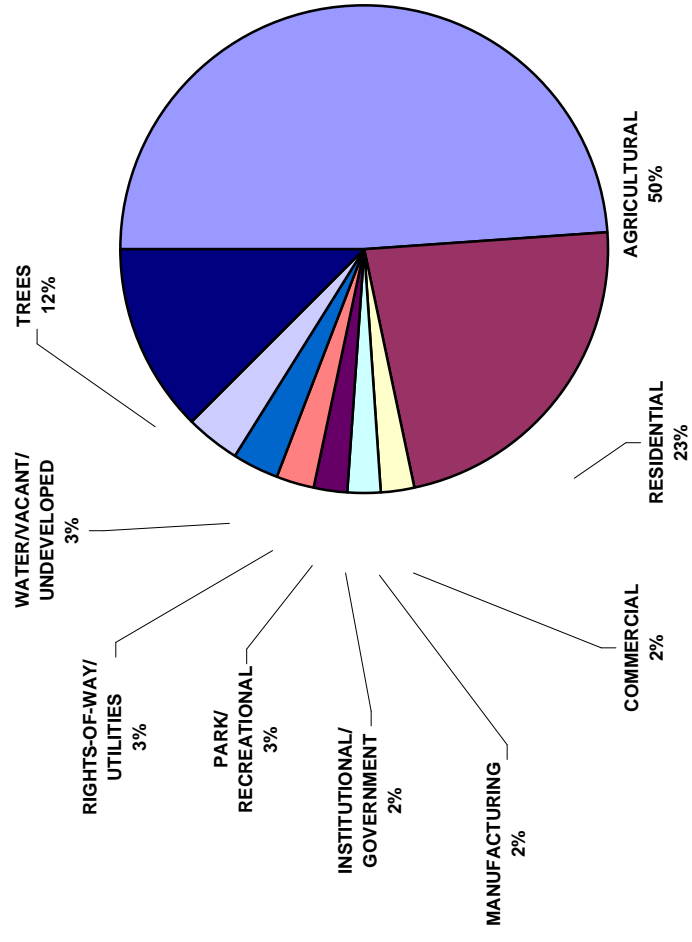
The following steps were used in developing the Future Land Use-2025 Map (Appendix F):

- Reviewing and updating the existing 2004 General Land Use Map by improving the accuracy and extent of the developed land use areas;
- Projecting the location, type, pace and extent of future development in the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County based on current trends;
- Evaluating the suitability of the land for development using the various physical feature maps (illustrated in Section 3).

CITY LAND USE



COUNTY LAND USE



- Evaluating the availability of utility services and accessibility to the future road network (see Sections 17 and 19);
- Determining compatibility with the character of surrounding land uses; and
- Analyzing this information to allocate future land use areas on the 2025 conceptual map.

In allocating future land uses, local government planning must designate sufficient land in a variety of locations to accommodate developers with a choice of sites that have potential for successful development, both economically and for the community as a whole. While economic market forces primarily dictate development location (and ultimately the level of economic success), another important consideration is that location decisions be compatible with the Plan, unless the benefit to the community from a proposal clearly overrides its inconsistencies with the Plan.

It is likely that certain areas will develop in the future that are designated as agriculture/undeveloped on the Future Land Use Map for 2025, found in Appendix F. To maintain a reasonable sequencing of development, these areas should not be allowed to develop or receive appropriate zoning approval until there is existing or proposed development nearby and commitments from the private sector and, if applicable, the public sector, for construction of the necessary water and sewer extensions and transportation network improvements are filed.

INTERSTATE 69 AND FUTURE LAND USE

In developing the land use plan, the proposed I-69 project was a major consideration in this planning process. This project is expected to have more influence on the future land use pattern in the region and in Vanderburgh County than any other single factor or project over the next 25 years. The I-69 Environmental Impact Statement describes the anticipated impact on land use as follows:

“...the project may both generate new growth and shift existing growth to locations in proximity to the proposed Interstate, particularly to areas adjacent to proposed interchanges.”

Most of the land use changes from I-69 are planned for the northeast portion of Vanderburgh County, where a major industrial corridor is proposed. Commercial development is expected around many of the interchanges. Although these areas will contain the majority of the changes, many undeveloped areas throughout the remainder of the I-69 corridor will also be developed due to this project.

To prepare for the anticipated growth and to maximize the potential benefits for Vanderburgh County and the region, planning efforts concerning the I-69 corridor must be coordinated with Warrick and Gibson Counties. The Indiana Department of Transportation will be offering grant

funds through the I-69 Community Planning Program for developing local plans. Vanderburgh County will participate in this program and assist our neighboring Counties along the I-69 route to participate also. Participation will provide a regional strategy for development of this corridor; and will establish/update future plans and tools for plan implementation for the local communities within the corridor. A growth management report that includes land use and the necessary local road network should be prepared to address potential development before the highway is completed in 2015.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND FRAMEWORK

The Action Plan is the frame work which should be used as a guide in determining land use decisions. This framework involves statements of goals, objectives and policies for land use and development. These policies should be written in a manner to give clear guidance to developers and to the City and County on development location decisions and growth issues. In fact, the land use policies in the Comprehensive Plan must be considered by local government when making decisions on rezonings and subdivisions.

Citizen involvement in formulating these development policies is the means to keep the plan current and to achieve the desired vision for the community. Local government cannot by itself manage growth and development. However, the adherence to well thought out and coordinated public policies that are supported by the community can successfully direct land use practices from the administration of land development regulations to the timing and location of development.

GENERAL LAND USE ACTION PLAN

GOAL

To create an overall pattern of orderly development through the arrangement of land uses that are adequately and efficiently served by a system of transportation, community services, and utilities, and sensitive to the natural physical qualities of the area.

OBJECTIVE

Growth of the community should progress outwardly from an intensely developed CBD, its surrounding neighborhoods and other major activity centers to areas with lower density development. To minimize unplanned or leapfrog growth in the Transitional and Rural areas, growth should occur as infill development or be contiguous to existing built up areas.

POLICIES

Focus efforts on downtown Evansville to ensure its continued economic viability and dominance as the focal point of social, cultural and financial activity in the community.

Develop higher density residential uses close to major activity centers to promote efficiency in land use, utility and alternative modes of travel.

Endorse development that is contiguous and compact and which minimizes future urban problems such as traffic congestion, storm water runoff, and unplanned growth.

Provide a transportation network and a utility system which directs development to the desired growth areas.

Coordinate with Warrick and Gibson Counties on establishing a regional strategy for planning and development of the I-69 corridor to prepare for the future and maximize the benefits this highway will provide to the region.

Participate with our neighboring Counties/communities in the INDOT I-69 Community Planning Program by seeking grant funding for local planning activities to provide a vision for future development.

Undertake a growth management report and, if necessary, sub-area transportation plans for the I-69 corridor in Vanderburgh County to address the impacts of anticipated development and provide a plan for the future, local road network.

OBJECTIVE

The development pattern should efficiently utilize the existing land, environmental and fiscal resources, infrastructure and services.

POLICIES

Enhance the environment for revitalization, redevelopment and rehabilitation by expanding public and private incentives.

Promote infill on vacant lots and adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized structures to efficiently use land and existing infrastructure.

Examine alternative development types, including cluster developments and planned unit developments, as a means of protecting green space and environmentally sensitive areas.

Maintain a generally compact form of urban development in order to efficiently utilize public/private investments.

OBJECTIVE

Require new developments to incur the full cost or participate in the cost of the public infrastructure (e.g. roads, water and sewer) needed to serve these developments through dedication of easements, and construction of infrastructure improvements.

POLICIES

In the review of proposed developments, use impact analyses to determine the effect of new developments on the environment, road network, educational system, community services, and utilities.

Insure that the utility system and transportation system improvements necessary to accommodate new development are in place when needed to mitigate development impacts.

Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to provide the Area Plan Commission with the authority to require special studies and to address off-site improvements as warranted to mitigate substantial development impacts on community infrastructure, services and flooding.

Research and establish the threshold criteria that would initiate traffic studies for new development.

OBJECTIVE

Emphasize development characteristics that enhance Evansville's vision through urban design and historic preservation.

POLICIES

Promote urban design at the community and neighborhood levels, including the preservation and rehabilitation of historic sites.

Locations that qualify as historic sites should be preserved and renovated for public and private use.

Efforts should be made to preserve the defining elements of historic buildings.

Strengthen existing focal points and create new focal points to connect elements of historic and natural importance, creating interest and variety in the community landscape.

Encourage natural resource corridor protection to improve and preserve water quality of streams, wildlife habitat and rural character.

Acquire scenic or conservation easements to protect natural and man-made environmental resources.

Discourage rezonings that will require a variance to meet code requirements.

Encourage progressive site design and compliance with all Zoning Code requirements to reduce the need for variances.

Investigate changing the sign requirements in the Zoning Code to enhance/improve signage as a contributing element in the aesthetic quality of the community in general and particularly along major corridors and at I-69 interchanges.

Research the feasibility of placing overhead utility lines underground within new major subdivisions and redeveloped areas; and then evaluate establishing criteria / priorities for burying existing lines.

Investigate changing the parking requirements in the Zoning Code to reduce the amount of impervious pavement required and establish criteria to allow for permeable surfaces.