



INTRODUCTION



I. INTRODUCTION

The Town of Ferdinand continues to face new challenges each year that stimulate the community to make improvements, prepare for growth, and embrace the potential of its future. As a part of Southwest Indiana, Ferdinand has been affected by the tremendous economic change resulting from the construction of the Toyota and A. K. Steel Plants in the region. These economic changes have sparked industrial, commercial, and residential growth and development throughout the region. As stated in the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, ***“the issue is not whether the growth will occur, rather the issue is how can Southwest Indiana and Ferdinand manage the growth as it occurs”***. This statement still holds true today, as growth along the Interstate 64 Corridor continues to increase and the region is preparing itself for two major transportation corridor improvements: US 231 Realignment through Spencer and Dubois County and the first segment of the Interstate 69 Extension Project through Gibson, Pike, Dubois, and Daviess Counties.

This comprehensive plan is a guide for the future of the Town of Ferdinand. The community seeks to improve the quality of life for its existing and future residents, focusing on the existing assets within the community and developing a plan for future growth.

As the Town of Ferdinand and other communities in Southwest Indiana continue to grow during the next ten years, the community will experience changes in development, transportation, population, and in services such as parks, sewers, and public safety. All of these changes will have potential effects upon the quality of life of the residents of the Ferdinand Community.



The future of Ferdinand will be dependent upon a balance of growth and the necessary public services and facilities that can support this growth. This will be accomplished through commitments to:

- Sound Comprehensive Community Planning
- Maintaining a Long-Range View of the Public Interest when Evaluating Land Use Issues
- Support for Infill Development and Revitalization Initiatives
- Encouraging the Conservation of Significant Natural Features and Environmentally-Sensitive Land
- Encouraging the Continued Agricultural Use of the Area's Most Productive Farmland

The final outcome of these planning efforts requires all to acknowledge that the public good is affected by private and community development. The individual actions of landowners, developers, and residents affect the whole community. Similarly, the actions taken by local leaders through zoning and infrastructure investments also contribute to the overall development of the Ferdinand Community.



A. The Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan is an official public document adopted by a local government to serve as a policy to guide decisions about the development of the community. As a policy guide, it must recognize the interdependence of land use decisions, resource management, the process of governing, and the physical infrastructure of the built environment.

What does a Comprehensive Plan do?

Because it is comprehensive, the plan provides guidance to the decision-making process of the *Plan Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Town Manager, and Town Council*. Officials within these groups have been empowered to protect community character and natural resources, ensure efficient expenditure of public funds, and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of those living within the Town of Ferdinand. A comprehensive plan is developed as a vision for the community's future and a road map for community decision-making.



How is a Comprehensive Plan Developed?

A successful comprehensive plan relies upon resident participation to represent the voices of a wide range of citizens. Their input is an essential element to formulate the goals and objectives of the plan. These public participation activities define a course of action that the Town of Ferdinand needs to undertake to maintain a vision for the future.

It is critical that the document represents those individuals who have been active participants in the planning process and identifies the actual interests of area residents. Through community workshops, public hearings, and meetings with the *Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee* and *Town Council*, the Comprehensive Plan is a statement about the Town's future, by and for the people of the Ferdinand Community.

Preparation of a Comprehensive Plan and updates to that Plan is the responsibility of the Plan Commission (IC 36-7-4-501). Indiana Code 36-7-4-201 specifies that the overall purpose of planning is to “encourage units to improve the health, safety, convenience, and welfare of their citizens and to plan for the future development of their communities...” The “Goals and Objectives” section of this plan has been designed with the following general principles in mind, as specified in IC 36-7-4-201:

- Carefully plan transportation systems.
- Allow growth with adequate provisions for public ways, utilities, healthcare, educational opportunities, and recreational facilities.
- Consider the needs of industry in future growth decisions.
- Ensure that residential areas help to create healthy surroundings for family life.
- Support growth of the community through a proportionate and efficient expenditure of public funds.

Additionally, Indiana Code 36-7-4-501 specifies that the purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is “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.”



What is the value of a Comprehensive Plan?

The value of a comprehensive plan is to articulate the community's future vision and how it will move toward that vision. To some degree all development is planned, but a comprehensive plan looks at all of the pieces as a whole, coordinating efforts to avoid duplication and limit expensive public expenditures. It protects the general welfare of the community by ensuring quality development occurs in the right locations and that incompatible uses are not adjacent. A comprehensive plan promotes *proactive thinking* about issues central to the community, rather than addressing them in a reactive manner. Planning can provide numerous benefits to a community, including:

- Coordinating capital improvement expenditures.
- Directing development to areas capable of handling increased growth pressures.
- Ensuring that developers will pay their fair share of improvements needed as a direct result of their development projects.
- Helping local government provide efficient services.
- Improving the quality of life.
- Limiting and mitigating impacts to natural resources of all types.
- Preserving and enhancing community character.
- Preventing incompatible development from locating in a residential neighborhood.
- Protecting property values.
- Providing a circulation network of safe streets and sidewalks.

The Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan contains the following sections:

- Introduction
- Community Profile
- Public Participation
- Action Plan



The Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Ferdinand includes the following major recommendations:

- Increase the number of people involved in community events, activities, and general leadership.
- Provide adequate community services to support new growth.
- Encourage economic investment within the community.
- Provide a broader range of products and services in the community.
- Promote carefully-planned growth.
- Encourage quality development, redevelopment, and revitalization.
- Promote the efficient use of land.
- Increase residential investment in the community.
- Provide a wide range of housing options within the community.
- Capitalize on existing transportation infrastructure.
- Promote collaborations and partnerships to address regional decisions that may affect the community.
- Enhance the community identity of the Town of Ferdinand.
- Reinforce community pride.
- Protect the small town character of Ferdinand.

Ultimately, the implementation of the Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan requires the recognition and acceptance that public interest is affected by both personal and community actions.

For any Comprehensive Plan, its overall goal can be described as a method of helping a community to analyze its decisions for the future within the context of its local character, history, and traditions; to develop a road map for its future; and to move forward with proactive measures to prepare for that future.



B. 1987 Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Ferdinand embarked upon its first Comprehensive Planning process in 1985. Led by a group of community leaders, meetings were held in the library of the Monastery over the course of two years to develop a final planning document. Community leaders were looking for ways to organize the community, so that “spot zoning” would not become a common occurrence and so that each land use was located in the most preferred area.

The endeavors of this group of community leaders were also looking for ways to prepare the Town of Ferdinand for future growth. From ongoing group discussions, a bypass road was devised as a way to ensure that the community would have ample room to grow and provide for industrial expansion, thus reinforcing their goal to better organize the land uses in the Ferdinand Area. Overall, the Town of Ferdinand sought direction for the future of their community and also a mechanism to update their local zoning ordinances.

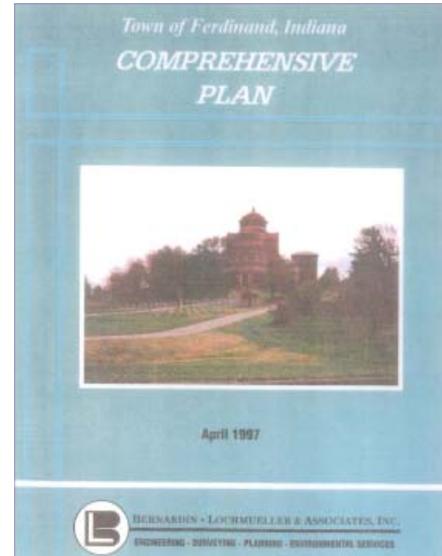
The following is an excerpt from the ordinance establishing the 1987 Comprehensive Plan, outlining the major objectives for the future development of the Town and its jurisdictional area to maintain the convenience of each land use to one another and the compatibility of different land uses where adjacent to one another.

- A realistic reservation of future land use areas for commercial and industrial uses.
- Keeping residential neighborhoods as free as possible of major trafficways, while trying to ensure that major trafficways form a physical framework within which neighborhoods can have good access to major trafficways and other areas of the Town and jurisdictional area.
- Providing for recreational uses and open spaces.
- Restricting extensive commercial development to those areas already primarily used for such purposes and restricting extensive industrial development to those areas already primarily used for such purposes or where sufficient buffer zones between those areas and residential areas are provided.
- Keeping industrial and residential land uses separate.
- Assuring that residential land uses have appropriate yards and trafficways.
- Assuring that future amendments to the zoning and subdivision control ordinance consider the provisions of this plan.



C. 1997 Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan was completed for the Town of Ferdinand in 1997 to help prepare it for the impacts of growth as it embraced several economic changes in the region: the additions of A.K. Steel near Rockport and Toyota of Indiana, Inc. near Princeton. The document stated, “The Town Council with the recommendation of the Plan Commission determined that to meet the challenges of the future growth and a development pressure, a Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan was needed.” The Plan Commission was looking for ways to prioritize its investments that would encourage development and growth in their community, specifically for the development of the parcels near the Interstate 64 interchange.



In addition to the potential for future development, the Plan Commission identified the need for a more organized document that was more complete and much more comprehensive, because the plan often was not capable of reinforcing the decisions that needed to be made concerning specific development, improvements, and growth within the community. This updated document also allowed legal standing for an update to local ordinances for zoning, development standards, and land use policies. The document also stated, “As Ferdinand moves into the 21st Century and towards the year 2020, the Plan will provide the framework upon which orderly growth and development can occur while maintaining the unique quality of life in the community of Ferdinand.”



D. 2007 Comprehensive Plan

This Comprehensive Plan is the third document of its kind completed for the Town of Ferdinand. The development of this document relies heavily on guidance from community leaders, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and comments from the general public.

Over the past twenty years, many communities across the nation have realized that planning with community participation is the most effective way to plan. The residents of Ferdinand are the true experts on community issues within their community. The assembled planning team members from Bonar Group serve only as facilitators and information transmitters to guide the community and its leaders in identifying, inventorying, and formalizing the informal planning that they undertake in their daily lives.

The planning process was designed to enhance day-to-day planning efforts by increasing the information available to leaders and citizens to make informed decisions. The intent was to establish a dynamic planning process that would continue to facilitate and stimulate communication among community stakeholders well into the future. This approach to planning ensures that future development and community decisions and activities will continue to adapt to the changing needs and demands of the community as a whole.

The Comprehensive Plan process was undertaken to establish an updated framework to guide land-based decision-making for the incorporated areas of the town, extra-territorial jurisdiction areas, and any areas that may be annexed in the future. The policies contained in this document are aimed at promoting public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, and the general welfare and the efficient provision of services during all stages of development. Ultimately, it outlines the needs of the community, sets policies that address planning issues, and recommends appropriate actions to achieve the desired results.



Project Partners

Town Council: Ferdinand is governed by a Town Council, which consists of three elected officials who are responsible for the administration of town business. The powers and duties of the council (related to planning and development) include the following: managing town property, constructing and maintaining roads, operating and funding services/programs, approving and passing ordinances (including zoning-related ordinances), levying taxes for public services, and sitting on or making appointments to various commissions and boards, including the Plan Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Under Indiana Code, the Town Council holds the legislative authority to adopt the Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan and implement all planning-related policies and strategies for the incorporated area. Implementation will take place with the guidance of the Plan Commission, the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), and Zoning Administrator. The Town Council is also the fiscal authority for the local government. They provide funds for the completion of the Comprehensive Plan document and will assist in the ongoing implementation of the plan through the operating budget for the Town of Ferdinand.

Town Manager: The Town Manager is a full-time paid position that helps to direct the general welfare of the Town of Ferdinand. This position is responsible for day-to-day operations of the Police Department, Volunteer Fire Department, Utility Department, Park and Street Department, and also oversees the activities and maintenance of civic properties, including the Town Hall, Fire House, Police Department, Water Tower, Sewage Treatment Plant, local parks, and other public utility properties. The Town Manager also acts as a liaison between the community and many regional and county representatives for issues and concerns related to the Town of Ferdinand. Also, this person often acts as a grant administrator, zoning administrator, and office manager.



Steering Committee: The steering committee draws from a variety of different public organizations and offices. It also includes concerned citizens who want to play an active role in the Comprehensive Plan process. The steering committee acts as the voice of the public as provided by a diverse group of community representatives. Upon review and approval of the Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan, it is the Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee's responsibility to recommend the adoption of the document to the Plan Commission.

Bonar Group – Planning Services Area: Bonar Group was the primary consultant for the Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan under the direction of the Town Council and the Steering Committee. Bonar Group provided the services of its Planning Director, Project Planner, and Mapping Specialist, as well as other members of the firm to form the Planning Team. This team gathered and processed the data for the community profile, facilitated workshops and meetings, provided expertise in all phases of the project, and drafted the comprehensive planning document.



Process

The Town Council initiated the Comprehensive Plan Update to ensure that the plan reflects the ongoing changes within the region and to address the code changes necessary to promote growth, maximize municipal investment, and maintain the quality of life.

The Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan is to be used by community leaders as a tool for guiding decisions, by policy makers for the development of ordinances, and it can also serve the development community as a reference to make informed development choices. The following basic principles guide this comprehensive plan:

1. The community's existing visual character, historic assets, natural features, heritage, and values should be retained and enhanced.
2. Decision-making processes should recognize and integrate short-term and long-term land use, transportation, environmental, institutional, and economic development objectives and options.
3. Planning efforts should be coordinated between all levels of government.
4. Cost-effective solutions should receive primary consideration.
5. Citizen participation should remain an integral part of the implementation and amendment process.
6. The pattern of new and infill development should be compatible with the character of existing development, including historic assets and natural features.
7. Civic, institutional, and commercial activity should not be isolated in single-use areas.
8. Future town growth should be compact, pedestrian-friendly, and a balanced mix of land uses.



Phase I: Initiating a Plan - The first phase of the planning process started with the Town Council's realization that an updated comprehensive plan was needed. Subsequently, local officials dealt with administrative tasks while setting up the project framework. This preparation phase included:

- Securing funding.
- Choosing the consultant.
- Negotiating the Scope of Work.
- Creating the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.
- Creating base maps to record data.
- Gathering relevant documents, studies, and plans.
- Coordinating public participation activities and establishing meeting schedules.

Phase II: Data Gathering and Analysis - The second phase of the planning process involved implementing a variety of data gathering activities. The existing condition of facilities, services, land use, and development were gathered and analyzed. The majority of this data is located within the Community Profile Section. Some of these tasks included:

- Surveying current land uses, classifying each parcel by principal use.
- Reviewing US Census Data and county records to construct a community profile based upon demographic, socio-economic, environmental, and development-related information.
- Gathering existing data on local utilities, infrastructure, community services, and regional amenities.

Phase III: Public Participation – Resident participation was an important part of the Comprehensive Plan process. The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was consulted throughout all the phases of the planning process to discuss issues important to them and the community. Additionally, the community played an active role by participating in public meetings and workshops, geared toward both adults and children, to identify critical issues and other important community information. A more thorough investigation of these activities is presented in the Public Participation Section of this plan.



Phase IV: Draft Plan Development - This planning phase included revisions to the future land-use map and the organization of the information gathered to create a draft plan. Comments gathered at public meetings provided the essential information for textual components. The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee participated by reviewing the goals and objectives and offering comments and suggestions. Following the receipt of these comments, the final goals and objectives were presented and agreed upon. Once these were completed, a draft plan was presented to the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee for review and comment.

Phase V: Final Plan Completion - In the final phase, revisions and edits were made based upon the comments and feedback from community members and leaders. A final document was recommended to the Town Council for further review and its final adoption.