



ACTION PLAN



IV. ACTION PLAN

The best measure of the success of a Comprehensive Plan is the extent to which the Plan is implemented. When the recommendations of a Comprehensive Plan are translated into specific actions, then the community can make progress in moving toward its goals and accomplishing its objectives. This Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Ferdinand is the culmination of a ten-month planning process, which included the participation and input from the Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, the Town Council, Town Staff, other community representatives, and numerous citizens throughout the community.

An *Action Plan* for the Town of Ferdinand has been developed through a series of meetings with the Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, interviews with various community leaders, and comments gathered from the Ferdinand Community Workshop and the *Planner's Day @ School Program* that was presented at Forest Hills High School. From these activities, a series of eight overall focus areas emerged during the Comprehensive Planning Process.

Community Character
Recreational and Cultural Opportunities
Economic Development
Promotion and Marketing
Community Development
Housing
Local Government
Land Use

Each of these focus areas represent specific aspects of the Ferdinand Area that the community has identified as opportunities for improvement or enhancement. As the community strives to meet the needs of its residents and provides an atmosphere that welcomes potential growth opportunities for the Ferdinand Area, it is crucial to identify the specific direction that each focus area should be moving towards.

While certain endeavors and activities are detailed in this section, the needs of the community are dependent upon broad-based ideas and the specific direction that is stated in the goals and objectives of this comprehensive plan. The overall framework outlined in the goals and



objectives are intended to provide a foundation for future decision-making and act as a guide to community leaders.

Additionally, this section of the Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan speaks to specific issues that can be directly managed through local zoning and land use ordinances and the subsequent enforcement of those ordinances. Still other issues can be addressed through local improvement projects, grass-roots initiatives by local organizations and civic groups, and significant outreach to other communities, organizations, and state entities with a vested interest in the Ferdinand Area.



A. Goals and Objectives

The goals, objectives, and associated ideas provided in this Action Plan Section are intended to provide local leaders with a specific direction to follow. They also present concepts, as identified by the public and the Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, which should be carried out through tasks and activities. These include, but are not limited to, the update and further development of land use ordinances and policies to help maintain the preferred quality of life for the residents, business owners, and property owners of the Town of Ferdinand.

The following paragraphs discuss the expressed issues, needs and ideas of the community. They are divided into sections for each of the focus areas identified and conclude with a goal and set of objectives.

*(Many of the concepts and ideas identified in this Action Plan align with the **Charter of the New Urbanism** as developed by the Congress for the New Urbanism.)*



Community Character

Many communities within the State of Indiana are currently striving to maintain their existing “sense of place” by preserving the heritage and legacy that generations of previous residents have developed. The first step towards the accomplishment of this objective is to recognize what defines the community’s identity and character.

A “small town” atmosphere and “quaint” downtown are often how a community member would respond when asked to describe the identity of their community. However, with numerous communities across the Midwest offering similar features, architectural styles, and small, locally-owned businesses, it becomes important for residents of a community to understand what makes their community different (i.e., what sets their area apart) and build upon those qualities as a part of their future progress.

Small Town Atmosphere

The Town of Ferdinand and the surrounding areas have a strong family-oriented quality of life that provides a good place to live and raise a family. Participants at the Ferdinand Community Workshop talked about how they valued the “small town feel”, and the friendly, close-knit atmosphere of the community. The importance of retaining this atmosphere as a focal point of the Area’s identity as the community grows in population was identified as a major issue at the Ferdinand Community Workshop.

Heritage and Values

The Ferdinand Area has a rich history founded on the strong work ethic of German immigrants, beginning in its early settlement and continuing to the present. During the Ferdinand Community Workshop, there was significant interest expressed in maintaining the existing community values and heritage, including the German aspects of that heritage, as illustrated by the annual Ferdinand *Heimatfest* and *Christkindlmarkt* events.

Monastery Immaculate Conception

Another aspect that makes the Ferdinand Community unique is the Sisters of St. Benedict who reside at the Monastery Immaculate Conception. This religious community following the Benedictine Tradition numbers 181 women, including approximately 130 who live within the Town of Ferdinand. Their mission statement is: “We, the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana, are monastic women



seeking God through the Benedictine Tradition of community life, prayer, hospitality, and service to others. By our life and work, we commit ourselves to be a presence of peace as we join our sisters and brothers in the common search for God.” Residents and other Ferdinand Community Workshop participants identified the importance of maintaining and improving the relationship with the Monastery as a focal point of the identity and character of the Ferdinand Area.

Historic Preservation

Historic sites and buildings play a valuable role in educating future generations about the culture and heritage of a community. Many of these places are unique and hold special meaning within the community. However, historic preservation and the adaptive reuse of existing structures can be a difficult, complex, and costly process that often leads to pressure for the demolition of a structure as an easier, short-term solution to the “problem” of an older building in need of rehabilitation.

Also, funding for the preservation of historic properties or buildings must compete with fiscal needs for parks, public safety, and other public amenities, if local funding is available at all. Preservation funding is available from a grant program managed by the Department of Natural Resources – Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (DHPA). While highly competitive, several eligibility requirements do exist, primarily eligibility and subsequent successful application for the structure to be added to the *National Register of Historic Places*. There may also be options available for the Town of Ferdinand to establish a Revolving Loan Fund for this purpose.

Adaptive Reuse

Community identity, character, and sense of place are closely connected to a thriving, active downtown area, whether it is large or small. This connection is often dependent on the visibility and use of downtown storefronts to help attract customers. A way to support the ongoing use of existing historic structures is to capitalize upon those buildings that may have existing storefronts. Maintaining those structures that had once been used for local mercantile uses can provide opportunity for businesses to attract customers. Likewise, it would be feasible to support those properties that may have once had second-story residential units.



Ferdinand should permit the adaptive reuse of downtown commercial buildings to maximize the number of storefronts available for commercial or office spaces. It might also be feasible to limit residential units to the upper stories of these commercial buildings by supporting mixed-uses in the downtown area.

Downtown Reinvestment

The commercial core of the Ferdinand Community still exists along SR 162, but it is not currently being used to its full potential. Personal convenience, disinvestment, newer suburban-style buildings and development, and aging commercial structures have redirected commercial development both to the north and the south of the “downtown” area. While they are still primarily located along SR 162, these types of changes are common in many communities. However, many communities also went through periods of time where historic buildings were replaced or modern enhancements were made to existing buildings, such as facades or window replacements. These changes also affect the historical atmosphere that a “downtown” or “Main Street” in Indiana often provides.

Personal convenience is possibly the largest factor contributing to a deteriorating downtown. This includes both vehicular access to parking and visual access from a primary transportation route. Today’s consumer is driven by convenience in association with the automobile. In other words, they will patronize the most convenient place along the most direct route toward their final destination. Small communities, such as Ferdinand, have lost some of the previous SR 162 traffic to other routes, including Interstate 64 and what will eventually be a re-routed four-lane highway for US 231, west of the Town of Ferdinand. While the downtown commercial area is still compact and convenient to the core of the community, the more convenient options do exist and typically win the approval of today’s consumer.

Off-Street Parking

Another significant question that needs to be answered about the ongoing development of the downtown area is how to deal with the issue of off-street parking. On one hand, people often perceive that the lack of available parking is the major reason that people do not use downtown areas more often. Although the issue was not brought up during the Ferdinand Community Workshop, parking in downtown areas is frequently identified as a significant community issue. On the other hand, revitalizing a downtown area generally requires that the

population density is high enough to encourage significant new private investment. In other words, to develop a site; there needs to be enough people living in a focused area to support local businesses.

Local Marketing

The Town of Ferdinand should continue to provide products, services, or other similar items that are connected to the identity, character, and existing amenities of the community. By focusing on these activities, the Ferdinand Area will entice travelers along Interstate 64 and visitors to Holiday World, the Ferdinand State Forest, Patoka Lake Reservoir, and other tourist sites located in the South Central and Southwestern Indiana Regions to visit and patronize Downtown Ferdinand.

Other communities have had some success in this area, but it is an ongoing challenge that should be addressed in an organized manner. One way to accomplish this task would be to create a more formal downtown business group or consider forming an official *Indiana Main Street* organization to formulate a plan for the future of the downtown area. One possible component of such a plan, which is already under consideration, is to pursue a **Streetscape Improvement Project** along Main Street. This project would also include the burial of existing utility lines and removal of utility poles, as well as sidewalk improvements, consistent wayfinding signage, historic street lighting, and pedestrian safety and convenience enhancements.

Compact Core Development

Another method to maintain the historic integrity and “small town” character of the community is to focus on the creation of a “critical mass” of residents in and near the downtown area. In other words, by maintaining a concentrated population near the core of the community, commercial businesses will prosper from local patronage, rather than focusing their spending in areas far from their home, which require a drive in the automobile rather than a short walk. To maintain the existing “critical mass” of residents and to potentially increase this mass, community leaders should encourage quality residential growth that is compact and pedestrian-friendly. They should also consider these concepts when reviewing development opportunities in local decision-making processes.



Goal 1 - Community Character

Enhance the existing character, heritage, values, and overall appearance of the Ferdinand Community, while promoting carefully-planned growth in the Community.

1. Promote the Ferdinand Community for its existing character as a safe place to raise a family, its natural beauty, and the comfortable lifestyle and friendliness of its residents.
2. Preserve the family-oriented values, intense pride of community, and strong work ethic exemplified in the traditions of the German Heritage of the Ferdinand Area.
3. Support the unique relationship of the Town of Ferdinand and the Monastery Immaculate Conception as we collaborate to fulfill community and social development needs of area residents.
4. Promote the regular maintenance and upkeep of homes, businesses, storefronts, yards, and driveways to ensure a positive community image throughout the Ferdinand Community.
5. Protect the historic built environment of the Ferdinand Area by promoting awareness of local history, architecture, culture, and overall value in preserving the heritage of the community.
6. Promote the utilization of existing buildings throughout Ferdinand by adaptively reusing them to serve the needs of the community, use land resources wisely, and to support carefully-planned growth.
7. Enhance the aesthetic beauty of Downtown Ferdinand and adjacent areas by developing a plan for the burial of utility lines, providing streetscape improvements that accent the character of the community, and encouraging local investment along Main Street.

Recreational and Cultural Opportunities

In Ray Oldenburg’s 1989 book, “The Great Good Place”, he notes that vital towns and neighborhoods offer three realms: “the home, the workplace, and the great good place, an informal gathering spot—such as a park, community center, or coffee shop – where people create and celebrate community”. The Town of Ferdinand has many such places for their community to gather: a community center, a lake, sports fields, parks, open spaces, trails, schools, playgrounds, numerous local businesses, and even the Monastery campus. However, maintaining these spaces and creating a community-wide pattern of celebrating the heritage of the Town of Ferdinand is an ongoing challenge.

The community has continued to maintain traditional events, invent new ways to improve local landmarks and amenities, and utilize the local resources within their community. However, it is still often difficult for residents in a community to recognize what they have, how precious it is, and to not take that for granted. Some communities may not possess a strong heritage; however, the Town of Ferdinand seems to have maintained this where others have not. Yet, comments from the Ferdinand Community Workshop reflected that the community understands that there is still room to improve, even when the community is doing a great job.

Community Parks

Parks and other open spaces are places that support community and neighborhood life. Elements and furnishings, such as fountains, memorials, monuments, open meadows, and specific sports-related fields; give each park special character. Parks can also provide shared amenities for a neighborhood, connecting adjacent neighborhoods and enhancing neighborhood life by providing the necessary green space, trees, light, and air that improves the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

Park and recreation issues that were identified during the planning process included concerns over the cleanliness of the parks, a desire to expand both the available play equipment and available recreational opportunities, and a desire to explore expanding the existing parks to allow space for additional future amenities. While the Town of Ferdinand has a wide variety of recreation areas and amenities within their local park system, there are always some improvements could be made.



Significant attention has been made to develop the 18th Street Recreation Park and the 5th Street Park. Regular maintenance and cleanliness has not historically been an issue in any of these parks, but providing new and improved amenities to those that already exist within the park could be added. Additionally, other parks and open spaces should be planned now at the outset of a period of potential growth. This could be completed by identifying areas that are not developable and then working with those property owners to dedicate or donate portions of these properties to the Town of Ferdinand for the use in the local park and recreation system. Significant areas that should be considered include the floodplains to the north and west of the community. While no structures or sports fields would be sufficient to be located in this flood-prone area, the drainage ditches and creeks that do exist provide a unique opportunity in the future to further develop trails and even possibly picnic areas that together will create a linear park.

Pedestrian Connectivity

A significant feature of the 18th Street Recreation Park is the pedestrian connectivity that has been enhanced in this area of the community. Because of the addition of trails throughout the park, there is connectivity between amenities within the park, as well as to several community destinations nearby. However, connectivity to residential areas to the north of this park is limited. Developing pedestrian connectivity to and from all areas within the community would be an ideal improvement for this and other parks located throughout the community. By providing pedestrian infrastructure, it establishes a safe link for residents, both adults and children, to utilize the park directly from their home, place of work, or neighboring commercial area. As the community continues to grow, it will be important to continue pedestrian enhancements throughout the community, not only for safety, but also to encourage growth and economic development.

Entertainment, Arts, and Culture

There are a variety of existing entertainment and cultural facilities and opportunities in the overall Ferdinand Area, including Holiday World and Splashin' Safari, the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, the Lincoln Amphitheatre, the French Lick Springs Resort and Casino, the Jasper Arts Center, the Monastery Immaculate Conception, and St. Meinrad Archabbey. But as is common in many communities, concerns were expressed during the Ferdinand Community Workshop about the lack of entertainment and cultural opportunities either "closer

to home” or for specific community age groups, especially teenagers and other young people.

To help take a leadership role in promoting the development of both additional entertainment and cultural opportunities for Ferdinand Community residents, it was recommended that a new **Ferdinand Culture and Arts Group** be created. Whether it be committee formed from another group or a representative group of several organizations and groups, it is important that an organized group of individuals identifies ways to improve entertainment and cultural opportunities within the community. This group would not replace any existing event-based coordination or other organization, but should exhibit a collaborative atmosphere from the community to build upon those activities, events, and opportunities within the Town of Ferdinand.

Community Facilities

With the City of Jasper so close to the Town of Ferdinand, it may seem unnecessary to develop some services and facilities that would be duplicated. However, there are a few exceptions to that rule that often play a key role in the quality of life of any community, regardless of size. Generally, these types of community facilities should be located within the downtown, a neighborhood, or residential area. By constructing facilities in these locations rather than in the outskirts of a community, it provides residents a centralized location that can be integrated into fabric of the community. It also provides all residents with adequate access to the facility, expanding transportation opportunities beyond the automobile to include alternative transportation methods, such as walking and other pedestrian activities.

One of these community facilities is the Ferdinand Public Library. While the facility is somewhat small and has limited amenities because of its size and date of construction, discussion is currently underway about the potential expansion and relocation of the facility. Expanding and improving the library was identified as a significant issue during the planning process.

Another community facility is the Ferdinand Branch of the Tri-County YMCA. For the past three years, the Tri-County YMCA has been working closely with the Sisters of St. Benedict and has utilized the Marian Heights Gymnasium and Marian Heights Academy Art Studio for their operations in the Town of Ferdinand. The development of a new YMCA facility was identified as a significant community



opportunity. Currently the Tri-County YMCA is conducting a funding campaign to expand their services in Southeast Dubois County by constructing a permanent full-service YMCA facility. As the YMCA continues to expand its services and outreach, the Town of Ferdinand and organizations within the community should strengthen their existing collaborations with both YMCA and the Sisters to ensure that the Ferdinand Branch of the Tri-County YMCA will develop within the Town of Ferdinand.

Specific coordination should be made with the Ferdinand Town Council and the Ferdinand Plan Commission as potential residential development opportunities arise and how those opportunities could include or collaborate with the Tri-County YMCA and the Ferdinand Public Library for location to construct their facilities.



Goal 2 - Recreational and Cultural Opportunities

Improve recreational and cultural opportunities available within the Ferdinand Community that will serve a variety of age groups and interests.

1. Promote the Tri-County YMCA to expand its facility and services to serve the people of the Tri-County Area.
2. Promote and assist in the expansion of the Ferdinand Public Library so that it offers updated facilities and services to the Ferdinand Community.
3. Enhance the local parks and recreation system by improving cleanliness, providing additional playground equipment, developing collaborative programs and sports activities, and expanding existing parks to provide space for additional amenities.
4. Promote the development of additional entertainment options in the Ferdinand Area to provide adequate opportunities for a variety of age groups and interests.
5. Encourage the development of broader cultural opportunities for the Ferdinand Community.



Economic Development

“Investment spawns investment” is a good way to begin a discussion concerning economic development. Some of the most significant economic drivers in any area are primary transportation routes, which in Southern Indiana includes SR 162, US 231, and Interstate 64, the only nearby east-west interstate highway. First, the community must develop a plan for the future that answers the questions, “Does the Town of Ferdinand want to grow?”, “Where should it grow?”, and “How should it grow?” The first task toward answering these questions is being completed through the development of this Plan. However, the answers to these questions may change over time; therefore, subsequent periodic updates to the Plan will ensure that it remains responsive to current and changing trends and needs.

Interstate 64 Interchange

In order for the Town of Ferdinand to benefit from the Interstate 64 Corridor as a primary economic driver, it will be important to accomplish several tasks. First, the community should consider updating its land use ordinances and policies that outline development standards, zoning classifications, and other guidelines to be followed to provide for well-planned growth and encourage further investment in the Ferdinand Area. Because the Interstate 64 Interchange could be considered as the “economic front door” to the community, development that occurs in this area should be representative of the character of the Town itself. In other words, somehow the development should be directed so that a welcoming and aesthetically-pleasing image is maintained. However, size and scale should be considered so that any development does not detract from the “small town” atmosphere that helps to define the community.

More specifically, zoning ordinances, overlay zones, or local economic development areas could also be identified to attract commercial and/or light industrial businesses or enhance eligibility for programs that could provide, if necessary, incentives for businesses to locate in this area.

Site Creation

The Town should continue to plan for, encourage, and invest in the development of competitive sites for existing business expansion and new business attraction. An example of this activity that has already been completed is the extension and enhancements made to fully-construct Industrial Park Road and its associated development sites, on



the south and west side of the Town of Ferdinand. As identified in the 1997 comprehensive plan, a recommendation was made to develop an “industrial by-pass” on the south side of the community, which would provide for an extension of both the existing Industrial Park Road and its accompanying industrial development sites. Among the Future Development Objectives included in that plan was to connect the southern end of this extension south of the East 1st Street intersection with SR 162. This roadway extension and associated utility extensions were completed in 2005, thus creating important development-ready sites available for the community.

By preparing parcels for future growth, it provides an instant incentive for businesses and industries to locate in any community. However, it is very important to carefully identify areas where the community wants to support new growth. A carefully-planned growth pattern will be critical in planning for the future of the Ferdinand Area. A state program that supports this idea is the “Shovel Ready Program” through the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC). Once eligible, the specific sites that are approved are entered onto a list of “shovel ready” sites located on the IEDC Website and promoted by the State of Indiana.

Pursuing tasks similar to the Industrial Park Road Project will help to address the needs of a proactive economic development strategy for the community. Several of the primary issues identified at the Ferdinand Community Workshop included diversifying the community’s industrial base and providing adequate infrastructure for business. Developing and maintaining an economic development strategy that identifies ways to promote the community, invest in new growth, and coordinate the needs and desires of potential businesses and industries is key to continuing economic prosperity for the Town of Ferdinand.

Industrial Diversification

As noted in “The Take on Our Town” information presented at the first ***Ferdinand Visioning Meeting - Vision Development Session I***, the top four major employers in 1996 within the Town of Ferdinand were Aristokraft (now MasterBrand Cabinets), Best Chairs (now Best Home Furnishings), Möbel Inc., and the Southeast Dubois County School Corporation. At this time, these remain the top four major employers. Maintaining the top employers is a positive sign for the community and the “cluster” of furniture and home furnishings provides a strong base for the community to build upon.



However, concerns have been expressed about the need to try to diversify the community's industrial base. Because there is currently a concentration in manufacturing in area industries, the community interested in attracting businesses and industries that may provide more "white collar" jobs, likes those within the life sciences or information technology areas. Focusing on the quality of local education, supporting the expansion and diversification of existing businesses, and providing local government coordination in economic development endeavors will be an important part of improving the chances of the Town of Ferdinand to attract these types of employers.

Youth Retention

The 1997 comprehensive plan noted that the median age for the Town of Ferdinand was steadily increasing from 24.7 years in 1970 to 32.9 years in 1990. Similar to many communities, a concern over the issue of a "brain drain" has been expressed by the Ferdinand Community. If young adults, particularly recent college graduates, do not feel that there are adequate employment opportunities available within the Ferdinand Area, they may choose not to stay or return to the community. The Ferdinand Visioning Committee discussed this issue in detail, resulting in the creation of a *Brain Gain Committee*, with goals to retain an additional 25% of college graduates returning to Ferdinand, "half returning as new college graduates to high skill/high wage jobs in the Ferdinand area" and "half returning within 15 years of college graduation to join local companies and as entrepreneurs".

In order to accomplish this task, it will be important for the Town of Ferdinand to provide a reason and potentially a mechanism that would allow these students an opportunity to live within the Town of Ferdinand. Whether educated with a high school diploma, an Associates Degree from Vincennes University-Jasper, or Bachelors or Masters Degree from any number of regional universities; a variety of needs should be identified for each educational attainment level. In order to accomplish the goals the Ferdinand Visioning Committee has established, a coordinated plan of action needs to be developed specifically for this task. It should identify housing needs, employment opportunities, limitations to employment proximity, preparation in secondary education, youth involvement in community endeavors, and local marketing of opportunities. The plan should attempt to provide an answer for young adults that question, "Why would I want to choose to live in the Town of Ferdinand?"

Locally-Owned Businesses

Specific consideration should also be given to the type or class of business that should be developed in a community. The Town of Ferdinand should encourage the ongoing development of locally-owned businesses, rather than encouraging the development of national franchise businesses.

The *Andersonville Study of Retail Economics*, released in October of 2004, outlines the benefits of focusing a community's efforts upon the development and expansion of locally-owned businesses. This study focused on a neighborhood on Chicago's north side known as Andersonville. With a primary thoroughfare that bisects the neighborhood and serves as its commercial center, further study of the community identifies that locally-owned businesses generate a greater impact on the local economy of the community, than those that are national franchise businesses. Some of the results of the study are shown below, with locally-owned business results in italics.

- *For every \$100 in consumer spending with a locally-owned business, \$68 remained in the local economy.*
- For every \$100 in consumer spending with a national franchise business, only \$43 remained in the local economy.
- *For every square foot occupied by a locally-owned business, the local impact was \$179.*
- For every square foot occupied by a national franchise business, the local impact was only \$105.

The study also identifies the following implications associated with a focus and support for national "chain" businesses:

- Local merchants generate substantially greater economic impact than chain firms.
- Replacement of local businesses with chains will reduce the overall vigor of the local economy.
- Changes in consumer spending habits can generate substantial local impact.
- Great care must be taken to ensure that public policy decisions do not inadvertently disadvantage locally-owned businesses.

Considering these facts, it would be appropriate for the Town of Ferdinand to encourage the development of locally-owned business and provide local support to existing locally-owned businesses within



the community. The Ferdinand Visioning Committee also recognized this as a community issue and established a goal that 25% of new businesses should be locally-owned.

Local support for these businesses can come in several forms. First and foremost, it is important for the residents of the Ferdinand Community to patronize these businesses, rather than traveling to Evansville or Jasper for a similar product or service. Secondly, local support can come from the leadership within the community. As the community promotes itself for local or regional tourism, business attraction, or to potential homeowners; leaders should highlight or also promote the unique locally-owned businesses that help to create the character of the Town of Ferdinand.

Finally, local government can provide support to locally-owned businesses by developing local incentive programs that would help to encourage residents to start new businesses. Local programs could also be developed that would help new locally-owned businesses to rehabilitate blighted buildings, Brownfields, or historic properties within the community. Still other opportunities may include tax incentives, fee abatements, or fast-track approval policies. Support for locally-owned businesses is very important and should be promoted by community leaders.

Local Business Support

While it is important to support locally-owned businesses, other businesses do exist within the community. These businesses may be franchises or a part of a larger corporation with headquarters located in another part of the county, state, or region; but encouraging their prosperity and growth will also have an impact on the local economy.

When attracting new businesses and industries, it is important not to abandon those that already exist and have made contributions to the Ferdinand Community. Local leaders should identify expansion opportunities by working closely with business leaders to find compatible businesses or industries that may utilize some by-product of their existing production that might provide some products or services already used by the company. Likewise, if a business was located within a closer proximity, it would reduce the existing costs to the existing businesses and industries of the Town of Ferdinand, which is often the case with logistics and trucking companies.



Employment Expansion

To attract new industrial or commercial businesses or specific service providers to the Ferdinand Area, it is crucial to outline specific guidelines that would make locating and building a new business an attractive investment. Providing specific guidelines and permitting processes at the local level that are easy to follow and understand may entice potential businesses to locate in the Ferdinand Area rather than locating elsewhere. Business owners and potential investors can easily identify communities that know exactly what they want and how they want to grow. This approach shows potential business owners that the community is serious about growth and has given it significant thought. It also proves community support for this growth and provides a welcoming atmosphere by community leaders, residents, and other business owners.

Early coordination with the Dubois County Economic Development Corporation and the local business leaders could also contribute to the decisions of potential business owners for future development of the business in the Ferdinand Area. Seeking out specific businesses that the community desires to locate within the community should be encouraged. This can be accomplished in a proactive manner by inviting them to the community and meeting with them to discuss the possibility of locating in the Ferdinand Area.

Economic Development Marketing

Another activity that should be considered is to develop a plan to market the community as a great place to live, raise a family, and establish a new business. For a business or industry to invest their money in a new community, it is important that the community is a place where its employees will want to live and raise their families. By incorporating the benefits of living in the Town of Ferdinand into a carefully-developed economic development packet with site information, history, amenities, demographics, and other local information; a potential developer or business will be able to take away critical information that will be important for their decision-making process.



Goal 3 - Economic Development

Expand economic investment and job growth in the Ferdinand Area by encouraging the development, expansion, and retention of quality businesses that provide employment opportunities with diverse career choices.

1. Encourage the diversification of the existing industrial base by promoting the Ferdinand Area and encouraging the ongoing development of suitable industrial growth, with an emphasis on the attraction of quality and professional jobs.
2. Maintain a community leadership and workforce base for the future by encouraging local high school and college graduates to stay or return to the Ferdinand Area to join local companies or create new business opportunities.
3. Maintain an ongoing investment in strategic infrastructure and other public services and encourage the expansion or provision of strategic private infrastructure and services, including technology services, to support quality economic development.
4. Continue to plan, invest in, and encourage the development of competitive sites for existing business expansion and new business attraction.
5. Promote the expansion of job growth through the creation of new businesses in the various business sectors.
6. Support existing local businesses so that they will improve, continue to invest in the Ferdinand Area, and contribute to the vitality of the local economy.



Promotion and Marketing

As previously noted, there are a number of existing facilities that should be considered and promoted as “attractions” for the Ferdinand Area, including Holiday World and Splashin’ Safari, the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, the Lincoln Amphitheatre, the Ferdinand State Forest, the Hoosier National Forest, Patoka Lake Reservoir, the Monastery Immaculate Conception, St. Meinrad Archabbey, and the recently-opened French Lick Springs Resort and Casino. Each of these sites provides a level of attraction for the Ferdinand Area. Given the community’s central location in relation to these attractions, tourism possibilities for the Ferdinand Area provide a significant benefit to the economic development of the Town of Ferdinand.

Community Branding

For smaller communities located in predominantly rural areas, marketing the community is an important part of developing tourism opportunities. The Town of Ferdinand has historic homes, historic downtown commercial buildings, and the Monastery Immaculate Conception complex, which offer a glimpse into the history of the Town of Ferdinand and what life was like in its past. However, to market the Town of Ferdinand, community leaders must determine what makes it unique and different from other communities by asking the question, “Why would I want to visit the Town of Ferdinand?” Specific events and social gatherings often help draw initial visitors to a community. But what is important is that those who visit during these seasonal events remember specific characteristics of the community that will make them return for another visit.

Developing a marketing concept or “brand” should be easily-identified because of the current events promoting their German-Catholic Heritage. However, executing and capitalizing on this “brand” may be a challenge for the Town of Ferdinand. Because the predominance of the German-Catholic traditions in Dubois County and South Central and Southwestern Indiana, many communities have identified with these traditions, as well.

One way to develop this “brand” further is to extend this heritage and concentrate on the physical parts of the community, rather than focusing solely on events or marketing materials.



While there is significant potential for the community to improve and reinforce its identity through the aesthetic enhancement of existing housing, businesses, and commercial areas, some aspects of this development will need to be initiated by the Town of Ferdinand. To assure residents, property owners, and business owners that aesthetic improvements are worth their investment, local government leaders must lead by example. Public investment in local improvement projects, such as the Streetscape Improvement Project along Main Street, could be developed in such a way that its design, detail, or aesthetic elements might contribute to the further development of this “brand”. By connecting this improvement project with local branding theme, the community will gain a significant aesthetic enhancement that provides a physical cohesiveness to the Main Street Corridor. These detailed enhancements to a significant community improvement project would help a visitor to identify with the German-Catholic Heritage of the Town of Ferdinand.

Regardless of the actions taken, it is important for the Town of Ferdinand to somehow build on its existing assets, events, and history to discover and build on its niche in the regional tourism market. The Ferdinand Visioning Committee has established a goal of capturing the business of 40% of Dubois County tourists, tripling the tourism-related income for the Town of Ferdinand, and partnering with the Monastery Immaculate Conception and Holiday World to fully develop the tourism potential of the community.

Local Education

In the *Charter of the New Urbanism*, Elizabeth Moule notes that “the quality and character of schools is very often cited as the primary reason families choose their place of residence.” Developing schools that are sized correctly for their neighborhoods reinforces the neighborhood structure and induces greater parental support within the school. This helps to develop schools that are closely tied to their communities. Schools also act as an important community focus, forming the heart of a neighborhood center. Likewise, they should be easily-accessible to those who use them. Elementary schools should be sized to accommodate a reasonable walking distance for a large number of students that live around the school. Similarly, high schools should be sized to accommodate the bicycling population around them.



The community is fortunate in that there are already several schools located in within the Town of Ferdinand. The award winning school system of Southeast Dubois County School Corporation has been recognized for the past four years. Likewise residents of the community recognized the convenient location of these schools as community strengths during the Ferdinand Community Workshop. Improving the way the community publicizes the accomplishments of the Southeast Dubois County School Corporation, specifically those schools within the Town of Ferdinand, was also identified as an important next step. It is important for a community to advertise the quality of the local education system. A brochure should be developed that will incorporate specific facts about the success and accomplishments of the local schools serving the Ferdinand Community, as well as important information regarding locations, contact information, amenities, and available opportunities for extra-curricular activity offered. This brochure should be provided to potential businesses and industries, potential residents, new residents, and visitors to help educate the public and share in the success of the accomplishments of the local schools of the Ferdinand Area.

Regional Approach

When developing collaborations, it is important to look beyond jurisdictional borders and find project partners who would benefit from the accomplishment of a similar objective. Regionalism is an approach that relies heavily on collaboration from multiple jurisdictions. Whether looking from a perspective of a small region or a larger, more encompassing region, regional collaborations provide a broad approach to interconnected issues, such as transportation, economic development, commerce, job growth, education, and tourism.

Several specific activities were identified to maintain this regional approach. These included working with neighboring communities to develop potential marketing materials that would promote the area from a regional perspective, both for tourism and economic development. A multiple-county marketing approach may also be possible and should not be eliminated as a potential extension of the promotion and marketing of the Ferdinand Area.

Community Marketing

An overall *Community Marketing Strategy* can yield many side benefits, beyond that of attracting new residents, including the development of tourism opportunities, the development of new



businesses and industries, and providing a regional approach to economic development. However, an important but often overlooked component of a *Community Marketing Strategy* is promoting the existing assets and strengths of the community to a targeted audience.

There were many community strengths and assets identified during the Ferdinand Community Workshop that provide a base to market the community as an excellent place to raise a family, provide a good education for children, and provide good employment opportunities. The Town of Ferdinand should invest in the assets and competitive advantages that already exist within the community. Then, by marketing those assets and advantages to a targeted audience, it will help to set the Town of Ferdinand apart from its competition.

However, to promote these assets, the Town of Ferdinand must first identify who it will be targeting in this *Community Marketing Strategy*. While critical, it can be difficult to narrow to a targeted population or group with like-minded characteristics. Several choices are available: who we want the target market to be, who might be interested in listening, and who actually will respond to the marketing strategy. It is important for community and government leaders to identify a target audience to promote the Town of Ferdinand. Because there may be several reasons to promote the community, an initial Community Marketing Strategy should be created with a single focus. Once this strategy has been developed or executed, then it may be feasible to outline a second strategy to a different targeted population.



Goal 4 - Promotion and Marketing

Promote the Ferdinand Community for its location, character, and unique amenities to support opportunities for growth.

1. Provide assistance to further the development, expansion, and promotion of local attractions, unique amenities, and dining options in the Ferdinand Area.
2. Promote existing and future tourism opportunities by capitalizing on the location, heritage, and scenic beauty that makes the Ferdinand Area unique.
3. Publicize existing local schools as significant resources for quality education and as a contributing element for local economic development efforts.
4. Maximize local marketing efforts for the Town of Ferdinand by focusing on its access to Interstate 64, the proximity to major metropolitan areas, and the existing attractions and industries located in the Ferdinand Area.
5. Promote tourism opportunities in spirituality, architecture, and culture offered by the Monastery Immaculate Conception through community collaboration and support by the local community.
6. Strengthen the overall marketing and promotion approach for the Town of Ferdinand by working together with neighboring communities, partnering to develop multi-county endeavors, and considering broader regional approaches at intrastate and multi-state levels.
7. Support advertising efforts that provide valuable information to promote the Town of Ferdinand, including available business expansion opportunities, area tourism potential, and its high quality of life.



Community Development

The concept of community development is a very broad topic including many different facets associated with a specific community. It may include economic development, land use planning, quality and availability of local services, neighborhood strengthening, and the improvement of general attitudes or ideas that may affect the community as a whole. Comprehensively, the development of a community is not about growth, but how economic growth, residential development, and other physical changes to a community might affect the quality of life within that community. Quality of life issues include safety, protection, sense of place, lifestyles, child welfare, health, relationships within the community, community outreach, collaboration, and poverty. In the broadest sense, community development is about developing and implementing community-based plans, to bring about the desired outcomes that will enhance economic opportunities, build strong neighborhoods, and improve the overall quality of life.

Welcoming Others

Somewhat surprisingly, the need for embracing increased diversity and improved tolerance in the community was strongly emphasized at the Ferdinand Community Workshop and at *Planner's Day @ School Program* that was presented to local high school students. It appears that the close-knit, "small town" atmosphere that many find attractive also can create perceptions of a lack of open-mindedness, an unwillingness to accept "outsiders", such as new residents, and a lack of tolerance for other cultures or ideas. However, feelings were also expressed identifying an opportunity for the community to do more than it has in the past to encourage activities that would promote diversity within the community.

The ongoing development of a tolerant attitude towards differences of others, whether cultural, ethnic, racial, religious, and social; should be supported and promoted by the local community and government leadership. While change is often difficult, positive influence through the leaders of the community can help to change the perception of others inside and outside of the community. This could be accomplished by incorporating diversity in local outreach programs either through local churches, businesses, or organizations. Another opportunity would be to develop a "diversity" fair or similar event that celebrates the differences of others, such as a cultural fair or multi-national cuisine event. A primary partner to develop this event

could be the Sisters of St. Benedict, focusing on their experiences and potential contacts with world missions projects throughout the world.

Good Traffic

The Ferdinand Area is located along the SR 162 Corridor, which meets Interstate 64 approximately a quarter-mile south of Downtown Ferdinand. These transportation corridors have the potential to offer significant benefits to the community. Additionally, because Interstate 64 is the only interstate in the area and the only east-west Interstate through Southern Indiana, it acts as the primary economic arterial for counties in the region. These opportunities have contributed to an increase in local and regional tourism opportunities and also encouraged new growth at the Interstate 64 Interchange at the junction of SR 162.

While these corridors and more significantly, this interchange, provide a significant amount of traffic through the Town of Ferdinand, its location just south of the community's core, does pose potential issues for the community. As with many things, traffic can be good and bad; however, the community should find ways to take full advantage of this existing transportation infrastructure. Community leaders must answer the question, "How can we make this traffic benefit the community?"

Potentially, there are several ways to focus on the benefits of "good traffic". A simple way to encourage that traffic to visit the community and patronize local sites and businesses is to create a wayfinding system. This system would provide a series of consistent signage that can be placed throughout the community to direct traffic to designated parking areas, historic sites, local industries, or significant community destinations where visitors might attend some event (i.e., schools, community center, Monastery).

Another way is to regularly maintain the local road system, so that it too remains aesthetically-pleasing and convenient. To accomplish this, it would be important to develop a **Local Infrastructure Maintenance Plan** for the local road and pedestrian system. Included in this plan would be prioritized projects and enhancements. This could be accomplished by identifying potential troublesome areas where traffic congestion is likely and developing infrastructure enhancements that would attempt to alleviate or reduce any existing or future issues. These may include re-striping, well-marked on-street parking, easy-to-understand parking signs, turning lanes, tree-lined medians,



crosswalks, speed tables, enhanced signaling features, limitations to vehicle weight or length, and additional signage or lighting.

Other ways to entice good traffic to stop at the SR 162 exit and visit the Town of Ferdinand may be local and regional marketing, interstate highway signage, promoting eye-appealing development at the interchange, or even just maintaining attractive exit/entrance ramp areas.

It is also important to consider that this “good traffic” may first enter the community in an automobile, but spend more time as pedestrians. Therefore, when reviewing the transportation systems and amenities available to a community, it is important to recognize that there are many modes of transportation that require different types of features for that infrastructure. Of these modes, vehicular transportation is often the primary focal point. However, it is important to consider alternative modes of transportation, such as walking, bicycling, and other similar transportation alternatives. As measures are developed to encourage “good traffic” within the Town of Ferdinand, local leaders must consider every opportunity to satisfy this traffic to return to the community.

Community Services

Several services are important to the residents of a community: police protection, fire protection, ambulance service, short-term health care, and emergency medical care. While some of these services are provided by the Town of Ferdinand, others are provided only in neighboring communities. Residents often feel more comfortable when the services can be provided at the local level, but this is not always feasible.

Comments at the Ferdinand Community Workshop indicated that residents felt that the existing services were adequate for local fire and police protection. However, they also identified the importance of maintaining the existing level of service to the community. Local government leaders should support the ongoing improvement to these services, whether through training, equipment, or personnel. Significant planning should be considered immediately to prepare for growth within the community before additional pressure is placed upon these services.



Additionally, those in attendance at the Ferdinand Community Workshop identified gaps in the areas of local healthcare and children's day care opportunities. The recent closing of St. Joseph's Hospital in nearby Huntingburg was noted as a concern and a possible future trend. Although expanding healthcare options would be a potentially difficult issue for the local leadership to address, it was also identified as an issue by the Ferdinand Visioning Committee, including a need for local emergency medical care service. Potentially, the development of strategic collaborations with local organizations, neighboring communities, and regional services could help to develop an expansion of local service to the Ferdinand Community. Significant effort should be made by community leaders to prompt this discussion.

Community Involvement

Unlike many other small communities, the Town of Ferdinand has been very successful in obtaining a significant amount of community involvement in various activities. Both the Ferdinand Visioning Committee Meetings and the Ferdinand Community Workshop were very well-attended. Concerns expressed included a perceived lack of ongoing involvement in civic organizations and a lack of adequate meeting places.

Concerns about new leaders emerging in the future were also expressed, particularly younger community leaders. Additional support from a younger generation is often sought in many smaller communities. They are important players that should also be considered for inclusion in local involvement opportunities and given the opportunity to hold community leadership positions in both community organizations and local government. Developing the youth of the Town of Ferdinand and involving them at a younger age will help them to understand local government and the importance of civic leadership, to value their community, and understand the importance of the decisions that have to be made for its future.

Additionally, new residents and other adults already living in the Town of Ferdinand should also be considered. Often a small portion of a small community acts on behalf of the larger community. While these community leaders may be involved in many organizations and leadership roles, it is important that they seek out new individuals to become involved in community planning and other local activities. Many communities work with the Purdue Cooperative Extension Office to offer a Leadership Academy Program where members of the community, both young and old, can learn effective ways to of being



active community leaders. This program and other similar endeavors could be driven by the Ferdinand Chamber of Commerce to train new leaders in the community. Regardless of the program, it is important for existing community leaders to recognize the ongoing need to get new people involved in the community.

Continuing Education and Training

Many communities have recognized the importance of the availability of quality continuing education, lifelong learning, and additional training. Such programs can improve both the educational attainment and the cultural enrichment of an area. For the Ferdinand Area, the nearest continuing educational site is the Vincennes University - Jasper campus, a branch in the Indiana Community College System. This local institution provides one and two year academic programs and Associate Degrees. However, a weakness identified during the Ferdinand Community Workshop was that these opportunities are not all conveniently located, given that the closest site is in Jasper. Additional training opportunities more closely associated with the existing manufacturing cluster of the Ferdinand Area should also be pursued.

Pedestrian Connectivity

The physical design of communities affects the lives of its residents every time they step outside. Communities, developments, and spaces that are designed with people in mind, generally are more attentive to the experiences that each person will have with the streets, sidewalks, buildings, and the surrounding larger environment. Well-designed neighborhoods with attractive sidewalks, small parks, and shops and restaurants that serve the community also lend themselves to more community encounters with friends and neighbors and can reinforce the sense of place of a neighborhood or community. “Walkability”, beauty, sociability, and access to activities and community destinations are all critical elements in designing for people.

The 18th Street Recreation Park is one such community destination: a large park located within walking distance from the center of Ferdinand, but not centrally-located for all parts of the community. The community’s linear configuration along the north-south portions of SR 162 contributes to this issue. While the park’s location has not been identified as a significant issue, the fact that the park lies towards the northeastern edge of the community suggests that additional consideration should be given to the manner of pedestrian travel to and from the park grounds. Other community destinations, including



Forest Park High School to the south, the Monastery Immaculate Conception further to the southeast, the Ferdinand Elementary School, and the Downtown Area to the southwest, are also nearby and somewhat connected through a series of sidewalks and multi-use paths.

Since the Ferdinand Community is small in size and most of the land uses near the park, school, and Monastery are either residential, institutional, or other low intensity uses; it should be feasible with regard to traffic volumes and general safety, that both children and adults should be able to walk to and from the park site with little problem. Partial walkway systems exist in all of these areas and there is also an existing connection between the Forest Park Junior-Senior High School property and the Park. However, a need for a more comprehensive system of walkways and trails was identified during the Ferdinand Community Workshop. Endeavors that would improve pedestrian connectivity throughout the community as a whole should be pursued, especially as new opportunities arise as the community continues to grow.



Goal 5 - Community Development

Provide continual enhancements to community services that support future growth and provide for the needs of existing and future residents.

1. Promote community activities that help to develop a community atmosphere that encourages cultural, ethnic, racial, religious, and social diversity and tolerance.
2. Develop a plan for the existing and future transportation system of the Ferdinand Area to provide infrastructure for new growth and maintain the quality of existing neighborhood streets and thoroughfares.
3. Continue to enhance local public safety and emergency services to maintain adequate emergency response times, sustain a low level of crime, and improve perceptions of public safety.
4. Promote improved levels of local healthcare and childcare by encouraging a broader range of facilities and services within the Ferdinand Community.
5. Promote increased community involvement by encouraging collaborations between existing civic groups, local government, and other local organizations in community activities, events, and projects.
6. Encourage the use and ongoing development of continuing education and lifelong learning opportunities for Ferdinand Area residents.
7. Promote an increasing level of pedestrian connectivity throughout the Ferdinand Community by enhancing existing and developing additional sidewalks, trails, and multi-use paths.

Housing

One of the elements that make up the character of a community is its housing and the actions and activities of the people who live in those residences. Visitors to a community often look at the number, types, size, maintenance, and general upkeep of local housing to gauge the community's pride, diversity, affordability, and especially, its quality of life.

Additional Housing

According to 2000 US Census Data as outlined in the Community Profile Section of this document, the Town of Ferdinand has 845 housing units. From 1990 to 2000, there was a 71 unit increase in the total number of housing units, a gain of over 9%. There was also an increase in the number of households during that same time period; 102 additional households were formed, a gain of almost 14%. Since there is almost no difference between the current number of households and the current number of housing units, opportunities for new residents to move to the Town of Ferdinand are limited. In order for the community to provide adequate opportunities for growth, additional residential units of all types are needed by the community,

Housing Options

Based on comments made at the Ferdinand Community Workshop, the Ferdinand community should encourage the development of more diverse housing options. This broader range of housing types could include single-family detached housing, single-family attached housing, duplexes, multiple family units (i.e. apartments), and other housing types such as condominiums and multi-generational housing (often referred to as "granny flats", garage apartments, and other types of similar ancillary housing units).

To accomplish the need for more diverse housing options, the Town of Ferdinand should consider developing incentives to target specific types of desired housing development that may provide a mix of housing types, sizes, and cost ranges. It is also necessary to review existing land use policies and regulations to confirm that mixed-residential developments and a wide variety of housing types are adequately accommodated. The Town of Ferdinand should also identify appropriate sites for compatible infill housing development



and identify existing structures that are or could be available for adaptive reuse for residential purposes, especially structures located within the downtown area.

Available Land

The need for additional housing was also identified by the Ferdinand Visioning Committee; a goal of the construction of 500 new homes over the next ten years was established by that group. While this goal is realistic, it will be important to identify specific parcels of land that are available and suited for residential housing development, as well as coinciding with ideal growth areas proposed by local leadership. It has been noted on several occasions that one of the challenges facing the Ferdinand Community is a lack of land that is available for development. Because of this, the Town of Ferdinand should also consider collaborating with existing landowners to create a list of potential sites for future development opportunities.

Infill Development and Housing

Ferdinand has a number of existing buildings that could be revitalized to improve the heritage and historic character of the community, including a number of structures in the downtown area. Ferdinand has several opportunities to address unsafe existing structures or unkempt properties through rehabilitation, restoration, adaptive reuse, or possibly demolition. Additionally, the downtown area and the area immediately around it have several open lots where additional buildings could be added to enhance the historic character of the remaining downtown buildings. Regardless of the specifics of each situation, the downtown area and other older parts of the community could benefit from historically-sensitive infill development that could include some higher-density housing, rather than a complete withdrawal from the existing character and valued heritage of this part of the community.

Some of the infill structures that have been added to these areas over the past thirty years do not reflect this character. It would be helpful to support infill development that helps to enhance the Town of Ferdinand's "sense of place". At the same time, the community should strive to connect to its past and fill the gaps that have been left by the removal of previous buildings or future gaps as a result of buildings that are replaced due to their lack of structural or historical integrity. It would be wise to discourage infill structures that do not complement the existing historical integrity of the downtown and to encourage

existing infill structures to be replaced or aesthetically-enhanced so that they contribute to the “sense of place” of the Town of Ferdinand.

Residential Maintenance

As previously noted, an important element of community character is the amount of community pride that is consistently shown. One issue that typically arises in areas where there has not been a significant amount of new private investment is that of a lack of adequate property and building maintenance. Concerns about the appearance of certain older properties, including a number of existing homes, were raised at the Ferdinand Community Workshop. The Town of Ferdinand should determine specific ways to promote both additional investment and increased pride in the maintenance of properties and buildings, especially residential properties. Exceptional property maintenance typically leads to both improved property values and an increase in the maintenance efforts of nearby properties. Unfortunately, the reverse is also generally true, with inadequate property maintenance it leads to lower property values and lower levels of nearby property maintenance. This is generally why communities implement minimum property maintenance standards, typically guidelines or ordinances, which set forth these minimum standards.

Incentives can also encourage improved property maintenance (for example, contests for yard of the month, best building improvement). The Town of Ferdinand should determine specific ways to recognize excellence and accomplishment in the maintenance of properties and buildings. This can also be a way to promote ongoing beautification efforts in targeted areas (adding new trees along a street, community plantings, aesthetic light fixtures, community clean-up days, etc.). The Town of Ferdinand should also consider developing specific design guidelines for certain designated areas to encourage new development that is compatible with existing architectural styles, building scales, and historical development patterns. Providing guidelines which encourage the community to meet certain standards helps to create a clear understanding of what the community feels is appropriate and inappropriate improvements and general maintenance.

Residential Connectivity

In the previously-referenced *Charter of the New Urbanism*, Richard Killingsworth and Tom Schmid of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states, “we may now be paying for building decades of auto-centered communities that discourage active lifestyles and



encourage sedentary lifestyles.” The cost paid by our communities includes a dramatic increase in overweight adults and children, as well as a huge number of health problems that stem from inactivity. Recent evidence shows that the risks of a sedentary lifestyle are alarming and could be a primary factor in approximately 200,000 deaths caused by heart disease, cancer, and diabetes each year.

Developments that emphasize mixed land use, high density, street connectivity, and pedestrian environments have a positive effect on walking and bicycling as alternative modes of transportation within a community. Residents may register significant benefits if they took two, 15-minute walking or bicycle trips several days a week. Overall, the built environment and our daily transportation choices play an important role in our health.

The Town of Ferdinand is fortunate that the majority of its street layout is predominantly urban in form. In other words, the community has an overall grid layout of criss-crossing streets, with many relatively short blocks. However, the lack of a complete sidewalk system within that grid is a significant issue. The majority of the blocks have few, if any, sidewalks, which identifies that vehicular connectivity, seems to have a higher priority than pedestrian connectivity. It will be important for the Town of Ferdinand to embrace the ideas of residential connectivity through pedestrian ways, such as sidewalks, multi-use paths, bicycle lanes, and other pedestrian infrastructure to encourage healthier lifestyles within the community.

Homeownership

A strength possessed by the Town of Ferdinand is its high homeownership rate, which stood at over 77% in 2000. This is higher than the State homeownership rate of 72% and significantly higher than the US rate of less than 67%. One of the issues identified by both the Ferdinand Community Workshop participants and the Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee members was to encourage quality and affordable housing opportunities within the Community to maintain this strength.

Considerable effort on the part of the State of Indiana, the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has developed many opportunities that encourage homeownership. Whether providing education, low-interest loans, or specialized programs to guide families toward homeownership; these opportunities do exist and



should be explored by community leaders to maintain the level of homeownership within the Town of Ferdinand.

Developing local guidelines or ordinances for the ongoing maintenance of homes and rental properties may also indirectly promote quality rental properties, rather than developing a growing problem of aging and unkempt rental properties that often pose a problem to many communities throughout the State of Indiana. Promoting high standards for rental properties located within the community may discourage blight often created from absentee landlords.



Goal 6 - Housing

Promote additional housing opportunities within the Ferdinand Area that is affordable, available, and appealing.

1. Continue to plan and encourage the development of additional areas to provide new homes that will support an increase in the population of the Ferdinand Community.
2. Encourage a balanced range of housing options for a variety of ages and income levels, while also maintaining the integrity of the community.
3. Promote a positive community image and appearance by developing standards and strategies to encourage the regular maintenance and upkeep of residential properties throughout the Ferdinand Community.
4. Encourage the creation of new residential neighborhood areas that are accessible and pedestrian-friendly.
5. Develop tools and guidelines to encourage new infill housing development that is compatible with existing neighborhood character and historic buildings.
6. Encourage quality and affordable housing opportunities within the Ferdinand Community to maintain a high level of homeownership.

Local Government

Operations of a local government are obviously key to the ongoing development of a community and to its endeavors to maintain a desired quality of life for its residents. However, several issues surround local government that can affect their mission, including distribution of responsibilities, creative collaborations, ongoing community planning, and the wise use of local resources, whether financial or material.

Government Structure

Strong leadership was identified as a “strength” during the Ferdinand Community Workshop. However, it was also noted that it seemed that a gap existed within the local government structure. Some community members have suggested that the creation of the new position of Town Manager would help to improve local government effectiveness and responsiveness. Local leaders have taken this under consideration and are currently interviewing for this position, which should be filled prior to the completion of this plan.

Financial Resources

As is common with many of Indiana’s smaller communities, a lack of financial resources is often cited as a “threat”. Limited financial resources create issues, particularly the ability for the Town of Ferdinand to take advantage of new opportunities that might arise in the near future, such as grant programs that require matching funds, potential local improvement projects, and future infrastructure enhancements. Given the desire for the community to grow, the local government and community leaders should monitor spending wisely and look for ways to generate additional income for the community, whether through creative collaborations, consolidation of resources, grants, donations, endowments, or other financial means that might be available for local improvements or enhancements.

Community Planning

One of the primary areas that this plan is attempting to address is the need to re-establish a clear direction for the future of the Ferdinand Community. Whether they are young or old, people often become more involved when a clear vision or definite direction is outlined for their community. The Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan is an important step forward in establishing a fresh direction for the community and should be used as a “road map” for the future of the Ferdinand Area.



The adoption and future use of this plan will establish consistency in decision-making and improve the accountability for existing and future leaders within the community.

Collaboration

Community progress often begins with the ideas and initiatives of smaller organizations and civic groups that have identified a specific need or issue within their area of influence or expertise. While these identified needs are generally very important, it is often difficult for a small group of individuals to proceed on their own to fill these needs or address these issues. In this respect, towns are no different from smaller groups. It is difficult for any entity to identify a need and try to fill that need without any assistance.

The act of bringing together multiple entities or developing a **collaboration**, allows a specific objective which fulfills a specific need or addresses a specific issue, to be accomplished. Collaborations come in many forms. However, because it is easier to join forces with other groups to accomplish a community's objectives, collaborating is a critical step to be taken to improve the quality of life in any community. As identified in the Action Plan Matrix, the Town of Ferdinand has many entities which could act as project partners or governmental liaisons or fill other similar roles. It is important that community leaders recognize these entities and combine resources with them to accomplish the objectives of the community and move toward its goals.

Collaborations are not always centered on a specific need; sometimes the focus is on resources sought after by communities, organizations, and other entities attempting to accomplish common objectives within a specific area. Many groups exist to serve a specific area and are often supported through federal, state, or county tax dollars. Therefore, identifying and utilizing these organizations for guidance, education, or even specific community services can also help the Town of Ferdinand achieve its objectives.

In addition, collaborations are often keys for eligibility or favorability when developing grant proposals for specific funding programs. The Town of Ferdinand and its many organizations should identify collaborative partners when seeking grant funding from any resource type.



Community Leadership

The existing leadership within the Town of Ferdinand was identified as a “strength” during the Ferdinand Community Workshop. However, as previously noted, concerns over whether future new leaders would arise for the community were also expressed, particularly new younger community leaders.

Additional support from a younger generation is often sought in many smaller communities. It will always be important to find ways to involve the youth of the community in the planning process for community events, specific community improvement projects, and other similar opportunities. They should also be considered and provided the opportunity to hold community leadership positions in both organizations and local government.

Another consideration is how to effectively prepare members of the younger generation to become Ferdinand’s leaders of tomorrow. This could be done through educational opportunities, special youth programs, and other collaborative projects with youth or school-based organizations and clubs that could provide new opportunities for them to become an active catalyst in the community. It will be important to establish new or build on existing relationships with these entities to develop programs that could help to enhance the leadership abilities and community involvement opportunities available to youth. Developing the youth of the Town of Ferdinand and involving them at a younger age will help them to understand local government and the importance of civic involvement and leadership, to value their community, and also to understand the importance of the decisions that have to be made for its future.

Local Business Leadership

Community-based initiatives are often an important part of the changing face of a community. They provide the residents of a community or area an opportunity to become active in the improvements to the entire community or within specific areas that have an identified need. Many communities find that developing organizations to address the needs of business owners, whether advertising, general marketing of the community, or distinct initiatives centered on aesthetics or beautification.



Owners of residential and commercial properties and proprietors of local businesses and industries, small and large, often act as the most significant stakeholders and the primary driving forces of a small community. Whether residents of the Town of Ferdinand or a neighboring community, many business and property owners are actively involved in community endeavors and local organizations in the Ferdinand Area. However, it is important that when new businesses come into the community they have a direct outlet to connect to the existing business community. Groups or organizations formed to address needs such as these often take the form of a Main Street Association, Downtown Revitalization Group, and/or Chamber of Commerce. While the Town of Ferdinand is fortunate to have a strong, active local Chamber of Commerce, other groups or committees may be necessary to share responsibility and insight to specific areas of concern. Overall, these groups represent stability and initiative in a local economy, which is often important as other businesses consider the Ferdinand Area for the location or expansion of their business or industry.



Goal 7 - Local Government

Enhance the local government of Ferdinand by implementing new plans, providing new opportunities, and encouraging regular involvement from the community.

1. Encourage increased local government effectiveness and efficiency by looking into ways to improve the governmental organizational structure, including the creation of a Town Manager position.
2. Address the management of growth and development in the Ferdinand Community by utilizing a Comprehensive Plan that provides guidance for local decision-making, area zoning ordinances that promote quality, carefully-planned growth, and local regulations that support the health, safety, and welfare of existing and future residents and business owners.
3. Promote collaboration, coordination, and cooperation with all appropriate entities that can address regional opportunities or threats that may have an impact upon the residents, property owners, visitors, or businesses of the Ferdinand Community.
4. Promote the involvement of local residents, including young adults, in community planning activities and local improvement projects to build new leadership in the community.
5. Maximize the financial resources of the Town of Ferdinand by utilizing existing monies wisely, pursuing external funding through collaborative efforts, and maintaining the ability to provide matching funds for grants and other funding opportunities whenever necessary.



Land Use

Land is one of the most important resources in a community. However, the use of land is often overlooked as a critical area that the community should manage. More specifically, local leaders should manage how it is used in relation to adjacent and nearby land uses. Land is an important community resource and can be developed for residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional uses. However, land can also be utilized for agricultural purposes or it can remain in its natural form; this is preferable in cases including as an environmentally-sensitive open space. The intelligent use of this resource is a critical catalyst that contributes to the character and aesthetic profile of a community.

In the years ahead, as the potential for growth in the Ferdinand Area continues to increase, the manner in which each parcel of land is developed will become a more significant part of how the community will be shaped to look in the future. Land use decisions during a period of growth will also dictate how the community itself will be used. The uses of land within and adjacent to the Town of Ferdinand will be critical to the success and continued growth in the Ferdinand Area. Several points in relation to the use of land have been identified by the community as areas of specific concern as the Town of Ferdinand continues to grow.

Defining Quality

At the Ferdinand Community Workshop and in discussions with the Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, it was noted that the promotion of additional growth in the Ferdinand Community was important to the community. At the same time, it was also recognized that not all types or patterns of growth are equally desirable. The overall intent is to encourage carefully-planned growth by promoting **quality** development, redevelopment, and revitalization.

The character of new development is often dictated by developers or business owners, without regard to how that development will interact with the existing built environment of the community. Therefore, when speaking of “quality” development, one should consider the following areas: reputation for good craftsmanship, potential impacts upon the community (i.e., traffic, infrastructure, safety), and how the new development might fit into the existing aesthetic character of the community (i.e., proportion to neighboring buildings, type of materials, lighting of property, and its location within the community). Other



ways to promote quality development are to encourage the ancillary aspects of that development, such as landscaping, signage, site design, building materials, and other similar development features that meet certain guidelines and standards identified as important by the community. As the Town of Ferdinand updates its land use policies and regulations, guidance for the possible design of these ancillary features should also be developed.

To improve and sustain the quality of life for the residents of the Ferdinand Community in the future long-term, the community's definition of "quality" development should be established. Once completed, this description should be incorporated into local zoning and land use ordinances and/or into the development review process for the Town of Ferdinand. This would allow the Ferdinand Plan Commission to improve their understanding for consideration of "quality" development and clarify final rulings in various decision-making processes as new growth opportunities are presented.

Compact Development

Another approach that should be looked at is encouraging higher density or compact growth. As noted in 2003's **Getting to Smart Growth II** report, compact development is a key element in creating more pedestrian oriented, "walkable" communities. For retail businesses, compact development means more customers in a given area. Neighborhoods that include more compact development can also support more stores and restaurants. Higher-density development can also contribute to a wider range of housing choices, including more affordable housing units. The report continues by stating that, "Consumer desires for convenient neighborhoods with many amenities, as well as public sector efforts to address traffic and use public resources efficiently, are creating increased interest in more compact development."

Sometimes described as "suburbia on a diet", compact development usually means smaller, perhaps narrower lots, shallower yards and setbacks, narrower streets, less off-street parking, and incorporates pedestrian-friendly design, with the outcome being that residents are closer to stores, services, parks, schools, and their neighbors.

Level of Service

As the Ferdinand Community grows with new homes, subdivisions, commercial areas, institutional uses, and industries, it will be important



to pay close attention to the level of service that can be adequately supplied for the growth that will come. Services, infrastructure, and utilities should be developed and/or extended by following specific policies that identify the locations and specific criteria where growth should be supported.

Additionally, expanding services, infrastructure, and other utilities requires careful planning. Depending on the increases in population, usage, or number of structures in a specific development, the needs of that development may be difficult to meet. By identifying the time and costs associated with developing adequate services that can support this growth, the community can make better decisions based on the provision of these services.

Therefore, it is important to establish specific guidelines and standards that will identify which areas should be promoted for growth and which areas should be avoided, such as floodplain areas. Providing services, infrastructure, and utilities only in areas where the community desires new growth helps to provide a carefully-planned growth pattern.

Carefully-Planned Growth

It is also important to identify ways in which carefully-planned growth could be encouraged, perhaps through an infrastructure improvement plan that sets priorities for and boundaries on where items such as utilities, local roads, or sidewalk improvements or expansions should be implemented. Other economic incentives can also be used to encourage developments in the community, but this growth should also adhere to the policies and preferences outlined in the local zoning and development ordinances.

Redevelopment

Encouraging quality redevelopment and revitalization will also include determining ways to address areas that are available for redevelopment due to the loss of former buildings, as well as buildings that are no longer in use. The Town of Ferdinand should develop strategies and create programs that encourage the re-use of vacant properties and buildings.

Balanced Growth

An inherent feature of carefully-planned growth is that the growth should also be balanced. Recent growth activity for the Town of

Ferdinand has been limited; there has not been a large amount of new development. However, situations like this can change quickly and once development finds a specific area of the community attractive, the need for balance in the other direction will become necessary. As the Town of Ferdinand continues to grow, it will be important to maintain the downtown area as its central core. Allowing development to re-center the community to one area or another could have repercussions on the overall character of the community and its sense of place.

Updated growth policies should continue to focus on encouraging a balance between strategic new development, the preservation of the existing built environment, infill development, conservation of existing agricultural land, retention of historic character, proportional development in all parts of the Ferdinand Area, and at the same time retaining the small town atmosphere of the Ferdinand Community.

Environmentally-Sensitive Land

The Ferdinand Area has a number of natural features and environmentally-sensitive areas, including woodland areas, moderately rolling topography in certain areas, significant existing site vegetation, and various water features; including streams and small scattered wetland areas. Two large floodplain areas are also located in the Ferdinand Area, one immediately north of Town along the Green Creek and the other west of the current Town boundaries along the Holey Run.

There are a number of ways to conserve natural features and preserve environmentally-sensitive land; however, it is typically not feasible to conserve every natural site feature or preserve all environmentally-sensitive land. In the case of the existing floodplain areas, however, these areas are currently designated as “Floodplain Zone A”. Any proposed construction or development in these areas would have to first submit detailed engineering plans for review and approval by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources - Division of Water. Updated land use policies and regulations should allow the Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals to have the ability to consider the conservation of significant natural site features and the preservation of environmentally-sensitive land as a part of the review process for new development proposals and other land use reviews or approvals.



During this review process, specific attention should be given to the impacts of the proposed use or development on storm water drainage, significant existing site vegetation, the water table, and also to the location of existing floodplain areas. Environmentally-sensitive areas can have significant value for a community. If these areas are altered, destroyed, or impacted in any substantial way, this may have serious effects on neighboring land uses and on the overall character of the Ferdinand Area.

Downtown Ferdinand

Historically, downtown areas were very pedestrian-oriented, regardless of their size or number of buildings and businesses. Over the decades, the accommodation of the automobile has generally had a negative impact on this pedestrian orientation. Communities that have revitalized their downtown areas within the past decade have typically relied on two things: bringing residential opportunities back to the downtown and providing a safe, pedestrian-oriented atmosphere to walk from business to business, across streets, and to automobiles. Several recent books, most notably Donald Shoup's "The High Cost of Free Parking", argue that in many instances, on-site parking should be minimized, if required at all (especially in downtown situations). There is no point in attempting to compete with suburban sites when it comes to the provision of free on-site parking. The objective for downtown areas should be to place a focus on high population density, a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, and the creation of the downtown area as a "destination point" for the community. Parking should be addressed as a secondary amenity, not as a primary amenity.

The Town of Ferdinand has the potential to provide this kind of atmosphere; but it needs to concentrate on the adaptive re-use of existing buildings and the promotion of infill development within the downtown area to provide new opportunities for businesses to locate in the downtown area. The community should encourage an increase in the number of residential opportunities in second-story buildings throughout the commercial core. One way to do this would be to develop zoning standards to allow mixed uses in the downtown area. Other potential issues that should also be considered are encouraging improvements to the properties of existing businesses and reinvestment by the Town of Ferdinand in existing infrastructure in this district, such as sidewalks, roads, pedestrian amenities, lighting, and wayfinding signage. A potential way to accomplish many of these tasks is to



develop a Downtown Overlay District that defines additional criteria beyond the requirements of the existing zoning ordinance or a Downtown Zoning District with similar standards.

Continuous Improvement

One of the primary purposes of a comprehensive plan is to serve as the basis for local land use decisions and regulations. This Plan should serve as an impetus for local leaders to consider updating existing land use policies and regulations. The Plan also acts as a guide to coordinate future growth and effectively allocate the Town's resources.

A frequent and often well-deserved criticism of zoning in general is that its application does not yield the overall results desired by the community. One reason for this is that updating local land use ordinances is a complex and potentially costly project that can also be very controversial. This often results in ordinances that have not been systematically reviewed or updated for many years.

The Plan Commission and Town Council have done a good job recently of amending Ferdinand's Zoning Ordinance as needed to deal with issues, such as adult uses and communication towers. However, it is a good idea to periodically consider an overall review of the existing land use policies and ordinances, especially each time a new Comprehensive Planning Process is completed and a new Comprehensive Plan is adopted.

The 1997 Plan recommended that the Town adopt a *Planned Unit Development Ordinance* (PUD), and include use and development commitments (written commitments) as part of the Ordinance as well. Since PUD's are typically used for larger scale, mixed use project plan review and approval, it does not appear that would be particularly applicable to Ferdinand's current situation. However, an amendment that would allow for development plan review and approval (as set forth in the 1400 Series of Indiana Code-Development Plans) would be advisable, as would implementing the previous recommendation of allowing both the Plan Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals to use written commitments as part of land use reviews and approvals.



Proactive vs. Reactive

Once a Comprehensive Plan is created and local land use ordinances are updated, it is also important that they are enforced. Without regular, consistent enforcement of these codes, local land resources will not be managed, but rather allowed to impact neighboring properties, affect the general quality of life, growth potential, and overall community character without any direction. This scenario places a community in a reactionary position to address new issues caused from hap-hazard, unguided development. It is best that a community maintain a proactive approach to local land use management.

Goal 8 - Land Use

Encourage carefully-planned quality growth in the Ferdinand Area through the efficient use of the environment, the improvement of local land use ordinances, and thorough community-based decision-making processes.

1. Promote carefully-planned growth by establishing prioritized areas where future development will be encouraged.
2. Promote a balance of strategic future development and agricultural land conservation to maintain the existing character of the Ferdinand Area.
3. Promote compact community growth and the efficient use of land resources by encouraging quality development, redevelopment, and revitalization in areas served by existing infrastructure, including the area around the Interstate 64 and SR 162 interchange (Exit 63).
4. Encourage carefully-planned growth by conserving natural features and environmentally-sensitive land, including the existing floodplain areas north and west of Ferdinand.
5. Promote quality redevelopment and revitalization by maintaining and expanding collaborations between existing businesses, property owners, and local leaders to develop the downtown area as an important destination point for the Ferdinand Community.
6. Encourage quality development, redevelopment, and revitalization by conducting regular reviews of existing land use policies and ordinances.
7. Promote community-based decision-making by encouraging broad citizen involvement in the review of new development proposals.



B. Plan Implementation

The Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan is an *Advisory Plan*. The Ferdinand Town Council, Ferdinand Plan Commission, Ferdinand Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), Town staff, and other community leaders should look to the Plan for guidance in making land use, development, growth, community facility, infrastructure, public safety, and other community enhancement decisions. The Plan should also serve as a guide for where and how growth and development should occur within Ferdinand and in the Town's designated planning jurisdiction. The Plan should serve as a "*road map*" for where the community is heading and how the community intends to move towards its goals.

What's Next?

As noted above, the plan should be used by the Town of Ferdinand, and when possible, by the larger community as decisions are made regarding development, redevelopment, and capital improvements (utility system improvements, transportation and other public infrastructure improvements, community facility expansions, and other similar situations). Administrative and legislative approvals of development proposals, including subdivision plats, rezoning requests, and other land use and development approvals will be one of the primary methods of implementing the plan. However, the Plan is comprehensive in nature and can provide guidance for a variety of local organizations, improvement projects, economic development endeavors, and community events and activities.

Using the Comprehensive Plan

This Comprehensive Plan was not intended to be developed only as a means to validate local zoning regulations, as required by State statute. Rather it is meant to be used as a document that assists the community in local decision-making, at all levels of government, through all organizations, and any local endeavors, events, or collaborations.

Action Plan Matrix

The goals and objectives developed during the Comprehensive Planning Process have been placed into a matrix format for quick and easy reference. A specific community role, leader, or organization has been identified for each objective. In this way, those responsible parties can monitor the ongoing progress toward accomplishing the objectives and monitor any additional opportunities that may be identified for those

objectives.

Additionally, the Action Plan Matrix offers recommendations for potential project partners who may be able to provide direction, knowledge, resources, or other overall support. While many potential project partners are listed, it should be understood that these partners represent a starting point in developing collaborations that will help to accomplish each objective. Other potential project partners may and probably do exist. It will be important that the responsible parties and project partners identified look for other collaborative opportunities throughout the community, the county, or the region.

It is important that all community endeavors, projects, or other activities are driven by the appropriate responsible party. However, it is equally important that each responsible party seeks out potential partners to develop collaborations for an efficient community-wide effort. Through the ongoing work of accomplishing each objective, the Town of Ferdinand will move closer to each corresponding goal.

Implementation of Specific Projects

As noted by Susan Harden and Al Zelinka in their 2006 book, *Placemaking on a Budget*, “communities that are most successful in realizing their visions are those that organize and plan for implementation – identifying who, what, when, where, why, how, and how much for each step of the project”. The implementation of this Comprehensive Plan may identify a need for a specific project. When pursuing these projects, answering these nine key questions can also contribute to the effective completion of that project.

- **What** is the project; what are the project’s individual components?
- **Where** will the project be located?
- **Why** is the project needed or desired?
- **When** should the project be carried out? (i.e., is it a short-term or long-term project)
- **Who** will lead the project and be part of the team to implement it?
- **How much** will the project cost to implement and maintain?
- **How** can the cost of the project be reduced through in-kind services or donated resources?
- **How** does the project relate to other planned or existing projects?
- **How** will the project be funded or otherwise made possible? (i.e., grants, volunteers, in-kind services)



One of the intents of the Action Plan Matrix is to attempt to answer some of these questions. As the responsible parties and their collaborative project partners begin to develop strategies to accomplish each of their objectives, they may begin to make a list of projects already recognized and additional projects that may be identified through continuing discussion. Once identified, specific projects should be prioritized so that the questions noted above can be fully answered.

Another implementation technique noted in the book, *Placemaking on a Budget*, is the concept of **Ready-Aim-Fire**. That is:

- **Ready:** Is the community organized, informed about, and engaged with the project? (If it is, then the community is READY and can move to AIM. If not, then continue working towards becoming READY).
- **Aim:** Have issues been identified, ideas formed, and consensus reached on desired actions? (If yes, then the community has its AIM and can proceed to FIRE. If not, then continue working toward AIM).
- **Fire:** Are the community's resources aligned, secured, and ready for implementation? (If so, then the community is ready to initiate the implementation of the project. If not, continue working until the community is confident it is ready to FIRE.)

Who should use the Comprehensive Plan?

The Ferdinand Plan Commission, Ferdinand Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), Ferdinand Town Council, and Town staff should make specific findings as to whether a submitted request or other item under consideration is in compliance with the Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan. Updates to existing development regulations and processes should be made a priority. Officials, departments and individual staff members within the Town of Ferdinand and Dubois County should be aware of the recommendations of the Plan as annual work programs and budgets are prepared and approved. The provision of economic incentives, if offered, should be evaluated in terms of the Plan's recommendations, especially the land use and economic development goals and objectives.

Use by Plan Commission

Plan Commissions are often faced with making some of the most controversial and difficult local government decisions. Although the Ferdinand Plan Commission will typically function in an advisory role to the Ferdinand Town Council, the Commission will be responsible for conducting public hearings, balancing opposing facts and opinions, maintaining a long-range perspective for the Ferdinand Community, and providing sound recommendations to the Ferdinand Town Council. The Ferdinand Plan Commission also makes final decisions on items such as subdivision plats. For these reasons, well-qualified individuals should be selected to serve on the Ferdinand Plan Commission and adequate resources, including educational materials and training, should be provided to them to allow the Commission to function effectively.

Use by Board of Zoning Appeals

The Ferdinand Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) also has a critical role in the implementation of the Plan. Like the Ferdinand Plan Commission, the BZA will be responsible for conducting public hearings, evaluating the evidence submitted for requests, maintaining a long-range perspective for the Ferdinand Community, and making sound decisions. Like the Plan Commission, well-qualified individuals should also be selected to serve on the BZA. Often, the BZA is asked to consider granting a variance or other exception to the standards of the community's zoning ordinance. Such variances and exceptions should be considered very carefully and based on evidence submitted along with each request. If the BZA determines that certain exceptions should be allowed to the Town's adopted land use ordinances, the Plan should be periodically reviewed in light of those decisions to ensure that the Plan still accurately reflects the Town's direction and policies.

Comprehensive Plan Updates

In order for the Comprehensive Plan to be effective and remain useful for the community over time, it is critical that the Plan be reviewed and evaluated periodically. This Plan evaluation should be a collaborative partnership between the Ferdinand Plan Commission and Town Council. A periodic, systematic review of the Plan and its implementation should be conducted by the Plan Commission. It is



recommended that the Commission carry out an annual review towards the end of each year and report to the Town Council on the progress that had been made towards accomplishing the Plan's objectives, along with noting any specific emerging issues, changing conditions, and "best practices" that have been identified for possible incorporation into either the Plan or the land use ordinances. It is suggested that this report take place at either the end of each year or at the beginning of the following year.

Five Year Review and Update

It is also recommended that the Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan in its entirety be evaluated for possible revision every five years. The Ferdinand Plan Commission should initiate the five-year revision process. It is recommended that the five-year evaluation include the following steps:

1. The Ferdinand Plan Commission should engage the services of a qualified consultant or staff to update the Community Profile and other relevant Plan information which may have become outdated.
2. The Ferdinand Plan Commission should conduct at least one community workshop, to be facilitated by members of the Ferdinand Plan Commission or a qualified consultant, to re-evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the Ferdinand Community, as well as to continue to gauge the overall needs and desires of the citizens of the community.
3. The findings of the community workshop should be presented to the Ferdinand Plan Commission.
4. Based on these findings, the Ferdinand Plan Commission should make recommendations for changes to the plan, including updated goals and objectives, to the Ferdinand Town Council.