



Terre Haute Vigo County *Comprehensive Plan*



Chapter 2: Goals, Policies, and Actions

CHAPTER TWO: Goals, Policies, and Actions

Introduction

The following material defines each key concept, articulates a goal relative to each concept, and sets policies relative to achieve desired growth and development results. Finally, for each set of public policies, a series of actions are recommended which will lead to successful completion of the goals. The actions are beginning points designed to stimulate action in support of the goals. Other approaches may prove equally useful and additional actions will be required over time in order to keep the plan relevant and dynamic.

The goals of the plan are related to achieving the desired future land use in the community. They were developed from the planning team's observations regarding the existing conditions and from public input that has been a part of the planning process.

The policies serve as guidelines that appointed officials can use to directly evaluate development proposals, rezoning requests and plans and issues that come before them. These policies support the goals that have been established.

Actions are steps that should be taken to implement the goals. They are more specific and attach a time frame and responsible party for implementation. In a plan as broad as THRIVE 2025, the actions may not be as specific as they would be in a downtown plan, neighborhood plan, corridor plan, or any other type of sub-area plan. In fact, some of the actions in this plan will be recommendations to develop these more specific and geographically constrained plans.

Some of the goals and objectives are not substantially different than those presented in the 1984 plan. That plan and THRIVE 2025 were developed independently, based on sound planning principles, and came to similar conclusions about how Terre Haute and Vigo County should develop. While progress has been made in areas of the 1984 plan, such as regulating development on a county-wide basis through zoning and subdivision control, other areas continue to present challenges to the community.

The goals, policies, and actions are presented in the following text, organized by the key plan concepts: growth pattern, neighborhood development and redevelopment, transportation, economic development, and physical appearance.

Growth Pattern

The goal for the growth pattern in Terre Haute and Vigo County is to use a strategic approach that considers environmental constraints to development, encourages infill and redevelopment of urbanized areas, and encourages new development to occur in areas that can be served by urban infrastructure and amenities.

Overall, the key issues related to general growth were:

- Limiting sprawl;
- Conserving prime farmland;
- Focusing industrial development in industrial parks; and,
- Steering housing into the city, towns, and small rural communities or villages.

There are a number of general policies that support the type of development that is consistent with the growth pattern goal. These policies should be used for assessing development proposals, public investments, and the like in Vigo County.

- Discourage development in environmentally sensitive or potentially hazardous areas such as flood plains, unstable soils and areas of shaft mining activities;
- Encourage contiguous urban development.
- Limit development density and intensity to existing or planned and funded infrastructure capacity;
- Manage growth by planned extension and expansion of public utilities, facilities and capital investments;
- Where major projects are planned which require new or improved roadways, storm-water drainage systems or sewer systems, create opportunities to expand, upgrade, and improve the capacity of existing systems near the proposed project;
- Locate community services, jobs, and shopping in close proximity to one another, with attractive connections and/or appropriate buffers;
- Use the widest possible range of funding options to pay for infrastructure and public facilities including but not limited to general tax increases, special assessment districts, and development fees and exactions; and,
- Protect productive agricultural lands and related uses from encroaching development.

Recommended actions are:

- Pursue Brownfield redevelopment on a site-by-site basis, as parcels are desired for redevelopment;
- Develop an urban service boundary to contain growth to area where it can be properly serviced; and,
- Revise the floodplain ordinance to better protect the floodplain resource.

Further policies related to growth pattern are in Chapter 3.

Neighborhood Development and Redevelopment

The goal for neighborhood development is to preserve and improve the existing residential areas, provide a variety of housing choices, and improve the quality of life in established neighborhoods while maximizing the potential of vacant commercial and industrial sites.

Overall, the key issues related to neighborhood development were:

- Preserving historic neighborhoods;
- Recognizing historic districts;
- Zoning protections for neighborhoods; and,
- Taking advantage of the opportunities that exist in vacant commercial and industrial buildings.

Certain policies can be used in decision making for rezoning and other development decisions as well as for the allocation of public funds and incentives that can positively influence the development of the existing neighborhoods and support redevelopment of vacant and underutilized parcels. These policies are:

- Encourage variety of housing choice in existing neighborhoods through a balance of preservation, rehabilitation and new development;
- Discourage new construction that is of an inappropriate height, bulk, or architectural character and demolition of structurally sound units;
- Reinforce and expand the stable areas of neighborhoods by focusing housing revitalization in a small, defined territory and finding appropriate new uses for the remaining land;
- Establish a development review process that provides notice of proposed developments to neighborhood organizations and allows for their input prior to formal adoption hearings;
- Retirement housing, public transportation and community services should be located within a reasonable walking distance and should be accessible via paved walkways that are lighted, secure, and well maintained. If neither public transportation nor community services are located within a short walking distance, the retirement housing development should provide shuttle bus service;
- To the extent possible, the architecture and site design for multifamily residential development should incorporate features that reduce the potential for crime and enhance the security of residents;
- Permit high-density housing only where direct access is available to streets or highways capable of carrying the traffic that these higher densities will generate;

- Design traffic circulation systems to reduce speeding, commuter or cut through traffic, or other conflicts in street use and character in residential neighborhoods;
- Consider local representatives and organization leaders of Terre Haute's neighborhoods and the Terre Haute Neighborhood Partnership as interested parties regarding formal proposals for new development or redevelopment that would impact existing residential neighborhoods and provide notice on proposals as such;
- Allow small commercial development within residential communities, primarily at collector cross streets and only when the commercial uses are designed to serve the neighborhood and the intensity, scale, and building design are compatible with surrounding residential uses;
- Encourage new infill development in established areas that is compatible with existing and/or planned land use, that is at a compatible scale with the surrounding area, and that can be supported by adequate public facilities and transportation systems;
- Stabilize residential neighborhoods adjacent to commercial areas through the establishment of transitional land uses, vegetative buffers and/or architectural screens, and the control of vehicular access;
- Utilize landscaping and open space along rights-of-way to minimize the impacts of incompatible land uses separated by roadways;
- Regulate the amount of noise and light produced by nonresidential land uses to minimize impacts on nearby residential properties;
- Encourage housing as a development option for infill sites, particularly in commercial areas, near the universities and near employment concentrations to reduce travel to classes and work;
- Indiana State University and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology fraternity and sorority housing should be located where they don't conflict with other residential uses. Alternatives include additional on-campus housing for fraternities/sororities and an off-campus Greek housing complex utilizing new construction or adaptive reuse of existing structures;
- Support variety of neighborhood types such as rural hamlet, suburban planned, fraternal residential, neo-traditional, and mixed use;
- Encourage remediation of Brownfield sites; and,
- Encourage redevelopment of vacant industrial and commercial sites.

Recommended actions are:

- Use residential tax abatements to encourage reinvestment in existing neighborhoods;
- Develop and enforce a property maintenance code; and,
- Use landscape buffers and screening to minimize conflicts between incompatible land uses and densities.

Transportation

The transportation goal is to recognize the importance of the relationship between land use and transportation through access management and corridor planning.

Overall, key issues related to the connection between land use and transportation include the need to:

- Develop corridor land use plans for strategic corridors in the city and county;
- Establish and implement access management plans;
- Create aesthetic standards for "gateway corridors;"
- Support projects that extend and reinforce the transportation grid in the City of Terre Haute, Town of Riley, Town of Seelyville, and Town of West Terre Haute; and,
- Plan and identify land uses for new corridors, so that their transportation function is preserved.

Policies that support the transportation goal, which should be used in decision making for development proposals and the use of public funds include:

Arterials and Collectors:

- Support the development of corridor plans along significant thoroughfares identified as having particular importance to circulation and as a gateway to the community;
- Support increased standards for development along key corridors such as U.S. 41, S.R. 46, and S.R. 641;
- Encourage the development of access management standards for key corridors; use access management principles in making development decisions;
- Require traffic impact studies to be done for all proposed developments that access a collector or arterial level roadway; and,
- Consider the impacts of increased traffic in making development decisions.

Local Streets:

- Require local streets in new subdivisions to connect to existing and planned collector streets;
- Require every major subdivision and road project proposal to construct or provide right of way for the extension of existing and planned collector roads;
- Include bus, walk, and bikeway provisions in all road improvement projects; and,
- Support local road construction standards which incorporate traffic calming (speed reduction) principles.

Alleys:

- Encourage developers of land to consider whether the addition of an alley to a development would enhance that development and the flow of traffic in the urbanized area;
- Vacate an alley or an un-built right-of-way only after evaluation of the function of that alley or un-built right-of-way serves no useful purpose in a neighborhood or the transportation network;
- Maintain alleys according to their function and construction type: gravel in low-density residential areas and asphalt in commercial and high-density residential context; and,
- Restrict joint use of an alley by single-unit residential uses and more intense uses through a Special Exception process defined in the Zoning Ordinance to avoid conflicts in character of the alley as experienced in traffic volumes, types, and speeds.

Mass Transit:

- Ensure transit access is provided for any new high-density residential development and in any retail development;
- Expand bus service when demand is demonstrated or projected, existing routes and service levels are not jeopardized, and when supported by an appropriate revenue source;
- Design bus bays into all new collector and arterial streets, and work with current multi-family developments to build bus stop facilities;
- Evaluate new multi-family and commercial developments and road networks for needed bus pull-offs and bus stops; and,
- Cooperate in the provision of commercial bus service from Terre Haute to other localities in Vigo County and beyond.

Bike Trails:

- Invite periodic review of policies and ordinances governing bike trails by the Terre Haute/Vigo County Trails and Greenway Committee. Consider including Greenway Committee on the Technical Advisory Committee;
- When residential and commercial developments are planned, seek opportunities to enlarge the bike trail system. Large developments should always include multi-purpose trails for internal circulation and connection to the Terre Haute and Vigo County bike pedestrian network;
- Consider inclusion of bicycle lanes in all repaving plans for the city streets;
- Include bicycle lanes and/or off-road bike-pedestrian trails when new roads are constructed;
- Plan bicycle and pedestrian access to all existing and proposed Terre Haute facilities;
- Encourage business and employers to provide bicycle parking for the use of employees and customers; and,
- Construct bike-pedestrian trails that are accessible to the physically challenged and meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards if topography permits and if economically feasible.

Recommended actions are:

- Encourage shared use commercial driveways and restrict driveway locations to manage access;
- Require development in areas served by transit to have sidewalks that connect the development to transit stops and the trail system;
- Engage in corridor planning for new corridors that consider land use, economic development, access management, and physical appearance of the corridor; and,
- Establish development criteria that associate the type of development and density with the transportation system and adjacent land uses.

Economic Development

The economic development goal is to build on local assets such as the airport, existing industrial parks, the universities, and the existing key elements of a life sciences initiative.

Key issues associated with the economic development goal are:

- Brownfield redevelopment;
- Downtown development;
- Airport development;
- Existing and new industrial parks; and,
- Life sciences initiative.

Policies that support and provide direction for decision-makers as they consider economic development projects, site plans, and the use of public funds or incentives are:

- Provide infrastructure support to improve appearance, traffic and pedestrian accessibility, and utility capacity;
- Implement programs to improve older commercial areas of the city, towns, and villages of the county to enhance their ability to provide necessary community services;
- Implement a community-based Brownfield redevelopment program to address potential environmental concern in vacant commercial and industrial areas;
- Encourage efforts to increase the viability of downtown Terre Haute as the central place of the county and region;
- Continue city-county cooperation to develop industrial sites;
- Support the community's universities and colleges in their state and private funding support and in achieving their goals of excellence;
- Support the development and optimal use of the airport;
- Discourage development that will encroach on or interfere with the operation of the airport;
- Encourage development that will maximize the airport's capabilities;
- Encourage business and industry that will diversify Vigo County's economic base;
- Encourage development of a business park designed for the life sciences;
- Protect industrial parks from encroaching development; and,
- Select a location, acquire land, and initiate work for a new industrial park prior to build out of existing industrial parks.

Recommended actions are:

- Identify and then target strategic sites for industrial development;
- Develop a parcel-by-parcel plan for use of the land around the Terre Haute International Airport;
- Develop a local life-science initiative similar to the statewide partnership of BioCrossroads; and,
- Use a historic architecture strategy to move downtown development forward.

Physical Appearance

The goal for physical appearance is to establish a strong and viable urban design framework by considering ways to improve those components that have the greatest influence on the physical form and character of a healthy community and by taking action steps (development regulations and planning efforts) to establish functional, valued, and attractive places that reflect the ideals of the community.

Key issues associated with the physical appearance goal are:

- Improvement in trash and yard maintenance, street cleaning, and open space maintenance;
- Protection of and capitalization on historic resource and buildings;
- Provision of sidewalks and bicycle/trail facilities;
- Provision of public parking in downtown;
- Overall appearance and cleanliness of the community;
- Landscaping guidelines, streetscape standards, and development regulations need updating to improve appearance;
- Increasing capacity for enforcement of regulations;
- Smell and odor of the community;
- Reduction in visual clutter/pollution; and,
- Terre Haute/Vigo County identity.

Policies to guide the development of projects related to the appearance of the community, making decisions, and expending public funds or providing incentives should include:

- Encourage new construction to reflect the context and character of the existing neighborhood;
- Require setbacks and buffering to adequately separate incompatible land uses;
- Support programs, which foster community pride and enhance community appearance;
- Protect significant historic properties and promote their rehabilitation and use;
- Protect the character of rural communities, scenic views, and the nature of the landscape;
- Increase the priority of cleanliness and order within the community and fund the enforcement appropriately;
- Increase the penalties for littering and lack of upkeep of properties;
- Provide countywide signage that reduces visual clutter to reflect a positive image of Terre Haute and Vigo County;
- Encourage public and private efforts to create entryways to the community, its districts, neighborhoods, and attractions so that a sense of arrival is established;
- Utilize the pedestrian experience as a criterion in reviewing development proposals; and,
- Support and fund the development of parks to serve residents of growing areas, as well as the construction of a trail system to connect key locations throughout the community.

Recommended actions include:

- Implementation of a strong sign regulation ordinance with enforcement capability that ensures its success;

- Use screening and landscaping to buffer incompatible uses and densities;
- Develop a landscaping standard for public rights-of-way; and,
- Institute an architectural review committee(s) to provide insight on development proposals prior to their approval.