



Terre Haute Vigo County *Comprehensive Plan*



Chapter 3: Geography of Implementation

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Introduction

The spatial arrangement of future land uses has emerged not only from the planning process but also from the existing pattern of development. Prior development has established the overall frame of reference on which future development options are grounded. The pattern of development areas and vacant undeveloped areas reflects past development economic, market, and environmental conditions.

The Growth Pattern Maps propose a new structure for future land use on top of existing land use patterns. These maps achieve the following results:

- Contain outward spread of intense urban growth;
- Foster contiguous urban development;
- Support a modest increase in residential development densities;
- Direct development away from sensitive environments;
- Reserve important natural and agricultural areas in the public interest;
- Limit risk to life and property from natural events;
- Link development capacity to existing and planned utility and roadway improvements;
- Encourage more effective use of existing public capital;
- Open development opportunities; and,
- Promote the livability of the community.

Land Use Categories

Rural Protection

This category is intended to protect agricultural production, natural resources, and environmentally sensitive areas located within Vigo County. Primary uses should include the production of grain, livestock grazing, forest preserve/reserve, floodplain protection and wetlands enhancement. These areas are based upon FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps, USGS shaft mine maps, and the lack of centralized water and sanitary sewer provisions.

Additional policies for Rural Protection Areas should include:

- Discouraging any expansion of centralized water and sanitary sewer;
- Primary uses of grain production, livestock grazing, forest production with replanting programs, and woodlands preservation/set-aside programs; and,
- Residential uses only being accessory to a primary use.

Rural Preservation

This category is intended to preserve and enhance the rural lifestyle in Vigo County. This category shares many of the aspects of property identified as a rural protection area with the exception of already being the recipient of public investment in the nature of the provision of centralized water or sanitary sewer.

Additional policies for Rural Preservation Areas should include:

- New development must be served by either centralized water or sanitary sewer;
- Expansion of centralized water and sanitary sewer only to alleviate a public health issue; and,
- Primary uses of grain production, livestock production, forest production, woodland preservation/set asides, and caretaker residential.

Estate Residential

These are areas with inadequate or non-existing facilities to support urban densities at this time. These areas are intended primarily as large lot residential areas with the average densities of two (2) acres per dwelling unit. Environmental condition may, in some cases, further limit prevailing development densities. Where development is to occur on septic systems, septic suitability must be judged on a site-specific basis. In order to maximize consistency with Vigo County development policies, adequate land coverage should be required to support two (2) independent septic fields. Current septic systems built in Vigo County have a useful life of twenty to twenty-five (20-25) years. A single septic system will probably fail prior to the life expectancy of the residential structure. In most cases, the provision of requiring space for two septic fields will not unduly restrict development. Areas designated Estate Residential also signify areas that are not planned for major new public investments in roadways or public utilities.

Over time some of these areas may come under increasing development pressure. Several special conditions may warrant increasing development densities. These include: planned and committed public improvements; adjacent and contiguous development at urban densities; a proposed master planned large scale, medium density neighborhood involving a large area (i.e. 200 acres); completion of a new major highway; and, shifts in the ease and merit of annexation which may provide strong public incentives to progressively annex. All of which should be approved through a future update of the Comprehensive Plan or preparation of a Sub-Area Plan. Extension of sewer and water facilities to a site should not, in itself, justify higher density development. Upgrading the plan's densities must be considered in the context of quantitative impact of the higher density on

the capacity of services such as streets, parks, schools, etc. The analysis must take into account the existing and projected use of public facilities vs. capacity of the facilities.

Additional policies for Estate Residential areas should include:

- Estate housing on lots greater than two acres as the primary use;
- Lots should be divided in a way that allows for additional development to be served in the future;
- Residential subdivision lots should not have frontage on county roads, rather they should be required to build local level public streets to provide access from the county road to the lots; and,
- Any increase in development density should be based upon the development and approval of long-range infrastructure development plans.

Suburban Residential

These are largely undeveloped areas lying within the boundaries of existing and planned urban services. Current residential densities range from building on lots of ½ acre to 2 acres in size; this should be used as a minimum density. Over time, densities should be encouraged to increase moderately to allow average densities of three to three and one-half (3 to 3 ½) households per acre. In the case of all residential densities, densities are stated as an average for the entire area in a given land use categories.

Promotion of monotonous suburban tract housing is not the intent of this growth pattern. To avoid this outcome, careful consideration of alternative site development schemes should be undertaken by planning, engineering, development, and real estate professionals for each new residential tract.

Increasing residential densities within this growth pattern offers four distinct advantages over typical low-density development.

- Provides for greater efficiency of public infrastructure;
- Reduction in the need for infrastructure extensions and expansions, thereby saving public capital cost;
- Provision for pedestrian scale residential neighborhoods, which will blend with existing Terre Haute neighborhoods that were developed at five to seven (5 to 7) units per acre and at the same time provide enhanced opportunities for non-motorized travel; and,
- Minimization land consumption and limited land disturbance.

Not every new subdivision will provide developed densities approaching four (4) units per acre. Yet, as cluster housing, patio homes, variations of zero-lot line housing and integrated neighborhoods of town houses, garden apartment, and single family dwelling units become more common and more fashionable, average densities will increase. Traditionally, allowable densities controlled mix and pattern of suburban

residential development. Density, per se, is increasingly viewed by development professionals as only one of many variables that must be considered in making site development decisions. The infrastructure capacity relative to undeveloped areas and special environmental conditions of a specific development site as well as the site plan itself and its impact on surrounding property should primarily control the developed density. This should especially be the case as development moves beyond minimum residential densities. In all cases, density and the arrangement of uses on a developed site should be sensitive to surrounding development patterns, making land use transitions within the new development and utilizing natural features as transitions or buffers.

Policies for Suburban Residential areas should include:

- Houses on lots ranging from one-half to two acres depending on wastewater treatment needs;
- The extent of non-residential uses should be limited to parks, churches, and schools;
- Residential subdivision lots should not have frontage on county roads, rather they should be required to build local level public streets to provide access from the county road to the lots; and,
- Medium range plans for expanding needed infrastructure should be developed, considering projected demand and funding.

Neighborhood Conservation

These areas encompass neighborhoods with established and stable residential environments. The vast majority of these areas are fully developed (or expected to be in a relatively short timeframe). Where new infill development is proposed, it should be entirely consistent and compatible with pre-existing developments. However, special public attention may, in some cases, be required to assure that drainage, sidewalk improvements, and linkages to pedestrian and bicycle trails are made. Many of these neighborhoods may be excellent candidates for special assessment districts for neighborhood improvements and amenities.

In addition, these areas encompass existing retail activity nodes located throughout the community. In general, these commercial areas have evolved in an unplanned, largely uncoordinated manner along frontage of primary arterials. Within these commercial bands, a great variety of activities exist which target different markets. Some activities are oriented toward "drive-by" markets, fast food restaurants, convenience stores, gasoline stations, drive-in banking facilities, for example. Other activities are special-purpose, oriented to single trips rather than comparative multi-purpose shopping. These single purpose

stores serve a market larger than a single neighborhood. Sales and service of automobiles, trucks, boats, recreational vehicles and related activities are special purpose region-serving activities. They require a large site with good visibility. Finally, commercial areas include a range of neighborhood level retail activities including grocery stores, pharmacies, personal services such as hair styling, and other frequently purchased goods and services.

Additional policies for Neighborhood Conservation areas should include:

- Allow for a range of housing densities based on the zoning ordinance;
- Allow for a mix of uses, focusing on neighborhood and community serving commercial nodes;
- Encourage neighborhoods to develop a unique sense of place, but still be part of the larger city;
- Reuse of commercial oriented structure should be limited to retail activities that contribute to the diversity and variety of retail uses in a commercial node;
- With respect to existing commercial “strips” – i.e. narrow bands of commercial uses occupying major roadway frontage, the limitation of additional or new commercial uses is strongly advised;
- Geographic expansion of these commercial “strips” should be limited to the provision of additional space to ensure the compatibility with adjacent uses, not an intensification of use; and,
- Improved landscaping, improved pedestrian amenities, and increased attention to lighting, signage, and impacts upon nearby residential areas should be examined in the review of development petitions.

Neighborhood Enhancement Areas

Areas that qualify as Neighborhood Enhancement Areas represent residential districts with aging housing stock, older industrial areas that are in need of reinvestment, and neighborhood commercial nodes that need assistance in meeting modern development standards. These areas are primarily located within Terre Haute, West Terre Haute, Seelyville, and Riley.

Residential neighborhoods that are in need of rehabilitation should receive priority efforts such as public improvements such as drainage, sidewalks, street, curb and gutter repair and replacement, and landscaping in the public right-of-way. Where appropriate, new residential infill projects should be considered a high priority for undeveloped parcels. Ultimately, incompatible and inconsistent uses with the residential context of these neighborhoods should be eliminated.

Over time, it is reasonable to expect obsolescence of facilities themselves or because corporate restructuring. As facilities are displaced, facility reuse plans or site redevelopment plans should be prepared. In some cases, industrial reuse or redevelopment may not be

appropriate, such as in the older core of the City of Terre Haute.

Neighborhood commercial areas are small scale, retail activity clusters or planned centers that serve limited market areas – typically 4,000 to 10,000 people. They provide shopping opportunities for those most frequently purchased goods and services. Neighborhood commercial areas should be distributed throughout the community in relationship to the distribution of households. Each neighborhood commercial center should be a master planned commercial development that is contained within a defined tract or land area. Auto ingress and egress must be controlled. Most importantly, these areas should relate to surrounding residential neighborhoods and not adversely impact the livability of those neighborhoods through traffic, lighting, noise, litter, or other impacts. They will require strong buffering and landscape regulations, as well as architectural compatibility with neighborhood context.

Additional policies for Neighborhood Enhancement Areas should include:

- Encourage infill development that is compatible with the land use mix and intensity of existing development;
- Support preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties;
- Incompatible and inconsistent uses with the residential context of these neighborhoods should be eliminated;
- Identify areas that need sub-area plans and prioritize the development of those plans by area;
- Allow for a range of housing densities based on the zoning ordinance; and,
- Encourage neighborhoods to develop a unique sense of place, but still be part of the larger city.

Reuse and Redevelopment Areas

These are areas that offer potential future reuse and redevelopment potential. These areas are a result of underutilization of land relative to potential development. Brownfield and blighted categorization establishes the need to apply policies established for these areas. A Brownfield site is land that was previously used for an industrial or commercial use that may have been contaminated by hazardous waste or pollution, but has the potential for reuse after it has been cleaned.

Additional policies for Reuse and Redevelopment Areas include:

- Incentives to be provided to support redevelopment;
- Density bonuses may be appropriate to support redevelopment;
- Sponsor the development of redevelopment plans; and,
- All policies from Neighborhood Enhancement Areas.

Regional Commercial

Regional commercial areas are major retail centers providing the widest variety of retail goods and services (comparative shopping goods such

as jewelry, apparel, household goods, and general merchandise) to a market area larger than the community, with no single type of retail activity dominating the district. The vitality of the areas is based upon the diversity of retail activities being located in a relatively concentrated area. With respect to these major regional shopping areas, future planning should consider the district or area as a whole, thereby assuring the vitality and viability of these regional commercial areas.

Additional policies to guide future development decisions include:

- Support spatial containment of commercial activities to existing commercially zoned sites to:
 - Maintain and reinforce the drawing power of major retail centers including anchor department and discount stores;
 - Reduce future traffic congestion by more closely tying existing retail centers with transit operations; expand the opportunities for pedestrian linkages between and among major existing activity centers;
 - Increase the identity of the district as a whole, with improved coordination in urban design elements including directional signage, common landscape elements such as lighting or street furniture; develop a common approach to business signage;
 - Encourage reinvestment in and continual upgrading of existing retail space; encourage the intensification of activities for retail comparative shopping purposes;
 - Emphasize multiple-trip purpose activities with regional significance. Ancillary activities such as fast-food restaurants or quick stop establishments do not add to the regional character of activity centers; and,
 - Ensure that future retail commercial development in the area does not detract from the viability of existing activity centers and does not detract from the livability of residential Neighborhoods in the vicinity.

Employment Centers

These areas are to be developed as high intensity, mixed-use, planned corporate business parks. Employment Centers may include a wide diversity of use activities including research and development, office buildings, corporate headquarters or corporate “campus” facilities, office/distribution facilities – so called “flex space” and institutional uses. In addition to these primary uses, complementary, secondary or ancillary activities should be encouraged on a limited basis. These may include open space, recreational amenities, day care centers, business support services like print services or computer service bureaus, and limited retail commercial activities such as restaurants, designed for use by employees. Employment Centers should be developed under a master development plan which provide landscape, lighting, architectural controls, internal vehicular and pedestrian circulation

plans, controlled access parking and loading facilities, common area lighting and standardized signage. Additionally, these areas should offer the protection of performance standards with respect to noise, vibration and environmental quality.

Airport

The Airport area shown on the Growth Pattern maps incorporates the Terre Haute International Airport and surrounding uses. The airport area has significant potential for airport-related business and industrial services. The airport area should be the focus of a sub-area plan that creates a parcel-by-parcel master land use plan to accommodate additional growth while acknowledging the limitations related to development adjacent to an airport.

Industrial Areas

Industrial Areas shown on the Growth Pattern maps incorporate existing or planned industrial parks and industrial facilities. Allocation of additional land for future development of industrial facilities is also shown. Areas appropriate for industrial use include large, uninterrupted tracts of level land with few environmental constraints and with excellent highway and arterial access. The plan, in general, accommodates expansion of existing industries.

Medical/Hospital Areas

The land within these areas is intended for uses that have a large concentration of existing medical activities. In addition to the hospitals, various clinics and offices of medical practitioners, support activities such as hospital equipment, medical supplies, pharmacies, medical and dental laboratories are appropriate for these areas. Ancillary retail activities for hospital visitors or employees may be appropriate – florists, limited restaurants, lodging facilities, insurance services, banking services, etc. It should be recognized Terre Haute's hospitals are regional health care providers servicing a large number of counties in West Central Indiana and East Central Illinois. Evidence suggests that the hospitals will continue future growth at least in a regional context.

Three future planning principles need to be followed as future development projects emerge in these areas:

- The size of the district(s) and the spill over effects of traffic and medical activities into adjacent residential neighborhoods should be contained and limited. This should be accomplished in a manner that does not inhibit future medical growth or development opportunities but at the same time does not cause displacement or conversion of residential uses for medical activities;
- The district should be planned as a whole with clear and controlled access, direction signage, controlled drive cuts, cooperative district wide parking, and careful planning of the

spatial interrelationships between various land uses and activities; and,

- Along the edges of the district(s) special attention should be devoted to buffering, perhaps through landscaping, to clearly separate and distinguish the hospital/medical area from the adjacent residential areas. Within the hospital/medical district landscaping, streetscape details and pedestrian amenities should be enhanced and coordinated.

Historic Districts

Historic Districts are locations within the community that are important because of historic events, architectural or cultural significance, or a connection to the lives of the people who lived there that should be protected and enhanced as an amenity to region. There are two types of historic districts:

- National Register Historic Districts. The National Register is a nation-wide list of buildings or areas certified by the Secretary of Interior as important architecturally, historically or culturally. Individual buildings and those in a district are eligible for Federal and Indiana tax credits for rehabilitation and tax reductions for easement donation. Listing a building on the National Register does not trigger local review of changes to the building unless the project is federally funded; and,
- Local Historic Districts. Local Historic Districts can be created by local ordinance, and are regulated by a historic district design standards in that ordinance. These standards vary from district to district and are developed by the neighborhood. "Certified" local historic districts have been determined to qualify for the National Register. These districts enjoy the same tax credit benefits as National Register districts.

Specific items to be utilized in identifying historic districts include:

- Buildings and structures within the district generally must be at least 50 years old;
- Many demolitions or new buildings have not altered the area's historic appearance;
- District resources should be similar in style, massing, detailing and/or date of construction;
- The buildings in the district must retain their original architectural character; and,
- The area must have clear and precise defined boundaries.

Downtown

In establishing a fundamental public policy to recognize downtown Terre Haute as a mixed use, high intensity activity center serving regional, community-wide, and neighborhood markets, future downtown development should be approached as series of specialized precincts, each with specific planning and urban design guidelines. Precise site-specific development objectives and urban design standards should emerge from previous recommended works. However, the following planning principles establish a general framework for guiding subsequent planning and development efforts in downtown Terre Haute.

- The ground floor blocks facing Wabash Avenue and 7th Street should remain pedestrian oriented with a high diversity of shopping goods, specialty stores and soft consumer goods. Ground floor space should be primarily retail with limited office space. Where service activities do occur along these blocks, opportunity for at least some retail frontage – perhaps retail display windows need to be considered. In addition, the architectural character and detail needs to be preserved and enhanced. With new buildings or facades, building mass and scale, building materials, door and window openings and other design details should be complementary, consistent, and compatible with existing structures; and,
- Throughout the downtown area vacant and underutilized buildings are apparent. The intensity of use of the underused or vacant buildings should be increased. Upper story floor space is especially difficult to fill, and adaptive reuse is encouraged; Residential and business service uses are also encouraged. If an activity does not have any adverse effect upon traffic or surrounding activities, through light, odors, or excessive noise, it should be encouraged, filling unused or underused spaces and buildings. Opportunities for redevelopment or adaptive reuse of low intensity activities should be explored on a site-by-site basis.

University Areas

The locations delineated as University Areas define property currently owned or identified by Indiana State University (ISU), Rose Hulman Institute of Technology (RHIT), St. Mary's of the Woods College (SMWC), or Ivy Tech Community College (ITCC) long-range master plans as the intended campus boundaries. These institutions of higher learning and their associated foundations do own other property throughout the community, but are not considered part of the campus. These properties are either held in trust, as income generating assets or as special purpose facilities and enterprises not directly linked to campus development. The University Area indicates the institutions' direct sphere of control, which in the case of ISU and ITCC neither the City of Terre Haute nor Vigo County exercises planning and development control. RHIT and SMWC, as private institutions, do fall within the planning and development control of Vigo County and the City of Terre Haute. However, this plan recognizes that the institutional administrations are better suited to guide development and master planning within their sphere of control. Therefore, all four institutions will be responsible for master planning activity for their campuses. Properties in private non-university ownership are subject to city and county planning policy and development regulations.

Village

The locations identified on the Growth Pattern maps as Villages are those areas, primarily in unincorporated Vigo County, that have developed at an urban density. The Villages identified acknowledge the existing areas that have developed at an urban density without being incorporated as cities or towns. They also provide for additional growth in and around the existing development of this type. Future development of the Villages should continue the street pattern and density of the existing village development to the extent that such development doesn't conflict with sound environmental or land use principles.

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