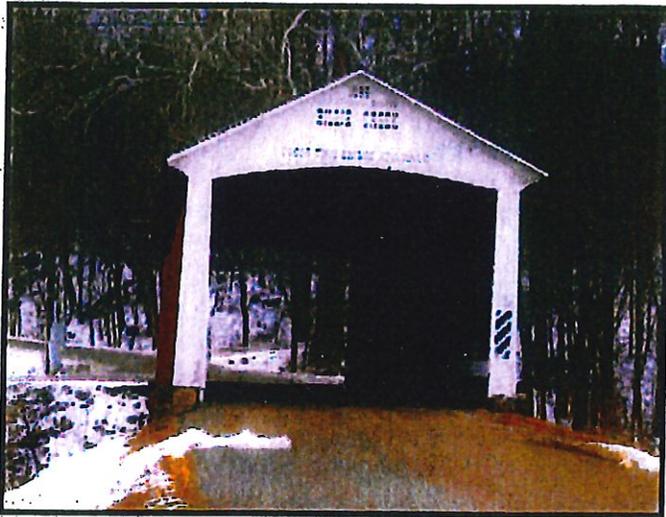


**LIVE • WORK • PLAY • LEARN**

# **COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**



## **PARKE COUNTY:**

*Beyond Covered Bridges*

## Acknowledgements

Parke County would like to thank all those who devoted their time and energy to help create this Comprehensive Plan. Their time and dedication to this process is greatly appreciated.

We would like to thank the Indiana Rural Development Council for its financial contribution to the project.

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## Chapter

# SETTING THE CONTEXT



## INTRODUCTION

Parke County Plan Commission wanted to update the county comprehensive plan for many years. Parke County Redevelopment Commission wanted to develop a strategic plan for economic development for many years. This plan is a collaborative effort by both groups to reach both goals through one planning process, seeking to engage the citizens of Parke County in planning for the future of their county. They joined together, designed a joint process, sought funding neither could acquire alone, and were successful.

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the planning process was both to create a plan for everyone to use, and to engage citizens in designing the future of the county. The process of bringing people together and discussing issues and concerns was as important to the future of the county as the actual planning documents created. This part of the purpose was to rebuild a greater sense of community and shared responsibility among the citizens.

The purpose of the products was to have a living document that could and would be used by public and private entities as they make decisions about the future. One purpose of the new County Comprehensive Plan was to meet state planning and zoning statutes. The purpose of the strategic economic development plan was to assist local officials provide infrastructure and support for economic growth and to enhance employment.

## WHY SHOULD PARKE COUNTY PLAN?

Planning addresses practical as well as idealistic values. When a community plans, it is using whatever facts are currently available, such as population, economic, and fiscal data, to make an educated projection as to what the future holds. This enables the community to identify and choose the best and most practical steps to accomplish its goals. Thus, planning is a community's way to prepare for its future.

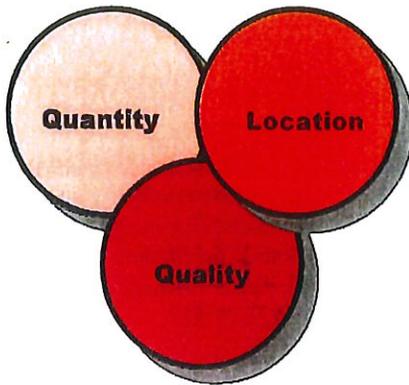
Planning identifies problems and points the community toward solutions. It helps a community to do first things first. In other words, it provides a rationale for assigning priorities. Planning creates sound policies for addressing growth. The comprehensive planning process informs and educates officials and citizens at the same time that it attempts to coordinate development projects.

Planning focuses on the need to allow growth to occur, but requires that it do so in a logical, controlled and sustainable manner. Planning furthers the welfare of people and their communities by creating convenient, equitable, healthful, efficient, and attractive environments for present and future generations.

## WHAT IS PLANNING?

Planning is community building. Planning is a collaborative process which ultimately defines a community's vision for the future.

## The Comprehensive Plan



A community's vision is created from desires of its citizens as well as an understanding of the problems and resources at hand.

Planning can be defined as, the process of anticipating future manifestations and complications, exploring their probable impact, and detailing policies, goals, objectives, and strategies to solve the problems. This often includes preparing options, considering alternatives, and issuing a final master plan: a comprehensive plan.

## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is not a legally binding and enforceable document like zoning or subdivision control ordinances. Rather, the comprehensive plan is an adopted, legislative document containing official policy statements for effective decision-making in both private development projects and community expenditures.

The purpose of a comprehensive plan is to guide a community into the future. A comprehensive plan is the vehicle with which a community's decision makers are able to control the quality, quantity, and location of their growth. The successful completion of the comprehensive planning process will ensure that future growth will provide a higher standard of quality of life for all in the community.

More precisely the plan is the policy document that plans for the physical, social, economic growth and redevelopment of the planning area. The plan influences policy decisions in a broad variety of areas, including, but not limited to:

- land use;
- transportation;
- infrastructure and utilities;
- drainage;
- environmental conservation;
- economic development;
- recreation and open space; and
- housing.

An effective comprehensive plan contains policies for growth, public facilities, land use, population densities, and critical resources, as well as a map illustrating the result of the proposed policies. The comprehensive planning process involves the creation of a framework for planned growth, through models in land use development, public services and resources, and public investments in a controlled positive manner.

## WHAT DOES INDIANA STATUTE REQUIRE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

While the comprehensive planning process is an activity primarily undertaken by local government, the State of Indiana has established specified standards for the purpose and content of the plan in the legislation that enables local units of government to undertake planning. Communities may adopt comprehensive plans "for the promotion of public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, or the general welfare and for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of development" (I.C. 36-7-4-501).

Indiana Code 36-7-4-500 series sets forth the standards for developing and evaluating a

comprehensive plan. Required elements include the following (I.C. 36-7-4-502):

- A statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction.
- A statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction.
- A statement of policy for the development of public ways, public spaces, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.

Optional elements, provided by I.C. 36-7-4-503, include:

- Surveys and studies of current conditions and probable future growth.
- Maps, plats, charts, and descriptive material presenting basic information, locations, extent, and character of pertinent characteristics, including history, population, land use, physical conditions, community centers, neighborhoods, public ways, public and private utilities, environmental conditions, transportation, parks, education, and other appropriate factors.
- Reports, maps, charts, and recommendations setting forth plans and policies for the development, redevelopment, improvement, extension, and revision of the subjects and physical, economic, or social situations within the jurisdiction.
- A short and long range development program of public works projects for the purpose of stabilizing industry and employment and for the purpose of eliminating unplanned, unsightly, untimely, and extravagant projects.
- A short and long range plan for the location, general design, and assignment of priority for construction of thoroughfares in the jurisdiction for the purpose of providing a system of major public ways that allows effective vehicular movement, encourages effective use of land, and makes economic use of public funds.

## **HOW DOES THIS PLAN MEET THE STATE'S COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING CRITERIA?**

The final document will include chapters that focus on goals, transportation, and plan implementation. The goals meet the criteria of establishing objectives for the future development of areas under the jurisdiction of the Parke County Advisory Plan Commission. The transportation chapter includes policies for the development of public ways that supplement the plans policies. The implementation chapter establishes policies for land use in the jurisdiction, as well as, additional policies for land use and the development of public ways, while addressing utilities, public land, and public structures and spaces.

## **WHAT ARE THE GRANT FUNDING CRITERIA?**

This comprehensive plan was supported by the Rural Development Action Program; a rural development grant funded and administered by the Indiana Rural Development Council (IRDC). The purpose of the grant is to stimulate economic development in rural areas and provide funding for the establishment of new regional rural development groups and the operations of existing regional rural development groups.

The grant funding criteria are based in large part on the contents of the County's approved application submittal which included objectives for infrastructure, economic development, land use, tourism, housing, recreation and education.

As a result, the plan is diligent in addressing the following grant funding criteria:

- the development of water resources and wastewater treatment with respect to rural, lake communities;
- the development of telecommunications infrastructure;

- recommendations for controlled economic development, including: agriculture, small business, cottage industries, industry, and manufacturing;
- recommendations for ordinance revisions;
- review of historical objectives for development in local tourism, a study of current trends in tourism and recommendations for the county's continued tourism;
- an assessment of the community's housing needs: past, present and future;
- incorporation of smart growth principles for the protection of the natural environment and overall rural character;
- the evaluation of existing park facilities and park and recreation needs;
- recommendations for improving the existing park and recreation areas and serving underserved areas;
- engage local education officials in the assessment of the County's school corporation;
- recommendations for improving the current structure of the school corporation; and
- review the county's access to higher education and local facilities.

## **COMMUNITIES INCLUDED IN THE PLAN**

The Parke County Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a policy tool for the Parke County Advisory Plan Commission in making decisions regarding land use. Due to the jurisdiction of the Plan Commission, this Comprehensive Plan will focus on the unincorporated areas of the county, over which the Plan Commission has jurisdiction.

The incorporated towns of Bloomingdale, Marshall, Mecca, Montezuma, and Rosedale will be considered in the plan as they are a part of Parke County, but the Parke County Advisory Plan Commission has no jurisdiction within the corporate limits of any of the towns.

The Town of Rockville has its own Advisory Plan Commission for areas within the corporate boundary of the town. The Parke County comprehensive plan will discuss Rockville in the context of it being the county seat and home to some of the local attractions and the largest populated area in the county.

The economic development aspects of this plan are intended to serve as a policy tool for all of Parke County, including each of the incorporated towns. Economic development policy must be coordinated between the county and the towns for the benefit of all.

## **Chapter**

# **VISION FOR PARKE COUNTY**

## **VISION FOR PARKE COUNTY**

Comprehensive Planning processes often begin with a vision, a collective statement of what a place wants to be in the future. The Parke County vision was crafted as a set of four vision statements related to the framework of the plan: living in Parke County, working in Parke County, playing in Parke County, and learning in Parke County.

### **PARKE COUNTY VISION STATEMENTS**

*Parke County will continue to be a scenic rural county of small towns, communities, and rural areas that maintain their heritage and character while providing a high quality of life in a relaxed atmosphere.*

*Parke County has a vigorous, work-friendly economic environment which supports existing businesses, encourages expansion of local businesses, and encourages entrepreneurs to create businesses, providing a variety of job opportunities that pay competitive wages and offer a comfortable standard of living.*

*Parke County offers year-round nature-based recreation, rural/small town history, arts, and handicrafts, for residents and visitors.*

*Parke County has multiple educational opportunities including a unified, high-quality public K-12 school district, post secondary education, adult education, alternative education, lifelong learning, and a county-wide library system.*

These four vision statements were prepared after four public input sessions were held around the county. The following sections provide background on each of the vision statements.

## **PARKE COUNTY AS A PLACE TO LIVE**

Parke County is a rural county with a number of small towns, places where people can live on family farms or in neighborhoods. More than 17,000 people call the county 'home.' When asked what made Parke County a good place to live, people who participated in a public meeting or focus group responded with a variety of answers that can be summarized in a few points:

- There is a natural beauty of the land in the county
- The state parks are part of what makes the county special
- People care about the traditional look of the communities

When asked what Parke County needed to do to remain a good place to live, people said:

- There is a need to be supportive of local industries, including cottage industries and crafters
- There is a desire to be able to shop locally
- There is a strong desire to keep the county rural



Historic Courthouse Square Buildings

The "Live" chapter of the plan identifies issues associated with living in the county over the next twenty years. A future land use plan and goals, objectives, and actions for achieving the vision for living in Parke County can be found in the "Implementation" chapter.

## **PARKE COUNTY AS A PLACE TO WORK**

Parke County has a few large businesses, a few significant government employers, and a number of small businesses and farms. Many Parke County workers commute to adjacent counties and larger cities. When asked what makes Parke County a good place to work, people who participated in a public meeting or focus group responded with a variety of answers that can be summarized in a few points:

- Business opportunities exist in the county
- Family farms are important
- The cost of living is reasonable

When asked what Parke County needed to do to improve as a place to work, people said:

- People want to be able to work close to home
- Need the infrastructure to be able to support medium and large businesses
- Need to continue to support small businesses and the existing businesses
- Need to designate an industrial park and provide incentives for industrial development
- Need to support a range of job opportunities
- Need to support cottage industries

The "Work" chapter of the plan identifies issues associated with working in Parke County over the next twenty years. A transportation plan and goals, objectives, and actions for achieving the vision for working in Parke County are found in the "Implementation" chapter.

## **PARKE COUNTY AS A PLACE TO PLAY**

Parke County is home to state parks, reservoirs, and recreation areas in addition to the scenic covered bridges that have made the county famous. The county has a number of nature-based recreation opportunities including camping and canoeing. The Covered Bridge Festival and other local festivals bring thousands of tourists to the county each year. Recreation opportunities for local residents are also an important aspect of playing in Parke County. When asked what makes Parke County a good place to play, people who participated in a public meeting or focus group told us:

- State parks and covered bridges
- Natural environment
- The county is a very good place to take a family for outdoor activities
- The county isn't highly commercialized
- Historic destinations

When asked what Parke County needed to do to make playing in Parke County more successful over the next twenty years, people said:

- Beautify the state and federal highways
- Focus on natural resources as attractions
- Use conservation easements
- Create year-round tourism opportunities
- Develop a YMCA and recreation opportunities for local people
- Coordinate tourism activities
- Focus on local goods (woodworking, crafts, farm products)



The Inn at Turkey Run State Park

The "Play" chapter of the plan identifies issues associated with recreation and tourism in Parke County over the next twenty years. Goals, objectives, and actions for achieving the vision for playing in the county can be found in the "Implementation" chapter.

## **PARKE COUNTY AS A PLACE TO LEARN**

Parke County students attend school in one of four school districts, three of which are entirely within Parke County. The towns of Rockville and Montezuma have libraries, but there isn't a countywide library system. Higher education opportunities within 50 miles are quite diverse, and the Parke County Learning Center provides opportunities closer to home. When asked what makes Parke County a good place to learn, people who participated in a public meeting or focus group told us:

- The schools are small and care for students
- The teachers are dedicated
- Parents are supportive of the schools

When asked what Parke County needed to do to make the community a better place to learn over the next twenty years, people said:

- There is a need for workforce development
- A county-wide library system is needed
- The three school districts entirely within the county should be unified
- There needs to be more lifelong learning opportunities, and people need to be more aware of the available lifelong learning opportunities

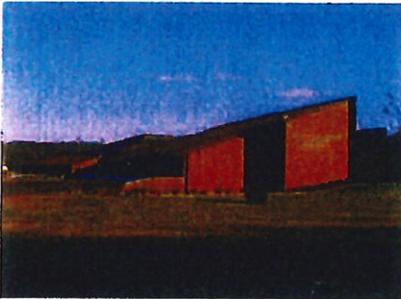
The "Learn" chapter identifies issues associated with learning at all levels in Parke County. Goals, objectives, and actions for achieving the vision for learning in Parke County are found in the "Implementation" chapter.



Rockville Jr. and Sr. High School



Turkey Run Jr. and Sr. High School



Riverton Park Jr. and Sr. High School



The Learning Center

## Chapter

# LIVE... IN PARKE COUNTY

## LIVING...

Live...it is about the activities Parke County residents do in their everyday life. The size of the population, the location and distribution of housing, land use patterns, and the conduct of everyday activities are included in this section.

## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS AND PROJECTIONS

According to the Census Bureau, there were 17,360 residents in Parke County in 2005, an increase of less than one percent since 2000. These figures include the large inmate population incarcerated at the Rockville Correctional Facility as residents. The largest number of people living in towns live in Rockville, with a population of 2,701 in 2005. Other incorporated communities include Bloomingdale (322), Marshall (365), Mecca (365), Montezuma (1,151), and Rosedale (759). Most growth in the past five years occurred in Liberty, Wabash, and Washington townships. Adams Township experienced a population loss of 42 people between 2000 and 2005.

The population of the county is expected to grow slightly between now and 2030 according to the Census Bureau. The most aggressive population projection places the 2030 population at 18,670. The age group that is expected to experience the most growth is seniors (over age 65).

Fewer than one third of the county residents live in incorporated towns. This means that the county has a significant role to play in development, particularly in establishing growth policy. Population growth in unincorporated areas generally means that issues such as providing for safe and efficient wastewater treatment and effective transportation systems need to be addressed carefully to protect natural areas and resources.

The projection that the 2030 population will be older than the current population suggests the need to consider a variety of housing types and locations to serve the needs of people who wish to age in place. This same population will also need access to convenient transportation, shopping, and services.

## HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Housing is another component of life in Parke County. Most people in the county live in single family homes. According to the Census of Population and Housing eighty-five percent of homes were owner occupied in 2000. This is higher than the state average, and Indiana is a strong home ownership state, ranking 12<sup>th</sup> in the country. The median home value was \$64,900 in 2000 compared to the statewide median of \$94,300.

There were nearly 900 vacation homes in the county, comprising 62 percent of vacant homes and 11 percent of all homes.



Historic home



Downtown Rockville

Housing affordability is another factor of living in Parke County. The median priced home in the county is affordable to the households with the median income for the county. The median home value is 1.8 times the median income, which is considered quite affordable housing. In most Midwestern markets, that ratio is between 2.0 and 3.0.

If households remain the same size in 2030 as they were in 2000, 568 homes will need to be needed to shelter the county's population, an increase of nine percent over 2000.

According to the Census of Population and Housing there have been 217 building permits issued for new residential construction from 2000 to 2004. All of the building permits during that time were issued for single family homes. This means that nearly 40 percent of the homes that will be needed for the projected 2030 population have already been permitted since 2000. Construction of vacation homes for residents of Terre Haute and Indianapolis may cause the construction of more homes than are needed to serve the local Parke County population.

## **CONSUMER SPENDING**

Consumer spending is a measure of the "disposable" income that people in the community have, another quality of life indicator. According to data from ESRI, residents of Parke County and Rockville spend far less than the national average on most retail goods and services. Mortgage payments and housing basics in Parke County are 23 percent less than the national average. Generally Parke County consumers spend 5 to 50 percent less than the national average on retail goods and services.

Consumer spending is, to a certain degree, a function of income. The income in Parke County is lower than the state and national averages, which explains at least some of the lower consumer spending.

The consumer spending patterns in Parke County may deter larger companies and companies that sell higher order goods such as expensive jewelry and cars from locating in the county.

## **HOME-BASED BUSINESSES AND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES**

Creating goods at home for retail sale from home is a valued activity in Parke County; in some cases this means selling fruit, vegetables, or meat at a roadside stand. Home-based businesses and cottage industries can also mean selling baked goods and sewn items; or, having workshops for making furniture, wood crafts, or repairing home and agricultural tools. This type of business is encouraged in the county and will continue to be a thriving part of the local culture and economy.

## **AGRICULTURE**

Agriculture is important to the county in terms of the local agricultural heritage and the amount of land that is engaged in agricultural production. Approximately 57 percent of the land in the county is in farms according to the Census of Agriculture. In terms of the local economy, agriculture is a smaller portion and has declined in significance from 1997 to 2002 according to the Census of Agriculture.

The Census of Agriculture numbers may not reflect what people in the farming community see on the ground locally. The Census of Agriculture includes small hobby farms in its count of farms, which tends to skew data in a downward direction. Agriculture is an important part of the way people live and work in Parke County. Preserving the integrity of prime agricultural

lands and allowing farmers to operate under normal conditions are important to the continued operation of farms in the county.

## **AMISH COMMUNITY**

There is a significant Amish population of approximately 800 people in Parke County. They primarily live in the east and northeast portion of the county. The community generally lives on farms, with workshops on site. The private parochial schools are generally within walking distance of a cluster of homes. The traditional mode of transportation for the Amish is horse and buggy.

The Amish want to engage in retail businesses from their farms and workshops, selling woodwork, furniture, crafts, and farm products. The community prefers that the focus be on the quality of their products rather than their culture in their dealings with tourists.

## **EXISTING LAND USE**

Agriculture is the largest land use in the county, occupying 57 percent of the 445 square miles of land in the county. Natural areas comprise 41 percent of the county's land area and parks and recreation account for two percent. Residential is the most significant urbanized land use and accounts for one percent of the area of the county. Other land uses (commercial, industrial, institutional, etc.) each account for less than one percent of the land in the county.

The urbanized land uses are primarily focused around the incorporated communities of Rockville, Bloomingdale, Marshall, Mecca, and Rosedale and in the lake area in the east central part of the county.

## **WHERE DO YOU GO? DESCRIPTION OF EXERCISE**

At the public open house on May 31, 2006, participants were asked to place a colored dot where they lived, bought groceries, worshiped, banked, ate out, purchased items for their homes, and went for entertainment in order to identify spatial relationships in the county and region. Most people conduct these activities in the Rockville area or leave the county for their services. The maps from this exercise are included in Appendix A.

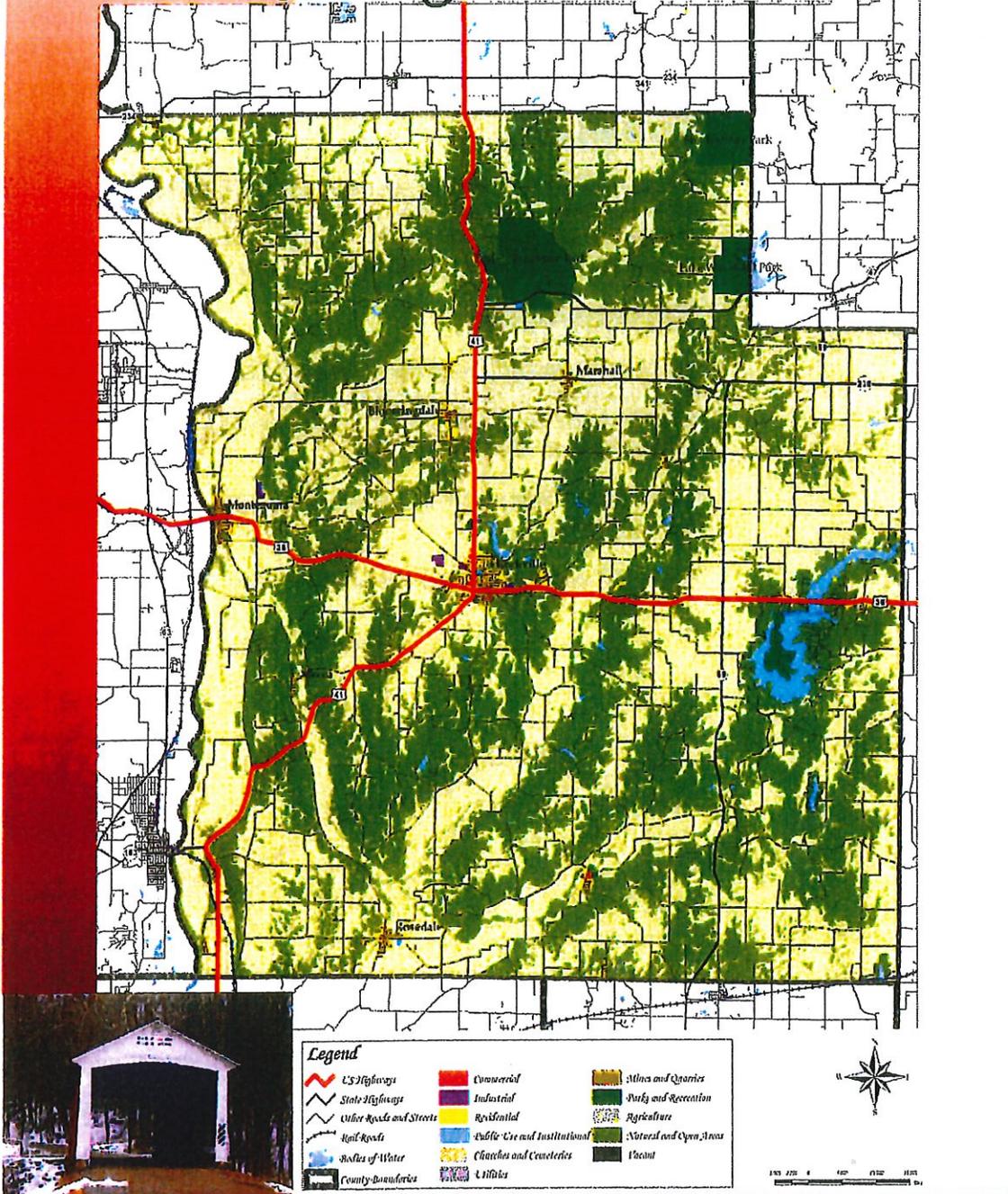
## **ISSUES**

The following issues were identified through early meetings with the Steering Committee and the public workshop:

- The current zoning laws need to be updated and enforced
- The Historical downtowns need to be revitalized
- Organizations need to unite to promote tourism year-round in all parts of the county
- Need to use natural resources and tourism to create more commerce
- Need to encourage development of cottage industries
- Communication infrastructure needs to be improved

Figure 3.1: Existing Land Use

# Existing Land Use



Live, Work, Play, and Learn in Parke County  
 Beyond Covered Bridges



## Chapter

# WORK... IN PARKE COUNTY

## WORKING...

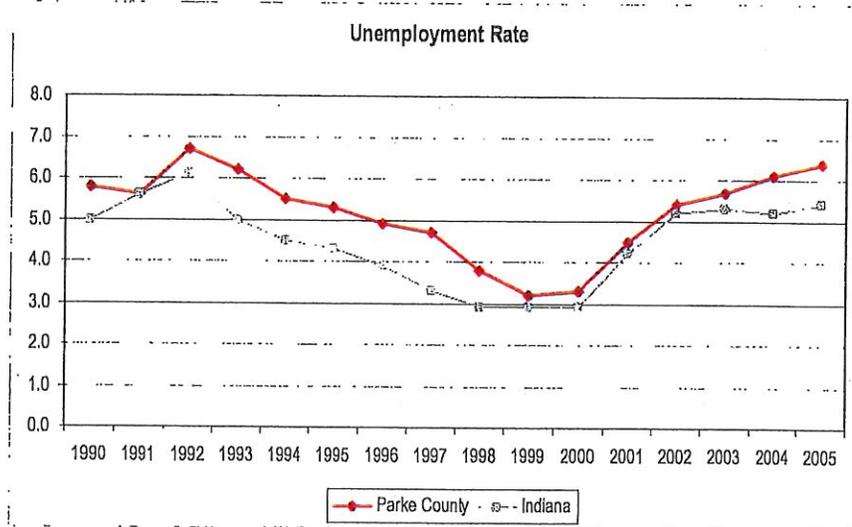
Working in Parke County includes information on the employers and how many people they employ, how many people work outside the county and where they work, and the income of households in the county. It also includes the land and infrastructure available for new business growth in the county and the programs to encourage new business development.

## EMPLOYMENT

Labor force participation in Parke County increased during the 1990s, following the recession early in the decade. In 1991, there were approximately 7,100 people in the labor force, by 2005 that number had reached 8,170. Labor force participation declined slightly in the early 2000s due to a nationwide economic downturn.

Unemployment in Parke County tends to trend with the state unemployment rate, but at a slightly higher rate.

Table 4.1: Annual Average Unemployment Rate 1990-2005



Source: Indiana Department of Workforce Development

## AGRICULTURE

Agricultural production and agri-business are significant components of the Parke County economy. Two of the largest employers listed in Table 4.2 are involved in agriculture. Many statistical measures focus on non-agricultural employment, but self-employed farmers and others working in agriculture contribute to the economy and the rural character of the county.

**“The government is the largest employer in Parke County.”**

## **EMPLOYERS**

The major industries in Parke County can be viewed in two ways, one based on employment and one based on sales volume. Each is important, county residents must have jobs in order to support their needs and quality of life, but a company could have a very high level of sales and support its few employees quite well.

The government is the largest employer in Parke County. The Indiana Womens Correctional Facility accounts for the majority of this employment. Other government employers include the municipal and county governments and the US Postal Service. Approximately 30 percent of employment in Parke County is in the government sector.

Retail trade is the second largest employer in the county. While no single retail employer has a large number of employees, the aggregate number employed by companies with fewer than 100 employees at a location accounts for more than 15 percent of employment in Parke County.

The third largest employment sector is manufacturing. Futurex is the largest manufacturing employer in Parke County, with approximately 230 employees in three locations. A number of smaller manufacturing operations contribute to nearly 15 percent of Parke County employment being in the manufacturing sector.

Table 4.2: Largest Employers in Parke County

<b>Employer</b>	<b>Employees</b>
Indiana Department of Corrections	295
Futurex	230
Southwest Parke Community Schools	110
Parke County Government	110
JT Shannon Lumber Company	102
Scott Pet Products	100
Rockville Community Schools	100

Source: Parke County Redevelopment Commission

The picture of the major players in the county shifts toward manufacturing and retail when sales volume is the criteria. Government enterprises are excluded because their revenues are largely dependent on taxes and intergovernmental transfers of funds. According to Harris infoSource records for Parke County businesses Manufacturing is the largest sector in terms of sales volume, with nearly \$60 million in sales. Retail is the second largest sector with approximately \$42 million in sales. The transportation, communications, and public utilities sector has nearly \$35 million in sales and agriculture, fishing, and forestry has more than \$24 million.

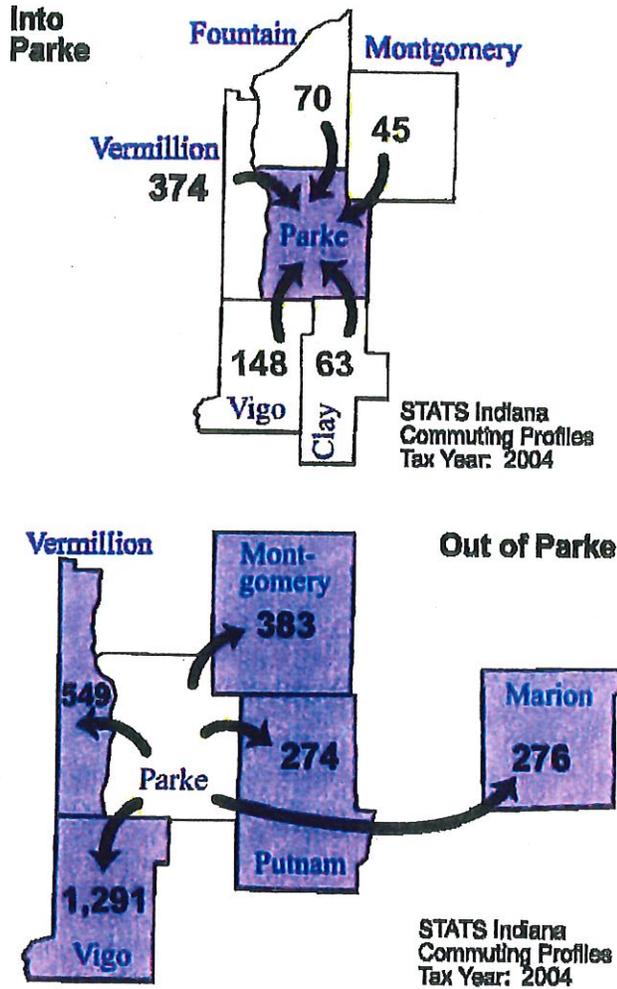
Four businesses in the county have sales in excess of \$10 million. They are Futurex, JT Shannon Lumber Company, Panhandle Eastern Pipeline Company, and Parke County REMC.

## **COMMUTING**

Parke County has fewer jobs than people in the labor force. Approximately 3,450 Parke County residents went to other counties to work, while only 700 workers from other counties came to Parke County. Most of the people who commute to other places for work are headed to Vigo County. Vigo County is a regional employment center with many more jobs than workers.

This commuting pattern means that Parke County residents spend time and fuel driving to other places for work. They are likely to spend money where they work, keeping that money from entering the Parke County economy. Commuting patterns also have impacts on traffic congestion, air quality and road conditions.

Figure 4.3: 2004 Parke County Commuting Patterns



Source: Indiana Department of Revenue and Indiana Business Research Center

## INCOME

Wages are the most significant determining factor in a household's income. The average weekly and annual wages can vary significantly from economic sector to sector. In some sectors, income is not consistent throughout the year, making meeting household obligations more challenging. Average annual wages from 2000 to 2004 reflect the national economic downturn. According to the Covered Employment and Wages statistics in 2001, the highest paying sector in Parke County was Information with an annual average wage of \$41,000. The information sector includes the newspaper and the phone companies. The only other sector above \$25,000 as an average annual wage was Educational Services at \$25,500. In 2002, Construction (\$25,200) joined Educational Services (\$26,000) and Information (\$44,800) as

one of the highest paying sectors. In 2003, Manufacturing rose above \$25,000 to \$25,500 as an annual average wage. Information (\$45,900) and Educational Services (\$26,300) remained the highest paying sectors. In 2004, wage recovery began to show. Six sectors had average annual wages over \$25,000. The leader was Information (\$48,200), followed by Manufacturing (\$28,900), Transportation and Warehousing (\$27,400), Educational Services (\$27,000), Public Administration (\$25,700), and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (\$25,500).

Median household income is the typical economic barometer for communities. The statewide median household income was \$41,567 in 2000. The 2000 median household income for Parke County was \$35,724 ranking 75<sup>th</sup> in the state. The 2003 Census estimate for the county is \$36,296 and \$43,323 for the state. Income in Parke County is estimated to be rising faster than income statewide.

Per capital personal income is another typical barometer. The statewide per capita personal income in 2004 was \$30,204 while the figure for Parke County was \$23,007 (ranked 84<sup>th</sup> of 92 Indiana counties).

## **EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Electricity**

Parke County is served by Parke County Rural Electric Membership Corporation (REMC). Parke County REMC manages and maintains over 1,400 miles of overhead high voltage electric lines throughout its six county service area including Clay, Parke, Vigo, Fountain, Montgomery and Putnam counties.

Parke County REMC is a nonprofit and member-owned electric cooperative. Incorporated in 1937 by a group of rural citizens, it exists today to distribute quality service and electricity to the members in portions of the six counties listed above.

Currently, Parke County REMC is located on the south side of the court house in Rockville, Indiana. The utility serves over 12,000 residential, commercial, and industrial members and are governed by a board of eight member-elected directors who oversee the general business affairs of the cooperative. In addition, Parke County REMC has employed a staff of men and women ready to serve the electrical and customer needs of Parke County residents as well as those of surrounding counties.

The Towns of Rockville and Montezuma have municipal utility companies. In addition, Duke Energy serves Parke County.

### **Power Facilities**

There are no power production facilities located in Parke County. The nearest power facility is located across the Wabash River just north of Newport in Vermillion County; the second, just north of Terre Haute in Vigo County to the southwest. This second power plant is part of the Parke County REMC.

### **Natural Gas**

Vectren serves as a natural gas provider, both municipal and rural, in Parke County.

There are six natural gas companies with infrastructure in Parke County; some of which directly serve nearly all of the incorporated areas.

A natural gas pipeline runs through Parke County and additional pipeline is planned.

### **Crude Oil**

There is one 22" crude oil pipeline that passes through Florida, Raccoon, Adams and Union Townships of Parke County.

**Water & Sewer**

Rosedale and Rockville are served by both water and sewer. Public water is available in Montezuma, Mecca, Bloomingdale, and Marshall.

**Telephone**

AT&T serves the majority of Parke County, however, Bloomingdale is served by the Bloomingdale Home Telephone Company.

**Cellular Towers**

There are five cellular towers located in Parke County. They are identified with the following places Rockville, Marshall, Bellmore and Coxville but are located in the rural areas.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES**

Encouraging business development in Parke County is primarily the responsibility of the Parke County Redevelopment Commission. One of the tools that the Redevelopment Commission uses in business development is maintaining information on available properties for industrial development. Currently there are four areas that are considered to be prime for industrial development. There is a site located just east of Montezuma of 100+ acres near US 36, which is zoned industrial, and is served by municipal water, gas, and electric. There is also a site at the southern end of the county of 150 acres, also zoned industrial, and served by rail, with an abundant supply of water, gas, and electric. The third site is also 100+ acres and is located just north of Rockville, and is served by municipal water and wastewater, as well as gas and electric. A fourth site is located just west of Rockville, contains 40 acres, and is also served by municipal water and wastewater, as well as gas and electric.

**ISSUES**

The issues associated with Working in Parke County that have been identified include:

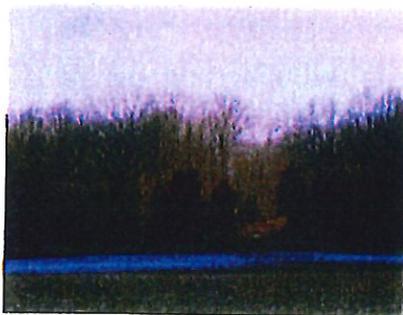
- Small business development and support of small businesses
- Infrastructure for medium/large businesses
- Development of an industrial park for marketing purposes
- Agriculture and agri-tourism
- Range of jobs from unskilled to highly skilled

## Chapter

# PLAY... IN PARKE COUNTY



One of the county's more than 30 covered bridges



Mossy Point Nature Preserve

## PLAYING...

Tourism is an important economic resource in Parke County. The Covered Bridge Festival each October brings thousands of people to the county over the ten day event. However, it is not the only tourism activity in the county by far. Recreation is also important to Parke County. Cecil Hardin Reservoir, Shades State Park, and Turkey Run State Park provide significant recreation opportunities for local residents as well as visitors from outside the county.

Festivals are a major tourism activity in the county. There are major festivals such as the Covered Bridge Festival, and numerous countywide and local festivals. These festivals have a variety of themes and cover most of the year. The Covered Bridge Festival is based in the Rockville Town Square, but many vendors are located throughout the whole county.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

The recreation opportunities in Parke County are abundant. The Cecil Hardin Reservoir provides water recreation opportunities on 2,600 acres of lake. The reservoir is managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers, who controls the water depth through an established summer and winter pool level. The pool level is not at full depth for an early start or late finish to the tourism season. The reservoir had 1,188,185 visitors in 2003. Raccoon State Recreation area is adjacent to the reservoir and provides camping, boat rentals, boat launches, and a trail system.

The state parks system also provides recreation opportunities. Shades State Park had 141,131 visitors in 2003-2004. The park has camping, fishing, hiking, picnic areas, and the Deer's Mill covered bridge. Turkey Run State Park had 715,976 visitors in 2003-2004. The park has camping, fishing, hiking, a nature center, picnic areas, a saddle barn, and swimming as well as the Lusk Home and the Inn at Turkey Run. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of State Parks & Reservoirs has not released more current visitor information.

The county has a Park and Recreation Board that manages Rockville Lake. Rockville Lake is a 400 acre park with camping, fishing, boating, swimming, nature trails, picnic areas, shelters, horseshoes, basketball courts, sand volleyball, and playgrounds. The lake itself is 100 acres and was constructed by the USDA Soil Conservation Service and the Little Raccoon Conservancy District in cooperation with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

Parke County also includes two nature preserve properties in Rocky Hollow – Falls Canyon Nature Preserve and Mossy Point Nature Preserve.

While there are relatively few town and county parks available in Parke County, the abundance of state and federal park land compensates for the lack of local resources. Additional investment may be needed by the county Parks and Recreation Board to provide more neighborhood and community scale parks. New development proposals should include the provision of open space for use by the residents of the development.

## **TOURISM**

### **AGRI-TOURISM**

Agri-tourism is another tourism activity in the county. The Maize at Hobson's Farm is the most formal type of agri-tourism. The Maize offers fall activities and produce. Examples include the Sand Lady Gourd Farm, which hosts a gourd festival each year, and several maple syrup camps which are open during the annual Maple Fair. Less formal, but important, agri-tourism is related to the cottage industries in the county; woodworking, crafts, and agricultural products. A few of these opportunities are included on maps geared toward tourism.

### **HERITAGE TOURISM**

#### **BILLIE CREEK VILLAGE**

Billie Creek Village provides heritage tourism opportunities with their collection of local historic structures and living history, events like Civil War Days, School Days, and Maple Sugar Days.

The buildings and demonstrations at Billie Creek Village date from the 1830's Log Cabin to the 1913 Schoolhouse. Even though electricity was available and people rode in cars by 1908, rural turn-of-the-century life mainly consisted of "doin' chores" and the slow pace of everyday living.

School programs at Billie Creek Village and Farmstead have been central to the mission of the Village since its beginning. The founders wanted to provide a living educational museum laboratory environment for children of all ages.

The facilities at the Village include a one-room school house where the ways children in the early 1900's learned to read, write and do arithmetic are re-enacted. Farm animals living at the Farmstead were common at the turn-of-the-century. In 2004 a straw-bale maze was added for fun and educational purposes. Other opportunities include a sugar camp, an herb garden, a general store, a blacksmith and other resident artisans.

The Billie Creek Village General Store offers items such as pottery, Covered Bridge items, brooms, quilts, afghans, baskets, jams, jellies, apple butter, fudge and candy counter. The General Store was the centerpiece of many early 1900s village communities. Hard to find household items including manufactured clothing were carried as well as food and other basic commodities of a small rural town (Billie Creek Village).

#### **MANSFIELD ROLLER MILL STATE HISTORIC SITE**

James Kelsey and Francis Dickson built the original mill on the sandstone beside Raccoon Creek in 1819. The original mill was a one story building that used stones to grind flour and cornmeal. Eventually a commercial center developed around the Dickson's mills and the community changed its name to Mansfield.

In 1875, Jacob Rohm built a new dam and a two story mill on the foundation of the original mill. Two water turbines, which still exist, were installed. Later a third story was added to the mill. Competition from large flour mills forced the conversion of the Mansfield Roller Mill into a local feed mill around 1929.

The mill was successfully listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990 and donated to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources in 1995 (Mansfield Roller Mill State Historic Site).



Billie Creek Village



Mansfield Roller Mill

## **FESTIVALS**

### **COVERED BRIDGE FESTIVAL**



Festival Booth Spaces

This countywide festival always begins on the 2nd Friday in October and is nationally known as one of the largest. The festival is hosted by nine communities throughout the county with a wide array of shopping and a variety of food. The Covered Bridge Festival was a 2005 winner of the Travelocity award for "Big Secrets Local Finds"

Headquartered on the courthouse lawn in Rockville, Indiana, since 1957, the festival has food served by many of the not-for-profit organizations of the county that use funds from the Festival to promote their organizations throughout the year. A large tent and streets around the courthouse is filled with crafters and vendors and open daily. Some of the crafters have been at the festival since it began. Free entertainment is scheduled on the south side of the courthouse throughout each day.

Guided tours provide transportation through the county to make stops at communities in the county and to see Covered Bridges along the way. Each of three tour routes is unique and different. One route tours the southern part of the county with stops in Bridgeton and Rosedale. Another route travels north through Country Farm Communities, Turkey Run State Park with a stop at Tangier where they serve the famous "Buried Beef", and a stop at Bloomingdale, a Quaker Community. The third route travels west focusing on the history of the Wabash & Erie Canal with a stop in Montezuma and historic Mecca with a one-room schoolhouse and a tent filled with all handmade products.

### **MAPLE FAIR**

At winter's end, Parke County's Maple Syrup Producers begin tapping the trees that provide sugar water for making maple syrup. Parke County Maple Fair is held in late February/early March. Visitors can travel country roads with covered bridges and tour maple syrup camps throughout the county and see how maple syrup is made down at the "sugar camp" and sample the syrups.

Festival headquarters are located one mile north of Rockville, on Highway 41 at the county's 4-H Fairgrounds. At the headquarters, maple syrup displays offer products such as pure maple syrup, maple sugar candy and maple syrup cookies. In addition to maple syrup products, there are works of Parke County artisans, handmade crafts, home baked goodies and jams and jellies. An annual event of the Maple Syrup Festival is the Covered Bridge Art Association artists show. Local artists demonstrate their talents and have works of art for sale.

Visitors can tour maple sugar camps of Foxworthy, Williams & Teague, Smiley's Camp, Meece Sweetwater Farms, and Baird's Sugar Shack where sixty gallons of sugar water are reduced to make one gallon of golden maple syrup.

### **OTHER FESTIVALS**

Mansfield Bridge Festival		Mansfield Village
Mushroom Festival	April	Mansfield Village
Bluegrass Festival	June	Mansfield Village
Rosedale Strawberry Festival	June	Rosedale
Old West Fest	June	Bridgeton
Rockville Main Street Cruise Inn	June	Rockville Town Square
Art & Wine Fair	June	Bridgeton
Civil War Days	June	Billie Creek Village
Antique Power Club	June	Fairgrounds

Rockville Lake Fireworks Show	July	Rockville
Raccoon Lake Fireworks Show	July	Raccoon Lake
Parke County Fair	July	Fairgrounds
Early Wheels Car Show	July	Billie Creek Village
Watermelon Festival	August	Billie Creek Village
Corvette Car Show	August	Billie Creek Village
Steam Harvest Days	September	Billie Creek Village
Turkey Run Cruise In	September	Turkey Run
Cornbread Festival	September	Mansfield Village
Milling Days	September	Bridgeton
Sorghum & Cider	September	Billie Creek Village
Country Christmas	November	Bridgeton
Main Street Hometown Holidays	December	Rockville
Covered Bridge Christmas	December	Rockville
Billie Creek Village Christmas	December	Billie Creek Village
Parke Co. Christmas Festival	December	

## **ISSUES**

The issues identified with Playing in Parke County include:

- Need to protect natural resources, historic resources, and scenic areas
- Need to develop year round tourism opportunities
- Provide better directional signage for visitors
- Need to create recreation opportunities for local residents as well as visitors

Chapter

**LEARN...  
 IN PARKE  
 COUNTY**

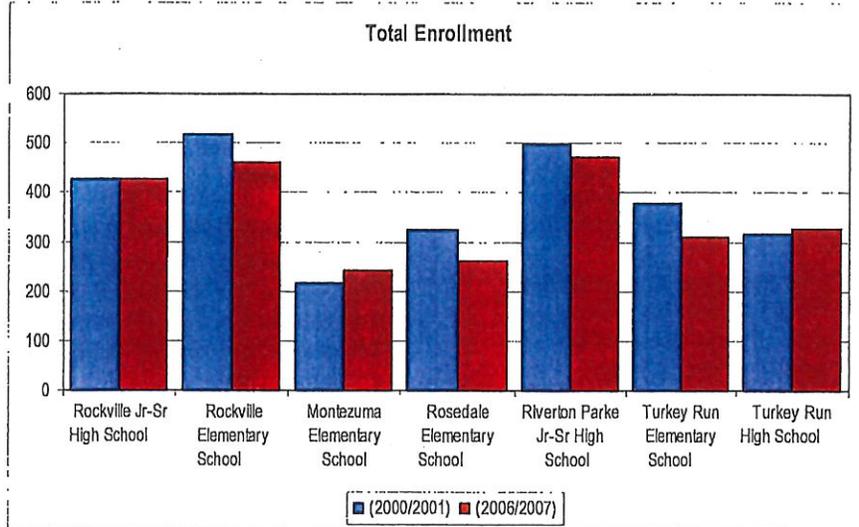
**LEARNING...**

Education, of all types, is an important part of living and working in Parke County. This includes public K-12 education, private education, lifelong learning, workforce development, and access to higher education.

**K-12**

There are four public school districts that serve Parke County, three of which are entirely within the county. Students in the southeast portion of the county attend Clay County schools. The Rockville Community School District has a junior/senior high school, and an elementary school. Enrollment in the Rockville school district was 886 in 2006-2007. The Southwest Parke Community School District has a junior/senior high school and two elementary schools. Enrollment in the Southwest Parke schools was 974 in 2006-2007. The Turkey Run Community School District has a junior/senior high school and an elementary school. Enrollment in the Turkey Run schools was 638 in 2006-2007.

Table 6.1: Enrollment in Parke County Schools



There are also nine private schools in the county, all of which are Amish parochial schools. Enrollment figures and other educational data are not available for these schools. The private schools include Adams School, Coyote Hollow, Ferndale, Leatherwood Creek, Sugar Creek, Sunset View, Secluded Acres, Whispering Willow, and Sycamore Country.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION**

Access to higher education is another facet of learning. This is not only for young adults as they finish high school, but for adults who wish to further their education or change career directions. There are nine colleges and universities within 50 miles of Rockville, including Indiana State University, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, and Ivy Tech in Terre Haute, and St. Mary of the Woods College in West Terre Haute, and Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Purdue University in West Lafayette, and DePauw University in Greencastle, and Danville Community College in Danville, Illinois.

Ivy Tech State College has a location in the county at the Parke County Learning Center in Rockville.

## **LIFELONG LEARNING**

Lifelong learning opportunities are provided by the Parke County Extension Service and the Parke County Learning Center. These opportunities range from practical life skills, to personal enrichment, to recreational training. Workforce development opportunities are critical learning components to the resident workforce and local employers. New technologies and changes in the economy require continual skill development and new skills for the workforce. The Parke County Learning Center offers courses through Ivy Tech State College. There are some non-credit class offerings, such as Conversational Spanish for the Workplace and computer skills classes.

### ***Public Libraries***

Under IC 36-12 any jurisdiction with a population over 10,000 may establish a public library. The Library is established by a resolution of the legislative body (County Commissioners) or a petition of 20% of the voters. In either case notice must be published in the newspaper.

The Library Board is appointed in accordance with state law according to the type of library.

The state law also establishes criteria for hiring a librarian, determining the tax rate, and capital projects funds.

## **LIBRARY**

The Town of Rockville has a community library, located on North Market Street. The library serves the Town of Rockville and Adams Township. The library has books, magazines, videos, a genealogy collection, Census records, children's services, an online card catalog, public access computers, meeting rooms, and participates in Interlibrary Loan. The library has more than 31,200 books, 75 magazine subscriptions, and 550 videos. Approximately 93,000 people visit the library per year. The library is accessible to Parke County residents outside Adams Township for a fee.

The Town of Montezuma also has a community library, located on Crawford Street. The library has books, magazines, videos, public access computers, children's services and participates in Interlibrary Loan. The library has more than 15,600 books, nearly 60 magazine subscriptions, and nearly 1,600 videos. Approximately 7,300 people visit the library per year. The library is accessible to Parke County residents for a fee.

There is no countywide library system.

## **ISSUES**

The issues identified for learning in Parke County over the next twenty years include:

- The three in-county school districts have a small enrollments but each has its own central administration
- There is no library system that serves the entire county
- Lifelong learning opportunities exist, and are being expanded and promoted

## Chapter

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARKE COUNTY PLAN

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The following policies are adopted to guide the location, quantity, and quality of growth in the county:

1. Support preservation and reuse of structures and districts listed on or eligible for the state or National Register of Historic Places.
2. Encourage new building design to be consistent with the character of existing development in the towns.
3. Encourage industrial development in locations with a high level of accessibility, and minimize visibility from scenic corridors.
4. Maintain agricultural areas.
5. Encourage water and sewer systems, and promote development in those areas.
6. Allow for the development of rural homes, businesses, and institutions that are consistent with the needs of the local traditional communities.
7. Encourage rural residential development to follow conservation design guidelines.
8. Focus on sustainable development.
9. Preserve the rural ambiance of the county by managing residential/commercial development.

Policies specifically related to land use are:

1. Encourage industrial development in locations with a high level of accessibility, and minimize visibility from scenic corridors.
2. Allow innovative housing types such as townhouses where appropriate infrastructure is available.
3. Maintain agricultural areas with protection from residential development.
4. Encourage cottage industries and home-based businesses while maintaining residential character in established neighborhoods.
5. Develop an industrial park.
6. Encourage residential development in appropriate areas.

Policies specifically related to public ways, places, lands, structures, and utilities are:

1. Promote preservation of the historic Courthouse Square.
2. Provide modern fire protection and emergency response.
3. Engage all communities in Capital Improvements Planning for the county to identify needed road repairs and rebuilding, with timelines and funding levels.
4. Develop a community-wide signage system to direct traffic to tourism destinations.
5. Implement a system for separating bicycle and buggy traffic from automobile and truck traffic on key transportation corridors.
6. Develop local standards, in conjunction with INDOT, to manage access on key highways outside incorporated communities to ensure appropriate traffic flow.
7. Encourage access to an "on-call" public transportation system.
8. Promote water and sewer systems.
9. Conduct engineering studies to determine the needed improvements to the water and wastewater treatment facilities.
10. Supply appropriate infrastructure, including telecommunications, throughout the county.

11. Promote Regional Sewer Districts.
12. Work with providers to ensure availability of high speed internet access to all Parke County citizens.
13. Support efforts to preserve and maintain historic bridges, mills, barns and other historic structures.
14. Work with Federal and State agencies to designate US 41 a Scenic Byway corridor from the 41/63 junction in Terre Haute to the 41/63 junction north of Attica.
15. Conduct a library master planning process to determine needs for buildings, staff, and electronic and print resources.

## **FUTURE LAND USE MAP**

The future land use map reflects several principles, including:

1. Rural community areas where agricultural uses, cottage industries, workshops, home-based businesses, schools, and places of worship may exist to meet the needs of the agricultural community and local traditional communities.
2. New residential development builds from existing neighborhoods and developed areas, preferably connecting to public utilities.
3. Commercial development is focused where there is an existing population base and existing commercial development, and where it can be served with utilities or meet local needs.
4. Industrial development located where the transportation system is favorable for industrial uses, where infrastructure can be provided, and where existing industrial uses exist.

The future land use map is available as Figure 7.1. The areas shown on the map are not zoning districts, rather they are broad land use classifications to guide decision-making related to zoning.

## **THOROUGHFARE PLAN AND FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION MAP**

A functional classification map is an important planning tool for the county because the Subdivision Control Ordinance has specific standards based on road classification. A revised zoning ordinance could also reference which road classifications can adequately support certain land uses.

Functional classification systems typically include arterials, collectors, and local roads and streets. The Parke County functional classification map includes primary and secondary arterials, collectors, and local streets.

Primary collectors, like US 36 and US 41, serve to connect communities and destinations on a regional scale. Secondary collectors, like the state routes, connect communities and destinations locally, but not necessarily on the larger regional scale. Collectors, as the name implies, collect traffic from local streets and distribute it to arterials. Local streets are those that are not otherwise classified and generally serve the purpose of providing access to residential and agricultural areas.

The Functional Classification Map also serves as the Thoroughfare Plan. The map identifies two areas along US 36 where there is considerable opportunity for buggy/bicycle/vehicle conflict. In these areas, passing lanes are encouraged to provide a safe way for vehicles to be able to pass slower moving vehicles, such as buggies.

**Interim Report**

Every year since 1978 Historic Landmarks Foundation has surveyed from two to four counties, looking for architecturally and historically significant structures and districts.

Field surveyors drive every road in the county, identifying, documenting, and photographing historic sites and structures. The fieldwork takes one year to complete, and the resulting illustrated publication, called an *Interim Report*, takes an additional year.

The term 'Interim Report' recognizes that the surveys become outdated almost overnight. There can never be a 'final' inventory because of the changing nature of our built environment. Properties can be demolished or altered, buildings are sometimes restored, and passing years add significance to buildings that were previously ineligible because they were less than 40 years old.

The functional classification map is available as Figure 7.2.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

### LIVING IN PARKE COUNTY

**GOAL:**

**Encourage preservation and reuse of historic structures throughout the county, with special attention paid to the covered bridges.**

1. Support preservation and reuse of structures and districts listed on or eligible for the state or National Register of Historic Places.
2. Maintain an inventory of historic properties in the county in conjunction with the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana.
3. Assess vacant historic structures and promote reuse of those that are sound and removal of those that are not.
4. Promote preservation of the historic Courthouse Square.
5. Implement a building inspection program with certified personnel.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Secure the local match for participation in the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana update to the Parke County Interim Report of historic structures.
2. Identify and contract with a professional to assess the structural integrity of vacant historic structures.
3. Identify structures which may be appropriate candidates for listing on the National or State Register of Historic Places and assist property owners in submitting applications and making improvements.
4. Provide information to property owners about the available grant funding and tax incentives for improving historic properties.
5. Develop and implement a façade improvement program.
6. Review the old building ordinance, and propose a new ordinance and program.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Redevelopment Commission
- Main Street Rockville
- Town of Rockville
- Friends of the Parke County Covered Bridges

**TIMEFRAME:**

Short to Medium term, 2007-2015

**GOAL:**

**Maintain the small town and rural character of Parke County, while managing growth in the community.**

1. Protect the visual character of the highway corridors leading into Parke County and to major destinations in the county.
2. Enhance the attractiveness of the communities through trash removal and recycling programs.
3. Encourage new building design to be consistent with the character of existing development in the towns.
4. Encourage industrial development in locations with a high level of accessibility, and minimize visibility from scenic corridors.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Adopt a corridor overlay district with standards regulating signs, lighting, and

- building materials within the US 36 and US 41 corridors.
2. Develop a strategy for submitting the US 41 corridor to be designated as a National Scenic Byway. Study the applications of other Scenic Byways and talk to their sponsors as a part of developing the strategy.
  3. Implement a countywide recycling program.
  4. Implement countywide clean-up days.
  5. Establish fines for illegal dumping and rewards for reporting illegal dumping.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Extension Service
- Plan Commission
- County Commissioners
- Town of Rockville
- US 41 Committee

**TIMEFRAME:**

Short term, 2007-2010

**GOAL:**

**Encourage the development of businesses that meet the day-to-day retail and service needs of the local population.**

1. Identify retail businesses that serve smaller market areas and pursue those businesses.
2. Encourage business competition to provide high quality products and services.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Conduct informal or formal surveys to identify local needs and potential markets
2. Target marketing efforts for commercial businesses to national or regional small market companies.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Economic Development Organization
- Chamber of Commerce

**TIMEFRAME:**

Short to Medium term, 2007-2015

**GOAL:**

**Encourage growth and development that promotes safe, active, healthy lifestyles.**

1. Promote development that is attractive for both young families and older adults.
2. Promote facilities that encourage health and physical activity.
3. Sustain and develop access to adequate medical and dental care.
4. Provide modern fire protection and emergency response.
5. Allow innovative housing types such as townhouses where appropriate infrastructure is available.
6. Adopt a building code and building inspection program.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Study the potential for a Parke County YMCA or Boys and Girls Club.
2. Identify fire protection needs and pursue grants to meet those needs.
3. Revise the county zoning ordinance to allow for new housing options.
4. Arrange for qualified personnel to inspect public improvements and buildings as a part of the permit process.

***Capital Improvements Planning***

The process of developing a schedule of all capital improvements to be carried out within a specific period of time (often 5 years), prioritizing the improvements, and identifying the estimated cost and funding source for each improvement.

***INDOT***

The Indiana Department of Transportation

***"On Call" Public Transportation***

Also known as a "demand responsive system," these systems are any type of public transportation other than a fixed route, fixed schedule system. "On call" systems generally include taxis, limousine services, van services, and shuttle bus systems.

Many "on call" transportation systems serve elderly or disabled persons and provide transportation to shopping, medical appointments, and other locations within a specific geographic area.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Fire Departments
- Plan Commission
- County Commissioners

**TIMEFRAME:**

Short term, 2007-2010

**GOAL:**

**Manage transportation throughout the community to meet the needs of county residents and visitors.**

1. Engage all communities in Capital Improvements Planning for the county to identify needed road repairs and rebuilding, with timelines and funding levels.
2. Develop a community-wide signage system to direct traffic to tourism destinations.
3. Implement a system for separating bicycle and buggy traffic from automobile and truck traffic on key transportation corridors.
4. Develop local standards, in conjunction with INDOT, to manage access on key highways outside incorporated communities to ensure appropriate traffic flow.
5. Encourage access to an "on-call" public transportation system.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Develop a Capital Improvements Plan for a five-year period, with annual updates.
2. Work with a consultant to develop and implement a signage system that meets INDOT standards and provides a unique identity for the county.
3. Apply for Transportation Enhancements funding for the design and construction of passing lanes on US 36 in the areas identified on the Thoroughfare Plan.
4. Incorporate access management principles into an update of the County Subdivision Control Ordinance.
5. Adopt a county policy for access management that regulates driveway spacing when subdivision isn't required for development.
6. Study models of "on call" public transportation and assess the feasibility of implementing a program in Parke County.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- County Highway Department
- County Council
- County Commissioners
- Plan Commission
- Convention & Visitors Commission
- Town of Rockville

**TIMEFRAME:**

Medium Term, 2010-2015

**GOAL:**

**Manage land use in a manner that provides for the efficient use of the community's resources while remaining flexible so as to meet the needs of local residents and business owners.**

1. Maintain agricultural areas with protection from residential development.
2. Encourage water and sewer systems, and promote development in those areas.
3. Encourage cottage industries and home-based businesses while maintaining

- residential character in established neighborhoods.
4. Allow flexibility for the development of rural homes, businesses, and institutions that are consistent with the needs of the local traditional communities.
  5. Encourage rural residential development to follow conservation design guidelines.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Identify grant funding for addressing capacity issues related to water and wastewater treatment.
2. Conduct engineering studies to determine the needed improvements to the water and wastewater treatment facilities.
3. Implement a zoning process for permitting home-based businesses and cottage industries.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Plan Commission
- County Commissioners
- Water Utilities
- Wastewater Utilities
- Town Councils
- Redevelopment Commission

**TIMEFRAME:**

Infrastructure – Medium Term, 2010-2015

Zoning – Short Term, 2007-2010

**GOAL:**

**Make Parke County more attractive for residents and visitors.**

1. Enforce regulations on trash dumping, junk cars, and other eyesores, and revise regulations as necessary to make them more effective.
2. Formulate and finance a county trash management plan to facilitate recycling, disposal of appliances, etc.
3. Support the renovation of the historic Courthouse Square.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Study other rural county trash and recycling programs for best practices.
2. Implement a program for Parke County.
3. Review the program annually for improvements.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- County Sheriffs Department
- Code Enforcement
- County Commissioners
- Plan Commission
- Solid Waste District

**TIMEFRAME:**

Trash programs, Short Term, 2007-2010

Courthouse square, Short to Medium Term, 2007-2015

**GOAL:**

**Promote mechanisms to bring the entire county together.**

1. Encourage civic minded citizens to participate in local government.
2. Conduct open community "Town Hall" forums and meetings.
3. Adult/Youth leadership skills transfer activities.

4. Youth membership on committees.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Actively seek participation of young adults and youth for committees.
2. Identify facilitators for "Town Hall" meetings.
3. Use the newspaper and radio and other electronic outlets and web site to advertise Town Hall meetings.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- County Commissioners
- Local Organizations
- Local Schools
- Extension Service
- Community Foundation

**TIMELINE:**

Short Term, 2007-2010

**WORKING IN PARKE COUNTY**

**GOAL:**

**Update and enforce regulations to make the county a "work-friendly" place to conduct business and start new businesses.**

1. Stronger zoning, building, and health codes to clean up the county.
2. Streamlined, more business-friendly regulations and processes.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Review and revise the county ordinances to encourage community character.
2. Hold a forum with business owners to identify problems with existing processes and regulations.
3. Review and revise processes as necessary to encourage business development.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Plan Commission
- County Commissioners
- Economic Development Organization
- Redevelopment Commission
- Chamber of Commerce

**TIMEFRAME:**

Short Term, 2007-2010

**GOAL:**

**Support business and industrial development and recruitment.**

1. Communicate with, advocate for, and support existing businesses in Parke and neighboring counties, for both retention and expansion potential.
2. Fund aggressive incentive packages for the recruitment of new businesses and industry.
3. Develop an industrial park.
4. Supply appropriate infrastructure, including telecommunications, throughout the county.
5. Develop Regional Sewer Districts.
6. Work with providers to ensure high speed internet access availability to all Parke County citizens.

7. Improve roads at industrial sites.
8. Provide workforce development opportunities through Parke County Learning Center.
9. Support agriculture, home based businesses, and cottage industries through education and business planning assistance.
10. Fund aggressive marketing plan through Redevelopment Commission.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Conduct a periodic Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) survey.
2. Establish policies for tax abatements.
3. Develop Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts.
4. Establish, fund, and implement a marketing plan and program.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Economic Development Organizations
- Redevelopment Commission
- County Commissioners
- County Council
- Chamber of Commerce
- Workforce Investment Board
- Parke County Learning Center
- Extension Service

**TIMEFRAME:**

Short Term, 2007-2010

**GOAL:**

**Develop the tourism industry to enhance employment and other year round benefits.**

1. Provide training opportunities for residents to enhance skills to work in the tourism industry.
2. Provide support for residents to start and develop tourism businesses.
3. Revise zoning ordinance(s) to encourage destination and agri-tourism while managing impacts on local communities.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Partner with the Parke County Learning Center to provide training in hotel/motel and restaurant management, hospitality, customer services, etc.
2. Host workshops on starting a tourism-based business.
3. Review and revise zoning and subdivision control ordinances to support tourism activities.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Parke County Learning Center
- Economic Development Organization
- Parke County Incorporated
- Convention & Visitors Commission
- Plan Commission
- County Commissioners
- Extension Service

**TIMEFRAME:**

Zoning, Short Term, 2007-2010

Tourism, Short to Medium Term, 2007-2015

***Business Retention and Expansion Survey***

A survey of existing businesses, typically conducted by the local economic development organization, to identify the needs and concerns of local businesses. The survey data remain confidential on an individual business basis. The survey is typically conducted once every two years.

**GOAL:**

**Promote Parke County people for key positions to influence or participate in decisions affecting employment in Parke or neighboring counties.**

1. Promote appointments to state bodies dealing with state properties and facilities, including the women's prison and state parks and recreation properties.
2. Host meetings on the future use of the Newport Chemical Depot property.
3. Engage potential agricultural businesses impacting Parke County.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Encourage volunteers to attend meetings held by various state agencies.
2. Engage agencies in discussions about local properties.
3. Identify individuals to serve on boards and commissions.
4. Write letters supporting the nomination of Parke County residents to boards and commissions.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- County Commissioners
- Economic Development Organization
- Extension Service
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Indiana Department of Corrections
- Newport Chemical Depot Local Reuse Authority
- Chamber of Commerce

**TIMEFRAME:**

Agricultural, Short Term, 2007-2010

Newport, Short Term, 2007-2010

State Agencies, Ongoing, 2007-2030

**PLAYING IN PARKE COUNTY**

**GOAL:**

**Protect and preserve parks, nature preserves, lakes, streams, and forests for future generations to enjoy.**

1. Manage commercial and residential development through enforceable zoning.
2. Focus on sustainable development.
3. Work with Federal and State agencies that manage land in Parke County, and other major land holders, to maximize recreational opportunities.
4. Educate youth about the importance of preserving natural resources and the environment.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Review and revise the zoning and subdivision control ordinances.
2. Establish a zoning enforcement program and penalties.
3. Encourage volunteers to speak at schools on Earth Day, Arbor Day, etc.
4. Develop natural resource and environmental education materials for teachers.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Plan Commission
- County Commissioners
- Volunteers
- Schools

**TIMEFRAME:**

Short Term, 2007-2010

**GOAL:**

**Protect and preserve the county's historic and rural heritage.**

1. Preserve the rural ambiance of the county by managing residential/commercial development.
2. Support efforts to preserve and maintain historic bridges, mills, barns and other historic structures.
3. Appoint and maintain a Historical/Protective Committee as called for in Section XXIV, Paragraph B of the existing Parke County Zoning Ordinance to "—review plans for new buildings and structures---for the protection of historic sites and landmarks".

**ACTIONS:**

1. Hold training sessions for Plan Commission members and elected officials about managing growth with the comprehensive plan and ordinances.
2. Provide Plan Commission members with the Citizens Guide to Planning from the Indiana Planning Association.
3. Appoint members to the Historical/Protective Committee.
4. Hold training for the Historical/Protective Committee to define their role and responsibilities.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Extension Service
- Redevelopment Commission
- Plan Commission
- County Commissioners

**TIMEFRAME:**

Short Term, 2007-2010

**GOAL:**

**Develop additional tourist attractions and coordinate activities of CVC, PCI, Main Street Rockville, Mansfield, Bridgeton, etc.**

1. Promote coordination among the various tourism organizations to minimize overlap and conflict.
2. Revise zoning ordinance to encourage tourism-based business while managing the impact of those activities on local services.
3. Enhance and maintain the Parke County web site, parkecounty.com or coveredbridges.com, to promote the wide range of attractions, activities and events - "There's more than Covered Bridges in Parke County".
4. Encourage owners of historic properties to identify tourism opportunities.
5. Encourage the creation of eco-tourism and agri-tourism enterprises.
6. Collaborate with surrounding counties to promote regional tourism.
7. Support the County Parks and Recreation Board's efforts to provide county wide recreational opportunities geared to youth and young families.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Hold joint meetings of the various organizations on a quarterly basis.
2. Design a new web page to reflect the idea that "There's more than Covered Bridges in Parke County."

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Parke County Incorporated
- Convention & Visitors Commission
- Main Street Rockville
- Town Councils
- Plan Commission
- County Commissioners
- Parks and Recreation Board

**TIMEFRAME:**

Short Term, 2007-2010

**GOAL:**

**Preserve and develop not-for-profit visitor attractions/sites such as the Covered Bridge Art Gallery, Billie Creek Village, the Mecca Schoolhouses, the Ritz Theater, the Quaker Meeting House and the Parke County Historical Society Museum**

1. Develop funding from new revenue sources, such as a county food & beverage tax and/or an "October option" sales tax.
2. Create a process whereby these revenues will be available to help maintain these visitor attractions.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Support efforts to provide local governments with more revenue options through providing testimony during the legislative session and contacting state representatives and senators.
2. Adopt a county food and beverage tax under Indiana code.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- County Commissioners
- Convention & Visitors Commission
- Parke County Incorporated
- Redevelopment Commission
- Economic Development Organization
- Mainstreet Rockville
- County Council

**TIMELINE:**

Short Term, 2007-2010

**GOAL:**

**Make it easier to find Parke County and to find the various attractions around the county**

1. Work with Federal and State agencies to designate US 41 a Scenic Byway corridor from the 41/63 junction in Terre Haute to the 41/63 junction north of Attica
2. Develop additional tour routes for historical sights, scenic country roads, old cemetery tours, paved bike routes, paved road tours
3. Develop and install new distinctive signage with a logo or common appearance to direct visitors on tours and to attractions around the county

**ACTIONS:**

1. Discuss the scenic byways plans from other communities on US 41 with those communities for ideas and coordination

***Wayfinding***

Much as the name implies, wayfinding systems are systems of directional signs that assist residents and visitors with finding particular destinations in the community. The signs generally have a unified theme and are more distinctive than highway signs.

2. Establish a group to study a scenic byway designation
3. Engage in a wayfinding study to identify needed signage
4. Fund a signage program and install signs according to the wayfinding plan

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Volunteers
- County Commissioners
- Indiana Department of Transportation
- Federal Highway Administration
- Convention and Visitors Commission

**TIMEFRAME:**

Signage, Medium Term, 2010-2015  
Scenic Byway, Short to Medium Term, 2007-2025

**GOAL:**

**Make Parke County more attractive for residents and visitors.**

1. Enforce regulations on trash dumping. Revise regulations as necessary to make them more effective.
2. Support the renovation of the historic Courthouse Square.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Review and revise regulations regarding trash and dumping.
2. Establish existing and new regulations.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- County Sheriff's Department
- County Commissioners
- Town of Rockville
- Plan Commission

**TIMEFRAME:**

Short Term, 2007-2010

**LEARNING IN PARKE COUNTY**

**GOAL:**

**Support improvement and efficiency of public K-12 schools, including unification of the central administration of the three public school districts.**

1. Study and develop models to analyze and determine the most efficient school system for the entire county, including curriculum and finance.
2. Encourage parents and students to take full advantage of educational opportunities within and outside the public school system.
3. Promote more challenging courses through combining students from each of the educational entities.
4. Control drug/alcohol/tobacco use through education and enforcement.
5. Continue to respect the private schools that are independent from local public school districts.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Appoint an advisory committee with representatives from all three school districts.
2. Hire outside consultants to study and analyze curriculum and finance options.
3. Study non-traditional high school curriculums/settings, including International Baccalaureate, additional Advance Placement classes, Nu-Tech High School,

***Advanced Placement***

AP courses are advanced honors classes designed for high school students who want to do college level work. At the completion of the course, students can choose to take an AP exam covering the subject of the course. If they pass the test with a satisfactory mark, the students can earn college-credit units, enabling them to opt out of introductory courses in college.

***International Baccalaureate***

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme is a challenging two-year curriculum, primarily aimed at students aged 16 to 19. It leads to a qualification that is widely recognized by the world's leading universities.

- Freeway, academies, and/or charter schools.
4. Establish and enforce school properties as drug/alcohol/tobacco free zones.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- School Boards
- Community Foundation
- Schools

**TIMEFRAME:**

Short Term, 2007-2010

***WorkKeys®***

WorkKeys is a program that was developed by ACT, the company that does college admissions testing. The program is a system that uses assessments, job analysis, and training to better prepare workers for jobs and match employers with the skilled employees they need.

**GOAL:**

**Support development of work skills.**

1. Provide adequate opportunities for skills development and ongoing education for workforce development.
2. Support availability of high-speed internet access to homes and businesses.
3. Encourage use of standardized measurement tools to help students better position themselves for success in the workplace.
4. Survey local and regional businesses to identify their educational needs.
5. Control drug/alcohol/tobacco use through education.
6. Market available programs to assure all residents are aware of opportunities for skills development education and training.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Work with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development to implement WorkKeys.
2. Develop and administer a survey of businesses regarding educational needs.
3. Create a coordinated marketing effort that identifies all ongoing education, skill development, and workforce training opportunities.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Economic Development Organization
- School Boards
- Department of Workforce Development
- Parke County Learning Center

**TIMEFRAME:**

Medium Term, 2010-2015

**GOAL:**

**Support development of life skills.**

1. Work with lifelong learning service providers to identify and market existing programs, and to develop new programs beneficial to county residents.
2. Increase education on personal finances and lifelong decision making.
3. Increase education on local history and culture to encourage respect and appreciation of Parke County and its various lifestyles.
4. Increase civic education on how government operates, how programs are funded, and how citizens can participate in local government.
5. Increase educational opportunities for fine arts and other cultural activities.
6. Encourage dialogue between citizens, including diverse entities in the county.
7. Increase education about drug/alcohol/tobacco use.
8. Market available programs to assure residents are aware of opportunities.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Encourage presentations by local elected officials in high school government classes.
2. Establish a marketing program for educational opportunities.
3. Provide meeting space and facilitators for workshops on local topics.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Local elected officials
- Parke County Learning Center
- Volunteers
- Extension Service
- School districts, Schools

**TIMEFRAME:**

Medium Term, 2010-2015

**GOAL:**

**Support development of a county-wide library system.**

1. Conduct a library master planning process to determine needs for buildings, staff, and electronic and print resources.
2. Provide high-speed internet access to residents.
3. Market available resources to assure residents are aware of them.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Create a study committee to engage in a library master planning process.
2. Establish and maintain a web site for Parke County residents that provides information on local resources.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Rockville Public Library
- Montezuma Public Library
- Volunteers
- County Commissioners
- Economic Development Organization

**TIMEFRAME:**

Library study, Short Term, 2007-2010

High-speed Internet, Short Term, 2007-2010

Marketing, Short Term, 2007-2010

## **IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS**

The tools used in implementing the Comprehensive Plan come in several forms. Some are regulatory like zoning and subdivision control. Each of these regulatory tools is highlighted below.

### **REGULATORY TOOLS**

#### **ZONING**

Zoning is one of the primary tools for implementing the comprehensive plan. It is a regulatory tool that is adopted by the legislative body (the County Commissioners). The current zoning ordinance was adopted in 1976. Some of the standards in that ordinance do not support the

concepts of the comprehensive plan, others are not the most effective regulatory tools currently available.

Recommended changes to the zoning ordinance include:

1. Some types of commercial signs such as flashing or moving signs, flags, and electronic message boards do not appear to be regulated. These sign types should be regulated to maintain the visual character of the community.
2. Fees should be adopted separately from the ordinance so that they can be updated without having to adopt an amendment to the zoning ordinance.
3. Cell tower regulations for siting and visual impact should be reviewed.
4. Residential alleys should be encouraged, rather than discouraged, for residential zoning districts that are adjacent to existing developed areas with alleys.
5. Home-based businesses should be regulated to promote them while managing their impact on adjacent uses.
6. Uses in districts should be revisited to consider appropriateness.
7. There should be provisions for cottage industries in agricultural areas to preserve the viability of farm-related or craft businesses.
8. Special exception uses should be listed in each district.
9. Landscape requirements should be reviewed and enhanced.
10. Ordinance provisions should be reviewed for consistency with recently changed state laws.

Another zoning tool that could be used to accomplish some of the goals of the comprehensive plan is an overlay district. An overlay district is applied to a particular area (such as a corridor or a historic district), on top of the base zoning. The standards of the overlay district are, in most cases, more restrictive than the standards of the base zoning and act to manage the quality and character of development in a particular area more intensively than in other similarly zoned areas.

#### **SUBDIVISION CONTROL**

Subdivision control is the other regulatory tool available to implement the comprehensive plan. The subdivision control ordinance establishes the standards for dividing land into parcels for development, and the improvements that must be made as a part of that division. It is where the community articulates standards for roads and streets, sidewalks, utility connections, and related items.

Recommended changes to the subdivision control ordinance include:

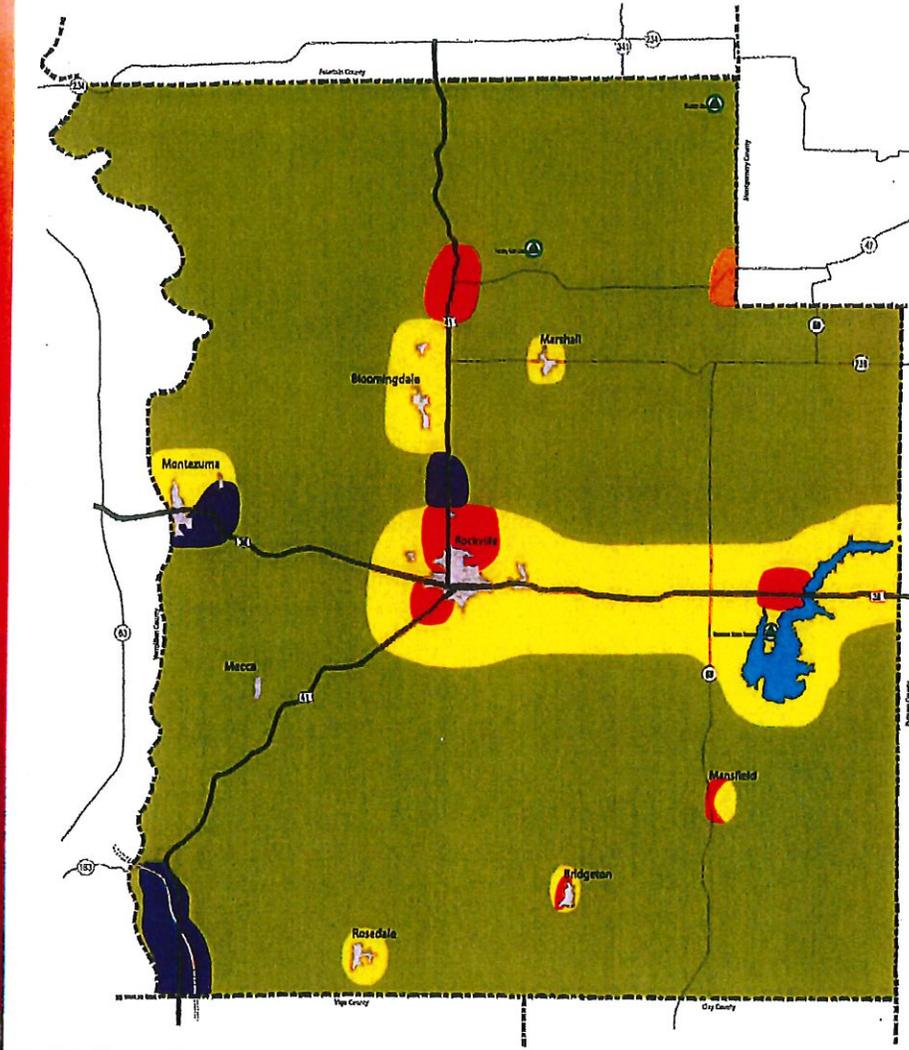
1. Incorporate the requirements for private streets and water pollution and sanitation from the zoning ordinance to the subdivision control ordinance.
2. Update the thoroughfare map and designations; include rights-of-way in the subdivision control text, not on the thoroughfare plan map.
3. Establish a distinct minor plat process for subdivisions creating fewer than three lots without opening new streets. Eliminate the ability to combine primary and secondary (final) plat for other subdivisions.
4. Update engineering standards to conform with modern standards and best practices.
5. Where blocks exceeding 800 feet are permitted, allow the Plan Commission to require a pedestrian crossing mid-block.
6. Require a percentage of common open space in residential subdivisions. Consider cluster development as an option for rural subdivisions.
7. Specify the subdivision and platting process and requirements in the main body of the subdivision control text, rather than a figure.
8. The secondary (final) plat process should be allowed to be approved

administratively so long as the plat conforms to the approved preliminary plan.

9. Performance guarantees for public improvements should be explicitly provided for.
10. Create checklists to be used by developers and staff to determine that all required items have been submitted.

Figure 7.1: Future Land Use Map

# Future Land Use Plan



**Legend**

- Rural Community
- Low Density Residential
- Mixed Use Development
- Commercial Development
- Industrial Development
- State Parks/POA
- Unincorporated Area
- Golf/11th Hole Reserves
- US Highway
- State Highway
- County Boundary



Scale: 1 inch = 1 mile

*Live, Work, Play, and Learn in Parke County  
 Beyond Covered Bridges*



Thoroughfare Plan/Functional Classification Map

# Thoroughfare Plan



**Legend**

- Local Road/Street
- Collector
- Secondary Road
- Thoroughfare
- County Boundary
- Utility Projections



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