

## CHAPTER 8

### SPECIAL TOPICS

#### Introduction

Special topics are those issue areas that became important during the development of the plan and warrant additional information, but are not necessarily able to be described in geographic terms such as downtown or an interchange.

Four special topics that emerged from the planning process were annexation, infill development, corridors, and agricultural business parks. The following sections will introduce each topic and discuss it in some level of detail.

#### Annexation

Annexation is the process where municipal governments (cities and towns) bring more land into their corporate boundaries. There are three methods of annexation in Indiana: involuntary, voluntary, and super-voluntary.

##### *Types of Annexation*

Involuntary annexation is initiated by the municipality. The area to be annexed must be 1/8 contiguous to the existing corporate boundary and either zoned commercial or industrial, have a population density of at least three people per acre, or be at least 60 percent subdivided. Another option is for the annexation area to be 1/4 contiguous and is “needed and can be used by the municipality in the reasonably near future.”

Involuntary annexations are subject to remonstrance by the property owners.

Voluntary annexation is initiated by a petition of at least 51 percent of the land owners or the owners of 75 percent of the assessed value of the area to be annexed. The area must be 1/8 contiguous to the existing municipal boundary. Voluntary annexations are subject to remonstrance by the property owners.

Super-voluntary annexation is initiated by petition to the municipality of 100 percent of the property owners. The area to be annexed must be 1/8 contiguous to the existing municipal boundary. Super-voluntary annexations may only be challenged on the basis of contiguity.

A remonstrance may be filed by 65 percent of the land owners or the owners of more than 75 percent of the assessed valuation of the annexation area. A remonstrance must be filed within 90 days after the publication of the adopted annexation ordinance.

The annexation ordinance must contain:

- A description of the boundaries of the territory to be annexed
- The approximate number of acres to be annexed
- A description of any special terms or conditions of the annexation ordinance
- A description of any tax abatements adopted for the area

A fiscal plan is required for all annexations. The time of adoption of the fiscal plan depends if the annexation is involuntary, voluntary, or super-voluntary. The written fiscal plan must include:

- A definite policy meeting statutory requirements
- Cost estimates of planned services to be furnished, itemized by municipal department
- The method(s) of financing the planned services
- A plan for the organization and extension of services
- Non-capital services must be provided within one year of the effective date of the annexation, capital services must be provided within three years.

In order to invalidate an annexation (support a remonstrance), the judge must find that all of the following are true:

- Police protection, fire protection, and street and road maintenance are adequately furnished by another provider
- There is a significant financial impact on residents or owners
- The annexation is not in the best interests of the land owners
- At least 65 percent of the property owners or owners of 75 percent of the assessed value opposes the annexation

#### *Purposes of Annexation*

Areas that should be annexed include:

- “Islands” or holes in the municipality
- Areas contiguous to the municipality that are provided with city services (police, fire protection, street repair and maintenance)
- Areas contiguous to the municipality that are developing, have developed, or are planned for development.

#### *Annexation Recommendations*

The City of Greensburg should:

- Develop an annexation policy and strategy
- Adopt formal policies regarding installation of infrastructure such as street lights and fire hydrants
- Pursue annexations consistent with the strategy defined

Note: The 2007 Indiana General Assembly has two bills for consideration regarding annexation. One would require municipalities to pay the remonstrators court costs if the annexation was determined to be invalid. The other would reduce the property owners required to remonstrate to 51 percent.

#### **Infill Development**

Infill development is development of new uses on previously vacant land that is within the urbanized area and has access to urban services such as water, sewer, roads, police and fire protection, and other urban services. Another type of infill development is redevelopment, or development of new uses or structures on land which has been

previously developed, but is currently vacant or abandoned. One special type of redevelopment is Brownfield redevelopment, in which the previous use of a site either actually or potentially left the site with environmental contamination issues.

*Why Infill is Important*

When communities are not focused on infill development, they experience Greenfield development on new sites that do not have infrastructure or adequate services. These sites require extension of urban services. Often, these extensions are costly, particularly when development “leapfrogs” over some undeveloped parcels to reach others.

Meanwhile vacant or undeveloped sites in the urban area are perceived as contributing to crime and blighted conditions, and may actually be doing so. These empty spaces can contribute positively to the tax base of the community and serve to stabilize and enhance the existing neighborhoods and commercial areas if they are developed.

Infill development generally doesn’t happen on its own, primarily due to the small size of parcels, regulatory barriers like zoning that makes the lot or structure non-conforming and/or unbuildable, lack of clear title or ownership, or perceived problems with the site. In order to encourage development of these sites, communities may provide incentives such as title clearing, land assembly, infrastructure maintenance or repair, or policies that overcome regulatory barriers.

*Brownfield Development*

Brownfield sites, those previously developed sites that are or are perceived as being environmentally contaminated, are an area of special concern. These sites need to be remediated, or cleaned up, before they can be put back into productive use if they are actually contaminated and cleared from liability if there is a perception that they may be contaminated. There are a variety of state and federal programs, often with financial assistance, to help communities address their Brownfield problems. Some environmental consulting companies specialize in Brownfield assessment and remediation.

Brownfield programs can be initiated on either a site-by-site basis as a need arises or a development opportunity is presented, or on a community-wide basis where a group of elected officials, government agencies, and citizens work together to identify and prioritize sites for assessment and remediation, as well as the ultimate reuse of the site.

**Corridors**

Key corridors into a community serve as the community’s “front door” – the place through which residents, workers, and visitors first see the community as they enter it. The corridors provide the first impression of the community. To ensure a welcoming first impression, corridors should function well for transportation, be pedestrian friendly, be attractively

developed, and have amenities that make the corridor unique to that community.

#### *Corridor Planning*

Tools that can be used to improve corridors for transportation function and aesthetic purposes include corridor master plans, corridor overlay districts, and access management plans.

Corridor master plans consider the transportation functions, land use needs and plans, pedestrian circulation, and aesthetic character of a corridor as a unified whole. They determine a desired future state of a particular corridor. These plans may recommend various projects including widening, realignment, inclusion of sidewalks or trails, landscaping, and streetscape enhancements. They may also recommend such policy changes as adopting an access management plan or policy or implementing a corridor overlay district in the zoning ordinance.

Corridor overlay districts are special districts added to the local zoning ordinance. The requirements for a particular corridor (or specified corridors) are “laid over” the base zoning district and provide regulation that is in addition to the requirements of the base district. Typical additional requirements in a corridor overlay would include enhanced landscaping, varied setbacks or parking lot locations, additional lighting requirements, and architectural standards.

Access management plans are policy statements that establish how access to businesses will be handled from various roadway types. This includes the number or spacing of curb cuts (such as driveways), the spacing of signalized intersections, and the regulation of turning movements (particularly left turns). These policies may be accompanied by illustrations or maps that exhibit the preferred access patterns. The purpose of access management is to regulate the access to parcels in a way that maintains or improves the flow of traffic along a roadway.

#### *Key Corridors for Greensburg*

There are several key corridors that serve Greensburg. I-74 is the most prominent and most visible. Key corridors that come into the Greensburg community include US 421, SR 3, SR 46, Freeland Road, and Lincoln Street.

I-74 is a major interstate connecting Indianapolis and Cincinnati as well as points beyond. Honda will be located at the western entrance to the community from I-74. There is available frontage on the south side of the interstate between the US 421 and SR 3 exits. There is little or no development located north of the interstate between these interchanges. The US 421 interchange is undergoing major reconstruction in preparation for the Honda plant.

The US 421 corridor is a business corridor from I-74 to the downtown and through to the west side of Greensburg. The corridor makes several

turns through downtown Greensburg. There are few areas along the roadway that have curbs and gutters or sidewalks. Many of the structures are not set very far back from the road and the land uses are relatively mixed. The intersection with State Road 3 is the only area where there is an attempt at access management.

The SR 3 corridor links Greensburg with cities like Muncie to the north and North Vernon to the south. It has an interchange with I-74 and connects the interstate with downtown via Lincoln Street. SR 3 itself heads to the east to bypass downtown. The SR 3/I-74 interchange has hotels, retail, and apartments. South of the intersection with US 421, the road is primarily rural. SR 46 is an east-west connector from the SR 3 bypass to the east side of the community, north of the railroad.

Freeland Road is an east-west connector located south of I-74, with cities like Columbus to the west and Batesville to the east. The plan for Freeland Road is to improve the road and develop the sections that are discontinuous between SR 3 and US 421.

Lincoln Street is the connection between the SR 3/I-74 interchange and downtown. The Lincoln Street corridor has recently been through a process to design roadway improvements and enhancements for the corridor from SR 3 to SR 46.

#### *Lincoln Street Enhancements*

The Lincoln Street enhancement project master plan was intended to:

- Identify existing aesthetic elements which should be preserved/protected and/or enhanced as the corridor is developed
- Develop alternative themes by which the corridor could be developed
- Establish a coherent identity throughout the corridor
- Establish pedestrian facilities that reinforce the theme and work in conjunction with the access management strategies to create a safer pedestrian environment
- Develop conceptual design drawings for enhancement treatments that will be used as the basis for future design development and construction

The process involved an inventory of the existing conditions and identifying opportunities and constraints in addition to a significant public involvement process. A steering committee was used to serve as liaison between the community and the design team. Public meetings were held to present conceptual treatments and final recommendations. The design team also met with the Tax Increment Finance (TIF) board to discuss the project.

The enhancement plan includes:

- Sidewalk treatments
- Interpretative panels and opportunities

- Landscape treatments
- Decorative light and signal poles
- Banners
- Street signs
- Wayfinding signage

### **Agricultural Business Park**

In recent years there has been an increased awareness by the general public that agriculture is a business, indeed an industry, and that parts of agricultural processing may not be particularly appropriate in rural areas due to infrastructure needs, but are not necessarily well-suited for standard industrial parks because of their agricultural product inputs and relationship with the land. This awareness has led to a variety of means of encouraging value-added agriculture and the processing of agricultural products. One of these models is the agricultural business park.

An agricultural business park uses the elements of a traditional business park that are successful, such as appropriate zoning, infrastructure, and land that is separated from or buffered from other uses, and combines them with the needs of agricultural products processors. These needs may be access to transportation systems, access to crops or research fields, or other needs specific to the type of agri-business.

#### *Agriculture as Industry*

Agricultural businesses include processors of grain for food, feed, or seed; ethanol or bio-diesel producers; slaughterhouses and animal rendering facilities; canneries; and other businesses that use agricultural products as inputs for production.

The rise in fuel prices in the past several years has accelerated the development of alternative fuel sources such as ethanol and bio-diesel. Many such processing facilities have been developed in the state of Indiana in the past year or two and more are slated for construction.

In some communities, including Greensburg, agricultural production facilities have developed over time in locations that are now creating urban land use conflicts. These uses include stockyards and grain elevators. These uses are important to the agricultural industry, but like other industries, may have negative impacts on the surrounding areas.

#### *Models of Agricultural Business Parks*

Muncie and Delaware County are one of the state's leaders in the development of zoning for agricultural businesses and creation of an agricultural business park. In 2005 the Delaware County Commission approved unanimously approved the creation of a new zoning district - the "agricultural bio-enterprise zone."

The "Agricultural Bio-Enterprise Zone" will give Muncie-Delaware County a unique product to market to agricultural businesses looking at the State

of Indiana," said Terry Murphy, Vice President, Economic Development for the Vision 2006 Economic Development Program. "This zone classification and eventual Ag Park development seeks to improve the economic stability of area farmers and create new jobs and investment in the county," added Murphy. The purpose of the AB-EZ is to provide a business park-like environment that is supportive to industries that add value to agricultural products produced locally.

Rob Swain, economic development director for the state department of agriculture, said Delaware County is the first community in the state to adopt an ag-park ordinance. Targeted businesses in the new zone area include existing technology providers of food, fiber, and energy for human, animal, and industrial applications as well as new applications from the rapidly developing areas being discovered through biotechnology.

The AB Agricultural Bio-Enterprise Zone was created to provide an area for exclusive location of those industries that use or produce renewable agricultural products or direct derivatives of renewable agricultural products as inputs for their manufacturing, processing, production, research, or refining operations. An AB Agricultural Bio-Enterprise Zone is intended to be occupied by multiple industries, including farming operations, so that the infrastructure, by-products, expertise and jointly developed knowledge and technologies to generate new value added agricultural products can be shared and/or reused by the occupying industries.

For an area to be classified as an AB Agricultural Bio-Enterprise Zone, the area must contain at least three hundred (300) acres comprised of contiguous or adjoining properties separated only by existing public roads, highways, or railroads. Any future additions to an existing AB Agricultural Bio-Enterprise Zone shall be contiguous or adjoin in the same manner and add a minimum of twenty (20) acres that is in one tract of land.

The Delaware County Commissioners voted to rezone over 800 acres of land near the town of Shideler from "agricultural" zoning to the county's new "Agricultural Bio-Enterprise Zone". The zoning change sets the way for the area to be developed as an "Agricultural Industrial Park". It will be Delaware County's fourth industrial park.

The new Agricultural Park is located near State Road 3 and State Road 28 providing potential new businesses with excellent access to both Interstate 69 and Interstate 70. The new park could be a prime location for businesses in the (1) food processing, (2) Ethanol, (3) Biodiesel, and (4) pharmaceutical sectors.

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