

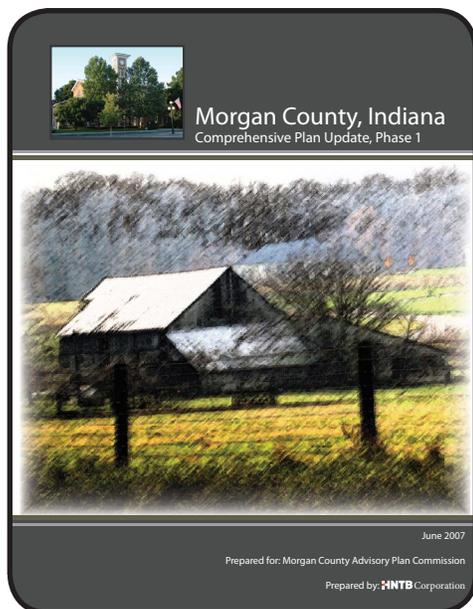
Introduction to Phase II

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Introduction to Phase 2

Morgan County divided the work for its Comprehensive Land Use Plan into two phases.

Phase 1 had a Steering Committee who worked with the consulting firm of HNTB Corp. to do research and analysis, seek public input and ultimately create a set of goals and objectives. It was completed in June 2007. Phase 1 of the comprehensive planning process addressed the questions of “Where are we now?,” and “Where do we want to go?”



Phase 2 had a Steering Committee with many of the same members. This committee worked with the consulting firm The Economic Growth Team on additional research and creating an implementation plan for the goals and objectives. It was completed in spring 2009. Phase 2 tackled the question, “How do we get there?”

Combining these two phases shows how the Comprehensive Plan was formed, but a third document was integrated into the county’s planning efforts.

The SR 37/SR 144 Overlay Plan was created at the same time as Phase 2. Representatives from Morgan County, Martinsville and Mooresville worked together on an intersection-by-intersection plan for those two corridors. The Overlay Plan was made in anticipation of Interstate 69 being built through Morgan County, following the footprint of the existing SR 37. However, the recommendations are structured to be what’s best for the corridor, whether I-69 is built or not.

Because SR 37 (and by extension, the new I-69) is the economic lifeblood of much of Morgan County, the need for integrating the Overlay Plan is clear.

This section provides background on the planning process and pitfalls that could derail planning efforts. There are also tips for comprehensive plan users.

The Planning Process

In Indiana, comprehensive planning is permitted by the 500 Series of Title 36-7-4 of the Indiana Code. This law empowers cities, towns, and counties to adopt plans. Any plan adopted in Indiana must contain at least the following three elements:

1. A statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction.
2. A statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction.
3. A statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.

In addition, the law provides for a number of optional elements, including, but not limited to parks and recreation, flood control, transit and natural resource protection. While each planning process should be custom-designed to meet community needs, nearly all contain the same core elements as found in this plan:

- ◆ Evaluate existing conditions, including strengths and weaknesses, community character, demographics, natural features, etc.
- ◆ Establish goals and objectives for the future
- ◆ Identify alternatives for meeting the goals and objectives
- ◆ Select the most desirable alternative
- ◆ Devise and adopt tools to implement the plan (zoning, subdivision control, capital improvement programming, etc.)
- ◆ Evaluate the success of the plan
- ◆ Revise the plan

These steps are part of a continuing process. Plans must be evaluated, changed and updated as the community changes. These changes can be gradual, as through demographic trends, technological change, or slow economic growth or decline. Sometimes change is more sudden, such as the location of a large new industry in a small community or the loss of a major employer.

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Morgan County's planning process for this comprehensive plan included the following key elements:

Big Tent Event

This event was a kick-off for all Morgan County communities doing comprehensive plans. Steering committee members and key people were invited to

hear about the comprehensive plan process and to identify things they would like to change and things they would like to preserve. It was held on June 26, 2008 at the Morgan County Fairgrounds.



Big Tent Event

Key Stakeholder Focus Groups

Focus groups were held to gather input from school officials, public safety professionals, large employers and elected officials from across the county. This was completed on August 28, 2008.



Community Leader Focus Group

Key Stakeholder Interviews

Representatives from utilities were interviewed as well as members of the consulting team working on the I-69 expansion for the Indiana Department of Transportation.

Steering Committee Meetings

The committee met six times to set priorities and discuss options. They also reviewed documents and held discussions via e-mail.

A full report on all the information-gathering activities can be found in the Appendix.

Why Comprehensive Plans Fail

Most plans aren't plans; they are just high-level ideas.

As a result, many comprehensive plans can be found in pristine condition, untouched atop of filing cabinets. Although every unsuccessful plan fails under its own set of circumstances, there are some miseries common enough to warrant further attention. The obstacles that get mentioned most when a community plan doesn't deliver include:

Lousy Communication

Some communities do little or nothing to distribute their plans, not even making them available on a public website. This means that citizens are not sufficiently informed about the process, do not participate in decisions or don't identify with the goals. Creators of the strategy have to get out enough information for people to understand what they're supposed to do. In a related failure, expectations about the plan are not shared openly or effectively.

To tackle this problem, a specific group – or better yet, specific person – must be assigned to spreading the word and generating momentum through an overall communication plan.

Who's in Charge?

When responsibility for decision making about capital improvements and provision of services is diffused among public agencies, private vendors and individual citizens, confusion is bound to follow. This diffusion makes accountability and coordination even more difficult.

In short, who are we following?

Weak leadership brings improper resource allocation, poor follow-through, and inefficient rewards and punishments. In this category, there is enough blame to go around: the problem doesn't just rest with the main person in charge, but includes the lack of ability or willingness from other people who are needed to step up. We are all called to lead from wherever we are, even if we're not at the top.

What's in it for Me?

Government is often focused on self-preservation while some businesses ignore public welfare to achieve their own ends.

Many planning initiatives fail because the people responsible for implementing them are not convinced of their value. More effort is needed to help people understand how getting behind the community's goals can support their personal goals. This solution leads back to communication and education.

No Money

There's rarely enough money to get everything done, and in tough times even the most worthy and desirable projects can get delayed. Neighborhoods lack needed amenities and economic development is inadequately organized and focused.

Like the poor, this problem will always be with us. The first step – and one that must be revisited constantly – is setting priorities.

Lack of Capacity

This bedeviling circumstance is similar to lack of money, but it's wider ranging and warrants a longer look. Capacity refers to a community's resources to carry out a project, including:

- ◆ Technical (someone with expertise)
- ◆ Managerial (someone to oversee)
- ◆ Funding
- ◆ Political Will

The first two bulleted items could be covered by a staff member or a volunteer of heroic proportions. The third bullet might include tools such as Tax Increment Financing, Redevelopment Commissions and Brownfield Development. The fourth bullet is the most difficult to quantify but easy to spot.

Local resources should be considered before determining future planning. For example, a solution which requires an extensive amount of staff to administer would not be appropriate for a community with few or no planning staff.

The I-69 Community Planning Program, which funded this study, recommends that communities complete a checklist to gauge their current planning capacity.

Planning capacity is determined by the highest level that has all or the most items checked in the table below. A preliminary checklist for Morgan County might look like the following table, with a designation between Level 3 and Level 4.

Planning Capacity Chart

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
<input type="checkbox"/> We have thought about planning for our community but do not have a plan commission.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We have a plan commission and a board of zoning appeals with rules of procedure.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We have a plan commission and a board of zoning appeals that consistently follow rules of procedure.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We have a plan commission and a board of zoning appeals that consistently follow rules of procedure and annual training.
<input type="checkbox"/> We do not have any planning staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> We have a building commissioner/ planner on staff.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We have a professional full time planner.	<input type="checkbox"/> We have a professional full time staff of planners and other trained technical staff.
<input type="checkbox"/> We have no financial resources designated for planning projects.	<input type="checkbox"/> We rarely designate financial resources for planning projects.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We occasionally designate financial resources for community planning projects.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We annually designate financial resources for community planning projects.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We have someone who focuses part of their time on economic development or redevelopment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We have a full-time staff member who is dedicated to economic development or redevelopment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We have a full-time staff member who is dedicated to economic development or redevelopment in addition to other trained technical economic development staff.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Our focus of planning is on plan review.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Our focus is on some longer range planning and visioning.	<input type="checkbox"/> Our focus is on long range planning.
	<input type="checkbox"/> We have no or limited inspections.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We have limited inspections and enforcement personnel.	<input type="checkbox"/> We have full range of inspections and full time enforcement personnel.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We have zoning and subdivision regulations.	<input type="checkbox"/> We regularly update our comprehensive plan and development codes.	<input type="checkbox"/> We have additional ordinances such as historic preservation, etc.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We have a comprehensive plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> We have additional ordinances such as architectural review, etc.	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We have a redevelopment commission.		

Once the community has determined its capacity level, it can better judge its ability to implement regulations, studies, etc. The I-69 Community Planning Program provides additional checklists where Morgan County can compare its capacity to carry out efforts in protecting natural resources, encouraging economic development, managing transportation and infrastructure impacts and directing development and growth.

Those tables can be found in the Appendix. For example, town leaders could review the Protecting Natural Resources checklist (sampled below) to see what tools a Level 3 community is best suited for:

Example Planning Capacity Matrix			
Tools in gray boxes are <u>not</u> recommended for that level of planning capacity.			
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Increasing Fundamental Planning Capacity	Land Ownership and Conservation Easements	Land Ownership and Conservation Easements	Land Ownership and Conservation Easements
	Conservation Subdivision Ordinance	Conservation Subdivision Ordinance	Conservation Subdivision Ordinance
	Hillside / Steep Slope Protection	Hillside / Steep Slope Protection	Hillside / Steep Slope Protection
	Tree Protection Ordinance	Tree Protection Ordinance	Tree Protection Ordinance

If a tool is beyond a community’s planning capacity, capacity can be acquired through external resources such as universities, regional planning organization, metropolitan planning organizations, other resource organizations and consultants.

Many communities that have a higher planning capacity use outsourced services to assist them in completing various projects. When capacity is acquired in this manner, a key consideration in the plan should be the long-term administrative requirements for successful implementation. Additionally, each community should analyze the different approaches to increasing local planning capacity. If external resources are used, a plan should be developed to gradually increase their own capacity in various

ways, such as analyzing or expanding the structural capacity of the planning staff.

For this plan, special care was given in the Action Steps to matching goals with the tool needed to carry them out.

A User’s Guide to the Comprehensive Plan

For the comprehensive plan to produce results, it must be linked in practical ways to the activities of the groups that influence growth in Morgan County. No one organization can implement the plan alone.

For those organizations to make the most of their work together in implementing the Comprehensive Plan, it is useful to understand how all the parts came together.

Vision, Development Principles, Goals & Strategies

These are the core beliefs that form the plan. They move from the broadest to the most specific.

The sections were formed during the planning process and were gathered from the steering committee, focus groups, interviews and public meetings.

The wording used in the various components could be useful for plan commissioners and commission

also refer to the input of the dozens of local leaders and residents whose opinions helped shape the plan's goals.

poured into creating this plan to let it slowly grow outdated, while the need for current planning does not.

They can also ask themselves how they make decisions without a plan. Certainly their long experience in the county guides their judgment, but a group of people making decisions based on their individual perceptions may not lead to a shared vision of the county's future.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a defensible, unified vision.

Tips for Developers

Developers across the country ask for "more predictability" from decision makers in order to maximize their investments. This plan spells out the community's preferred future; where it wants to extend infrastructure and where it wants housing, industrial and commercial development to go.

The plan also suggests future changes to the zoning code and subdivision regulations.

Tips for Citizens

After finding your house on the future land use or critical sub area maps, the next step is to read up on community issues that interest you. Check on the Greenways Plan or environmental protection. Most importantly, check out the Implementation Plan for ways to get involved.

Changes to the Comprehensive Plan

The final word on the Morgan County Comprehensive Plan is that the landscape is always changing, and the plan should be modified to change along with it.

This may not mean a complete update, but every year or so the planning commission and others should review the tenets of the plan and make note of future change. It would be a poor use of the resources