WHITE COUNTY, INDIANA

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

AUGUST 26, 2026

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Executive Summary

White County is a community defined by its productive farmland, strong towns, natural resources, and the relationships that connect residents to one another and to the land. Agriculture has shaped the County's landscape, economy, and identity for generations, while its communities, recreational assets, and entrepreneurial spirit continue to provide opportunities for residents and businesses alike.

Like many rural communities across Indiana, White County faces both opportunities and challenges as it plans for the future. Changing demographics, housing shortages, infrastructure needs, evolving technologies, workforce demands, and changing economic conditions will continue to influence the County over the coming decades. At the same time, White County residents have expressed a strong desire to preserve the qualities that make the County unique, including its agricultural heritage, rural character, community identity, and quality of life.

The White County Comprehensive Plan establishes a long-range vision for the County over the next ten to twenty years. Prepared pursuant to Indiana law, the Plan serves as a guide for future decisions related to land use, housing, infrastructure, economic development, natural resource stewardship, and community development.

The Comprehensive Plan does not approve or prohibit specific projects or technologies. Rather, it establishes a framework for evaluating future opportunities and challenges in a manner that reflects community priorities and long-term County objectives. As a policy document, the Plan may also establish preferred, discouraged, or restrictive policy direction for categories of land use where necessary to advance the County's adopted goals. Specific regulatory standards and approval procedures are established through the zoning ordinance and other implementing regulations.

The Comprehensive Plan was developed through an extensive process of research, public engagement, stakeholder discussions, Steering Committee meetings, and review by the White County Area Plan Commission.

Public engagement activities included:

- Countywide public surveys;
- Community meetings and open houses;
- Stakeholder interviews and focus groups;
- Online engagement opportunities;
- Steering Committee discussions; and
- Public meetings before the Area Plan Commission.

Participants represented a broad range of interests, including agricultural producers, businesses, municipal officials, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, residents, and community leaders.

The planning process identified many areas of broad alignment, including the importance of agriculture, strong communities, infrastructure investment, quality of life, and preparing future generations for success. At the same time, the process also revealed differing perspectives regarding issues such as renewable energy, future growth patterns, and the balance between property rights and community impacts.

The Plan acknowledges these differing perspectives and seeks to provide a transparent and consistent framework for future decision-making.

Several recurring themes emerged throughout the planning process.

- **Agriculture Defines White County:** Agriculture remains White County's predominant land use and was consistently identified as central to the County's economy, heritage, and identity. Participants frequently emphasized the importance of preserving agricultural viability while ensuring that future decisions consider long-term impacts on farmland and rural landscapes.
- **Strong Communities Matter:** Participants repeatedly emphasized the importance of White County's towns, schools, churches, civic organizations, and community institutions. Strong communities were viewed as essential to long-term quality of life and economic vitality.
- **Housing is a Growing Need:** Housing availability and affordability emerged as significant concerns throughout the County. Participants identified workforce housing, housing diversity, senior housing, and reinvestment in existing housing stock as important priorities.
- **Infrastructure Supports Future Opportunity:** Roads, bridges, broadband, utilities, public safety services, and community facilities were frequently discussed as essential investments necessary to support residents, businesses, and future growth.
- **Future Generations Need Opportunity:** Younger residents emphasized the importance of employment opportunities, internships, recreation, community investment, and opportunities for personal growth and leadership development.
- **Stewardship and Local Decision-Making Are Important:** Participants frequently discussed stewardship of farmland, water resources, and community character. Property rights, local decision-making, and responsible growth emerged as recurring themes throughout the planning process.

Vision Statement

White County will remain a community rooted in agriculture, strengthened by thriving towns and rural communities, and prepared to thoughtfully evaluate future opportunities while preserving the qualities that make White County unique.

Plan Organization

The Comprehensive Plan is organized around three major themes.

- **Part I – Protect What Matters:** This section focuses on preserving and strengthening White County's agricultural foundation, rural character, and natural resources. It establishes a framework for stewardship and for evaluating future technologies and land uses in a manner consistent with community priorities.
- **Part II – Strengthen Communities:** This section addresses housing, infrastructure, community facilities, and quality of life. It recognizes that strong communities are essential to White County's long-term success and seeks to ensure that residents of all ages have opportunities to thrive.
- **Part III – Prepare for the Future:** This section establishes a framework for economic opportunity, future growth, and land use decision-making. It recognizes that White County will

continue to experience change and seeks to ensure that future decisions are guided by transparency, stewardship, and long-term thinking.

Goals

The Comprehensive Plan is organized around six overarching goals:

- **Goal 1 – Preserve and Strengthen Agriculture and Rural Stewardship:** Preserve and strengthen White County's agricultural foundation, rural character, and natural resources while providing a transparent framework for evaluating future change.
- **Goal 2 – Strengthen Housing and Neighborhoods:** Promote housing opportunities that support residents at all stages of life while strengthening neighborhoods and communities throughout White County.
- **Goal 3 – Invest in Infrastructure and Community Facilities:** Maintain and improve infrastructure and community facilities in a manner that supports residents, businesses, agriculture, and future growth while promoting efficient and fiscally responsible investment.
- **Goal 4 – Promote Economic Opportunity:** Support a resilient and diverse economy that builds upon White County's agricultural foundation, strengthens communities, and creates opportunities for current and future generations.
- **Goal 5 – Strengthen Communities and Quality of Life:** Promote healthy, welcoming, and vibrant communities that support residents of all ages and contribute to White County's long-term quality of life.
- **Goal 6 – Foster Effective Governance and Collaboration:** Implement the Comprehensive Plan through coordinated action, strategic investment, ongoing public engagement, and collaboration among White County, municipalities, partner organizations, and residents.

Critical Path Strategies

Several implementation priorities emerged as particularly important during the planning process:

- Preserve agricultural viability and rural character;
- Expand housing opportunities for residents of all ages;
- Maintain and modernize infrastructure and community facilities;
- Support workforce development and economic opportunity;
- Strengthen communities and quality-of-life amenities; and
- Modernize planning and development regulations.

These priorities should receive particular attention during the early years of implementation.

Looking Ahead

White County's future will not be determined by this document alone. Rather, it will be shaped by the decisions made by residents, businesses, public officials, and community organizations over time.

The Comprehensive Plan establishes a framework for those decisions. By building upon its agricultural heritage, investing in its communities, and thoughtfully preparing for future opportunities, White County can preserve the qualities residents value while ensuring continued prosperity and resilience for future generations.

Acknowledgements

Special Thanks

County Officials

County Commissioners

David Davis - District 1
Kaleb Pass - District 2
Mike Smolek - District 3

County Council

Raymond L Kramer, Jr - President
Arthur A Anderson
James G Annis
Steve Christopher
Janet J Faker
Matthew A McKean
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Area Plan Commission

Members

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Pam Cochran, Clerk-Treasurer, Town of Reynolds
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Triva Woodley, Developer/Broker
Randy Strasser, President, White County Economic Development Corporation
Brandi Page, President, Streets of Monticello Association
Marty Huseman, Purdue Extension Educator

1.0 Introduction

White County stands at an important moment in its long history—a period shaped by demographic change, new economic opportunities, pressing infrastructure needs, and a renewed desire to align growth with the County's rural identity and values. The 2026 Comprehensive Plan provides a unified policy framework to guide land use, infrastructure investment, housing, economic development, and public services over the next twenty years. It replaces and updates the 2017 Comprehensive Plan and integrates strategic work conducted by local governments, community organizations, and regional partners.

This plan responds directly to the challenges and opportunities identified during the Educate and Explore phases of the planning process, including the extensive Existing Conditions Report, stakeholder meetings held throughout spring and summer 2025, and Steering Committee Meetings #1 and #2. Public outreach at the White County Fair, the Spirit of Monticello Festival, and the online surveys also provided critical insights into housing needs, renewable energy concerns, childcare shortages, infrastructure gaps, and the community's strong connection to its rural heritage.

The Comprehensive Plan is both a strategic guide and a practical tool. As the County continues to attract agricultural enterprises, manufacturing employers, tourism visitors, and interest from renewable energy developers, this plan provides a balanced framework for directing growth to appropriate areas, protecting valued resources, improving the quality of life for residents, and strengthening local government capacity.

1.1 What is a Comprehensive Plan?

White County is a community defined by its productive farmland, strong towns, natural resources, and the relationships that connect residents to one another and to the land. Like many rural communities across Indiana, White County faces a variety of opportunities and challenges that will influence its future over the next twenty years. Changes in demographics, housing needs, economic conditions, agricultural markets, infrastructure demands, and emerging technologies are shaping conversations about the future of the County and its communities.

The White County Comprehensive Plan provides a framework for addressing these changes in a manner that reflects local priorities and community values. Prepared pursuant to Indiana law, the Comprehensive Plan serves as the County's long-range policy document for guiding decisions related to growth, land use, infrastructure investment, economic development, housing, natural resource stewardship, and community development.

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to:

- Establish a shared vision for White County's future;
- Identify community priorities and areas of concern;
- Guide decisions regarding land use and future development;
- Coordinate public investments in infrastructure and community facilities;
- Provide a foundation for updates to zoning and subdivision regulations;
- Promote coordination among White County, its municipalities, and partner organizations; and
- Establish implementation strategies to help achieve community goals.

The Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory document. Adoption of this Plan does not approve, deny or regulate specific projects, developments, technologies, or land uses. Rather, the Plan establishes a set of goals, policies, and guiding principles intended to assist elected officials, appointed boards, staff, and community organizations in evaluating future decisions. Those policies may express a preference for, concern regarding, or presumption against particular categories or patterns of development when supported by the goals and values established in this Plan. Zoning and other implementing regulations establish the enforceable standards used to carry out that policy direction.

White County will continue to evolve over time. The purpose of this Plan is not to predict every future opportunity or challenge, but instead to provide a durable framework for evaluating change in a manner that preserves the qualities residents value while preparing the County for future generations.

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1.2 How to Use This Plan

The White County Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a practical guide for public decision-making over the next ten to twenty years. The Plan is organized to move from understanding the County as it exists today, to identifying a shared direction for the future, and finally to establishing policies and implementation strategies.

The chapters of this Plan are organized as follows:

Chapter 2: White County Today — Facts, Perspectives, and Community Themes: This chapter presents a profile of White County, including demographic, economic, housing, infrastructure, agricultural, and environmental conditions. It also summarizes the perspectives and themes that emerged throughout public engagement, recognizing both areas of broad alignment and topics where differing viewpoints remain.

Chapter 3: Looking Ahead — Vision and Policy Direction: This chapter establishes the community vision, guiding principles, goals, and objectives that provide the foundation for future decision-making.

Part I — Protect What Matters: These chapters focus on agriculture, rural character, natural resources, and stewardship of the County's most important assets.

Part II — Strengthen Communities: These chapters address housing, infrastructure, public facilities, quality of life, and the continued vitality of White County's communities.

Part III — Prepare for the Future: These chapters address economic opportunity, future land use, and strategies for managing change in a manner consistent with community priorities.

Implementation: The final chapter identifies the actions, partnerships, and regulatory updates necessary to implement the Plan over time.

The Comprehensive Plan should be considered alongside other adopted plans, ordinances, and policies. While no single recommendation should be interpreted in isolation, the Plan as a whole is intended to provide decision-makers with a consistent framework for evaluating future proposals and public investments.

1.3 Planning Process

The White County Comprehensive Plan was developed over the course of 2025 and 2026 through a process designed to combine technical analysis with broad public engagement.

The planning process began with an evaluation of existing conditions, including demographic trends, housing conditions, economic characteristics, agricultural resources, infrastructure systems, and previously adopted plans and studies. This research provided an understanding of the County's existing strengths, opportunities, and challenges.

Public engagement formed an essential component of the planning process. Residents, businesses, farmers, community organizations, public officials, and other stakeholders were invited to participate through a variety of engagement methods designed to reach a broad cross-section of the community.

Engagement activities included:

- Two countywide public surveys;
- Community open houses and public meetings;
- Pop-up engagement events held throughout the County;
- Stakeholder discussions representing a variety of interests and perspectives;

- Focus group meetings;
- Steering Committee meetings;
- Area Plan Commission work sessions and public hearings;
- Online engagement opportunities and comment collection; and
- Direct coordination with County and municipal officials.

Because White County residents hold a variety of perspectives regarding issues affecting the County's future, the planning process sought not only to identify areas of agreement, but also to understand where significant differences of opinion exist. The Comprehensive Plan acknowledges those differences and seeks to provide a framework for future decision-making rather than presume unanimity on every issue.

The resulting Plan reflects both technical analysis and extensive community input. While not every participant agreed on every issue, recurring themes emerged regarding the importance of agriculture, strong communities, infrastructure investment, quality of life, and responsible stewardship of the County's resources.

1.4 Relationship to Other Plans and Past Efforts

The White County Comprehensive Plan builds on prior planning work, current technical analysis, and related efforts by the County, municipalities, and partner organizations. It is not intended to replace every local plan, study, or policy document. Instead, it brings those efforts together into one countywide policy framework. The most important prior planning document is the 2017 White County Comprehensive Plan. That plan provided broad direction for land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, parks, economic development, and implementation. Many of its themes remain important today, including support for agriculture, protection of rural character, economic development, housing needs, infrastructure investment, and community quality of life. This updated Plan carries forward those themes, but revises them to reflect current conditions, new public input, and emerging issues such as renewable energy, data centers, broadband, housing feasibility, and local government capacity.

The Plan also incorporates the 2023 City of Monticello Strategic Plan. Monticello is White County's county seat and only incorporated city, so its future is closely tied to the future of the County as a whole. The Monticello Strategic Plan provides more detailed direction for the city, including downtown revitalization, housing, recreation, riverfront opportunities, infrastructure, tourism, and local economic development. This countywide Plan recognizes Monticello's role while also addressing the needs of smaller towns, rural areas, lake areas, and unincorporated communities.

Several technical reports and planning materials also support this Plan. The Existing Conditions Report provides the factual base for the Plan, including information on population, housing, employment, land use, transportation, utilities, natural resources, and community facilities. Public engagement summaries and stakeholder input reports document what residents, farmers, businesses, local officials, nonprofit leaders, schools, utilities, and other participants said during the planning process. These materials are included or summarized in the appendices so that readers can understand how the Plan's recommendations were developed.

This Plan was also prepared alongside a review of White County's zoning and subdivision regulations. The zoning ordinance and subdivision control ordinance are the County's primary tools for carrying out many land use recommendations. The Comprehensive Plan does not change zoning by itself. However, it provides policy direction for future ordinance updates, including clearer land use categories, better development standards, stronger review procedures, and improved consistency between the Plan and local regulations.

Other related efforts also informed this Plan. These include regional economic development discussions, infrastructure and utility coordination, renewable energy ordinance work, data center discussions, tourism and recreation planning, and possible future trail planning. Some of these efforts may continue after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan should therefore be used as a guide for future studies, grant applications, ordinance amendments, capital improvements, and intergovernmental coordination.

Because conditions will continue to change, this Plan should be reviewed regularly. Future updates may be needed as new data becomes available, major development proposals are considered, infrastructure needs change, or community priorities evolve. The goal is to keep White County's planning work coordinated, practical, and useful for decision-makers and residents over time.

2.0 White County Today: Facts, Perspectives, and Community Themes

Understanding White County requires more than an examination of population trends, economic statistics, or land use patterns. White County is also defined by its history, its agricultural landscape, its communities, and the perspectives of the people who live and work here.

This chapter presents both objective conditions and observations gathered through the planning process. Demographic, economic, housing, infrastructure, and environmental information provides an understanding of current conditions and emerging trends. Public engagement conducted throughout the planning process provides additional insight into the opportunities, concerns, aspirations, and challenges identified by participants.

No public engagement process can perfectly represent every resident or perspective. Participation in surveys, meetings, focus groups, online discussions, and other engagement activities is voluntary and therefore may not reflect the County's population in exact proportion. Furthermore, White County residents hold differing views regarding a number of important issues affecting the County's future.

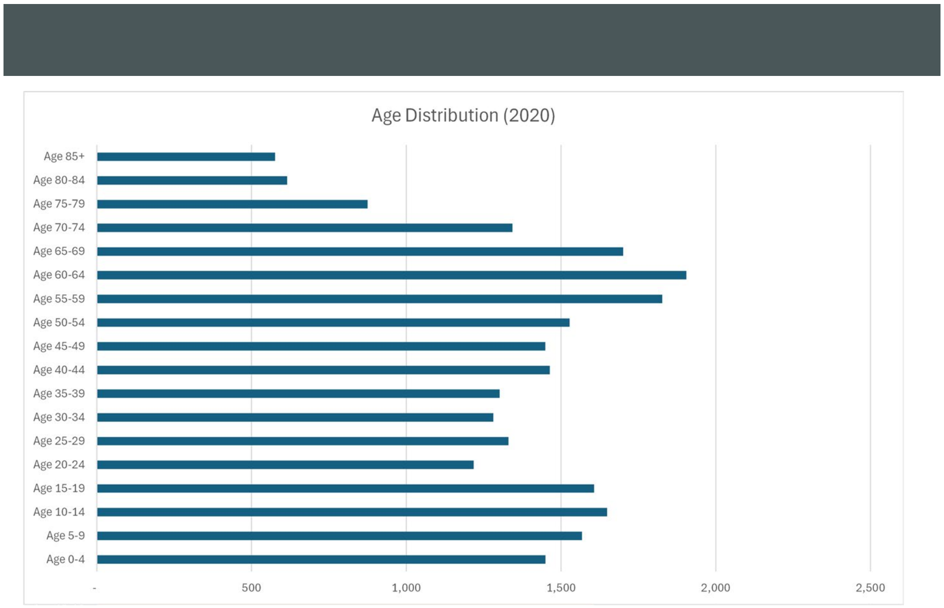
Accordingly, the observations presented in this chapter should not be interpreted as definitive statements of countywide opinion or evidence of unanimous consensus. Rather, they represent recurring themes, concerns, aspirations, and tensions that emerged throughout the planning process and that merit consideration as White County plans for the future.

Together, the factual information and community perspectives presented in this chapter establish the foundation for the vision, goals, and policies contained in subsequent chapters.

2.1 Population and Demographic Trends

White County's population has remained relatively stable over recent decades, reflecting trends common throughout many rural Indiana counties. While modest population growth has occurred in some communities and lake areas, long-term demographic trends suggest an aging population, changing household structures, and continued competition for younger residents and workforce talent.

Key demographic observations include:



The County's older residents outnumber the younger ones.

- An increasing proportion of older residents.
- Smaller average household sizes.
- Continued demand for workforce attraction and retention.
- A need to provide housing and services appropriate for residents at all stages of life.

These demographic trends have implications for housing, workforce development, transportation, healthcare, and community services throughout the County.

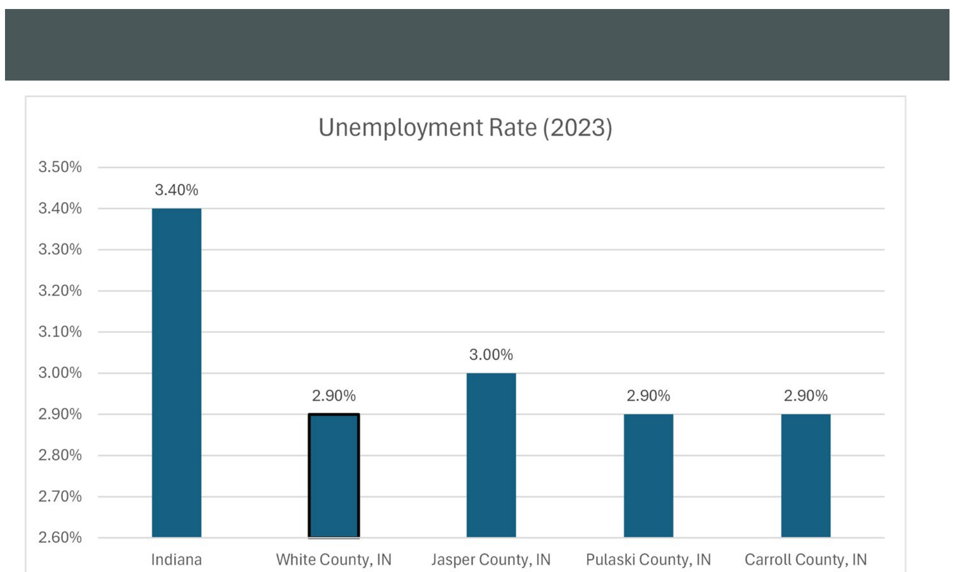
Planning Implications

- Housing options should accommodate residents of different ages, incomes, and household types.
- Workforce attraction and retention will remain important community priorities.
- Communities and service providers should prepare for an aging population while continuing to invest in opportunities for younger residents and families.

2.2 Economy & Workforce

White County's economy has historically been anchored by agriculture and related industries. Manufacturing, tourism, healthcare, education, and service industries also play important roles in supporting the local economy and providing employment opportunities.

Agriculture continues to influence not only the economy, but also land use patterns, community identity, and the County's rural character. At the same time, changes in agricultural markets, technology, workforce availability, and regional economic conditions continue to shape the economic landscape.



Unemployment in White County is lower than in the State and than in many nearby comparable counties.

Public engagement frequently highlighted concerns regarding workforce attraction and retention. Participants often discussed the importance of creating opportunities that encourage young people and families to remain in or return to White County.

Students and younger participants emphasized several recurring themes, including:

- Access to employment opportunities.
- Internships and job-shadowing experiences.

- Community investment.
- Recreation and quality-of-life amenities.
- Welcoming communities.
- Opportunities for personal growth and leadership development.

Participants also discussed the importance of entrepreneurship, supporting local businesses, and ensuring that economic growth complements rather than diminishes the qualities that make White County unique.

Planning Implications

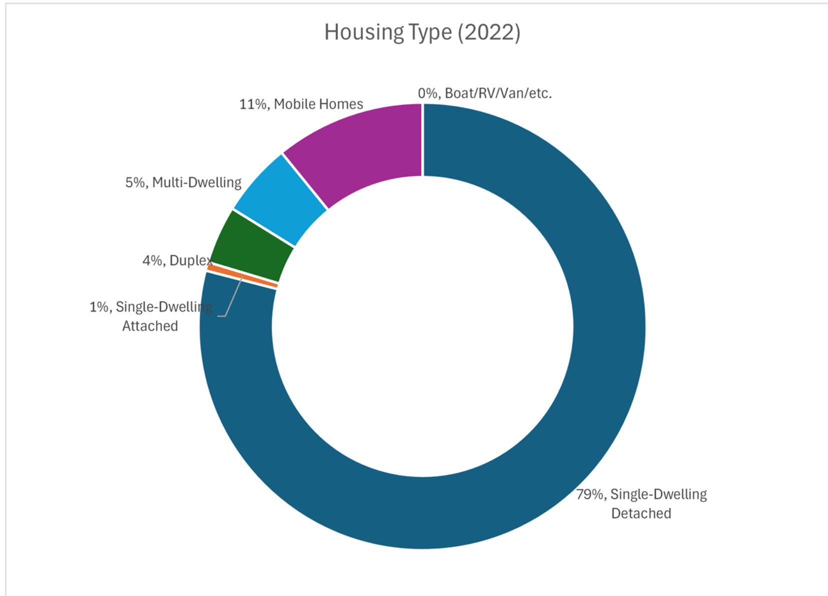
- Strengthening connections between schools, employers, and workforce development organizations should remain a priority.
- Economic development efforts should build upon existing community assets, including agriculture, tourism, and local businesses.
- Providing opportunities for younger residents may improve long-term retention and community vitality.

2.3 Housing Market

Housing availability, affordability, and condition emerged as important issues throughout the planning process.

Participants frequently discussed:

- Limited housing choices.
- Affordability challenges.
- A shortage of workforce housing.
- The need for senior housing options.
- The importance of maintaining existing housing stock.



Most dwelling units in White County are single-dwelling detached, which have a higher average per-unit cost.

Housing needs vary throughout White County. Communities may experience different housing conditions, market pressures, and development opportunities. Nevertheless, participants consistently identified housing as an important component of community vitality and economic competitiveness.

Planning Implications

- Expanding housing choices should remain a countywide priority.
- Existing housing stock should be maintained and improved.
- Communities should pursue housing strategies appropriate to local conditions and infrastructure capacity.

2.4 Infrastructure and Community Facilities

Transportation systems, utilities, broadband infrastructure, parks, public facilities, and emergency services all contribute to the quality of life enjoyed by White County residents.

Participants frequently identified infrastructure investment as an important community need. Roads, bridges, drainage systems, broadband access, and utility infrastructure were commonly discussed during surveys and stakeholder meetings.

Participants also emphasized the importance of maintaining community facilities, supporting public safety services, and investing in recreational amenities that improve quality of life.

Planning Implications

- Infrastructure investments should be coordinated with future growth and development patterns.
- Existing public facilities and infrastructure assets should be maintained and modernized.
- Continued investment in broadband, transportation, and community facilities will support residents, businesses, and local governments.

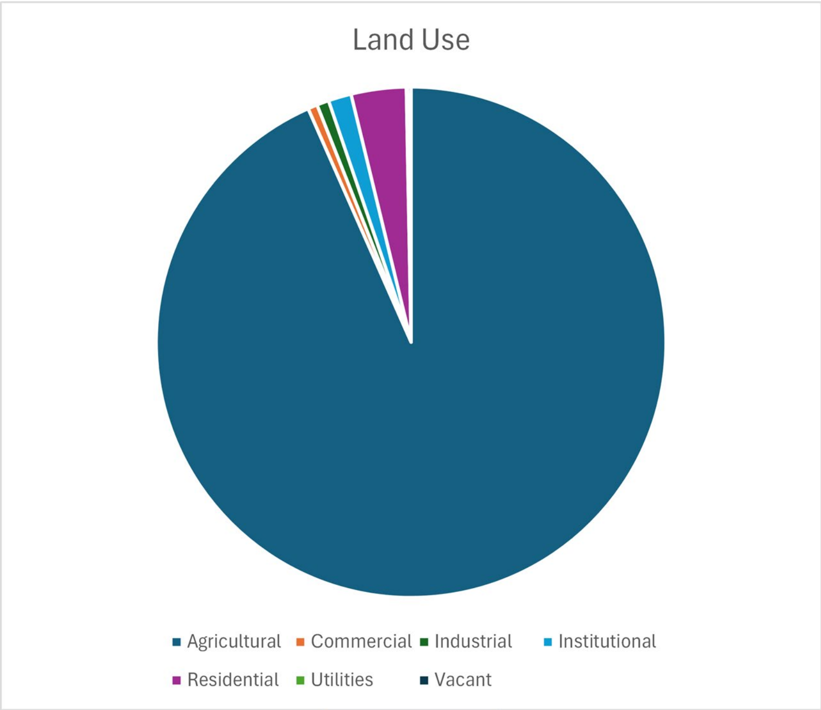
2.5 Agriculture & Natural Resources

Agriculture remains White County's predominant land use and continues to play a central role in the County's economy, landscape, and identity.

Throughout the planning process, agriculture was frequently discussed not only as an economic activity, but also as a defining characteristic of White County's rural heritage and sense of place.

At the same time, participants identified several issues affecting the future of agriculture, including:

- Farmland conversion.
- Farm succession.
- Drainage and water management.
- Changes in agricultural markets.
- Compatibility between agricultural operations and other land uses.



Most of the County – about 93percent -- consists of agricultural uses.

White County's agricultural landscape is supported by extensive natural resources, including productive soils, surface waters, watersheds, wetlands, and groundwater resources. Stewardship of these resources was frequently identified as important to the County's long-term future.

Planning Implications

- Maintaining long-term agricultural viability should remain an important County objective.
- Land use decisions should consider impacts on agricultural productivity and natural resources.
- Water resources, drainage systems, and environmental assets should be managed and protected for future generations.

2.6 Community Perspectives and Emerging Themes

Public engagement revealed a number of recurring themes regarding White County's future. While participants did not agree on every issue, several topics emerged repeatedly throughout surveys, meetings, stakeholder discussions, and other engagement activities.

- **Agriculture Shapes Community Identity:** Many participants described agriculture as fundamental to White County's economy, landscape, heritage, and identity. Agricultural land, family farms, and the County's rural character were frequently cited as assets that should be preserved and strengthened.

- **Strong Communities Matter:** Participants often emphasized the importance of strong towns, schools, civic organizations, churches, and community institutions. Maintaining vibrant communities and fostering local pride were frequently discussed.

- **Quality of Life Influences Retention:** Participants frequently connected quality-of-life amenities—including parks, recreation, housing options, events, and community gathering spaces—to the ability to attract and retain residents.

- **Future Generations Need Opportunity:** Younger participants emphasized the importance of employment opportunities, workforce preparation, recreation, leadership opportunities, and welcoming communities.

- **Stewardship and Local Decision-Making Are Important:** Participants frequently discussed stewardship of farmland, water resources, and community character. Local decision-making, property rights, and responsible growth were also recurring topics.

2.7 Areas of Broad Alignment

Although complete agreement was not present on all topics, several themes appeared consistently throughout public engagement activities.

These themes included:

- Agriculture should remain an important part of White County's future.
- White County's communities and quality of life should be strengthened.
- Infrastructure investment is needed.
- Housing opportunities should expand.
- Future decisions should consider long-term impacts on the County's character and resources.
- White County should prepare for changing economic and demographic conditions.

2.8 Questions for White County's Future

Public engagement also revealed several issues for which significant differences of opinion remain.

These topics include:

- **Utility-Scale Renewable Energy:** Public engagement revealed differing perspectives regarding utility-scale renewable energy development. Questions raised during the planning process included:
  - What role, if any, should utility-scale renewable energy play in White County's future?
  - What constitutes an appropriate scale and location for such facilities?
  - How should farmland preservation, property rights, neighboring landowner concerns, and economic considerations be balanced?
  - How should cumulative impacts to agricultural landscapes, infrastructure, and community character be evaluated?

- **Emerging Industrial and Energy Development:** Participants raised questions regarding emerging industries and technologies, including:
  - Under what circumstances should new industrial or technology-related uses be considered appropriate?
  - How should potential impacts on water resources, infrastructure, public services, and surrounding land uses be evaluated?
  - What standards should be used to assess compatibility with existing agricultural and residential areas?

- **Balancing Property Rights and Neighbor Impacts:** Public engagement highlighted differing perspectives regarding how land use decisions should balance:
  - The rights of property owners to utilize their land;
  - The interests of neighboring landowners;
  - The long-term viability of agricultural operations; and
  - Preservation of rural character and quality of life.

- **Pace and Location of Future Growth:** Participants expressed differing opinions regarding:
  - The amount of future growth White County should encourage;
  - Appropriate locations for new residential, commercial, and industrial development;
  - The extent to which future growth should be directed toward municipalities and existing infrastructure corridors; and
  - The degree to which agricultural land should remain protected from conversion.

Recognition of these differing perspectives does not imply that disagreement should prevent future action. Rather, it reflects the importance of continued public discussion, careful evaluation, and transparent decision-making as White County considers future opportunities and challenges.

3.0 Looking Ahead: Vision and Policy Direction

Chapter 2 described White County as it is today. It also summarized what residents, stakeholders, local officials, and community partners said during the planning process. That input showed many areas of agreement. Agriculture should remain central to White County's future. Existing towns and rural communities should be strengthened. Housing, infrastructure, public services, and quality of life need continued attention. Future decisions should consider long-term effects on farmland, neighborhoods, public costs, and community character.

The planning process also showed that not every issue has a simple answer. Residents expressed different views about renewable energy, emerging industrial uses, property rights, farmland conversion, infrastructure limits, and the pace and location of future growth. These differences are important. A comprehensive plan does not require everyone to agree on every future decision. Instead, it should provide a clear and consistent way to evaluate choices as they arise.

This chapter establishes that policy direction. It begins with a vision statement that describes the future White County wants to work toward. It then identifies community values and guiding principles that should shape future decisions. The chapter concludes with goals and objectives that organize the Plan's recommendations and provide the foundation for later chapters on agriculture, housing, infrastructure, quality of life, economic opportunity, land use, and implementation.

The vision, values, principles, goals, and objectives in this chapter should be used together. They are intended to help elected officials, appointed boards, staff, municipalities, partner organizations, landowners, developers, and residents consider future opportunities in a fair and transparent way. They also help explain what White County wants to protect, where it wants to invest, and how it should evaluate change over time.

The direction in this chapter does not approve or deny any specific project. Rather, it provides the foundation for future decisions. When development proposals, ordinance updates, infrastructure investments, public programs, or community initiatives are considered, they should be reviewed in light of the policy direction established here.

3.1 Vision Statement

White County will remain a community rooted in agriculture, strengthened by thriving towns and rural communities, and prepared to thoughtfully evaluate future opportunities while preserving the qualities that make White County unique.

3.2 Community Values

Throughout the planning process, participants frequently discussed the qualities that make White County a desirable place to live, work, farm, and raise a family. Although perspectives differed on some issues, several broad values emerged repeatedly.

These values are intended to guide future decisions and implementation efforts.

- **Stewardship:** White County's farmland, water resources, natural systems, and community assets should be managed responsibly so that future generations inherit a County that remains productive, resilient, and prosperous.

  Stewardship recognizes both the importance of conserving valued resources and the responsibility to carefully evaluate the long-term consequences of public and private decisions.

- **Community:** Strong communities are essential to White County's future.

  White County values strong towns, neighborhoods, schools, civic institutions, faith communities, and social connections. Community life is strengthened when residents have opportunities to participate, volunteer, gather, and invest in the places they call home.

- **Opportunity:** White County should provide opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds to succeed.

  This includes opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship, housing, education, recreation, and personal growth. Expanding opportunity will help White County attract and retain residents, support local businesses, and strengthen the County's long-term vitality.

- **Independence:** White County values individual initiative, private property rights, and local decision-making.

  Residents expressed a strong desire to retain local control over land use and community development decisions while respecting the rights and interests of neighboring property owners and the broader community.

- **Responsibility:** Public investments and development decisions should be coordinated, transparent, fiscally responsible, and consistent with long-term community goals.

  Responsible decision-making requires careful consideration of costs, benefits, impacts, and tradeoffs.

3.3 Guiding Principles

The following principles are intended to guide future decisions related to growth, development, infrastructure investment, and community development.

Principle 1: Agriculture Comes First

Agriculture is the defining land use of White County and remains central to the County's economy, landscape, heritage, and identity.

Future decisions should consider their potential effects on long-term agricultural productivity, agricultural infrastructure, and the viability of farming operations.

Principle 2: Preserve Rural Character

White County's rural landscapes, open spaces, natural resources, and small-town character are important community assets.

Future growth and development should respect the qualities that contribute to White County's identity and quality of life.

Principle 3: Strengthen Existing Communities

The long-term vitality of White County depends upon strong municipalities, neighborhoods, and rural communities.

Public investments should support existing communities, encourage reinvestment, and strengthen community facilities and services.

Principle 4: Coordinate Growth with Infrastructure

Growth should occur in locations where infrastructure and public services can be provided efficiently and responsibly.

Infrastructure investments and land use decisions should be coordinated to maximize public benefit and minimize unnecessary costs.

Principle 5: Balance Property Rights and Community Impacts

Private property rights are an important community value. At the same time, land use decisions can affect neighboring properties, public infrastructure, agricultural operations, and community character.

Future decisions should seek to balance individual rights with broader community interests and long-term County objectives.

Principle 6: Evaluate Change Using Community Standards

White County will continue to encounter new technologies, industries, and development proposals. The level of planning review should reflect the scale and potential consequences of the decision. Proposals involving unusually large land areas, substantial infrastructure or utility demands, significant off-site effects, or potentially long-term or cumulative changes to land use patterns should receive a correspondingly greater level of review.

The County should evaluate future opportunities using clear, transparent standards that consider:

- Agricultural impacts;
- Infrastructure capacity;
- Natural resource impacts;
- Community character;
- Fiscal implications;
- Public health and safety;
- Compatibility with surrounding land uses;
- Scale, intensity, and duration of potential impacts; and
- Direct and cumulative effects of similar existing and approved development.

Principle 7: Invest in Future Generations

Long-term community prosperity depends upon creating opportunities for younger residents and future generations.

White County should continue investing in education, workforce development, housing, recreation, leadership development, and quality-of-life amenities that encourage people to remain in or return to the County.

3.4 Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives that follow provide the organizational framework for the remainder of this Plan. Each goal reflects recurring themes identified throughout the planning process and is supported by more detailed policies and implementation strategies in subsequent chapters. Goals 1 through 5 each have their own dedicated chapter; Goal 6 is discussed in the implementation chapter (Chapter 10).

The following goals provide the organizing framework for the Comprehensive Plan. They describe the major outcomes White County seeks to achieve over the next ten to twenty years.

These goals are intentionally broad. They are not meant to list every action, policy, or implementation step. Instead, they establish the major areas of policy direction for the Plan. More detailed objectives, policies, and implementation priorities are provided in the chapters that follow.

Each goal corresponds to a major chapter of the Plan:

- **Goal 1** corresponds to Chapter 4: Agriculture, Rural Character, and Resource Stewardship.
- **Goal 2** corresponds to Chapter 5: Housing and Neighborhoods.
- **Goal 3** corresponds to Chapter 6: Infrastructure and Community Facilities.
- **Goal 4** corresponds to Chapter 7: Economic Opportunity and Tourism.
- **Goal 5** corresponds to Chapter 8: Strong Communities and Quality of Life.
- **Goal 6** corresponds to Chapter 10: Implementation, governance, and collaboration.

Goal 1: Preserve and Strengthen Agriculture, Rural Character, and Resource Stewardship

Preserve and strengthen White County's agricultural foundation, rural character, and natural resources while providing a clear and fair framework for evaluating future change.

Agriculture is central to White County's economy, landscape, and identity. This goal recognizes the long-term importance of farmland, farm operations, drainage, soils, water resources, and rural landscapes. It also recognizes that future land use decisions should consider their effects on agricultural viability, natural resources, surrounding properties, public services, and community character.

Goal 2: Strengthen Housing and Neighborhoods

Promote housing opportunities that serve residents at all stages of life while strengthening neighborhoods, towns, and communities throughout White County.

Housing affects workforce retention, senior living, family stability, school enrollment, and economic competitiveness. This goal supports a wider range of housing options while encouraging reinvestment in existing neighborhoods and directing new housing toward locations where roads, utilities, emergency services, and community facilities can support it.

Goal 3: Invest in Infrastructure and Community Facilities

Maintain and improve infrastructure and community facilities in a way that supports residents, businesses, agriculture, public safety, recreation, and future growth while promoting efficient and responsible public investment.

Infrastructure and community facilities shape where growth can occur and how well residents are served. This goal addresses roads, bridges, drainage, utilities, broadband, public safety, parks, recreation, trails, schools, libraries, and other public facilities. It emphasizes maintenance, coordination, and investment decisions that support long-term community needs.

Goal 4: Promote Economic Opportunity and Tourism

Support a resilient and diverse economy that builds on White County's agricultural foundation, strengthens local businesses and communities, expands tourism, and creates opportunities for current and future generations.

White County's economy includes agriculture, manufacturing, small businesses, tourism, recreation, logistics, and emerging industries. This goal supports business retention, entrepreneurship, workforce development, agribusiness, year-round tourism, downtown activity, and responsible evaluation of major economic opportunities. Economic growth should strengthen the County without undermining agriculture, infrastructure, natural resources, or community character.

Goal 5: Strengthen Communities and Quality of Life

Promote healthy, welcoming, and vibrant communities that support residents of all ages, strengthen local identity, and contribute to White County's long-term quality of life.

Strong communities are built through local identity, civic life, recreation, health, wellness, education, culture, youth opportunity, volunteerism, and social connection. This goal recognizes the importance of

White County's towns, rural communities, lake areas, schools, parks, libraries, civic organizations, churches, nonprofits, events, and gathering places.

Goal 6: Foster Effective Governance and Collaboration

Strengthen local decision-making, coordination, communication, and implementation capacity so that White County and its communities can carry out the Comprehensive Plan over time.

Many of White County's priorities require cooperation among the County, municipalities, public agencies, schools, utilities, nonprofit organizations, businesses, landowners, residents, and regional partners. This goal emphasizes shared responsibility, transparent decision-making, ordinance alignment, grant readiness, intergovernmental coordination, and regular monitoring of plan implementation.

PART I:
PROTECT WHAT MATTERS

The planning process revealed that White County residents care deeply about the qualities that define the County and distinguish it from other places. Throughout surveys, meetings, stakeholder discussions, and public comments, participants frequently emphasized the importance of preserving the assets, traditions, and landscapes that have shaped White County's identity over generations.

Agriculture, rural landscapes, natural resources, and community character were consistently identified as among White County's greatest strengths. Participants frequently described these resources not only as economic assets, but also as essential components of the County's heritage, quality of life, and sense of place.

At the same time, White County continues to experience changing demographic, economic, technological, and development conditions. These changes present both opportunities and challenges for the County and its communities. The decisions made today regarding land use, infrastructure, resource management, and future growth will influence White County for decades to come.

Protecting what matters does not mean resisting all change. Rather, it means ensuring that future decisions are guided by a clear understanding of the resources and qualities that residents value most and by a commitment to stewardship for future generations.

The chapters contained in Part I establish the framework for protecting and sustaining White County's most important assets. They focus on preserving the long-term viability of agriculture, maintaining rural character, stewarding natural resources, and providing principles for evaluating emerging land uses and technologies in a manner consistent with community priorities.

Together, these chapters affirm a central theme that emerged throughout the planning process:

> **White County's future should build upon and strengthen the agricultural landscapes, natural resources, and rural character that have long defined the County and continue to shape its identity today.**

4.0 Agriculture, Rural Character, and Resource Stewardship

Agriculture has shaped White County's landscape, economy, and identity for generations. Productive farmland, family farms, rural landscapes, and natural resources remain among the County's greatest assets and distinguish White County from many other communities throughout the region.

Throughout the planning process, agriculture was consistently discussed as more than an economic activity. Participants frequently described agriculture as central to White County's heritage, community identity, and quality of life. Agricultural land, open spaces, drainage systems, and rural landscapes contribute to the County's character while supporting businesses, employment, tourism, and local traditions.

At the same time, agriculture and rural communities continue to face changing conditions. Agricultural markets, demographics, technology, development pressures, infrastructure demands, and emerging land uses all have the potential to influence White County's future.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a framework for protecting and strengthening White County's agricultural foundation while providing guidance for evaluating future change in a manner consistent with community priorities and long-term stewardship.

Chapter Goal

Preserve and strengthen White County's agricultural foundation, rural character, and natural resources while providing a transparent framework for evaluating future change.

4.1 The Importance of Agriculture

Agriculture remains the predominant land use in White County and serves as the foundation of the County's rural economy and identity. Productive farmland and related agricultural enterprises contribute significantly to local employment, agribusiness activity, tax base, and economic output.

Beyond its economic contributions, agriculture influences nearly every aspect of life in White County. The County's agricultural landscape shapes development patterns, preserves open space, supports local businesses, contributes to tourism and recreation, and reinforces the rural character valued by many residents.

Public engagement repeatedly highlighted the importance of maintaining a strong agricultural sector. Participants frequently expressed a desire to preserve farmland, support farmers and agricultural businesses, and ensure that future decisions consider long-term agricultural viability.

White County's future prosperity depends in part upon maintaining an environment in which agriculture can continue to thrive while adapting to changing economic and technological conditions.

4.2 Farmland Preservation and Agricultural Viability

Long-term agricultural viability depends upon maintaining access to productive farmland, supporting agricultural infrastructure, and minimizing unnecessary conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses.

Agricultural land conversion occurs for a variety of reasons, including residential growth, infrastructure expansion, economic development, and changes in agricultural economics. While some land conversion will inevitably occur over time, the cumulative effects of such conversion should be considered when evaluating future development patterns.

Participants frequently discussed concerns related to farmland conversion, farm succession, drainage and water management, encroachment by incompatible land uses, and maintaining the economic viability of farming operations.

White County should continue to support land use patterns and policies that recognize agriculture as a long-term and permanent land use rather than simply a transitional use awaiting future development.

Objectives

Objective 4.2A: Protect the long-term productivity and viability of agricultural land.

Objective 4.2B: Support agricultural businesses, agribusiness, and value-added agricultural opportunities.

Objective 4.2C: Promote compatibility between agricultural operations and non-agricultural land uses.

Objective 4.2D: Support conditions that enable future generations to continue farming in White County.

Policies

Policy 4.2.1: Recognize agriculture as a permanent and desirable land use throughout appropriate areas of White County.

Policy 4.2.2: Encourage future growth to occur in locations where infrastructure and public services already exist or can be efficiently extended.

Policy 4.2.3: Evaluate both direct and cumulative farmland conversion when considering future land use decisions. This evaluation should consider the acreage and agricultural productivity of land proposed for conversion; fragmentation of contiguous agricultural areas; effects on farm operations, access, and drainage; and the amount of agricultural land already converted or committed to non-agricultural uses through existing or approved development. Proposals involving substantial additional conversion should receive greater scrutiny as cumulative farmland conversion increases.

Policy 4.2.4: Support programs and partnerships that strengthen agricultural businesses, support farm succession planning, and encourage value-added agricultural activities.

Policy 4.2.5: Promote compatibility between agricultural operations and adjacent non-agricultural uses through appropriate siting, buffering, and development standards.

Policy 4.2.6: Support maintenance and improvement of drainage infrastructure and other systems essential to agricultural productivity.

Policy 4.2.7: Promote public understanding of the economic, cultural, and environmental importance of agriculture to White County.

4.3 Rural Character

White County's rural landscapes, open spaces, scenic vistas, and small communities contribute significantly to the County's identity and quality of life.

Participants frequently described rural character as one of White County's defining assets. While definitions of rural character varied among participants, recurring themes included open agricultural landscapes, scenic resources, small-town identity, historic settlement patterns, and a strong sense of place.

Rural character is influenced by both public and private decisions. Land use patterns, infrastructure investments, development standards, and resource stewardship all affect the appearance and function of rural areas.

Protecting rural character does not require preventing all change. Rather, it means ensuring that future growth and development occur in ways that respect and reinforce the qualities residents value most.

Objectives

Objective 4.3A: Preserve the rural landscapes and scenic resources that contribute to White County's identity.

Objective 4.3B: Encourage development patterns that are compatible with existing rural land uses and settlement patterns.

Objective 4.3C: Maintain and enhance the distinctive character of White County's rural communities and countryside.

Policies

Policy 4.3.1: Encourage development patterns that maintain the integrity of agricultural landscapes and rural viewsheds.

Policy 4.3.2: Promote compatibility between new development and surrounding rural land uses.

Policy 4.3.3: Encourage context-sensitive site and building design in rural areas.

Policy 4.3.4: Protect significant natural, scenic, and cultural resources where feasible.

Policy 4.3.5: Support planning and development practices that reinforce the unique identity of White County's communities and rural areas.

4.4 Water Resources and Environmental Stewardship

White County's long-term prosperity depends upon responsible stewardship of its natural resources.

Agriculture, communities, businesses, and residents all rely upon healthy watersheds, productive soils, functioning drainage systems, and reliable groundwater resources. Throughout the planning process, participants frequently identified water resources, drainage, and environmental stewardship as important considerations for future decision-making.

White County contains a variety of natural resources that warrant careful stewardship, including prime agricultural soils, rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, floodplains, woodlands, groundwater resources, and drainage infrastructure.

Future land use and development decisions should consider the long-term impacts on these resources.

Objectives

Objective 4.4A: Protect and maintain White County's water resources.
Objective 4.4B: Promote responsible stewardship of natural systems and environmental resources.
Objective 4.4C: Ensure that future development appropriately considers environmental impacts and resource constraints.

Policies

Policy 4.4.1: Protect water resources and encourage practices that maintain water quality and quantity.
Policy 4.4.2: Consider impacts to watersheds, drainage systems, groundwater resources, and environmentally sensitive areas when evaluating future development proposals.
Policy 4.4.3: Encourage development practices that minimize adverse environmental impacts.
Policy 4.4.4: Support conservation and stewardship initiatives undertaken by public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private landowners.
Policy 4.4.5: Encourage coordination among agencies and organizations involved in natural resource management.

4.5 Evaluating Utility-Scale Energy and Emerging Technologies

White County will continue to encounter new technologies, industries, and land uses over time. Utility-scale renewable energy facilities, data centers, advanced manufacturing, energy infrastructure, and other emerging technologies may present both opportunities and challenges.

Public engagement revealed differing perspectives regarding many of these uses. Participants expressed varying opinions regarding their potential economic benefits, impacts on agriculture and rural character, infrastructure demands, environmental considerations, and compatibility with surrounding land uses.

The Comprehensive Plan does not determine the outcome of an individual development application. It may, however, establish a policy posture toward categories of development based upon their relationship to White County's adopted goals for agriculture, rural character, natural-resource stewardship, infrastructure, public safety, and land-use compatibility. Nor can a long-range plan anticipate every future technology or development proposal that may emerge over the next twenty years.

Accordingly, White County should use both clear policy direction and a consistent evaluation framework when considering utility-scale energy facilities and other significant proposals.

White County has already accommodated substantial utility-scale energy development. Future proposals should therefore be evaluated not only on their individual merits, but also in relation to the County's existing and approved utility-scale energy footprint and the cumulative effects of additional development.

White County establishes a precautionary and generally restrictive policy toward additional utility-scale energy development where such development would substantially convert productive agricultural land, fragment agricultural areas, materially alter rural landscapes or scenic resources, create incompatibilities with nearby residences or communities, place substantial demands on infrastructure or emergency services, or materially increase cumulative concentrations of utility-scale infrastructure.

Given the existing extent and visibility of utility-scale wind development in White County, the County establishes a strong policy presumption against additional utility-scale wind energy development where such development would substantially alter rural landscapes, affect the continued use of productive agricultural land, create incompatibilities with nearby residences, or contribute to cumulative concentrations of utility-scale infrastructure.

Additional utility-scale solar development should be strongly discouraged where it would result in substantial conversion or fragmentation of prime or otherwise highly productive agricultural land, materially increase cumulative farmland conversion, or conflict with the preservation intent of the Growth Policy Areas established in Chapter 9.

Utility-scale battery energy storage and similar energy infrastructure should be located and designed so that emergency-response capability, public safety, infrastructure capacity, compatibility with surrounding uses, and long-term site management can be satisfactorily addressed.

The absence of a numerical acreage or generating-capacity threshold in this Plan should not be interpreted as an entitlement to, or a presumption in favor of, additional utility-scale energy development. Existing and approved facilities constitute part of the baseline against which cumulative effects should be evaluated.

Objectives

Objective 4.5A: Provide a consistent and transparent framework for evaluating significant land use and infrastructure proposals.

Objective 4.5B: Ensure that future proposals are evaluated in consideration of their long-term impacts on agriculture, natural resources, infrastructure, and community character.

Objective 4.5C: Promote informed public discussion and transparent decision-making regarding significant development proposals.

Evaluation Framework

Future proposals involving utility-scale energy facilities, emerging industries, or major infrastructure investments should be evaluated in consideration of the following questions:

Agricultural Stewardship

- What impacts could occur to agricultural productivity and long-term agricultural viability?
- Would the proposal contribute to fragmentation or conversion of agricultural land?
- How would the proposal affect surrounding agricultural operations?

Natural Resource Stewardship

- What impacts could occur to groundwater, surface water, drainage systems, soils, or other natural resources?
- Are adequate mitigation measures proposed?

Community Character and Compatibility

- Is the proposed use compatible with surrounding land uses?
- How would the proposal affect rural character, scenic resources, and neighboring properties?

Infrastructure and Public Services

- Can existing infrastructure and public services adequately support the proposal?
- What improvements may be required?

Public Health and Safety

- Are emergency response capabilities adequate?
- What potential public health or safety considerations should be addressed?

Fiscal and Economic Considerations

- What long-term fiscal impacts could occur?
- How would benefits and costs be distributed?

Cumulative Effects

- How does the proposal relate to existing development patterns and previously approved facilities?
- What cumulative impacts may occur if similar facilities continue to develop over time?
- How much agricultural land, infrastructure capacity, or geographic area is already occupied by or committed to existing and approved facilities of a similar type?
- Would the proposal materially expand the geographic extent or intensity of impacts beyond existing development patterns?
- Would additional development change the cumulative effects on agricultural viability, rural character, public infrastructure, public services, or neighboring properties?

Policies

Policy 4.5.1: Apply a precautionary and generally restrictive policy toward additional utility-scale energy development when such development conflicts with the County's objectives for agricultural preservation, rural character, natural-resource stewardship, infrastructure capacity, public safety, or land-use compatibility.

Policy 4.5.2: Apply a strong policy presumption against additional utility-scale wind development where it would substantially expand or intensify impacts on productive farmland, rural landscapes, surrounding residences, or existing concentrations of utility-scale infrastructure.

Policy 4.5.3: Strongly discourage utility-scale solar development that would result in substantial conversion or fragmentation of prime or otherwise highly productive agricultural land or materially increase cumulative farmland conversion.

Policy 4.5.4: Evaluate utility-scale energy and other significant proposals using the evaluation framework in this section, including the cumulative effects of existing and previously approved development.

Policy 4.5.5: Require transparent public engagement and coordination with municipalities, public agencies, utility providers, emergency-response agencies, and other affected entities when considering significant land-use and infrastructure proposals.

Policy 4.5.6: Periodically review and update development regulations as technologies, cumulative development patterns, technical information, and community conditions change.

PART II:
STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

White County's future depends not only on protecting its agricultural heritage and natural resources, but also on maintaining strong, healthy, and resilient communities. Thriving towns, neighborhoods, public institutions, and community organizations are essential to the County's long-term prosperity and quality of life.

Throughout the planning process, participants frequently emphasized the importance of strong communities. Residents discussed the need for additional housing opportunities, investment in infrastructure and public facilities, expanded recreational opportunities, and continued support for schools, public safety services, and civic institutions. Participants also expressed a desire to ensure that White County remains an attractive place for people of all ages to live, work, raise families, and age in place.

Many participants, particularly younger residents, highlighted the importance of creating communities that provide opportunity, foster personal growth, encourage social connections, and offer amenities that support a high quality of life. These themes reinforce the understanding that community vitality extends beyond physical infrastructure alone. Quality places, welcoming neighborhoods, recreational opportunities, cultural amenities, and opportunities for civic engagement all contribute to the strength and resilience of White County's communities.

Like many rural communities, White County faces challenges related to housing availability, demographic change, aging infrastructure, workforce retention, and changing community needs. Addressing these challenges will require continued cooperation among White County, its municipalities, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and residents.

The chapters contained in Part II establish a framework for strengthening White County's communities through strategic investment in housing, infrastructure, community facilities, and quality-of-life amenities. Together, these chapters seek to ensure that White County remains a place where residents can prosper, communities can thrive, and future generations can choose to build their lives.

A recurring theme emerged throughout the planning process:

> **Strong farms require strong communities, and strong communities depend upon continued investment in the people, places, and institutions that make White County home.**

5.0 Housing and Neighborhoods

Housing plays a fundamental role in the health and vitality of White County's communities. The availability, quality, location, and affordability of housing influence economic competitiveness, quality of life, workforce attraction, and the ability of residents to remain in the communities they call home.

Throughout the planning process, housing emerged as one of the most frequently discussed issues. Participants expressed concerns regarding the availability of workforce housing, housing affordability, the condition of existing housing stock, and the limited range of housing options available in many parts of the County. Participants also emphasized the importance of ensuring that younger residents, families, workers, and older adults have opportunities to find housing that meets their needs.

White County's housing needs are diverse. Some residents desire to remain on farms or in rural areas, while others prefer housing within municipalities or near community services and amenities. Likewise, housing needs change over time as households age, family sizes change, and economic circumstances evolve.

Addressing housing needs will require continued collaboration among White County, municipalities, developers, employers, nonprofit organizations, and residents. Because housing markets and community conditions vary throughout the County, no single strategy will address every local need. Instead, the County should support a variety of housing solutions appropriate to local conditions, infrastructure availability, and community priorities.

This chapter establishes a framework for expanding housing opportunities, maintaining existing neighborhoods, and ensuring that White County remains a place where residents of all ages and incomes can find housing that meets their needs.

Chapter Goal

Promote housing opportunities that support residents at all stages of life while strengthening neighborhoods and communities throughout White County.

5.1 Housing Choice and Availability

A diverse housing supply provides residents with the flexibility to remain in White County as their housing needs change over time. A range of housing choices can also support workforce attraction, economic development, and community vitality.

Public engagement frequently highlighted concerns regarding limited housing availability, particularly for young adults, families, workers, and older residents seeking to downsize or age in place. Participants noted that many communities offer relatively few alternatives to traditional single-family detached housing.

Communities throughout White County should support housing choices that respond to local market conditions while remaining compatible with community character and available infrastructure.

Objectives

Objective 5.1A: Encourage a variety of housing types that serve residents at different stages of life.

Objective 5.1B: Expand housing opportunities that support workforce attraction and retention.
Objective 5.1C: Promote housing development in locations served by existing or planned infrastructure.

Policies

Policy 5.1.1: Encourage a diverse range of housing types, including single-family, duplex, townhouse, and appropriately-scaled multi-family housing where infrastructure and community services are available.
Policy 5.1.2: Direct higher-density residential development toward municipalities and areas served by public infrastructure.
Policy 5.1.3: Support housing development that responds to identified local housing needs and market conditions.
Policy 5.1.4: Promote residential development patterns that are compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and land uses.
Policy 5.1.5: Coordinate housing initiatives with economic development and workforce development efforts.

5.2 Workforce Housing

Housing availability influences the ability of employers to attract and retain workers. Participants frequently identified workforce housing as an important issue affecting White County's long-term economic competitiveness.

A shortage of housing options affordable to workers can limit employment opportunities, increase commuting distances, and make it more difficult for younger residents and families to remain in the County.

White County should work collaboratively with municipalities, employers, developers, and regional partners to identify opportunities to expand workforce housing options.

Objectives

Objective 5.2A: Support housing opportunities for the County's current and future workforce.
Objective 5.2B: Encourage partnerships that increase the supply of workforce housing.

Policies

Policy 5.2.1: Support housing initiatives that improve the availability of housing for workers employed in White County.
Policy 5.2.2: Encourage collaboration among employers, municipalities, developers, and housing organizations to address workforce housing needs.
Policy 5.2.3: Promote housing development in locations that provide access to employment centers, services, and community amenities.

5.3 Housing for an Aging Population

White County, like many rural communities, is experiencing demographic changes associated with an aging population. Many residents expressed a desire to remain in their homes and communities as they age, while others identified a need for additional senior housing options.

Providing opportunities for residents to age in place can strengthen communities, support social connections, and improve quality of life for older adults.

Housing options for older adults may include smaller homes, accessible housing, senior-oriented housing developments, assisted living facilities, and housing located near services and community amenities.

Objectives

Objective 5.3A: Provide opportunities for residents to remain in White County throughout all stages of life.

Objective 5.3B: Support housing options that allow residents to age in place.

Policies

Policy 5.3.1: Encourage housing options that meet the needs of older adults and residents with changing mobility needs.

Policy 5.3.2: Promote accessible housing design and universal design principles where appropriate.

Policy 5.3.3: Support housing locations that provide convenient access to services, healthcare, and community facilities.

5.4 Neighborhood Stability and Housing Quality

Existing neighborhoods and housing stock represent significant community assets. Maintaining and reinvesting in existing housing can strengthen neighborhoods, preserve community character, and improve quality of life.

Participants frequently emphasized the importance of maintaining existing homes and neighborhoods while addressing issues related to housing condition, vacancy, and disinvestment where present.

Continued investment in existing neighborhoods can help communities remain attractive, support property values, and reduce pressure for unnecessary outward expansion.

Objectives

Objective 5.4A: Maintain and improve the quality of existing housing stock.

Objective 5.4B: Promote stable, attractive, and well-maintained neighborhoods.

Policies

Policy 5.4.1: Encourage rehabilitation, maintenance, and reinvestment in existing housing.

Policy 5.4.2: Support programs and partnerships that assist homeowners with housing maintenance and rehabilitation.

Policy 5.4.3: Encourage local efforts to address vacant, abandoned, or deteriorated properties.

Policy 5.4.4: Promote neighborhood improvement initiatives that strengthen community identity and quality of life.

5.5 Residential Development Patterns

Future residential development should occur in a manner that supports efficient infrastructure investment, protects agricultural resources, and reinforces existing communities.

While rural residential living remains an important component of White County's character, dispersed residential development can affect agricultural operations, increase infrastructure costs, and contribute to farmland fragmentation.

The County should encourage residential development patterns that balance individual housing preferences with broader community goals related to agriculture, infrastructure, and community development.

Objectives

Objective 5.5A: Coordinate residential growth with infrastructure availability and community services.

Objective 5.5B: Promote development patterns that minimize conflicts between residential and agricultural land uses.

Objective 5.5C: Encourage efficient and fiscally responsible growth patterns.

Policies

Policy 5.5.1: Encourage new residential development in or adjacent to municipalities and areas served by existing infrastructure.

Policy 5.5.2: Consider impacts on agricultural land and farming operations when evaluating residential development proposals.

Policy 5.5.3: Promote residential development patterns that minimize unnecessary fragmentation of agricultural land.

Policy 5.5.4: Encourage coordination among White County and municipalities regarding future residential growth patterns.

5.6 Housing Implementation Priorities

The following priorities should guide housing-related implementation efforts during the planning period:

1. Evaluate local housing needs on a periodic basis to identify changing market conditions and housing gaps.
2. Strengthen partnerships among White County, municipalities, employers, developers, and housing organizations.
3. Encourage housing development that supports workforce retention and economic competitiveness.
4. Promote reinvestment in existing housing stock and neighborhoods.
5. Coordinate future residential growth with infrastructure capacity and agricultural preservation objectives.

The recommendations contained in this chapter are intended to support housing opportunities that meet the needs of current and future residents while preserving the qualities that make White County's communities attractive places to live.

6.0 Infrastructure and Community Facilities

Infrastructure and community facilities are essential to White County's quality of life, economic competitiveness, and long-term sustainability. Roads, bridges, utilities, broadband networks, parks, public buildings, schools, emergency services, and other community facilities support residents, businesses, agricultural operations, and visitors throughout the County.

Throughout the planning process, participants consistently identified infrastructure investment and maintenance as important priorities. Roads and bridges, drainage infrastructure, broadband access, utility capacity, and public facilities were frequently discussed as necessary investments to support existing residents while preparing for future opportunities.

Infrastructure decisions also influence patterns of growth and development. The location and capacity of transportation systems, utilities, and public services help determine where future growth can occur efficiently and where long-term agricultural preservation should remain the priority. Coordinating infrastructure investments with land use decisions can improve public service delivery, reduce long-term costs, and promote fiscally responsible growth.

White County's infrastructure network is extensive and serves a diverse geography that includes municipalities, unincorporated communities, agricultural areas, and recreational destinations. Maintaining and improving this network will require continued cooperation among White County, municipalities, utility providers, school corporations, state agencies, and other public and private partners.

This chapter establishes a framework for maintaining and enhancing infrastructure and community facilities in a manner that supports residents, strengthens communities, and reinforces the County's long-term vision.

Chapter Goal

Maintain and improve infrastructure and community facilities in a manner that supports residents, businesses, agriculture, and future growth while promoting efficient and fiscally responsible investment.

6.1 Transportation Infrastructure

Transportation infrastructure supports economic activity, agricultural operations, emergency services, school transportation, tourism, and everyday travel throughout White County.

White County's transportation network includes state highways, county roads, municipal streets, rail corridors, airports, trails, and local transportation services. Because of the County's rural nature, the roadway network remains particularly important for residents, businesses, and agricultural producers.

Participants frequently identified roadway maintenance, bridge improvements, safety, drainage, and continued investment in transportation infrastructure as important priorities.

Transportation investments should support existing communities, agricultural operations, economic development, and safe travel for all users.

Objectives

Objective 6.1A: Maintain and improve the County's transportation network.
Objective 6.1B: Support safe and efficient movement of people, goods, and agricultural products.
Objective 6.1C: Coordinate transportation investments with future growth and development patterns.

Policies

Policy 6.1.1: Prioritize maintenance and preservation of existing transportation infrastructure.
Policy 6.1.2: Coordinate transportation improvements with anticipated growth areas, economic development initiatives, and community needs.
Policy 6.1.3: Consider the needs of agricultural equipment and freight movement when planning transportation improvements.
Policy 6.1.4: Support transportation improvements that enhance safety for all users.
Policy 6.1.5: Encourage coordination among White County, municipalities, INDOT, and regional partners regarding transportation planning and investment.

6.2 Utilities and Public Infrastructure

Reliable utility infrastructure is essential to maintaining public health, supporting economic development, and accommodating future growth.

White County is served by a variety of public and private utility providers delivering water, wastewater, electric, natural gas, telecommunications, and other essential services. The availability and capacity of these systems vary throughout the County.

Future development should occur in locations where adequate utility infrastructure exists or can be efficiently extended.

Objectives

Objective 6.2A: Coordinate future growth with utility capacity and infrastructure availability.
Objective 6.2B: Promote efficient and cost-effective extension of utility infrastructure.
Objective 6.2C: Support reliable and resilient utility systems.

Policies

Policy 6.2.1: Coordinate land use decisions with the availability of water, wastewater, electric, and other utility services.
Policy 6.2.2: Encourage development in areas where utility infrastructure already exists or can be efficiently provided.
Policy 6.2.3: Promote intergovernmental coordination regarding utility planning and infrastructure expansion.
Policy 6.2.4: Support utility system improvements necessary to maintain reliable service and accommodate appropriate growth.
Policy 6.2.5: Consider long-term operation and maintenance costs when evaluating infrastructure expansion.

6.3 Broadband and Telecommunications

Access to reliable, high-speed broadband has become essential for education, healthcare, business development, agriculture, public safety, and quality of life.

Participants frequently identified broadband access as an important issue, particularly in rural areas of the County. Expanding broadband availability can support remote work, precision agriculture, workforce development, entrepreneurship, and educational opportunities.

Broadband infrastructure should be viewed as an essential component of White County's long-term competitiveness.

Objectives

Objective 6.3A: Expand access to reliable high-speed broadband throughout White County.

Objective 6.3B: Support broadband infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of residents, businesses, farms, and institutions.

Policies

Policy 6.3.1: Support public and private efforts to expand broadband access throughout White County.

Policy 6.3.2: Encourage collaboration among service providers, local governments, and regional partners to improve broadband service.

Policy 6.3.3: Promote broadband infrastructure that supports education, healthcare, agriculture, and economic development.

6.4 Public Safety and Emergency Services

Public safety services are essential to maintaining quality of life and supporting future growth.

White County relies upon a network of fire departments, law enforcement agencies, emergency medical providers, emergency management organizations, and other public safety partners. Maintaining adequate staffing, equipment, facilities, and response capabilities will remain important as community needs evolve.

Participants frequently emphasized the importance of supporting emergency services and ensuring that future development does not adversely affect emergency response capabilities.

Objectives

Objective 6.4A: Maintain effective public safety and emergency response services.

Objective 6.4B: Ensure that future development is coordinated with emergency service capabilities.

Policies

Policy 6.4.1: Support continued investment in public safety facilities, equipment, and personnel.

Policy 6.4.2: Consider emergency response capabilities when evaluating significant development proposals.

Policy 6.4.3: Encourage coordination among public safety agencies regarding future planning, training, and capital improvements.

Policy 6.4.4: Support emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation efforts.

6.5 Parks, Recreation, and Trails

Parks, recreation facilities, trails, and open spaces contribute significantly to quality of life, public health, tourism, and community identity.

Participants frequently expressed interest in expanding recreational opportunities, improving parks and trails, and providing amenities that appeal to residents of all ages. Recreation assets also support tourism and economic development efforts throughout White County.

Future investments should seek to expand recreational opportunities while strengthening connections among communities and destinations.

Objectives

Objective 6.5A: Expand and improve recreational opportunities throughout White County.
Objective 6.5B: Promote access to parks, trails, and recreational amenities for residents and visitors.
Objective 6.5C: Support recreation investments that strengthen quality of life and tourism.

Policies

Policy 6.5.1: Support maintenance and enhancement of existing parks and recreational facilities.
Policy 6.5.2: Encourage development of trail connections among communities, parks, schools, and recreational destinations where feasible.
Policy 6.5.3: Promote recreational opportunities that serve residents of all ages and abilities.
Policy 6.5.4: Encourage coordination among local governments, park providers, schools, and nonprofit organizations regarding recreational planning.

6.6 Community Facilities and Public Institutions

Schools, libraries, government facilities, healthcare providers, community centers, and other public institutions play a critical role in community life.

Participants frequently identified schools, civic organizations, and community institutions as important assets that contribute to White County's identity and quality of life.

Continued investment in community facilities and institutions will help ensure that White County remains a desirable place to live and work.

Objectives

Objective 6.6A: Maintain and improve community facilities and public institutions.
Objective 6.6B: Promote coordination among agencies and organizations providing public services.

Policies

Policy 6.6.1: Support continued investment in schools, libraries, government facilities, and other community institutions.
Policy 6.6.2: Encourage collaboration among local governments, educational institutions, healthcare providers, and nonprofit organizations.

Policy 6.6.3: Coordinate public facility planning with anticipated demographic and development trends.

6.7 Infrastructure and Community Facilities Implementation Priorities

The following priorities should guide infrastructure and community facility investments during the planning period:

1. Maintain and modernize existing transportation, utility, and public facility infrastructure.
2. Coordinate infrastructure investments with future growth and development patterns.
3. Expand broadband access throughout the County.
4. Continue supporting public safety agencies and emergency response capabilities.
5. Enhance parks, recreation facilities, and trail connections.
6. Strengthen partnerships among White County, municipalities, utilities, schools, and other service providers.
7. Pursue state, federal, and private funding opportunities to support infrastructure and facility improvements.

The recommendations contained in this chapter recognize that infrastructure and community facilities are long-term investments that influence White County's future for generations. Coordinated, strategic, and fiscally responsible investment will help ensure that residents, businesses, and communities continue to thrive.

7.0 Economic Opportunity and Tourism

A strong and resilient economy is essential to White County's long-term prosperity and quality of life. Economic opportunity supports residents, strengthens communities, sustains public services, and provides the resources necessary to maintain the County's infrastructure and community facilities.

White County's economy has long been shaped by agriculture and related industries. Manufacturing, tourism, healthcare, education, retail, and service industries also contribute significantly to employment and economic activity throughout the County. Together, these sectors provide a diverse economic base that supports residents and communities throughout White County.

Throughout the planning process, participants expressed a desire to expand economic opportunities while preserving the qualities that make White County unique. Public engagement frequently emphasized the importance of supporting local businesses, creating opportunities for younger residents, strengthening workforce development, and building upon existing economic assets rather than pursuing growth for its own sake.

Participants also expressed interest in strengthening tourism, expanding recreational opportunities, supporting entrepreneurship, and preparing for changing economic conditions. Many participants emphasized that future economic development should complement White County's agricultural foundation, strengthen existing communities, and reinforce community character.

White County will continue to experience changing economic conditions over time. New industries, technologies, and business opportunities will emerge, while demographic changes, workforce trends, and broader economic forces will continue to influence local conditions. The County's long-term success will depend upon its ability to remain adaptable, support local businesses and entrepreneurs, and thoughtfully evaluate future opportunities.

This chapter establishes a framework for promoting economic opportunity while ensuring that future economic development supports White County's agricultural heritage, strengthens communities, and contributes to long-term prosperity.

Chapter Goal

Support a resilient and diverse economy that builds upon White County's agricultural foundation, strengthens communities, and creates opportunities for current and future generations.

7.1 Agriculture as an Economic Foundation

Agriculture remains the cornerstone of White County's economy. Agricultural production, agribusiness, agricultural services, and related industries generate employment, support local businesses, and contribute significantly to the County's economic base.

The long-term viability of agriculture is therefore closely tied to White County's broader economic future. Maintaining productive farmland, supporting agricultural businesses, and encouraging value-added agricultural activities can strengthen the local economy while reinforcing the county's identity.

Participants frequently emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong agricultural economy and supporting future generations of farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs.

Objectives

Objective 7.1A: Support the continued viability and competitiveness of agriculture and agribusiness.
Objective 7.1B: Encourage economic activities that add value to agricultural production.
Objective 7.1C: Promote diversification within the agricultural economy.

Policies

Policy 7.1.1: Support businesses and industries that strengthen White County's agricultural economy.
Policy 7.1.2: Encourage value-added agricultural enterprises, agricultural processing, and agritourism opportunities.
Policy 7.1.3: Support efforts that improve the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of agricultural operations.
Policy 7.1.4: Promote collaboration among agricultural producers, educational institutions, and economic development organizations.

7.2 Business Development and Entrepreneurship

Locally owned businesses, entrepreneurs, and small businesses play an important role in White County's economy and community life. These businesses create jobs, provide essential goods and services, and contribute to community identity.

Participants frequently expressed support for strengthening local businesses, encouraging entrepreneurship, and creating opportunities for business expansion.

Supporting entrepreneurship and small business development can help diversify the local economy while building upon White County's existing strengths.

Objectives

Objective 7.2A: Support entrepreneurship and small business development.
Objective 7.2B: Encourage business retention, expansion, and investment.
Objective 7.2C: Strengthen local and regional economic partnerships.

Policies

Policy 7.2.1: Support programs and partnerships that assist entrepreneurs and small businesses.
Policy 7.2.2: Encourage retention and expansion of existing businesses.
Policy 7.2.3: Promote coordination among economic development organizations, local governments, educational institutions, and business leaders.
Policy 7.2.4: Encourage reinvestment in existing commercial areas and downtown business districts.

7.3 Workforce Development and Talent Retention

The availability of a skilled workforce is essential to White County's economic competitiveness. Employers throughout the County depend upon the ability to attract, retain, and develop workers with the skills necessary to meet changing economic demands.

Public engagement consistently highlighted concerns regarding workforce attraction and retention, particularly among younger residents and families. Participants frequently discussed the importance of creating opportunities that encourage people to remain in or return to White County.

Students and younger residents emphasized the importance of internships, job-shadowing opportunities, workforce preparation, leadership development, and exposure to career opportunities within White County.

Objectives

Objective 7.3A: Strengthen workforce development opportunities for residents of all ages.
Objective 7.3B: Encourage partnerships that connect education, workforce development, and employers.
Objective 7.3C: Create opportunities that encourage younger residents to remain in or return to White County.

Policies

Policy 7.3.1: Support partnerships among schools, employers, higher education institutions, and workforce development organizations.
Policy 7.3.2: Encourage internships, apprenticeships, job-shadowing, and other career exploration opportunities.
Policy 7.3.3: Promote educational and workforce initiatives aligned with local and regional employment needs.
Policy 7.3.4: Support efforts to attract and retain young professionals, families, and skilled workers.

7.4 Tourism and Recreation Economy

Tourism contributes significantly to White County's economy and quality of life. The County's lakes, recreational resources, agricultural landscapes, historic communities, festivals, and community events attract visitors from throughout the region.

Participants frequently identified tourism as an important economic asset and expressed interest in expanding tourism opportunities while preserving community character and natural resources.

White County's tourism economy benefits from a diverse range of attractions and experiences. Continued collaboration among tourism organizations, local governments, businesses, and community organizations will be essential to maximizing these opportunities.

Objectives

Objective 7.4A: Strengthen White County's tourism and recreation economy.
Objective 7.4B: Promote year-round tourism opportunities.
Objective 7.4C: Encourage tourism activities that complement community character and natural resources.

Policies

Policy 7.4.1: Support collaborative efforts to strengthen White County's tourism economy.
Policy 7.4.2: Encourage tourism initiatives that highlight White County's agricultural heritage, recreational assets, natural resources, and community character.
Policy 7.4.3: Support development of recreational amenities and experiences that attract visitors while serving residents.
Policy 7.4.4: Encourage coordination among tourism organizations, economic development agencies, local governments, and community partners.
Policy 7.4.5: Promote agritourism, heritage tourism, outdoor recreation, and lake-related tourism opportunities.

7.5 Evaluating Emerging Economic Opportunities

Economic conditions, technologies, and industries will continue to evolve over time. White County may encounter opportunities involving new industries, advanced manufacturing, technology-based businesses, energy infrastructure, or other emerging economic sectors.

Public engagement revealed differing perspectives regarding certain forms of future economic development, particularly where proposals could affect agriculture, natural resources, infrastructure, or community character.

The Comprehensive Plan does not attempt to identify every future industry or economic opportunity that may emerge. Instead, it establishes a framework for evaluating future opportunities in a manner consistent with White County's long-term vision.

Future economic opportunities should be considered in relation to:

- Their compatibility with surrounding land uses;
- Potential impacts on agricultural productivity and rural character;
- Infrastructure and public service requirements;
- Water resource and environmental considerations;
- Workforce needs and local employment opportunities;
- Fiscal impacts and long-term public costs;
- Community priorities and quality of life.

Where an economic development proposal qualifies as a major land use proposal because of its scale, intensity, land consumption, infrastructure or utility demands, or potential off-site effects, it should also be evaluated under the Major Land Use Proposal framework in Section 9.4. Economic and fiscal benefits should be considered together with, rather than separately from, agricultural, infrastructure, natural-resource, public-service, compatibility, and community impacts.

Objectives

Objective 7.5A: Prepare White County to respond to changing economic conditions and future opportunities.

Objective 7.5B: Evaluate emerging economic opportunities using transparent and consistent standards.

Objective 7.5C: Ensure that future economic development supports White County's long-term vision.

Policies

Policy 7.5.1: Evaluate significant economic development opportunities in consideration of agricultural, environmental, infrastructure, fiscal, and community impacts.

Policy 7.5.2: Encourage transparent public discussion regarding significant economic development proposals.

Policy 7.5.3: Promote economic development that complements White County's agricultural foundation and community character.

Policy 7.5.4: Support economic diversification that strengthens long-term community resilience.

7.6 Economic Opportunity and Tourism Implementation Priorities

The following priorities should guide economic development efforts during the planning period:

1. Support and strengthen White County's agricultural economy.
2. Encourage entrepreneurship, small business development, and reinvestment in existing commercial areas.
3. Strengthen partnerships among schools, employers, workforce organizations, and economic development agencies.
4. Expand opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, and workforce development.
5. Promote year-round tourism opportunities and strengthen coordination among tourism partners.
6. Evaluate future economic opportunities using transparent standards consistent with community priorities.
7. Continue building a resilient and diversified economy that supports residents, communities, and future generations.

The recommendations contained in this chapter recognize that White County's long-term prosperity depends upon balancing economic opportunity with stewardship, community values, and responsible decision-making. By building upon existing strengths while thoughtfully preparing for future opportunities, White County can remain economically competitive while preserving the qualities that define the County.

8.0 Strong Communities and Quality of Life

White County's future depends not only upon its agricultural economy, infrastructure systems, and natural resources, but also upon the strength of its communities and the quality of life experienced by residents.

Strong communities are built upon relationships, institutions, traditions, and places. Schools, churches, civic organizations, local events, parks, historic downtowns, volunteerism, and community pride all contribute to the social fabric that makes White County a desirable place to live, work, raise a family, and retire.

Throughout the planning process, participants frequently identified White County's people, community spirit, and quality of life as among the County's greatest strengths. Residents described White County as a place characterized by strong relationships, volunteerism, local pride, and a willingness to work together to address community challenges.

Participants also emphasized the importance of investing in places and programs that support residents of all ages. Recreation, community gathering spaces, cultural amenities, local events, and opportunities for youth engagement were frequently identified as important community priorities. Younger residents, in particular, emphasized the importance of welcoming communities, opportunities for personal growth, creativity, leadership development, and activities that encourage people to remain in or return to White County.

As White County evolves, continued investment in quality of life will be essential to attracting and retaining residents, supporting economic development, and strengthening community identity.

This chapter establishes a framework for strengthening White County's communities, enhancing quality of life, and ensuring that residents of all ages continue to find opportunity, connection, and a sense of belonging within the County.

Chapter Goal

Promote healthy, welcoming, and vibrant communities that support residents of all ages and contribute to White County's long-term quality of life.

8.1 Community Identity and Sense of Place

Each of White County's communities possesses a distinct identity shaped by its history, people, institutions, traditions, and physical environment. Community identity contributes to civic pride, strengthens social connections, and helps distinguish White County from other communities.

Participants frequently emphasized the importance of preserving community character while continuing to invest in placemaking and community improvements.

A strong sense of place can encourage reinvestment, strengthen tourism, improve quality of life, and foster community pride.

Objectives

Objective 8.1A: Preserve and strengthen the unique identity of White County and its communities.
Objective 8.1B: Promote placemaking initiatives that enhance community character and civic pride.
Objective 8.1C: Support efforts that celebrate White County's heritage, traditions, and local culture.

Policies

Policy 8.1.1: Support placemaking initiatives that strengthen community identity and improve public spaces.
Policy 8.1.2: Encourage preservation and enhancement of features that contribute to local character and sense of place.
Policy 8.1.3: Promote community events, festivals, and traditions that foster civic pride and social connection.
Policy 8.1.4: Support efforts to preserve and interpret White County's cultural and historical resources.

8.2 Strong Towns and Community Centers

White County's municipalities, unincorporated communities, and neighborhood centers serve as focal points for commerce, social interaction, public services, and community life.

Healthy downtowns, business districts, schools, churches, and community gathering places contribute significantly to quality of life and community vitality.

Participants frequently emphasized the importance of maintaining strong communities and investing in places where residents gather and interact.

Continued reinvestment in these community centers will help strengthen local economies and support long-term community vitality.

Objectives

Objective 8.2A: Support vibrant municipalities, downtowns, and community centers.
Objective 8.2B: Encourage reinvestment in community gathering places and civic spaces.
Objective 8.2C: Strengthen the social and economic vitality of White County's communities.

Policies

Policy 8.2.1: Support efforts to maintain and revitalize downtowns, commercial districts, and community centers.
Policy 8.2.2: Encourage investment in public spaces that promote community interaction and civic engagement.
Policy 8.2.3: Promote development and redevelopment patterns that reinforce existing communities.
Policy 8.2.4: Encourage cooperation among communities to strengthen regional identity and shared opportunities.

8.3 Recreation, Health, and Wellness

Access to recreation, parks, trails, and wellness opportunities contributes to both individual health and overall community quality of life.

Participants frequently identified recreational opportunities and community amenities as important factors influencing where people choose to live and remain. Recreation assets also support tourism, economic development, and social interaction.

White County should continue to support recreational opportunities that serve residents of all ages and abilities.

Objectives

Objective 8.3A: Expand recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.
Objective 8.3B: Promote healthy lifestyles and community wellness.
Objective 8.3C: Improve access to recreational amenities throughout White County.

Policies

Policy 8.3.1: Support continued investment in parks, recreation facilities, trails, and open spaces.
Policy 8.3.2: Encourage recreational opportunities that serve residents of all ages, interests, and abilities.
Policy 8.3.3: Promote partnerships among local governments, schools, nonprofit organizations, and community groups to expand recreational opportunities.
Policy 8.3.4: Encourage community design and programming that promotes physical activity and healthy lifestyles.

8.4 Arts, Culture, and Historic Resources

White County's history, traditions, and cultural resources contribute significantly to community identity and quality of life. Historic buildings, landscapes, local traditions, arts organizations, museums, and cultural events strengthen the County's sense of place and provide opportunities for education, tourism, and community engagement.

Participants frequently expressed appreciation for White County's heritage and community traditions and emphasized the importance of preserving these assets for future generations.

Objectives

Objective 8.4A: Preserve and celebrate White County's historic and cultural resources.

Objective 8.4B: Support arts, culture, and heritage activities that enhance quality of life and community identity.

Policies

Policy 8.4.1: Support preservation and adaptive reuse of historically significant buildings and sites where feasible.

Policy 8.4.2: Encourage interpretation and promotion of White County's history, heritage, and cultural assets.

Policy 8.4.3: Support arts and cultural activities that strengthen community identity and tourism.

Policy 8.4.4: Encourage partnerships among cultural organizations, schools, local governments, and community groups.

8.5 Investing in Future Generations

The long-term vitality of White County depends upon its ability to attract, retain, and support younger residents and families.

Throughout the planning process, students and younger residents identified several recurring themes regarding White County's future. Participants emphasized the importance of employment opportunities, internships, job-shadowing experiences, recreation, welcoming communities, leadership opportunities, creativity, and community investment.

Younger residents also expressed a strong desire to contribute to the future of White County and emphasized the importance of listening to younger voices as communities plan for the future.

Supporting future generations requires continued investment in education, workforce development, leadership opportunities, recreation, and community engagement.

Objectives

Objective 8.5A: Create opportunities that encourage younger residents and families to remain in or return to White County.

Objective 8.5B: Promote youth engagement, leadership development, and civic participation.

Objective 8.5C: Support educational and workforce opportunities that prepare future generations for success.

Policies

Policy 8.5.1: Support partnerships among schools, employers, and community organizations that provide internships, job-shadowing, and career exploration opportunities.

Policy 8.5.2: Encourage opportunities for youth participation in community planning, leadership, and civic activities.

Policy 8.5.3: Promote amenities, programs, and events that appeal to younger residents and families.

Policy 8.5.4: Support efforts to strengthen connections among education, workforce development, and community organizations.

8.6 Welcoming and Inclusive Communities

Participants frequently described White County as a place characterized by strong relationships, volunteerism, and a willingness to help one another. Maintaining welcoming communities that foster respect, participation, and civic engagement will be important to White County's long-term success.

Strong communities are built when residents feel connected, valued, and able to participate in community life.

Objectives

Objective 8.6A: Promote welcoming communities that encourage participation and social connection.

Objective 8.6B: Strengthen civic engagement and volunteerism.

Objective 8.6C: Foster collaboration and mutual support among residents, organizations, and institutions.

Policies

Policy 8.6.1: Support community initiatives that strengthen social connections and civic engagement.

Policy 8.6.2: Encourage volunteerism and participation in community organizations and activities.

Policy 8.6.3: Promote opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds to participate in community life.

Policy 8.6.4: Support partnerships that strengthen community capacity and local leadership.

8.7 Strong Communities and Quality of Life Implementation Priorities

The following priorities should guide community development and quality-of-life initiatives during the planning period:

1. Strengthen community identity, placemaking, and civic pride initiatives.
2. Continue investing in downtowns, community centers, and public gathering spaces.
3. Expand recreational opportunities and community amenities.
4. Preserve and promote White County's historic and cultural resources.
5. Increase opportunities for youth engagement, leadership development, and workforce preparation.
6. Foster welcoming communities and strengthen social connections.
7. Encourage partnerships among local governments, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and civic groups.

The recommendations contained in this chapter recognize that White County's greatest asset is its people. Continued investment in community life, civic institutions, and quality-of-life amenities will help ensure that White County remains a place where residents can thrive and future generations choose to call home.

PART III:
PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

White County has long demonstrated an ability to adapt to changing economic, social, and technological conditions while maintaining the agricultural heritage and rural character that define the County. As White County looks to the future, continued success will depend upon its ability to thoughtfully evaluate opportunities, respond to changing conditions, and make informed decisions that reflect community priorities.

Throughout the planning process, participants frequently discussed the importance of preparing for future change while remaining grounded in the values and assets that make White County unique. Residents expressed interest in expanding economic opportunities, supporting local businesses, strengthening tourism, and ensuring that future generations have reasons to live, work, and invest in White County. At the same time, participants emphasized the importance of ensuring that future growth and development occur in a manner that respects agriculture, protects natural resources, and reinforces community character.

Like many communities, White County will continue to experience change over the coming decades. Economic conditions will evolve, demographic trends will shift, technologies will emerge, and new development opportunities will arise. Some of these changes may present opportunities to strengthen the County's economy and quality of life, while others may create challenges requiring careful consideration and community discussion.

Preparing for the future does not mean attempting to predict every specific opportunity or challenge that may emerge. Nor does it mean assuming that growth or change should occur in all places or under all circumstances. Rather, preparation involves establishing a clear framework for evaluating future opportunities, directing growth to appropriate locations, and ensuring that public and private decisions are consistent with the County's long-term vision.

The chapters contained in Part III establish that framework. They focus on strengthening White County's economy, supporting tourism and entrepreneurship, identifying appropriate areas for future growth and development, and providing guidance for future land use decisions. Together, these chapters seek to ensure that White County remains economically resilient, fiscally responsible, and well-positioned to respond to future opportunities while preserving the qualities residents value most.

A recurring theme emerged throughout the planning process:

> **White County's future should not be defined solely by change itself, but by the community's ability to thoughtfully evaluate opportunities and shape change in ways that strengthen agriculture, support communities, and preserve the County's identity for future generations.**

9.0 Growth Strategy and Future Land Use

Land use decisions shape how White County grows, how farmland is protected, how communities remain strong, and how public services are provided. Decisions about housing, business development, agriculture, utilities, renewable energy, recreation, transportation, and public facilities all affect the County's long-term character and fiscal health.

White County is not expected to grow in the same way everywhere. Some areas should remain primarily agricultural. Some areas are better suited for housing, business, or employment growth because they are near towns, roads, utilities, or public services. Some areas are important because of their lake and recreation character. Others serve as highway corridors, rural gateways, or community centers that help define the County's identity.

This chapter provides a framework for guiding those decisions. It does not change the zoning of any property by itself, and it does not approve or prohibit any specific project. Instead, it identifies the County's preferred land use pattern and provides a policy basis for future decisions by the Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, municipal officials, staff, landowners, developers, and residents.

The chapter includes two related tools. The first is the Growth Policy Areas framework, which describes the broad role different parts of the County should play over time. These areas help answer the question: "What kind of growth or preservation is most appropriate in this part of White County?"

The second is the Future Land Use Map, which identifies the general types of land uses that are preferred in different locations. These categories help answer the question: "What uses are generally appropriate here?"

Together, these tools are intended to support consistent, transparent, and practical land use decisions. They should be used with the goals and policies in this Plan, the zoning and subdivision ordinances, infrastructure capacity, public safety needs, environmental conditions, surrounding land uses, and the specific facts of each proposal.

Because no map can account for every site-specific condition, the maps in this chapter should be used as guides rather than rigid rules. They are intended to help White County manage change in a way that protects agriculture, strengthens existing communities, supports economic opportunity, coordinates growth with infrastructure, and preserves the qualities that make the County distinctive.

How to Use the Maps

The maps in this chapter are intended to guide future land use decisions. They do not change the zoning of any property by themselves, and they do not approve or deny any specific project. Instead, they provide a policy guide for the Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, municipal officials, landowners, developers, and residents when future development proposals are reviewed.

The Growth Policy Areas Map shows the County's broad policy direction for different parts of White County. It identifies areas where farmland and rural character should be preserved, areas where community growth should be encouraged, areas suited for employment uses, areas where lake and recreation activity should be supported, and corridors or districts where design and character are especially important.

The Future Land Use Map shows the general type of land use that is preferred in different locations. These categories include agriculture, rural residential, community residential, mixed use, commercial, employment, public and institutional uses, recreation and open space, and utility or infrastructure uses.

Both maps should be used together. The Growth Policy Areas Map answers the broader question: "What role should this area play in the future of White County?" The Future Land Use Map answers the more specific question: "What types of land uses are generally appropriate here?"

When reviewing a rezoning, subdivision, site plan, or major development proposal, decision-makers should consider whether the proposal is consistent with both maps, the goals and policies of this Plan, available infrastructure, surrounding land uses, and the potential effects on agriculture, neighborhoods, roads, utilities, public safety, and community character.

Because no countywide map can account for every property-level condition, the maps should be used as guides rather than rigid rules. Site-specific factors such as parcel size, road access, drainage, utility availability, environmental constraints, nearby homes or farms, and adopted zoning standards should also be considered. Where a proposal differs from the map, the applicant should explain why the difference is appropriate and how the proposal still supports the overall goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter Goal

> **Direct future growth and development in a manner that protects agriculture, strengthens communities, coordinates infrastructure investment, and preserves White County's long-term quality of life.**

9.1 Countywide Growth Policy Areas

The Future Land Use Framework is organized around a series of Growth Policy Areas intended to guide future land use and infrastructure decisions throughout White County. These areas reflect the County's long-term vision for balancing agricultural preservation, community growth, economic opportunity, and resource stewardship.

The Growth Policy Areas are not zoning districts and should not be interpreted as precise regulatory boundaries. Rather, they provide policy guidance regarding the general character, development expectations, and public investment priorities appropriate within different parts of the County.

Collectively, these Growth Policy Areas are intended to:

- Preserve White County's agricultural foundation and rural character;
- Direct growth toward areas served by existing or planned infrastructure;
- Strengthen municipalities and established communities;
- Support economic development in appropriate locations;
- Protect natural resources and recreational assets; and
- Promote efficient and fiscally responsible public investment.

The Land use Policy Areas are shown in Figure 1, and discussion of the area designations follows.

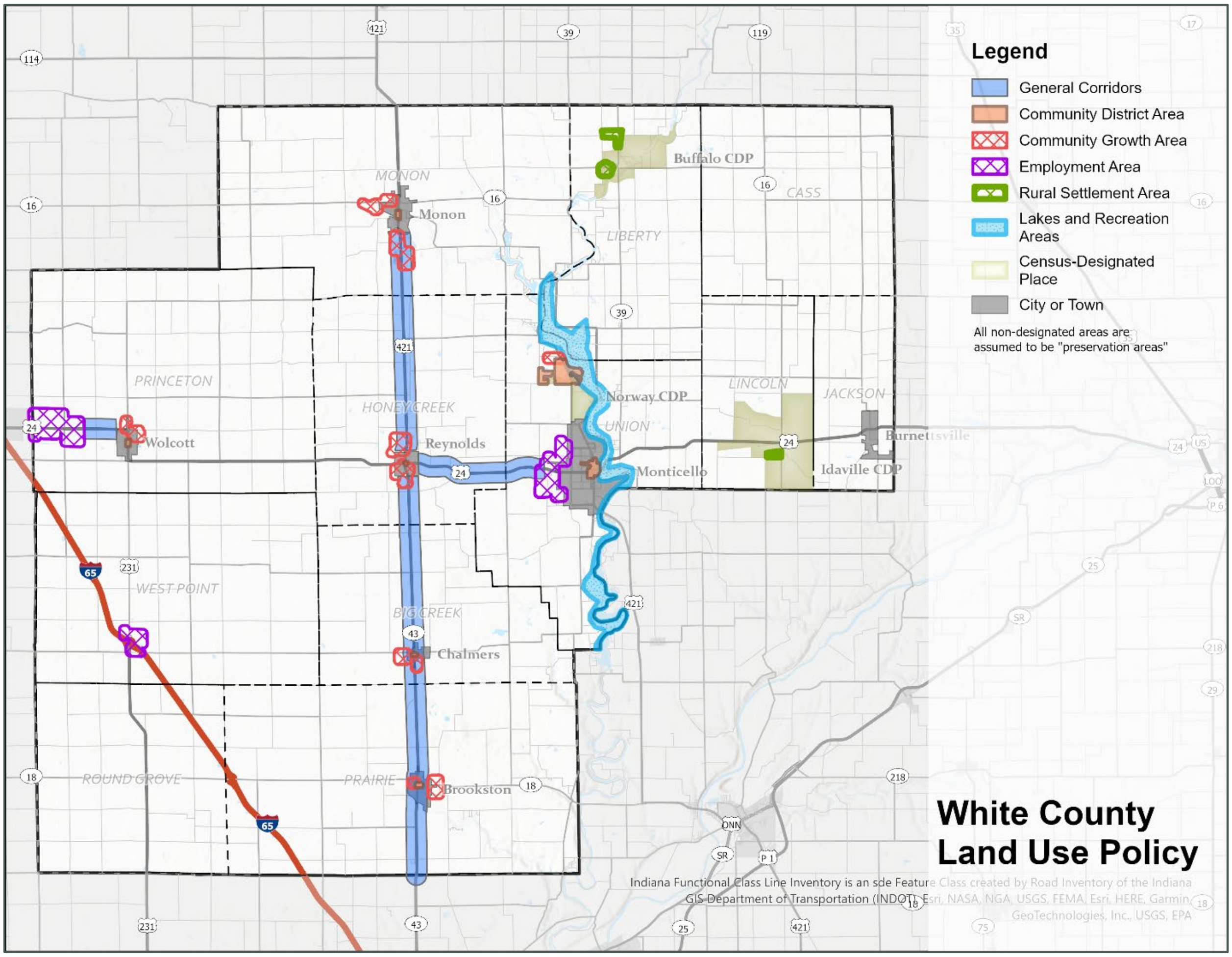


Figure 1: Land Policy Map

Preservation Areas

Preservation Areas encompass the majority of White County and consist primarily of agricultural and rural lands intended to remain predominantly agricultural throughout the planning period.

These areas contain productive farmland, agricultural infrastructure, natural resources, and rural landscapes that contribute significantly to White County's economy, heritage, and identity. The long-term intent for Preservation Areas is to maintain agriculture as the dominant land use while accommodating agricultural operations, agricultural support businesses, limited rural residential development, and other uses compatible with the agricultural landscape.

Future decisions within Preservation Areas should emphasize the long-term viability of agriculture, protection of natural resources, minimization of farmland fragmentation, and preservation of rural character.

Primary Policy Direction

- Recognize agriculture as the preferred long-term land use.
- Minimize unnecessary fragmentation and conversion of productive farmland.
- Encourage compatibility between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses.
- Protect rural landscapes, natural resources, and community character.

Community Growth Areas

Community Growth Areas are generally located in and around White County's municipalities and other areas where infrastructure and public services currently exist or can be efficiently extended.

These areas are intended to accommodate the majority of future residential, commercial, institutional, and mixed-use development during the planning period. Concentrating growth in these locations promotes efficient use of infrastructure, supports existing communities, and reduces development pressure on agricultural lands.

Future development within Community Growth Areas should occur in a manner that strengthens existing communities, supports reinvestment, and maintains compatibility with surrounding land uses.

Primary Policy Direction

- Direct the majority of new growth toward municipalities and serviced areas.
- Encourage infill, redevelopment, and reinvestment.
- Coordinate growth with infrastructure and public service capacity.
- Promote a range of housing and economic development opportunities.

Rural Settlement Areas

Rural Settlement Areas include White County's established unincorporated communities and other historic rural development nodes.

These communities provide important residential, commercial, institutional, and social functions within the County and contribute significantly to White County's identity and sense of place. Future growth within Rural Settlement Areas should generally be limited in scale and consistent with the existing character and infrastructure capacity of the community.

The intent of this policy area is to support continued reinvestment and incremental growth while preserving the distinct identity and rural character of these communities.

Primary Policy Direction

- Encourage compatible infill development and reinvestment.
- Maintain the scale and character of existing communities.
- Coordinate future growth with available infrastructure and services.
- Preserve the unique identity of rural communities.

Employment Areas

Employment Areas include locations appropriate for industrial, manufacturing, logistics, business park, and other employment-generating land uses.

These areas should generally possess adequate transportation access, utility infrastructure, and separation from incompatible land uses. Employment Areas are intended to accommodate future economic growth while minimizing conflicts with surrounding agricultural and residential uses.

Future development within Employment Areas should emphasize job creation, economic competitiveness, efficient infrastructure utilization, and compatibility with adjacent land uses.

Primary Policy Direction

- Concentrate employment uses in locations with adequate infrastructure and transportation access.
- Promote industrial and business development that supports White County's economic goals.
- Minimize conflicts between employment uses and surrounding land uses.
- Encourage high-quality site design and buffering.

Lake and Recreation Areas

Lake and Recreation Areas encompass White County's lakes, recreational destinations, tourism assets, and associated development areas.

These areas are among White County's most significant economic, environmental, and quality-of-life assets. The policy emphasis within these areas is to balance recreational access, tourism, environmental stewardship, residential development, and community character.

Future development should protect natural resources while supporting tourism, recreation, and continued investment in lake communities.

Primary Policy Direction

- Protect water quality and sensitive environmental resources.
- Support recreation and tourism-related development.
- Maintain the character of lake communities.
- Balance economic opportunity with environmental stewardship.

General Corridors

General Corridors consist primarily of major transportation corridors that serve as important travel routes, gateways, and visual entryways into White County and its communities.

These corridors often contain a mixture of agricultural land, scattered residential development, commercial uses, and transportation infrastructure. Because these corridors are highly visible and help shape residents' and visitors' perceptions of White County, future development should be carefully managed to preserve rural landscapes, scenic views, and community character.

The intent of this policy area is not to encourage continuous strip development, but rather to maintain the function, safety, and visual quality of major transportation corridors while accommodating appropriate development in designated locations.

Future development along General Corridors should emphasize context-sensitive design, coordinated access management, preservation of rural viewsheds, and compatibility with surrounding land uses.

Primary Policy Direction

- Preserve scenic rural landscapes and important viewsheds along major transportation corridors.
- Discourage continuous strip commercial development patterns.
- Maintain the safety and function of major transportation facilities through coordinated access management.
- Encourage high-quality site design, landscaping, and buffering.
- Protect corridor gateways and entrances into White County's communities.

Community Districts

Community Districts consist primarily of traditional downtowns, central business districts, and other established civic and commercial centers within White County's municipalities and communities.

These districts represent important economic, social, and cultural assets. They frequently contain historic buildings, public spaces, civic institutions, local businesses, and community gathering places that contribute significantly to White County's identity and sense of place.

Community Districts serve as focal points for commerce, civic activity, tourism, and community life. Continued reinvestment in these areas will be essential to maintaining strong communities and preserving White County's unique character.

Future development and redevelopment within Community Districts should reinforce historic development patterns, encourage walkability, support local businesses, and strengthen community identity.

Primary Policy Direction

- Support reinvestment in downtowns and traditional business districts.
- Preserve and enhance the historic character and architectural identity of community centers.
- Encourage mixed-use, walkable development patterns where appropriate.
- Support local businesses, public gathering spaces, and community events.

- Strengthen Community Districts as centers of commerce, civic life, and community identity.

9.2 Future Land Use Categories

The Land Use Design Map, Figure 2 (below) illustrates the County's long-term vision for future growth, conservation, and development patterns. The map should be used in conjunction with the goals, objectives, and policies contained throughout this Plan.

The Future Land Use Map:

- Provides general guidance regarding appropriate land use patterns;
- Identifies areas appropriate for future growth and conservation;
- Supports coordination between land use and infrastructure investment; and
- Assists decision-makers in evaluating future development proposals.

Because future conditions may change, the map should be interpreted flexibly and updated periodically as necessary. A discussion of land use categories appears after the map.

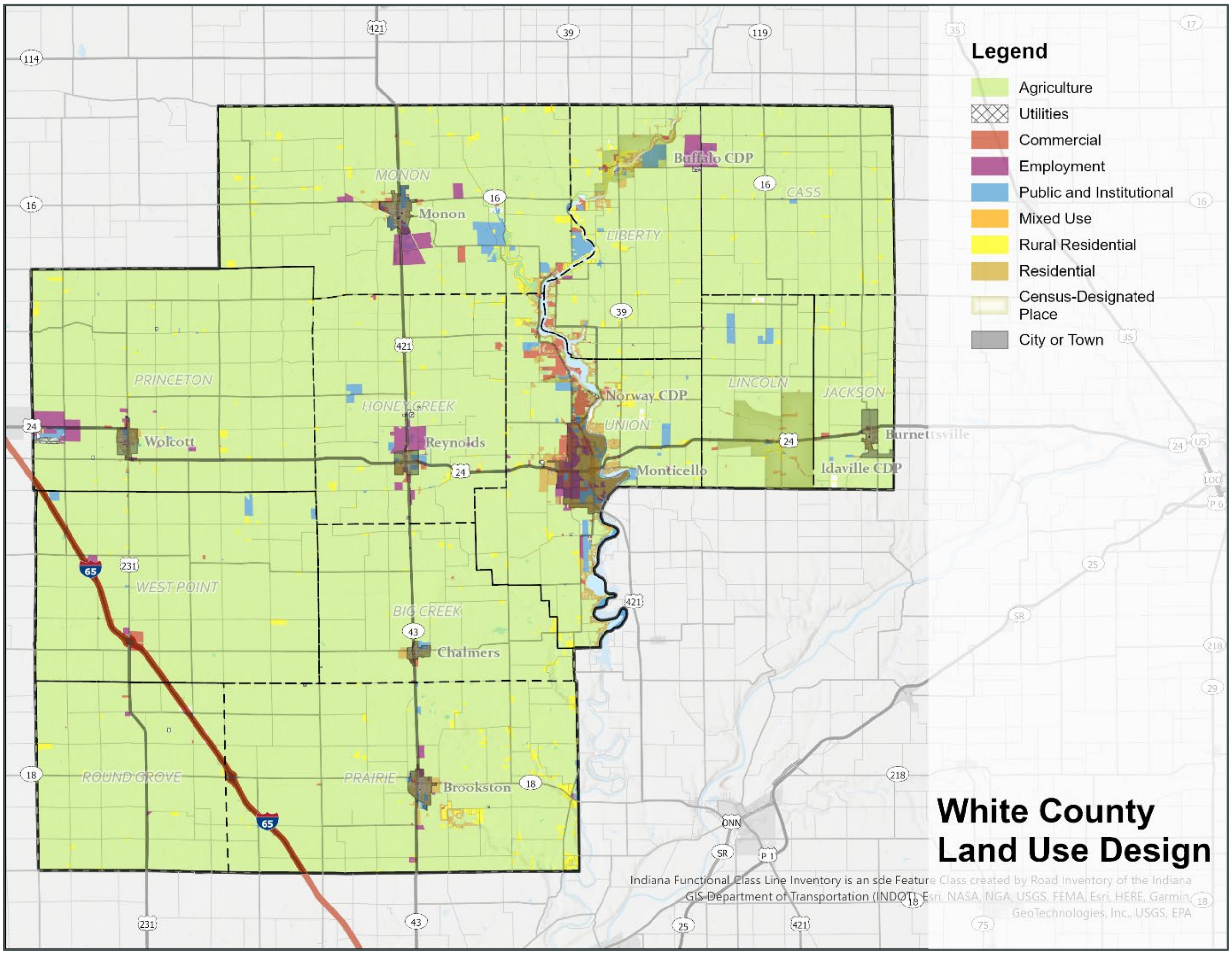


Figure 2: Land Use Design

The categories described below are intended to guide future land use decisions and should not be interpreted as zoning classifications.

Agriculture

Areas designated Agriculture are intended to remain predominantly agricultural throughout the planning period.

Primary uses include:

- Crop production;
- Livestock operations;
- Agricultural support businesses;
- Agribusiness;
- Farm residences; and
- Other agricultural uses.

Limited non-agricultural uses may be appropriate when compatible with surrounding agricultural operations and consistent with County policies.

Rural Residential

The Rural Residential category includes existing rural residential development and areas appropriate for limited low-density residential development.

Development within Rural Residential areas should minimize impacts on agricultural operations and preserve rural character.

Community Residential

Community Residential areas are intended to accommodate a range of residential housing types in locations served by infrastructure and community services.

These areas are generally located within or adjacent to municipalities and existing communities.

Mixed Use and Community Centers

Mixed Use and Community Center areas include downtowns, traditional business districts, and community activity centers.

These areas support a mixture of residential, commercial, civic, and institutional uses.

Commercial

Commercial areas are intended to accommodate retail, service, office, hospitality, and related commercial uses.

Commercial development should generally occur within municipalities, established commercial corridors, or designated growth areas.

Employment

Employment areas are intended for manufacturing, industrial, business park, warehousing, logistics, and other employment-generating uses.

Such areas should be served by adequate transportation and utility infrastructure.

Public and Institutional

Public and Institutional areas include schools, government facilities, utilities, parks, healthcare facilities, and other public or quasi-public uses.

Utility and Infrastructure

Utility and Infrastructure areas include major public utility facilities, transportation infrastructure, substations, water and wastewater facilities, and other significant infrastructure assets.

Utility and Infrastructure designations are intended to recognize existing or planned infrastructure facilities and should not be interpreted as endorsing future projects that have not undergone separate public review and approval processes.

9.3 Community Closeups of Land Use Policy Areas and Design

Closeups of the land use categories discussed above are shown below:

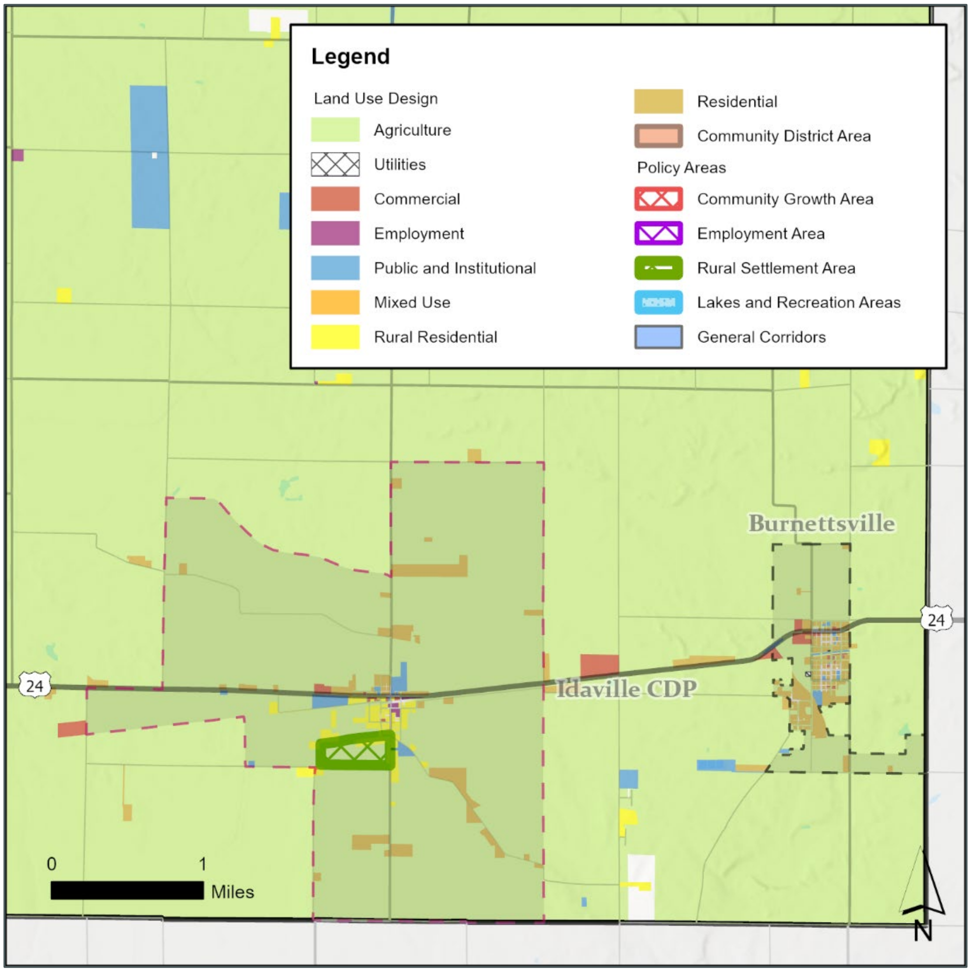


Figure 3: Burnettsville-Idaville

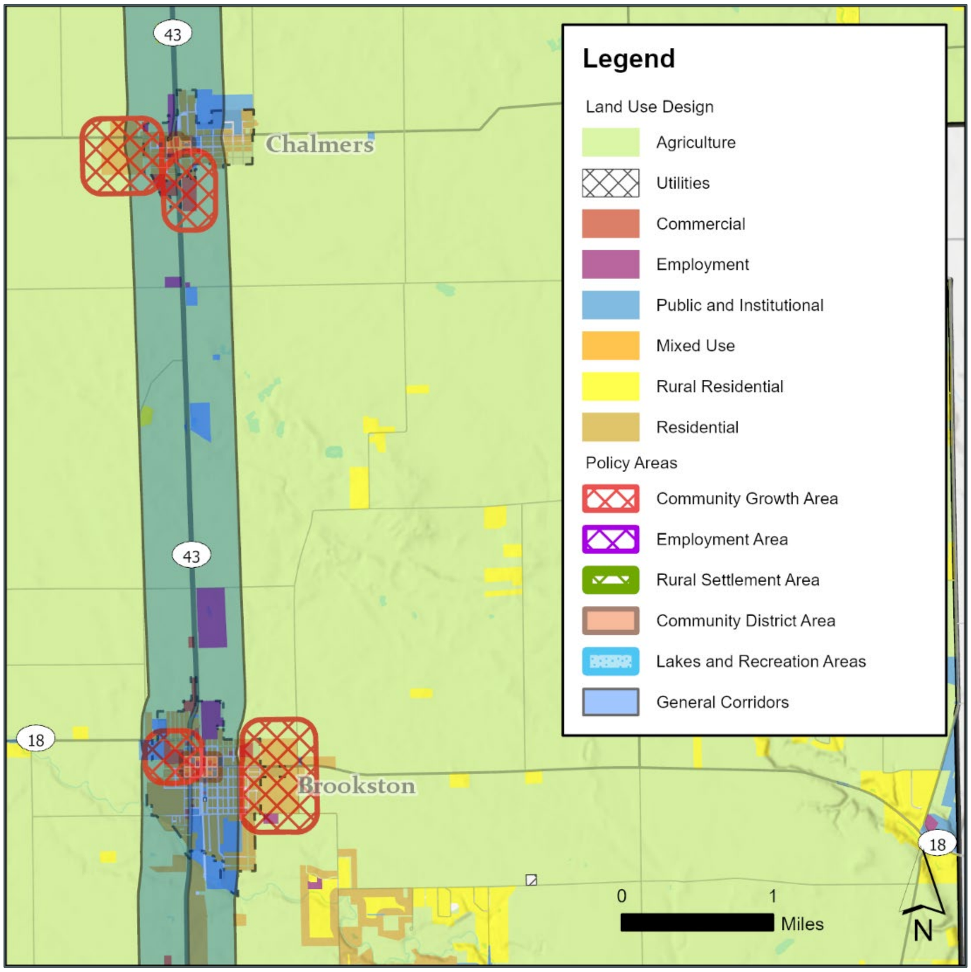


Figure 4: Chalmers-Brookston

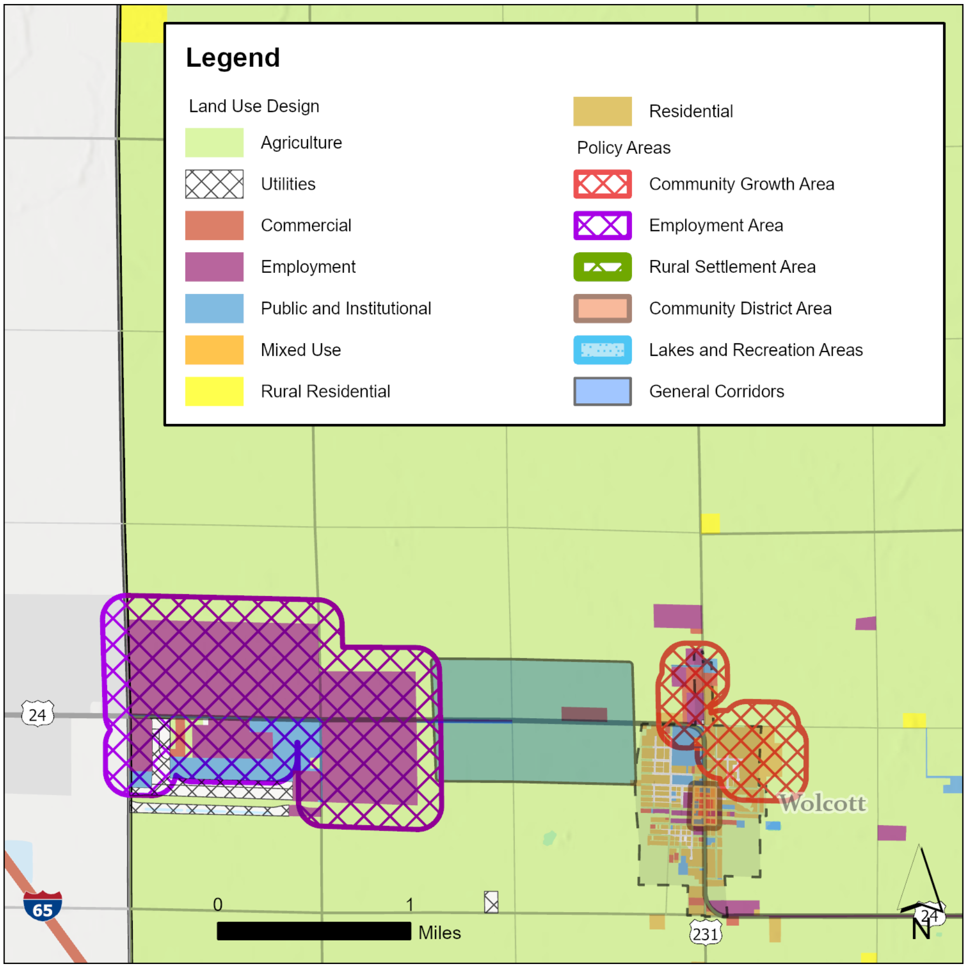


Figure 5: Wolcott

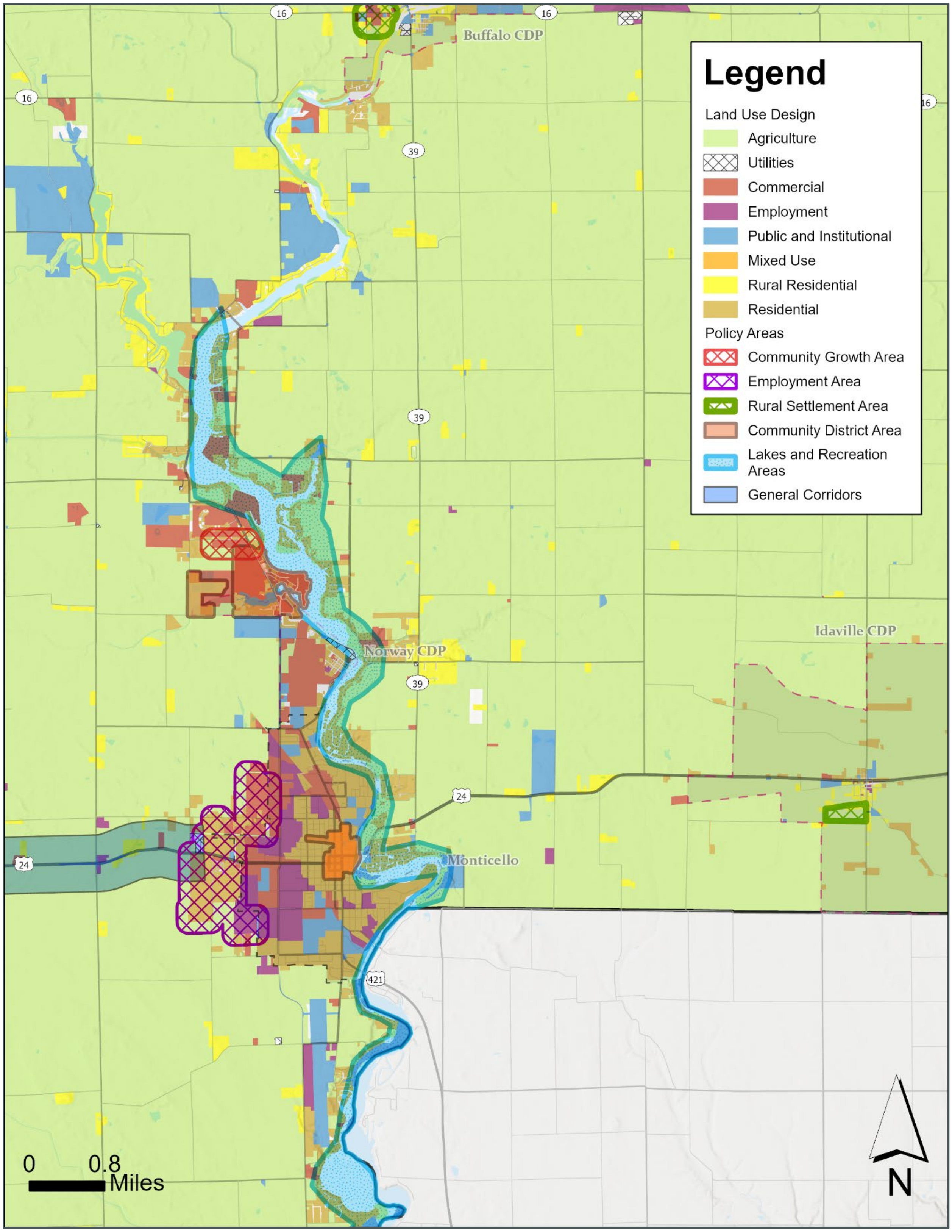


Figure 6: Monticello-Norway

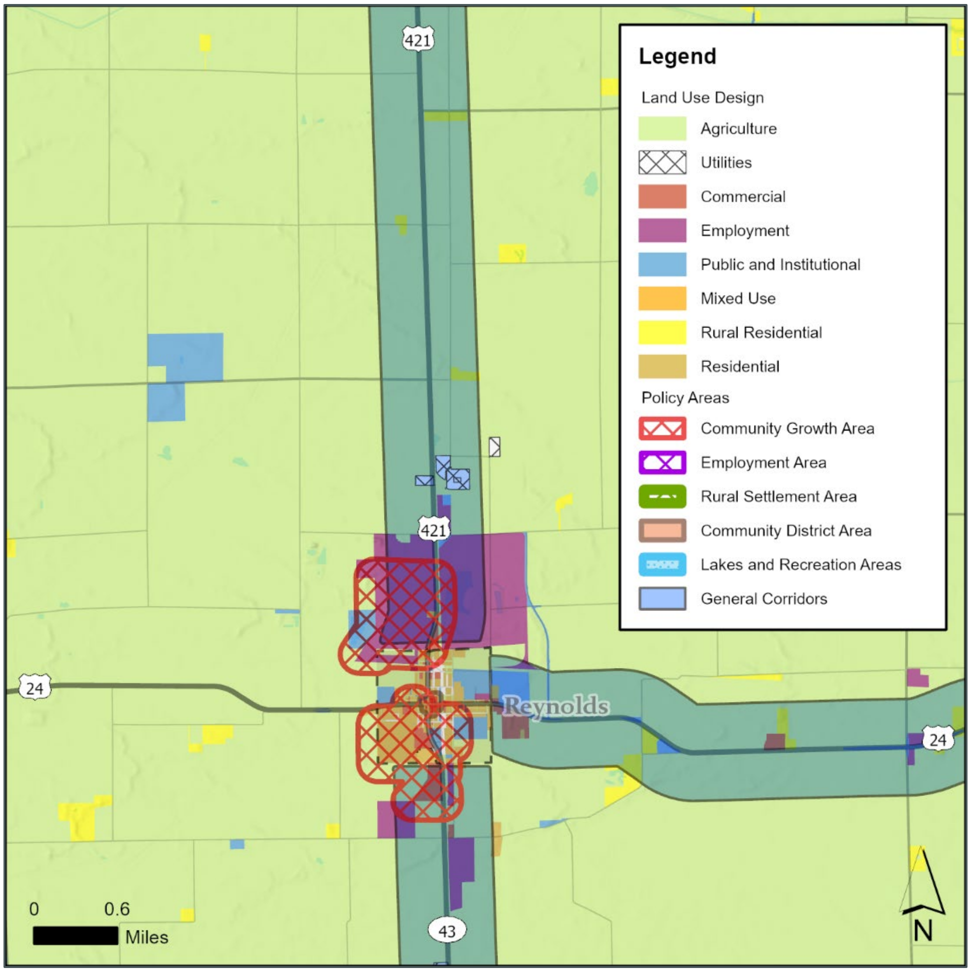


Figure 7: Reynolds

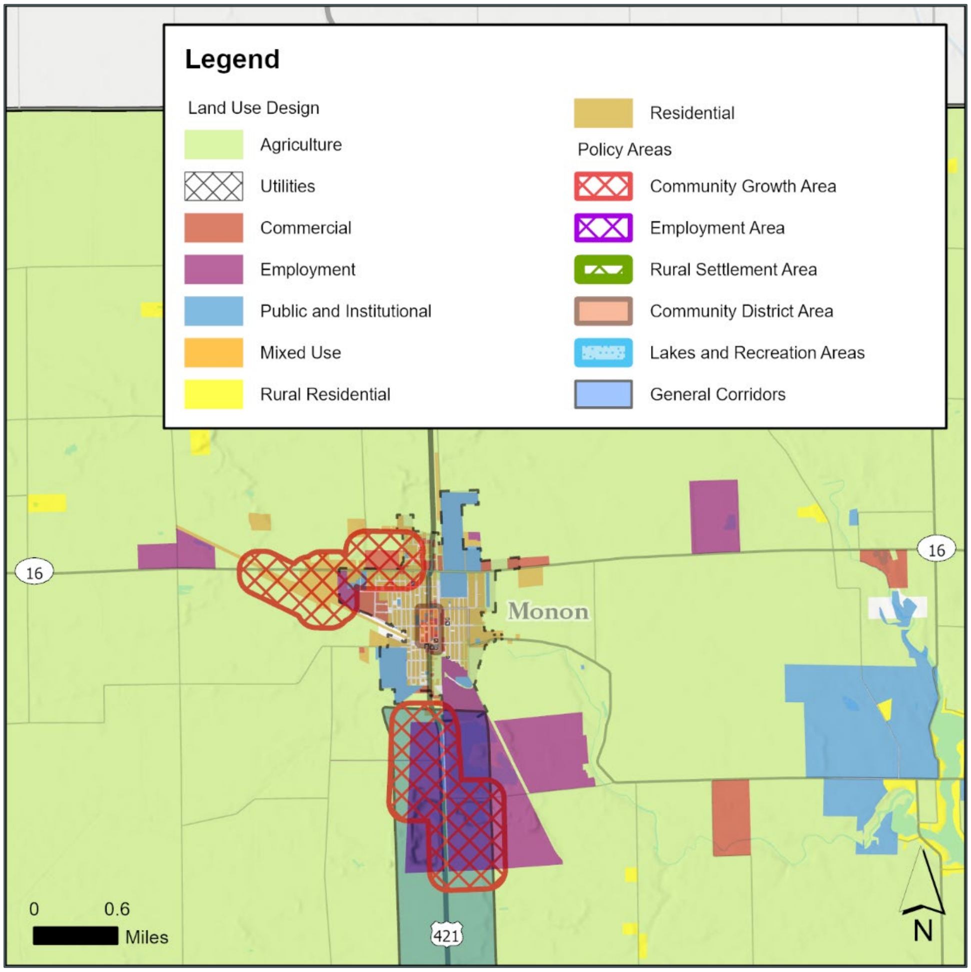


Figure 8: Monon

9.4 Land Use Decision-Making Framework

Major Land Use Proposals

Some development proposals warrant a greater level of planning review because of their scale, intensity, land consumption, infrastructure or utility demands, potential off-site effects, or potential to create long-term or cumulative changes to White County's land-use pattern. For purposes of this Plan, these are referred to as major land use proposals.

The term is intentionally based on the characteristics and potential effects of development rather than a fixed list of industries. Technologies, markets, and development types will change over the life of this Plan, and a use that is unfamiliar today may become an important land-use question in the future.

Examples could include large industrial or logistics campuses, data centers, major tourism or recreation facilities, large residential developments, utility or infrastructure facilities, or other development of comparable scale or intensity. These examples are illustrative and do not create a presumption for or against a particular use.

When evaluating a major land use proposal, White County should consider:

- Plan and Location Consistency: Is the proposal consistent with the Future Land Use Map, Growth Policy Area, and applicable goals and policies of this Plan?
- Agricultural Effects: How much agricultural land would be converted? What is its productive value? Would agricultural tracts be fragmented or nearby farm operations impaired? What cumulative conversion has already occurred or been approved?
- Scale and Land-Use Pattern: Is the scale or intensity substantially different from surrounding or prevailing development patterns? Would the proposal establish a new pattern likely to influence subsequent development?
- Water, Drainage, and Natural Resources: What demands or impacts would occur to groundwater, surface water, drainage systems, floodplains, soils, wetlands, or other environmental resources?
- Transportation and Access: What traffic, freight, road, access, safety, or maintenance effects could result during construction and long-term operation?
- Utilities and Infrastructure: What water, wastewater, electric, broadband, drainage, or other utility capacity would be required? Are improvements necessary, and how would their costs be allocated?
- Public Services and Safety: Can emergency services and other public agencies adequately serve the development? Would additional staffing, equipment, facilities, training, or planning be needed?
- Compatibility and Community Character: What effects could occur to nearby homes, farms, businesses, scenic resources, noise levels, lighting, views, or rural and community character?
- Fiscal and Economic Effects: What employment, investment, tax revenue, or other benefits are anticipated, and how do they compare with infrastructure, service, maintenance, and other long-term public costs?

- Cumulative Effects: How would the proposal interact with similar existing and approved development? Would successive development of the same type materially change the County's agricultural base, infrastructure systems, environmental resources, or community character?
- Mitigation and Long-Term Adaptability: Can significant impacts be avoided or reasonably mitigated? If the use ceases, can the property feasibly be restored, reused, or adapted to another productive use?

Major land use proposals should receive a level of review sufficient to allow decision-makers to understand these effects before making a policy or regulatory decision. The information requested should be proportionate to the nature and magnitude of the potential impacts. Implementing ordinances should establish when traffic, water, wastewater, drainage, utility, public-safety, fiscal, environmental, agricultural, or other technical studies are required and when independent third-party review is appropriate.

No single criterion should determine the outcome of every land use decision. Rather, decision-makers should evaluate proposals holistically in consideration of the County's long-term vision and adopted policies, except where a more specific policy of this Plan establishes a stronger preference, presumption, or direction for a particular land use or policy issue.

The Major Land Use Proposals review as specified in this section provides a framework for how large future land use proposals should be reviewed in the future by the Plan Commission and County Commissioners. This recommendation does not however require the Plan Commission and the County Commissioners to use this suggested framework. Should the County feel strongly about this recommendation and would like for future projects to be required to be evaluated using this framework, then appropriate modifications should be made to Chapter 12, Administration, within the County's Zoning Ordinance to incorporate these principles as a required component of the review process.

9.5 Intergovernmental Coordination and Growth Management

Land use decisions frequently affect multiple jurisdictions and service providers. Continued coordination among White County, municipalities, utility providers, school corporations, and other public agencies will be necessary to manage future growth effectively.

Objectives

Objective 9.5A: Promote coordination among jurisdictions and service providers.
Objective 9.5B: Coordinate land use decisions with infrastructure planning and public investments.

Policies

Policy 9.5.1: Encourage regular coordination among White County, municipalities, and other public agencies regarding future growth and development.
Policy 9.5.2: Coordinate land use decisions with planned infrastructure investments.
Policy 9.5.3: Encourage intergovernmental agreements where appropriate to address shared planning and infrastructure issues.
Policy 9.5.4: Periodically review and update the Future Land Use Map and related policies as conditions change.

9.6 Growth Strategy and Future Land Use Implementation Priorities

The following priorities should guide future land use decisions during the planning period:

1. Preserve White County's agricultural foundation and minimize unnecessary fragmentation of farmland.
2. Direct growth toward municipalities and areas served by infrastructure.
3. Strengthen existing communities through reinvestment and appropriate growth.
4. Coordinate future development with infrastructure capacity and public service availability.
5. Promote compatibility among adjacent land uses.
6. Continue intergovernmental coordination regarding growth, infrastructure, and annexation.
7. Periodically review and update the Future Land Use Map and related policies.
8. Establish clear, proportionate review procedures for major land use proposals, including requirements for technical information necessary to evaluate agricultural, infrastructure, transportation, water, fiscal, public-safety, environmental, compatibility, and cumulative impacts.

The recommendations contained in this chapter establish a framework for guiding future growth while preserving the qualities that residents value most. Through thoughtful planning and continued collaboration, White County can accommodate future opportunities while maintaining its agricultural heritage, community character, and quality of life.

10.0 Implementation

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide decisions, investments, partnerships, and community priorities over the next ten to twenty years. The goals, policies, maps, and recommendations in earlier chapters describe the future White County wants to work toward. This chapter explains how the County and its partners can begin turning that direction into action.

Implementation will not happen all at once. Some recommendations can begin soon after adoption through staff work, development review, ordinance updates, public communication, or coordination among local partners. Other recommendations will require additional funding, technical study, grant applications, public-private partnerships, or long-term capital planning. Some actions will be led by White County, while others will depend on municipalities, schools, public agencies, utilities, nonprofit organizations, businesses, landowners, developers, and residents.

The purpose of this chapter is to make the Plan usable after adoption. It identifies priority strategies, assigns general responsibility, outlines implementation actions, and describes how progress should be reviewed over time. The chapter also recognizes that White County and its communities have limited staff and financial capacity. For that reason, implementation should focus on practical steps, shared responsibility, outside funding, and steady progress rather than trying to complete every recommendation at once.

The Implementation Chapter is organized as follows:

- **Section 10.1: Implementation Framework** explains how the Plan should be used and identifies the major roles, responsibilities, and tools for implementation.
- **Section 10.2: Critical Path Strategies** identifies the highest-priority actions that should receive special attention during the first years after adoption.
- **Section 10.3: Implementation Matrix** organizes recommended actions by goal, lead entity, partners, timeframe, and progress measure.
- **Section 10.4: Funding and Partnerships** describes how the County and its partners can pursue grants, local funding, shared capacity, and public-private partnerships.
- **Section 10.5: Ongoing Public Engagement** explains how public communication and participation should continue after adoption.
- **Section 10.6: Monitoring and Plan Maintenance** describes how the Plan should be reviewed, updated, and kept useful over time.

This chapter should be reviewed regularly by the Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, municipal officials, and partner organizations. The actions in this chapter are not a fixed checklist. They are a starting point for coordinated implementation. As conditions change, White County should update its priorities while continuing to use the Plan’s vision, goals, policies, and maps as the foundation for decision-making.

Chapter Goal

Implement the White County Comprehensive Plan through coordinated action, strategic investment, ongoing public engagement, and periodic evaluation and updates.

10.1 Implementation Framework

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy guide. It establishes White County's long-term direction, but it does not carry out recommendations by itself. Implementation will occur through many decisions made after adoption, including development review, ordinance updates, infrastructure investments, grant applications, partnerships, public facility planning, and private investment.

Implementation should be guided by four basic ideas.

- **First, the Plan should be used regularly.** County officials, municipal leaders, staff, boards, partner organizations, applicants, and residents should refer to the Plan when considering land use decisions, public investments, ordinance amendments, major development proposals, and community improvement projects.
- **Second, implementation should be shared.** No single office, board, department, or organization can complete every recommendation. Some actions will be led by White County. Others will be led by municipalities, public agencies, schools, utilities, economic development organizations, nonprofit groups, private businesses, landowners, developers, or residents.
- **Third, implementation should be practical and phased.** The County and its partners should focus first on actions that are high priority, realistic, and capable of building momentum. Some actions can begin soon after adoption. Others will require additional study, funding, staffing, public engagement, or coordination among several partners.
- **Fourth, implementation should be reviewed over time.** Conditions will change. New issues will emerge. Some priorities may become more urgent, while others may take longer than expected. The Plan should be reviewed regularly so that it remains useful and connected to local needs.

Roles and Responsibilities

Implementation responsibilities will vary depending on the action. The following groups are expected to play important roles.

White County Government

White County government, including the County Commissioners, Area Plan Commission, Area Plan Office, Board of Zoning Appeals, County Highway Department, public safety agencies, and other departments, will play a central role in carrying out the Plan. County responsibilities include reviewing development proposals, updating land use regulations, coordinating infrastructure priorities, pursuing funding, convening partners, and tracking implementation progress.

Municipal Governments

Monticello, Brookston, Chalmers, Reynolds, Wolcott, Monon, and other local communities will continue to guide growth, provide services, maintain infrastructure, support local businesses, and strengthen community identity within their jurisdictions. Municipal leadership will be especially important for housing, downtowns, utilities, parks, streets, local economic development, and quality-of-life improvements.

Public Agencies and Service Providers

School corporations, utility providers, broadband providers, drainage authorities, transportation agencies, park providers, libraries, public safety organizations, health providers, and regional planning agencies will help implement recommendations related to infrastructure, public services, community facilities, education, health, safety, and mobility.

Economic Development, Tourism, and Community Organizations

Economic development organizations, tourism organizations, chambers of commerce, nonprofit organizations, civic groups, youth-serving organizations, agricultural organizations, and community foundations will be important partners for business development, workforce development, tourism, housing partnerships, community services, youth engagement, and quality-of-life initiatives.

Private Sector and Landowners

Property owners, agricultural producers, businesses, employers, developers, builders, utilities, and investors will help implement the Plan through private decisions and investments. Their roles may include housing development, business expansion, redevelopment, agricultural stewardship, infrastructure coordination, and responsible development consistent with the Plan.

Residents

Residents also have an important role in implementation. Public participation, volunteer service, civic leadership, neighborhood investment, and constructive involvement in local decision-making will help keep the Plan grounded in community priorities.

Implementation Tools

White County and its partners should use several tools to carry out the Plan:

- Development review and rezoning decisions;
- Zoning and subdivision ordinance updates;
- Capital improvement planning;
- Infrastructure priority lists;
- Grant applications and funding partnerships;
- Interlocal agreements and shared services;
- Public-private partnerships;
- Technical studies and third-party review when needed;
- Housing, economic development, tourism, and recreation initiatives;
- Public engagement and communication; and
- Annual implementation monitoring.

These tools should be used together. For example, a future housing project may require a zoning update, utility coordination, developer partnership, public communication, and grant funding. A major employment project may require land use review, infrastructure analysis, road access planning, public safety coordination, and written commitments. A downtown improvement may require municipal leadership, local business support, outside funding, and community volunteers.

Relationship to the Rest of Chapter 10

The following sections provide the work program for implementation. Section 10.2 identifies Critical Path Strategies that should receive special attention during the first years after adoption. Section 10.3 provides the Implementation Matrix, which organizes recommended actions by goal, lead entity, partners, timeframe, and progress measure. Section 10.4 describes funding and partnership strategies. Section 10.5 describes ongoing public engagement. Section 10.6 explains how the Plan should be monitored, maintained, and updated over time.

Together, these sections are intended to make the Comprehensive Plan usable after adoption. The Plan should not be treated as a one-time report. It should be used as a continuing guide for decisions, investments, partnerships, and public discussion about White County's future.

10.2 Implementation Priorities

While all recommendations in this Plan are important, several implementation priorities should receive special attention during the first years after adoption. These priorities are called Critical Path Strategies because they are the actions most likely to shape White County's long-term success.

Each Critical Path Strategy identifies a lead entity, key partners, early actions, and measures of progress. The lead entity is not expected to complete the work alone. Rather, the lead entity is responsible for convening partners, tracking progress, and reporting back to the Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, or other appropriate decision-making bodies.

The Area Plan Commission should review progress on these strategies at least once each year. This review should identify completed actions, current barriers, funding needs, and recommended next steps.

Critical Path Strategy 1

Preserve Agricultural Viability and Rural Character: Agriculture remains the foundation of White County's economy, landscape, and identity. Preserving agricultural viability does not mean preventing all change. It means recognizing agriculture as a permanent and desirable land use, reducing unnecessary land use conflicts, and guiding non-agricultural development to locations where it will have fewer long-term impacts on farming operations.

Lead Responsibility: White County Area Plan Commission and White County Commissioners

Key Partners: Agricultural producers, Purdue Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, drainage authorities, municipal governments, economic development organizations, and landowners

First-Year Actions: Within the first year after adoption, the County should review zoning and subdivision standards for consistency with the agricultural preservation policies in this Plan. This review should focus on farmland conversion, rural residential development patterns, buffering between agricultural and non-agricultural uses, drainage impacts, and standards for large-scale or emerging land uses.

The County should also establish a simple process for tracking major farmland conversion decisions. This may include an annual summary of rezonings, subdivisions, renewable energy projects, industrial projects, and other approvals that convert agricultural land to non-agricultural use.

Ongoing Actions: The County should continue to recognize agriculture as a long-term land use, support value-added agriculture and agricultural businesses, maintain rural road and drainage systems that serve farm operations, and evaluate voluntary farmland preservation tools. The County should also continue to encourage development patterns that reduce conflicts between farms, homes, businesses, and infrastructure.

Measures of Progress: Progress should be measured by completion of ordinance updates, annual tracking of farmland conversion, continued investment in drainage and agricultural transportation systems, and use of plan policies in rezoning and subdivision decisions.

Critical Path Strategy 2

Strengthen Housing Opportunities: Housing availability affects workforce retention, school enrollment, senior living, economic competitiveness, and overall community vitality. White County needs more housing choices while also protecting existing neighborhoods and guiding new housing to places where roads, utilities, and public services can support it.

Lead Responsibility: Municipal governments, with support from White County and the Area Plan Commission

Key Partners: White County Commissioners, White County Area Plan Office, housing organizations, economic development organizations, employers, nonprofit organizations, private developers, real estate professionals, and utility providers

First-Year Actions: Within the first year after adoption, the County and municipalities should identify priority housing opportunity areas. These should include infill sites, redevelopment sites, underused properties, and growth areas with reasonable access to utilities and public services.

The Area Plan Office should also review zoning and subdivision standards that may make attainable housing, senior housing, accessory dwelling units, small-lot housing, duplexes, townhomes, or multifamily housing difficult to build in appropriate locations.

Ongoing Actions: The County and municipalities should support reinvestment in existing housing, encourage new housing in serviced areas, promote housing options for older adults, and work with employers and developers on workforce housing opportunities. Future housing work should be tied to realistic market demand, infrastructure capacity, and community character.

Measures of Progress: Progress should be measured by identification of housing opportunity areas, ordinance changes that support appropriate housing variety, number and type of new housing units approved, rehabilitation or reinvestment activity, and partnerships formed with developers, employers, or housing organizations.

Critical Path Strategy 3

Invest in Infrastructure and Community Facilities: Reliable infrastructure and community facilities are essential to public safety, economic opportunity, and quality of life. Roads, bridges, broadband, utilities, drainage, parks, emergency services, schools, and public facilities should be maintained and improved in ways that support existing residents and guide future growth responsibly.

Lead Responsibility: White County Commissioners and municipal governments

Key Partners: Area Plan Commission, County Highway Department, utility providers, broadband providers, public safety agencies, park providers, schools, drainage authorities, regional planning organizations, and state and federal funding agencies

First-Year Actions: Within the first year after adoption, the County should begin preparing a coordinated infrastructure priority list. This list should identify the most important road, drainage, broadband, utility, public safety, and community facility needs that affect growth, safety, and quality of life.

The County should also use the Growth Policy Areas and Future Land Use Map when evaluating infrastructure extensions or major public investments. Growth should be encouraged where infrastructure can be provided efficiently and discouraged where new development would create excessive public costs.

Ongoing Actions: The County and municipalities should prioritize maintenance of existing infrastructure, pursue broadband improvements, coordinate utility planning with future growth areas, support emergency service capacity, and continue investment in parks, recreation, and community facilities. Infrastructure decisions should consider both short-term needs and long-term operating costs.

Measures of Progress: Progress should be measured by adoption or maintenance of an infrastructure priority list, grant applications submitted, projects funded or completed, broadband service improvements, public safety investments, and documented use of the Plan in infrastructure decisions.

Critical Path Strategy 4

Support Economic Opportunity and Workforce Development: White County's economy is rooted in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, small businesses, and regional access. A stronger economy will require continued support for existing employers, small businesses, workforce development, tourism, agribusiness, and compatible new investment.

Lead Responsibility: White County economic development organizations and municipal governments

Key Partners: County Commissioners, Area Plan Commission, school corporations, employers, chambers of commerce, tourism organizations, Purdue Extension, regional workforce partners, Ivy Tech or other education partners, nonprofit organizations, and business owners

First-Year Actions: Within the first year after adoption, economic development partners should convene a workforce and business roundtable. This group should identify near-term workforce needs, barriers to business growth, opportunities for internships or apprenticeships, and ways to connect students and young adults to local career paths.

The County and its partners should also identify priority employment areas where infrastructure, transportation access, and land use policy support future business investment.

Ongoing Actions: Economic development partners should support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, strengthen school-employer partnerships, expand job-shadowing and internship opportunities, promote agribusiness and value-added agriculture, and support year-round tourism strategies. Reinvestment in downtowns, commercial corridors, and existing employment areas should be prioritized where possible.

Measures of Progress: Progress should be measured by number of workforce partnerships, student/employer programs, business retention visits, small business support efforts, tourism initiatives, priority employment sites identified, and development proposals consistent with the Plan's economic development policies.

Critical Path Strategy 5

Strengthen Communities and Quality of Life: Quality of life is central to White County's ability to retain residents, attract new families, support employers, and serve future generations. Strong towns, downtowns, schools, parks, trails, lake assets, civic groups, cultural resources, and community events all contribute to the County's long-term vitality.

Lead Responsibility: Municipal governments and community organizations

Key Partners: White County, park providers, schools, libraries, nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, tourism organizations, arts and cultural groups, youth-serving organizations, health and wellness partners, and residents

First-Year Actions: Within the first year after adoption, the County and municipalities should identify a short list of quality-of-life priorities that can be advanced through partnerships or grants. These may include downtown improvements, park upgrades, trail planning, lake access, youth engagement, community events, public art, historic preservation, or wellness facilities.

The County should also work with nonprofit and community partners to improve coordination among organizations that provide youth services, senior services, childcare, recreation, health, and family support.

Ongoing Actions: Local partners should continue investing in downtowns and community centers, expanding recreational opportunities, supporting arts and historic preservation, encouraging youth leadership, and strengthening community events. These efforts should be coordinated with tourism, housing, workforce, and economic development strategies.

Measures of Progress: Progress should be measured by quality-of-life projects funded or completed, grants pursued, new or expanded partnerships, youth engagement activities, downtown or park improvements, and increased coordination among local service organizations.

Critical Path Strategy 6

Modernize Planning and Development Regulations: The Comprehensive Plan should be reflected in White County's zoning ordinance, subdivision control ordinance, development review procedures, and day-to-day land use decisions. Clear and consistent regulations help protect residents, guide investment, reduce conflict, and make the development process more predictable.

Lead Responsibility: White County Area Plan Commission and Area Plan Office

Key Partners: White County Commissioners, municipal governments, Board of Zoning Appeals, County Attorney, planning staff, code consultants, utility providers, public safety agencies, developers, landowners, and residents

First-Year Actions: Within the first year after adoption, the Area Plan Commission should begin a formal consistency review of the zoning ordinance and subdivision control ordinance. This review should identify amendments needed to implement the Comprehensive Plan, including future land use categories, growth policy areas, housing flexibility, agricultural protection, buffering, infrastructure standards, renewable energy, data centers, battery storage, and other emerging land uses.

The County should also establish a clear procedure for reviewing major development proposals that may require technical studies. For purposes of this procedure, the significance of a development should be determined by characteristics such as scale, intensity, land consumption, infrastructure and utility demands, public-service needs, and potential off-site or cumulative effects rather than solely by the name or classification of the industry involved. The procedure should identify when traffic, water, wastewater, drainage, electrical, agricultural, public-safety, fiscal, environmental, or other technical studies are warranted; when independent third-party review is appropriate; and how the scope of review should be proportionate to the potential impacts.

Ongoing Actions: The Area Plan Commission should continue updating regulations as conditions change. Ordinance updates should be understandable, enforceable, legally defensible, and consistent with the Plan. Public education should be part of major ordinance amendments so that residents, landowners, and applicants understand the purpose of the changes.

Measures of Progress: Progress should be measured by completion of ordinance updates, adoption of clearer review procedures, use of third-party technical review when appropriate, reduction of internal ordinance conflicts, and documented consistency between development decisions and the Comprehensive Plan.

First-Year Implementation Emphasis

During the first year after adoption, White County should focus on a manageable set of early actions that can build momentum. These should include:

1. Begin zoning and subdivision ordinance updates for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Create a simple annual implementation review process led by the Area Plan Commission.
3. Identify priority housing opportunity areas in municipalities and serviced growth areas.
4. Prepare a coordinated infrastructure priority list.
5. Establish a process for tracking major farmland conversion decisions.
6. Convene an economic development and workforce roundtable.
7. Identify priority quality-of-life projects for grants, partnerships, or local investment.
8. Develop a procedure for third-party technical review of major development proposals when needed.

These early actions should be revisited annually. As projects are completed or new issues emerge, the County should update its priorities while continuing to use the goals, policies, and maps in this Plan as the basis for decision-making.

10.3 Implementation Matrix

The Implementation Matrix identifies recommended actions to help carry out the goals, policies, and Critical Path Strategies in this Plan. The matrix is intended to be used by the Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, municipal officials, staff, partner organizations, and residents as a practical work program.

The matrix does not require every action to be completed at once. Some actions can begin shortly after adoption. Others will require funding, staff capacity, partnerships, or additional study. Priorities may also change as conditions change. The matrix should be reviewed at least once each year as part of the Plan's annual implementation review.

For planning purposes, actions are organized by timeframe:

Short-Term: 0–3 years
Medium-Term: 3–7 years
Long-Term: 7 or more years
Ongoing: Continuing work that should occur regularly after adoption

The "lead entity" is the organization or group that should take primary responsibility for moving the action forward. Lead entities are not expected to complete the work alone. Most actions will require support from partners, staff, elected officials, local organizations, residents, and property owners.

Plan Goal / Strategy	Recommended Action	Lead Entity	Key Partners	Timeframe	Progress Measure
Goal 1: Preserve and Strengthen Agriculture and Rural Stewardship	Review zoning and subdivision standards for consistency with the Plan's agricultural preservation and rural character policies.	Area Plan Commission	County Commissioners, Area Plan Office, County Attorney, agricultural representatives, municipalities	Short-Term	Ordinance review completed; priority amendments identified
Goal 1	Track major farmland conversion decisions, including rezonings, subdivisions, renewable energy projects, industrial projects, and other large-scale land use changes.	Area Plan Office	Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, GIS staff	Short-Term / Ongoing	Annual farmland conversion summary prepared

Plan Goal / Strategy	Recommended Action	Lead Entity	Key Partners	Timeframe	Progress Measure
Goal 1	Evaluate voluntary farmland preservation tools, such as conservation easements, agricultural districts, purchase or transfer of development rights, or other incentive-based programs.	County Commissioners	Area Plan Commission, agricultural organizations, Purdue Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, landowners	Medium-Term	Options reviewed; preferred voluntary tools identified
Goal 1	Strengthen standards for compatibility between agricultural and non-agricultural uses, including buffering, setbacks, drainage, access, and right-to-farm notification.	Area Plan Commission	County Attorney, Area Plan Office, agricultural producers, developers, municipalities	Short-Term / Medium-Term	Updated standards prepared or adopted
Goal 1	Continue to support drainage, rural road, and agricultural transportation improvements that help maintain farm operations.	County Commissioners	County Highway Department, drainage authorities, agricultural producers, state and regional funding partners	Ongoing	Priority drainage and rural transportation needs identified and advanced
Goal 1	Encourage value-added agriculture, agribusiness, food processing, farm support businesses, and other uses that strengthen the agricultural economy.	Economic development organizations	County Commissioners, Area Plan Commission, Purdue Extension, agricultural producers, municipalities	Ongoing	New or expanded agribusiness opportunities supported
Goal 2: Strengthen Housing and Neighborhoods	Identify priority housing opportunity areas, including infill sites, redevelopment sites, underused properties, and serviced growth areas.	Municipal governments	Area Plan Office, County Commissioners, utility providers, developers, housing organizations	Short-Term	Housing opportunity areas identified and mapped

Plan Goal / Strategy	Recommended Action	Lead Entity	Key Partners	Timeframe	Progress Measure
Goal 2	Review zoning standards that may limit appropriate housing options, including duplexes, townhomes, multifamily housing, accessory dwelling units, senior housing, and small-lot housing.	Area Plan Commission	Municipal governments, County Attorney, developers, real estate professionals, housing organizations	Short-Term	Barriers identified; ordinance amendments considered
Goal 2	Promote housing development in areas with existing or planned utilities, roads, emergency services, and community facilities.	Municipal governments	Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, utility providers, developers	Ongoing	Housing approvals aligned with serviced areas and growth policy areas
Goal 2	Support reinvestment in existing neighborhoods through rehabilitation, code compliance, adaptive reuse, and neighborhood improvement programs.	Municipal governments	County Commissioners, nonprofit organizations, housing agencies, property owners, local lenders	Medium-Term / Ongoing	Rehabilitation programs or partnerships pursued
Goal 2	Encourage housing options for older adults, including accessible homes, smaller homes, senior apartments, and housing near services.	Municipal governments	Health and senior service providers, developers, nonprofit organizations, Area Plan Commission	Medium-Term	Senior housing needs evaluated; projects or partnerships advanced
Goal 2	Work with major employers, developers, and economic development partners to support workforce housing opportunities.	Economic development organizations	Employers, municipalities, County Commissioners, developers, housing organizations	Medium-Term / Ongoing	Employer or developer partnerships established

Plan Goal / Strategy	Recommended Action	Lead Entity	Key Partners	Timeframe	Progress Measure
Goal 3: Invest in Infrastructure and Community Facilities	Prepare a coordinated infrastructure priority list for roads, bridges, drainage, utilities, broadband, public safety, parks, and community facilities.	County Commissioners	Municipal governments, County Highway Department, utility providers, broadband providers, public safety agencies, park providers	Short-Term	Infrastructure priority list prepared and reviewed annually
Goal 3	Use the Growth Policy Areas and Future Land Use Map when evaluating major infrastructure extensions or public investments.	County Commissioners	Area Plan Commission, municipal governments, utility providers, regional planning partners	Short-Term / Ongoing	Infrastructure decisions documented for plan consistency
Goal 3	Coordinate water, wastewater, stormwater, and broadband planning with areas identified for community growth and employment uses.	Municipal governments and utility providers	County Commissioners, Area Plan Commission, broadband providers, developers	Medium-Term / Ongoing	Utility planning aligned with growth areas
Goal 3	Pursue grants and outside funding for priority infrastructure, broadband, public safety, parks, and community facility improvements.	County Commissioners and municipal governments	KIRPC, state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, schools, utility providers	Ongoing	Grant applications submitted; funding awarded
Goal 3	Support public safety capacity, including emergency response planning, training, facility needs, and coordination for large-scale or emerging land uses.	Public safety agencies	County Commissioners, Area Plan Commission, developers, municipalities, emergency management	Short-Term / Ongoing	Emergency coordination procedures strengthened

Plan Goal / Strategy	Recommended Action	Lead Entity	Key Partners	Timeframe	Progress Measure
Goal 3	Identify transportation safety priorities, especially rural intersections, major corridors, school areas, and locations with recurring safety concerns.	County Highway Department	INDOT, Area Plan Commission, municipalities, schools, public safety agencies	Medium-Term / Ongoing	Safety priority locations identified; projects advanced
Goal 4: Promote Economic Opportunity	Identify priority employment areas where land use policy, infrastructure, transportation access, and utility capacity support business investment.	Economic development organizations	Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, municipalities, utility providers, landowners	Short-Term	Priority employment areas identified
Goal 4	Convene a workforce and business roundtable to identify employer needs, training gaps, internship opportunities, and youth retention strategies.	Economic development organizations	Schools, employers, Ivy Tech or other education partners, workforce partners, nonprofit organizations	Short-Term	Roundtable established; workforce priorities identified
Goal 4	Support business retention, expansion, entrepreneurship, and small business development throughout the County.	Economic development organizations	Chambers of commerce, municipalities, County Commissioners, local businesses, lenders	Ongoing	Business visits, support programs, or expansion efforts documented
Goal 4	Strengthen tourism by connecting lake recreation, Indiana Beach, downtowns, trails, events, local businesses, and year-round visitor activity.	Tourism organizations	Municipal governments, economic development organizations, business owners, park providers, community organizations	Medium-Term / Ongoing	Tourism initiatives or partnerships advanced

Plan Goal / Strategy	Recommended Action	Lead Entity	Key Partners	Timeframe	Progress Measure
Goal 4	Evaluate major emerging economic opportunities, such as data centers, battery storage, renewable energy, and advanced industry uses, using clear standards and technical review.	Area Plan Commission	County Commissioners, County Attorney, utility providers, public safety agencies, third-party technical reviewers	Short-Term / Ongoing	Review procedures established; technical studies required when appropriate
Goal 4	Encourage redevelopment and reuse of underused commercial, industrial, and institutional sites.	Municipal governments	Economic development organizations, Area Plan Commission, property owners, developers	Medium-Term / Ongoing	Redevelopment sites identified; reuse projects supported
Goal 5: Strengthen Communities and Quality of Life	Identify a short list of quality-of-life projects that may be advanced through grants, partnerships, or local investment.	Municipal governments and community organizations	County Commissioners, parks, schools, libraries, nonprofits, tourism organizations	Short-Term	Priority quality-of-life project list prepared
Goal 5	Support downtowns, community centers, and rural settlement areas as important places for civic life, local business, events, and community identity.	Municipal governments	Main Street organizations, business owners, tourism organizations, County Commissioners, residents	Ongoing	Downtown or community center projects advanced
Goal 5	Improve coordination among nonprofit organizations, local governments, schools, and service providers addressing youth, seniors, childcare, health, recreation, and family support.	Community organizations	Municipal governments, County Commissioners, schools, healthcare providers, faith-based organizations	Short-Term / Ongoing	Coordination meetings or shared initiatives established

Plan Goal / Strategy	Recommended Action	Lead Entity	Key Partners	Timeframe	Progress Measure
Goal 5	Support parks, trails, recreation, lake access, wellness facilities, and outdoor amenities that serve both residents and visitors.	Park providers and municipal governments	County Commissioners, tourism organizations, schools, nonprofit organizations, state and federal funding partners	Medium-Term / Ongoing	Recreation projects, trail planning, or lake access improvements advanced
Goal 5	Encourage youth engagement, leadership development, internships, volunteer opportunities, and civic involvement by younger residents.	Schools and youth-serving organizations	County Commissioners, municipalities, employers, nonprofit organizations, economic development partners	Medium-Term / Ongoing	Youth engagement programs or events implemented
Goal 5	Preserve and promote historic, cultural, agricultural, and small-town assets as part of White County's identity.	Municipal governments and community organizations	Tourism organizations, historical groups, property owners, schools, residents	Ongoing	Cultural or historic preservation activities supported
Goal 6: Foster Effective Governance and Collaboration	Establish an annual Comprehensive Plan implementation review led by the Area Plan Commission.	Area Plan Commission	Area Plan Office, County Commissioners, municipal governments, partner organizations	Short-Term / Ongoing	Annual implementation review completed
Goal 6	Prepare a brief annual progress memo documenting completed actions, current barriers, emerging issues, and recommended next steps.	Area Plan Office	Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, municipalities	Short-Term / Ongoing	Annual progress memo prepared
Goal 6	Continue intergovernmental coordination among White County, Monticello, Brookston, Chalmers, Reynolds, Wolcott, Monon, and other local partners.	County Commissioners and municipal governments	Area Plan Commission, Area Plan Office, public agencies, utility providers	Ongoing	Coordination meetings held; shared issues documented

Plan Goal / Strategy	Recommended Action	Lead Entity	Key Partners	Timeframe	Progress Measure
Goal 6	Explore shared staffing, shared services, grant-writing support, or project management assistance for smaller communities with limited capacity.	County Commissioners	Municipal governments, KIRPC, Community Foundation, nonprofit partners, regional agencies	Medium-Term	Shared capacity options evaluated
Goal 6	Modernize public communication about planning, development proposals, ordinance updates, public hearings, and major community issues.	Area Plan Office	County Commissioners, municipal governments, communications staff, community organizations	Short-Term / Ongoing	Improved communication tools or procedures implemented
Goal 6	Create a clear, impact-based procedure for heightened review of major development proposals, including defined circumstances for technical studies and independent third-party review.	Area Plan Commission	County Attorney, County Commissioners, public safety agencies, utility providers, outside technical consultants	Short-Term	Major-development review procedure established and used when warranted
Goal 6	Review and update the Comprehensive Plan periodically so it remains current and useful.	Area Plan Commission	County Commissioners, municipalities, residents, partner organizations	Ongoing / Long-Term	Annual reviews, five-year evaluation, and future plan update completed

10.4 Funding and Partnerships

The Comprehensive Plan identifies actions that will require time, staff capacity, public investment, private investment, and outside funding. Some recommendations can be carried out through normal staff work or local decision-making. Others will require grants, partnerships, capital improvement planning, or shared resources among several organizations.

White County and its municipalities should treat this Plan as a tool for funding and partnership development. A clear adopted plan can help the County and its partners show that projects are tied to public input, local priorities, and long-term policy direction. This can strengthen grant applications and help partners coordinate around shared goals.

Funding Approach

No single funding source will be sufficient to implement the Plan. White County should use a layered funding approach that combines local funds, outside grants, private investment, and partner contributions.

Potential funding sources may include:

- Local capital improvement funds;
- County and municipal budget allocations;
- State and federal grant programs;
- Regional planning and transportation funds;
- Economic development revenues and incentives;
- Public-private partnerships;
- Philanthropic and nonprofit funding;
- Developer contributions and commitments;
- Utility and broadband provider investment;
- Park, recreation, trail, and tourism funding sources; and
- Private property owner and business investment.

The County should be strategic when pursuing outside funds. Grant applications are most competitive when projects are well-defined, locally supported, and ready to move forward. For that reason, the County and its partners should maintain a list of priority projects, probable costs, needed local match, responsible parties, and likely funding sources. This list should be reviewed each year as part of the Plan's implementation review.

Grant Readiness

Many communities miss funding opportunities because projects are not ready when grant cycles open. White County and its municipalities should improve grant readiness by preparing basic project information before funding is available.

For priority projects, this may include:

- A clear project description;
- A planning-level cost estimate;
- A map or project location;
- Identification of the lead applicant;
- Documentation of public support;
- A list of likely partners;
- Identification of local match sources;
- Basic engineering, design, or feasibility work where needed; and
- A statement showing how the project supports this Comprehensive Plan.

This approach is especially important for infrastructure, housing, broadband, parks, trails, downtown improvements, public safety, and community facility projects.

Local Match and Capital Planning

Many grant programs require a local match. White County and its municipalities should plan ahead for these match requirements. A project may be a high priority, but it may not be competitive or feasible if no local match is available.

The County and municipalities should consider setting aside funds for priority implementation projects, especially those that can leverage larger outside grants. Capital planning should be tied to the Growth Policy Areas, Future Land Use Map, and Implementation Matrix so that public investment supports the locations and actions identified in this Plan.

When possible, local funding should be used to leverage outside dollars rather than carry the full cost of a project. Even small local investments can help prepare projects, complete early design work, or make grant applications stronger.

Partnerships

Partnerships will be essential to successful implementation. Many of the Plan's recommendations fall outside the direct authority of any one office, board, or organization. Housing, workforce development, childcare, broadband, tourism, infrastructure, farmland preservation, and quality of life all require coordination across multiple groups.

Important implementation partners include:

- White County Commissioners;
- White County Area Plan Commission;
- Area Plan Office;
- Municipal governments;
- School corporations;
- Utility and broadband providers;
- Public safety agencies;
- Drainage authorities;
- Park and recreation providers;
- Economic development organizations;
- Tourism organizations;
- Chambers of commerce;
- Agricultural organizations;
- Purdue Extension;
- Soil and Water Conservation District;
- Nonprofit and civic organizations;
- Healthcare, childcare, and social service providers;
- Employers and business owners;
- Developers and property owners;
- Regional planning organizations;
- State and federal agencies; and
- Residents.

Each partner will have a different role. Some partners may lead projects. Others may provide funding, technical knowledge, land, facilities, outreach, volunteers, or political support.

Shared Capacity for Smaller Communities

Several White County communities have limited staff capacity. This can make it difficult to pursue grants, manage projects, review development proposals, update local policies, or coordinate infrastructure improvements. The County should explore ways to help smaller communities share capacity.

This may include:

- Shared grant-writing support;
- Shared project management assistance;
- Joint planning or technical services;
- Shared code enforcement or inspection support;
- Interlocal agreements for specific projects;
- County assistance with mapping, data, or public communication;
- Regional partnerships for transportation, broadband, housing, and infrastructure; and
- Regular coordination meetings among County and municipal officials.

Shared capacity does not mean that every community must have the same priorities. It means that communities can work together when they face similar challenges or when a joint approach makes a project more realistic.

Public-Private Partnerships

Private investment will play an important role in implementing this Plan. New housing, business development, utility improvements, broadband expansion, downtown reinvestment, tourism improvements, agricultural investment, and redevelopment of underused properties will often depend on private property owners, developers, employers, and service providers.

The County should use public-private partnerships carefully and transparently. These partnerships should provide a clear public benefit, such as infrastructure improvement, job creation, housing production, tax base growth, redevelopment, public access, or protection of community resources.

For major development proposals, partnerships may also include written commitments, development agreements, infrastructure agreements, road use agreements, drainage commitments, public safety coordination, or third-party technical review. These tools should be used to make sure development supports the goals of this Plan and does not place unreasonable costs on local taxpayers.

Annual Funding and Partnership Review

As part of the annual implementation review, the Area Plan Commission, County Commissioners, municipalities, and partner organizations should review funding needs and partnership opportunities. This review should address:

- Which priority projects are ready for funding;
- Which projects need additional planning or cost estimates;
- Which grants or funding programs may be available;
- Which projects require local match;
- Which partners should be involved;
- Which communities need technical or staffing support;
- Which private investments could help carry out the Plan; and
- Which actions should be added, delayed, or revised.

10.5 Ongoing Public Engagement

Public engagement should continue after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan is intended to guide decisions over many years, and new issues will arise as conditions change. Residents, landowners, businesses, farmers, community organizations, public agencies, and local officials should continue to have opportunities to understand, discuss, and help shape important planning decisions.

Ongoing public engagement is especially important when White County considers major development proposals, ordinance updates, infrastructure investments, public facility improvements, housing initiatives, park and recreation projects, or amendments to this Plan. These decisions can affect property owners, neighborhoods, agricultural operations, public services, and community character. Public input should therefore be part of the process before major decisions are made.

Meaningful engagement helps White County:

- Build trust and transparency;
- Improve decision-making;
- Identify emerging issues;
- Understand community concerns and trade-offs;
- Explain how decisions relate to the Comprehensive Plan;
- Encourage community ownership; and
- Strengthen implementation.

Engagement Principles

Future public engagement should be clear, accessible, and timely. Residents should be able to understand what decision is being considered, why it matters, how it relates to the Comprehensive Plan, and how they can participate.

White County should use the following principles when designing future engagement efforts:

- **Use plain language.** Public materials should avoid unnecessary technical language. When technical terms are needed, they should be explained clearly.
- **Engage early.** Public input is most useful before decisions are mostly complete. Early engagement allows residents to help identify concerns, opportunities, and trade-offs.
- **Use more than one method.** No single meeting, survey, or notice reaches everyone. Engagement should include a mix of in-person, online, written, and informal methods when possible.
- **Be transparent about the decision.** Public materials should explain whether the County is gathering ideas, testing options, reviewing a specific proposal, considering an ordinance, or preparing for a formal vote.
- **Show how input was used.** When possible, the County should summarize public comments and explain how they influenced the final recommendation or decision.
- **Respect different perspectives.** Many planning issues involve real trade-offs. Public engagement should allow disagreement while keeping the process factual, respectful, and focused on community decision-making.

Engagement Methods

White County should continue using a variety of engagement methods based on the type and importance of the issue being considered. These may include:

- Public meetings and open houses;
- Online surveys;
- Project webpages;
- Interactive maps or online comment tools;
- Pop-up engagement at community events;
- Stakeholder interviews or focus groups;
- Small-group meetings with affected property owners or community partners;
- Presentations to municipal councils, boards, schools, civic groups, or community organizations;
- Public workshops on specific topics, such as housing, infrastructure, agriculture, renewable energy, data centers, trails, or downtown revitalization;
- Written comment periods;
- Frequently asked questions and issue summaries; and
- Regular updates through County and municipal communication channels.

The level of engagement should match the importance of the decision. A routine administrative action may require only standard notice and public meeting procedures. A major ordinance update, large development proposal, infrastructure investment, or Comprehensive Plan amendment may require broader outreach and clearer public education.

Engagement for Major Development Proposals

Major development proposals can raise questions about traffic, drainage, utilities, public safety, farmland conversion, property values, noise, visual impacts, and community character. For proposals with significant public interest or potential community impact, the County should encourage early communication among applicants, staff, affected property owners, public safety agencies, utility providers, and local officials.

When appropriate, applicants should be encouraged or required to provide clear public information about the proposal, including project location, site layout, expected land use, infrastructure needs, anticipated public benefits, potential impacts, and proposed mitigation measures. For complex proposals, third-party technical review may also help the public and decision-makers understand the facts before action is taken.

Public engagement for major development proposals should not replace the formal review process required by ordinance or state law. Instead, it should help make that process more informed, transparent, and constructive.

Engagement for Ordinance Updates and Policy Changes

Updates to the zoning ordinance, subdivision control ordinance, development standards, or other planning policies should include public education. Residents and property owners should be able to understand what is changing, why the change is being proposed, and how the change may affect future development or property use.

For major ordinance updates, the County should consider preparing a plain-language summary, comparison table, frequently asked questions, or presentation before formal adoption hearings. This is especially important for topics that are complex or controversial, such as renewable energy, battery storage, data centers, housing flexibility, agricultural protection, short-term rentals, development review procedures, and infrastructure standards.

Engagement with Youth and Future Generations

The Comprehensive Plan emphasizes the importance of future generations. White County should continue to seek input from young residents, students, young adults, and working families. These groups may not always attend traditional public meetings, but they are directly affected by decisions related to housing, jobs, transportation, recreation, childcare, schools, and quality of life.

Future engagement efforts should include methods that are easier for younger residents to access, such as school-based activities, online surveys, social media promotion, youth leadership discussions, employer-based outreach, and events held at times and locations that are convenient for working families.

Annual Engagement and Reporting

Ongoing engagement should be tied to the annual implementation review described in this chapter. Each year, the Area Plan Commission should provide a brief public update on Plan implementation. This update should identify actions completed, actions underway, barriers encountered, emerging issues, and priorities for the next year.

The annual update does not need to be lengthy. A short presentation, memo, public meeting item, or online summary can help residents understand that the Plan remains active and that implementation is being tracked.

10.6 Monitoring and Plan Maintenance

The Comprehensive Plan should be treated as a working document. It should guide decisions after adoption, but it should also be reviewed and updated as conditions change. New development proposals, infrastructure needs, housing trends, economic opportunities, public concerns, and state or federal programs may affect how the Plan is implemented over time.

Monitoring and maintenance are intended to keep the Plan useful. They also help the County explain what has been completed, what remains unfinished, and what new issues may need attention.

Annual Implementation Review

The Area Plan Commission should review implementation progress at least once each year. This review may be completed as a regular meeting item, short staff memo, public presentation, or annual progress report.

The annual review should address:

- Actions completed during the past year;
- Actions currently underway;
- Actions that have not yet started;
- Barriers to implementation, such as funding, staffing, legal issues, or lack of partners;
- Major development decisions made during the year;
- Ordinance updates completed or still needed;
- Infrastructure, housing, agriculture, economic development, and quality-of-life priorities;
- Public input received during the year; and
- Recommended priorities for the next year.

The annual review does not need to be lengthy. Its purpose is to keep the Plan visible and active. A short, consistent annual review will help local officials, residents, and partner organizations understand whether the County is making progress.

Progress Measures

White County should use simple progress measures to track implementation. These measures should focus on whether the County and its partners are taking action, not only whether every long-term outcome has been achieved.

Progress measures may include:

- Number of implementation actions started or completed;
- Zoning or subdivision ordinance amendments adopted;
- Major development proposals reviewed for consistency with the Plan;
- Acres of farmland converted to non-agricultural use;
- Housing units approved, built, or rehabilitated;
- Infrastructure projects funded or completed;
- Grant applications submitted and awarded;
- Public engagement activities completed;
- Intergovernmental coordination meetings held;
- Partnerships formed with schools, nonprofits, employers, utilities, or community organizations; and
- Updates made to maps, data, or technical studies.

These measures should be reviewed with the Implementation Matrix in Section 10.3. The County may revise or add measures over time as priorities change.

Five-Year Progress Evaluation

Approximately five years after adoption, White County should complete a more detailed progress evaluation. This evaluation should determine whether the Plan's goals, policies, maps, and implementation priorities are still current.

The five-year evaluation should consider:

- Progress on the Critical Path Strategies;
- Changes in population, housing, employment, agriculture, and development trends;
- New infrastructure needs or capacity constraints;
- Major rezonings, subdivisions, or development approvals since adoption;
- Changes in state or federal law;
- New funding opportunities;
- Public concerns or emerging community issues;
- Whether the Growth Policy Areas and Future Land Use Map remain accurate; and
- Whether minor amendments to the Plan are needed.

The five-year evaluation may result in a short update memo, revised implementation priorities, map corrections, or targeted amendments. A full rewrite of the Plan is not usually necessary at the five-year point unless conditions have changed significantly.

Plan Amendments

Minor amendments may be needed before the next full update. Amendments may be appropriate when new information becomes available, when a major public investment changes growth expectations, when an adopted policy needs clarification, or when a map correction is needed.

Plan amendments should be considered carefully. The County should avoid changing the Plan only to support a single project unless the change is also consistent with the Plan's broader goals and long-term policy direction.

When a proposed amendment is considered, decision-makers should ask:

- What condition or issue has changed since adoption?
- Is the amendment consistent with the Plan's vision and goals?
- Does the amendment support responsible growth and public investment?
- Would the amendment create conflicts with agriculture, neighborhoods, infrastructure, public safety, or community character?
- Has the public had a reasonable opportunity to understand and comment on the proposed change?

Comprehensive Plan Update

A full update of the Comprehensive Plan should occur approximately every ten years, or sooner if major changes make the Plan outdated. A full update should include new data, public engagement, review of prior implementation progress, updated goals and policies, and revised maps.

A comprehensive update may be needed sooner if White County experiences major population change, significant development pressure, major infrastructure expansion, substantial changes in agriculture or the economy, or new state or federal requirements that affect local planning.

Responsibility for Plan Maintenance

The Area Plan Commission should have primary responsibility for monitoring the Plan and recommending updates. The Area Plan Office should support this work by tracking implementation activity, preparing review materials, and coordinating with County departments, municipalities, and partner organizations.

The County Commissioners, municipal governments, public agencies, schools, utilities, economic development organizations, nonprofit organizations, agricultural partners, businesses, and residents also have important roles. The Plan will be most effective when many partners use it to guide their own decisions, projects, and investments.

Keeping the Plan Active

The Comprehensive Plan should not sit on a shelf after adoption. It should be used when reviewing development proposals, preparing ordinance amendments, setting infrastructure priorities, pursuing grants, coordinating with municipalities, and discussing major community issues.

By reviewing the Plan regularly and updating it when needed, White County can keep its planning work current, practical, and connected to community priorities. The future of the County will not be shaped by this document alone, but by the decisions, partnerships, and investments made over time.

Appendices

Appendix A: Existing Conditions Report

Appendix B: Public Engagement Summary

Appendix C: Projections Methodology

Appendix A: Existing Conditions Report

(Separate document on website)

Appendix B: Public Engagement Summary

Purpose of This Appendix

This appendix documents the public outreach methods, schedule, participation levels, and key findings that informed the White County Comprehensive Plan. The outreach program was designed to meet statutory expectations for public involvement, exceed minimum best practices for rural county planning, and ensure that community values directly shaped plan goals, policies, land use guidance, and implementation priorities. The engagement process emphasized transparency, accessibility, geographic reach, and sector diversity, recognizing that White County includes both incorporated communities and extensive rural areas with varied interests and constraints.

Public Outreach Goals

The outreach program was structured around five primary objectives:

1. **Inform** residents and stakeholders about the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan and how it would be used.
2. **Listen** to community concerns, priorities, and lived experience.
3. **Test assumptions** derived from data analysis and the Existing Conditions Report.
4. **Identify tradeoffs** among land use, infrastructure, agriculture, housing, and economic development.
5. **Build consensus** around goals, priorities, and near-term implementation strategies.

Overall Outreach Timeline

Public engagement occurred throughout the planning process, with increasing specificity over time.

Period	Engagement Focus
Spring 2025	Awareness-building, issue identification
Summer 2025	Validation of findings; land use and growth discussions
Fall 2025	Testing of goals, priorities, and strategies
Winter 2025	Confirmation of direction and implementation focus

This phased approach allowed early input to shape later recommendations rather than reacting to a completed plan.

Engagement Methods

1. Countywide Public Survey #1 (Spring 2025)

Purpose:
To gather broad input on community priorities, challenges, and perceptions early in the planning process.
Timing:
Launched Spring 2025; open approximately 30 days.
Format:
Online survey accessible via desktop and mobile devices.
Participation:
• **283 completed responses**, an unusually strong response rate for a rural county.
Topics Covered:
• Quality of life
• Housing availability and condition
• Infrastructure and utilities
• Economic development and employment
• Agriculture and farmland
• Renewable energy perceptions
• Parks, lakes, and recreation
• Transportation and safety
Key Findings:
• Housing diversity and availability emerged as a top concern.
• Infrastructure capacity—particularly water, sewer, and broadband—was widely cited as limiting growth.
• Strong support for agriculture as a defining County asset.
• Mixed but strongly held views on renewable energy development.
• Broad interest in expanded recreation, lake access, and community amenities.

Survey results directly informed the Existing Conditions Report and Steering Committee discussions.

2. Community Event Outreach (Summer 2025)

Purpose:
To reach residents who may not participate in online surveys or formal meetings.
Events Included:
• **White County Fair (July 2025)**
• **Spirit of Monticello Festival**
• Other community gatherings and municipal events
Methods:
• Informational displays
• One-on-one conversations
• Distribution of plan information and survey links
Key Outcomes:
• Increased visibility of the planning effort
• Input from a broader demographic cross-section
• Reinforced importance of lakes, small towns, and agriculture
• Helped validate survey findings

3. Stakeholder Meetings (April–May 2025)

While technically distinct from general public outreach, stakeholder meetings played a critical role in capturing in-depth community perspectives and are included here for completeness.

Participants Included:

- Agricultural producers
- Renewable energy developers
- Renewable energy–affected residents
- Business and development community
- County and municipal officials
- Education and nonprofit leaders
- Regional partners (KIRPC and neighboring counties)

Format:

Facilitated group discussions focused on issues, opportunities, and constraints.

Key Findings:

- Small-town institutional capacity is a major limiting factor.
- Housing feasibility is constrained by utilities and market conditions.
- Renewable energy requires clearer, defensible standards rather than prohibitions.
- Childcare and healthcare gaps directly affect workforce retention.
- Strong interest in coordinated infrastructure and grant-seeking efforts.

A full summary is provided in the Stakeholder Input Report.

4. Steering Committee Engagement (April–October 2025)

A representative Steering Committee provided structured public oversight and guidance.

Meetings Held:

- **Steering Committee #1 – April 10, 2025**
- **Steering Committee #2 – July 31, 2025**
- **Steering Committee #3 – October 15, 2025**

Activities Included:

- Review of Existing Conditions
- SWOT-style discussions
- Drafting and refinement of goals
- Land use trade-off analysis using the “White County-Oppoly” exercise
- Review of emerging policy direction

Key Contributions:

- Identified institutional capacity as a top countywide issue
- Supported infrastructure-ready growth strategy
- Emphasized need for housing diversity
- Helped balance competing perspectives on renewable energy
- Shaped the final goals and objectives

5. Countywide Public Survey #2 (Fall 2025)

Purpose:
To test draft Goals and Objectives and assess community priorities and tradeoffs before finalizing recommendations.

Timing:
Launched mid-October 2025; open approximately 30 days.

Focus Areas:
- Agreement with proposed goals
- Ranking of priority actions
- Perceptions of growth tradeoffs
- Tourism and quality-of-life priorities
- High-level land use considerations

Notable Adjustments:
At the request of elected officials, Survey #2 was advanced earlier than originally scheduled to demonstrate visible public engagement during fall 2025.

Key Findings:
- Strong emphasis on housing, infrastructure, and childcare
- Continued demand for clear renewable energy standards
- High value placed on lakes, trails, and year-round amenities

Summary of Public Outreach Findings

Across all engagement methods, several consistent themes emerged:

- Strong support for **housing diversification and reinvestment**
- Recognition that **infrastructure limits growth**
- Desire to **protect agriculture while allowing flexibility**
- Demand for **clear, fair renewable energy standards**
- Concern about **childcare, healthcare, and senior services**
- Interest in **lakes, trails, and quality-of-life amenities**
- Awareness that **small towns need more technical capacity**

These findings directly informed the plan's Vision, Goals, Land Use Framework, Planning Topics, and Critical Path Strategies.

Role of Public Input in Plan Development

Public outreach was integrated at every stage of plan development:

- Survey #1 shaped the Existing Conditions Report
- Stakeholder meetings refined problem statements
- Steering Committee input guided goal development
- Survey #2 tested draft recommendations
- Open houses confirmed implementation priorities

As a result, the Comprehensive Plan reflects not only data analysis, but the lived experience and priorities of White County residents.

Conclusion

The public outreach program for the White County Comprehensive Plan was robust, inclusive, and iterative. It provided multiple opportunities for residents and stakeholders to shape the plan over time, ensuring that final recommendations are grounded in community values, practical realities, and shared aspirations for the County's future.

Appendix C: Projections Methodology

1. General Principles and Methodological Framework

1.1 Planning Objective

The primary objective was to develop **order-of-magnitude projections** for residential, commercial, and industrial land demand that:

- Are grounded in recognized demographic and economic datasets;
- Explicitly account for regional growth pressures;
- Can be adjusted as assumptions change; and
- Are suitable for informing long-range land use policy rather than site-level zoning decisions.

To that end, projections were developed using a spreadsheet-based model that allows assumptions—especially the degree of growth diversion from Tippecanoe County—to be modified and tested for sensitivity.

1.2 Data Sources

The following data sources were used consistently across all land use categories:

- **Existing Land Use:** White County Auditor parcel-based land use data.
- **Demographic and Economic Projections:** Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. countywide projections (population, households, household size, and earnings by sector).
- **Community-Level Population Data:** U.S. Census and ACS data used to "step down" countywide projections to individual communities.
- **Local Planning Documents:**
  - City of Monticello Comprehensive Plan (2023, OCRA-funded).
- **Projection Horizon:** 2025 (baseline year) to 2050.

1.3 Regional Spillover Assumptions

A central feature of the methodology is the explicit recognition that White County's future growth is influenced by **recent and planned residential and employment growth in northern Tippecanoe County**. Rather than assuming White County grows independently, the model incorporates:

- A portion of Tippecanoe County's projected population growth shifting into White County; and
- A smaller, more conservative share of Tippecanoe County's employment and earnings growth spilling over, reflecting White County's role as a complementary rather than primary employment center.

Commercial land demand was further adjusted to reflect anticipated growth in **countywide tourism activity**, particularly around Lake Shafer, Lake Freeman, and Indiana Beach.

2. Residential Acreage Projections

2.1 Countywide Population Context

Table 1 summarizes the Woods & Poole population projections that establish the regional context.

Table 1. Woods & Poole Population Projections (2025–2050)

County	2025 Population	2050 Population	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Tippecanoe County	191,402	215,418	+24,016	+12.5%
White County (base)	24,885	24,490	−395	−1.6%

Two adjustments were then made:

1. **Tippecanoe County Diversion:**
   Ten percent of Tippecanoe County's growth (2,402 persons) was assumed to locate in White County by 2050.
2. **White County Adjustment:**
   Based on recent building permit activity, the White County 2050 population was adjusted upward to **26,130 persons**, representing approximately 5 percent growth rather than decline.

With the addition of diverted population, the revised **White County 2050 population is 28,530**, a net increase of 14.6 percent over 2025.

2.2 Community-Level Population "Step Down"

The countywide projection was allocated to individual communities using a combination of adopted plan assumptions and recent population trends.

- **Monticello:** Projections from the 2023 Comprehensive Plan were used (5,450 in 2025 to 5,910 in 2050).
- **Other Towns:** 2020–2025 trends were extended to 2050.
- **Unincorporated Areas:** Assumed modest growth.

Prior to applying Tippecanoe County diversions, baseline 2050 projections were as follows:

Table 2. Baseline 2050 Community Population Projections (Pre-Diversion)

Community	2025	2050
White County (total)	24,885	26,130
Monticello	5,450	5,910
Monon	1,950	2,000
Reynolds	500	550
Wolcott	930	1,000
Chalmers	550	600
Brookston	400	350
Unincorporated Areas	15,110	15,720

2.3 Allocation of Diverted Tippecanoe County Population

The 2,400 diverted residents were distributed as follows:

- **10% each** to Monticello, Monon, Reynolds, and Wolcott;
- **30% each** to Chalmers and Brookston.

This reflects proximity to growth pressures and relative development capacity.

Table 3. Revised 2050 Population Projections (Post-Diversion)

Community	2050 Pop
White County (total)	28,530
Monticello	7,330
Monon	2,480
Reynolds	680
Wolcott	1,240
Chalmers	1,030
Brookston	600
Unincorporated Areas	15,160

2.4 Household Growth and Residential Acreage

Woods & Poole projects an average household size of **2.41 persons per household in 2050**, compared to 2.39 in 2025. Applying this assumption yields the household increases shown below.

Table 4. Projected Household Change (2025–2050)

Area	Net New Households
White County	1,427
Monticello	761
Monon	213
Reynolds	74
Wolcott	125
Chalmers	198
Brookston	83
Unincorporated Areas	−28

Using representative residential densities for each community, the household increases were converted to land demand.

Table 5. Residential Acreage Change

Area	Acres (+/−)
White County (total)	+433.33
Monticello	+251.13
Monon	+70.39
Reynolds	+18.46
Wolcott	+31.37
Chalmers	+59.47
Brookston	+24.75
Unincorporated Areas	−22.25

3. Commercial Acreage Projections (Countywide)

Commercial land demand was assumed to scale proportionally with residential growth.

- **Without Tippecanoe County diversion:**
  94 new acres (approximately 5 percent over the 2025 base of 1,925 acres).
- **With Tippecanoe County diversion:**
  282 new acres.

To reflect increased tourism promotion and activity, a **2.5 percent premium** was applied to total commercial development (including existing), adding **55 acres**.

Total projected commercial growth (2025–2050): 337 acres

General Location Assumptions

- Tourism-related growth (55 acres): primarily near Monticello and Indiana Beach.
- Town-based growth: approximately 20 acres each in Monticello, Chalmers, and Burnettsville.
- Interstate-oriented growth:
  - 105 acres near SR 18 interchange
  - 105 acres near US 231 North interchange
  - 32 acres (15%) near US 231 South interchange

4. Industrial Acreage Projections

4.1 Earnings-Based Method

Given the increasing capital intensity of manufacturing, **manufacturing earnings** were used as a proxy for industrial land demand.

- **White County manufacturing earnings:**
  $171.0M (2025) → $222.4M (2050)
  Increase: $51.4M (+30%)

4.2 Tippecanoe County Spillover

A conservative **5 percent** of Tippecanoe County's manufacturing earnings growth was assumed to spill into White County:

- Tippecanoe County growth: $316M (2025–2050)
- 5% diversion: $15.8M

This results in **total White County manufacturing earnings of $238.2M in 2050**, a 39 percent increase over 2025.

Applying this increase to existing industrial acreage (1,925 acres) yields an estimated **962 acres of additional industrial land demand**.

4.3 General Location Assumptions

- SR 18 interchange: 30%
- US 231 North interchange: 30%
- US 231 South interchange: 10%
- Monticello: 10%
- Reynolds: 20% (reflecting central labor access)

5. Comparisons of Purdue Research Foundation work to Projected Demand

Recent work by the Purdue Research Foundation (PRF) did an assessment of supply of residential and industrial land, guided by a suitability assessment for the location of those uses. Table 6, below, shows the general comparison between demand and supply for these uses. The overall assessment is that supply significantly outstrips demand, which is desirable in that the County can accommodate all the projected demand. Furthermore, residential demand and supply seem reasonably distributed, although it appears that Monticello is starting to approach the limit of suitable residential sites. The proposed allocation of industrial land within the County is also comparable, although the PRF's avoidance of allocating industrial land to Reynolds may warrant further review.

Table 6. PRF comparisons: Acreage – demand and supply

<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="2">Residential acreage</th><th colspan="2">Industrial Acreage</th></tr>
<tr><th>Area</th><th>Demand</th><th>Supply</th><th>Demand</th><th>Supply</th></tr>
<tr><td>White County (total)</td><td>433.33</td><td>1,736</td><td>962</td><td>2,574</td></tr>
<tr><td>Monticello</td><td>251.13</td><td>288</td><td>96</td><td>257</td></tr>
<tr><td>Monon</td><td>70.39</td><td>247</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Reynolds</td><td>18.46</td><td>429</td><td>192</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Wolcott (inc. US 231N /I-65 interchange)</td><td>31.37</td><td>269</td><td>288</td><td>977</td></tr>
<tr><td>Chalmers (inc. US 231S /I-65 interchange)</td><td>59.47</td><td rowspan="2">503</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Brookston</td><td>24.75</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Elsewhere</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>384</td><td>1,570</td></tr>
</table>

6. Closing Observations

These projections are intentionally conservative, transparent, and policy-oriented. They are not intended to prescribe exact locations or timing of development, but rather to:

- Establish a **reasonable envelope of future land demand**;
- Inform land use categories and growth areas in the Comprehensive Plan; and
- Provide a defensible basis for discussion with the Area Plan Commission, elected officials, and the public.