

City of Kokomo

Comprehensive Plan

Kokomo Comprehensive Plan City of Kokomo, Indiana

Adopted: September 24, 2001



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Foreword

How should Kokomo manage orderly, long-term growth and development? Are community services and facilities adequate to serve current and future populations? Where should future residential, commercial, or industrial development locate? Are there sensitive, natural features within Kokomo that need to be protected or enhanced? These are just some of the issues addressed in a Comprehensive Plan.

In May 2000, the planning effort was initiated to revise Kokomo's 1948 Comprehensive Plan. Since a Comprehensive Plan addresses community issues, it was essential that citizens have a voice in shaping their community. In fact, the City leadership was emphatic that this effort be a grass roots effort.

Because public input was so vital to preparing a plan for Kokomo, a Steering Committee of seventeen people from diverse backgrounds was formed. This group was asked to serve as a sounding board on behalf of the community throughout the planning process. In addition, three public workshops and extensive key interest group interviews were held to gather information and ideas from the community.

The act of planning reflects a community's fundamental desire for a better future. By creating this Comprehensive Plan, the City of Kokomo recognized the strategic advantage of anticipating change, identifying problems, and capitalizing on opportunities. Ultimately, the Plan is intended to make the most efficient use of the land, and effective use of investments in utility services, streets, schools, and public parks. In addition, Kokomo must balance the impacts of the built environment with the protection of natural landscape.

The planning process generally incorporated three separate but interrelated phases:

- 1) data, information and statistics collection,
- 2) public input, and
- 3) plan preparation (adoption).

The Kokomo Comprehensive Plan reflects the current and anticipated needs of the City. It is a living document and must evolve with the evolution of the City. To be effective, this Plan should be reviewed, evaluated and, when necessary, updated to reflect changing trends, outlooks, and thinking. In this way, the Plan remains a relevant guide to the future growth and development of Kokomo.

Each chapter of the Plan contains strategies for the city to implement to successfully achieve the stated goals. Implementing all of the strategies simultaneously may not be possible and the city needs to set priorities based on availability of funding and other resources. City leaders should review the goals, objectives, and strategies listed in each chapter on an annual basis.

Table of Contents

Preface

Foreword	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Comprehensive Plan Mandate	v
Location and Historical Setting	vi

Part 1 - Comprehensive Plan Foundation

Chapter 1 - Community Profile

Demographics	5
Public Participation	11

Part 2 - Goals and Objectives

Chapter 2 - General Goals

Introduction	25
Health, Safety and Welfare	25
Quality of Life	25

Chapter 3 - Land Use

Introduction & Goal	28
Objectives & Strategies	29
Residential	30
Parks, Recreation & Open Space	30
Environmentally Sensitive Areas	31
Institutional	31
Commercial	32
Industrial	33
Future Land Use Map	34

Chapter 4 - Growth Management

Introduction & Goal	38
Objectives & Strategies	39
Infill & Redevelopment	40
Annexation	40
Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)	41

Chapter 5 - Transportation

Introduction & Goal	44
Objectives & Strategies	45
Pedestrian Networks	46
Public Transportation	46
Improvements to Existing Roads	47
US 31 Consideration	47
Street Hierarchy	48
Kokomo Municipal Airport	48
Transportation Plan	49

Chapter 6 - Community Facilities & Services

Introduction & Goal	52
Objectives & Strategies	53

Chapter 7 - Environmental

Introduction & Goal	56
Objectives & Strategies	57
Wildcat Creek Watershed	58
Floodplain Management	58
Riparian Forests	59
Woodlot Management	59
Water Quality	60
Wetland Conservation	60
Kokomo Wastewater System	61
Soil Quality & Management	61

Chapter 8 - Image & Identity

Introduction & Goal	64
Objectives & Strategies	65
Gateways	66
Downtown	66
Visitor Profile Survey	67

Chapter 9 - Economic Development

Introduction & Goal	70
Objectives & Strategies	71
Development Opportunities	72
Quality Schools	72

Chapter 10 - Parks and Recreation

Introduction & Goal	74
Objectives & Strategies	75
Park Enhancements	76

Chapter 11 - Conclusion

Summary	79
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Part 3 - Appendix

Survey Forms	83
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Acknowledgments

The City of Kokomo Comprehensive Plan is the result of hard work and contributions from many people. It is believed that a plan that does not involve those it hopes to serve will not be as successful. For this reason, the residents of the community were asked to put forth much effort, thoughts, ideas, goals, and visions. It is appropriate and necessary to give special recognition and appreciation to the following people who were integral to this planning process.

Special Thanks

Special thanks to the People of Kokomo, particularly those that attended the workshops and provided their valuable input into the planning process as well as the following people who made this effort possible.

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Comprehensive Plan Mandate

This Comprehensive Plan is based on community input, existing land uses, existing development trends, suitability, feasibility, and natural land features. Through this evaluation of Kokomo, the following elements were identified as key issues to be addressed by the plan.

- Community character and image,
- Traffic congestion along U.S. 31,
- Economic development and diversification,
- Protection of the natural environment,
- Redevelopment of under-utilized buildings/districts,
- Pedestrian trail system, and
- East-west thoroughfare through the city.

Indiana Statutes, Title 36, Article 7, as amended, empower cities to plan. This unit of government is charged with the purpose of improving "the health, safety, convenience, and welfare of the citizens and to plan for the future development of their communities to the end:

- 1 That highway systems [and street systems] be carefully planned;
- 2 That new communities grow only with adequate public way, utility, health, educational, and recreational facilities;
- 3 That the needs of agriculture, industry, and business be recognized in future growth;
- 4 That residential areas provide healthful surroundings for family life; and
- 5 That the growth of the community is commensurate with and promotive of the efficient and economical use of public funds" (IC 36-7-4-201).

Public law also states that a city may establish planning and zoning entities to fulfill this purpose (IC 36-7-4-201). These entities include a Planning Commission and a Board of Zoning Appeals.

The Indiana statutes provide for and require the development and maintenance of a comprehensive plan. The Plan Commission shall maintain the Comprehensive Plan (IC 36-7-4-501).

IC 36-7-4-502 and 503 state the required and permissible contents of a comprehensive plan. Required plan elements are listed below:

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

It is the duty of the Plan Commission to compile this and additional information permissible by case law into the Comprehensive Plan. This mandate serves as the foundation of the *Kokomo Comprehensive Plan*.

Property Rights Mandate

Our nation has developed a process, through public debate, the passage of legislation and the making of court decisions, for determining the balance between private, neighbor and community property rights. The process uses the open, public preparation and adoption of what is currently called a "Comprehensive Plan" for establishing policies describing community standards, hopes and desires. The process implements the adopted policies through the adoption of regulations, such as zoning, subdivision control and other ordinances, and the creation of programs and projects, such as economic development efforts and road and sewer improvements. The process permits the community determination of the balance between private, neighbor and community property rights within the context of constitutional rights, state and federal laws and court decisions.

*Statements in brackets [] are not part of the quotes but are added to clarify interpretation of the quote.

Location and Historical Setting

The City of Kokomo is a regional metropolitan area serving north-central Indiana. The major transportation routes include: US 31, 35 and SR 22; rail system; and municipal airport. These transportation modes facilitate the efficient movement of people, goods and services.

Kokomo's regional economic vitality dates back to its settlement in the early 19th century. Treaties signed with the Miami Indians in 1834, 1838 and 1840 allowed for the influx of white settlers into the swampy and densely forested area. During this time, David Foster founded the community of Kokomo and maintained a good trading relationship with the Miami Indians. In 1844, Kokomo was chosen as the County Seat of Justice of Howard County, formally known as Richardville County.

Fueled by the discovery of natural gas in 1886 and the completion of gravel roads and railroads, Kokomo rapidly developed into a regional industrial center. Although the supply of natural gas was limited, the industrial spirit of residents was not and Kokomo very quickly established itself as a "City of Firsts". In 1894, Elwood Haynes designed and built America's first automobile and later that same year, the first pneumatic rubber tire was invented by D.C. Spraker. George Kingston followed in 1902 with the development the first carburetor. In an effort to find tarnish-free tableware for his wife, Elwood Haynes discovered stellite cobalt-based alloy and stainless steel in 1906 and 1912 respectively. The industrial expansion of Kokomo continued through the First World War.

In the mid-1930s, Delco Radio Corporation and the Chrysler Corporation established operations in Kokomo. Much of the region was affected by the depression and both these corporations provided many employment opportunities and stimulated economic development throughout the community. Kokomo's industrial presence continued to grow through the Second World War where many war items were produced including the first all metal life boat (1941) and life raft (1943) nicknamed the "Kokomo Kid".

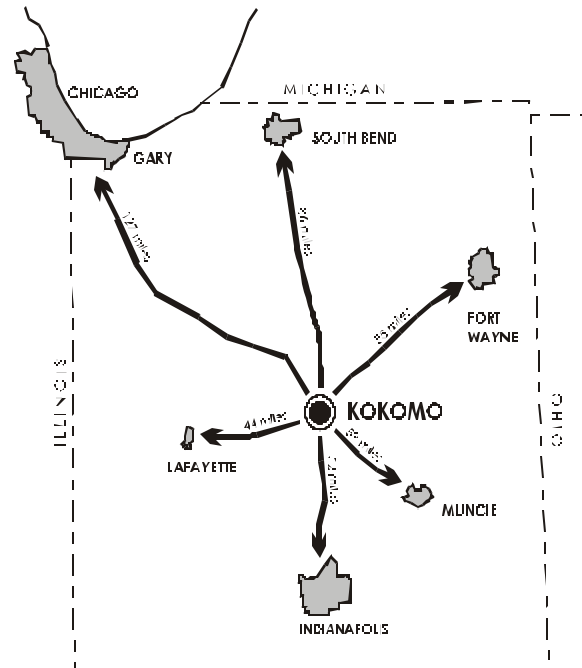


Figure 1: Location of Kokomo, Indiana.

Several notable inventions at Delco Radio Corporation have contributed to Kokomo's image as a City of Firsts. These include the first push-button car radio (1938), the first signal-seeking car radio (1947), and the first all transistor car radio (1957).

The City of Kokomo continues to enjoy a strong economy. Delphi Delco Electronic Systems, formally Delco Radio Corporation and the recently merged, Daimler-Chrysler remain the major employers in the area and create jobs not only within their industries, but also in the other businesses and services in Kokomo and the north-central Indiana region.

Part

1

Comprehensive Plan
Foundation



Chapter 1

Community Profile

Community Profile - Demographics

Introduction

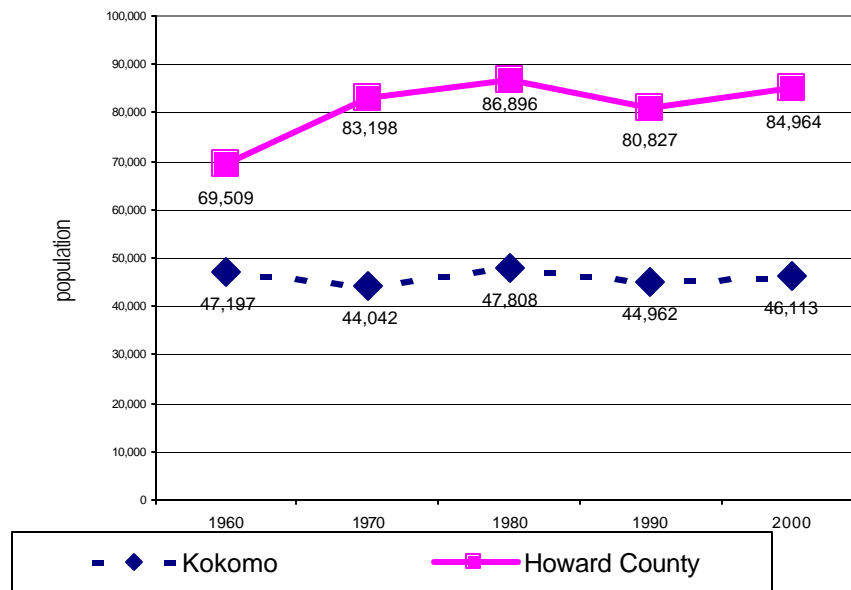
Planning for the future requires an investigation of the current influences affecting the community. This section contains demographic data including statistics and analysis compiled primarily from U.S. Census information.

Information was compiled in order to provide a “snapshot” of the community in population, income, educational level, housing characteristics, etc. Most information was taken from the U.S. Census conducted once every 10 years. Since this section also documents demographic trends, census information from a series of years was used in the charts.

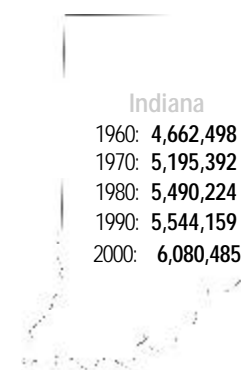
At the time of publication of this document, all of the 2000 census data was not yet available. The data on the following pages is from the most recent and available census unless otherwise stated. As a result of current date not being available, the contents of this plan is based more so on public input and discussions with community leaders than census data.

Community Profile - Demographics

Population

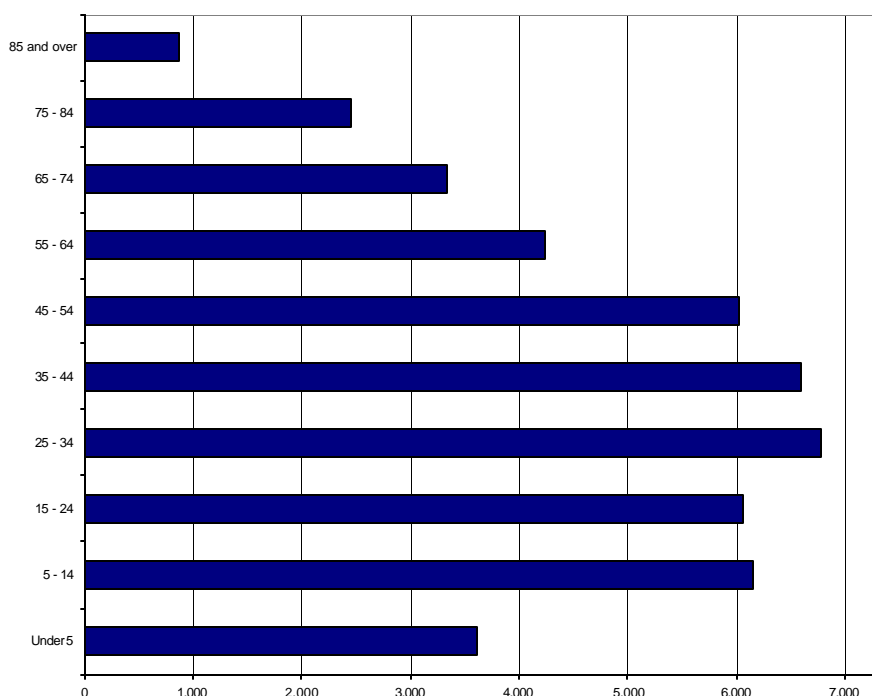


The 2000 Census data indicate that Kokomo and Howard County are below their 1980 population highs by 3.5% and 2.2% respectively. The state population has increased each of the last four decades, growing 10.8% since 1980.



Source: 2000 US Census

Age of Population



The Baby Boom Generation (1946-1964) comprised roughly 12,600 people or 27% of the Kokomo population in 2000.

In 2000, the Baby Boomers are 36 to 54 years old while their children, Generation Y, are 5 to 23 years old.

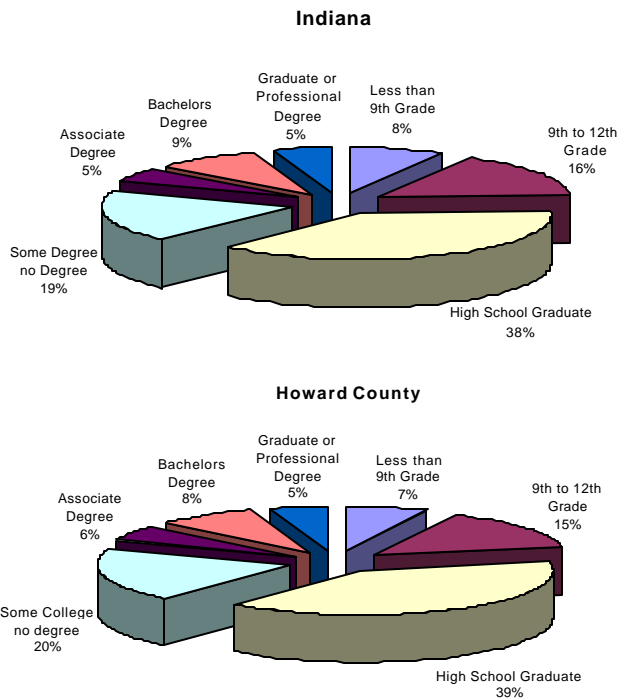
The national labor shortage is expected to continue until 2010 when Generation Y enters the labor force in large numbers.

Over the next thirty years, communities will need to ensure adequate health and emergency services, recreational, and housing opportunities are available for retired Baby Boomers.

Source: 2000 US Census

Community Profile - Demographics

Educational Attainment

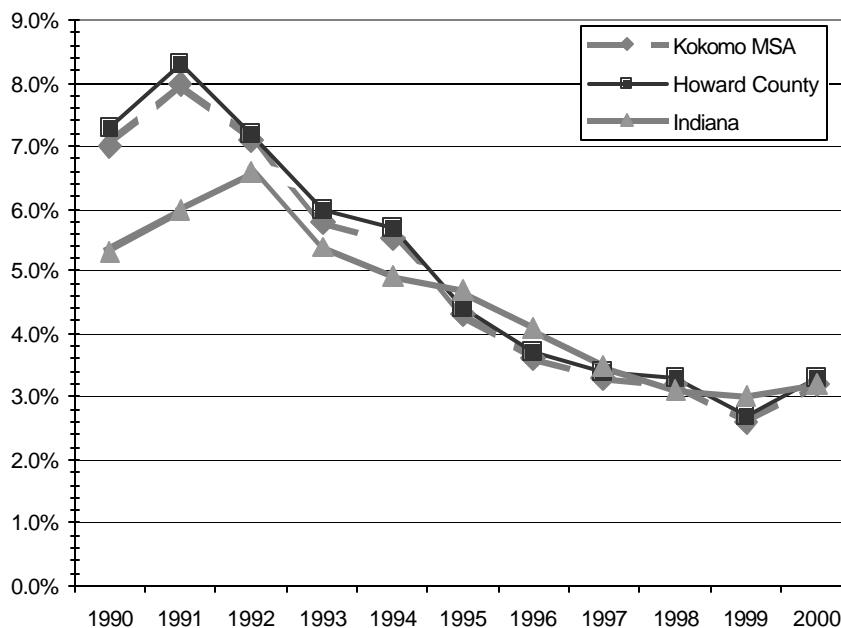


The accompanying pie charts show educational attainment levels for residents over 18, in Howard County and Indiana in 1990. As seen in the pie charts, the percentage breakdown of educational attainment levels was strikingly similar in Howard County and Indiana. At each educational attainment level, Kokomo was within one percentage point of the state level.

Source: 1990 US Census

Unemployment Rate

Annual Average Unemployment Rates



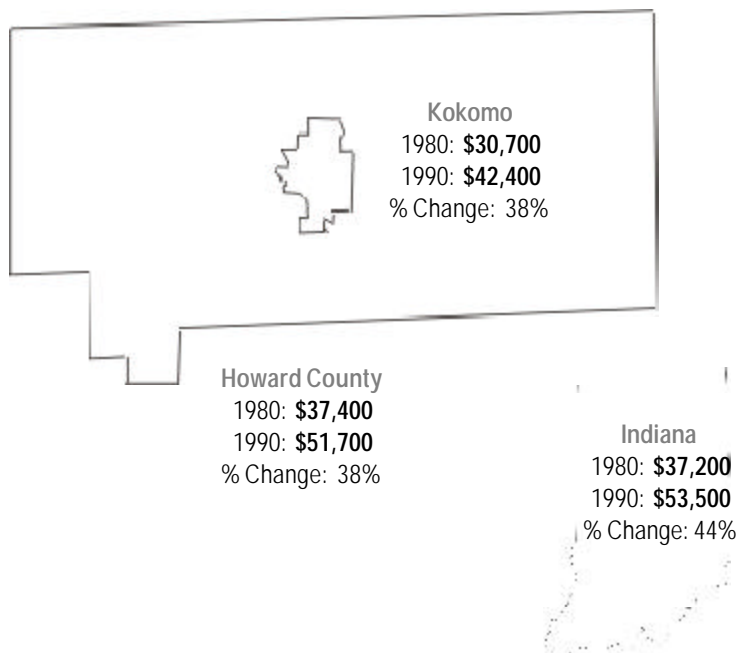
From 1990 to 1994, Kokomo and Howard County registered noticeably higher annual average unemployment rates than the statewide average. Kokomo and Howard County's rates peaked at 8% and 8.3% respectively in 1991, a year ahead of Indiana's peak of 6.6% in 1992.

Since the early 1990's, unemployment rates have dropped. In recent years, Kokomo and Howard County have experienced unemployment rates that are similar to the state's. The rise and fall of employment levels is consistent with nationwide economic and labor trends.

Source: Indiana Department of Workforce Development, 2000

Community Profile - Demographics

Median House Income



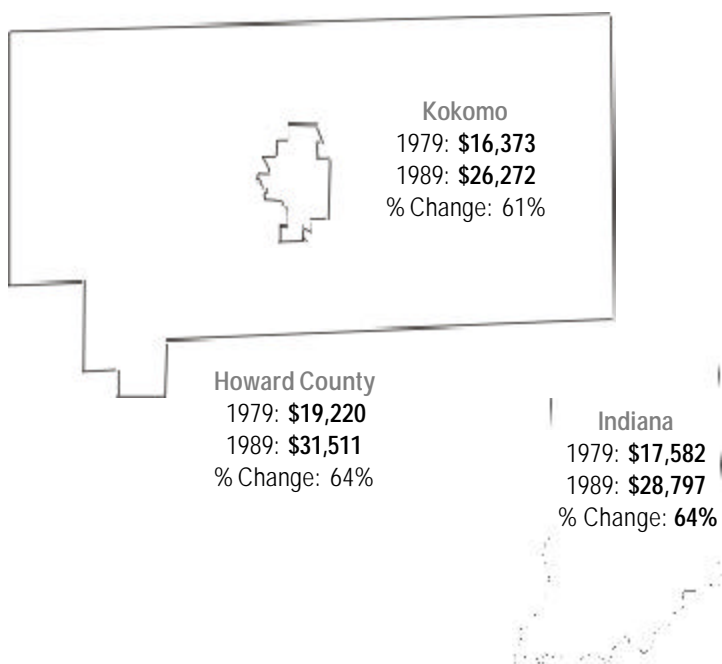
The median house value is the middle value from a sample of owner-occupied houses in Kokomo.

Between the years of 1980 and 1990, Kokomo's median house value rose 38%, in line with Howard County but lagging the statewide median increase of 44%.

Low housing values provide an opportunity for those wanting to buy homes within the area, but may also reduce the tax base within the community.

Source: 1980 & 1990 US Census

Median Household Income



Kokomo's median household income is determined by taking the income at the midpoint of a sample of households in Kokomo.

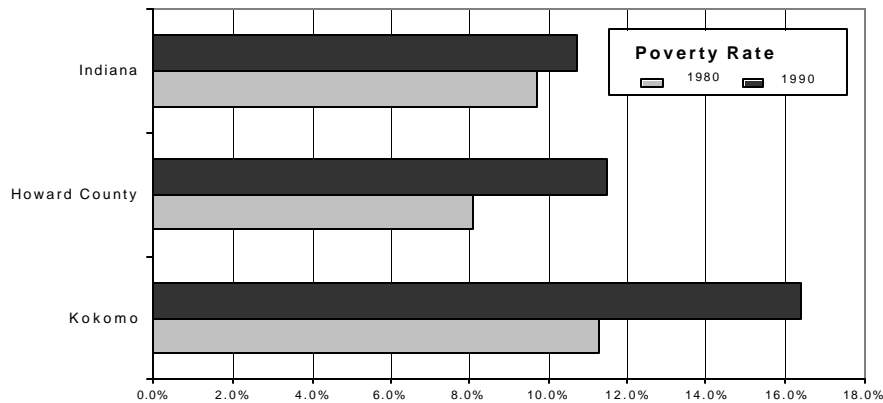
In 1979, Kokomo had a lower median household income than both Howard County and Indiana. Despite a 61% increase in Kokomo's median household income, Kokomo still underperformed both Howard County and Indiana in 1989.

Kokomo, Howard County, and Indiana incomes did not keep pace with nationwide inflation, reflected in the Consumer Price Index which rose 71% between 1979 and 1989.

Source: 1980 & 1990 US Census

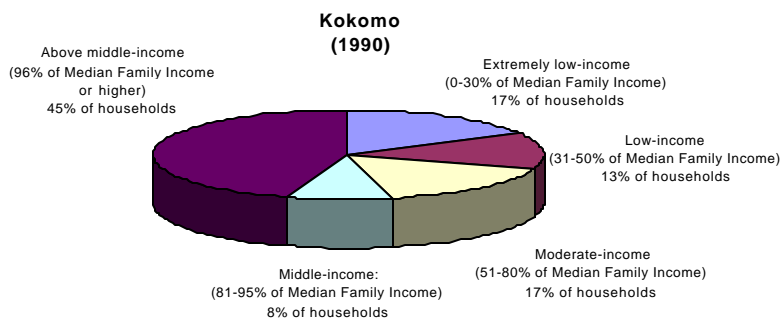
Community Profile - Demographics

Low & Moderate Income



The poverty rate, which is determined nationally, varies with the family size and the number of children under eighteen years old. The 1980 and 1990 poverty rates were \$8,351 and \$13,254, respectively, for a family of four with two children.

In 1980 and 1990, Kokomo had a higher poverty rate than the county and state. Poverty in Kokomo increased by 5 percentage points over the ten years.



Kokomo may be more susceptible than the rest of the state to cyclical changes in the economy since 35% of its workers are in manufacturing as opposed to 25% statewide. However, unemployment does correlate with poverty, given unemployment was close to 13% in 1980, compared to 8% in 1990.

The Kokomo Consolidated Plan for 1995 states affordable rental properties are needed for households earning less than 50% of the median family income.

Source: Indiana State Data Center, Kokomo Consolidated Plan 1995

Community Profile - Public Participation

Introduction

Public participation is the backbone of the comprehensive plan. This section summarizes the public participation efforts of this planning effort.

The public participation process included three separate public workshops. The workshops were publicized through articles and announcements in the local newspapers and on the radio. Postcards were sent to a random sample of citizens and announcements were made at local meetings. The process exceeded the requirements for public notification established by the State of Indiana.

The following pages summarize the data collected and workshop results.

Community Profile - Public Workshop #1

Introduction

The first public planning workshop for the Kokomo Comprehensive Plan was held on June 29, 2000. Two workshops were held in one evening, the first at a north location and the second at a south location. The purpose of this workshop was to determine the strengths, weaknesses, needs and dreams of the community. Approximately 25 individuals were in attendance at both workshops. Attendees were divided into small groups to ensure that everyone had a chance to voice their opinion. Small groups are generally more productive and allow everyone to hear one another more easily.

Strengths

The strengths or assets of a community enhance the quality of life of its residents. Kokomo has many strengths as identified by the participants in the first public workshop. The following is a list of common strengths identified by both workshop groups.

- Parks
- Greenspace
- Volunteer interest

Kokomo has many other strengths. The following is a list of items that were identified by at least one person in the workshop groups. The items are listed in no particular order.

Group 1

- Employment opportunities
- Good labor market
- Affordable quality housing
- Chrysler/GM/Delphi
- Greenspace with development

Group 2

- Wildcat Creek
- Revitalization of downtown and downtown events
- Theatre, Kokomo Symphony
- Multi-cultural festival and other events at IUK
- Park concerts
- Sieberling Mansion
- Elliott House
- Kirkendall Interpretive Center
- Automobile, Haynes, and County Museums
- Higher education (IUK, Ivy Tech, Purdue Extension, Wesleyan University)
- Cooperative high-tech training programs at schools
- New career center
- Road maintenance and sidewalks
- Free mulch at sewage treatment plant
- Public services
- City-County Cooperation
- Healthcare facilities
- Churches and social services
- Millennium Project
- Kokomo opalescent glass
- Civic Center
- Factory architecture

Community Profile - Public Workshop #1

Weaknesses

The weakness of a community can be harmful to the health, pride and image of the community. Weaknesses also lead to apathy and negative attitudes. The following common weaknesses were noted by both workshop groups.

- Not enough of an industrial base
- Lack/Maintenance of sidewalks
- Inadequate zoning ordinance (e.g. noise, light, land use conflicts, spot zoning)
- Traffic and aesthetics of US 31

The following is a list of other weaknesses identified by at least one person of each workshop group. The items listed below are in no particular order.

Group 1

- Traffic on Dixon Rd.
- East/west routes
- Infrastructure capacity as community grows
- Emergency services response time
- Public transportation
- Condition and availability of sidewalks
- Downtown parking
- Natural amenities

Group 2

- Gateways and image of Kokomo
- Outdated playground equipment
- Water quality of Wildcat Creek
- Incompatible land uses
- Billboards on Dixon Rd.
- Flooding
- Appearance of some neighborhoods
- Lack of bicycle and fitness trails

Needs

The following list is a summary of the common needs listed by both workshop groups. These are items that the participants feel are necessary for Kokomo to become a better place to live, work, and recreate.

- Restore and protect the natural drainage system to reduce flooding up/down stream
- Pedestrian linkages and sidewalks
- Better coordination between private and public interests

The following is a list of needs identified by at least one person in each workshop group. The items are listed in no particular order.

Group 1

- Billboard ordinance
- Beautification
- Enforcement of existing ordinances
- Infill/reuse development
- Increase the capacity of sanitary sewers for growth
- Remedy the combined sewer issue
- Mechanisms for redevelopment
- County master plan for drainage
- Downtown parking
- Viable industrial park

Group 2

- Sanitation plant
- Activities for young adults
- High paying jobs
- High tech industry
- Plan to reduce traffic congestion on US 31
- Stop lights at busy 4-way intersections
- Public transportation
- Lake
- Hotel, restaurants, conventions
- Removal of dike at Dixon and Markland
- Funding for the Millennium Project
- Expansion of recycling

Community Profile - Public Workshop #1

Dreams

Dreams are what the participants would like Kokomo to be if there were no political or financial restrictions. The following dreams were mentioned in both workshop groups.

- Entertainment center/district
- Restaurants

There were many other dreams noted by at least one person of the workshop groups. The items listed are in no particular order.

Group 1

- Convention center
- North/South and East/West access
- More efficient routes for trucks
- Pride in neighborhoods
- Removal of “grandfathered” land uses
- Neighborhood groups policing
- Change in philosophy from “small town” to “city”
- City-county unified decision-making (e.g. Unigov)
- Elimination of vacant lots and businesses

Group 2

- Transformation of US 31 with improved traffic flow and streetscape design
- Railway to Indianapolis, Chicago, and Lafayette
- Lake and mountain
- Fish caught in river safe for human consumption
- Rest stops and a truck stop between Kokomo and Indianapolis
- Professional football team and stadium concerts
- Underground parking
- State of the art sewage treatment

Community Profile - Public Workshop #2

Introduction

The second public workshop was held on August 22, 2000. Approximately 30 residents of Kokomo participated in the workshop. The purpose of this workshop was to discuss key phrases for the goals and objectives necessary to address the needs defined in the first workshop.

Needs Survey

A survey was distributed and completed by participants in the second workshop. The purpose of the survey was to help confirm information received in the first workshop as well as to give an indication of the opinions of newcomers in the process.

The needs survey was based on the input from the first workshop (strengths, weaknesses, needs and dreams) with a few items added by the consultant. Participants were asked to place a check mark next to the items they believed were needed in Kokomo. These survey results are not necessarily a true “snapshot” of the opinions of everyone in Kokomo. It does, however, do two things. First it helps to confirm the input of the first workshop. Secondly, the survey adds to the input gathered in the first workshop.

Twenty-seven surveys were submitted at the end of the meeting. The following chart illustrates the “Needs” voted on by 60% or more of the participants.

Overall (27 participants):	Responses	% of Total
Regulate signs and billboards	22	81%
Preserve historically and culturally important features	21	78%
Discourage incompatible land uses	20	74%
Require maintenance of vacant buildings and lots	20	74%
Focus on small business development	20	74%
Enhance the water quality of Wildcat and Kokomo Creeks	20	74%
Manage and direct growth	19	70%
Encourage unified decision-making between the city and county	19	70%
Enhance entrances into the city	19	70%
Better enforce nuisance ordinances	18	67%
Enhance recreation opportunities along/on Wildcat Creek	18	67%
Protect existing natural amenities	18	67%
Consider impact on natural resources when development proposed	18	67%
Focus on retaining and expanding existing industry	17	63%
Develop a county-wide masterplan to address drainage issues	17	63%

Community Profile - Public Workshop #2

Key Phrases for Goals & Objectives

Following the needs survey, participants were asked to organize themselves into discussion groups to develop key phrases for goal and objective statements. Participants were asked to sit in on one of the following three topic groups.

- 1) Land Use, Growth Management, Parks & Recreation
- 2) Image & Identity, Environment, Economic Development
- 3) Transportation, Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services

The discussions of each topic was repeated twice, giving each participant the opportunity to participate in two of the three topic groups. The following lists is a summary of key phrases that were developed in each group:

Land Use Groups

- Maintain a wide range of affordable housing
- Protect natural areas and discourage development along Wildcat Creek
- Encourage reuse of brownfields
- Encourage compatible land uses
- Maintain order and better enforce existing ordinances
- Balance growth and preservation
- Identify a vision for the city and build upon it
- Develop separate rules for suburban and urban areas

Growth Management Groups

- Encourage revitalization
- Balance growth with the capacity of the infrastructure
- Establish a Unigov between the Kokomo and Howard County
- Manage and control growth along major thoroughfares
- Encourage infill and redevelopment of buildings and lots in the downtown area
- Identify and protect key features of Kokomo
- Ensure availability of infrastructure with annexation

Parks & Recreation Groups

- Modernize and upgrade existing parks facilities
- Create indoor facilities for large groups and year round activities
- Add sports fields for baseball, softball, soccer
- Create small parks in the inner city and neighborhoods
- Connect neighbors to amenities via parks and pedestrian paths
- Explore recreational opportunities on and along Wildcat Creek
- Create recreational programs for teens

Transportation Groups

- Better manage large volumes of traffic in small areas at factories, malls, etc.
- Improve public transportation system
- Continue good maintenance of existing streets
- Upgrade new streets to meet standards
- Establish an east-west corridor through city
- Explore alternative forms of transportation
- Explore a US 31 bypass for through traffic
- Consider a loop around the city for through traffic

Community Profile - Public Workshop #2

Infrastructure Groups

- Address condition of aging sewers and septic systems
- Require sidewalks in residential areas
- Establish standards for sidewalks throughout the city
- Address combined sewer overflow issue
- Establish a storm water masterplan in partnership with the county
- Control location of cell towers
- Enforce rules and ordinances for detention ponds

Community Facilities & Services Groups

- Create an affordable, indoor facility for family events
- Upgrade existing facilities
- Need additional public pool and indoor gymnasium
- Establish programs for youth
- Maintain current response time for police, fire, and emergency vehicles

Image & Identity Groups

- Maintain current image of family place, shopping hub, good jobs and affordable housing
- Expand image to be more cultural, diverse economic base, improved waterways
- Reduce image of industrial city
- Explore incentives and programs to rebuild and maintain neighborhoods
- Establish beautification program for major streets throughout the city
- Require greenspace with development (except industrial)
- Create an entertainment district and activities for young adults

Environment Groups

- Enhance and protect the quality of wetlands, floodplains, rivers, wooded areas and open spaces
- Improve the current perception of poor environmental conditions in Kokomo
- Encourage the public to volunteer and assist IDEM with mitigation and monitoring
- Explore recreational opportunities on the Wildcat Creek and Kokomo reservoir
- Increase fines for polluters
- Promote low emission modes of transportation

Economic Development Groups

- Support local businesses and increase opportunities for additional small businesses
- Attract businesses to second story of downtown buildings
- Explore incentives and programs to reuse vacant lots and aging buildings
- Focus efforts on business retention
- Support the tourism industry
- Attract more diverse hotels, restaurants and shopping opportunities
- Create after hours atmosphere (restaurants, shopping, activities, etc.) to support conventions
- Attract high tech businesses
- Build amenities to attract higher income homes

Community Profile - Public Workshop #3

Introduction

Approximately thirty participants attended the third public workshop on October 3, 2000. The focus of the final workshop was to review goals and objectives developed in the second workshop and to develop strategies for implementation. The meeting started with a community survey, followed by a mapping exercise, and discussion on strategies.

Community Survey

Participants were asked to answer a community survey which focused on broader community and quality of life issues. Although these survey results are not statistically rigorous or representative of the entire population of Kokomo they do provide the decision-makers with some direction as to what attracts and retains citizens.

An overwhelming number of respondents indicated that their quality of life in Kokomo is “good”. Having “always lived here” and “quality jobs” ranked very high as reasons to live in Kokomo. Written comments included “friends”, “family” and “schools”. When asked how to improve the quality of life in Kokomo the responses included “more entertainment”, and “more landscaping”. Written comments to this question included “specialty retail”, “protection of Wildcat Creek”, and “improvement of US 31”. “Homes for young families”, “housing options for seniors”, and “homes for single people” were identified as housing needs within the city. Issues that were of greatest concern for respondents included “traffic congestion”, “community character”, and “safety”. Those items with which respondents had the least concern with included “housing density”, and “proximity to work”.

Mapping Exercise

Participants organized themselves into small groups of four and engaged in a colorful mapping exercise. Group members identified transportation corridors for pedestrians and vehicular traffic, dangerous intersections, and congested roads. Potential areas for future commercial, industrial, and residential development were also identified.

Community Profile - Public Workshop #3

Key Phrases for Strategies

The following key phrases for strategies may take the form of programs, policies, or projects for the City of Kokomo.

Land Use & Growth Management

- Redevelop neighborhood brownfields as open space and parks
- Establish setbacks or greenways for development along rivers
- Establish an advisory board to work with developers along natural areas
- Redistribute parking downtown to fix parking issue (esp. public parking)
- Differentiate uses in business districts/zoning based on impact to surrounding uses
- Architectural/design review for areas needing aesthetic controls (sensitive areas of community)
- Add phrase “under-utilized” to infill and redevelopment discussions

Transportation

- Create a holistic road network not just an east-west route

Community Facilities & Services

- Build infrastructure to attract or support language of base businesses (i.e. Chrysler is German)
- Adapt to different languages of students in schools

Image & Identity

- Eliminate billboards and sign clutter with ground signs
- Utilize private dollars for community improvements
- Better coordinate smaller efforts to build on community dream
- Continue efforts to quickly demolish abandoned buildings to reduce the negative impact on surrounding uses
- Community will and unity needed to build dream for city

Environment

- Flooding in Highland Park and Foster Park ideal for flood control

Economic Development

- Difficulty attracting new industry due to existing industry
- Be flexible to accommodate growth not anticipated
- Diversify workforce to attract new industry (catch 22 since need workforce to attract industry)
- City and development community need to work together to attract and market city in worldwide market
- Need atmosphere to attract and retain people (night life, shopping, restaurants, etc.)
- Build social infrastructure (theatre, shopping, recreation) to attract businesses
- Diversify restaurants to support, attract and retain new residents from outside the U.S.

Community Profile - Public Participation

Summary

The information collected during the public workshops has been used to identify the existing issues in the community. Specifically, the information in this plan is an inventory of the opinions and ideas of residents.

A comprehensive plan utilizes goals, objectives, and strategies to help guide growth and development within a community. These goals, objectives and strategies are based on the opinions, ideas, and needs of the residents. Information collected from residents in the workshops was used as the foundation for defining the community goals, objectives, and strategies.

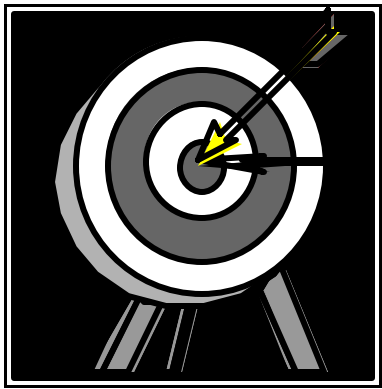
The primary community issues, as determined by residents, are listed below in no particular order:

- Economic development and diversification
- Maintain and enhance the natural environment, particularly Wildcat Creek and floodplain
- Enhance and enforce local zoning and related ordinances
- Encourage infill and redevelopment of vacant buildings and lots in downtown
- Establish a trail system to link neighborhoods and parks to other amenities throughout the city
- Create and east-west thoroughfare through the city

Part

2

Goals and Objectives



Chapter 2

General Goals

General Goals

Introduction

The following pages list and describe broad goals of the community. The issues addressed in these goals were predominant in the citizen participation process. The essence of these goals are interlaced throughout the entire document and these goals are considered the highest priority goals in the document. Each goal in this chapter addresses community-wide issues. Goals, objectives, and strategies that address specific topic areas are listed and discussed in Chapters 3 through 10.

Health, Safety, and Welfare

GOAL:

To protect and improve the health, safety, and welfare of the Kokomo community.

This goal is the only goal in this section that was not directly derived from community input. This goal reflects what should always be promoted by a community implementing planning. The goal is derived from the original language founding planning (State Code) and is still considered the primary reason for implementing planning in a community.

Kokomo should always strive to protect its residents from potentially dangerous situations and environments. The areas of protection include, but are not limited to the following:

- fire,
- disease,
- flood,
- dilapidated structures,
- community-wide economic deterioration, and
- hazardous materials.

Decisions shall not be solely based on the potential effects to property values. It is understood that some decisions must be made for the benefit of the entire community and this may occur at the detriment of one or a few persons.

Increasing property value community-wide shall be considered as rational for decision making. Furthermore, community decisions shall strive to avoid decreasing any district's property values.

Quality of Life

GOAL:

To preserve and enhance the quality of life for the residents of Kokomo.

The quality of life in a community is made up of a lot of items, both tangible and non-tangible. According to the, *Indiana Total Quality of Life Initiative*, there are fourteen quality of life factors. They include:

- economic vitality,
- consumer opportunity,
- infrastructure,
- transportation,
- public services,
- health and safety,
- education,
- housing,
- land-use and growth management,
- environment,
- recreation,
- arts and culture,
- community character, and
- community life.

Always strive to improve the quality of life in each of the above noted categories to the extent that the effect is community-wide.

Several of the above "quality of life" factors appear throughout this document. In general, these factors should always be considered when community decisions are being made.



Chapter 3

Land Use

Land Use

Introduction

Land use patterns can have a positive or adverse effect on neighboring properties and the entire community. The pursuit of this section is to determine and direct land use patterns in the most positive manner, consistent with the community's best long-term interest.

The Kokomo Comprehensive Plan allows for the following general land use categories to exist within the community:

- residential,
- commercial,
- high tech/light industry,
- environmentally sensitive areas,
- institutional uses, and
- parks, recreation and open space.

The bases for deciding the type of district, size of district, and location of the districts include:

- compatibility with the land,
- compatibility with the topography,
- availability of public and private services,
- protection of the health, safety and welfare of the community as a whole.

On this and the following page the Land Use goal, objectives, and strategies are listed. The pages following describe in more detail the components of the plan as they relate to land use.

Goal

- 1) Encourage orderly and responsible development to promote the health, safety, and welfare of citizens in the City of Kokomo while maintaining Kokomo as a leading community for affordable housing.

Land Use

Objectives

- 1) Ensure adequate land for residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and recreational uses.
- 2) Designate specific districts in the community suitable for residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and recreational uses.
- 3) Strongly discourage locating incompatible and conflicting land uses adjacent to, or in close proximity to one another.
- 4) Encourage redevelopment and infill of vacant or under-utilized buildings and lots.
- 5) Preserve the integrity and character of unique areas of the city.
- 6) Require that uses of land are sensitive to adjacent environmental features.
- 7) Ensure adequate, efficient, and safe pedestrian and automobile access.
- 8) Encourage adequate housing opportunities for all levels of income within the community.
- 9) Ensure that residential land uses are situated to encourage safe, accessible, sanitary, and aesthetically appealing districts.

Strategies

- 1) Adopt, maintain, and utilize the City of Kokomo Comprehensive Plan.
- 2) Adopt, maintain, and utilize the City of Kokomo Zoning Ordinance.
- 3) Adopt, maintain, and utilize the City of Kokomo Subdivision Control Ordinance.
- 4) Maintain a detailed and accurate zoning map.
- 5) Educate and inform the community on land use laws and policies, as well as, the reason for such laws and policies.
- 6) Develop, maintain, and utilize design guidelines for the downtown, gateways, and primary corridors.
- 7) Promote industry in appropriate locations, buffered from non-industrial uses and designed in an environmentally sensitive manner.
- 8) Explore mechanisms for redevelopment of commercial, residential, recreational, and industrial areas.
- 9) Adopt regulations necessary to maintain high quality construction and design standards.
- 10) Work toward gaining improved access to industrial areas through changes to air and road transportation.
- 11) Continue to provide for infrastructure needs of potential industrial users.
- 12) Require new developments to provide for a pedestrian network.
- 13) Encourage a mix of housing sizes and affordability in the city.
- 14) Limit undesirable land uses in residential areas.
- 15) Create development standards that preserve the high quality environmental features.
- 16) Protect public groundwater supply from potentially harmful land uses.
- 17) Recognize environmentally sensitive areas.
- 18) Adopt zoning and other ordinances regulating sexually oriented businesses.

Land Use

Residential

The real essence and strength of a community is the composition of the residents who live there. The type, size, cost, character, and availability of housing in a community are the primary factors which contribute to the type of people that live in that community. These factors also influence the quality of life in a community.

Housing in Kokomo is among the most affordable in the State, both in home sales and rental units. A third of the homes in Kokomo were built before 1940. Most homes are in good repair, but a number of older homes are in need of repair and maintenance to meet current building standards. The quality of residential areas is threatened by undesirable land uses and billboards. The integrity of these areas needs to be maintained in order to enhance the quality of life for Kokomo residents.

A community is not made up of a homogenous group of people with the same incomes, tastes, desires, and standards for quality of life. For these reasons not all new housing can serve a narrow group of citizenry. Instead, accommodations for large families, young families, new couples, singles, elderly, and disabled are necessary. Small to large single family detached housing in addition to small-scale apartment complexes, condominium developments, and/or similar types of housing is appropriate and necessary to accommodate the full range of housing needs in Kokomo.

Parks, Recreation & Open Space

Access to parks, recreation, and open space opportunities are important to maintaining a high quality of life, good health, and community spirit. Well rounded parks and recreation programs provide a variety of opportunities for all income levels and age groups throughout the entire year.

The City of Kokomo continues to provide good facilities and programming for it's residents and exceeds the State recommend requirements for parks and recreation. Multiple parks throughout the city provide natural areas, walking trails, and open space for passive recreation as well as courts, sports fields, and play equipment for more organized, active recreational opportunities. The shelters and buildings at the parks are regularly rented by clubs and citizens of the community.

The city should continue to inventory the park and recreational needs of the community and make sure adequate land is set aside during development that is suitable to meet the needs of the surrounding residents.

Chapter 10 of this plan contains detailed information regarding parks and recreation in Kokomo.

Land Use

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Environmentally sensitive areas include wetlands, floodplains, water features, riparian corridors, large tree lots, and unique vegetation. These areas are considered local amenities and areas which make living in the community an enjoyable and healthier experience.

Kokomo has many of these beautiful amenities and the citizens support the preservation of these areas. These areas include floodplains, wetlands, woodlots, and rivers. Streamside forests or riparian corridors along the rivers are considered unique and rare in Indiana. In fact these areas offer the healthiest vegetation and animal habitats within the Kokomo area. Several wooded lots still exist in the region, but many have disappeared due to development. A few marginal wetlands or wetland soils can be found in the area, especially in low lying floodplain areas.

Recognizing the aesthetic and functional importance of these natural areas, woodlots, riparian corridors, floodplains, and wetlands should be protected and preserved in the wake of development.

More detailed environmental information is contained in Chapter 7 of this plan.

Institutional

Institutional uses within a community include schools, libraries, city offices, community centers, and churches. Most of these land uses will fit within any district in the community, however there can be ill effects to be avoided. Institutional uses typically fit nicely within business areas or even on the fringe of residential areas when properly buffered. These land uses must be carefully sited such that they do not adversely affect local street capacity or the characteristics of local neighborhoods.

The City of Kokomo has an impressive array of academic institutions including Indiana University at Kokomo, Purdue University Extension, Wesleyan University and Ivy Tech College. Museums unique to the region include: The Automotive Museum, Haynes Museum, Howard County Historical, Opalescent Glass Museum and Kirkendall Interpretive Center.

Kokomo should continue to allow new institutional uses to develop within residential or commercial districts, but with development standards which will protect local street networks from excessive use and be aesthetically sensitive to adjacent land uses.

Land Use

Commercial

Commercial uses in a community provide employment opportunities, tourism, availability of goods and services, recreation, and many other amenities. Commercial districts can take on many different forms. These may include: strip developments, historic downtowns, shopping malls, and office districts. The character and features of the commercial areas reflect the economic vitality of a community.

Kokomo has several business districts which vary in character and function. These districts include the historic downtown area, retail shopping districts, and strip development along the major transportation routes.

Downtown Business District

Downtown Kokomo has a variety of businesses, and as a district best represents the character of the city. This district contains moderate quality business space, and some buildings with upper story space. Much work has been done to revitalize the downtown business district including the enhancement of building facades, accent benches, trash receptacles, sidewalk paving and lighting. The downtown area provides excellent opportunities for unique, non-chain restaurants and niche retail to attract tourist.

Retail Shopping District

There have been several nodes of retail shopping development along US 31. These nodes have, in many cases, merged together with strip development. Two major shopping destinations in the city include Markland Mall, Kokomo Mall, Markland Avenue between Goyer Road and US 31. It is important for the city to maintain these malls as clustered shopping destinations rather than allowing individual retailers to spill into other parts of the city. Efforts should be made to retain and attract popular stores for a variety of income and age groups. These two malls seem to have suitable parking, good access and signage.

Strip Development District

The strip development along US 31 is in response to lack of space in the downtown and the higher volumes of traffic on US 31. The strip development districts have fulfilled the need for business expansion, but have very little character as a district. Further, each of the businesses have curb cuts and few have sidewalks; creating potential conflicts between vehicular travel pedestrian circulation.

New retail commercial district along U.S. 31 should focus primarily on highway commercial businesses and these businesses should primarily cater to the needs of travelers. To reduce traffic congestion with multiple curb cuts, all new development in this district should be accessed off of a developer provided frontage or access road rather than directly on US 31.

Land Use

Industrial

Industries in a community provide good jobs and a strong tax base. Even though there are many benefits to industry development, there are also many trade-offs due to the nature of the development. Some of the potential trade-offs include transportation conflicts, land use conflicts, pollution, and reduction of aesthetic quality.

If planned and managed, many of the negative effects of industrial developments can be eliminated. As an example, only allowing industry that is appropriately designed with landscaping, quality facades, and a good circulation pattern, can limit many adverse effects of industrial development.

Kokomo is a “City of Firsts” and has a rich history of industrial development. The industrial areas in Kokomo range from large automotive corporations to smaller, owner owned and operated light industrial businesses. Kokomo has a strong work force and support businesses for continued industrial development. It is important for the city to maintain and attract industries that complement the existing infrastructure while at the same time remaining flexible to adapt to changes in industrial needs.

Designated areas for industrial expansion and development should be treated with the same importance of the downtown business area with unique theme signage, lighting and landscaping to give a cohesive feel to the industrial area.

Land Use

Future Land Use Map

On the following page is the Future Land Use Map (Plan) developed for the City of Kokomo and its planning jurisdiction. This plan incorporates input from the public (workshops), the objective opinions of the community leaders and the planning consultant.

The plan locates the primary land uses within the community using conceptual graphics. This map is intended to only represent general districts of land use. The map geographically depicts the land use goals of the community. All current and future land use decisions shall be judged and ultimately influenced by this map.

Land Use Descriptions

On the Future Land Use Map several terms are used to describe land use categories. Below is a description of each land use category used on the map.

Low Density Housing: Single family housing below a density of 3 units per acre. Typical low density housing would be single family detached homes.

Medium Density Housing: Single family housing of varying types between 3 to 6 dwelling units per acre. Typical medium density housing would be: single family detached, duplexes, triplexes, condominiums, townhomes, and cluster housing.

High Density Housing: Single family and multifamily housing of varying types over 6 dwelling units per acre. Typical high density housing would be: townhomes, cluster housing, apartments, and condominiums.

Institutional/Government: Uses commonly associated with government operations and facilities. This category also includes uses commonly associated with institutions. Examples of Institutional and Governmental uses include, but are not limited to: City Hall, libraries, schools, courts, places of worship, and colleges.

Future Study Area: Established to denote an area that could not, at the time of the adoption of this plan, be designated for a specific land use due to an impending study of the area.

Neighborhood Commercial: Commercial uses that have very low impact on residential districts and that complement the quality of life in neighborhoods.

Downtown Commercial: Commercial uses that complement a high density, pedestrian oriented business district, primarily including entertainment, retail and service businesses.

General Commercial: A commercial area that accommodates a wide variety of large and small scale commercial uses. Typically this category is for commercial uses that cater to vehicle traffic with high visibility from major roadways.

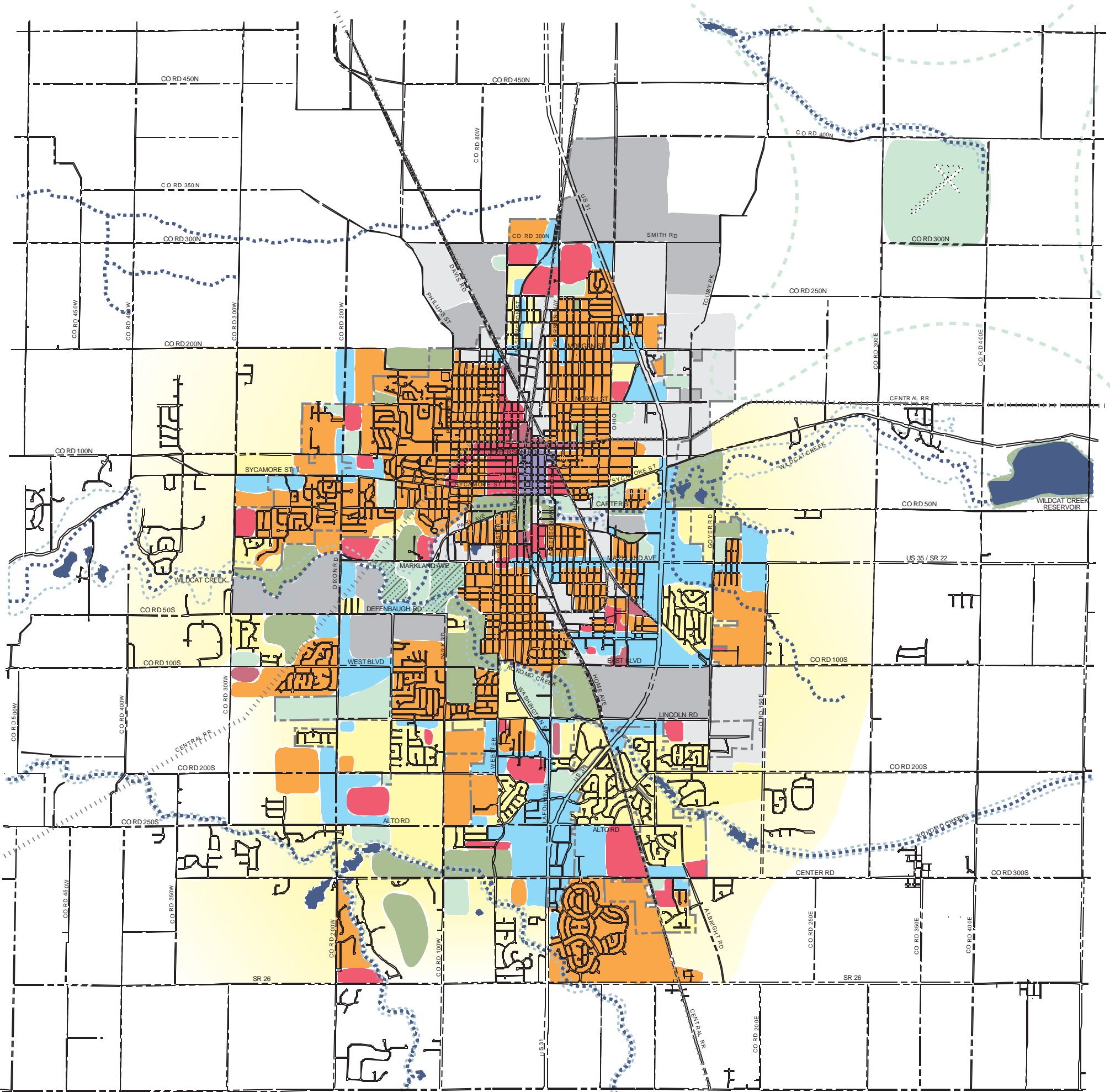
Parks & Recreation: Public and private parks used for passive and active recreation. Also, low impact commercial recreation facilities.

Office/High Tech/Light Industrial: Employment centers that utilize medium to large scale buildings with medium to large scale parking lots. Also, these facilities have low traffic, environmental or aesthetic impact on surrounding areas.

Heavy/Medium Industrial: Uses that manufacture or assemble products and that typically have moderate to significant traffic, environmental, or aesthetic impact on surrounding areas.

Airport Hazard Zone: A region around the airport with limits on development such to protect the airspace and operations of the airport. Also this area serves as a buffer such to disallow uses that would be adversely affected by the noise from aircraft.

City of Kokomo Comprehensive Plan



- Low Density Residential (under 3 units/acre)
- Medium Density Residential (3-6 units/acre)
- High Density Residential (over 6 units/acre)
- Institutional/Government
- Future Study Area
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Downtown Commercial
- General Commercial
- Parks & Recreation
- Office/High Tech/Light Industrial
- Heavy/Medium Industrial
- Corporate Boundary
- Railroad
- Airport Hazard Zone
- Floodplain Boundary

0 1/2 Mile 1Mile

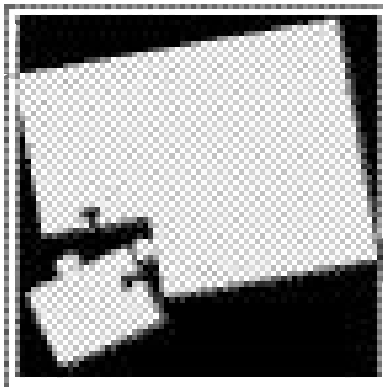


This map locates the primary land uses within the City of Kokomo. It is intended to only represent general districts of land use and geographically depict the land use goals of the community. All current and future land use decisions shall be judged and ultimately influenced by this land use map..

Floodplain areas shown on this map are for illustrative purposes only. The exact location of floodplain boundaries should be determined with reference to the FEMA maps and appropriate site survey.



ARCHITECTS



Chapter 4

Growth Management

Growth Management

Introduction

Sound growth management practices will ensure appropriate transitions of land and adequate supply of resources and services as the community continues to grow. This section of the comprehensive plan is concerned primarily with tools to direct and manage growth and development. The strategies identified for growth management include:

- infill and redevelopment of vacant or under-utilized lots and buildings,
- annexation, and
- the creation and maintenance of a capital improvement plan (CIP)

On this and the following page the Growth Management goal, objectives, and strategies are listed. The pages following describe, in more detail, the growth management strategies mentioned above.

Goal

- 1) Manage and direct growth and development in Kokomo such that it maintains the highest quality of life for current and future residents.

Growth Management

Objectives

- 1) Ensure that new development complements the character of its surroundings.
- 2) Focus business and industrial development within the corporate limits of the city.
- 3) Encourage growth only when it falls within the service capacity of the city.
- 4) Ensure that new development is environmentally sensitive.
- 5) Require greenspaces/buffers between conflicting development zones.
- 6) Encourage growth and development that is sensitive to pedestrian scale, pedestrian linkages, and local needs.
- 7) Encourage new growth in vacant or under-utilized pockets within and around the existing developed city.

Strategies

- 1) Adopt, maintain, and utilize the Kokomo Comprehensive Plan.
- 2) Adopt, maintain, and utilize the Kokomo Zoning Ordinance.
- 3) Adopt, maintain, and utilize the Kokomo Subdivision Control Ordinance.
- 4) Develop and maintain a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) for expansions and upgrades to transportation, infrastructure, and parks.
- 5) Utilize the Long-Range Transportation Plan for Kokomo and Howard County.
- 6) Follow the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the metropolitan planning area.
- 7) Develop and implement a master plan for redevelopment and infill of vacant or under-utilized lots and buildings throughout the city.
- 8) Evaluate and determine capacities of existing public facilities, including schools, parks, sewers, water, and roadways, for example to determine if community can support new development.
- 9) Develop, maintain, and utilize design guidelines for primary nodes and corridors.
- 10) Ensure that new development uses high quality and durable building materials.
- 11) Annex property which is subject to development when appropriate.
- 12) Annex new developments that are contiguous to the current corporate limits of Kokomo.
- 13) Discourage spot zoning and incompatible land uses.

Growth Management

Infill & Redevelopment

Infill development is normally defined as development which utilizes existing vacant or under-utilized buildings and properties within the existing urban fabric. This redevelopment strategy has many advantages, including making the most efficient use of existing infrastructure. Taking advantage of existing infrastructure avoids the cost of extending services further from the city since it typically costs less to repair streets than to build new ones. Limiting sprawl preserves existing farmland and undisturbed natural areas along the periphery of the city. Strategically located infill development can also serve as a catalyst for physical and economic improvements in the surrounding area.

Throughout the city, there are several vacant or under-utilized buildings and lots. These include residential, commercial, and industrial areas within the city. The city should focus planning and marketing efforts on revitalizing areas throughout the entire city. As well as explore incentive-based programs and funding opportunities to infill and redevelop targeted areas.

Annexation

Annexation is the process of incorporating land outside of a city's corporate limit into the city. Benefits to the land owner of the annexed land include access to city resources, utilities, facilities and services. The city benefits by controlling the future land use of the annexed property and increased tax revenue. Kokomo currently evaluates requests for city services, from owners of areas outside the city, by completing a detailed analysis of the city's capabilities for providing services.

Kokomo should study and consider the annexation of parcels of land currently outside its corporate boundary. In such a study many factors must be considered before taking action. The following criteria must be considered:

- total acreage,
- contiguous with city limits or not,
- potential/pressures for growth,
- availability of utilities, and
- ability to provide city services.

Land outside of the corporate boundary should be evaluated every two years for annexation potential.

All potential developments outside the corporate boundary wanting to utilize city services or infrastructure should only be allowed if they are to be annexed.

Growth Management

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Capital improvements include any physical improvements identified and needed by a community. The most common projects usually involve construction and maintenance of roads, municipal buildings, acquisition of real property, or acquisition of equipment.

A capital improvement budget is formally adopted in the operating budget programmed for the next fiscal year. A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a timetable or schedule identifying all planned capital improvements to be made over a period of time, usually 5 years. The improvements are prioritized as to importance, giving an approximate date that they will be completed, and cost estimates for each project and anticipated funding sources.

The benefits to a capital improvement plan include:

- long range financial planning,
- possible opportunity to purchase land before prices go up,
- ensuring long term projects are handled in a coordinated and timely manner,
- prevention of costly mistakes such as repaving a road and ripping it up a year later to repair or install some type of utility, and
- better management of capital funds.

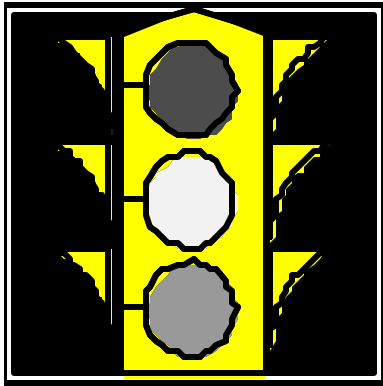
Utilities, Parks & Recreation and the Municipal Airport currently use CIP as part of their implementation process.

Capital Improvement Plan is one of the most effective means to manage growth in a community. With a CIP in place, the community can best sculpt or manage where and when growth occurs within the city. All city departments receiving federal funds should develop a CIP under a city CIP.

The CIP, as it relates to the streets, sidewalks and other transportation facilities, should be developed within the context by the areas Long-Range Transportation Plan and in close coordination with the official Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

For the purpose of this Comprehensive Plan, the capital improvement projects include, but are not limited to the maintenance and construction of:

- streets,
- sidewalks,
- sanitary sewer,
- storm sewer,
- water lines,
- parks and recreation,
- public buildings, and
- municipal airport.



Chapter 5

Transportation

Transportation

Introduction

As the city continues to grow, transportation planning becomes increasingly important. The efficient movement of goods, services and people directly effect the quality of life of residents.

This section of the comprehensive plan focuses on the transportation and circulation patterns of Kokomo. The elements of transportation and circulation that are in this section include:

- pedestrian networks,
- public transportation,
- improvements to existing roads, and
- municipal airport.

On this and following page the Transportation goal, objectives, and strategies are listed.

The pages following describe in more detail the components of the plan as they relate to transportation.

Goal

- 1) Provide a safe, appropriate, and efficient transportation network for all common modes of transportation including pedestrian accessibility.

Transportation

Objectives

- 1) Develop a transportation/circulation network that complements the land use and growth management goals of the city.
- 2) Develop a network of sidewalks and trails for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles.
- 3) Minimize congestion on the primary transportation routes.
- 4) Encourage providing at least one additional east-west route for thoroughfare traffic.
- 5) Assure efficient accessibility for police, emergency, and fire vehicles to all properties in their jurisdictions.
- 6) Continue evaluating alternate forms of public transportation to meet current transit needs.
- 7) Ensure adequate right-of-way is preserved for future expansion or improvements to roads and for proper drainage capacity.
- 8) Expand the services of the Municipal Airport to continue to serve the needs of the Kokomo region.

Strategies

- 1) Maintain and utilize the Long Range Transportation Plan for Kokomo and Central Howard County.
- 2) Maintain a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for construction, upgrade, and maintenance of pedestrian sidewalks, trails, roads, and airport.
- 3) Require new developments, approved for development by Howard County, while awaiting annexation into Kokomo, be developed to city development standards.
- 4) Minimize and/or eliminate dangerous roadways and intersections.
- 5) Consider adding new or alternative streets to mitigate congestion on major routes and narrower streets.
- 6) Require subdivision road systems to link to neighboring subdivisions for ease of emergency vehicles and daily traffic flow.
- 7) Provide safe pedestrian crossings on major roads.
- 8) Consider the impact of new development on existing roadways and pedestrian ways when reviewing new development proposals.
- 9) Require new development to have sidewalks on at least one side of the street.
- 10) Include sidewalks and/or marked paved shoulders as part of the planning and design of new roads and during the upgrading of existing routes.
- 11) Support programs supporting property owner construction and/or repair of sidewalks and paths where necessary throughout the city.
- 12) Continue to explore conversion of abandoned railroad into future rail-to-trail projects.
- 13) Inventory public transit ridership interest and investigate cost effective and feasibility improvements.
- 14) Investigate establishing incentives with businesses to encourage van/car pooling and bus transit.
- 15) Seek to secure more funding for the First City Rider Program to provide more rides per month or to reduce the cost of the ride.
- 16) Promote the First City Rider Program to increase awareness of services.
- 17) Inventory the needs of local businesses and air travellers dependent on the municipal airport.
- 18) Review commercial carrier truck routes serving Kokomo.
- 19) Evaluate establishing hazardous materials truck routes and encourage maintenance of current high levels of hazardous materials emergencies response capabilities.

Transportation

Pedestrian Networks

Sidewalks and paths in a community make up the transportation and circulation network for pedestrian traffic. These pedestrian linkages should provide uninterrupted, safe and efficient linkages for walkers, cyclers, and other modes of non-motorized transportation. Further, sidewalks should link all the primary nodes of activity within a community. Some of these nodes include schools, parks, and commercial centers.

Sidewalks

There are several areas where sidewalks are in need of repair or where sidewalks are needed throughout the city. The current Thoroughfare Plan for the city encourages sidewalk construction as a method of reducing highway congestion and as an alternative to continued road construction.

The repair of the sidewalks throughout the city is the responsibility of the property owners. However, the city does encourage interested property owners to participate in a 50/50 program to split the costs of repairing sidewalks. This program has been successfully implemented throughout the city.

Trails

Pedestrian trails are typically found winding through a park or school campus however they are becoming increasingly popular in busier parts of the city. Trails may be used for recreation or as alternative transportation for non-motorized vehicles. Trails may be used to link neighborhoods, schools, commercial districts, businesses, and parks. Most importantly, trails need to be part of a larger network with an established hierarchy of uses and volumes of traffic. The trail system should be well marked for ease of mobility and well lit if they are intended for use by commuters and other patrons, after hours.

Public Transportation

A well planned public transportation system can efficiently move people throughout the city for work, shopping, entertainment, school, and recreation. Without one, residents without access to an automobile can become isolated from job opportunities, and social and medical services.

Kokomo currently provides two public transportation services: The Spirit of Kokomo and the First City Rider Program. The Spirit of Kokomo service targets the needs of the elderly, handicapped, and some low income residents while the First City Rider Program serves all members of the general public. According to the most recent United Way surveys, public transportation is the number one need for low-income residents of Kokomo.

Public transportation is an important element to a growing city like Kokomo. Not only does it provide mobility to those without access to a vehicle but strong ridership can minimize traffic congestion on the major routes, improve air quality, and the quality of life of the citizens of Kokomo. The city should:

- investigate cost effective improvements to existing public transportation services;
- inventory ridership interest and investigate cost effective and feasibility improvements; and
- investigate establishing incentives with businesses to encourage van/car pooling and bus transit.

Transportation

Improvements to Existing Roads

Transportation and circulation patterns consist of a variety of forms in Kokomo. Traditionally, cities were developed in a grid street pattern. In the 1950's and 1960's developments were constructed with curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs. These trends in development patterns may have resulted in circulation problems in Kokomo.

Kokomo, like most communities, has both a grid pattern in its older urban area and curvilinear streets in its newer areas. Kokomo also has three major highways which travel through the city. These are US 31, US 35, and SR 22. Many times heavily travelled roads, such as state highways are prone to excessive curb cuts. Curb cuts should be limited to a minimum to reduce accidents and traffic congestion, especially along major thoroughfares. When they do exist they should be a minimal width and be adequately defined with curbs.

US 31 Consideration

In an effort to address the congestion and stoplight problems along US 31, INDOT has conducted several studies of US 31 from Indianapolis to South Bend and is focusing on new environmental impact studies of the metropolitan area in the US 31 corridor. It will be important for the local community to participate in and provide input to the INDOT environmental studies.

There are multiple curb cuts, stoplights, and access points to US 31 in Kokomo resulting in major traffic congestion problems. Too many driveway cuts, give drivers too many access points to go in and out of causing congestion and increasing the possibility of accidents. If new development occurs along US 31 or if existing properties were to be redeveloped, they should be accessed by shared driveways or an access road.

Asside from the INDOT US 31 study efforts, the City of Kokomo should consider improved access management guidelines for US 31 and other ring or arterial roads in Kokomo that will facilitate improved traffic flow to existing and future businesses.

Transportation

Street Hierarchy

A street hierarchy is a system where roads are classified based on their purpose and their travel demand. For instance a state highway (primary arterial) serves a different purpose and had different travel demands than a neighborhood road. The road classifications are as follows:

- **Primary Arterial** - A street with access control, restricted parking, and that collects and distributes traffic to and from minor arterials.
- **Minor Arterial** - A street that collects and distributes traffic to and from collector and primary arterial streets.
- **Collector** - A street designed to facilitate the collection of traffic from local streets. Also, it provides circulation within neighborhood areas and convenient ways to reach arterial streets.
- **Local** - A street designed primarily to provide access to abutting properties and discourage through traffic.

In some instances a road may be classified higher than its existing use, because it is anticipated to have higher traffic volumes in the future.

Establishing a street hierarchy can offer several advantages to a community including increased safety, efficiency, residential quality, and land use efficiency.

Development in the future should contribute to the city goal of providing a safe, appropriate and efficient transportation network for all common modes of transportation including pedestrian accessibility.

Kokomo Municipal Airport

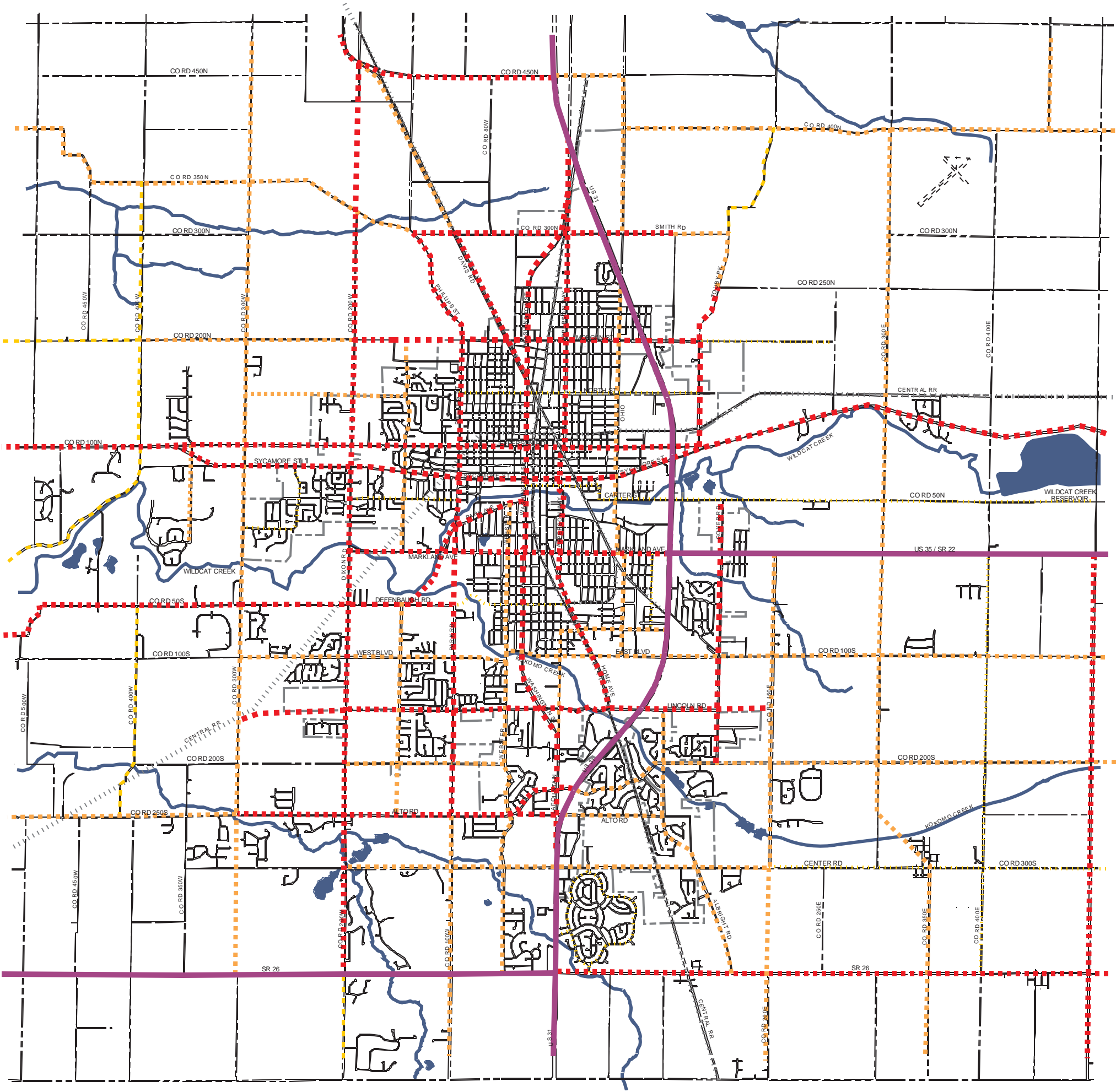
The Kokomo Municipal Airport is owned and operated by the City of Kokomo and located outside the city's corporate limits in the center of Howard Township. The airport is appropriately sized to serve the needs of Kokomo and is comparable in size to Anderson, Miami County, and Lafayette airports. Kokomo is also located in close proximity to two of the largest airports in the State, Fort Wayne and Indianapolis.

A significant number of corporate and industrial businesses in the area utilize the airport for efficient and rapid transportation of people and freight in and out of the Kokomo area. Air transport saves significant travel time especially during times of the year when road transportation can be challenging due to inclement weather. Passenger aircraft that utilize the Kokomo Municipal Airport typically range in size from 4 to 30 passengers. The economic contribution of the airport to the local economy is substantial, averaging 5 million dollars per year.

The city and county should work in partnership toward enhancing the 4.5 miles of road between the terminal and US 31. Additionally, the city and county should work together to significantly restrict residential growth within the Airport Hazard Zone.

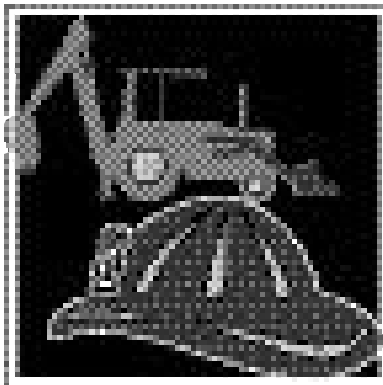
Due to air freight and passenger transportation demands, areas adjacent to the airport may support office, warehouse, and light industrial growth. The city should determine the market demand and consider infrastructure and zoning changes to allow this type of nonresidential growth.

City of Kokomo Comprehensive Plan



- Primary Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Proposed Minor Arterial Alignment
- Major Collector
- Proposed Major Collector Alignment
- Minor Collector
- Proposed Minor Collector Alignment
- Corporate Boundary
- Railroad





Chapter 6

Community Facilities & Services

Community Facilities & Services

Introduction

As a community grows, one of the biggest challenges is to keep up with the additional facilities and services that the community needs. Community facilities may include libraries, schools, recreation facilities, and government buildings. Community services may include fire, police, EMS, public health, social services, support for nonprofit/community-based organizations, public infrastructure and utilities such as wastewater collection/treatment and water supply.

This section of the comprehensive plan is primarily concerned with the accessibility and maintenance of public infrastructure, city services, and city facilities.

There are several other types of public infrastructure in a community such as streets and sidewalks. Streets and sidewalks are discussed in Chapter 5, Transportation.

Storm water drainage is an often forgotten public utility. The proper drainage of water is very important within a community. Storm water drainage systems are often subsidized by property taxes or special assessments unlike water and wastewater systems which collect funds through user charges based on consumption.

On this and the following page the Community Facilities and Services goal, objectives, and strategies are listed.

Goal

- 1) Provide affordable, usable, quality, effective, and efficient public facilities and services for the citizens of Kokomo.

Community Facilities & Services

Objectives

- 1) Develop and maintain a capital management program for community facilities and services to expand with the growth of the City of Kokomo.
- 2) Encourage growth and development where adequate infrastructure and public services are already in place or in close proximity, and that can be accommodated with a reasonable capital expenditure by the city.
- 3) Utilize best management practices to minimize the affects of combined sewer overflow events, while keeping within the city's fiscal capabilities.
- 4) Improve drainage to minimize property damage from flooding.
- 5) Improve public health throughout the community.
- 6) Encourage additional public programs and facilities for children, young adults and the elderly.
- 7) Maintain access and quality educational opportunities throughout the city for all ages and incomes.
- 8) Identify and address external and internal influences on the community that may damage the current level of community safety.
- 9) Continue programs and policies, updating as appropriate, that will focus awareness on drug and other issues that currently exist or threaten the community.
- 10) Assess and modify programs, as appropriate, for educating and enhancing participation of our youth in the values of a safe community.

Strategies

- 1) Ensure that police, fire, and emergency services are appropriate for the existing and future community.
- 2) Provide adequate and affordable public facilities to conduct city business.
- 3) Ensure that all city offices and departments communicate and inform the public and businesses within the community of city business and relevant information.
- 4) Ensure road maintenance, snow removal, trash pickup, and planning and zoning services are maintained and adequately address the needs of the community.
- 5) Ensure that impacts to all public infrastructure, facilities and services are considered when reviewing development proposals and rezonings.
- 6) Maintain public meeting places for large gatherings and activities.
- 7) Maintain a public infrastructure plan, which supports the future land use goals of the community.
- 8) Ensure that an infrastructure system is maintained that complements economic development efforts while protecting the integrity of the system and the citizens of Kokomo.
- 9) Encourage consensus building between the city and county and unified decision making where possible while protecting the interests of the citizens of Kokomo.
- 10) Increase awareness of health screenings and events within the community.
- 11) Work with schools and other existing organizations to increase substance abuse counseling and preventive programs.
- 12) Increase the number of affordable or free job training programs so residents may obtain higher paying jobs.
- 13) Evaluate alternatives for improving ambulance service.
- 14) Improve immunization rates in Kokomo through education and coordination with clinics.
- 15) Adopt zoning and other ordinances regulating sexually oriented businesses.
- 16) Investigate establishing a public health and safety matrix.
- 17) Plot and clearly mark "Drug Free" zones.
- 18) Prepare a Future Sanitary and Storm Sewer Development Plan, based on the Future Land Use Plan, which establishes needed sewer capacities for serving future development.



Chapter 7

Environmental

Environmental

Introduction

Natural environments enhance the quality of life for residents in a community by adding aesthetic and ecological value. However, residents of growing cities find it increasingly challenging to protect and preserve natural areas in the wake of continued growth and development.

This section of the comprehensive plan is focussed on the identification of environmentally sensitive areas, and the maintenance and enhancement of these areas.

The Kokomo Comprehensive Plan addresses several strategies for protecting various aspects of the environment. The aspects covered include:

- Wildcat Creek watershed,
- floodplain management,
- riparian forests,
- woodlot management,
- water quality,
- wetland conservation,
- wastewater treatment, and
- solid quality and management.

On this and following page the Environmental goal, objectives, and strategies are listed.

The pages following describe in more detail the components of the plan as they relate to Environmental issues.

Goal

- 1) Promote an ecologically sound community through the protection and enhancement of environmental resources.

Environmental

Objectives

- 1) Protect drinking water sources from potential contamination within the corporate limits through best management practices.
- 2) Protect the water quality of Wildcat and Kokomo Creeks and meet all the regulatory requirements for management of the city's environmental infrastructure.
- 3) Conserve natural areas, such as floodplains, forests, and wetlands within the corporate limits.
- 4) Establish and maintain streamside vegetation buffers, where possible, for water quality protection and creation of wildlife habitats.
- 5) Reserve quality open space as habitats for plants and animals and for residential recreation as possible.
- 6) Protect scenic views and the natural environment in Kokomo and minimize conflicts between development and the natural environment.
- 7) Utilize best management practices to minimize the effects of combined sewers overflow events within the city's fiscal capabilities.
- 8) Encourage and cooperate in the mitigation of brownfield sites to place valuable land into productive use.

Strategies

- 1) Revise ordinances, as necessary, to address construction sites management to minimize runoff and soil erosion to prevent impacts on water quality.
- 2) Develop/revise landscape ordinances to require landscape plans and planting of vegetation within new developments and give bonuses for using plants native to the region.
- 3) Cooperate with state and federal agencies to conserve, maintain and enhance natural areas.
- 4) Maintain flood storage potential of the area with well-designed detention and retention ponds.
- 5) Meet regulatory requirements for identifying the best technical and cost effective methods to minimize the impacts of CSO events in Kokomo and implement the city's Long Term Control Plan to address management of the city's combined sewer system over the next fifteen years.
- 6) Develop/revise ordinances to reduce/restrict the percentage of impervious surface within a development to reduce runoff and soil erosion.
- 7) Develop/revise ordinances requiring new developments to be sensitive and buffer natural features and habitats of vegetation and wildlife.
- 8) Enforce state and local requirements disallowing the construction of residential and commercial structures in the floodplain.
- 9) Encourage yard waste composting and recycling of paper, plastics, and metals throughout the community.
- 10) Continue to work with local groups who perform volunteer monitoring along Wildcat and Kokomo Creeks.
- 11) Continue to cooperate with the federal and state governmental agencies to insure that the city's needs are addressed in the planning and cleanup and reuse of the Continental Steel superfund site.
- 12) Work with the Indiana American Water Company to insure implementation of the water supply well head protection programs.
- 13) Work with the local health department and citizen to develop and implement a program for disconnection of existing septic tanks within the corporate limits and for the provision of sanitary sewer service provided to the extent possible.

Environmental

Wildcat Creek Watershed

The Wildcat Creek Watershed is 804 square miles, covers 7 counties, and includes 3 major metropolitan areas: Kokomo, Lafayette, and Frankfort. Within the watershed, the Kokomo Reservoir at Greentown is the largest impoundment of water.

Land uses within the watershed have a significant impact on the quality of water and wildlife habitats of the river. Maintaining streamside forests, limiting encroachment of development along the banks and in floodplain areas, and reducing large areas of impervious surfaces are effective methods to reduce pollutants and sediments from depleting the water quality.

The Wildcat Guardians, a local environmental group, is dedicated to improving the health and beauty of Wildcat Creek. Their priorities include: eliminating trash dumping along the banks and in the watershed, eliminating illegal pollutants discharges, reducing streambank erosion, elimination of channel obstructions and habitat degradation, and improving recreational value of the Wildcat.

IDEM has completed a draft Restoration Action Strategy for the Wildcat Creek Watershed. Kokomo cooperated with IDEM in the preparation of the document and provided comments to IDEM during the development of the document. The city should continue to work toward protecting the watershed. Kokomo should also continue to work with IDEM and other stakeholders to insure sound and effective watershed management.

Floodplain Management

Flooding causes more damage to communities across the country than all other types of natural disasters combined. Flooding is costly, not only in terms of the value of the property lost, but also lives lost. If natural areas within floodplains are protected, greenspace will be flooded frequently instead of commercial and residential structures located within the floodplain. This minimizes economic losses attributed to flooding.

Floodplains act as sponges, soaking in rain and snow and slowing the overland flow of water. This is in contrast to impervious surfaces, such as parking lots, rooftops and roadways, which serve to speed up stormwater flow. The more pervious, floodplains that are present within the watershed, the less severe flooding will be in downstream areas.

Kokomo should prohibit development in the floodplain, particularly residential. If development must occur, mitigation measures must be required so that there is no “net loss” of floodplain storage capacity.

Environmental

Riparian Forests

Forests located along Wildcat Creek, Kokomo Creek and their tributaries have significant ecological and aesthetic values. These areas, often referred to as riparian forests, are some of the richest holdings of plants and animals. Healthy streamside forests are able to stabilize the banks of the waterways, filter sediments and pollutants from stormwater runoff before they reach the waterways, and reduce flooding and drainage problems. The destruction of these areas, would greatly impact the environment and Kokomo's quality of life.

Such land can be vulnerable to developmental pressures. Additional review of proposed development along these waterways will be taken to ensure that development does not crowd the banks and that the integrity of the natural areas are is not destroyed.

Woodlot Management

There are presently several small and medium sized woodlots in Kokomo. Because of the many benefits they provide, these woodlots should be managed. A forest stand can reduce air temperatures in the summer by about 10 degrees Fahrenheit and can reduce wind velocities by 20 to 60 percent.

Among other benefits, woodlots and smaller stands of trees provide vital wildlife habitat and even clean pollutants from the air; an acre of woods is estimated to absorb ten tons of carbon dioxide per year. On a smaller scale, saving a few trees on a site reduces energy bills for the property owner, reduces the erosion of soil on construction sites, and increases the value of the property.

Because woodlots are important to the character of Kokomo, and provide a host of other benefits to property owners, any new development should be designed in such a way to minimize the impact on woodlots and tree stands.

Environmental

Water Quality

The residents of Kokomo receive their drinking water from either the public water system or from private wells. The public water supply is owned and operated by the Indiana American Water Company and they utilize the Wildcat Creek Reservoir at Greentown and groundwater as sources of the water supply. In either case, the water is sensitive to land uses and practices that could contaminate the water supply. Any development that poses a risk to the groundwater in Kokomo will be prohibited unless technologically acceptable measures are used to protect the water supply.

Additionally, the water quality of the surface waters in Kokomo are important to the health, safety, welfare, and economic stability of the community. These natural features should be protected.

Wetland Conservation

Kokomo has a few wetland areas, low flow streams/ditches, and wet soils. These areas should not be disturbed. Development in these areas should be avoided to the extent possible and Kokomo should strive to insure that State and Federal Laws for wetland mitigation are met.

Environmental

Kokomo Wastewater System

The Kokomo Sanitary Utility operates a wastewater collection and treatment system that provides services to the residents, businesses, and industries of Kokomo. The wastewater system is integral to the protection of the public health and welfare and to the protection of the environment and water quality of the Wildcat and Kokomo Creeks.

The system includes approximately 300 miles of sewers (approximately 60% of which are combined sanitary/storm sewers and 40% of which are separate sanitary sewers).

The Utility operates the wastewater system under provisions of a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit issued by IDEM, per requirements of the State and Federal Clean Water Acts. The city's NPDES Permit was revised in September 2000 and is effective through July 2005. The effluent discharge limitations contained in the permit were calculated by IDEM to be protective of the water quality standards for the Wildcat Creek. Compliance with those limitation insures that the water quality standards for the Wildcat Creek will not be exceeded because of an effluent discharge. The NPDES Permit also mandates the city to meet provisions related to operating and maintaining a combined sewer system with permitted combined sewer overflow outfalls. The city should remain committed to meeting all provisions of its revised permit and meet all deadlines and limitation contained in the permit.

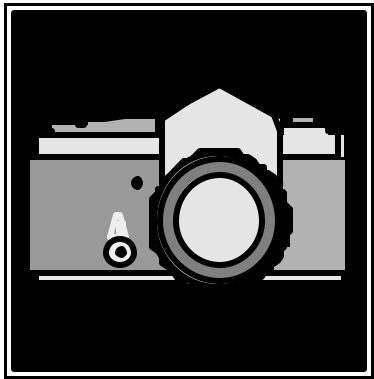
The city is committed to an aggressive capital improvement program for the wastewater system. The city is also completing the first phase of a comprehensive collection system study and will be completing mandated plans for managing the combined sewer overflows (CSO) during the next 2 years. The Long Term Control Plan for CSO operation, maintenance, and management is scheduled for implementation over the next 10 to 15 years. The city's goal is to maximize the efficiency of the collection and treatment components to reduce the frequency and duration of CSO activation events to minimize water quality impacts, within the fiscal capabilities of the utility.

Soil Quality & Management

To determine the appropriate land use and development in particular areas of Kokomo, it is important to know what the soil limitations are of the proposed development.

Development on inappropriate soils can result in a variety of problems. Some of these problems include erosion from water or wind and flooding and drainage problems from increased stormwater runoff. These problems can cause financial burdens for property owners and for Kokomo.

These problems can be minimized through adequate planning in the selection of sites for development. Soils should be tested properly, and only land uses which are suitable for specific sites should be allowed. All development should have adequate sanitary sewer capacity and required to be connected to the Kokomo Sanitation Utility's Wastewater System.



Chapter 8

Image & Identity

Image & Identity

Introduction

Image and identity in a community has become increasingly important to community leaders. In Kokomo, this opinion was reflected by residents at the public workshops.

The questions “What do you think of when you think of Kokomo?” or “What is your impression of the character in Kokomo?” should be asked regularly.

The impression of the local residents may be different than those who do not live in Kokomo.

This chapter of the comprehensive plan is focussed on the character and perceptions of Kokomo. It addresses several methods for the community to improve its image and identity including:

- gateways,
- downtown, and
- Visitor Profile Survey.

Image and identity is a key component to maintaining community character. Events such as the Haynes Apperson Festival held in summer are just the type of thing that helps to reinforce the unique identity of Kokomo and its surrounding area.

On this and following pages the Image & Identity goal, objectives, and strategies are listed.

Goal

- 1) Develop and maintain a community identity for Kokomo which will promote a positive and appealing community image for citizens and visitors.

Image & Identity

Objectives

- 1) Enhance local assets and heritage to develop an overall positive community identity.
- 2) Preserve and enhance historical and culturally significant amenities.
- 3) Develop a beautification plan along sensitive and major corridors throughout the city.
- 4) Enhance and enforce local zoning and nuisance ordinances.
- 5) Maintain Kokomo as the regional center for the surrounding communities.

Strategies

- 1) Utilize the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Subdivision Control Ordinance, to the extent legally possible, to sculpt the character of new development.
- 2) Consider the impacts of new development on the integrity and existing character of Kokomo.
- 3) Maintain and utilize design guidelines for primary corridors, gateways, and the downtown.
- 4) Utilize consistent and high quality materials for all public facilities and public structures, including, but not limited to buildings, signs, fences, park equipment and sidewalks.
- 5) Capitalize on the historical and culturally significant amenities to create a unique identity.
- 6) Enhance the gateways on all primary roads to ensure a positive first impression.
- 7) Utilize a combination of theme, slogan, logo, icon, color, texture, and/or materials to reinforce and enhance the desired identity.
- 8) Utilize landmarks and strong focal elements to develop a lasting positive impression on residents and visitors.
- 9) Replace diseased and unsafe trees within the public rights-of-way with hardy trees that are suitable for the urban environment.
- 10) Provide wayfinding signage to enable people to navigate through the city easily.
- 11) Encourage appropriate lighting, odor and noise levels that are consistent with each district and surrounding land uses.
- 12) Utilize the visitor and convention bureau to meet goals and objectives.

Image & Identity

Gateways

Gateways are the first impressions of a visitor to the community. US 31 is the predominant access for traffic through and into Kokomo. Therefore, development along US 31 needs to reflect the identity and character of Kokomo. One aspect of gateway enhancement includes beautifying the entrance to Kokomo through sign control and landscaping. The second aspect is regulating development along US 31.

The Plan Commission should be sensitive to the overall effect proposed businesses would have along US 31. The review of development proposals should incorporate aesthetics, scale, character, and traffic concerns. It is also important to keep in mind that anything developed on that corridor gives visitors and passersby alike their first impression of Kokomo.

Gateways have been established at Indiana Heights, the north/south ends of US 31, and the east/west ends of Markland Avenue. These gateways include colorful landscaped mounds and large signs welcoming visitors and residents to Kokomo.

Basic design guidelines and a highway access plan will help to reinforce and maintain the character of Kokomo for years to come.

Local residents will continue to have great pride in their community if it always reflects a positive character.

Downtown Kokomo

The workshops showed that residents felt the historic nature of Kokomo's downtown was a strength.

Kokomo is fortunate to have a vibrant downtown. Much work has been done to revitalize the downtown business district including the enhancement of building facades, accent benches, trash receptacles, sidewalk paving and lighting. The downtown area provides excellent opportunities for unique, non-chain restaurants and niche retail to attract tourists.

A downtown is considered the heart of a community. Much like gateways, their appearance is closely tied to community pride. Design guidelines should be initiated to continue the consistency of character in this key area of Kokomo.

Image & Identity

Visitor Profile Study

The Kokomo/Howard County Convention & Visitor's Bureau in conjunction with the Purdue Tourism & Hospitality Research Center conducted a Visitor Profile Study from May 1999 to February 2000. The objective of the study was to develop a profile of visitors to the Kokomo area. Approximately 800 interviews were conducted, representing almost 3,000 visitors.

During the study, the majority of visitors to the area ranged in age between 35 and 54 years and classified themselves as professional/technical personnel, skilled workers, managers or executives. A large percentage of visitors were male and travelled from within Indiana to visit Kokomo.

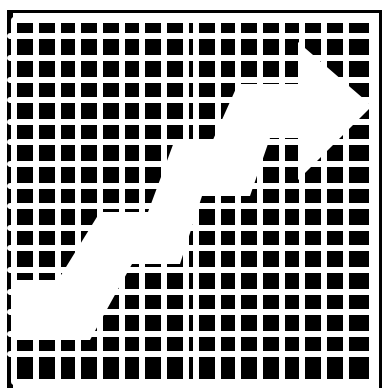
Forty percent of visitors were in Kokomo for business and thirty-four percent travelled for pleasure. Almost half of the respondents stayed for 2-4 nights. Ninety percent of which stayed in local hotels and motels.

While visiting Kokomo, respondents' top ten most favorable attractions included:

- Indianapolis 500 Speedway
- Grissom Air Museum State Historic Site
- Children's Museum, Indianapolis
- Highland Park, Kokomo
- Kokomo Opalescent Glass Factory
- Peru Circus Museum, Peru
- Circle Center Mall, Indianapolis
- Downtown Kokomo
- Seiberling Mansion/Howard County Historical Museum, Kokomo
- Kokomo Library Genealogy Room

Visitors to Kokomo found the city to be an affordable, safe and accessible travel destination.

Overall, the visitors surveyed seem to enjoy their visit to Kokomo. The city should use the information collected by the Visitor's Bureau to target tourism and marketing efforts throughout the city as well as beautifying corridors between key destinations.



Chapter 9

Economic Development

Economic Development

Introduction

Successful economic development efforts provide opportunities for expanding and balancing the tax base for the community. Such efforts may include quality of life factors, diversification of business and employment opportunities, and retention of businesses.

This chapter of the comprehensive plan is concerned with Economic Development in Kokomo and addresses several concepts for the city to consider including:

- expansion and retention of existing businesses,
- attracting new businesses,
- diversification of businesses, and
- quality of life/family related issues.

On this and following page the Economic Development goal, objectives, and strategies are listed.

The pages following describes in more detail the components of the plan as they relate to Economic Development.

Goal

- 1) Improve the local economy and upgrade the standard of living for all citizens of Kokomo.

Economic Development

Objectives

- 1) Promote orderly economic growth and stability.
- 2) Support business and industry to strengthen the tax base and enhance the community's vitality.
- 3) Support a mix of commercial and light industry to provide employment and adequate services.
- 4) Promote commercial businesses and industry that are suitable, feasible, and consistent with other community goals and objectives.
- 5) Promote and support locally owned and operated businesses.
- 6) Promote infill and redevelopment of vacant buildings and lots.
- 7) Strive to overcome physical obstacles that prevent business districts from thriving.

Strategies

- 1) Coordinate the objectives and strategies of each economic development organization to maximize efficiency and to minimize duplicating of efforts.
- 2) Coordinate the unique strengths of government, nonprofit, and private organizations to implement economic development projects.
- 3) Assist with expansion of existing or location of new businesses which expand tax base and provide new jobs; and that complement the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan.
- 4) Support development of the industrial park as defined in the comprehensive plan.
- 5) Inform local businesses of state economic development incentives to retain and expand operations.
- 6) Develop a plan to attract hotels and restaurants that enhance tourism and conventions.
- 7) Provide suitable space and exposure for smaller businesses to thrive.
- 8) Balance residential and commercial uses within the downtown to provide daytime and evening attractions and activities.
- 9) Expand tourism through festivals or sporting events.
- 10) Encourage home businesses or home offices as an alternative means for expanding commerce in the city.
- 11) Promote appropriate infrastructure for internet-based services.
- 12) Promote upscale housing similar to that of Carmel, Westfield and Noblesville to attract upper income families.
- 13) Strive to enhance the quality of schools such that Kokomo becomes the leader in central Indiana education.
- 14) Maintain quality open space, park, and recreation opportunities for all income and age groups.

Economic Development

Development Opportunities

Kokomo, the City of Firsts, is built on the innovation and creativity of business leaders. As the current economic market becomes more reliant on high technology, Kokomo needs to position itself to embrace this opportunity.

Kokomo's assets include central location, major transportation routes, good workforce, low cost of living and a good quality of life. Businesses like to locate in communities that are both good places to live and work.

Kokomo has a strong economic base to build upon. Delphi Delco Electronic Systems, Daimler-Chrysler Corporation, and related support businesses provide a variety of employment opportunities for residents of Kokomo and the surrounding area. However, the city should consider promoting a wider variety of land uses to diversify the tax base. Franchise restaurants and stores dominate the landscape of Kokomo making it difficult for unique, local businesses to thrive.

Quality Schools

More and more businesses and industries are gravitating toward communities that have quality schools. Businesses depend on educated individuals to fill positions within their companies as well as attract and retain good employees, especially those with families.

Kokomo has a good school system and several well respected higher academic institutions including Ivy Tech, Indiana University at Kokomo (IUK), Purdue University, and Wesleyan University.

Individuals and businesses attempting to stay current at high-tech jobs require local facilities for training and continuing education. Kokomo has cooperative high-tech training programs available through the schools and career center.

A good school system is able to attract and retain businesses to the area while providing a high quality of life to its residents.



Chapter 10

Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation

Introduction

Parks improve the quality of life by providing cleaner environment, access to natural resources, and family recreation. Parks and recreational opportunities make communities more livable and desirable places to live and can attract new residents, businesses, and visitors. Parks can offer a good return on the city’s investment.

This chapter of the comprehensive plan is concerned with Parks and Recreation in Kokomo. Parks and recreation are a high priorities of the city residents. The people in Kokomo recognize the direct relationship of parks to quality of life.

This component of the comprehensive plan addresses methods for the community to improve its parks and recreation system.

On this and following page the Parks & Recreation goal, objectives, and strategies are listed.

Goal

- 1) Develop and maintain recreation opportunities and/or facilities to meet the current and future needs of Kokomo.

Parks & Recreation

Objectives

- 1) Expand and/or upgrade the park system in a coordinated manner such that expenditures are effective and match the community's growth.
- 2) Protect park lands and recreational areas from undesirable, conflicting and potentially hazardous land uses and developments.
- 3) Strive to maintain the parks and recreational amenities to a quality that meets or exceeds the character goals of the community.
- 4) Ensure a mix of sizes and locations of public parks and open spaces to provide opportunities for passive and active recreation.
- 5) Interconnect the parks, recreation land, public natural areas, and public facilities with a network of pedestrian trails.
- 6) Seek funding sources that can subsidize the cost of park improvements and implementation of the Millennium trail project.
- 7) Enhance recreational opportunities along and on Wildcat Creek.
- 8) Promote recreational opportunities for children, teenagers, adults, and senior citizens.
- 9) Encourage expansion of programs focused on the arts.

Strategies

- 1) Maintain and utilize the City of Kokomo Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- 2) Continue to meet Department of Natural Resources standards for park planning to qualify for State and National funding.
- 3) Continue to maintain a park plan that incorporates the community's goals and that creates a vision for the park system.
- 4) Continue to utilize the talents of local residents by involving them in maintenance and decision making.
- 5) Develop appropriate pedestrian linkages throughout the developing areas and existing and new parks to meet recreation and transportation needs.
- 6) Connect parks to neighborhoods and community amenities via a trail network.
- 7) Continue to look to a variety of state and national sources to find funding for park improvements and reforestation.
- 8) Maximize the range of recreational opportunities by providing park facilities that are not available through the school and county system.
- 9) Encourage the joint development of recreational facilities by the park and school systems.
- 10) Use the 1983 Bikeway Plan and the Indiana Trails 2000 guide to develop and expand trails and linear paths (e.g. along greenways on Kokomo and Wildcat Creek).
- 11) Research the use of sewer easements for right-of-way for pedestrian access.
- 12) Upgrade parks and facilities to meet the year-round needs of the public.
- 13) Plant young trees in wooded areas to replace older, less healthy trees.
- 14) Consider structural grassed areas to handle parking for large events.
- 15) Assess public and private capabilities for expanding special events and cultural activities and facilities that will attract visitors to the community.
- 16) Investigate adding emergency call boxes in recreational areas and along recreational routes.

Parks & Recreation

Park Enhancements

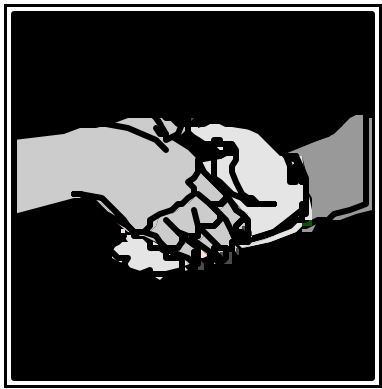
Parks contribute to an increased quality of life. A high quality of life not only includes a strong economy, but also a clean environment, a good education system, access to outdoor resources, and family recreation opportunities. An improved quality of life makes a community a more desirable place to live, attracting new residents, businesses and tourists, thus, improving the local economy as well.

Parks also make a community more livable by providing social benefits to residents. Although they are difficult to quantify, these benefits are just as important to consider. The residents of Kokomo recognize the relationship between parks and quality of life.

The 1998 Park and Recreation Master Plan for Kokomo identified 28 neighborhood and community park properties throughout the city. They range from neighborhood parks to larger community parks. The physical character of these parks varies to meet the diverse needs of the community. Several parks have large open areas for organized sports while others are more densely wooded with walking trails and passive picnic areas.

In addition to the city-owned park properties, schools, churches, and private entities provide the Kokomo community with additional locations for swimming, golf, soccer, baseball, softball, basketball, and playground equipment.

According to the participants of the public workshops, much of the play equipment, sports fields, and meeting facilities that are city owned are in need of upgrading and modernizing. Parking is limited for large events like tournaments, concerts, and other events. And better connections between the parks, residential areas, schools and other amenities throughout the city are also needed.



Chapter 11

Conclusion

Summary

The completion of this comprehensive plan inherently recognizes the strategic advantage of anticipating change, identifying problems, and capitalizing on opportunities in Kokomo. Decision-makers in most communities today are faced with problems and situations that need immediate resolution on a daily basis. This forces decisions to be made on a reactive basis rather than a proactive basis. It is anticipated that with the completion and adoption of this comprehensive plan, Kokomo's leaders will plan for the future in a more positive way. Rather than reacting to the daily problems that arise, decision-makers, and the community as a whole, can better realize the vision for Kokomo.

It is believed that the questions asked at the beginning of this document are addressed through the goals and objectives in this document. Future growth and development can be better directed such that it will provide the most benefit to the community, thus strengthening its economic health and the quality of life of its residents. Promoting meaningful growth will not only ensure quality development, but it will also protect and enhance Kokomo's natural environment.

An important part of a successful comprehensive plan requires implementing some of the *Strategies* listed throughout the document. The intent of the strategies in this plan is to lend guidance toward implementation. Conversely, they are not written as a decree, mandating that they be accomplished by the city leaders. Plans are dynamic. What may be appropriate at the time of adoption may not be appropriate or implementable at a later date. Therefore, the city should strive to accomplish the essence of the plan and its strategies to the extent of the city's capacity and resources.

This document cannot be viewed as a static "set in stone," series of unalterable ideas and projects. To be effective, it must be reviewed, evaluated, and when necessary, updated to reflect changing trends, outlooks, and big picture thinking in the community. In doing so, the community can collectively plan for the future in a proactive manner, thus capturing opportunities and avoiding potential pitfalls.

The Plan Commission will review the Kokomo Comprehensive Plan annually; complete a community-based review and update within three to five years after adoption; and conduct a complete update no later than ten years after adoption.

Part

3

Appendix



City of Kokomo

Comprehensive Plan Update

Community Needs Survey

Version 55, 2000

Participants of the first workshop were asked to identify community strengths, weaknesses, and needs. Most of the items listed below were identified by at least one group. A few items have been added by the planning consultant. These items are organized into categories and are listed in no particular order. Please mark along the list, placing an "X" on the box to the left of items you believe are needed in the City of Kokomo.

The City of Kokomo needs to:

Storm Water Management & Flood Risk

- ☐ Manage and direct stormwater
- ☐ Develop new development to be consistent on smaller lots with shared green space
- ☐ Develop new development to be on larger lots with underground green space
- ☐ Better enforce existing ordinance
- ☐ Regulate signs and billboardage
- ☐ Regulate noise and light pollution
- ☐ Encourage public decision making between the city and county
- ☐ Discourage incompatible land uses
- ☐ Encourage public and development
- ☐ Concentrate new businesses development along US 31
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Economic Development

- ☐ Encourage retail/commercial development
- ☐ Create an entertainment district with hotels, restaurants, shopping
- ☐ Focus on attracting new large employers
- ☐ Focus on small business development
- ☐ Focus on retaining and expanding existing industry
- ☐ Promote a variety of land uses to help diversify the tax base
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

City Issues

- ☐ Enhance entrances into the city
- ☐ Coordinate parks, signs, flower planting throughout community
- ☐ Develop maintenance of vacant properties and lots
- ☐ Change philosophy from "small town" to "city"
- ☐ Increase professionally and continually improve facilities
- ☐ Better enforce ordinances ordinance
- ☐ Enhance character of neighborhood
- ☐ Enhance character of US 31
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Community Facilities & Services

- ☐ Expand public programs to meet the needs of the city
- ☐ Create additional public programs and facilities for children, youth, seniors and the elderly
- ☐ Develop new initiatives to participate in legislation
- ☐ Improve public safety and public services
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Survey Forms - Workshop #3

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Survey Forms - Workshop #3

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