



# THE VIEW

Newsletter for the Update of the Indianapolis-Marion County Comprehensive Plan

## *Citizens Voice Issues at Town Hall Meetings!*

Town Hall meetings were held throughout the county to gain insight into the planning issues important to the citizens of Marion County. The meetings were held on September 27 at the Wayne Township MSD Education Center, on October 3 at IPS School #48, on October 5 at Howe Middle School and on October 11 at Southport High School.

Those attending the meetings included neighborhood association members, City-County Councilors, Board of Zoning Appeals members, school district representatives, township officials, representatives of environmental organizations and individual citizens.

The attendees filled out questionnaires regarding ideals and objectives and participated in small group discussions about planning issues and quality of life. Results of the Town Hall meetings have been used to set the topics that the Issue Committees will study and have also been used to develop the value statements that will guide the development of the comprehensive plan update.

In the questionnaire, participants were asked about the qualities of their ideal city and their ideal neighborhood. They were also asked to consider the objectives proposed by the Growth Advisory Committee

Report.

The first question was “If you were designing your ideal city, what would you definitely include?” Participants could make up to ten responses. The top three responses were good schools, convenient mass transit and a variety of parks and greenways. Trailing these items was

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## *Issue Committees Announced*

Eight Issue Committees have been established to further develop the update to the Indianapolis-Marion County Comprehensive Plan.

The Issue Committees will serve as the principal forums for in depth public involvement. Each committee will address a separate aspect of civic life within the county.

The issues that will be studied originated from public input received at the Town Hall Meetings. The public input was further refined by the Steering Committee, resulting in eight Issue Committees:

***Cultural, Social and Education  
Economic Development  
Environment, Parks, and Open  
Space***

***Land Use Standards and Procedures***

***Neighborhoods and Housing  
Redevelopment***

***Regionalism***

***Transportation and Infrastructure***

The Issue Committees will set community goals and objectives as well as develop recommendations for policies and programs. The issue areas will have “fuzzy boundaries” in order to allow the committees to explore the interrelationships among issues. Issue Committees working on overlapping topics may hold joint meetings to integrate work and resolve conflicts.

Issue Committees will rely

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*Citizens from page 1 . . .*

a grouping of answers concerning the environment, culture, infrastructure and the economy.

When asked about the aspects of their ideal neighborhood, the most frequent response was “sidewalks within the neighborhood.” Other top responses were proximity to parks, schools and convenience shopping and the presence of mature trees.

While responses remained constant despite the meetings’ geographic locations, participants did have some specific areas of concern. For example, participants at the south meeting were particularly interested in low noise levels and participants at the east meeting frequently mentioned street lighting.

The questionnaire concluded with objectives concerning city growth. Participants were asked to evaluate recommendations developed in late 1999 by the Growth Advisory Committee. The respondents strongly agreed with these statements which talked about balanced land use and the quality planning, construction and maintenance of communities. See box for more detailed results of the questionnaire.

The bulk of the town hall meetings involved small group discussions. Participants worked in groups of five to ten to collectively answer questions about planning issues and quality of life. After the discussions, each group presented their work and their comments were recorded. After the group work was complete, each person individually ranked the importance of the statements.

The answers to the questions were similar from meeting to meeting although each meeting had some unique statements.

The four questions each group was given to consider were:

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## Questionnaire Results

Following is a summary of results from a questionnaire given to participants in the first round of Indianapolis Insight Town Hall Meetings. After the conclusion of the Town Hall Meetings the questionnaire received wider distribution through the Indianapolis Insight webpage ([www.indygov.org/indianapolisinsight](http://www.indygov.org/indianapolisinsight)), suburban newspapers, and various meetings and classes. The results listed below are from the Town Hall meetings.

1. If you were designing your ideal CITY, what would you definitely include? (Respondents could offer up to ten responses. They were given a list of 35 items to choose from and were also given the option to develop their own responses.) The top 11 responses were:

- Good schools (50 responses)
- Convenient mass transit (44)
- Variety of parks and open spaces (40)
- Clean air (29)
- Strong economy (28)
- Vital downtown (28)
- Variety of cultural activities (26)
- Clean groundwater for safe drinking water (25)
- Infrastructure that anticipates future growth (25)
- Open space within the city (24)
- Respect for historic structures and neighborhoods (23)

2. If you were designing your ideal NEIGHBORHOOD, what would you definitely include? (Respondents could make up to ten responses. They were given a list of 21 items to choose from and were also given the option to come up with their own responses.) The top 7 responses were:

- Sidewalks within the neighborhood (51 responses)
- Mature trees (39)
- Parks within walking distance (37)
- Proximity to schools (36)
- Convenience shopping within walking distance (32)
- Open space (30)
- Strong community organization/activities (30)

3. Think about your ideal neighborhood. For each of the following pairs, circle the point of the scale that most closely represents your ideal.

Separation of housing types. (responses)	1 (8)	2 (17)	3 (17)	4 (29)	Mix of housing types.
Similarly valued properties. (responses)	1 (14)	2 (18)	3 (24)	4 (16)	Mix of property values.
A variety of shopping within walking distance (responses)	1 (25)	2 (19)	3 (17)	4 (11)	No commercial uses near housing.
A variety of street and walking connections to adjacent neighborhoods (responses)	1 (49)	2 (15)	3 (5)	4 (4)	No connections to adjacent neighborhoods.
Remoteness from neighbors (responses)	1 (7)	2 (16)	3 (30)	4 (19)	Closeness to neighbors.
Neighbors are much the same as yourself. (responses)	1 (9)	2 (25)	3 (19)	4 (19)	Many neighbors are different than yourself.

4. In late 1999, representatives from 28 local organizations with a stake in city development convened to discuss issues of city growth. This group, entitled the Growth Advisory Committee, developed two objective statements. They are:

Objective 1: We should strive to achieve a balance of land uses throughout the various parts of the county and the region. Balanced land use is important not only for tax base equity, but also for livable communities where people can live, shop, recreate and earn a living throughout the different phases of their lives.

Objective 2: New developments should be such that they retain their value over the long haul. Well-planned, well-built and well-maintained communities should retain their value and should not be a drain on society and government resources.

How strongly do you agree or disagree with these objectives:

Objective 1.  
Strongly agree (43) Agree (21) Disagree (3) Strongly disagree (2)

Objective 2.  
Strongly agree (53) Agree (19) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree (1)

# Steering Committee Gears Up!

Appointed by Mayor Bart Peterson, the Indianapolis Insight Steering Committee is charged with providing oversight to the public input portion of the Comprehensive Plan update. The Steering Committee coordinates the other forms of public involvement and will ultimately recommend a final draft of the plan to the Metropolitan Development Commission for adoption.

The committee consists of representatives of various groups with an interest in the future development and redevelopment of Indianapolis-Marion County. The citizen chairs of each of the Issue Committees are also members of the Steering Committee

A careful look at the Steering Committee reveals that while some members may be seen as pro-growth and others as anti-growth, the greatest percentage represent organiza-

tions that neither pro-growth or anti-growth, but are affected by growth and have an interest in how development occurs.

Throughout the planning process, committee members are encouraged to attend and participate in town hall meetings. They will look at issues on a comprehensive and long-term level. They will also encourage participation by groups that traditionally do not get involved in the planning process

At its November 9<sup>th</sup> meeting the Steering Committee reviewed and refined value statements. They also approved the number and topics of the issue committees and recommended members to serve on those issue committees.

As the Issue Committees do their work, the Steering Committee will receive updates on their progress as  
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# Downtown Plan in the Works

The Indianapolis Division of Planning is conducting two major planning efforts over the next two years. One is the Indianapolis Insight Plan; the update to the Indianapolis-Marion County Comprehensive Plan. The other is the Indianapolis Regional Center Plan 2000-2020.

The Regional Center Plan provides guidance for the continued growth and improvement of the downtown. It calls for programs to address the delivery of social services, public education, human relations and support for the arts and recommends land uses. It provides

guidelines for creating a downtown that is a source of pride of all residents of the city and state.

The original Regional Center Plan was developed in 1970 and has been updated every 10 years since then. The study boundaries of the Regional Center Plan are the inner loop of the County's Interstate system on the north, east, and south and roughly the Conrail railroad on the west. The update of the plan for 2000-2020 proposes to expand this study area north to 16<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Indianapolis Insight Plan and the Regional Center Plan will be coordinated as they are developed.

## Indianapolis Insight: Steering Committee

Harold Anderson, Metropolitan Development Commission  
Ellen Annala, United Way/Community Service Council  
Edward Bowes, Pike Township Metropolitan School District  
Thomas Bruns, Indianapolis Water Company  
Cathy Burton, Marion County Alliance of Neighborhood Associations  
Joe Calderon, Land Use Committee of the Indianapolis Bar Association  
Moira Carlstedt, Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership  
Elmo Carver, Franklin Township Community School District  
Alicia Craig, National Audubon Society, Amos W. Butler Chapter  
Mark Dewart, Sierra Club, Heartlands Group  
Luis Dominguez, Indiana Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
Carl Drummer, Center Township Trustee  
Ed Frazier, Town Board President, Town of Speedway  
Dale Henson, Decatur Township Fire Department  
Phil Hinkle, City-County Council  
Craig Hintz, Warren Township Metropolitan School District  
Jan Hope, Builders Association of Greater Indianapolis  
Karen Celestino Horseman, City-County Council  
Lacy Johnson, Indianapolis Airport Authority  
Sam Jones, Urban League of Indianapolis  
Charles Kindermann, Indianapolis Senior Citizens Center  
Michael Lawson, Indianapolis Regional Economic Development Partnership  
Lee Wellen, Central Indiana Regional Citizens League  
Marcia Matthieu, Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District  
Jesse Moore, Indianapolis Black Chamber of Commerce  
John Ottensmann, IUPUI-School of Public and Environmental Affairs  
Michael Porter, Historic Urban Neighborhoods of Indianapolis  
Cherrish Pryor, Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce  
Thomas D. Schneider, Mayor, City of Lawrence  
Bob Snyder, American Institute of Architects, Indianapolis Chapter  
Steve Sullivan, Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors  
Ed Treacy, Metropolitan Development Commission  
Nannette Tunget, Mayor, City of Southport  
J. Werner Wiley, Mayor, City of Beech Grove  
Barry Wood, Washington Township Assessor  
Chairpersons of the issue committees (Eight groups of citizens and experts will study issues in various topic areas. The issue committee chairpersons will join the steering committee.)

# Study Looks at Future of Metropolitan Growth

An economic base study outlining future population, workforce and land consumption projections will soon be released by the Department of Metropolitan Development's Division of Planning. The study was commissioned by the Division to provide background data for the update of the Indianapolis-Marion County Comprehensive Plan, the update to the Indianapolis Regional Center Plan and for regional trans-

portation planning. The projections were developed by HNTB Architects, Engineers and Planners of Indianapolis and Development Strategies, Inc of St. Louis.

The study focuses on prevailing trends in population and the economy and what the outcome of those trends will be if they continue at current rates. It reports on the nine-county metropolitan Indianapolis area as a whole and by county.

Marion County is shown as a whole and by township. The Regional Center is also studied individually.

The study is divided into four main sections:

1. The first section reviews how the regional economy has changed during the past thirty years. In that time, economy has shifted from a heavy reliance on manufacturing jobs to a service-oriented economy.

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## Implementation Requires Everyone!

Implementation of the comprehensive plan is a complex process involving thousands of individual decisions and actions.

The current Comprehensive Plan for Indianapolis-Marion County is made up of a variety of planning documents. The Township Land Use Plans are probably the most well-known portions of the plan, but the plan also includes the Thoroughfare Plan, neighborhood plans, corridor plans and park plans.

The various components of the Comprehensive Plan are implemented in different ways. The Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Indianapolis Department of Capital Asset Management implement the Thoroughfare Plan when they approve and then build new streets or widen existing ones. Neighborhood and corridor plans are implemented by

neighborhood organizations in partnership with the City and other institutions and organizations. Indy Parks is the primary implementor of the park plan segments of the Comprehensive Plan.

The land use portions of the Comprehensive Plan are implemented chiefly by private individuals and groups as they make decisions on how to develop or redevelop their property. Because state law recognizes the Comprehensive Plan as the basis for zoning, individuals and groups are not only guided by the comprehensive plan but also regulated by zoning ordinances.

The application and enforcement of the Indianapolis' zoning ordinances is a three-tiered process involving DMD's Current Planning section, the Division of Permits, and the Code Compliance office. Current Planning administers land use petitions, such as variances, rezonings, approvals, special exceptions, subdivision plats and street vacations. It also provides recom-

mendations pertaining to those petitions to the Boards of Zoning Appeals (BZA), the Hearing Examiner, the Plat Committee and the Metropolitan Development Commission (MDC).

The Division of Permits reviews and approves site and development plans in order to ensure compliance with zoning, building and infrastructure regulations.

Code Compliance enforces the zoning ordinances and ensures that approved construction meets the requirements of the building and infrastructure codes.

The Current Planning staff relies on the Comprehensive Plan in developing their recommendations to the MDC and the BZAs. The Plan is also used by landowners and builders when deciding how to best develop a property. Neighborhood groups and individual citizens use the comprehensive plan in making land use decisions and will cite the comprehensive plan when promoting or defending their neighborhood.

# Dreaming the Possible Dream

The City of Indianapolis is taking a “values-driven” approach to the update of the Indianapolis-Marion County Comprehensive Plan, which asks participants to “dream a realistic dream.”

Cities may take many different approaches to comprehensive planning. Some cities prefer to take a very mathematical approach using market research, demographic studies and statistical models. However this method often excludes the human element. Other jurisdictions prefer a “vision-driven” approach, which is based on the collective dreams of its citizens. These plans can be very exciting, but very difficult to implement because they often do not include realistic and tangible goals to be achieved.

The Indianapolis Insight plan is using a balanced approach that asks citizens to dream about an ideal future but then sets those dreams against a backdrop of demographics, technology and development markets.

In order to provide a philosophical structure to the plan a series of value statements have been adopted by the Indianapolis Insight Steering Committee. The actions and policies recommended by the plan are expected to both reflect and respect these values.

The value statements are:

- Development of our city and county should meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- We should strive to achieve a balance of land uses, including a diversity of housing options, throughout the various parts of the

county and the region. Balanced land use is important not only for tax base equity, but also for livable communities where people can live, shop, recreate and earn a living throughout the different phases of their lives.

New developments should be well-planned, well-built and well-maintained so that they retain their value over the long haul. Established areas should be well-maintained to retain (or regain) their value and to preserve their unique identity.

- We should strive to maintain a healthy environment and to make appropriate improvements to the current state of the environment. Of particular importance are clean air, ground and surface water, conservation of natural features including wooded areas, and adequate parks and open space.

- We should continue to improve our transportation system so that it is well-connected, convenient, and safe. We should provide a variety of transportation choices so that all people regardless of age or ability can travel throughout the region. Both the transportation system and the infrastructure system should anticipate and guide growth of the metropolitan area.

- We should maintain and further develop a strong, diverse economy and to make efforts to attract and retain highly skilled and educated workers. Forces of disinvestment and decline should be countered with a variety of redevelopment and reinvestment activities wherever needed to maintain the vitality of the community.

- The regional center should continue as the focus of the larger

scale cultural events and venues, however we should support a variety of cultural activities within all parts of the city. We should respect historic structures and neighborhoods as the physical embodiment of our history and cultural identity.

- As the center of an increasingly regional metropolitan area, Indianapolis should be a leader in planning-related cooperation and communication.

## Website and Hotline

Two good ways to keep up to date on the Indianapolis Insight Plan is to visit our website or call our hotline.

The Indianapolis Insight web site is a great place to get up-to-date information about the comprehensive planning process. Recently the site has displayed meeting dates, times, and location maps; background documents, a list of steering committee members, and methods of participation. Online participation currently includes an interactive discussion forum and an issues and values questionnaire. The web site can be found at: [www.indygov.org/indianapolisinsight](http://www.indygov.org/indianapolisinsight).

A telephone hotline has been established to help keep everyone involved in the update process. Callers have the opportunity to check dates of public meetings, learn more about comprehensive plans and how they affect citizens, request information, and leave comments. The Indianapolis Insight Hotline is:

(317) 327-5111

### *Citizens from page 2...*

1. What issues do you think are important to the future of Indianapolis as a good place to live and work?
2. In what ways would you like to see Indianapolis change for the better?
3. In 2020, what issues do you think will be important to you? (Remember you will be 20 years older.)
4. In the face of many forces of change, what qualities of Indianapolis life are important to hang on to?

The answers to the first two questions commonly included concerns about redevelopment, public transportation, parks and greenspace, adequate infrastructure, a clean environment, and public participation in planning and zoning.

The third question elicited common responses concerning transportation options, a clean environment, neighborhood shopping, senior housing, a good sidewalk system, and keeping senior citizens integrated into the community.

The qualities of Indianapolis life that participants most wanted to hang on to were the friendliness of the citizens; parks, greenways and greenspaces; a vital downtown; ethnic and cultural diversity; and strong and recognizable neighborhoods.

The comprehensive planning staff thanks both the meeting participants and the venues for making the Town Hall meetings possible.

### *Economic from page 4...*

While these shifts have been accompanied by increases in personal income, Indianapolis has not kept pace with national income growth.

2. Comparisons are made with nine American metropolitan areas of similar population as Indianapolis.

3. Projections to the year 2025 in five-year increments are presented next. These are based on independent projections of the resident population prepared by the Indiana Business Research Bureau of Indiana University. By combining these with trends in employment and housing, projections are made for jobs and households.

4. Finally, these projections are converted to major land use categories to estimate future needs for land development in the Indianapolis metropolitan area. The conversions are customized to represent prevailing patterns in the eight counties surrounding Marion County and in the nine townships within the County. In this way, it is possible to visualize the amount of land which may be necessary to absorb future growth.

The projections in the study are intended solely as guides for planning. They are not intended to represent exact characteristics of the Indianapolis metro area in the next 25 years. However, the trends that have affected the Indianapolis area in the past can be combined with certain trends in the population and labor force in order to suggest a future pattern of growth in the metropolitan area.

The following key projections and trends result from application of the land use model developed for this study.

- Regionally, the amount of developed land land uses will increase by 70% over the 25 year period, from 823 square miles to

1,397 square miles for a net increase of 574 square miles. This results from a conversion of agricultural or undeveloped land to urban/suburban uses.

- Regional population would increase 15%.
- Regional households would increase 20%.
- Regional employment would increase 10%.

- Population and households would continue to move out from the central part of the region. The metropolitan area would continue to grow, from a population of 1,565,150 in 2000 to 1,798,700 in 2025, however most of this growth will occur away from the central portion of the region.

- Pike, Lawrence, and Wayne Townships simply do not have enough developable land remaining to absorb their mathematically projected growth. Some of that projected growth, therefore, is likely to spill over into adjacent counties.

- Marion County would experience a net decline in employment by place of work. Marion County's share of metro area jobs was 67 percent in 1998, down from 75 percent in 1970. This trend is projected to continue to year 2025 unless actions are taken to stem these shifts.

To some, these projections may seem favorable and actions could be recommended to reinforce them. To others, the projections may seem unfavorable. In such cases, recommended actions could attempt to alter the "path" of the trends in order to achieve more favorable outcomes by the year 2025.

*Committees from page 1. . .* significantly on members with technical expertise. Participants will include citizens, City-County Councilors, Metropolitan Development Commission members, City staff, and representatives from business and neighborhood organizations. Committee members will also include persons who volunteered at the first round of Town Hall meetings.

Issue Committee members will meet every three to four weeks over a five to six month period.

The **cultural, social and education** committee will study the aspects of our society that enhance our community and make it a better place to live. The committee will address issues concerning values, civility, community assets, and services and how they affect our lives and the physical form of our city.

The **economic development** committee will study the City's ability to sustain the economic needs of its citizens. This committee will be challenged to suggest an approach to encourage intelligent economic growth while providing an adequate tax base for essential public sector activities. It will also address appropriate levels of commercial and industrial expansion.

The **environment, parks and open space** committee will study the relationship between current and future development of Indianapolis and the environment. This committee will envision how a lively community of more than one million people can grow in ways that have a positive effect on both the human population and the environment.

The **land use standards and procedures** committee will study the relationship between the Comprehensive Plan, City zoning ordinances and the Rules of Procedure. It will

also evaluate the methods the City uses to implement the Comprehensive Plan. While this committee will not make specific land use recommendations, it will establish the methods and standards to be used in developing future land use recommendations.

The **neighborhoods and housing** committee will study the land use patterns of successful neighborhoods and how those patterns could positively influence new neighborhood development or redevelopment, while preserving and redeveloping commercial and residential areas.

The **redevelopment** committee will plan for continued redevelopment activities to attract new businesses and encourage existing businesses to remain, increase employment opportunities, protect and increase the tax base and encourage overall economic growth.

The **regionalism** committee will invite neighboring jurisdictions to come together to discuss and seek accord on regional planning issues such as coordination and cooperation, land use along jurisdiction boundaries, and overall urban growth.

The **transportation and infrastructure** committee will serve as an in depth forum for public, private and community investors to study planned and current transportation and infrastructure initiatives, and explore the likely effects on future development.

If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else to serve on one of these committees, please call the Indianapolis Insight Hotline at 327-5111, fax us at 327-5103, or visit our website at [www.indygov.org/indianapolisinsight](http://www.indygov.org/indianapolisinsight) and with name, address, phone number and committee name. Please make your nominations before December 7, 2000.

*Steering from page 3. . .*

well as resolving any conflicts that may arise. The Steering Committee will also review, coordinate and refine the goals, objectives, policies and implementation strategies recommended by the issue committees.

Once the first phase of the comprehensive plan update is completed, the Steering Committee will recommend its adoption by the Metropolitan Development Commission.

The second phase of the update will be the designation of land use recommendations to Marion County properties. The Steering Committee will assist in coordinating and refining the land use plan.



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## *Insight Conference Kicks-Off Update*

A half day conference titled “INDIANAPOLIS INSIGHT: Comprehensive Planning for the 21st Century” kicked-off the comprehensive plan update on the morning of September 14, 2000. Approximately 220 persons attended the event held at the Madam Walker Urban Life Center in downtown Indianapolis.

The conference was opened by Deputy Mayor William Shrewsberry who asked those in attendance to perform the vital tasks of dreaming and planning.

Keynote speaker was Dr. Catherine Ross, Director of GRТА (Georgia Regional Transportation Authority). In describing her work and the mission of her agency, Dr.

Ross emphasized the need to think regionally, to plan inclusively, and to think about human costs; not just the economic costs, of sprawl.

A panel discussion on the topic of growth in Indianapolis followed Dr. Ross. Panelists included Charles Guynn of Indiana Black Expo Economic Development Corporation, Ruth Hayes, a neighborhood leader; Phil Hinkle, City-County Councilor; Greg Lindsey, IUPUI School of Public and Environmental Affairs; and Randy Snyder, Metropolitan Development Commission. The panel discussion was moderated by Carolyn Coleman, Director of Metropolitan Development.

The conference ended with a presentation by Keith Holdsworth,

Principal Planner, on how to get involved in the Comprehensive Plan update.

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