

## Chapter 2: Land Use Plan

### **LAND USE PLAN INTRODUCTION**

The Town of Westfield and Washington Township are located in fast-growing Hamilton County and are experiencing growth pressures as desirable locations in the Greater Indianapolis Metropolitan Area. Citizens of the community value many aspects of life in Westfield that can be retained through careful planning. This section of the Westfield – Washington Township Comprehensive Plan is intended to establish policies that guide future land use decisions. The policies contained in this plan also will form the basis for future land use regulations.

The purpose of this element of the Comprehensive Plan is to serve as a guide for Westfield’s future development. The plan is not a regulation and should not be viewed in that context. At the same time, this plan is adopted by the Plan Commission and the Town Council, and it is the official policy of the Town of Westfield and Washington Township. Decision makers should give full weight to this plan as the agreed-upon vision for the future of the community. These policies should be clear so that they can serve as the basis for the implementing regulations that will follow adoption of the plan. The policies also should assist the Advisory Plan Commission, the Town Council, and the Board of Zoning Appeals in their decision making.

This section has two parts: overarching community development policies, and land-use specific policies. Each set of policies is accompanied by a list of implementation tools. These tools are further explained and expanded in Chapter 4 of this plan.

### **OVERALL COMMUNITY GOALS AND POLICIES**

While Westfield – Washington Township is located in Hamilton County, the fastest growing county in the Indianapolis area, the community has a rural and small-town feel that is absent in some of the other areas that surround Indianapolis. Local residents want to preserve that character. In particular, there is a desire that Westfield retain its unique sense of identity and not become indistinguishable from any of the other communities in the metropolitan area.

While it is difficult to precisely define what makes the Westfield area unique, there are positive elements of that character that can be identified for the purpose of planning. Westfield – Washington Township has significant natural areas and open space. The area has four named villages: Eagletown, Jolietville, Hortonville and Lamong, each with a unique history. Westfield has a central downtown with locally owned businesses. The

town has a rich history that includes a role as a stop on the Underground Railroad. Citizens of Westfield value a low crime rate, easy access to public services, manageable traffic, excellent schools, and high-quality public services. It is the intent of this plan to preserve those valued characteristics and enhance them where possible.

As a starting point, certain overarching principles of growth and development are identified relating to how land uses should develop. These fundamental principles serve as a foundation for more land use specific policies that follow in this chapter. It is the desire of the community to see a diverse balance of land uses that proceed in an efficient and well connected pattern with good land use transitions. The land use patterns should be fiscally sustainable, high quality, and should be accompanied by substantial and permanent open space of one form or another. The following are the policies that embody these principles.

### **Land Use Diversity & Balance**

Westfield desires to be a diverse rather than homogeneous community, providing a range of housing, recreational, and economic opportunities for its residents. No single socio-economic segment or housing price point should dominate the community nor be neglected.

#### ***Development Policies – Land Use Diversity and Balance***

- Encourage compatible and high quality “life span” housing, including a balanced mix of homes for renters and first-time buyers, housing for first-time owners ready to move up, executive housing, and senior housing. Regardless of type of housing or its target market, all housing should be of high quality design with lasting value. A balanced range of compatible single-family detached and attached housing in a variety of price ranges is envisioned.
- Encourage diversity in lot sizes and lot layout.
- Encourage a mix of housing types and prices that meets the needs of the full range of population in Westfield – Washington Township.

## ***Implementation Tools – Land Use Diversity and Balance***

- Zoning regulations
  - Establish appropriate locations for varying housing types.
  - Development standards that establish appropriate setbacks, densities, lot sizes.
- Design standards to ensure quality development.
- Demographic studies that evaluate the market and the availability of housing stock in the various categories.



*Figure 5: Allowing a variety of housing types and sizes will help promote a "lifespan" of housing opportunities.*

## Buffers and Transitions

Appropriate transitions between land uses are essential to the full enjoyment of property. The types of transitions that are needed will differ in different circumstances. In some cases, undisturbed open space will be used. In other areas, buffering using landscaping, fencing, or a combination of those may be in order. It is important that existing uses, especially residences, be properly buffered from new development that has a different character.

### *Development Policies – Buffers and Transitions*

- Provide appropriate buffers between the commercial development and any adjacent non-commercial uses, particularly residential uses.
- Use landscaped building setback areas to provide buffering from roadways.

- Where appropriate, encourage transitional land uses as buffers to help mitigate negative land use impacts. For example, attached housing could be used as a transition between commercial or industrial uses and single family uses. In addition to serving as a land use buffer, such housing can contribute to the goal of providing a balanced range of land uses.



*Figure 6: Certain uses, such as attached housing, can serve as a land use buffer between nonresidential uses and lower intensity detached housing.*

Attached housing should be used as a transitional land use only in coordination with actual commercial or industrial development. The mere presence of land recommended or zoned for future business uses should not be used as justification for attached housing as a transitional land use. Absent any existing or pending business use, any attached housing must stand on its own merits and not be justified as a transitional land use.

- Provide appropriate transition between adjacent dissimilar residential areas.
- Ensure proper buffering between existing residences and new development of a dissimilar character.
- Develop a range of buffering requirements, to allow for different buffers in different situations.

- Combine “hardscape” buffers, such as fences and walls, with landscaping and distance for a more pleasing aesthetic effect.
- Utilize natural open space for buffering in industrial areas.
- Encourage the uses of natural buffers involving “reforestation” of natural vegetation, particularly when buffering between suburban and rural uses, and between existing uses and new development.
- Discourage the use of berms for buffering.

### ***Implementation Tools – Buffers and Transitions***

- Zoning regulations
  - Require buffering appropriate to differing situations.
  - Provide for transitional land uses.
- Landscape design manual, detailing appropriate plantings, fencing and similar features for different land use categories, with emphasis on the transitions between incompatible land uses.

## **Connectivity**

Improved and increased vehicular and pedestrian connections between existing neighborhoods and new subdivisions within Westfield – Washington Township will reduce automobile miles, increase opportunities for social interaction and enhance the safety and vitality of the community. New development can provide opportunities for the creation of new multimodal links through sites to improve the accessibility and connectivity within neighborhoods.

### ***Development Policies – Connectivity***

- Provide pedestrian systems within open space and along roadways to connect to surrounding pedestrian and bicycle networks, particularly the Midland Trace and Monon Trails.
- Avoid fragmentation of open space into isolated, unconnected areas, except to provide passive recreation, neighborhood parks and commons.

- Link spaces within neighborhoods and between neighborhoods and the larger community through a multi-modal system of fully connected routes to all destinations.
- Include pedestrian facilities in all new developments. In particular, develop improved connections between key destinations such as between residential and commercial areas, and between residences, parks and schools.
- Participate in regional transportation efforts that promote better regional connectivity, such as the IndyGo Bus service.

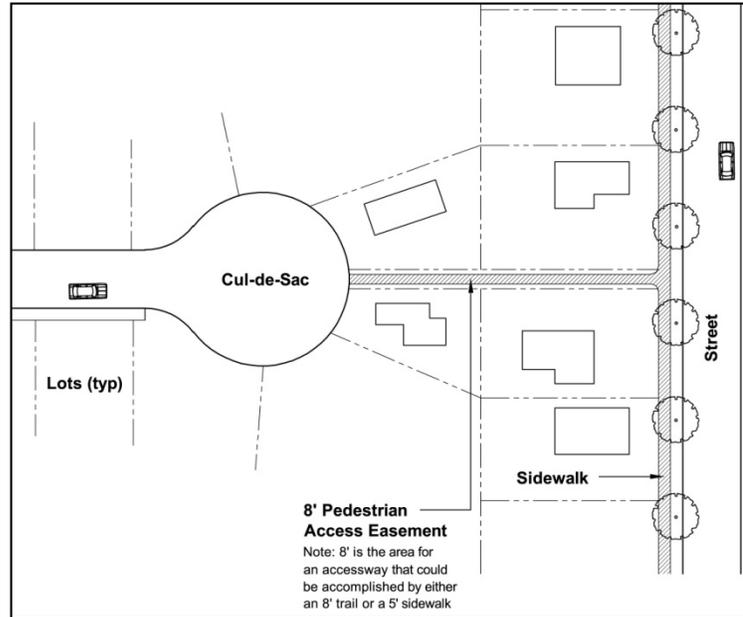


Figure 7: Pedestrian links between neighborhood developments and streets, commercial centers, or other public spaces increases overall community connectivity.

## Implementation Tools – Connectivity

- Prepare and adopt a pedestrian and bicycle plan that includes a connectivity map for the township, to serve as a basis for zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Zoning regulations
  - Require pedestrian facilities in conjunction with all new development.
- Subdivision regulations
  - Require pedestrian facilities and bicycle networks in all new subdivisions.

## Contiguity of Development

Development that is scattered and sprawled throughout the township rather than adjacent to existing developed areas is inefficient for provision of services and detracts from the overall sense of community. As new development occurs, it is generally more desirable for it to occur as part of a gradual radiating out from existing developed

areas which are typically better served by infrastructure, as contrasted with a less desirable “hopscotch” pattern. Developments far from the town center can diminish community character and identity by creating a sprawled development pattern, take away much-needed resources from the community core, and often bring traffic and service problems.

### ***Development Policies – Contiguity of Development***

- Encourage new development to be located contiguous to existing development. In rare circumstances, non-contiguous development may be permitted when it is vital to the economically and spatially efficient expansion and improvement of key infrastructure.
- Recognize that the promotion of efficient expansion of development relative to infrastructure and the avoidance of inefficient sprawl is a general policy; there may be occasions when non-contiguous development is still appropriate, especially when provisions are made for adequate public facilities and infrastructure not just for the development itself, but for land between the development and the existing developed and serviced area.

### ***Implementation Tools – Contiguity of Development***

- Establish a development review process for zoning map amendments, subdivisions, and site development that ensures that contiguity policies are considered. This process should focus on the following:
  - The overall pattern of development;
  - Promoting contiguity;
  - Discouraging inefficient sprawl;
  - Orderly expansion of infrastructure.
- Review this plan annually, to evaluate its relevance and effectiveness, and revise the plan regularly, at least once every five years.

## Access Control

As the community grows, new driveways and traffic generators can create congestion and lengthen the time spent in the car. These effects can be reduced if traffic is managed correctly.

### *Development Policies – Access Control*

- Require development of frontage roads in conjunction with new nonresidential development.
- Limit access points pursuant to an access management plan, particularly on arterial and collector streets, to new development to reduce the number of areas of traffic conflict and to ensure adequate sight distances.
- Utilize traffic calming techniques to control speeds in areas where lower speeds are desirable, such as in residential neighborhoods and in the pedestrian-oriented downtown.



*Figure 8: A traffic-calming device.*

### *Implementation Tools – Access Control*

- Prepare and adopt an access management plan to serve as the basis for zoning, subdivision, and site plan review requirements relating to the smooth flow of traffic.
- Prepare and adopt design standards for driveways and intersections
- Zoning regulations
  - Require minimum driveway separation distances to minimize points of conflict.
  - Require minimum sight distances for driveways to ensure proper visibility for drivers.
- Subdivision regulations
  - Require minimum intersection spacing, appropriate to the street classification.

- Require design and installation of frontage roads to minimize traffic conflicts on major thoroughfares.

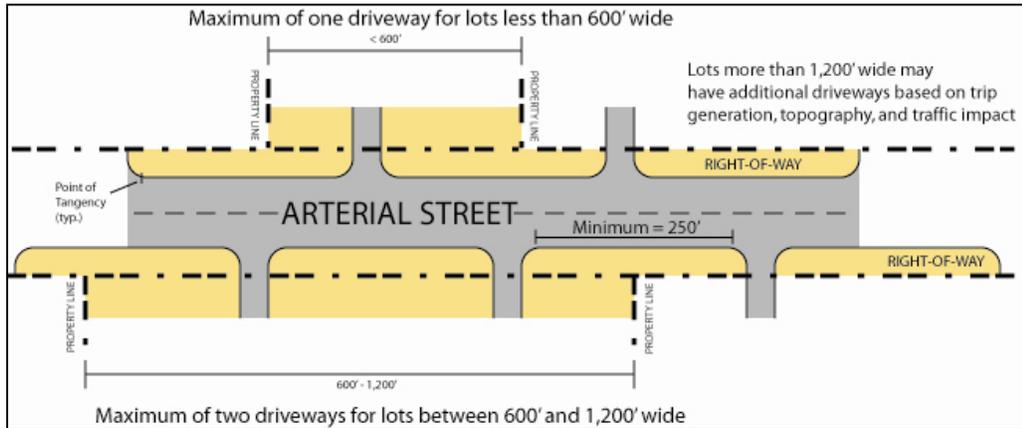


Figure 9: Regulating minimum driveway separation and sight distances will improve overall access control.

## Residential Design Standards

In order for Westfield to achieve a unique and identifiable character, it must develop workable architectural and neighborhood design standards for new subdivisions. The purpose of the standards is not to increase housing prices but rather to enhance the sense of place in Westfield.

### *Development Policies – Residential Design Standards*

- Encourage neighborhoods that do not have the appearance of “production” housing.
- Encourage variety and diversity in housing while maintaining a distinct style or character and avoiding the appearance of “cookie cutter” subdivisions.
- Where subdivisions are juxtaposed, avoid abrupt changes in housing scale, mass, and materials.
- Consider the effect of new subdivisions on the character of existing neighborhoods and mitigate adverse effects through proper design and buffering.
- Evaluate new residential development on the basis of overall density and the relationship of that density to effective and usable open space preservation, rather than on lot sizes.



*Figure 10: Encouraging diverse housing styles and materials improves the overall appearance of residential developments.*

## Implementation Tools – Residential Design Standards

- Zoning regulations
  - Establish appropriate maximum and minimum densities for different types of neighborhoods.
  - Establish standards for infill housing, including mass, scale, height, and architectural style.
- Subdivision regulations
  - Require subdivision proposals to include transition plans, to show how the new development will complement existing adjacent development.
- Prepare and adopt a residential design manual.

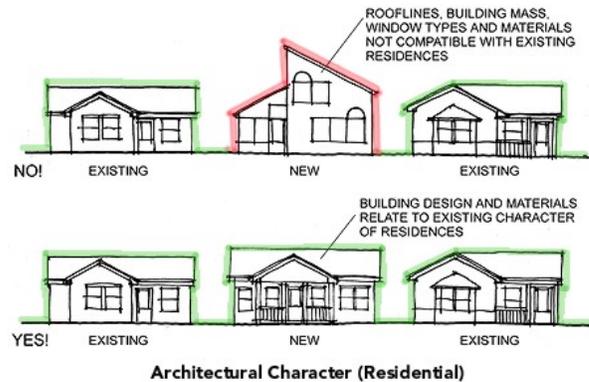


Figure 11: Standards for infill housing encourage compatibility in residential design.

## Open Space and Recreation

Open fields, farms, parks, water bodies, and other open space and recreation areas, whether public or private, are important to the community character of Westfield – Washington Township. Little Eagle Creek is an especially valuable natural feature that should be protected as development takes place in the community.

### *Development Policies – Open Space and Recreation*

- Design open space to form an interconnected network, with provisions for linkages to existing or potential open space on adjoining properties.
- Maintain stream corridors, woodlands, hedge rows, and other valuable natural and historic resources as part of the dedicated open space.
- Locate open space so as to maintain the visual character of scenic roads.
- Require open space in all new developments. Open spaces should consist of usable areas or valuable natural areas. Open space should not consist only of land that is left over in the site plan review process.
- Preserve natural features such as stands of trees, water bodies, and wetlands when land is developed.



*Figure 12: Natural features such as streams and stands of trees should be preserved as open space and can be improved with picnic tables and trails to provide access to the public.*

- Protect Little Eagle Creek. The installation of sewers in the township has the potential to damage this important resource. It is important that the sewer expansion be completed in an environmentally sensitive manner.
- Provide both passive and active recreation for the residents of the community.
  - See Appendix G, Family Sports Capital Addendum, for the Family Sports Capital of America initiative (October 2009).
- Provide parks and recreational facilities in new developments to accommodate the needs of the community as it grows.

- Recognize that the location and configuration of open space is of importance along with the amount of open space. The location and configuration of open space should be a primary design consideration in the development process, not an afterthought based on a determination of unusable land.
- Use open space as part of an integrated storm water management approach to maintain natural drainage patterns, attenuate water quality impacts, replenish groundwater, and incorporate detention facilities as visual and environmental amenities such as ponds.

### ***Implementation Tools – Open Space and Recreation***

- Establish a development review process for zoning map amendments, subdivisions, and site development that ensures provision of open space consistent with these policies
- Zoning regulations
  - Establish minimum percentages of open space for new development
  - Establish standards for the location and type of open space for different types of development
  - Provide protections to Little Eagle Creek, perhaps using an overlay zone.
- Subdivision regulations
  - Establish minimum requirements for dedication and development of parks in conjunction with new subdivisions
  - Establish minimum percentages of open space for new subdivisions
  - Allow density bonuses for additional permanent open space
  - Establish standards for the location and type of open spaces required for different types of subdivisions



## Fiscal Considerations

Westfield can best serve its residents by remaining fiscally sound. The economic impact, positive or negative, of development on the community's physical infrastructure is a legitimate factor in development decisions. The town needs to devise a consistent strategy for considering these impacts.

### *Development Policies – Fiscal Considerations*

- Require new development to pay its fair share of the cost of providing infrastructure needed as a result of that new growth.
- Consider the impact of growth in land use planning and decisions on public services and facilities.
- Ensure that all new development will have adequate public services and facilities.

### *Implementation Tools – Fiscal Considerations*

- Establish minimum levels of service and infrastructure for new development.
- Establish a development review process for zoning map amendments, subdivisions, and site development that ensures provision of adequate public services and infrastructure
  - Require applicants to provide fiscal impact analyses to document impact of their proposed developments, particularly larger developments. The town should ensure that there is a consistent methodology for preparation of these analyses.
  - Require applicants to demonstrate that adequate service is available or will be available at the time of development.
  - Consider using a fiscal model to predict the costs associated with new development.



*Figure 14: New development should pay its "fair share" of the cost for providing necessary infrastructure and services.*

- Zoning regulations
  - Establish minimum standards for infrastructure and services for new development.
- Subdivision regulations
  - Establish minimum standards for infrastructure and services for new subdivisions.
- Adopt an impact fee ordinance that complies with Indiana statutes.
- Promote cooperation and exchange of information about the impact of new growth on public services and facilities provided by other jurisdictions, such as the school district.

## **LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES**

For purposes of this plan, the Town of Westfield and Washington Township are divided into the land use character areas listed below and further described in this plan:

- Rural Residential
  - Existing Southwest
  - Northwest
  - Northeast
- Suburban Residential
  - Existing
  - New
- Commercial (retail, office, service)
  - Regional
  - Local
- Highway Corridors
- Business Parks
- Villages

Because of its special character and importance to Westfield – Washington Township, the downtown is considered in a separate chapter of this plan.



*Figure 15: Land uses in Westfield – Washington Township.*



## **RURAL RESIDENTIAL**

### ***Existing Rural Southwest***

#### **Background**

The Southwest Rural Residential area includes single-family residences, equestrian uses, and artisan farms in agricultural and rural areas. It also includes the Little Eagle Creek watershed, wetlands, rolling topography, and upland woods. The open nature of the area is enjoyed by many, and because open space is a valued community amenity, every effort should be made to encourage uses that preserve this open character. The envisioned long-range gross density is low: no more than one unit per three acres gross density. This area may have rural subdivisions, developed with substantial open space by using Rural or Conservation Subdivisions as described elsewhere in this plan. Higher gross densities, up to one unit per acre, may be permitted only in Conservation Subdivisions (see development policies below).

This area will continue to have rural uses and a rural feel: natural open spaces, trees, fields, and streams. The predominant land use will be low-density residential, including farmsteads, individual houses on large lots, equestrian uses, and subdivisions with a rural feel, considerable open space, and perimeter buffering. While it is expected that over time the few remaining large commodity farms in this area may be converted to residential development and smaller artisan farms, the rural character and equestrian nature should be retained. A primary component of this character is substantial natural-appearing open space.

Residents who move into rural areas should not expect the same type of environment and the same level of services as their more urban counterparts. Public water, sanitary sewer, and storm water drainage facilities may not be immediately available. Farming is a legitimate commercial land use activity that will produce noise, dust and odors, and occasionally will impede traffic.



*Figure 16: Rural Washington Township.*

This area is designated as Existing Rural, because it is largely already developed, and its rural character is viewed as a long-term condition: it is not intended to convert to other types of uses. Specifically, this area provides not just a rural character that is valued by the community; it provides an area where residents can live a rural lifestyle, and this plan embraces the importance of that rural lifestyle opportunity.

The western portion of this area is in close proximity to the Indianapolis Executive Airport. Special consideration was given during the planning process to incorporate the needs of the airport. Specifically, the following items were taken into account when defining the land use for the Southwest Rural Residential area:

- A review of input from the airport authority showed that multiple uses would be appropriate along Boone-Hamilton Road including parks, agriculture, and low-density residential uses. However, high density residential is not appropriate for this location. Other land uses were mentioned as well (e.g., hazardous waste recycling), however these uses were not compatible with the goals and desires of the Southwest quadrant.
- Results from a charette conducted to confirm appropriate uses for this area, which was attended by an airport representative as well as members of the Southwest Rural Residential area. The charette concluded that low-density residential and agricultural uses were compatible with the airport, and desired by the public.
- Mapping of existing development in the rural southwest indicated that the area is already 80% developed as low-density residential.
- Additional direction was provided by overlaying the Southwest quadrant with the noise sensitive area from the airport.

All of this input was considered when developing the land use for Existing Rural Southwest. Additionally, it should be noted that the airport is beginning a new master planning process. The process is anticipated to take three years, and The Westfield-Washington Township Comprehensive Plan should be reevaluated when the airport plan is complete to ensure the area continues to develop in a way that is desirable for both the Existing Rural Southwest area and the airport.

## Development Policies

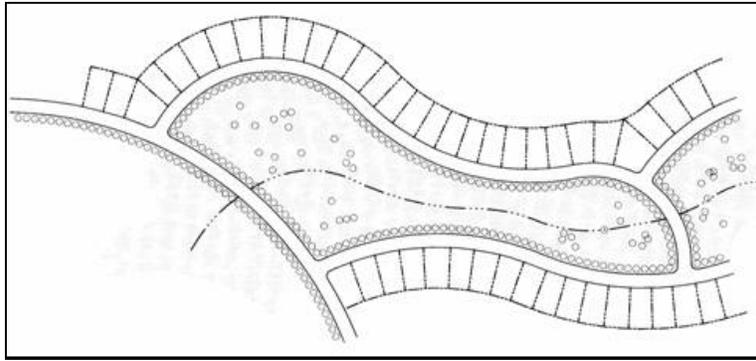
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- View large-scale commodity farms (crops and livestock) as being subject to eventual change under growth pressure. Washington Township is in the path of growth and it is expected that the few remaining large-scale agricultural tracts will be converted to other uses.
- Encourage artisan farms and equestrian uses to maintain the rural, country-like atmosphere.
- Protect and enhance the Eagle Creek Trail as a recreational amenity.
- Allow the continuation of the historic rural patterns (single-family houses on large parcels). New residential development will be accommodated, but only on large lots consistent with existing patterns or in Rural or Conservation Subdivisions as defined in this plan.
- Promote flexible design that maximizes open space by regulating density rather than lot size. This approach will permit a wide range of lot dimensions (area, frontage, setbacks, etc.).
- Encourage open space through incentives (such as density bonuses).
- Locate roadways and house lots so as to respect natural features and to maximize exposure of lots to open space (directly abutting or across the street). “Single-loaded” streets (with homes on one side only) can be used to maximize open space visibility, thus increasing real estate values and sales, while costing no more than streets in conventional subdivisions (due to savings from narrower lot frontages).

### Appropriate Land Uses in the Rural Southwest

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- Single-family detached houses on large lots or in a Rural or Conservation Subdivision.
- Accessory dwellings
- Equestrian uses
- Agriculture, including artisan farms



*Figure 17: Open space and the preservation of natural features, such as a stream, can be incorporated into a development to maximize exposure to individual lots.*

- Preserve Little Eagle Creek Ave. as a scenic by-way.
- Utilize subdivision street standards for new development that are appropriate to the rural context (open ditches, no curb and gutter).
- Preserve historically significant buildings and resources (barns, houses, etc.).
  - Recognize that the southwestern area of the township identified as rural on the map is unique relative to the other rural areas. Specifically, the character and pattern of development in this area is committed to small-scale equestrian-oriented and related rural uses, as contrasted with the large-scale agricultural patterns in the northwest. As such, the policy of this plan is that the character of the southwest rural area should remain essentially unchanged. New growth and development in this area should be reviewed with the intent of ensuring that it is compatible both from a use and density perspective, with minimal impact on the natural and visual environment.

## Implementation Tools

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### *Zoning Regulations*

- Establish maximum densities aimed at retaining rural character and maintaining the existing density
- Provide for density bonuses in Conservation Subdivisions (up to 1 unit/acre gross density) only if specific standards are met with reference to the following:
  - Threshold percentages of open space
  - Location, connectivity, and suitability of open space areas
  - Minimum amount of usable open space (active and passive recreation, equestrian trails)
- Limit the land uses to those that are consistent with and contribute to the rural character
- Create design standards for new buildings to ensure consistency with the character of the area
- Establish buffering requirements for new development
- Establish a rural equestrian zoning district with standards aimed at maintaining a rural, country-like atmosphere. Housing in this district is secondary to the agricultural and equestrian uses.



*Figure 18: Providing for development around the equestrian community may include special provisions for lot sizes, fencing requirements, and/or open space requirements that include riding trails.*

### *Other Tools*

- Participate in the creation of the Indianapolis Executive Airport plan. Review the plan upon completion to ensure that development is compatible with both existing southwest rural residential and the Indianapolis Executive Airport.

## ***Subdivision Regulations***

- Provide for Conservation Subdivisions that have the following characteristics:
  - Substantial open space (at least 60% of gross acreage) that is connected
  - Preserved primary conservation areas
  - Clustering of houses
  - Home sites that border open space
  - Perimeter buffering
  - Natural topography (no mass grading)
  - Rural street patterns (no curb and gutter, single-loaded streets)
  - Varying lot sizes, dimensions, and setbacks
  
- Provide for rural subdivisions that have the following characteristics:
  - Large lots (3-acre minimum)
  - Shared private streets or driveways
  - Natural topography (no mass grading)
  - Rural street patterns (no curb and gutter)
  - Standards for development and maintenance of common driveways



*Figure 19: Rural conservation subdivision.  
Source: Randall Arendt*

## ***Rural Northwest and Northeast***

### **Background**

The Northwest Rural Residential encompasses much of the northwestern quadrant of the township and includes single-family residences; agricultural areas, including the township's largest concentration of commodity farms; some smaller artisan farms; and some equestrian uses. There are significant natural areas, including Little Eagle Creek, wetlands, wooded areas, and much open farm ground. The named community of Lamong is located within this area; it is discussed under "Villages" in this chapter. The Rural Northeast area is smaller in

## ***Conservation Subdivision Process Tool Box***

### **Conservation Subdivisions**

One of the best ways to achieve quality residential development in the rural areas while preserving rural character is to develop as conservation subdivisions. These subdivision forms allow development of detached single-family homes clustered on smaller lots than generally permitted in the underlying zoning district, but at the same gross density, while preserving large areas of open space or historic features.

Conservation subdivisions allow the location of buildings on land best suited for construction, while permanently preserving valuable resources without changing the gross density permitted on the development site. This creative and flexible subdivision approach encourages building sites with attractive views, both from off-site roads and on-site buildings; encourages efficiency in the development of roads and utilities (shorter roads because there is less frontage per unit); and contributes to the variety of housing choices in the town and township.

### **Other Considerations**

There are other issues which must be considered in the design of a cluster or conservation subdivision. The following highlights the primary issues:

#### ***Location of Sewer Treatment Facilities***

Dwelling units in a cluster subdivision can typically be served by private on-site well and septic systems.

#### ***Ultimate Use of Open Space***

There are several ways to use the conserved open space: maintain it in its natural state, use it as pasture or cropland, or provide passive or active recreation.

#### ***Permanent Protection of Common Spaces***

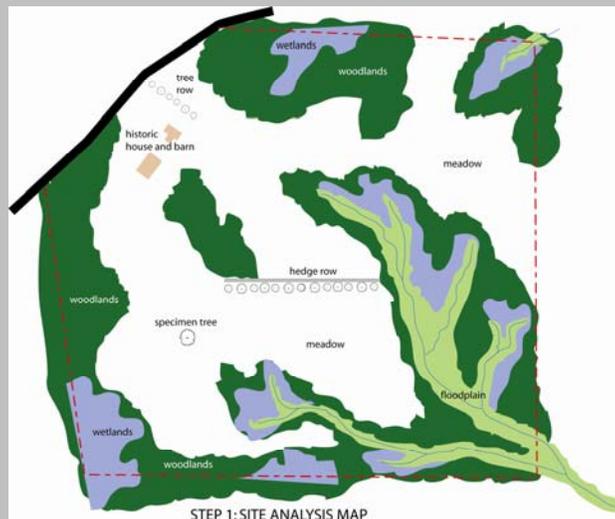
There are three common ways to permanently preserve the conserved spaces in the subdivision: an individual commonly owned lot with a conservation easement, deed restrictions or covenants, or as a part of a privately owned lot that is protected in a similar manner.

## Step 1: Site Analysis Map

A map of potential conservation areas should begin with the information available from the town's mapping services, and from this plan. The maps and aerial photos should be used to identify the primary and secondary conservation areas on the site and the features on surrounding properties. The primary conservation areas should include the most severely constrained lands, where development would typically be restricted under current codes, such as wetlands and floodplains. Secondary conservation areas should include locally significant features of the existing landscape. These secondary areas may include the following features:

- Mature woodlands
- Hedgerows, freestanding trees or tree groups
- Wildlife habitats and travel corridors
- Prime farmland
- Groundwater recharge areas
- Greenways and trails
- River and stream corridors
- Historic site and buildings
- Scenic view sheds

This information should be combined to identify the areas on the site that are the best candidates for preservation/conservation. While it is not an exact process, this step allows the town and developer to identify the areas with the most potential to contribute to the rural character of the area.



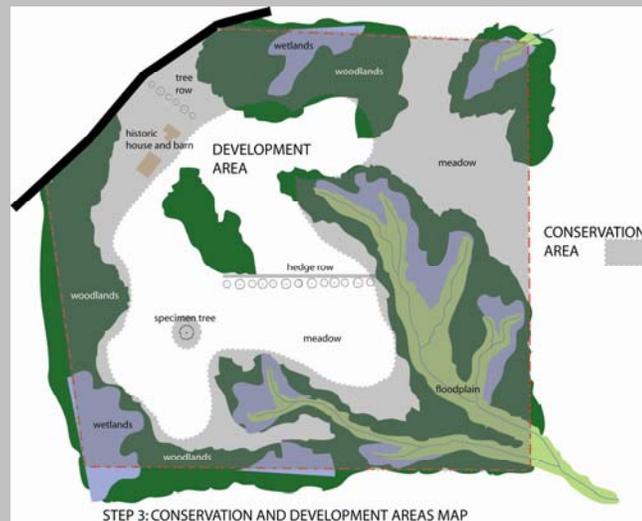
## Conservation Subdivision Process Tool Box

### Step 2: Site Inspection

After the mapping analysis of the site, the applicant and town staff should conduct a site inspection to confirm the site analysis map and identify additional unmapped features that may be present. This step is especially important for identifying scenic view sheds.

### Step 3: Conservation and Development Areas Map

Once the mapping and visual inventory of resources have been completed, the applicant should provide a map illustrating the areas to be conserved (Conservation Areas) and the land area available for building sites (Development Areas) should be created. This map will serve as the basis for the final site plan. This map should designate at least 60% of the site area for conservation.



## Conservation Subdivision Process Tool Box

### Step 4: Conservation Plan

Finally, the applicant should prepare a conservation plan. Because the conservation plan is not driven by a prescribed lot size, the most efficient and rural design can be accomplished by first locating the houses to capitalize on the best views and buffering from the off-site roads. Then the house sites should be connected with roads and trails, which minimize the amount of roads to be developed while still safely providing access to each building. Finally, the lot lines should be drawn.



Figure 22: Photos of conservation subdivisions.

## **SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL**

### ***Background***

Suburban Residential includes residential development with a variety of housing types, including subdivisions, at a variety of densities, along with recreational uses.

For the purpose of this plan, two different categories of Suburban Residential are identified on the map: Existing and New Suburban areas. The Existing Suburban Residential area is generally located in the southeastern quadrant of the planning area. As its name implies, it is the area where most of the existing suburban residential pattern has taken place. The basic policy of this plan for this area is fairly simple: preserve and protect the stability and integrity of the area as it fills in. This area consists primarily of single-family residences. Retail uses have not been part of Westfield's plan for this area, and development of such uses would change the character of the area.

The New Suburban Residential area depicts the future residential growth of the community, generally to the west and north of the Existing area. Its location is a function of its proximity to the existing growth area as well as the planned availability of sanitary sewer service.

The New Suburban Residential area will be predominately residential, including a variety of housing types to serve different family sizes and life situations from entry level to retirement. Subdivisions at a variety of densities and a broad range of housing types will continue to be the prevalent development form. The New Suburban Residential has three areas: Southwest, Northwest, and Northeast. These have somewhat different character, but the same development policies and implementation tools apply to all three.



Figure 23: Suburban residential development in Westfield/Washington Township.

## ***Existing Suburban***

### **Development Policies**

- Promote the protection of the existing suburban character of the area.
- Encourage only compatible infill development on vacant parcels in existing neighborhoods as a means of avoiding sprawl.
- New development should be permitted only upon a demonstration that it will not alter the character of the area, and will not generate negative land use impacts.
- Ensure that infill development is compatible in mass, scale, density, materials, and architectural style to existing development.
- Ensure that new development adjacent to existing suburban is properly buffered.
- New retail uses should not be permitted in the Existing Suburban areas. The Existing Suburban Areas were planned and have developed primarily for residential uses, and attempting to introduce retail uses into those areas will change the residential character of the area. These should be located in those areas that are planned for retail expansion.

#### **Appropriate Land Uses in Existing Suburban**

- Detached dwellings
- Attached dwellings
- Institutional uses
- Recreational uses

## ***New Suburban***

### **New Suburban Southwest Background**

The Southwest New Suburban area includes a diverse mix of uses: a town park, a golf course, open farmland, residential development, and a central core of large-lot residential and rural properties, equestrian uses and artisan farms. It is adjacent to the Village of Eagletown, and two highways: SR 32 and 146<sup>th</sup> Street. There also are institutional uses, including a school and a school transportation center.

While it is expected that over time, the few remaining large agricultural tracts in this area will be converted to residential development or other uses, this development should be context-sensitive. As development moves south from SR 32, north from 146<sup>th</sup> Street, and west from Ditch Road, the density should decrease and open space should increase. Within the Southwest New Suburban area, there is land that is not suitable for dense development because of steep slopes or other natural features. These lands should be developed according to rural standards.

The key for this area will be land use transitions and buffers that accommodate suburban development in such a way that negative land use impacts on existing and stable rural uses are mitigated so as not to negatively affect the quality of life of long term rural residents.

## **New Suburban Northwest and Northeast Background**

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The Northwest and Northeast Suburban Residential area contains single-family residences, open farmland, artisan farms and some businesses, especially agribusiness and rural-related businesses. Because of the natural topography, streams, hedgerows, and wooded areas, this area has a rural feel and character. Farmhouses are included, as well as houses in rural non-farm environments, where people may have a limited number of animals such as horses or 4-H animals.

This area will continue to have rural uses and a rural feel into the immediate future: natural open spaces, trees, fields, and streams. However, the town's long-range plan is to provide sanitary sewers in the entire township, which will have the effect of creating pressure for more dense development in this area. It is expected that over time the large commodity farms in this area will be converted to residential development, and this area is identified to absorb future suburban density and type of development. While the development of this area for suburban uses is envisioned in the long term, it is also important to keep the overall policy of contiguity in mind: development is encouraged to occur in a way that it is contiguous with existing development, meaning that new growth should radiate out from existing suburban areas, and should not sprawl piecemeal throughout the new suburban areas.

## Development Policies (applies to all New Suburban)

- Ensure that new development occurs in a way that it is contiguous with existing development.
- Require all development to have public sewer and water, paved streets, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks.
- Design developments such that back yards are not adjacent to collector or arterial streets unless uniform attractive screening is provided.
- Prevent monotony of design and color. Recognize that quality in design applies not just to individual homes, but to the collective impact of an entire development. For example, many homes that might be “high quality” may not achieve a high-quality development if they are all the same and are not part of a sensitive and quality overall design.
- Encourage a diverse range of home styles in individual subdivisions, using innovative architecture of a character appropriate to Westfield.
- Encourage compatible and high quality “life span” housing in furtherance of the overall policy of this plan.
- Emphasize connectivity between subdivisions, and avoid creating isolated islands of development.
- Ensure proper land use transitions between dissimilar types of residential development.
- Ensure appropriate transitions from businesses located along US 31, SR 32, and SR 38 and from adjoining large subdivisions.
- Use open space, parks, and less-intensive land uses as buffers in

### Appropriate Land Uses in New Suburban

- Detached dwellings
- Attached dwellings
- Institutional uses,
- Recreational uses
- Artisan farms
- Equestrian uses

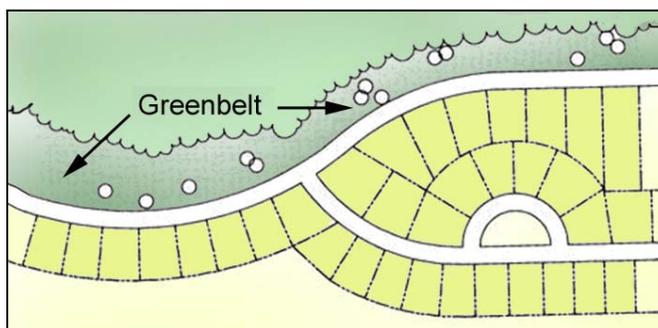


Figure 24: Greenbelts and landscaping buffers can help create a transition between uses.

appropriate circumstances.

- Preserve existing older structures when possible.
- Permit new development only where the transportation network is sufficient for the added traffic volumes. Based upon traffic studies, developers should make appropriate improvements to mitigate traffic impacts resulting from the new development.
- Promote flexible design that maximizes open space preservation by regulating density rather than lot size. This approach permits a wide range of lot dimensions (area, frontage, setbacks, etc.) and a variety of housing types (detached, semi-detached, attached) to serve multiple markets (traditional families, single-parent households, empty-nesters, etc.).
- Encourage quality and useable open space through incentives (density bonuses) based upon density rather than minimum lot sizes and widths.

- Encourage development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, trails, paths or any combination thereof designed to accommodate pedestrians) in new development. These facilities should be designed to improve connectivity. In particular, promote



connections to new regional trails such as the Monon and Midland Trace Trails

*Figure 25: Bicycle and pedestrian trails increase connective and can improve the overall quality of the development.*

- Land that is characterized by steep slopes or other natural limitations on development should be left natural or developed at rural, rather than suburban densities.
- Promote innovative development, such as Conservation Subdivisions and traditional neighborhood design.
- Require appropriate transitions and buffers between neighborhoods, particularly those of differing character or density. At interfaces between large lot residential property and new suburban development, baseline buffering requirements should be used to preserve the rural environment

of those larger parcels (preferably through the use of reforestation to achieve natural conditions).

- Locate roadways and house lots so as to respect natural features and to maximize exposure of lots to open space (directly abutting or across the street). “Single-loaded” streets (with homes on one side only) can be used to maximize open space visibility, thus increasing real estate values and sales, while costing no more than streets in conventional subdivisions (due to savings from narrower lot frontages).
- Encourage attractive streetscapes that minimize front-loading garages, provide garage setbacks from front facades of houses, minimize design and material repetition, and avoid house orientations where the back sides face the public right of way.
- Encourage roadway improvements that promote safety but do not increase speed.

## **Implementation Tools**

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### ***Zoning Regulations***

- Establish appropriate locations for varying housing types
- Development standards that establish appropriate setbacks, densities, lot sizes
- Emphasize density, rather than lot size
- Require that new development have all necessary services and infrastructure
- Buffering, including reforestation buffers
- Transitions between developments
  - Between new suburban and more rural neighborhoods, use larger lots and increased open space
  - Cluster higher-density development in areas that abut industrial, commercial, or other higher-density areas.
- Landscape standards (these should discourage berms and fencing in favor of more natural-appearing buffers, using native plants)
- Create a Traditional Neighborhood Design District that provides for the following:

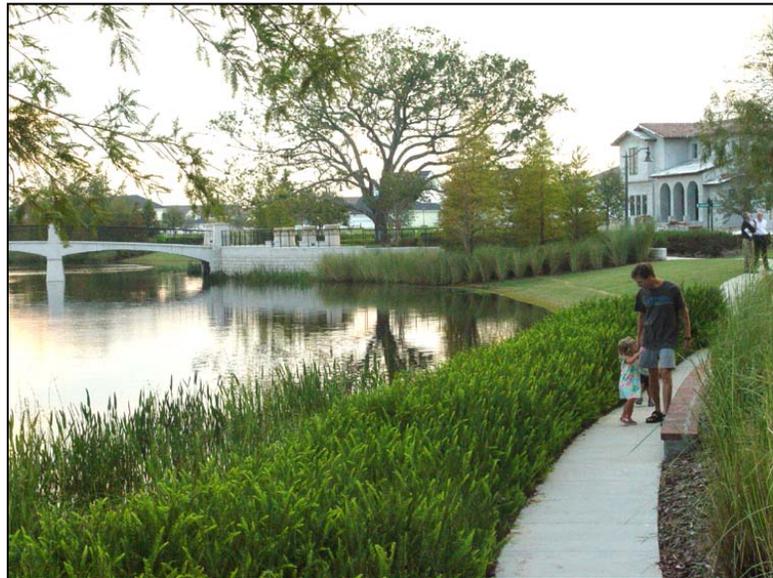
- Garages that are behind the front line of the dwelling or are side-loaded
- Front porches
- Smaller front setbacks



Figure 26: A development that incorporates elements of traditional neighborhood design increases connectivity and provides for a diverse mix of housing types.

## ***Subdivision Regulations***

- Provide for Conservation Subdivisions that have the following characteristics:
  - Substantial open space (at least 60% of gross acreage) that is connected
  - Preserved primary conservation areas
  - Clustering of houses
  - Home sites that border open space
  - Perimeter buffering
  - Natural topography (no mass grading)
  - Rural street patterns (no curb and gutter, single-loaded streets)
  - Varying lot sizes, dimensions, and setbacks
- Preserve natural topography
- Adequate streets
- Connectivity
- Pedestrian facilities
- Recreational facilities
- Common open space
- Mechanisms to ensure maintenance of common facilities
- Proper drainage
- Green space between sidewalk and curb
- Open space standards (location, size, type)



*Figure 27: Photograph of a development that incorporates natural features into the common open space with pedestrian facilities.*

## ***Other Tools***

- Design standards that ensure quality development.
- Establish a development review process that ensures developments that comply with the standards and with the comprehensive plan

- Adopt an updated Thoroughfare Plan that establishes future street patterns and appropriate cross sections
- Prepare and adopt a parks, recreation, and open space plan to serve as a basis for zoning, subdivision, and site design requirements
- Prepare and adopt a circulation and trail plan
- Prepare and adopt an access management plan

## **COMMERCIAL**

### ***Local Commercial***

#### **Background**

Local businesses are intended to provide goods and services used by nearby residents on a day-to-day basis, as opposed to attracting customers or clients from a large geographic area. Examples include but are not limited to banks, beauty salons, drug stores, convenience stores, automobile service stations, video stores, dry cleaners, restaurants, and supermarkets. Local examples include Westfield Commons, Westfield Marketplace, Carey Shoppes, Springmill Commons and Bridgewater Marketplace. Shopping centers typically have at least one anchor business.

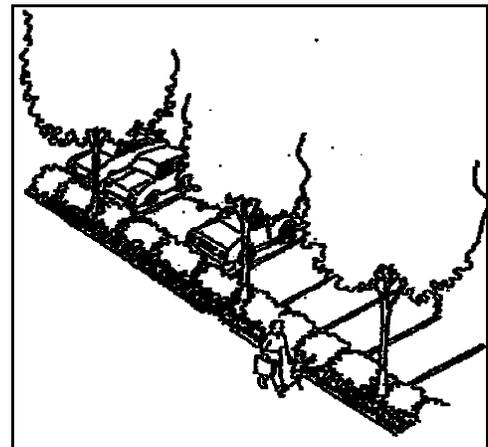
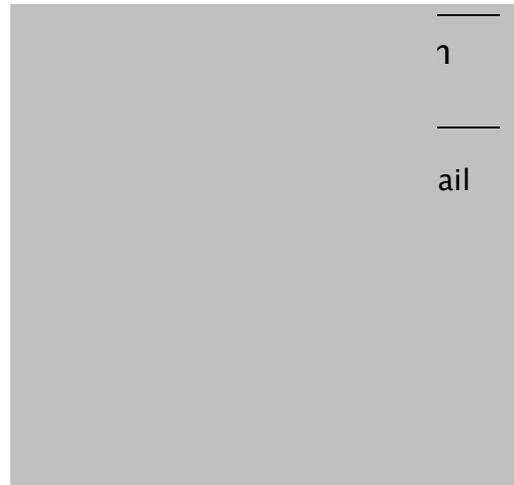


*Figure 28: Local commercial scale bank.*

Local commercial development is characterized by architecture having a residential or suburban feel, attractive signs, extensive landscaping, and ample off-street parking. Most local business is located in commercial centers, typically having at least one anchor business and several smaller businesses, some of which are on outlots.

## Development Policies

- Locate local commercial development only in planned centers and only on streets classified as arterials or on frontage roads as depicted on the Land Use Concept Map.
- Require commercial uses to be dispersed, but also to be focused on key nodes, avoiding strip patterns, which are inefficient from an access standpoint.
- Require the size, materials, color, and design of buildings to be unique to Westfield. “Franchise” architecture that represents no effort to create a unique design that fits Westfield – Washington Township is not acceptable.
- Discourage masses of asphalt. Parking areas should be broken up by landscaping or by being located on more than one side of the buildings.
- Require all parking areas to have interior landscaping as well as landscaping along the street.
- Require all lighting to be shielded and directed downward.
- Encourage signs that are easy to locate and read, sized and designed in relation to the buildings and the traffic conditions in which they are viewed.
- Require loading and service areas to be screened and to be located so as not to be a nuisance to neighboring properties.
- Encourage internal connectivity between adjacent commercial developments.
- Encourage pedestrian connections between local commercial areas and adjacent residential areas.
- Use attached residential, offices, and similar uses as transitions between more intensive and less intensive uses.



- Require effective buffering between commercial uses and adjacent residential uses.
- Prevent commercial uses from encroaching into residential areas.
- Encourage the use of frontage roads to minimize traffic conflicts.

## **Implementation Tools**

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### ***Zoning Regulations***

- Establish a planned commercial district with strong development standards, including landscaping and lighting.
- Establish a site plan review process for commercial development.
- Require traffic studies and traffic management plans for new commercial development.
- Buffering requirements, including transitional land uses
- Design standards to ensure quality development.
- Thoroughfare plan that provides for frontage roads.
- Access management plan to control curb cuts, which is a plan for promoting smooth traffic flow by establishing standards for access to property. This plan would address issues such as driveway locations and separation distances, frontage roads, passing blisters, left turn lanes, and traffic signals.

### ***Subdivision Regulations***

- Establish standards for commercial subdivisions