



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan is a guide for the future of Muncie and Delaware County. As such, it outlines the vision of the community as articulated by its citizens, the goals, objectives, and policies that steer the community to that vision, and the individual plans that serve as blueprints for achieving these ends.

Communities plan so that they can better control their future and provide a high quality of life to their residents. By carefully planning land uses and public investments, public services can be more efficiently provided, scarce land resources can be put to their highest uses, and public resources can be effectively targeted to pervasive problems.

It is important to understand that while the Plan is a document with a long-term vision (generally 20 to 30 years), it is not a zoning ordinance or other regulatory document. However, the Plan is adopted by the legislative bodies of the City and County, thereby becoming an official policy statement. The fact that the Plan encompasses both City and County interests and issues allows for a seamless Plan, absent of the contradictory City-County policies that continue to plague many Hoosier communities.



Ball Pillars at Minnetrista Center

The Comprehensive Plan is the policy document for the physical, social, and economic growth and redevelopment of the City and County. As such, the plan influences policy decisions in a broad variety of areas, including, but not limited to, the following: land use, transportation, infrastructure and utilities, drainage, environmental conservation, urban reinvestment, economic development, recreation and open space, and housing.

Indiana law provides guidelines for the development of the Plan. According to these guidelines, the general purpose of the Plan is to “...guid[e] and accomplish[] a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the area which will, in accordance with present and future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or general welfare of the inhabitants, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development....”

The last comprehensive plan for Delaware County was completed in 1977. Many of the underlying planning assumptions and analytical conditions related to that plan had dramatically changed therefore a complete revision-versus-update to the plan was desired. In its diligence of discussing the purpose and use of the proposed comprehensive plan, the Steering Committee has identified the need for this plan to be used as a policy guide by the City of Muncie and Delaware



County. Equally however, the Steering Committee has recognized that the plan as a guide will need to be flexible to changing conditions which may arise over the period of the plans life. It is desired that the plan be updated every five years, and that on an annual basis, the plan be monitored for its performance.

Currently, Muncie and Delaware County are at a critical phase in their growth and development as shown in Map 1-1 Base Map. The community's economy has been hit hard during the last several years by the departure of several key industries, including the namesake for many important community institutions, the Ball Corporation. Urban sprawl has diluted the capacity of the community to efficiently provide important public services. Much of this sprawling growth has consumed agricultural land, making farming an increasingly difficult activity. Muncie's inner-city neighborhoods suffer from deterioration and blight.

In contrast, there are easily identified assets such as, and definitely not limited to, Ball State University, the White River, a growing medical community and small business diversification. Factoring all of these elements together is the function of a comprehensive plan which will then provide the guidance for future development of the Muncie-Delaware County community.

1.2 PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The process for developing the Plan began in 1997, when the City and the County appointed a steering committee to oversee the Plan's development. Proposals for consulting services were solicited shortly thereafter, and in December of 1997, HNTB Corporation was selected for assisting in the development of the new Comprehensive Plan.

The process for developing the new Comprehensive Plan is reflected in the organization of this document. The first major phase of the new Comprehensive Plan was garnering public input through various means, which included public meetings, an issues symposium, and electronic participation. Local and regional demographic and economic changes were investigated, as were the existing land uses of the City and County. These findings informed the development of the Policy Plan. Several land use alternatives were then generated and critiqued. Attributes of the land use alternatives were used to develop the Land Use plan. The impacts of the Plan were examined and used to form the functional elements of transportation, parks and open space, and community development. Once the elements were in place, methods for implementing the Plan were researched.

Coincident with the new Comprehensive Plan was a Targeted Industry Study (TIS), which was intended to identify industrial clusters for which the City and County were considered competitive. The TIS also identified activities that the City and County could pursue to strengthen their competitive advantages for attracting industries. The results of the TIS form many of the policy statements and actions contained within this new Comprehensive Plan.

1.3 HISTORY OF MUNCIE/DELAWARE COUNTY

The City of Muncie has built a steady foundation from its long rich history. It has felt growth and decline throughout its existence, but its strength in character has allowed it to overcome most difficulties in its path. Before Muncie became a city, the area along the White River, which can be described as the present day downtown, was home to Munsee/ Wolf Clan of the Delaware Indians. The establishment of this area lead the way to a tribal town called Munsetown, which later became Muncie.

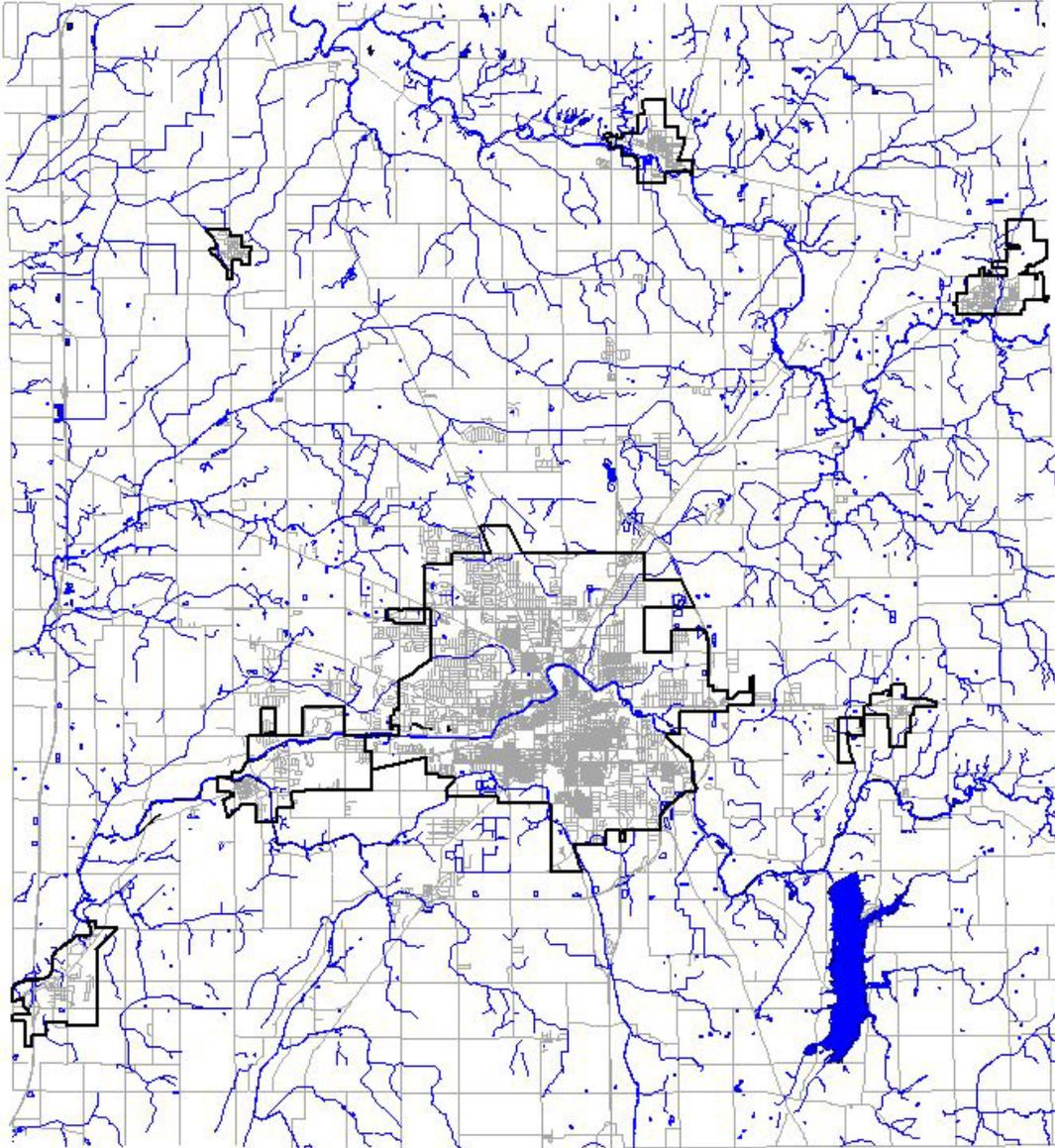
In 1886 a gas boom occurred drawing industries around the country to central Indiana. Muncie became the center for glass and steel manufacturing in the state. The most notable of these manufacturers was the Ball brothers and their glass manufacturing company. The Ball family moved to Muncie in 1888 and remained there until 1998. Not only did the Ball Brothers and then later Ball Corporation bring jobs and a steady economy to the City of Muncie, but also a level of philanthropic support that supercedes anything their company ever accomplished. The Ball family donated funds and support for a variety of community projects, such as like the acquisition of the Indiana State Normal School, and later Ball State University, and the donation of over \$2 million for the construction of Ball Memorial Hospital.

After 1910, the second emergence of industrial development occurred due to the need for tool and die manufacturers for the new wave of automobile use. One of the leading manufacturers in the early part of the century was Warner Gear; this company later merged with the Illinois parts maker Borg and Beck to create a “multi-national firm that was a major Muncie employer throughout the 20th century.”

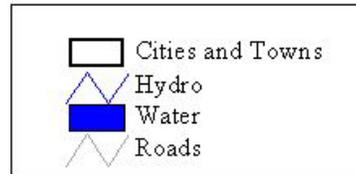
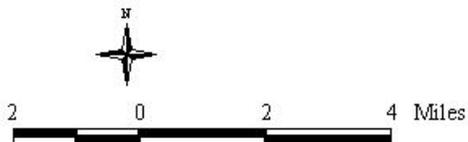
In 1929 Muncie became known as “Middletown” or the typical American City when the husband and wife team of Robert and Helen Lynd conducted the Middletown studies. The studies looked at a variety of issues and characteristics that cities and towns dealt with on a day to day basis. Even today, many classrooms and sociological analyses are still finding these studies relevant. In 1935, the Lynds followed up with a second study, Middletown in Transition and in 1977, the University of Virginia conducted a further study of Muncie, called Middletown III, to determine what changes may have occurred since the Lynds’ second study.¹ Although Muncie became known as “Middletown” the recognition did little for the town in regards to benefits or fame.

Muncie was home to several attempted Normal schools throughout the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Because of a donation by the Ball Brothers in 1918, the Indiana State Normal School opened and flourished throughout the century. The Normal School later became the present day Ball State and received University status in 1965. Ball State University has played a major role in the growth and development of the Muncie community.

During the 1960’s, Muncie grew geographically with the expansion of the Muncie Sanitary District. Rural residences could now have the same benefits and service protection that the residents of the city utilized. With this increase in services came the annexation of rural Delaware County into Muncie’s city limits. Efforts to continue to annex rural Delaware County over the last three decades have remained constant, in attempts to allow Muncie to grow and expand with the times.



Map 1-1: Base Map



Muncie is taking an aggressive move towards the next century by improving the quality of living and it's surrounding environment. Major projects have taken place, such as the renovation of the Muncie Mall, the expansion of Walnut Street to accommodate two-way traffic and new economic development strategies to aid in the loss of Ball Corp. headquarters and the ABB and GM plants. The next century will be an exciting one, building on the past and moving head on to the future.