



Public Meeting #1

November 6, 2024

Meeting Summary

The project team facilitated the first public meeting for the Flourishing Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan on November 6, 2024. The meeting was held from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Ferdinand Community Center at 1710 Community Drive in Ferdinand, Indiana. In total, 41 community members and two project team members attended the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan to the public and gather input on items that will be addressed, or that residents think should be addressed, in the plan.

Attendees –

- Roughly 45 people attended the public meeting to provide input for the Flourishing Ferdinand Comprehensive Plan.

Overview and Discussion

The project team prepared a presentation, nine presentation boards, an Assets and Liabilities worksheet, a Land Use Map, and a Big Idea Bingo worksheet to collect public opinions and input. During the presentation, the project team explained the comprehensive planning process, the purpose and legal requirements of a comprehensive plan, and the plan's timeline. The team also presented a variety of data on existing demographic, housing, economic, and physical characteristics of the community to form the basis of the plan.

Following the comprehensive planning overview and existing conditions summary, the project team facilitated three visioning exercises using the aforementioned meeting materials. The following is an outline of the visioning exercises and the information collected from them.

Visioning Exercise #1: Assets and Liabilities

The first visioning exercise was developed to gather thoughts and opinions on what topics should be discussed within the plan. To do so, all attendees were encouraged to individually fill out the Assets and Liabilities worksheet. The worksheet asked attendees to prioritize three topics and list assets and liabilities within those topics. An asset is something that could be considered a strength or something to promote while a liability is something that could be considered a weakness or in

need of improvement. A total of 35 worksheets were returned at the end of the meeting. The following outline summarizes the input received under each topic.

- Topic #1: Land Use and Development
 - Asset
 - Available land
 - Apply for grants to help incentivize growth
 - Historic preservation is popular
 - Pristine land at entryways on both north and south sides of town
 - Beautiful, rare vistas that are unique in the Midwest
 - Potential to shape a new vision
 - Excellent parks and recreation
 - Land is available – need to attract developers
 - Available land on south side of town on east side of 162
 - Available vacant land throughout the town is unused
 - Liability
 - Unsure if the town has the infrastructure for new development
 - Keep development under control
 - No protections or incentives to preserve and restore existing historic buildings
 - Little, if any, oversight to protect town entrances from unattractive development like storage units and box buildings – no protection from polluting industries
 - Haphazard development
 - No concentrated downtown
 - No daycare
- Topic #2: Public Facilities and Services
 - Asset
 - Liability
 - Light pollution – reduce total lumens output for streetlights and at residences and businesses (use ordinances to keep light directed at own property, dark-sky friendly, and lower wattage – Dollar General, Cascade Café, Holiday Foods do it right)
- Topic #3: Placemaking
 - Asset
 - Good family units exist
 - Older folks seem to have what they like and want
 - The town has great events
 - Safe town
 - Successful festivals and events that draw huge crowds - Folk Fest, Christkindlmarkt
 - Framing Ferdinand
 - Community festivals
 - Community pride
 - Parks department

- Small town values
 - Short travel distance to parks
 - Liability
 - Not open to outsiders
 - Young and middle age move on or don't come – due to housing
 - We are old and resistant to change
 - Older population is not active in reinvesting money in the community
 - Concerns were raised about how the community responded to prior community engagement and events
 - There is not enough to retain young adults or draw them back
 - Lack of common gathering space
 - Limited places for activities – theaters
 - Facades along Main Street need improvement
 - Dangerous to walk or bike in town or to other communities
 - Facades on Main Street need improvement – they don't match German heritage
- Topic #4: Economic Development
 - Asset
 - Available land
 - Infrastructure is available
 - Large workforce/volume of workers
 - I-64 connection
 - Good quality broadband on a town-wide fiber system
 - Open tax abatements as incentives
 - Land is available
 - Proximity to I-64
 - Capitalize on German Heritage
 - Strong manufacturing base and building trades
 - Mobel Site
 - Update and use the buildings along Main Street for new businesses
 - Liability
 - Job opportunities exist but lack of a labor force prevents growth
 - More merchants are needed for growth and higher income job opportunities
 - Limited employment opportunities for young adults
 - The area needs more industry, retail, rest areas, and childcare services
 - Lack of competing employers – two large manufacturers then numerous small companies
 - No railroad
 - Young people exodus and brain drain
 - Need to expand infrastructure and utilities to build new businesses
 - The town needs more entry-higher level jobs for recent graduates to come back to Ferdinand
 - The town needs funds to fuel growth
 - Need more white collar jobs

- Town has limited funding
 - Water infrastructure needs updates
 - Few businesses open here because there is no available land for them – attracting businesses so they can attract people
 - Ferdinand needs more businesses
 - Little variety in existing businesses
 - There are not enough businesses to keep people in Ferdinand
- Topic #5: Housing
 - Asset
 - Available land is zoned and annexed
 - People seem to want new or modern offerings
 - The town can plan for each demographic's specific needs
 - Available land has been identified
 - Housing is being planned and developed
 - Good quality housing stock
 - Most people maintain their properties really well
 - There is room to grow on available properties in town
 - Available land – pristine fields – to develop housing
 - There is property ready and available for development
 - Older homes that can be beautifully renovated
 - Available land north of Ferdinand
 - Ferdinand is an attractive community to live in
 - Newer homes are being developed and planned
 - Liability
 - Cost of existing housing is priced well above similar areas
 - Older folks could move to new and better-suited homes to free up existing single-family housing
 - Cost of new development – could be cost prohibitive
 - Some homes on Main Street could use renovations
 - New housing development is not affordable
 - Many homes do not have sidewalk access
 - No public transportation
 - Housing is expensive due to limited supply
 - High cost of development
 - High cost of infrastructure
 - Low inventory of homes
 - Homes are priced too high for the local workforce
 - Infrastructure and development is expensive to build
 - No affordable housing for single-income families
 - Lack of modern 1st single family homes for sale
 - Lack of nearby empty properties for new construction
 - Housing prices seem to be much higher than in nearby communities
 - Oversight to protect beauty of housing development - bland, cookie-cutter, unattractive neighborhoods

- Lack of available housing – limited options
 - Lack of available land
 - High cost of development
 - Lack of owned, buildable space
 - The housing inventory is old
 - Need more options to attract young people, young professionals, and talent
 - Need more housing if you want to grow
 - It is expensive to develop green, undeveloped land
 - The only affordable homes are old
- Topic #6: Transportation
 - Asset
 - The town currently has a decent transportation base
 - Great east/west and north/south connections
 - Leverage I-64 and SR 162 traffic for commerce
 - The overall existing transportation system
 - I-64 and SR 162
 - Liability
 - Transportation infrastructure needs to be kept up to date – consider possible upgrades like roundabouts at certain intersections
 - Poor walkability – few sidewalks and most are in poor condition
 - Curbs and gutters are old with many gaps (spotty) – need to fill in areas where they are lacking
 - Limited biking or walking from residential areas
 - Biking and walking paths would improve quality of life
 - Few sidewalks
 - Sidewalks are needed
 - No public transportation
 - No trails or bike paths
 - The town needs public transportation
 - No transportation throughout Dubois County or northern Spencer County
 - Intersection Main Street and 16th Street has too much traffic – needs a light
 - Too few sidewalks, build sidewalks in all available areas
 - High traffic at intersection of 162 and 264 – need a roundabout or intersection improvements to slow or control traffic
 - Truck traffic through town
 - Traffic at 162 and 264
 - The town has few real crosswalks – nine in total, seven on Main Street – enforce purposeful crosswalks
 - Industrial bypass needs bike lanes
 - Heavy traffic at the intersection of Main Street and 16th Street
 - Dangerous intersection at Main Street and 16th Street, 162 and 264
 - Main Street is used by large trucks that should be using the bypass
 - The intersections of Main Street and 23rd Street, and Main Street and Industrial Park Road need traffic signals

- Routes like Industrial Park Road are hard to fully utilize – its intersections with Main Street are hard to access, rework the traffic flow
 - Sidewalk connectivity is inadequate, businesses and schools are not accessible by sidewalk
 - Need sidewalk connectivity, trails, and public transportation
 - Long wait at dangerous intersections – Main Street and 16th Street (YMCA) and at 162 and 264
 - Too much traffic through town
 - Need sidewalk and bike path connectivity – town assets are spread out but should be connected to one another
- Topic #7: Agriculture
- Topic #8: Natural Resources
- Topic #9: Parks and Recreation
 - Asset
 - The town’s facilities are attractive to potential residents
 - Offer cultural opportunities for music, art, architecture]
 - Beautiful parks and walking trails
 - The existing parks are great
 - The town has a great inventory of existing parks
 - Access to YMCA, trails, high school facilities
 - The town has great parks
 - The parks have much empty space available for future use
 - Liability
 - Maintaining existing parks and improving facilities is a challenge with the current budget
 - No splash pad
 - Limited accessibility for people with disabilities
 - Limited sidewalks and sidewalk connections
 - No trails
 - Need better, or more, sports fields for bigger tournaments
 - Parks need improved programming to be better utilized
 - Transportation is needed
 - Need for emphasis on renewable energy grants – on rooftops for example
 - Need more access to public gyms
 - Town budget is limited – can it support growth or facility renovations
 - The town needs a performance area
 - Need bike trails and sidewalks
 - The parks are underutilized and could hold more community activities or events
 - Need a community gathering space with a performance stage
- Topic #10: Broadband Access
 - Asset
 - Existing fiber internet network across town
- Other Topic #1: Health

- Liability
 - No urgent care – travelers near highway
 - Expand the local clinic to 24-hour care
- Other Topic #2: Childcare
 - Liability
 - No certified childcare within a reasonable distance for people who live or work in Ferdinand
 - Not a single fulltime childcare facility in Ferdinand, licensed or unlicensed – barrier to growth of families and population, unattractive to move here
 - Need a daycare
- Other Topic #3: Aesthetics
 - Liability
 - Lighting is too bright – creates glare, inability to see the stars
 - Residential light trespass, the town needs a lighting ordinance

Visioning Exercise #2: Land Use Mapping

The second visioning exercise was developed to gather input about the potential locations of future development. Attendees were encouraged to participate in groups and place stickers corresponding to different types of land use on a map of Ferdinand. There was a total of 13 groups that placed stickers on 13 maps. This exercise helped attendees and the project team visualize where the community believes development is most appropriate. The feedback received from the second visioning exercise will be used to generate a future land use plan for Ferdinand. The following image displays the input received from this exercise.

Generally, the attendees believed interchange development should remain near the interchange, housing development should occur in most vacant or agricultural areas, and industrial development should remain on the west side of the town. Other suggestions included

- An amphitheater at 18th Street Park
- A park with rock climbing and golf on the south side of Ferdinand
- Specific locations for restaurants or daycare
- A sports complex
- A trail to Huntingburg
- Another trail that connects the west side of town to Old Town Lake Park
- Enhancing the German architecture and Bavarian theme on Main Street
- Redeveloping a trailer park into a park or affordable housing



- More business and less residential along Main Street
- Enhance German Architecture and Bavarian Theme on Main Street

Convert former rail into trail to Huntingburg

Sports complex

Redevelop the trailer park into affordable housing or a park extension

Daycare

Creative subdivision, not bland cookie cutter development

Amphitheater

Shared use path connecting former rail to park

Event space

Rock climbing, golf course, stables

Vacant areas for town homes, single family, and daycare



0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

	Vacant		Downtown Business
	Industrial		Commercial Business
	Utility		Residential - Single Family
	Institutional		Residential - Multi-Family
	Agriculture		Residential - Mobile Home
	Recreational		Municipal Boundary
			Waterbody

Visioning Exercise #3: Big Idea Bingo

The third visioning exercise used stylized bingo boards to collect input on the community's big ideas for the future of Ferdinand. The board proposed 16 big ideas and left a free space for attendees to suggest their own. Attendees were encouraged to place a sticker on the five big ideas they thought would have the greatest impact in the town. In total, 13 groups participated and chose big ideas on 13 boards. The following image displays where attendees place their stickers and any big ideas that were written in the free space.

Sidewalk connectivity, trail connectivity, and childcare are among the most popular concerns for Ferdinand's residents. Other primary concerns include expanding housing opportunities, expanding retail and dining options, downtown façade improvements, and the development of a gathering space for the community. The following is a list of big ideas that were written in the free space on each board.

- Handicapped accessible playground
- Route industrial trucks to the bypass
- Housing options for aging in place, retirees – include the amenities they want on the property. This will help open up single-family housing for new residents too
- Remove telephone/power lines
- Improved wifi and cell service
- Improved initiative/ planning to guide development, street widths to accommodate parking and bike lanes, mandate sidewalks
- Diversification of town population
- Renovation and retention of schools
- Optimization of “Downtown District,” less old housing, more business
- HUD Healthy Homes type of programs to preserve housing stock
- Fund-seeking/grant funding personnel to make these items more attainable
- Bicycle and walking trails to Huntingburg, Santa Claus, and Ferdinand State Forest
- Protect the town's beautiful entrances on north and south 162
- Historic preservation ordinance to protect these resources
- Use different bulbs in the streetlights – too harsh
- Town cinema/museum
- Historic home signs and walking tour
- Urgent care
- Visitor center
- Removal of overhead power lines
- Emergency preparedness: power failure, weather, earthquake, food shortage
- Farmers market (community garden)
- Water security
- Housing
- Shopping/dining center on north end of town
- Lighting ordinances (signs, street lights, security lights)
- Roundabout at 162 and 264

- Mini roundabout at the park for kids on bikes
- Golf carts to transport between stores and local areas
- Connect nearby towns with bike paths
- Outdoor community gathering area for all ages



BIG IDEA BINGO

Place a sticker next to the five (5) big ideas you think would help Ferdinand flourish!

Use a sticky note to write down a new big idea and place it in the free space.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Stage, Amphitheater 	Greenways	Small Business Incentives	Facade Improvements	New Shopping Opportunities	Street Furnishings (Benches, Lighting, trash receptacles) <small>The light pollution is obnoxious Reduce lighting</small>
Splash Pad	Seasonal Programming	Water Utility Updates	Childcare Facility	New Town Center	Sidewalk Connectivity
Public Art	Town Gateway Monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handicapped, accessible playground Route industrial trucks to bypass Housing options for aging in place and retirees with amenities they want on property Renovation and retention of schools Optimization of "Downtown District", less old housing, more businesses Shopping/dining center on north end of town Lighting ordinance roundabout at 162 and 264 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove telephone/power lines Diversification of town population Improved wifi and cell service Improved initiative planning to guide development, street widths to accommodate parking and bike lanes, mandated sidewalks HUD healthy home type of programs to preserve housing Mini roundabout at park for kids on bikes Pavilion for farmers market and events 	Condos	Neighborhood Cleanups
Wayfinding Signage	Bike Lanes/Cycle Tracks and sidewalks	<p>FREE SPACE</p> <p>Write down a new big idea!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund-seeking/grant personnel to make these projects attainable Bicycle and walking trails to Huntingburg, Santa Claus, and Ferdinand State Forest Protect town entrances on north and south 162 Historic preservation ordinance to protect these resources Water security, flooding Golf carts for transport in local areas Use different bulb in streetlights Town cinema/museum Historic home signs and walking tour urgent care, visitor center Remove overhead power lines Emergency preparedness: power failure, weather, earthquake, food shortage Farmers Market, community garden Connect nearby towns with bike path Community space for all ages 		Retail Hub	Regional Trail Connectivity
Public Transit Opportunities	Single-Family Housing	Downtown District	Expanded Restaurant Dining Opportunities	Public Pool	Youth Programming
Townhouses	Enhanced Plantings	Interstate Development	Senior Center	Public Murals	Street Trees



Other Materials and Comments

In addition, three comment cards were returned at the end of the meeting. The following is a summary of the input received from the comment cards.

- Comment Card #1
 - Community gathering spaces for all generations
 - Reduce light glare on Main Street
 - Bike paths connecting to neighboring towns
- Comment Card #2
 - Accessible playground with sensory activities
 - Splash pad
 - Develop an area for a farmers' market
 - Sidewalk/exercise path, plan to connect the community
 - Walking trail around New Town Lake
 - Storm sewer replacement program
 - New drinking water treatment plant - 350,000 to 500,000 gallons per day
- Comment Card #3
 - Streetlights are very harsh, bright, and blue. Could the shade be more historically correct like an amber tone?
 - The tops of the streetlights are open, wastes a lot of light – light pollution
- Assets and Liabilities: Other Comments
 - Do not create low income housing areas that will deteriorate and become isolated as poor neighborhoods
 - Fill in empty lots
 - Construct bike lanes and bike paths
 - Make common community gathering areas outdoors for all age groups
 - Outdoor amphitheater
 - Indoor theater plays
 - Nutritional family dining over fast food dining
 - The town needs activities for individuals: golf course, hiking, horse stables
 - Land use and development: develop for housing and areas of service to citizens
 - Route traffic away from Main Street to bypass
 - Bike trail around bypass
 - Southern entry to town has cornfields on east and development on the west. Can the town buy the east side for a park?
 - Town trolley circling and going to shopping areas at the north and south sides of town
 - The town needs sidewalks to provide access to shopping areas
 - Build a streetlight for pedestrians at the YMCA, library, and Dollar General intersection (16th Street)
 - The town needs mini-parks on Virginia Street and Missouri Street for all the families that walk, Older people need benches and the town needs trees

- It is important to draw people to and retain people in Ferdinand
- Maybe implement building standard codes for building or renovating along Main Street – maintain a cohesive look
- Secondary access to the library would help traffic flow
- Explore options for updating older homes
- Use land use to allow growth around existing industry
- If the town wants to grow, it should actively try to attract and help developers
- Close open ditches and drainage
- Spraying turkey manure upwind of town shouldn't be allowed
- Fix the timing on the stoplight in town
- Allow four-wheelers on the road
- Main Street needs more available apartments, duplexes, town homes, and compact places for average families to live
- Build an amphitheater to accommodate Folkfest and other activities
- Repurpose trailer park for labor housing
- Develop programs to rehabilitate blighted housing using the TIF – for example, buy and redevelop the trailer park
- Build a roundabout at 162 and 264
- Build bike lanes or ebike routes
- Build an amphitheater at 18th Street Park
- The large ditches along Main Street are unsightly
- Keep people shopping local
- Available land should be dedicated proportionally to housing and economic development – do not favor one or the other

The presentation and meeting concluded with a brief description of the project's next steps. The project team encouraged attendees to take the project's online survey and share it with other members of the community.