

## Inventory Shows County and Municipal Cooperation in Local Planning

A new inventory of local approaches to planning in Central Indiana indicates that most counties are involved in land use planning and that county plan commissions plan cooperatively with dozens of Hoosier municipalities. The inventory was completed by the Center for Urban Policy and the Environment as part of an ongoing project, Central Indiana's Future: Understanding the Region and Identifying Choices.

The center inventoried county and municipal approaches to planning in 44 Central Indiana counties (see page 2).

The center found:

- Thirty-five of the 44 counties have established plan commissions and have zoning and subdivisions regulations to guide development.
- Seventeen of the counties have established area plan commissions, which, under Indiana law, necessarily plan cooperatively with municipalities. These counties routinely plan with at least 60 cities and towns.
- Sixteen of the counties have established advisory plan commissions, which, under Indiana law, are not required to but may plan jointly with municipalities. These counties voluntarily plan cooperatively with 11 municipalities.
- Two counties—Marion and Delaware—have metropolitan plan commissions and plan jointly with municipalities within their boundaries.
- Just nine of the 44 counties, and only six of 49 municipalities, have capital improvement or transportation improvement plans.
- Forty-seven municipalities with populations of at least 2,500 have advisory plan commissions.

### Statutory Options for Planning in Indiana

Indiana code (I.C. 36-7-4) provides for three basic types of city and county plan commissions:

- advisory
- area
- metropolitan.

While the aim of each type of commission is to protect public health, safety, and welfare by planning for growth and development, their areas of jurisdiction vary somewhat. Advisory plan commissions serve cities, towns, and counties. Municipalities serve the area within their corporate limits and in some cases are allowed planning jurisdiction over contiguous unincorporated territory up to two miles outside the corporate limits. Extraterritorial planning jurisdiction means that muni-

palities have authority to review development proposals and issue permits for areas not within their boundaries. County advisory plan commissions serve the unincorporated territory within the adopting county excluding any extraterritorial jurisdiction claimed by municipalities. Municipalities also may designate the county advisory plan commission as the municipal plan commission.

Area plan commissions are a cooperative effort between county government and at least one municipality within the county. State law encourages these planning jurisdictions to adopt unified development tools and regulations (comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, and subdivision regulations). Area plan commissions have jurisdiction over all unincorpo-



rated territory as well as the area within participating municipalities. Municipalities within these counties may not exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction.

The third type of plan commission provided for under Indiana law is a metropolitan plan commission. These commissions serve counties and at least the largest municipality within their boundaries.

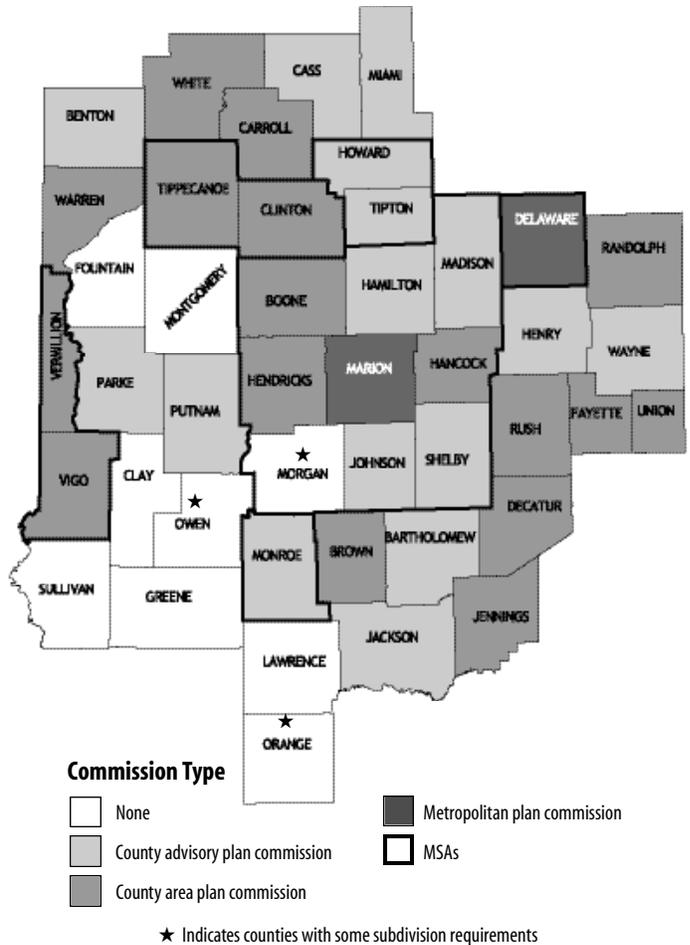
Indiana law also provides for two additional approaches that are used infrequently—joint planning commissions and township joinder agreements. The Edinburgh/Bartholomew County/Columbus Joint District Plan Commission is the only such commission allowed under state law. This plan commission has jurisdiction over a small territory in unincorporated Bartholomew County near the intersection of highways I-65 and U.S. 31. Township joinder agreements allow townships to join municipal plan commissions under certain conditions. This construction is used infrequently. Four such agreements exist in Hamilton County, Cicero–Jackson Township, Noblesville–Fall Creek and Delaware Townships, Carmel–Clay Township, and Westfield– Washington Township.

### Plan Commissions in Central Indiana

As noted above, within the 44-county Central Indiana region, 35 counties have active plan commissions; nine counties do not plan. Three counties that do not have planning—Owen, Morgan, and Orange counties—have adopted minimal subdivision requirements to address drainage and dedicated roads. Ninety-three municipalities are included in the jurisdiction of these 35 plan commissions.

Although not statistically significant, the counties without planning are more likely to be rural and have smaller populations than counties with planning. The federal Bureau of the Census has designated 18 urbanized counties around the cities of Bloomington, Indianapolis, Kokomo, Muncie, Terre Haute, and Lafayette as Metropolitan Statistical Areas. All but two of these 18 counties have planning. The remaining seven counties without planning are among the 26 counties in the region that are considered more rural. The average populations of the counties with planning is 54,600 (excluding Indianapolis–Marion County), while the average population of counties without planning is 32,200. The counties without

### Central Indiana Region County Plan Commissions



planning also tend to have smaller proportions of their populations within incorporated municipalities.

Sixteen of the 35 county plan commissions operate under advisory planning law. Henry County has been designated to serve as plan commission by nine municipalities within its boundaries, suggesting that it may in effect function much like an area plan commission. Monroe and Tipton counties each plan for a single municipality.

Seventeen county plan commissions operate under area planning law serving 60 additional municipalities. The number of municipalities planning jointly as part of area plan commissions varies considerably. Four counties plan for a single municipality, while one—Randolph County—plans for 10 municipalities.



Two metropolitan plan commissions serve 23 municipalities. In Indianapolis–Marion County, most city-county functions, including planning, were unified in 1969 with the creation of UNIGOV. The Metropolitan Development Commission serves the consolidated city of Indianapolis–Marion County and 16 municipalities within the county. While the Muncie–Delaware County Metropolitan Plan Commission was established formally under a special provision of advisory planning law, it functions similarly to the commission in Marion County and plans cooperatively with seven municipalities. Both plan commissions provide unified administration and deliberation for the various municipalities and unincorporated territory in these counties.

The center found that just nine counties have capital or transportation improvement plans. These counties are Delaware, Hancock, Hendricks, Howard, Johnson, Marion, Putnam, Tipton, Vigo, and Wayne. Six municipalities that do not participate in a county plan commission and have populations greater than or equal to 2,500 have such plans.

Among municipalities in Central Indiana with populations of 2,500 or greater, 51 do not participate in one of the county plan commissions described above. Forty-six of these municipalities have municipal advisory plan commissions. A 47th municipality, Cumberland, has a municipal plan commission with jurisdiction only within its corporate limits within Hancock County. The portion of Cumberland within Marion County is served by the Indianapolis Metropolitan development Commission. Four municipalities—Paoli, Linton, Bloomfield, and Brownstown— have chosen not to adopt advisory municipal planning or to join a county plan commission.

## Implications for the Future

Indiana's land resources are natural assets, and Hoosiers have expressed concern about the management of them. In 1999, in response to increasing concern over development and growth, the General Assembly created the Indiana Land Resources Council. The council's mission is to provide local governments information about different ways to manage investments in the state's land resources and to help them understand the likely returns from different management strategies.

An essential step in any planning process is to take stock of current management efforts. This inventory of planning in Central Indiana is the most comprehensive assessment of planning available for any region of the state. The inventory has two major findings:

- Most counties and larger municipalities plan.
- There is considerable cooperation between county and municipal governments in local planning.

These findings are encouraging, for they suggest that a foundation for new efforts already exists in most places.

The fact that most counties and municipalities now are planning does not mean, however, that planning practice cannot be improved. For example, another important finding is that only nine counties and six municipalities have capital or transportation improvement plans. Although comprehensive plans are meant to guide development, some studies have found that infrastructure investments are a more powerful determinant of development patterns. All other factors equal, development tends to follow infrastructure investments. To ensure that infrastructure improvements do not work at cross purposes with other community objectives, it is important for comprehensive plans to take into consideration likely capital or transportation improvements.

The mere existence of plans also does not mean that planning practices necessarily are effective. The effectiveness of planning hinges on the tools used to guide development processes and the ways that those processes are implemented. Future studies will assess the planning tools—comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations—that local governments have put in place and explore the ways in which these tools are being used. New information about the practice of planning in Central Indiana is essential to achieve the goals of strengthening the region and improving quality of life.

## Sources

The data summarized here were collected from Central Indiana counties and municipalities through telephone calls and visits to county and municipal offices. Information on types of planning commissions and their authority to plan is from Indiana Code 36-7-4-1 to 36-7-5.1-26 ([www.ai.org](http://www.ai.org)) and the *Indiana Citizen Planners Guide*, published by the Indiana Planning Association.



## Plan Commissions by County

County	Type of County Plan Commission	Municipalities Included in County Plan Commissions	Municipal Advisory Plan Commissions (1998 Population est. 2,500)
Bartholomew	Advisory		Columbus, Edinburgh*
Benton	Advisory		
Boone	Area	Whitestown, Advance	Lebanon, Zionsville
Brown	Area	Nashville	
Carroll	Area	Delphi, Yeoman, Camden, Burlington	
Cass	Advisory		Logansport
Clay	None		Brazil
Clinton	Area	Colfax, Kirkland, Mulberry, Rossville	Frankfort
Decatur	Area	Milford, Millhousen, New Point, St. Paul, Westport	Chesterfield*, Greensburg
Delaware	Metro	Muncie, Daleville, Eaton, Gaston, Selma, Yorktown, Albany*	
Fayette	Area	Connersville	
Fountain	None		Attica, Covington
Greene	None		
Hamilton	Advisory		Carmel, Cicero, Fishers, Noblesville, Westfield
Hancock	Area	McCordsville, Fortsville, Shirley*, Spring Lake	Greenfield, Cumberland*
Hendricks	Area	North Salem	Brownsburg, Danville, Plainfield
Henry	Advisory	Blountsville, Dunreith, Lewisville, Middletown, Mt. Summit, Spiceland, Springport, Straughn, Sulphur Springs	New Castle
Howard	Advisory		Kokomo
Jackson	Advisory		Seymour
Jennings	Area	Vernon, North Vernon	
Johnson	Advisory		Edinburgh*, Franklin, Greenwood, New Whiteland, Whiteland
Lawrence	None		Bedford, Mitchell
Madison	Advisory		Alexandria, Anderson, Elwood*, Pendleton, Chesterfield*
Marion	Metro	Beech Grove, Clermont, Crows Nest, Cumberland*, Homecroft, Indianapolis, Speedway, Lawrence, Meridian Hills, N. Crows Nest, Rocky Ripple, Southport, Springhill, Warren Park, Williams Creek, Wynnedale	



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Miami	Advisory		Peru
Monroe	Advisory	Stinesville	Bloomington, Ellettsville
Montgomery	None		Crawfordsville
Morgan	None		Martinsville, Mooresville
Orange	None		
Owen	None		Spencer
Parke	Advisory		Rockville
Putnam	Advisory		Greencastle
Randolph	Area	Albany*, Farmland, Losantville, Lynn, Modoc, Parker City, Ridgeville, Saratoga, Union City, Winchester	
Rush	Area	Rushville, Carthage, Glenwood	
Shelby	Advisory		Shelbyville
Sullivan	None		Sullivan
Tippecanoe	Area	Lafayette, West Lafayette, Battle Ground, Dayton, Clarks Hill,	
Tipton	Advisory	Elwood*	Tipton
Union	Area	Liberty, West College Corner	
Vermillion	Area	Clinton	
Vigo	Area	Terre Haute, Riley, Seelyville, W. Terre Haute	
Warren	Area	Pine Village, State Line, West Lebanon, Williamsport	
Wayne	Advisory		Richmond
White	Area	Brookston, Burnettsville, Chalmers, Monon, Reynolds, Wolcott, Monticello	
<b>44 Counties</b>	<b>16 Advisory 17 Area 2 Metropolitan 9 No Planning and Zoning</b>	<b>93 Included Municipalities</b>	<b>47 Municipal Advisory Plan Commissions</b>

\* The corporate limits of six municipalities—Albany, Edinburgh, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Shirley, and Elwood—extend into two counties. Albany, Cumberland, and Elwood have been confirmed as being within the jurisdictions of two plan commissions. Albany is served by the Muncie—Delaware County Metropolitan Plan Commission and the Randolph County Area Plan Commission. Cumberland is served by the Marion County Metropolitan Development Commission and the Cumberland Advisory Plan Commission. Elwood is served by the Tipton County Advisory Plan Commission and the Elwood Advisory Plan Commission.



## Central Indiana's Future: Understanding the Region and Identifying Choices

Central Indiana's Future: Understanding the Region and Identifying Choices, funded by an award of general support from Lilly Endowment, Inc., is a research project that seeks to increase understanding of the region and to inform decision-makers about the array of options for improving quality of life for Central Indiana residents. The Center for Urban Policy and the Environment faculty and staff, with other researchers from several universities, are working to understand how the broad range of investments made by households, governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations within the Central Indiana Region contribute to quality of life. The geographic scope of the project includes 44 counties in an integrated economic region identified by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.



*Central Indiana Region*

One particular effort involves analyses of ways that local governments plan for growth. These analyses involve assessment of local land-use decisions at a number of points within local decision-making processes, including decisions to form a plan commission, adopt a comprehensive plan, adopt implementation tools such as zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations, review of petitions and permits for conformity with regulations, and acceptance or rejection of permits and petitions. This inventory is the first in a series of analyses of local planning initiatives.

The Center for Urban Policy and the Environment is part of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. For more information about the Central Indiana Project or the research reported here, contact the center at 317-261-3000 or visit the center's Web site at [www.urbancenter.iupui.edu](http://www.urbancenter.iupui.edu).

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