

Executive Summary

Planning is as simple as five questions:

- Who are we?
- Where are we going?
- Where do we want to go?
- How are we going to get there?
- How will we know when we've gotten there?

These questions also provide the outline for this report.

Chapter one, the Profile, answers the questions “Who are we?” and “Where are we going?” These questions are answered by a statistical profile and inventory of various elements of life in Shipshewana and Newbury Township. Of course, a community is more than its statistical profile and inventory. However, these do provide insight on some of the issues facing the community, and suggest the how to focus the possible solutions to those issues.

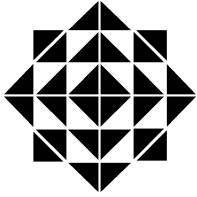
The other aspect of the community is answered by the question “Where do we want to go?”, in the following chapter, Community Perspectives. The Community Perspectives chapter has two parts, a L.A.N.D. Matrix and Community Issues. The L.A.N.D. Matrix outlines the many ideas, suggestions, and recommendations gathered from Shipshewana and Newbury Township residents and business people during a series of community workshops. These were then condensed into eight issue areas which are examined in more depth in the Community Issues section.

The community issues are transformed into eight policy areas in chapter three, the Comprehensive Plan. The question “How are we going to get there?” is answered by the policy statements, goals, and action steps in the plan. The question “How will we know when we've gotten there?” is answered by the benchmarks in each policy area. Each policy area also includes a map and a priority matrix.

Extra assistance is also found in chapter four, the Detail Sections, which provide more information on certain topic areas.

Chapter five provides development guidelines for Shipshewana.

Introduction



Profile

Shipshewana is a small town in rural Newbury Township of LaGrange County in northeastern Indiana. LaGrange County is also largely rural, with agriculture as its major industry, but also has a manufacturing industry centered on manufactured housing and recreational vehicles.

Shipshewana and LaGrange County are also well known as the home of the “plain people:” Mennonite and Amish. Their influence has contributed greatly to Shipshewana’s unique small town atmosphere, which is also characterized by quaint downtown buildings, good schools, a park and library of quality seldom seen in such a small community, and a respect for faith, all of which are highly valued by its many long time residents. This character has contributed to the growth of a tourism industry centered on the Shipshewana Flea Market and Auction.

The growth in tourism is also valued by most residents, but has exerted considerable pressure on the unique small town character. There are concerns that tourists do not fully understand and can sometimes alienate the Amish and Mennonite culture to which they are drawn. Without a doubt, tourism has increased traffic substantially, causing congestion on area roads and parking areas and threatening the safety of Amish and Mennonite buggies and both local and visitor bicyclists and pedestrians.

These transportation issues are one factor which has made it difficult to expand local industries, which is desirable in order to diversify the community’s economic base so as not to be overly dependent on the seasonal tourist business. Industrial expansion has also been made more difficult by the lack of available land within the corporate limits of Shipshewana. Not only is there little room for industry, but also for the homes to serve industrial workers.

These issues are all complicated by the fact that planning and zoning for Shipshewana are controlled by the county, which may not be able to provide the attention that could be provided locally. Shipshewana can choose to control its own planning and zoning, but this has been controversial in the past and will require significant community education if it is to be successful in the future.

For more detailed information on these issues, see chapter one, the Profile. Information is provided in the following categories:

- Context
- History
- Culture and Character
- Images of Shipshewana and Newberry Township
- Population and Demographics

- Income
- Housing
- Education and Schools
- Industry and Occupation
- Commuting and Transportation
- Infrastructure, Community Facilities, and Community Services
- Town Government
- Push-Pull Factors

The Community Perspectives, found in chapter two, were obtained from a series of community workshops where local residents and business owners were asked to list their:

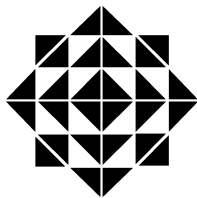
- Assets
- Liabilities
- Needs
- Dreams
- Obstacles
- Opportunities

The Community Perspectives generally reflect and expand on the information in the Profile, providing more focus and suggesting possible solutions. The workshop participants then voted on their “Top Ten” issues, which were condensed into eight issue areas:

- Culture and Character
- Traffic and Parking
- Industry
- Housing
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space
- Land Use and Controlled Growth
- Design Guidelines
- Local Control of Planning and Zoning

These issue areas were then transformed into policy areas in chapter three, the Comprehensive Plan, a summary of which appears on the following pages.

Community Perspectives



Comprehensive Plan

Policy

Culture/Character:
Maintain/enhance local character; strengthen understanding/respect for local culture

Goals

- Broaden cultural education for residents/visitors
- Encourage participation of Amish/ Mennonites in local decision-making while respecting their separation from government
- Promote farming/ alternative agriculture in Western LaGrange County
- Establish/enhance community festivals
- Improve pedestrian areas
- Develop consistent system for signage/wayfinding icons
- Promote consistent architectural character in tourist areas
- Develop transportation systems that respect vehicular, buggy, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic

Action Steps

- Visits to Menno-hof part of tour packages
- Cultural information in promotional materials
- Official liaisons
- Organic farming/ integrated pest management
- Reduced erosion through improved farming techniques (no till farming, crop rotation, alternative crops)
- Focus on community, not tourism
- Urban forestry/greening of Shippshewana
- Pedestrian alleys
- Public spaces
- Identify tourist areas, including parking and restrooms
- Architectural review for major corridors
- Roads/interchanges redesigned to be safer for all
- Separate buggy/bicycle lanes
- Improved sidewalks/ pedestrian areas

Shipshewana Master Plan

Policy

Transportation/Circulation:
Develop efficient/effective system for circulation, including parking, for all forms of transportation, in and around Shipshewana

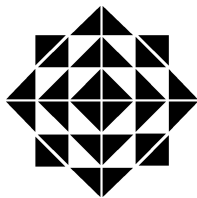
Goals

- Develop alternative circulation systems for all users
- Develop truck route
- Develop buggy-friendly road design/separate lanes
- Develop wayfinding/signage system
- Develop parking assessment/strategy
- Develop signage to clearly identify parking areas
- Develop tourist parking
- Create additional buggy parking
- Provide secure bicycle parking
- Separate pedestrians/vehicles
- Create safe pedestrian connections
- Encourage Pumpkinvine Trail

Action Steps

- Through traffic route
- Flea Market circulation
- Separate buggy/bicycle lanes
- Additional road connections
- Long term project
- Work with INDOT
- Better direct traffic
- Parking study
- Separate tourist parking from residents
- Parking fees for improvements
- Shuttle if necessary
- Encourage/require hitching posts
- Well-lit U-frame racks
- Physical/visual barriers
- Safe crossings, etc.
- Manage community concerns





Comprehensive Plan

Policy

Economic Development:
Enhance tourism while
diversifying with compatible
industries

Goals

- Establish separate tourist areas
- Encourage Flea Market to reintroduce “farmer’s market” atmosphere
- Develop signage to improve tourist circulation
- Develop ways for tourists to pay for needed improvements
- Encourage hospitality-industry training
- Develop focused industrial areas
- Coordinate industrial recruitment with LaGrange County
- Develop truck route
- Develop strategy for infrastructure investment
- Develop an incubator
- Encourage continued retail niche businesses in tourist areas
- Develop guidelines for chain businesses
- Encourage resident-oriented services

Action Steps

- New tourist development in nodes along SR 5
- Harrison Street secondary tourist area
- Signage to clearly identify tourist areas
- Unique niche market of local products
- Provide opportunities for locals
- Separate tourists
- Parking fees
- Sales tax
- License fees
- Vocational programs
- Efficient use of infrastructure/traffic
- Support tax base
- Capitalize on local industries
- Respect existing industry
- Capital Improvements Plan
- Entrepreneurship, especially by Amish/Mennonite community
- Local products
- Small business assistance
- Maintain local character
- Separate from tourist areas

Shipshewana Master Plan

Policy

Housing:
Provide adequate, affordable housing for a variety of housing needs, while protecting integrity of existing housing

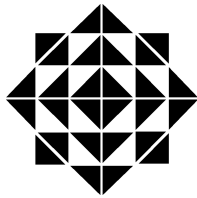
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space:
Develop a comprehensive parks system with pedestrian connections between recreation areas and other community facilities

Goals

- Promote development of high quality affordable housing
- Identify appropriate areas for residential development
- Develop design guidelines to manage quality and character of new housing
- Create pedestrian linkages between existing parks, recreation, and open space
- Develop new park space for active/passive recreation to meet community needs
- Improve Wolfe Community Building
- Consider building town hall to house all functions of local government

Action Steps

- Manufactured housing
- Base on infrastructure capacity
- Include variety of housing types
- Encourage development projects, not scattered sites
- Identify park and recreation nodes
- Identify existing connections and needs
- Develop funding
- Begin construction
- Trails for walkers, joggers, in-line skating, wheelchairs
- Team sports - baseball, soccer, basketball
- Picnic areas
- Playgrounds & tennis courts
- Adequate, well-lit parking for facilities
- Restrooms ADA compliant
- Include offices, meeting rooms, and fire and police services



Comprehensive Plan

Policy

Land Use and Growth Management: Efficiently manage growth and land use while preserving the area's unique culture and character

Goals

- Discourage the conversion of prime farmland to non-agricultural uses
- Focus industrial development in an industrial park
- Focus community-oriented development in the town center
- Focus tourism development along SR 5 and Harrison Street
- Encourage development of traditional neighborhoods
- Manage growth through preservation of agricultural land
- Use an urban service boundary

Action Steps

- Use various farmland preservation tools
- Agricultural zoning
- Efficiency of land and infrastructure
- Precede development by adequate infrastructure
- Best access to residents
- Efficiency of land and infrastructure
- Design guidelines for community character
- Limit amount of residential development to appropriate places based on adequate infrastructure
- Design Guidelines for community character
- Cluster development
- Use various farmland preservation tools
- Precede development by adequate infrastructure
- Capital Improvements Plan

Development Guidelines: Promote Development that is sensitive to the unique character and cultural resources of the area in its architecture and design

- Establish clear guidelines for new development and significant modification to existing development.

Shipshewana Master Plan

Policy

Planning and Zoning:
Consider bringing planning and zoning functions under local authority to better manage the location, type, and quality of development

Goals

- Meet state requirements regarding local planning
- Develop and adopt a comprehensive plan
- Determine appropriate mechanism for administration
- Meet state requirements regarding local zoning
- Adopt a zoning ordinance that meets state requirements and local needs
- Determine appropriate mechanism for enforcement

Action Steps

- Establish Development Review Board
- Establish development review jurisdiction
- Include all state requirements
- Formally adopt plan
- Expand from Town Manager as necessary
- Adopt comprehensive plan
- Establish a zoning ordinance
- Follow state requirements
- Expand from Town Manager as necessary

