



INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION

This comprehensive plan is a guide for the future of the Town of Milltown. As with any community, its local leaders seek to improve the quality of life for its existing and future residents, focusing on the existing benefits within the community and developing a plan for future growth.

As time passes the needs of a community may change, population growth may occur, new housing may be built, and the demand for development may increase. As a community faces potential change in overall needs of its residents, it should be prepared to address those changes whether they are related to development, transportation, population, or in public services such as parks, sidewalks, trails, sewers, and public safety. Any change will potentially affect the *quality of life* for the residents of the Milltown Community.

The future of Milltown will be dependent on a balance of growth and providing the necessary public services and facilities that can support this growth. This will be accomplished through commitments to:

- Sound Comprehensive Planning
- Diligent Protection of Natural Resources and Agricultural Land
- Maintaining a Long-Range View of the Public Interest When Evaluating Land Use Issues

The final outcome of these planning efforts requires all to acknowledge that the public good is affected by private and community development. The individual actions of landowners, developers, and residents affect the whole community. Similarly, the actions taken by the Town through land use decisions and investments in infrastructure also contribute to the overall development of the Milltown Community.

A. The Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan is an official public document adopted by a local government to serve as a guide to make decisions and develop policies regarding the development of the community. As a policy guide, it must recognize the interdependence of land use decisions, resource management, the process of governing, and the physical infrastructure of the built environment.

What does a Comprehensive Plan do?

Because it is comprehensive, the Plan provides guidance for the decision-making process of the *Town Council*. In communities that have decided to adopt a zoning ordinance, the Plan can also provide guidance to the *Plan Commission* and the *Board of Zoning Appeals*. The Plan can also serve as a guide to a local *Park & Recreation Board*, *Board of Public Works*, *Town Manager*, *Clerk-Treasurer*, and other similar boards and entities. Local community leaders and organizations may also utilize the Plan to provide them guidance in their endeavors. This guidance can help them make prudent decisions regarding community character and natural resources, ensure efficient expenditure of public funds, and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of those living within the Town of Milltown. A comprehensive plan is developed as a vision for the future of the community and a road map for community decision-making.

How is a Comprehensive Plan Developed?

A successful comprehensive plan relies upon resident participation to represent the voices of a wide range of citizens. Their input is an essential element to formulate the goals and objectives of the plan. These activities define a course of action that the Town of Milltown needs to undertake to maintain its vision for the future.

It is critical that the document represents those individuals who have been active participants in the planning process and identifies the actual interests of area residents. Through community workshops, public hearings, and meetings with the *Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee* and *Town Council*, the Comprehensive Plan is a statement about the future of the Town, by and for the people of the Milltown Community.

Indiana State Statute (*IC 36-7-4-201*) specifies that comprehensive plans should “encourage units to improve the health, safety, convenience, and welfare of their citizens and to plan for the future development of their communities...” The plan has been designed with the following general principles in mind, as specified in *IC 36-7-4-201*:

- Carefully plan transportation systems
- Allow growth with adequate provisions for public ways, utilities, healthcare, educational opportunities, and recreational facilities
- Consider the needs of industry in future growth decisions
- Ensure that residential areas help to create healthy surroundings for family life
- Support growth of the community through a proportionate and efficient expenditure of public funds

What is the value of a Comprehensive Plan?

The value of a comprehensive plan is to articulate a vision of the future for the community and how it will move toward that vision. To some degree all development is planned, but a comprehensive plan looks at all of the pieces as a whole, coordinating efforts to avoid duplication and limit expensive public expenditures. It protects the general welfare of the community by ensuring quality development occurs in the right locations and that incompatible uses are not adjacent. A comprehensive plan promotes *proactive thinking* about issues central to the community, rather than addressing them in a “reactive” manner. Planning can provide numerous benefits to a community, including:

- Coordinating capital improvement expenditures
- Directing development to areas capable of handling increased growth pressures
- Ensuring that developers will pay their fair share of improvements needed as a direct result of their development projects
- Helping local government provide efficient services
- Improving the quality of life
- Limiting and mitigating impacts to natural resources of all types
- Preserving and enhancing community character
- Preventing incompatible development from locating in a residential neighborhood
- Protecting property values
- Providing a circulation network of safe streets and sidewalks

B. 2010 Comprehensive Plan

This Comprehensive Plan is the first document of its kind completed for the Town of Milltown. The development of the document relies heavily on guidance from community leaders, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and comments from the general public.

Over the past twenty years, many communities across the nation have realized that planning with community participation is the most effective way to plan. The residents of Milltown are the true experts on issues within their community. Bonar Group only serves as a facilitator and information transmitter to guide the community and its leaders in identifying, inventorying, and formalizing the informal planning that they undertake in their daily lives.

The planning process was designed to enhance day-to-day community planning efforts by increasing the information available to local leaders and residents to make informed decisions. The intent was to establish a dynamic planning process that would continue to facilitate and stimulate communication among community stakeholders well into the future. This approach to planning ensures that future development, local decision-making, and other community activities will continue to adapt to the changing needs and demands of the community as a whole.

This Comprehensive Planning Process was also undertaken to establish a new framework to guide land-based decision-making for the incorporated areas of the town, those areas adjacent to the community, and any areas that may be annexed in the future. The Town of Milltown does not currently maintain any local zoning jurisdiction and relies on the Harrison County Advisory Plan Commission for land use regulation activities for the Harrison County side of the community. Thus, the Town of Milltown is utilizing this Comprehensive Planning Process to investigate opportunities that it may consider pursuing in the future to assume partial or complete jurisdiction over the incorporated areas of the community and any extra-territorial jurisdiction areas within the 2-mile allowance.

The goals, objectives, concepts, ideas, and activities contained in this document are aimed at promoting public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, and the general welfare and the efficient provision of services during all stages of development. Overall, the Plan outlines the needs of the community, sets objectives that address planning issues, and recommends appropriate actions to achieve the desired results. Ultimately, the implementation of the Milltown Comprehensive Plan requires the recognition and acceptance that public interest is affected by both personal and community actions.

The 2010 Milltown Comprehensive Plan contains the following sections:

- Introduction
- Community Profile
- Public Participation
- Action Plan

Project Partners

Town Council: Milltown is governed by a Town Council, which consists of three elected officials who are responsible for the administration of town business. The powers and duties of the council (related to planning and development) include the following: managing town property, constructing and maintaining roads, operating and funding services/programs, approving and passing ordinances (including land use-related ordinances), levying taxes for public services, and sitting on or making appointments to various commissions and boards.

The Town Council holds the legislative authority (under Indiana Code) to adopt the Milltown Comprehensive Plan. However, implementation of the goals and objectives of the plan will take place under the guidance of both the Town Council and the Plan Commission and shall also involve local residents, local organizations, and other community groups. The Town Council is also the fiscal authority for the local government. They have provided the funds necessary for the completion of the comprehensive plan document and will assist in the ongoing implementation of the plan through the operating budget of the Plan Commission.

Steering Committee: The steering committee draws from a variety of different public organizations and elected offices. It also includes concerned citizens who want to play an active role in the Comprehensive Plan process. The steering committee acts as the voice of the public as provided by a diverse group of community representatives. Upon review and approval of the Milltown Comprehensive Plan, it is the responsibility of the Milltown Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to recommend a final draft document to the Plan Commission for review.

Bonar Group: Bonar Group was the primary consultant for the Milltown Comprehensive Plan under the direction of the Town Council and the Steering Committee. Bonar Group provided the services of its Community Planner and Mapping Specialist, as well as other members of the firm to conduct the Comprehensive Planning Process. Consulting services included the gathering and processing of data to develop a community profile, facilitating a community workshop and various meetings, the development of maps, providing expertise in all phases of the project, and drafting the Comprehensive Plan document.

Process

The Town Council initiated the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the community is preparing for the ongoing changes within the region, including traffic, population growth, and development pressures that may occur in the future.

The Milltown Comprehensive Plan is to be used by policy makers as a tool for guiding decisions and the development of ordinances, but it can also serve the development community as a reference to make informed development choices. The following basic policies have guided the Comprehensive Planning Process and the development of this Plan:

- Decision-making processes should recognize and integrate short-term and long-term land use, transportation, environmental, and economic development options
- Planning efforts should be coordinated between all levels of government
- Cost-effective solutions should have primary consideration
- Citizen participation should remain an integral part of the implementation and amendment process

Phase I: Initiating a Plan - The first phase of the planning process began as the Town Council recognized that a comprehensive plan was needed. Subsequently, the elected officials dealt with administrative tasks while setting up the project framework. This preparation phase included:

- Securing Funding
- Choosing a Consultant
- Negotiating the Scope of Work
- Passing an Ordinance to Create a Plan Commission
- Passing a Resolution Appointing Plan Commission Members
- Holding the First Plan Commission Meeting
- Creating the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
- Defining the Legal Incorporated Limits of the Community
- Coordinating Public Participation Activities and Establishing Meeting Schedules

Phase II: Data Gathering and Analysis - The second phase of the planning process involved implementing a variety of data gathering activities. The existing condition of facilities, services, and land development were gathered and analyzed. The majority of this data is located within the Community Profile Section. Some of these tasks included:

- Surveying Current Land Uses & Classifying Each Parcel by Principal Use
- Reviewing US Census Data and County Records to Construct a Community Profile based upon Demographic, Socio-Economic, and Development-Related Information
- Gathering Existing Data on Local Utilities, Community Services, and Regional Amenities
- Receiving Approvals for the use of GIS Mapping Data to Develop Various Maps

Phase III: Public Participation – Resident participation was an important portion of the Comprehensive Plan process. The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was consulted throughout all the phases of the planning process to discuss issues important to them and the community. Additionally, the community played an active role by participating in public meetings and workshops to identify critical issues and other important community information. A more thorough investigation of these activities is presented in the Public Participation Section of this plan.

Phase IV: Draft Plan Development - This planning phase included the organization of the information gathered to create a draft plan. Comments gathered at public meetings provided the basis for the Plan. The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee participated by reviewing the goals and objectives and offering comments and suggestions. Following the receipt of these comments, the final goals and objectives were presented and agreed upon. Once these were completed, a draft plan was presented to the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee for review and comment.

Phase V: Final Plan Completion - In the final phase, revisions and edits were made based upon the comments and feedback from the Town Council, Plan Commission, Town Attorney, Grant Administrator, and Steering Committee. Additional information was added as an Appendix to the document to create the final document. The Plan Commission held a public hearing on the plan per Indiana State Statute (*IC 36-7-4-507*) to receive comments and feedback from the public. Upon conclusion of the Public Hearing, the Plan Commission approved the Plan and recommended the final document to the Town Council for its final adoption. The Town Council then held a public hearing as required by the grant guidelines and adopted the Plan per Indiana State Statute (*IC 36-7-4-509*).

The Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Milltown includes the following major recommendations:

- Increase the number of people involved in community events, activities, and general leadership.
- Provide adequate community services to support new growth.
- Encourage economic investment within the community.
- Provide a broader range of products and services in the community.
- Promote carefully-planned growth.
- Encourage quality development, redevelopment, and revitalization.
- Promote the efficient use of land.
- Increase residential investment in the community.
- Provide a wide-range of housing options within the community.
- Capitalize on existing transportation infrastructure.
- Promote collaborations and partnerships to address regional decisions that may affect the community.
- Enhance the community identity of the Town of Milltown.
- Reinforce community pride.
- Protect the small town character of the Milltown Community.

The overall goal for this Comprehensive Plan is to help the Milltown Community to analyze its future decisions in the context of the local character and history of the community, while still moving forward in proactive ways to prepare for the future.