

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

Westfield's 2026 comprehensive plan, "Looking to the Horizon," provides a modern framework for managing the city's continued growth and development. Building on the previous comprehensive plan from 2007, this updated plan responds to significant community change over the last two decades and incorporates extensive input from residents, stakeholders, elected officials, and city staff. As a policy guide, the plan integrates land use, transportation, utilities, economic development, and quality of life considerations into a cohesive document that will shape Westfield's physical development and influence public investment in the years to come.

Indiana Planning Law

Under Indiana Code (IC), the requirements for a comprehensive plan are established in the IC 36-7-4-500 series. This statute establishes that comprehensive plans are adopted by a resolution and are intended to promote the public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, or general welfare and for the sake of efficiency and economy in the development process.

The statute establishes the required contents of a comprehensive plan:

1. A statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction
2. A statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction
3. A statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities

A comprehensive plan may also include additional elements and "any other factors that are a part of the physical, economic, or social situation within the jurisdiction."

Community Engagement

Public input was solicited continuously throughout the seven phases of the planning process. There were numerous opportunities for resident and stakeholder engagement, including a dedicated comprehensive plan website, online surveys, focus groups, virtual and in-person open houses, presentations at regularly-scheduled city council meetings, displays at seasonal farmer's markets that allowed Westfield residents to informally engage with the consultant team, and community planning week - a focused, multi-day gathering of planners and stakeholders to solicit input, draft recommendations, and devise and resolve other key comprehensive plan milestones. The planning process was guided by a project steering committee and engagement also included workshops for city staff and elected and appointed officials.

This comprehensive plan's planning area is Westfield-Washington Township, a 56 square mile area along the western edge of Hamilton County that includes the incorporated city of Westfield as well as unincorporated sections of the township. Since 1977, the city has had planning and zoning jurisdiction over the entire township. While there is no expectation that the city of Westfield will grow to include all Westfield-Washington Township within the lifespan of this comprehensive plan (the next 20 years) the defined planning area allows the city to better prepare property owners, developers, and utility providers for future growth occurring locally and regionally.

Looking to the Horizon

The plan's central theme, "Looking to the Horizon," emphasizes forward-thinking decision-making to ensure Westfield's progress remains deliberate, balanced, and aligned with community values. The plan establishes a vision statement that articulates the city's desired future and focuses priorities, resource allocation, and assessment criteria.

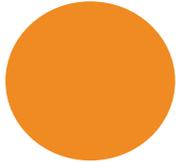
The vision serves as the comprehensive plan's foundation for measurable goals and objectives to evaluate whether proposed projects or policies support the community's long-term ambitions. Value statements complement this vision by conveying core principles and shared beliefs, helping to maintain consistency and integrity as conditions and leadership in Westfield change over time. The collective principles and beliefs deemed most important among Westfield's residents pertain to community relationships, health and well-being, economic vitality, recreational opportunities, inclusive growth, attainable housing, and multi-modal connectivity.



Vision:

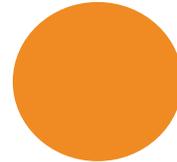
Westfield is a welcoming, connected, and resilient community that appreciates its past while purposefully directing its future. Innovative growth, defined neighborhoods, dynamic public spaces, flourishing businesses, and a strong economy support residents of all ages and backgrounds. Using strategic planning and investment, Westfield remains a leader in livability, with excellent schools, walkable districts, preserved green spaces, and a deep sense of civic pride.

Westfield is a place where...



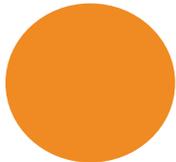
Value

Community thrives with strong social connections among residents, schools, businesses, local institutions, and government.



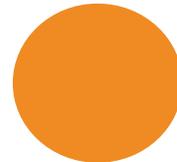
Value

Thoughtful planning guides intentional growth, preserves community identity, and enhances quality of life.



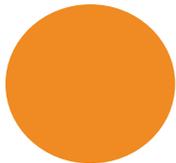
Value

Residents are at the heart of everything we do, ensuring safety, quality of education, access to health care, and support of every stage of life.



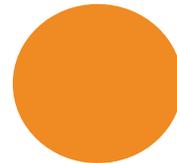
Value

Attainable housing and services are available at a variety of price points to support a high quality of life for residents of all ages, abilities, and interests.



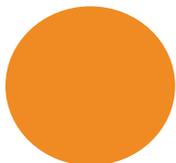
Value

Local, national, and global businesses, entrepreneurs, and other industries are growing, fueling a strong and diverse economy.



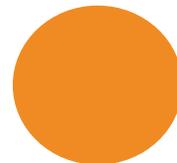
Value

Trails, sidewalks, and transit connect people to daily necessities and activities.



Value

Recreation and entertainment amenities and programming are integral to health, wellness, and social interaction of the community.



Value

Everyone is welcome.

Themes

Five themes are the organizational framework for Westfield's comprehensive plan goals and objectives. The themes are areas of focus within the document that were largely developed through public input collected during the planning process with guidance from the steering committee and city staff. The themes should be viewed as interconnected and complementary to one another.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Position Westfield as a dynamic and resilient economic hub by fostering a diversified business base, cultivating innovation and entrepreneurship, strengthening workforce talent, and leveraging strategic investments in infrastructure, quality of place, and partnerships — ensuring the city's sustained competitiveness, prosperity, and leadership within the regional economy.

QUALITY OF PLACE

People recognize the quality of place in Westfield and make it a choice community. It is a community where the local history is ingrained through public art and initiatives. The natural features of the community are valued assets on their own and contribute to recreation opportunities and programming. Recreation for people of all ages is a focus of the Westfield community.

HOUSING

Westfield will be a model community that provides diverse and accessible housing opportunities for residents across all income levels, life stages, and household compositions. As Westfield's housing opportunities change, the city will maintain its distinctive character and quality of life through innovative planning, strategic partnerships, and equitable development practices that support long-term economic vitality and environmental stewardship.

TRANSPORTATION

Westfield's transportation strategy focuses on the modernization of the street network, ensuring the safe and efficient flow of traffic for all modes, reducing car dependency and supporting higher density housing types through improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, enhanced transit service, and mixed-use development patterns that integrate with housing, employment, retail, and service opportunities.

UTILITIES

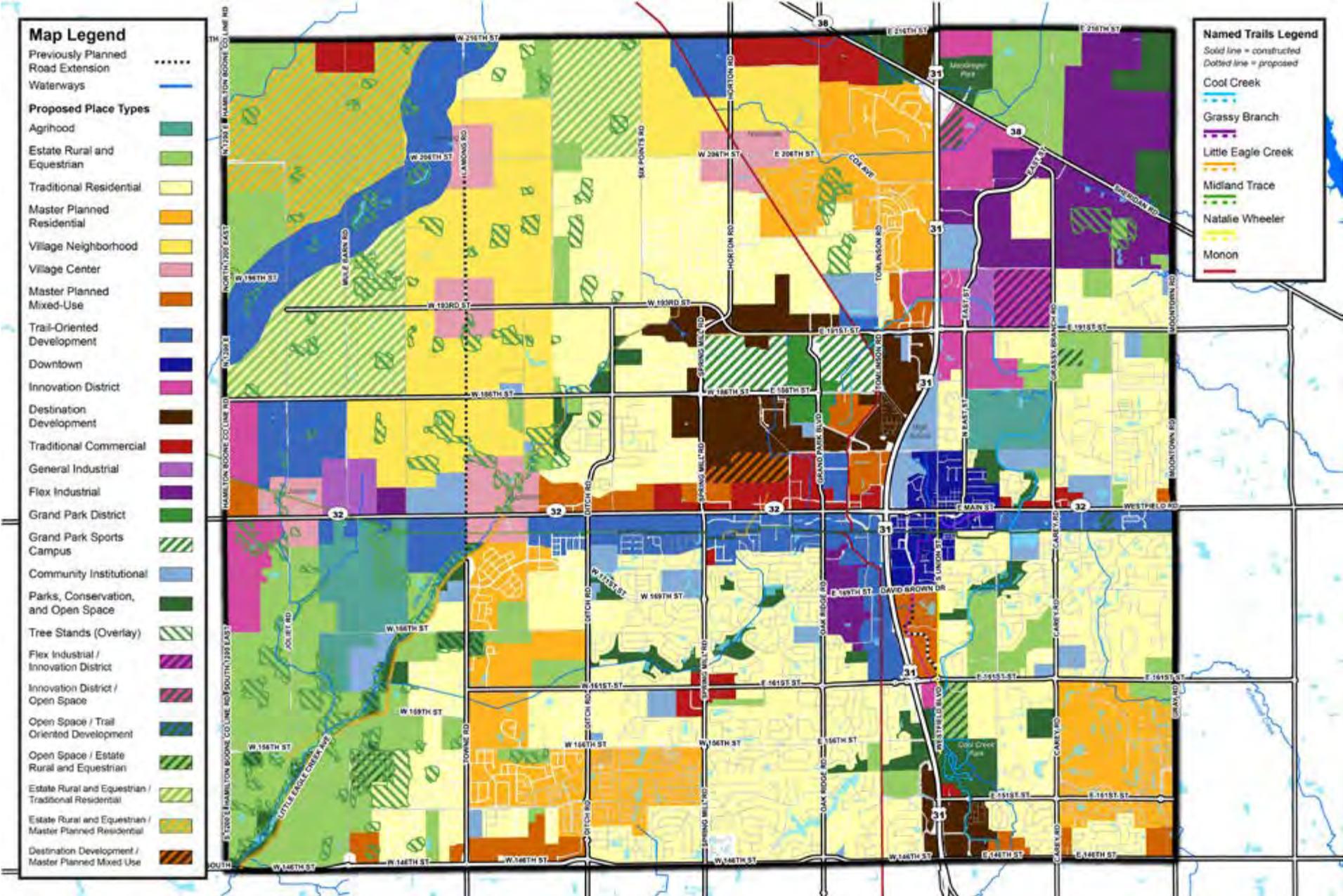
Ensure utility infrastructure accommodates growth through proactive coordination with utility owners and developers, protection and maintenance of existing assets, and prioritization of green infrastructure.

Placetype Framework and Future Development Map

In this comprehensive plan, planning for Westfield's future physical development shifts focus from conventional land-use maps to a "placetype" approach. This approach considers the character of the planning area's existing conditions, natural landscape, built environment, function and purpose, integration of the transportation and utility networks, and proximity and regional connections. Placetypes allow for the introduction of desirable new development and redevelopment forms that may not typically be considered through traditional land use planning. It inspires a more durable, attractive, and resource-efficient place-based strategy for the city's future growth.

There are 19 placetypes and one special development featured in "Looking to the Horizon's" Future Development Map. Each placetype defines primary and secondary land uses. In many cases, these uses are encouraged to be intermixed, but the secondary uses should be developed in limited capacity and not exceed the primary land uses within each placetype. Beyond uses, the placetypes descriptions contain recommendations regarding building form (height, placement, and character), site design (landscape, amenities, access, and parking), and transportation (vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit). Finally, each placetype includes a set of precedent images demonstrating the intent of the placetype.

The Future Development Map identifies where placetypes should be physically located within the planning area boundaries as the community continues to develop and redevelop. The map does not dictate when development should occur; rather, it describes how development should look, feel, and function if/when it does happen.



Complementary Connections

Westfield's network of physical and economic connections is pivotal to the city's development and function. This network encompasses infrastructure and resources crucial for mobility, attracting investment, and community welfare. Additionally, the local economy connects the residents of Westfield to the regional suburban Indianapolis market. Local and regional accessibility make Westfield an appealing place to live, work, and do business.

The city's transportation network is the connective tissue that links the plan's components explored in this document. The city's commitment to policy decisions that support the plan's vision, values, and recommendations is critical to its future economic success. As such, the comprehensive plan calls for maintaining and modernizing the street network to ensure reliability for all users. Key actions involve "right-sizing" roadways based on user intensity and expanding east-west and north-south connections. The recommendations emphasize slowing traffic speeds through design, establishing clear design standards for street lighting, landscaping, increasing visibility at intersections, and fulfilling a safe, comfortable, and complete bicycle and pedestrian trail system.

Public land for parks, schools, utilities, and transportation infrastructure is a consideration throughout the plan to provide for adequate parks and open space, quality public education, and well-serviced businesses and neighborhoods. Private utility companies that serve Westfield were key stakeholders in development of the plan alongside city staff.

Implementation and Application

The planning process does not end with adoption. The comprehensive Plan carries on through implementation. This occurs through a variety of tools, including amendments to the city's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and coordination with other key documents such as economic studies and subarea plans. While the comprehensive plan serves as a guiding policy document, it is not a regulatory instrument and does not change zoning, alter property rights, or impose development requirements. Instead, it offers high-level direction to inform land use decisions, public investments, and development proposals across the community. Ongoing monitoring and periodic updates of this plan, its recommendations, and its overall relevance are built into the implementation process, including an annual status review. The lifespan of a comprehensive plan is approximately 20 years. In between these major updates the city should assess if the comprehensive plan is continuing to meet the community's needs and is responsive to changing conditions and emerging opportunities.

"Looking to the Horizon" is the city's manual for coordinated planning and priorities across departments, boards, commissions, and community partners. Its integration with zoning tools, subarea plans, and infrastructure investments makes it a central reference point for decision-makers, developers, and residents. By clearly articulating Westfield's vision and values, the plan provides a unified roadmap for purposeful, inclusive, and sustainable growth—ensuring that the city remains a thriving, well-connected, and future-ready community for generations to come.

Document Organization

Beginning in 2024 and concluding in early 2026, Westfield’s comprehensive plan planning process was conducted over 18 months and seven phases: 1) Baseline Assessment, 2) Capacity Building, 3) Vision & Values, 4) Draft Plan, 5) Final Plan, 6) Adoption, and 7) Final Deliverables. It is within these seven phases that the consulting team, under the oversight of the City of Westfield’s planning staff and guidance from the plan steering committee, developed the critical work products that form the framework and content of this document. “Looking to the Horizon” is organized into seven chapters, complemented by this executive summary and supportive appendix. Each topic and final conclusions explored throughout this document’s chapters reflect months-long research, thoughtful discussions, and decisions reached during the planning process.

Chapter 7: Implementation

The final chapter of “Looking to the Horizon.” This chapter outlines measures for achieving the recommendations, such as zoning decisions, project prioritization, and progress tracking. An implementation matrix graphically presents each action step, specifying timing, priority, difficulty, lead agency, key partners, and links to other critical plan sections. The plan’s 20-year duration allows adequate time to achieve its goals, objectives, and desired land use patterns.

Chapter 1: Planning Foundation

Explains the purpose, process, and structure of the plan.

Chapter 3: Themes and Goals

Products of the plan’s vision and value statements. Five planning themes emerged to serve as the organizing elements for plan goals and objectives. This chapter describes each theme’s function and role, desired outcomes, the “how-to’s,” responsibilities, and evaluation criteria.

Chapter 5: Thoroughfare Plan

Outlines a strategic approach to maintaining and modernizing Westfield’s street network to support current transportation needs while accommodating future growth. This approach emphasizes safety for all modes of transportation and introduces key policies aimed at optimizing roadways, establishing design standards, and facilitating multimodal connections across the city.

Chapter 2: Vision and Values

Summarizes the community engagement process, articulate the comprehensive plan’s vision and value statements, and introduce the plan’s major themes.

Chapter 4: Placetypes

The core of the comprehensive plan; this chapter will likely be the most referenced section of this document. Placetypes guide future development in Westfield. This chapter includes descriptions for each of the 19 individual placetypes, a corresponding map, and the applicable principles and standards.

Chapter 6: Connecting it Together

About the policy and recommendations that are the most important pieces of the comprehensive planning process. This chapter explores Westfield’s evolution from a small town to a thriving, influential city in the Indianapolis Metropolitan Statistical Area. Continued growth depends on maintaining the relationships, resources, and cooperation necessary to sustain Westfield’s economic success and attract desirable new investment.

Appendix:

Includes supporting research and findings that are used as the foundation for the assumptions, recommendations, and other decisions made throughout the comprehensive plan planning process. Materials in the Appendix include a summary of Westfield’s existing conditions, the community input process, and frequently used planning terms and definitions.

