



Frequently Asked Questions

Hancock County MegaSite Planned Unit Development

May 1, 2025

SURGE|DEVELOPMENT

Important Dates:

May 8, 2025 – 6:00pm

Public Informational Meeting

Greenfield-Central High School Auditorium
810 N Broadway St, Greenfield, IN 46140

May 27, 2025 – 6:30pm

Hancock County Plan Commission

Mt. Vernon High School Auditorium
Door Entrance #7
8112 N. 200 W., Fortville, IN 46040

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Preface

This document provides detailed answers to the most common questions and concerns raised during the public input process, stakeholder discussions, and initial review stages of the Hancock County MegaSite Planned Unit Development.

Our goal is to ensure that residents, community leaders, and stakeholders have clear, accessible information about the intent, structure, and community impacts of the proposed PUD.

This information will be **shared publicly** and made available through a variety of channels to help **support open dialogue, encourage informed feedback, and foster a collaborative approach** as plans are refined and the proposal moves forward.

We appreciate the community's engagement and look forward to continued discussions about how this project can best support the future success of Hancock County.

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Purpose of the Hancock County MegaSite Planned Unit Development

The purpose of the Hancock County MegaSite Planned Unit Development (PUD) is to **attract high-quality jobs and significant investment** from some of the **most technologically advanced companies in the world** to Hancock County.

This PUD is designed to create a thoughtful, cohesive development that **aligns with and advances the goals outlined in the 2023 Hancock County Land Use Plan**. It seeks to respect adjacent property owners and land uses, while carefully considering impacts on county infrastructure and utility systems.

The Hancock County MegaSite PUD is intended to be a model for responsible, community-focused development — **one that avoids the piecemeal, uncoordinated growth patterns of the past**. By utilizing the advantages of a Planned Unit Development process, we can ensure that development is organized and beneficial for the long term.

As technology and infrastructure needs continue to evolve, **communities that proactively prepare sites with appropriate zoning and infrastructure will be best positioned for future success**. Our focus is on ensuring that all future development at the MegaSite is aligned with community goals, supports responsible infrastructure planning, and delivers lasting value for residents, workers, and the broader community.

What is a Planned Unit Development (PUD)?

A **Planned Unit Development (PUD)** is a type of zoning that allows for more thoughtful, cohesive planning across a larger area, rather than reviewing individual projects one at a time.

It's a way for the community, developers, and local government to **work collaboratively** to guide future growth responsibly — ensuring that new development is attractive, functional, and fits well with the surrounding community.

In a PUD, the county and community help **establish a framework upfront**: what types of uses are appropriate, setbacks, how much green space is preserved, how roads connect, how traffic is managed, and how impacts like drainage and utilities are handled.

Where We Are Today: Preliminary Plan (Concept Phase)

We are currently in the **Preliminary Plan** phase — sometimes called the **concept phase** — of the Planned Unit Development process.

This is the first step in a larger public process that allows the community and county leaders to provide **vital feedback** before any specific projects move forward.

- The **Preliminary (Concept) Plan** identifies **key development components** such as:
 - Potential land uses (e.g., data center, technology, light industrial)
 - Setbacks and building distances from property lines
 - Buffering and landscaping requirements
 - Green space and open space preservation
 - Traffic study requirements
 - Drainage and utility planning

This plan **lays the groundwork** for how the larger area will develop over time, ensuring that growth is **cohesive, coordinated, and community-focused**.

Important Clarification: PUD Approval is NOT Project Approval

Approval of the PUD zoning does NOT mean that any specific project has been approved.

Rather, it means that a development framework has been established — with specific, enforceable requirements that future users must meet before any building can occur.

Before any project is approved, multiple additional steps must happen, including:

- A **Detailed Plan** must be submitted to the county for approval, including full site plans, drainage plans, and platting documents.
- The **Technical Review Committee (TRC)** — composed of county officials and technical experts — will conduct meetings to review plans as part of the Preliminary Plan and Platting Process.
- The **Plan Commission** will hold **an additional public meeting**, where plan information will be reviewed as part of the Platting Process.
- **Traffic evaluations and utility confirmations** will be presented and made available for review by county leaders, county consultants, and the public.
- **Drainage reports and designs** will be reviewed for compliance by the **County Surveyor, the County Drainage Board** (which includes the County Commissioners), and **independent engineering consultants** prior to any project approvals.

These points will be incorporated into the Planned Unit Development. This structured process is designed to ensure that **development fits the community's needs** at every step — not just at the beginning.

Why This Matters for Hancock County

The safeguards built into the proposed Planned Unit Development protect the community by:

- **Providing Multiple Opportunities for Public Input:**
Residents, neighbors, and community leaders will have several chances to review, comment, and help shape specific projects before they are approved.

- **Ensuring Careful, Professional Review:**
Independent engineers, traffic experts, and drainage consultants — not just developers — will review plans for compliance with county standards.
 - **Coordinating Infrastructure and Road Networks:**
Planning across a larger area allows roads, utilities, stormwater systems, and green spaces to be designed thoughtfully, rather than in a piecemeal fashion.
 - **Protecting Neighboring Properties:**
Setbacks, buffers, drainage management, and landscaping requirements will ensure that future development is respectful of neighboring properties.
 - **Promoting Responsible, Long-Term Growth:**
By planning comprehensively now, we lay the foundation for **attractive, functional, and economically beneficial development** for decades to come — rather than reacting project-by-project without a big-picture vision.
-

Final Thought

This Preliminary Plan is an opportunity for community leaders, residents, and county officials to **work together proactively** to shape growth in a way that reflects the community's values and priorities.

Your voice matters, and this process has been intentionally designed to be transparent, thoughtful, and responsive to community input every step of the way.

We appreciate your engagement and look forward to continued collaboration as we plan for a bright future together.

What is a Data Center?

Data centers are the critical infrastructure that powers our modern digital world.

At their core, a data center is a **highly specialized, secure facility** designed to house the computer servers, networking systems, and energy infrastructure needed to support everything from email and banking to healthcare systems, education, manufacturing, and artificial intelligence.

Every time someone uses a smartphone, works remotely, streams a movie, manages a business operation, or interacts with artificial intelligence (AI) — **a data center is quietly making it possible behind the scenes.**

Why Are Data Centers Important?

- **The Backbone of Modern Life:**

Data centers ensure that businesses, hospitals, schools, and governments can operate efficiently. They store and process critical information securely and quickly, enabling essential services that we rely on every day.

- **Enabling the Future of AI and Innovation:**

Artificial intelligence is one of the most transformative technologies of our time, with applications in medicine, agriculture, logistics, manufacturing, education, and beyond.

However, AI requires **immense computing power** to operate.

Data centers provide the specialized, scalable infrastructure that enables AI to train, learn, and deliver real-world solutions — whether that's improving crop yields, diagnosing disease earlier, or optimizing supply chains.

- **Energy Efficiency and Technological Advancement:**

Modern data centers are marvels of **engineering, sustainability, and efficiency.**

Today's facilities are built with:

- Advanced cooling and power management systems to **minimize environmental impact.**
- Energy recovery systems that **reuse waste heat** and improve overall efficiency.

- **Critical Economic and Community Asset:**

Data centers represent long-term investment in communities.

They:

- Generate **high-wage technical jobs** in IT, engineering, security, and operations.
- Create a strong, stable **long-term property tax base** to help fund schools, roads, police, and fire protection.
- Serve as an attractor for **new technology businesses** and future economic growth.

Why This Matters for Hancock County

As the world continues to move rapidly toward a **knowledge-based economy**, communities that are prepared to support data center development position themselves to be leaders in the future of technology and innovation. By hosting facilities that support cloud computing, cybersecurity, AI, education, and smart infrastructure, we are **laying the groundwork for prosperity, resilience, and competitiveness** for generations to come.

In short: **Data centers are today's equivalent of yesterday's railroads or highways** — they are the vital infrastructure that will move Hancock County forward into the future.

Why is This the Right Area for This Data Center Development?

Selecting the right location for future development is one of the most important decisions a community can make — balancing economic opportunity, infrastructure readiness, and respect for existing land uses.

The area identified in the proposed Planned Unit Development (PUD) is the **right location** for a data center and advanced technology campus for several key reasons:

1. Alignment with Hancock County's Land Use Plan and Public Input

- In **2023**, Hancock County updated its **Comprehensive Land Use Plan** through an extensive public input process. You may view the plan at www.hancockin.gov/557/Future-Hancock
- This process **specifically identified the PUD area for future manufacturing and industrial uses** — recognizing the opportunity to build the County's economic base near major transportation infrastructure and compatible adjacent uses, with utility availability.
- The proposed development is aligned with the **community's publicly stated vision** for this area.

2. Strategic Location Adjacent to Indianapolis Regional Airport

- The site lies **immediately adjacent to the Indianapolis Regional Airport**, a key driver for future economic activity in Hancock County.
- Proximity to the airport provides logistical advantages for technology users and supports regional and state-level economic development goals.

3. Utilities and Infrastructure are Available and Supportive

- Over several years, we have coordinated extensively with utility providers to confirm that **power, water, wastewater, gas, and fiber infrastructure** are available — or

can be responsibly extended — to support development without overburdening existing community resources.

- **Significant electric transmission infrastructure** already bisects the site, ideal for large-scale data center operations.
 - Water and wastewater service evaluations have confirmed the ability to support substantial users without drawing from sensitive local groundwater resources.
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4. Low Community Impact After Construction

- After the initial construction phase, data centers **generate little daily traffic** compared to other industrial or commercial users.
 - They place **minimal ongoing demand** on community resources such as:
 - Police and fire services (relative to many other uses)
 - Schools
 - Public facilities
 - This creates **long-term tax base benefits** without significant strain on county services.
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5. Enhancing the Transition and Addressing the Unique Needs of Adjacent Properties

- It has been made clear during the PUD process that **this area must thoughtfully transition** between the airport and important neighboring uses like **Tuttle Orchards** and nearby agricultural land — a factor that was **not fully addressed** in the original 2023 Land Use Plan.
 - In response:
 - We are **increasing setbacks** along portions of **600 North and 300 West**.
 - **Mounding and landscape plantings** are planned along these roads to preserve the visual character of the travel corridors leading to Tuttle Orchards as the project develops.
 - We are **working with the County to create a large, permanent buffer** along the PUD boundary with Tuttle that could become a **community amenity** — enhancing the visitor experience at the orchards.
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6. Supporting the County's Economic Development Goals

- The project directly advances Hancock County's economic development priorities by:
 - **Increasing opportunities for investment.**
 - **Expanding the County's tax base** to help fund schools, roads, and public services.
 - **Creating high-quality job opportunities** for residents in emerging technology and engineering fields.
- We are also collaborating with the County to ensure the **broader regional road network** will be able to support the site's needs while preserving quality of life for residents.

Why This Matters for Hancock County

Hancock County has **clearly defined** this area for economic development through its **public planning efforts**, and the infrastructure is positioned to support responsible growth.

As a developer, we understand that with this opportunity comes a **serious responsibility**:

- A responsibility to **work collaboratively with the County, Tuttle Orchards, and adjacent landowners.**
- A responsibility to **thoughtfully manage the transition** between different land uses.
- A responsibility to **deliver a project that enhances, not harms, the broader community.**

Through careful planning, enhanced buffering, infrastructure investment, and open public engagement, we are committed to ensuring that this development **adds lasting value to Hancock County** — economically, environmentally, and as a place so many call home.

What Steps Are Being Taken to Address Tuttle Orchards' Concerns?

We recognize that **Tuttle Orchards is an incredibly valuable community asset** — not only as a working farm, but as a beloved destination for families, schools, and visitors throughout the region.

Tuttle is part of the heart and identity of Hancock County, and it's important that any future development **respects, supports, and enhances** their operations and the broader community experience.

Our focus is to be a **good neighbor** and to design a development that **coexists harmoniously** with Tuttle Orchards, while providing **opportunities for community enhancement**.

How We Are Addressing Tuttle Orchards' Concerns

Through the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process — which allows for **thoughtful, intentional planning** rather than reactionary growth — we are able to directly incorporate strategies to support Tuttle and address potential impacts.

Here are the key steps we are currently taking:

1. Limiting Permitted Uses Within the PUD

- We are removing incompatible uses that are otherwise permitted under Hancock County's standard industrial zoning districts, to ensure development remains appropriate and aligned with the PUD Intent and the County's future vision.

2. Requiring Traffic and Utility Studies at the Detailed Plan Stage

- The PUD will require submission of the following as part of any Detailed Plan approval:
 - Traffic Evaluations
 - Utility Plan Confirmations
- These evaluations must be submitted as part of the Detailed Plan, for review by County staff and consultants, and available for public review prior to approval — ensuring full transparency and accountability.

3. Lowering Building Heights Adjacent to the Orchards

- In the areas of the PUD **closest to Tuttle Orchards**, we are **lowering the maximum allowable building heights** to reduce visual impacts.
- This ensures that future buildings will not tower over or overshadow the orchard experience.

4. Significantly Increasing Setbacks and Landscaping Buffers

- We are **increasing required setbacks** along portions of key corridors near Tuttle, including along **600 North and 300 West**.
- These setbacks will include **mounding and plantings** to create attractive, year-round visual screening as the property develops.

5. Creating Opportunities for Enhanced Signage for Tuttle Orchards

- We are working with the County to find opportunities to incorporate wayfinding and directional signage opportunities along main travel corridors to better guide visitors to Tuttle Orchards.
- This will help maintain and enhance access and visibility as the area grows.

6. Establishing a Wide, Permanent Buffer Along Tuttle Orchards' Boundary

- We are collaborating with the County to **establish a wide, permanent buffer** along the PUD boundary shared with Tuttle.
- We envision this buffer as a **potential community amenity**, enhancing the orchards' surroundings and preserving open space between operations and development.

7. Coordinating County Thoroughfare Improvements that Benefit Tuttle Orchards

- We are working with the County to consider updates to the County's Thoroughfare Plan.
- These improvements are intended to enhance **traffic flow, safety, and accessibility** for Tuttle Orchards' customers and the surrounding community — ensuring that the orchards remain easy and convenient to visit.

8. Ongoing, Meaningful Communication and Collaboration

- We are committed to **open, ongoing communication** with the Roney family.
 - Our goal is to **listen, adapt, and address concerns** through regular updates, collaborative problem-solving, and genuine partnership.
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Why the Planned Unit Development (PUD) Process Matters for Tuttle Orchards and Hancock County

The PUD process is **uniquely suited** to address concerns like those raised by Tuttle Orchards because it:

- Allows **future development to be planned comprehensively**, not piecemeal.
- Requires **public input and multiple review stages** before a project can proceed.
- Enables County leaders to **set enforceable conditions** such as buffers, building heights, setbacks, and drainage protections as the area develops.

Rather than reacting to each project individually, the PUD gives Hancock County and the community the ability to work cooperatively with the developer to guide how development happens in a way that protects and complements important assets like Tuttle Orchards.

Final Thought

Tuttle Orchards is a treasured part of Hancock County's past, present, and future. We understand that **it is our responsibility** to ensure any growth related to the PUD around the orchards is **thoughtful, respectful, and beneficial** — not just for today, but for generations to come.

Through careful planning, enhanced buffering, strategic improvements, and ongoing communication, we are committed to **supporting Tuttle Orchards** and ensuring that **future development adds value to the community**.

How Are Utilities Being Addressed Within the PUD Area?

The success of any responsible development depends on ensuring that infrastructure — particularly utilities — can support future growth without placing unnecessary burdens on the community.

In planning for the proposed Planned Unit Development (PUD), **significant, multi-year coordination efforts** have taken place with area utility providers to confirm that **water, sewer, power, fiber, and gas services** are available and can be expanded responsibly to meet potential project needs.

Below is an overview of how each utility is being addressed:

Power

- **Transmission Infrastructure:**

The proposed site is uniquely positioned with significant electric transmission infrastructure, making it particularly well-suited for uses like data centers that require large, stable power supplies.

- **Duke Energy Coordination:**

- Duke Energy owns and operates a major **transmission line that bisects the site**, with **available capacity** to serve high-power users.
- Ongoing coordination with Duke has confirmed **their ability to serve** and develop the necessary power delivery infrastructure for future projects.

- **Additional Power Options:**

- Beyond Duke, **other transmission lines** located near the site may also provide additional capacity if needed.
- Portions of the site fall within **NineStar Connect's** service area, and through their partner **Wabash Valley Power Alliance**, may be served by additional power resources.

Water

- **Dual Water Service Providers:**

The site has the advantage of potential service from **both Citizens Water and NineStar Connect**.

- **Citizens Water Evaluation:**

- Citizens Water has a **significant system size and operational capacity**, capable of supporting large-scale users.
- Citizens can provide **looped and redundant water feeds** to the PUD area, ensuring reliability and resiliency.
- Citizens Water has **confirmed the ability to meet projected needs without drawing on Hancock County's groundwater resources**, helping to **preserve local aquifers** and ensure sustainable water management for the community.

- **NineStar Connect Water Service:**

- NineStar Connect is **actively expanding its water service territory** in areas in proximity to the proposed PUD.
- NineStar's growing water infrastructure provides an opportunity to **support future development** within the PUD as either a **primary service provider** or as a **secondary/redundant source**.
- **Ongoing evaluation of NineStar's capacity** will continue to ensure that service options remain flexible and responsive to the needs of potential users within the PUD.
- Coordination with NineStar provides additional opportunities to **strengthen regional water infrastructure** while supporting Hancock County's long-term growth goals.

- **Future Water Efficiency:**

- Technological advances — particularly in data center water management — are **dramatically reducing water usage** through **reclamation, recycling, and high-efficiency cooling systems**.
- We are **reserving land within the PUD** to create opportunities for the integration of water reuse technologies, ensuring a more sustainable approach over time.

Wastewater

- **Aqua Indiana Coordination:**

The Planned Unit Development lies within **Aqua Indiana's wastewater service territory**.

- **Existing Infrastructure:**

- Aqua operates the **Western Hancock Wastewater Treatment Plant** located at the Indianapolis Regional Airport.
- Wastewater generated from projects will be conveyed via **gravity sewers and force mains** to this facility for treatment.
- We have worked closely with Aqua to confirm **their available capacity and ability to serve** future developments within the PUD.

Gas

- **CenterPoint Energy Gas Service:**

CenterPoint Energy is the **natural gas provider** for the area.

They have confirmed capacity to serve potential developments within the PUD area.

Fiber Connectivity

- **High-Speed Fiber Infrastructure:**

Thanks to the foresight and investment of **NineStar Connect**, Hancock County is equipped with a **robust, high-speed fiber optic network**.

- This ensures that the site is **well-positioned for the intensive data connectivity needs** of technology-driven projects, including data centers and advanced manufacturing.

Why This Matters for Hancock County

Utility readiness is one of the most critical protections against irresponsible development.

Before any project moves forward within the PUD, we are proposing language that will **require submission of a utility plan** as part of the development review process.

Specifically:

- The plan must **clearly identify proposed utility requirements** for each project.
- The plan must include **written confirmation from utility providers** verifying that services can meet the needs without overextending infrastructure or creating risks to the community.
- These plans will be reviewed by county leaders, consultants, and made available to the public.

By doing this, Hancock County ensures that **no project is approved without responsible utility support** — safeguarding quality of life, protecting infrastructure investments, and ensuring that growth happens **only where it makes sense**.

How Will This Proposed Development Help Hancock County Achieve Its Economic Development Goals?

How Will It Increase Tax Base and Provide Good Jobs for the Community?

One of Hancock County's core economic development goals — outlined through its planning documents, public input sessions, and strategic initiatives — is to **grow and diversify the county's tax base while attracting high-quality jobs** that support the needs of a growing, modern population.

The proposed Planned Unit Development (PUD) directly supports these goals in several important ways:

1. Significant New Investment and Expansion of the Tax Base

- **Scale of Investment:**

The full build-out of the PUD could support billions of dollars in private investment — including data center facilities, advanced manufacturing, infrastructure improvements, and supporting businesses.

- **Land Impact:**

All of this investment would occur on less than **0.4% of Hancock County's total land area**, preserving the county's agricultural and rural character while concentrating new growth efficiently.

- **Transformative Tax Base Expansion:**

This kind of growth would provide **transformative resources** to help fund new infrastructure, schools, roads, public safety, parks, and other critical community services without overburdening homeowners and existing businesses.

2. Attracting and Supporting High-Quality, Technology-Driven Jobs

- **Quality Jobs for a Growing Population:**

The data center and technology users expected for the site typically create jobs in fields like:

- Information technology (IT operations, network management)
- Engineering (mechanical, electrical, computer) and Project Management

- Support Services, Facilities maintenance, and security
 - **Right-Sized Job Creation:**

Unlike large manufacturing plants or warehouses, data centers **generate significant tax value without overwhelming the local labor market:**

 - Hancock County already has a **very low unemployment rate**, indicating a strong, healthy economy.
 - Data center campus projects typically create **several hundred high-quality, well-paying jobs** — a number that can **be absorbed by the county’s ongoing residential growth** without creating labor shortages or stressing local employers.
 - **Long-Term Stability:**

These projects represent **long-term, stable investments** that operate for decades and continue creating jobs, local contracts, and infrastructure investments over time.
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Why This Investment Matters to Hancock County

This development offers Hancock County a **rare and powerful opportunity** to achieve multiple community goals simultaneously:

- **Expand and diversify the tax base** without requiring massive land consumption.
- **Attract cutting-edge technology jobs** that complement the County’s demographic and economic growth.
- **Generate revenue to fund public services** — including education, infrastructure, and emergency services — that will benefit all residents **especially given challenges presented by new state legislation.**
- **Plan growth responsibly**, ensuring that new investment fits within the County’s land use plans, infrastructure availability, and long-term vision.

By welcoming strategic, high-value investment through a thoughtful, community-led planning process, Hancock County can **secure its economic future while preserving the character and quality of life** that makes it a special place to live, work, and grow.

How is This Proposed Development Different from the Warehouses Developed in the Community Over the Last 10 Years?

We recognize that over the past decade, Hancock County has experienced a significant number of warehouse and logistics developments.

While these projects have provided marginal community benefits, there is growing concern that speculative growth, infrastructure strain, and the long-term economic impact of these developments.

The proposed Planned Unit Development (PUD) — designed for data centers and advanced technology campuses — is fundamentally different in several important and strategic ways:

1. Type of Use and Economic Impact

- **Warehouses:**
Primarily support the storage and distribution of goods, with **lower assessed value per acre** relative to their size.
- **Proposed Development:**
Focused on **build-to-suit projects** for some of **the most advanced technology companies in the world** — including cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and digital infrastructure users.
 - This creates **dramatically higher assessed values** and **long-term, durable investment** in the community.

2. Traffic and Infrastructure Impacts

- **Warehouses:**
Create significant truck and employee traffic, leading to **road wear, congestion, and infrastructure pressure**.

- **Proposed Development:**
After initial construction, data centers generate **low daily traffic** and **minimal impact** on roads.
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3. Employment Characteristics and Workforce Alignment

- **Warehouses:**
Produce larger volumes of entry-level jobs, which can strain local labor markets and housing if not managed carefully.
 - **Proposed Development:**
Produces **high-quality jobs** in IT, engineering, facilities management, and cybersecurity — professions that **align with Hancock County’s growing workforce** and educational initiatives.
 - Supports programs like **Amplify Hancock**, which focuses on strengthening Hancock County’s workforce, education, and community development efforts.
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4. Speculative vs. Build-to-Suit Approach

- **Warehouses:**
Much of the warehouse development over the last decade has been **speculative** — built before tenants were secured — leading to a **significant inventory of underutilized or vacant space** in the community.
 - **Proposed Development:**
This PUD will be focused primarily on build-to-suit projects, meaning:
 - Facilities will be designed specifically for committed users.
 - Projects will be constructed when a major company is ready to occupy the site, ensuring that new construction is purpose-driven.
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5. Community Resource Demand

- **Warehouses:**
Increase demands on public services (road maintenance, public safety) and can generate ripple effects on housing and transportation systems.
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- **Proposed Development:**
Places **less long-term demand on public services** while **enhancing community stability**.
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6. Visual and Aesthetic Standards

- **Warehouses:**
Often designed for utility over aesthetics, contributing to concerns about the visual impact along key corridors.
 - **Proposed Development:**
Includes architectural standards, expanded landscape buffers, and thoughtful site considerations to preserve community character along primary roads like 600 North and 300 West, and near Tuttle Orchards.
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Why This Matters for Hancock County

This next phase of development is about **thoughtful, strategic investment** — not just growth for growth's sake.

- It **builds a stronger, more resilient tax base** with minimal community disruption.
- It **creates higher-paying, future-ready jobs** for residents, helping Hancock County grow smartly as both population and educational attainment levels rise.
- It **avoids the pitfalls of previous development**, ensuring that new construction is **anchored by users** with a vested interest in the community's success.
- It **strengthens community partnerships** by supporting initiatives like **Amplify Hancock** that connect workforce development, education, and livability.

Ultimately, this development is designed to benefit Hancock County today — and secure opportunity for generations to come.

It reflects a commitment to **smart growth, responsible planning, and a better future for all residents**.

How Can Hancock County Be Protected from Irresponsible Growth or Unwanted Development with a Planned Unit Development (PUD)?

A major strength of using a **Planned Unit Development (PUD)** process is that it gives Hancock County much greater control over how land is developed compared to traditional zoning.

Instead of reacting project-by-project without a guiding vision, the PUD process **sets clear expectations, standards, and safeguards** for responsible, community-focused development upfront.

Here's how a PUD helps protect Hancock County:

1. Establishing Development Standards Upfront for a Larger Area

The **Preliminary Plan (Concept Phase)** identifies key elements such as:

- Permitted uses
- Building setbacks
- Buffers and landscaping
- Maximum building heights
- Green space requirements
- Traffic study requirements
- Utility infrastructure planning

These standards are not general ideas — they are **binding parts of the zoning** and must be followed by any future developer or user.

This means Hancock County is not left guessing later about what might happen — the foundation is clearly set now.

2. Multiple Layers of Public Review Before a Project is Approved

Even after the PUD zoning is approved, **NO project can proceed** without going through **multiple additional steps**, including:

- Submission of a **Detailed Plan** showing building locations, drainage designs, site plans, and traffic and utility studies.
- **Technical Review Committee (TRC) meetings**, which are public, where county leaders, county staff and technical experts review plans.
- An **additional Plan Commission meeting** for platting.
- **Requirement to submit** traffic and utility studies for community and consultant review before decisions are made.

These steps are not optional — they are being built directly into the PUD requirements.

3. Independent Expert Review of Infrastructure and Drainage

Before any detailed plan is approved, it must be reviewed by:

- **The County Surveyor** and engineering consultants to ensure proper stormwater management.
- **The County Drainage Board**, which includes County Commissioners, to confirm compliance with Hancock County drainage requirements.
- **External professional engineers and consultants** hired by the County, not developers, to double-check all infrastructure designs.

This provides an extra layer of accountability to prevent development that would negatively impact neighboring properties or community resources.

4. Flexibility to Require Adjustments Based on Detailed Plans

Because future development will require detailed plan approval, **Hancock County retains the right to request changes** to site layouts, buffering, traffic improvements, and other design elements if a project is not in line with the established standards.

This ensures that future projects can be responsibly adapted based on community needs and technical realities, not forced into a rigid, one-size-fits-all approach.

5. Safeguarding Community Character with Thoughtful Long-Term Planning

By planning across a larger area, the PUD allows:

- **Internal road networks** to be considered logically for better traffic flow and safety.
- **Green space and landscaping** to be preserved and integrated.
- **Consistent, compatible uses** to be located together — rather than scattered, disconnected developments that cause confusion and conflict.
- **Transitions and buffers** to protect adjacent properties from incompatible uses.

Rather than reacting to each project individually, Hancock County can guide development in a **cohesive, attractive, and responsible way** that protects the rural character and community assets people value most.

Final Thought

The PUD process being proposed builds in **strong safeguards, professional oversight, and robust community involvement** at every step.

It does not hand over unchecked control to developers — it empowers Hancock County leaders and residents to be active participants in shaping responsible growth.

Through careful planning, transparent review, and meaningful public input, we can **protect what makes Hancock County special while preparing thoughtfully for a prosperous future.**