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The City of Kendallville's *Comprehensive Plan*

Common Council Draft
December 5, 2025



KENDALLVILLE PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

Acknowledgments

Thank you to those who were essential in the development of Kendallville Plan:

Project Team

Mayor Lance Waters
Amy Ballard
Dave Lange
John Blume

Steering Committee

Mayor Lance Waters
Jenna Anderson
Amy Ballard
Dave Lange
John Blume
Julia Tipton
Kim Clouse
Kristen Johnson
Matt Stinson
Mindy London

Common Council

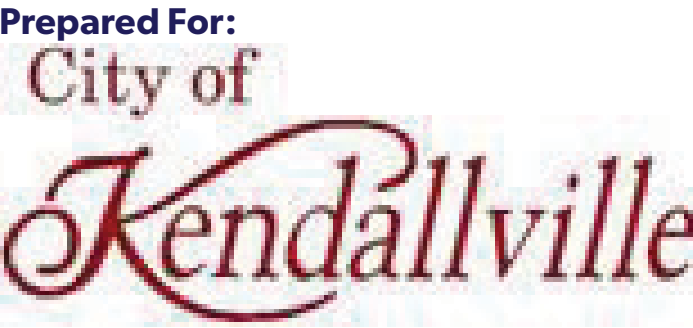
Amy Ballard
Corey Boese
Christopher McCreery
Tara Streb
Shari Targgart

Plan Commission

Rick Kiersey, President
John Blume, Vice President
Lisa Cordial, Secretary
Amy Ballard
David Button
Regan Ford
Michael Fitch
Todd Hanes
Rosie Miller
Yvette Reece
Joe Sells

Community Engagement Partners

The process of development Kendallville Plan included over 2,100 interactions with the community through surveys, stakeholder interviews, planning pop-ups, public open houses, and social media.



Prepared By:



INTRODUCTION

Preface

Comprehensive Plans

Comprehensive planning is a collaborative, community-driven process. The planning process brings together members of the community to learn, listen, and work together in order to create a clear and consistent community-wide vision with supporting goals and strategies. These guide community decision-makers on matters of land use and development, and often also include guidance on utility, transportation, economic, recreation, and housing investments.

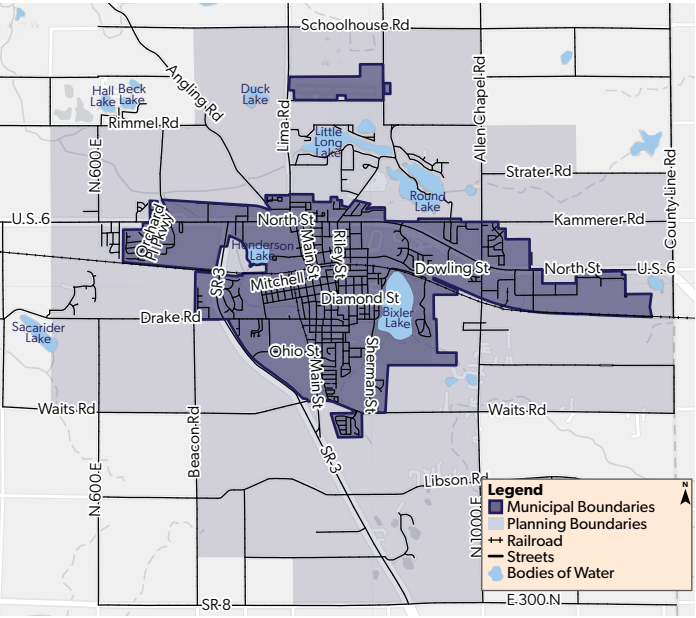
Indiana Code Requirements

The City of Kendallville has an Advisory Plan Commission that serves the incorporated areas of the City, as well as the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). Indiana Code 36-7-4-501 requires the development and maintenance of a comprehensive plan to promote public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, or the general welfare, and for the sake of efficiency and economy.

Indiana Code 36-7-4-502 spells out the minimum requirements of a comprehensive plan:

- A statement of objective for the future development of the jurisdiction.
- A statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction.
- A statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.

A community must have an adopted comprehensive plan in order to establish and administer zoning and/or subdivision control ordinances. Indiana Code allows the incorporation of additional information into a comprehensive plan to address issues and goals specific to the jurisdiction including, but not limited to, history, education, redevelopment, land utilization including agriculture, flood control, environmental, and public institutions.



Planning Boundaries

As part of the Kendallville Plan Comprehensive Planning Initiative, the project boundaries include the legal, incorporated limits of the City of Kendallville. The planning area also encompasses the City’s Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), established through an inter-local agreement between the City and Noble County in 1990. Broadly, the planning boundary extends north to Schoolhouse Road, east to County Line Road, south to SR 8 / E 300 N, and approximately one-half mile west of N 600 E.

About this Plan

Kendallville Plan serves as a comprehensive update and replacement for the existing Kendallville Comprehensive Plan, originally adopted in 2010 and amended in 2019. Its development was guided by the Community Profile Report, the Community Engagement Report, and input from the Steering Committee and Project Team, all of which provided the foundational framework for this plan.

Over the past decade, Kendallville has worked diligently to counter negative perceptions and revitalize its core through quality of life initiatives outlined in the previous plan. While these efforts have advanced the City’s revitalization, challenges related to reputation remain. The Kendallville Plan offers a strategic roadmap for decision-makers, focusing on quality of place enhancements, growth and redevelopment opportunities, and strengthening community identity and spirit.

How to Use

Kendallville Plan is designed to guide community and economic development efforts, with a focus on growth, redevelopment, and strengthening community identity. Local officials should reference this plan when making decisions about development, policies, projects, and programs. It is intended to be a living document, reviewed and updated every 5 years to remain relevant as demographics, housing, technology, industry trends, and environmental conditions evolve.

- Plan Structure and Themes
- Kendallville Plan is organized into six key themes:
- Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use
 - Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods
 - Inclusive Transportation
 - Facilitate Economic + Business Development
 - Promote Identity + Community Spirit
 - Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation

- Each Plan Theme is presented in its own chapter, which includes:
- Goal: The overarching direction for the theme.
 - Objectives: Specific targets that support the goal.
 - Foundational Support: Data and insights from the Community Profile Report and Community Engagement Report that reinforce the Plan Theme, goal, and objectives.
 - Paths to Progress: Actionable initiatives and ideas for achieving goals and objectives.

Paths to Progress and Implementation

Paths to Progress outline strategies and actions the City and community can take to advance the plan’s objectives. These may include examples of successful projects from Kendallville and other communities. Many initiatives support multiple themes and will be reflected in Chapter 7: Plan Implementation.

The final chapter, Plan Implementation, features Project Spotlights, which prioritize priority projects identified by the Steering Committee based on community engagement and their potential to deliver meaningful benefits to the community. Additionally, this chapter includes an Implementation Matrix, which is a comprehensive listing of all Plan Themes, Goals, Objectives, and Paths to Progress, illustrating how the plan’s components work together, designating priority, and identifying community partners.

Acknowledgment of Accomplishments

- Kendallville has made significant strides in revitalizing the community, from downtown improvements to expanded parks and recreation opportunities, as well as investments in residents through programming at the Community Learning Center. This plan recognizes key accomplishments achieved since the last comprehensive planning initiative, including, but in no particular order:
- Redevelopment of Kendallville High School into the Community Learning Center, as well as the development of collaborative programming to serve the community.
 - Expansion of the Kendallville Outdoor Recreation Complex, featuring sports fields and skating facilities.
 - Completion of major studies and plans, such as the 2025–2030 Park Master Plan, Noble County Housing Strategy, and updates to the 2010 Kendallville Comprehensive Plan.
 - Public investments through initiatives like the PreservINg Indiana Main Street program, Drake Road upgrades, Founders Park development, and East Noble School improvements.
 - Private investments in downtown facades, industrial and commercial facilities, and residential development.
 - Development and expansion of the Fishing Line Trail to and through Kendallville.
 - Establishment of 231 Main Co-Working Space.
 - Achieving National Main Street accreditation.
 - Revitalization of traditional neighborhoods through Kendallville Restorations, Inc.



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KEY TAKEAWAYS

Community Profile Report

The following section summarizes the Community Profile Report; the complete report can be found in Appendix A.

The Community Profile Report provides a snapshot of Kendallville’s existing conditions, highlighting the City’s strengths, opportunities, and areas where strategic action can further support sustainable growth. Key takeaways from the analysis span socio-economics, zoning and land use, economic development, public services and facilities, infrastructure, and environmental conditions – all of which inform the priorities and strategies outlined in this Plan.

Socio-Economic Trends

Kendallville’s population growth is trending upward, signaling stability and renewed vitality for a community of its size. Continued investment in housing, employment, and quality of life amenities can further influence this trajectory. The City’s growing number of single-person households suggests the need for diverse housing options. Many of these smaller households, especially those age 65 and older, have lower median incomes and distinct lifestyle needs that should be reflected in future housing and service planning.

Zoning + Land Use

A review of the City’s zoning and land use patterns indicates several opportunities for refinement. Some zoning districts are rarely applied but could support a greater range of housing types and neighborhood character if used more intentionally. In addition, several commercial areas remain zoned industrial, which may not align with their current use or long-term vision as identified in the Future Land Use Map.

The analysis also found that community-oriented facilities – such as schools, parks, and the public library – could be zoned to better reflect their civic role and strengthen their integration into surrounding neighborhoods. Updating Kendallville’s development ordinances would modernize development standards, aligning them with current Indiana Code and contemporary design

practices. Finally, improved coordination between the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Code, as well as clarification of inconsistent district titles and procedural conflicts, will enhance predictability, streamline the development process, and support more efficient decision-making.

Economic Development

Kendallville and Noble County are both experiencing measurable economic growth, supported by ongoing investment from local industries. The City has a strong foundation of tools to facilitate continued development, including a Redevelopment Commission, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts, and various grant and incentive programs. While the original Downtown TIF District sunset in 2025, the 2020 Consolidated Economic Development Area remains active and can continue to support downtown projects. These tools, coupled with the City’s growing calendar of events and community amenities, strengthen Kendallville’s position as both a regional employment center and a destination for visitors.

Public Facilities + Services

Kendallville’s municipal departments provide dependable public services that meet both daily operational and long-term community needs. The City’s park and recreation system offers a diverse array of amenities that promote active living, family recreation, and community wellness. Kendallville is further distinguished by a strong network of nonprofit organizations and community facilities that support education, culture, the arts, and overall well-being.

Streets, Trails + Sidewalks

Kendallville’s transportation network efficiently supports local and regional travel, but non-vehicular access remains a challenge. While most of U.S. 6 includes sidewalks, many sections are not maintained, and the corridor lacks safe bicycle infrastructure. The Fishing Line Trail provides valuable connectivity north of U.S. 6, yet opportunities remain to expand trail access



Founded in 2019, the Community Learning Center strives to advance the self-sufficiency of all residents through collaborative, multi-generational programs and offerings.

southward and strengthen east-west connections across the City. Older neighborhoods typically have sidewalks in need of repair, while newer developments lack consistent or connected pedestrian routes. Addressing these gaps will improve safety, accessibility, and neighborhood connectivity.

Utility Services

Kendallville’s City-owned water and wastewater utilities are major assets, offering abundant capacity for both existing users and future growth. Recent upgrades to serve local industries ensure that the system will remain robust for many years. Strengthening partnerships and communication with private utility providers will be critical for supporting new development and maintaining Kendallville’s infrastructure readiness.

Environmental Conditions

Kendallville’s lakes are vital natural resources that contribute to both recreation and community identity. Bixler Lake, in particular, provides accessible public waterfront recreation rarely found in cities of similar size. Continued monitoring of water quality remains essential, especially given the prevalence of septic systems surrounding Little Long and Round Lakes. Wetlands located on the City’s outskirts also represent important ecological assets, though they can limit or complicate future development in certain areas.

Kendallville’s community profile reveals a City with solid infrastructure, a growing economy, and a strong sense of local identity. Strategic updates to zoning and subdivision standards, targeted reinvestment in neighborhoods, and ongoing attention to infrastructure, recreation, and environmental quality will position Kendallville to manage growth responsibly and maintain its small-town character while embracing future opportunity.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Community Engagement Report

The following section summarizes the Community Engagement Report; the complete report can be found in Appendix B.

Kendallville’s community engagement process revealed strong civic pride and a shared desire to build on recent progress in downtown revitalization, housing, and quality-of-life improvements. Across public surveys, stakeholder interviews, and meetings with City officials, participants expressed optimism about Kendallville’s potential – tempered by a recognition that continued leadership, investment, and collaboration will be essential to sustain momentum.

Leadership + Vision

City officials and stakeholders emphasized the need for a proactive, unified approach to community development. While recent revitalization efforts in infrastructure, public facilities, and downtown aesthetics were praised, many felt the City could take a stronger role in incentivizing business growth, acquiring land for development, and addressing blighted or vacant properties. Aligning planning and zoning documents with Kendallville Plan was cited as a priority to ensure future development is well-coordinated. Participants also called for improved communication – both between City departments and with residents – through a citywide communication strategy that fosters transparency, volunteer engagement, and civic pride.



Economic Development + Downtown Vitality

Revitalizing the downtown core remains central to Kendallville’s vision for the future. Residents appreciate ongoing building improvements and downtown events but desire greater variety and excitement in local business offerings. The lack of sit-down restaurants, unique shops, and family-oriented entertainment options was among the most common survey responses. While festival-goers and longtime residents acknowledged visible progress, they also identified opportunities to enhance business recruitment, diversify storefronts, and increase the quantity of accessible parking spaces.

Housing + Neighborhoods

Housing emerged as the most consistent theme across all engagement methods. Stakeholders identified housing as a cross-cutting issue that influences workforce attraction, economic growth, and long-term community stability. Residents expressed concern that Kendallville’s current housing stock will not meet future needs and called for a broader mix of options – ranging from affordable and workforce housing to senior and small-lot homes.

Survey results indicated strong support for duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes, while attitudes toward higher-density “missing middle” housing were more cautious. Many residents preferred expanding homeownership opportunities rather than adding rentals and emphasized the need to balance new development with reinvestment in existing neighborhoods. Concerns about absentee landlords and poor property maintenance were common, underscoring the importance of code enforcement, neighborhood pride, and incentives for reinvestment.



Community engagement in the form of a planning pop-up provided opportunities for input at the local farmers' market.

Parks, Recreation, + Quality of Life

Kendallville residents take pride in their parks and recreational amenities, particularly Bixler Lake, but want to see these assets revitalized and expanded. Popular ideas included a splash pad, upgraded trails and sidewalks, and creative enhancements to the lakefront such as kayak or boat rentals and small-scale independent recreation options. Residents largely supported community-driven fundraising for these projects and, in some cases, modest fees or reallocated resources to maintain them. The community also values arts, culture, and placemaking as ways to enhance local identity and attract visitors.

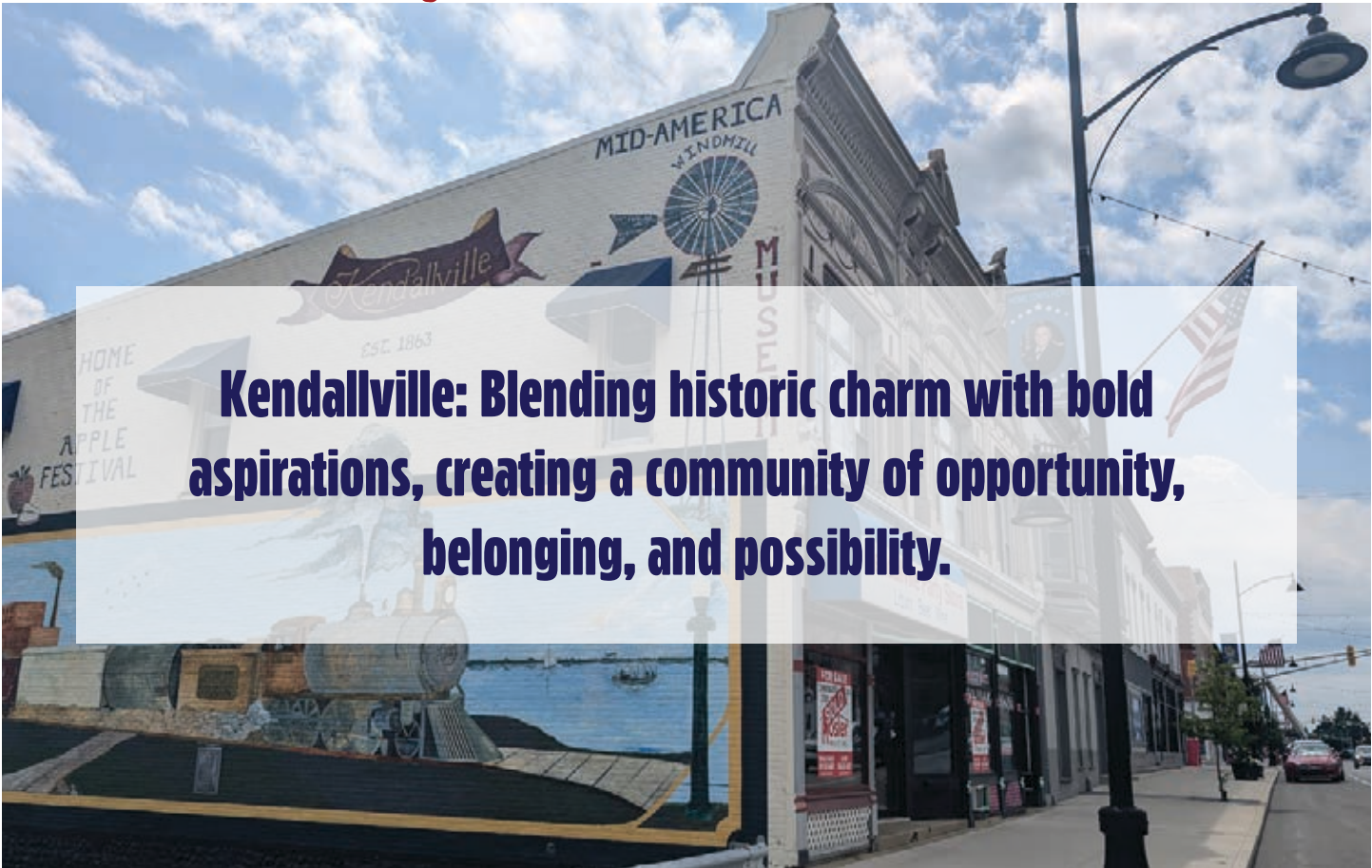
Workforce, Family, + Youth Engagement

Stakeholders consistently linked housing, workforce readiness, and childcare as interconnected needs. Employers and educators noted that reliable, affordable childcare directly impacts workforce participation and economic growth. Programs like Noble County’s Tri-Share Childcare initiative and partnerships through Thrive by 5 were seen as important steps toward addressing these challenges.

Engaging youth and families was another recurring theme. Participants want Kendallville to provide opportunities for young people to connect, volunteer, and lead – both to retain future generations and to strengthen the City’s civic culture. The CLC, Library, and Impact Institute were frequently cited as partners capable in these endeavors.

Collaboration + Next Steps

Perhaps most encouraging, the engagement process demonstrated strong collaboration among Kendallville’s public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Stakeholders praised the City’s community-minded spirit and willingness to work together but agreed that strategic leadership and targeted investment are needed to translate momentum into measurable results. Moving forward, the community hopes to see a balance between proactive planning and grassroots energy – focusing on housing readiness, neighborhood revitalization, and a vibrant, inclusive downtown that reflects Kendallville’s small-town character and forward-looking vision.



Kendallville: Blending historic charm with bold aspirations, creating a community of opportunity, belonging, and possibility.

Kendallville Plan, the City's new comprehensive plan, sets a forward-looking vision for a vibrant, inclusive community that blends historic charm with bold aspirations. It provides a strategic roadmap for growth, redevelopment, and quality-of-life enhancements, guiding decisions on land use, housing, transportation, economic development, parks, and community identity.

Why It Matters

This plan positions Kendallville to manage growth responsibly, maintain its small-town character, and embrace future opportunities through strategic leadership, collaboration, and investment.

Community Engagement Insights

Strong civic pride and optimism for Kendallville’s future. Top priorities:

- Housing diversity
- Downtown revitalization
- Parks and recreation improvements
- Better communication
- Expanded dining options
- Family-friendly amenities

Implementation

The plan includes an Implementation Matrix detailing priorities, timelines, and partnerships. Some high-priority actions include:

- Zoning modernization and map updates
- Housing readiness strategies
- Downtown revitalization and corridor enhancements
- Trail and sidewalk expansion
- Economic development initiatives tied to workforce and childcare solutions

Key Themes & Goals



Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use

This chapter calls to modernize zoning and subdivision ordinances; direct growth to strategic areas; prioritize infill and redevelopment; maintain downtown vitality; protect environmental assets; and maintain public facilities.



Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods

This chapter calls to expand housing options for all income levels and life stages; encourage missing middle housing (duplexes, triplexes, townhomes); strengthen neighborhoods through reinvestment, code enforcement, and infrastructure upgrades.



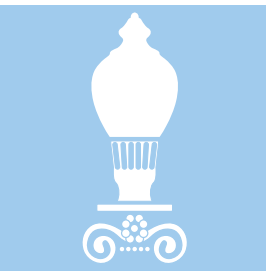
Inclusive Transportation

This chapter calls to develop a connected network for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists; extend trails and sidewalks; improve intersections and traffic flow; and coordinate with INDOT for corridor enhancements.



Facilitate Economic + Business Development

This chapter calls to retain and support existing businesses; strengthen downtown with retail, dining, and entertainment; attract high-tech industry; and expand tourism and hospitality.



Promote Identity + Community Spirit

This chapter calls to launch a Public Relations (PR) campaign to challenge stereotypes and showcase progress; expand community events; embrace arts and culture; and enhance gateways and corridors.



Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation

This chapter calls to implement the 2025–2030 Park Master Plan; explore splash pad development; activate Bixler Lake with water-based recreation; expand trails; and year-round activities.

Vision

Kendallville strives to be a vibrant and inclusive community that blends historic charm with bold aspirations for the future. By investing in housing, innovation, recreation, and the arts, the City seeks to create abundant opportunities where every generation and household can thrive. With cared-for neighborhoods, a downtown alive with culture and commerce, and connections that welcome entrepreneurs, innovators, families, and individuals alike, Kendallville is building a place of belonging, prosperity, and endless possibility – a City where dreams take root and the future shines bright.



CHAPTER 1: ENABLE STRATEGIC GROWTH + LAND USE





Promote balanced and intentional growth that strengthens Kendallville’s economy, neighborhoods, and quality of life by aligning land use decisions with community priorities.

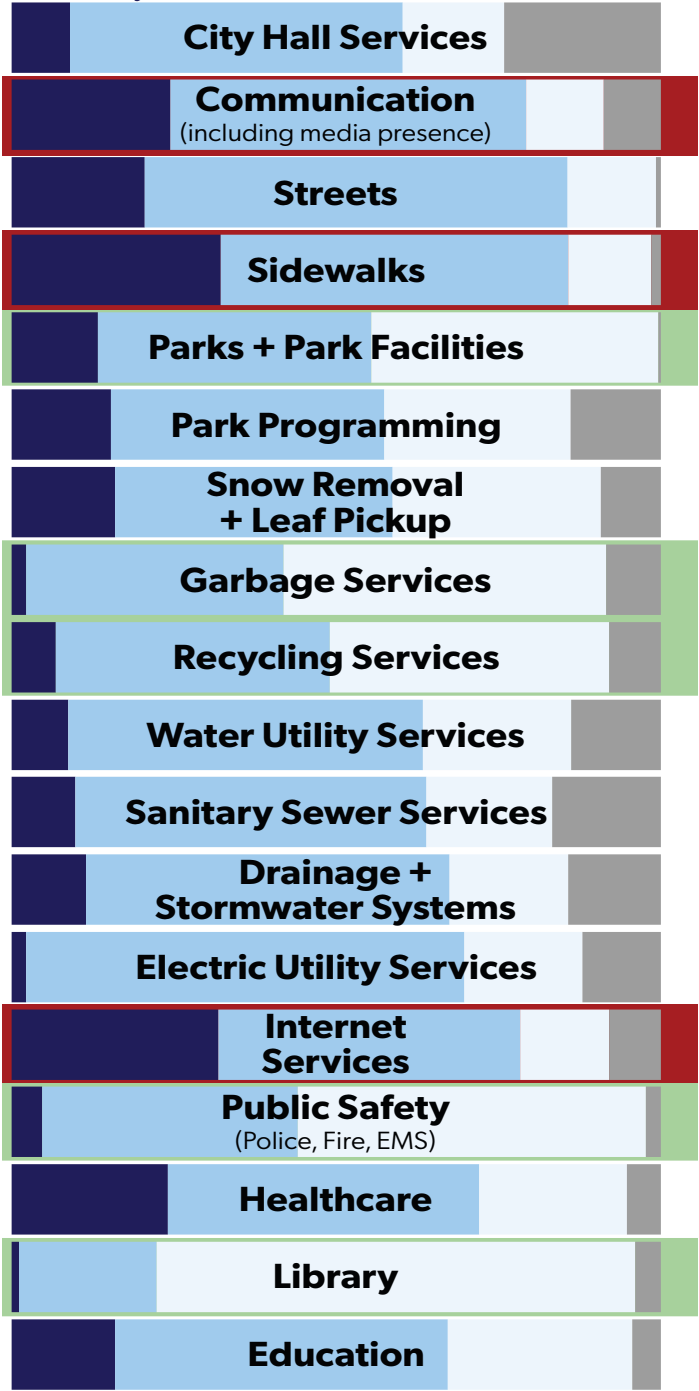
Objectives

- 1-1 Direct future growth to strategic areas that ensure efficient infrastructure, protect community character, and enhance quality of life.
- 1-2 Overhaul and modernize the City’s Zoning and Subdivision Control Ordinances to be clear, consistent and promote the development patterns identified in Kendallville Plan.
- 1-3 Proactively update the zoning map to promote development consistent with the Future Land Use Map in Kendallville Plan.
- 1-4 Maintain the existing boundary of Downtown Kendallville prioritizing full occupancy of Kendallville’s downtown buildings, business growth and development, and second floor residential.
- 1-5 Promote growth through redevelopment and infill development within the existing City Limits and utility service areas.
- 1-6 Promote the advantages and quantify the perceived disadvantages of annexation to local property owners and the community.
- 1-7 Continue to recognize the importance environmental assets play in enhancing quality of life.
- 1-8 Maintain public facilities to ensure reliable levels of service, operational efficiency, and an enhanced quality of life.



- Kendallville has planning jurisdiction inside the Kendallville city limits, as well as an extra-territorial jurisdiction of contiguous areas within 2-miles of city limits. The Kendallville Plan is intended to plan for all of Kendallville's planning jurisdiction.
- Kendallville's first comprehensive plan was adopted in 1963. The community has had a new planning document developed about every 15 years since then. The last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2010 with a small update in 2019.
- Community engagement revealed there is a strong appetite for stricter code enforcement.
- Stakeholders identified the poor condition and general decline of many of Kendallville's general commercial and highway commercial plazas as a weakness.
- Community members are proud of the City's recreational amenities, recent downtown revitalization efforts, and the CLC.
- Despite Kendallville's utilities having capacity, aging infrastructure was identified by local officials as one of the community's biggest challenges.

■ When asked to rate the quality of the following local services, respondents identified parks, garbage/recycling, public safety, and library services as above average, outlined in green below. Communication, sidewalks, and internet services received more below average ratings than any other services, outlined in red below.



1: Below Average 3: Above Average
2: Average N/A or Not Sure

ENABLE STRATEGIC GROWTH + LAND USE

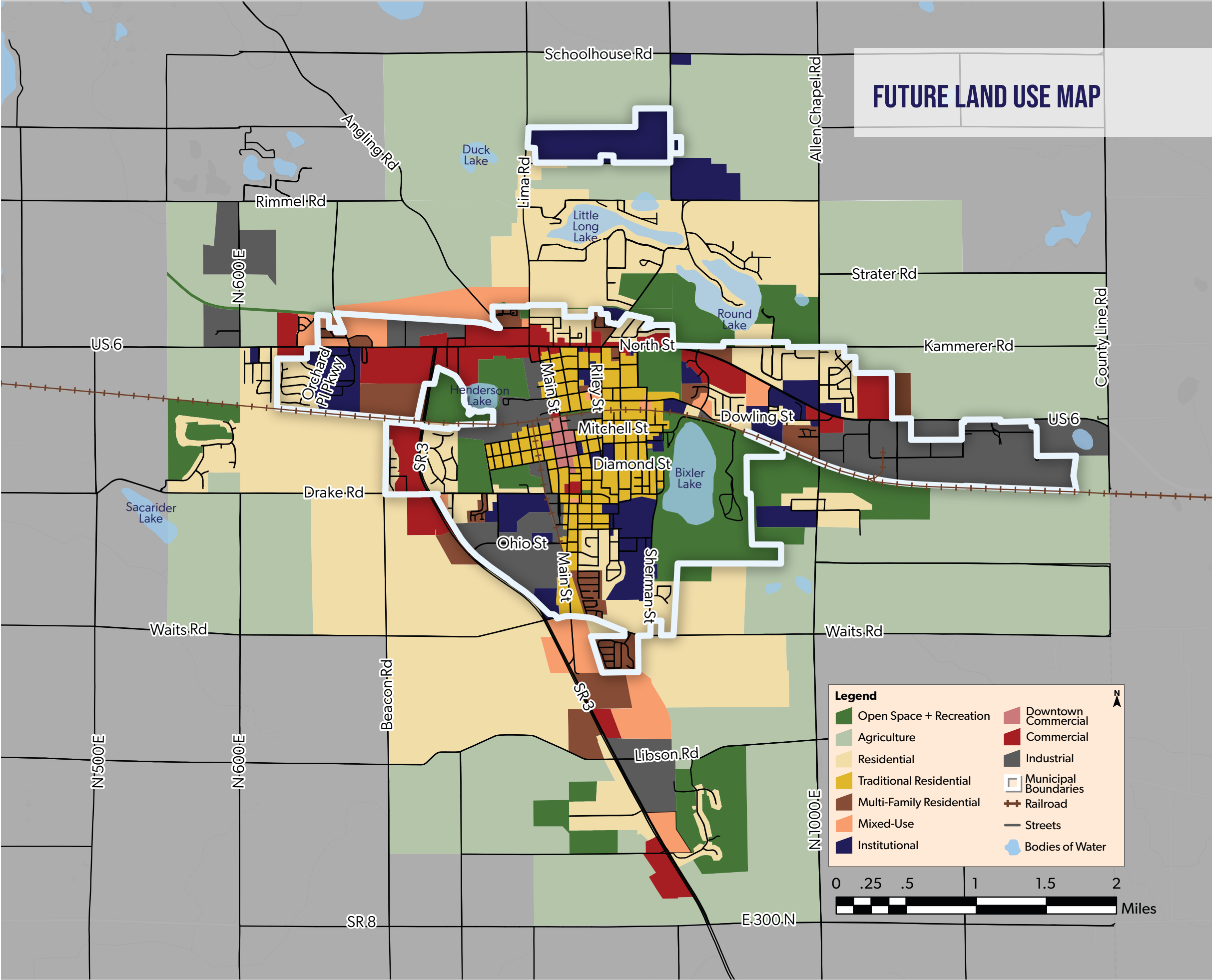
Paths to Progress

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map is a tool that illustrates how the community hopes to grow and change over time. It shows the general pattern and character of future development, reflecting the community’s vision and priorities for housing, business, recreation, and natural areas. While it is not a zoning map and does not carry the force of law, it provides important guidance for future decisions about land use, infrastructure, and investment. By showing where different types of development make the most sense, the map helps property owners, developers, and community leaders work toward a shared vision for growth that is thoughtful, coordinated, and sustainable.

The most substantial change from the Future Land Use Map included in the 2010 Plan is the addition of more residential uses. In keeping with current trends, some land use categories offer the potential for mixed-use.

Each land use category is described on the following pages organized from least intense to most.



OPEN SPACE + RECREATION



Areas designed for active and passive recreation, environmentally sensitive areas, conservation areas, and areas of remembrance. Open space and recreation land uses provide connection to the natural environment and can be intertwined with the built environment.

RESIDENTIAL



Predominately single-family neighborhoods, larger residential homesteads, or lakefront residential.

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL



Predominately housing in the form of duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, multiple condominiums on a single lot, or/ and apartments with parking in parking lots.

INSTITUTIONAL



Mixture of civic-centered establishments from small local facilities to large campus-style institutions. Public spaces may be embedded within these areas. Uses generally include places of worship, civic centers or services, medical facilities, and educational institutions.

AGRICULTURE



Rural areas reserved for crop production and raising of animals with traditional rural housing types. Agricultural-related structures are larger scale, typically on larger sites with greater setbacks.

TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL



Predominately single-family neighborhoods that offer diverse housing styles on grid-iron street patterns with the occasional duplex or triplex. Lots, structures, and setbacks tend to be smaller in size with pedestrian focus. Alleys may be included and garage/driveway access is less dominant.

MIXED-USE



Areas that may include a mixture of medium to high-density residential and small-scale commercial uses. Mixed use areas should be walkable with buildings built closer to the street with parking located on-street or in side or rear yards. Residential conversion to a commercial use is appropriate if the design is consistent with the district standards. The greater the density of the development, the higher quality the design and building materials should be.

DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL



Mixture of small-scale commercial uses including entertainment, offices, services, retail, and restaurants; government, medical, or educational institutions; multi-family residential in the form of upper floor apartments or a small-scale apartment building. Downtown areas are destinations with a strong “sense of place” and include public spaces for gathering and access to entertainment, recreation, and art. The built environment emphasizes high quality materials, walkability, and pedestrian-scale features. Historic architecture is highly valued. New development must be sensitive to historic character and patterns.

COMMERCIAL



Medium to large commercial operations that are mostly highway-oriented or convenience-oriented. Land uses include offices, services, retail, restaurants, hotels, and medical facilities; multi-family residential in the form of apartments or assisted living facilities. These areas serve local and regional populations. Developments are oriented along major thoroughfares or within close proximity to major thoroughfares. Outdoor storage should be prohibited.

INDUSTRIAL



Medium to large operations that are local or regional job centers in either a campus setting or independent. Uses may include assembly facilities, research and design labs, technology, distribution, manufacturing, production, warehousing, storage facilities, construction etc. Access for semi traffic is generally required. Street design should accommodate pedestrians.

Modernization of Ordinances

One of the primary tools to bring a comprehensive plan to reality is regulatory controls in the form of zoning, subdivision control, and development ordinances. It's critical that these regulatory measures align with and support the goals and objectives in Kendallville Plan. This means the standards and regulations encourage the type of development for which the plan calls.

Although the ordinances have been amended and share a common structure, they contain some uncommon provisions. Most zoning ordinances list land uses as a Permitted Use or Special Exception Use. Any use not included in those lists are considered prohibited. Kendallville's zoning ordinance is fundamentally different in that it also includes a "Not Permitted Use" and a "Special Use," neither of which is mentioned until the Land Use Matrix – located at the end of the zoning ordinance.

The zoning ordinance should make use of transitional districts that help the built environment transition from higher intensity uses like an industry or commercial business to lower intensity uses like a neighborhood. Districts that include low intensity non-residential uses like parks, schools, small-scale medical, religious, and professional offices or districts that permit a mix of uses make excellent transitional districts.

With regard to residential uses and zoning, having a district that accommodates only a single use by right, for example Suburban Residence and Single Family Residential, leaves little room for flexibility. (See Housing Chapter for additional information.)

Kendallville's existing commercial districts do not recognize the difference between a commercial use located in Historic Downtown versus one that may be on North Street (U.S. 6). While the use (for example a restaurant) might be the same, the fact that the use is located downtown should elicit a different set of standards than if that same use is located on U.S. 6. A district specific to downtown should be a high priority as it would permit the City to incorporate architectural standards to ensure any new development or redevelopment has character complementary to the existing built environment.

As a whole, the zoning ordinance would benefit from consistent district titles and abbreviations. Some abbreviations are one letter (A); some are two letters (OS); some are one letter dash one number (R-1); and some are a combination of three letters and numbers with or without dashes (MR1, C-1A). When district names and abbreviations are consistent, it improves user-friendliness and understandability of the ordinance, as well as the map.

Kendallville's Subdivision Control Ordinance would benefit from a comprehensive review and update to improve clarity, consistency, and usability. Aligning its terminology, definitions, procedures, and organizational structure with those used in the zoning ordinance would create a more cohesive regulatory framework for applicants, staff, and decision-makers. Standardizing these elements can eliminate confusion and ensure that both ordinances work together.

Zoning Map

A comprehensive and thorough review of the Kendallville Zoning Map should focus on making zoning districts consistent with existing uses where the Future Land Use Map aligns with the existing use. For property that is undeveloped or underdeveloped, the zoning map should reflect the Future Land Use Map.

Updates to the map should support greater diversity in housing types with a focus on permitting missing middle options. This is key to creating consistency with Kendallville Plan. As mentioned, adjustments to existing districts (or re-calibrating/re-naming of districts), can also be a substantial improvement in streamlining the development process, particularly for missing middle housing.

The zoning map should support the creation of mixed-use areas and transitional districts that support missing middle housing and low intensity non-residential uses. Trends across the Midwest are moving toward permitting more intermingling of uses than has been acceptable in the past.

Overlay districts should be incorporated into the zoning map to ensure those districts are considered when zoning compliance is reviewed.

While it might seem minor, Kendallville should give consideration to colors assigned to each district on the map. The nationally recognized Land Based Classification Standards is the acceptable standard when selecting colors for land use and zoning maps. For example, greens are generally reserved for parks, recreation, agricultural, and/or very low intensive uses in the Land Based Classification Standards. Kendallville's Zoning Map uses green for industrial districts - the most intensive uses.



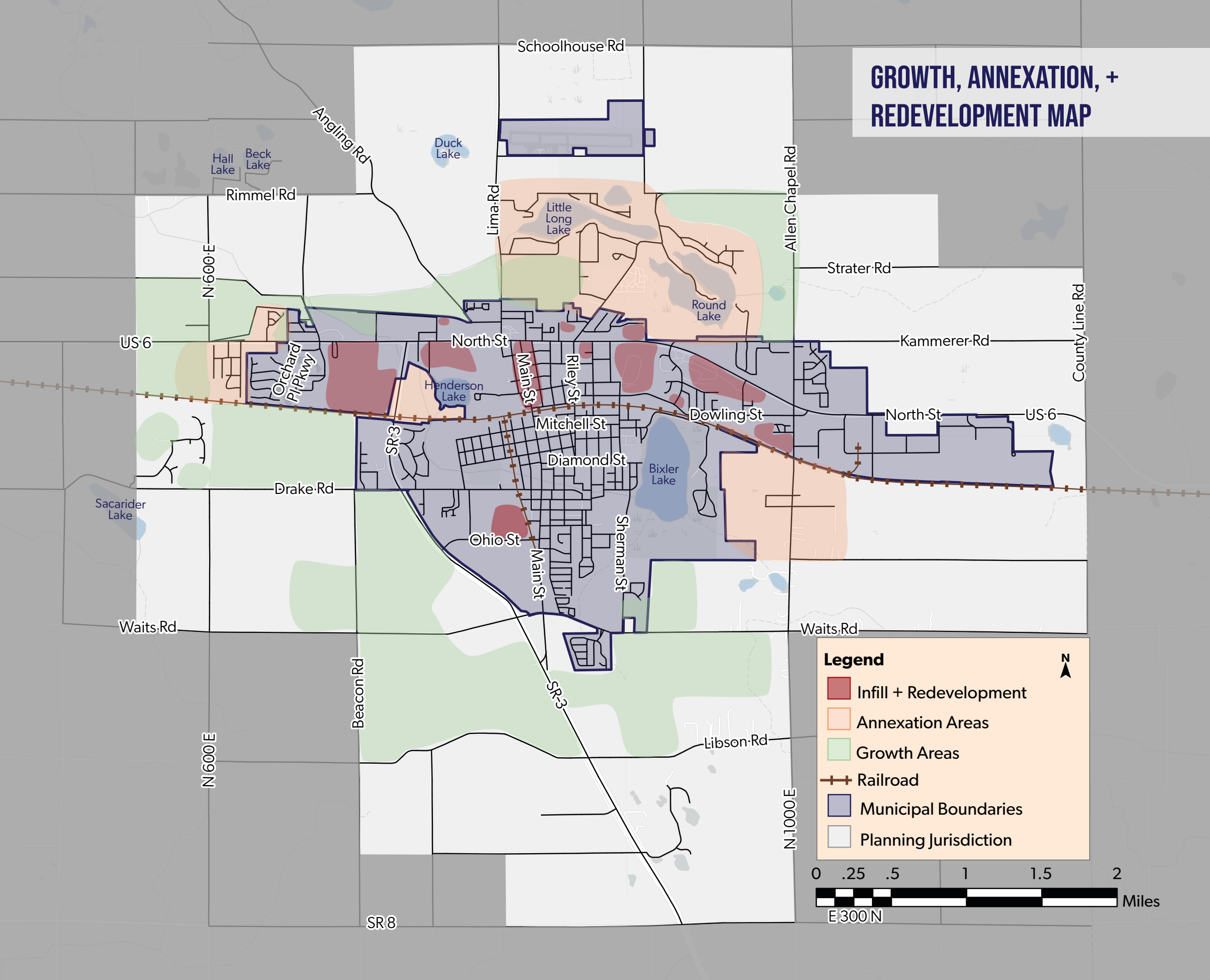
North Side Elementary School is a good example of a transitional land use. It's presently zoned R-1 (Single Family).

Growth, Annexation, + Redevelopment
Growth Areas

Future growth areas should be strategically focused on supporting new or expanding residential neighborhoods and employment centers rather than expansive new retail or commercial districts. While limited neighborhood-scale retail serving the south side of Kendallville would be appropriate, larger-scale commercial development should be directed to existing commercial corridors and nodes.

Where possible, growth should occur in a contiguous pattern adjacent to the existing city limits to promote efficient service delivery and infrastructure investment. Significant potential exists for residential expansion on the community’s south side, particularly as growth from Allen County continues to move northward along the State Road 3 corridor.

The Growth, Annexation, and Redevelop Map identifies areas within city limits for redevelopment including work like Kendallville Restoration Inc. is completing as well as commercial property along U.S. 6. Areas identified for potential annexation are contiguous to city limits, as are most of the areas for growth and new development.



Annexation

Kendallville should pursue annexation of new developments whenever feasible, ideally at the time projects obtain approval and utility connections are approved. When annexation is not immediately possible due to contiguity requirements, the City should continue requiring annexation non-remonstrance agreements as a condition of extending municipal utilities beyond city limits. These agreements ensure that property owners receiving City utilities agree not to oppose future annexation efforts.

While the State has made annexation increasingly difficult, Indiana’s 1% property tax caps reduce the financial impact of annexation on residential property owners. As part of any annexation process, the City will be required to prepare a fiscal and policy plan outlining the projected impacts on each affected property. To support future decision-making, it may be beneficial for Kendallville to conduct a broader analysis of property tax implications to better evaluate the feasibility and potential benefits of targeted annexation areas.

Kendallville may want to target the "donut hole" located on the west side of town just north of the railroad tracks, the residential areas around the lakes, and neighborhoods on the far west side near Meadow Lane for the initial annexation studies.



Atz Place offers 38 low- and moderate-income apartments for those over 55 years old. The project was the redevelopment of a former industrial site located within the community's existing grid-iron street network.

Redevelopment

Kendallville has some excellent examples of redevelopment and infill. The Community Learning Center (CLC) repurposed historic school buildings into a facility that strives to offer multi-generational programs and offerings focused on health and wellness, workforce and economic development, as well as performing and fine arts. Atz Place, an affordable senior apartment building, is on the site of a former underutilized industrial facility. Projects like these demonstrate how existing properties can be re-imagined to better serve today’s needs and priorities.

The ongoing work of Kendallville Restoration Inc., (KRI) is also an excellent example of infill and redevelopment. KRI has been reinvesting in properties on a lot-by-lot basis – often maintaining existing uses while enhancing condition and value.

There are many more opportunities for redevelopment and infill development in Kendallville. These initiatives offer significant advantages because they make use of sites that typically already have access to infrastructure and utility services, reducing costs and accelerating project timelines. This type of redevelopment strengthens the City's built environment and long-term vitality.



Despite considerable success in revitalizing downtown's buildings, some spaces remain unoccupied.

Downtown Kendallville

The City should continue to maintain the existing boundary of downtown as the hub of community life, commerce, and culture. Efforts should focus on maximizing occupancy of downtown buildings by promoting uses that strengthen the district’s vibrancy and long-term sustainability. (See Downtown Detail Map on Page 30.)

Prioritize Utilization

Encourage active ground-floor uses – such as retail, dining, and service-oriented businesses – that draw residents, visitors, and investment into the downtown. Support entrepreneurs and small businesses that contribute to the growth, stability, and diversity of businesses. Promote adaptive reuse of upper floors for quality residential units, with a particular emphasis on second-floor housing, to help create a lively, mixed-use environment.

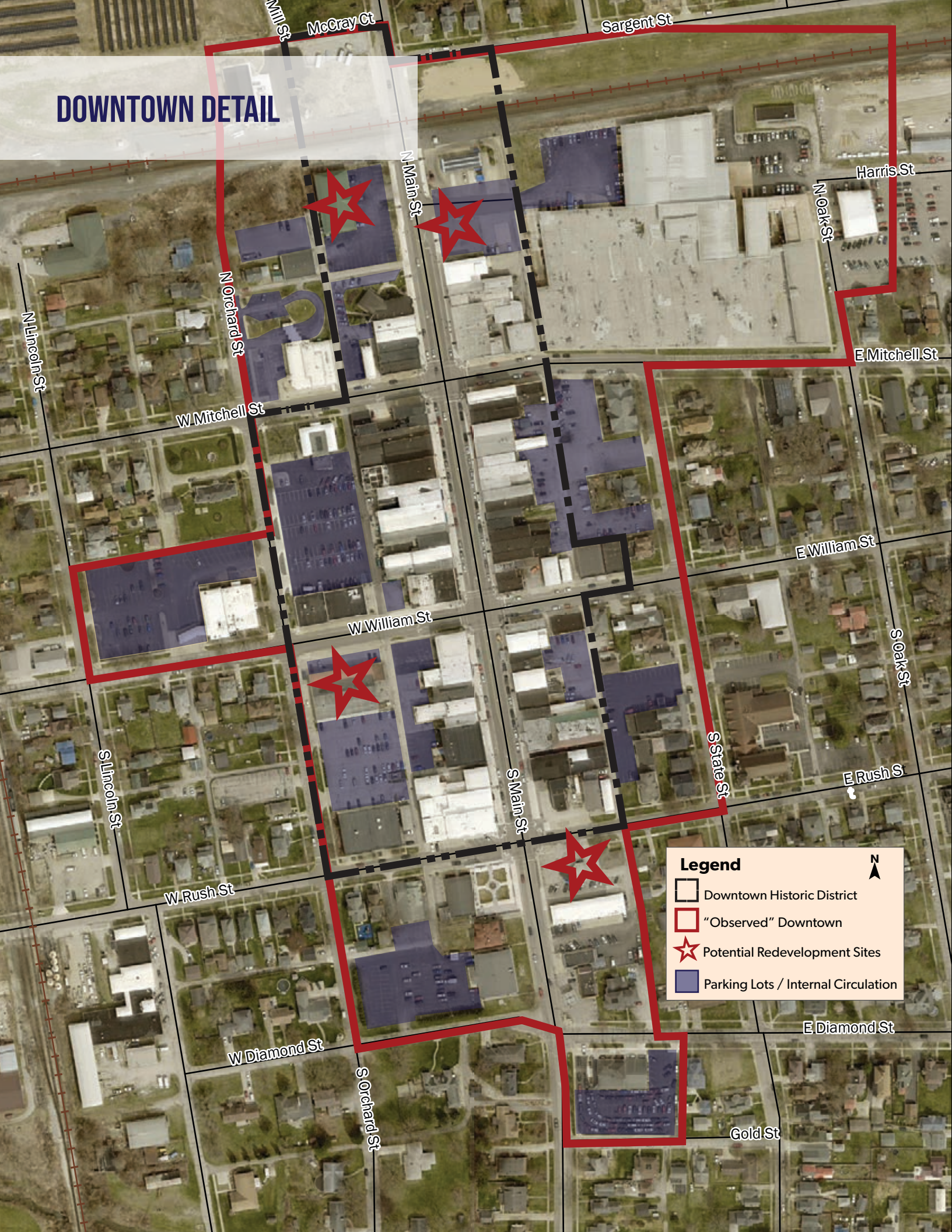
Although the City and Redevelopment Commission have been working with a residential developer to bring second-floor housing downtown over the last couple of years, that project has not yet materialized, underscoring the importance of continued efforts and incentives to make mixed-use redevelopment a reality.

There are several sites within the existing downtown boundaries that could accommodate a larger project like a hotel, corporate headquarters, tech park, or apartment building. Those sites are identified with a star on the map on Page 30.

Preserve and Reinforce Character

Prioritize the protection and enhancement of downtown’s historic and architectural character while actively fostering new investment that aligns with Kendallville’s identity. Adopt clear and enforceable architectural and design standards – utilizing the expertise of the City’s Historic Preservation Commission – to ensure that future development and rehabilitation projects reinforce the downtown's historic fabric.

Kendallville should strengthen code enforcement and require adherence to minimum housing standards, particularly for second-story residential units, to maintain quality, safety, and long-term viability. With significant revitalization investments recently made in downtown revitalization, the City must take deliberate action to safeguard those improvements and ensure they continue to drive economic activity, community pride, and lasting



DOWNTOWN DETAIL

value.

Strengthen Community Life

Ensure downtown remains a vibrant destination for cultural events, recreation, and civic life, reinforcing its role as the heart and gathering place of Kendallville. Downtown is more than a commercial center – it is where the community’s history, identity, and future intersect. Festivals, public art, farmers markets, and local celebrations not only draw residents and visitors alike but also strengthen the sense of pride and belonging that defines Kendallville. By continuing to invest in public spaces, programming, and a welcoming, walkable environment, the City can ensure downtown remains the symbolic and social core of the community – a place where people connect, memories are made, and the spirit of Kendallville is most visible.



Vendors line Main Street for the 2025 Fairy, Gnome, and Troll Festival.

Highlight on Downtown Parking



Parking is an essential component of downtown infrastructure, and the City of Kendallville currently provides several free public parking lots to support local businesses and visitors in addition to free on-street parking. However, dedicating large areas to surface parking comes at a cost – the same land cannot also contribute to economic activity or placemaking. This raises an important question: *is there such a thing as too much parking?*

A formal parking study could help the City better understand how existing spaces are used, where demand is highest, and whether all current lots are truly necessary. Such an analysis would also identify opportunities for more efficient management, shared parking, or potential redevelopment. In some cases, City-owned parking lots may represent valuable real estate for future projects – such as an office headquarters, mixed-use infill, or a small technology park – that could generate new jobs, tax base, and activity in the downtown core.

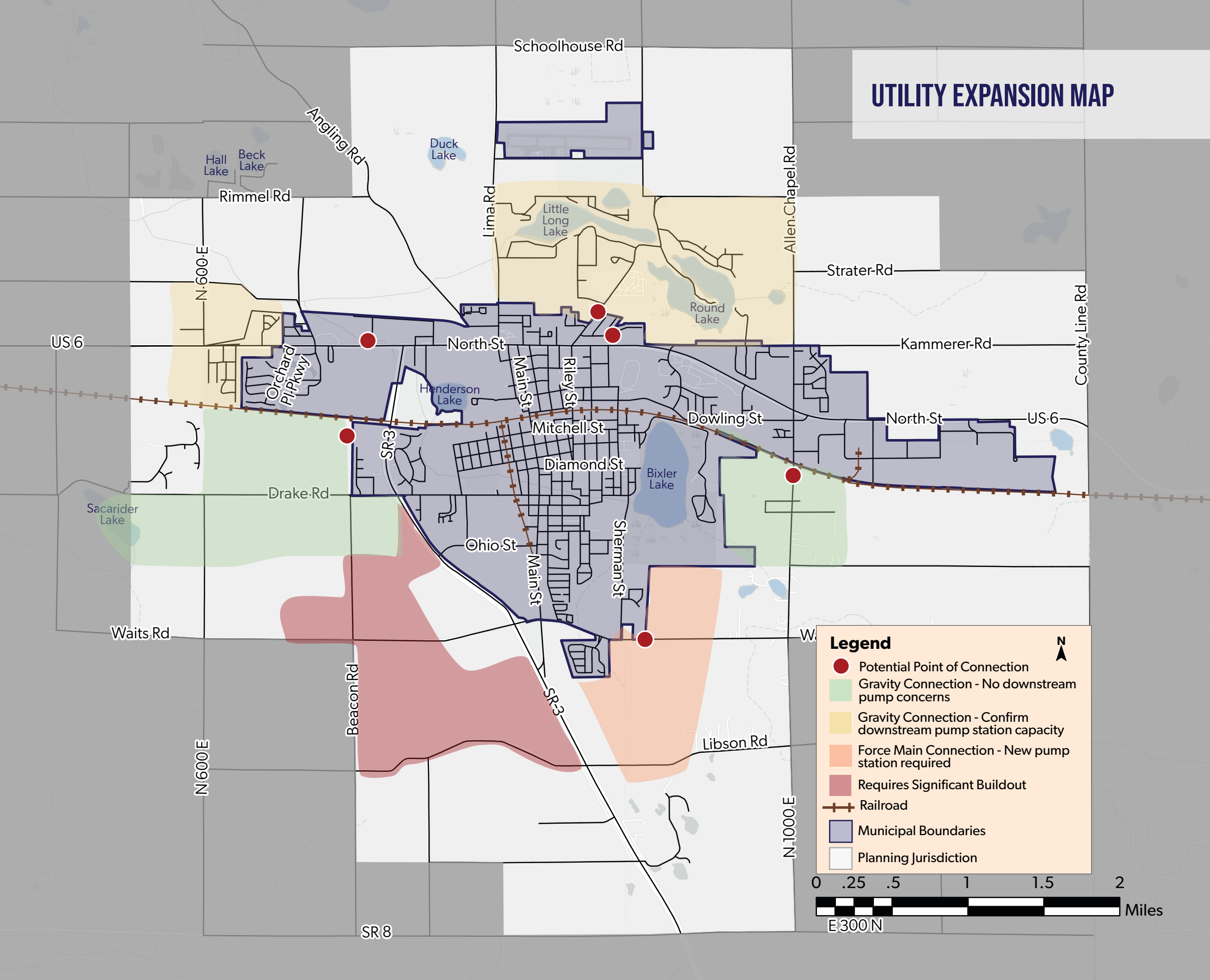
Utilities

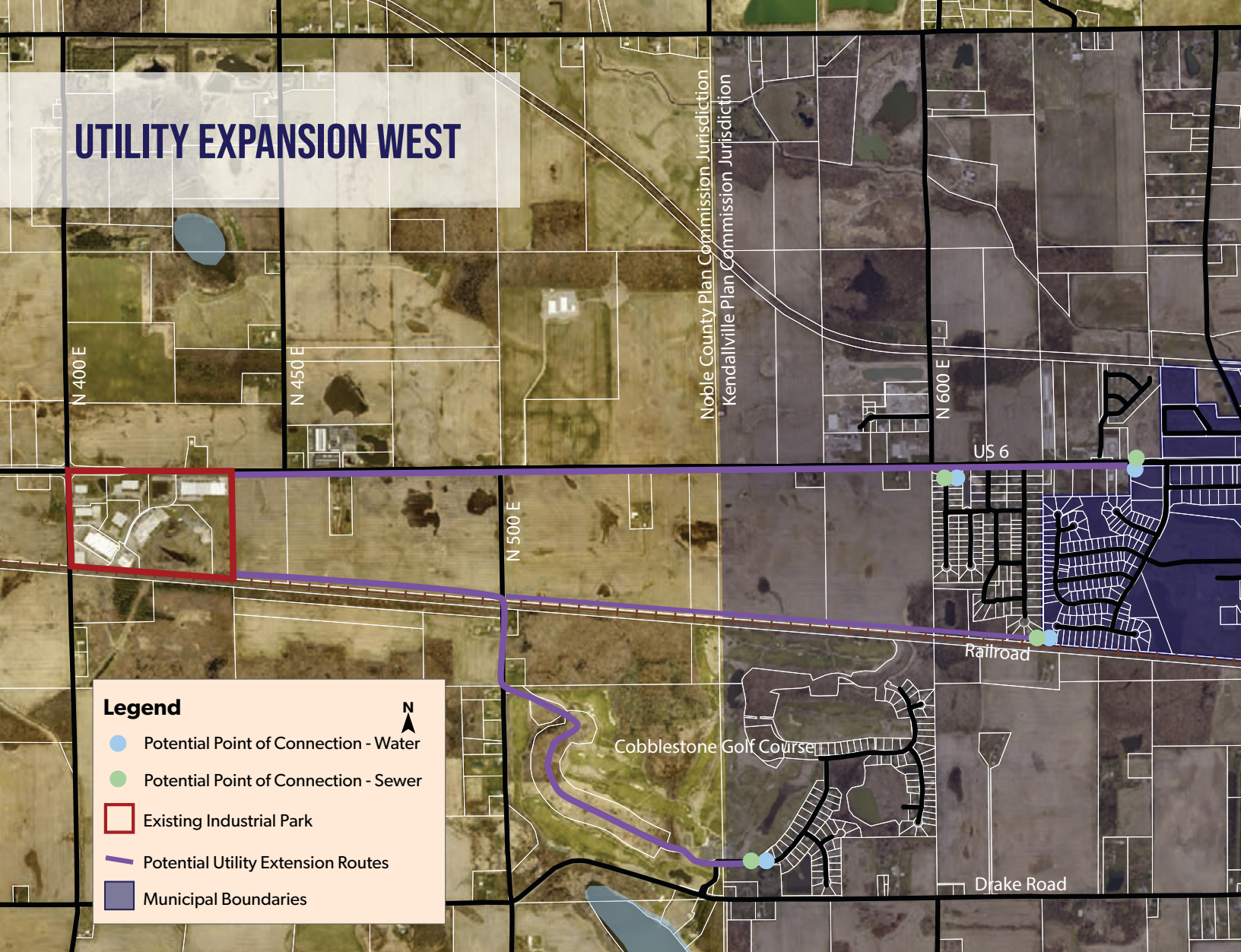
Utilities play a critical role in a community’s ability to grow, attract development, and support future land uses. Kendallville’s existing water and wastewater systems have available capacity to accommodate additional demand, allowing the City to support new growth within its current boundaries through facility expansions, redevelopment of underutilized sites, or infill projects.

As shown in the utility service map in Appendix A, sanitary and water lines already extend beyond the municipal limits to the west and south, primarily serving residential customers. This existing infrastructure positions the City to serve additional users in the future, provided adequate service levels – such as water pressure – are maintained. In areas where water pressure may be insufficient, system enhancements like a system loop or the construction of a new water tower could be necessary.

For larger-scale growth – such as new neighborhoods, commercial districts, or employment centers outside city limits – additional infrastructure extensions would be required. While Kendallville does not currently face capacity constraints at the wastewater treatment plant or the water treatment plant, ongoing coordination and investment will be essential to sustain future growth. Recent projects, such as the removal of lead water lines, demonstrate how grant funding can play a pivotal role in supporting system improvements.

Looking ahead, the City should explore a range of financing and incentive tools to help facilitate future utility extensions. This could include offering developer cost-sharing programs, leveraging state or federal grant opportunities, or establishing a tax increment financing (TIF) district to help fund infrastructure investments that support long-term growth and development.





Utility Expansion West

Approximately 2-miles west of Kendallville is an existing industrial park. B & J Medical and ColorMaster Inc. are the largest companies, in terms of assessed value, in this existing industrial area. In total, the area is about \$8 million in assessed value.

The industrial node is outside of Kendallville's extra-territorial jurisdiction. Coordination with Noble County to add this area to Kendallville's extra-territorial jurisdiction is a prerequisite to making any investment in infrastructure.

While the cost of extending water and sanitary sewer utilities might be cost prohibitive without outside funding, there are several items the City can begin working on in preparation for the project and to make the project more competitive for grant funding.

Those items include engineering studies that determine the most economical route considering existing connection options and capacity of pumping infrastructure. The City could also begin evaluating and/or pursuing site control in the form of utility easements and/or land acquisition once a feasible extension route is determined.

Public Facilities

The City of Kendallville has been committed to the effective care and management of its public facilities, and that commitment should continue. Well-maintained facilities are critical to ensuring reliable service delivery, and protecting the City's long-term investments.

The City of Kendallville will use the following principles as it relates to public facilities:

- Level of Service: Public facilities will be maintained to provide consistent, dependable, and safe services to residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Efficiency: The City will employ proactive, cost-effective, and sustainable maintenance practices that reduce long-term costs, extend facility life, and maximize taxpayer value.
- Quality of Life: Maintenance will prioritize safety, accessibility, and aesthetics to ensure facilities contribute positively to the community's well-being, vibrancy, and livability.
- Collaborative: Regular collaboration between departments allows coordination of projects across all utilities and facilities.

In implementing the above principles, the City will be better equipped to address unexpected issues, as well as address needs for growth. Regular inspection schedules and preventative maintenance plans should be put in place for all facilities. Modern technology, energy efficiency practices, and data-driven decision-making will optimize operations.



Part of the system that gives Kendallville room to grow – one of the City's three elevated water towers.

City Departments should continue to coordinate to ensure maintenance aligns with broader goals for growth, infrastructure, and community development. There should be emphasis on creation of a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) by the City that addresses capital needs of each department over a 5-year period. A Capital Improvements Plan ensures resources are allocated responsibly and assists with cross-departmental collaboration.

This Capital Improvements Plan should, at minimum, be acknowledged by the Board of Public Works and Common Council and re-visited on an annual basis. Making the CIP available for the public informs residents of funding priorities years in advance and ensures transparency.



Above: The City constructed a small solar field on the former site of McCray Refrigeration and named the site accordingly. Below: Google Earth illustrates the size of McCray Solar Power Generation Facility and its proximity to the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant.

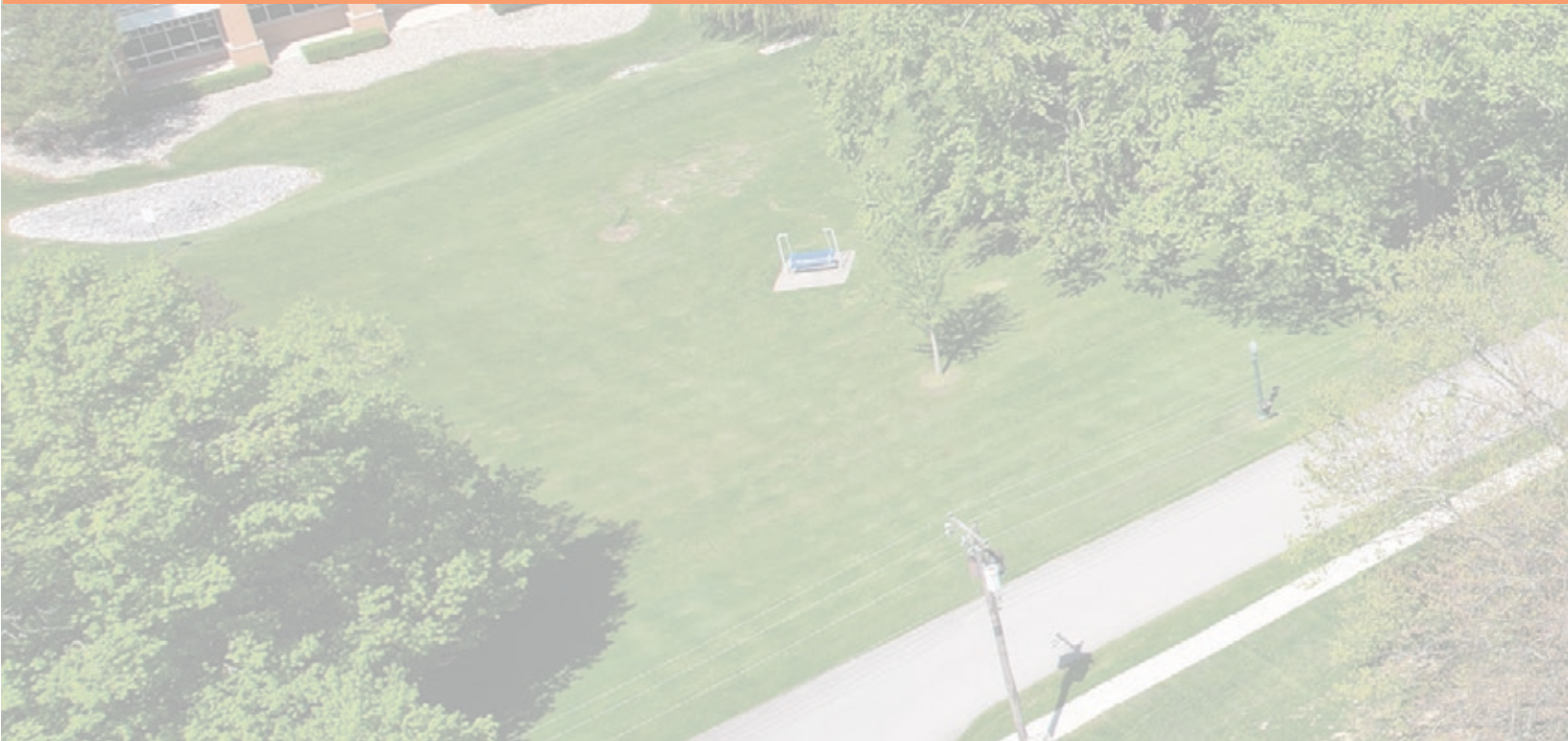




CHAPTER 2:

FOCUS ON HOUSING +

NEIGHBORHOODS



Goal



Strengthen Kendallville’s neighborhoods by expanding quality housing options, improving existing housing stock, and fostering pride to ensure safe, attractive, and connected neighborhoods.

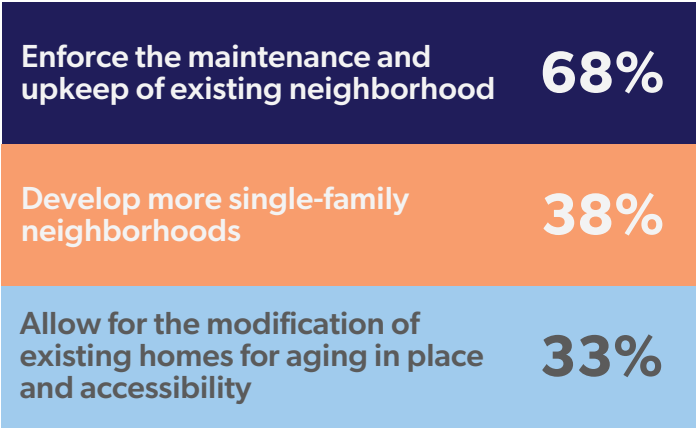
Objectives

- 2-1 Support programs and incentives that encourage repair, rehabilitation, and energy efficiency improvements for existing homes to extend their life and value.
- 2-2 Enhance neighborhood character through reinvestment, infill, and infrastructure upgrades that promote safety, connectivity, and neighborhood pride.
- 2-3 Encourage the development of a diverse mix of homes – rental and ownership, single-family and multi-family – that serve residents at all income levels and life stages.
- 2-4 Update zoning and subdivision regulations to streamline approval processes, reduce barriers, and enable a wider range of housing types that meet evolving community needs.
- 2-5 Identify and map appropriate locations for new housing, aligned with infrastructure capacity, growth areas, and desired housing types.
- 2-6 Proactively reduce blight and improve livability by enforcing property maintenance standards, holding absentee landlords accountable, and supporting adaptive reuse where possible.

Foundational Support

- Kendallville’s population is trending upward, in contrast to the population decline observed in both Noble County and the State of Indiana. Continued growth will depend in large part on the availability and diversity of housing options.
- Over half of the survey respondents do not believe Kendallville’s current housing stock will fit their housing needs in the future.

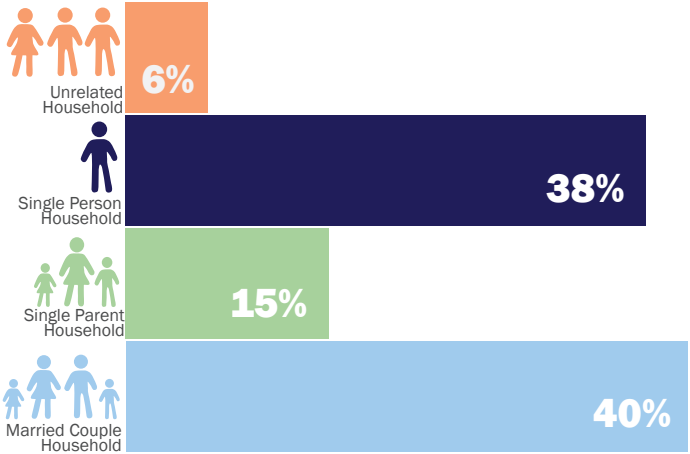
■ Top 3 housing development priorities according to the community survey:



■ The most preferred missing middle housing options according to the second survey:



■ Single-person households make up 38% of all households in Kendallville, with 18% of all households consisting of an individual age 65 or older living alone.



■ Zoning districts that permit only single-family detached dwellings make up 39% of Kendallville's jurisdiction. All other housing types - including missing middle options - are only permitted in 2.5% of Kendallville's jurisdiction.

Zoning District		% of Planning Area
RS	Suburban Residence	28.63%
R-1	Single Family	9.79%
R-2	Single and Two Family	1.90%
R-3	Condominium	0.05%
AR	Apartment District	0.41%
MR1	Manufactured Housing District	0.0%
MR2	Manufactured Housing / Mobile Home District	0.0%

Preserve + Improve Existing Homes

Older Neighborhoods

Kendallville's older housing stock can be strengthened through coordinated repair, rehabilitation, and maintenance programs. Kendallville Restoration Inc. (KRI) is leading the way by restoring more than 30 homes and replacing those that are beyond repair with contextually-appropriate infill housing. KRI is a non-profit dedicated specifically to improving neighborhoods in Kendallville and has received State recognition and accolades for its impact. Any funds made by the sale of a house is put back into purchasing and revitalizing additional properties. KRI's focus has been on North Main Street properties.

Expanding support for current housing and homeowners could include initiatives such as low-interest loan programs, matching grants, or tool-lending libraries. Partnerships with organizations like the Community Learning Center (CLC), local home improvement retailers, and building trades programs can provide homeowners with practical workshops on DIY repairs, energy efficiency, and preventative maintenance – or even connect them directly with students gaining hands-on experience in the trades.



The Community Learning Center (CLC), in partnership with Indiana Landmarks and Ivy Tech, will be launching courses focused on proper historic preservation techniques to build local workforce capacity in this specialized field. The initiative emerged from recognition that few tradespeople possess the skills necessary to restore and maintain historic structures. By developing these skills locally, Kendallville can better support revitalization of older homes and structures.

Aging-In-Place

Accessibility improvements, such as adding ramps or widening entryways, should also be integrated into neighborhood reinvestment strategies to allow residents to comfortably age in place while maintaining the character of existing neighborhoods. Aging-in-place is critical to residents regardless if they live in stick-built homes or mobile homes in mobile home parks. Connecting homeowners in need of accessibility upgrades with organizations like NeighborLink, United Way, or local trade programs can further support these efforts.

Strengthen Neighborhoods + Infrastructure

Small, visible improvements can spark widespread reinvestment. A neighborhood sidewalk assessment – mapped in GIS – can help prioritize where sidewalks are missing or in poor condition. From that baseline, the City could create a sidewalk program, offering cost-sharing or grants for improvements that enhance walkability and safety. There are many examples of sidewalk programs across northeast Indiana.

Throughout the planning process, many comments were made about property owners intentionally maintaining vacant properties and adopting strategies to dis-incentivize maintaining vacancies. There is no special incentive for maintaining a vacant property except claiming the loss on income taxes. However, a vacant property is subject to the same annual property taxes as an occupied one. A vacant property often reduces in value over time, resulting

in the potential for reduced property taxes. While Indiana does not have a statewide vacancy tax, some cities have adopted fees and penalties for vacant and abandoned properties.

Some communities across Indiana have proactive programs to address blight. Neighborhood pride grows when blight is addressed.

- Vacant Property Registration: South Bend's ordinance requires owners of properties vacant for 90+ days to register and pay annual escalating fees (\$300-\$1,000), discouraging vacancy and long-term neglect.
- Land Banking and Redevelopment: Terre Haute's Redevelopment Commission acquires tax-delinquent or unsafe properties, demolishes them, and resells lots to builders for infill housing.
- "A Lot to Love:" Fort Wayne's initiative sells city-owned parcels to small-scale builders at reduced cost while offering financial support to close appraisal gaps.

These examples show that small, steady, and visible actions can reshape neighborhoods block by block.

Mobile Home Parks

Mobile home parks remain a critical source of affordable housing, especially for young families and seniors. Improvements to these neighborhoods begin with visible action: mowing common areas, cleaning up trash, and repairing roads or lighting.

Just like in historic neighborhoods, small improvements can make a big difference in the look and feel of mobile home communities. Programs that help residents with materials for skirting, steps, and paint can go a long way toward improving both safety and appearance. These residents could also benefit from DIY workshops and hands-on classes that teach simple home repair and maintenance skills. Partnering with home improvement stores, building trades students, and the CLC to offer mobile home-specific classes would make these skills accessible and practical. Hosting the workshops in the parks could spark interest and inspire residents to take pride in their homes.

Pre-approved Infill Housing

The City of South Bend has taken a proactive approach to neighborhood revitalization by developing and adopting a series of pre-approved house plans. These context-sensitive infill designs have been fully vetted, ensuring zoning compliance and providing cost estimates upfront – significantly reducing barriers and expenses for builders. The collection includes a range of housing types, offering multiple home configurations as well as options for duplexes, triplexes, and small apartment buildings.



Pages from the City of South Bend's Neighborhood Infill guide illustrate approved plans for a variety of missing middle housing types.

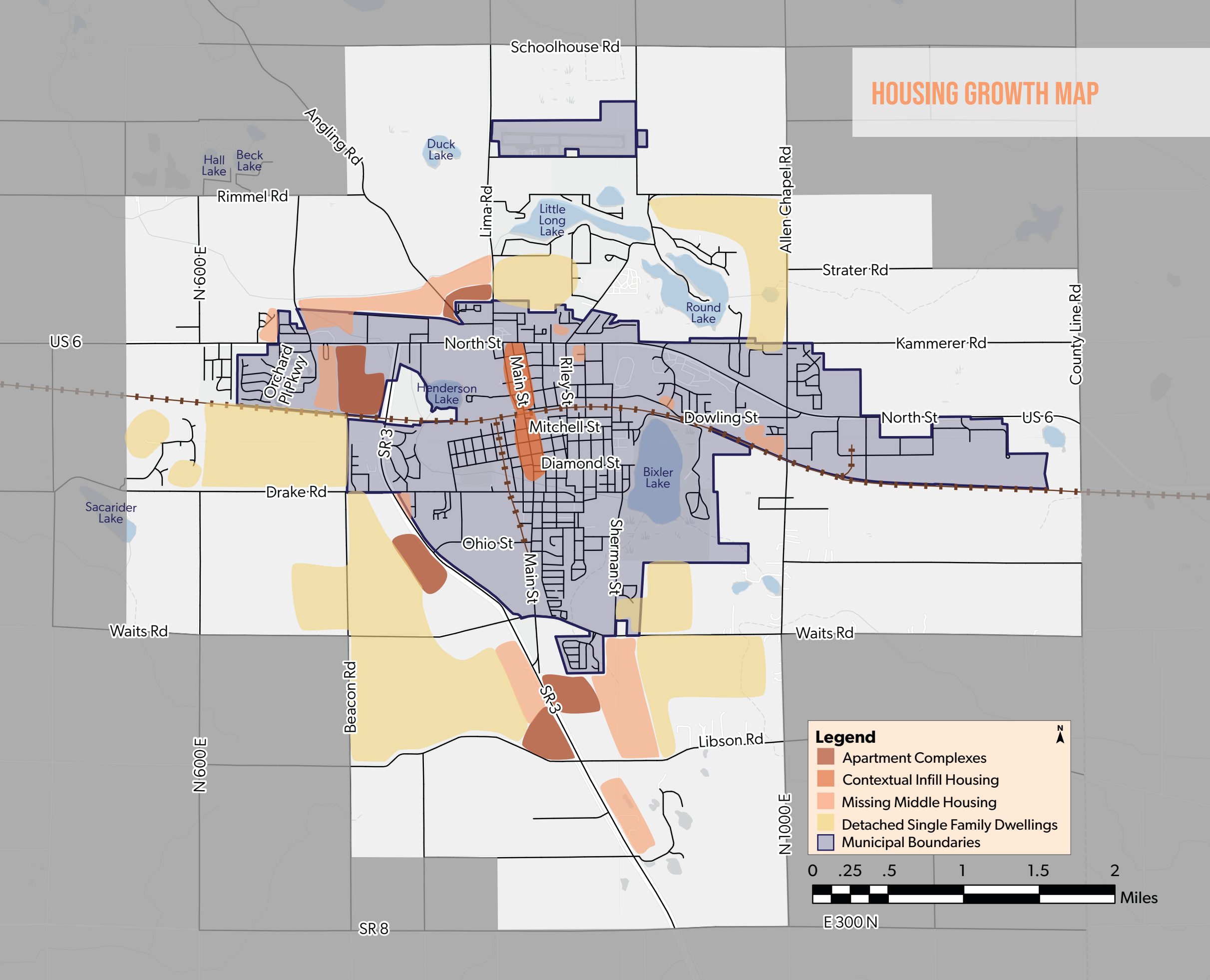
Advancing New Housing

All types of housing are demanded in Kendallville, and community input confirms a strong interest for a wide range of options. A healthy housing market depends on the ability for residents to “move along the housing ladder.” For example, when older adults are able to downsize into low-maintenance homes or garden-style apartments, their single-family homes become available to younger families. Those families, in turn, free up starter homes or rental units for new workers entering the community. Encouraging development that supports these transitions – such as senior-friendly housing, executive homes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and high-quality rentals – strengthens the entire housing ecosystem.

The Housing Growth Map illustrates areas where housing would be an appropriate land use and identifies the type of housing that would be most appropriate. Each housing types is explained in more detail on the following page.

Diversifying Housing Options

Kendallville’s market is primed for more housing diversity, and several new residential projects are already underway. There is strong potential for a mix of housing types – including duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and garden apartments – especially in and around existing neighborhoods. Alternative options such as ADUs, container homes, second floor downtown apartments, or the adaptive reuse of older buildings can also provide creative solutions that add gentle density while respecting neighborhood character. Projects like Atz Place demonstrate how well-designed infill development can both meet modern needs and enhance existing neighborhoods.



APARTMENT COMPLEXES



Apartment complexes are primarily renter-occupied dwelling units with 5+ units per building. Parking lots, blocks of garages or carports, and a common dumpster are characteristics of apartment complexes.

MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING



Missing middle housing is generally a mixture of owner-occupied and renter-occupied dwelling units. It includes a range of housing types including single-family attached dwelling units in the form of duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes, as well as small multi-family buildings like garden apartments. Parking is typically in a garage or driveway specific to the unit or a small parking area.

CONTEXTUAL INFILL HOUSING



Front facade + Rear facade

Contextual infill housing can be owner-occupied or renter-occupied. It includes housing that fits the character of the existing neighborhood. This may include 2nd floor apartments in the case of downtown or single-family attached or detached homes with characteristics common to the neighborhood like alley access and a front porch street presence in the case of an older neighborhood.

DETACHED SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLINGS



Single-family detached homes can be owner-occupied or renter-occupied. This housing type can include executive housing, upper/mid-range housing similar to what has recently been constructed in the City, homes along a lake, and/or a starter home. An attached two or three-car garage is standard.

Highlight on Missing Middle Housing

Missing middle housing refers to a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types that are compatible and in scale with single-family neighborhoods.

These housing types – such as duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, cottage apartments, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) – offer more choices for residents while maintaining the look and feel of traditional neighborhoods. Not everyone needs or wants a single-family detached home, and not everyone can afford it.

Communities face a shortage of attainable housing options for single-person households, low- and moderate-income households, young professionals, small families, and older adults seeking to downsize. Missing middle housing helps diversify the housing stock, supports economic mobility, and creates more inclusive neighborhoods within established areas while supporting walkability, reducing infrastructure costs, and making efficient use of existing land and utilities.

Community engagement conducted as part of this planning process demonstrated that residents are receptive to expanding housing choices. Many expressed support for smaller-scale, neighborhood-compatible housing types that provide pathways to homeownership, rental opportunities, and accessible options for seniors.

Encouraging missing middle housing will require Kendallville to make intentional policy changes – including updates to zoning and subdivision regulations and more flexible design standards. By enabling these types of homes to be built in appropriate locations, Kendallville can expand housing options, increase its population, strengthen neighborhood vitality, and ensure that residents of all ages, incomes, and household types have a place in the Kendallville's future.



Housing Readiness

The most successful communities approach housing from multiple angles – making the regulatory environment development-ready, investing in infrastructure, offering incentives, and forming partnerships. Kendallville can do the same by focusing on several key strategies. Over time, these combined efforts send a clear message: Kendallville is ready for continued housigrowth!

Removing Barriers

Currently, Kendallville’s zoning framework poses significant barriers to housing diversity. The City’s Single and Two-Family District, Condominium District, and Apartment District – which collectively accommodate most “missing middle” housing types – make up less than 2.5% of the City’s total planning and zoning jurisdiction. By comparison, approximately 39% of the City’s total planning and zoning jurisdiction is zoned exclusively for single-family homes. As a result, any new residential development that does not fit the single-family

model almost always requires a rezoning, adding time, cost, and uncertainty to the development process.

Allowing missing middle housing options by right in zoning districts is key to providing an affordable option for single-person households, young families, and those looking to downsize. Revisions to the zoning ordinance and zoning map are critical to removing barriers for the development of missing middle housing and population growth.

Having pre-approved plans for infill development, permitting accessory dwelling units (ADUs), incorporating provisions for newer and less conventional housing like container homes or homes constructed with prefabricated walls and assembled onsite, and simplifying adaptive reuse regulations can further encourage small-scale residential projects to move forward.

Kendallville could take this as far as pre-zoning key parcels for housing development to streamline the development process.

Highlight on Alternative Housing Types

The region is experiencing a surge in interest in alternative construction types. These photos are from Fort Wayne's recent pilot project that includes a container home and a home constructed with prefabricated walls.

Bottom Left: Exterior picture of a home constructed with three shipping containers. The back includes a covered patio and second floor balcony. Bottom Middle: Exterior picture show a home constructed with prefabricated walls and assembled onsite.



Top: Interior pictures of a container home show where containers were adjoined exposing the corrugated steel walls and ceilings, exposed duct work in the ceilings, and internal supports. Middle: The interior picture of the home constructed with prefabricated walls looks and feels like a typical stick-built home.



Noble Creek Subdivision on the City's southeast side will ultimately include 72 lots, with construction underway on the 33 lots that make up Section 1.

Use Incentives and Financial Tools

Housing development is economic development. New programs and funding sources, like Indiana Economic Development Corporation's READI program, are becoming available for infrastructure to support housing development. Residential tax abatements, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) resources, Affordable Housing Program (AHP) funds through the Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis, tax-credits, and land banking can provide homeownership assistance and make workforce and infill housing more financially viable.

Invest in Infrastructure and Site Readiness

With available capacity in both water and wastewater systems, Kendallville is well-positioned to accommodate new residential growth. Proactive infrastructure planning goes beyond general readiness – it includes identifying precise utility connection points, assessing the capacity of affected lift stations, and estimating how many new dwelling units existing systems can support. It might also mean identifying the best location for connection to the larger street and sidewalk/trail network.

This level of analysis helps prioritize future housing sites and ensures development proposals align with available infrastructure. Strategic investment in extending utilities, upgrading existing infrastructure as required, improving transportation access, and

planning for amenities such as parks and sidewalks /trails will further enhance housing readiness and reduce costs for developers while guiding growth to the most suitable locations.

Form Strategic Partnerships

Collaboration with private developers, nonprofit housing organizations, financial institutions and even local employers is an essential component of the housing readiness. Nonprofit housing organizations and financial institutions are well-versed in available programs and have experience with projects that have been implemented in other communities.

Local employers provide a connection to future residents. Studies show that employees with shorter commutes are happier and can lead to increased productivity. Perhaps relocation assistance can be greater the closer an employee lives to the workplace.

Support Infill and Redevelopment

Community efforts to redevelop vacant or underutilized sites within the existing urban fabric should continue to be promoted. These projects provide new housing opportunities without requiring costly extensions of infrastructure. Smaller-scale infill projects also help preserve neighborhood character while adding new housing options.

Code Enforcement

Code enforcement should prioritize education, resource connection, and assistance to help property owners successfully maintain and improve their homes. The focus should be on collaboration rather than punishment—creating a supportive approach that strengthens neighborhoods over time. That said, there is a clear distinction between being unable and being unwilling to comply. When education and resource connections do not lead to progress, enforcement should proceed with the goal of achieving compliance and preserving the visual character and quality of the neighborhood.

Code enforcement employees primarily reside within the Police Department. As Kendallville evolves from a reactive model of enforcement to a proactive community improvement strategy, the code enforcement responsibility should be shared or shift to the Building and Planning Department for building codes and zoning codes.

- The evolution to a proactive community improvement strategy includes:
- Targeted enforcement in high-complaint or high-blight areas.
 - Greater accountability for absentee landlords.
 - Clear reporting and tracking tools to document and address complaints efficiently.

Like many of the housing strategies presented in this chapter, long-term consistency over years will yield results that support Kendallville's vision.



Consistent enforcement is key to maintaining a strong neighborhood foundation.

Education + Promotion

There are many ways Kendallville can support residents in building housing stability and success – and the collaborative framework to do so already exists through the Community Learning Center (CLC), Kendallville Public Library, Impact Institute, and other local partners. These organizations are well-positioned to offer a coordinated series of classes that address both the financial and practical sides of housing.

Workshops on financial literacy, tenant rights, and homeownership readiness could help residents better understand topics such as budgeting, determining affordability, assembling a home-buying team, securing insurance, and understanding property taxes. Meanwhile, a second track of hands-on “Home Basics” or “House 101” classes could cover simple maintenance and repair skills – painting, patching drywall, changing furnace filters, cleaning techniques, hanging shelves or pictures, fireplace care, and more.

By combining financial education with practical skill-building, Kendallville can empower residents to become confident tenants and homeowners, strengthening both individual stability and neighborhood pride.





CHAPTER 3:
INCLUSIVE
TRANSPORTATION



INCLUSIVE TRANSPORTATION
Goal



Develop and maintain a connected transportation network that supports all users - including drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists - in a safe, efficient, and accessible manner.

Objectives

- 3-1 Enhance safe vehicular travel on existing streets and plan for future growth while also planning for other modes of transportation.
- 3-2 Coordinate with INDOT for upgrades and corridor enhancements along U.S. 6 and SR 3.
- 3-3 Enforce access management plans for new and existing non-residential developments to create safer, more efficient traffic flow.
- 3-4 Keep major thoroughfares and gateways functional and visually appealing to achieve a balanced transportation system.
- 3-5 Strategically secure rights-of-way for future infrastructure improvements and partner with applicable agencies for long-term success.
- 3-6 Encourage connectivity between neighboring developments and discourage cul-de-sacs or single access point subdivisions.
- 3-7 Upgrade problematic intersections through redesigning, reconstructing, re-signing, or adjusting signals.
- 3-8 Develop a Trails and Sidewalk Plan that intends to improve and expand sidewalks and trails to enhance community safety and connectivity.
- 3-9 Extend the Fishing Line Trail to connect to Downtown Kendallville and other community-oriented institutions.
- 3-10 Continue to require new developments to install and maintain pedestrian connections within the development, as well as connecting to the overall pedestrian network.
- 3-11 Promote and generate awareness around pedestrian and bicycle safety through education and better enhanced facilities.
- 3-12 Partner with local and regional organizations to pursue trail development and seek funding opportunities.

INCLUSIVE TRANSPORTATION
Foundational Support

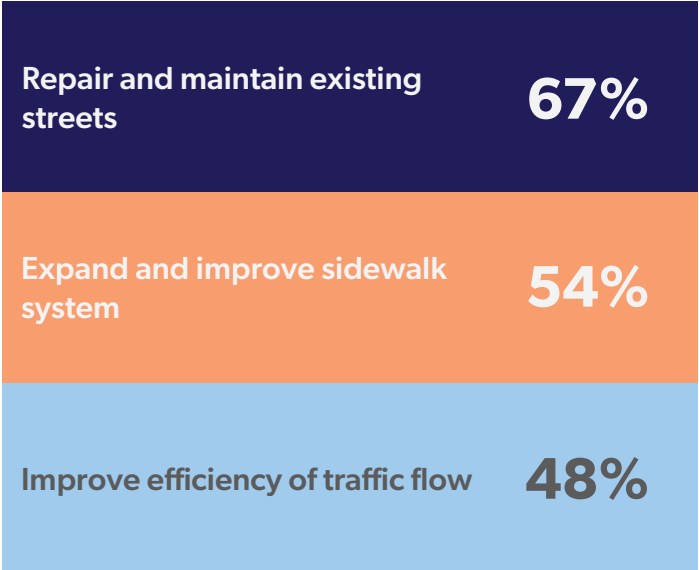
■ *Kendallville is situated directly south of LaGrange County, which has one of the largest Amish populations in the country. Being just a few miles south of these communities brings increased Amish community presence, increasing the demand of providing for horse and buggy transportation.*

■ *Throughout community engagement, disappointment over recent U.S. 6 traffic reconfiguration was expressed.*

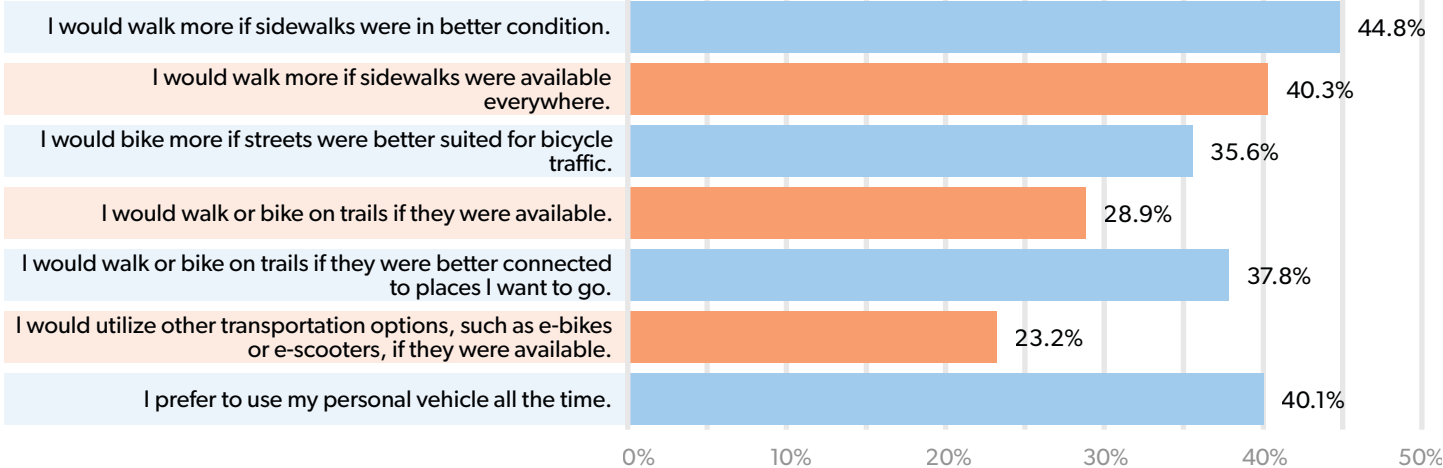
■ *There is a call to maintain and enhance the existing sidewalk network followed by a focus on creating connections to local destinations.*



■ *Survey respondents selected the following as the top three transportation priorities...*



■ *When survey respondents were about walking and biking in relation to available infrastructure and places of interest, responses indicated that sidewalk condition and availability heavily influenced whether they would walk or drive.*



INCLUSIVE TRANSPORTATION

Paths to Progress

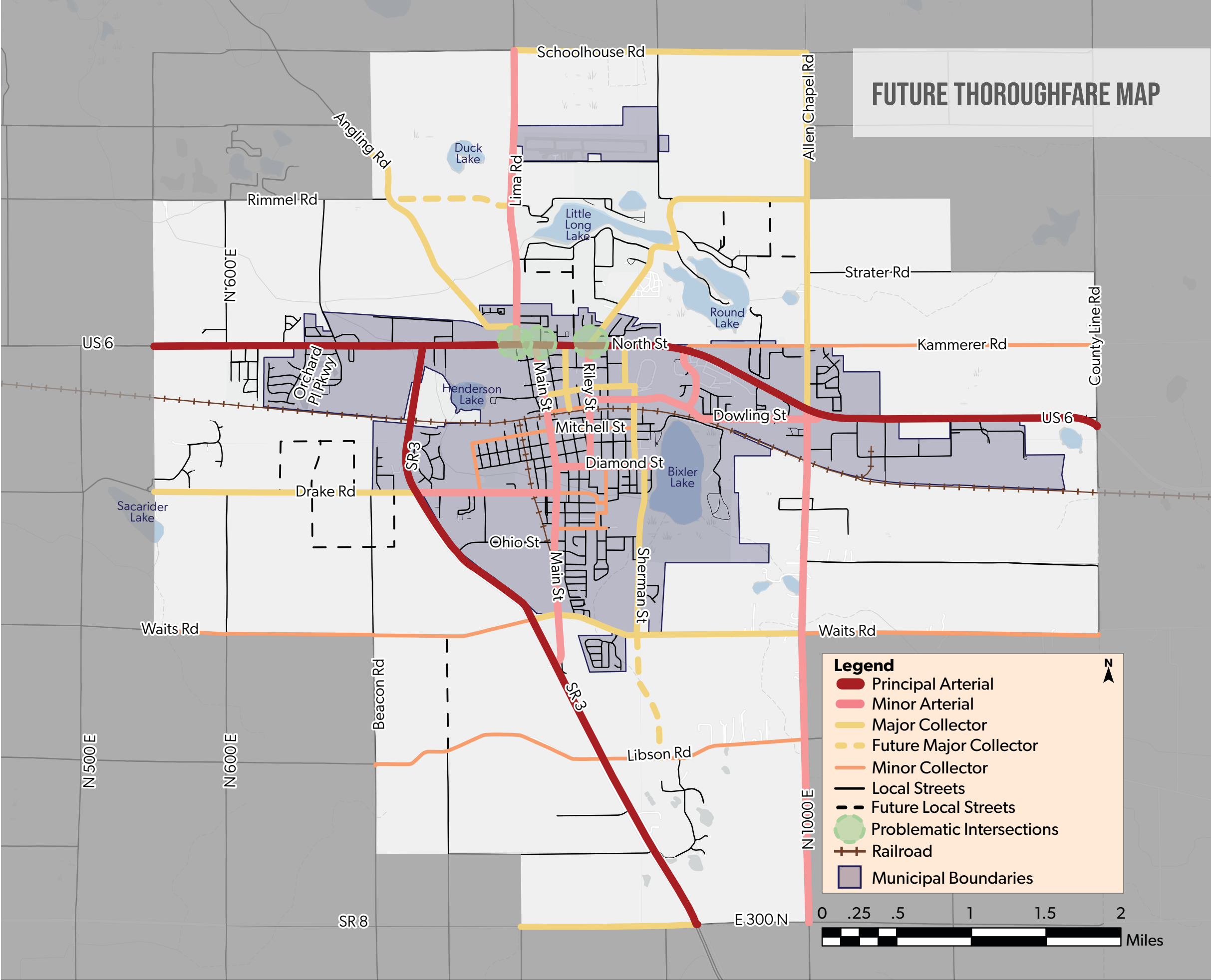
Future Thoroughfare Plan

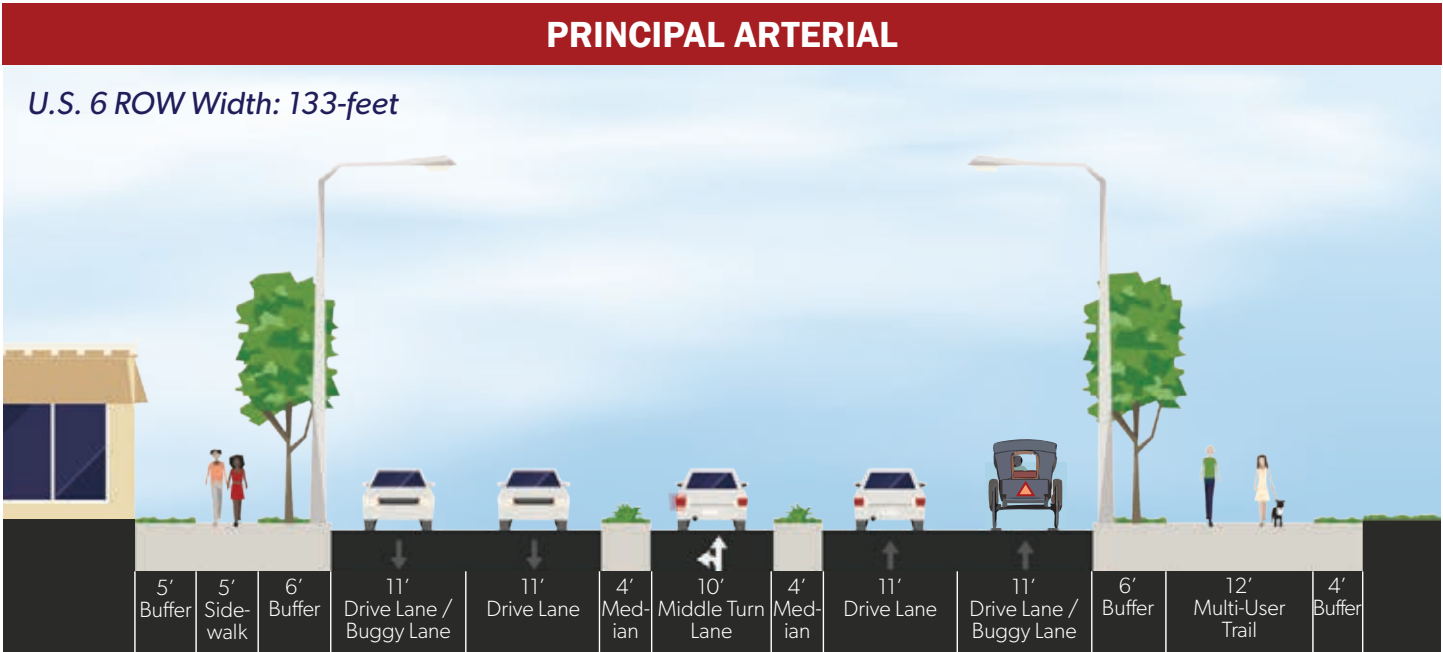
The Future Thoroughfare Plan is an integral component of a comprehensive plan as it focuses on how people should move throughout the community. Traditionally, thoroughfare planning has focused on vehicular mobility, prioritizing vehicular traffic over other modes of transportation. The past several decades there has been a nation-wide shift emphasizing the importance of considering all modes of transportation to ensure safe and proper accessibility options for everyone. And while Kendallville has multiple transportation agencies involved, it's imperative that the City leads the discussions and actions required to meet the community's needs. These actions may include integrating complete streets ideas, managing driveways and access points, upgrading traffic flow designs, and improving and expanding the trails and sidewalks network.

The Future Thoroughfare Map designates street classifications based on Average Daily Trips (ADT's) and street functions. In the following pages are street sections for each classification based on rural or urban settings and describe ideal design considerations. Dashed lines on the Future Thoroughfare Map indicate future street expansion opportunities to alleviate traffic problems or match future development opportunities as listed throughout Chapter 1: Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use and Chapter 2: Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods. All designs and proposals are conceptual and would required detailed engineering based on existing infrastructure, right-of-way availability, and surrounding context.

Additionally, the City should prepare for rural street urbanization as new development occurs in rural settings.

Being located directly south of LaGrange County, Kendallville needs to be cognizant of the Amish community who travel by horse and buggy or bicycle. Widening road shoulders and installing hitching posts in key locations is a way to ensure the transportation network in Kendallville is truly inclusive.





Function: Carry high volumes of traffic between local and regional destinations

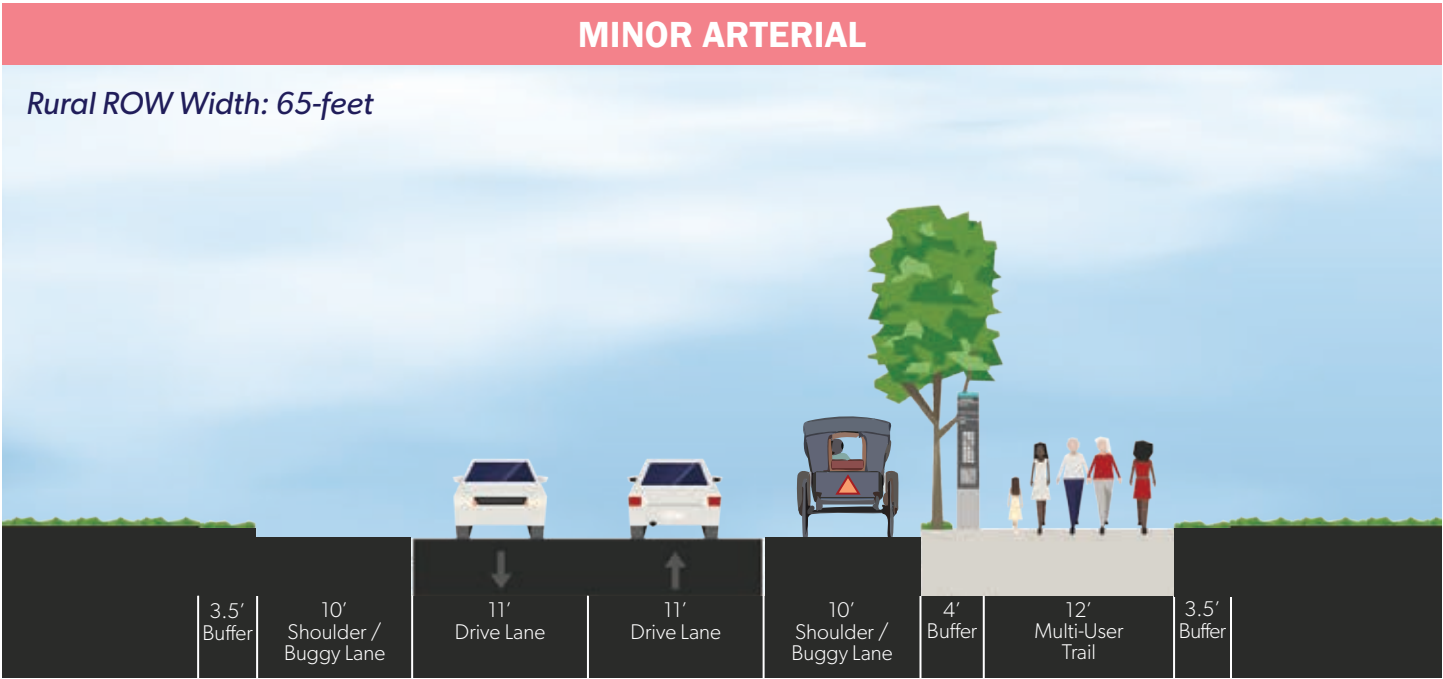
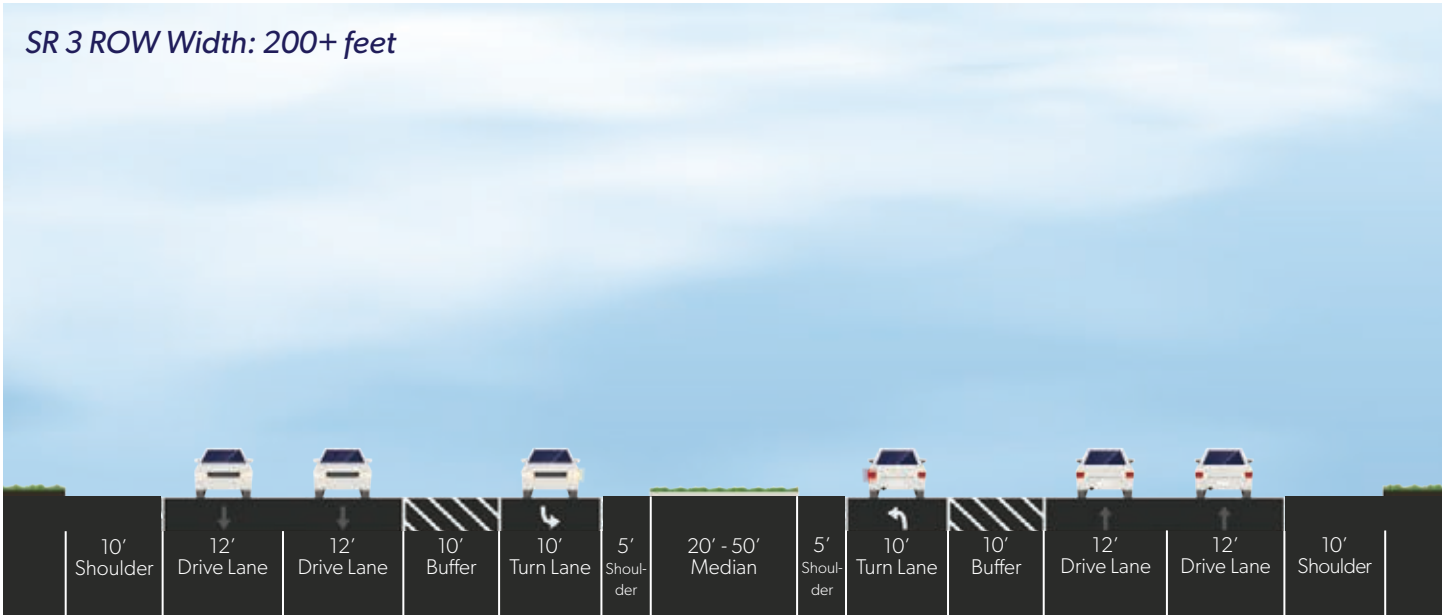
Average Daily Trips: > 10,000

Examples: U.S. 6, SR 3 (south)

Authority: exclusively INDOT

Design Considerations:

- Ideal right-of-way: 100+ feet
- Emphasis on providing safe accessibility options for vehicular, pedestrian, bicyclists, and horse + buggy along U.S. 6; provide safe and efficient vehicular traffic flow along SR 3
- Incorporate appealing streetscape features in "buffer," like street trees, lighting, benches, gateway and wayfinding signage, etc. along U.S. 6; Incorporate gateway signage along SR 3
- Greater emphasis on moving people through
- Encourage trail development along U.S. 6



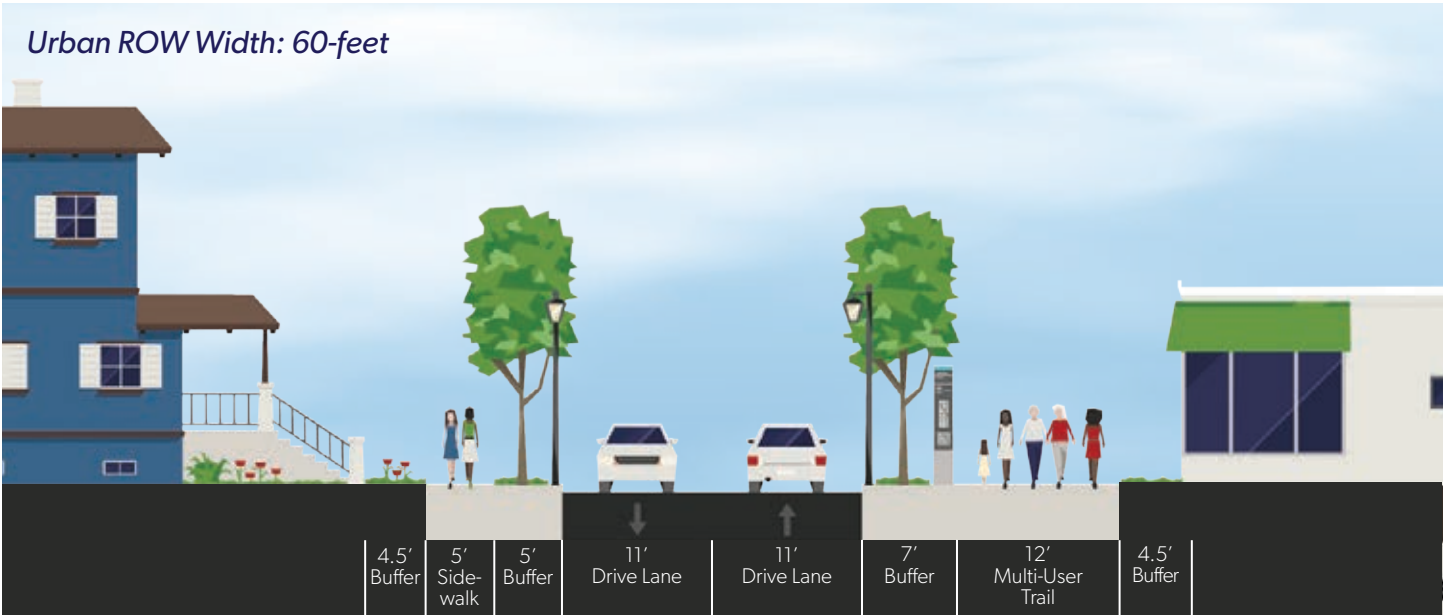
Function: Carry high to moderate traffic between local and regional destinations, with a focus on local destinations

Average Daily Trips: 5,000 - 10,000

Examples: Main St, Diamond St, Dowling St, Lima Rd (North SR 3), Fairview Blvd, Allen Chapel Rd / N 1000 E

Design Considerations:

- Ideal right-of-way: 60 to 70-feet
- Emphasis on providing safe accessibility options for vehicular, pedestrian, bicyclists, and horse + buggy in rural settings
- Incorporate appealing streetscape features in "buffer," like street trees, lighting, benches, wayfinding signage, etc.
- Greater emphasis on connections to community services and amenities
- Encourage trail development
- Discourage on-street parking, except in Downtown





Function: Distribute traffic from local streets safely to arterial streets while connecting community services and respecting adjacent neighborhoods

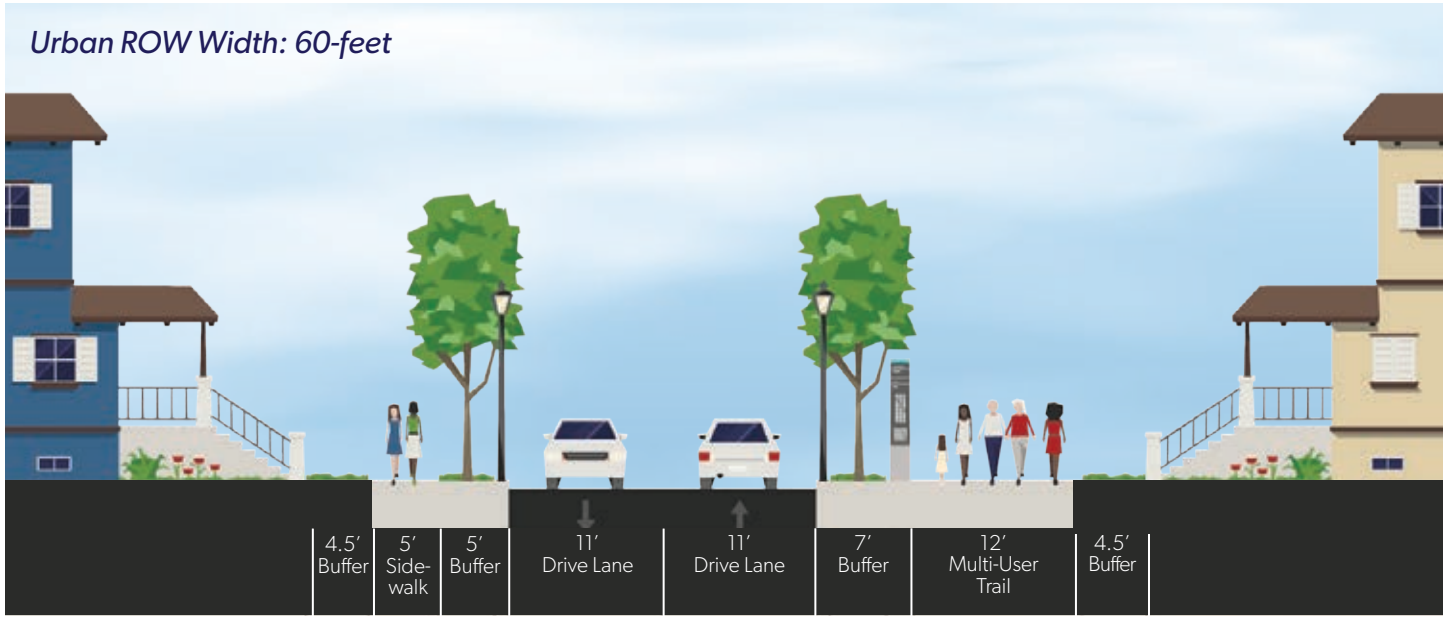
Average Daily Trips: 1,000 - 5,000

Examples: Drake Rd, Angling Rd, Allen Chapel Rd, Sherman St, Wayne St, Riley Rd

Proposed Extensions: Sherman St, Rimmel Rd

Design Considerations:

- Ideal right-of-way: 60-feet
- Emphasis on providing safe accessibility options for vehicular, pedestrian, bicyclists, and horse + buggy in rural settings
- Incorporate appealing streetscape features in "buffer," like street trees, lighting, benches, wayfinding signage, etc.
- Greater emphasis on connections to community services and amenities
- Encouragement of trail or pedestrian connectivity
- Discourage on-street parking



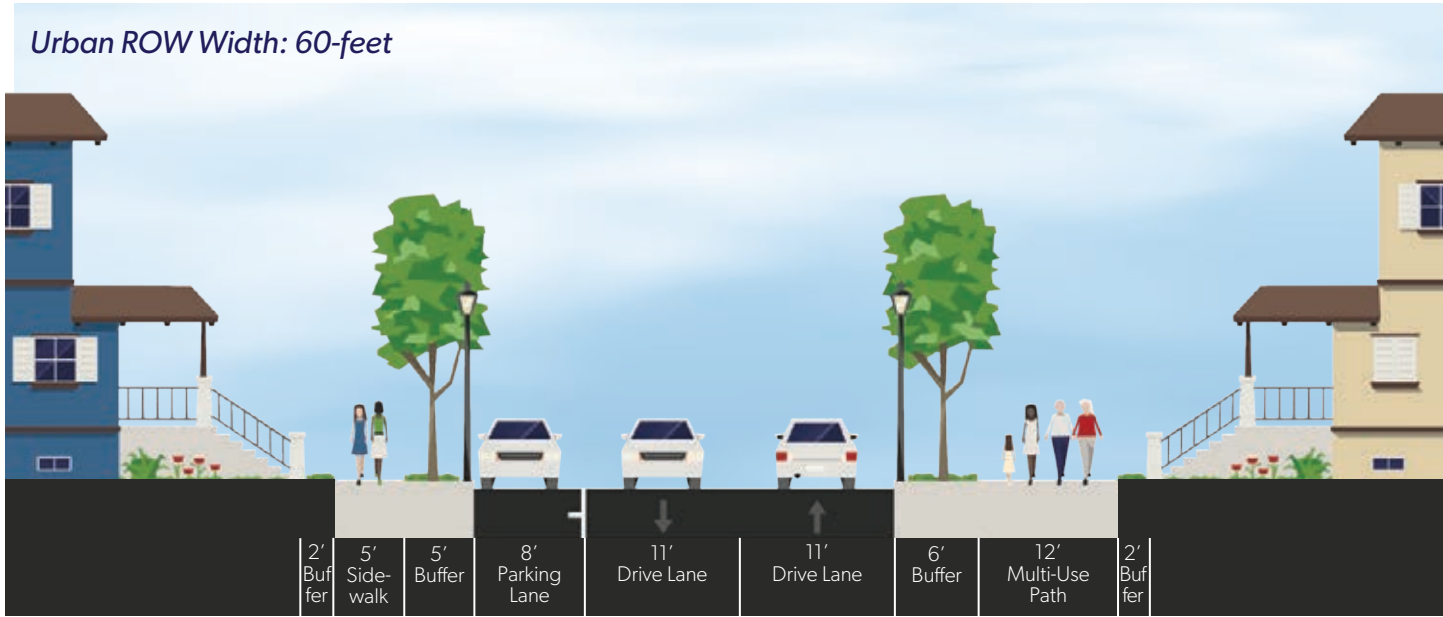
Function: Distribute traffic from local streets safely to arterial and major collector streets while connecting community services and serving adjacent neighborhoods

Average Daily Trips: < 1,000

Examples: Mitchell St, Kammerer Rd, Libson Rd, Iddings St, Garden St

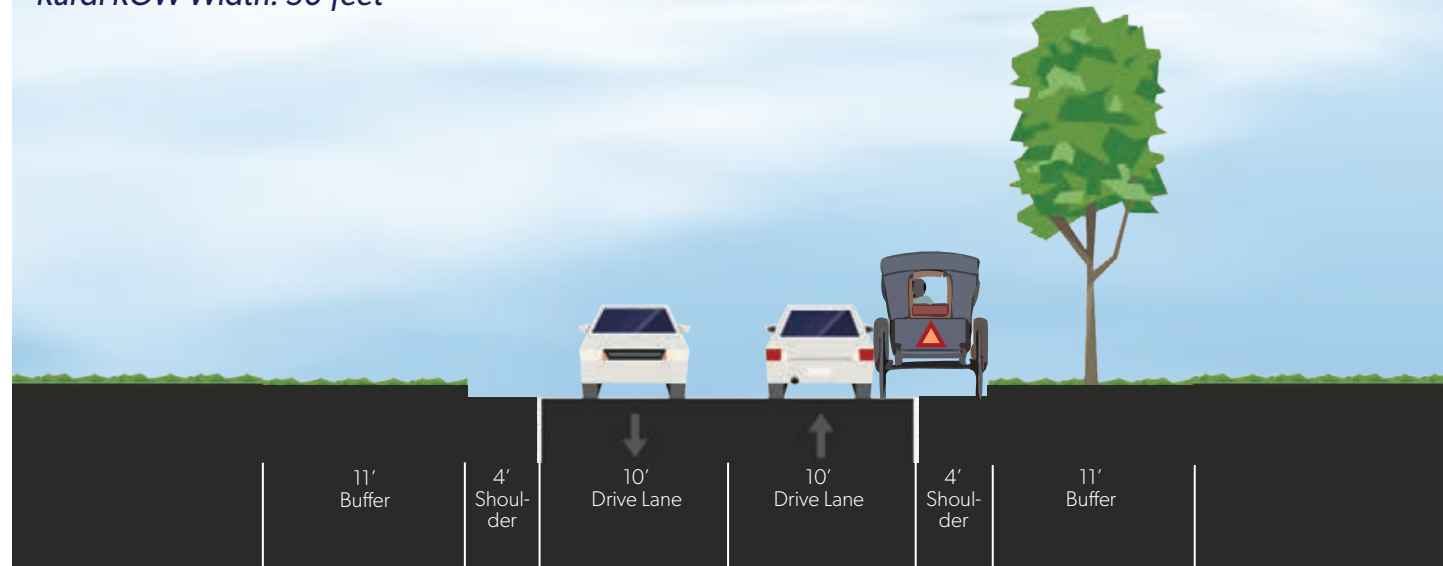
Design Considerations:

- Ideal right-of-way: 50 to 60-feet
- Emphasis on providing safe accessibility options for vehicular, pedestrian, bicyclists, and horse + buggy in rural settings
- Incorporate street trees and lighting features in "buffer"
- Greater emphasis on connections to community services and amenities
- Encouragement of pedestrian connectivity in urban and rural settings
- On-street parking permitted on one side of the street



LOCAL STREETS

Rural ROW Width: 50-feet



Function: Provide direct access to properties and neighborhoods

Average Daily Trips: < 800

Examples: Vine St, Orchard Pl Pkwy, Rush St, State St, William St, Brian's Pl, N Shore Dr

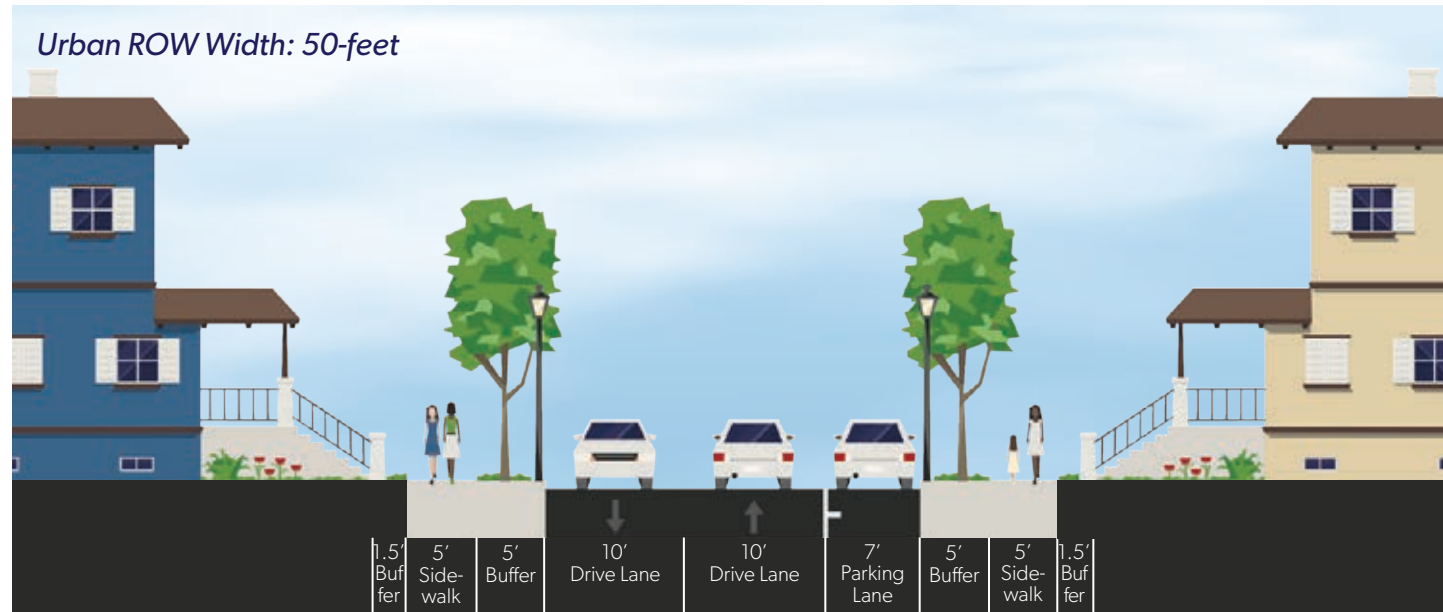
Proposed Extensions as Required:

for better connectivity and new development within designated growth and redevelopment areas as depicted in Chapter 1: Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use

Design Considerations:

- Ideal right-of-way: 50-feet
- Emphasis on providing safe accessibility options for vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclists
- Incorporate street trees and lighting features in "buffer"
- Greater emphasis on connections to housing and local businesses
- Encouragement of pedestrian connectivity in urban and suburban settings
- On-street parking permitted in residential neighborhoods

Urban ROW Width: 50-feet



The recent Drake Road improvements are a prime example of implementing Complete Street elements.

Complete Streets

Complete Streets are streets that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists of all ages and abilities. The ultimate goal is to make it easy and safe to cross the street, walk, or bike to school, shops, work, or parks.

Complete Streets policies design the rights-of-way to accommodate the community's needs and to enhance the right-of-way with elements that compliment all users such as wayfinding signage, enhanced crosswalks, street lighting, and benches.



Promoting efficient travel lanes

Each Complete Streets community is unique by responding to its community context, and even thoroughfare context, considering urban, suburban, and rural streets.

One way to achieve complete streets in areas where right-of-way is insufficient is to implement a road diet. Road diets are a strategy that typically consists of removing vehicular travel lanes or reducing lane width to achieve more space to accommodate for alternative modes of transportation and right-of-way elements.



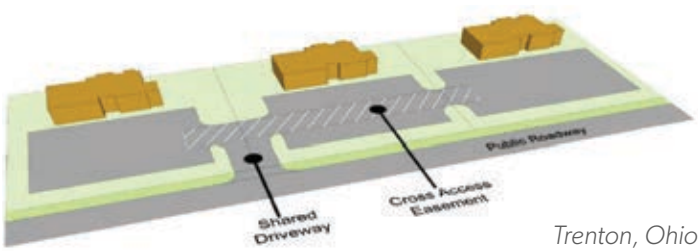
Encouraging pedestrian safety through enhanced crosswalks

Access Management

Access management is a tool to help reduce traffic congestion, maintain existing roadway capacity, reduce frequency of crashes, and preserve investment in the streets by managing location, design, and type of access to property according to INDOT’s Access Management Guide. The need for access management arises from an increase in traffic volume and congestion of the street particularly along commercial corridors abutted by developments with increased traffic volume. For example, principal and minor arterials are generally designated to move traffic, not provide access to each individual property.

U.S. 6, particularly west of Main Street, experiences a significant number of Average Daily Trips while also accommodating one or two access points for nearly every property. Partnering with INDOT to create an access management plan is one imperative step to achieving more efficient travel flow along U.S. 6. The graphic below shows how access management could look for the properties just east o the SR3 U.S. 6 intersection. This concept reduces access points from 10 curb cuts to just 5 while using shared access, realigning drives, and developing streets to provide side or rear access points.

- Some techniques to manage access include:
- Determine and enforce appropriate driveway width and separation standards.
 - Consolidate access for adjacent properties and encourage shared driveways and parking.
 - Encourage internal connections between adjacent properties through cross-access easement agreements.
 - Update development standards to include adequate internal circulation planning and design.
 - Require compliance with new development standards as properties begin to consider redevelopment.
 - Consider construction of rear or side access streets to alleviate in and out traffic along the principal arterial.



Achieving success will not happen quickly, but being persistent in access management enforcement and looking for opportunities to create alternative access points will be instrumental in long-term efficiency for this corridor. After all, preserving traffic flow while also improving safety for all users can encourage economic growth.



Highlight on Intersection Improvements

Intersections highlighted in green on the Future Thoroughfare Map on Page 53 depict intersections that were identified during the public engagement process that currently are or may become issues as future development occurs. Each of these intersections is on U.S. 6, which is under Indiana Department of Transportation's (INDOT) authority and control. The City is charged with partnering with INDOT to advocate for its citizens and visitors to create a safe and efficient transportation network. Whether these improvements include a simple adjustment in signal timing or investigation and reconfiguration of travel lanes is needed, it will require a working partnership with INDOT.

Additionally, extending roads to redirect traffic from heavily congested areas can begin to ease traffic congestion, but will not solve the problems without additional reconfiguration projects as discussed above. For example, extending Rimmel Rd east to connect to SR 3 North (Lima Road) - as shown in the Future Thoroughfare Map - would divert traffic from the intersection at Angling Rd and SR 3 North (Lima Rd). Reducing congestion at this intersection can begin to alleviate congestion at the U.S. 6 and SR3 North (Lima Rd) intersection.

Another important aspect of intersection improvements is to consider safety for all users. Bringing attention to crosswalks in a visual or physical manner promotes safety, especially for pedestrians. Examples of this include enhanced crosswalks, like the painted crosswalks in Downtown, or crosswalks constructed with a different material. This may also include curb bumpouts at intersections, decreasing the distance pedestrians have to cross to make it across the road. Or in cases of roads with many wide travel lanes, like U.S. 6, installing a raised pedestrian island between the two directions of travel, provides a safe resting area for pedestrians after crossing one direction of travel, before crossing the next.



Sidewalks + Trails

Importance of Pedestrian + Bicyclist Safety

Being one of the most vulnerable users of rights-of-way, ensuring the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-vehicular modes of transportation is imperative to the entirety of the community. Promoting safety of these users supports a healthier lifestyle for community members, creates more sustainability in the community, and ensures reliable transportation alternatives for disadvantaged groups.

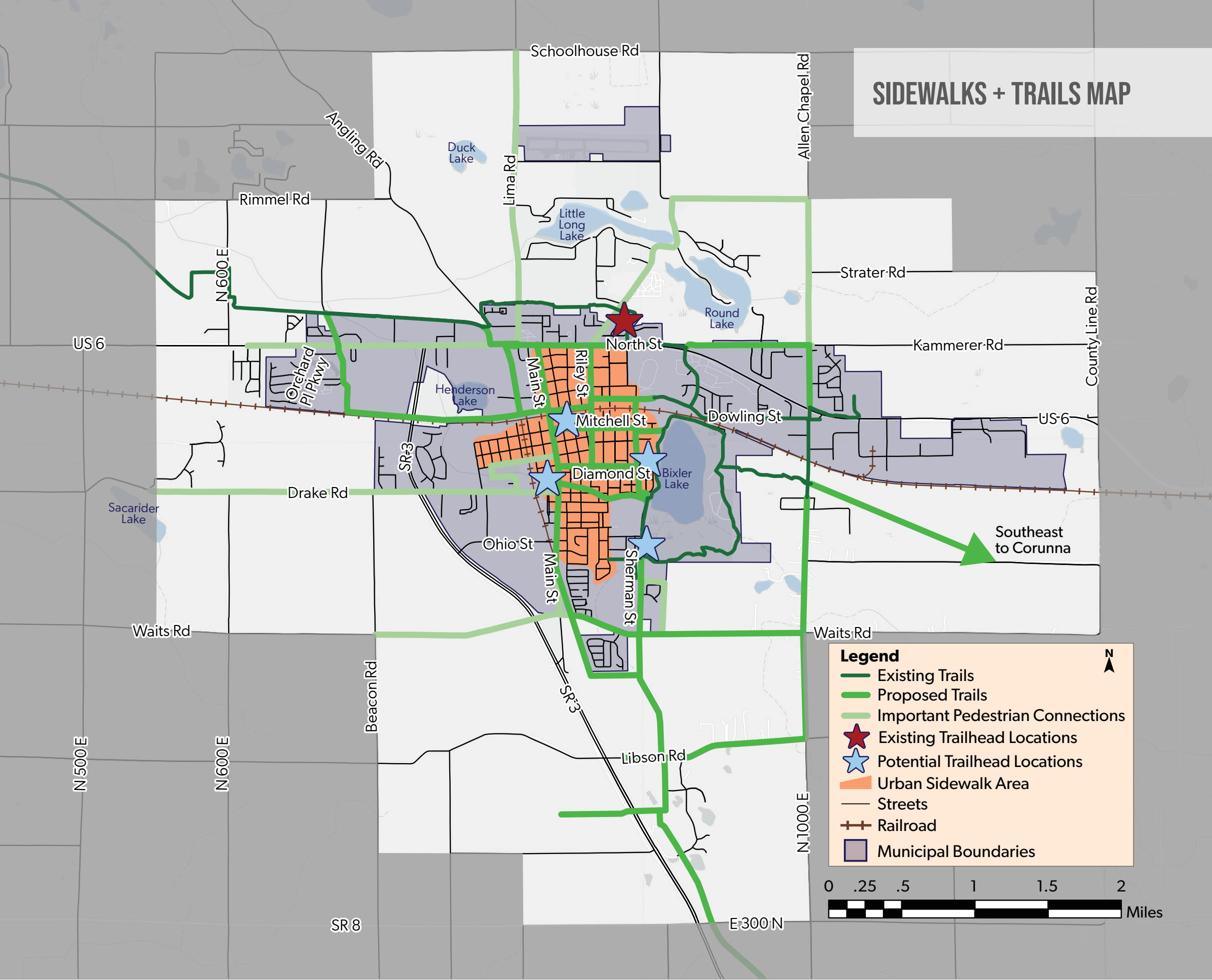
Trails + Sidewalk Plan

Developing a Trails + Sidewalk Plan is the next step in establishing a comprehensive pedestrian and bicyclist network in Kendallville. This plan begins by forming a committee of major stakeholders and partners including the Park Department, Noble Trails, Noble County, and Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRRC). This plan will investigate ideal locations for trails and sidewalks, identify key community connections, begin thoughtful design considerations for key connectors, and locate funding sources for implementation.

The Sidewalks + Trails Map shows potential trail expansion and important pedestrian connections based on Noble Trails proposals, NIRCC's regional trail initiative, and connection to community organizations. This map is intended to assist in the development of a Trails + Sidewalk Plan, but not act as the final concepts for the City. Trails should be a minimum of 10-feet where possible. Whereas important pedestrian connections - integral connections to create a complete pedestrian network - could be a sidewalk or path in rural settings.

The Sidewalks + Trails Map also identifies potential locations for trailheads. These locations are ideal as they are in proximity to community nodes and are owned by community-oriented organizations:

- Entrance to Bixler Lake Nature Preservation parking area
- Kendallville Public Library and / or Bixler Lake West
- Founder's Park
- City-owned property north of railroads adjacent to Sargent Street



Sidewalk Program

There are many neighborhoods that include sidewalks, predominantly in the Urban Sidewalk Area shown on the Sidewalks + Trails Map. In these neighborhoods, sidewalk condition has been raised as a concern in terms of disrepair or safety. Some properties are simply missing sidewalks creating gaps in the sidewalk network. In a recent tree survey, the City identified hundreds of trees within the right-of-way which have caused damage to the public sidewalks. The City intends to replace those segments of damaged sidewalks. Areas with a high density of trees that have caused damage and are designated as a trail priority should begin planning, preparing, and upgrading to a trail if the right-of-way is adequate.

Additionally, the City can also investigate a sidewalk program, which would offset the cost of the construction to repair or complete the entire sidewalk on a property. Communities all across Indiana are pursuing this option to create a complete and accessible sidewalk system at more affordable pricing for the residents. Some communities include Fort Wayne, Huntington, Auburn, Mishawaka, and Columbia City.

There are a few neighborhoods in Kendallville that were developed without sidewalks or other pedestrian connectivity. In the areas that are not designated as a proposed trail or important pedestrian connection in the Sidewalks + Trails Map on Page 63, the City should investigate a neighborhood sidewalk campaign. This campaign would engage residents in the neighborhood and garner their interest in constructing sidewalks throughout their neighborhood. Each neighborhood would have the opportunity to provide feedback and decide whether or not they wanted to pursue sidewalks.

Should the neighborhood decide to construct sidewalks, the City can pursue detailed engineering plans and create actionable steps to complete the sidewalks. To be mindful of the City's resources, the cost should be shared between the property owner and the City. As with new development, the cost of sidewalk construction is included with the initial construction package, the majority of the cost of the sidewalk installation should be borne by

the property owner. However, the City could share the cost in construction management, grading and drainage improvements, and a percentage of the sidewalk itself.

Trail Expansion + Community Connections

A functional network of trails offers a variety of benefits beyond connectivity including improved public health and community aesthetics. One of the major amenities to the Kendallville community is the Fishing Line Trail. During the community engagement process, many Kendallville residents noted the success and popularity of the Fishing Line Trail offering community connections as well as recreational opportunities. Similar to the previous Comprehensive Plan, the City shares a vision to provide trail connectivity throughout the community. Improved connectivity to existing community amenities and facilities is important to creating a walkable and connected community.

Kendallville is unique in its park amenities including the parks around Bixler Lake. Trails traverse around Bixler Lake connecting East Bixler Lake, West Bixler Lake, Kendallville Recreation Center and the Campground with the natural woodlands and wetlands. Recent improvements and trail extensions have been made to the trails around Bixler Lake and the Park Department intends to continue these trail implementations and enhancements. Additionally, the 2025-2030 Park Master Plan explored the conceptual layout of trails in Sunset Park that would help connect users from Drake Road to Rush Street.

Maintaining existing downtown and neighborhood sidewalks is also important to maintaining a healthy and connective urban environment while connecting users to commerce and residents. Identifying potential walkway corridors for expansion and wayfinding signage enhancements can help to create a network of walkways to and from downtown to community amenities such as the parks, YMCA, schools, library and Community Learning Center.



CHAPTER 4: FACILITATE ECONOMIC + BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



4



Promote a resilient and diversified economy by supporting existing businesses, encouraging entrepreneurship, attracting new employers, and enhancing quality of life.

Objectives

- 4-1 Retain and support existing businesses.
- 4-2 Strengthen the downtown core with retail, dining, and family-friendly amenities.
- 4-3 Provide space and infrastructure for high tech and industrial growth.
- 4-4 Align workforce training, education, and housing opportunities to meet employer needs and retain talent.
- 4-5 Continue to use economic development tools effectively.
- 4-6 Advance tourism, hotel, and conference development.

- *Top three development priorities according to the community survey:*

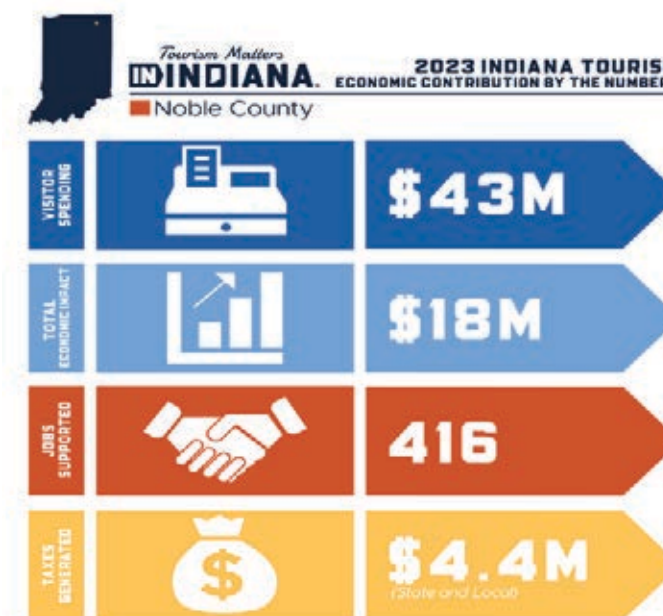
Expand dining opportunities	69%
Increase and enhance retail opportunities	46%
Expand business and workforce opportunities	37%

- *Top three downtown priorities according to the community survey:*

Provide more dining options including outdoor dining	61%
Infill vacant sites and storefronts	56%
Offer more variety of retail opportunities	45%

- *Employment by Industry: 46% of the employed population over 16 is employed in the manufacturing industry*

- *Economic impact from tourism in Noble County in 2023:*



- *My least favorite thing about Kendallville is...*



Paths to Progress

Supporting Existing Businesses

Kendallville’s long-term economic vitality depends on a strong commitment to retaining and supporting the businesses that are already rooted in the community.

Almost half of Kendallville's employed population is in the manufacturing industry, and that fact should not be overlooked. From an industrial perspective, supporting local businesses means ensuring that local employers have the resources, infrastructure, and workforce support they need to remain competitive in changing markets. There are many organizations in place – in the Northeast Indiana region, Noble County, and Kendallville – that can continue to provide technical assistance, offer specific workforce training, work to improve access to housing and childcare, facilitate access to state and regional incentives, and foster a supportive business climate to help industries grow and adapt.

From a commercial perspective, supporting existing businesses requires attention to both visibility and functionality. Many businesses along North Street (U.S. 6) rely on daily traffic counts to sustain operations. Maintaining well-functioning infrastructure systems, reliable utilities, and strong public safety services is essential to keeping these businesses viable. Efforts to ensure streetscape improvements make local businesses inviting and convenient are just as important.



Lakeside Book Company located on the east side of Kendallville employs about 160 people.

Existing Resources

A strong network of organizations work together to boost the business community. Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, Be Noble, the Kendallville Chamber of Commerce, Historic Downtown Kendallville, and the City itself provide essential support.

The Kendallville Area Chamber of Commerce, celebrating its 100 year anniversary this year, provides monthly business counseling at no cost, offers podcast opportunities, hosts a job posting board, and creates opportunities for members to connect and network. The Chamber has an active and consistent social presence that highlights its members.

Be Noble, Noble County's economic development organization, offers many similar benefits on a countywide level. SHOPNoble is the Be Noble's online source to advertise and promote small businesses located in Noble County for free. On the flip-side, it can also be used to find entertainment, dining, retailers, suppliers, contractors, and service providers. The site offers gift cards that are valid at many locations throughout Noble County.

All these efforts are reinforced by partnerships with the Community Learning Center (CLC), Impact Institute, Freedom Academy, and East Noble Schools, all of which play critical roles in workforce development. Connecting businesses with

appropriately skilled labor, childcare options, and training resources is vital to sustaining growth and meeting the needs of local employers.

Strengthening the Downtown Core

Historic Downtown Kendallville has seen significant investment in its buildings and streetscape, yet continued attention is needed to strengthen downtown's economic mix. Future business attraction and development should emphasize retail, dining, entertainment, and family-friendly amenities that will reinforce downtown’s role as both the cultural and commercial heart of the city.

Supporting activities and events at the CLC, continuing to grow and coordinate community festivals, and offering incentives for new and existing businesses will continue to create the vibrancy that is so critical to a successful downtown.

Targeted policies can help address underutilized or vacant commercial and industrial properties. For example, Indiana offers a property tax deduction for property owners who occupy or lease long-vacant buildings. By promoting tools like this along with consistent code enforcement in downtown (both first floor commercial spaces and upper floor residential spaces), Kendallville can encourage new business development while reducing the number of vacant or under-performing spaces (thus supporting existing businesses). Coordinated efforts between the City, local organizations, and property owners will be key to realizing this vision.

The community engagement results identified there is a lack of accessible parking spaces in downtown. Efforts should be made to remedy this situation making sure that accessible parking spaces take into consideration the location of sidewalk ramps and accessible pedestrian routes.



A seasonal "parklet" offers the opportunity to dine outside in Downtown Kendallville.

Accessible parking spaces are insufficient in Downtown Kendallville.

Building Capacity

For Kendallville to remain competitive and resilient in a rapidly changing economy, it must continue to build capacity – not only through infrastructure and site readiness, but also by cultivating relationships, resources, and partnerships that expand beyond local boundaries. Capacity building involves strengthening the systems, people, and networks that enable economic growth. This includes planning and investing in development-ready sites, housing, modern utilities, and digital infrastructure, while also fostering connections with regional investors, developers, and workforce partners who can bring new expertise and capital to the community. With citywide fiber internet on the horizon and strong water, sanitary, storm, and street systems already in place, Kendallville is well-positioned to meet the needs of future employers while ensuring long-term economic sustainability.

Providing Space and Infrastructure for Growth

Economic capacity is not built through infrastructure alone, but also through creative strategies that lower barriers to entry for entrepreneurs. Kendallville should consider a bold approach – such as renovating a downtown building to include a commercial kitchen that can serve as a test kitchen for local chef-entrepreneurs. Such a facility could serve as a next step for those who begin at The Cookery (the CLC’s kitchen) or with a food truck. Reduced rent, shared equipment, and rotational access would allow new businesses to experiment and grow with less risk while fulfilling the community’s desire for more locally owned restaurants.

Similar approaches could extend to retail space, giving local makers or artisans – such as pottery enthusiasts who began at the CLC – the opportunity to bring one-of-a-kind products to downtown storefronts. Larger-scale initiatives, such as a small technology park that complements the existing co-working space at 231 Main, could further position Kendallville as a supportive environment for startups and innovation. (See Chapter 7: Implementation for a Spotlight on Attracting High Tech.)

Kendallville Municipal Airport

The Kendallville Municipal Airport strengthens the City’s regional connectivity and economic competitiveness. Its general aviation facilities provide a gateway for corporate travel, freight logistics, and visiting investors, complementing Kendallville’s highway and rail access. Enhanced marketing and continued maintenance of the airport facilities can further position Kendallville as a well-connected, business-ready community.

Aligning Workforce, Education, and Housing

Kendallville has already established strong partnerships among schools, training providers, and local employers to address industrial workforce needs. Local schools demonstrate solid graduation rates and can strengthen the school-to-work pipeline through internships, co-ops, and employer partnerships that connect students directly with career opportunities. These partnerships should be inclusive of all students, from those entering the workforce immediately after graduation to those pursuing some form of higher education or certificate.



Small retail booths allow small businesses the opportunity to sell their products locally without needing substantial start up capital.



Founders Park in Downtown Kendallville newly developed in 2022 illustrates the City's commitment to investing in quality of life initiatives.

Building on this model, similar collaborations could be expanded to support small businesses, culinary entrepreneurs, and creative professionals—ensuring they, too, have access to training, mentorship, and the resources needed to grow and prosper.

Workforce alignment also relies on access to supportive services such as childcare. Quality, affordable childcare enables parents to remain active and reliable participants in the labor market. Through community engagement, residents identified a shortage of affordable childcare options in the area. The Early Childhood Education Coalition and Thrive by 5 have begun addressing this need. In 2024, Noble County piloted the innovative Tri-Share Childcare Program, in which the cost of childcare is shared equally among the family, the employer, and the County—funded through the Noble County Economic Development Income Tax (CEDIT).

Additionally, housing emerged as one of the most pressing needs during the Kendallville Plan process. Expanding housing options will not only relieve existing pressure on families and workers but also provide the stability required to attract and retain talent in the community.

Enhancing Quality of Life

Economic capacity is strengthened by investments in quality of life. Trails, sidewalks, parks, recreational amenities, quality schools, a vibrant downtown, and cultural opportunities all contribute to a community where families choose to live and businesses choose to locate.

Investments in public art not only beautify the community but also stimulate local economies by attracting visitors, encouraging downtown activity, and supporting creative entrepreneurs. (See Chapter 5: Promote Identity + Community Spirit.)

Attract + Expand

Kendallville’s future prosperity depends on its ability not only to retain existing businesses but also to attract new employers and expand local job centers. As noted, the community benefits from a strong framework of collaboration, particularly through the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership and other regional allies. Through continued use of incentives, expanding cultural experiences, promoting tourism, and collaborating to realize the potential of underdeveloped facilities, Kendallville can attract high-quality employers that bring long-term economic opportunities.

Utilizing Tools + Incentives

Be Noble has identified targeted industries including advanced materials, agri-food processing, automotive supply, and medical device and technology. Adding high-tech industry that is focused on manufacturing and agriculture to this list is a natural fit for Kendallville given the strong manufacturing and agricultural sectors that exist.

One component in attracting and expanding business activity is to continue to leverage the full range of economic development tools. Incentives, financing mechanisms, and public-private partnerships can be strategically applied to catalyze investment and reinvestment, support business expansions, and encourage entrepreneurial ventures. Clear and consistent use of these tools will demonstrate to employers and investors that Kendallville is a supportive place to locate and grow.

The are smaller scale incentives and tools that can be used to promote business growth for restaurants and family-friendly entertainment, like low interest small business development loans; grants for facility improvements from the Redevelopment Commission; and utilizing shared professional services like legal and accounting offered by a local chamber or mentors who are retired executives.

Promoting Tourism + Hospitality Development

Tourism and hospitality are emerging opportunities to strengthen Kendallville’s regional competitiveness and enhance quality of life. A new hotel and modern conference center would serve business travelers, visiting families, and regional events, creating both direct and indirect economic impact.

Beyond traditional hotels, boutique hotels offer the potential to differentiate Kendallville by weaving the City’s story into the hospitality experience. For Kendallville, such an investment could reinforce downtown momentum, elevate tourism, and showcase the City’s unique identity while benefiting residents and visitors alike.

Highlight on Boutique Hotels

Once a declining post-industrial town, Hudson, New York (population 5,736) has reinvented itself as a cultural and hospitality destination, largely spurred by the opening of William Farmer & Sons, a boutique hotel and restaurant that highlights the character of the region. The hotel’s success created a ripple effect of new investment – downtown buildings were restored, restaurants and galleries opened, and the town gained national recognition as a creative hub. This case illustrates how a single boutique hotel, when paired with local character and entrepreneurial spirit, can catalyze revitalization in a small community.

Source: merchantileexchange.com





Expanding Dining + Experiences

Community engagement results were clear: sit-down dining options are in high demand in Kendallville. Eating and drinking establishments represent another avenue for economic growth and cultural vibrancy. Market data suggests that smaller, locally-driven endeavors will likely be the more attainable and therefore more successful in Kendallville, especially those led by entrepreneurs with roots in the community.

Renovating a downtown building to host a sit-down restaurant or brew pub would not only provide an anchor destination but also create a ripple effect of increased foot traffic and investment in the surrounding district.

The list of restaurant ideas from community engagement is long, but the highlights include:

- steakhouse
- family-friendly brew house
- farm-to-table (highlighting the local agricultural community)
- barbecue
- coffee shop
- formal dining



The Noble County Fairgrounds is over 60-acres and hosts the annual Apple Festival and Bluegrass Festival in addition to the Noble County Fair.

Unlocking the Potential of the Fairgrounds

The Noble County Fairgrounds represents an underutilized asset with enormous potential. While the City of Kendallville is not the owner or operator of the fairgrounds, the potential impact of the facility is too great to ignore.

Expanded programming, events, or complementary development could transform the fairgrounds into a year-round attraction, generating tourism revenue and community pride. Paired with entrepreneurial development through the Community Learning Center (CLC), which helps nurture the next generation of local business leaders, the fairgrounds could become a tremendous community asset for new ventures, as well as a regional draw.

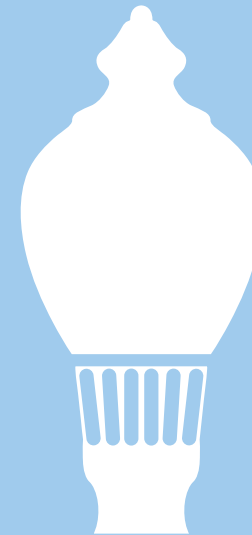
Highlight on Fairgrounds as a Year Round Economic Engine

Hendricks County 4-H Fairgrounds and Conference Complex in Danville, Indiana boasts a modern conference center, commercial kitchen, camping, and flexible exhibit halls. The 110-acre campus hosts year-round consumer shows, consignment markets, festivals, and banquets – demonstrating how upgraded facilities convert a “fairground” into a regional events venue that supports local caterers, makers, and hospitality. The development process took about 3 years with nearly \$15 million invested.

The new Hendricks County Fairgrounds includes a community building with a multi-purpose auditorium, commercial kitchen, cafeteria, offices, classrooms, and connected exhibit hall, along with pedestrian infrastructure that is ADA accessible.

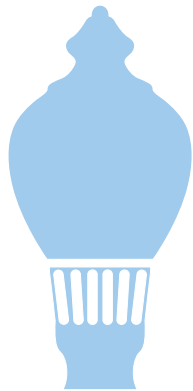


Indoor arenas, barns, and open halls can be lightly retrofitted (A/V, commercial kitchen upgrades, Wi-Fi/fiber) to host expos, maker markets, agricultural/food festivals, youth sports, and rallies. Hendricks County and Elkhart County models show clear demand for flexible spaces that serve multiple audiences year-round. Target events (advanced manufacturing vendor fairs, agricultural/food processing showcases, RV/outdoor shows) reinforce regional clusters and create business-to-business or business-to-consumer deal flow and can drive weeks of local spending. Regular event calendars translate to hotel room nights, restaurant traffic, retail sales, and seasonal/part-time jobs.



CHAPTER 5: PROMOTE IDENTITY + COMMUNITY SPIRIT

5

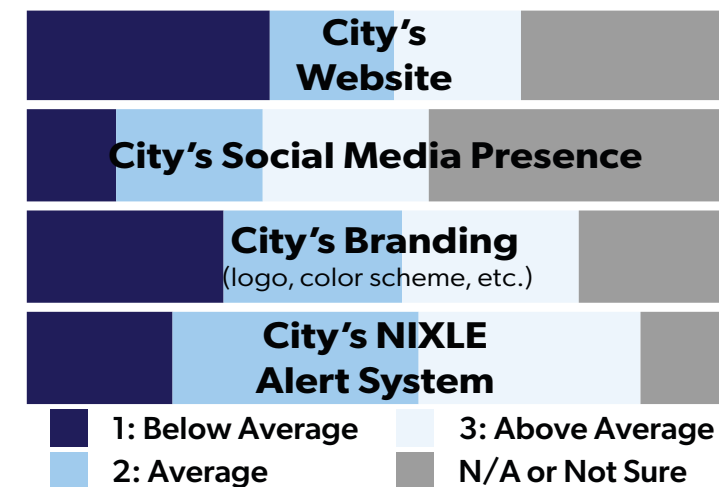


Celebrate Kendallville's history, culture, and small-town charm while embracing diversity and future growth.

Objectives

- 5-1 Continue to develop strategies to improve communication with the community.
- 5-2 Partner with local organizations to promote and expand local events within the community and the region.
- 5-3 Launch a Public Relations (PR) campaign to challenge stereotypes and highlight progress.
- 5-4 Review property maintenance codes for sufficiency and continue to pursue enforcement.
- 5-5 Enhance major corridors and gateways into and through the City creating a welcoming environment.
- 5-6 Consider hiring an employee or contracting a PR firm to focus on Public Relations and Community Outreach.
- 5-7 Strengthen partnerships with community organizations and work towards the same community goals.
- 5-8 Continue to support revitalization of downtown and traditional neighborhoods.
- 5-9 Embrace and nurture the arts community by establishing an Arts Commission to enhance and promote public art and cultural heritage.

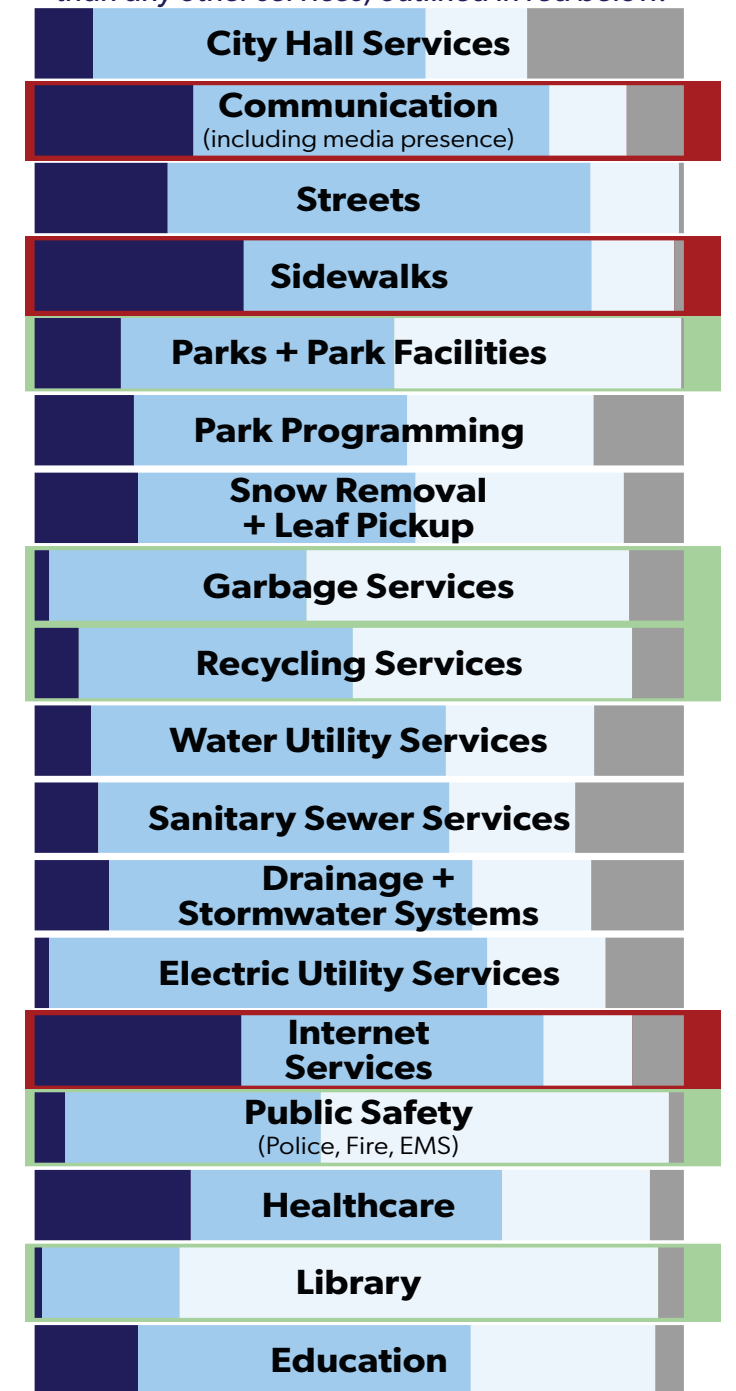
- In the AARP Livability Index, the overall Community Score was 53 out of 100, while the Engagement Score was rated low at 37, being the lowest scored category for the City.
- Kendallville's signature green streetlight posts with decorative luminaires are a distinctive design element the community has proudly preserved over time.
- When asked to rate the City's communication efforts, responses varied significantly indicating there is room for improvement.



- When asked what 3 words best describe Kendallville, survey respondents said...



- When asked to rate the quality of the following local services, respondents identified parks, garbage/recycling, public safety, and library services as above average, outlined in green below. Communication, sidewalks, and internet services received more below average ratings than any other services, outlined in red below.



PROMOTE IDENTITY + COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Paths to Progress

Public Communication Strategies

To foster a stronger sense of community and enhance public trust, the City of Kendallville should commit to refining its public communication strategies. A key priority is ensuring consistent messaging and branding across all official documentation and public notices. This consistency not only reinforces the City's identity but also builds credibility and transparency in its interactions with residents.

Recognizing the importance of representation, the City should evaluate current branding themes to determine whether they authentically reflect the community's values, culture, and aspirations. This introspective approach ensures that the City's visual and narrative identity evolves in alignment with its people.

To ignite community spirit and encourage civic pride, the City can launch a community-wide contest to design a new city logo or community flag. This initiative will be open to all residents, with a special opportunity for collaboration with middle and high school students. Such engagement fosters ownership and inclusivity, allowing citizens to contribute meaningfully to the City's image.

To support these efforts and elevate outreach, the City should consider hiring a Public Relations Coordinator or contracting professional PR services. This role would be instrumental in managing and implementing branding initiatives, coordinating campaigns, and ensuring that the City's voice is both unified and responsive to community needs.

Together, these strategies aim to build a more connected, informed, and proud Kendallville – where communication is not just a tool, but a bridge between government and community.



There are 3 variations of City logos circulating through the public.

Promoting Community Identity

Kendallville needs to embrace a dynamic and inclusive approach to community identity through a strategic Public Relations (PR) campaign designed to celebrate progress, challenge outdated perceptions, and amplify the City's aspirations. At the heart of this initiative is a commitment to showcasing tangible achievements – such as downtown revitalization, improvements along Drake Road, enhancements to parks, and the properties being revitalized by Kendallville Restorations Inc. (KRI) – through compelling “before and after” storytelling on social media and print media. These visual narratives not only highlight transformation but also foster civic pride and engagement.

The campaign should align closely with the City's long-term planning efforts, including the Kendallville Plan and the 2025-2030 Park Master Plan. By promoting the shared vision outlined in these documents and any documents that come out of these, the City reinforces its dedication to thoughtful growth and redevelopment, cultural enrichment, and community well-being.

While Kendallville has made commendable strides in regional and national promotion, including its upcoming feature on Viewpoint with Dennis Quaid, there is a renewed focus on deepening local engagement. To maximize the impact of this national exposure, all promotional materials from the Viewpoint with Dennis Quaid filming should be actively shared with local media outlets, especially television stations and on social media, ensuring residents feel connected to and proud of their City's recognition.

This multi-layered PR strategy is more than a communications effort – it is a celebration of Kendallville's evolving identity, a bridge between its rich history and promising future, and a call to action for every resident to participate in shaping the narrative of their community.

Increasing Community Engagement

At the beginning of the planning process, there were concerns that community apathy might hinder progress. However, the overwhelming volume of feedback received throughout the project suggests a strong undercurrent of interest and investment among residents. While apathy is a challenge faced by many communities, it is not insurmountable – and Kendallville is well-positioned to lead by example in overcoming it.

A key strategy in combating disengagement is identifying and rallying around shared goals. Projects like a heavily-desired splash pad can show how a unifying cause can galvanize community support and participation. By focusing on initiatives that resonate with residents, the City can foster a sense of collective purpose and pride.

Encouraging community ownership is essential. Initiatives such as the community garden at the Community Learning Center (CLC), or new initiatives such as the development of a new City logo, a community flag, or public mural projects offer residents tangible ways to contribute to the City's identity and vibrancy. These efforts not only beautify the community but also instill a deeper sense of belonging and stewardship.

Celebrating both large milestones and everyday achievements is another powerful tool for engagement. Highlighting success stories, expanding citizenship awards, and recognizing community contributions can inspire continued involvement and reinforce positive momentum.

Ongoing support for community events remains a cornerstone of engagement. By expanding year-round programming and encouraging residents to take on small but meaningful roles in event planning and execution, the City can cultivate a culture of participation and shared responsibility.

Effective communication is critical to these efforts. Utilizing multiple communication platforms and formats ensures that information is accessible and inclusive, reaching residents where they are and in ways that resonate with them.

Highlight on Sidewalk Joy

Sidewalk Joy is a creative placemaking initiative that transforms ordinary sidewalks into spaces of delight and connection with a goal of sparking joy and interaction among neighbors and visitors. Through whimsical, low-barrier installations—such as Free Little Art Galleries, Mug Exchanges, Puzzle Exchanges, Wishing Trees, and themed displays—Sidewalk Joy invites residents and visitors to engage with public spaces in unexpected ways. These interactive spots foster community pride, spark creativity, and encourage neighborly interaction, all while beautifying the city's streetscape. By introducing similar installations in Kendallville, the City can build on its commitment to vibrancy and inclusivity, turning everyday walks into opportunities for joy and engagement.

Source: Worldwide Sidewalk Joy



Finally, embracing creative and whimsical initiatives like the Sidewalk Joy project can bring delight and inspiration to public spaces. These curated installations – ranging from Free Little Art Galleries and Puzzle Exchanges to Wishing Trees and Little Free Libraries – offer low-barrier opportunities for community interaction. The Enchanted Noble County Fairy Trail stands as a successful local example, and expanding upon such concepts can further enrich the community experience.

Together, these strategies form a comprehensive approach to deepening community engagement, fostering pride, and building a more connected and vibrant Kendallville.

Pride through Property Maintenance + Revitalization

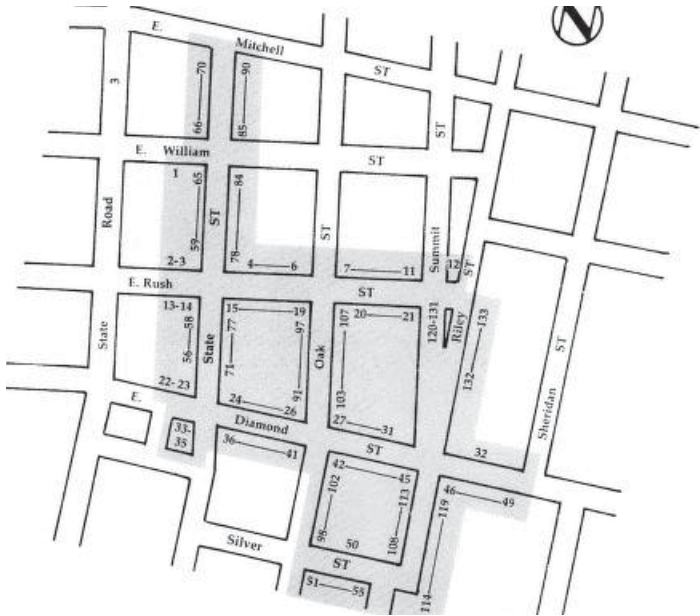
Kendallville’s commitment to revitalization and property maintenance reflects a deep-rooted pride in its heritage and a forward-looking vision for community enhancement. At the heart of this effort is the PlacemakINg program, championed by Downtown Historic Kendallville, which has played a pivotal role in breathing new life into the city’s core. These downtown revitalization efforts not only preserve the architectural charm of the area but also stimulate economic activity and community investment.

Complementing this initiative is the impactful work of Kendallville Restorations Inc., whose dedication to restoring homes and properties has led to the rejuvenation of entire neighborhoods. Their efforts serve as a model for how targeted investment and preservation can transform the character and vitality of residential areas.

A standout example of adaptive reuse is the transformation of the former Kendallville High School into the Community Learning Center. This project exemplifies how historic structures can be repurposed to meet contemporary needs while maintaining their cultural significance.

To further support these revitalization goals, the City should consider extending historic district boundaries to include key neighborhoods and corridors identified in the Noble County Interim Report, such as the William Mitchell Historic District, Diamond Street Corridor, and Park Avenue Corridor. This expansion would allow for the application of historic housing guidelines, encouraging preservation and access to potential grant or funding opportunities for restoring historic homes and supporting revitalization. Additionally, consistent and effective code enforcement is essential to address blighted properties. Ensuring that existing codes are sufficient for maintaining and enforcing property maintenance is a critical component.

Looking ahead, community corridor revitalization presents a strategic opportunity to enhance public spaces and stimulate private investment. As outlined in Chapter 7: Implementation, these corridors can



The William Mitchell Historic District as depicted in the 1986 Noble County Interim Report.

be transformed through thoughtful design and infrastructure improvements. Initiatives like the sidewalk program – which begins in the public right-of-way – can serve as catalysts for broader neighborhood investment, signaling the City’s commitment to beautification and accessibility.

Promoting + Expanding Community Events

Kendallville has cultivated a strong tradition of hosting beloved community events that resonate both locally and regionally. Building on this foundation, the City is poised to expand its event offerings to further enrich community life, attract tourism, and foster civic pride.

One strategy is to increase the number of year-round events, creating consistent opportunities for engagement across all seasons. One promising concept is the establishment of a Christkindl Market, which would showcase local artisans and crafters while drawing visitors from across the region. The Fairgrounds presents an ideal venue for such an event, offering ample space and infrastructure to support a festive, high-impact experience.

In addition to expanding seasonal programming, Kendallville should continue to innovate by developing new, imaginative events that appeal to a broader audience. The success of the Fairy, Troll, and Gnome Festival – once an unexpected idea, now one of the City’s most celebrated gatherings–

demonstrates the power of creative thinking and community buy-in.

Equally important is the promotion of lesser-known events that contribute to the City’s cultural richness. By elevating these under-recognized initiatives through targeted marketing and outreach, Kendallville can ensure that all community efforts receive the visibility and support they deserve.

Together, these efforts will reinforce Kendallville’s reputation as a vibrant, welcoming City that values tradition, creativity, and inclusive celebration.

Public Art + Establishing Art Commission

Kendallville’s existing public art programs – such as Art on Main, the creative apple and whisk bike racks, and various community murals – demonstrate a strong foundation of public art and civic pride. These initiatives have successfully activated public spaces and fostered community investment, serving as visual representations of Kendallville’s identity, culture, and aspirations.

To build upon this momentum, the City should consider formally establishing an Art Commission in alignment with the Indiana Arts Commission (IAC). The IAC is a state agency dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for Indiana residents through the arts. Forming a local Art Commission through the IAC would open doors to grant opportunities, professional development, and collaborative programming that can elevate Kendallville’s public art efforts to new heights. By following a similar path, Kendallville can:

- Expand existing programs with broader community input and professional guidance.
- Access state and federal funding through IAC grants such as Arts Project Support and Arts Organization Support.
- Foster inclusive cultural development by involving residents in the creation and curation of public art.
- Strengthen its identity as a vibrant, creative, and welcoming City.

Establishing an Art Commission would be a strategic investment in Kendallville’s cultural future – one that honors its heritage while inspiring innovation and unity.

Highlight on Public Art

A compelling example of success is found in Warsaw, Indiana, where the creation of the Warsaw Public Arts Commission transformed the City’s cultural landscape. Initially spurred by feedback from a state placemaking grant application, Warsaw launched its commission and engaged residents in hands-on art projects. One standout initiative was the installation of Reflection, a 10-foot mosaic pavilion with direct community participation. The artist, Gail Christofferson, invited members into the creation by hosting community workshops where residents could place pieces of glass into panels that would be used for the final piece. This project, supported by the IAC’s Creative Convergence program, not only beautified the City but also deepened civic pride and public involvement. The art movement continued with the creation of Art Works, a spotlight on Warsaw’s creative makers.

Source: artsmidwest.org





The Diamond Street Corridor provides many streetscape enhancements as it exists today. Implementing additional elements would only further improve this corridor.

Corridor Enhancements

Major corridors serve as the visual and experiential gateways into a community, shaping both first impressions and long-term perceptions. In Kendallville, these corridors are more than just transportation routes – they are vital expressions of the City’s identity, values, and aspirations. Enhancing these corridors presents a powerful opportunity to showcase Kendallville’s charm, pride, and commitment to community identity.

To effectively leverage this potential, the City should prioritize the integration of cohesive design elements and amenities that reflect both functionality and aesthetic appeal. These enhancements may include:

- Pedestrian-friendly infrastructure such as sidewalks, trails, and crosswalks to promote walkability and accessibility.
- Street trees and landscaping to soften the urban environment and provide shade, beauty, and ecological benefits.
- Illumination of Kendallville’s distinctive street lights that contribute to safety and ambiance.
- Wayfinding and gateway signage that reinforces Kendallville’s brand and guides residents and visitors through the community.
- Public art installations that celebrate local culture and creativity, further enriching the visual landscape.

By investing in these elements, Kendallville can reframe its identity in a way that is both welcoming and memorable. These corridors become not only conduits of movement but also curated experiences that reflect the spirit of the City.

This initiative is further explored as a Spotlight in Chapter 7: Plan Implementation, where key corridors are designated and prioritized for enhancement. This spotlight on corridor enhancement underscores its importance as a cornerstone of Kendallville’s broader revitalization and placemaking efforts.



CHAPTER 6: CONTINUE TO INVEST IN PARKS + RECREATION



CONTINUE TO INVEST IN PARKS + RECREATION

Goal



Enhance community health, livability, and pride by sustaining and expanding Kendallville’s parks, trails, and recreational opportunities.

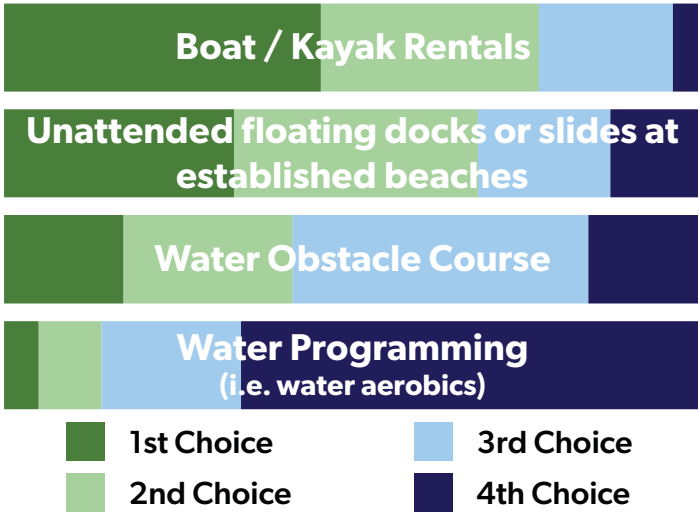
Objectives

- 6-1 Continue implementation of the goals and objectives within the 2025 – 2030 Park Master Plan.
- 6-2 Strengthen collaboration between the Park Department, City Hall, and other local agencies.
- 6-3 Improve park and recreation connectivity with neighborhoods and community spaces through trails and sidewalks as depicted in Chapter 3: Inclusive Transportation.
- 6-4 Study the feasibility of a splash pad, including location, utility availability, design, and funding.
- 6-5 Partner with community groups to support parks through volunteering, fundraising, and outreach.
- 6-6 Explore and implement water-based activities to further activate Bixler Lake.
- 6-7 Conduct a feasibility study for converting vacant or underutilized commercial buildings into indoor sports facilities.
- 6-8 Protect natural areas like lakes, wetlands, and flood-prone areas while promoting passive recreation and environmental education.

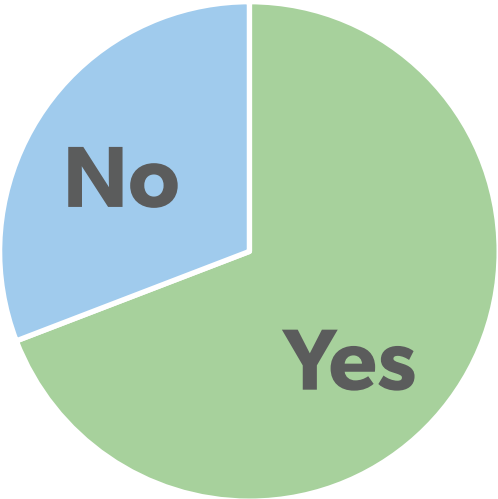
CONTINUE TO INVEST IN PARKS + RECREATION

Foundational Support

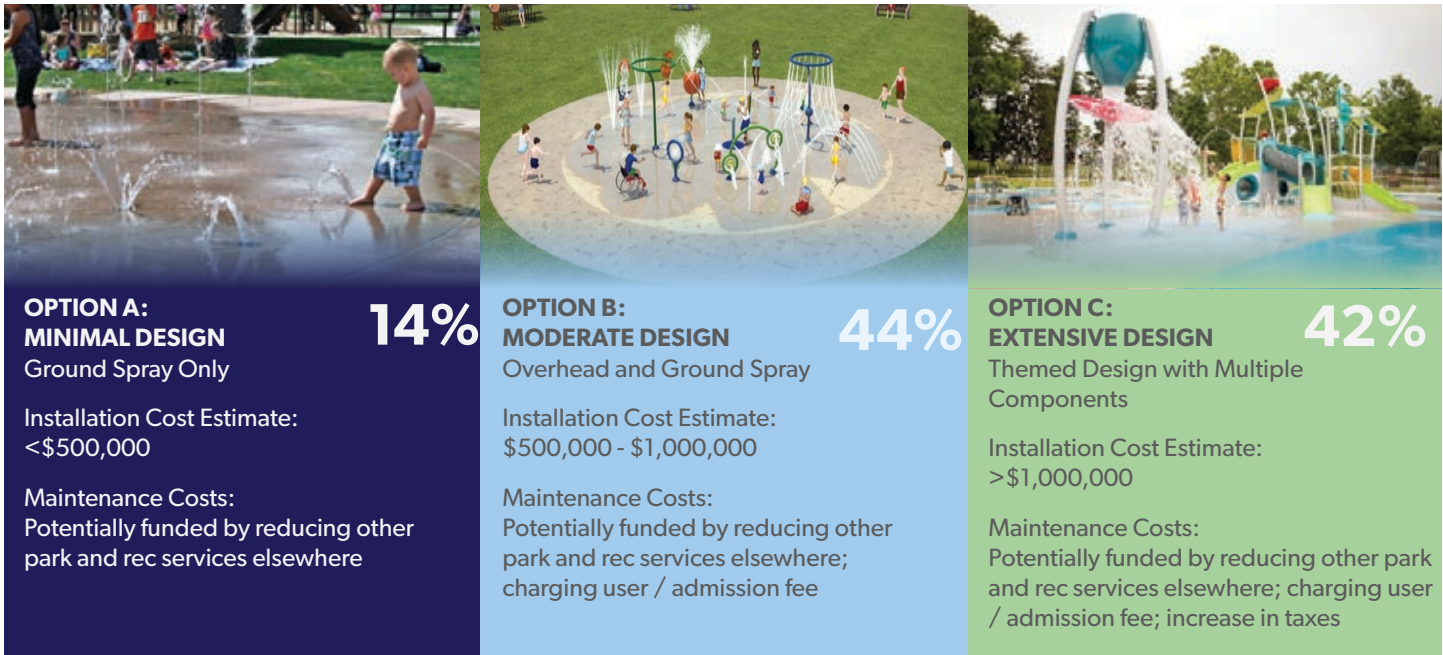
- The status of Bixler Lake’s water quality and mentions of Bixler Lake being an “untapped community asset” were frequently mentioned throughout community engagement.
- When asked what type of activation at Bixler Lake would you like to see, there was significant support of adding self-supported water-based activities like boat or kayak rentals along with unattended floating docks or slides at beaches on Bixler Lake.



- In the first community survey, an overwhelming amount of mentions regarding the City investigating a splash pad spurred a second survey to collection additional information.
- There was overwhelming support for a splash pad in both surveys, especially in the second survey where nearly 70% of respondents stated they would use a splash pad.



- When presented with options, survey respondents prefer splash pads have moderate or extensive designs when considering splash pad components and costs.



Park and Recreation Master Plan

In an ongoing effort to have an active park and recreation system, the City adopted the 2025-2030 Park Master Plan in accordance with Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). The plan provides a clear roadmap for developing recreational activities, improving park facilities, fostering community partnerships, and promoting fiscal responsibility with seven goals that are supported by many objectives and actionable initiatives.

It is imperative that the City and Park Department work together alongside community activists to achieve these goals throughout the course of the plan’s life, as well as continue to pursue and update the Park Master Plan on a 5-year basis to remain active and eligible for IDNR resources.

Creative Programming + Partnerships

The 2025–2030 Park Master Plan emphasizes the importance of dynamic, responsive programming that evolves alongside the needs and interests of the Kendallville community. As recreational trends shift and demographics change, it is essential that the City continues to evaluate and adapt its park programming to ensure it remains relevant, inclusive, and impactful. This ongoing review process not only enhances the quality of life for residents but also reinforces the role of parks as vital community assets.

A cornerstone of this adaptive approach is the cultivation and strengthening of strategic partnerships. The Park Plan highlights existing collaborations with key community institutions such as the Cole Center Family YMCA, the Kendallville Public Library, and the Community Learning Center. These partnerships have proven instrumental in expanding the reach and diversity of recreational offerings, leveraging shared resources, and fostering a more interconnected community fabric.

Looking ahead, the Park Plan calls for the intentional development of new partnerships with local organizations, schools, businesses, and civic

GOAL 1

Enhance Existing and Introduce Additional Recreation Activities

Create recreational activities that boost tourism, increase visitor appeal, and promote health, wellness, and social equity.

GOAL 2

Establish a Capital Improvements Program

Develop a capital improvement program that ensures fiscal responsibility and maintains a robust fund balance.

GOAL 3

Continue Existing and Build New Partnerships

Maintain our partnership with Cole Center Family YMCA and The Community Learning Center to offer programs and activities, while fostering new community partnerships to enhance recreational activities and park amenities.

GOAL 4

Engage the DNR

Form a partnership with the Department of Natural Resources to gain expertise on wetlands, wildlife, and natural prairies. This collaboration will help preserve and enhance our natural resources, wildlife habitats, and water quality.

GOAL 5

Volunteer Engagement and Support

Implement strategies to attract, engage, and retain volunteers to enhance and sustain our existing programs.

GOAL 6

Maintain an Organization Structure

Maintain a strong organizational structure by aligning roles with program needs and providing ongoing staff training to support and sustain our initiatives effectively.

GOAL 7

Improve Marketing and Promotion

Enhance and promote the facilities, activities, and events of the Kendallville Park & Recreation Department by leveraging marketing opportunities.

Goals from the 2025-2030 Park Master Plan

groups. These alliances are envisioned as catalysts for innovation in programming, enabling the Park Department to introduce new amenities, host inclusive events, and deliver educational and wellness initiatives that resonate with a broad cross-section of the community.

By advancing both existing and emerging partnerships, the City can cultivate a deeper sense of community ownership and pride. These collaborative efforts are key to overcoming civic apathy, as they empower residents to take an active role in shaping and sustaining the spaces they value. Through shared responsibility and engagement, Kendallville can continue to build a vibrant, resilient, and community-driven parks system that reflects the aspirations of its people.

Year-Round Activities

Kendallville continues to prioritize inclusive and engaging recreational opportunities that span all seasons, fostering community pride, wellness, and connectivity. The 2025–2030 Park Master Plan highlights several initiatives designed to activate these spaces year-round and encourage residents to enjoy the outdoors in diverse ways. By remaining responsive to evolving community interests and seasonal needs, Kendallville can ensure its recreational offerings remain vibrant, inclusive, and impactful.

Nature-Based Programming

Seasonal Color Hikes are an inviting way to activate the community in seasons of change – spring and fall - especially at natural areas including Bixler Lake Wetland and Nature Area, Blackman Woods Preserve, and Wes Frehse Preserve, as well as along new trails outlined in Chapter 3: Inclusive Transportation. These hikes offer immersive experiences that blend recreation with environmental appreciation, suitable for individuals, families, and youth-based groups.



Spring and fall color walks invite people to connect with nature in cooler times throughout the year.

Community Events and Races

Kendallville can continue its legacy of community events by hosting derbies, tournaments, and races throughout the year. These events could be water-based on Bixler Lake or land-based across the community, such as an Apple 5K Run or a Community Color Run. These activities not only promote physical health but also strengthen community bonds through shared experiences.

Winter Recreation

To enhance seasonal offerings, the City could initiate the installation of a temporary ice rink, providing a festive and active winter destination for families and individuals. An ideal location for this could be in conjunction with a Christkindl Market at the Fairgrounds. Additionally, a designated sledding hill – such as the one near Wes Frehse Preserve – can be improved with essential user accommodations including parking areas and temporary restroom facilities, ensuring accessibility and comfort for all visitors.



Defiance Development + Visitors Bureau

Installing a temporary ice rink like the one above provides winter time activities for the local and regional community.



Activating Bixler Lake

Bixler Lake stands as a central natural and social asset in Kendallville, offering unique opportunities to foster community gatherings, outdoor recreation, and environmental education. To fully realize its potential, encouraging further activation is a strategic approach to focus on inclusive, sustainable, and community-driven enhancements.

To encourage greater use of the lake for recreational purposes, the City should investigate the feasibility of installing water play features such as unattended docks, floating platforms, and slides. These amenities were guided by community input to ensure alignment with local interests and safety standards. Such features can transform the lake into a vibrant destination for families and youth.

A lakefront boardwalk would provide scenic walking and gathering spaces, enhancing accessibility and aesthetic appeal. This infrastructure could serve as a hub for leisurely walks and nature observation, while also connecting existing trails and park features.

Building on the success of current kayak rentals, the City could explore the installation of kayak kiosks to provide flexible, self-service access. This approach enhances convenience for users and encourages

spontaneous recreation, while also supporting eco-tourism and healthy outdoor activity. Additionally, it reduces staff time committed to assist with kayak rentals.

To support safe and informed lake usage, educational initiatives focused on water quality – particularly E. Coli awareness – should be implemented. Signage and outreach programs will help residents understand the importance of water safety, the causes of contamination, and how to engage responsibly with the lake environment. The City already monitors and alerts its residents of E. Coli levels, but educating them on why it exists and why it can't be resolved without eradicating fowl life can assist in overcoming negative comments on lake quality.

Activating Bixler Lake through thoughtful enhancements can enrich Kendallville's recreational landscape. By addressing potential challenges with proactive solutions, the City can create a safe, engaging, and sustainable environment that reflects community values and promotes year-round enjoyment.

Environmental Considerations

Kendallville's natural assets – including wetlands, flood-prone areas, prairies, and preserves – offer valuable opportunities to integrate recreation with environmental stewardship. These landscapes are ideal for passive and select active recreational uses, such as walking trails, nature observation, and educational programming. Thoughtful development in these areas can enhance community engagement while preserving ecological integrity.

Wetlands and flood-prone environments are well-suited for passive recreation, such as nature trails or boardwalks, allowing residents to experience local ecosystems without disrupting them. Incorporating interpretive signage can further enrich the experience by educating visitors on native flora, fauna, and the importance of wetland conservation.

The natural area within Sunset Park, on the north side of Bixler Lake Ditch, presents a unique opportunity to revitalize underutilized space. Establishing trails with educational signage can foster environmental awareness and provide a scenic, low-impact recreational option. Establishing a more prominent pedestrian connection between

the north side neighborhoods and Sunset Park would not only improve accessibility but promote active lifestyles and strengthen community ties.

Expanding on successful amenities like the solar system-themed trail in Bixler Lake Wetland Nature Area, additional educational paths can be developed to highlight environmental topics such as local ecosystems, conservation practices, and climate awareness. These features serve dual purposes – recreation and education – making them ideal for school groups, families, and nature enthusiasts.

The Blackwood Nature Preserve and Wes Frehse Preserve offer promising locations for nature emersion through natural trail development. Prior to implementation, feasibility and environmental impact studies should be conducted to assess parking availability and access and ensure the protection of environmental assets. Inspiration can be drawn from regional examples such as Metea Park and ACRES Land Trust properties, which successfully balance public access with ecological preservation.



This concept drawing from the 2025-2030 Park Master Plan shows integration of walkway connections through natural areas.

Investigate a Splash Pad

Conducting a feasibility study on a splash pad to identify potential locations and necessary development actions is the first step in constructing a community splash pad. There is incredible support for a splash pad in Kendallville, which indicates the community will be active throughout the feasibility, planning, funding, and construction stages of a splash pad.

Chapter 7: Plan Implementation takes a deep dive on the considerations to account for when investigating the development of a splash pad.



**CHAPTER 7:
PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**



Introduction

This chapter highlights spotlight projects selected by the Steering Committee based on public engagement and their potential to deliver meaningful benefits to the community. Each project originates from a specific goal or objective within Kendallville Plan and is presented with detailed information on its purpose, anticipated benefits, and relevance to Kendallville. Where appropriate, example locations within the community are provided to illustrate how these projects could be implemented; however, these examples are not intended to be exclusive or final.

The concepts outlined here should be further explored as the City advances these initiatives, either independently or in partnerships. All designs included in this chapter are conceptual and will require additional studies before implementation.

At the beginning of each spotlight project, a section identifies the applicable Plan Themes, demonstrating how these large-scale projects align with and support the broader goals of the Kendallville Plan while benefiting the community as a whole. Where a Plan Theme is bold in color, this Plan Theme is applicable to the Project Spotlight. Where a Plan Theme has been muted, it is not an applicable Theme.

Applicable Plan Themes



Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use



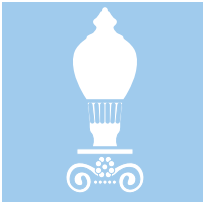
Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods



Inclusive Transportation



Facilitate Economic + Business Development



Promote Identity + Community Spirit



Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation

Non-Applicable Plan Themes



Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use



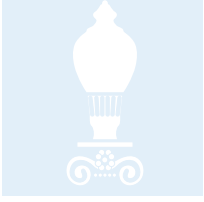
Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods



Inclusive Transportation



Facilitate Economic + Business Development



Promote Identity + Community Spirit



Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation

Spotlight: Focus on Commercial Infill + Redevelopment

Kendallville’s commercial strip centers represent one of the community’s strongest opportunities for reinvestment. As retail and service patterns evolve, these aging sites can be repositioned to better reflect modern consumer preferences, support local business, strengthen community identity, and generate long-term fiscal benefits. With more intentional design, updated property regulations, and targeted partnerships, Kendallville can transform underutilized commercial areas into vibrant, mixed-use destinations that residents and visitors want to frequent.

The ideas listed in this spotlight are merely conceptual to envision how this lot could be redeveloped, providing more business growth and opportunity in an underutilized area. The City would not take the lead on the redevelopment efforts, but would rather act as a partner to bring this concept to life.

Redevelopment Potential of Commercial Strip Centers

Kendallville’s strip centers are characterized by large expanses of asphalt, void of pedestrian environments, and buildings set far back from the street. Fairview Center alone contains over nine acres of parking, much more than its current uses demand. This overbuilt parking footprint has led to inefficient and sometimes unattractive use of space – such as sprawling outdoor product display areas that diminish aesthetics and functionality.

These shopping centers often also include a deed restriction limiting future uses (if they were formerly occupied by a big box store) which adds to the complexity of redevelopment.



Fairview Center has prime visibility from U.S. 6, but the view is dominated by an unused parking lot that has fallen into disrepair.

Applicable Plan Themes



Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use



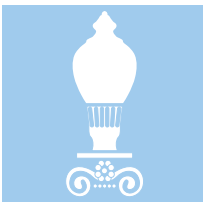
Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods



Inclusive Transportation



Facilitate Economic + Business Development



Promote Identity + Community Spirit



Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation

Reinvestment in these centers offers an opportunity to increase consumer activity, expand the City’s tax base, and create memorable destinations. Converting excess parking into buildable lots with pedestrian plazas, landscaping, and mixed-use buildings would bring new amenities to Kendallville while improving circulation, safety, and the overall user experience.

Many of these shopping plazas have high visibility which heightens the potential for transformation: adding curbing, landscaped islands, and internal streets along with driveway alignments can separate circulation from parking, reduce conflicts, and provide space for amenities like seating areas, food trucks, outdoor markets, green infrastructure stormwater features, and even Designated Outdoor Refreshment Areas (DORAs).

With the right redevelopment framework, these centers can evolve from purely transactional environments into multi-purpose community hubs that reinforce Kendallville’s identity and contribute more significantly to local revenue.

Potential Uses and Redevelopment Concepts

Infill Development

Large parking lots can be subdivided into building pads. New buildings could include single-use or mixed-use structures that incorporate retail, restaurants, and offices on the ground floor with apartments or workforce housing on upper floors.

Workforce Development & Technology Partnerships

Given IMPACT Institute’s location in Fairview Center, the property surrounding it could evolve into a workforce development and technology campus.

Community-Serving Amenities

Redeveloped spaces can also accommodate childcare centers, health and wellness studios, indoor recreational activities, youth enrichment uses, and flexible indoor/outdoor event areas.

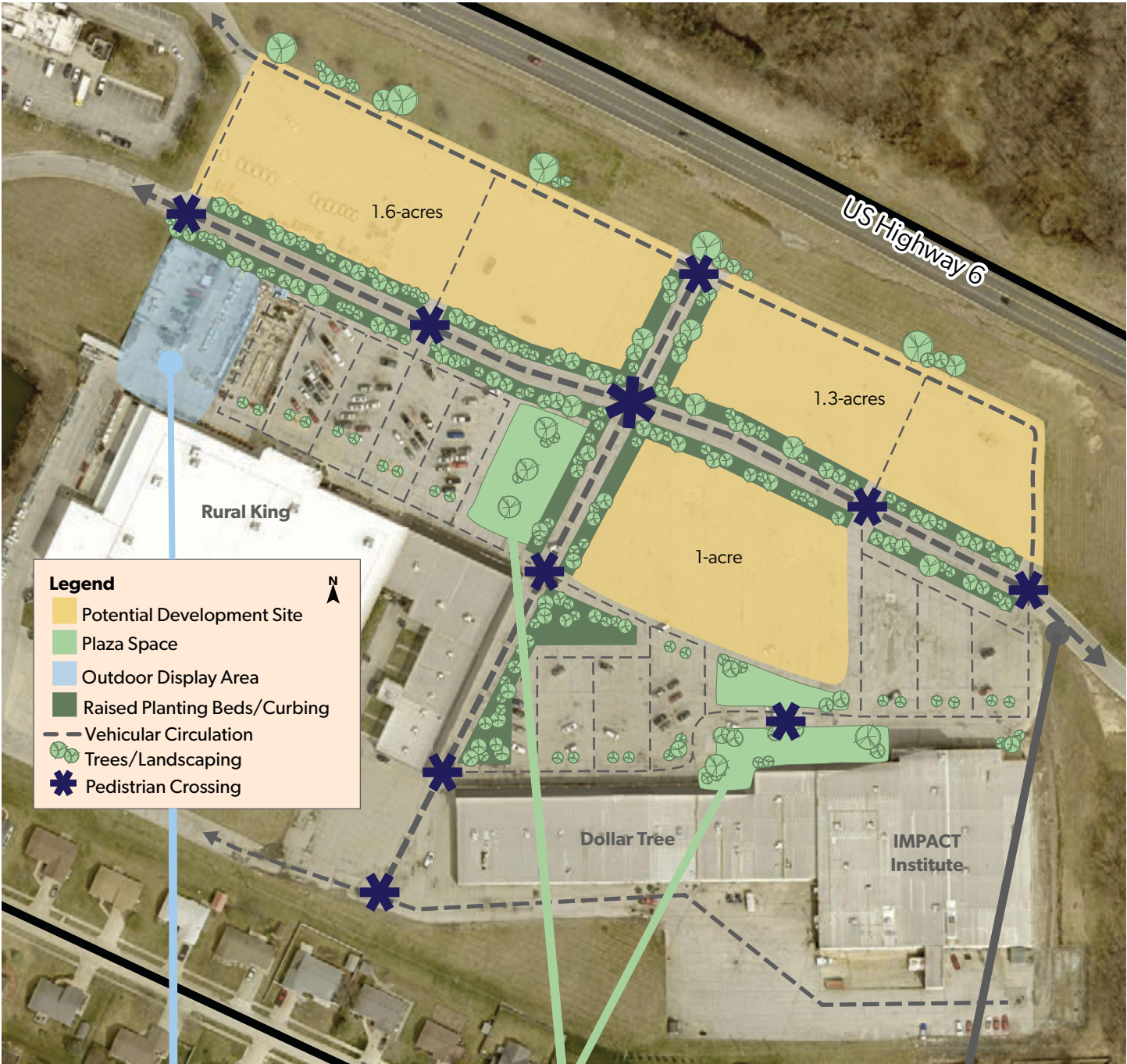
Plazas, Public Spaces, & Special Event Areas

Portions of existing parking lots can be converted to pedestrian plazas with outdoor dining areas, food-truck courts, and/or seasonal market spaces.

Steps to Success



Kendallville’s commercial strip centers hold extraordinary potential for reinvention. By transforming excess parking into productive sites, integrating mixed-use development, improving circulation and landscaping, and leveraging partnerships with institutions like IMPACT, these properties can become dynamic activity centers that strengthen economic resilience and community identity.



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Spotlight: Attracting High-Tech Industry

In a community whose identity has long been rooted in manufacturing and agriculture, a technology park or technology center represents a forward-looking shift – one that honors the past while creating new pathways for prosperity, jobs, and generational retention.

Why a Tech Park?

Small towns and rural communities need strategies that enable them to reap the economic benefits of new technology, instead of merely experiencing the adverse impact (like job loss due to automation).



Downtown Kendallville combines historic charm with modern innovation – an ideal setting for a technology park. Professional resources in accounting, finance, and legal, along with daily conveniences like coffee shops, lunch options, and public art, are all within a walkable downtown.

With investment to modernize interior spaces, historic buildings could be transformed into flexible, tech-ready environments with updated wiring, broadband, and energy-efficient systems.

Similar to the Little Rock Technology Park, (pictured here) Kendallville’s downtown has the character and connectivity to become a vibrant hub for entrepreneurship and innovation.

The economy is demanding deeper integration of technology, data, and analytics into traditional sectors, and agriculture is no exception. Precision farming, data-driven decision-making, ag-software, and smart equipment are reshaping how farms operate. Manufacturing, too, is evolving through robotics, IoT (Internet of Things), and sensors that drive productivity. For Kendallville – that already hosts manufacturing and agriculture – this is an opportunity to move into higher-value segments while leveraging its existing assets, specifically workforce with industry-specific knowledge and experience.

Technology Park Strategy
Industrial Sector Focus

- Ag-Tech and Precision Agriculture: Software development, data science, drone imagery, and IoT (Internet of Things) integration.
- Advanced Manufacturing: Robotics, additive manufacturing, predictive maintenance, digital twins, and automation specifically focused in advanced materials, agri-food processing, automotive supply, and medical device and technology.
- Digital Operations: Cloud computing, cybersecurity, remote monitoring, and edge technologies.
- Support Roles: Technical sales, STEM training, system integration, and research and development support.

Buildings + Campus

A technology park can take the form of a single building or a small campus, but its purpose is the same: to create an ecosystem where innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration can thrive. Such a facility should offer high-speed fiber connectivity and feature a mix of private and shared office suites, interactive conference rooms, a podcast recording studio, fabrication and maker spaces, labs, and flexible multi-purpose rooms for training and seminars. These adaptable spaces encourage the co-location of businesses – ranging from start-up incubators to research and development teams – fostering natural synergies among ag-tech, advanced manufacturing, and digital service providers.

Downtown Kendallville presents a strong opportunity for a technology park, offering walkability, amenities, and a historic environment that blends seamlessly with modern innovation needs. However, several other locations in and around Kendallville also offer strategic advantages. The Community Learning Center, just three blocks from downtown, already serves as a hub for collaboration, learning, and creativity.



Another potential location is along the U.S. 6 corridor – particularly near the IMPACT Institute on the west side of the City – which would provide direct connection to a key training asset while ensuring excellent transportation access.

Applicable Plan Themes

Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use

Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods

Inclusive Transportation

Facilitate Economic + Business Development

Promote Identity + Community Spirit

Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation



Workforce + Talent

Kendallville’s existing manufacturing and agriculture workforce already provides a strong foundation for retraining, upskilling, and cultivating the next generation of tech-enabled talent.

Local assets such as the Community Learning Center, IMPACT Institute, Ivy Tech, and area school districts create a ready-made pipeline for workforce development and entrepreneurship. The CLC’s robotics training equipment, digital media, fabrication, and arts programs can be intentionally aligned with tech-park tenants to provide real-world learning, internships, and collaborative projects that spark creativity and problem-solving.

Similarly, the IMPACT Institute offers specialized trades training – ranging from welding and machining to automation and industrial maintenance – that can be expanded to include advanced manufacturing certifications, mechatronics, and precision equipment diagnostics.

Ivy Tech’s regional presence brings the ability to launch customized certificate programs in fields such as ag-data analytics, supply-chain technology, cloud-based software for industrial applications, and digital fabrication. Together, these partners create a continuum of learning that starts in K-12 and extends through adult education and employer-specific training.

A technology park can build on these strengths by catalyzing new programming – entrepreneur bootcamps, maker-to-market labs, coding and digital skills workshops, or accelerator-style cohorts that connect innovators with mentors, investors, and testbeds for pilot projects. By aligning the physical space of the tech park with this regional talent ecosystem, Kendallville can create an environment where residents can explore new ideas, retrain for emerging fields, and launch new ventures that support long-term economic growth.

Community + Regional Benefits

A technology park diversifies the economic base, provides higher-wage opportunities, and supports entrepreneurship. It also enhances Kendallville's image – transforming it from a legacy manufacturing/agricultural town to a hub known for its innovation and entrepreneurship.

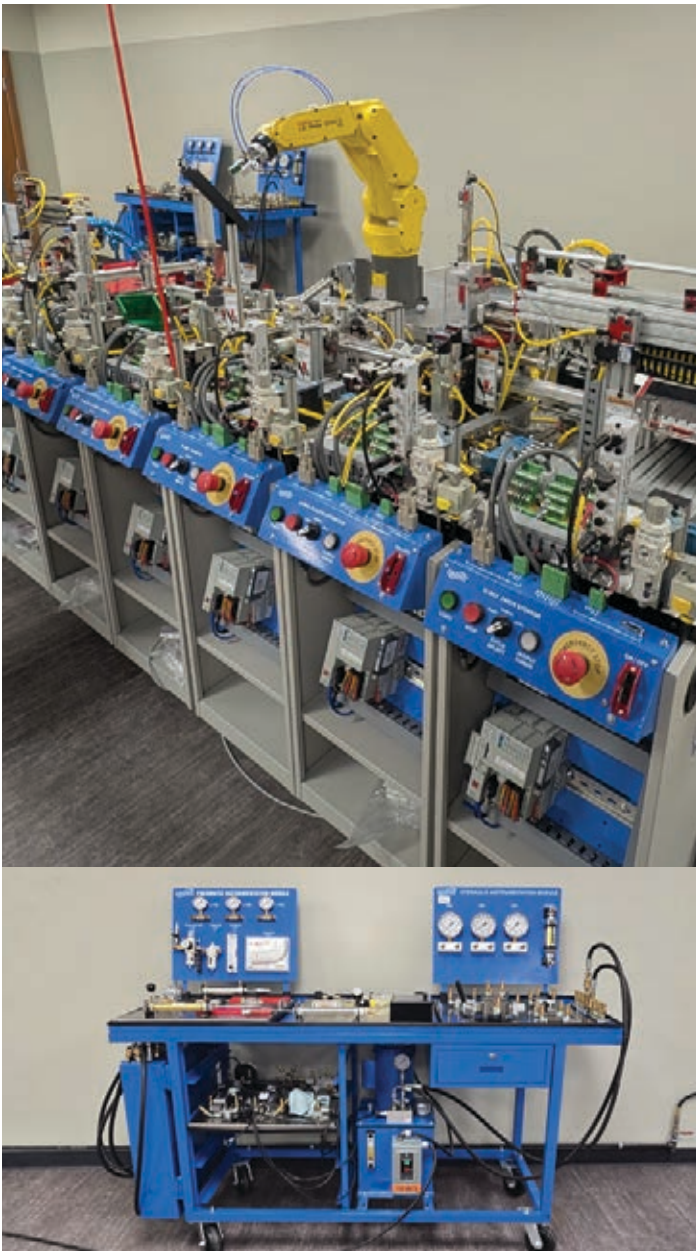
Agri-tech in Northeast Indiana

Traction Ag is an agri-tech software company that exemplifies the intersection of agriculture and technology. Founded in 2019 by leaders with both software and farm backgrounds, Traction Ag



developed a cloud-based farm-accounting application that integrates field operations, financials, inventory, and payroll. The company has raised multiple rounds of funding to scale its engineering and data integration capabilities. Headquartered in Auburn, Traction Ag serves the Midwest regional row-crop sector and continues to expand into specialty and permanent crops.

Traction Ag represents the kind of high-tech, high-value employment that a technology park can attract including software engineers, data analysts, cloud-platform specialists, agronomy-data experts, and product designers. Its success demonstrates how small communities can be at the forefront of digital innovation in agriculture.



Using grant funds, the CLC recently acquired robotics equipment to provide training opportunities for students and interested community members.

Tech Definitions

Additive Manufacturing: A technical term for 3-D printing. The process of creating objects layer by layer from a digital design rather than cutting or shaping materials form a larger block.

Digital Twin: A live digital version of something physical. A virtual replica of a physical object, process, or system that uses real-time data and simulation models to mirror and predict how the real-world counterpart performs.

IoT (Internet of Things): Physical devices that are connected to the internet allowing them to collect, share, and act on data without constant human input. "Smart" objects.

Mechatronics: The engineering behind smart machines. An interdisciplinary field that combines mechanical engineering (machines/mechanisms), electronics (sensors/circuits/power systems), and computer science and controls (software/automation/robotics). A mechatronics technician works on systems where mechanical parts, electrical components, and computer programming all interact.

Precision Farming: A technology-based approach to farming that uses data, sensors, GPS, and analytics to manage crops and livestock with greater accuracy and efficiency. Using technology to give plants and animals exactly what they need, when and where they need it.

Predictive Maintenance: A maintenance strategy that uses data, sensors, and analytics to predict when equipment or machinery is likely to fail. Instead of waiting for something to break (reactive maintenance) or using a fixed schedule for maintenance (preventative maintenance), predictive maintenance monitors the actual condition and performance of equipment to anticipate problems early.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics): An educational focus and a career field category that emphasizes critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation, and hands-on learning through these four disciplines.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Spotlight: Corridor Enhancement

Major corridors serve as the visual and experiential gateways into a community, shaping both first impressions and long-term perceptions. In Kendallville, these corridors are more than just transportation routes – they are vital expressions of the City’s identity, values, and aspirations. Enhancing these corridors presents a powerful opportunity to showcase Kendallville’s charm, pride, and commitment to community identity.

By investing in these elements, Kendallville can reframe its identity in a way that is both welcoming and memorable. These corridors become not only conduits of movement but also curated experiences that reflect the spirit of the City.

This spotlight on corridor enhancement underscores its importance as a cornerstone of Kendallville’s broader revitalization and placemaking efforts. It also reinforces that corridor enhancement is an initiative that is supported by all Plan Themes.



To effectively leverage this potential, the City should prioritize the integration of cohesive design elements and amenities that reflect both functionality and aesthetic appeal. These enhancements may include:

PROMOTING WALKABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

SOFTENING THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

WELCOMING AND GUIDING RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

CELEBRATING CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

Applicable Plan Themes



Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use



Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods



Inclusive Transportation



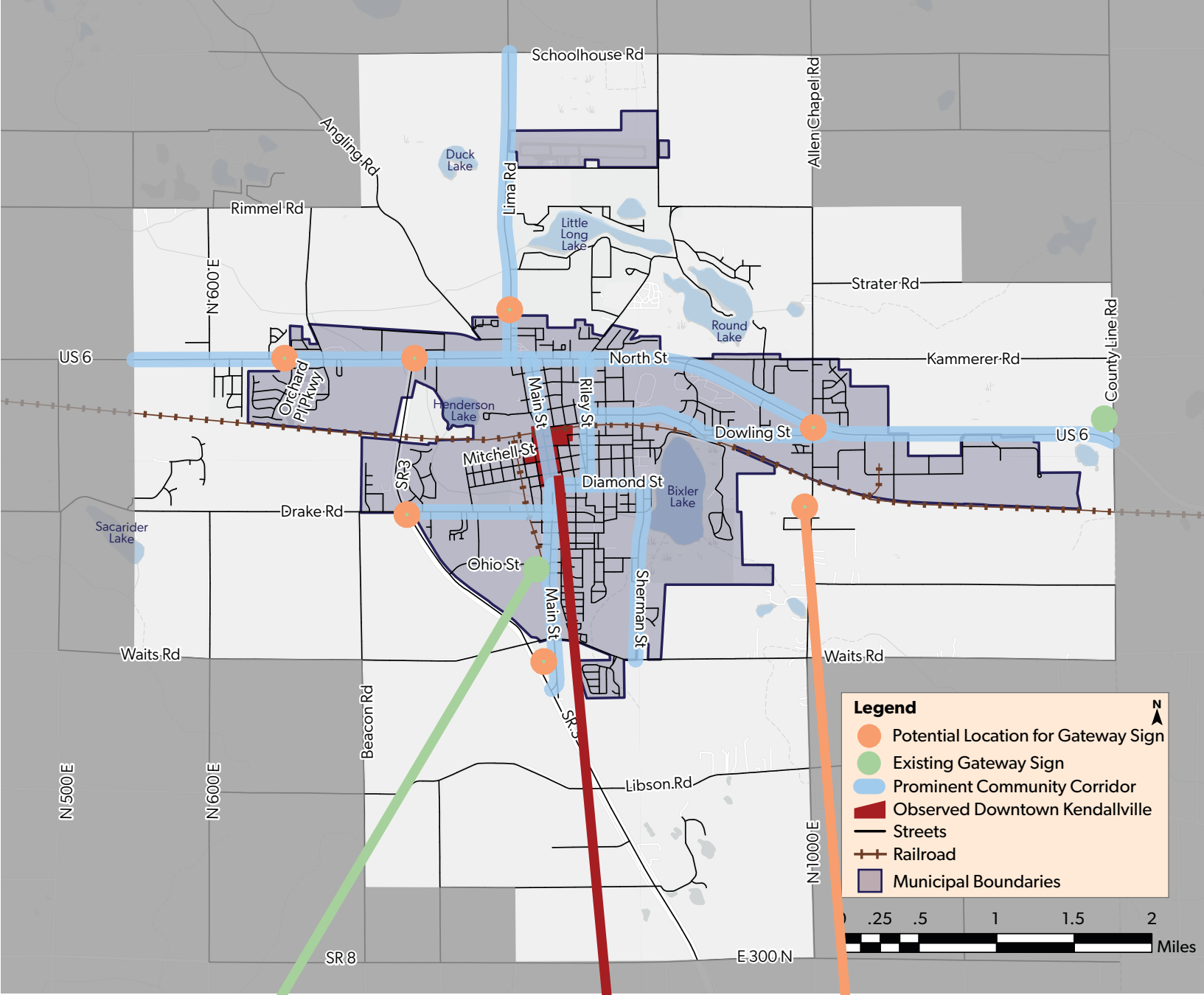
Facilitate Economic + Business Development



Promote Identity + Community Spirit



Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation



Community Gateway Signs



Entrance feature welcoming visitors to Downtown



Community Gateway Signs

This map depicts a community-wide initiative focused on prominent community corridors that should implement enhanced corridor elements. It also identifies locations of existing and potential gateway signs welcoming visitors into the community.

Promoting Walkability + Accessibility

Improving walkability in community corridors is vital for safety, inclusivity, and connectivity. Key strategies include maintaining continuous, accessible sidewalks and upgrading them to multi-use trails as aligned with the Sidewalks + Trails Map, which supports walking, cycling, and recreation. Safety enhancements such as high-visibility painted crosswalks, curb bump-outs to shorten crossing distances, and pedestrian refuge islands for wide roads help protect pedestrians and increase driver awareness. Together, these measures create safer, more inviting spaces that encourage active transportation and strengthen community vitality.



Softening the Urban Environment

Street trees, natural materials, landscaping, and bioswales transform rigid streetscapes into comfortable, sustainable environments. Trees provide shade and improve air quality, while landscaping adds beauty and biodiversity. Permeable materials reduce runoff and integrate built elements with nature. Bioswales manage stormwater, enhance water quality, and support wildlife. Together, these features deliver shade, visual appeal, and ecological resilience.



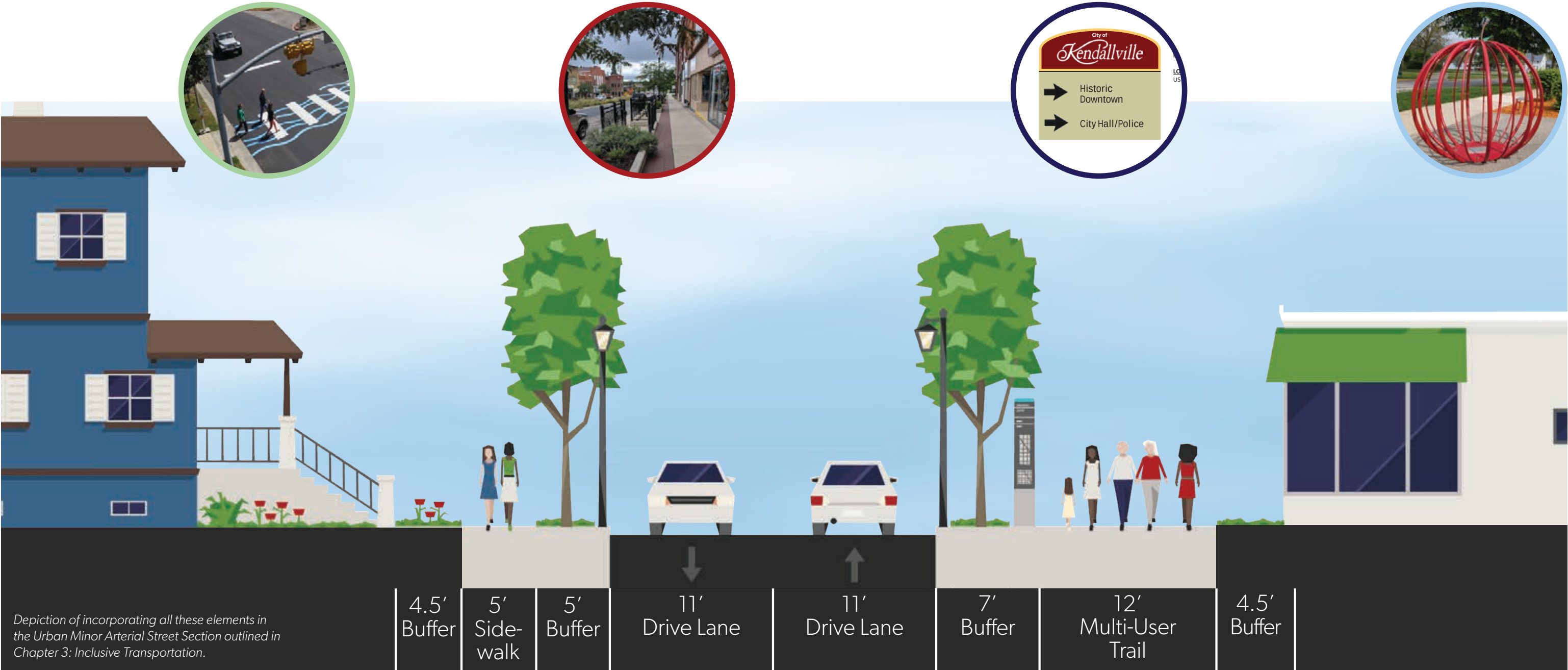
Welcoming + Guiding Residents + Visitors

Well-designed wayfinding and gateway signage strengthens Kendallville's identity while improving navigation for residents and visitors. These elements create a cohesive visual brand, making the community recognizable and welcoming. Clear directional signage enhances accessibility, reduces confusion, and encourages exploration of local destinations. Gateway features signal arrival, promote pride, and leave a lasting positive impression, reinforcing Kendallville as a vibrant and connected community.



Celebrating Culture + Creativity

Enhancing streetscapes with Kendallville's distinctive street lighting and public art fosters both safety and identity. Kendallville's unique street luminaires improve visibility while creating a warm, inviting ambiance that reflects local character. Complementing this, public art installations – murals, sculptures, and interactive pieces – celebrate community heritage, creativity, and history. These elements transform ordinary corridors into vibrant cultural experiences, enriching the visual landscape and strengthening civic pride.



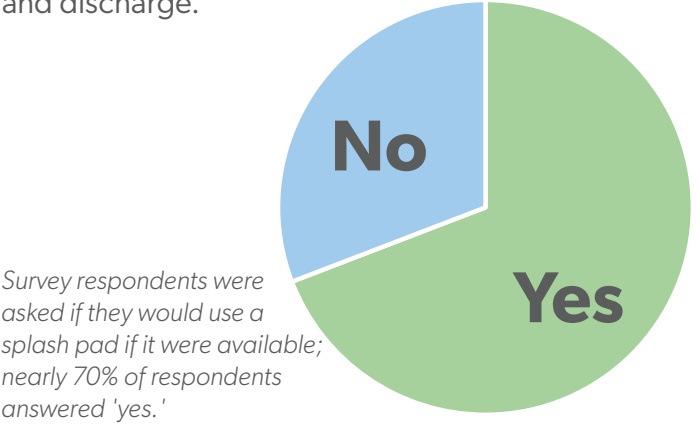
Spotlight: Investigating Splash Pad Development

Splash pads serve as valuable community amenities, providing a safe and inclusive environment for water-based recreation. In Kendallville, public interest in constructing a splash pad is strong, as demonstrated through community surveys and engagement opportunities. This support was further validated in the 2025–2030 Park Master Plan, where a splash pad ranked among the top five most requested new amenities.

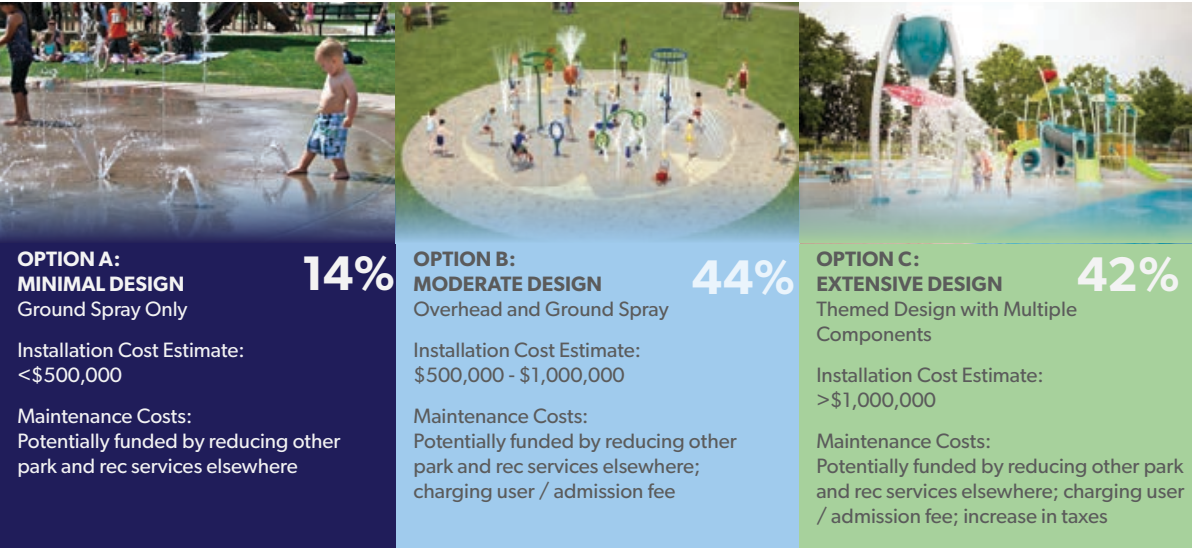
Compared to traditional pools, splash pads offer greater cost efficiency, particularly in terms of water usage and operational expenses. However, several factors influence the overall cost and feasibility of implementation, including location, system type, and design features.

The community must first determine whether to pursue a ground spray or overhead structure design. While overhead structures provide a more dynamic play experience, they typically incur higher material and installation costs.

System selection is another critical cost consideration. A Flow Through System, which discharges used water into the sanitary system, is less expensive to install but may result in higher long-term utility costs due to potable water consumption and wastewater discharge. In contrast, a Recirculating System filters and reuses water, requiring more upfront investment but offering long-term savings through reduced water usage and discharge.



Survey respondents were also asked what type of splash pad design they preferred based on installation and maintenance cost estimates. The results listed to the right indicate interest in a moderate to extensive designed splash pad.



Applicable Plan Themes

Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use

Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods

Inclusive Transportation

Facilitate Economic + Business Development

Promote Identity + Community Spirit

Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation

Utility infrastructure also plays a significant role in project feasibility. Costs may increase if the proposed site lacks access to adequate water, storm, or sanitary systems. Additional infrastructure, such as lift stations for low-lying areas, may be required. State regulations, including those from the Department of Homeland Security, mandate features such as accessible restrooms within 300 feet and outdoor showers for recirculating systems. Other design elements – such as accessible pathways, seating, and parking – must also be considered.

Previous planning efforts, including the 2020–2025 Park Master Plan, identified potential sites for a splash pad, notably the Kendallville Outdoor Recreation Center, considering its volume of visitors, and Sunset Park, considering its integration in established neighborhoods. To advance the project, a Splash Pad Oversight Committee should be formed to guide the decisions and develop funding strategies. Through the Splash Pad Oversight Committee, the City should initiate a feasibility study to assess site readiness, infrastructure needs, and associated costs. The feasibility study will identify further steps in detail, but in general, the process of splash pad development is as follows:

1. Form Splash Pad Oversight Committee made of City Officials and passionate community members.
2. Conduct a feasibility study to be informed about site selection, infrastructure needs, design elements, and associated costs. Open for public engagement if desired.
3. Finalize Site + Design Selection and determine details and costs.
4. Raise funds through community fundraisers, grants, and community investment opportunities.
5. Begin Splash Pad development by selecting contractor, obtaining permits, and constructing splash pad.
6. Ribbon Cutting and opening of new amenity.



Introduction

The Implementation Matrix integrates all components of Kendallville Plan – Themes, Goals, Objectives, and Paths to Progress – into a cohesive framework. It illustrates the interconnected nature of these elements and provides a clear roadmap for action. The matrix outlines next steps by assigning priorities, establishing timeframes, and identifying Community Partners who will collaborate with the City to bring these ideas to life.

How it works

Each two-page spread focuses on a single Plan Theme. The Plan Theme and its corresponding Goal appear in the top-left corner for quick reference. Below, a table lists all objectives associated with that Plan Theme and cross-references them with every other Plan Theme. If an objective relates to another Theme, it is marked with a circle, illustrating the interconnected nature of the plan.

- Objectives are then assigned a priority level - high, medium, or low:
- High Priority: Projects or policies the City actively supports and pursues. Even if long-term or ongoing, these objectives should be reinforced through policy, decision-making, and action.
 - Medium Priority: Initiatives that would benefit the community and can be advanced when opportunities arise.
 - Low Priority: Important but complex projects that may require significant resources. It may be beneficial to focus on higher-priority items first.

Paths to Progress identified throughout the plan are also included here, aligned with each objective. This means a Path to Progress originally listed in Chapter 3 may appear multiple times across different Plan Themes, reflecting the plan’s integrated approach.

- Each objective is assigned a timeframe, indicating when the City should begin pursuing it – not the duration of completion. Timeframe options include:
- Ongoing: Projects that begin in their designated timeframe and require periodic review for continued relevance.
 - 0 - 2 Years: Initiatives to start promptly, even if only through initial discussions with partners.
 - 3 - 5 Years: Projects scheduled to begin within this period.
 - 5 - 10 Years: Longer-term initiatives to start within this timeframe.
 - 10+ Years: Projects likely dependent on the completion of other efforts.

Finally, Community Partners are listed alongside each objective to ensure broad collaboration. Achieving the Kendallville Plan requires community-wide support and action.

Community Partners

To ensure Kendallville Plan is fully supported and successfully implemented across the community, Community Partners are designated for each Theme, Goal, and Objective. These local leaders play a critical role in advancing the initiatives outlined in the plan. The following guide identifies key Community Partners; however, this list can be adjusted or expanded as organizations grow or evolve.

Community partners are grouped by their service geography: Local, Regional, or State.

Local Organizations

- Be Noble
- Church Organizations
- Cole YMCA
- Community Learning Center (CLC)
- Fairgrounds
- Foundations
- Fraternal Clubs
- Historic Downtown Kendallville (HDK)
- Kendallville Chamber of Commerce
- Kendallville Public Library (KPL)
- Kendallville Restoration Inc. (KRI)
- Noble County
- Noble County Soil & Water Conservation District (Noble SWCD)
- Noble Trails
- Park Users
- Visit Noble County
- Youth Groups

Regional Organizations

- ACRES
- Consultants
- Financial Institutions
- Freedom Academy
- Health Networks
- IMPACT Institute
- Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC)
- Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership (NEI)
- Private Developers
- Private Utility Companies

State or National Organizations

- Indiana Arts Commission
- Indiana Economic Development Commission (IEDC)
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
- Indiana Main Street (IMS)
- Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)
- National Main Street (NMS)
- Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA)



ENABLE STRATEGIC GROWTH + LAND USE

Promote balanced and intentional growth that strengthens Kendallville’s economy, neighborhoods, and quality of life by aligning land use decisions with community priorities.

Plan Theme

Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use	Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods	Inclusive Transportation	Facilitate Economic + Business Development	Promote Identity + Community Spirit	Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation
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Theme # Objective

Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use	1-1	Overhaul and modernize the City’s Zoning and Subdivision Control Ordinances to be clear, consistent and promote the development patterns identified in Kendallville Plan.	●	●	●	●	●	●
	1-2	Proactively update the zoning map to promote development consistent with the Future Land Use Map in the Kendallville Plan.	●	●	●	●		●
	1-3	Maintain the existing boundary of Downtown Kendallville prioritizing full occupancy of Kendallville’s downtown buildings, business growth and development, and second floor residential.	●	●		●	●	
	1-4	Promote growth through redevelopment and infill development within the existing City Limits and utility service areas.	●	●		●		
	1-5	Promote the advantages and quantify the perceived disadvantages of annexation to local property owners and the community.	●	●	●	●	●	●
	1-6	Direct future growth to strategic areas that ensure efficient infrastructure, protect community character, and enhance quality of life.	●	●	●	●	●	●
	1-7	Continue to recognize the importance environmental assets play in enhancing quality of life.	●	●		●		●
	1-8	Maintain public facilities to ensure reliable levels of service, operational efficiency, and an enhanced quality of life.	●	●	●	●	●	●

Priority Paths to Progress Timeframe Community Partners

High	Modernization of Ordinances; Missing Middle Housing; Housing Readiness; Access Management	0-2 Years; Ongoing	Consultants
High	Future Land Use Map; Zoning Map; Missing Middle Housing; Housing Readiness	0-2 Years; Ongoing	Consultants
High	Downtown Kendallville; Supporting Existing Businesses; Building Capacity	Ongoing	HDK; Financial Institutions; Private Developers
High	Future Land Use Map; Growth, Annexation, + Redevelopment; Preserve + Improve Existing Homes; Strengthen Neighborhoods + Infrastructure; Advancing New Housing; Missing Middle Housing	Ongoing	Consultants; Financial Institutions; Private Developers
Low	Growth, Annexation, + Redevelopment	3-5 Years; Ongoing	Consultants; Noble County
High	Modernization of Ordinances; Growth, Annexation, + Redevelopment; Utilities; Public Facilities; Future Thoroughfare Plan; Corridor Enhancement	Ongoing	Consultants; Financial Institutions; Private Developers
Medium	Activating Bixler Lake; Environmental Considerations	Ongoing	Noble SWCD; IDNR
Medium	Utilities; Public Facilities; Supporting Existing Businesses; Building Capacity	Ongoing	Consultants



FOCUS ON HOUSING + NEIGHBORHOODS

Strengthen Kendallville’s neighborhoods by expanding quality housing options, improving existing housing stock, and fostering pride to ensure safe, attractive, and connected neighborhoods.

Theme #		Objective	Plan Theme					
			Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use	Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods	Inclusive Transportation	Facilitate Economic + Business Development	Promote Identity + Community Spirit	Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation
Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods	2-1	Support programs and incentives that encourage repair, rehabilitation, and energy efficiency improvements for existing homes to extend their life and value.	●	●		●	●	
	2-2	Enhance neighborhood character through reinvestment, infill, and infrastructure upgrades that promote safety, connectivity, and neighborhood pride.	●	●	●	●	●	
	2-3	Encourage the development of a diverse mix of homes – rental and ownership, single-family and multifamily – that serve residents at all income levels and life stages.	●	●		●		
	2-4	Update zoning and subdivision regulations to streamline approval processes, reduce barriers, and enable a wider range of housing types that meet evolving community needs.	●	●		●		
	2-5	Identify and map appropriate locations for new housing, aligned with infrastructure capacity, growth areas, and desired housing types.	●	●		●		
	2-6	Proactively reduce blight and improve livability by enforcing property maintenance standards, holding absentee landlords accountable, and supporting adaptive reuse where possible.	●	●		●	●	

Priority	Paths to Progress	Timeframe	Community Partners
High	Preserve + Improve Existing Homes	Ongoing	Church Organizations; CLC; KPL; KRI; School Groups; IMPACT Institute; Financial Institutions; OCRA
Medium	Growth, Annexation, + Redevelopment; Strengthen Neighborhoods + Infrastructure; Advancing New Housing; Missing Middle Housing; Housing Readiness; Sidewalks + Trails; Pride through Property Maintenance + Revitalization; Corridor Enhancement	Ongoing	KRI; IMPACT Institute; Financial Institutions; Private Developers; OCRA
High	Zoning Map; Downtown Kendallville; Advancing New Housing; Missing Middle Housing; Building Capacity	Ongoing	Financial Institutions; NEI; Private Developers; OCRA
Low	Modernization of Ordinances; Missing Middle Housing; Housing Readiness	0-2 Years	Consultants
Low	Future Land Use Map; Zoning Map; Growth, Annexation, + Redevelopment; Utilities; Advancing New Housing; Future Thoroughfare Plan	0-2 Years	Consultants
Medium	Modernization of Ordinances; Downtown Kendallville; Strengthen Neighborhoods + Infrastructure	Ongoing	



INCLUSIVE
TRANSPORTATION

Develop and maintain a connected transportation network that supports all users - including drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists - in a safe, efficient, and accessible manner.

Plan Theme

Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use	Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods	Inclusive Transportation	Facilitate Economic + Business Development	Promote Identity + Community Spirit	Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation
		●		●	●
		●		●	
●		●	●	●	
		●		●	
●	●	●			●
	●	●			
		●			
	●	●	●		●
		●	●		●
●	●	●			
		●			●
		●			●

Theme # Objective

Inclusive Transportation	3-1	Enhance safe vehicular travel on existing streets and plan for future growth while also planning for other modes of transportation.
	3-2	Coordinate with INDOT for upgrades and corridor enhancements along U.S. 6 and SR 3.
	3-3	Enforce access management plans for new and existing non-residential developments to create safer, more efficient traffic flow.
	3-4	Keep major thoroughfares and gateways functional and visually appealing to achieve a balanced transportation system.
	3-5	Strategically secure rights-of-way for future infrastructure improvements and partner with applicable agencies for long-term success.
	3-6	Encourage connectivity between neighboring developments and discourage cul-de-sacs or single access point subdivisions.
	3-7	Upgrade problematic intersections through redesigning, reconstructing, re-signing, or adjusting signals.
	3-8	Develop a Trails and Sidewalk Plan that intends to improve and expand sidewalks and trails to enhance community safety and connectivity.
	3-9	Extend the Fishing Line Trail to connect to Downtown Kendallville and other community-oriented institutions.
	3-10	Continue to require new developments to install and maintain pedestrian connections within the development, as well as connecting to the overall pedestrian network
	3-11	Promote and generate awareness around pedestrian and bicycle safety through education and enhanced facilities.
	3-12	Partner with local and regional organizations to pursue trail development and seek funding opportunities.

Priority Paths to Progress Timeframe Community Partners

High	Future Thoroughfare Plan; Sidewalks + Trails; Corridor Enhancement	Ongoing	Noble Trails; Consultants; NIRCC
Medium	Future Thoroughfare Plan	0-2 Years; Ongoing	NIRCC; INDOT; OCRA
Low	Modernization of Ordinances; Future Thoroughfare Plan	3-5 Years; Ongoing	Noble County; Consultants; Private Developers; INDOT
Medium	Downtown Kendallville; Future Thoroughfare Plan; Supporting Existing Businesses; Corridor Enhancement	3-5 Years; Ongoing	HDK; INDOT; NIRCC
Low	Utilities; Advancing New Housing; Future Thoroughfare Plan	Ongoing	Noble County; Consultants; NIRCC; Private Developers; INDOT
Low	Modernization of Ordinances; Future Thoroughfare Plan	Ongoing	Consultants; Private Developers
Low	Future Thoroughfare Plan	3-5 Years; Ongoing	NIRCC; INDOT
High	Housing Readiness; Sidewalks + Trails; Pride through Revitalization; Corridor Enhancement; Activating Bixler Lake	3-5 Years	Noble Trails; Consultants; NIRCC; IDNR; INDOT
High	Sidewalks + Trails	5-10 Years	CLC; HDK; Noble Trails; Private Developers; IDNR
Low	Modernization of Ordinances; Sidewalks + Trails	Ongoing	Private Developers
Low	Sidewalks + Trails	3-5 Years; Ongoing	CLC; Cole YMCA; Foundations; HDK; KPL; School Groups; Noble Trails, NIRCC
Low	Sidewalks + Trails	3-5 Years; Ongoing	Noble Trails; Consultants; NIRCC; IDNR



FACILITATE ECONOMIC + BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

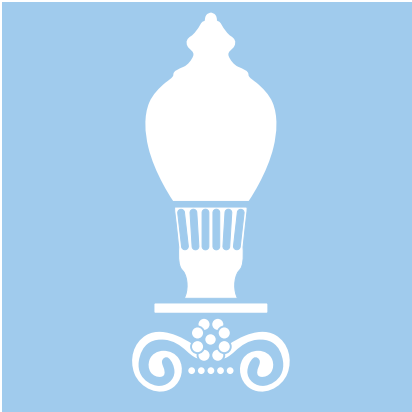
Promote a resilient and diversified economy by supporting existing businesses, encouraging entrepreneurship, attracting new employers, and enhancing quality of life.

Plan Theme

Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use	Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods	Inclusive Transportation	Facilitate Economic + Business Development	Promote Identity + Community Spirit	Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation
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Theme	#	Objective					
Facilitate Economic + Business Development	4-1	Retain and support existing businesses.	●			●	●
	4-2	Strengthen the downtown core with retail, dining, and family-friendly amenities.	●	●		●	●
	4-3	Provide space and infrastructure for high tech and industrial growth.	●			●	
	4-4	Align workforce training, education, and housing opportunities to meet employer needs and retain talent	●	●		●	
	4-5	Continue to use economic development tools effectively.	●			●	
	4-6	Advance tourism, hotel, and conference development.	●			●	●

Priority	Paths to Progress	Timeframe	Community Partners
Medium	Supporting Existing Businesses; Building Capacity; Attract + Expand	Ongoing	Be Noble; HDK; Chamber; Visit NC; NEI; IEDC; IMS; NMS
High	Modernization of Ordinances; Downtown Kendallville; Supporting Existing Businesses; Building Capacity; Attract + Expand; Promoting + Expanding Community Events; Public Art + Art Commission	3-5 Years	HDK; Chamber; Financial Institutions; Private Developers; IEDC; IMS; NMS; OCRA
Medium	Downtown Kendallville; Utilities; Supporting Existing Businesses; Building Capacity	Ongoing	Be Noble; CLC; HDK; Chamber; NEI; Private Developers; Private Utility Companies; IEDC; IMS; NMS; OCRA
High	Preserve + Improve Existing Homes; Strengthen Neighborhoods + Infrastructure; Housing Readiness; Education + Promotion; Advancing New Housing; Building Capacity	Ongoing	Be Noble; CLC; Foundations; HDK; Chamber; School Groups; Freedom Academy; IMPACT; NEI; IEDC
Low	Utilities; Supporting Existing Businesses; Attract + Expand	Ongoing	Be Noble; HDK; NEI; Private Developers; Private Utility Companies; IEDC
Low	Downtown Kendallville; Attract + Expand; Promoting + Expanding Community Events; Public Art; Activating Bixler Lake	3-5 Years	Be Noble; Fairgrounds; HDK; Chamber; Visit NC; NEI; Private Developers; IEDC; IMS; NMS; OCRA



PROMOTE IDENTITY + COMMUNITY SPIRIT
Celebrate Kendallville’s history, culture, and small-town charm while embracing diversity and future growth.

Plan Theme

Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use	Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods	Inclusive Transportation	Facilitate Economic + Business Development	Promote Identity + Community Spirit	Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation
			●	●	
			●	●	●
	●		●	●	
●	●		●	●	
		●	●	●	
			●	●	
	●		●	●	
●	●			●	
			●	●	

Theme	#	Objective
Promote Identity + Community Spirit	5-1	Continue to develop strategies to improve communication with the community.
	5-2	Partner with local organizations to promote and expand local events within the community and the region.
	5-3	Launch a Public Relations (PR) campaign to challenge stereotypes and highlight progress.
	5-4	Review property maintenance codes for sufficiency and continue to pursue enforcement.
	5-5	Enhance major corridors and gateways into and through the City creating a welcoming environment.
	5-6	Consider hiring an employee or contracting a PR firm to focus on Public Relations and Community Outreach.
	5-7	Strengthen partnerships with community organizations and work towards the same community goals.
	5-8	Continue to support revitalization of downtown and traditional neighborhoods.
	5-9	Embrace and nurture the arts community by establishing an Arts Commission to enhance and promote public art and cultural heritage.

Priority	Paths to Progress	Timeframe	Community Partners
Medium	Public Communication Strategies	Ongoing	CLC; HDK; KPL; Consultants
Medium	Downtown Kendallville; Supporting Existing Businesses; Increasing Community Engagement; Promoting + Expanding Community Events; Creative Programming + Partnerships; Year-Round Activities	Ongoing	Church Organizations; CLC; Foundations; YMCA; HDK; Chamber; KPL; School Groups; Youth Groups; Health Networks
Medium	Public Communication Strategies; Promoting Community Identity Promoting + Expanding Community Events	0-2 Years	CLC; HDK; KPL; Consultants
Medium	Modernization of Ordinances; Downtown Kendallville; Preserve + Improve Existing Homes; Strengthen Neighborhoods; Code Enforcement; Pride through Maintenance + Revitalization	0-2 Years; Ongoing	
High	Downtown Kendallville; Complete Streets; Supporting Existing Businesses; Corridor Enhancement	3-5 Years; Ongoing	Fairgrounds; Foundations; HDK; Chamber; KRI; Visit NC; Consultants; INDOT
Low	Public Communication Strategies	3-5 Years	Consultants
High	Public Facilities; Education + Promotion; Attract + Expand; Increase Community Engagement; Promote + Expand Events; Creative Programming	Ongoing	Be Noble; CLC; Fairgrounds; Foundations; HDK; Chamber; KPL; KRI; Visit NC; Noble Trails; IMPACT
High	Preserve + Improve Homes; Downtown Kendallville; Strengthening Neighborhoods; Sidewalk Program; Pride through Maintenance + Revitalization; Corridor Enhancement	Ongoing	CLC; Foundations; HDK; Chamber; KRI; Consultants; Financial Institutions; IMPACT; Private Developers; IEDC; OCRA
Low	Downtown Kendallville; Building Capacity; Public Art + Art Commission	0-2 Years	CLC; Foundations; HDK; KPL; Indiana Arts Commission



CONTINUE TO INVEST IN
PARKS + RECREATION

Enhance community health, livability, and pride by sustaining and expanding Kendallville’s parks, trails, and recreational opportunities.

Plan Theme

Enable Strategic Growth + Land Use	Focus on Housing + Neighborhoods	Inclusive Transportation	Facilitate Economic + Business Development	Promote Identity + Community Spirit	Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation
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Theme	#	Objective						
Continue to Invest in Parks + Recreation	6-1	Continue implementation of the goals and objectives within the 2025 – 2030 Park Master Plan.				●		●
	6-2	Strengthen collaboration between the Park Department, City Hall, and other local agencies.					●	●
	6-3	Improve park and recreation connectivity with neighborhoods and community spaces through trails and sidewalks as depicted in Chapter 3: Inclusive Transportation.	●	●	●	●		●
	6-4	Study the feasibility of a splash pad, including location, utility availability, design, and funding.				●		●
	6-5	Partner with community groups to support parks through volunteering, fundraising, and outreach.				●		●
	6-6	Explore and implement water-based activities to further activate Bixler Lake.				●		●
	6-7	Conduct a feasibility study for converting vacant or underutilized commercial buildings into indoor sports facilities.	●			●		●
	6-8	Protect natural areas like lakes, wetlands, and flood-prone areas while promoting passive recreation and environmental education.	●			●		●

Priority	Paths to Progress	Timeframe	Community Partners
Medium	Promote + Expand Community Events; Park Master Plan; Creative Programming; Year-Round Activities	Ongoing	CLC; Fraternal Clubs; Foundations; Noble Trails; Park Users; School Groups; Youth Groups
Low	Sidewalks + Trails; Increasing Community Engagement; Park Master Plan; Creative Programming	Ongoing	CLC; YMCA; KPL; Noble Trails
High	Downtown Kendallville; Sidewalks + Trails; Pride through Maintenance + Revitalization; Corridor Enhancement	3-5 Years; Ongoing	Foundations; Noble Trails; Consultants; NIRCC; IDNR; INDOT
Medium	Investigate a Splash Pad; Attract + Expand	3-5 Years	Consultants
Low	Increasing Community Engagement; Park Master Plan; Creative Programming	Ongoing	Church Organizations; CLC; Foundations; YMCA; Fraternal Clubs; HDK; KPL; Noble Trails; Park Users; School Groups; Youth Groups
Medium	Year-Round Activities; Activating Bixler Lake	5-10 Years	Noble SWCD; IDNR
Low	Attract + Expand; Year-Round Activities	10+ Years	Consultants; Financial Institutions; Private Developers
Low	Year-Round Activities; Environmental Considerations	5-10 Years	CLC; Fraternal Clubs; KPL; Noble SWCD; ACRES