

WINCHESTER INDIANA

2023 COMPREHENSIVE AND STRATEGIC REINVESTMENT PLAN



Comprehensive and Strategic (Re)Investment Plan

Steering Committee

Joe Batt

Gary Friend

Lisa Jennings

Errol Klem

Bob McCoy

Jim Nunez, Jr

David Rees

Missy Williams

Dan Baker (Randolph County)

City Council

John Boyd

Terry (Bear) Alfrey

Leesa Friend

Jim Nunez, Jr.

Tom Sells

Planning Team

Shelby Alexander

Michael Burayidi

Clarissa Carrigan

Grayson Cates

Joseph Gassensmith

Maria Henriquez

Brenden Resnick

Holly Sedler

Martin Spink

Matthew Yazel

Submitted

December 6, 2023



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Introduction

Winchester, Indiana is a city with a rich history of agriculture and community building. The city now stands at a pivotal juncture with a solid local economic base of industry that has been rooted in the city for decades and a need to broaden and create a brighter future with new industry and a skilled workforce that will continue to sustain the city in the twenty-first century. Figure 1 shows the many assets that the city has that can be built upon to help propel the city's development. This comprehensive plan provides such a roadmap designed to honor the city's past while embracing a brighter, more eco-friendly and inclusive future. The plan is rooted in thorough research, community engagement, and a shared vision that outlines a multifaceted approach to growth, sustainability, and overall prosperity for the city.

Community Assets



Figure 1: Diagram of Community Assets

A History of Planning

The City of Winchester has a long history of planning. The city adopted its first Master Plan in 1967. This plan set forth a long-range vision for the City of Winchester. The elements that were addressed in this planning document are the economy, population, land use proposals, natural and cultural resources, transportation, and capital improvements, along with guidance on how the plan is to be implemented. The plan emphasized that the economy is the hub around which the city revolved, noting that every attribute of the community “either results from its economy or is reflected in its economic activities,” and therefore noted that the economic element is vitally important to the plan’s success.

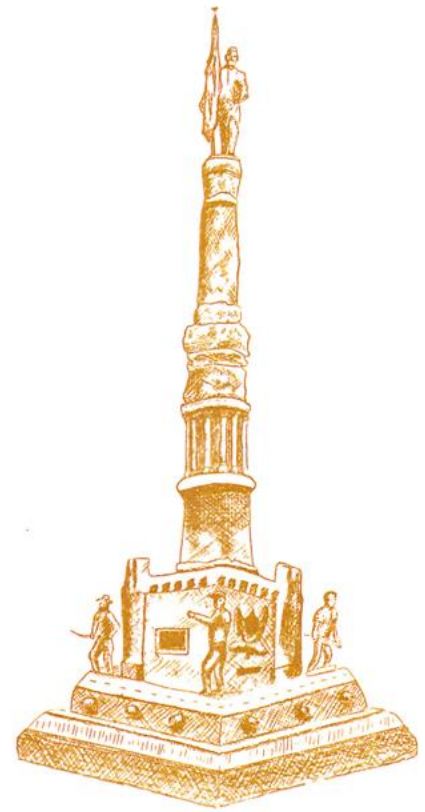


Figure 2: Sketch From the Winchester Master Plan 1967

Although the data in the plan showed a very different Winchester than the city of today, it was helpful to glean information from the previous study in the development of the current plan. In 1960, 42.8% of Winchester's population was employed, largely within the city boundaries. From 1960 to the publication of the 1967 plan, a substantial number of jobs were added within the city. Randolph County increased employment by 21.6% in only six years between 1960 and 1966, and several manufacturing firms in the City of Winchester reported increases in employment. In 1960, roughly half of workers who travelled outside Randolph County for work went to work in Delaware County. The total number of outward commuters constituted about 1 in 5 workers. A very small proportion of employees within Randolph County commuted there from outside the county. Some 25% of the workforce was employed in blue-collar jobs, with glass production showcasing by far the highest number of employees. Manufacturing provided 85.8% of the county’s payrolls, not including agricultural and mineral extraction. There were 16 manufacturing businesses located in the city at the time of the 1967 plan. Additionally, for retail statistics, 125 establishments were in the city. A population increase had been projected over the following decades, coinciding with an increase in the labor force.

In 1967, Winchester’s residential stock consisted largely of single or two-family homes. The consultants expected future growth of urban uses to develop in a compact manner around the city, while most agricultural land in the surrounding county would remain. A variety of residential lot sizes was noted in the city and several concerns were observed in land use conflicts including the location of industrial uses immediately surrounding residential neighborhoods, the inequity in the location of new construction, and a lack of planning for future housing needs. A similar concern was raised about commercial and industrial land uses, noting that there was a lack of room for expansion of industry. A large amount of public and semi-public land uses was identified, including school and park lands, exceeding averages for similar sized cities. Several land use development trends were identified: lower residential densities, rural living, and a high number of mobile homes. The 1967 Master Plan provided historical context for the development of the current plan.

Purpose of the Current Plan

The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to help guide the city’s investment priorities and future land use decisions. Strategic decisions involving investment to enhance quality of place, historic preservation, façade improvements, annexation, parks, trails, and green space will be more effectively accomplished through a coordinated and well thought out approach that is guided by this comprehensive plan. The plan is intended to build upon and complement the Randolph County Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2018.

A Shared Vision

Through a community engagement process which included informal discussions with residents, a survey, and a public forum, residents expressed their vision for the city’s development. This shared vision is encapsulated in the following statement:

Winchester, IN envisions a future where the preservation of a strong quality of life, a thriving local economy created through innovation and collaboration, a cherished small-town atmosphere, and a deep sense of community collectively define our vibrant and flourishing city.

Through this vision, several themes emerged as priority areas for the city’s development and are classified into eight broad areas: land use, economy, housing, parks and recreation, transportation, placemaking, health and education, and civic and culture. These priority issues form the elements of the plan that will be discussed later.



Figures3 and 4: Images of Winchester's Town Center



Indiana Planning Statute

Indiana statute, Title 36, Article 7, as amended, enables municipalities to plan for the purpose of promoting the future development of the community and to enhance the health, safety, convenience, and welfare of citizens. The adoption of a comprehensive plan is established by legislative mandate as the basis for zoning and subdivision control ordinances in Indiana. IC 36- 7-4-501, 502 and 503 state the required and permissible contents of a comprehensive plan as comprised of the following elements:

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

Other optional elements that may be included as needed by a municipality include history, land use, population densities, sewers, sanitation and drainage, flood control, and transportation, among others. The comprehensive plan for Winchester is prepared to meet the state statutes. In addition to meeting the state requirements, which mandates the adoption of a comprehensive plan as the basis for managing land use and zoning decisions, the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) bases its funding decisions in part on the adoption of a comprehensive plan that at a minimum meet some specified requirements. They include first, an analysis of the demographics of the municipality, the city's economic base and land use patterns, an assessment of government's fiscal capacity, adequacy of public facilities and services, placemaking, and the adoption of policies governing economic development, housing, transportation, natural resources, and parks and recreation, among others (see Appendix A for OCRA requirements).

History

Winchester is a city in Randolph County, Indiana (see Figure 5). Located in the far Eastern part of the State of Indiana, Winchester boasts a storied history that echoes the broader narrative of American expansion and community development during the time of 'Manifest Destiny.' Founded in the early 19th century, Winchester emerged as a thriving hub along a tributary of the White River, a vital waterway for early settlers. The town's origins can be traced to 1818 when it was platted and was officially incorporated as a city in 1869. During its early years, Winchester's growth was heavily influenced by the construction of the White River Canal, which connected the city to broader regional trade networks like Muncie and Indianapolis.



Figure 5: Historic Bridge

Source:

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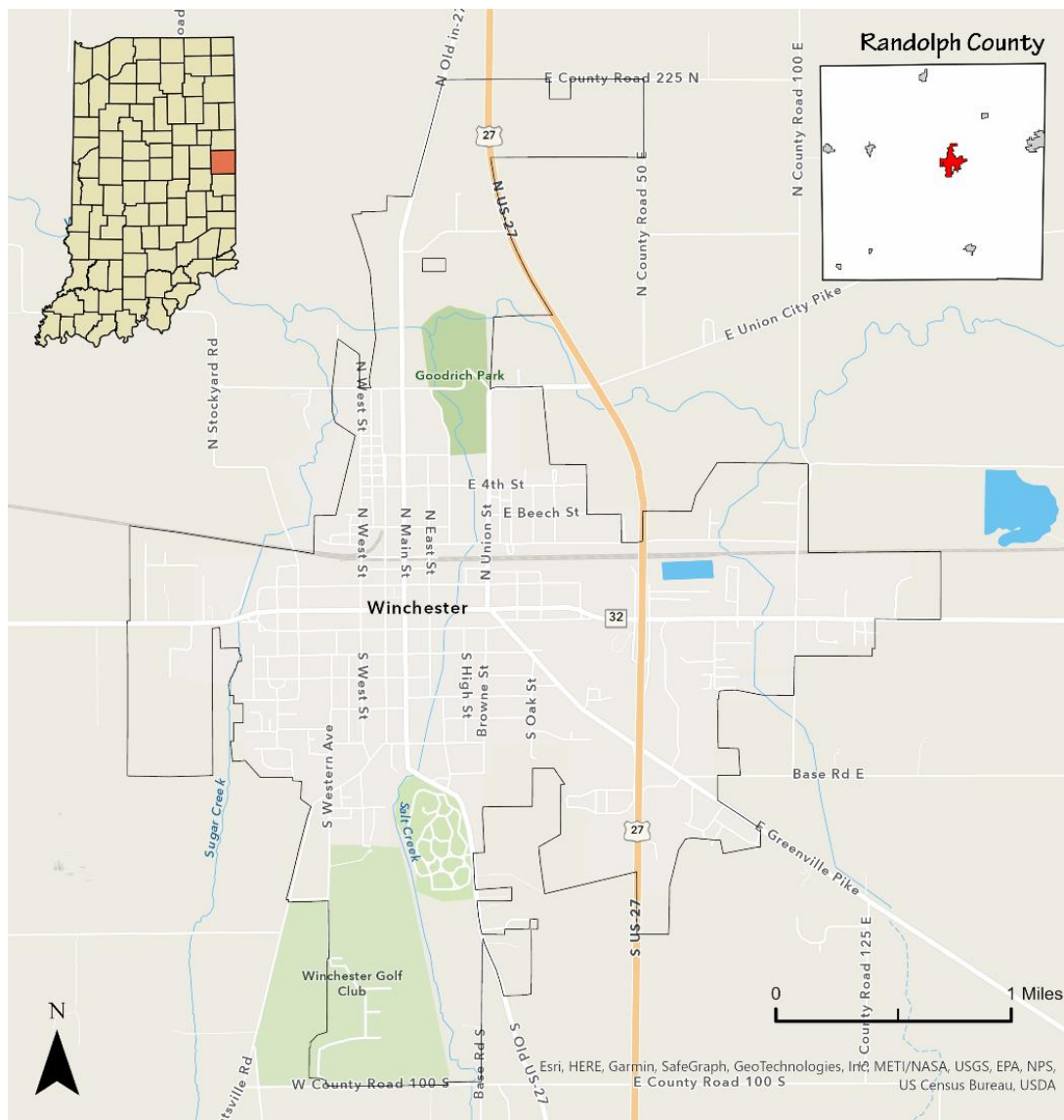
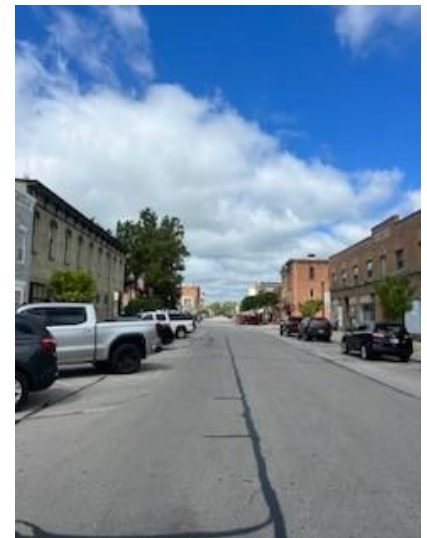


Figure 6: The City of Winchester in its regional context.



Figure 7: Winchester's Downtown



Winchester's history is closely tied to its agricultural heritage, with the surrounding fertile lands fostering a robust and expansive farming community. As the city grew, it became a center for grain milling, providing a vital economic lifeline to the region. Winchester's role as a transportation nexus was further solidified with the arrival of the railroad in the late 19th century, enabling the efficient movement of goods and people. This transportation infrastructure not only bolstered the local economy but also made Winchester a vibrant cultural and commercial center in East Central Indiana. Like many midwestern cities, the two historical pillars of Winchester's economy were agriculture and railroad transportation. Today, while much has changed, and the economy has shifted toward more commercial farming and away from transportation and railroads, Winchester's history remains woven into the fabric of its past and present, serving as a reminder of its enduring resilience (see Figures 3 - 7 for some of the historical landmarks of the city).

Community Profile

Winchester has a total area of 3.47 square miles (8.99 km²), of which 3.46 square miles (8.96 km²) is land and 0.01 square miles (0.03 km²) is water. As shown in Table 1, the city had a 2020 population of 4,843, a decrease of 1.9% from the 2010 Census although DataUSA estimated the 2021 population to have increased to 5,016 (see Table 1). Like many other small cities in the Midwestern region, the city's population is aging as shown in Figure 8. The median age is almost 40, with a median household income of \$51,985, and a poverty rate of 16.7% (see Figure 9).

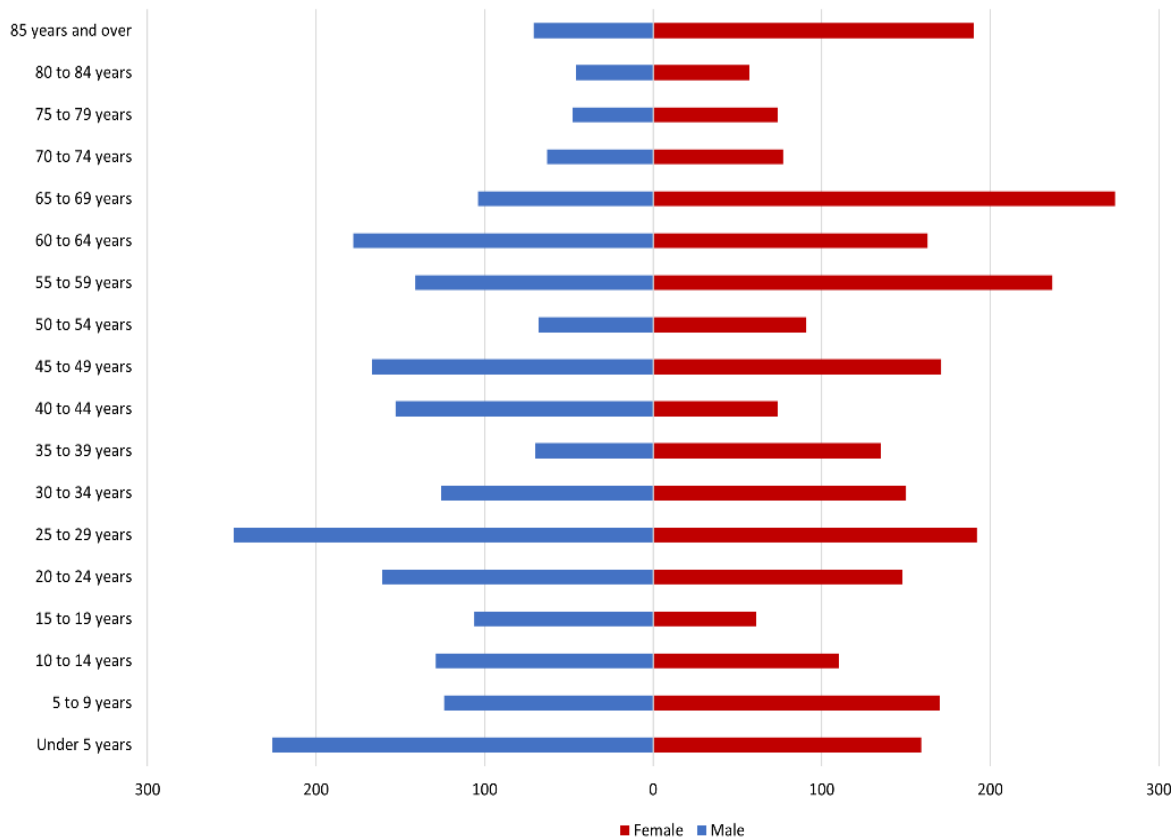


Figure 8: Population Pyramid of the City of Winchester Source: US 2020 Census

Median Property Value


\$79,400

2021
data

Poverty Rate


16.6%

Population


5,016

Median Household Income


\$51,985

Median Age


39.6

Figure 9: Socio-economic Characteristics of Winchester
Source: Data USA <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/winchester-in#demographics>

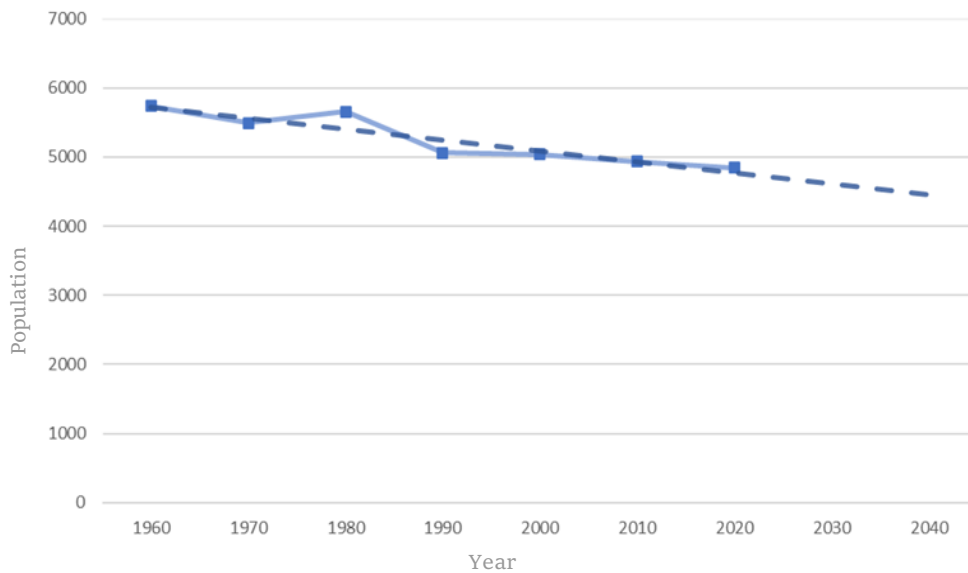


Table 1: Population Trends

Year	Population	Change
1960	5,742	0%
1970	5,493	-4.3%
1980	5,659	3%
1990	5,095	-10%
2000	5,037	-1.1%
2010	4,935	-2%
2020	4,843	-1.9%

Figure 10: Demographic Trends

Figure 10 shows that since the 1980s the city's population has been on a downward trend losing 564 people between 1980 and 1990, 58 people between 1990 and 2000, 102 people between 2000 and 2010, and 92 between 2010 and 2020. Figure 11 shows that much of the population loss in the city is from the age cohort that's older than 35 years. Thus between 2011 and 2021, Winchester lost 305 people in the age cohort of 35 to 64 years and 41 people that were older than 65 years. This trend can be reversed with the coordinated strategic investments that are proposed in this plan and can help return the city to its 1970s growth trend that will raise the population to at a minimum 5,058 in the next ten years.

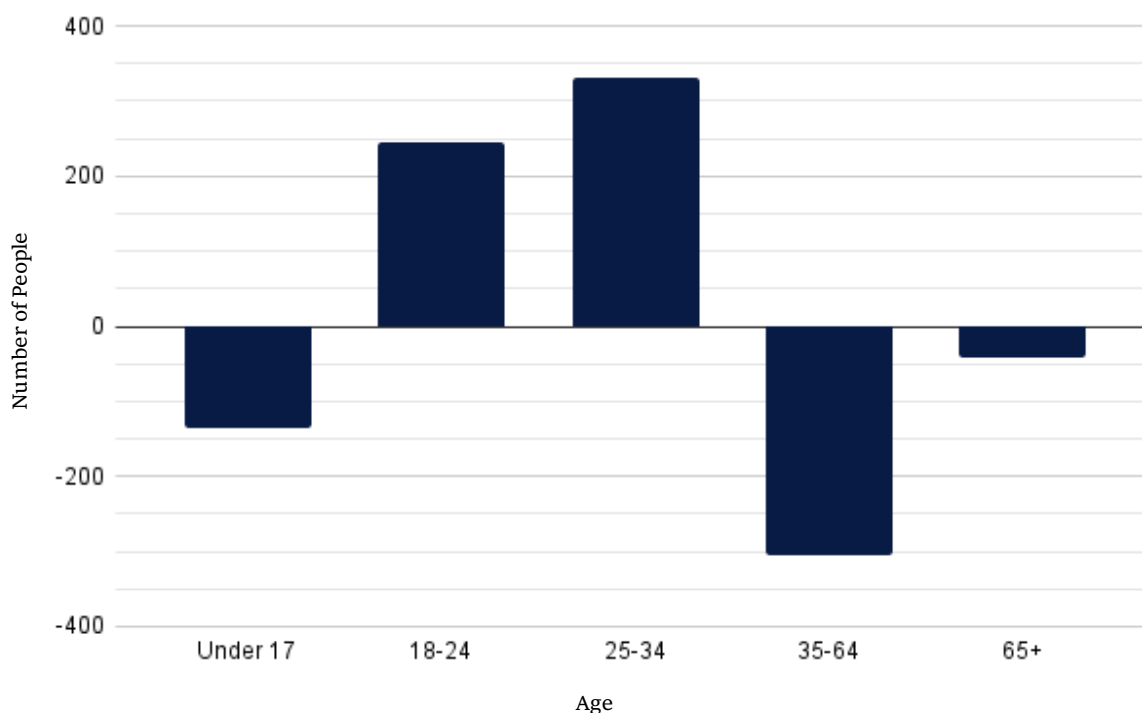


Figure 11: Change in age distribution, 2011 – 2021 Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

Housing and Households

There are 2,818 housing units in Winchester. This number includes both rented and owned units. Figure 12 shows the different types of housing in the city. Table 2 compares Winchester’s rental and owner-occupied housing to the state of Indiana. It shows that the city has more owner-occupied housing (69%) than that of the state (58.7%). The housing vacancy rate (9%) is also lower than that of the state (10.3%). In 2020 Winchester had 2,043 households with an average of 2.34 persons per household. The median age of the population was 40 years.

Table 2: Housing by Tenure

Tenure	Winchester	Indiana
Owner-Occupied	69%	58.70%
Renter	31%	31.18%
Vacancy	9%	10.30%



Figure 12: Variety of housing types in Winchester. Sources: Zillow

Housing Burden and Quality

A housing burden is the number of people that pay more than 30% of their income on housing. Figures 12 and 13 show owner cost burden by income (as of 2021) and renter cost burden by cohort. Figure 13 shows that lower income households shoulder a higher cost burden than higher income households in the city. In 2021, owner cost burden was 60% among Individuals earning less than \$20,000 a year. This is in contrast with those making \$100,000 and above who do not seem to experience a housing burden at all.

Figure 13 shows that among renters, nearly 35% are housing burdened. Single person households and senior citizens, however, have the most housing burden for all renters. As Figure 14 shows lower income households also shoulder the most housing burden. Also, most housing units in the city were built before 1950, suggesting considerable rehabilitation may be needed for such housing (see Figure 15).

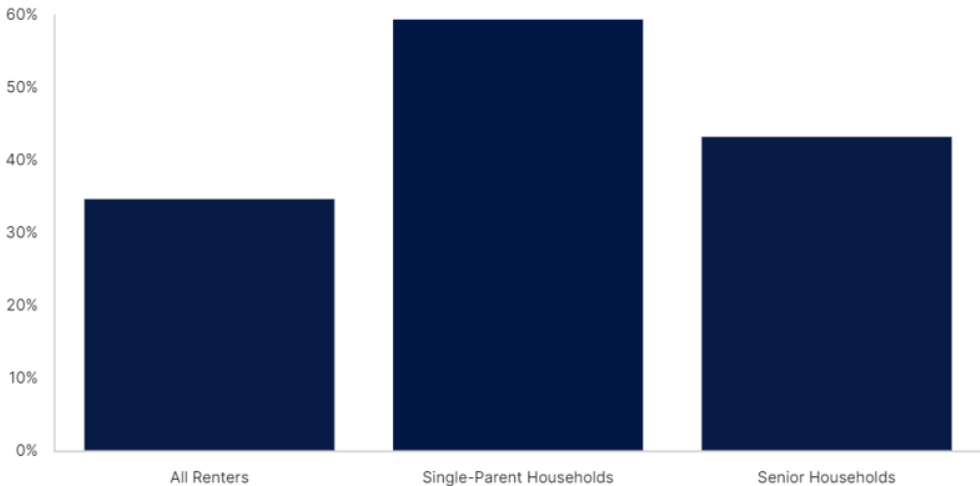


Figure 13: Renter Cost Burden by Cohort Source: Census 2020

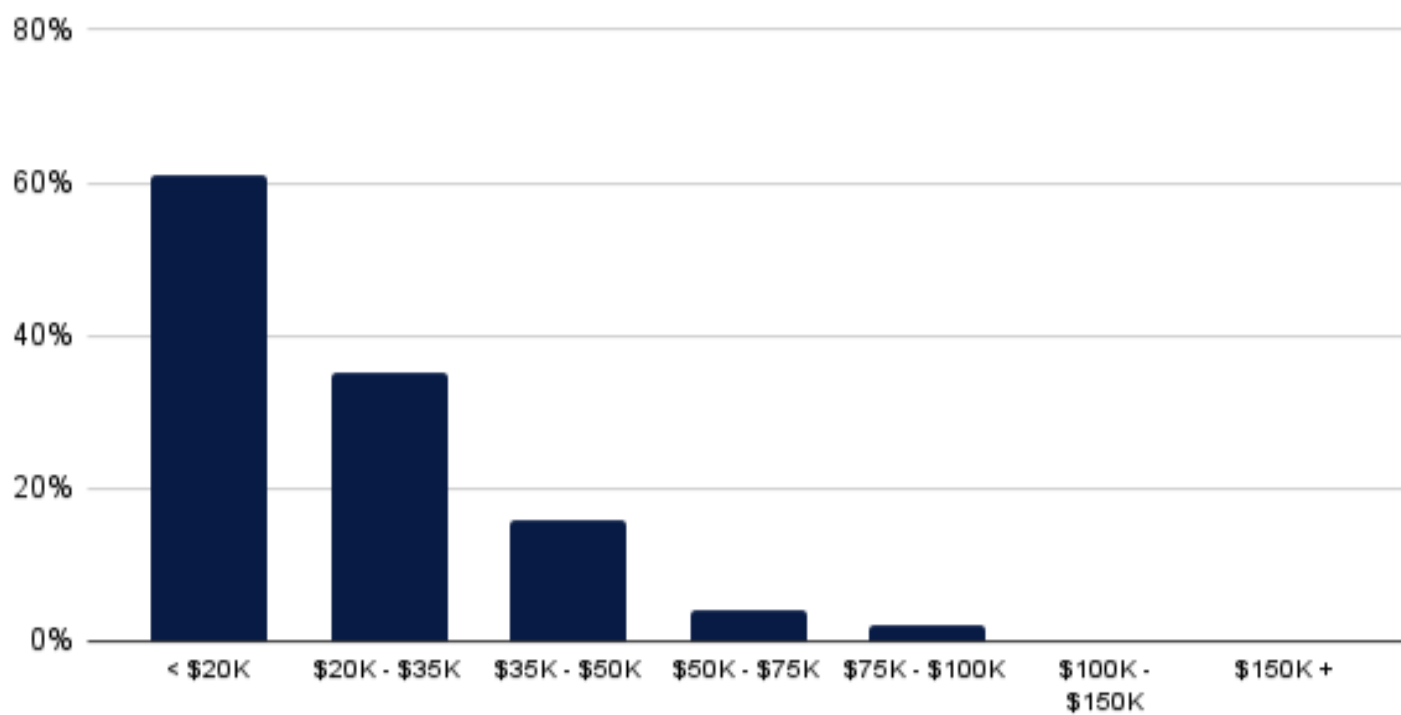


Figure 14: Owner Cost Burden by Income Source: Census 2020

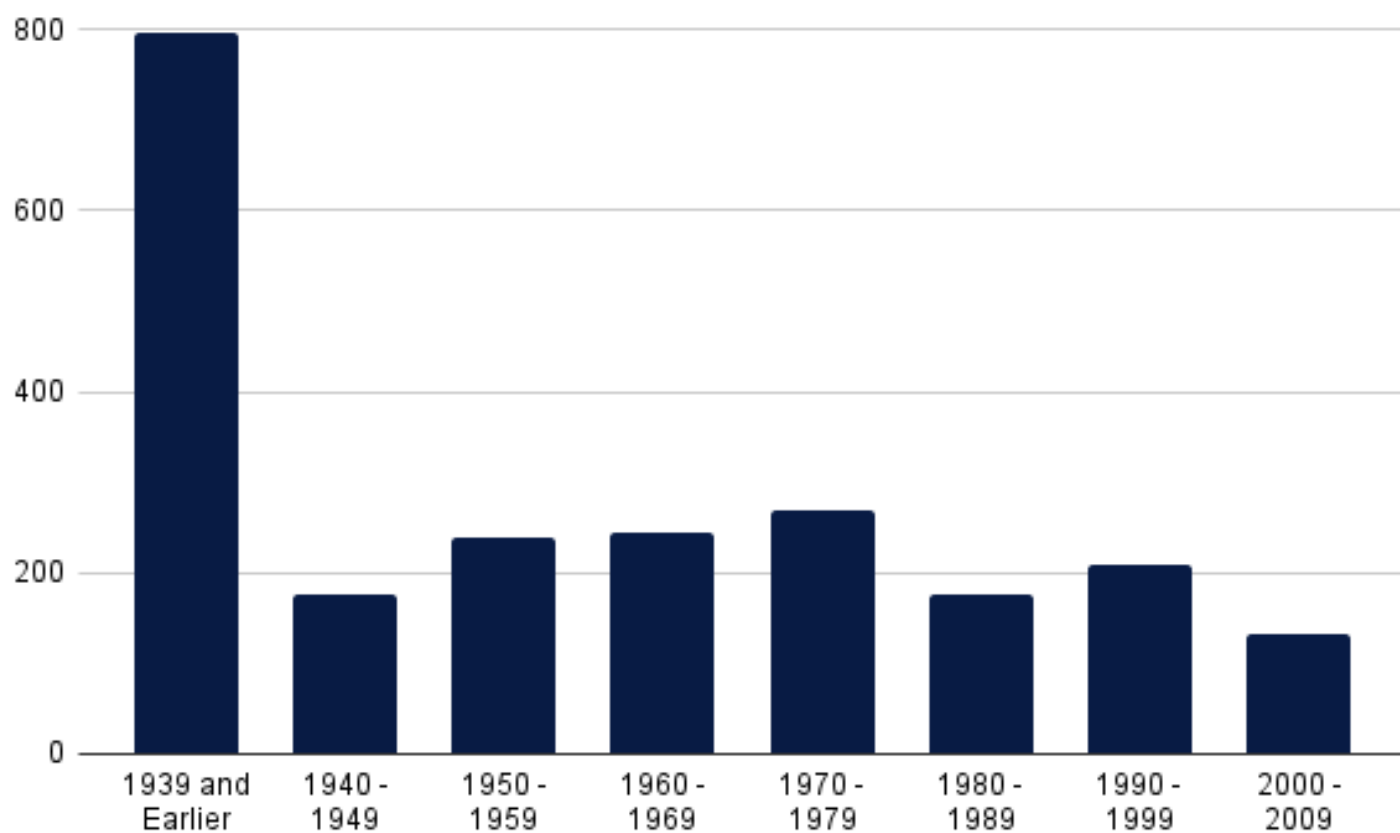


Figure 15: Housing Built by Decade Source: Census 2020

Structure Quality

As Figures 16 and 17 show, the field assessment revealed that 37% of structures are in ‘good’ condition. This classification indicates some level of landscaping and clear attention to upkeep. This category is followed by buildings that were classified as ‘fair’ at 30%. Fair buildings had some detritus but overall neither displayed telltale signs of neglect nor exceeding care.

Figure 18 depicts the type of structures by use with the major use of structures in the city being residential, accounting for 89% of buildings. The majority of these seem to be single family residential.

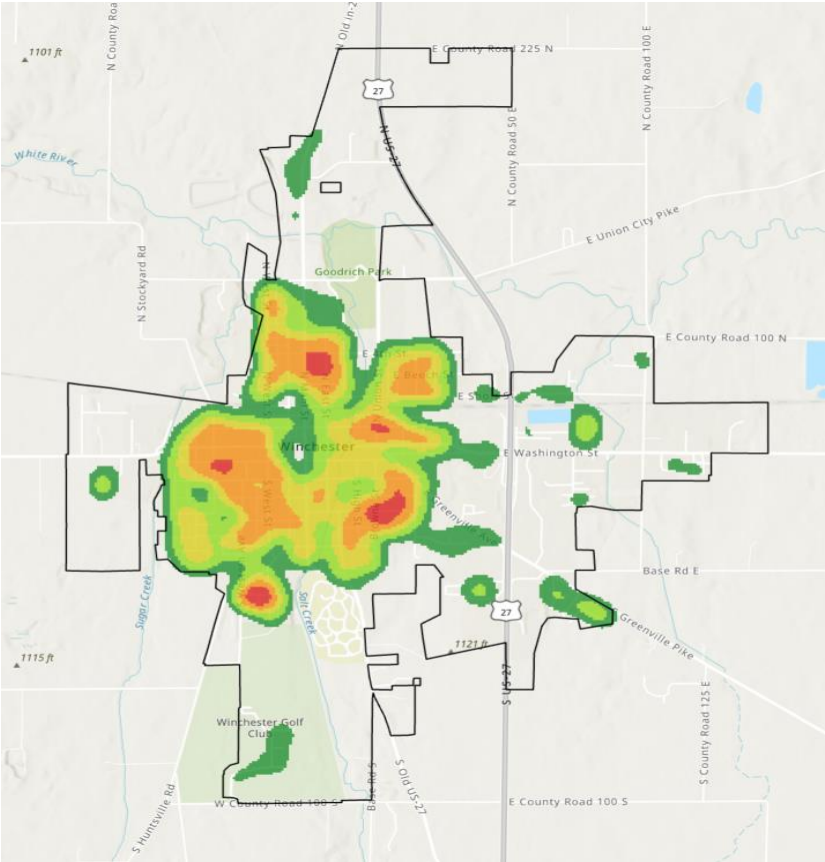


Figure 16: Structure Quality from Field Observations

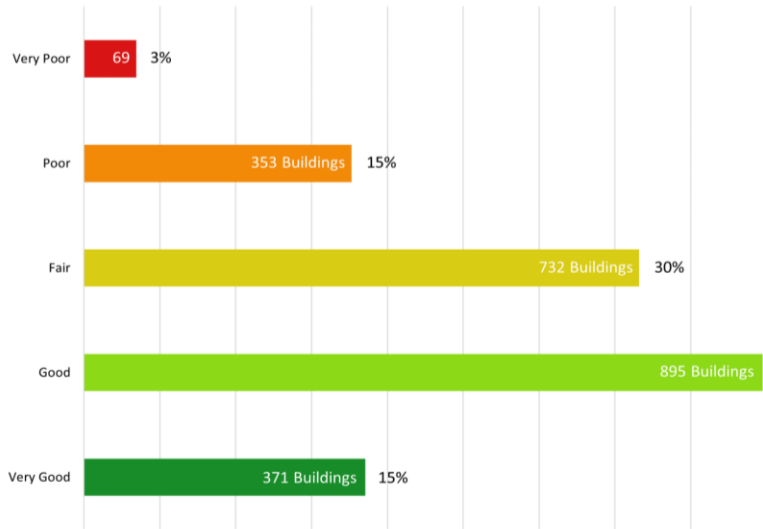


Figure 17: Quality of Structures in Winchester

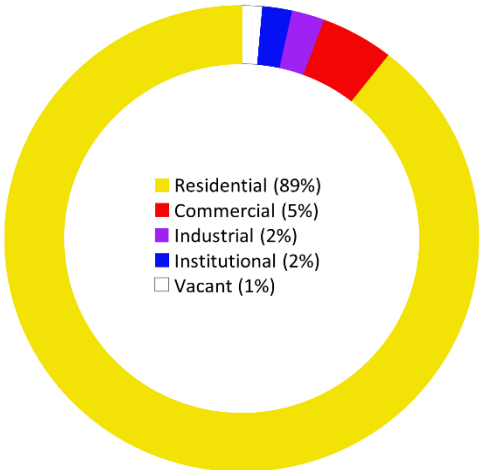


Figure 18: Type of Structures in Winchester

Economic Base

There are 287 businesses in the city of Winchester employing 4,107 people, most of whom work in manufacturing, educational and health care and other service sectors. The employee per residential population ratio is 86 employees for every 100 people. The civilian labor force population age 16+ is 2,280. The top three employers in the city are Anchor Glass Continr, Jay Petroleum Inc, and Ohio Valley Gas Corporation. Table 3 provides the employment breakdown for Winchester in comparison to Indiana by major employment sectors. It shows that most of the population in the city work in manufacturing, education and health care, and arts and entertainment sectors. Compared to Indiana, Winchester's businesses employ more people in the arts and entertainment related sector but have fewer people employed in retail employment than Indiana. Figure 19 and Table 4 show the places of work for workers in the city. The data show that of the 2,090 people who are employed in the city, 674 work in Winchester, and that 1,416 commuted outside the city to work, mostly in Indianapolis, Muncie, and Union City.

Table 3: Employed Population by Sector

2020 Employed Population 16 years and over	Winchester	Indiana
Agriculture and Mining	1.4%	1.2%
Construction	4.9%	6.2%
Manufacturing	24.6%	18.7%
Wholesale trade	2.6%	2.5%
Retail Trade	7.6%	10.8%
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	6.7%	5.7%
Information	1.4%	1.4%
Finance and Insurance	1.0%	5.2%
Scientific and Administrative	6.9%	8.5%
Educational and Health Services	23.3%	23.3%
Arts and Entertainment	10.4%	8.6%
Other Services	2.4%	4.6%
Public Administration	6.7%	3.5%

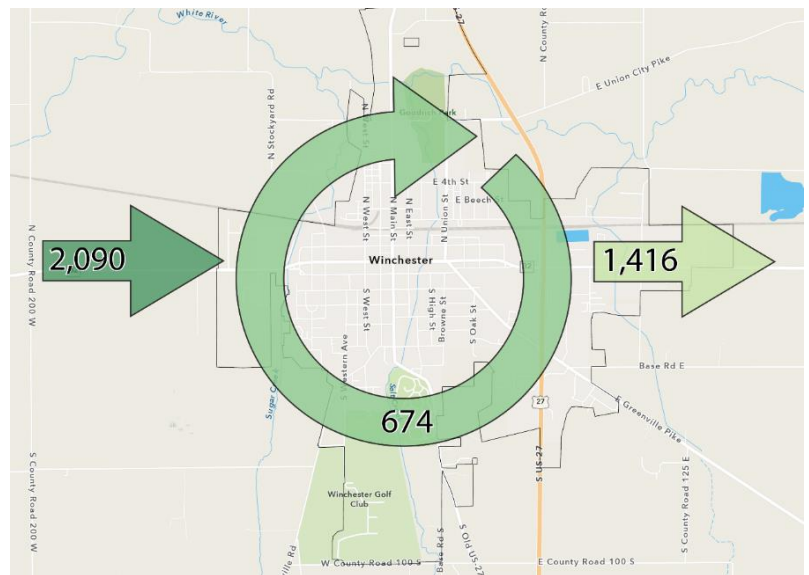


Figure 19: Inflow and Outflow of Workers Source: Census

Table 4: Census 2020 Commuting Patterns

Place of Work	Winchester
Worked in State of Residence	98.5%
Worked in County of Residence	73.1%
Worked Outside County of Residence	25.4%
Worked Outside State of Residence	1.5%
Living in Place	100%
Worked in Place of Residence	58.7%
Worked Outside Place of Residence	41.3%

Educational Attainment

Table 5: Educational Attainment of Population 25+ years

Educational Attainment: Population 25+	Winchester	Indiana
Less than 9 th Grade	1.2%	1.6%
9 th to 12 th Grade	4.5%	3.3%
High School Graduate	18.7%	15.3%
Some College	13.7%	9.3%
Associate's Degree	3.1%	4.1%
Bachelor's Degree	4.8%	8.0%
Graduate or Professional Degree	3.0%	4.6%
High School Graduate or Higher	43.3%	41.3%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	7.7%	12.5%

Table 5 displays educational attainment for Winchester in comparison to Indiana. The data show that most of the population in Winchester have a high school diploma and a smaller percentage have some college education but no degree. The city falls behind the state in the percentage of residents that have a college or post baccalaureate degree (7.7% compared to 12.5% for the state).

The Planning Process

The process that was used in preparing the comprehensive plan is depicted in Figure 20. The process began with several pre-planning meetings to lay the groundwork for the plan. A Steering Committee was formed of prominent civic leaders in the city to help guide the preparation of the plan. We reviewed key documents pertaining to the city's development, conducted a field assessment to document the quality and characteristics of the city's physical environment, we analyzed Census data, designed and deployed a survey to gather residents' views and opinions about the city's development, and used the information gathered to identify the priority development issues. The eight elements which include strategies for implementation, partners needed for the implementation of each strategy, and the phasing of implementation are herein documented.

Research



Plan Creation



Figure 20: The planning process workflow

Document Review

In the early phase of the process, we requested relevant documents relating to planning and visioning from the city to get firsthand information about the planning efforts that the city has engaged in to date. These documents provided historical context and valuable insights into the community's development history and priorities. The documents that were reviewed in preparation for writing the Winchester Comprehensive Plan included: the city's 1967 Master Plan, the Winchester Parks Plan, 2017, the Winchester as an inclusive community document, the 2018 Randolph County Comprehensive Plan, the 2021 Randolph County Strategic Planning Analysis, the 2017 Winchester Parks Plan, the Strategic Planning Analysis: Economic & Residential Outlook for Randolph County, 2021, and Randolph County Ready to Act Meeting Notes, 2021. As a summary, a review of the documents relating to planning and residents' vision for the city and county called for prioritizing the following issues:

- Strategic investment in housing;
- Continuing to enhance quality of the city's parks;
- Workforce training for existing and future job opportunities;
- Support for local businesses and the arts;
- Strengthening civic amenities;
- Revising the zoning code;
- Attracting and retaining population in the city and county;
- Increasing pride in the appearance of the city and region;
- Supporting and encouraging businesses to hire people with special needs; and
- Preparing for population change (older and with more disabilities).

Field Assessment

A field survey was conducted to observe and document existing conditions and the quality of the city's infrastructure and community assets. The assessment helped identify physical constraints, opportunities, and potential environmental considerations that may impact the city's development. The field observations also enabled us to assess the quality of the city's buildings and housing stock, sidewalks, streets, and other infrastructure, as well as observe traffic flow, and document the amenities in the city's parks, and public gathering spaces.

Census Data Analysis

Data on the City of Winchester was gathered from several reliable sources although most is taken from the U.S. Census and American Community Survey, with some calculations made by ESRI for 2023 figures. The data was processed, cleaned, and organized for systematic evaluation. Statistical tools and software were then employed to identify trends, patterns, and correlations within the data. This added to both the quantitative and qualitative data that was obtained from the resident survey and field assessments and were analyzed for thematic content and to gain valuable insights.

Stakeholder Engagement

Resident engagement played a pivotal role in the data gathering phase, involving outreach, data collection, surveys, and a public forum (see Figure 21). These engagements enabled us to identify the needs and preferences of residents and their vision and priorities for the city's development.



Figure 21: Community members envision what they want to see in Winchester at a community forum meeting at Beeson Clubhouse on October 11, 2023.

Resident survey: A survey was designed and used to solicit residents' views and suggestions for the development of the city. Careful consideration was given to the wording and format of the survey questions to ensure they are clear and unbiased. The questionnaire asked questions related to residents' attributes, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs. Attributes refer to demographic data about the respondents of the survey. Attitudes refer to the view that survey respondents have towards certain aspects of life in Winchester. Behavior questions were used to gauge the actions and habits of respondents. Beliefs refer to the values that residents hold as they relate to the city's growth and development. The survey utilized Qualtrics, an online survey software to administer and gather the data. Residents were provided with a weblink that took them to the survey questions to fill in and respond to questions. In total, some 80 residents responded to the survey.

Public forum: We also provided an opportunity for in-person engagement through a public forum that was held in a common community space. Several residents showed up at the Beeson Clubhouse to express their views and to offer suggestions for the city's development. First small group discussions were held separately and then we convened for each table to report on their discussions. The ideas expressed at the public forum were collated and helped to inform the priority issues that were identified for implementation in the plan.

The findings from the document review, field assessment, community survey, census data analysis, and public forum were compiled into comprehensive reports (see Appendices). These reports provided a holistic view of the community's needs, aspirations, and challenges and served as a foundation for informed decision-making in the plan's development.

Plan Elements

The analysis in the previous studies enabled us to identify the key priorities of city residents. These were classified into eight areas that are deemed essential for the city’s development and overall well-being. These elements are land use, housing, economy, placemaking, parks & recreation, transportation, education & health, and civic and culture. These are considered the backbones that will enhance Winchester’s quality of life and foster economic prosperity. Within each element, there are clearly stated goals and a set of strategic initiatives and action plans that provide a roadmap for implementation to ensure the realization of the goals. To reinforce the effectiveness of the strategies, valuable insights are incorporated from case studies showcasing how other communities have successfully implemented these strategies. These real-world examples serve as practical models, offering tangible evidence of the positive impact these strategies can have on communities. By drawing upon these case studies, we ensured that the proposed strategies for Winchester are not only ambitious but also rooted in practicality and feasibility.

Each of the strategies identifies the essential partners that will be needed to implement the policy. Establishing partnerships in the comprehensive plan is essential in transforming goals into tangible realities. Fostering these alliances ensures a shared sense of ownership and commitment among all involved parties, ensuring the successful realization of the envisioned future. A timeframe of implementation is also specified for each strategy. While some of the proposed strategies such as cleaning polluted industrial land require mobilization of funds and resources, others such as changing the zoning ordinance to permit infill development can be implemented within the existing organizational framework and will thus require minimal time and financial commitment. The criteria for placing a project into short versus long term is explained in Table 6.

Table 6: Phasing of Proposed Projects and Programs

Phase 1 (1 to 3 Years)	Phase 2 (3 to 10 years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low Cost• Can be implemented within existing structure of government or institutional framework.• Takes a shorter time to implement.• Provides a catalyst for longer and more expensive projects to be implemented.• Requires mobilization of fewer resources and funds.• Less complex to implement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expensive.• New structure(s) needs to be formed to implement.• Takes a longer time to implement.• Project requires sustained investment.• Cannot be implemented with through the city’s general revenue funds.• More complex to implement.

Land Use

Comprehensive land use planning plays an important role in shaping the future of cities. By analyzing the existing land uses and engaging with the community, we were able to identify the missing components that are crucial for meeting the diverse needs of residents, and to identify any land use conflicts and incompatibilities that may exist in the community. Strategies are thus formulated for addressing these deficiencies in an effective manner. In addition, such an analysis serves to formulate policies that will guide the future growth of the city in a more coordinated and responsible way. By implementing well-thought-out zoning regulations and development policies, cities can channel private investments toward areas that align with their vision. These intentional and deliberate efforts help attract private developers by ensuring that their investments are protected and that they contribute meaningfully to the community's development by fostering a vibrant and harmonious urban environment.

Winchester's notable strengths with land use lie in its well-defined downtown area, characterized by a concentrated cluster of high-density businesses offering a range of services. This centralized hub promotes a lively and walkable atmosphere with the occasional community events. The city also has designated historic and tax increment financing districts (see Figure 23) concentrated around old industrial sites and at the eastern commercial section. However, a weakness is the sprawling commercial area to the east of downtown that could use some infill development to flush out the area.

Initial research from the field assessment identified a large portion of city land that is underutilized. The land use map in Figure 22 affirms this showing that 15.9% of land is vacant or undeveloped. There are 45 parcels zoned low density residential, 39 parcels of commercial, and 26 parcels of Industrial land (see Figures 24 and 25, and Tables 6 and 7). So, there is some potential for infill development especially in vacant land that is zoned industrial. However, the industrial land should be assessed for contamination before development takes place on the sites.

The community survey indicates a large portion of residents' money is spent outside of Winchester; 76% of respondents shop outside the city, 72% dine outside city boundaries, and 70% go elsewhere for entertainment (see Appendices). The survey also indicated a lot of residents would like more options for grocery shopping as they currently only have a Walmart. There were also multiple responses of residents who would like to have more local food options and high-end dining within the city. The policies proposed in this section seek to address these deficiencies and the needs of residents.

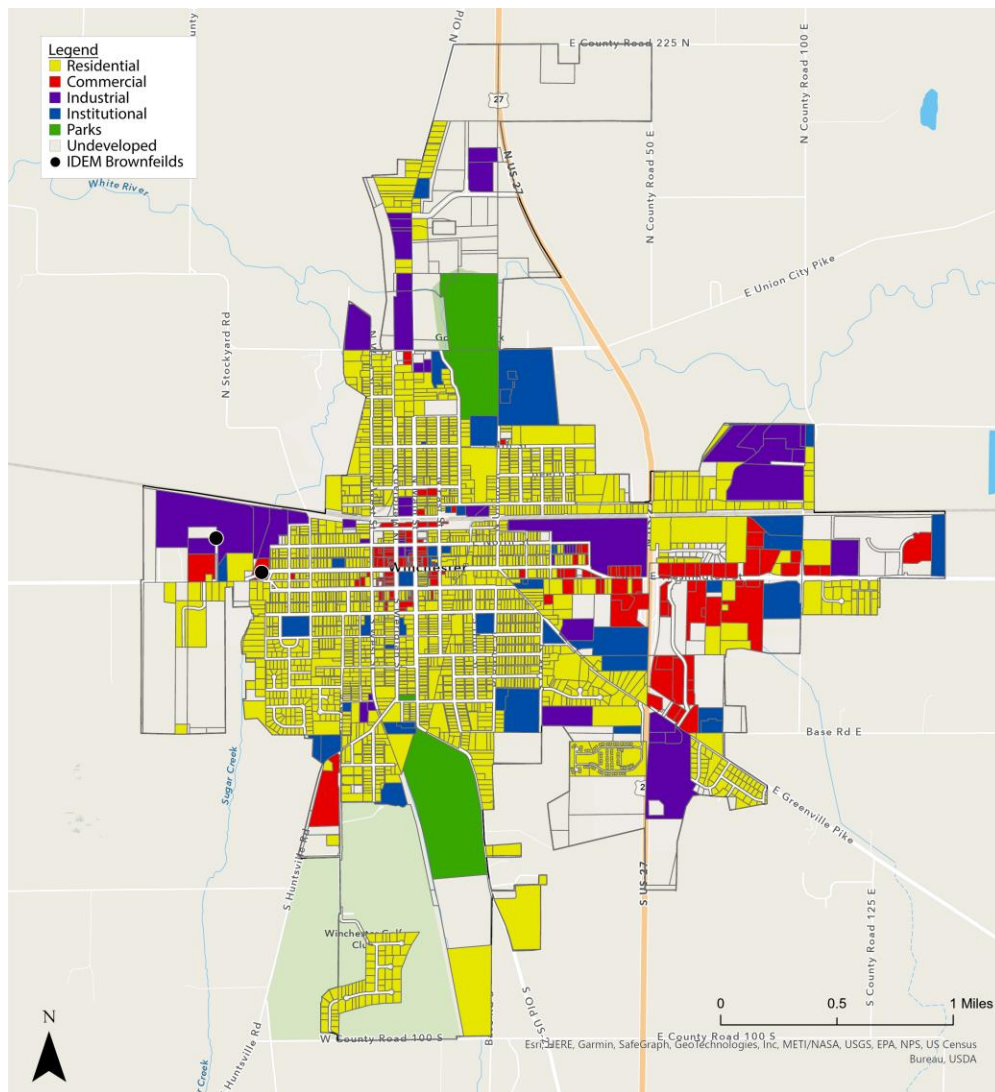


Figure 22: Existing Land Use Based on Field Observations

Table 7. Land Uses

Estimated Land Use	Count
Residential	42.4%
Commercial	16.3%
Industrial	11.3%
Institutional	7.8%
Parks	6.3%
Vacant & Undeveloped Land	15.9%

Table 6. Structure Uses

Field Assessed Structure Use	Count
Residential	89%
Commercial	5%
Industrial	2%
Institutional	2%
Vacant	1%

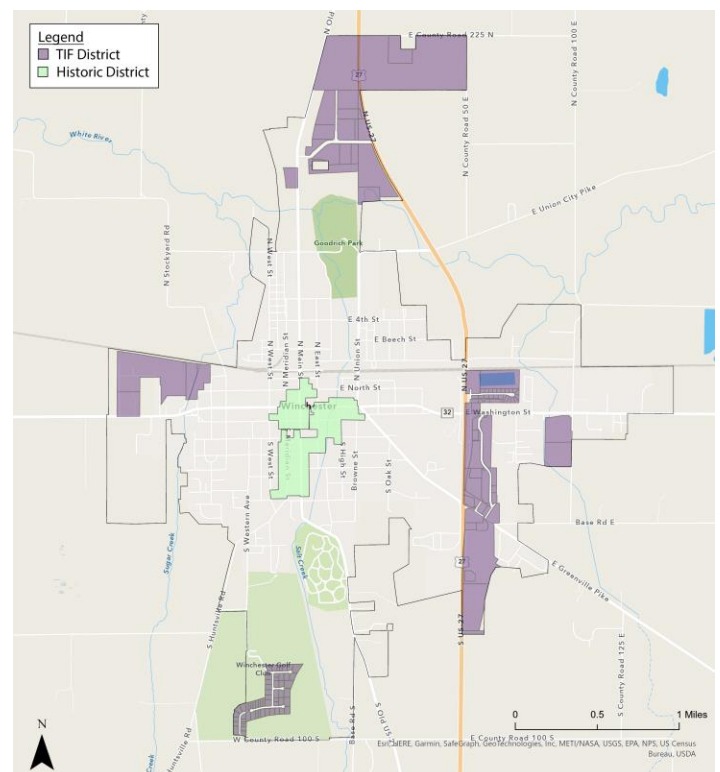


Figure 23: Historic Districts and Tax Increment Financing Districts

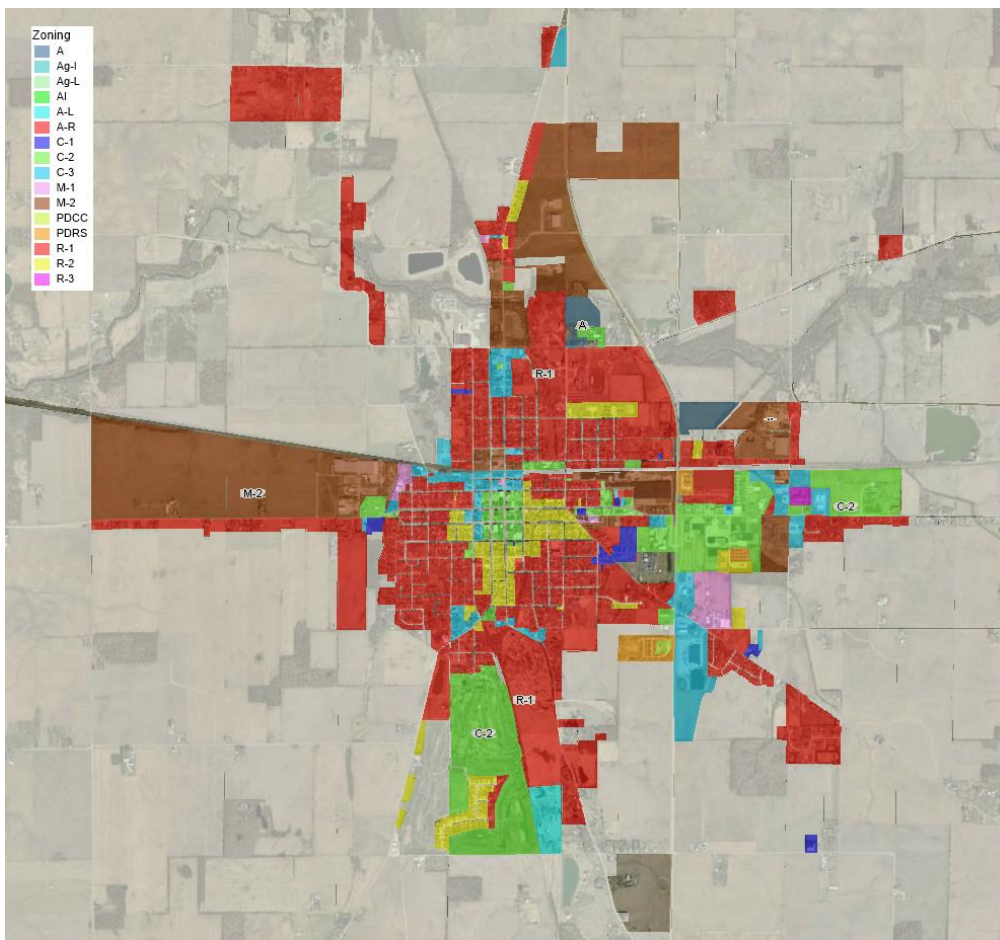


Figure 24: Zoning Map from Randolph County GIS web site.

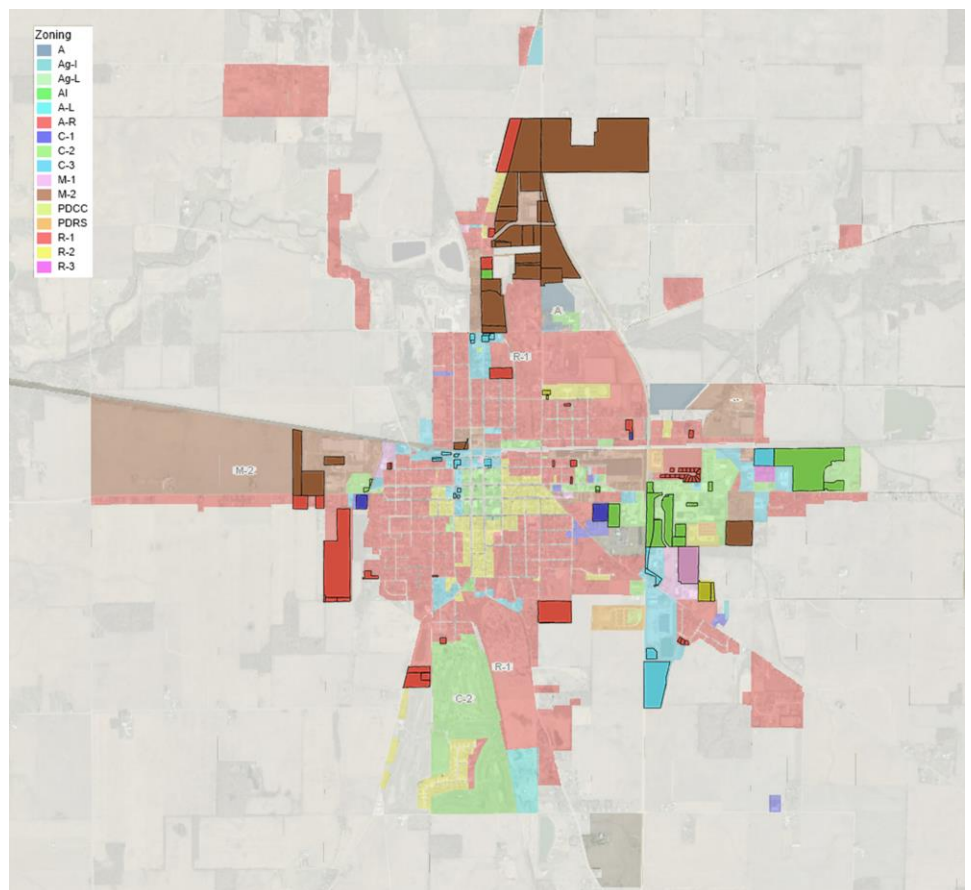


Figure 25: Zoning of Undeveloped Lots

Land Use Goals

Two goals are proposed for addressing and improving land use in the City of Winchester: Encourage infill development and reclaim polluted and vacant industrial land. Accompanying strategies for each goal are also outlined.

Goal 1. Encourage Infill Development

Three strategies are proposed to encourage infill development in the city and are discussed below. They are; expediting the review of proposals involving infill development, rezoning vacant R-1 lots to R-3 to encourage higher density development, and adoption of an accessory dwelling unit (UDU) ordinance.

Strategy 1. Expedite Development Review of Proposals for Infill Development

The City should adopt a policy to prioritize the review of infill sites over virgin land to provide an incentive for developers to build on such lands first. Since time is money for developers decreasing the time it takes to receive approval for proposals located on vacant land within the city will provide an economic incentive for infill development sites. Figure 25 shows the location of the undeveloped land in the city that should be prioritized for development.

Infill development also has other benefits in the sense that it enhances the compactness of urban form, increases efficiency in travel between uses, and utilizes existing public infrastructure (roads, water, gas, electricity, sewer, etc.) to facilitate new development rather than requiring the provision of new public infrastructure at the outskirts of the city.

Partnerships: Winchester City Staff, Randolph County Planning Staff, developers, and community residents.

Funding: No funding needed.

Phase 1: Can be implemented within 1 to 3 years.

Strategy 2. Rezone Undeveloped R-1 Lots to R-3 to Encourage the Development of Affordable Housing.

Some of the lots that are undeveloped or vacant as shown in Figure 25 are in the county designated R1 zone. This zone only permits the development of single-family residential housing. To increase the development of affordable housing and to obviate the need for a lengthy rezoning and variance application process by developers of such land, the city should work with the county planning department to identify appropriate lots that are large enough or can be combined with adjacent lots for multifamily housing and rezone these lots from R1 to R3 to permit multifamily housing development.

Partnerships: Winchester City Staff, Randolph County Planning Staff, and city residents.

Funding Sources: No funding needed.

Phase 1: Can be implemented within 1 to 3 years.

Strategy 3. Adopt an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance.

An accessory dwelling unit is a secondary unit that is built on a single-family residential lot either as an attachment to the primary dwelling unit or as a separate dwelling unit on the single-family lot. They are sometimes referred to as granny flats, coach houses or in-law suites. ADUs can help address the affordable housing needs of the city by allowing single family property owners to add a secondary housing unit to their lot. This strategy should be pursued on a case-by-case basis following city review of such proposals by property owners to ensure that the additional units do not place undue hardship on neighbors and the city. When adopted the ADU ordinance should address concerns that usually arise from these ordinances such as occupancy (the owners of the principal house should live in one of the units), design (the appearance of the unit should not detract from the character of the neighborhood), size (the ADU should fit in with the height and size of existing buildings), and parking (should not generate too much traffic).

AARP in partnership with the American Planning Association has produced comprehensive guides for municipalities and residents to understand ADUs and the technicalities behind them (see Figure 26 for the different types of ADU designs). Specifically, AARP has a document that models state and local ordinances to assist municipalities in implementing new regulations and can be found at the following link <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2021/adu-model-state-act-and-local-ordinance.html>

Partnerships: Winchester City Staff, Randolph County Planning Staff, and local community.

Funding Sources: No funding needed.

Phase 1: Can be implemented within 1 to 3 years.



Figure 26: Types of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU). Source: <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2021/adu-model-state-act-and-local-ordinance.html>

Case Study 1: Howard, South Dakota: Population 848

Howard has redefined the essence of rural living through its innovative initiative, Maroney Commons. This infill development project stands as an advance of the town's forward-thinking approach, aiming to bridge the gap between rural simplicity and contemporary sustainability while using the existing infrastructure. The project began when High School students started a "buy local" campaign to increase sales tax revenue in Miner County. This resulted in an increase in sales by \$16 million in the first year. A visioning session was held to determine the location of a proposed new building to be built with the sales tax revenues. A 40-acre parcel outside town was donated for the building, but instead Howard residents chose to locate it on an infill site.

Maroney Commons is a multifaceted, green complex that combines various elements to create a vibrant community hub. This mixed-use development includes a hotel, providing comfortable accommodations for visitors and travelers, a state-of-the-art conference center facilitating discussions and knowledge exchange, an inviting restaurant serving local delicacies, and offices designed to educate rural residents about green jobs and technology. Maroney Commons not only utilizes the existing infrastructure but also serves as an educational platform, empowering the community with the skills and expertise needed to thrive in an increasingly eco-conscious world. This also has allowed for the growth of the town's economy as new businesses were created. Doing infill development in Winchester would be beneficial in the downtown area since there are currently many vacant spaces in downtown buildings.



Figure 27: Before and after site of the infill development in Howard, South Dakota

Case study 2: South Euclid, Ohio, Population 21,883

The City of South Euclid, population 21,883 provides fee waivers for developers in the form of board and commission fees, and application and review fees for developers who build on infill lots. Through this process, builders are able to save at least \$3,000 per property. The City of Winchester can waive development review fees for developers that choose to build on infill lots as a way to decrease development costs and encourage infill development.

Goal 2. Clean Up and Redevelop Old Industrial Land

Strategy: Work with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) to assess the city's industrial sites for ground contamination and incentivize remediation. Where contamination is identified, the city can seek funding from the Superfund to clean up the sites. Following cleaned up a request for proposal can be sent out by the city to recruit business investment on the sites.

Partnerships: Winchester Staff, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, and Landowners.

Funding: General revenue fund, grants & bonds, Federal Sources (Superfund), State Sources, and TIF.

Phase 2: can be implemented within 3 to 10 years.

Case Study: Lacon, Illinois; Population 1,862

Environmental remediation can be expensive and even more so the smaller the city. However, Lacon, IL with a population under 2,000, was able to remediate a 17-acre contaminated site, the old Lacon Woolen Mill. A familiar story to that of other midwestern cities in the rust belt, this mill was the primary employer until 1960. The site included a 4-acre parcel of industrial property and 13-acres of riverbank and flood plain. In 1996 the state environmental protection agency (IEPA) did a site assessment. The following year the city used \$250,000 of local Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to clean up the site and remove debris and rubble. Then in 1999, the city received a brownfield redevelopment grant of \$12,000 from IEPA and another \$200,000 of EPA brownfield grant, that was put towards studying the site for reuse and preparing a remediation plan. Eventually the city became eligible for a \$500,000 EPA Brownfield cleanup revolving grant. Lastly, in 2001, the city was awarded another \$150,000 that was used to remove sediment contamination in the riverfront. With this cleanup developers slowly rebuilt the area into a variety of residential, commercial, and recreational uses. This is a great example of how Winchester could approach remediating its various industrial sites across the city and the potential ways to fund such an endeavor; but also, a testament of patience and the need for a sustained effort.



Figure 28: Site of contaminated land in Lacon, 1994 and below same site in 2022 after redevelopment. Source: Google Earth



Housing

Diverse and high-quality housing is the foundation for a strong community. The most important source of funding for a city is tax revenue and the largest portion of that tax revenue comes from property taxes. With 89% of structures in Winchester being in residential use, residential property tax is vital to the success of the community. Property taxes are assessed based on the value of the property itself. Major factors that contribute to property values are location, quality of the structure, and quality of the adjacent structures. For this reason, it is essential that residential properties in Winchester are well kept for the sake of property values as well as community pride. People often take pride in the ownership of their home; it is typically the largest investment that a person makes. Winchester should be a community that protects the investment of time and money that residents put into their homes. Vacancies and blighted properties pose a risk to those investments and subsequently to the prosperity of the city itself.

The City of Winchester has a low housing vacancy rate compared to the State of Indiana. Also, majority of the housing stock in the city is either in good or very good quality. However, Winchester has a low diversity of housing typologies with few options for lower income households. The few blighted buildings in the city are also scattered throughout the city, affecting the quality of the healthy housing stock. There is also a high housing burden experienced by residents, especially households in the lower income bracket.

During a thorough field inventory of existing structures in the city, we rated structures on a scale from 1-5 with 1 representing a very good quality structure and 5 representing a very poor-quality structure. Through this inventory, it was determined that 18% of homes are below an acceptable level of aesthetic and structural quality and that 69 homes (3% of the housing stock) were determined to be in very poor condition (see Figure 29). These properties are likely in need of extensive repairs or in some cases demolition. There was no spatial concentration of the houses that were determined to be in very poor quality. Rather, these houses were scattered throughout the city. Because of this, it is very likely that good quality homes are being impacted in value because the adjacent properties are not being well kept.

One of the main contributors to the deterioration of some housing units could simply be the age of the units themselves. Winchester has a lot of historic small-town charm, but with that comes a lot of older homes that may have deteriorating foundations or structural components. The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHDA) has determined that majority of homes in Winchester were built before 1940 (see Figure 30). In recent decades Winchester has seen its lowest levels of home construction. While historic homes can add a lot of value to a community, older homes that are not well kept are a threat to safety and property values for residents.

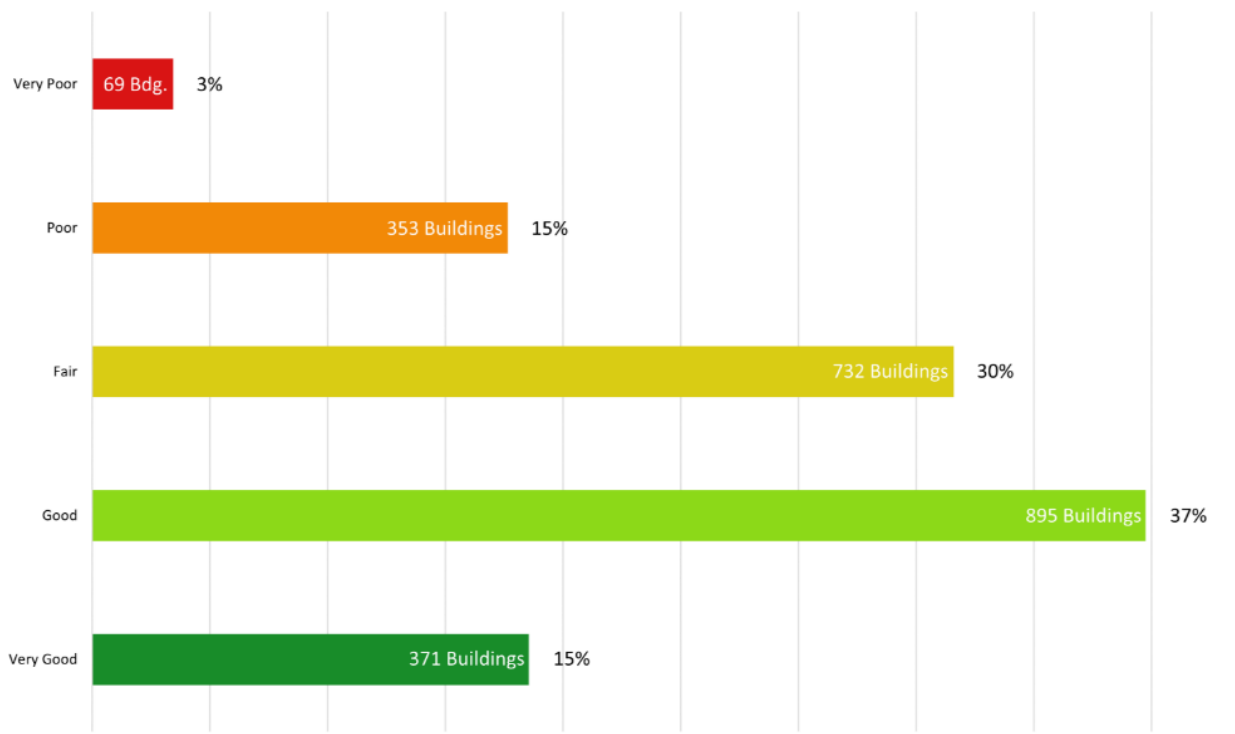


Figure 29: Quality of the Housing Stock

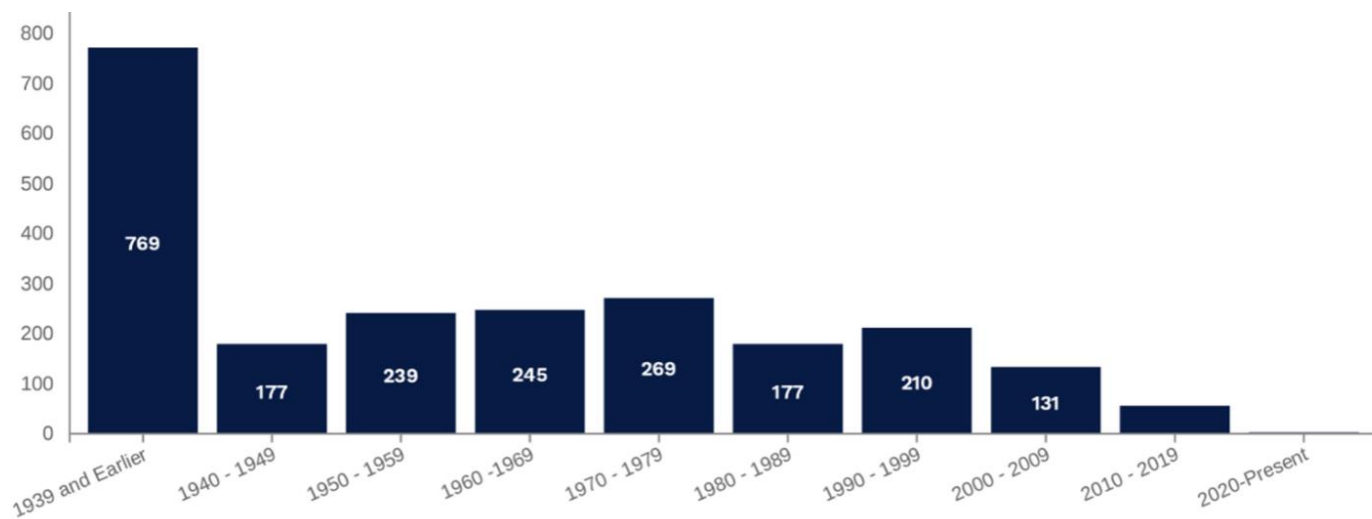


Figure 30: Age of the Housing Stock

During the field assessment of the community and as shown in Figure 31, it became clear that single-family housing dominated the housing stock. Data from IHCD also confirms that majority of renters and owners live in single-family homes. This could potentially be problematic as single-family homes can often be more expensive to own/rent than attached homes or homes in a multi-family development. Single-family homes also often come with more maintenance costs and require effort from residents to ensure the property is well kept. Lower income households may also be better served by multi-family housing.

However, Winchester does not have a large selection of multi-family developments to choose from.

Expanding the diversity of housing types for both renters and owners could provide more residential opportunities for different income groups who live in the city.

The US Department of Housing (HUD) guidelines specify that a household should not spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Thus, a household is said to be experiencing a housing cost burden when they pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs and is severely cost burdened when they spend more than 50% of their household income on housing costs. As noted earlier, Winchester experiences high rates of cost burden, especially for lower-income residents; 15.3% of homeowners and 34.7% of renters in the community are cost burdened as shown in Figure 32. Homeowners with lower incomes are more likely to be cost burdened because they are limited in the variety of housing stock from which to purchase. Providing more housing options from starter homes to large single-family and multi-family rental apartments could help to lower the cost burden experienced by residents.

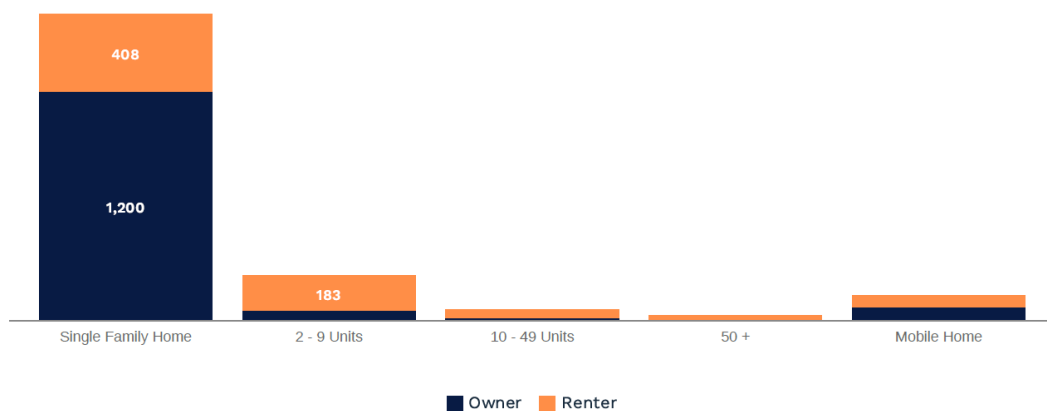


Figure 31: Housing by Tenure

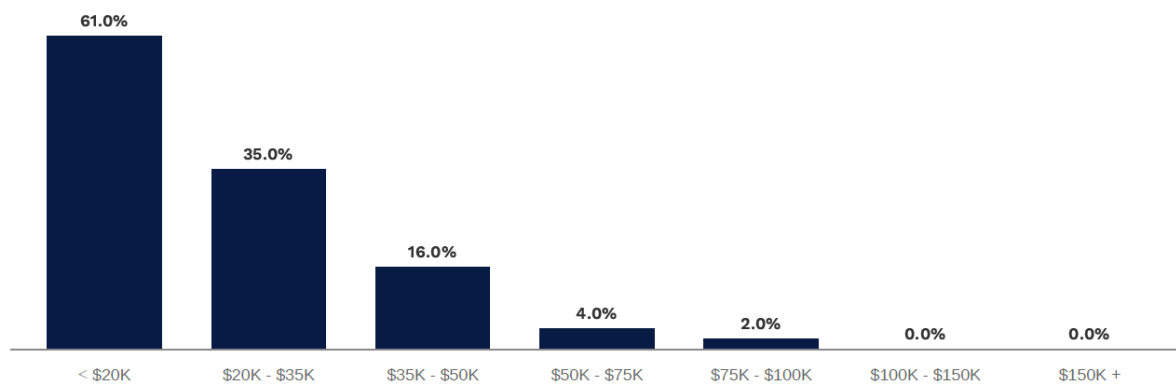


Figure 32: House Burden by Income

Housing Goals

Two goals are specified to address the deficiencies identified in the housing sector in Winchester. The first goal is to provide a variety of housing types to meet the needs of city residents. Four strategies are proposed to meet this goal. The second goal is to ensure that structures meet building codes. Two strategies are discussed to help the city obtain this goal.

Goal 1: Provide a Variety of Housing Types to Meet the Needs of All Residents

It is important that the city provides a variety of housing types that suits the needs of all residents. While single-family homes are the predominant housing typology, these homes may not be the right fit for all households in Winchester. By expanding the availability of different housing types at different market price points, the city can begin to decrease the proportion of residents who experience housing burden and create a more welcoming and embracing community. The following strategies are ways the city can provide the variety of housing types that meet the needs of all residents.

Strategy 1: Create a Housing Tax Increment Finance (HoTIF) District

To encourage housing development on large areas of vacant land, some cities establish a tax increment financing (TIF) district specifically for housing development. By establishing a TIF, the property taxes for existing property is capped at the current value and any additional value added to the land resulting from new housing development, is taxed at the same rate but the revenues are set aside in a fund for projects specifically within that TIF district. These TIF funds can be used to fund infrastructure projects like sidewalks, roads, water and sewer lines, etc. for the district. Winchester has two options when using TIF, the City can sell bonds upfront to pay for infrastructure projects prior to development and then pay the bonds back later using the TIF revenue or it can fund the improvements through the general revenue upfront and following redevelopment recoup the expenditure. The reinvestment of TIF funds into the neighborhood makes it cheaper for developers to build housing because they do not have to pay to extend infrastructure to homes or for land preparation and property demolition. This has the potential to subsequently reduce home prices because the cost of building the home was decreased by the TIF.

Partnership: City of Winchester, property developers , city residents

Funding: Tax Increment Financing

Phase 1: Can be implemented between 1 and 3 years.

Case Study: Nappanee, IN; Population 6,882.

A successful HoTIF was recently created by the city of Nappanee, IN. Nappanee sits between Elkhart and Kosciusko counties. The community had a population of 6,882 in 2021. With the creation of a HoTIF, Nappanee was able to attract R. Yoder Construction to build a new subdivision consisting of duplex-style villas, single-family homes, and estate-style homes at a variety of price points (see Figure 33). The money captured by the HoTIF was used to add infrastructure improvements to the area and to potentially spur further development within the district.

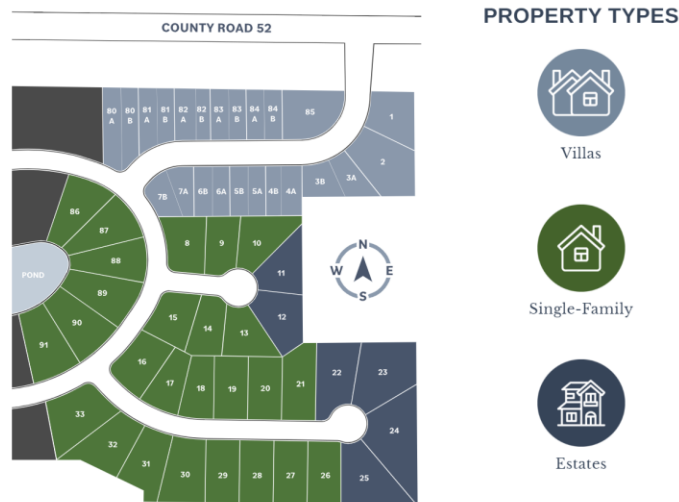


Figure 33: Wellfield Housing Development Subdivision Plan in a HoTIF

Strategy 2: Make Use of Low-Income Housing Tax-Credits (LIHTC)

Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) were created by federal legislators under the Tax Reform Act of 1986 to facilitate the development, construction and maintenance of affordable housing. In Indiana, LIHTC are distributed by the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA). The agency distributes these tax credits through a competitive process where developers make a case for the site they plan to develop affordable housing. Each year, IHCDA can award up to \$30 million in LIHTC. These credits are much sought after by developers of affordable housing in the United States. The City of Winchester could work with potential developers to explore the possibility of adding an affordable housing component to their development. The City should also work alongside developers to provide data and other assistance to help them become eligible for the LIHTC. Through this strategy, the city can ensure developers know their options when it comes to affordable housing development and work to increase the likelihood that the project will receive LIHTC funding.

Partnerships: IHCDA, Indiana Department of Revenue, Housing Developers .

Funding: IHCDA

Phase 2: Can be implemented between 3 to 10 years



Figure 34: Old Saybrook, Ct, Main Street

Strategy 3: Property Tax Abatements for Developers Building Affordable Housing

To further incentivize the development of affordable housing within the community, the City of Winchester could provide developers of affordable housing with property tax abatements. An example of this program could be graduated abatements over a 5- or 10-year period where the owner of the property eventually begins paying the full tax rate. This program would be beneficial to both renters and owners of these affordable housing units. If the developer chooses to retain ownership of the property, the housing unit can be rented at an affordable price because the developer does not have to pay the full tax rate on the property. If the developer chooses to sell the home, the new owner of the home will receive the benefits of the tax abatement and be less likely to experience housing burden. These abatements make it cheaper for developers to build affordable housing units and make home ownership or rental easier for low-income residents of the community.

Partnership: IHCD, City of Winchester

Funding: City of Winchester General Revenue Fund

Phase 1: can be implemented within 1 to 3 years.

Case Study: New Albany, IN; Population 37,411

The City of New Albany, IN has a population of 37,411 and lies in Floyd County along the Ohio River. New Albany offers tax abatements to developers for between one and ten-years. The City offers these tax abatements in order to expand the tax base, create and retain good paying jobs, and diversify the local economy. These abatements are offered for real property including rehabilitation and new development as well as personal property including

manufacturing equipment, research & development equipment, logistics equipment, and IT equipment. While these abatements are focused on commercial properties and business expenses, the proof of concept exists and can be applied to residential property in the same way.



Figure 35: City of New Albany, IN

Strategy 4: Adopt Residential Infill and Adaptive Reuse Development Policies

During the field assessment phase of the development of this comprehensive plan, we noticed vacant lots scattered throughout the residential areas of the community. It is likely that these lots at one time had a home on them but since then the homes have been demolished. As the community looks to expand the availability of homes, there should be a prioritization to build infill housing on lots between existing homes. This will help to improve the aesthetic of Winchester neighborhoods by filling in unsightly gaps. Ideally infill homes will vary in housing typology to encourage the integration of different households and income groups into the neighborhoods. The city should also encourage the adaptive reuse of existing vacant buildings in the community. Even though vacant buildings may not be of residential use currently, the interiors can be retrofitted for multi-family units to provide even more housing variety. This strategy could be very effective on the second floor of retail spaces in the downtown square. The city can encourage the development of infill and adaptive reuse through policies such as reducing parking and building setback requirements for these projects. By reducing these requirements, development becomes more feasible both financially and within the given limitations of surrounding properties. The city can also expedite or “fast-track” applications related to infill and adaptive reuse projects to help developers save time and money.

Partnership: Randolph County Area Plan Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Randolph County Planning Department.

Funding: None

Phase 1: Can be implemented within 1 to 3 years.

Case Study: Pinellas County, FL and San Diego, CA

This type of initiative can be achieved at any scale. Both Pinellas County, FL and San Diego, CA have implemented programs that expedite the review and approval of projects that suit the needs of vulnerable residents. Pinellas County expedites the review process and has the Development Review Administrator



Figure 36: Affordable Housing Development Rendering for Pinellas County, FL

act as a shepherd throughout the entire process to help facilitate and streamline any requested changes to the development or required documents for review. San Diego immediately schedules review meetings to provide staff feedback, reduce project review cycles, funds the initial environmental study, and gives public hearing scheduling priority for projects with an affordable housing component or infill developments.

Strategy 5: Create Model Home Designs for Developers to Build

Another way to reduce development costs is for the city to provide a few pre-approved building plans for housing units that a building developer could immediately begin building without having to hire an architect or await the approval of building permits. About five unique house designs of varying size would provide developers with enough variety and lead to a more diverse housing stock overall. Developers would have the opportunity to change features such as color, façade materials, and ornamentation on the homes to avoid monotony. These pre-approved building plans would be ideal for infill development on vacant lots in otherwise built-out areas of the city. This strategy allows the city to partner with developers in the development of new homes without making concessions on quality or typology.

Partnership: Residential Architecture Firm

Funding: Winchester General Revenue Fund

Phase 1: Can be implemented within 1 to 3 years

Case Study: South Bend, IN; Population 103,453

The City of South Bend, IN has created a document with building plans for a number of different types of infill housing typologies for developers to choose from (see Figures 37). This document outlines a 3-step process for developers to easily use the city's preapproved building plans. Each building plan identifies which zoning districts it is permitted to be built in and provides varying options for building facades to decrease monotony. Minor variations are permitted but for the most part, the building plans are to be followed exactly as given. This level of convenience provided to the developer has allowed more infill housing to be built quickly to bridge the gaps of developing vacant property in the city.



Figure 37: Examples of Floor Plans provided by the City of South Bend, IN



Goal 2: Ensure Homes Meet Housing/Building Code Requirements

It is important that the housing stock in the City of Winchester is of good quality and up to building code requirements. These measures can help to ensure the safety, health, and wellbeing of city residents. Good quality housing structures not only contribute to the aesthetic quality of the city, but also the economic wellbeing of the city government and its residents. Properties rated as poor or very poor in the field assessment are in need of improvements and most of those improvements will not be made without the intervention of the Winchester local government.

Strategy 1: Hire a Code Enforcement Officer for the County

The person currently in charge of building code compliance and enforcement for the City of Winchester is the Randolph County Building Commissioner. In order to be more vigilant on the compliance of structures to state building code, the county should hire a code enforcement officer who can respond to resident inquiries regarding code compliance. This would allow for more specialized attention on city structures as opposed to being overseen by the County Building Commissioner who also oversees building permitting and other duties.

Partnership: Randolph County, City of Winchester

Funding: Winchester General Revenue Fund

Phase 2: Can be implemented between 3 to 10 years

Strategy 2: Create a Fund for the Demolition of Blighted Homes

Blighted properties are a detriment to the community in a number of ways. Deteriorating blighted homes have the potential to eventually collapse which poses a risk to the health and safety of residents. Blighted homes also take away from the aesthetic appeal of the neighborhood, it can negatively impact residents' pride for the community if they see abandoned and unkempt properties scattered throughout the city. Blighted homes can also decrease the property value of adjacent homes due to the risk they pose to health and safety as well as the visually unappealing aspects of the property. The city should establish a fund in the annual budget for the demolition and removal of abandoned and blighted property both to mitigate the negative effects of blight as well as create space for new development. Developers are not likely to redevelop property that has demolition costs associated with the project, so the City needs to take the first step to kick-start redevelopment.

Partnership: IHCD, City of Winchester

Funding: Grant funds, Winchester General Revenue Fund

Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years



Figure 38: Home Demolition in Winchester, IN

Case Study: Richmond, IN; Population 35,817

The City of Richmond, IN has a population of 35,817 people and lies in eastern Wayne County. The City has established a Blight Elimination Program to help remove properties that pose a threat to the community. The program was created in partnership with the City and IHCD. After the city demolishes the blighted structure the property either becomes part of the adjacent property, a developer applies for it, the property is handed over to Habitat for Humanity, or the original property owner retains ownership. By the end of 2019, 203 blighted properties had been demolished. Properties eligible for the Blight Elimination Program must be residential, 4 dwelling units or less, vacant, score high enough on a site evaluation matrix, not be on a historical register, and cannot be a mixed-use building.

Economy

A strong economy is essential in creating quality of life for communities. A strong economy allows families to increase their standard of living, expands employment options, and seek educational opportunities. A strong economy increases the tax base for the municipal government which allows for more funding to be reinvested back into the community. More can be spent on infrastructure, schools, public safety, social services, and other government services as a result of a healthy economy.

Understanding the current state of the businesses and workforce in Winchester is critical to developing strategic solutions to improve economic conditions. Winchester is strategically located near metropolitan areas such as Indianapolis and Dayton. The city also has a tradition of retaining small family-owned businesses and thus has a reputation of being a great location for entrepreneurs to start a business. Table 8 shows data on employment and poverty in Winchester in comparison to the state of Indiana. The data show that the city fares worse than the state of Indiana on certain economic metrics including median household income, percent of the population in poverty, and educational attainment. Winchester has been losing population since the 1980s, which has in turn negatively impacted the local economy. The city can turn things around by capitalizing on its strengths and by utilizing its assets to grow the city's economy.

Table 8: Employment and poverty in Winchester

Economic Metric	Winchester	State of Indiana
Median Household Income	\$51,985	\$66,785
Percent in Poverty	16.6%	12.6%
Employment rate	57.2%	61.5%
Average Disposable Income	\$63,893	\$69,085
Bachelor's degree or higher	14.8%	29.6%

Approximately 2,764 people work in the City of Winchester, but only 674 of those workers actually live within the city boundaries (see Table 9). The table also shows that 75.6% of workers in the city do not live in the city as most commute there to work from Muncie, Union City, Farmland, Parker City, and other cities in the region.

Figure 39 shows that most residents of Winchester work in the education and healthcare industries with manufacturing coming in second and the arts, leisure, and hospitality industries in third. Also, most people in Winchester do not have a college degree which limits employment opportunities for them and thus creates prominence in the manufacturing and service sectors. Also, people with a college degree do not have as many employment opportunities in Winchester and this may explain why the city is not able to attract and keep college graduates. Figures 40 and 41 show the workforce by age of residents and where residents in the city spend their money. Unlike the state of Indiana, a higher proportion of the workforce in Winchester are in the age brackets of 16 to 54 years. Housing is also where residents spend most of their disposable income followed by healthcare.

Table 9: Place of work of Winchester residents.

Where Winchester Residents are Employed	Percent
Winchester	32.2%
Total outside of Winchester	67.8%
1. Indianapolis	8.1%
2. Muncie	6.7%
3. Richmond	6.3%
4. Portland	3.9%
5. Union City	3.6%
6. Greenville	1.4%
7. Anderson	1.4%
8. Dunkirk	1.4%
9. Greenfield	1.1%
10. Carmel	1%
Other places	37.1%

Where Winchester Workers Live	Percent
Winchester	24.4%
Total outside of Winchester	75.6%
1. Muncie	3.9%
2. Union City	3.3%
3. Farmland	1.8%
4. Parker City	1.7%
5. Lynn	1.4%
6. Richmond	1.4%
7. Ridgeville	1.3%
8. Portland	1.2%
9. Fort Wayne	1.1%
10. Indianapolis	1.1%
Other places	57.4%

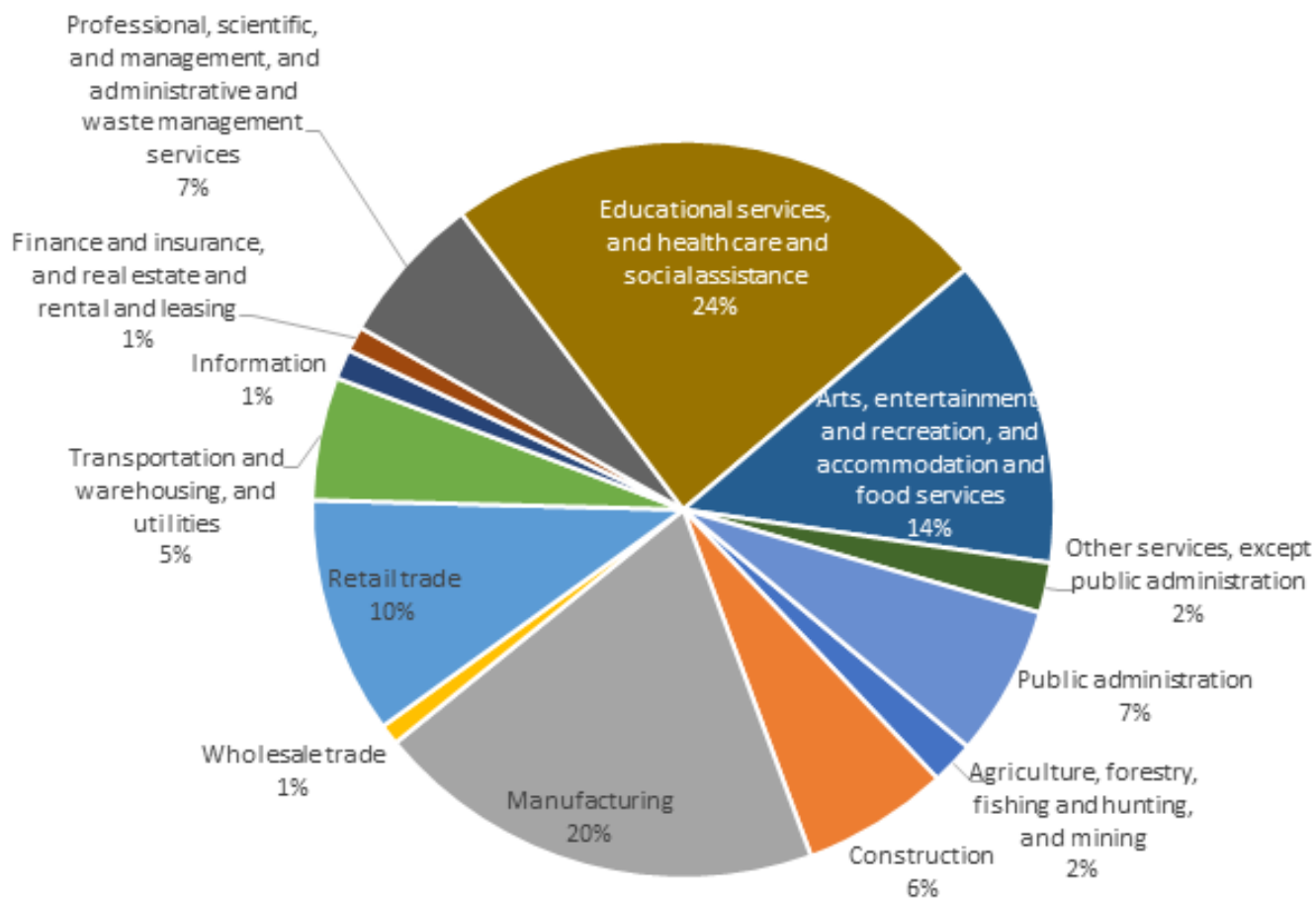


Figure 39: Employment by industry in Winchester.

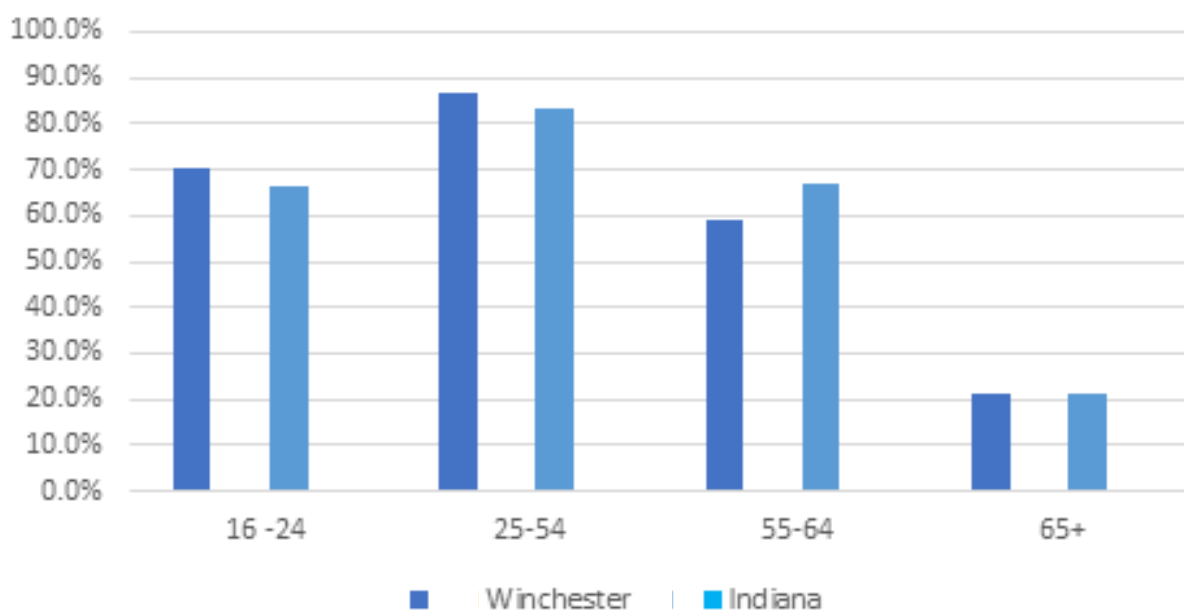


Figure 40: Age of the workforce.

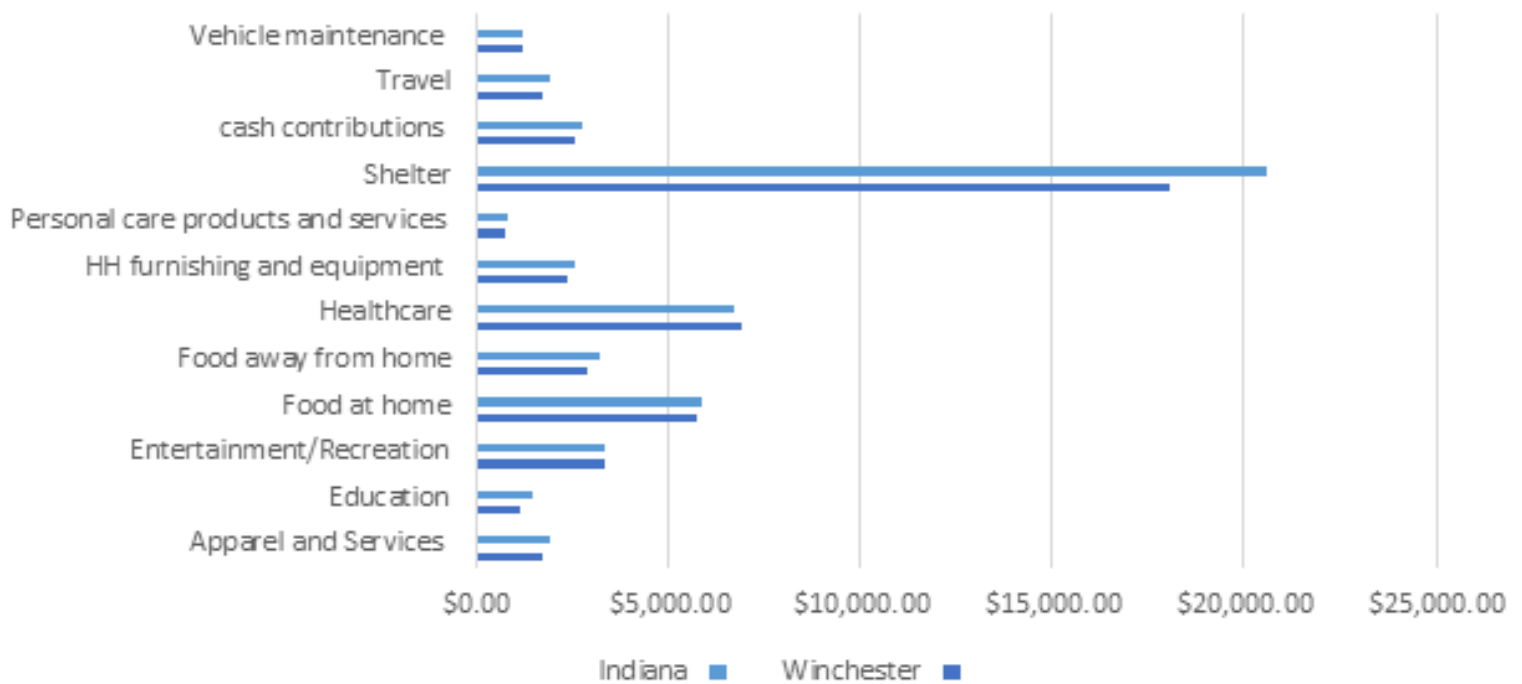


Figure 41: Consumer expenditure

Winchester has over 300 businesses located within the city limits. Businesses range from large manufacturing plants to small family-owned businesses in historic storefronts across from the courthouse. Winchester is located near many major cities like Dayton, Fort Wayne, and Indianapolis. As in many small towns, Winchester faces challenges related to attracting and retaining businesses, as well as competing with larger cities for resources and investment. However, the city offers opportunities for niche businesses that cater to the specific needs and preferences of the local population. Winchester has a strong sense of community, and businesses often engage in local events and support community initiatives. This fosters a sense of loyalty among residents towards these local businesses. Yet according to survey results (see Appendix), many residents in Winchester do not patronize businesses downtown which are primarily small locally owned businesses. A "buy local" campaign similar to what is being done in Union City, IN may help change this trend.

Residents also noted the lack of diverse options for shopping and for services that are needed. For example, Walmart is the only grocery store in the city, and Walmart and CVS are the only pharmacies. There is only one hotel that caters to the needs of tourists and the population that come to town to participate in the annual softball tournament, and speed races. By supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs, Winchester can increase options for where people can shop.

The Winchester Speedway draws many visitors throughout the year and although the Speedway is about a mile from the county courthouse, many race fans do not visit downtown. Providing reason for this crowd to visit and shop in the city can help generate revenues for local businesses and the city.

Economic Goals

Several goals are proposed for improving the economic sector of the city: seek external funds to augment expenditure from the general revenue fund, retain the workforce, diversify local businesses, and increase tourism.

Goal 1: Seek Funding to Implement the City's Priority Projects and Programs

Strategy 1: Hire a Grant Writer

There are several good ideas and projects that the city wants to implement but is limited by funding. One way to identify and raise funds for these projects is by hiring someone with grant writing skills to assist in identifying external funding sources and applying for them. Grant writers are skilled at identifying and securing grants from various sources, including federal, state, and private foundations. They can help the city access additional funds that might not otherwise be available. Grant writers are familiar with the intricacies of grant applications. They understand what grant agencies are looking for and can craft persuasive proposals that have a higher chance of success. Preparing grant applications can be time-consuming so having a grant writer dedicated to this task allows other city employees to focus on their core responsibilities.

While hiring a grant writer comes with a cost, the return on investment can be substantial if they secure grants that far exceed their salary. Additionally, a grant writer can help the city avoid wasting time and resources pursuing grants for which they are unlikely to be competitive. A grant writer can play a vital role in helping the city secure external funding, promote financial stability, and efficiently manage resources. They bring expertise, networking capabilities, and a specialized skill set that can be invaluable for a municipality's long-term success.

Given the limited capacity of the city to hire and pay for a grant writer, they can be housed at the Randolph County United economic development office. Alternatively, the City of Winchester can collaborate with other willing cities to hire a grant writer to serve more than just Winchester so they can share the cost of hiring one. Indeed, the Eastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, which serves Randolph County and created the county's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy identified the need to hire a grant administrator.

Case Study, Churubusco, IN; Population 1,796

The Town of Churubusco, Indiana is located in northeast Indiana near Fort Wayne and has a population of under 2,000 residents. The town has a town clerk-treasurer who also serves as an OCRA-certified grant administrator. Through this position the town has been awarded over \$4.5 million in grants from INDOT, OCRA, DNR, IHCDA, and private funders. The town clerk-treasurer also works with the Northeast Indiana Regional Development Authority to secure grant funding to benefit projects the town needs. In 2022, RDA awarded \$500,000 to Churubusco to build a new civic center with a library, meeting spaces, and workforce training facilities (see Figure 42).



Partnerships: Jay, Henry, and Wayne Counties
Funding source: General revenue fund

Phase 1: Can be implemented within 1 to 3 years

Figure 42: An old PNC Bank will become the Churubusco Civic Center and Public Library

*Source: <https://townofchurubusco.com/departments/clerk-treasurer/>
https://www.fwbusiness.com/fwbusiness/article_9df7ae62-b8d2-5ca3-96e7-f409ff707432.html*

Goal 2: Organize downtown businesses to improve the downtown commercial district.

Strategy 1: Create an Economic Improvement District for downtown businesses.

To augment municipal expenditures in the Courthouse square area, property owners can establish an Economic Improvement District. An Economic Improvement District (EID) is a self-funded, self-governing entity formed by property and business owners within a specific geographic area. It is important to note that EIDs are typically funded through assessments of property owners within the district. These assessments are used to finance the services and improvements that benefit the demarcated business area. EIDs are typically established to enhance the quality of life, commerce, and overall economic vitality of a commercial district, and augment municipal expenditures in the area.

EIDs often invest in the beautification and maintenance of public spaces within their district. This can include activities like street cleaning, landscaping, graffiti removal, and the installation of public art, and thus making the area more attractive and inviting.

EIDs often develop marketing and branding strategies to attract more visitors and shoppers to the area. They may organize events, festivals, and other promotional activities to boost foot traffic and sales for businesses.

These special taxing districts can play a role in driving economic development within their district. They may provide financial incentives, grants, or support for businesses looking to expand or invest in the area, ultimately fostering job creation and economic growth.

EIDs can advocate on behalf of local businesses with local government and other entities, helping to address issues like parking, zoning regulations, and public transportation to create a more business-friendly environment.

Additionally, EIDs can tap into funding opportunities that individual businesses or property owners might not be able to access, allowing for more substantial investments in the district's improvement.

Partnerships: Winchester Main Street Organization, downtown property owners, and downtown business owners.

Funding source: Self-funding

Phase 1: Can be implemented within 1 to 3 years.

Case Study: Kendallville, IN; Population 10,205

Downtown Kendallville, Indiana has an Economic Improvement District to support the vibrancy of the city's historic Main Street businesses (Figure 43). The city with a population of 10,205 is located in Noble County in the northeast corner of the state. By collecting additional taxes from the buildings located within the district, the EID received \$34,500 for their 2021 budget. They allocated the money for these initiatives:

- \$10,000 – snow removal
- \$7,500 – landscaping and flowers
- \$6,000 – business recruitment
- \$5,000 – street decorations
- \$2,000 – promotions and advertising
- \$1,500 – administrative and legal expenses
- \$1,500 – weed control
- \$1,000 – general maintenance



Figure 43: Downtown Kendallville, Indiana showing the business improvement district.
Source: https://www.kpcnews.com/newssun/article_13697d06-35cc-54dd-baad-700ec1b2b093.html
<https://www.kendallvillein.gov/EconomicImprovementDistrict>)

Strategy 2: Create a Tax Increment Financing District in the County Courthouse Area

The city has had some success with TIF Districts in the past, including incentivizing the development of Willow Ridge Housing Development and APEX (see Figure 44). By creating a new TIF District in the downtown area, Winchester can attract new businesses and shoppers there. The tax revenue captured can go towards infrastructure improvements in the Courthouse area and façade improvements without the need to apply for a grant.

TIF districts offer several potential benefits. TIF districts can help revitalize blighted or underdeveloped areas by attracting new businesses, creating jobs, and increasing property values. This can stimulate economic activity and generate additional tax revenue over time. As a TIF district develops, property values tend to rise, resulting in higher property tax revenues. The additional tax revenue is typically captured by the TIF district and used to fund further development and infrastructure improvements. While TIF districts initially divert property tax revenue to fund development, they can generate more tax revenue in the long run once the district matures and property values increase, and the debt is paid off.

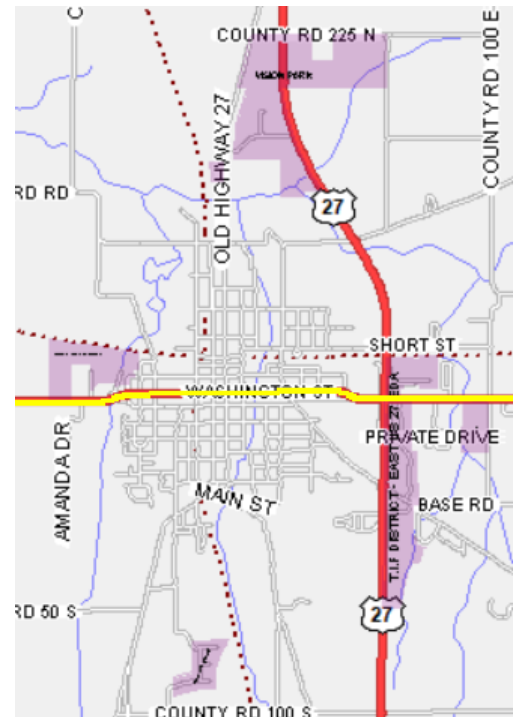


Figure 44: Map showing the TIF Districts located within Winchester.

How TIFs Work (see Figures 45 and 46)

First, the city has to form a Redevelopment Committee made up of 5 people. The committee members are appointed by the City Council.

The redevelopment committee next holds a public hearing to discuss the creation of the TIF and its boundaries.

A boundary is delineated for the TIF district, which in this case will be in the Courthouse Square and other applicable areas in the downtown.

The existing tax base for property in the delineated area is frozen and the tax revenues continue to be shared by the county, the School District and other special districts.

Any increment value resulting from new development that increases revenue generated is used to pay for property acquisition, land clearance, street improvements, and infrastructure improvements in the district.

It is important to note that with the creation of the TIF district, there will be no increase in the property tax rate in the area. But tax revenue raised from increased property value will be segregated for use in the district.

TIF District timeline

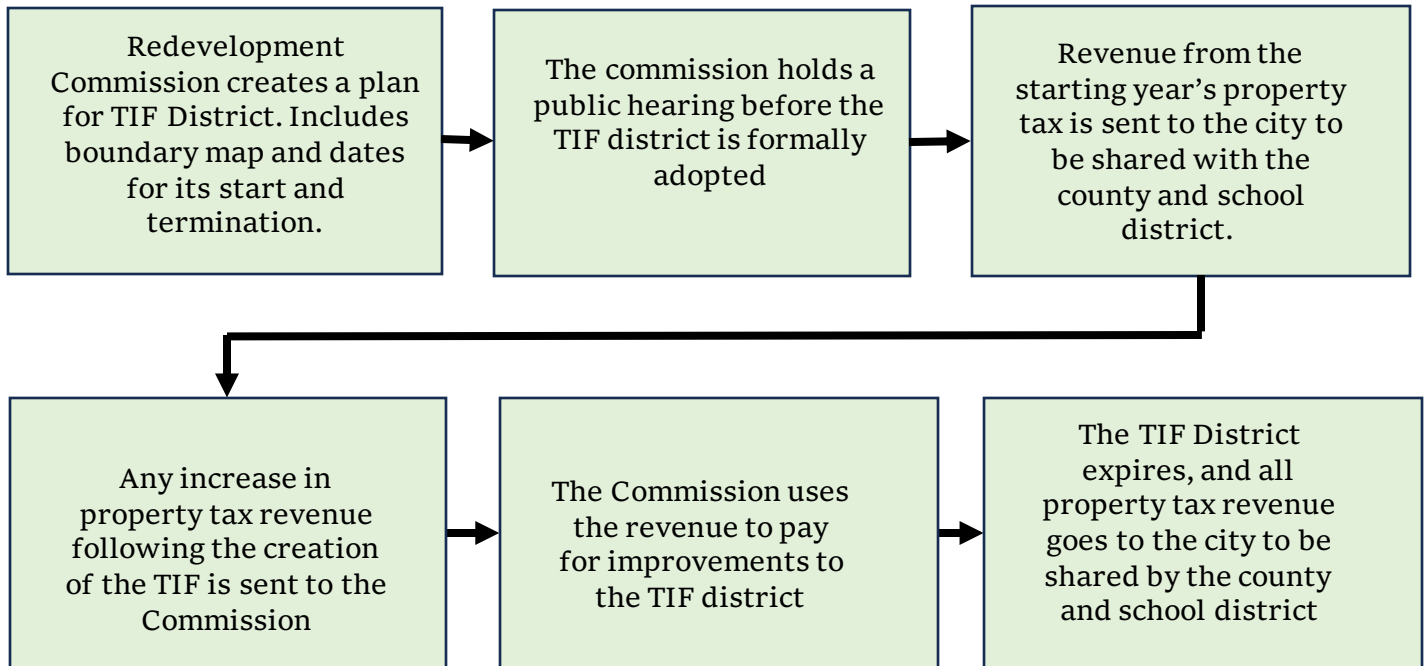
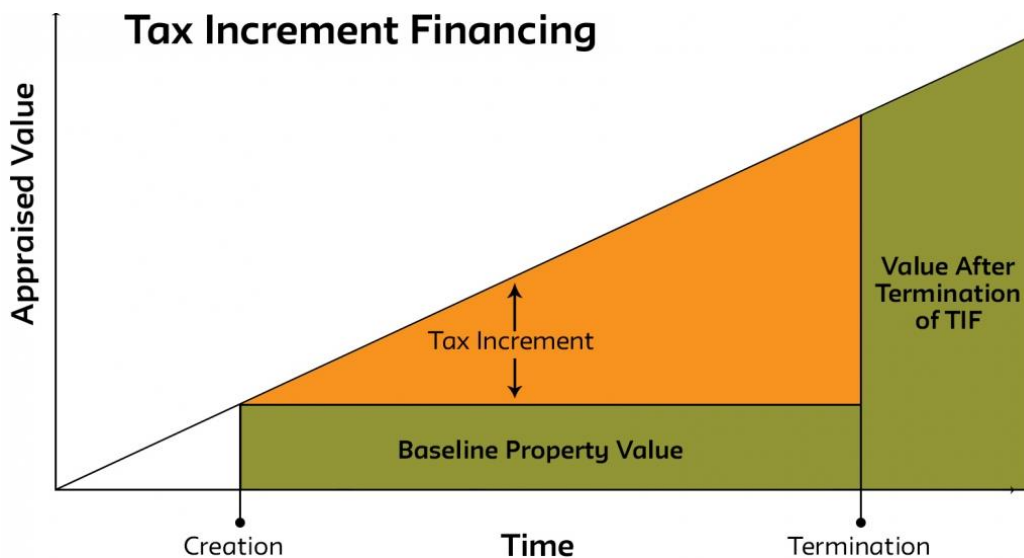


Figure 45: Flow chart showing the process for a TIF District



ce: Planning Tank. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) | Public Financing | Types of TIF.
s://planningtank.com/finance/tax-increment-financing-tif-types-tif (accessed 2018).

Figure 46: Graph showing property tax revenue collected from businesses in the TIF District from creation to termination.

Partners: Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC)

Financing: Self-financing, municipal bonds

Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years.

Case Study: Huntington, IN; Population 6,400

Huntingburg, Indiana is a town located in southwest Indiana with a population of 6,400 residents. The city has used TIF Districts to attract residential and industrial development in recent years. Farbest Foods (Figure 47) is a meat processing company that expanded their plant with the help of TIF funds. The expansion was completed in September 2022 and helped keep 640 jobs by modernizing their production and allowing the factory to remain in town.



Figure 47: Farbest Foods plant in Huntington, Indiana

Goal 3: Attract and Retain the Workforce in the City

Strategy 1: Incentivize the Workforce in Winchester to Live Within the City.

From Table 9, we saw that there are over 2,000 workers who commute to work in Winchester on a daily basis. While some live in Randolph County, others live outside the county boundaries such as Muncie, and Indianapolis. This is the ideal population for the city to try and attract by convincing them to live close to their place of work. The city should therefore identify this workforce and reach out to them to try and convince them to move and live in Winchester. A survey can be used to identify reasons why they are not living in Winchester. This will help the city to make strategic investment decisions and improvements, as well as marketing with a focus on attracting this specific group.

Partners: Consulting agency

Funding: General revenue fund

Phase 1: Can be implemented within 1 to 3 years.

Case Study:, Clayton, MO; Population 17,355

Clayton, Missouri has a population of 17,355 residents. Its municipal government surveys residents and business owners regularly to gauge their level of satisfaction with city services. The city uses a variety of digital and in-person strategies to let people and organizations know about the survey and its purpose. Using the business survey results, for example, the city learned that business owners were dissatisfied with the condition of the streets, so the city prioritized repairs and maintenance in their next budget.

Goal 4: Decrease the Cost of Business Location in the City.

Strategy 1: Get Shovel-ready Properties Site Certified by OCRA

The Indiana Site Certified program certifies sites that are ready for economic development. Communities of any size may apply for the designation through the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs. Indiana Site Certified sites are featured on Indiana's Site Selector Database and are included in the Indiana Economic Development Corporation's (IEDC) marketing materials. The Indiana Site Certified Program has three main goals. First is to mitigate risks and provide necessary due diligence of a site. The second goal is to market the site to prospective developers. And lastly, to illustrate the community's commitment to economic development.

The city has several greenfield properties that could meet the requirements to be Site Certified. This designation makes it cheaper for development to start there because there is no need for investors to prepare the site for construction themselves. All environmental assessments, utility requirements, and infrastructure needs are guaranteed to be met with Site-Certified status.

There are national level "shovel-ready" designations as well. Verisite is a comprehensive site certification program, which compensates for industry gaps, such as brownfields and existing buildings. The Verisite program creates a narrative around in-depth market research and analyzes human capital components to provide brokers, site selectors, developers, and other decision-makers with reliable data.

Partnerships: Indiana Economic Development Corporation, Randolph County United

Funding: Grants

Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years.

Case Study: Riverside, MO; Population 4,013

Riverside, Missouri is a city with a population of 4,013 people. The state of Missouri has a "shovel-ready" site designation program. A certified site in Missouri requires the ground to be mostly clear and level, be at least 25 acres, be intended for business use, have at least a six-inch water main, industrial capacity sanitary sewer, and three-phase 12 kilovolt electric infrastructure. In April 2015, Gov. Jay Nixon, along with local leaders and company executives, announced that U.S. Farathane will open its first Missouri production facility at Riverside Horizons Business Park, a Missouri Certified Site (see Figure 48). The \$51.6 million expansion was expected to create 267 jobs over the course of three years and provide a boost to the state's automotive supplier industry.

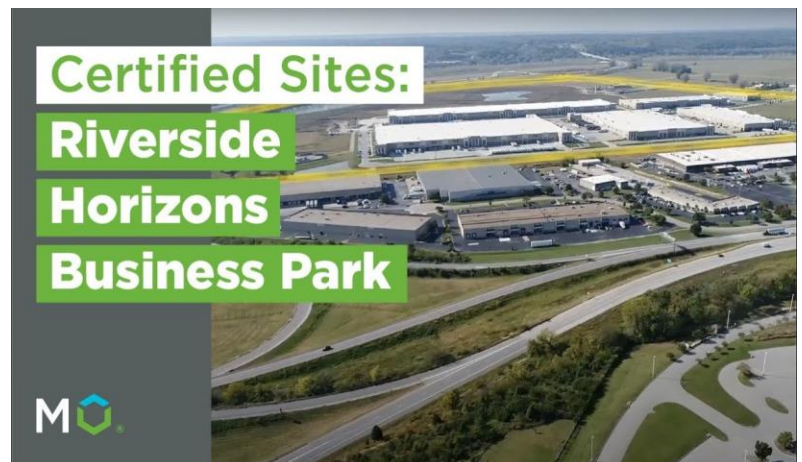


Figure 48: Marketing material for the Riverside Horizons Business Park, which is a Certified Site in Riverside, Missouri.

Strategy 2: Provide Tax Abatements for New Businesses and Industries

Property tax abatement is a tax incentive program that offers benefits to property owners, businesses, and local communities. The primary purpose of property tax abatement is to encourage investment, job creation, and economic development using the property tax structure.

Property tax abatement provides an incentive for property owners and businesses to invest in real estate and make improvements to their properties. This can help to stimulate economic growth.

Many property tax abatement programs in Indiana are tied to job creation. Businesses that expand or establish operations in the state may receive tax incentives based on the number of jobs they create. This can lead to employment opportunities for residents. By offering tax incentives, cities can attract developers and investors to redevelop underutilized or blighted properties, leading to improved urban landscapes. The infusion of new investment into properties and neighborhoods can lead to increased property values, benefiting property owners and the local tax base. This can, in turn, result in increased revenue for local governments.

By offering tax incentives, Winchester can be more competitive in attracting businesses and investment, both from within the state and from outside. This can help retain and attract talent, as well as foster a more business-friendly environment.

Partnerships: Randolph County United, City of Winchester

Funding: The general fund

Phase 1: Can be implemented within 1 to 3 years.

Case Study: Batesville, IN; Population 6,520

Batesville, Indiana is located in the southeast part of the state and has a population of 6,520 residents. The city offers tax abatements for new developments within the city. In October 2023, Batesville approved tax abatement for the Depot Square 2.0, which is a new housing development near the downtown. In September 2023, Hiviz Custom Outfitter, LLC., agreed to build a new manufacturing plant for their apparel company, bringing 30 full-time jobs to Batesville. In 2021, the city approved a 10-year tax abatement for IKIO Lighting, which plans to create 30 jobs at a new manufacturing plant in the city (see Figure 49).



Figure 49: Picture of the new facility for IKIO Lighting in Batesville, Indiana

Goal 5: Support Entrepreneurship and Start-up Businesses

Strategy 1: Provide Licenses for Food Trucks to Try Out Ideas at Courthouse Square Before Locating in a Vacant Space Downtown.

The city can provide licenses to new food truck vendors by simplifying the licensing processes and so lower barriers to entry for aspiring food truck vendors. This allows individuals with creative culinary ideas to start their businesses with reduced administrative burdens. The shortened licensing process can encourage more entrepreneurs to start food truck businesses, leading to increased economic activity. Once their food trucks become successful, these entrepreneurs might then start a brick-and-mortar storefront in Winchester.

Food trucks often offer unique and diverse cuisine, providing consumers with a wider range of culinary options. This can enrich the local food scene and cater to various tastes and preferences. Food trucks can be a tourist attraction in their own right. Tourists may seek out food truck festivals and events, boosting tourism revenue for the local area. Food trucks can become a staple at the farmer's market, events at Winchester's parks, and during race events at the Speedway. Increased tourism can boost spending within the city to support local businesses. Both food truck vendors and tourists have the potential to be attracted from across east central Indiana, including larger cities like Richmond, Muncie, Dayton, Fort Wayne, and Indianapolis. Food trucks have the added potential to attract future residents to live in Winchester to enjoy the city's vibrant food scene, as well as increase the quality of life for current residents.

Partners: Winchester Main Street Organization and other organizations hosting events

Funding: No funding needed

Phase 1: Can be implemented within 1 to 3 years.

Case Study: Connersville, IN; Population 13,324

Connersville, Indiana is in southeastern Indiana and has a population of 13,324 residents. The city has a food truck festival on a weekend every August. The festival attracts more than 70 food trucks from 6 states and over 200 other local vendors.

This festival attracts visitors from across Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio. Local bands perform concerts during the event, which helps bring in a strong evening crowd. The event is hosted at Mettel Field Airport, which serves Fayette County (see Figure 50).



Figure 50: Picture of the Tri-State Food Battle in Connersville, Indiana

Strategy 2: Create a Business Incubator that Supports Start-ups for Entrepreneurs

A business incubator is a program or facility designed to nurture and support the growth of startup and early-stage companies. These programs provide a range of resources, services, and support to help entrepreneurs turn their ideas into successful and sustainable businesses. Business incubators can be physical spaces, virtual programs, or a combination of both. Many business incubators offer physical office space, shared workspaces, or laboratories where startups can operate. This creates a collaborative environment where entrepreneurs can work together, share ideas, and benefit from a supportive community. Incubators often provide access to essential resources such as high-speed internet, meeting rooms, office equipment, and other infrastructure that startups may not be able to afford independently. Incubators facilitate networking by connecting startups with mentors, industry experts, potential investors, and other entrepreneurs. This networking can open doors to partnerships, collaborations, and funding opportunities. Incubators often organize workshops, seminars, and training programs to educate entrepreneurs on critical business skills. These educational opportunities help startups develop the knowledge and skills necessary for success. Incubators may offer a range of support services, including legal advice, accounting services, marketing assistance, and access to professional networks, which can be particularly valuable for early-stage companies.

Partnerships: Randolph County United

Funding: General revenue, grants, and public –private partnerships

Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years.

Case Study: Platteville, WI; Population 11,764

Platteville, Wisconsin has a population of 11,764 people. This community has a business incubator that has been in operation since 2001 (see Figure 51). In about two decades, they have supported 70 start-up businesses. The Platteville Business Incubator helps a wide variety of businesses including manufacturing, technology, culinary and professional services. The facility has meeting rooms, high-speed internet, a commercial kitchen, laser cutters, warehouse space, and even a daycare. The incubator has a partnership with the city as well as the Platteville Area Industrial Development Corporation (PAIDC), Platteville Chamber of Commerce, International Business Innovation Association, and the Wisconsin Business Incubator Association (WBIA).



Figure 51: Front sign for the Platteville Business Incubator

Placemaking

Placemaking is an approach to urban planning and design that aims to promote quality of life by making public spaces attractive places for people. It is a multifaceted concept built upon the idea that providing spaces where people meet and interact are necessary for a vibrant and successful community. Placemaking also refers to the quality of the built environment.

Winchester currently has a lot of character; however, there is no uniformity to the design elements of the built environment. This is especially the case with wayfinding and directional signs throughout the city.

Placemaking is important to Winchester as it is a means to achieve:

- **Community Building:** Placemaking fosters a sense of community by providing spaces where people can interact, connect, and engage with one another. This sense of belonging can lead to stronger social ties and a more cohesive community.
- **Quality of Life:** Placemaking enhances the quality of life for residents by creating attractive and well-designed public spaces. These spaces offer opportunities for relaxation, recreation, and enjoyment, which can lead to improved mental and physical health.
- **Economic Development:** Well-planned and inviting public spaces can attract businesses, tourists, and investors. Placemaking can contribute to economic vitality by increasing foot traffic and supporting local businesses, which, in turn, can lead to job creation.
- **Cultural and Historical Preservation:** Placemaking can emphasize the cultural and historical significance of a place, helping to preserve and celebrate the unique heritage and identity of a community. This can bolster the sense of pride and identity among residents.
- **Safety:** Well-planned public spaces, with good lighting and clear sightlines, can improve safety and security. When people feel safe in public spaces, they are more likely to use and enjoy them.
- **Increased Civic Engagement:** Accessible and well-designed public spaces can encourage civic participation and activism. They provide venues for public meetings, cultural events, and community gatherings, facilitating dialogue and collaboration among residents.
- **Aesthetic and Cultural Enrichment:** Placemaking values the aesthetic and cultural aspects of urban design, making public spaces more visually appealing and meaningful. This can instill a sense of pride in a community and attract visitors.
- **Adaptability:** Placemaking considers the long-term sustainability of public spaces. Flexible designs that adapt to changing community needs can extend the lifespan and relevance of these spaces.
- **Tourism:** Attractive and vibrant public spaces can make a location more appealing to tourists and visitors. This can boost the local economy and promote tourism-based activities.
- **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** Placemaking promotes accessibility for all, regardless of age, physical ability, or socio-economic status. It aims to create spaces that are welcoming and inclusive to a diverse range of people.

An assessment of the quality of place features in Winchester identified many assets but also some issues that need remediation (see also Table 10):

- Gateway signs are busy and inconsistent
- Directional signs are needed to help guide people to community facilities and amenities
- Some historic buildings, especially commercial structures, need structural improvements
- Resident participation in civic activities such as Council meetings and volunteer opportunities is low.
- The Randolph County Strategic Planning Analysis Document (2020) drew attention to quality of life and listed areas for action. The document listed three concerns that fell into the domain of placemaking; i) improve main streets, ii) support local business and the arts, and iii) strengthen civic amenities. These ideas could be addressed by creating an arts trail and implementing a tour of statues and landmarks such as the cemetery, fountains and monuments.

Table 10: Strengths and weaknesses of the city’s quality of place amenities

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good safety/traffic signage.• Many sidewalks.• Goodrich and Beeson Park, though disconnected, have strong programming and are well utilized by residents.• There are many organized community events, though more are likely needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gateway signs are busy and inconsistent.• Bridges are historic, BUT they are not well kept and have outdated signage.• Sidewalks are inconsistent, some areas need more attention than others.• Some urban prairies throughout the city

Placemaking Goals

Two primary goals are advanced for improving placemaking accompanied by several strategies.

Goal 1: Provide a More Cohesive Look for the City Through Design Guidelines

Strategy 1: Adopt and Implement Uniform Wayfinding and Gateway Signs.

To achieve a uniform wayfinding system the City of Winchester needs to hire a firm to consult with residents to design guidelines for a signage style or develop on their own through a community charrette a signage system. Regardless of how it is achieved, signage must then be put up in accordance with best practice. This means it should not be obstructed by vegetation and other signage, though the city seems to already be successful at this; as well, signage should be placed in angles that achieve optimal clarity to those who use them.

The extent of signage upgrades made is at the discretion of the city. Simply refreshing street signs would suffice, though a step further would also see new landmark signage in front of public amenities like parks and civic buildings. At the extreme end of the spectrum the city could also implement bespoke traffic lights and road name signs in key areas like downtown, near the two major parks, or along select corridors. Depending on the style pursued by the city, bespoke signs could mean anything from wrought iron poles to hyper-modern ones. Figure 52 shows the existing signs in the city and Figures 53 to 55 show how signage can be improved.



Figure 52: Existing gateway signs.

Examples of What Improved Gateway and Directional Signs May Look Like:



Figure 53: Digital sketch of a masonry welcome sign similar to current school sign.

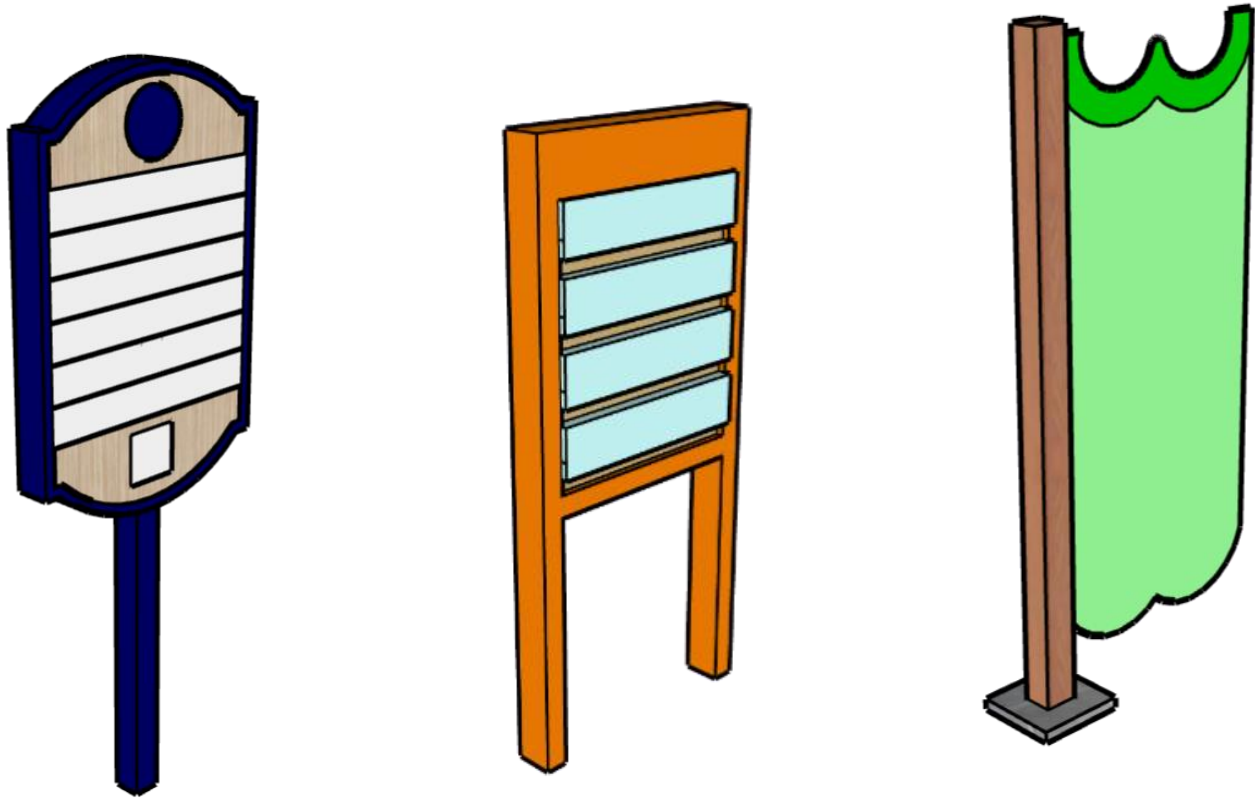


Figure 54: Digital sketches of several kinds of free-standing signage.

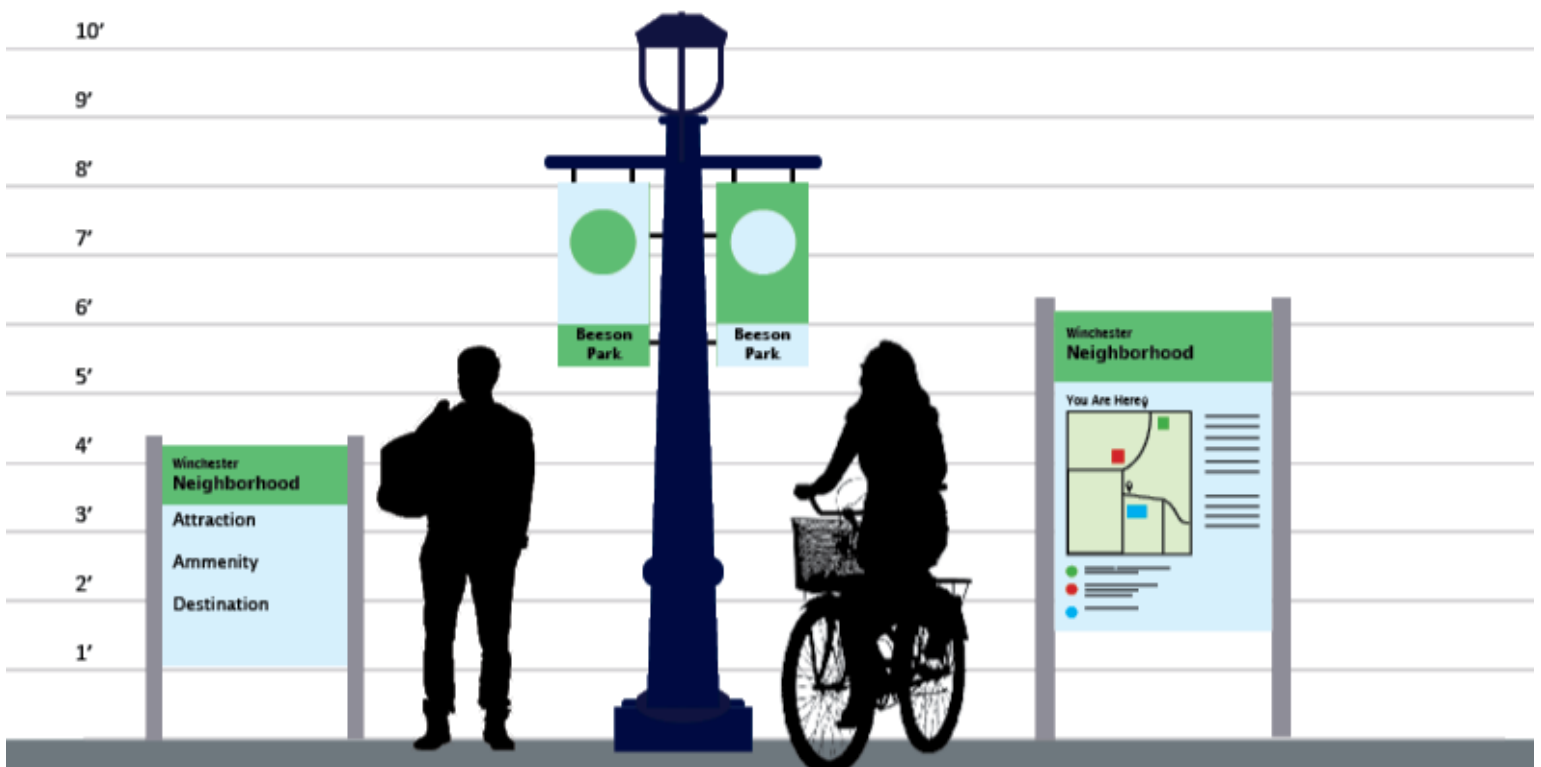


Figure 55: Render of an imagined sign family. From left to right: Standing directional sign; Hanging identifier flags; and a kiosk.

Strategy 2: Readopt and fund a façade improvement program for historic buildings.

The city in the past implemented a façade improvement program, a form of forgivable loan that is made out to commercial building owners located at the courthouse square. Facade programs provide matching grants in which property owners contribute anywhere from 5% to 50% of the cost to rehab a commercial or industrial building in the specified area. Façade projects should include the improvement of a significantly visible part of the interior or exterior of a commercial or industrial building or making a vacant building more suitable for commercial or industrial use (see Figure 56).

In the past the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) aided two downtown projects in Winchester, one of which was for façade renovations. Winchester could draw from the general revenue entirely to fund the program, use it to match grant funds from an entity like OCRA, or seek grants from other organizations or State departments.

Case Study: Auburn, IN; Population, 13,593

Auburn Main Street (AMS), the Auburn Redevelopment Commission, and the City's Building, Planning and Development department joined hands to fund a Façade Grant Program. It encourages both downtown businesses and building owners to improve the appearance of their historical facades. This has been done to catalyze commerce and foster an overall improved business environment within Auburn's historic downtown corridor.

The Façade Improvement Program is a 50% matching grant, with a maximum grant amount of \$15,000 but larger sums may be approved on a case-by-case basis. Grants are requested by applicants once yearly, but projects may be phased. The program is meant to improve extant buildings. Among permissible expenses are exterior/façade improvements, exterior lighting, signage, awnings, windows, doors, and similar undertakings. Architectural and Engineering costs associated with façade improvements not exceeding \$2,500 are eligible for 100% reimbursement. Proposed projects must be compliant with current codes and ordinances and must be in accordance with specific design guidelines. Eligible buildings must be at least 50 years old and be commercial and be within the Downtown Business District TIF.

Winchester could find success in a new façade program by adopting pieces of Auburn and other city's programs. Ideally, the city would have a body, be it existing or new, that reviews and approves proposals for the program based on set criteria. The criteria will have to include those expressed by the lender or donor, but the city should also have a list of agreed upon terms like permissible expenses, signage, compliance to a unified color scheme and architectural improvements. Ultimately, this is not dissimilar to the former façade program that was funded by OCRA's grant.

Partnerships: City of Winchester, Office of Community and Rural Affairs, property owners

Funding source: General revenue fund, grants from state government agencies, community foundation.

Phasing: Can be implemented between 3 to 10 years..



Figure 56: Before and after images of façades improved in Auburn.
 Source: <https://www.auburnmainstreet.org/facade-improvement-program/>

Case Study: Hyattsville, MD; Population, 20,873

Hyattsville, Maryland's document outlines the city's plans for wayfinding. The Hyattsville Wayfinding Signage Program states its goal is to execute a wayfinding system that is both "direct and friendly." It follows this with an acknowledgment of poor signage quality plaguing the city and assuring the reader of its commitment to improving signage. The demerits are then listed. Highlighted are a lack of signage indicating public parking along Route 1, no signage denoting the city's historic district or other attractions along U.S. 1, and –the direst problem according to the authors, a total lack of adequate directional signs for locals and non-locals. Following this is a list of attractions that are notable enough to be considered for signage. The categories of features considered are Parking, Municipal/County Building, Historic Points of Interest, Cultural Points of Interest, Park and Recreation, Schools, and Transit Stations.

After the list, a map is provided indicating the streets of Hyattsville and its major roads with the border of the city highlighted in blue (see Figure 57).

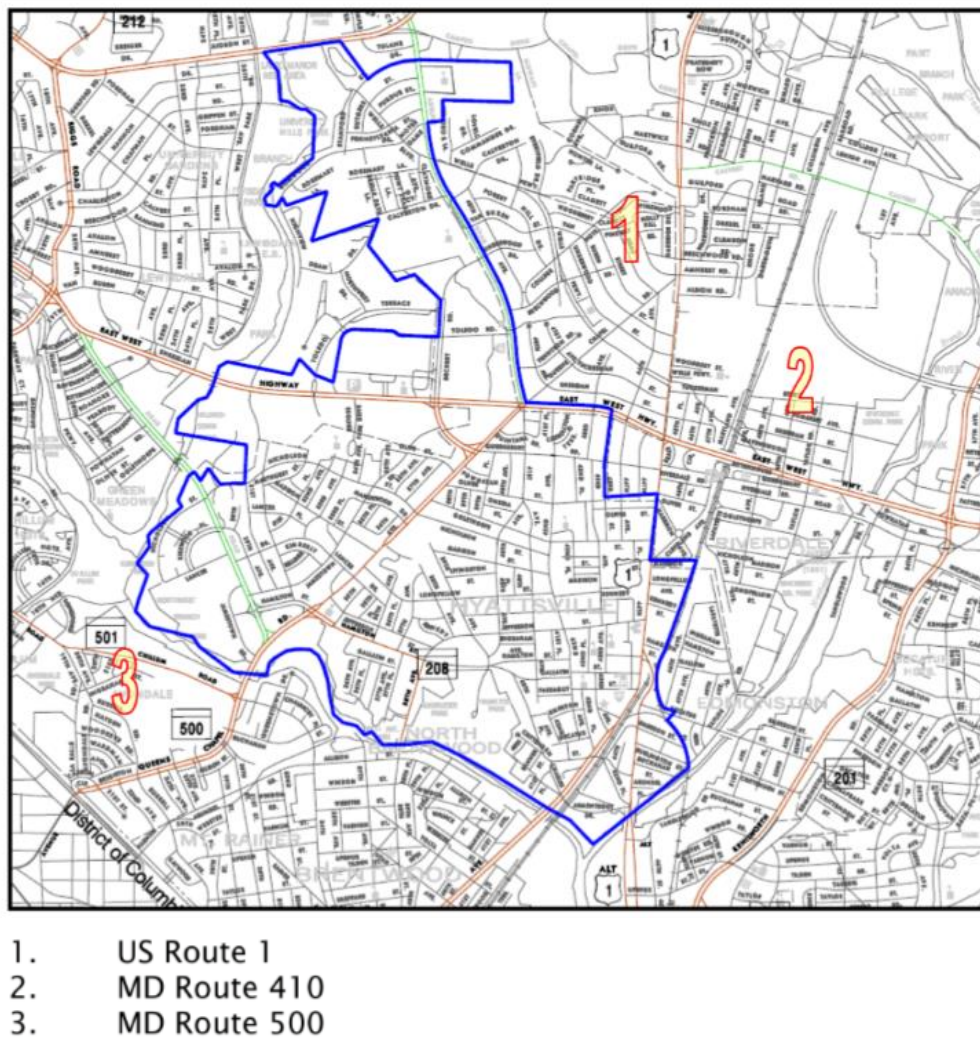


Figure 57: Map of Streets in Hyattsville, MD

Source: <https://www.hyattsville.org/DocumentCenter/View/848/Wayfinding-System-Final-Report?bidId=>

Due to a conflicting plan the county had, Hyattsville had limited options, but in 2018 the city installed three sculptural signs along the Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail (see Figure 58 and 59). The signs, designed by local artist Charles Bergen, function as kiosks that include maps developed by the Hyattsville Community Development Corporation (CDC). In October of 2021, the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Northern Gateway Community Development Corporation developed a Wayfinding and Signage Plan and created a booklet compiling their accomplishments, ongoing efforts, and briefly, their intentions for future development.

They note that, while artisan signage adds necessary character to trails and corridors, it is costly. That is why such signage is used sparingly and is supported by a vaster quantity of more cost-efficient signs like those depicted in the draft. It would behoove the city of Winchester to draft similar reports documenting notable shortcomings in directability around the city from the perspective of both locals and visitors. However, the issue we identified was chiefly the disorder of existing welcome signs into the City of Winchester.

Partnerships: City of Winchester, consulting firm, city residents.
Funding source: General revenue
Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years.



Figure 58: One of three sculptural signs along the Rhode Island Trolley Trail in Hyattsville, MD

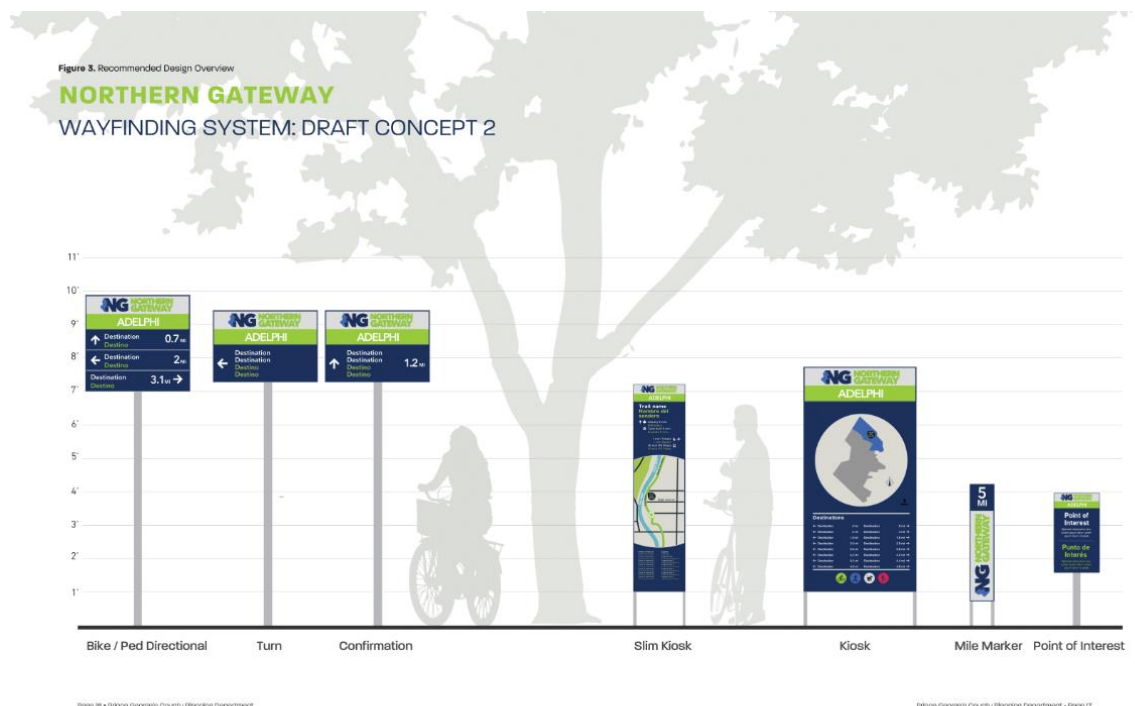


Figure 59: Draft sign family developed for 'Northern Gateway Wayfinding and Signage'
Source: https://issuu.com/mncppc/docs/ng_wayfinding_v3

Strategy 3: Adopt Design Guidelines for New Development

Design guidelines are recommendations that cities adopt to help guide property owners and developers about appropriate design features that should be considered in making improvements to their buildings. These guidelines may specify the type of building materials, color, roof styles, and other architectural elements. The goal is to ensure consistency and best practices that will enhance the user experience of a place.

A design guideline at a broad scale may be as follows:

Put Your Best Face Forward

Orient architectural and landscape elements including but not limited to entrances, balconies, and gardens towards the Anywhere Ville Greenway and Nondescript Place River.

Develop accessways connecting pedestrians to the greenway and river.

A specific district whose primary industry is tourism may have a guideline along the lines of a “Tourism District Development Guidelines.” In moderation, but where provided, incorporate Winchester themes and iconography in décor, art, and design. This may take the form of statues, mosaics and pavers, murals, etc. Some notable features of Winchester to consider are:

- The city’s flag
- The historic courthouse
- Flower or animal important to the city
- A product important to the city’s economy or history such as Wick’s Pie.

Larger cities like Portland, Oregon utilize design overlay zones which act as an aid to developers to understand the city’s aesthetic and functional expectations for the design of their buildings. This is applied as an overlay to accommodate and preserve districts and neighborhoods with unique identities. Some small towns have similar guides, one such town is Madison, Georgia.

Partnerships: City of Winchester, design consultant, city residents.

Funding source: General revenue and grants

Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years.

Case Study: Madison, GA; Population: 4,894

The City of Madison Historic Preservation Commission's "Design Criteria: Preservation Standards & Guidelines for Changes to Designated Properties" is a document that sets forth guides and restrictions for historic buildings and new buildings to keep in spirit with the character of historic buildings. The document also has a section devoted to 'New Construction.' This chapter addresses the city's belief that every property contributes significantly to the character of the town. The guidelines are separated into 'Site Planning' regulations and 'Architectural Design' regulations. Some guidelines included are:

- Orientation – The orientation of new buildings should face the same direction as historic buildings.
- Form - the form of new buildings should be patterned after historic building forms to approximate historic building mass, roof pitch, foundation/floor-to-ceiling heights, and bay divisions.
- Materials - New buildings should use traditional building materials utilized historically in that area (i.e. primarily wood siding in residential character areas and brick in commercial/warehouse areas.)

Source: <https://www.madisonga.com/DocumentCenter/View/207/Preservation-Design-Criteria-Booklet?bidId=>

Notably, this document provides a map identifying relevant districts, example renderings of acceptable and exemplary construction, unacceptable examples for comparison, guidelines, and rationale for said guidelines. Since Madison, Georgia's primary draw is its historic charm, it would follow that conservation of the city's historic 'feel' is carried out through their design guidelines. This, however, is only one among many applications of a design guideline.

Case Study: Rushville, IN; Population, 6,187

Some cities, like Rushville, incorporate design guidelines directly in their zoning ordinances. Rushville's design guidelines appear in their section regarding its Corridor Overlay District, which consists of land visible and accessible from several high traffic roads (State Road 3, State Road 44, and U.S. 52). This is done to encourage "efficient land use, promote coordinated development, permit innovative site designs, establish development standards and preserve the integrity of the roadways within the corridors," (Rushville, IN., Municipal Code § K(2)(a)).

The code includes general design standards some including:

“v. Architectural design standards...

(b) Entry features. Entryway features shall be required at the primary entrance to the structure and shall include at least three (3) of the following design elements:

(i) Raised corniced parapets over the door, peaked roof forms having an average slope greater than or equal to a minimum 5:12 pitch, arches, or architectural details such as tile work and moldings that are integrated into the building structure and design;

(ii) Integral planters or wing walls that incorporate landscaped areas and/or places for sitting;

(iii) Enhanced exterior lighting such as wall sconces, building mounted accent lights, or decorative pedestal lights.

(1) Pedestrian facilities.

(a) A continuous, delineated pedestrian route network no less than six (6) feet wide, that continues from the perimeter public sidewalk to the primary customer entrance of all primary buildings on the site shall be provided.

Another provision is that of materials used on non-residential front facades in the district.

Permissible materials in Rushville’s Corridor Overlay District are: Brick or face tile; Wood; Native stone; Glass, provided that reflective glass is limited to a maximum of 50% of the area of any façade wall on which the glass is used; Tinted and/or textured concrete masonry units such as split face block and burnished block; Tilt-up concrete panels that are adorned or textured; Architectural pre-cast concrete; Architectural metal; Exterior insulation and finishing system; or, Fiber cement board.

Rushville's approach to Design Guidelines is one that is metered; affecting no other district but its Mainstreet Overlay. This means that the weight of impact the guidelines carry on quality of place is more so determined by location within the city than on the overall design of the city. Winchester may draw from the specificity of requirements or the broadness of rationale for adoption of guidelines such as Rushville's.

Goal 2: Adopt a Mural Program to Cover Blank Walls Particularly for Buildings Along SR 32 and for the Overpass at South 32.

Several buildings along SR 32, the major thoroughfare through Winchester have blank walls that make the city uninteresting and can be spruced up to depict the city’s history and advertise its uniqueness such as the nationally beloved local cemetery, Wick's pies, Goodrich Park and famous people such as the Goodrich family and its role in the city’s development.

Strategy: Organize Local Artists to Identify and Paint Blank Walls Along SR 32. The local historic society can take the lead role in organizing and paying for local artists to provide this service.

The owners of blank walls ailing Winchester, and local artists, should be provided with an avenue to reach the local government or a staff member to express their desire to partake in this program.

Artists and business owners should discuss payment, and the city may seek additional funding to pay artists through the Indiana Arts Commission or the Arts Association of Randolph County. After which, design review should be undertaken to ensure the quality and subject of the art are catered to Winchester.

Case Study: Fort Bragg, CA; Population, 6,970

Fort Bragg, California houses the Alleyway Art Project, which facilitates connections between artists, sponsors, and building owners to orchestrate the creation of murals (see Figures 60 and 61). Despite the name, these murals may be placed anywhere, for instance ‘Sunlit Redwood Forest’ by artist Ryan Grossman is located on the building’s side. The program is curated and managed by a single person whose office is in the County’s Art Council. On the landing page of the program, beneath a list of articles about recent murals, there is an interactive map highlighting where the murals can be found.



Figure 60: Façade before and after installation of ‘Sunlit Redwood Forest’ by Ryan Grossman on 301 E Redwood Ave. Co-sponsored by The Redwood Forest Foundation Inc. (RFFI). Source: <https://fortbraggalleywayart.org/sunlit-redwood-forest/>



Figure 61: The Rhododendron' by Ferric Decay on 300 N Main St. Co-sponsored by the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens.

Partners and responsible parties

1. The City of Winchester
 - a. The city itself is responsible for drafting laws and ordinances that encourage quality of place
 - b. City projects and events
 - c. It is imperative that the city government recognizes that it is responsible for the maintenance and replacement of urban furniture, signage, and landscaping. These things need upkeep and can break like anything else. Should something the city implemented break, it is the responsibility of the city to delineate the task of repair. Depending on the nature of the undertaking, this may be the domain of Parks and Recreation, the Transportation Department, or another entity.
2. Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority's (IHCDA) Indiana Placemaking initiative
 - a. <https://www.in.gov/ihcda/placemaking-indiana/>
3. Indiana Arts Commission
 - a. Creative Placemaking Toolkit
 - b. <https://www.in.gov/arts/cptoolkit/finding-funding/>
4. Arts Association of Randolph County (Arts Depot)
 - a. <https://www.artsdepot.org/>

Parks and Recreation

Parks and recreational amenities play an important role in enhancing the quality of life in a city and attracting new residents. These spaces provide residents and visitors with opportunities for physical activity, leisure, social interaction, and a connection to nature, and they contribute to the overall well-being of the community, promote a healthier lifestyle, and are often a focal point for cultural events and community gatherings. In Winchester, these services have a strong foundation, but there are numerous opportunities for expansion and improvement. The strengths and challenges of the city's parks and recreational amenities is summarized in Table 11. Figure 62 shows the parts of the city where access to a park is beyond walking distance.

Table 11: Observations on city's parks and recreational amenities

Observations	Findings
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large amount of park space • Diverse types of offerings
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most are well maintained and clean • Walking paths must be repaired to meet ADA requirements
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many residents are not within walking distance to a park • Parks have ADA issues with pedestrian paths
Program Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many recreation offerings including youth baseball and softball
Expansion Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to introduce 'Pocket Parks' on vacant lots • Overall need for more quaint parks such as the existing Beeson Park

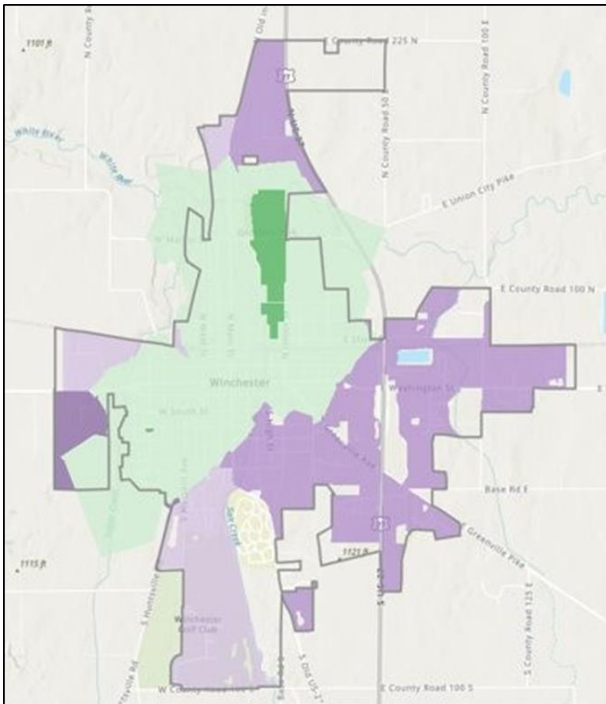


Figure 62: Access to city parks with purple color showing where additional parks could be provided.

Parks and Recreation Goals

Three goals and accompanying strategies are suggested for improving parks and recreation amenities in the city. They include increased ADA compliance for paths and walkways within parks, the introduction of an intracity trail system, increasing the number of neighborhood ‘pocket parks,’ and the development of a parkway system within Winchester.

Goal 1: Ensure All Residents are Within Walking Distance of a Park.

Strategy 1: Provide Pocket Parks Where Residents are Too Far From an Existing Park.

The concept of 'Pocket Parks' introduces a new approach to urban planning that can have a profound impact on city living. These small-scale, community-based green spaces can transform underutilized lots, parking spaces, or forgotten corners of the city into vibrant communal spaces; hence the name “Pocket Parks.” By creating these micro-parks throughout neighborhoods, cities foster a stronger sense of community and provide residents with convenient, easily accessible green spaces to relax, socialize, or simply enjoy the outdoors. They're an ideal solution for areas where traditional large parks may not be feasible.

The introduction of 'Pocket Parks' is also an opportunity to enhance the aesthetic appeal and value of a neighborhood and the properties within it. These mini parks, often creatively landscaped with native plants, seating areas, and public art, contribute to the beautification of the overall neighborhood environment.

These pocket parks also provide a gathering space for residents. Their presence can attract potential homebuyers and businesses to the area, increasing property values and stimulating local economic development. In this way, 'Pocket Parks' are not just small green spaces but catalysts for more vibrant and thriving neighborhoods. Additionally, the introduction of single-lot size pocket parks provides the opportunity to transform vacant lots into both an amenity and a desirable space.

Partners: City of Winchester, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Environmental groups.

Funding: General revenue and grants

Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years.



Figure 63: Beeson “pocket park” in Winchester.

Case Study: Beeson Park in Winchester, IN

A case study for the introduction of pocket parks already exists in the city of Winchester. Beeson Park, while not formally recognized as a ‘Pocket Park,’ is a single-lot width park that provides great amenities for a small-scale park. As described previously, the introduction of a pocket park this size can transform vacant lots into vibrant community gathering spaces that are aesthetically pleasing and are fixtures in their respective neighborhoods. Figure 63 shows images of the existing Beeson Park.

Case Study: Noblesville, IN; Population 69,604

A good case study for the success of the implementation of pocket parks can be seen in the City of Noblesville, Indiana. The city has taken a forgotten corner lot near an electrical grid lot that has pedestrian trail access and transformed it into a pedestrian gathering space. Generally called the ‘Noblesville Pocket Park,’ and officially known as the ‘Riverwalk Depot Pocket Park,’ this space has become a trailhead for Noblesville’s White River Greenway trail system and provides a space for residents to enjoy the outdoors, the views of the White River, and a respite for bikers. Figure 64 shows before and after images of this pocket park in Noblesville.



Figure 64: Vacant lot before it was developed into a pocket park.



Strategy 2: Develop an Intracity Trail Network that Connects Parks and the Parkway System.

An intracity trail network is a visionary project that offers a wealth of benefits to urban areas. Beyond merely providing recreational opportunities, these interconnected trails create green corridors that wind through the heart of the city, providing a welcome respite from urban life. Residents and visitors can enjoy the tranquility of nature without leaving the city, promoting physical fitness and mental well-being while reducing the environmental impact of long commutes to distant parks or natural areas. Additionally, these parkway systems allow residents greater proximity to parks and improve overall accessibility to existing park spaces.

In addition to promoting physical health and environmental sustainability, these trail networks can invigorate local economies. They attract tourists and residents alike, boosting local businesses. Furthermore, they often increase property values along the trails, providing a financial incentive for property owners to maintain attractive surroundings. The interconnectedness of parks through a trail network also encourages the preservation of existing green spaces and enhances the overall quality of a city, making it an attractive option for cities to invest in.

Partners: City of Winchester, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Environmental groups

Funding: General revenue and grants

Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years.

Case Study: French Lick, IN; Population 1,722

The trail system in French Lick, Indiana, with an approximate population of 1,700 residents, is an intracity trail network that connects the French Lick Resort, a golf course, and other existing park spaces. This trail network provides a boost in property values for residents, increased accessibility to existing park space, and greater recreation opportunities for residents. Winchester can model an intracity trail network parkway system off this existing system in the town of French Lick. Figure 65 shows an image of the French Lick trail system.



Figure 65: An intracity trail in French Lick.

Goal 2: Ensure Parks and Downtown are Safe Spaces for Residents to Congregate at All Times of Day and Night.

Strategy 1: Introduce an Emergency 911 Call Box System Downtown and Within Existing Parks.

The introduction of emergency 911 call box systems in Winchester's parks and downtown district is a proactive initiative that would greatly enhance the safety and well-being of both residents and visitors. These call boxes provide a direct and reliable means of communication in case of emergencies, ensuring rapid response times from local authorities or medical services. Winchester's parks are recreational spaces, and having these call boxes scattered throughout them would instill a sense and perception of security for those who enjoy the nature and amenities they offer. Families, hikers, picnickers, and outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy their time in the parks with the mindfulness that a physical presence and connection to emergency services is available in case of unforeseen circumstances.

This initiative aligns with the town's commitment to ensuring the welfare of its community, making its parks and downtown district even more inviting, accessible, and secure for all, thus further solidifying Winchester's reputation as a caring and thoughtful community. This service could be done through the implementation of emergency 'Blue Phones' such as those seen on college campuses, or through the implementation of highway/roadside-style call boxes.

Partners: City of Winchester, Randolph County United

Funding: General fund, grants from community foundation

Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years.

Case Study: Call boxes at Ball State University

(Emergency Blue Light Phones)

At Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, the blue light emergency phones stand as vigilant sentinels across the campus, providing a sense of security to students, faculty, and staff (see Figure 63). These distinctively blue-colored phones are strategically placed in key locations, serving as beacons of safety in both well-traveled areas and more secluded spots. Equipped with a direct line to the university's police department, these emergency phones are a visible manifestation



Figure 66: Blue light emergency phone at Ball State University

of the institution's commitment to ensuring the well-being of its community members. The blue light phones serve as a reassuring reminder that help is just a call away, contributing to the overall safety infrastructure of the campus. According to a university spokesperson, the blue light emergency phones play a crucial role in fostering a secure environment at Ball State. The spokesperson states, "Our commitment to the safety of our students and staff is unwavering, and the blue light emergency phones are a tangible representation of that commitment. They provide a direct link to our police department, allowing for rapid response in case of emergencies. It's not just about the physical presence of these phones; it's about the peace of mind they offer to our campus community, knowing that help is easily accessible when needed." This sentiment reflects the university's proactive approach to campus safety and its dedication to creating a secure and supportive environment for all.

Strategy 2: Pedestrianize a Portion of Downtown Temporarily at Different Times of the Year.

Winchester offers a unique opportunity to enhance the quality of life for its residents by considering the pedestrianization of a portion of its downtown area, even if only occasionally and on a temporary basis. This initiative would not only contribute to the town's recreational options but also foster a sense of community and well-being among its residents. By closing off certain downtown streets to vehicular traffic, Winchester could create a vibrant and safe space for people to stroll, socialize, enjoy recreational activities, and patronize downtown businesses. It would encourage residents to explore their downtown, patronize local businesses, and participate in community events. This pedestrian-friendly transformation could be used to host various recreational events such as street markets, art fairs, live music performances, and outdoor fitness classes. Additionally, it would promote a healthier lifestyle, as people would have the opportunity to walk, bike, or simply relax in a car-free environment, fostering a strong sense of place and unity in the core of Winchester.

Partnerships: Downtown business and property owners, City of Winchester

Funding: No funding is needed

Phase 1: Can be implemented within 1 to 3 years.

Case Study: Winchester Farmers' Market

The Farmers' Market in Winchester is a vibrant community hub where local farmers and artisans converge to showcase their produce and crafts. This lively market, typically held on weekends, encapsulates the essence of Winchester's agricultural heritage and serves as a platform for residents to connect with local growers. The market's diverse array of fresh fruits, vegetables, handmade goods, and artisanal products not only supports the local economy but also fosters a sense of community. According to a report in the Winchester News Gazette, the market has grown over the years, attracting both locals and visitors who appreciate the quality and authenticity of the offerings. The Winchester Farmers Market thus stands as a testament to the town's commitment to sustainable agriculture, community engagement, and the celebration of local craftsmanship.

Goal 3: Ensure all Existing Park Space is of High Quality.

Strategy 1: Increase ADA Compliance for Existing Pedestrian Paths Within Park Spaces and Sidewalks.

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a landmark civil rights law in the United States that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. This law was enacted in 1990, and it mandates equal access to jobs and employment. This act also requires that city-owned sidewalks and pedestrian paths in the United States must be designed, constructed, and maintained in a way that ensures accessibility for individuals with disabilities. This includes features like curb ramps, accessible crosswalks, and smooth, level surfaces to accommodate mobility aids such as wheelchairs. Additionally, for example, pedestrian pathways must be, at minimum, 5 feet wide, and many of the paths in Winchester's parks do not meet this requirement.

Improving compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act for pedestrian paths is a multifaceted endeavor that brings numerous benefits to a city. First and foremost, it's a significant step towards fostering inclusivity and accessibility for all members of the community. By ensuring that sidewalks, crosswalks, and public walkways meet ADA standards, cities can break down physical barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from freely navigating their urban environment and recreational amenities. This not only improves safety by preventing accidents and falls but also empowers people with disabilities to participate more fully in community life, leading to an improved sense of civic pride in the population. Moreover, increasing ADA compliance has positive economic implications by expanding the customer base for local businesses as everyone can access them, and it aligns with legal requirements that ensure equal opportunities for all Americans.

Additionally, enhancing ADA compliance is a step towards creating a more livable and attractive urban space. Accessible pedestrian paths make cities more appealing to residents and tourists alike. Moreover, the commitment to universal accessibility reflects positively on a city's image, demonstrating a dedication to social equity and inclusivity. In this context, increasing ADA compliance can also lead to a boost in tourism and investments, further benefiting the local economy. Overall, focusing on ADA compliance is not just about compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, but about creating a more vibrant and welcoming city.

Partnerships: City of Winchester

Funding: General revenue, Community Crossings grant from state government

Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years.

Strategy 2: Improve Lighting Quality Within Parks.

Enhancing the lighting quality within Winchester's parks is a significant step toward creating a safer and more inviting outdoor environment for both residents and visitors. Improved lighting not only extends the usability of these public spaces into the evening hours but also fosters a sense of security. Winchester's parks serve as gathering places for the community, and by brightening these areas, the town can encourage more nighttime activities, such as picnics, sports, and social gatherings. The softer, energy-efficient lighting, such as LED lighting, can illuminate walking paths and recreational areas, reducing the risk of accidents and providing a more enjoyable atmosphere for stargazing or evening walks. By prioritizing the quality of park lighting, Winchester can underscore its commitment to the well-being of its residents, making the parks truly inclusive, accessible, and enjoyable spaces for everyone to utilize both day and night. An investment in lighting infrastructure will not only enhance safety but also strengthen the city's reputation as a community that cares for its residents and values their quality of life.

Partnerships: City of Winchester, grants

Funding: General revenue, Community Foundation

Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years

Transportation

The City of Winchester lies along SR 32, through which several thousand vehicles travel each day. This provides an opportunity for the city to capitalize on the through traffic. Most streets within the city are also in good quality although there are several streets that do not have sidewalks. The city faces transportation challenges similar to those of smaller cities its size in Indiana. As the hub of Randolph County, the city is the center of commerce and tourism, seeing residents and visitors traversing the city on many modes of transportation. A well-developed transportation network improves mobility options for everyone in Winchester and makes it easier to complete everyday tasks. Safe transportation ensures that the city's residents can participate in community events, and confidently make visits to businesses, schools, and neighbors. Investment in the transportation network can also stimulate the economic growth of the city, according to the American Public Transportation Association. Transportation is an essential component to the vitality of Winchester, and other pieces cannot succeed without a well-developed transportation network.

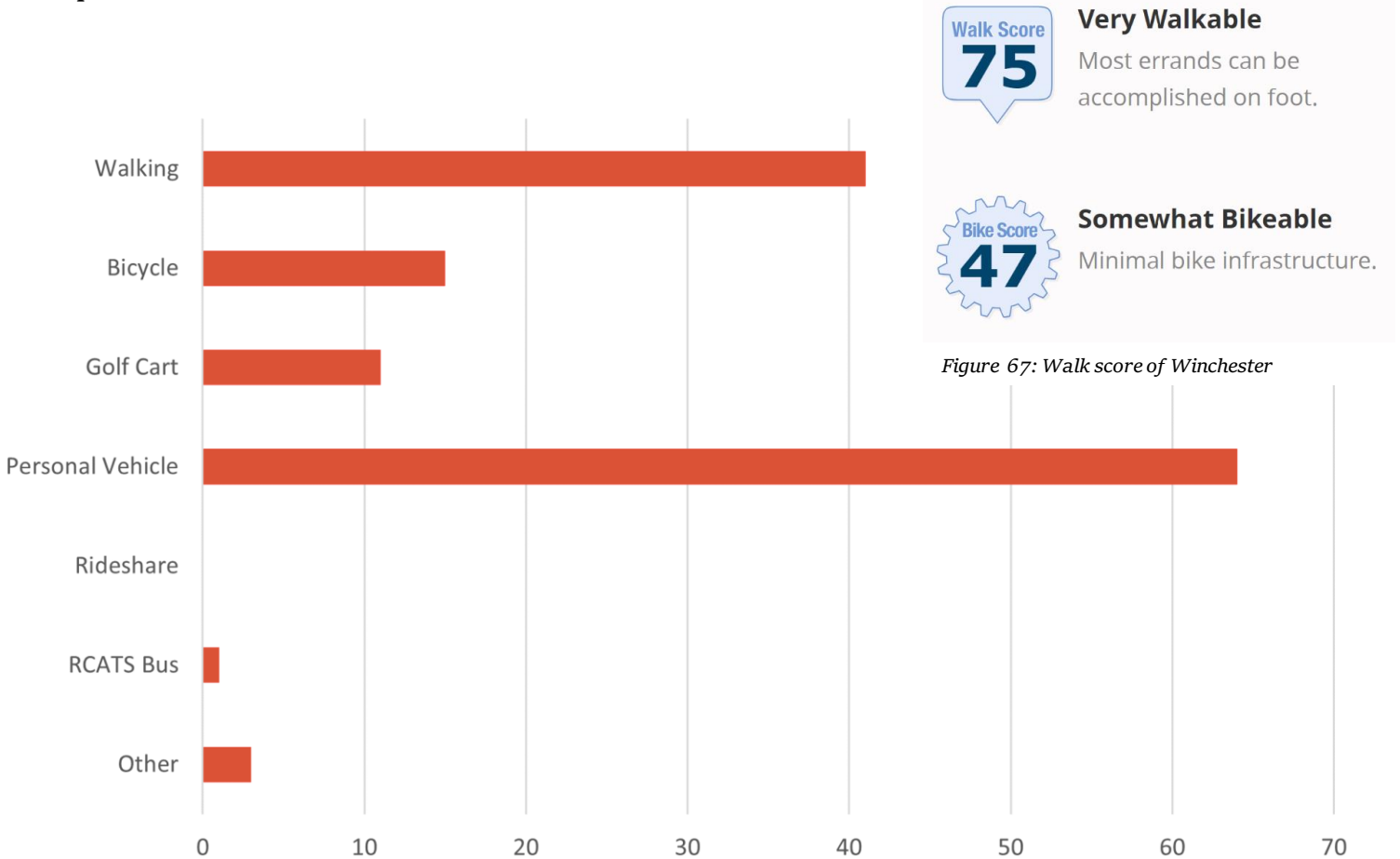
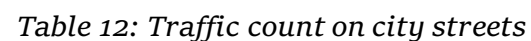


Figure 67: Walk score of Winchester

Figure 68: Predominant mode of transportation in Winchester

Walk Score provides ratings to communities based on their walkability, bikability, and transit access. As Figure 67 shows, Winchester received a score of 75, which is in the highest category. This indicates that most trips done by residents can be accomplished by walking to and from the destination. This is largely due to the proximity of residential development to commercial business. The bike score is in the lowest category, indicating Winchester has very little bike infrastructure. The City of Winchester has many residential, lower-traffic streets, which are safer to traverse than higher-traffic streets. However, there is no dedicated bicycle infrastructure anywhere in the city, with the exception of some trails in public parks. This likely leads to a low evaluation for the city. As Winchester does not have a currently operating public transit system, the transit score is not listed, and presumed to be 0. Winchester is likely too small in population to support a fixed-route transit service. From the survey conducted, the use of personal vehicles and walking are the two most common methods of transportation.



Distance:	Street:	Closest Cross-street:	Count:
0.09	East Washington Street	S Cherry St (0.01 miles E)	6,219.00
0.15	State Road 32	S East St (0.04 miles W)	7,366.00
0.15	North Union Street	Davis St (0.02 miles N)	5,325.00
0.19	East Washington Street	Ludy Rd (0.06 miles W)	6,962.00
0.21	Browne Street	Thompson St (0.03 miles N)	622
0.26	South Main Street	S Old Hwy 27 (0.01 miles SE)	2,300.00
0.27	West Franklin Street	S Main St (0.01 miles E)	1,144.00
0.28	West Washington Street	Polk St (0.07 miles SE)	6,237.00
0.31	South Main Street	E Will St (0.0 miles S)	2,433.00
0.32	East Greenville Avenue	Hospital Dr (0.01 miles SE)	5,170.00
0.36	North Main Street	E Railroad St (0.03 miles S)	8,350.00
0.36	East Washington Street	Ludy Rd (0.01 miles W)	6,363.00
0.38	W Washington St	S West St (0.02 miles W)	6,599.00
0.4	East Orange Street	Richmond St (0.0 miles W)	494
0.42	North West Street	W North St (0.01 miles S)	738
0.46	East Greenville Avenue	E Base Rd (0.02 miles SE)	4,886.00
0.46	East 4th Street	N Residence St (0.01 miles E)	1,165.00
0.48	East Orange Street	S Stone St (0.01 miles W)	1,592.00
0.49	US 27 046 SW	Linda Dr (0.09 miles N)	1,871.00
0.51	North Union Street	E 4th St (0.07 miles S)	5,325.00
0.52	East Short Street	Hwy 27 (0.06 miles E)	891
0.53	North Residence Street	E 5th St (0.03 miles N)	273
0.54	US 27 012 SE	N McDonald Dr (0.09 miles N)	1,995.00
0.55	United States Highway 27	E Greenville Ave (0.2 miles S)	6,459.00
0.55	West 4th Street	N Meridian St (0.01 miles E)	2,850.00
0.55	South Main Street	Richmond St (0.01 miles SE)	5,325.00
0.56	Huntsville Road	Beeson Dr (0.0 miles NE)	1,712.00
0.56	South West Street	George St (0.04 miles N)	421
0.57	East Washington Street	N McDonald Dr (0.05 miles W)	9,088.00
0.57	32	Sunny Knoll Dr (0.02 miles W)	8,541.00

66

The City of Winchester has several high-traffic roadways through busy parts of town. As displayed in Figure 69, Route 32 has the highest average daily traffic count within the city boundaries, nearing 10,000 trips per day. Locally, this is known as East and West Washington Street. Along SR-32 are a variety of uses within the city, including residential uses closer to the Courthouse Square, commercial uses near the Square and east of US-27, and industrial uses in the eastern portions of the city. The uses provide a benefit to residents however, this sometimes creates greater traffic burdens.

In addition to the local traffic that utilizes SR-32, many vehicles travel through Winchester on the corridor. Although this can provide economic potential, it stresses the transportation system with additional passenger cars and commercial traffic, which can include large trucks. Residents expressed concerns about the truck traffic near the downtown square, as this is the main east/west thoroughfare, and there is no nearby bypass for the town. This can be advantageous for businesses located near the courthouse, but also may negatively impact quality of life for residents nearby and make the roads more unsafe. The main north-south regional route through Winchester is US-27, extending north to Deerfield and south to Lynn. Although this is also a high-traffic state-maintained truck route, US-27 is elevated through part of the city, disallowing traffic to cause increased travel time for local residents. SR-32 has the opposite condition, acting as a local road with regional traffic.

Many of the roads through the city are in fair to good condition (see Figure 70), and this is a strong point for the city. There are pockets of lower-quality roads in the city, which tend to be concentrated in specific neighborhoods. Roads also degrade at noticeably faster rates near heavy industry uses, which places a strain on the budget for road maintenance.

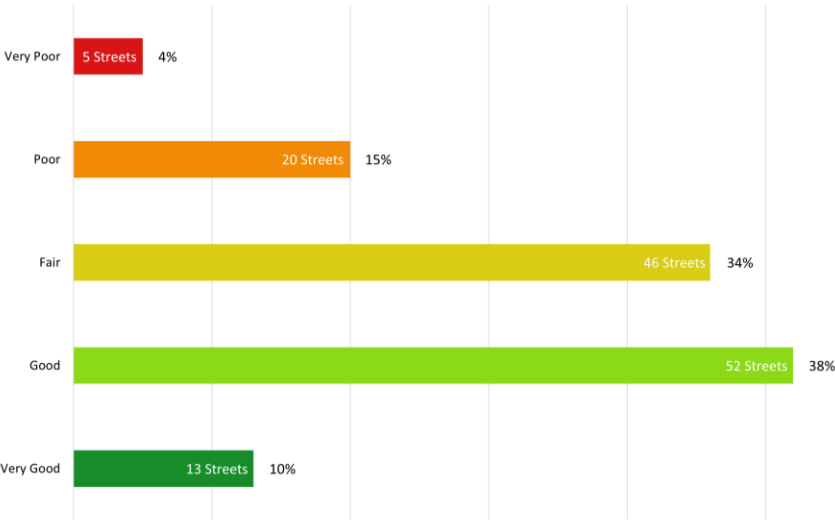
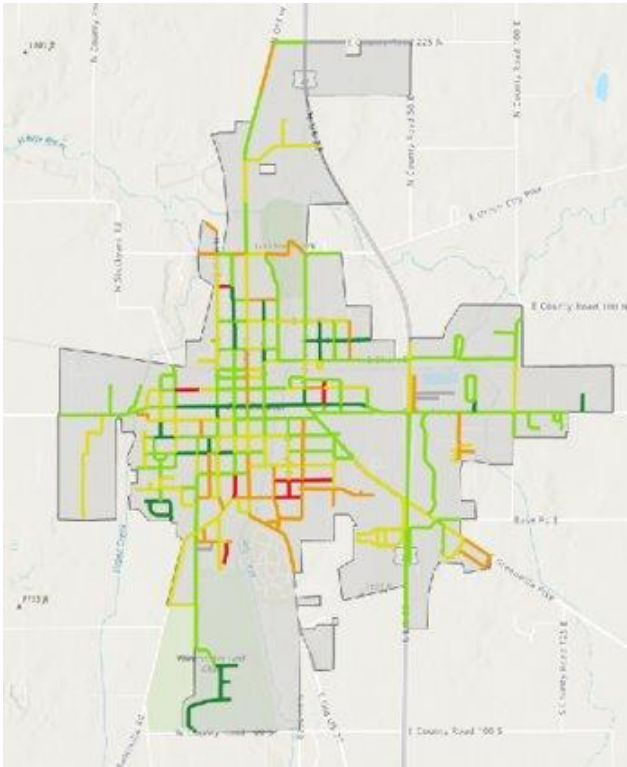


Figure 70: Street Quality Chart and Map



Transportation Goals

Two transportation goals are advanced for improving this sector of the city: improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure through capital improvement planning, and provide a regional transportation system. Within these two broad goals are several implementation strategies for consideration.

Goal 1: Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

How successfully residents and visitors of Winchester are able to move around depends largely on the prevalence of safe and convenient infrastructure. For pedestrians, this may include flat, wide sidewalks, and noticeable crosswalks where road crossings are needed. For cyclists, this may include dedicated right of way for bicycle paths, or painted bike lines to heighten visibility. This can be more efficiently undertaken if a town or city has a process for planning and implementing such projects.

Strategy 1: Adopt and Implement a Capital Improvement Program (CIP):

The city can plan for the provision of infrastructure by adopting a capital improvement plan. A Capital Improvement Program is a plan outlining future expenditure for municipal capital projects. This typically includes specific, actionable projects, a proposed timeline, and sources of funding. For the City of Winchester, a Capital Improvement Program would be an invaluable tool ensuring projects are organized and prioritized, and vital to maximizing local budgets. The Indiana House Enrolled Act of 2019 defines “capital improvements” which can be made rather broadly (see Table 13).

Without a CIP, Winchester faces a more difficult task in both obtaining necessary funding to complete projects, because these are often large lump sum commitments, and risks inequitable development by only responding to the needs of those who raise their own concerns; a CIP is the best way to ensure equitable outcomes in infrastructure development.

Capital Payments
General Fund
Fire Service
Municipal Vehicles
Buildings
Public Parks

Table 13: Capital Payments and Improvements

It is likely that the City of Winchester would need to utilize resources outside of the city to create this program. Often, municipalities with smaller population sizes hire consultants or contractors to help them prepare the capital improvement plan. It remains vital that the city is an integral and invested part of this process, regardless of who is enabling its completion.

Capital Improvements
Land Acquisition
Site Improvements
Infrastructure Improvements
Construction of Structures
Building Rehabilitation, Renovation, or Expansion
Acquisition of Improved Facilities and Equipment

Partnerships: City of Winchester, Randolph County, hired consultant
Funding: General Fund, HUD/other grants
Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years.

Case Study: Avon, IN; Population 21,474

In May of 2020, the Town of Avon, Indiana, published a fourth draft of their “Capital Funding Plan” document, outlining capital spending for the next fiscal cycle (see Table 14). The Town of Avon hired a consultant to complete the document and compute the financial data used. The town’s document contained five detailed sections, as well as several appendices which expand upon information described. The sections are as follows:

- A- Capital Funding
- B- Summary of Capital Projects by Construction Cost
- C- Summary of Capital Projects by Funding Source
- D- General Obligation Debt Limit for Town of Avon
- E- General Obligation Debt Limit for Redevelopment District

Avon has defined a redevelopment district based on the needs of their community and has defined four “priority redevelopment areas” within the town. The City of Winchester may look to this as an example and potentially seek to create districts of its own.

Table 14: Capital improvements plan for the Town of Avon, Indiana.

Project	Total Cost	Local Share	Remaining Local Share
100 South Widening Project 1	\$ 20,305,000	\$ 16,805,000	\$ 15,005,000
Dan Jones Widening - US 36-1005 Project 2	4,703,890	1,910,000	1,710,000
200 North Reconstruction Project 3	4,771,081	2,325,216	250,000
Trail and Sidewalk Connections - US 36 Project 4	547,111	547,000	388,000
Trail and Sidewalk Connections - 150S/ Avon Ave. Project 5	714,000	714,000	564,000
Erosion Control - White Lick CR 625 Project 6	2,000,000	450,000	450,000
CR 100 S and Dan Jones Park Land Project 7	220,000	220,000	110,000
Police Technology Project 8	175,000	175,000	125,000
Construct Park Improvements Project 9	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Paving Not in TIF District Project 10	4,900,000	4,600,000	3,800,000
Paving in TIF District Project 11	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,000,000
Dan Jones Bridge Widening - Aesthetics Project 12	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
Reconstruction Intermediate School Road Project 13	570,000	570,000	540,000
Dan Jones Widening - Phase 2 Project 14	7,500,000	3,200,000	3,200,000
Dan Jones Paving Project 15	2,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000
Raceway/100 N Roundabout Project 16	3,300,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
Infrastructure Plan - RRP EDA Project 17	300,000	300,000	300,000
Gateway 36 Project 18	500,000	500,000	500,000
Gateway RRP Project 19	300,000	300,000	300,000
Light & Life Church - Park Land Purchase Project 20	136,000	136,000	136,000
Emergency Sirens with Townships Project 21	65,000	65,000	65,000
Extension of Garage Bay at Police Station Project 22	135,000	135,000	135,000
Remodeling Town Hall Project 23	115,000	115,000	115,000
2020 Trail and Sidewalk Project Project 24	900,000	900,000	900,000
Shelter & Restroom Project 25	300,000	300,000	300,000
Playground Project 26	100,000	100,000	100,000

A majority of projects described in the Town of Avon capital plan are intended for infrastructure improvements to improve safety and capacity. There are two projects for “Trail and Sidewalk Connections,” both of which total over \$1 million in investment. There is also a bridge widening project, which includes an expansion in sidewalk infrastructure. Winchester has several bridges that require improvements, both due to obsolete functionality and lack of pedestrian infrastructure; this type of project can be placed in the CIP.

Case Study: Community Crossings Grant Program

In 2016, the Indiana Department of Transportation launched the Community Crossings Grant Program. This is “a partnership between INDOT and Hoosier communities, both urban and rural, to invest in infrastructure projects that catalyze economic development, create jobs, and strengthen local transportation networks.” In its most recent cycle, communities across the state received almost \$100 million in funding for infrastructure improvements. For FY23, Winchester received roughly \$650,000 in funding. This investment can stretch local dollars further, and is strengthened by having a well-rounded, complete CIP.

Strategy 2: Identify Areas for Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements

The City of Winchester will need to investigate potential streets and/or corridors which could be candidates for bicycle lanes, cycle tracks, or multi-use trails. Considerations for locations should include:

- Prevalence of current bicycle use
- Proximity to schools or other services
- Speed limit
- Roadway links to popular destinations
- Surrounding land use

Before permanent infrastructure is constructed, the city is advised to first place temporary markers to view the success of the program. A public input process for this implementation is still vital, though first attempting a temporary project will create shorter timelines for the project overall.

Partner: Winchester Street Department, INDOT

Funding: General Fund, grants from non-profit organizations

Phase 1: Can be implemented between 1 to 3 years.

Case Study: Warsaw, IN; Population 15,804

In the summer of 2022, temporary bike lanes were placed on the main street of downtown Warsaw, IN (see Figures 71 and 72), a practice called tactical urbanism. The town of just over 15,000 had completed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan in 2013, which included a downtown cycle track, which had been one of the last remaining segments as of that year of a major trail. The town implemented a temporary cycle track at low cost, using flex-posts and planters to mark trail right-of-way. Warsaw is now investigating the success of such a project to see if a permanent treatment should be implemented.

Winchester may follow similar ideas to what was included in Warsaw's project. Due to this low-cost method, temporary fixtures can be implemented in a very short timeline, while longer-range planning efforts are underway. This is also an excellent method to gauge community feedback to such plans.



Figure 71: Temporary bike lanes in Warsaw, Indiana.



Figure 72: Temporary bike lanes in Warsaw, Indiana.

Case Study: New Castle, IN; Population 17,396

In 2014, New Castle, Indiana approved a bicycle and pedestrian master plan for the city and surrounding township. Part of this plan included identifying both corridors which see higher demand in bicycle ridership and destinations which need safer routes surrounding their locations. A similar process was followed for pedestrian infrastructure. Combining these findings with community-specific requests for facilities, a master plan was created for the city, with potential and recommended routes shown in Figure 73. Although New Castle is a larger municipality than Winchester, this process can be replicated by the city in a similar fashion and would likely require the assistance of a consultant. With a master plan in place, it is more streamlined to include projects in the CIP.

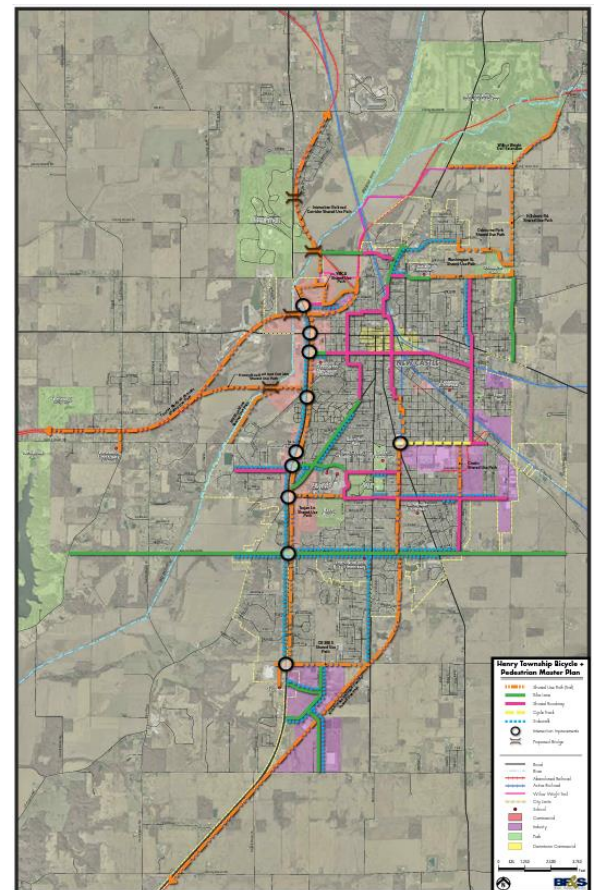


Figure 73: Recommended bicycle routes in New Castle, Indiana.

Example of a CIP Development Process in Winchester

After analysis of the field assessment, it has been determined that access to the following destinations and community amenities may pose a risk to residents. Considerations for bicycle infrastructure as well as pedestrian accessibility are thus suggested. To fit in line with the Capital Improvement Program process, several areas of the city have been identified as priority improvement areas. Phasing the implementation of infrastructure improvements is provided so that sequentially and as funds become available each phase of the project is pursued. Priority Phase 1 could be pursued as part of one five-year Capital Improvement Program, with Priority Phase 2 to follow. It is vital that community outreach be completed and form a component of the process before the designation of these phases, to see if residents have additional insight into the state of the provision of safe infrastructure.

Priority Phase 1:

- Goodrich Park – Western entrance does not have sidewalks. E Martin St and N Residence St do not have pedestrian infrastructure on segments bordering the park boundaries. Eastern entrance has partial sidewalk access. N Union St has sidewalks on both sides, E Union City Pike is without sidewalks. The park is a popular location for children and families, and it is a vital location to improve for pedestrian safety.
- Winchester Community High School – Approach from northeast is without pedestrian infrastructure. E Union City Pike has residences located near the school without safe access. The city should plan for students approaching from the east, and ensure they have proper infrastructure off of the higher-speed roadway.
- QR Baker Elementary – This elementary school is not accessible from all directions via sidewalks. The road to the east has a small width and does not have a pedestrian walkway. It is especially vital to emphasize safe bicycle and walking access to points of education, as children are most at risk from adverse conditions. All education centers should be fully connected to the network.

Priority Phase 2:

- City Southeast – Several restaurants, retail, and healthcare destinations are located in the southeast section of Winchester along E Greenville Ave. These include Ascension St. Vincent Medical, a Walmart Supercenter, and several local and chain restaurants. E Greenville Ave had sidewalks installed recently, which does provide a safer environment for reaching most destinations. However, the intersection with U.S. 27 is a significant barrier. There is no safe route by bicycle or walking to traverse this high-speed roadway. Pedestrians and bicyclists are separated by this roadway.
- Fountain Park Cemetery – The main non-motor vehicle route to the cemetery has discontinuous sidewalks along S Main St. This cemetery's open space is available for public use, and a safe access is important to the community.
- East-West Corridor Link – State Route 32, or East Washington Street, is not a friendly experience to pedestrians or cyclists

Priority Phase 3:

- Outer Residential – Sidewalks are discontinuous in outer residential neighborhoods of Winchester. Gaps should be investigated for feasibility to better complete the network. This component will likely take longer to plan and implement, and projects may be of smaller scale, yet it is important to continue the momentum.

Goal 2: Provide Regional Transportation Network

Winchester has positioned itself as a community which encourages prospective residents with jobs in surrounding municipalities and counties to move within its borders, to enjoy a high quality of life with a small-town feel. A potential concern which arises from this concept is that of safe and reliable transportation to and from major employment centers.

Destinations outside of city limits, as well as some within the Winchester boundary, are often inaccessible by methods other than private vehicle. The city sees high rates of personal vehicle ownership and use, even within its borders. Over 90% of respondents to the public survey noted that they used a personal vehicle to get around destinations within Winchester. While vehicle ownership is consistent with that of the national average, there are segments of the population within the city that do not have access to any vehicles for their personal use.

In addition, employment centers are not the only destination to which residents of the city need access. Students are also a group that could potentially benefit from services leaving the City of Winchester. According to Ball State, enrollment from Randolph County for Ball State University totals 123 for the Fall 2023 semester, with 33 students from within the City of Winchester boundary (see Table 15). Reliable transportation to and from Delaware County to reach Ball State and other education institutions and regional employers can open this route to a greater population.

Table 15: City of residence for Ball State students in the Fall of 2023.

City	Fall 2023
Albany	3
Farmland	23
Losantville	4
Lynn	5
Modoc	4
Parker	1
Parker City	18
Redkey	
Ridgeville	19
Union City	11
Williamsburg	2
Winchester	33
Grand Total	123

Strategy 1: Implement Inter-City Transportation

Residents of Winchester and Randolph County who do not own a private vehicle face great challenges in their freedom of mobility. Expanding options for those who need more transportation choices will help everyone in the community.

Inter-city transportation can fulfill several needs of residents in Winchester, and can be used for, but not limited to, the following services: education, employment, healthcare, entertainment, tourism and visiting Family/ Friends.

An initial extent of an inter-city system would likely connect nearby cities with populations exceeding a certain threshold, indicating there may be enough demand for the service to run, and along a route with enough ridership potential. For example, a route from Winchester to Muncie may stop in Farmland, Parker City, and Selma before reaching destinations in the city itself. This service could potentially be privately run by a service such as LifeStream or by a destination sponsor such as Ball State University but is likely to be subsidized by local government entities.

Partner: LifeStream Services, Ball State University, Randolph County

Funding: Randolph County , State and federal grants

Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years.

Case Study: CIRTAs Workforce Connector

The Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority is a government organization focused on enhancing transportation options in and around Central Indiana (Figure 74). One component of service that is offered is the “Workforce Connector” program. The goal of the service is to connect employment centers outside the reach of IndyGo, the transit agency for the City of Indianapolis, with potential employees within the city. Two connector routes are in operation, the Whitestown Connector and Plainfield Connector. The Whitestown Connector links the farthest extent of an IndyGo bus route with the Whitestown Industrial Park. The Plainfield Connector connects the farthest extent of two IndyGo bus routes with the Anson Industrial Park. Both routes offer service to downtown Indianapolis at certain times of day as well.

In 2020, ridership on the workforce connector totaled over 32,000, according to the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority, connecting potential employees with thousands of jobs. Winchester could begin to investigate a sponsorship of these transportation options as more people move into the community and search for employment.



Figure 74: A CIRTAs workforce connector bus.

Case Study: LifeStream's New Inter Urban Service

Throughout East Central Indiana, LifeStream Services, Inc. operates a demand-response bus service called “The New Inter Urban” for residents in need of individual transportation, including in the City of Winchester and Randolph County (see Figure 75). The name reflects rail service formerly available throughout the region. Although this is not a fixed-route service, it fulfills the needs of residents that cannot travel by private vehicle for any reason. Since LifeStream is already equipped with a bus fleet, it may not be too great of an investment to implement a trial inter-city scheduled bus line that extends to Winchester.

Case Study: Hoosier Ride

In 2021, the Indiana Department of Transportation published the Indiana Intercity Bus Needs Assessment and Service Evaluation, outlining intercity buses that currently service the state. They identified one intercity route which presently goes near Winchester, Hoosier Ride, which operates a route from Indianapolis to Fort Wayne, stopping in Muncie (see Figure 76).

This is a heavily subsidized transit service, with a farebox recovery ratio of only 10% from the Indianapolis to Muncie portion (only 10% of the cost of the ride is covered by a ticket fare). This is also the only route provided within 25 miles of Winchester; no route currently serves Randolph County. This route is vital to those who ride it, and the state provides a subsidy of over \$100 per rider to ensure the route continues to run. Winchester could request a similar service to be run from an already-equipped company and receive at least daily service to the community.



Figure 75: A LifeStream interurban connector



Figure 76: An Indiana Intercity bus

Education and Health

Education and health are extremely important to Winchester's development. Education equips individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for workforce participation, the skills of the workforce help to attract business to cities, and education helps to foster economic growth. Furthermore, a well-educated population leads a healthier life, and helps reduce healthcare strain and costs. Access to quality healthcare services and education contributes to a healthier population, increasing productivity and overall well-being. Investing in education and healthcare in Winchester can attract new residents, enhance the quality of life for existing ones, and stimulate economic development. Therefore, nurturing a well-educated and healthy population positions the city for long-term growth and sustainability.

Our investigation shows that Winchester lags behind the state in the number of college graduates from Associate to the post-graduate level (see Table 16). Also, as shown in Figure 77, although the city has an ample supply of parks per capita, the residents that are physically inactive (35.5%) is higher than that for the state of Indiana (31.5%). Similarly, residents that are in poor health (22.8%) is higher than that for the state (20.6%). Overall, therefore, there is room for improvement in the city's educational attainment and in the health of its residents.

Table 16: Educational attainment of Winchester population

Winchester Level of Education	Winchester	Indiana
High School Graduate	38.3%	33.2%
Some College	28%	20.1%
Associate Degree	6.4%	8.9%
Bachelor's Degree	9.8%	17.3%
Graduate/Professional Degree	6%	9.9%

Upon close observation of Winchester's education and health systems, several key findings emerge. While the city provides primary and secondary education, the absence of higher education institutions highlights the need for improved opportunities for advanced learning. Similarly, primary healthcare services are available, but specialized medical care may require residents to seek treatment outside the city, indicating room for growth in the healthcare sector. Overall, these sectors contribute significantly to Winchester's quality of life, but addressing identified weaknesses, including limited higher education options and specialized healthcare services, is essential for the city's sustained development.

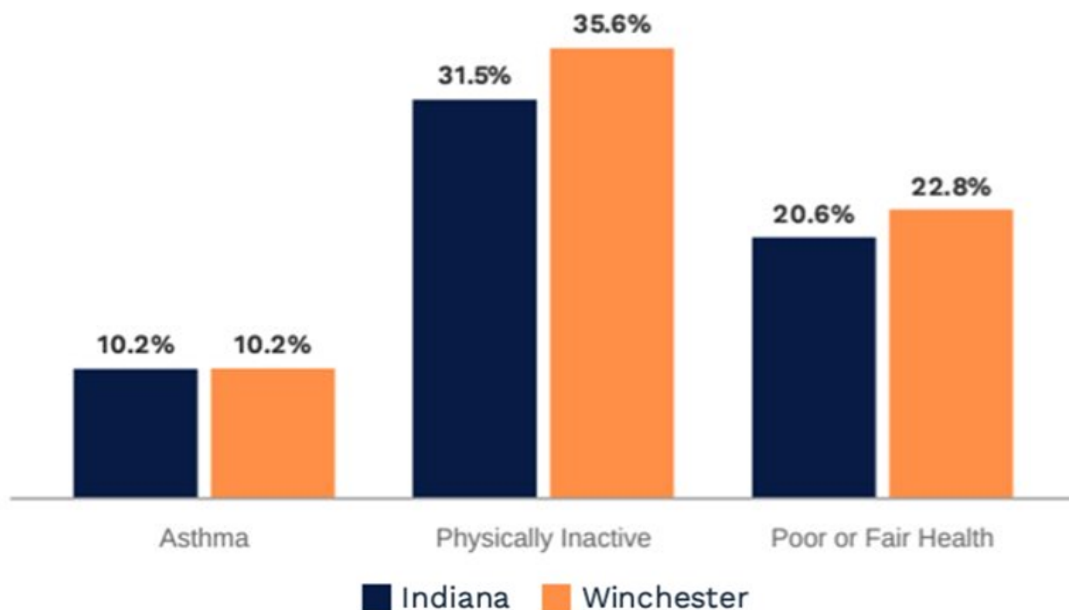


Figure 77: Health outcomes of Winchester residents. Source: American Community Survey (ACS), US Census Bureau, and Center for Disease Control (CDC) Health Outcomes, 2019.

Education Goals

Two goals are set forth in this element to help improve the education and health sector. At the forefront of this is a concerted effort to decrease drug and substance abuse among the population. This will involve not only punitive measures through the Judicial system but also a proactive approach, such as working with non-profit organizations like recovery centers and Meridian Health to provide support, counseling, and treatment for those struggling with addiction. The community recognizes the importance of fostering role models within its schools to help guide children in navigating these challenges. Additionally, promoting peer-to-peer interactions within the school environment, perhaps facilitated by organizations like the YMCA, can offer emotional support and counseling to those in need. Transitional housing solutions should also be explored to address issues of rehabilitation and homelessness, while a focus on skills development is aimed at helping individuals gain employment and rebuild their lives. These multifaceted initiatives reflect a community committed to tackling the complex issues of substance abuse, recovery, and overall well-being.

Goal 1: Decrease Drug and Substance Abuse

Strategy 1: Identify students who are willing to be role models in schools to guide their peers toward healthier choices and facilitate peer-to-peer interactions within schools. The City will need to work with the School Board to create such a program.

Case Study: City of Evansville, IN; Population 118,414

The Evansville Medication Diversion Prevention Program, implemented by the substance abuse prevention coalition Evansville (BASE) in collaboration with nine key community partners, has had a significant impact on reducing drug and substance abuse in the Evansville, IN School District. The program aimed to address issues such as prescription medication overdoses, drug misuse in schools, and theft of prescription medications. The results have shown a decrease in the 30-day use of prescription medications among middle school and high school students, an increase in the proper disposal of prescription medication, and improved storage and security of prescription medications in the community. Moreover, community members no longer identify prescription medication misuse and abuse as a prevalent issue. This program's success demonstrates the positive impact of collaborative efforts and comprehensive strategies in reducing drug abuse within a community.

Partners:

The School Board, local non-profit organizations such as the local YMCA and Meridian Health, law enforcement agencies, healthcare providers, community-based organizations, parents and guardians, local businesses, mental health professionals, and youth organizations.

Funding Sources:

Government Grants, Foundation Grants, Corporate Sponsorship, community fundraising, non-profit collaborations, the school district, crowdsourcing, in-kind donations, and public-private partnerships.

Phasing:

The project's schedule reveals a blend of short-term efforts to establish the program and long-term strategies to ensure its sustainability and growth. While the early months concentrate on program setup, the subsequent phases extend into continuous implementation, evaluation, and expansion, showing a commitment to the project's long-term success.

Strategy 2: Create Mentorship Programs to Guide Individuals and Potential Business Owners.

Creating mentorship programs tailored to guide individuals in their career advancement can significantly boost employment efforts in the city. Specifically, Winchester can pair seasoned business owners with those who are just launching a new business or looking for employment to help guide them in the right direction. The mentor-mentee can meet on a regular basis over lunch in informal settings to talk and to assist mentees with job readiness and business management issues. These programs can bridge the gap between job seekers and the skills and knowledge needed to excel in various industries. By connecting experienced professionals with those seeking employment, mentorship programs can provide valuable guidance, networking opportunities, and insights into the local job market.

Mentorship can be especially impactful for recent graduates and those looking to change careers, helping them navigate the complexities of job hunting and career development. Ultimately, these programs can empower individuals, enhance their employability, and contribute to the growth of the local workforce, making Winchester a more prosperous and job-rich community.

Case Study: Students Leading Students (SLS) mentorship program

SLS is a Michigan-based non-profit organization founded in 1982 with the goal of preparing the youth for emerging high-tech jobs and addressing various issues they face. SLS focuses on youth development theories, drug prevention, and leadership practices in an integrated approach. It has created a network of 620 high schools in Michigan, training students to develop and deliver peer education programs. These programs cover a wide range of topics, including substance abuse prevention, bullying, suicide prevention, and safe driving. SLS empowers students to challenge societal norms and influence their peers positively. By teaching leadership, team-building, communication, and resistance skills, SLS helps students prepare for future high-tech jobs by fostering a sense of responsibility, critical thinking, and the ability to tackle complex issues in today's youth environments. While the City of Winchester may not have the capacity to launch such a program by itself, the city can work with Randolph County United to set up a similar program at the county level.

Partners:

Local business owners, educational institutions, workforce development agencies, the Chamber of Commerce, Nonprofit organizations, and local and county government.

Funding source:

Randolph County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), Randolph County Community Foundation Grants, Winchester Business Association, Randolph County WorkOne, local educational institutions, crowdfunding via local platforms, local philanthropic organizations such as the Goodrich family foundation, partnerships with local businesses, and local mentorship organizations.

Phasing:

The project's schedule blends short-term actions for initiating the program with long-term strategies to ensure its sustainability and growth. The initial months can be used to establish the groundwork, and subsequent phases extend into continuous mentorship, evaluation, expansion, and long-term planning, aiming for sustained success and positive community impact.

Strategy 3: Ensure Continued Progress Towards Achieving the Goals in the Drug-Free Randolph County

Plan. Drug free Randolph County is the local authority on this issue and thus, their adopted plan should be followed and implemented to help decrease drug and alcohol abuse. Drug-Free Randolph County has a comprehensive community plan that identifies agencies, organizations, as well as risk factors and identifies assets in the county that can be used to prevent drug abuse. Funding sources for accomplishing these goals are also outlined in the plan.

Civic and Cultural

Winchester's civic and cultural amenities play a vital role in shaping the community's identity and fostering a strong sense of pride among its residents. These elements contribute to social cohesion by bringing people together through events and activities and create robust social networks and support systems. Moreover, Winchester's cultural attractions and civic initiatives are not only sources of entertainment but also stimulate economic activity by attracting visitors and businesses, thereby contributing to the local economy. The presence of cultural amenities, such as museums and parks, also serve to enhance the overall quality of life for city residents, providing recreational opportunities and promoting well-being. Additionally, cultural elements often serve as educational platforms, offering learning opportunities and preserving the community's history and heritage. Civic engagement is encouraged through participation in cultural and civic activities, allowing residents to actively contribute to local governance. Ultimately, building on Winchester's cultural elements will help create a vibrant cultural environment and active civic life making it a thriving community for residents and visitors alike.

The preservation of the community's history and heritage is a notable strength, contributing to a sense of continuity and tradition. The Goodrich family's significant contributions to the city has helped to maintain some of the city's cultural heritage. The historic Courthouse is a unique cultural building that has been preserved with commitment from several notable community organizations and the support of its residents. The pride associated with the cemetery adds depth to the community's cultural fabric, creating a sense of reverence and connection to the past. Moreover, the rich railroad history in Winchester adds another layer of cultural significance, reflecting the city's historical roots and development. The softball tournament and the racetrack emerge as dynamic cultural events that draw people to the area, further enriching Winchester's social tapestry. These events not only contribute to the community's vibrancy but also serve as economic drivers, attracting participants and spectators alike.

Winchester grapples with challenges and weaknesses alongside its strengths in the integration of civic and cultural elements. Limited financial resources constrain the development and maintenance of cultural amenities, potentially hindering the community's ability to host diverse events. Infrastructure limitations may also impact the range and accessibility of cultural activities. Balancing tradition with innovation is a delicate task, as the community strives to preserve its history while embracing evolving cultural expressions. Ensuring diversity and inclusivity in cultural events is an ongoing challenge, requiring efforts to address representation gaps. Public participation in cultural and civic activities is often low, posing a potential hurdle to the overall success of community initiatives. Managing tourism's impact on local infrastructure and the authenticity of cultural attractions demands careful consideration. Resource allocation among cultural projects, adapting to demographic changes, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders are additional challenges. Public awareness and education about the importance of the city's culture are essential to garner stronger community support. Overcoming these challenges necessitates an all-hands-on deck approach, and the utilization of supportive external agencies at the county and state level to ensure that Winchester's civic and cultural scene continues to thrive and meet the evolving needs of its residents.

Civic and Cultural Goals

The primary goals of the civic and culture element are i) to increase and encourage volunteerism among residents particularly in civic government, and for supporting the work of the non-profit sector, and ii) develop a brand for marketing the city. Several strategies are advanced for achieving these goals.

Goal: Increase and Encourage Volunteerism

Strategy 1. Work with the Existing Non-profit Organizations in the City.

The low hanging fruit is to utilize the network of volunteers in existing non-profit organizations to expand and grow the number of volunteers. The city should thus engage with and support existing local groups like the Boys and Girls Scouts, churches, schools, and senior centers. Realistically not everyone in the community is willing or able to volunteer due to various external factors. So, by reaching out to organizations in the community that already exist and using those as the first step to encourage active citizenship and volunteering is a good way to engage residents that are interested. These groups are also more self-sustaining and the organizational structures already exist to quickly mobilize their members to take part in volunteer events.

Partnerships: City government, nonprofit organizations, churches, and the local community.

Funding: No funding needed.

Phase 1: Can be implemented within 1 to 3 years.

Strategy 2. Improve Communication with Residents and Non-profit Organizations to Share Volunteering Opportunities and Experience Stories.

The biggest hurdle to getting volunteers is effective communication with those interested in helping. City government and nonprofit groups have to get their message out to residents about their needs so that potential volunteers know the opportunities that are available to them. It also helps to tell stories about the contribution of volunteers and the impacts that these volunteers have made to the organizations and the city. Perhaps, an annual event that recognizes volunteers for their work and the presentation of awards to those residents that have excelled in volunteer activities may be a way to encourage others to volunteer their time.

Although preexisting groups are a great start, not everyone is involved in that way and organizations should explore more ways to reach residents. Language and technological limitations in communication should also be kept in mind especially for the elderly and non-English speaking residents. Thus, different ways to reach potential volunteers need to be explored. Posting volunteer opportunities in grocery stores, community bulletin boards, local libraries, the city's website, and social media are good places to start.

Partnerships: City government, nonprofit organizations, and the local community.

Funding: No funding needed.

Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years.

Strategy 3. Annual Cleanup Day to Create Stewardship and Pride in the Community.

Creating a sense of attachment to one's community and encouraging residents to care can be a great way to further bolster civic engagement. The city should organize an annual cleanup day where residents are encouraged to come out and help keep the city clean. This not only brings awareness about littering and taking care of the environment, but it also helps residents get to meet and know each other and thus strengthens a sense of community. A cleanup day helps to make the city tidier and creates a sense of pride and responsibility for residents to take care of the place where they live.

Partnerships: Randolph County recycling, City of Winchester, and city residents.

Funding: General revenue fund, grants, and fundraising.

Phasing: This can be easily organized within a year and can be sustained annually over several years.

Strategy 4. Provide Transportation or Carpooling to Assist Volunteers to Get to Volunteer Sites.

When trying to encourage volunteers, organizers must consider what barriers to participation their community may be facing. Although the most significant barrier will likely be the competing time constraints between school, work, and home, another variable to consider is safe and efficient transportation. Some residents may not have the mobility due to disabilities or age; others may not have a vehicle or may only have one car in the family or may simply prefer to have someone else drive them to the site. Carpooling is also an opportunity for volunteers to get to know each other and create new bonds and communities. Organizers can either schedule a shuttle or communicate with other involved residents to assist in giving rides where needed depending on how many would need such assistance.

Partnerships: Local government, nonprofit organizations, and city residents.

Funding: No funding is needed.

Phase 2: Can be implemented within 3 to 10 years.

Case Study: Go All IN Day by United Way of Central Indiana

All IN Day is an annual event United Way holds in Central Indiana, which was last held on Friday, June 23, 2023. On this day, as the name implies, everyone is encouraged to go out and volunteer. This most recent event had more than 1,400 volunteers participating, 719 corporate partners (of which 130 were new that year), and 65 community sponsor organizations.

Over the past year, United Way of Central Indiana had 18,880 hours of volunteering, 5,392 volunteers, and \$538,835 worth of volunteer time. United Way currently serves seven counties: Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Marion, Morgan, and Putnam. Their strategy for gaining local involvement relies on understanding each region's unique makeup through data and analytics to give the specific assistance they need. They also prioritize communication and sharing stories of previous events, capitalizing on their volunteers' individual strengths to bolster the community.

In a Fox59 article, they discuss how more people are volunteering throughout Indiana with massive assistance from United Way. Post-pandemic, they are noticing a higher interest in volunteering and giving back to those in need, so United Way is making sure to connect those individuals with the right opportunities, believing in providing opportunities to people at any age. These reports are a great reminder that the interest in volunteering is still out there, and there is an increasing number of people interested in volunteering. One has to remember to reach people where they are and respond to their individual needs.

Goal 2: Promote the City of Winchester as an Attractive Place to Visit and Relocate.

To make Winchester, Indiana, an attractive destination, it is crucial to identify and showcase its unique features. In the case of Winchester, these distinguishing factors could include the historical significance of its cemetery, the renowned local pie, and the excitement of the racetrack. Emphasizing these distinctive elements creates a compelling narrative that sets Winchester apart from other destinations. In doing so the following steps must be taken into consideration:

Strategy 1: Know Your Audience

Before crafting a marketing strategy, understanding the target audience is essential. Winchester can tailor its approach to cater to various demographics, such as Eastern Central Indiana residents, county residents, as well as a broader audience of U.S. and global travelers. By aligning marketing efforts with the interests and preferences of specific audience groups, Winchester can create a more effective and personalized marketing strategy.

Strategy 2: Make Use of NFC Technology and QR Code

In today's smartphone-driven era, leveraging NFC technology and QR codes can provide modern and convenient ways for travelers to explore Winchester. Connecting these technologies to relevant sites, such as the city's website to share pertinent news, enhances the tourist experience. Platforms like MySmartJourney offer the opportunity to deliver diverse content, allowing Winchester to highlight its attractions and create unique and enjoyable experiences for visitors.

Strategy 3: Develop Your City Brand

Establishing a recognizable and memorable city brand is essential. Design guidelines, logos, color schemes, slogans, and consistent messaging contribute to creating a cohesive brand image for Winchester. This distinct identity becomes a crucial component of the marketing strategy, attracting more visitors to the city.

Partners: City of Winchester, Randolph County United

Funding: General revenue, Community Foundation, Grants

Phase 1: Can be implemented within 1 to 3 years.

Goal 3: Create an Innovative Marketing Campaign to Attract Potential New Residents to Winchester.

Strategy 1: Create an Attractive City Website

A user-friendly and frequently updated city website is vital for engaging with tourists online. Winchester's website should feature various media elements, including videos, images, and blog posts, to effectively highlight its attractions and engage the target audience.

Strategy 2: Get Virtual Feedback

Monitoring virtual feedback is crucial for Winchester to improve the overall experience it offers to travelers. By addressing issues highlighted in online feedback, the city can enhance its offerings, ensuring positive experiences for visitors.

Strategy 3: Use social media

Leveraging social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter allows Winchester to effectively highlight cultural activities, festivals, landmarks, and accommodations. A strong social media presence helps build a global following for the city's brand and enables precise marketing strategies by targeting specific demographics.

Strategy 4: Virtual Reality and Video Marketing Strategies

Incorporating virtual reality and video marketing strategies provides a unique way to promote Winchester. Offering 360-degree virtual tours of the city or its attractions allows potential visitors and future residents to explore its wonders from the comfort of their homes, making Winchester visually appealing and creating contactless interactive journeys.

Partners: City of Winchester, marketing consultant, web developer.

Funding: General revenue fund.

Phase 1: Can be implemented within 1 to 3 years.

Case Study Case Study: Union City, Indiana

Union City, Indiana, has embarked on an innovative branding campaign to showcase its unique charm and draw attention to its distinctive features. The campaign strategically focuses on highlighting the city's historical significance, community spirit, and local businesses. Utilizing a cohesive brand image, including logos and slogans, Union City aims to stand out as a welcoming destination with a rich tapestry of heritage and a vibrant community atmosphere. The city's promotional efforts extend to an engaging online presence, leveraging social media platforms and a user-friendly website that provides visitors with a virtual tour of its attractions. Through this multifaceted approach, Union City endeavors to create a lasting and positive impression, enticing both residents and visitors to explore and appreciate the hidden gems within its boundaries.

Work Tracker

Element	Goal	Strategy	Phase	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started
Land Use	Encourage Infill Development	Provide fast track review of proposals for infill development	1			
		Rezone undeveloped R1 lots to R3	1			
		Adopt an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) ordinance	1			
	Redevelop old industrial lots	Assess the city's industrial sites for contamination and clean up	2			
Housing	Provide a variety of housing types	Create a Housing Tax Increment Finance district	1			
		Use the state Low-Income Housing Tax-Credit	2			
		Use property tax abatements	1			
		Adopt residential infill and adaptive reuse development policies	1			
		Create model home design for developers to choose from	1			
	Ensure Homes Meet Housing and Building Code Requirements	Hire a code enforcement officer at county level	2			
		Create a fund for the demolition of blighted homes	2			
Economy	Seek funding to implement the city's projects and programs	Hire a grant writer	1			

Work Tracker

Element	Goal	Strategy	Phase	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started
	Organize downtown businesses	Create an economic improvement district for downtown businesses	1			
		Create a tax increment financing district in the county courthouse area	2			
	Attract and retain workforce in the city	Incentivize the workforce in Winchester to live within the city	1			
	Decrease the cost of business location in the city	Provide tax abatements for new businesses and industries	1			
		Get Shovel Ready properties and sites certified by OCRA	2			
	Support entrepreneurship and start-up businesses	Provide licenses for food trucks to test out new restaurant ideas	1			
		Create a business incubator	2			
Placemaking	Provide a more cohesive look for the city through design guidelines	Adopt and implement uniform wayfinding and gateway signs	2			
		Readopt and fund a façade improvement program	2			
		Adopt design guidelines for new development	1			
	Adopt a mural program	Organize local artists to paint murals	1			

Work Tracker

Element	Goal	Strategy	Phase	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started
Parks and Recreation	Ensure that all residents are within walking distance of a park.	Provide pocket parks where residents are too far from existing parks	2			
		Develop an intracity trail network	2			
	Ensure parks and downtown are safe	Introduce an emergency 911 call box system	2			
		Pedestrianize a portion of downtown temporarily	1			
	Ensure all existing park space is of high quality	Ensure ADA compliance on all sidewalks and at parks	2			
		Improve lighting quality within parks	2			
Transportation	Improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure	Implement a Capital Improvement Program	2			
		Identify areas for infrastructure improvements	1			
	Provide regional transportation network	Implement inter-city transportation	2			
Education and Health	Decrease use of drugs and substance abuse	Implement peer-to-peer counseling	1			
		Implement a mentorship program for business owners to guide start-ups and young graduates	1			
Civic and Cultural	Encourage volunteerism	Engage with and support local groups	1			

Work Tracker

Element	Goal	Strategy	Phase	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started
		Improve communication with residents and nonprofit organizations	1			
		Clean Up Day to encourage local stewardship	1			
		Provide transportation or carpooling	2			
	Promote the City of Winchester		1			
	Create an innovative marketing campaign		1			