

DOWNTOWN BLUFFTON INDIANA

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN



WELCOME TO THE PARLOR CITY

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INTRODUCTION

For over 100 years, the City of Bluffton has provided quality, affordable living standards for its citizens. Bluffton has been a strong contributor to the American economy due to honest, hard working residents. Bluffton continues to thrive today through ingenuity and hard work as well as a love for their neighbors and friends in the community. Bluffton as well as many other cities has been through difficult times but fortunately have continued to press on and rise up from the difficult situations. The citizens of Bluffton are very team oriented and continually work together to get help their fellow citizens through rough times and continue to remain strong and vibrant.

We are convinced that the citizens of Bluffton will work together in this time of rejuvenating and revitalizing Bluffton's city center. Our city-center remains an important part of th our history and cultural fabric. The city-center serves as the government and economic center as hundreds of people arrive daily to work, conduct business and socialize. Admittedly, Bluffton's city-center has fallen over difficult times in the past two decades seeing many of its establishments depart for other opportunities.

There are a core group of Businesses in the city-center that continue to serve Bluffton residents. Bluffton NOW! Is committed to joining these devoted individuals and businesses in recapturing the vibrancy and economic power that was once possessed by the city-center. Bluffton NOW! welcomes help from all citizens of all ages and all walks of life to join us in this grand endeavor as we work together to achieve a common goal of making Bluffton a great place to live both now and in the future.

The following strategic investment plan has been created to help provide vision, guidance and a long term approach to properly revitalizing Bluffton's city-center. This strategic plan provides discussion about Bluffton's needs, wants, and concerns. Our aim is to provide actionable steps to address and solve the identified needs. Together we can once again create a hustling, bustling downtown environment that will attract new and exciting businesses. This will allow us to retain talented students, professionals, entrepreneurs and families in our community.

Great things are happening in Bluffton! We hope you are as excited as we are about the amazing things that are going to happen in Bluffton as we move forward.

Thank you for your support!

The Bluffton NOW! Team



ABOUT US

Bluffton, Indiana

The name "Bluffton" was derived from the site of the town - on the bluffs, south of the Wabash River. Because Bluffton was one of the first Indiana cities to have a large percentage of paved streets, it was long ago called "The Parlor City". The beautiful trees overhanging wide and spacious streets, with the many well kept homes and fine lawns, have helped to make this an ideal Hoosier city. Many of the prominent businesses in Bluffton can trace their origin back to pioneer times exemplifying their permanence and solidarity. Today, Bluffton serves as the county seat for Wells County.



ABOUT US

Bluffton NOW!

Bluffton NOW! is a community organization devoted to revitalization and long-term growth of Bluffton’s downtown sector (city-center). We believe that in-order for a community to continue to thrive and grow it must actively attract and retain talented individuals. In order to achieve this growth, Bluffton NOW! is focused on creating a city atmosphere and vibe that attracts new business and a talented workforce, and retains the successful businesses, entrepreneurs, professionals, and families already living in our community.

Vision for the Future

The vision for Bluffton NOW! is to “promote a fun and vibrant community where people want to live, work and play.”

Mission for Success

Bluffton NOW!’s mission is to be the catalyst to energize Bluffton by envisioning ideas and goals, and by engaging and empowering citizens to facilitate an active, vibrant, and attractive community.

Main Street Indiana

Bluffton was accredited by the Office of Rural and Community Affairs in 2015 as an Indiana Main Street community. We operate by the Main Street four point approach: Promotion, Design, Economic Restructuring and Organization. Our organization is operated by our board to accomplish these tasks.



MARKET POTENTIAL

REASON
1

We invite you to take advantage of the potential market offerings that are available in our community.

Top 15 Categories	Total Potential
Other General Merchandise Stores	\$3,511,371
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$2,621,219
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$2,160,153
Other Miscellaneous Stores Retailers	\$1,651,372
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instrument Stores	\$1,532,983
Clothing Stores	\$911,110
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	\$856,603
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	\$855,851
Lawn & Garden Equipment & Supply Stores	\$795,183
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	\$625,655
Shoe Stores	\$461,698
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	\$398,907
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	\$385,304
Direct Selling Establishments	\$350,256
Special Food Services	\$255,255

Bluffton at a Glance

Total Population
9,969

Median Income
\$38,590

Per Capita Income
\$20,082

Bachelor's Degree
16.3%

Growth Factor
0.7%

Key Preferences (Taken from Ring Study 2014 provided by Berkshire-Hathaway)

Restaurant & Dining	1 mile	3 mile	5 mile
Visited family restaurant/steakhouse in last 6 mos	73.0%	74.7%	75.4%
Visited family restaurant/steak house 4+ times/mo	29.2%	30.4%	30.1%
Went to fast food/drive-in in last 6 mos	91.7%	91.7%	91.9%
Went to fast food/drive-in 9+ times/mo	41.3%	40.8%	40.6%

Retail Goods and Services

Bought men's clothing in last 12 months	46.7%	48.8%	0.497
Bought women's clothing in last 12 months	45.5%	45.1%	0.452
Bought clothing for child <13 yrs in last 6 months	26.9%	25.9%	0.263
Used beef (fresh/frozen) in last 6 months	73.8%	74.8%	75.1%
Used fish/seafood (fresh/frozen) in last 6 months	52.1%	54.4%	54.7%
Used organic food in last 6 months	14.9%	15.4%	15.3%

Entertainment

Attended a movie in last 6 months	57.2%	56.7%	56.8%
Went to a live theater in last 12 months	9.3%	10.4%	10.7%
Went to a bar/night club in last 12 months	18.9%	17.9%	17.9%



MARKET POTENTIAL

REASON
1

Bluffton High School Students Survey Highlights

Bluffton High School students completed a survey put on by the market and entrepreneur class in support of Bluffton NOW! Here are some highlights from their survey.

66% of the students stated that entertainment was most important thing they would like to see come to Bluffton.
(Movie theatre was top response.)

49% of students stated that restaurants are the reason for visiting downtown.

70% of students would like to see new businesses come to downtown .

73% of students stated that “there is nothing to do” being the number one reason for not visiting downtown.

95% of students would attend a downtown event like a seasonal event, concert or festival.

54% of students stated that they would most likely look for new downtown information on social media.
(Instagram was the top vote getter.)

54% of students stated that entertainment should be the focus of any proposed riverfront development project.



Total Respondents
333

Gender Break Down
46.6% Male
53.4% Female

Age Break Down
0.9% - 13
15.6% - 14
26.8% - 15
26.2% - 16
22.4% - 17
8.1% - 18+



MARKET POTENTIAL

REASON
1

Community Survey Highlights

Bluffton NOW! completed a community wide survey regarding downtown Bluffton. Here are some of the highlights from the survey.

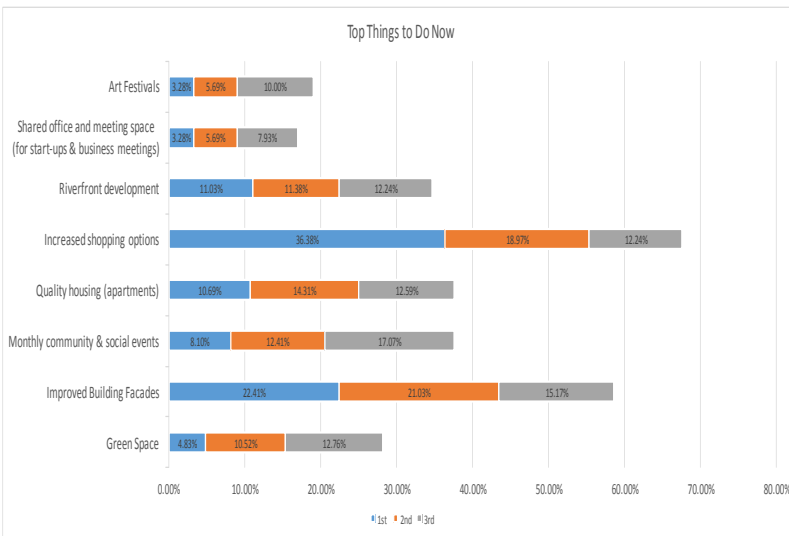
The results show that the perception of downtown Bluffton is average to below average in appearance, average to below average in parking, average to good in lighting, average to good in safety and average to good in cleanliness.

73% of respondents visit downtown Bluffton on a monthly basis. (Other, banking, shopping, visiting the courthouse, and dining are the main reasons for the visits.)

37% of respondents stated that they would potentially move to downtown Bluffton if there were more upscale apartments, followed by **30%** who are looking for remodeled homes.

52% of respondents stated that they would prefer to shop in downtown for Fresh Market items.

Increased shopping options and improved building facades top the list of things to do now. See chart



Total Respondents
702

Gender Break Down
31% Male
69% Female

Age Break Down
0% - under 18
12% - 18 to 24
24% - 25 to 34
17% - 35 to 44
18% - 45 to 54
20% - 55 to 65
8% - 65 to 74
1% - over 75

Income Break Down
8% - Less than \$25K
24% - \$25K – \$49,999
29% - \$50K – \$74,999
19% - \$75K – \$99,999
10% - \$100K – \$124,999
4% - \$125K – \$149,999
2% - \$150K – \$174,999
0% - \$175K – \$199,999
4% - More than \$200K



Bluffton is home to a number of key community assets that have laid the groundwork for success and quality of life for its citizens.



Bluffton Parks and Recreation (12 local parks with pool & splash pad)

The Bluffton Parks & Recreation Department offers more than 125 programs and events during a calendar year. There are a wide-range of recreational opportunities for all ages. The majority of them are free and the others are offered for a low cost. There are triathlons, 5K races, mud runs, dances, princess tea parties, concerts, movies, block parties, sports and so much more!

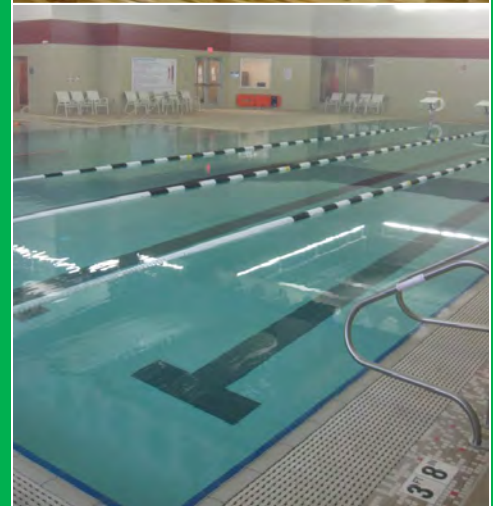
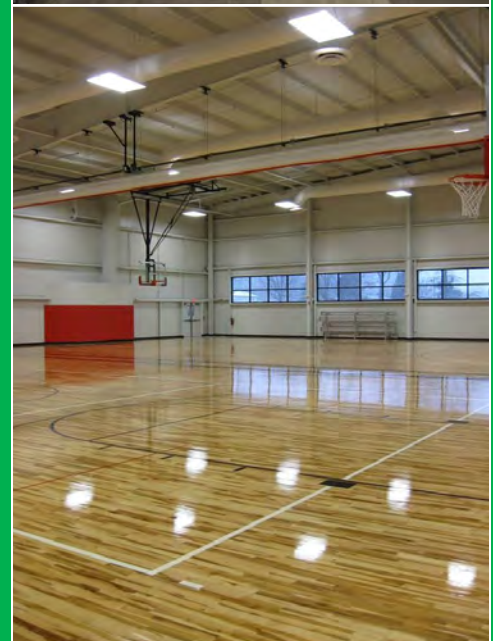




Caylor-Nickel Foundation Family YMCA

Opened in January of 2015 and situated on 30 acres on the north side of Bluffton, the Caylor-Nickel

Foundation Family YMCA (C-NFF Y) is the culmination of a broad collaboration of foundations, corporations, companies, and individuals who contributed over \$7M to provide Wells County with a 46,000 sq. ft. building dedicated to the spiritual, physical, and mental well-being of the community. As part of the Greater Fort Wayne Y, the facility includes a multi-use pool (a gift of Pretzels, Inc.) that provides swim lessons, aqua aerobic classes, and provides a fun play space for younger children. The 5k sq. ft. Wellness Center (a gift of Bluffton Regional Medical Center) is equipped with excellent fitness equipment, including a large number of adaptive pieces for members with physical disabilities. Add a large double gymnasium, aerobics and cycling rooms, free child watch for members, and it is easy to see that the C-NFF YMCA provides a great variety of opportunities that allow members to invest in their health or enjoy recreation with friends or family.





Wells County Public Library (WCPL)

The main branch of the Wells County Public Library is located in downtown Bluffton. The 40,000 square foot facility offers 100,000 items, meeting rooms, a full schedule of program for infants through seniors, a wide range of digital resources, and an extensive local history collection. The library prides itself on being an active community partner and a warm and inviting community center.



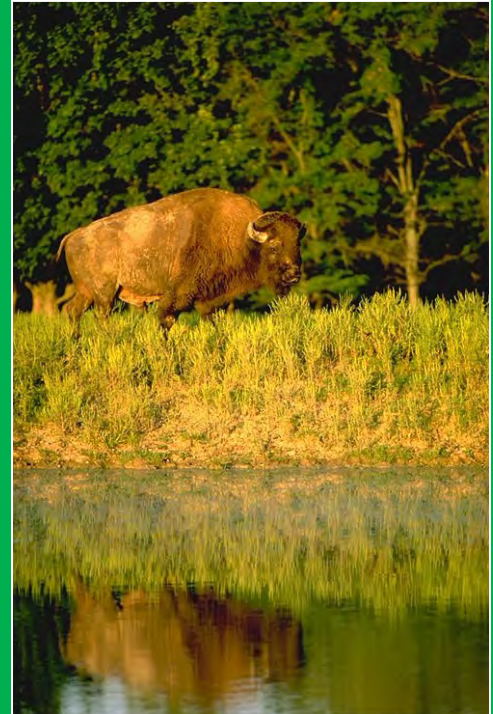
Rivergreenway / Interurban Trail

Rivergreenway and Interurban Trail Corridor is a paved walking and bicycling trail starting at the Ouabache State Park and currently ends at the intersection of Main Street and Monroe Street on the northside of Bluffton. The trail features include a boating access site in the east end of the trail near the White Bridge, a replica historic covered bridge, a designated bridge over the Wabash River, trail way finding maps, and designated parking lots along the trail. No horses or motorized vehicles are allowed on the trail.

Ouabache State Park

Ouabache State Park is a 1,104 acre park located just five miles east of downtown Bluffton. Ouabache (pronounced “Wabash”), named by the French after the Indian word o-ba-chee, takes its name after the river that forms the southwest boundary for the park.

Within the park, Kunkel Lake offers excellent fishing, and during the summer months, a naturalist can provide information about the natural wonders of the park. A lodge recreation building is ideal for special gatherings and is now available all year. The park is working on updating its baseball diamond that will have a brand new infield this Spring. Ouabache is also excited about the construction of its brand new bocce ball set to open in 2016, which will be the first of its kind in State Parks. The park also features several picnic and playground areas, trails, a bicycle path that connects from the park to downtown Bluffton, tennis courts, an outdoor swimming pool, and a 124-site campground. Information provided by IDNR.



The Wells County Arts, Commerce & Visitor's Center

The Arts, Commerce & Visitors Center is a picturesque site on the bluff of the Wabash River and is the perfect setting to host parties, wedding receptions, gatherings, business meetings, seminars or any event. The Wells County Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development, along with the Wells County Visitors Center is a one stop for new and existing businesses, residents and visitors to Wells County, Indiana. Additionally located inside this magnificent building is the Creative Arts Council which operates a gallery that features eight or more art exhibits per year, as well as a School of Ballet and Block Box Theatre.

Kehoe Park Amphitheater

Kehoe Park is about 2 acres in size and located in the central part of Bluffton along the Wabash River, just west of the Ind. 1N-Ind. 124 juncture. Facilities include a lighted amphitheater (outdoor theatre), a pavilion (gazebo) with picnic tables and a restrooms building. This is the site of the summer concert series and free Friday movies in July.

Creative Arts Council of Wells County

For over 40 years, the Creative Arts Council has been providing arts-related programming to Bluffton and Wells County. Recognized and supported by the Indiana Arts Commission and a member of Arts United, Creative Arts' mission is to encourage, present, and promote the arts for the benefit of each individual in the community. In addition to a variety of classes and special events, Creative Arts offers a School of Ballet, an Art Gallery, and is home to Wells Community Theater. Creative Arts regularly presents art exhibits in its free, public gallery, and features a summer concert series called Jazz on the Patio. The Creative Arts Council also is a partner with the Wells Community Boys & Girls Club performing dance and drama outreach programs. As a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, the Creative Arts Council relies on corporate community support and individual memberships.





Bluffton Regional Medical Center (Lutheran Health Network)

Bluffton Regional Medical Center, Bluffton, Ind., is located just 30 minutes south of Fort Wayne, Ind. This 79-bed acute care facility is a member of the Lutheran Health Network. Bluffton Regional provides medical, surgical and pediatric care, inpatient and outpatient surgery, intensive care, continuing care, emergency services, rehabilitation services and a full range of digital diagnostic services. All inpatient areas of the facility have had full renovations including updated infrastructure and treatments. The most recent renovation at BRMC involved a \$3 million investment to complete The Women's Center, the hospital's obstetrical services unit that can accommodate up to 12 newborns. Surgeons find the equipment they need as well as an excellent nursing staff both within the OR and in all of the patient units. Our unique multispecialty physician history lends a tertiary feel to the facility with all the comforts and conveniences of a hometown hospital.

Bluffton Regional Medical Center is a member of The Lutheran Health Network, whose members are owned by subsidiaries of Community Health Systems, a taxpaying, integrated healthcare delivery system and one of the largest employers in the region. LHN encompasses eight separately licensed hospitals and nearly 1,000 licensed beds. The foundation of LHN is a strong team consisting of more than 7,000 associates. Each network entity offers a wide range

Lutheran Health Network continues to provide patients with extensive access to specialized care through its hospitals, patient care centers and physician practices. The strength of Lutheran Health Network allows it to recruit highly skilled physicians, innovate with the newest technology and participate in clinical research. These attributes enable it to sustain and grow its spectrum of services, and most importantly, deliver the choice, support, care and patient experience that have long been its hallmark.



Excellent Public School Systems



Bluffton Harrison Metropolitan School District

The Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District (BHMSD) was organized in 1882. The school district is comprised of Harrison Township that includes a majority of the city of Bluffton, a portion of the town of Poneto, and the town of Vera Cruz. The school system serves students from all areas school districts and includes one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. Students at BHMSD are immersed in a multi-faceted learning environment striving to maximize student potential in all areas.



Northern Wells Community Schools

Northern Wells Community Schools is a special place which aims to equip students to maximize their present and future success. It is small enough to know everyone's name, but large enough to offer students an academic program that will give them the skills they need to be successful. Staff members are committed to helping all students succeed. On a daily basis they demonstrate their willingness to go "the extra mile" to do what's right for students.



Southern Wells Community Schools

Southern Wells Community School Corporation is composed of Southern Wells Elementary School, grades K-6; and Southern Wells Jr/Sr High School, grades 7-12; and serves over 850 students. Our students consistently bring positive recognition to our schools and community through their many academic and extra-curricular achievements. Our administrators, faculty and staff are highly qualified and constantly strive to meet the challenges of local, state and federal curricular expectations.





The Wells County 4-H Park

The Wells County 4-H Park is located at the south edge of Bluffton one State Road 1. The 40 acre park is host to a variety of community events and activities throughout the year that include the annual 4-H Fair in July and the Wheels of Yesteryear Antique Power Show in August.

In addition, the park is a popular location for several regional horse and livestock shows, a rodeo, Medieval Reenactors weekend, a horse pull, antique tractor pulls, a truck/tractor pull and several camping organizations.

The large Wells County Community Center located at the 4-H Park hosts the annual Senior Citizen Expo, the High School Career Expo and numerous banquets, community fundraisers and other meetings. For more information about the Wells County 4-H Park visit www.wells4h.com call 260-824-1689 or stop by 1240 4-H Park Road, Bluffton.





The Wells County Foundation Inc.

The Wells County Foundation, Inc. is a public, tax-exempt, philanthropic organization. The Foundation inspires people to make charitable gifts that improve the quality of life for people in Wells County.

The Foundation is a philanthropic catalyst for Wells County. Active as a visionary convener, the Foundation provides leadership to strategically respond to current, ongoing and emerging issues locally.

Charitable gifts made not *to*, but *through* the community foundation improve the quality of life for deserving men, women and children in Wells County. Gifts of cash, stock, real estate, life insurance or from IRA accounts help donors fulfill their dreams of doing good . . . and giving back.

The Foundation responds to emerging and ongoing community issues. Income from endowment funds is distributed to local students via scholarships and to local not-for-profit organizations via grants. The Foundation distributed in excess of \$1,200,000 in grants and scholarship awards in 2016.

From the roots which were embedded in the Foundation more than 60 years ago and the continued support of our donors and volunteers today, the Foundation continues to grow and flourish, thereby improving the quality of life in Wells County.

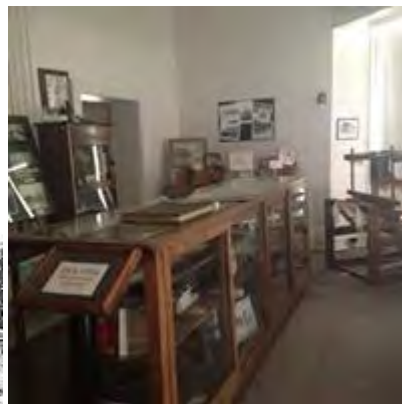




The Wells County Historical Museum

The Wells County Historical Society was founded in 1935. Its purpose then, and now, is to preserve the rich heritage of Wells County and its residents - past and present.

The Museum, known as the Stewart-Studabaker mansion, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is open 1-4pm Sundays -April through October and every weekend after Thanksgiving till Christmas for our Festival of Christmas Trees. Groups may visit any time by appointment. The beautiful three story brick Victorian mansion housing the Museum was built in 1882 by Alvin Stewart an engineer in charge of construction of the first railroad through Wells County. The Wells County Historical Society purchased the home in 1974. Its fourteen rooms house more than 20,000 carefully cataloged items relative to Wells County's history, culture, industry and genealogy.



REVITALIZATION IN ACTION

REASON
3

Active Phases!

This is the list of our current work towards revitalizing downtown!

Building The “A” Team

Through the initial community involvement and start up of Bluffton NOW! a stellar team has been formed comprised of local business professionals, residents, and government officials to be the energy behind revitalizing downtown Bluffton. The board is compiled of 12 voting and 12 non-voting members. See list of current board members on the “Have Questions” page.

Community Reinvestment Program

Bluffton NOW! partners with the City of Bluffton to provide a matching grant program for the benefit of downtown property owners. The program matches dollar for dollar up to \$25,000 for improvement to downtown buildings. Since 2015 the program has created over a \$1,000,000 of public and private investment into our downtown buildings. This program has become such a hot commodity that we ran out of funding twice in 2017 do to a substantial increase project requests. We have multiple project proposals in the hopper already for 2018 as well. The aesthetics of and the ability to use downtown buildings has greatly improved since the inception of this program.

Youth Involvement

Bluffton NOW! partners with the Bluffton High School students to help provide the youth’s perspective on downtown revitalization and assists Bluffton NOW! with marketing and downtown improvement projects since 2015. The 2015 class conducted a student survey related to downtown revitalization and helped clean up some downtown buildings. The 2016 class helped develop a business expansion idea for an existing downtown business and cleaned and decorated empty downtown storefronts. The 2017 class is working on creating marketing videos for the plaza and trail project.

Learning

Bluffton NOW! Membership is continually learning about what other communities are doing to revitalize their downtowns. Then looking at ways to learn from their mistakes and successes to help us work through the path of downtown revitalization. We have also taken opportunities to work with local community members to gain their perspective on what is desired for our downtown.



The Next Phases!

What are working towards accomplishing next!

Market Street Plaza \$1,100,000

Bluffton NOW! is starting the process of taking a bad situation of a downtown fire and making it into a great opportunity to provide a location for downtown activities. Just the conversation about the Market Street Plaza has created an increased excitement in downtown development. The construction of the plaza will provide more opportunities for people to experience downtown Bluffton and participate in its revitalization.

Project Benefits

1. Creates a central gathering place “courthouse square” for community activities via a professionally designed plaza the highlights our historic courthouse.
2. Provides a location that will increase public and private events in downtown (farmers market, live shows, movies, parks department events, weddings, family events, lunch gatherings, downtown business market during street fair, display area for community art, community organization events, starting point trail related events) will create more traffic in the downtown after hours extending business opportunities into the evening.
3. Sets the standard for the quality of improvements in the downtown area by creating a beautiful showcase for our community pride in downtown. Gives a positive impression to young talent and potential incoming businesses when they are making their decision regarding coming to our community.
4. Introduces an anchor attraction that will bring additional retail and service businesses into downtown do to its ability to draw excitement to downtown and increase foot traffic. Acts as a top notch amenity for those who would wish to live in downtown.
5. Replaces dilapidated building and vacant spaces with a use that will benefit all of the other buildings in downtown. Erases a sad time in the history of our downtown by creating something new in the heart of our community.



The Next Phases! (Continued)

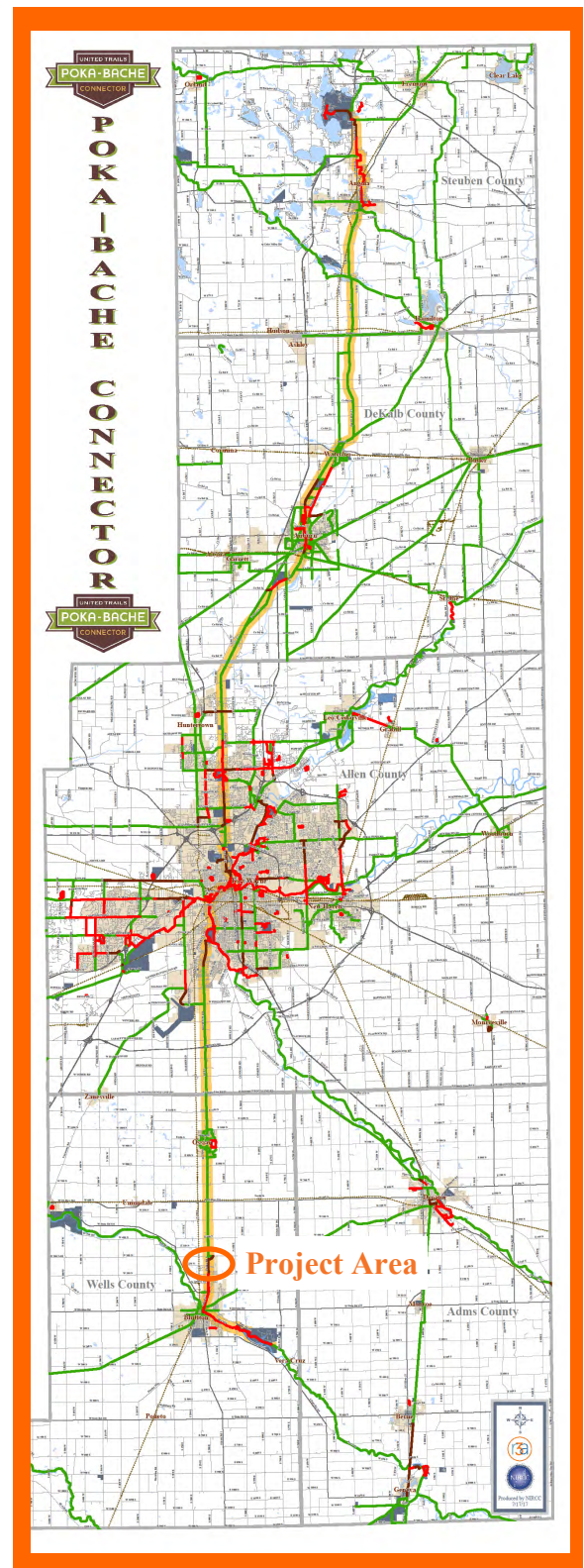
Interurban Trail Ext. \$1,300,000

Part of the Pokabache Trail Connector

While the interurban trail expansion is occurring miles away from downtown Bluffton, Bluffton NOW! Is looking at a long term benefit from a substantial trail network. Over the last few years a plan has been formulated to create an 80 plus mile trail network that would connect Ouabache State Park and Pokagon State Park. This project has been spearheaded by local officials and the Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council. The project is named Pokabache Trail. With approximately a 1/3 of the trail network already completed each new mile brings us one step closer to having a world class tourism magnet that will run through downtown Bluffton. The users of the trail will provide additional opportunities for downtown businesses.

Project Benefits

1. Furthers development of the southern portion of the 80 plus mile Pokabache Trail connecting Ouabache and Pokagon State Parks. By expanding our trail network we are doing our part to match the successful extensions of the trails completed by our neighboring communities. It shows how serious our community is to providing amenities that are important for attracting young talent and new business opportunities.
2. Promotes safety for those people who choose or need to walk or bike as their form of transportation. Ties northern neighborhoods to other parts of town already served by the trail. Improves mobility for everyone in our community, making it a more “walkable community”
3. Creates a community asset that will expand our local tourism opportunities in combination with our downtown and state park. It puts downtown on the map as a destination for trail users.
4. Provides for community health by creating a longer trail for exercise and outdoor activities which are known to improve both physical and mental health. Expanding the trail will give more people easy access to the trail.
5. Creates the opportunity for additional community trail related events such walks, 5Ks and marathons that attract people to our community and highlight our community pride.



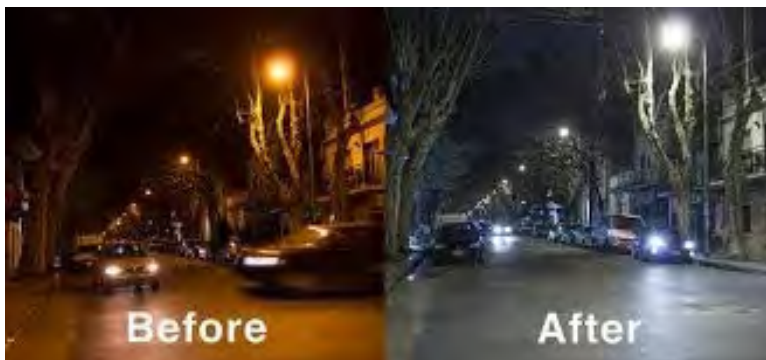
The Next Phases! (Continued)

Light Up Downtown (Part of Plaza Budget)

Bluffton NOW! will start the process with the Market Street Plaza to light up the alleyways and side street in downtown to provide safe routes throughout downtown and to provide a better visual appeal for businesses to be open later into the evening and for customers to want to move throughout downtown. The ideal design will be to use ultra efficient LED lighting to provide adequate lighting as an extension of the downtown street lighting. This plan will mimic the sidewalk lighting installed at the Wells Fargo bank.

Project Benefits

1. Improves the appearance of the downtown during the evening, by lighting up the side streets and alleyways within the downtown area. Creates a vibrant and inviting atmosphere which shows off our community pride in our downtown.
2. Creates a perception of safety in the downtown area by lighting up the dark areas in downtown. Removes any concern about traveling on downtown side streets and alleyways in the evening.
3. Promotes a cleaner downtown by lighting up all of downtown instead of just the main streets, increasing community pride in our downtown. Improved lighting reduces likelihood of vandalism and littering.
4. Utilizes LED lighting to promote high quality lighting in conjunction with low long term costs. Provides a major upgrade for downtown.
5. Improves the viability of downtown businesses, events and parking access in and around the downtown area, by creating well lit walking paths between the parking locations and desired destination for potential consumers and event attendees.



The Future Phases!

This is a list of our future planned revitalization efforts. These projects are still being developed and will continue to morph as the projects move through their development phases.

Improve Streetscape

Bluffton NOW! will promote the replacement of the mature trees used in the existing streetscape with planters and smaller ornamental trees to improve the view of store fronts and signage, while attempting to lessen the damage to sidewalks and underground utilities being caused by the existing trees.

Programming

Bluffton NOW! along with other organizations will start the process of designing and implementing programming for the Market Street Plaza that will create the additional excitement needed for downtown revitalization. Programs will include first Fridays, movies, music and much, much more.

Business Incubator

Bluffton NOW! leadership has been contemplating providing a location for entrepreneurs to work and share ideas which will cultivate new successful and resilient businesses that can set up in our community.



The Future Phases! (Continued)

Performance and Movie Complex

Bluffton NOW! has plans to partner with a private developer and the creative arts council to create a downtown performance hall and movie complex to provide additional space for creative arts programming and once and for all answer the age old issue of needing a movie theatre in our community for our youth.

Downtown Residential Development

Bluffton NOW! has begun the process of testing the waters on potential residential development projects in the downtown area. The goal is to partner with existing building owners and a private developer to develop a residential project. Residential development is a key for long term resiliency in downtown revitalization. We would be looking at partnering with developers to bring high quality residential development into our downtown. This project also would work towards answering the needs set forth in the housing study.

Riverfront Development

Bluffton NOW! Is hoping to complete riverfront improvements that had been started by the construction of the Creative Arts and Commerce Building and Keho Park. By improving the east side of the downtown riverfront it will create a stellar entrance to our beautiful downtown. While the type of vehicle for such improvements is unknown at this time this goal is an important feature towards completing the revitalization of our downtown.



There are a wide variety of incentives to operate a business in downtown Bluffton. This is a list of a few of the available incentives to help bring your dream into a reality.



Indiana Small Business Development Center

Business Advisors meet once a month at the Wells County Chamber of Commerce building with entrepreneurs. Most of the funding comes through tax revenues and there is a low to no cost for one-on-one consulting.

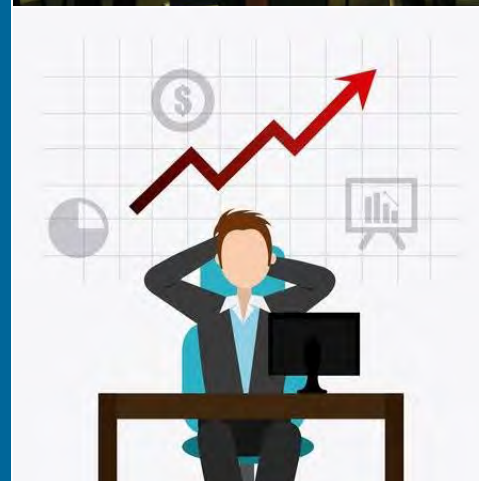
Products and solutions offered by ISBDC:

No Cost, One-on-One Business Consulting

ISBDC Business Advisors will evaluate your business from top to bottom or target specific areas to help find efficiencies. Whether you are in the startup, growth, or mature business stage our trained Advisors will help you start stronger, grow faster, and work smarter.

Strategic Planning: provides clients with tangible plans they can start implementing immediately. ISBDC Business Advisors will help you and your team develop goals, strategies, and tactics to reach your company vision.

Financial Understanding & Growing Your Bottom Line: develop a better understanding of what your financial statements are telling you about the health of your business. The ISBDC will assist in developing a plan to generate a greater net income while strengthening operations.



Products and solutions offered by ISBDC: (Cont.)

Industry Research Reports and Prospect Lists: learn what you need to know about your industry including market trends, best practices, current market conditions, industry leaders, and upcoming industry-specific technology.

Market Research Reports: choose from an array of reports that will enable any business to understand their market and provide them with goods and services through their preferred media.

Business Planning Research: the ISBDC offers SmallBizNavigator, an online planning tool, which includes feasibility, business, and marketing plan templates to help you create a detailed map for your business. The ISBDC, in partnership with Fifth Third Bank, also offers SmallBizU, which teaches entrepreneurs money, marketing, and management through the delivery of 20 core courses online.



USDA Loan

The Wells County Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund is a county-wide program available to new or existing businesses committed to Wells County. This fund has been made available through a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Traditionally, revolving loan funds are combined with private commercial loans to provide minimum gap financing, or the portion of the project financing required to complement the conventional funding resources.



The USDA loan program will target:

1. Existing small businesses currently located in Wells County which are interested in expanding and improving their enterprises;
2. Existing small businesses currently located outside Wells County which are interested in relocating to Wells County; and,
3. New small businesses which are interested in establishing themselves in Wells County.

Other criteria, application and requirements must be met. Interested applicants must contact Wells County Economic Development for consideration.



Wells County Leadership Academy

The Wells County Leadership Academy offers participants solutions to the fast-paced ever-changing needs of business and industry in the 21st Century. Providing a leadership training program for your employees.

Community Reinvestment Program

See **Revitalization in Action**

Applications are available through Bluffton NOW!

Community Development Corporation

The Community Development Corporation of Northeast Indiana (CDC) is a City of Fort Wayne sponsored 501 c (6) not for profit business development organization. Mission to stimulate economic growth and prosperity throughout the communities serve the state of Indiana by providing alternative financing options to new and existing small business owners.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

REASON **5**

Downtown Bluffton and the surrounding area has several ongoing and one time events that provide activities for the community. These activities help create additional opportunities for area businesses to benefit from the added foot traffic through out the year. This is a sampling of the events held throughout the year.



Chilly Chili



Wells County Theatre



Bluffton Rough & Muddy 5K & Soggy Jog



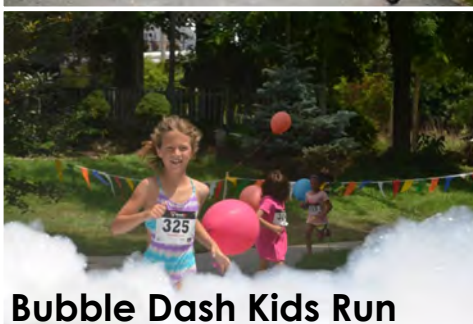
Chicks Run 5K



Bike Bluffton



Kehoe Park Summer Concert Series



Bubble Dash Kids Run



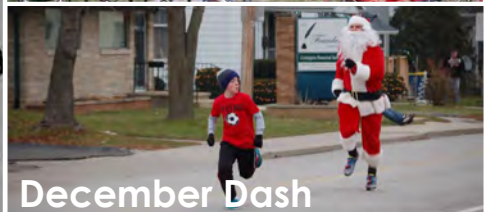
Movie's at Kehoe Park



Boo N Bluffton



Zombie 5K



December Dash



COMMUNITY EVENTS

REASON **5**



Winter Wonderland



Jazz on the Patio



Rock on the Patio



Christmas in the Mansion - Wells County Historic Museum



Parlor City Christmas



Bluffton Street Fair



Spring Gala



Harvest Hustle 5k



Bluffton NOW! Brrr Fest!



Bluffton NOW! Pancake Breakfast



Arts Bazaar



Touch a Truck



HAVE QUESTIONS?

Please contact the following individuals with questions related to working, living or investing in Bluffton, Indiana.

Bluffton NOW!

Michael Lautzenheiser, Jr. - President

blufftonnow@gmail.com

260-820-1671

www.blufftonnow.org

David Crell - Vice President

Nick Huffman - Treasurer

Jeremy Penrod - Secretary

Voting Members

Kim Leas

Stephanie Davis

Andy Ault

Bruce Golder

Josh Hunt

Lannette Bickel

Rina Stuck

Jessica Dubbeld

Non-Voting Members

Ted Ellis

Ted Smith

Pam Vanderkolk

Joel Harmeyer

Blake Gerber

Doug Brown

Karl Grau

Tammy Slater

Collin Andrews

Erin Prible

Chad Kline

Chuck King

City of Bluffton

Mayor Ted Ellis

mayor@ci.bluffton.in.us

260-824-1520

www.blufftonindiana.net

Wells County Chamber of Commerce

Erin Prible, Executive Director

eprible@wellscoc.com

260-824-0510

www.wellscoc.com

Wells County Economic Development

Chad Kline, Executive Director

ckline@wellsedc.com

260-824-0510





Join us and help revitalize downtown Bluffton NOW!

Web Site: www.blufftonnow.org

Email: blufftonnow@gmail.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/blufftonnow

Twitter: www.twitter.com/bluffton_now