

TOWN OF OSSIAN COMMUNITY REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ossian's approach to growth is shaped by its position along key transportation corridors, survey responses indicating steady population needs, and feedback from local public meetings emphasizing small-town charm. Comparison data highlighted the town's socioeconomic stability and the potential for strategic commercial and light industrial development. Ossian's Vision Principles therefore revolve around focused growth near existing neighborhoods, well-planned development along SR 1, and preserving the family-friendly atmosphere that residents value. From these principles, action items include identifying target locations for business expansion, implementing design guidelines that maintain architectural harmony, and coordinating with developers to ensure new subdivisions include sidewalks and shared green spaces. This blend of traditional character and modern amenities aims to keep Ossian both livable and economically dynamic.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

The Town of Ossian, located in northern Wells County, serves as a growing residential and commercial hub. Understanding Ossian's physical and land use characteristics is essential for shaping a master plan that supports sustainable growth, economic development, and infrastructure improvements. This section examines zoning, infrastructure, environmental assets, and land use patterns, providing a framework for strategic planning and decision-making.

Ossian's land use framework supports a mix of residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, and industrial zones, with agriculture remaining dominant in surrounding areas. As new housing developments emerge, Ossian continues to focus on preserving its small-town character while accommodating growth.

The town recognizes the importance of infrastructure investments, particularly in utility upgrades, stormwater drainage improvements, and transportation enhancements. As Ossian grows, ensuring adequate infrastructure capacity will be crucial for maintaining service reliability and supporting economic expansion.

Ossian is also home to natural features such as Eighty Mile Creek and surrounding conservation areas, which play an important role in stormwater management and environmental preservation. Protecting these assets while allowing for smart development will be key to the town's long-term sustainability.

By examining these existing conditions, this section provides a comprehensive overview of Ossian's development landscape, ensuring that growth is balanced, strategic, and aligned with community priorities.

As one of Wells County's key communities, Ossian continues to experience growth while maintaining its small-town charm and strong connection to the surrounding rural landscape. Understanding the town's natural features, zoning, land use patterns, and infrastructure provides insight into how future development can be managed to support economic growth, residential expansion, and environmental stewardship. This section examines the physical characteristics that define Ossian today and the infrastructure that will guide its future.

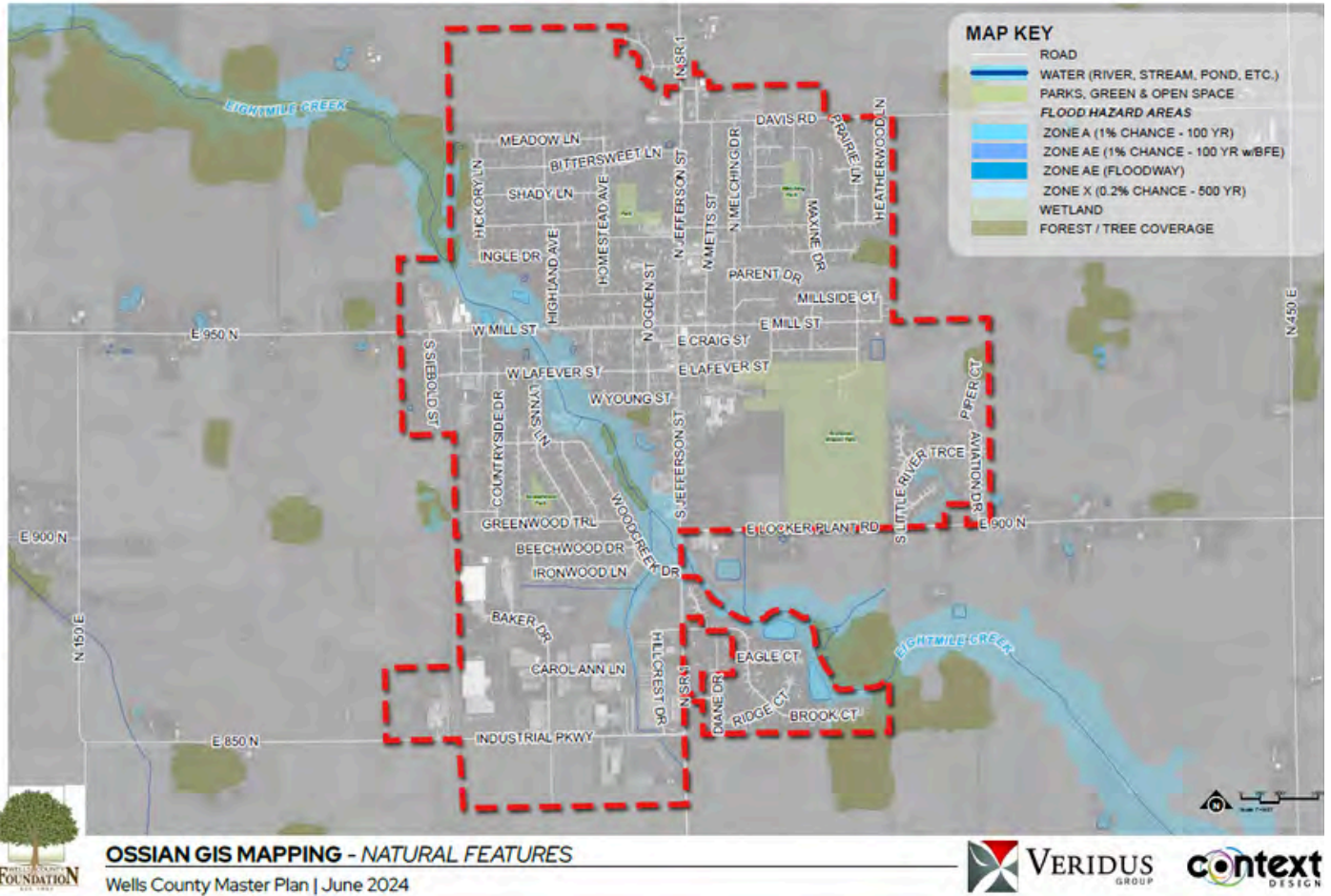


Figure 40: Ossian Natural Conditions Map; Source: Context Design

Ossian’s natural landscape is shaped by Eighty Mile Creek and its tributaries, which provide scenic and ecological value but also present challenges related to flood management. Flood hazard areas, including 100-year and 500-year flood zones, indicate areas where development may require mitigation efforts to minimize risk. Additionally, wetlands and tree-covered areas contribute to the town’s environmental character, supporting green spaces and providing natural buffers.

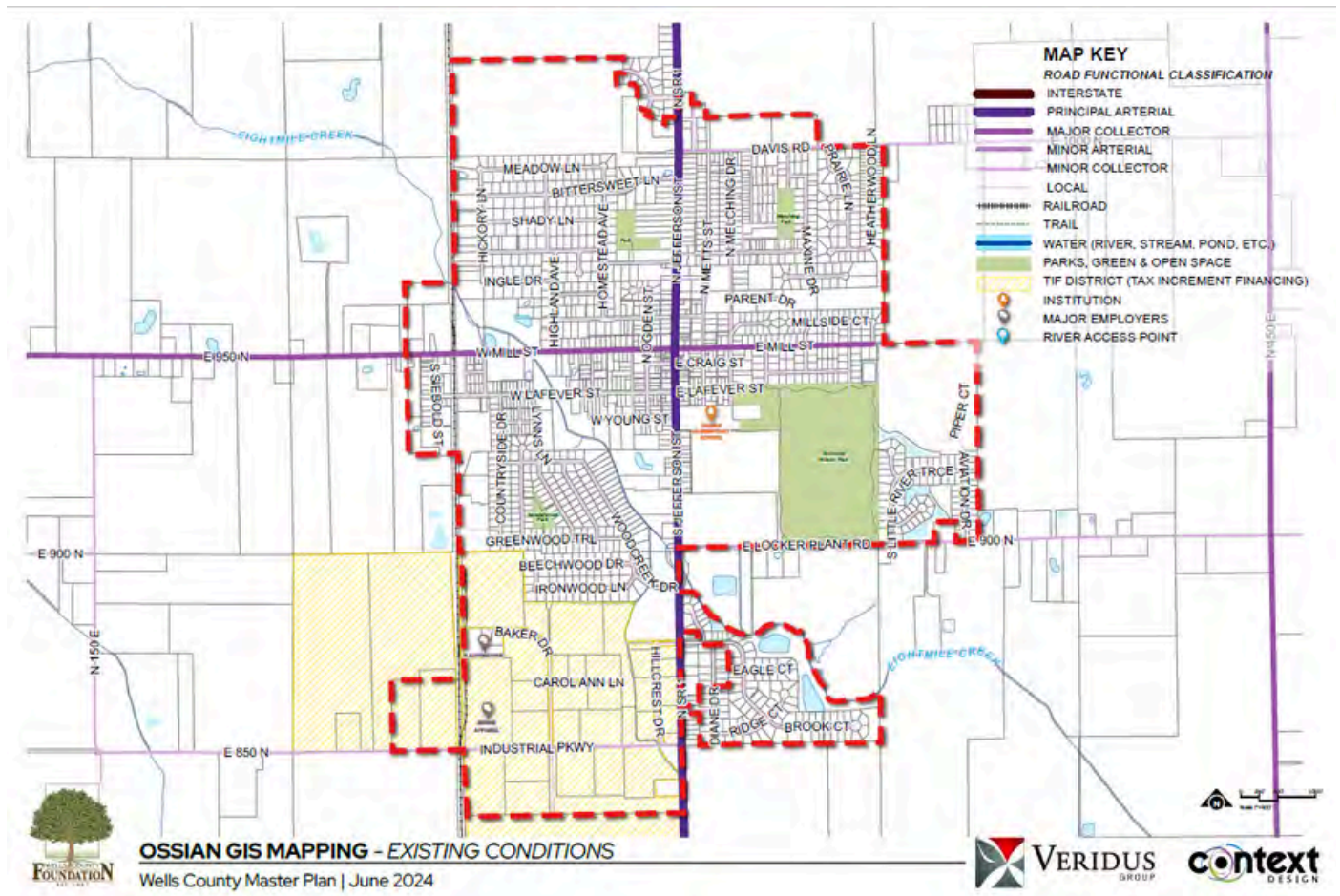
- Flood-prone areas along the creek and low-lying zones require careful planning to mitigate potential risks.
- Parks, open spaces, and tree coverage offer environmental and recreational benefits that enhance community well-being.
- Wetlands and conservation areas provide important ecological functions, supporting biodiversity and stormwater management.

As Ossian continues to grow, maintaining a balance between development and environmental preservation will be essential to ensuring long-term sustainability and resilience.

Ossian's transportation and infrastructure networks are essential to supporting continued growth and economic development. The town is served by principal arterials, minor arterials, and collector roads, providing key connections within the community and to surrounding areas. Rail infrastructure enhances Ossian's appeal for industrial development, offering freight access for local businesses.

- TIF districts (Tax Increment Financing) are designated to encourage investment and redevelopment in strategic areas.
- Major employers and institutions contribute to Ossian's economic vitality, supporting local jobs and services.
- Public utilities and infrastructure investments are crucial for accommodating future development while maintaining high service levels.

Ensuring that transportation improvements, utility expansions, and land use policies align with Ossian's growth will be critical in sustaining a well-planned, connected, and resilient community.



Ossian's zoning structure accommodates a variety of land uses to support residential neighborhoods, commercial activity, and industrial development while preserving agricultural land on the town's periphery.

- Agricultural zoning (A-1, A-R) dominates the areas surrounding the town, ensuring the continued use of farmland while allowing for strategic expansion.
- Residential zoning (R-1, R-2, R-3, suburban residential) is concentrated within the town's core and expanding neighborhoods, providing a mix of housing options.
- Commercial zoning (B-1, B-2, Central Business District) is primarily located along major roadways, supporting retail, offices, and services.
- Industrial zoning (I-1, I-2) is strategically positioned in the southern and western portions of Ossian, offering space for manufacturing and logistics operations.
- The land use plan identifies undeveloped land, flood-prone areas, and conservation zones, ensuring that future growth aligns with community priorities while minimizing environmental impacts.

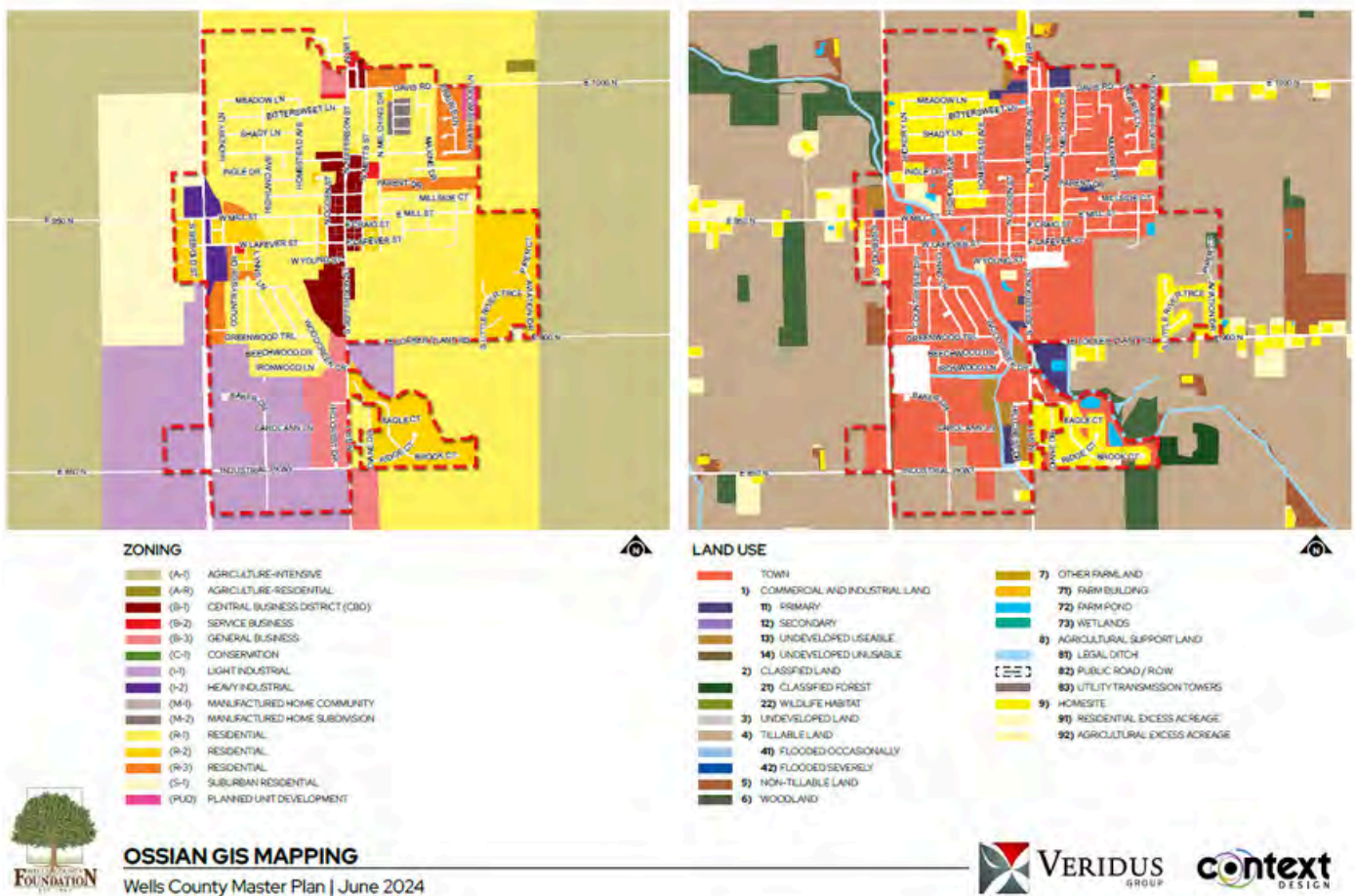


Figure 43: Ossian Zoning and Land Use Map; Source: Context Design

Ossian’s existing conditions, land use framework, and infrastructure assets provide a strong foundation for future planning efforts. By carefully managing residential expansion, commercial and industrial development, and environmental preservation, the town can maintain its small-town character while supporting sustainable growth. Thoughtful planning and strategic investments will ensure that Ossian remains a vibrant and livable community within Wells County for years to come.

ANALYSIS OF VACANT PARCELS IN OSSIAN

The map displays the distribution of vacant parcels in Ossian, marked in orange, showing a mix of undeveloped land within the town’s core and along its boundaries.

Clusters of vacant parcels are noticeable in the central and southern sections, particularly near major roads and industrial corridors. The western and eastern edges of the town also contain scattered vacant parcels, indicating potential areas for future development. Some parcels are near water features, which could influence land use decisions.

The pattern of vacant land suggests a combination of infill opportunities within established neighborhoods and potential expansion at the periphery, reflecting a varied landscape of development possibilities. It will be important to reflect upon the Vision 2035 Plan when future opportunities arise for those parcels.

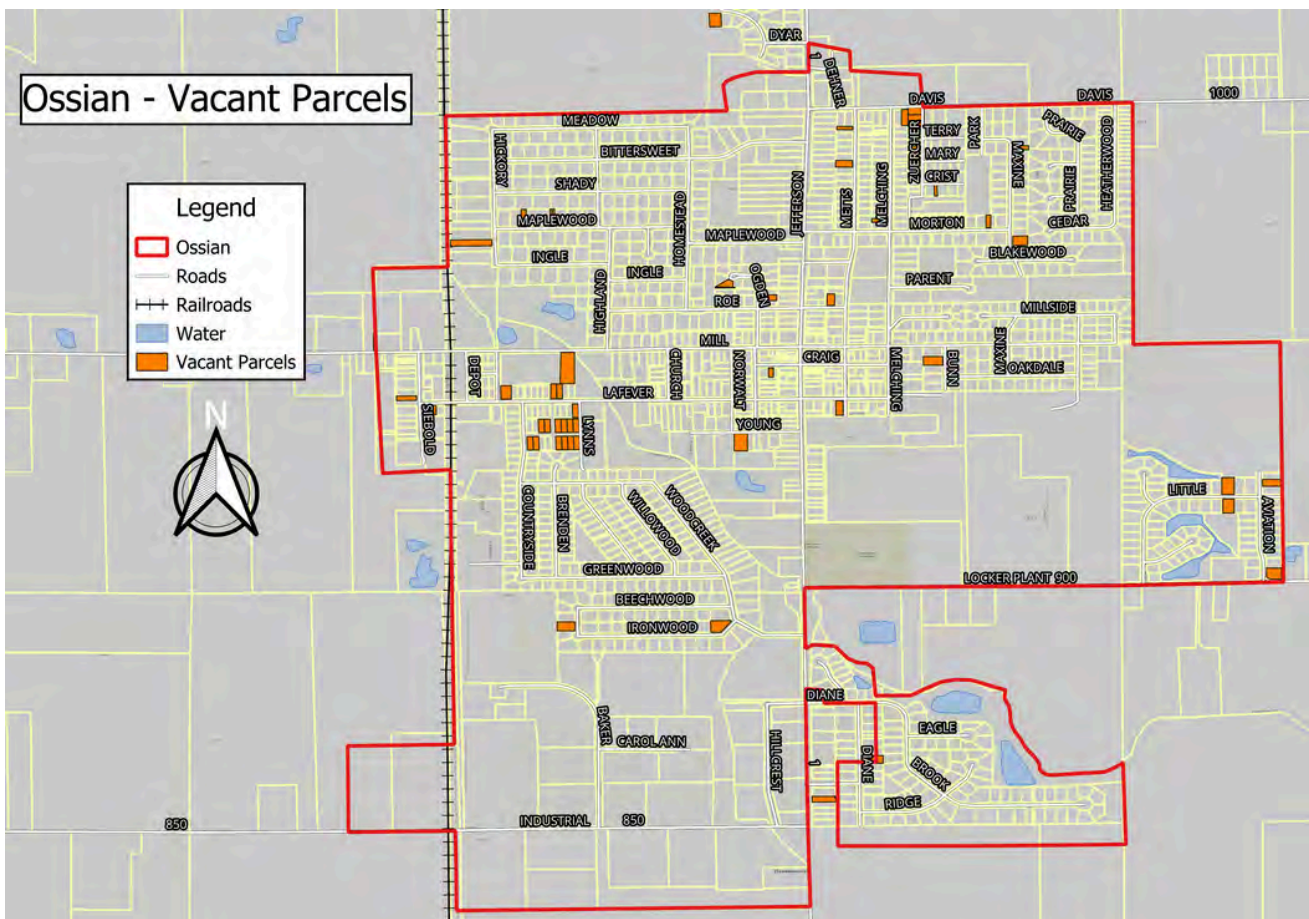


Figure 42: Ossian Vacant Parcels Map; Source: Wells County GIS

COMMUNITY MEETING

The input gathered from the Ossian community meeting highlights key priorities for downtown revitalization, redevelopment, and new development based on public feedback.

Key Priorities for Downtown Ossian:

1. Quality Dining and Entertainment Options – This category received strong support, with a majority of high-priority (green) votes, emphasizing a demand for more restaurants, cafés, or entertainment venues.
2. Vibrant and Diverse Retail Options – Participants also identified the need for retail expansion, though the responses were more evenly split between medium and high priority.
3. Enhanced Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure – While fewer votes were cast here compared to other categories, those who prioritized it ranked it highly, indicating a niche but important concern.
4. Housing Revitalization and Infill – Residents placed consistent support on this category, showing a desire to improve or expand housing within the town.

Additional Considerations:

One notable write-in comment under "Other" was "Downtown Parking," signaling a concern about accessibility in the town's core.

Redevelopment and New Development Preferences:

Community feedback on redevelopment and new development locations was captured through zoning maps with pin markers.

- Redevelopment Priorities:
 - The central business district (CBD) along Jefferson Street had the highest concentration of commercial (red) pins, reinforcing the desire for more businesses in the downtown area.
 - Residential redevelopment (yellow pins) was scattered, with a few key locations in the north and eastern parts of town, aligning with housing revitalization priorities.
 - Some industrial redevelopment (blue pins) was noted in the southern and western sections, suggesting a focus on repurposing existing industrial areas.
- New Development Priorities:
 - Commercial development (red pins) was again centered along the Jefferson Street corridor, emphasizing its role as a business hub.
 - New residential development (yellow pins) showed a concentration in the southeastern and northeastern portions of town, indicating areas where growth is expected.
 - Industrial development (blue pins) was largely placed in the southwest, aligning with existing industrial zoning.

Conclusion:

The feedback reflects a strong desire for expanded commercial and dining options, better housing opportunities, and strategic redevelopment within the town center. While infrastructure improvements like pedestrian access and parking were mentioned, elements like public art and sustainability initiatives ranked lower in urgency. The insights from this meeting provide a clear direction for how Ossian can balance growth, revitalization, and new development to meet community needs.

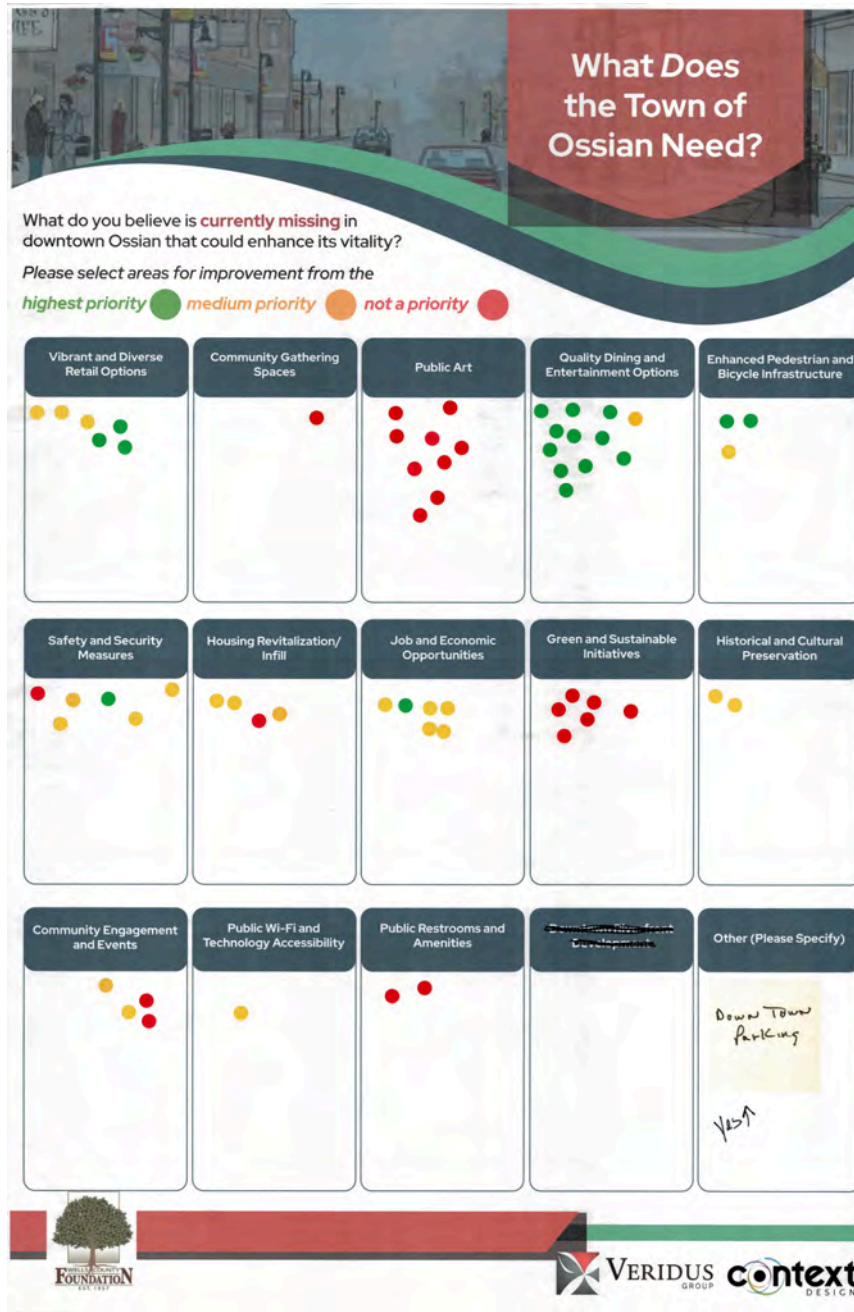


Figure 44: Ossian Community Meeting Needs; Source: Ossian Community Meeting

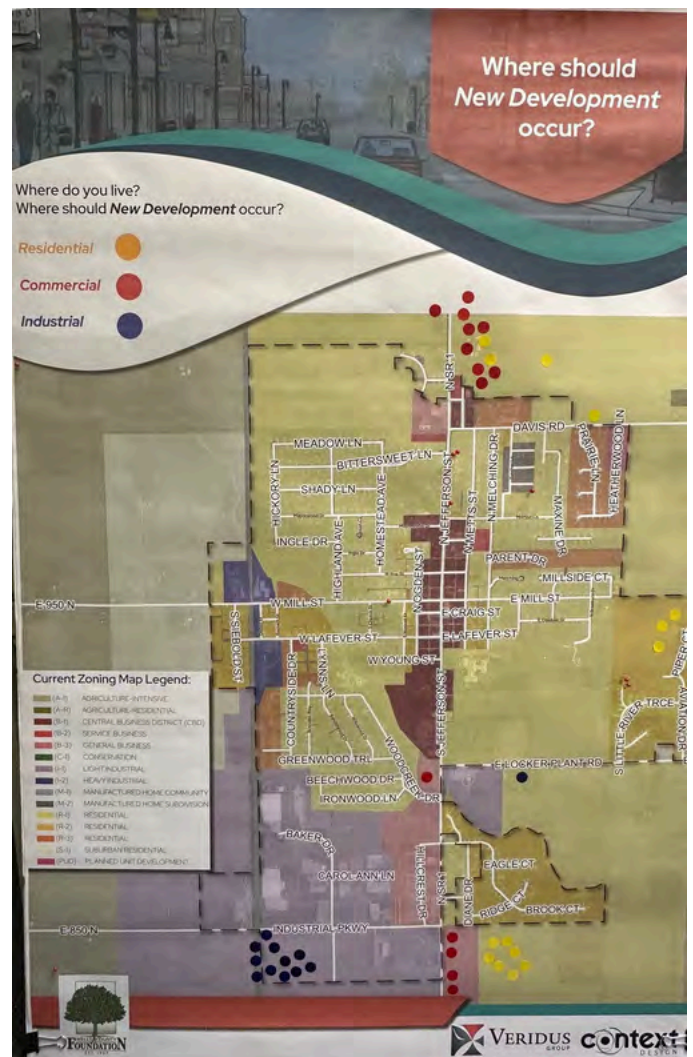
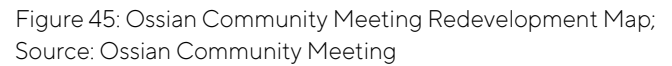
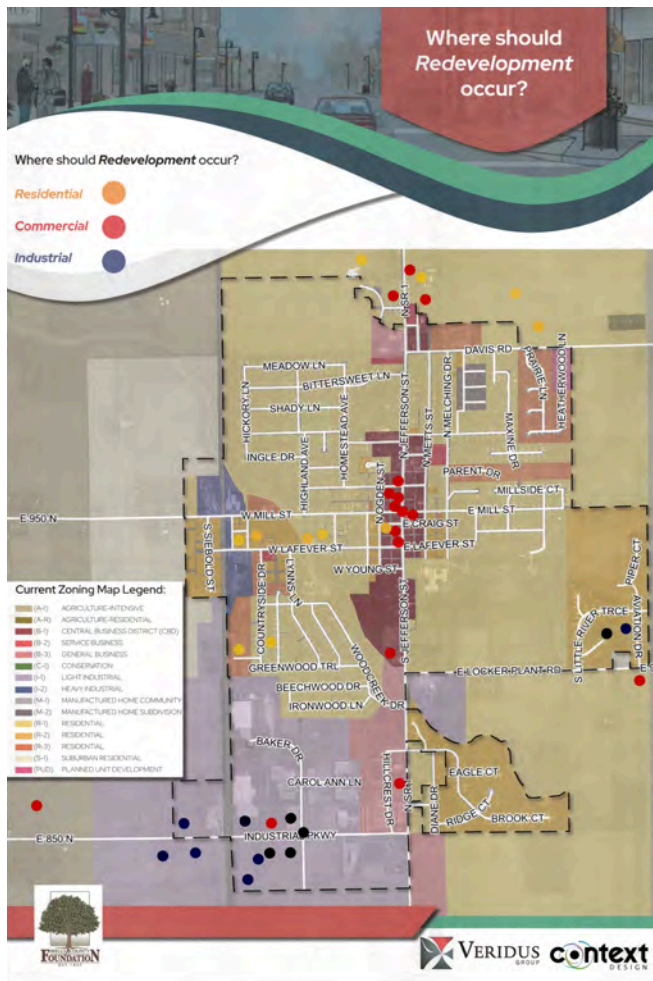


Figure 46: Ossian Community Meeting Development Map;
Source: Ossian Community Meeting

FUTURE VISION

Ossian's future vision is shaped by community discussions and stakeholder feedback, reflecting the town's priorities for growth, development, and quality of life enhancements. Through an extensive engagement process, residents and leaders have identified key themes that will shape Ossian's long-term direction.

This section presents Ossian's vision principles, which establish objectives for strategic land use, infrastructure improvements, and economic development. The town is committed to expanding residential neighborhoods, strengthening commercial corridors, and ensuring sustainable infrastructure investments. Enhancements to stormwater management, pedestrian connectivity, and public spaces will contribute to a more livable and resilient community.

These vision principles will be further refined into formal policies, guiding future decisions on development regulations, infrastructure projects, and economic initiatives. With this structured approach, Ossian will continue to grow strategically and sustainably, ensuring that new investments align with community needs and long-term priorities.

VISION PRINCIPLES: TOWN OF OSSIAN

Ossian is poised for strategic growth that enhances local opportunities while preserving its small-town character and rich traditions. By focusing on intentional development, expanding local amenities, and fostering a strong sense of community, the town will continue to thrive while maintaining its unique identity. These vision principles will guide Ossian's future, ensuring a balance between progress and tradition that supports residents, businesses, and future generations.

1

Focused growth for a thriving future.

2

Enhance local offerings while preserving character.

3

Strengthen community while honoring tradition.

FOCUS AREAS

As a growing residential and economic hub, Ossian is focused on strategic expansion and infrastructure investment to support sustained growth. The Focus Areas section translates the town's vision principles into concrete planning strategies, ensuring that development aligns with community needs and long-term priorities.

Key growth priorities for Ossian include:

- Expanding residential neighborhoods to meet increasing housing demand.
- Strengthening commercial and retail development along key corridors.
- Investing in transportation improvements to support local and regional connectivity.
- Upgrading utilities and stormwater systems to ensure infrastructure resiliency.
- Enhancing parks, trails, and public spaces to improve community well-being.

Designated growth areas and planned infrastructure projects are illustrated through the below map, ensuring that Ossian's expansion remains strategic and sustainable. These Focus Areas will serve as a guide for decision-makers and developers, ensuring that the town's growth supports long-term economic and community success.

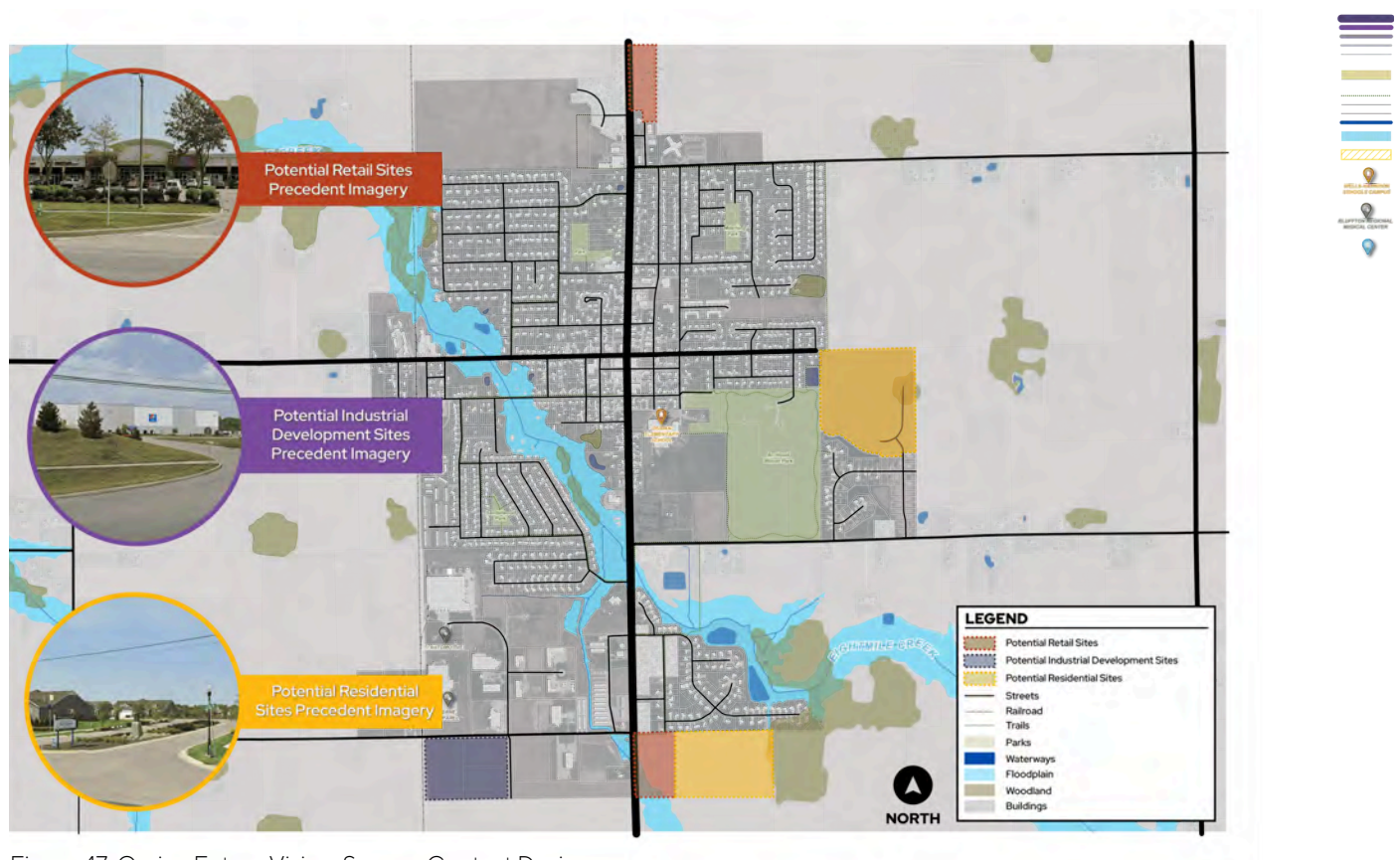


Figure 47: Ossian Future Vision; Source: Context Design

Building on these priorities, Ossian’s strategic expansion focuses on residential, commercial, and industrial development to support its growing community and economy. The map highlights key potential development sites that align with the town’s long-term vision.

To accommodate increasing housing demand, the map designates areas for potential residential development, ensuring that Ossian continues to provide diverse and high-quality housing options for residents. These planned neighborhoods will integrate with existing infrastructure and support the town’s overall growth strategy.

The map also identifies potential retail development sites, reinforcing the town’s commitment to strengthening commercial corridors. These areas will help attract businesses, enhance local shopping and dining options, and create jobs, ensuring a thriving local economy.

Additionally, Ossian recognizes the importance of industrial expansion in supporting economic growth. The designated industrial development sites provide opportunities for new businesses and employment centers, leveraging Ossian’s connectivity and infrastructure to attract investment.

While the map focuses on these key development areas, Ossian remains committed to broader infrastructure improvements, including transportation upgrades, stormwater management, and enhancements to parks and public spaces. These focus areas will guide public and private investment, ensuring that Ossian’s growth remains strategic, sustainable, and community-oriented.

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation framework for Ossian provides a strategic guide to ensure that community priorities are effectively managed and advanced. Through two detailed matrices, this framework establishes clear responsibilities, funding strategies, and timelines for infrastructure expansion, economic growth, and community improvements.

The first matrix outlines each goal and priority, identifying:

- Responsible Parties: Local agencies, community leaders, and state partners.
- Potential Funding Sources: Grant opportunities, private investments, and infrastructure funds.
- Cost: The estimated total cost for each strategy on a scale of \$ - \$\$\$\$.
- Priority Level: A classification of initiatives based on their urgency and impact.
- Timeline: Projected completion periods to ensure continued progress.

The second matrix provides specific action steps for implementing each goal, ensuring measurable progress through structured planning and execution.

These matrices will be a critical tool for Ossian’s leadership, helping the town prioritize investments, track progress, and align development with long-term goals.

TOWN OF OSSIAN VISION 1

Focused growth for a thriving future.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
1	Guide residential, commercial, and industrial development to defined areas of Ossian—prioritizing residential near existing neighborhoods, commercial expansion along SR 1, and industrial uses in the southwest—to support efficient land use and logical community expansion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council • Redevelopment Commission • Wells County Area Plan Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Funds • TIF • EDIT 	\$	High	12 - 36 Months, Ongoing
2	Promote growth patterns that reinforce community identity by expanding infrastructure strategically, supporting infill where feasible, and ensuring new development complements Ossian’s existing neighborhoods and economic goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council • Redevelopment Commission • Wells County Area Plan Commission • Ossian Utility Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility Funds • TIF • EDIT 	\$\$\$	High	12 - 36 Months, Ongoing

Vision 1, Strategy 1: Guide residential, commercial, and industrial development to defined areas of Ossian—prioritizing residential near existing neighborhoods, commercial expansion along SR 1, and industrial uses in the southwest—to support efficient land use and logical community expansion.

Objectives	Tactics
Expand Residential Development in Growth Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and rezone key areas on the town’s fringes to accommodate new residential neighborhoods. • Partner with developers to create housing options that meet the needs of growing families, first-time buyers, and retirees. • Ensure new subdivisions include pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, green spaces, and connections to existing roadways.
Encourage Commercial Growth in Targeted Corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate commercial development zones along major roadways to attract businesses and services that support the expanding population. • Offer tax incentives or infrastructure assistance to encourage businesses to locate in designated growth areas. • Improve road access, signage, and utilities to support commercial development and enhance visibility for businesses.
Strengthen Industrial Development Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand industrial zoning near existing business parks and transportation corridors to attract manufacturing and logistics companies. • Invest in utility and roadway upgrades to ensure new industrial sites are development-ready. • Collaborate with regional economic development organizations to market Ossian as a prime location for business expansion.

Vision 1, Strategy 2: Promote growth patterns that reinforce community identity by expanding infrastructure strategically, supporting infill where feasible, and ensuring new development complements Ossian’s existing neighborhoods and economic goals.

Objectives	Tactics
Encourage Residential Growth Near Existing Neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rezone land adjacent to established neighborhoods to accommodate new housing while maintaining community character. • Extend infrastructure, such as roads, water, and sewer, to support residential expansion in targeted areas. • Require new developments to include pedestrian connections to nearby parks, schools, and commercial areas.
Support Commercial Expansion Along SR 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract retail, dining, and service-based businesses to the north and south ends of SR 1 by offering targeted development incentives. • Improve traffic flow, sidewalks, and streetscaping along SR 1 to create an inviting commercial corridor. • Work with property owners to redevelop underutilized sites along the highway into vibrant business hubs.
Develop Industrial Opportunities in the Southwest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand industrial zoning and infrastructure to accommodate manufacturing, logistics, and technology businesses. • Partner with regional workforce programs to ensure a skilled labor pool for new and expanding industries. • Promote the area to site selectors and investors as a prime location for industrial development with strong transportation access.

TOWN OF OSSIAN VISION 2

Enhance local offerings while preserving character.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
1	Spur new businesses in dining, retail, and entertainment that complement Ossian's family-friendly atmosphere and small-town values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council Redevelopment Commission Wells County Economic Development Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TIF EDIT 	\$\$	High	12 - 36 Months, Ongoing
2	Focus redevelopment efforts along the downtown area and SR 1 corridor to create opportunities that enhance the community's appeal without compromising its identity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council Redevelopment Commission Wells County Economic Development Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TIF EDIT 	\$\$	High	12 - 36 Months, Ongoing

Vision 2, Strategy 1: Spur new businesses in dining, retail, and entertainment that complement Ossian’s family-friendly atmosphere and small-town values.

Objectives	Tactics
Attract Family-Friendly Dining and Retail Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit restaurants, cafés, and specialty food markets that align with the town’s character and meet resident demand. • Offer incentives such as tax abatements or infrastructure assistance to attract locally owned businesses. • Partner with developers to create small retail hubs that integrate seamlessly into existing neighborhoods.
Expand Entertainment and Recreational Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of family-friendly entertainment venues, such as a community theater, bowling alley, or event space. • Encourage seasonal events, farmers' markets, and festivals to activate public spaces and attract visitors. • Partner with local organizations to create programming, such as outdoor movie nights, concerts, or youth-oriented activities.
Ensure New Businesses Align with Ossian’s Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop design guidelines to maintain small-town aesthetics in new commercial developments. • Encourage businesses to incorporate green space, outdoor seating, and walkability into their site plans. • Prioritize business recruitment efforts that align with the community’s values and enhance quality of life.

Vision 2, Strategy 2: Focus redevelopment efforts along the downtown area and SR 1 corridor to create opportunities that enhance the community’s appeal without compromising its identity.

Objectives	Tactics
Revitalize Downtown Ossian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer façade improvement grants to restore historic storefronts and enhance the visual appeal of downtown businesses. • Encourage mixed-use development that integrates retail, office, and residential spaces to increase downtown activity. • Improve streetscaping with decorative lighting, planters, and pedestrian-friendly features to create a welcoming environment.
Enhance the SR 1 Corridor for Thoughtful Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement zoning updates to guide commercial and mixed-use development along SR 1 while maintaining the town’s small-town character. • Improve sidewalks, crosswalks, and access points along SR 1 to enhance safety and walkability. • Partner with property owners to redevelop underutilized lots into attractive business or retail spaces.
Create Community-Oriented Public Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish pocket parks, plazas, or gathering spaces along the downtown and SR 1 corridor to encourage social interaction. • Support outdoor dining, pop-up markets, and public art installations to activate redevelopment areas. • Develop signage and branding initiatives that highlight Ossian’s charm and guide visitors to key attractions.

TOWN OF OSSIAN VISION 3

Strengthen community while honoring tradition.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
1	Maintain Ossian's family-friendly, small-town charm by supporting development that aligns with the community's values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council Main Street Wells County Area Plan Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Fund EDIT 	\$	High	12 - 36 Months
2	Encourage projects and initiatives that build on the town's traditions and foster a sense of safety, belonging, and pride among residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council Wells County Area Plan Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Fund EDIT 	\$	Medium	2 - 5 Years

Vision 3, Strategy 1: Maintain Ossian’s family-friendly, small-town charm by supporting development that aligns with the community’s values.

Objectives	Tactics
Encourage Development That Reflects Ossian’s Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish architectural and design guidelines to ensure new buildings complement the town’s historic and small-town aesthetic. • Prioritize infill development and adaptive reuse projects to maintain the existing neighborhood feel. • Require residential and commercial developments to include green space, sidewalks, and pedestrian connections to enhance community livability.
Support Locally-Owned and Family-Friendly Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer incentives for businesses that align with Ossian’s values, such as family-owned shops, local restaurants, and service-oriented establishments. • Develop a small business incubator program to help entrepreneurs launch ventures that contribute to the town’s identity. • Organize community events that highlight and support locally-owned businesses.
Preserve and Celebrate Local Traditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect historic sites and structures that contribute to Ossian’s identity and sense of place. • Continue supporting long-standing community events, such as parades, festivals, and holiday celebrations. • Encourage public art and storytelling initiatives that honor the town’s history and culture.

Vision 3, Strategy 2: Encourage projects and initiatives that build on the town’s traditions and foster a sense of safety, belonging, and pride among residents.

Objectives	Tactics
Enhance Public Safety and Neighborhood Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in street lighting, pedestrian crossings, and traffic calming measures to create safer streets for residents. • Strengthen partnerships between local law enforcement, schools, and community organizations to support crime prevention and safety initiatives.
Promote Community Gathering Spaces and Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new parks, plazas, and shared public spaces that encourage interaction and strengthen community bonds. • Support and expand annual events, such as festivals, farmers’ markets, and holiday celebrations, that reinforce local traditions. • Encourage the use of public spaces for family-friendly activities, such as outdoor concerts, movie nights, and craft fairs.
Strengthen Civic Engagement and Volunteerism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a town-wide volunteer program to encourage residents to take an active role in community improvement projects. • Establish a youth advisory board to engage younger generations in civic initiatives and leadership opportunities. • Recognize and celebrate community contributions through awards and public appreciation events.