

CITY OF BLUFFTON COMMUNITY REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bluffton stands out as Wells County’s economic and cultural hub, a role that was underscored by county-level data showing relatively strong household incomes and steady population growth. Results from the local public meeting and survey underscored the need for downtown revitalization, enhanced dining and entertainment options, and better access to healthcare services. As a result, Bluffton’s Vision Principles concentrate on creating a vibrant downtown-riverfront district, upgrading infrastructure to growing demand, restoring and expanding healthcare facilities, and offering a mix of mid-priced single-family and market-rate multi-family housing. In practice, these principles become action items such as façade improvement grants for downtown redevelopment, strategic investments in stormwater and utility upgrades, active recruitment of medical providers, and planned sidewalk and trail expansions that link neighborhoods to Bluffton’s historic core.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

As the largest city and economic center of Wells County, Bluffton plays a crucial role in regional development and economic sustainability. Understanding the physical and land use characteristics of Bluffton is essential for shaping a master plan that supports growth, infrastructure improvements, and community well-being. This section examines current zoning, infrastructure, environmental assets, and land use patterns, providing a foundation for strategic decision-making.

Bluffton’s land use reflects a blend of residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural areas, with a growing focus on downtown revitalization and economic expansion. While agriculture remains prevalent in the surrounding areas, Bluffton’s commercial and industrial hubs are concentrated along major corridors, particularly around State Roads 1 and 116.

The city recognizes the need for continued investment in infrastructure improvements, particularly in stormwater management, utility upgrades, and road maintenance. Many infrastructure systems are aging and in need of replacement or expansion to meet the demands of future growth and business development. Additionally, enhanced stormwater drainage solutions will be key to preserving Bluffton’s road infrastructure and mitigating flood risks in low-lying areas.

Bluffton’s natural assets, including the Wabash River and Ouabache State Park, provide opportunities for recreation, tourism, and environmentally integrated development. These resources contribute to economic and ecological benefits, particularly as Bluffton seeks to integrate natural surroundings into its development plans.

By assessing these current conditions, this section provides a comprehensive overview of Bluffton’s development landscape, guiding strategies that balance economic vitality, infrastructure investments, and environmental stewardship to support the city’s future growth.

As the county seat and largest city in Wells County, Bluffton serves as an economic, residential, and transportation hub. The following maps provide insight into the natural features, zoning, land use, and infrastructure that shape Bluffton’s current development and future growth opportunities.

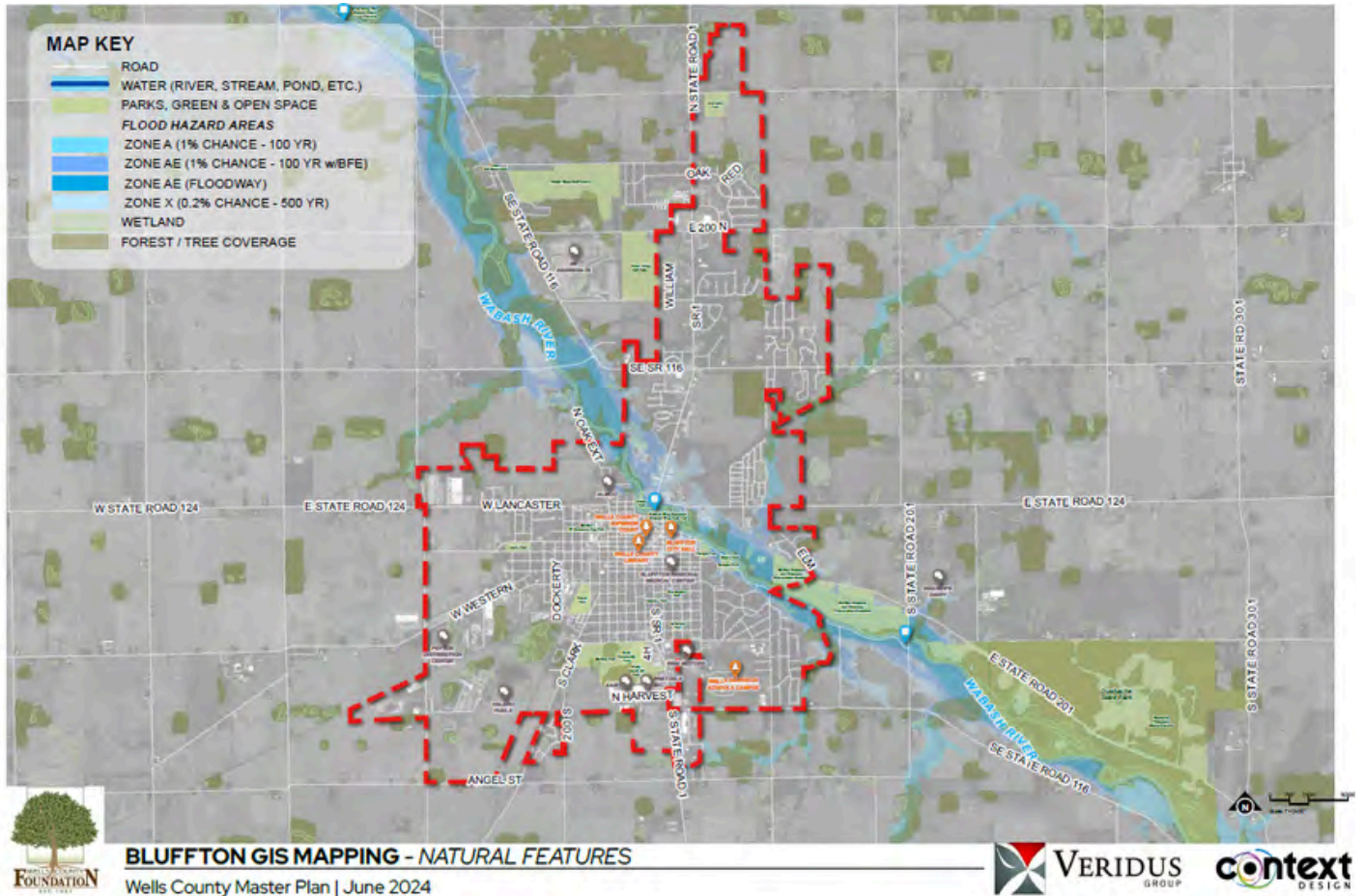


Figure 33: Bluffton Natural Features Map; Source: Context Design

The Bluffton Natural Features Map highlights the city’s environmental assets and constraints. The Wabash River, which runs through Bluffton, is a defining feature of the city, providing both recreational opportunities and environmental challenges. The map identifies wetlands, tree coverage, and flood hazard areas, indicating locations where development may be constrained by natural conditions.

- Flood hazard areas, marked in blue, outline locations subject to 100-year and 500-year flood events, requiring careful land use planning to mitigate risks.
- Parks and open spaces are distributed throughout the city, offering green space for recreation and conservation.
- Forest and tree coverage areas, shown in green, help maintain Bluffton’s environmental quality and contribute to its small-town character.

Preserving these natural resources while accommodating growth is a key consideration for Bluffton’s future development strategy.

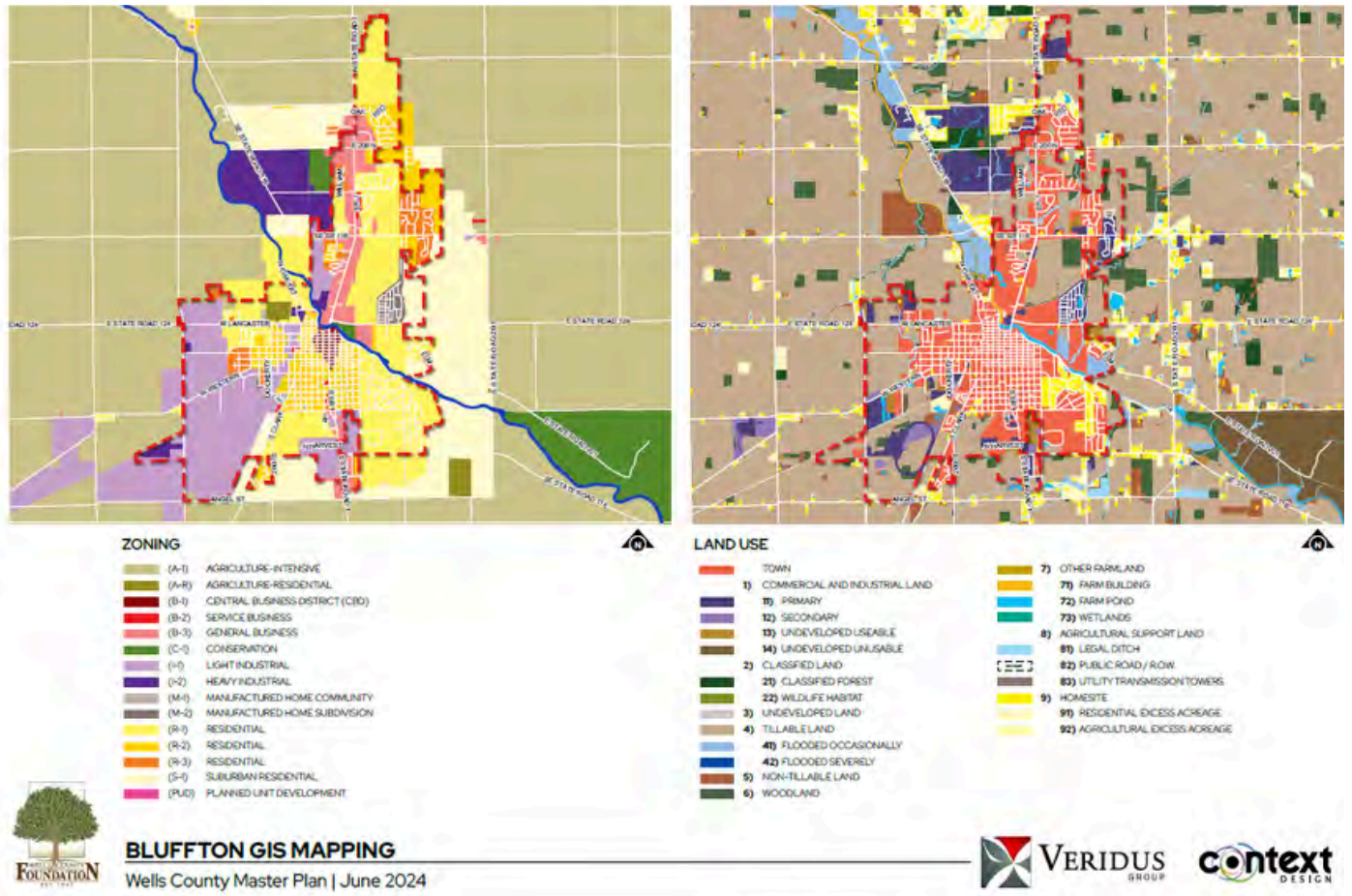


Figure 36: Bluffton Zoning and Land Use Map; Source: Context Design

The Bluffton Zoning and Land Use Map provides a breakdown of how land is currently designated within the city. Bluffton’s zoning framework supports a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses, ensuring a balanced and functional urban environment.

- Agricultural land (A-1, A-R) remains present around the city’s periphery, preserving farmland while allowing for future growth.
- Residential zoning (R-1, R-2, R-3, suburban residential) is concentrated in established neighborhoods and expanding areas, accommodating a range of housing types from single-family homes to higher-density developments.
- Commercial and business districts (B-1, B-2, CBD) are centered in downtown Bluffton and along major corridors, supporting retail, services, and professional offices.
- Industrial zones (I-1, I-2) are strategically located near major transportation routes, facilitating manufacturing and logistics operations.

The land use map further classifies developable land, wetlands, flood-prone areas, and agricultural support lands, providing a comprehensive understanding of how Bluffton's land is utilized and where future growth is feasible.

These maps collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of Bluffton's current conditions, guiding planning efforts to balance economic growth, environmental conservation, and infrastructure investments. As the city expands, strategic zoning policies, floodplain management, and transportation improvements will play a crucial role in ensuring a sustainable and vibrant future for Bluffton and its residents.

ANALYSIS OF VACANT PARCELS IN BLUFFTON

The below map highlights the current distribution of vacant parcels across Bluffton, with concentrations both within the city core and along its periphery. Clusters of undeveloped land are notably present near major roads and rail corridors, suggesting areas with potential for future growth. The future opportunities for these parcels need to align back to the Vision 2035 future land use plan.

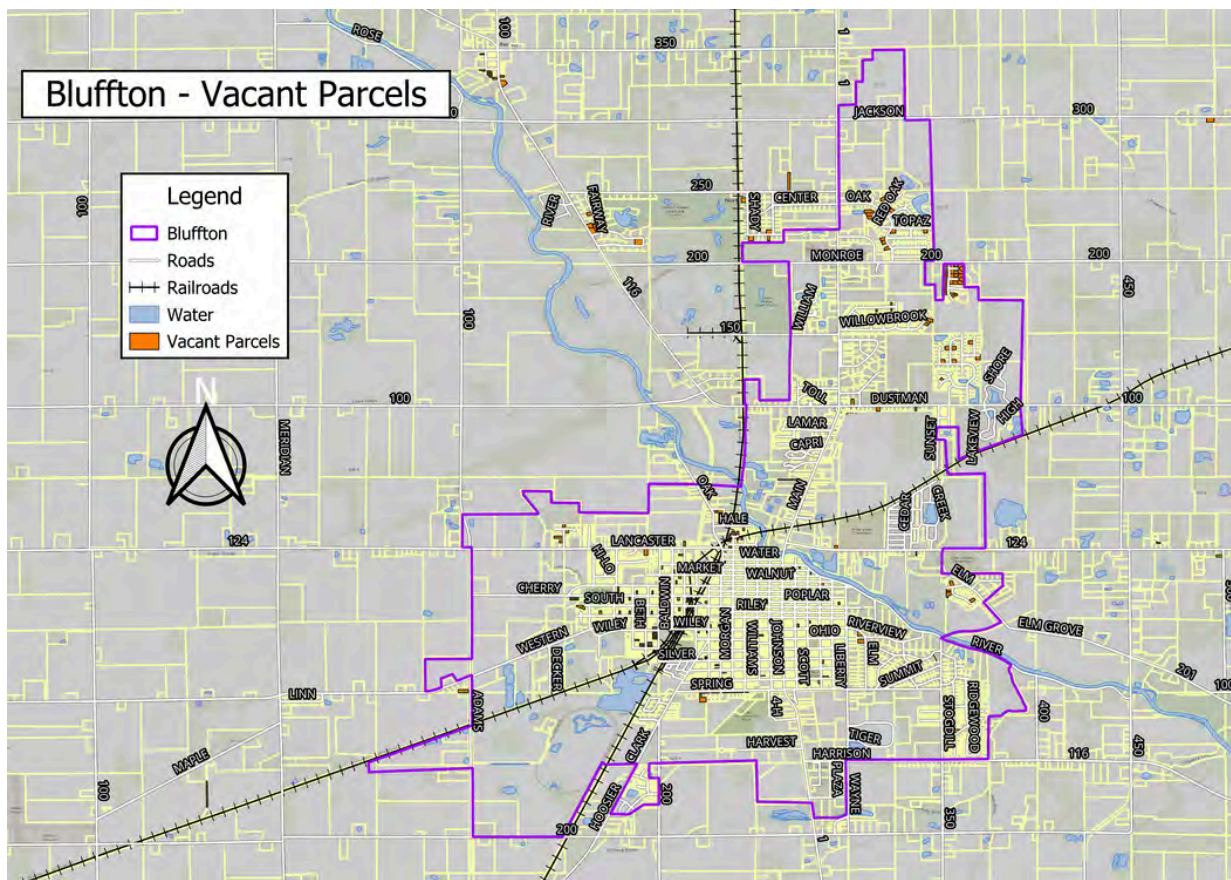


Figure 35: Bluffton Vacant Properties Map; Source: Wells County GIS

Infill parcels within established neighborhoods indicate available land for development without significant infrastructure expansion, while larger vacant areas on the outskirts align with transportation networks. Proximity to water features may present considerations related to flood risk or recreational use. The distribution of these parcels reflects a mix of urban infill potential and outward expansion trends, shaping Bluffton's land-use landscape.

COMMUNITY MEETING

The feedback collected during the Bluffton community meeting provides valuable insights into key priorities and areas of improvement that residents feel are missing in downtown Bluffton. Based on the sticker voting exercise, several themes emerge regarding community needs and priorities.

Key Priorities Identified:

1. Quality Dining and Entertainment Options – This category received a high number of votes, with a mix of high (green) and medium (yellow) priorities, indicating strong demand for additional restaurants, entertainment venues, and nightlife options.
2. Enhanced Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure – A significant number of votes across all priority levels suggest that improving walkability and cycling access is an important consideration for downtown vitality.
3. Downtown Riverfront Development – The community sees the riverfront as an opportunity for growth, with mixed perspectives on priority levels, but a clear interest in leveraging it for development.
4. Public Restrooms and Amenities – This was heavily marked, showing a strong need for additional restroom facilities and other public conveniences to support downtown visitors.

Additional Considerations:

1. Housing Revitalization and Infill received mostly high and medium priority votes, emphasizing the importance of maintaining and expanding residential opportunities in the downtown area.
2. Community Gathering Spaces and Public Art had moderate engagement, suggesting they are seen as desirable but not urgent.
3. Green and Sustainable Initiatives and Historical and Cultural Preservation received fewer overall votes but were still marked as important by some attendees.

Emerging Needs:

One noteworthy addition under "Other" was childcare, indicating that at least some community members feel there is a gap in available childcare services in Bluffton.

Conclusion:

Overall, the feedback highlights a desire for economic vibrancy, infrastructure improvements, and enhanced public amenities in downtown Bluffton. While priorities vary among residents, common themes include the need for more entertainment and dining options, improved public facilities, and greater connectivity for both pedestrians and cyclists. The insights gathered from this meeting will be instrumental in shaping future development strategies and policy decisions.

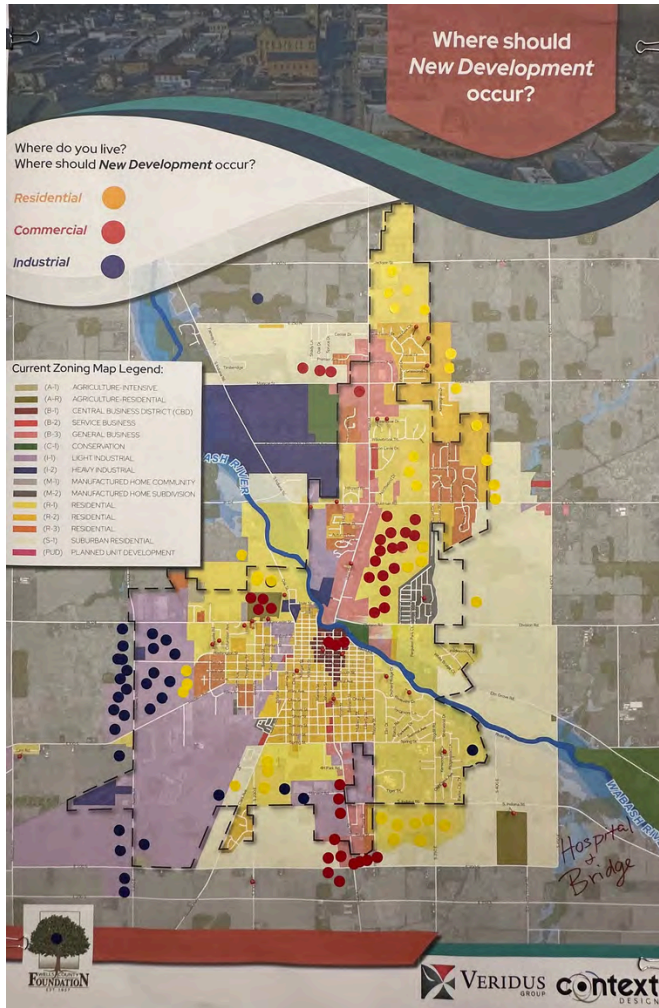


Figure 37: Bluffton Public Meeting Map;
Source: Bluffton Community Meeting



Figure 38: Bluffton Public Meeting Needs;
Source: Bluffton Community Meeting

FUTURE VISION

The City of Bluffton's future vision is rooted in community engagement and stakeholder input, ensuring that its growth reflects the needs and aspirations of residents, businesses, and leaders. Through surveys, public meetings, and discussions, common themes emerged, shaping a set of vision principles that will guide Bluffton's future.

This section outlines Bluffton's key vision principles, which will serve as the foundation for land use planning, infrastructure investments, and economic growth. Bluffton aims to enhance its downtown core, expand housing opportunities, strengthen economic corridors, and improve public amenities. Investments in infrastructure modernization, stormwater management, and transportation enhancements will be critical for ensuring sustainable growth.

These vision principles will guide future policy development, particularly in areas such as land use regulations, expansion of public spaces, and enhancement of community facilities. As the city implements this vision, strategies will be further refined into specific actions, ensuring that Bluffton remains a vibrant, thriving, and connected community within Wells County.

VISION PRINCIPLES: CITY OF BLUFFTON

Bluffton's future is built on a strong foundation of community, connectivity, and quality of life. As the city continues to grow, strategic investments in key areas will ensure a vibrant and sustainable future. A thriving downtown, modern infrastructure, accessible healthcare, and varied housing options will support Bluffton's long-term success while preserving its small-town charm. These vision principles, based on Vision 2035 and community feedback, will guide development, enhance economic opportunities, and improve daily life for residents, ensuring that Bluffton remains a welcoming and resilient community for generations to come.

1

Downtown Bluffton and Riverfront will be a vibrant, connected, mixed-use hub for dining, entertainment, and community engagement while preserving its small-town charm.

2

Bluffton will invest in modern infrastructure to support growth, improve connectivity, and enhance quality of life. Upgrading roads, utilities, and public services will ensure a safe, efficient, and sustainable foundation for the city's future.

3

Bluffton will work to restore, strengthen, and expand access to healthcare and wellness services to ensure residents can obtain essential medical, behavioral, and preventative care.

The City of Bluffton does not directly provide healthcare services. Its role is to convene partners, promote awareness, reduce access barriers, advocate for local capacity, and align public and private resources to support a resilient, accessible healthcare system.

4

Bluffton will strengthen its community fabric through housing, developing a citywide strategy that maximizes value per acre and promotes connectivity and engagement.

5

Bluffton will foster effective and innovative teams within the municipality that develop transparent, efficient, and results-driven processes, measurable in impact and focused on delivering high-quality public services, while delivering a highly valued work experience for its employees.

6

Bluffton will create and sustain vibrant, clean, and accessible spaces that reflect our local flavor and heritage, enrich the quality of life, and serve as welcoming, attractive destinations for residents, businesses, and visitors, offering fun and healthy recreational opportunities for all.

7

Bluffton will build a connected community where participation in events, programs, and shared experiences enhances the quality of life, fosters a lasting sense of belonging, and strengthens Bluffton's sense of pride and trust.

FOCUS AREAS

As the largest city and economic center of Wells County, Bluffton’s growth strategy focuses on sustainable development, infrastructure improvements, and downtown revitalization. The Focus Areas section for Bluffton translates the city’s vision principles into actionable strategies, guiding future land use decisions and public investments.

Key growth priorities for Bluffton include:

- Expanding housing options to accommodate a growing population.
- Enhancing downtown revitalization efforts to support local businesses and attract new development.
- Improving transportation and road infrastructure to enhance mobility and connectivity.
- Upgrading water, sewer, and stormwater management systems to accommodate growth.
- Preserving green spaces and integrating recreational amenities into urban development.

To support these initiatives, the below map outlining designated growth areas and infrastructure investments is included, ensuring that development aligns with Bluffton’s long-term goals. These Focus Areas will guide public and private sector investments, ensuring that Bluffton remains a vibrant and sustainable city.

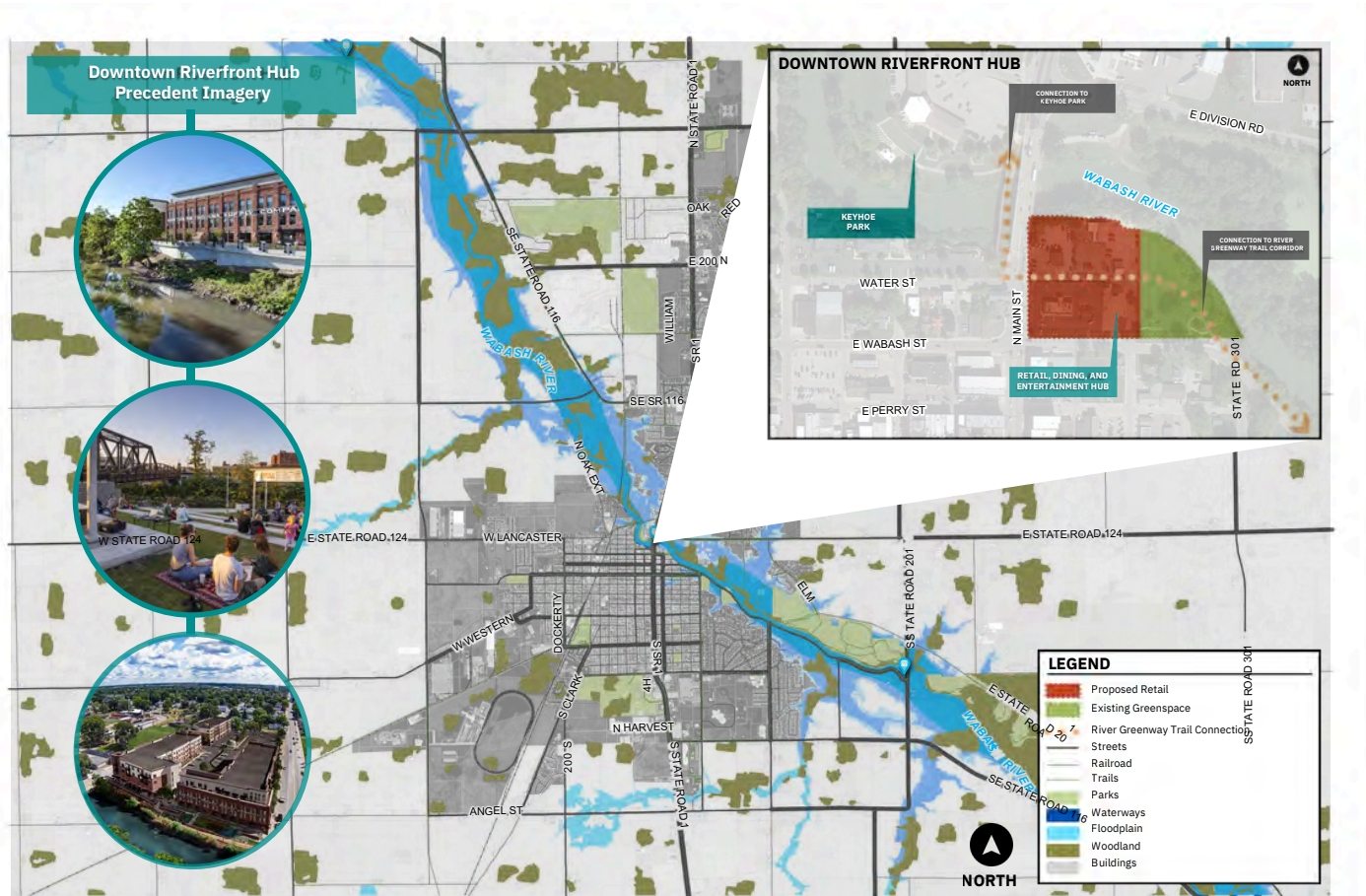


Figure 39: Bluffton Focus Areas; Source: Context Design

Building on these priorities, the Downtown Riverfront Hub emerges as a key opportunity area for revitalization and economic development. As illustrated in the map, this area leverages Bluffton’s connection to the Wabash River, creating a vibrant destination for retail, dining, and entertainment. A key component of this vision is the integration of green space and recreational connectivity, ensuring that development enhances both community engagement and environmental sustainability.

The map highlights planned improvements and connections within the riverfront district, including a proposed retail hub that will serve as a catalyst for downtown activity. Enhanced pedestrian pathways will link the Downtown Riverfront Hub to Keyhoe Park, strengthening access to existing green space and reinforcing Bluffton’s commitment to walkability and outdoor recreation. Additionally, connections to the River Greenway Trail Corridor will provide seamless access for both residents and visitors, fostering an active and accessible downtown environment.

Beyond the riverfront, Bluffton’s broader growth strategy remains focused on expanding housing options, enhancing infrastructure, and supporting business development; all of which will ensure that the city’s long-term vision for sustainable and strategic growth is realized. By aligning investment with these priorities, Bluffton is laying the foundation for a thriving and dynamic community.

IMPLEMENTATION

Bluffton’s implementation framework provides a structured approach to advancing the city’s long-term vision through two comprehensive matrices. These tools will help align resources, track progress, and ensure accountability as Bluffton pursues strategic growth and infrastructure improvements.

The first matrix identifies key priorities and goals, along with:

- Responsible Parties: Local government, community organizations, and private sector partners.
- Potential Funding Sources: Grants, economic development incentives, and infrastructure investments.
- Cost: The estimated total cost for each strategy on a scale of \$ - \$\$\$\$.
- Priority Level: A classification system to help sequence projects effectively.
- Timeline: A realistic timeframe for each initiative to maintain momentum.

The second matrix provides a step-by-step breakdown of each goal, identifying the specific actions necessary to achieve success. By detailing required tasks, roles, and funding strategies, this tool ensures that Bluffton’s goals translate into tangible outcomes.

These matrices will serve as a roadmap for the city’s future, guiding project coordination, economic development efforts, and infrastructure investments to create a stronger, more connected Bluffton.

CITY OF BLUFFTON VISION 1

Downtown Bluffton and Riverfront will be a vibrant, connected, mixed-use hub for dining, entertainment, and community engagement while preserving its small-town charm.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
1	Obtain architectural renderings and engineering cost estimates for all applicable proposed projects for this vision statement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Council • County Commissioners • County Council • Redevelopment Commission • Parks Board • Bluffton NOW! • Community Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund • Tax Increment Financing • State/Federal Grants • Community Foundation 	\$	Highest	0 - 1 Year
2	Redevelop the Eastside Riverfront into a mixed-use district that serves as a grand gateway into downtown Bluffton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Developer(s) • Land Trust • City Council • County Commissioners • County Council • Redevelopment Commission • Parks Board • Bluffton NOW! • Community Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Equity • General Fund • Tax Increment Financing • Tax Credits • State/Federal Grants • Community Foundation • Philanthropy 	\$\$\$	High	2 - 5 Years
3	The Northside Riverfront Strategy strengthens recreation, connectivity, and community spaces by upgrading amenities, improving trails, and enhancing trailheads.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Council • County Commissioners • County Council • Redevelopment Commission • Parks Board • Community Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund • Tax Increment Financing • State/Federal Grants • Community Foundation • Philanthropy 	\$\$	High	2 - 7 Years

Cost: \$ = \$1M or less | \$\$ = \$1M - \$5M | \$\$\$ = \$5M - \$15M | | \$\$\$\$ = \$15M and up

CITY OF BLUFFTON VISION 1

Downtown Bluffton and Riverfront will be a vibrant, connected, mixed-use hub for dining, entertainment, and community engagement while preserving its small-town charm.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
4	Redevelop the Westside Riverfront into a mixed-residential area featuring integrated trails and inviting open spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Developer(s) • Land Trust • City Council • County Commissioners • Redevelopment Commission • County Council • Parks Board • Community Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Equity • General Fund • Tax Increment Financing • Tax Credits • State/Federal Grants • Community Foundation • Philanthropy 	\$\$\$\$	High	2 - 9 Years
5	Continue developing downtown into a destination featuring local shops, restaurants, upper-level residences, interactive open spaces, cultural art, and vibrant community activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Developer(s) • Land Trust • City Council • County Commissioners • County Council • Redevelopment Commission • Parks Board • Bluffton NOW! • Community Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Equity • General Fund • Tax Increment Financing • Tax Credits • State/Federal Grants • Community Foundation • Philanthropy 	\$\$\$	High	2 - 12 Years

Cost: \$ = \$1M or less | \$\$ = \$1M - \$5M | \$\$\$ = \$5M - \$15M | | \$\$\$\$ = \$15M and up

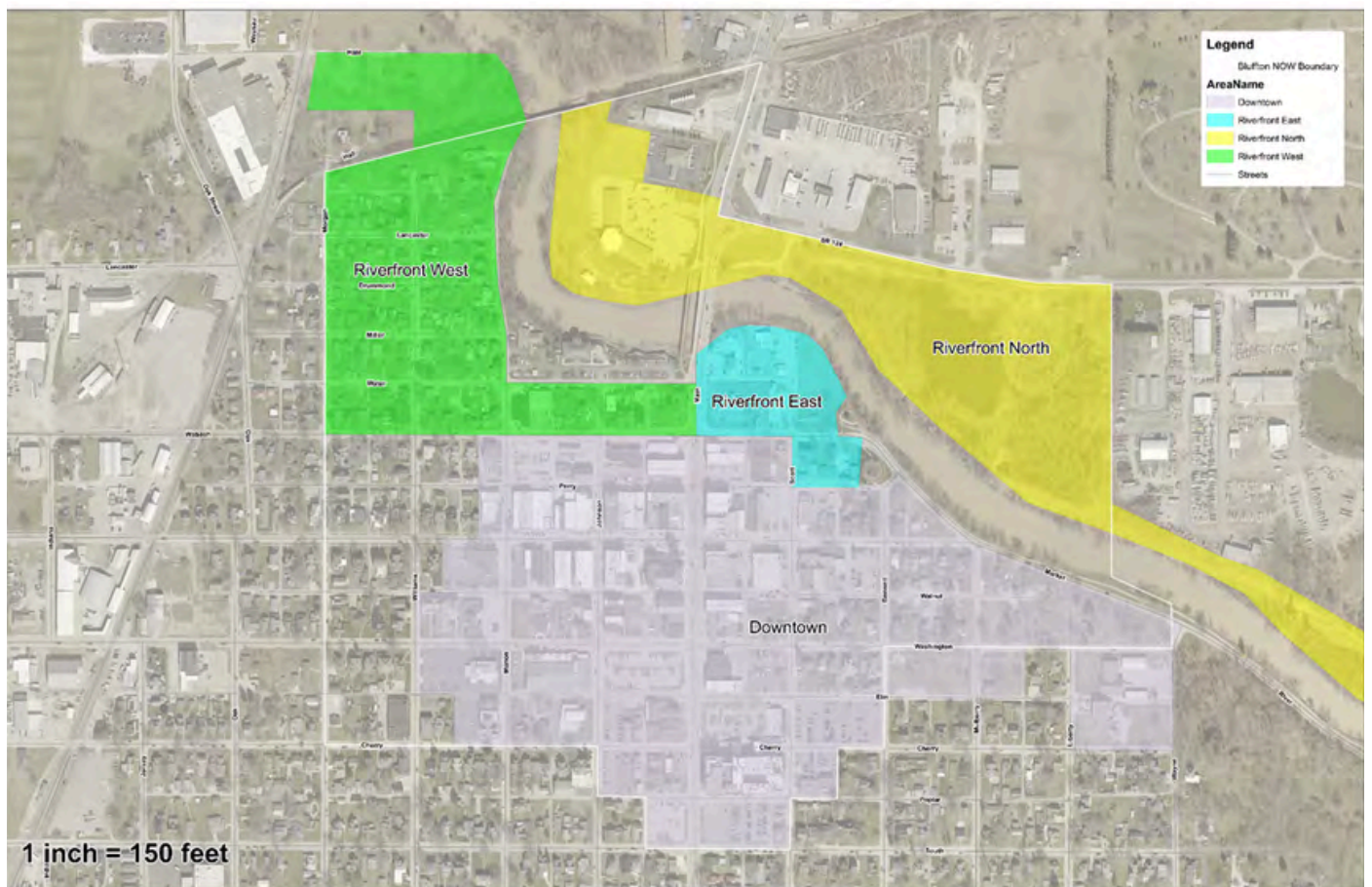
CITY OF BLUFFTON VISION 1

Downtown Bluffton and Riverfront will be a vibrant, connected, mixed-use hub for dining, entertainment, and community engagement while preserving its small-town charm.

Vision 1 Proposed Timeline

Vision 1 - Timeline												
Strategy	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Obtain architectural renderings and engineering cost estimates for all Vision 1 projects												
Riverfront East: mixed-use district gateway to downtown												
Riverfront North: Upgrading North Kehoe Park, improving trails, and enhancing trailheads												
Riverfront West: mixed-residential area featuring integrated trails and inviting open spaces												
Downtown Revitalization: open spaces, cultural art, and activities												

Vision 1 Proposed Map



Vision 1, Strategy 1: Obtain architectural renderings and engineering cost estimates for all applicable proposed projects.

Objectives	Tactics
Professional renderings of potential projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFP/RFQ process to hire an architect to provide renderings • Create a team to work with the selected architect through the process • Use our historic downtown and neighborhood design, and the natural appeal of the river as design guidelines
Professional cost estimates of potential projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFP/RFQ process to hire an engineer to provide cost estimates based on the architectural renderings • Work with key stakeholders to determine any project red flags • Create a team to work with the selected engineer through the process
Market concepts to prospective donors and investors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create website • Create a multifaceted social media campaign • Hold public meetings • Develop relationships with donors and foundations • Develop relationships and match prospective leads with potential investors and developers.
Prepare for approving projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a plan to make sites ready for development • Create clear approval procedures • Align procedures with best practices • Remove development roadblocks

Vision 1, Strategy 2: Redevelop the Eastside Riverfront into a mixed-use district that serves as a grand gateway into downtown Bluffton.

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Develop mixed-use development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with a private developer to acquire properties within the Eastside Riverfront area and find suitable locations for existing businesses • Work with NIPSCO to move or buffer gas line equipment • Develop a grand mixed-use development
<p>Develop an urban riverfront-style park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an urban-style riverfront park project that surrounds the mixed-use development and parking areas. • Develop a multi-use Indoor park/sports area • Develop lighting in the area to promote pedestrian safety
<p>Develop a gateway to downtown feature</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a gateway sign for downtown Bluffton as people cross the Crosby Bridge • Light up the Crosby and Pedestrian Bridge
<p>Develop the official connection between the Interurban Trail and the River Greenway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Trail / Sidewalk improvements connecting our existing trail system • Develop safe crossing of Main Street through innovative design or mural crossings • Install Wayfinding Signage

Vision 1, Strategy 3: The Northside Riverfront Strategy strengthens recreation, connectivity, and community spaces by upgrading amenities, improving trails, and enhancing trailheads.

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Improve the north section of Kehoe Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deck / Restaurant behind Dutch Mill Plaza • Public Events / Family Events / Food Trucks • Lighting under the bridge / Riverfront Lighting • Permanent Mini Golf • Install Large Swings, Firepits, Play Area, and Riverside Activities for families • Connect the north riverside trail throughout Kehoe Park.
<p>Develop the north riverside trail</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the existing trail for walking with compacted stone and get the necessary easements from the three private landowners • Improve the mountain bike trail • Determine a permanent maintenance solution for trails • Install a pedestrian bridge over the Paxson and Johnson Ditches • Install historical signage • Install historical art
<p>Develop Trailheads</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the existing grass parking area at the southeast corner of the Main Street and SR 124 (Division Road) Intersection. • Install a kayak launch near the Main Street bridge • Improve the existing grass parking area at the curve on Elm Grove Rd by the Paxson Ditch • Improve connections to existing trails • Install wayfinding signage

Vision 1, Strategy 4: Redevelop the Westside Riverfront into a mixed-residential area featuring integrated trails and inviting open spaces.

Objectives	Tactics
<p>A mixed-residential redevelopment that seamlessly blends into downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with a private developer to acquire properties within the westside riverfront area • Develop apartments with riverfront views of the Wabash River with a private developer • Develop duplexes and single-family owner-occupied residential properties along the back side of the area. • Improve the view of the river through the clearing of invasive species and other bank improvements • Discuss options for a small commercial area within the development
<p>Develop the extension of the Bluffton Greenway to the Bluffton Cemetery property, add a kayak access, and create additional open space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a green space alongside the residential development • Develop a trail with a trail head at the residential development and the old Bluffton Cemetery property. • Develop a kayak launch at the end of Hale St

Vision 1, Strategy 5: Continue developing downtown into a destination featuring local shops, restaurants, upper-level residences, interactive open spaces, cultural art, and vibrant community activities.

Objectives	Tactics
Complete Pathways Project & Improve Public Parking Lots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Alley 3 in the Downtown Pathways Project • Develop Alley 5 in the Downtown Pathways Project • Develop landscaping features and sidewalks at each downtown public parking lot • Create consistent wayfinding signage for public parking lots • Develop permanent maintenance plans and funding for these spaces
Advance the redevelopment of the showcase downtown properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully activate key buildings in downtown, near Parlor City Plaza and Main Street, to promote Parlor City's charm. • Utilize the Community Reinvestment Program to promote private investment • Partner with PAGO and the Land Trust to work towards this goal • Create a downtown TIF to support projects
Work towards 100% occupancy of downtown buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the redevelopment of vacant downtown buildings and underutilized properties • Promote the preservation and activation of historic structures (including local government-owned properties) • Utilize the Community Reinvestment Program to promote private investment • Partner with the Land Trust to work towards this goal • Create a downtown TIF to support projects • Work with the private owner to develop the Spiral Loft project

Vision 1, Strategy 5: Continue developing downtown into a destination featuring local shops, restaurants, upper-level residences, interactive open spaces, cultural art, and vibrant community activities.

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Create a people-friendly commercial environment in downtown.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the ability for pedestrians and cyclists to cross Main St • Promote consistent events and activities to drive activation in downtown. • Tie events together to make active days • Develop outdoor eating and gathering opportunities within downtown • Develop art and cultural items throughout downtown • Promote the Parlor City Refreshment District to boost downtown growth. • Further develop streetscape improvements in downtown using the Downtown Bluffton Streetscape Plan • Develop pedestrian-only spaces within downtown • Create a downtown business advocates group • Develop an Indoor Park
<p>Develop pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in downtown.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do a study on Main St to improve walkability • Install Mural Crosswalks • Install benches, outdoor tables, bike racks, security cameras, and lighting • Consider making more downtown areas pedestrian- and cyclist-only

CITY OF BLUFFTON VISION 2

Bluffton will invest in modern infrastructure to support growth, improve connectivity, and enhance quality of life. Upgrading roads, utilities, and public services will ensure a safe, efficient, and sustainable foundation for the city’s future.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
1	Infrastructure Modernization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials Board of Works Utility Depts Economic Development Area Plan Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilities General Fund Grants TIF Public Private Partnerships 	\$\$\$\$	High	1 - 10 Years
2	Urban Densification and Revitalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials Private Developers Utility & Street Depts Utility Depts Parks Dept Economic Development Bluffton NOW! Area Plan Commission Building / Code Enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilities General Fund Grants TIF Public Private Partnerships Non-Profits Philanthropy 	\$\$\$	High	1 - 10 Years
3	Pathways and Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials Street Dept Parks Dept INDOT Wells County Trails Bluffton NOW! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Fund Grants TIF Public Private Partnerships Philanthropy 	\$\$\$	High	1 - 10 Years
4	Strategic Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials Department Heads Board of Works Infrastructure Committee City Engineer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Fund Grants TIF Public Private Partnerships 	\$\$\$	High	1 - 10 Years

Cost: \$ = \$1M or less | \$\$ = \$1M - \$5M | \$\$\$ = \$5M - \$15M | | \$\$\$\$ = \$15M and up

Vision 2, Strategy 1: Infrastructure Modernization

Objectives	Tactics
Power Capacity, Redundancy, and Modernization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cherry Street Substation (redundancy and capacity) • MAJ Substation (redundancy and capacity) • Identify partnership opportunities with other projects for electrical distribution to be moved underground in the downtown area (modernization) • Modify city standards to require underground electric for future development • Bluffton will welcome alternative energy solutions. As technology advances and market forces affect residents, we will use available solutions to serve our citizens best. In the near term, our efforts will focus on education and awareness.
Wastewater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the life of the sanitary sewer and reduce I & I, accomplish this through incremental lining projects, 10 miles over 10 years (Collection) • North Main Extension, 2026 – 2028, 1.5 miles (Collection) • Pump Station Rehabilitation, 1 pump station every 3 years (Collection) • Plant 2 Valve Replacement, 2025 – 2026 (Plant) • Dewatering Facility (Plant)
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well 10 (Poplar Grove) • Study for Well 11 • Indiana Street Water Tower replacement or refurbishment • Lead pipe remediation, lead-free by 2037 • Water Main replacements: 1-2% per year over the next 10 years. • Address calcification complaints
Storm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a stormwater management plan in compliance with MS4 requirements. • Establish and implement a stormwater fee for the upgrading and maintenance of stormwater infrastructure. Funds generated from this item could address the need for a new Maintenance Garage.

Vision 2, Strategy 2: Urban Densification and Revitalization

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Promote development within city limits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and prioritize vacant or underused properties for redevelopment to enhance land-use efficiency • Adopt zoning policies that support infill, mixed-use, and higher-density development • Identify development partnership opportunities • North Farm Feasibility Study
<p>Improve older neighborhood attractiveness and livability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement incentive programs for home renovations and downtown building improvements. Continue strong support of the community reinvestment program • Create streamlined processes for transferring vacant lots to new property owners. • Focus on eliminating blight and increasing enforcement of local ordinances.
<p>Develop pedestrian-friendly downtown spaces that encourage economic activity and community gathering.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with Bluffton NOW! To complete the downtown pathways project • Partner with Bluffton NOW! In the efforts to beautify, maintain, and increase visibility of our public parking lots • Partner with Bluffton NOW! In the efforts to develop the Johnson Street Walking Mall and update the Downtown Streetscape • Develop a downtown parking structure • Create a Welcome to Downtown Bluffton Sign / Archway • Develop a skatepark / pump track • Integrate green infrastructure (trees, stormwater features) into redevelopment plans.

Vision 2, Strategy 3: Pathways and Connectivity

Objectives	Tactics
Construct 5 miles of multi-use trails by 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a multi-use trail connecting the interurban trail to Bluffton Woods along SR 124 • Develop a multi-use trail connecting the interurban trail to the YMCA • Develop a multi-use trail from Bluffton Woods to the River Greenway • Support the development of the Poka-Bache Connector Trail heading north to Ossian
Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity across key city locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with schools to develop safe trail corridors and educational routes through the use of existing sidewalk maintenance and improvement programs (HSIP Grant) • Coordinate with INDOT and local agencies on sidewalk extensions on Main St between Spring St and State St • Coordinate with local agencies on sidewalk extensions on Lancaster St to Adams St • Develop a comprehensive signage and wayfinding plan for trails and public spaces. • Establish a central pathway system connecting parks, downtown, and neighborhoods. • Install bike lanes and pedestrian-friendly street designs. One-way roads?
Enhance street accessibility and safety for all users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address Street build-up from repeated overlay (sidewalks and street at the same level) • Streets with parking on one side only • Pursue a city-county partnership for the second bridge

Vision 2, Strategy 3: Pathways and Connectivity

Objectives	Tactics
Enhance digital infrastructure and internet connectivity citywide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance digital infrastructure and internet connectivity citywide
Review and Update Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and Update City Construction Standards

Vision 2, Strategy 4: Strategic Resource Management

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Develop a robust grant acquisition strategy to expand funding capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a dedicated Grant Writer to identify and secure external funding sources.
<p>Optimize development and utility fees for sustainable revenue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a City Engineer for accountability and monitoring • Conduct a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis for infrastructure projects. • Develop a multi-year capital investment plan that aligns with projected growth and maintenance needs. Establish a cross-department Infrastructure Committee for coordination. • Publish an annual Infrastructure Progress Report for public transparency. • Review system development fees. • Develop incentive programs for utility and infrastructure upgrades.
<p>Establish Infrastructure Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a long-term infrastructure improvement plan to coordinate investments and timelines. • Review and update policies annually to reflect changing conditions and community feedback

CITY OF BLUFFTON VISION 3

Bluffton will work to restore, strengthen, and expand access to healthcare and wellness services to ensure residents can obtain essential medical, behavioral, and preventative care.

The City of Bluffton does not directly provide healthcare services. Its role is to convene partners, promote awareness, reduce access barriers, advocate for local capacity, and align public and private resources to support a resilient, accessible healthcare system.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
1	Strengthen Preventative Care Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials City Staff Health Care Providers Local Not-for-Profits Mobile Service Providers News Health Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Local Government Grants Philanthropy 	\$	Modearte High	3 - 9 Years
2	Expand Mental, Behavioral, and Aging Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials City Staff Local Schools Health Care Providers Council on Aging Health Department Wells County Mental Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Local Government Grants Philanthropy 	\$	High	3 - 9 Years
3	Improve Healthcare Communication & Community Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials City Staff Health Care Providers Health Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Local Government Grants Philanthropy 	\$	Modearte High	2 - 9 Years
4	Promote Community Wellness, Youth Programs, and Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials City Staff YMCA Youth Sports Leagues Drug Task Force Local Schools Law Enforcement Emergency Management Recovery Organizations Health Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Government Grants Philanthropy 	\$	Modearte High	3 - 9 Years

Cost: \$ = \$1M or less | \$\$ = \$1M - \$5M | \$\$\$ = \$5M - \$15M | | \$\$\$\$ = \$15M and up

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	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
5	Sustain and Strengthen EMS Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials City Staff Health Care Providers Emergency Management Wells County EMS Local Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMS Income Private Local Government Grants Philanthropy 	\$	High	1-9 Years
6	Protect and Transition Critical Hospital-Based Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials City Staff Health Care Providers Emergency Management Wells County EMS Area Plan Commission Health Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Local Government Grants Philanthropy 	\$	High	1-9 Years

Cost: \$ = \$1M or less | \$\$ = \$1M - \$5M | \$\$\$ = \$5M - \$15M | | \$\$\$\$ = \$15M and up

Vision 3, Strategy 1: Strengthen Preventative Care Access

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Increase community awareness and utilization of existing preventative care services by 2027, measured through publication reach, digital engagement, and participation in local screening events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate digital, print, and event-based promotion of preventative services available locally. • Maintain an annually updated directory of medical, dental, and vision providers and coordinate the provision of this information for local publication (e.g., News-Banner “Outreach Wells” directory) and to the Facebook Wells County resource page. • Maintain a prominent link on the City of Bluffton website to access the current listing of local medical providers, practice information, and mental health services. • Ensure outreach materials are accessible to Medicaid, Medicare, uninsured, and underinsured populations.
<p>Expand access to preventative screenings for underserved populations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with providers and community organizations to host recurring screening events. • Recruit mobile screening services. • Pursue grants and private funding to support free or low-cost screenings. • Evaluate the feasibility of a public-private community health assistance fund.

Vision 3, Strategy 2: Expand Mental, Behavioral, and Aging Health Services

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Improve coordination and awareness of mental and behavioral health services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a centralized resource guide for behavioral health services. • Support school-based mental health education and referral pathways. • Clearly communicate service availability and limitations.
<p>Evaluate feasibility of expanded behavioral health service capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess community demand for additional services, including targeted services for veterans. • Engage regional healthcare systems on potential service expansion. • Identify workforce gaps and monitor funding opportunities.
<p>Address aging, in-home care, and respite service gaps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess service availability and utilization. • Coordinate with the Council on Aging and service providers. • Use demographic trends to guide service planning.
<p>Support youth mental health and suicide prevention efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with schools to provide speakers, programs, and suicide awareness resources. • Offer free booth space at community events (e.g. Street Fair) to showcase mental health providers and services. • Coordinate with churches and youth organizations to expand youth opportunities.

Vision 3, Strategy 3: Improve Healthcare Communication & Community Confidence

Objectives	Tactics
Establish consistent, transparent healthcare communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publish regular healthcare features and updates.• Maintain an annual healthcare services guide.• Designate responsibility for healthcare communications within City administration.

Vision 3, Strategy 4: Promote Community Wellness, Youth Programs, and Prevention

Objectives	Tactics
Expand youth wellness and recreation programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with community organizations to host youth programs. • Support YMCA and youth sports leagues. • Host community wellness events.
Strengthen recovery and substance abuse prevention efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain City participation on the Drug Task Force. • Coordinate with schools, EMS, and law enforcement. • Distribute centralized recovery resources.

Vision 3, Strategy 5: Sustain and Strengthen EMS Services

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Support EMS systems that preserve local control, rapid response times, and workforce stability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for governance models prioritizing local responsiveness. • Explore City-County funding strategies.
<p>Strengthen EMS workforce recruitment and retention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote EMS career pathways through schools and training programs. • Support staffing strategies that meet recommended coverage levels.
<p>Evaluate expansion of community paramedicine services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore post-discharge home visit programs. • Evaluate potential reductions in hospital readmissions.

Vision 3, Strategy 6: Protect and Transition Critical Hospital-Based Services

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Support the long-term viability of emergency and inpatient services in Bluffton through active monitoring, coordination, and alignment of City-supported healthcare initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish formal, recurring executive-level communication between City leadership and hospital system leadership to monitor utilization trends, service risks, and strategic priorities. • Advocate for Bluffton’s hospital as a strategic regional asset by highlighting EMS integration, community paramedicine potential, senior population growth, and reduced transport times. • Align City-supported initiatives (EMS coordination, community paramedicine, wellness programming, discharge follow-up) to reduce avoidable readmissions and uncompensated care. • Monitor emergency department utilization, EMS diversion patterns, and inpatient admission trends in coordination with healthcare and public safety partners to identify emerging risks to local service viability. • Monitor and pursue eligibility for state and federal rural hospital stabilization and healthcare resilience programs.
<p>Prepare contingency pathways to maintain emergency and urgent care access if inpatient beds or emergency services are reduced, reconfigured, or where patients are routinely redirected to other facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate alternative care models that could operate within the existing hospital footprint or nearby, including freestanding emergency departments, 24/7 urgent care with EMS co-location, or short-stay observation units. • Coordinate with EMS leadership to model transport, response-time, and staffing impacts under reduced-service scenarios. • Identify zoning, permitting, and infrastructure barriers in advance to enable rapid service conversion if required. • Maintain an updated inventory of regional inpatient capacity and transfer relationships.
<p>Preserve healthcare employment, clinical presence, and community confidence during periods of service instability or transition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with healthcare partners to retain outpatient, diagnostic, behavioral health, and specialty services locally regardless of inpatient service changes. • Support workforce transition strategies that encourage healthcare professionals to remain in Bluffton. • Implement a proactive, transparent communication framework to address community concerns during periods of service instability or transition.

CITY OF BLUFFTON VISION 4

Bluffton will strengthen its community fabric through housing, developing a citywide strategy that maximizes value per acre and promotes connectivity and engagement.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
1	Develop a first-time homebuyers strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials Lending Institutions Insurance Agencies Realtors Consultants GIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local State Grants 	\$	High	0 - 24 Months
2	Work to promote infill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials Wells County APC Housing Programs Developers Building Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local State Grants Private 	\$	High	1 - 9 Years
3	Diversify the types of residences built	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials Wells County APC Developers Building Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local State Grants Private 	\$	Medium	2 - 9 Years
4	Strengthen neighborhood identity and pride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials Wells County APC Developers Neighborhood Groups Non-Profits Building Department Creative Arts Bluffton NOW! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Philanthropy Grants Private 	\$	Medium	2 - 9 Years
5	Redevelop key blighted areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials Wells County APC Developers Building Department Creative Arts Bluffton NOW! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Philanthropy Grants Private 	\$\$\$	Medium	2 - 9 Years

Cost: \$ = \$1M or less | \$\$ = \$1M - \$5M | \$\$\$ = \$5M - \$15M | | \$\$\$\$ = \$15M and up

Vision 4, Strategy 1: Develop a first-time homebuyers strategy

Objectives	Tactics
Expand access to homeownership opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize Club 720 to roll out assessments and surveys with employers to identify employee housing needs. • Create an employer engagement and talent retention plan to help build a local buyer pipeline. • Identify gaps in daycare availability for young parents.
Increase collaboration with local lenders to support new buyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with local banks, credit unions, and lenders to market and promote DPA (Down Payment Assistance) and construction loans. • Coordinate an event hosted by the Mayor to rally financial institutions and promote first-time buyer programs. - Offer Indiana Housing Education, USDA loan guidance, and local financial literacy workshops.
Research the feasibility of creating Housing Support Zones in Bluffton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the feasibility of creating Housing Support Zones in Bluffton. • Develop a micro-loan program (36-month, second-loan model) to support down payments. • Support and expand programs like OOR and NeighborLink to assist with property cleanup and maintenance.

Vision 4, Strategy 2: Work to promote infill

Objectives	Tactics
Encourage Infill and renovation projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a city-led marketing campaign to promote infill opportunities. • Create programs that incentivize new constructions of single-family homes in Housing Support Zones
Establish clear density and design standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with city officials to draft ordinances limiting density (no more than a duplex per lot). • Require garage inclusion for duplexes. Develop density ordinances that balance parking and green space.
Create a structure to facilitate lot redevelopment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a city-supported 501(c)(3) or committee to acquire and renovate homes for resale. Model after Kendallville’s Kendallville Restorations, focusing on restoring 1-4 family properties. • Explore partnerships with local contractors and investors for sustainable redevelopment.

Vision 4, Strategy 3: Diversify types of residences built

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Support a balanced housing mix for all income levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor housing inventory to ensure proportional growth across housing types. • Maintain strong landlord-to-ownership ratios.
<p>Maintain a database of landlords, distinguishing between local and out-of-state owners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish or evaluate an 80/20 ownership-to-rental ratio ordinance. Assess enforcement mechanisms and penalties for ordinance violations. • Right of refusal on home sales, offering the home as an owner-occupied purchase before investors.
<p>Implement landlord and tenant checklists at lease signing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable the Building Department to inspect and require maintenance for deteriorating rentals. • Require landlords to assume responsibility for unpaid city utilities within a set timeframe. If the tenant moves out and is delinquent, send notice to the landlord if not paid by 45 days. Accounts need to be at a 0 balance within 90 days.

Vision 4, Strategy 4: Strengthen neighborhood identity and pride

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Identify and Name Neighborhoods, Create Districts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide grants and fundraising support for neighborhood entryway signage (e.g., Willowbrook model). Use historical streets or plat names to define neighborhood boundaries.
<p>Foster collaboration among neighborhood groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study models from Fishers and South Bend for neighborhood cohort programs. Encourage community associations and Non-Profits (The Dream Center & Habitat) to coordinate cleanups and beautification events. • Include the City and nonprofits at each event to support volunteers and explore possible infrastructure improvements.
<p>Strong, well-named districts can build welcoming, desirable growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Riverbend District - Near the river with natural spaces, enhancing the beauty of our natural landscape. • Bluffton Arts & Living District- highlights the arts center, great for branding a new Arts Center, and the younger generation. • The Townline District- A contemporary neighborhood name with new townhome developments near shopping areas. • Wells Park District- Strong, civic-minded area near the Wells community pool and parks. • The Parlor City District- to emphasize the downtown living with lofts, apartments, and a downtown vibe.

Vision 4, Strategy 5: Redevelop key blighted areas

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Redevelop South Hospital/ Blighted Site into Modern Townhomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFP out to developers and provide grants and fundraising support for the newly developed District. Encourage the community surrounding this new district to be involved in the planning process.
<p>Create a district, e.g., the Wells Park District</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictures below demonstrate the types of townhomes that are desirable. It is important to redevelop this space with parks in mind. • Adding the Creative Arts Center to this area would create a new destination, drive traffic through downtown, and enable future redevelopment on the South end of town.
<p>Encourage compliance with ordinances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junk ordinances clean up so we have no GREY areas, clear and consistent expectations • Parking Ordinance: residents must park on solid surfaces, i.e., pavement or stone. • Put the trash and recycling bins up when collection is done.



CITY OF BLUFFTON VISION 5

Bluffton will foster effective and innovative teams within the municipality that develop transparent, efficient, and results-driven processes, measurable in impact and focused on delivering high-quality public services, while delivering a highly valued work experience for its employees.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
1	Enhance team collaboration and leadership development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Staff • Elected Officials • Utility Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government • Utilities • Grants 	\$\$	Medium	18 - 36 Months
2	Establish the definition of high-quality public services in Bluffton and work to provide them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Staff • Elected Officials • Utility Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government • Utilities 	\$\$	Medium - High	6 - 18 Months
3	Optimize processes for transparency, efficiency, and measurable impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Staff • Elected Officials • Utility Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government • Utilities 	\$	Medium	12 - 24 Months
4	Develop a positive and rewarding work environment for City staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Staff • Elected Officials • Utility Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government • Utilities • Grants 	\$	Medium - High	6 - 18 Months

Cost: \$ = \$1M or less | \$\$ = \$1M - \$5M | \$\$\$ = \$5M - \$15M | \$\$\$\$ = \$15M and up

Vision 5, Strategy 1: Enhance team collaboration and leadership development

Objectives	Tactics
Strengthen leadership capabilities across all municipal departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement required management leadership training • Develop mentorship programs • Establish an onboarding program for new managers • Identify future leaders (strengths, weaknesses, talents, skills) • Develop pathways of learning and growth
Develop a Team-Centric Culture that fosters innovation and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a utility coordination program to share future projects across departments to aid in planning • Hold monthly/quarterly team-building activities to build relationships across departmental lines (who leads this?) • Bring in someone from outside to lead training and/or team-building (lunch & learn) • Hold multi-departmental meetings (quarterly/semi-annually/annually) to explore ways to share resources across departments
Cultivate an environment of continuous learning and adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send staff to local/regional trade shows and trainings • Develop and maintain standard operating procedures (SOPs) for critical functions in each department • Offer additional training and classes to interested employees • Collaborate with other like-departments in our region to share knowledge (host round tables, vendor trainings, etc) • Departmental “Rodeos” for hands-on demonstration/training events

Vision 5, Strategy 2: Establish the definition of high-quality public services in Bluffton and work to achieve providing them.

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Educate the public on what services our organization does (and doesn't) provide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer "open houses" at a large facility with tables/displays set up for the public to come talk with departments and learn what we do. • Website – spotlight on a different department each month • Mayor's Podcast "spotlights" on city departments/functions • Continue newsletters from the Mayor's Office • QR codes to send people to a list of events • Expand Bluffton "event" calendar (consider broader community scope)
<p>Educate and engage residents in the municipal process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a survey to indicate the best communication channels with citizens • Communicate city "wins" and achievements – how much more did we get done and at what cost/savings • Community surveys (run by outside company?) to gauge satisfaction in specified areas • Improve live-stream access on website (currently too many clicks to drill down) • Expand 311's ability to use AI to guide non-emergency callers using the FAQ knowledge base
<p>Establish how to measure if we are, in fact, providing high-quality public services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a channel for feedback (satisfaction or not) (TRASH CANS?!?!) • Establish response time metrics and gauge citizen perception of satisfaction • Establish a work order management system (to track projects, completion rates, etc.) • Establish a service request management system (expand the 311 system)

Vision 5, Strategy 3: Optimize processes for transparency, efficiency, and measurable impact.

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Increase Departmental Transparency (How do we tell citizens what we did/are doing?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and communicate clear goals and expectations • Establish desired levels of service for each department • Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) • Create ways to track and assess KPIs
<p>Increase Departmental Efficiencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish baselines of current service levels / KPIs • As teams across the organization identify opportunities for process improvements • Work together to improve processes • Establish a method to track the value of the improvements (time/money/resources) • Provide monthly productivity/efficiency results so all staff in departments can see them.
<p>Develop Community impact metrics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify community goals/opportunities – surveys, pictures, how to gauge public opinion/input, QR CODES!!!! • Establish baselines of new and existing impact/goals we wish to maintain • Work to achieve/sustain those goals • Identify methods of measuring impact and review results quarterly – surveys, pictures, how to gauge public opinion/input, QR CODES!!!! • Install people counters to track increases in facility usage.

Vision 5, Strategy 4: Develop a positive and rewarding work environment for City staff.

Objectives	Tactics
Attract and retain skilled staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an actual Human Resources department and/or designated resource • Review job descriptions to ensure accuracy and effectiveness • Cast a wider net in the applicant pool (Indeed, ZipRecruiter, etc) • Establish an onboarding program for new employees • Conduct annual “stay” interview to identify potential flight risks • Paid birthday off • Surprise afternoon off • Consider improved maternity (and/or paternity) leave plans/options • Lunch is provided for a different department each month • Food trucks at City Hall or on the Plaza • Years of Service Awards/Recognition
Empower, recognize, and engage employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anonymous suggestion box • Employee surveys • Department heads can establish criteria for “above and beyond” and recommend or allow peer recommendations for “spot bonuses” (i.e., \$25 chamber bucks) • See above, could be citizen-initiated too • Family-friendly event nights (i.e., movie night, bingo night, Vegas night, holiday turkey/ham donations) • Win Lunch with the Mayor (employee nominations)
Provide an environment where employees grow and thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach employees on how to establish and maintain a healthy well-being • Routine positive feedback and encouragement from managers and peers • Productivity Bonuses (boost productivity and morale) • Earn time off (i.e., an afternoon a month) as a reward for exceptional service • Allow 1-2 mental health days per year, which must be used during the specified time range • Consider establishing a “sick bank” for employees to donate excess sick hours to be used for future medical emergencies • Community Serve-events (i.e., Angel Tree, Habitat for Humanity, Kate’s Kitchen, Emergency \$ fund, Adopt a Greenway, City Cleanup, Parks Cleanup • Volunteer Opportunities – work-sponsored, paid days, but pitching in to help those less fortunate in the community

CITY OF BLUFFTON VISION 6

Bluffton will create and sustain vibrant, clean, and accessible spaces that reflect our local flavor and heritage, enrich the quality of life, and serve as welcoming, attractive destinations for residents, businesses, and visitors, offering fun and healthy recreational opportunities for all.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
1	Beatify and Activate Public Spaces (Welcoming / "Parlor City")	See individual responsibility and funding charts for each objective below		\$\$	High	1-9 Years
2	Expand Recreational and Accessible Community Spaces			\$\$	Medium High	2-9 Years
3	Celebrate Local Heritage, Arts, and Culture			\$	Medium High	2-9 Years
4	Strengthen Community Engagement, Learning, and Stewardship			\$\$	High	1-9 Years

Cost: \$ = \$1M or less | \$\$ = \$1M - \$5M | \$\$\$ = \$5M - \$15M | | \$\$\$\$ = \$15M and up

Vision 6, Strategy 1: Beautify and Activate Public Spaces (Welcoming / “Parlor City”)

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Enhance downtown aesthetics and streetscape to reflect Bluffton’s “Parlor City” identity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance parking lots with thoughtful landscaping and cohesive signage; maintain flowerbeds free of promotional materials to maintain a unified appearance; and ensure only non-invasive plants are purchased. • Implement a façade improvement program to restore historic or character-defining building exteriors, while establishing design guidelines and review processes to prevent the use of materials that detract from downtown’s aesthetic. • Paint crosswalks and utility boxes; install murals and sidewalk rain art. • Add sculptures (permanent or temporary) and other artistic features to pathways and public spaces. • Install branded elements such as murals, decorative banners, and a “Welcome to Bluffton” arch to greet visitors and reinforce city pride. • Create seasonal Instagrammable photo opportunities. • Coordinate window decorating contests and holiday home contests • Illuminate building outlines and the pedestrian bridge with lights during the summer months, and increase frequency for special events to enhance nighttime ambiance • Perform a comprehensive sign inventory to assess condition, remove unnecessary signs, and reduce visual clutter for a cleaner, more navigable streetscape. • Conduct a semi-annual sidewalk power-washing program to create a visually appealing pedestrian area.

Responsibility	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bluffton NOW! • Chamber of Commerce • Economic Development • Local Artists, Teachers, and Students • Bluffton Street Department • Creative Arts Council • Area Plan Commission • Historical Society • Local Building and Business Owners • Wells County Tourism • Local Sign Companies, Landscape Firms, and Design Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land & Water Conservation Fund • IDNR Grants • OCRA Grants • Indiana Destination Development Corporation Grants • Community Foundation • USDA Grants • Philanthropy • Corporate Sponsorship

Vision 6, Strategy 1: Beautify and Activate Public Spaces (Welcoming / “Parlor City”)

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Improve pedestrian comfort and safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add lighting and seating in parking areas and remaining pathways and trails. • Maintain sidewalks by grinding tripping hazards and repairing broken curbs. • Install cozy tables, chairs, bench swings, rocking chairs, or integrate seating areas combined with raised flower planters downtown. • Install public amenities like bulletin boards, Wayfinding Signs, QR codes with maps, and tourism suggestions. • Add free Wi-Fi and phone charging stations downtown and in parks. • Activate downtown sidewalks by adding shaded parklets for outdoor dining. • Add a permanent, accessible bathroom downtown with a baby-changing table. • Close select streets to traffic during events with temporary decorative lighting to create pedestrian zones. • Inform residents about the advantages of human-scale design over car-centric planning to promote walking, biking, and active transportation. • Coordinate with businesses along the Interurban Trail to install bike racks. • Conduct a comprehensive study of traffic accidents to identify patterns, high-risk intersections, and recurring safety issues. Use the findings to implement targeted measures such as improved signage, road markings, speed control measures, pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, and traffic calming strategies to reduce accidents and enhance overall safety for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. • Consider ways to be golf cart-friendly and offer discounted weekend passes for special-event golf cart parades. • Install clear, easy-to-read signs for downtown, parks, trails, and civic buildings. • Ensure sidewalks remain unobstructed by enforcing regulations against parked vehicles, trash cans, or other barriers.

Responsibility	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wells County Trails • INDOT • NIRCC / Police Department / Street Department • AARP Indiana • Parks Department • Local Utilities • Local Businesses and Building Owners • AdamsWells • Local Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCRA Grants • INDOT Grants • AARP Grants • NIPSCO Grants • Community Crossings • Community Development Block Grants • Local Government • Community Foundation • Philanthropy

Vision 6, Strategy 1: Beautify and Activate Public Spaces (Welcoming / “Parlor City”)

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Establish Routine Maintenance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilize community volunteers to take an active role in maintaining downtown spaces, parks, trails, public art, and riverfront areas through organized clean-ups and stewardship programs. • Train volunteers to identify and remove invasive plant species in parks and along trails, promoting native vegetation and ecosystem health. • Pursue grant funding to implement projects that prevent riverbank erosion and protect waterfront areas. • Create an Economic Improvement District for downtown merchants or a neighborhood group to oversee upkeep and event coordination. • Implement bird flocking solutions and routine streetscape maintenance. • Educate residents on how to use the City’s “Report a Concern” system • Refresh the water tower paint and explore adding colorful uplighting to enhance visual appeal. • Implement sustainable maintenance practices (plant only native plants, switch to energy-efficient lighting) • Regularly clean or paint the water towers • Earn the Tree City USA designation and increase and maintain a healthy tree canopy.

Responsibility	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Service Clubs • Churches and Schools • Wells County Soil and Water • Neighborhlink • Parks Department • Wells County Extension Office • Local Scouts and 4-H Clubs • Downtown Business Association • Local Utilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDNR Grants • IDEM Grants • OCRA Grants • Corporate Volunteer Matching Programs • Duke Energy Foundation • NIPSCO Grants • EPA Brownfield Program • Community Foundation • Philanthropy

Vision 6, Strategy 2: Expand Recreational and Accessible Community Spaces

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Develop inclusive recreational facilities for all ages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with merchants for monthly meetings, downtown tours, sales, and special events such as First Fridays, Third Thursdays, Flicks on the Bricks, Concerts, Theater Performances, Block Parties, etc. • Build a skate park, pump track, and roller hockey park • Create a mini-golf course • Recruit entertainment businesses, such as a game store and movie theater, through grants, tax incentives, and marketing of prime downtown locations. • Introduce summer recreational amenities on the plaza, including chessboard tables, bag toss, ping pong, giant games, temporary mini-golf stations, and fire pits. • Install additional power sources downtown to accommodate food trucks. • Improve riverfront amenities such as a fishing pier or area, bench swings, a public restroom, and a water fountain. • Promote and support businesses offering indoor climbing, eSports lounges, cat cafés, indoor toddler play areas, outfitter stores, kayak rentals, and restaurants with integrated gaming or interactive spaces to enhance entertainment options. • Develop and program a Performing Arts Center that hosts theater productions, concerts, dance performances, community talent showcases, and educational workshops to foster local arts and cultural engagement. • Establish a Senior and Community Center that provides accessible programming, social activities, educational workshops, wellness classes, and intergenerational events to foster community connection, lifelong learning, and an active lifestyle. • Develop a co-working and maker’s space that offers flexible workstations, collaborative areas, creative labs, and access to tools and technology, fostering entrepreneurship, innovation, skill-building, and community collaboration. • Activate empty lots by creating pocket parks and community gardens that enhance neighborhood livability. • Promote downtown dining diversity by offering incentives to attract new restaurants and culinary experiences.

Vision 6, Strategy 2: Expand Recreational and Accessible Community Spaces

Responsibility	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park Department • Bluffton NOW! • Chamber of Commerce • Wells County YMCA • Local Service Clubs / Youth Leagues / Schools • Local Businesses and Building Owners • Creative Arts Council • Local Health Care Providers • Private Developers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDNR Grants • OCRA Grants • Indiana Destination Development Corporation Grants • Community Foundation • USDA Rural Development • Philanthropy • Corporate Sponsorship / Grants

Vision 6, Strategy 2: Expand Recreational and Accessible Community Spaces

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Improve connectivity and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with Wells County Trails to implement priority trail segments, including trails along Route 124, connections to the YMCA, and linking the River Greenway to the Interurban Trail, while establishing safe sidewalks to parks and downtown destinations. • Upgrade sidewalks and crossings to ADA standards, install compliant ramps, improve surface conditions, and ensure clear, unobstructed pathways for all pedestrians. • Evaluate and optimize street parking by analyzing areas where vehicles frequently block sidewalks, converting streets to one-sided parking as needed to maintain safe pedestrian routes. • Enforce a code that prevents drivers from parking on sidewalks • Expand active transportation infrastructure by installing bike lanes, bike racks, bike repair stations, and offering bike rental options for residents and visitors. • Enhance pedestrian and event safety by temporarily closing streets during events, adding wayfinding maps, and implementing traffic-calming measures for pedestrians, cyclists, and golf carts. • Deploy electric vehicle charging stations to support sustainable transportation and accommodate EV users. • Promote trail accessibility and resources on the Wells County Trails website, providing detailed maps, difficulty ratings, and user-friendly information to ensure safe, enjoyable outdoor experiences. • Create designated pedestrian corridors connecting key destinations, incorporating clear crosswalks, lighting, signage, seating, landscaping, and public art to make walking safe, accessible, and enjoyable for people of all ages.

Responsibility	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wells County Trails • INDOT • NIRCC • Street Department • AARP Indiana • Local Utilities • Local Business and Building Owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Highway Administration Grants • OCRA Grants • Build Grants • IDNR Grants • Clean Cities Coalition Grants • AARP Indiana • State Trail and Regional Trail Grants

Vision 6, Strategy 2: Expand Recreational and Accessible Community Spaces

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Enhance senior and intergenerational accessibility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide ADA-accessible parking, restrooms, and clearly marked pathways to ensure safe access for people of all abilities. • Develop senior-focused programming and community spaces, connecting with daycare facilities to foster intergenerational learning, social interaction, and shared recreational opportunities. • Partner with schools and churches to open gyms, fields, tracks, and meeting rooms for community use, promoting multi-generational engagement and physical activity. • Encourage businesses to apply for grants to install easy-open, slow-closing ADA-accessible doors to improve accessibility for all residents. • Coordinate with the Council on Aging to provide wheelchair and mobility scooter rentals or loans for seniors and residents with mobility challenges. • Offer water wheelchairs at Wells Community Aquatic Facility to ensure inclusive aquatic recreation for seniors and individuals with disabilities. • Build a community learning center that offers educational workshops, technology training, arts and crafts classes, and intergenerational programs, serving as a hub for lifelong learning and social engagement. • Establish a senior center with dedicated spaces for social activities, wellness programs, recreational classes, and intergenerational events, fostering a welcoming environment that encourages active aging and community connection.

Responsibility	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council on Aging • Schools / Child Care Centers • Churches / Community Centers • Senior - Focused Nonprofits • ADA Consultants • AWS and Occupational Therapist • Local Health Care Facilities • Public Library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AARP Indiana Grants • Older Americans Act Title III Grants • Community Development Block Grants • OCRA Grants • Healthcare Foundation of Northeast Indiana • Local Health Care Grants • Community Foundation • Philanthropy

Vision 6, Strategy 3: Celebrate Local Heritage, Arts, and Culture

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Integrate arts and creative expression throughout public spaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Public Arts Commission (Creative Arts of Wells County, Bluffton Parks, Bluffton Now!, area artists, art teachers & students, etc) to partner on grants, attend workshops, and promote installation of public art in Bluffton. • Install murals, sculptures, and sidewalk rain art in parks, pathways, and plazas. • Paint crosswalks and utility boxes to reflect local culture and history. • Install window clings in downtown storefronts and public buildings to highlight Bluffton’s history and notable residents. • Offer families the opportunity to purchase a commemorative banner honoring a Veteran to be displayed on a downtown light posts • Develop a Creative Arts Facility as a hub for community workshops, exhibitions, and classes. • Engage residents in temporary community art projects—such as collaborative murals, painted benches, or sculpture displays—that are exhibited publicly throughout the city and later sold to support local programs. • Create whimsical discoveries for visitors with tiny, hidden artworks like Mice on Main, fairy doors, miniature gnome homes, and painted rocks.

Responsibility	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Arts Council • Indiana Arts Commission • Local Schools • Wells County Historical Museum • Local Artists, Fabricators, and Sign Companies • Art Students and Youth Organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEA “Our Town” Grants • Indiana Arts Commission • OCRA Grants • Philanthropy • IHEDA Grants • Local Business and Building Owners • Community Foundation

Vision 6, Strategy 3: Celebrate Local Heritage, Arts, and Culture

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Host events that reflect local flavor, culture, and heritage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan seasonal festivals, outdoor movies such as Flicks on the Bricks, and cultural events in plazas and parks to celebrate community life and attract visitors. • Highlight local history and natural heritage by focusing events on figures or themes such as Paul Cook, EB Williamson Irises, or Charles Deam. • Incorporate art, music, and heritage elements into all events to strengthen civic pride and community identity. • Host cook-offs, food truck rallies, local factory tours, and farm-to-table tastings to showcase local culinary traditions and businesses. • Partner with the Historical Museum to offer Living History events featuring costumed interpreters demonstrating quilting, candle dipping, Dutch oven cooking, and other traditional crafts. • Organize Storytelling on the Square, where local historians, residents, and teachers share memories, historic events, and unique stories from Bluffton’s past. • Celebrate local culinary heritage with events like Pretzel & Brews, pairing locally made pretzels or bread products with regional craft beers, sodas, and ciders. • Host carry-ins, community picnics, and recipe swap events to encourage informal social interaction and sharing among residents. • Offer guided historic walks, home tours, and explorations of downtown’s hidden gems, including attics, basements, and other rarely seen spaces. • Support and expand the Farmer’s Market and agritourism initiatives to highlight local agriculture and produce.

Responsibility	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bluffton NOW! • Wells County Historical Museum • Parks Department • Local Breweries, Wineries, Restaurants, and Farms • Wells County Tourism • Visit Indiana • Indiana Destination Development Corporation • Local Media Outlets • Local Schools and Churches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indiana Destination Development Corporation Grants • IHCD Grants • Philanthropy • USDA Rural Business Development Grants • Community Foundation

Vision 6, Strategy 3: Celebrate Local Heritage, Arts, and Culture

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Support creative partnerships and volunteer engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with schools, churches, and local nonprofits for programming and facility use. • Offer classes in community gardens, arts, and recreational spaces. • Promote volunteer opportunities for arts, beautification, and events. • Partner with 4-H, farmers, and FFA for local produce tastings and demonstrations • Create a Mayor’s Youth Council for student input on projects and programs • Partner with foreign exchange students to celebrate cultural diversity through an international food festival, engaging travelogues, and personal stories. Offer short interactive language lessons.

Responsibility	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Schools, 4-H, and FFA • Parks Department • Wells County Extension Services • Churches, Nonprofits, and Cultural Groups • Foreign Exchange Programs • Local Restaurants and Chefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indiana Humanities Grants • Youth as Resources • Youth Service America Grants • AARP Indiana • Local Civic Clubs • Community Foundation

Vision 6, Strategy 4: Strengthen Community Engagement, Learning, and Stewardship

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Establish community hubs and third places for social connection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop or support the Wells County Dream Center as a space for events, childcare, coworking, and learning. • Encourage cafés and libraries to host story hours, social gatherings, and educational programs. • Partner with schools to allow community access to gyms, walking tracks, and meeting rooms. • Support & coordinate with the Park Department’s 5-Year Master Plan priorities to ensure consistency with long-term community investments. (replace aging equipment, trail development, ADA accessible facilities, and bury overhead powerline when appropriate)

Responsibility	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wells County Dream Center • Library • Local Schools and Churches • Chamber of Commerce • Economic Development • Parks Department • YMCA and Child Care Providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCRA Grants • USDA Grants and Loans • Lilly Foundation • Community Foundation • AARP Indiana • Local Business and Building Owners • Philanthropy

Vision 6, Strategy 4: Strengthen Community Engagement, Learning, and Stewardship

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Promote learning, sustainability, and volunteerism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support community gardens with water, shade, seating, and classes; coordinate volunteer committees. • Offer educational programs on gardening, arts, aging, and healthy recreation. • Coordinate river and park clean-up days to engage residents in stewardship. • Become a Bird Town Indiana City to restore, protect, and improve bird habitat. • Regularly gather community feedback through public forums and city surveys. • Share updates on project progress, survey results, and city plans through newsletters, the city website, social media, and the Parlor City Voice Podcast to keep residents informed and involved. • Develop a friendly visitor program to pair newcomers with local “guides” to introduce them to community resources and events. • Form citizen committees representing diverse age groups and neighborhoods to provide input on projects and policies. • Establish a “Neighbor-to-Neighbor” program that connects residents in need of assistance with volunteers who can help with home maintenance, repairs, or other supportive tasks (similar to Neighbor Link). • Recognize and celebrate volunteers, local businesses, and community contributors to foster pride.

Responsibility	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wells County Extension Services • Parlor City Community Garden • Local Schools • Local Service Organizations • Parks Department • Local Media Outlets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDEM Grants • AARP Indiana Grants • EPA Grants • Community Foundation • Local Business and Building Owners • Philanthropy

Vision 6, Strategy 4: Strengthen Community Engagement, Learning, and Stewardship

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Resolve blight and improve neighborhood quality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate all blighted and brownfield sites throughout the city and implement remediation, redevelopment, or removal strategies to improve community safety and aesthetics. • The city should obtain and repurpose the 124 S Oak Street property into a public space that meets the requirements. • Repair broken sidewalks, curbs, and pathways. • Upgrade streetscapes, sidewalks, and neighborhood parks to improve safety and appeal. • Encourage neighborhood associations to coordinate improvements, host community/block party events, and beautification efforts. • Offer small grants to neighborhoods to fund minor beautification projects that enhance livability and foster local pride.

Responsibility	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment Commission • Local Nonprofits • Building Department and Code Enforcement • Neighborhood Associations • Local Churches • Habitat for Humanity • Neighborlink • Wells County Land Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA Grants • OCRA Grants • Community Development Block Grants • USDA Grants • Community Foundation • Local Government • Corporate Grants • Philanthropy

CITY OF BLUFFTON VISION 7

Bluffton will build a connected community where participation in events, programs, and shared experiences enhances the quality of life, fosters a lasting sense of belonging, and strengthens Bluffton’s sense of pride and trust.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
1	Activate the Parlor City: Maintain, expand, and create community events and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials Parks Department Community Groups Non-Profits Tourism Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Local Businesses General Public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Grants Philanthropy Sponsorship 	\$	High	1-9 Years
2	Experience Bluffton: Develop a community engagement plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials Parks Department Community Groups Non-Profits Tourism Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Local Businesses General Public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Grants Philanthropy Sponsorship 	\$	High	1-9 Years
3	Tell our Story: Develop a consistent community marketing plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials Parks Department Community Groups Non-Profits Tourism Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Local Businesses General Public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Grants Philanthropy Sponsorship 	\$	High	1-9 Years

Cost: \$ = \$1M or less | \$\$ = \$1M - \$5M | \$\$\$ = \$5M - \$15M | | \$\$\$\$ = \$15M and up

CITY OF BLUFFTON VISION 7

Bluffton will build a connected community where participation in events, programs, and shared experiences enhances the quality of life, fosters a lasting sense of belonging, and strengthens Bluffton’s sense of pride and trust.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
4	Find your Bluffton: Wayfinding and Branding Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials Parks Department Community Groups Non-Profits Tourism Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Local Businesses General Public Poka-Bache Task Force NIRCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Grants Philanthropy Sponsorship 	\$	High	1-9 Years

Cost: \$ = \$1M or less | \$\$ = \$1M - \$5M | \$\$\$ = \$5M - \$15M | | \$\$\$\$ = \$15M and up

Vision 7, Strategy 1: Activate the Parlor City: Maintain, expand, and create community events and experiences

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Maintain and expand existing events and experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow events attendance by 20% by 2028 • Improve event attendance tracking (free ticketing i.e. Eventbrite) • Integrate into a new community-wide digital calendar • Run targeted social media adds 2-weeks prior to events • Work to expand participation in event and experience planning • Develop new financial support mechanisms to sustain events and experiences • Provide additional support to the Parks Department, local businesses, and community organizations that provide these events and experiences • Actively support fundraising efforts for these events and experiences • Integrate these events and experiences into the community marketing plan • Work to combine existing events and experiences, or pair them with new events and experiences, to create active days or weekends in Bluffton.
<p>Create Parlor City centric experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop citizen groups that can guide the planning and implementation of new Parlor City-centric events and experiences • Develop events and programming that focus on multiple age ranges (0-17, 18-35, 36-59, and 65+) • Develop a new multi-day festival to complement our other activities and experiences with a tie to our local heritage • Create new semi-permanent passive experiences in our community i.e.. murals, sculptures, scavenger hunts, self-guided tours, veteran memorials, historical figures, and information centers • Work with Bluffton NOW! to develop a hometown hero’s banner program for Bluffton to support veterans, active service members, and first responders • Work to combine these new events and experiences with existing events and experiences, to create active days or weekends in Bluffton

Vision 7, Strategy 2: Experience Bluffton: Develop a community engagement plan

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Create a welcome wagon program for new residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Bluffton concierge website, email list, and phone number • Work with utilities and local real estate agents to collect contact information for new residents • Survey new residents on what information would be helpful to provide • Create a list of existing churches, non-profits, social groups, and clubs that people can engage with • Develop the neighbor-to-neighbor program
<p>Create Parlor City centric experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a parlor city passport promoting eating, recreating, and shopping local • Create seasonal parlor city photo stations • Create Bluffton curated gift boxes featuring local businesses and products • Offer guided tours of historic buildings, homes, and places • Create meet the maker style events, highlighting locally made products • Grow shop local, sidewalk sales, farmers markets, and Taste of Bluffton activities

Vision 7, Strategy 3: Tell our Story: Develop a consistent community marketing plan

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Develop a unified and accessible events calendar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a communications director position • Create a committee to select a new digital community-wide calendar product (robust search and filter functionality, mobile-friendly event submissions, and add to calendar feature) • Provide training, user testing, brand guidelines, and micro-grants for organizations that host events in the community to promote use of the community-wide digital calendar • Create QR codes and landing pages to help promote the calendar throughout multiple platforms • Place signage and QR codes on social media, in mailers, and key public places (library, post office, community hubs, public buildings, popular cafes...) to promote the calendar • Partner with local news outlets to further promote the calendar and upcoming events, “What’s on in Bluffton” weekly segment, using the new digital community-wide calendar
<p>Capture and share the spirit of Bluffton’s major events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and train a Digital Storyteller to lead community storytelling, coordinate event coverage, and train partner organizations and volunteers. • Identify priority events and partners (schools, clubs, nonprofits, local groups), rotate coverage, and include citizen interviews, quotes, and business spotlights. • Build a simple annual content plan with consistent branding, templates, workflows, and strong local SEO optimization. • Produce real-time coverage of priority events and launch the Parlor City Stories Live social media series. • Collect evergreen content (videos, interviews, behind-the-scenes) and run online contests encouraging residents and visitors to share photos and videos. • Track analytics and community feedback, adjust storytelling based on performance, and create quarterly and end-of-year highlight reels.

Vision 7, Strategy 4: Find your Bluffton: Wayfinding and Branding Initiatives

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Make Bluffton easier to navigate for residents, new families, and visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen our visual identity by using consistent visual identity (colors, fonts, community history, and design elements) across the city, geared to be recognizable and easy to read • Highlight public parking opportunities • Increase attendance at parks and events by marking these sites easier to find and move through • Create gateway signage as part of the wayfinding plan • Improve perception of our overall appearance and sense of pride in annual community surveys
<p>Highlight high-impact areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate high traffic areas to place wayfinding signage, such as downtown, trailheads, major intersections, parks, and gathering areas • Provide pedestrian-friendly elements in downtown and on trails • Use simple directional arrows and other universally accepted terms and symbols • Use durable, weather-proof materials to reduce maintenance • Make sure wayfinding signage is ADA-compliant • Include a 5-year refresh plan for wayfinding materials • Create a maintenance plan and budget • Add wayfinding questions to annual citizen surveys
<p>Digital wayfinding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive digital map • QR Codes at high-impact areas for pedestrian traffic • Includes updates of key community projects • Social media stories for events explaining where to park, enter, and navigate spaces
<p>Bluffton Equipment Branding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a unified letterhead • Add city logo to all correspondence • Tie branding into grants and capital projects • Require brand alignment in new developments and partnerships • Add city logo to all new city vehicles

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.

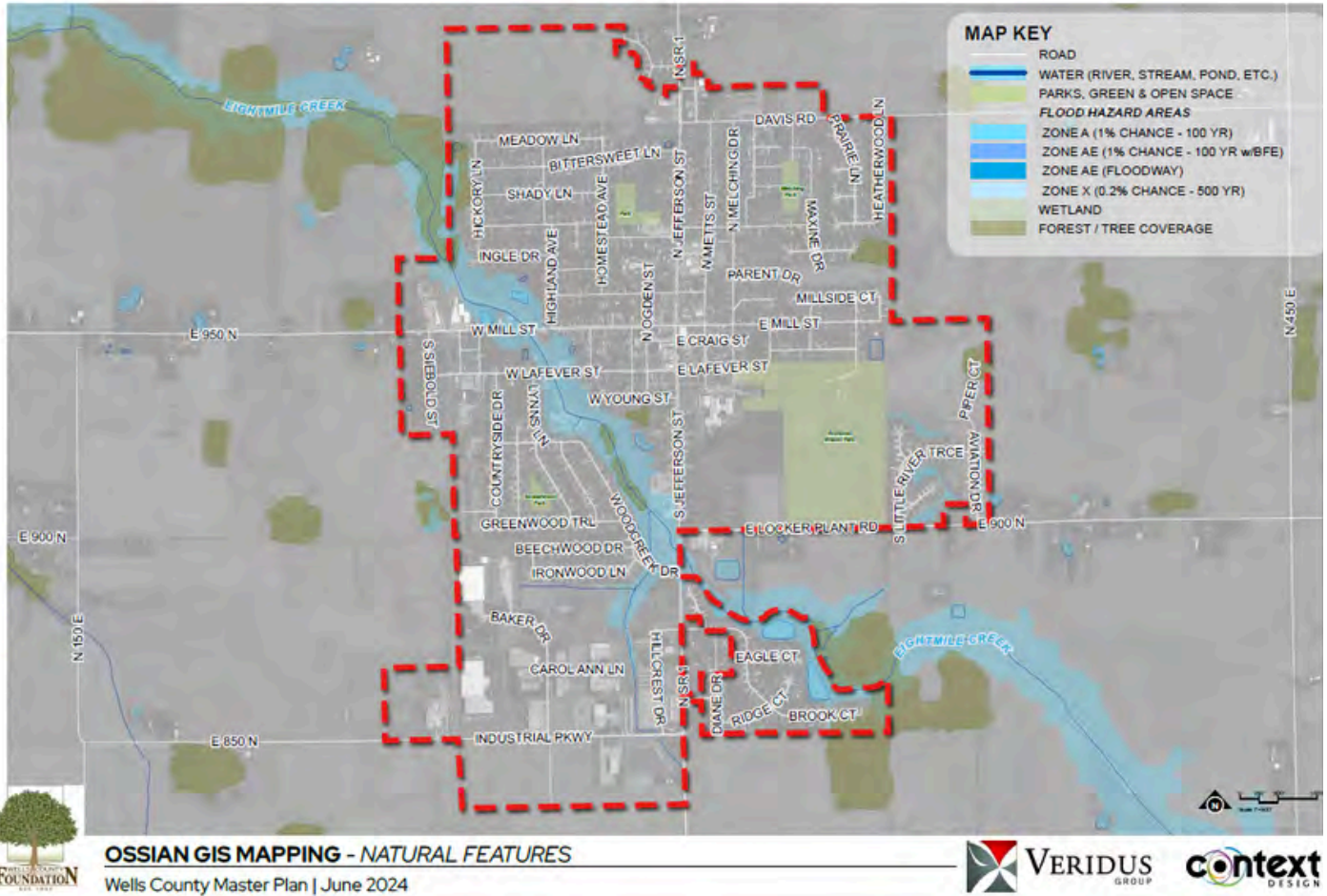


Figure 40: Ossian Natural Conditions Map; Source: Context Design

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.

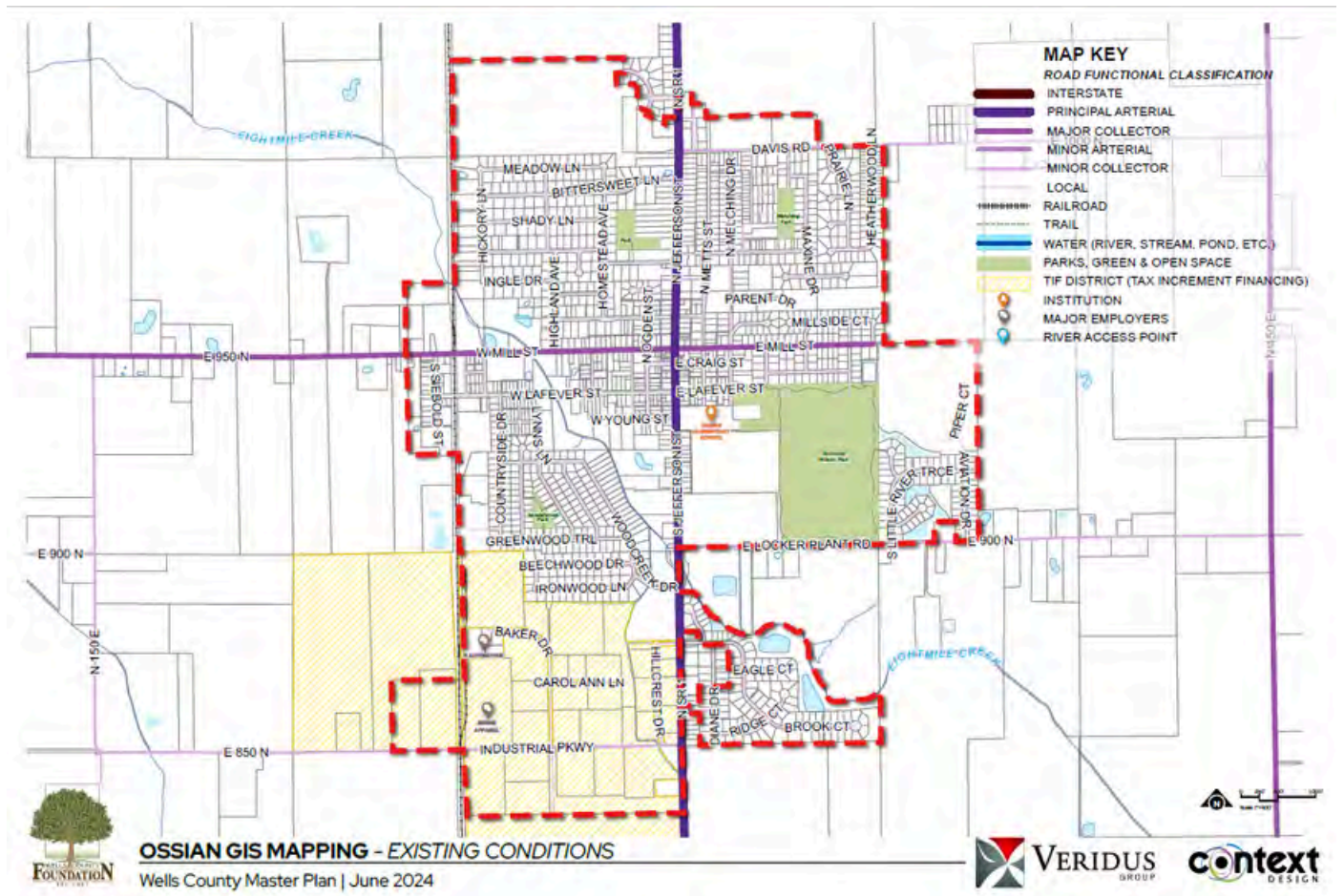


Figure 41: Ossian Existing Conditions Map; Source: Context Design

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.

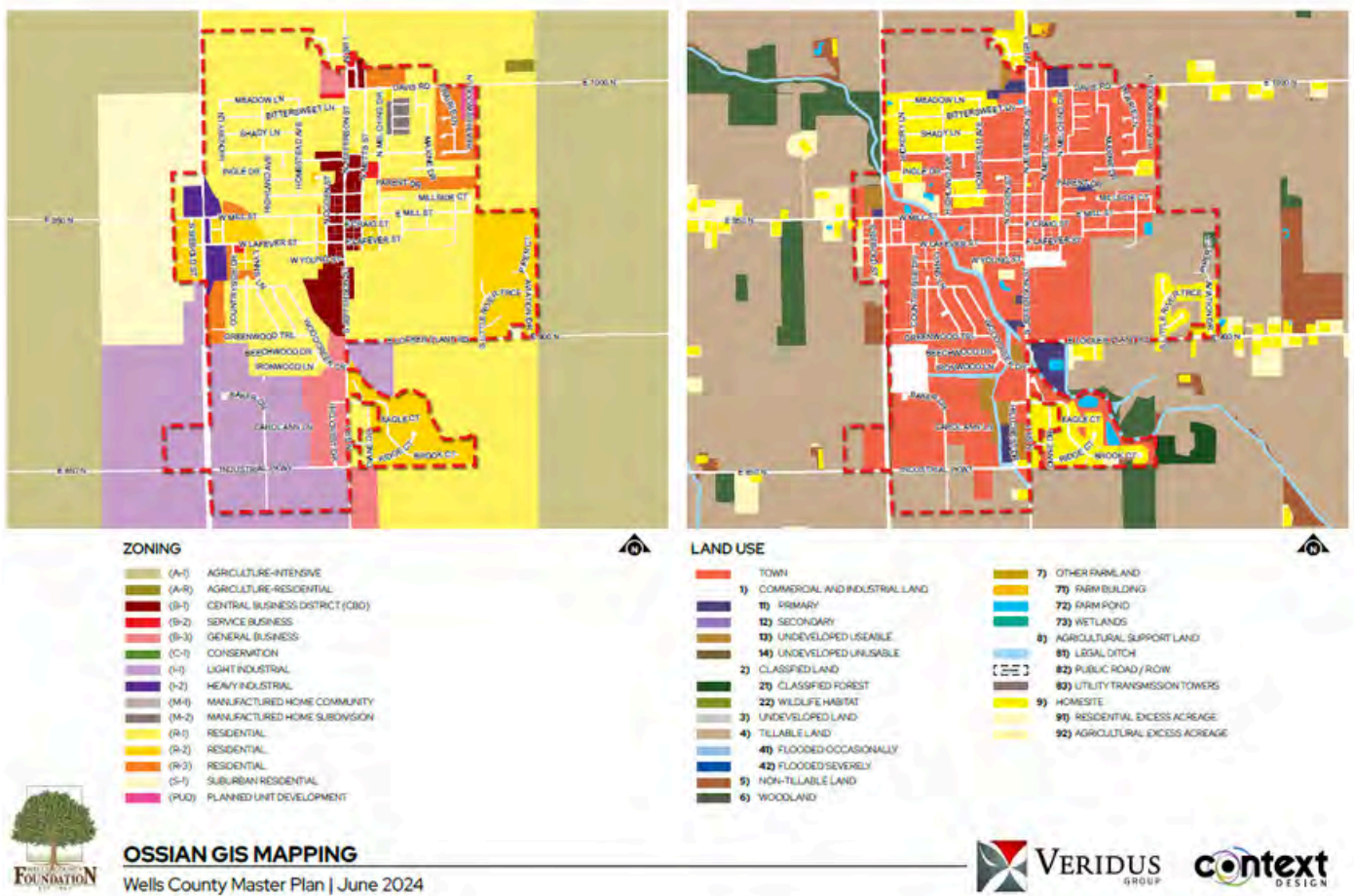


Figure 43: Ossian Zoning and Land Use Map; Source: Context Design

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.

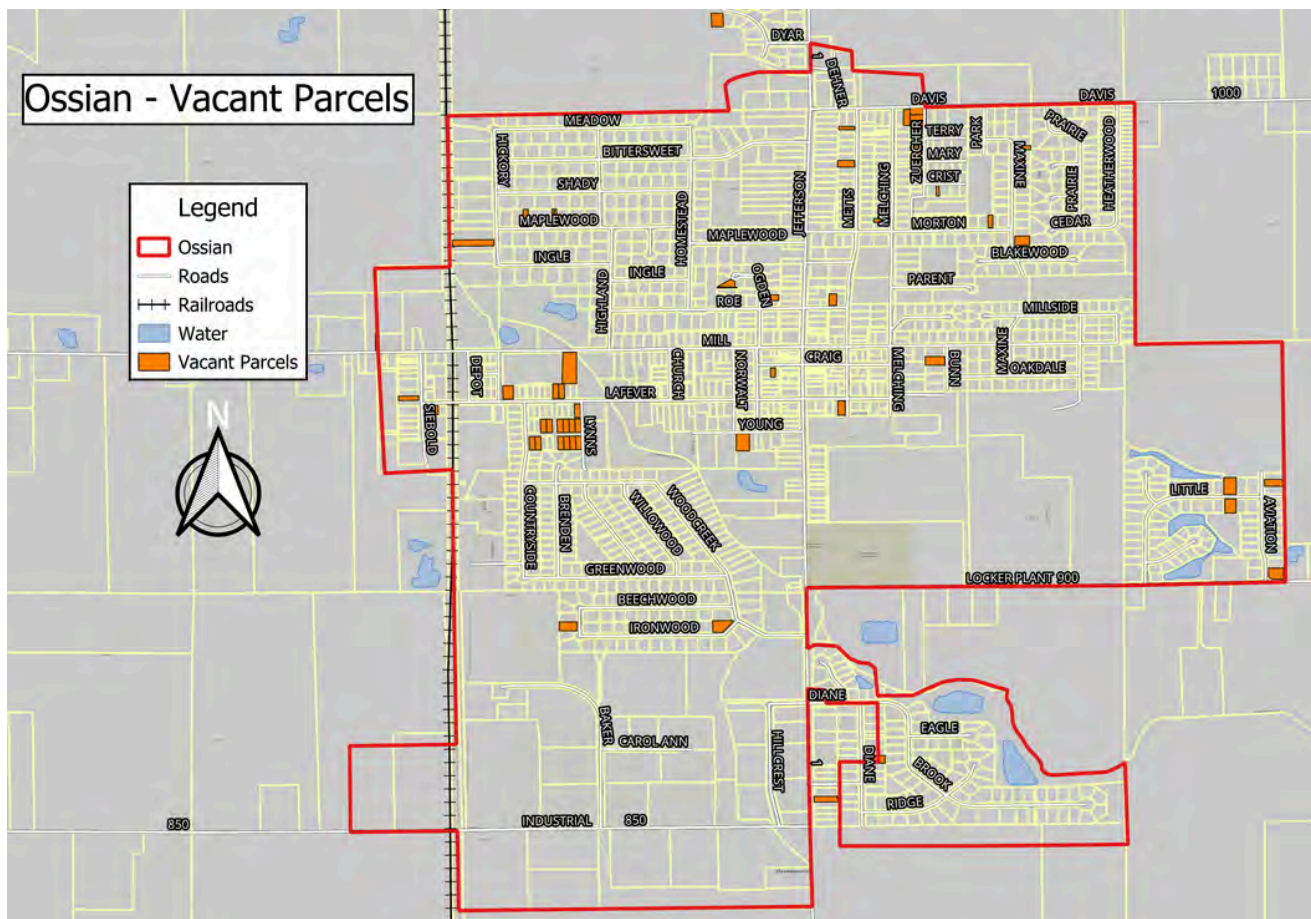


Figure 42: Ossian Vacant Parcels Map; Source: Wells County GIS

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.

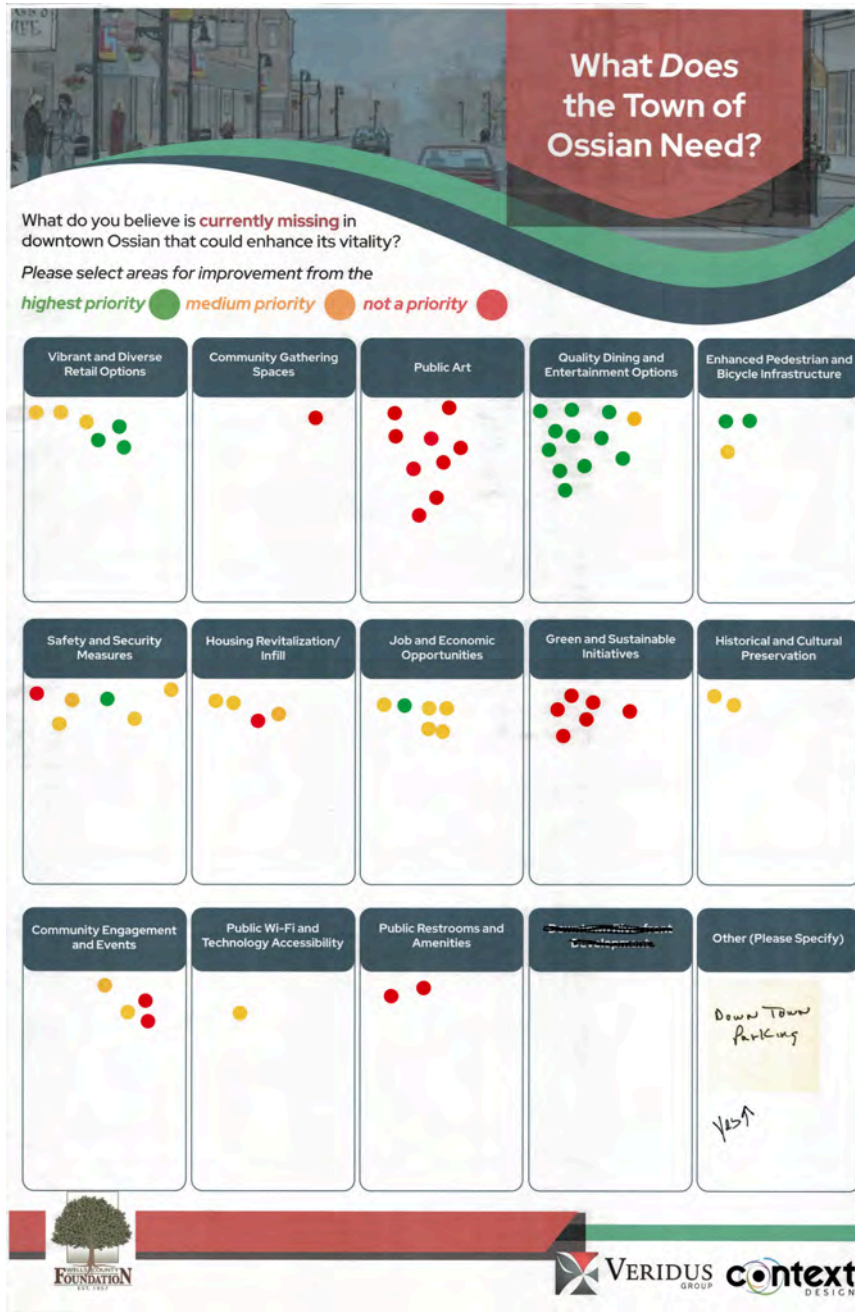


Figure 44: Ossian Community Meeting Needs; Source: Ossian Community Meeting

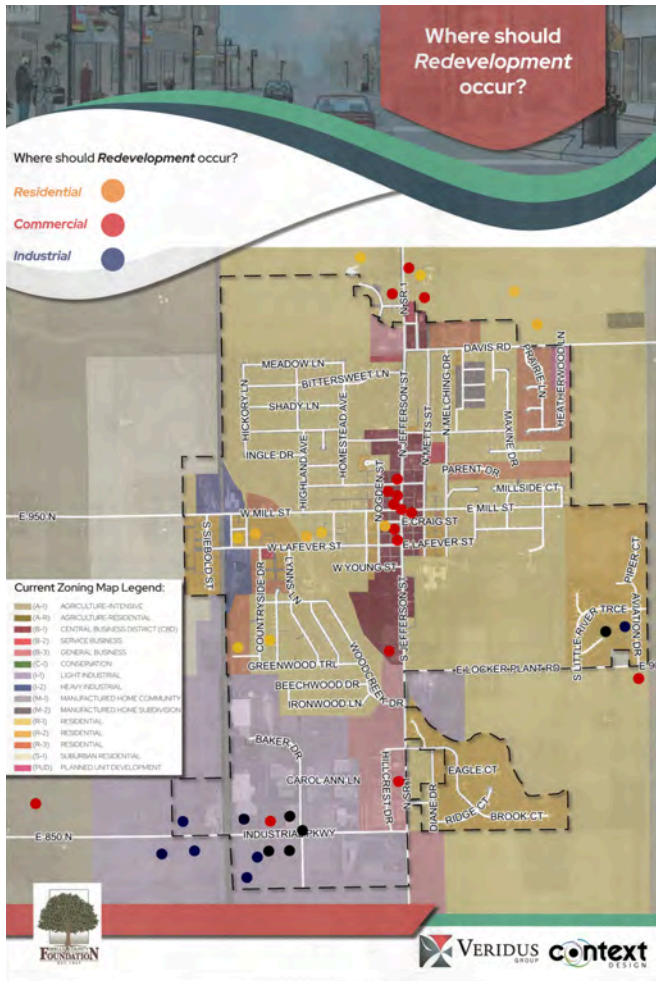


Figure 45: Ossian Community Meeting Redevelopment Map;
Source: Ossian Community Meeting

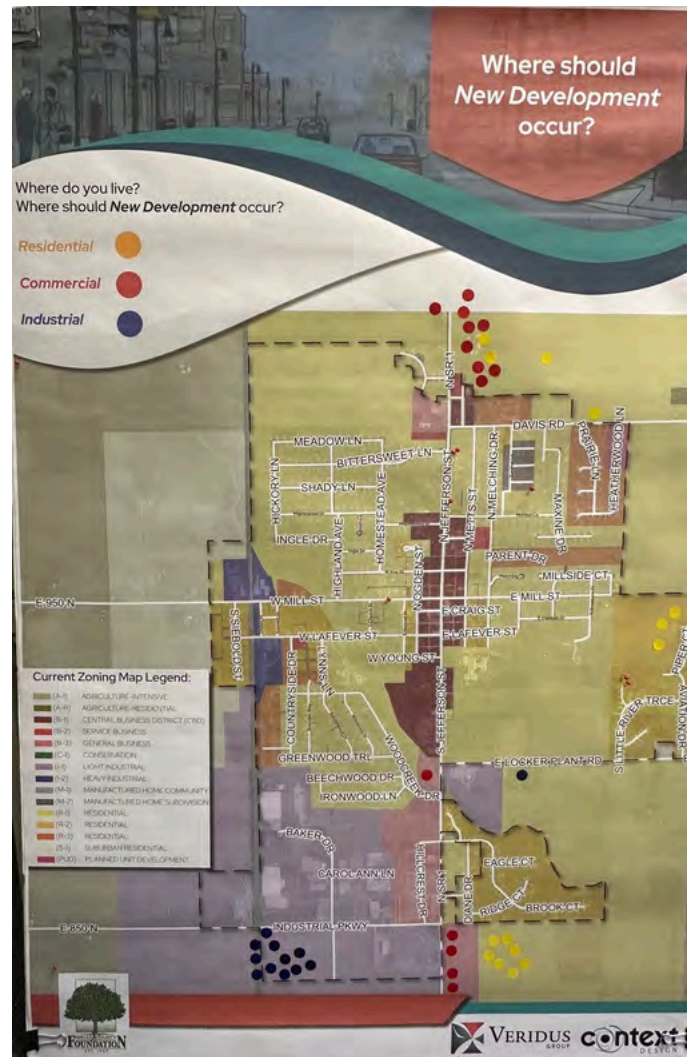


Figure 46: Ossian Community Meeting Development Map;
Source: Ossian Community Meeting

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.

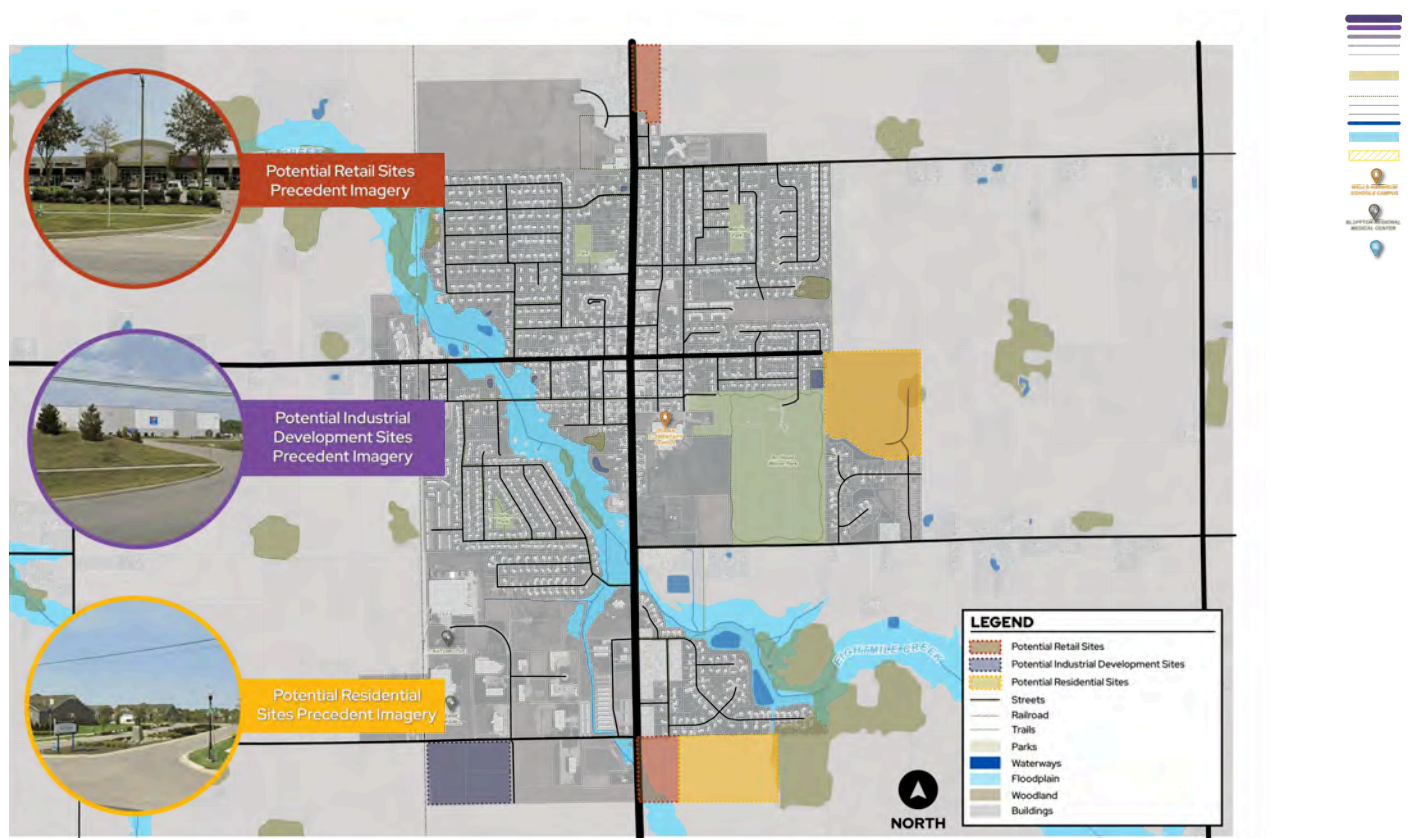


Figure 47: Ossian Future Vision; Source: Context Design

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.