

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.

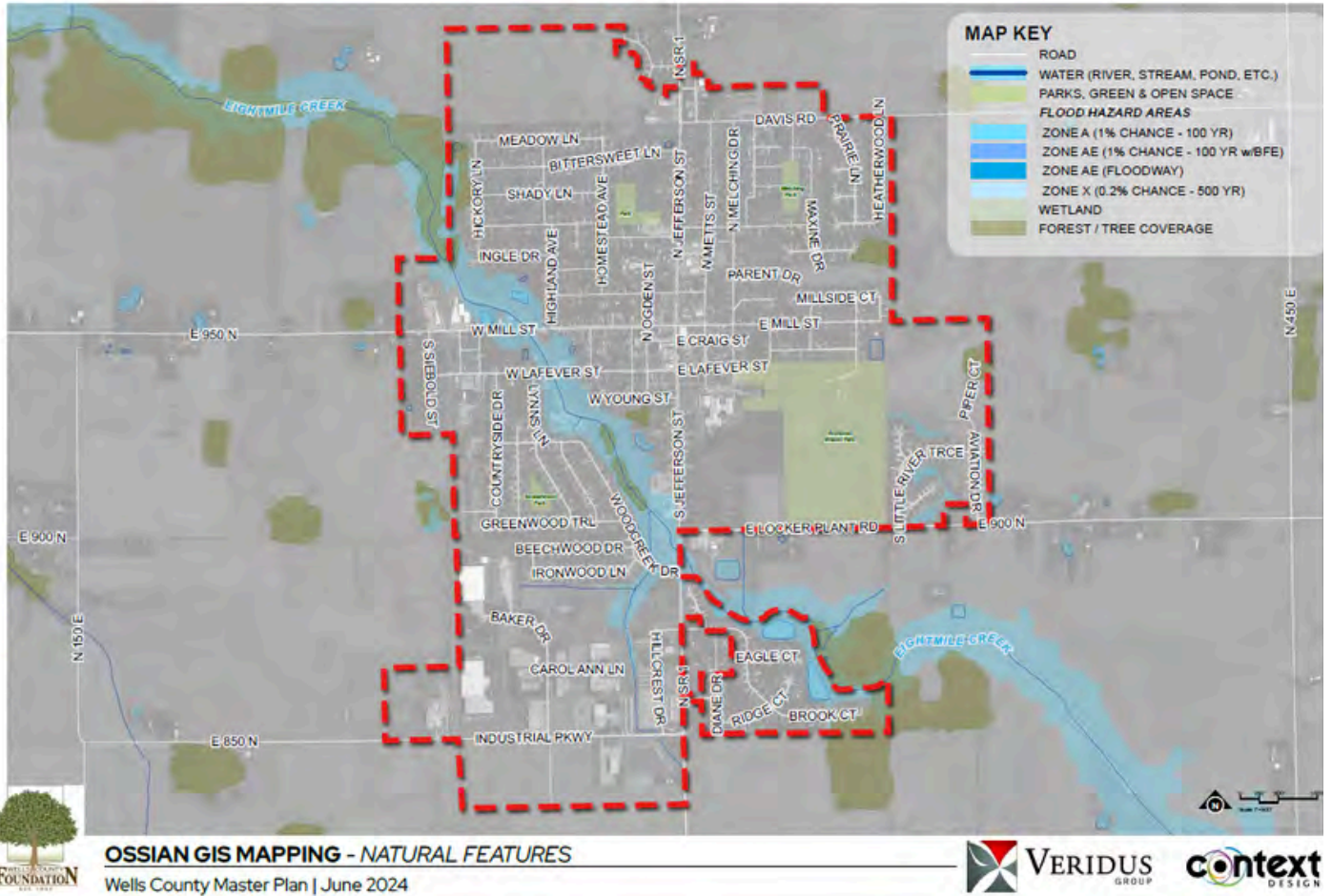


Figure 40: Ossian Natural Conditions Map; Source: Context Design

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.

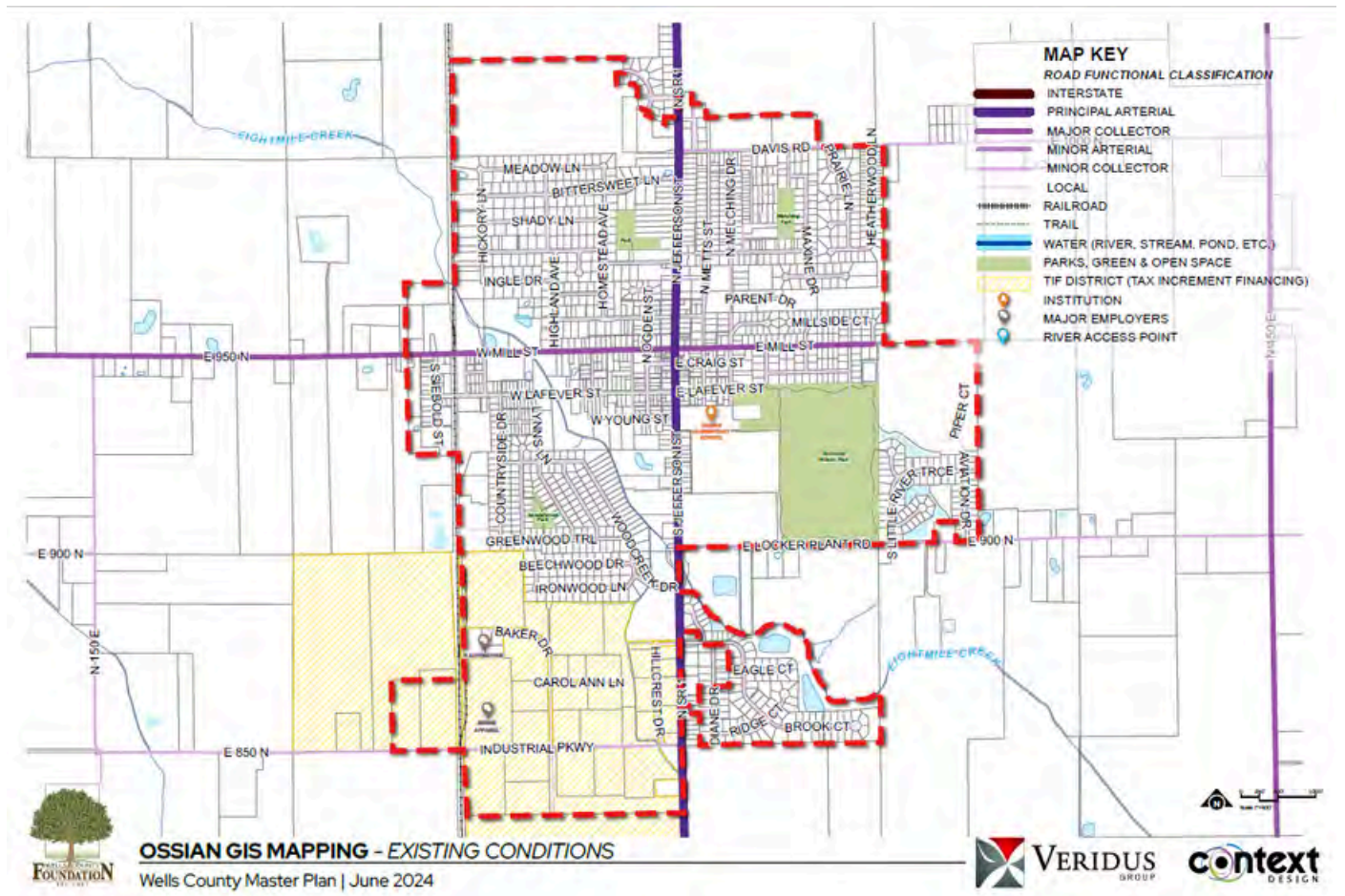


Figure 41: Ossian Existing Conditions Map; Source: Context Design

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.

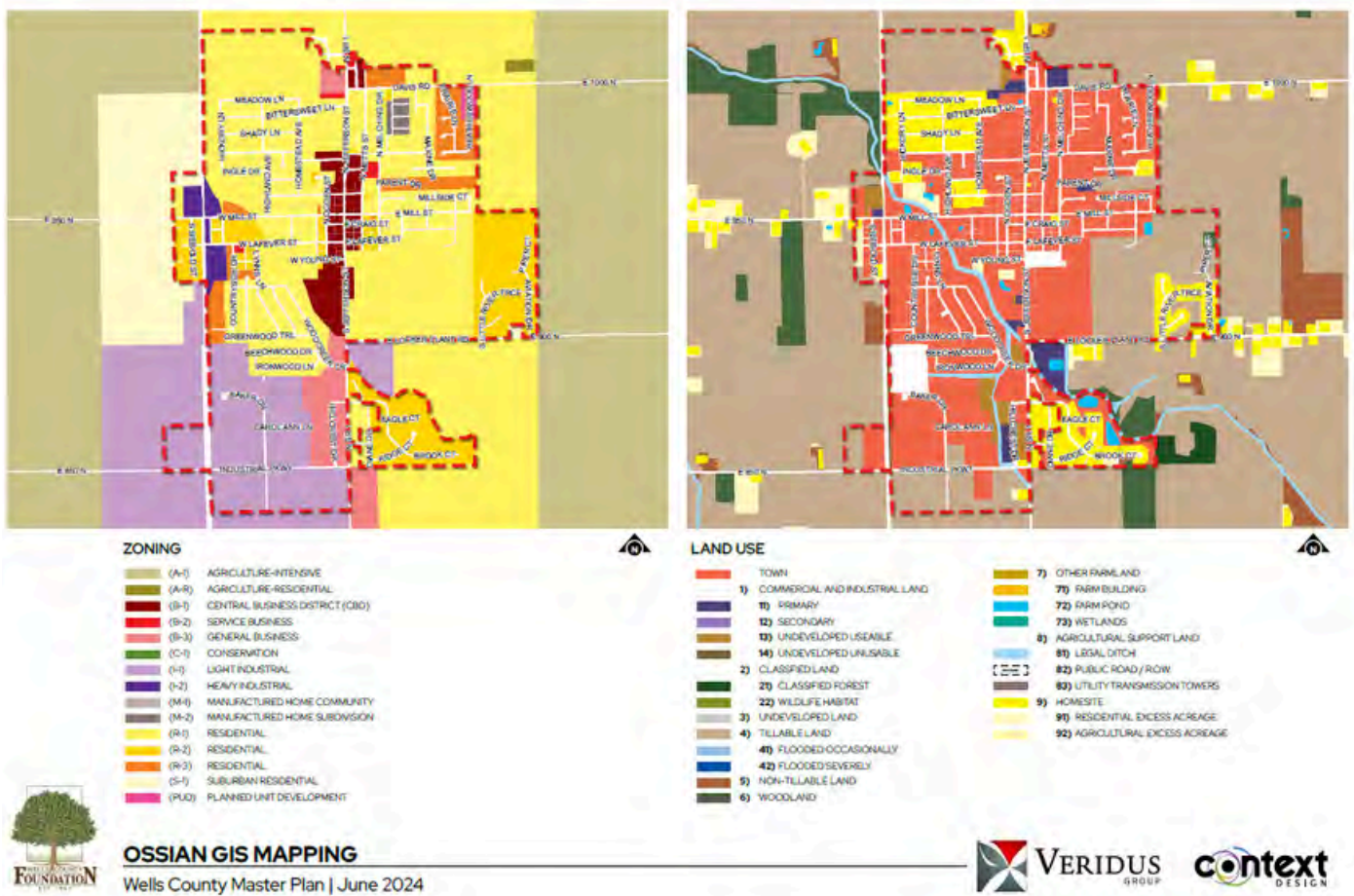


Figure 43: Ossian Zoning and Land Use Map; Source: Context Design

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.

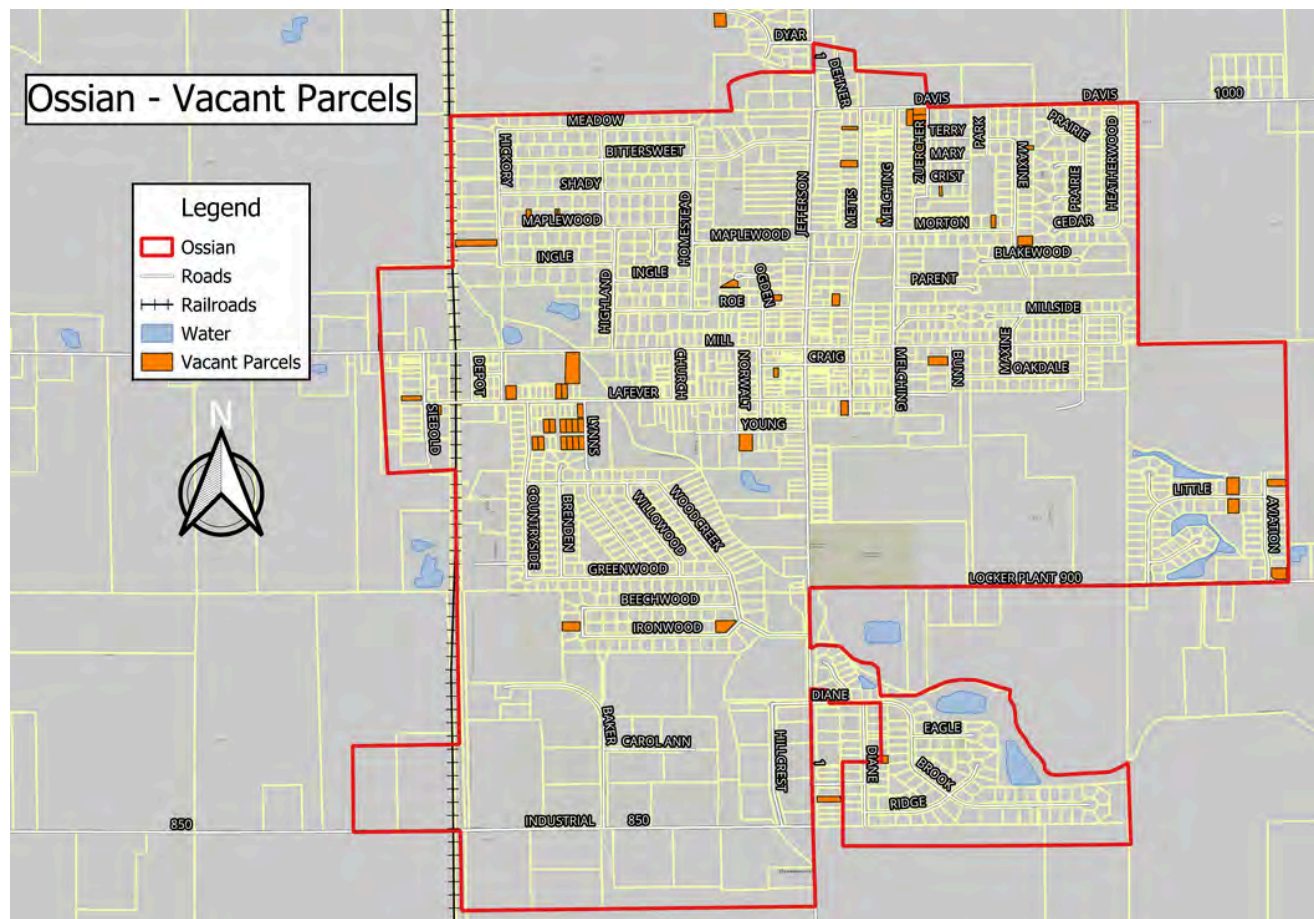


Figure 42: Ossian Vacant Parcels Map; Source: Wells County GIS

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.

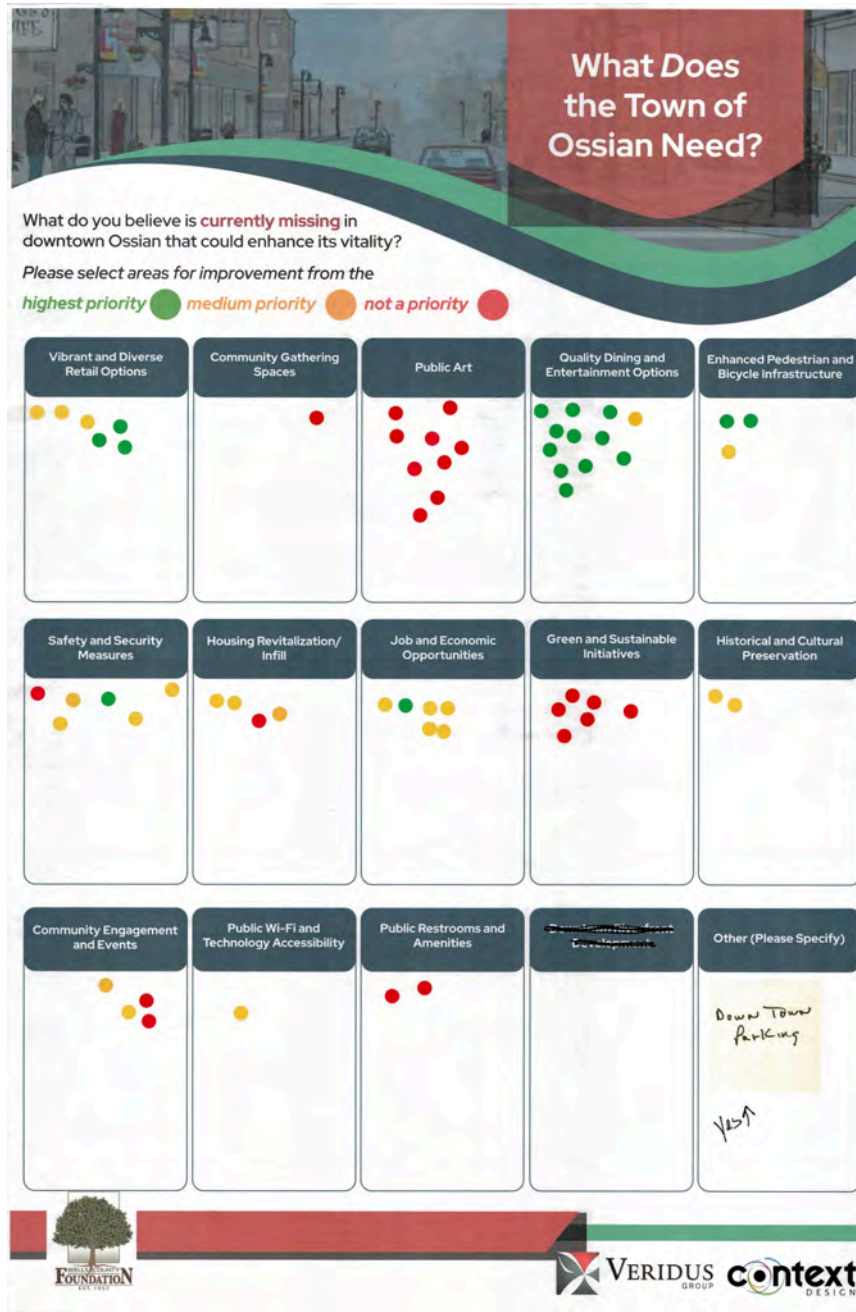


Figure 44: Ossian Community Meeting Needs; Source: Ossian Community Meeting

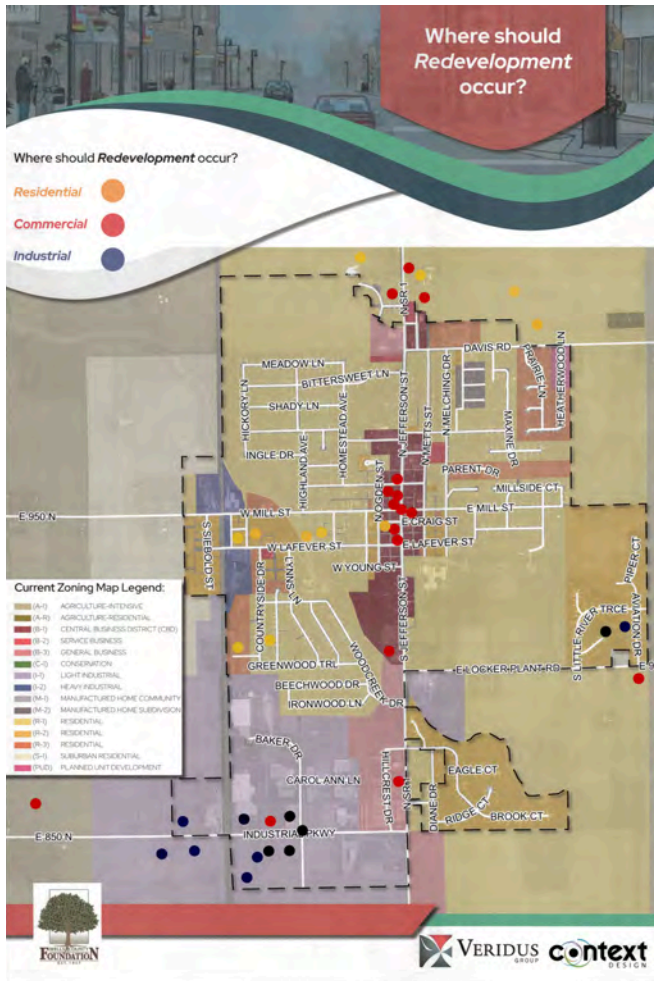


Figure 45: Ossian Community Meeting Redevelopment Map;
Source: Ossian Community Meeting

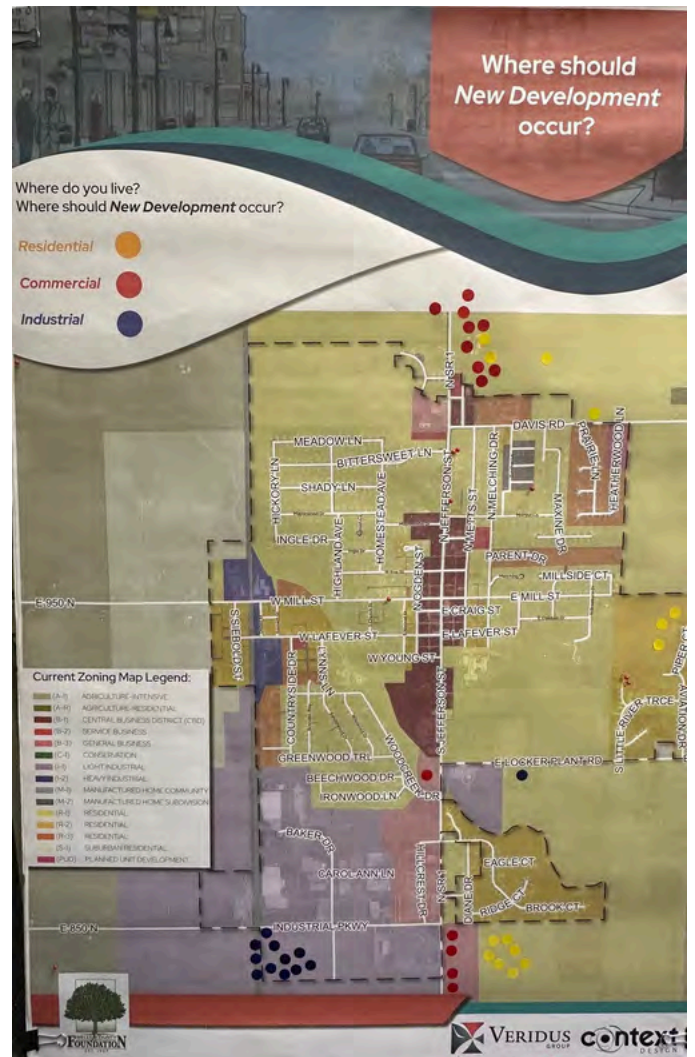


Figure 46: Ossian Community Meeting Development Map;
Source: Ossian Community Meeting

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.

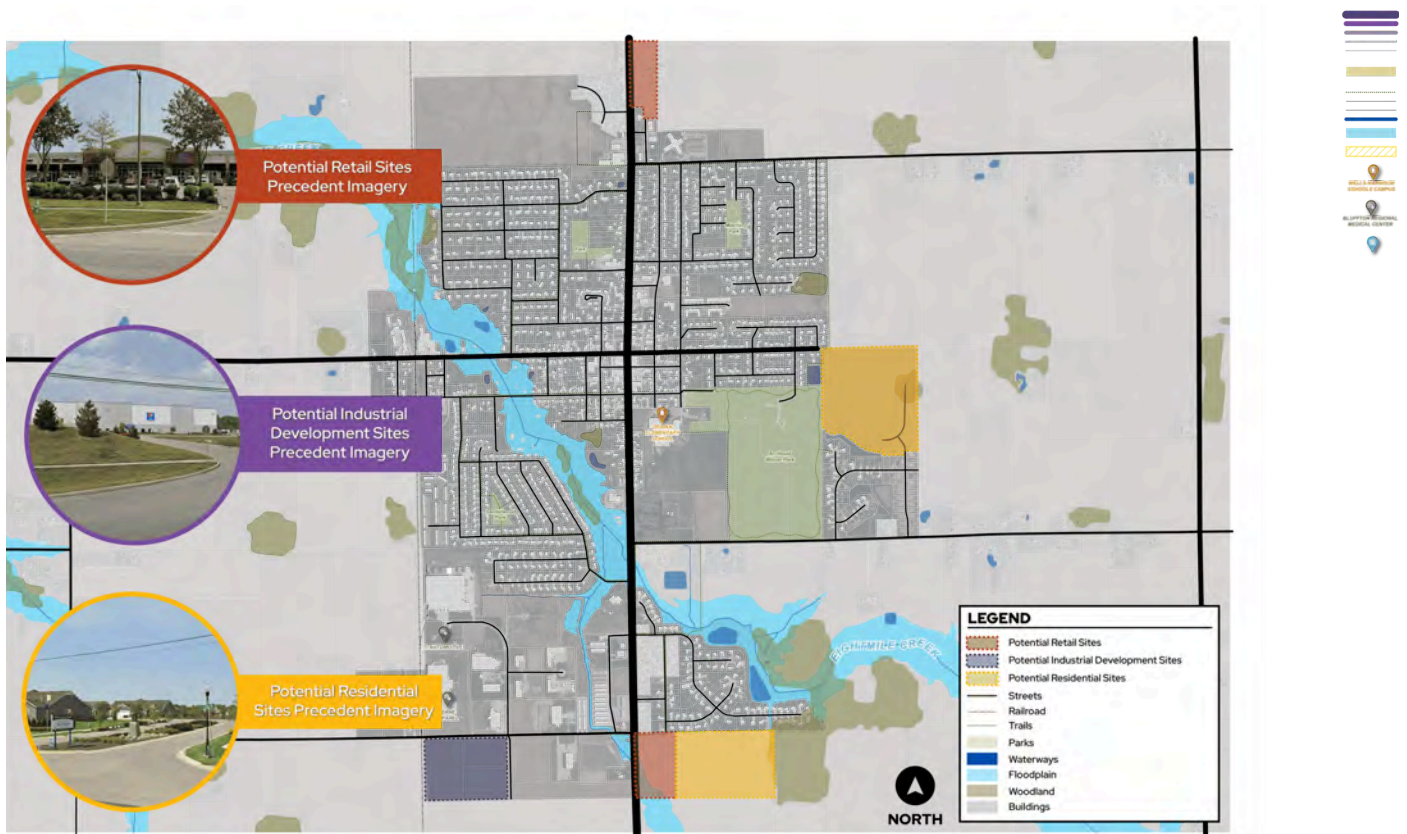


Figure 47: Ossian Future Vision; Source: Context Design

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

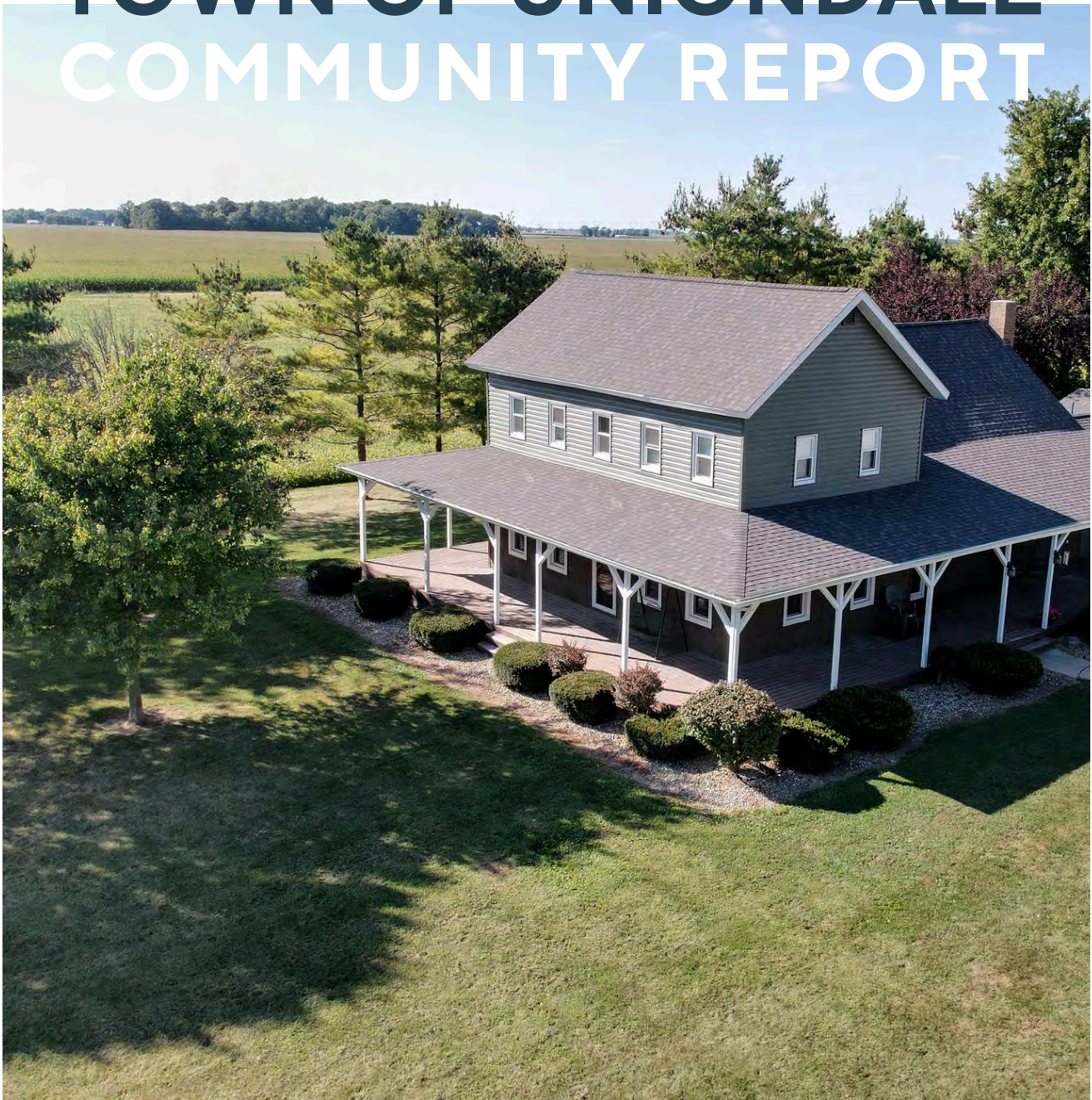
Vision 3, Strategy 1: Maintain Ossian’s family-friendly, small-town charm by supporting development that aligns with the community’s values.

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.

TOWN OF UNIONDALE COMMUNITY REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uniondale's role as a smaller, primarily residential community was reinforced by county comparison data and a public meeting that stressed reversing population decline, upgrading infrastructure, and attracting basic amenities like grocery options. Survey participants noted the need for stable or increased job availability, particularly given Uniondale's geographic location and relatively affordable housing stock. Accordingly, Uniondale's Vision Principles include sustainable growth through owner-occupied housing, industrial site identification to create new jobs, and improved infrastructure (especially sewer and stormwater systems) to support development. These principles lead to action items such as infill construction incentives on vacant town-owned lots, industrial zoning updates on the town's fringes, and stronger intergovernmental cooperation for upgraded roads and drainage.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Uniondale is a small but vital community within Wells County, with strong ties to agriculture and regional connectivity. Understanding Uniondale's land use characteristics and infrastructure needs is essential for guiding sustainable development and investment.

Uniondale's land use patterns are predominantly agricultural, with small residential and commercial clusters along its main corridors. Maintaining a balance between farmland preservation and controlled development is a key priority for future planning.

Infrastructure investments, particularly in stormwater management and road improvements, will be crucial for ensuring long-term resilience and connectivity. As Uniondale looks to the future, enhanced drainage solutions and infrastructure upgrades will play a critical role in maintaining service reliability and flood mitigation.

By evaluating these existing conditions, this section provides a comprehensive overview of Uniondale's development landscape, ensuring that strategic investments align with community needs.

The Town of Uniondale is a small but important community in Wells County, providing a mix of residential neighborhoods, agricultural land, and commercial corridors along State Road 224. As one of the county's smaller incorporated areas, Uniondale plays a role in supporting rural development while maintaining strong connections to regional transportation networks. This section examines the town's natural features, zoning, land use patterns, and infrastructure, providing insight into how Uniondale can guide future growth while preserving its character.

Uniondale's natural landscape is shaped by nearby streams, wetlands, and agricultural fields, which contribute to the town's rural identity. Flood hazard areas, including 100-year and 500-year flood zones, are present along waterways, emphasizing the need for thoughtful land use planning in these areas. Tree coverage and wetlands further define the environmental conditions, providing natural buffers and conservation opportunities.

- Flood-prone areas along streams and low-lying sections of town require careful planning for stormwater management and infrastructure improvements.

Uniondale’s zoning structure is designed to preserve agricultural land while supporting residential and commercial growth in designated areas. The town’s compact nature allows for a clear separation between urban development and surrounding farmland.

- Agricultural zoning (A-1, A-R) remains dominant in the surrounding areas, ensuring the preservation of farmland and supporting rural land uses.
- Residential zoning (R-1, R-2, R-3, suburban residential) is concentrated within the town’s core, providing housing options for residents.
- Commercial zoning (B-1, B-2, Central Business District) is primarily located along State Road 224, accommodating local businesses and services.
- Industrial zoning (I-1, I-2) is present near the town’s eastern and southern edges, offering space for potential business expansion.

The below land use plan identifies additional areas for undeveloped land, flood-prone areas, and conservation, ensuring that future development aligns with both community needs and environmental constraints.

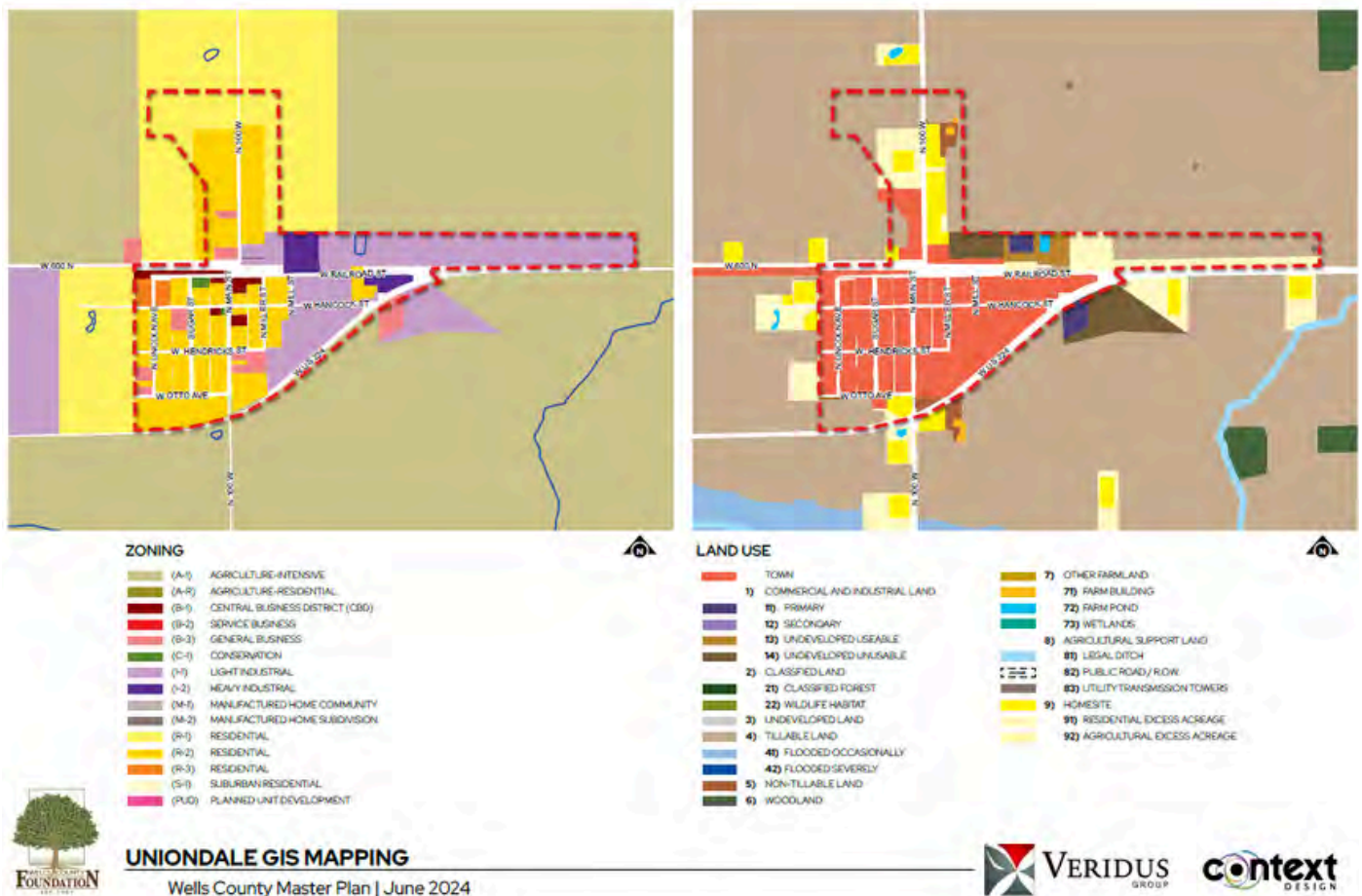


Figure 50: Uniondale Zoning and Land Use Map; Source: Context Design

Uniondale’s existing conditions, land use patterns, and infrastructure assets provide a strong foundation for future planning efforts. By carefully managing residential growth, commercial development, and environmental preservation, the town can continue to serve as a small but vital part of Wells County. Ensuring that land use policies, infrastructure improvements, and economic strategies align with long-term goals will help Uniondale remain a resilient and thriving community.

ANALYSIS OF VACANT PARCELS IN UNIONDALE

The map shows the distribution of vacant parcels in Uniondale, marked in orange, with most concentrated in the central and southern portions of town. These parcels are primarily located within the existing street grid, indicating infill potential.

A few vacant parcels are positioned within the higher residential area, with future land use for all of the parcels designated as residential in the Vision 2035 Plan. The town’s boundaries extend eastward along a transportation corridor, where additional undeveloped land is present. The pattern of vacant parcels reflects a compact community with limited but strategically located areas designated for residential development.

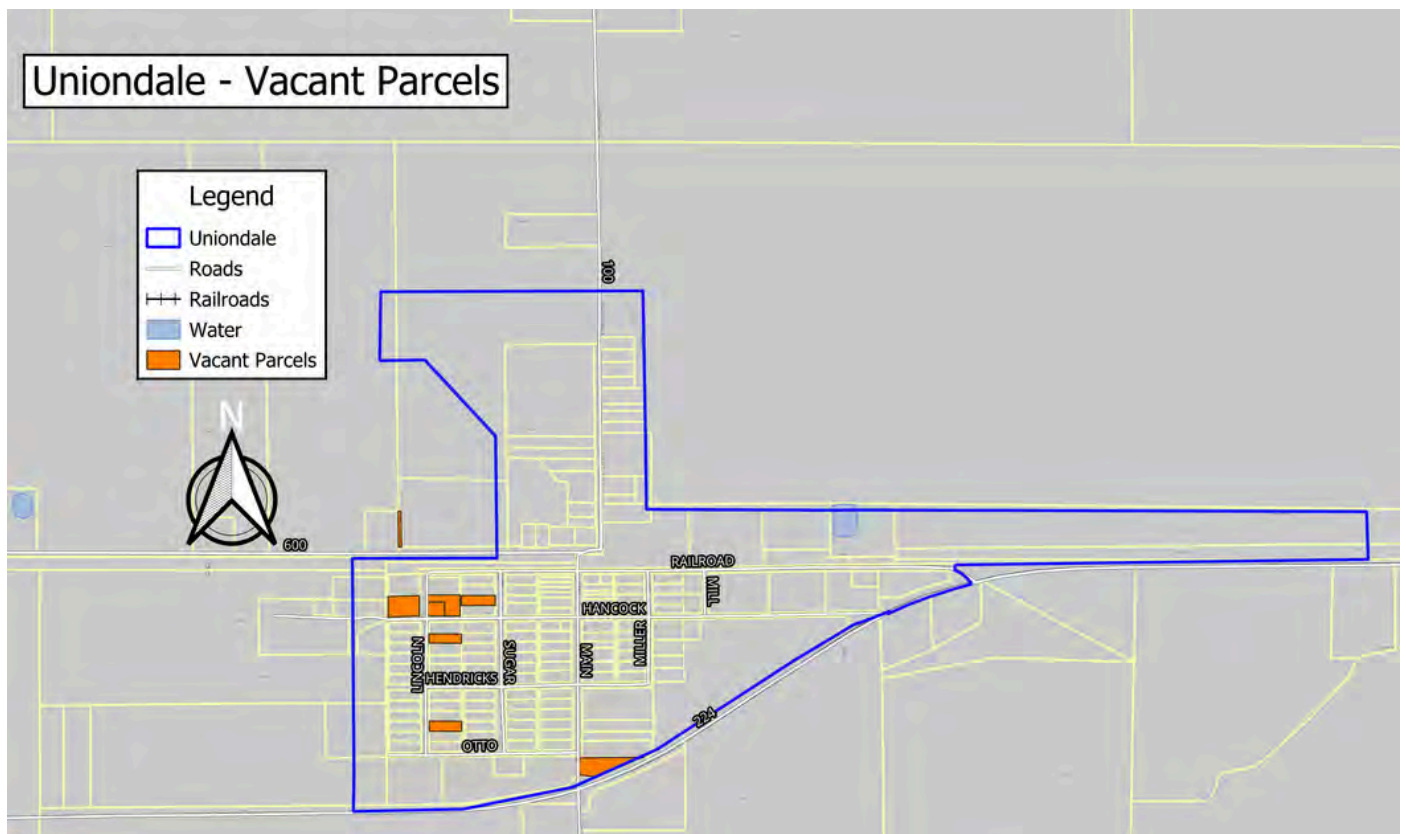


Figure 49: Uniondale Vacant Parcels Map; Source: Wells County GIS

COMMUNITY MEETING

In a recent community meeting, Uniondale residents shared candid reflections on the town's current conditions and future prospects. While participants expressed concern about the town's long-term viability, describing it as "a dying community," there was also a strong sense of possibility, particularly if quality jobs could be brought within the town limits. Much of the discussion centered around the need for infrastructure improvements, expanded housing opportunities, and renewed civic leadership.

Residents voiced frustration with the burden placed on a few individuals to keep the town running, and shared a desire for professional management and stronger collaboration with the county. They also identified areas of strength, including the ballpark, close social ties, and Uniondale's geographic location, which could support incremental growth. The conversation made clear that while the town faces real challenges, many of them are solvable with strategic investments and more coordinated leadership.

STRENGTHS

- Strong community bonds; residents know and support one another.
- Affordable housing and the lowest sewer rates in the county.
- Regional draw: the town's ballpark regularly brings in thousands.
- Geographic proximity to key highways and job centers.
- Two small businesses and two historic churches create a village-like character.

WEAKNESSES

- Over-reliance on elected officials for maintenance and operations.
- No professional town manager; limited administrative capacity.
- Aging housing stock and absentee property owners.
- Infrastructure issues, especially with drainage and sewer.
- Limited ability to pursue grants or development opportunities.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Vacant and underused lots along 224 could support new housing.
- Space available for light industrial development and jobs.
- Desire to bring back community staples (grocery, gas station).
- Potential for incremental growth with county partnerships and improved management.

THREATS

- Infrastructure deterioration outpacing the town's capacity to respond.
- Perception of decline discouraging investment.
- Lack of EMS responsiveness; fire services are now based in Markle.
- Small town board stretched thin; risk of burnout without support.

FUTURE VISION

Uniondale’s vision for the future is shaped by community engagement and local priorities, ensuring that growth and development align with the town’s unique character. Through public input and stakeholder discussions, a set of vision principles has been developed to guide Uniondale’s long-term strategy in alignment with Vision 2035.

This section outlines Uniondale’s vision principles, focusing on agricultural preservation, residential development, infrastructure improvements, and small-business growth. The town aims to maintain its rural charm while investing in essential infrastructure and stormwater management solutions to support future growth.

As Uniondale moves forward, these principles will inform future policies in areas such as land use planning, public infrastructure, and community investment. The implementation section will further refine these goals into actionable strategies, ensuring that Uniondale’s vision becomes reality while maintaining its strong sense of community and rural identity.

VISION PRINCIPLES: TOWN OF UNIONDALE

Uniondale will embrace sustainable growth that strengthens its economy, enhances infrastructure, and preserves its small-town character. By supporting housing development, improving community amenities, and fostering a strong sense of place, the town will create new opportunities while maintaining its close-knit identity. These vision principles will guide Uniondale’s future, ensuring thoughtful development that benefits both current and future residents.

1

Sustainable growth through housing and economic development.

2

Enhance infrastructure and community amenities.

3

Preserve character while building community.



FOCUS AREAS

Uniondale’s Focus Areas reflect the town’s commitment to preserving its small-town character while pursuing targeted development. This section translates Uniondale’s vision principles into actionable priorities, ensuring well-managed growth and infrastructure investment.

Key growth priorities for Uniondale include:

- Preserving agricultural land while allowing for controlled residential expansion.
- Encouraging small business development to support the local economy.
- Investing in infrastructure improvements, including road maintenance and stormwater management.
- Enhancing public spaces and community amenities for residents.
- Addressing long-term water and sewer system needs to support sustainable growth.

To ensure cohesive planning, the below map highlights designated growth areas and infrastructure projects, helping stakeholders make informed land use decisions. These Focus Areas will guide Uniondale’s future, ensuring that growth aligns with community priorities while maintaining the town’s rural character.

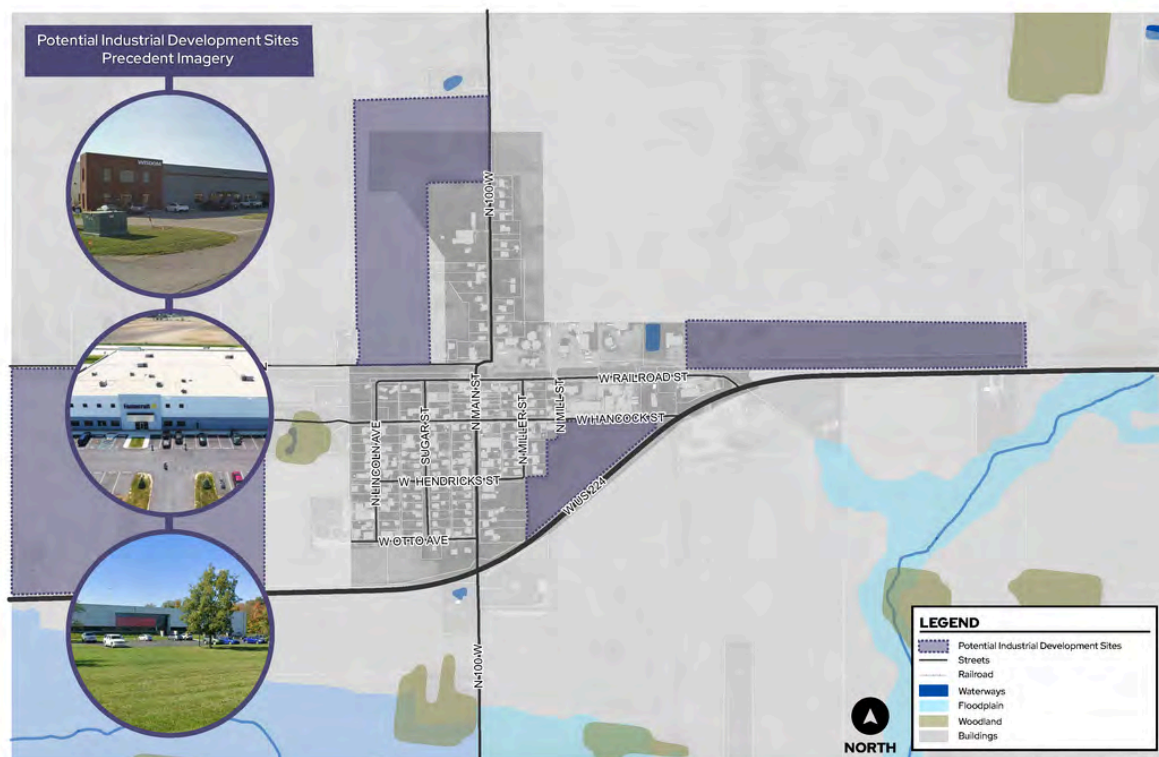


Figure 51: Uniondale Future Vision; Source: Context Design

Building on these priorities, Uniondale’s approach to growth balances economic expansion with the preservation of its small-town and rural character. The map focuses on potential industrial development sites, identifying strategic areas where new businesses and job opportunities can be introduced while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding community.

The highlighted industrial development areas support Uniondale’s goal of encouraging small business growth and economic diversification. These sites, strategically located near existing infrastructure and transportation corridors, provide opportunities for light industrial and commercial operations that can strengthen the local economy without compromising the town’s character.

While the map primarily emphasizes industrial development, Uniondale remains committed to infrastructure investments that support sustainable growth, including road maintenance, stormwater management, and long-term water and sewer system upgrades. These improvements will ensure that Uniondale’s development is well-managed and aligned with community needs.

Additionally, the town continues to prioritize preserving agricultural land and fostering controlled residential expansion that respects its rural roots. By guiding growth in a thoughtful and strategic manner, Uniondale ensures that its future remains sustainable, community-focused, and true to its small-town identity.

IMPLEMENTATION

Uniondale’s implementation framework offers a structured approach to advancing the town’s long-term growth strategy. Through two action-oriented matrices, this plan ensures that key priorities are addressed in a timely and efficient manner.

The first matrix establishes each priority and goal, detailing:

- Responsible Parties: Town officials, regional agencies, and local stakeholders.
- Potential Funding Sources: Public grants, infrastructure funds, and private partnerships.
- Cost: The estimated total cost for each strategy on a scale of \$ - \$\$\$\$.
- Priority Level: A classification of initiatives to guide project sequencing.
- Timeline: Estimated timeframes for goal completion.

The second matrix breaks down each goal into actionable steps, ensuring clear direction for implementation. These matrices will serve as practical tools for Uniondale’s leadership, providing a roadmap for strategic investment, infrastructure improvements, and long-term planning.

TOWN OF UNIONDALE VISION 1

Sustainable growth through housing and economic development.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
1	Reverse population decline and attract new residents by promoting owner-occupied housing development, including infill projects on town-owned lots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council • Redevelopment Commission • Builders • Habitat for Humanity • Financial Institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDIT • Grants • Low Interest Loans 	\$\$	High	12 - 36 Months
2	Identify areas for industrial development on the town's fringes to attract quality employers, aiming to create at least 100 jobs in the next decade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council • Utility Board • Wells County Economic Development • Redevelopment Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund • Utility Funds • TIF 	\$\$	High	12 - 36 Months, Ongoing

Vision 1, Strategy 1: Reverse population decline and attract new residents by promoting owner-occupied housing development, including infill projects on town-owned lots.

Objectives	Tactics
Promote Owner-Occupied Housing Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with developers to build new single-family homes that appeal to first-time buyers and growing families. • Offer financial incentives, such as reduced permit fees or property tax abatements, for owner-occupied housing projects. • Create a homebuyer assistance program to help residents with down payments and financing options.
Encourage Infill Development on Town-Owned Lots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and inventory vacant or underutilized town-owned properties suitable for residential development. • Develop a streamlined process for selling or leasing town-owned lots to builders committed to owner-occupied housing. • Implement design guidelines to ensure infill housing complements the existing character of Uniondale’s neighborhoods.
Market Uniondale as a Desirable Place to Live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a promotional campaign showcasing the town’s affordability, quality of life, and small-town charm. • Highlight Uniondale’s proximity to regional employment centers and recreational amenities to attract new residents. • Partner with real estate professionals to actively market available homes and new housing opportunities.

Vision 1, Strategy 2: Identify areas for industrial development on the town’s fringes to attract quality employers, aiming to create at least 150 jobs in the next decade.

Objectives	Tactics
Designate Industrial Development Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rezone targeted areas and ensure necessary infrastructure, such as roads, water, and sewer, is in place to support industrial growth. • Develop an incentive package, including tax abatements and expedited permitting, to attract manufacturers and logistics companies.
Proactively Recruit Quality Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with regional economic development organizations to market Uniondale as a business-friendly location. • Target industries that align with the local workforce and provide stable, well-paying jobs. • Attend industry trade shows and networking events to connect with potential investors and business leaders.
Invest in Workforce Development to Support Industrial Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with local schools and training programs to ensure residents have the skills needed for industrial and manufacturing jobs. • Establish partnerships with prospective employers to create apprenticeship and job training opportunities. • Promote workforce relocation incentives to attract skilled workers to the area.

TOWN OF UNIONDALE VISION 2

Enhance infrastructure and community amenities.

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
1	Invest in critical infrastructure improvements, particularly the sewer system, to support residential and industrial growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council • Utility Boards • Redevelopment Commission • Wells County Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund • EDIT • TIF • Utility Funds 	\$\$\$\$	High	12 - 36 Months
2	Build on Uniondale’s existing strengths, by expanding recreational opportunities and fostering events that benefit residents and draw visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council • Park Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund • Grants • Donations 	\$\$	Medium	2 - 5 Years
3	Explore hiring maintenance staff to ensure ongoing care for public spaces and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund • Utility Fund 	\$\$	Low	2 - 5 Years

Vision 2, Strategy 1: Invest in critical infrastructure improvements, particularly the sewer system, to support residential and industrial growth.

Objectives	Tactics
Upgrade and Expand the Sewer System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the existing sewer infrastructure to identify capacity limitations and necessary upgrades. • Secure state and federal funding to finance sewer system expansions that accommodate future residential and industrial development. • Implement phased improvements to ensure sewer capacity aligns with long-term growth projections.
Ensure Infrastructure Readiness for Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend sewer lines to designated residential and industrial growth areas to attract development. • Upgrade treatment facilities to handle increased demand while meeting environmental standards. • Improve stormwater management systems to prevent overflows and protect water quality.
Coordinate Infrastructure Planning with Economic and Housing Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align infrastructure investments with Uniondale’s land use plan to ensure efficient growth. • Work with developers to coordinate sewer upgrades with new housing and business developments. • Establish long-term maintenance and funding plans to sustain infrastructure reliability and functionality.

Vision 2, Strategy 2: Build on Uniondale’s existing strengths, by expanding recreational opportunities and fostering events that benefit residents and draw visitors.

Objectives	Tactics
Expand Recreational Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and develop new park spaces, playgrounds, or greenways to enhance outdoor recreation for residents. • Improve existing recreational facilities with upgraded equipment, walking trails, and picnic areas. • Partner with regional organizations to establish nature-based activities such as fishing areas, biking trails, and community gardens.
Host Community Events to Engage Residents and Attract Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize seasonal festivals, farmers’ markets, and holiday celebrations that highlight Uniondale’s small-town charm. • Develop event partnerships with local businesses and organizations to increase participation and sponsorship opportunities. • Establish an annual signature event that becomes a regional attraction and economic driver for the town.
Promote Tourism and Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create marketing materials that showcase Uniondale’s parks, events, and local attractions to draw visitors. • Encourage the development of small businesses, such as cafés, craft shops, and outfitters, that complement recreational tourism. • Improve signage and wayfinding to connect visitors to key points of interest throughout the town.

Vision 2, Strategy 3: Explore hiring a Town Manager or maintenance staff to ensure ongoing care for public spaces and services.

Objectives	Tactics
Expand Maintenance Staff for Public Spaces and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess current maintenance needs and determine the required staffing levels for parks, streets, and public facilities. • Develop a funding strategy to support new hires, including potential cost-sharing with county or regional agencies. • Create a routine maintenance plan to ensure parks, sidewalks, and town-owned properties are well-kept year-round.
Improve Efficiency in Public Service Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a work-order system to track maintenance requests and prioritize repairs. • Provide training and resources for maintenance staff to ensure high-quality service. • Explore partnerships with neighboring towns or the county for shared staffing or equipment to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

TOWN OF UNIONDALE VISION 3

Preserving Character While Building Community

	Strategy	Responsibility	Funding	Cost	Priority	Timeline
1	Maintain Uniondale's small-town charm and sense of community through thoughtful planning and collaboration with county government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Officials Wells County Areas Planning 	General Fund	\$	Medium	3 - 5 Years
2	Pursue incremental growth that aligns with the town's values, strengthens partnerships with neighboring municipalities, and ensures a cohesive vision for the future.	Elected Officials	General Fund	\$	Medium	3 - 5 Years
3	Promote initiatives that bring back essential services, such as grocery stores and gas stations, to enhance residents' quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council Wells County Economic Develop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Fund EDIT TIF 	\$\$	Medium	3 - 5 Years
4	Create property maintenance standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General fund 	\$	High	12 Months

Vision 3, Strategy 1: Maintain Uniondale’s small-town charm and sense of community through thoughtful planning and collaboration with county government.

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Ensure Thoughtful Planning that Preserves Uniondale’s Character</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop design guidelines that maintain the town’s small-town aesthetic while allowing for necessary growth and modernization. • Encourage infill development and adaptive reuse projects that complement existing structures and historic features. • Establish a public input process to ensure residents have a voice in planning decisions that impact the town’s character.
<p>Strengthen Collaboration with County Government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with county officials to align zoning and infrastructure planning with Uniondale’s growth objectives. • Advocate for county investment in key projects, such as road improvements, public utilities, and recreational amenities. • Develop joint initiatives with the county to support economic development, housing, and community services.
<p>Foster Community Engagement and Pride</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize town meetings and workshops to keep residents informed and involved in community planning efforts. • Support volunteer-led beautification projects, such as landscaping, mural installations, and public space improvements. • Celebrate Uniondale’s history and traditions through events, historical markers, and community storytelling initiatives.

Vision 3, Strategy 2: Pursue incremental growth that aligns with the town’s values, strengthens partnerships with neighboring municipalities, and ensures a cohesive vision for the future.

Objectives	Tactics
Encourage Growth that Aligns with Uniondale’s Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a growth strategy that prioritizes small-scale, well-planned development that maintains the town’s close-knit feel. • Support residential and commercial projects that enhance the community’s identity and quality of life. • Require new developments to incorporate green space, pedestrian connectivity, and architectural styles that reflect Uniondale’s character.
Strengthen Partnerships with Neighboring Municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regular meetings with nearby towns to coordinate infrastructure improvements, economic development, and regional planning efforts. • Explore shared service agreements for utilities, public safety, and maintenance to improve efficiency and reduce costs. • Work with regional organizations to advocate for funding and support for projects that benefit multiple communities.
Ensure a Cohesive Vision for the Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a long-term town development plan that balances growth with historic preservation and community values. • Implement zoning and land use policies that guide development in a way that complements Uniondale’s existing neighborhoods. • Engage residents and stakeholders in the planning process to ensure decisions reflect the town’s collective vision.

Vision 3, Strategy 3: Promote initiatives that bring back essential services, such as grocery stores and gas stations, to enhance residents’ quality of life.

Objectives	Tactics
Attract Essential Retail and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a market analysis to identify gaps in essential services, such as grocery stores, gas stations, and pharmacies. • Develop incentive programs, including tax abatements or reduced permitting fees, to attract businesses that provide daily necessities. • Work with commercial developers and local entrepreneurs to encourage investment in small-scale retail and service businesses.
Support Local Business Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a business recruitment campaign targeting companies that align with the town’s needs and growth potential. • Partner with small business support organizations to provide funding, mentorship, and resources for residents interested in opening essential service businesses. • Explore cooperative business models, such as a community-owned grocery store, to provide needed services while keeping profits local.
Improve Infrastructure to Support New Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that commercial development areas have the necessary infrastructure, including roads, utilities, and broadband, to attract and sustain businesses. • Streamline zoning and permitting processes for essential service businesses to encourage quicker establishment. • Work with county and state economic development agencies to secure grants and funding for commercial revitalization projects.

Vision 3, Strategy 4: Create property maintenance standards.

Objectives	Tactics
Adopt property maintenance ordinance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research property maintenance ordinances.• Create guidelines that fit within the needs of Uniondale.