



# Consolidated South Elkhart Economic Development/ Redevelopment Area and Consolidated Allocation Area Plan

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Consolidated South Elkhart Economic Development/ Redevelopment Area and  
Consolidated Allocation Area Plan  
City of Elkhart, Indiana

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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE  
CONSOLIDATED SOUTH ELKHART  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT AREA**

**Purpose and Introduction**

This document is the Economic Development Plan (Plan) for the Consolidated South Elkhart Economic Development/Redevelopment Area (the "Consolidated Area") which includes all of the real estate described in Exhibit E-2 attached to Declaratory Resolution 13-R-11 for the Consolidated Area. This Consolidated Plan is intended for approval by the Elkhart Redevelopment Commission, the Elkhart Plan Commission, and the Elkhart Common Council in conformance with Indiana Code §36-7-14 et seq.

**Plan Objectives**

The purpose of the Plan is to benefit the public health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of the City of Elkhart and Elkhart County, Indiana, by increasing the economic well-being of the City of Elkhart and the County of Elkhart, Indiana; and by increasing the real estate values in the City of Elkhart. The Consolidated Plan will promote opportunities for gainful employment, to retain and expand existing business enterprises, to attract and retain jobs, and to enhance the property tax base in the City of Elkhart, Indiana.

**Description of Consolidated Area**

The Consolidated Area is depicted on the map attached to the Declaratory Resolution for the Consolidated South Elkhart Economic Development/Redevelopment Area as Exhibit E-2 attached to the Declaratory Resolution. The Plan is attached to the Declaratory Resolution as Exhibit I. Capitalized terms used, but not defined, herein shall have the meanings given to such terms in the Declaratory Resolution.

**Acquisition of Real Property**

In addition to the real estate on the Acquisition Lists for each of the four Development Areas which are included in the Consolidated Area, which are incorporated within this Consolidated Plan by reference, the following additional parcels of real estate are identified for possible acquisition by the Redevelopment Commission in order to carry out this Consolidated Plan.

In addition to the real estate acquisition listed above, it is anticipated that portions of certain parcels of real estate within the Consolidated Area will be acquired to accommodate the construction of certain infrastructure projects identified in this Consolidated Plan. The Commission may provide all or a portion of the funding for such acquisition, but it is anticipated that the acquisition of these parcels will be made by the City of Elkhart in a manner that the City normally acquires real estate and/or right-of-way for such infrastructure projects.

The estimated cost of the acquisition of the listed parcels of real estate is approximately Ten Million Dollars (\$10,000,000.00).

#### Activities

Portions of the plan were originally developed as separate plans for four (4) separate development areas, being the South Main Street Gateway Economic Development Area, the Pierre Moran Redevelopment Project Area, the Southwest Industrial Economic Development Area, and the Sterling East Redevelopment Area. It is the intent to retain and incorporate herein by reference the four existing development plans to the extent that such projects have not been completed. It is also the intent to add new projects, both within the Consolidated South Area and within the real estate constituting the four original development areas.

For each infrastructure project described below, Redevelopment may fund the costs of real estate acquisition, engineering costs, architectural fees, surveying costs, title fees, design costs, legal costs, accounting costs, financing costs, project development and management costs, costs of permits, licenses, approvals or other similar costs in addition to the cost of construction.

The following list is a comprehensive overview of potential projects that may be undertaken using TIF funding. It is meant to supplement, not supersede, the previously established goals and objectives of the individual TIFs that are now being consolidated into the Consolidated South Area. These actions could include, but are not limited to, the following:

#### Planning Activities

On occasion, short-range and long-range plans will be needed to assist in providing direction for the Redevelopment Commission and city staff. These plans will be used to provide direction on how best to achieve the economic development and redevelopment goals of the TIF. The development of plans for Lusher Avenue, Hively Avenue, Prairie Street and South Main Street are priorities.

The planning activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Corridor study
- Access management strategy
- Beautification plan
- Utility needs study
- Storm water management
- Traffic improvement plan
- Pedestrian facility needs study
- ADA compliance and implementation study
- Zoning overlay recommendations
- Develop standards and overlay recommendations

### Streetscape / Beautification/Public Amenities

One of the major goals of a streetscape is to improve public amenities and aesthetics in an effort to spur interest and economic development in a specific area. Focused efforts throughout the Consolidated TIF area are recommended, with specific attention paid to major thoroughfares and gateways along Lusher Avenue, Hively Avenue, Prairie Street and South Main Street.

Improvements could include, without limitation:

- Walkways (sidewalks, multimodal paths, etc.)
- Lighting
- Landscaping
- Crosswalks
- Building façades
- Improvements to tree lawns
- Parks
- Community Gardens
- Right-of-Way Improvements
- Signage

Careful consideration should be given for selecting high-impact locations where projects will encourage private investment and, therefore, increment to the TIF.

### Gateway Improvements

Gateways are the "front door" to our community and give visitors their first impression of the community. It is important that special attention be given to improving the gateways in an effort to spur additional economic development in the area. When possible, TIF revenue should be leveraged with federal funds so as to maximize impact in areas where roadway improvements will encourage private investment. Major thoroughfares, connector streets, and primary intersections should be priorities specifically Lusher Avenue, Hively Avenue, Prairie Street and South Main Street.

### Transportation Improvements

Transportation corridors are a vital part of making Elkhart a complete community. Railroads, rivers, and existing roadways restrict traffic flow in a number of areas around the city. Staff will use a coordinated, comprehensive effort to determine what transportation improvements will be needed in the near term as well as into the future. Special attention will be given to major thoroughfares, connector streets, railroad underpass/overpass projects (including the Prairie Street Overpass Project), and gateways to the community.

### Utility, Technology Infrastructure and Right-of-Way Improvements

Easy access to development sites and public utilities is vitally important to future economic development in the community. Where appropriate, TIF money will be spent to construct, repair, extend and upgrade utilities, technology infrastructure, and right-of-ways to better serve the TIF area. These actions could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Traffic Devices, Street Lights, etc.
- Water, Fire Hydrants, Drainage, Sewer, and Storm Water Infrastructure
- Technology Infrastructure

- Curbs, Intersections, Overpass/Underpass, Roadways, Alleys, Bridges, etc.
- Gas, Electric, and other Utilities including burying of utilities

#### Property Acquisition / Demolition / Rehabilitation

On occasion, the private sector is unable or unwilling to acquire, demolish, and / or rehabilitate properties. There are many properties throughout the Consolidated South Area TIF area that should be considered for acquisition and either demolition or rehabilitation.

The properties on the Property Acquisition List may be considered for acquisition. These properties would be considered as under-performing to the extent that adaptive re-use of the existing structure will likely not be sustainable. Hence, acquisition and demolition through a public-private partnership will likely be required. Costs for acquisition will vary depending upon the structure and possibility of partnerships.

In addition to direct acquisition of for sale properties on the acquisition list, the City will continue to work with Elkhart County to acquire tax delinquent properties. This process is critical to addressing the vacant and abandon property issues that can cause blight in the area and works against efforts to develop this area.

#### Development Incentives

Public-private partnerships will likely be necessary in some of the most challenged properties. This may extend to assistance in assemblage or acquisition, public infrastructure, reimbursement agreements, tax incentives or low interest loans or grants.

#### Adoption of the SoMa Implementation Strategy

The SoMa area over laps with the Consolidated South Area. This plan set forth a series of activities and strategies to improve the area. The activities and strategies set forth in the SoMa Plan will be utilized in the Consolidated South Area as and when appropriate to make local public improvements as defined in this plan.

### Plan Financing

It is the intention to fund the Consolidated Plan from incremental ad valorem real property taxes (and personal property taxes where applicable) allocated under Indiana Code §36-7-14-39. Other funding sources may be utilized if necessary to complete the projects set forth in the Consolidated Plan. It is further understood that tax incremental ad valorem property taxes may be used to reimburse other initial funding sources as permitted by I.C. §36-7-14-39. The funds generated by the incremental ad valorem property taxes may be used for additional infrastructure improvements made within or connected to the Consolidated Allocation Area or serving or benefitting the Consolidated Allocation Area, and such other purposes as allowed under I.C. §36-7-14-39, as amended.

The costs that may be financed from the incremental ad valorem property taxes include, but are not necessarily limited to, the cost of any land to be acquired, acquisition, of right-of-way or easements, cost of materials and labor, and all reasonable architectural, engineering, legal, financing, accounting, advertising, and supervisory expenses related to the development and/or implementation of the Plan.

### Plan Cost Estimates

The total cost to implement the proposed Consolidated Plan, not including real estate acquisition costs, is estimated to be Eight Million Dollars (\$8,000,000.00).

### Amendment of the Plan

Subject to compliance with the requirements specified in Indiana Code §36-7-4-17.5, and other applicable provisions of I.C. §36-7-14, the Redevelopment Commission may amend this Consolidated Plan.

## **City of Elkhart Consolidated Development Area Purpose Statement**

It is necessary to create a Development (Economic and Redevelopment) Plan to determine the activities that will be undertaken by the City of Elkhart Redevelopment Commission in relation to any of the development areas under its management. The purpose of the Plan is to benefit the public health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of both the City and County by increasing the economic well-being of the City of Elkhart and the County of Elkhart, Indiana; and by increasing the real estate values in the City of Elkhart. The Plan will promote opportunities for gainful employment, to retain and expand existing business enterprises, to attract and retain jobs, and to enhance the property tax base in the City of Elkhart, Indiana. Over the years, the City of Elkhart adopted separate plans for four (4) distinct development areas in southern Elkhart (South Main Street Gateway Economic Development Area, Pierre Moran Redevelopment Project Area, Southwest Industrial Economic Development Area, and Sterling East Redevelopment Area). At the time these Plan areas were established, they were viewed as individual areas that did not relate to the surrounding areas or the other Plan areas in southern Elkhart. With the establishment of the most recent of these Plan areas in 2012, it became apparent to City staff that although the individual Plans were appropriate for their districts, the revitalization and future development of southern Elkhart as a whole was not being addressed. The discussion about how to proceed kept returning to the idea that the Plan areas would be more than the sum of the parts if they could be joined. There are some aspects of each of the individual Plan areas that are unique and these plans should be retained so that the plan details are not lost. This consolidation, however, would allow for a larger Plan area so that projects with real impact could be developed and thus spurring significant development in southern Elkhart.

The following list is an overview of potential projects that may be undertaken using TIF funding. It is meant to supplement, not supersede, the previously established goals and objectives of the individual TIFs that are now being combined into the Consolidated South Area.

These actions could include, but are not limited to, the following:

### Planning Activities

Each of the current Plans allows for planning activities, but the Consolidated Plan will allow for larger scale studies that investigate issues that cross current Plan area boundaries.

### Streetscape / Beautification/ Public Amenities

Many of the current Plans call for these types of public amenities and aesthetics improvements as a way to spur interest and economic development in a specific area. The Consolidated TIF will allow these projects to be selected based on high-impact locations where projects will encourage private investment and, therefore, increment to the TIF.

### Gateway Improvements

Improvements to the Plan area's gateways would be new to some of the existing areas. This concept is similar to the public improvements listed above but also includes the concepts of entryways into the Plan area as critical for development. This can be thought of as a specialty type of public improvement that focuses specifically on main thoroughfares and entryways into the Plan area.

### Transportation Improvements

All of the existing Plans call for roadway and street improvements, but the Consolidated area will allow for the evaluation and improvement to transportation systems as a tool for development. The difference in the two types of projects has to do with scale. By looking only at what can be done in the individual areas, the benefit to the transportation system as a whole is lost. Again, the idea here is that the benefits that can be achieved through consolidation is greater than what individual parts can accomplish alone.

### Utility, Technology Infrastructure and Right-of-Way Improvements

None of the existing Plans call for technology infrastructure. This will be critical as we move towards more technology-driven development in southern Elkhart.

### Property Acquisition / Demolition / Rehabilitation

Only two of the four Plans specify properties for acquisition. The other two (Pierre Moran and Southwest Industrial) do not have an acquisition list. This means that the Redevelopment Commission cannot acquire any properties through traditional sale process. They can acquire tax certificates from Elkhart County but that limits the usefulness of the property acquisition and assembling tools of the Redevelopment Commission.

### Development Incentives

Public-private partnerships will likely be necessary in some of the most challenged properties. This may extend to assistance in assemblage or acquisition, public infrastructure, reimbursement agreements, tax incentives or low interest loans or grants. This activity is listed in most of the existing plans but is critical for any development plan.

### Adoption of the SoMa Implementation Strategy

The SoMa Implementation Strategy is a new activity and has been added to this Plan as the portion of the South Main Gateway Plan area that overlaps with the SoMa area will become part of the Consolidated South Area. It is important that we support the implementation of this strategy throughout the SoMa area and not limit the revitalization efforts to the Downtown Plan area.