



City of Elkhart Comprehensive Plan Update



Adopted
February 02, 2015



Acknowledgements

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Planning does not have a defined beginning and end. It is an on-going process that responds to new information and circumstances and incorporates changing conditions into decisions. Circumstances that may change include physical conditions of buildings and/or infrastructure, economic climate, the natural environment, and social and community goals.

In early 2009, the City of Elkhart's Planning & Development Department initiated a process to update its 1996 Comprehensive Land Use Plan and revise the planning and development direction for the City. The timing of this planning process uses the current economic "down time" to the City's advantage to establish a framework for planning and development activity that is representative of the City's vision for the future and value system. As Elkhart, the State of Indiana, and the nation continue to recover and re-adjust to the new economic normal, through its Comprehensive Plan Update, the City is preparing itself for new opportunities and investment over the next 20 years

Vision

A vision statement and six supporting goals were developed using input gathered during the planning process' first Community Open House and refined by the Steering Committee. This vision statement incorporates the community values and factors of livability as identified by Elkhart citizens. It is an inspirational description of what Elkhart would like to be in the future and serves as a guide for decision-making and community expectations. The six goals represent six tenets of the City's desired ultimate physical, social, and/or economic development that strengthen the vision and frame subsequent actions.

Elkhart is the city with a heart. It is a safe, attractive, and remarkable community featuring well-maintained neighborhoods, vibrant economy, distinctive downtown, environmental stewardship, and a coordinated transportation system offering its citizens a desirable quality of life through access to exemplary schools, public facilities, parks, and services. Elkhart is a well-respected destination of choice for living, working, and recreating achieved by responsible leadership and collaborative partnerships among citizens, the business community, institutions, and government.

Downtown/Cultural

Continue revitalization of Elkhart's downtown to re-establish itself as a center of commercial, civic, cultural, and social activity.

Downtown is a part of Elkhart's iconic identity. In most communities, the economic health and vitality of a city is gauged by the condition of its downtown. Revitalization of Downtown Elkhart has been a continuous effort for more than a decade.

Elkhart’s citizens and City leadership have indicated on numerous occasions that downtown is important and should be an economic development priority for the community. Downtown has many residential, retail, and commercial space competitors throughout Elkhart and the Michiana Region. Responding to this competition and downtown’s competitive advantages, the Comprehensive Plan Update recommends preparing downtown properties for a streamlined redevelopment process, capitalizing on downtown’s unique qualities, enhancing downtown’s civic, cultural, and social niche, and assisting the downtown management organization. The Comprehensive Plan Update supports the previous planning endeavors, in particular the 2004 Downtown Action Agenda, which outline strategies for downtown redevelopment, revitalization, and organizational initiatives.

Neighborhoods

Direct investment, amenities, and new housing development to established residential areas within the City’s boundaries to create additional opportunities for diverse ages, income levels, and stages of life in neighborhoods of choice.

Neighborhoods are the places where everyday life occurs. They create and form communities and flourish with the availability of quality and proximate housing, schools, jobs, health care, public safety, retail, and services. Elkhart’s residential population has experienced a modest increase since 2000. The demand for new housing, however, is stagnant and older neighborhoods near the center of the City are continuing to experience high vacancy rates. Residential growth has occurred primarily through annexation of subdivisions in suburban areas adjacent to Elkhart’s outer City limits. The Comprehensive Plan Update emphasizes the need and desire to maintain and reinvest in existing residential neighborhoods. This maintenance and reinvestment involves physical improvements to housing stock and gateways, public and private sector financial commitments, revised review and approval processes, and programmatic support to reinforce Elkhart’s residential neighborhoods. Through these various means, it is important to provide housing products at various price points that appeal to homebuyers and renters that demand a quality home in or near the center city.

Mobility

Establish and maintain a balanced and connected system for all modes of transportation within the City and to regional networks.

Elkhart’s transportation system includes air, rail, water, and surface. A balanced transportation system provides opportunity for all means of travel in a cooperative and coordinated manner to meet the needs of the community. It also fully integrates with adjacent

land uses, serves the travel demands and desires of citizens, and is compatible with the natural environment. A transportation system that provides safe, convenient, and efficient movement of traffic is vital to a community's well-being. It has significant influence on the appearance, character, and economic viability and is an important consideration when current and future land use decisions are made. It affects the "where, when, and why" that development takes place and creates access to markets, employment, and investment.

The Comprehensive Plan Update's recommendations pertaining to mobility include strategies that increase efficiency and safety while meeting the access and needs of all motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation. These recommendations are intended to assist public officials, developers, and other interested parties in making decisions relating to land use, public right-of-way improvements, funding opportunities, future public investment, and other transportation issues.

Aesthetics, Natural Resources & Open Space

Create opportunities for investment, activities, and programs that ensure protection of the City's built and natural environments, maintenance of open space and greenways, and respect for its heritage.

Elkhart's heritage and natural resources are essential components of the community. Most notably, the St. Joseph and Elkhart rivers have shaped the development of the City and their presence contributes to the community's character, environmental quality, and recreational amenities. Because Elkhart's natural resources are inherent components of the City, the provision of adequate greenspace and the protection of sensitive environmental areas must be considered as necessary public facilities similar to infrastructure and utility services. Additionally, heritage preservation is also an important local government service and a sensible investment, returning multiple benefits from modest expenditures. The intent of the Aesthetics, Natural Resources & Open Space Goal of this Comprehensive Plan Update is to protect significant, scarce, non-renewable resources and develop ways to capitalize on these assets while advancing preservation endeavors. To achieve this goal, environmental and heritage stewardship should be approached as a shared responsibility. Efforts will require coordination among City departments, not-for-profit organizations, the private sector, and other local, state, and federal agencies to work together to maintain Elkhart's unique sense of place.

Health & Safety

Coordinate public services and amenities with land use decisions to protect the well-being and quality of life of Elkhart's citizens and its environment.

The advantages of amenable intergovernmental relations include thoughtful and proficient land use decision-making processes, coordinated growth management and preservation, efficient delivery of services, and economies of scale. Growth and development cross jurisdictional boundaries and departmental responsibilities. There are no requirements for comprehensive plans to address intergovernmental collaboration. However, as one of the six primary goals of this Comprehensive Plan Update, the health and safety of the Elkhart community includes maximizing public resources through cooperation, streamlined processes, and consolidated efforts to provide for responsible use of land and logical growth. By coordinating decision-making and approval processes, the City of Elkhart can better connect and align transportation systems, City services, and other infrastructure and resources with neighborhoods, commercial centers, institutions, and recreational facilities.

Planning Themes

Four primary planning themes have developed throughout the planning process:

1. Land Use
2. Environment & Design
3. Economic Development
4. Corridor Character (land use + transportation)

Diagrams illustrating these primary planning themes were presented to the Steering Committee members and Public throughout the process for feedback, comment and approval. The summary of the concepts are as follows:

Future Land Use Plan

There are only slight differentiations between the existing and future land use maps. The future land use map introduces a new land use category, mixed-use. This land use category is not represented in the City's existing land use, nor is it mentioned in the 1996 *Comprehensive Plan*. The trend throughout the US was the separation of uses. The planning profession and community leaders have determined that a mix of uses in certain places in a community will help an area thrive and provide the quality of life residents are looking for.

The overall concept of the proposed future land use plan is to maintain and reinvest in the core of the City, including residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, industrial areas, institutions, infrastructure, and open space within the existing City limits. In addition to the new mixed-use land use category, the future land use plan includes more commercial uses and less industrial uses along key corridors. Mixed-use emphasizes retail and housing and reinforces the *Downtown Action Agenda's* four districts. Once this plan is adopted, and the City completes its current annexations, the 1986 annexation plan will have been substantially met. Therefore, to reflect the goals of the *Comprehensive Plan Update*, the annexation plan should be updated.

Future Environment & Design Framework

The overall concept of the proposed future environment & design framework includes three components: 1) focus on and improve first impression areas such as entry points into the City and along key transportation routes to enhance the visual perception of Elkhart; 2) capitalize on natural features for economic and environmental sustainability; and 3) set a higher standard for design within the community.

As illustrated on the framework diagram, eight key entry points in the City are highlighted for aesthetic enhancement. The Riverwalk is proposed to expand outside of the downtown districts and a new blue line trail connects parks, natural habitat areas, and other waterfront amenities along the St. Joseph River. Additionally, an expanded South Main Street District as defined in the *Downtown Action Agenda* enhances the economic and physical environment of the City's southern gateway. Expanded overlay district boundaries include the Main Street corridor south of downtown; reinforced overlay district parameters will help to distinguish appropriate design and development in both urban and suburban contexts.

Future Economic Development Framework

The overall concept of the proposed future economic development framework is to target new investment to high profile locations that offer the highest return on investment potential.

The framework diagram highlights five significant (high profile) redevelopment areas identified for new investment, eight key entry points (also high profile) in the City are highlighted for aesthetic enhancement, ten areas of concentrated activity within walking distance of residential neighborhoods identified for additional neighborhood-scaled development, and expanded overlay district boundaries to include the Main Street corridor south of downtown.

Corridor Character Framework

The corridor character framework has been a work in progress since the planning process' first public open house in January 2010. At that time, Elkhart citizens were asked to assign "personalities" to major and minor arterials, or road segments, throughout the City. These personalities consider both transportation and adjacent land uses and the reciprocal relationship between these two functions.

The framework's overall concept uses the identified personalities to guide future corridor design and development of public and private spaces. There are five identified corridor types that are present throughout the City including: 1) industrial corridor, 2) commercial corridor, 3) commuter route, 4) neighborhood link, and 5) scenic drive. Application of corridor character types reflects the land use and transportation relationship and a road may traverse through several corridor character types with a change in context and adjacent land uses.

Conclusion

The Elkhart Comprehensive Plan should serve as Elkhart's guide for land use and development policies for development and redevelopment in the study area. The long range goals, objectives, and recommendations, along with the supporting maps, are intended to guide development decisions towards the community's collective vision of the future. Members of the city staff, Plan Commission and City Council should interpret the goals and objectives as a long-term and deliberately broad vision. The commission and council should keep in mind that this plan reflects the community's values. City officials cannot expect to control all circumstances. However, the spirit of this plan should be adhered to in order to ensure that the community's values are maintained. The strategic action steps, on the other hand, are intended to direct the day-to-day decisions concerning more specific and task oriented activities. Members of the City Council should interpret the strategic actions steps by saying, "given our long-term goals and changing community conditions, these are the projects and programs that we want to complete in the short-term and long-term, and this is how we plan to accomplish them." Interpreting the plan in this way will enable the members of both the commission and city to justify their approval, or denial, of any proposed development or redevelopment in Elkhart.

The City's comprehensive plan contains many different recommendations in each Chapter that will be carried out through existing departments and programs. During the creation of this plan, several departments have come together to create

this plan. The future implementation of the plan requires the on-going relationship between these departments. Strong partnerships are needed to foster good communication and provide additional alliances in the implementation of some of these recommendations. The implementers/champions should present the recommendations of this plan formally to the City's various boards and commissions.

The implementation of the comprehensive plan will require the City's financial commitment and support to carry out the policies and achieve the vision and goals set forth herein. These financial commitments should include programs and policies the city currently has in place. Although it is the City's intent to administer this plan with the current financial resources available, monies may need to be set aside in future budgets to carry out some of the recommended actions. The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan does not authorize expenditures for its implementation. The City Council, in accordance with state statutes and the City policies, may authorize the financial resources to implement the plan.



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Chapter I

Introduction

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Purpose & Need

In the late 2000s, the City of Elkhart experienced some devastating and challenging economic set-backs that garnered national attention from the media and the White House. Elkhart was highlighted as a case study in the nation's economic recession in 2009, with its nearly 19 percent unemployment rate (March 2009) and the downturn of the recreational vehicle (RV) industry. As the national unemployment rate continued to increase throughout 2009, Elkhart's unemployment rate started to decrease and the RV industry began to experience a slight improvement throughout the year.

In early 2009, the City of Elkhart's Planning & Development Department initiated a process to update its 1996 *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* and revise the planning and development direction for the City. The timing of this planning process uses the current economic "down time" to the City's advantage to establish a framework for planning and development activity that is representative of the City's vision for the future and value system. As Elkhart, the State of Indiana, and the nation continue to recover and re-adjust to the new economic normal, through its *Comprehensive Plan Update*, the City is preparing itself for new opportunities and investment over the next 20 years.

Study Area

Located in north central Indiana, Elkhart is part of the Elkhart-Goshen Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as well as the South Bend-Elkhart-Mishawaka Combined Statistical Area, also known as Michiana. Approximately 32 square miles in area, the City of Elkhart is located in the northwest corner of Elkhart County. The City is located within portions of Concord, Osolo, Baugo, and Cleveland townships and is adjacent to the Michigan state line.

This *Comprehensive Plan Update* builds on and revises the City of Elkhart's 1996 *Comprehensive Land Use Plan*. Unlike the 1996 *Plan*, this *Plan Update* only includes the 23.45 square miles of the City of Elkhart corporate boundaries. The previous *Plan* included the corporate boundaries along with Baugo, Cleveland, Osolo, Concord, and a portion of Washington townships.

How to Use This Plan

A comprehensive plan is a document with a long-range view that serves as a guide for making land use decisions, preparing capital improvement programs, and determining the rate, timing, and location of future growth. It is based on establishing long-term vision, goals, and objectives that direct investment and development activity within a city. A comprehensive plan typically considers a 20-year planning horizon, although plan updates can

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occur before the expiration date if the recommendations are implemented, goals are achieved, community conditions change, values and/or priorities shift, or if circumstances dictate that the plan is no longer germane. As such, a comprehensive plan should be reviewed annually to determine progress and relevancy.

The development of the City of Elkhart's *Comprehensive Plan Update* is the result of a multi-year, three phased process. The phased planning approach is organized around three activities:

Phase 1 – Visioning (2009)

Phase 2 – Guiding Principles & Physical Planning (2010)

Phase 3 – Implementing (2011)

This plan addresses four primary planning themes: 1) land use, 2) transportation, 3) environment and design, and 4) economic development. These themes are incorporated into the requirements for comprehensive plans specified by Indiana Code 36-7-4-502:

Sec. 502.A comprehensive plan must contain at least the following elements:

1. A statement of objectives for the future development of the City of Elkhart.
2. A statement of policy for the land use development of the City of Elkhart.
3. A statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.

Once adopted, this *Comprehensive Plan Update* will:

- Update existing land use inventories
- Address key land use, transportation, urban design, and other development issues
- Provide guidance for future land use and infrastructure decisions
- Outline policy to direct future growth, development, and reinvestment

The Comprehensive Plan will be used by the City of Elkhart Plan Commission and City Council as required under Indiana Law. This plan serves as the basis for development and infrastructure policy related to development, redevelopment and management of land uses. This plan should provide the policy basis to support any

changes in the Zoning and Subdivision Control Ordinance as well as provide guidance on the creation of a Capital Improvements Plan.

Change in Land Use/Re-Zoning Review

From a policy standpoint, the plan will provide guidance specifically for changes in land use through rezonings or future land use amendments. The City Council and Plan Commission should give consideration to the relevant section of the plan when reviewing applications and desired changes. Specifically this review would determine whether a rezone or land use amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, appropriate recommendations in the Plan and Future Land Use Map. If the application is supported by the various relevant sections of the Plan, then the rezoning/ amendment should be approved. If the application is not supported by the various relevant sections of the Plan, then the Council and Commission should either deny the application or approve the application with conditions that would make it consistent with the intent of the Plan. A situation could occur where changes have occurred either socially, physically, culturally or economically in Elkhart that make the Comprehensive Plan inconsistent with the values and goals of the City. At that point, the Commission or Council should note that and the comprehensive plan needs to be updated to be consistent and responsive to the changing conditions.

Applicability of Comprehensive Plan to Other Planning Tools

The Comprehensive Plan also provides guidance for land use planning tools and development actions and decisions. The specific tools of the planning process could include zoning ordinance, subdivision control ordinance, capital improvement programs, land bank programs, redevelopment programs.

Subdivision Control Regulations

Subdivision control regulations provide standards for the division of land and the development of many types of infrastructure within subdivisions. Standards could include the splitting of the number of tracts of land, design of streets, sidewalk and pathway locations and other physical improvements to the land. The purpose of Subdivision Control Regulations is to protect the owner from inadequate services which are needed for different types of land uses as well as limit the burden on taxpayers for having to provide additional costs for underserved or improperly designed improvements. The Elkhart Plan Commission has a process for reviewing subdivisions.

Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance regulates land use and development for land within the city. It controls the size, density, and character of development within a district through the use of developmental standards. Additionally, zoning classifications are broken into permitted land uses within each district as well as conditional and special exception land uses. The Ordinance has been amended to include architectural standards for the exterior of buildings in designated overlay or historic districts. The majority of the chapters of the plan address the various design standards, community character, placement and location of development and redevelopment that would support the zoning ordinance.

Building Code

The Building Code regulates the condition and maintenance of all property, buildings and structures. It also provides the standards for supplied utilities to ensure structures are safe, sanitary and fit for habitation. The Plan provides specific guidance in Chapter Three regarding the appearance of the Elkhart Community.

Minimum Housing Ordinance (Code Enforcement)

The Housing Ordinance regulates and governs the condition and maintenance of all residential buildings and structures. Chapter Two discusses existing housing stock and housing conditions in detail. The Plan then provides specific guidance in Chapter Three and Chapter Four regarding future housing needs in the community, maintaining existing housing stock and future areas for redevelopment of additional housing.



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Chapter 2

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Process Overview

This project was an update of the 1996 plan. It was a joint effort undertaken by the City of Elkhart's Planning & Development Department Staff and the CHA Consulting Planning and Urban Design Team. Due to financial considerations, the project was phased over a three year period in order to allow City Staff and RW Armstrong to create a joint plan that will be implemented after its adoption.

Phase 1 – Visioning (2009). In this Phase the team kicked off the project and explained to the public and steering committee the format, phasing and duration of the project. The team also focused on identifying existing resources that needed to be included in the process, documenting issues and opportunities within the community and crafting a vision statement and goals. The phase ended with a public open house.

Phase 2 – Guiding Principles & Physical Planning (2010/2011). Phase 2 built on the efforts of Phase 1 and the input generated at the Community Open House. The Steering Committee further refined the draft vision statement and the livability indicators evaluated and ranked at the Open House. The vision and livability indicators from Phase 1 became the foundation for guiding principles. Guiding principles from Phase 2 set the direction for the remainder of the planning process, identified and confirmed the focus areas and plan priorities, and developed goals and objectives that became the organizing elements for the final plan recommendations.

Phase 3 – 2013 Adoption (2011/2012). Phase 3 concluded the *Comprehensive Plan Update* planning process. The focus of this final phase was the completion of plan recommendations, implementation tools, and preparation of the final document. The City's Planning & Development Department along with the CHA Consulting Team prepared the final document and presented it to both the Plan Commission and City Council in 2013.

Key Events

The project kicked off in June of 2009 with a Steering Committee meeting of 13 people including representatives of the City Council, Plan Commission, Community Development Department, Engineering Department and interested citizens. The first meeting focused on planning process and discussing issues and opportunities within the City of Elkhart.

In August 2009, the planning team interviewed 13 community leaders and stakeholders with knowledge of Elkhart's real estate market, economic development efforts, educational system, utilities, civic organizations, social services, and city government.

These interviewees discussed with the planning team community assets and needs, vision for the future, development opportunities, physical and social liabilities, economic challenges, neighborhood concerns and initiatives, design and aesthetics, social inequities, suggestions for improvement, and civic engagement.

Also in August, 2009 the planning team facilitated a Planning Vision Workshop with City department directors to introduce the Comprehensive Plan Update planning process and ascertain the capital improvement projects, plans, and efforts that are concurrent to the Update planning process. Through this discussion, department directors briefed the planning team and their peers on the current events of their departments. Additionally, department directors were asked to identify key findings, issues, and in-process items that are relevant to the development of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

In January 2010, the planning team hosted a public Open House to introduce the Comprehensive Plan Update planning process to Elkhart community residents and stakeholders. This Open House allowed them to review the work completed to date, validate initial findings, and provide input regarding community values. The information collected then assisted in the definition of plan recommendations and strategies throughout the continued planning process. The Open House's informal format was organized around four stations.

In September 2010, a second Steering Committee meeting, was held. This meeting focused on revisiting the project purpose and process as well as Phase I findings, reviewing the Open House results, discussing the plan's vision and goals, reviewing physical and market conditions, and planning for next steps.

The third Steering Committee meeting was held in December 2010. The focus of this meeting centered on refining the future plan frameworks for land use, environment & design, economic development, and corridor character, evaluating recommendations, and determining recommendation implementation tools, responsibility, level of importance, and level of difficulty.

In February 2011, the planning team facilitated a public Open House to provide an opportunity to introduce Phase 2 of the *Comprehensive Plan Update* planning process to Elkhart community residents and stakeholders and allowed them to review the work completed to date, validate initial findings, and provide input regarding community values that will assist in the definition of the plan recommendations and strategies throughout the continued planning process.

Other Planning Initiatives

The 1996 *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* included a series of goals and objectives pertaining to residential development, economic development, transportation systems, and quality of life. These goals and objectives provided the framework for the plan's recommendations and action plan. The action plan outlined 12 general strategies and six downtown strategies for implementation. These strategies were reviewed by the planning team and the Steering Committee; they will be used as a checklist throughout the development of the *Plan Update*.

General Strategies

1. Plan Commission Review and Hearing
2. City Council Review and Hearing
3. Adopt the Land Use Plan
4. Revise/Update the City and County Zoning/Subdivision Codes
5. Elkhart County Zoning and Subdivision Regulations
6. Property Maintenance Code Updates
7. Focused Funding
8. Marketing/Public Relations Campaign
9. Sign Code Updates
10. Gateway Projects
11. Neighborhood ID Program
12. Capture Intermodal Opportunities
13. Update the Water/Sewer Master Plan

Downtown Strategies

1. Establish Special Overlay Zoning Districts
2. Increase Home Ownership in Inner-City Neighborhoods
3. Maintain the Single Family Character of Neighborhoods
4. Develop a Master Plan for the Downtown Area
5. Expand Responsibilities of Redevelopment Commission
6. Evaluate the Need and Location for a Civic Center

It is important to note that the 1996 *Plan* geographic boundaries included the City of Elkhart as well as Baugo, Cleveland, Concord, Osolo, and Washington (portion) townships, so some recommendations include action by Elkhart County government. The 2009-2012 *Plan Update* only includes the Elkhart City limits in its study area boundaries. In 2006, the Elkhart County Advisory Plan Commission and the Elkhart County Board of Commissioners

prepared the *Elkhart County Comprehensive Land Use Plan* for the unincorporated areas in the County's 16 townships.

In addition to the 1996 *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* and the 2006 *County Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, the following documents were also reviewed as part of the *Update* planning process:

- *Master Plan for Water Supply & Distribution 2001-2015* (2002)
- *The Horizon Project: Today's Vision for a Dynamic Elkhart County Tomorrow* (2003)
- *Elkhart Downtown Action Agenda* (2004)
- *Elkhart Municipal Airport Layout Plan Report* (2006/2007)
- *Elkhart County Northwest Gateway Area Plan* (2008)
- *SR 19 Corridor Vision/Northpointe Neighborhood Conceptual Redevelopment Strategy* (2008)
- *City of Elkhart Long-Term Control Plan* (2009)
- *Comprehensive Five Year Park Master Plan 2009-2013* (2009)
- *2010 - 2015 Elkhart Consolidated Housing Plan* (2010)

Demographic Overview & Community Profile

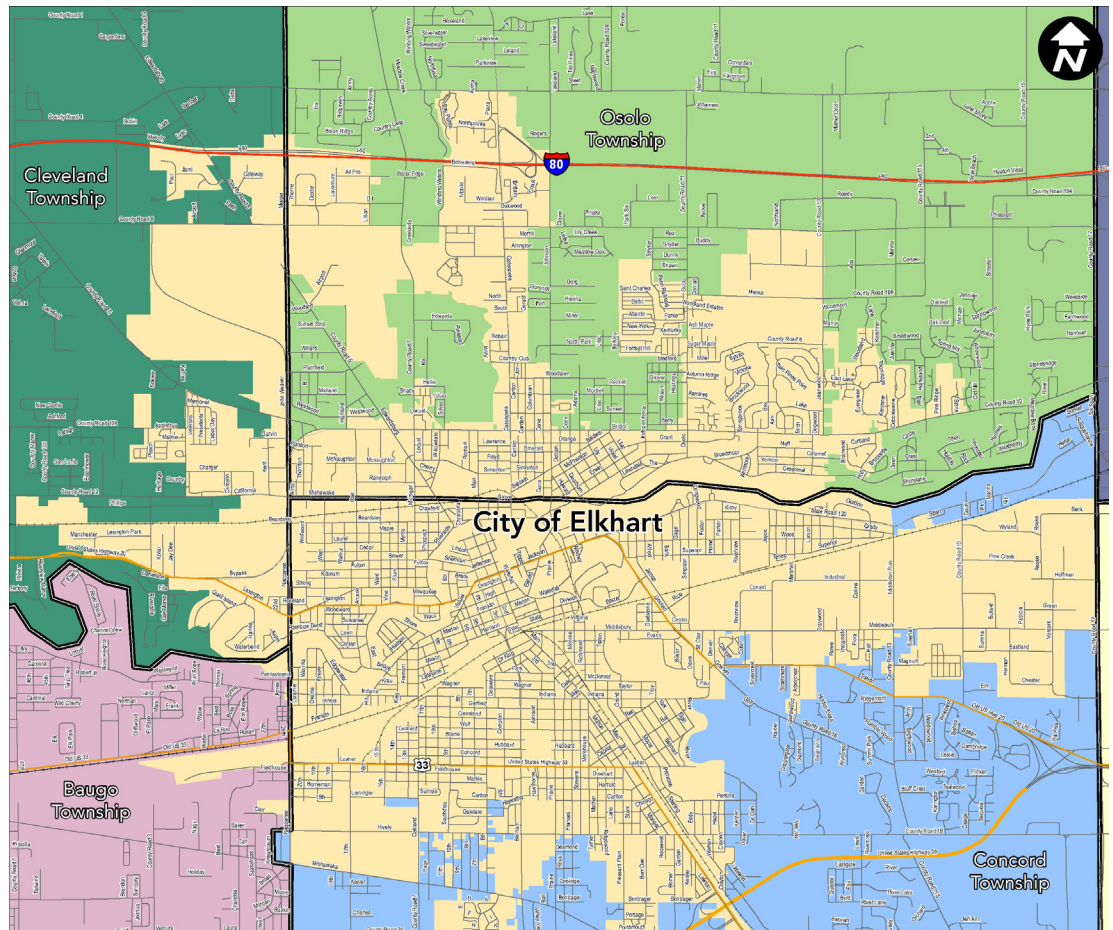
Several demographic profiles have been completed throughout the Comprehensive Plan Update's planning process, from mid-2009 through 2012. As such, while some of the information presented is dated, what is important to this process are the trends related to the demographics. For a comprehensive plan, the greatest indicators that would influence land use decisions are population, households, and employment numbers. The population figures indicate whether the City is growing or declining. From this information, we can then determine if the City has enough land to support the population trends or if more land is needed through redevelopment or annexation. The number of households indicates approximately how many housing units are needed and if the City has enough units and land to support the trend. Finally, employment figures reveal whether the local economy is growing or declining - and at times a particular sector can be identified. This leads to ensuring that enough land is devoted to certain employment uses whether it be retail, office or industrial. For this process, these indicators have been updated through 2012 data.

Population

The City of Elkhart is Elkhart County's largest incorporated municipality with more than 26 percent of all County residents (2011). Most of the City lies within Concord Township. As of 2011, 51,320 people, comprising 19,261 households, live in the City of Elkhart. The City of Elkhart has maintained steady growth through the 20th Century, but has been growing at a slower

pace than the county as a whole since 1940. Between the years 1960 and 2000, the City grew by 11,600 residents with a majority of that population increase occurring in the 1990s when there was nearly a one percent annual growth rate throughout the decade. The population growth of the 1990s is attributed to the influx of Hispanic residents recruited by the recreational vehicle industry. The City was experiencing a modest population through most of the 2000s. However, the 2009 economic downturn created a one-year population loss of nearly four percent between 2009 and 2010. The 2011 population count includes a small recovery from the late decade loss. (Sources:

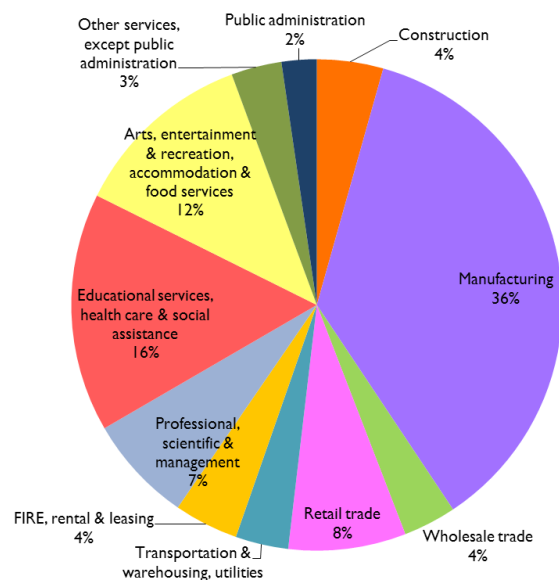
US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, STATS Indiana, Indiana Business Research Center)



Income, Education & Employment

Income levels in the City of Elkhart are slightly lower than Elkhart County's income levels. The average annual household income for the City of Elkhart is \$45,580 (2008-2010 American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates). This average is less than the Elkhart County average of \$54,539 per year (2010 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimate). Slightly more than six percent of the households in the City have an annual income of \$100,000 or more, while more than 38 percent have an annual household income of less than \$25,000. The City of Elkhart's median annual household income (meaning that half the population is earning more than this amount, half is earning less) is \$33,217 (2008-2010 American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates). The per capita, or per person, income is \$17,879 (2006-2010 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates). Elkhart County's median household income is \$47,258 and the per capita income is \$22,187 (2006-2010 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates).

Figure 2.2: Elkhart's Employment Industries



Nearly 74 percent of residents (age 25 and older) living in the City of Elkhart have a high school diploma. In comparison, 80 percent of Elkhart County and more than 86 percent of Indiana residents have graduated high school. Fourteen percent of the City of Elkhart population has a Bachelor's degree or higher. More than 18 percent of Elkhart County residents and more than 22 percent of Indiana residents have a Bachelor's degree or higher (2006-2010 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates).

Elkhart County is a regional employment destination for Michiana. With Elkhart as the County's largest city, many of these jobs are located within the Elkhart city limits including several of the County's largest employers. The City's economic base, historically, has been the manufacturing of recreational vehicles, boats, musical instruments, electronic components, and pharmaceuticals. Thirty-six percent of the employed Elkhart population works in manufacturing. The chart below illustrates the industries employing Elkhart's workforce (2009-2011 American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates).

Elkhart County's September 2012 unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) is 8.4 percent. This is above the state and national averages of 7.5 percent and 7.6 percent respectively. This 8.4 percent is an improvement from the September 2011 unemployment rate of 11.4 percent.

Housing

There are 22,948 housing units in the City of Elkhart. More than 53 percent of these units are single-family, detached homes. More than seven percent are mobile homes and the remaining approximate 39 percent are multi-family structures (2006-2010 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates). In 2008, approximately 53 percent of the total housing units were owner occupied, with approximately 47 percent renter-occupied and 16 percent vacant. It can be assumed that these percentages have remained relatively unchanged over the last four years. In Elkhart County, more than 71 percent of housing units are owner occupied (2008). Median home values are lower in the City of Elkhart than the median home values in Elkhart County, \$90,900 and \$128,000 respectively. Both areas experienced increases in home values from 2000 to 2009 and values are forecasted to increase modestly until 2014. However, these forecasted increases do not fully reflect the economic downturns of the late 2000s or

the burst of the housing bubble. The City of Elkhart experienced nearly an eight percent increase in housing units from 2000 to 2009. It is forecasted that the number of housing units in this area will increase an additional two percent between 2009 and 2014 (2006-2010 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates and ESRI forecasts for 2009 and 2014).

Sixteen percent of Elkhart's housing stock is vacant. A majority of the City's vacant homes are located in the neighborhoods, shown in red in the map below, west of downtown. Approximately 20 to 25 percent of residences located in downtown are vacant. Areas with the highest occupancy rates are neighborhoods near the northern City limit, adjacent to County neighborhoods.

Table 2.1: Elkhart's Owner-Occupied Units by Value

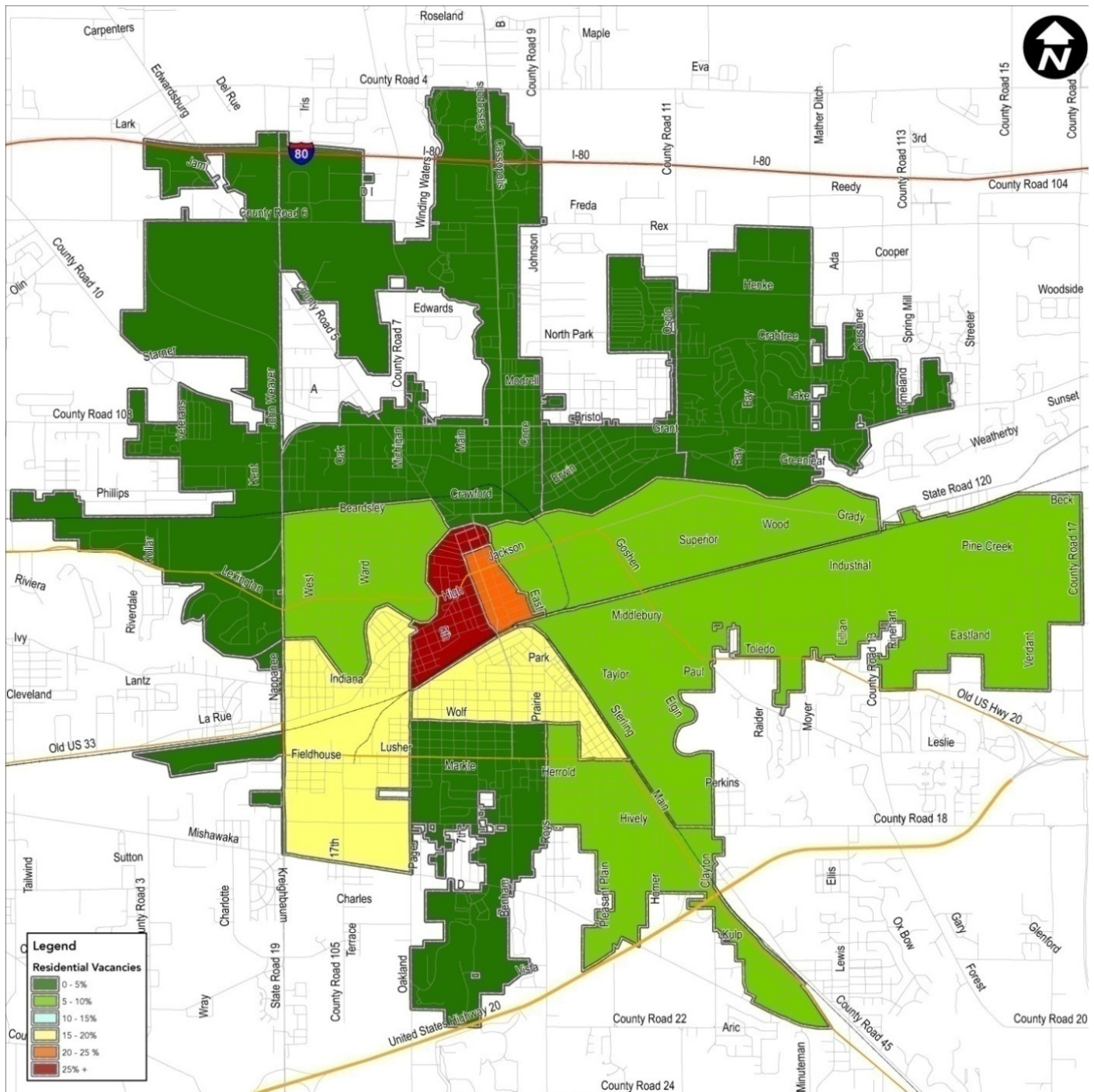
	Census 2000		2009		2014	
Price Range (dollars)	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under \$50,000	2,180	20.1%	1,362	11.4%	1,275	10.5%
\$50,000- \$99,999	6,321	58.4%	5,555	46.3%	4,982	41.2%
\$100,000- \$149,999	1,482	13.7%	3,171	26.5%	3,671	30.3%
\$150,000- \$199,999	449	4.1%	1,174	9.8%	1,325	11.0%
\$200,000- \$299,999	194	1.8%	455	3.8%	584	4.8%
\$300,000- \$499,999	112	1.0%	142	1.2%	140	1.2%
\$500,000- \$999,999	32	0.3%	88	0.7%	78	0.6%
\$1,000,000+	54	0.5%	38	0.3%	42	0.3%
Total	10,824	100.0%	11,985	100.0%	12,097	100.0%
Median Value	\$74,250		\$93,267		\$98,127	
Average Value	\$89,756		\$111,212		\$116,134	

Source: ESRI Forecasts for 2009 and 2014; US Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing
Data Note: Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding

Age of Population

How the population ages can indicate the future need of potential housing units in the City of Elkhart. The table below provides a summary of the change in population categories over a 24 year period from 1990 until 2014. The 55-64 age group has increased significantly in size over this time frame, while the number of children in the community has decreased slightly. The overall population for young professionals and the elderly, those over 75, has and will continue to show a decrease through 2014. Given the decline in these population groups, the demand for small, one to two bedroom rental units, condominiums, and apartments may be affected since these housing types are often popular among young professional and older age groups.

Figure 2.3: City of Elkhart Residential Vacancy Rate



Source: United States Postal Service, December 2009

Change in Residency

The 2004 Housing Needs Assessment for Elkhart County identified several unique housing situations and needs for many definable sub-populations based on the 2000 census information. Many of these groups are concentrated in Elkhart City. Among these populations, the need for secure and appropriate housing is a serious concern for both children and the elderly. Parental resources, lack of access to adequate health care, and lack of adequate public resources often threaten children with homelessness. The elderly, often on fixed incomes, are strained to afford necessities, often have health problems, may be disabled, and are increasingly the victims of crime. Independent living for the elderly is becoming much more difficult for the aging population.

Table 2.2: Elkhart Age Population Trends

Age Category	1990		2000		2008		2009		2014		1990-2014 Change
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	
0 - 4	4029	9.2%	4,869	9.4%	5,307	10.1%	4,784	8.9%	4,810	8.8%	19.38%
5 - 9	3295	7.6%	4,164	8.0%	4,333	8.3%	4,278	7.9%	4,360	8.0%	32.32%
10 - 14	2838	6.5%	3,736	7.2%	3,135	6.0%	3,894	7.2%	4,064	7.4%	43.20%
15 - 19	2794	6.4%	3,426	6.6%	2,901	5.5%	3,691	6.9%	3,647	6.7%	30.53%
20 - 24	3444	7.9%	4,321	8.3%	3,110	5.9%	3,800	7.1%	3,915	7.2%	13.68%
25 - 34	8146	18.7%	8,877	17.1%	9,536	18.2%	7,961	14.8%	7,809	14.3%	-4.14%
35 - 44	6046	13.9%	7,589	14.6%	7,405	14.1%	7,529	14.0%	7,307	13.4%	20.86%
45 - 54	3920	9.0%	5,720	11.0%	6,714	12.8%	6,863	12.8%	6,609	12.1%	68.60%
55 - 64	3362	7.7%	3,599	6.9%	4,708	9.0%	5,173	9.6%	5,706	10.4%	69.72%
65 - 74	3200	7.3%	2,705	5.2%	2,407	4.6%	2,961	5.5%	3,699	6.8%	15.59%
75 - 84	1855	4.3%	2,127	4.1%	2,015	3.8%	1,975	3.7%	1,905	3.5%	2.70%
85+	698	1.6%	741	1.4%	927	1.8%	903	1.7%	881	1.6%	26.22%

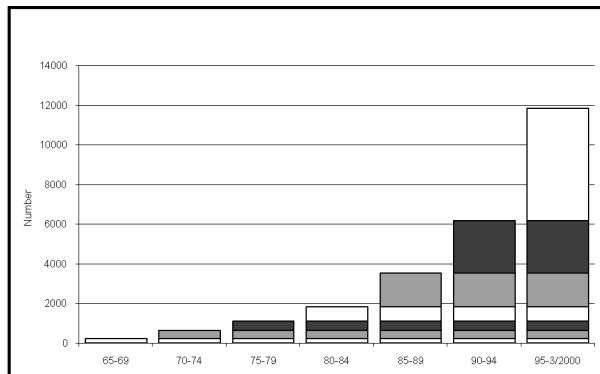
Source: US Census 1990 & 2000, 2006-2008 American Community Survey, ESRI (2009-2014 Forecasts)

Table 2.3: Elkhart Population Characteristics

Age	1990	2000	2008	2009	2014	Percent Change
Preschool (0-4)	4,029	4,869	5,307	4,784	4,810	19.4%
School Age (5-19)	8,927	11,326	10,369	11,863	12,071	35.2%
Millennium (20-29)	11,590	13,198	12,646	11,761	11,724	1.2%
X Generation (30-49)	6,046	7,589	7,405	7,529	7,307	20.9%
Baby Boomers (50-64)	7,282	9,319	11,422	12,036	12,315	69.1%
Elderly (65)	5,753	5,573	5349	5,839	6,485	12.7%

Source: US Census 1990 & 2000, 2006-2008 American Community Survey, ESRI

Figure 2.4. Increase in Foreign Born Residents



Source: US Census 2000

Homelessness in the City of Elkhart is also a significant issue. The homeless may be transients, victims of abuse, victims of eviction, or members of any of the area's special populations whose circumstances have changed radically. Family Services of Elkhart County estimated the homeless population in 2003 at 800.

Table 2.4: Elkhart County Change in Residence (1995-2000)

Type of Change or Move	Number		Percent	
	County	City	County	City
Total Population, 5 years and older	168,052	46,709	100.00%	100.00%
In Same House as 1995	86,250	20,707	51.32%	44.3%
In Different House than 1995 in Elkhart County	81,802	23,544	48.68%	50.4%
Same City or Town	19,650	NA	11.69%	NA
Different City or Town	32,083	NA	19.09%	NA
Relocated from Different Indiana County	10,254	2,831	6.10%	6.1%
Relocated from Different State	14,787	5,576	8.80%	11.9%
From Puerto Rico, U.S. Islands, or Foreign Country	5,035	2,458	3.00%	5.3%

Source: US Census 2000

Households

The 2008 American Community Survey reports 71,191 households in Elkhart County and 20,073 households in the City of Elkhart. Some of the housing needs of these household groups can be inferred from characteristics identified in the Census. In other cases, appropriate housing is based solely on income and availability. Some statistics and examples are shown below. There is an increase in the number of Female Head of Households (27 percent change), Female Householder with children under 18 (31 percent), and non-family households (48 percent). This change indicates the potential needs for specific types of housing units including apartments, condominiums, duplexes, and affordable one to four bedroom homes.

The table below demonstrates that there are several factors influencing housing choice and ultimate occupancy of a particular housing type.

Persons per Household

The 2008 American Community Survey reports 71,191

Table 2.5: Elkhart City Household Characteristics (1990-2008)

households in Elkhart County and 20,073 households in the City of Elkhart. Overall, the number of households has increased over time and is expected to continue to increase. In examining the persons per household trends from 1990 until 2008, the City of Elkhart's persons per household has not changed. However, in 2009, the number of persons in a household has decreased and is expected to hold steady through 2014. This trend is due to two occurrences, one being that the number of households has increased faster than the population. The second occurrence is due to a national trend of smaller households. With the number of households increasing faster than population, there will be a need for more housing units. However with a smaller family size, households will not need as large of a unit as in previous decades.

Household Type	1990	2000	2008	Percent Change	Housing Characteristics
Family Household	17523	20107	20073	15%	Apartment, condominium, 1-4 BR home
Family Households with Children Under 18	5941	7015	7070	19%	Apartment, condominium, 1-4 BR home
Married Couple Families	8248	8477	7901	-4%	Apartment, condominium, 1-2 BR home
Female Householder	2491	2905	3163	27%	Apartment, condo, rental, public housing
Female Householder with Children Under 18	1762	2076	2304	31%	Apartment, condo, small single family, rental, public housing
Non-Family Households	6201	9560	9180	48%	Apartment, condominium, 1-4 BR home
Householder Living Alone	5113	6265	5843	14%	Apartment, condominium, 1-2 BR home
Living Alone 65 or Older	1932	2338	1869	-3%	Apartment, condominium, 1-2 BR home
All Household: Over 65	3735	4113	3818	2%	Apartment, condo, small single family
All Household: Under 18	5941	7015	7070	19%	Apartment, condominium, 1-4 BR home

Source: US Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000 & 2006-2008 American Community Survey

Housing Tenure

The composition of homeowners versus renters, reported in the 2000 Census and updated in the 2008 American Community Survey, suggests a trend that as people age and gain more income they are more likely to move into home ownership.

Home ownership trends in the City of Elkhart change with the age of the householder. As shown in the following graph, the percent of homeownership increases through the 45 to 64 years age bracket and remains steady through age 74. Homeownership then tapers off past age 75. The trend illustrated in Figure 6 below indicates that householders become more able to purchase homes through age 65 (the “working years”), stay in their homes to about age 74, then gradually move out of homes and into rental, assisted living, or other types of housing. The trend also suggests that approximately 14 percent of householders never become homeowners and live in rental housing for their entire lives.

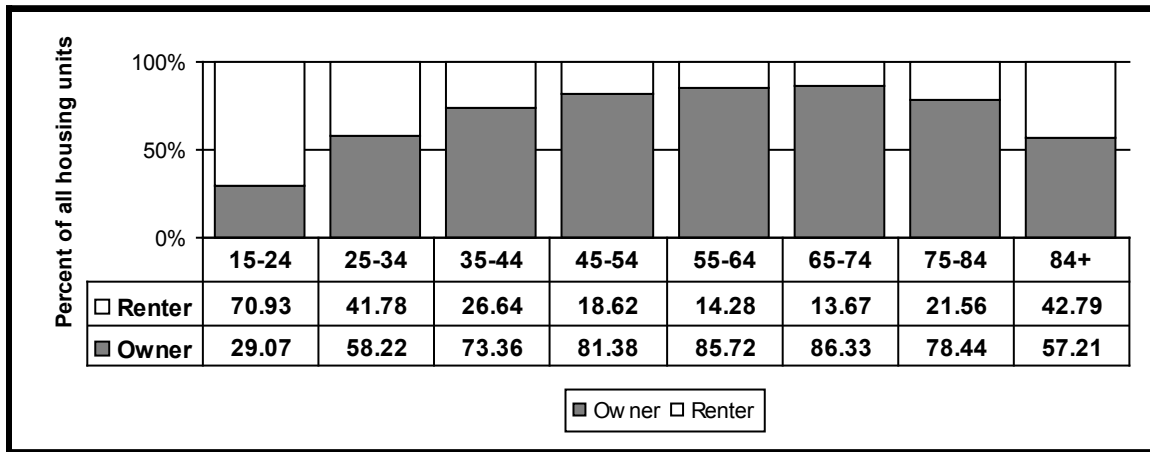
Table 2.6: Persons Per Household Trends

	1990	2000	2008	2009	2014
Elkhart City	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.3	2.3
Elkhart County	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.7

Source: US Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000, 2006-2008 American Community Survey, ESRI, 2009 & 2014 Forecasts

The distribution of owners and renters, according to household size, presents another view of the housing picture. The largest category of homes is two person households with approximately 5,800 housing units. The smallest category is seven person households with approximately 560 households. Overall, there have been significant changes in the size of households from 2000 to 2008. Both one and two person, owner occupied households have shown decline, while three person and five person, owner occupied households have seen significant growth. This is counter to the trend in persons per household, but could indicate that there are more non-family households living together and more than just two person households. This trend could be due to the current economic climate and the impact the market has had on income. Additionally, this could also signify that once the housing market rebounds, smaller, owner occupied housing units might be needed. In renter occupied housing units, most categories from three person to more than seven person households have declined. The impact of the decline in larger, renter occupied households results in a need for an increase in smaller rental units. The other housing situation that has occurred in Elkhart is that many older rental units have been divided into smaller units. Local housing officials report that apartments and homes once designed for single families have been divided into as many as eight single units.

Figure 2.5: Owners & Renters by Age Group



Source: US Census 2000

According to 2008 American Community Survey, there were 10,856 (54 percent) owner-occupied housing units in Elkhart and 9,217 (46 percent) renter-occupied units. At the time of this survey there were 2,981 vacant housing units, an increase from 1,616 units noted in the 2000 Census. Relative to the entire county the City of Elkhart, with 26.5 percent of the population, has only 22.5 percent of all owner-occupied housing units, but 50.8 percent of all rental units. In actual numbers, there are more households of all sizes among owner-occupied units than among rental units. The difference is especially marked among households with two, three, and four members. Nationally, one third of all households are renters.

Income & Housing

Patterns are also present in income and household size in the City of Elkhart. In households earning less than \$10,000 per year, there are disproportionately more three and four person households among renters than among owners. In this bracket, there are also more two person owner households than renter households. In the \$10,000 to \$19,000 income bracket, there is an increasing percentage of three, four, and five person households among renters as compared to owners. In the \$20,000 to \$29,000 income bracket, there is a predominance of larger households, and a significant number of single person households.

Income and household size comparisons indicate a significant presence of three to five person household groups with incomes under \$30,000 in the rental market. The total number of households in this group according to the 2000 Census is 2,807. These household heads are likely hindered from becoming homeowners due to their inability to support all household members and mortgage payments on their annual income. In these situations, it is likely that the housing costs of these households is above

the accepted standard of 30 percent of income, as defined by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, for many members of this under \$30,000 per year income group. Household sizes for both the \$30,000 to \$39,000 and \$40,000 to \$49,000 brackets have similar renter / owner patterns with small differences in the three and four person household sizes.

Rental housing in Elkhart is a unique situation. In the past, some units in the inner city areas of Elkhart have been and continue to be converted from owner occupied single-family units to rentals for one or more families. These conversions are not legal, and therefore, as the housing market picks up again the City needs to be cognizant of this and enforce the policy. It is not uncommon

Table 2.7: Elkhart Owner & Renter-Occupied Units by Household Size

Size of Household	Owner-Occupied Units			Renter-Occupied Units		
	2000	2008	Percent Change	2000	2008	Percent Change
1 person	2,632	2,397	-9%	3,443	3,446	0%
2 person	3,726	3,388	-9%	2,273	2,420	6%
3 person	1,693	1,967	16%	1,448	1,378	-5%
4 person	1,365	1,388	2%	1,150	1,071	-7%
5 person	751	1,030	37%	583	527	-10%
6 person	312	306	-2%	244	191	-22%
7 or more persons`	258	380	47%	194	184	-5%

Source: U.S. Census 2000 & 2006-2008 American Community Survey

Table 2.8: Elkhart Low & Moderate Income Population (2008)

Range	Households At/Under Median Income Level (\$38,462)			Families At/Under Median Income Level (\$42,520)		
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent	
		Group	Accum		Group	Accum
Under \$10,000	1,979	9.8%	9.8%	701	5.5%	5.5%
\$10,000-\$14,999	1,276	6.3%	16.1%	604	4.7%	10.2%
\$15,000-\$24,999	3,263	16.2%	32.3%	1,669	13.1%	23.3%
\$25,000-\$34,999	2,890	14.4%	46.7%	1,863	14.7%	38.0%
\$35,000-\$40,999	989	4.9%	51.6%	653	5.1%	43.1%
Subtotal	10,397	51.7%		5,490	43.3%	
Elkhart City Total	20,073	100%	100%	12,692	100	100%

Source: 2006-2008 American Community Survey

to find these dwellings housing as many as three, four, or more separate households. In these same areas there are a number of duplexes and other multi-family dwellings that have also been re-subdivided to accommodate more renters. Duplexes in Elkhart have been subdivided into as many as six or eight units.

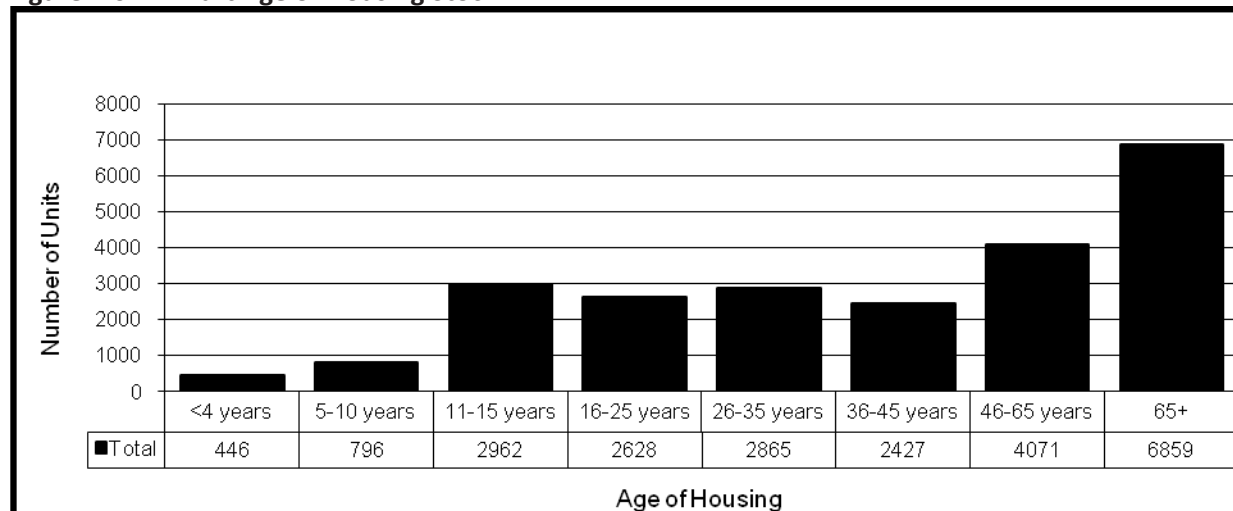
Finally, in reviewing income versus the type of household, several conclusions can be identified. All in all, approximately 50 percent of households and approximately 43 percent of families are under the median household and family income. This means there is a need for affordable housing as the number of households and families at or below the median income level has increased since 2000. Couple that with the increase in the number of persons in an owner occupied household, this means that affordable, larger housing is needed.

Age of Housing Stock

The history of housing construction in the City of Elkhart shows that there has been a relatively steady relationship between the construction of owner-occupied housing and rental housing. The decade of the 1990's indicates that rental housing construction had declined. However, the conversion of single-family to multi-family housing was increasing in this same time period.

Approximately 20 percent of Elkhart's housing stock was constructed prior to 1941. Housing construction progressed at an increasing rate from that time until about 1970. With most of the housing stock aging and conditions declining overall in the City, the relationship is more pronounced in some neighborhoods than others. Given the age of Elkhart's housing stock, maintenance and upkeep comprise a large percentage of households' housing costs. This means that more income is required to keep aging homes

Figure 2.6: Elkhart Age of Housing Stock



Source: 2006-2008 American Community Survey

in suitable condition for owners and renters. With the increase of households and families at or below the median income, the aging housing stock could pose a problem for suitable, affordable housing in the future. For more information on the condition of housing, see Chapter 4.

Census data indicates that the majority of housing units, both rental and owner-occupied, are between 16 and 45 years old. A large number of homes are also more than 66 years old.

Rent

Rental patterns in Elkhart vary widely from those of state averages. The supply of low rent housing is consistently lower than that of the state for all rentals under \$400 per month. Census figures indicate an ample supply of rental housing in the medium price market between \$400 and \$650 per month. In Indiana, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is \$697 per month. In the Elkhart-Goshen Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), the two-bedroom FMR is \$731 per month. (Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2009).

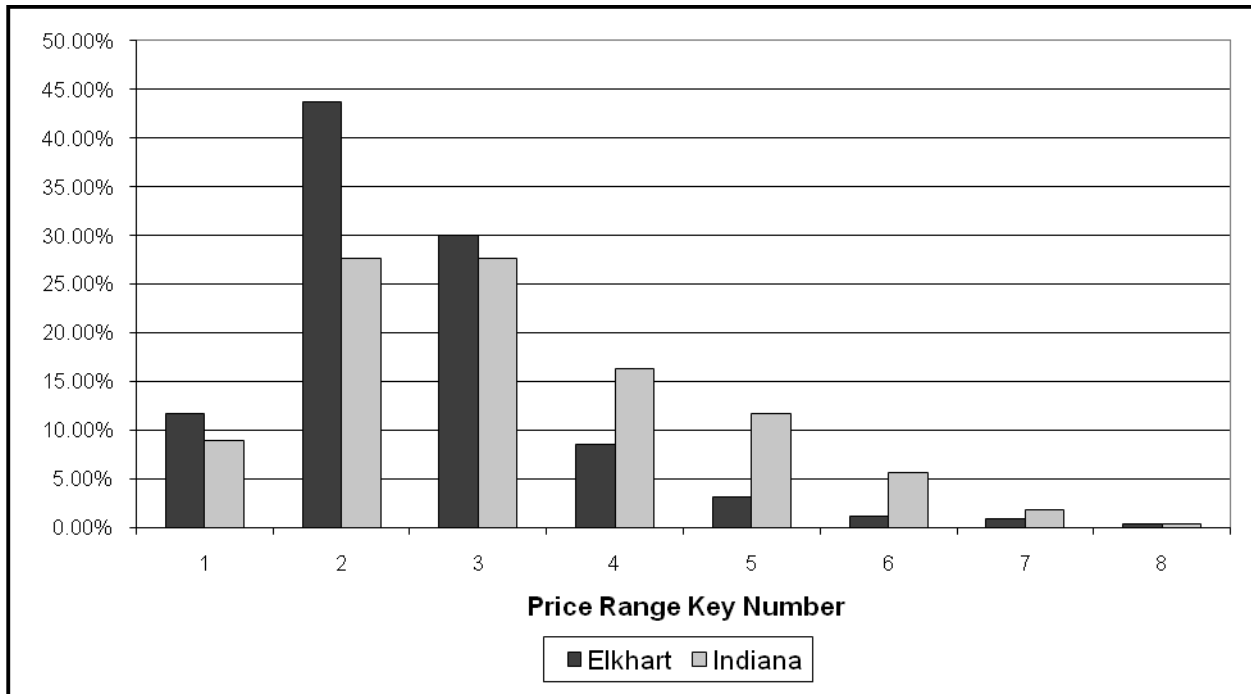
Ownership by Value

The distribution of the housing stock by unit value presents another view of the City of Elkhart. The value of the majority of units that are available in the City is less than \$150,000. The greatest number of units available in the City is valued between \$50,000 and \$99,999. Though data indicates the available presence of housing units valued under \$50,000, it is likely that the units are in sub-standard condition. Dwelling units that sell in this very low price range in Elkhart are usually older homes with many deficiencies and needed major repairs. The availability of homes valued up to \$150,000 is high compared to the state.

Overcrowding

In general, the City of Elkhart is not experiencing overcrowding in owner occupied or renter-occupied single and multi-family

Figure 2.7: Percent of Housing Stock by Unit Value



See Table 2.9 for key to price ranges. Source: 2006-2008 American Community Survey

housing. Ninety-eight percent of single-family, owner-occupied
Table 2.9: Elkhart & Indiana Housing Value Range & Distribution

	Price Range (dollars)	Elkhart City		Indiana		% Variance from State
		Number	%	Number	%	
1	Under 50,000	1,266	11.7%	159,937	9.0%	2.7%
2	50,000-99,999	4,746	43.7%	488,701	27.6%	16.1%
3	100,000-149,999	3,284	30.0%	490,266	27.6%	2.35%
4	150,000-199,999	934	8.6%	288,660	16.3%	-7.7%
5	200,000-299,999	340	3.1%	206,909	11.7%	-8.6%
6	300,000-499,999	137	1.2%	99,208	5.6%	-4.4%
7	500,000-999,999	104	0.9%	32,075	1.8%	-0.9%
8	1,000,000+	45	0.4%	7,145	0.4%	0%
	Total	10,856	100.00%	1,772,901	100.00%	0.00%

Source: 2006-2008 American Community Survey

housing and 96 percent of renter-occupied, single-family housing are not experiencing overcrowding. However, there is some indication of moderate and severe overcrowding in owner-occupied multi-family housing which is at 8.6 percent and 16.5 percent, respectively. For renter-occupied housing units, multi-family units are experiencing moderate overcrowding. The increase in the number of persons occupying rental units is indicative of local economic conditions where more people (related or unrelated) live in one unit to share living expenses. This trend could suggest that there is a shortage of quality, multi-family renter and owner occupied housing.

Table 2.10: Overcrowding by Housing Tenure*

	Owner Occupied Housing			Renter Occupied Housing		
	I Family	2+Family	Non-Family	I Family	2+Family	Non-Family
Total Housing Unit	14,150	454	5,305	6,085	190	5,280
No Overcrowding	98%	75%	100%	96%	55%	100%
Moderate	1.9%	8.6%	0%	3.3%	44.7%	0%
Severe	0%	16.5%	0%	0.33%	0%	0%

Source: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2007, provided by HUD

* CHAS information for the City of Elkhart is a compilation of data for Concord & Osolo Township

Number of Bedrooms in Housing Units

While the data indicates there is not a housing shortage overall, another component to assessing the availability of housing in Elkhart is by reviewing the number of bedrooms offered in various housing. As indicated in the number and type of households, the greatest numbers of households are three and four person households. This indicates that the City of Elkhart needs to have more housing units offering three and four bedroom. As illustrated in the table below, in 2008, approximately 65 percent of the housing stock had either two or three bedrooms. This number has risen slightly from 2000. However, there is not a tremendous amount of four and five bedroom housing units in the City of Elkhart. This is a normal trend seen in

Table 2.11: Number of Bedrooms in Elkhart

	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total	2008	% of Total
None	296	1.5%	508	2.3%	590	2.6%
1	3,270	17.1%	4,027	18.6%	4,347	18.9%
2	6,621	34.6%	7,312	33.8%	7,341	31.8%
3	6,516	34.0%	7,446	34.4%	7,967	34.6%
4	2,162	11.3%	1,940	9.0%	2,146	9.3%
5 or More	282	1.5%	415	1.9%	663	2.9%

Source: 1990 & 2000 Census; 2006-2008 American Community Survey; ERSI (2009 – 2014 forecasts)

many communities across the US as the majority of homes that have four and five bedrooms are significantly more expensive and not considered to be affordable by a majority of households in a community. This is no different in Elkhart, where those houses that have four and five bedrooms range in the upper tiers of home values and are not affordable for households at or below the median household or family income.

Housing Type

The number of units indicates the availability of various types of housing within the City. The number of units available by housing type is important, especially as housing sizes are fluctuating due to the recessed economy and based on the life cycle of people residing in the community. Overall, the number of housing units has increased in the City of Elkhart. Additionally, there has been a significant increase in unit vacancies, six percent increase from 2000 to 2008. A possible explanation is related to a declining economy and increase in the number of persons living together out of necessity.

In reviewing the number of housing units, the majority are single family units, representing approximately 55 percent of all units. What is also noticeable is the slight increase in the total number of three to four units and five to nine units. Again, this trend could be due to market demand with more people living together and the need for this type of housing in Elkhart.

Table 2.12: Number of Units in Elkhart

	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total	2008	% of Total
Total Housing Units	19,147	100%	21,648	100%	23,054	100%
Single Family	11,373	59%	12,233	57%	12,660	55%
2 Unit	1,263	7%	1,094	5%	1,289	6%
3 to 4 Unit	1,689	9%	2,153	10%	2,798	12%
5 to 9 Unit	1,133	6%	1,595	7%	2,150	9%
10 to 19 Unit	1,148	6%	1,024	5%	1,138	5%
20 or More	1,613	8%	2,031	9%	1,640	7%
Mobile Home	756	4%	1,518	7%	1,379	6%
Boat, RV, Van, Etc.	172	1%	-	0%	-	0%

Source: 1990 & 2000 Census; 2006-2008 American Community Survey; ERSI (2009 – 2014 forecasts)

Table 2.13: City of Elkhart Ownership

	1990	% Total	2000	% Total	2008	% Total	2009	% Total	2014	% Total
Total Units	19,147	100%	21,688	100%	23,054	100%	23,332	100%	23,813	100%
Owner	9,800	51%	10,824	50%	10,856	47%	11,982	51%	12,094	51%
Renter	7,719	40%	9,343	43%	9,217	40%	8,893	38%	9,144	38%
Vacant	1,628	9%	1,616	7%	2,981	13%	2,457	11%	2,575	11%

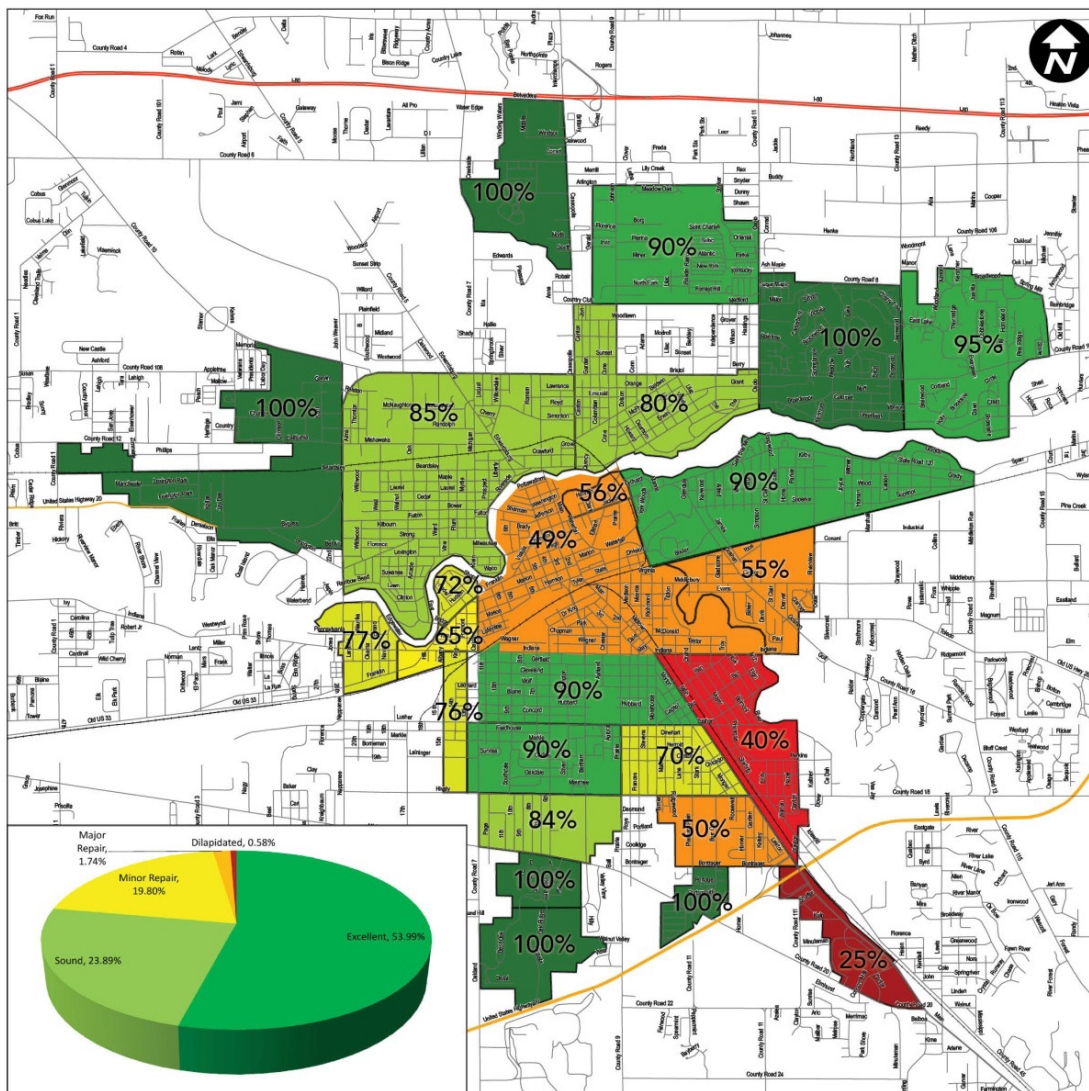
Source: 1990 & 2000 Census; 2006-2008 American Community Survey; ERSI (2009 – 2014 forecasts)

Housing Conditions

A housing conditions survey was conducted throughout the residential neighborhoods in the City of Elkhart for the purpose of assessing the physical appearance and state of repair within the City's housing stock. The survey was conducted between April and November of 2009. In this survey, evaluations of 1,440 structures, combined with general neighborhood assessments, provided the basis for the "Overall Building Condition" map below. This map was displayed during the Community Open House, described later in this document, and summarizes the findings of the housing conditions survey.

When reading the map, areas with a green shade have the lowest concentration of homes that need improvement and areas with an orange or red shade have a higher concentration of homes in need of repair or improvement. Nearly 54 percent of housing units are in "excellent" condition, nearly 24 percent are in "sound" condition, approximately 20 percent are in need of "minor repair;" less than two percent are in need of "major repair;" and approximately one-half of a percent are considered "dilapidated." In general, housing units in the neighborhoods north of the St. Joseph River are in sound or excellent condition. The percentage assigned to neighborhoods, groups of neighborhoods, or sub-areas throughout the City indicate the percentage of homes that are in good condition. The areas in need of the most repair are the ones along South Main Street including downtown and near downtown neighborhoods.

Figure 2.8: Overall Building Condition



Housing Values

Housing values in the City of Elkhart, as in any market, are established by the many variables affecting overall supply and demand. Current housing values for the City of Elkhart, as reported in the 2008 American Community Survey, are illustrated in the table below.

If you take the median family income in 2008, a family in Elkhart could generally afford a house that is valued approximately \$106,300 – \$127,500. The median housing value is \$93,900, with the majority of housing units available in 2008 in the under \$150,000 categories.

By and large, Elkhart has an adequate supply of affordable housing. Housing values are, in general, increasing and are forecasted

Table 2.14: Trends in Housing Values

Value	2000	% of Total Units	2008	% of Total Units	2009	% of Total Units	2014	% of Total Units
<\$50,000	2,180	20.1%	1,266	11.7%	1,362	11.4%	1,275	10.5%
\$50,000 – \$99,999	6,321	58.4%	4,746	43.7%	5,555	46.3%	4,982	41.2%
\$100,000 – \$149,999	1,482	13.7%	3,284	30.3%	3,171	26.5%	3,671	30.3%
\$150,000 – \$199,999	449	4.1%	934	8.6%	1,174	9.8%	1,325	11.0%
\$200,000 – \$299,999	194	1.8%	340	3.1%	455	3.8%	584	4.8%
\$300,000 – \$499,999	112	1.0%	137	1.3%	142	1.2%	140	1.2%
\$500,000 – \$999,999	32	0.3%	104	1.0%	88	0.7%	78	0.6%
>\$1,000,000	54	0.5%	45	0.4%	38	0.3%	42	0.3%
Total Units	10,824	100.0%	10,856	100.0%	11,985	100.0%	12,097	100.0%
Median Value	\$74,200		\$93,900		\$93,267		\$98,127	

Source: 1990 & 2000 Census; 2006-2008 American Community Survey; ERSI (2009 – 2014 forecasts)

Table 2.15: Elkhart & Indiana Housing Value Range & Distribution

	Price Range	Elkhart City		Indiana		% Variance from State
		Number	%	Number	%	
1	Under \$50,000	1,266	11.7%	159,937	9.0%	2.7%
2	\$50,000 - \$99,999	4,746	43.7%	488,701	27.6%	16.1%
3	\$100,000 - \$149,999	3,284	30.0%	490,266	27.6%	2.35%
4	\$150,000 - \$199,999	934	8.6%	288,660	16.3%	-7.7%
5	\$200,000 - \$299,999	340	3.1%	206,909	11.7%	-8.6%
6	\$300,000 - \$499,999	137	1.2%	99,208	5.6%	-4.4%
7	\$500,000 - \$999,999	104	0.9%	32,075	1.8%	-0.9%
8	\$1,000,000+	45	0.4%	7,145	0.4%	0%
	Total	10,856	100.00%	1,772,901	100.00%	0.00%

Source: 2006-2008 American Community Survey

to increase through 2014. However, a significant percentage of Elkhart's housing units are decreasing in value as a result of the City's and region's recent economic downturns, high unemployment rate, and reduced household incomes. In theory, these conditions increase the affordable housing stock. However, the income rates used to determine affordability also decrease to reflect these changing economic conditions. In reality, the affordable housing inventory remains stagnant or decreases as a result of the local economy. Additionally, as household sizes and values change, the type of housing offered at certain price points may create shortages in certain sized housing units which could then lead to overcrowding.

Property Values

Property values cover as broad a range as in most Midwestern communities. The range extends from properties with little or no value to as high as \$1,000,000 per home. Compared to state averages, the City of Elkhart has a strong supply of homes priced for low and moderate income residents. The availability of lower valued homes has actually increased in the City of Elkhart since 2000, when a shortage of lower valued homes was noted. However the acceptability and livability of homes, including mobile homes at the lower end of the scale, is reduced at the extreme lower values.

Though the data also suggests some constriction in the housing market in homes priced between \$125,000 and \$500,000, recent building activity suggests that there is ample room for most middle income residents to move into new housing.

Given the demand for housing in Elkhart, the condition of many structures is not consistent with sale prices on the open market. Homes offered for sale by charitable organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity and LaCasa of Goshen, are typically in superior condition.

Gross Rent

The cost of rental housing can be assessed by reviewing the gross rent for rental units. The table below illustrates the change in gross rent from 2000 to 2008. Overall, there has been an increase in monthly rental costs throughout the 2000s. A concern in this trend is that the number of units available in the \$300 to \$499 and \$500 to \$749 price ranges decreased from 10 percent (of all rental units) in 2000 to six percent (of all rental units) in 2008. Another area of concern is that there was a 14 percent increase in the number of units available in the \$750 to \$999 range. The affordable units in 2000, those available to the very low and low income households, have increased their rental prices. Therefore, these units are now affordable to a smaller group of potential

Table 2.16: Gross Rent

Monthly Rental	2000	% of Total Units	2008	% of Total Units
<\$200	783	8%	367	4%
\$200 – \$299	338	4%	365	4%
\$300 – \$499	2,647	28%	1,659	18%
\$500 – \$749	4,273	46%	3,669	40%
\$750 – \$999	873	9%	2,093	23%
>\$1,000	186	2%	789	9%
No Cash Rent	243	3%	275	3%
Total Units	9,343	100%	9,127	100%
Median Value	\$537		\$627	

Source: 1990 & 2000 Census; 2006-2008 American Community Survey; ERSI (2009 – 2014 forecasts)

Table 2.17: Total Number of Constructed Buildings

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Single Family	62	65	42	43	45	45	58	15	11	386
2 Family	0	5	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	9
3 & 4 Family	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	5
5 or More Family	2	2	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	9
Total	64	71	47	47	46	45	58	19	11	409

Source: 1990 & 2000 Census; 2006-2008 American Community Survey

Table 2.18: Total Number of Constructed Units

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Single Family	62	64	42	43	45	45	58	15	11	385
2 Family	0	10	2	0	2	0	0	4	0	18
3 & 4 Family	0	0	9	0	2	0	0	8	0	19
5 or More Family	42	72	36	36	0	0	0	0	0	186
Total	104	146	89	79	47	45	58	27	11	608

Source: 1990 & 2000 Census; 2006-2008 American Community Survey

Table 2.19: Residential Real Estate Activity (2009 - 2010 Elkhart County)

Month	# New Listings		# Sold Listing		Median Price		Days on Market		% Sale to List	
January	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010
	238	253	71	94	\$74,000	\$82,000	92	118	93.05	94.26

Source: Statistics contained in this report were obtained from the MLS of Elkhart County, Inc. and the US Department of Labor Statistics. ECBOR and the MLS of Elkhart Co. are in no way responsible for the accuracy of the data. Data maintained by the Board or MLS may not reflect all real estate activity in Elkhart County. Data updated as of 2/11/10.

renters and are not addressing the housing needs of the very low and low income households.

Estimated New Residential Construction

In the 2000s, the residential construction market has seen significant highs and lows. The changing economy has affected the new residential construction industry throughout the United States and is exacerbated in the City of Elkhart. The table below indicates a strong building program in Elkhart in the early 2000s, especially in the multi-family market. At the close of the 2000s, construction of multi-family units slowed and construction of single-family units nearly stopped.

Housing Values & Availability

The following table compares the sales and listing of residential homes from the multiple listing service (MLS) for Elkhart County, representing Elkhart County townships. Data compares information from January 2009 to January 2010.

Issue Identification

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a planning tool that helps identify positives and negatives both inside and outside of a community. The results of this exercise provide a broad description of the major issues affecting the City of Elkhart. These comments will be used to develop strategies that employ strengths to capitalize on opportunities and minimize weaknesses by avoiding threats.

The chart on the next page is a summarized list of the SWOT identified by City of Elkhart department directors.

Definitions

Strength – Positive characteristic or influence that originates within the City.

Weakness – Negative characteristic or influence that originates within the City.

Opportunity – Influence from outside the City that may result in a positive impact.

Threat – Influence from outside the City that may result in a negative impact.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks, recreational amenities, cultural events, and leisure activities • Quality of life • Interest and investment in downtown revitalization • Strong sense of community • Entrepreneurial spirit • Skilled workforce for manufacturing industry • Proximity to larger cities and markets (Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis, Cleveland) • Low cost of living • Natural amenities (lakes, rivers, Lake Michigan, dunes) • Competitively priced commercial, industrial, and residential real estate • Good schools and access to higher education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blight and poorly maintained properties and neighborhoods • Difficult to “sell” Elkhart with its aging and unkempt physical conditions – challenging conditions to attract professionals • Unemployment • Low education attainment • Code enforcement and building conditions • Sub-standard and unkempt rental housing – creates negative connotation for all rental housing units • Empty commercial/industrial buildings • Manufacturing-centric economic base • Skilled workforce for manufacturing industry, unskilled/uneducated workforce for other employment sectors • Crime and misconception of crime • Narrow minded constituency more concerned about cost than quality • Few stable neighborhoods

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-connected to major transportation links that can provide access throughout the state, region, and country • Reuse of manufacturing facilities to diversify the economy • Skilled and willing workforce • Availability of federal stimulus funds providing support for capital improvement projects without relying entirely on local tax revenue • Leverage national media attention to attract new investment to the area • Industry diversification due to economic downturn • IUSB-Elkhart and new Ivy Tech campus offering increased educational opportunities • Nanotechnology Center at University of Notre Dame • Strong and well-funded community-wide economic development organizations • Commitment to job creation and retention from elected officials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recession that continues to adversely affect downtown redevelopment activities and downtown businesses • Continued absentee property owners and property foreclosures • Unfavorable local and national economic conditions • Insufficient tax revenues to support essential City services, caused by reduction in property taxes • Continued high unemployment • Continued lack of industrial diversification • Neighborhood deterioration • Large percentage of single-family homes that are rental units

Opportunities and Constraints

An “Opportunities & Constraints” diagram serves as a graphic summary of the information gathered during windshield surveys, document review, stakeholder interviews, department directors’ workshop, and the kick-off Steering Committee workshop. It was displayed at Open House for public review and comment. Identified opportunities include:

1. *River and streams – recreational and aesthetic benefits.* Opportunities for downtown development along the Elkhart River has had a positive impact on the image of the area and provides a unique amenity not available elsewhere in the City. In general, homes along the St. Joseph River have a higher value than others in the City.
2. *Key entrances into the community.* A significant amount of investment and attention has been focused on the Northpointe Gateway, at the Toll Road/Cassopolis Street intersection. Additional key entrances include State Road 19, Old US 33/South Main Street, and County Road 17 at the US 20 Bypass. Internal gateways include Old US 20 at the City limits, Old US 33 at Nappanee Street/State Road 19, and Jackson Boulevard at Middleton Run Road. These identified gateways are opportunities to reinforce a sense of welcome and the Elkhart community image.
3. *Diverse housing stock and residential base.* Opportunities exist for several types of households and stages in life.
4. *Access to shopping.* The Michiana region is well supplied with retail options, particularly in Mishawaka along Grape Road. Most Elkhart residents can arrive at a regional retail center within a 15 to 25-minute drive and neighborhood convenience retail, for everyday goods and services, are more abundant throughout the City. Key retail nodes and corridors are along Cassopolis Street, Bristol Street, and the Concord Mall.
5. *Strong park system.* The City of Elkhart boasts an extensive system of 36 parks offering a variety of amenities, activities, and programming. There is some momentum to create a linear park (i.e. pedestrian and bike multi-use path) to link all of these park destinations.
6. *Robert Young Rail Yard – second largest freight classification yard in the world.* The rail yard presents both economic development and transportation opportunities and reinforces Elkhart’s rail heritage.
7. *Corporate and charter air travel.* Like the rail yard, the Elkhart Municipal Airport is an economic development and

transportation opportunity. The airport has plans to expand to the west and increase capacity, in particular corporate and private flights.

8. *Commercial and light industrial flexible space.* Due to the recent economic downturn, many industrial buildings are available for sale or lease. The 1996 *Comprehensive Plan* planned for industrial growth along County Road 17 on the City's eastside and near the Toll Road/CR 17 intersection. Elkhart has a supply of industrial buildings and land that are currently available for tenants.
9. *Historic downtown with development potential.* Downtown revitalization has been an ongoing activity for the last ten years. With new investment, new restaurant openings, and the completion of the Lerner Theatre renovation, community interest in the health and vitality of downtown continues.
10. *Toll Road access.* Elkhart's location along Interstate 80/90 (Indiana Toll Road) presents economic development opportunities, in particular with logistics and distribution.
11. *Proximity to large markets.* I-80/90 (Toll Road) provides access to large markets, such as Chicago (110 miles west), Toledo (135 miles east), Detroit (200 miles northeast), and Cleveland (240 miles east). The US 20 Bypass offers access to Indianapolis (160 miles south).

Identified constraints include:

1. *River and streams – limits north-south vehicular and pedestrian movement.* Elkhart's natural features are considered both an opportunity, as mentioned above, and a constraint in that they limit physical access which influences transportation routes and land use patterns. This influence can be an advantage to some areas and a disadvantage to other areas.
2. *Irregular City boundaries.* Elkhart's city limits are confusing for residents as well as difficult for emergency service providers. The City's inconsistent boundaries require frequent interaction and cooperation between City and Elkhart County government and can impede potential economic development and investment transactions due to convoluted approval processes from multiple jurisdictions.
3. *Deteriorating housing stock/foreclosures.* This is a common concern throughout the country and can adversely affect redevelopment activities and adjacent properties.
4. *Robert Young Rail Yard – eyesore and safety hazard for vehicular and pedestrian movement.* Like Elkhart's natural features, its rail yard is both an opportunity and a constraint. The presence of the rail yard diminishes the visual and perceived

environmental quality of properties adjacent to it and, it is located near a prominent gateway into the City.

5. *Struggling downtown businesses.* The challenges of downtown businesses are exacerbated by the overall decline in the national retail industry and weak consumer confidence, which is tied to a high unemployment rate and general uncertainty in the market.
6. *Norfolk South rail line – limits vehicular and pedestrian movement.* Similar to rivers and streams, rail lines limit physical access which influences transportation routes and land use patterns. Commercial and industrial land uses are better suited for rail line adjacency in comparison to residential land uses.
7. *Conflicting land uses.* Elkhart has a relatively high percentage of industrial and heavy commercial uses. The City also has a history of annexing income producing properties as they require City services. This has led to a conflicting land use pattern as some industrial uses have expanded into residential areas.

Planning Themes

Throughout the planning process, similar issues and opportunities were identified as noted above. These could be organized around four main planning themes which were then used to organize material for public meetings to get feedback. The themes including the following:

1. Community Livability
2. Land Use
3. Mobility
4. Housing Needs Assessment

Community Livability

What is community livability? Community livability refers to subjective indicators used to measure a place's quality of life as experienced by residents, employees, customers, and visitors. Indicators include safety and health, education, environmental conditions, social interactions, recreation and entertainment, aesthetics, and unique cultural and natural resources. Community livability directly benefits people who live in, work in, or visit an area. A place with a perceived high quality of life, or a livable community, can attract businesses, residents, and investment. Livability is largely affected by conditions in the public realm, places where people interact with each other and their community, including commercial districts, schools, parks, streets, transportation hubs, and other public gathering spaces.

The livability vernacular was introduced as it relates to the community vision statement. Members of the public and steering committee evaluated, on a grading scale of A through F, the current condition of 22 livability indicators within the City of Elkhart. Participants were also asked to designate the level of importance for each of the 22 indicators, in terms of which indicators should be included in the final plan vision statement.

Overall, the City of Elkhart was rated at a “C+” level across all 22 livability indicators. Indicators with a “C” grade are considered to have a moderate presence with average quality, but there exists a need for improvement. Some livability indicators fared better than the average grade, such as vocational skills education curriculum and housing for diverse ages and stages of life, both of which scored a “B+” and are highlighted in green. Public transportation, highlighted in red, received the lowest grade of all indicators with a “D.”

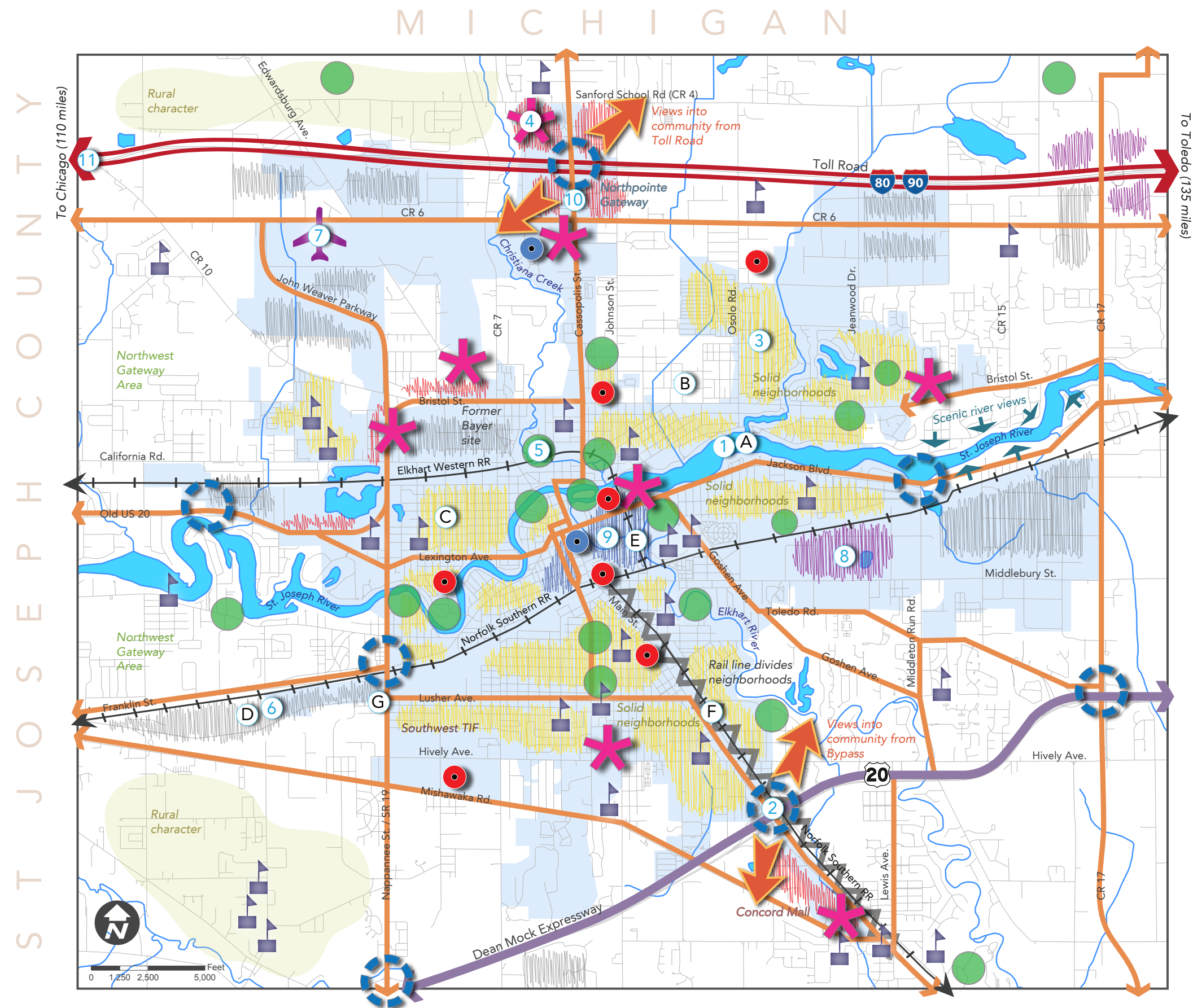
Given these 22 livability indicators, the level of importance (highly important, important, somewhat important, or not important) was identified for each indicator. The top five ranked most important livability indicators included:

1. Walkable downtown
2. Diverse economy
3. Safe neighborhoods
4. Vibrant downtown
5. Public transportation

The indicators considered less important included:

1. Regional cooperation with surrounding Michiana communities
2. Preservation of historic buildings
3. Recreational fields and programs
4. Community heritage
5. Rental housing options

Community gardens, park maintenance, green building, alternative energy, sustainable businesses, and downtown parking were all additional indicators listed by participants with some level of importance to Elkhart’s livability.



City of Elkhart Comprehensive Plan Opportunities & Constraints

Key

- Indiana Toll Road
- US 20 Bypass
- Major Arterial
- Rail Line
- Gateway
- Retail Node
- Park
- School
- Elkhart City Limits
- Regional Airport
- Fire Department
- Police Department
- Office
- Industrial
- Residential
- Downtown Elkhart
- Commercial
- Views

- Opportunities**

 - 1 Rivers and streams - recreational and aesthetic benefits
 - 2 Key entrances into the community
 - 3 Diverse housing stock and residential base
 - 4 Access to shopping
 - 5 Strong park system
 - 6 Robert Young Rail Yard - second largest freight classification yard in the world
 - 7 Corporate and charter air travel
 - 8 Commercial and light industrial flexible space
 - 9 Historic downtown with development potential
 - 10 Toll Road access
 - 11 Proximity to large markets (Chicago, Toledo, Detroit, Indianapolis)
- Constraints**

 - A Rivers and streams - limits north-south vehicular and pedestrian movement
 - B Irregular City boundaries
 - C Deteriorating housing stock / foreclosures
 - D Robert Young Rail Yard - eyesore and is a safety hazard for vehicular and pedestrian movement
 - E Struggling downtown businesses
 - F Norfolk Southern rail line - limits vehicular and pedestrian movement
 - G Conflicting land uses



Importance Rank	Livability Indicator	Average Letter Grade
1	Walkable downtown	B
2	Diverse economy	C-
3	Safe neighborhoods	B-
4	Vibrant downtown	C+
5	Public transportation (e.g. bus, rail)	D
6	Attractive neighborhoods	C+
7	K-12 public & private schools	C+
8	Continuing education opportunities	B
9	Riverfront development	B
10	Bikeways & trails	D+
11	Community events	B
12	Vocational skills education curriculum	B+
13	Parks	B
14	Sidewalks	C
15	Entry-level jobs	C-
16	Housing for diverse ages & stages of life (e.g. students, elderly, families, etc.)	B+
17	Homeownership options	B-
18	Regional cooperation with surrounding Michiana communities	C-
19	Preservation of historic buildings	C
20	Recreational fields & programs	C+
21	Community heritage	C+
22	Rental housing options	C+
23	Other: community gardens, gardens, park maintenance, green buildings, alternative energy, sustainable businesses, downtown parking	
Overall grade - across all indicators		C+

Land Use

Land use as a theme illustrates the location and type of desired growth for a community. It manages and promotes responsible, high quality growth. It physically states the development vision while promoting economic development and identifying infrastructure improvements. Land Use station displays were organized around the three components of land use planning:

- Location—positioning of new development or redevelopment within a community
- Quantity – amount of new development or redevelopment that can be supported by a community
- Quality – the type and character of growth

Location. A map displaying Elkhart’s existing land use pattern and a description of Elkhart’s existing land use conditions is provided in Chapter Four. From the existing land use map, a future land use framework was created and presented. Descriptions of both the existing land use pattern and future land use framework are provided later in Chapter Four.

Residential

Apartment	Condominium/ Townhouse	Duplex	Single-Family Home
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Office/Commercial

Office Park	R&D Campus	Free Standing	Converted Single-Family Home
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Retail

Regional Shopping	Community Shopping	Neighborhood Convenience	Niche/Specialty
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Industrial

Heavy Industrial	Light Industrial	Warehousing	Heavy Commercial
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Quantity. In the four land use categories of residential, office/commercial, retail, and industrial, four types of specific uses were organized and arranged from “most intensive use” to “least intensive use.” In discussions, citizens and the steering committee were asked to indicate their preferred (indicated in **bold** below) development or redevelopment type (left to right – most intensive use to least intensive use).

In the categories of **residential, office/commercial, and industrial development, moderately intensive uses are appropriate for identified new development and redevelopment locations** throughout the City. These types of moderately intensive office/commercial and industrial land uses support the community’s desire for additional employment opportunities and a more diversified economic base. The more favored **condominium/townhouse** residential development supports the desire for additional housing options for those interested in a lower maintenance home, in particular young professionals and empty nesters. This type of dense residential development is **appropriate for more urban, walkable environments**, such as downtown.

The Michiana region is served well with retail options, particularly in Mishawaka along Grape Road. Most Elkhart residents can arrive at a regional retail center within a 15 to 25-minute drive. Recognizing this, as well as the challenges faced by Concord Mall on Elkhart's southside, the less intensive **niche/specialty** and **neighborhood convenience** types of retail are most **appropriate for identified new development and redevelopment locations**. Niche/specialty retail is most commonly found near other niche/specialty retail and restaurants in compact, walkable environments, such as downtown or neighborhood business districts. Neighborhood convenience centers offer everyday goods and services (e.g. dry cleaning, banking, coffee) that consumers want within a short walking or driving distance from their homes.

Quality. The quality subtheme has 15 land use characteristics to help the City identify the types of quality uses desired by citizens and the steering committee. The listed land use characteristics pertained to the quality of life as influenced by land uses. The top five ranked most important land use characteristics included:

1. Downtown revitalization
2. Multi-mode transportation system
3. Protection of environmental resources
4. Choice in housing options
5. (tie) Choice in employment options
5. (tie) Public gathering spaces

When comparing the quality of life land use characteristics with the vision for community livability indicators, there are some parallels, including the importance of downtown, diverse employment opportunities, and a balanced transportation system that considers multiple modes of transportation.

Land Use Quality of Life	
Importance Rank	Land Use Characteristic
1	Downtown revitalization
2	Multi-mode transportation system
3	Protection of environmental resources
4	Choice in housing options
5 (tie)	Choice in employment options
5 (tie)	Public gathering spaces

Vision for Community Livability	
Importance Rank	Livability Indicator
1	Walkable downtown
2	Diverse economy
3	Safe neighborhoods
4	Vibrant downtown
5	Public transportation (e.g. bus, rail)

Mobility

Mobility reinforces the importance of a transportation system that balances the needs of all potential users and the influence of transportation facilities on adjacent land uses.

Elkhart Community Schools recently increased its student walk zones as a means to reduce busing and school district transportation costs. The walk zone for elementary and middle school students is a one-mile radius of the school. The high school walk zone is a two-mile radius of the school. There are some exceptions to these zones, especially in the less developed areas of the City. Facilities, such as sidewalks, marked crossings, and buffering from moving vehicles are fundamental components of a safe pedestrian route to school. To illustrate the walk zone coverage for all elementary, middle, and high schools, three maps were displayed to Open House participants demonstrating that nearly all of the City limits are included in a school walk zone. This leads to a conclusion that pedestrian facility installation should be a priority in all designated school walk zones. Additionally, a one-mile radius from all City parks was also mapped to show their walk zones, as parks are often destinations for pedestrians.

Citizens were asked about their likely walking and biking habits if they had a safe means to access a facility (e.g. sidewalk, multi-use path, and/or bike lane). One hundred percent of Mobility station respondents indicated that if given the opportunity and safe access, they would walk to work/school, shopping, or recreational destinations. Respondents were willing to walk the farthest for recreation (46 percent would walk more than 15 minutes to reach a recreation destination). More than 38 percent would walk five to ten minutes for work; 46 percent would walk five to ten minutes for shopping.

More than 88 percent of respondents would bike to work/school, shopping, or recreational destinations given the opportunity and safe access. Like walking, respondents were willing to bike farther for a recreation destination (60 percent would bike more than five miles). More than 57 percent of respondents would bike more than five miles for work/school.

An important consideration in land use and transportation planning is the reciprocal relationship between these two functions. Transportation systems and their adjacent land uses shape the character of an area, or community, and have a direct effect on its perceived quality of life. This is particularly important when recruiting new investment to the City and in sustaining the existing investment and residential base.

The purpose of identifying the character or “personality” for the major and minor arterials in the City is to assign an image

to these corridors that will lead to technical recommendations pertaining to land use and transportation policy. These character classifications will assist the City, property owners, and developers in understanding the desired development aesthetic within the City of Elkhart. Five corridor classifications have been developed for the City of Elkhart and are as follows:

- *Commuter Route.* A corridor with primary access to destinations or other major transportation routes, characterized by mixed land uses.
- *Neighborhood Link.* Local street primarily serving local users, adjacent residential land uses.
- *Scenic Drive.* Attractive corridor with adjacent natural features, extensive landscaping, or aesthetic views.
- *Commercial Corridor.* Road or street characterized primarily by a concentration and distribution of retail/commercial uses.
- *Industrial Corridor.* Road or street characterized primarily by industrial uses and substantial truck traffic.

Neighborhood Link and Commuter Corridor were the prevailing assigned corridor classifications for many of Elkhart's Corridors. Cassopolis Street, Bristol Street, and downtown streets were identified as Commercial Corridors. Middlebury Street, County Road 17, South Main Street, Old US 33, Toledo Road, and sections of Lusher and Hively avenues were designated as Industrial Corridors. Only Jackson Boulevard, between Goshen Avenue and Middleton Run Road, was labeled as a Scenic Drive. The resulting recommendations can be found in Chapter Eight.

Housing Needs Assessment

A housing needs assessment was undertaken to provide information for both the Comprehensive Plan and the *Five Year Housing Assessment Update* and the *Consolidated Plan*. The initial findings including the graphically summarized, color-coded "Overall Building Condition" map depict the variations in conditions of residential structures in Elkhart's neighborhoods, as illustrated in the above demographic section. The conditions assessment is a result from a generalized, subjective evaluation of neighborhood residential units. Housing in the neighborhoods north of the St. Joseph River was largely evaluated as sound or excellent condition. Housing in the neighborhoods south of the river, particularly south of the Norfolk Southern rail tracks, was evaluated as in need of repair, with some notable exceptions.

The results of the analysis showed that elderly housing was determined to be the highest rental need, while housing for veterans and persons with addictions was determined to be the lowest rental needs. The identified highest homeownership need

and, incongruously also one of the lowest identified housing needs, was households with annual household incomes of \$0 to \$29,650. Homeownership opportunities for homeless and developmentally disabled were identified as no need.

Recognizing that neighborhood needs and conditions vary across areas throughout the City, specific improvements have been identified for each neighborhood. Suggested improvements included sidewalk replacement/installation, street trees, site redevelopment, connections to public utilities, etc. The City's neighborhoods were divided into six districts, similar to the City's code enforcement districts, in order to record participant input. Maps illustrating all mentioned improvement needs throughout all six districts are included in the appendix of this memorandum.

Area 1 (northwest section). The majority of identified needed improvements are concentrated along the Elkhart & Western rail line. Noted desired improvements included street trees, housing stock improvement and renovation, and redevelopment of vacant sites, among others.

Area 2 (northern section). Cassopolis Street, near the Toll Road interchange, received the most comments in this area. Noted desired improvements included street trees, housing stock improvement and renovation, and infrastructure improvements. Open House participants also indicated that sidewalks and buffering between land uses would improve Bristol Street, between Osolo Road and Jeanwood Drive, and the addition of landscaping along Greenleaf Boulevard would increase its visual appeal.

Area 3 (downtown and near downtown). Ten of the 11 presented improvement activities were identified as needed in the downtown and near downtown neighborhoods. Needs along Franklin Street included landscaping, housing stock improvement and renovation, redevelopment of selected sites, street trees, and utility connections. Waterfall Drive has redevelopment opportunities along with a need for landscaping.

Area 4 (St. Joseph River south). Middlebury Street received nearly all noted improvements for this area. In particular, street trees, landscaping, housing stock improvement and renovation, sidewalk replacement/installation, and open space/community gathering facility, were mentioned.

Area 5 (southwest section). The neighborhood immediately south of the Norfolk Southern rail line, both east and west of Benham Avenue, received the highest concentration of comments in this area. Noted improvement needs include sidewalk replacement/installation, housing stock improvement and renovation, and street trees.

Area 6 (southeast section). Open House participants indicated that housing stock improvement and renovation, landscaping, and buffering between land uses are needed along South Main Street.



City of Elkhart Comprehensive Plan Update

Adopted February 2, 2015



Chapter 3

Visioning

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20 Year Vision

A vision statement and six supporting goals were developed using input gathered during the planning process' first Community Open House and refined by the Steering Committee. This vision statement incorporates the community values and factors of livability as identified by Elkhart citizens. It is an inspirational description of what Elkhart would like to be in the future and serves as a guide for decision-making and community expectations. The six goals represent six tenets of the City's desired ultimate physical, social, and/or economic development that strengthen the vision and frame subsequent actions.

Elkhart is the city with a heart. It is a safe, attractive, and remarkable community featuring well-maintained neighborhoods, vibrant economy, distinctive downtown, environmental stewardship, and a coordinated transportation system offering its citizens a desirable quality of life through access to exemplary schools, public facilities, parks, and services. Elkhart is a well-respected destination of choice for living, working, and recreating achieved by responsible leadership and collaborative partnerships among citizens, the business community, institutions, and government.

From this vision statement, six principals or goals have been identified that will frame the recommendations. These topical areas include:

- I. Downtown and Cultural
- II. Neighborhoods
- III. Mobility
- IV. Education & Economic Development
- V. Aesthetics, Natural Resources & Open Spaces
- VI. Health and Safety



Participants at the first public open house.

The goal statements are as follows:

Goal I: Downtown & Culture - Continue revitalization of Elkhart's downtown to re-establish itself as a center of commercial, civic, cultural, and social activity.

Goal II: Neighborhoods - Direct investment, amenities, and new housing development to established residential areas within the City's boundaries to create additional opportunities for diverse ages, income levels, and stages of life in neighborhoods of choice.

Goal III: Mobility - Establish and maintain a balanced and connected system for all modes of transportation within the City and to regional networks.

Goal IV: Education & Economic Development -

Grow and diversify Elkhart's economy through academic programming, training, and business retention, expansion, and recruitment initiatives. Enhance the skillset and educational attainment of the workforce to qualify it for employment opportunities in a variety of industries and positions.

Elkhart's Vision Wheel



Goal V: Aesthetics, Natural Resources & Open Spaces

- Create opportunities for investment, activities, and programs that ensure protection of the City's built and natural environments, maintenance of open space and greenways, and respect for its heritage.

Goal VI: Health & Safety -

Coordinate public services and amenities with land use decisions to protect the well-being and quality of life of Elkhart's citizens and its environment.

Downtown/Cultural

Goal I

Continue revitalization of Elkhart's downtown to re-establish itself as a center of commercial, civic, cultural, and social activity.

Downtown is a part of Elkhart's iconic identity. In most communities, the economic health and vitality of a city is gauged by the condition of its downtown. Revitalization of Downtown Elkhart has been a continuous effort for more than a decade. Elkhart's citizens and City leadership have indicated on numerous occasions that downtown is important and should be an economic development priority for the community. Downtown has many residential, retail, and commercial space competitors throughout Elkhart and the Michiana Region. Responding to this competition and downtown's competitive advantages, the Comprehensive Plan Update recommends preparing downtown properties for a streamlined redevelopment process, capitalizing on downtown's unique qualities, enhancing downtown's civic, cultural, and social niche, and assisting the downtown management organization. The Comprehensive Plan Update supports the previous planning endeavors, in particular the 2004 Downtown Action Agenda, which outline strategies for downtown redevelopment, revitalization, and organizational initiatives.

The following action steps provide guidance to City policy and decision-makers to support the Downtown/Cultural Goal. Policy development requires the leadership and commitment of Elkhart City officials and collaboration with other partners. It is not solely up to the City to implement the following action steps; however, it is necessary that the City create an environment that is conducive to success in this area by dedicating more resources to organizing efforts, setting guidelines, and enforcing ordinances to enhance and promote assets, creating and maintaining partnerships, and galvanizing stakeholders. As Elkhart recovers from the economic recession of the late 2000s, the City should consider updating the Downtown Action Agenda and reviving its partnership with the downtown development organization to advance these action steps.

Recommendations

- a. Promote mixed-use occupancy in downtown buildings and judiciously permit uses that support the intentions outlined in the Downtown Action Agenda.
- b. Create development opportunity for live/work spaces in downtown buildings.



A view of Main Street in Downtown Elkhart.

- c. Clear unkempt properties to create turn-key sites for business location in priority areas.
- d. Scale and design new structures to be compatible with adjacent buildings and context.
- e. Establish cooperative agreements between the City and private property/business owners to advance Elkhart's downtown revitalization efforts such as facade improvements and maintaining sidewalks.
- f. Continue support of the downtown development organization.
- g. Update the downtown plan.

Neighborhoods

Goal II

Direct investment, amenities, and new housing development to established residential areas within the City's boundaries to create additional opportunities for diverse ages, income levels, and stages of life in neighborhoods of choice.

Neighborhoods are the places where everyday life occurs. They create and form communities and flourish with the availability of quality and proximate housing, schools, jobs, health care, public safety, retail, and services. Elkhart's residential population has experienced a modest increase since 2000. The demand for new housing, however, is stagnant and older neighborhoods near the center of the City are continuing to experience high vacancy rates. Residential growth has occurred primarily through annexation of subdivisions in suburban areas adjacent to Elkhart's outer City limits. The Comprehensive Plan Update emphasizes the need and desire to maintain and reinvest in existing residential neighborhoods within the existing City limits. This maintenance and reinvestment involves physical improvements to housing stock and gateways, public and private sector financial commitments, revised review and approval processes, and programmatic support to reinforce Elkhart's residential neighborhoods. Through these various means, it is important to provide housing products at various price points that appeal to homebuyers and renters demanding a quality home in or near the center city.

Housing in the City of Elkhart should be affordable and attractive to all citizens, regardless of incomes or whether they rent or own their homes. The following action steps provide guidance to City policy and decision-makers to support the Neighborhoods Goal. Policy development requires the leadership and commitment of Elkhart City officials and collaboration with other partners. It is not solely up to the City to implement the following action steps;

however, it is necessary that the City create an environment that is conducive to success in this area by dedicating more resources to organizing efforts, setting guidelines, and enforcing ordinances to enhance and promote assets, creating and maintaining partnerships, and galvanizing stakeholders. Neighborhood associations are the essential partners in accomplishing these action steps.

Recommendations

- a. Dedicate efforts and funding to improving current “at risk” residential neighborhoods with the highest potential for long-term stability.
- b. Address vacant residential properties to reduce any adverse effects of abandoned properties on stable neighborhoods.
- c. Develop a program to create and maintain neighborhood entrances and common areas in areas that do not have a homeowners association.
- d. Create or re-establish and promote neighborhood identities.
- e. Establish residential character guidelines for infill housing within established neighborhoods.
- f. Prepare specific neighborhood revitalization plans and implementation strategies for targeted neighborhoods.

Mobility

Goal III

Establish and maintain a balanced and connected system for all modes of transportation within the City and to regional networks.

Elkhart’s transportation system includes air, rail, water, and surface. A balanced transportation system provides opportunity for all means of travel in a cooperative and coordinated manner to meet the needs of the community. It is also fully integrated with adjacent land uses, serves the travel demands and desires of citizens, and is compatible with the natural environment. A transportation system that provides safe, convenient, and efficient movement of traffic is vital to a community’s well-being. It has significant influence on the appearance, character, and economic viability and is an important consideration when current and future land use decisions are made. It affects the “where, when, and way” that development takes place and creates access to markets, employment, and investment.

The Comprehensive Plan Update’s recommendations pertaining to mobility include strategies that increase efficiency and safety while meeting the access and needs of all motorized and non-



The RiverWalk is an important part of the pedestrian system in Downtown Elkhart.

motorized modes of transportation. These recommendations are intended to assist public officials, developers, and other interested parties in making decisions relating to land use, public right-of-way improvements, funding opportunities, future public investment, and other transportation issues.

The following action steps provide guidance to City policy and decision-makers to support the Mobility Goal. Policy development requires the leadership and commitment of Elkhart City officials and collaboration with other partners. It is not solely up to the City to implement the following action steps; however, it is necessary that the City create an environment that is conducive to success in this area by dedicating more resources to organizing efforts, setting guidelines, and enforcing ordinances to enhance and promote assets, creating and maintaining partnerships, and galvanizing stakeholders. The Michiana Council of Governments (MACOG) is a key collaborator with the City in the development and maintenance of Elkhart's transportation system.

Recommendations

- a. Incorporate facilities for all modes of transportation into road resurfacing and reconstruction projects.
- b. Install sidewalks within all residential neighborhoods.
- c. Install internal sidewalk network in all new commercial, industrial, and institutional developments.
- d. Install multi-purpose paths along all major and minor arterials.
- e. Install bicycle lanes along the routes recommended by the Pedal Panel.
- f. Link all internal pedestrian systems (i.e. sidewalks) with the larger, citywide pedestrian/bicycle transportation network.
- g. Provide for seamless connections among transportation modes including bus, pedestrian facilities, and bicycle facilities.
- h. Create sustainable funding source for facility construction and maintenance.

Education & Economic Development

Goal IV

Grow and diversify Elkhart's economy through academic programming, training, and business retention, expansion, and recruitment initiatives. Enhance the skillset and educational attainment of the workforce to

qualify it for employment opportunities in a variety of industries and positions.

The local and regional economy is fundamental to a community's quality of life and its citizens' standards of living. A healthy economy creates employment opportunities, supports the tax base, attracts residents, funds public facilities and government services, and establishes a community where people want to live. Education and economic development are reciprocally linked in that an educated population positively contributes to economic growth and sustainability and a growing economy expands and increases the quality of educational opportunities.

Economic development has both individual and collective rewards. Increased personal income and wealth increases the tax base so a community can provide the level of services that citizens expect. Likewise, education also has both individual and collective rewards. An educated and skilled individual has the ability to pursue employment opportunities that offer a higher level of salary, thus increasing personal wealth and contributing more to the local tax base. Tax money is reinvested in the community's educational system which produces additional skilled workers required by current and potential employers. A community that provides a workforce to meet the changing needs of employers will be most attractive for sustainable economic development efforts.

Elkhart prides itself on a skilled workforce. City leaders have recognized for years the importance of diversifying the skill set of its residents through conventional and innovative education and job training endeavors. As economic trends shift, a diversified workforce will not be solely dependent on one industry to provide employment and will be better positioned to handle economic ebbs and flows. The Education & Economic Development Goal of this Comprehensive Plan Update reinforces the education-economic development relationship and outlines techniques to capitalize on the region's diverse educational resources to advance the City's traditional economic development efforts of business retention, attraction, and expansion. The regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) maintained by MACOG is focused on workforce development issues while the Horizon 2.0 (the second generation of Elkhart County's collaborative economic development strategy) are focused on expanding educational opportunities.

In addition to the City of Elkhart's Economic Development Department, the lead advocate of economic development in Elkhart County is the Economic Development Corporation (EDC). Since 2000, the EDC has been instrumental in attracting and retaining quality businesses in the County and is the City's key partner in fostering Elkhart's economy. The following action steps



Residents enjoy a walk around Island Park.

provide guidance to City policy and decision-makers to support the Education & Economic Development Goal. Policy development requires the leadership and commitment of Elkhart City officials and collaboration with other partners, such as the EDC. It is not solely up to the City to implement the following action steps; however, it is necessary that the City create an environment that is conducive to success in this area by dedicating more resources to organizing efforts, setting guidelines, and enforcing ordinances to enhance and promote assets, creating and maintaining partnerships, and galvanizing stakeholders.

Recommendations

- a. Continue the City's economic development efforts of business recruitment, retention, and expansion.
- b. Clear unkempt properties to create turn-key sites for business location in priority areas.
- c. Identify new and emerging markets where Elkhart has a competitive advantage in terms of location, skills of workforce, economy of scale, building inventory, incentives, or other decision-making factors.
- d. Identify and pursue funding opportunities that support the educational and training needs of existing and emerging businesses in the City.
- e. Ensure regular communication among school district, higher education institutions, continuing education providers, Chamber of Commerce, and other representatives from the business community to marry local employment opportunities with academic and training curriculums.
- f. Continue participation in the Horizon 2.0 initiative.
- g. Develop new, non-monetary incentives to entice new investors and retain existing businesses.
- h. Cluster similar and complementary businesses to create economies of scale, encourage resource sharing, market an area's identity, and provide a convenient and memorable experience for customers.
- i. Direct new development and investment to areas within the current City limits rather than in undeveloped/greenfield areas.
- j. Continue to revise the 2013 Annexation Strategy.

Aesthetics, Natural Resources & Open Space

Goal V

Create opportunities for investment, activities, and programs that ensure protection of the City’s built and natural environments, maintenance of open space and greenways, and respect for its heritage.

Elkhart’s heritage and natural resources are essential components of the community. Most notably, the St. Joseph and Elkhart Rivers have shaped the development of the City and their presence contributes to the community’s character, environmental quality, and recreational amenities. Because Elkhart’s natural resources are inherent components of the City, the provision of adequate greenspace and the protection of sensitive environmental areas must be considered as necessary public facilities similar to infrastructure and utility services. Additionally, heritage preservation is also an important local government service and a sensible investment, returning multiple benefits from modest expenditures. The intent of the Aesthetics, Natural Resources & Open Space Goal of this Comprehensive Plan Update is to protect significant, scarce, non-renewable resources and develop ways to capitalize on these assets while advancing preservation endeavors. To achieve this goal, environmental and heritage stewardship should be approached as a shared responsibility. Efforts will require coordination among City departments, not-for-profit organizations, the private sector, and other local, state, and federal agencies to work together to maintain Elkhart’s unique sense of place.

The following action steps provide guidance to City policy and decision-makers to support the Aesthetics, Natural Resources & Open Space Goal. Policy development requires the leadership and commitment of Elkhart City officials and collaboration with other partners. It is not solely up to the City to implement the following action steps; however, it is necessary that the City create an environment that is conducive to success in this area by dedicating more resources to organizing efforts, setting guidelines, and enforcing ordinances to enhance and promote assets, creating and maintaining partnerships, and galvanizing stakeholders. The Elkhart County Soil and Water District Conservation, the City Plan Commission, Purdue University Extension, and community volunteers are all key collaborators with the City in the efforts to protect and enhance Elkhart’s existing built and environmental resources.

Recommendations

- a. Facilitate public-private partnerships and cooperative agreements in beautification and preservation efforts.
- b. Create sustainable urban forests on vacant land and potentially contaminated sites.
- c. Promote community gardens and local food production.
- d. Prepare and maintain a natural resource inventory and assessment.
- e. Incorporate sustainable design in all new developments, redevelopments, and infrastructure projects.
- f. Install multi-purpose paths along the greenway routes recommended by the Pedal Panel.
- g. Require architectural design of structures within overlay districts to be compatible with development context and corridor character.
- h. Establish design guidelines for gateways to influence signage, landscape design, parking, and building orientation.
- i. Establish separate urban and suburban design guidelines.
- j. Review and revise local historic district plan and ordinance.

Health & Safety

Goal VI

Coordinate public services and amenities with land use decisions to protect the well-being and quality of life of Elkhart's citizens and its environment.

The advantages of amenable intergovernmental relations include thoughtful and proficient land use decision-making processes, coordinated growth management and preservation, efficient delivery of services, and economies of scale. Growth and development cross jurisdictional boundaries and departmental responsibilities. There are no requirements for comprehensive plans to address intergovernmental collaboration. However, as one of the six primary goals of this Comprehensive Plan Update, the health and safety of the Elkhart community includes maximizing public resources through cooperation, streamlined processes, and consolidated efforts to provide for responsible use of land and logical growth. By coordinating decision-making and approval processes, the City of Elkhart can better connect and align transportation systems, City services, and other infrastructure and resources with neighborhoods, commercial centers, institutions, and recreational facilities.

The following action steps provide guidance to City policy and decision-makers to support the Health & Safety Goal. Policy development requires the leadership and commitment of Elkhart City officials and collaboration with other partners. It is not solely up to the City to implement the following action steps; however, it is necessary that the City create an environment that is conducive to success in this area by dedicating more resources to organizing efforts, setting guidelines, and enforcing ordinances to enhance and promote assets, creating and maintaining partnerships, and galvanizing stakeholders. The Elkhart County Health Department, the County Soil and Water District Conservation, and the Builders Association of Elkhart County, Inc. are all key collaborators.

Recommendations

- a. Coordinate decision-making and approval processes among City departments.
- b. Coordinate transportation and land use planning.
- c. Coordinate installation of pedestrian/bicycle facilities with programs associated with public health and community wellness.
- d. Identify key vacant sites and buildings for redevelopment or conservation.
- e. Minimize the appearance of blight.
- f. Remediate brownfield sites.
- g. Establish an Elkhart City-Elkhart County Conservancy District to manage utility resources.
- h. Strive to build civic facilities and other City buildings using sustainable and green building principles.



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Chapter 4

Land Use

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Introduction

Understanding a community's land uses and development trends is critical in planning for its future. Existing land uses provide the framework from which the community's long-term development vision is created. Historic development patterns assist in:

- Understanding past land use policy and what potential changes might be needed;
- Determining potential, appropriate, and responsible future growth;
- Capitalizing on economic development opportunities; and
- Addressing infrastructure needs.

Comprehensive plans allow communities to manage the location, quantity, and quality of growth. Location refers to where new development or redevelopment should occur. Quantity refers to the amount of new development that can be supported by the local and regional economy. Quality refers to the type and character of growth. Effectively balancing these three elements directly influences the function and character of a community and its transportation efficiency.



Quantity, Quality & Location are the backbone of land use policy in the Elkhart community.

Existing Land Use

Elkhart's topography, natural features, and transportation system (water and surface) have all shaped the development of the City throughout its approximate 200 year history. Elkhart was first platted in 1832 with 51 lots near the north bank of the St. Joseph River. The first building was constructed at the northwest corner of Main and Jackson streets. With the development of rail lines, access to the St. Joseph River, and its location along the route between Chicago and Detroit, Elkhart became a transportation hub and commercial center which resulted in growth occurring beyond the original 51 lots.

Today, Elkhart's land development and redevelopment patterns are an indication of its past and its evolving land use policies, as discussed throughout this chapter. Elkhart is a mature community with land uses and development patterns that represent its cultural history, manufacturing industrial base, and automobile-oriented suburban growth. These land uses contribute to the Elkhart community character, conveying its identity to residents and visitors. The City's historic downtown has the building inventory and architectural composition representative of a Midwestern community of its age featuring a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses. Parks are located along the Elkhart and St. Joseph rivers in the floodways and floodplains, where other uses are not safe or practical. Other pockets of natural areas and parks



Commercial uses and available retail space in the Downtown Area.

are scattered throughout the City with little to no connections to each other.

As the City has grown, several land use patterns have emerged and many of the City's uses are inherited from Elkhart County, an outcome of annexations. Heavy industrial uses, some in operation and some remnants of Elkhart's manufacturing past, line the Norfolk Southern, Elkhart & Western and Grand Elk rail lines, the 80/90 Toll Road, and anchor the corners of the City limits. Outside of the downtown commercial center, commercial uses, including both retail and office space, are located along the City's major thoroughfares and are primarily automobile-oriented in character. Single-family residences are the dominant residential land use within historic neighborhoods located adjacent to downtown and in newer residential developments and subdivisions located in more rural settings. Community facilities, including parks, libraries, churches, and schools are equally dispersed throughout the City providing amenities for Elkhart's citizens.

As stated earlier, the City of Elkhart's policies, historic economic base, and annexation agreements with Elkhart County have allowed a variety of land uses to occur. Elkhart is an employment center for the Michiana region. As such, Elkhart has a slightly larger percentage of land use dedicated to industrial (29 percent) and commercial (9 percent) uses than residential use (35 percent). Elkhart imports employees from other communities within Elkhart County and the region. Serving as a regional employment base has economic advantages, but also has disadvantages pertaining to land use and strain on local resources. For example, with such high intensity and percentage of industrial and commercial uses, there are many instances of incompatible adjacent land uses throughout the City. It is not uncommon to find a residence next to an industrial use with little buffering or less intensive uses separating these incompatibilities. Because of the economic recession, many of the industrial and commercial uses are now vacant and no longer contributing to the City's tax base. Without a comprehensive plan and future land use direction, the City's tendency to incrementally permit industrial and commercial uses that encroach into established residential neighborhoods will continue.

The "Existing Land Use Distribution" diagram illustrates Elkhart's land use composition. At 29 percent and 28 percent of total land within the City limits, industrial and low density residential, respectively, represent the largest land use categories. Public/institutional uses such as churches, schools, and libraries are eleven percent of the City's land use. Commercial, which includes both office and retail, accounts for nine percent. Together, medium and high density residential comprises five percent. Two percent of the City is mobile home parks, one percent is the railroad, and

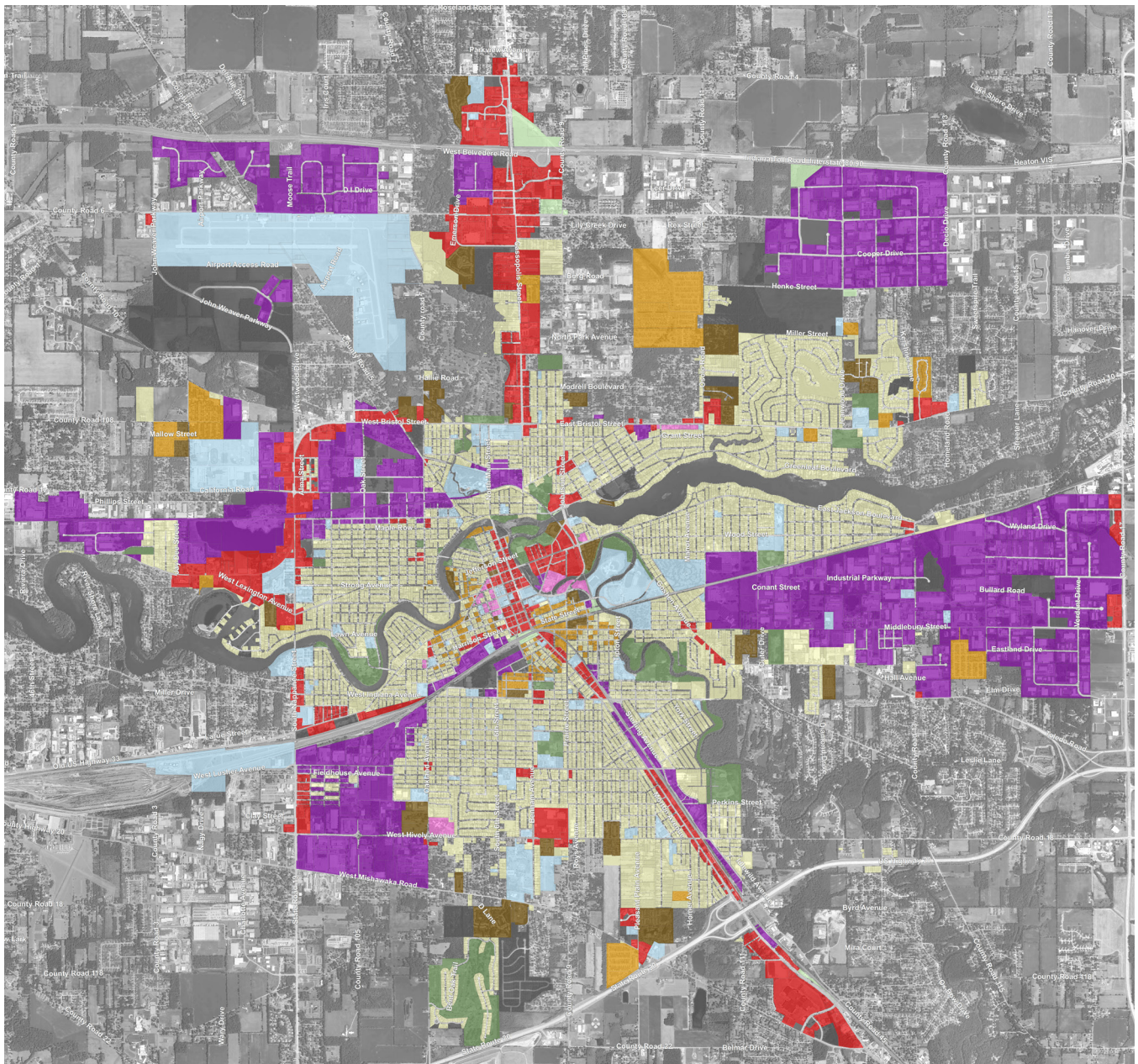
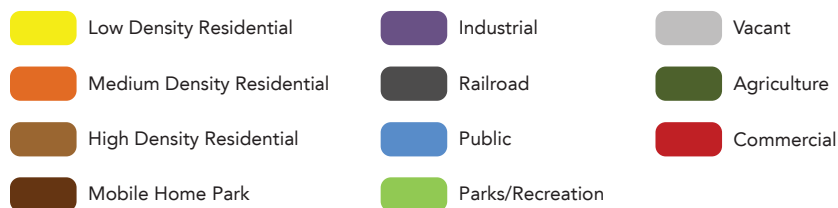


Figure 4.1: Existing Land Use Map



one percent is agriculture. Approximately nine percent of the land in Elkhart is vacant.

Existing Land Use By Geographic Organization

A noticeable characteristic of the City is its irregular incorporated boundaries. The City's corporate limits occupy land in portions of Concord, Osolo, Cleveland, and Baugo townships. The City's boundaries have expanded as City water and sewer service has been extended and Elkhart County land has been annexed.

The following description of Elkhart's existing land use pattern is organized by five geographic sections of the City:

1. Downtown
2. Northwest/West
3. Southwest/West
4. Southeast/East
5. Northeast

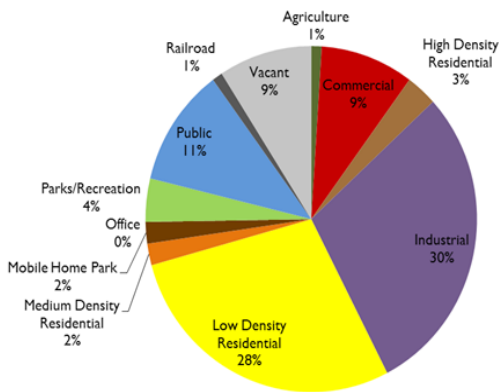


Figure 4.2: Existing Land Use Distribution

Downtown

Single family residential and multi-family residential conversions within the inner city remain the most densely populated. The oldest housing stock occurs north and west of the downtown area. Those homes were constructed on smaller lots with the homes covering a large portion of the property. Many of the homes built within three to four blocks west of Main Street were formerly single family homes that have been converted to multi-family dwellings. In reviewing Polk Directories, many of these conversions occurred in the late 1930s and 1940s during and after World War II.

Many office and small retail uses exist in converted homes along Main Street and west toward Second Street and Third Street. A small number of new office buildings as well as a bank have been constructed primarily along Main Street in the last ten years. Those commercial uses begin to transition to converted residential uses at Third Street and beyond. The Main Street corridor has the most dense commercial uses with many of the oldest structures having converted the upper stories to residential and office uses. The most common land uses now found in the downtown are office, bank, medical office, recreational/park, restaurant, and apartments (multi-family). Ordinary commercial/retail uses have had varied success along Main Street with a few notable exceptions including Hopman's Jewelry, Christian Science Reading Room, Seifert Drug Store, and Stephenson's, an upscale women's apparel shop.

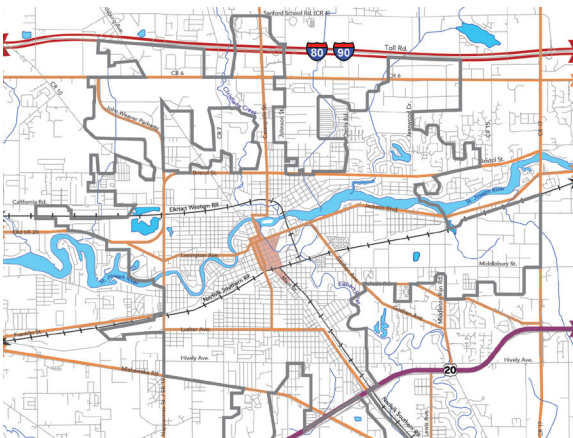


Figure 4.3: Downtown Geographic Boundaries

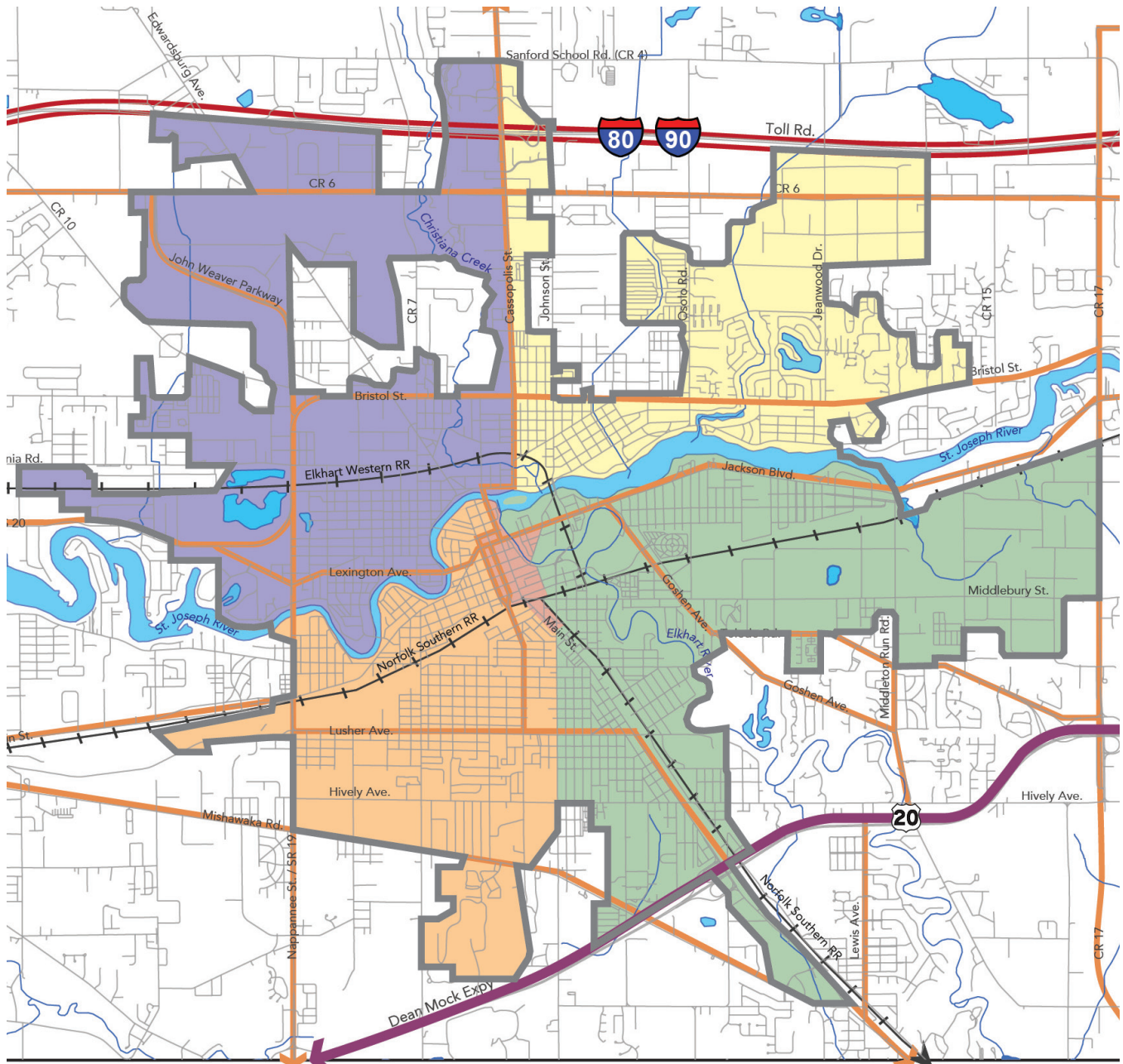


Figure 4.4: Geographic Location Map for Land Use

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------|--|--------------------|
| | Indiana Toll Road | | Northwest Quadrant |
| | US 20 Bypass | | Northeast Quadrant |
| | Major Arterial | | Southeast Quadrant |
| | Rail Line | | Southwest Quadrant |
| | City Limits | | Downtown |

Substantial investment has been made over the last several years with private and public dollars to implement the findings of the 2004 *Downtown Action Agenda*. The Arts and Entertainment District, as proposed in the study, has begun to take shape. The new Central Park in the 300 block of South Main Street, IUSB's Elkhart campus, Nibco Ice and Water Park, and two new office buildings on Nibco Parkway, along with the above noted long established businesses have begun to revitalize and reinvigorate the downtown.

Many of the existing downtown buildings have been renovated, and several have created new loft apartments above commercial, ground-floor space. The Riverwalk has provided an excellent backdrop for new office, restaurant, and recreational uses. Several new restaurants have opened within the last three years within the downtown Arts and Entertainment District.

The \$16 million renovation and restoration of the Lerner Theatre came to fruition with grand opening events in 2011. By expanding the footprint of the facility north to High Street, banquet and meeting space was created. These areas have already seen activity for parties, meetings, proms and the like. The renovation included enlargement of the performance stage which will accommodate larger productions. Area residents have attended theatrical presentations and concerts and restaurants in the district reported increased patronage during Theatre events.

Potential areas for redevelopment exist along the Elkhart Avenue corridor where a large manufacturing facility (Elkhart Foundry) had been idle for several years. With the foundry buildings now demolished and the site cleared and seeded, it is ready for private development. The site is approximately six acres and enjoys scenic frontage on the Elkhart River. A quality project, potentially including commercial and residential space, is needed which could in turn spur compatible development on nearby underutilized land.

Northwest/West

Summer 2011 marked the beginning of INDOT's work to widen and improve State Road 19, or Nappanee Street. The north boundary of the project will realign the intersection of Bypass Road and Nappanee Street. Bypass Road is proposed to connect to Nappanee Street at a newly formed 'T' intersection. This portion of the project caused the closing of a used car business at the site. The primary land uses in the area of the proposed project are auto sales and auto related services, fast food restaurants, office uses both medical and dental, and the city's sewer treatment plant and office. The southern limit of the project will be at the intersection of Franklin where Franklin will shift to the north to

allow for increased stacking of vehicles waiting to proceed north, east or west on State Road 19 north of the viaduct.

The West Bristol Street corridor is beginning to experience an increased demand for commercial uses. Historically, many of the uses adjacent to West Bristol Street have been manufacturing. For a variety of reasons, whether it be plant closure or relocation or redevelopment of vacant land, many of the recent uses have been commercial. Examples of those new commercial uses have been food service (i.e. restaurant, coffee shop) and retail. One recent example of redevelopment is a daycare center built on land formerly owned by the Bayer Corporation (formerly Miles). Some examples of existing commercial uses are the Elkhart Market West where Martin's Super Market is the anchor tenant and the Parkmor Plaza shopping center, which has experienced some vacancies.

The area directly south of Elkhart Market West located where Bristol Street becomes Nappanee Street, has conflicting land uses. The area is zoned for industrial and manufacturing uses, however several single family homes remain as non-conforming uses. The residential uses were located in the area prior to the establishment of the manufacturing and industrial uses. Several smaller manufacturing uses currently operate in the area as well as auto service/repair shops. The property in that area was indeed originally platted for residential development which negatively impacts a transition to manufacturing uses. Hurdles to redevelopment include difficulty in meeting compliance with minimum setbacks, parking requirements and storm water retention requirements. Therefore, large scale redevelopment would be challenging due to the shallow depth of the lots and existing infrastructure.

Beyond the Bristol/Nappanee corridor to the northwest of CR 10 and John Weaver Parkway, are established manufacturing uses and a new industrial park. The Aeroplex Industrial Park, accessed via the John Weaver Parkway, offers 300 +/- acres of undeveloped land, some of which is adjacent to the airport. The Aeroplex Industrial Park is within five minutes of the Indiana Toll Road providing quick vehicular access to a major East/West thoroughfare.

The unincorporated Cleveland Township, beyond the municipal boundary, has experienced tremendous growth in suburban residential housing. Many of these homes are on estate size lots, many over one acre, with well water and septic systems. This area has easy access to St. Joseph County (Mishawaka and South Bend) so residents in this area may be employed there and/or do their shopping there. The closest place within Elkhart City limits for these county residents to shop for groceries, do banking or enjoy dining out would be the shopping center at the Elkhart Market

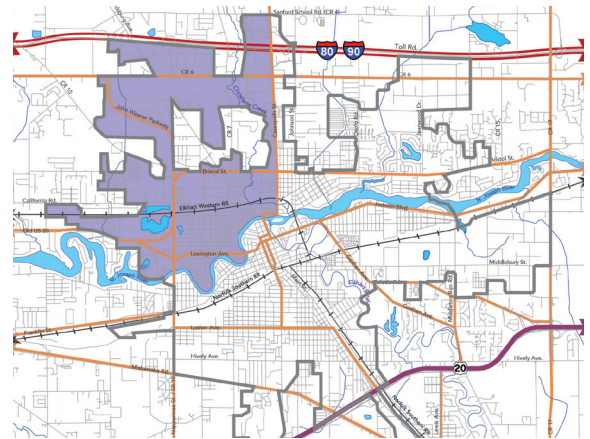


Figure 4.5: Northwest/West Geographic Boundaries

West. Other commercial locations could be accessed via CR 4 (Sanford School Road) or CR 10.

A Superfund Site exists at the intersection of CR 10 and John Weaver Parkway. Many of the county residences to the east, which are located in Elkhart County, have been connected to the municipal water system due to potable water contamination from the Himco area. A reuse plan was written several years ago for the Himco Dump, as the property has become known, that outlined potential passive recreation options for the property. None has been established to date.

Southwest/West

Discussed in the previous section, improvements to State Road 19 impact the Southwest/West area as well. This area's primary land uses are auto sales and auto related services, fast food restaurants, office uses both medical and dental, and the City's sewer treatment plant and office.

The retail and office uses along Nappanee Street, Franklin Street, Lexington Avenue were primarily constructed 20 to 30 years ago and many properties are beginning to show their age. A number of these properties were constructed for a specific use or have a unique architectural design that presents challenges for a new or alternative use. Some infill redevelopment has occurred. Very few of the properties along these corridors are linked with sidewalks and movement between the commercial uses depend on the use of an automobile.

The Southwest neighborhood is bounded by Nappanee Street on the west, Lusher Avenue to the north, Oakland to the east and Hively Avenue to the south and has had manufacturing zoning since at least 1957. The predominant land uses in the area are smaller manufacturing, auto salvage and repair, and warehousing. A number of residential properties still exist as non-conforming uses within this area and several have successfully sought variances from the Board of Zoning Appeals to legalize their existence. There has been a limited number of new businesses in this area. As noted in a previous section, lots here were also originally platted for residential uses which will cause challenges for a transition to large scale development where manufacturing uses rely on truck traffic for deliveries. There is typically not sufficient room for truck navigation on the property and as a result of that, navigation occurs in the public right of way potentially causing conflicts with other traffic.

Southeast/East

County Road 17, the eastern boundary for the municipality, has experienced substantial commercial development over the past

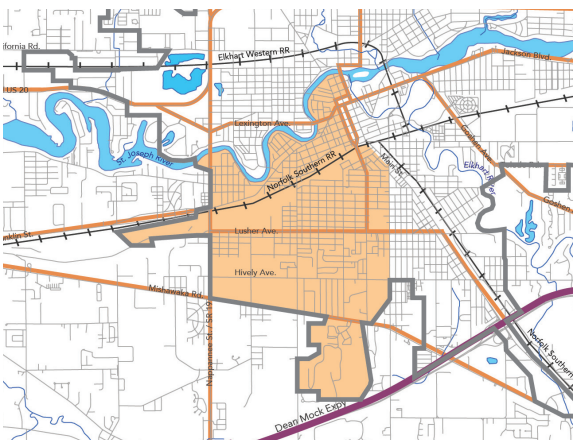


Figure 4.6: Southwest/West

seven to ten years. Within the municipal boundary, most of the 1996 'future land use maps' call for the land fronting CR 17 to be industrial. That has not been the development trend however, as commercial uses have dominated the corridor. Several large strip centers with restaurants and office and service uses, as well as a large garden design center, and two financial institutions exist in the area. Presumably, these businesses look to nearby residents of unincorporated Jefferson Township (east side of County Road 17) as their base of patronage. Additionally, people living in Michigan and south/central Elkhart County, including the greater Goshen area, can now access this area with ease. County Road 17 is a four lane, limited access road that now extends from US 12 in Michigan and will eventually connect to US 6 in southern Elkhart County. County Road 17 also connects to the new Elkhart East exit at the Indiana Toll Road. The Dean Mock Expressway (US 20) terminates at County Road 17 which links Elkhart to South Bend and St. Joseph County.

Slightly west of the County Road 17 corridor, the manufacturing/industrial park (Elkhart Industrial Park) is almost completely built out with little vacant land left for development. Recent construction activities have focused on additions to existing buildings. Many warehouses and manufacturing operations have existed in that area for 15 to 25 + years, with properties north of Middlebury Street being approximately 10 years older.

The residential neighborhoods to the east of the downtown and south of the Saint Joseph River from Jackson to Middlebury include many stable, mostly single family dwellings. A good portion of those homes were built after WWI, on through the 1950's and continue to be well maintained and home owner occupied.

Northeast/East

A major annexation from unincorporated Osolo Township to the City was the Northland Industrial Park. The annexation went into effect in January 2008. This annexation added 492 acres to the City of Elkhart. The Northland Industrial Park consists of many warehouses and manufacturing plants that continue to supply the recreational vehicle industry. Easy access to the Indiana Toll Road makes it a desirable location. The area has almost no vacant/undeveloped land.

The single family residential area south of the Northland Industrial Park has experienced ground water contamination and has subsequently been connected to municipal water service. The homes are still located in Elkhart County with many of those residents choosing not to annex to the City. These neighborhoods connect to other neighborhoods located within the city via local streets.

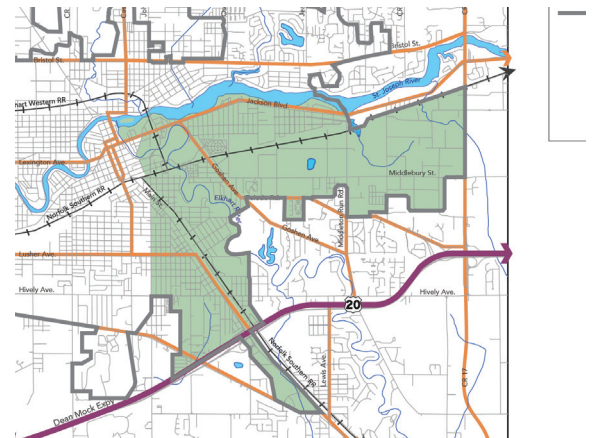


Figure 4.7: Southeast/East Geographic Boundaries

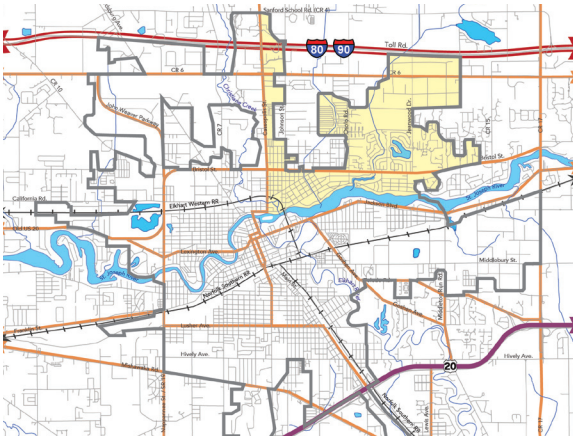


Figure 4.8: Northeast/East

The construction of these homes spanned several decades beginning in the 1950's to the present. The area remains desirable because of easy access to parks, schools and shopping. The East Bristol Street corridor has neighborhood retail, banks and a new grocery store within a five minute drive for residents in most of Osolo Township, both incorporated and unincorporated.

The residential neighborhoods north and south of the East Bristol Street corridor and north of the Saint Joseph River include many stable, mostly single family dwellings with several smaller apartment complexes located east of Osolo Road and in the Walnut Trails planned unit development. The homes vary in age with earlier build dates in the 1920's. Several new builds have occurred on lots where new owners have had older homes razed to make way for more modern architecture and floor plans. This phenomenon is especially noted at waterfront properties along Greenleaf, a trend found in many communities with waterfront sites.

The Remington Industrial Park is located just outside the municipal boundary on the City's northeast side. Developed within the last decade, this park has water and sewer services. The Elkhart East Business Park is also located outside the municipal boundary, but is served by city services. These two planned industrial/commercial areas have the largest amount of undeveloped land available.

The County Road 17 extension connects to a new Indiana Toll Road entrance and continues north to Michigan and US 12. As a limited access road, County Road 17 serves to connect southwest lower Michigan through Elkhart County to US Highway 6.

1996 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations

The last major update to the City of Elkhart's *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* occurred in 1996. This reviewed, in general terms, the land use categories within the City of Elkhart and portions of the surrounding unincorporated townships of Osolo, Concord, Baugo, Cleveland and Washington. In contrast, this 2012 *Comprehensive Plan Update* only examines the land within the City's corporate boundary. The existing land use update was performed by Elkhart City staff using the most recent aerial photography and windshield surveys of the community.

The 1996 *Comprehensive Plan* cited the purpose of evaluating existing land use patterns within the community to determine the historic patterns of development, conflicting land uses, and provide a basis for establishing future land use scenarios. The 1996 *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* describes the following land use categories:

Residential. Residential uses are found throughout the city. In general, the area surrounding the downtown has higher density development. Often this is due to single family dwelling conversions and smaller lot sizes. The farther away from downtown the density becomes lower with larger suburban sized lots that in some areas of the city reach one half acre or more. With much of the City built out, new residential development occurs outside the City boundary in larger suburban, estate sized lots.

Office. This category includes all types of office uses – law, medical and dental, insurance, real estate, and other professional offices. These uses are found in the downtown and also along Bristol Street between Osolo Road and Cassopolis Street. Offices are also found in commercial shopping centers alongside less intense retail and/or service uses. Many office uses can be found in converted homes along streets that are heavily travelled.

Commercial. The commercial land use category includes a wide range of uses. Neighborhood retail, strip/power centers, malls, and the downtown Central Business District (CBD) are examples of commercial uses found within the city.

Industrial. This category provides for all types of manufacturing and warehousing uses. The 1996 plan cited the manufacturing and production of manufactured housing, mobile homes, recreational vehicles and associated support industry/businesses which still account for a large percentage of industrial uses within the community. Recent trends have introduced small building light industry/back office functions, and warehousing uses into the City. The trend of large areas needed for manufacturing are in the past and so large industrial sites should be able to be redeveloped to suit more light industry, warehouse and small manufacturing processes.

Public/Institutional. These uses include schools, government facilities, hospitals, places of worship, cemeteries, and other public facilities. These facilities are dispersed throughout the city, and there is typically a correlation between location and the population served. Public Uses are not usually found concentrated in one area.

Park and Recreation. Within the city limits the current inventory of park land covers 296.75 acres. Elkhart has 32 park facilities that range in size from a small mini-park to Boot Lake Nature Preserve which covers 226 acres. The existing park system offers residents and visitors a wide variety of activities. Those activities include passive recreation opportunities such as walking trails/paths, fishing, picnicking and horseshoe courts. Active recreational opportunities include multiple playgrounds, basketball courts, ball diamonds, soccer fields, a water park, and ice skating.

Agriculture/Undeveloped. These lands are used for the cultivation of crops and animal grazing, woodlands, and undeveloped land. Agricultural uses are typically located outside the urbanized areas. The city does not plan or zone for agriculture uses.

Vacant. This category includes land that is undeveloped and land tracts of land that were previously developed for residential, commercial, and industrial uses that are not currently in use.

Future Land Use

The future land use framework is a map illustrating how the City of Elkhart should grow, develop, and redevelop over the next 20 years. The City may, from time to time, annex additional property into its corporate limits in order to provide municipal services. Completing a financial feasibility study is important for the City to completely understand the fiscal impact on the City's municipal budget due to the annexation. The future land use framework does not alter the 2009 City limits with the exception of the airport expansion area, where the Elkhart Municipal Airport is planning to expand its facility west.

Although the City's boundaries are irregular and oftentimes confusing to residents and emergency service providers, it is unlikely that the City's boundaries will substantially change in the next 20 years. As such, there are only slight differentiations between the existing and future land use maps. The future land use map does introduce a new land use category, mixed-use, to the City. This land use category is not represented in the City's existing land use, nor is it mentioned in the 1996 *Comprehensive Land Use Plan*.

The overall concept of the future land use framework features a reduction of the City's industrial land use inventory, reinvestment efforts directed downtown, and minimal annexation until the existing City core is strengthened. The reinvestment and strengthening of the core includes residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, industrial areas, institutions, infrastructure, and open space within the existing City limits. The future land use framework is not significantly different from the existing land use map, and reflects the intention of focusing future development and redevelopment within the current City limits.

The new future land use framework does, however, introduce a new land use category of mixed use development. The purpose of this new category is to encourage redevelopment on underutilized or vacant commercial or industrial land. New mixed land uses are primarily located along key transportation corridors and downtown. Mixed use promotes a combination of situations including several types of uses within one structure, such as street level retail or office with residential on upper floors. This type

of mixed use is most common in downtowns and reinforces the City's Downtown Action Agenda's four districts. Additionally, mixed use can apply to a mix of uses on a parcel or parcels where commercial, office, residential, institutional, and parks and open space are master planned as a coordinated development. To allow for the introduction of the mixed use category, the future land use framework reduces the industrial land use classification footprint along key transportation corridors, such as US 20 Bypass, Nappanee Road, Main, and Bristol in favor of more mixed use and commercial development.

2012 Comprehensive Plan Update Designations

The future land use framework diagram features 13 land use categories defined as:

Commercial. Lots devoted to uses that provide general retail, personal service, office, and sales operations which serve the everyday needs of people. Commercial uses should be located along major corridors, at neighborhood nodes, and in downtown.

Commercial uses located within neighborhood nodes are smaller scale establishments such as convenience stores, small restaurants or coffee shops, dry cleaners, service stations, professional and medical offices, and other similar uses that have a low impact on adjacent residential areas. Neighborhood nodes are typically located at an intersection of collectors roads that lead into residential neighborhoods.

Community-wide commercial uses provide a mix of business, service, and office uses that serve the larger region. Community commercial uses generally are larger scale such as strip malls and big box retailers that include grocery stores, shopping malls, vehicle sales, discount retail stores, chain restaurants, or bookstores. These areas typically develop along major arterial roadways.

Industrial. Industrial uses include light or heavy manufacturing, warehouse, production, logistics and distribution, or require a large amount of area for outdoor operations or storage. Future uses should be clean industry with enclosed/screened storage. Consideration should be given to location, buffering, and negative environmental impacts.

Recreation/Park. Recreation and park uses are lots or parcels which contain open space, green areas, ball fields, children's play equipment, public and private golf courses, community gardens, natural features, animal habitats, conservation areas, wooded areas, and environmentally sensitive areas. Recreation and park areas should be used as a respite from urban development and link to each other through a system of greenways (or linear parks) and trails.



An example of a community-serving commercial shopping center.



Warehousing and logistics are considered an industrial land use.



A multi-use path in Island Park provides a recreation amenity in an environmentally sensitive area.

Natural. Natural areas are undeveloped lots or parcels unaltered by activity where vegetation is distributed in naturally occurring patterns. Such areas are not necessarily completely natural or undisturbed, but are substantially preserved for the appreciation of natural features.

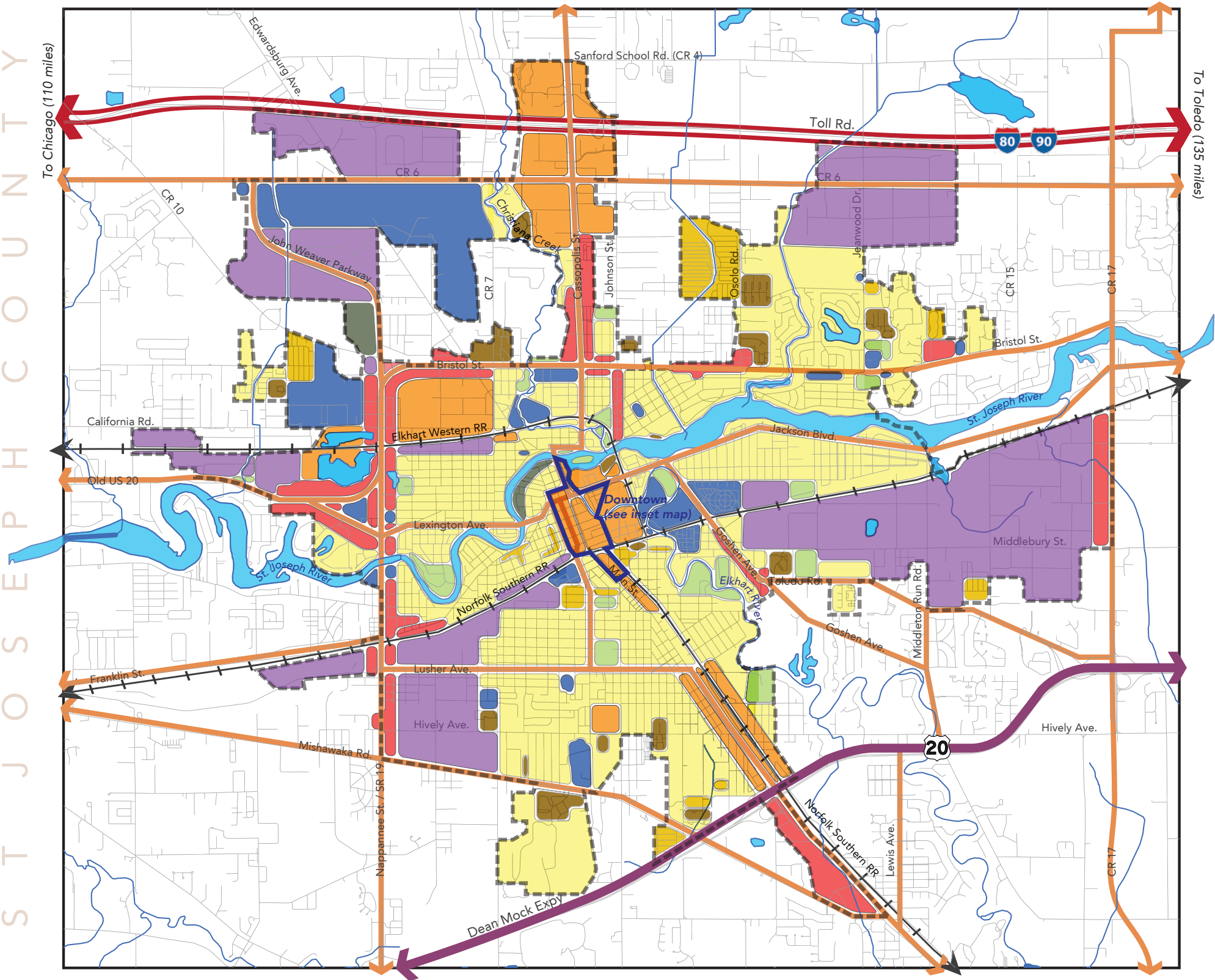
Institutional. Institutional uses are lots which contain schools, religious facilities, government facilities, hospitals, cemeteries, utilities, and other quasi-public facilities. These uses are typically located near residential areas or urban centers and serve the local population.

Residential. Residential uses are lots, parcels, or portions of mixed-use buildings which are devoted to detached and attached housing units utilizing municipal water, sanitary sewer, and sidewalks. Residential uses can have a variety of housing types including single-family, duplex, or apartments. Densities will vary depending on the location within Elkhart and can range from less than 1.0 dwelling unit per acre up to 24.0 dwelling units per acre. Consideration should be given to the location within the City, the surrounding density and type of adjacent housing, transportation network and location to parks, schools, and shopping areas. Future freestanding residential construction should be focused on filling in the existing community structure. Future single-family, detached residential development should occur in existing residential neighborhoods as “infill” development on vacant lots to complete the neighborhood residential block pattern rather than in undeveloped, “greenfield” areas. Density variations are defined as follows:

Low Density Residential. Residential development designed to provide for the lowest density single-family residential development typically requiring larger lot width and area. However, in urbanized or urbanizing areas the frontage of the lot may be narrower than 60 feet. The intent is to protect and conserve existing and future residential development, particularly in more recently developed areas. In all cases, the development characteristics of the dwellings are to be of a design that is compatible with its surroundings. Because of the provision for narrow lots in urbanized areas, the resulting average density in developments located within this classification is 6.0 units per acre. However, new developments should achieve a minimum density range of 4.5 to 7.2 units per acre dependent on dimensional requirements found in applicable municipal ordinances.

Medium Density Residential. Residential development designed to provide for both single- and two-family dwellings requiring average size lot width and area. In all cases, the development characteristics of the dwellings are

M I C H I G A N



Future Land Use

Key

Indiana Toll Road

US 20 Bypass

Major Arterial

Rail Line

Downtown

City Limits

Commercial

Industrial

Recreation / Park

Natural

Low Density Residential

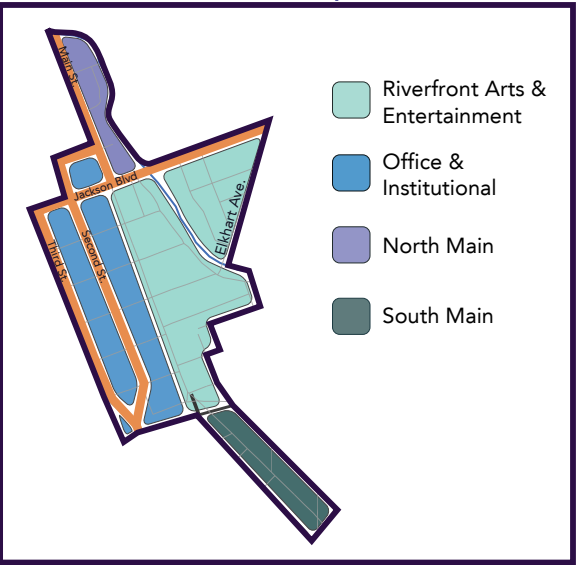
Medium Density Residential

High Density Residential

Mixed Use

Institutional

Downtown Districts Inset Map



to be of a design that is compatible with its surroundings. Single-family dwellings should achieve a minimum density of 7.2 units per acre with two-family dwellings achieving a minimum density of 12.1 units per acre all dependent on dimensional requirements found in applicable municipal ordinances.

High Density Residential. A combination of single-family, two-family, and multiple-family residential development, including townhomes, intended to provide residential development achieving a minimum density range of 6.0 to 13.1 units per acre dependent on the dimensional requirements found in applicable municipal ordinances. Due to development pressures, increases in the intensity due to the conversion of older single-family residences to two or more residential unit structures historically has occurred within well-established areas of the City. The goal of this density classification is to ensure this development does not create a detriment to the surrounding area due to inadequate parking and infrastructure, undersized lots and general incompatibility with the surrounding area.

Mixed-Use. A parcel or lot with more than one use located within a building or occupying the site. Typical combinations of land use mixes on a lot or parcel can include residential, commercial, institution, recreation, open space, and office. These uses are typically developed within a coordinated development program. Buildings can also be mixes of uses where commercial or office are located on the ground floor and office or residential are located on upper floors. Review will need to occur to ensure that the appropriate mix of uses is compatible with one another and with adjacent land uses.

Downtown. Downtown Elkhart is comprised of four districts as identified in the 2004 Elkhart *Downtown Action Agenda*. Specific districts are defined as follows:

Riverfront Arts & Entertainment District. A Mixed use district with emphasis on pedestrian uses including art, entertainment, specialty retail and restaurants located on the first floor and office/housing in the upper stories. Land uses should be oriented to small retail businesses or services related to theater, dance, music, art, recreation, movie, and other compatible arts and entertainment uses. Institutional uses such as churches, schools and social services should be limited in this district.

Office & Institutional District. A district focusing on government, office and other institutional uses. This district should include uses such as government offices, library, churches, schools and other office uses. Support mixed uses are appropriate including office, convenience retail and



Religious facilities are considered institutional uses.



Single family homes comprise the majority of the low density residential land use in the City.



Townhouses are an example of a medium density residential development.



A multi-family apartment complex is classified as high density residential.



This example of mixed-use development includes apartments above retail shops.



An existing use in the Riverfront Arts & Entertainment District.

restaurants all co-located within a single building. General or specialty retail should be avoided in this district.

North Main Street District. This district's focus should include office, convenience retail, and restaurants. Future development should include mixed-use development with office and convenience retail on the first floor and housing on the upper floors. Any residential should be situated with views to the river. The character of new residential development should be such that distinguishes it from the Riverfront Arts and Entertainment District.

South Main Street District. A district that functions as both a gateway to the downtown and an area in transition from residential to commercial uses. This district serves as a transition area between the core downtown area to the north and the residential areas to the south. Commercial uses should be primarily neighborhood-oriented businesses, including small convenience retail, service retail and restaurants. Efforts in this district should focus on building renovation, removal of dilapidated structures, and small business development.

Five Redevelopment Areas

The future land use framework maintains the general existing land use pattern. Five redevelopment areas are proposed for consideration and future economic development exploration. These include the following:

- Miles-Bayer Redevelopment Area
- Five Points Redevelopment Area (Old US 20/Bypass/Lexington Avenue/Nappanee Road)
- Woodland Crossing Mall Redevelopment Area (formerly Pierre Moran Mall)
- Downtown East Redevelopment Area
- Airport Expansion and Redevelopment Area

The Miles-Bayer redevelopment area is a key economic development site that is being marketed by both the City of Elkhart and the Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County. Given its proximity to major thoroughfares and access to the Elkhart Western rail line, and the environmental remediation that may be required because of its previous use, a mix of industrial and commercial uses is appropriate at this location.

There is a desire by the City to improve the appearance and function of the land uses adjacent to the Old US 20/Bypass/

Lexington Avenue/Nappanee Road intersection. This includes the land surrounding the quarry south of California Road to the land fronting Old US 20. The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) has redesigned this intersection as part of the Nappanee Road improvement project, which allows the opportunity for additional land use changes and reconfigurations. Redevelopment of this area should include reorganizing the existing commercial uses fronting Bypass Road and Lexington Avenue, creating a unified streetscape, and recruiting complementary retail or commercial uses that will support the redefined aesthetic of these two potential redevelopment areas.

The Woodland Crossing Mall, formerly the Pierre Moran Mall, is a new, open concept retail center that has changed ownership in the last five years. The enclosed center section of the Pierre Moran Mall was razed to allow for the new retail concept. Elkhart's population has shifted both in the neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the Woodland Crossing Mall as well as throughout the City. As this shift has occurred, so have retail shopping destinations. As stated earlier in this memorandum, the Michiana region is well-served by regional retail centers in Mishawaka. Southeast of the Woodland Crossing Mall site is the Concord Mall, which itself is struggling. Given the availability and relatively quick access to retail selections along Grape Road in Mishawaka, the City of Elkhart is unable to support multiple retail sites requiring a large trade area customer base. The Woodland Crossing Mall's new owners are targeting their tenant recruitment plan to focus on more neighborhood convenience retail. Further redevelopment of this area should consider civic or community destinations that could attract additional customers to the area while providing a service or recreational opportunity that is not available at other retail centers throughout the City.

As mentioned previously, Concord Mall, on the City's south side, has experienced changes from the volatility in the retail industry, changing consumer preferences and demographics, and regional retail consolidation. Tenant recruitment is ongoing for mall managers and JC Penney and Carson's have committed to remain in the mall. To support these and other national retailers, mall management is marketing space to locally owned businesses. Potential reconfiguration of the site to include non-retail components could serve to enhance the overall mall experience and complement and support existing retail tenants.

The *Downtown Action Agenda* was prepared in 2004 to guide the revitalization of downtown Elkhart. In this plan, four districts were proposed, each with a role in the overall function of downtown. The future land use framework supports the continued development of these four downtown districts focusing on the riverfront arts and entertainment opportunities, office and institutional uses

along the civic spine created by the library, City Hall, and other educational and government uses, mixed-use development on the north end of downtown, and gateway development on the south end of downtown. On South Main Street, in particular between Lusher Avenue and the US 20 Bypass, numerous ethnic businesses have opened creating an emerging destination for specialty retail and restaurants. To further encourage and support this success, and build upon the recommendations of the *Downtown Action Agenda's* South Main Street District, a South Main Street Cultural District designation is proposed beginning at downtown's southern gateway and continuing south along Main Street. The cultural district niche has the potential for a customer base that extends into the entire region.

Several neighborhood nodes are noted on the future land use framework diagram. A neighborhood node is a concentration of two or more significant uses or activity hubs that serve as a resource, destination, or community gathering space for nearby neighborhood residents. These neighborhood nodes may include the pairing of a school, church, retail establishment, and/or other community facility. Nodes are important to neighborhood identity and should be encouraged throughout the City. It is important that these nodes are accessible by means other than an automobile in order to be truly part of a neighborhood and ensure that all ages and abilities can make use of the amenities. Depending on the size of the node and the specific types of uses, the "reach" of a neighborhood node varies. The future land use framework considers the inclusion of these nodes, where appropriate, in the proposed redevelopment areas that are adjacent to significant residential populations. See Chapter Seven for more information on neighborhood nodes.

Land Use Interpretation & Application

The future land use framework is a graphic summary of the vision, goals and objectives of this document. It represents a 20 year vision of what the City should look like in the future. This framework is intended to guide overall development of the area, but it is not prescriptive in nature to control the regulatory development on individual lots. Land use plans and future planning initiatives are generally adopted as resolution in the State of Indiana and, as such, are policy, not law. This land use framework is needed in order to support any zoning within the City.

Zoning is adopted as legal ordinance and provides the specific standards for the development of individual or groups of parcels. This may include specific uses allowed in each zone, density, lot size, setback, and other development standards. The *Comprehensive Plan Update* should serve as the policy basis for any changes in zoning regulations whether it is a text or a map change. All future

development in the City of Elkhart should be consistent with both zoning and the future land use framework.

The City of Elkhart's future land use framework was developed to reflect the desire for re-focused growth in the City for the next 20 years. Because of the uncertainty associated with the timing of new development or redevelopment, market conditions, and location of future development, the interpretation and administration of this plan will require that the City of Elkhart remain flexible in the possibilities associated with the future development, while still remaining true to the overall intention of this plan.

Currently, the City has an Advisory Plan Commission. The development approval process is undertaken by the City Planning Staff and Plan Commission. The City of Elkhart's *Comprehensive Plan Update* should serve as a guide but does not contain the actual decisions that should be made. The *Plan* serves as a reminder and provides guidance of the community's collective vision for the future growth and development of this area and should be interpreted as such.

New development or redevelopment within the City of Elkhart should be reviewed for consistency with the future land use map. If a new annexation, rezone, planned unit development (PUD), subdivision, or site plan review request is proposed for the City, a review and evaluation of the proposal against the City of Elkhart's *Comprehensive Plan Update* and relevant ordinances should occur with a formal staff recommendation to Plan Commission. The evaluation should include an understanding of the development and the degree to which the proposed project conforms to the plan's goals, objectives, recommendations, future land use and transportation maps as well as the corridor character. If the development petition is consistent with the future land use framework, multi-modal transportation recommendations, and other character frameworks, then the staff report to the Plan Commission should state that the proposal is consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan Update* and, therefore, should be approved. There could be times when modifications may be necessary to a petition to ensure it is consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan Update*. In those situations, City staff may make recommendations requiring certain conditions be placed on the approval or that the petition be denied until the petition is revised so that it is consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan Update*.

There will be occasions, however, when a development petition is not in conformance with this *Plan*. In that situation, the development petition provides for a desired new policy or development character that changes the documented and projected character described for that area within the comprehensive plan. The discussion surrounding the petition will become clear that the

policy and graphic representation of the development character has changed. When this condition exists, the City staff should amend the comprehensive plan with the development petition in order for it to become a detailed site plan for the specific area with the community and override the policy and development character for that specific section of the City. If the *Comprehensive Plan Update* is amended, all policy decisions thereafter will need to be consistent with the new amendment. If this occurs, the City staff will need to determine if the comprehensive plan goals, objectives, and map should be revisited for an update or if the development petition addressed a change in the development character of a specific area and therefore the amendment solved the problem.



City of Elkhart Comprehensive Plan Update

Adopted February 2, 2015



Chapter 5

Mobility

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Introduction

Mobility in the City of Elkhart includes the local and regional motorized and non-motorized transportation network. Transportation options include roadways, public transit, rail, commercial aviation, general aviation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and navigable waterways.

Vehicular

The vehicular transportation network is categorized into classifications in order to handle various levels of traffic volume. Each street has a functional classification that relates to the amount of traffic it can carry.

- Freeways are divided into multi-lane, high speed roads with limited access. They are designed to move traffic on a regional scale. The Toll Road and the US 20 Bypass are examples of freeways.
- Major Arterials connect two or more regions, urban areas, or communities. They predominantly serve “through traffic” with minimum direct service to adjacent land uses.
- Minor Arterials consist of all major streets designed and intended to move traffic quickly. Examples of minor arterials include Hively Avenue, Lusher Avenue, Indiana Avenue, Middlebury Street, Franklin Street, Lexington Avenue, Jackson Boulevard, Beardsley Avenue, Bristol Street, Oakland Avenue, Benham Avenue, Prairie Street, and Main Street.
- Collector streets link the higher volume arterial systems to the local streets and are designed to carry higher volumes than local streets.
- Local streets distribute the traffic from collectors and arterials and carry the least amount of traffic. All residential neighborhood and subdivision streets are examples of local streets.

Maintaining and expanding the City’s roadway network is a coordinated effort among the City of Elkhart, the Michiana Council of Governments (MACOG), and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT).

City of Elkhart

The City of Elkhart’s local roadways are maintained by the Street Department. The department periodically upgrades the City’s streets, curbs, and sidewalks based on a regular maintenance

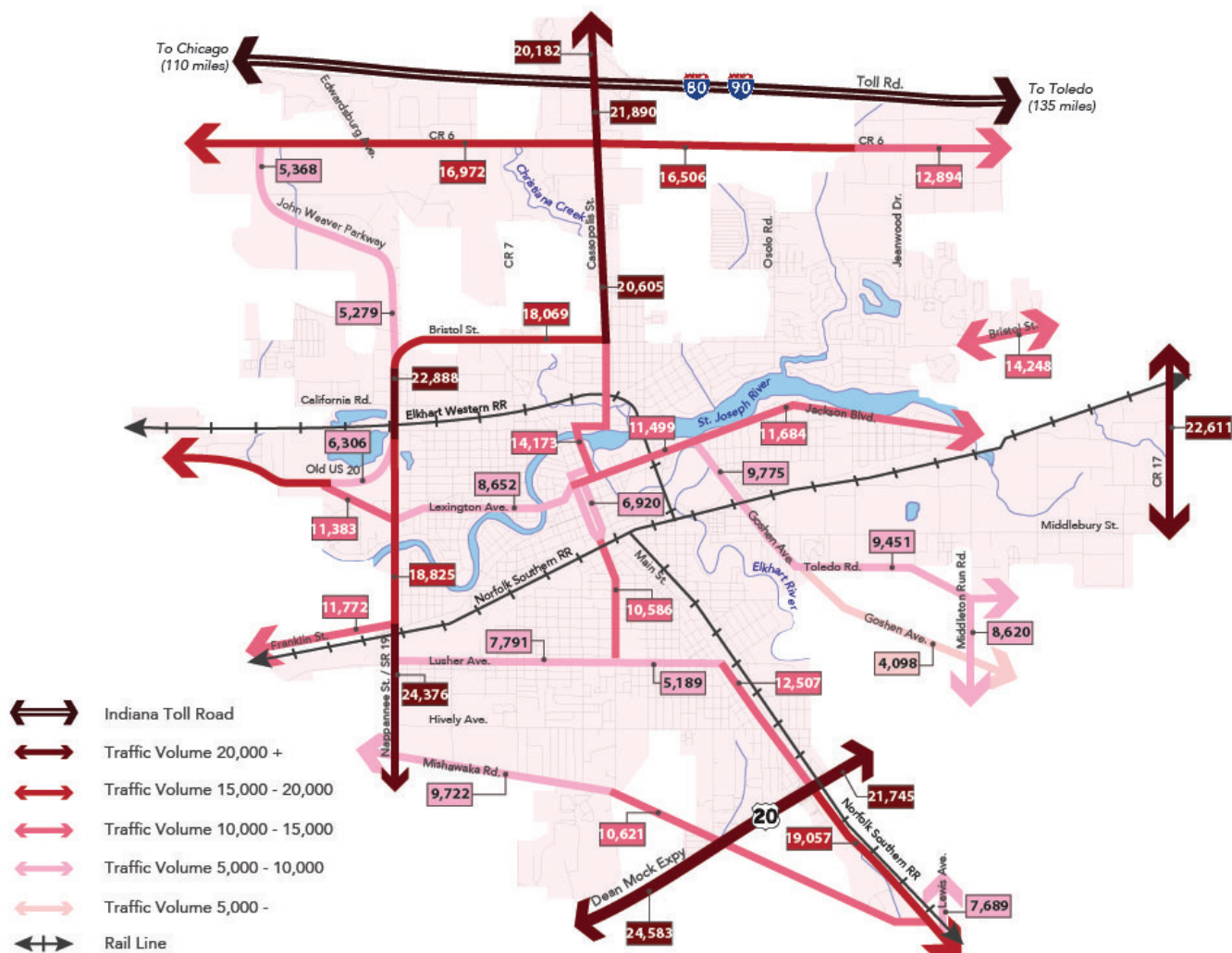


Historic postcard of Elkhart's Elkhart Avenue Bridge

Elkhart County

MACOG

Major Routes and Traffic Counts



out the area's transportation planning. The MPO established for the Elkhart/South Bend MSA is the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG). MACOG facilitates coordinated transportation planning efforts for the federally designated urban areas of Elkhart and St. Joseph counties and rural planning activities in Marshall and Kosciusko counties.

MACOG's comprehensive transportation plan for the Michiana region, the 2035 Long-Term Transportation Plan, outlines several road improvement projects planned for streets throughout the City of Elkhart. *These projects were identified through MACOG's process and plan and not through the City of Elkhart Comprehensive Plan process.* Identified improvements and target completion years include:

MACOG Completed Projects:

- Hivley Avenue added travel lanes (2009)

MACOG Upcoming Projects as part of 20-year Plan:

- Beardsley Avenue added travel lanes (2020)
- Cassopolis Street added travel lanes (2020)
- CR 10 (Bristol Street) added travel lanes (2020)
- Goshen Avenue added travel lanes (2020)
- Hively Avenue Underpass grade separation (2020)
- Lexington Avenue center turn lane (2020)
- Oakland Avenue added travel lanes (2020)
- Prairie Street added travel lanes (2020)
- Prairie Street Underpass grade separation (2020)
- Toledo Road added travel lanes (2020)
- Benham Avenue added travel lanes (2025)
- CR 11 (Osolo Road) added travel lanes (2025)
- Main Street added travel lanes (2025)
- Main Street center turn lane (2025)
- Prairie Street added travel lanes (2025)
- Bypass Road added travel lanes (2030)
- CR 7 (Michigan Street) added travel lanes (2030)



Road improvement work in Elkhart



Elkhart's Interurban Trolley

- Indiana Avenue added travel lanes (2030)
- Lusher Avenue added travel lanes (2030)
- Oakland Avenue added travel lanes (2030)

These road projects have been deemed necessary through the use of Level of Service modeling, pictured to the right. MACOG utilizes computer modeling software that predicts how much traffic will increase along the area roadways during the upcoming years due to population changes and changes in development. The model then identifies roads that are under, at, or over capacity, which results in a level of service. The Level of Service ranges from A to F with A being a roadway that is free-flowing and F being a road that is completely stopped with congestion. Engineers typically design for a roadway to achieve level C or D. The maps on the following pages show what the levels of service are projected to be on the local roadways both with and without the previously mentioned improvements. As the maps indicate, there is more green surrounding the City of Elkhart in the map with the roadway improvements, which indicates higher levels of service.

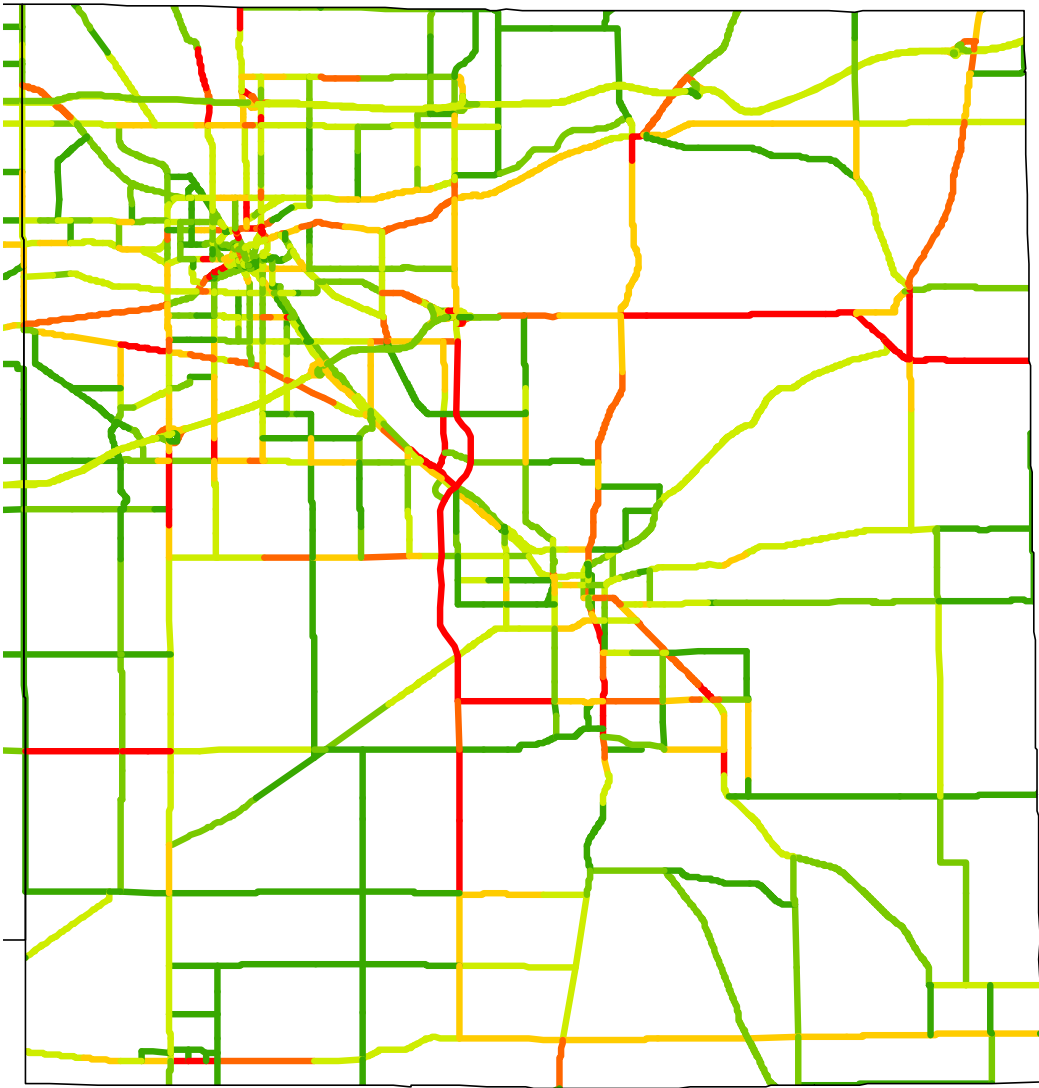
INDOT

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is responsible for the maintenance of all State and Federal highways within Elkhart County. INDOT's 2035 Transportation Plan identifies the policies and major projects that will be implemented over the plan's lifetime, but does not specifically mention any smaller projects. Smaller projects are identified in MACOG's Long-Term Transportation Plan. Future INDOT projects located in the City of Elkhart include:

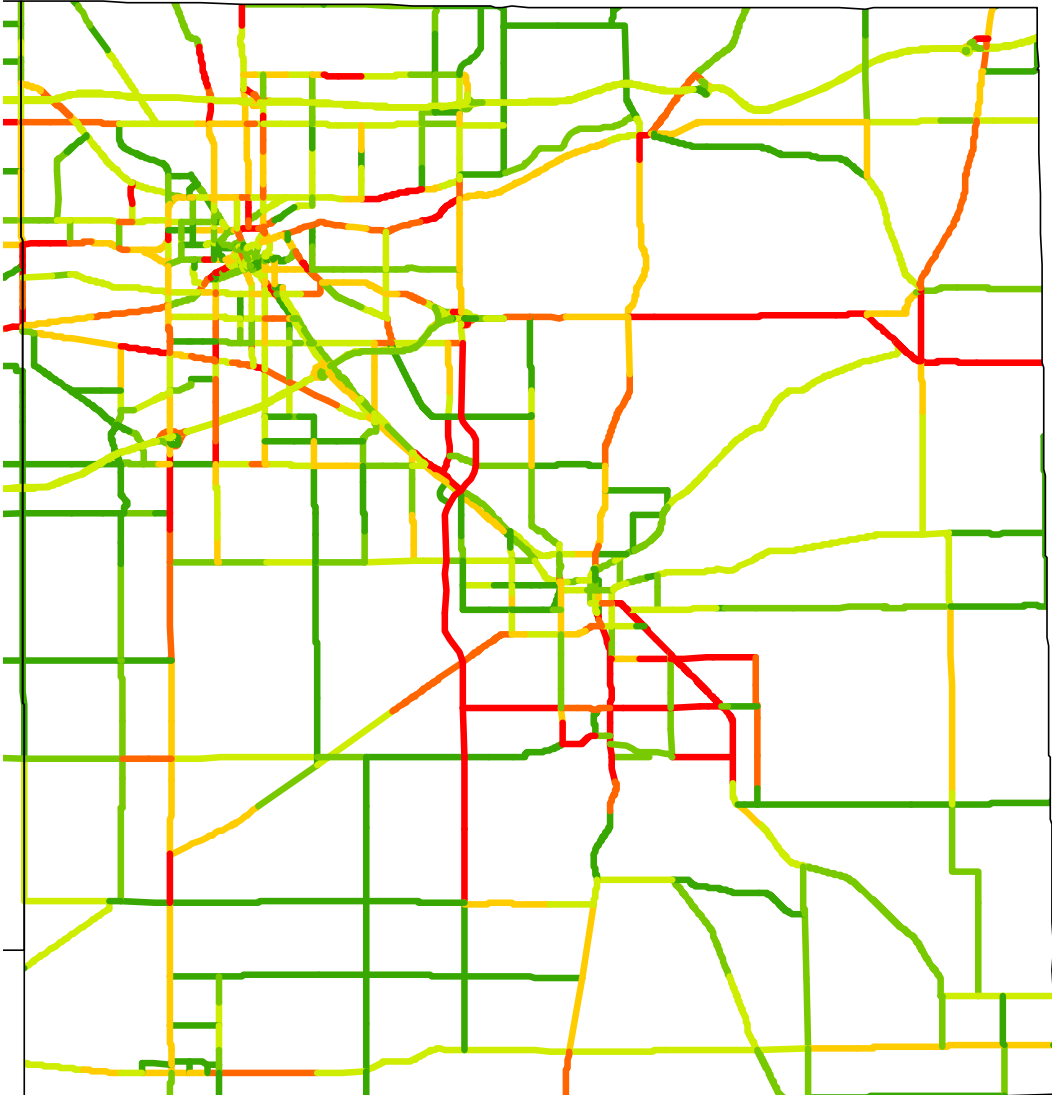
- State Road 19 center turn lanes (2015)
- US 33 center turn lanes (2015)

In addition to these projects, an interchange with Interstate 80/90 has been added at County Road 17. This interchange was not identified in the 1996 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This interchange provides direct a direct link, via CR 17, between the Toll Road and US 20. Elkhart's Toll Road interchanges are located at CR 17, Cassopolis Street, and State Road 331 (Capital Avenue).

Nappanee Street (SR 19) was improved by INDOT in 2012. The \$14 million project reconstructs, reconfigures, and widens the roadway to align with the work previously completed north of Beardsley Avenue and south of Lusher Avenue.



2035 Level of Service Map with new projects
(2035 MACOG Transportation Plan)



2035 Level of Service Map with no new projects built
(2035 MACOG Transportation Plan)

- LOS A
- LOS B
- LOS C
- LOS D
- LOS E
- LOS F

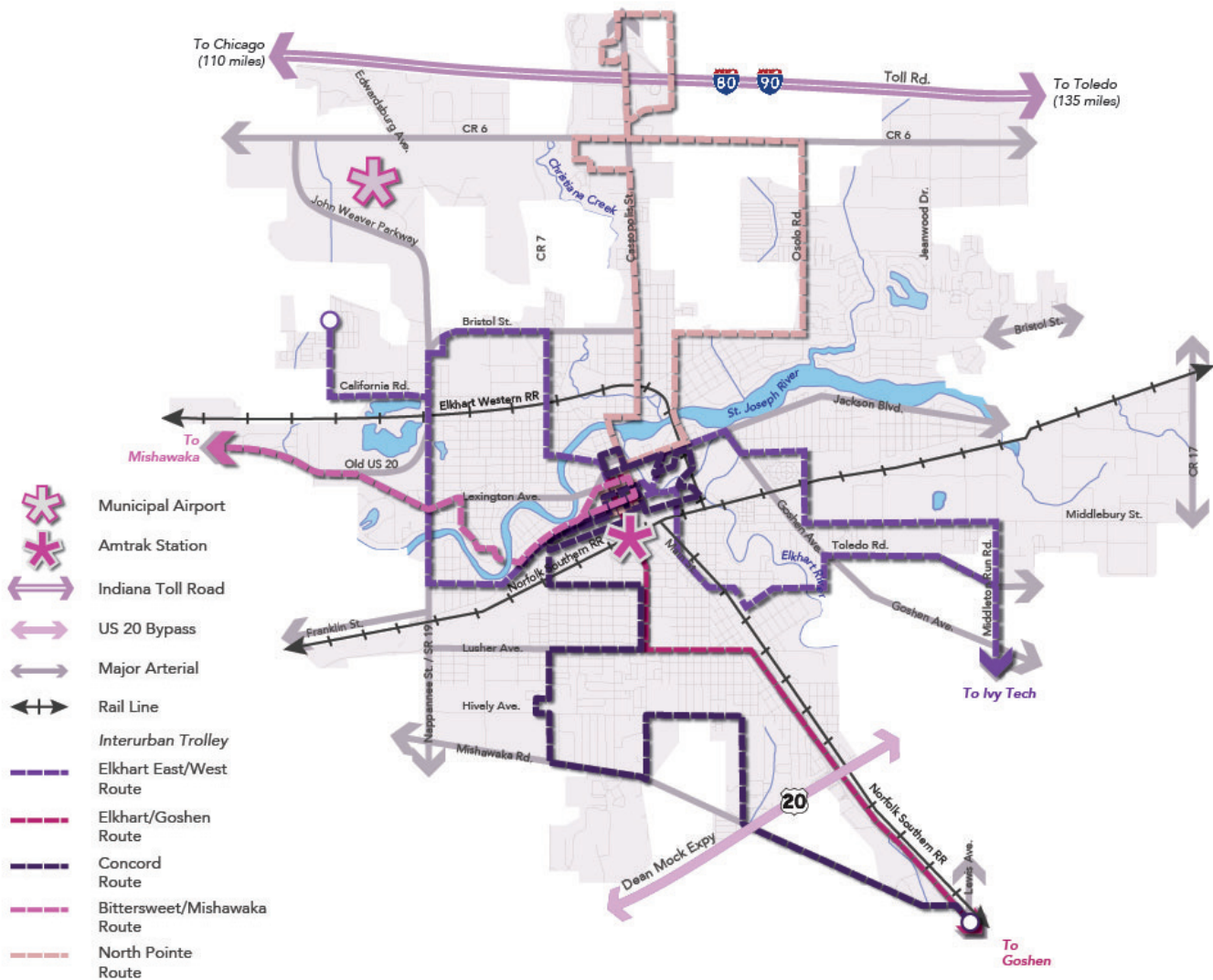
Transit

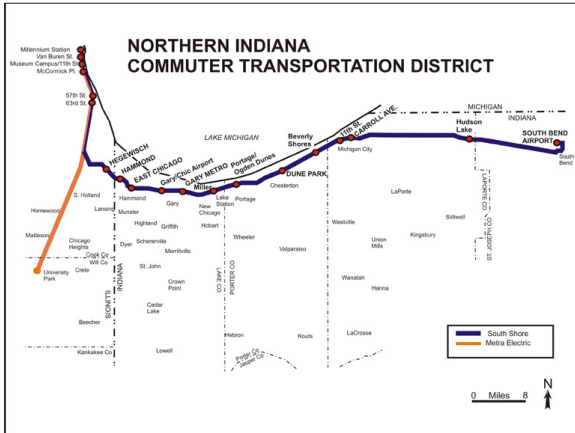
Elkhart is served by fixed route bus service and paratransit service. The City is also in close proximity to regional passenger rail service.

Bus

Bus service in Elkhart is provided by the Interurban Trolley, Heart City Rider, and Goshen Transit Service. These three systems provide fixed-route, on-demand, and paratransit services throughout the City. The Interurban Trolley is a fixed-route bus service that offers five different routes which serve all sides of Elkhart. There is also a line that provides service between Elkhart and Goshen. In addition to service to Goshen, the Interurban Trolley links with South Bend's TRANSCO system at Martin's Super Market on the City's far west side. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Interurban Trolley also offers

Functional Diagram of Major Transit Routes





Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District Routes



Amtrak Capitol Limited Route



Amtrak Lake Shore Limited Route

on-demand paratransit service throughout its service area for individuals needing additional assistance.

The interurban trolley routes are designed to serve various areas within the Community. From time to time, routes are changed to meet the needs of the community. For the most up-to-date route, please check the interurban trolley website at: <http://www.interurbantrolley.com/>.

The Heart City Rider and Goshen Transit Service are demand-response transit systems that operate in Elkhart and Goshen 24-hours a day, seven days a week. These services do not have fixed routes. They provide transportation to people who are registered with the services and call in to schedule a ride. The services are also equipped to shuttle patrons with disabilities.

Bus service is provided in South Bend by TRANSPO, which is a fixed-route bus system that serves both the City of South Bend and Notre Dame University. TRANSPO provides a link between the Interurban Trolley and both the South Shore Line and the South Bend Regional Airport.

Passenger Rail

The South Shore Line, operated by the Indiana Commuter Transportation District, provides passenger rail service between South Bend and Chicago. The line has plans to eventually extend service to Elkhart. The line extension is part of an effort to reduce the travel time from South Bend to Chicago to one hour and 54 minutes, which would be a reduction of 24 minutes from the current service.

Elkhart is also served by two Amtrak lines with the City's historic train station serving as the local Amtrak station. Amtrak's Capitol Limited line from Washington, DC to Chicago and Lake Shore Limited line from Albany to Chicago both make daily stops in Elkhart. These lines provide three trains per day bound for Chicago, one train bound for Washington, DC, and two trains bound for Albany-Rensselaer, New York.

Bicycle & Pedestrian

Sidewalks in Elkhart are maintained by the Street Department. Where sidewalks are not in the public right-of-way, they are the responsibility of the property owner to maintain. The City offers a curb and sidewalk program through the Street Department to help offset the costs of repairing, maintaining, and replacing sidewalks.

The City of Elkhart is an active bicycling community. The City has 17.5 miles of bikeways and there are plans increase this number. The Elkhart Pedal Panel, a blue-ribbon commission assembled by Mayor Dick Moore, was created to study Elkhart's bicycling personality and evaluate the current practicality of bicycling in Elkhart. The Pedal Panel is chaired by the Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce and has leadership from the City of Elkhart, MACOG, area hospitals, local businesses, and Bike Elkhart. The Panel prepared a plan that identified potential routes for new bikeways and identified resolutions for other bike friendly issues. Potential routes recommended in the plan include Wood Street to

Bicycle and Pedestrian Network





An advertisement for Elkhart's Warbird Fly-in

American Park, Greenleaf Boulevard, Riverside Drive and Strong Avenue, and Franklin Street and McNaughton Park. The City is currently working with the Pedal Panel on signing and painting the routes below as part of these implementation efforts.

Bike Elkhart is a bicycling advocacy group for bicycling. The group meets monthly and promotes bicycling events and routes throughout the community.

Recent updates to accommodate bike lanes in existing street system.

The existing bikeways in Elkhart are:

- Greenleaf Route - 3.8 miles
- Greenway Trail - 1.6 miles
- Indiana Bike Lane - 1.7 miles
- Lusher Bike Path - 0.3 miles
- MapleHeart Trail - 0.4 miles (Trail continues to Goshen)
- Riverwalk Route - 4.1 miles
- Sterling Bike Lane - 1.1 miles
- Strong Route - 2.3 miles
- Wood Route - 2.2 miles

Sources: <http://www.elkhartindiana.org/departments/division.asp?DD=34-474>

<http://www.bikeelkhart.org/index.php>

Airports

Elkhart Municipal Airport

Owned by the City of Elkhart, the Elkhart Municipal Airport was founded in 1940 as a general aviation facility and is now capable of serving jet-powered planes. The airport's land covers 640 acres in fee simple and 58 acres in aviation easements. In 2001, a new control tower was added to house new equipment. Following the new control tower, the main runway was outfitted with enhanced guidance systems to facilitate easier and safer landings for larger aircraft, especially in inclement weather. According to the FAA, Elkhart Municipal Airport had 21,426 flights per year (2008), which equates to approximately 59 flights per day on average. These statistics are subject to seasonal variations as Notre Dame home games and the annual air show significantly increase air traffic on certain weekends. As of 2012, the FAA reports that the airport

is home to 86 based aircraft, which includes 43 single-engine, 18 multi-engine, 23 jet-engine, and two military planes.

South Bend Regional Airport

Founded in 1940, the South Bend Regional Airport provides commercial service to the Michiana area. The airport covers 2,200 acres and is home to 46 aircraft, which includes 31 single-engine planes, seven multi-engine planes, seven jet-engine planes, and one helicopter. As of 2009, the FAA reported that the airport handled 40,512 annual trips for an average of 111 per day of which 44 percent were commercial flights. The airport recently constructed a 45,000-square-foot concourse expansion that features five new gates and increased passenger amenities, including retail. South Bend Regional Airport is an intermodal transportation facility that links the airport with the South Shore rail line and with South Bend's TRANSPO bus system.

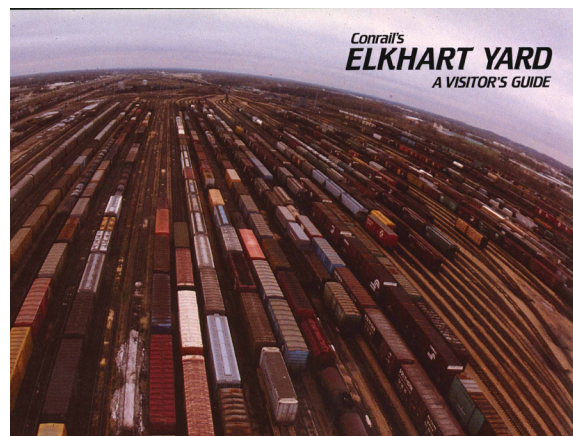
Rail

Elkhart has a significant amount of rail infrastructure. The City is served by two operational rail lines and a switching yard. The main line provides service between New York and Chicago carrying approximately 74 trains per day. Freight service is provided by Conrail and passenger service is provided by Amtrak. A second rail line serves the area north toward Kalamazoo and Detroit, Michigan.

The Robert Young rail yard is the second largest rail switching yard in the country. The rail yard occupies 675 acres, is four miles long, and is located on the west side of the City, south of US 33 West. The yard services east and west freight rail traffic for Conrail. It handles between 2,800 and 3,200 rail cars per day for a total of approximately 74 trains.

A second, smaller rail line serves the former Bayer (Miles) campus and the industrial property, north of downtown. Exact figures for the use of this line were not available at the time of this plan.

The amount of rail traffic in Elkhart often leads to congestion and conflicts between vehicular traffic and trains at crossings. The 1996 Comprehensive Land Use Plan identified railroad grade separation as an issue of concern of the community. The Plan noted that at-grade intersections are cause for a number of safety issues including the potential for vehicle/train conflict, potential delay in emergency services, and general disruption for residents while waiting for crossings to clear. In 1996, the points by which to bypass rail traffic were the Benham Avenue, Oakland Avenue, and Nappanee Street (SR 19) underpasses. In 2005, a new rail underpass was constructed at Indiana Avenue



Conrail's Visitor's Guide to the Elkhart Rail Yard



and Main Street in order to relieve traffic congestion caused by rail traffic near downtown. The new underpass assists east/west traffic coming into Elkhart from the east and helps to move traffic more efficiently during peak times of rail activity. Currently in the design phase, an overpass is planned at Prairie Street which will improve north/south traffic by providing a fifth point to cross the main rail line that passes through the City.



Pedestrian amenities near Elkhart's waterways



City of Elkhart Comprehensive Plan Update

Adopted February 2, 2015



Chapter 6

Environment and Design

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The City of Elkhart has many different features that have shaped how it has developed over time. Most of these features have a positive impact on the City and have been areas of strengths the City has built upon. Many of these features can be categorized as “environmental” in nature and would include brownfield sites, historic districts, parks, floodplains, and landfills. Features such as brownfield sites, historic districts and other open or green space and vacant lots within the City offer the community the ability to shape a design framework that focuses redevelopment to the core of the city.

The focus of this chapter is to highlight the strategies for using key environmental assets to promote economic development and encourage redevelopment of brownfield sites, propose a strategy for additional greening and open space within the city and provide a framework for future urban design in the City.

Existing Conditions

The City has many assets that will continue to play a part in the growth management and redevelopment of key areas of the City. In some places, these environmental assets have limited development while others have been strengths to spur on redevelopment. What is apparent over time is that the growth trend of the city has continued to expand outwardly while the population and job base has shrunk during one of the greatest economic recessions. Therefore, the City of Elkhart must have a strategy that incorporates its environmental strengths to stabilize the City and provide opportunities for redevelopment. The environmental and design strengths in the City are both organic and policy based decisions. These include parks, rivers, riverwalk, historic districts and structure, education, and cultural activities. Each of these elements will play a role in future economic development.

Parks

The City of Elkhart has a Parks Department which manages the City’s more than 30 park facilities that range in size from small pocket-parks to regionally serving recreation attractions. A five year park master plan exists for the City for the period of 2009 to 2013. The existing park system offers residents and visitors a wide variety of activities including passive recreation opportunities such as walking trails/paths, fishing, picnicking and horseshoe courts. Active recreational opportunities include multiple playgrounds, basketball courts, ball diamonds, soccer fields, a water park, and ice skating. Within the city limits the current inventory of park land covers approximately 300 acres. The City has a population of approximately 51,000 people in 2010 and based on the National Recreation and Parks Association’s standard of approximately 10 acres of park land per 1,000 people, the City of Elkhart is deficient

in park space. However, as shown on the corresponding map, the parks are well dispersed throughout the City to serve the population. Some of the major parks and their facilities include:

American Park

American Park is a 13-acre area located on the banks of the Elkhart River. The park is located near the central business district and offers fishing, picnic tables, grills, benches and an outdoor picnic shelter. This partially wooded area is very popular for family picnicking and fishing. Since the facility is located adjacent to Elkhart Central High School, it is also a popular area for high school students after school.

Baker Park

Baker Park is a 10-acre facility on the Elkhart River across from Studebaker Park. While Baker Park is a fairly passive wooded facility, it has one ball diamond and playground. Picnic facilities and fishing are the most popular activities in the park. During the high

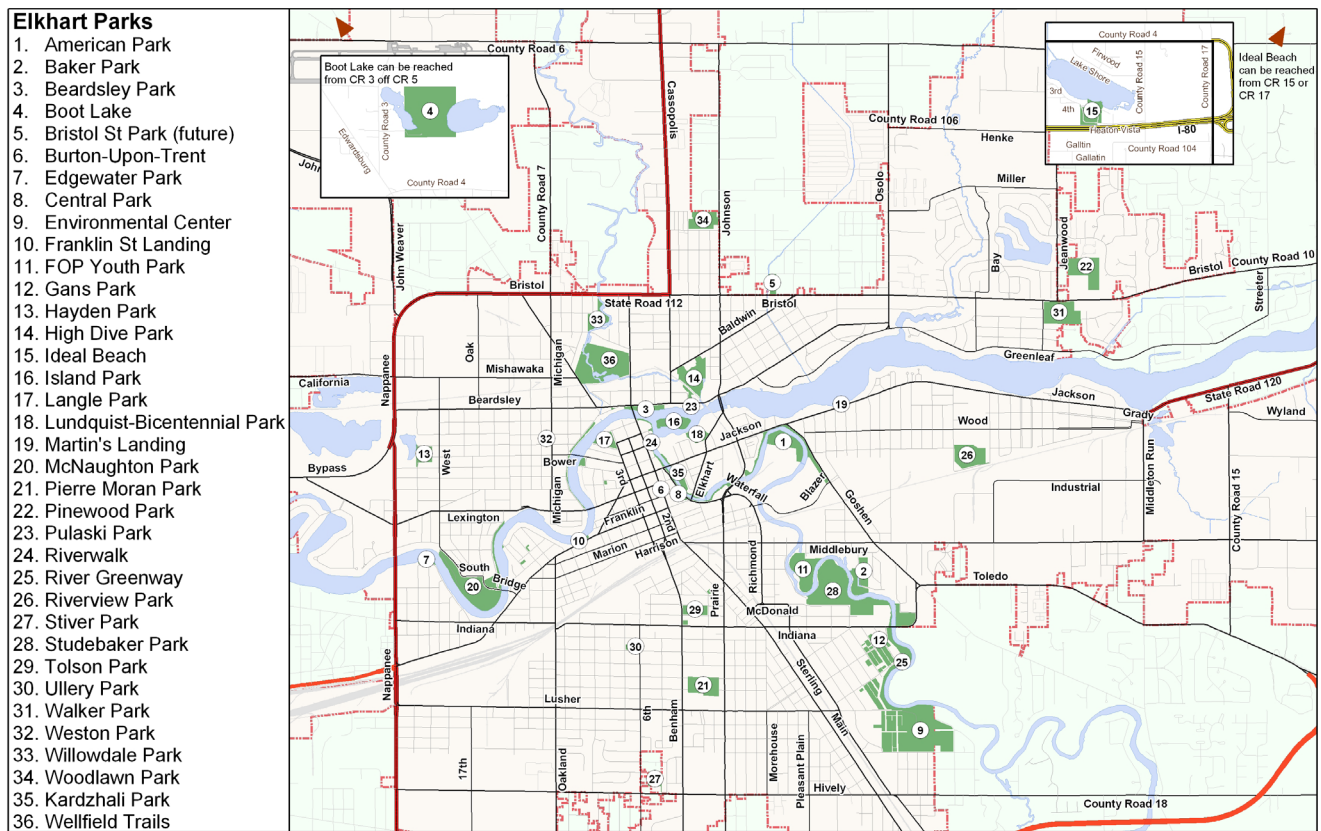


Figure 6.1: Elkhart Parks

water periods of the year, a great deal of the park is under water; therefore, major facility construction is not advisable.

Edgewater Park

An anonymous donor donated this one-acre site on the St. Joseph River to the Department. The park includes a boat launch area, parking and accessible fishing platforms.

Elliot Park

This park is currently closed. The City is in the process of determining the future use of this property. Although it is outside of the City corporate boundary, this property could be a key redevelopment opportunity.

Hayden Park

Hayden Park is a 9-acre park site located in a municipal water department pumping site. It is one of the first areas to be jointly utilized by two city departments. A gazebo and accessible fishing pier are available for use.

High Dive Park

High Dive Park is a 14.6-acre site located on Christiana Creek. It is one of the most unique facilities in the system. In the mid 1900's, it was developed as a private facility which included swimming and other amusements such as a museum, zoo, water toboggan, concessions and a giant windmill. The site contains three ponds which are no longer open for swimming. The Elkhart Art League and the Park Department utilize the buildings on the site. Currently, the facilities located in the park include: four lighted tennis courts, Elkhart Art League facilities, playground area, picnic area, lookout tower and abundant fishing in the site's three ponds.

Island Park

Island Park is Elkhart's oldest and most scenic park. The 7-acre island is located in the downtown area at the junction of the Elkhart and St. Joseph Rivers. The island is accessible by three footbridges. Island Park is the central park in the downtown development area. Facilities available in this park include: playground area, bandstand, open air shelter, trail, exercise course, artisan well, picnic area and fishing at any point around the island. Rhapsody in Green and Island of Blues Festivals occur during June and August in Island Park.

Ideal Beach Family Water Park

This 14-acre parcel on Heaton Lake is accessible via Heaton Vista Road and County Road 15, one mile west of the County Road 17 Toll Road interchange. The Ideal Beach Family Water Park has a large double water slide, a wading pool for toddlers, a miniature golf course, horseshoe courts, sand volleyball courts, a concession

building, a changing building, numerous picnic tables, ample parking and playground equipment. It is outside of the City corporate boundary.

Langle Park

Langle Park is a 5-acre site which was originally purchased and developed by the City's Community Development Department. After the site was developed, the property was given to the Park and Recreation Department. The site features two tennis courts, playground, basketball court, and rest rooms.

Lundquist-Bicentennial Park

Located on the south bank of the St. Joseph River, this 5.6-acre park site has developed into a very popular segment of the Elkhart Park System. Footbridges that connect Lundquist-Bicentennial, Pulaski, High Drive and Island Parks have led to the area's increased popularity. Facilities available include rest rooms, picnic facilities, walking/ jogging trails, and fishing. The annual city festival, "Rhapsody in Green," is held each June at Lundquist Bicentennial, High Dive and on the island. Approximately 50,000 people attend the three-day event each year. The Elkhart YMCA complex is adjacent to the park, which has helped develop this area and Riverwalk into the most popular jogging area in the community. Lundquist Bicentennial Park is a fully irrigated facility making its lawn areas and flower beds very scenic throughout the summer and early fall.

McNaughton Park

McNaughton Park is a 25-acre site located on the St. Joseph River. McNaughton Park is the city's most popular park. Facilities in this park include: six lighted tennis courts, picnic areas, lighted horseshoe courts, lighted softball diamond, two boat launches, spray park, indoor pavilion and a bandshell. The spray park is the most recent addition which opened in 2007. The bandshell is home to the Elkhart Municipal Band on Tuesday nights from June to August. The bandshell and pavilion are available for rental year round. Band concerts are performed throughout the summer at the bandshell. The Department operates a playground program each summer for seven weeks.

McNaughton Park is located adjacent to Elkhart General Hospital which utilizes the facility throughout the year. In the event that an emergency patient from the hospital needs fast transportation to another facility, the lighted ball diamond serves as a landing pad for helicopters. Patients visit the park facilities on a regular basis. The facilities in the park are fully accessible.

NIBCO Water & Ice Park

Nibco Water & Ice Park opened in 2007, adjacent to the Riverwalk. The facility includes ice-skating in the winter time and open green space and a spray park for youth throughout the rest of the year. Concessions and a restroom building augment the ice skating rink facility.

Pierre Moran Park

Pierre Moran Park is a 9-acre site offering a wide variety of recreational opportunities. Located in the south central section of the city, this park provides service to the most heavily populated area of the city. The park is adjacent to the Pierre Moran Middle School and Roosevelt Elementary, which allows the schools to utilize the park facilities for many of the physical education classes throughout the year.

Facilities available at Pierre Moran Park include: a new pool with a water slide and zero depth entry, renovated restrooms and concessions, two lighted softball diamonds, skateboard park, indoor pavilion utilized park in the community. All areas of the park are fully accessible. The new pool opened in the summer of 2008.

Pinewood Park

Pinewood Park is a 16-acre school park site adjacent to Pinewood Elementary School on the northeast side of the city. The site features a trail system, wooded areas, four tennis courts and shared school playground.

RiverWalk

The Riverwalk is the hub of the trail system that meanders along the Elkhart River to the St. Joseph River connecting various parks, green spaces, and rivers. The Riverwalk incorporates various scenic footbridges, overlooks, a memorial, art, wi-fi and interpretive signage to provide a variety of experiences along this trail.

Riverview Park & Softball Complex

Riverview Park is a 15-acre school park site which contains rest rooms, concession stand, and playground area. Riverview is the location of one of the ten yearly playground sites operated by the Department. The Martin Skate Park has been very successful. The sports complex which has four lighted softball fields is home to several tournaments throughout the spring, summer and fall months.

Studebaker Park

Studebaker Park is a 39-acre site featuring a softball diamond, two tennis courts, playground area, indoor pavilion, picnic area, soccer field, and river trails. Fishing in the Elkhart River, which runs between Studebaker and Baker Parks, offers excellent opportunities. Studebaker Park is adjacent to Mary Beck Grade School, which uses the park facilities throughout the year. The City's maintenance and ground's complex is located-in this park.

Tolson Park

Tolson Park is 5.37-acres and located along Benham Avenue. Tolson Park is also home to Tolson Center. The park has six lighted basketball courts, volleyball court, baseball diamond, youth soccer field and indoor gymnasium. Tolson Center continues to be a major hub of educational and recreational activity in the south-central part of Elkhart.

Walker Park

Located on the far northeast side of the city, Walker Park has added much needed acreage to the system in an area where additional park facilities are currently at a minimum. The park has been developed to include a walking trail, play area and parking. This park is recognized by the Department as having the most of use for a passive park in Elkhart.

Weston Park

Weston Park is a 1.63-acre park located on Michigan Avenue. Facilities include gazebo, playground and picnic benches. The park was developed on the site of the old Weston School building.

Willowdale Park

Willowdale Park is a 6.5-acre site located on Christiana Creek on the north central side of the community. Facilities available in the park include an indoor pavilion, restrooms, softball diamond, fishing and basketball. This park has one of the department's most popular supervised playground locations in the city which is a part of the summer program. All of the facilities in the park are fully accessible.

Woodlawn Park

Woodlawn Park is a 10-acre facility located on the northeast side of the community. The site features a large wooded area with a trail system and a year-round nature center. The park is utilized as an educational center for scouting and school groups. Volunteers provide all programming and activities at the Center.

Other Recreation Facilities

In addition to the above mention parks, the City of Elkhart's recreational needs are met through a variety of additional groups and facilities. Citizens may utilize programs and facilities offered by the City and Elkhart County's Park's Department. Some of these other facilities include:

- Beardsley Park
- Boot Lake Nature Preserve
- Bristol St. Park (Future)
- Burton-upon-Trent Park
- Environmental Center
- Franklin Street Landing
- F.O.P. Park
- Gans Park
- Martin's Landing
- Pulaski Park
- River Greenway
- Ullery Park

Rivers & Floodplain

The City of Elkhart has two rivers that intersect downtown. The St. Joseph and Elkhart rivers provide opportunities for transportation, active and passive water recreation, riverfront development, and unique aesthetic features. The St. Joseph River is a navigable waterway that extends between Baw Beese Lake in Hillsdale, Michigan, and Lake Michigan near St. Joseph and Benton Harbor, Michigan. The Elkhart River is a slow-moving waterway that is largely not navigable and extends between Noble/LaGrange County and Elkhart, where it empties into the St. Joseph River. In addition to commercial and residential development, riverfront park and open space featuring recreation and public access to the water is common along both rivers throughout Elkhart.

As shown on the "Existing Environmental and Design Conditions" map, the larger of the two rivers is the St. Joseph River which flows from east to west through the downtown. Residential properties along the St. Joseph remain highly sought after whether as ordinary resales or as sites destined for teardown of aging homes and construction of larger homes. The smaller is the Elkhart River which flows from the southeast into downtown and intersects

with the St. Joseph River at the north end of downtown. Over the past ten years much redevelopment has occurred along the Elkhart River; new office buildings, restaurants, the RiverWalk, and the NIBCO Water and Ice Park are examples of recent projects.

There are a number of small tributaries that flow into the St. Joseph River. Cobus Creek, Christiana Creek, Baugo Creek, Yellow Creek, Pine Creek, and Puterbaugh Creek all flow into the St. Joseph River. Many of these water bodies provide desirable settings for both residential and commercial development.

Adjacent to many of the waterways are floodplains as delineated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These floodplains serve several functions. For example they store flood waters during flood events, recharge groundwater aquifers, and act as a habitat for wildlife. The current boundaries of the local floodplains have been delineated by new maps that the City adopted in August 2011. Two neighborhoods partially situated in a floodplain are a northwest area including portions of streets Jefferson, Moody, North Fifth, North Sixth and a southeast area including portions of streets Arch, Folsom, Elgin, York and Huron.

RiverWalk

The RiverWalk, which is part of the greater Elkhart park system links many downtown amenities. The RiverWalk begins on the north at Pottawattomi Drive adjacent to the Elkhart River and proceeds south past the intersection of Elkhart Avenue. This project has spurred interest in redevelopment along the river and offers pedestrians a chance to experience the river through various outlook points and footbridges. The RiverWalk also acts as a connector to the county wide trail system that offers a multi-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Overlay Districts

Currently the zoning ordinance prescribes seven overlay districts that may have a major impact on the visual, physical and functional character of the City. The established districts are Cassopolis Street from Bristol Street to the north city limits, Main Street from Lusher Avenue to the south city limits, Nappanee Street from Bristol Street to the south city limits, Bristol Street from Nappanee Street to 600 feet east of Osolo Road, County Road 6 between the east and west city limits, Johnson Street from the St. Joseph River to Bristol Street, County Road 17 between the north and south city limits, and the Riverwalk overlay district. The City has developed specific zoning requirements that regulate land uses and provide for higher design standards. With these overlay districts, a greater level of review is needed regarding specific site elements as well as façade and roof design elements for the structure.

Historic Districts & Structures

Elkhart has three districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The State-Division Historic District, the Elkhart Downtown Commercial District and the Beardsley Avenue Historic District. There are also 10 individual structures listed on the National Register.

State – Division Street Historic District. The State – Division Street Historic District is located southeast of downtown. The district is bounded generally by Main Street to the west, the Norfolk Southern Rail Road to the south, Waterfall Drive to the north and Monroe Street to the east. The majority of the homes were built between the 1860's through the 1930's with a mix of architectural styles ranging from Italianate and Italianate influenced vernacular dwellings, a variety of Queen Anne derived houses, to Craftsman influenced Foursquares and bungalows. The majority of structures are frame construction with a number of brick dwellings. This neighborhood still retains its brick streets with some original limestone curbing.

Elkhart Downtown Commercial District. The Elkhart Downtown Commercial runs the length of Main Street from Jackson Boulevard to the Norfolk Southern Rail Road south of State Street at Main Street. The structures were built from approximately 1868 to the 1930's with most buildings built to a height of three stories. The styles of architecture found here range from Italianate, Queen Anne and Classic Revival with many of the buildings retaining the original limestone facade. Many of the buildings have a modernized first floor but many have retained the original detail stone work and period window design on the upper floors. The district boasts the Lerner Theatre, which is also a local historic landmark. The district also contains two buildings designed by local architect E. Hill Turnock; the former YWCA located on West Lexington Avenue and the former Water Company Building located on South Main Street.

Beardsley Avenue Historic District. The Beardsley Avenue Historic District is north of downtown. The district, which includes homes fronting along Beardsley Avenue, is bounded approximately by Edwardsburg Avenue to the west and Montessori Drive at the east. The district also includes two city parks which rest along the St. Joseph River, Island and Beardsley Parks. The district contains some 43 structures which were built from the 1840's through the 1940's. Many of the homes are of the Prairie Style with Mediterranean and Neoclassical elements. Other homes in the district are Queen Anne and Gothic Revival style. The district is named after Havilah Beardsley, the founder of Elkhart. His home is located within the district and is designed in the Italianate style. The district also contains a magnificent home that is locally and Nationally Registered known as Ruthmere. This BeauxArts styled

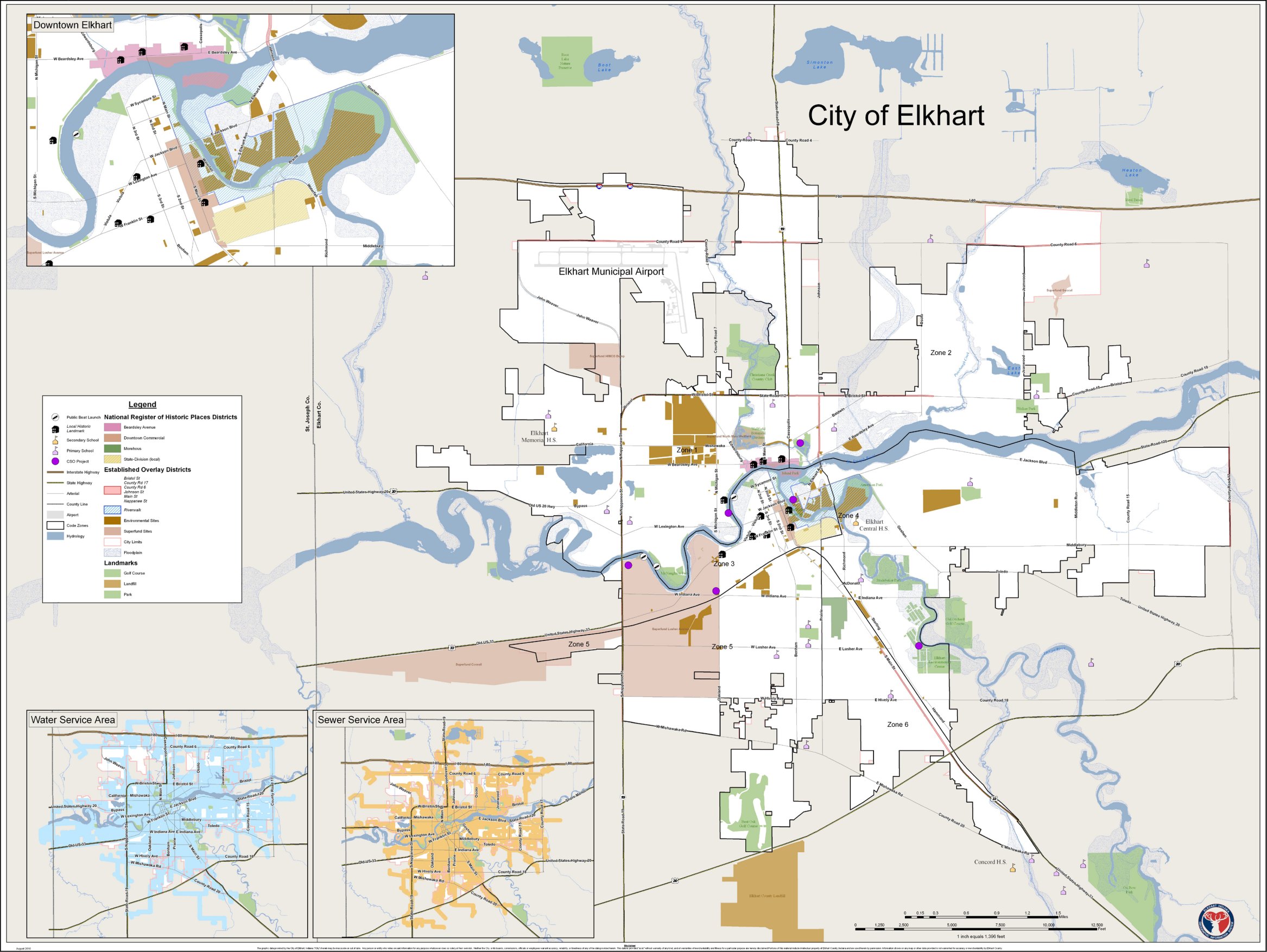
home was once owned by the descendants of Havilah Beardsley and is now preserved as a house museum.

Historic resources are significant to the identity of any community. Keeping historic resources eligible for listing is important to the character of the community. Many other structures and potentially other districts within the city may be eligible for the National Register. Currently, there are no local guidelines for two of the three districts, only the State – Division District has guidelines because of its local landmark designation status. Consideration should be given to the development of guidelines to preserve the character of the structures within these districts.

National Historic Sites. There are 10 National Historic Places located throughout Elkhart. Most, but not all, of the structures are located outside of the State – Division and Beardsley Historic Districts. The local sites are:

- Albert R. Beardsley House (aka Ruthmere, listed 1978)
302 E. Beardsley Ave., Elkhart
- Dr. Havilah Beardsley House (aka Havilah Beardsley Mansion, listed 2000)
102 W. Beardsley Ave., Elkhart
- Emmanuel C. Bickel House (listed 1979)
614 Bower St., Elkhart
- Bucklen Theatre (aka Elkhart Opera House, listed 1986).
Demolished.
S. Main and Harrison Sts., Elkhart
- Buescher Band Instrument Company Building (aka The Buescher Building, listed 1996). *Demolished.*
225 E. Jackson Ave., Elkhart
- Green Block (aka Smith Frye Building, listed 1980)
109-115 E. Lexington, Elkhart
- Lerner Theatre (aka Elco Theatre, listed 1980)
401 S. Main St., Elkhart
- Mark L. & Harriet E. Monteith House (listed 1985)
871 E. Beardsley Ave., Elkhart
- Joseph and Sarah Puterbaugh Farm (aka Puterbaugh-Haines House, listed 1995)
59123 Co. Rd. 9, Elkhart
- Young Women's Christian Association (aka Elkhart YWCA; Lexington House, listed 1991)
120 W. Lexington Ave., Elkhart

Existing Environmental and Design Conditions



Local Historic Sites. The city also has ten single site local landmark districts. They are the Ruthmere house museum located in the Beardsley Avenue National Historic District, the Lerner Theatre located in the Main Street Commercial National Historic District, the Samuel Strong School on West Lexington Avenue, the Dr. Havilah Beardsley Memorial located at the intersection of Riverside Drive and West Beardsley Avenue, the Dr. Havilah Beardsley home located in the Beardsley Avenue National Historic District at the intersection of Main Street and Beardsley Avenue, the Ambrose Bierce House located on West Franklin Street, the 1897 Simpson Love House and the 1912 Snader Welling House both located on West Franklin Street, the 1894/95 National Paper and Supply Company located on East Lexington Avenue and the Charles Isbell House on North Riverside Drive.

- National Paper and Supply Company (125 East Lexington Avenue);
- Simpson-Love House (329 West Franklin Street);
- Snader-Welling House (931 West Franklin Street);
- Ruthmere house museum (302 East Beardsley Avenue);
- Lerner Theatre (410 South Main Street);
- Samuel Strong School (330 West Lexington Avenue);
- Havilah Beardsley Memorial (intersection of Riverside Drive and West Beardsley Avenue);
- Ambrose Bierce House (518 West Franklin Street);
- Dr. Havilah Beardsley Home (102 West Beardsley Avenue);
- Charles Isbell House (227 North Riverside Drive).

Brownfield Sites

The City of Elkhart was an industrialized City that developed with heavy manufacturing to support industries related to the development of recreational vehicles and musical instruments. However, as certain industries wound down many sites in Elkhart were contaminated and have been identified as superfund sites. Superfund sites are those sites identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in order to facilitate the cleanup of abandoned hazardous wastes. The EPA established the Superfund cleanup process in order to take sites from a hazardous state to one that adds to the community years into the future. As noted on the Existing Environmental & Design Conditions map, these superfund sites include:

- Conrail Site – located west of the City and just south of Old US 33. This site is a 2,500 acre site that includes contamination from a rail yard, drag strip and other light industrial activities. The rail yard is an electronically controlled hump yard operated by Norfolk Southern Corporation and serves as a classification distribution yard for freight cars. The Osceola Dragway is a commercial drag racing facility. All of these sites contain chemical contaminants. Cleanup is scheduled for these sites. These properties are still operational with these uses.
- HIMCO Site – This site is located north of Bristol Street just west of John Weaver and south from the airport. It was an unlicensed, unlined 60-acre landfill. The dump was privately operated by Himco Waste-Away Services, which collected and received commercial, industrial and medical waste and general refuse from 1960 until 1976. The site is currently in the cleanup process under a federal consent decree that was effective November 28, 2007. A reuse strategy was developed in 2004 and would include the following uses: active recreation areas, passive recreation and leisure areas, ecological zones, environmental education center, and/or a Himco recreational vehicle park.
- Lane Street Ground Water Contamination Site. This site is located at the edge of the City on the northeast side. This site includes a plume of contaminated groundwater that extends toward the south from the industrial park to an area of homes located along Lane Street. At this time the source of this contamination has not been identified. Water filtration systems have been provided to 13 homes in the area. Further investigation of the source and extent of contamination is ongoing.
- Lusher Avenue Site. This area is bounded on the north by the St. Joseph River, on the west by Nappanee Street, on the south by Hively Avenue, and on the east by Oakland Avenue. This site includes a plume of contaminated groundwater. This contamination comes from processes involved in making adhesives, synthetic fibers, refrigerants, food packaging, and coating resins. The EPA installed point-of-use carbon filters in 25 residences and businesses to reduce contamination concentrations below the acceptable safe drinking water standards. Additionally seven residences and businesses were converted to municipal water. Currently additional monitoring and field investigation is on-gong.

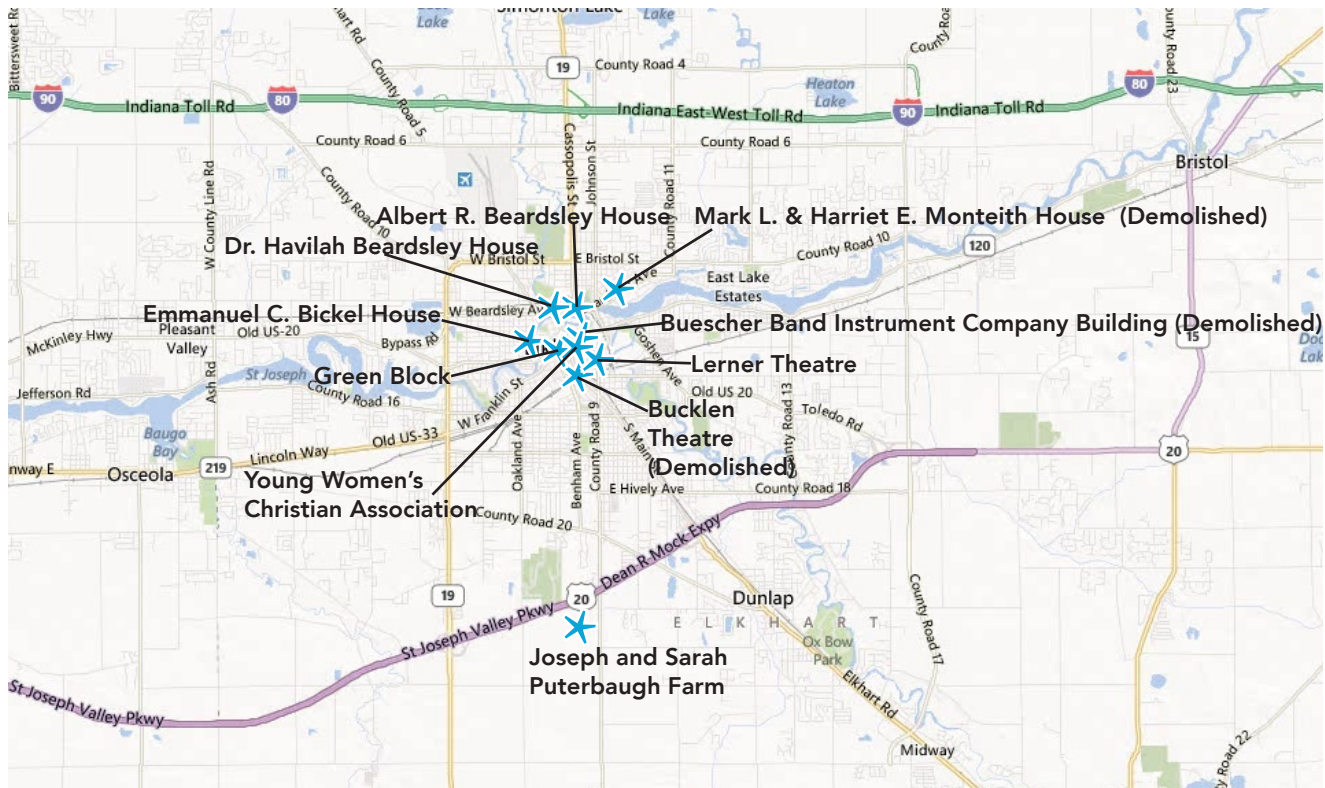


Figure 6.2: National Historic Sites

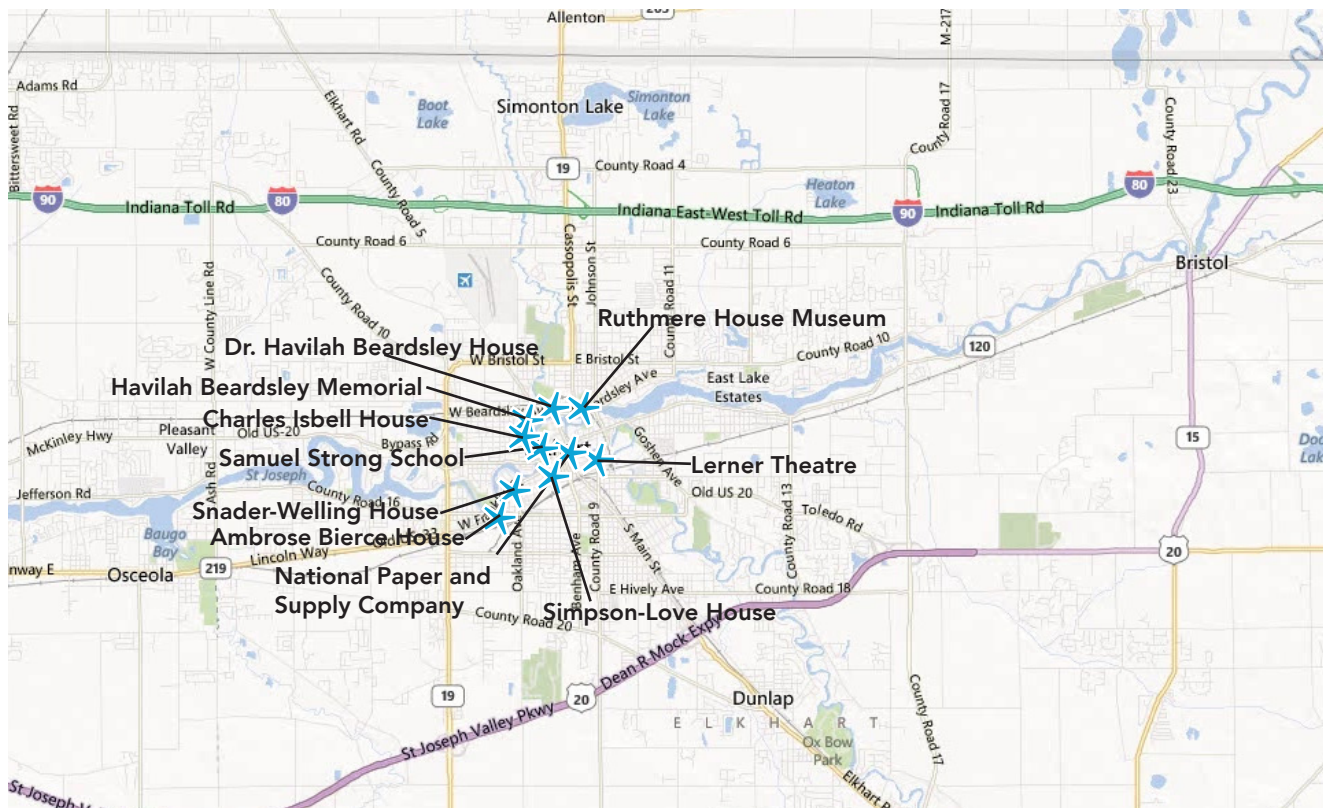


Figure 6.3: Local Historic Sites

- Main Street Well Field. This site is one of the largest of three well fields owned by the City of Elkhart. This well field consists of 15 wells on 10 acres of land and supplies approximately 70 percent of the drinking water for the City. The groundwater has found to be contaminated with volatile organic compounds (VOCs). A solution has been put in place with the construction of an air stripper in 1987 and the construction of a soil vapor extraction system in 1995. Groundwater is continuously monitored by the EPA. The last review was completed in June 2012

Source: Environmental Protection Agency Superfund Website (www.epa.gov)

Future Environment and Design Framework

Key Findings/Conclusions

As noted above, the City has several assets including historic structures and districts, waterways, RiverWalk, and numerous parks. These assets have increased the quality of life of residents and are strengths in attracting new businesses. The City needs to continue to build upon these assets and develop mechanisms to mitigate the weaknesses.

While the St. Joseph River is certainly an asset in the community, the floodplain that surrounds it has caused problems for residents who live near the river. The City must limit redevelopment in areas of known flooding or ensure that new development is designed to minimize the impact of flooding. This may include parking on the first floor and/or raising the structures. Additionally, in the River Vista neighborhood where flooding has significantly impacted structures, the City must determine if it should and can get additional Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds to purchase these homes and relocate families in this area.

Due to the industrialization within the City, there are multiple environmental and brownfield sites. This has left several sites within the City as currently undevelopable. The EPA is working with property owners to clean up the sites. For the future, the City needs to put additional environmental standards in place for heavy industry in order to safeguard the City.

General Overview

The overall concept of the proposed future environment and design framework includes three components: 1) focus on and improve first impression areas such as entry points into the City and along key transportation routes to enhance the visual perception of Elkhart; 2) capitalize on natural features for economic and environmental sustainability; and 3) set a higher standard for design within the community.

As illustrated on the framework diagram, eight key entry points into the City are highlighted for aesthetic enhancement. The Riverwalk is proposed to expand outside of the downtown district. A new blue line trail connects parks, natural habitat areas, and other waterfront amenities along the St. Joseph River. Additionally, an expanded South Main Street District as defined in the *Downtown Action Agenda* enhances the economic and physical environment of the City's southern gateway. Expanded overlay district boundaries to include the Main Street corridor south of downtown, and reinforced overlay district parameters to distinguish appropriate design and development in an urban context and suburban context will help ensure enhanced aesthetics.

Gateways: Gateways are key entrances into a community. They contain special markers which signify that the area is a special area. Special markers could include regulation of land use, special signage, aesthetic treatments, etc. Eight key entry points into the City identified for aesthetic enhancement. What should be noted is that not all gateway points should be addressed in an identical manner. The special markers and treatments should correspond with the established corridor typologies identified in Chapter 8, Corridor Character.

Riverwalk Expansion: The City has spent considerable resources to develop the Riverwalk along the Elkhart River in downtown. The Riverwalk has spurred economic development and revitalization within the downtown. The plan recommends that the City should continue to build upon the Riverwalk by expanding it along the Elkhart River, outside of the downtown districts. The City should focus on expanding it to the west along the St. Joseph River. Besides connecting the existing Riverwalk, it would connect to Langle Park, Franklin City Landing, and McNaughton Park. This Riverwalk would connect to a blue line trail. The eastern connection would run along the Elkhart River south. This Riverwalk expansion would connect American Park, Baker Park, FOP Park, Studebaker Park, Gans Park, River Greenway and the Environmental Center.

St. Joseph River amenities & opportunities: As noted above, the St. Joseph River is a strength within the City. In the Northwest Gateway Study, Elkhart County designated a blue line trail along the St. Joseph River. The City should designate its own blue line trail along the St. Joseph to connect to the portion in Elkhart County. The City should highlight the water route with wayfinding and marked accessible put-in and take-out locations. The blue line trail could connect the parks, natural habitat areas, and other waterfront amenities for boaters along the St. Joseph River. Additionally the City should investigate installing a public boat launch at downtown or near downtown park.

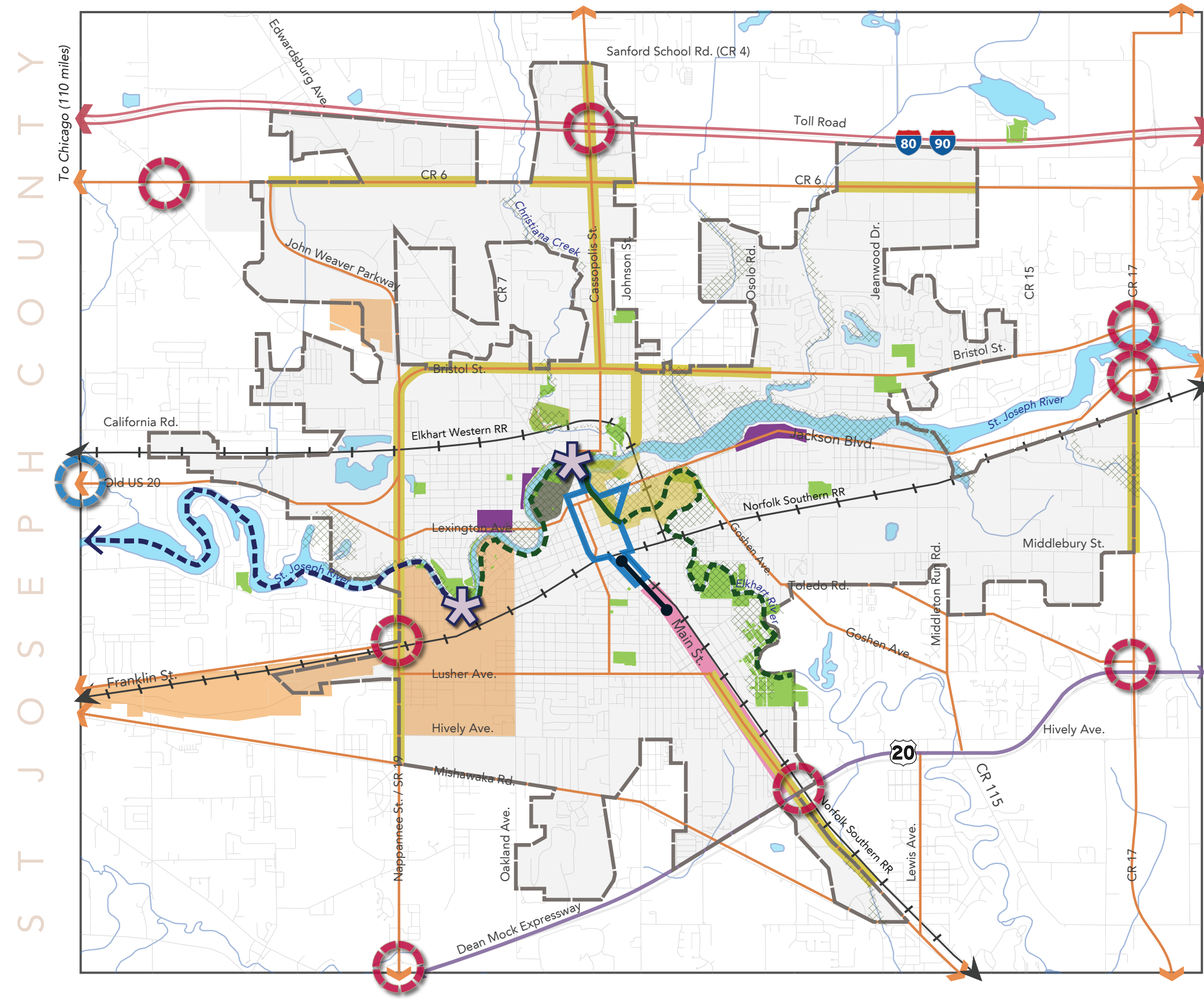
Expanded South Main Street District & overlay district: The City has an established district just south of downtown. The plan recommends the expansion of the South Main Street District as defined in the Downtown Action Agenda in order to enhance the economic and physical environment of the City's southern gateway and promote redevelopment of the entire south Main Street. With the expansion of the South Main Street District, an updated redevelopment plan should be created. As an implementation phase of both the comprehensive plan and the updated redevelopment plan, the overlay district for the South Main Street area should be expanded to include this new area. Additional standards for design, uses, parking and landscaping should be considered as part of this update.

Finally, the City should review all overlay districts for the City to determine what updates would be required to each district to implement the vision in this plan. The City should determine how to reinforce the overlay district parameters to distinguish appropriate design and development in an urban context and suburban context.

Deteriorating Properties. As Elkhart continues to recover from the effects of the recession on its local economy and the increased vacancy in buildings and land due to the closing of businesses, the City will need to assess and address deteriorating properties. These properties could be considered "eyesores" within the community and could negatively impact the success of economic development efforts. There are a few action steps that the City could undertake to mitigate any potential "community eyesores." These action steps include the following:

- Create and Adopt a Design and Aesthetics Overlay Ordinance.
- Create a formalized list of unsafe buildings, under utilized properties and key properties for redevelopment.
- The City should develop a more formalized pursuit of non-conformities and obsolete uses.

M I C H I G A N

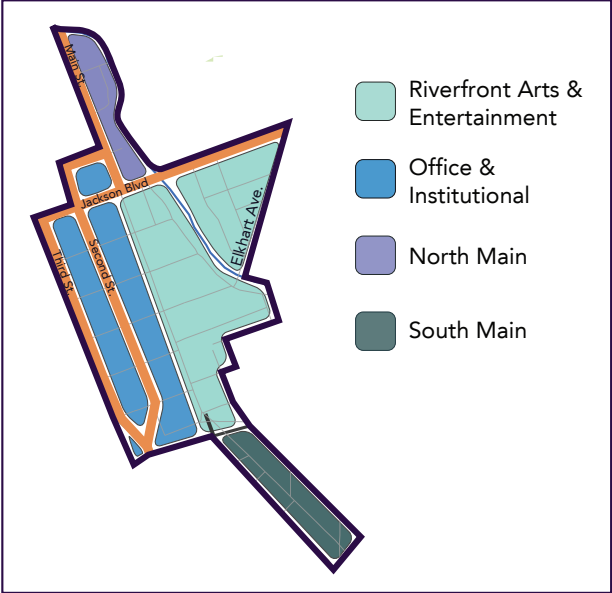


City of Elkhart Comprehensive Plan Update
Future Environment & Design Framework

Key

Indiana Toll Road	Existing Riverwalk
US 20 Bypass	Proposed Greenway
Major Arterial	Proposed Blue Line
Rail Line	Existing Overlay District
Elkhart City Boundary	Superfund Mitigation Area
City Park	Proposed Downtown South Main District Extension
State Identified Potential Historic District	Downtown
Floodway Mitigation Area	Proposed Major Gateway
Floodplain (development limitations &/or restrictions)	Proposed Minor Gateway
Proposed Overlay District	Public Boat Launch Enhancement

Downtown Districts Inset Map





City of Elkhart Comprehensive Plan Update

Adopted February 2, 2015



Chapter 7

Economic Development

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Introduction

Economic development is an important aspect to maintaining and improving the well-being of the Elkhart Community. It consists of projects and programs to enhance private sector business activity and increase jobs and wealth for Elkhart’s residents. Economic development can consist of improvements to infrastructure and transportation systems, improving the overall quality of life factors within the community to make it more attractive to business, incentive and financing programs to lower the costs of doing business within the community, and improving social programs and education to build a higher skilled workforce to improve the labor efficiency for local business. The public sector has a role in helping to attract and retain jobs within a community and improve the welfare of its residents. This section discusses specific programs as part of the overall growth strategy of Elkhart to help build wealth and prosperity.

Existing Areas for Investment and Development

The City currently has seven different TIF (tax increment financing) districts to help focus redevelopment efforts within the City. TIF districts operate by freezing tax assessments at a base level when they are created. This current tax revenue continues to go to the City’s general fund and other taxing district funds (i.e. schools, libraries, etc.). As new investment creates new assessed value within the district, the new taxes generated off that additional investment are diverted to a new fund. This new fund can only be used for further investment and improvements within the TIF district. The premise is that once redevelopment and new investment is complete, the district is dissolved and now the new revenues go back to the original taxing jurisdictions. Without the additional investment that this district creates, it is argued that new private investment and assessed valuation would not otherwise occur. The districts are outlined on the “Economic Development Existing Conditions Map”.

The City currently has six active plans in place for infrastructure improvements and reinvestment aimed at economic development. Objectives of the plans include encouraging new business investment, sewer, water and transportation improvements, reinvigorating older industrial areas, and new commercial development. The specific plans are summarized as follows:

Southwest Industrial Area Plan

Mission

The mission of the Southwest Industrial Area Plan is to facilitate new business investment in the Economic Development Area. New business investment will result in an increase in the tax base and additional employment opportunities for area residents. Investment will be in the form of new commercial development and industrial development.

Goals

- Improve the aesthetics of the area.
- Improve the infrastructure within the area.
- Resolve land use conflicts between industrial and residential areas.
- Assist the existing area businesses to expand and improve their current facilities.
- Attract new commercial and industrial development to the area.

Proposed Activities

The proposed activities for the TIF may include the following:

1. Sewers and Water – Eliminate combined sewer overflows by separating sanitary and storm sewers currently serving the area. Sewer and water lines would also be extended to residential areas not currently served by City utilities.
2. Road Improvements – Some of the improvements that may be funded utilizing TIF revenues include the addition of turn lanes on Prairie Street, in addition to Hively and Benham Avenues. Pedestrian crossing signals and crosswalks may be added at all additional traffic lights resulting from redevelopment. Curbs may also be added along both sides of Prairie from Dinehart to Hively and along both sides of Benham from Hiawatha to Hively.
3. Sidewalks – The neighborhoods to the south of Woodland Crossing Shopping Center (formerly known as the “Pierre Moran Mall”) have sporadic sidewalks. The plan would be to extend sidewalks to areas where they are not currently in place. Sidewalks may also be placed around the full perimeter of Woodland Crossing Shopping Center making it more pedestrian friendly. Currently, sidewalks are only located to the south and east of CVS along Hively and Prairie. Sidewalks may be extended along both sides of Benham from Hiawatha to Hively. Sidewalks may also be extended along both sides of Prairie from Dinehart to Hively.

4. Public Amenities – Street trees and pedestrian lighting may be added along major roadways, including the perimeter of Woodland Crossing Shopping Center to make it more pedestrian friendly and aesthetically pleasing. This would also encourage use of the sidewalks and crosswalks added as a result of this redevelopment project. Improvements, such as lighting, may also be made to the pedestrian access from Hawthorne into the mall area.

Elkhart Technology Park Redevelopment Plan

Introduction and Purpose

The City of Elkhart seeks to create a Redevelopment Area in the Beardsley Avenue-Michigan Street industrial area. The site is an older industrial area located in northwest Elkhart consisting of approximately 220 acres. The redevelopment plan is based on a strategy of transitioning this area from traditional manufacturing to technology based businesses by creating a technology park. By adopting the redevelopment plan and implementing the proposed activities, the following benefits may be realized:

- increased opportunities for gainful employment of area residents;
- attraction of new high technology businesses to the area;
- retention and/or expansion of existing businesses in the area.
- increased local tax base

Mission and Goals

The mission of the Elkhart Technology Park Development Plan is to facilitate new business investment in the Redevelopment Area. Specific goals of the plan are as follows:

- improve the overall aesthetics;
- improve the existing infrastructure area and provide new technological infrastructure;
- assist the existing area businesses to expand and improve their current facilities;
- attract new commercial and industrial development;
- fund needed public improvements;
- provide incentives for businesses and offer tax credits.

Technology Park Overview

Research has shown that the development of successful technology parks can have a positive impact on local and regional economies by encouraging and fostering businesses that provide skilled, high wage jobs. Elkhart has a growing economic base, but it is focused heavily on traditional manufacturing. The creation of a technology park and the subsequent technology based businesses will diversify our local economy and provide opportunities for residents to pursue careers with technology based businesses without leaving the area.

Downtown

The overriding goal of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan is to facilitate and encourage reinvestment and redevelopment in downtown Elkhart, specifically within the designated impact zone. Reinvestment will be in the form of new housing, commercial development, entertainment/recreational opportunities, and civic uses which will provide an attractive, pedestrian-friendly environment for both residents and visitors. The end result will be an environment that attracts local private investment, and sets the stage for on-going, healthy growth.

Specific objectives of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan are as follows:

1. Utilize the Elkhart and St. Joseph Rivers as a downtown amenity and a community resource.
2. Utilize land downtown to its maximum potential, or “highest and best economic use,” in a manner which blends private and public uses.
3. Encourage new investment in the impact zone to strengthen the investment climate in the entire downtown.
4. Increase the local tax base.
5. Increase the downtown resident population.
6. Enhance the overall appearance of the downtown to attract new investment and new patrons.
7. Make downtown Elkhart a “destination point” for the city, county and region.
8. Eliminate pockets of disinvestment, detrimental influences and environmental concerns.
9. Remove inappropriate land uses currently within the downtown area, such as industrial sites and warehouses.

10. Incorporate an “arts and culture theme” into downtown revitalization efforts.
11. Enhance the overall security and public safety in the downtown area.
12. Use limited public resources to leverage significant new private investment in the downtown area. Every one dollar of public investment should strive for attracting four to ten dollars of private investment.

Cassopolis Street Improvements

The following types of public improvements are needed along the entire Cassopolis Street Corridor and also along that portion of Johnson Street (CR 9) within the Redevelopment Area.

Streetscape

Streetscape improvements are needed throughout the Cassopolis Street Corridor. The proposed improvements include provision of sidewalks and other pedestrian friendly amenities, distinctive street lighting, street trees, and a unified sign program.

There are very few sidewalks on Cassopolis Street. Proposed improvements include extending sidewalks from the south side of the Toll Road overpass, where they currently end, south to Bristol Street. This would allow pedestrian traffic to safely move along the corridor. In addition, sidewalks would be added to one or both sides of Johnson Street to create safer pedestrian movement. TIF funds may also be used to fund sidewalks in and around any future commercial development that occurs within the redevelopment area. TIF funds may also be used as a match for a T-21 grant from the State of Indiana. Indiana’s Transportation Enhancement program allows funding for transportation projects to expand beyond the traditional accommodations for cars, trucks, buses and transit. Transportation enhancements (TE) are transportation-related activities that are designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the Nation’s inter-modal transportation system. At least twenty percent (20%) of a project’s cost must be paid for by the sponsor to show commitment by the community.

Consistent street lighting is a necessary element for creating a sense of cohesion throughout the corridor. This type of cohesion has been implemented along areas such as Elkhart Avenue, South Main Street and Benham Avenue. Part of this plan is to create a corridor with this type of feel and distinctive identity.

A major component of the streetscape is landscaping. A unified landscape plan is necessary so that as the corridor develops, the



There is a need for better sidewalks along Cassopolis Street.

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landscape complements the lighting and helps create a pleasant environment for both pedestrians and motorists. Key landscape components include provision of sidewalks, pedestrian crossings and street trees.

Utility Relocation (Underground)

TIF funds from this Economic Development Area may be used to relocate utilities from overhead to underground. This would help to improve aesthetics and reduce congestion that has resulted from signage, utility poles and power lines. TIF funds may also be used to assist in the cost of burying power lines in future development areas within this district.

Transportation Improvements

TIF Funds may be used to assist in implementing the recommendations contained in the Corridor Study, including the provision of additional traffic lights. Additional lights may be added along Cassopolis at Emerson Drive. This will become necessary as future commercial development occurs along the eastern portion of Cassopolis Street near this intersection. Along Johnson Street, an additional traffic light may be needed at the intersection of Arlington if Arlington is realigned at Emerson and becomes an east west connector between Cassopolis and Johnson.

Water and Sewer

TIF funds would be used to eliminate combined sewer overflows by separating sanitary and storm sewers currently serving the area. Combined sewers are found primarily in the southern portion of the corridor.

Proposed Activities by Development Area

The Cassopolis Street Corridor consists of five distinct development areas and the Lerner Performing Arts Center project (formerly the ELCO Theatre) in heart of Downtown Elkhart’s Arts & Entertainment District. The following paragraphs will discuss the proposed activities in each area beginning with the northernmost area, south of Sanford School Road and proceeding south along Cassopolis to Bristol Street and into downtown.

Northpointe Gateway

The intersection of Cassopolis Street and the Indiana Toll Road forms a major gateway to the City of Elkhart. It is commonly known as Northpointe due to the presence of the Northpointe PUD, a large mixed-use PUD that occupies the entire corridor west of Cassopolis Street between Sanford School Road and the Toll Road. The area on both sides of the Toll Road and both sides of Cassopolis Street forms a visitor’s first impression of Elkhart when exiting the Toll Road. There are many hotels



Northpointe Gateway area.

located in this area along with the Elkhart County Convention and Visitors Bureau. Currently, sidewalks extend on both sides of the Cassopolis Street bridge spanning the Toll Road, but end abruptly at grade level. Proposed improvements include providing the streetscape components discussed previously in this plan (sidewalks, landscaping, distinctive lighting), with particular emphasis on creating pedestrian connections within existing development, as well as between them. Of major importance in the Gateway is the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Corridor Study. This would include alignment of entrances to commercial developments on either side of Cassopolis Street, consolidation of existing curb cuts where possible, improving pedestrian access and providing rear service drives.

Windsor Street/ County Road (CR) 6 Loop

The first signalized intersection south of the Toll Road is the intersection of Cassopolis Street and Windsor Avenue. To the east, Windsor Avenue provides access to County Road (CR) 9 (Johnson Street) through a major commercial center containing restaurants, a hotel, retail and office uses. West of Cassopolis Street, Windsor Avenue provides access to commercial and industrial development and terminates in a cul-de-sac. Just south of this area is the intersection of CR 6 and Cassopolis Street, an intersection with huge traffic volumes and many automobile accidents. The Northfield Market PUD, located south of CR 6, contains both Wal-Mart and a multi-plex cinema, popular destinations in the corridor. Proposed improvements in this area include the creation of an extension of the eastern portion of Windsor Avenue south to connect with CR 6. This would provide an alternate route for traffic trying to access the Northfield PUD and other commercial establishments in close proximity. The plan also calls for the addition of right-turn lanes at all four corners of the intersection. Consolidation of access points and construction of streetscape improvements are also proposed for this area.

Emerson Arlington Connection

The area surrounding Emerson Drive on the west and Arlington Street on the east contains large areas that are poised for redevelopment. Currently, Emerson Drive and Arlington Street are not in alignment and form T intersections at Cassopolis Street. This results in numerous traffic accidents as people try to jog from one to the other. Further development will only exacerbate this problem. It is imperative that Emerson Drive and Arlington Street be aligned with each other and the intersection signalized. Access to new commercial areas can then be provided from Emerson Drive and Arlington Street. Street improvements along Arlington will be made from Cassopolis Street to CR 9 (Johnson Street) and along CR 9 where new development occurs. Corridor Study recommendations will be implemented and streetscape improvements will be made.



The intersection of Windsor Avenue and Cassopolis Street.



The intersection of Arlington Road and Cassopolis Street.



Homes along Cassopolis Street just south of South Drive.



View along Cassopolis Street north of Sunset Avenue.



Artist rendering of the Lerner Performing Arts Center.

South Drive Area

Proposed improvements include the extension of South Drive east to CR 9. The extension of South Drive east to Johnson Street would provide another connection between Cassopolis and Johnson Streets, in addition to providing access to large, currently undeveloped or underdeveloped areas. As development occurs, access management principles would be applied and construction of the streetscape would occur. Consolidated and coordinated access will be planned to accommodate the residential area to the west of Cassopolis Street as commercial development occurs.

Country Club Drive to Bristol Street

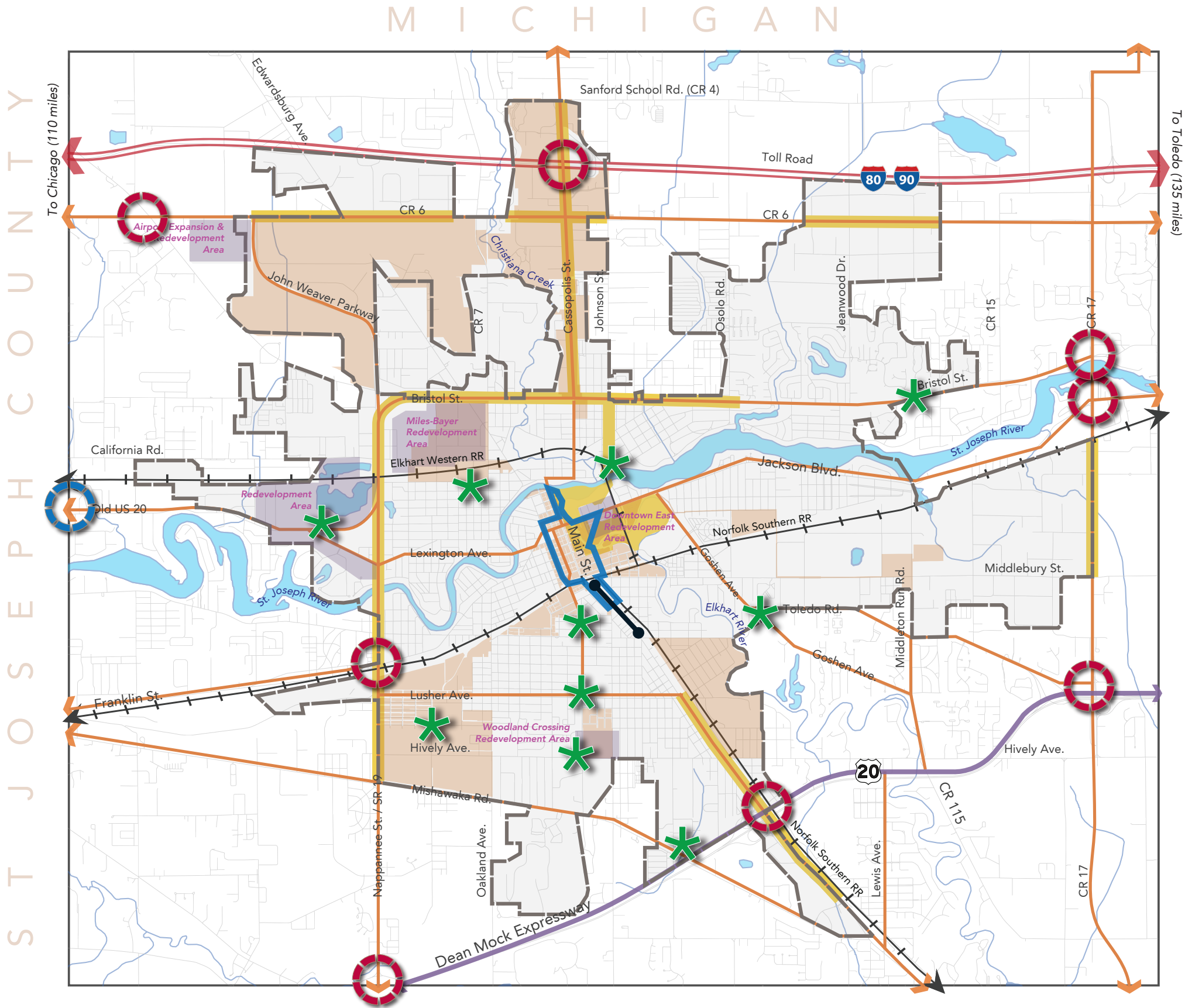
This area is characterized by a wide variety of commercial uses located on small lots with many curb cuts, lots of signs, and large volumes of traffic. There are some industrial uses west of Cassopolis Street and also some undeveloped areas large enough to accommodate a mixed-use type of development. Proposed improvements in this area include installation of the streetscape and other street improvements, and consolidation of existing curb cuts wherever possible. It is very important in this area to create a pedestrian friendly environment to connect the commercial corridor with nearby residential neighborhoods.

Lerner Performing Arts Center Project (also referred to as the “ELCO Theatre” and the “Lerner Theatre”)

The Lerner Performing Arts Center was recently restored to its original 1920s opulence while at the same time being outfitted with state-of-the-art, 21st century acoustical improvements. The renovated theatre is poised to become the cornerstone of a thriving Arts and Entertainment District in the heart of downtown Elkhart.

An additional 6,000 square feet of meeting space, complete with catering, means such things as corporate business events, wedding receptions, proms, banquets and other activities now have the space and attractive quarters to meet the demand.

An attractive and active performance venue and meeting space means that Elkhart residents and others from out of town will have plenty of reasons to visit downtown and take in other nearby destinations. Since the Cassopolis Street Corridor is the primary gateway from the Toll Road to Downtown, a thriving downtown Arts and Entertainment District will increase the volume of vehicle traffic (a key indicator of retail property values) and will have a positive impact on the hotels, restaurants, and other retailers in the Cassopolis Street Corridor.



Future Economic Development Framework

Key

Indiana Toll Road

US 20 Bypass

Major Arterial

Rail Line

Elkhart City Boundary

Existing TIF District

Downtown

Existing Overlay District

Proposed Overlay District

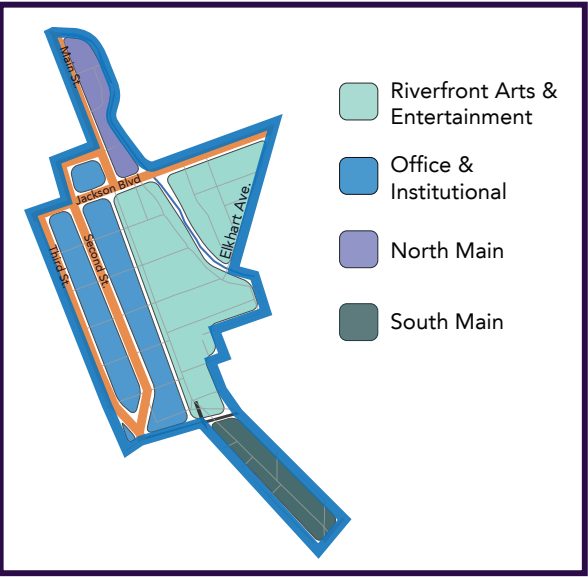
Proposed Redevelopment Area (area intended for new investment & changes to the existing land use pattern)

Proposed Gateway & Revitalization Area (highly visible area that would benefit from aesthetic improvements and focused redevelopment)

Proposed Minor Gateway Area (visible area that would benefit from aesthetic improvements)

Proposed Neighborhood Activity Center (walkable, pedestrian-oriented destination featuring 2 or more related or complementary uses, such as retail &/or institutions within a 5-minute walking distance of each other & a residential neighborhood)

Downtown Districts Inset Map



Public Engagement

The future economic development framework for the City is created through a combination of carrying forward the implementation of existing plans, consideration of plans created for the regional area that include the City of Elkhart, and public engagement as a part of the comprehensive planning process.

A Community Open House was held on February 22nd, 2011 to get feedback on ideas being generated as part of the comprehensive planning process. Participants were asked for feedback on goals and objectives related specifically to economic development. Participants overwhelmingly agreed with:

- Pursuing funding sources for education and training needs for existing and emerging businesses.
- Promoting the retention, expansion and attraction of business through financial and technical support.
- Marketing of the community as a place to develop/manufacture alternative/renewable energy products.
- Improving the overall sense of place and aesthetic quality and character of the community to improve business retention, expansion and attraction efforts.

Overall public support for economic development efforts is high within the community. In addition to the use of TIF districts as a tool, three additional economic development designations were discussed including revitalization areas, redevelopment areas and neighborhood activity centers.

Revitalization Area: A highly visible area within the community that would benefit from aesthetic improvements.

Redevelopment Area: Designated area intended for new development and changes to the existing land use pattern. These would include existing or newly proposed TIF districts.

Neighborhood Activity Center: Walkable, pedestrian-oriented destination featuring two or more related or complementary uses, such as retail and/or institutions, within a five minute walking distance. The workshop attendees confirmed proposals for locations of the above areas and established additional gateway revitalization areas near SR 120 and CR 17 and along Bristol Street at the city limits just west of CR 15.



Economic development areas and potential implementation actions.

Redevelopment Framework

Redevelopment is an important aspect to the overall revitalization and economic development of the City. Redevelopment itself is the process of rehabilitating and renovating areas of the city with new investments of infrastructure, public facilities and/or private development. The City of Elkhart has developed three designations for areas of the community that represent different levels and focus for redevelopment opportunities.

Business and Workforce Development

Elkhart prides itself on a skilled workforce. City leaders have recognized for years the importance of diversifying the skill sets of its residents through conventional and innovative education and job training endeavors. As economic trends shift, a diversified workforce will not be solely dependent on one industry to provide employment and will be better positioned to handle economic ebbs and flows. The education and economic development goal of this plan reinforces the education-economic development relationship and outlines techniques to capitalize on the region's diverse educational resources to advance the City's traditional economic development efforts of business retention, attraction and expansion.

In addition to the City of Elkhart's Economic Development Department, the lead advocate of economic development in Elkhart County is the Elkhart Development Corporation of Elkhart County (EDC). Since 2000, the EDC has been instrumental in attracting and retaining quality businesses in the County and is the City's key partner in fostering Elkhart's economy. The following action steps provide guidance to City policy and decision-makers to support the education and economic development goal. Policy development requires the leadership and commitment of Elkhart City officials and collaboration with other partners, such as the EDC. It is not solely up to the City to implement the following action steps; however, it is necessary that the City create an environment that is conducive to success in this area by dedicating more resources to organizing efforts, setting guidelines, and enforcing ordinances to enhance and promote assets, creating and maintaining partnerships and galvanizing stakeholders.

More specifically, business and workforce recommendations should focus on:

- Continue the City's economic development efforts of business recruitment, retention and expansion.
- Clear unkempt properties to create turn-key sites for business location in priority areas.
- Identify new and emerging markets where Elkhart has a competitive advantage in terms of location, skills of workforce, economy of scale, building inventory, incentives or other decision-making factors.
- Identify and pursue funding opportunities that support the educational and training needs of existing and emerging businesses in the City.
- Ensure regular communication among school districts, higher education institutions, continuing education providers, the Chamber of Commerce, and other representatives from the business community to marry local employment opportunities with academic and training curriculums.
- Continue participation in the Horizon 2.0 initiative.
- Develop new, non-monetary incentives to entice new investors and retain existing businesses.
- Cluster similar and complementary businesses to create economies of scale, encourage resource sharing, market an area's identity, and provide a convenient and memorable experience for customers.

- Direct new development and investment to areas within the current City limits rather than in undeveloped/greenfield areas.
- Update the City's Annexation Plan.

Regional Framework

Elkhart, Kosciusko, Marshall and St. Joseph counties came together in 2010 to create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region. The immediate impact of the CEDS is to make the region available for fast-track funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (US EDA) for economic development and infrastructure development. In addition it serves as a coordinating piece for regional economic development efforts recognizing that each community is part of a larger regional economy.

The CEDS does lay out several strategies that have a direct impact on the City of Elkhart including:

- Focusing on the redevelopment of existing Brownfield sites within the community. Brownfield sites are properties in which there is a suspicion or confirmation of environmental contamination. The suspicion alone often makes it hard to secure financing to develop the site.
- Ensure excess capacity in sewer and water infrastructure so as not to hinder future development.
- Pursue governmental partnerships with higher education institutions to encourage technology transfer to the private sector.
- Identify uses for and companies which can use the by-products of the alternate energy production process.
- Ensure each elementary school has a computer library and access to technology.
- Partner with schools to open facilities for after-hours training and workforce development activities.
- Ensure educational activities have access to pedestrian and public transportation facilities.
- Coordinate with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) and follow requirements to create viable Certified Technology Parks.
- Develop the skill sets of incumbent and emerging workers that will meet the current and future demand of employers.
- Increase the number of residents in the region who possess post-secondary degrees, especially in math and science.

Adopted February 2, 2015



City of Elkhart Comprehensive Plan Update

Adopted February 2, 2015



Chapter 8

Corridor Character: Land Use & Transportation

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Introduction

A road is more than simply a route between two destinations. Roads, thoroughfares, corridors, and related facilities are all significant components of a community's landscape and public realm. Integrating comprehensive transportation planning with land use and environmental planning is critical in creating livable and sustainable communities. The alignment, scale, and character of a transportation thoroughfare help define a community's urban context, development patterns, and sense of place. Thoughtful design, construction, and management of streets and highways that enhance interconnected transportation options with adjacent land uses create a corridor character that becomes a community focal point and contributes to an area's quality of life.

This chapter connects the *Comprehensive Plan Update's* "Land Use" and "Mobility: Existing & Planned Network" chapters. The "Land Use" chapter documents Elkhart's existing land use pattern and outlines how the community should grow, develop, and redevelop in the future. The "Mobility" chapter includes a description of the City's functional classification system, the efforts of Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG), and Elkhart's current and future pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular, air, rail, and water transportation systems. Elkhart's image is perceived along its major thoroughfares, minor arterials, and neighborhood streets. It is understood that Elkhart should have a well-connected, easily accessible transportation network that provides safe, comfortable, logical, and efficient access, increases mobility options for all users and abilities, and supports economic vitality along with environmental quality. All of these components comprise the complementary relationship between transportation and land use planning, where infrastructure capacity is matched with current and future land uses. Well-managed transportation corridors meet the community's needs for mobility while balancing other environmental considerations.



Downtown Elkhart

Current Land Use & Mobility Description

Industry and low density residential areas comprise the majority of Elkhart's land use. Industrial areas are generally located toward the edges of the City's irregular boundaries and along rail lines. Residential neighborhoods generally surround the City's core and line the north and south banks of the St. Joseph River. The transportation corridors leading to these areas assume the character and condition of their respective, adjacent land uses and, in the less urban and more suburban or rural areas, typically accommodate only vehicular traffic.

A future land use framework and a new land use category to the City of Elkhart, mixed use development were introduced in Chapter Four, Land Use. The purpose of this new category is to



Existing pedestrian amenities

encourage redevelopment on underutilized or vacant commercial or industrial land. New mixed land uses are primarily located along key transportation corridors and downtown. Mixed use promotes a combination of situations including several types of uses within one structure or a mix of uses on a parcel or parcels where commercial, office, residential, institutional, and parks and open space are master planned as a coordinated development. To allow for the introduction of the mixed use category, the future land use framework reduces the industrial land use classification footprint along key transportation corridors.

The identification of a corridor's character supports the future land use framework, the new mixed use category, the reduction of the City's industrial land use inventory, reinvestment efforts directed downtown, and minimal annexation until the existing City core is strengthened.

There were five main findings from the research conducted in the Mobility Chapter, Chapter Five. These findings are:

- **Multiple Jurisdictions:** Elkhart's roadways are regulated by the City, MACOG, and INDOT. Each organization has a schedule for when to carry out improvement projects, which can result in multiple construction periods and designs for one location. Coordination of new and upcoming improvement projects should be coordinated between agencies to reduce any negative impacts.
- **Transit:** The City has a fixed-route bus system that serves all corners of Elkhart's jurisdiction. The system also links to TRANSPO in South Bend and the South Bend Regional Airport, where the South Shore Line also has a station. These links should be maintained with as little headway, the time between busses, as possible.
- **Bike and Pedestrian:** Elkhart has developed an extensive network of bike and pedestrian facilities. These facilities should continue to be implemented, connected, and expanded.
- **Airports:** Air travel is available for both private, general aviation planes as well as for commercial air travel. The municipal airport's events, such as the Warbird Fly-in should continue to be supported.
- **Rail:** The City has an extensive rail network that bisects Elkhart from East to West. The City must maintain access between the two halves of Elkhart when long trains block at-grade crossings.

Overall Concept

To help illustrate the role and function of a corridor's character in a community, relevant information was presented to and solicited from the citizens of Elkhart during this planning process' public open houses in 2010 and 2011. In the open house presentations, the reciprocal relationship between land use and transportation planning was explained along with the connection to a community's perceived quality of life. The perceived quality life is particularly important when recruiting new investment to the City and in sustaining the existing investment and residential base.

The purpose of identifying the character or "personality" for the major and minor arterials in the City is to assign an image to these corridors that will lead to technical recommendations pertaining to future land use development or redevelopment and transportation policy. These character classifications will assist the City, property owners, and developers in understanding the desired development aesthetic within the City of Elkhart. The following "Corridor Character Framework" diagram is a product of public open house and Steering Committee member input. Citizens and committee members were asked how they view or experience, from a visual and functional standpoint, the City's major and minor arterials using the following five descriptions:



A neighborhood street in Elkhart

- **Commuter Route.** Road or street with primary access to destinations or other major transportation routes, characterized by mixed land uses.
- **Neighborhood Link.** Local street primarily serving local users, adjacent residential land uses.
- **Scenic Drive.** Attractive road or street with adjacent natural features, extensive landscaping, or aesthetic views.
- **Commercial Corridor.** Road or street characterized primarily by a concentration and distribution of retail/commercial uses.
- **Industrial Corridor.** Road or street characterized primarily by industrial uses and substantial truck traffic.

Corridor Character Framework

Purpose:

Use identified character or "personalities" for the City's major and minor arterials to guide future corridor design and development of public and private spaces.



Bridges linking Elkhart's automotive and pedestrian corridors

Framework Highlights:

- Five corridor character types occur throughout the City defined by adjacent land uses and transportation systems.
- Application of corridor character types reflects the interdependent and reciprocal relationship between land uses and adjacent transportation systems.
- Corridor character definition does not alter the roadway's functional classification.
- One street may traverse through several corridor character types with the change of context and adjacent land uses.
- Recommended design features enhance the transportation efficiency and qualitative experience along the corridors.
- Corridors in an urban or suburban context feature dedicated facilities and amenities, where appropriate, for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Corridor Character Application & Use

The framework emphasizes five corridor character types that occur throughout the City of Elkhart. Application of these corridor types reflects both the existing as well as the preferred direction of the corridor in terms of desired future land use, development, or redevelopment and transportation options. The chart on the following page outlines how the application of the corridor personality may guide the development direction of the corridors' public and private spaces. This chart is the basis for recommendations pertaining to land use and transportation decisions and outlines possible, likely, and/or optimal design considerations.

It is important to note that the assigned corridor character, and subsequent recommendations, does not attempt to alter the roadway's functional classification. Rather, this application of desired design and features serves to enhance the efficiency and qualitative experience along the corridor in a thoughtful, inclusive, and comprehensive way. This application considers organized land use patterns, sense of place, site access, safe, comfortable, and balanced transportation options, and economic development opportunities in the respective designations.

The chart defines each of the five designated corridor types and the application of the future land use, environment and design, mobility, and economic development attributes. Application of these attributes considers the corridor's context first – rural, suburban, or urban. Relevance of environment and design treatments, mobility options, and economic development potential

Chapter 8: Corridor Character: Land Use & Transportation



-
- Industrial Corridor**
(road or street characterized primarily by industrial uses & substantial truck traffic)
- Neighborhood Link**
(local street primarily serving local uses, adjacent residential land uses)
- Commercial Corridor**
(road or street characterized primarily by a concentration and distribution of retail/commercial uses)
- Scenic Drive**
(attractive road or street with adjacent natural features, extensive landscaping, or aesthetic views)
- Commuter Route**
(road or street with primary access to destinations or other major transportation routes, characterized by mixed land uses)
- Rail Line**
- Elkhart City Limits**



Elkhart's Civic Plaza and adjoining commercial area

is determined by the corridor's environment and current and future land uses. Environment and design treatments involve corridor medians, access control, curbs, streetscape amenities, landscape and lighting, whether the corridor is a gateway into the City, and if design guidelines are applicable now or in the future. Mobility considers if a corridor is likely to host transit in the future, how and where bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be incorporated, and if on-street parking is appropriate. Ultimately, improving Elkhart's corridors is a tool for area economic development efforts in that land uses will be organized, transportation facilities will be comprehensive and consistent, and aesthetics and urban design will complement the environment and adjacent uses. These improvements are intended to increase the appeal and establish the corridor's sense of place within the Elkhart community. New and continued economic investment is more likely to occur in areas that demonstrate enduring investment by both the public and private sectors.

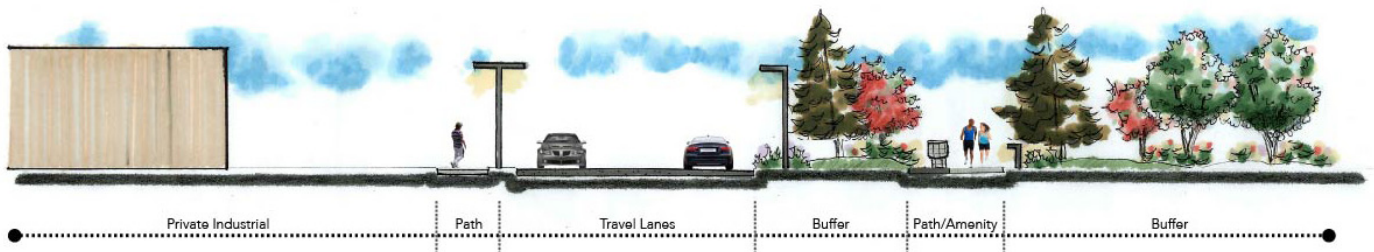
The illustrations below demonstrate how the public and private space along the identified corridor types could be organized to maximize the land use and transportation reciprocal relationships and associated facilities. Each example provides for dedicated travel lanes for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians and incorporates streetscape amenities, natural features, and landscape design. The intent of these examples is to represent a possible option and should not be considered the sole design solution for the respective corridor classification. Specific design standards are described in the Department of Public Works' "Standard Construction Specifications" (1998).

Industrial Corridors are characterized primarily by industrial land uses, such as light or heavy manufacturing, warehouse, production, logistics and distribution, or those uses that require a large amount of area for outdoor operations or storage. These corridors also accommodate a significant amount of truck traffic. Desired future land uses along these corridors include clean industry with enclosed/screened storage with appropriate buffering between uses and from the public right-of-way. A dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facility, or facilities, should be incorporated along the roadway with physical separation from the parallel vehicle travel lanes. Industrial Corridors offer prime economic development and redevelopment opportunities for the City and Elkhart County.

Commercial Corridors are characterized primarily by a concentration and distribution of retail and commercial uses. These corridors are thoroughfares that, in most cases, include neighborhood commercial nodes, regional shopping destinations, and/or lead to downtown Elkhart. Neighborhood nodes are typically located at intersections of collector roads that lead into

CORRIDOR TYPE & DEFINITION	CONTEXT CONTINUUM	LAND USE	ENVIRONMENT & DESIGN							MOBILITY			ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
			Gateway	Median	Access Control	Curbed	Streetscape Amenities	Landscape & Lighting	Design Guidelines	Future Transit Accommodation	Bicycle & Pedestrian Accommodation	On-Street Parking	Adjacent Commercial District or Node	New Commercial Investment Potential
Industrial Corridor 	Rural	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Suburban	Industrial Commercial	Yes, at City limits and key intersections	Desired	Yes, coupled with median	Possible	Possible, in retail/commercial areas	Yes	Yes, in overlay districts & at gateways, low impact development (LD) preferred	Yes	Dedicated bicycle & pedestrian facilities & amenities	No	Yes	Yes
	Urban	Industrial Commercial	Yes, into districts and at key intersections	No	Yes, reduced conflict points with pedestrians	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, in overlay districts & at gateways, low impact development (LD) preferred	Yes	Dedicated bicycle & pedestrian facilities & amenities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Commercial Corridor 	Rural	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Suburban	Commercial Industrial Mixed-Use	Yes, at City limits and key intersections	Desired	Yes, coupled with median	Possible	Yes, in retail/commercial & mixed-use areas	Yes	Yes, in overlay districts & at gateways, low impact development (LD) preferred	Yes	Dedicated bicycle & pedestrian facilities & amenities	No	Yes	Yes
	Urban	Commercial Mixed-Use	Yes, into districts and at key intersections	No	Yes, reduced conflict points with pedestrians	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, in overlay districts & at gateways, low impact development (LD) preferred	Yes	Dedicated bicycle & pedestrian facilities & amenities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Commuter Route 	Rural	Agricultural	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Signed bicycle route or shared road	No	No	No
	Suburban	Industrial Commercial	Yes, at City limits and key intersections	Possible	Yes, coupled with median	Possible	Possible, in retail/commercial areas	Yes	Yes, in overlay districts & at gateways, low impact development (LD) preferred	Yes	Dedicated bicycle & pedestrian facilities & amenities	No	Yes	Yes
	Urban	Commercial Mixed-Use	Yes, into districts and at key intersections	No	Yes, reduced conflict points with pedestrians	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, in overlay districts & at gateways, low impact development (LD) preferred	Yes	Dedicated bicycle & pedestrian facilities & amenities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Neighborhood Link 	Rural	Agricultural Residential	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Signed bicycle route or shared road	No	No	No
	Suburban	Residential	Yes, at City limits and key intersections	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes, in overlay districts & at gateways, low impact development (LD) preferred	No	Dedicated bicycle & pedestrian facilities & amenities	Possible, in residential areas with low traffic volumes	Possible, at neighborhood activity centers	Yes, at neighborhood activity centers
	Urban	Residential Commercial Mixed-Use	Yes, into districts and at key intersections	No	Yes, reduced conflict points with pedestrians	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, in overlay districts & at gateways, low impact development (LD) preferred	No	Dedicated bicycle & pedestrian facilities & amenities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scenic Drive 	Rural	Agricultural Natural	Yes, natural features	No	No	No	No	No	No	Possible	Signed bicycle route or shared road	No	No	No
	Suburban	Residential Natural	Yes, natural features	Desired	Not formal though adjacent development should be limited	No	No	No	Restricted new development, all new development should complement existing surrounding structures & landscape, low impact development (LD) preferred	Possible	Dedicated bicycle & pedestrian facilities & amenities	No	No	No
	Urban	Residential Natural	Yes, natural features	No	Yes, reduced conflict points with pedestrians	Yes	Yes, minimal, in character with natural features	Yes, minimal, in character with natural features	Restricted new development, all new development should complement existing surrounding structures & landscape, low impact development (LD) preferred	Yes	Dedicated bicycle & pedestrian facilities & amenities	Possible	Possible, at neighborhood activity centers	Yes, at neighborhood activity centers

residential neighborhoods. Retail at these nodes includes smaller scale establishments, such as convenience stores or personal services that serve the immediate residential population. Regional shopping destinations attract a customer base from outside the immediate area, including customers from neighboring jurisdictions and passersby. Regional shopping includes big box retailers, chain restaurants, grocery stores, and complementary-scaled development. Corridors that feature neighborhood or regional-scale retail and commercial establishments should be accessible by multiple modes of transportation, including transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. Access control with medians and consolidated driveways is desired, as are streetscape amenities, a consistent landscape, and appropriately scaled lighting. A commercial corridor also identified as a community gateway should entail a higher level of design criteria. Downtown is the historic retail, employment, and cultural center of the Elkhart community. Streets and roads that lead into downtown are important to the City's history and current sense of place. Downtown streets should feature dedicated pedestrian space, such as sidewalks, activity space for outdoor dining and special events, streetscape amenities, such as plantings, benches, bicycle parking, and pedestrian-scaled lighting, and on-street parking, where appropriate. Like Industrial Corridors, Commercial Corridors offer prime economic development and redevelopment opportunities for the City and Elkhart County.



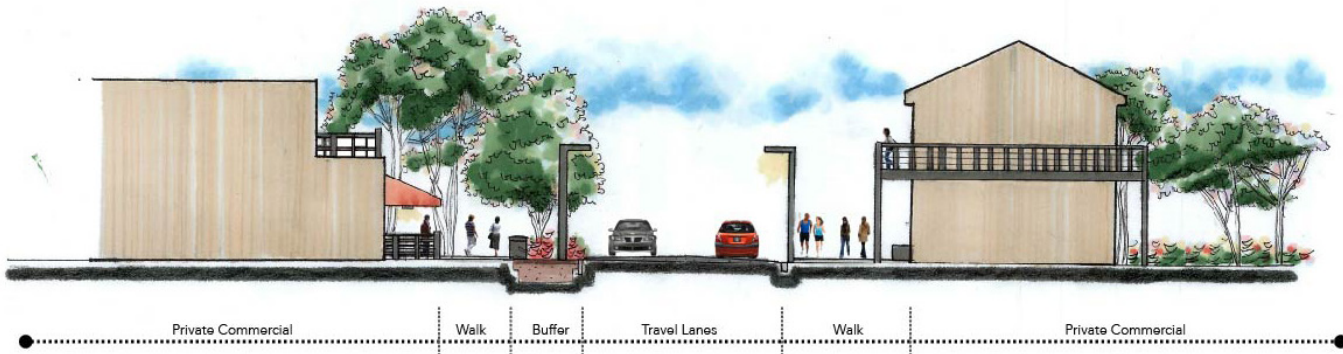
Industrial Corridor example illustrating dedicated bicycle/pedestrian facilities and green buffers protecting bicyclists and pedestrians from adjacent industrial uses and moving vehicles.

Commuter Routes are characterized by a mix of land uses and have direct, primary access to destinations and other major transportation routes. These are the streets and roads that a majority of residents take to work. As such, these corridors should offer commuting opportunities via multiple modes of transportation, including transit, bicycle, walking, and private automobile. Access control with medians and consolidated driveways is desired to reduce potential conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists.

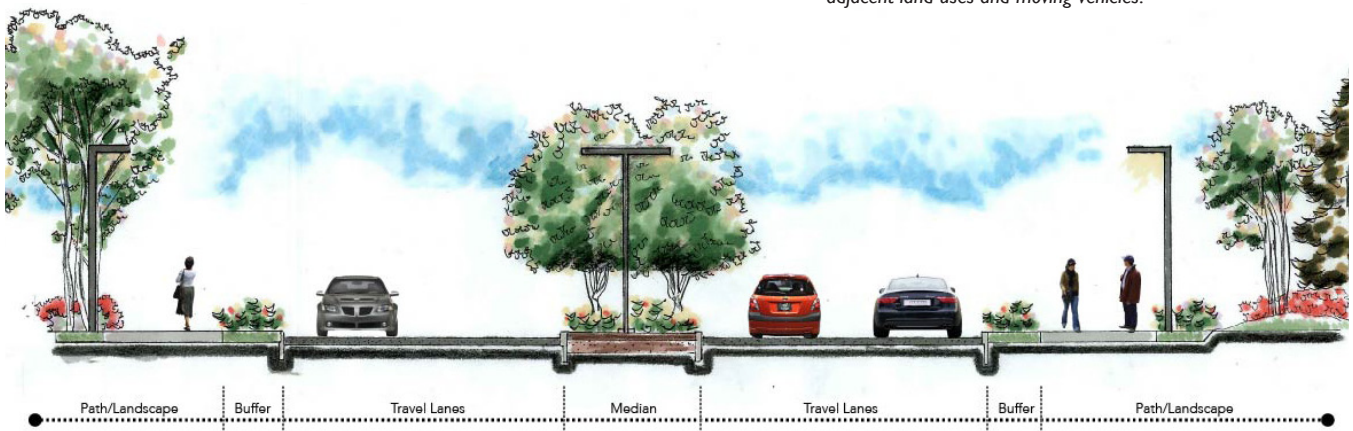
Neighborhood Links are local streets primarily serving local residents and adjacent neighborhoods. These streets are typically low volume and low speed and should accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic along with private automobile traffic. These streets may lead to or feature neighborhood commercial nodes. In these cases, access control, streetscape amenities, appropriately

scaled and placed landscape and lighting, and on-street parking opportunities should be considered.

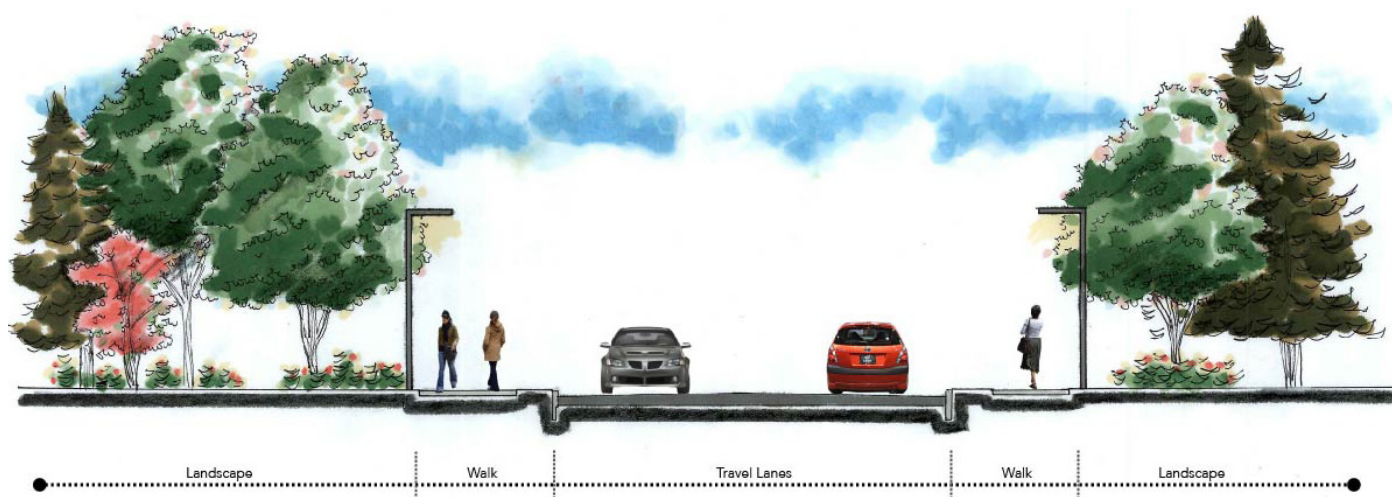
Scenic Drives are attractive streets or roads with adjacent natural features, extensive landscaping, or aesthetic views. Scenic Drives may lead to or be adjacent to recreational areas, parks, or natural areas. As such, the Scenic Drive transportation system should include dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facilities offering opportunity to travel to/from recreational destinations by bike or foot. In keeping with the park-like or natural setting, new development along these corridors should be limited. Any new development should complement existing, surrounding structures and landscape; low impact development (LID) is preferred.



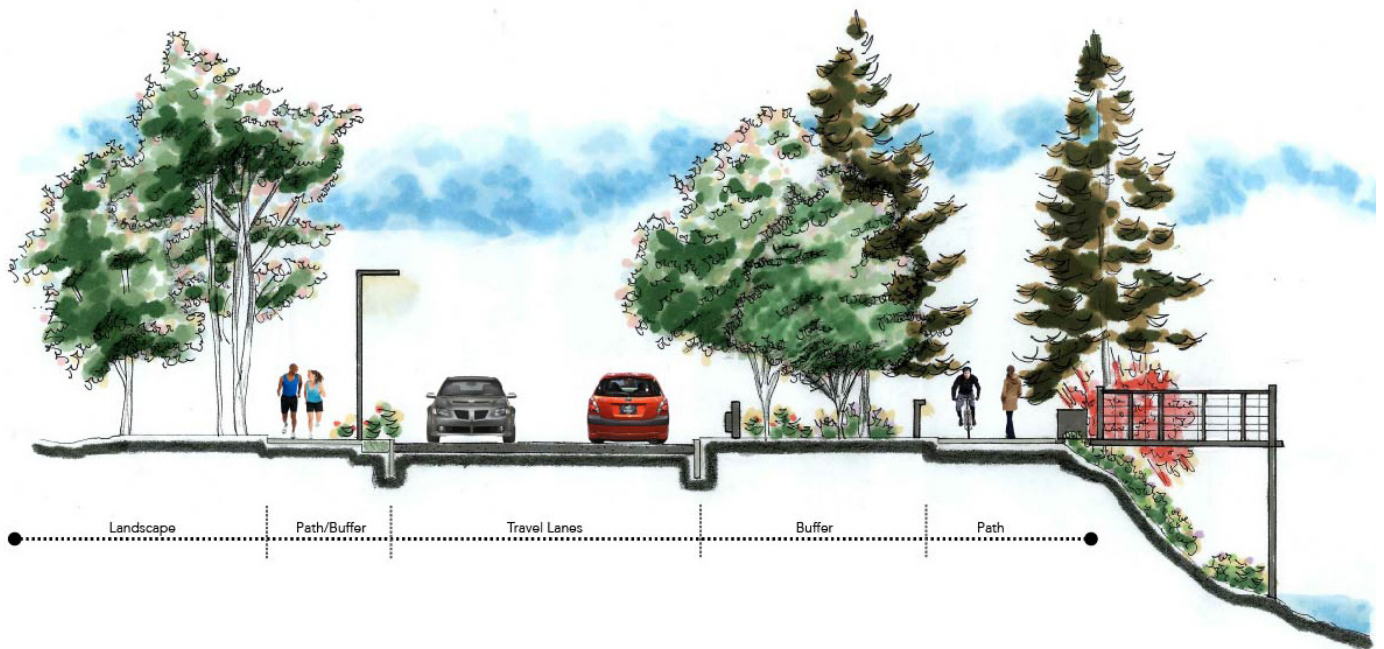
Commercial Corridor example illustrating dedicated pedestrian facilities, activity space, and streetscape amenities.



Commuter Route example illustrating dedicated bicycle/pedestrian facilities and green buffers protecting bicyclists and pedestrians from adjacent land uses and moving vehicles.



Neighborhood Link example illustrating a separated pedestrian facility along a low volume and low speed street.



Scenic Drive example illustrating the relationships among the pedestrian/bicycle space, vehicle travel lanes, green buffer, and a natural feature, such as the St. Joseph River.



City of Elkhart Comprehensive Plan Update

Adopted February 2, 2015



Chapter 9

Implementation

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Introduction

Compared to implementation, preparing the comprehensive plan is relatively uncomplicated. The real challenge often comes in translating a plan's vision, goals, and recommendations into the day-to-day operations and actions of City government. The main purpose of the City of Elkhart's Comprehensive Plan Update is to implement its recommendations,

When the City determines how to implement the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations, it is important to continuously consider the integrity of the planning process, the community's values, and why those ideas are so important. A plan is a community's future. It is the collective will and dreams of its citizens and a community's duty is to find ways to give it life that keep it true to the vision and maintain its integrity.

A comprehensive plan is comprehensive for a reason – because everything in a living community is interconnected – and it must be implemented in a way that treats its components as part of a whole. It takes great care to make every decision within the context of that basic reality. With these thoughts in mind, this chapter is meant to help a community adopt, implement and update a comprehensive plan and make it available to the public.

Adoption

A local government must prepare a resolution to adopt its comprehensive plan to ensure that it promotes the public health, safety, morals and convenience, order or the general welfare and for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of development. Typically each Common Council has a process for adopting resolutions and generally involves a public hearing allowing public comment. If residents are actively involved throughout the planning process, the public hearing should go smoothly. Using a resolution, the local government formally adopts the plan – by a simple majority vote. The procedures for adopting a plan are described in Indiana Code, 36-7-4-501. Even with a well-designed planning process, a community may lack consensus on certain issues or, in the worst case, may not have enough support to adopt a plan. In that case, a local government may want to:

- Setup a committee to work through the remaining issues. The committee should have balanced representation from all sides of the issues in dispute and a definite timeline for reporting back its recommendations.
- Recommend further study of the issues with a clear timeline. Through additional study, participants may discover new information that will help them develop a consensus.

- If the community is extremely divided on an issue, it may be necessary to bring in a professional facilitator or a mediator to help it find a solution. Sometimes a community must make tough choices and move on.

Program Administration & Development

The City's comprehensive plan contains many different recommendations in each Chapter that will be carried out through existing departments and programs. During the creation of this plan, several departments have come together to create this plan. The future implementation of the plan requires the ongoing communication and interaction between these departments. Strong partnerships are needed to foster good communication and provide additional alliances in the implementation of some of these recommendations. The implementers/champions should present the recommendations of this plan formally to the City's various boards and commissions. Some of the key departments that need to continue to be involved include: Community Development & Redevelopment, Economic Development Department, Neighborhood Associations, Planning & Zoning Department, Public Works & Utilities Department, Street Department, Parks and Recreation, Public Safety and Emergency Management, and the Office of the Mayor. To achieve the vision and goals set forth in this plan, some of the existing programs and policies the City current uses may need to be modified so the policies and recommendations contained herein can be implemented. Some of the recommendations proposed may also require new initiatives for the City. These should be implemented when the necessary resources are available.

As mentioned in Chapter One: Introduction section under "How to Use this Plan," the plan should be adopted as a matter of land use and redevelopment policy for the City. After the plan is adopted the City should create an implementation task force and include a periodic review of the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that it is consistent with the changing environment within the City.

Each department will carry out the recommendations spelled out in Chapter Three and summarized priorities at the end of this chapter. These recommendations will be carried out through day to day policy decisions which will be made by Planning and Engineering staff, Plan Commission and City Council. The future land use map illustrates the targeted redevelopment of areas within the City. To that end, the future land use map, itself, is a visual representation of the recommendations and the future direction of growth. The map is a conceptual snapshot of how the City should look in 20 years in terms of land use. Because of the uncertainty associated with the timing, market conditions, and

location of future development, the administration of this plan will require that Elkhart remain flexible in the possibilities associated with the future development, while still remaining true to the overall intention of this plan.

Interpretation

The Elkhart Comprehensive Plan should serve as Elkhart’s guide for land use and development policies for development and redevelopment in the study area. The long range goals, objectives, and recommendations, along with the supporting maps, are intended to guide development decisions towards the community’s collective vision of the future. Members of the city staff, Plan Commission and City Council should interpret the goals and objectives as a long-term and deliberately broad vision. The commission and council should keep in mind that this plan reflects the community’s values. City officials cannot expect to control all circumstances. However, the spirit of this plan should be adhered to in order to ensure that the community’s values are maintained. The strategic action steps, on the other hand, are intended to direct the day-to-day decisions concerning more specific and task oriented activities. Members of the City Council should interpret the strategic actions steps by saying, “given our long-term goals and changing community conditions, these are the projects and programs that we want to complete in the short-term and long-term, and this is how we plan to accomplish them.” Interpreting the plan in this way will enable the members of both the commission and city to justify their approval, or denial, of any proposed development or redevelopment in Elkhart.

When a new annexation, rezone, planned unit development (PUD), subdivision, or site plan review request is filed with the Planning & Development Department, the City planning staff as well as other city departments should review and evaluate the application against the Elkhart Comprehensive Plan and the City’s ordinances and provide a staff report with a formal recommendation to the Plan Commission regarding its findings. The staff report should include an evaluation of the development and the degree to which the proposed project conforms to the plan’s goals, objectives, recommendations, and future land use, environment & design, economic development, and corridor and character maps.

The Elkhart Comprehensive Plan does not contain the actual decisions that should be made; however, it does serve as a reminder and provide guidance of the community’s collective vision for the future growth and development of this area and should be interpreted as such.

Rezoning

Zoning protects the rights of individual property owners while promoting the general welfare of the community. The purpose of zoning is to locate specific land uses where they are most appropriate. In determining the most appropriate zoning designation, the City must consider such things as public utilities, road access, and the existing or established development pattern of the area in which development is proposed.

In general, the Plan Commission and City Council should consider that a rezone is only justifiable under the following circumstances:

- When the requested rezoning is consistent with long range land use plans adopted by the appropriate governing body
- When there was an error or oversight in the original zoning of the property
- When changes have occurred to conditions in the vicinity of the property which prevent the reasonable use of the property as currently zoned
- When the requested rezoning benefits the community at large

Rezoning should not be granted because of a single hardship expressed by a property owner or group of property owners. The community's collective vision for the future is not negotiable.

Should the Plan Commission recommend approval to the City Council for numerous rezoning that are substantially inconsistent with the future land use map associated with the Elkhart Comprehensive Plan, the plan should be updated. This is an indication that the area's conditions, issues and/or priorities have changed.

Implementation Task Force

The Plan Commission and/or City Council should consider appointing an implementation task force to guide the implementation of the plan. It is recommended that this task force be a committee of the Plan Commission and/or the City Council and be appropriately named the "Planning and Zoning Committee". This task force should spearhead City planning initiatives, interface with the Community Development Department, Public Works and Streets Departments, and provide input on all planning related decisions for the City in accordance with the Elkhart Comprehensive Plan. Such a task force should include project steering committee members, representatives of the City Council, and Redevelopment Commission, Plan Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, planning staff, and citizens. For the implementation of the Plan to be successful, organizations

and agencies assigned to each implementation item must be aware of their role, responsibility, and/or abilities.

Work Plan

The Elkhart Comprehensive Plan covers a broad variety of issues and subject matters. In order to implement the plan, the implementation taskforce should, on an annual basis, prioritize the recommendation and action steps outlined in the plan for that fiscal year and develop a strategy for moving these items forward. This information should be shared and approved by the City Council, since they control the budget for the City. It will be important that this is completed prior to City budgeting time in order to ensure adequate funding is in place if funds are anticipated from the City budget.

Monitoring & Update

Planning does not have a defined beginning and end. It is an on-going process that responds to new information and circumstances and incorporates changing conditions into decisions. Circumstances that may change include physical conditions of buildings and/or infrastructure, economic climate, the natural environment, and social and community goals.

Once the plan is adopted it will need to be revised from time to time to ensure that it stays consistent and relevant to current conditions. It is best that the City continue in the same partnership manner it has to undertake the creation of this plan. An implementation committee should be used to monitor and update this plan. A plan update should occur at intervals of approximately every five years. The purpose of the plan update is to re-evaluate the goals, policies, and strategies contained within this Plan (noting those to change and those to remove), and to develop new policies if necessary to make sure that this Plan is being effective. The plan update process is further described below.

A disciplined schedule for plan review is helpful in plan implementation. Noting areas of the plan's success helps to build support for future planning activities. The identification of less successful components of the plan may suggest a need for refinement and/or amendment. The City Council, in a joint work session with the Plan Commission, should therefore conduct a thorough annual review of the plan, asking whether the conditions on which the plan was predicated still hold true. An annual "report card" should be prepared by the City staff which reviews and documents the activities of the Redevelopment Commission, Plan Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and City Council that are relevant to Elkhart.

Also, prior to preparing the annual City operating budget, an assessment should be completed that documents the impacts of

the plan implementation activities. This assessment should consist of the following:

- Major differences between projected economic and demographic growth rates and actual growth
- Necessary adjustments to the implementation tools and techniques - these may be brought on by changes in state legislature, etc.
- Deviations by the Redevelopment Commission or Plan Commission from the plan, and why those deviations were made
- Requests for amendments to the plan, in order to determine if there is a pattern of requested changes emerging
- Changes in the local/regional political structure that may affect the implementation of the plan
- Identifying the programs and projects completed that were identified in the plan.
- For each implementing program/project, develop criteria that can be used to measure the effectiveness of the program, apply those criteria, and write a report summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of the program
- Identify new programs, if any, that could be implemented

A separate process exists for amendments to the Plan. The City should perform amendments on a yearly or periodic basis as needed. This plan amendment should be at the recommendation of the implementation committee. Plan amendments may include revisions to one or more sections of this plan as a result of changes within the market, infrastructure, a specific issue/policy change or change in state law. Plan amendments may include changes to the land use plan map or may be as small as correcting text. The process for making these amendments is described below.

Plan Update Process

This plan should be updated at least every five (5) years, unless otherwise directed by the Plan Commission or Common Council. This is important, especially since the land use plan focuses on redevelopment of key core areas and large parcels in the City. The City's prime consideration in making a determination of when an update should be initiated, should include what changes have occurred since the Plan was last updated. These changes may be in such areas as the economy, the environment, changes in administration, traffic congestion, jurisdictional priorities, projected growth or something else significant. The plan update should include a thorough review and evaluation of the vision

and development policies contained within Chapter 3 of the plan. Within that review, each development policy should be reviewed for achievement, in process or lack of relevancy. Policies that have been achieved or are not relevant should be changed or removed from the plan. New policies should be developed, if necessary, to accommodate any changes in conditions and ensure the plan is still effective. A plan update should also include a thorough review of the validity of all the information contained within the plan and should include extensive opportunities for involvement by the public, boards and commissions, elected and appointed officials, staff and other affected interests.

Plan Amendment Process

Plan amendments should be considered when the overall vision and development policies still remain. This process should be undertaken when changes are needed to specific redevelopment parcels, as identified in this plan, or a stretch of road that might be changed. An amendment should be considered only when it will not change the overall vision or development principals established. The amendment would be in accordance to IC 36-7-500 series and occur as follows:

- The City's Plan Commission would give notice for a public hearing for an amendment to the jurisdiction's Comprehensive Plan in accordance with IC 5-3-1
- Hold a public meeting(s) and approve the amendment by certifying the Comprehensive Plan amendment to the appropriate jurisdiction's legislative body
- A resolution shall be adopted by the appropriate jurisdictional legislative bodies

Fiscal Considerations

The implementation of the comprehensive plan will require the City's financial commitment and support to carry out the policies and achieve the vision and goals set forth herein. These financial commitments should include existing programs and policies the city currently has in place. Although it is the City's intent to administer this plan with the current financial resources available, monies may need to be set aside in future budgets to carry out some of the recommended actions. The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan does not authorize expenditures for its implementation. The City Council, in accordance with state statutes and the City policies, may authorize the financial resources to implement the plan.

Funding may be available from outside sources. When opportunities become available and make sense financially, the City should seek these funds through federal, state or local grants, loans and other financial resources. This may also include the city

investing in sending a staff member to be certified by the state in some granting programs, Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), for example.

Tools

In today's current economy, development has slowed tremendously from the pattern from the late 90's and early 2000's. Cities will not see the housing boom again and many today have to cope with foreclosures and an overabundance of housing stock. As noted in Chapter 2 Process & Methodology, the City of Elkhart's Housing Condition is fairly stable and there is not a large gap between the supply and demand of housing. However, the City has the largest percentage of housing (almost 44%) in the value range of \$50,000 to \$100,000.

In terms of industrial and commercial development, the trends in the City have shown that these land uses have decreased. In terms of the tax base, this has been a hard hit for the City's budget. However issues of over commercialization of Elkhart's corridor and environmental issues on industrial property have left large areas of redevelopment potential within the City. With this slowdown in the economy, while difficult for the City, an opportunity exists to redefine areas and put the City in a position for strong redevelopment and the creation of jobs when the economy recovers.

While the City is struggling, it should be cautious in terms of just accepting any development. Any development occurring should be considered appropriate and consistent with the direction that Elkhart desires and is stated in the Comprehensive Plan. The City should evaluate development on a case by case basis. Since the economy is in recovery mode, infill or targeted economic development will need incentives to help make it spur development. There are a variety of tools and mechanisms that the city can use to help attract this growth.

The purpose of this section is to provide a list of tools that can be used to implement the plan. In some cases the City is already using some tools, in other cases there are other options and incentives that the City can employ to implement the vision of this plan and spur economic redevelopment. Below is a discussion of the tools out there that the City could use:

Loans and Grants

Federal

The Federal Government has many different loan and grant programs through many of its federal agencies that may assist in the implementation of this plan.

Economic Development Administration (EDA) – The EDA is a department under the Department of Commerce. Their mission is to promote the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. The EDA has many different granting programs to implement both planning and infrastructure projects. This information can be found on the EDA’s website at WWW.EDA.GOV. As discussed in Chapter 7, Elkhart has a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. That document will be critical in the seeking of grants. The following grant programs are currently available under the EDA program:

FY 2012 EDAP FFO: Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs opportunity: *Synopsis taken from Grant Announcement:* EDA supports development in economically distressed areas of the United States by fostering job creation and attracting private investment. Specifically, under this FFO, EDA will consider construction, non-construction, and revolving loan fund investments under the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs. Grants made under these programs will leverage regional assets to support the implementation of regional economic development strategies designed to create jobs, leverage private capital, encourage economic development, and strengthen America’s ability to compete in the global marketplace. Under this FFO, EDA solicits applications from rural and urban communities to develop initiatives that advance new ideas and creative approaches to address rapidly evolving economic conditions.

EDA’s Planning and Local Technical Assistance Programs: *Synopsis taken from Grant Announcement:* Under the Planning program EDA assists eligible recipients in creating regional economic development plans designed to stimulate and guide the economic development efforts of a community or region. As part of this program, EDA supports Partnership Planning investments to facilitate the development, implementation, revision, or replacement of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS), which articulate and prioritize the strategic economic goals of recipients’ respective regions. In general, EDA provides Partnership Planning grants to the designated planning organization (e.g., District Organization) serving EDA-designated Economic Development Districts to enable these organizations to develop and implement relevant CEDS. In addition, EDA provides Partnership Planning grants to Indian Tribes to help develop and implement CEDS and associated economic development activities. The Planning program also helps support planning organizations, including District Organizations, Indian Tribes, and other eligible

Recipients, with Short Term and State Planning investments designed to guide the eventual creation and retention of higher-skill, higher-wage jobs, particularly for the unemployed and underemployed in the Nation's most economically distressed regions. The Local Technical Assistance program strengthens the capacity of local or State organizations, institutions of higher education, and other eligible recipients to undertake and promote effective economic development programs through projects such as feasibility analyses and impact studies.

Housing & Urban Development (HUD): HUD's mission, as stated on their website (WWW.HUD.GOV) it to create strong, sustainable inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. HUD has been instrumental in dealing with Elkhart's housing issues by providing funding to update plans, purchase properties, rebuild and renovate homes. The majority of Elkhart's housing funding comes from the Community Development Block Grant Fund (CDBG). HUD has been in partnership with DOT and EPA to provide funding for the Sustainable Communities Initiative, Choice Neighborhood Planning Grants and Livable Communities Grant. The department also has grants for the Fair Housing Initiatives Program, and other programs. The best way to monitor this is to work with Elkhart's Community Development Manager, Crystal Welsh, and monitor HUD's website.

Department of Transportation (DOT): The DOT's primary mission is to support the United States Highway system, airport system, transit system among other areas. However they also provide funding to states who thereby provide funding to the Indiana MPO's. Besides general funding, the DOT also accepts applications for other grants such as the HUD/EPA/DOT joint programs of sustainable communities, choice neighborhood programs, and livable communities grants. The DOT also has calls for TIGER Grants, FHWA Highway Grants, Transportation Safety grants, FTA Grants and FAA spaceport grants. More information of these grants can be found on DOT's website at WWW.DOT.GOV. Like the other federal grant process, it is imperative that the City work with MACOG as they will keep abreast of these initiatives.

State

Shovel Ready Program: The Indiana Economic Development Corporation helps communities certify economic development sites as "ready for development." The program is aimed at helping companies locate and develop a site quickly. Indiana's Shovel Ready Program has a series of criteria that qualify a site to be shovel ready. Grant funding for this program can be found at <http://iedc.in.gov/programs-initiatives/indiana-shovel-ready-program>.

Industrial Development Grant Fund: This Indiana Economic Development Corporation program provides financial support for infrastructure improvements in conjunction with projects creating jobs and generating capital investment in Indiana. This program would apply to a company located in Indiana that was to expand or locate a new facility. The funds from this program would need to be matched by Elkhart and the company. Grant funding for this program can be found at: <http://iedc.in.gov/programs-initiatives/industrial-development-grant-fund>.

Indiana Brownfields Program: This Indiana Finance Authority program provides educational, financial, technical and legal assistance to identify and mitigate environmental barriers that prevent the utilization of potential development sites. Grants and loans are available. The program website is www.in.gov/ifa/brownfields/.

Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) Program: This Indiana Economic Development Corporation program is a refundable tax credit program that rewards companies creating jobs and contributing to the growth of Indiana's economy. EDGE credits are calculated as a percentage of payroll tax withholding for net new Indiana jobs. EDGE credits may be awarded for a period of up to 10 years. The website for this program is: <http://iedc.in.gov/tax-credits-exemptions/economic-development-for-a-growing-economy-tax-credit>.

Venture Capital Investment Credit: This Indiana Economic Development Corporation program was established to improve access to capital to fast growing Indiana companies by providing individual and corporate investors an incentive to invest in new firms. To participate in the program, businesses must enroll. Investors who provide qualified debt or equity capital to enrolled firms receive a credit against their Indiana income tax liability. The website for this program is: <http://iedc.in.gov/tax-credits-exemptions/economic-development-for-a-growing-economy-tax-credit>.

Hoosier Alternative Fuel Vehicle Manufacturer Tax Credit: The purpose of this program is to provide job creation and higher wages for Indiana businesses who help reduce the energy dependency and help to reduce air pollution due to the manufacturing or assembly of alternative fuel vehicles in Indiana. This program provides a tax credit to those businesses who manufacture alternative fuel vehicles. The business must compensate its employees at least 150 percent of the state's hourly minimum wage and agree to maintain operations for at least 10 years. More about the program can be found at the website: <http://iedc.in.gov/tax-credits-exemptions/hoosier-alternative-fuel-vehicle-manufacturer-tax-credit>.

Hoosier Business Investment Tax Credit: HBI Tax Credit provides incentive to businesses to support jobs creation, capital investment and to improve the standard of living for Indiana residents. The non-refundable corporate income tax credits are calculated as a percentage of the eligible capital investment to support the project. The credit may be certified annually, based on the phase-in of eligible capital investment, over a period of two full calendar years from the commencement of the project. More about the program can be found at the website: <http://iedc.in.gov/tax-credits-exemptions/hoosier-business-investment-tax-credit>.

Industrial Recovery Tax Credit: The Industrial Recovery tax credit provides an incentive for companies to invest in facilities requiring significant rehabilitation or remodeling expense. After a building has been designated as an industrial recovery site, companies may be eligible for a tax credit calculated as a percentage of qualified rehabilitation expense. This particular program would be ideal for many of Elkhart's industrial buildings. More information can be found on the website: <http://iedc.in.gov/tax-credits-exemptions/industrial-recovery-tax-credit>.

Loan Guaranty Program (IEDC): This Indiana Economic Development Corporation program provides loan guarantees to lenders for the benefit of a high-growth/high-skilled company, manufacturer, rural development project, value-added agricultural enterprise or another type of business that creates or retains a significant number of Hoosier jobs. For rural development and value-added agricultural projects, the guaranty is \$300,000. The guaranty for high-growth/high-skilled companies and manufacturing projects may be up to a maximum of 75%-90% of the principal balance of the loan, depending on the collateral. The website for this program is: www.in.gov/iedc/LoanGuarantyProgram.htm.

Certified Technology Parks: This Indiana Economic Development Corporation program supports the attraction and growth of high-technology business in Indiana and promotes technology transfer opportunities. Designation as a Certified Tech Park allows for the local recapture of certain state and local tax revenue which can be invested in the development of the park. The website for this program is: <http://iedc.in.gov/programs-initiatives/indiana-certified-technology-parks>.

Indiana 21st Century Research and Technology Fund: The Indiana 21st Century Research and Technology Fund was created to stimulate the diversification of the state economy by developing and commercializing advanced technologies in Indiana. Grant funds are available. This program operates under the leadership of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. [<http://www.elevateventures.org/>]

Façade Improvement Program

With a façade improvement program, the City would provide both technical and financial assistance to Elkhart property owners or business tenants who are seeking to renovate or restore commercial, historic residential or industrial building facades and associated elements, including signage and lighting. The program's purpose would be to support the vitality of the City of Elkhart's designated commercial, historic or targeted redevelopment sites and to encourage re-investment and redevelopment throughout the area by improving the appearance of existing buildings and other elements associated with the appearance of the property (ie signs and lights). The program would need to limit the improvements to such items as window and door repair, repair and restoration of historic architectural details, painting, removal of siding or other elements that would bring the building back to its original design, storefront rehabilitation, repair/replace awnings; façade lighting; signs; masonry repairs/tuck pointing; and major landscape improvements consistent with city improved streets.

Tax Phase-In

The tax phase-in is the gradual collection of property taxes on new improvements to real estate and/or personal property during a designated number of years. Personal property that is eligible for the incentive includes equipment for manufacturing, research and development, logistic distribution, and information technology. The phase-in may extend from one to ten years.

Application for a phase-in begins with city staff meeting with the potential recipient to determine the firm's needs. The applicant then formally submits paperwork for review by staff. The application is scored by staff members, who determine the number of years for which the phase-in should be offered. The Common Council retains final authority to either approve or deny the phase-in application.

This is currently an incentive program the City implements.

Tax Abatement

Tax abatement is a tool used by local governments to spur on private development and lure companies to locate in their jurisdiction. Tax abatement is used to help spur job creation by exempting a portion or all of assessed value from hitting the tax rolls of a new development. Tax abatements can be granted for both new construction and for redevelopment projects (rehabilitation of an existing building or redevelopment of a site into a new use). Additionally, the City has the opportunity to provide property tax abatements on equipment for manufacturing and laboratory uses and/or computer equipment for experimental research and

development laboratories that have not been previously taxed in Indiana. Tax abatement can be granted for up to ten years and is typically developed on a graduated scale to come back onto the tax rolls. In order to offer tax abatement, the City will have to implement four tasks including:

1. Eligibility Requirements – property must be characterized as either undesirable for normal development or designated as an economic revitalization area and an application tailored to Elkhart’s tax abatement process should be filled out prior to any development or personal property being purchased.
2. Evaluation, Recommendation and Public Process – evaluate application, determine if any conditions should be met prior to the granting of tax abatement (wage level, number of jobs, clean industry, etc.), prepare resolution for approval, and hold preliminary and confirmatory public hearing.
3. Post Approval Requirements – after construction has been completed and new assessment has been determined, property owner is required to file additional paperwork with the county auditor.
4. Annually Monitor Program – property owner is required to file additional paperwork with the county auditor 60 days after the end of each year. The City Council should review information to ensure that the property owner is compliant with the conditions of the abatement.

The City currently uses the Tax Phase-In in a similar manner as tax abatement.

Aurora Capital Loan Program

The Aurora Capital program finances the rehabilitation and construction of commercial real estate in the heart of the city. The maximum loan amount for work is \$50,000 with a fixed interest rate of 2.5 percent.

The objective of the loan pool is to stimulate physical improvements to small businesses in downtown Elkhart. Funds shall be used only for downtown development projects. Program guidelines mandate that each project: be located within a specific boundary area, be compatible with the Redevelopment Plan, and have a substantial positive impact on the downtown area. Funds can be used for development of market rate housing – but not low-income housing – and projects must incorporate at least partial office or commercial uses.

This is currently an incentive program the City implements.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

TIF is a funding technique that takes advantage of development or redevelopment to pay public infrastructure costs or other improvements within a designated area. The tax increment is the difference in the tax capacity and tax revenues generated after development has occurred compared with the tax capacity and tax revenues previously generated. The City then uses this “captured increment” to pay or repay incurred public costs that are eligible expenditures, including acquiring property, removing structures, utility improvements, streetscape improvements, additional studies, etc. The City currently uses TIF and has seven active TIF districts as noted in Chapter Seven, Economic Development.

It has been the general policy of the City to use TIF only for commercial, office and industrial redevelopment to help pay for needed improvements through tax increment financing. The City typically pays for the infrastructure improvements prior to the development build out. This puts the city at a bit of risk, and especially within this current economic climate, of paying for infrastructure projects without the guarantee that the development will materialized.

One of the options the City could consider is the “pay as you go” approach. In this particular scenario, the City puts the onus on the development rather than taking the risk themselves. In this situation, the City would reimburse the developer for those agreed upon and eligible project costs after the development has been constructed. Using this type of approach ensures that increments will be generated from the new construction and the City does not issue bonds for financing a project. TIF is an implementation device for economic development and redevelopment and is currently used by the City.

Regulatory Controls & Policy

Zoning & Subdivision Control Ordinance Updates

The Elkhart Comprehensive Plan is a statement of policy and it is not a regulatory document. The most common regulatory means for implementing the plan include zoning and subdivision ordinances. Zoning is the most direct method for regulating land use. In addition to restricting uses, zoning ordinances also dictate the bulk of development (typically through height requirements, floor-area ratios, etc.) and its site placement (typically through the use of building lot setbacks). The subdivision ordinance relies on the right of municipalities to regulate the subdivision of land, and places the burden of implementing public infrastructure directly on the developer.

Currently the zoning for the City is managed through Elkhart's Planning Department as well as the Plan Commission. Therefore, the City should consider revising its ordinances to be consistent with the recommendations of this plan.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

The CIP is a planning document that covers a timeframe of three to five years, and is updated annually and implements the comprehensive plan by providing the necessary funding for short-range infrastructure and capital improvement projects. The document provides guidance and planning for capital improvements throughout the city and allocates financial resources to various community needs and requests. The document states the City Council's prioritization of the financial resources available for capital project spending by identifying which projects should be included, when they should be constructed and how they will be financed.

This plan represents the City's tentative commitment to comply with the plan unless circumstances or priorities change in the future. The commitment is more certain in the first year of the CIP and becomes increasingly more tenuous in subsequent years. Nevertheless, the CIP should be used as the City's present plan and priority over the next three to five years. Even though the CIP is a planning document, it should not be an automatic authorization of the construction of projects, because of the procurement process and the allocation of resources.

This would be a new program for the City to implement.

Infrastructure Replacement Plan and Policy (IRPP)

Planning and providing financing for capital replacement costs is a difficult challenge for the City during this economic climate. Determining replacement costs involves evaluating assets and their expected useful lives, projecting replacement costs, examples of financing options, determining bonding levels, estimating users fees and tax levies and evaluating impacts on property owners. This issue is addressed through the annual budgeting process as well as using the CIP (discussed above). While both of these approaches are important components of any capital planning process, neither provides enough information about long-term replacement needs.

Therefore, planning for Elkhart's long term replacement needs is even more essential to support the redevelopment targeted in this plan. Typically, in the past, as an incentive the City's policy has been to pay for replacement costs of infrastructure through TIF, tax levies or through the general budget. The City may need

to consider special assessments to an area to cover some of the replacement costs if TIF or general funds are not available.

To respond to these issues, the City Council may want to create and adopt an infrastructure replacement plan and policy for the city. This plan would describe the city's policy and conditions necessary in paying for replacement infrastructure. The plan would also present information derived through analysis of replacement needs over the next fifty years. Examining future needs well in advance, and consistent with the redevelopment objectives of this plan, will allow the City to develop strategies for meeting future demands. The infrastructure replacement policy requires a long-term analysis of replacement needs in an effort to:

- Moderate changes in tax levies
- Manage debt levels
- Predict and plan for future debt issuance
- Maintain quality services
- Limit the use of special assessment

This would be a new program for the City to implement.

Housing Program

The recommendations support initiatives to conserve and rehabilitate sound housing and to broaden housing opportunities for the residents of Elkhart. The recommendations in this plan support the initiatives of the Housing Needs Assessment Update (April 2010). The future land use map illustrates appropriate areas for housing. For detailed implementation measures regarding Elkhart's housing stock, the implementation task force of the comprehensive plan should refer to the 2012 Housing Needs Assessment Update.

Private Land Use Decision

The Plan guides landowners in the City of Elkhart. If landowners want to use their land in a new way, they need to identify the zoning district in which the property is located, and determine whether the zoning regulations allow the development of the proposed land use. If not, the owner needs to examine the Comprehensive Plan concerning the property, since a change in zoning must be consistent with the intent of the Plan.

Deteriorating Properties

As Elkhart continues to recover from the effects of the recession on its local economy and the increased vacancy in buildings and land due to the closing of businesses, the City will need to assess and address deteriorating properties. These properties could be

considered to be “eyesores” within the community and impact the success of economic development efforts. There are a few action steps that the City could undertake to mitigate any potential “community eyesores.” These action steps include the following:

- I. Create and Adopt a Design and Aesthetics Overlay Ordinance
 - Conduct aesthetics and design survey within the downtown, existing overlay districts and key targeted redevelopment properties.
 - Determine appropriate design and aesthetic treatments for the various areas within the community and key redevelopment sites.
 - Develop overlay district that would correspond to each area where it would be implemented.
 - Determine how improvements would occur whether it be through public, private, or a combination of mechanisms.
 - Adopt Aesthetics Overlay Ordinance.
2. Create a formalized list of unsafe buildings, under-utilized properties and key properties for redevelopment.
 - Identify/inventory buildings.
 - Prioritize worst cases.
 - Determine if design & aesthetics overlay would be pertinent to implement on identified property.
 - Begin outreach to property/business owners to determine clean-up/aesthetic treatments.
 - Determine if formal code enforcement is needed. Consider litigation if necessary.
 - Incentivize compliance by property owner to clean up properties/site by providing tax incentives, disposal assistance, mitigation assistance, infrastructure improvements, or partnership to create redevelopment plans.
3. The City should develop a more formalized pursuit of non-conformities and obsolete uses.
 - Identify/inventory buildings which are obsolete & uses that are conformity/compatibility issues.
 - Prioritize worst cases/biggest offenders.

- Determine higher/better use for sites which could be just green space, tree production, sod production, solar field, community facility, etc.
- Determine relocation opportunities of businesses into zoning districts or industrial parks that are planned for such uses.
- Incentivize relocation or removal including moving assistance, tax incentives, disposal assistance, mitigation assistance, break on permit fees/utility permits and connection fees.
- Determine who can take title to land if current owner wants to sell, or make donation.

4. Consider de-annexation.

- The City should have conversations with the County to determine if County is interested in taking back excess land.
- Prior to any de-annexation, the City should confirm that if de-annexation occurs it does not create legal issues for City in the future if failure to comply with annexation ordinance or associated “Fiscal Plan” ever occurred.

Goals & Recommendations Prioritization

Throughout this comprehensive plan, several goals and recommendations were made. As mentioned in this chapter, this plan is a 20 year document and therefore, not all of the recommendations can and should be implemented at one time. The purpose of this section is to summarize the goals and recommendations and identify what tools are needed to implement the recommendations. The table below also spells out who, whether public or private, should be involved in the implementation of that particular recommendation. A lead entity is identified with the support entities listed below it. It is anticipated that the lead entity will spearhead that particular recommendation and involve the support entities to assist. The level of importance and level of difficulty help to prioritize the recommendations along with the timeline for implementation. The level of importance signifies how important the recommendation is to the City’s vision in regards to the series of recommendations under the goal. A high importance obviously increases the priority whereas a low priority means that the recommendation is one of the last ones to be implemented. The level of difficulty indicates how difficult a recommendation is to implement. A level one means there are little to no challenges or constraints to implement the recommendation. If the level of difficulty is coupled with the high level of importance, then the recommendation becomes

one of the top recommendations under that goal to implement first. However, if a level of difficulty is four, it means there are a number of challenges to implement and it will likely take some time before the recommendation can be fully implemented. If a high level of difficulty is coupled with a high level of importance then the recommendation will be a higher priority but may take longer to implement, whereas a low importance and a high level of difficulty makes that recommendation one of the last ones to be implemented as noted by the timeframe. There is nothing to say, however, that a recommendation must fall within the suggested timeline for implementation.

DOWNTOWN/CULTURAL GOAL: Continue revitalization of Elkhart's downtown to re-establish itself as a center of commercial, civic, cultural, and social activity.

Downtown is a part of Elkhart's iconic identity. In most communities, the economic health and vitality of a city is gauged by the condition of its downtown. Revitalization of Downtown Elkhart has been a continuous effort for more than a decade. Elkhart's citizens and City leadership have indicated on numerous occasions that downtown is important and should be an economic development priority for the community. Downtown has many residential, retail, and commercial space competitors throughout Elkhart and the Michiana Region. Responding to this competition and downtown's competitive advantages, the *Comprehensive*

DOWNTOWN/CULTURAL	GOAL: Continue revitalization of Elkhart's downtown to re-establish itself as a center of commercial, civic, cultural, and social activity.				
	Recommendation	What tools are needed to implement this recommendation? <i>(Potential options listed)</i>	Responsibility: Who is the lead? Who is the support?	Level of Importance Level of Difficulty <i>1 to 4 (1 has no or relatively few challenges or constraints, 4 has multiple & significant challenges or constraints)</i>	Timeline for Implementation
	Promote mixed-use occupancy in downtown buildings and judiciously permit uses that support the intentions outlined in the Downtown Action Agenda.	ZO update Incentive zoning	LEAD Downtown Elkhart, Inc. SUPPORT Business community, Redevelopment Commission, City Planning	<div> <div>High</div> <div>Med</div> <div>Low</div> </div> <div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div> </div>	Short (0-5 years)
	Scale and design new structures to be compatible with adjacent buildings and context.	ZO update Overlay zoning City as Developer Public/private partnership	LEAD City Planning SUPPORT Private developers	<div> <div>High</div> <div>Med</div> <div>Low</div> </div> <div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div> </div>	Short (0-5 years)

DOWNTOWN/CULTURAL	Create development opportunity for live/work spaces in downtown buildings. Note: more Class A office space is needed	City is currently doing the following: City as Developer Incentive zoning Public/private partnership Website devoted to downtown properties Revolving loan (SBC) Financial incentives	LEAD City Economic Development SUPPORT Business community, brokers, private developers	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Clear unkempt properties to create turn-key sites for business location in priority areas.	City clearance Violation program City as Developer Non-profit task Public/private partnership Shovel Ready program Greening of City	LEAD City Economic Development SUPPORT Redevelopment Commission	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Establish cooperative agreements between the City and private property/business owners to advance Elkhart's downtown revitalization efforts	Public/private partnership Infrastructure improvements Financial incentives Revolving loan	LEAD Redevelopment Commission SUPPORT Downtown Elkhart, Inc.	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Continue support of Downtown Elkhart, Inc. Note: need to re-establish the professional downtown management organization. Need a downtown business association. DEI has a narrower focus than Elkhart Centre???	Financial incentives Infrastructure improvements Shovel Ready program	LEAD City Economic Development SUPPORT Downtown businesses	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Update the downtown plan	Consultants Internal update	LEAD City Planning, Redevelopment Commission SUPPORT Downtown businesses, Downtown Elkhart, Inc.	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)

Plan Update recommends preparing downtown properties for a streamlined redevelopment process, capitalizing on downtown’s unique qualities, enhancing downtown’s civic, cultural, and social niche, and assisting the downtown management organization. The *Comprehensive Plan Update* supports the previous planning endeavors, in particular the 2004 *Downtown Action Agenda*, which outline strategies for downtown redevelopment, revitalization, and organizational initiatives.

NEIGHBORHOODS GOAL: Direct investment, amenities, and new housing development to established residential areas within the City’s boundaries to create additional opportunities for diverse ages, income levels, and stages of life in neighborhoods of choice.

Neighborhoods are the places where everyday life occurs. They create and form communities and flourish with the availability of quality and proximate housing, schools, jobs, health care, public safety, retail, and services. Elkhart’s residential population has experienced a modest increase since 2000. The demand for new housing, however, is stagnant and older neighborhoods near the center of the City are continuing to experience high vacancy rates. Residential growth has occurred primarily through annexation of subdivisions in suburban areas adjacent to Elkhart’s outer City limits. The *Comprehensive Plan Update* emphasizes the need and desire to maintain and reinvest in existing residential neighborhoods within the existing City limits. This maintenance and reinvestment involves physical improvements to housing stock and gateways, public and private sector financial commitments, revised review and approval processes, and programmatic support to reinforce Elkhart’s residential neighborhoods. Through these various means, it is important to provide housing products at various price points that appeal to homebuyers and renters that demand a quality home in or near the center city.

Housing in the City of Elkhart should be affordable and attractive to all citizens, regardless of income or whether they rent or own their homes. The following action steps provide guidance to City policy and decision-makers to support the Neighborhoods Goal. Policy development requires the leadership and commitment of Elkhart City officials and collaboration with other partners. It is not solely up to the City to implement the following action steps; however, it is necessary that the City create an environment that is conducive to success in this area by dedicating more resources to organizing efforts, setting guidelines, and enforcing ordinances to enhance and promote assets, creating and maintaining partnerships, and galvanizing stakeholders. Neighborhood associations are the essential partners in accomplishing the action steps.

NEIGHBORHOODS	GOAL: Direct investment, amenities, and new housing development to established residential areas within the City's boundaries to create additional opportunities for diverse ages, income levels, and stages of life in neighborhoods of choice.				
	Recommendation	What tools are needed to implement this recommendation? <i>(Potential options listed)</i>	Responsibility: Who is the lead? Who is the support?	Level of Importance Level of Difficulty <i>1 to 4 (1 has no or relatively few challenges or constraints, 4 has multiple & significant challenges or constraints)</i>	Timeline for Implementation
	Dedicate efforts and funding to improving current "at risk" residential neighborhoods with the highest potential for long-term stability.	Financial incentives Neighborhood assessment program Infrastructure improvements	LEAD City Community Development SUPPORT Public Works	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Address vacant residential properties to reduce any adverse effects of abandoned properties on stable neighborhoods.	Greening of City City demolition Vacancy ordinance Update Minimum Housing Ordinance Violation program	LEAD City Community Development SUPPORT Public Works Building Code	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Develop a program to create and maintain neighborhood entrances and common areas in areas that do not have a homeowners association.	Greening of City Infrastructure improvements Financial incentives to neighborhoods	LEAD City Community Development SUPPORT Public Works	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Medium (5-10 Years)
	Create or re-establish and promote neighborhood identities. Note: sense of belonging/pride in ownership.	Neighborhood assessment program Neighborhood plans	LEAD City Community Development SUPPORT Public Works	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Establish residential design guidelines for infill housing construction on lots within established neighborhoods.	ZO updates Design guidelines Infill policy	LEAD City Planning SUPPORT City Community Development	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Long (10-20 Years)
	Prepare specific neighborhood revitalization plans and implementation strategies for targeted neighborhoods.	Neighborhood assessment program Neighborhood plans Public infrastructure	LEAD City Community Development SUPPORT City Planning, Public Works	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)

MOBILITY GOAL: Establish and maintain a balanced and connected system for all modes of transportation within the City and to regional networks.

Elkhart's transportation system includes air, rail, water, and surface. A balanced transportation system provides opportunity for all means of travel in a cooperative and coordinated manner to meet the needs of the community. It also fully integrates with adjacent land uses, serves the travel demands and desires of citizens, and is compatible with the natural environment. A transportation system that provides safe, convenient, and efficient movement of traffic is vital to a community's well-being. It has significant influence on the appearance, character, and economic viability and is an important consideration when current and future land use decisions are made. It affects the "where, when, and way" that development takes place and creates access to markets, employment, and investment.

The *Comprehensive Plan Update's* recommendations pertaining to mobility include strategies that increase efficiency and safety while meeting the access and needs of all motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation. These recommendations are intended to assist public officials, developers, and other interested parties in making decisions relating to land use, public right-of-way improvements, funding opportunities, future public investment, and other transportation issues.

GOAL: Establish and maintain a balanced and connected system for all modes of transportation within the City and to regional networks.				
MOBILITY	Recommendation	What tools are needed to implement this recommendation? (Potential options listed)	Responsibility: Who is the lead? Who is the support?	Level of Importance Level of Difficulty 1 to 4 (1 has no or relatively few challenges or constraints, 4 has multiple & significant challenges or constraints)
				Timeline for Implementation
	Incorporate facilities for all modes of transportation into road resurfacing and reconstruction projects. Note: not enough ROW to create safe bike/ped facilities along all existing roads.	CIP Infrastructure replacement plan & policy	LEAD Public Works SUPPORT	<div> <div>High</div> <div>Med</div> <div>Low</div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div> </div> Short (0-5 years)
	Install bicycle lanes along the routes recommended by the Pedal Panel.	CIP Financial incentives DPW Standard Construction Specifications update	LEAD Public Works SUPPORT	<div> <div>High</div> <div>Med</div> <div>Low</div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div> </div> Short (0-5 years)

MOBILITY	Install sidewalks within all residential neighborhoods. Note: requires walk to school program and educational programs.	CIP Financial incentives DPW Standard Construction Specifications update	LEAD Street Department SUPPORT City Community Development	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Long (10-20 Years)
	Install internal sidewalk network in all new commercial, industrial, and institutional developments. Note: Walmart is an example.	SCO updates DPW Standard Construction Specifications update CIP Financial incentives	LEAD City Planning SUPPORT Street Department	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Install multi-purpose paths along all major and minor arterials. Note: Cassopolis, North Johnson.	SCO updates DPW Standard Construction Specifications update CIP Financial incentives	LEAD Public Works SUPPORT	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Existing ROW Short (0-5 Years) No ROW Long (10-20 Years)
	Link all internal pedestrian systems (i.e. sidewalks) with the larger, citywide pedestrian/bicycle transportation network.	Thoroughfare Plan updates SCO updates DPW Standard Construction Specifications update CIP Infrastructure replacement plan & policy Financial incentives	LEAD Public Works SUPPORT City Planning	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Medium (5-10 Years)
	Provide for seamless connections among transportation modes including bus, pedestrian facilities, and bicycle facilities.	Thoroughfare Plan update SCO updates DPW Standard Construction Specifications update CIP Infrastructure replacement plan & policy Financial incentives	LEAD MACOG SUPPORT Public Works, City Planning	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Medium (5-10 Years)

EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL:

Grow and diversify Elkhart’s economy through academic programming, training, and business retention, expansion, and recruitment initiatives. Enhance the skillset and educational attainment of the workforce to qualify it for employment opportunities in a variety of industries and positions.

The local and regional economy is fundamental to a community’s quality of life and its citizens’ standards of living. A healthy economy creates employment opportunities, supports the tax base, attracts residents, funds public facilities and government services, and establishes a community where people want to live. Education and economic development are reciprocally linked in that an educated population positively contributes to economic growth and sustainability and a growing economy expands and increases the quality of educational opportunities.

Economic development has both individual and collective rewards. Increased personal income and wealth increase the tax base so a community can provide the level of services that citizens expect. Likewise, education also has both individual and collective rewards. An educated and skilled individual has the ability to pursue employment opportunities that offer a higher level of salary, thus increasing personal wealth and contributing more to the local tax base. Tax money is reinvested in the community’s educational system which produces additional skilled workers required by current and potential employers. A community that provides a workforce to meet the changing needs of employers will be most attractive for sustainable economic development efforts.

Elkhart prides itself on a skilled workforce. City leaders have recognized for years the importance of diversifying the skill set of its residents through conventional and innovative education and job training endeavors. As economic trends shift, a diversified workforce will not be solely dependent on one industry to provide employment and will be better positioned to handle economic ebbs and flows. The Education & Economic Development Goal of this Comprehensive Plan Update reinforces the education-economic development relationship and outlines techniques to capitalize on the region’s diverse educational resources to advance the City’s traditional economic development efforts of business retention, attraction, and expansion.

In addition to the City of Elkhart’s Economic Development Department, the lead advocate of economic development in Elkhart County is the Economic Development Corporation (EDC). Since 2000, the EDC has been instrumental in attracting and retaining quality businesses in the County and is the City’s key partner in fostering Elkhart’s economy. The following action steps provide guidance to City policy and decision-makers to support

the Education & Economic Development Goal. Policy development requires the leadership and commitment of Elkhart City officials and collaboration with other partners, such as the EDC. It is not solely up to the City to implement the following action steps; however, it is necessary that the City create an environment that is conducive to success in this area by dedicating more resources to organizing efforts, setting guidelines, and enforcing ordinances to enhance and promote assets, creating and maintaining partnerships, and galvanizing stakeholders.

EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	GOAL: Grow and diversify Elkhart's economy through academic programming, training, and business retention, expansion, and recruitment initiatives. Enhance the skillset and educational attainment of the workforce to qualify it for employment opportunities in a variety of industries and positions.				
	Recommendation	What tools are needed to implement this recommendation? <i>(Potential options listed)</i>	Responsibility: Who is the lead? Who is the support?	Level of Importance Level of Difficulty <i>1 to 4 (1 has no or relatively few challenges or constraints, 4 has multiple & significant challenges or constraints)</i>	Timeline for Implementation
	Continue the City's economic development efforts of business recruitment, retention, and expansion.	ED Plan update Marketing Plan update & implementation Financial package	LEAD City Economic Development SUPPORT EDC of Elkhart County	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Clear unkempt properties to create turn-key sites for business location in priority areas.	City clearance Violation program City as Developer Non-profit task Public/private partnership Shovel Ready program	LEAD City Community Development SUPPORT City Building & Code Enforcement	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Identify new and emerging markets where Elkhart has a competitive advantage in terms of location, skills of workforce, economy of scale, building inventory, incentives, or other decision-making factors. Note: City focuses on retaining existing, then attracting new.	Targeted industry study ED Plan update Marketing Plan update & implementation	LEAD City Economic Development SUPPORT EDC of Elkhart County	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Medium (5-10 Years)

EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	GOAL: Grow and diversify Elkhart's economy through academic programming, training, and business retention, expansion, and recruitment initiatives. Enhance the skillset and educational attainment of the workforce to qualify it for employment opportunities in a variety of industries and positions.				
	Recommendation	What tools are needed to implement this recommendation? <i>(Potential options listed)</i>	Responsibility: Who is the lead? Who is the support?	Level of Importance Level of Difficulty <i>1 to 4 (1 has no or relatively few challenges or constraints, 4 has multiple & significant challenges or constraints)</i>	Timeline for Implementation
	Identify and pursue funding opportunities that support the educational and training needs of existing and emerging businesses in the City.	Federal & State grants or reduced interest loans Public/institutional partnership	LEAD Elkhart County Horizon Project SUPPORT	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Medium (5-10 Years)
	Direct new development and investment to areas within the current City limits rather than in undeveloped/greenfield areas.	Adjacency ordinance Implementation of Land Use Plan Infrastructure improvements Financial incentives	LEAD City Economic Development, Brownfield Coordinator SUPPORT City Planning	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Ensure regular communication among school district, higher education institutions, continuing education providers, Chamber of Commerce, and other representatives from the business community to marry local employment opportunities with academic and training curriculums.	Public/institutional partnership ED taskforce	LEAD Elkhart County Horizon Project SUPPORT Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Develop new, non-monetary incentives to entice new investors and retain existing businesses. Note: Review City's administrative review and approval process. Technical assistance committee to provide administrative review for development projects.	Marketing Plan update & implementation Financial package City as Developer Infrastructure improvements Shovel Ready program	LEAD Mayor's Office SUPPORT EDC of Elkhart County, City Economic Development, Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce, City Council	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)

EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Cluster similar and complementary businesses to create economies of scale, encourage resource sharing, market an area's identity, and provide a convenient and memorable experience for customers.	Implementation of Land Use Plan Infrastructure improvements Business incubator Client relations management database	LEAD City Economic Development, City Planning, EDC of Elkhart County SUPPORT Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Medium (5-10 Years)
	Update 1986 Annexation Plan.	Annexation Plan update & implementation	LEAD City Planning SUPPORT	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)

AESTHETICS, NATURAL RESOURCES & OPEN SPACE

GOAL: Create opportunities for investment, activities, and programs that ensure protection of the City's built and natural environments, maintenance of open space and greenways, and respect for its heritage.

Elkhart's heritage and natural resources are essential components of the community. Most notably, the St. Joseph and Elkhart rivers have shaped the development of the City and their presence contributes to the community's character, environmental quality, and recreational amenities. Because Elkhart's natural resources are inherent components of the City, the provision of adequate greenspace and the protection of sensitive environmental areas must be considered as necessary public facilities similar to infrastructure and utility services. Additionally, heritage preservation is also an important local government service and a sensible investment, returning multiple benefits from modest expenditures. The intent of the Aesthetics, Natural Resources & Open Space Goal of this Comprehensive Plan Update is to protect significant, scarce, non-renewable resources and develop ways to capitalize on these assets while advancing preservation endeavors. To achieve this goal, environmental and heritage stewardship should be approached as a shared responsibility. Efforts will require coordination among City departments, not-for-profit organizations, the private sector, and other local, state, and federal agencies to work together to maintain Elkhart's unique sense of place.

AESTHETICS, NATURAL RESOURCES & OPEN SPACE	GOAL: Create opportunities for investment, activities, and programs that ensure protection of the City's built and natural environments, maintenance of open space and greenways, and respect for its heritage.				
	Recommendation	What tools are needed to implement this recommendation? <i>(Potential options listed)</i>	Responsibility: Who is the lead? Who is the support?	Level of Importance Level of Difficulty <i>1 to 4 (1 has no or relatively few challenges or constraints, 4 has multiple & significant challenges or constraints)</i>	Timeline for Implementation
	Facilitate public-private partnerships and cooperative agreements in beautification and preservation efforts.	Public/private partnership draft agreements Beautification with infrastructure improvements Financial incentives Revolving loan CIP	LEAD City Planning SUPPORT Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce	<div> <div>High</div> <div>Med</div> <div>Low</div> </div> <div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div> </div>	Short (0-5 years)

AESTHETICS, NATURAL RESOURCES & OPEN SPACE	Create sustainable urban forests on vacant land and potentially contaminated sites.	Greening of City Brownfield reclamation grants Non-profit land trust/conservancy	LEAD City Economic Development, Brownfield Coordinator SUPPORT City Forrester/Arborist	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Medium (5-10 Years)
	Promote community gardens and local food production.	Greening of City Public/private partnerships City owned land Parks Department program	LEAD Neighborhood associations SUPPORT Master Gardeners, grassroot organizations	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Prepare and maintain a natural resource inventory and assessment.	Assessment log Parks Department staff	LEAD City Parks & Recreation, Public Buildings & Grounds SUPPORT	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Medium (5-10 Years)
	Incorporate sustainable design in all new developments, redevelopments, and infrastructure projects.	ZO & SCO updates DPW Standard Construction Specifications update Financial incentives Infrastructure incentives	LEAD City Planning SUPPORT	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Medium (5-10 Years)
	Install multi-purpose paths along the greenway routes recommended by the Pedal Panel. Note: challenges – routes and property.	CIP Financial incentives DPW Standard Construction Specifications update	LEAD Public Works SUPPORT City Parks & Recreation	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Existing ROW Short (0-5 Years) No ROW Medium (5-10 Years)
	Require architectural design of structures within overlay districts to be compatible with development context and corridor character..	ZO updates Design guidelines Overlay Zone Financial incentives	LEAD City Planning SUPPORT	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Establish design guidelines for gateways to influence signage, landscape design, parking, and building orientation.	ZO updates Design guidelines Overlay Zone	LEAD City Planning SUPPORT	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Medium (5-10 Years)
	Review and revise local historic district plan and ordinance.	ZO updates Design guidelines Overlay Zone	LEAD City Planning SUPPORT Downtown Elkhart, Inc.	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)

HEALTH & SAFETY GOAL: Coordinate public services and amenities with land use decisions to protect the well-being and quality of life of Elkhart's citizens and its environment.

The advantages of amenable intergovernmental relations include thoughtful and proficient land use decision-making processes, coordinated growth management and preservation, efficient delivery of services, and economies of scale. Growth and development cross jurisdictional boundaries and departmental responsibilities. There are no requirements for comprehensive plans to address intergovernmental collaboration. However, as one of the six primary goals of this Comprehensive Plan Update, the health and safety of the Elkhart community includes maximizing public resources through cooperation, streamlined processes, and consolidated efforts to provide for responsible use of land and logical growth. By coordinating decision-making and approval processes, the City of Elkhart can better connect and align transportation systems, City services, and other infrastructure and resources with neighborhoods, commercial centers, institutions, and recreational facilities.

HEALTH & SAFETY	GOAL: Coordinate public services and amenities with land use decisions to protect the well-being and quality of life of Elkhart's citizens and its environment.				
	Recommendation	What tools are needed to implement this recommendation? <i>(Potential options listed)</i>	Responsibility: Who is the lead? Who is the support?	Level of Importance Level of Difficulty <i>1 to 4 (1 has no or relatively few challenges or constraints, 4 has multiple & significant challenges or constraints)</i>	Timeline for Implementation
	Coordinate decision-making and approval processes among City departments.	ZO updates Design guidelines Overlay Zone Interdepartmental agreement	LEAD Mayor's Office SUPPORT	<div>High Med Low</div> <div>1 2 3 4</div>	Short (0-5 years)
	Coordinate transportation and land use planning. Note: coordinate with County public improvement projects and upgrades.	Integration into Thoroughfare Plan TAC Meetings CIP	LEAD Public Works, City Planning SUPPORT MACOG	<div>High Med Low</div> <div>1 2 3 4</div>	Short (0-5 years)

HEALTH & SAFETY	Coordinate installation of pedestrian/bicycle facilities with programs associated with public health and community wellness.	Integration into Thoroughfare Plan CIP Financial incentives	LEAD Hospital, County Health Department, City Grants Department SUPPORT	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Identify key vacant sites and buildings for redevelopment or conservation.	Greening of City Brownfield reclamation grants Non-profit land trust/conservancy	LEAD Redevelopment Commission, City Brownfield Coordinator SUPPORT City Building & Code Enforcement, neighborhood associations	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Minimize the appearance of blight. Note: change violation process – State legislation	ZO Updates Nuisance ordinance Blight assessment Design guidelines Land bank	LEAD City Planning, City Building & Code Enforcement SUPPORT City Brownfield Coordinator	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Short (0-5 years)
	Remediate brownfield sites.	Greening of City Brownfield reclamation grants Non-profit land trust/conservancy Shovel Ready Program	LEAD City Brownfield Coordinator SUPPORT	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Long (10-20 Years)
	Establish an Elkhart City-Elkhart County Conservancy District to manage water resources. Note: City Sewer Service District.	Interjurisdictional agreement Conservancy District Task Force	LEAD Sewer Conservancy District SUPPORT	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Long (10-20 Years)
	Strive to build civic facilities and other City buildings using sustainable and green building principles. Note: LEED standards???	ZO updates Sustainability guideline manual City sustainability ordinance	LEAD City Council SUPPORT Mayor's Office	High Med Low 1 2 3 4	Medium (5-10 Years)