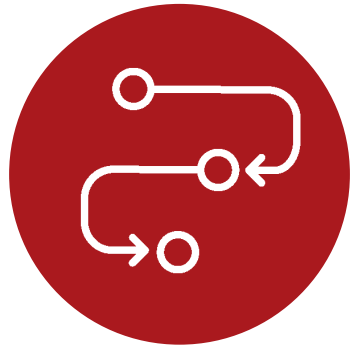




Huntington Destination Downtown Master Plan

Agenda



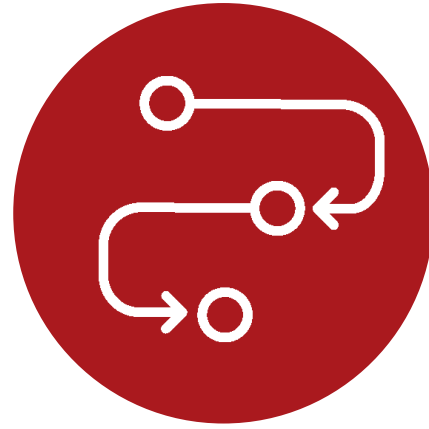
**Process
Overview**



**Plan
Overview**



**Moving
Forward**

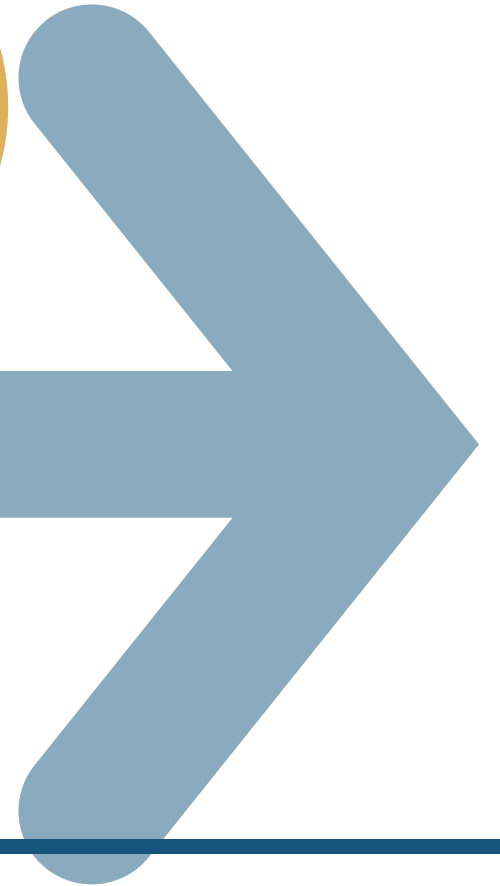


Process Overview

Process



ON-GOING: Public Engagement, Involvement, and Feedback





Plan Overview

Huntington Destination Downtown Master Plan

HUNTINGTON *Destination Downtown Master Plan*



01

Plan Background



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This plan was developed with the support of many individuals who donated their time, energy, and resources to share ideas and shape this plan. Special thanks to the following individuals for their contributions to this plan:

Huntington City Staff

Richard Strick, Mayor

Adam Cuttriss, Director of Public Works and Eng.

P.J. Felton, City Council at-large

Bryn Keplinger, Dir. of Community Dev. and Redev.

Amber Rensberger, Administrative Assistant

Mike Snelling, GIS Coordinator

A special thanks to Pathfinder Arts and Entrepreneurial Center for allowing us to host both public workshops within their gallery space as well as Kevin Krauskopf for social media outreach and mobile display coordination.

Huntington Destination

Downtown Steering

Committee

Tanner Babb, Huntington University

Tina Disch, Huntington County Visitor Bureau

Matt Ditzler, Community Foundation

Ashlyn Kippert, The Awakening Church

Kendall Mickle, County Council

Tom Mills, First Federal Savings Bank

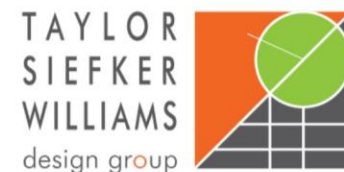
Alexia Ramirez, Boy's and Girl's Club

Jordan Smith, Smith Furniture Co.

Brock Zehr, Huntington University

Consultant Group

Taylor Siefker Williams Design Group



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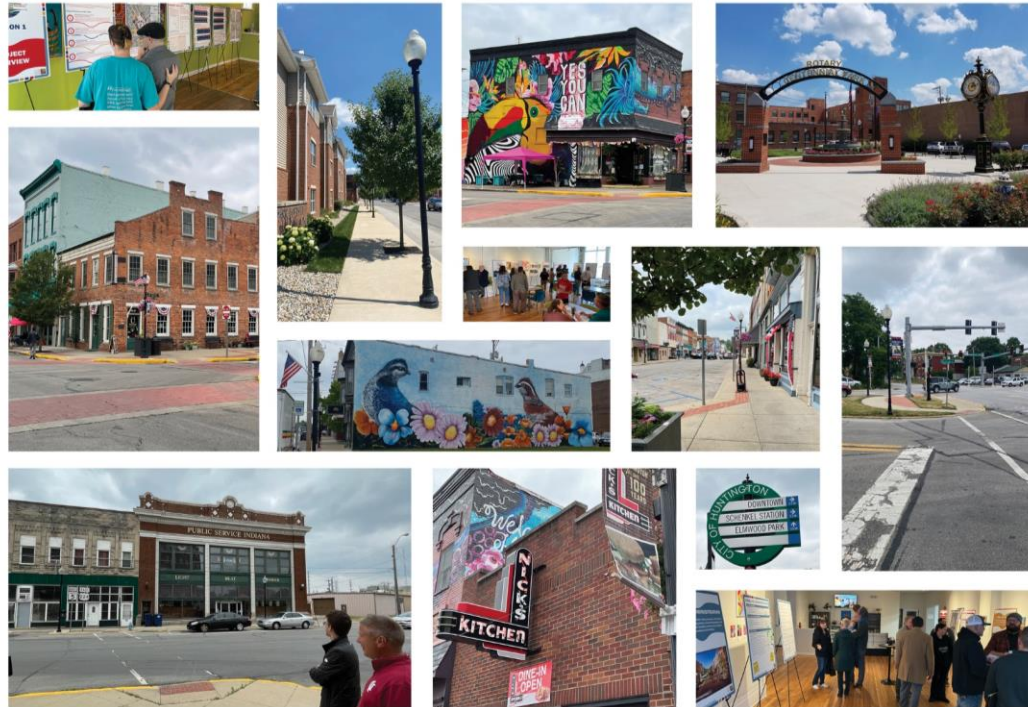
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ABOUT THIS PLAN

The City of Huntington initiated a process to create the *Destination Downtown Master Plan* that responded to changing trends and conditions that are impacting their downtown environment. The process is based upon community input and sound planning principles designed to improve the quality of life for the Huntington community and ultimately increased investment in downtown. The final plan, and the recommendations outlined, were developed through collaboration with residents and downtown business owners and represent a diverse mix of development priorities ranging from connectivity to destination enhancements and policy recommendations.

The *Huntington Destination Downtown Master Plan* is intended to serve as a broad policy guide for the City of Huntington and its community partners as the parties work together to successfully guide future downtown decision making. The plan is also intended to serve as a blueprint for City Council, governmental boards, and staff as they evaluate land use, development, redevelopment, and infrastructure decisions. The recommendations within the plan should be used to inform decisions around visual character, development and enhancement locations, the extent of public and private investments and future private development proposals within downtown Huntington.

This plan takes current context and trends into consideration and establishes a strong foundation for downtown Huntington so that the area can continue to grow and thrive in the future.



How to Use this Plan

This plan is comprised of five chapters:

Introduction

This first chapter provides background information, outlines the importance of a downtown master plan, describes the planning process, and establishes the basic context for the plan, including an overview of Huntington's demographics and community profile.



Community Engagement

This chapter summarizes the extensive and robust community engagement conducted for this planning process and the findings. Key findings identified through the engagement are also noted.



Recommendations

This chapter outlined the broad set of recommendations that can be taken to improve downtown Huntington's development fabric, infrastructure systems, and overall vitality. This section is organized as follows: 1) development priorities, 2) connectivity, 3) destination enhancements, 4) downtown vitality, and 5) administration of adaptations.



Implementation

This chapter identifies partnerships, timelines, priorities, and city role in projects which could be utilized to assist the city and their partners in advancing the recommendations found within the Plan.



Appendices

This chapter includes additional information for tools and resources to aid implementation as well as the full results of all community outreach initiatives.



PROCESS

The *Huntington Destination Downtown Master Plan* was a 10-month process initiated by the City of Huntington. Taylor Siefker Williams Design Group, a community planning firm, provided technical assistance for the planning process. The process was guided by a 13-member Steering Committee of appointed community members representing the city, downtown businesses, community groups, and local institutions. The process combined research and analysis with community engagement that gathered ideas and feedback from more than 200 community members.

The committee was formed to oversee and provide direction throughout the planning process and become plan champions for the final recommendations. Committee members shared their input, reviewed plan deliverables, and provided valuable feedback.

The plan was also shaped by the broader community through public outreach and workshops that invited

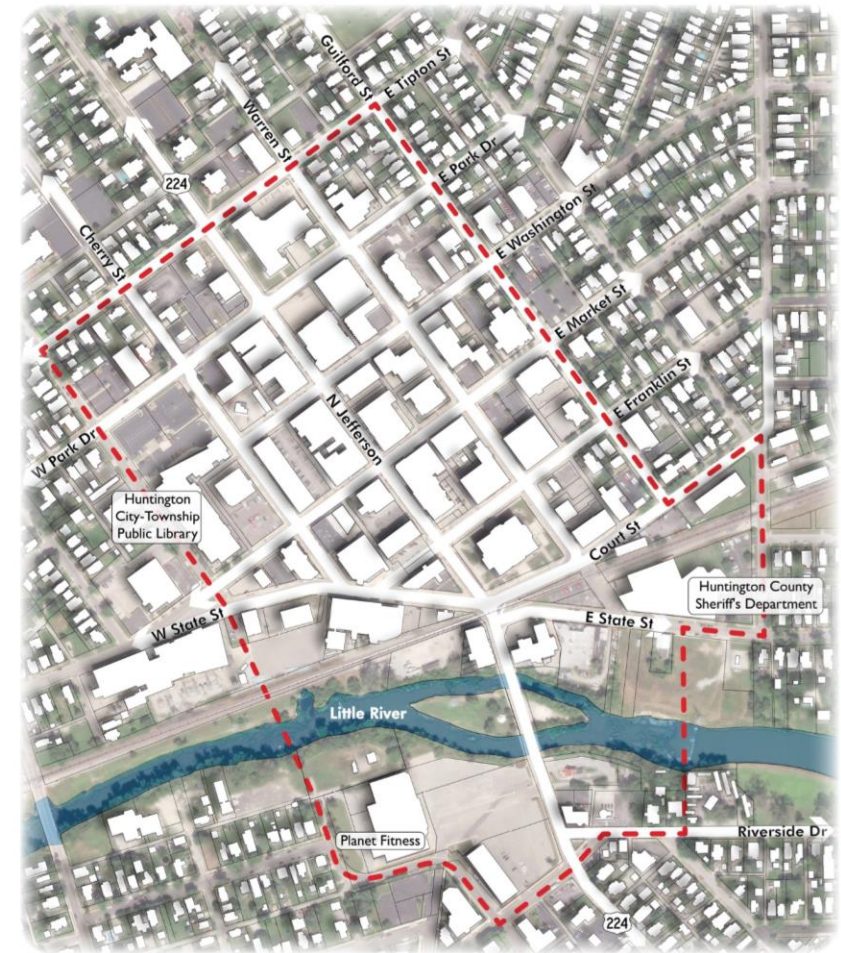
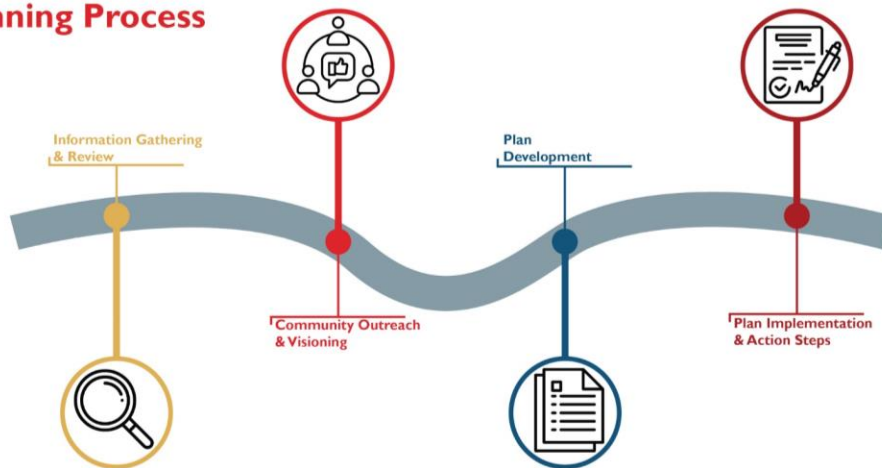
all Huntington residents, employees, and stakeholders to help shape the future of downtown Huntington.

Analysis tasks included evaluation of demographics, housing, and market trends; examination of previous plans; GIS and mapping, land use and zoning analysis; and policy and comparative community case study research. The plan reviews these layers of analysis with the community engagement findings to present detailed recommendations that are visionary, attainable, and respond to the current needs of downtown Huntington.

Together, the steering committee and the community participated in the following phases of work to better understand the downtown area, the impacts and trends being experienced, and the overall intentions for the future.

The planning process was divided into four phases of work: (1) information gathering and review, (2) community outreach and visioning, (3) development of the plan, and (4) implementation and action steps for the plan.

Planning Process



Legend

- Little River
- Buildings
- Downtown Boundary
- Roadways



Plan Study Area

This downtown master plan evaluates the city and downtown of Huntington as it exists today within the established project boundary limits. The downtown boundary covers roughly twenty city blocks. For the purpose of this planning effort, the downtown area encompasses the geographic boundaries of Tipton Street to the north, Etna Avenue and Riverside Drive to the south, Guilford Street to the east, and Poplar Street to the west.

The character of this area is a diverse mix of land uses including governmental, recreational, commercial, residential, and industrial.

PLANNING CONTEXT

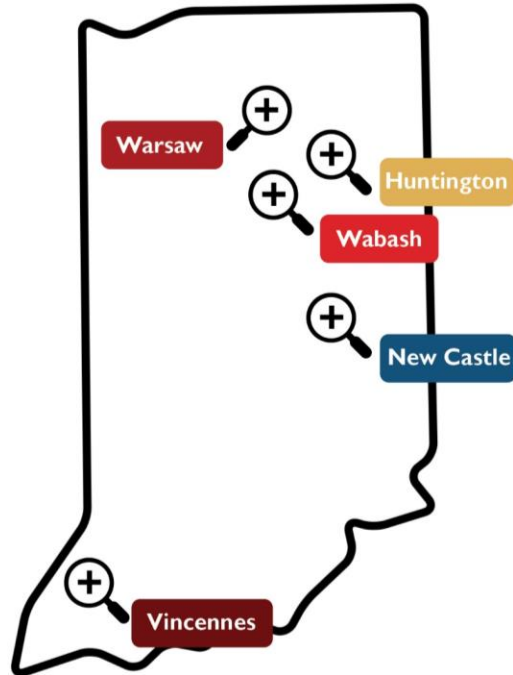
Huntington is located within Huntington County, Indiana and serves as the county seat. Huntington is approximately 20 miles to the metro area of Fort Wayne, Indiana. In addition, Huntington University is located within the City of Huntington. Huntington has a population of 17,033 individuals while Huntington University adds an additional 1,300 students annually for the fall, winter, and spring seasons, increasing an opportunity for an economic draw of a younger demographic downtown.

Huntington County's geographic location became an integral part of its prosperity. One of the shortest identified routes that connected Lake Erie to the Mississippi River used the Little River which runs through the city. The first train arrived to the city on November 13, 1855, marking the beginning of an era of economic growth and prosperity. Commercial, industrial, and residential units were originally constructed around the train depot in what is now downtown Huntington. Later, the area grew in popularity due to lime deposits excavated, giving the city the nickname of "Lime City".

For the purpose of this study, four comparative communities were selected based on their similar downtown footprints, economic status, natural resources, vacancy rate, and mix of downtown uses. The communities of Warsaw and Vincennes also have colleges located in their communities. The purpose for including comparative communities is to examine their strengths and challenges

and to identify any improvements that are being made in response to these factors which could be incorporated into potential recommendations for the Plan.

The four communities identified for the study were Wabash, New Castle, Warsaw, and Vincennes, Indiana. The analysis included a review of business trends, employees, and basic demographic profiles. Data was gathered using the U.S. Census American Community Survey from 2010 and 2021. A high-level summary of statistics related to Huntington and the comparison communities are examined on the following pages.



COMMUNITY ECONOMIC PROFILE

Businesses

The City of Huntington ranks right in the middle with the third highest number of business as well as the third highest percentage of retail occupations. Downtown businesses include a unique variety of first-floor dining and retail options while also containing professional businesses such as dental and law offices. Most businesses are located at the street level and are open daily to the walk-in public.



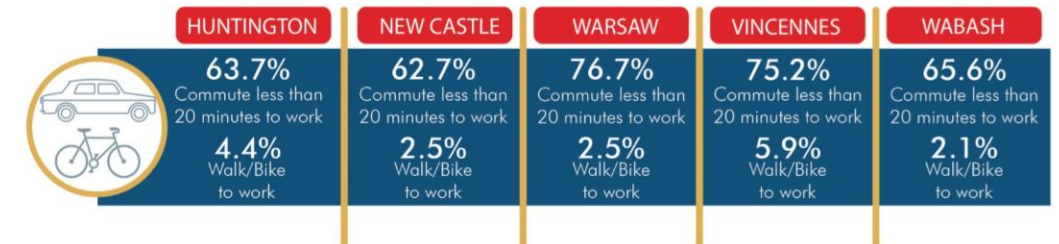
Employees

The City of Huntington has the highest number of employees employed within city limits. However, the city has the lowest per capita income of any of the comparative communities. This is indicative that Huntington has the greatest number of employees making lower per capita income. This could be due to an unequal distribution between white and blue collar professions as well as a younger workforce.



Commuting

The City of Huntington has the second highest commute time overall, indicating residents are more likely commuting to work within the city or county rather than traveling across county lines. Huntington also sees the second highest number of people that walk or bike to work, indicating their employer is in close proximity to their residence or they feel safe traveling on walking or biking networks established in the city.



COMMUNITY PROFILE

Population

The City of Huntington has the second highest population overall at 17,033 unique individuals from a variety of backgrounds. For downtown planning, it is essential to understand the following community dynamics to better plan and develop a downtown the community will utilize. While Huntington's population has had a small decrease over the last 11 years, the city still contains the second highest population of individuals.



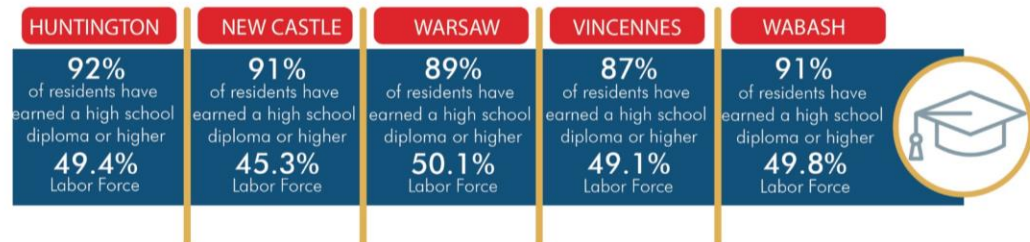
Age

The City of Huntington has the lowest median age, meaning younger individuals are drawn to the city due to affordability, quality of life, job opportunities, or other reasons. The city also has the lowest unemployment rate by a significant margin. This indicates that Huntington's younger population is employed and earning a wage that could be spent in downtown.



Education

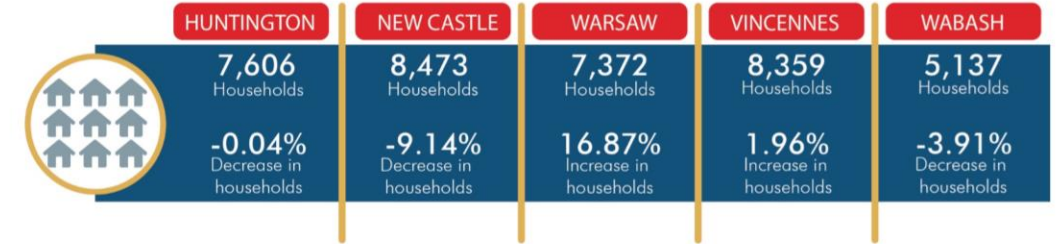
When compared to our other communities, Huntington has the highest percentage of high school graduates which is indicative to a workforce that is slightly more educated. Of the current population, Huntington has the third highest labor force.



COMMUNITY HOUSING PROFILE

Households

The City of Huntington has the third highest number of households while having the second highest population. This indicates greater family households or more individuals living with other individuals, potentially as a result of a limited housing stock. Since 2010, the city has seen a slight decrease in households, indicating limited new housing structures. This identifies issues related to the housing supply not keeping up with the demand while the existing supply is aging and potentially requiring more maintenance.



Home Value

From the comparison communities, Huntington has the highest percentage of homes built before 1939 at nearly half of all housing supply falling into this age category. Aging housing supply can result in lower housing values, decreased quality standards, and increased vacancy within Huntington. It may also be an indicator that residents may have limited funds or resources available.



Household Income

The City of Huntington saw a 32.5% median household income increase while all other comparative communities saw at least a 23% increase. When compared to all comparative communities, Huntington's wages are maintaining a livable wage for the region from 2010 to 2021. This would indicate that residents of Huntington have expendable income that could be directed towards downtown if desired.





EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Existing conditions for the downtown study area were documented through a visual survey and existing GIS data sources. Conditions were analyzed to establish a base of current offerings within the downtown study area. This analysis helps to provide a basis for future plan goals and objectives. Topics analyzed include the following:

■ Land Use

Land use refers to the current use of a plot of land and represents the economic and cultural activities that are practiced at that given place.

■ Zoning

Zoning refers to municipal laws or regulations that govern how real property can and cannot be used in certain geographic areas.

■ Automobile Safety

Automobile safety refers to the frequency and severity of accidents that occur within the downtown area and what future enhancements could help to prevent further accidents.

■ Transportation

Transportation refers to the frequency of vehicles on certain roadways and the classifications of these roadways based on the amount of daily traffic received.

■ Parking

Parking refers to any designated spots currently in downtown that are for vehicles other than roadways. These can vary in ownership and availability.

■ Sidewalks

Sidewalks are paved paths, designated for pedestrians, adjacent to existing roadways.

■ Underutilized Areas

Underutilized areas are areas that are not being utilized to their full potential, and may include vacant buildings and land areas.

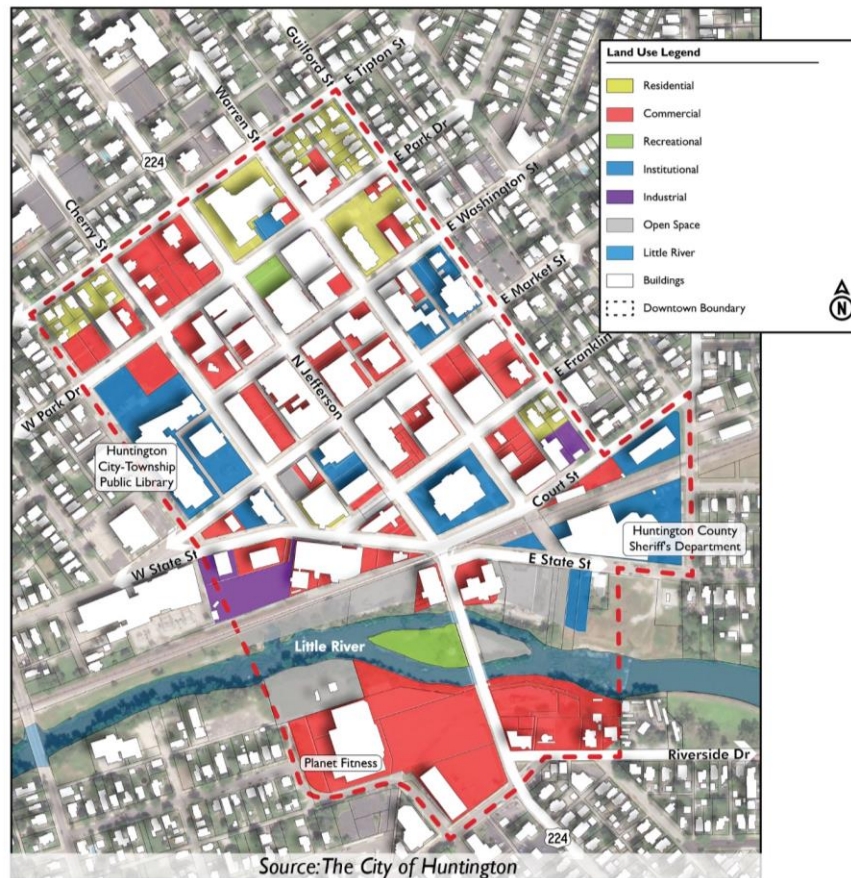
■ Urban Tree Canopy

This refers to any existing tree within the downtown study area that can vary in species, size, and age.

LAND USE

The composition and layout of land uses plays an inherent role in the character of an area and how development will impact that character. There are no fixed standards regarding the composition of land uses in downtown. Rather, understanding and documenting the character allows a determination of what the area is now physically and what it should be in the future in accordance with the vision set forth by the community.

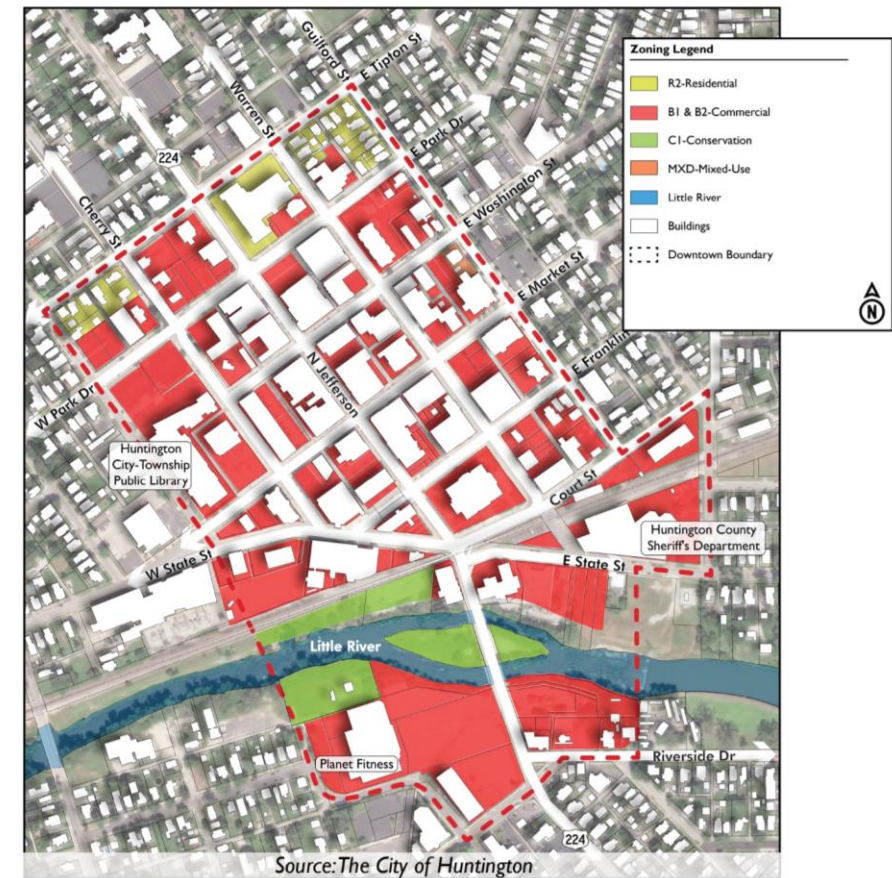
Downtown Huntington is fortunate to have the diverse base of land uses of commercial, residential, recreational, institutional, open space, and light industrial. The dominant land use observed is commercial while recreational is scarce with only two parcels. Commercial land is developed for business uses such as offices, restaurants, and shops. Residential land is utilized for human inhabitation. Recreational land is utilized for active play or open space. Institutional is land utilized for a public or social purpose that is not a commercial use, such as local government. Open space is vacant land not being utilized for a purpose. Lastly, industrial land is utilized for the purpose of manufacturing operations for the production of goods and services.



ZONING

Downtown Huntington's study area is zoned majority B-1 or B-2 commercial and R-2 residential while possessing small parcels of recreational and mixed use.

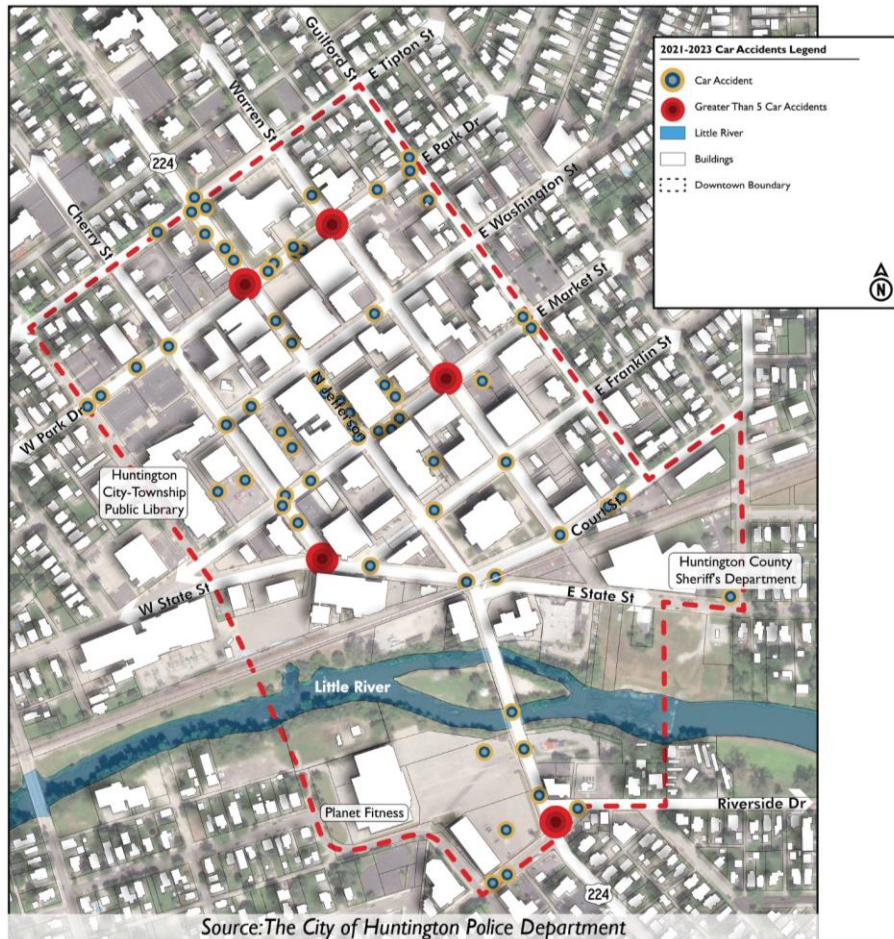
B-1 zoning is a specific zoning classification to signify a certain purpose for the land located within it. Huntington's downtown is zoned majority B-1 which is the densest commercial district primarily used in downtown while B-2 is still business development but does not have the same density requirements as a B-1. C-1, or conservation, is used to classify land that shall not contain physical development and is most commonly used for park space or floodplain areas as observed along the Little River. R-2, or residential, is most commonly used to classify inner-city single family lots that are at a higher density than typical suburban neighborhoods would allow. MXD, or mixed-use, is used to classify lots that contain a multitude of uses or an exception of uses, such as higher density residential or commercial, compared to surrounding lots.



AUTOMOBILE SAFETY

Car accidents are primarily focused along US 224 and North Jefferson Street. Key intersections along US 224 see the highest car accident rate between 2021 and 2023. There are 99 reported accidents between 2021 and 2023 with many major vehicular collisions and some minor collisions present from parking areas throughout downtown. Accidents observed are a direct result of wide roadways, higher rates of vehicular speed, and confusing street layouts.

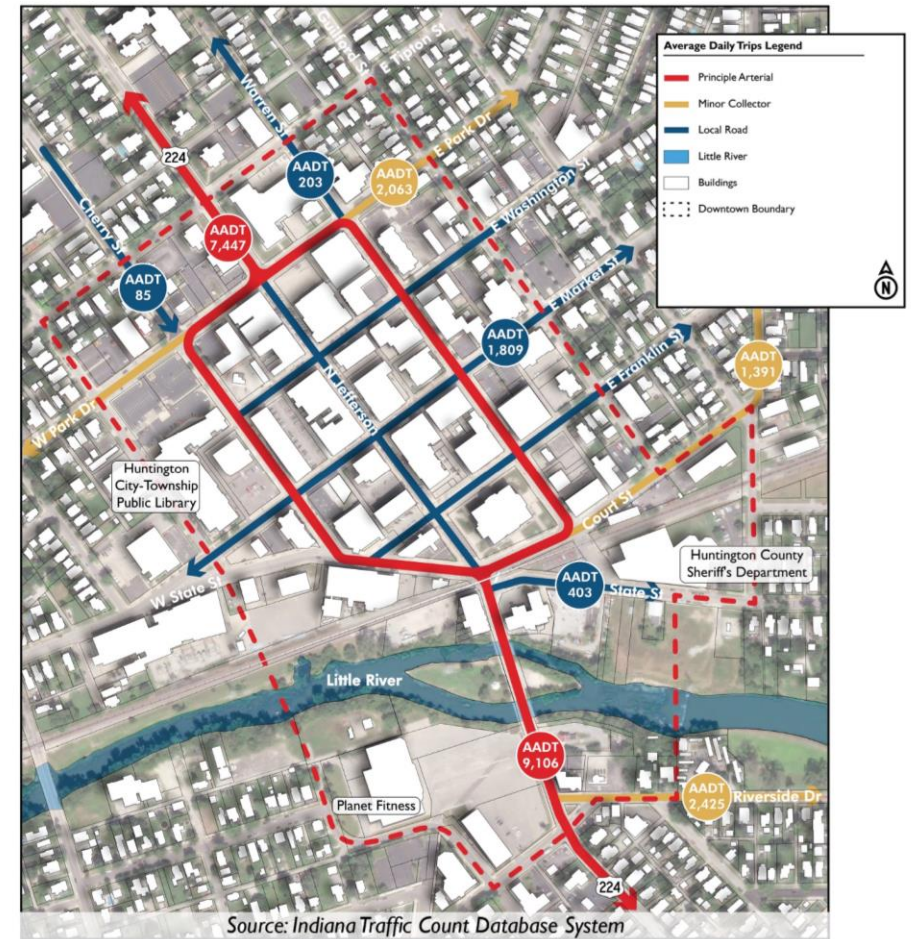
Safety enhancements, such as travel lane width reduction and enhanced pedestrian awareness measures, are potential policies that can be used to address vehicular speed, increase driver awareness that they are entering a pedestrian environment, and promote the downtown as more than a vehicular thoroughfare.



TRANSPORTATION

Average annual daily trips (AADT) are examined for all downtown roadways to determine the level of usage each receives and which roadways are more likely to be considered more pedestrian friendly. These roadways are examined by the Indiana Traffic Count Database System.

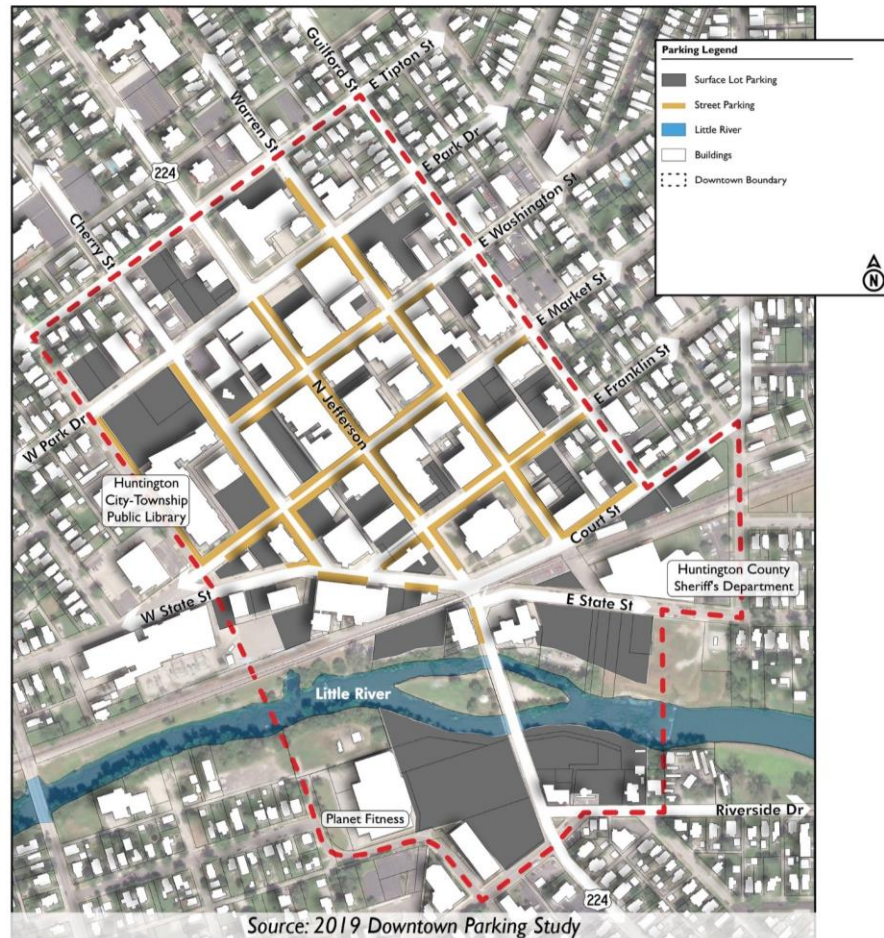
The map below illustrates the AADT for the downtown street network. INDOT-owned US 224 receives over three times more daily trips than any other roadway in downtown with at least nine thousand AADT's observed. Park Drive, Riverside Drive, Court Street, and Market Street also saw over one thousand daily trips. These roadways are a primary focus for increased safety measures.



PARKING

Parking, and its perceived availability, is a key issue to downtown function and long term sustainability. The map below identifies on-street parking and surface lot parking areas.

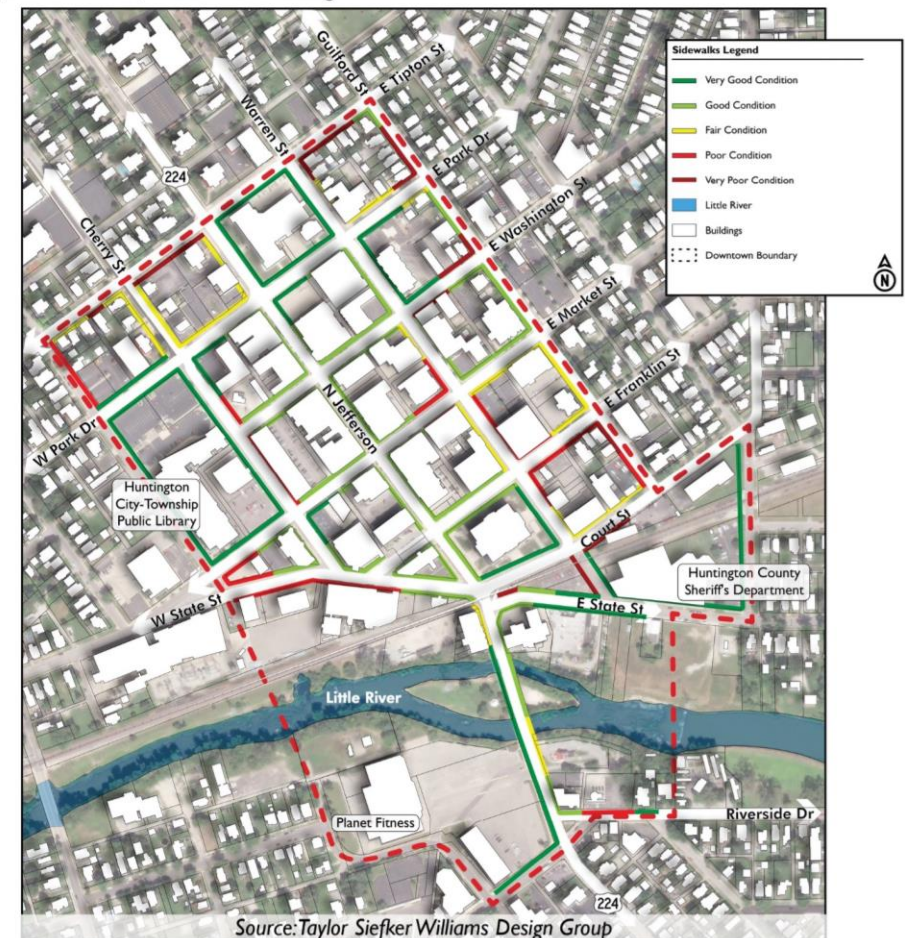
A 2019 Parking Study concluded there are 349 on-street spaces, 182 public off-street spaces and 173 private off-street spaces. The City of Huntington enforces approximately 77% of the existing hourly and daily downtown parking as of 2019. Increasing awareness and accessibility of this parking is critical in the reduction of vehicular accidents and the perceived notion that there is no parking available downtown.



SIDEWALKS

Sidewalks connect pedestrians to multiple businesses and amenities promoting universal access to downtown destinations. They also promote the connectivity of downtown to surrounding residential areas, allowing for easier access.

A sidewalk condition inventory was conducted, as part of the downtown physical inventory, which classified the conditions into five categories. Very good condition rating is a new sidewalk with no cracking, good ADA accessibility, and/or a good width while a good condition sidewalk rating means it is relatively new with minor cracks and good accessibility. Fair condition ratings were sidewalks that had cracking and/or were not ADA accessible. Poor condition ratings were sidewalks with substantial cracking, narrow width, and/or no ADA accessibility while very poor condition ratings were sidewalks that were not evident due to overgrown vegetation, narrow width, or extreme cracking.



UNDERUTILIZED

Underutilized lots are classified as not being used to their full economic or development potential. These can be parcels that contain a vacant or underutilized/partially vacant physical building, surface parking area, or are undeveloped entirely. An underutilized building is defined as a development that is not being used or taxed to its full potential in the B-I zoning district for Huntington.

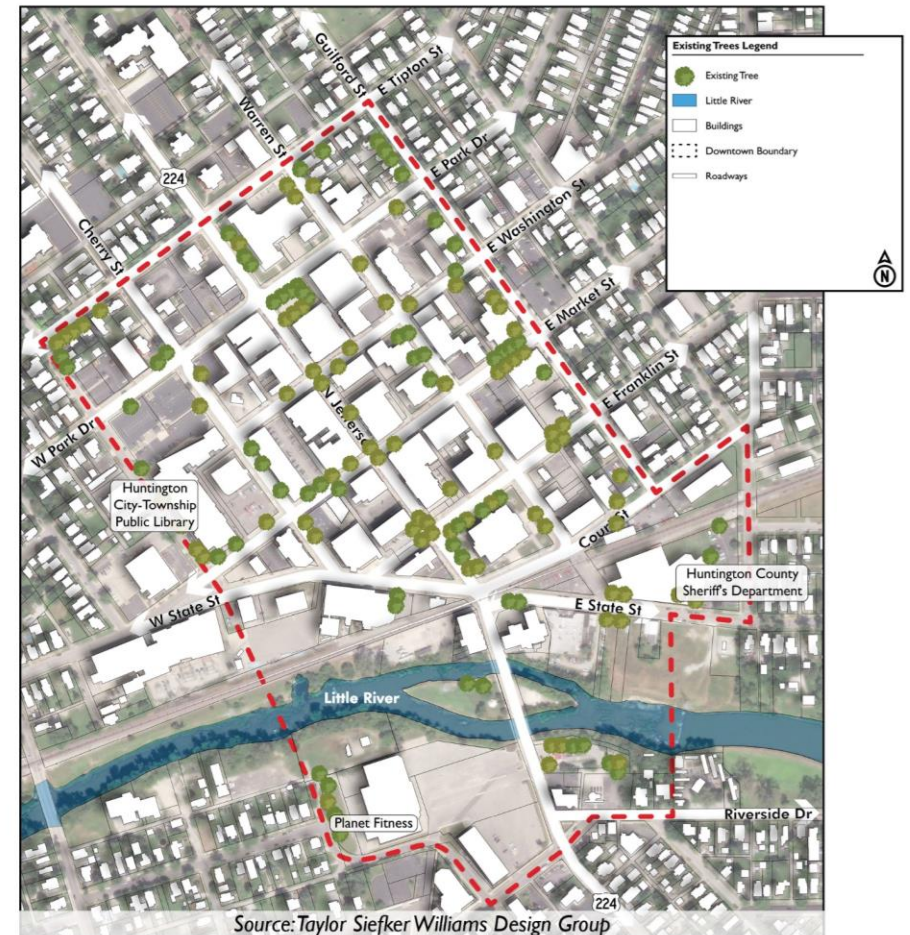
There were 17 sites identified as being underutilized. These areas are majority open land or surface parking lots. In addition, there are 18 inactive utility addresses within the downtown area, signifying that they are most likely vacant. These are sites that are prime candidates for marketing towards redevelopment or new development activities.



URBANTREE CANOPY

The existing tree network downtown is fragmented with minimal coverage throughout. In addition, many existing trees are non-native species that are invasive to Indiana's climate zone. Existing tree coverage does not extend above 20 feet in most areas, providing limited shading.

A consistent tree coverage in downtown Huntington will establish a greater identity, promote greater walkability, reduce seasonal temperatures, and reduce vehicular speeds. Residents have identified a desire for greater natural vegetation in the downtown area and appropriate tree species selection and placement which promote better long-term viability of the tree canopy while not impeding, or covering, existing physical buildings.



02

Community Engagement



INTRODUCTION

The *Huntington Destination Downtown Master Plan* is founded on the shared voices and ideas of the community. The planning process emphasized broad and meaningful input through a variety of formats including both in-person and digital media. This chapter summarizes the outreach and engagement opportunities that were conducted as well as the results of those efforts. Key outreach statistics that highlight the outreach efforts are also included to provide additional context regarding participant perceptions of downtown.

The planning team used a variety of methods and tools to gather input and feedback throughout the *Huntington Destination Downtown Master Plan* planning process. A summary of which is highlighted below with a more detailed description of the various activities on the following pages.



Over 300 Community Members Engaged In The Huntington Destination Downtown Master Plan Process.



Greater Than 1,469 Interactive Feedback Dots Used At The Public Workshops



Over 95 Public Workshop Attendees



More Than 200 Online And Paper Survey Respondents



14 Locations Selected For The Mobile Display



13 Steering Committee Members



STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee of 13 engaged stakeholders was formed to help guide the planning process. The Steering Committee includes representatives from City Staff, City and County Council, downtown businesses, community groups, and local institutions.

The Steering Committee was tasked with ensuring that the plan content reflects the values of stakeholders and the broader Huntington Community. This group acted as a sounding board to review the plan findings, concepts, and recommendations.

The following Steering Committee meetings took place throughout the planning process:



Steering Committee Meeting #2 Feedback



Steering Committee Meeting #1 Introduction



Steering Committee Meeting #1 Introduction



Steering Committee Meeting #2 Analysis

Steering Committee Summary: Meeting #1

The first Steering Committee Meeting was held on June 16, 2023. During this meeting the committee and consultant team performed an initial site inventory and discussed downtown Huntington's current conditions, projects in the process of completion, and opportunities/challenges currently in the downtown.

A presentation explaining the master planning process, the roles and responsibilities the committee obtained throughout, and a summary of the inventory collected to date was provided.

In conclusion, committee members were given an assignment to rank their perception of downtown elements, including infrastructure and land use issues.

Steering Committee Summary: Meeting #2

The second Steering Committee Meeting was held on August 14, 2023. During this meeting, the consultant team presented their initial findings of the current demographic conditions of Huntington in comparison to the four comparative communities.

In addition, a physical analysis was performed for the downtown study area. The purpose of this was to lay a foundation for the remainder of the planning process.

In conclusion, future public outreach events were discussed, including the launch of the project website, mobile display, and initial public surveys. Committee members were also given two additional tasks to complete in the visioning of downtown's future including a prioritizing of catalyst projects and an establishing of key project sites/areas.

Steering Committee Summary: Meeting #3

A third Steering Committee Meeting was held on November 30, 2023. During this meeting, a vast array of public outreach components for the project were summarized and discussed to better understand public and business desires.

From these summaries, and prior Steering Committee exercises/feedback, the consultant team developed a proposed Downtown Vision Statement and five key goal categories which were then discussed with the Steering Committee.

Members were asked to rank the level of priority and provide feedback on the proposed vision statement and goals/objectives.

Steering Committee Summary: Meeting #4 & #5

The fourth and fifth Steering Committee Meetings were held on January 22, 2024 and March 19, 2024 respectively.

The fourth Steering Committee Meeting analyzed the updated vision statement, goals, and objectives. This meeting also presented an opportunity to present a draft of the final downtown master plan document and gain feedback.

During the fifth Steering Committee Meeting, the group reviewed the draft of the downtown master plan and provided additional feedback prior to plan presentation to council.

PUBLIC INPUT WORKSHOPS

Feedback Summary: Public Workshop #1

Two Public Input Workshops were held to engage with the broader Huntington community. The first session was held to inform the public about the planning process, better understand public perceptions regarding downtown, and to generate “Big Ideas” for potential project opportunities.

On September 14, 2023 over sixty community members attended the first Public Workshop to learn about the *Huntington Destination Downtown Master Plan* planning process. At this session, held at the Huntington Arts and Entrepreneurial Center, the team utilized a variety of interactive stations. These stations prompted attendees to the appropriateness of certain development types, where they work, shop, or live downtown, what design elements are apparent currently compared to those that are not apparent, as well as which land uses and amenities are priorities for downtown Huntington. Page 38 includes highlights of the input from this workshop.



Public Workshop #1 Station #2



Public Workshop #1 Station #1



Public Workshop #1 Station #1



Public Workshop #1 Station #3

Feedback Summary: Public Workshop #2

A second Public Workshop was held to provide input on downtown Huntington's future and respond to the proposed Downtown Vision Statement, Project Goals and Objectives, and Action Steps. In addition, the public was able to prioritize potential project specific initiatives, programs, and policies related to downtown.

On January 31, 2024 over 36 community members attended the second Public Workshop to provide input to the draft project recommendations. The Pathfinder Arts and Entrepreneurial Center hosted this public workshop. At this open house, the team utilized interactive stations to allow the community to respond to which action steps they desire to be prioritized as well as provide general feedback. The public provided a range of input to the draft recommendations which page 39 highlights.



Public Workshop #2 Gallery



Public Workshop #2 Goal #1



Public Workshop #2 Goals 3 & 4



Public Workshop #2 Goal #1

ONLINE PRESENCE

Huntington Destination Downtown Project Website

The planning team developed a project website for the downtown master plan at huntingtondowntownplan.com. This website provided on-going project updates, hosted presentation materials and other documentation, and served as an avenue to gather community input.

Interactive Online Activities

Interactive online activities were made available throughout the course of the planning process to reach as wide of an audience as possible, including those that may prefer to engage in a digital format. To accomplish this, several tools were utilized, which are described below.

Interactive Map

An interactive map was used to gather place-based comments and ideas from the community. This information was used by the planning team to focus efforts on key opportunity sites or areas for improvement. The input from the interactive map activities can be found on the following page.

Ideas Wall

An ideas wall was also created to capture and organize the community's vision, priorities, big ideas, and other thoughts into a visually interesting format that encourages interaction between community members through up-voting and discussion. Comments posted on the ideas wall were added to the list of comments generated throughout the planning process.

Project website

Online interactive map

Do something with the east side of bridge island. Looks bad. Fence? Bushes? Stores stay open later on Fridays.

Start a discussion

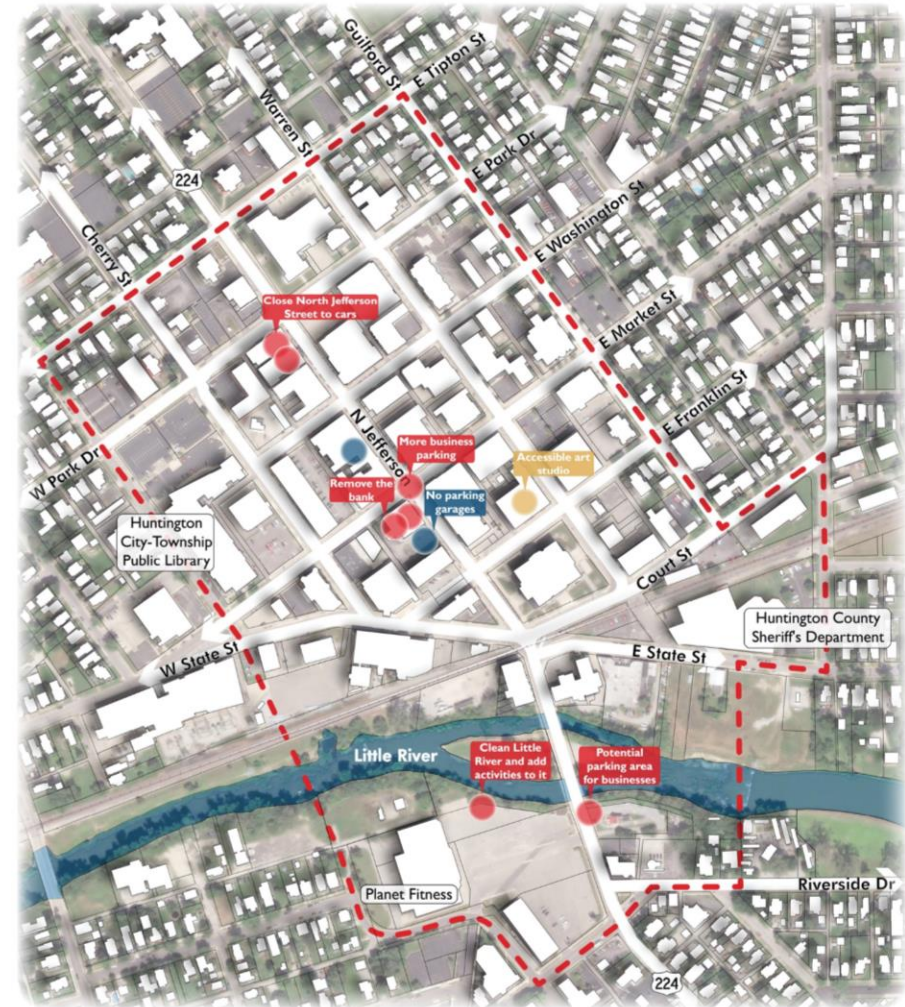
Places and Destinations | 4 months ago

Until you divert semi-truck jeff and send them up: dream will never become North Jefferson for 27+ y steadily increased. I see r cross downtown streets r turns around downtown Diesel fumes, noise and t over by such a massive v from going downtown. # there.

Start a discussion

Roads and Sidewalks | 4 mont

Online ideas wall



- Legend**
- Ideas and Suggestions
 - Something I Like
 - Something I Dislike
 - Make a Comment
 - Little River
 - Buildings
 - Downtown Boundary



Online Interactive Map Results

The map above depicts the results from the online interactive mapping activity. The animations on the map above summarize the comments left. Once a user placed a pin on the map, they were given the option to add a comment as to why they chose to place a dot there. Users placed dots on a map according to several prompts:

- Ideas and Suggestion
- Something I Dislike
- Something I Like
- Make A Comment

MOBILE DISPLAY

A Mobile Display was developed to broaden input from the Huntington community outside of the traditional public meetings and online presence. The display was used to advertise and promote the plan to better inform the public about the planning process, ultimately gaining insight and additional input to guide the plan, and to build support for the plan outcomes.

The Mobile Display was placed in over 13 locations during a two-month time frame, including Huntington Municipal Airport, the Pioneer Festival, and Huntington University Merillat Centre for the Arts. During this time period, community members had the opportunity to respond to multiple questions to help better understand the existing condition of downtown as well as identifying community desires for downtown Huntington. These questions prompted attendees to share ways they would enhance downtown, what they currently love, what the current challenges are, and what future priorities should be. The input received, highlights, and key takeaways from the Mobile Display can be found on the following pages.

Mobile Display Feedback Summary

What do you love about downtown?

- “Easily walkable and great food options”
- “Businesses that are unique to Huntington”
- “Small Town feel”
- “Looking at all of the historic architecture”
- “There is a store for all of my favorite hobbies”
- “Downtown is safe and relatively clean”



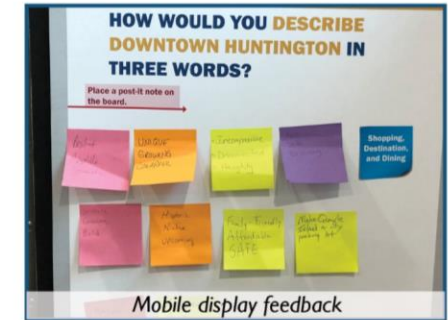
What improvements are of the most importance?



Mobile Display Feedback Summary

How would you describe downtown in three words?

- “Safe, Growing, Fun”
- “Family Friendly, Affordable, Safe”
- “Old Fashioned, Walkable, Free”
- “Historic, Upcoming, Niche”
- “Incompatible, Disconnected, Undeveloped”
- “Adaptable”



What should be prioritized in the future?



What is your big idea for downtown?

- “Riverfront park and path”
- “Housing options”
- “Entertainment options for all ages”
- “Improve building facades and interiors”
- “Divert truck traffic from 224 & 5 to Broadway”
- “Add a farmer’s market, or grocery store”





PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

Online Presence

Online tools revealed an overwhelming response of ideas and suggestions for the downtown study area. Popular topics discussed were the need for parking, development and redevelopment of sites, as well as Little River utilization for recreational purposes.

Public Workshops

Public Workshops gained a consensus that downtown is growing and possesses potential for future development, programming, and events. Overwhelming support for riverfront development and natural integrations, such as parks and open space, was observed as well as a need for downtown events and management.

Mobile Display

The Mobile Display was available at numerous locations throughout the community. Community Feedback from participants revealed a desire to amplify downtown through the enhancement of new development, events, and programming that are gaining momentum.

Public Surveys

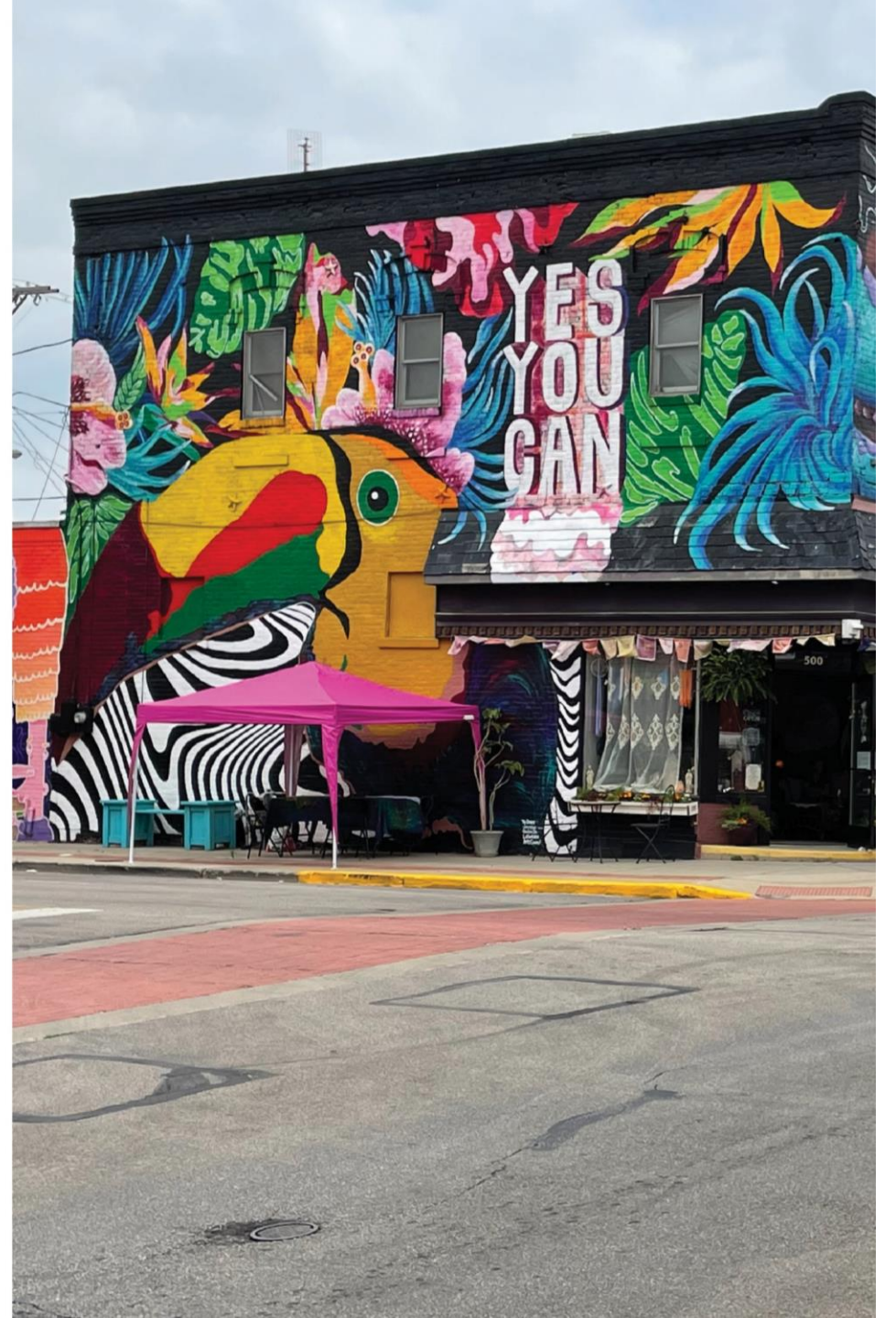
Residents were asked to answer a variety of questions regarding perceptions of downtown and the priorities it should address for the plan. An overall consensus was reached that downtown is improving but still lacks in certain categories that need addressed such as safety, youth entertainment, and public restroom facilities. When asked what priorities should be the key focus, highlighted votes include grocery store and entertainment business development, safe and consistent sidewalk and trail connections, parks and trail programming with a focus along the Little River, downtown marketing and community gathering spaces, and facade enhancement and homeless shelter funding.

Business Owner Survey

Business owners feel downtown is a prime location for commerce but feel the business environment could be more collaborative and needs such as accessibility and marketing could be enhanced.

03

Recommendations



PLAN FRAMEWORK

As a result of the inventory and extensive public dialogue, a framework for recommendations has been established that builds upon the broad community vision for downtown. The resulting plan recommendations are representative of the community's values, ideas, and priorities, building directly on the local input.

This chapter outlines the recommendation for *Huntington Destination Downtown Master Plan*: a collection of projects, policies, and programs that will guide the community toward its goals for the future. This chapter is divided into five sections, representing each of the major plan topic areas covered in this plan. Each section adheres to a consistent format, starting with the topic goal and existing conditions and trends, followed by a summary of the recommendations. Each of the topic areas addressed support the vision statement for downtown and outline a series of physical improvement, policy, and administrative recommendations.

Each goal, objective, and action step focuses on key areas of the downtown's success and sustainability. Each of the five topic areas outlined in this section support the overall vision statement for downtown which is to reinforce the area as the "Heart of Huntington".

Vision:

An inspiration statement that broadly defines a community's values and ideal future

Goal:

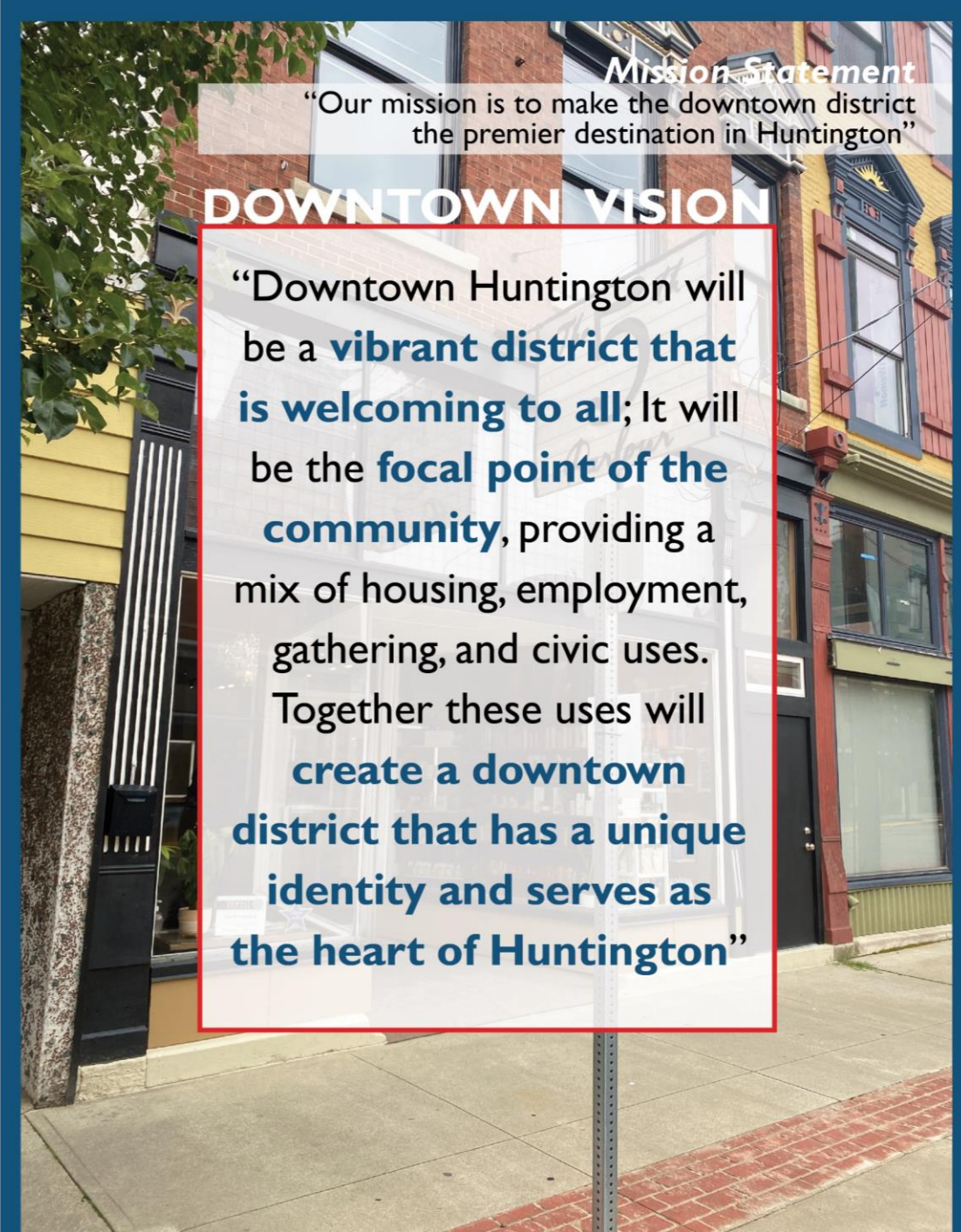
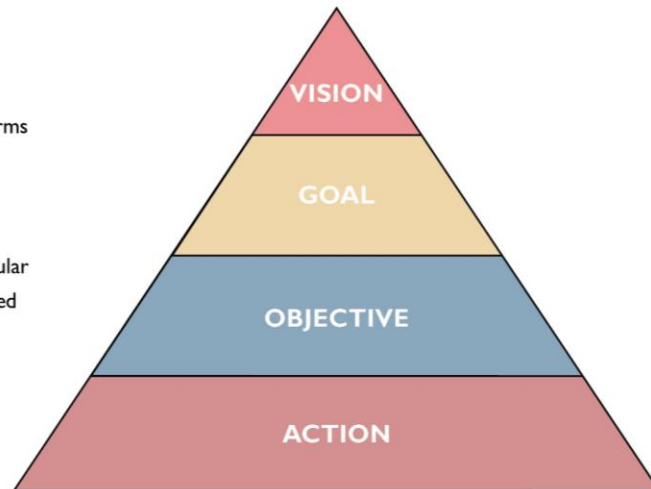
A broad, desired outcome for the community expressed in simple terms for each of the plan's topic areas

Objective:

Elements that define what a particular goal means, providing a more refined sense of direction

Action:

A strategy to achieve a corresponding objective





GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Like the vision statement, goals are broad statements that provide another level of specificity and articulate areas of specific focus related to an identified topic. For the purposes of this planning effort, five overarching plan goals were identified that capture the key focus areas for downtown. These goal statements identify the intended outcomes of this plan and are outlined in detail in the following pages. The five goals were crafted to organize the key recommendations around similar areas of focus.

- 1) Development
- 2) Connectivity
- 3) Destinations
- 4) Vitality
- 5) Administration

The following renderings are conceptual illustrations that demonstrate a potential solution for each goal focus area. The image is meant to promote community discussion while providing a realistic solution that the goal, and its actions, are striving to achieve.

#1: DEVELOPMENT

#2: CONNECTIVITY

#3: DESTINATIONS

#4: VITALITY

#5: ADMINISTRATION



DEVELOPMENT

Conceptual Image: US 224 South Of The Bridge Facing Etna Ave.

GOAL 1: Improve downtown development, and supporting systems, to ensure that the district can provide a diverse and accessible set of goods and resources to Huntington’s residents and visitors.

Land use and development decisions are fundamentally important to the form, function, and prosperity of a community. For this reason, development, and investment in downtown, is an essential topic for the Plan.

Many factors contribute to issues related to downtown development recommendations. First and foremost, the community’s vision for its built environment and physical character must take precedent. Other influencing factors include demographic trends, market conditions, infrastructure needs, transportation impacts, fiscal impacts, regional plans, utility decisions, and environmental conservation and protection.

Highlights of feedback related to development issues downtown and key recommendations for development initiatives follow.

What We Heard

All of the feedback shared throughout the process directly informed the development recommendations outlined in this section. Key highlights include:

Public Survey

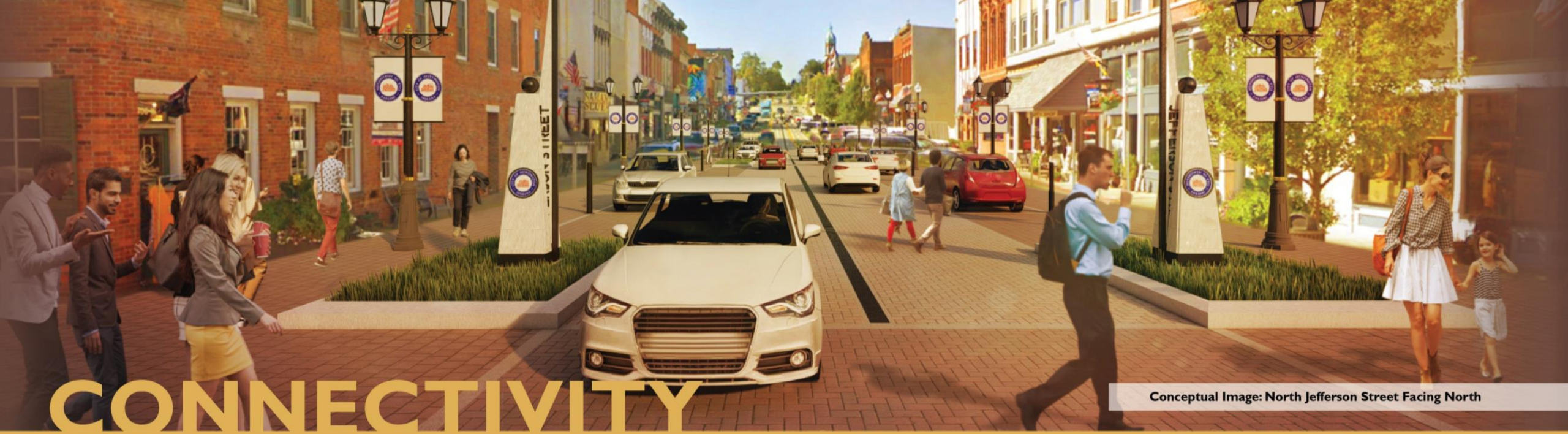
- Downtown is too small and needs to be expanded.
- Keeping storefronts leased increases the likelihood of people continuing to desire downtown.
- Downtown feels dated and there are buildings in need of redevelopment. Preserve historic commercial buildings.

Community Workshop

- Quality housing options and businesses are appropriate.
- Entertainment options are the most important type of development identified.
- Apartment housing is the most important type of housing development identified.

Mobile Display

- Business attraction and retention is the highest priority.
- Majority desire for new housing or businesses south of the Little River.



Conceptual Image: North Jefferson Street Facing North

GOAL 2: Improve and enhance connections into and through downtown to ensure that the area is safe, accessible, and comfortable for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Connectivity focuses on recommendations and concepts for downtown that address all modes of transportation, with a prioritization of pedestrians and bicyclists in addition to automobiles.

Connectivity plays a key role in the dynamics of accessibility between places and, as such, is inherently linked with many other plan priorities. A robust, safe, and connected mobility network can shape change, growth, and support development and long term investment in the greater downtown area.

A summary of the community feedback highlighting connectivity topics as well as recommendations for this goal are on the following pages.

What We Heard

Connectivity issues were top issues identified in the public input process as key factors related to the safety and accessibility of downtown.

Public Survey

- 81.1% of survey respondents drive to downtown Huntington.
- 83.59% of survey respondents are under 65 years old.
- Parking is seen as an issue by a majority of residents.
- North Jefferson Street is desired to become a two-way street by residents.
- 34.86% of respondents shop or dine in downtown Huntington at least once a week.

Community Workshop

- There have been 99 car accidents reported between 2021-2023 within downtown.
- 10,867 people live within a mile of downtown.
- Recreational spaces are the second most important type of development identified.
- Parking is the least apparent in downtown.

Mobile Display

- Connectivity is one of the highest priorities for the future of downtown.
- Majority of street-scape enhancement dots



Conceptual Image: Little River Activation Facing South

GOAL 3: Promote, preserve, and increase the supply of natural features and usable open space throughout downtown to encourage recreation and activation within these spaces.

Supporting and creating unique and attractive destinations is a critical component in reinforcing the character and sense of place downtown. These elements are typically physical developments that can be seen and experienced by all users of downtown. They play a crucial role in attracting people and often can be used to celebrate or highlight unique characteristics of the downtown. Supporting these unique destinations reinforces that downtown is the place to go for community activities, events, entertainment, and commerce.

Public input provided numerous ideas related to downtown destinations. Highlights of those comments, as well as the plan recommendations for this topic, are presented in the following pages.

What We Heard

Destinations along the Little River was a key topic addressed by a majority of outreach efforts. In consensus, all efforts agree that the river will play a vital role in the downtown's future.

Public Survey

- Respondents feel the Little River is currently being underutilized.

Community Workshop

- Riverfront development was voted the most appropriate for downtown.
- Recreational spaces are the second most important type of development identified.

Mobile Display

- The majority of gathering and green space map dots were placed along the Little River from residents.

Steering Committee

- The majority of gathering and green space map dots were placed along the Little River from Steering Committee Members.



Conceptual Image: North Jefferson Street Southern Entrance

VITALITY

GOAL 4: Activate downtown Huntington by providing unique and community focused seasonal events, year-round programming, and promote these activities to the community and region using distinct downtown branding and messaging.

Having a vital downtown is essential to cultivating an activated and dynamic space. The plan objectives focus on creating an active and vital downtown, reinforcing the need to continue to support and elevate both the physical infrastructure, programming, and marketing of the public spaces downtown. Many elements related to the vitality plan goals are not physical recommendations. Rather, they reinforce both existing and new programming and policy initiatives intended to support downtown activity.

A series of project recommendations are supported by public input comments, outlined on the following pages.

What We Heard

Downtown has an dedicated crowd of users who appreciate current offerings and feel enhancements can be made to further reinforce an unique character for the district.

Public Survey

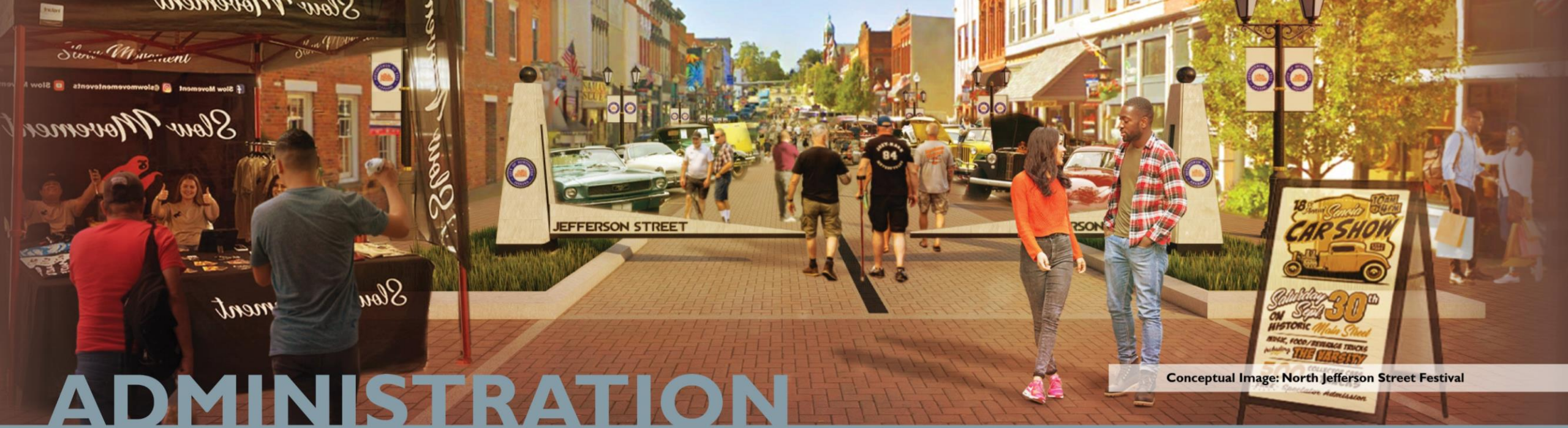
- 80.95% of survey respondents attend festivals and events currently held.
- 87.5% of survey respondents have shopped or dined in downtown Huntington for over four years.

Community Workshop

- Defined character is not apparent currently.
- Parks and open space is the second most appropriate land use in downtown.
- All amenities were identified highly as being appropriate.
- A good mixture of land uses is not apparent.

Mobile Display

- Streetscape enhancements is voted as the highest improvement area.
- Community facilities and programming are the two highest priorities identified for



Conceptual Image: North Jefferson Street Festival

ADMINISTRATION

GOAL 5: Modernize public administration roles, processes, and tools to properly enforce current regulations, incentivize programs and development, and provide flexibility so that we can adapt to changing conditions and priorities.

Providing recommendations related to the administration of downtown programs, policies, and physical investments is key to a more streamlined and efficient function of downtown management. The plan recommendations related to administration elements play a key role in the maintaining and updating of policy enhancement for downtown programs. These updates provide a long-term support system for sustaining and promoting downtown growth, development, and engagement.

The following pages highlight key administrative recommendations that were supported by community input documented during the planning process.

What We Heard

The enhancement and enforcement of administrative roles and tasks is needed in downtown to ensure the maintenance and increase in programming.

Public Survey

- Survey respondents identified homelessness and soliciting as being evident in downtown.
- Parking is currently identified as confusing and lacks proper enforcement.
- Public events and festivals are desired and supported by local citizens.

Community Workshop

- Parking is not apparent in downtown.
- 16 people identified there is opportunities for growth currently.
- Businesses do not work together and there is a bad environment among them.

Mobile Display

- Citizens love events and festivals currently held in downtown.
- Programming is ranked highest in future priorities.

04

Implementation



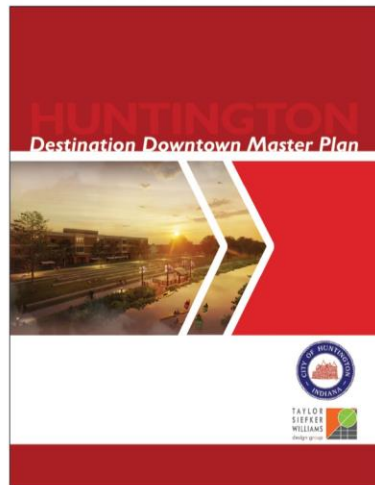
PLAN STEWARDSHIP

Planning does not end with the adoption of the *Huntington Destination Downtown Master Plan*. Rather, the plan must become operationalized by the City of Huntington and community partners as a key reference document for decision making and program development. Ultimately, the outcomes for this plan will result from the strong partnerships of a community-wide effort to achieve implementation success. This section outlines the recommended approach to using, monitoring, and updating the plan on a regular basis.

Using the Plan

The plan should be referenced and used as a tool related to how both public and private decisions are prioritized concerning development, connections, destination, vitality, and administration objectives. It is critical that key selected officials, staff, decision makers, business owners, and developers are familiar with the plan goals and vision. It is recommended that a training session to review the plan goals be facilitated with boards and commissions that influence downtown growth and development. An annual review of the progress of the plan recommendations should also be conducted by staff in order to update key plan priorities or timeline milestones. Additional future planning efforts, including comprehensive planning, economic development planning, community arts planning, parking studies, housing studies and strategies, and visioning studies should include a review of the downtown plan recommendations to better align those planning efforts.

The plan should also be accessible to the general public by utilizing the plan website, accessible via the city site at huntingtondowntownplan.com, to house the final plan document and post updates about plan implementation and key progress.



Plan Orientation



Public Access & Marketing Promotion



Annual Review

Partnerships

Partnerships are key in implementing the *Huntington Destination Downtown Master Plan*. Strengthening, growing, and maintaining partnerships within the community will expand Huntington's capacity to implement actions and goals identified in this plan. As the plan includes a wide variety of goals and objectives, partnerships with private, non-profit, and public organizations will be critical to implementation success. The success of this plan's implementation does not fall on the City of Huntington alone, rather it relies on strong collaboration and participation from multiple organizations in the community. Key potential partnerships for implementation from a variety of sectors include the following:

Public

- City of Huntington
- Huntington Plan Comm.
- Huntington Redev. Comm.
- Huntington County Community School Corp.
- Huntington Historic Review Board
- Huntington County
- Indiana Dept. of Transportation
- Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources
- Indiana Office of Comm. & Rural Affairs
- Huntington City-Township Public Library
- USDA Community Facilities Program
- Indiana Destination Dev. Corporation
- IHCD CreatiNg Places

Private

- Huntington University
- Local Businesses
- Downtown Building Owners
- Residential and Commercial Developers
- Private Philanthropy
- Local Financial Institutions

Non-Profit



- Huntington United Economic Development
- Civic and Faith-Based Organizations
- Huntington Area Recreational Trails Association
- Community Foundation of Huntington County
- Huntington County Visitors Bureau
- Huntington County Chamber of Commerce
- Heritage Days Festival/Event Groups

SUMMARY MATRIX



The table on the following pages is a compilation of the plan goals, objectives, and actions set forth in previous chapters. This matrix connects each action with the city's role as well as identifies potential capital intensity required for implementation. The legend below provides a detailed explanation of each item considered in the matrix and its importance.

City Role


It is recognized that the city cannot always be directly responsible for achieving every recommendation specified in this plan. In a lot of cases, there will be financial, legal, or other constraints that require numerous agencies participation to achieve a specific action. Some projects are significant enough that they will involve buy-in or collaboration from numerous partnerships. As a means of better highlighting the scale of role by the city, the matrix identifies those that they control and those that they can influence.

-  **Control** - Actions the city can directly carry out.
-  **Influence** - Actions the city desires to achieve or make progress on, but cannot do so on its own without outside involvement from other agencies or partners, or where decision making by private parties largely drives the outcome.


Time Frame

-  **Specific** - Actions that are time-bound projects or initiatives that will eventually be completed.
-  **Ongoing** - Actions that are ongoing, general policy directives and do not have an end date.

Priority

-  The priority indicator is used to call special attention to recommendations of great community importance based on community engagement feedback.

Capital Intensity

-  This tool is used to highlight a projects estimated cost from beginning to completion. Its serves in assisting the community in better understanding the fundraising needed for the implementation of the actions.

How to Use the Matrix

The graphic below provides an overview on understanding the components of the implementation matrix.

- 1 Section** - Each section is a particular element or topic of the Downtown Master Plan.
- 2 Goal Statement** - The goal statement is an aspirational statement that describes a desired future or outcome. Each section has an accompanying goal statement.
- 3 Objective** - An objective is a participial step to achieve a goal. Each objective is numbered according to the order in which it appears in the plan (eg. 1-1, 1-2, etc.).
- 4 Actions** - Each action is numbered in relation to the objective to which it is contributing, followed by the order in which it appears in the plan (eg. 1-1, 1-2, etc.).
- 5 City Role** - The city role column indicates whether an action is directly within the purview of the City of Huntington or whether it is an action that the City can influence with the help of other partners.
- 6 Time Frame** - The time frame column indicates whether an action is specific and time-bound or an ongoing policy directive.
- 7 Capital Intensity** - The capital intensity column indicates an estimated cost associated with the action statement on a rating from one (\$), for the least expensive projects, up to five (\$\$\$\$\$) for the most expensive projects.
- 8 Priority** - An action is designated as a priority if the community agreed that it is very important and will help Huntington achieve its goals and vision for downtown. It should be noted Council may choose to shift priorities annually over time, in response to community desires and preferences.

1	SECTION HEADER			
2	Goal Statement:			
3	Objective			
4	Action	Action Statement		
8	Action	Action Statement		
	Action	Action Statement		
	Action	Action Statement		

DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1: Improve downtown development, and supporting systems, to ensure that the district can provide a diverse and accessible set of goods and resources to Huntington's residents and visitors.

Land Use/Development District Objectives		City Role	Time Frame	Capital Intensity
1-1	Increase available entertainment business options.	🚫	🔄	\$\$\$
1-2	Increase the diversity of land use within downtown.	●	🔄	\$\$
1-3	Capitalize on land available for development.	●	🔄	\$\$\$\$
1-4	Consider establishment of a unique tax district within downtown to support maintenance and beautification enh.	●	🛑	\$
1-5	Create new development opportunities along the Little River.	🚫	🔄	\$\$\$\$
Infill and Redevelopment Objectives		City Role	Time Frame	Capital Intensity
1-6	Favor infill development over physical expansion of the downtown district where possible.	🚫	🔄	\$\$\$
1-7	Incentivize quality commercial and residential development to increase foot traffic.	🚫	🔄	\$\$\$
1-8	Encourage quality residential options throughout downtown.	🚫	🔄	\$
1-9	Develop a grocery store within the downtown area.	🚫	🛑	\$\$\$
1-10	Target commercial redevelopment opportunities along the Little River.	🚫	🔄	\$\$\$\$
Parking Objectives		City Role	Time Frame	Capital Intensity
1-11	Include public parking locations in wayfinding signage. (as recommended by previous parking study)	●	🛑	\$
1-12	Install and maintain angled and parallel parking options where scale of street allows for additional on-street park.	●	🔄	\$\$
1-13	Increase handicap accessible parking options along North Jefferson Street. (if possible by 3-5%)	●	🛑	\$\$
1-14	Monitor the current 4-hour long-term parking along Cherry and Warren Streets and adjust as appropriate.	●	🛑	\$
1-15	If demand warrants, consider supporting the creation of a parking structure to service downtown.	🚫	🔄	\$\$\$\$\$

CONNECTIVITY

Goal 2: Improve and enhance connections into and through downtown to ensure that the area is safe, accessible, and comfortable for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Vehicular Transportation Objectives		City Role	Time Frame	Capital Intensity
2-1	Where appropriate, reduce the width of vehicular travel lanes on city-controlled streets.	●	🔄	\$\$\$
2-2	Implement an increase in native street trees.	●	🔄	\$\$
2-3	Implement Complete Street principles and practices in public infrastructure projects.	●	🔄	\$\$\$
2-4	Evaluate returning North Jefferson Street to two-way traffic, requiring parallel parking instead of angled.	●	🛑	\$\$\$\$
2-5	Implement a zero-curb design along North Jefferson Street	●	🛑	\$\$\$\$\$
Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes Objectives		City Role	Time Frame	Capital Intensity
2-6	Maintain and expand street lighting throughout downtown.	●	🔄	\$\$
2-7	Implement consistent and safe sidewalk connections throughout downtown.	●	🔄	\$\$\$\$
2-8	Install "curb bump outs" at appropriate intersections to protect parking and enhance pedestrian safety.	●	🔄	\$\$\$
2-9	Install pedestrian activated crossing lights at each intersection along US 224.	●	🔄	\$\$
2-10	Display clear crosswalks at all intersections downtown using materials such as paint, brick, or stamped concrete.	●	🛑	\$\$
2-11	Maintain and expand parking identification signage throughout downtown.	●	🔄	\$
2-12	Install planted verge/stormwater retention areas at curb bump outs where appropriate.	●	🔄	\$\$
2-13	Place barriers to protect bicycle lanes where feasible.	●	🔄	\$\$
2-14	Place movable planter box barriers adjacent to trails when adjacent to travel lanes.	●	🔄	\$
2-15	Develop a unique trail or greenway that connects existing trails to downtown.	●	🔄	\$\$\$

DESTINATIONS

Goal 3: Promote, preserve, and increase the supply of natural features and usable open space throughout downtown to encourage recreation and activation within these spaces.

Public Open Space Objectives		City Role	Time Frame	Capital Intensity
3-1	Introduce native vegetation on public open space areas adjacent to Little River corridor currently underutilized.	●	↻	\$
3-2	Create parks and trail programming on public open land where available, especially adjacent to the Little River.	◐	→	\$\$
3-3	Develop civic activation within open space that is outside of the floodplain.	◐	→	\$
3-4	Institute a central community gathering space adjacent to the Little River.	●	→	\$\$\$
3-5	Develop overlook areas near areas of interest, history, or recreation.	●	→	\$\$

Riverfront Objectives		City Role	Time Frame	Capital Intensity
3-6	Redevelop the Little River's bank to support water activation and floodplain control.	●	→	\$\$\$
3-7	Program the Little River, through recreational opportunities such as kayaking, to promote its activation and utilization as a recreational resource in downtown.	◐	↻	\$\$
3-8	Identify and incorporate potential park/open space development options for floodplain areas along the Little River.	◐	↻	\$\$

VITALITY

Goal 4: Activate Downtown Huntington by providing unique and community focused seasonal events, year-round programming, and promoting these activities to the community and region using distinct downtown branding and messaging.

Marketing Objectives		City Role	Time Frame	Capital Intensity
4-1	Continue and expand the marketing of downtown programs, events, and festivals marketed and programmed distinctly.	◐	↻	\$
4-2	Implement downtown branding through logo and website development.	◐	→	\$
4-3	Re-establish a Main Street Organization or Downtown Merchants Association (or similar)	◐	→	\$

VITALITY

Goal 4: Activate Downtown Huntington by providing unique and community focused seasonal events, year-round programming, and promoting these activities to the community and region using distinct downtown branding and messaging.

Programming Objectives		City Role	Time Frame	Capital Intensity
4-4	Grow and support consistent downtown events throughout the year.	◐	↻	\$
4-5	Develop a flexible indoor/outdoor space for community events.	●	→	\$\$\$\$
4-6	Provide a mix of programming suitable for all age groups.	◐	↻	\$
4-7	Encourage a consistency in business hours among businesses.	◐	→	\$

Branding Objectives		City Role	Time Frame	Capital Intensity
4-8	Use decorative paving materials to enhance the unique character of the downtown district.	●	↻	\$\$\$
4-9	Encourage the use of native landscaping throughout downtown and the riverfront corridor.	◐	↻	\$
4-10	Continue to install/maintain decorative lights to provide safety lighting and promote unique district character.	●	↻	\$\$
4-11	Add signage and landscaping at major entry points in downtown Huntington to refresh the gateway experience.	●	→	\$\$
4-12	Install wayfinding signage throughout downtown that aligns with trail signage.	●	→	\$\$
4-13	Add historic markers/historic culture trail to buildings and sites downtown.	●	→	\$
4-14	Work with INDOT to coordinate enhanced signage options along US 224 (gateway, wayfinding).	●	↻	\$
4-15	Regularly make existing public restroom in courthouse available or install a public restroom within the downtown area that is accessible to all.	●	→	\$\$
4-16	Develop murals and public art that are distinct to Huntington and incorporate district color palettes and labeling.	◐	↻	\$\$
4-17	Utilize existing logo and branding for the downtown to include in the built environment and marketing efforts that supports the existing "Heart of Huntington" brand.	◐	↻	\$

ADMINISTRATION

Goal 5: Modernize public administration roles, processes, and tools to properly enforce current regulations, incentivize programs and development, and provide flexibility so that we can adapt to changing conditions and priorities.

<i>Public Policy Objectives</i>		<i>City Role</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>	<i>Capital Intensity</i>
5-1	Consider downtown updates to the Huntington Zoning Code to include a hybrid of use-based and form-based approaches to standards.	●	↻	\$
5-2	Adopt a complete streets policy for the downtown area.	●	↔	\$
5-3	Review B-I zoning downtown for appropriate design standards/uses and amend as appropriate.	●	↻	\$
<i>Incentives and Resources Objectives</i>		<i>City Role</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>	<i>Capital Intensity</i>
5-4	Monitor the current TIF as it impacts the downtown district.	●	↻	\$
5-5	Provide funding to homelessness organizations to develop/enhance an overnight shelter.	⊘	↔	\$\$
5-6	Encourage the utilization of existing Commercial Facade and Roof Grant (CFRG) and/or loan program.	●	↻	\$\$\$
5-7	Consider tax abatement incentives for transformative downtown projects.	●	↻	\$\$

ADMINISTRATION

Goal 5: Modernize public administration roles, processes, and tools to properly enforce current regulations, incentivize programs and development, and provide flexibility so that we can adapt to changing conditions and priorities.

<i>Oversight Objectives</i>		<i>City Role</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>	<i>Capital Intensity</i>
5-8	Hire a part-time or full-time manager/director for downtown programming and administration, a Main Street Organization or a Downtown Business Association.	⊘	↔	\$\$
5-9	Adopt a Riverfront District for the downtown area.	●	↔	\$
5-10	Consider adopting/enhancing a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) for the downtown area.	●	↔	\$
5-11	Enforce two-hour and four-hour parking zones and permit lots.	●	↻	\$
5-12	Continue to support police presence and visibility throughout downtown.	●	↻	\$
5-13	Continue to support work/share collaborative spaces downtown.	⊘	↻	\$\$
5-14	Re-engage downtown merchants/Business Coalition/Main Street Organizations.	⊘	↔	\$
5-15	Consider downtown exterior review design guidelines.	●	↔	\$
5-16	Consider the reduction of the speed limit for the east-west streets of Franklin, Market, and Washington.	●	↔	\$

05
Appendix





TOOLS, RESOURCES, AND FUNDING

Various tools, programs, and funding sources are available through a local, state, and/or federal scale. The following tools, programs, grants, and other resources are those the City of Huntington may be able to utilize in implementing the goals of this plan. This list is current as of February 2024 and is expected to evolve in the years after the plan's adoption.

Funding and Programs

Tax Abatement

Tax abatement is a phase-in of property taxes and is intended to encourage development in areas that would not otherwise develop. Tax Abatement is one of the tools widely used by municipal governments to attract new businesses to the community, or to encourage investment in new equipment or facilities that will improve the company while stabilizing the community's economy. Communities may develop procedures for abatement application and policies on the amount and length of the abatement that will be approved and procedures to ensure compliance with the terms of the statement of benefits.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a powerful financing tool used to fund economic development and investment in infrastructure. This tool uses taxes on future gains in real estate values to pay for new infrastructure improvements within the district. Huntington has two designated TIF districts while the downtown is included in the larger of the two that covers the majority of city TIF districts. It is recommended that the downtown area compose a unique TIF district for downtown specific development and redevelopment.

Developer Funded Infrastructure

Similar to impact fees, communities can also fund infrastructure improvements by having the developer cover those costs directly. These can include roadway improvements, stormwater infrastructure, and other related utilities that may need expanded due to development. However, the improvement must be directly related to and proportionate to the new development's impact.

Impact Fees

An impact fee is a charge on new development to pay for the cost of infrastructure and related services that are necessitated by and benefit the new development. The fee is based on the type of development assessed for the increase in the burden on infrastructure. Fees contribute to a non-reverting fund and can be used for infrastructure improvements and amenities including park and recreation and multi-modal projects.



PUBLIC OUTREACH AND PARTICIPATION

The following pages are a complete compilation of all public feedback received across multiple outreach tools as well as documented attendance of both public workshop sessions held in downtown Huntington. Outreach components include public and downtown business owner surveys, mobile display boards, public open houses, interactive online activities, and steering committee meetings. They are organized in the following manner:



Downtown Business Owner Surveys



Online Public Surveys



Mobile Display



2 Public Workshops



Moving Forward

Priority Key Takeaways

Goal #1: Development

Encourage quality development and redevelopment throughout downtown in order to promote a unique district with diverse land uses. In addition, increase parking awareness and accessibility for all users.

Goal #2: Connectivity

Implement safe and consistent connectivity networks that promote multimodal transportation and an increase in its overall quality of use.

Goal #3: Destinations

Focus attention to the Little River and provide adequate programming and gathering spaces for community activities.

Goal #4: Vitality

Downtown must establish and advertise its unique identity through branding, staffing, and physical enhancements.

Goal #5: Administration

Review current downtown policy, organizations, and unique district enhancements to promote increased activation and community/business participation

Project Schedule

LEARN

Inventory and Analysis ●●●

DREAM

Concept Development ●●●

IMPLEMENT

Design Implementation ●●●





Huntington Destination Downtown Master Plan