



Middlebury

Grown from Tradition

CULTIVATE • BUILD • THRIVE
—2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN—





APPROVED BY THE:

Elkhart County Planning Commission - July 9, 2020

Town of Middlebury Town Council - July 20, 2020

Elkhart County Board of Commissioners - August 17, 2020

PREPARED FOR:

Town of Middlebury &
Middlebury Chamber of Commerce

PREPARED BY:



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MIDDLEBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Miranda Cripe	President
Dan Shoup	Vice-President
Scott Miller	Member
Chuck Teall	Member
Jeremy Yahwak	Member

ELKHART COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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ELKHART COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Frank Lucchese	Vice-President
Suzanne M. Weirick	Member

STEERING COMMITTEE

Dan Frederick	Former Town Council Member, Town of Middlebury
Gary O'Dell	Former Town Council Member, Town of Middlebury
Jane Allen	Superintendent, Middlebury Community Schools
Jason Auvil	Planning Manager & Zoning Administrator, Elkhart County Planning & Development
Jason Bontrager	President, Middlebury Chamber of Commerce
Jeremy Yahwak	Town Council Member, Town of Middlebury
John McKee	President, Middlebury Park Board
Kent Yoder	President, MDK Enterprises, LLC
Lance Miller	CFO, Das Dutchman Essenhaus Inc.
Levi King	President, King Corporation
Mary Cripe	Town Manager, Town of Middlebury
Matt Shoup	Co-Owner, Cardinal Bus Inc.
Mike Huber	Planner, Abonmarche
Miranda Cripe	Town Council President, Town of Middlebury
Monica Skibbe	Resident
Peggy Hutchison	Town Clerk-Treasurer, Town of Middlebury
Roger Huffman	L&W Engineering Inc.
Sam Hoover	Executive Vice President & COO, First State Bank
Sheri Howland	Director, Middlebury Chamber of Commerce
Sherm Hansen	Advancement Director, Elkhart County Economic Development Corporation
Wilbur Bontrager	Former Chairman of the Board Jayco

TOWN COUNCIL APPROVAL

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-12

RESOLUTION ADOPTING MIDDLEBURY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS Indiana Code § 36-1-3 permits any unit in the State of Indiana to exercise any power or to perform any function necessary to the public interest in the context of its governmental or internal affairs, which is not prohibited by the Constitution of the United States or of the State of Indiana, or denied or pre-empted by any other law, or is not expressly granted by any other law to another governmental entity;

WHEREAS the Town Council of the Town of Middlebury, Indiana is the Town legislative body and is by law authorized to adopt ordinances and resolutions for the performance of functions for the Town of Middlebury, Indiana;

WHEREAS the Town of Middlebury, Indiana has reviewed and considered the 2006 Elkhart County Comprehensive Plan as applicable to the Town of Middlebury and has developed a proposed amendment to the 2006 Elkhart County Comprehensive Plan as applicable for the Town of Middlebury, Indiana known as the Town of Middlebury 2030 Comprehensive Plan;

WHEREAS the Town of Middlebury, Indiana submitted an application to amend the 2006 Elkhart County Comprehensive Plan, as applicable in the Town of Middlebury, Indiana, known as the Town of Middlebury 2030 Comprehensive Plan;

WHEREAS after proper legal notice and a public hearing was held as provided by applicable law, the Elkhart County Plan Commission did find that all elements of the law had been met and did on the 9th day of July, 2020 recommend to amend the 2006 Elkhart County Comprehensive Plan, as applicable for the Town of Middlebury, Indiana, with the Town of Middlebury 2030 Comprehensive Plan;

WHEREAS the Elkhart County Plan Commission has filed and certified its recommendation with the Town Council of the Town of Middlebury, Indiana and the Board of Commissioners of the County of Elkhart, Indiana;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED, ESTABLISHED, AND RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Middlebury, Indiana as follows:

1. Pursuant to Indiana Code Section 36-7-4-509, the Town Council of the Town of Middlebury, Indiana does hereby approve and adopt the Town of Middlebury 2030 Comprehensive Plan as an amendment to the 2006 Elkhart County Comprehensive Plan to be applicable in and the governing comprehensive plan for the Town of Middlebury, Indiana.

2. The Town of Middlebury 2030 Comprehensive Plan shall be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the Middlebury Clerk-Treasurer and at the Elkhart County Department of Planning and Zoning. In addition, the Town of Middlebury 2030 Comprehensive Plan shall be placed on file in the Office of the Elkhart County Recorder.

3. This Resolution shall be effective upon its date of adoption.

RESOLVED this 20th day of July, 2020.

TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF
MIDDLEBURY, INDIANA

By: Miranda Cripe
Miranda Cripe, President

By: Dan Shoup
Dan Shoup, Vice President

By: Scott Miller
Scott Miller

By: Chuck Teall
Chuck Teall

By: Jeremy Yahwak
Jeremy Yahwak

ATTEST:

Peggy A. Hutchison
Peggy A. Hutchison
Middlebury Clerk-Treasurer

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OUR VISION

“The Town of Middlebury, grown from tradition, is a welcoming, thriving community for all ages. A place committed to an entrepreneurship zest while maintaining a safe, family-oriented environment with quality education, innovation, and community involvement.”

OUR PLAN

The process of strategic planning allows individuals representing all walks of life from our community to challenge themselves to create strategies, a road map, to guide future development. This planning process addressed twelve strategic topics with community members leading a team to develop their part of the plan. Additional input came through a community questionnaire and small group meetings. The entire process was facilitated by leaders from the Michiana Council of Government.

OUR COMMUNITY

As a community, we have been known as “makers,” ones who thrive on the entrepreneurial spirit to cultivate ideas and then turn those ideas into reality. This spirit is exhibited through a wide diversity of; Amish businesses, Town Center merchants, and multi-national manufacturers. As a community, we have a strong sense of belonging, pride, family values, and a commitment to excellence in education. The planning process is meant to build upon these strengths.

OUR FUTURE

This plan will continue to encourage and support the “makers” spirit and the passing on of the traditional values that have made Middlebury the successful community it is today. It will help guide the strategic investments to continue in the spirit of being “Grown from Tradition.”



Introduction

GROWN FROM TRADITION

We, as a community, have been known as “Makers,” ones who thrive on the entrepreneurial spirit to cultivate ideas and make those ideas a reality. While we appear to be a “small” town when looking down from 30,000 feet in the air, but on the ground, we have a “skyscraper” maker’s mentality of “going big,” and this is shown from our world-leading manufacturing industries, successful local businesses, government leadership and administration, and the volunteerism and dedication from our local residents.

Looking back on the formation of the Middlebury community, Middlebury was built from traditions. Meaning, family-focused values were carried over into the workplaces that cultivated a welcoming, family-friendly atmosphere. An atmosphere that encouraged business leaders and their employees to not see each other from the lens of “job titles” but as family. An atmosphere that built lasting relationships and that encouraged one another to strive for their best and succeed. An atmosphere and spirit that was passed down from generation to generation. An atmosphere that was grown from tradition, reflective from the hard-working, dedicated, and committed families who started Middlebury-families who dreamed of starting a business one-day and turned those dreams into realities by starting businesses that have now grown into world-leading businesses.

OUR PLAN

This comprehensive plan will continue to inspire and guide the Town of Middlebury and community leaders to cultivate and build a thriving and resilient community. This Plan will continue to encourage and support the “Maker’s” spirit and the passing on of the traditional values that have made Middlebury what it is today and to make strategic investments to continue to grow from tradition.

A comprehensive plan strengthens and unifies a community by engaging and empowering all types of residents, regardless of income, age, or disability, to participate and themselves to create an actionable plan, a road map, to guide future development that represents the interests of all residents. This Plan was developed by the vision and input of its community leaders and residents and was organized by a volunteer group of Town officials and staff, business owners, local citizens, and community organizations, known as the Steering Committee. This plan will serve as Middlebury’s blueprint to cultivate and build a thriving and resilient community.

PLANNING PROCESS

Beginning in April of 2019, the Town of Middlebury kicked off the planning process by organizing a Steering Committee to serve as the lead representative body overseeing the development of the plan. Once one of the first activities the Steering Committee participated in was to review the 2011 Comprehensive Strategic Plan and the status of the strategies. The 2011 Comprehensive Strategic Plan served as the base for the development of this plan. The planning team held monthly Steering Committee meetings to go through the five-step planning process (shown on the next two pages) and report on the progress of the plan development.

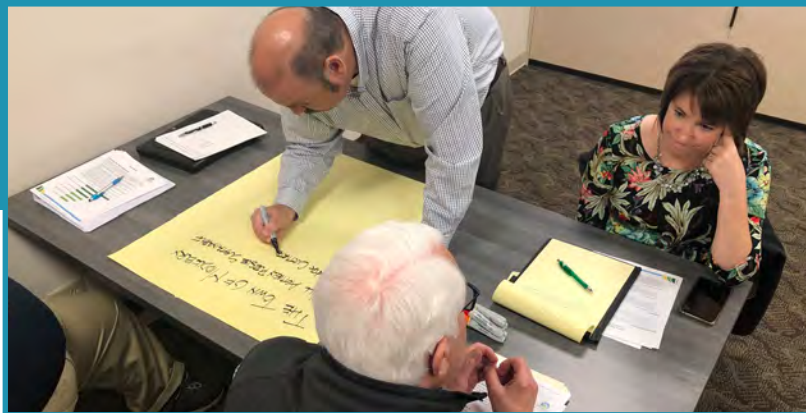
The planning process was designed to engage residents of the Middlebury community in developing a vision for the Town’s future, identify the building blocks the Town values the most, identify the major opportunities and challenges, and action strategies to serve as a guide for local and private decision-making. Additionally, the process was built on the foundation of community involvement through multiple facets that sought input from key stakeholders including Town officials and staff, residents, local business owners, Northridge High School students, and other community organizations. The plan addressed 12 focus areas (strategic topics) that were assembled as focus area teams, led by key community stakeholders to develop an actionable plan for their focus area.



THE FIVE-STEP PLANNING PROCESS:

1

Establish the community vision and core values – This integral step set the stage for the plan development. Several meetings involved vision building exercises that led the Steering Committee to identify what they liked and disliked about Middlebury and community aspects they valued the most. At this time, the Town engaged its residents and key stakeholders through multiple engagement efforts. Rather than hosting one public event to gather input such as an open house, we engaged residents and visitors at the Middlebury Summer and Fall Festivals and held stakeholder Focus Group Workshops. Over 900 postcards notifying participants of a public input survey were distributed at the Summer Festival. At the Fall Festival, the Steering Committee engaged nearly 30 participants using selfie message boards to share their vision of Middlebury in 2030. Coupled with an input survey, we received over 150 individuals to gauge how residents the future of Middlebury, development preferences, and what they value the most. Results of the Public Input Survey are in the Appendix. Middlebury’s 2030 vision statement answers the question of what kind of town we want to be and sets forth principles (Core Values) that address the physical and social well-being of the town. The vision statement and core values acknowledge Middlebury is an appealing and welcoming place to all and that community leaders and partnerships will be a critical component to realize the Town’s vision. Middlebury’s 2030 vision statement and values are seen on pages 10 and 11.



2

Analyze existing conditions – The planning team gathered the supporting facts and data to serve as the community profile. Information was collected using U.S. Census data, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Government Finance Tool, and interviews with Town staff, organization leaders, and community facility directors. Details on the Existing Conditions are in the Appendix. Using the existing conditions and the Core Values, the planning team held a Focus Group Workshop made up of key stakeholders and technical experts to identify the goals of what they want to see accomplished by 2030, then draw out what Middlebury is doing well and the major issues the Town needs to address to make these goals a reality.



3

Develop the action strategies – This step involved a second Focus Group Workshop to align the major challenges and action strategies to the Core Values and prioritize the strategies that should first be considered for implementation in the next five years. Focus Group members then applied those priority strategies into a future land use map. Strategies looked at identifying potential new development and redevelopment properties in the planning area to establish a vision to guide land development decisions over the next 10 years.



4

Prepare plan document and review – The final plan is the accumulation of steps 1 to 3 and was reviewed by the Steering Committee. The Plan was available for public review as a 15-day engagement period in June 2020. The community had the opportunity to attend focus area meetings and provide input on a focus area's priority action program.

5

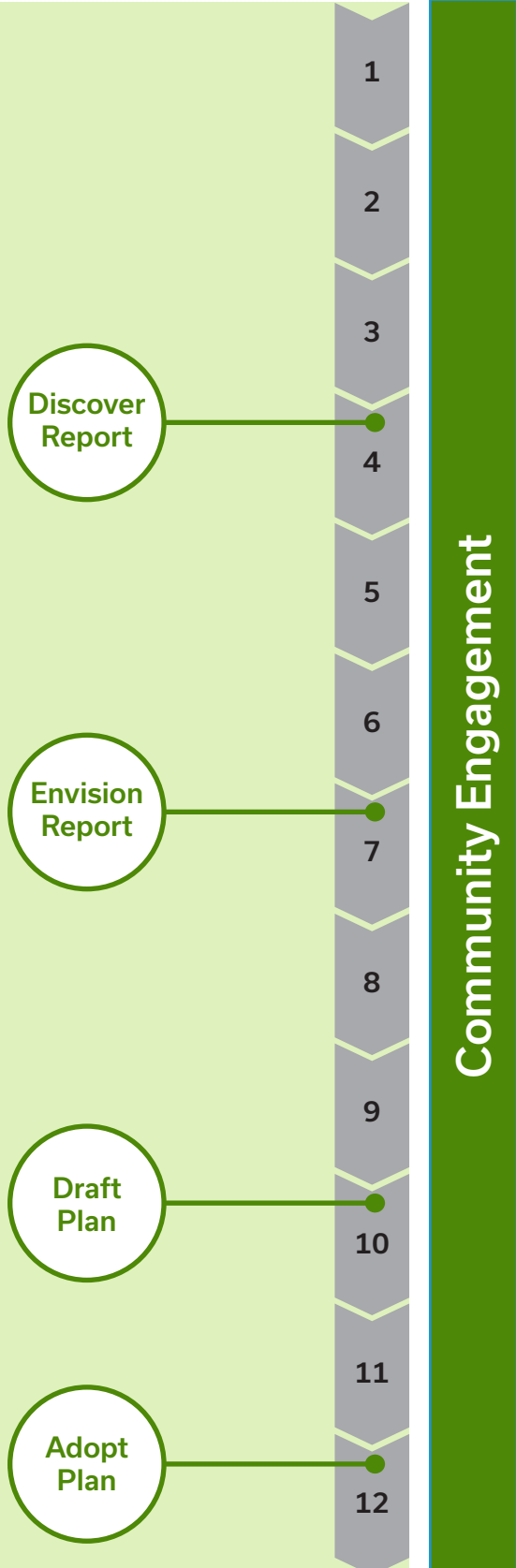
Adopt final plan – The Steering Committee presented the final plan to the Elkhart County Planning Commission for their endorsement and adoption by the Middlebury Town Council.

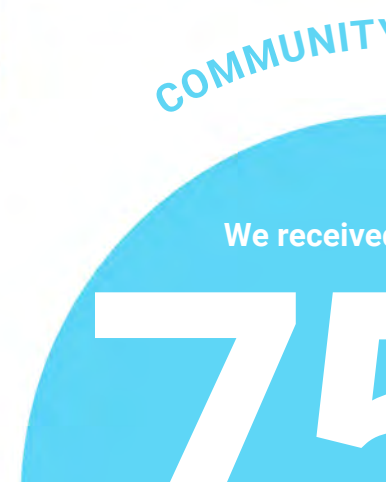
PROJECT TIMELINE

Milestones

Months

Phases





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We received the input of

756

PARTICIPANTS

between the Selfie Message Boards,
Public Input Survey, and
Student Survey

FALL FEST = 42, STUDENT SURVEY = 562, PUBLIC SURVEY = 152

OUR VISION TO CULTIVATE, BUILD, & THRIVE



"The Town of Middlebury, grown from tradition, is a welcoming, thriving community for all ages. A place committed to an entrepreneurship zest while maintaining a safe, family-oriented environment with quality education, innovation and community involvement."



OUR VALUES...

1

Attractive & Welcoming Community

Residents value a quaint, small-town feel where neighbors are friendly and welcoming. They value the attractiveness and peacefulness of the Town Center, homes, and neighborhoods.

2

Opportunities for Community Connections

Residents value creating quality places to shop, eat, live and gather with neighbors and friends to build community connections. Through culture arts, events and festivals, residents are able to meet new people and create vibrant places to live.

3

Industry, Innovation, & Education

Residents value good jobs and opportunities for entrepreneurship, strong local businesses, and a well-supported community school system.

4

Infrastructure & Safety

Residents value safe streets, where residents can get around with ease whether driving, walking, biking, or by buggy. Having dependable, high-quality utilities and infrastructure systems creates opportunities for growth and supports existing residents.

5

Simple, Family-Focus Lifestyle

Residents value having an affordable, family-friendly place to raise their kids. The simple lifestyle adds to the character and culture of the town.

6

Nature, Parks, & Trails

Residents value the investment in green space, trails and parks and would like to see it continue to be maintained as high-quality amenities.



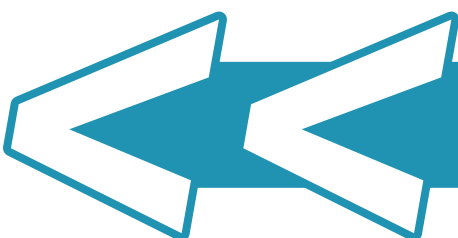
The 2013 Branding Study was guided by Insight Strategic Concepts, Inc. from Elkhart and Heiden Creative Company from Plymouth. The Branding Study Steering Committee first conducted a focus group research that engaged families and churches, educators, businesses, the Amish Community, youth, and governance and civic organizations. The research focused on collecting information using an input survey. The first three questions, what is your first impression of Middlebury, what adjectives, and emotions best describe Middlebury, guided the identification of the following six core values.

- Sense of community
- Industry, innovation, and education
- Infrastructure and safety
- Simple lifestyle and faith
- Family focus
- Nature, parks, and trails
-

Additionally, this research guided the team to design Middlebury's new logo and tagline, "Grown from Tradition."

The formation of these core values was inspired from the Middlebury Branding Strategy that was done in 2013, a top priority recommendation from the 2011 Comprehensive Strategic Plan. Additional inspiration came from the responses to a question asked in the public input survey – what are three qualities that make a community a desirable place to live. The goal of this question was to find common themes amongst the responses in comparison to the six values that were identified from the 2013 Branding Study. The Steering Committee then condensed those responses and the previous values into the set of values as previously mentioned.

These six core values serve as the basis that articulates the characteristics, aspirations, and social attributes the community desires.





Cultivating Middlebury

A PROFILE OF OUR COMMUNITY TODAY

As a community, we have been known as “makers”, ones who thrive on the entrepreneurial spirit to cultivate ideas and then turn those ideas into reality. This spirit is exhibited through a wide diversity of; Amish businesses, Town Center merchants, and multi-national manufacturers. As a community, we have a strong sense of belonging, pride, family values, and a commitment to excellence in education. The planning process is meant to build upon these strengths. To understand where we are going, it is important to understand where we are at. The community profile outlines where Middlebury is today. It will highlight the strengths, opportunities, and challenges in various key components, or focus areas, of the community. It is organized by the following six Focus Areas:

1. **Town Center**
2. **Land Use and Development**
3. **Transportation and Infrastructure**
4. **Parks, Trails, and Community Enhancements**
5. **Marketing and Communications**
6. **Education**

The origin of these Focus Areas came through the development of the 2011 Comprehensive Strategic Plan and was deemed essential to remain for the organization of this Middlebury 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Prior to the kickoff of this Plan, it was expressed by the Middlebury Town Manager and community leaders involved in the development of the 2011 Strategic Plan to organize these six Focus Areas into individual “Focus Groups” with representation from field professionals, Town Department Superintendents, Town Council members, business leaders, and community organization leaders who were deemed as experts and individuals with an invested history in one or more of these Focus Areas.

The desire and intent for this organizational structure of Focus Groups were to guide and advise the Steering Committee and the Town of Middlebury on what is working well in these Focus Areas and the major challenges and shortcomings the Town should address to enhance Middlebury’s quality of life and vibrancy. The identification of the successes, needs, and challenges from experts within the Focus Areas came from a series of Focus Group Workshops and individual Group meetings and through this method, provided greater insight and guidance in the creation of an actionable plan with priority transformative strategies (identified in the next two sections of this Plan) that will enhance Middlebury’s quality of life, the vibrancy of underutilized properties, resiliency in the local economy, and communication amongst community stakeholders and organizations. This will better prepare and guide the Town through future growth and development to ensure community and economic development initiatives are reflective of the community’s vision and values.

The formation of the Focus Groups can also streamline the implementation efforts by alleviating the pressure on the Town of Middlebury from being the sole responsible entity and make an immediate progression on building the vision into reality in a shorter timeframe with multiple Focus Groups working simultaneously

to effectively manage and implement their set of transformative strategies. Outlined on the subsequent pages are the assets, the aspects and features that have greater potential to be refined and enhanced, and the major challenges related to the six Focus Areas.



TOWN CENTER

Middlebury's Town Center has been a long-standing community asset as being one of the first areas platted in the incorporation of the town limits. The Town Center serves as Middlebury's downtown and represents a mixture of development patterns and uses with Main Street/SR 13 and Warren Street serving as the main intersection. The scale of buildings within the four blocks of the main intersection range from single story to three-story buildings. The uses that are northbound of the intersection are an auto service station and a gas station/convenience store. The southbound uses range from dining, shopping, a bank, and professional offices. Radiating from the four blocks are single-family homes, religious institutions, the Middlebury Township Fire Department, Middlebury Parks, Middlebury Community Public Library, Middlebury Community Historical Museum, and other commercial businesses. The Town Center has the greatest potential to create a unique identity and sense of place to truly offer a vibrant, walkable live-work environment with a denser development pattern to integrate a mixture of housing choices and local businesses that can appeal to many new individuals, families, entrepreneurs, local artisans, and makers.



ASSETS

- Successful local businesses from entrepreneurship spirit
- Strong leadership from the Chamber of Commerce and business owners
- Presence of community facilities such as public parks, public library, and Historical Museum
- Middlebury's section of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail is located on the edge of the Town Center and provides a connection for users to the Town Center
- The Town Center parks serves as the gathering hub for community events and festivals



OPPORTUNITIES

- A strategy from the 2011 Comprehensive Strategic Plan was to develop a branding initiative with input from the Middlebury community; this created a new Town logo and tagline, and a signage and wayfinding plan
- Several properties have been identified for infill redevelopment and could be developed with a mixture of denser housing choices and local businesses
- The Town Center has generated momentum following the adoption of the 2011 Comprehensive Strategic Plan by creating stakeholder Focus Groups to guide improvement efforts and development recommendations, and the Town would like to see redevelopment efforts first be focused in the Town Center to frame its identity and enhance its vibrancy
- Coordination with INDOT to capitalize on the planned infrastructure projects to improve underground utilities, the flow of traffic on SR 13/Main Street, and continuing the enhancement of the Main Street streetscape



CHALLENGES

- Lack of a shared vision or identity for the Town Center
- Need for additional local dining and shopping opportunities
- Need to evaluate the parking conditions and utilization in the Town Center to determine parking deficiencies and appropriate strategies to enhance the parking system
- Retention of local businesses
- Traffic congestion and heavy truck traffic on SR 13 makes crossing Main Street difficult, unsafe for pedestrians, and an unacceptable level of noise
- Financial commitments to upgrade aging commercial buildings and homes

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT



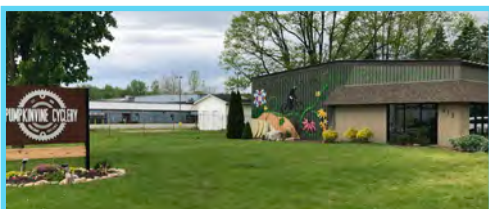
The Land Use & Development focus area represents Middlebury's built environment, its residential communities, and the local economy - the major employers, economic partnerships, and economic development. This focus area is seen by community leaders and Town officials as a major anchor for Middlebury's prosperity and resiliency to hardships. It is reflective of Middlebury's identity and roots of being known as a "Makers" community with the entrepreneurial spirit that accelerated and drove the initial growth of the community. Middlebury is home to several successful entrepreneurs who took their dreams of one day owning their own company to make a difference in their world and community they lived in.

With leading RV manufacturers in the world like Jayco and Coachmen, Middlebury has been a welcoming and attractive place to "do business." Supporting the local economy are the citizens of Middlebury who occupy the various residential communities. Middlebury's residential communities consist of the original-older homes in the Town Center with many subdivisions outlining the Town Center and employment areas. The types of homes are primarily single-family detached homes with several multi-family complexes.



ASSETS

- The long-standing success of major employers like Jayco, Coachmen, Lozier Store Fixtures, Das Dutchman Essenhaus, and entrepreneurs supports a strong tax base and opportunities for capital investments
- Middlebury has a history of being a Makers Community with a strong entrepreneurial spirit
- Middlebury's high-quality public green spaces, trail network, and Middlebury Community Schools appeals to new families and businesses





OPPORTUNITIES

- Elkhart County is working on improving its broadband infrastructure to install dark fiber along major corridors to better serve its communities like the Town of Middlebury and increase private investment for economic growth
- The Town is planning to extend public utilities on the west side of Town along US 20 and can provide opportunities for new commercial development
- Coordination with INDOT to capitalize on the planned infrastructure projects to improve underground utilities and the flow of traffic on SR 13/Main Street
- Several properties in key areas like the Town Center and employment centers may provide opportunities for redevelopment for new housing and jobs
- The Town has a local Chamber of Commerce and has discussed of also creating a Merchant’s Association to increase the services and accommodations for local businesses and entrepreneurs
- Strong momentum to implement the Elkhart County Vibrant Communities Action Agenda



CHALLENGES

- Lack of communication of the Town’s vision to key stakeholders and Town Boards and planning needs not to restrict to only the town limits
- Need for a plan of action to properly guide extensions of the municipal boundaries and public infrastructure systems to accommodate future economic development opportunities
- Need to preserve Middlebury’s sense of place and small-town values while allowing modest and sustainable future growth
- Need to ensure major centers of the Town are connected through proper transitions in land uses, the character of development patterns, and attractive streetscapes
- The Town’s major industry sector focuses heavily on manufacturing and needs to encourage diversifying to include additional sectors to broaden its job market and remain strong through economic crises
- Ensure major employers and local businesses are retained and continue to do business in Middlebury
- Limited spaces for retail businesses in the Town Center, at gateways, and along major corridors
- Need to attract an anchor grocery store and expand its housing choices to include affordable options and multi-family units
- Encourage property owners to develop a sense of community pride and ownership to maintain their properties to enhance the appeal of the community’s image
- Financial commitments to upgrade aging commercial buildings and homes



TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

The Transportation & Infrastructure focus area details the backbone structure that supports the movement of the community and livability. Middlebury has major transportation routes, US 20, SR 13, and the Indiana Tollroad that have served as catalysts for economic development for private investors-businesses and entrepreneurs to conveniently locate in the movement of their goods and services. These routes also make way for Middlebury's tourism for visitors

to stop in the community to dine at the popular Das Dutchmen Essenhaus, shop at a downtown retail store, and to enjoy its high-quality parks and multi-use trails. This focus area also reflects the Town's public services with high-quality infrastructure systems that provide the community with quality drinking water, sanitary sewers, well-maintained streets, sidewalks, and trails. These infrastructure systems also support community and economic growth to attract new individuals, families, and businesses to call Middlebury home and retention as well.



ASSETS

- The Trails of Middlebury multi-use trail network adds to the community's attractiveness and quality of life
- High-quality services from Town Departments like Public Works, Streets, Water, Wastewater, Police and Fire



OPPORTUNITIES

- Major transportation routes of US 20 and SR 13 provide economic development opportunities
- Strong partnerships with regional and state entities to capitalize on planned transportation and infrastructure projects like the installation of the dark fiber broadband infrastructure, upgrading the Town's public utilities, and road reconstruction projects of US 20 and SR 13
- INDOT's Community Crossings Program provides tremendous opportunities to properly maintain local streets and improve road conditions, where needed





CHALLENGES

- Extensive upgrades are needed for the Town's water and wastewater infrastructure systems
- Ensure Police and Fire have adequate equipment and personnel to retain its high-quality community protection services and adequately respond to emergency situations
- Need for a more centralized location of the Town Hall and Police station as they feel disconnected from the Town Center
- Coordinate proper traffic flow during road reconstruction projects
- Key intersections in the Town Center and along SR 13 need to improve existing pedestrian crossings with high-visible marked crossings and add high-visible mid-block crossings associated with the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail
- Traffic congestion and heavy truck route on SR 13 makes crossing Main Street difficult and unsafe for pedestrians
- The need to add Amish buggy and bicycle lanes in the Town Center



PARKS, TRAILS, AND COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENTS

Middlebury's quality of life amenities including parks, trails, community library, community historical museum, tree canopy and entertaining community events create the memorable attributes that make the Middlebury community special. These are significant contributors to the economic development of the community by retaining residents and businesses as well as drawing tourism, new residents and new businesses.



The Middlebury Community Library is a cornerstone of the community giving people the opportunity to find jobs, explore medical research, experience new ideas, and get lost in wonderful stories, while at the same time providing a sense of place for gathering. The library is supported in many ways by the Friends of the Middlebury Public Library.

The Middlebury Community Historical Museum collects, preserves, and presents Middlebury's history for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations. The museum is a wonderful place for people of all ages providing both fun and education.

There are numerous events throughout the year in our community appealing to residents and visitors. The Then and Now Committee sponsors educational events such as the Literary Carousel and fun times like the annual Pumpkin Race. The Park Department's annual Riverfest celebration recognizes the importance of fresh water in our community. Parks Summer Fun program is a tradition in Middlebury for children 12



years and younger. Both the Museum and Library host events for people of all ages. The Town's Summer and Fall Festivals bring the community together with fun and entertainment that sees thousands of residents and visitors. These events are an opportunity for people from all walks of life to gather providing opportunities for participation, volunteering, and building a sense of belonging.

The Tree Board plays an important role in preserving and improving our tree canopy and planting trees throughout town at the annual Arbor Day celebration.



The Middlebury Park and Recreation Department and Board provide 10 quality parks and multi-use trails plus facilities for recreation, organized sports, and entertainment. Parks intend to preserve, protect and promote the natural environment through responsible stewardship of natural and economic resources. The resources of the department are enhanced by an active Friends of the Middlebury Parks organization.



The Trails of Middlebury is a multi-use trail system whose backbone is the Middlebury section of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail connecting Middlebury to Goshen and Shippshewana. It is the responsibility of the Park Department to maintain and improve the Town's section of this trail. The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail is a nationally recognized regional trail that attracts thousands of users annually from all over the nation. Two other trails; the Wayne Street and Ridge Run Trails help connect trails to our school campus, Das Dutchman Essenhaus, Town Center as well as many of our communities and churches. Woodland walking trails in Riverbend and Olde Mill Parks provide access into nature with boardwalks allowing visitors to get into the woods and wetlands.



A short section of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail is designated as the "Learning Corridor". This section is from the Little Elkhart River to the location of the former Middlebury Railroad Station. It includes several historical interruptive signs, the museum, several gardens including the annual Quilt Garden and the Krider World's Fair Garden.

Krider World's Fair Garden is a historical, botanical garden that began as a display garden for Krider Nurseries. At the 1933-1934 Chicago World's Fair and because of this exhibit; a mail order nursery business took root and prospered through the middle of the 20th Century. It was through mail order that the Krider Nurseries grew and offered both to American and to overseas customers' botanical wonders such as the thorn-less rose known as the Festival Rose. The Gardens was given to the town by the Krider and Wesdorp families, and has been constantly improved keeping the character of the garden as designed in the 1930's. It a national destination for many visitors and the crown jewel of our park system.



ASSETS

- The most important asset are the people supporting parks, trails and community enhancements. The majority of these being volunteers giving thousands hours of their time and thousands of dollars in donations.
- Working committees, such as Park's, Riverfest, and Landscaping committees specialize in specific projects. This multiplies the Park Department's effectiveness and reach by approximately ten fold.
- The Friends of the Parks and Friends of the Middlebury Community Library include approximately 200 individuals and businesses.
- Established volunteer boards direct these organizations giving their asset of diverse experiences and skills.
- The Park Department is capable of and has been successful securing grants, and partnering with the Friends of the Parks organization to procure financing has multiplied our available assets.
- High quality services provided by the staff of the Park Department and Community Library.
- The support of the people who came before us that had the commitment to provide for facilities like the library and museum, plus setting aside the property for future development of park land.
- State recognized destinations like the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail and Krider World's Fair Gardens.
- Park Department communications directed by a board member get the parks message to the community through the monthly inMiddlebury magazine and news releases.
- The Park Master Plan updated every five years details plans to direct our assets to complete objectives. This plan was updated with over 325 individuals providing input and support in early 2020.
- Presence of a local Arts Council to incorporate public art in public parks and along the trails adding to Middlebury's uniqueness and attractiveness





OPPORTUNITIES

- The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail and Krider World’s Fair Gardens are nationally recognized that attracts thousands of users and visitors annually and from all over the nation, adding to Middlebury’s tourism
- The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail provides off-road access to regional communities like the City of Goshen and the Town of Shipshewana, making it possible for individuals to safely commute to work by bicycle
- Krider World’s Fair Gardens provides a unique setting to host wedding ceremonies, high school Prom photos, and other entertainment gathering occasions
- Strong community and Town Government support to invest in developing the Trails of Middlebury and for the operations of the Park Department
- Strong community partnerships between the Town, community organizations, and committees
- Expand the Town’s Parks Department environmental education programs
- Middlebury’s Tree City designation expands opportunities to apply for grants and enhance the value of its urban forestry
- The appropriate recognition of volunteers
- The support from the Town, Boards, and staff for the implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan



CHALLENGES

- Ensuring the long-term financial support to implement the Parks Master Plan and proper maintenance of Middlebury’s high-quality parks, trails, and recreational amenities
- Acquiring additional funding sources to complete the Trails of Middlebury
- There are several residential areas in Middlebury that do not have a neighborhood-scale park or access via an off-road trail to Middlebury Parks and the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail
- Ensuring proper communication and awareness of the Park Department’s sustainable and environmental initiatives, and land preservation efforts



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

The Marketing & Communications focus area represents Middlebury's cultural and tourism initiatives and support to its local businesses and entrepreneurs to excel, thrive, and accelerate business growth and productivity. Middlebury's Chamber of Commerce is a great asset to its business community and support for entrepreneurs to start-up their businesses. This focus area is also reflective of the Town's ability and initiatives to advertise (market and communicate) and showcase the uniqueness of Middlebury's quality of life and the various high-quality amenities Middlebury has to offer to attract new residents, visitors, and businesses to the community. Local artisans and crafters also have opportunities to showcase their skills and workmanship with Middlebury having a local Arts Council.



ASSETS

- Presence of a local Arts Council and the Middlebury Chamber of Commerce
- The long-standing success of major employers like Jayco, Coachmen, and the Das Dutchman Essenhaus, and entrepreneurs supports a strong tax base and opportunities for capital investments
- Middlebury has a history of being a Makers Community with a strong entrepreneurial spirit
- Middlebury's high-quality public parks, multi-use trail network, and Middlebury Community Schools appeals to new families and businesses
- High-quality services from Town Departments like Public Works, Streets, Water, Wastewater, Police and Fire



OPPORTUNITIES

- Middlebury has a local Art Council that is pursuing to become a designated 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
- More younger families are moving to the Middlebury community to enroll their children into Middlebury Community Schools
- Strong support for sustainable agriculture practices and agricultural community



CHALLENGES

- Expanding and encouraging volunteerism from locals and youth to feel “connected” to their community and develop a sense of community pride
- A need to have a cohesive branding strategy and marketing package to communicate Middlebury is a business-friendly community and enhance the appeal from the virtual - online - front door perspective
- Limited presence and proper utilization of social media as a marketing tool
- A lack of a centralized community calendar to properly organize and communicate details of festivals and events
- Limited staff for the Middlebury Chamber of Commerce
- Lack of a centralized tourism department to adequately manage marketing and tourism efforts
- Financial commitments to upgrade aging commercial buildings and homes
- A need to encourage more community involvement and an organized volunteer database



EDUCATION

The Education focus area represents another one of Middlebury’s appealing assets, Middlebury Community Schools. For any size community - urban or rural - one of the most attractive and anchoring assets a community must have are progressive quality schools. Middlebury Community Schools, along with the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, are the top-rated aspects that draw new families and businesses to Middlebury. Middlebury is seeing growth in population and school enrollment as more families are relocating to the community to be within the Middlebury Community School district. Additionally, school enrollment is increasing as more students are transferring from other school districts in Elkhart County. Middlebury Community Schools excels in preparing students for college and entering the workforce, academically and socially. Northridge High School provides many opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy spectating a range of sporting events and live performances including the highly successful and nationally acclaimed Northridge Northern Lights.





ASSETS

- Northridge High School adds to Middlebury’s quality of life by offering residents and visitors the opportunity to enjoy sporting events and live performances from the premier show choir and nationally acclaimed Northern Lights
- Middlebury Community Schools is a top-rated public school system that does well preparing its students for college and entering the workforce
- Middlebury’s high-quality public parks, multi-use trail network, and Middlebury Community Schools appeals to new families and businesses



OPPORTUNITIES

- More families are moving to Middlebury and enrolling their children into Middlebury Community Schools



- Northridge High School offers certification classes for adults and students in advanced manufacturing and CPT
- Northridge High School offers students apprenticeship and internship opportunities to gain early experience in careers of their interests
- The Middlebury Community School Administration is exploring ways to establish a mentoring program, known as the Adults Reaching Middlebury Students (ARMS) to help all types of students excel academically and socially and suicide prevention
- Strong partnerships with the Horizon Education Alliance and Ivy Tech Community College



CHALLENGES

- The Town needs to expand its housing options and include affordable housing to help younger families who need financial assistance and want to locate and enroll their children into Middlebury Community Schools



- Encourage more local businesses to participate in Northridge High School’s apprenticeship and internship program
- Need for individuals to volunteer as a mentor to support the ARMS mentorship program
- Need for the Middlebury Community School Administration to increase community awareness and advertisement of the various education and training programs



Building Middlebury

A VISION FRAMEWORK FOR MIDDLEBURY

The Middlebury vision strives to incorporate sustainable practices as a vital component to maintaining their small-town identity while allowing future growth. Such practices relate to preserving their natural features while enhancing their quality of life and vibrancy.

While the vision statement describes the type of place Middlebury wants to become, it will take hard-work, dedication, and commitment from the community to continue the “Maker’s” entrepreneurial spirit to build Middlebury’s vision into reality. The framework for realizing Middlebury’s vision is illustrated in the Future Character Map and reinforced by the transformative strategies. Therefore, to realize the vision, implementation will require coordination between the Town, community leaders, regional organizations, advocacy groups, and residents. Additionally, monitoring and tracking the progress of the Plan will show measurable results.

The Future Character Map illustrates Middlebury’s vision of how they imagine their community to look in 2030 to guide the location for new development and redevelopment. The Future Character Map was cultivated from several seedlings that included the public input surveys, Focus Group Workshops, and a series of Steering Committee meetings. At its inception, the public input surveys provided the Steering Committee with a general idea of the types of development patterns the community would like to see in Middlebury that came

“The Town of Middlebury, grown from tradition, is a welcoming, thriving community for all ages. A place committed to an entrepreneurship zest while maintaining a safe, family-oriented environment with quality education, innovation and community involvement.”

from several visual preference questions. Then the development of the Map came from the two Focus Group Workshops. The first Workshop was held at the kickoff of the planning process that engaged community stakeholders to record their grand visions of Middlebury in 2030 and what is preventing that dream item from being a reality today. Following the first Workshop, each of the Focus Groups held deep-dive meetings to identify the transformative strategies that addresses the major barriers identified from the first Workshop. Following these deep-dive sessions, the Steering Committee reviewed and prioritized the major barriers the Town should first address to enhance the livability and quality of life for its residents. A second Focus Group Workshop was held to then prioritize the transformative strategies and transfer those action items onto a future land use map. At the second Workshop, Focus Group members worked together in several rounds to create four future land development concepts and then condensed to two final concepts. The Steering Committee held a series of meetings to review the two concepts and condense them into one final concept map that serves as the Future Character Map.



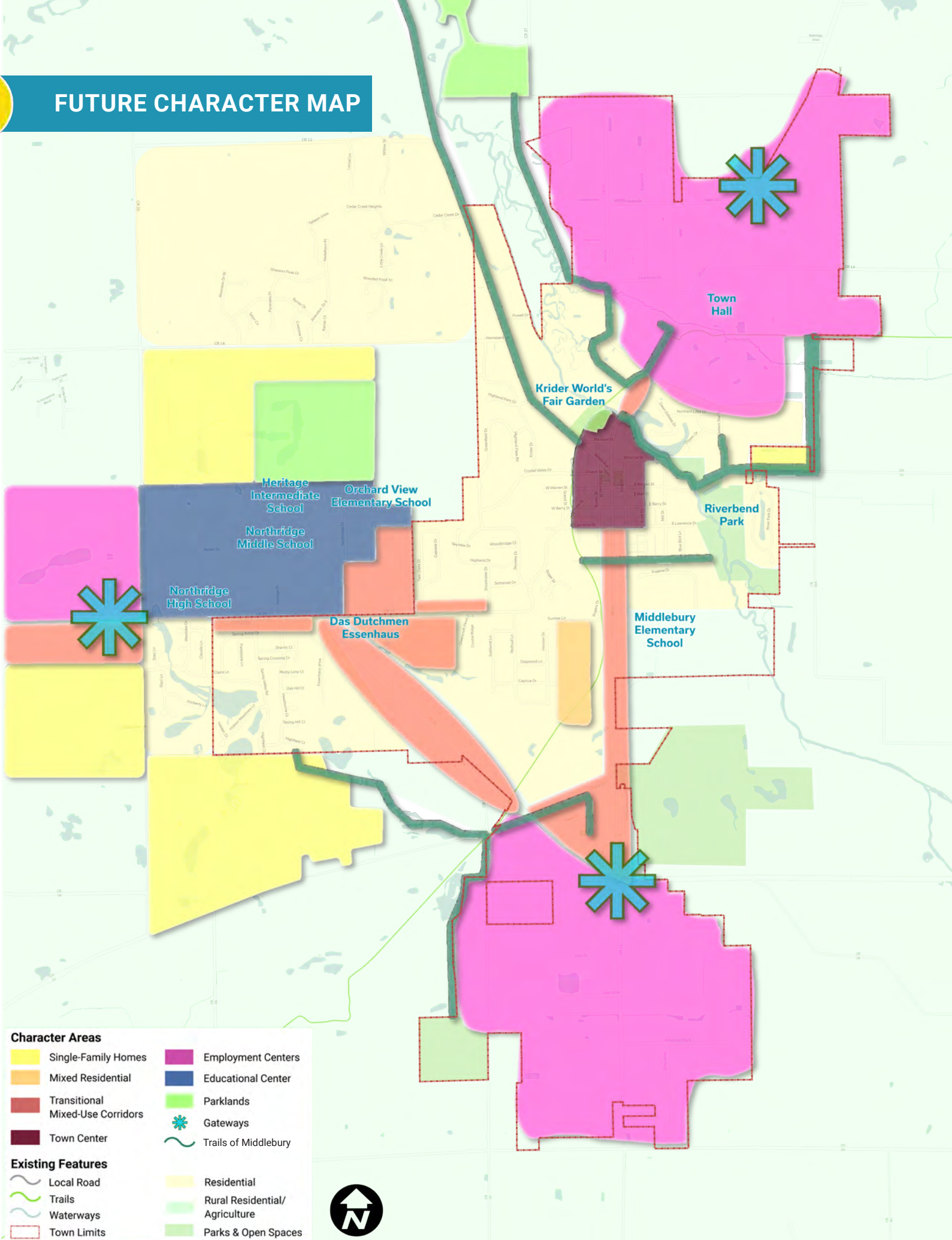
The Future Character Map is framed into eight character areas to help the Town and its partners to focus on the quality and the character of the preferred types of development and guidance of where the development should first be built. As Middlebury looks to modestly and sustainably grow, the Future Character Map encourages new development and redevelopment initiatives to first be focused in targeted centers to maximize or enhance the use of the existing infrastructure and preserve open spaces and farmlands.

The Future Character Map illustrates the vision while zoning will implement the vision at the parcel level. These character areas establish a framework to retain Middlebury’s small-town values and identity, encourage walkable mixed-use developments to occur in the Town Center and along the major thoroughfares such as US 20 and SR 13, appropriately expand its employment centers and residential areas, and preserve natural features and contiguous farmlands, where feasible. It is the Town’s goal to have a cohesive multi-use trail network known as the “Trails of Middlebury” to connect to Middlebury’s destinations to enhance the mobility and safety for all users. These areas provide transformative strategies to attract new residents, employers, and visitors. Descriptions for each of the character areas are defined on the subsequent pages following the Future Character Map.

The Future Character Areas include:

- **Town Center**
- **Residential**
- **Transitional**
- **Employment Centers**
- **Parks & Recreation**
- **Mixed-use Corridors**
- **Educational Center**
- **Gateways**
- **Trails of Middlebury**

FUTURE CHARACTER MAP



Character Areas

- Single-Family Homes
- Mixed Residential
- Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors
- Town Center
- Employment Centers
- Educational Center
- Parklands
- Gateways
- Trails of Middlebury

Existing Features

- Local Road
- Trails
- Waterways
- Town Limits
- Residential
- Rural Residential/Agriculture
- Parks & Open Spaces



TRANSFORMATIVE STRATEGIES

TOWN CENTER

The Town Center is one of Middlebury’s unique assets that contains many of Middlebury’s quality of life amenities such as Krider World’s Fair Gardens, Middlebury Community Public Library, Middlebury Community Historical Museum, and Parks. Though it is an asset, the Town desires to continue to build on its uniqueness and create a thriving and vibrant place to live, work, and play. The Town envisions the Town Center as a mixed-use urban environment with denser residential units, an increase in local businesses, unique gathering spaces, and a vibrant Main Street.

The Town Center’s built environment will retain the current form but in targeted areas for infill and redevelopment, the development pattern should focus on integrating a mixture of uses in a denser setting to offer a vibrant and walkable place with diverse living options and working spaces. This may include integrating residential units on the upper floors of buildings that have ground-floor retail, restaurants, or professional office spaces. Additionally, new residential housing with a mixture of types and styles could be integrated into redevelopment plans of infill areas. It is the Town’s desire to retain the existing downtown businesses but also be attractive to expand and balance the job market by attracting and encouraging new professional office, service-based businesses, and retailers or “Makers” to consider locating their business in the Town Center. Additional infill spaces are encouraged to include urban parks and/or common plaza spaces to add to the Town Center’s quality of life, reinforce the sense of place, and promote social interaction, and building relationships with your neighbors.

Street fronts and sidewalks should also be attractive and inviting places to shop, walk, bike, and interact with one another offering outdoor eating spaces, benches, appealing landscapes, lighting, banners, and traffic calming mechanisms to slow vehicular travel speeds.



GOAL

Proactively market the vision and character of the Town Center

- Develop a Town Center Redevelopment Plan
- Adopt Town Center Development Standards for redevelopment and new development to implement the vision of the Town Center
- Establish a design review board to review proposed development plans to ensure plans are reflective of the Town Center’s vision
- Promote mixed-use and infill development to support a vibrant and thriving Town Center
- Research and provide appropriate incentives to encourage infill and redevelopment in targeted areas
- Create an organization to work with all stakeholders for fundraising and to drive the vision
- Conduct a parking study to evaluate the parking needs in downtown
- Retain existing businesses while promoting a diversified market to have additional commercial and retail uses

GOAL

Increase the number of local businesses and small-scale retail spaces to provide additional shopping, dining, and service opportunities

- Work with property owners to encourage the reclassification of property they own not currently being utilized for an active business (i.e. using for storage or sitting empty) into retail space
- As property becomes available, be intentional about marketing and redeveloping for retail space
- Identify properties to support retail districts in the town
- Develop and maintain a database inventorying a list of available properties for sale for redevelopment/adaptive re-use of vacant sites and buildings for economic development and to increase retail space
- Provide additional local shopping and grocery establishments to reduce the need to travel to regional communities for daily needs

GOAL

Coordinate infrastructure improvements with future development plans to reduce fiscal impacts

- Capitalize on the planned SR 13 INDOT improvements to include traffic calming measures and redesign the streetscape to support the character of the Town Center and Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors

GOAL

Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users

- Add more pedestrian crossings on Main Street and use of crossing signals
- Support a walkable Middlebury by continuously improving existing sidewalks, eliminate gaps, and encourage the construction of 6 foot wide sidewalks, where feasible
- Explore the feasibility to widen Main Street to improve traffic flow and accommodate for bicyclists and Amish buggies
- Conduct an SR 13 corridor study/traffic impact study to identify and program feasible solutions at downtown intersections
- Conduct a feasibility study to re-route SR 13 outside of the Town Center to reduce heavy-truck traffic and improve the safety for all users

GOAL

Preserve Middlebury's character while enhancing the sense of place through the creation of vibrant, walkable destinations

- Create sub-area standards for targeted development areas in the Town Center, Employment Centers, Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors, and Gateways
- Enhance the sense of connectivity and activity between the Town Center, Employment Centers, and Gateways through the creation of Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors along US 20 and SR 13

EMPLOYMENT CENTERS



Middlebury is home to many successful manufacturing industries and entrepreneurs with the “making” spirit that adds to the attractiveness of doing business in Middlebury. Although Middlebury appears as a “small-town” in terms of the land size and population, Middlebury offers a thriving and growing business climate with being home to many large-scale manufacturing industries like Jayco and Coachmen RV industries to name a few. Development patterns have supported industrial and commercial uses to locate at the northern entrance of Town on SR 13 and the southern entrance into Town on SR 13 and US 20. The Town plans to continue to promote and expand these areas to support “doing business” for the large-scale manufacturing businesses and preserve the character of its residential areas. This includes expanding and upgrading its utility systems to adequately support the growing needs of business users and maximize the use of the available capacity and existing infrastructure systems. Additionally, strategies focus on creating a marketing package to aid in business retention and expansion, support entrepreneurs in business startups, and provision of working spaces.

EMPLOYMENT CENTERS - Transformative Strategies

GOAL

Proactively plan for sustainable and modest growth

- Develop an annexation strategy for targeted growth areas
- Create utility extension policies to support future development in targeted areas
- Coordinate with Elkhart County to construct the planned dark fiber (broadband infrastructure) in Middlebury to support businesses and future economic development
- Develop a vision for the SR 13 and I-80/I-90 interchange

GOAL

Diversify the industry sectors to ensure Middlebury's job market is resilient through an economic crisis

- Develop and maintain a database inventorying a list of available properties for sale for redevelopment/adaptive re-use of vacant sites and buildings for economic development opportunities
- Leverage workforce programs and opportunities within existing stakeholders in the County, including HEA, IVY Tech, etc



GOAL

Increase the number of local businesses and small-scale retail spaces to provide additional shopping, dining, and service opportunities

- Create a comprehensive business retention program
- Create a Middlebury marketing plan
- Proactively support the “Maker” entrepreneur spirit by developing business incubators
- Provide additional local shopping and grocery establishments to reduce the need to travel to regional communities for daily needs



EDUCATIONAL CENTER

Middlebury Community Schools is committed and focused on improving its community partnerships and expanding its programs to strengthen the Middlebury community. The Educational Center Character area reflects the location of the majority of Middlebury Community Schools with the exception of three elementary schools. Middlebury Community Schools strives to offer a high-quality education system and cultivate students to excel academically, socially, and harness leadership and creativity skills preparing them to enter the workforce and a college degree. Much like Middlebury's attractiveness of being known as a “Makers” community, Middlebury Community Schools continues to be a top appealing asset that draws new families and businesses to the community. Middlebury Community Schools will continue to enhance its educational system by establishing the ARMS mentorship program to help students excel in their learning capabilities who need more one-on-one time, and support the creation of housing subsidy programs to provide financial support for families in need and want to enroll their children in Middlebury Community Schools.



EDUCATIONAL CENTER - Transformative Strategies

GOAL

Establish “lasting” partnerships with community entities and organizations

- Establish a regular joint School District and Town meeting to ensure both entities share the same vision
- Encourage high school senior student(s) to serve as a Town Council Representative
- Expand network opportunities and establish partnerships with local churches, service clubs, community organizations, the Town of Middlebury, and local businesses

GOAL

Provide affordable housing options

- Support the development of a Young Family-Focused Housing Subsidy Program
- Support the development of an “Entry-level/First-time Homebuyer Housing Subsidy Program

GOAL

Establish the ARMS mentorship program to assist the needs of all students in Middlebury Community Schools

- Assess the students’ various needs per school and grade-level who need mentorship
- Make it easier to support children who need the extra one-on-one time with an adult
- Establish mentors at each school and for the school district
- Create a list of mentor activities
- Create a promotional video of the mentors describing what they do with students
- Conduct outreach efforts of the program through “Lunch and Learn” trainings, being a guest speaker at the Annual Middlebury Chamber of Commerce Dinner, and utilizing social media

RESIDENTIAL



The Residential Character area reflects the community's desire to preserve Middlebury's small-town charm and existing residential structures while understanding the Town does need new housing options, the scale of development, and affordability-levels to enhance its attractiveness towards new families and businesses. While it is the Town's goal to maintain the character of existing neighborhoods and encourage the community to take care and ownership of maintaining their property, the Town does also envision alternative housing options with a range of density (scale) and affordability be integrated into redevelopment plans in targeted areas such as the Town Center and along the Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors, where feasible, to enhance the vibrancy of these places and Middlebury's quality of life. Additionally, these accommodations will enhance the community's livability aspects by offering a more unique style of living in a denser neighborhood setting.

The community also understands the need to offer a range of affordable housing options to accommodate first-time homebuyers and renters wanting to relocate to Middlebury for their children to attend Middlebury Community Schools that need affordable and practical options that meet their financial needs. The Town also envisions new residential developments offer connections to adjacent areas such as schools, restaurants, offices, and other neighborhoods through the development of the Trails of Middlebury and sidewalks to create a more walkable setting to encourage residents to commute by walking or biking for their shorter destination trips within the community.

RESIDENTIAL - Transformative Strategies

GOAL

Provide diverse and affordable housing options

- Support the development of a Young Family-Focused Housing Subsidy Program
- Support the development of an "Entry-level/First-time Homebuyer Housing Subsidy Program
- Research and provide appropriate incentives to housing developers to construct denser residential units in targeted infill and redevelopment areas such as Town Center, Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors, and Gateways
- Diversify the Town's housing choices to provide alternative housing options for all needs and incomes

GOAL

Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users

- Coordinate with INDOT to program safe crossings for pedestrians from adjacent neighborhoods to Middlebury Schools across US 20 in the US 20 widening project (such as a pedestrian bridge, hawk signals, or pedestrian tunnel)

GOAL

Ensure quality development for new neighborhoods

- Encourage housing developers to include open spaces or pocket parks in new subdivisions
- Revise the subdivision control ordinance to require pedestrian connectivity throughout the site design to include sidewalks or trails, and open spaces
- Develop and adopt design standards that are specific for the implementation of the vision for new residential units (i.e. integrating a mixture of housing types of housing and affordability in site plans)

GOAL

Preserve the existing residential character

- Develop a property maintenance ordinance/neighborhood preservation ordinance



PARKS & RECREATION

One of the many assets or quality of life amenities that makes Middlebury an attractive place to live, work, and “do business” is its high-quality parks, outdoor recreational amenities, and trail network. The Parks and Recreation Character areas reflect the locations of Middlebury’s existing and proposed parklands and recreational amenities. The Town of Middlebury values the provision of public green spaces and trails and is committed to investing its resources to ensure these amenities are maintained to high quality. Additionally, the Town is committed to investing in building new public green spaces and trail connections in underserved neighborhoods and development centers of Middlebury to ensure all parts of the community have access to a park and/or a trail connection to a park. The Town updated its 5-Year Parks Master Plan to guide

implementation for new parks and trails, enhance existing park amenities, and establish new education programs. The Town also values implementing “green” initiatives to encourage sustainable and environmentally friendly management practices in its operations and maintenance of park grounds, landscapes, trails, and facilities. It is a Town goal to increase their efforts on community engagement to effectively communicate the Town’s vision with implementing environmentally friendly practices, land preservation efforts, and ways the community can support and get involved.



PARKS & RECREATION - Transformative Strategies

GOAL

Continue to construct the Trails of Middlebury - a multi-use trail system that connects to Middlebury’s Employment Centers, Town Center, Parks, and neighborhoods

- Form a Trails Committee to help guide the development of trail amenities, new trails, and ongoing improvements
- Complete the River Mill Trail that connects Riverbend and Olde Mill Parks to the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail
- Improve and expand the walking trails/boardwalks in Riverbend Park
- Complete the boardwalk/trail planned for Olde Mill Park
- Develop a multi-use trail connecting Corson Park to the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail
- Partner with regional entities to assist in the construction of the Quaker Trace Trail

GOAL

Preserve and enhance Middlebury's high-quality parks, trails, and outdoor recreational amenities



- Implement the strategies identified in the 2020-2024 Parks Master Plan
- Continue to develop the Riverbend and Olde Mill Parks Master Plan, & the Trestle Terrace Development Plan
- Develop an asset management plan for parks, trails, and trees
- Develop neighborhood parks in currently underserved areas
- Explore the feasibility for a new dog park
- Provide a blue-way connector from Riverbend Park to Corson Park
- Explore the feasibility to construct new trailheads with public parking lots
- Incorporate public art in parks and along the trails
- Install drinking fountains and public restrooms at Riverbend Park and Krider World's Fair Garden
- Expand the Museum and historical identification of designated properties

GOAL

Enhance communication and public education on the Park Department's sustainability and environmental initiatives

- Enhance public communications through the funding of a Parks page in the inMiddlebury Magazine, news releases, and feature articles
- Encourage Park and Recreation Department, Boards, and Staff to maintain ongoing communications regarding the progress of the 2020 Parks Master Plan



GATEWAYS

The Gateway character areas are identified at the entry-points into the Middlebury community. These areas include the entry routes on US 20 from the west and east and SR 13 from the north and south. These two transportation routes are vital for economic development opportunities and adequately do business for Middlebury’s major employers. They are also vital in carrying the many visitors to Middlebury to enjoy eating at Essenhaus or visit one of Middlebury Parks and trails. It is imperative that the Town build attractive entrances not only from a landscape perspective but development at these entrances be intriguing and inviting destination places. The Town envisions these areas to support the immediate employment centers and residential areas as another vibrant live-work environment. Meaning, employers and/or entrepreneurs could locate in these places to diversify the regional job market and capitalize on the convenient access to US 20 or SR 13. The types of employment establishments at these Gateways could include light manufacturing, fabrication assemblies, light industrial centers, flex space buildings, corporate offices, and other professional offices.

Residential development could also be encouraged in a denser mixed-use setting like what is envisioned in the Town Center and the Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors. Homes could support a mixture of market-rate and affordable units. Additional development could include the integration of smaller-local retail and offices. Street design should accommodate for users to have safe and accessible options to walk or bike for their shorter commute trips to Northridge Schools, Essenhaus, the Town Center, parks, and neighborhoods. Additionally, site designs should support an attractive and safe pedestrian environment with connections between the sidewalk and front door of the buildings.

GATEWAYS - Transformative Strategies

GOAL

Build attractive Gateway - “welcome” entrances at targeted areas on US 20 and SR 13 that are intriguing and inviting destination places

- Adopt land use policies at Middlebury’s gateway entrances to implement the vision and attract the desirable businesses for these areas
- Use landscaping, small parking lots, benches, public art, and informational kiosks to serve as a small-scale welcome center



GOAL

Proactively plan for sustainable and modest growth

- Develop an annexation strategy for targeted growth areas
- Create utility extension policies to support future development in targeted areas
- Support future development on the west side of Town with the provision of public utilities by conducting a Preliminary Engineering Study and acquire needed properties
- Develop a vision for the SR 13 and I-80/I-90 interchange

GOAL

Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users

- Coordinate with INDOT to program safe crossings for pedestrians from adjacent neighborhoods to Middlebury Schools across US 20 in the US 20 widening project (such as a pedestrian bridge, hawk signals, or pedestrian tunnel)

GOAL

Preserve Middlebury's character while enhancing the sense of place through the creation of vibrant, walkable destinations

- Create sub-area standards for targeted development areas in the Town Center, Employment Centers, Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors, and Gateways
- Enhance the sense of connectivity and activity between the Town Center, Employment Centers, and Gateways through the creation of Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors along US 20 and SR 13
- Capitalize on the presence of the major transportation corridors (US 20, SR 13, and I-80/I-90) and connections to regional markets and Middlebury's Employment Centers and Town Center

TRANSITIONAL MIXED-USE CORRIDORS



The Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors are envisioned to provide a unique and inviting transition in scale and development patterns between the Gateways, Town Center, and Employment Centers along US 20 and SR 13. The development patterns would reflect similarly to the Gateways and Town Center settings but with a lower building scale to create a more inviting and safer feeling for pedestrians. The development pattern is envisioned as vibrant, walkable mixed-use places with residential options, local retail and offices, and park spaces.



While the street design on US 20 and SR 13 may not be supportive to have traffic-calming measures such as on-street parking, street furniture, and landscape elements given the intent of these roads to function as major transportation routes, the Town envisions the development to encourage vehicular and pedestrian activity to occur on any adjacent (secondary) streets. This pattern would limit the number of driveways or intersections on US 20 and SR 13 to efficiently move traffic and enhance pedestrian safety by walking along the secondary streets to access a building's front door. The character of these new secondary streets could then include the attractive setting of having on-street parking, street furniture, outdoor seating at restaurants, lighting, and landscape elements, as well as support walking and biking as a means for travel. The character of new buildings should reflect place-making components with buildings oriented towards the street, built-up or close to the sidewalk, and surface parking lots located in the rear of buildings with on-street parking in the front to encourage interaction and activity at building fronts.



TRANSITIONAL MIXED-USE CORRIDORS - Transformative Strategies

GOAL

Proactively plan for sustainable and modest growth

- Develop an annexation strategy for targeted growth areas
- Create utility extension policies to support future development in targeted areas
- Support future development on the west side of Town with the provision of public utilities by conducting a Preliminary Engineering Study and acquiring needed properties

GOAL

Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users

- Coordinate with INDOT to program safe crossings for pedestrians from adjacent neighborhoods to Middlebury Schools across US 20 in the US 20 widening project (such as a pedestrian bridge, hawk signals, or pedestrian tunnel)
- Explore the feasibility to widen Main Street to improve traffic flow and accommodate for bicyclists and Amish buggies
- Support a walkable Middlebury by continuously improving existing sidewalks, eliminate gaps, and encourage the construction of 6 foot wide sidewalks, where feasible
- Conduct an SR 13 corridor study/traffic impact study to identify and program feasible solutions at downtown intersections
- Conduct a feasibility study to re-route SR 13 outside of the Town Center to reduce heavy-truck traffic and improve the safety for all users

GOAL

Coordinate infrastructure improvements with future development plans to reduce fiscal impacts

- Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users
- Capitalize on the planned SR 13 INDOT improvements to include traffic calming measures and redesign the streetscape to support the character of the Town Center and Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors

GOAL

Preserve Middlebury's character while enhancing the sense of place through the creation of vibrant, walkable destinations

- Develop and adopt design standards that are specific for the implementation of the vision for the Transitional Mixed-Use Corridor
- Create sub-area standards for targeted development areas in the Town Center, Employment Centers, Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors, and Gateways
- Enhance the sense of connectivity and activity between the Town Center, Employment Centers, and Gateways through the creation of Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors along US 20 and SR 13
- Promote mixed-use and infill development to support a vibrant and thriving Town Center
- Research and provide appropriate incentives to encourage infill and redevelopment in targeted areas
- Capitalize on the presence of the major transportation corridors (US 20, SR 13, and I-80/I-90) and connections to regional markets and Middlebury's Employment Centers and Town Center

TRAILS OF MIDDLEBURY

Middlebury is progressive in building connections to its key destinations and community assets through an extensive multi-use trail network referred to as the Trails of Middlebury on the Future Land Use Character Map. This network of trails provide efficient and safe connections to Middlebury's unique assets such as Northridge Schools, Das Dutchmen Essenhaus, parks, employment centers, the Town Center, and neighborhoods.

While not shown on the Future Land Use Character Map, the sidewalk network is also essential to provide accessible and safe means for residents to choose to walk or bike for their "in-town" commute or enjoyment recreationally. Middlebury is continuing to expand the sidewalk network to eliminate gaps and enhance pedestrian safety to make Middlebury more "walkable," in particular, along key corridors such as US 20 and SR 13.

TRAILS OF MIDDLEBURY - Transformative Strategies

GOAL

Continue to construct the Trails of Middlebury - a multi-use trail system that connects to Middlebury's Employment Centers, Town Center, Parks, and neighborhoods

- Form a Trails Committee to help guide the development of trail amenities, new trails, and ongoing improvements
- Complete the River Mill Trail that connects the Riverbend and Olde Mill Parks to the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail
- Improve and expand the walking trails/boardwalks in Riverbend Park
- Complete the boardwalk/trail planned for Olde Mill Park
- Develop a multi-use trail connecting Corson Park to the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail
- Partner with regional entities to assist in the development of the Quaker Trace Trail
- Continue researching different funding sources to develop the Middlebury Trails network

GOAL

Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users

- Upgrade and add signage and pavement markings for trail and pedestrian crossings
- Support a walkable Middlebury by continuously improving existing sidewalks, eliminate gaps, and encourage the construction of 6 foot wide sidewalks, where feasible

GOAL

Preserve and enhance Middlebury's high-quality parks, trails, and outdoor recreational amenities

- Implement the strategies identified in the 2020-2024 Parks Master Plan
- Continue to develop the Riverbend and Olde Mill Parks Master Plan, & the Trestle Terrace Development Plan
- Develop neighborhood parks in currently underserved areas



OTHER TRANSFORMATIVE STRATEGIES

In addition to the character areas illustrated on the Future Land Use Character Map, other transformative strategies were identified from the Focus Group Workshops, the public input survey, and the Steering Committee that address the community-wide issues but are not applicable to put on a map as they are not directly tied to a character area. These are strategies that will bring transformation from a community-wide level, broader than within a specific character area.

OTHER - Transformative Strategies

GOAL

Marketing & Tourism

Expand and enhance Middlebury's marketing and tourism initiatives

- Create a Merchant Association to bring collaboration, a common sense of purpose, and community involvement
- Establish a "Makers Market" and promote this as a shop-local campaign
- Utilize existing organizations to partner with local businesses to create experiential events to bring in customers (i.e. knitting circle, workshops, book swaps, etc.)
- Develop a "Makers Map" to highlight local artisans
- Educate business owners, chamber staff, and other organizations on using social media and share best practices
- Support the Middlebury Chamber's efforts to continue implementing the Vibrant Communities Action Agenda Items
- Continue the development and promotion of the Middlebury Chamber/Art Council's Public Art Program

GOAL

**Marketing
& Tourism**

Enhance the utilization of social media platforms

- Create a strategic branding plan with a vision and a clear and consistent message for use on social media outlets (i.e. hashtags, targeting audiences, advertising, etc.)
- Utilize social media, signage, email communications, etc. to promote local businesses and showcase what they have to offer

GOAL

**Marketing
& Tourism**

Increase the Town's visual presence with acquiring and using high-quality images and color themes

- Source local photography talent
- Create a method of assigning and receiving media
- Work with the Arts Council on creative ways to use their stock
- Goal: Enhance the Middlebury Farmers Market
- Relocate and expand the Farmers Market to one of the downtown parks
- Increase promotional efforts
- Invite local crafters and artisans to showcase trades
- Add local events and entertainment
- Increase the offering of locally grown produce

GOAL

**Marketing
& Tourism**

Enhance volunteerism and community involvement

- Develop a volunteer database to encourage participation from the community to instill community pride and ownership
- Partner with Middlebury Community Schools to create opportunities for youth involvement
- Identify areas where students can be involved in marketing the Town by working with the Middlebury Chamber, Town Parks Department, Arts Council, Middlebury Community Library, Middlebury Community Historical Museum, Friends of Middlebury Parks, apprenticeships, social media, class credit, etc.

GOAL

Public Infrastructure

Establish a comprehensive preventative maintenance program for Middlebury's assets

- Develop a Middlebury Asset Management Plan that coordinates improvements between the Town Public Works Dept., Town Parks Dept., and the Middlebury Tree Board
- Proactively maintain and update street signs, street pavement markings, tree canopy, and landscaping

GOAL

Public Infrastructure

Enhance underutilized spaces

- Explore opportunities to utilize temporary "pop-up infrastructure" to envision underutilized spaces and how to properly use these repurposed spaces (i.e. pavement markings, signage, and barrier objects)

GOAL

Public Infrastructure

Improve the Town's water infrastructure system to better serve residents and businesses

- Install a detention tank at the Town's water treatment plant
- Identify the location of dead-end water mains and adequately loop
- Replace the water tower near Lawrence Street
- Improve the pressure for the water tower near Meijer
- Upsize the water mains on SR 13 near Middlebury Elementary School

GOAL

Public Infrastructure

Improve the radio communications equipment for Middlebury's Police and Fire Departments to enhance the response times to emergency calls and reduce their ISO ratings

- Improve emergency radio communications for first responders with the installation of the Elkhart County dark fiber infrastructure
- Upgrade the monopole
- Upgrade the radio equipment to 800 Mhz

GOAL

Public Infrastructure

Improve the Town's wastewater infrastructure system to better serve residents and businesses

- Reconstruct the lift stations
- Enhance the SCADA system

GOAL

Public Infrastructure

Reduce noise pollution from heavy truck traffic

- Adopt a Town ordinance or install signs on SR 13 and US 20 to prohibit engine brake use, etc. to reduce noise pollution from heavy truck traffic

GOAL

Public Infrastructure

Reduce the number of "black holes" - areas with limited to no cellular service

- Explore the feasibility to install required infrastructure on top of the Town's water tanks
- Establish a rental agreement for service providers to rent the infrastructure space

GOAL

Zoning

Preserve Middlebury's character while enhancing the sense of place through the creation of vibrant, walkable destinations

- Develop and adopt design standards specific to a Character area as identified on the Future Character Map to guide developers plans and site designs to achieve the Town's vision
- Review existing zoning ordinances and process with Elkhart County Planning to communicate the Town's vision and ensure developers adhere to the desires of the Town
- Develop and adopt building and fire codes
- Integrate the Future Land Use Character Map and goals in Town planning processes and communication is cohesively shared amongst Town Boards, Staff, and Committees



Measuring our Success

A THRIVING MIDDLEBURY - PRIORITY ACTION PROGRAM

The following Action Program lists the highest priority action strategies Middlebury will first focus its implementation efforts following the adoption of this Plan to begin achieving their 2030 vision. Early in the planning process, the Steering Committee identified key community stakeholders who are knowledgeable individuals and professionals, and those who have an interest in these focus areas to serve on a Focus Group to help the Town identify the major challenges and strategies related to those areas and create an actionable plan. It is the desire of the Town for these Focus Groups to regularly meet and work towards implementing the strategies identified within their focus areas. The following Action Program consists of the highest priority strategies organized by the six focus areas as presented from the Community Profile section of this Plan. These strategies will guide the Town and Focus Group's implementation efforts over the next five years to enhance the Town's vibrancy. A complete list of the strategies for the focus areas is provided in the Appendix. Prioritization was first done by community stakeholders at the second Focus Group Workshop, and a final review was done by the Steering Committee to ensure the priorities would be realistic for implementation and supportive by the Town of Middlebury.

Middlebury’s core values and transformative action strategies are the frameworks of seeing the vision implemented. The core values serve as the “cultivators” that articulate the characteristics, aspirations, and social attributes the community desires, and the strategies transform the “built environment” to see the vision built up to reality. The Steering Committee identified six core values to guide future site designs and development concepts, and new policies and programs for the Town of Middlebury. These strategies align with the core values of **Attractive & Welcoming Community, Opportunities for Community Connections, Industry, Innovation, & Education, Infrastructure & Safety, Simple, Family-Focus Lifestyle, and Nature, Parks, & Trails.**

PRIORITY ACTION PROGRAM

TOWN CENTER

GOALS	ACTION STRATEGIES
Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a feasibility study to re-route SR 13 outside of the Town Center to reduce heavy-truck traffic and improve the safety for all users
Proactively market the vision and character of the Town Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Town Center Redevelopment Plan • Conduct a parking study to evaluate the parking needs in downtown • Promote mixed-use and infill development to support a vibrant and thriving Town Center • Research and provide appropriate incentives to encourage infill and redevelopment in targeted areas • Retain existing businesses while promoting a diversified market to have additional commercial and retail uses
Preserve Middlebury’s character while enhancing the sense of place through the creation of vibrant, walkable destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create sub-area standards for targeted development areas in the Town Center, Employment Centers, Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors, and Gateways

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

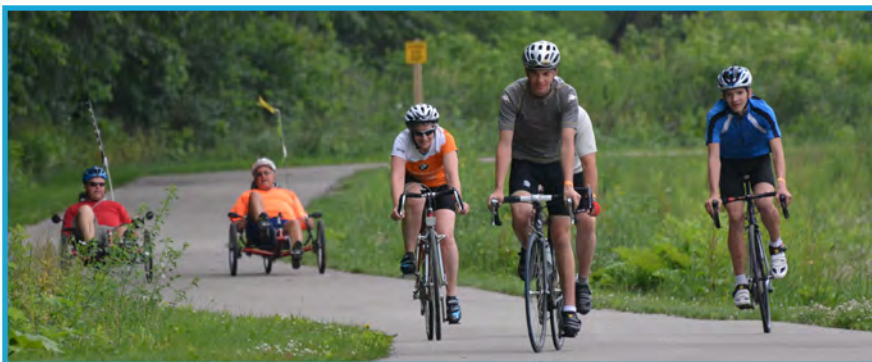
GOALS	ACTION STRATEGIES
<p>Preserve Middlebury’s character while enhancing the sense of place through the creation of vibrant, walkable destinations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and adopt design standards specific to a Character area as identified on the Future Character Map to guide developers plans and site designs to achieve the Town’s vision • Create sub-area standards for targeted development areas in the Town Center, Employment Centers, Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors, and Gateways
<p>Preserve the existing residential character</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a property maintenance ordinance/neighborhood preservation ordinance
<p>Ensure quality development for new neighborhoods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the subdivision control ordinance to require pedestrian connectivity throughout the site design to include sidewalks or trails, and open spaces • Encourage housing developers to include open spaces or pocket parks in new subdivisions
<p>Proactively plan for sustainable and modest growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create utility extension policies to support future development in targeted areas
<p>Increase the number of local businesses and small-scale retail spaces to provide additional shopping, dining, and service opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional local shopping and grocery establishments to reduce the need to travel to regional communities for daily needs
<p>Expand and enhance Middlebury’s marketing and tourism initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Merchant Association to bring collaboration, a common sense of purpose, and community involvement • Establish a “Maker’s Market” and promote this as a shop-local campaign

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

GOALS	ACTION STRATEGIES
Proactively plan for sustainable and modest growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create utility extension policies to support future development in targeted areas • Support future development on the west side of Town with the provision of public utilities by conducting a Preliminary Engineering Study and acquiring needed properties
Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with INDOT to program safe crossings for pedestrians from adjacent neighborhoods to Middlebury Schools across US 20 in the US 20 widening project (such as a pedestrian bridge, hawk signals, or pedestrian tunnel) • Explore the feasibility to widen Main Street to improve traffic flow and accommodate for bicyclists and Amish buggies • Upgrade and add signage and pavement markings for trail and pedestrian crossings
Coordinate infrastructure improvements with future development plans to reduce fiscal impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalize on the planned SR 13 INDOT improvements to include traffic calming measures and redesign the streetscape to support the character of the Town Center and Transitional Mixed-Use Corridors
Improve the Town's Water infrastructure system to better serve residents and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install a detention tank at the Town's water treatment plant

PARKS, TRAILS, & COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENTS

GOALS	ACTION STRATEGIES
<p>Continue to construct the Trails of Middlebury - a multi-use trail system that connects to Middlebury's Employment Centers, Town Center, Parks, and neighborhoods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the River Mill Trail that connects Riverbend and Olde Mill Parks to the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail
<p>Preserve and enhance Middlebury's high-quality parks, trails, and outdoor recreational amenities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the strategies identified in the 2020-2024 Parks Master Plan • Continue to develop the Riverbend and Olde Mill Parks Master Plan, & the Trestle Terrace Development Plan • Develop neighborhood parks in currently underserved areas
<p>Enhance communication and public education on the Park Department's sustainability and environmental initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Town Committees, Boards, and Staff to maintain ongoing communication about the Park Department's sustainable practices, and land preservation efforts, and the Tree Board's management of Middlebury's urban forestry (tree canopy)



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

GOALS	ACTION STRATEGIES
Expand and enhance Middlebury’s marketing and tourism initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a “Makers Map” to highlight local artisans • Educate business owners, chamber staff, and other organizations on using social media and share best practices
Proactively market the vision and character of the Town Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote mixed-use and infill development to support a vibrant and thriving Town Center
Enhance the utilization of social media platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a strategic branding plan with a vision and a clear and consistent message for use on social media outlets (i.e., hashtags, targeting audiences, advertising, etc.) • Utilize social media, signage, email communications, etc. to promote local businesses and showcase what they have to offer
Increase the Town’s visual presence with acquiring and using high-quality images and color themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source local photography talent • Create a method of assigning and receiving media • Work with the Arts Council on creative ways to use their stock

EDUCATION

GOALS	ACTION STRATEGIES
Establish the ARMS mentorship program to assist the needs of all students in Middlebury Community Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the students’ various needs per school and grade-level who need mentorship • Establish mentors at each school and for the school district
Establish “lasting” partnerships with community entities and organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand network opportunities and establish partnerships with local churches, service clubs, community organizations, the Town of Middlebury, and local businesses
Provide affordable housing options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of a Young Family-Focused Housing Subsidy Program

EVALUATING OUR ACTION PROGRAM

Regular evaluation and monitoring of the Middlebury 2030 Comprehensive Plan, in particular, the Priority Action Program, will be a key component for an actionable plan. If the plan is to be a valuable resource to the Town, the Town should establish a method to measure the successes and challenges in achieving the vision and implementing the Priority Action Program. Continual monitoring of the progress of the Action Program will keep key decision-makers such as the Town Council, Town staff, Focus Groups, the Middlebury Chamber of Commerce, and the public informed about the Program's effectiveness. Additionally, monitoring the Program will help identify what aspects of the action strategies are working and areas that need to be improved or modified. This contributes to the comprehensive plan being a living document, as the Town can review and update the Plan every five years to stay current with changing community needs and resources that come available.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROGRAM

One suggested method to evaluate and monitor the progress of the Action Program is to set up a Performance Evaluation Program that establishes milestones and/or project deadlines to see a project through completion. It is recommended that project development be monitored and evaluated through a five-year period, concluding each year with an annual progress report. The progress report may include an assessment of the strategies as to how they are achieving the Town's vision and goals, identify aspects of the project that are working well and aspects that are not working well, and strategize ways to improve those aspects that are not working well.

The performance evaluation program could be presented to the Middlebury Town Council as an annual update with additional advisement from the Elkhart County Planning Commission. Using an evaluation program like what is suggested, will help keep the Town aware of how to respond to the arising issues or community needs and aspirations over the next 10 years.



ORGANIZE FREQUENT FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

One way to utilize the performance evaluation program is for the Town to encourage the six Focus Groups to continue to meet on a regular basis and use the performance evaluation as a criterion for the direction and purpose of the meeting.

The establishment of the six Focus Groups was a key direction by the Town and community leaders as a means to manage the implementation of the Action Program and the set of strategies identified for their specific Group and monitor the progress of those strategies. It is a desire of the Town to have an actionable plan and continue the momentum generated by the planning process following adoption.

While the Town may not ultimately be the sole responsible entity to implement a strategy, the Town could coordinate with the Chairs of the Focus Groups to establish a meeting schedule for the upcoming year, provide guidance on projects, and to receive updates on the progress of project developments. Doing so will cultivate long-lasting partnerships and communication.

One of the six Focus Groups, the Land Use & Development group, was identified at the forefront to assist the Town Manager and Elkhart County Planning Commission to guide and manage community and economic development initiatives that may occur in Middlebury. The direction for this particular Focus Group could be to oversee community development activities and make recommendations to the Town Council on land use decisions to have sustainable and modest growth and work with developers to ensure development proposals are reflective of the Town's vision. This may also include working with the Town Council and Town Manager to develop policies that support extending its municipal boundaries and public utilities to enhance its services to the residents and businesses outside the municipal boundaries.

Additional collaboration could be with the Town Manager and the Elkhart County Planning Commission on proposed projects and review of submitted site plans to the zoning ordinance to ensure project proposals and site plans strive to achieve the vision of the Future Land Use Character Areas identified early in the Building Middlebury - Our Future Vision Framework section of this Plan.

GUIDANCE ON IMPLEMENTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Middlebury 2030 Comprehensive Plan serves as the policy document to guide growth and development over the planning horizon to 2030. It sets a general framework for local decision-making and provides direction for land use planning and zoning efforts, budgeting priorities, and coordination with other public and private organizations. This chapter outlines the roles for the Town of

Middlebury and supporting community organizations and entities, as well as tools and potential funding sources to implement the transformative strategies and build the vision into reality.

ROLE OF THE TOWN GOVERNMENT

The comprehensive plan should be used on a daily basis by Town staff, committees, Town Council, and the Elkhart County Planning Commission to review and evaluate site plan proposals to ensure they are consistent with Middlebury’s vision, prioritize capital expenditures on public infrastructure, and guide community and economic development. Town Council should refer to the Plan when approving development proposals and budgeting of its general fund.

MAINTAIN OPEN DIALOGUE WITH COMMUNITY

The Middlebury community was involved through the entire planning process in the development of this Plan, and community engagement should not stop there. Maintaining an open dialogue and consistently encouraging community involvement after the Plan is adopted is vital for successful implementation. The Town should be at the forefront actively communicating the Town’s vision and action strategies to its residents, business leaders, private investors, Town boards, committees, and community organizations to foster a sense of pride and unity to achieve the vision. Simple procedures to communicate with the greater community could be to make sure the Plan is accessible online; hard copies are available at the municipal building or library; routinely update the Town’s website; regularly inform the public through the newsletter of development and policy changes; as well as seek input when evaluating the progress of implementing the transformative strategies.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Zoning Ordinance

The purpose of a zoning ordinance is to govern the subdividing of lands, regulate the uses on the land in terms of scale, intensity, and appearance, and implement the land use policies from the comprehensive plan. Likewise, the zoning map and regulations should reflect the vision of the future land use map. Zoning is an important regulatory tool for implementing the Town’s vision by establishing the types of uses to be allowed on specific properties and prescribe the character and intensity of permitted development. It is one of the Plan Commission’s primary responsibilities to oversee the Town’s various development ordinances and ensure they are concurrent with the vision of the Middlebury 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

While the comprehensive plan is a guiding policy document for growth and development in the community and setting guidelines for the quality, character, and intensity of new development over a long-term, the zoning ordinance operates at a parcel level dealing



with development on a daily basis to ensure the vision of the comprehensive plan is carried out. However, the comprehensive plan and zoning do not always operate harmoniously as they are accompanied by constant changes in the real estate market, community desires, and/or local decision-makers.

Areas to review and make improvements, if necessary, include modifying the zoning map and district standards to better reflect the future land use map; revise the plan development process to allow additional flexibility in regards to housing density and mixed-use developments; monitor impacts on stormwater management and use of best management practices (BMPs); requirements for developers in land dedications and exactions; and, define the type and scale of new development to require a traffic impact study.

Capital Improvement Plan

Like the Zoning Ordinance, the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) or the Town's general obligation fund is another implementation tool in carrying out the Plan's action strategies. The Town uses the CIP to plan, budget, and finance the purchase and/or construction of capital improvement projects within a 10-year period. Eligible projects include constructing large capital infrastructures such as roads or utilities, Town facilities, and parks, equipment or other fixed assets. All projects should then be reviewed, prioritized, and programmed with cost estimates and funding mechanisms, into the Town's capital budget for each fiscal year. A capital budget is the Town's annual budget that lists projects to be implemented in the current fiscal year. Therefore, the CIP is updated annually to reflect shifting priorities, emerging issues, changes in technology, and alterations from projected revenue. The CIP allows the Town to weigh project costs and benefits, and analyze the fiscal impacts to prioritize for the most beneficial public improvements while staying within budget constraints.

It is important to note that projects listed in the CIP are not guaranteed to make it into the annual capital budget. Therefore, the Town should analyze all of the projects included in the CIP each year during an update. Additionally, the review of the Comprehensive Plan update should correspond with the preparation of the Town's annual capital budget and CIP. This ensures resources are aligned with proposed changes in the upcoming fiscal year.

TOWN REVENUE SOURCES

Many of the action strategies in the comprehensive plan can be implemented through administrative decision-making or Town funded programs, details provided below. However, others may require outside assistance, in which case the Town should proactively search for external grant opportunities.

Below are the several revenue sources the Town of Middlebury can use to finance capital improvement projects.

General Fund

The Town's General Fund accounts for the revenue collected from all Town enacted funding sources including property taxes, utility fees, and any permits. The General Fund pays for personnel and department operations, with a small percentage available for capital improvements. The amount used for capital improvements is set by Town Council prior adoption of the annual capital budget.

Land Exactions

An Impact fee is one land exaction tool the Town could use to implement public infrastructure and facilities. Impact fees are intended to require developers to pay a fee, prior to acquiring building permits, to help offset the cost impacts from the new development in order for the Town to efficiently serve the community for public safety, utility services, parks, and transportation. These fees are established based on the capital and operation effects of new development. Currently, the Town does not have an impact fee policy but could coordinate with the Elkhart County Planning Department to review and determine the feasibility to enact such a fee.



Fee-in-Lieu's is another land exaction tool to implement public infrastructure and facilities. They operate differently than impact fees in that they are not based on the impacts of development but the requirement for developers to construct public infrastructure or facilities to serve the area. Fees can be used as subject to final site plan approval, and the Town may work with a developer to pay a fee-in-lieu of constructing the public infrastructure or facility so long as the infrastructure or facility is proportionate and reasonably tied to the development area. Example fee-in-lieu's can be applied for constructing bicycle and pedestrian facilities like sidewalks or trails, and parklands.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts

The Town of Middlebury Redevelopment Commission was established by the Town and has representation of Middlebury residents. The Middlebury Redevelopment Commission oversee activities and funding related to the Town's two TIF Districts called the Town Center and Elroy Drive. The Elroy Drive TIF District is adjacent to the County's Middlebury Southeast TIF District, and was also used to support Jayco's expansions and improvements. The Town Center TIF activities will support future development in the Town Center. Additional activities included adding properties off CR 37 to support Coachmen's improvements and expansions.

The Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission has two TIF districts adjacent to the Town of Middlebury called Middlebury East and Middlebury Southeast. The Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission makes all decisions related to the expenditures of these resources, no formal representation from Town of Middlebury are on the Commission. TIFs were formed to support expansion of industrial uses within the districts through utility extensions (water and sewer). The Middlebury Southeast TIF activities supported Jayco's campus expansions and improvements. The Middlebury East TIF activities supported the Meijer development and expansion, and in the future, the TIF could support the development of an industrial park. The Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission has worked with the Town to fund improvements for its water and sewer systems, including improvements for its water tower and wastewater treatment plant. The Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission established another TIF district at the SR 13 and Indiana Toll Road interchange to support gateway improvements and development of industrial.

The four TIF districts are referred to:

Town of Middlebury Redevelopment Commission

- Town Center (downtown and off CR 37)
- Elroy Drive (south of US 20 and the Middlebury Southeast TIF, and on both sides of SR 13)

Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission

- Middlebury East (east of SR 13 and north of the Little Elkhart River)
- Middlebury Southeast (south of US 20 and east of SR 13)

Economic Development Income Tax (EDIT)

The Economic Development Income Tax (EDIT), also known as the County Economic Development Income Tax (CEDIT) is an optional tax available to all counties in Indiana. Revenue is divided among the county, cities, and towns, and must be used for economic development or public infrastructure projects. Elkhart County has adopted CEDIT. The Town may use their apportionment as a local match for federal and state projects.

Wheel Tax (Local Option Highway User Tax)

The Local Option Highway User Tax is available to all counties. Elkhart County has been collecting a Wheel Tax since 2004. Distributions are made to the cities and towns as well as the counties. The Town may use their apportionment as a local match for federal and state projects.

Motor Vehicle Highway Account (MVHA)

MVHA revenue is an account of the General Fund of the State of Indiana, which, by statute, is credited with the collection of the first six cents of the motor fuel and fuel use taxes, plus the statutory fees for motor vehicle registration and operation. The State collects these highway user taxes and apportions it back to the local municipalities for administration. The MVHA is the principal source of revenue for the overall operation of street and highway departments. MVHAs uses include the purchase of materials, labor costs, and/or equipment purchases required in the maintenance and construction of streets and roads. The Town may use their apportionment as a local match for federal and state projects.

Public-Private Partnerships

A public-private partnership (PPP) is a business relationship between a private-sector company and a government agency for the purpose of completing public projects. PPPs can be used to finance, build, and operate capital projects. The Town could collaborate with the Elkhart County Economic Development Corporation to explore opportunities to market vacant properties that have a good potential to be redeveloped or re-purposed for economic development activities like attracting new businesses, create business incubator spaces and workforce development.

POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

There are several federal and state grant opportunities available the Town of Middlebury and its Focus Groups could pursue as they work on implementing the Action Program to help offset project development costs. These potential funding opportunities will help the Town to enhance its public utility systems, parks, trails, recreational amenities, local streets, community development initiatives, and economic development initiatives. The following are some potential grant opportunities the Town could pursue.

Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) administers the federal transportation program. The Town of Middlebury can apply for federal funds through a regular call for projects. The Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) can assist the Town in planning and applying for transportation funding through INDOT and other state programs.

INDOT's Community Crossings Match Grant Program

On March 23, 2016, Indiana Governor, Mike Pence, signed House Bill 1001 and Senate Bill 67 into law, which made available additional funding to incentivize local governments to begin inventorying, assessing, and improving their community assets of local roads and bridges. In April 2017, Governor Eric Holcomb signed House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1002 into law, continuing the Community Crossings Match Grant (CCMG) fund by committing to invest hundreds of millions of dollars for local road and bridge projects. Unlike the 2016 legislation, communities such as Middlebury with a population of less than 10,000 are required to submit eligible projects at a 25 percent match rather than 50 percent. Eligible projects for the Town include preventative maintenance, road rehabilitation, or road reconstruction. Middlebury has regularly applied for CCMG and has been successful to receive an award from each call, receiving nearly \$4 million that has improved over 10 miles of its local roads. Without the financial assistance from CCMG, these improvements would have taken longer to complete.

Economic Development Administration Public Works & Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs

EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs provide communities with resources to address their various economic needs. EDA supports infrastructure and economic development projects that lead to job creation and retention, an increase in private investment, advances innovation, enhances manufacturing capacities, and workforce development. More information is provided on the EDA's funding opportunities webpage.

Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) Programs

OCRA oversees the allocation of federal CDBG funds for community development projects to eligible entities including the planning and construction of public facilities and Main Street revitalization. Under the Public Facilities Program, a community can apply for up to a grant award of \$500,000 and requires a local match of 10 percent of the total project cost.

OCRA Quick Impact Placebased (QuIP) Grant

QuIP is designed to fund small-scale projects that make a quick community enhancement and transformation of underutilized spaces to spark community conversation and creativity. This grant encourages the establishment and strengthening of partnerships between the Town, residents, community groups and organizations, and businesses. Grants requests must be between \$2,500 and \$5,000 and have a local match of either cash, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both.

Indiana Housing Community Development Authority (IHCDA) Programs

IHCDA seeks to assist communities to create high-quality hometowns that are safe, affordable, and quality housing options. IHCDA promotes, finances, and supports a broad range of housing solutions, from temporary shelters to homeownership assistance. IHCDA partners with housing developers, lenders, investors, and nonprofit organizations to use their financing resources to serve low and moderate-income earners.



IHCDA Patronicity CreatINg Places Grant

The CreatINg Places grant is a crowdsource funding mechanism that communities can apply and submit a project campaign that seeks public donations. IHCDA will match the dollars raised for successful campaigns up to \$50,000.

United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides a Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program to rural communities with no more than 20,000 residents to aid in constructing or improving essential community facilities such as hospitals, health clinics, schools, public safety buildings, community centers, museums, local food systems, and other community-based initiatives. More details on how to acquire the Rural Development Community Facilities Grant is available on the USDA's Rural Development website.

United States Fire Administration

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) offers a number of fire service grants the Middlebury Township Fire and EMS Department could pursue to offset costs for equipment, staffing, and fire prevention measures. One grant program Middlebury may be eligible for is the Assistance to Firefighters used to purchase equipment, protective gear, and vehicles as well as training initiatives.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) offers several community facilities grants such as Fire Management and Recreational Trails Program. Fire Management grants is a 50/50 match that helps volunteer fire departments purchase vehicles and equipment. The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a state match grant to aid local communities in land acquisition and/or developing multi-use trails. The RTP reimburses a local community up to 80 percent of the project expenses upon project approval. More details on these programs are located on the Indiana Department of Natural Resources website.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is available for local communities who have a state-approved Park and Recreation Board and Five-Year Parks Master Plan. The LWCF is a state match grant that provides 50 percent of the costs for land acquisition and/or development of parks and recreational facilities upon project approval. More details on the LWCF are located on the Indiana Department of Natural Resources website.

