

# Portland Downtown Revitalization Plan

Past, Present & Future | June 1, 2019 v2.2



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## Prepared For

The City of Portland, Indiana

### Steering Committee

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- Rusty Inman
- Mayor Randy Geesaman
- Dan Watson
- Ami Huffman

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This plan was developed in collaboration with the City of Portland by Rb Architects, with contributions from Cushman Wakefield, Arsee Engineers and Strand Associates



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- Portland Historic Preservation Committee
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- Portland City Council
- Portland Mayor's Office
- The Citizens of Portland
- Cushman & Wakefield – Commercial Real Estate Services
- Commercial Review – Jay County's Daily Newspaper
- Collection of Mrs. Sandy Bupp – Photography and Photo Archive

**Stakeholders (n) –**

- 1) a person or group with an interest or concern in something, especially business.
- 2) group of individuals or organizations whose decisions and actions can affect the actions of a larger community.

Rb



**Brent Mather** leads the Team with his unique understanding of how to successfully implement community revitalization goals and his exceptional record of transforming historic structures into neighborhood assets. He was instrumental in the first Stellar Pilot Grant awarded to Greencastle, Indiana, directly relevant to the principles of carefully increasing development density and integrating historic structures in a Vision Plan. Brent also has the unique ability to conduct lively and highly interactive community presentations that are informative for attendees and address previous stakeholders concerns. His experience is based on his successful work in the Indiana Cities and Towns of: Logansport, Wabash, Kokomo, Brazil, Greencastle, Attica, Richmond, Cicero, Cloverdale and Russiaville.

# Certification

## Brent Mather | Principal

### Design + Planning + Implementation + Management

Brent Mather spent the last twenty (20) years across Indiana working with communities restoring their historic infrastructure, envision holistic preservation plans, revitalizing brownfield and downtown sites, strengthening small businesses as an economic base, and adapting existing structures (historic and non-historic) to new sustainable, environmentally "green" uses. Brent is listed with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources as an Historic Preservationist. This combination of interests codifies the combined interests of state agencies IHCDA, IOCRA, INDOT, and FDA-Rural. Many of Brent's successful projects have combined state funding mechanisms with LIHTC, New Market Tax Credits, ARRA Energy funding, TIF districts, local economic development corporations' low interest loans, Indiana Landmarks, and private funding / financing. Brent coordinates the unique requirements and needs of each funding partner and produces a single cohesive project, even when the construction is multi-phased, multi-site, fast-tracked and design-build.

In 2015 alone, Brent participated in the design of eleven (11) multi-family complexes, and twenty eight (28) single family homes. He has been an instrumental part of ten (10) recent State of Indiana Stellar Grant Pilot programs with combined IOCRA and IHCDA funding for second floor housing above existing historic storefronts. In 2009, as Senior Project Manager, Brent combining IHCDA's "innovative design method", combining IHCDA NSP#1 funds with CDBG grant dollars (HUD) to revitalize the multiple blocks of New Castle Indiana with for-sale income qualified condominiums above mixed-use retail and multiple for-sale individual homes on scattered sites.

### Timeline

1989	Attended Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in Architectural Design
1991	Attended University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in Architecture
1996	BS in Architecture from the University of Illinois
1996	Attended University of Illinois in Architecture and Urban Planning
1998	Defended Thesis "Urban Renewal and Sensitive Additions"
1998	Joined Woollen Molzan and Partners Architects, Indianapolis, Indiana
2002	Joined Browning Day Mullins Dierdorf, Indianapolis, Indiana
2005	Joined Brenner Design, Indianapolis, Indiana studio head architecture + preservation
2012	Co-founded R&B Architects, LLC

### Community Philosophy

Brent enjoys many community projects outside his profession, volunteering his time within Indiana's Arts and Historic Communities. From 2000 to 2004 Brent served on the Executive Board of the Old Northside Neighborhood. 2004 to 2010, Brent served on the Board of Directors of Dance Kaleidoscope Modern Dance Company where he also chaired its annual fundraiser in 2008 and 2009. In 2009 and 2010, Brent joined the Capital Improvements Committee for the Indiana Historical Society and assisted on its construction project for Indiana Experience and You Are There! Brent has led three (3) Steering Committees for Indiana Landmarks planning national conferences and development for endangered Indianapolis structures. He spends his free time restoring a 1910 Tudor Gothic Revival home in Indianapolis.



# Letter from the Mayor

## Randy D. Geesaman



Randy D. Geesaman  
Mayor, City of Portland  
321 North Meridian Street  
Portland, Indiana 47371

**MAYOR'S OFFICE**  
CITY OF PORTLAND, INDIANA  
*Randy D. Geesaman, Mayor*

February 26, 2019

To the Citizens of Portland:

It is an Honor to present to all of you our City's 2019 Downtown Revitalization Plan. This document represents our collective vision for the future of our downtown district as a vital part of our City. It is a product of months of dedication and commitment from focus groups, business owners, building owners, you our citizens, young professionals, the Planning Commission, Main Street Portland, the City's staff, and last but not least Brent Mather and his consultant team members of Rb Architects.

I am excited that this plan will set the course for moving Portland's downtown core towards much improved sustainability, and our goal since 2016 to provide a thriving, resilient, evolving downtown area that supports the identity of Portland as a place to be and raise a family. As I have said many times, our focus with the Downtown Revitalization Plan is to provide an action plan to implement fully which will improve the City from the inner core outward. Portland already has key assets as a drawing card to our Community, but this Plan will make us stronger for our coming generations.

The City of Portland has come together many times before to make Positive initiatives happen such as the John Jay Center for Learning, Art's Place, and the new WaterPark to just name a few. The successes of our Downtown Revitalization Plan will rest on the same continued participation and determination to make it all happen. Together, we will start by tackling key, foundational, small projects that when combined make significant differences in the Quality of Life, and our economy, immediately. This Plan with its improvements will also help form a foundation for a sustainable City wide vitality. As I have said repeatedly before this needs to be a Public/Private Partnership in a collaborative effort working together for the future generations of Portland. Throughout this journey, there will be many challenges to overcome, but the reward will be a stronger, more resilient downtown which in turn will evolve and stronger, more resilient City of Portland.

The citizens of Portland have always been our greatest Asset. Your participation in this Plan, your support of this Plan, will show proof of your dedication to making Portland great. Since, 2012, as a Community we have always taken something negative like the Flooding, the "Old Pool", blighted houses, etc. and turned them into something very positive and something we can be proud of. The Downtown Revitalization Plan is another opportunity to make that happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Randy D. Geesaman".

Mayor Randy D. Geesaman

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[mayorgeesaman@embarqmail.com](mailto:mayorgeesaman@embarqmail.com)

# Executive Summary

Roughly 100 miles northeast of the State capital, Portland, Indiana is a close-knit and historical community of 6,200 people with a great passion and love for the city they call home. This spirit exists because of the deeply rooted connection to Indiana's history and its early success as a state. The citizens of Portland possess the needed enthusiasm, desire and drive to re-establish the city as a regional hub and a wonderful, vibrant place to call home.

In 2018, the City of Portland's residents came together to engage in the process of improving their community, specifically their downtown. The Portland Redevelopment Commission and the Director of Community Development empaneled a team of planning professionals, including R&B Architects. This group – the consulting team – was tasked with assessing the current conditions of downtown, creating a vision for the future, and establishing a path forward. The plan was to be actionable, including cost estimates and potential sources of funding.

The Portland community has contributed in the form of numerous public meetings. The consulting team led participants through a process to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the city, the priorities of the group, and a visioning exercise to determine what could be imagined downtown. In addition to these efforts, the team completed a demographic and market study to determine where opportunities lay to better serve the population of Portland.

## Among its strengths, Portland has:

- i. ...a strong hometown feel deeply rooted in Jay County history.
- ii. ...a great regional location and proximity to nearby commerce and attractions.
- iii. ...wonderful existing structures, many with historic framework.
- iv. ...a calendar full of local/regional events; attracting large numbers of visitors.
- v. ...a very active and devoted local government.

## The team identified four projects that met the goals defined by the stakeholders that provided economic impact and improved the area's aesthetic. They are:

1. Façade Restoration – to re-establish a welcoming environment for an active Downtown Historic District.
2. Downtown Signage, Way Finding, and Parking – to quickly and easily direct visitors to their destinations; to accommodate increased traffic.
3. Creation of trails, attractions, etc. – to increase the draw of regional and niche visitors, along with improving the quality of life for residents.
4. Creation of new, market rate housing opportunities, supported by the Jay County Housing Study (2018) which identified need for multi-family rental for all age ranges and incomes.

These projects will be made possible through careful planning and the thoughtful leadership of the Jay County Community Development, engaged citizens, and stakeholder groups working toward the same goals. Each project builds to create momentum. In the process, the project area will not only undergo a beautification process, but also will become an economic engine that will create jobs and wealth for the City of Portland itself.

Implementation of proposed projects is the primary challenge of the Portland Community and Portland Main Street Committee. With shrinking population and evidence of fewer highly engaged volunteer citizens, the current environment is of "a few people doing a lot of jobs", as expressed by Portland resident volunteer Sandy Bubp. The Portland Main Street Committee already has taken the first key step to re-engage a grass roots, ground-up effort for Downtown Revitalization – inviting new participants from all sectors of Portland, inside the Downtown and adjacent. The formation of a Young Business Persons' sub-committee of Portland Main Street promises to be the start of yearly updates to keep this Revitalization Plan alive, functioning, and dynamic.



Photo: Cromer's Building (c1935)  
Used with permission  
Collection of Mrs. Sandy Bubp

# Portland Downtown Revitalization Plan

## Section A: Introduction



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Photo: Hawkins Building (c1940)  
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# Portland Downtown Revitalization Plan

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The City of Portland initiated this Downtown Revitalization Plan with the intent of outlining a path toward reinvestment in the downtown core. In past few decades, much of the commercial development has shifted away from the historic Downtown Business District. There is now a desire to seek a vibrant, concentrated community center once again. Shaped with input from stakeholders, officials, and the public, this study outlines a process for development decisions and makes recommendations for appropriate investment.

**City of Portland** services within the city limits meet the basic needs of residents, but offer little opportunities in the way of retail, recreation, and entertainment. Given the easy access on State Roads 26, 27 & 67, Portland is within reach of larger communities that can accommodate current demand for retail, recreation and entertainment services. This is both a positive and a negative for the City. While a significant number of people pass through Portland on the state roads, few of them are spending time downtown. Currently there are few reasons for motorists, unfamiliar with Portland, to stop in the downtown core. Many businesses have drifted toward the western and northern ends of town to benefit from available space and proximity to highway traffic.

#### Downtown Portland District

The same highways that take activity away from the downtown can also bring people to it. With a condensed core and easy transportation, the prospect for vitality is ripe for advancement. It simply requires focus back to the center of the city and away from the edges.

This is the purpose of the Downtown Revitalization Plan: **To outline the necessary steps for bringing the focus back to the heart of Portland.** This can be accomplished by concentrating on redevelopment opportunities within the downtown by:

- Maximizing amenities and taking strides toward
- Making necessary improvements to the infrastructure; including buildings, sidewalks, parking and signage, and
- Adopting an economic approach to enhance the quality of life for residents as well as to attract outside business.

Photo: Hawkins Building (c1960)  
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# Section A

# Introduction

# Purpose of The Plan

This Downtown Revitalization Plan is intended to set out a future vision for the downtown core. A plan for this area must create a sense of place, establish an identity, encourage investment, and promote activity. Throughout the planning process, several discussions and exercises took place to aid community stakeholders in developing their vision. While the Downtown Revitalization Plan is a broad statement, it reflects the combined values of the community.

## Goals:

- Improve Portland's image and identity, by inspiring and re-establishing the welcoming environment of a vibrant Downtown Historic District.
- Become a destination and hub for regional tourism options
- Create a walkable, interactive community with easy access to businesses and services, and connections to cultural events and activities.

These goals, along with the findings from the workgroup sessions, are to be woven together to create a vision statement that represents the future of the City of Portland.

This document is a starting point and is intended to be coordinated with other future planning studies, in order to guide and direct redevelopment for the downtown Portland. Specifically it identifies opportunities that can be implemented for revitalization of Portland's Downtown Commercial District.

After initial planning and working group meetings, the intention of the citizens stakeholders expanded. The vision they had for their community to work toward included three primary goals:

- Improving image and revitalizing local identity; returning to positive, 'hometown' feel and local community pride.
- Increasing retention of local population, especially young residents, and creating an environment that captures thru-traffic and temporary populations.
- Rebranding the city to reflect a mixture of its history and values in order to increase commerce and culture in the downtown district.

# Vision Statement

In the year 2021, we envision Portland's core to have a small-town atmosphere that exemplifies family values. We see a planned and developed downtown that serves as a gathering place for both residents and visitors. We will be nationally recognized for our high-quality educational system and a wide array of employment opportunities in diversified businesses; both supported by a well-planned and designed community infrastructure.



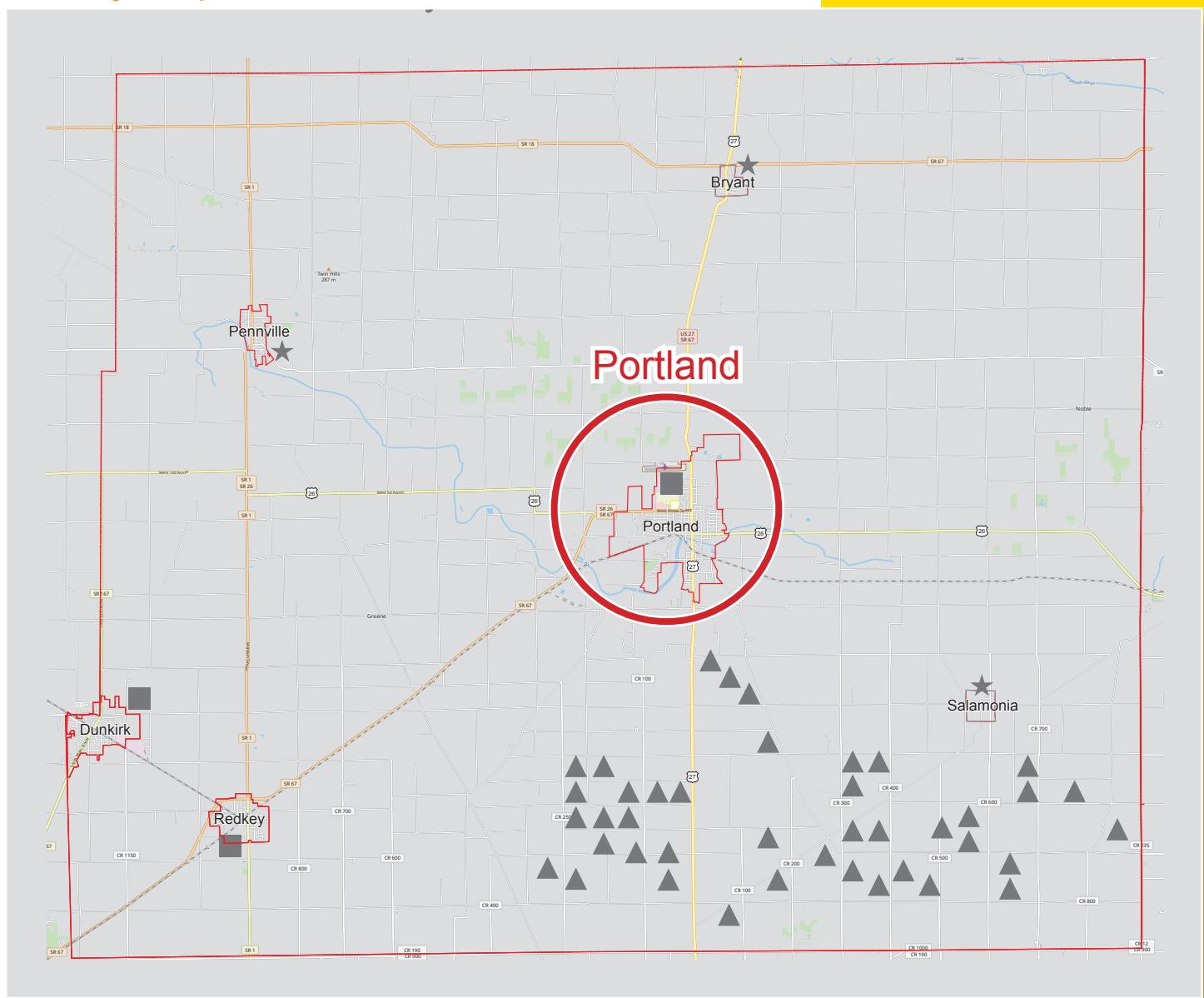
Photo: Portland Water Tower (2016)  
Ami Huffman, Photographer

# Scope of The Plan—Downtown

The project area for the purposes of this study is the Portland Commercial Historic District in downtown Portland, Indiana. This area is generally defined by the following description: “On Meridian Street, the district takes in one building north of Arch Street and extends six blocks southward to include the South Meridian Street Bridge... The long, straight, eastern boundary is formed by the alley behind the buildings on the east side of Meridian Street... The South Meridian Street Bridge over the Salamonie River acts as the southern boundary, separating the commercial district from a residential area. The western boundary is the most irregular. It extends west of Meridian Street to include the County Courthouse, the Portland Fire Department, and other resources on Court, Commerce, Walnut and Main Streets as well as one significant building west of Ship Street (319 W Main St.)”.



## County Map—Context

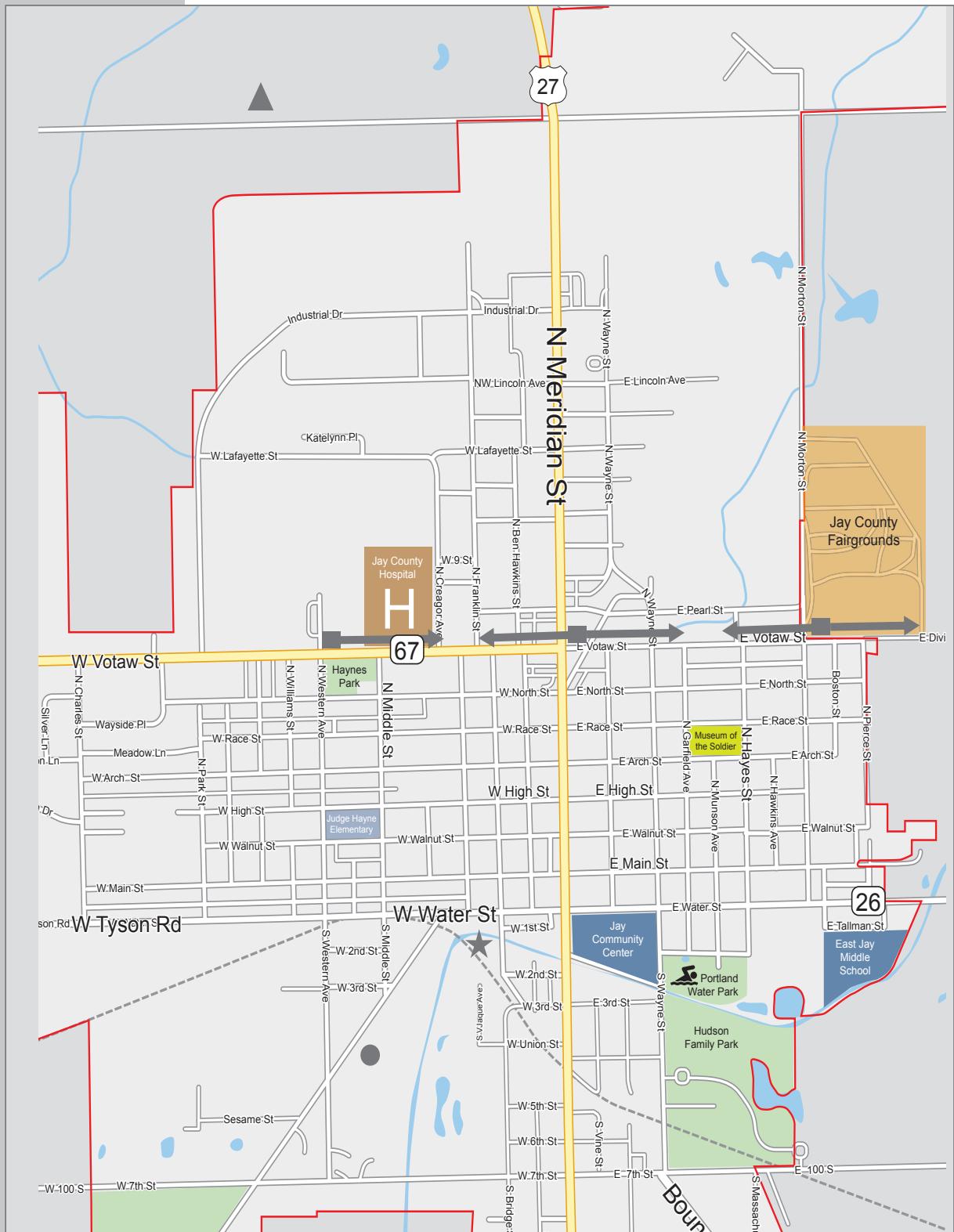


<sup>1</sup>Section 2, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. National Park Service, 1996.



# Scope of The Plan– Downtown (cont.)

## City Map–Context

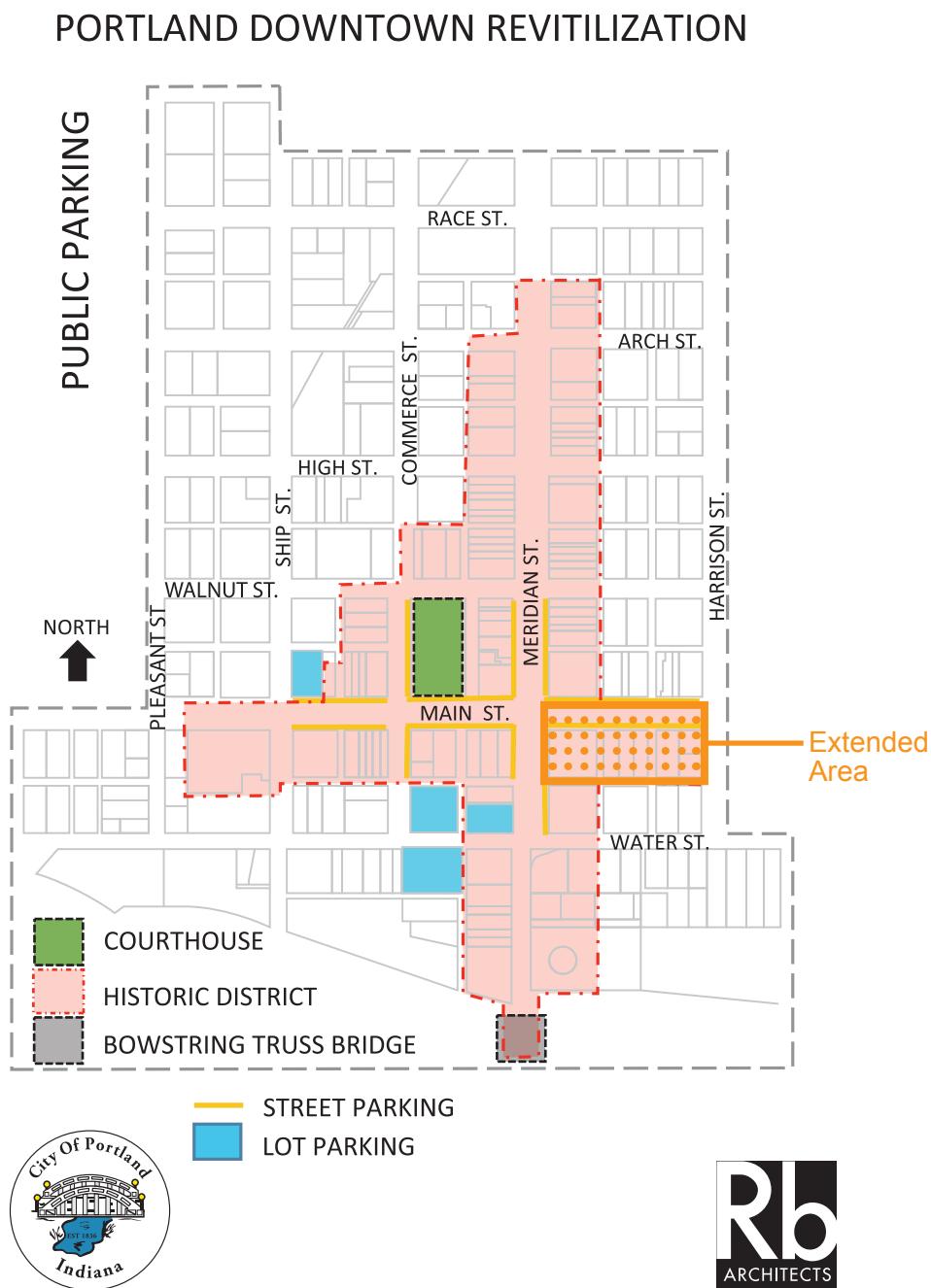


# Scope of The Plan— Downtown (cont.)

The Portland Main Street Committee elected to expand the scope of their Downtown Revitalization Plan to include the commercial buildings and opportunities on East Main Street.



## Downtown Map



# Planning Process

This Downtown Revitalization Plan was initiated by the City of Portland and Portland Main Street Committee. Focused on public input, the study process included opportunities for residents to provide feedback and guide recommendations. Members of the community were invited to workshops and public open house forums over a 7 month period, beginning in June 2018 and ending in January 2019.

Prior to recommending physical and policy changes, the consultant team conducted an inventory of past and current conditions. Additionally, the consultant team sought out examples of relevant models, planning theories and ideologies for the community to weigh in creation of an overall vision. Finally, several revitalization projects specific to Portland were identified.



figure 2

## Portland meetings

Check out thw Appendix and Section B (p. 54) for details on Community Input and Results of Public Input Meetings

06/29/2018 – Committee Meeting	10/19/2018 – Portland RDC – Re-development Commission Update
07/13/2018 – Facade Owners Meeting	11/02/2018 – Public Meeting
08/03/2018 – Committee Meeting	11/08/2018 – OCRA Presentation
08/06/2018 – GAP Analysis / Survey Meeting	11/13/2018 – Committee Meeting – Main Street
08/24/2018 – Facade Owners One on One	11/27/2018 – Community Listening Session
08/31/2018 – Facade Owners Second Meeting	12/12/2018 – Committee Meeting – Main Street
09/04/2018 – Historic Preservation Committee, Facade Committee Presentation	01/25/2019 – RDC Portland / Historical Preservation Commission Update
09/13/2018 – Facade Committee Presentation, Public Invited	02/04/2019 – Committee Final Review – Main Street
09/14/2018 – Committee Meeting	03/04/2019 – Public Update at City Council
09/20/2018 – Committee Meeting – Marketing	
10/18/2018 – Committee Meeting – Main Street Business Association	

# How to Use The Plan

This plan is only the first step in a Downtown Development Program. It articulates a direction and vision to help guide community leadership in the development and reinvestment in downtown. The success of downtown does not hinge on perfect parking layouts, optimal development sites, or smooth traffic flow. Instead, it relies on the ability to stimulate interest and excitement within the community, as well as creating a focal point for the town. Accordingly, this plan provides recommendations to begin the revitalization process. Use this as a resource when making decisions on future investments and weighing new opportunities. It stresses implementation strategies.

It is important to stress that these recommendations will not be realized without ongoing leadership by the community. The vision and goals outlined in the plan can only become reality with the dedication and commitment of the people who make things happen. The intent of this Downtown Revitalization Plan is not to solve every perceived problem in the area. Rather, it will provide recommendations that will contribute to the collective vision the community has agreed upon. Other elements are needed, such as critical review of the zoning ordinances and fostering the Main Street Organization to aide in the promotion of the Downtown area. With support, a transformation will occur.

This document is organized to reflect the planning process that was completed to develop the framework of the plan. Readers of the plan are encouraged to highlight, make notes, and check-off sections of the plan as they are accomplished. Most importantly, users are encouraged to refer to the plan often, continually monitoring the progress and insuring that the downtown is improving in a manner consistent with the overall vision and elements set forth. Through careful and purposeful planning, public and private collaboration, and hard work, downtown Portland is poised to become a destination and a beacon of civic pride.

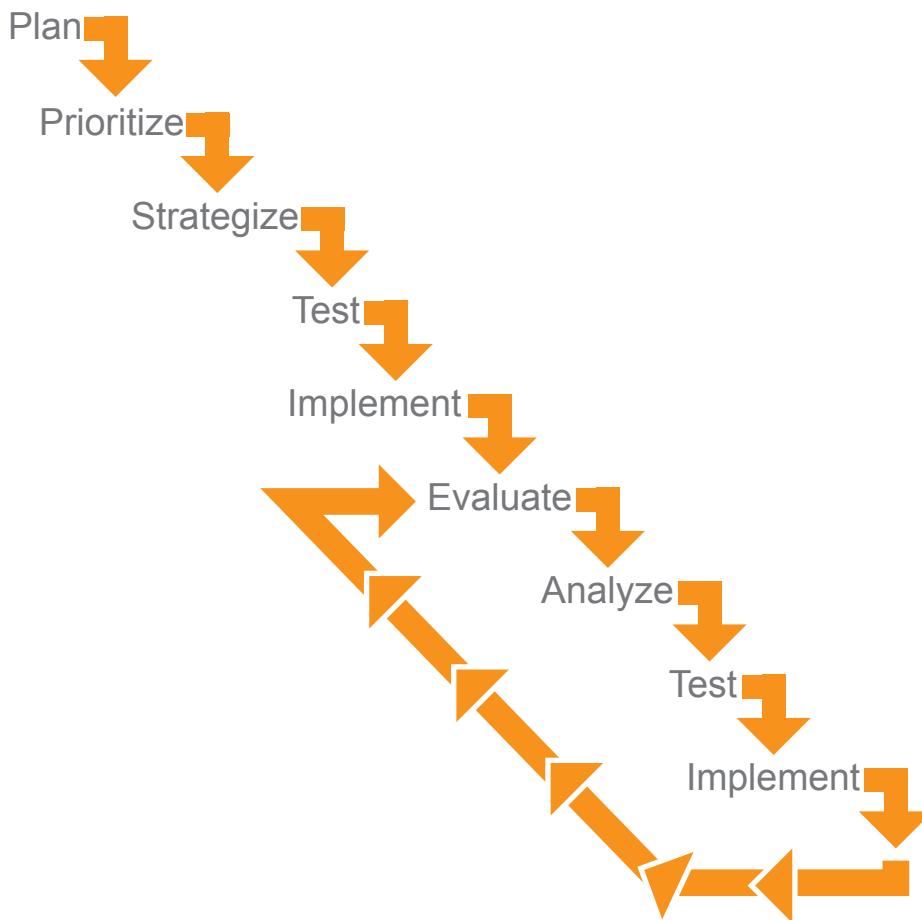


Photo: 155 N. Meridian Street  
Portland Indiana (c1895)  
Used with permission  
Collection of Mrs. Sandy Bubb

# Social, Cultural and Historical Background

Photo Right: Main Street Portland, IN (c1908)  
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Collection of Mrs. Sandy Bubb



Portland, Indiana was established in 1837 as the county seat of newly formed Jay County. From its founding on the north bank of the Salamonie River until the arrival of the railroad in 1871, the city existed as a sleepy and isolated frontier community. Landlocked, its early economy consisted mostly of goods, tools and staples for wagon and canoe travel. Farm and livestock related commerce would increase as roads improved. Early settlers arrived by land, mostly of British, German and/or Scots-Irish heritage; isolated pockets of Native American populations continued to exist in the surrounding areas. When the railroad finally arrived, Portland would experience a long stretch of strong economic and commercial growth along with a population boom. These new interregional connections allowed for the growth of all kinds of commercial and industrial business. Portland's growth would increase even more with the discovery of natural gas in 1886. The Trenton Natural Gas Field was the largest in the world at the time. The subsequent period of prosperity would continue into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and create a vibrant and bustling downtown.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Portland would become nationally known for its contributions to the design of the broom<sup>2</sup>, dairy equipment<sup>3</sup>, fledgling automobile industries<sup>4</sup>, and most notably to natural gas development. It is said that the gas was so plentiful, customers were charged by the month or year rather than by volume. Portland and other communities on the Trenton Field thought the supply of gas was endless. So much so it became fashionable to erect arches of perforated iron pipe and let them burn brightly day and night for month after month (American Oil & Gas Historical Society 2018). However, this lack of conservation would spell the end of Portland's economic boom. Gas wells across what was once the largest field in the world stopped producing by 1910. Portland's economy would not reach the same heights again, but the Downtown Commercial Historic District is a direct and timeless reminder of a very unique, prosperous time in Indiana, and the United States as a whole.

<sup>2</sup>The Joseph Lay Broom Company was widely regarded as a top commercial broom manufacturer of the era.

<sup>3</sup>The Creamery Package Manufacturing Company claimed to be the 'world's largest manufacturer of dairy equip.'

<sup>4</sup>Sheller Manufacturing Corporation would produce steering wheels for Ford Motor Co.

# Portland Downtown Revitalization Plan

## Section B: Existing Conditions



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Photo: Portland Public Library (2018)  
Ami Huffman, Photographer

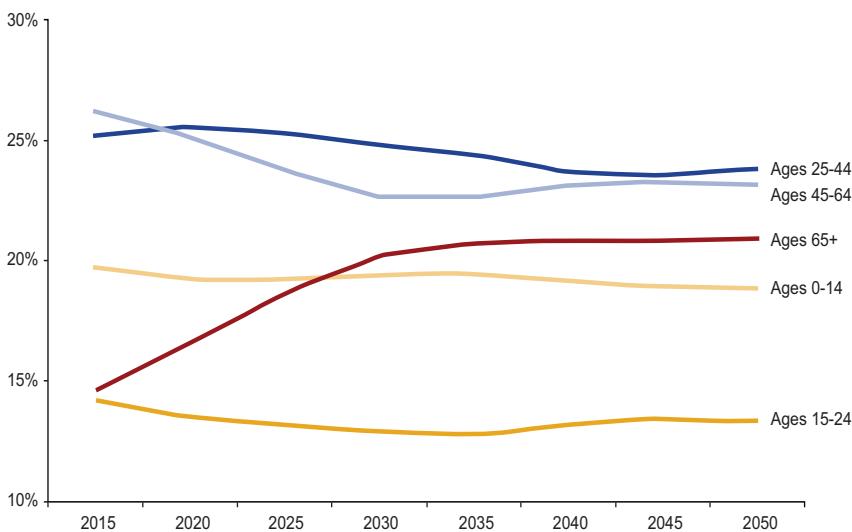
## Market Conditions

### Demographics

In 2016, the population of Portland was estimated to be 6,225 as reported by (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). This is nearly identical to 2010 Census data, which showed a population of 6,223; roughly translated to no increase. However, data shows a decrease in population from the 2000 Census when the City had a recorded population of 6437. The median age is 39.4 years old, with approximately 18% of the population being over the age of 65. Roughly 50% of the population is between the ages of 20 and 60. Approximately 25% of the population is between the age of 20 and 30. 96% of the population is White/Non-Hispanic, while the largest minority is made up of Hispanic/Latino peoples.

By comparison, [Indiana's population will grow](#) by roughly 660,000 residents between 2015 and 2050—a 10 percent increase over this 35-year stretch—according to new population projections released by the Indiana Business Research Center. Growth over this period will be heavily front-loaded, with 60 percent of these gains taking place by 2030. All told, the state's population total will climb from an estimated 6.61 million residents in 2015 to 7.27 million in 2050.

**Figure 3: Projected share of total population by age group, 2015 to 2050**



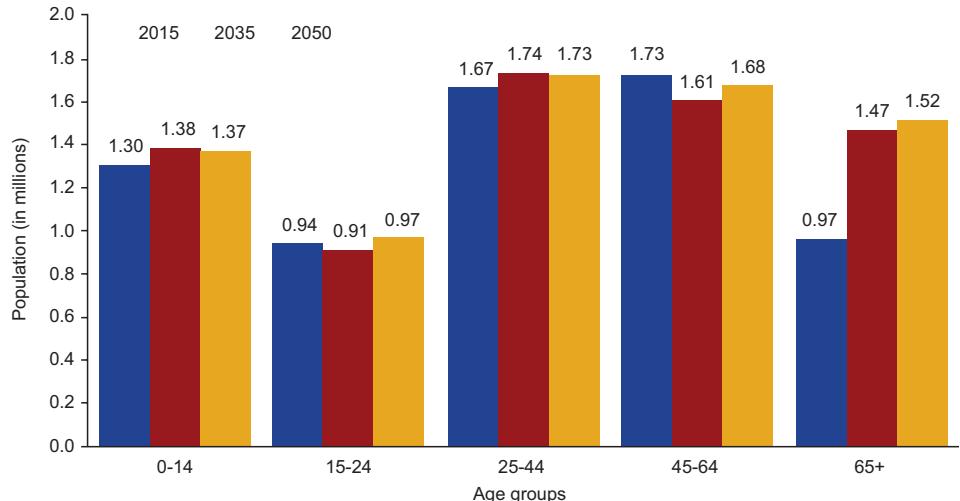
Source: Indiana Business Research Center

## Section B Existing Conditions

## Market Conditions (cont.)

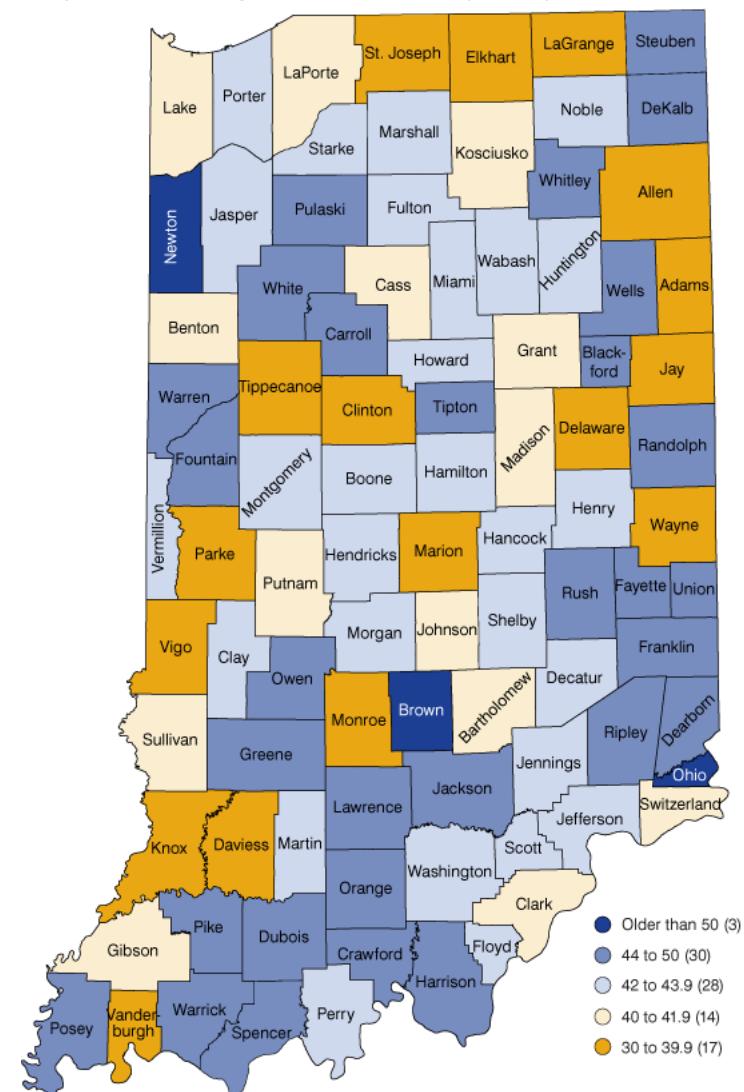
## Demographics (cont.)

Figure 4: Indiana population by age group



Source: Indiana Business Research Center

Figure 9: Projected median age of the population by county, 2050



Source: Indiana Business Research Center

# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Demographics (cont.)

### Portland's Total Population Data (2010 Census):

Subject	Number	Percent
SEX AND AGE		
Total population	6,223	100.0
Under 5 years	405	6.5
5 to 9 years	413	6.6
10 to 14 years	402	6.5
15 to 19 years	412	6.6
20 to 24 years	379	6.1
25 to 29 years	384	6.2
30 to 34 years	359	5.8
35 to 39 years	409	6.6
40 to 44 years	405	6.5
45 to 49 years	402	6.5
50 to 54 years	410	6.6
55 to 59 years	370	5.9
60 to 64 years	356	5.7
65 to 69 years	306	4.9
70 to 74 years	242	3.9
75 to 79 years	185	3.0
80 to 84 years	195	3.1
85 years and over	189	3.0
Median age (years)	39.4	( X )
16 years and over	4,909	78.9
18 years and over	4,750	76.3
21 years and over	4,529	72.8
62 years and over	1,351	21.7
65 years and over	1,117	17.9



# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Demographics (cont.)

### Portland's Diversity Data (2010 Census):

RACE		
Total population	6,223	100.0
One Race	6,131	98.5
White	5,880	94.5
Black or African American	28	0.4
American Indian and Alaska Native	2	0.0
Asian	29	0.5
Asian Indian	4	0.1
Chinese	4	0.1
Filipino	3	0.0
Japanese	11	0.2
Korean	2	0.0
Vietnamese	3	0.0
Other Asian [1]	2	0.0
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0
Native Hawaiian	0	0.0
Guamanian or Chamorro	0	0.0
Samoan	0	0.0
Other Pacific Islander [2]	0	0.0
Some Other Race	192	3.1
Two or More Races	92	1.5
White; American Indian and Alaska Native [3]	26	0.4
White; Asian [3]	11	0.2
White; Black or African American [3]	11	0.2
White; Some Other Race [3]	28	0.4
Race alone or in combination with one or more other races: [4]		
White	5,970	95.9
Black or African American	46	0.7
American Indian and Alaska Native	35	0.6
Asian	47	0.8
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	4	0.1
Some Other Race	224	3.6
HISPANIC OR LATINO		
Total population	6,223	100.0
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	363	5.8
Mexican	334	5.4
Puerto Rican	3	0.0
Cuban	0	0.0
Other Hispanic or Latino [5]	26	0.4
Not Hispanic or Latino	5,860	94.2

# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Demographics (cont.)

### Portland's Diversity Data (2010 Census) :

HISPANIC OR LATINO		
Total population	6,223	100.0
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	363	5.8
Mexican	334	5.4
Puerto Rican	3	0.0
Cuban	0	0.0
Other Hispanic or Latino [5]	26	0.4
Not Hispanic or Latino	5,860	94.2
HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE		
Total population	6,223	100.0
Hispanic or Latino	363	5.8
White alone	138	2.2
Black or African American alone	2	0.0
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0	0.0
Asian alone	0	0.0
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0.0
Some Other Race alone	191	3.1
Two or More Races	32	0.5
Not Hispanic or Latino	5,860	94.2
White alone	5,742	92.3
Black or African American alone	26	0.4
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	2	0.0
Asian alone	29	0.5
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0.0
Some Other Race alone	1	0.0
Two or More Races	60	1.0



# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Employment

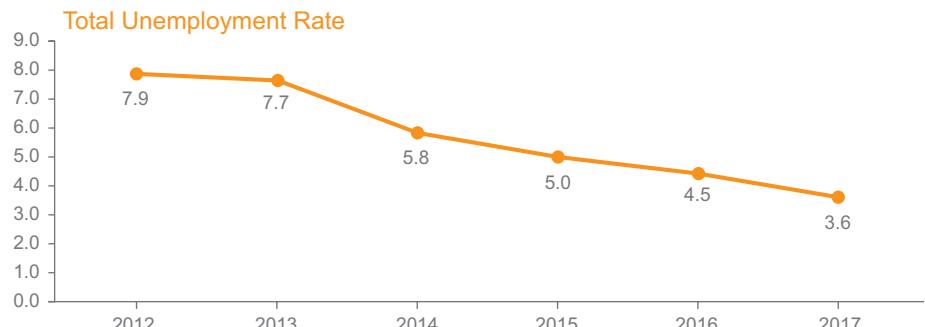
Unemployment in Portland can be summarized by looking at data for Jay County as a whole. The majority of the county's ten largest entities and employers are located in the city. Jay County's unemployment rate is estimated at 3.6%, slightly higher than the State average of 3.3%. There is an estimated work force of 9,731 persons in Jay County, with at least 4,000 full-time positions in Portland. It should be noted that this figure is mainly attributed to the large manufacturing presence in and around Portland. As of 2016, total earnings for Jay County totaled \$512,400 with an average per job earning of \$47,812. Roughly 3,000 manufacturing jobs earned an average of \$63,267 per year, making manufacturing one of the most prevalent occupations (36.1% of jobs) and highest paying industries in the county.

## Labor Force Data (As of 2017)

Labor Force, 2017	Number	Rank in State	Percent of State	Indiana
Total Resident Labor Force	9,731	69	0.3%	3,320,409
Employed	9,385	69	0.3%	3,203,351
Unemployed	346	73	0.3%	117,058
Annual Unemployment Rate	3.6	36	102.9%	3.5
September 2018 Unemployment Rate	3.0	45	100.0%	3.0

Source: STATS Indiana, using data from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development

## Graph of Unemployment Rate in Jay County



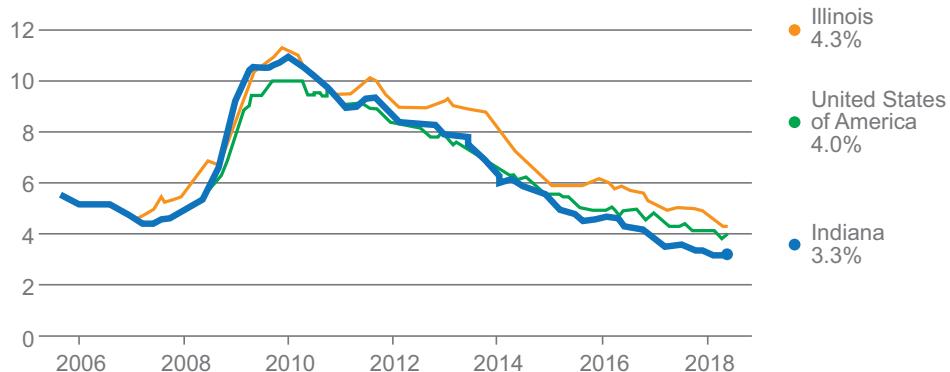
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Employment (cont.)

### Unemployment Rate in Indiana—Comparison

3.3% (Jun 2018)



### Top 10 Employers in Jay County

Company	Location	# of Full Time
1. FCC (Indiana), LLC	Portland	825
2. Jay County Schools	Jay County	539
3. Tyson Mexican Originals	Portland	455
4. Ardagh/Verallia	Dunkirk	410
5. IU Health Jay	Portland	354
6. Motherson Sumi Systems, LTD	Portland	350
7. Sonoco	Portland	178
8. Jay County Government	Jay County	165
9. ATI – Forged Products	Portland	150
10. Priority Plastics	Portland	140

\*SOURCE: JAY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

TOP  
TEN

# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Employment (cont.)

### Employment Earnings by Industry

Employment and Earnings by Industry, 2016	Employment	Pct Dist. in County	Earnings (\$000)	Pct Dist. In County	Avg. Earnings Per Job
Total by place of work	10,717	100.0%	\$512,400	100.0%	\$47,812
Wage and Salary	7,929	74.0%	\$277,784	54.2%	\$35,034
Farm Proprietors	749	7.0%	\$72,592	14.2%	\$96,919
Nonfarm Proprietors	2,039	19.0%	\$84,065	16.4%	\$41,229
Farm	940	8.8%	\$76,784	15.0%	\$81,685
Nonfarm	9,777	91.2%	\$435,616	85.0%	\$44,555
Private	8,351	77.9%	\$365,825	71.4%	\$43,806
Accommodation, Food	521	4.9%	\$7,684	1.5%	\$14,749
Arts, Ent., Recreation	58	0.5%	\$297	0.1%	\$5,121
Construction	692	6.5%	\$36,764	7.2%	\$53,127
Health Care, Social Serv.	Data not available due to BEA non-disclosure requirements.				
Information	77	0.7%	\$6,270	1.2%	\$81,429
Manufacturing	2,923	27.3%	\$184,930	36.1%	\$63,267
Professional, Tech. Serv.	210	2.0%	\$5,345	1.0%	\$25,452
Retail Trade	892	8.3%	\$19,811	3.9%	\$22,210
Trans., Warehousing	Data not available due to BEA non-disclosure requirements.				
Wholesale Trade	296	2.8%	\$24,075	4.7%	\$81,334
Other Private (not above)	1,506*	14.1%*	\$36,804*	7.2%*	\$24,438*
Government	1,426	13.3%	\$69,791	13.6%	\$48,942

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

\* These totals do not include county data that are not available due to BEA non-disclosure requirements.

# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Commercial/Retail Development, Problems and Opportunities

R&B Architects commissioned a Cushman & Wakefield to provide a Retail and Service Business Opportunity evaluation of Portland in order to gather the raw data needed to make suggestions for improvements to the local economy. The following data is derived from that study, completed at both a 2 mile and 15 mile radius around the Downtown area.

The study examines business opportunities in terms of number of businesses a specific trade area could bear, total revenue, and square feet of occupied business space. The analysis focuses on those retail and service businesses that commonly have storefronts in downtown and business districts. This includes traditional retail stores such as pharmacies and groceries, but also services such as auto repair and hair salons. The analysis of retail and service business opportunities involves both quantitative examination and qualitative insight following a three-step process:

- Assess demand;
- Determine inventory supply; and
- Draw realistic conclusions.

The analysis uses various data sets from the Census U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey for demographic information, economic census data for industry sales information, and the Urban Land Institute's Dollar and Cents data income and expense data from almost 1000 shopping centers in the U.S. and Canada.

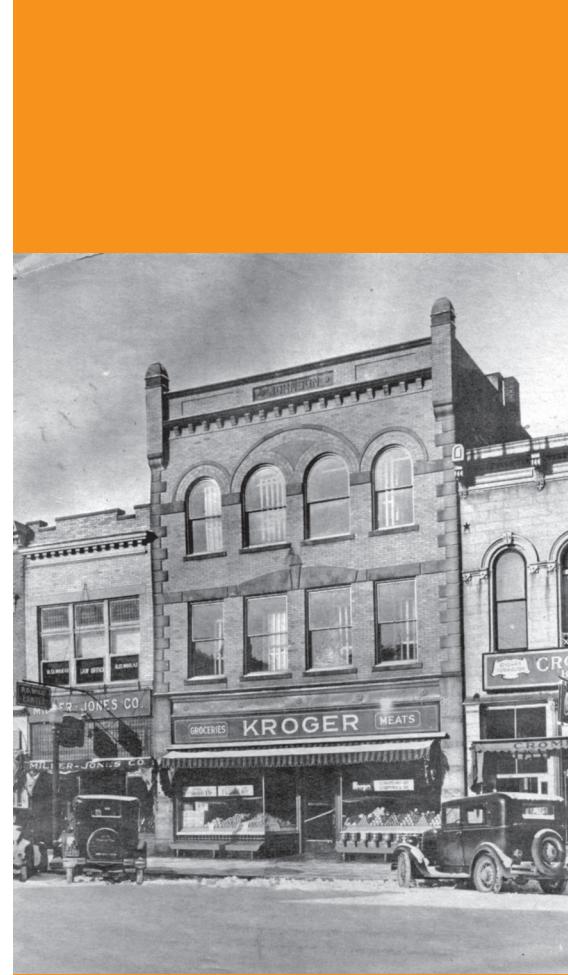
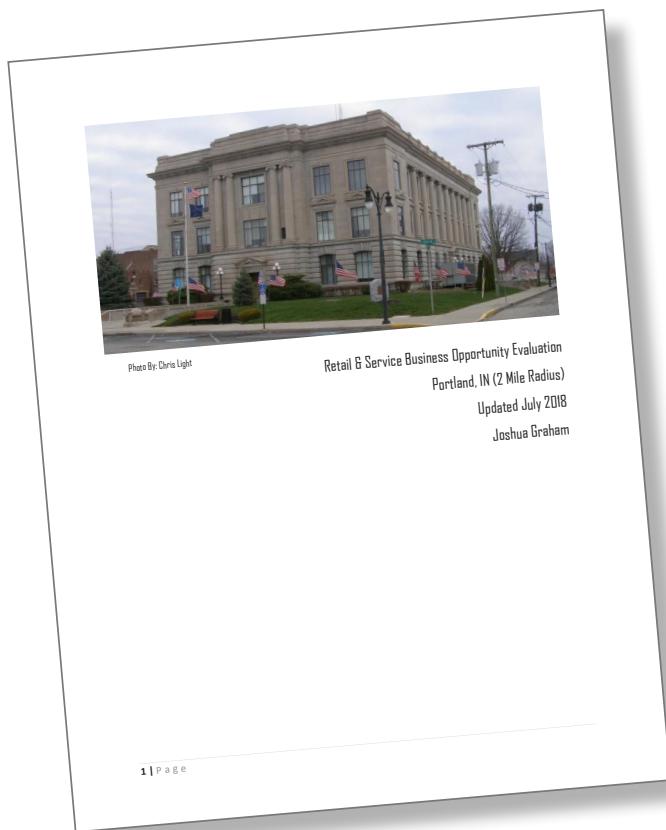


Photo: Kroger Grocery (c1935)  
Used with permission  
Collection of Mrs. Sandy Bupp



# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Commercial/Retail Development, Problems and Opportunities (cont.)

### Gap Analysis and Data—Downtown Portland

Currently, a great deal of consumer spending is taking place outside of Portland. Within the Study Area there is a variety of businesses, but it is mostly comprised of services — banks, the post office, city hall, churches, etc. Grocery, pharmacy, and larger-scale retail is located outside of the Study Area.

Consulting partner Cushman-Wakefield made a study of commerce within both a 2-mile radius centered on the study area and a 15-mile radius centered in the study area in order to analyze trade gaps in comparison to national averages with regard to revenue, square footage, and number of stores.

Within a **2-mile** radius, the greatest **revenue surpluses** are in:

- New Car Dealerships - \$9,066,237/year
- Grocery Stores - \$7,163,410/year
- Gasoline Stations - \$4,178,873/year

Within a **2-mile** radius, the greatest **revenue shortages** are in:

- Full-service Restaurants - \$11,641,441/year
- Pharmacies & Drug stores - \$11,175,258/year
- General merchandise stores - \$8,717,805/year

Within a **15-mile** radius, the greatest **revenue surpluses** are in:

- New Car Dealerships - \$50,561,546/year
- Gasoline Stations - \$40,611,008/year
- Grocery Stores - \$37,534,508/year

Within a **15-mile** radius, the greatest **revenue shortages** are in:

- Specialty Food Stores - \$3,317,860/year
- Automotive Repair (Mechanical/Electrical) - \$3,233,328/year
- Automotive Parts and Tire Stores - \$1,229,164/year

Within a **2-mile** radius, the greatest **square footage surpluses** are in:

- General merchandise stores – 18,463 sq. ft.
- Home Centers – 4,728 sq. ft.
- Family Clothing Stores – 3,720 sq. ft.

Within a **2-mile** radius, the greatest **square footage shortages** are in:

- Limited-service eating places – 29,308 sq. ft.
- Beauty Salons – 25,959 sq. ft.
- Pharmacies & Drug Stores – 13,461 sq. ft.



# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Commercial/Retail Development, Problems and Opportunities (cont.)

### County-wide Comparison

Within a **15-mile** radius, the greatest **square footage surpluses** are in:

- General Merchandise Stores – 309,747 sq. ft.
- Family Clothing Stores – 22,933 sq. ft.
- Pharmacies and Drug Stores – 18,625 sq. ft.

Within a **15-mile** radius, the greatest **square footage shortages** are in:

- Beauty Salons – 50,629 sq. ft.
- Limited-service Eating Places – 48,387 sq. ft.
- Electronics and Appliance Stores – 27,213 sq. ft.

Within a **2-mile** radius, there is a **surplus of stores** in:

- Personal Goods Repair – 3.4 stores
- Other personal care services (Tattoos/Spas/Piercings) – 2.0 stores
- Nail Salons – 1.9 stores

Within a **2-mile** radius, there is a **shortage of stores** in:

- Limited-service Eating Places – 6.4 stores
- Automotive Parts and Tire Stores – 4.7 stores
- Grocery Stores – 4.1 stores

Within a **15-mile** radius, there is a **surplus of stores** in:

- Beauty Salons – 40.3 stores
- Personal Goods Repair – 20.2 stores
- Other personal care services (Tattoos/Spas/Piercings) – 16.6 stores

Within a **15-mile** radius, there is a **shortage of stores** in:

- Automotive Repair (Mechanical/Electrical) – 12.9 stores
- Grocery Stores – 8.5 stores
- New Car Dealers – 5.2 stores

The entire *Retail and Service Business Opportunity* evaluation is available in the appendix of this Revitalization plan. The following graphs are a highlight of the information it provided.

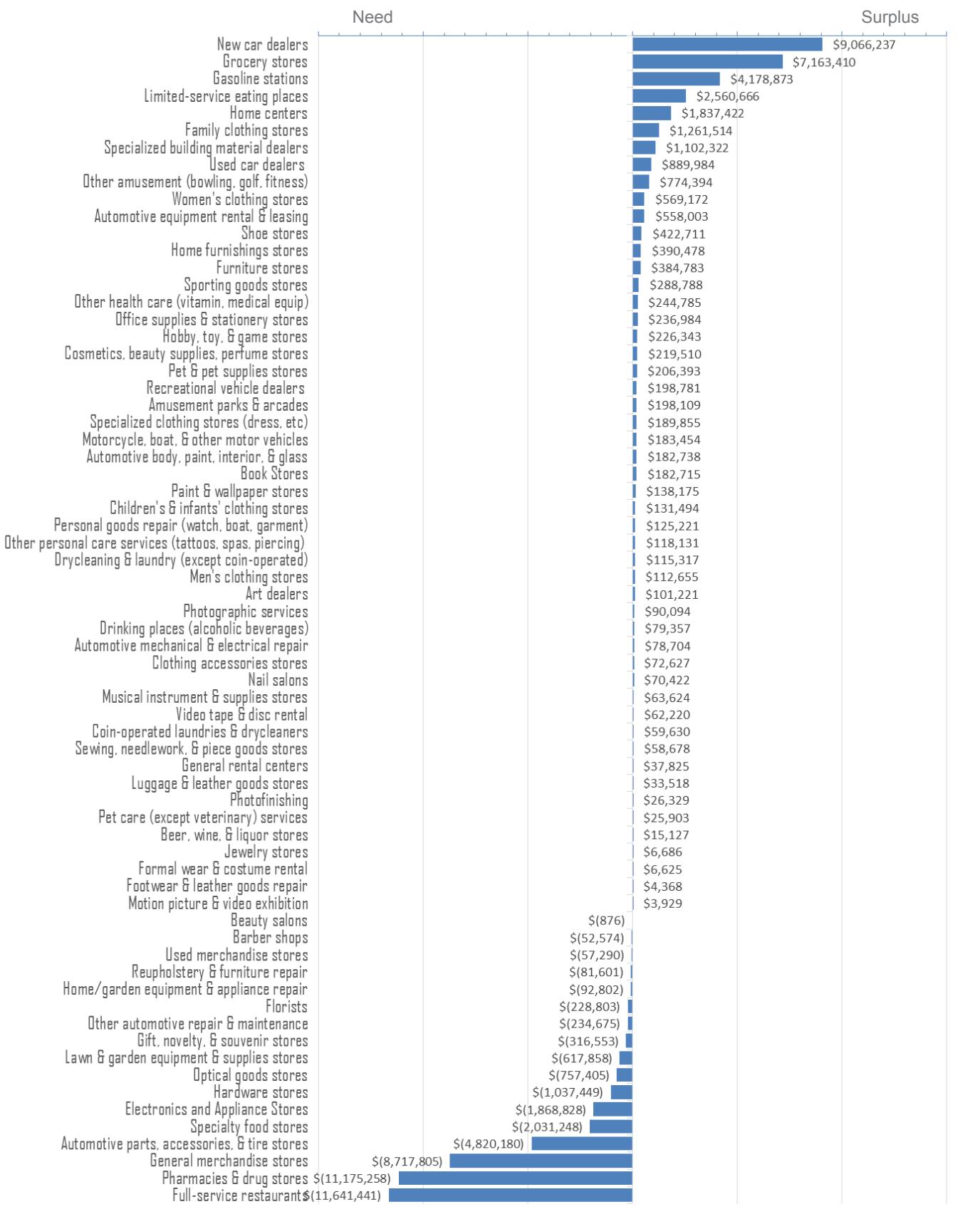
Photo: North Meridian Street (c1958)  
Used with permission  
Collection of Mrs. Sandy Bubb



# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Commercial/Retail Development, Problems and Opportunities (cont.)

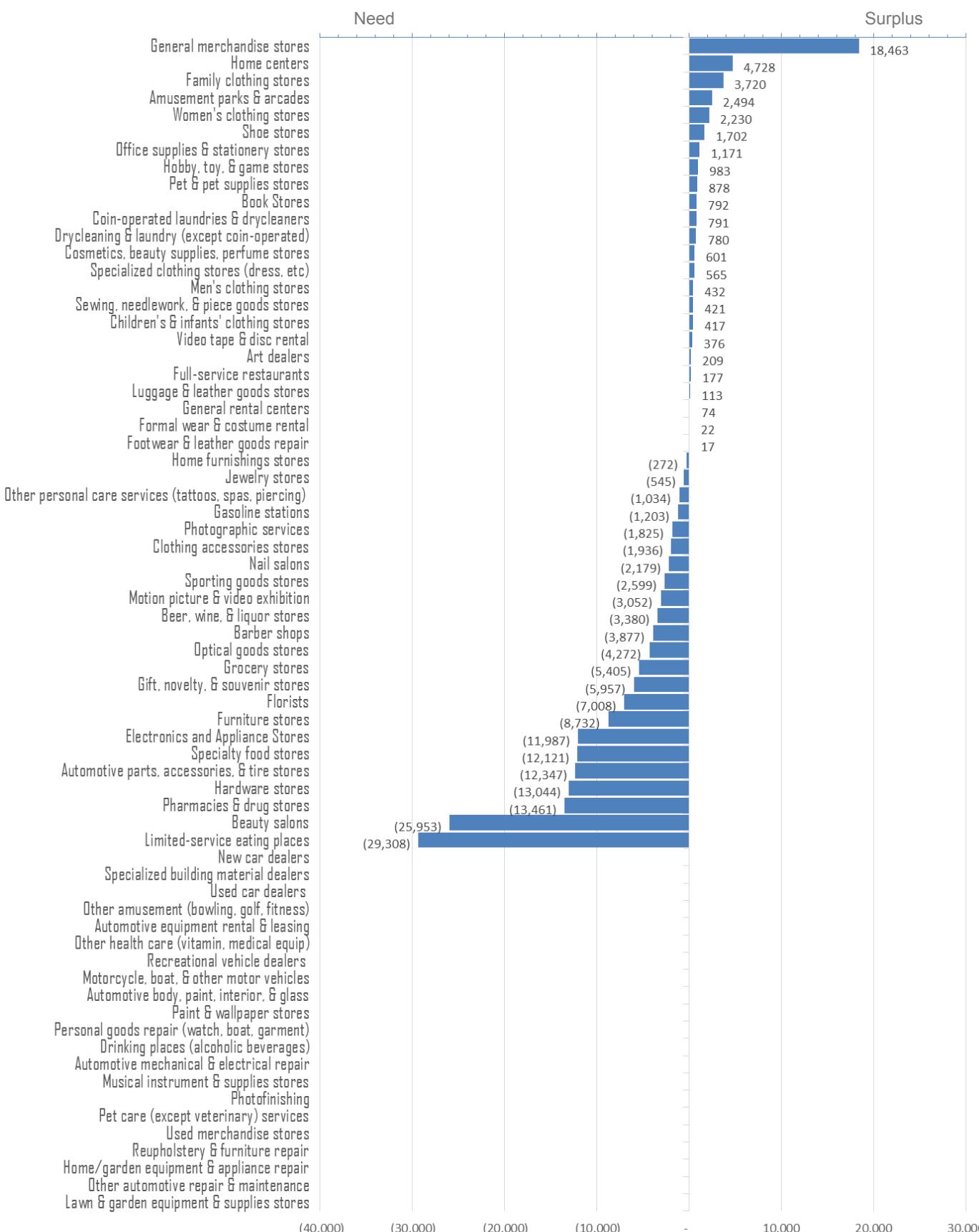
### 2-Mile Radius Analysis Revenue Data—Downtown Portland



# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Commercial/Retail Development, Problems and Opportunities (cont.)

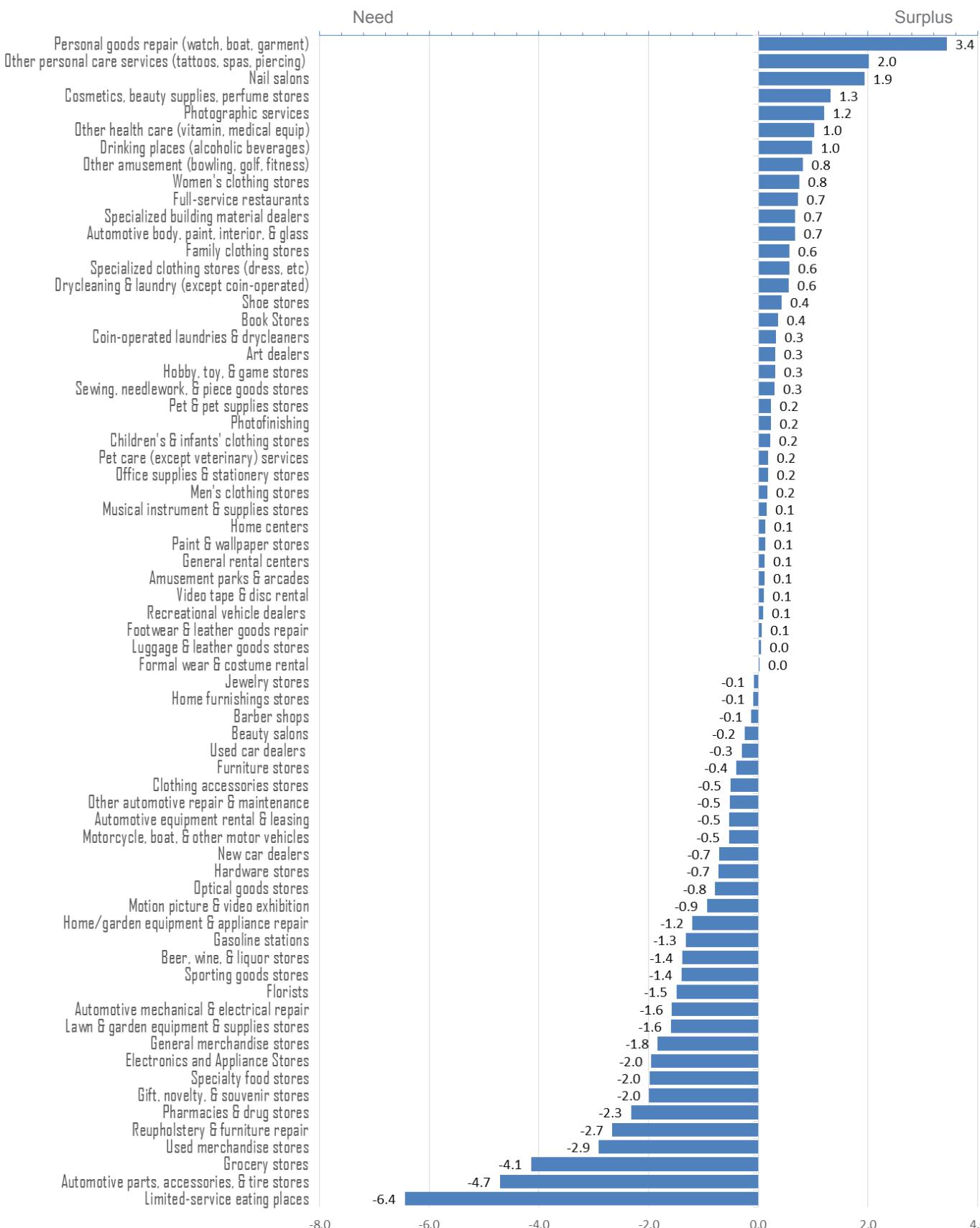
### 2-Mile Radius Analysis Sq. Footage Data—Downtown Portland



# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Commercial/Retail Development, Problems and Opportunities (cont.)

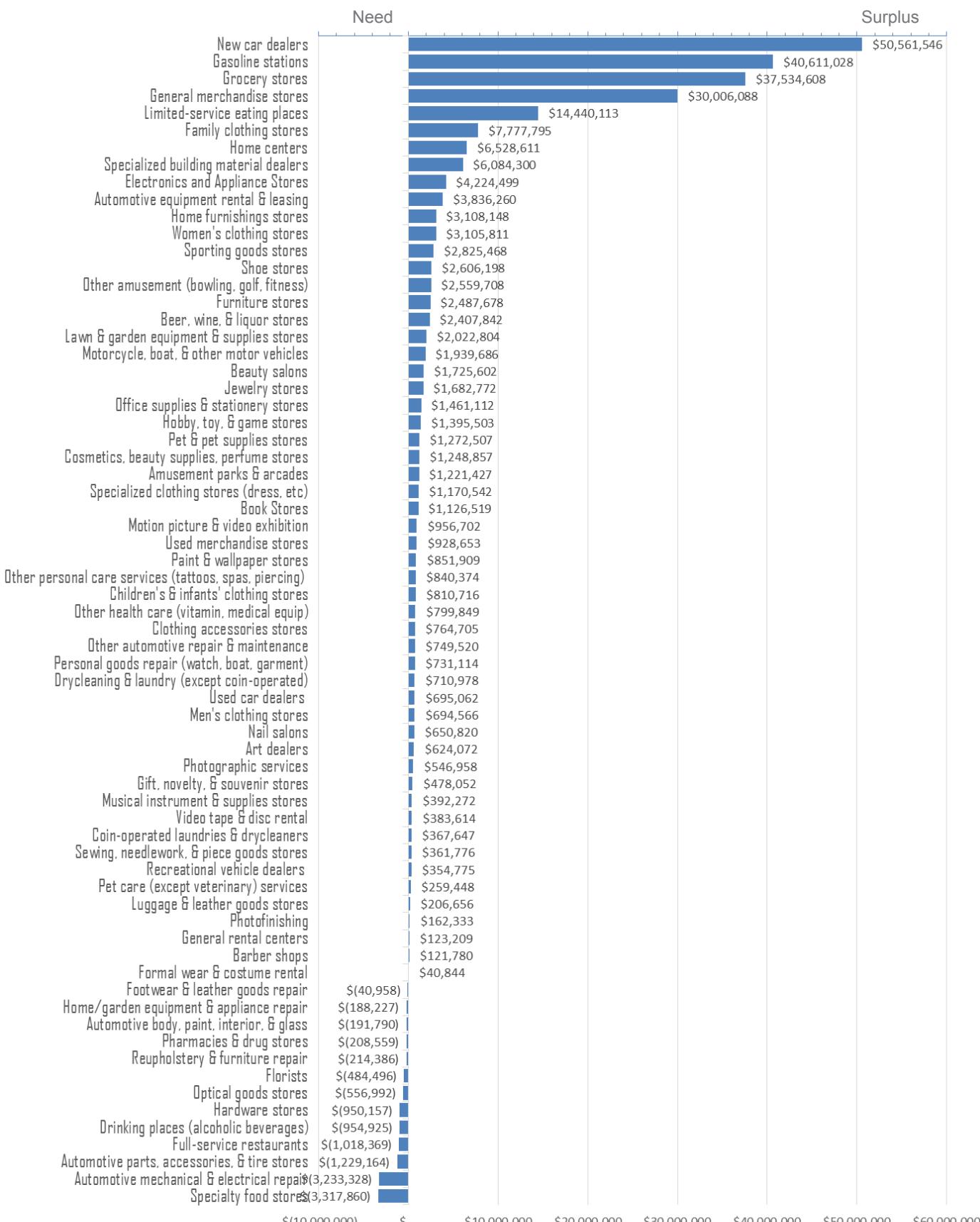
### 2-Mile Radius Analysis Number of Stores Data—Downtown Portland



# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Commercial/Retail Development, Problems and Opportunities (cont.)

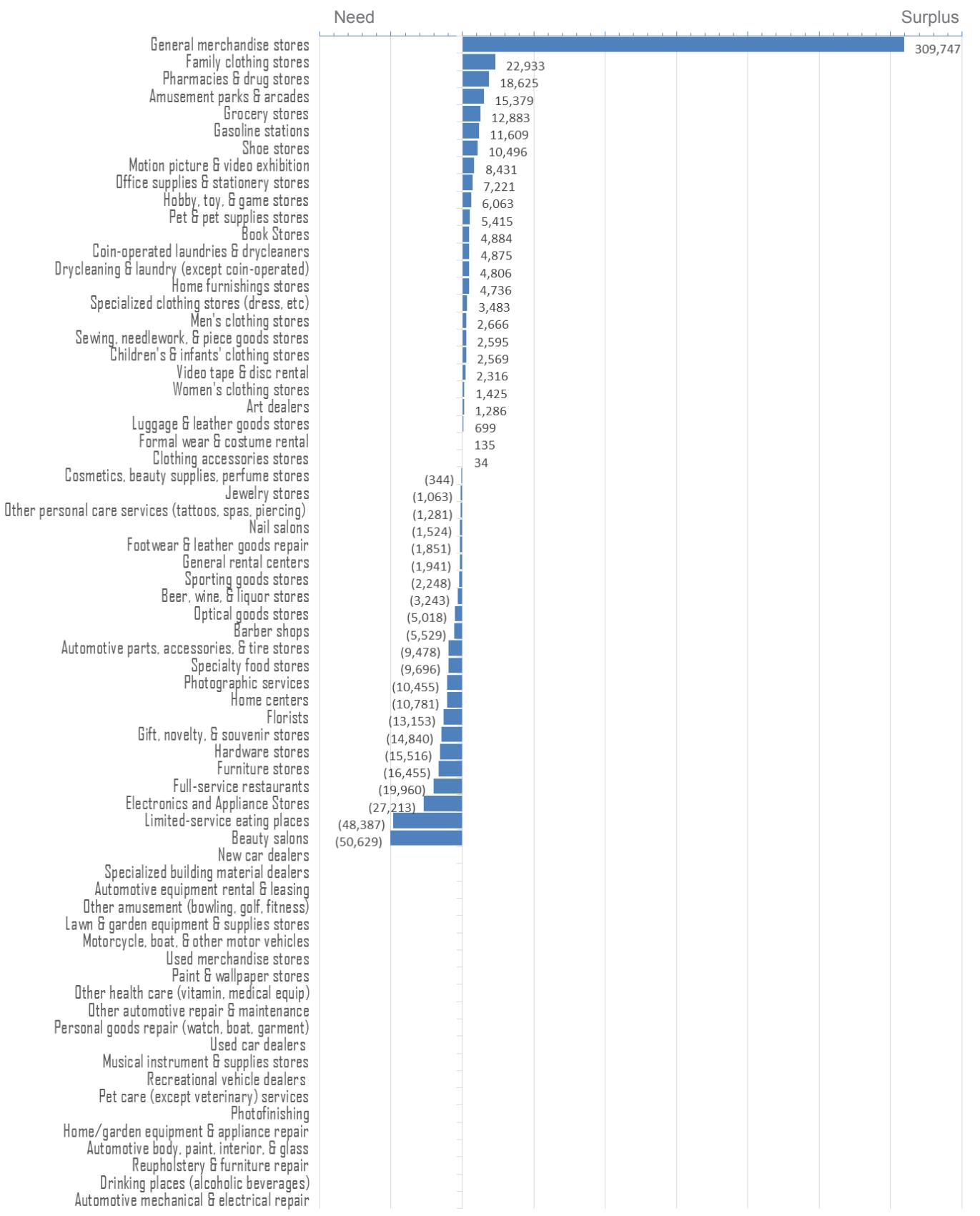
### 15-Mile Radius Analysis Revenue Data—County-wide Comparison



# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Commercial/Retail Development, Problems and Opportunities (cont.)

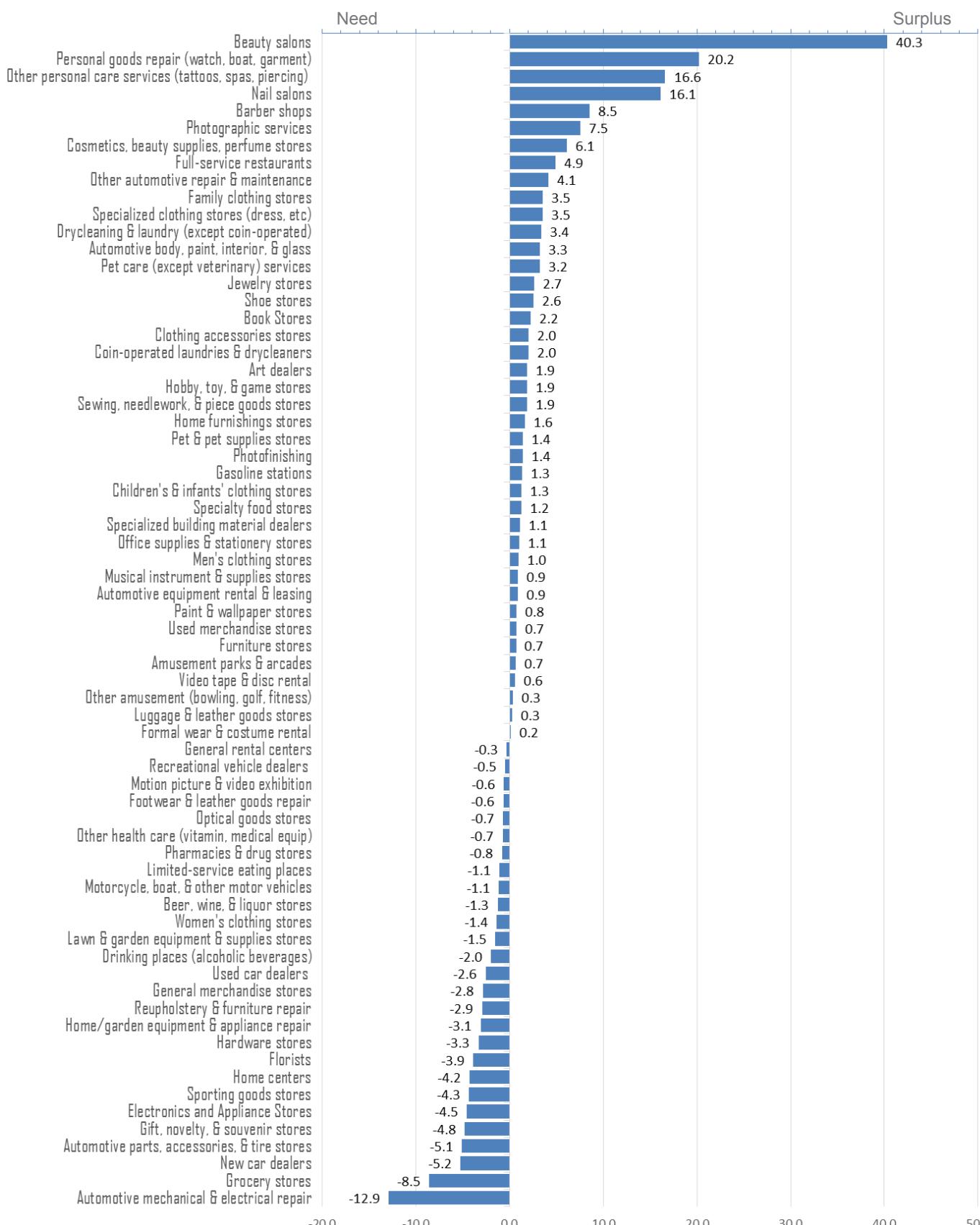
### 15-Mile Radius Analysis Sq. Footage Data—County-wide Comparision



# Market Conditions (cont.)

## Commercial/Retail Development, Problems and Opportunities (cont.)

### 15-Mile Radius Analysis Number of Stores Data—County-wide Comparison



# Physical Conditions

## **urban-fabric. Noun. (plural urban fabrics) (idiomatic, literary)**

The physical aspect of urbanism, emphasizing building types, thoroughfares, open space, frontages, and streetscapes but excluding environmental, functional, economic and sociocultural aspects.

# Physical Conditions

## History of Existing Planning Stakeholders

Launched in 1985, the Jay County Development Committee (JCDC) exists to support the community and economic vitality of the county. In some cases, this may mean helping out in the area of industrial recruitment. In other cases, the JCDC will assist with business retention and expansion. (See Understanding Community Development: Some Theoretical & Practical Perspectives, Appendix A). Since its inception, Jay County Community Development (JCCD), JCDC's partner agency, has successfully secured over \$18 million dollars in grant funding for workforce development initiatives, regional planning, transportation, and health and safety projects. These dollars directly benefit county residents.

In 2011, Jay County joined the East Central Regional Planning Partnership. This organization has elevated the county's thinking to the regional level, added a mixture of tools to the kit, and provided additional partners with whom to collaborate. While Jay County is located within different regions, it was determined that the East Central Regional Planning Partnership is the best fit, based on Jay County's commuting patterns and its top 5 industry clusters (manufacturing, 28 percent; government, 14 percent; agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, 10 percent; retail trade eight percent; and construction, seven percent). The Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD) provided technical assistance in helping JCDC determine—which region best aligns with Jay County.

The Purdue Center for Regional Development gives strong attention to a step-by-step, asset-based, capacity-building process:

1. Building collaboration between communities within the county,
2. Providing economic data analysis tailored to help inform the county of its current or emerging clusters and comparative economic advantages, and
3. Accessing technical assistance made available by the state's land-grant university system.

JCDC's new plan is the culmination of a year-long effort to re-evaluate the JCDC and encourage stronger engagement by community leaders. 2018-2022 plan is intended to serve as the new five-year plan for the county, giving its Board Members and Director an action plan against which to check progress at each meeting. The strategic plan identified these four goals as key focus areas to grow, diversify and strengthen the county:

- |                           |                                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • physical infrastructure | • community/economic development |
| • workforce development   | • housing                        |

The following SMART objectives (delineated under each of the four goals) are supported by sound data analysis and are designed to build on county assets and address potential barriers:

1. Complete downtown revitalization planning and initiate/expand the Main Street program;
2. Create a supportive system for nurturing and growing entrepreneurial activities;
3. Enhance the targeted business retention and expansion program in the county;
4. Examine and pursue value-added agricultural opportunities in the county and/or region;
5. Develop a detailed profile of Jay County's housing characteristics;
6. Work with a coalition of key individuals and organizations to improve, expand, and attract housing;
7. Develop plan to expand the diversity of market rate housing that aligns with resident needs;
8. Complete existing infrastructure projects that have been approved and funded;
9. Plan for new funding to address existing infrastructure needs in the county;
10. Explore the feasibility of addressing specialized infrastructure needs;
11. Profile the industry and occupational make-up of Jay County;
12. Determine the workforce development-related needs of priority employers in Jay County;
13. Provide workforce development training for youth and adults of targeted employers.

JCDC and its partners will use this action plan to further support the competitiveness of the county by guiding its future investments of time and financial resources in its economy.

# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Evaluation of Existing Plans

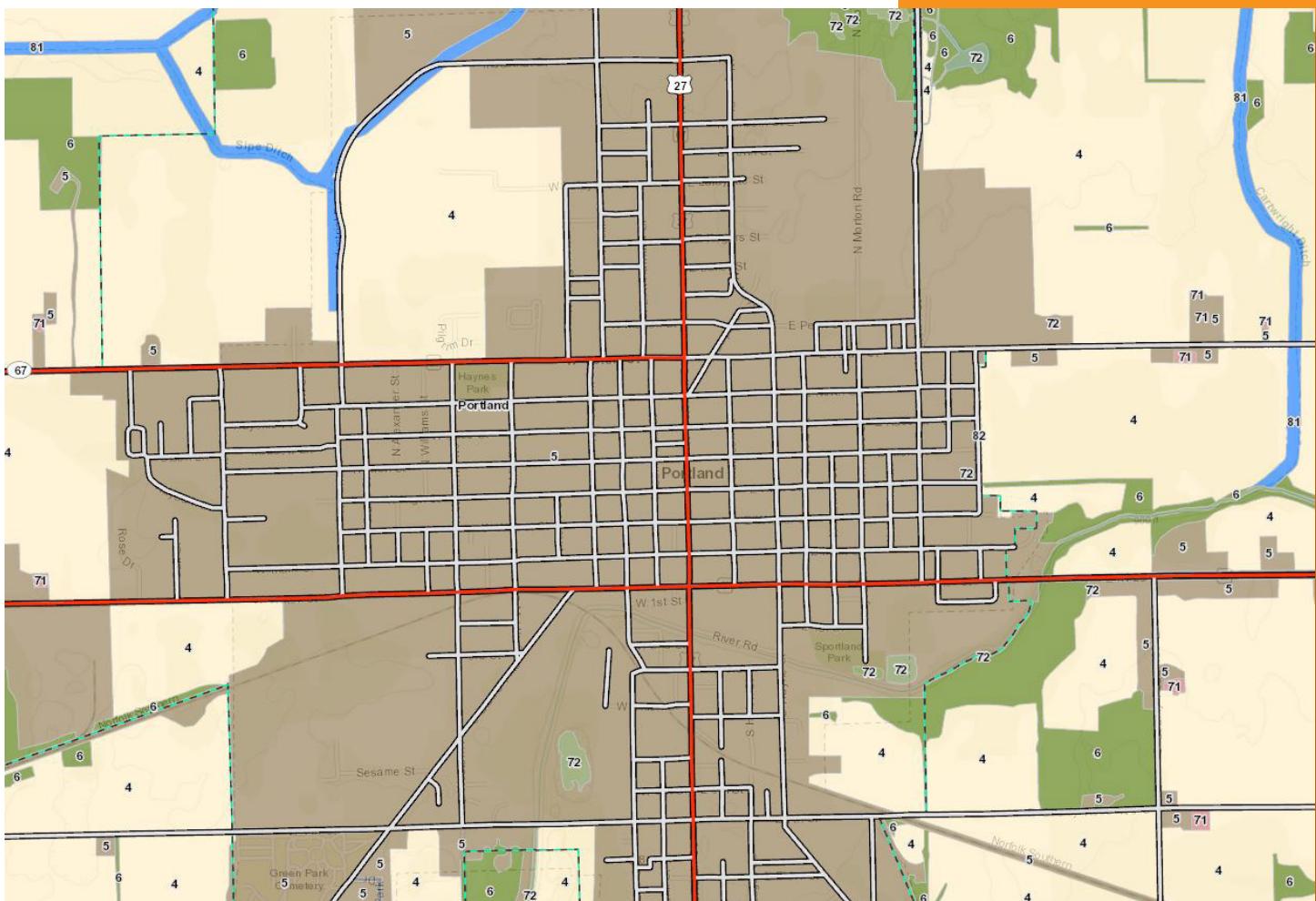
### Planning and Land Use

Land-use planning is the process of ordering and regulating the utilization of land that promotes its efficient and ethical use, hence encouraging best practices in land use such as environmental conservation, space economization, and prevention of land-use conflicts. Fundamentally, it is an indispensable tool for land control and pollution prevention. By and large, the uses of land determine the diverse socioeconomic activities that occur in a specific area, the patterns of human behavior they produce, and their impact on the environment.

### Planning

Elevate Maps, the Jay County (Graphic Information Systems) provider, indicates there to be one major type of land use within the Study Area: non-tillable land. This is bounded almost entirely by tillable land and pockets of woodlands. The Land Use map below represents non-tillable land as a grey-brown color with the number 5; it denotes tillable land and woodlands with beige and green respectively (#4 and #6).

### Land Use Map



### Land Use Controls

Land-use planning often leads to land-use regulation, which typically encompasses zoning. Zoning regulates the types of activities that can be accommodated on a given piece of land, as well as the amount of space devoted to those activities, and the ways that buildings may be situated and shaped.

## Evaluation of Existing Conditions

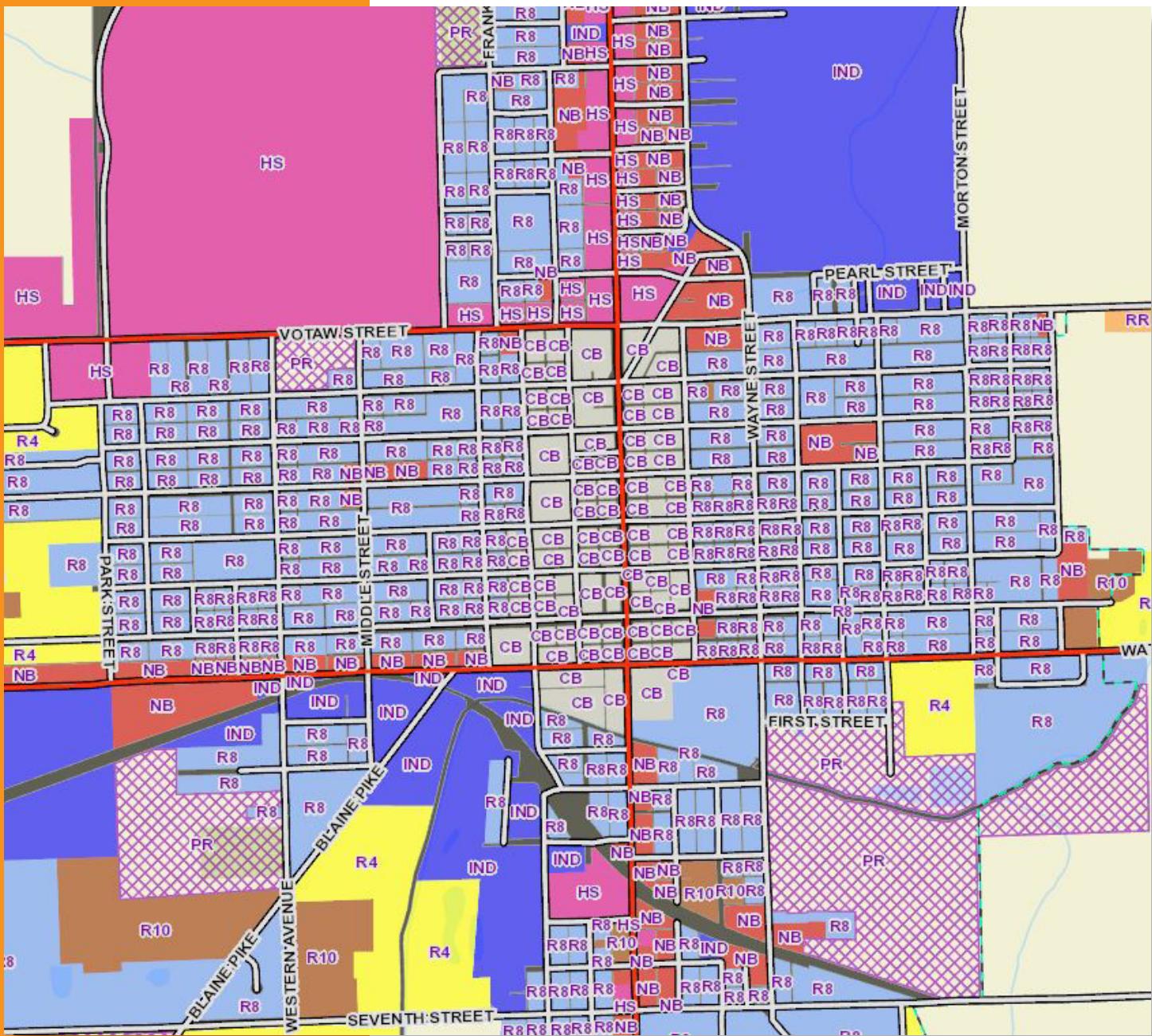
# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Evaluation of Existing Plans (cont.)

### Land Use

Elevate Maps also indicates there is one major type of zoning within the Study Area: Central Business. This is bounded to the east and west by Medium Density Residential zones, to the north by Highway Service and Neighborhood Business zones, and to the south by a combination of Medium Density Residential and Industrial zones. The zoning map represents Central Business zoning as a grey color, Medium Density Residential as a light blue, Highway Service as pink, Neighborhood Business as red, and Industrial as purple.

Zoning Map



# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Evaluation of Existing Plans (cont.)

### Land Use (cont.)

#### Countywide Consolidation of Farmland

There is a general trend in modern farming that leads to the ‘historical’ small, family farms to be either sold to or purchased by larger, sometimes commercial, farming businesses. This leads to the small farm becoming less and less common, as well as that population either leaving areas like Portland or moving to larger cities. More often than not this also creates an issue with County schools being able to keep an operable number of students. In the case of Portland and Jay County, the declining population (not entirely due to consolidation of area farmland) has created a situation in which it is not economically viable to operate multiple schools running at less-than optimal capacity.

The consolidation of schools, while economically efficient, can have substantial social and economic side effects:

- Long bus rides each day— cutting down on family and after-school program time
- Loss of property values, extra-curricular activities, etc.
- A diminished feeling of ‘community’ as local schools often help to define part of a rural identity.



Photo: Waters Family Barn (2018)  
Jay County Indiana  
Ami Huffman, Photographer

# Physical Conditions

## Community Engagement

### Public Open House

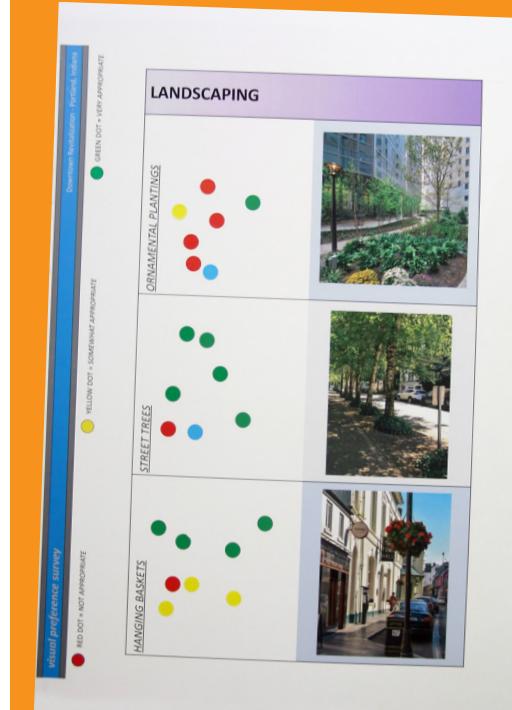
The public open house was held in downtown Portland’s event center, Jay Center, located on South Meridian. The project scope, community engagement, attitude survey and timeline were reviewed. Immediately following this introduction, the architectural renderings of the facade projects were presented. As in the steering committee meeting, the potential of these four historic buildings generated a fair amount of interest from the public. The community attitude survey results with over 250+ respondents were then reviewed. This was followed with the perception of concept plans to support downtown merchant activities, connectivity to adjacent Portland Neighborhoods, wayfinding, gateway locations, and cultural trail design options, demonstrating Portland branding opportunities.

### Steering Committee Meetings

The Portland Main Street Committee (PMSC) was assembled to advise and direct development of this Downtown Revitalization Plan. Steering committee members are downtown stakeholders in that owns a downtown building and/or operates a downtown building. The energy and productivity of these downtown stakeholders was evident throughout the planning process and their input was invaluable.

### Town Council Engagement and Adoption Proceedings

Mayor Randy Geeseman participated in all Main Street committee meetings. Town Council adoption will proceed upon the Office of Community and Rural Affairs final plan review and acceptance.

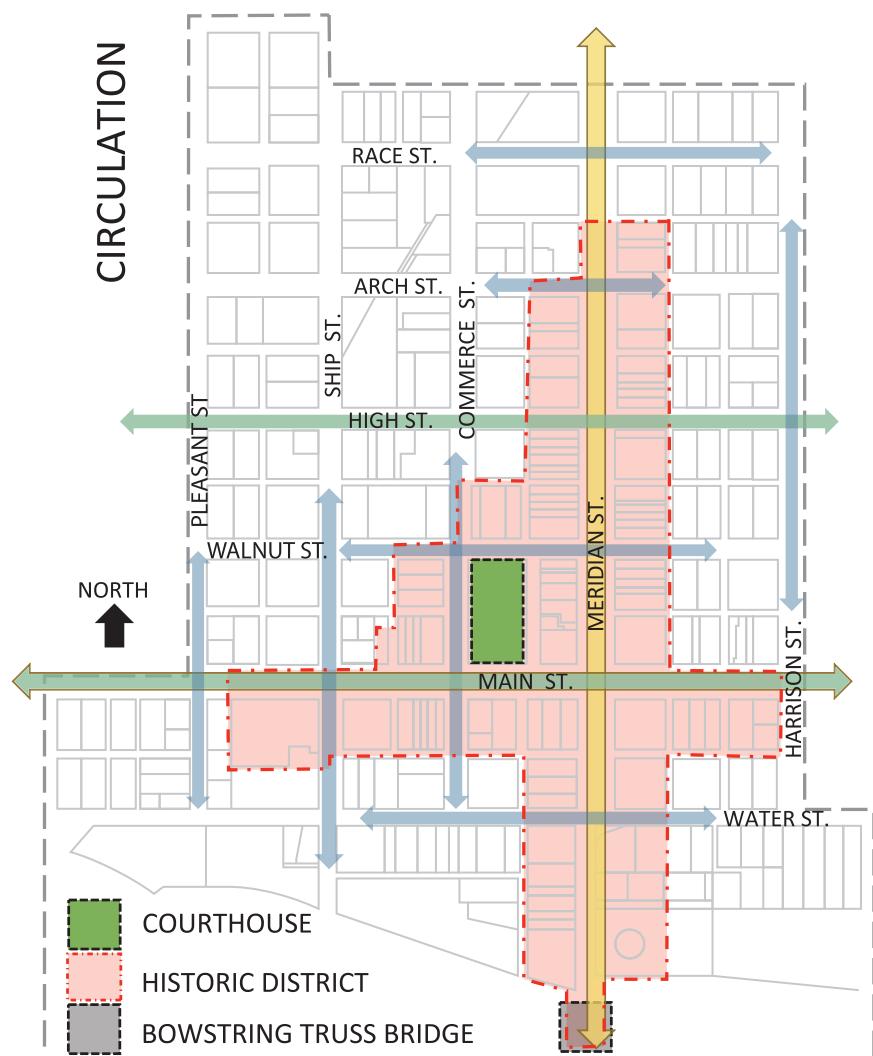


# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Circulation

### Traffic Concerns

- Poor timing of lights on Meridian Street causes backups/delays
- Highway divides Downtown; people reluctant to cross
- Lack of speed limit enforcement and crosswalks



↔ PRIMARY STREETS  
↔ SECONDARY STREETS



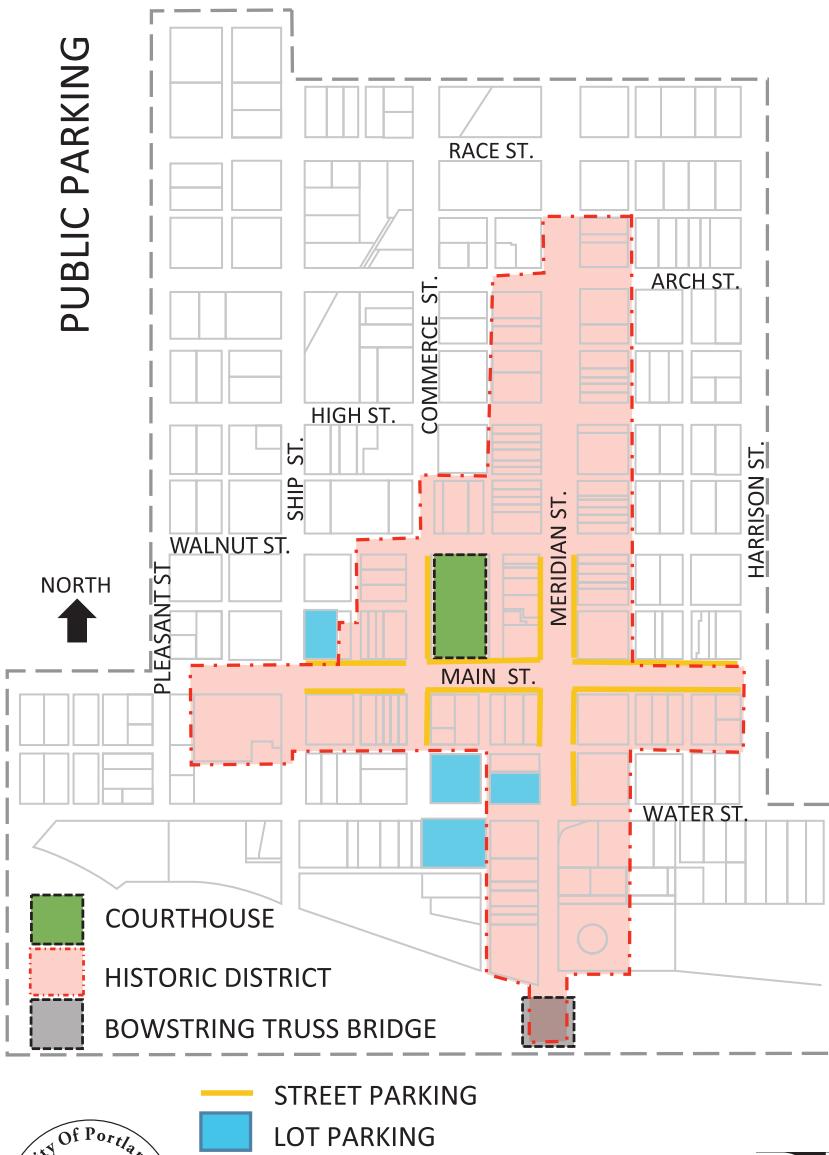
# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Parking

Parking was mentioned as a concern by the committee. It should be designed for average use, to balance adequately serving local business and promoting a pedestrian-friendly feel. During periods of high-demand (during parades, festivals, etc.), available parking spaces may quickly fill up.

## Parking Concerns

- Lack of spaces on Main & Meridian
- Employees of businesses take up prime spots
- Local events cause overload of available spaces
- Lack of parking is stopping development of second floor apartments



# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Infrastructure

### Current and Recent Projects

The City of Portland has recently completed various projects aimed at improving and modernizing the conditions and quality of life for its residents. Most notably, the Portland Water Park project was finished and opened to great success. It replaced the 54-year old Portland Pool with an Olympic size pool, water slide, lazy river and splash pad.

An ongoing project that will make a major impact is a Flood Control improvement for the Salamonie River, which historically inundates large parts of the downtown after a major rain event. The Army Corps of Engineers has been working in partnership with the City to address the issue and correct it for future generations.

There are also numerous projects around Portland focused on re-establishing a vibrant and active Downtown for the existing population, while also modernizing amenities to attract and keep younger generations.

### Current Projects

- Sidewalk improvements
- Updates and improvements to Haynes Park (restrooms and horseshoe pits)
- Northwest sewer project (alleviating flooding on the West side of Portland)
- IN-26 updates (new water/sewer lines, paving, sidewalks and lighting) – Meridian Street to Eastern city limits
- Growth of Industrial Park
- Development of a manufacturing academy at Jay County High School
- Salamonie River flood control improvements with Army Corps of Engineers
- Portland Municipal Airport runway extension
- Storm water and sewer improvements

### Recent Projects

- Portland Water Park project – replacing 54-year old Portland Pool (will include zero entry, water slide, lazy river, lily pad walk and Olympic pool)
- City of Portland Westside CSO (2015)
- Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs Awarded \$400,000 to Jay County and Jay Community Center for the addition of a Senior Center addition to the Jay Community Center (2015)
- Completion of the Lafayette Street Extension Project (2014)
- Award to the City of Portland for SRTS Sidewalk Construction (2014)
- SRTS Planning Study for the City of Portland Awarded \$59,700 (2013)
- Awarded \$572,570 by INDOT for Lafayette Street Expansion Project (2013)
- Awarded \$386,313 by INDOT for Creagor Street Greenway Project (2013)



Photo: Drainage Tiles on South Meridian Street (2016)  
Ami Huffman, Photographer

# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Infrastructure (cont.)

Alternative Energy Grants Awarded for the Community Resource Center, Portland Water Treatment Facility, Wastewater Facility, Jay County Highway Department, and FCC of Portland (2010)

Consulting partner, Strand Associates, performed a site assessment of the existing roads, sidewalks, ADA ramps, and street parking within the City of Portland. The area within the Scope of Work (referred to as the Study Area) is the Portland Commercial Historic District in Downtown Portland. This area is generally defined by the following description: On Meridian Street, the district takes in one building north of Arch Street and extends six blocks southward to include the South Meridian Street Bridge... The long, straight, eastern boundary is formed by the alley behind the buildings on the east side of Meridian Street. The South Meridian Street Bridge over the Salamonie River acts as the southern boundary, separating the commercial district from a residential area. The western boundary is the most irregular. It extends west of Meridian Street to include the County Courthouse, the Portland Fire Department, and other resources on Court, Commerce, Walnut and Main Streets as well as one significant building west of Ship Street (319 W Main St.)<sup>5</sup>.

Additionally, GIS information was requested from all local utility service providers within the Study Area.

### Road Conditions

All existing roads within the Study Area need at least a new surface coat. Several existing roads are in bad condition, exhibiting severe longitudinal and transverse cracking. A majority of the remaining roads exhibit moderate longitudinal and transverse cracking throughout the Study Area.

### Sidewalk Condition & ADA Ramps

The existing sidewalks along Main Street and Meridian Street are in acceptable condition. There are no locations or intersections within the Study Area that include painted crosswalks. Typically, the existing ADA ramps at the street intersections are not compliant with current ADA standards because they do not meet one or more of the following requirements:

- Have truncated domes;
- Have tactile warning grooves;
- Have level landings;
- Meet the required ramp slopes;
- Meet minimum dimensions

### Utility GIS Information

The condition and capacity of public utilities are vital factors affecting the quality of life for citizens in a community. Equally important is the ability of public infrastructure to support and attract development and growth in a community.

Ohio Valley Gas Company distributes natural gas to the City of Portland. The main service is provided from the west, running underground along State Highway 26. There are several short runs buried in alleys and side streets throughout the Study Area.

Indiana Michigan Power Company provides electric service to the City of Portland. Typically, the electric lines are routed through city overhead on utility poles.

Five different data companies provide internet, phone and cable services to the City of Portland. It appears that the service is typically buried and is beginning to utilize fiber optic technology, as well as more traditional copper cables.



Photo: North Meridian St., Westside (2018)  
Brent Mather, Photographer



Photo: West Mainstreet, Northside (2018)  
Brent Mather, Photographer

<sup>5</sup>Section 2, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. National Park Service, 1996.

# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Drainage

### Flooding

Flooding in Portland has been an issue since the City was platted 1837 on the poorly drained north bank of the Salamonie River. Through its history there have been numerous ditching and dredging projects, as well as more modern storm water and sewer improvements; all with the hope of alleviating spring flood events.

One of the major contributors to this flooding, other than the naturally poorly-drained soil, is the drainage tile system installed in the farming fields to the east of the community. When there is a significant rain, all of the water enters the Miller Branch and travels underground to the Salamonie River. With large rain storms becoming ever more frequent, the issue has become a 'top priority' with floods in 2011 and 2015 inundating a large part of the Downtown.

The issue is being looked at through a number of different lenses. Solutions are not cheap, but also are not impossible.

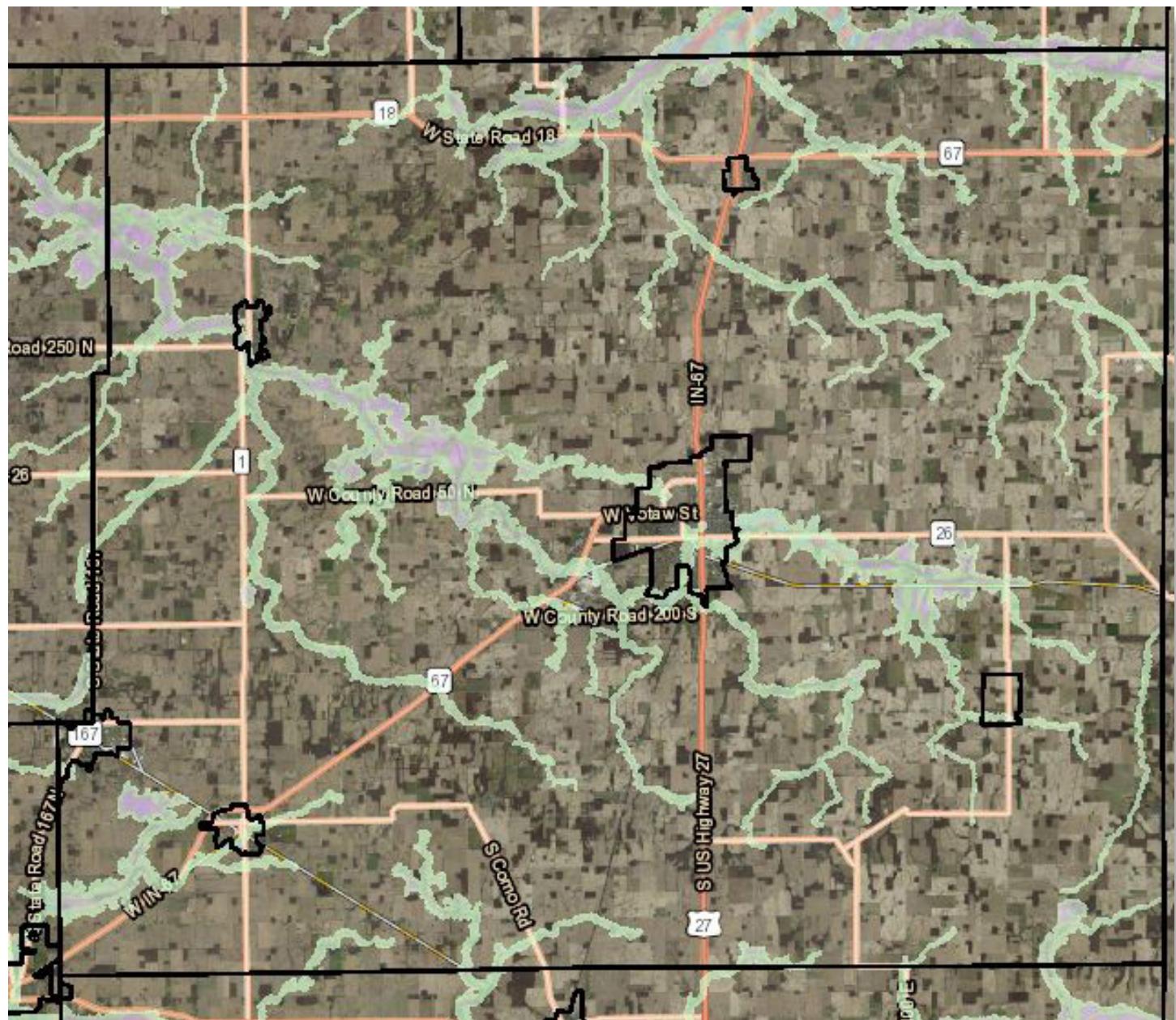


Photo: Downtown Portland (2015)  
Used with permission  
The Commercial Review, Jack Rynolds

# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Drainage (cont.)

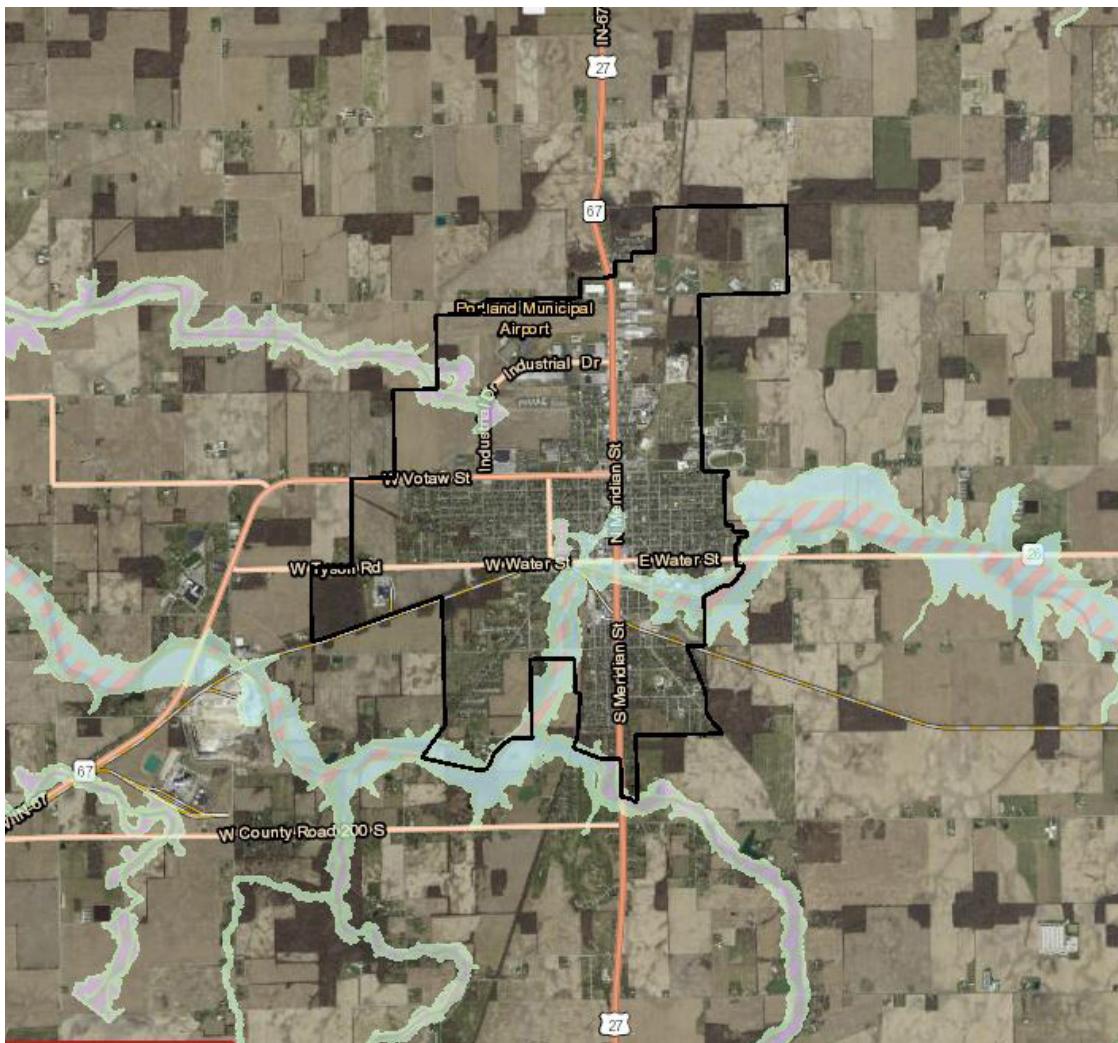
IN-DNR Flood Map of Jay Co.



# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Drainage (cont.)

IN-DNR Flood Map of Portland, IN



### Effective Flood Zones

#### About these Flood Zones

- 0.2% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone A (Approximate Study)
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone AE (Detailed Study)
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Floodway
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone AH
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone AO
- Zone X - Protected by Levee

### Preliminary Flood Zones

#### About these Flood Zones

- 0.2% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone A (Approximate Study)
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone AE (Detailed Study)
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Floodway
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone AH
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone AO
- Zone X - Protected by Levee

### Best Available Flood Zones

- |                          |                                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| FEMA Zone AE Floodway    | DNR Approximate Fringe               |
| DNR Detailed Floodway    | Additional Floodplain Area           |
| DNR Approximate Floodway | FEMA Protected by Levee              |
| FEMA Zone A              | FEMA Floodplain - Ponding (Depth)    |
| FEMA Zone AE             | FEMA Floodplain - Sheet Flow (Depth) |
| DNR Detailed Fringe      |                                      |

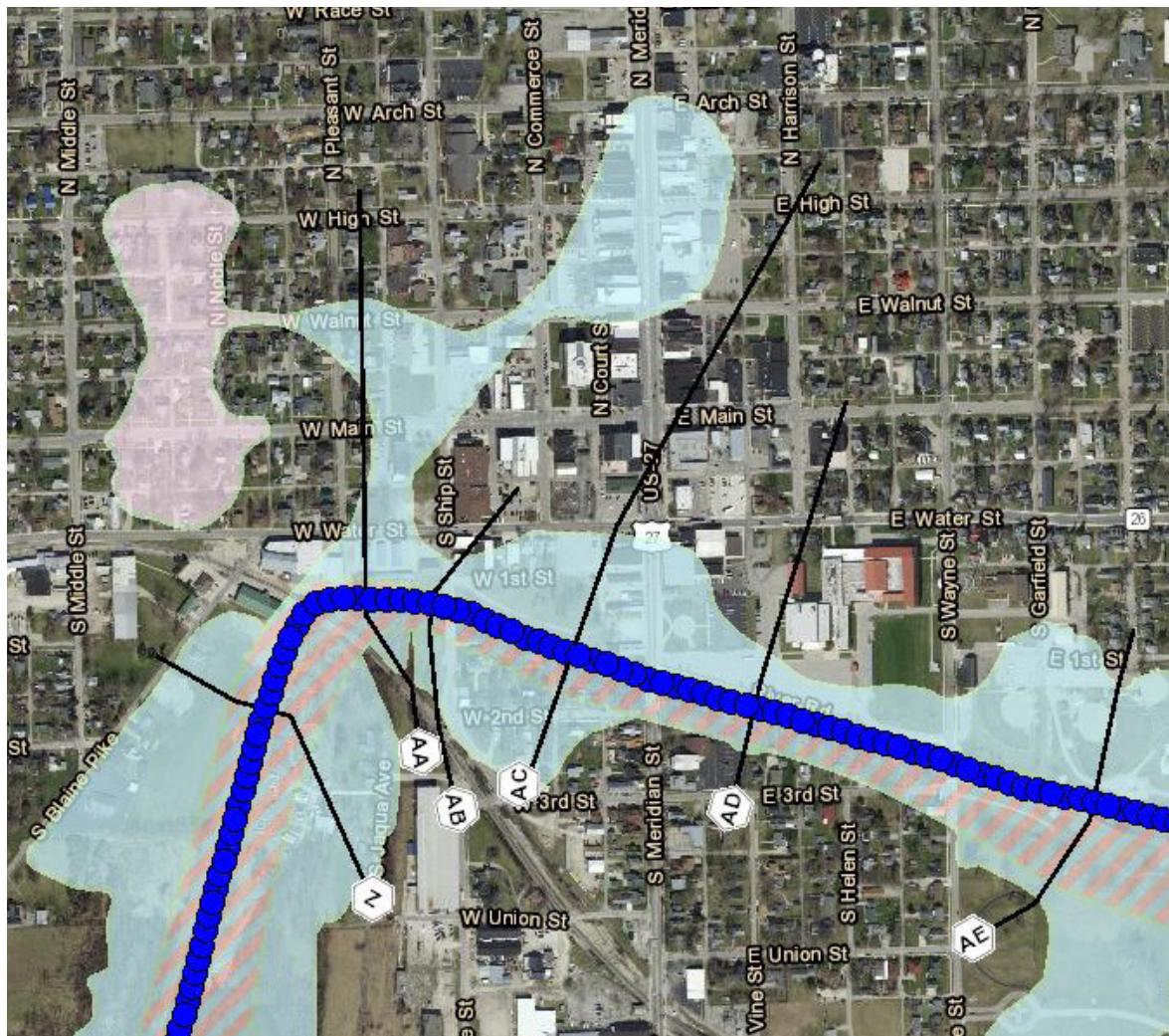
### Flood Elevation Points

- Flood Elevation Points - Zone A (Approximate)
- Flood Elevation Points - Zone AE (Detailed)

# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Drainage (cont.)

IN-DNR Flood Map of Downtown Portland, IN



### Effective Flood Zones

About these Flood Zones

- 0.2% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone A (Approximate Study)
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone AE (Detailed Study)
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Floodway
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone AH
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone AO
- Zone X - Protected by Levee

### Preliminary Flood Zones

About these Flood Zones

- 0.2% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard
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- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone AE (Detailed Study)
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Floodway
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone AH
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard - Zone AO
- Zone X - Protected by Levee

### Best Available Flood Zones

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <span style="background-color: #a1c4fd; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;"></span> FEMA Zone AE Floodway    | <span style="background-color: #d3d3d3; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;"></span> DNR Approximate Fringe               |
| <span style="background-color: #a1c4fd; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;"></span> DNR Detailed Floodway    | <span style="background-color: #ffff00; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;"></span> Additional Floodplain Area           |
| <span style="background-color: #d3d3d3; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;"></span> DNR Approximate Floodway | <span style="background-color: #808000; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;"></span> FEMA Protected by Levee              |
| <span style="background-color: #a1c4fd; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;"></span> FEMA Zone A              | <span style="background-color: #a1c4fd; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;"></span> FEMA Floodplain - Ponding (Depth)    |
| <span style="background-color: #a1c4fd; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;"></span> FEMA Zone AE             | <span style="background-color: #a1c4fd; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;"></span> FEMA Floodplain - Sheet Flow (Depth) |
| <span style="background-color: #a1c4fd; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;"></span> DNR Detailed Fringe      |  |

### Flood Elevation Points

- Flood Elevation Points - Zone A (Approximate)
- Flood Elevation Points - Zone AE (Detailed)

# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Drainage (cont.)

### Sandbag Crew

The City of Portland maintains a group of volunteers that make it their priority to provide necessary assistance to the community before/during flood events. As a group of roughly ten citizens, they meet semi-regularly to discuss planning and best practices with regard to providing sandbags to the people of Portland. As of the writing of this plan, the "Sand Bag Crew" assembles, when needed, at the Jay County Fairgrounds in order to utilize the large, drive-thru livestock barns for loading supplies. They are a very fine example of citizens being involved in their community and working together to alleviate an issue their city faces.

### Which Buildings Don't Flood?

As seen in aerial photography from a flood event in 2015, the Courthouse and buildings at the intersection of Meridian and Main Streets are the most likely in downtown to stay 'dry'. While the severity of the rain events and associated flooding will always determine which structures remain unaffected, flood data and aerial photography indicate the following areas of Downtown to be 'dry' during a 'normal' event:

- Area directly west of Meridian St. along Main St.
- Generally east of Meridian St. along Main St.; toward residential neighborhoods
- Roughly half of a block north and south of Main St. along Meridian St.



# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Drainage (cont.)

### Aerial Photos of Recent Flood Events

#### 2015 Flooding

Photos: Used with permission  
The Commercial Review, Jack Reynolds



Downtown Flooding, 2011



# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Gateways, Signage and Wayfinding

Portland's current signage and wayfinding exists primarily as overhead street signs and a collection of banners located on street lamps. There is a notable lack of an organized wayfinding campaign meant to direct visitors and residents toward specific destinations in the Historic District and beyond.

All major roads and streets are appropriately labeled with traditional green, overhead signs at intersections. Signs designating parking areas, speed limits and other essential information are located at intervals along Meridian Street and other major streets.

Lamppost banners seem to be the only designation for entering/exiting the Downtown Commercial Historic District. With the majority of traffic entering from the north and the bulk of residential areas lying to the south of downtown, a lack of appropriate signage can be considered a missed opportunity to boost commerce as well as community pride.

There is not any formal "gateway" or wayfinding to designate the Historic District or highlight the features within Portland. All of these issues can be addressed and resolved with a concentrated effort toward creating a "brand" for Portland and a rethink of the how the city presents itself to visitors and people passing through on State Roads.



Photo: Haynes Park (2012)  
Brent Mather, Photographer

# Physical Conditions (cont.)

Photos: Downtown Portland  
Streetscapes (2018)  
Sandy Bubb, Photographer

## Street Scapes

Previous attempts at Downtown Revitalization throughout the years have left Portland's land and streetscaping somewhat tired and lacking uniformity.

There is only one location in the Downtown area with any permanent street furniture, behind the Harmony Café by Arts Place. The benches are in good condition, but they lack any real coordination with the businesses along Meridian and Main Streets.



There are numerous trash receptacles throughout the Downtown, but the majority are in need of either repair or replacement due to weathering/aging.



Portland does have a Garden Club, which generally takes care of the planters around the Downtown area. These planters are large, concrete pots with decorative detailing and are located on a handful of corners throughout the area. Most are planted with variants of hardy evergreens.



Street lighting is generally in good condition, but could use updating. The style is appropriate but is not specific to any particular historical period. There are a few banners/signs on various lampposts.

# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Public Transit

"The New InterUrban" is a low-cost public transportation service currently serving the residents of Jay County. It operates on a ride-scheduling system, and accommodates ADA requirements. While not an exclusive to Portland, it is the only true public transit currently in existence.

Portland maintains a Greyhound bus stop at the McDonalds on North Meridian Street.

Previously, in the early 20th century, Portland was part of the larger Union Traction Company of Indiana; sitting at the end of an interurban line from Muncie to Portland. Like elsewhere in Indiana, traction lines fell out of favor with the advent of gasoline and diesel; The increasing availability of personal automobiles marked the end of rail travel in Indiana.



Photo: Bow Truss Bridge  
Portland, Indiana (2012)  
Ami Huffman Photographer

# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Private Housing Conditions and Vacancy

### Housing

According to the 2018 estimates for Portland, from Indiana.hometownlocator.com, there are 3,033 housing units available within the town limits. 1,604 (52.9%) of these are owner occupied, while 1,018 of them are renter occupied. Moreover, 412 of the available housing units are vacant; 13.6% of available units. The median home value is slightly over \$80,767, and the average value is just over \$91,651. Portland is home to 1,626 family households, with a total of 2,621 households.

From 2010 to 2016, the number of family households renting their homes increased by 6.5% while the number owning their home decreased by 11.0%. This trend is forecasted to slow between 2016 and 2021, with family renter households decreasing by 6.4% and owner households 1.1%. Residents aged 65 and older, who are renting their homes increased by 25.1% from 2010 to 2016. This number is projected to increase by another 33.3% by 2021. Home ownership rated for the same age group increased slightly, 6.7%, from 2010 to 2016 and is expected to stay relatively the same through 2021; projections show a 1.1% increase.

This data should be considered when looking into Portland's future. By 2021 nearly 20% of the population will be over the age of 65, and 53.5% of the population will be aged 21-64; the age at which the US Census Bureau designates households as family.

### Household Data (2010 Census)

Subject	Number	Percent
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>		
Total households	2,607	100.0
Family households [1]	1,620	62.1
Male householder	1,105	42.4
Female householder	515	19.8
Nonfamily households [2]	987	37.9
Male householder	409	15.7
Living alone	322	12.4
Female householder	578	22.2
Living alone	514	19.7
<b>HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>		
Total households	2,607	100.0
1-person household	836	32.1
2-person household	920	35.3
3-person household	357	13.7
4-person household	283	10.9
5-person household	145	5.6
6-person household	43	1.6
7-or-more-person household	23	0.9
Average household size	2.32	( X )
Average family size	2.89	( X )

United States™  
Census

# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Private Housing Conditions and Vacancy (cont.)

### Family Housing Data (2010 Census)

FAMILY TYPE AND PRESENCE OF RELATED AND OWN CHILDREN		
HOUSEHOLD TYPE		
Families [3]	1,620	100.0
With related children under 18 years	773	47.7
With own children under 18 years	694	42.8
Under 6 years only	167	10.3
Under 6 and 6 to 17 years	146	9.0
6 to 17 years only	381	23.5
Husband-wife families	1,113	100.0
With related children under 18 years	429	38.5
With own children under 18 years	393	35.3
Under 6 years only	85	7.6
Under 6 and 6 to 17 years	100	9.0
6 to 17 years only	208	18.7
Female householder, no husband present families	365	100.0
With related children under 18 years	253	69.3
With own children under 18 years	220	60.3
Under 6 years only	54	14.8
Under 6 and 6 to 17 years	35	9.6
6 to 17 years only	131	35.9

### Housing Growth Data (US Gazetteer)

GROWTH RATE / YEAR	2010-2018	2018-2023
Population	0.1%	-0.13%
Households	0.06%	-0.18%
Families	0.04%	-0.33%
Median Household Income		1.56%
Per Capita Income		2.26%

Total Housing Units	3,033 (100%)
Owner Occupied HU	1,604 (52.9%)
Renter Occupied HU	1,018 (33.6%)
Vacant Housing Units	412 (13.6%)
Median Home Value	\$80,767
Average Home Value	\$91,651

# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Private Housing Conditions and Vacancy (cont.)

### Inventory of Vacant and Occupied Buildings

R&B Architects and the consulting team conducted a survey of the buildings and structures in Downtown Portland. The goal of the research was to determine whether addresses in the Study Area were host to a business or residence, as well as whether they were occupied or vacant. The full report is available in the appendices. The following is a summary of the gathered information:

- Of the 65 addresses surveyed along Meridian Street, there were approximately 71 businesses, 10 of which were also residences, and 4 residences. 16 of the buildings were vacant while the rest were occupied.
- Of the 31 addresses surveyed along Main Street, there were approximately 30 businesses, 9 of which were also residences, and 2 residences. 8 of the buildings were vacant while the rest were occupied.
- Commerce, Race and Walnut Streets were also surveyed at some level. There were a total of 7 addresses examined, with 6 businesses and the City of Portland's Firestation. 1 of the buildings was vacant.

Within the Historic District, a majority of the facades are in need of significant restoration. Many still maintain their historic integrity, but will require restoration.

Some of the original storefronts were covered at some point in the 1970s and 80s which has resulted in a deterioration of wooden components and loss of glass.

The conditions vary and are addressed in more detail in the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Facade Recommendations.

## Evaluation of Existing Plans

### 2016 County-Wide Housing Study

Jay County completed a comprehensive Housing Study by the National Land Advisory Group (September 2016). The Study focused on the entire Portland Indiana Community and its effect on Jay County. The number of households in Portland has increased by 2% over the previous 6 years and 1.2% From the 5 years prior. This steady growth combined with an 11% increase in the local Median Income (2010 to 2016) indicates the need for additional housing and residents' capacity for affording housing.

The 2016 study also investigated the saturation rate, that is the rate at which the current market is building a supply of houses for this demand. It found two opportunities for future development that might greatly influence the Downtown Portland Study Area

- Multi-family housing was needed in the Market Rate and Moderate to Low income areas, but NOT in the luxury market. This would indicate the currently under served need for family and senior apartments which could be combined in a mixed-use development (housing over retail) in the traditional pattern of Downtown Portland Land Use.
- Within the Single-family market, the lack of the availability of affordable newer single-family homes and the establishment of single-family subdivisions was negatively impacting the market area and slowing household growth. The un-served need for this type of luxury and market rate (not affordable) housing city-wide was actually convincing families to live elsewhere, effectively turning them away.

The Single Family Detached building type described in highest demand is not currently found within the Downtown Portland Study Area, nor is it highly compatible with the traditional land-use practices of a semi-urbanized Downtown. However, immediately adjacent to the Downtown Portland Study Area are two large single-family residential neighborhoods where 95%+ of the current land-use and amenities are set aside for market rate Single Family Residential. This is a highly mobile, walking demographic that should be considered as a target audience for the amenities proposed within the Downtown Study Area – an economic feeder.

# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Existing Economic Development Tools

### TIF Districts

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) subsidies, which are used for both publicly subsidized economic development and municipal projects, have provided the means for cities and counties to gain approval of redevelopment of blighted properties or public projects such as city halls, parks, libraries etc. The definition of blight has taken on a broad inclusion of nearly every type of land including farmland, which has given rise to much of the criticism.

To provide the needed subsidy, the urban renewal district, or TIF district, is essentially always drawn around hundreds or thousands of acres of additional real estate (beyond the project site) to provide the needed borrowing capacity for the project or projects. The borrowing capacity is established by committing all normal yearly future real estate tax increases from every parcel in the TIF district (for 20–25 years, or more) along with the anticipated new tax revenue eventually coming from the project or projects themselves. If the projects are public improvements paying no real estate taxes, all of the repayment will come from the adjacent properties within the TIF district.

Although questioned, it is often presumed that even public improvements trigger gains in taxes above what occurs, or would have occurred in the district without the investment. In many jurisdictions yearly property tax increases are restricted and cannot exceed what would otherwise have occurred.

The completion of a public or private project can at times result in an increase in the value of surrounding real estate, which generates additional tax revenue. Sales-tax revenue may also increase, and jobs may be added, although these factors and their multipliers usually do not influence the structure of TIF.

The routine yearly increases district-wide, along with any increase in site value from the public and private investment, generate an increase in tax revenues. This is the “tax increment.” Tax increment financing dedicates tax increments within a certain defined district to finance the debt that is issued to pay for the project. TIF was designed to channel funding toward improvements in distressed, underdeveloped, or underutilized parts of a jurisdiction where development might otherwise not occur. TIF creates funding for public or private projects by borrowing against the future increase in these property-tax revenues

### Effectiveness of the Existing RDC, Historic Preservation Commission, and Current Facade Program

Portland Indiana and the Portland Downtown Study Area are fortunate to have many of the best, current economic tools in place and a track record of successful projects. Since its inception, over \$200,000 in TIF funds have been distributed by the RDC to Downtown Facade Matching Grants, in an “apply as needed” process. The applications are heard both by the Portland Preservation Commission who determines their historic appropriateness, and then by the Redevelopment Commission who determines their fundability.

The application process itself is simple and streamlined. However, in the public surveys and public meeting with Portland Main Street and representatives of the Portland City Council, concerns were raised about the public perception of the difficulty in working on historic buildings downtown and a perception that the historic preservation commission was limiting what individuals might do with their properties. This can be a common concern among communities; though empirically the land value data supports the fact that historic review commissions universally increase property values and opportunities. Most communities have benefitted from increasing public awareness of the good things that programs such as these have accomplished, and of how citizens can get involved themselves to make the process better. Portland does not currently have an active, positive marketing campaign; a goal of the Portland Main Street Organization, which covers several topic areas.

# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Existing Economic Development Tools (cont.)

### County Economic Development Income Tax (CEDIT)

Each employee who is working in Jay County is paying a percentage of its income into a fund that is designated for economic development activities. In some cases, the money has been earmarked for certain infrastructure improvements in the community or county that may directly benefit a company. Many times, a company may reap indirect benefits from the CEDIT revenue because of these improvements.

### Portland Foundation

Founded in 1951, The Portland Foundation is the second oldest community foundation in Indiana. It was created to enhance the quality of life for the people of Jay County, Indiana, now and for generations to come, by building community endowment, effecting significant impact through grant making and providing leadership on key community issues.

The Portland Foundation encourages requests from any new or existing charitable organization or community agency in Jay County. Grant proposals must have direct relevance to Jay County charitable needs.

#### Areas the Foundation wants to support are:

- Start-up costs for new programs
- One-time projects or needs
- Capital needs beyond an applicant organization's capabilities and means

#### Generally, the Foundation does not support:

- Individuals, other than scholarships
- Religious or sectarian purposes
- Make-up of operating deficits, post-event or after-the-fact situations
- Endowment campaigns
- Propaganda, political or otherwise, attempting to influence legislation or intervene in any political affairs or campaigns.

Requests are reviewed and voted on by the Foundation Board twice a year.

Deadline dates are typically in January and July and are announced in the local media.

**Address:** 107 South Meridian Street, Portland, IN 47371

**Phone:** 260.726.4260

**Fax:** 260.726.4273

**Email:** [tpf@portlandfoundation.org](mailto:tpf@portlandfoundation.org)

# Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Liabilities, Issues, Strengths, and Opportunities

In developing the plan, Mainstreet Portland first analyzed pros and cons of what already exists in Portland.

- What is working and strong?
- What is missing?
- What can be improved?

This process, called **S.W.O.T** Analysis, focuses on gathering information on **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities** and **Threats** within specific communities. Findings from this exercise, guided by the consultant team, can be found in the Appendix.

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hometown Feel</li><li>• Strong Sense of community when everyone comes together</li><li>• Great pride in schools</li><li>• Local businesses are great community advocates</li><li>• Fairgrounds and local events calendar</li><li>• Wonderful inventory of buildings Downtown</li><li>• Water Park</li><li>• Location – “1 Hour from Anywhere”</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appearance of Downtown “Looks trashy...”</li><li>• Lack of prominent Entry Points</li><li>• Many of the houses near downtown are not kept up to community standards</li><li>• Reliance on Walmart</li><li>• Lack of upkeep City Landscaping and Roadsides</li><li>• Nothing going on after 5PM</li><li>• Lack of Parking</li><li>• Branding, Image and Wayfinding</li><li>• Residents going elsewhere for entertainment</li></ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>The Patriot</i> – Jay County High School’s mascot</li><li>• Community pride waiting to be tapped</li><li>• Encouraging/Retaining younger generations</li><li>• Interest in a holistic approach</li><li>• Open storefronts and available buildings</li><li>• Existing traffic and exposure</li><li>• Downtown apartments and Senior living</li><li>• Flood Control projects</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stopping planning/trying</li><li>• Negative attitudes to image and change</li><li>• Property owners not interested in restoring facades</li><li>• Losing younger generations to elsewhere</li><li>• Empty school buildings</li><li>• Waning interest in being a ‘community’</li><li>• Difficulties with flood insurance</li></ul>

# Facade Conditions and Recommendations

## Evaluation of Existing Plans

### Facade Conditions

The Portland Commercial Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, makes up the traditional commercial core of Portland. It primarily lies along Meridian Street, extending east and west roughly one block.

#### From the National Register of Historic Places Nomination (1996):

"The Portland Commercial Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for its significant association with the history of commerce, politics/government. The district is also significant for its collection of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial and public buildings..."

Commerce played a vital role in the development of Portland's downtown area. After its designation as a county seat, the town became the central market place for Jay County and some of the surrounding area including west-central Ohio. As the county seat, Portland attracted residents of the countryside to the courthouse to transact legal business and to engage in local politics.

Architecturally, the Portland Commercial Historic District conveys Portland's historic past and reflects on its later stages of commercial development. The years 1880-1895 and 1905-1925 represent the two most active periods of construction in the commercial district. A number of prominent architectural styles including Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Neoclassicism found expression in those periods of major construction."

The Portland Historic Preservation Commission published its most recent Design Guidelines in April 2009. The guidelines are "written to provide owners with recommendations for restoration and remodeling which are in keeping with the Commercial District's architectural character and add to the economic value of the property and the district as a whole".

## Current Conditions

Storefronts in Downtown Portland are currently mixed in appearance and condition. A great number of the structures are historic in nature, some of which have fallen into disrepair while others have had their facades altered during attempts to 'modernize' the appearance. "In the process", the National Parks Service notes, "these alterations may have completely changed or destroyed a building's distinguishing architectural features that make up its historic character." As a result, it is crucial to utilize local records and archives for research on the historical appearance of a building. The remaining structures are more contemporary in design and appearance, with many of them in good condition; a few of these could benefit from additional investment and modernization. During this phase of Portland's Downtown Revitalization Plan, it will be important to keep these three questions in mind (National Parks Service 1982):

- If the original storefront has survived largely intact but is in a deteriorated condition, what repairs should be undertaken?
- If the storefront has been modernized at a later date, should the later alterations be kept or the building restored to its original appearance or an entirely new design chosen?
- If the building's original retail use is to be changed to office or residential, can the commercial appearance of the building be retained while accommodating the new use?

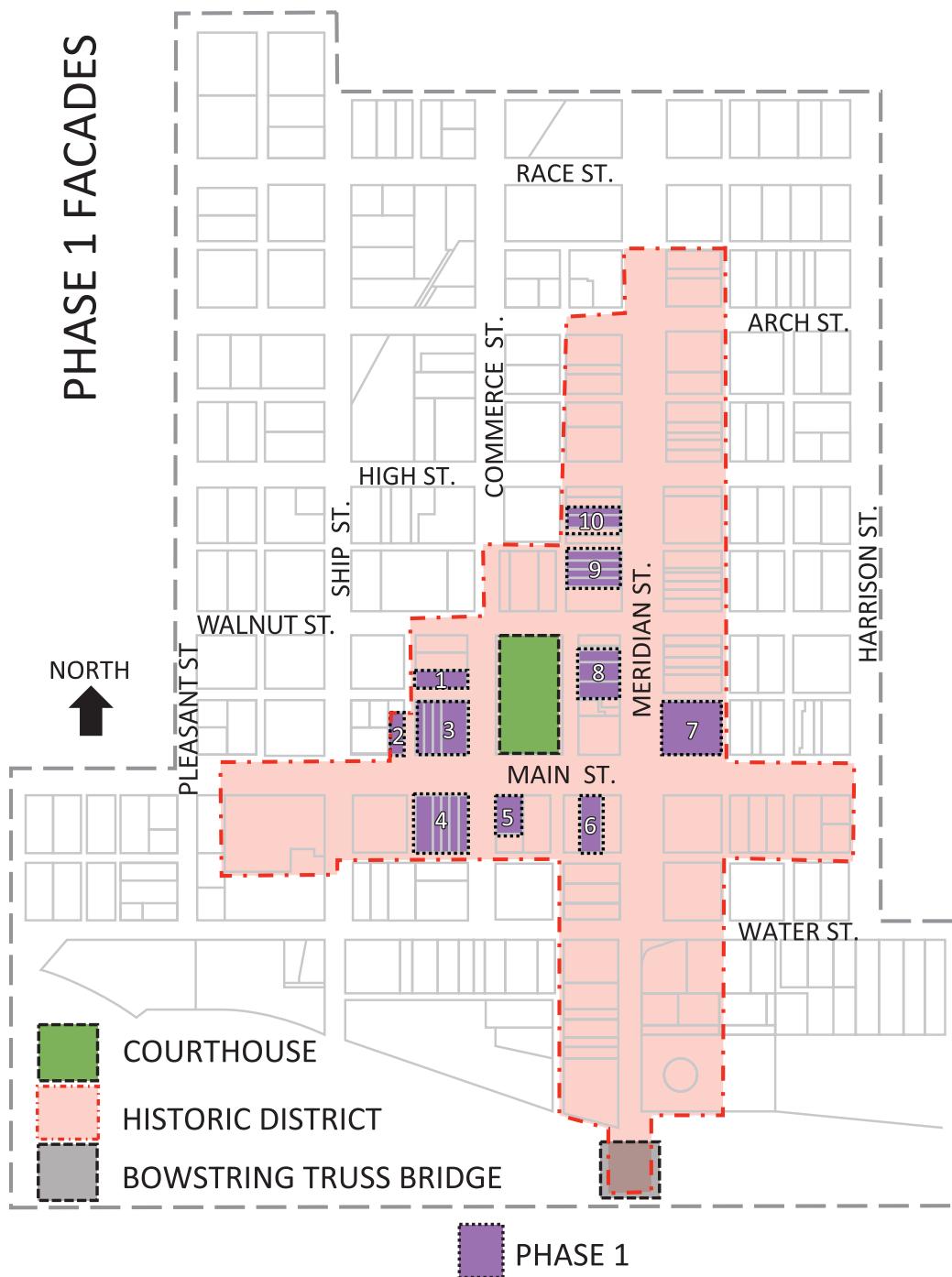
## Facade Recommendations

The goal of this facade restoration project is not to create identical, "cookie cutter", appearance, but to restore a warm and inviting level of quality throughout Portland's Commercial Historic District.

It is crucial that these high-impact updates be made as part of working toward the physical beautification of the Downtown. This will directly impact and address the main goal of Portland's Revitalization plan: Improve the city's image, both locally and regionally, and establishing an identity by recreating a vibrant small town culture. The positive image will serve the community well as it works toward achieving the goals of this Redevelopment project. Additionally, the restoration of facades in the Portland Commercial Historic District will mitigate any further deterioration of the city's historic fabric.

# Facade Conditions and Recommendations

## PORLAND DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



1. 110 N. COMMERCE
2. 214 W. MAIN
3. 206-212 W. MAIN
4. 201-211 W. MAIN
5. 121-129 W. MAIN
6. 107 W. MAIN
7. 101-111 N. MERIDIAN
8. 112-124 N. MERIDIAN
9. 204-210 N. MERIDIAN
10. 216-218 N. MERIDIAN



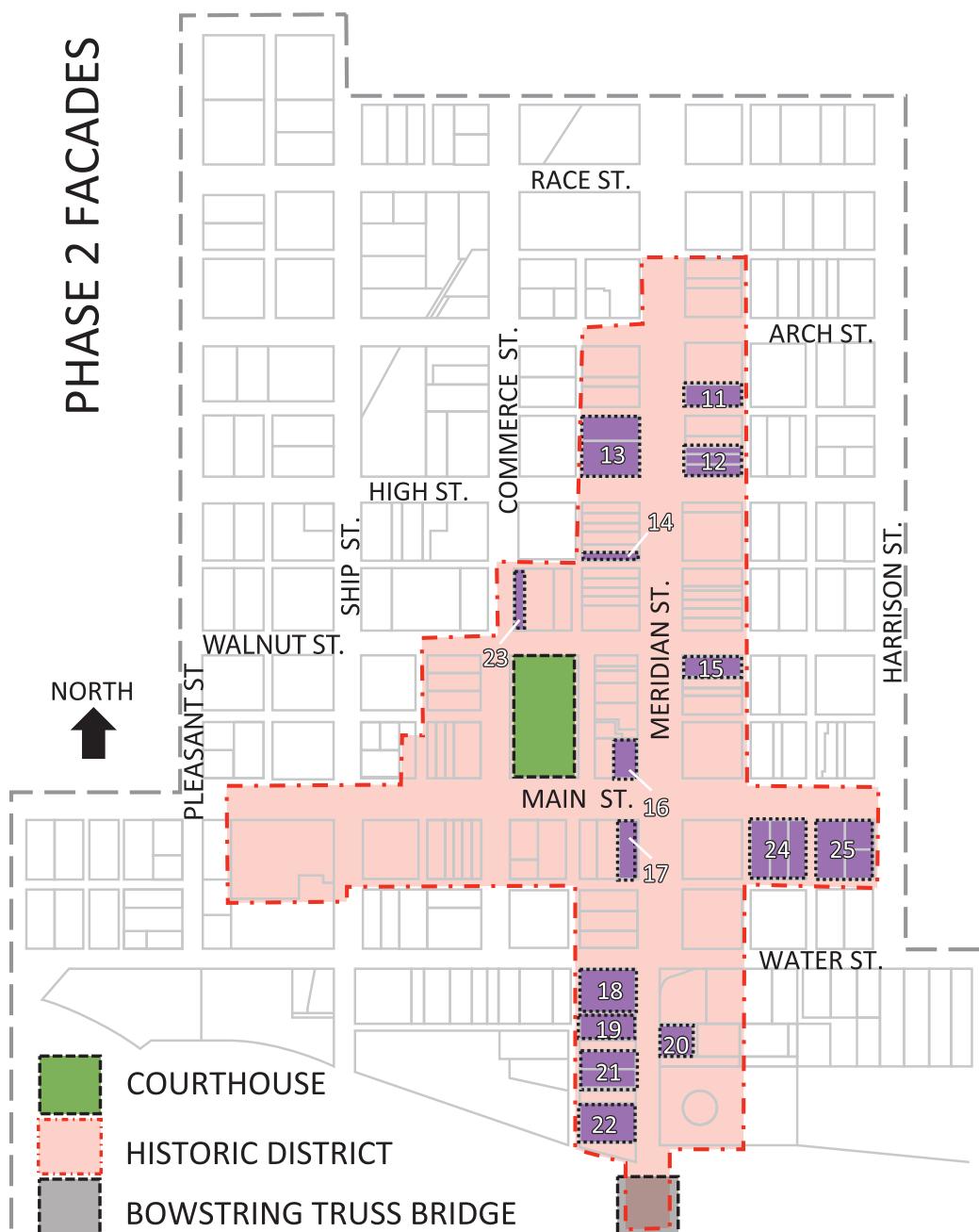
# Facade Conditions and Recommendations (cont.)

## Phase 1 Facade Improvement Project

Address	Estimated Cost
101 N Meridian St.	\$47,406.63
103-105 N Meridian St.	\$300,415.22
109-111 N Meridian St.	\$94,072.71
118 N Meridian St.	\$55,257.43
120 N Meridian St.	\$48,802.61
122-124 N Meridian St.	\$43,189.65
208-210 N Meridian St.	\$90,265.52
216 N Meridian St.	\$34,161.04
218 N Meridian St.	\$47,279.82
107 W Main St.	\$76,660.15
121-129 W Main St.	\$240,971.09
201-203 W Main St.	\$275,579.99
205-207 W Main St.	\$184,943.09
206-208 W Main St.	\$195,540.87
209-211 W Main St.	\$204,005.74
210 W Main St.	\$15,554.74
212 W Main St.	\$24,376.26
214 W Main St.	\$112,824.83
110 N Commerce St.	\$69,601.53
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,160,908.41</b>

# Facade Conditions and Recommendations (cont.)

## PORLAND DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



# Facade Conditions and Recommendations (cont.)

## Phase 2 Facade Improvement Project

Address	Estimated Cost
112 N Meridian St.	\$500.00
123 N Meridian St.	\$15,378.82
125 N Meridian St.	\$216,743.87
221-227 N Meridian St.	
301-311 N Meridian St.	\$36,654.48
302-308 N Meridian St.	\$218,504.21
321 N Meridian St.	\$44,908.25
101 S Meridian St.	\$67,577.84
210 S Meridian St.	\$500.00
216 S Meridian St.	\$34,161.04
218 S Meridian St.	\$47,279.82
221 S Meridian St.	\$55,851.80
224-228 S Meridian St.	\$37,878.79
240 S Meridian St.	\$87,394.20
124 W Walnut St.	\$52,537.33
111-115 E Main St.	\$10,391.12
119 E Main St.	\$21,349.75
129 E Main St.	\$15,403.49
137-141 E Main St.	\$37,514.69
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,100,529.50</b>

# Cultural and Social Conditions

## City-Wide Cultural and Social Resources



Photo: Splashpad (2018)  
Used with permission  
The Commercial Review, Jay Reynolds



Photo: Jay Co. Tractor & Engine Show (2017)  
Ami Huffman, Photographer



Portland has a long history and prides itself on being a safe, family-friendly small town. It offers a variety of lodging, event spaces and recreation opportunities. Its regional location and proximity to cities like Ft. Wayne, Huntington, Marion, Muncie and Richmond make it ideal for the 'day trip', or a long weekend away. Larger cities, Indianapolis and Dayton, are within a two-hour drive.

Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve, part of the Indiana DNR Wetland Reserve Program, is twelve miles north of Portland. An area within the ongoing restoration of northeastern Indiana's wetlands and at the heart of the Limberlost Swamp, the Loblolly Marsh offers visitors the opportunity to see 440 acres of natural floodplains, marshland, prairies and mature woodland. Numerous trails and a large amount of wildlife, including migratory birds, make this a great destination for nature enthusiasts.

Portland also has many city parks featuring shelters, picnic areas and sporting equipment (basketball courts and playgrounds). The Jay County Fairgrounds, John Jay Center for Learning, and several other locations play host to Portland's many annual events, drawing large numbers of visitors. Appropriate signage and improving walkability will only serve to increase access to these areas.

The city has many active civic groups and a very busy schedule of annual, public events. The Tri-State Antique Engine & Tractor Show and the Fiber Arts Festival are two of the biggest draws on the calendar; both drawing throngs of visitors to the area. There are also a number of smaller events throughout the year. A new initiative by the Main Street group will be activating the community by decorating the Downtown for the holiday season and for events such as Fiber Fest.

**The Tri-State Antique Gas Engine & Tractor Show** is a nationally-known and regionally recognized event for enthusiasts of steam and gasoline engines, and related historical equipment. It is held every year toward the end of August and regularly draws thousands of people from all over the Midwest. The show features over 3000 engines and 800 tractors, 150 antique and craft dealers, and 400 engine and tractor parts dealers. Visitors fill up the area's lodging and drastically increase traffic during what is arguably, Portland's busiest time of year. Attendees and local business owners would both benefit from a revitalized Downtown, bringing in even more revenue to the city.

**The Fiber Arts Festival Downtown Portland** is an annual event, unique to Portland and the Jay County area. It is a celebration of arts and crafts related to fiber work (knitting, crochet, etc.). Draw hundreds of visitors to Downtown Portland. The Festival provides classes, handmade crafts for sale, local food and a general excitement to Portland and Jay County and it is known for its contribution to quilting and other 'homesteading' arts. This is a wonderful asset to the City as it tries to redefine itself, allowing for multi-generational interactions along with a general sense of community for residents and visitors alike.

**Jay County Fair** is a local tradition, bringing the residents of the entire county together for an annual week-long summer celebration of rural American life. Events like harness racing, hog wrestling, live music performances and a demolition derby create an atmosphere people throughout Indiana have come to expect from a county fair. Livestock and horse showing is also a large component of the week's events.

Along with a calendar full of community oriented events, these major events make Portland a great regional destination for visitors.

# Cultural and Social Conditions (cont.)

## Countywide Cultural and Social Resources (cont.)

### Lodging; Hotels & Motels



**Holiday Inn Express**  
100 Holiday Drive Portland, IN  
(260) 726-6688  
<http://www.hiexpress.com/portlandin>



**Portland Inn**  
1147 US 27 Portland, IN  
(260) 726-8888  
<http://www.portland-inn.com>



**Hoosier Inn**  
1620 N Meridian St. Portland, IN  
(260) 726-7113  
<http://www.hoosierinnportland.com>



**Budget Inn**  
1411 US 27 Portland, IN  
(260) 726-9391  
[budgetinn\\_portland@yahoo.com](mailto:budgetinn_portland@yahoo.com)

### Event Space



**John Jay Center for Learning**  
101 S Meridian St. Portland, IN  
(260) 729-5525  
<http://www.jjcl.net/reserve-room>



**Lions Club Civic Center**  
307 E 100 N Portland, IN  
(260) 251-1863  
[portlandlionsclub@gmail.com](mailto:portlandlionsclub@gmail.com)



**Arts Place**  
131 E Walnut St. Portland, IN  
(260) 726-4809  
<http://www.artsland.org>



**Jay Community Center**  
115 E Water St. Portland, IN  
(260) 726-6477  
<http://www.jaycc.org>



**West Jay Community Center**  
125 N Hoover St. Dunkirk, IN  
(765) 768-1544  
<http://thewjcc.wix.com/wjcc>



**Jay County Public Library**  
315 N Ship St. Portland, IN  
(260) 726-7890  
<http://www.jaypl.lib.in.us>



**Holiday Inn Express**  
100 Holiday Drive Portland, IN  
(260) 726-6688  
<http://www.hiexpress.com/portlandin>



**Portland Golf Club**  
124 W 200 South Portland, IN  
(260) 726-8256  
<http://www.portlandgc.com/ballroom.html>



**Jay County Hospital**  
500 W Votaw St. Portland, IN  
(260) 726-7131  
<http://www.jaycountyhospital.com>



**Jay County 4-H Building**  
806 E Votaw St. Portland, IN  
(260) 726-4707



**Women's Building (Jay County Fairgrounds)**  
806 E Votaw St. Portland, IN  
(260) 726-5104



**Portland Elks Club Room**  
126 W High St. Portland, IN  
(260) 726-8585



**Portland Moose Family Center**  
1100 W Votaw St. Portland, IN  
(260) 726-4024



**Richard's Restaurant**  
806 E Votaw St. Portland, IN  
(260) 726-5104



**American Legion**  
211 W Walnut St. Portland, IN  
(260) 726-4449



**Bryant Community Center**  
107 S Malin St. Bryant, IN  
(260) 997-6418



**Dunkirk Elks Lodge**  
1026 S Main St. Dunkirk, IN  
(765) 768-6134  
<http://www.elks.org>



**The Meeting House**  
8339 N 400 E Bryant, IN  
(260) 997-6822



**Pennville Community Center**  
235 E North St. Pennville, IN  
(260) 731-5172  
[drinkut@embarqmail.com](mailto:drinkut@embarqmail.com)

# Cultural and Social Conditions (cont.)

## Countywide Cultural and Social Resources (cont.)

### Campgrounds



**Fox Lake Campground**  
7424 S 300 E Portland, IN  
(260) 335-2639  
<http://foxlakecampground.com/>



**Paradise Pointe RV Resort**  
3965 W 550 S Portland, IN  
(260) 726-9695  
[theparadisepointe@hotmail.com](mailto:theparadisepointe@hotmail.com)

### Parks



**Hudson Family Park**  
509 S Wayne St. Portland, IN



**Haynes Park**  
700 W North St. Portland, IN



**Milton Miller Park**  
1400 N Franklin St Portland, IN



**Webster Depot Park**  
255 Lincoln Ave. Dunkirk, IN



**Loblolly Marsh**  
250 W Bryant, IN



**Freedom Park**  
200 S Meridian St. Portland, IN



**Jay County Fairgrounds**  
806 E Votaw St. Portland, IN



**Runkle/Miller Field**  
515 Blaine Pike Portland, IN



**Dunkirk City Park**  
125 Hoover St. Dunkirk, IN



**Redkey Park**  
S Morgan Dr. Redkey, IN



**Pennville Park**  
235 E North St. Pennville, IN

### Trails



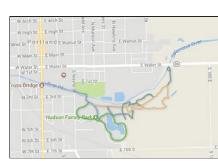
**Veronica's Trail**  
Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve



**Nature Preserve Trails**  
Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve



**Bird Sanctuary**  
Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve - Bird Sanctuary



**Hudson Park Trail of Trees**  
Hudson Park, 509 S Wayne St. Portland, IN



**Jay County Hospital Wellness Walkway**  
Jay County Hospital - 500 W Votaw St. Portland, IN



**Tyson Road Bike Connector**  
High School to Main Street, Portland, IN

# Cultural and Social Conditions (cont.)

## Countywide Cultural and Social Resources (cont.)

### Sports



**Portland Golf Club**  
124 W 200 S Portland, IN  
(260) 726-4646  
<http://www.portlandgc.com>

Read More >>>



**Jay Community Center**  
115 E Water St. Portland, IN  
(260) 726-6477  
<http://www.jaycc.org>



**Portland Water Park**  
304 S Hayes St. Portland, Indiana  
(260) 726-6653  
<https://www.facebook.com/PortlandWaterPark>



**Patriot Fitness**  
105 N Meridian St Portland, IN  
(260) 726-2409  
<http://www.patriot-fitness.com>



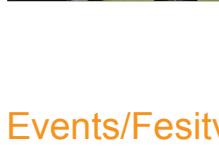
**Portland Rockets**  
515 Blaine Pike Portland, IN (Runkle-Miller Field)  
(260) 703-2003  
<http://www.ballcharts.com/PortlandRockets2010>



**Sunnybite Yoga**  
8 W High St. Redkey, IN  
(260) 251-7606



**The Brown Bowl**  
1616 N Meridian St. Portland, IN  
(260) 726-8312



**Crown City Cruisers**  
Mainstreet  
May, Annually



**Home Coming**  
Mainstreet  
Portland, Indiana  
Fall, Annually



**Forth of July Parade**  
6/4/19  
Meridian Street  
Portland, Indiana



**Golf Club of the Limberlost**  
207 N Dr. Geneva, IN  
(260) 368-7388  
<http://www.limberlostgolf.com>



**West Jay Community Center**  
125 Hoover St Dunkirk, IN  
(765) 768-1544  
<http://thewjcc.wix.com/wjcc>



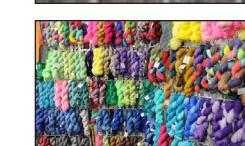
**Loblolly Marsh**  
250 W Bryant, IN



**Crown City Lanes**  
115 Eaton Pike Dunkirk, IN  
(765) 768-6455

**End of the Trail**  
30 S Meridian St. Redkey, IN

**Dunkirk Pool**  
120 Hoover St. Dunkirk, IN  
(765) 768-1544



**Brick Alley**  
Portland, Indiana

**Fiber Festival**  
Jay Community Center  
115 E. Water St.

# Cultural and Social Conditions (cont.)

## Current Image

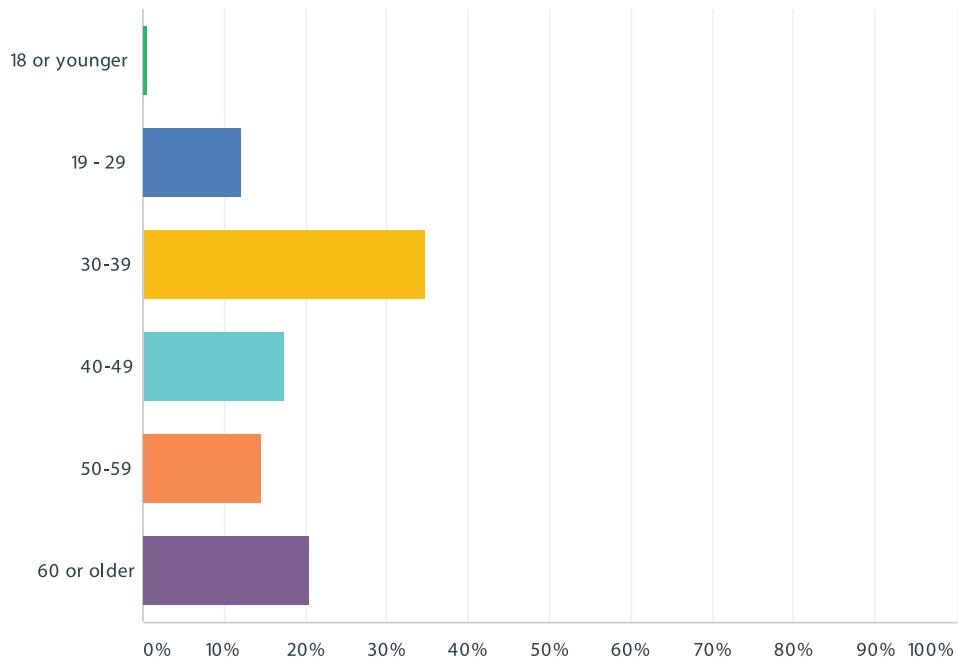
R&B Architects undertook a survey of Portland and Jay County residents, as well as regional visitors, at the 2018 Tri-State Antique Gas Engine and Tractor Show. The questionnaire covered a range of topics focused on gauging both the impression of Portland's downtown and what could attract more visitors. A total of 380 people responded to the 11 question survey.

The following is a summary of the data:

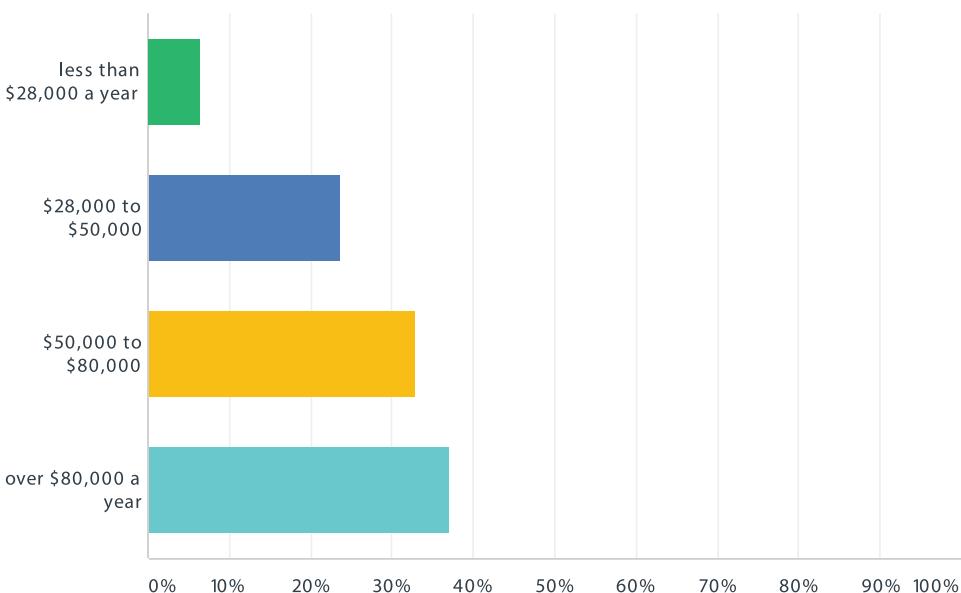
- Gender: 68.16% Female, 31.84% Male

- Age:

Age



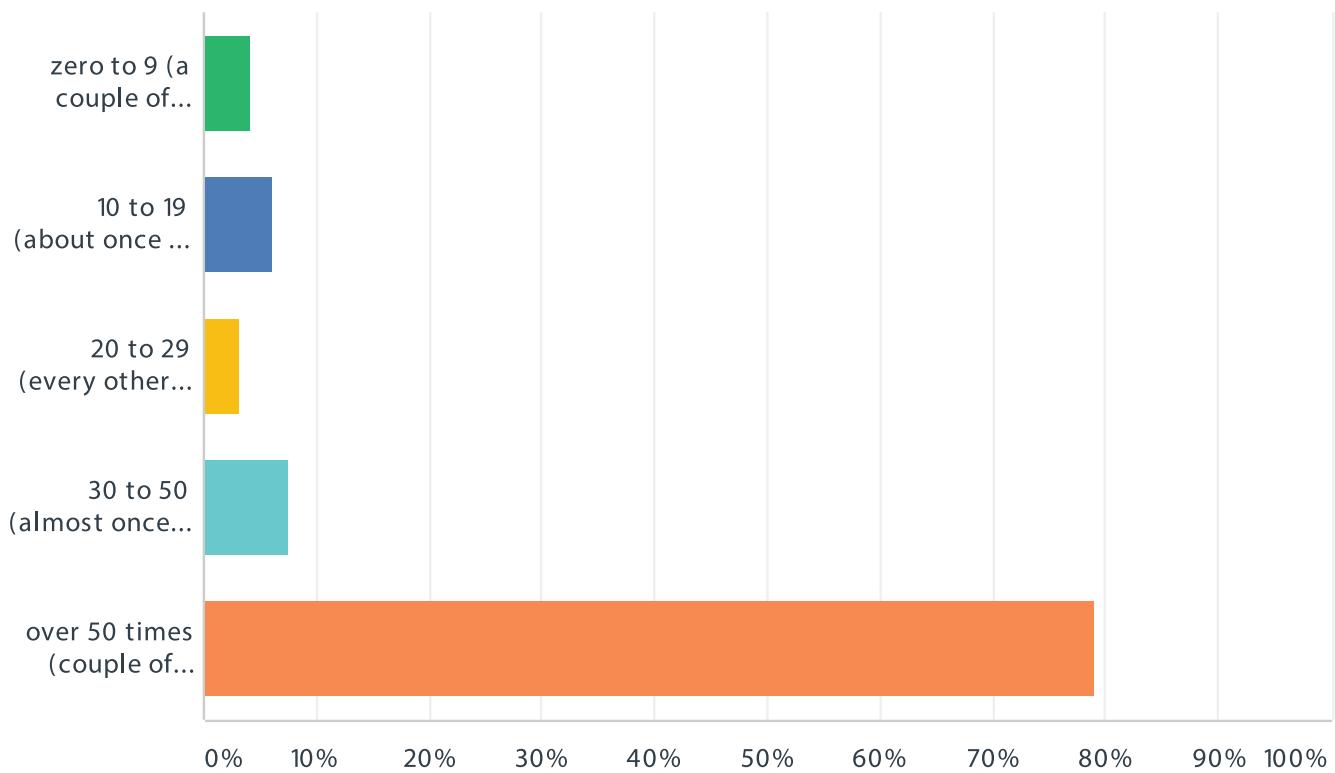
Income



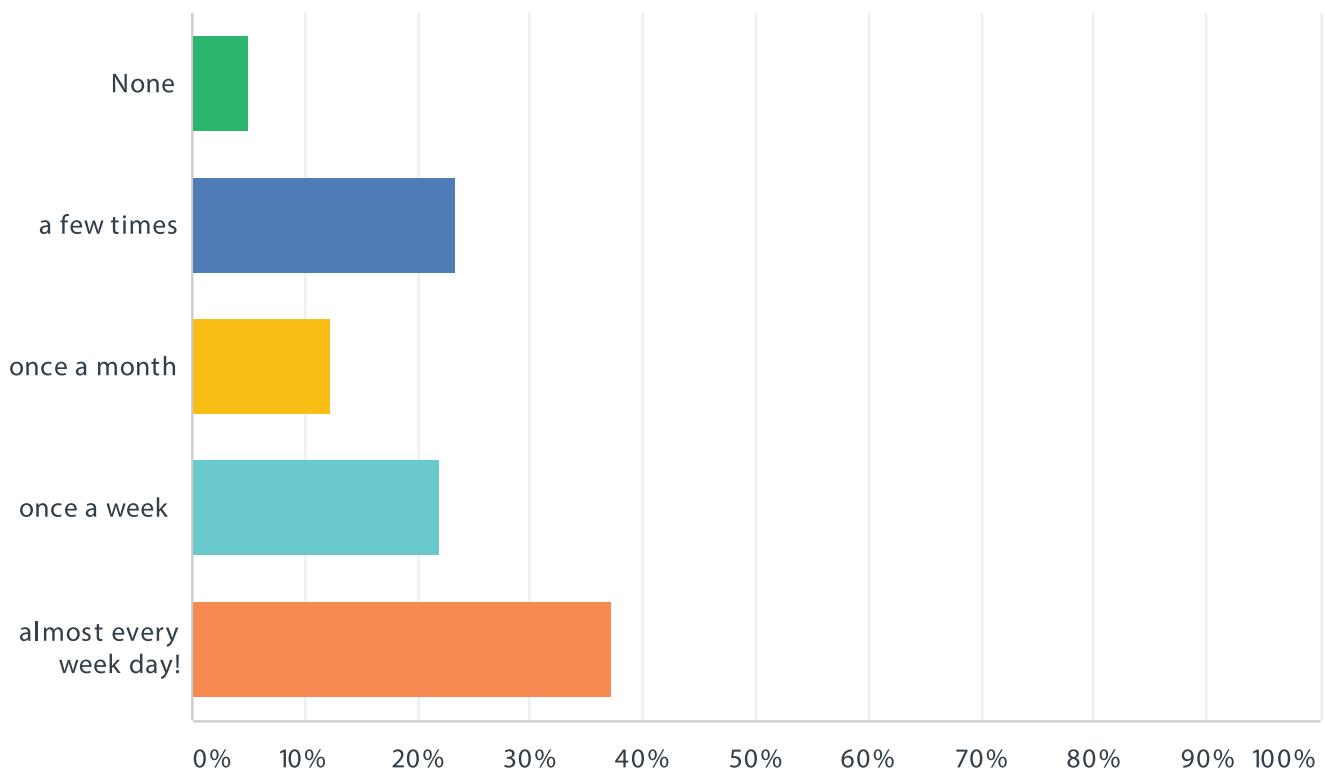
# Cultural and Social Conditions (cont.)

## Current Image (cont.)

### Annual Visits to Portland



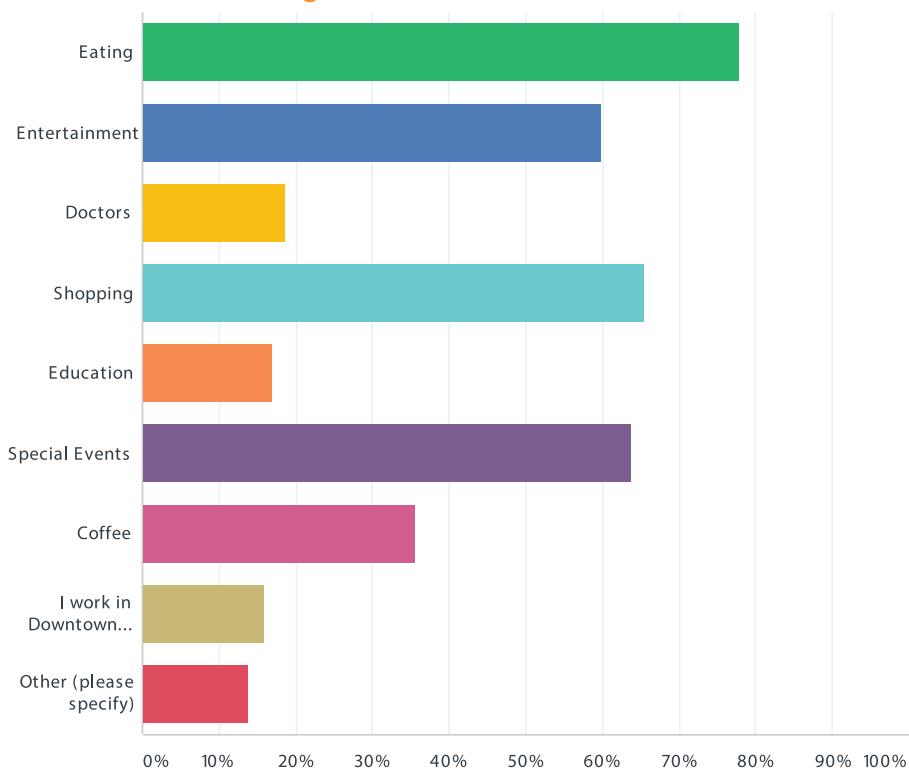
### Annual Visits to Downtown Portland



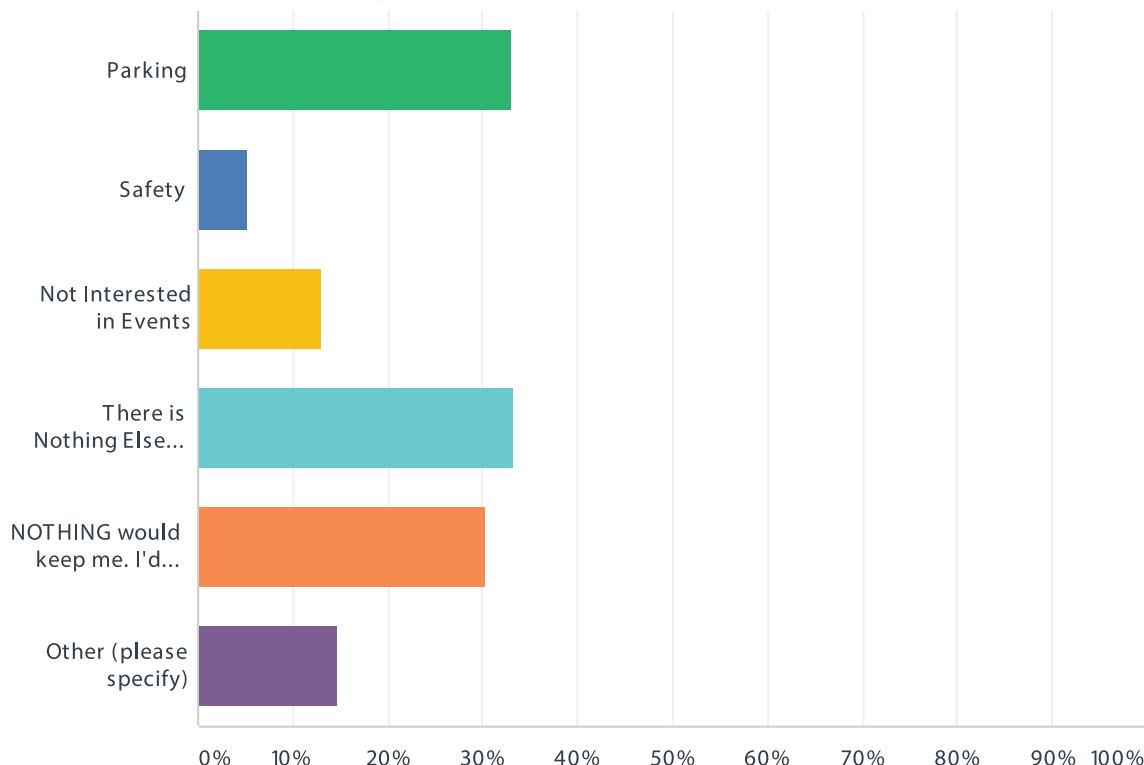
# Cultural and Social Conditions (cont.)

## Current Image (cont.)

Reason for Visiting Downtown



Reason for Not Visiting Downtown Portland



\*Please see appendix for full survey and data set.

# Cultural and Social Conditions (cont.)

## Would you tell your friend to visit Downtown Portland? Why?

"At this point, there isn't really anything that would make me tell someone to visit... I don't think there is enough to justify telling people to go."

"Yes, because I am a believer in supporting small business!"

"Most of my friends live in Portland... they already know how little there is going on in Downtown. There aren't even benches *along Meridian St. anymore* for the who like to walk and need a rest..."

"I wish there more small shops to visit. I'd love a coffee shop atmosphere and maybe a small cafe. That would encourage me to bring more friends to Downtown Portland."

"There is nothing here anymore. I am embarrassed about how things have deteriorated in the past 20 years."

"I would because it's my hometown, not because there is a specific place or attraction to draw them in. Downtown Portland needs to be 'lived in' again. Locally owned restaurants, boutiques, artisan shops need to be added. Our town has So much potential but nothing to keep the young crowd involved, or to raise a family."

"Yes! If you aren't from Portland there are a few cute shops to visit!"

"No! Shops are only open when everyone else is at work... and close on the weekends when real trade could happen. Therre is literally nothing for the 18-25 year old to do or look forward to. Another auto parts store? How about a young persons area, or something that promotes community outside of the 4-H Fairgrounds?"

\*Please see appendix for full survey and data set.



An Open Space / Vacant Land survey was completed in February 2019. This additional analysis was highly coordinated with Parking, Circulation, and Zoning analysis from earlier in 2018. The goal was to help determine highest and best uses for currently under-developed parcels in and immediately adjacent the Downtown Study Area. With input from the Portland Main Street Committee, available parcels were prioritized with a preference for:

- First for the creation first of new Class A retail, and
- Secondarily for the development on affordable market-rate housing.
- While additional public amenity spaces were also discussed as catalysts for improved Quality of Life, the large number of existing public amenities within walking distance made this Return on Investment (ROI) seem small form a property value / tax basis and when considering the ongoing cost of maintenance.

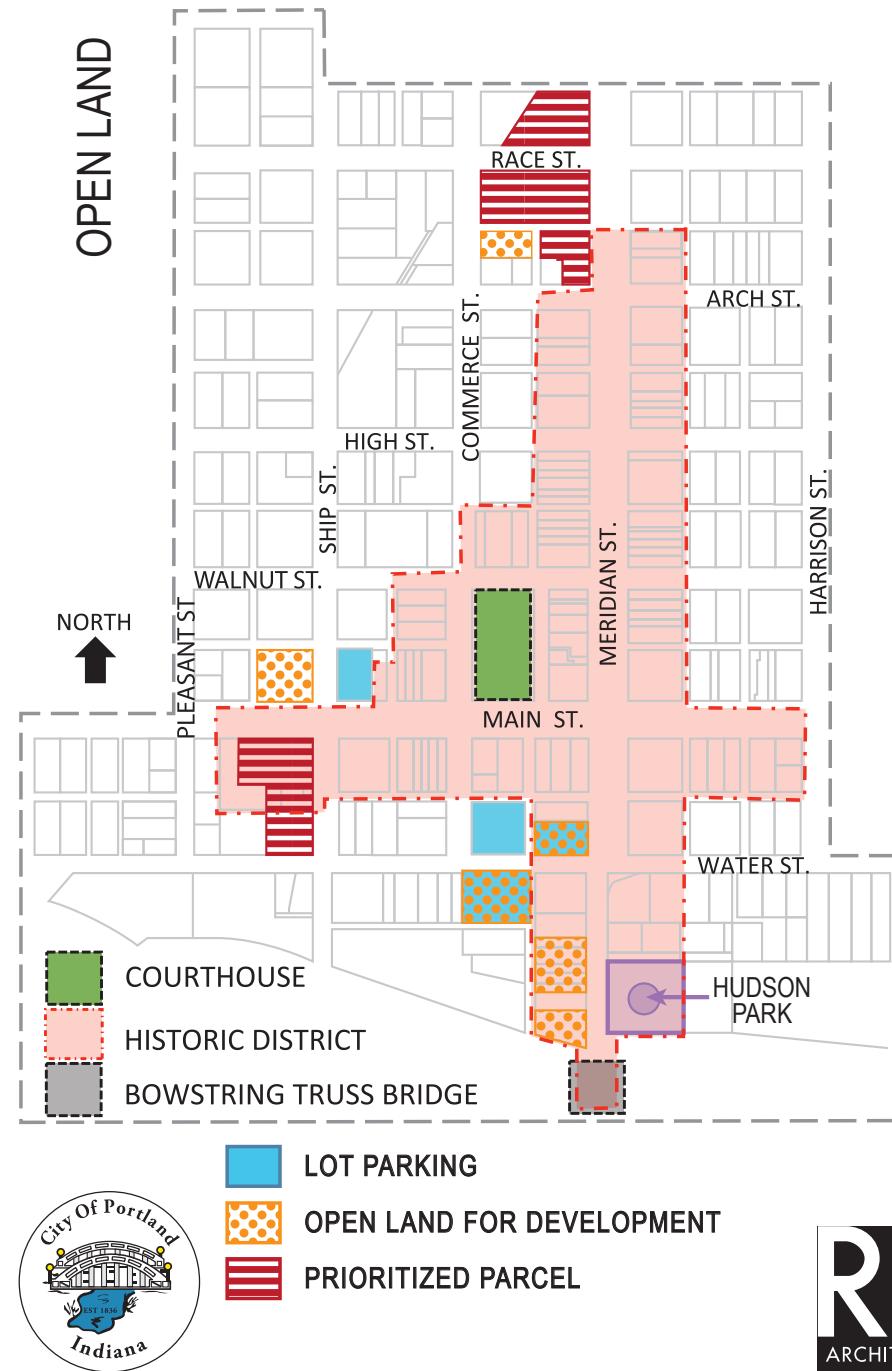
Several identified parcels had available previous (though expired) Phase 1 Environmental studies, valuable guides to the cost of re-use and feasibility. These clusters of multiple parcels in the 400 North block of Meridian Street and 300 West block of Main Street became "Prioritized Parcels" (see map above).

- 400 North Meridian Street (approx. 2.3 acres in 8 vacant parcels)
  - multiple current owners, has a deed restriction for underground contamination and is currently best suited to improved parking area
- 300 West Main Street (approx. 1.6 acres in 4 parcels including the Hood Building) - 3 owners, also had a Phase 2 Environmental Study made available by the current owners of the main, South-most parcel). The property had only minor above ground contamination and is well suited to the redevelopment of Housing or Retail, or a combination of both.

# Cultural and Social Conditions (cont.)

## Existing Conditions

### Open Land



# Portland Downtown Revitalization Plan

## Section C: Other Recommendations



# Portland Downtown Revitalization Plan

## Section C: Other Recommendations

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Photo: Hudson Park (2017)  
Ami Huffman, Photographer

## Historic Guidelines for Maintenance and Design

### General Guidelines for The Maintenance and Design

The Portland Historic Preservation Commission, comprised of seven residents and a non-voting advisory committee, developed a set of rules for the city's historic structures and districts. In 2009, they released the Downtown Portland Historic District Design Guidelines after closely modeling it after The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. It serves as a guide for property owners and the community when approaching projects in the Portland Commercial Historic District.

The Design Guidelines offer business owners and residents access to ideas for the maintenance of historic structures, as well as clearly explaining the parameters for new construction and restoration projects. Moreover, it serves as a safeguard for the Historic District and the integrity of its buildings, landscaping, signs, etc. The Preservation Commission provides an application for Certificate of Appropriateness Permit as an attachment to the document. The entire document is available from the Commission upon request.

The Portland Preservation Commission currently meets monthly only on an as-needed basis to review "Certificates of Appropriateness (COA)" and make recommendations. An example COA is included in the Appendix. The inconsistency of meeting times was a topic of Joint Preservation Commission and Portland Main Street. Both have agreed to hold monthly meetings regardless.

## Section C Other Recommendations

# Guidance for Rebranding and Image

## Brand Perception

Branding is an essential part of any redevelopment effort. Properly done, it can attract people to a city and spur economies to life. This allows the story of Who, What, and Why to be told on all levels; all that defines Portland, Indiana. Modern branding is not just meant to attract visitors and increase tourism, but it will go a long way in changing the way residents, new and old, see their hometown.

Quality of life and community are the leading motivators for family aged residents, 55 and under, when making decisions like where to move and when to stay in or leave their home. As employment and jobs become more centered around mobility and the ability to work from home, these two factors are especially important for small cities like Portland to consider during any redevelopment efforts.

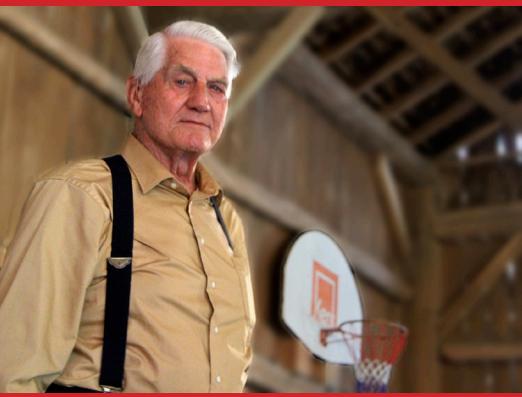
Branding gives a face to a community, creating something tangible to express the place through language, maps, initiatives, pictures, color and sentiment. By strategically defining and visually expressing the City of Portland residents and visitors alike will be immediately connected to the location. Creating a real connection to place encourages visitors to move, then settle into a community and along with current residents open businesses, build homes, participate in a truly local economy and continue the revitalization of Portland as the heart of Jay County.

Strong internal local marketing strategies, including web-based social media communication assist existing residents in getting the word around town. Current initiatives have grown organically out of need and are neither “managed”, “focused”, nor targeted outside the community. The result is a low impact outward facing impression in an increasingly accessible 21st century economy. Meanwhile, marketing movements and current market theories are rapidly changing in the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as evidenced by the growth of Amazon on-line shopping both for urban and rural populations. This is an opportunity to seize upon with new innovate approaches to reaching marketing goals, instead of trying to fit 20th century theories into 21<sup>st</sup> century problems. In the last 4 decades, American decision making has switched from “Price Based” (1970’s) to “Origin” (1980’s Made in the USA Campaign) to “Quality” (1990’s and early 2000’s) to “Trendy” (early 2000’s), and is currently significantly impacted by “Experienced Based” decision making. Portland should have the following goals for its marketing and rebranding as part of this Revitalization Plan:

- Build an outward facing, coordinated and intentional image for Portland, Indiana that reflects its community-wide goals
- Implement aka “launch” that initiative
- Maintain the consistency and energy behind the coordinated out-ward facing market campaign

The following projects will, along with the previously mentioned rebranding efforts, allow Portland to accomplish its goals of modernizing and updating its image:

- Developing a Web presence
- Accessible Local Calendar
- Coordinated Social Media Campaigns
- Event Based Updates for local and regional populations



Photos: Jay County Industry  
JCC, Portland, IN (2016)  
Used with permission  
The Commercial Review, Jack Reynolds

# Guidance for Rebranding and Image (cont.)

## Visual Identity and Brand Management

Consistency, Coordination and Communication are the keys to successful marketing implementation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not large cost spends of marketing money.

This is a paradigm shift from 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> century Marketing / Advertising Theory.

Key personnel will be identified and committee roles assigned for implementation of the brand. Appropriate training will be provided on design tools, including website CMS and social media. These team members will partner and collaborate under a communications plan, allowing created content to be available for all to use and remain cohesive. This team will do the bulk of Portland's story-telling. Brand champions will be connected to personnel and work in step to infuse the narrative and initiatives into city life. Once a strong brand is set, it's important to manage it properly for maximum visibility and engagement. Standards and usage will be set for all output of the visual identity. These best-use standards make it easy for any individual within the Portland system to create content that fits within the brand, and the wider image created for Jay County. Standards should include:

### Photography guidelines

- Subject matter, colors, style, when to use custom vs. stock images, etc.
  - Ex: "Photos taken should emphasize human interaction..."

### Parameters for messaging

- How information about the brand should be communicated
  - Ex: "Important information should be conveyed with confidence..."
  - Ex: "Humorous, playful language can be peppered in when speaking on entertainment..."

### Color Usage

- When and where to use what brand colors
  - Ex: "Use light blue when quoting..."

### Typography

- Different fonts for display, headers, body content, etc.
  - Ex: "Use Expletus Sans for titles..."

### Logo Spacing and Usage

- Appropriate padding distance around the logo
- Ways to not use the logo
  - Ex: adding words, adding drop shadow, making the logo smaller than the name, etc.



Photo: Water's Family Barn (2018)  
Jay County Indiana  
Ami Huffman, Photographer

# Guidance for Rebranding and Image (cont.)

Together, all these pieces create a central brand identity. Usability across platforms will be a central criterion for this complex identity system. Rebranding and Place making efforts should consider the following:



## Logo

- Embodies the central theme of Portland in a recognizable, succinct design
- Includes icon, master logo, and iterations
- May include a brand promise/city tagline

## Choice of typography and color palette

- Chosen based on their underlying psychological connections to the city
  - Ex: Yellow = happy; Times New Roman is structured, professional, reminiscent of typewriters/journalism, etc.
- Setting type and palette creates a consistent toolbox to be used in print and web design across departments and groups

## Wayfinding (including signage and maps)

- Including signage and maps
- Connects physical location/landmarks to the town's identity
- Establishes physical cohesion and creates accessibility throughout the city
- Labeling city highlights that fit the brand to direct new people to them effectively

## Event/Space Design

- Further imbuing branded identity in selected or highlighted areas by:
  - Designing layouts
  - Incorporating existing features/landscape/architecture into branded design
  - Creating new design assets to complement or create ambience
  - Designating areas of green space to bolster activity in certain areas

## Public Art Curation

- Multimedia art, usually outside or in public places, which embodies a piece of Portland's story
- Commissioning artists within Portland, and creating or bringing in pieces as needed.

## Other design assets

- Including, but not limited to: campaign design, urban planning consultation, photography, video, podcasting, etc.



Photo Top: Jay County Tractor and Engine Show (2016)  
Ami Huffman, Photographer

Photo Middle: Arts Place Spring Concert (2016)  
Used with permission  
Jay County Arts Place

Photo Bottom: 408 West Main Street  
Greg Bubp, Photographer

# Guidance for Rebranding and Image (cont.)

All of these elements, used together or separately, create a visual identity that will be recognizable at a glance. Consider the following examples, as each city is immediately identified by different aspects, styles or cultures – its brand:

## Chicago

- “The Windy City”; Big-City tough; the Cubs; the Bean; great shopping and famous food.

## Louisville

- “The South of the North”; slower living; the Kentucky Derby and mint juleps; fried chicken and bourbon.

## Cincinnati

- “Over-The-Rhine”; eclectic vibe; gourmet food and flying pigs.

Consideration should be given for utilizing an outside consultant team for the Brand identification, market testing, and long term implementation. A dedicated professional team will work in collaboration with the local community and County-wide initiatives to insure the Portland identity continues to fit into a greater identity for Jay County.



Photo: Arts Place, Inc.  
Portland, Indiana (2016)  
Ami Huffman, Photographer

# Guidance for Rebranding and Image (cont.)

## Scalability and Sustainability

As Portland grows and evolves, its established brand must do the same. Along with Jay County's increased visibility to potential residents and businesses, and an increase in tourism, Portland's position as the center of commerce and county seat will give an added importance to careful and calculated brand management efforts. **Decisions must be made with a view toward the future.** This is especially true as Portland's identity becomes more solidified, becoming the foundation for a reinvigorated community.

The creation of an analytics dashboard to be used by Portland's city officials, should be considered to continually track levels of interest and measure digital engagement of the branded content. Also, Quarterly surveys within the community will measure physical growth as well as perceived connection to the city and its branding.

Annual audits can also be established to re-evaluate city goals, demographics and direction. These should consider the aforementioned analytics and continue market research to tailor content/digital advertising strategy. Elements will be added, subtracted or tweaked to best suit the growth of Portland.

# Guidance for Rebranding and Image (cont.)

## Community Affinity Boards

The entire Portland Community came together in a series of public meetings early December 2018, to express their opinions and "vote" for their preferences. Hosted by the Portland Main Street Committee at the John Jay Center, these three events attracted over 560 participants. "Affinity Boards" were created graphically to allow participants to anonymously express their preferences for examples of Street Scapes, Street Furnishings, Signage, Branding, etc. This exercise was an empirical way to quantify the emotional responses of preference. The information gathered was used by the design team when proposing the details of Key Projects — see Section D



# Portland Downtown Revitalization Plan

## Section D: Proposed Plan



**Rb**  
ARCHITECTURE  
PRESERVATION  
PLANNING  
INTERIORS

# Portland Downtown Revitalization Plan

## Section D: Proposed Plan

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# Section D Proposed Plan

Photo: Portland, Meridian St.  
Bow Truss Bridge (2017)  
Brent Mather, Photographer



## Introduction

While this action plan was carefully prepared using the most up-to-date and relevant information available, ideas and philosophies are constantly changing. The following is meant to serve as a guide for accomplishing the established vision of this project. There is a copious amount of research, studies and opinions on revitalizing small cities like Portland. Along with it, there is a growing trend of the Main Streets across the United States reclaiming a modern version of their former glory. However, the end goal will only be accessible through flexibility and change; we should look at the past as a map, not as a plan. Approaching this endeavor with an open mind and dedication to thinking outside the box is welcomed!

Should there be a change of resources, such as funding, personnel, or support, there may be cause to re-evaluate the mission. If these issues ever arise, it is important to keep the original goals and project vision in mind. The original intention should be maintained throughout any new action plan.

# Approach to Market Conditions

## Demographics and Quality of Life

qual·i·ty of life (noun)

The standard of health, comfort, and happiness experienced by an individual or group.

“the things that are needed for a good quality of life”

Residents of small cities across the Midwest regularly report Quality of Life as one of the main attractions to where they live. With a wide-ranging definition, this concept can generally be summed up as a combination of the following: *employment, schools, medical services, housing, local government, child and senior services, retail and entertainment*. This can also include categories such as: *arts and culture, natural environment, and recreation and leisure*. It is important to consider these themes, common interests for a majority of Hoosiers, when looking at this plan for Downtown Portland and its future.

Studies have shown that communities with high quality of life ratings had the following in common (Burkhart-Kriesel 2017):

- More elders aged 65 and older (demographic indicator);
- Growing number of jobs in goods-producing industries over the past 20 years, in areas such as manufacturing, construction, etc. (employment indicator);
- More people involved in community improvement projects (civic engagement indicator); and
- Members in more local organizations but members of fewer non-local organizations outside the community (social capital indicator); and
- Ratings given by residents that showed themselves as well-kept, supportive, open to new ideas, trusting, safe, tolerant and friendly than other communities. They also saw themselves as having strengthened these characteristics over the past 20 years.

Along with these commonalities in small cities whose residents perceive a higher Quality of Life, it is important to note the causations. Why is it important to areas like Portland?! (Burkhart-Kriesel 2017)

- Community elders have the time, connections and often financial resources to support community projects. Retirees also have leadership experience in the city and are often a large segment of the community's population. Finding ways to keep elders in the community through senior services or housing projects enhances the asset base of the town.
- Job gains or losses do play a role in quality of life. The goods-producing sector may offer many middle-skill and full-year opportunities with decent benefits. It is really about the “growth of quality jobs suited to small town economies that promotes overall community quality of life”.
- Civic engagement as an indicator measured the community's actions to identify and address community issues. Social capital measured the trust, reciprocity, cooperation, networks and attachments that energize and improve coordinated actions within that community. *Growing both of these areas should be considered a priority for small towns because there are actionable, short-term and often inexpensive ways to increase these attributes without much, if any, outside help.*

Photo: Stock photo

## Action Step

Focus on the amenities  
that both retain Millenial  
Generations AND  
promote Aging in  
Place for Baby-Boomers

# Approach to Market Conditions (cont.)

## Demographics and Quality of Life (cont.)

With a combination of leadership from community elders and Portland's older generations and a drive toward renewing civic engagement, Portland can be revitalized and perhaps modernized for future generations. An improved Quality of Life for younger generations, especially those who may have left for Universities or Cities, attracts people looking to raise families and 'settle down' outside the lifestyle a large population center enforces. Research has shown that apprenticeship programs, High School training, incentives for starting businesses, and leadership opportunities are effective in retaining, as well as reclaiming, the youth that often leave and never return. The Rutgers University sociologists who undertook this research were quoted as saying (Alexander 2017):

*"Our work looked at the mechanism of mentorship and nurturing you have in small towns. In fact, most young people we spoke with talked about how in a place like [the town they studied] 'we kind of feel you are part of something bigger than yourself.'"*

### —Hollowing Out the Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and What It Means for America

Re-establishing this sense of community and sense of pride is the key to Portland's Quality of Life, along with its self-image, increasing for the long-term and becoming a vibrant, tight-knit city. The following will discuss in detail how to accomplish this, making suggestions based on facts, studies and research based theory from similar endeavors.



Photo: Portland, Meridian St.  
Bow Truss Bridge (2017)  
Brent Mather, Photographer

## Strategies for Retaining and Attracting Youth to Small Towns

It may not be possible to prevent youth from leaving. Big cities and opportunities across the country/globe offer insights on what the world is actually like. However, it is possible to slow down, maybe even reverse, the trend of people born between 1980 and 2000 leaving the small cities they grew up in. The University of Illinois Extension's examination of rural Illinois towns provided a list of "5 Strategies for Retaining and Attracting Youth to Small Towns":

### **1 Increase access to improved, high-speed Internet service**

- Considered the *highest priority* in almost all research material.
- Internet is no longer seen as an optional service; it has become an essential utility, similar to water and electricity.

### **2 Invest in “youth priorities” and make community more attractive to young people**

- Make sure to create “Third Spaces”: coffee shops, micro-breweries, other creative and networking outlets.
- Traditional bars do not interest them; young people place a high value on family relationships and social networking.

### **3 Support for Small business and entrepreneurial opportunities**

- ~70% of young people want to own their own business; very receptive to incentives offered by city/county.
- Create buzz in community about the benefits of ‘shopping small’

### **4 Actively engage and consult the local young people in the Redevelopment Process**

- Make sure they know the city wants them to stay; or return after schooling.
- Invite youth into the governmental process so they can become better future leaders

### **5 Make young people the target of your marketing**

- Keep advertisements digital and short
- Peer-to-peer recommendations will lead to free online marketing (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

## Approach to Market Conditions (cont.)

## Demographics and Quality of Life (cont.)

### Seniors and Millenials

Portland, along with nearly every other ‘small town’ in Indiana, has been forced to address two great issues with its residents: an aging population of baby boomers and losing a large part of its younger generation when it is time to go to University/start a career. One would be forgiven for thinking these to be two completely unrelated issues, requiring two completely different approaches. This is surprisingly not the case, with both populations growing more and more interested in the same Quality of Life standards (Municipal Association of South Carolina 2016). The following will outline each issue independent of the other, and offer solutions to the problems.

Very commonly, Millennials will leave home after High School. According to research from the past decade, roughly 80% of young people ‘would prefer not to stay’ in their hometowns as adults (Pamela Schallhorn 2015). This happens in cities all across America for a variety of reasons; everything from University degrees to finding romance to careers has been listed. Portland has seen the effects first hand over the past decade. While studying what scholars refer to as, “the hollowing out of rural America”, a Research Center in Nova Scotia listed six specific personal “negotiations” young people go through when making the decision to leave home (Michael Unger 2015):

- Many of the young people who feel forced to leave would choose a rural lifestyle over an urban one;
- They like the open spaces and the kinds of recreational activities available beyond concrete jungles;
- They appreciate the sense of community that exists in many small cities;
- They like the daily contact with nature...;
- They like the pace of life and the values people hold to;
- They want less stressed lives and safe places to raise a family.

The same study also showed that a large percentage of those who have left, would have rather stayed. This creates a unique challenge to cities like Portland, who want to redevelop and perhaps modernize their Historic downtowns into sustainable small cities. How does a small city get its sons and daughters to come home? Or never leave in the first place?

While it is essential for any small city to prioritize its young people during any attempt to redevelop Main Street, the community’s older generation cannot be forgotten or overlooked. They often represent a large proportion of the leadership in cities like Portland, as well as a major part of the community itself. It should also be remembered that baby boomers also hold the majority of the purchasing power in many small communities.

The issue of catering to both communities may seem daunting, but this does not need to be the case. Generational trend expert, Curt Steinhorst, notes, “Something fascinating has occurred where we’re seeing the converging of our relationship with our technology, so that even older generations and younger generations are all starting to look just like what you often associate with this ‘millennial generation’. If it hasn’t happened [in your town] yet, just wait another year.” (Municipal Association of South Carolina 2016)

# Approach to Market Conditions (cont.)

## Demographics and Quality of Life (cont.)

There is also the idea that this goes far beyond the idea of technology. Community development specialist, Peter Kageyama, presents the idea that millennials and seniors often want similar things from their hometowns. Walkability, cost-efficient housing, and a vibrant food scene are among some of the more easily attainable goals for small cities like Portland. For example: because of differing meal times, restaurants will see longer hours and less downtime. Housing is another common interest shared between the generations, with seniors and young people having an interest in living in the restored downtown.

Kageyama also makes a very salient point about providing senior housing options. His suggestion is twofold (Municipal Association of South Carolina 2016):

- Consider plans that encourage senior citizens to interact with the larger neighborhood. Ex: New York City's micro-apartments. Structures far smaller than the 400-square-foot minimum of a conventional apartments. These appeal to new college graduates, millennials and retirees.
- Cities are already multigenerational. It's just a matter of enhancing the existing amenities. Ex: a playground can be recast as a "grandparent-friendly playground," complete with design features to appeal to older residents who may be visiting the park with their grandchildren.

Portland is a perfect candidate for this kind of rethink. The existing structures throughout the Historic District and the Downtown would happily support the kind of 'business-below-owner-above' living situation so many successful small cities, and bigger cities, have seen in recent years. Any proposed Senior Living downtown could also benefit from greater integration with the development of a revitalized downtown.

### WHATS IN:

- Short, bulleted lists
- Texting instead of calling
- Social media as a way to get the fastest results
- Cities and businesses using websites combined with apps to offer services
- Quick, explanatory YouTube videos

### WHATS OUT:

- Telephone calls
- Voicemails
- Wordy emails with vague subject lines
- Instruction manuals

# Approach to Market Conditions (cont.)

## Commercial Development, Economic Vision and Role Models

### Things in Common

These cities, for the most part, were of similar sizes and provided the same general resources/opportunities, but each had differentiating factors that made the community a unique place to live, work, and visit. Qualities that were noted within these cities and identified as desirable by the committee include:

- Connection to natural environment
- Comfortable
- Flowers/plantings
- Gateways
- Quaintness
- Dynamic Architecture
- Attractive Street Lighting
- Shopping/Industry
- Handwritten shop signs
- Diversity
- Affordability
- Interconnection of the residents

Business recruitment and job creation can be challenging for any community, but can seem insurmountable to small cities like Portland. However, this does not mean that business recruitment is impossible. This process, however, is not without pitfalls.

Incentives for outside businesses can be costly. Additionally, just as these businesses are enticed to come into the community, they can be enticed to leave by someone offering more money, tax breaks, etc. These incentives can create an environment for the new business lacking in any real connection to the community and requiring little investment on the business's part. This being especially true if the business is part of a larger corporation with headquarters located outside the community, resulting in very few decisions being made to benefit the community. More often than not, this also means that profits will be channeled back to the headquarters rather than being invested locally.

A strategy for success in a smaller, rural community is to grow business from within. These smaller communities should:

- Identify and build upon existing assets
- Engage all members in planning
- Take advantage of outside funding (no matter how small)
- Create incentives for redevelopment and encourage investment
- Encourage cooperation within the community and the region
- Support a healthy business environment

Portland has the capacity to grow business from within, both existing and new. Portland's assets include affordable and available real estate. There is an engaged group of citizens working together to improve Downtown. And importantly, there are several underserved market service sectors and plenty of tourism traffic to support new business ventures. For most small communities like Portland, it makes more sense to aid and encourage investment in several small businesses rather than offering incentives to larger, outside companies.

# Approach to Market Conditions (cont.)

## Commercial Development, Economic Vision and Role Models (cont.)

### Role Models

When establishing the vision for the City of Portland, citizens were asked what communities they admired and wished to emulate. For each city that is listed, it was asked what qualities they were hopeful of implementing in a revitalized Portland.

The committee identified the following cities as role models:

City, State	Population (2017)
Greenville, OH	12,771
Muncie, IN	68,625
Valparaiso, IN	33,376
Fort Recovery, OH	1,435
Celina, OH	10,290
Goshen, IN	33,220
Pierceton, IN	1,018
Fort Wayne, IN	265,904
Indianapolis, IN	863,002
Wabash, IN	10,112
Charleston, SC	134,875
St. Augustine, FL	14,243

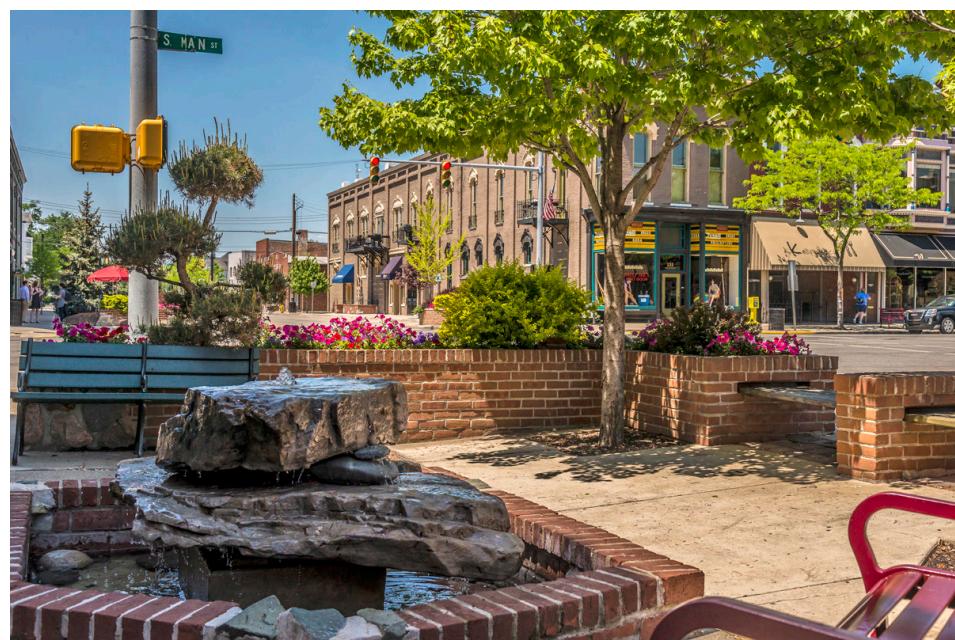


Photo: Holland Michigan  
Main Street Plaza (2017)  
Brent Mather, Photographer

### Action Step

Building Portland as a community for its current residents First, focusing on retention before the attraction of new residents and businesses. Many new businesses and residents will naturally gravitate towards Authentic Communities

# Approach to Market Conditions (cont.)

## Action Step

Grow and Sustain an active Main Street Community.  
The Indiana Main Street movement has:

- Created 4,740 Net New and Expanded businesses
- 29,632 New Full and Part Time Jobs
- Invested \$3.5 BILLIONS in private equity
- \$2.0 BILLIONS in public re-investment
- Completed 9,367 Building Rehabilitations
- 9,142 New Housing Units
- Fostered 2,485 Other Public Improvement Projects

## Retail and Main Street

An article from StrongTowns.org presents the following argument about Main Streets in America:

*"There's a weird war raging these days. There are people who advocate high rise living and public transit in the urban core to the exclusion of other arrangements. And then there are folks who can't hold their head up high in church on Sunday if they don't live on a quarter acre lot out on the far fringe of the metroplex with four cars parked in front of their fully detached home. I always choose the thing in the middle. It's called a "town". I'm a Main Street kind of guy."*

—Sanphillippo 2015



Photo: Main Street America  
Provided by nationalmainstreet.org

### Important attractions to classic Main Streets:

- **On small town setups:** The World War II Main Street town complete with hardware store, local mom and pop shops, great places to eat, business incubators, post office, public parks, and City Hall. The majority of the buildings are one and two stories tall.
- **On getting around:** Once you're in town you can walk or bike everywhere. That includes the young, the elderly, people with limited physical mobility, the rich, the poor... everyone.
- **On residential being above shops:** The most affordable apartments are directly above the shops. These are perfect for young adults as well as older people on a fixed income. Both groups enjoy the convenience of nearby shops and activities.
- **On employment:** All levels of employment from a first teen aged service job to an advanced career in (Insert relevant regional city).
- **In general:** This arrangement satisfies nearly all the metrics for both of the warring factions. A traditional Main Street town is neither sprawl nor a hyper dense concrete city. It's economical as well as ecological. It's beautiful and family friendly. And perhaps most importantly, a Main Street town is physically structured in a way that allows its diversified local tax base to support the required infrastructure over the long haul.

# Approach to Physical Conditions

## Circulation and Parking

Public lot and street parking in Portland is currently underutilized, and lacks appropriate wayfinding so as to be an asset to visitors and residents alike. **It is important to note that there is not an actual shortage of parking available in the Downtown area.** The perception of parking availability is different than the reality. People come to the conclusion of parking scarcity for a good reason; many live elsewhere and only visit the city during peak periods or special events.

Utilizing appropriate signage and wayfinding along the many routes into Downtown will help to both alleviate parking congestion and redefine the perception of a lack of available spaces. For example, there are three rather sizable public parking lots adjacent to the Jay County Visitors & Tourism Center (Shown on map in RED), as well as ample street parking along Meridian and Main Streets (shown in YELLOW). However, there is no coordinated signage to announce this to potential visitors, and more importantly, residents of the city. As a result, patrons of any new restaurants, breweries or shops along Main Street may choose to go elsewhere if they aren't aware of parking options other than what is adjacent to their specific destination. When in reality, there are several spots open just around the corner.



A revitalized, continuous Downtown Commercial Historic District will make Portland more "walkable" and as a result encourage visitors and residents to park somewhere other than directly in front of their destinations. As the revitalization of Portland progresses and attitudes toward street parking begin to change, the "*There is no parking*" mentality will disappear.

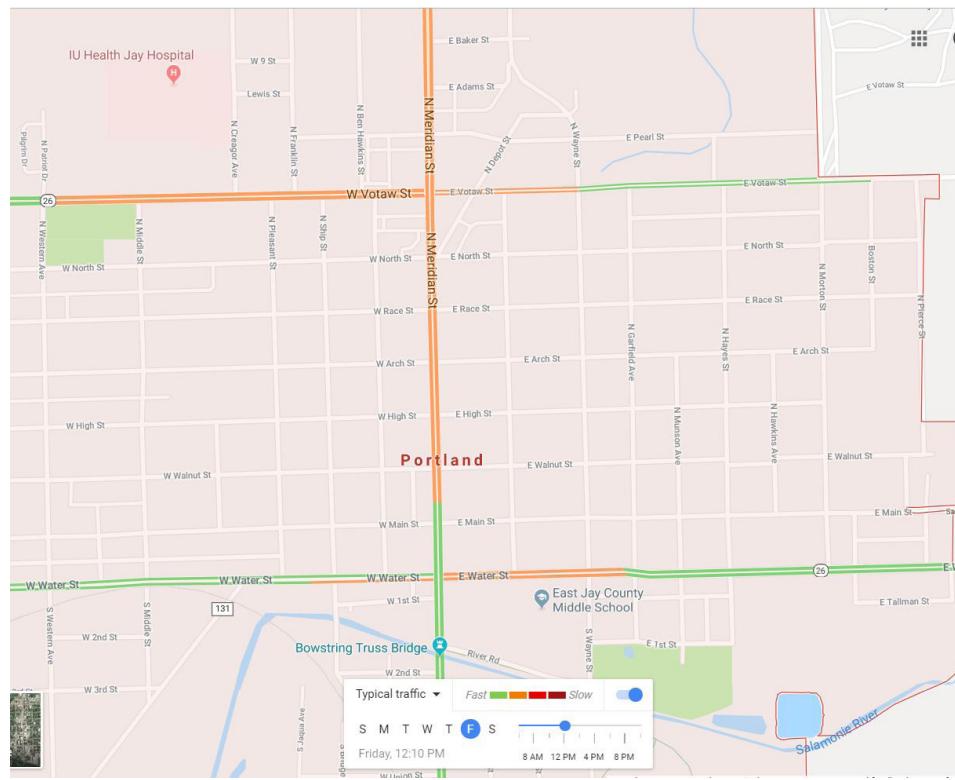


Photo: North Meridian Street,  
200 Block (2018)  
Sandy Bupp, Photographer

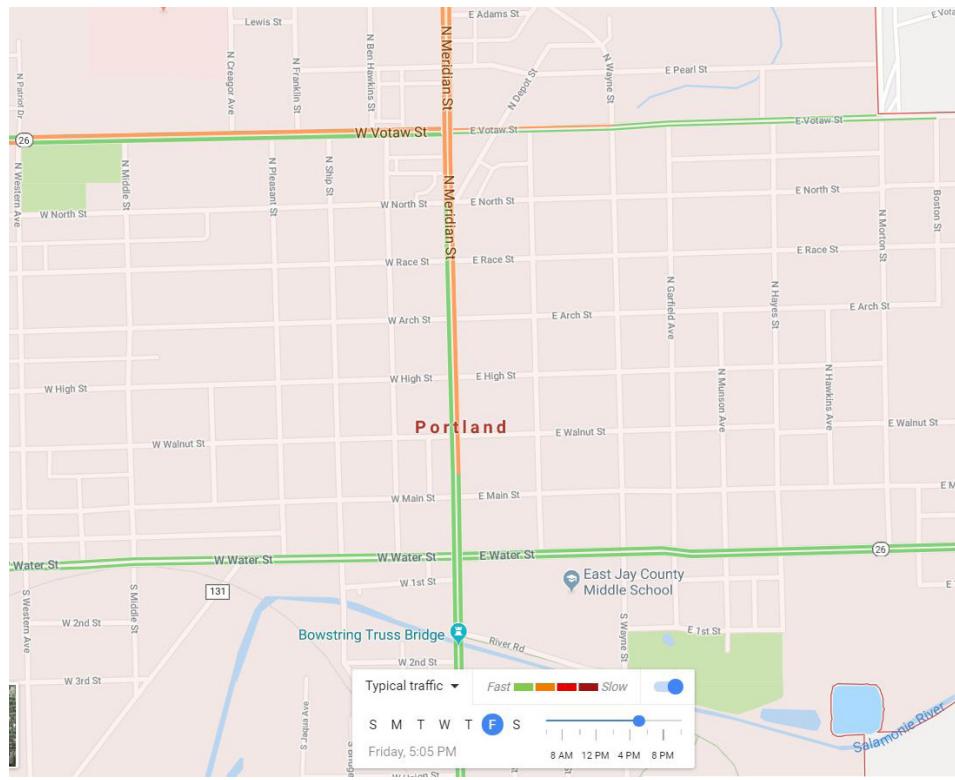
# Approach to Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Circulation and Parking (cont.)

### Downtown Portland Traffic @ NOON



### Downtown Portland Traffic @ 5:00PM



# Approach to Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Circulation and Parking (cont.)

While adjusting the timing of stoplights along Meridian Street may help to alleviate traffic flow issues, the lack of speed limit enforcement should be the priority for rectifying these concerns in Downtown Portland. Commercial and farm related traffic will be difficult to reduce given the importance of Portland to Jay County, and its connection to State and County Highways. Finding ways to reduce the speed at which vehicles travel along Meridian Street will be essential. The following information from the Federal Highway Administration should be considered:

- Speed management is a significant challenge for small, rural communities where the main roadway through the town serves a dual role. Outside the town, the roadway provides high-speed travel over long distances; within the built-up area, however, the same roadway accommodates local access, pedestrians of all ages, on-street parking, bicycles, and the many other features unique to the character of a community. This convergence of roadway purposes presents both an enforcement challenge for the community and a potential safety problem for the public.
- Addressing the issue through law enforcement alone often leads to temporary compliance at a significant cost.
- A more permanent way to reinforce the need to reduce speed is to change the look and feel of the road by installing traffic calming treatments that communicate to drivers that the function of the roadway is changing. Traffic calming has been evaluated and used extensively within low-speed urban areas in the United States but less so in rural areas where driver expectations and traffic characteristics are different.
- Traffic calming is common in rural communities in Europe where multiple measures such as colored pavement, physical lane narrowing, signing, and landscaping are often combined. A gateway treatment intended to evoke lower speed on the approach and entrance to the community is usually followed by a series of other measures repeated throughout the community to encourage drivers to maintain appropriate speeds. Speed reductions up to 15 mph from rural traffic calming have been reported in France, Denmark, and the UK, although speed reductions of 5 mph were more typical. Total accidents were reduced by 50%, and injury accidents by 25% or more.



Photo: North Meridian Street,  
300 Block (2017)  
Brent Mather, Photographer

## Traffic Calming\*

The Federal Highway Administration conducted a study in 2009, Appropriate Traffic Calming Techniques for Small Iowa Communities (TR-523), looking at the most effective methods for improving traffic issues in small, mostly rural communities. While the full report is available online, the following table offers a concise and effective summary of the gathered data. It also offers the following insights:

- Design of vehicles should be considered when determining the type of traffic-calming treatment to implement. For example, farm vehicles and heavy truck traffic are common in many rural communities and must be accommodated.
- Maintenance can be an issue with many traffic-calming treatments. For example, the speed feedback signs provide a different example in that, to be effective, agencies must establish the capability to troubleshoot and maintain these signs within a reasonable response time.
- Cost effectiveness is always a factor in selecting traffic-calming treatments. While speed feedback signs were effective in all situations, their higher cost make them most appropriate for areas where it is critical that drivers slow down, such as near schools, playgrounds, or community pools.
- Durable pavement marking materials should be considered when the markings extend within wheel paths. Standard paint products wear quickly and without frequent reapplication can reduce the effectiveness of the message.
- Community buy-in is important. In several cases, although community leadership was onboard, the community was opposed to the treatment, even when it was proven to be effective.
- The lane narrowing treatment that used tubular markers to create a center island was most effective, suggesting that lane narrowing is most likely to be effective when drivers are presented with a physical object that causes deflection.
- Small communities may not be familiar with traffic calming and may need additional education

\*Federal Highway Administration Brief  
“181108” Traffic” (2018)

# Approach to Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Circulation and Parking (cont.)

### Summary of impacts and costs of rural traffic calming treatments

Treatment	Change in 85th percentile speed (mi/h)	Cost	Maintenance	Application
Transverse pavement markings	-2 to 0	\$	Regular painting	community entrance
Transverse pavement markings with speed feedback signs	-7 to -3	\$\$\$	Regular painting	community entrance
Lane narrowing using painted center island and edge marking	-3 to +4	\$	Regular painting	entrance or within community
Converging chevrons and "25 MPH" pavement markings	-4 to 0	\$	Regular painting	community entrance
Lane narrowing using shoulder markings and "25 MPH" pavement legend	-2 to 4	\$	Regular painting	entrance or within community
Speed table	-5 to -4	\$\$	Regular painting	within community
Lane narrowing with center island using tubular markers	-3 to 0	\$\$\$	Tubes often struck needing replacement	within community
Speed feedback sign (3-months after only)	-7	\$\$\$	Troubleshooting electronics	entrance or within community
"SLOW" pavement legend	-2 to 3	\$	Regular painting	entrance or within community
"35 MPH" pavement legend with red background	-9 to 0	\$	Background faded quickly; accelerated repainting cycle	entrance or within community
\$ under \$2,500				
\$\$ \$2,500 to \$5,000				
\$\$\$ \$5,000 to \$12,000				

The importance of implementing one or more of these traffic-calming measures cannot be understated. They are far more cost effective than increase law enforcement, and can have a greater impact on the walkability and pedestrian friendly nature of a revitalized Downtown Portland.

# Approach to Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Gateways, Signage and Wayfinding

What good is a beautified Downtown if you can't show it off? The intent of this Revitalization project is to drive traffic into downtown, and guide them to a destination once they have arrived. To maximize the benefits of this investment, Portland will need to implement the "branding" discussed in Section C of this Comprehensive Plan.

Once a consistent brand has been established, Portland should begin applying it on high-visibility signs. Signage allows a traveler to learn how to get somewhere, know when they have arrived at a destination, and what there is to do at a specific location. The boundaries of Portland's Downtown are fairly established, as they coincide with the Portland Commercial Historic District. It would be advantageous to begin establishing two gateways on the North and South ends of Downtown, perhaps utilizing the famous Bowstring Truss Bridge in some fashion. This establishes a beginning and an end for travelers, but also a constant reminder of where the focus should remain for those working to implement this plan.

The gateways themselves should be large in scale and include the iconography established in the Branding and Identity process. The Role Model Cities offer many examples of style and design for gateway markers – from stone monuments to signs spanning the width of the street. The possibilities for Downtown Portland to call attention to itself are numerous. The positivity in the vision statement can be reflected in the message, "Downtown Portland Welcomes You."

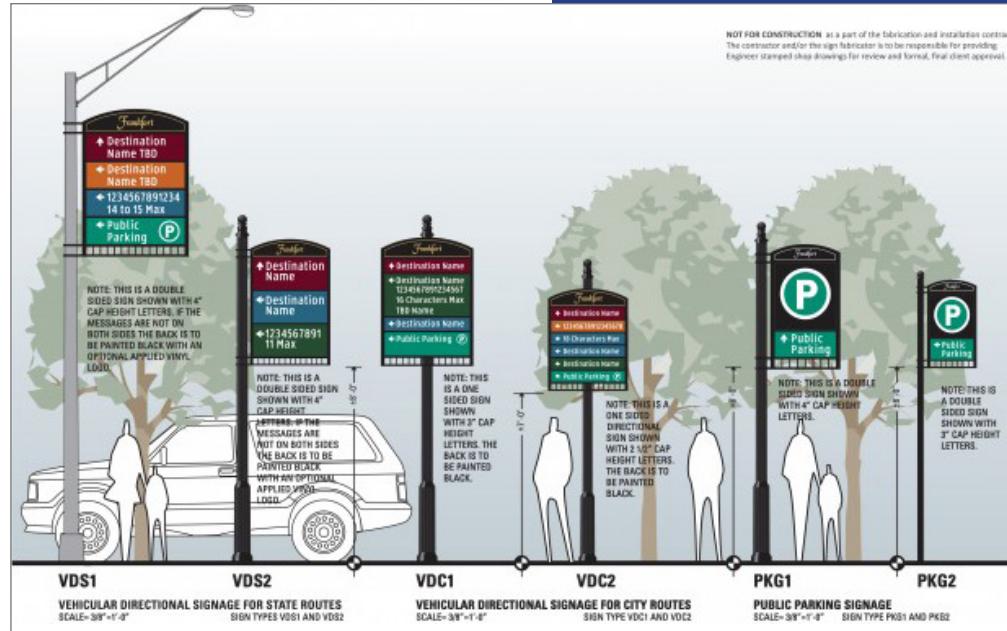
### Signage

Signs are a necessary part of getting both citizens and visitors where they need and want to go. Signs can direct to additional parking, civic facilities, parks, and in some instances, businesses. Of course, directing people Downtown is key. Travelers may otherwise have a perception that all their needs can be met by the outlying areas of the city. Signage is one way to let them know of all the unique dining and service experiences just out of sight and down the road. It is a major component of increasing traffic to downtown businesses and making the area more economically viable.

### Wayfinding

Moving into Downtown, multiple scales of directional wayfinding are recommended to address the needs of pedestrians and vehicles alike. A vehicle travelling at a higher speed will need only the most basic information placed on a larger sign at a greater height. While a pedestrian has the ability to spend more time and get much more specific information from a smaller, lower sign. Pedestrians also benefit from the usage of maps, lists of businesses, and walking directions from parking to attractions.

Destinations to highlight include: schools, government offices, police and fire stations, the post office, parking, and more. Additionally, wayfinding can be successfully combined with informational kiosks that promote local tourism, history and events.



# Approach to Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Streetscapes

As part of the Revitalization Plan, the land and streetscaping will be given an update in Portland's Downtown Commercial District. During a public meeting in November 2018, participants were surveyed to determine what type of street furniture, lighting and plant materials were preferred in a Revitalized Portland. R&B's suggestions are based upon that information.



Benches will be added as part of the efforts to modernize Meridian and Main Streets. This will provide residents and visitors alike places to rest or simply enjoy the improved Downtown, creating a more vibrant and energetic feeling in the community. The following are examples of the preferred style.

Photos: All provided by sfbetterstreets.org



Trash receptacles throughout the Downtown are in need of being updated and replaced with modern, historically appropriate versions. Not only will this improve the general aesthetic of Meridian and Main Streets, but strategically placing them will go a long way to keep Portland clean.

# Approach to Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Streetscapes (cont.)

Photos: All provided by sfbetterstreets.org



While the street lighting in Portland is in relatively good condition, updating with similarly historically appropriate lampposts will offer continuity of design in a newly revitalized Downtown. Participants in the November 2018 meeting indicated a preference for the above styles.



As part of the move toward Complete Streets in Portland, it will be necessary to address the plant materials throughout the Downtown. There was a consensus in the November meeting that street trees and hanging baskets were preferred. It is notable that there were no objections to using traditional planters/pots as well. It is possible that the existing Garden Club could be involved in the maintenance.

# Approach to Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Private Property: Affordable Housing

The following goals have been established as a way of addressing the issues Portland faces with regard to housing:

- I. Assist homeowners in owner occupied repair process that will aid in projects that will help them stay in their homes and age in place.
- II. Encourage development of varied types of housing for a wider mix of options to meet a range of needs.
- III. Encourage infill development for new construction to keep existing neighborhoods vibrant.

There are a large number of homeowners in Portland who would like to stay in their residences. However, between the cost of maintenance or physical barriers that create difficulties for the mobility impaired there exists a frequency of abandoning homes that are deteriorated and a loss of {mostly} older residents from homes that they would like to stay in but they cannot comfortably live there any longer.

A Homeowner Repair program would greatly decrease the incidence of houses falling into disrepair before they become unrecoverable. Likewise, it could provide accessibility improvements to and within homes for those in need of accommodation, allowing them to remain in their homes and slow the loss of the aging population from the community. The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority offers the Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program as a method of addressing this issue throughout Hoosier communities. Through IHCDA's CDBG Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation program, eligible local units of government and not-for-profit organizations may apply for grant funding in order to complete repairs on owner-occupied residential properties. Funding of up to \$25,000 per home may be used to address conditions in the home that, if left unattended, would create an issue with the integrity of the home or become a detriment to the residents' quality of life.



Photo: 384 West High Street, Portland, IN, Brent Mather, Photographer

# Approach to Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Private Property: Affordable Housings (cont.)

In order to accomplish the goal of stabilizing and growing Portland's population for the future, creating a pool of affordable, single-family homes is essential. A lack of modern homes that reflect modern living and smaller family units can severely affect a small town's ability to attract new residents, and more importantly keep homegrown talent from leaving. Fortunately, this problem is being addressed across the United States. This is especially true in small town environments, where much of the housing dates from pre-war construction (pre-1940s). An advocate of redeveloping and strengthening small towns, [strongtowns.com](http://strongtowns.com), provides a set of guidelines in its "*5 Immutable Laws of Affordable Housing*".

### **1. Developers don't pay the costs of construction; tenants and buyers do.**

A developer who doesn't pass costs on will not be in business for very long. For this reason, anything that makes development more costly for developers makes housing more costly for people. And remember, time is money; a convoluted permitting process makes housing more expensive, too.

### **2. Housing demand is regional.**

Regulations might stop your neighborhood from growing, but that won't stop people from moving to your city. Every house that doesn't get built in your neighborhood is a house getting built somewhere else, usually at the edge of town. The level of cognitive dissonance in people who, on the one hand vociferously proclaim their love of the environment and slander the destruction of agricultural or environmentally sensitive land at the edge of town, and on the other vehemently oppose development in their neighborhood could be the subject of whole dissertations in social psychology (not to mention the environmental cost of longer commutes from the edge of town).

### **3. If your zoning and building code mandates expensive housing, housing will be expensive.**

Most zoning codes place minimums on the size of dwelling units, the size of lots, and countless other factors that affect the cost of building housing. Unfortunately, these minimums don't generally envision affordable construction types, even in the most progressive and challenged of housing markets.

### **4. Affordable housing isn't affordable if your transportation costs are too high.**

Leaving the cost of transportation out of the definition of affordable housing favors development where land is cheap but the transportation system is built around the private automobile. Cars are not cheap...

### **5. Today's affordable housing was the last generation's luxury housing.**

Many of the older neighborhoods that provide the lion's share of affordable housing today were once the shiny new environs of the expanding American middle class, who built massive amounts of new housing in the middle of the last century with amenities like washing machines that were the newest, hottest consumer amenities of their time.

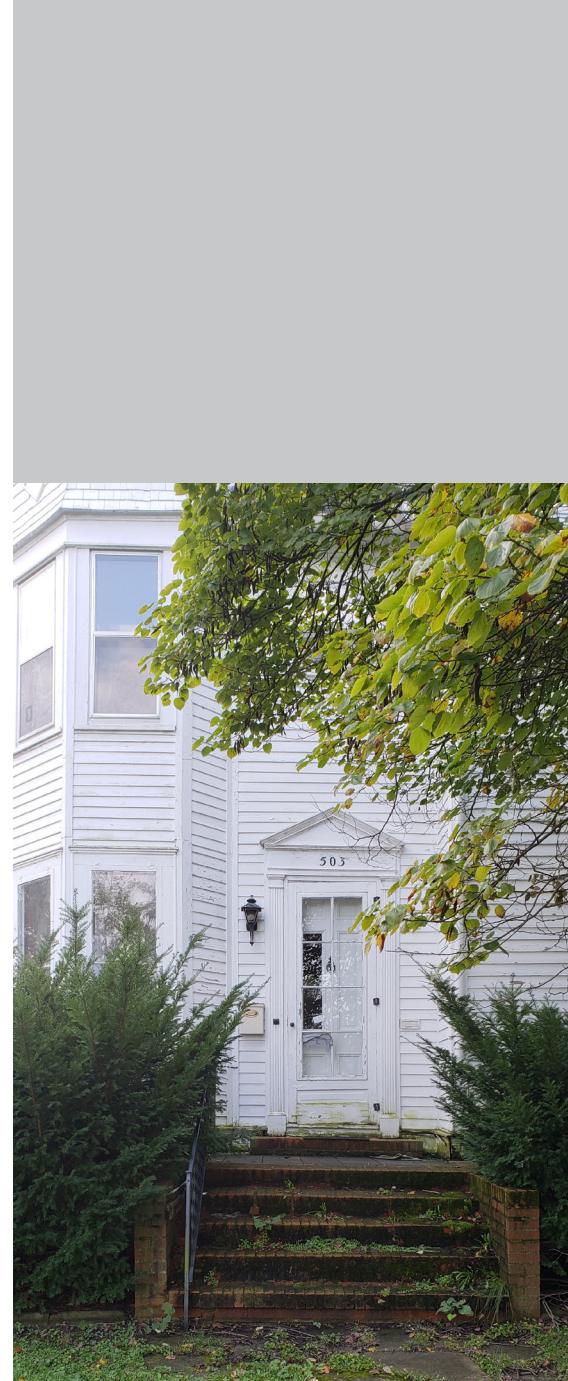


Photo: 384 West High Street,  
Portland, IN  
Brent Mather, Photographer

# Approach to Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Action Step

Focus on Market Rate improvements within Downtown Portland and immediate adjacent neighborhoods, some where the absentee landlord rate is over 68%. Promote Home Ownership and Re-investment with Owner Occupied Rehabilitation (OOR) from Indiana Housing Community Development Authority (IHCDA)

## Private Property: Affordable Housings (cont.)

The advice becomes even more specific when addressing issues of affordability in small markets like Portland. The following suggests three strategies for accomplishing the daunting task of attracting both builders and buyers to small markets like Jay County.

### **1. Reduce minimum lot sizes and relax density restrictions in single-family zones.**

The cost of purchasing land is a significant portion of the total cost of a house. This is especially true in low-density residential development where the buildings occupy a much smaller footprint. If your zoning code requires large lots, the houses that are built will be more expensive than if they could be built on smaller lots. That's a mathematical fact that should be intuitive but has escaped scrutiny in most communities with affordability issues.

Restricting development in low-density residential zones also increases the cost of housing by the same logic: if you can only build one housing unit on a lot, the cost of that land must be absorbed by that single unit. Allowing more units spreads the land costs over many households, lowering the total cost of development.

### **2. Fix your zoning; if by-right development is economically infeasible, you're creating artificial scarcity.**

Only the biggest players have deep enough pockets and the requisite experience to fight for rezoning or variances. The rest will simply look elsewhere for adding units, or not build them at all. What's worse, when big developers fight through the process, they need to scale up their projects to recoup the costs (see Law #1). It's a double whammy: *expensive housing that also tends to be out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood.*

### **3. Take a more active role in providing affordable housing.**

This may be surprising given that the other strategies discussed involve government doing less. But think of it as a barbell strategy: enabling private developers to do what they do best (build lots of new housing at the most affordable prices possible) while empowering local governments to directly house those in greatest need who are least likely to be helped by private activity. Inclusionary zoning is a case in point: we've conned ourselves into thinking we can have our cake and eat it too by coercing developers into providing Affordable Housing. At best this has very little effect and at worst it backfires.

A tangible example can be found in the similarly rural state of Iowa, as they have already begun addressing their small-town housing crisis. "The joke is that good homes sell at the funeral home," an article in the Des Moines Register reads. Iowa's rural communities, like many across the heartland, have suffered decades of population loss. New data released by the Census Bureau underscore the bleeding: *More than half of all Iowans now live in 10 counties, all of them in metropolitan areas... Yet demand for housing in rural Iowa has only increased.* Many businesses and industries in small towns are looking to hire, but the people left in small communities increasingly hold on to their homes, which forces any new hires to commute from much greater distances.

# Approach to Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Private Property: Affordable Housings (cont.)

Developers and contractors, busy building in places like Des Moines and Cedar Rapids, are often wary of the inherent risk involved in rural communities where populations are declining. And with significantly lower home values in rural areas, new construction might cost more than it can bring at sale. These dynamics have created an ultra-tight market in many communities.

One of the most salient points for Portland to take from Iowa is on sustainable economic development strategies. Iowa's Governor, Kim Reynolds, offered her outlook:

**"In small communities, sustainable redevelopment requires jobs, skilled workers to fill those jobs and homes to house them. It is almost like a chicken and egg (situation). We need people and they need housing. So which do you put in first?"**

Like Portland, and the majority of Jay County, much of Iowa's housing stock is old: More than a quarter of Iowa's nearly 1.4 million housing units were built in 1939 or earlier. Nationally, that rate is 13 percent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau... And household sizes have shrunk over the years. **So even communities with no growth need more homes to house the same population.** In 1950, the census counted 3.25 people per Iowa household. By 2016, that number was down to 2.43. Indiana currently has an average of 2.53 people per household.

While it is quite a distance away from Portland, the state of Iowa and its approach to revitalizing small towns across its rural countryside should be studied for a practical example of how to solve the issues faced here in the Hoosier State.

Regarding market demand, there is a wide variety in the population who is buying homes; between first time homebuyers, secondary or upgrade buyers, and buyers who are downsizing. The average request is for 3 bedrooms, 1.5 bath and preferably a garage. The challenge though is that most buyers of any kind are wanting move-in condition home, with few repairs or improvements needed. This presents a difficulty in that while most homes being sold are in well maintained condition, they are still lacking in some cosmetic repairs or general updates. Altogether there is a reported shortage of inventory in Portland as well as the surrounding towns.



# Approach to Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Drainage and Flooding Issues

The City of Portland is working with a group of experts, including the US Army Corps of Engineers and private contractors, to address the root causes behind this historic issue. The Army Corps of Engineers is developing a plan for correcting/controlling the Salamonie River and its tendencies to overflow its northern bank. In addition to this Federal assistance, private engineering companies, working with the City and County, are analyzing the Millers Branch drainage system and surrounding drainage tile networks in search of a way to mitigate ever more frequent high-volume rain events. Combined with updated storm water systems, the City of Portland hopes to tame the Salamonie River in the near future.

## Flood Insurance Availability and Subsidies

The Indiana Department of Insurance offers consumers a basic guide to understanding flood insurance and available resources for dealing with more and more common flood events. A flood event is defined by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) as:

“...an excess of water (or mud) on land that’s normally dry... a general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of two or more acres of normally dry land area; or of 2 or more properties... from overflow of inland or tidal waters; unusual and rapid accumulation of surface waters from any source...”

In general, homeowner's policies do not cover flood events and the loss caused by them; some may offer coverage for damage resulting from sewer and drain backups, but policies should be specifically checked for this. Policies can be purchased for homes or businesses, regardless of whether the property is in or out of a floodplain, directly from a property and casualty insurance agent, or insurance company if the local community participates in the NFIP. Jay County is a participant in this federal program which began in 1968. As of 2016, the NFIP has over 5 million policies. It should be noted that flood protection is generally quite expensive and has a tendency to favor property along shorelines and major waterways. A study by Dartmouth University showed that in Connecticut, “homeowners on Martha’s Vineyard pay an average premium of \$400 per \$100,000, while residents of Fairhaven, a blue-collar town with a median household income of about \$40,000, pay over \$800.” This negative relationship between property value and premium costs, along with flood mapping data, may make flood insurance coverage unfeasible for most residents of small towns and cities.

From 1998–2007, Indiana experienced nine federally declared flood disasters. For example, in early 2005, heavy rains fell on soil already saturated from snowmelt, resulting in statewide flooding. Ninety percent of Indiana counties were declared federal disaster areas, with more than \$7 million in flood insurance claims paid to Indiana property owners. Total insured flood loss during that ten year period was in excess of \$39.8 million; roughly 1% of the state's households have private flood insurance.

Photo: Portland, Indiana  
Downtown Flood (2015)  
Used with permission  
The Commercial Review, Jack Reynolds

# Approach to Physical Conditions (cont.)

## Special Projects

Portland's location, while not far from the larger communities of Muncie and Fort Wayne, is just far enough away from current information hubs and antennas that universal coverage for multiple carriers is impaired. Some cellular carriers have dead zones and public Wi-Fi is not available. In an increasingly connected culture both of social media and business communication, the lack of stable information streams is a major negative to potential development within Downtown Portland specifically. Residents and visitors alike have difficulty making calls or checking emails unless connected to a landline or LAN system. The lack of universally transportable communication throughout the Downtown Target area discourages both the business interactions of existing retailers and discourages new business opportunities from choosing a Downtown Portland location.

It can be economically difficult based on pure supply-demand economics and projected Return of Investments to influence larger carriers to increase their coverage to a region of relative low-density. Often municipal incentives are needed to augment corporate vendors' proposals. A Wi-Fi zone could be created, either led by the City of Portland, or as a special project of Main Street Portland or Jay County Tourism. Successful projects like these are often supported by advertising revenue collected from sponsor businesses interested in their messages being "pushed" to customers utilizing the free Wi-Fi. Typically, the use of Wi-Fi is provided at no or low cost to the end user. The initial cost to set up systems is followed by a relative low cost of maintenance, making medium and long-term return on investments from advertising revenue possible. Additionally, there are federal programs that can be tapped to create wider broadband systems like public Wi-Fi. Adding this universal connectivity would not only improve quality of life for local residents, improve the economic development of local businesses, promote tourist experiences, broaden education, etc. but it does so across all demographic and socio-economic stratus. Wi-Fi doesn't discriminate between age, income, ethnicity, or education level equally raising the quality of experience for residents and visitors.

...the lack of stable information streams is a major negative to potential development within Downtown Portland specifically

# Approach to Cultural and Social Conditions

## Improving Cultural and Social Resources



Photo Above: Nickleplate Apartments  
Rendering (2017)  
Frankfort, Indiana

Photo Below: Cultural Trail (c2016)  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
Provided by Visit Indy Inc.

### Benefits of a Cultural Trail

The following data can be used as an example of what Portland can expect from investment in a large, community focused project like the Cultural Trail. It is taken from a study on the economic and cultural impact of a similar, although larger, project in Downtown Indianapolis:

- **8 miles** of Trail
- **6 cultural districts** connected and highlighted by the Indianapolis Cultural Trail include Fountain Square, Indiana Avenue, Mass Ave, The Canal & White River State Park, and the Wholesale District. Linking to the Monon Trail, the Trail allows residents and visitors easy access to Broad Ripple Village and Carmel from the downtown; continuing to build a stronger Indianapolis community.
- **\$63 million** of total project cost
- **\$27.5 million** of total private funding
- **\$35.5 million** of total federal transportation funding (\$20.5 million TIGER grant)
- **11.25 acres** of Trail pavers
- **8,065 cubic yards** of topsoil
- **\$864.5 million** of estimated economic impact
- **11,372 estimated jobs** created
- **5 acres** of new landscaping
- **86 bike racks**
- **25,400 square feet** of storm-water planters
- **40 miles** of Indianapolis Parks Greenway Trail system connected to the Trail
- **2013** year Trail officially opens as complete 8 miles
- **7 public art** projects along the Trail

# Approach to Cultural and Social Conditions (cont.)

## Benefits of Downtown Market-Rate Apartments

The proposed Meridian Street Apartment Project will create major changes in Downtown Portland. While there were large numbers of residents living and working in the Commercial District during the early part of the 20th century, housing trends across the country saw almost all of those residents move to the surrounding residential areas or to a larger metropolitan area. Building off of reasons discussed in Section B of this plan's for millennials and seniors newfound desire for quality of life, providing a return to the days of Downtown living in a small city like Portland is essential. Evidence of the potential impact of housing in Commercial District can be found by examining the Nickel Plate Flats project in Frankfort, Indiana:

- \$6.8 million investment to yield 'new lease on life' for downtown
- A 73-unit, 60,000 square-foot, four-story building housing studio, one and two-bedroom apartments and executive suites is set to be developed by Iron Men Properties on the northeast side of Frankfort's downtown square at the intersection of Jackson and Washington Streets.
- The structure will house 11 studio apartments, 42 one-bedroom/one-bath, 18 two-bedroom/two-bath apartments and two executive suites with two-bedroom/two-baths each with rooftop patios. Rents will range from \$545 per month for a studio apartment to \$1,350 per month for an executive suite.
- Major financial impact for downtown commerce and quality of life as more money is directly available for the economy due to influx of new residents and existing people relocating to Downtown.



Photo: Hawkins Building (c1960)

Used with permission

Collection of Sandy Bubp

## Introduction

Over the last half-century, Portland has suffered a loss of community interest and identity. Reclaiming the energy and pride once so prevalent in the city is essential to this entire Downtown Revitalization Plan being enacted. Placemaking can be a secret weapon in combating apathy, complacency and negative opinions that often stifle Revitalization efforts in communities like Portland.

The first step of this is small-scale doable improvements that can immediately bring benefits to public spaces and the people who use them. Indiana's Office of Community and Rural Affairs offers, along with avenues for funding, suggestions for "space enhancement and community transformation that sparks community wide conversation and creativity":

- Alley activation: Art Alley
- Creative project to showcase community identity
- Enhancement of existing/underutilized public assets into a new/usable space
- Interactive life-size games or game sheds for public use
- Pop-up public gathering spots
- Transforming vacant store fronts
- Unique signage or identifiers

Place making, whether via one of OCRA's suggestions or through an original idea, should be utilized as a tool for gathering information on what the community wants/likes as well as increasing awareness and creating excitement for the future. It can be an invaluable asset during the rebranding and redevelopment processes.

# Approach to Cultural and Social Conditions

## Reclaiming Community Interest and Identity

When evaluating what to include in a new brand for the City of Portland, it will be important consider a larger vision which incorporates the whole of Jay County. It is crucial that the rest of the county and area immediately surrounding Portland be brought along on this journey. A revitalized and rebranded Portland surrounded by struggling, rural communities will do little for the sustainability of this entire project. Consider the following example as a roadmap for how to incorporate Portland into a larger retooling of Jay County's identity. The model resembles the "Pure Michigan" campaign that has been so successful in the State of Michigan's redevelopment.

- Each town comprising Jay County will develop its own branding, focused on what makes it unique and important to the county.
  - Portland is the "Heart of Commerce"; Red Key is the "Entertainment District"; Pennville is the "Place for Families"; Dunkirk is the "Hub of Historical Tourism"; etc...
- Visitors and potential residents, as well as businesses, will no longer just be coming to Portland they will be going to Jay County. Portland will develop into a destination that offers easy access to the rest of a revitalized and refocused Jay County.

An umbrella-type identity strategy encourages cooperation amongst neighboring cities and towns rather than competition. Using the example of "Pure Michigan" shows it is possible for all of the parts of Jay County to form a greater whole by developing and nurturing each location's unique characteristics and attractions.

Once a county-wide strategy is in place, the rebranding process can shift toward evaluating the current perception of Portland. This evaluation will be multilevel:

- Analyze, research and conduct firsthand exploration of the city's demographics, quality of life, appearance, commerce, entertainment, historical context, projected growth, etc.
- Interviews with current residents, stakeholders, city council and youth will offer valuable input. Questions concerning values, available support systems and personal narratives will feed a larger narrative of Portland.
- Audit of Portland's current "brand" will provide an even deeper understanding. Working alongside city stakeholders, analysis will begin with strengths and weaknesses, internal as well as external perception and brand challenges. R&B's 2018 survey will be utilized to explore the following:
  - Why do residents call Portland home?
  - What tone and personality does Portland have?
  - What things differentiate Portland from other cities?
  - How do people outside of Portland view it?
  - What methods of marketing are currently being implemented?
  - Do people know your city when they see it?

Systems and infrastructure will be put in place for Portland's brand to be utilized effectively. Individuals to manage the brand must be established, placing an importance on the continued growth of Portland's story and its evolution. Channels of communication, from marketing to potential residents/tourists, to growing pride in residents, to connecting with community groups will be developed.

# Approach to Cultural and Social Conditions

## Solving Communication Issues

The following strategies and methods, proposed by the Institute for Local Government (ILG)<sup>6</sup>, clearly lay out a realistic vision for Portland:

### 1. COMMUNICATION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

- **Be attentive.** Whether with an individual colleague or in council chambers before a packed house, paying attention to the speaker, the subject at hand and (as appropriate) the interpersonal dynamics involved will make you a more effective communicator and help you to be perceived as a respectful, effective colleague and public servant.
- **Ask clarifying questions.** This shows a desire to better understand the speaker and demonstrates both attentiveness and an interest in learning more. Typically this is a better communication choice than a quick emotional retort or an immediate explanation of your own views. Asking clarifying questions helps increase the likelihood of a more productive conversation or exchange.
- **Let people know you are listening.** Two very simple ways to do this include paraphrasing and using a perception check. Paraphrasing is repeating the essence of the speaker's remark, thus conveying that you've heard the substantive content of what he or she has said. A perception check involves acknowledging the emotional content of a speaker's comment. Both paraphrasing and a perception check can be important communication tools for council members. Neither suggests you are necessarily agreeing with the speaker or expressing your own opinion on the issue at hand.

### 2. DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN VALUES, INTERESTS AND POSITIONS

- Your conversations with other individual council members or residents often concern topics that they (and perhaps you) feel very strongly about. It may seem there is no way to even begin to have a useful discussion about such topics. However, understanding the distinction between a value, an interest and a position can be helpful when tackling this type of situation. Consider these examples:

- "Children are our community's most important resource." This is a value;
- "I want a park and open space where our children can play." This is an interest; and
- "I want a park and skateboarding area at the corner of Palm and Main with the city contributing all the funds." This is a position.

Listen for and ask about values and interests that underlie speakers' expressed positions. People can more readily understand each other's values and interests than they can accept different positions. Typically there are more ways to satisfy interests than to bridge conflicting positions. A conversation about values or interests can often reduce or clarify differences.

- **Separate the people from the problem.** It's not unusual for emotions to cloud problem-solving when people feel strongly about an issue. However, it is far more effective to attack the problem together, not each other. It's also a much better way to preserve an important working relationship
- **Focus on interests, not positions.** Taking a hard negotiating position can obscure what is really wanted. A conversation about interests, which tend to be broader than positions, creates more opportunities for coming up with an idea that appeals to all participants. Discussing interests rather than focusing on positions means that there's a lot more to talk about and improves the chances of success.
- **Invent options for mutual gain.** In the typical back and forth of "making your case" there is often little opportunity to jointly think about and creatively invent new ideas that may be in the interests of both (or all) negotiators. However, this type of creative thinking probably won't occur unless it's given a time and a place to happen, and making time for this step is especially important when addressing polarized local issues.
- **Insist on using objective criteria.** This is perhaps the hardest problem-solving guideline to follow — but perhaps the most important — in what is often a challenging political environment. Working to creatively solve a problem or reach an accord can be advanced if the participants can agree on some sort of common standard or a result that they think makes sense. (cont.)

## Introduction

The Institute for Local Government recommends that local policy-making be a collaborative activity. Issues that affect the future well-being of their cities also spur local officials to have conversations and collaborate with members of the public about the kind of community they envision for themselves and their children. The group suggests that local governance be approached with the following goals in mind:

1. Communicate and problem-solve with colleagues;
2. Maintain collaborative relationships with fellow council members;
3. Preside over and participate in city council meetings;
4. Interact with and respond to members of the public; and
5. Design effective and inclusive processes for engaging the public.

Portland should strive to create a unified, coordinated, flexible and dynamic communication system with these goals in mind. Without an efficient and reliable system for inter-governmental and public communication, achieving the goals and visions of this Revitalization Plan will be nearly impossible.

# Approach to Cultural and Social Conditions (cont.)

## Solving Communication Issues (cont.)

### 3. CIVILITY AND COUNCIL MEMBER BEHAVIOR

- Many city councils are grappling with the challenge of how to ensure civility among council members in their own deliberations. The New Jersey State League of Municipalities recently published an article by author John C. Gillespie. His 10 commandments of public civility, include these admonishments:
  - Thou shalt not allow legitimate critique of policy and practice to become a personal attack aimed at the person who devised the policy or implements the practice;
  - Thou shalt not rudely interrupt a colleague midsentence nor “speak over” a colleague while he or she is speaking;
  - Thou shalt not pretend something is much more important than it really is simply to score points with an audience; and
  - Thou shalt always recognize that your colleagues were also elected, just as you were, and deserve the same level of respect for having run and won.
- A growing number of cities are creating handbooks that help council members (and the public) better understand city government and council members’ roles and responsibilities. In addition, cities are adopting ground rules for council meetings that extend beyond procedural rules and address expectations and guidelines for council member conduct. One example of such rules is:
  - Council members should actively pay attention while others are talking. Council members should be aware that side conversations, note writing and nonverbal expressions made by council members can be distracting to the meeting. Be aware that other council members, staff and the public in attendance can hear and see these actions.

### 4. EFFECTIVE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Successful public engagement can help local agencies manage challenges by contributing to the following outcomes:
  1. Better identification of the public’s values, ideas and recommendations. Well-executed public engagement can provide more nuanced views about an issue from a broader spectrum of residents than a simple “yes” or “no” election.
  2. Residents who are more fully informed about issues and local agencies. Public engagement presents opportunities for residents to better understand the issues and challenges impacting their community, grapple with practical problems and real trade-offs, and see local agency challenges as their own.
  3. Improved local agency decision-making and actions with better results. Members of the public provide rich sources of information regarding their community history and needs. This information can inform local agency decision-making and potentially produce superior results.
  4. Enhanced community buy-in and support. Involving members of the community in a meaningful way can build a sense of ownership and greater support for the local agency decision. It can also reduce contentiousness.
  5. Faster project implementation with less need to revisit issues again. Mutually agreed-upon decisions are less likely to continually reappear as issues of concern both for local agencies and community members.
  6. More trust — in each other and in local government. Open dialogue, shared interests and mutual problem-solving can bring disparate groups of people together, potentially resulting in increased trust in the others’ ability to solve problems and make good decisions.
  7. Increased community participation and leadership development. Positive experiences with public engagement can lead to better informed residents who are more likely to participate in other community activities and have the confidence and skills to become future local government leaders.

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<sup>6</sup>Western City’s Blog [www.westerncity.com/article/strategies-creating-more-collaborative-effective-council](http://www.westerncity.com/article/strategies-creating-more-collaborative-effective-council)

# Portland Downtown Revitalization Plan

## Section E: Implementation and Maintenance



**Rb**  
ARCHITECTURE  
PRESERVATION  
PLANNING  
INTERIORS

# Portland Downtown Revitalization Plan

## Section E: Implementation and Maintenance

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## Timetable

### Implementation by Year

#### Year 1

##### • Economic Development –

- Goal: New Entertainment and Food Venues with the creation of one full service restaurant / brewery
- Goal: Portland RDC Reviews internal Strategies for Priority Allocating Funds

##### • Improve Quality of Life –

- Goal: New Services for Downtown Residents with the opening of one neighborhood food market

##### • Planning for Sustainability –

- Goal: Initial Engineering for Downtown Facade Program (10-15 Buildings identified as Phase I)
- Goal: Strengthen the official “Main Street Portland” organization with Board Development
- Goal: Identify Environmentally Challenged sites within the Downtown Target Area

##### • Internal and External Marketing –

- Goal: Engage a Professional Comprehensive Marketing Plan for Portland and Jay County as a county-wide collaborative

##### • Housing –

- Goal: Form a City-wide Housing Task Force that focuses on the top four recommendations of the 2016 Portland Housing Study, especially downtown 2<sup>nd</sup> floor residences

##### • Funding –

- Goal: Form an Exploratory Committee to investigate a Regional Stellar Identification (target 2020)

Photo: North Meridian Street  
Postcard (c1907)  
Used with permission  
Collection of Sandy Bubp

## Section E Implementation and Maintenance

# Timetable (cont.)

## Implementation by Year (cont.)

### Year 2

- **Economic Development –**

- Goal: Create a Content Resource Management Database (CRM) that lists each property / parcel in the Target Area, including Building Uses and Owner Contact
- Goal: Begin Phase 1 Facade Restorations on 10-15 Target Buildings

- **Improve Quality of Life –**

- Goal: Initial Engineering for Downtown Street Scape / Main Street Market
- Goal: Improve Weekly and Monthly Main Street Events with a one season pilot program to hold Farmers' Market on West Main and Winter Farmer's Market in nearby building(s).

- **Planning for Sustainability –**

- Goal: Form a Residential TIF District which includes the Downton Target Area
- Goal: Convert "Main Street Portland" to a 501c3
- Goal: Initial Engineering for the clean-up for Environmental Sites within Downtown Target Area

- **Internal and External Marketing –**

- Goal: Pilot a six month local ad campaign with common branding for multiple downtown events
- Goal: Collect Metrics about event attendance and review Pilot Campaign impact

- **Housing –**

- Goal: Encourage the Development of a new-construction, 20-40 unit Multi-Family Market Rate Apartment Complex within the Target Area

- **Funding –**

- Goal: Form an Investor Group (for-profit or 501c3) to work closely with Jay County Foundation and Redevelopment Commission as capital for projects

### Year 3

- **Economic Development –**

- Goal: Analyze Impact of Property Value changes since 2000 inside the Target Area
- Goal: New Entertainment and Restaurant Venue / Expansion of existing venue

- **Improve Quality of Life –**

- Goal: Construction of Main Street Downtown Marketplace (3 blocks)

- **Planning for Sustainability –**

- Goal: Initial Engineering for 5-10 Facades Phase 2 Target Buildings
- Goal: Begin Clean-up of Environmental Concerns on properties within the Downtown Target Area
- Goal: "Main Street Portland" hires a part-time Director / Community Liaison

- **Internal and External Marketing –**

- Goal: Launch a one year, Downtown focused external ad campaign as part of Jay County-wide Marketing Strategy
- Goal: Continue collecting Metrics for increased attendance

- **Housing –**

- Goal: Encourage the Development of 2nd floor housing restorations, especially Live-Work Solutions that open new first floor businesses

- **Funding –**

- Goal: Form a CDC focused on Downtown Development (may be linked to Main Street Portland)

# Timetable (cont.)

## Implementation by Year (cont.)

### Year 4

- **Economic Development –**
  - Goal: Form a Task Force to analyze the need and benefit for renewing TIF District boundaries
- **Improve Quality of Life –**
  - Goal: Construction of Main Street Downtown Marketplace (3 blocks)
- **Planning for Sustainability –**
  - Goal: Continue Clean-up of Environmental Concerns on properties within the Downtown Target Area
  - Goal: Initial Engineering for Creation of a Downtown-Focused Cultural Trail Loop (General Specifications and Costs)
- **Internal and External Marketing –**
  - Goal: Refine and extend external ad campaign as part of Jay County-wide Marketing Strategy
- **Housing –**
  - Goal: Continue to encourage the Development of 2nd floor housing restorations, especially Live-Work Solutions that open new first floor businesses.
  - Goal: Hold an open house tour showcase to properties / include properties in existing community Holiday House Tours

### Year 5

- **Economic Development –**
  - Goal: Open Seasonal Festival Farmer's Market on Main Street improvements
- **Improve Quality of Life –**
  - Goal: Construct Pilot Section (4 blocks) of "Complete Streets" Cultural Trail Loop extending Downtown to the North-West along High Street, connecting adjacent residential neighborhood
- **Planning for Sustainability –**
  - Goal: Initial Engineering for remaining 5-10 Facades Phase 2 Target Buildings
- **Internal and External Marketing –**
  - Goal: Pilot a six month local ad campaign with common branding for multiple downtown events
  - Goal: Collect Metrics about event attendance and review Pilot Campaign impact
- **Housing –**
  - Goal: Encourage the Development of a new-construction, 20-30 unit Adult (55+) Affordable Living Facility

### Years 6 – 10

- **Economic Development –**
  - Goal: Renew TIF District and Reaffirm Role of Redevelopment Commission (RDC)
  - Goal: Complete remaining 5-10 Facades of Target Buildings inside Downtown
- **Improve Quality of Life –**
  - Goal: Continue Annual Construction of 4 blocks sections "Complete Streets" Cultural Trail Loop
- **Planning for Sustainability –**
  - Goal: Commission and Fund a formal Maintenance Plan for supported Infrastructure
  - Goal: Review City-wide Zoning and propose a Downtown Over-lay District to encourage creating new-construction of mid-sized commercial solutions
- **Internal and External Marketing –**
  - Goal: Continue County-wide Internal and External Marketing Plan, strengthening the Downtown Portland Identity as a sub-brand
- **Housing –**
  - Goal: Continue to add 5-10 units of new Market Rate housing within the Downtown, focusing on Existing Structures and 2nd Floor Residences, especially Live-Work solutions

# Timetable (cont.)

## Implementation By Topic

### Economic Development

#### Year 1

- Goal: New Entertainment and Food Venues with the creation of one full service restaurant / brewery
- Goal: RDC Reviews internal Strategies for Priority Allocating Funds

#### Year 2

- Goal: Create a Content Resource Management Database (CRM) that lists each property/parcel in the Target Area, including Building Uses and Owner Contact
- Goal: Begin Phase 1 Façade Restorations on 10-15 Target Buildings

#### Year 3

- Goal: Analyze Impact of Property Value changes since 2000 inside the Target Area
- Goal: New Entertainment and Restaurant Venue / Expansion of existing venue

#### Year 4

- Goal: Form a Task Force to analyze the need and benefit for renewing TIF District boundaries

#### Year 5

- Goal: Open Seasonal Festival Farmer's Market on Main Street improvements

#### Year 6 – 10

- Goal: Renew TIF District and Reaffirm Role of Redevelopment Commission (RDC)
- Goal: Complete remaining 5-10 Facades of Target Buildings inside Downtown

### Improve Quality of Life

#### Year 1

- Goal: New Services for Downtown Residents with the opening of one neighborhood food market

#### Year 2

- Goal: Initial Engineering for Downtown Street Scape / Main Street Market
- Goal: Improve Weekly and Monthly Main Street Events with a one season pilot program to hold Farmers' Market on West Main and Winter Farmer's Market in nearby building(s).

#### Year 3

- Goal: Construction of Main Street Downtown Marketplace (3 blocks)

#### Year 4

- Goal: Construction of Main Street Downtown Marketplace (3 blocks)

#### Year 5

- Goal: Construct Pilot Section (4 blocks) of "Complete Streets" Cultural Trail Loop extending Downtown to the North-West along High Street, connecting adjacent residential neighborhood

#### Year 6 – 10

- Goal: Continue Annual Construction of 4 blocks sections "Complete Streets" Cultural Trail Loop

# Timetable (cont.)

## Planning for Sustainability

### Year 1

- Goal: Initial Engineering for Downtown Façade Program (10-15 Buildings identified as Phase I)
- Goal: Strengthen the official “Main Street Portland” organization with Board Development
- Goal: Identify Environmentally Challenged sites within the Downtown Target Area

### Year 2

- Goal: Form a Residential TIF District which includes the Downton Target Area
- Goal: Convert “Main Street Portland” to a 501c3
- Goal: Initial Engineering for the clean-up for Environmental Sites within Downtown Target Area

### Year 3

- Goal: Initial Engineering for 5-10 Facades Phase 2 Target Buildings
- Goal: Begin Clean-up of Environmental Concerns on properties within the Downtown Target Area
- Goal: “Main Street Portland” hires a part-time Director / Community Liaison

### Year 4

- Goal: Continue Clean-up of Environmental Concerns on properties within the Downtown Target Area
- Goal: Initial Engineering for Creation of a Downtown-Focused Cultural Trail Loop (General Specifications and Costs)

### Year 5

- Goal: Initial Engineering for remaining 5-10 Facades Phase 2 Target Buildings

### Year 6 – 10

- Goal: Commission and Fund a formal Maintenance Plan for supported Infrastructure
- Goal: Review City-wide Zoning and propose a Downtown Over-lay District to encourage creating new-construction of mid-sized commercial solutions

# Timetable (cont.)

## Internal and External Marketing

### Year 1

- Goal: Engage a Professional Comprehensive Marketing Plan for Portland and Jay County as a county-wide collaborative

### Year 2

- Goal: Pilot a six month local ad campaign with common branding for multiple downtown events
- Goal: Collect Metrics about event attendance and review Pilot Campaign impact

### Year 3

- Goal: Launch a one year, Downtown focused external ad campaign as part of Jay County-wide Marketing Strategy
- Goal: Continue collecting Metrics for increased attendance

### Year 4

- Goal: Refine and extend external ad campaign as part of Jay County-wide Marketing Strategy

### Year 5

- Goal: Pilot a six month local ad campaign with common branding for multiple downtown events
- Goal: Collect Metrics about event attendance and review Pilot Campaign impact

### Year 6 – 10

- Plan, strengthening the Downtown Portland Identity as a sub-brand

# Timetable (cont.)

## Housing

### Year 1

- Goal: Form a City-wide Housing Task Force that focuses on the top four recommendations of the 2016 Portland Housing Study, especially downtown 2nd floor residences

### Year 2

- Goal: Encourage the Development of a new-construction, 20-40 unit Multi-Family Market Rate Apartment Complex within the Target Area

### Year 3

- Goal: Encourage the Development of 2nd floor housing restorations, especially Live-Work Solutions that open new first floor businesses

### Year 4

- Goal: Continue to encourage the Development of 2nd floor housing restorations, especially Live-Work Solutions that open new first floor businesses.
- Goal: Hold an open house tour showcase to properties / include properties in existing community Holiday House Tours

### Year 5

- Goal: Encourage the Development of a new-construction, 20-30 unit Adult (55+) Affordable Living Facility

### Year 6 – 10

- Goal: Continue to add 5-10 units of new Market Rate housing within the Downtown, focusing on Existing Structures and 2nd Floor Residences, especially Live-Work solutions

## Funding

### Year 1

- Goal: Form an Exploratory Committee to investigate a Regional Stellar Identification (target 2020)

### Year 2

- Goal: Form an Investor Group (for-profit or 501c3) to work closely with Jay County Foundation and Redevelopment Commission as capital for projects

### Year 3

- Goal: Form a CDC focused on Downtown Development (may be linked to Main Street Portland)

# General Cost Estimates

## Main Street Complete Street Project

A two lane complete street can cost an estimate anywhere from \$4 million and \$10 million for one block. Over the three blocks of downtown Portland the total estimate would be anywhere from \$12 million to \$16 million as proposed in the Downtown Revitalization Plan.

## Meridian Street “Road Diet” (INDOT 2020)

The cost of a gateway sign can range from approximately \$100 to \$500. The cost of gateway structures can range greatly depending on the specific type of items chosen. Some gateway structure treatments options are: monument signs (approximately \$19,000), street spanning arches supported by metal posts within bulb outs (approximately \$64,000), and gateway columns (\$10,000).

The cost of parking lots would be around \$18/ sq. ft. The cost of widening the sidewalk would be an estimated \$250,000. The cost of a curb ramp is approximately \$810 on average, or \$12 per sq. ft. Adding truncated domes/ detectable warning material is approximately \$42 on average.

The cost of street furniture will vary depending on the design, style, manufacturer, and region. Benches range from approximately \$220 to \$5,700, with an average cost of \$430. Bus Shelters can range from approximately \$5,000 to \$40,000, and street trees from \$50 to \$940. Trash and recycling receptacles range from approximately \$300 to \$3,200, with an average cost of \$310.

Pedestrian-level streetlight costs range from approximately \$300 to \$13,900 each, depending on the fixture type and service agreement with the local utility company. The average cost is approximately \$4,900. Crosswalk lighting can range from approximately \$10,750 to \$42,000 per crosswalk, and in-pavement lighting from \$6,500 to \$40,000 as a total cost.

## Meridian Street Market-rate Apartments

The national average cost to build apartments is \$64,575 - \$86,100 for 861 sq. ft. This project is looking at 140,000 sq. ft. total so the cost would range \$10,500,000 - \$14,000,000.

## Cultural Trail Through Downtown Portland

Approximate Total: \$840,000.00

Trailhead Facility: \$750,000.00 – North Edge Downtown District

3 Blocks of Main Street Inside Downtown: \$3,000,000

## Facade Improvements

Phase 1 – \$2,160,908.41

Phase 2 – \$1,000,529.50



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# Financial Tools

Portland will benefit greatly from the use and expansion of its TIF District. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a public financing method that is used as a subsidy for redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects in many countries, including the United States. Similar or related value capture strategies are used around the world.

Through the use of TIF, municipalities typically divert future property tax revenue increases from a defined area or district toward an economic development project or public improvement project in the community. TIF subsidies are not appropriated directly from a city's budget, but the city incurs loss through foregone tax revenue. The first TIF was used in California in 1952. By 2004, all 50 American States had authorized the use of TIF.

Portland could, and should, also utilize the following sources of funding for redevelopment and revitalization efforts:

## INDIANA OFFICE OF COMMUNITY & RURAL AFFAIRS (OCRA):

A variety of grants are distributed to assist communities in revitalizing downtowns.

Website: [www.ocra.in.gov](http://www.ocra.in.gov)

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS (CDBG)** are available with a required 20% match. They include the following types of projects:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water Projects</li><li>• Sewer Projects</li><li>• Storm Drainage Projects</li><li>• Infrastructure in support of Housing Projects</li><li>• Senior Care Centers</li><li>• Daycare Centers</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Centers</li><li>• Downtown Revitalization</li><li>• Historic Preservation</li><li>• Libraries</li><li>• Healthcare Centers</li><li>• Special Needs Buildings</li><li>• Fire Stations/Firetrucks</li></ul> |
|---|---|

**CDBG** funds are available up to \$600,000 with a 20% match to the following:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Non-entitlement cities</li><li>• Community Governments</li><li>• Town Governments</li><li>• County Governments</li></ul> | <p>These grants are used for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Elimination of slums and blight</li><li>• Benefit low to moderate income persons</li><li>• Infrastructure improvements</li><li>• Downtown Revitalization</li><li>• Community and daycare centers</li><li>• Historic Preservation</li></ul> |
|--|---|

**COMMUNITY PLANNING FUNDS** are up to \$50,000 for individual communities and up to \$15,000 for two communities.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Non-entitlement cities</li><li>• Incorporated towns</li><li>• County governments</li></ul> | <p>These grants are used for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feasibility studies</li><li>• Downtown Revitalization Plans</li><li>• Historical Preservation Studies</li><li>• Affordable Housing Studies</li></ul> |
|--|---|

## MAIN STREET REVITALIZATION PROGRAM (MSRP, administered by OCRA)

offers grant opportunities, networking, and information to Indiana cities and towns. Emphasis is placed on the preservation and development of traditional downtown resources. To qualify, communities must become Indiana Main Street members. The program offers a statewide internet database of buildings available for purchase or rent that can be used.

# Financial Tools (cont.)

## INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (INDOT):

**2018 COMMUNITY CROSSINGS MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM** provides funding to cities, towns, and counties across Indiana to make improvements to local roads and bridges. Community Crossings is a partnership between INDOT and Hoosier communities, both urban and rural, to invest in infrastructure projects that catalyze economic development, create jobs, and strengthen local transportation networks. Projects that are eligible for funding include road resurfacing and preservation, bridge rehabilitation or replacement, alternative transportation connectivity, and road reconstruction with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance in connection with a road project. Material costs for chip sealing and crack filling operations are also eligible for funding.

Website: [www.in.gov/indot/2390.htm](http://www.in.gov/indot/2390.htm)

## INDIANA LANDMARKS:

A private, non-profit statewide organization with 8,000+ members. Headquarters are located in Indianapolis with a regional network of seven offices and two house museums. Website: [www.indianalandmarks.org](http://www.indianalandmarks.org)

**EFROYMSON FAMILY ENDANGERED PLACES GRANTS:** Grant funding is available to local preservation organizations up to \$2,500. The grants are available for redevelopment costs such as architectural or engineering services.

**EFROYMSON FAMILY ENDANGERED PLACES LOAN:** This loan program is available for up to \$75,000 to non-profit organizations for acquisition and/or rehabilitation of historic properties. Recipients will have low interest terms for three years and must attach Indiana Landmarks protective covenant to the property deed. Special consideration is given to projects that will save buildings listed or eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or located in a National or State Register Historic District.

## INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (IDEM)

**INDIANA BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM:** Low interest loans for abandoned or underused properties are available where environmental contamination hampers expansion or redevelopment. These are available for political subdivisions.

Website: [www.in.gov/cleanups/2371.htm](http://www.in.gov/cleanups/2371.htm)

Funding is available for the following types of projects:

- Site Assessment
- Environmental investigation
- Remediation
- Soil and Groundwater clean-up
- Demolition
- Asbestos and Lead-Based Paint Abatement

# Financial Tools (cont.)

## INDIANA HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:

This state agency focuses on housing needs in regard to home ownership and the development of rental housing, and provides support to community housing development organizations. The authority is based in Indianapolis. Website: [www.in.gov/ihcda](http://www.in.gov/ihcda)

**RENTAL HOUSING TAX CREDITS (RHTC):** Tax credits are distributed for a period of ten years to developers of affordable housing.

- Property acquisition
- Rehabilitation of Existing Housing
- New Housing Construction

**HOME Funds (distributed through Housing and Urban Development – HUD)** are available to local governments and non-profit organizations up to \$500,000 with a required 25% match.

- Develop affordable housing for low to moderate income.
- Property acquisition
- Rehabilitation housing
- Counseling to families

## INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR)

The DNR is a state agency that administers numerous programs impacting historic preservation, outdoor recreation and the environment. The Indiana Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology (DHPA) administers the bulk of the historic preservation-related programs in the state government. It is based in Indianapolis.

Website: [www.in.gov/dnr/historic/](http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic/)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND (HPF) is funded by an annual distribution of Federal dollars from the National Park Service (NPS). Funding is available to government entities, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations. Grants are for predevelopment costs (up to \$30,000) and project costs (up to \$50,000) including acquisition, development, and archaeology with a required 50% match.

Website: [www.in.gov/dnr/historic/grants.html#hpf](http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic/grants.html#hpf)

Architectural projects include:

- National Register nominations for eligible districts
- Feasibility studies
- Architectural and engineering plans
- Specifications for the rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse of National Register-listed properties
- Historic structure reports for National Register-listed properties
- Historic context studies with National Register nominations for specific types of historic resources

The grant program provides matching grant assistance. All grant funds are paid out on a reimbursement basis. Grant awards are subject to maximum award amounts.

Website: [www.in.gov/dnr/historic/7589.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic/7589.htm)

## THE LAND AND WATER PRESERVATION FUND (LWPF)

was passed by Congress in 195 to assist eligible governmental units in the provision of new park areas. The LWPF is a matching assistance program. The main source of funding for the LWCF grants comes from federal offshore oil lease revenues. Since the LWCF is a reimbursing program, the project sponsor does not receive the grant funds at the time of application approval. The sponsor must have the local matching 50% of the actual costs of the approved prior to the application. The sponsoring park and recreation board is reimbursed 50% of the actual costs of the approved project. Local funding sources used to match the federal assistance may be derived from appropriations, tax levies, bond issues, force account labor, gifts, donations of land, cash, labor, materials, and equipment. Other federal funding sources cannot be used as the local share of the project, except revenue sharing, Community Development Act funds, and Farmers Home Administration loans. Having an updated master park plan increases the chances of obtaining funding.

# Financial Tools (cont.)

## NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Chartered by Congress in 1949, this privately-funded non-profit organization is charged with preserving America's most significant historic sites. It is based in Washington, D.C. with a regional office in Chicago, Illinois. Website: [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION GRANT PROGRAM (administered by OCRA) strives to preserve and rehabilitate historic properties in order to further incentivize downtown economic development. Applications can be submitted at any time. Projects must meet certain minimum requirements:

- The lead applicant must be any individual, partnership, firm, association, joint venture, limited liability company or corporation.
- A non-profit facilitating affordable housing organizations are also eligible as lead applicants.
- The lead applicant must be able to show title/ownership upon grant award

Grant requests between \$10,000 and \$100,000 will be accepted. Eligible requests must be no more than 35% of eligible project costs. Local match must be greater than or equal to 65% of total eligible project costs.

## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS)

This federal agency administers numerous programs impacting historic preservation, forestry, national park systems, and Native American tribal preservation. Based in Washington, D.C. with a regional office in Omaha, Nebraska. Website: [www.nps.gov/](http://www.nps.gov/) and [www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax)

**NPS TAX CREDIT PROGRAM:** A 20% income tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing buildings that are determined by the Secretary of the Interior, through the National Park Service, to be "certified historic structures". The State Historic Preservation Offices and the National Park Service review the rehabilitation work to ensure that it complies with the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation. The Internal Revenue Service defines Qualified Rehabilitation Expenses (QREs) on which the credit may be taken. Owner-occupied residential properties do not qualify for the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit.

## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

**PUBLIC WORKS GRANTS:** A grant program of the US Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration. Funds can be used to revitalize, expand, and upgrade a community's physical infrastructure to attract new industry, encourage business expansion, diversify local economies, and generate or retain long-term, private sector jobs and investment. Website: [www.eda.gov/programs/eda-programs](http://www.eda.gov/programs/eda-programs)

**ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:** This program provides technical, planning, and infrastructure assistance in distressed economic regions. Website: [www.eda.gov/programs/eda-programs](http://www.eda.gov/programs/eda-programs)

# Financial Tools (cont.)

## INDIANA ARTS COMMISSION

This State agency offers funding for various art and art education programs.

Website: [www.in.gov/arts](http://www.in.gov/arts)

Grant programs include:

- Arts in the Parks & Historic Sites
- Arts Organization Support III
- Community Consultancies
- On-Ramp Career Accelerator
- Partnering Arts, Communities and Education (PACE)
- Regional Arts Initiative Grants
- Regional Arts Partner
- Statewide Cultural Districts

## NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

This agency provides grants to organizations for several types of programs related to the arts, including museums, preservation of art forms, etc.

Website: [www.nea.gov/grants/index.html](http://www.nea.gov/grants/index.html)

The grants require 50% matching funds and pertain to the following disciplines:

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| • Artist Communities                            | • Music              |
| • Arts Education                                | • Musical Theater    |
| • Dance   | • Opera              |
| • Design  | • Presenting         |
| • Folk & Traditional Arts                       | • State and Regional |
| • Literature                                    | • Theater            |
| • Local Arts Agencies                           | • Visual Arts        |
| • Media Arts<br>(film/radio/television/museums) |                      |

## SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA)

The SBA works with lenders to provide loans to small businesses. The agency doesn't lend money directly to small business owners. Instead, it sets guidelines for loans made by its partnering lenders, community development organizations, and micro-lending institutions. The SBA reduces risks for lenders and makes it easier for them to access capital. Website: [www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans](http://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans)

## THE BALL STATE UNIVERSITY INDIANA COMMUNITIES INSTITUTE (ICU)

This organization offers a variety of services and opportunities to communities across the State of Indiana to support communities in their economic development. Website: [www.bsu.edu/academics/centersandinstitutes/indiana-communities-institute](http://www.bsu.edu/academics/centersandinstitutes/indiana-communities-institute)

## INDIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION CAPITAL ACCESS PROGRAM

The program provides businesses with access to capital by encouraging lenders who participate in the program to make loans for unconventional small business lending.

# Financial Tools (cont.)

## TAP GRANT/RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM GRANT

A matching assistance program sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration to provide funding for acquisition or development of multi-use recreational trail projects. Both motorized and non-motorized projects may qualify.

## INDIANA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

Indiana Humanities oversees a competitive grants program that awards funding to Indiana nonprofit organizations, schools and other institutions.

**INNOVATION GRANTS (UP TO \$10,000)** provide Indiana nonprofits with funds to develop and implement bold and creative public humanities programs that introduce new ideas, utilize unique approaches and/or reach underserved audiences. The goal is to support projects that apply fresh and inventive components or methods to help people learn new information, consider different perspectives, share ideas and understand one another better. Programs should be creative (maybe even risky) and stretch boundaries—and they must be open to the public and utilize the humanities as a tool for engagement.

**COLLABORATION GRANTS (UP TO \$20,000)** provide Indiana nonprofits with funds to partner with other community organizations to deliver in-depth public humanities programming built around a core idea or theme. Partnerships may be among organizations within a community, within a region or even across the state. Formats and approaches may vary—anything from a weeklong festival to a series of public workshops spread over several months—as long as the programming involves humanities topics/humanistic approaches, engages wide audiences and has a meaningful impact on the communities in which it takes place.

# Legal Tools

## Code Enforcement

Both the courts and city and state code enforcement have tools for redevelopment of blighted properties. Within the legal system there are last resort actions for punitive solutions to blighted properties in Attica to follow frontline options like assistance, resources, proactive education, and consistency to following existing regulations.

It is important to provide opportunity to fix the issue. The city must provide adequate notice regarding the problem and not just in the form of a citation, but provide guidance and tools for individuals on how to accomplish the task at hand and be a resource in assisting them in procuring the means (\$) to complete the job.

The city can organize a cleanup with environmental ties to encourage Portland's residents to participate. Revising regulations on boarding buildings and general clean up with fines incurring will motivate property owners. Courts may remit penalty if owner brings the court a plan and shows progress offering 4-6 weeks review periods. The courts could require steeper penalty for not meeting deadlines.

If proper notice has been given and no action is taken by property owner, within a reasonable amount of time, the City has an obligation to public safety to step in and clean up grievous violations. The costs of which are to be billed to the owner or put on property tax bills.

Once all other avenues have been exhausted the city must be ready to follow through on more stringent measures toward getting the repairs paid for. Stepped fines, assessments of property taxes, collections, judgements against wages, or liens on properties should not be taken lightly but are legal means towards restitution.

Finally, there may be cases where forcing a property into receivership to the public entity may be required. Properties currently unoccupied during foreclosure process could go through receivership and the courts could add banks and their respective agents to the additional parties in court. This allows the City/Land Bank to create connecting banks and new opportunities in turn. An example of such a letter is included in the appendix.

## Ordinances

Portland has the ability to enact new ordinances that would benefit and enable a modern Downtown, especially allowing for a Live/Work situations. This is an attractive option for 21st century small-business owners. There is a draft of such an ordinance in the appendices.

## Portland Historic Preservation Commission

The Portland Historic Preservation Committee is the city's authority on any historic structures within the Portland Commercial Historic District. The current Downtown Portland Historic District Design Guidelines were adopted in April 2009. The full document can be found in the appendices, along with a Certificate of Appropriateness.

# Manpower Tools

"Don't tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results." ~ George S. Patton Jr.

In order for a coordinated approach to this Downtown Revitalization Plan, it is necessary to define the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved at every level. The Main Street organization will play a leading role throughout this process. Efforts should be made to develop their capacity, including recruiting more volunteers and seeking training opportunities to make sure this leadership group is aware of current programs that could benefit Portland.

It is also recommended that Portland develop and adopt an ADA Transition Plan. The purpose of the plan is to identify deficiencies in Portland's policies, procedures, practices, and physical assets. It also provides guidance for the removal of accessibility barriers. It will also measure progress to date and identify steps necessary to bring Portland's programs into compliance with ADA regulations. This planning effort could be done in conjunction with a larger countywide study.

The following offers a model for the flow of these roles and responsibilities rather than a definitive structure. It is broken down into four levels: Downtown, City, County, and State.

## 1. Downtown

- Commercial owners and Renters
  - Main Street organization as a pseudo "Chamber"
- Stakeholders
- Administrators
  - Paid Staff and/or Consultants
  - from city or county level budgets
- Elected and Appointed Officials
  - Committee level.
- Volunteers
  - Also pulling from Main Street organization
- Neighbors
  - Especially residents inside and adjacent to downtown

## 2. City Level

- Elected/Appointed Officials
  - Mayoral and Town Council level
- Administrators
  - Paid Staff and/or Consultants
  - City Department Heads

## 3. County Level

- Elected Officials
- Stakeholders
  - LEDO
  - County Foundations

## 4. State and Federal Level

- Elected Officials
- Government Departments
  - OCRA
  - USDA – Rural
  - INDOT
  - DNR

# Main Street Portland

## Sustainable Solutions for Implementation

Contemporary with the 2018 start of this Downtown Revitalization Study, the formal creation of Portland's Main Street Organization is a key part of any sustainable implementation. It is the bringing together of existing Stakeholders in one common platform that can assist removing communication barriers, pooling resources towards common goals, and build a stronger, organized and efficient structure in which to solve current concerns and tackle future problems. There are many reasons that the elegant and proven concepts within the National and Indiana Main Street Programs will continue to be a great resource for Portland, but by the foremost are the:

- wealth of past knowledge and
- access to real-time current problem solving ideas

Communities like Portland maintaining a Main Street Organization are universally encouraged to build a minimum of four (4) strong committees and not centralize all work/power with one group or person. The goal is to involve as many voices as possible, and to create a steady, sustainable work flow that can transcend natural events such as any one member becoming incapacitated or having to move from the community.

Portland's Main Street Exploratory Committee began informally meeting in October of 2017, at the invitation of resident and Community Development Director, Ami Huffman. Throughout 2018, it continued to be an advisory group to this Downtown Revitalization Plan. Meeting monthly, Portland Main Street formed the job descriptions of four key committees, and as consultants with the Downtown Revitalization Plan tackled individual topics, the interested persons from each of those committees participated: Governance, Events, Marketing, Aesthetics. In January 2019, the Portland Main Street Committee officially took on a formal internal structure; and in March 2019 it elected its first President for a 2 year term.

### **Local Accountability**

Another significant asset within the formalization of the Portland Main Street Committee and its publicly open elections and meetings is a non-partisan, unbiased basis from which to accomplish the goals and initiatives set forth in this Downtown Revitalization Plan. The Plan came out of over 20 public meetings designed to include all aspects of the Portland Community's voice. Similarly the Portland Main Street Committee represents not just the merchants and building owners of the Downtown Revitalization Target Area, but also the adjacent residents, the visitors, and significantly the potential new residents and owners.

Quarterly reviews with all Main Street Committees, City Representative(s), and Chamber of Commerce Representative are planned for 2019 and on-going. Additionally, the Portland Main Street Committee has been charged with a published annual review of the Downtown Revitalization Plan process, roughly every Spring as a launch of their next years' initiatives.

And not just accomplish the small individual goals, but as a whole, how to reach the ultimate goal of a thriving Portland. There are endless opportunities for the City of Portland to pursue but there needs to be cohesion between the separate functions. The overarching objective is for key actions to work catalysts, and continually spur further action. The intent of this section is to create pathways that will bring together all of the various elements that need to come together to reach this end.

# Revisions to Existing Plans & Regulations (cont.)

## Threefold pathway:

While there are endless smaller wins that can and should be pursued as prospects become available, here we are laying out a threefold pathway toward revitalization and progress. They are like lanes on a highway going in the same direction, which should be undertaken concurrently to get everyone to the desired destination. All implementation measures fall under one of three broad categories: policy/regulations, capital projects, and programs; the latter two either with government participation or simply City endorsed.

This chapter will provide a wide range of action items for the city but there are a few priorities under each category that are imperative to set the plan in motion.

## Programs

### Public Relations

What is Portland's identity? Through committee meetings it has become evident that the citizens of Portland have a great deal of pride in their community, but there seems to a great deal of nostalgia for how things used to be. This past Portland is not going to return, so the city must look forward to where they want to go in the future. There is no evidence that that residents of Portland wish to be anything other than a warm and inviting small town but there are endless ways to promote the identity of an idyllic rural city, changing minds without changing the heart of the community.

The city, first and foremost needs a dedicated public relations person; a cheerleader and advocate for the city's message, someone who can be the point person for responding to public and media questions. This person should be charismatic and driven, articulate, knowledgeable, and outgoing, and skilled in marketing, technology, and graphic design. This position could start as a part time contract position and could even be shared with the School Corporation and Portland Main Street, to develop a cohesive message about the community.

This position would be able to work with the city in developing a response plan (Policy) and facilitate public relations campaigns, and then it has unlimited capacity to expand and assist in establishing an Regional Development Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Visitor's Bureau. It can maintain a database for Client Relationship Management (CRM) of Community, Regional and National Contacts. This would be a person who has the pulse of the community and can keep ahead of risks to the city and be the first to advance Portland toward opportunities.

### Capital Improvements:

Portland must be the first to invest in the physical fabric of the community, and this will not only improve the appearance of the downtown environment and quality of life for residents but will spur further private investment as well. The track record is proven for communities' Return on Investment for publically funded capital improvements to be paid back in terms of increased economic vitality and strengthened tax base.

It is recommended that, as necessary, the City pursue a number of grants to assist in making these capital improvements. This will both expedited work and relieve some of the burden of cost from the city's limited resources.

#### Priorities:

Downtown reinvestment – the downtown is a critical area of focus, and with the number of vacant and deteriorating buildings this location is poised to be the make or break point for Portland. By renovating at least one building at a time, the city will not only save the fabric of the downtown, and remove a public hazard; it will also provide attractive commercial space that new businesses may want to move into and visibly demonstrate that the City is committed to an objective of revitalization.

### Policy and Regulations:

Create clear policies and consistent effective enforcement

While a new public relations person can work with the city in developing a response policy. An improved building code and effective code enforcement will improve the appearance throughout town, increase public safety and demonstrate to the public the city's position and integrity.

While there is an existing building ordinance, there are holes in the existing code. An adoption of updated regulations, instituting an inspection requirement and occupancy permitting for all commercial buildings and new construction projects is recommended. Furthermore, a clear and unwavering enforcement of these codes is necessary, because a rule without follow through will never enact change.

# Portland Downtown Revitalization Plan

## Section F: Summary



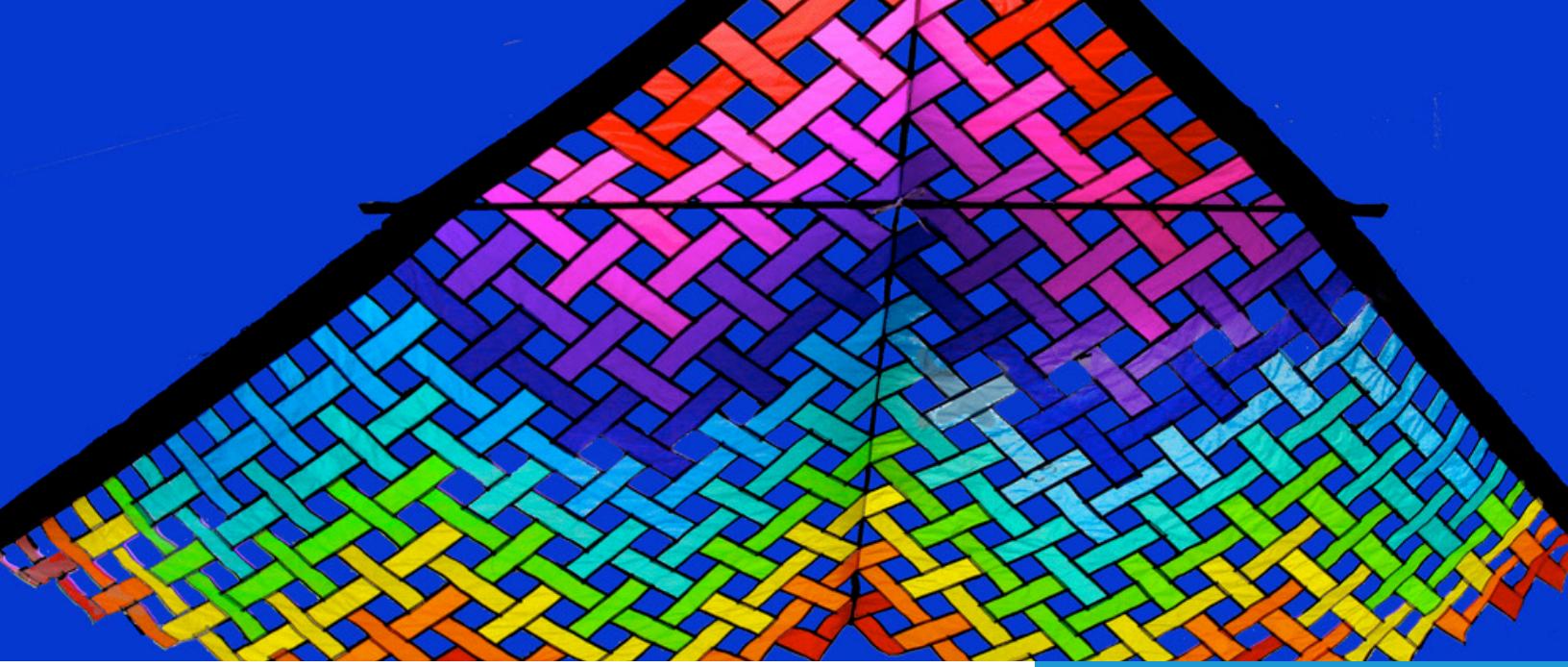
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# Portland Downtown Revitalization Plan

## Section F: Summary

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## Overview

Reflecting on the goals and vision statement for the City of Portland, and with inspiration from the Role Models in mind, the next step in the planning process is to outline revitalization projects. Until now, the information has been broad, establishing a context for future decision making. This section will define priority projects, discuss the rationale for their selection, provide implementation suggestions and offer sources for funding. The priority projects are as follows:

1. Facade Restorations & Main Street Complete Street Project
2. Meridian “Road Diet” (INDOT 2020)
3. N Meridian Street Market-Rate Apartments and Affordable Housing
4. Cultural Trail

## Section F Summary

# Overview (cont.)

## Project Priority

**1. Façade Restorations and Main Street Complete Street Project.** First, these will have the largest impact on restoring the image of the Downtown Commercial District. Vacant spaces become more desirable to tenants after a rehabilitation, while vibrant Main Streets have long been the heart of successful small towns across America. Fresh and interesting facades also inspire more “drop-in” traffic from people passing through town. The Downtown will benefit from increased occupancy and tax revenue from this investment in the Commercial District.

**2. Meridian “Road Diet”** This will address the current lack of formal entrances and gateways to the Downtown Core, as well as modernize an outdated Meridian Street. Widened sidewalks, corner curb bump-outs with ADA accessibility, implementation of traffic calming and public parking will accomplish the goal of creating a contemporary Downtown. With the addition of appropriate signage and wayfinding, the issues created by Meridian Street being a busy, rural highway can be mitigated. Signage directing traffic into the Commercial District, announcing arrival, and assisting visitors to their destination will increase the ability of existing and new businesses to thrive.

**3. Meridian Street Market-Rate Apartments,** and establishing affordable housing in the residential areas directly adjacent to the Portland’s Downtown. Creating approximately 150 units of one and two-bedroom apartments above first floor retail will make an immediate impact on the economic and social health of the Commercial District. This project will most likely require an improvement to existing utilities and some additional parking. In addition, increasing the availability of affordable homes in adjacent residential areas will help to shift Portland’s housing from a rental population to one comprised of homeowners. This will create a direct, tangible investment in the community from residents, new and old.

**4. A Cultural Trail.** This pilot project is a new amenity that can be enjoyed by the community and visitors alike. It is proposed as a total of 19 blocks through the Downtown and residential areas. While the Downtown portion of this project will require construction of new infrastructure, the largest portion (16 blocks) will utilize existing grass medians between sidewalks and roads to create a bike path and routes into Downtown for the local ‘golf-cart’ culture. This new, modernized and pedestrian friendly pathway will draw residents into the newly revitalized Commercial District; it will also immediately prove beneficial to public health/recreation and quality of life.

# Timeframes and Mechanisms and Evaluation, Monitoring and Updating the Plan

Rb Architects will work with The City of Portland, its partners and fellow consultants to monitor and advise the Downtown Revitalization Plan from the initial planning to its completion and beyond. Rb Architects will guide the process of the many projects accompanied by periodic progress checks throughout its entirety. As the Downtown Commercial District evolves, so must the revitalization plan. We believe in adaptive planning and will implement it so that the project can move forward on schedule. These periodic checks will occur on a bi-weekly basis through initial completion, and then move to bi-monthly visits over the first year. For the remainder of the first five years, communication with the City of Portland will become quarterly. After that through the tenth year of implication Rb Architects will remain available as consultants to the city of Portland as its newly revitalized Downtown Commercial Historic District.



Photo: Portland City Council Chamber  
January 2, 2019  
Brent Mather, Photographer



# Portland Downtown Revitalization Plan

## Section G: Appendices



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- Facade Detailed Cost Estimates
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- GAP Retail Analysis
- Resident / Visitor Survey

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