



2015 Comprehensive Plan

Town of North Manchester
Executive Summary

Riverfront Development Concept

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In June 2014 Ball State University's Bowen Center for Public Affairs conducted a series of strategic planning workshops. This discussions followed the following process:

1. Formulating visions and mission statements to describe the desired future for the Town and its methods for achieving that future.
2. Analyzing the Town's environment and resources to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
3. Developing a set of 3 to 5 high-level strategic goals that capitalize on critical strengths and opportunities and mitigate critical weaknesses and threats to enable the Town to achieve its vision.
4. Developing departmental objectives and action plans to contribute to the Town's high-level strategic priorities.
5. Implementing the department plans and monitoring progress.

A large number of elected and appointed officials and local representatives of community stakeholder organizations participated in the formulation of the vision and mission statements, SWOT analysis, and development of strategic goals.

SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

- Human resources (current staffing levels, staff development, succession plans)
- Infrastructure and Technology (buildings, streets, pedestrian/bicycle, utilities, information technology, vehicles and equipment, communication technology, emergency communication)
- Amenities (recreational, cultural, educational, entertainment, community-wide events, not for profit culture)
- Financial Resources (current revenues, revenue capacity, revenue stability, debt capacity)
- Processes (Town Council processes, management and supervision, purchasing, staff recruiting, budgeting, planning, internal communication)
- Political Environment (elected officials, local communities, state/federal mandates)
- Economic Environment (local income levels, regional employment, local workforce skill level)
- Social, Demographic, and Technological Environment (population age, population growth, home ownership, home makeup, available healthcare)
- Natural Environment (air quality, river water quality, noise pollution, light pollution)

STRATEGIC VISION AND MISSION

As planned, participants in the project produced a vision statement, mission statement and list of high-level strategic goals. The project results were as follows:

- Vision: North Manchester is a vibrant, creative community where everyone can live, learn, and prosper.
- Mission Statement: Partnering with our citizens, businesses and community organizations, we:
 - Foster a forward-looking, people-friendly, creative community
 - Promote educational excellence for all
 - Develop opportunities for growth and prosperity.

STRATEGIC GOALS

After reviewing the list of critical strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, participants were each asked to develop a maximum of five suggested goals for discussion. These recommendations were sorted, classified and discussed at length.

The group then refined and consolidated the discussion into a final list of four key specific goals:

- Improved housing stock and commercial buildings
- Improved amenities, including river, sidewalk, trail system, and others
- Effective marketing and branding strategy
- Thriving commercial corridor

These goals have been utilized as the framework in which the idea of “Communities for a Lifetime” has been explored within this comprehensive planning process, resulting in a series of strategies for the community intended to be realized in multiple phases and iterations as resources and opportunities arise – serving as a roadmap for the community as they look toward the future.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The 2015 Comprehensive Plan sets forth six guiding principles that support the vision and are the basis of the overall framework plans:

1. Promote business services and civic right-sizing. As demographics shift in the coming years, businesses will need to better understand how they can diversify their services and incentivize their employees to meet the demands. This plan outlines North Manchester’s need to focus on a right-sizing approach to its urban core and a rebranding of how local-owned business can succeed.
2. Create a legacy as a “Lifetime Community” focused on citizen well-being. Aging populations and the rise of the Creative Class has produced an increased demand for urban villages designed to attract empty nesters and millennials. This plan focus the Town’s efforts around a “Lifetime Community” initiative that leverages its current assets in the promotion of a vibrant community for all ages and abilities.
3. Strengthen infrastructure to meet future needs. In serving residents with a wide range of age and physical ability, the community’s infrastructure needs to prioritize pedestrian activity and engagement. This plan proposed a holistic approach to multi-model transportation for a rural community, centered around the independence of its residents.
4. Develop a diverse inventory of housing for people of all ages and abilities. Diverse housing is the key to quality neighborhoods and the critical component to any livable community. This plan partners a variety of residential maintenance initiatives with the development of a new 90+ acre subdivision, to create a series of neighborhoods with unique personalities.
5. Redevelop the commercial corridor as walkable, mixed-use urban center focused on livability. With the growing popularity of urban villages, North Manchester is positioned well to utilize their existing historic downtown (and adjacent river) as a key component to their Lifetime Community initiative. This plan focuses on the redevelopment of a unified downtown and riverfront district as the central hub for commercial and social activity within the community.
6. Create “smart growth” strategies for local businesses. In collaboration with institutional partners such and Manchester University, the community will explore “smart growth” strategies that can not only enhance the quality of life the community can offer, but encourage locally-owned business to pursue innovations around community health and well-being. This plan aims to transform North Manchester into a regional leader in exploring how businesses can support people of all ages and abilities.



LIFETIME COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

In an effort to pursue a Lifetime Community model, specific effort should be given to the following:

- **Healthy Community Coalition:** Create a Healthy Community Coalition consisting of local business and institutional leaders to explore how existing assets and services can be enhanced to better serve the Town as a modern healthy community. Tactics could include:
 - Conduct a Livable Communities Evaluation
 - Develop a Task Force to consider how existing institutions and services can play a more active role in economic development and planning within the community.
- **Multi-Modal Public Transit:** Consider a comprehensive transportation study outlining the various modes of transportation, including:
 - Predictability and access of transit services by residents,
 - Safety and ease of use of crosswalks,
 - Interaction between multiple modes of transit (e.g., cars, bikes, pedestrians)
- **Define and Implement a Lifetime Community District:** Determine the geographic limits of the Lifetime Community District and implement an Overlay Zoning District for its future development. This could be performed in collaboration with conversations surrounding new and/or expanded TIF districts within the community.
- **Public Art:** Create a “Public Art” initiative within the community to explore how art can be used as a wayfinding strategy within the Town.

INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

When considering transportation – choice is essential. Everyone should be offered the opportunity to come and go as they wish, connecting themselves independently with each asset and amenity the community has to offer. In doing so, this plan makes the following recommendations:

- **Enhanced Blueways and Greenways:** Planned community trail network should be fully implemented to encourage a diverse use (e.g., walking, jogging, biking) of both greenways (e.g., trails, bike paths) and blueways (e.g., kayaking).
- **Public Transit:** Working with local transit programs (e.g., Living Well in Wabash County CoA, Inc.) and neighboring institutions (e.g., University, retirement communities), consideration should be given to a predictable and municipal service for people of all ages and abilities (e.g., trolley). The route should consider connection between community institutions, adjacent neighborhoods, and everyday goods and services. Additional consideration should be given to formal transport stops for pedestrians.

- Crosswalk Improvements: Existing intersections should be enhanced to allow safe access by pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Traffic calming measures should be implemented where pedestrian traffic is encouraged.
- Adequate Public Toilets: Create a series of clean, conveniently located public restrooms. Access to these are an important amenity in the functionality of active trail systems for many older adults.
- Create Unique and Engaging Parks: Create a variety of outdoor park spaces that offer unique and differing experiences (e.g., passive vs. active). Consideration should be given to spaces designed for everyday use and those designed to host specific events and festivals.
- Wayfinding Signage: Develop a strategy to implement a robust and assistive wayfinding signage program that offer consistent and branded messaging for community amenities and functions. From cultural amenities and historical landmarks to street crossing and gateway markers, this signage should be consistent and intuitive. Specific attention should be given to font and aesthetics to ensure easily read by people of all ages.

NEIGHBORHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS

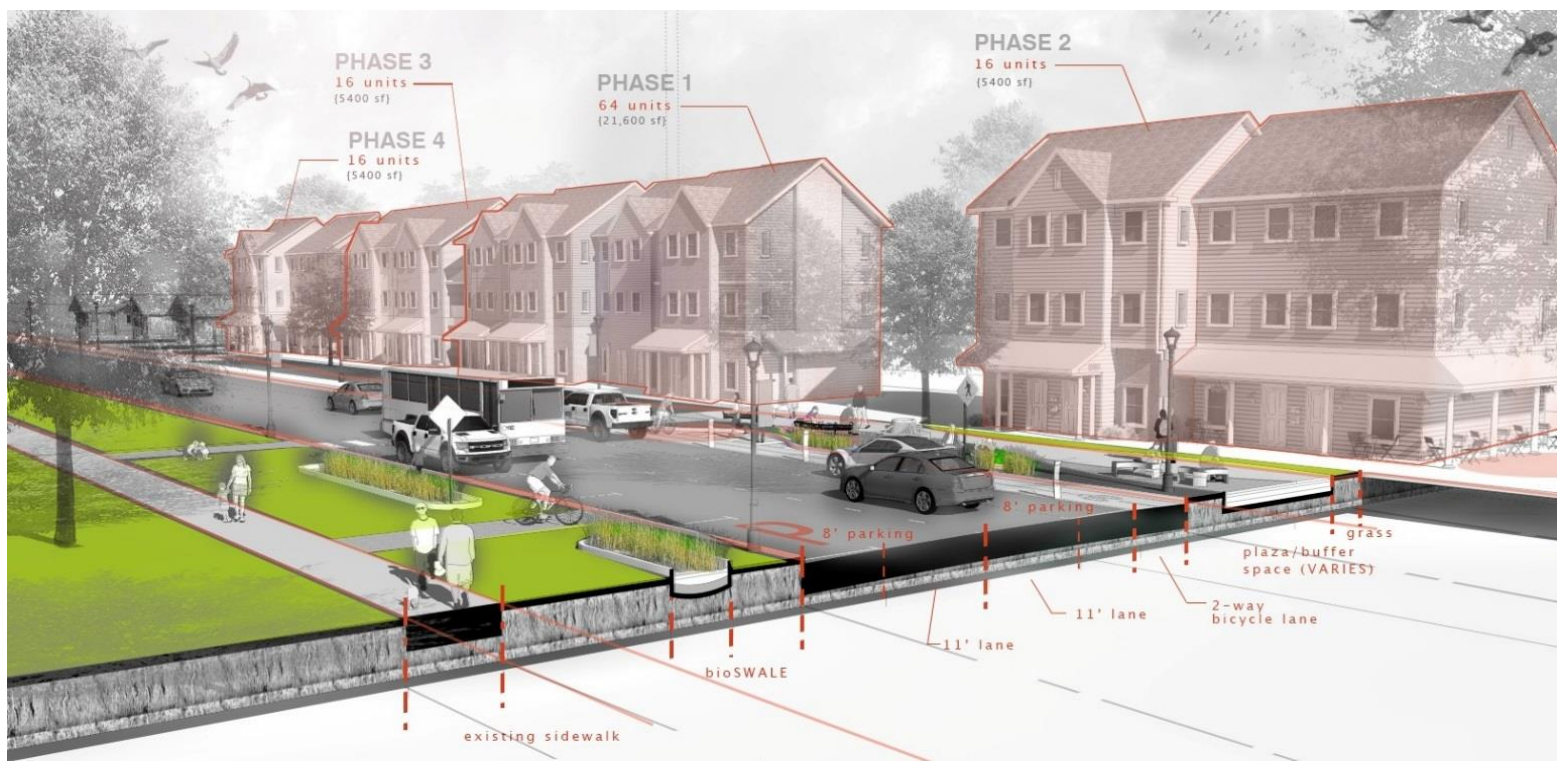
Neighborhoods are about people. They function as a place to interact and socialize. In considering strategies for the Town's neighborhoods to improve in the coming years, specific effort should be given to the following:

- Affordability: Define affordable housing types within the community and conduct a survey of what services are available to these residents. Once compiled, develop a strategy to strengthen the livability of these residents in partnership with existing service providers in the area.
- Accessibility and Modifications: Develop a Home Modification Program to identify funding and implementation of home modifications (e.g. Senior Housing Assistance Repair Program or "SHARP") to ensure homes are accessible and functional for their residents.
- Maintenance: Develop a neighbor-based volunteer network to allow residents and organizations to assist those in need regarding home maintenance and repairs. For more see www.nlfw.org.
- Access to Services: Create a task force to explore ways to consolidate and disseminate information regarding community services and support through one primary source. Define services that have physical limitations and implement this information into a comprehensive housing strategy.
- Diversity: Conduct a county-wide housing study to understand and identify current housing stock, defining surpluses and shortages within the community. In identifying these, specific attention can be given to understanding how unmet demand can be capitalized upon in the coming years.
- Social Interaction: Develop series of programs to incentivize resident pride in front porches. From "façade grant" programs to holiday decorating contests, these strategies aim to encourage social interaction and redefine the importance of these "semi-public" spaces. Additionally, consider the development of a "block club" pilot program to encourage citizen-lead social functions within each neighborhood.

OVERALL PROJECT LIST

General

1. Develop Comprehensive Plan Task Force to review progress.
2. Determine boundaries for future TIF district(s).
3. Conduct a Livable Communities Evaluation (AARP) for the Town in partnership with local retirement communities.
4. Develop a Task Force to consider how existing institutions and services can play a more active role in economic development and planning within the community.
5. Consider a comprehensive transportation study outlining the various modes of transportation, including: Predictably and access of transit services by residents; Safety and ease of use of crosswalks; Interaction between multiple modes of transit (e.g., cars, bikes, pedestrians).
6. Define and Implement a Lifetime Community District (LCD) and an overlay zoning policy.
7. Create a "Public Art" initiative within the community to explore how are can be used as a wayfinding strategy within the Town.
8. Conduct a rebranding effort for the Town that illustrates a clear culture of health and dedication to lifetime communities.



Market Street Development Concept

9. Fully implement community trail network should be fully implemented to encourage a diverse use (e.g., walking, jogging, biking) of both greenways (e.g., trails, bike paths) and blueways (e.g., kayaking).
10. Working with local transit programs (e.g., Living Well in Wabash County CoA, Inc.) and neighboring institutions (e.g., University, retirement communities), consideration should be given to a predictable and municipal service for people of all ages and abilities (e.g., trolley). The route should consider connection between community institutions, adjacent neighborhoods, and everyday goods and services. Additional consideration should be given to formal transport stops for pedestrians.
11. Enhance existing intersections to allow safe access by pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Traffic calming measures should be implemented where pedestrian traffic is encouraged.
12. Create a series of clean, conveniently located public restrooms. Access to these are an important amenity in the functionality of active trail systems for many older adults.
13. Develop a strategy to implement a robust and assistive wayfinding signage program that offers consistent and branded messaging for community amenities and functions.

Neighborhood Development

14. Define affordable housing types within the community and conduct a survey of what services are available to these residents. Once compiled, develop a strategy to strengthen the livability of these residents in partnership with existing service providers in the area.
15. Develop a Home Modification Program to identify funding and implementation of home modifications (e.g. Senior Housing Assistance Repair Program or "SHARP") to ensure homes are accessible and functional for their residents.
16. Develop a neighbor-based volunteer network to allow residents and organizations to assist those in need regarding home maintenance and repairs. For more see www.nlfw.org.
17. Create a task force to explore ways to consolidate and disseminate information regarding community services and support through one primary source. Define services that have physical limitations and implement this information into a comprehensive housing strategy.
18. Conduct a county-wide housing study to understand and identify current housing stock, defining surpluses and shortages within the community. In identifying these, specific attention can be given to understanding how unmet demand can be capitalized upon in the coming years.
19. Develop series of programs to incentivize resident pride in front porches. From "façade grant" programs to holiday decorating contests, these strategies aim to encourage social interaction and redefine the importance of these "semi-public" spaces.

20. Consider the development of a “block club” pilot program to encourage citizen-lead social functions within each neighborhood.
21. Conduct a formal analysis of the existing wetland located within the property and develop a series of design guidelines as to how it can be incorporated into the development.
22. Develop a pattern book to outline design guidelines and strategies for the new neighborhood as a requirement for its development by private investors.
23. Conduct a county-wide housing analysis to define current housing stock and potential future needs in an effort to determine the most appropriate housing types to be include within the development.

Market Street Development

24. Provide enhance along 9th Street to create a clear and intentional connection to surrounding amenities (e.g., Warvel Park, Peabody Retirement Community).
25. Acquire site control of identified land planned for future housing development and pursue private developer(s) for potential multi-family housing.
26. Transform Market Street into functioning “complete street” including, bike lane, on-street parking, transit stop(s), pedestrian crossings, and vehicular traffic lanes.
27. Provide clearly defined crosswalks/lighting at 5th and 9th Street intersections.
28. Provide redeveloped intersection with formal crosswalks, lighting, signalization, and four-way stop sign at 7th Street.
29. Redevelop and rebrand Warvel Park as a “wellness park” by implementing: Jogging/Walking Trail System; Outdoor exercise equipment; Active Adult Playground (e.g., rock-climbing wall); Public restrooms; amphitheater and signage.
30. Conduct formal analysis of existing monuments and cemetery within Holderman Park to confirm current condition. Recommendation to be given as to how future development should incorporate existing monuments.

Downtown + Riverfront Development

31. Explore University Programs that could be housed in downtown storefront.
32. Explore voucher dining program with locally-owned restaurants with retirement communities.
33. Create façade improvement program for “river-facing” facades to encourage outdoor dining.
34. Create policy for the access of service and trash vehicles along the river-facing façade of existing downtown buildings to ensure they will not interrupt key business hours.
35. Consider programs to incentive residential presence in upper floors of downtown buildings.
36. Establish a “farm to fork” imitative with existing Main Street program.
37. Create a dynamic, accessible path system to encourage pedestrian activity from the downtown to the river. In addition, create a series of gathering spaces to host events, small gatherings, and serve as an icon for the river.
38. Create a series of kayak launches along the river in partnership with a formal kayak trail from the University to downtown.
39. Create a coalition focused on training and coaching local downtown businesses in employing and attracting customers of all ages and abilities.
40. Create an attractive park and civic space for festivals and events within the flood plain acreage surrounding the river.
41. Create a local Economic improvement District to serve and program the enlarged downtown area (e.g., beautification, business services, communication, programming).