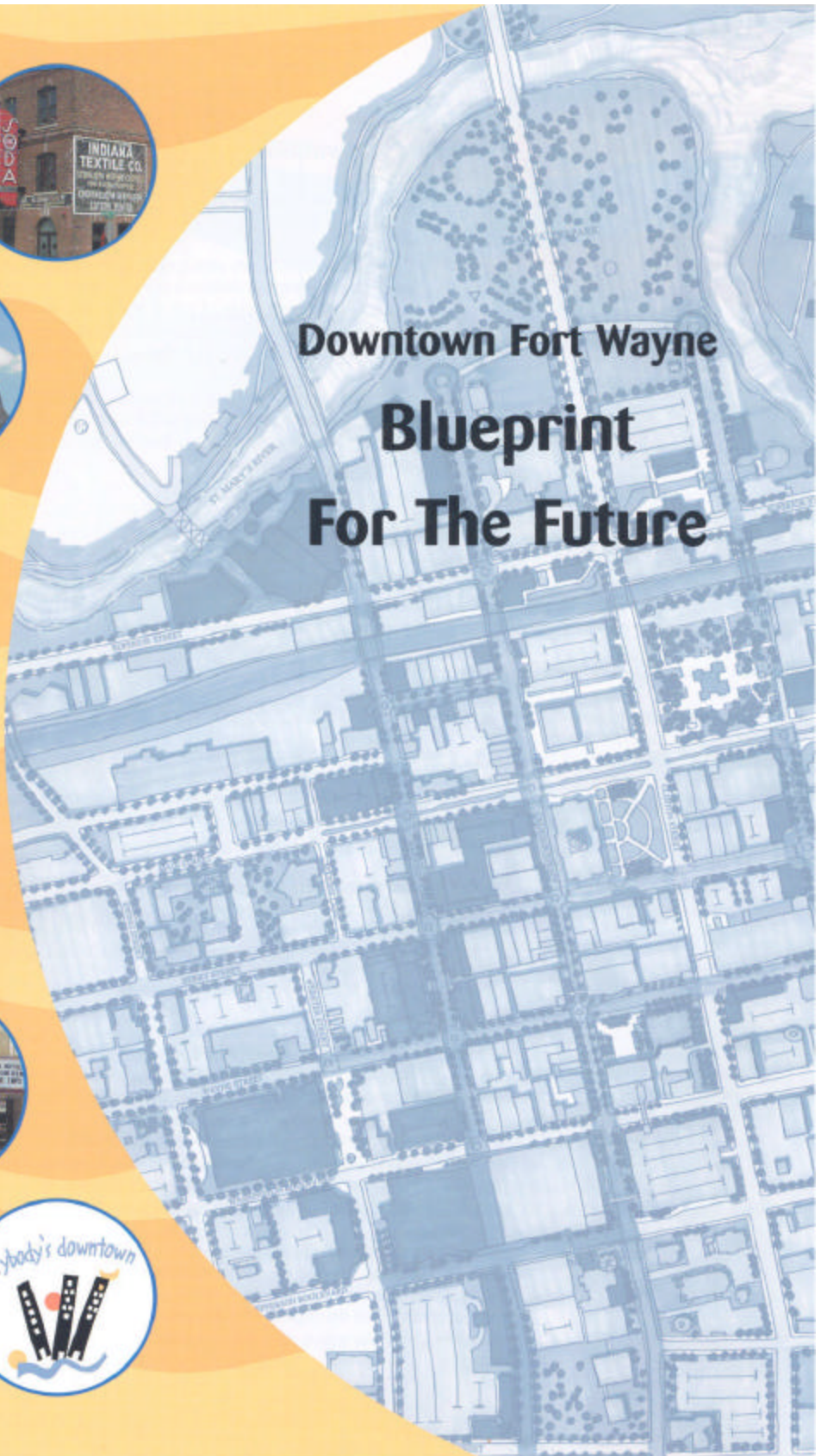
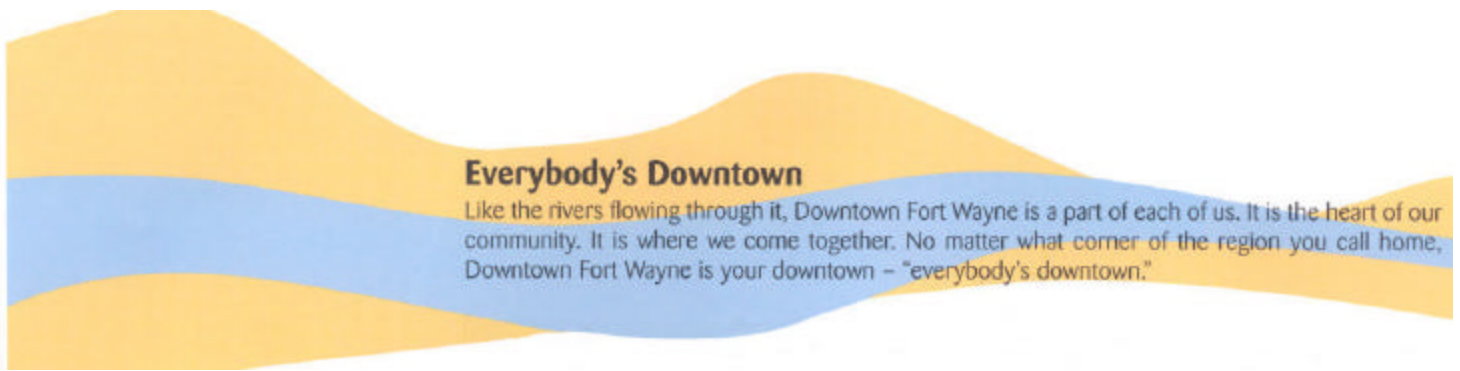




# Downtown Fort Wayne Blueprint For The Future





In symbol and substance, Downtown says much about who and what we are as a community. It marks the place of our beginning. It defines our image to the world. It is the showcase for our creative spirit, our heritage and our pride of place. It is where we gather to celebrate, to affirm our beliefs and to realize our greater civic mission. That shared importance, that claim of communal identity, endows each of us with a stake in its future. Downtown is ours to create, ours to shape.

As times have changed, so has the role of downtown. From Kekionga's trading village to its days as a territorial fortress, from transportation hub to the seat of government, from commercial nexus to the hothouse for art and culture, each era has invented and invigorated Downtown Fort Wayne with a new focus and energy.

The symbolic importance of Downtown will always remain. But with each new age, Downtown must find anew its substantive purpose. In 2002, that charge is both our **challenge and our opportunity**.

## The Vision

Downtown Fort Wayne is... [Everybody's History](#)  
[Everybody's Neighborhood](#)  
[Everybody's Playground](#)  
[Everybody's Opportunity!](#)

Living. Working. Enjoying. Vibrant downtowns work successfully within each of these realms. They are significant contributors to the identity, livability and competitiveness of their greater communities. And they are magnets for activity. Regardless of size, the impact of a healthy downtown is enormous. The goal of the Blueprint is to direct and then stimulate in action a Downtown Fort Wayne with an exciting and undeniable energy.

The vision statement provides the thematic centerpiece for capturing and concentrating our collective efforts. Symbolically and substantively, Downtown Fort Wayne is "everybody's downtown." *To reach its potential and fulfill our aspirations, Downtown Fort Wayne must become the activity center for the region, providing one-of-a-kind business, residential, cultural and recreational opportunities.*

## Taking Stock of Our Downtown

A thorough examination of existing conditions provides the context for the Blueprint. It is based upon research, an investigation of the current situation and meaningful community participation.

### 1. Understanding Market Conditions - Market OverView

The market analysis provides an economic baseline for Downtown Fort Wayne in the context of the City, Allen County, the six-county metropolitan statistical area (MSA), and the State of Indiana. This analysis illustrates the market potential for residential, commercial, and retail investment activity.

Perhaps the key market finding is that a healthy, vibrant Downtown Fort Wayne is dependent upon expanding its market reach. The market must include the Fort Wayne MSA and beyond. In recent history, Downtown has not capitalized on the significant disposable income and demand for services that exists within the region. With this plan, *Downtown has the ability to become a major destination venue for the region*, attracting more customers to its business, cultural, and entertainment venues.



Five market segments, or niches, emerged as potential areas of opportunity: tourism, arts and entertainment, recreation, residential, and office, all which are currently evident in the Downtown marketplace.

A complete copy of the Market Analysis Newsletter is available at [www.yourdowntown.com](http://www.yourdowntown.com).

## 2. Understanding Physical Conditions - The Existing Framework

The "Existing Framework" diagram is a graphic illustration summarizing the existing conditions present in Downtown Fort Wayne. It identifies the key components of Downtown Fort Wayne. Many of the areas show strength (such as the active Downtown churches and the arts and cultural concentration), but others are not fully developed and lack critical mass (e.g. no significant concentration of restaurants in close proximity to one another), There is no unifying look or physical theme to Downtown, street-level activity is limited to weekdays between the business hours of eight and five, and the gateways into Downtown are not clearly defined nor do they convey a sense of enticing entry.

## 3. Understanding Community Desires, Securing Public Involvement - Community Outreach

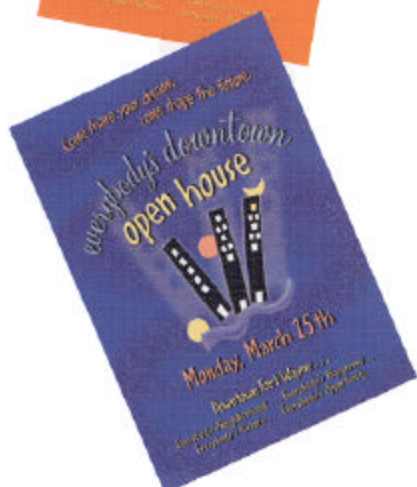
The full participation of the community was actively sought throughout the planning process. Opportunities included approximately 40 stakeholder interviews, three focus group discussions, two community-wide public open houses, nine Steering Committee meetings, and a website dedicated to informing and engaging Fort Wayne, Allen County and regional users.

## Key Blueprint Assumptions

Following the analysis of Downtown Fort Wayne, several conclusions were reached -providing guidance to the remainder of the planning process. These points were affirmed by the Steering Committee and presented to the public at the second open house.

### Key Blueprint Assumptions

- The health of Downtown's core area is critical, and the core is the primary focus area. .
- Downtown has not been capturing its share of the regional market.
- Downtown must become a regional destination point.
- Downtown must spotlight and create regional destination venues.
- Downtown's future is as a mixed-use center (residential, commercial and retail).
- Downtown must link its major destination venues.
- Design, amenities and uniqueness are three terms that should drive future investment.
- The strong interest in and connection to the city's rivers and the potential they represent are future development opportunities.



## Elements of A Healthy Downtown

Successful downtowns share some basic elements, or common ingredients, which make them work. Downtown Fort Wayne was evaluated on its performance relative to these elements as a way to understand: 1) Where Downtown is performing well; and 2) Where the community needs to allocate resources to enable Downtown to perform better.

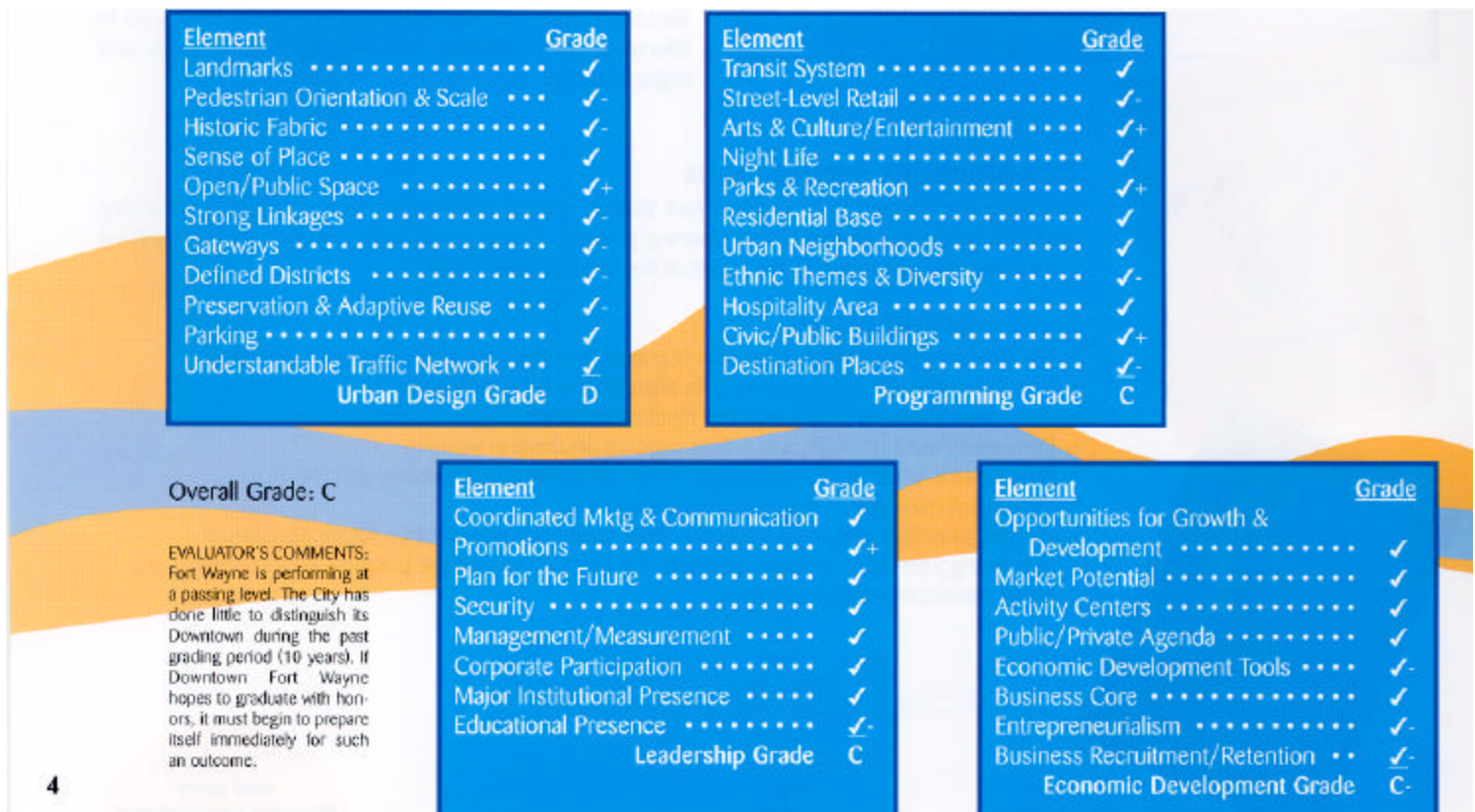
This evaluation concluded that Downtown currently excels in the following areas:

- Arts, Culture and Entertainment .
- Parks and Recreation
- Civic/Public Buildings
- Open/Public Space.
- Downtown Promotions

Deficiencies that must be addressed before Downtown can prosper:

- Business Recruitment/Retention
- Economic Development Tools
- Defined Districts
- Pedestrian Orientation and Scale .
- Preservation and Adaptive Reuse
- Street-Level Retail

The evaluation is laid out as a "Report Card" to the community. This report card is like any other - it clearly "grades" Downtown's performance in specific areas. For any downtown to reach its potential, it must perform well across all of the elements - a balanced commitment to improvement is critical to achieving success. The report card also provides a valuable tool for measuring progress, and will be used on an annual basis to report progress to the community. Recognizing Downtown's strengths and weaknesses provides a valuable method for prioritizing the recommended projects in this Blueprint. By building on Downtown's strengths and aggressively addressing its weaknesses, the community can transform Downtown's "C"s into "N"s.



## The Blueprint - Overview And Recommendations

The Blueprint envisions a Downtown that is vibrant with new activity and with investment, unique in what it offers the region, and diverse with a broad array of commercial, residential, recreational, and cultural uses. The Blueprint presents a framework for achieving the vision of Everybody's Downtown.

The Blueprint serves as the impetus to action. It is the guide, giving focus and cohesion while promoting innovative development. Evolutionary in spirit, it emphasizes flexibility, openness and inclusion. The process of energizing Downtown is both dynamic and ongoing. It builds on the historic strengths and accomplishments of yesterday's Downtown; even as it capitalizes upon the momentum of today by championing and enhancing major initiatives currently underway. The enhancements to the Allen County Public Library and Grand Wayne Center expansions are primary examples.

The Blueprint recommendations which follow, encompass and detail three integrated components: Foundation Elements, Destination Districts and Collaborative Initiatives.

## Foundation Elements

The Blueprint's Foundation Elements are priority initiatives that are tied to the Elements of a Healthy Downtown. They ground and support all other aspects of the plan. Engaged and empowered leadership at the highest levels; focused and sustained economic development efforts; strong attention to the aesthetic requirements of a successful downtown; and innovative programming of downtown buildings, uses and activities ensure the "foundation" on which the "unique and special" downtown will be built.

### Leadership Elements

- Blueprint Leadership
- Unified Marketing and Branding

### Economic Development Elements

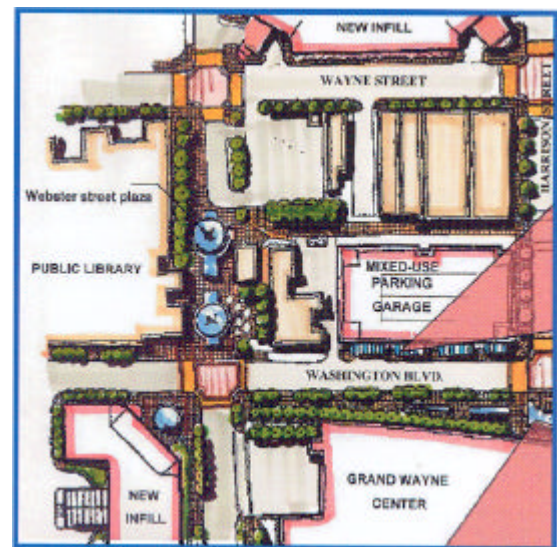
- Business Retention/Recruitment Program
- Economic Incentives

### Urban Design Elements

- Wayfinding System
- Urban Design Guidelines
- Streetscape Improvements
- Traffic Circulation Improvements

### Programming Elements

- District Specific Programming
- Expanded Programming and Marketing for Arts and Cultural Organizations



IMPROVEMENTS AROUND  
THE GRAND WAYNE

Find more  
Blueprint Information at  
[www.yourdowntown.com](http://www.yourdowntown.com)



## Destination Districts

One of the Elements of a Healthy Downtown is defined districts (under the heading of Urban Design). Defined districts bring recognition to Downtown's unique businesses and points of interest by employing strategies that group them together. Businesses are more successful when located in an area that is known to have a concentration of "like uses." Districting is a way to place a name and identity in a specific area; it is a form of brand awareness. The Blueprint recommends that Downtown be divided into four distinct districts based on physical character, type of uses, and use concentration - both current and future.

- DOWNTOWN DISTRICT:
- LANDING (YELLOW)
  - HOSPITALITY (RED)
  - BARR STREET (PURPLE)
  - CANAL (BLUE)

The **Landing District** builds on the existing entertainment momentum of The Landing and expands the geographic area of this niche beyond Columbia Street. This district includes uses that are considered traditional entertainment district uses, such as restaurants and nightclubs, in addition to mixed-used development featuring "creative industries" (architects, interior designers, advertising firms, etc.), commercial office space, and residential units located on upper-floors above unique and indigenous retail uses. The Landing District is a

lynch pin among the Downtown districts in that it has a physical connection to each district - a strong development and pedestrian link along Harrison Street to the Hospitality District, a strong development and pedestrian link to the Barr Street District along Main Street, and it is directly adjacent to the Old Canal District.

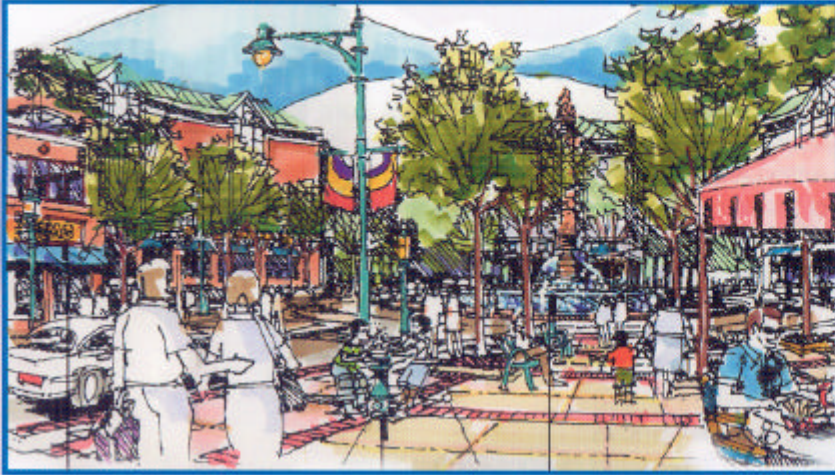
- Harrison Street Infill Strategy -Wayne to Superior Streets Phased Streetscape Improvements with Angled Parking -
- Washington to Superior Streets
- New Mixed Use Infill -Northwest Corner of Harrison and Main Streets
- Expanded Landing Streetscape Improvements
- Maximize Use of Bonar Building
- Restore Fountain at Columbia and Harrison Streets



HARRISON STREET LANDING DISTRICT

The **Hospitality District** is Downtown's welcome center, the first stop for the Fort Wayne visitor. The hospitality focal points are the expanding Grand Wayne Center, Public Library, Embassy Theatre, and Botanical Conservatory. Several other important Downtown venues are located in this district as well, such as the Hilton Hotel, Convention and Visitors Bureau Welcome Center, Scottish Rite Auditorium, and many historic and notable churches.

- Grand Wayne Center and Downtown Library Gateway Streetscape
- Maximize Use of Bonsib Building
- Embassy Theatre Streetscape
- Library Expansion
- Grand Wayne Center Expansion
- Webster Street Plaza
- Mixed Use Parking Garage at Northwest Corner of Washington and Harrison Streets
- Civic Center Parking Garage Renovation
- Study of reduced width of Jefferson and Washington Streets within Downtown Core
- Scottish Rite Center Renovation
- Hotel/Mixed Use Development at Southwest Corner of Jefferson and Harrison Streets
- Indiana Hotel Renovation
- Botanical Garden Expansion/For-profit Retail Development
- Embassy Theatre Façade Renovation
- Redevelopment Site West of Webster, Portland Building Block



HARRISON STREET DEVELOPMENT

The **Barr Street District** elevates awareness of Downtown as a fun and entertaining place for art and culture in the Fort Wayne region, in terms of facilities, activities, and programming. This designation does not suggest that all cultural venues must be located on Barr Street in order to be a part of the district. Barr Street merely serves as the organizing element and the location of several existing cultural venues. It is a symbol associated with Fort Wayne cultural activities both current and future and the starting point for this initiative.

- Renovation of Marketplace on Barr Street -Berry to Washington Streets
- Streetscape Improvements -Intersection of Main and Barr
- Phased Streetscape Improvements along Barr Street -Main to Jefferson Streets
- Citilink Transit Facility Development
- Main Street Plaza -in front of PAC and Museum of Art
- Main Street Median Project "Daylily River"
- Rich Concentration of Public Art and Blank Wall Treatments
- Maximize Use of NIPSCO Building
- Heritage Square Development Adjoining History Center
  - McCulloch House Renovation
  - Alexander Taylor Rankin House Renovation
- Museum of Art Expansion
- New Mixed Use Infill Development



INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS ON BARR STREET

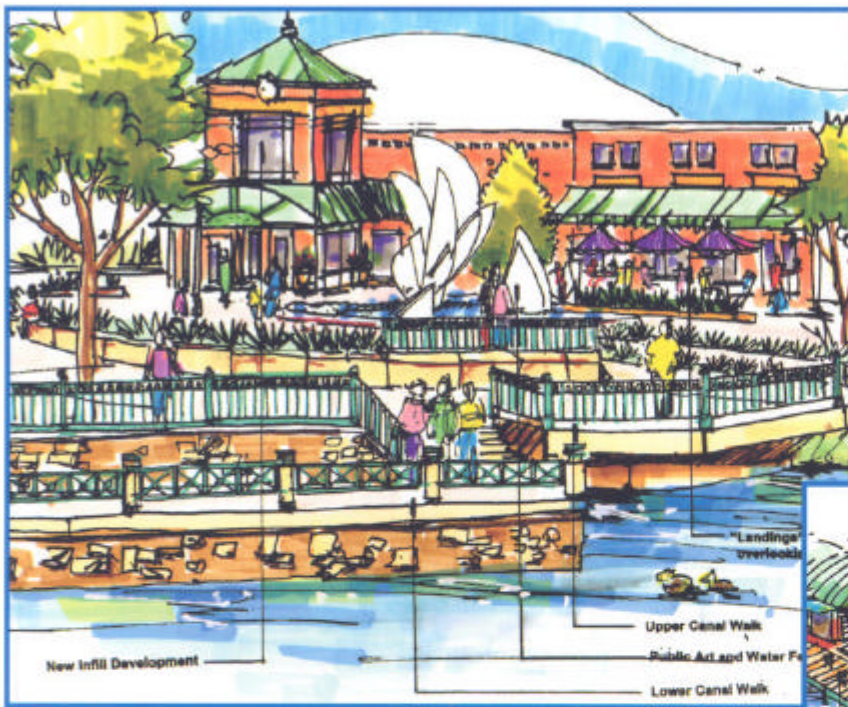


BARR STREET MARKET

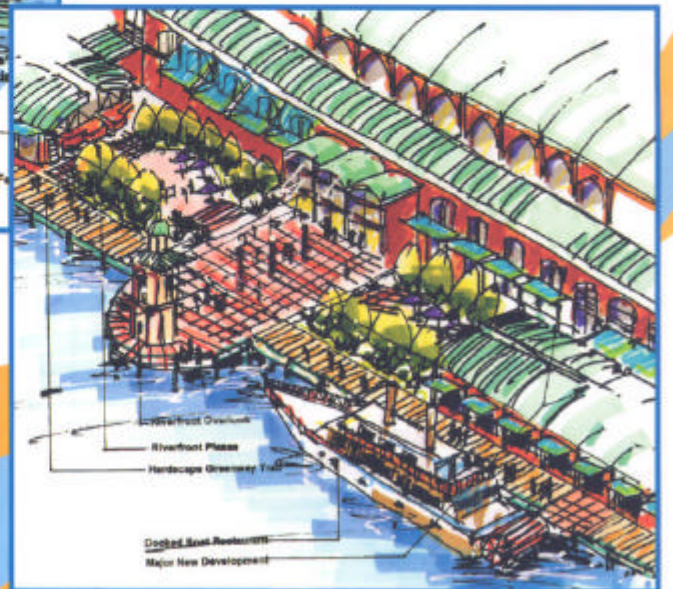
Find more  
Blueprint Information at  
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The **Old Canal District** mixes recreational and commercial uses along Superior Street and proposes the reintroduction of a canal or significant water-based features. This area would include pedestrian walkways, a connection to the existing Rivergreenway system, and a physical link between the Landing and Barr Street Districts. Included in proposals for this area are the development of a new "anchor" project at the north end of Harrison Street at the River, enhanced pedestrian access to Headwaters Park, and improvements to the rail overpass on Clinton Street to create a defining gateway into Downtown.

- Canal Area Feasibility Study
  - Significant Water Features
- Rail Overpass and Gateway Enhancements
- Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Improvements along Clinton Street
  - Pedestrian Improvements Under Rail Overpass
  - East Lane Modifications on Clinton Street -Superior Street to Freimann Square
  - Pedestrian Crossing Improvements at Headwaters Park
- Enhanced Linkages to Rivergreenway System
- Maximize Use of Existing Citilink Site
- East Superior Market Study
  - Extend Arts and Cultural Activities -Barr to Superior Streets
  - Maximize Use of Taylor Rental Building
- Anchor Activity at Harrison Street near River
- Lighting/enhanced walkways on bridges such as Clinton, Lafayette and Wells Street bridges



RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT





## Collaborative Initiatives

The Blueprint illustrates the pivotal role of Downtown set amidst and interacting with the residential neighborhoods and commercial areas surrounding it. Some of these include East and West Central neighborhoods, St. Joseph Hospital, the Lincoln National campus, the areas just north of the river along with the OmniSource site and the Historic Fort. Expanding upon the collective regional potential, Downtown Fort Wayne can become an additional magnet for activity and investment when marketed in concert with other leading shopping areas, cultural and visitor attractions and sporting venues.

The Collaborative Initiatives are grouped into three broad categories:

## Strategic Developments Adjacent to Downtown

- OmniSource Development
- Indiana Institute of Technology (IIT)
- St. Joseph Hospital
- Lincoln National Campus
- Historic Fort
- Baker Street Station Renovation

## Emergent Initiatives

- Digital Downtown – The economic future of modern cities will be defined by their capacity to generate, process and distribute information. Fort Wayne can become a regional and national communications hub to realize its full potential in the information age. Through the development of wireless zones and hot spots, promotion of existing high capacity fiber networks and application of available uses of technology, Downtown will gain a strategic advantage as it becomes a magnet for technology-oriented businesses and learning activities.
- Sports Corporation Project – The Fort Wayne Sports Corporation published a report in Spring 2002 detailing the type and possible sites for a recreational sports facility capable of hosting state, regional and national events. The project represents a highly desirable activity generator for downtown, increasing its visibility and customer base. The Blueprint for Downtown proposes a joint effort between the Sports Corporation and the City to undertake a detailed Downtown site assessment/selection as the key next step to moving this catalyst project forward.
- Downtown Churches Partnership – At the heard of the City of Churches, Downtown Fort Wayne is the center and origin of a strong religious community that remains active today. The mission of many of these churches is to foster and improve their Downtown presence. In addition to providing spiritual guidance, many also provide learning and entertainment opportunities, nonprofit child-care and other faith-based social services within Downtown. These services and programs bring people Downtown at non-peak hours, presenting unique opportunities for supporting Downtown revitalization.
- Innovative Public-Private Funding for the Arts
- Infill Housing Opportunities
- High-Speed Passenger Service

## Coordinated Community Planning Efforts

Concurrent with the development of this Blueprint, the City and County have initiated other important planning projects that are being coordinated with the Downtown efforts. Specifically, the City Parks Department has begun work on a new Parks Master Plan, the City Planning Department has initiated work on a new Housing Strategy; and finally, beginning in 2003, the City and County are embarking on a joint effort to create a new comprehensive plan for the entire community. Each process will focus significant attention on the Downtown and the central city.



everybody's downtown



## Acknowledgements

### Downtown Initiative Co-Chairs

Mayor Graham Richard, City of Fort Wayne  
Commissioner Marla Irving, Allen County

### Steering Committee

Paula Hughes, Downtown Improvement District  
Angela Boerger, Communications Consultant  
Ben Eisbart, Omni Source  
Dave Gionet, Citilink  
Christopher Guerin, Fort Wayne Redevelopment Commission  
Eric Heffley, Southwest Area Partnership  
George Huber, Equity Investment Group  
Darrel Jagers, Invent Tomorrow  
Phil Laux, Chamber of Commerce  
Senator David Long, Indiana State Legislature  
James Owen, Plan Commission  
Steve Rahn, Lincoln National  
Elias Samaan, Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (retired)  
Tom Smith, Fort Wayne City Council  
John Stafford, Sagamore Associates  
Pat Tippmann, Tippmann Group  
Bob Walters, Barrett and McNagny

A special thank you to all of the members of the Downtown Task Force sub-committees for their ideas and time.

*“There will come a time when you  
believe everything is finished.  
That will be the beginning.”  
- Louis L'Amour*

For ongoing Downtown Blueprint updates go to [www.yourdowntown.com](http://www.yourdowntown.com).

To schedule a Blueprint presentation for your group, call the

**Downtown Improvement District at 420-3266.**



DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT  
DISTRICT