



Vision Plan

ELLETTSVILLE WOULDN'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT...

OUR
SENSE OF
COMMUNITY

OUR
SMALL
TOWN FEEL

OUR
LIMESTONE
HISTORY

OUR
STRONG
SCHOOL
SYSTEM

OUR
COMMUNITY
ORGANIZATIONS

OUR
QUAINT
DOWNTOWN

OUR
FALL FESTIVAL

- COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES

Planning for Tomorrow, Planning for Greater Ellettsville

Vibrant. Connected. Thriving. There is no better time to start planning for tomorrow than now. As the Ellettsville community looks in the proverbial rear-view mirror while driving toward the future, it is evident that the community has experienced highs and lows. Each high ushers a momentum that can either be built upon or burnt out. Each low is an opportunity to either continue forward on the anticipated path or make a detour towards something new.

Starting with the high points, Ellettsville has many things to celebrate. In the last several years, Ellettsville has experienced growth in population leading to new development, new pedestrian connections including the completion of the Heritage Trail, and expansion of local organizations such as the Greater Ellettsville Chamber of Commerce. As of 2020, the Town of Ellettsville is home to just over 6,600 residents. Over the last decade, Ellettsville has grown by 4.3%. While this could indicate that nearly 300 new residents were born into existing Ellettsville families, it is more likely that the influx was spawned by a large number of people choosing to move and make Ellettsville their home. Maybe it was the affordable housing options, strong school system, and/or proximity to larger cities and natural features that drew them here? Whatever the reason, Ellettsville is growing and there is opportunity to capitalize on. **This planning process provides a platform for introducing incremental and transformative ideas that can strengthen Ellettsville's identity and broaden the type of development, amenities, and services offered to support current and future residents.**

Looking at the Town's obstacles, Ellettsville has been dealing with a community identity crisis for the better part of the last decade. This predicament stems from several contributing factors - some more deep-rooted than others. Residents, local leaders, and business owners find themselves asking the following questions:

- How does Ellettsville fit into the regional approach for economic development?
- How do we set ourselves apart from Bloomington while still working collaboratively to better both of our communities?
- Why does my next-door neighbor have a Bloomington address, but I have an Ellettsville address?
- How can Ellettsville embrace these residents that call Ellettsville home but do not live within the geographic town limits?

The first step in overcoming a community identity crisis is to consider who the Town is planning for. When it comes to community identity and establishing a vision for the future, Ellettsville believes the Town boundary is merely a line on the map that separates one jurisdiction from another. A sense of belonging to a particular community transcends geographic bounds. For this reason, the *Envision Ellettsville Vision Plan* considers opportunities beyond the town limits. The Envision Ellettsville process reflects a collection of thoughts and ideas for the Greater Ellettsville area which includes both Richland Township and Bean Blossom Township. It is important to note that these ideas will require communication and collaboration between the Town of Ellettsville and Monroe County.

Together, the Town of Ellettsville, its partners, and the Greater Ellettsville neighbors can build a complete community – a place where you don't have to leave in order to access everyday essentials - a place where residents and businesses thrive. Welcome to Ellettsville!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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A special thanks goes out to the residents, stakeholders, and community leaders for their insight and participation throughout the Vision Planning process. The following individuals are recognized for their contribution in the preparation of the Vision Plan.

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- Gary Brinley - *Peoples State Bank*
- Christa Curtis - *Cook Medical*
- Jimmie Durnil - *Ellettsville Police Dept.*
- William Ellis - *Ellettsville Town Council*
- Michael Farmer - *Town of Ellettsville*
- Chris Fisher - *Ellettsville Main Street Inc*
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- Christy Langley - *Hoosier Energy*
- Darby McCarty - *Smithville*
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- Kevin Tolloty - *Town of Ellettsville*

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- Cullen McCarty - *Smithville*
- Dr. Jerry Sanders - *Richland Bean Blossom School Corp*
- Pete Yonkman - *Cook Medical*

LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS FOCUS GROUP

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- Braxton Harrison - *People State Bank*
- Donna Niese - *State Farm*

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL FOCUS GROUP

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- Mitch Hannon - *Blueline*
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COMMUNITY SERVICES FOCUS GROUP

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- Gary Brinley - *Peoples State Bank*
- Diana Choate - *Monroe County's Fall Festival*
- Chris Fisher - *Fishers Reporting, Inc.*
- Chris Hosler - *Ellettsville Public Library*

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“We need to keep revising our thoughts as reality changes around us. The one constant factor that has never changed is our sense of community. This is what defines Ellettsville as our hometown now and forever more.”

- Vision Wall Participant



What is a
Vision Plan?

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

What is a Vision Plan?

A Vision Plan is a guidance document that outlines a community-wide vision for the future. It is a result of a planning process that provided several opportunities for the community to pause, take inventory of how things currently are, and then define what Ellettsville wants to be in the future. The *Envision Ellettsville Vision Plan* is grounded in the understanding of current conditions and community perceptions. This Vision Plan provides an opportunity to think big and bold about the future while still being holistic and practical in the approach. The community was able to dream about how development in Ellettsville could look, reflect on how they would like residents and visitors to move about the community, and think creatively about addressing a wide range of physical challenges spanning from lack of amenities to flood mitigation.

Of particular importance is understanding how a Vision Plan is different from a comprehensive plan and how the two documents can work together. A comprehensive plan is a guidance document that provides a roadmap for the next 10-20 years and is formally adopted by the Town Council.

Outlined by Indiana Code, comprehensive plans are required to provide statements about future growth in regard to land use, transportation and utilities, and other public services and facilities.

A Vision Plan stays at a much higher level, outlining an overall vision for the community with recommendations that focus on placemaking and physical improvements. This Vision Plan sets the stage for a comprehensive plan update and should be used to ensure the updated comprehensive plan aligns with the vision outlined within this document.

The *Envision Ellettsville Vision Plan* defines our vision for the future as a complete community and then identifies supporting goals and big ideas for achieving that vision – one step at a time. The *Envision Ellettsville Vision Plan* is just the beginning of a meaningful transformation for where Ellettsville is heading. This document will serve as a launching pad for taking the big ideas and turning them into reality. A complete community does not appear overnight – it takes time and dedication.

Why Plan? Why Now?

The Envision Ellettsville initiative was created by the Greater Ellettsville Area Chamber of Commerce and Ellettsville Main Street Inc. and funded through a Community Impact Grant by the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County (CFBMC). This initiative was born out of the need for a shared vision in order for the community to take thoughtful, community-driven steps forward.

Most planning processes are kick-started by one of two things: the community needing assistance overcoming a series of challenges that are negatively impacting their community or the ability to leverage new opportunities to enhance the community. For Ellettsville, it is a combination of both.

Supply versus demand is a fragile concept for communities. Too much supply can leave houses or businesses sitting vacant and too much demand can lead to skyrocketing prices. Ellettsville is uniquely positioned in its ability to offer a supply that can match the demand. The demand is apparent in the population growth. The Town of Ellettsville has grown by 4% over the last 10 years. If we expand the geographic area to include the Greater Ellettsville area, that percentage is even higher at a total 8.5% increase in population. The supply is perceived as the available land surrounding Ellettsville and the excess capacity within the Town's utility services. This signifies people and businesses want to live and do business within the community and Ellettsville is fortunate to have the resources to welcome them, but the question becomes about how to best manage the supply and demand.

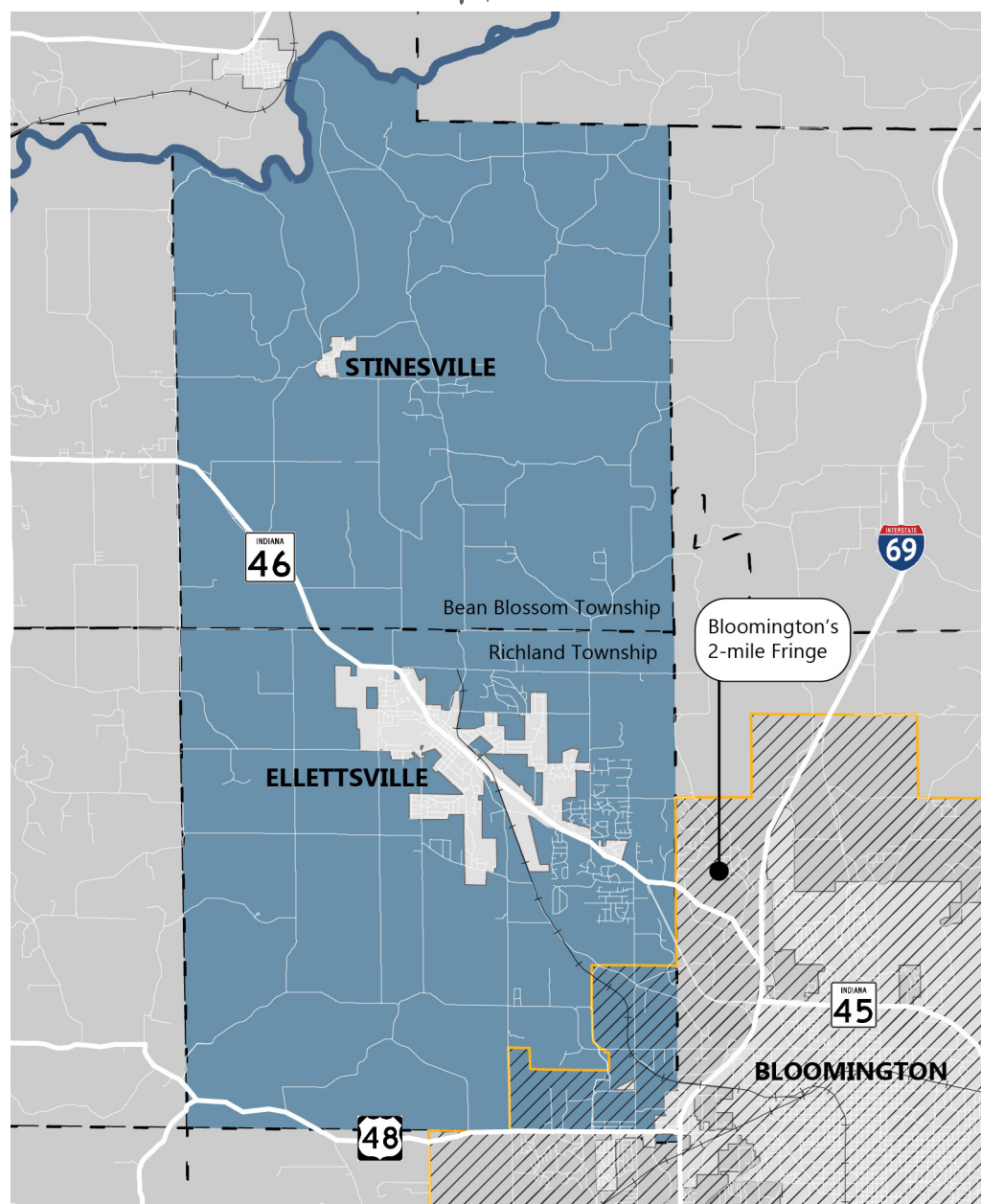
Planning for the supply associated with growth requires maintaining or enhancing existing areas and expanding into new areas. Prioritizing the enhancement of existing areas of the Town has a direct impact on current residents and businesses. Efforts such as beautification, code enforcement, and infill and redevelopment projects can start to create a population retention and community reinvestment strategies. For outward growth, Ellettsville can explore areas of opportunity just outside of their jurisdiction. Through future land use planning and targeting areas of identified future growth, Ellettsville can develop an annexation strategy to help guide the Town as to where and how the community should grow. Of particular importance to Ellettsville is Bloomington's 2-mile fringe, which is only 1 mile from Ellettsville's current town boundary. This means that Bloomington has planning and zoning control over most of the SR 46 east of Ellettsville. Capturing the 1-mile area of opportunity along SR 46, between the existing Ellettsville town boundary and the current 2-mile fringe zone, requires the Town to be proactive in supporting growth and development along the corridor.

Annexation is the absorption of territory by expanding the town limits.

There are many benefits for both the property owners and the town when annexing. Property owners benefits include lower water and sewer rates, quality police and fire protection, maintained roads and sidewalks, and the ability to vote in local elections and participate in local government. The primary benefits for the Town are directly related to fiscal health. Annexation leads to a greater and more diverse tax base and revenue sources.

Planning for the demands associated with growth requires determining who and what the Town wants to attract. The “who” is important because the demographics play a major role in the types of housing, services, and amenities that are desired and necessary for a target market. The strategy would be different if the Town were planning for families as opposed for young professionals. The “what” identifies desirable types of development. Some community members welcome multi-family residential while others prefer it not be located within their community. Some communities want large employers to fill a business park while others want local, mom-and-pop businesses within the heart of downtown. Community feedback collected during the visioning process indicated that the residents of Ellettsville are mixed on such topics, desiring more single-family homes but recognizing the advantages to more diverse housing and encouraging the idea of larger employers with an associated business park but still longing for the downtown atmosphere of small business owners. This response to these wants and needs can be addressed through the creation of population and workforce attraction strategies. These strategies can work together to chart the path forward for Ellettsville. The *Envision Ellettsville Vision Plan* strives to provide guidance for both scenarios - enhancing existing areas and expanding into new areas, while also acknowledging the reality of the challenges that Ellettsville is facing.

Greater Ellettsville Context Map



Planning Process

Visioning is a participatory process where stakeholders and residents develop consensus around what a community will look like or be like in the future. The *Envision Ellettsville Vision Plan* was completed in a 6-phase process over the course of 8-months.

Project Kick-off: The key tasks completed during phase 1 included meeting with the steering committee, completing a community tour, creating a brand and identity for the project (not a brand and identity for the Town), and establishing the project website.

Information Gathering and Review: The key tasks completed during phase 2 included collecting data, completing an inventory of the built environment, and facilitating the second steering committee meeting.

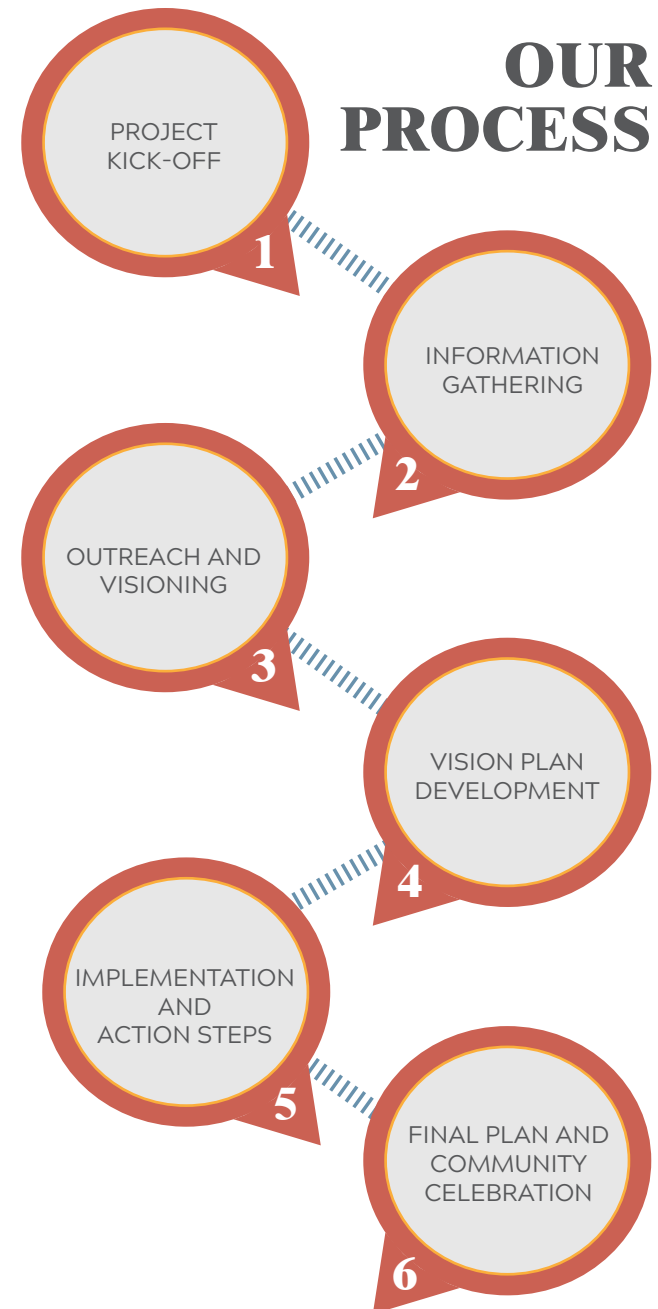
Community Outreach and Visioning: The key tasks completed during phase 3 were geared toward public engagement. The project team hosted the third steering committee meeting and focus group interviews, facilitated a public visioning workshop, developed a mobile display that traveled around Town, and published an online survey and engagement tool via the project website.

Vision Plan Development: The key tasks completed during phase 4 included completing a series of SWOT analysis summaries and drafting a community identity statement, vision statement, and supporting goal statements. The project team presented the draft content at the fourth steering committee meeting and facilitated a work session with the Town Council.

Implementation & Action Steps: The key tasks completed during phase 5 included the development of the action agenda (big ideas), hosting the final steering committee meeting, and drafting the final plan document.

Final Vision Plan & Public Celebration: The key task completed during phase 6 included finalizing the Vision Plan and facilitating a community celebration.

OUR PROCESS



Community Engagement

An extensive public and community engagement strategy was utilized to broaden the input of this Vision Plan. Its purpose was to cast a wide net with the intent of capturing a broad array of input, direction, and feedback from community leaders, business owners, and residents. Public input is more than just getting ideas, it's about communicating with residents, working with business owners, and bringing the community together. It was understood from the beginning that this plan needs to inform and educate those groups while allowing for input of ideas, suggestions for improvements and a continuous ongoing dialogue in the community. In order to best achieve this, several different input strategies were employed during the Envision Ellettsville process.

GUIDING GROUPS

- **Community Steering Committee**

A Steering Committee made up of residents, community leaders, business leaders, and other stakeholders guided the development of the Vision Plan. In all, eight meetings were held with the Steering Committee during planning process.

Prior to this planning effort, the committee initiated preliminary visioning efforts by performing early planning tasks, fundraising and securing additional resources, and selected a consultant to assist with the effort. Once the vision process started, preliminary planning ideas and direction were presented to the Steering Committee for feedback, and their input provided general direction on all of the public engagement and planning efforts.

- **Key Stakeholder Interviews**

The Steering Committee identified five key community stakeholders for a deeper dive on conversations specific to Ellettsville's future. Each of the key stakeholders were identified based upon their community investment and because they or their organizations are integral to the success of the community. One-on-one interviews were conducted with each key stakeholder and the input received was incorporated into the broader perspective being received from other groups. This input allowed a counter check to the broader input being received from residents.

- **Focus Groups**

As a part of Outreach and Visioning phase of the Envision Ellettsville planning process, the project team hosted a series of focus groups and stakeholder interviews. These interviews provided the project team an opportunity to dive deep into specific topics with people that represent certain organizations or backgrounds. This process focused on hearing from individuals that represented the Local Businesses, Public Utilities, Community Service Providers, High School Students, and Young Professionals.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

- **Online and Social Media Engagement**

One of the first levels of engagement included the development of an online website and social media for the project. Working with the Steering Committee, a project-specific website was created as an online platform for project information and input. Residents could access a public survey for the plan, create ideas for a “vision wall,” and provide community-specific input on a mapping exercise of the Greater Ellettsville area. While this allowed for a more personal interaction with the process, it also provided an additional layer of access important during the pandemic, when not everyone was comfortable participating in in-person sessions. During the planning process, there were over 1000 unique online sessions on the website with over 812 unique views.

- **Mobile Display**

Another tool used to gather community input was a project mobile display. A portable display unit with information about the Envision Ellettsville project and input questions were included on a display that traveled to different businesses and organizations in the Greater Ellettsville area. The mobile display provided an additional opportunity to reach out to the community and allow residents to provide feedback on the project and its direction.

- **Public Visioning Workshop**

A Public Visioning Workshop was held for the Greater Ellettsville area to gather input and ideas regarding opportunities/challenges, capital improvement projects, community amenities, and programming that need to be addressed. This Visioning Workshop was structured so attendees could interact with the planning team one-on-one and participate in an open-house format to provide ideas or comments. Over 50 residents attended the Visioning Workshop and provided input on the process.

- **Public Online Survey**

In addition to the Public Visioning Workshop, a community survey was facilitated and advertised through social media and the project website. The survey identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the community as well as provided insight for future projects, programs, and capital investments that will form the community’s vision. Throughout the process, there were 413 people who took the survey and a nearly 81% completion rate.

- **Town Council Working Session**

Members of the Steering Committee and the planning team facilitated a working session with the Town Council. At this meeting, the planning team provided a project update and facilitated a discussion about the vision and potential future needs in Ellettsville. During this session, participants brainstormed ideas on how best to align the plan recommendations with the current priorities of the Town and the financial aspects associated with implementation.

Engagement by the Numbers

Providing a robust public engagement and communication plan was of the upmost importance to the Envision Ellettsville steering committee. Through various engagement opportunities, both in-person and online, the project team was able to listen and educate a wide cross-section of people who live, work, and/or do business within Greater Ellettsville.

8 Steering Committee Meetings



200+

Dot stickers used at the workshop



100+

Written comments received at the workshop



812

Project Website Views



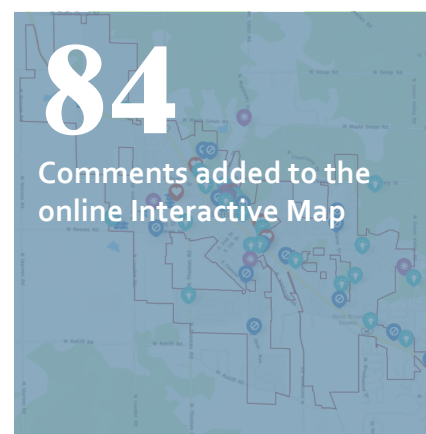
50

People attended the Public Visioning Workshop



84

Comments added to the online Interactive Map



5 Key Stakeholder Interviews

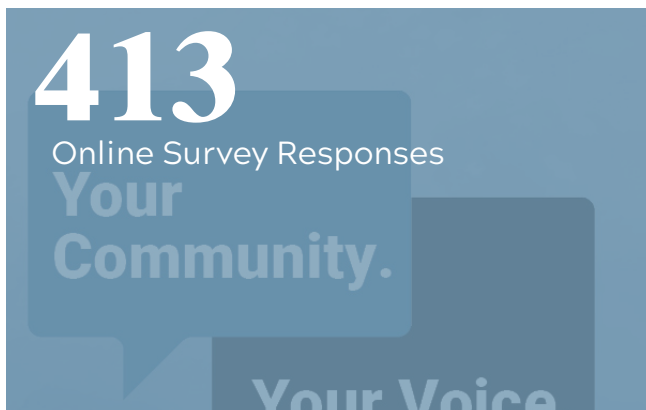


5 Focus Group Meetings

413

Online Survey Responses

Your Community.



78

Comments added to the online Vision Wall



288

Total visits to the online Vision Wall



721

Total visits to the online Interactive Map



ENGAGEMENT KEY TAKEAWAYS - WHERE ARE WE NOW?

A key component to planning for the future is understanding what the community values and what they would like to see improved. The following page outlines key takeaways from the Online Community Survey. The full summary can be found in the appendix.



COMMUNITY ASSETS

Location | Small Town Charm | Education |
Quality of Life | Availability of Land

COMMUNITY-WIDE CHALLENGES

Lack of entertainment options | Lack of cohesive vision |
Lack of diversity in businesses | Beautification

COMMUNITY VALUES

Safe neighborhoods | Thriving businesses | Vibrant Downtown | Welcoming Change | Walkability

DOWNTOWN CHALLENGES

Lack of Retail and Dining Options | Flooding | Beautification and Visual Appearance |
Ability to Attract Visitors

WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

The Public Visioning Workshop allowed attendees to dream big about the future of Ellettsville. The following page outlines words or phrases that were identified on the vision wall during the Visioning Workshop. The full summary can be found in the appendix.



ENVISION ELLETTSVILLE AS A PLACE TO **LIVE**

Destination Restaurants | Public
Gathering Spaces | Single-family
Homes with various lot sizes

ENVISION ELLETTSVILLE AS A PLACE FOR **BUSINESSES**

Reliable Broadband | Neighborhood Services |
Employment Opportunities | Coworking Spaces |
More Young Professionals | Improved Connectivity

ENVISION ELLETTSVILLE AS A PLACE FOR **RECREATION**

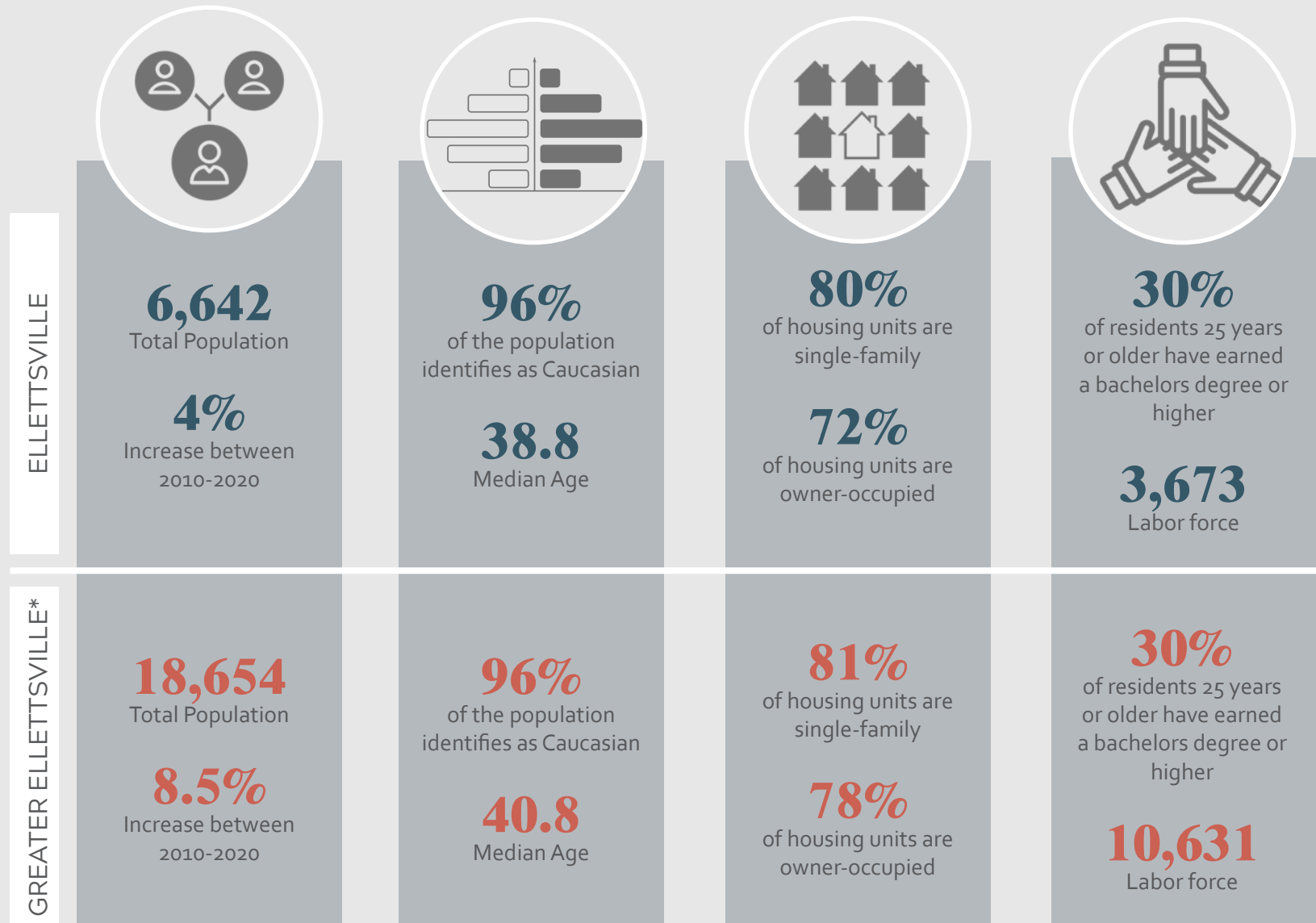
Improved Sidewalks and Trails | Public Gathering
Space | More Picnic Shelters and Playgrounds

ENVISION ELLETTSVILLE AS A PLACE FOR **ENTERTAINMENT**

Vibrant Downtown | Local Shops | Sidewalks
and Trails | Breweries and wineries

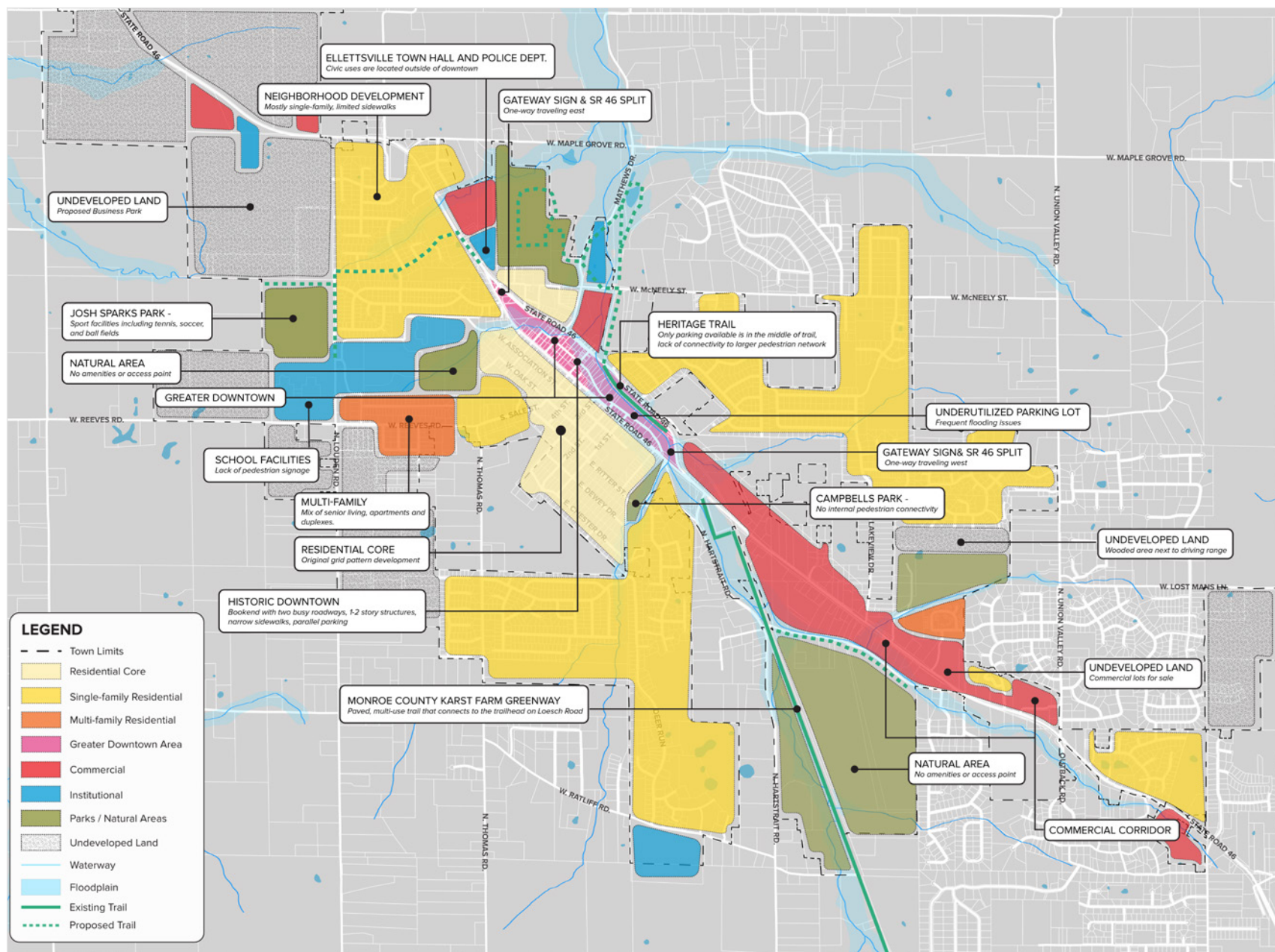
Community Snapshot

A quick snapshot of Ellettsville's current conditions was collected and analyzed to illustrate some of the data-driven opportunities and challenges. Many of the findings are explained in greater detail in Chapter 3: Our Framework.



*Greater Ellettsville is comprised of everything within Richland and Bean Blossom Townships, including Ellettsville.

Existing Physical Conditions Map



ELLETTSVILLE NEEDS TO FOCUS ON...

CONNECTING
THE COMMUNITY
AS MORE
NEIGHBORHOODS
ARE BEING
DEVELOPED.

AESTHETICS.
A LONG-TERM
DEVELOPMENT PLAN
COULD POSITIVELY
IMPACT "THE LOOK AND
FEEL" OF BUSINESSES
ALONG SR 46.

ATTRACTING
BUSINESSES TO THE
DOWNTOWN AREA
AND CREATING MORE
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
FAMILIES TO DO THINGS
IN ELLETTSVILLE
- SHOPPING AND
ENTERTAINMENT.

BUILDING A
WELCOMING
IDENTITY THAT
IS FRIENDLY TO
GROWTH.

COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES,
NEIGHBORHOOD
IDENTITIES,
DOWNTOWN
UTILIZATION OF
SPACE, AND FLOOD
MITIGATION.

ANNEXATION
EFFORTS TO
MAKE MORE LAND
AVAILABLE FOR
FUTURE EXPANSION
PLANS FOR HOUSING
AND INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPMENT.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter serves as the foundation for the vision, goals, and recommendations that follows. Both data collection and public input informed the development of the Vision Plan in various ways. There are two-sides to every story. While data tells one-side of the story, community perceptions can tell another story.

Trends of demographic and socio-economic data helped to identify opportunities and challenges in terms of people, housing, and economics. Public input helped to identify opportunities and challenges related to the built environment, development policies, and community programs, among other things.

The key conclusions from phase 1 of the planning process were carried forward to draft the identity statement and vision statement in the following chapter.