

*Welcome to*



*Indianapolis*

**MOUNT VERNON  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN  
ADOPTED  
MARCH 9, 2023**



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Special Thanks

Thank you to everyone who participated in the stakeholder focus group meetings, online survey, and public workshop event. The participation and feedback from the community of Mount Vernon helped make this planning process a success.

# INTRO

Mount Vernon has an established reputation as a regional job center within southwest Indiana. The city and its surrounding areas boast several unique assets, such as river access, large employment centers, a small-town feel, and a sense of community shared by all residents.

The downtown area and the eastern business park/Tax Increment Financing district are two of those assets. As this plan was developed with city leaders, it became evident that these two "sub-areas" were essential pieces of Mount Vernon's future. Therefore, additional effort was made to examine those areas of the city.

While having some challenges, Mount Vernon is a community that prides itself on maintaining its "small-town feel," having an independent school district, and being a river town and an employment center.

This plan will focus on Mount Vernon's current trends, needs, and future growth of the entire community. There are two focus areas: Downtown Mount Vernon and the Eastside Economic Development Area #1 Tax Increment Financing District Sub-area.

## DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON FOCUS AREA MAP



Image Source: ESRI



## EASTSIDE AREA #1 TIF DISTRICT SUBAREA



Image Source: ESRI



# WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

## OVERVIEW

A comprehensive plan is a strategic guide containing policy statements for effective decision-making in private development projects and community initiatives for the public good. The plan's purpose is to guide the community through realizing its vision. A comprehensive plan is a vehicle for a community's decision-makers to control their growth's quality, quantity, and location. It provides a snapshot of the current point in time and a vision for the future, guiding long-term investment, growth, and development.

A comprehensive plan assists policy, land use, and infrastructure decisions and helps gather input from various sources to build consensus around the plan. Its most effective form is a living document that should be updated as change occurs in the community's land use, transportation, infrastructure, resources, demographics, and priorities.

This plan is not a rezoning document, and the zoning classifications within the city do not change because of the recommendations in the plan. Any future zoning changes within the city, whether initiated by Mount Vernon or by a private land owner, must follow standard Indiana law and the Area Plan Commission's process for rezoning a property, updating, or amending the text of the ordinances. It is not the only piece of the decision-making process and is not the solution for all the community's challenges. Recommendations within the comprehensive plan may require further, in-depth studies to provide the best possible solutions to specific issues.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Communities may adopt comprehensive plans as described by Indiana Code for the promotion of public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, or the general welfare and the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of development.

*Indiana Code 36-7-4-500* series sets forth the standards for developing and evaluating a comprehensive plan. Required elements include the following:

- A statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction.
- A statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction.
- A statement of policy for the development of public ways, places, lands, structures, and utilities.







## HOW IS THIS DOCUMENT ORGANIZED?

This document identifies the goals and objectives determined as a result of the public input received through the Explore Phase of Mount Vernon's Comprehensive Plan development. Previously, an existing conditions report was created, providing pertinent information about this document. The Existing Conditions report will not be included here but would be a helpful document to have available for reference.

This document will then describe the Vision Statement that acts as a guiding principle of the entirety of the Comprehensive Plan. Following that, the goals and objectives will be provided. The goals and objectives are meant to be broad guidelines to achieve the community's vision.

Following the goals and objectives will be Critical Path Strategies. These identified objectives are relatively low in cost, quick to complete, or require fewer human resources. Critical path strategies include direct, actionable steps, an estimated timeline, and an estimated cost.

# EXISTING CONDITION ANALYSIS VS. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The existing conditions analysis (described below) describes Mount Vernon as it is today. The remainder of this plan focuses on what Mount Vernon residents (and its downtown and east gateway) want to be tomorrow. This document established a series of overarching goals, objectives organized by topic area, and strategies to help.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

Before making any recommendations for Mount Vernon, the consulting team needed to analyze the existing conditions of the community, understand all past planning efforts, learn about the proposed future projects, discuss the wants and needs of the community, and record observations that were made along the way.

A study of the current conditions was carried out and published in the Mount Vernon Existing Conditions Report (March 2022). An analysis of the existing conditions found the following key trends:

- Like most of southwestern Indiana, Mount Vernon has seen its recent population growth stagnate, with even a few surrounding communities decreasing in size.
- While slightly lower than surrounding towns and cities, Mount Vernon's poverty rate is nearly double that of Indiana and the surrounding Posey County.
- While Mount Vernon's current median household income lies around the middle of its neighbors, this value is expected to grow slower than surrounding communities.
- Most of Mount Vernon's housing stock was built between 1970-1979 or prior, with the amount of new housing per year shrinking significantly since then.
- Mount Vernon has a higher homeownership level than nearby Evansville and Henderson.
- Mount Vernon lacks any higher valued housing stock (\$500,000+) than its neighboring communities.
- Roughly 25% of Mount Vernon residents worked in the manufacturing industry in 2021, above the state average (18%) and much higher than surrounding communities (averaging 15%).

These trends and the overall analysis of the existing conditions informed the stakeholder and steering committees in determining the appropriate goals and objectives for the Comprehensive Plan.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

### THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The project steering committee was comprised of several local volunteer leaders, organization members, business owners, and community members. The project steering committee was instrumental in guiding the consulting team in terms of the overall planning process and the recommendations of the final plan. During the process, the committee helped identify the city's strengths, weaknesses, threats, opportunities, future vision, and community values. Throughout the project, the committee met regularly to discuss critical benchmarks and review draft materials. During the process, the group challenged assumptions, ideas, and public outreach results to create the best plan possible for Mount Vernon.



## THE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

A team of professional planners met with community stakeholders with a direct connection to one or more of these four important topics of a community:

- City Administration and Utilities (included city staff and department leadership related to streets, public safety, parks, utilities, zoning, and general administration)
- Housing and Real Estate (focused on the local housing market, housing products, and neighborhoods)
- Education and Workforce Development (included school, economic development leaders, county visitor's bureau, Main Street leaders, and downtown property owners)
- Local Elected Officials (focused on local and regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats)

During the meetings, the consultant team and stakeholders were able to dig deeper into these critical community topics. The detailed information provided during these meetings was instrumental in developing the initial thoughts and ideas on how best to improve the future of Mount Vernon. These stakeholder group meetings' results were presented to the steering committee and used to craft and refine the draft objectives and strategies.





## PLANNING HISTORY

There are a number of past planning efforts to guide, or prepare for, future development and redevelopment opportunities throughout the city. There have been several plans and studies completed to not only prepare for the future, but to improve the quality of life offered in Mount Vernon.

Each past planning effort is unique and offers a special perspective into the desired goals and outcomes of the city. A brief summary for each past plan is provided to better understand the content and its purpose.

- City of Mount Vernon Downtown Redevelopment Plan (2005)
- The Bend in the Ohio: A New Riverfront Experience (2007)
- The City of Mount Vernon Comprehensive Plan (2008)
- Posey County Comprehensive Plan (2008)
- Zoning Ordinance of Mount Vernon, Indiana (2012)
- Stellar Communities Program - Letter of Interest (2013)
- Mount Vernon Redevelopment Area Redevelopment Plan - Resolution No. 2013-02 (2013)
- Stellar Communities Program - Letter of Interest (2014)
- Mount Vernon Downtown Plan Update (2014)
- Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) (2022)



## COMMUNITY VISION

The Steering Committee members created a community vision statement for this comprehensive plan update. The community vision is a statement that is unique to the personality and aspirations of the community. The city continues to attract and sustain a large employment base but has not seen significant residential growth in recent years. Therefore, the community vision was designed to strike a balance between embracing the past, maximizing the present, and improving the future to create a thriving community for people and businesses. The following goals, objectives, and strategies identified within this plan strive to help the city achieve this community vision.

### VISION STATEMENT

Mount Vernon is a **ROBUST** employment center known for its wealth of job opportunities while maintaining a **SMALL TOWN** feel and charm for its residents.

The city will embrace its **PAST** as a river city and preferred business destination while striving to enhance Mount Vernon's **VISIBILITY, DOWNTOWN ACTIVITY, CONNECTIVITY**, and utilization of **PUBLICLY OWNED ASSETS**.

### GOALS

Goals are the targeted statements identified in the plan to see measurable outcomes in the community. These goals are meant to overlap plan focus areas and tie all objectives statements to familiar themes. This plan includes six goal statements for the Comprehensive Plan, and three specific goals for the Downtown and Eastside sub-area plans each (which will be stated in those sections of this plan).

#### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

- ✓ Continue to be southwest Indiana's premier destination for employers.
- ✓ Develop a clear and marketable brand/identity for Mount Vernon.
- ✓ Become a connected community that links the city from the Ohio River to all amenities and neighborhoods.
- ✓ Provide a framework for both public and private activity generators and locations to thrive.
- ✓ Maintain and enhance existing public infrastructure, parks, and public assets.
- ✓ Develop character-based identities for Mount Vernon's distinctive neighborhoods that encourage a mix of housing opportunities and options for residents and the local workforce.





## FOCUS AREAS

A Comprehensive Plan's purpose is to outline and guide the community to achieve its fullest potential and vision. To address all future ideas, a Comprehensive Plan must address a wide range of topics that affect the community. These topics become the goals that influence the objectives and strategies within this plan. The goal topics for the City of Mount Vernon include:

- Land Use.
- Housing.
- Branding (define the image, events, logos, what is our niche?).
- Wayfinding signage (gateways, parking, attractions, etc.).
- Attract/support local businesses and job creation.
- Preserve small town feel.
- Downtown redevelopment.
- Continue to maintain and upgrade public infrastructure.
- Upgraded parks and facilities.
- More connections throughout Mount Vernon.

## OBJECTIVE STATEMENTS

The Objective Statements are an important step in establishing a better understanding of the more detailed strategies mentioned later within this plan.

The objective statements are policy objectives related to each of the previously mentioned Goal Topics. These statements are aspirational to guide the community toward its future goals and overall Community Vision. They were created using a variety of data input. The primary sources used when crafting these statements include:

- Past planning documents from the community.
- Conclusions from the Analysis Map.
- Input from the Vision and Values Online Survey.
- Input from the Steering Committee.
- Input from the various Stakeholder Groups.
- Input from the Public Workshop Event.

**As a community, we should all strive to achieve these objective statements to achieve our vision.**

## LAND USE

The Future Land Use Map is intended to complement the goals and policy objectives included within the regulatory framework. The Future Land Use Map serves as a visual representation of the city's intended future development, redevelopment, and reinvestment. The new Future Land Use Map promotes an integration of compatible land uses, thoughtful downtown redevelopment, and strong placemaking qualities.

This map should be used when applying land use recommendations to specific sites or districts. The Future Land Use Maps build upon the current development pattern within Mount Vernon with a focus on investment within strategic areas of the city's core.





### FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Land Use plans are created to protect the character of a community as it grows and make choices that allow desirable development patterns to become established. A map of community land is used to diagram the different ways that a community needs to use the land. City officials can use the diagram as a visual reference when making responsible decisions about future development in the community.

Areas within Mount Vernon and a one-mile radius have been classified into eight unique place-types. Unlike traditional land use designations, which are applied parcel by parcel, place-type designations can define the nature and desired character of uses on a larger scale. The approach allows for greater flexibility regarding future land use decisions and puts an emphasis on how adjacent place-types interact and impact one another.

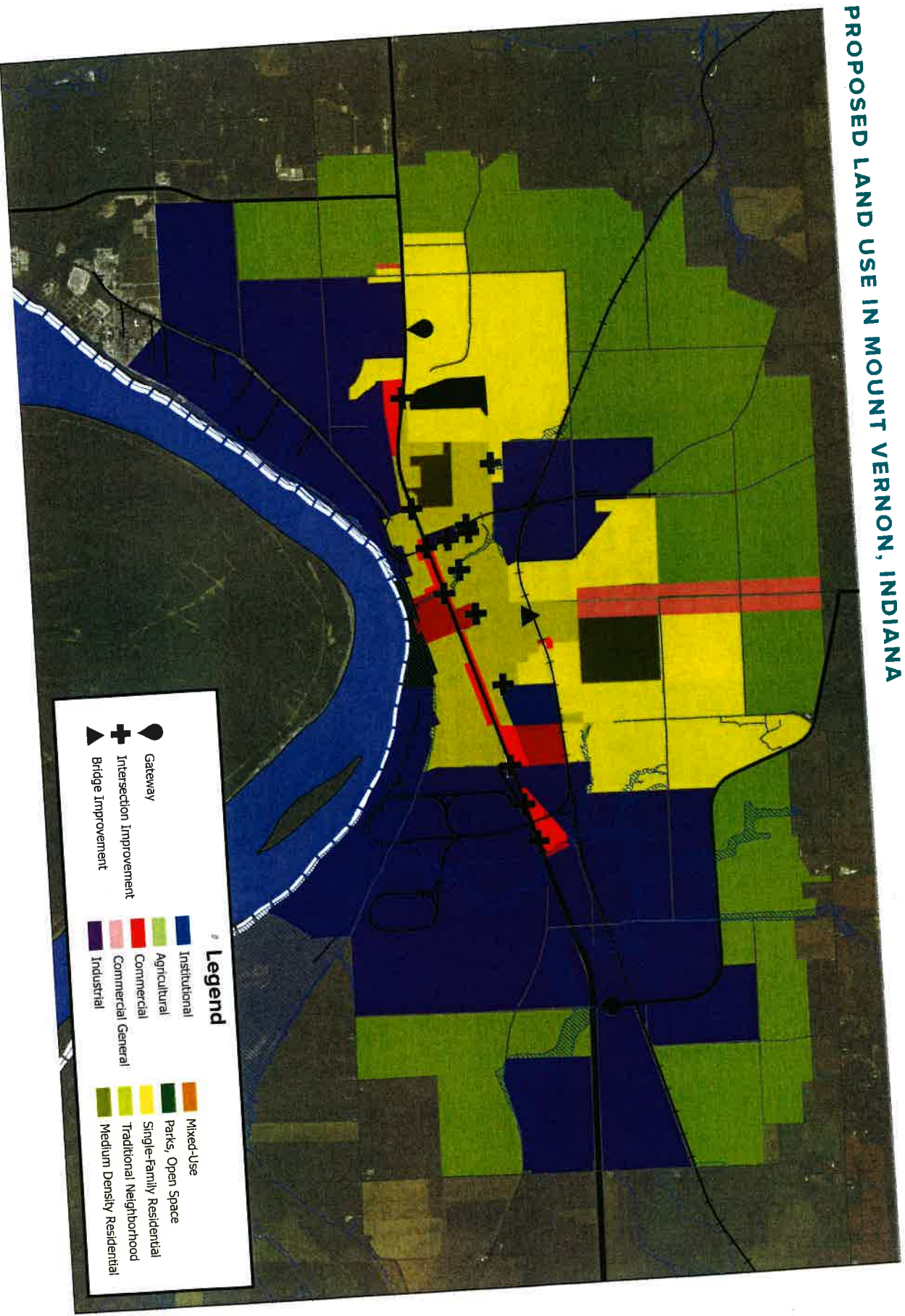
Each of Mount Vernon's eight place-types describe the character, land uses, and level of connectivity within each designation. Land use place-types have been designated based on existing land use, built form, physical characteristics and conditions, growth trends, and community input. Following the adoption of the comprehensive plan the city should regularly review the Future Land Use Map and individual place-types to ensure that the land uses are responsive to the community's needs and goals.

### RELEVANT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

-  Continue to be southwest Indiana's premiere destination for employers.
-  Become a connected community that links the city from the Ohio River to all amenities and neighborhoods.
-  Provide a framework for both public and private activity generators and locations to thrive.
-  Develop character-based identities for Mount Vernon's distinctive neighborhoods that encourage a mix of housing opportunities and options for residents and the local workforce.



# PROPOSED LAND USE IN MOUNT VERNON, INDIANA



SOURCE: ESRI and American Structurepoint, Inc.

## **FUTURE LAND USE**

City officials create land use plans for protecting the character of a community as it grows and ensuring the plans for the future align with the needs of the residents. Land use plans can help city officials make choices that allow desirable patterns of development. A map of community land is used to diagram the different ways that a community needs to use the land. Mount Vernon's Comprehensive Plan uses a type-based approach to future land use planning. Areas within the city of Mount Vernon have been classified into eight unique land-use types. Unlike traditional land use designations, which are applied parcel by parcel, place-type designations can define the nature and desired character of uses on a larger scale. The approach allows for greater flexibility regarding future land use decisions and puts an emphasis on how adjacent place-types interact and impact one another.

Each land use typology describes the character, land uses, and connectivity within each designation. Land use place-types have been designated based on existing land use, built form, physical characteristics and conditions, growth trends, and community input. Following the adoption of Mount Vernon's Comprehensive Plan, the city should regularly review the Future Land Use Map and individual place-types to ensure that the land uses are responsive to the community's needs and goals.

### **Objective Statements**

- Encourage mixed-use and infill development in the downtown core.
- Focus new growth at strategic locations that encourage a linked community and promote continued investment by local, regional, and national employers.
- Coordinate growth and development with recent and expected investments in infrastructure, such as the SR 69 bypass and utility expansions.
- Improve the city's ability to position potential residential development sites and market them to regional developers.
- Ensure that the governing zoning ordinance and supporting regulations (e.g., permitting, utility connections, etc.) are aligned with the future land use map and support a mix of commercial, industrial, residential, and mixed-uses development.
- Preserve the character and identity of Mount Vernon's physical assets in the historic districts and neighborhoods surrounding downtown.
- Support policies and regulations that promote connectivity to the downtown, recreational facilities, and river front.



## LAND USE CATEGORIES

### AGRICULTURAL

Agriculturally classified lands consist of areas of extremely low-density within the growth area. The Agricultural category generally includes land for farming, livestock, poultry, and low-density residential. These areas are of the lowest density in Mount Vernon and include large expanses of undeveloped open land and natural areas. New development of other land use categories within the Agricultural areas should be discouraged to limit the conversion of these areas to more intense development.

### COMMERCIAL GENERAL

Commercial is primarily located along highly-traveled corridors which serve as primary entry points into the city. The Commercial District operates primarily as a shopping district for Mount Vernon residents and visitors by providing a mix of everyday essentials and specialty goods and services. The position of the commercial area serves both local residents and regional visitors. The commercial land use typology allows for flexibility regarding the intensity and scale of development, supporting both smaller, local businesses, and regional destinations and attractions. The range of commercial and service uses could include retail, service businesses, restaurants, professional offices, and medical related uses. Commercial land uses should generally be located away from or buffered from residential districts due to their high volume of traffic, potential to generate noise, operate at late hours, create obtrusive lighting, and other adverse constraints.

Appropriate attributes of land use with the commercial land-use typology include restaurants, cafés, bars including franchise and drive-through restaurants, day-to-day retail and consumer service businesses such as grocery stores, salons, convenience stores, and businesses that provide basic goods and services, specialized retail and service businesses such as hardware or office appliance stores, professional and medical offices such as branch banks, auto-oriented uses such as gas stations, and auto repair shops, and public and semi-public facilities such as schools, fire stations, and religious institutions.







## INDUSTRIAL

The industrial land-use typology includes areas deemed appropriate for light to heavy industrial uses, which are generally not compatible with residential development. The scale and intensity of these areas could vary greatly and provide opportunities for both local and regional developments. The industrial place-type should be appropriately screened and buffered from adjacent incompatible uses. Since many of Mount Vernon's industrial areas are located along primary thoroughfares, a thoughtful approach to development and site design should be applied within these areas to reduce the impacts on community well-being.

Appropriate attributes of land uses within the industrial typology include light-to-heavy manufacturing uses whose primary objective is for compounding, processing, packaging, and assembling of products, warehouses, shipping, and logistics facilities that provide for the storage shipping, and coordination of materials and goods, research and development, laboratories and testing facilities, home and corporate offices included larger planned campuses, general offices, call centers, storage facilities, and electricity, gas, and water services such as power plants, sewage treatment plants, and landfills.

## INSTITUTIONAL

This land use includes uses that serve and meet community needs through a wide range of facilities, including city utilities, medical campuses and clinics, local, state, and federal government buildings, residential care facilities, hostels, disability housing, childcare centers, cultural facilities churches, places of sacred and religious affiliation, cemeteries, hospitals, civic or religious uses, schools, public or private schools, and colleges and universities.

Some small, neighborhood-scaled facilities could be integrated with other place-types, the designated institutional areas should be addressed individually to ensure their unique characteristics and needs are adequately managed. As opportunities arise, efforts should be made to further integrate these uses into the surrounding area by improving access and aesthetics of the identified development.





## MIXED-USE

The mixed-use category is primarily located in urban or downtown areas of Mount Vernon. This typology is the focal point of the community and offers a variety of uses to serve as a core area. As this is intended to be one of Mount Vernon's most diverse area with a scale of development catered to the pedestrian. This typology should have high intensity development with compact blocks.

Appropriate attributes of this land use should include restaurants, cafés and bars which cater to breakfast and the late night dining crowd, commercial retail and service businesses such as clothing shops, high-density residential units developed as part of a mixed-use building, hotels or other hospitality uses that cater to overnight visitors, professional and medical offices, performance or entertainment venues, public social service institutions, co-working spaces, public and semi-public facilities such as schools and religious institutions, and public parks or open spaces.

## PARKS/OPEN SPACE

The Parks/Open Space place-type should be located throughout the community and serve as a key destination and amenity to the city. This category includes land for the use of nature preservation, protection, passive recreation, and active recreation.

Appropriate land use attributes within this typology should include public parks, recreational areas, open areas designed specifically for sports, indoor or outdoor recreational facilities, natural areas, forest preserves, native conservation areas, retention areas, lakes, golf courses, and greenbelts.







### **SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL**

This land use category includes medium to low-density residential neighborhoods located outside of Mount Vernon's downtown. This place-type should be a transition between rural and high-density areas such as commercial corridors and mixed-use urban developments. These areas could offer newer housing in the form of larger, single-family detached housing units on lots that are larger than those found near downtown Mount Vernon. Typically, this land use is developed in larger subdivisions supported with city utilities.

Attributes of this land use include single-family detached residential units as a main housing type, single-family attached units such as townhomes or four-squares that are integrated in with single-family detached units, public and semi-public facilities such as schools, fire stations, and religious institutions, public parks and open spaces to ensure that all neighborhoods have access to areas for interaction and recreation.

### **MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**

The medium-density residential land use category includes medium-to high-density residential neighborhoods which accommodate single- and multi-family housing units. These areas should be walkable and include community parks in walking distance to each residential community. This area should be considered highly for multi-use trails rather than sidewalks. Housing in this typology could be older, however will likely be newer construction.

Attributes of this land use include single-family residential units such as townhomes, condos, and apartments up to ten dwelling units per acre. The maximum recommended build height is two story structures, with a special-use exemption for three-story buildings determinant on location to single-family detached residential and building type.



TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

This land use category includes older residential neighborhoods within or around the city’s urbanized areas and Downtown Mount Vernon. The Central Neighborhood typology features an older housing stock in traditional block-grid patterns on smaller lots. This neighborhood is a dense, walkable environment with quick access to commercial areas, parks and open spaces, community facilities, and local destinations. These are typically some of the oldest areas within a city; reinvestment, upkeep, maintenance, and pride in ownership are critical to the neighborhood’s long-term stability. New construction, significant renovations, and building additions should consider the surrounding area’s existing scale, style, and character.

Typical attributes and uses of this land use include single-family detached units, single-family attached units such as duplexes or townhomes, three- to eight-unit flats, accessory detached units such as carriage houses or in-law quarters, neighborhood and small scale commercial, public or semi-public facilities such as schools, fire stations, and religious institutions, and public parks and open spaces.



PROPOSED LAND USE		EXISTING ZONING DISTRICT
Agricultural		A
Commercial General		B-1A, B-2, B-3
Industrial		B-3, M-1, M-2, M-3
Institutional		B-1, B-1A, B-2, RO
Mixed-Use		PUD, CBD, RM
Single-Family Residential		RS
Medium-Density Residential		RT, R-2, RM, RMH
Traditional Neighborhood		RT, R-2, R-M, R-3, B-1, B-1A, CBD

*The Zoning Ordinance of the City of Mount Vernon, the Town of Cynthiana, the Town of Poseyville, and Unincorporated Posey County has districts which already fit into the suggested land use typologies. The table to the right compares them.*

# HOUSING

Housing and neighborhoods are the fabric of a city. Each of Mount Vernon's neighborhoods offer a unique and diverse sense of place. Neighborhoods are more than places to live, they are a mark on the city's historical timeline, they are centers of activity, and they are home to places Mount Vernon residents love.

The following objectives can guide Mount Vernon in developing and maintaining clean and safe neighborhoods that encourage a mix of housing opportunities to meet the needs of the residents and local workforce.

## Objective Statements

- Foster safe, connected, and livable neighborhoods.
- Accommodate all housing types and densities.
- Create opportunities for life-long residency (young professionals, young adults, families, and seniors).
- Refine and enforce local ordinances and permit processes to encourage quality neighborhoods.
- Develop neighborhoods that are connected and supported by all necessary infrastructure.
- Redevelop neighborhoods and use infill locations where necessary infrastructure, community services, and facilities exist.
- Refine zoning regulations and incentive policies to encourage a wide range of "missing middle" (see Missing Middle Housing on the next page) housing types within and surrounding Downtown Mount Vernon.
- Modify local policies and regulations to accommodate housing developments and individual housing units suitable for an elderly population, and to the extent that they are different, for low-income residents.

## RELEVANT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

- ✓ Develop a clear and marketable brand/identity for Mount Vernon.
- ✓ Become a connected community that links the city from the Ohio River to all amenities and neighborhoods.
- ✓ Provide a framework for both public and private activity generators and locations to thrive.
- ✓ Maintain and enhance existing public infrastructure, parks, and public assets.
- ✓ Develop character-based identities for Mount Vernon's distinctive neighborhoods that encourage a mix of housing opportunities and options for residents and the local workforce.



## MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

Stakeholder meetings with employers revealed perceived challenges to recruiting talent to Mount Vernon. One of the key issues identified was the lack of “interesting” workforce housing, particularly for younger professionals. One solution is to create “Missing Middle” housing units.

According to [missingmiddlehousing.com](https://missingmiddlehousing.com), missing middle housing is: “house-scale buildings with multiple units in walkable neighborhoods. These building types, such as duplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, and courtyard buildings, provide diverse housing options and support locally-serving retail and public transportation options. We call them ‘missing’ because they have typically been illegal to build since the mid 1940s and ‘middle’ because they sit in the middle of a spectrum between detached single-family homes and mid-rise to high-rise apartment buildings, in terms of form and scale, as well as the number of units and often, affordability. In the diagram below, the missing middle types are shown in yellow, providing many housing options in-between the single-family homes and higher intensity apartment buildings, both shown in white.”<sup>1</sup>

### Missing Middle Housing Types



Source: <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/about>

<https://missingmiddlehousing.com/about>

# BRANDING

Branding can contribute to another of Mount Vernon's goals—placemaking—while also providing information for residents and visitors. Mount Vernon's identity can grow a sense of place and encourage the character of the community. A brand to give a picture to that identity can help separate Mount Vernon from other cities.

The following objectives can guide Mount Vernon in establishing a brand which could improve the sense of place for residents, visitors, and the workforce.

## Objective Statements

- Create a brand, identity, and environment that serves residents, visitors, and potential future partners and residents.
- Use the built environment to create a sense of place and identity.
- Preserve, enhance, and celebrate the local history of Mount Vernon.
- Celebrate and grow local events and activities.
- Strengthen the digital presence, brand, and identity of Mount Vernon.
- Create a media relations and marketing plan for regional city promotion.
- Employ the use of best practices in the creation, branding, and maintenance of each gateway.

## RELEVANT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

- ✓ Continue to be southwest Indiana's premier destination for employers.
- ✓ Develop a clear and marketable brand/identity for Mount Vernon.
- ✓ Become a connected community that links the city from the Ohio River to all amenities and neighborhoods.
- ✓ Provide a framework for both public and private activity generators and locations to thrive.



Mount Vernon School Board Branded Signage  
Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.



## WHAT IS BRANDING?

"Branding involves creating a desired image for a product or place. For a place, a brand is a set of emotional connections and positive expectations in the minds of residents and visitors. Successful brand identities establish a preconceived expectation that is either met or exceeded by the reality. Logos and taglines are evocative of the overall image that is a brand. Through advertising, events, and grassroots word of mouth, places can be defined by coordinated branding efforts, allowing businesses and activities to stand out from the continuous onslaught of media appeals to consumers. Branding is more than the words and images used along with a place name; those things can change over time. A brand is a long-term, permanent concept of what a place should be and mean. It therefore demands a great deal of forethought to be successfully conceived, implemented, and sustained."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> University of Wisconsin Extensions, Downtown Economics, Issue 154



Example of Branding from Carmel Arts District, Carmel, Indiana

Source: American Structurepoint

## WAYFINDING

Wayfinding can promote connectivity and Placemaking by utilizing another of Mount Vernon's goals, Branding. Signage pointing to Mount Vernon's popular, recreational, or historical sites can guide residents and visitors to notable locations within the city.

### Objective Statements

- Support and promote key points of interest to residents and visitors.
- Work with a designer to create and apply branding to wayfinding signs around key points in the city, specifically Downtown and the Riverfront.

### WHAT IS WAYFINDING?

Wayfinding is "The process of using spatial and environmental information to navigate to a destination."<sup>3</sup> Wayfinding within a city typically refers to branded signage, either actual signage or painted pavement, to direct persons to a location.

### RELEVANT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

- ✓ Develop a clear and marketable brand/identity for Mount Vernon.
- ✓ Become a connected community that links the city from the Ohio River to all amenities and neighborhoods.
- ✓ Provide a framework for both public and private activity generators and locations to thrive.

<sup>3</sup> *The Image of the City* by Kevin Lynch, MIT Press, 1960.





Example of Wayfinding signage in Big Rapids, Michigan  
Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.



Example of Wayfinding signage from Peru, Indiana  
Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

One of the largest drivers of population growth is the availability of high-quality jobs. While jobs can bring people to an area, providing for the safety and comfort of residents and population is what keeps people interested in a community. Growing Mount Vernon's commercial diversity, workforce, and population will go hand-in-hand.

### Objective Statements

- Support commercial, office, and industrial land use mix to provide a diversified tax base.
- Support the growth of existing businesses and attract new high-quality business opportunities that create jobs and wealth for residents.
- Promote and enhance local career pathways strategy or strategies that can offer continued training to advance a worker's skills, pay, and future employment opportunities over time.
- Provide incentives for high-school graduates to enter the workforce and continue training.
- Encourage experienced workers ages 20+ to continue careers in Mount Vernon via local governmental incentives.

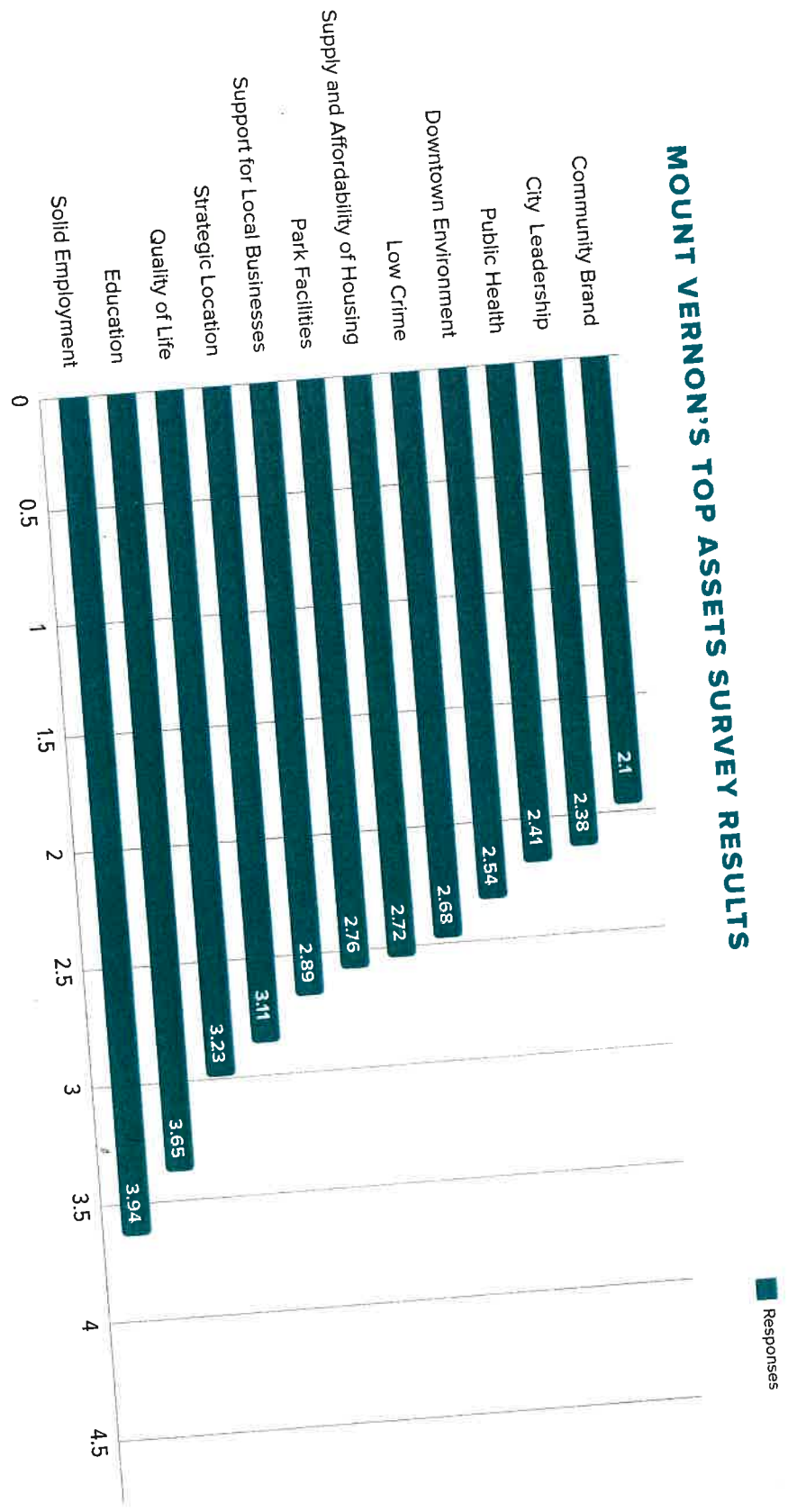
**EMPLOYMENT WAS #1  
ASSET OR KEY TO SUCCESS  
ON 3 SURVEY QUESTIONS**

## RELEVANT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

- ✓ Continue to be southwest Indiana's premier destination for employers.
- ✓ Develop a clear and marketable brand/identity for Mount Vernon.
- ✓ Become a connected community that links the city from the Ohio River to all amenities and neighborhoods.
- ✓ Provide a framework for both public and private activity generators and locations to thrive.
- ✓ Maintain and enhance existing public infrastructure, parks, and public assets.
- ✓ Develop character-based identities for Mount Vernon's distinctive neighborhoods that encourage a mix of housing opportunities and options for residents and local workforce.



# MOUNT VERNON'S TOP ASSETS SURVEY RESULTS



Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.

# PLACEMAKING

Placemaking is the attention to and growth of a community's spaces that promotes a community's health, happiness, and wellbeing. The city's continued success will expand on the community Mount Vernon offers and the characteristics of the city's history and people. Focusing on the community's existing wants and needs could promote growth and population retention.

## Objective Statements

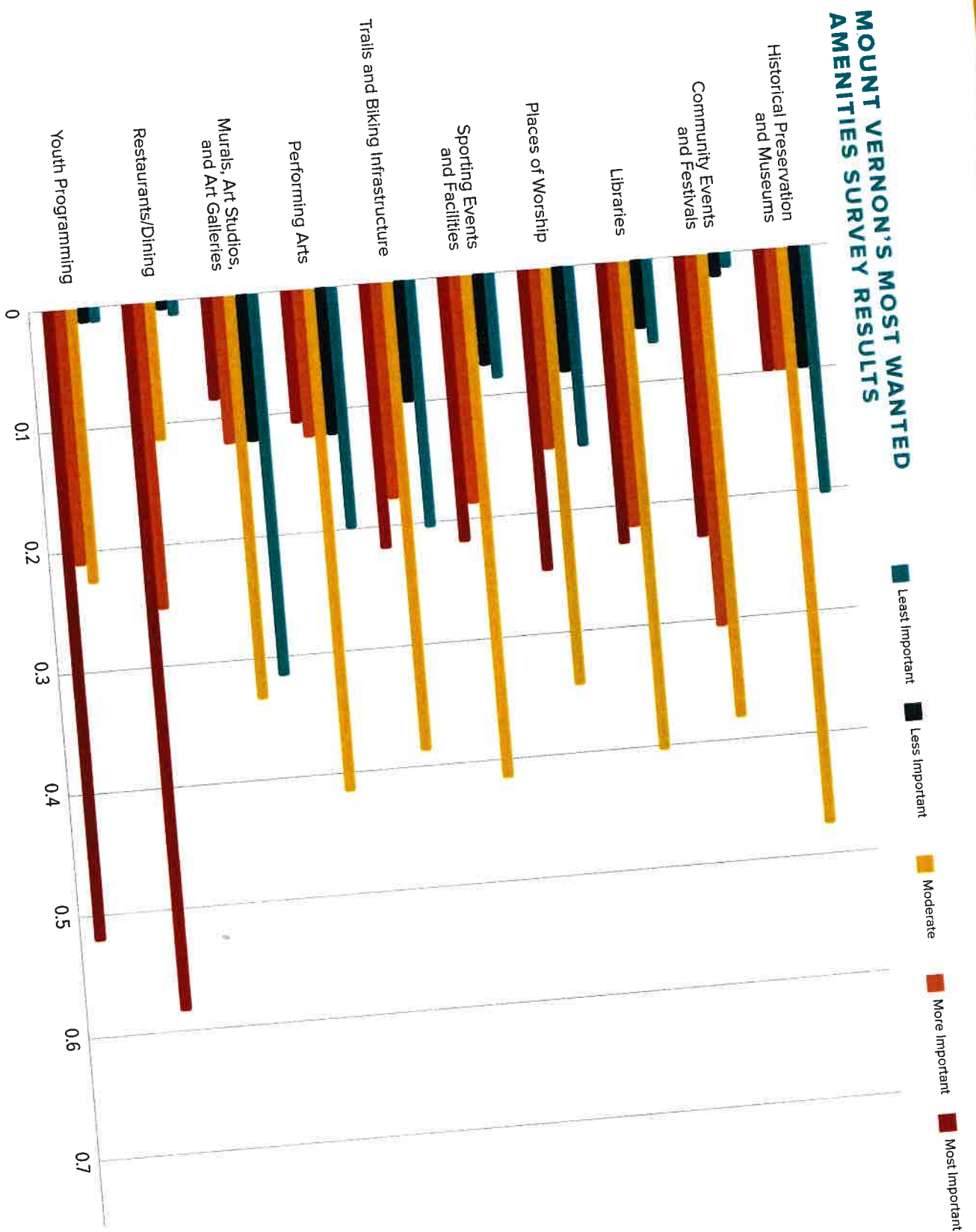
- Support the growth and enhancement of events and festivals throughout the year.
- Use the built environment to create a sense of place and identity.
- Promote key points of interest and supporting facilities (parking) to residents and visitors. Encourage and promote the strategic placement of public art in the community.
- Improve the physical appearance of the built environment throughout Mount Vernon.
- Improve the city's collective ability to deliver attractive sites for development and redevelopment.
- Support commercial development and redevelopment in established commercial districts.
- Support changes to the zoning code to encourage development and remove barriers towards implementing the community's vision.

## RELEVANT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

- ☒ Develop a clear and marketable brand/identity for Mount Vernon.
- ☒ Become a connected community that links the city from the Ohio River to all amenities and neighborhoods.
- ☒ Provide a framework for both public and private activity generators and locations to thrive.
- ☒ Maintain and enhance existing public infrastructure, parks, and public assets.
- ☒ Develop character based-identities for Mount Vernon's distinctive neighborhoods that encourage a mix of housing opportunities and options for residents and the local workforce.



# MOUNT VERNON'S MOST WANTED AMENITIES SURVEY RESULTS



Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.

# DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT

A focus on Downtown Redevelopment will bring life and economy back to the center of Mount Vernon. A continued focus on infill development, pedestrian-oriented commercial uses (such as restaurants and shops), and local amenities could contribute to a strong community.

## Objective Statements

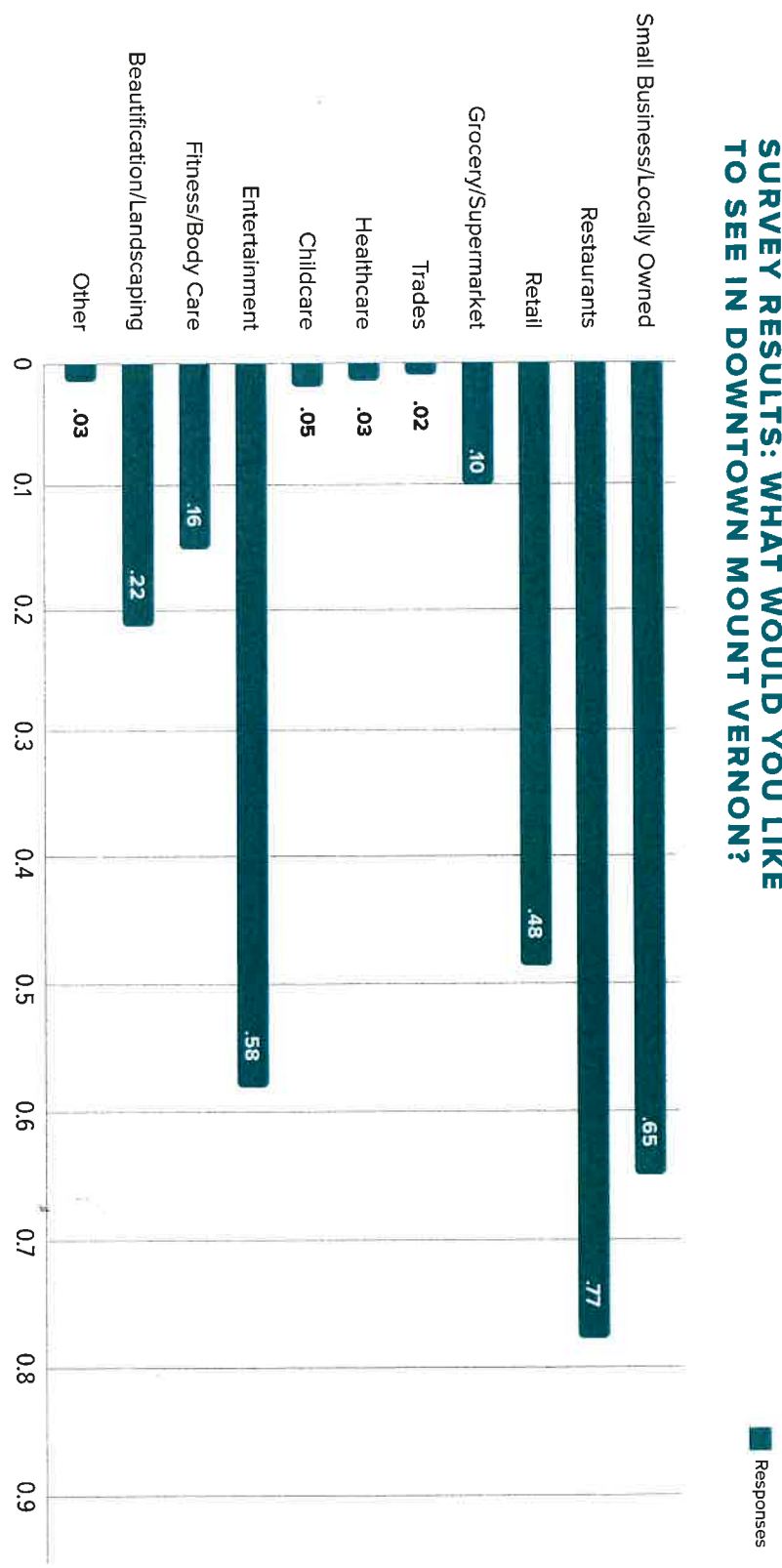
- Implement the Downtown Redevelopment Sub-Area Plan.
- Organize appropriate land uses to meet low- and high-density uses while providing quality places to live, work, and play.
- Promote revitalization and infill within current boundaries of infrastructure and urbanized areas.
- Enhance the character and identity of the physical environment through the creation of district-specific design guidelines related to scale, form, massing, and connectivity.

## RELEVANT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

- ☒ Develop a clear and marketable brand/identity for Mount Vernon.
- ☒ Provide a framework for both public and private activity generators and locations to thrive.
- ☒ Develop character-based identities for Mount Vernon's distinctive neighborhoods that encourage a mix of housing opportunities and options for residents and local workforce.



**SURVEY RESULTS: WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON?**



Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.



## PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Public infrastructure keeps the city moving and functioning smoothly. This aims to ensure high-quality, efficient, and effective utility infrastructure to address the needs of both existing and future residents and businesses.

### Objective Statements

- Maintain a high-level of service for all infrastructure through continuous monitoring and evaluation.
- Coordinate utility infrastructure extensions with land use, growth, and economic development policies.
- Continually monitor utility provider capacities and proactively work with city departments and non-city providers to extend utility services to development areas.
- Implement land-use laws that require increased focus on pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and trails.

### RELEVANT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

- ✓ Continue to be southwest Indiana's premier destination for employers.
- ✓ Become a connected community that links the city from the Ohio River to all amenities and neighborhoods.
- ✓ Provide a framework for both public and private activity generators and locations to thrive.
- ✓ Maintain and enhance existing public infrastructure, parks, and public assets.



# PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks and recreational facilities are crucial spaces that allow populations to relax, connect with nature, exercise, and play. A city's parks, open spaces, and trails could also provide a central hub for residents to meet and connect, fostering a strong sense of community.

## Objective Statements

- Plan new facilities and activities at Brittle Bank Park.
- Support facilities and programming that enhance park, recreation, and cultural destinations.
- Support programming and collaboration to address local health and wellness issues.
- Plan for improved park amenities such as water stations, seating, bicycle repair stations, pet waste stations, and safety features.
- Include increased pedestrian or multi-modal path requirements in ordinances and future plans.
- Promote youth centers that provide activities, life skills courses, and training programs.

## RELEVANT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

- ✓ Become a connected community that links the city from the Ohio River to all amenities and neighborhoods.
- ✓ Provide a framework for both public and private activity generators and locations to thrive.
- ✓ Maintain and enhance existing public infrastructure, parks, and public assets.



# TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY

Connectivity includes all forms of transportation that could move a person from one space to another. Enhancing the connections throughout the city for pedestrians, cyclists, vehicular, and other forms of travel could contribute to the high quality of life Mount Vernon offers.

## Objective Statements

- Provide improved mobility through Mount Vernon along key corridors.
- Ensure accessibility for police, fire, emergency, and school vehicles.
- Coordinate, communicate, and cooperate with funding agencies as it relates to completing transportation/utility improvements within project limits where possible.
- Develop increased connections between existing park, leisure, downtown, and community-wide destinations.
- Work with Posey County and INDOT towards approval and construction of the State Route 69 By-Pass.

## RELEVANT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

- ✓ Continue to be southwest Indiana's premiere destination for employers.
- ✓ Become a connected community that links the city from the Ohio River to all amenities and neighborhoods.
- ✓ Provide a framework for both public and private activity generators and locations to thrive.
- ✓ Maintain and enhance existing public infrastructure, parks, and public assets.







## **FUTURE TRANSPORTATION MAP**

The Future Transportation Map is intended to complement the Future Land Use Map and goals and objectives of this plan. The future transportation map serves as a guide to the city's plans for roadway, trail, and pedestrian improvements.

This map should be used when applying land use recommendations to specific sites or corridors. The Future Transportation Maps build upon the current development pattern within Mount Vernon with a focus on improvement to key corridors or intersections.

Transportation plans are often used to guide short, mid, and long-range transportation projects. Transportation plans often provide guidelines and recommendations on corridor functional classification, critical design standards, and the integration of public utilities and are often critical in securing infrastructure funding.

A partnership between Mount Vernon, Posey County, and INDOT will be crucial in improving infrastructure in accordance with the future transportation plans. The recommendations in this section area tool intended for all parties to understand the implications of land use development patterns on motorized and non-motorized systems and to balance the community's functional needs with their desire to maintain a small-town aesthetic.

Each of the three types of roadway improvements can benefit one or multiple goals and objectives found in this plan. Two gateway improvements are suggested at the eastern and western entrances of Mount Vernon. A bridge improvement is proposed where necessary, and multiple intersection improvements are suggested. Many intersection improvements are placed at integral locations to promote transportation safety for both motorized and non-motorized transportation. The locations of the proposed improvements were selected by their ability to move people throughout Mount Vernon and promote connectivity, from neighborhoods, to downtown, parks, and to work. Multiple identified intersection improvements are identified from INDOT's improvement plans.<sup>4</sup>

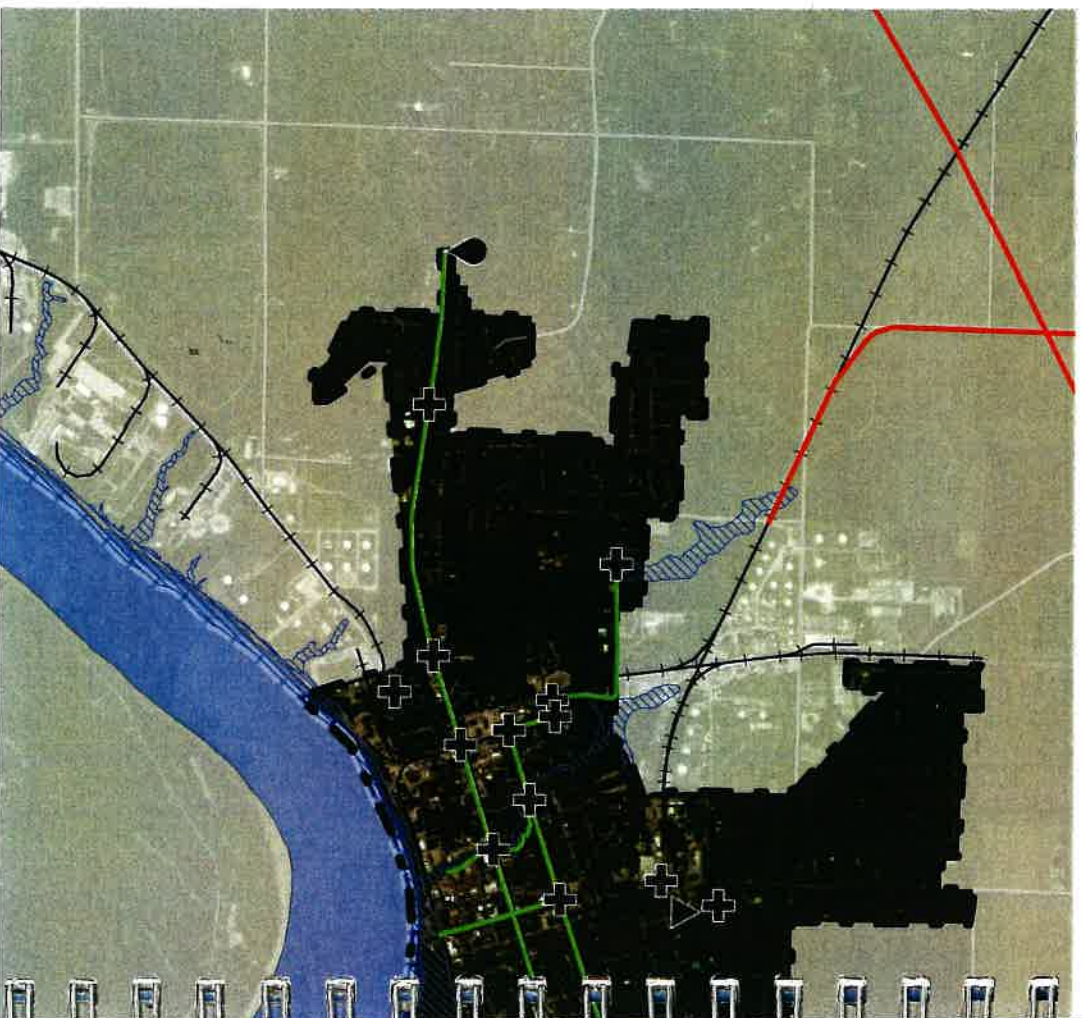
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<sup>4</sup><https://enlapos.indot.in.gov/dotmaps/nr/f/>

## PROPOSED INTERSECTIONS

- Highway 62 West at Mount Vernon's City Limits – Gateway Improvement and Signage
- Highway 62 East at Mount Vernon's City Limits – Gateway Improvement and Signage
- West 4th and Parke Street – Pedestrian, Americans with Disability Act (ADA), and Bicycle Improvements
- West 4th Street and Nettleton Street – Pedestrian, ADA, and Bicycle Improvements
- West 8th and Wolflin Street – Pedestrian, ADA, and Bicycle Improvements
- West 8th Street and Nettleton Street – Pedestrian, ADA, and Bicycle Improvements
- West 6th Street and Nettleton Street – Pedestrian, ADA, and Bicycle Improvements
- West 6th Street and Vine Street – Pedestrian, ADA, and Bicycle Improvements
- West 4th Street over River – Pedestrian, ADA, and Bicycle Improvements
- West 6th Street and Main Street – Pedestrian, ADA, and Bicycle Improvements
- East 6th Street and Harriet Street – Pedestrian, ADA, and Bicycle Improvements
- Ohio River Scenic Byway and Plaza Drive – Pedestrian, ADA, and Bicycle Improvements

## FUTURE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT MAP

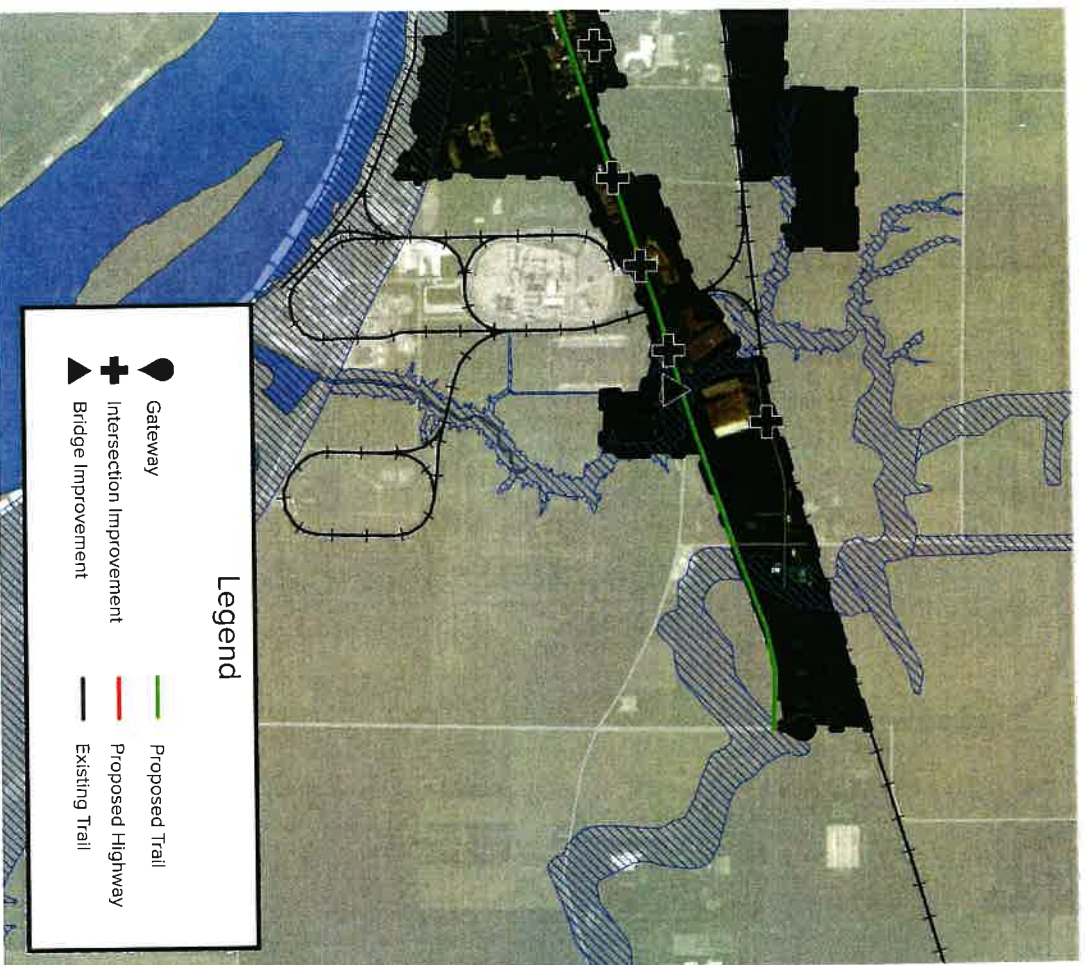


Source: ESRI, IndianaMAP, American Structurepoint, Inc.



## INDOT IMPROVEMENTS

- West 2nd Street and Barter, Munchoff, Nettleton, and Pearl Streets - Structural Improvements (Start date of 2022, Quarter 3)
- Main Street and Cardinal Drive, Main Street, Lark, Melody, Mockingbird, and Robin Lanes, and Oriole Circle – Structural Improvements (Start date of 2022, Quarter 3)
- Mulberry Street at Grant, Harrison, Locust, and Mulberry Streets – Structural Improvements (Start date of 2022, Quarter 3)
- East 5th Street at Barbee, Byrd, Elm, Everett, Harriet, and Short Sycamore Streets – Structural Improvements (Start date of 2022, Quarter 3)
- Ohio River Scenic Byway and State Street – Drainage Ditch Correction (Start date of 2023, Quarter 2)
- Ohio River Scenic Byway Bridge over McFadden Creek – Bridge Deck Overlay (Start date of 2022, Quarter 3)
- Old Highway 62 between Plaza Drive and Leonard Road North – Structural Improvements (Start date of 2022, Quarter 3)



# DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON SPECIAL AREA PLAN

## **INTRODUCTION**

Downtown Mount Vernon is located in the near center of the city limits and has been the hub of activity since Posey County's founding in the early 1800s. The culture, physical growth, and prosperity of Mount Vernon and Posey County have been notable through job creation in manufacturing and industries connected through the Ohio River. Continuing that tradition is a clear goal of the community, and this plan guides that goal.

## **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON SPECIAL AREA PLAN?**

The sub-area plan aims to address public comment regarding the importance of Downtown Mount Vernon to the community. An expressed need to reinvigorate the downtown to create a vibrant area with shopping, dining, recreation, and living options deserves its own focus.

This plan will focus on select parcels within the Downtown TIF boundary.

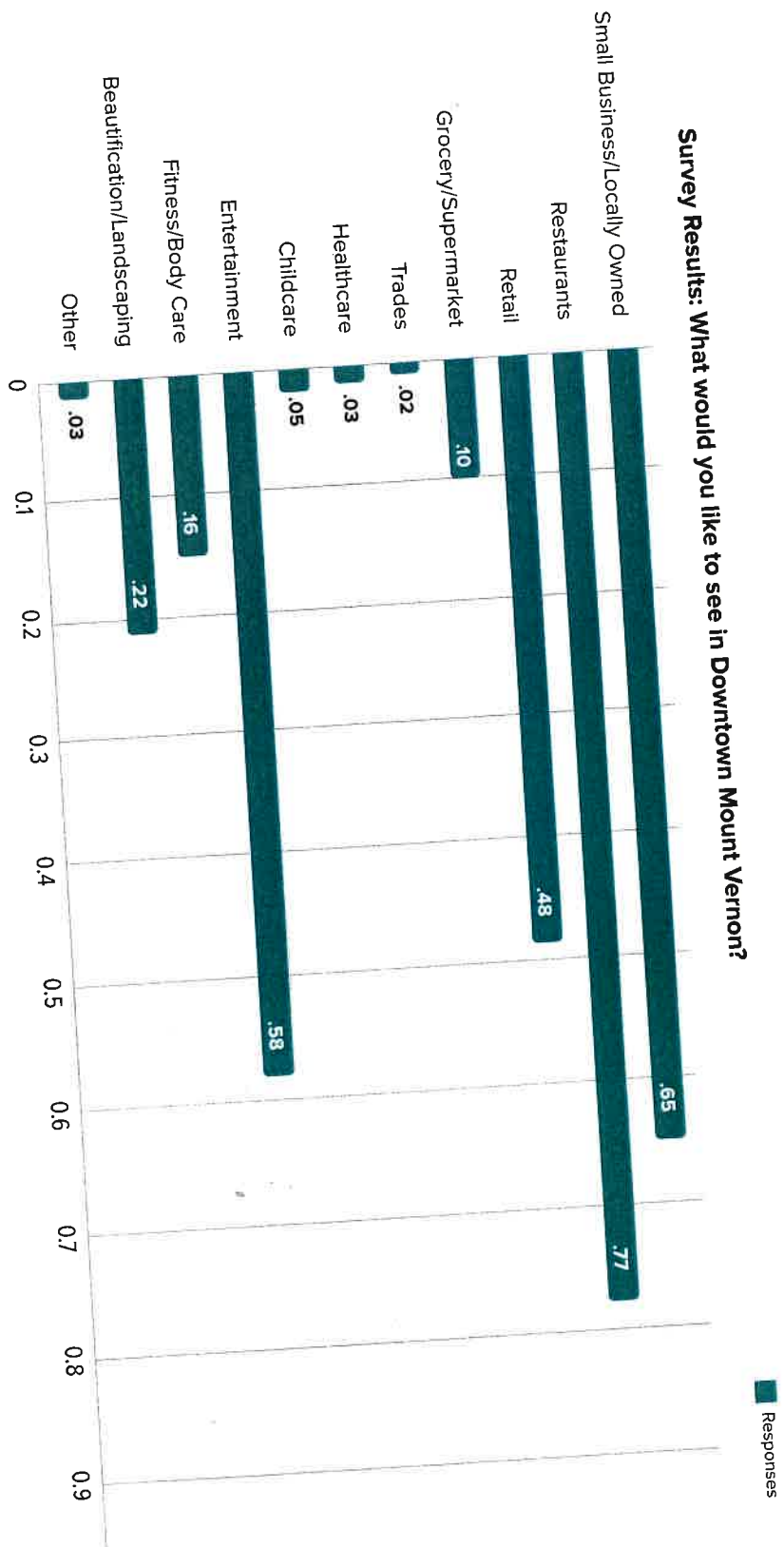


### DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON PLAN GOALS

Downtown is a unique and historic part of Mount Vernon that has its own identity, architecture, and importance to Mount Vernon residents. During this plan's engagement efforts, refocusing on Downtown as the center of the community was identified as a key to the city's future. As such, this sub-area plan/update to the 2014 Downtown Redevelopment Plan incorporates three goals specific to the downtown area:

- Make Downtown the focal feature for activities, businesses, festivals, residents, and visitors.
- Support the targeted redevelopment of Downtown with a block-by-block approach along key corridors.
- Develop the riverfront as a downtown amenity while preserving its prominence and visibility throughout Downtown Mount Vernon.

Survey Results: What would you like to see in Downtown Mount Vernon?

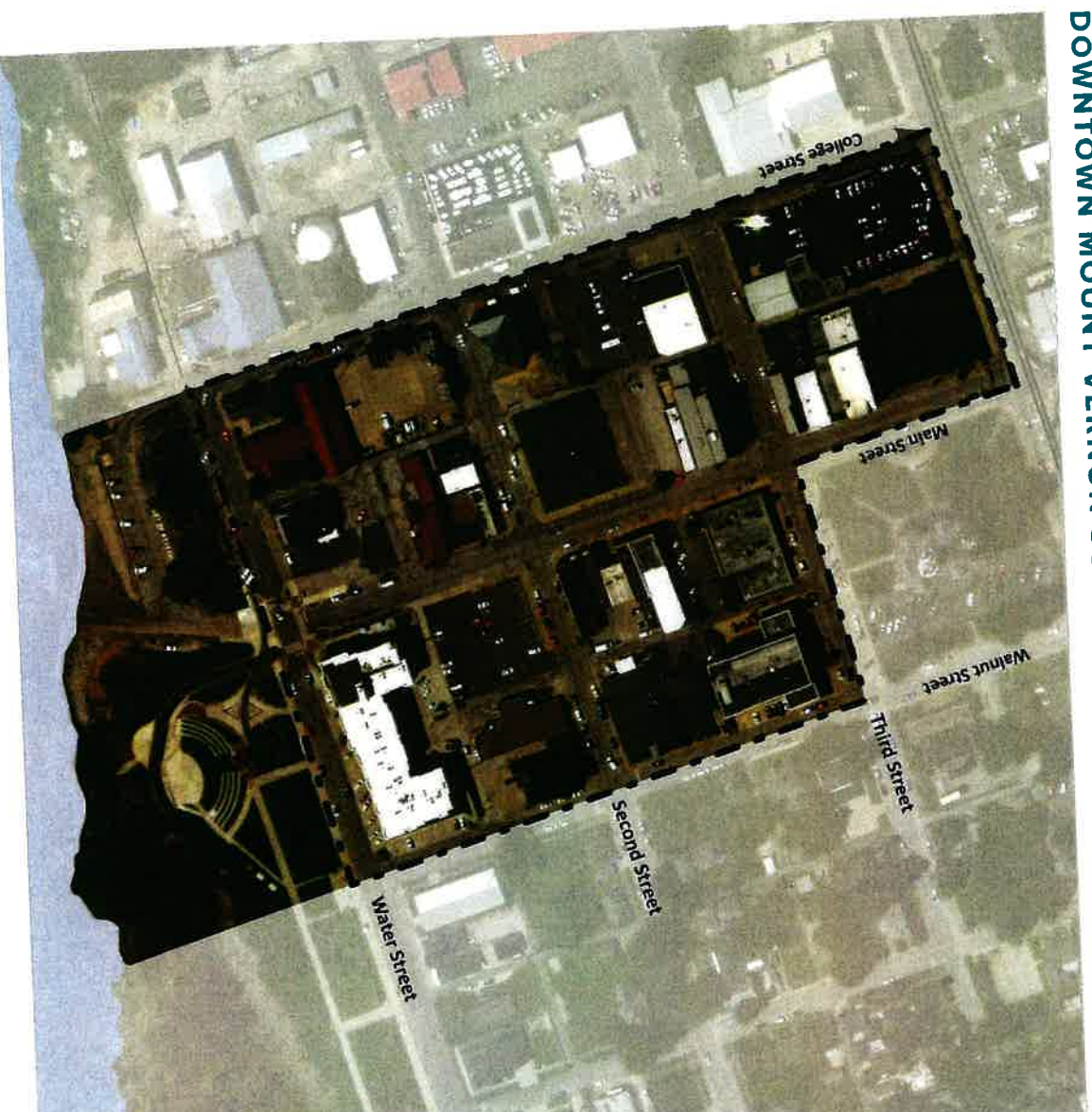


Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.

## DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON SUB AREA PLAN MAP

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation and action items for the downtown plan build on the concepts presented in this area by the 2014 Downtown Redevelopment plan and great progress made by Mount Vernon officials on the action items from that plan. Land uses should refer to the Land Use section and Future Land Use Map. However, this sub-area section contains more detailed recommendation specific to the downtown area.



Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.



## FUTURE LAND-USE

Land-use in Downtown Mount Vernon should consist of only mixed-use structures or parks and leisure activities. The land use and structures recommended in the 2014 Downtown Revitalization plan are still relevant to the goals today. The main focus area can be seen in the figure to the right, outlined in solid red. The uses recommended are new retail with mixed-use infill and rehabilitation of original Main Street buildings.

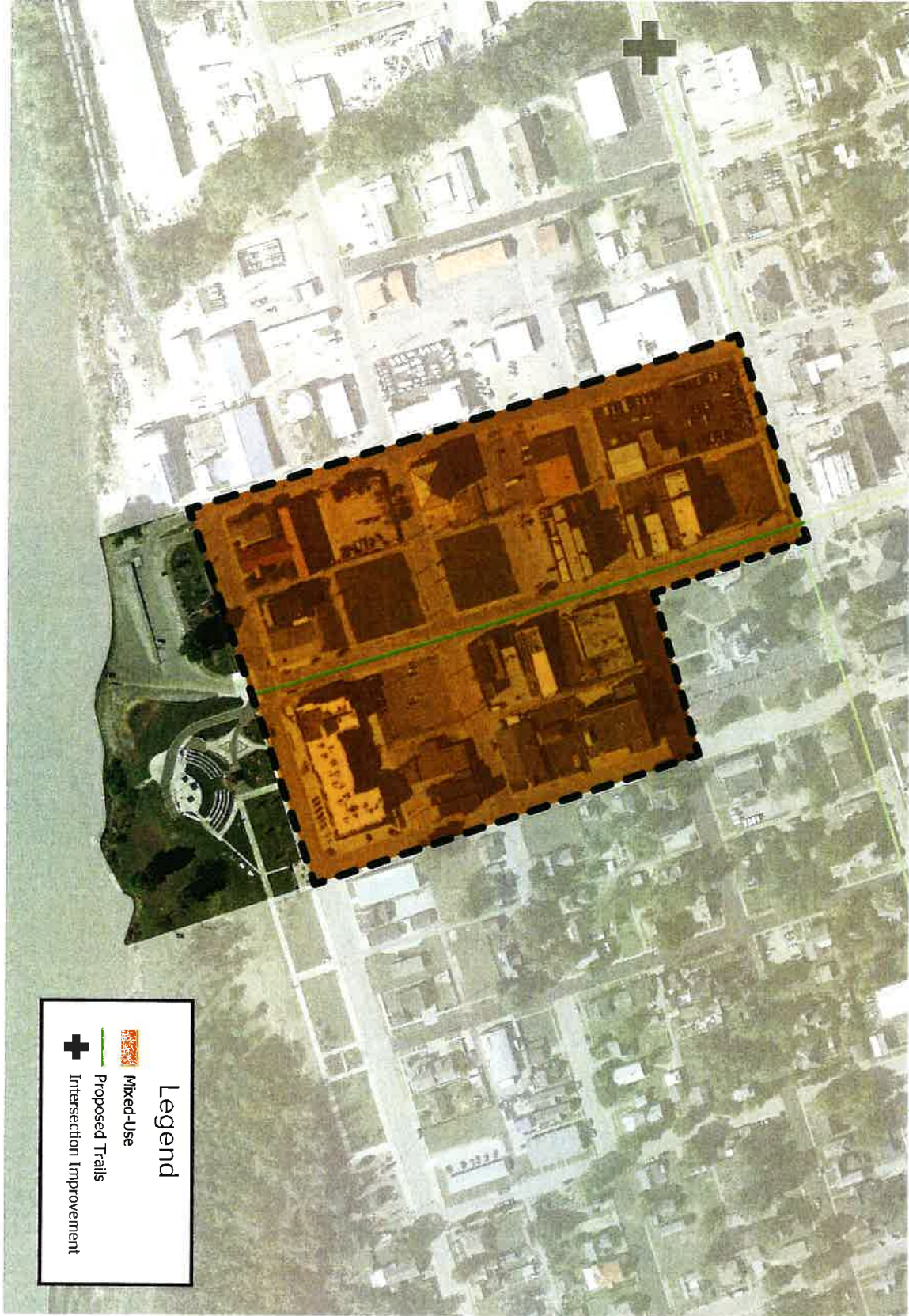
### **MOUNT VERNON RESIDENT FEEDBACK**

Mount Vernon residents were clear that downtown was important to them. When asked what kinds of activities they wanted to see in downtown, it was explicit they wanted to see more shopping opportunities, entertainment options, restaurants, and increased beautification efforts.





**PROPOSED DOWNTOWN LAND USE IN MOUNT VERNON, INDIANA**



SOURCE: ESRI and American Structurepoint, Inc.



## NEW OBJECTIVES

### Concentrate redevelopment activities and initiatives within a “core area” of downtown.

- Develop key intersections along Main Street as local entertainment, public art, or historical information nodes.
- Install wayfinding signage to identify parking areas and local attractions to help residents and newcomers find interesting activity nodes.
- Attract a bed and breakfast downtown in the core area.
- Add residential units downtown.
- Revise the Central Business District to specify that upper-story dwelling units are permitted for use.
- Establish an official riverfront district per Indiana Code 71-3-20-16.1.

### Develop a downtown-specific brand in addition to the City-wide brand recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. Downtown branding should include:

- Designated gateways into the downtown area.
- Increased awareness of the culture and history.
- Continued public art and mural programs.
- Creation of a branded downtown-specific website for public events, newsletters, Facebook posts, parking maps, and to establish a point of contact for downtown economic development inquiries.

### Create an entrepreneurial atmosphere for businesses to locate in downtown.

- Meet with local business/property owners to gauge their interest in converting available retail space into pop-up, temporary business host sites, or another incubator type.
- Develop an entrepreneur pipeline by coordinating educational programs with on site classes, area resources, and business with the local school district and regional community colleges.
- Consider working with local entrepreneurs to establish a potential food hall or food truck court.
- Create special events and programs to attract local workers to downtown on Friday nights.
- Assist local business owners to create and manage their own business two business special events.

# DOWNTOWN BEAUTIFICATION AND ACTIVATION



Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.



Create pedestrian passsthroughs in existing alleys to connect the downtown and riverfront



Invite a variety of infill development



Beautify the area with new plantings & site amenities



Utilize as a temporary activity space



Install decorative signs to denote the extents of downtown or other points of interest



Beautify intersections similar to the intersection of Walnut & Water streets

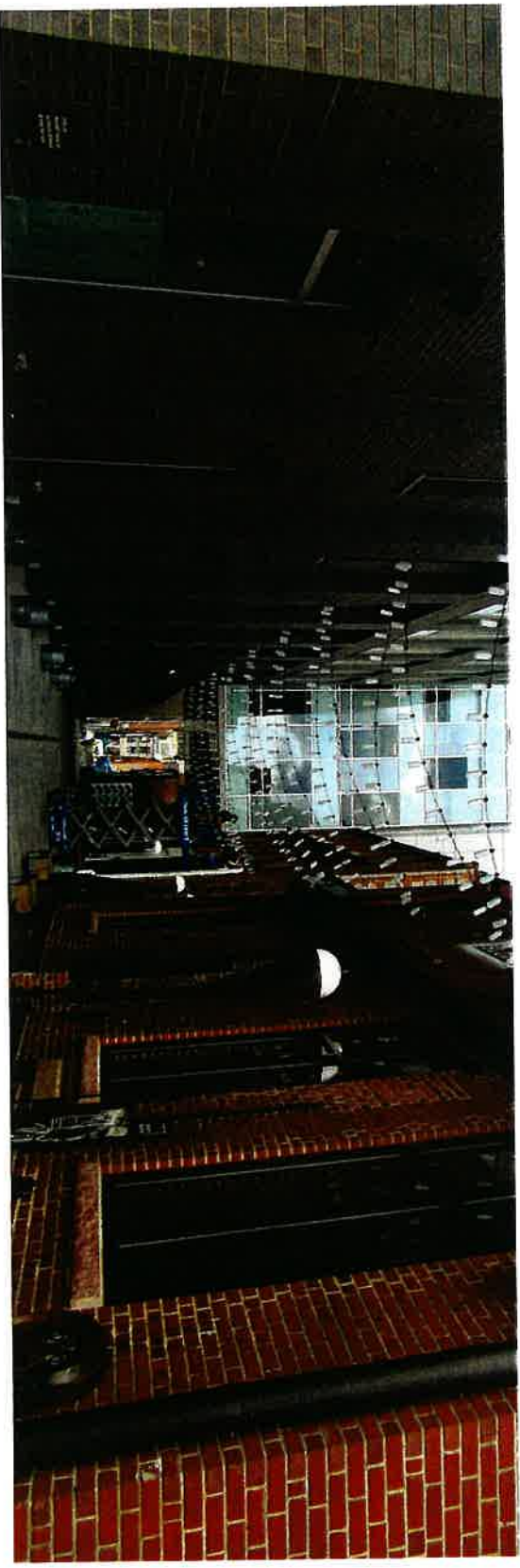


Invite prime infill opportunities as outlined in the READI grant



Amenities to draw visitors towards the river





Alleyway Beautification

Source: <https://www.westword.com/restaurants/the-alley-at-the-dairy-block-debuts-for-rockies-home-opener-10171749>



Alleyway Beautification

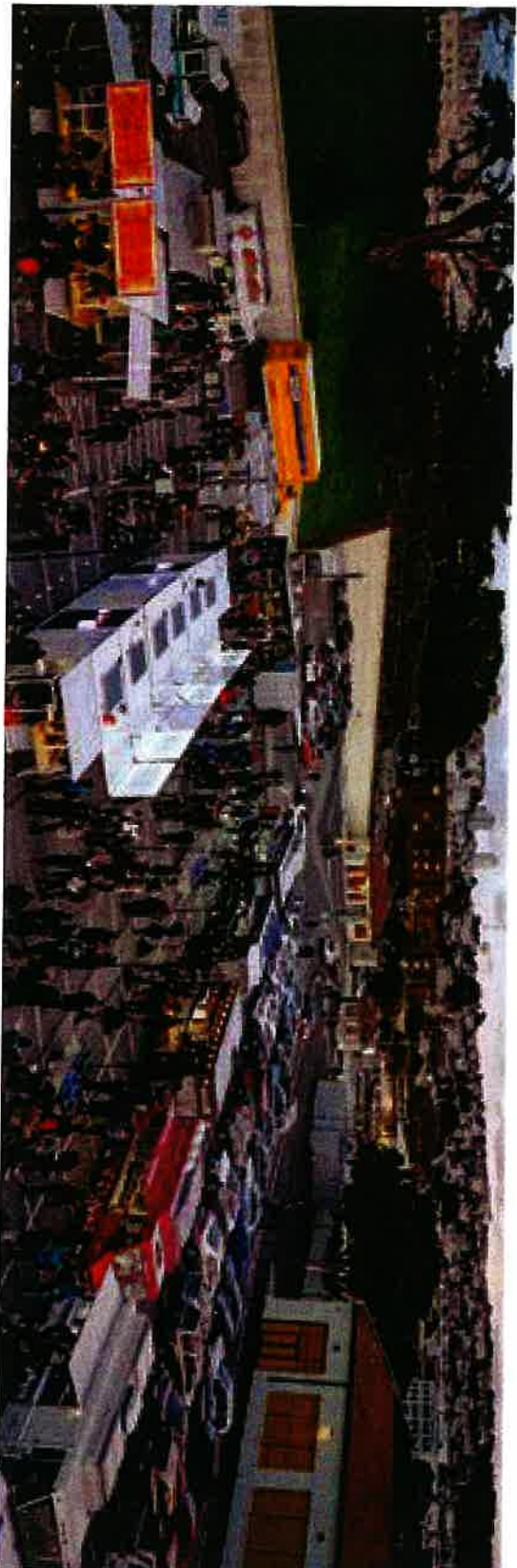
Source: <https://twitter.com/indychelsee/status/871795446380933120>



Alleyway Beautification

Source: <https://www.artworkscincinnati.org/media/New-Line-Alley-Wolf-18-6793.jpg>





Activation of a Temporary Space

Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/564x/4f/4d/9e/4f4d9eb373d815dd479acd4d3779ec5.jpg>



Activation of a Temporary Space

Source: <https://sf.eater.com/22251368/off-the-grid-fort-mason-coronavirus-2021-plans-al-pastor-papi-spark-social-sf>

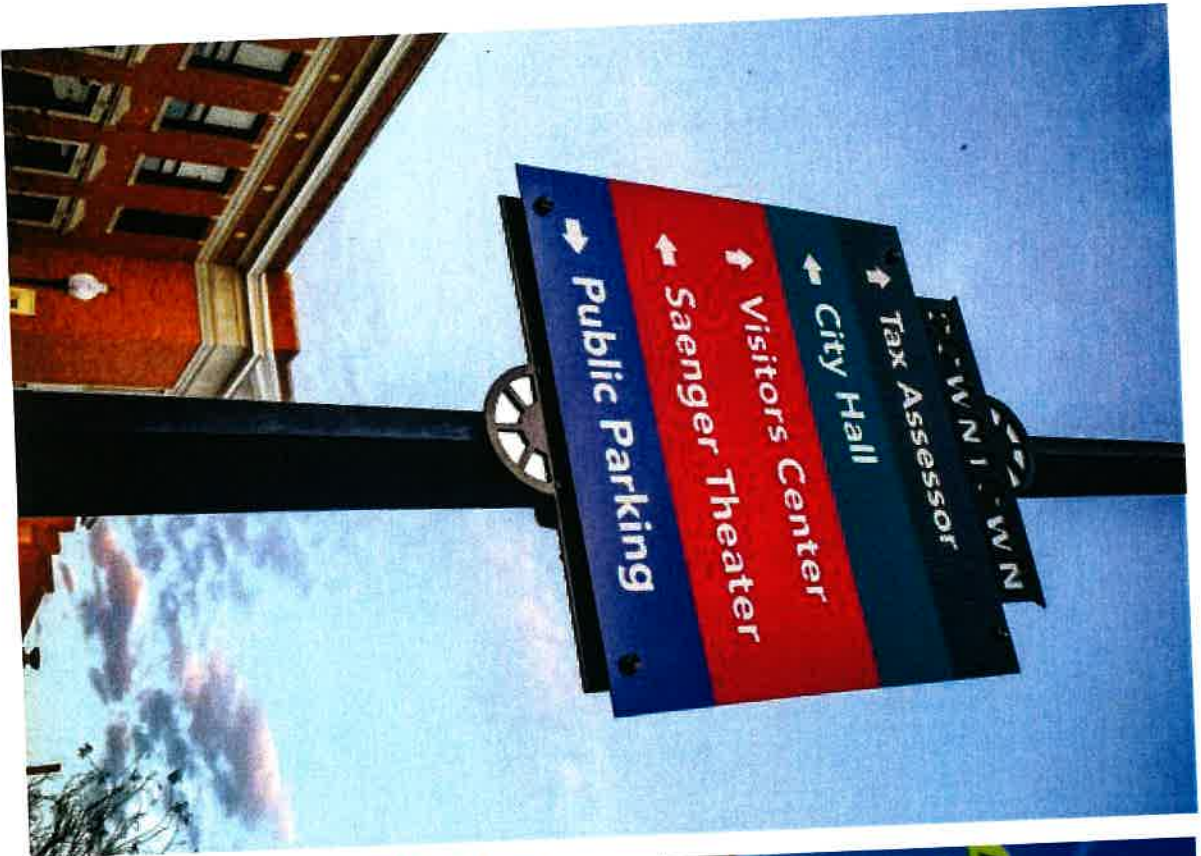


Activation of a Temporary Space

Source: <https://www.floridatfoodtrucks.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/stock-food-truck.jpg>



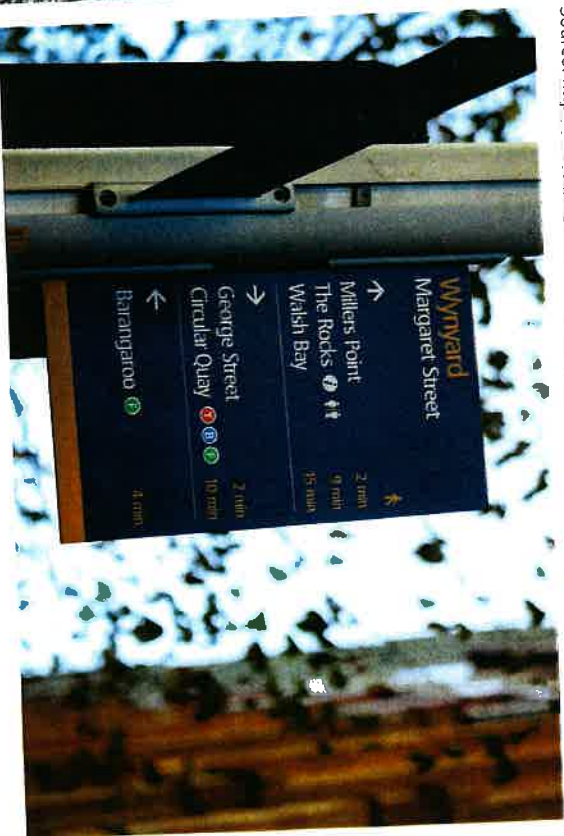
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Wayfinding Signage  
Source: <https://www.hattiesburgms.com/news-updates/new-wayfinding-signage-unveiled-in-downtown-hattiesburg/>



Wayfinding Signage  
Source: <https://bainbridgedowntown.org/city-installs-wayfinding-signs/>



Wayfinding Signage  
Source: <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/public-health-safety-programs/wayfinding-and-signage>



Downtown Amenities - Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Source: <https://columbusunderground.com/new-stations-downtown-offer-fast-charge-for-electric-vehicles-bw/>



Downtown Amenities - Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Source: <https://electrificationmy.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/OakvilleChargeHero.jpg>



B

E

G



Streetscape Improvements  
Source: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)



Streetscape Improvements  
Source: <http://www.cityarch.com/planning/rocky-river-streetscape/>



Streetscape Improvements  
Source: <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/photo/pedestrian-crossing-in-the-city-royalty-free-image/617867368>



## RESTATED AND REVISED OBJECTIVES

The following Objectives are restated from the 2014 Downtown Mount Vernon Sub-area Plan and updated as needed. All the sub-area goals feed into the Downtown Redevelopment goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Create an environment that attracts retail and retains businesses**

- Form a Main Street Organization.
- Create and promote a small business toolkit.
- Create a tax abatement program for small business activities.
- Pursue applying for business development loans to provide funding for needed business development opportunities.
- Promote, attract, and retain specialty shops in the downtown area.
- Attract retail downtown (e.g., restaurants, cafes, bars, microbreweries, convenience retail, etc.).

### **Preserve existing architectural character and history (encourage complementary infill)**

- Incorporate design standards into the Zoning Ordinance.
- Encourage complementary infill development.

### **Improve parking and travel in the Downtown area**

- Improve existing parking lots.
- Improve on-street parking.

### **Establish Mount Vernon as a historical and cultural destination**

- Encourage the continued installation of public art and murals to display Mount Vernon's history and culture.

### **Continue to embrace the river as the centerpiece of downtown**

- Establish a downtown promotion and branding program.
- Establish downtown events programs.

## DOWNTOWN BEAUTIFICATION AND ACTIVATION



Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.





# EASTSIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA #1 TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) DISTRICT

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Mount Vernon Redevelopment Commission created the Eastside Economic Development Area #1 TIF District in partnership with the city of Mount Vernon in June 2006. The purpose of the financing mechanism is to encourage the development of commercial properties at the eastern border of Mount Vernon's corporate limits.

## **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE EASTSIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA #1 TIF DISTRICT SUB-AREA PLAN?**

The purpose of this plan is to refocus and reconsider the TIF District Boundaries. The plan's success early in its life span shows that Mount Vernon is still an important economic hub for the area.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The land use recommendations for the Eastside Economic Development Area #1 TIF District can be found in the Future Land Use Map included in this document. Uses should be consistent with the existing businesses within the TIF district, uses which could generally fit into heavy commercial or light manufacturing zoning districts.



## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Given the unique needs of the eastside sub-area, the goals statements for this sub-area plan are combined with the objective statements since the goals and objectives are closely related.

### **Establish a new TIF District to assist development in Mount Vernon and Posey County**

- Identify parcels adjacent to the existing TIF District that could be adopted into and supplement an expanded TIF District boundary.
- Determine if these parcels need to be annexed or can remain in the County.
- Start the annexation process of the identified parcels into Mount Vernon.

### **Expansion of public utilities to parcels within the TIF District**

- Coordinate with Mount Vernon utilities and local electric, gas, and telecommunications communities to ensure parcels in the TIF District have access.
- Identify solutions to floodplain management within the TIF District and implement them as necessary.

### **Ensure that road, port, rail, and trail access reaches from Mount Vernon to all TIF District parcels**

- Identify locations where additional road access might be needed and begin development as necessary.
- Ensure access to the port for all parcels within the TIF District.
- Ensure shared access to the Evansville Western Railway for all parcels within the TIF District.
- Identify the best path to develop a multi-use trail to the TIF District.



# CRITICAL PATH STRATEGIES

The goals and objective statements are created to guide the community's vision through recommendations; the strategies are direct guidelines to implement those recommendations. Each critical path strategy has a complete page outlining the work plan. This plan is intended to assist in implementation, related goals, action items, people or organizations involved, and provides an estimated timeline and cost for each project.

Each strategy identified should be considered a top priority. Strategies are typically short-term, affordable projects that can create momentum and showcase immediate progress for the community. Some projects will be long-term and require extended timelines, additional budgeting, or increased staff resources to complete.

One strategy might apply to multiple goals or objective statements. Strategies that directly address multiple goals will be identified. Strategies might address the first step to completing a long-term goal as well.

## HOW TO USE THE CRITICAL PATH STRATEGIES

The following pages provide specific guidance to Mount Vernon and community partners on implementing the identified critical path strategies. Each program's dedicated work plan will have an included timeframe that will be no longer than three years and an estimated cost.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH AND AWARENESS

Some proposed projects and programs will incorporate public outreach and engagement activities in their planning process. To provide transparency to the decision-making and implementation process, responsible parties must keep the public informed of the changes and progress occurring because of the implementation of this plan. All identified critical path strategies will benefit from informing the public of potential changes, anticipated impacts and benefits, and when the community can expect to see those changes implemented. Public outreach will give businesses and residents time to prepare for the changes, become educated about and aware of the changes, and potentially reduce adverse public reactions.



# STRATEGY 1

Work with the Area Plan Commission (APC) on any updates to the Joint City/County Zoning Ordinance to align with the comprehensive plan goals and objectives, future land use map, and sub-area plans (as needed).

## ACTION STEPS

- Review the Ordinance against the comprehensive plan and future land use and transportation maps to identify barriers related to implementation.
- Complete an Ordinance diagnosis to identify strengths, weaknesses, and possible alternative approaches for each goal topic.
  - Ensure that a range of housing types remain as permitted uses in historic and older neighborhoods
  - Consider additional landscape standards for properties along arterial and collector streets
  - Consolidate all sign standards into a separate chapter to ensure they meet current best practices and recent legal precedents.
- Work with the Area Plan Commission of Posey County to address specific changes related to land uses and place type definitions, land-use transitions, redevelopment efforts, residential densities, restricted development within the floodplain, and enhanced code enforcement.

## PARTIES TO INVOLVE

- Professional Consultant (if desired)
- Mount Vernon City Officials and Staff
- Mount Vernon Public Works
- Mount Vernon Board of Works
- Mount Vernon Common Council

## RELATED GOALS

- Housing
- Economic Development
- Downtown Redevelopment
- Public Infrastructure
- Parks and Recreation
- Transportation and Connectivity

## TIME FRAME

0-2 years

## ESTIMATED COST

Low

## STRATEGY 2

Work with the APC to ensure a range of housing types are permitted in the governing Zoning Ordinance.

### ACTION STEPS

- Work with the Area Plan Commission of Posey County to review and proposed updates to the area zoning ordinance to include language allowing for diversified housing types.
- Encourage the rezoning of residential properties in areas around commercial centers and mixed-use development to this new zoning category.
- Consider developing a land bank (see sidebar for description) to encourage residential development.

### PARTIES TO INVOLVE

- Mount Vernon City Officials
- Mount Vernon Public Works
- Mount Vernon Board of Works
- Posey County Board of Zoning Appeals
- Posey County Area Plan Commission
- Mount Vernon Common Council

### RELATED GOALS

- Housing
- Economic Development
- Downtown Redevelopment
- Public Infrastructure

### TIME FRAME

0-2 years

### ESTIMATED COST

Low to Medium



**LAND BANKS**

"Land Banks are public authorities or non-profit organizations created to acquire, hold, manage, and sometimes redevelop property in order to return these properties to productive use to meet community goals, such as increasing affordable housing or stabilizing property values. Land banks can play a number of different roles depending on a community's development goals, including: (a) providing a mechanism for assembling parcels of tax-delinquent or abandoned properties for redevelopment; (b) acquiring and holding strategically valuable properties until the community can develop them as affordable housing, and; c) acquiring properties to convert to other uses such as retail, parks, or open space for flood mitigation. In addition to acquiring and holding land, land banks can maintain, rehabilitate, demolish, and lease or sell property."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <https://calihousingsolutions.org/housing-policy-library/land-banks/>

## STRATEGY 3

Work with a consultant to create a unique brand for the City and Downtown Mount Vernon.

### ACTION STEPS

- Assemble a group of city leaders as a Branding Task force to head up the development and implementation of this process.
- Inventory all existing branding efforts to help determine Mount Vernon's niche.
- The task force should create a logo, narrative, and tag lines that promote Mount Vernon as a destination for new residents, potential business owners, and existing residents. Extra attention should be paid to "shop local" efforts to bring existing residents and employees to Mount Vernon businesses.
- Develop strategies for the City, partner agencies, businesses, and property owners to disseminate the new brand via social media, the mayor's podcast, international corridor-specific website, themed stickers, t-shirts, branded mailers, new business profiles, etc.
- Identify existing or new events and potential organizers to create and coordinate new frequent micro-events such as local live music, street food celebrations, and movies under the stars.
- Create increased wayfinding signs that mark the location of city-owned off-street parking lots and local attractions.

### PARTIES TO INVOLVE

- Professional Consultant (if applicable)
- Mount Vernon City Officials
- Mount Vernon Common Council
- Evansville Regional Economic Partnership
- Posey County Officials
- Visit Posey County

### RELATED GOALS

- Housing
- Economic Development
- Downtown Redevelopment
- Parks and Recreation
- Placemaking
- Wayfinding

### TIME FRAME

1-6 months

### ESTIMATED COST

Medium





Sample Branding for Mount Vernon  
Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.



Example of a trail in Mount Vernon  
Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.



## STRATEGY 4

Identify gaps and priorities in the city's trail and sidewalk systems to increase connectivity between parks, schools, downtown, neighborhoods, large employers, and popular community destinations.

### ACTION STEPS

- Create a task group or hire a professional consultant to assess the existing sidewalk and trail infrastructure in Mount Vernon, such as conditions, gap locations, and locations that require accessibility upgrades.
- Identify priority areas for trail improvement. Priorities should be in areas with no trails or where ADA accessibility (Americans with Disabilities Act) is lacking.
- Apply for grant funding from private, local, or federal sources to make the trail updates.
- Create a line item in the City's budget to assess and fund design, trail construction, and intersection improvement projects.

### PARTIES TO INVOLVE

- Professional Consultant (if requested)
- Mount Vernon Street Department
- Mount Vernon Board of Works
- Mount Vernon Parks and Recreation
- Posey County Area Plan Commission
- General Public

### RELATED GOALS

- Housing
- Wayfinding
- Economic Development
- Placemaking
- Downtown Redevelopment
- Public Infrastructure
- Parks and Recreation
- Transportation and Connectivity

### TIME FRAME

1-3 years

### ESTIMATED COST

Medium to High

## STRATEGY 5

Promote and enhance local career pathway strategies that can offer continued and on-the-job training to advance a worker's skills, pay, and future employment opportunities over time.

### ACTION STEPS

- Determine the current need for the local workforce.
- Develop a quarterly business roundtable with the leaders of local businesses to showcase existing programs and ensure that training programs address local needs that advance skills, improve professionalism, and ease finding employees.
- Enhance job shadowing and apprenticeship opportunities through the Indiana Economic Development Council's Work-Based Learning Programs. In particular:
  - Build public-private partnerships through the State Earn and Learn programs,
  - Inquire with local manufacturers about creating registered apprenticeships,
  - Talk to local employers about the Next Level Jobs—Employer Training Grant Program to help continue the training for recent high-school graduates and offset their training costs. (See the sidebar below.)
- Create a job fair for local employers to interview recent high-school graduates that have gone through local training programs and technical college graduates.

### PARTIES TO INVOLVE

- General Public
- MSD of Mount Vernon
- Mount Vernon Economic Development
- Mount Vernon City Officials
- Work One
- Evansville Economic Development Partnership
- Indiana Economic Development Council
- Local Business Owners/Operators

### RELATED GOALS

- Economic Development
- Parks and Recreation

### TIME FRAME

Ongoing

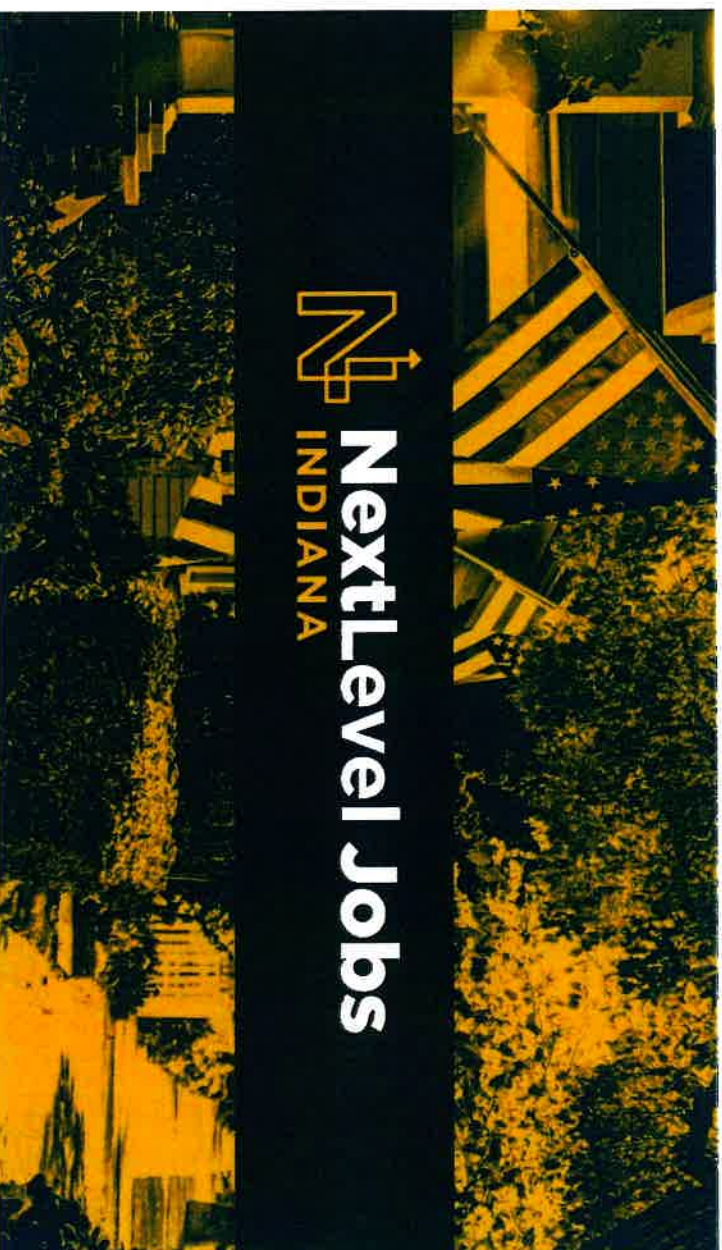
### ESTIMATED COST

Low



### **NEXT LEVEL JOBS**

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development (IDWD) created the Next Level Jobs – Employer Training Grant to assist with job placement and training for Indiana Based Business. The program provides businesses up to \$5,000 per employee trained, hired, or retained for six months. Employers may receive a maximum of \$50,000 (ten employees). More than 100 occupations are eligible for the grant in various industries.<sup>6</sup>



Indiana Next Level Jobs Program

Source: <https://www.in.gov/dwd/business-services/etg/?industry=agriculture>.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.in.gov/dwd/files/ETR-Overview.pdf>

## LEBANON PARKS MASTER PLAN<sup>7</sup>

Lebanon, Indiana, created a master plan outlining what the parks department would like to accomplish over a five-year period. The plan assesses the community's existing park facilities and programs and plans to address current and possible future services and needs. The plan also provides the necessary pathway to apply for Department of Natural Resources Funding.

The plan focuses on facilities, programs, and utilities to include or update the city's current or future parks and buildings.<sup>8</sup> This plan can serve as an example for Critical Path Strategy 11 and 12.

### FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARKS AND RECREATION CAN COME FROM:

#### Federal Funding

- [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#)
- [Recreational Trails Program](#)
- [DNR Shooting Range Program](#)

#### State Programs

- [Indiana Trails Program](#)
- [Next Level Trails](#)
- [President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust Fund](#)
- [Community Development Block Grants \(CDBG\)](#)

#### Other Funding

- [Posey County Community Foundation, Community Good Grants Program](#)
- [AARP Community Challenge](#)
- [People for Bikes](#)

#### Free Grant Resources might be found at:

- [Charity How To](#)
- [Park Planning Information and Guidelines](#)

<sup>7</sup> <https://indianaeconomicdigest.net/Content/Most-Recent/Health-Care/Article/Lebanon-Parks-Department-unwells-5-year-system-master-plan/319187390>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.lebanon.in.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Lebanon-Parks-Master-Plan1.pdf>



## STRATEGY 6

Utilize the upcoming parks and recreation master plan to determine what features/amenities are needed in Mount Vernon. After Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) approval, use this as a guide to add features to Brittle Bank Park and all parks within Mount Vernon. Focus on improvements first to Brittle Bank Park since this Plan's public engagement efforts clearly showed the community feels this is an underutilized asset.

### ACTION STEPS

- Create a plan including which park amenities are desired and where they should be located. This can be done internally or by a professional consultant.
- Create an itemized list of facility enhancements, equipment, or trails to determine what budget years these items may be purchased/constructed.
- Determine any grants that each identified enhancement project might qualify for funding assistance from private, state, or federal sources.
- Budget funding to purchase and install the park amenities annually in the City's budget planning efforts.
- Implement the amenities plan.

### PARTIES TO INVOLVE

- Professional Consultant (if requested)
- Mount Vernon City Officials
- Mount Vernon Parks and Recreation
- General Public
- Posey County Area Plan Commission
- Visit Posey County
- Mount Vernon Street Department

### RELATED GOALS

- Branding
- Wayfinding
- Placemaking
- Public Infrastructure
- Parks and Recreation
- Transportation and Connectivity

### TIME FRAME

1-3 years

### ESTIMATED COST

Medium to High

# STRATEGY 7

Create a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) to ensure critical infrastructure upgrades and expansion are accounted for annually.

## ACTION STEPS

- Create a system to track capital and infrastructure-related projects (this can be a spreadsheet or advanced software system).
- Set up an annual internal process with key staff to review the project to determine projects that are coming to completion, ones in a process that need continued funding, and future projects to start five years in the future.
- Review the CIP annually with the City Council as part of the City's budget process to ensure the priorities of the CIP align with the City's vision and to account for unexpected changes in priority.

## PARTIES TO INVOLVE

- Mount Vernon Board of Works
- Mount Vernon City Officials
- Mount Vernon Public Works
- Mount Vernon Street Department

## RELATED GOALS

- Placemaking
- Branding
- Public Infrastructure
- Parks and Recreation
- Transportation and Connectivity

## TIME FRAME

3-5 years

## ESTIMATED COST

Medium

"A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) contains all the individual capital projects, equipment purchases, and major studies for a local government; in conjunction with construction and completion schedules and in consort with financing plans. The plan provides a working blueprint for sustaining and improving the community's infrastructure. It coordinates strategic planning, financial capacity, and physical development."<sup>9</sup> CIPs are typically limited to five budget cycles, ensuring that incremental progress is made toward critical infrastructure projects. The five-year limit also ensures that once a project is started that funding priorities remain intact for these projects.

<sup>9</sup><https://open.gov.com/article/capital-improvement-plans-10/>



STRATEGY 8

Ensure the CSX Railroad bridge over Mulberry Street (County Bridge No. 351) is repaired or replaced according to the Posey County Bridge No. 351 Abbreviated Engineer's Assessment (American Structurepoint, Inc., July 2022). This will maintain a safe railroad crossing and continued emergency vehicle access.

ACTION STEPS

- Review the recommendations of the July 22 report.
- Work with Posey County Highway Department or create an information task force to continue development of bridge replacement plans.
- Assist Posey County in finding State and Federal grants which contribute to funding the design and construction of the bridge.
  - Plans should include accommodation for pedestrians. Several walkers and bikers were observed using this bridge, and there are currently no sidewalks for this section of Mulberry Street.
  - Coordinate pedestrian and redevelopment projects directly adjacent to the bridge to ensure the neighborhood is factored into the final plans.

PARTIES TO INVOLVE

- Posey County Highway Department
- Posey County Board of Commissioners
- Indiana Department of Transportation
- Mount Vernon Board of Works
- Mount Vernon City Officials
- Mount Vernon Public Works
- Mount Vernon Street Department

RELATED GOALS

- Public Infrastructure
- Parks and Recreation
- Transportation and Connectivity

TIME FRAME

3-5 years

ESTIMATED COST


High

## POSEY COUNTY BRIDGE NO. 351 ABBREVIATED ENGINEER'S ASSESSMENT

In July of 2022, American Structurepoint was tasked with evaluating the conditions of the bridge on Mulberry Street over the CSX railroad by Posey County. The bridge group's evaluation determined that there was significant cracking and exposed rebar on the bridge and three alternatives for evaluation, but stated that doing nothing was not a preferred alternative since this would "leave the deteriorated structure in place." Mulberry Street also serves as a primary access route for emergency response personnel and vehicles, which increases the importance of maintaining Mulberry Street as a viable north-south route in the city.

The bridge project needs continued evaluation to maintain safe access for residences and emergency vehicles. Mount Vernon can work with Posey County to help ensure that the recommendations from the American Structurepoint report are examined and pursued to remedy this situation.



**STRUCTUREPOINT**  
INC.

**Posey County Bridge No. 351**  
**Abbreviated Engineer's**  
**Assessment**


5025 ROVER ROAD, SUITE 200  
MOUNTAIN VIEW, IN 46040  
PHONE: 317.947.5580  
FAX: 317.947.5580

**Mulberry Street over CSX Railroad**

Existing NBI Number: 6500289  
Existing Structure Number: 65-00351  
Prepared for Posey County  
by American Structurepoint, Inc.  
**July 2022**

Submitted by:  
  
Ryan Curnutt, PE  
American Structurepoint, Inc.  
Date: 7/6/2022

Posey County Bridge No. 351 Engineer's Assessment Title Page  
Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.

**STRUCTUREPOINT**  
INC.

**Mulberry Street over CSX Railroad**  
**Posey County Bridge No. 351**

**5.0 Existing Facility**

**5.1 Road Classification and Speed**  
Mulberry Street is classified as an Urban Local Road on level terrain. The design speed limit (posted) for Mulberry Street through the project area is 30 mph.

**5.2 Existing Structure History**  
The original structure was built in 1960 according to the Bridge Inspection Report and there are no available construction plans. The existing structure is a five-span, continuous, reinforced concrete beam bridge with 12' spans. The bridge has a total length of 72'-0". The bridge has a total bridge length of 101'-0". The structure is constructed on a crest vertical curve. The out-to-out coping dimension is approximately 24'-8" which accommodates a 18'-0" clear roadway ( curb to curb).

There is significant cracking and spalling with exposed rebar throughout the structure, which is load posted for only 11 tons. The existing vertical clearance is approximately 21ft from top of rail to bottom of beam, yielding the 23ft requirement for bridges over railroads.

**5.3 Traffic Data**  
The following traffic data is currently estimated for Mulberry Street.

TRAFFIC DATA	Mulberry Street
A.A.D.T. (2022)	1,700 V.P.D.
A.A.D.T. (2047)	2,000 V.P.D.
DIRECTIONAL DISTRIBUTION	50% NB / 50% SB
TRUCKS	7% A.A.D.T.

**5.4 Further Testing**  
An abutment report and testing will be required. Mitigation for abutment containing materials will be considered as necessary.

Posey County Bridge No. 351 Facility Analysis  
Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.

**8.0 Cost Analysis**

**8.1 Total Cost Estimate**  
The cost estimate for the recommended alternative is summarized in the table below. See Appendix C for further cost breakdowns and notes.

Phase	Cost
Road and Bridge Construction	\$5,823,800
Utility Relocation	180
Land Acquisition	\$298,000
Railroad Agreement	5,100,000
Preliminary Engineering and Construction Inspection	\$1,052,000
Owner Contingency (Assume 10% of Construction Cost)	\$582,380
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$5,883,060</b>

Posey County Bridge No. 351 Cost Analysis  
Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.

STRATEGY 9

Create an events board. The intent of this board is to promote, plan, and encourage local community events.

ACTION STEPS

- Establish an events board to oversee and identify community events.
- Ensure funding is acquired to plan and host community events.
- Develop a permit or assistance program so business owners can host business-to-business marketing events, such as wine walks, sidewalk sales, etc.
- Create an approval process to encourage local business owners to take charge and develop their events with minimal assistance from City staff and partner agencies.

PARTIES TO INVOLVE

- Mount Vernon Parks and Recreation
- Mount Vernon Parks Board
- General Public
- Visit Posey County
- Evansville Economic Development Partnership

RELATED GOALS

- Branding
- Placemaking
- Downtown Redevelopment
- Parks and Recreation

TIME FRAME

1-6 months

ESTIMATED COST

Low to Medium



STRATEGY 10

Develop gateway landscaping and signage designs for downtown's east and west gateways.

ACTION STEPS

- Hire a professional designer via a request for proposals or request for qualifications process.
- Involve the public in the design decision process.
- Secure private, local, state, or federal funding to construct the gateways.

PARTIES TO INVOLVE

- Professional Consultant
- Mount Vernon City Officials
- Mount Vernon Common Council
- General Public

RELATED GOALS

- Branding
- Wayfinding
- Placemaking

TIME FRAME

1-3 years

ESTIMATED COST

Medium

## STRATEGY 11

Concentrate redevelopment activities and initiatives within a “core area” of Downtown Mount Vernon.

### ACTION STEPS

- Ensure that the governing zoning ordinance allows for mixed-use development in the downtown area. This update should identify apartments as a permitted use on the upper-stories mixed-use buildings to eliminate any potential confusion.
- Turn the underutilized green spaces in the downtown core into a temporary gathering space for local events and entrepreneurs.
- Approve and create a river district for the eligible portion of the downtown area.
- Turn Downtown Mount Vernon into the “cradle for entrepreneurs” that supports the entrepreneurial economy. (See sidebar on the next page).
- Develop a co-working space model by implementing a maker space and/or a food hall downtown.
- Sponsor an infrastructure improvement plan to make downtown buildings more attractive to business owners and encourage building owners to use second stories for apartments.
- Create opportunities for pop-up and temporary businesses downtown by utilizing existing events and spaces such as the farmer’s markets, local festivals, and sidewalk sales in conjunction with the events group as recommended in Critical Path Strategy #9.
- Develop a “pre-inspection” program to help potential businesses assess the code deficiencies and potential costs of locating into a Mount Vernon building before signing a lease or purchasing.

### PARTIES TO INVOLVE

- Professional Consultant (if requested)
- Mount Vernon City Officials
- Mount Vernon Common Council
- General Public
- Posey County Area Plan Commission

### RELATED GOALS

- Housing
- Economic Development
- Placemaking
- Downtown Redevelopment

### TIME FRAME

1-3 years

### ESTIMATED COST

High



## DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON PLAZA



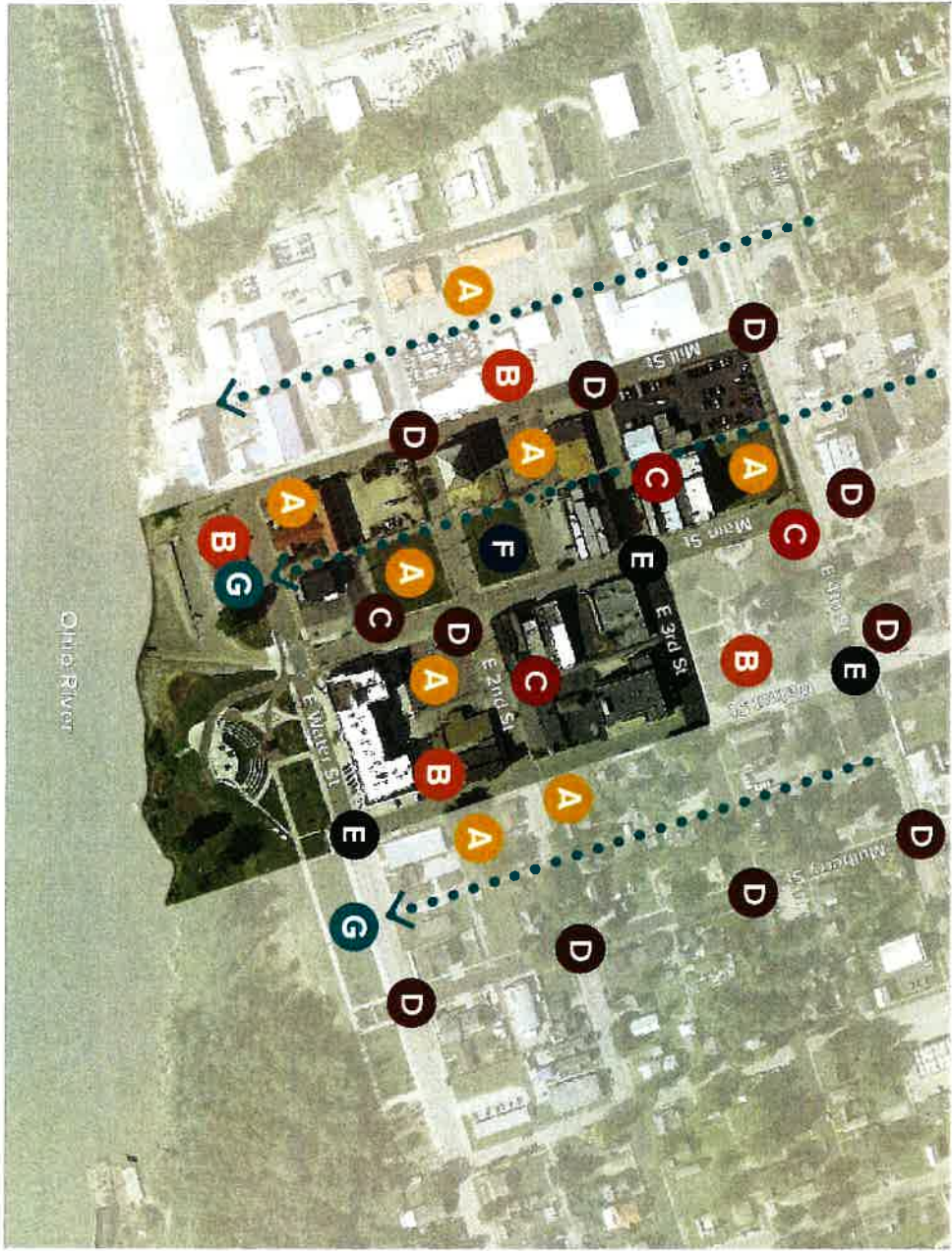
Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.

### **CARMEL, INDIANA URBAN CORE DISTRICT<sup>10</sup>**


Carmel's Zoning Ordinance includes an Urban Core District, which focuses on development or redevelopment in specified urban areas in Carmel, Indiana. The district is intended to fully promote and include mixed-use, transit-oriented development that allows for entertainment, employment, residential, and all-day use of spaces.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.carmel.in.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/19535/637927923376230000>

# DOWNTOWN CORE





Source: American Structurepoint, Inc.



Create pedestrian passsthroughs in existing alleys to connect the downtown and riverfront



Invite a variety of infill development



Beautify the area with new plantings & site amenities


Utilize as a temporary activity space


Install decorative signs to denote the extents of downtown or other points of interest


Beautify intersections similar to the intersection of Walnut & Water streets


Invite prime infill opportunities as outlined in the READI grant


Amenities to draw visitors towards the river



## ENTREPRENEURIAL ECONOMY

Entrepreneurs are often the heart of a community's downtown. Local businesses give consumers diverse shopping options and the feeling of supporting a local business owner directly but are also excellent sources of community development. A healthy local business often has a ripple effect on other businesses. Consumers visiting one shop or eating out at one local restaurant will likely take time to see another business downtown while they are there, and local businesses tend to source their materials locally. The e-commerce effect has changed how consumers shop for goods. A local good or service can provide consumers with a unique experience of finding a product that would not be offered online and supporting a business owner within the community.

Local businesses and entrepreneurs also provide a unique opportunity to fill underserved retail NALCS market areas. Local businesses often serve a niche for the community or the retail environment that big box stores cannot. Based on stakeholder discussions and the public input, consumers want more local restaurants and boutiques—both optimal opportunities for entrepreneurs to take on.

Being an entrepreneur is difficult and establishing a local business takes time, money, and hard work. The city should establish incentives to encourage business development downtown to mitigate the entrepreneur's risks. Incentives could include sponsoring an infrastructure improvement plan to update and make downtown buildings more attractive to building owners. The city should consider developing and providing more opportunities such as workshops, networking events, and entrepreneurship classes in a co-working space.

A traditional co-working space is not the only tool to encourage or support entrepreneurial efforts. Other examples encompass the same idea as a co-working space but for different retail sectors, including food halls, test kitchens, and maker's spaces. Like a traditional co-working space, a maker's space offers more options to support small-scale manufacturers, artists, and even small, light industrial developments.<sup>12</sup> Food halls or test kitchens are similar to a mall food court, except they offer cuisine from local restaurants or chefs, usually rotating restaurants monthly instead of chains. Food halls give those interested in opening a restaurant a place to start and are often incubators for new local restaurants, providing what could be considered a dining pipeline.<sup>12 13 14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.madlax.org/about>

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.sunkingbrewing.com/hf\\_tfq/you-have-a-food-hall-located-at-sun-king-spirits-in-carmel-in-what-is-a-food-hall/](https://www.sunkingbrewing.com/hf_tfq/you-have-a-food-hall-located-at-sun-king-spirits-in-carmel-in-what-is-a-food-hall/)

<sup>13</sup> <https://thesitestekitchen.com/the-story/>

<sup>14</sup> Cushman & Wakefield. *The Food Hall Model*. 2020.

## FOOD HALL CASE STUDY: FISHERS TEST KITCHEN, FISHERS, INDIANA



Source: [fisherstestkitchen.com](https://fisherstestkitchen.com)

The Fishers Test Kitchen hosts three culinary entrepreneurs launching their restaurant concepts in the completely built-out test kitchen. The chefs remain in the test kitchen for a year to test ideas and build their menus. The time in the food hall also gives them time to gain a following from local diners. The test kitchen also partners with Sun King Brewery in Carmel to provide diverse local dining options from test kitchen chefs. Chefs rotate every few years with the goal being that once chefs have gained enough following, built their menu, and learned how to run a kitchen, they can start their restaurant in the community after their time in the test kitchen. The test kitchen supports local culinary entrepreneurs while creating a more vibrant and exciting local food culture for the district to enjoy.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> <https://fisherstestkitchen.com/the-story/>



## POP UP SHOPS CASE STUDY: SOHUD COLLECTIVE, COLUMBUS, OHIO



"SoHud Collective" Pop-Up Shop in Columbus, Ohio, with iconic bus pop-up shop and local rotating vendors (2021)

Source: Sohud Collective, Facebook Page



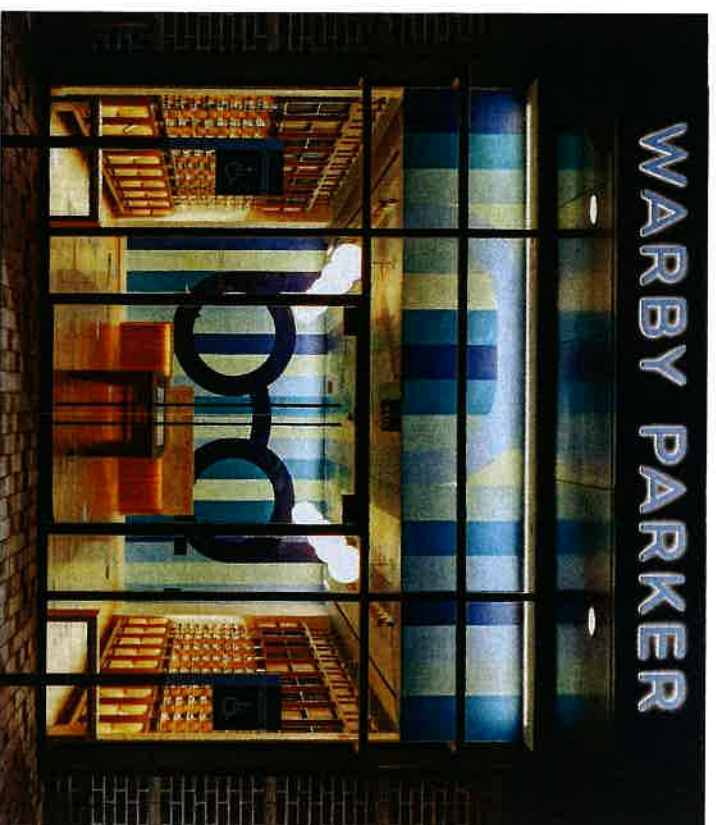
Original SoHud Collective pop-up shop when first starting its monthly pop-up in an underutilized surface lot (2020)

Source: The Lantern, Taylor Grindle

A pop-up shop is a temporary store or vendor. A pop-up shop can take the form of a tent, temporary structure, shipping or storage container, a rotating mall space, a vehicle, or a brick and mortar store. One of the easiest ways to encourage pop-up shops in a city is by hosting a public fair or festival where vendors can rent their own booth space. Pop-up shops feature all kinds of goods from fashion, jewelry, arts, and glasses frames to collectibles and handmade items such as soaps and candles. Pop-up shop opportunities allow local businesses to show their face to the public and get recognition for their product while also increasing city activity and street life.

The "SoHud Collective" is an example of a seasonal outdoor pop-up shop in the South Hudson neighborhood of Columbus, Ohio. Known for the iconic bus that houses one of the reoccurring pop-up shops, the market originated during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic to promote safe open-air shopping. The pop-up shop has since increased in popularity and has continued to be a staple of summer weekends in the South Hudson neighborhood. The pop-up shop offers a rotation of local vendors who sell clothing, home goods, jewelry, arts, and plants. Located in a previously underutilized surface lot, the SoHud Collective pop-up shop has brought a new life into the space and often attracts many weekend visitors and vendors to participate in the local pop-up shop. The increased street life and attraction to the pop-up shop has also led to increased business and development in the neighboring shops along Summit St.<sup>16 17</sup>

In some cases, pop-up shop businesses go on to become brick and mortar stores in the community. The now national retailer, Warby Parker, originated as a pop-up shop selling glasses virtually and in select temporary locations. Warby Parker now owns physical stores in cities such as Boston, Los Angeles, and New York City.<sup>18</sup>



A Warby Parker pop-up store in Houston

Source: Midway

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.theantenn.com/2020/06/new-pop-up-thrift-business-to-host-sale-on-hudson-st-saturday/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://614now.com/2020/culture/sohud-collective-provides-fresh-styleish-open-air-experience>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.latimes.com/fashion/altherage/la-ig-warby-parker-20130728-story.html>



EASTSIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA SPECIFIC CRITICAL PATH STRATEGIES

STRATEGY 12

Actively market and pursue industrial land uses that could use port access along the Ohio River.

ACTION STEPS

- Partner with Ports of Indiana and Evansville Regional Economic Partnership to identify available parcels and what the best use could be. Create a quarterly meeting between partner agencies to discuss evolving marketing, business, and infrastructure needs.
- Ensure the parcels have the required utilities to support businesses.
- Advertise available parcels which could contribute to the plans within this document.
- Proactively assess future infrastructure needs and expansions to existing facilities.

PARTIES TO INVOLVE

- Ports of Indiana
- Evansville Regional Economic Partnership
- Mount Vernon City Officials
- Mount Vernon Common Council
- Mount Vernon Economic Development
- Indiana Economic Development Council

RELATED GOALS

- Economic Development
- Public Infrastructure

TIME FRAME

1-6 months

ESTIMATED COST

Low

## **ST. LOUIS PORT AUTHORITY**

The St. Louis Port Authority was established to promote the port's welfare, encourage private capital investment, increase the volume of commerce, and promote foreign trade within the port district.<sup>19</sup> The port provides marketing and business development services, lease management for public and city-owned land, cruiseboats, financing, and a municipal river terminal for the city.<sup>20</sup>

The city's Port District is 6,000 acres along nineteen miles of the Mississippi River. The Port Authority is enabled to oversee projects along the riverfront, improve rail access, and manage federal grants. The additional funding available to river ports has enabled improvement within the city.<sup>21</sup>

The St. Louis Port Authority is a leading example of the types of services that local port authorities could provide to bolster trade, local economic development, and riverfront management.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://stlpartnership.com/who-we-are/board-of-director/st-louis-county-port-authority/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/sldc/sipa/index.cfm>

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.stltoday.com/business/local/st-louis-port-authority-looks-to-use-powers-beyond-riverbanks/article\\_300c436d-de34-5fe-b368-212bc982146c.html](https://www.stltoday.com/business/local/st-louis-port-authority-looks-to-use-powers-beyond-riverbanks/article_300c436d-de34-5fe-b368-212bc982146c.html)



## STRATEGY 13

Work with Posey County and the Posey County Redevelopment Commission to establish a new TIF east of the City's limits to help pay for critical infrastructure to continue to attract large employers to the Port of Indiana Eastside TIF District.

### ACTION STEPS

- Reach out to the Posey County Redevelopment Commission to start the process of evaluating the approach boundaries for a new TIF and potential ways to partner to provide the expanded infrastructure needed from Mount Vernon's utility systems.
- Determine which area along State Route 62 on the eastside of Mount Vernon qualifies for Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- Identify the boundaries and parcels of the proposed TIF District on the east side. The new district should be adjacent to the existing Eastside TIF District.
- Create guidelines with Posey County to help fund potential upgrades to Mount Vernon's facilities, including business attraction efforts.
- Pre-determine a process for reviewing and approving TIF expenditures for items for new projects based on the number of jobs created, expected average salary, and potentially employees living within a two-mile radius of the city limits.
- Develop and adopt the TIF District.

### PARTIES TO INVOLVE

- Posey County Economic Development Partnership
- Ports of Indiana
- Mount Vernon City Officials
- Mount Vernon Common Council
- Mount Vernon Economic Development

### RELATED GOALS

- Placemaking
- Public Infrastructure
- Transportation and Connectivity

### TIME FRAME

1-2 years

### ESTIMATED COST

High

## UPDATING THE PLAN

The following measures should be taken to ensure that the recommended strategies and action steps continue to move the community toward its vision and that the plan accurately reflects the community's collective vision and values over time.

- Prepare an annual report highlighting how the plan was used and the effectiveness of the contents. Pay particular attention to the implications of how one part of the plan affects or otherwise relates to another.
- Establish a five-year review and update process to examine and revise the plan's contents regularly. Of particular importance are:
  - Updates to the socio-demographic information;
  - Ensure that each of the policy objectives identified is still relevant;
  - Including the use of any newly defined best practice in land use or transportation planning or zoning;or,
  - Simply aligning the plan's content with any changes to the local regulatory environment.
- Establish a community engagement process, complete with inter-local cooperation, to complete the first two measures.



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# APPENDIX

Existing Conditions Report



**MOUNT VERNON  
EXISTING  
CONDITIONS  
REPORT**



**MAP 1, REGIONAL CONTEXT**





# REGIONAL CONTEXT

The City of Mount Vernon is a community in the southwestern corner of Indiana, located 15-miles west of the City of Evansville along the Ohio River. The City is the seat of Posey County and at the intersection of SR 141, SR 69, and SR 62 as shown on Map 1, Regional Context. The community is also home to one of Indiana's three official ports for freight and cargo.

## COMPARISON COMMUNITIES

While collecting Mount Vernon's demographic data and economic makeup, several comparison communities were identified to evaluate how Mount Vernon was faring compared to its neighbors in the larger region. These communities include the State of Indiana, Posey County, the City of Evansville, the City of Henderson, the Town of Darmstadt, and the Town of Newburgh. Communities were selected based on their proximity to Mount Vernon (so they would be under similar market conditions), their relative size, and the geographic areas in which they operate. This way, general trends affecting the entire region can be filtered out, and patterns specific to Mount Vernon addressed. That could mean supportive positive developments, reacting to changes, or combating harmful trends in the community.

# DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

## OVERVIEW

An overall analysis of Mount Vernon's current conditions was carried out to help guide the planning process and provide the necessary background information to develop project and policy recommendations. Topics considered in the analysis included: community demographics, market conditions, resident amenities, transportation elements, infrastructure conditions, the natural environment, and the evaluation of areas of interest identified in the community.

Data used in this analysis is from the US Census Bureau and the following sources unless stated otherwise:

### AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, US CENSUS

In addition to the decennial census (2010), the US Census Bureau continually conducts dozens of other censuses and surveys, including the American Community Survey. The American Community Survey is an ongoing effort that gathers information from a community through a small sample, rather than the extensive 10-year decennial survey with which most are familiar.

### ESRI COMMUNITY ANALYST

ESRI Community Analyst is a powerful tool for analyzing data within a specific geographic location. It allows data to be observed at the local level and compared with surrounding groups. Data was used from the US 2010 Census, 2021 American Community Surveys (ACS), and ESRI-derived projections for 2026.

## KEY TRENDS

- Like most southwestern Indiana cities, Mount Vernon has seen its recent population growth stagnate, with even a few surrounding communities decreasing in size.
- While slightly lower than surrounding towns and cities, Mount Vernon's poverty rate is nearly double that of Indiana Posey County.
- While Mount Vernon's current median household income lies around the middle of its neighbors, this value is expected to grow slower than surrounding communities.
- Most of Mount Vernon's housing stock was built between 1970-1979 or prior, with the amount of new housing per year shrinking significantly since then.
- Mount Vernon has a higher level of homeownership than both nearby Evansville and Henderson.
- Mount Vernon lacks any higher valued housing stock (\$500,000+) compared with its neighboring communities.
- Roughly 25% of Mount Vernon residents worked in the manufacturing industry in 2021, above the state average (18%) and much higher than surrounding communities (averaging 15%).





## POPULATION

### HISTORICAL CHANGE AND PROJECTED GROWTH

The City of Mount Vernon experienced a rapid loss in population between 2000 and 2010 but has since stabilized with little growth or decline over recent years, with only a half percent lost since 2010. The current stagnation is part of a broader trend occurring throughout most of southwest Indiana in large and small communities.

### EDUCATION

Mount Vernon has a high achievement rate among residents obtaining a high school degree or equivalent (43.6 percent). The community has fewer residents without a high school degree (8.1 percent) than Evansville and Henderson. However, while comparable, Mount Vernon is slightly lower than surrounding communities regarding associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and graduate or professional degrees.

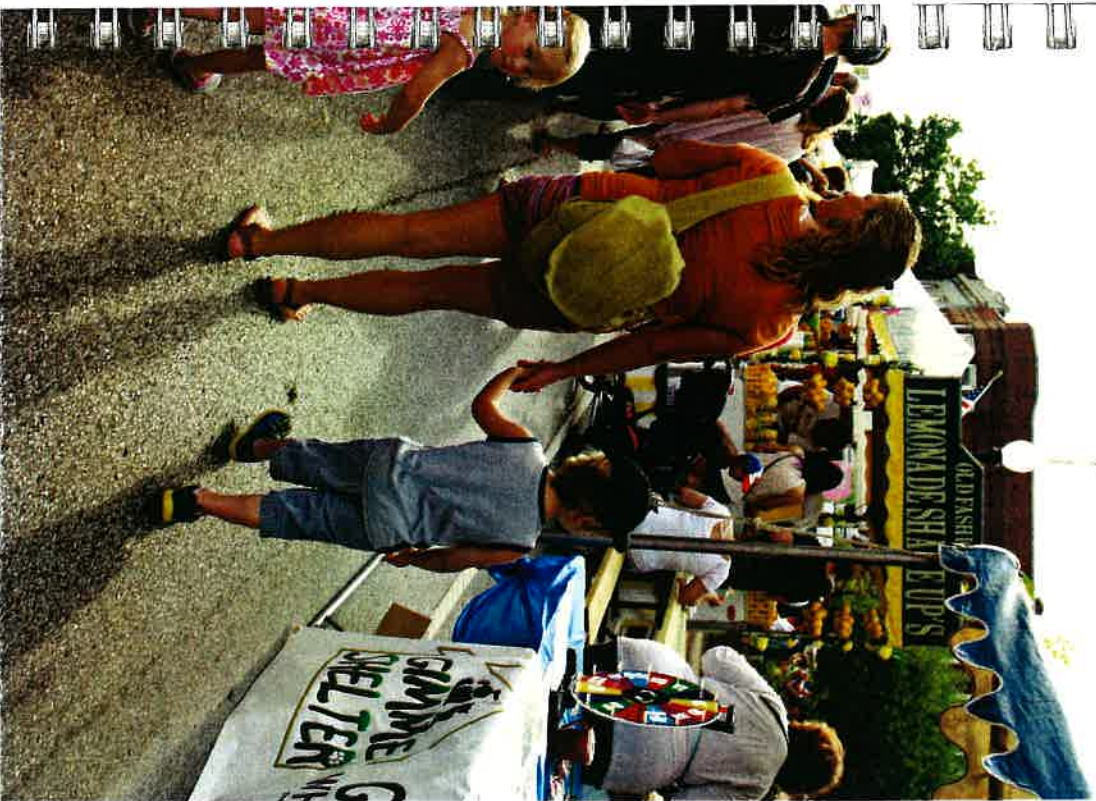
The Mount Vernon community has a well-functioning education system but is losing students to competing communities once they complete a higher level of education. For example, in 2015, Farmersville Elementary School received the Nation Blue Ribbon Award from the US Department of Education for the exemplary high performance of its students.

### HOUSEHOLDS

Despite the relatively stable number of residents in the Mount Vernon community, the total number of households (2,736) has slowly increased over time (0.48 percent since 2010), with the pattern expected to continue towards 2026 (0.84 percent). Meanwhile, the average household size has dropped slowly since 2010 (-0.83 percent) and is likely to continue into 2026 (-0.42 percent). That translates to fewer people occupying more homes, limiting the stock available for recirculation and new residents.

### MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

In 2021, the median household income for Mount Vernon was \$55,225 annually, with a projected 6.8 percent increase (\$59,238) expected by 2026. While Mount Vernon currently has a higher per household income than adjacent communities, it still falls behind the smaller rural neighbors. In addition, this income is expected to grow at a slower rate than surrounding communities.





## AGE

The median age of Mount Vernon residents has increased from 40.2 (2010) to 43.5 (2021). That puts Mount Vernon near the higher end of the spectrum than comparison communities' 2021 medians ages. The comparable cities of Evansville, Henderson, and, the State of Indiana were lower than Mount Vernon. Newburgh, Darmstadt, and Posey County's median age was higher as shown in the graphic below, 2021 *Comparable Communities Median Age*.





## EMPLOYMENT

### LABOR FORCE

The City of Mount Vernon had a labor force participation rate of 49.2 percent in 2021, significantly lower than the State of Indiana (63 percent) and the US (61.6 percent). Labor force participation rate is the percentage of residents actively engaged in the workforce or looking for work out of the entire population. It does not include those residents outside of the workforce. 49.2 percent could indicate many households with a single income source or widespread health/age items preventing the population from working. If the former, there is the potential labor pool to drive industry growth and business development further, if correctly incentivized.

Unemployment in Mount Vernon remained at 3.8 percent in 2021, similar to its neighboring communities (including Posey County at 2.3 percent) and slightly below the Indiana state average (4.6 percent). That is especially significant given the 2020 pandemic, which saw spikes in unemployment as businesses were closed. Ideally, an unemployment rate of 3-5 percent is desirable for a community, as this accounts for workers switching jobs while also limiting businesses from over competing for labor. While some competition helps drive innovation and wage growth, too much competition over labor strains a business's ability to operate effectively and places limitations on the overall economic development of the of the community.

### AGE DEPENDENCY RATIO

Given the observed low unemployment rate of 3.8 percent in 2021 and relatively low labor force participation rate of 49.2 percent, this report also examined the age dependency ratio for Mount Vernon and the listed comparable communities. The age dependency ratio examines the relationship between those of workforce age (16-65) and age groups not considered of primary working ages - children (0-15) and retirees (65 plus). The comparable community age dependency ratios, illustrates that Mount Vernon had a higher ratio (71.6) than all but two comparable communities (Darmstadt, IN, 78.4) and (Newburgh, IN, 72.7). In 2021, Mount Vernon observed a relatively high Age Dependency Ratio, which may explain the low labor force participation rate and unemployment rate.

#### 2021 MOUNT VERNON AGE DATA

**1,418**  
CHILD POPULATION  
(AGE <18)

**3,877**  
WORKING AGE POPULATION  
(AGE 18-64)

**1,359**  
SENIOR POPULATION  
(AGE 65+)

**71.6**  
AGE DEPENDENCY RATIO

**35.1**  
SENIOR DEPENDENCY RATIO

## INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATION

As with most communities in the modern service-based economy, Mount Vernon's largest industry is the service industry which employs nearly half of the workforce (39.9 percent). Service categorized job levels were similar to Posey County (40.3 percent) and State of Indiana (43.5 percent). Service industry jobs include animal care, personal caregivers, janitorial, housekeepers, cooks, food servers, and healthcare employees. While often the most prominent industry, the service sector typically recirculates funds within a local economy rather than generate or capture exterior funds.

The second largest industry following the service sector is manufacturing, at 25.1 percent, higher than the Posey County (22.3 percent) and state (18.4 percent) levels. While manufacturing has decreased across the nation and automaton and globalization reduced the size of the needed workforce; Mount Vernon has retained a robust manufacturing base.

### JOBS BY NAICS INDUSTRY SECTOR (2019)

	COUNT	SHARE
Agriculture, Forestry, and Hunting	0	0.0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0.0%
Utilities	6	0.2%
Construction	36	1.5%
Manufacturing	292	12.1%
Wholesale Trade	79	3.3%
Retail Trade	202	8.4%
Transportation and Warehousing	23	1.0%
Information	35	1.5%
Finance and Insurance	95	3.9%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	23	1.0%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	139	5.8%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0.0%
Administration and Support, Waste Management and Remediation	221	9.2%
Educational Services	374	15.5%
Health Care and Social Assistance	160	6.6%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4	0.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	265	11.0%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	115	4.8%
Public Administration	342	14.2%

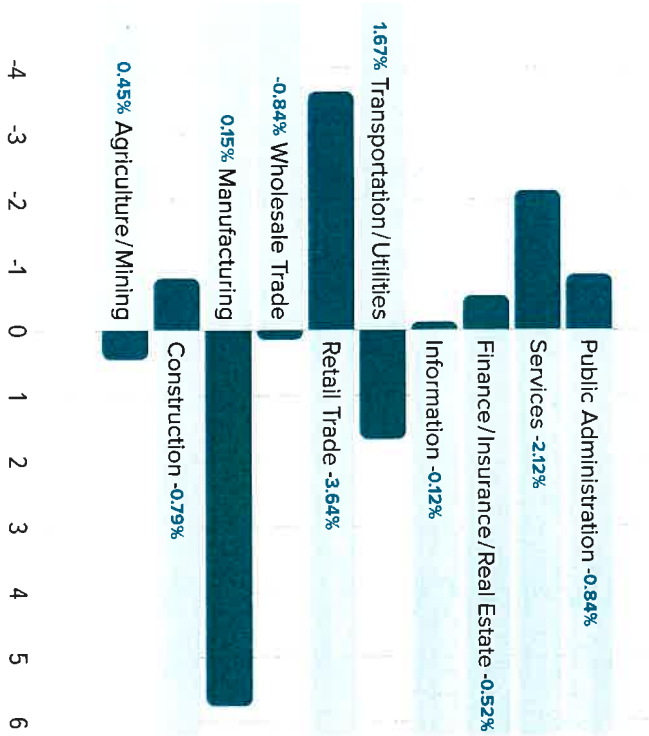


**HISTORICAL CHANGE**

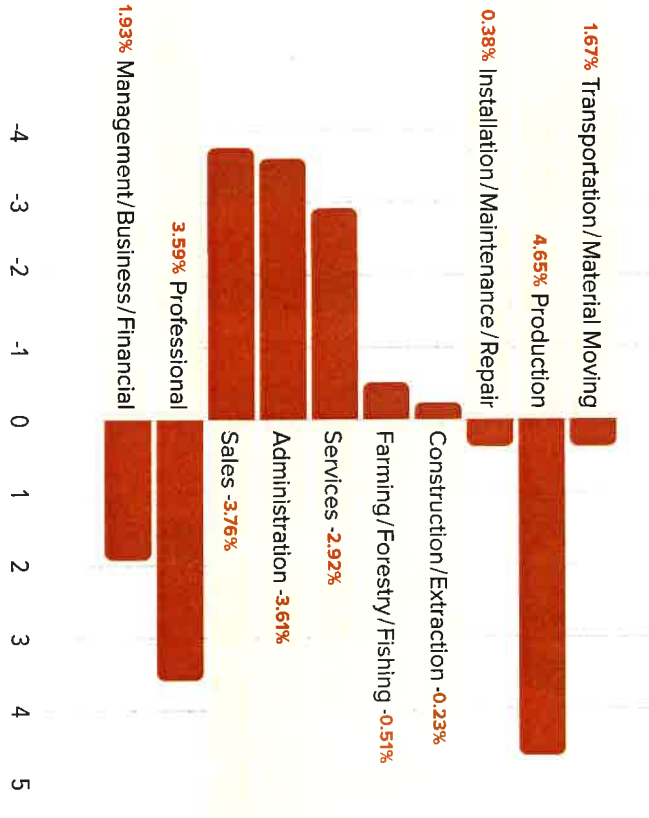
Between 2010 and 2021, Mount Vernon saw a 5.76 percent growth in manufacturing, with the transportation industry growing 1.67 percent. Conversely, the retail sector saw a 3.64 percent drop in employment. Overall, all other sectors remained the same or experienced a slight decrease.

Mirroring these industry trends, Mount Vernon saw a 4.77 percent increase in skilled labor jobs in the community between 2010 and 2021. In contrast, the community lost 2.92 percent of its service jobs and 1.75 percent of its professional/office jobs.

**CHANGE IN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16+  
BY INDUSTRY PERCENT CHANGE 2010-2021**



**DETAILED CHANGE IN EMPLOYED POPULATION  
16+ BY OCCUPATION PERCENT CHANGE 2010-2021**



# PROJECTED GROWTH

## HOUSING

Similar to its population, Mount Vernon's housing stock has remained static since 2010, with only 53 housing units added through 2021. Of these, the majority were rental units, leaving the owner-occupied housing of the community mostly unchanged.

### SINGLE-FAMILY

Single-family housing is characterized by a stand-alone residential home typically occupied by just one household or family. The physical structure stands alone on its own property and does not share any walls or structural elements with other homes (attached vs. detached).



### MULTI-FAMILY

Multi-family housing is where multiple housing units are contained within the same structure, connected side-by-side, or stacked vertically. Examples of multifamily housing include but are not limited to duplexes, townhomes, cottage homes, condominiums, and apartment complexes.

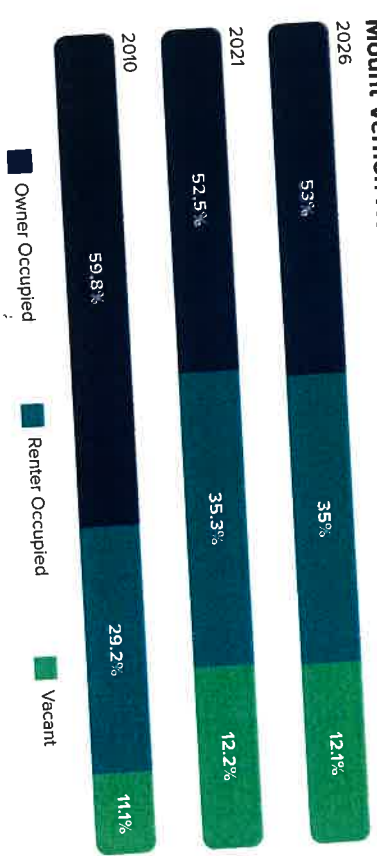


## OCCUPATION TYPE

While vacancy tends to be the marker most used to judge a housing market, the breakdown of ownership type (if someone owns or rents their home) can often be just as informative as to what is going on in the community. Such shifts and trends can illustrate what kind of demand there is in the housing market and how long you can expect resident professionals to remain in the community.

While subject to individual differences and needs, a community's ideal homeownership rate should be around the 65 percent mark, with renters making up 25-30 percent of the market and a vacancy rate hovering around 6-8.<sup>1</sup> In comparison, Mount Vernon shows a lower than-average rate of homeownership (52.5 percent), a greater number of renters (35.3 percent), and a high level of vacancy (12.2 percent).

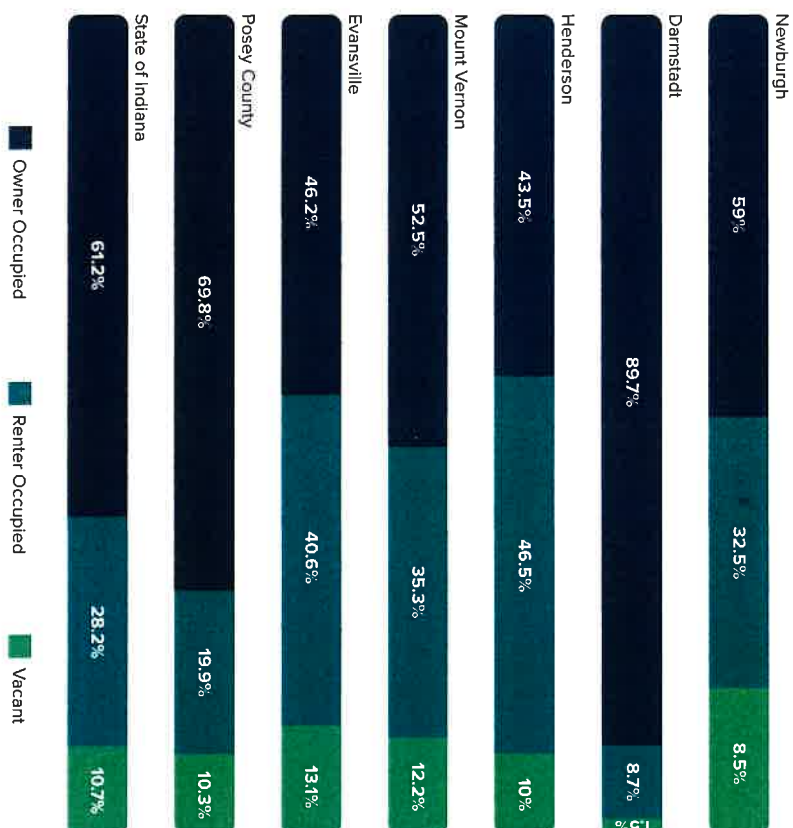
### Mount Vernon Home Ownership



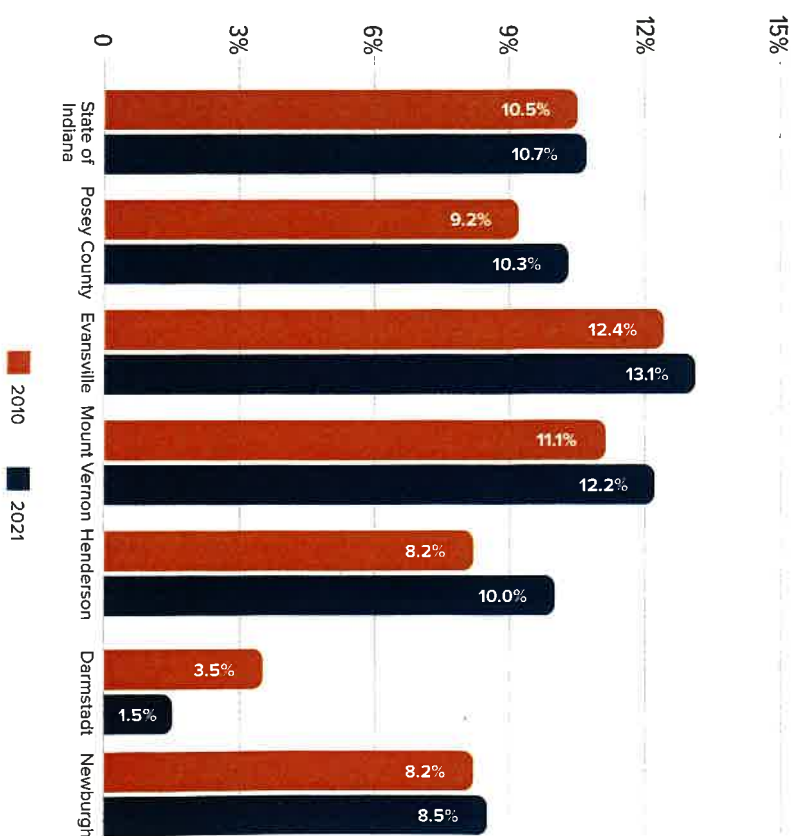
<sup>1</sup> Statista. Homeownership rate in the United States from 1990 to 2020. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/184902/homeownership-rate-in-the-us-since-2003/>  
<sup>2</sup> Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. Rental Vacancy Rate in the United States. <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/RVVRUSO156N>



### Housing Unit Summary (2021)



### Vacancy Rates Over Time





## COMMUTER BEHAVIOR

Mount Vernon has a very mobile workforce, with 79 percent of the community's resident workforce (2,432 residents) leaving the community for their primary source of employment and only 21 percent (648 residents) remaining to work within the community<sup>3</sup>. However, unlike most communities, Mount Vernon has enough economic activity and such a demand for labor that local businesses are pulling approximately 1,763 workers from Illinois, Kentucky, Evansville, and the surrounding Posey County.

Not only does this highly transient workforce demonstrate that Mount Vernon is an attractive housing option for Evansville workers, but the ability to draw in a replacement workforce from its surroundings shows the community has an extremely attractive and competitive labor market.

**LOCAL WORKFORCE: 648**

**EXPORTED WORKFORCE: 2,432**

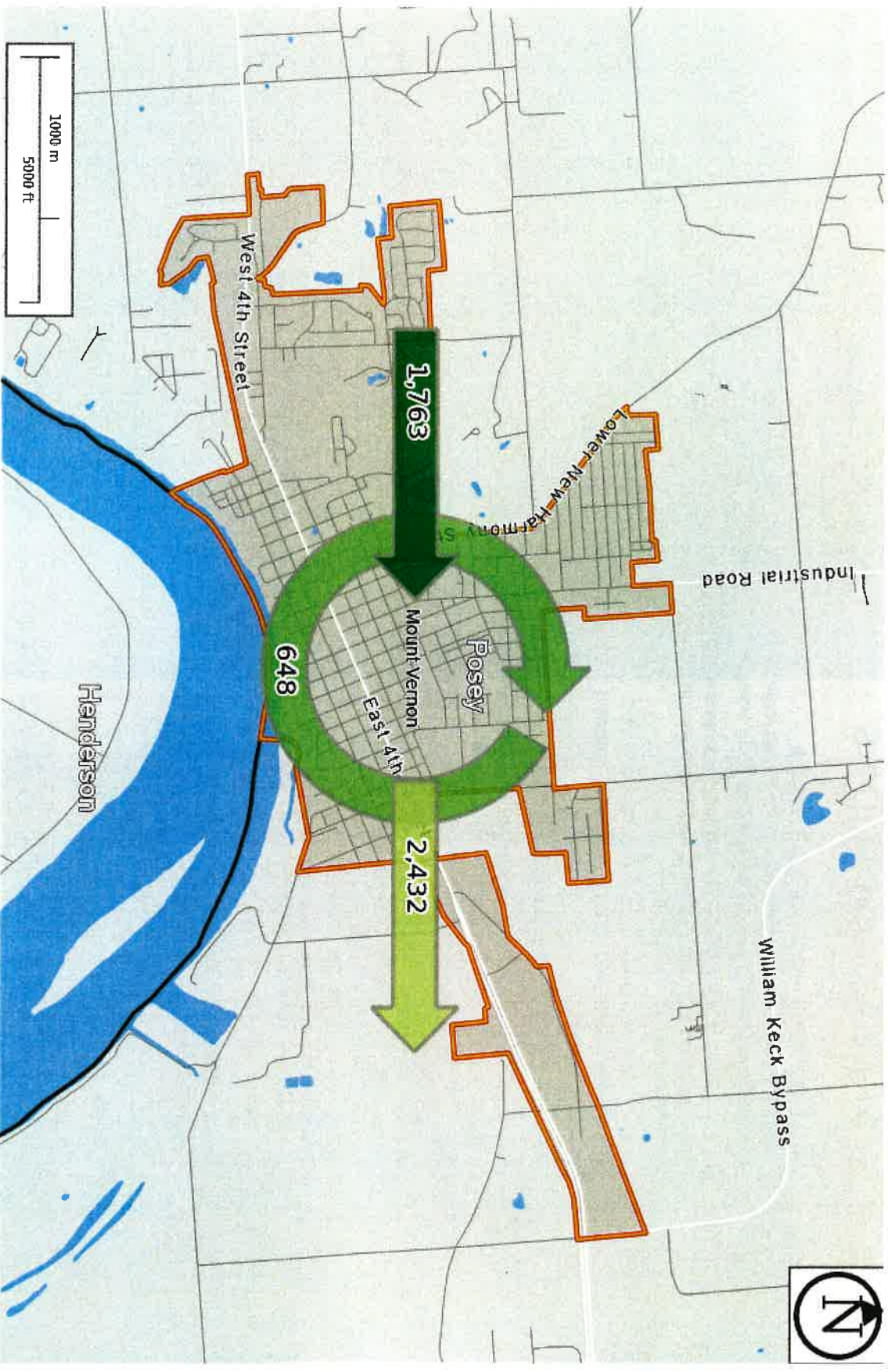
**IMPORTED WORKFORCE: 1,763**

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<sup>3</sup> Census on the Map- Mount Vernon (2019), United States Census Bureau, <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>



MAP 2, MOUNT VERNON: COMMUTING WORKFORCE



Map Source: Census on the Map

# MARKET CONDITIONS

## MOUNT VERNON TRADE AREA

An analysis of Mount Vernon's population trends, commuter patterns, daytime population, and public input, revealed two distinct trade areas. The two trade areas identified were:

1. Primary Trade Area – The primary trade area was defined as a 10-minute drive from Mount Vernon's downtown and captures residents and employees that work and likely shop at local businesses in Mount Vernon multiple times per week.
2. Extended Trade Area – The extended trade area was defined as a 25-minute drive time from the courthouse square and captures potential shoppers that may frequent Mount Vernon's businesses once or twice a month.

## PRIMARY TRADE AREA

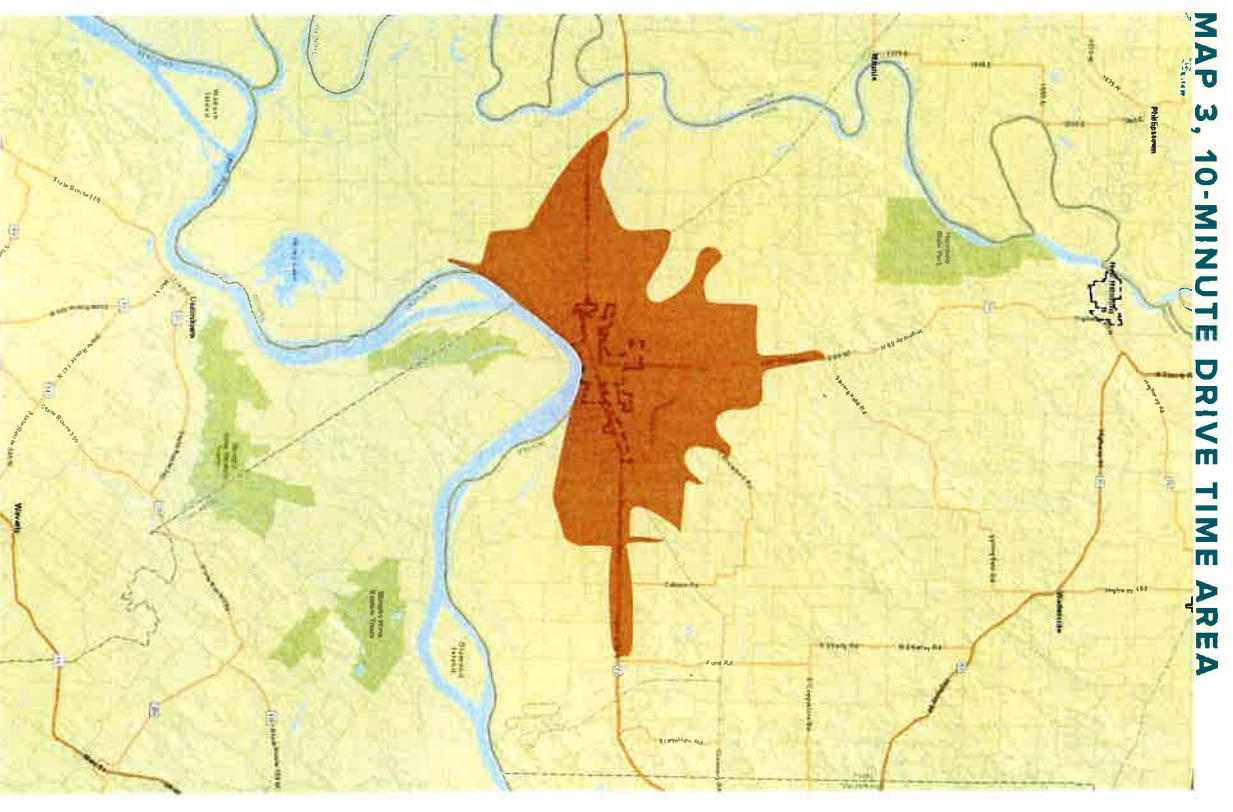
When analyzing a trade area observed "Leakages" are noted as potential growth opportunities. A leakage in a local market means that people living within the trade area are spending money outside of that area. This indicates that the amount of additional disposable income could be captured in the trade area but is being lost or "leaking" to shopping areas outside. Examination of the amount of spending in the primary trade area revealed leakages in the Food and Beverage, General Merchandise, and Food Services (restaurants) categories. This comparison was made to identify the Mount Vernon community's market potential, evaluate how successful the various industries are doing, and identify industries where Mount Vernon could recapture spending that is leaking out of the community. The graphic on the next page demonstrates how these leakage numbers translate into new businesses. The potential sales amounts were converted into a number of stores needed to fill that demand based on industry standard for sales per square foot and average store size.

### Observed Retail Sector Leakages in the 10-Minute Trade Area

RETAIL SECTOR		RETAIL LEAKAGE
Food and Beverage		\$11,969,109.00
General Merchandise		\$12,984,711.00
Food Services and Drinking		\$10,503,716.00



10-MINUTE DRIVE TIME NEW DEMAND			
RETAIL CATEGORIES			
FOOD AND BEVERAGE	GENERAL MERCHANDISE	FOOD SERVICE	
SALES NEEDED PER SQUARE FOOT			
\$500	\$303	\$250	
POTENTIAL CAPACITY (SQUARE FOOT)			
23,938	42,854	42,015	
AVERAGE SIZE (SQUARE FOOT)			
17,000-40,000	7,400-182,000	4,180	
POTENTIAL NUMBER OF STORES			
1	1-5	10	



## EXTENDED TRADE AREA

The extended trade area for Mount Vernon covered the entire southwestern half of Posey County, with the outer edges spilling over the state border with Illinois and into western Evansville. The extended trade area revealed leakage estimates in the Food and Beverage, Health and Personal Care, Clothing and Accessories, General Merchandise, and Food Services (restaurants) categories. The graphic on the next page demonstrates how these leakage numbers translate into new businesses. The potential sales amounts were converted into a number of stores needed to fill that demand based on industry standard for sales per square foot and average store size.

**MAP 4, 25-MINUTE DRIVE TIME AREA**





25-MINUTE DRIVE TIME NEW DEMAND				
RETAIL CATEGORIES				
FOOD AND BEVERAGE	HEALTH AND PERSONAL CARE	CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES	GENERAL MERCHANDISE	FOOD SERVICE
SALES NEEDED PER SQUARE FOOT				
\$500	\$300	\$325	\$303	\$250
POTENTIAL CAPACITY (SQUARE FOOT)				
95,789	35,041	40,961	100,428	80,662
AVERAGE SIZE (SQUARE FOOT)				
17,000-40,000	1,200-1,500	800-12,000	7,400-182,000	1,600-4180
POTENTIAL NUMBER OF STORES				
2-4	23-29	3-40	1-13	19-50





### **TRADE AREA SUMMARY**

Analysis of the primary and extended trade areas revealed realistic market opportunities in three major industries: Food and Beverage (groceries), General Merchandise, and Food Services and Drinking Places (restaurants). Additional market demand was noted in the extended trade area in the Healthcare and Personal Services and Clothing and Accessory sectors. Exactly how much growth/new businesses this demand can support will depend on the industry in question, as each faces different costs, logistics, and sale volumes. Leakage shown in the extended trade area revealed a demand for more shopping and dining options if visitors are attracted from this extended trade area. Since the extended trade area relies more on infrequent shoppers, the estimated number of stores is likely higher than actual demand.



## EXISTING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Land Use and Zoning are two primary tools that local governments use to control and regulate the specific use of property within their jurisdiction. That is done in the pursuit of creating a well-thought-out and orderly built environment while limiting the chance of conflicting uses occurring next to each other and affecting each other's value/productivity.

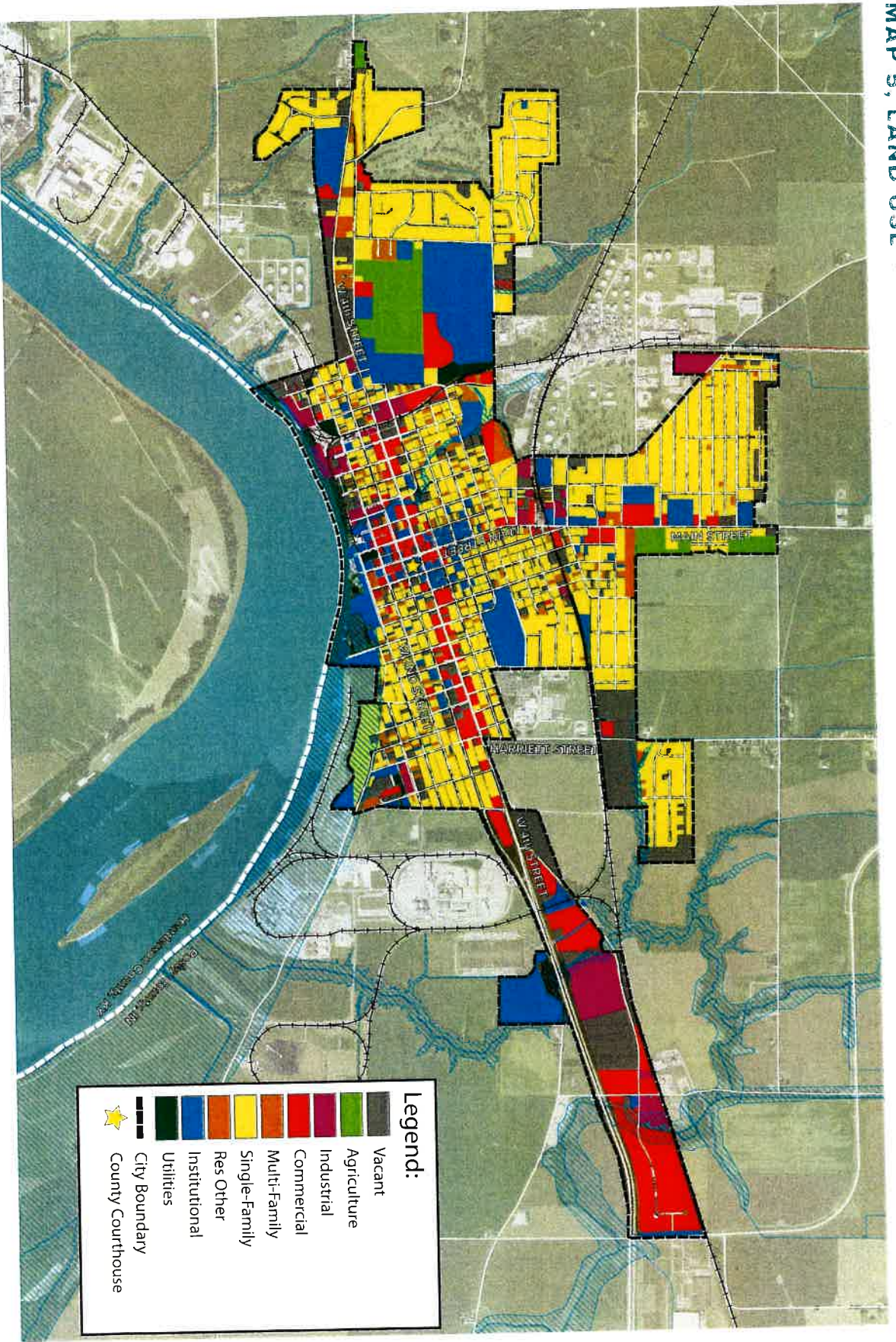
### LAND USE

Land use describes both the current and desired future use of a property.<sup>4</sup> That can refer specifically to the property's physical structures, occupants, temporary users, or the specific activities permitted. However, this tends to be the municipality's desired end goal for a parcel as a land-use classification is not legally binding. Instead, it is used as the basis for regulating any potential changes in a property's future use.

LAND USE CATEGORY	ACRES	PERCENT
Agricultural	63.7	4.7%
Commercial	159.0	11.6%
Industrial	66.5	4.9%
Institutional	232.8	17.0%
Residential: Single-Family	603.7	44.1%
Residential: Multi-Family	19.6	1.4%
Residential: Other	43.2	3.2%
Utilities	9.7	0.7%
Vacant	171.2	12.5%
TOTAL	1,369.8	100%

<sup>4</sup> Law Insider, Legal Definitions Dictionary, <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary>

MAP 5, LAND USE





## COMMERCIAL

Commercial land use (also known as retail) encompasses activities primarily in the buying, selling, and trading of goods and services. Facilities associated with this use vary widely and can range from home businesses to shopping centers (malls), from hotels to offices.

## INDUSTRIAL

Industrial land use is the use of land for manufacturing (light, medium, and heavy), mining and mineral extraction, and chemical processing. That can also include structures and activities that support the industrial process, such as warehousing and transportation shipping.

## INSTITUTIONAL

Institutional land uses are any governmental, civic, parks, charitable, quasi-public, or religious use that does not fit within another use category. Institutional land use is not as economically productive as other uses. It acts in a supporting or service role to surrounding activities and does not generate a tax income for the community.

## Utilities

Utilities can be classified as their own categories or under the Institutional category. Utilities, such as power and water, are closely tied with government bodies. Some utilities are directly owned and operated by local government bodies to have more control and encourage development, but this varies by community.

## RESIDENTIAL

Human dwellings and habitation typically define residential land use for a property. That can range from single-family homes to multi-family apartments. Depending on the number of occupants and their density, some multi-family apartments can be classified under commercial land use due to the property owner operating the property as a rental business. Residential land uses are typically the most prominent use within an urban environment and generally grouped in the following sub-categories:

### Multi-Family Residential

A specific classification of Residential, Multi-Family Residential refers to more dense housing stock, such as duplexes, apartments, and townhomes.

### Single-Family Residential

A specific classification of Residential, Single-Family Residential is the most common type of housing stock and is often considered the most desirable type by residents.

### Other Residential

A specific classification of Residential, Other Residential is a catchall classification to address all other forms of housing, such as mobile home parks and the more recent tiny homes.

## VACANT

Vacant land is land not actively dedicated to other land use categories, including agricultural. This designation is often temporary, as property owners and City leadership tend to push more active uses to keep the community vibrant and productive. Vacant land use typically is located where demolition has recently taken place and is usually empty, ready for transition back into residential or commercial use. Vacant parcels may be found throughout the community, as transitional (and temporary) vacancy is part of the gradual transformation of any community.

# ZONING AND POLICY

*"A zoning ordinance divides a jurisdiction of a local government into districts or zones. Within the zones, the ordinance regulates how the land is used, the intensity or density of uses, the bulk of buildings on the land, parking, building materials, and other aspects of land use and construction. The ordinance contains both written regulations and a zoning map, which may both be amended by the local legislative body."<sup>5</sup>*

## CURRENT ZONING DISTRICTS

### RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY (RS)

The Residential Single-Family district is designed to permit the development and conservation of detached dwellings on individual lots.

### RESIDENTIAL TOWNHOUSE (RT)

The Residential Townhouse district is designed to permit the development of a fee simple townhouse district. This district is intended to provide suitable areas for single-family attached or detached dwellings with a medium density.

### RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY (RM)

The Residential Multifamily district is designed to provide suitable areas for single-family, two-family and multi-family dwelling types in suitable environments in a variety of densities to meet the varying requirements of families. Permitted types include:

- Single-family attached (patio homes, townhouses, condominiums)
- Two-family dwellings (duplexes)
- Multi-family (apartments)

### RESIDENTIAL MOBILE HOME PARK (RMH)

The Residential Mobile Home Park district is intended to provide an alternative to conventional single-family housing. To achieve this, the RMH district allows two different types of mobile home settings:

#### Mobile Home Park

This designation is intended for commercial rental development. This designation provides for the location of mobile home parks and the leasing, regulation, and control of mobile homes within a park site. It is further intended that mobile home parks be designed and adhere to high development standards to ensure compatibility with surrounding areas and the safety of occupants of mobile homes.

#### Mobile Home Subdivision

This designation is intended to provide a residential subdivision for mobile homes and modular housing units which are not typically compatible with conventional single-family homes. The designation provides for individual lots, which allow the mobile homeowner to own the property on which the home is situated. Minimum tract size is established to assure that a desirable residential environment is created. The requirements established in this district are intended to encourage compatibility between mobile home developments and developments on adjoining land and to protect and enhance the mobile home site and its surroundings.

<sup>5</sup> What is a Zoning Ordinance?, Indiana Citizen Planner's Guide, Chapter 8, Zoning Ordinances, <https://indianaplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/FINAL-CitizenPlannersGuide-3-2017-Ch.8-ZoningOrdinances.pdf>



**OFFICE DISTRICT (O)**

The Office District is designed to preserve and promote the development of efficient office facilities and to maximize compatibility with other land uses by:

- Establishing bulk and area controls.
- Requiring off-street parking.
- Controlling the number, area, location, and types of signs.
- They are designed to provide an area for offices, together with certain community facilities usually compatible with primary office uses.

**COMMERCIAL SHOPPING (CS)**

The Commercial Shopping District is designed to accommodate convenience, neighborhood, shopping areas providing a wide range of retail and personal service uses.

**COMMERCIAL GENERAL DISTRICT (CG)**

The Commercial General District accommodates existing development of mixed commercial uses, which are well established while providing a degree of protection to adjacent residential areas. It is also to accommodate the grouping of specific commercial and light industrial uses which are compatible with one another.

**COMMERCIAL HIGH-INTENSITY (CH)**

The Commercial High-Intensity District is designed to accommodate high-intensity commercial and related uses.

**CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (CBD)**

The Central Business District is designed to accommodate and encourage the most desirable, most productive, most intense use of land, without regard to the regulation of building height floor area, land coverage or parking space requirements within the central core area of the City. The Central Business District is also to preserve and promote the public and private investment of the existing central core area

**MANUFACTURING LIGHT (M-1)**

The Manufacturing Light District is designed to provide an environment conducive to developing and conserving modern manufacturing and scientific research facilities. Additionally, it is to provide areas suitable for manufacturing, wholesaling, warehousing, and other industrial activities which have no objectionable environmental influences.

**MANUFACTURING MEDIUM (M-2)**

The Manufacturing Medium District is designed to group a wide range of industrial uses which may produce moderately objectionable environmental influences in their operation and appearance.

**FLOOD HAZARD DISTRICT (FH)**

The purpose of the Flood Hazard District is to guide development in the flood hazard areas to reduce the potential for loss of life and property, reduce the potential for health and safety hazards, and reduce the possibility for extraordinary public expenditures for flood protection and relief.

**A Flood Hazard District is intended to:**

- To prevent unwise developments from increasing flood or drainage hazards to others;
- To protect new buildings and major improvements to buildings from flood damage;
- To protect human life and health from the hazards of flooding;
- To lessen the burden on the taxpayer for flood control projects, repairs to flood-damaged public facilities and utilities, and flood rescue and relief operations;
- To maintain property values and a stable tax base by minimizing the potential for creating flood-blighted areas; and
- To make federally subsidized flood insurance available for structures and their contents in the City by fulfilling the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program.



## **PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD)**

Planned Unit Development is an alternative to conventional development where the tract is under common ownership or control, and a detailed plan (outline development plan) for the development of the tract, as a unit, is proposed and submitted for public review. A prerequisite for PUD development is the approval of an additional zoning district classification by the Area Plan Commission and the City Council.

### **Planned Unit Development is intended to:**

- Permit innovative land development while maintaining appropriate limitation of the character and intensity of use and assuring compatibility with adjoining and nearby properties;
- Permit flexibility within the development to best utilize the unique physical features of the site;
- Provide and preserve meaningful open space;
- Achieve a continuity of function and design within the development

## **VARIANCES**

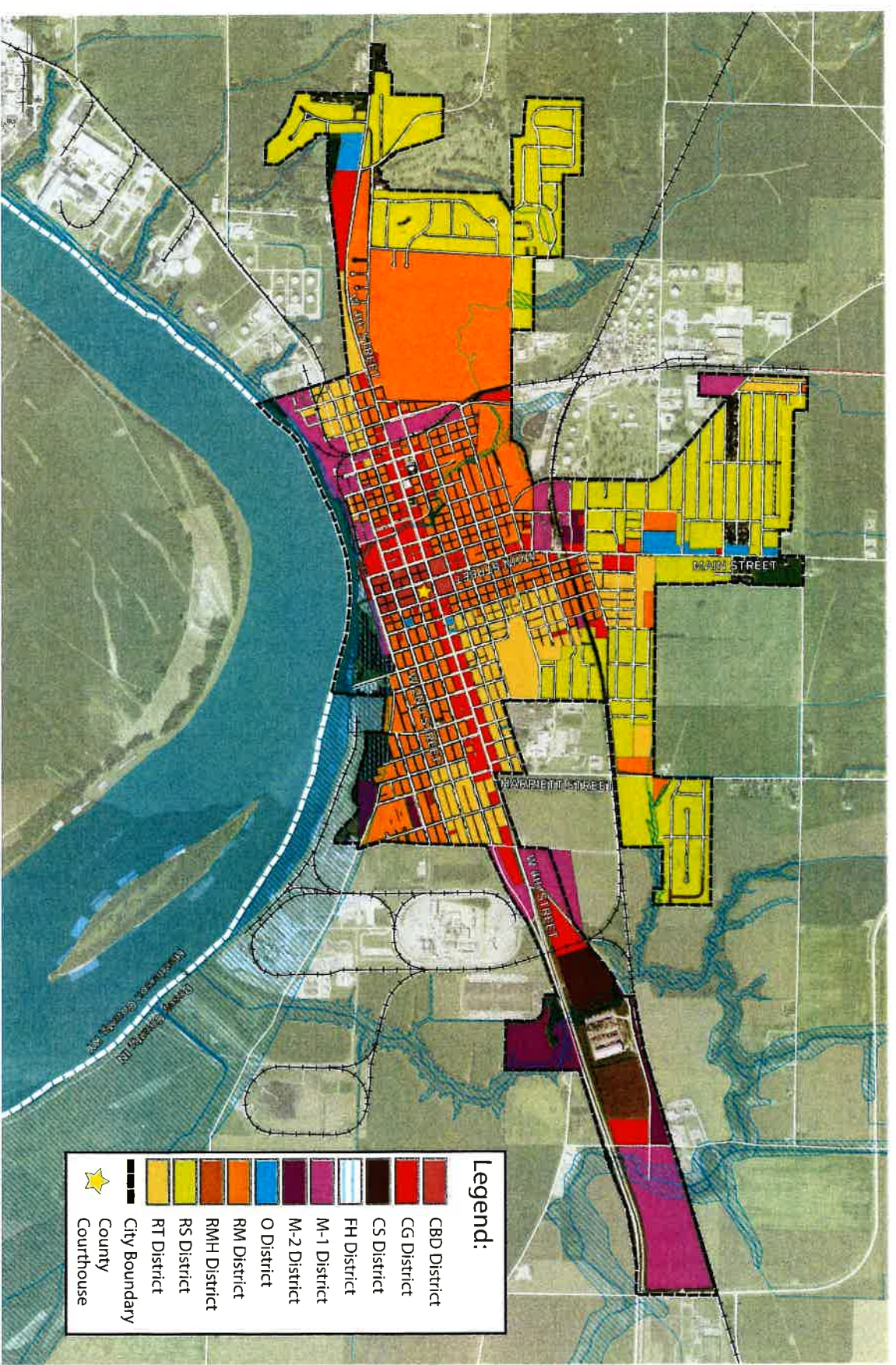
While zoning codes are designed broadly to be flexible, the massive range of conditions under which individual parcels exist means that not every situation can be accounted for when applying the local zoning restrictions to a property. In these cases, a variance comes into play where a specific property is allowed certain exemptions (or to vary) from local regulations if the general zoning code over-burdens their property due to some unique conditions. To be allowed this variance, a request must be made to the local zoning board, who will judge if a variance is appropriate given the situation.

## **TIF DISTRICTS**

A Tax Incremental Financing District, or TIF, is a public financing tool used to subsidize community improvement projects and private development by utilizing the future projected tax revenue a project is expected to generate to pay back a bond. Financing projects in this way is only allowed if the project would not naturally occur given normal market conditions.



MAP 6, ZONING DISTRICTS





# TRANSPORTATION AND MOVEMENT

## ROAD NETWORK AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC COUNTS

Mount Vernon is unusual for an Indiana community in that it does not have direct access to an interstate or highway and is instead serviced by State Roads (SR) 62 and 69. Despite this lack of access, Mount Vernon can be seen as the hub of activity for the region west of Evansville. Map 7, illustrates this road network and displays the Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) counts on Mount Vernon's busiest streets.

MAP 7, AADT COUNTS ON MOUNT VERNON'S MAJOR CORRIDORS





## ROADWAY CLASSIFICATION

In an effort to organize and prioritize roadway maintenance and improvements, the Federal Highway Administration developed the Functional Classification System to classify roadways based on their capacity and intended use. By breaking roadways down in this manner, roads can be upgraded or downgraded based on their level of demand and average daily traffic. Additionally, responsibilities for certain types of roadways can be divided between the federal, state, and local levels of government.

### INTERSTATE

"Interstates are the highest classification of Arterials and were designed and constructed with mobility and long-distance travel in mind."

### PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL

"These roadways serve major centers of metropolitan areas, provide a high degree of mobility, and can also provide mobility through rural areas."

### MINOR ARTERIAL

"Minor Arterials provide service for trips of moderate length, serve geographic areas that are smaller than their higher Arterial counterparts and offer connectivity to the higher Arterial system."

### MAJOR COLLECTOR

"Collectors serve a critical role in the roadway network by gathering traffic from Local Roads and funneling them to the Arterial network. Major Collector routes are longer, have lower connecting driveway densities, have higher speed limits, are spaced at greater intervals, have higher annual average traffic volumes, and may have more travel lanes than their Minor Collector counterparts."

### MINOR COLLECTOR

"Collectors serve a critical role in the roadway network by gathering traffic from Local Roads and funneling them to the Arterial network."

## LOCAL ROADS

"Locally classified roads account for the largest percentage of all roadways in terms of mileage. They are not intended for use in long-distance travel, except at the origin or destination end of the trip, due to their provision of direct access to abutting land. Bus routes generally do not use Local Roads, which are often designed to discourage through-traffic. As public roads, local roads should be accessible for public use throughout the year."

## CURRENT CONDITIONS

The current conditions of Mount Vernon are an evaluation of the community's current infrastructure capacity and the identification of any upcoming capital improvement projects. Given the community's past history as a rail and river hub, Mount Vernon boasts extensive rail and port facilities with which to support its various industries.

### PORT INFRASTRUCTURE

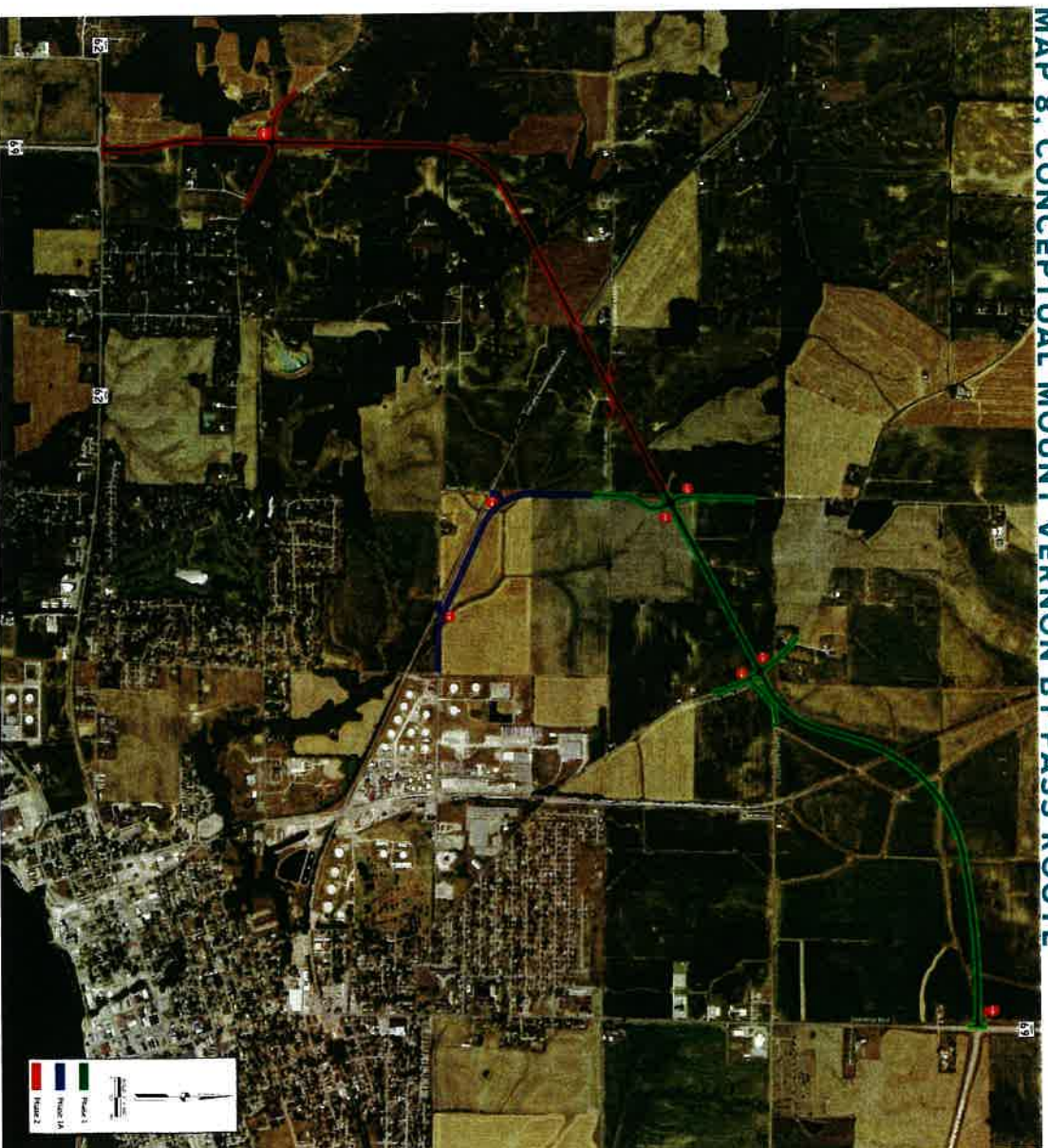
- Rail
- Water - The Mount Vernon port is the largest port for coal shipments in the US and the seventh-largest inland port. The John T. Myers locks and dam, located 13 miles southwest of Mount Vernon, was constructed to improve navigation and flood control on the Ohio River. They are important to shipping for the region's river-based industries.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount\\_Vernon,\\_Indiana#Government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Vernon,_Indiana#Government)

## UPCOMING PROJECTS

Mount Vernon has opportunities to increase its success regarding business development. The increasing number of businesses has led to an ever-growing demand for materials, with an equally great need to ship out finished goods. This rapid growth in logistic support has led to Mount Vernon's main roadways being congested with semi-truck shipping traffic, leading to increased drive times for residents and increased wear and tear on local roads from the heavier weights. To divert the worst of this freight traffic, as bypass road is currently in the planning stated and (as proposed) redirect heavy traffic around the city core, rather than through it.

MAP 8, CONCEPTUAL MOUNT VERNON BY-PASS ROUTE





## NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

Mount Vernon is similar to most Indiana communities in terms of sidewalk inventory and condition. Most of the old city core and major corridors have fully maintained walkways on both sides of the road, but outside these areas, the presence of any sidewalks or their condition becomes less assured.

### COMMUNITY TRAILS

The City of Mount Vernon has made a concerted effort in recent years to provide adequate trails and recreation facilities to residents, seeking to connect major community destinations to residential areas. Successful projects include the development of walkways at the new Riverbend Park, which has been extended with the addition of a 5 million dollar trail north along Main Street. While currently limited in size, the step-by-step implementation of quality trail systems like these is often the most economical approach to new infrastructure for communities.



Image Source: Ohio River Parks Project

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Unlike private for-profit businesses, community facilities are publicly supported programs and structures designed to provide critical services to residents. These can range from education facilities to general amenities that most communities are expected to have or deliver, such as libraries or health care.

### EDUCATION FACILITIES

The Metropolitan School District (MSD) of Mount Vernon oversees five public schools within Posey County, with three in Mount Vernon proper. Supplemented with additional private and religious schools, the community's education capacity ranges from preschool to high school. No dedicated college facilities currently exist in Mount Vernon, with the closest higher learning facilities being located to the east in Evansville.

#### Elementary

- West Elementary School
- James Whitcomb Riley School
- St. Matthew's School (K-5) is operated by the Diocese of Evansville

#### Middle

- Mount Vernon Jr. High School
- Performing Arts School

#### High

- Mount Vernon High School

## CIVIC FACILITIES

### HEDGES CENTRAL COMMUNITY CENTER

Officially under the authority of the Mount Vernon Parks and Recreation Department, the Hedges Central Community Center was repurposed from the Hedges Central Elementary School when reduction in the student population left the school district with excess capacity. To preserve the structure and maintain the capacity in the case of rapid student growth, the decision was made to convert the old school into a community center. The Community Center now not only hosts youth facilities but is the location of the Posey County Historical Society and several community nonprofit organizations.

The center operates from early September to mid-April, Tuesday through Saturday.

#### Activities include:

- Roller skating
- Basketball
- Ping pong
- Pool
- Foosball
- Nintendo Wii
- Air hockey/floor hockey
- Additional wintertime activities

### ALEXANDRIAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Founded by Matilda Greathouse Alexander in 1895, the Alexandrian Public Library serves the residents of Mount Vernon and the surrounding Black, Lynn, Marrs, Point, and Robinson Townships. The main building claims over 100,000 books and items, with a mobile library that visits local schools and the surrounding county. The library offers several adult and youth reading programs, in addition to computer facilities that residents can freely use.

The main building was recently renovated in 2015, which has seen the addition of three new study rooms and a new entryway.

## HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

While host to several medical clinics and specialized healthcare facilities, Mount Vernon does not have a dedicated hospital. The closest major facilities (Deaconess Midtown Hospital and Select Specialty Hospital) are located in western Evansville, 19 miles away.

#### Local Medical Facilities:

- Deaconess Clinic EXPRESS Mt. Vernon
- Mount Vernon Nursing and Rehabilitation
- Rice James an MD





## INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

### STREETS AND SANITATION

#### STREET DEPARTMENT<sup>7</sup>

The Street Department is located within the City Garage at 406 Old Highway 69S. They are responsible for maintaining approximately 100 lane miles of streets and nearly 50 miles of alleyways by providing services like paving and repairing potholes.

#### SANITATION AND RECYCLING<sup>8</sup>

The Department of Sanitation is also located in the City Garage. It provides residents with weekly trash pick-up, and excess trash can be collected by the department for an additional fee. Recycling is picked up twice a month, and the current collection schedule can be found on the city's website at [www.mountvernon.in.gov](http://www.mountvernon.in.gov). The leaf collection schedule can also be found there, and the city provides free appliance pick-up on Fridays if residents call (812) 838-2352 to arrange it.

#### WATER DEPARTMENT

New Trident filtration plants were officially dedicated on May 22nd, 2009. The building is the Cooper Building, in honor of Councilman Terry Cooper. The new plant can filter up to 2800 gallons per minute<sup>9</sup>. Before that, the existing plant was at capacity, and new homes had to source water from other sources. Wells provide water for some properties in the area.

#### SEWER DEPARTMENT

The primary function of the Sewer Department is to treat the waste that is entering the plant. The Sewer Department is responsible for only the main sewer lines. Those lines receive wastewater from buildings, and the building owners are responsible for the lateral lines. Lateral lines

are the sewer lines that go from the house or business to the main sewer line. When a home or business is in an area that prevents gravity flow, a lift station is used to pump the wastewater to the treatment plant. The Mount Vernon Sewer Department has several lift stations located throughout the city.<sup>10</sup> To prevent major problems, maintenance operators at the treatment plant created a preventative maintenance program, which includes weekly inspections of critical facilities, routine flushing, and vacuuming of sewer lines.<sup>11</sup> There are also septic systems installed in properties in the area.

#### UTILITIES<sup>12</sup>

##### Electric

The electric service providers for Mount Vernon are Vectren, Duke Energy, and the WIN Energy REMC.

##### Natural Gas

Vectren is the sole provider of natural gas in the County.

##### Telecommunications

Telecommunication services are provided by Insight, Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, CenturyLink, Comcast, and BasicTalk.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.mountvernon.in.gov/departments/structureid=12>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.mountvernon.in.gov/departments/division.php?structureid=54>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.mountvernon.in.gov/departments/structureid=13>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.mountvernon.in.gov/departments/structureid=11>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.mountvernon.in.gov/egov/apps/document/center.egov?view=item&id=1>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.pcedp.com/utilities-and-communications/>

# EMERGENCY SERVICES

## SHERIFF AND POLICE<sup>13,14</sup>

### COUNTY SHERIFF

The County Sheriff in 2022 was Tom Latham and their office, which includes the County Jail, is in Mount Vernon at 1201 O'Donnell Road. The jail/confinement center was completed in 2018 and can house 208 inmates. The Sheriff provides enforcement of state laws and county ordinances, court security, jail/confinement, and civil court process. They may also supervise and inspect pawnbrokers, vendors, junk-shop keepers, cart-men, expressmen, dealers in secondhand merchandise, intelligence offices, and auctions. Additionally, they may authorize any deputy in writing to exercise the same powers.

### CITY POLICE

The Mount Vernon Police Department is comprised of 14 full-time sworn officers and employs one full-time secretary. Anthony Alldredge was appointed Chief of Police in April 2016. The department is located at 311 College Street near the corner of Fourth and College Streets, and the facility was completed in January 2015. Services provided by the police include public education, crime investigations, bicycle registration, and enforcement of local ordinances.

### FIRE DEPARTMENT<sup>15,16</sup>

The Mount Vernon Fire Department is located adjacent to the Police Department at 311 College Avenue in Mount Vernon. Established in 1880, it has seven paid full-time firefighters, six paid-on-call members, and six volunteers. The chief is currently Wes Dixon.

Their equipment includes three standard engines and one ladder truck. The Department provides various educational programs and fire prevention courses such as fire exit planning and smoke detector information. They respond to over 700 calls per year.

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT<sup>17</sup>

The current director of the Posey County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is Larry Robb. The primary functions of the County's EMA are to provide 911 and medical response services, create and maintain emergency plans, mitigate the damage during emergencies, respond during emergencies to assist residents and work with other governmental agencies to return things "back to normal" after an emergency.



The Posey County Community Emergency Response Team's trailer, which is part of the County's EMA services. Source: poseycountyin.gov.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.poseycountyin.gov/county-offices/sheriffs-office/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.mountvernon.in.gov/departments/structure?id=10>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.mountvernon.in.gov/departments/division.php?structureid=24>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.mountvernon.in.gov/departments/structure?id=7>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.poseycountyin.gov/county-offices/emergency-management-agency/>



# ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

## LAKES/RIVERS

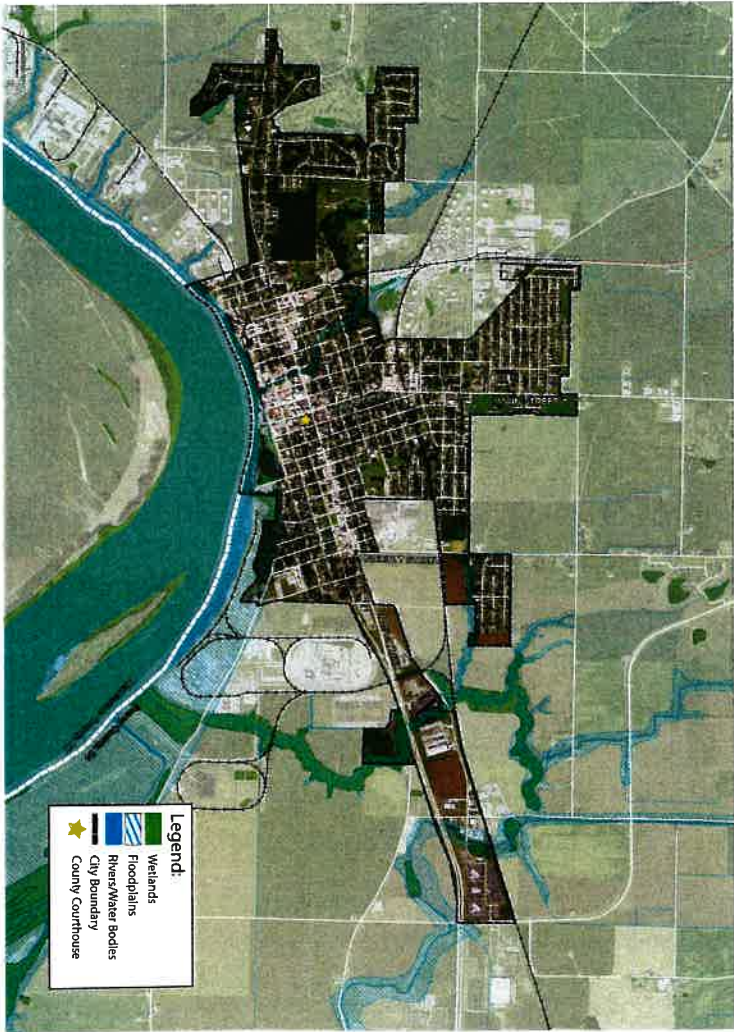
Mount Vernon's prominent distinguishing feature, the Ohio River, has massively shaped the community's layout and personality. Being situated on the outer bend of the river has allowed Mount Vernon to gain access to one of the busiest commercial inland waterways in the country, with the nearby Port of Indiana-Mount Vernon now handling the most significant volume of goods (crops, coal, manufactured goods, etc.) in the state.

## WETLANDS

Wetlands are areas where water covers the soil or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year, including during the growing season. Located along coasts as well as along inland along waterways, wetlands are nature's purification systems, removing water-born pollutants and providing some of the richest ecosystems in the world for wildlife. A single wetland can form the basis of an entire region's ecological food chain. The built environment requires wetlands to regulate and store floodwaters during periods of high rain and acting as a recharging station for the local watershed as water is returned to the local water table. Because of their sensitive nature, wetlands enjoy significant legal protection from human interference or development at the local, state, and federal levels.

<sup>18</sup> What is a Wetland? United States Environmental Protection Agency  
<https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/what-wetland>

MAP 9, ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES





## NATURAL RESOURCES

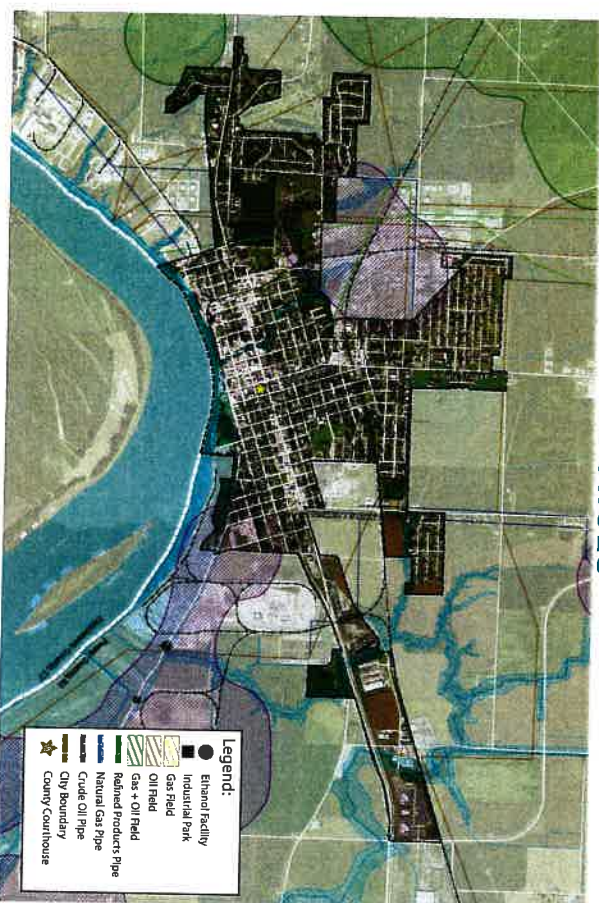
While limited within the city boundaries of Mount Vernon, Posey County and southwestern Indiana are in possession of abundant oil and natural gas reserves. Underground natural gas and petroleum were extracted and processed by private corporations; nine of which are located within the City of Mount Vernon.<sup>19</sup> The processed materials are then sent through an extensive system of interstate and intrastate pipelines buried deep underground to commercial and domestic consumers.<sup>20</sup> The drilling, production, exploitation, and abandonment of resource wells are overseen and managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Oil and Gas.

## FLOODPLAINS

A floodplain consists of two parts, the first being the main channel of the river itself, called the floodway, and the surrounding potential area of flooding. Floodplains are the somewhat flat area of land next to a river or stream stretching from the waterway to the outer edges of a potential flood zone, typically characterized by steeper banks or barriers. These areas are identified based on the frequency and likelihood of being saturated or submerged during periods of flooding, often tied to a seasonal cycle. Floodplains can be small or massive in size, depending on the size (capacity) of the water body in question, the topography of the surrounding land, and sites recorded history of flooding.

Identifying floodplains within a community is vital to understanding where building and development are possible, where it could pose risks, and where ecologically sensitive areas could be impacted by human activity. This consideration is crucial for Mount Vernon given the proximity of the Ohio River and the presence of minor waterways within the community and along its eastern edge.

**MAP 10, NATURAL RESOURCES**

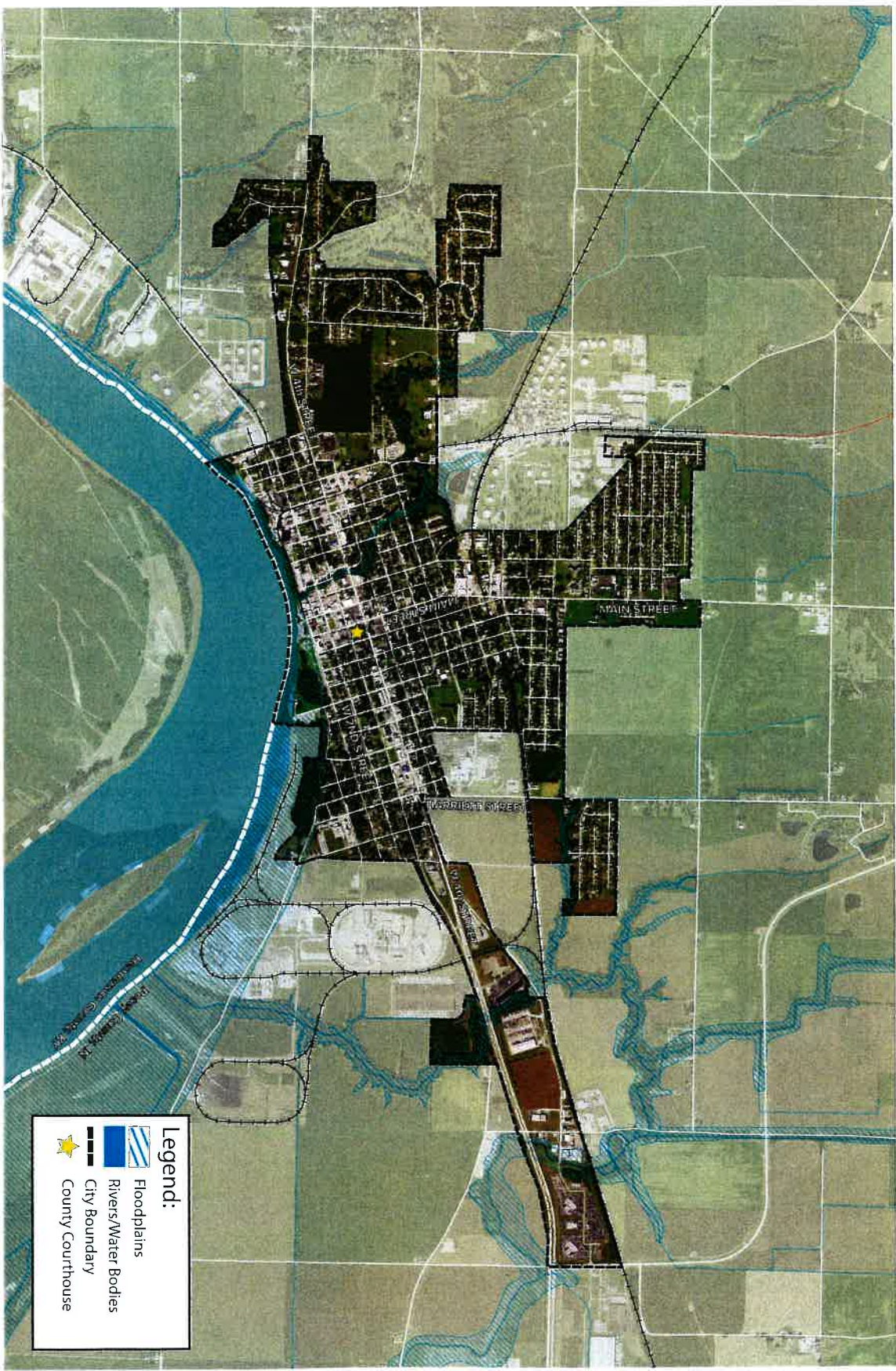


<sup>19</sup> Active Operators List, Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Oil and Gas, August 09, 2021, <https://www.in.gov/dnr/oil-and-gas/files/og-ActiveOperatorList.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY IN INDIANA, John A. Rupp, Indiana Geological and Water Survey Indiana University, <https://igws.indiana.edu/OilGas/>



MAP 11, FLOODPLAINS







## NATURAL LANDSCAPE

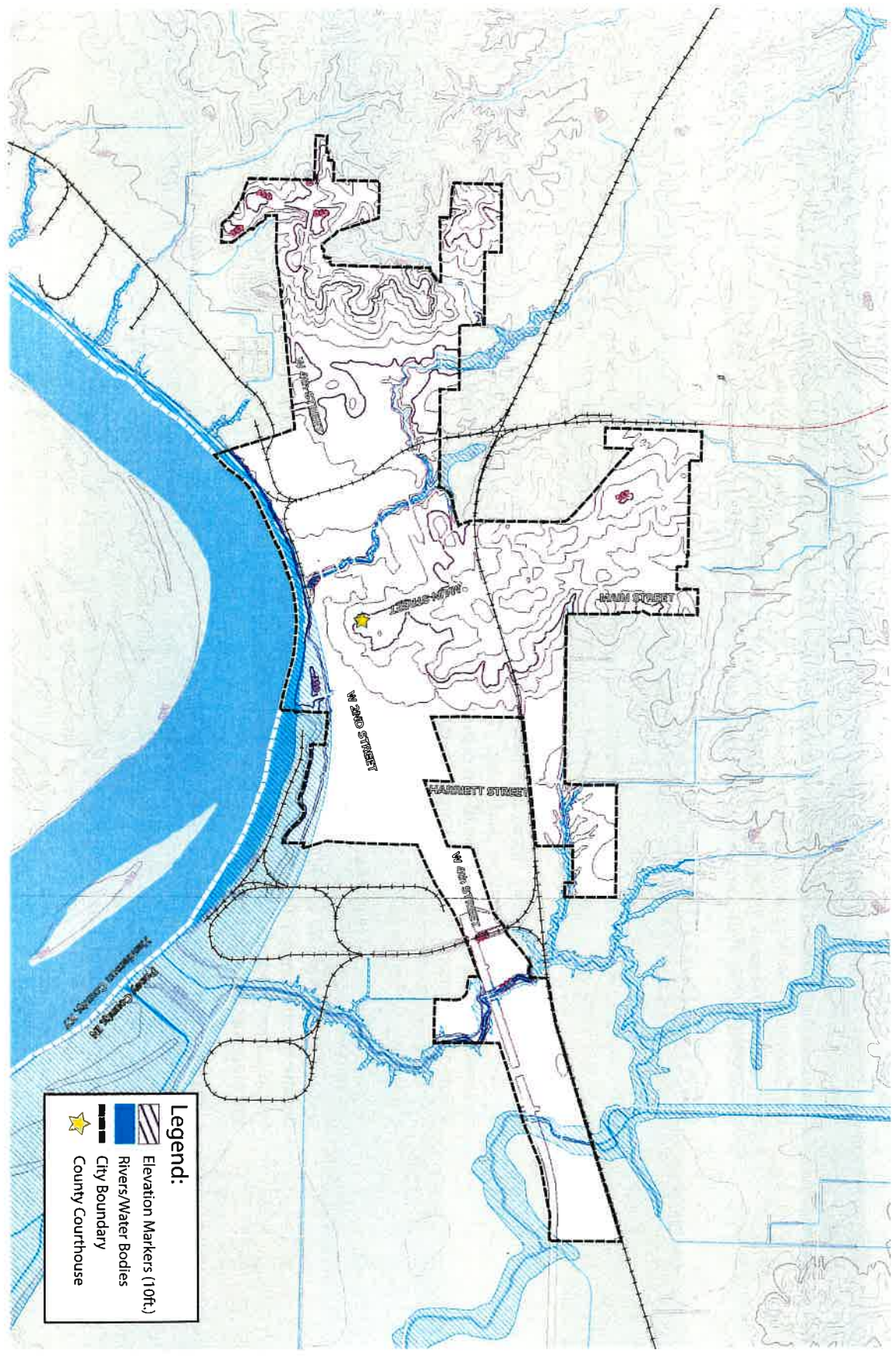
Understanding the natural landscape is a deciding factor when evaluating the potential future and potential prosperity of a community, both in what the community can achieve and how it should be pursued. That includes both the immediate resources available to the community and how the land itself may shape and influence any growth that occurs.

### TOPOGRAPHY/SLOPE

The City of Mount Vernon sits in an elevated position compared to its surroundings on an outer bend of the Ohio River. This slight elevation gives the city a moderate level of protection from river flooding. The areas immediately surrounding the community in Posey sit at lower elevations and are at an increased risk of flooding. The entire southwest corner of the state sits at a significantly lower elevation at the merging of the Wabash River and the Ohio River. These limitations, along with the natural barrier of the river, force Mount Vernon to look towards the north and east for long-term growth and development.



MAP 12, TOPOGRAPHY



## LAND COVER

Land Cover is in reference to the physical characteristics within a community, both natural and those made by human activity. With the exception of the west side of the community, most of Mount Vernon is built out and developed, with moderate tree cover outside of the community parks and the downtown lacking any significant tree cover. The riverfront surrounding the City is similarly built out with no gaps in development, being a mix of open agricultural fields and dense industrial development. The land surrounding the community is comprised mostly of flat open farmland.

## CONTAMINATION AND POLLUTION

Human activity can often lead to the natural landscape being saturated with harmful materials such as chemicals, metals, and non-native natural elements. The presence of these pollutants can pose long-term risks to both residents and the natural ecosystem, with especially damaging cases resulting in parcels of land being rendered unusable without significant and costly remediation and repair.

## BROWNFIELDS

Brownfields are previously developed land that is not actively used and may be contaminated by past business operations and uses. This potential contamination impedes the reuse or redevelopment of a property due to the presence (or possible presence) of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Due to brownfields often forming from old industrial sites, entire sections of a community's historic core can potentially be locked out of the market and made unusable by discovering pollutants in the soil.

As the discovery of soil contaminants often comes after an enterprise has gone bankrupt or moved to another site, many communities are often left with the financial burden of cleaning up and remediate the site to bring it back into the market. Given how costly this can be for small or declining communities, the US Environmental Protection Agency created the Brownfields and Land Revitalization Program. This program provides grants and loans to communities to identify, evaluate, and clean up brownfields.

## SUPERFUND SITES

As opposed to simply identifying brownfields and helping communities who voluntarily perform remediation services, superfund sites are contaminated sites federally designated sites recognized as the nation's worst hazard sites. Where brownfields are often voluntarily cleaned up, superfund sites legally bind the original polluter to bear the cost of site cleanup through the *Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA)*. Additionally, superfund sites are federally managed and involve a great deal more oversight, management, and evaluation in the cleanup process.



## RECOGNIZED BROWNFIELD SITES

ID #	NAME	ADDRESS	ACRES	FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	OTHER ASSISTANCE	USE RESTRICTIONS	DATE OF CLOSURE
4030017	Westside Laundry	211 Mill St		Remediation Grant awarded 2/16/2010	No Further Action Letter 4/25/2012	No groundwater extraction	12/13/2012
4060060	Mount Vernon IN Riverfront	SWC Main and Water St		Remediation Grant applicant 6/27/2007	Oversight		
4070466	Bullard Electric Service	330 E Water St		Remediation Grant applicant			
4070467	Dausman Motors	311 College Ave		Remediation Grant applicant 6/2007			
4081101	Mount Vernon Milling Company	SEC Main and Water Sts			Acknowledgment Letter 11/7/2008		
4111007	Former National Guard Armory	118 Main St			Brownfield Determination Letter 10/28/2011		
4200607	Schilli Leasing	101 Givens Rd	4		Comfort Letter 9/30/2020	Groundwater use restriction, soil management plan required	12/7/2020

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

As part of any community, parks and open green spaces provide residents with a break from the monotony of the built environment and recreation opportunities for residents of all ages. In addition to the amenities they offer and the health benefits that come with recreational activities, parks can be economic catalysts to their surrounding neighborhoods. According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and studies carried out by several universities (such as the University of Washington), a park space can increase the property value of surrounding homes from 5-to-20% depending on its size, condition, amenities, and distance.

### **PARK CLASSIFICATION**

While not an officially standardized or adopted system, the NRPA has developed some general classifications in which park spaces can be broken down and classified. As park spaces are subject to wide variations in users, intended uses, scale, financial support, and environmental conditions, a fixed evaluation system became impossible to impose across the entire country. In place of a fixed system, broad categories focusing on primary elements of a park's size, the amenities offered, and its intended users were developed instead.





## **NATIONAL/STATE PARKS**

The largest classification, National and State parks typically are focused on conservation and environmental protection, with visitors traveling from across the state and even out of state to visit. Activities tend to focus on passive recreation in the form of natural landscaping, walking/hiking trails, and few physical structures.

## **REGIONAL PARKS**

Regional parks are larger-scale parks that tend to focus on more active recreation, drawing in both residents and visitors using sports fields and leagues. While they can still serve the needs of residents, regional parks serve the needs of sports groups and dedicated users, potentially intimidating the more casual user.

## **COMMUNITY PARKS**

Community parks are small- to medium-sized park facilities, with amenities geared towards more general users such as joggers, families, and small groups. Amenities can include playground equipment, sports fields, open spaces, walking trails, water features, and accessible through alternative transit from surrounding neighborhoods.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS**

Neighborhood parks are the most minor and most localized park classification, located within residential neighborhoods with only a few amenities such as playground equipment and seating. Due to their size, they typically do not have dedicated parking facilities and instead are visited by surrounding residents via bike or on foot.

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<sup>21</sup>Research Shows Parks Add Significant Boost In Home Values Nearby, Robert Caston, TheParkCatalog, <https://www.theparkcatalog.com/blog/parks-homes-values/>



## PARK FACILITIES



### BRITTLEBANK PARK

Brittlebank Park is the primary and largest recreation facility within Mount Vernon at 40 acres and hosts several youth and adult sports leagues.

#### Park Category

- Community park

#### Amenities:

- Brittlebank swimming pool
- Playground equipment
- 5 Baseball/softball fields
- 4 Tennis courts



### SHERBURNE PARK/RIVERBEND PARK

Recently expanded upon with the addition of the adjacent Riverbend Park, Sherburne Park is located just south of Downtown Mount Vernon along the Ohio River waterfront. Both parks together account for 6.5-acres of parkland along the riverfront.

#### Park Category

- Community park

#### Amenities:

- Picnic tables
- Park bench seating
- Playground equipment
- Pavilion



### KIMBALL PARK

Kimball Park is a half-acre local neighborhood park located along Kimball and Sycamore Street in eastern Mount Vernon. Though open and under-developed, the park boasts direct access to surrounding neighborhoods which provides residents with easy access to park amenities.

#### Park Category

- Neighborhood park

#### Amenities:

- Playground equipment
- Bench seating



### FAIRVIEW PARK

A hidden gem within the Mount Vernon community, Fairview Park is tucked between an active rail line, residential homes, and a dense tree line. The two-acre park is primarily made up of open green space and has only one entry and exit point.

#### Park Category

- Neighborhood park

#### Amenities:

- Playground equipment
- ½ Basketball court

### KIWANIS PARK

Kiwanis Park is an under-developed 5-acre site comprised of primarily open green space and contains the Mount Vernon Senior Citizens Center. Additionally, Kiwanis Park is situated less than 1,000 feet to the east of the much larger Brittlebank Park.

#### Park Category

- Community park

#### Amenities:

- Mount vernon senior center
- Softball field
- ½ Basketball court
- Open green space

### IMAGINATION STATION AT COLLEGE PARK

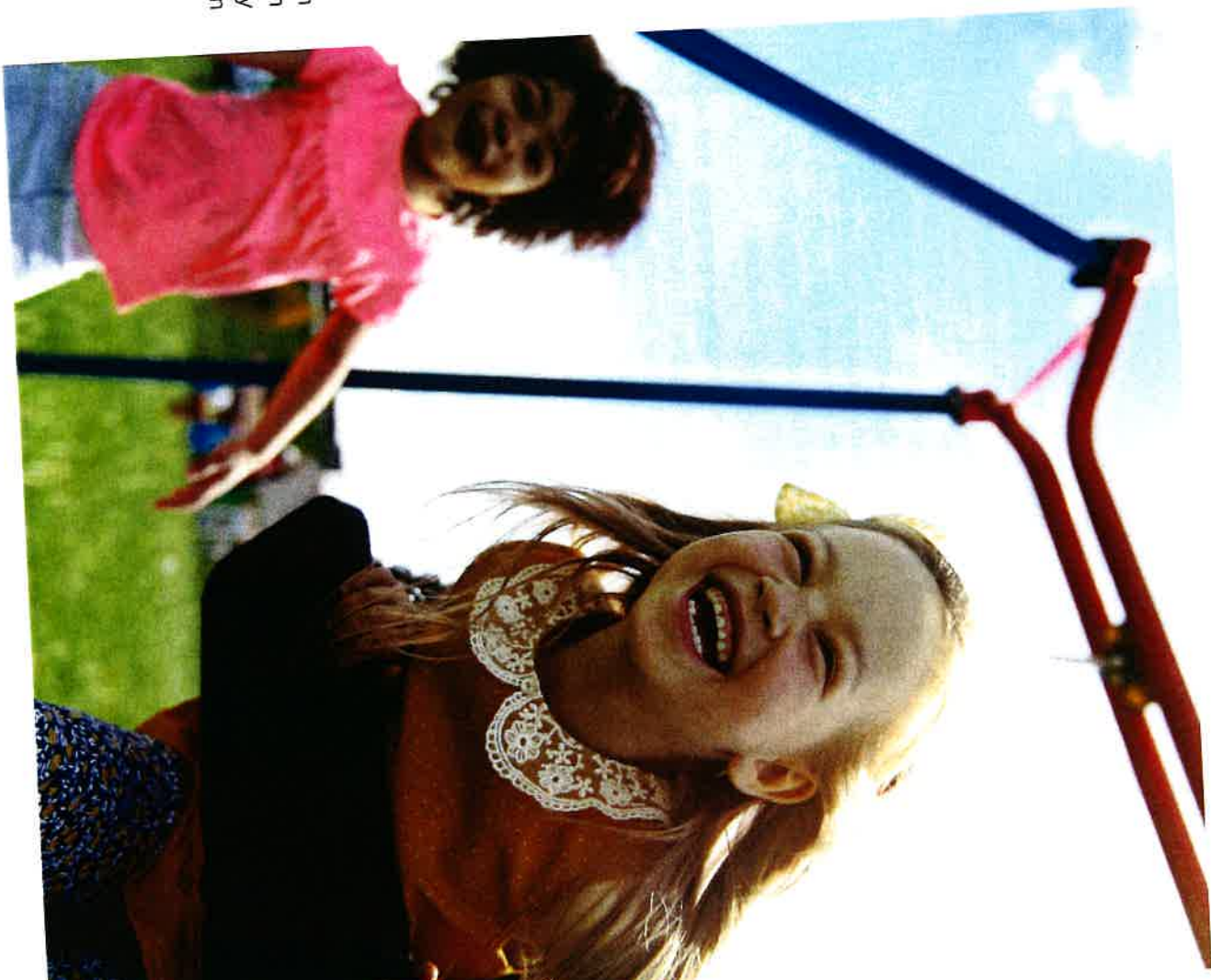
Located on the Alexandrian Public Library grounds, the Imagination Station was built in 2000 by the City of Mount Vernon, with maintenance being assumed jointly by the Alexandrian Library Board and the Mount Vernon-Black Township Parks and Recreation Department in 2010.

#### Park Category

- Neighborhood park

#### Amenities:

- Playground Equipment (Fenced-In)



# COMMUNITY BRANDING

As the world becomes ever more interconnected and individuals ever more mobile in how far they can travel for work, effective community branding has become a frontline issue for communities seeking to retain their residents. With larger metropolitan areas nearby, Indiana communities have had to develop an innovative approach in attracting and retaining residents, highlighting what they offer that cannot be found in larger cities.

## GATEWAYS

Gateways are critical points within and around the community that act as transitions between the different spaces that make up a community and often serve as a nexus for people to gather and move through. That transition is often perceived as a "break" in the environment, giving shape to an area and determining the difference between "here" and "there." Such spaces are significant in shaping the impressions of visitors to the community, making their commute through the community both impactful and memorable.

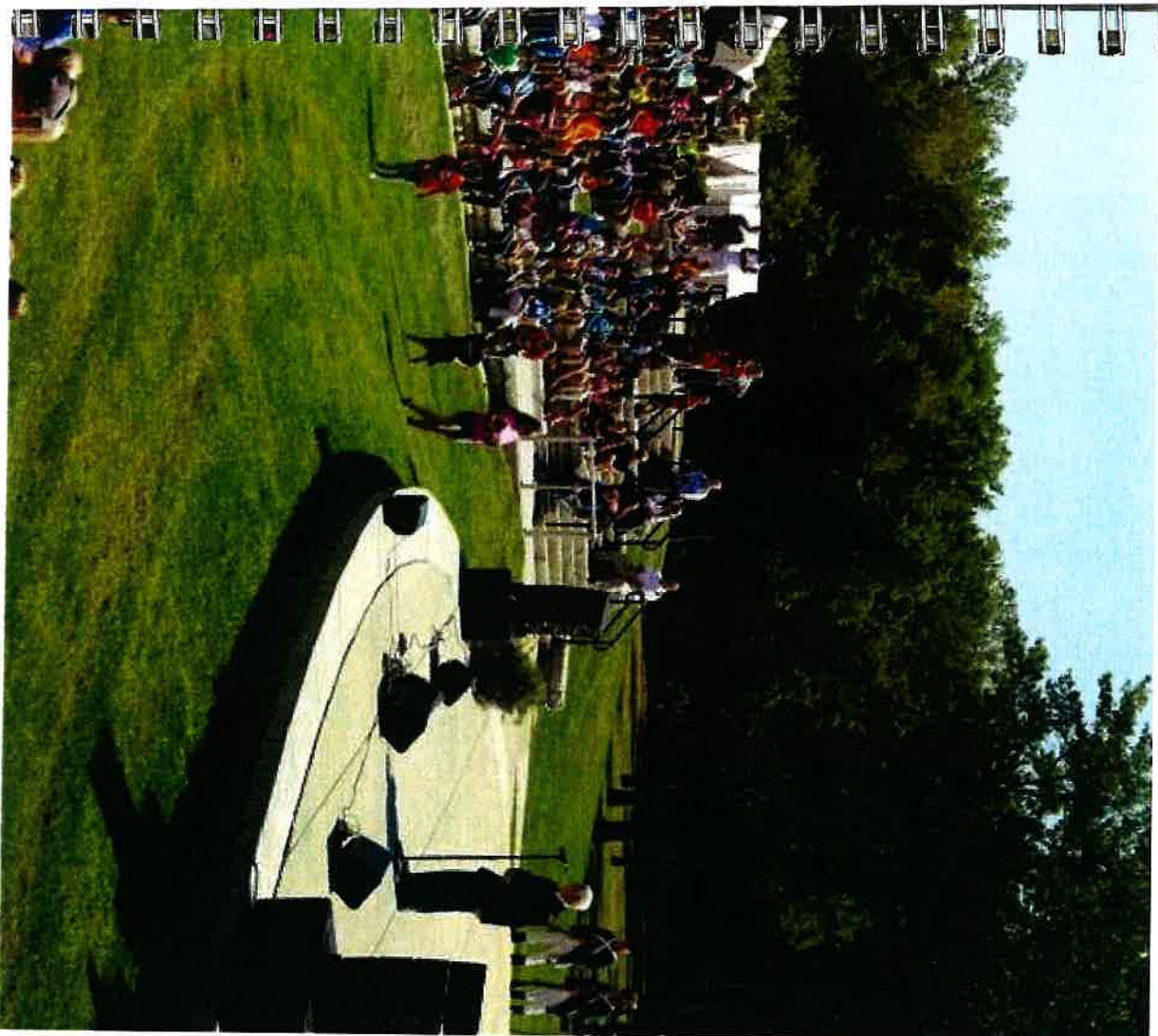
## NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

As a community grows and develops, neighborhoods begin to form defining characteristics that set them apart from the community at large. That can be both physical and perceived, ranging from certain building materials and styles used in home construction to residents of a particular background gathering around some shared characteristic. In the past, this often revolved around residents' wealth or cultural heritage, leading to visually distinct and recognizable communities. Cities such as Chicago, IL (Little Italy) and Cincinnati, OH (Over the Rhine) are notable examples of communities that have capitalized on the cultural heritage of old historic neighborhoods and turned it into an economic driver for both visitors and residents.



Image Credit: Mount Vernon River Days, <https://mtnvernonriverdays.com/>





**A list of officially recognized neighborhoods and subdivisions in Mount Vernon<sup>22,23</sup>:**

- Blackford Lake Estates
- Charles Lawrence
- Copperline Village
- Country Club Estates
- Country Terrace
- Fairview
- Hidden Valley
- Lakeland Ridge
- Lakeview Place
- Marrs Manor
- Mueller Manor
- Nuway
- Saint Charles Place
- Serenity Estates
- Waterford Place

## **DISTRICTS**

A district is a well-defined and recognized city area whose structures/spaces have a particular element in common. Often used as a tool for economic revitalization and as a means of securing funds, districts often act as an anchor and help to reinforce the community's identity within a designated area. That is due to their ability to promote and preserve community aspects such as communal history, historic architectural styles, neighborhood identity, community branding, cultural heritage, and preserving desirable aesthetics. These elements, in turn, can lead to happier residents as well as growth in both tourism and economic activity.

<sup>22</sup> Mount Vernon Indiana Real Estate Subdivisions, Cressy & Everett Real Estate, <https://www.cressyeverett.com/mount-vernon-indiana-subdivisions.html>

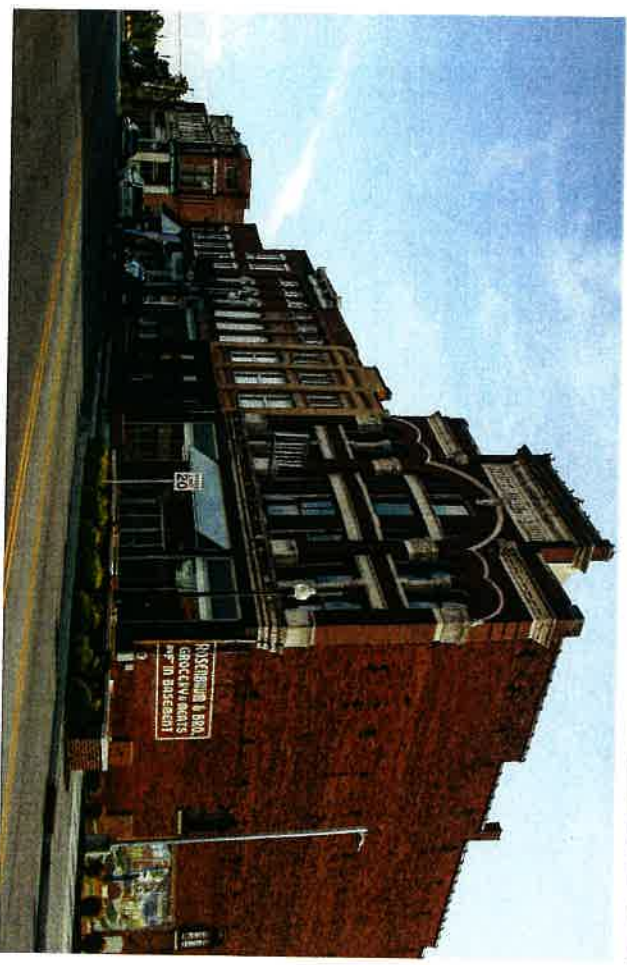
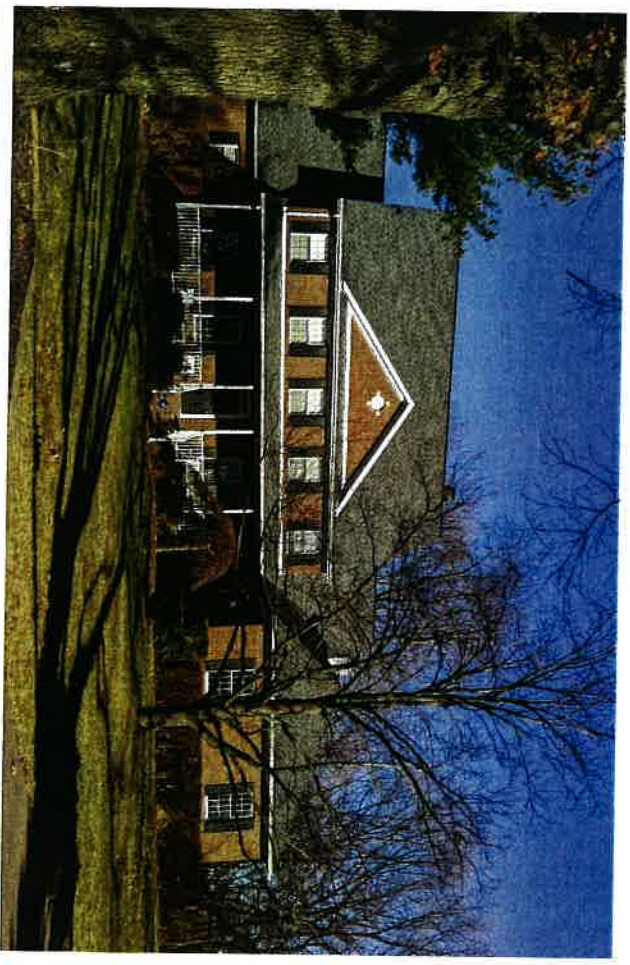
<sup>23</sup> Mt. Vernon IN Neighborhoods and Subdivisions, Talk To Tucker Realtors, <https://www.ftuckereinge.com/mnt-vernon/neighborhoods/>

## WELBORN HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Welborn Historic District is a primarily residential district laid out by Jesse Welborn between 1822 and 1826, with development taking place between 1840 and 1942. The district was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1992 for its examples of Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Romanesque Revival, and Colonial Revival architectural styles. In total, the district has 154 contributing buildings (residences with intact historically significant architectural elements) and five contributing structures (non-residential).

## DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Mount Vernon Downtown Historic District was developed between the years of 150 and 1953 within the current boundaries of the Central Business District of Mount Vernon. Registered on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003, the district holds 39 contributing buildings, two contributing sites, one contributing structure, and two contributing objects within its boundaries.









# DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON SPECIAL AREA PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

In 2014, American Structurepoint created an updated downtown redevelopment plan for Mount Vernon. Eight years have passed since the adoption of the document. American Structurepoint developed a subsection devoted to updating the downtown redevelopment plan with this concurrent comprehensive planning effort. This subsection serves as an existing conditions update specific to Downtown Mount Vernon. While this portion of the project contains similar information to the city-wide Existing Conditions Report, the following pages were devoted to the downtown area and highlight what has changed and what current data will help the continued redevelopment of downtown Mount Vernon.



## **EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT VS. DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON PLAN UPDATE EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT**

This Existing Conditions Report summarized relevant data about Downtown Mount Vernon in 2022. This subsection reviewed applicable demographics, land use, physical improvements and buildings, infrastructure, and goals from previous planning efforts relative to the Downtown Mount Vernon TIF area.

### **FUTURE PLAN**

The upcoming plan will focus on what Downtown Mount Vernon will be like in the future.

### **DOWNTOWN'S HISTORY**

Mount Vernon has deep roots in agriculture and Ohio River activities. Since the settling of Posey County in the early 1800s, generations of hardy pioneers and modern-day Hoosiers have lived in Mount Vernon and the surrounding countryside. Industries have grown and, in some cases, have died off or been replaced by new ones. Grain milling, oil refining, and river transportation have been long-lived. Ax handle manufacturing, steam thresher manufacturing, and soda pop bottling have come and gone.

The location of downtown today is the original settlement known as McFadin's Bluff. Established in 1806, Mount Vernon later got its current name in 1815 in honor of George Washington. It originally began as a frontier trading post for European settlers along the Ohio River. Due to its location along the river, Mount Vernon grew into a shipping port that collected local grain and produce from the agricultural areas of the county. These products were then brought to port in Mount Vernon and shipped to the Southern half of the United States. Over time the port grew to include flour, paper, sawmills, foundries, and canning factories. The growth of Mount Vernon and its shipping capacity, and its ideal location for future growth, led to it becoming the Posey County seat in 1825.

Downtown's history is front and center in the culture, physical growth, and prosperity of Mount Vernon. This history is rich and tied directly to job growth based on manufacturing goods from industries connected to the Ohio River. Mount Vernon's identity is in many ways tied to the good fortunes brought by the river and industries that helped spur growth in the local area.



WHY FOCUS ON DOWNTOWN

While conducting our public engagement efforts, the project team quickly realized how important downtown Mount Vernon was to stakeholders, residents, community businesses, and local organizations. A reinvigorated and vibrant downtown was top-of-mind to all participants, many of whom were longtime residents with fond memories of eating and shopping within the heart of the community.

CONTEXT WITHIN MOUNT VERNON

Downtown Mount Vernon is located in the near center of the city limits. While there is no official “downtown” boundary, various planning and funding efforts defined different areas as downtown Mount Vernon over the past ten years.

DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON TIF DISTRICT

In 2013, the Mount Vernon Redevelopment Commission (MVRDC), in conjunction with the City Council, adopted the Mount Vernon Redevelopment Plan and Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) District to assist with funding and redevelopment initiatives in the downtown area. Map 13, Mount Vernon Downtown Redevelopment and TIF Boundary highlight the TIF district's boundaries. The TIF area is generally bounded by the Evansville Western Railway track on the north, Ohio River to the south, Locust Street on the east, and Mill Street/Chestnut Street on the west. The 33-acre TIF was established on August 13, 2013, and contained 443 parcels,<sup>23</sup> and will expire in 2038.

2019 DOWNTOWN TIF STATISTICS<sup>24</sup>

The gross assessed value for all property in this TIF	\$31,905,100
The net assessed value for all property in this TIF	\$19,613,523
The base value for all property in this TIF	\$18,327,263
The incremental value for all property in this TIF	\$1,286,260
Total revenues for this TIF in 2019	\$32,676

<sup>23</sup> <http://gateway.ifionline.org/TIFviewer/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://gateway.ifionline.org/TIFviewer/>

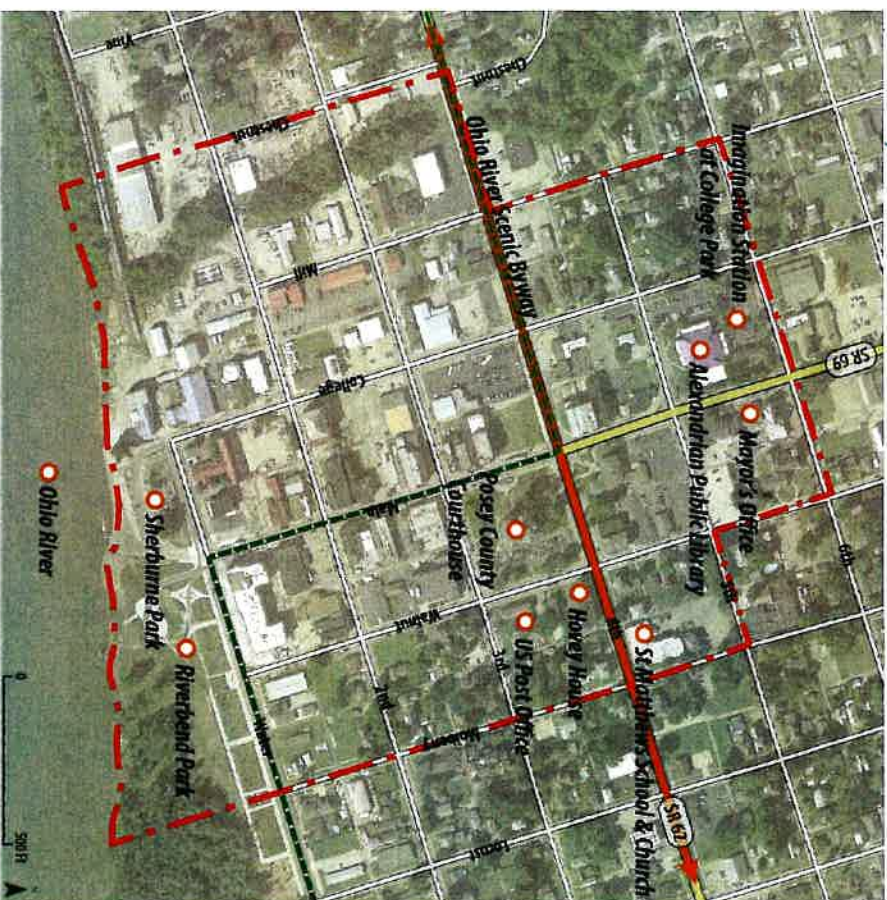
MAP 13, MOUNT VERNON DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AND TIF BOUNDARY



LEGEND

--- TIF Boundary



**MAP 14, 2014 DOWNTOWN PLAN FOCUS AREA****LEGEND**

--- Old Downtown Boundary

**2014 DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE**

The most recent downtown plan update in 2014 chose to focus on a smaller 80-acre section of the TIF, which covered approximately 22 blocks. That plan's focus area was 6th Street on the north, Mulberry Street on the east, the Ohio River on the south, and Chestnut Street on the west and shown as Map 14, 2014 Downtown Plan Focus Area.

**2022 DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON  
PLAN EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT**

This report will focus on the entire area within the TIF boundary. While goals and strategies in the upcoming future plan may not focus on the whole TIF area, encapsulating data for the area as a whole was essential to understanding the full physical and cultural dynamics of downtown. In particular, this plan section provides a snapshot of specific demographics, policies, programs, and funding initiatives tied to the downtown area as it was in February of 2022.

<sup>35</sup> 2014 Downtown Mount Vernon Redevelopment Plan Update, American Structurepoint

**DOWNTOWN DEMOGRAPHICS**

Since this downtown area update was conducted in conjunction with a Comprehensive Planning effort for the City of Mount Vernon. This section refers to the comprehensive city-wide demographics incorporated into that companion document. The table below, Mount Vernon Demographics Snapshot, represents a sample of that information most relevant to this downtown plan update.

**MOUNT VERNON DEMOGRAPHICS SNAPSHOT<sup>26</sup>**

2021 Demographic Categories	Downtown TIF Boundary	10-Minute Walk	Mount Vernon City, Indiana
Total Population	515	1,500	6,652
Total Households	208	579	2,749
Average Household Size	2.4	3	2.3
Total Businesses	100	153	264
Total Employees	942	1,433	2,626
Total Daytime Population	942	2,057	6,446
Median Household Income	\$50,481	\$47,595	\$55,225
Median Age	38.6	38.0	41.3

In addition to the city-wide statistics mentioned in the above table, this section examines a subset of the relevant demographic categories. This section compares city-wide statistics to the TIF's boundaries and an area representing a ten-minute walk from the 4th and Main Streets intersection. These two categories represent the individuals that live and work in the downtown area and are likely to walk to restaurants, stores, or possibly their place of employment. The following items were noted on the next page as compared to the Mount Vernon's limits.

<sup>26</sup> Community Analyst, ESRI and US Census Bureau







## RESIDENTS

- 515 individuals live in the TIF boundary, or 77 percent of Mount Vernon's Total population.
- 1,500 persons (22.5 percent) reside within a 10-minute walk of the Main Street and 4th Street intersection.
- The median age for both the downtown TIF (38.6) and 10-minute walk (38.0) residents was lower than that of Mount Vernon (41.3).
- Mount Vernon has 2,749 housing units within its corporate limits. The downtown TIF had 208 (7.6 percent), and the 10-minute walk had 579 (21.1 percent).<sup>27</sup>

## BUSINESSES

- 153 of Mount Vernon's companies (58.0 percent) are within the 10-minute walk of the Main Street and 4th Street intersection. This boundary includes a portion of Main Street, which is a busy commercial corridor
- Similarly, 54.6 percent (1,433) of the city's jobs were within the 10-minute walk area.
- The total daytime population in the 10-minute walk was 32.0 percent of Mount Vernon's daytime population. Compared to the percent of businesses, the relatively lower percentage of the daytime population is due to the community's larger employer's locations near the periphery of the city's limits.<sup>28</sup>

## INCOME

- Median income in the TIF boundary (\$50,481) and the 10-minute walk area was lower (\$47,595) than the city-wide Mount Vernon median income of \$55,225.

## OVERALL TRENDS

Our review of Mount Vernon's downtown area demographics supported comments received during public engagement activities. We learned that downtown is still a significant economic, business, and jobs center for the community. However, most residents do not live downtown, with the number of residents living within a 10-minute walk increasing slightly. Downtown residents tend to be younger and earn less money per year than the median of the Mount Vernon population.

<sup>27</sup> Community Analyst, ESRI and US Census Bureau

<sup>28</sup> Community Analyst, ESRI and US Census Bureau

**2014 DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE GOALS**

Setting the stage for continued analysis was a review of the goals from the previous update. The last planning downtown effort included a Critical Path Strategy Matrix with eight Goals and 36 Objectives.<sup>29</sup>

			
No progress was made on this objective	This object was started but not completed	This object was started and substantial complete	Objective is now obsolete due to changes in technology, policy, or community needs
AS OF FEBRUARY OF 2022			

<sup>29</sup> 2014 Downtown Mount Vernon Redevelopment Plan Update and American Structurepoint



## 2014 DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

### 1 - CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ATTRACTS AND RETAINS BUSINESSES

OBJECTIVES	STATUS
Form Main Street Organization	Not Started
Create and promote a small business toolkit	Not Started
Create a tax abatement program for small business activities	Not Started
Pursue applying for business development loans that will provide funding for needed business development opportunities	Not Started
Promote, attract, and retain specialty shops in the downtown area	Ongoing
Maintain and Implement Tax Increment Financing	Ongoing
Attract retail downtown (restaurants, cafes, bars, microbreweries, convenience retail, etc.)	Ongoing
Attract a Bed and Breakfast downtown	Ongoing

### 2 - PRESERVE EXISTING ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND HISTORY (ENCOURAGE COMPLEMENTARY INFILL)

OBJECTIVES	STATUS
Implement a Facade Grant Program	Complete (Still being Utilized)
Designate the downtown as a legal historic district for zoning purposes	Not Started
Create a set of design standards	Not Started
Encourage complementary infill development	Ongoing

### 3 - IMPROVE PARKING AND TRAVEL IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA

OBJECTIVES	STATUS
Improve existing parking lots	Ongoing
Improve on-street parking and reduce street widths	Ongoing
Improve wayfinding and downtown branding program	Ongoing
Determine current parking inventory and potential need	Ongoing

4 - CREATE A SAFE DOWNTOWN ENVIRONMENT	
OBJECTIVES	STATUS
Extend Landing lighting style into streetscapes downtown	Ongoing
Install video surveillance cameras and call buttons	Ongoing
Address unsafe buildings	Ongoing
Ensure areas are set aside for additional residential or mixed use development	Ongoing
Increase patrol on foot, bike, and car	Ongoing

5 - ESTABLISH MOUNT VERNON AS A HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL DESTINATION	
OBJECTIVES	STATUS
Increase awareness of the culture and history	Ongoing
Establish a public art or mural program to display the history and culture	Ongoing
Construct Main Street Trail	Complete
Create designated gateways into downtown area	Not Started

6 - CONTINUE TO EMBRACE THE RIVER AS THE CENTERPIECE OF DOWNTOWN	
OBJECTIVES	STATUS
Establish an official riverfront district per Indiana Code	Not Started
Establish a downtown promotions and branding program	Not Started
Establish downtown events programs	Ongoing
Continue annual stop of steam boats, embellish areas to visit	Not Started



**7 - CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS INCREASED HOUSING OPTIONS (LOFTS, TOWN HOMES, AND CONDOS)**

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Establish a housing market plan geared toward developers	Not Started
Identify and acquire property for multi-family	Ongoing
Draw surrounding residents in	Ongoing

**8 - ESTABLISH CLEAR COMMUNICATION OF VISION, MESSAGE, AND RESOURCES**

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Create a single point of contact for economic development efforts.	Ongoing
Develop a consolidated outreach and marketing program consistent with brand.	Not Started
Enhance the use of digital/on-line communications, newsletter, etc., for dispersing important information.	Ongoing
Develop a communications plan	Not Started



## **DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON PROGRESS**

Many of the City's goals (19) from the previous plan were started or substantially completed as of February 2022. City officials and stakeholders should be proud of their ongoing efforts to improve the downtown area. While some items may not be the most visible, they set the stage for continued success.

### **COMPLETED**

This section found that two of the 2014 plan's goals were completed, representing a great start. These two goals were:

- Construct the Main Street Trail; and
- Implement a Facade Grant Program.

#### **Main Street Trail<sup>30</sup>**

City partners recently completed a 0.3-mile portion of the Main Street Trail, starting at the Riverbend Park at the Ohio River and heading north to the Mayor's office. This trail links several downtown/Mount Vernon landmarks, institutional buildings, and businesses. It also represented a critical step towards building a connected, accessible, and equitable downtown.

In addition, to the trail elements, City officials have extended new facilities and features to both sides of the right-of-way (r-o-w), including seating, plantings, and a mixture of complementary colored concrete and brick paver textures.

#### **Facade Grant Program**

The Redevelopment Commission's (RDC) facade grant program has assisted 14 businesses and property owners with approximately \$62,800 of grants funded through TIF revenue. The program is a 50/50 matching grant meaning the recipient matches the funding amount received. Since the grant became available in 2017, including the matching funds and additional project costs, these activities have resulted in nearly \$188,000 of direct investment within the downtown TIF boundary.

<sup>30</sup> Image Source: American Structurepoint











PHYSICAL ASSETS AND ANALYSIS

Demographic data, 2014 plan goal progress, the established TIF, and how this subarea plan fits within the context of the City's comprehensive planning effort comprise an important part of downtown Mount Vernon's story. The status of the downtown's physical environment and opportunities represents a key ingredient to realizing future goals for the development and reinvigoration of this important district. The following subsection details the composition of downtown Mount Vernon's physical assets as of February 2020 and identifies potential opportunities to explore.

Key landmarks

The downtown Mount Vernon TIF area was home to several important buildings, government facilities, trails/roads, historic landmarks, and natural features. Map 15, Downtown Landmarks highlight the location of these key buildings:

- The Mayor's Office
- Public Safety building
- College Park
- Alexandrian Library
- St. Matthew's School and Church
- Posey County Courthouse
- Hovey House
- US Post Office
- Sherburne Park
- Riverbend Park
- The Ohio River
- American Discovery Trail
- And Ohio River Scenic Byway

One important point to note is that most of these landmarks are on or within one block of Main Street and disbursed north to south within a six-block walk. The American Discovery Trail (and recent Main Street extension north of 4th street help connect these destinations.

<sup>31</sup> <https://reisforeveryone.com>

MAP 15, DOWNTOWN LANDMARKS



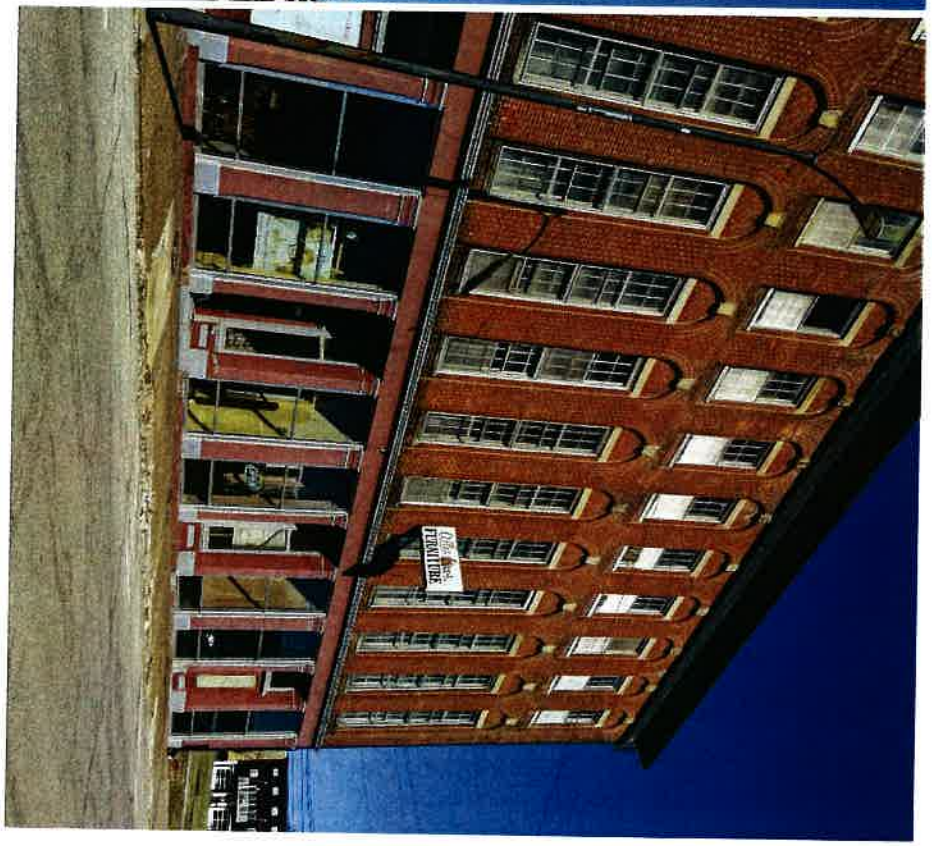
**LEGEND**

- TIF Boundary
- - - American Discovery Trail
- Ohio Scenic Byway
- Landmarks

## **BUILDINGS AND APPEARANCE**

This report noted a mixture of building types and ages dispersed throughout the downtown area. Late 1800s, multi-story buildings were mixed with mid-1900s single-story buildings. A few statement buildings were next to older single-family homes, such as the Posey County Courthouse and Hovey Home. The most recent constructions were a three-story mixed-use apartment and retail building near the Ohio River and a bank building at the 4th and Main Streets intersection. Based on this analysis of the structures, no recognized dominant architectural style represented downtown buildings. Officials involved with development may want to consider architectural guidelines for downtown within the zoning ordinance.

This section also noted that many of these buildings' second and third stories seem unoccupied, and these upper stories may represent opportunities to add residential units in the TIF boundary.



<sup>37</sup> Image Source: American Structurepoint



**Examples of Modern Construction**



**Examples of Government and Landmark Buildings**



**Examples of Single-Family Homes**



### DOWNTOWN AREA ZONING

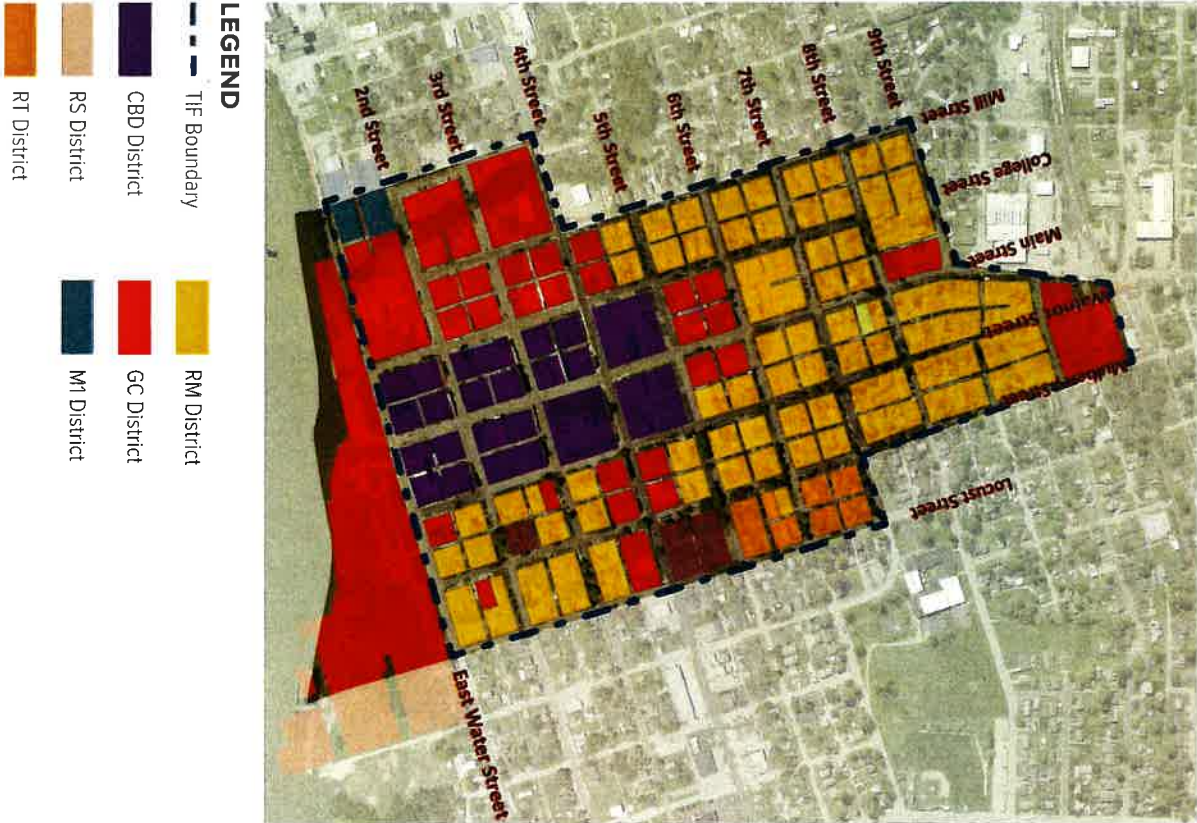
The properties inside the downtown TIF boundary and those just south along the river were located in seven different zoning districts. The largest portion of the downtown area (almost 50 percent) is zoned RM-Residential Multi-Family. This zoning district permits various residential uses, ranging from single-family dwellings to multi-family dwellings. The second-largest zoning designation is GC- General Commercial at 26.7 percent of the total area, including properties that make up Sherburne and Riverbend parks. The third-largest is the CBD Central Businesses District that makes up the core of downtown Mount Vernon starting at 5th Street and encompassing the blocks between College and Mulberry Streets down to East Waterfront Street.

DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON TIF ZONING AREAS BY PERCENTAGE	
ZONING DISTRICT	ACRES
CBD – Central Business District	16.6%
GC - General Commercial	26.7%
M1 - Light Manufacturing	2.1%
O - Residential Office	1.8%
RT- Residential Townhouse	3.0%
RS - Residential Single Family	0.2%
RM - Residential Multi Family	49.6%

Interestingly, this area's Zoning Ordinance examination noted that zero residential uses are listed as permitted by right in the CBD. While not permitting all residential uses is understandable, some types of dwelling units (second floor and above uses) might be desirable to allow by-right. Another item to note is that bulk requirements in the CBD district do not encourage outdoor seating, art spaces, entertainment spaces, incentives for contributing to bike plans.

<sup>33</sup> <https://poseyn.wrhgjs.com/>

MAP 16, DOWNTOWN AREA ZONING





**MAP 17, DOWNTOWN AREA EXISTING LAND USE**



**EXISTING LAND USE**

Zoning districts illustrate permitted uses on a particular parcel; however, existing land use evaluations indicate how properties were used in February of 2022. The table below, Downtown Land Use Percentages, shows that most properties (31.5 percent) were used for single-family dwellings. The second highest percentage was institution-related uses (30.3 percent). Commercial/retail use was the third-highest percentage (17.4), and vacant was the fourth-largest percentage (7.9).

This section noted some discrepancies between the Zoning of properties and observed land uses. Particularly, the percentage of single-family residences according to land use is much higher than properties zoned for only single-family uses.

DOWNTOWN LAND USE PERCENTAGES	
LAND USE CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE
Commercial	17.4%
Industrial	5.5%
Institutional	30.3%
Single-Family	31.5%
Multi-Family	2.4%
Two-Family and Townhouse	3.9%
Vacant	7.9%

The majority of single-family homes were located in the RM district, which permits a variety of residential use types. The other interesting difference was the amount of land devoted to institutional uses. Most of these properties were zoned GC and, at face value, imply more businesses downtown than the land use analysis revealed. One other item noted in the land use analysis was the 7.9 percent of properties observed as vacant.<sup>34</sup> The zoning analysis does not identify vacancies, but these properties were important to note and represent opportunities for future development.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.in.gov/dig/files/>

**VACANT, UNDERUTILIZED, AND GOVERNMENT-OWNED PROPERTIES**

Map 18, Vacant, Underutilized, and Government-Owned Properties below showcases the location of properties identified as potential future building blocks for downtown Mount Vernon. Some parcels, such as the county facilities, US post office, library, and Mayor's office, will not be redeveloped. However, this analysis showed a critical mass of properties with large underutilized areas and city-owned properties that may create redevelopment areas in the future. In particular, many of these parcels existed between 4th and East Water Streets to the west of Main Street. Map 18 also illustrates that a critical mass of governmental activity generators existed along Main Street. Tying these activity generators to potential redevelopment opportunities represents an important thread towards encouraging new interest in downtown Mount Vernon.

**MAP 18, VACANT, UNDERUTILIZED, AND GOVERNMENT-OWNED PROPERTIES**



**LEGEND**

- - - TIF Boundary
- Underutilized Property
- City-Owned Property
- Governmental-Owned Property
- US Post Office



**PARKING**

In 2014 there were 320 off-street public parking spaces dispersed through the downtown area. Since that time, buildings along Main Street were demolished and transformed into additional parking areas. New parking lots have added another 65 spaces in the TIF boundary for a total of 385 spots distributed among ten separate parking lots. Additionally, approximately 730 on-street spots were observed within the study area, as shown on Map 19, Public Parking Spaces. This report only examined the on-street parking near mixed-use and commercial areas. This analysis did not include on-street parking spaces on streets comprised primarily of single-family homes. In addition to these spaces, another estimated 500 private business spots existed in the study area.

**MAP 19, DOWNTOWN PUBLIC PARKING SPACES**



TRAFFIC AND STREETS

Downtown Mount Vernon was developed as a traditional urban grid with several local, collector, and arterials streets. This system of roads creates numerous ways and alternate routes for residents, businesses, workers, and industrial traffic to get around the TIF boundary. Sidewalks are often located between the curb and constructed buildings on most streets. This grid pattern also created numerous intersections and various ways to connect downtown to the rest of the City and the southwestern Indiana region. Map 20, Downtown Traffic and Circulation Patterns show downtown's street layout pattern. East Water Street is the only part of this grid that stops and does not connect to properties west of Main Street. Map 20 also illustrates the hierarchy of the road system. Several high traffic minor arterials and major collectors run through downtown, providing various route options. The downtown area has a traffic volume of up to 18,170 average annual daily trips (AADT) on 4th Street, showcasing the high number of commuters and residents that visit or view the area every day.

MAP 20, DOWNTOWN TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION PATTERNS





**MAP 21, UNDERUTILIZED ASSETS**



- LEGEND**
- TIF Boundary
  - Key Intersections
  - Gateway Intersections
  - Key Pedestrian Intersections
  - Alleys
  - Main Street Bike Trail
  - Creek Bed

## UNDERUTILIZED OPPORTUNITIES

The previous subsections described downtown Mount Vernon's existing physical assets ranging from local landmarks to a functional street network. This analysis also noted several underutilized physical features in the TIF area as shown on Map 21, Underutilized Assets. The asset most underutilized are key intersections. Intersections on Main Street were recently upgraded and highlighted the beginning of raising downtown Mount Vernon's physical profile. As noted on Map 20, Downtown Mount Vernon Traffic and Circulation, high traffic volume existed at Locust and Chestnut Street along 4th Street and the 6th and Main Streets intersection (shown on Map 21 as Gateway intersections). These locations may be ideal spots to create gateways with upgraded pedestrian walkways, public art, and gateway signs to catch the attention of those passing through downtown.

Key intersections also exist for pedestrians. Map 21 highlights seven key pedestrian intersections where pedestrians can see historic landmarks views of the river, provide access to public amenities and parks, and intersect with the new Main Street trail. Highlighting these through physical improvements and wayfinding signage may enhance pedestrians' ability to navigate downtown.





#### **Alley located west of Main Street**

Also highlighted on the map are alleys that parallel Main Street. Aside from occasional refuse collection, these alleys are not often used by automobiles or pedestrians. Given the uncommon use, the alleys represented physical attributes that may be activated to provide alternate pedestrian paths and ways to connect people with downtown businesses.

#### **Creek located east of Chestnut Street**

One final underutilized asset observed is the creek bed east of Chestnut Street. This greenway may form the basis of a naturalized pedestrian connection and trail between assets north of Main Street and the park facilities along the Ohio River.



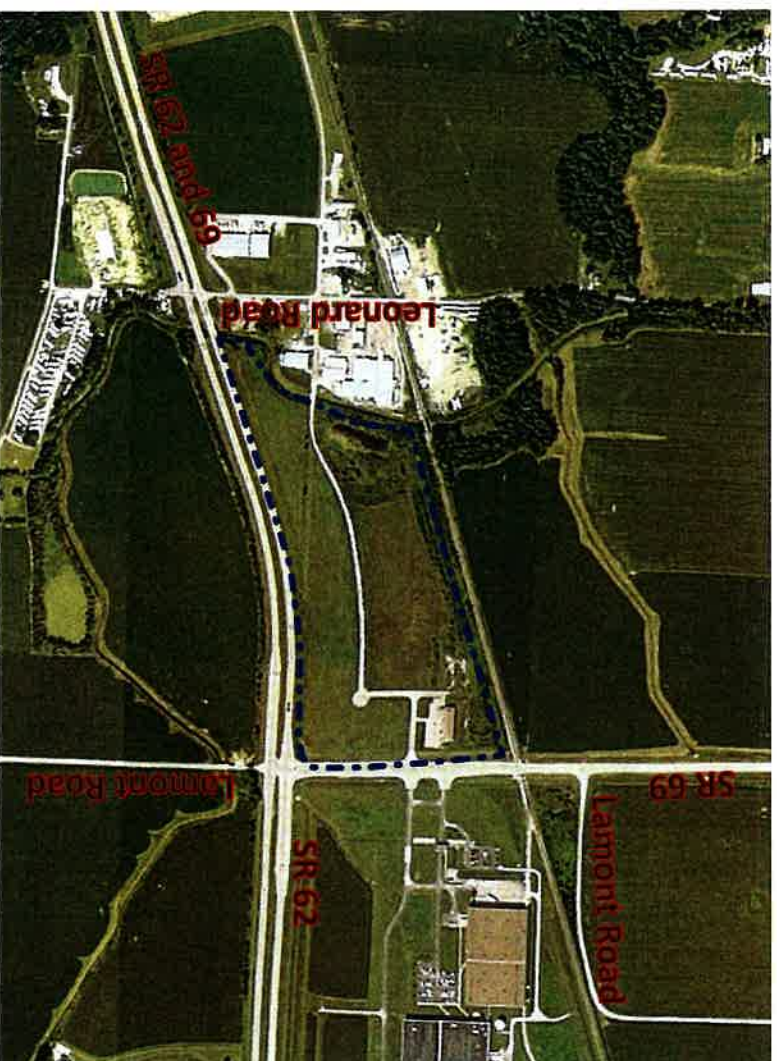
# EASTSIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA #1 TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) DISTRICT SUBAREA EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

## HISTORY

In June of 2006, the Mount Vernon Redevelopment Commission created the Eastside Economic Development Area#1 TIF district in partnership with the City of Mount Vernon. This financing mechanism was approved to encourage the development of commercial properties at the eastern border of Mount Vernon's corporate limits. Map 22, Eastside Economic Development Area 2006, shows the lack of development in the area before the approval of the TIF district.<sup>35</sup> It is clear that before the approval of the TIF that development had not taken off on these properties.

<sup>35</sup> Image Source: Google Maps

MAP 22, EASTSIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA 2006



## LEGEND

--- TIF Boundary

## EASTSIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA #1 IN 2022

The MVRDC and City have utilized this TIF district to successfully create economic development activity and generate new property tax revenue. The three-car dealerships (Expressway Ford, Expressway Chevrolet, Expressway Jeep, Chrysler, and Dodge bring customers and visitors. These businesses also create jobs that add to a healthy area job market. In 2019 the TIF had an assessed value of \$8,006,700, an increase of \$7,527,810 from the 2006 assessed value of \$478,890. As of February 2022, all debt services incurred utilizing TIF proceeds were paid off, and TIF revenue was considered surplus. Since the TIF was approved in 2006, the district has had a life span of 30 years and may stay in place until 2036. Given that parcels inside the TIF are developed. The MVRDC may want to consider expanding the TIF boundaries to include more properties and spur additional development.

### 2019 EASTSIDE TIF STATISTICS<sup>36</sup>

The total number of properties in this TIF	2
Real property records in this TIF	2
The gross assessed value for all property in this TIF	\$8,006,700
The net assessed value for all property in this TIF	\$8,006,700
The base value for all property in this TIF	\$478,890
The incremental value for all property in this TIF	\$7,527,810

## MAP 23, EASTSIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA 2022

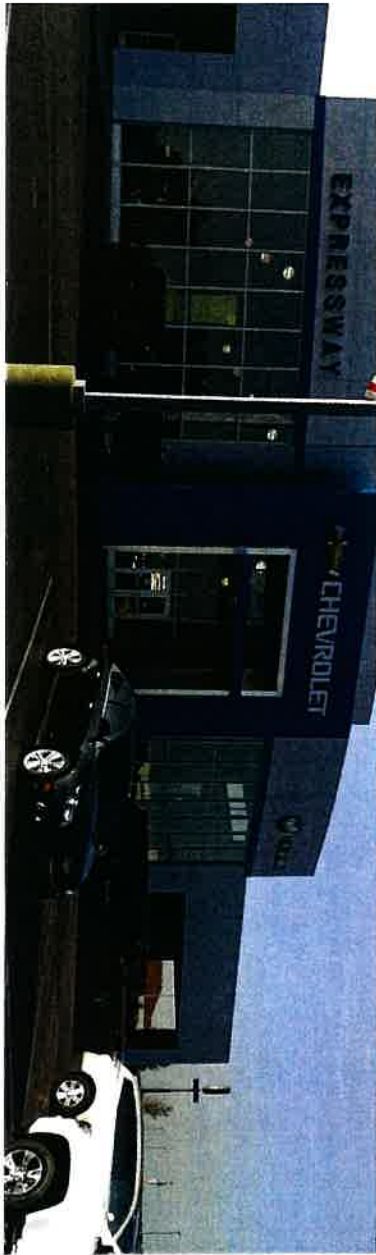


### LEGEND

- TIF Boundary
- City Limits



Expressway Chevrolet



Expressway Ford



Expressway Jeep, Chrysler, and Dodge



## EASTSIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA ZONING

The Zoning of the properties within the TIF was M1-Light Manufacturing and Research and Development District. This district's purpose statement was "to provide an environment conducive to the development and conservation of modern manufacturing and scientific research facilities. Additionally, it is to provide areas suitable for manufacturing, wholesaling, warehousing, and other industrial activities which have no objectionable environmental influences."<sup>36</sup> This zoning designation includes a wide array of light manufacturing uses and consists of a range of commercial, retail, and new boundaries would provide flexibility to help attract new business-es. Heading west within the City's corporate limits are a mixture of commercial use and heavy manufacturing districts.

The majority of the properties surrounding the TIF are in unincorporated Posey County. The properties near the TIF area are zoned M2, Manufacturing Medium/Heavy, and A, Agricultural. One consideration of a potential TIF expansion might be the annexation of properties at the time of development to help ensure new uses align with the City and MVRDC's vision for this corridor and key gateway area into Mount Vernon.

<sup>36</sup> The Zoning Ordinance

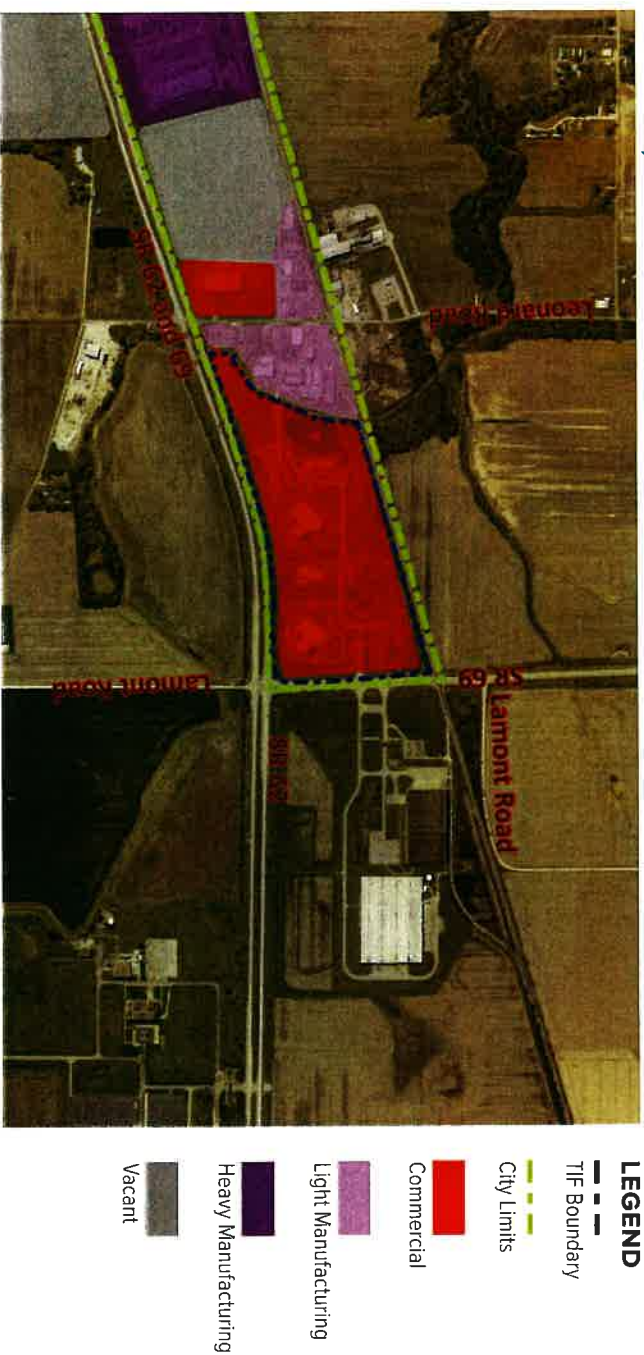




## EASTSIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA #1 EXISTING LAND USE

Land uses within the TIF district were all commercial enterprises comprised of three car dealerships and their supporting uses (service area, parking, etc.). Map 25, Eastside Area Existing Land Uses, illustrates that while the properties are zoned manufacturing, they were developed as commercial uses approved as special exemptions by Mount Vernon. Uses within the City heading west from the TIF are commercial and manufacturing. The land uses surrounding the TIF in unincorporated Posey County are a mix of manufacturing, agricultural/vacant land, and limited single-family homes. A review of these surrounding parcels indicated that potential TIF expansion would not likely create new conflicts.

**MAP 25, EASTSIDE EXISTING LAND USES**



## EASTSIDE ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION ASSETS

The TIF properties and surrounding area were integrated into the vehicle and rail systems. The properties had frontage on SRT 69/62 that connects Mount Vernon to the region and the Interstate system. The eastern edge of the TIF also has frontage on the SR 69 bypass. SR 69 and 62 are considered primary arterials heading east and north of the TIF.<sup>37</sup> The Evansville Western Railway runs to the north of the parcels and connects this site to the more extensive national freight rail network. This rail system also connects the area with the Mount Vernon Port Authority facilities. The properties are severed by Mount Vernon water and sewer facilities while private companies provide electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications. Nearby properties to the east were provided sewer by the Posey County Sewer District. The Comprehensive Plan Existing Conditions Report noted that plans were in development to extend the SR 69 bypass west and completely around Mount Vernon.

The TIF and surrounding properties are ideally located to help foster business and economic development activities from a traffic perspective. The area's proximity to rail and port facilities combined with large undeveloped land areas, create an inviting environment for continued business and job growth. Mount Vernon or the Posey County Sewer District and private companies are able to provide critical utilities to these development sites.

<sup>37</sup> <https://indot.maps.arcgis.com/apps>

**MAP 26, EASTSIDE ROAD AND TRANSPORTATION ASSETS**



- LEGEND**
- TIF Boundary
  - City Limits
  - Minor Arterial
  - Major Collector
  - Local Road
  - Rail Line

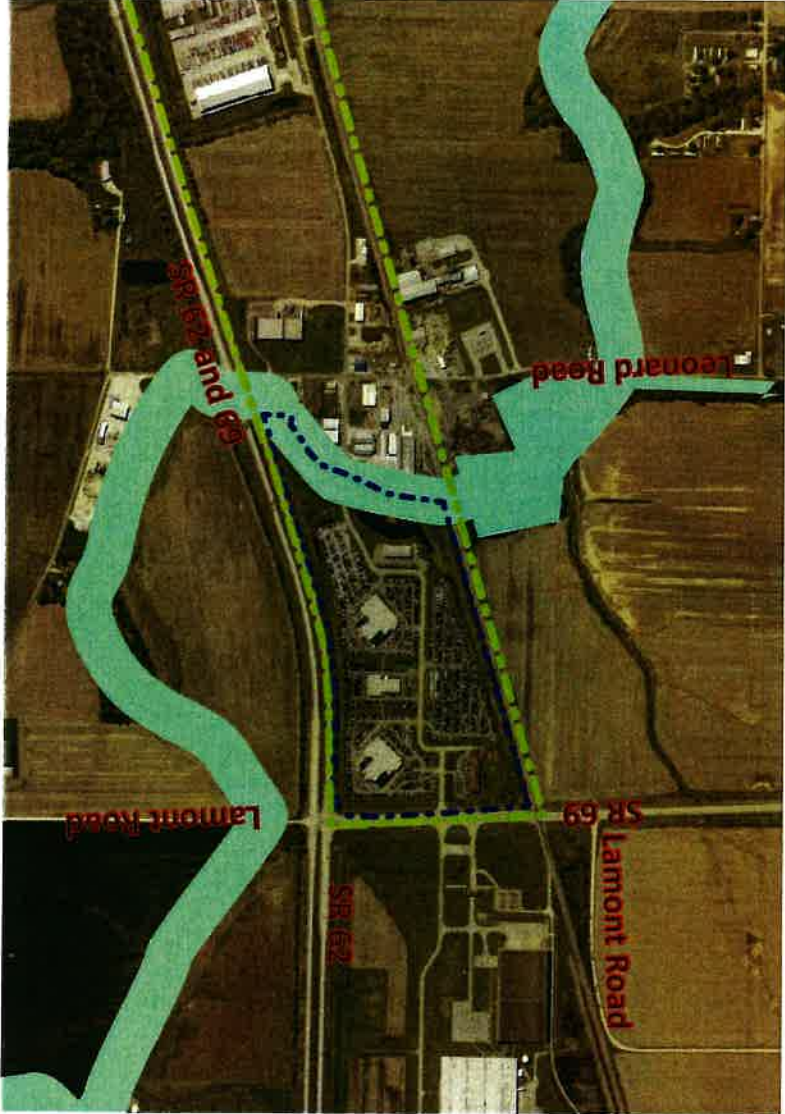


**FLOOD PLANE**

One item to note is the known floodplain running east of the TIF properties and throughout and surrounding areas. When considering expansion and continued development in the immediate vicinity, a floodplain can be a costly burden to overcome. As City officials and the MVRDC continue to examine this area for job growth and development, they should examine potential floodplain mitigation efforts and consider possible grant or funding opportunities for floodplain mitigation activities.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> <https://poseyin.wtngis.com/>

**MAP 26, EASTSIDE AREA FLOODPLAIN**



- LEGEND**
- TIF Boundary
  - City Limits
  - Floodplain



AMERICAN  
STRUCTUREPOINT  
INC.