

Muncie Strategic Investment Plan



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This TogetherDM Strategic Investment Plan for the City of Muncie builds on the strong track record of citywide strategic planning that began with the Muncie Action Plan (MAP) in 2009-10 and has continued through subsequent MAP updates. It reflects MAP's focus on collaborations across sectors—public and private—as the key to forward movement on critical issues and to building a community-wide sense of ownership over the work and the results.

Three place types are used by this plan to organize actions that align with TogetherDM's priorities and direction, and each place type identifies an overarching goal that relates to existing conditions and their influence on strategy.

The Action Outlines identified in this plan represent the most malleable part of this document and should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis by the TogetherDM Coalition to ensure that they reflect current opportunities, the community's capacity to implement, and progress made.

Downtown Muncie



GOAL

Make Walnut Street Exceptional & Connect Downtown to Community Assets

Continue to make downtown Muncie the great place it can be by heightening (not relaxing) the focus on Walnut Street and making deliberate connections to adjacent assets.



Historically, Downtown Muncie was the indisputable civic, social, and economic core of the city. It occupied a special place in the hearts of area residents and was larger than life for those who had only limited opportunities to take advantage of its shopping and entertainment offerings. After decades of disinvestment, Downtown has been making a comeback as the center of the community – literally and symbolically. While McGalliard Road and Bethel Avenue continue to see the lion's share of economic investment, these areas can't and don't capture the imagination of the community's residents.

Downtown's ongoing rebirth has been intentional and is the direct result of partnerships among the City, private enterprises, and nonprofit organizations. The launch of the Muncie Downtown Development Partnership in 1983 was instrumental to realizing the successes to date. Walnut Street is a special place and the vibrancy of the restaurants attest to the payoffs associated with streetscape improvements, the 75 days of programmed events between May and December, and many other economic initiatives that have been necessary to turn the area around.

But Downtown is not finished. There is still a lot of work that must be done to ensure that Downtown realizes its full potential. This work will require a more proactive approach by City Hall as an equal partner with the Muncie Downtown Development Partnership, a continued focus on making Walnut Street one of Indiana's best streets, and thoughtfully connecting Downtown's renewed energy to nearby community assets.



Downtown Muncie



Make Walnut Street Exceptional & Connect Downtown to Community Assets

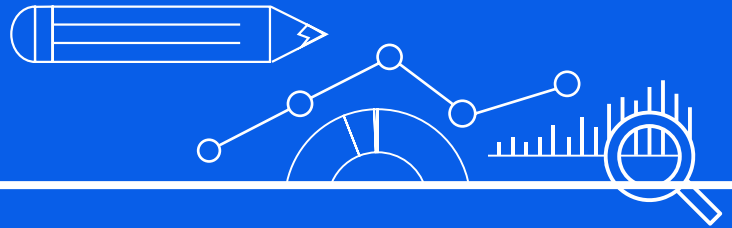
Continue to make downtown Muncie the great place it can be by heightening (not relaxing) the focus on Walnut Street and making deliberate connections to adjacent assets.



How does this approach connect to the Big Things?

Downtown is not done. The successes of the past ten years cannot be taken for granted and require additional and frequent infusions of local energy and funding. The special character that has been cultivated on Walnut Street should set the precedent for future variations along Main Street west to the White River Canal District and east to the Madjax Makerforce space, ultimately **Strengthening the Quality of Places**. Residential development in and near Downtown will **Improve Housing Conditions and Options** and new businesses and opportunities focused along Walnut and Main Streets will **Expand Opportunities for Upward Mobility** by providing job opportunities that don't yet exist in Muncie.





How does it serve ‘getting the basics right?’

Downtown is the core of the community and its success is critical to the viability of the City’s neighborhoods, those nearby in particular. While many buildings have been lost to demolition and it will take time to see infill buildings replace them where a parking lot is now situated, Walnut Street and Main Street are the two foundational streets that should be the focus for incentives for new infill buildings. Creating the sense of completion along these heavily trafficked streets and connecting to valuable community assets is essentially **‘getting the basics right’** for Downtown.

What are some specific outcomes this approach will aim for?

Walnut Street and Main Street are the locations for new infill projects Downtown

Community assets such as the White River/ TuheyPark, the MadjaxMakerforce/Masonic Temple block, Canan Park/Courtyard Marriott and the Muncie Fieldhouse are enhanced and seamlessly connected by Walnut and Main Streets

New residents move into Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods, and the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile between each of these community assets is comfortably walkable



Downtown Muncie



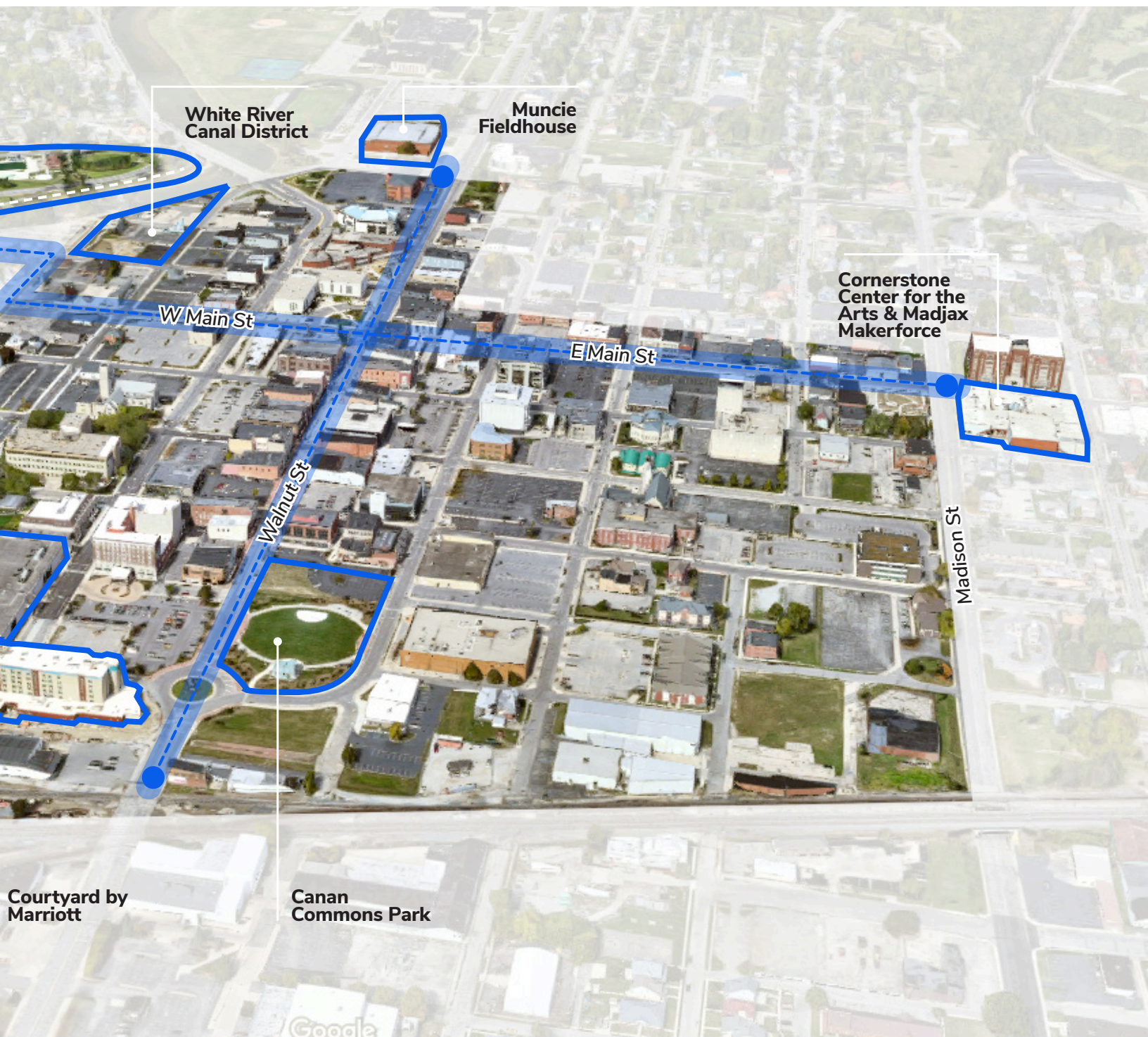
STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION #1

Focus public and private investments along Walnut Street and Main Street

Today's Downtown Muncie is generally associated with the stretch of Walnut Street between Charles Street and Main Street. These three blocks are special in terms of architecture, entertainment opportunities, and streetscape finishes. But they end abruptly. Muncie can and must support a larger, more sustained area of vitality—one that connects this core area to other community assets.

These efforts to expand and connect must be concentrated, however, and cannot be spread across the historic downtown footprint—an area of 100 acres that is simply too large for present or anticipated levels of demand. Instead, much can be achieved by focusing investment energy along two key cross streets: Walnut Street and Main Street. These corridors are identifiable by most residents as 'Downtown' and should be reinforced as such. Without strategic infill development along these streets, Downtown won't have the appearance, scale, or critical mass necessary to become the economic engine that it needs to be for the City of Muncie.





Downtown Muncie



STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION #2

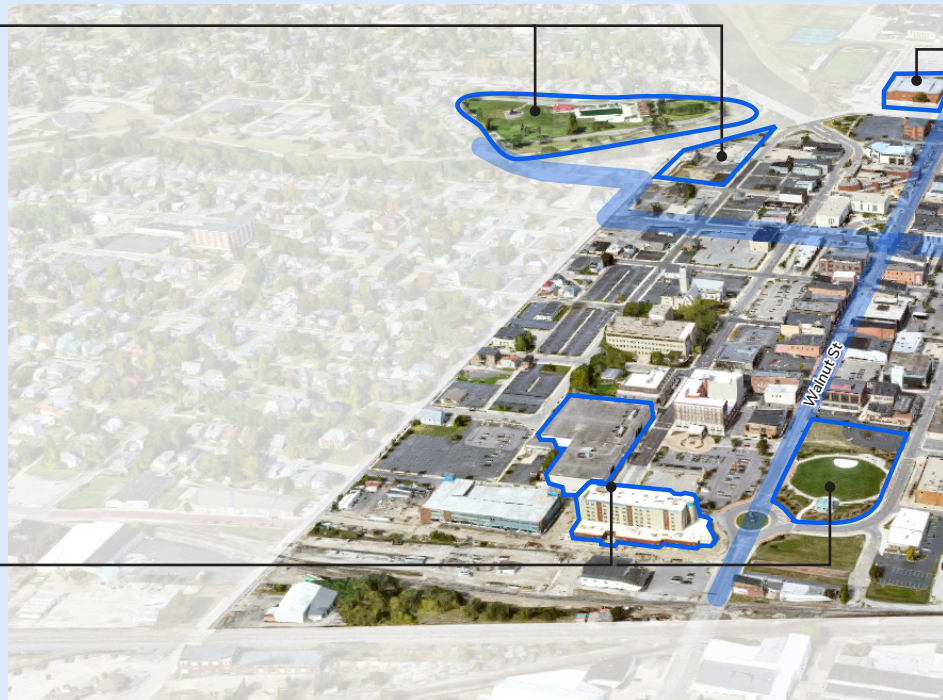
Capitalize on the community assets that frame the Downtown area

The City of Muncie has many community assets in and around Downtown, but they feel disconnected. Most of these assets tend to be located along Main and Walnut Streets, providing additional rationale to direct all efforts—resources, funding, and political support—to making these streets great.

Specifically, there are **four clusters of community assets** strategically positioned just over a half-mile apart, from east to west and north to south, that should serve as connected anchor points for Downtown Muncie.

Western Anchor

On the western edge of Downtown and just across the White River is Tuhey Park and the trail system along the river. Before you cross the river is the White River Canal District—a redevelopment project that will include new residential and commercial uses. Presently, the riverfront feels distant and inaccessible from Downtown. While TogetherDM strongly recommends infill efforts remain focused along Walnut and Main Streets, there may be opportunities for the City and private investors to begin re-imagining blocks adjacent to the old courthouse square that was located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and Walnut Street. With strategic infill in this area along Main and Washington Streets, between Walnut and Liberty Streets, the river and the emerging Canal District could become a very accessible local asset for all Downtown residents and visitors.



Southern Anchor

Shoring up the south end of Walnut Street is the **Courtyard by Marriott, Horizon Convention Center** and **Canan Commons Park**. All of these community assets are in very good condition and reflect the benefit of their young age and/or maintenance investments.





Northern Anchor

At the north end of Downtown is the **Muncie Fieldhouse**, a beautiful gymnasium built in 1928 for the Muncie Central High School Bearcats that has fallen into disrepair over the last decade. This building provides an iconic focal point as visitors enter the Downtown from the north and should be rehabilitated to its former glory.



Eastern Anchor

On the east side of Downtown, at the intersection of Madison and Jackson Streets, is the aptly named

Madjax Makerforce facility that provides space for budding entrepreneurs to rent as they launch their businesses. Across the street is the **Masonic Temple building** that houses the **Cornerstone Center for the Arts** offices. This magnificent building is currently underutilized and should be restored for residential use and/or consideration for Ball State University student apartments for those wanting to live in an edgy Downtown location.



Downtown Muncie



STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION #3

Support additional—and concentrated—residential development

Retail and services follow households. If underutilized second and third floors of many of the buildings along Main and Walnut Streets are rehabilitated to provide living space, the built-in clientele for downtown businesses will grow and make it an even more compelling place for non-residents to visit. Whether for young residents needing an apartment, or empty-nesters needing step-down housing and less space to maintain, or new student housing for Ball State University, downtown should be a compelling residential option.

Within the general Downtown area, there are approximately 1,100 (1.5% of Muncie's total population) at the present time. While the population for similar sized cities in America varies considerably, a city of Muncie's size should have about 5% (3,400 people) of the city's population downtown to achieve a self-sustaining sense of viability. Based on data analysis from the Muncie Downtown Development Partnership, Downtown currently has a 98% residential occupancy rate—an indication of the demand to live in Downtown as well as the limited supply.

While there may be a temptation to develop downtown's numerous parking lots with new infill buildings, this should not be the focus. The sea of parking, specifically on the east side of downtown, is vast and scattered, and there are limited opportunities to create a cohesive neighborhood environment in the near-term. Instead, the City and its partners should incentivize new residential development (through adaptive reuse of existing building or new infill) solely along Main and Walnut Streets to create a critical mass of residential energy.

**Downtown Muncie
Desired Population Growth**





STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION #4

Strengthen connections to adjacent neighborhoods

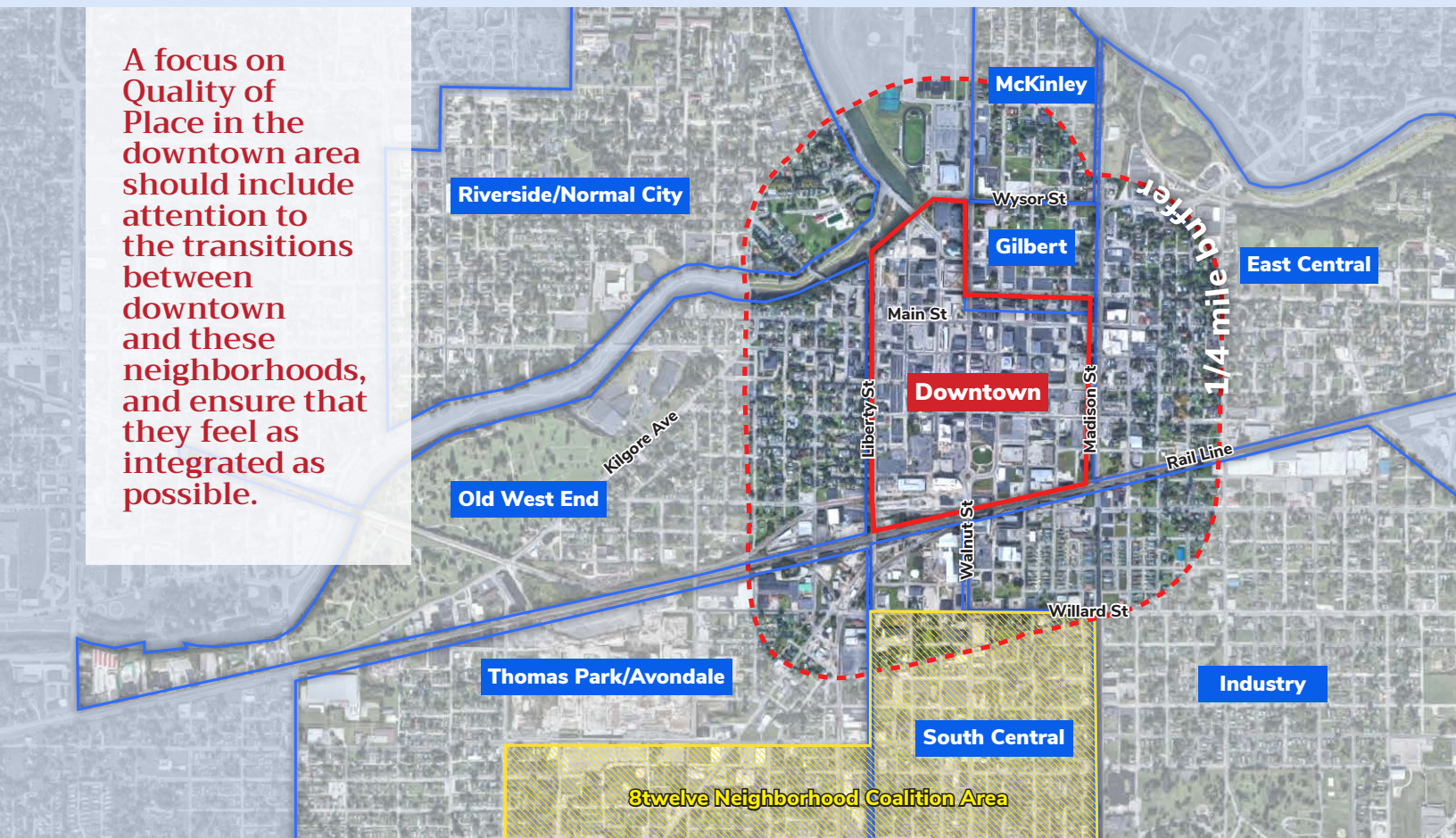
Downtown is a neighborhood and competes with every other neighborhood for residents, new development, and recognition. This competition need not come at the expense of others if proximity to a strong downtown becomes an important selling point for neighborhoods across the city.

This is especially true for the eight neighborhoods that are next to downtown.

These eight neighborhoods, which declined during the late 20th century, should benefit from their proximity to downtown's many employment, service, and entertainment offerings. Just as importantly, downtown should benefit from a surrounding residential base that feels connected to downtown and spends money there.

Riverside/Normal City	4,405 residents
Old West End	1,416 residents
McKinley	484 residents
Gilbert	217 residents
East Central	1,014 residents
Thomas Park/Avondale	4,026 residents
South Central	1,066 residents
Industry	1,842 residents

A focus on Quality of Place in the downtown area should include attention to the transitions between downtown and these neighborhoods, and ensure that they feel as integrated as possible.



Downtown Muncie



GOAL

Make Walnut Street Exceptional & Connect Downtown to Community Assets

Action Outline

WHAT

Focus infill efforts along Walnut Street and Main Street to create visible connections to community assets – infill the ‘cross’ - See Considerations 1 & 2

Provide residential development incentives within the Downtown neighborhood - See Consideration 3

Ensure quality streetscape maintenance and improvements along Walnut Street and expand some of those improvements to Main Street - See Considerations 1 & 2

Make certain that adjacent neighborhoods feel well connected to Downtown - See Consideration 4

Update zoning code and design standards for the Downtown neighborhood

WHY	WHO	HOW
The Downtown neighborhood is quite large and will take decades to infill but the main corridors should be the focus of all infill efforts over the next 10 years	Muncie Downtown Development Partnership, City of Muncie, Ball Brothers Foundation,, and DMMPC	Strict delineation of special incentives – grants, TIF, free architectural design, tax abatements, etc. – to infill the ‘cross’ corridors
Existing and future commercial development – retail, restaurants, entertainment – is strengthened by its proximity to nearby customers	Ball Brothers Foundation, Next Muncie, City of Muncie, and public/private/nonprofit partnerships	Significant residential infill in the Downtown neighborhood will require financial incentives until the private market can justify the risk on its own
Walnut Street feels special and wonderful as a result of recent streetscape improvements; similar improvements along Main Street would reinforce Walnut Street and create new build opportunities	Muncie Downtown Development Partnership, City of Muncie Public Works, possible Business Improvement District (BID)	Supplement County and State resources with local resources as needed
It is necessary that intentional work is done to build the social and physical connections necessary between – expand the presence of Downtown	Muncie Downtown Development Partnership, City of Muncie, DMMPC, and neighborhood organizations	Coordinate with the City of Muncie to prioritize high quality corridor transitions between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods for pedestrians; coordinate with any work by the Healthy Blocks Partnership (see City Neighborhoods)
The zoning code is the primary tool the city can use to ensure future development patterns are aligned with the comprehensive plan	DMMPC	Commit existing staff and budget for professional services provided by planning / code consultant

City Neighborhoods



GOAL

Nurture Healthy Blocks for Healthy Neighborhoods

Cultivate partnerships around comprehensive, block-level strategies that utilize a wide range of tools to cover the fundamentals of neighborhood health.



Notable strides have been made since 2010 to lay a groundwork for healthier neighborhoods in Muncie. There are more neighborhood associations with more volunteers, hundreds of blighted properties have been removed or renovated, and a wider range of partners—such as those in the 8twelve Coalition—are working to combine resources for greater impact.

But progress has often felt frustratingly slow or fleeting. And the number and scale of issues to address—such as the 6,100 properties that showed signs of deferred maintenance in the TogetherDM condition survey—remain daunting.

In light of the strides made and the challenges that persist, this plan's goal for Muncie's neighborhoods is **the achievement of healthier neighborhoods one block at a time**. Whole-block strategies, supported by the right partners and resources, have the potential to stimulate revitalization in a way that is tangible, builds confidence, spreads a sense of collective ownership, and inspires action on successive blocks.

City Neighborhoods



Nurture Healthy Blocks for Healthy Neighborhoods

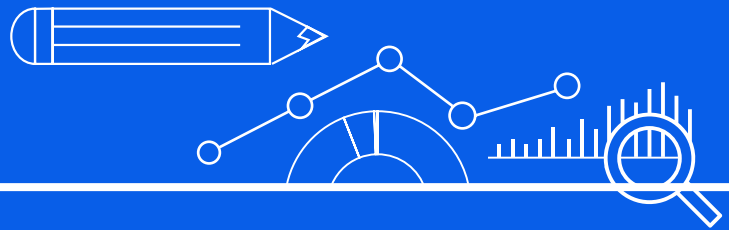
Cultivate partnerships around comprehensive, block-level strategies that utilize a wide range of tools to cover the fundamentals of neighborhood health.



How does this approach connect to the Big Things?

Housing represents the largest land use in most neighborhoods. Consequently, any effort to **Improve Housing Conditions and Options** will impact neighborhood health and quality of life. Stronger housing conditions, along with improvements to the public spaces that shape our experience of neighborhoods—from streets, to trees, to parks—will also serve to **Strengthen Quality of Place**. And when affordable housing options are distributed more evenly across neighborhoods that provide stable environments for low-income families—with access to well-resourced early learning programs—they become part of a toolkit to **Expand Opportunities for Upward Mobility**.





How does it serve ‘getting the basics right?’

Neighborhood well-being boils down to **four basic factors to get right that reinforce one another**: the health of the housing market (how strong is demand and how marketable is the supply), the capacity of residents to manage neighborhood affairs and advocate for their interests, the condition of public and private property, and the image projected by the neighborhood. This approach strives to nurture these factors at the fundamental unit of neighborhood action: the block.

What are some specific outcomes this approach will aim for?

Whenever a block receives focused attention, the following outcomes should be sought from a comprehensive block-level strategy:

- The market improves
- Physical conditions improve
- Resident engagement and leadership capacity improve
- Image improves

City Neighborhoods



STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION #1

Aim for healthy neighborhood outcomes

Four related outcomes will serve as the best indications of progress towards achieving healthy blocks and healthy neighborhoods. If a market is stabilizing or improving, if conditions are getting better, if resident leadership capacity is growing, and if image and perceptions are becoming more positive, neighborhood health is moving in the right direction.

While a range of additional social, economic, and environmental outcomes are likely to be important to many stakeholders, a consistent focus on these four will put neighborhoods and the City of Muncie in a position to achieve a wider range of outcomes.



Market improves



Conditions improve



Resident engagement and leadership capacity improve



Image improves

Proposed Outcome

Why?

Home prices that appreciate at the rate of inflation or higher will indicate enhanced neighborhood desirability and will encourage reinvestment by owners

An increase in the proportion of properties that are well-maintained and a decrease in the proportion of properties in trouble will improve confidence and reinforce demand

A sense of ownership and agency makes residents more likely to manage issues effectively at the neighborhood level

A good or improving image builds neighborhood self-confidence and makes it more competitive in the regional market

Measurement(s)

- Trend in median home value
- Trend in average sale prices
- Trend in median gross rent

- Trend in share of properties in excellent or good condition
- Trend in share of properties that show visible signs of deferred maintenance
- Condition of major streets and public amenities

- Presence of active neighborhood assn. or informal clubs
- Stable or rising rate of owner-occupancy

- Internal and external impressions of the neighborhood are favorable or improving



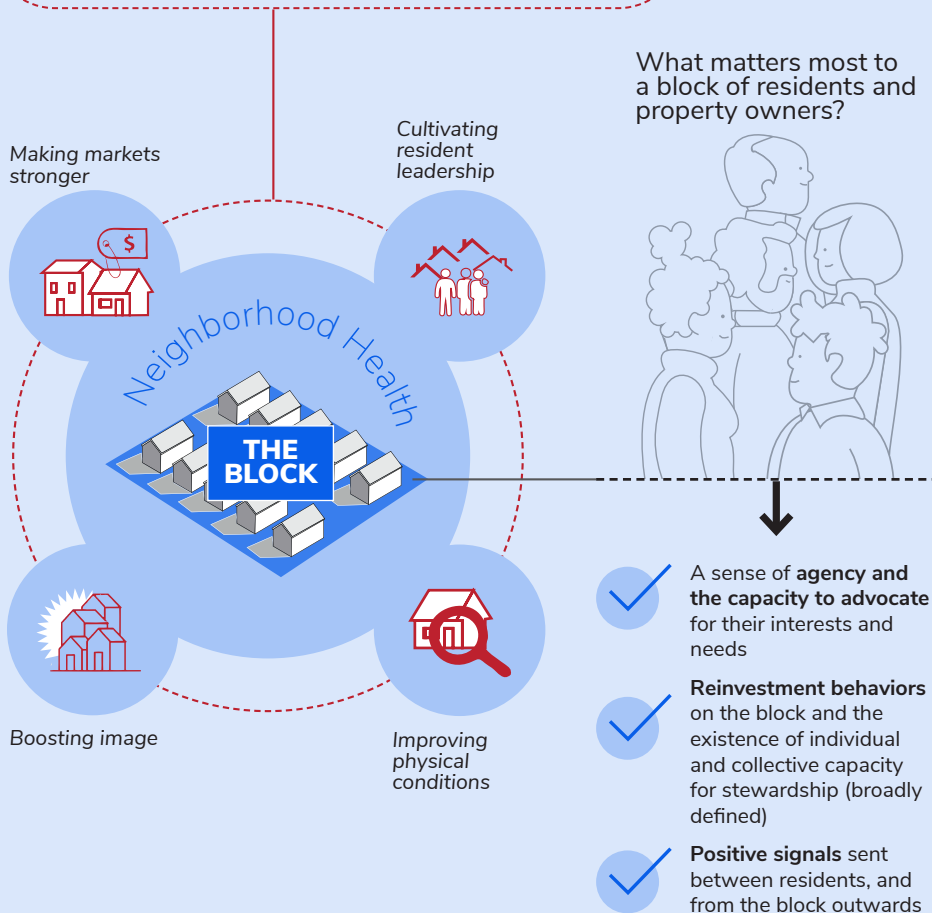
STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION #2

Develop whole-block strategies with diverse partnerships

The development of block-level strategies will help Muncie avoid two related strategic mistakes: (1) completing one-off projects that fail to address other issues that undermine the health of a block and (2) scattering resources too widely to have a sustained impact. The block as a geographic unit is small enough that coordinated interventions by a wide range of stakeholders can make a profound difference if they address interconnected issues and cultivate a lasting sense of resident ownership for the block's long-term health.

Simple, small-scale strategies at the block level—with residents and property owners at the center of the action—will help promote confidence and healthy behaviors...

and should leverage resources and expertise, as needed, from a range of potential partners.



City of Muncie
 Mayor's Office
 City Council
 Community Development
 Police
 Public Works/Streets
 Building Commissioner
 Parks

Other Public Agencies and Boards
 Muncie Redevelopment Commission
 Muncie Community Schools
 Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission
 Muncie Arts and Culture Council
 Muncie Sanitary District
 Muncie Land Bank
 Delaware County Commissioners and Council
 County Auditor and County Treasurer

Private and Non-Governmental Entities
 Private builders and developers
 Realtors
 Regional lenders
 Muncie Action Plan
 MAP's Neighborhood Leadership Council
 Neighborhood Associations
 8twelve Coalition
 BSU Building Better Neighborhoods Program
 BSU College of Architecture and Planning
 Pathstone Indiana
 Habitat for Humanity
 EcoRehab of Muncie
 Ball Brothers Foundation
 Community Foundation of Muncie & Delaware County

City Neighborhoods

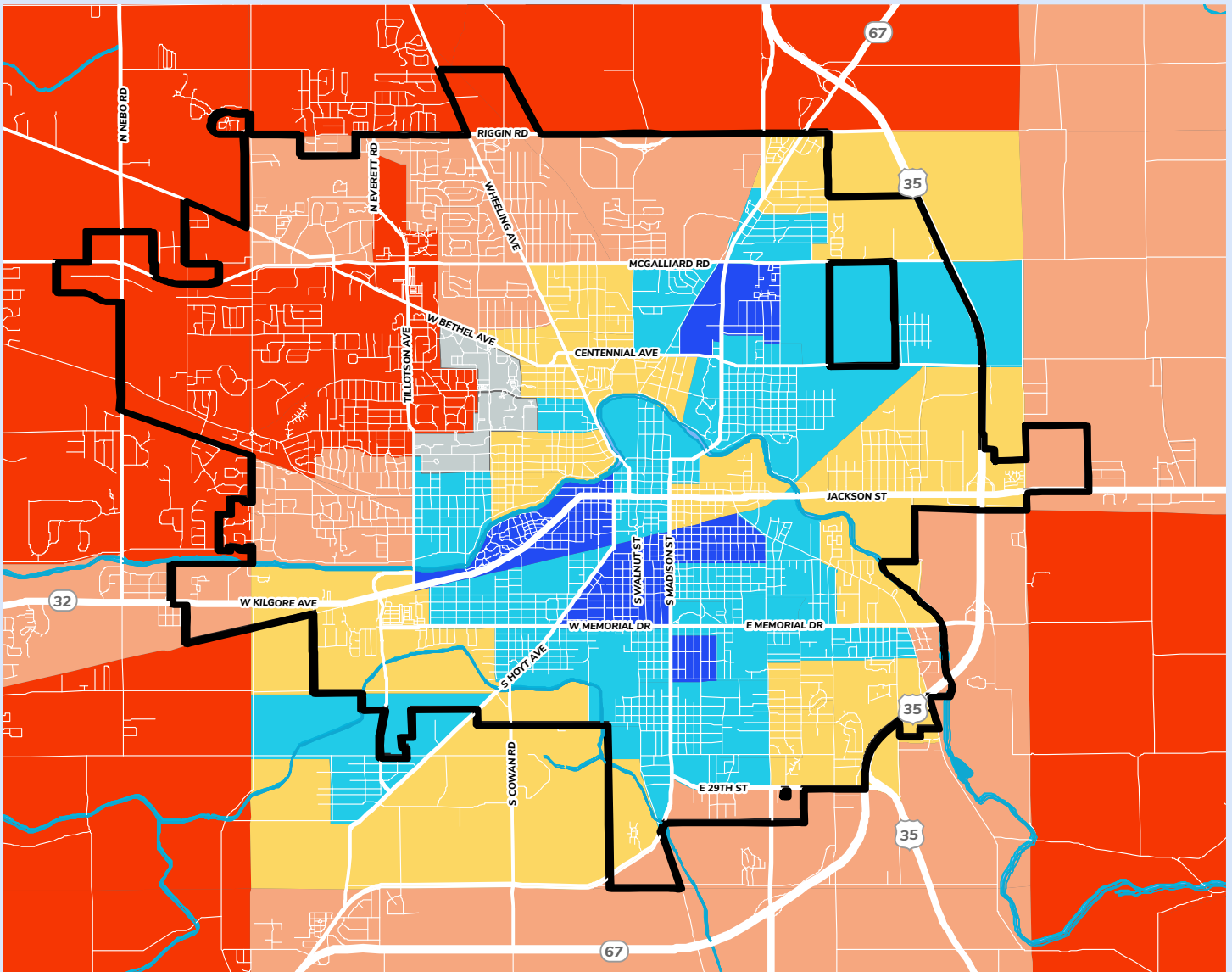
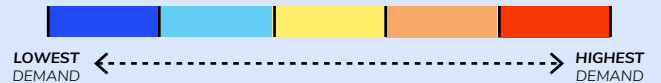


STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION #3

Use market conditions to craft realistic strategies

Market conditions should always inform the development of neighborhood strategies. Where demand is stronger, the private sector can be counted on to be a significant source of any investment equation. Where demand is lower, public investment must play an outsized role to stabilize and strengthen the market so that private investment can play a bigger role. If this distinction is not accounted for, public interventions will almost always be too little to have a lasting impact.

Housing Market Demand Typology in the City of Muncie



Using Market Conditions to Inform Strategy

MARKET TYPE	HIGHEST DEMAND	HIGHER DEMAND	AVERAGE DEMAND	LOWER DEMAND	LOWEST DEMAND
Strategic Aims	Protect and maintain existing strength; do not allow to slip	Prevent decline on vulnerable blocks, where one or two properties pose a threat to stability and confidence	Prevent decline on vulnerable blocks, where one or two properties pose a threat to stability and confidence	Revitalize in a targeted manner, especially near community assets	Cultivate stability; reestablish a sense of agency and pride
Intervention Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic code enforcement and compliance assistance • Acquire and mediate disposition of vulnerable properties on stable blocks or near key assets; invest in repairs that will improve marketability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic code enforcement and compliance assistance • Resident leadership cultivation and engagement • Home reinvestment and homeownership programs • Acquire and mediate disposition of vulnerable properties on stable blocks or near key assets; invest in repairs that will improve marketability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic code enforcement and compliance assistance • Resident leadership cultivation and engagement • Home reinvestment and homeownership programs • Acquire and mediate disposition of vulnerable properties on stable blocks or near key assets; invest in repairs that will improve marketability • Targeted acquisition and demolition of unsalvageable homes; mothball properties with strategic value but unlikely to find a strong buyer • Acquire vacant land to clean, green, and hold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic code enforcement and compliance assistance • Resident leadership cultivation and engagement • Home reinvestment and homeownership programs • Resident leadership cultivation and engagement • Targeted acquisition and demolition of unsalvageable homes; mothball properties with strategic value but unlikely to find a strong buyer • Acquire vacant land to clean, green, and hold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic code enforcement and compliance assistance • Targeted demolition of unsalvageable homes • Resident leadership cultivation and engagement • Targeted acquisition and demolition of unsalvageable homes; mothball properties with strategic value but unlikely to find a strong buyer • Acquire vacant land to clean, green, and hold

City Neighborhoods




STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION #4


Make the most of limited resources by investing the right way in the right locations


Limited resources will mean, of course, that only so many blocks can be the subject of focused attention at any given time. Selecting blocks that are good candidates for certain types of strategies will increase the odds of success on those blocks and the probability that those successes will serve as models—and inspiration for—other blocks in the city.


Importantly, a focus on specific blocks for specific strategies is not the same thing as withdrawing services and resources from other blocks. It is recognition that making a difference requires focus, and that each block that becomes healthy from focused attention will contribute to the City of Muncie's fiscal capacity to provide high-quality services citywide.

Strategic Guidance for Focused Work in Muncie Neighborhoods

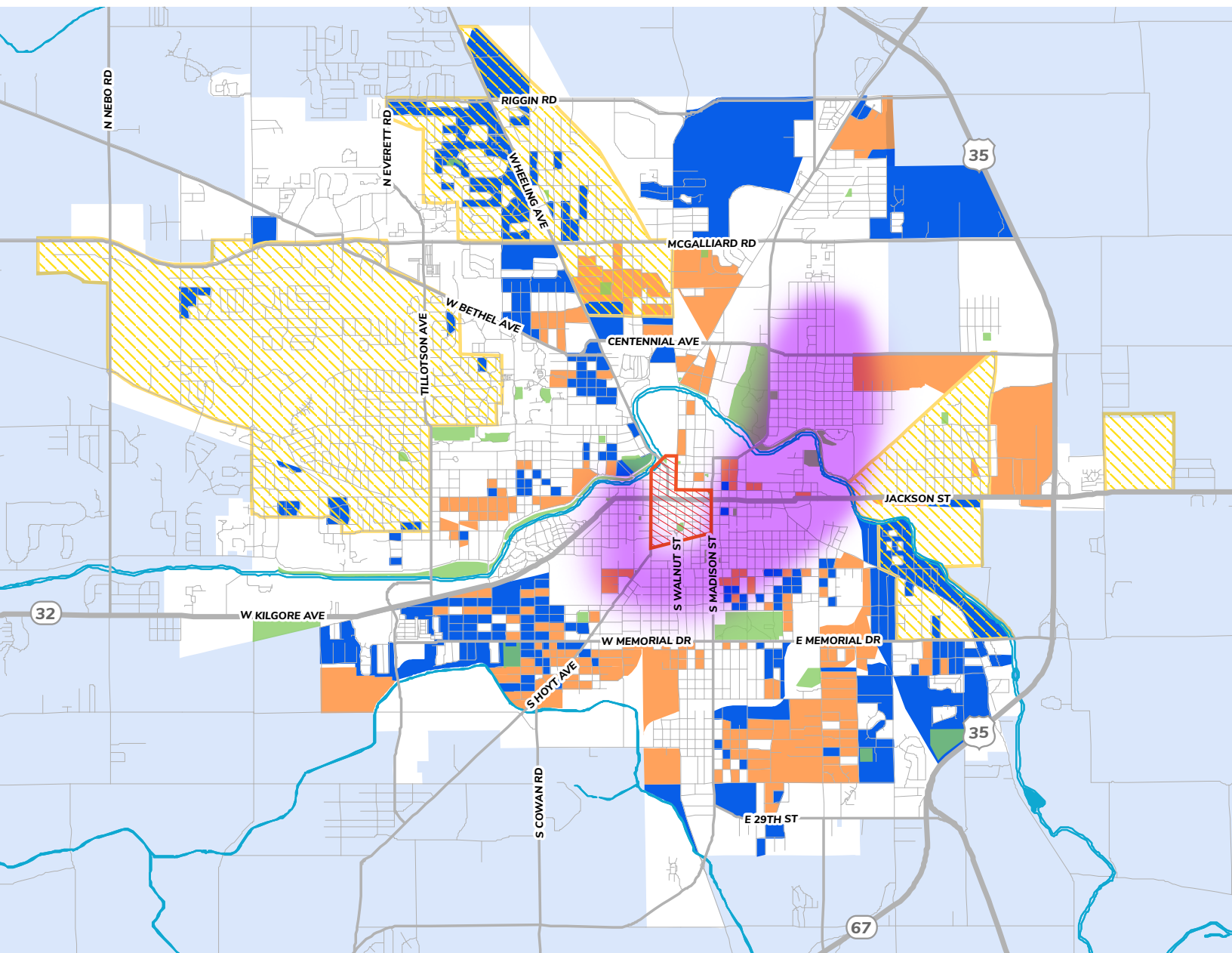
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Reinvestment Areas, Type A

These are blocks that are largely stable with modest levels of deferred maintenance. Strategic investments have a high probability of making these blocks stronger and spurring reinvestment by neighbors. Small investments of the right type have the potential to yield short-term success and prevent problems from worsening and getting more expensive to solve over time.
- 
Reinvestment Areas, Type B

These are blocks that have higher levels of deferred maintenance than Type A Reinvestment Areas, but these blocks still retain a number of healthy properties. Larger investments are needed here to bolster confidence and manage the encroachment of blight, but there are identifiable strengths to build from.
- 
Core Stabilization and Revitalization Areas

The Reinvestment Areas (both types) are stable enough to support the whole-block revitalization approach a single block at a time. In the Core Stabilization and Revitalization Areas, however, weaker demand and more distressed housing conditions require work on a larger scale. Any intervention here should be prepared (1) to focus on several blocks at a time to make any improvements sustainable and (2) for the work to rely more heavily on public dollars due to low levels of private demand.
- 
Inclusion Areas

Inclusion Areas are blocks where markets are relatively strong and there are below-average concentrations of lower income households. Investing affordable housing resources in these areas—preferably in mixed-income developments—will create accessible housing in areas of greater economic opportunity and avoid reinforcing high concentrations of poverty elsewhere.



- Reinvestment Areas, Type A
- Reinvestment Areas, Type B
- Inclusion Areas

- Downtown Muncie
- Parks

- Core Stabilization and Revitalization Areas

Note: Areas that are highlighted on this map, as well as areas not highlighted, would benefit from interventions that are appropriate for the market types outlined under Strategic Consideration #3.

City Neighborhoods



Nurture Healthy Blocks for Healthy Neighborhoods

Action Outline

WHAT

Establish a “Healthy Blocks Partnership” to identify opportunities for concerted interventions, develop block-level strategies with residents, and coordinate a wide range of tools to advance block-level health - See *Considerations 2-4*

Expand neighborhood coordination capacity to make a “Healthy Blocks Partnership” feasible and sustainable; designate a full-time coordinator - See *Consideration 2*

Create matching grant programs to promote home improvements and neighborhood beautification, especially in Reinvestment Areas - See *Consideration 4*

Create capital fund to support strategic acquisition of troubled properties in areas targeted by healthy blocks approach; use funds for rehab or demolition as appropriate - See *Considerations 3 & 4*

Coordinate affordable housing investment plans to ensure that investments promote access to economic opportunity and do not reinforce concentrated poverty - See *Consideration 4*

Coordinate literacy volunteers at the neighborhood level to help build early childhood reading skills

WHY	WHO	HOW
Capacity and resources to nurture neighborhood health exist in Muncie but are often too scattered to have a sustainable impact. High levels of coordination and flexibility are needed for focused investments to produce desired outcomes.	Muncie Action Plan as the convener and coordinator of a partnership that includes contributors from across the 'ecosystem' of neighborhood actors in Muncie—public, private, and non-profit	Commit existing staff time and resources from Partnership members, along with additive capacity and resources outlined in this Strategic Investment Plan
The levels of coordination and planning that are required for a “Healthy Blocks Partnership” to work will exceed existing levels of capacity that partners can be expected to contribute.	House added coordination capacity within the Muncie Action Plan organization	Source funds for coordination capacity from public, private, and philanthropic entities that will contribute to the “Healthy Blocks Partnership”
The promotion of active and collaborative reinvestment in homes and in neighborhood curb appeal will improve housing conditions and advance all four outcomes of neighborhood health.	Matching grant programs overseen by neighborhood coordinator at Muncie Action Plan; funds raised from private and philanthropic sources.	Use matching grant programs to stimulate collaborative investments by residents on targeted blocks; distribute grants without income restrictions
On many of Muncie’s most vulnerable blocks, one or two properties can influence the block’s direction. When opportunities arise to improve a property and ensure stable ownership, resources and capacity should be available to make that happen.	Muncie Land Bank as the primary coordinator of acquisition/disposition of troubled properties within the Healthy Blocks Partnership; strong relationship needed with Delaware County and its tax sale process	Raise funds from public, private and philanthropic sources to enable opportunistic acquisitions; once acquired make improvements necessary to attract a good buyer with a plan that supports healthy neighborhood outcomes
The placement of new affordable housing and mixed-income housing can play a role in deconcentrating poverty in Muncie and providing greater access to economic opportunity	City of Muncie Department of Community Development	As part of future updates to the City’s Consolidated Plan for HUD, work with affordable housing developers on a thoughtful distribution strategy for new or rehabilitated affordable housing.
Developing good reading skills early in life improves a child’s prospects in school and beyond. A literacy tutoring program that connects volunteers to children in their neighborhood or elementary district has the potential to improve literacy while boosting community engagement on a critically important subject.	BY5, Ball State School of Education, and Muncie Community Schools	Design a custom program for Muncie that models similar successful efforts in other states, including Virginia’s Book Buddies program

Parks and Connective Corridors



GOAL

Connect High Quality Public Spaces

Increase investments in Muncie's parks and improve the quality of place along corridors that connect parks to each other and to city neighborhoods.



Muncie is a city with outstanding public spaces. Scenic parks laid out in the early 20th century, trails along the White River, one of Indiana's most picturesque university campuses, the bustle of Walnut Street downtown—all of these and more represent a legacy of building a high-quality public realm that should be maintained and continued.

A recent focus on boosting investment in Muncie's park system is an important pivot away from underinvestment and neglect of recent decades. Sustained work will be needed to catch-up on the maintenance of publicly-owned spaces and to raise standards for private property along important corridors. Such work is not superficial or superfluous. It will make Muncie a place where people and businesses choose to be, thus driving reinvestment in neighborhoods and corridors and building a stronger tax base to support vital services and infrastructure.

This plan's goal for Muncie's Parks and Connective Corridors is a **recommitment to Muncie's legacy of high-quality public spaces**, and the connection of those spaces by streets that exemplify community pride.

Parks and Connective Corridors



Connect High Quality Public Spaces

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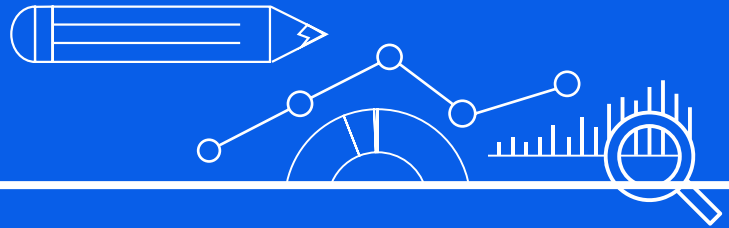
Increase investments in Muncie's parks and improve the quality of place along corridors that connect parks to each other and to city neighborhoods.



How does this approach connect to the Big Things?

Whether it's a beautiful park or a great street, quality public spaces improve the city experience and **Strengthen Quality of Place**. These spaces add value to neighborhoods and should be considered as a component in investment strategy. This added value can boost confidence in homeowners and investors and help to **Improve Housing Conditions and Options** and **Expand Opportunities for Upward Mobility** by helping to build wealth for city households.





How does it serve ‘getting the basics right?’

When we think of public space in a city we think of things like parks and trails, plazas, streets, and even our public buildings like city hall and the public library. These are all part of the public realm. The public realm and the quality of it directly impacts the experience people have whether it be as a city resident or a visitor. Providing and maintaining a quality public realm is fundamental to city life and ‘getting the basics right.’

What are some specific outcomes this approach will aim for?

- City parks are well maintained and include the required amenities to serve both passive and active recreational needs of residents
- People have a park within a 10-minute walk or bike ride of their home and/or workplace
- City corridors are inviting, walkable, bikeable and transit friendly and development has predictable urban form that seamlessly integrates the public and private realms

Parks and Connective Corridors



STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION #1

Use a street typology to shape zoning changes and streetscape investments

All streets are important but not all are equal. Some are designed primarily for moving automobiles. These auto-centric roadways or ‘thoroughfares’ often include high volumes of vehicular traffic at high speeds and are not ideal for walking and biking. It doesn’t mean that walking and biking should not be accommodated, but that the primary focus is getting automobiles from point A to B. On the flip side, some roadways or streets are designed primarily for pedestrians. These “pedestrian priority” streets tend to be compact and fronted by mixed-use buildings with retail storefronts on the first floors and other uses above. Typically, automobiles are accommodated but pedestrian traffic is the focus and the development along these streets rely on foot traffic.

These two roadways, as with other roadway types, should be based on context, and the fit and finish are different from one another. Each roadway type has a relationship to transportation mode, land use and other development regulations, and streetscape design. Considering the relationship between these components helps to strengthen Quality of Place.

Street Type	Regional Thoroughfare	Urban Thoroughfare
General Description	The Regional thoroughfares are high intensity commercial corridors that serve the regional community. They tend to be major commuter routes that travel across the entire city and provide access to regional destinations and shopping areas. It is not uncommon for these roadways to include several travel lanes and large intersections.	The Urban Thoroughfare provides access and connects districts and neighborhoods in the City. They are often one-way and include on-street parking and a mix of land uses. They are multi-modal streets that accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, and transit users.
	Example: McGalliard Rd	Example: Jackson St
Adjacent Development	Large setback Front yard parking – 1 row max Drive-through facilities	Shallow setback No front yard parking On-street parking Parking garage access Drive-through facilities
Pedestrian Facilities	Multi-use Trail Sidewalk – Standard Crosswalk – High visibility	Sidewalk – Standard Sidewalk – Wide Crosswalk – Standard Crosswalk – High visibility Pedestrian level lighting
Bicycle Facilities	Multi-use Trail Cycle track Bike Lanes	Cycle track Bike Lanes
Streetscape Components	Street trees Tree lawns / buffer Bike racks Benches and trash	Street trees Tree lawns / buffer Bike racks Benches and trash receptacles Wayfinding signs

Downtown Pedestrian Focus	Downtown Connector	Neighborhood Commercial	Neighborhood Residential
<p>The Downtown Pedestrian Focused Streets are the premier “A” streets in downtown. They are generally smaller in scale than the Urban Thoroughfare, and serve residents, visitors, and workers. They include traditional multi-story urban buildings and support high levels of walking with on-street parking to serve local retailers storefronts and restaurants. Parking entrances, utilities, and other facilities that do not support the pedestrian retail nature of the street should not front the street.</p> <p>Example: Walnut St</p>	<p>Downtown Connectors are “B” level district streets that often connect Urban thoroughfares and Downtown Pedestrian Focused Streets. They are pedestrian and bike friendly and have a mix of uses that front the street. In addition to on-street parking, the Downtowns Connectors should be two-way and can provide access to surface and garage parking, which is undesirable on the Downtown Pedestrian Focused Streets.</p> <p>Example: Adams St</p>	<p>Neighborhood Commercial Streets are typically located in the heart of a residential part of the city. Characterized by dense single floor commercial and retail use, they are often concentrated in an area only a few blocks long. On-street parking and transit stops are often included.</p> <p>Example: W University Ave</p>	<p>Neighborhood Residential Streets provide immediate access to Muncie’s residential fabric. They are used primarily for local trips and are characterized by lower vehicle volumes and speeds.</p> <p>Example: Gilbert St</p>
Shallow setback No front yard parking On-street parking	Shallow setback No front yard parking On-street parking Parking garage access	Shallow setback No front yard parking On-street parking Parking garage access	Shallow setback On-street parking
Sidewalk – Wide Crosswalk – Standard Crosswalk – High visibility Pedestrian level lighting	Sidewalk – Standard Sidewalk – Wide Crosswalk – Standard Crosswalk – High visibility Pedestrian level lighting	Sidewalk – Standard Sidewalk – Wide Crosswalk – Standard Crosswalk – High visibility Pedestrian level lighting	Sidewalk – Standard Crosswalk – Standard Pedestrian level lighting
Bike Lanes Sharrows (shared use lanes)	Bike Lanes Sharrows (shared use lanes) Bike Boulevards	Bike Lanes Sharrows (shared use lanes) Bike Boulevards	Sharrows (shared use lanes) Bike Boulevards
Curb extensions Street trees Bike racks Benches and trash Wayfinding signs	Curb extensions Street trees Bike racks Benches and trash Wayfinding signs	Sharrows (shared use lanes) Bike Boulevards	Street trees Tree lawns / buffer Wayfinding signs

Parks and Connective Corridors



STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION #2

Apply the street typology to downtown with a focus on building a critical mass of great streets

Great cities have great streets and healthy downtowns. Walnut Street is currently a great street between Howard Street and Main Street. It's not the abundance of brick pavers or the decorative lighting that makes it great. It's the combination of streetscape components working in concert with a consistent street wall of storefronts, historic buildings, and pedestrian oriented land uses. The street invites people to stroll and linger, which plays into downtown's role as both the social and economic hub of the city.

Great streets seamlessly integrate the public and private realms to create a vibrancy that only urban streets can offer. However, once you get away from the four-block stretch on Walnut Street the vibrancy falls off quickly. Outside this stretch, downtown lacks the critical mass where commercial / retail, cultural, and civic activities are concentrated. This concentration facilitates economic and cultural exchange and without it downtown feels desolate and isolated. Focusing economic development and public realm improvements on a concentrated area will help build the critical mass needed to integrate the great segment of Walnut Street into a larger cohesive and connected downtown. Build it from the inside out.





STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION #3

Maximize the benefit from the resources spent on street improvements by considering more than pavement condition

With the completion of the pavement condition assessment and the continued evaluation of the city's roadway network, the city has a grading system that allows streets in the greatest need of resurfacing to be selected for repair. The city is using the 'worst first' approach for road resurfacing and rehabilitation. However, there's more to consider than pavement condition when selecting which streets to complete first, and broadening those considerations will help to ensure that every dollar spent on streets represents a wider investment in Quality of Place and community vitality.

In addition to pavement condition, consider the following factors when selecting streets:



Community Assets

Considers streets adjacent to community assets, or that connect to community assets (e.g. parks, trailheads, etc.)



Gateways

Considers highly visible corridors since they play an important role in how residents and visitors experience the City of Muncie, which is a factor when considering opening a business, accepting a job or buying a home. sidewalks don't exist, street trees, upgrade lighting, etc.)



Investment Areas

Considers streets that are in areas where improvements would add to other public or private investments being made or considered.



Higher Standards

Considers streets where opportunities exist to improve more than just the street surface (e.g. sidewalks where sidewalks don't exist, street trees, upgrade lighting, etc.)

Considering these things, along with pavement condition, will improve streets and maximize the return on public street investments.

Parks and Connective Corridors



Connect High Quality Public Spaces

Action Outline

WHAT

Update the parks and recreation master plan every 5 years

Increase the Park Operating Fund every year

Develop a street repaving and reconstruction plan and update it annually - See Consideration 3

Include streetscape improvements (e.g. trees, pedestrian scaled lighting, sidewalks, furnishings, high visibility crosswalks, etc.) in street projects - See Consideration 1

Develop and implement a tree-planting strategy for commercial corridors - See Consideration 1

Establish a “Muncie Conservation Corps” to provide experience and training to youth and young adults while improving the urban landscape

As part of a citywide zoning code update, permit mixed-use development and design standards along corridors- See Consideration 1

WHY	WHO	HOW
To help city staff and officials identify future park improvements and potential future park locations	Parks Department, and city council; professional services provided by landscape architecture / planning consultant	Commit existing staff and budget for professional services provided by landscape architecture / planning consultant
To adequately develop and maintain a parks system for a city with a population of 60,000	Parks Department, city council and 'Friends of Muncie Parks' or other privately funded park conservancy	Combine enhanced public sector commitment with private fundraising capacity; \$88 is the median per capita spending for similar size cities
To move more streets into preventative maintenance status and to improve the aesthetic and functional quality of streets	City Public Works Department, City Council, Delaware County Engineering Department, and INDOT	Commit existing staff and budget to meet street repaving / reconstruction goals
Adding streetscape improvements to street repaving /reconstruction projects provides economies of scale that would not exist if those same improvements were made as a separate project	City Public Works Department, Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Planning Organization, Delaware County Engineering Department, and INDOT	Supplement County and State resources with local resources as needed
Street trees alone can significantly improve the look and feel of a corridor	City Public Works Department, City Council, Delaware County Engineering Department, INDOT, and Urban Forestry Board	Commit existing staff and budget to expand the city's street tree planting program
A well-organized local version of the iconic CCC has the potential to result in real improvements to parks and public space while also helping Muncie residents climb the economic ladder and feel a greater sense of ownership over conditions in the community	A public-private partnership overseen by the Muncie Parks and Recreation Board and advised by Ivy Tech	Create an annual pool of jobs to support park improvements and city beautification activities with sufficient supervision and training to build good work habits and connect people to future employment opportunities
Great corridors require the integration of the public and the private realms and the only way to ensure good private side development is to require it	Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission	Commit existing staff and budget for professional services provided by planning / code consultant