I am pleased to introduce the 2016 Downtown Blueprint Update – a plan that builds on the current downtown strategy by taking a fresh look at how we can continue to invest in the heart of our community.

Since we published our first Downtown Blueprint Plan in 2003, our city has gone through a tremendous transformation. The Allen County Public Library has been expanded and renovated, as has the Grand Wayne Convention Center, which hosts thousands of visitors every year. The arts campus has come to life and the award-winning Parkview Field has attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors. We have a new hotel and a growing number of new options for downtown living – the Harrison, Randall Lofts, Anthony Wayne condos and soon Superior Lofts and Cityscape Flats.

The future holds even more excitement for downtown. The construction of Ash Skyline Plaza and the Skyline Tower, along with the revitalization of The Landing, will bring more residents, visitors and businesses to Fort Wayne. Finally, the development of the riverfront will open more opportunities for people to live, work and play in everyone’s neighborhood – downtown Fort Wayne.

It’s important to keep this momentum going, and that’s exactly what the 2016 Downtown Blueprint Update will do. This strategic plan is the result of consultation with many community members – business leaders, property owners, developers and elected officials. Throughout the planning process and in our public open house, residents repeatedly expressed their enthusiasm for downtown renewal and their support for innovative ways to attract new residents and visitors to Fort Wayne and northeast Indiana.

The 2016 Downtown Blueprint Update will guide the continued growth and revitalization of downtown Fort Wayne, which serves as the front door to all of northeast Indiana. This plan will inspire us to continue working to create one of the nation’s most welcoming and exciting downtowns.

Thomas C. Henry
Mayor, City of Fort Wayne
Blueprint Projects and Beyond:

1. Anthony Wayne Condos
2. Art Museum expansion
3. Arts Campus Gateway
4. Arts Lab – Blackbox Theater
5. Arts Plaza
6. Ash Brokerage/Skyline Tower
7. Barr Street Market
8. Citilink Intermodal Transit facility
9. Citizens Square
10. Chyscape Flats
11. Fort Wayne Newspapers expansion
12. Grand Wayne Center expansion
13. Indiana Hotel renovation
14. Landing Project
15. Library expansion
16. Library Plaza on Webster St.
17. Lighting and pedestrian improvement to MLK Bridge
18. Lighting Wells Street Bridge
19. Main Street Median
20. Parkview Field/The Harrison/ Courtyard by Marriot
21. Railroad Overpass Gateway
22. Randall Lofts
23. St. Joseph Medical Office Building
24. St. Joseph Hospital Renovations
25. Superior Circle/"City" Sculpture
26. Superior Lofts
27. Two-way conversion/streetscape improvements: Calhoun, Ewing, and Fairfield
28. United Way & ARCH renovations
29. University of St. Francis Downtown Campus
30. West Main Street building renovations

Downtown Accomplishments since 2003:

- Downtown Design Guidelines
- Downtown Improvement District Reauthorization
- Riverfront Conceptual Plan Completed
- Downtown Dining District Established
- New Market Tax Credits
- Revised Zoning Districts allowing mixed-use development
Introduction

Since the completion of the first Downtown Blueprint (2003) and the subsequent Blueprint Plus Plan (2005), Downtown Fort Wayne has been undergoing a transformation into a regional destination for working and playing.

Recent catalytic investments in Fort Wayne’s downtown such as those at Parkview Field and the Ash Brokerage project have increased our community’s excitement about the downtown and energized many in the community to aspire to greater success.

The Downtown Investment Map shows public as well as significant private investments that have come to fruition over the past 13 years. Over this time much has been accomplished. The successes can be attributed to having broad-based plans that provide a shared vision for downtown. These plans and the subsequent initiatives helped to focus limited resources, assisted with building collaborations, and directed investment.

The 2016 Downtown Blueprint Update is intended to build on our current successes and identify new opportunities. This plan will provide the framework and direction instrumental in stimulating future private investment as well as guiding strategic public investment.

As we move to the next phase of shaping our downtown’s future this document will serve as a guide for public and private stakeholders who share in the goal of transforming Fort Wayne’s downtown into a thriving and exciting center for the community and the region where people will want to work, play and live.
Guiding principles

The following statements provide the foundation for the goals and strategies that were developed by the Downtown Stakeholder Group. These Guiding Principles recognize the work that has preceded this planning effort and the tenets of extraordinary community development.

1. Adhere to the goals and principles in the Blueprint, BluePrint Plus and Riverfront Fort Wayne plans.
2. Provide a diverse range of housing options for all populations.
3. Create opportunities and incentives for anchor and concentrated street level retail that provides a balance between tourism opportunities and the interests and needs of locals.
4. Celebrate our downtown riverfront areas and coordinate planning and implementation efforts of the Riverfront Fort Wayne Plan.
5. Encourage increased density and ensure quality built environment in the core downtown.
6. Tell Fort Wayne’s story and continue with efforts to market the downtown to area residents, newcomers and investors.
7. Provide attractive gateways and a balanced transportation system that connects downtown to the surrounding neighborhoods.
8. Promote and enhance historic resources.
9. Expand cultural and entertainment venues in the downtown area.
10. Activate and enhance public places including parks and open spaces.

Public Open House

On October 22, 2015, the City of Fort Wayne together with Greater Fort Wayne Inc., the Downtown Improvement District, and Arts United hosted a public open house to present preliminary recommendations. The open house was designed to engage the public in activities that invited them to think about issues related to enhancing downtown and to share their ideas for improving downtown. The event was well-attended; over 250 people showed up and shared their ideas. The information gathered at the open house generally affirmed the direction that our community is heading with respect to cultivating investment in downtown. The following is a summary of the input and ideas received at the open house:

Encourage Retail & Entertainment
- Feedback indicated an overwhelming interest for more entertainment, retail and restaurant opportunities. Music venues, grocery and pharmacy stores, and locally owned restaurants topped the list of most desired.

Expand Development Incentives: Public Funding
- Bringing passenger rail service back to Fort Wayne and investing in historic buildings were two of the highest ranked public investment ideas.

Improve Walkability
- A majority indicated they would walk or bike more if they lived within a mile of downtown.
- Participants ranked two specific intersections: (1) Broadway and Wilt Street; and (2) Main and Columbia streets as their top choices for improvement.

Parking Management
- People are generally comfortable with parking garages as long as it is clear that they are open to the public.
- Participants indicated a strong desire for longer parking times and more ways to pay for on-street parking.

Expand Housing Choice
- Of the seven housing types offered as preferred housing choices if they could live within a mile of downtown, the majority indicated they would prefer living in a renovated historic house or a “fixer-upper” in an historic neighborhood. High-rise living in either an apartment or condominium also ranked high.
Concentrate retail and mixed-use development along Harrison Street and the adjacent blocks of Wayne, Berry, Calhoun and Columbia Streets.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Support efforts to redevelop The Landing Historic District into a mixed-use destination.
- Identify and pursue appropriate mix of retail to serve downtown employees, visitors, and residents; including grocery, pharmacy, boutique and locally owned shops.
- Develop proactive recruitment strategy to cultivate retail investment.
- Concentrate efforts to activate ground-level storefronts with retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses.
- Create a strategy for transforming surface parking lots into infill development.
- Build on the existing Downtown Streetscape Template to create a unifying aesthetic that connects the Grand Wayne Convention Center to the Riverfront District.
- Work with developers to determine the feasibility of an additional hotel to support activities in the Harrison/Grand Wayne Convention Center Area and Riverfront district development.
Support the priorities and recommendations of the Riverfront Fort Wayne Conceptual Plan.

STRATEGIES:

- Support implementation of Phase 1 recommendations including property acquisition, site clearance and infrastructure improvements.
- Support efforts to enhance connectivity between downtown destinations and the Riverfront District.
- Continue to support volunteer efforts to clean up and beautify areas within the Riverfront District.
- Increase efforts to bring more people to the Riverfront District through planned events and programming.
- Support development of feasibility studies for the Downtown Environmental Stewardship Center and the Headwaters Junction proposals.
Make traveling to and within Downtown more inviting for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

**STRATEGIES:**
- Incorporate aesthetic improvements including public art into streetscapes, public spaces and railroad elevations.
- Develop specific and higher maintenance standards for streetscape and public space amenities including public art.
- Continue to incorporate traffic calming design elements along Jefferson and Washington Boulevards.
- Explore the redesign of Berry and Wayne into two way corridors.
- Explore options for transforming Clinton and Lafayette from highways into urban boulevards.
- Improve pedestrian crossings to increase pedestrian comfort and safety.
- Establish, promote, and expand the City’s bike share program.
- Explore the creation of a downtown transit circulator.
- Improve connectivity between the downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.
Support Arts United’s efforts to renovate and expand the Arts Campus.

**STRATEGIES:**
- Identify design modifications and programming strategies to activate Freimann Square and reinforce the connection between Clinton Street and the Arts Campus.
- Explore the redesign of the Rousseau Center plaza and parking garage to invite pedestrian movement between Calhoun and Clinton streets.
- Investigate ways to activate the space under the elevated rail lines.
Compose a compelling story about downtown and the riverfront that can be used for marketing and promotion.

STRATEGIES:
- Identify elements that celebrate local heritage.
- Highlight successful projects and initiatives that demonstrate positive progress toward becoming a world-class downtown.
- Coordinate a marketing strategy that weaves the story through promotional efforts of all downtown partners/stakeholders.
- Expand and coordinate year-round downtown programming and incorporate into promotional efforts.

Improve parking management and availability.

STRATEGIES:
- Develop a strategy for future parking needs and management within downtown and the riverfront district.
- Coordinate a shift from a majority of parking provided in surface lots to a majority provided in parking garages.
- Work with developers in converting surface parking lots into infill development.
- Design future parking structures to incorporate storefront spaces for retail and hospitality uses.
- Encourage expansion of on-street parking.
Increase housing opportunities within downtown and in surrounding neighborhoods.

**STRATEGIES:**
- Quantify the market for housing absorption to meet the demand for a variety of housing types and price points within the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Provide planning, support and incentive programs for a variety of housing types in downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, including upper-story apartments, condominiums, row houses, and single-family housing.

![Left: Conceptual rendering of Cityscape Flats is an example of new urban housing designed to encourage and satisfy growing trends for downtown housing. Right: Urban renewal in surrounding neighborhoods is crucial to maintain a variety of housing types in the downtown area.]

Improve coordination among governmental departments, jurisdictions, and others to encourage downtown investment and growth.

**STRATEGIES:**
- Investigate possible improvements to the policies, rules, and procedures of various regulatory agencies (including the Building Department, Department of Health, and Department of Planning Services) in order to facilitate redevelopment of existing buildings.
- Develop a strategy to address and manage challenges between property owners and government agencies (such as trash removal and loading zones) which occur in an increasingly dense and built environment.
- Explore the creation of a downtown business advocate (or expediter) position that can assist small business and property owners on navigating government regulations and mitigating challenges between property owners.
Implementation

A guide for moving ideas into action

**GOAL:**
Concentrate retail and mixed-use development along Harrison Street and the adjacent blocks of Wayne, Berry, Calhoun and Columbia Streets.

**CHAMPIONS:**
- Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.
- City of Fort Wayne, Community Development

**PARTNERS:**
- Downtown Development Trust
- Downtown Improvement District
- Capital Improvement Board
- City of Fort Wayne, Redevelopment

**CHAMPIONS:**
Encourage investment in new and existing downtown buildings and infrastructure.

**CHAMPIONS:**
- City of Fort Wayne, Community Development

**PARTNERS:**
- Downtown Improvement District
- Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne
- Private Sector

**CHAMPIONS:**
Support the priorities and recommendations of the Riverfront Fort Wayne Conceptual Plan.

**CHAMPIONS:**
- Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.
- City of Fort Wayne, Community Development
- Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne

**PARTNERS:**
- Capital Improvement Board
- Downtown Improvement District

**CHAMPIONS:**
Make traveling to and within Downtown more inviting for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

**CHAMPIONS:**
- City of Fort Wayne, Community Development

**PARTNERS:**
- City of Fort Wayne, Traffic Engineering
- Downtown Improvement District
- Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne

**CHAMPIONS:**
Support Arts United’s efforts to renovate and expand the Arts Campus.

**CHAMPIONS:**
- Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne

**PARTNERS:**
- Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.
- City of Fort Wayne, Parks Department & Community Development

**CHAMPIONS:**
Compose a compelling story about downtown and the riverfront that can be used for marketing and promotion.

**CHAMPIONS:**
- Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.
- Downtown Improvement District

**PARTNERS:**
- Visit Fort Wayne
- ARCH
- Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne

**CHAMPIONS:**
Improve parking management and availability.

**CHAMPIONS:**
- City of Fort Wayne, Community Development
- Downtown Improvement District

**PARTNERS:**
- City of Fort Wayne, Redevelopment, Traffic Control

**CHAMPIONS:**
Increase housing opportunities within downtown and in surrounding neighborhoods.

**CHAMPIONS:**
- City of Fort Wayne, Community Development

**PARTNERS:**
- Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.
- Private Sector

**CHAMPIONS:**
Improve coordination among governmental departments, jurisdictions, and others to encourage downtown investment and growth.

**CHAMPIONS:**
- Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.

**PARTNERS:**
- City of Fort Wayne, Community Development
- Downtown Improvement District
Plan Development

Recommendations for the 2016 Blueprint Update were developed through the efforts of a group of downtown stakeholders comprised of business, cultural and economic leaders from various organizations. The group worked with Community Development staff between 2014 and 2015 to discuss opportunities and potential obstacles. The group also worked with staff to identify the organizations and entities that will partner and help champion the implementation of this plan.

Downtown Stakeholder Group

Dave Arnold  Downtown Improvement District
Karl Bandemer  Deputy Mayor, City of Fort Wayne
Mark Becker  Consultant
Zachary Benedict  MKM Architecture + Design
Andrew Boxberger  Carson Boxberger
Steve Brody  Capital Improvement Board
Bill Brown  Downtown Improvement District
Therese Brown  Allen County Commissioner
James Cook  JP Morgan Chase
Angie Garcia  Carson Boxberger
Scott Glaze  Fort Wayne Metals
Julie Inskeep  Fort Wayne Newspapers
Nancy Jordan  Lincoln Financial Group
Sr. Elise Kriss  University of Saint Francis
Ray Kusisto  Orthopedics Northeast
Greg Leatherman  Community Development, City of Fort Wayne
Mick McCollum  Greater Fort Wayne
Susan Mendehall  Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne
Geoff Paddock  Common Council
Tim Pape  Carson Boxberger
Mac Parker  Downtown Development Trust Board
Dan Ross  Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne
Marla Schneider  Fort Wayne Metals
Kylene Shree  Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership
Alex Smith  JBG Supply
Jason Smith  Investor
Tom Smith  Common Council
Lisa Updike  Barnes and Thornburg
John Urbahns  Greater Fort Wayne
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