Gehl, in collaboration with Fort Wayne City Planning and Policy, conducted a Public Space + Public Life Study of downtown in Spring 2018. This study sets a baseline understanding of life and space in the city. It helps us to know how public spaces are supporting public life in Downtown Fort Wayne. This baseline allows the City to identify challenges and opportunities for growing public life. It also allows the City to set target public life outcomes and measure progress during interim activation events and future phases of physical improvements. This report details our findings of the Public Space + Public Life study and proposes a Public Realm Strategy and a concept design for a pilot project to kick start this strategy.

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At the Heart of Fort Wayne

Welcome to Fort Wayne

A city rich with historic character
of hidden gems and shortcuts that inspire your sense of curiosity
At the Heart of Fort Wayne

Engaging main streets
At the heart of Fort Wayne

And riverfront parks...

..but, also CAR parks
At the heart of Fort Wayne

Popular events

Showcasing local talent

Fort Wayne Public Realm Action Plan

Gehl — Making Cities for People
A Walkable City and Regional Node

Fort Wayne’s downtown is primed to become a city-wide and regional destination.

The lively restaurants on Calhoun and Wayne Streets are a 10-minute walk from the rest of downtown—including access to the riverfront. Surrounded by desirable neighborhoods, downtown activity attracts people from all over the area for events and markets. Fort Wayne’s downtown also has a regional reach, centered between major Midwestern destinations such as Detroit, Chicago, and Cleveland.
A City Growing... *Fast*

This district is on the move with vital opportunities for employment and education. Strong investments in talent, hospitality, and innovation will lay the foundation for a bright future.

Fort Wayne is undergoing a serious development renaissance including a wide variety of projects that provide amenities for people to live, work, and play downtown. It is important to leverage the momentum these efforts bring through a high-quality, well-connected public realm that prioritizes the human experience.
Background & Context

+250,000
Square feet of retail space is coming in with new developments like The Landing, the proposed Electric Works and more.

1.2 M
Square feet of new multi-use office, retail residential, and hotel space brought in by the proposed Electric Works.

+250
New hotel rooms—a boutique hotel on Main Street and Hampton Inn will give the city a 112% increase in places for visitors to stay.

+140,000
New residential units in Northeast Indiana by 2031. Multiple mixed-use developments will increase opportunities for living downtown.

Fort Wayne Public Realm Action Plan

Gehl — Making Cities for People
Change is coming to Fort Wayne.

How will the Public Realm support this development, spark more growth, and be the connective tissue linking all of its assets?
Setting the Stage for Tomorrow.

In the face of this urban change, it’s important to know where Fort Wayne wants to go and who it wants to be.

In order to shape strategies to guide growth that fits, reflect and supports the city’s overarching goals moving forward, we begin with an honest look at how people experience the city today.
Leverage all of your public realm.

A city’s public realm is more than its formal parks and plazas. It is all spaces between buildings.

A vibrant and active downtown considers the public life of its destinations as well as its connections.

From its sidewalks and streets, to alleyways and underpasses, to public buildings and informal cut-throughs, Fort Wayne has a rich, connected network of public spaces to foster the life and culture of its residents well beyond its plazas and parks.
Background & Context

The 21st Century Street is a Place

Streets are a city’s largest public canvas — its largest public space. They make up more than 80% of all public space in cities and present the greatest untapped resource to bolster a city’s public realm for people — to foster a sense of community, connect residents to their city, and make their culture visible and accessible.
The Spatial Qualities You Value

Before heading out and observing the city, we wanted to understand what urban qualities Fort Wayne locals cherish and aspire for their public realm.

Responding to the “My Favorite Places” survey (see process details p.17), over 600 people shared what qualities draw them to their favorite Fort Wayne destinations. Important shared values became apparent. Here are what emerged as the top spatial qualities that attract people. These qualities paint a picture of Fort Wayne and should act as reference for how developments and improvements are shaped moving forward.
**Our Process**

**Kick-off**
- **Kick-off! Research and Understanding**
  - Diving into background materials, scoping the site for survey locations, understanding initial goals for the study

**Discovery**
- **Discovery! Collecting our baseline data**
  - Public Space Public Life Survey; Framing Opportunities and Challenges
  - Online Favorite Places Engagement; Initial Data Finding

**Synthesize**
- **Pilot Workshop**
  - Emerging Public Life Insights; Stakeholder Committee Pilot Project Workshop; Design Sprints

**Design**
- **Pilot Workshop**
  - Draft Public Realm Strategies, Conceptual Pilot Project Design/Program(s)

**Next Steps! Evaluate**
- Implementation support, evaluation and refinement

---

Fort Wayne Public Realm Action Plan

Gehl — Making Cities for People
Background & Context

Our Process

Favorite Places Survey

The My Favorite Places survey is a tool to understand where people like to spend time in their city. We’ve used this around the world to understand what qualities people value and start to understand how we can apply those tools to our design recommendations.

What do locals love?

We heard from locals what makes their favorite places special to them...

- It feels like a great place to have conversation.
- I wish there was a better connection to the riverfront.
- It’s relaxing, rejuvenating and promotes a healthy lifestyle.

Online Engagement

This survey was distributed online, broadcasted on the local news, and posted on the city’s social media pages. It collected over 600 responses from people around Fort Wayne.

Fort Wayne’s Quality Criteria

Distilled from the answers people gave on why they love about their favorite places, these 12 key qualities rose to the top.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Frequency cited</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Atmosphere</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Food &amp; Retail</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative, Discovery, Play</td>
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<td>Access To Green</td>
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<td>Dynamic &amp; Hands On</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warm &amp; Cozy</td>
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<td>Relaxing Respite</td>
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<td>Family Friendly</td>
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<td>Night Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education, Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Character</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Views</td>
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The Public Space + Public Life Survey

Public Space + Public Life surveys have been performed around the globe by Gehl and partner cities. In some places, like Sydney and Copenhagen, Public Life data is an integrated part of the city planning process and is used to gauge success according to public life benchmarks. It is no coincidence that these cities are ranked as some of the world’s most livable places. When cities use public life data to guide their design and policies, the outcome is better for people.

Download the Public Life Data Protocol: www.gehlinstitute.com
Decode the Everyday to set Benchmarks for Tomorrow

Why a Public Space + Public Life (PSPL) study?

To provide evidence on which to base objective choices
To find human stories
To inform strategy and design
To benchmark progress
To discover new opportunities
To create urgency for change

In order to get to where you want to go, you need to know where you’re starting. A Measure, Test, Refine approach helps us understand what kind of design and programming certain spaces need, how successful pilot projects are, and what should be refined moving forward.
A city observes itself.

With the help of a generous crew of 50 volunteers, we went out and surveyed 33 locations around the city to get a pulse of how people move through and stay in the city.

The city of Fort Wayne came together to survey their streets and public spaces. We had 50 volunteers come out to take part in capturing the city’s baseline data.
Survey Locations and Methods.

Our Public Space + Public Life survey was conducted with 50 volunteers to collect data on pedestrian movement and stationary activity of people in the public realm of Fort Wayne’s downtown core. 10 key zones, each including 2-3 count locations and one stationary mapping location, were surveyed over a 12 hour period from 8am to 8pm on the following:

Thursday, April 26
63° | Sunny; partly cloudy in the morning

Saturday, April 28
50° | Mostly cloudy until the evening

This is what we studied...
Method 1: Age & Gender

Who is moving through and spending time downtown?
Method 2: People Moving

Volumes of people walking or cycling on streets, sidewalks, and alleyways.
Method 3: Stationary Activity

What activities are inviting who to spend time? Body posture, activity, age, gender of people staying.
Method 4: Public Space Analysis

To understand the relationship between public life and public space, we documented facade quality, land use, neighborhood amenities, public space amenities, and performed test walks to feel the current pedestrian experience.
Emerging Trends & Key Takeaways

How well do the streets in downtown Fort Wayne invite people to walk and bike—especially outside of commuting hours?

What is the quality of experience moving through the city—by foot, bike, transit, and private car?

How does the space support or hinder public life?
01 Special occasions (and lunch) drive public life.

Fort Wayne locals come out enthusiastically when invited.
Key Takeaways

**Bursts of activity followed by quiet stretches is characteristic of the city’s public life throughout the week.**

The demand to spend time downtown is there—it’s just focused around a few key times.

During the week, the city sees sharp up ticks during lunch while on the weekend it sees spikes in the evening.
Key Takeaways

Fort Wayne locals show up.

Events are magnetic draws, attracting vast numbers of people on par with cities three and four times larger. When events leave, however, these spaces empty out dramatically.

Barr Street Market is an example, which welcomes a broad range of ages and visitors to the space Saturday morning for the market. Over 1,000 Fort Wayne locals visit each hour, similar to San Francisco’s Embarcadero. And of those walking through, another 71 are staying, similar to Denver’s 16th Street Mall. But, when the market packs up, the space averages just 1 visitor an hour. Spaces need to provide more everyday invitations, supporting a latent demand to spend time downtown.

Note: Market runs Saturdays from May to October.
Dense Pockets of Activity but little Ripple effect

It’s not always clear there’s something just around the corner.
Throughout the week, people concentrate along a few key nodes.

Attracting people during their free time, these streets—Calhoun, Wayne, and Columbia—see the highest number of people (and fewest fluctuations) throughout the week.

But the activity is tightly concentrated in these areas, with significant drop-offs in pedestrian activity on the streets linking these high performing nodes.
Activity directly relates to the city’s highest quality and most engaging facades.

People are drawn to streets and spaces that engage their senses. Conversely, those spaces that are inactive and dull can make people feel unwelcome, unsafe, and uninvited.

The facade articulation was mapped of the downtown core. Overlayed with public life data, pockets of rich, articulate urban fabric correlate directly with the city’s densest nodes of pedestrian activity. To encourage public life to spill from one node to the other, start by targeting these missing links by activating street frontages.
IN FOCUS
Designing for the Human Scale

We experience space through our senses. Good, engaging urban spaces designs for this.

01 Need for Stimuli
A happy human brain is stimulated about 1000 times an hour, or 1 stimuli every four seconds.

02 Eye Level
Humans take in their surroundings at eye level. Articulation and detail on the ground floor are essential to a positive pedestrian experience. What a street does to activate above the ground floor is far less important.

03 The Walking Animal
Humans, even from a very early age, walk about 3 miles per hour.

04 Active Streets
Walking at 3mph and needing stimuli every 4 seconds to feel engaged, humans need stimulation at about every 24 feet. This math confirms why a great Main Street feels the way it does — the width and rhythm of an articulate storefront is about every 24 feet. This measurement quantifies why active streets make us feel happy, encouraging us to stay and spend time and blank facades do the opposite.
Leafy Street
Trees

Outdoor seating

Narrow Units — Pedestrians are constantly stimulated

Engaging signage

Key Takeaways
Activated facades on Wayne Street, between Calhoun and Harrison

VIBRANT FACADE

Fort Wayne Public Realm Action Plan

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Large blank facade

No visual cues to continue
Pleasant facades are in-between. Often beautiful architecturally, they nevertheless do little to engage the pedestrian experience of street.
03 Not a Cycling City — yet. But there are brave explorers leading the way.

Lack of safety and legibility work against unlocking a latent cycling culture
Cyclists stick to sidewalks

While overall numbers of cyclists downtown per street is relatively low, when looked in aggregate there is a clear latent demand for cycling. There just isn’t a strong biking grid to support desire lines nor safe routes to open the mode to all ages and abilities.
Tight squeeze!

Two cyclists perform a common dance on the Columbia Avenue bridge. Despite the challenging path, people are still biking into and around downtown, demonstrating a need for better biking infrastructure.

I bike along Washington everyday to get to work. But I stick to sidewalks because it feels safer.
Existing bike lanes are disconnected through the core.

Nevertheless, the top performing cycling streets are these missing links. The latent demand to bike downtown could be unlocked by prioritizing connecting bike lanes.

Together, Calhoun, Superior, and Barr Streets see the majority of the city’s cycling traffic—despite not being designated bike routes. The core lacks a clear, safe way through by bike, especially its north-south links. Prioritize a minimum grid of safe, protected bike lanes within the core to support existing cyclists navigating the city but also as a gate-opener to encourage more everyday cyclists, of all ages and abilities.

Not all “bike lanes” are bike lanes. Depending on the comfort of cyclists and the awareness of local motorists, a simple painted stripe is often not enough to make it a viable, safe option.
IN FOCUS

Cycling: Quality Matters

Invitations for cycling mean inviting for all people, ages, and abilities. Making people feel comfortable and safe is essential for encouraging commuting by bike in cities where the cycling culture is new and emerging.

01 Interested but Concerned Bikers
Cyclists that are interested in cycling but concerned about safety are more ten times more likely to travel by bike with a protected lane than no lane. Source: NACTO

81% 39% 8%
Separated Bike Lane Bike lane No Bike Facility

02 People RSVP to Real Invitations
When cities implement safe bike lanes, people respond. Source: NACTO

WASHINGTON DC

03 Invitations for all Users
Make bike lanes inviting to all users, not just confident riders

Ahead of the curb
Keep an eye out for how cities are adapting infrastructure to new types of mobility like dockless scooters and bikes

04 Not all Bike Lanes are created Equal
Protected lanes can be achieved in many different ways. By adding protected infrastructure, cities have seen an increase in bicycle use.

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Key Takeaways

Events are bringing families downtown, but everyday it’s an office-worker crowd

There is a millennial up-tick on weekends
Events bring families downtown, but everyday is an adults-only crowd.

With few invitations for families downtown, we see few children or elderly downtown.

More than 1/4 of Fort Wayne’s population is under 18 y/o — but less than 1/10 are spending time downtown.

Age Breakdown

Weekday

- 0-4: 7%
- 5-14: 14%
- 15-24: 0%
- 25-64: 6%
- 65+: 73%
Key Takeaways

On the weekend there’s an up-tick in young people, but still few families.

Coffee and burgeoning restaurants bring young people downtown on the weekend.
Key Takeaways

- No space for people
- Uneven pedestrian surface
- Wide, empty streets
- No eyes on the street feels unsafe
- Unpleasant pedestrian environment: no shelter, greenery or activity
Key Takeaways

- Uncomfortable seating for only 1-2 people
- Crosswalk not easily visible
- Sidewalk and plaza too wide for human scale
- Nowhere comfortable to sit and spend time
- Impractical crosswalk
05

Look but don’t touch: public spaces don’t invite spending time.

Great public spaces lack active edges and invitations to spend time.
Key Takeaways

There is a latent demand to spend time, there are just few invitations to do so.

Most people we counted in stationary zones were standing because there are few invitations to sit.
Wish there was a place to sit.
Scale and exposure challenge Fort Wayne’s formal public spaces.

People like to be around other people. Break down large public spaces to make them feel human scale and comfortable.

Spaces like AEP plaza and the Arts United plaza would need to invite an unrealistic amount of people to feel full and active on a typical day. Large scale events can help draw the crowds and make these spaces feel engaging. For everyday use these spaces should consider a re-design that breaks the space down into smaller quadrants.

Key Takeaways

1 person per 8,250 sqft

4 people per 1.4 acres of space

4 people per 62,700 sqft of space

200ft

380ft

165ft

E4 IMP Plaza Loneliness Diagram

Average number of people on the weekend [4]

Hellooo!

Scale and exposure challenge Fort Wayne’s formal public spaces.

People like to be around other people. Break down large public spaces to make them feel human scale and comfortable.

Spaces like AEP plaza and the Arts United plaza would need to invite an unrealistic amount of people to feel full and active on a typical day. Large scale events can help draw the crowds and make these spaces feel engaging. For everyday use these spaces should consider a re-design that breaks the space down into smaller quadrants.

Key Takeaways

10 people per 168,000 sqft of space

420ft

400ft

G3 Friemann Square Loneliness Diagram

Average number of people on a weekday (10)

1 person per 16,000 sqft

10 people per 3.9 acres of space

Reference:

Trafalgar Square

Arts United Plaza

AEP Plaza

Union Square

Best Practice

Union Square

Healthy public spaces feel full!

1 person every 250 sqft

1 person per 250 sqft

Union Square is in New York, New York

250 people need to be in Arts United plaza for it to feel full.

672 people need to be in AEP plaza for it to feel full.

Fort Wayne Public Realm Action Plan

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IN FOCUS
Rittenhouse Square: Philadelphia

A rich mix of invitations draws a wide range of everyday users. Rittenhouse square in Philadelphia is an example of how variety and adjacent activations can make a public space more than just platform for events, but part of the everyday fabric of the city’s public life.

01 Seating Variety
Different types of seating for different types of social interaction

02 Various scales of open space
Wide open fields for the extrovert, small nooks for the couple on a date or a family moment

03 Active Edges
Café seating and clearly delineated entrances

04 Invitations for all ages
Water features, play elements, ample seating and creative programming make spaces fun for all.

05 Strong neighborhood ownership
Consistent neighborhood-driven programming is key. “Friends of Rittenhouse” organizes events to keep the calendar full.
People make space their own.

Fort Wayne locals spending time downtown are creating their own ways to do so.
Key Takeaways

Improvised seating is part of the delight of city life

Ledges, steps, stoops and “BYO” seating: Fort Wayne locals are adept and creating their own social environments.

With few formal public seating options, Fort Wayne locals make their own. This creative appropriation of space can provide clues to where the city ought supply some more formal seating options to meet this demand. Importantly, while secondary seating might seem “good enough”, when informal seating is the only available option many people — especially older people — may not choose to come to this space.
Key Takeaways

- Seating ideal
- Social distance
- Creative
- Quiet, Relaxing
- Public Space Experts
- Sense of Discovery
- Unique atmosphere
- Stimulation every 4 seconds
- Fort Wayne Public Realm Action Plan

Gehl — Making Cities for People
IN FOCUS
Presidio Chair
San Francisco

These custom love seats activated a vast Presidio Park in San Francisco. Wide enough to fit multiple people but light enough to be moved around, Gehl created these chairs to support the creative ways people enjoy making space their own.

Playful Proximity
Because the furniture was light-weight and dynamic, people had the opportunity to create seating arrangements for their desired group size.

Invitations for all ages
From a lounger to a seesaw, kids (and adults) could interpret the Presidio chair as a playground module just as readily as a piece of furniture.

User-Generated Variety
The weight of the chairs allowed the park to be self-made and required people to work together to re-arrange the space.

UNIVERSAL PROXIMITY
OF SOCIAL SEATING

People are social beings, they want to sit close together. This is universal, in many contexts...
Hidden Gems are the connective tissue of the city

Exploration and discovery drive downtown’s fine grain network
Best Practice

IN FOCUS

Coney Island

Fort Wayne has so many local gems. One of the city’s most coveted assets is Coney Island, a popular downtown hangout for locals and a place where visitors can get a taste of what it’s like to be local in Fort Wayne.

“My sister had no idea there was a back door to Coney Island downtown. Only the cool kids know about it apparently.”

01

Locals Only
Locals use the back door and walk through the kitchen to get into Coney Island.

02

A Downtown Landmark
Coney Island has been around since 1914 and is a strong landmark in Fort Wayne locals mental map of Downtown.

03

A City Peak!
The back door of Coney Island sees 2X more pedestrian traffic than the downtown’s average hourly pedestrian counts.

Fort Wayne Public Realm Action Plan

Gehl — Making Cities for People
The alleyways are a cherished urban asset all Fort Wayne locals delight in exploring.

With programs such as *Art This Way*, downtown is bringing the alleyway network to life.

Still, even as the alleys are working well, they can and should aspire to do even more. The alleyway network can be the connective tissue and the beating heart of the city — they can convenient shortcuts and creative canvases for art, but they can also be places unto themselves, public spaces to spend time, shop, eat, and explore.
Key Takeaways

- Engaging light and shadows
- Potential to open these windows!
- Cool in the shade
- Slow traffic
- Blank Canvas!
- Visual destination
- Public Art!

Already rich with human scale urban qualities, providing opportunities to stay and spend time is the next step.
Fort Wayne takes their alleyways seriously — local muralists are transforming these spaces into cultural destinations.
Emerging Trends

01. SPECIAL OCCASIONS (AND LUNCH) DRIVE PUBLIC LIFE

02. DENSE POCKETS OF ACTIVITY, BUT LITTLE RIPPLE EFFECT

03. NOT A CYCLING CITY — YET. BUT THERE ARE BRAVE EXPLORERS LEADING THE WAY

04. EVENTS ARE BRINGING FAMILIES DOWNTOWN, BUT EVERYDAY IT’S A OFFICE WORKER CROWD.

05. LOOK BUT DON’T TOUCH: PUBLIC SPACES NEED MORE INVITATIONS SPENDING TIME

06. PEOPLE MAKE THEIR OWN SPACE

07. HIDDEN GEMS ARE THE CONNECTIVE TISSUE OF THE CITY
How we get there.

Public Realm Framework

The outcome of a well-executed Public Realm Framework is a population that changes its paradigm from “let’s go to point A” to “let’s go downtown”. Currently, Fort Wayne locals go downtown for specific reasons or destinations. We want “Downtown” itself to be the destination. The Public Realm is a key driver in connecting places and giving identity to the center of Fort Wayne.
5 Strategies to Shape a Thriving Public Realm

Making Fort Wayne’s Downtown public realm people first requires comprehensive, action oriented planning.

Through our in-depth analysis of downtown’s public spaces and public life, we’ve identified six key strategies that are essential to connecting downtown’s core and making it people first.

1. Define people first core
   Make it easy for people to walk, cycle and spend time in the public realm.

2. Mend your gaps
   Complete corners and activate blank facades downtown.

3. Nurture your Fine Grain Network
   Enhance the connective tissue as the center of the downtown core.

4. Make your public spaces feel smaller
   Break down the space to feel human scale.

5. Extend your chain of activity
   Mend the gaps to lengthen your chain of activity.

Fort Wayne Public Realm Action Plan

Gehl — Making Cities for People
Define and commit to your people-first core.

Prioritize comfort, safety, convenience to encourage people spending time downtown to park once.

A few key moves to prioritize people in the downtown core include:

- 25 mph speed limit on streets within the core
- Complete crosswalks that are visible
- Complete sidewalks to provide comfort and walkability
- Optimize traffic signal timing for pedestrians
- Human scale wayfinding & signage that makes destinations clear
Guiding Strategies

2

Mend your gaps

Active ground floors make spaces feel more walkable and knit a more complete urban fabric.

Large gaps in the downtown core like parking lots, vacant lots, or large set backs can make the walking experience feel uninviting. These spaces should be filled with more ground floor activity - active storefronts, vendors, or public amenities. These new additions would act like “bread crumbs”, leading downtown visitors from one activity to the next.

Graphic representation of possible sites for activating underutilized parcels
Guiding Strategies

IN FOCUS
Parking: Opportunity Space

The downtown core of Fort Wayne is incomplete. The urban fabric is interrupted by parking lots, vacant storefronts, or inactive buildings. Complete corners are key visual cues to continue onward and make for safer crossings.

Example corner activation from Gehl’s work in Pittsburgh

Harrison and Wayne

01
348,000 square feet of parks
A limited amount of designated public space.

02
4 Million square feet of parking!
This is an incredible opportunity to reclaim more space for people

03
12X
More parking than parks

Fort Wayne Public Realm Action Plan

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3. **Extend your chain of activity**

Today, people visit downtown for one or two activities then head home. Large gaps in the downtown core are an opportunity to develop more activity and link together reasons to stay.

### Millennial
- Coffee ➔ Market ➔ Shopping ➔ Happy hour ➔ Dinner ➔ Music

### Family
- Market ➔ Riverfront ➔ Ballpark ➔ Lunch ➔ Arts Campus ➔ Movies

### Empty Nester
- Lunch ➔ Library ➔ Shopping ➔ Theatre ➔ Dinner ➔ Evening Stroll
Guiding Strategies

4

Make your open spaces feel smaller

Outdoor spaces currently feel vast, windswept and offer little for everyday recreation.

Break down open spaces in the core with more human scale elements that extend the spaces beyond event capacity to everyday use. Focus on adding comfort with:

- Social seating
- Protection from micro-climates and shade
- Small scale kiosks or store fronts for commercial activity
- Programming that sparks social activity
Guiding Strategies

**IN FOCUS**

**Spatial Quality Criteria**

Gehl has developed 12 quality criteria for documenting spatial conditions, to understand how physical elements impact use and activity. These criteria fall into three categories: protection, comfort and delight. These categories build on one another—if a space is lacking protection, people won’t be comfortable enough to stay and enjoy the space.

**Protection**

Without basic protection from cars, noise, rain, and wind, people will avoid spending time in a space. Protection from these things is mandatory for a place to be used.

**Comfort**

A space with elements that make walking, standing, sitting, seeing, and conversing comfortable, invite people to spend time there.

**Delight**

A good place becomes great by including elements that delight - they invite people to be active and make use of the positive aspects of micro-climates and the human scale.

**Freimann Square**

Freimann square has a lot of nice aesthetic qualities but is lacking the essential elements of protection that make people feel safe in a space.
Define and activate edges, provide variety of seating to accommodate a range of group sizes.
Guiding Strategies

Create a bold focal point, parse vast spaces into smaller “rooms”
Support the users you want to invite, rather than defending against users you don’t.

It’s a subtle difference, but defensive public space design can have the opposite effect.
Best Practice

IN FOCUS
Care in Public Space

City agencies and non-profit organizations devoted to care and services for at-risk people in Fort Wayne should be empowered to boost efforts downtown. The goal should not be to banish vulnerable people from downtown’s public spaces but to provide services and dignified care.

Hygiene on Wheels
Lava Mae is a non-profit in San Francisco that provides showers and general hygienic essentials to homeless neighbors in need 6 days a week on a bus, often parking near the city’s key public spaces.

Public Amenities
Providing restrooms for public use is a great way to support all users.

Special Programming
Invite community organizations in to host food drives, serving holiday dinners, and family friendly events that include all.

01
02
03
Nurture your fine grain network to establish a dynamic hierarchy or streets

Different street types work together to make a vibrant downtown.

Navigating a downtown through a variety of street scales yields easy and flexible movement, whether on foot, bike, transit or car. Focusing on boosting and linking the city’s fine grain networks will encourage people to park once, and walk from commercial corridors, to active alleyways and urban boulevards without relying on a driving. Furthermore, a variety of street characters helps people orient themselves and enjoy a variety of urban experiences.
Street Variety

Streets should emphasize and prioritize different commuting and staying experiences. Below are examples of typologies Fort Wayne should leverage.

**Alleyways**
Capitalize on your fine grain streetscapes by creating atmospheres that are comfortable for social interaction.

**Commercial Corridor**
Encourage café seating to spill out onto the sidewalks to capitalize on existing food and beverage activity and high pedestrian activity on Calhoun street.

**Transit Hub**
Make transit stops comfortable and accessible by improving sidewalk quality and adding in street trees. Bus hubs like Clinton street are great places to start on this.

**Urban Boulevard**
On busy traffic streets, like Main Street, add street trees to calm noise, extend sidewalks to give people space to move and consider being bold by adding a center median with bike lanes and transit stops.

**Bike Connection**
Re-balance the streets that have parking on both sides by adding in bike lanes running in both directions. Street trees should buffer sidewalk and parking.
Make these places to spend time, not just move through.
From best shortcut!

To favorite hangout!
A series of temporary pilot projects, carried out in an iterative process, can generate buzz and begin to set the groundwork for changing mindsets about the character of a place. Early activation can be low-budget but high impact. Places don’t have to be finished or polished to be fun and engaging. People attract people. When there is a reason to stay and something to do, people will keep coming back for more.
Objective:

Come in with (or without) a plan. 

Discover a reason to stay.
Pilot Projects

There are many opportunity areas in Fort Wayne. We took time to workshop 6 potential pilot projects with key stakeholders.

The group helped co-create, refine, and finally prioritize which projects had the greatest potential.

A brief explanations of the early activation projects follow. Ultimately, this core team elevated the Alleyways as priority for early activation.

The key stakeholder group went out in the field to investigate opportunities and challenges of the different proposed pilot project sites.
The Front Porch

Fort Wayne’s historic courthouse is already the architectural crown jewel of downtown. Leverage this asset and make the lawn an appealing place for families to relax and play in front of the city’s most iconic structure.

**POTENTIAL MOVES**
Create a relaxing lounge space with seating variety, create creative and flexible play spaces, install lighting features, install sun shades, program events like movie nights.

Calhoun Market

**EXISTING EXPERIENCE**
Activate the courthouse block to fill the public life gap on Calhoun and bridge the gap to Columbia street with a continuous people-first street. Test new ways to engage the sidewalks between Berry and Main, with a vibrant street market as the centerpiece.

**POTENTIAL MOVES**
Add colorful kiosks, provide creative canopy, lighting, shade, and signage, install a temporary ice rink, create drop-off/pick-up zones for the holidays, add vibrant pedestrian crossings.

The Canvas at Freimann Sq.

**EXISTING EXPERIENCE**
Re-invent Freimann Square. Let the museum spill out into the public realm and create an interactive outdoor art park, inspiring a sense of curiosity and play for kids and families.

**POTENTIAL MOVES**
Activate the edges, partner with the museum and local makers, install playful art installations, provide comfortable places to sit, install a café kiosk, improve street kiosk creatively.

Alleyway Activation

**EXISTING EXPERIENCE**
Build on existing art activation by enhancing the laneways with people-first design, visual interest, and event programming to create a uniquely Fort Wayne pedestrian district.

**POTENTIAL MOVES**
Transform alleyway nooks into micro hangout spots, each with a unique character, including comfortable seating areas, pocket concert venues, or other delightful and surprising destinations.

Food Court

**EXISTING EXPERIENCE**
Transform the AEP plaza into an outdoor food court for downtown employees and visitors. Create an essential destination with eye-catching lighting and comfortable seating and shade while showcasing local business and celebrating Fort Wayne’s best flavors.

**POTENTIAL MOVES**
Activate edges with food kiosks, create a food truck and food court zone, create inviting places to sit, add shade elements, add human-scale lighting, consolidate back of house operations.

The Landing 1.0

Create a seasonal pedestrian-only way on Columbia Street, letting the street’s people-first qualities shine and infusing it with public activity and family fun. Test programming that could inform The Landing redevelopment.

**POTENTIAL MOVES**
Encourage entrepreneurs pop-ups, Use colorful ground paint on pedestrian thoroughfare, use string lights for ambiance, encourage event programming, provide good wayfinding signage, engage the community.

Pilot Concept
Alleyway Activation

Fort Wayne’s alleyways represent one of the greatest untapped resources in the city.

Thanks to the success of programs like Art this Way, the latent potential of the alleyway network has gained momentum, with increasing recognition and support from city leaders and local champions.

But the alleys can and should be more. The next step is to unlock their potential as places to spend time just as much as places to walk through.

How?

There are three primary opportunities that should be tested:

1. Alleys as micro-retail corridors
2. Alleys as interactive canvases
3. Alleys as event spaces

Detailing key moves for each, follow.
**Pilot Concept**

**Where to start**

Make exploring downtown on foot a true pleasure by leveraging Fort Wayne’s most human-scale asset: its alleyway network. Enhance the alleyways with people-first design, visual interest, and event programming, and create a uniquely Fort Wayne pedestrian district. Start with these three locations to build momentum.

**Corridor Kitchen.** As a key gateway to the alleyway network that connect to downtown’s most active street—Calhoun—Corridor Kitchen will pilot how the alleyways can be food and retail hubs.

**Off-the-Wall Lane.** Leaning into the narrow experience of this main corridor, Off-the-Wall lane will be a place to mix art installations that invite interaction and participation, with an emphasis on play.

**The Patio.** Leveraging the unique nooks and special spaces within the alleyway network should start with a temporary re-imagining of this space into a beer garden and outdoor movie patio.
Pilot Concept

**Key Moves**

To maximize the potential of the alleyway network, their experience needs to be multidimensional. This kit of parts will help shift the alleys from engaging pathways to inviting places to spend time.

**Active Edges**
Retail, food, and interactive installations should activate the interior facades. Long term: punch out windows to create an active street condition.

**Light the way**
Make alleys open for business throughout the day and night. Light the network so they feel safe at all times.

**More than Art**
Make murals interact with the user and space, including digital landscapes, or wall-mounted installations.

**Highlight Gateways**
Let people know there is some there. Create gateway art that spills into the adjacent street to catch people’s attention and draw people in.

**Green Edges**
Introduce planting pots throughout, especially in areas with seating to soften space.

**Complete Journeys**
In order to connect and formalize the network, mid-block crossings should be studied and implemented.

**Anchor Events**
Create a consistent programming anchor/event in the alleyways to build local identity get the alleys on Fort Wayne’s mental map.

**Inspire Discovery (don’t direct it).**
Lead people around the corner with wayfinding that is more than a directory or a sign that tells you something it over there.

**Flexible Seating**
Introduce low profile and adaptable seating throughout the networked, concentrated around active focal points (including art, food and retail areas).

**Creative canopies**
Overhead canopies create a human scale and can be a creative opportunity for artists.

**Cohesive Back-of-House**
Contain and consolidate trash location. Coordinate pick up times and maintenance.
Activation Zone 1

**Corridor Kitchen**

**Alleyways as micro-retail corridors.**

Creating a bold and engaging gateway to the alleyway network, complete with small vendors focused on attracting and incubating local food merchants.
Activation Zone 1

**Corridor Kitchen**

*Alleyways as micro-retail corridors.*

The outdoor dining experience capitalizes on the high pedestrian volumes in this area, the generous space allotted and Fort Wayne’s existing foodie culture. This activation is about creating a place for locals to meet and start spending time. This alley is already a popular thoroughfare, with this activation we can create a place that invites Fort Wayne locals to stay and inspire them to discover the alleyway network and what it has to offer the city.
 Activation Zone 1

Getting it Done

**PHASE 1**

**Hardware**
Introduce food trucks to temporarily activate the parking garage facade. Complement this with supporting elements and invitations to stay—including tables and chairs, overhead lighting, plantings, and bold gateway signage/art.

**Software**
Engage local vendors, permit the space for food and alcohol consumption, lease the parking spaces for a fixed term, create and communicate regular events. Also, manage through traffic for non-active hours.

- **Temporary Activation**
  Lease parking spaces for 1 month and invite 3-4 food trucks to activate the space. Explore potential for other operators outside food and beverage as well, such as retail.

- **Cohesive back of house**
  Consolidate trash and move it further down the alley. Coordinate collection time. Consider housing box.

- **Art around the corner**
  Bold art installations at the corner and under the sky bridge as visible cues to draw people in.

- **Pallet Seating Nook**
  Meet people where they are: deck space and add seating and planters. Pallets can be a good low-fidelity material.

- **Graphic Gateway**
  Let the gateway paint spill onto the sidewalk to cue an entrance, and inspire curiosity.

- **Name the alley**
  Naming the alley signals that this is a safe, maintained space part of the city grid.
Activation Zone 1

Getting it Done

**PHASE 2**

**Hardware**
Introduce a more permanent presence in phase 2 with retrofitted shipping containers or other customized micro-retail kiosks to activate the edge. Introduce established seating pockets and landscaping.

**Software**
Engage local operators for longer-term lease of kiosks. Study the possibility of closing street to through-traffic permanently, except for trash collection.

- **Parklet**
  Area to support adjacent retail, include modular seating and tables.

- **Green Edge**
  Include a vertical row of dense plantings to soften how the parking deck meets the dining space.

- **Narrow Edge Seating**
  Integrate greenery and narrow benches along the edge for more permanent and dynamic seating options.

- **Alleyway Parklet**
  Formalize communal seating at the back-entrance with a parklet by moving the trash and adding decking and planters to make a comfortable experience for outdoor seating.

- **Active Frontages**
  Use Phase 1 to determine operator types and then execute a more permanent iteration utilizing retrofitted shipping containers or customized kiosks.
IN FOCUS
Market 707
Toronto, Ontario
IN FOCUS
Market 707
Toronto, Ontario

Focused in retrofitted shipping containers, Market 707 in Toronto is a low-impact, low cost impromptu pedestrian mall offering a variety of food and services. The market has been immensely successful, offering business opportunities to low income residents and bringing a formerly nondescript neighborhood to life.

01
Something for everyone
The containers offer a variety of services and amenities from coffee and crepes to ethnic food and bicycle repair.

02
Gives start-ups a leg up
Low rent and small spaces give local vendors an opportunity to take risks that were otherwise unavailable. Some have gone on to open brick and mortar spaces.

03
Fills a gap in the urban fabric
Shoppers can now walk from the established commercial area into the market. These extra eyes on the street make the neighborhood safer.

04
A reason to stick around
Diverse program includes emergency childcare, a skateboard shop that teaches youth entrepreneurial skills, and a basketball program.

05
Catalyzes cooperation between vendors
The businesses have started a mini business improvement group that collects a small amount of money each month to buy amenities such as lighting and advertising.
IN FOCUS

Melbourne
Alleyways, Australia
IN FOCUS

Alleyways
Melbourne, Australia

The Melbourne Alleyways transformed former alleys into lively hubs of activity for small scale businesses and social interaction. The initiative originally helped revive an otherwise dying downtown area.

**Kick-starting Downtown’s Revitalization.** In 1984, Gehl worked with Melbourne City Council to analyze the challenges and potential of the city center—which had fallen into a deep recession and was facing bankruptcy. Emerging from this work was the activation of Melbourne’s alleyways. A strategic plan for the alleyways was built on continuing to upgrade and maintain the physical form and condition of alleyways, aligned with an economic development strategy for the creative industries contained within them.

**Active Interior.** Alleyways open up the building facades to former alleys, creating a breeding ground for creative activities and small scale businesses.

**Partnerships.** The alleyways foster partnerships with, and between, businesses, residents and community groups.

Above: Hosier lane connecting to Federation Square arts and culture center

**A Shared Vision.** The “Love Your Alleyway” program assists in creating strategies that engages businesses and residents in alleyways to achieve a shared vision for new lanes.
Activation Zone 2

Off the Wall

Alleyways as interactive canvases

How might we make it new again? Creating a canvas for rotating interactive art and installations, anchored by a local merchant.
Activation Zone 2

Off the Wall

Alleyways as interactive canvases

The intimate, linear space of these alleyways lends itself to fun play installations, seating, and overhead canopies that capitalize on the unique spatial qualities of the alleyways and make navigating narrow spaces fun.
Activation Zone 2

Getting it Done

Hardware
Lay the canvas by lighting the space well, painting gateways, adding greenery, and introducing overhead canopies. Introduce linear play elements and seating. In the long term, activate edges by punching through the walls for storefronts and bring in a mid-block crosswalk.

Software
Invite local artists to perform in the alleys, talk to adjacent businesses about bringing a coffee cart into the alleys, study and coordinate with public works about formalizing a mid-block crosswalk.
IN FOCUS

Alley-oop
Vancouver, British Columbia
IN FOCUS

Alley Oop
Vancouver, British Columbia

The local business improvement district, architects, and local neighbors came together to develop a pedestrian friendly place in Downtown Vancouver. Together, the team developed a bright space for people to take a break from work and play.

A Bold Design
The team pressure-washed the alleyway, removed potholes, painted the street, walls and dumpsters with brightly colored street-grade paint.

02
Inviting from the street
Bright paint spilling onto the sidewalk, lighting, and a crowd of event goers pulls visitors in.

03
Play
Ground paint and installed hoops created alleyway basketball courts.
IN FOCUS
Passageways
Chattanooga, Tennessee
IN FOCUS

Passageways
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Chattanooga’s Passageways leverage all “four walls” of their alleyway network — with a special focus on creative canopies. These overhead installation create a dynamic sense of enclosure and boost the intimate characteristics of alleys. In addition to overhead art, wall-mounted play installations invited people to engage and interact with the space.

Rotating Artists
An eclectic mix of visual, industrial, and performance artists used the space as both canvas and stage.

Creative Enclosure
Give a human scale to the space and inspire a sense of discovery

Art that Invites Interaction
Use walls to install art that allows people to engage and reinterpret the space.
Activation Zone 3

The Patio

Alleyways as event spaces.

Establishing a magnetic destination and place to spend time, together, with a flexible patio showcasing a range of events, including beer garden and movie night.
Activation Zone 3

Getting it Done

Hardware
Set up kiosks for food services or markets (event dependent), install string lighting, provide flexible and stow-able communal seating, define edges with green plantings. Paint screen wall.

Software
Partner with adjacent merchants and MKM architecture + design as space operators and designers, secure appropriate permits for events, coordinate event permissions and communicate events.

- Beer Hall
  Permit the space to serve food and alcohol outside at designated times within a defined area.

- Lighting canopy
  Use overhead lighting to create a cozy atmosphere.

- Kid Zone
  Define space for kids complete with stow-able play elements.

- Lush Pocket
  Use plants to create a green buffer that encloses the space and provides a place for parents to look over their kids.

- Communal Seating
  Place picnic tables or long community tables where people can gather and mingle with other Fort Wayne locals.

- Moving Image Wall
  Paint wall white for screening art, interactive motion capture, and movies.

- Flexible Amenities
  Let this space be easily transformable so it can accommodate various programs, including movie night, beer garden, or holiday market.
REsurfaced: Louisville Kentucky
IN FOCUS

REsurfaced: Louisville, Kentucky

REsurfaced program works with local partners to improve surface parking lots and large vacant sites through a range of placemaking initiatives.

For events and non-event days
Transforming and activating underutilized surface lots and vacant spaces to bring back the walkable urbanism Louisville once enjoyed.

Amenities for a range of users
REsurfaced worked with a large variety of partners and sponsors to bring lots of different experiences to each new activation including food, music, games, and social programming. This variety of partnerships allowed the activation to extend to a wide user-group.

Rotating Programs
Each REsurfaced activation is meant to only last several days. This allows for the group to rotate sites, constantly experimenting with new programs and refine each new effort.
IN FOCUS

Nuit Blanche
Montreal, Quebec

Montreal’s Nuit Blanche is an annual celebration of arts and culture. It takes place in the winter months and combines light and motion installations with special programming.

Light Play
Installations that light the night and create intimate unique spatial experiences are a way to warm the space in colder months.

Keep Moving
Installations that require people to move their bodies help keep people warm and engaged.

Indoor Moments
Invite art museums to stay open late and offer free or discounted exhibits. This invites people to step indoors and take a break from the cold while experiencing something new in their city.
Next Steps

How to get it done

With momentum building downtown and growth coming, the time is now to start. Following is a illustrative timeline to sequence the design and programming of the alleyway pilot project.
**Activation Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month 1</th>
<th>Month 2</th>
<th>Month 3</th>
<th>Month 4</th>
<th>Month 5</th>
<th>Month 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify stewardship model</td>
<td>Paint gateway markers</td>
<td>Surface / Mural painting</td>
<td>Solicit artists proposals</td>
<td>Install overhead canopy</td>
<td>Tenant Workshop: daylighting interior windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alley naming process</td>
<td>Install planters + greenery</td>
<td>Paint MKM wall white</td>
<td>Invite local vendors to sell goods</td>
<td>Install surface / Wall interactive installations</td>
<td>Event: Movie Night or Winter Market (season-dependent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicit artists proposals</td>
<td>Coordinate trash pick up</td>
<td>Invite local operators</td>
<td>Popcorn in the alleys – recurring movie screenings</td>
<td>Install surface / Wall interactive installations</td>
<td>Event: Dual-program Corridor Kitchen with the Patio to activate connector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure parking spaces</td>
<td>Install overhead lighting</td>
<td>Solicit artists proposals</td>
<td>Install surface / Wall interactive installations</td>
<td>Install overhead canopy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light the alleys</td>
<td>Online / social media communication campaign throughout</td>
<td>Install surface / Wall interactive installations</td>
<td>Fabricate custom edge seating</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove / clean alley clutter</td>
<td>Invite food trucks in</td>
<td>Refine dining w/ more permanent footprint: kiosks</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop brand and marketing material</td>
<td>Kick off event: Dinner in the alleys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop communication plan</td>
<td>Workshop: local businesses + future alley tenants</td>
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</tbody>
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**Fort Wayne Public Realm Action Plan**

**Gehl** — Making Cities for People
Moving Forward

Making it Happen

With alignment and a cooperative relationship between key stakeholders, including the Downtown Improvement District, City Planning, local merchants, and Mayor Tom Henry, Fort Wayne is well positioned to move forward on number of projects within relatively short order.

The time is now to capitalize on this momentum to implement important public realm improvements. Some projects outlined in the action plan are near-term, pilot ready proposals. Others will require more funding over a longer timeline. In both instances, key to the process in an action oriented approach is to learn and adapt by doing — to test, measure, and refine. This ongoing evaluation of progress is essential to measure, make a quantitative case for what’s working, what’s not, and build success moving forward.

1. Bring it together with your local champions, makers, and doers.

It takes a team of people with different perspectives, skills, and contributions to make a downtown feel complete.

Fort Wayne is bustling with activity like food trucks, new restaurants and bars, cultural events, and pop-up retail. People are ready and willing to contribute to their city. It requires mutual trust and delegated roles to have a functioning team of producers to feel like everyone is contributing to a larger purpose of making downtown Fort Wayne for people.

2. Leverage Partnerships and Define Roles

How partnerships function for each alley project is different. Strong trust and collaboration, however, is required for an effective alleyway activation. The city, private funders, designers, adjacent property owners, and downtown advocates must all know their roles and responsibilities. Not only is it necessary to have a collaborative group of partners and stakeholders, this group must designate a clear leader or organization that will be the main champion of the alleyway project. This leader will manage the funds, roles and responsibilities, and ensure day-to-day maintenance of the alleys runs smoothly.

The strong ongoing work led by the Downtown Improvement District is a natural fit to continue in this role, with on-going support from city planning.

Fort Wayne Public Realm Action Plan

Gehl — Making Cities for People
3. Find the right funding balance

Finding the right mix of various funding sources is a great opportunity to involve different community members in the project. Leverage community interest in activating the public realm by joining private funds from BIDs, public investment, and grants that support local artists and makers. Pooling together resources helps distribute the investment load and gives a wider group interests to be involved and contribute their perspectives.

The long-term success of the alley activations will require an agreement between partners about long-term use and maintenance. In some cases, like Chattanooga, property owners pay an annual fee to the River City Company who will use that pot of money to maintain the City Thread alley. Some kind of agreement between partners is necessary to upkeep the success of the alley and ensure the sustainability of the project.

4. Communicate Projects

Letting the public know about projects is just as important as informing key downtown stakeholders involved in the process.

Generating sustainable use of the alley requires a strong engagement platform. This includes ways to engage partners and stakeholders but also the public. Engagement should include strong graphic material establishing an identity for the project that excites and empowers partnerships. This material can then be expanded and carried forward to a public communication platform whether that be through social media, website, flyers, signage, etc.

5. Kick-off and strive for a Ripple Effect

A big factor of success for urban alleyway activations is a strong kick-off event or series of events that brings people together to see these spaces in a new way: as pathways as well as destinations. Kick-off events can include parties, “gallery” openings, screenings, music events and performances. These events build an identity of place in people’s minds and encourage them to come back.

Special thanks to our friends at the Community Foundation of Fort Wayne, Knight Foundation, Fort Wayne Redevelopment Commission