

PLAN ADOPTION  
TOWN COUNCIL: AUGUST 20, 2024  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: OCTOBER 7, 2024

# TOWN OF ELIZABETH

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## Comprehensive Plan

CELEBRATING OUR ASSETS



BUILDING QUALITY PLACES



EXPANDING OUR OFFERINGS



TOWN PLANNING  
INITIATIVE  
HARRISON COUNTY  
The Town of Elizabeth



**TOWN OF ELIZABETH, INDIANA  
RESOLUTION NO. 2024- 14**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL  
OF ELIZABETH APPROVING THE  
ELIZABETH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, Indiana Code 36-7-4-500, *et. seq.* empowers the Harrison County Plan Commission and Harrison County Board of Commissioners to prepare a Comprehensive Plan for the promotion of public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, or the general welfare and for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of development and to make periodic updates thereto; and

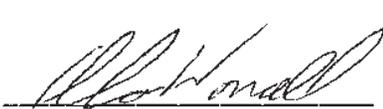
WHEREAS, Indiana Code 36-7-4-500, *et. seq.* authorizes a Comprehensive Plan to include a variety of elements, including but not limited to a statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction; a statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction; a statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities; and any factors that are part of the physical, economic, and social characteristics of the town; and

WHEREAS, the Harrison County Plan Commission, in conjunction with the Harrison County Community Foundation, Taylor Siefker Williams Design Group, and The Wheately Group, has undertaken a study to develop the Elizabeth Comprehensive Plan for the town; and

WHEREAS, the Elizabeth Town Council did certify the Elizabeth Comprehensive Plan with a \_\_\_\_\_ vote and forwarded the Comprehensive Plan to the Harrison County Plan Commission with favorable support for adoption.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF ELIZABETH, INDIANA that the town council is in support of the Elizabeth Comprehensive Plan and desires for the Harrison County Plan Commission and Harrison County Board of Commissioners to proceed with the official public hearing in accordance with Indiana Code 36-7-4-500, *et. seq.* and all other required adoption processes in order to adopt the Elizabeth Comprehensive Plan.

**PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF ELIZABETH, INDIANA  
ON THIS 20<sup>th</sup> DAY OF August, 2024.**



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# Acknowledgments

## ELIZABETH TOWN COUNCIL

Mike Sampson

Alan Worrall

Vincent Tuell

Willard Haas

## SPECIAL THANKS

To the Elizabeth community members that participated in the community engagement efforts.

## PLAN ADOPTION

The Elizabeth Town Council approved this plan on August 20, 2024. Following the town's approval, the *Elizabeth Comprehensive Plan* went through the formal adoption process starting with a favorable recommendation from the Harrison County Plan Commission on October 3, 2024 and then went the Harrison County Commissioners on October 7, 2024.

FUNDED BY:



PREPARED BY:



*In the future, some growth can take place while keeping the small town charm intact. A unique feature or event would draw people to the area.*

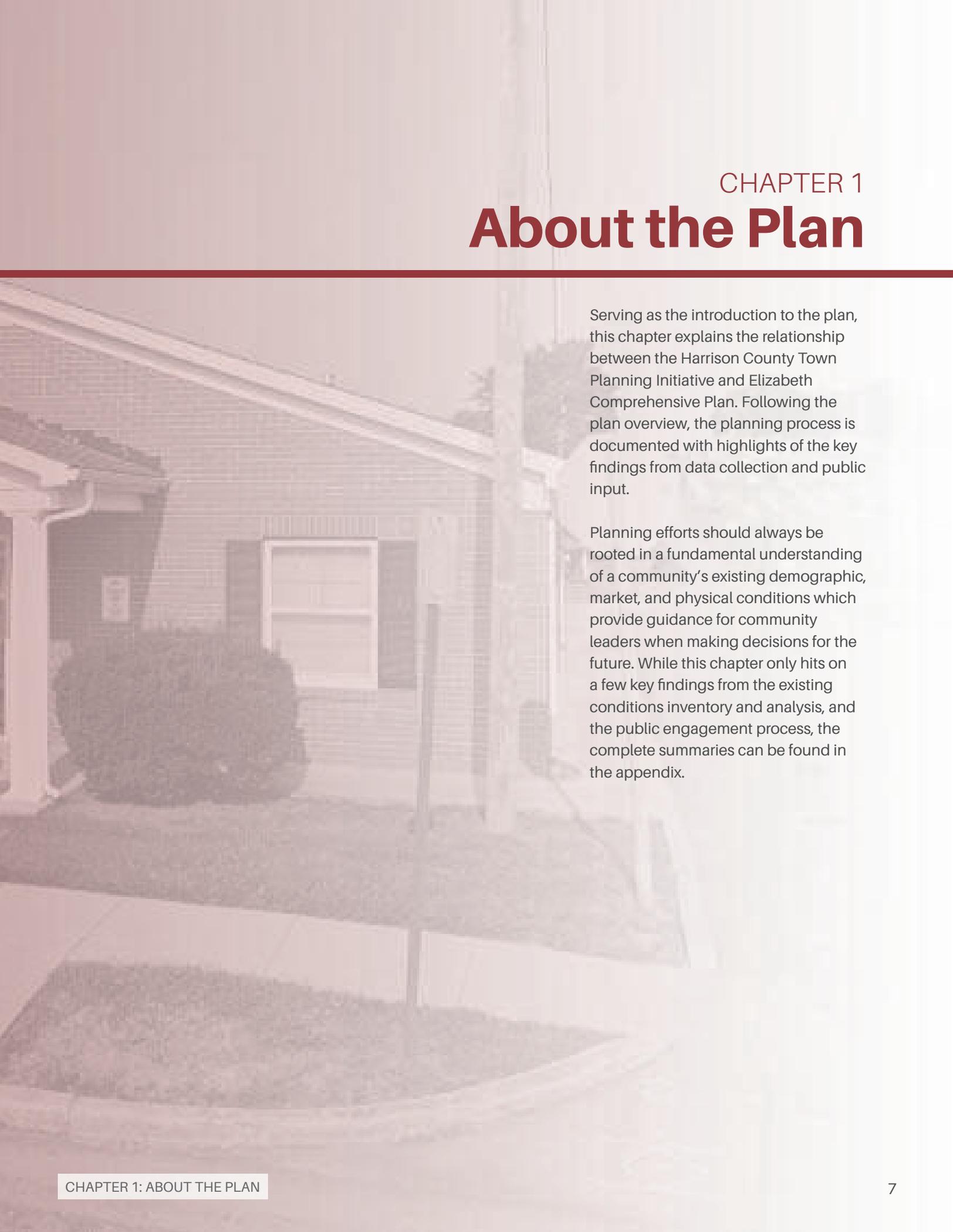
*- Community Survey Participant*

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## CHAPTER 1

# About the Plan

Serving as the introduction to the plan, this chapter explains the relationship between the Harrison County Town Planning Initiative and Elizabeth Comprehensive Plan. Following the plan overview, the planning process is documented with highlights of the key findings from data collection and public input.

Planning efforts should always be rooted in a fundamental understanding of a community's existing demographic, market, and physical conditions which provide guidance for community leaders when making decisions for the future. While this chapter only hits on a few key findings from the existing conditions inventory and analysis, and the public engagement process, the complete summaries can be found in the appendix.

# PLAN OVERVIEW

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*The Harrison County Town Planning Initiative, funded by both HCCF and Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Giving Indiana Funds for Tomorrow (GIFT) VII Implementation Grant, assisted each of the county's ten incorporated towns to complete a Comprehensive Plan and an Asset Management Plan, as required by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT).*

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## **What is the Harrison County Town Planning Initiative?**

Planning for the future often begins as a grassroots effort within a community- meaning the issues that need to be solved and the big ideas for the future MUST come from the people, workers, and businesses of the town. Individuals and groups working together provide a base for the policies and development-related decisions, helping identify the projects and programs needed to help achieve the vision and goals for the future.

The *Harrison County Town Planning Initiative* was first introduced in the *2020 Harrison County Community Leadership Planning Initiative*, a plan that brought together the multiple governmental bodies, non-profits, and community organizations within Harrison County to provide a strategic and aligned direction related to the quality of life for those living and working in Harrison County. In response to this plan, the Harrison County Community Foundation (HCCF) recognized the importance and impact of providing the resources to each town for them to dream big and solve community issues. This initiative, funded by both HCCF and Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Giving Indiana Funds for Tomorrow (GIFT) VII Implementation Grant, provided assistance to the county's ten incorporated towns to complete a comprehensive plan and an asset management plan to provide a foundation for each community to make the positive changes they felt were most critical to the town's future.

The *Elizabeth Comprehensive Plan* encourages the community to maintain its rural character, facilitate local events, and invest in local facilities and amenities. A comprehensive plan works to identify a community's goals and aspirations for the future based on community needs, data-driven trends, and public perceptions. At the end of the process, the plan should be used to guide decisions related to growth and development and also help prioritize projects and programs identified for the short, mid, and long-term.

# PLANNING PROCESS

The development of this comprehensive plan was guided by the ideas and feedback shared by the community. The *Elizabeth Comprehensive Plan* took place over nine months, starting in August 2023 and ending in April 2024. The process consisted of three key phases:

## PHASE 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS (AUGUST 2023 - SEPTEMBER 2023)

The beginning phase consisted of data collection and analysis in addition to identifying the community's major assets and challenges through existing demographics and socio-economic conditions, mapping analysis, and the first public engagement event. This phase acted as the starting point for defining the big ideas for the future and big issues to solve.

**Public Engagement Round 1** - The project team facilitated the first public engagement opportunity for the Elizabeth Comprehensive Plan on August 30, 2023 at Wilson's General Store, 8249 Beech Street in Elizabeth, Indiana. At the meeting, the project team gathered input regarding ideas, concerns, and potential development for Elizabeth. This input helped the team to identify strengths, weakness, and opportunities that would drive the development of the plans goals and main themes.

## PHASE 2: STRATEGIC PLANNING (OCTOBER 2023 - JANUARY 2024)

The second phase included the development of strategies, including crafting and refining the vision statement, goals, and big ideas, as well as using previous analysis and public input to develop the draft plan. This phase included a public engagement event allowing participants to review and provide feedback on the plan's draft plan content.

**Public Engagement Round 2** - The second public engagement opportunity occurred at the Elizabeth Civic Center on January 16, 2024. The meeting was attended by two community members, two town staff, and the three Town Council members. At the meeting, the project team presented a draft of the vision, goals, and big ideas from the plan to the community. The team received feedback from the attendees and used it to refine the vision, goals, and big ideas and to develop the plan's high priority initiatives.

## PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES (FEBRUARY 2024 - APRIL 2024)

The final phase of the planning process focused primarily on implementation, including finalizing the prioritization of strategies and identifying supporting action steps for completing each strategy. This phase also included the final public engagement event, the public release of the draft plan, and the adoption process for the comprehensive plan.

**Public Engagement Round 3** - The project team facilitated the third public engagement opportunity at the Elizabeth Civic Center on March 19, 2024. The team presented a draft of the high priority catalyst initiatives and action steps at the town council meeting. Two community members, two town staff, and the three members of the Town Council attended the meeting and provided feedback on the initiatives so they more closely match the town's goals for the future. Following the refinement of the high priority initiatives, the team began developing the final plan.

## WHERE WE ARE TODAY?

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# DATA-DRIVEN

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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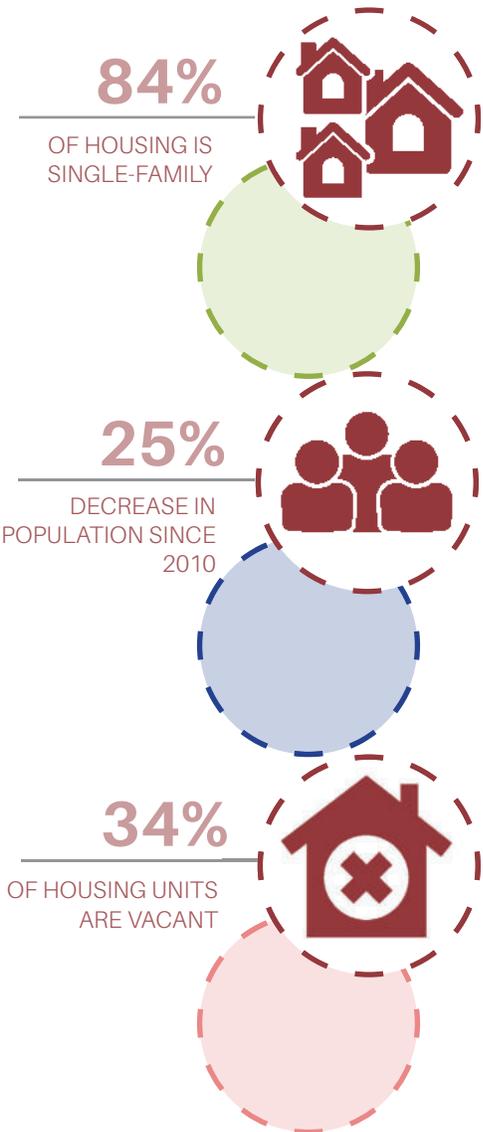
### ELIZABETH'S OPPORTUNITIES

- **Labor Force** - Elizabeth's labor force is employed across many industries. This ensures the town has some economic resiliency. If a significant employer within one industry were to close, Elizabeth's population would still largely be employed as they are working in different industry. Therefore, Elizabeth has some protection against economic downturn in single industries.
- **Rising Incomes** - Median household incomes are rising in Elizabeth, meaning residents are likely to have greater financial flexibility. Extra income can be used to purchase additional goods or services beyond necessary costs of living. Therefore, there is an opportunity expand the local commercial market to take advantage of this expendable income. This would also increase the number of amenities and services available to residents and improve local quality of life.
- **Number of Community Facilities** - There are many community facilities in town that service Elizabeth and surrounding areas. This is significant for the local population. Emergency response times are fast because there are emergency medical and fire protection services functioning in the town. There are also social and political centers like the Veterans American Legion, Town Hall, Harrison County Public Library, and South Harrison Community Center within Elizabeth. Their location in town makes them easily accessible to residents. The only community facilities not in town are the local schools.
- **Strong Social Environment** - Elizabeth has a town hall, public library, community center, churches, and an American Legion Post. Each of these community assets have the opportunity to host or sponsor community-wide events. They can seek to do so on their own or work together to hold a larger event. This multitude of community facilities can ensure the development of a strong social environment in Elizabeth. Each organization can bring people together through great, community events.

During the planning process, a variety of demographic conditions were collected and assessed in addition to comments gathered directly from the public. The following pages show a high-level overview of Elizabeth today. A more in-depth assessment can be found in the appendix on page 50.

## ELIZABETH'S CHALLENGES

- **Lack of Diverse Housing Options** - There are few housing options in Elizabeth. The majority of the housing stock is comprised of single-family detached homes. While this is a popular style of home, it is not always affordable or even desirable for everyone. It is important to include other options like single-family attached, multi-family, apartment, or mobile home units. This would make Elizabeth more attractive to many as it would allow the town to offer a larger variety of housing units. It could also help to make Elizabeth an even more affordable place to live.
- **Lack of Sewer Infrastructure** - There is no public or private sewer infrastructure in Elizabeth. Residents' only option is to have a septic tank on their property. This works well for smaller communities so the town does not have to cover the cost of building such a small wastewater network. However, it limits the potential for local population growth and town expansion. It also prevents the town from improving the quality of resident's wastewater service.
- **Decreasing population** - The inconsistent population changes make it difficult to create future projections. This could prevent Elizabeth from attracting new commercial shops or amenities. Population projections are used to measure a town's potential future growth. When a town's population projection predicts little to no growth, prospective shops and stores choose to avoid investing in property in that town. This is because each store is built where there is an adequately sized population to support it.
- **High Rate of Housing Vacancy** - Elizabeth's vacancy rate is very high. Generally, a healthy vacancy rate for housing is between 5% and 10% as it allows for households to move to other units within the community. However, Elizabeth's vacancy rate is triple that with over one-third (34%) of housing units being vacant. Maintenance of vacant units is critical. If they fall into disrepair, they will lower surrounding property values and affect property tax income. They will also discourage new residents from moving in and encourage current residents to leave.



## WHAT DID WE HEAR?

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# COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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*Elizabeth should maintain its small town character.*

*Its hard to attract businesses and growth without proper sewer infrastructure in place.*

*The town needs more small businesses and restaurants to take advantage of traffic at the 4-way intersection.*

*Many properties are in need of basic maintenance or demolition.*

*Sidewalk extensions and road improvements would help prevent speeding and increase safety.*

*We can hold events and programs to get youth involved in the community.*

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The planning process included three public engagement opportunities which provided community members several ways to share ideas and feedback either in person at a scheduled event or through an online survey. A few of the big ideas that were shared during the process are highlighted below. A more detailed summary of each public engagement event can be found on the project website ([harrisoncountytownplanning.org](http://harrisoncountytownplanning.org)).

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*The town lacks widespread access to reliable, high-speed internet and broadband services.*

*Redevelop or demolish vacant structures to make way for new homes and businesses.*

*Annual community festivals could bring the community together and provide new business opportunities.*

*Elizabeth needs restaurants and a grocery store.*

*Programs for the youth and elderly would help keep them connected to the community.*

*Elizabeth needs more attractive amenities like parks, trails, and gardens.*

# HOW IS THE PLAN ORGANIZED?

*A comprehensive plan serves many functions including but not limited to identifying a collective vision for the future, providing justification for growth and development-related decisions, shaping the appearance of the community, promoting economic development, balancing competing interests, and prioritizing strategic investments.*

The *Elizabeth Comprehensive Plan* is organized into three chapters. Each chapter is outlined below.

## **Chapter 1: About the Plan**

Serving as the introduction to the plan, this chapter includes a plan overview, an overview of the process used to complete the plan, highlights of key findings, and an outline of the plan's organization.

## **Chapter 2: The Path Forward**

Utilizing community feedback and data-driven facts as the foundation, chapter two outlines the vision for the future and several supporting big ideas. This chapter is organized into three themes. Each theme covers a variety of topics and big ideas crucial to guiding growth and enhancing the quality of life in Elizabeth. The project and program recommendations within these big ideas should be utilized by town staff, elected officials, and community leaders when determining how to allocate resources within the community.

- Theme 1: Celebrate Our Assets – The first theme focuses on building upon the existing assets and resources in Elizabeth to create new opportunities based on placemaking, historic and natural assets, parks, recreation, and trails. Expanding Elizabeth's existing assets not only widens entertainment options and activities for current residents but can draw new visitors and residents to the community.
- Theme 2: Build Quality Places – The topics within this theme cover the physical aspects of Elizabeth including land uses, roads and sidewalks, utilities and broadband, and housing. These planning elements are critical components to supporting growth within the community because they provide the foundation needed for development to occur.
- Theme 3: Collaborate to Expand Our Offerings – The final theme addresses the additional programs and facilities which contribute to the quality of place and ensure the town is adequately addressing health and wellness, education, workforce, and economic development. These planning elements support a growing population and ensure current and future residents remain healthy and stay competitive within the workforce.

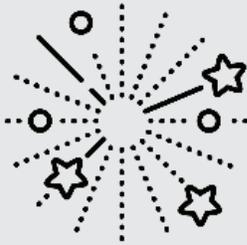
## **Chapter 3: Our Next Steps**

Building on the highest priority strategies, chapter three provides additional details on the 10 catalytic initiatives that were identified as the most critical strategies to implement. This chapter is intended to assist the town in implementing each one of these projects, programs, or policies. Each catalyst initiative highlights specific information including a description, action steps, partners, resources, and tools.

# PLAN ORGANIZATION

THEMES, GOALS, AND TOPICS

## THEME 1 CELEBRATE OUR ASSETS



### THE **CELEBRATE** GOAL

Provide quality spaces, amenities, and programs to encourage social interaction and recreation.

### TOPICS EXPLORED

PLACEMAKING

HISTORIC & NATURAL  
ASSETS

PARKS & RECREATION



### THE **BUILD** GOAL

Maintain quality places and infrastructure to continue meeting the needs of current and future residents.

### TOPICS EXPLORED

LAND USE

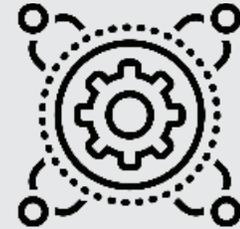
TRANSPORTATION

UTILITIES

HOUSING

## THEME 2 BUILD QUALITY PLACES

## THEME 3 COLLABORATE TO EXPAND OUR OFFERINGS



### THE **COLLABORATE** GOAL

Improve communication with residents and attract additional small-town amenities to Elizabeth.

### TOPICS EXPLORED

HEALTH & WELLNESS

ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT



*Elizabeth is a safe, rural community where residents come together to connect and enjoy quality events and small-town amenities.*

# The Path Forward

Chapter Two was created with the future in mind. This chapter starts by identifying the vision for the next 10 to 20 years. Following the vision, the chapter uses three themes to organize the goals, big ideas, and strategy statements. The strategies serve as the primary plan recommendations that should be implemented over time. Each strategy is ranked as a low, medium, or high priority. The high priority strategies are then carried forward to Chapter Three as catalyst initiatives.

# DEFINING THE PLAN COMPONENTS

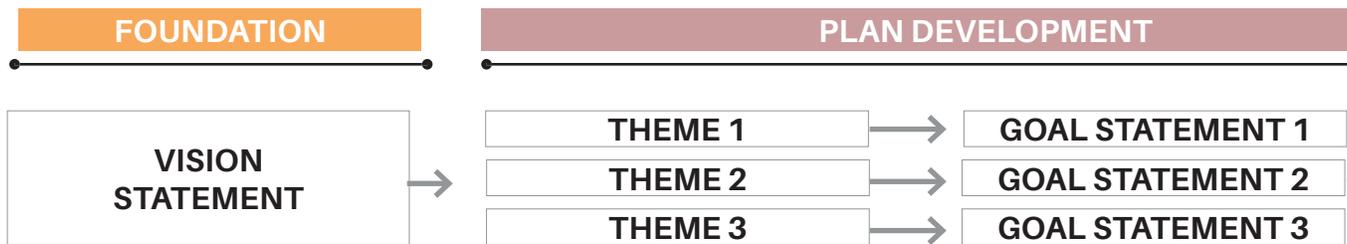
While the composition of every comprehensive plan may vary slightly, there are a series of common planning components that work together to create the guidance document. These components represent a hierarchy of detail starting with the broadest elements, the vision statement, at the top and working downward. With each step down (or in this case, moving right across the bottom of the page), the planning components get slightly more specific. The graphic below defines each of the components and illustrates how the components are used to build upon one another.

Before making a plan, it is important to know where you want to go first. A vision statement is an overarching and forward-thinking idea that captures the values of the community and outlines what the community wants to do or become in the future. After establishing a clear understanding of the town’s aspirations, the vision statement serves as the foundation for the goals, big ideas, and strategies.

The plan themes provide the organizational framework to ensure the comprehensive plan is addressing all the necessary topics. The goals, big ideas, and strategies transform the desired outcomes into an attainable, community-driven action plan. The plan recommendations are identified within the strategy statements. In essence, the strategies are the specific things the community needs to do in order to achieve the vision and goals.

By nature, a comprehensive plan covers a vast range of topics. Because of this, the number of strategy recommendations can quickly become overwhelming for plan users. **The Catalyst Initiatives help to narrow the focus by identifying the top priorities for the community.** The following chapter outlines the vision, themes, goals, big ideas, and strategies. The catalyst initiatives are outlined in Chapter Three: Our Next Steps.

## Composition of Planning Components



The **vision statement** is a broad statement that highlights what the town wants to do or become in the future. The statement captures the values of the community and outlines what residents wish the community to strive for in the future.

The three **themes** are used as organizational elements to provide a consistent framework for all of the comprehensive plans completed as part of the Harrison County Town Planning Initiative. Within each theme, there are a number of topics explored.

The **goal statements** define what the town is striving to accomplish in order to achieve the vision over the next 10 to 20 years.

# SETTING THE STAGE

The vision statement represents a blend of community values, aspirations, and commitments from local residents, staff and officials, business owners, and neighbors. It is a reflection of the community values and identifies the places, things, or characteristics that should be preserved. It documents the hopes and dreams for the future and demonstrates dedication to working towards the desired outcome. For Elizabeth, the town is striving to build a greater sense of community by investing in events, gathering spaces, and the existing infrastructure.

This vision statement was developed based on the ideas and input that were collected throughout the public engagement process. The first round of engagement encouraged participants to dream big while sharing their ideas for the future. The second and third rounds of engagement were used to refine the statement and confirm the vision resonated with the community.

## OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

*A vision statement is not about what the community is today but instead about what it want to do or become in the future.*

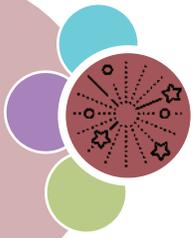
*Elizabeth will thrive by investing in **great community events, quality parks, and small-town amenities**. Residents will come together for events and assist in local decision-making where possible. The town will maintain its **rural character and sense of community** through the **preservation and improvement of its existing built environment**.*



The **big ideas** are a collection of opportunities identified by the community or within a previous planning effort. These ideas link the desired outcome with a specific strategy for addressing a challenge or leveraging an asset or opportunity.

The **strategy statements** identify a specific project, program, or policy that can be used or implemented to achieve the vision and goals. The strategies are prioritized to help narrow the focus of the community.

The **catalyst initiatives** are the top priority strategies for the town. Additional information such as a initiative description, action steps, partners, and resources is identified to assist the town in implementation.



THEME #1

# CELEBRATE OUR ASSETS

## GOAL STATEMENT

Provide quality spaces, amenities, and programs to encourage social interaction and recreation.

## 1. PLACEMAKING

*What does this mean for Elizabeth?*

Placemaking is the act of planning and designing public spaces to encourage community growth and development. It is a collaboration intended to identify a community's individual needs and desires. As such, placemaking is a community-driven effort that engages the community members it could impact. This collaboration helps to identify community-wide economic, social, and development needs that lead to the proposal of small-scale alternatives to larger development projects. Such alternatives can have more success in appropriately meeting small town needs than most large projects. Through collaborative placemaking, the Town of Elizabeth can work with limited resources to enhance the built environment, encourage economic growth, and have a significant impact on the entire community.



### PLACEMAKING BIG IDEAS

*What do we want to achieve?*

#### *Big Idea: Unique Community Events*

**Collaborate with local organizations to facilitate and promote town events.**

There are many community facilities within Elizabeth that regularly host or facilitate local events or gatherings. These include the Harrison County Public Library Elizabeth Branch, the South Harrison Community Center, and the American Legion Post 379. While these community organizations and facilities are performing well on their own, the Town of Elizabeth can collaborate with them on special community-wide events. This is especially true for the South Harrison Community Center which can host indoor events in the winter. Whether through town-led events or organizational gatherings, working with well-established community organizations, or taking advantage of what their facilities have to offer, can allow the town to foster a greater sense of community.

#### *Big Idea: Youth Activity Programming*

**Explore ways to offer regular events and programs for local youth, especially throughout the summer months.**

Parents in Elizabeth have limited available options in terms of youth programming for their children. Excluding South Central Jr-Sr High School, which is not open in the summer, the nearest programs are in Corydon or New Albany. This means Elizabeth's youth are likely not enrolled in any additional sports, art, or other programming. Having an organization that provides youth programming within Elizabeth would improve the social environment by bringing more people together. In addition, the Harrison County Public Library and the Harry N. Rooksby Memorial Playground could be excellent locations for both indoor and outdoor youth programming.

*Big Idea: Community Clean-up*

**Organize a “Spring cleaning” community clean-up day.**

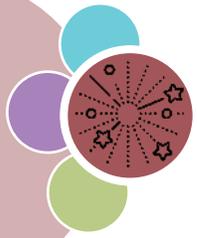
Currently, the Town of Elizabeth can ensure properties stay clean and safe by enforcing local regulations. However, this does not bring the community together and can often single out an individual. Establishing a community clean-up day can involve the entire community through at-home and volunteer efforts to ensure Elizabeth remains clean. This event would solve some issues of property maintenance and build pride in the community. It would also create a sense of self-ownership and serve as an incentive to keep the town clean throughout the year. To further assist in this program, the Town of Elizabeth can partner with a charity to donate certain items or rent a dumpster for the disposal of larger items.

*Big Idea: Property Maintenance*

**Require property owners to maintain safe, attractive homes and businesses.**

In any town, there may occasionally be poorly maintained properties. It is important to establish strategies for handling such properties that could harm the overall image of the town. Adopting and enforcing an unsafe building ordinance would ensure that the town has the necessary tools in place to hold property owners accountable and maintain a safe and well-maintained built environment. While the county has similar ordinances in place for the unincorporated areas, the county does not enforce these rules and regulations within town limits.

STRATEGIES	PRIORITY RANKING		
	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
STRATEGY 1.1 - Establish a community events committee with representation from the town, library, American Legion, and local churches to host events throughout the year.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
STRATEGY 1.2 - Survey the community to identify what types of youth programming would be most desirable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
STRATEGY 1.3 - Collaborate with a waste management service to provide bulk or large item trash pickup once a year.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
STRATEGY 1.4 - Adopt and enforce an unsafe building ordinance to address dilapidated structures and abandoned homes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>



THEME #1

# CELEBRATE OUR ASSETS

## GOAL STATEMENT

Provide quality spaces, amenities, and programs to encourage social interaction and recreation.

## 2. PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS

*What does this mean for Elizabeth?*

Parks and recreational areas serve to both protect and provide access to high-quality natural areas and resources. They promote health, wellness, and social interaction across the communities they are in. There are many different types of parks and recreational areas. Parks are typically classified according to their programming, or the amenities and activities they offer. For example, playgrounds offer a space for children to play, green space offers a place for people of all ages to enjoy time outdoors, and sports fields and courts offer a place for athletic activities. Recreational areas can provide a variety of programming including spaces for trail walking, hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, camping, and more. Additions or improvements to parks and recreational facilities can ensure community members have access to nature and any activities it can offer.



### PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS BIG IDEAS

*What do we want to achieve?*

*Big Idea: Park Enhancements*

#### **Increase community park amenities within Elizabeth.**

There are few park amenities within or surrounding Elizabeth. The nearest significant park, South Harrison Park on Hwy 11, is five miles away. Therefore, small-scale parks within Elizabeth could perform well in providing minor park amenities for those who wish to stay nearer to home. The Harry N. Rooksby Memorial Playground currently has a playground, a basketball court, and some green space. However, residents could benefit from either an addition to this park or the construction of another. Either action would allow for new play equipment for children and athletic areas to accommodate other sports like tennis or soccer.

*Big Idea: Trail Connectivity*

**Work with Harrison County to explore the possibility of a multi-use path/trail from Elizabeth to South Harrison Park.**

The primary route from Elizabeth to South Harrison Park is to drive along Hwy 11 and eventually turn left. Hwy 11 was built to efficiently move vehicle traffic. This makes it unsafe for pedestrians and potentially for bicyclists. A multi-use trail from Elizabeth to South Harrison Park would better accommodate the safety needs of individuals traveling without an automobile. The most significant challenges of constructing a trail in Harrison County are land ownership and topography. Luckily, Pine Hill Drive already travels the ideal route between Elizabeth and the park. Aligning the trail with Pine Hill Drive should mitigate these issues assuming there is enough available right-of-way to build along the road.

*Big Idea: Lakefront Recreation*

**Provide opportunities for residents to enjoy different types of recreation.**

Overall, park amenities are limited within Elizabeth. A campground is located nearby at South Harrison Park on Hwy 11, but there are no outdoor recreational areas that offer amenities for fishing, walking, hiking, or jogging immediately around Elizabeth. There is a potential opportunity at the lake and surrounding area along Sandy Branch Road just south of Elizabeth. This location is prime for the development of a park featuring trails, a dog park, and fishing. Ensuring a variety of recreational activities are both available and accessible to residents will improve local quality of life and promote general health and wellbeing.

PRIORITY RANKING

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

**STRATEGIES**

*How will we achieve it?*

STRATEGY 2.1 - Survey residents to identify desired park improvements or additions within Elizabeth and seek grant funding from the county or philanthropies.	<input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
STRATEGY 2.2 - Coordinate with Harrison County and INDOT to determine the feasibility of a trail to connect the town to nearby amenities.	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>
STRATEGY 2.3 - Continue pursuing opportunities, such as the Lake on Sandy Branch Road, for additional recreational space.	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>



THEME #2

## **BUILD QUALITY PLACES**

### **GOAL STATEMENT**

Maintain quality places and infrastructure to continue meeting the needs of current and future residents.

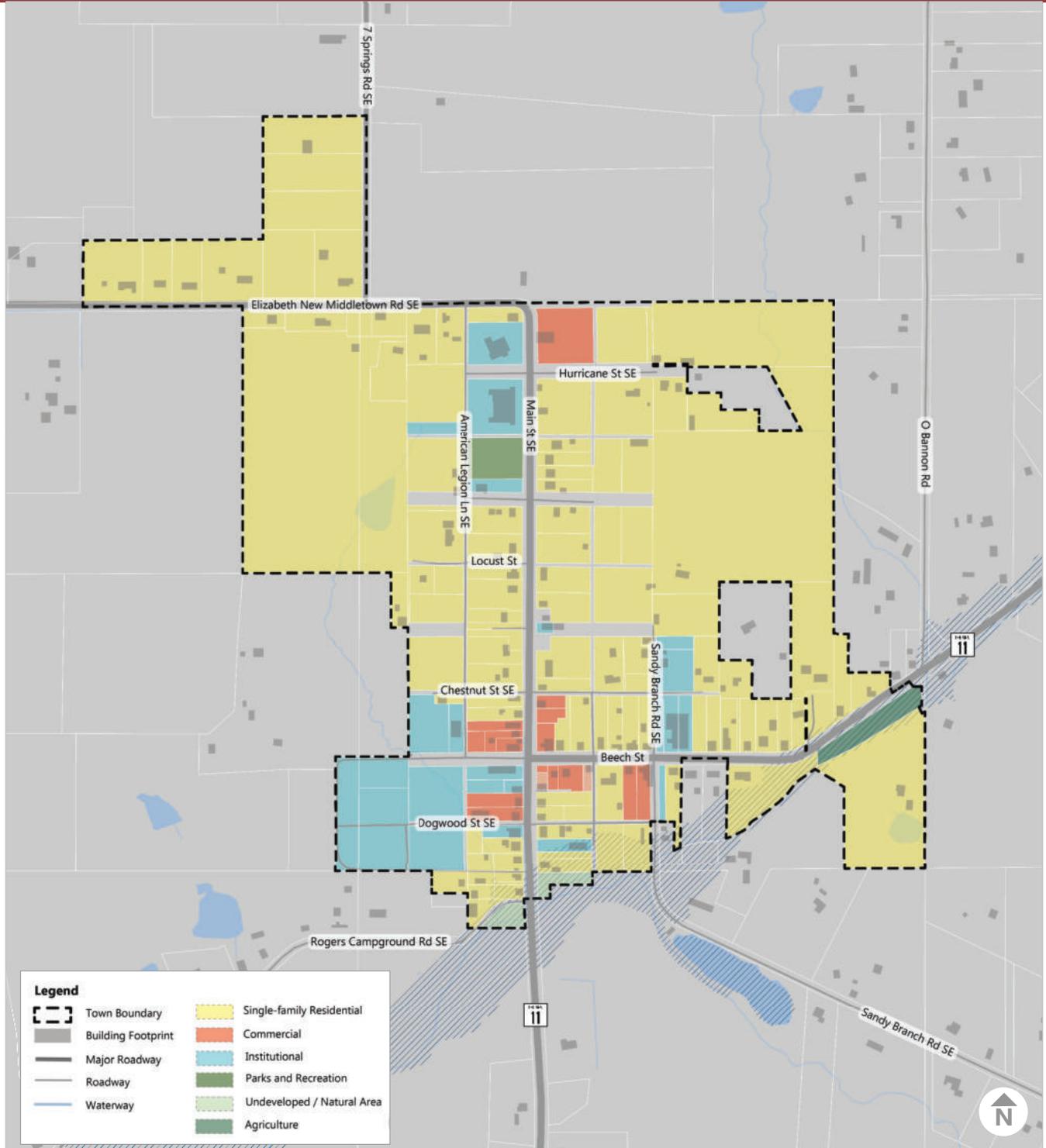
### **3. LAND USE**

*What does this mean for Elizabeth?*

Land use refers to the activity happening on a piece of land. For example, if someone is living in a house on their property, they are using that land for residential purposes. There are several land uses other than residential, including commercial, industrial, institutional, recreation, and agriculture. It is important to manage these land uses because each use will have a different impact on a property and the land around it. For example, industrial properties could leave behind ground pollution or have heavy machinery that generates too much noise for properties adjacent to residential areas. These situations create land use conflicts that impact the usefulness of property. Land use planning is meant to guide the planning decisions that could prevent such issues in the future.

Elizabeth's Future Land Use map identifies agricultural areas already within the municipal boundaries for residential development. This is intended to preserve surrounding natural and agricultural properties by limiting growth that could encroach upon those areas. The map also identifies several properties around the intersection of Main Street and Hwy 11 Beech Street for commercial or multi-family development. Many of these properties are currently vacant but could perform well as commercial areas. Their proximity to the intersection allows them to tap into the market generated by the high volume of passing traffic. The properties identified for multi-family use are intended to house small-scale structures. This could include multi-family structures with no more than four housing units.

# FUTURE LAND USE MAP





THEME #2

## **BUILD QUALITY PLACES**

### **GOAL STATEMENT**

Maintain quality places and infrastructure to continue meeting the needs of current and future residents.



### **LAND USE BIG IDEAS**

*What do we want to achieve?*

#### *Big Idea: Town Center Development*

**Promote redevelopment of the main intersection in Elizabeth to generate economic activity.**

The intersection of Main Street and Hwy 11 is the busiest intersection in Elizabeth. As such, it is seen by the greatest number of people. However, the intersection's importance to the town is undermined by how little activity there is around it. There are several properties around the intersection of Main Street and Hwy 11 that are viable for redevelopment. To generate activity, the Town of Elizabeth can promote the existing businesses at the intersection. This could help to bring customers to the area. Elizabeth could also support those businesses by helping the owners apply for a small business loan through the Harrison County Economic Development Corporation.

#### *Big Idea: Housing Infill*

**Ensure quality housing is available and affordable for current and future residents.**

In Elizabeth, there are several vacant or blighted properties that present redevelopment opportunities. Constructing new housing on vacant lots and/or rehabilitating blighted properties will increase the number of housing options available for current and future residents. To encourage residential infill, the Town of Elizabeth can establish a program to support home repairs and new home construction. Elizabeth can use this program to engage with residents and local property owners. They will help to identify barriers to housing development or repairs and determine what is needed to complete them. The housing program should then facilitate home repairs, new home construction, and blight removal.

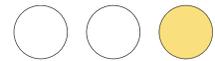
## STRATEGIES

*How will we achieve it?*

PRIORITY RANKING

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

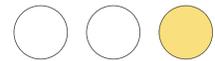
STRATEGY 3.1 - Identify and promote commercial redevelopment opportunities, specifically near the intersection.



STRATEGY 3.2 - Connect existing and potential business owners to resources made available through the Harrison County Economic Development Corporation.



STRATEGY 3.3 - Explore the creation of a blight removal and/or housing rehabilitation program to support residential infill.





THEME #2

# BUILD QUALITY PLACES

## GOAL STATEMENT

Maintain quality places and infrastructure to continue meeting the needs of current and future residents.

## 4. UTILITIES

*What does this mean for Elizabeth?*

Municipalities are often responsible for providing utility services like water, wastewater, solid waste disposal, and stormwater management. Private companies usually handle other utilities like electricity and broadband, but they also may offer water, wastewater, or other services. In Elizabeth, most utilities, excluding water and wastewater in limited areas, are provided by private entities. Whether they are publicly or privately provided, utilities are significant to a community's development. For example, a town's growth is often dependent on the availability of utility infrastructure.



### UTILITIES BIG IDEAS

*What do we want to achieve?*

*Big Idea: Water Line Improvements*

**Identify and prioritize improvements to the town's water services.**

Like many rural towns, one of Elizabeth's biggest utility challenges is related to the age of infrastructure. Aging water lines are at high risk of having damage and usually need repairs. Damaged water lines could have a significant impact on the quality of a town's water service. The worst effects include contamination of the water supply. Therefore, it is important to assess the quality of the water infrastructure and provide necessary repairs as soon as possible. The simplest way to acquire funding for this infrastructure repair project is to increase water rates. This will impact residents and water customers but it will also ensure a quality water supply for the town.

*Big Idea: Broadband*

**Collaborate with Harrison County to aid in the following of the county's Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan.**

In March of 2022, Harrison County was certified as a Broadband Ready Community by the Indiana Broadband Office. This means Harrison County has displayed that it is dedicated to improving broadband access for its residents by removing obstacles to broadband development. The designation is intended to attract broadband developers and companies to the county by proving that it is easier to improve service. The certification and the Harrison County Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan both help to attract broadband infrastructure development and improve broadband service. Therefore, Elizabeth can reach out to the county and establish a need for improved service. Then, the town can aid in development of broadband infrastructure as needed to fulfill the Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan.

*Big Idea: Wastewater Infrastructure*

**Work with Harrison County to explore options for expanding sewer infrastructure or connecting to the Harrison County Regional Sewer District.**

As mentioned, residents of Elizabeth rely on individual septic tanks for their wastewater needs. This system is acceptable for a community of this size, but it will not be enough to support growth or redevelopment. It is important to begin investing in wastewater infrastructure to prepare for the future. Installation of a wastewater system would not only improve service to current residents, but it would also increase Elizabeth’s growth potential. It would be easier for new homes or stores to be built in town as they will have a sewer system to tap into. Until then, development in Elizabeth is largely limited to housing and few shops that can survive on septic.

PRIORITY RANKING

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

**STRATEGIES**

*How will we achieve it?*

STRATEGY 4.1 - Collaborate with Harrison County, the Regional Sewer District, and the Health Department to address the need for wastewater infrastructure in Elizabeth.



STRATEGY 4.2 - Partner with Harrison County to implement the Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan.



STRATEGY 4.3 - Complete a capital improvement plan to identify and prioritize the improvements needed to ensure Elizabeth can continue providing safe, clean water to residents.





THEME #2

## BUILD QUALITY PLACES

### GOAL STATEMENT

Maintain quality places and infrastructure to continue meeting the needs of current and future residents.

## 5. TRANSPORTATION

*What does this mean for Elizabeth?*

With the exception of Hwy 11, Elizabeth is responsible for maintaining the transportation network within town limits. This includes all local roads and sidewalks. The maintenance and upkeep of these facilities is important because they connect people and their homes to opportunities for employment, business, and recreation. Additionally, the design of transportation facilities can affect how people travel. Typically, wider lanes on a road encourage people to drive faster because they feel less restricted. Conversely, narrow lanes cause drivers to reduce their speed. Some roads can even prevent certain types of development. For example, large stores or warehouses will not be constructed on small roads with limited vehicle capacity. This is because those roads do not provide a connection to a large enough population or market to fuel their business.



### TRANSPORTATION BIG IDEAS

*What do we want to achieve?*

*Big Idea: Road Maintenance*

**Continue to apply for state funding programs to maintain the town's local roadways.**

The Town of Elizabeth is responsible for maintaining its local roadways, which include all roads except for Hwy 11. Currently, these roads are in fair condition, but they will eventually need to be resurfaced and possibly improved. One way to prepare for the cost of this maintenance is to ensure the town has an updated pavement asset management plan. A pavement asset management plan is a necessary qualification for funding through the Community Crossings Matching Grant program. This program provides funding to towns, cities, and counties to make repairs to their roads and bridges.

of the reduced speed limits and increased fines if caught speeding. A less cost-effective method is to create town gateways. Gateway signage can be attractive and improve local quality of life. It can also attract drivers' eyes and notify them that they have entered the Town of Elizabeth.





THEME #2

## **BUILD QUALITY PLACES**

### **GOAL STATEMENT**

Maintain quality places and infrastructure to continue meeting the needs of current and future residents.

#### *Big Idea: Reduce Speeding in Town*

**Collaborate with INDOT to secure additional signage to help communicate speed limits along Hwy 11.**

On Hwy 11, drivers have a speed limit of 40 miles per hour until they enter the Town of Elizabeth. The speed limit then drops to 30 miles per hour. Similarly, the speed limit on Elizabeth New Middletown Road is 50 miles per hour until it becomes 30 in town. Drivers are likely to remain at these higher speeds within town due to road design. One simple, and cost-effective, method of convincing drivers to reduce their speed, is to implement additional signage at the town's entrances. The signage should notify drivers of the reduced speed limits and increased fines if caught speeding. A less cost-effective method is to create town gateways. Gateway signage can be attractive and improve local quality of life. It can also attract drivers' eyes and notify them that they have entered the Town of Elizabeth.

#### *Big Idea: Streetscape Improvements*

**Redesign the Main Street streetscape to strengthen the community identity and improve road safety.**

Main Street, from the intersection with Hwy 11/Beech Street to the Civic Center, is efficient at moving vehicles from one end of town to the other. However, it lacks a strong identity. Improving that identity would strengthen residents' connection to Elizabeth and make the town more memorable to visitors and passerby. To do so, Elizabeth can introduce new streetscaping elements to beautify the Main Street Corridor. Such elements would include trees, plantings, and decorative streetlighting. Framing the road with trees would improve visual appeal and encourage drivers to maintain a safe speed. Decorative lighting would improve visibility in the evening and create space for new banners that could feature town branding.

*Big Idea: Crosswalks*

**Ensure pedestrians can safely access key community facilities.**

Currently, there is a sidewalk on the west side of Main Street from Beech Street to the Town Hall. This sidewalk provides the town with a walkable connection to the Town Hall, Community Center, Harrison County Public Library, and Harry N. Rooksby Memorial Playground. However, there are no painted crossings on Main Street. This can make it difficult for people east of Main Street to access this sidewalk. Providing a safe place to cross Main Street can solve this issue, especially for school children at Small Hands Pre-School at the corner of Main Street and Chestnut Street. The crossing will be useful for the children, and for the whole community, to safely cross Main Street and access the park and other facilities.

*PRIORITY RANKING*

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

**STRATEGIES**

*How will we achieve it?*

STRATEGY 5.1 - Maintain an updated pavement asset management plan to pursue additional infrastructure improvement grants such as Community Crossings.



STRATEGY 5.2 - Engage with INDOT and advocate for design and signage improvements that would encourage motorists to slow down.



STRATEGY 5.3 - Implement decorative streetscaping elements to improve safety and visual appeal along Main Street.



STRATEGY 5.4 - Construct a crosswalk at the preschool on Main Street so children and the community can safely access the park, library, and community center.





THEME #3

# COLLABORATE TO EXPAND OUR OFFERINGS

## GOAL STATEMENT

Improve communication with residents and attract additional small-town amenities to Elizabeth.

## 6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*What does this mean for Elizabeth?*

Elizabeth is a rural bedroom community in which much of the population is employed elsewhere. The majority of the town’s population commutes to other, out-of-town locations for work. Therefore, economic development efforts should focus on supporting Elizabeth in its current state to keep the population living in town. This involves placemaking, housing, and infrastructure improvement concerns, but it also necessitates the attraction of small-town amenities that improve local quality of life. Improving and expanding on what the town can offer to residents will help to maintain the population and may even generate some growth.



### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BIG IDEAS

*What do we want to achieve?*

*Big Idea: Community Engagement*

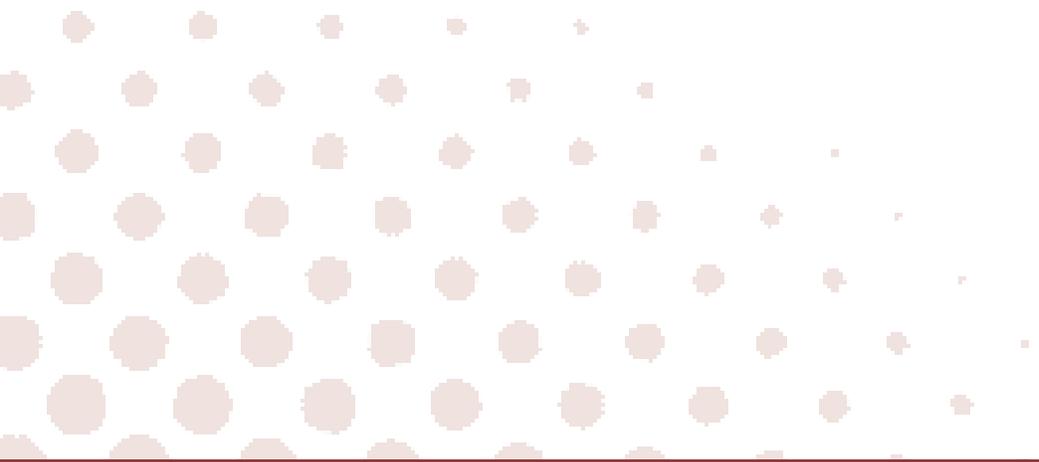
#### **Increase community engagement efforts to improve resident involvement.**

Any project or event that happens in a town can affect every resident in that town. Ensuring that residents have a say, or at least that they are present during the decision-making process, can limit the potential negative impacts of a project. Additionally, community members often have valuable input that is useful to town leaders. Inviting residents to municipal meetings, and making those meetings more accessible, can be beneficial for Elizabeth. It would improve town-wide communication, build pride in the community, and generate helpful discussions on potential projects in town.

*Big Idea: Attract New Businesses*

#### **Increase access to everyday services and amenities.**

Residents of any town enjoy having access to certain amenities. These amenities could be provided by a public municipality, like parks and libraries, or by private companies, like restaurants and stores. In a small town like Elizabeth, the challenge is attracting amenities that cater to a small market. Small, locally owned businesses typically fill this role as they would operate at the correct scale to expand local amenities. Some examples of small businesses that could benefit Elizabeth are a bakery, café, coffee shop, antique shop, hardware store, or small restaurant with seating. A hardware store and a restaurant may be particularly beneficial as they would provide Elizabeth with a place to buy necessary equipment and a gathering space to socialize respectively.



## **STRATEGIES**

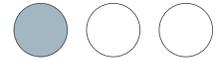
*How will we achieve it?*

PRIORITY RANKING

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

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STRATEGY 6.1 - Survey residents to understand how the town can improve communication and encourage community participation.



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STRATEGY 6.2 - Collaborate with the Harrison County Economic Development Corporation to promote, attract, and assist in the development of new businesses in Elizabeth.





*The 10 catalyst initiatives are projects or programs that were identified as top priorities based on their ability to achieve the community-wide vision and/or address a specific challenge the community is facing.*



## CHAPTER 3

# Our Next Steps

Building on the highest priority strategies, chapter three provides additional details on the 10 catalytic initiatives that were identified as the most critical strategies to implement. This chapter is intended to assist the town in implementing each one of these projects, programs, or policies. Each catalyst initiative highlights specific information including a description, action steps, partners, resources, and tools.

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 1

Supports the *Unique Community Events Big Idea* (See Page 20)

## PLACEMAKING STRATEGY 1.1

**Establish a community events committee with representation from the town, library, American Legion, and local churches to host events throughout the year.**

### DESCRIPTION

There are many types of community events that can benefit a town and its residents. For example, festivals or popular markets can draw visitors to a town. This drives economic growth by encouraging people to patronize local businesses. Comparatively, small scale farmer's markets or game nights bring residents together to celebrate their community. At any scale, events can positively impact a community.

As noted in engagement efforts, Elizabeth's residents wish to see more community events. There are multiple local organizations, like the American Legion and Harrison County Public Library, that serve the community and may support an event. Developing a relationship with such an organization could allow for both the town and the organization to build upon existing events or prepare a new one. The town could even revive a previous event like Spirit Day. Events that are unique to Elizabeth will help to establish a strong community identity that would serve to regularly bring residents together in celebration of the town they share.

### ACTION STEPS

- Identify potential partner organizations that can offer volunteers or resources to support community events.
- Select an individual or group to build a relationship and coordinate with outside organizations.
- Determine what resources are available for community events.
- Determine the type of local events that would be viable in Elizabeth based on the available resources. Some options include the former Spirit Day, a farmer's market, Main Street festival, food crafts market, or library book fair.

### PARTNERS

- Town staff or officials
- Local volunteers
- Harrison County Public Library Elizabeth Branch
- Local institutions or service organizations such as the American Legion, Harrison County 4H, or Harrison County Community Foundation.
- Local businesses

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- American Legion
- Harrison County Public Library
- South Harrison Community Center

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 2

Supports the *Youth Activity Programming Big Idea* (See Page 20)

## PLACEMAKING STRATEGY 1.2

**Survey the community to identify what types of youth programming would be most desirable.**

### DESCRIPTION

While it is critical to support schools as they provide quality education during the academic year, it is just as important to provide programming opportunities for children while they are out of school. Ensuring the establishment of a summertime programs can provide this necessary support while children are out of school.

There are obstacles to developing youth programming, especially in regard to funding. Funding is necessary for renting or building a space to operate a program. It is also needed to hire labor to manage the programming. To combat some of these obstacles, the town can negotiate the use of the South Harrison Community Center. Indoor programming can occur at the community center while outdoor programming can be facilitated next door at the Harry N. Rooksby Memorial Playground. This, combined with funding resources from organizations like Early Learning Indiana, Brighter Futures Indiana, or the Harrison County Community Foundation, should help to keep initial costs down.

### ACTION STEPS

- Select an individual or group to coordinate with the South Harrison Community Center.
- Determine the available space, times, staff, and other resources that can be dedicated to summertime childcare.
- Apply for funding resources from the State, County, or local non-profits/philanthropies to support the childcare program. Potential sources of funding include Early Learning Indiana, The Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, or Brighter Futures Indiana.

### PARTNERS

- Town staff or officials
- South Harrison Community Center
- Local childcare organizations potentially including YMCA of Harrison County or the Boys and Girls Club of Harrison County.

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Early Learning Indiana Closing the Gap Grant Program
- Brighter Futures Early Childhood Capacity Building Grant Program
- Brighter Futures Build, Learn, Grow Grant Program
- Harrison County Community Foundation Furthering Youth Inc. Fund

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 3

Supports the *Property Maintenance Big Idea* (See Page 21)

## PLACEMAKING STRATEGY 1.4

**Adopt and enforce an unsafe building ordinance to address dilapidated structures and abandoned homes.**

### DESCRIPTION

Within Elizabeth, there are vacant structures or homes that present redevelopment opportunities. However, after consistent vacancy and little to no maintenance, they are in poor condition. Vacant and dilapidated properties can have a significant negative impact on the town around them. They can decrease surrounding property values making them more difficult to sell. Dilapidated structures can also be a threat to public safety and welfare. Lack of maintenance can make a building structurally unstable, increasing the risk of injury for people in or near it.

To simplify the redevelopment process for these properties, Elizabeth can adopt an unsafe building ordinance. The ordinance can cite various building codes, like the codes established by Harrison County or by Indiana, to enforce specific safety requirements for all structures within the town. It could also establish a process by which unsafe buildings can be improved. However, if the issues with a structure are too great, then it will have to be demolished to make way for redevelopment.

### ACTION STEPS

- Write an ordinance defining the regulations a building must meet.
- Host a public meeting to gather input on the ordinance.
- Rewrite the ordinance as necessary.
- Educate the public on the ordinance so residents are aware of the changes before they receive code violations.
- Determine the resources needed to enforce the unsafe buildings ordinance.
- Determine a process to enforce the unsafe buildings ordinance.
- Properly advertise a public hearing for the new ordinance and then formally adopt the ordinance during a town council meeting.

### PARTNERS

- Town staff or officials
- Harrison County staff or officials

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Harrison County Uniform Building Code
- Harrison County Zoning Ordinance

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 4

Supports the *Trail Connectivity Big Idea* (See Page 22)

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS STRATEGY 2.2

Coordinate with Harrison County and INDOT to determine the feasibility of a trail to connect the town to nearby amenities.

### DESCRIPTION

South Central Jr-Sr High School is approximately four miles away from Elizabeth, and South Harrison Park is a mile and half beyond that. Currently, the only connection between these facilities is Hwy 11. Hwy 11 is a state road with high speed limits and no pedestrian facilities. This can make visits to these destinations difficult for residents of Elizabeth who do not or cannot drive an automobile.

A pedestrian trail between Elizabeth and South Central Jr-Sr High School could serve as an alternative mode of transportation and provide a recreational amenity that connects the town to a community destination. However, there are some challenges to constructing a trail between these locations. The first is that the trail would be primarily outside of Elizabeth. The town would have to work with Harrison County to start the project. Another is land acquisition and topography. A trail may be feasible within the right of way for Hwy 11, but additional infrastructure costs will be necessary to ensure pedestrian safety along the highway.

### ACTION STEPS

- Meet with Harrison County, South Harrison School Corporation, Harrison County Parks, and INDOT to gauge their interest in developing the trail.
- Work with a consultant to develop conceptual designs for the trail including a proposed alignment and estimated cost.
- Begin exploring funding resources to pay for the final design documents and construction of the trail.

### PARTNERS

- Town staff or officials
- Harrison County staff or officials
- South Harrison Community School Corporation - South Central Jr.-Sr. High School
- Harrison County Park - South Harrison Park

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Indiana Department of Natural Resources - Next Level Trails.
- INDOT - FHWA Transportation Alternatives Program
- South Harrison Community School Corporation
- Harrison County Parks
- Harrison County Community Foundation

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 5

Supports the *Lakefront Recreation Big Idea* (See Page 23)

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS STRATEGY 2.3

Continue pursuing opportunities, such as the Lake on Sandy Branch Road, for additional recreational space.

### DESCRIPTION

Currently, there is one park within the Town of Elizabeth. This park, the Harry N. Rooksby Memorial Playground, offers a playground, a basketball court, and a greenspace for residents. While it provides opportunities for sport and play, the park does not have the proper amenities to support other types of outdoor recreation. If residents want to walk a trail, fish, or take their dog to a park, they must leave Elizabeth to go to another park facility.

Elizabeth can retain park-goers by introducing new park amenities within the town. This would likely require new park development. Fortunately, a lake located just south of Elizabeth, can provide a space for this new development. The lake and surrounding property present an opportunity to provide additional recreational amenities to residents. These can include walking or hiking trails, a dog park, or areas for fishing. To obtain funding for the development of this park, the Town of Elizabeth would have to establish a Parks and Recreation Board.

### ACTION STEPS

- Establish a Parks and Recreation Board to access different types of parks funding.
- Create a five-year parks and recreation plan to become eligible for the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant.
- Apply for park development funding from organizations like the Harrison County Community Foundation and Indiana DNR.
- Engage with the community to determine the amenities that should be available at the new park.
- Identify a group or individual to design the park with input from the community.
- Secure funding and then construct the new park amenities.

### PARTNERS

- Town staff or officials
- Harrison County Parks
- Indiana DNR

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Harrison County Community Foundation
- Harrison County Parks

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 6

Supports the *Town Center Development Big Idea* (See Page 26)

## LAND USE STRATEGY 3.1

**Identify and promote commercial redevelopment opportunities, specifically near the intersection.**

### DESCRIPTION

The intersection of Main Street and Hwy 11/Beech Street is significant within Elizabeth. Nearly every resident, visitor, or passerby has to use this intersection if they are in Elizabeth. However, despite the intersection's importance, there are few businesses surrounding it that take advantage of the high volume of traffic. Instead, several nearby buildings suitable for commercial activity are vacant. Therefore, the intersection presents several opportunities for placemaking, redevelopment, and economic development.

To attract businesses, Elizabeth can promote the business opportunities surrounding the intersection of Main Street and Hwy 11/Beech Street. Additionally, the town can simplify the process of opening a new business in Elizabeth. To do so, Elizabeth officials could connect small business owners to the Harrison County Economic Development Corporation or the Indiana Small Business Development Center. Both provide financial resources for small business establishment and operation.

### ACTION STEPS

- Identify vacant buildings or property around the intersection of Main Street and Hwy 11/Beech Street that are suitable for commercial use.
- Coordinate with the current property owner to gauge their interest in redeveloping or selling the property.
- Promote any available commercial sites to local and regional businesses, Economic Development Corporations, and Chambers of Commerce.
- Assist any interested business owners in contacting the Harrison County Economic Development Corporation or the Indiana Small Business Development Center so they may obtain financial resources.

### PARTNERS

- Town staff or officials
- Harrison County Economic Development Corporation
- INDOT

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Harrison County Economic Development Corporation Small Business Loan
- Indiana Small Business Development Center

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 7

Supports the *Housing Infill Big Idea* (See Page 26)

## LAND USE STRATEGY 3.3

Explore the creation of a blight removal and/or housing rehabilitation program to support residential infill.

### DESCRIPTION

An excess of dilapidated homes can harm a town's physical appearance and lead to a decrease in property values. This can make it hard for potential new residents to purchase a quality home. As such, they would likely look elsewhere in a stronger housing market. Buildings in disrepair also present a safety risk. If a home is not appropriately maintained, then structural damage could become so great that it would be beyond repair.

A local blight removal and/or housing rehabilitation program could support residential infill in Elizabeth. This type of program would help homeowners maintain their properties. The program could also prevent vacant properties from indefinitely remaining vacant due to lacking a septic system. A blight removal program can target these structures and assist with demolition or renovations that would allow the installation of a septic system. Overall, the program could involve setting aside funding for blight removal and rehabilitation purposes or it could be as simple as partnering with the USDA to administer its housing repair programs.

### ACTION STEPS

- Establish the program by passing an ordinance and/or collaborating with the USDA.
- Begin setting aside funds for the program.
- Connect qualifying home owners to the USDA for the Single Family Housing Repair Loan and Grant Program.

### PARTNERS

- Town staff or officials
- Harrison County staff or officials
- Local Property Owners

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Harrison County Community Foundation
- Harrison County Community Services Repair Affair Program
- USDA Single Family Housing Repair Loan and Grant Program

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 8

Supports the *Broadband Big Idea* (See Page 28)

## UTILITIES STRATEGY 4.2

**Partner with Harrison County to implement the Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan.**

### DESCRIPTION

The Indiana Broadband Office has certified Harrison County as a Broadband Ready Community. The county earned this distinction by developing the Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan. Since becoming a Broadband Ready Community, Harrison County has begun enacting this plan. The county's Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan presents an opportunity for Elizabeth to improve access to broadband and internet services for its residents.

To improve local broadband services, Elizabeth can engage with Harrison County to learn how it could assist in enacting the Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan. Participating in the implementation of this plan could streamline the development of critical broadband infrastructure nearby or within the town. This would result in service improvements for residents in need of a quality internet connection.

### ACTION STEPS

- Collaborate with Harrison County regarding the Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan.
- Determine Elizabeth's role in assisting the county's plan implementation.
- Enact and implement the broadband plan in collaboration with the county.

### PARTNERS

- Town staff or officials
- Harrison County Staff or Officials
- Indiana Broadband Office
- Internet and/or Broadband Service Providers Operating in Harrison County

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Town staff or officials
- Harrison County staff or officials
- Harrison County Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan
- Harrison County Community Foundation

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 9

Supports the *Water Line Improvements Big Idea* (See Page 28)

## UTILITIES STRATEGY 4.3

Complete a capital improvement plan to identify and prioritize the improvements needed to ensure Elizabeth can continue providing safe, clean water to residents.

### DESCRIPTION

Infrastructure systems are typically built to last a long time. However, they need regular maintenance and occasional updates to ensure they can continue to efficiently provide high-quality service. In Elizabeth, there are some water lines that were built over 50 years ago. Aging water lines, like these, are at higher risk of failure. This would prevent the water system from effectively operating throughout Elizabeth. Prioritizing the reconstruction of these lines in the near future is critical to ensuring residents will continually have access to clean drinking water.

Elizabeth can address its aging water system with an assessment. Fortunately, the town established its own water utility. So, it has simple access to records that could identify the date each line was constructed. The oldest water lines should then be the first targets in a capital improvement plan. They will become the top priority for reconstruction or improvements to preserve the quality of the town's drinking water.

### ACTION STEPS

- Work with the Elizabeth Water Company to identify the age and condition of existing water lines.
- Assess which lines are most in need of improvements or reconstruction.
- Prepare a capital improvement plan that lays out a timeline of improvements to each identified water line.
- Apply for grants and funding assistance to aid the construction process.

### PARTNERS

- Town staff or officials
- Elizabeth Indiana Water Company
- Harrison County staff or officials

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- State Water Infrastructure Fund
- Indiana Drinking Water State Revolving Fund
- Engineers

# CATALYST INITIATIVE 10

Supports the *Streetscape Improvements Big Idea* (See Page 32)

## TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY 5.4

**Implement decorative streetscaping elements to improve safety and visual appeal along Main Street.**

### DESCRIPTION

Currently, Main Street in Elizabeth has few features that distinguish it from similar corridors in other communities. It has standard streetlights and utility poles as well as a narrow sidewalk with no curbs. This results in little to no visually apparent community identity for Elizabeth. Introducing some streetscaping elements, like trees, planters, and decorative streetlights, along Main Street could reinforce Elizabeth's identity.

Lining the road with trees and decorative streetlights would not only improve the visual appeal of the street. It would also provide additional space for decorative items. For example, Elizabeth could hang banners from the streetlights to display a community brand to road users. Implementing trees and planters along Main Street could also have the side effect of discouraging speeding. These streetscape elements change the nature and appearance of the street. This encourages drivers to maintain safer speeds because the street appears so different from the typical roads outside of town.

### ACTION STEPS

- Identify precise locations for trees, decorative streetlights, and other streetscaping elements on Main Street.
- Determine the cost of each streetscape improvement and any annual maintenance/electric service.
- Secure funding through placemaking initiatives and/or roadway improvement programs.
- Recruit assistance from the county or INDOT on the installation of the streetlights.

### PARTNERS

- Town staff or officials
- Harrison County staff or officials

### RESOURCES / TOOLS

- Asset Management Plan
- IDDC Indiana Placemaking Activation Grant
- INDOT Community Crossings Matching Grant
- Harrison County Community Foundation

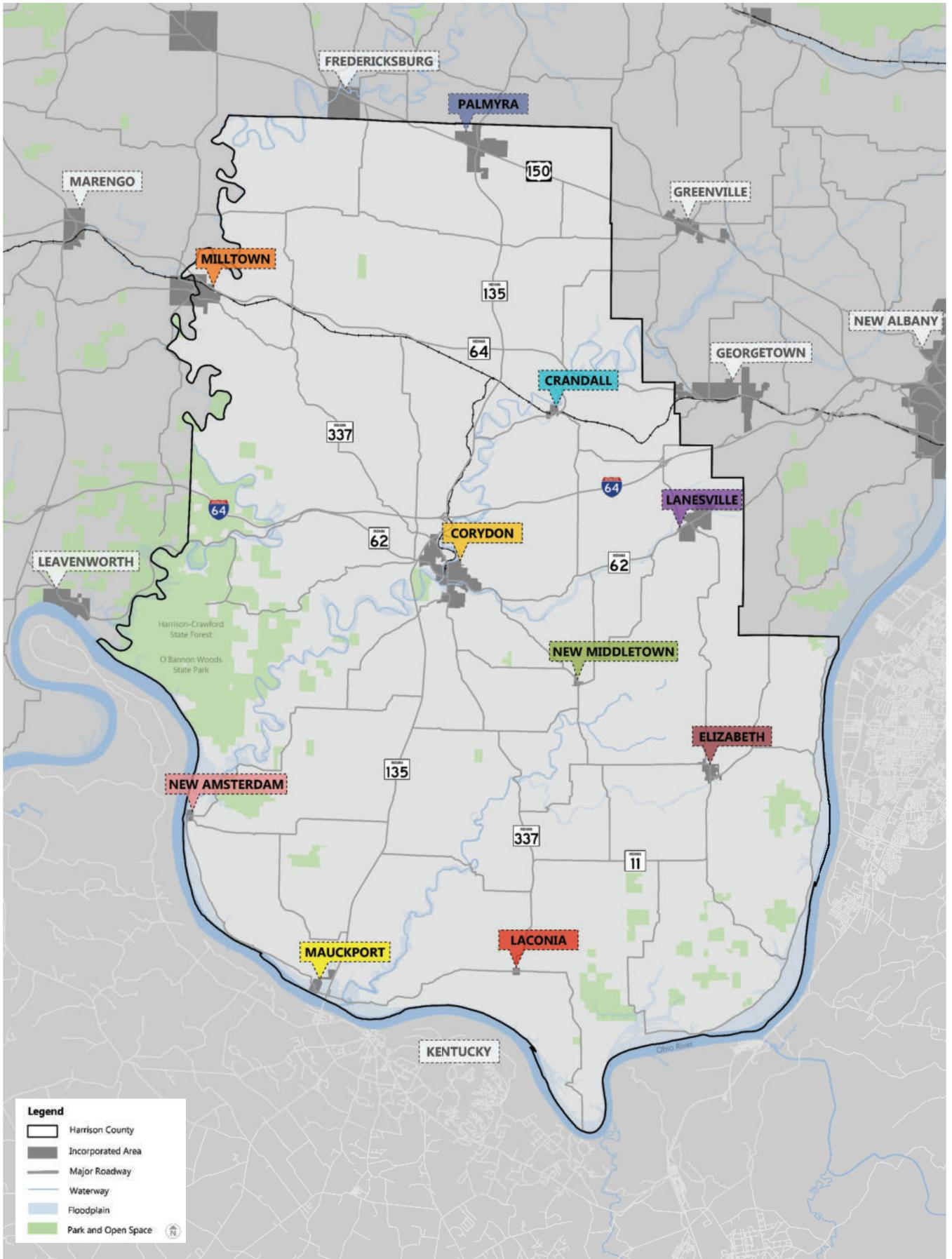


*From 2010 to 2020, Elizabeth lost more than a quarter (25%) of its population bringing it from 162 to 121 residents.*

# Appendix

## Existing Conditions Summary

A clear and cohesive understanding of Elizabeth, as it exists today, is a critical building block in developing a comprehensive plan. The *Elizabeth Comprehensive Plan* will outline a community-wide vision with associated goals and recommendations for how to achieve the town's future wants and needs. It is important to complete a baseline assessment of the demographic and socioeconomic status, and inventory of the built environment, to identify issues and opportunities that should be considered as parts of the plan. Ultimately, the issues and opportunities identified will inform the town's goals and recommendations for meeting its overall vision.



## REGIONAL CONTEXT

Settled between the large metropolitan areas of Evansville and Louisville, Harrison County is comprised of rural landscapes and scattered small towns. Regionally, the county is within a short distance to natural features including Cave Country and multiple state parks that offer spelunking and hiking. It is also along the Ohio River which offers canoeing, boating, and other water activities.

Considered one of the smaller towns in Harrison County, Elizabeth has about 0.26 square miles (166 acres) of land within town limits. Along the southern border, Hwy 11 connects Elizabeth to I-64, which runs east-west through the center of the county with interchanges near Corydon as well as numerous state roads.

## PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

**Crafting a comprehensive plan is an opportunity to build upon past planning efforts.** Elizabeth was established in 1812, and the town has continued to evolve since then. With an understanding of past planning efforts and current conditions, a planning effort can better respond to residents' needs and better account for the impacts and opportunities of growth and redevelopment. While Elizabeth does not have any past comprehensive plans specifically for the town, Harrison County has completed plans that include Elizabeth. The following plans were considered as part of the planning process:



### Harrison County Comprehensive Plan - 2009

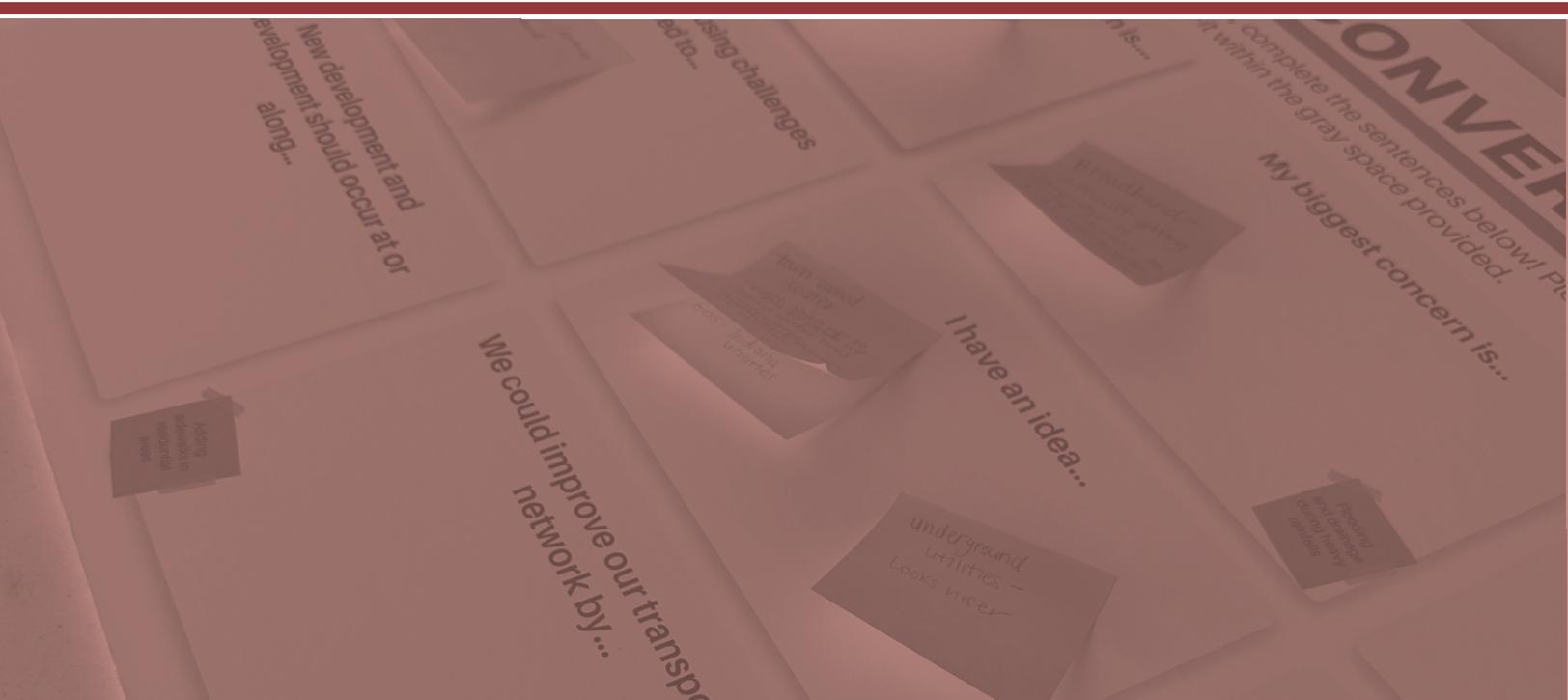
The county's current comprehensive plan establishes a vision that emphasizes the value of the small towns and rural lifestyle and balances development opportunities with good stewardship of the land. The plan outlines eight key goals that range from providing responsible development and preserving the rural character to responding to lifelong educational needs and supporting the expansion and enhancement of services, programs, and facilities. Additionally, the implementation chapter focuses on updating policies, establishing new regulations, and conducting further plan-related studies.

### Harrison County Community Leadership Planning Initiative - 2020

This initiative focused on five areas that were identified as the highest priorities for the county's future. The initiative's goals were to address those priorities through the combined efforts of the county and local leadership. The five priorities included:

- A shared vision for Infrastructure and Land Use Planning
- Workforce and Education
- Diverse Housing Options
- Business Development and Support
- Substance Abuse, Health, and Wellness

This initiative identified the need to create comprehensive plans for each of the ten incorporated towns as well as the county. The Elizabeth Comprehensive Plan is one of ten town plans being completed as part of the *Harrison County Town Planning Initiative*.



# DEMOGRAPHICS

PEOPLE | HOUSING | ECONOMICS

The following section evaluates both demographic and socioeconomic data to identify defining community characteristics, and trends. The profile compares standard town population, housing, and economic data to other local towns, Harrison County, and the State of Indiana to provide context. Unless otherwise stated, the following data was gathered from the U.S. Census. Data is from 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates.

The Census is a self-reported data-collection system in which each resident fills out a form in order to be counted. Because Elizabeth is a very small town, the Census data that is collected has a small sample size. This can result in a large margin of error and possibly skew data. This is further compounded when people do not return their Census form, and past years appear to have had a low participation rate. Therefore, while the data can provide a helpful starting point, it must be considered within context. More accurate data could be gathered from a local, door-to-door survey if specific statistics are needed when implementing this plan.

## PEOPLE

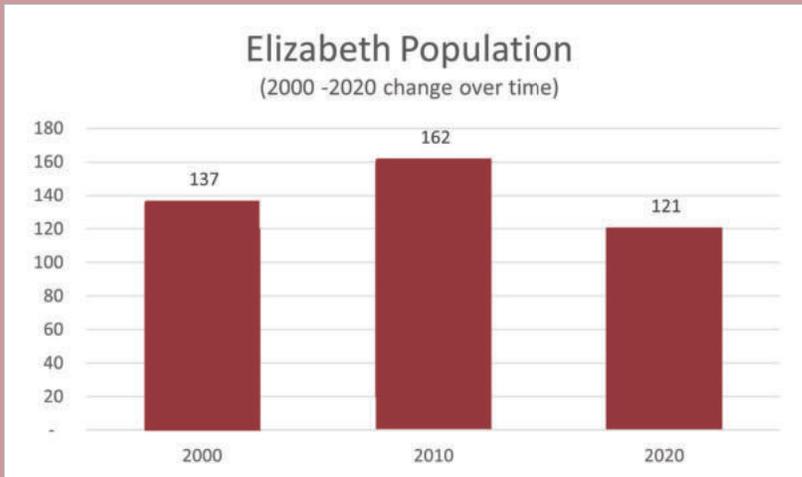
### **Population growth in Elizabeth has been inconsistent over the last few decades.**

Elizabeth experienced an 18.2% population increase between 2000 and 2010 but then experienced a 25.3% decrease from 2010 to 2020. The total population of Elizabeth in 2020 was 121 making it the sixth-largest town in Harrison County. Elizabeth is currently losing population. However, Harrison County's population is projected to increase over the next 20 years. Therefore, Elizabeth may see new residents fill some vacant homes in town.

### **The town's average household size has increased over the past decade.**

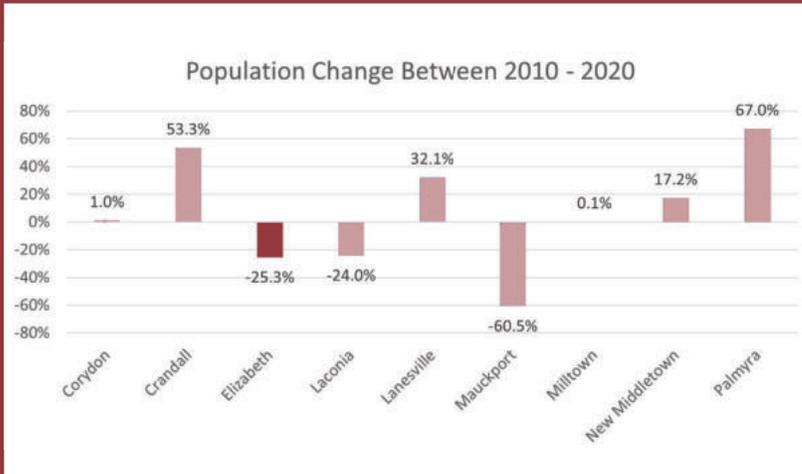
In 2020, Elizabeth had a total of 46 households which is a 12.2% increase from 2010. This is the fourth-largest increase in the number of households among the towns in Harrison County. Furthermore, household sizes can be used in projecting future housing needs in the community. The average number of persons per household in Elizabeth is 2.69, up from 2.18 in 2010. This is similar to the average household sizes in the United States (2.69), Indiana (2.6), and Harrison County (2.78).

TOTAL POPULATION



Elizabeth saw a decrease in population from 162 in 2010 to 121 in 2020.

POPULATION CHANGE



Elizabeth's population has declined by more than a quarter in the past decade. This is the second largest decline in Harrison County.

HOUSEHOLDS

Household Size (owner)	2010	2020	Percent Change
Corydon	2.56	2.3	-10.2%
Crandall	2.03	2.39	17.7%
Elizabeth	2.18	2.69	23.4%
Laconia	2.7	3.22	19.3%
Lanesville	2.34	2.55	9.0%
Mauckport	2.94	2	-32.0%
Milltown	2.85	2.81	-1.4%
New Amsterdam	2	3.81	90.5%
New Middletown	3.26	4.04	23.9%
Palmyra	2.81	2.82	0.4%

On average, there are more residents in each housing unit than ten years ago.

**Elizabeth is not diverse.**

Race and ethnicity are considered two separate and distinct characteristics. Race refers to a person's physical characteristics, and ethnicity describes a person's origin or cultural identity. Elizabeth's racial mix is consistent with half of the towns in Harrison County as 100% of residents identify as White alone. When looking at ethnicity, 6.4% of Elizabeth's population was of Hispanic or Latino descent in 2010. As of 2020, none of the population identified as Hispanic or Latino descent.

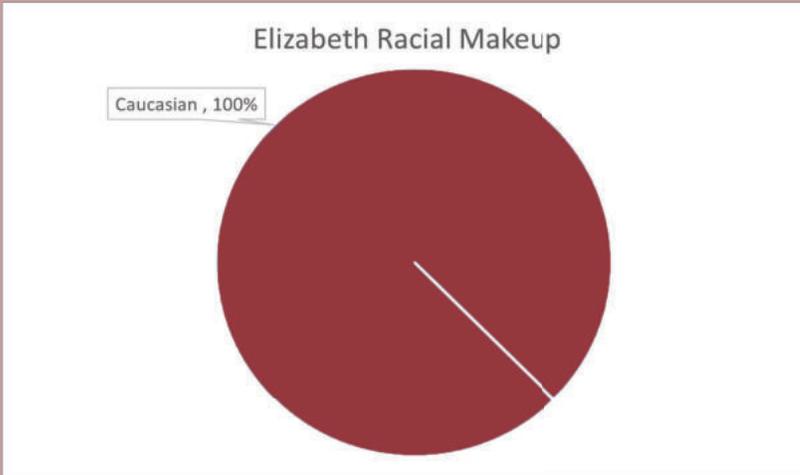
**The population of Elizabeth is aging.**

Three of the four largest age groups in Elizabeth are made up of residents older than 30 years. Roughly 45% of Elizabeth's population is between 30 and 59. If the youngest generations do not grow in size, and this portion of the population ages in place, Elizabeth's population will be comprised primarily of older generations. Despite this, there is still a large age group under 20 years old. Approximately 17% of Elizabeth's population is between 10 and 19.

**Education attainment rates are decreasing.**

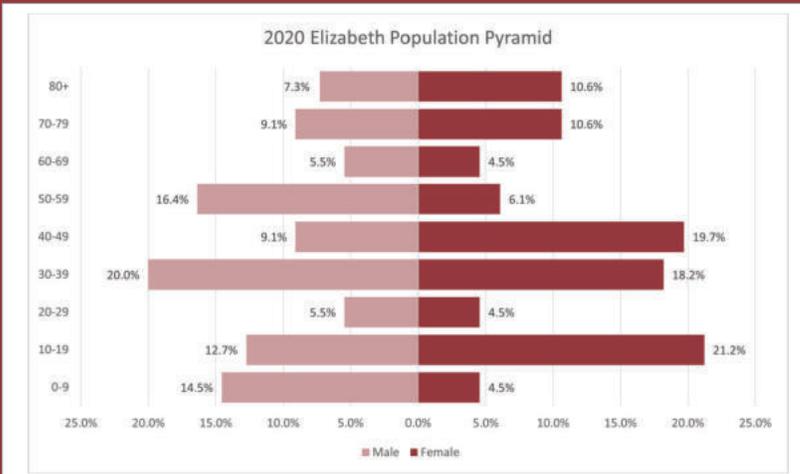
Although lower than the average across the country, high school graduation rates in Elizabeth are still high with 79.8% of the population holding a diploma. The percentage of Elizabeth citizens with a bachelor's degree or higher is the highest in Harrison County but slightly lower than Indiana as a whole. Both the percentage of Elizabeth's citizens with at least a high school degree and the percentage of Elizabeth's citizens with a bachelor's degree or higher has decreased since 2010.

RACE & ETHNICITY



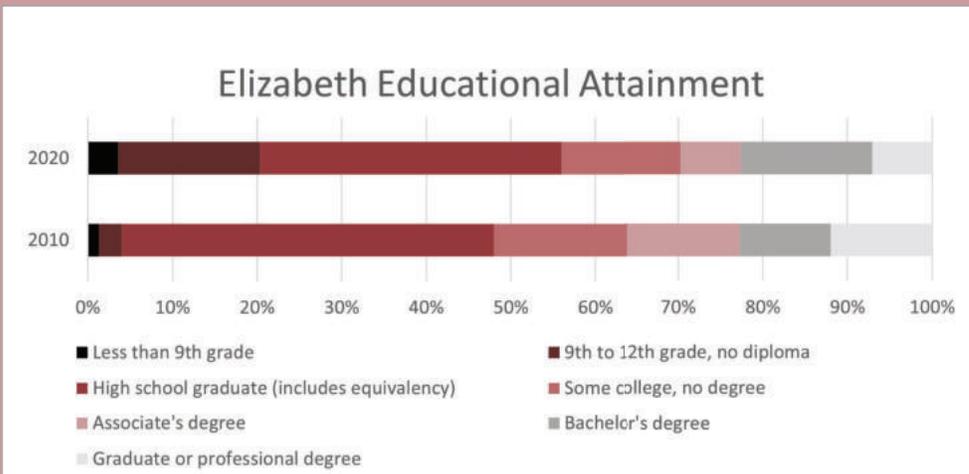
*Every resident of Elizabeth identified themselves as White alone.*

AGE STRUCTURE



*Almost half of the population is between the ages of 30 and 60. However, much of the population is between 10 and 19 years old.*

EDUCATION



*Elizabeth has the highest rates of college level educational attainment in Harrison County.*

## PEOPLE - KEY CONCLUSIONS

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ELIZABETH?

- **Elizabeth's total population has declined after previously increasing at a steady rate.** Elizabeth has declined by 41 people since 2010, which is approximately a 25.3% decrease in population. The current population is 121 people. This type of decrease, especially for a small town, makes it difficult to provide and maintain services such as libraries. This could also harm small businesses that rely on the local population. Without the necessary demand, Elizabeth's services and businesses may struggle to fully operate.
- **Elizabeth's household size is changing.** The number of single-person households has remained the same in Elizabeth, however, the number of family-households has increased by 5 households. This may mean that immediate family members are continuing to live together or are moving back in with each other instead of living alone. Family households benefit from income pooling, economies of scale, and higher rates of saving than do single-person households.
- **Elizabeth's population is primarily becoming older.** Within a few decades, a large portion of Elizabeth's population will be approaching retirement or beyond it. This could strain local healthcare systems and cause the town's population to rapidly decrease as a significant part of Elizabeth passes away. Fortunately, the second largest age group is between 10 and 19. This generation may help to offset the effects of an aging population. Ensuring high-quality education and youth programs are in place for this group, and for future generations, would help to attract families to Elizabeth. This would bring in younger generations, improve local education opportunities, and maintain the town's population.
- **Racial and cultural diversity is increasing slightly within Harrison County, but not in Elizabeth.** In 2010, Elizabeth was one of the most diverse towns in Harrison County. About 85% of the population identified as White, 2% identified as Black or African American, and 6.4% identified as American Indian and Alaska Native. Additionally, 6.4% identified as being of Hispanic or Latino origin. As of 2020, the population is higher but 100% of Elizabeth's population identified as White alone. Since 2010, the population of Harrison County has also become more diverse. Therefore, non-White populations are settling outside of Elizabeth. This could impact population growth as some potential residents may choose not to move to Elizabeth due to a lack of diversity in the local population.
- **Educational attainment levels have decreased in Elizabeth.** From 2010 to 2020, the percentage of Elizabeth's population with a Bachelor's degree or higher has decreased by 5%. In the same time period, the percentage of the population with a high school diploma has declined by 16.2%. The greatest increase occurred to the percentage of the population that has attained some high school education without graduating. Decreasing rates of educational attainment may indicate changes in the demand for employment opportunities. Many fields of employment require a certain level of educational attainment to enter. If educational attainment rates are decreasing, then the demand to work in such fields is decreasing.

## HOUSING

### **Elizabeth's vacancy rate is rising.**

Just under 46% of Elizabeth's 70 total housing units are owner-occupied. This is low in comparison to Harrison County and Indiana. In contrast, 34.3% of housing units in Elizabeth are vacant. This is one of the highest percentages of vacant housing among the ten towns in Harrison County. It is also substantially higher than what is considered a healthy vacancy rate.

### **Elizabeth's housing stock is not very diverse.**

Of the 70 housing units in Elizabeth, 84.3% are single-family detached homes. Nearly 3% are in structures with two units, 1.4% are in structures with three or four units, and 11.4% are mobile homes. This is not particularly diverse in comparison to most other towns in Harrison County.

### **Elizabeth's housing units are, on average, increasing in value.**

From 2010 to 2020, Elizabeth's median home value increased by 13.9%. Elizabeth's current median home value (\$120,000) is the second highest in Harrison County behind Lanesville. Despite this, it is lower than Harrison County's median home value which factors in the values of homes in unincorporated areas.

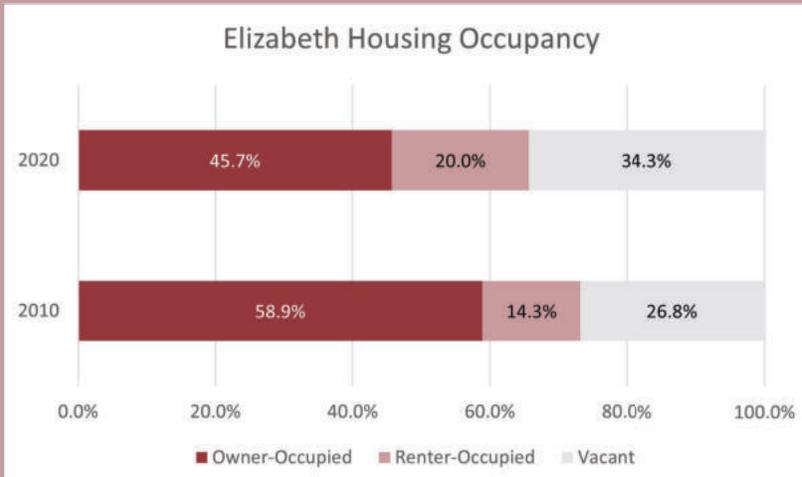
### **Rent has increased in Elizabeth.**

Of Elizabeth's 70 total housing units, 20% are renter-occupied. The median rent in town is almost \$875 per month. This is an increase of \$275 from \$600 median contract rent in 2010. This increase likely followed the market as it reflects the increase in local home values. However, if it increases too quickly, policy controls may be put in place to protect renters and attract future residents.

### **Most housing in Elizabeth was built before 1950.**

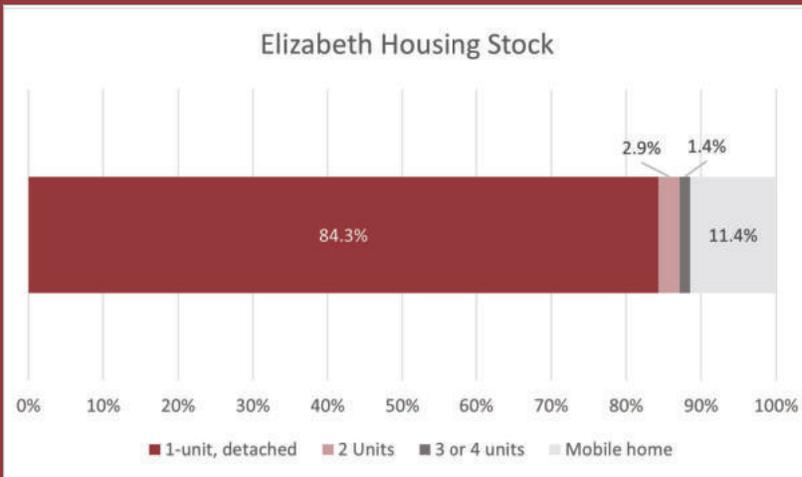
The age of a community's housing stock is sometimes used as a measure of the general condition of the community's housing supply. Over half (51.5%) of Elizabeth's housing stock was built before 1950, meaning it is at least 70 years old. An additional 20% of the housing units were built between 1950 and 1959. Older homes are more likely to need repairs often.

HOUSING UNITS



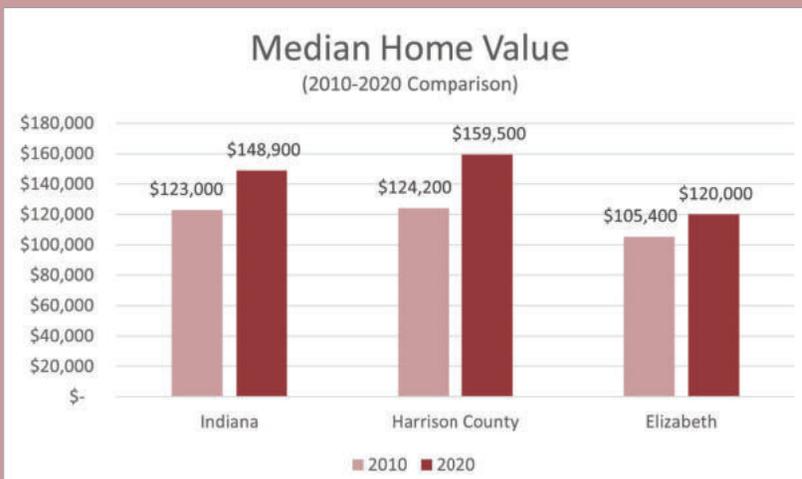
As of 2020, 24 housing units in Elizabeth are vacant. This accounts for more than a third of all housing in the town.

HOUSING TYPES



Most housing units in Elizabeth are single-family, detached homes. Few residents live in multi-unit structures.

HOME VALUES



Since 2010, the median home value in Elizabeth has increased by 14%.

## HOUSING - KEY CONCLUSIONS

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ELIZABETH?

- **Elizabeth is experiencing an increase in vacancy rates.** Although the number of housing units increased by only 14 from 2010 to 2020, Elizabeth saw a shift in occupancy. The vacancy rate increased by 7.5% meaning over one-third of housing units are vacant. Housing that is vacant, and unmaintained, for long periods of time fall into disrepair. Such structures affect surrounding land values and lower the assessed values of surrounding properties. This causes land values to decrease and impacts local property taxes too. Maintaining a large quantity of vacant housing can become costly, so it is important to prevent housing from remaining vacant for too long.
- **Elizabeth needs more housing options.** Most housing units in Elizabeth are in single-family detached structures. As such, the housing stock is not diverse. This could force some residents and potential residents to move elsewhere because they are not able to find desired housing within Elizabeth. It is important that a community provides a range of housing choices that meet the needs of people of all income levels, age groups, and special needs.
- **Elizabeth's homes are aging with increased maintenance and repair costs.** Over 70% of all housing in Elizabeth is at least 60 years old. In addition, no new homes have been built since 2009. Due to their age, many homes in Elizabeth can become very costly to maintain and update. There are state and federal programs available that could aid homeowners in making repairs or updates to their homes, but additional assistance may become necessary.

## EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE

### The median household income in Elizabeth has increased.

The median income of a household in Elizabeth has increased by 36% since 2010. This is the third largest increase in comparison to the other nine towns in Harrison County. Elizabeth’s median household income, \$57,500, falls just under that of Indiana and Harrison County.

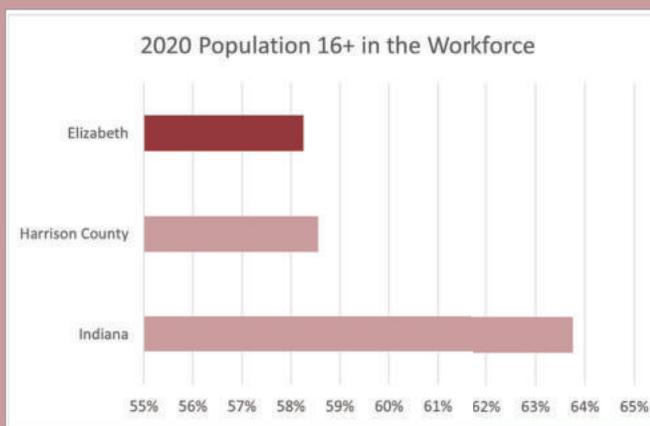
### More than half of Elizabeth’s residents 16 and older are in the labor force.

A town’s labor force is the portion of the population over the age of 16 that is employed or available for work. The labor force includes people who are in the armed forces, employed, unemployed, or actively seeking employment. In 2010, 50 residents of Elizabeth aged 16 and older were employed, meaning the labor force participation rate was 62.5%. By 2020, this has decreased to 58.3%, but there are 10 additional labor force participants. This is due to an increase in the size of the population aged 16 and older.

### Elizabeth residents work across many industries.

The educational services, and health care and social assistance sector employs the greatest percentage of Elizabeth residents (26.7%). The arts, entertainment, recreation and accommodation, and food services sector is the second largest industry sector employing Elizabeth residents at 20.0%, followed closely by manufacturing (15.0%). Heavy employment in health and service industries reflects Elizabeth’s reliance on other regional employment centers, like Louisville. With an increased number of labor force participants in Elizabeth. The arts, entertainment, recreation and accommodation, and food services sector saw the largest change from only two employed persons in 2010 to 12 employed people in 2020. The other industries had minor changes in labor force participation.

#### LABOR FORCE



*Despite its small size, Elizabeth’s workforce is employed across many industries. No more than 27% of the workforce is in any one industry.*

#### COMMUTING TRENDS

WORKED IN STATE OF RESIDENCE	73.3%
<i>Worked in county of residence</i>	41.7%
<i>Worked outside county of residence</i>	31.7%
WORKED OUTSIDE STATE OF RESIDENCE	26.7%

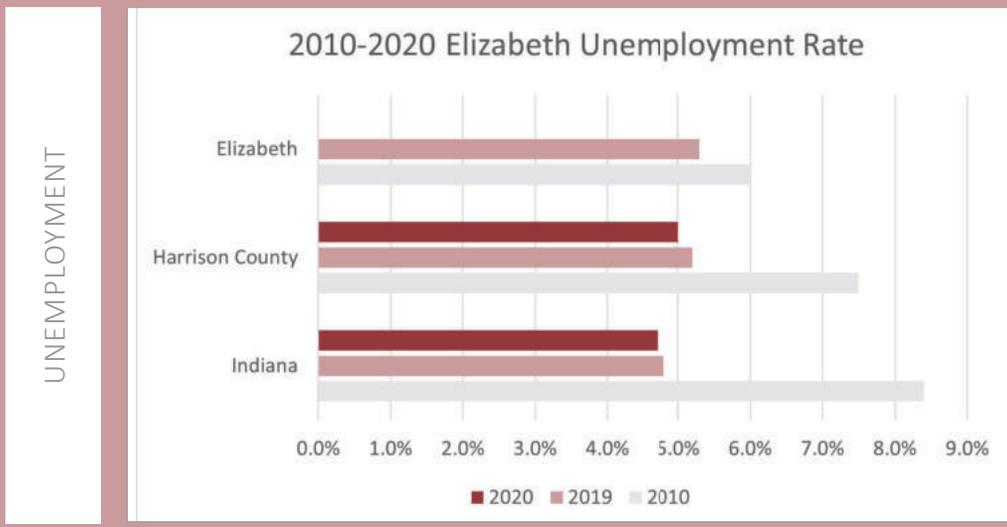
*Roughly 32% of Elizabeth’s workforce lives in town but works outside of Harrison County. In total, 5% of the workforce works in another county in Indiana and 26.7% works out of state.*

**Elizabeth has a low rate of unemployment.**

In 2020, Elizabeth’s unemployment rate was 0.0%. Unemployment rates consider only those individuals aged 16 years and older that are currently employed or actively seeking employment. Harrison County’s unemployment rate in 2020 was 5.0%, which is slightly higher than Indiana’s at 4.8%.

**Elizabeth’s average commute time is similar to Harrison County’s.**

The average commute time for residents of Harrison County is 31.3 minutes. Similarly, the average commute time for Elizabeth’s residents is 30.5 minutes, which happens to be the approximate time it takes to travel from Elizabeth to Louisville, Kentucky. However, only 27% of residents work outside of Indiana. Regardless of whether residents are traveling to Louisville for work, the half-hour drive confirms that they are traveling away from town. The average resident of Elizabeth works several miles outside of town.



*As of 2020, Elizabeth has an unemployment rate of 0%, whereas Indiana and Harrison County have rates of roughly 5%.*

## ECONOMICS - KEY CONCLUSIONS

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ELIZABETH?

- **Elizabeth's median household income is increasing.** The town's median income was \$57,500 in 2020 which represents a 36.0% increase from 2010 (\$42,292). With an increase in wages and a low cost of living compared to neighboring communities, the population may have a larger disposable income that could be spent in town if businesses and amenities were present. This would encourage greater economic activity in Elizabeth.
- **Elizabeth has a well-sized labor force, but its population structure may be a problem.** As of 2020, almost 60% of the town's population is part of the workforce. Looking to the future, the population is projected to get older with much of the labor force retiring in only two decades. If retained, the existing younger population can soften the blow, but it cannot completely mitigate the impact. As the current workforce gets older and closer to retirement, their incomes will change. A shift in finances could impact the individuals' disposable incomes and affect the local economy and housing stock.
- **Elizabeth's workforce is not particularly dependent on any one industry.** Between 2010 and 2020, the percentage of the workforce employed in the arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services industries increased while other industries such as transportation, warehousing, and utilities, information, and educational services, manufacturing, and educational services, and health care and social assistance have stayed relatively the same. This diverse spread of employment will help limit the severity of any recessions or business closings in the short term.

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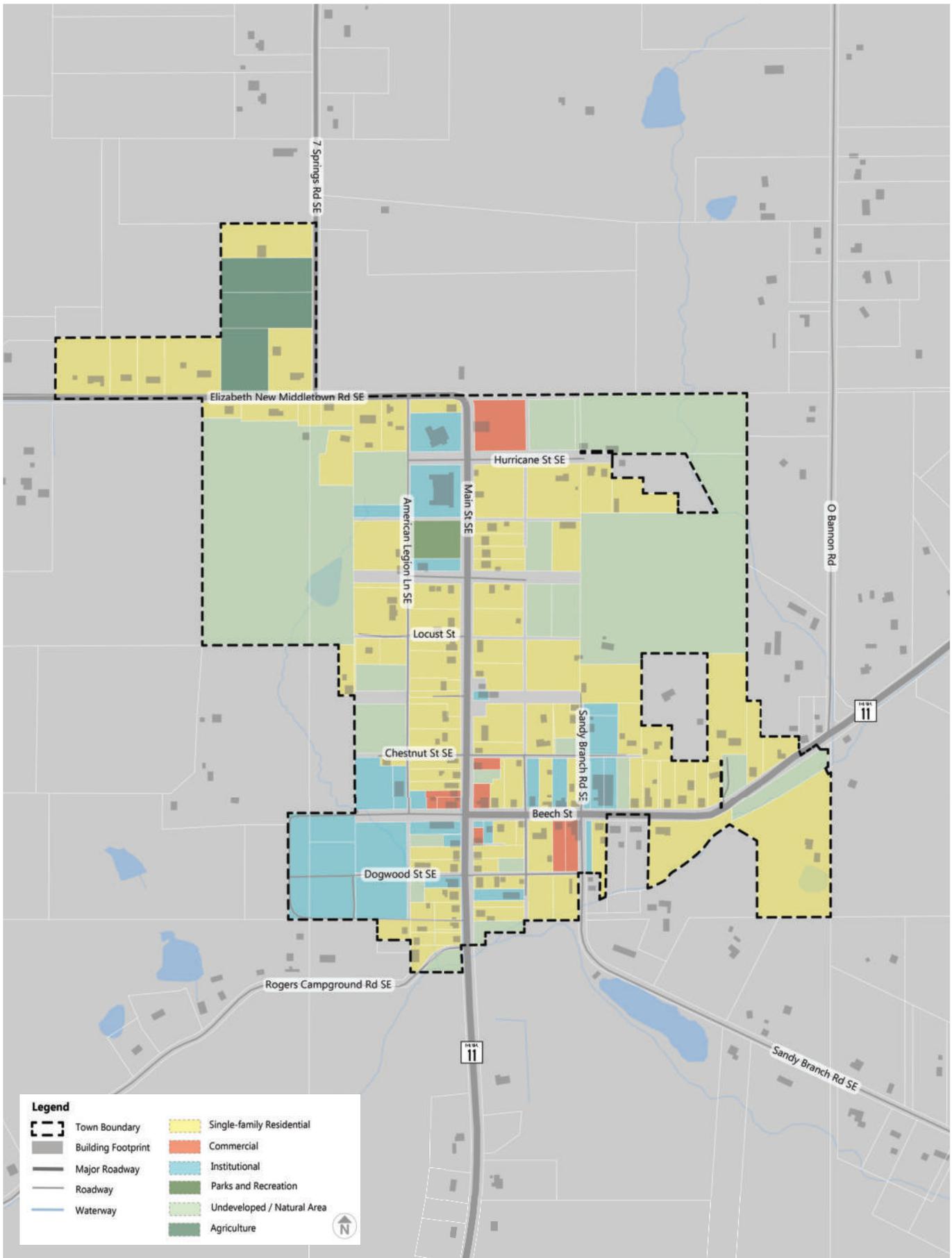
# THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE | TRANSPORTATION | UTILITIES | COMMUNITY FACILITIES

It is important to review the land use pattern, transportation network, and location of utility infrastructure to understand what is happening on the ground. Some elements, such as buildings, streets, and sidewalks, are easy to evaluate because people can easily see them. Other elements, such as utility infrastructure, are not as easy to assess because it is largely located underground or not visible. These components come together to form the built environment. The following section provides a brief overview of existing land use, transportation, and utility infrastructure in Elizabeth.

## EXISTING LAND USE

One of the primary requirements for comprehensive planning, set forth by the Indiana Code, is a statement of objectives for land use. Land use is the type of activity that occurs on a property or within a structure. There are many different types of land uses, but the most common uses include residential, commercial, parks and recreation, industrial, and institutional.



The existing land uses within Elizabeth include the following:

- **Residential** – The residential category represents land used exclusively for residential purposes. Most housing units within this category are single-family homes.
- **Commercial** – This category represents land that is used for providing goods and services. Commercial uses are very limited in Elizabeth, including a general store, a bank, and a few vacant commercial buildings.
- **Institutional** – Institutional uses typically include religious, educational, or civic uses. Uses within this land use category are typically exempt from property taxes. The institutional uses within the town include the Elizabeth Civic Center and Town Hall, Harrison County Public Library Elizabeth Branch, South Harrison Community Center, Elizabeth Volunteer Fire Department, Harrison County Hospital EMS Station 2, and two churches along with the Rose Hill Cemetery.
- **Public Park** – The public park category represents land used for active recreation or passive open space. Harry N. Rooksby Memorial Playground is the only facility open to the public that is on the Community Center property. This park has a medium-sized playground, basketball court, and a small gazebo.
- **Undeveloped / Natural** – This category represents land that is not developed. Most of the undeveloped land is used for agricultural purposes or additional natural space for owned residential properties.

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## TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

A transportation network can and should include more than just roads for cars. A complete network includes multiple ways for people to get around, including sidewalks, multi-use paths, trails, and public transit options (such as buses). The following section outlines the existing transportation network in Elizabeth.

### ROADS

Functional classification records how a road functions and how often private property has direct access to it. This includes several factors such as the efficiency of travel, traffic circulation, access points, number of lanes, speed limits, and how the road is used. The Federal Highway Functional Classification system has six primary road classifications, including interstate, freeway or expressway, principal arterial, minor arterial, major collector, and minor collector. Any road not classified is considered a local road.

Elizabeth has only one major roadway within town limits. Hwy 11, which provides east-west connectivity to Laconia and north to Maplewood and I-64, is classified as a major collector. All the other roads in town are considered local roads. Elizabeth is responsible for maintaining the local roads within town limits.

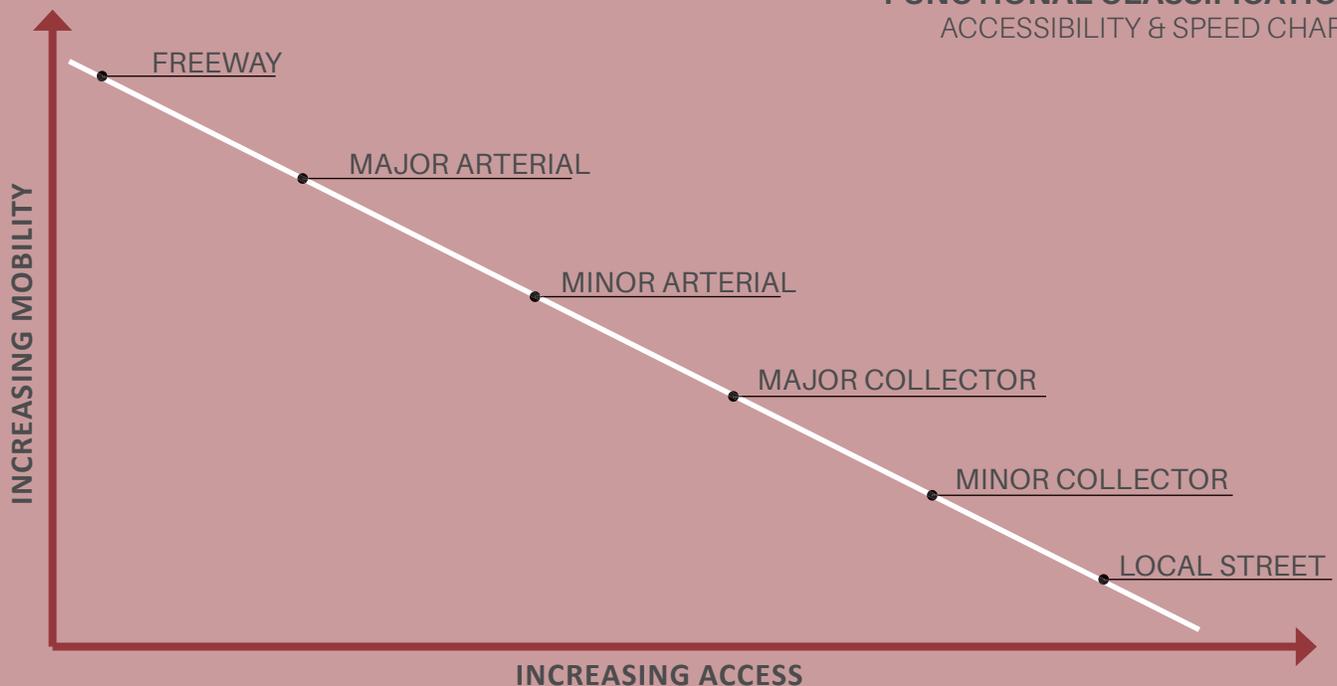
### SIDEWALKS

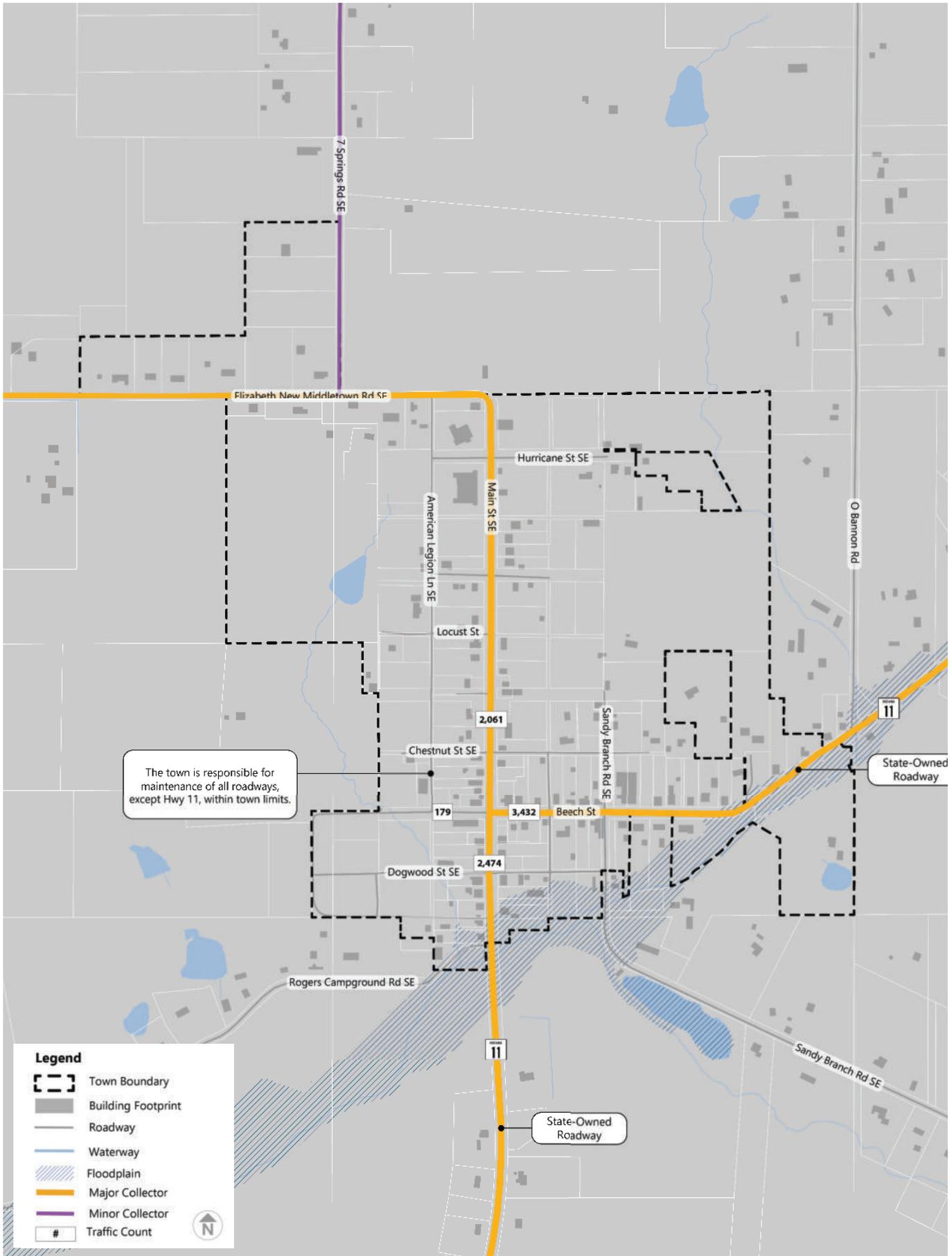
Sidewalks not only serve as another way for people to get around town, but they also provide a recreational amenity for leisure walking and biking. Sidewalks are very limited in Elizabeth. The existing sidewalks are primarily located along the west side of Main Street and the north side of Hwy 11/Beech Street.

### BUS ROUTES

There is one public transit service available to residents. Working with the Harrison County Commissioners and Blue River Services, the Southern Transit System (SITS) serves the community with rural transit services. SITS is available to residents in Crawford, Harrison, Scott, Washington, and Floyd Counties. Their door-to-door service provides a way for residents to get from their houses to a destination within the region. Trips must be scheduled in advance by phone and costs range from two to four dollars one way, depending on the mileage. The existing route for Harrison County includes the Community Center in Elizabeth, the Harrison Center in Corydon, and the Palmyra Habilitation Center.

**FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION**  
ACCESSIBILITY & SPEED CHART





## UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Water, wastewater, stormwater, electricity, and broadband (internet) are typically provided by a public or private entity. These utilities are critical to maintaining a high quality of life and supporting community growth and development.

### WATER, WASTEWATER, AND STORMWATER

The Town of Elizabeth has a water system that provides service to much of the town. However, the infrastructure in this system is nearing the end of its useful life. The town's water system requires maintenance and updates to ensure it continues to provide quality water service to the residents of Elizabeth.

The Harrison County Regional Sewer District provides wastewater service to a small portion of Elizabeth. Service is currently limited to where the infrastructure exists between the town and the Caesar's Southern Indiana Casino. This system was originally built to provide wastewater service for the casino. The rest of Elizabeth has no wastewater service, meaning each property must rely on private septic tanks.

Elizabeth does not have stormwater infrastructure.

### ELECTRIC

Local electricity is provided by the Harrison County Rural Electric Membership Cooperative. The Harrison County REMC is a not-for-profit, member-owned cooperative that offers electric services throughout much of Harrison, Floyd, Clark, Crawford, and Washington Counties. In addition to utility services, the organization offers several community programs for youth and members.

### BROADBAND

There are eight internet providers within the area, including Frontier, Viasat, HughesNet, and Mainstream Fiber. Many of them have limited availability and limited speeds and rely on varying technologies including ADSL, cable, fiber, fixed wireless, or satellite. Internet and broadband service are expected to improve with the implementation of the *Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan*.

In 2022, the Chamber of Commerce of Harrison County and the Harrison County Community Foundation drafted a *Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan*. The plan identifies

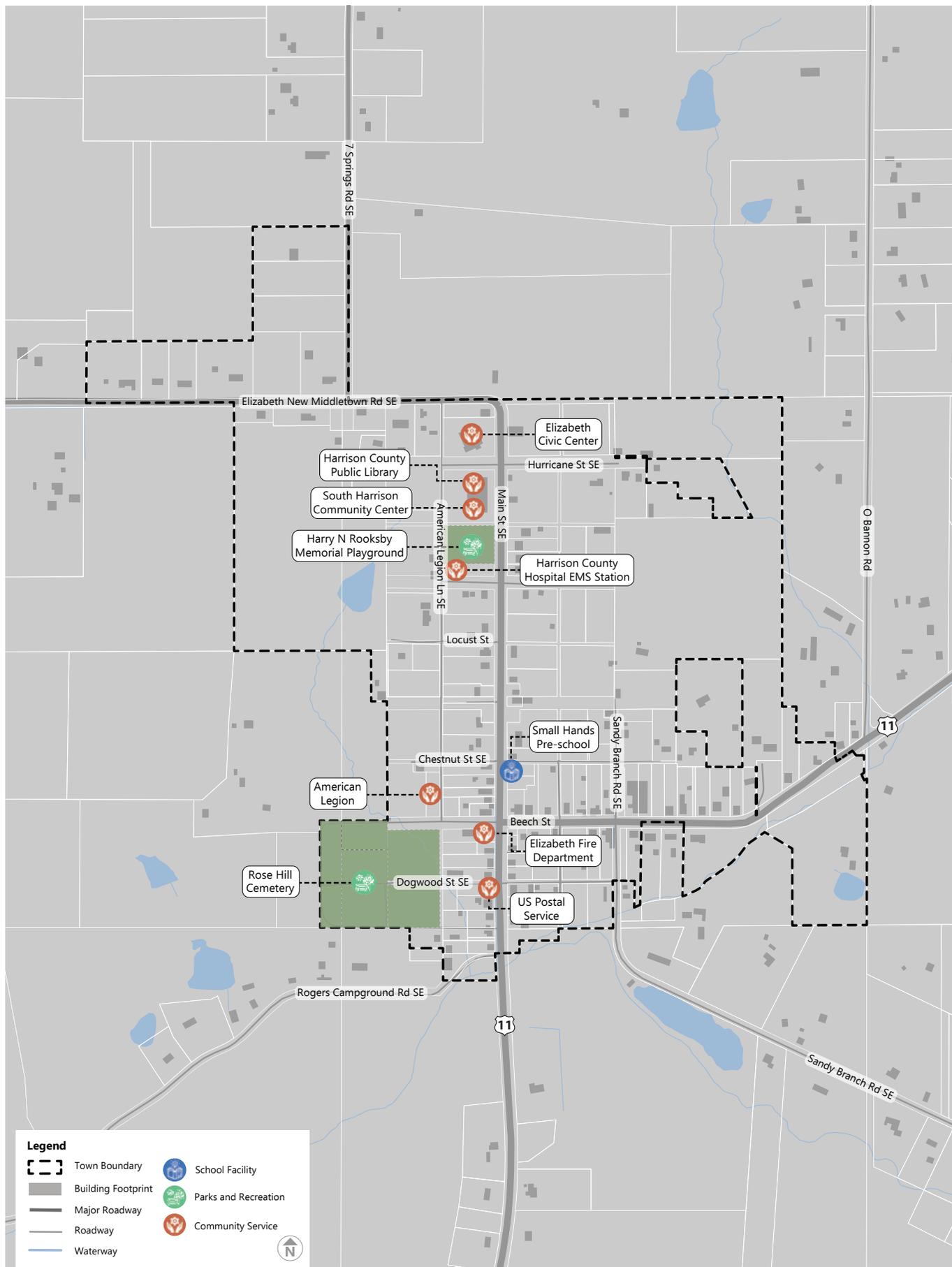
areas in need of broadband infrastructure, defines the greatest return on investment, and outlines strategies for implementation. The plan was completed for the entire county, but the town will also see its benefits as the recommendations are implemented. Due to the low population count in and around Elizabeth, it is likely some financial incentive will need to be provided to encourage broadband build-out.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities enhance the quality of life within the Town of Elizabeth. They can provide a range of services, including health, public safety, government administration, and recreation. Elizabeth has many community facilities, especially for a town of its size. These facilities include:

- **South Harrison Community Center** - It was renovated from the former Elizabeth High School (1937-1958) and Elizabeth Grade School (1958-1986) and hosts various community and holiday events.
- **Harrison County Public Library Elizabeth Branch** - The library is in the same renovated building as the Community Center.
- **Harry N. Rooksby Memorial Playground** - This park, named after a former principal of the Elizabeth Grade School, features a playground, a basketball court, and green space.

Other community facilities that service the residents of Elizabeth include the town hall, volunteer fire department, EMS station, Veterans American Legion, and post office.



# KEY CONCLUSIONS

## Elizabeth's Strengths & Opportunities

The inventory collected and outlined within this analysis informed the planning process by revealing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats based on what the community has to offer today and what it could offer in the future. The following analysis highlights the key conclusions that served as the foundation for the vision, goals, and recommendations of the *Elizabeth Comprehensive Plan*.

- **Labor Force** - Elizabeth's labor force is employed across many industries. This ensures the town has some economic resiliency. If a significant employer within one industry were to close, Elizabeth's population would still largely be employed as they are working in different industry. Therefore, Elizabeth has some protection against economic downturn in single industries.
- **Rising Incomes** - Median household incomes are rising in Elizabeth, meaning residents are likely to have greater financial flexibility. Extra income can be used to purchase additional goods or services beyond necessary costs of living. Therefore, there is an opportunity expand the local commercial market to take advantage of this expendable income. This would also increase the number of amenities and services available to residents and improve local quality of life.
- **Community Facilities** - There are many community facilities in town that service Elizabeth and surrounding areas. This is significant for the local population. Emergency response times are fast because there are emergency medical and fire protection services functioning in the town. There are also social and political centers like the Veterans American Legion, Town Hall, Harrison County Public Library, and South Harrison Community Center within Elizabeth. Their location in town makes them easily accessible to residents. The only community facilities not in town are the local schools.
- **Broadband Planning** - Harrison County's Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan has helped to prepare the area for broadband investment. This is significant as it could impact the availability of internet service in Elizabeth. Internet and cell service is currently limited in both location and providers in and around the Town of Elizabeth. Improving these conditions could ensure that Elizabeth and its residents are more strongly connected to one another and to surrounding communities.
- **Strong Social Environment** - Elizabeth has a town hall, public library, community center, churches, and an American Legion Post. Each of these community assets have the opportunity to host or sponsor community-wide events. They can seek to do so on their own or work together to hold a larger event. This multitude of community facilities can ensure the development of a strong social environment in Elizabeth. Each organization can bring people together through great, community events.

# KEY CONCLUSIONS

## Elizabeth's Challenges & Threats

- **Limited Housing Options** - There are few housing options in Elizabeth. The majority of the housing stock is comprised of single-family detached homes. While this is a popular style of home, it is not always affordable or even desirable for everyone. It is important to include other options like single-family attached, multi-family, apartment, or mobile home units. This would make Elizabeth more attractive to many as it would allow the town to offer a larger variety of housing units. It could also help to make Elizabeth an even more affordable place to live.
- **Limited Sidewalk Network** - Elizabeth's sidewalk network is very limited. Specifically, sidewalks exist along Main Street and Hwy 11/Beech Street. These sidewalks, while narrow, are in fair condition with minor areas of plant growth between cracks in the pavement. These sidewalks are likely to need maintenance or upgrades within the decade. Additionally, there is no safe pedestrian access to these sidewalks from residential areas that are not on Main Street or Hwy 11.
- **Limited Sewer Infrastructure** - There is no public or private sewer infrastructure in Elizabeth beyond the system available to Ceasers Southern Indiana Casino. Residents' only option is to have a septic tank on their property. This limits the potential for local population growth and town expansion. It also prevents the town from improving the quality of resident's wastewater service.
- **Decreasing population** - The inconsistent population changes make it difficult to create future projections. This could prevent Elizabeth from attracting new commercial shops or amenities. Population projections are used to measure a town's potential future growth. When a town's population projection predicts little to no growth, prospective shops and stores choose to avoid investing in property in that town. This is because each store is built where there is an adequately sized population to support it.
- **Aging Population** - Elizabeth's population is growing older as its age structure becomes more imbalanced. Nearly half of the town's residents are between the ages of 30 and 59. In only two decades, much of this group will be approaching retirement or beyond it. Additionally, people of this age often require additional healthcare. As this group will be a large group in Elizabeth, it could place stress on local healthcare systems.
- **Housing Vacancy** - Generally, a healthy vacancy rate for housing is between 5% and 10% as it allows for households to move to other units within the community. However, Elizabeth's vacancy rate is triple that with over one-third (34%) of housing units being vacant. Maintenance of vacant units is critical. If they fall into disrepair, they will lower surrounding property values and affect property tax income.

**TOWN PLANNING  
INITIATIVE**  
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The Town of Elizabeth

