





**APPROVED BY THE:**

Elkhart County Planning Commission - June 10, 2021

Elkhart County Board of County Commissioners - July 6, 2021

Town of Bristol Town Council - July 15, 2021

**PREPARED FOR:**

Town of Bristol

**PREPARED BY:**



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## BRISTOL TOWN COUNCIL

<b>Jeff Beachy</b>	President
<b>Cathy Burke</b>	Member
<b>Delbert Schrock</b>	Member
<b>Whitney Pierle</b>	Member
<b>Floyd Lynch</b>	Member

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<b>Cathy Burke</b>	Town Council Member, Town of Bristol
<b>Chris Garner</b>	Member, Bristol Park Board
<b>Dave Dufour</b>	Executive Director, Elkhart Civic Theatre
<b>Dawn Powell</b>	Adult Program Coordinator, Bristol Public Library
<b>Delbert Schrock</b>	Town Council Member, Town of Bristol
<b>Floyd Lynch</b>	Town Council Member, Town of Bristol
<b>Jason Auvil</b>	Planning Manager & Zoning Administrator, Elkhart County Planning & Development
<b>Jeff Beachy</b>	Town Council President, Town of Bristol
<b>Lauren Bailey</b>	Resident
<b>Mike Albin</b>	Town Marshall, Town of Bristol
<b>Mike Yoder</b>	Town Manager, Town of Bristol
<b>Nicholas Kantz</b>	Chief, Bristol Volunteer Fire Department
<b>Ron Norman</b>	Member, Bristol on the River
<b>Sarah Mercer</b>	Owner, Red Bird
<b>Sherm Hansen</b>	Advancement Director, Elkhart County Economic Development Corporation
<b>Whitney Pierle</b>	Town Council Member, Town of Bristol

# TOWN COUNCIL APPROVAL

RESOLUTION NO. 7-15-21RA

## **A RESOLUTION OF THE BRISTOL TOWN COUNCIL ADOPTING THE BRISTOL 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – A GRAND VISION FOR OUR HOMETOWN**

WHEREAS, the Town of Bristol Town Council is empowered to approve a Comprehensive Plan for its area of jurisdiction by the provisions of Indiana Code, Section 36-7-4-500 et. seq. entitled “500 Series – Comprehensive Plan”;

WHEREAS, the Town of Bristol organized a Steering Committee and solicited input from the public to guide the development of the Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan and establish a vision for the Town’s future;

WHEREAS, the Town of Bristol and the Steering Committee, based on examining existing conditions and analyzing public input developed the Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan to be the local policy to guide future growth and development;

WHEREAS the Town of Bristol, Indiana has reviewed and considered the 2006 Elkhart County Comprehensive Plan as applicable to the Town of Bristol and has developed a proposed amendment to the 2006 Elkhart County Comprehensive Plan as applicable for the Town of Bristol, Indiana known as the Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan-A Grand Vision For Our Hometown;

WHEREAS the Town of Bristol, Indiana submitted an application to amend the 2006 Elkhart County Comprehensive Plan, as applicable in the Town of Bristol, Indiana, known as the Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan-A Grand Vision For Our Hometown;

WHEREAS after proper legal notice and a public hearing was held as provided by applicable law, the Elkhart County Plan Commission did find that all elements of the law as mandated in Indiana Code, Section 36-7-4-500 et. seq. entitled “500 Series – Comprehensive Plan” had been met and did on the day of June 10, 2021 recommend to the Elkhart County Board of Commissioners amend the 2006 Elkhart County Comprehensive Plan, as applicable for the Town of Bristol, Indiana, with the Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan-A Grand Vision For Our Hometown;

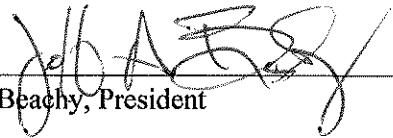
WHEREAS the Elkhart County Board of Commissioners approved the request to amend the 2006 Elkhart County Comprehensive Plan, as applicable to the Town of Bristol, Indiana, known as the Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan-A Grand Vision For Our Hometown, and certifies the approval by the Town Council of the Town of Bristol, Indiana to adopt the Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan-A Grand Vision For Our Hometown as the local policy to guide future growth and development; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Bristol, Indiana that the Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan-A Grand Vision For Our Hometown does hereby approve and adopt the Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan-A Grand Vision For Our Hometown as an amendment to the 2006 Elkhart County Comprehensive Plan to be the guiding local policy for future growth and development for the Town of Bristol, Indiana.

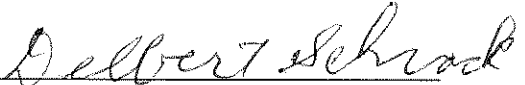
The Town of Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan shall be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the Bristol Clerk-Treasurer and at the Elkhart County Department of Planning and Zoning. In addition, the Town of Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan shall be placed on file in the Office of the Elkhart County Recorder.

The Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan-A Grand Vision For Our Hometown is hereby adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Bristol, Indiana this 15th day of July, 2021.

TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF  
BRISTOL, INDIANA

By:   
Jeff Beachy, President


By:   
Cathy Burke

By:   
Delbert Schrock

By:   
Whitney Pierle

By:   
Floyd Lynch

ATTEST:

  
Cathy Antonelli  
Bristol Clerk-Treasurer

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Our Grand Vision .....	7
Our Grand Plan .....	7
Our Grand Community .....	7
Our Grand Future.....	7
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Our Grand Plan for Bristol’s Future .....	8
Planning Process .....	9
A Grand Vision of Our Hometown.....	14
Our Values .....	14
<b>2. OUR GRAND COMMUNITY .....</b>	<b>16</b>
A Profile of our Community Today .....	16
Downtown .....	17
Economic Development.....	19
Transportation & Infrastructure .....	21
Parks & Recreation.....	22
Housing .....	27
Community Facilities & Events .....	29
<b>3. OUR GRAND FUTURE .....</b>	<b>32</b>
A Development Framework for Bristol.....	32
Future Development Concept Map .....	34
Future Development Character Areas .....	36
<b>4. MEASURING OUR SUCCESS .....</b>	<b>56</b>
Our Grand Action Program .....	56
Evaluating our Grand Action Program .....	59
Guidance on Implementing the Comprehensive Plan .....	60

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## OUR GRAND VISION

“Our grand hometown of Bristol is a vibrant, growing, and safe place to call home, where neighbors are connected, caring, and welcoming to all, with high-quality features and amenities to enjoy in all seasons, and a resilient and thriving business community.”

## OUR GRAND PLAN

This plan will be the framework to inspire and lead us as a community to invest in the amenities and services to ensure we offer a grand hometown for our current and future residents and businesses. Our grand plan is to retain our small-town charm and rural character while creating attractive and vibrant activity centers.

## OUR GRAND COMMUNITY

As a community, we are committed to ensuring our grand hometown is appealing, attractive, competitive, and affordable for everyone to have an opportunity to decide to call Bristol home. We value those we do business with and more importantly we value our residents who make Bristol a grand hometown for all.

## OUR GRAND FUTURE

Our grand future will be an attractive place with vibrant spaces to gather with friends and families to create lasting memories. It will be welcoming to new families, individuals, and businesses building on our entrepreneurial spirit. It will be a place to welcome visitors throughout the year to enjoy our parks and natural amenities.



# Introduction



## OUR GRAND PLAN FOR BRISTOL'S FUTURE

In Bristol, there are several places to gather with friends and families and share and create lasting memories. Whether it is gathering at one of our parks, a downtown local business, or catching a show at our historic opera house, there is a place for you.

We take pride in protecting the beauty of our natural landscapes and features and relish these assets that have attracted residents and businesses for so many years. From the picturesque St. Joseph River to the rolling meadows and farmlands. We are a charming and welcoming community for you to call home. While we may be small geographically, we have a growing local economy from being a business-friendly community to help our employers and local businesses remain in Bristol to grow and thrive.

As a community, we are committed to ensuring our grand hometown is appealing, attractive, competitive, and affordable for everyone to have an opportunity to decide to call Bristol home. We value those we do business with and more importantly we value our residents who make Bristol a grand hometown for all. This is our grand hometown!



This comprehensive plan will be the framework to inspire and lead us as a community to invest in the amenities and services to ensure we offer a grand hometown for our current and future residents and businesses. This Plan seeks to preserve our valuable historic assets while being open to allow our community to grow and thrive socially, economically, and realistically. This is our grand plan for Bristol's future!

A comprehensive plan strengthens and unifies a community by engaging and empowering all types of residents, regardless of income, age, or disability, to participate and themselves to create an actionable plan, a road map, to guide future development that represents the interests of all residents. This Plan was developed by the vision and input of its community leaders and residents and was organized by a volunteer group of Town officials and staff, business owners, local citizens, and community organizations, known as the Steering Committee. This plan will guide the Town of Bristol to build a thriving and resilient community.

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

Beginning in October of 2019, the Town of Bristol kicked off the planning process by organizing a Steering Committee to serve as the lead representative body overseeing the development of the plan. The planning team held monthly Steering Committee meetings to go through the five-step planning process (shown on the next two pages) and report on the progress of the plan development.

The planning process was designed to engage residents of the Bristol community in developing a vision for the Town's future, identify the building blocks the Town values the most, identify the major opportunities and challenges, and action strategies to guide land development and establishing programs or services. Additionally, the process was built on the foundation of community involvement through multiple facets that sought input from key stakeholders including Town officials and staff, residents, employers and their employees, the Latino community, and other community organizations.

# THE FIVE-STEP PLANNING PROCESS:

## 1

### **Establish the community vision and core values –**

This integral step set the stage for the plan development. Several meetings involved vision-building exercises that led the Steering Committee to identify what they liked and disliked about Bristol and the community aspects they valued the most. At this time, the Town engaged its residents and key stakeholders through multiple engagement efforts.

The first was issuing a public input survey. We received input from 250 residents and workers, representing 20 percent of Bristol's population! Participants share their vision of their ideal hometown, how Bristol rates to their vision, what they like and dislike about Bristol. Promotion of the survey was done through distribution and display of flyers at every downtown business, in the break-rooms of major employers, direct mail a postcard to every Bristol resident, we advertised on Facebook, and was featured on a local Hispanic radio program called Horizonte Radio. Results of the Public Input Survey are in the Appendix.

The next engagement opportunity was a public open house on February 26, 2020. Over 30 residents attended the Open House and shared their GRAND VISION of Bristol and the barriers preventing those aspirations from being achieved today. Bristol's 2030 vision statement answers the question of what kind of town we want to be and sets forth principles (Core Values) that address the physical and social well-being of the town. The vision statement and core values acknowledge Bristol is an appealing and welcoming place to all and that community leaders and partnerships will be a critical component to realize the Town's vision. Bristol's 2030 vision statement and values are seen on pages 14 and 15.





2

### Analyze existing conditions –

The planning team gathered the supporting facts and data to serve as the community profile. Information was collected using U.S. Census data, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Government Finance Tool, and interviews with Town staff and Boards, organization leaders, and community facility directors. Details on the Existing Conditions are in the Appendix. Using the existing conditions and the Core Values, the planning team guided the Steering Committee to identify the goals of what they want to see accomplished by 2030, what Bristol is doing well, and the major issues the Town needs to address to make these goals a reality.



3

### Develop the action strategies –

This step involved a series of workshops with the Steering Committee to identify the action strategies that support the Core Values and address the major challenges. Prioritization was also done to identify the top priorities the Town should first implement in the next five years. The next step was to create a future development concept map. Future concepts included identifying land for new development and redevelopment opportunities, and the desired character for each of these areas. The vision of the future development concept map is intended to guide development decisions over the next 10 years.

4

### Prepare plan document and review

– The final plan is the accumulation of steps 1 to 3 and was reviewed by the Steering Committee. The Plan was available for public review for 30 days from May 3, 2021, to June 3, 2021. The community had the opportunity to attend two input sessions, participate in online interactive activities, and submit their comments using the online form.

5

### Adopt final plan –

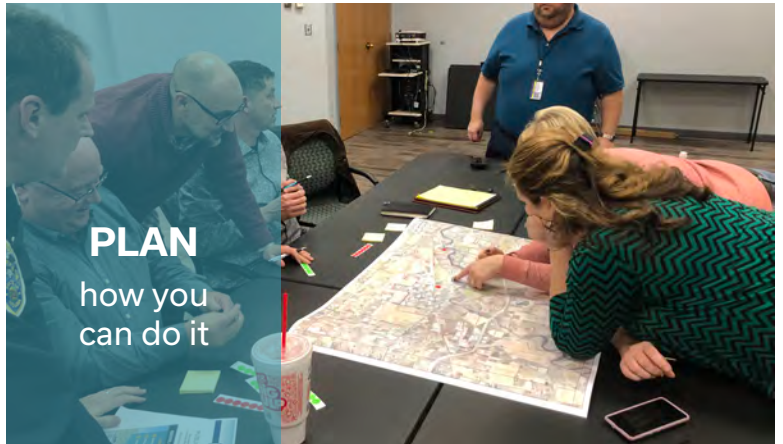
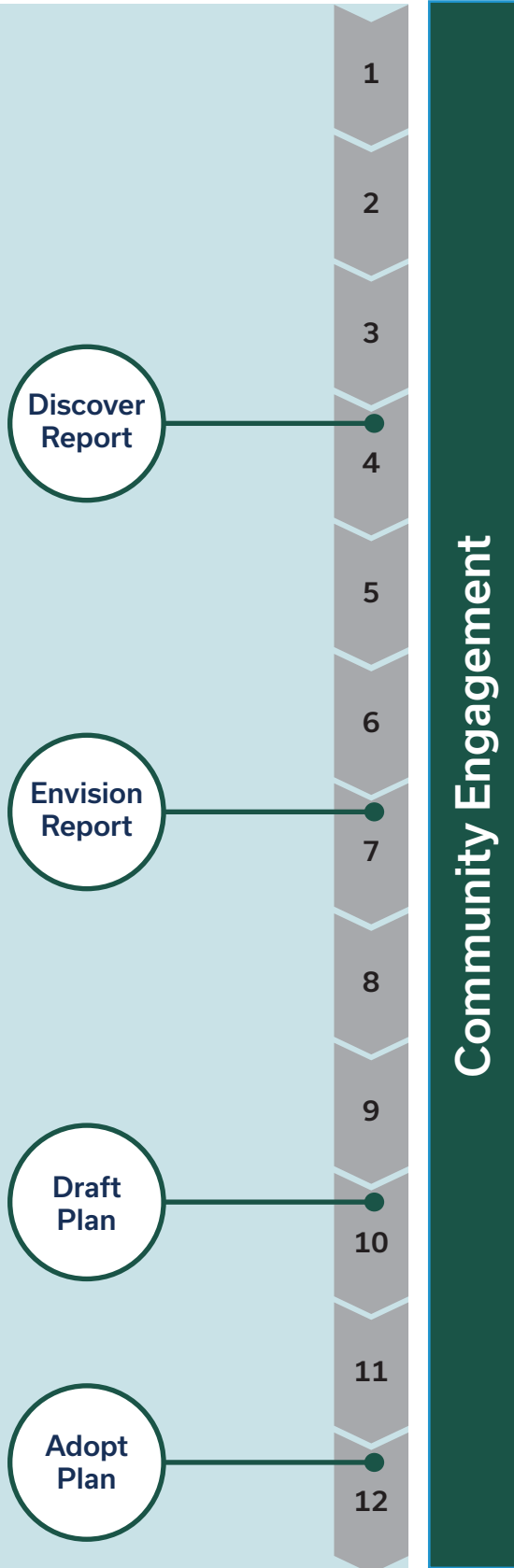
The Steering Committee presented the final plan to the Elkhart County Planning Commission for their endorsement, then to the Elkhart County Board of County Commissioners, and finally the Bristol Town Council for their approvals. The Town's Plan will be incorporated into Elkhart County's current Comprehensive Plan.

# PROJECT TIMELINE

Milestones

Months

Phases





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We received input from

**287**

**PARTICIPANTS**

between the Public Input Survey,  
Open House, & Input Sessions

PUBLIC SURVEY = 250, OPEN HOUSE = 30 & INPUT SESSIONS = 7

**WOW!** Vision of Bristol in 2030, What do you like to see?  
**WOW!** What is preventing that thing from happening now?

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EXIT

# A GRAND VISION OF OUR HOMETOWN

*Our GRAND Hometown of Bristol is a vibrant, growing, and safe place to call home, where neighbors are connected, caring, and welcoming to all, with high-quality features and amenities to enjoy in all seasons, and a resilient and thriving business community.*

## OUR VALUES...

1

### Quality places & attractions

We value creating attractive and vibrant places to gather with your friends and families and build lasting memories. The places we create will offer distinct characteristics and intricate designs. We value having a safe community with high-quality community protection services. We value having diversity in events and festivals to celebrate all backgrounds to offer unique opportunities to connect with friends and families.

2

### Quality Parks & Outdoor Recreation

We value having quality parks and outdoor recreational amenities for all users and skill levels to enjoy in all seasons. We value having choices to live an active and healthy lifestyle. We value the investment to ensure our parks and amenities are adequately maintained.



### **Connectivity & Accessibility**

We value creating a connected and accessible community with streets that are safe and accommodates all users. We value having a quality road system to efficiently move people and goods. We value having quality public infrastructure systems that are accessible and conducive for future growth. We value creating amenities to make it easier to bike and walk.



### **Quality Housing & Neighborhoods**

We value creating quality places to live, raise a family, and build memories with your families and friends. We value offering a diversity of choices with creative design, character, and affordability. We value preserving the character of our neighborhoods and small-town charm.



### **Diverse Employment Opportunities to Enhance Resiliency**

We value having diversity in job opportunities to enhance our competitive and economic resilience. We value having a strong local business community and are an incubator for local entrepreneurs and small business start-ups.



### **Quality Education**

We value having a quality education system that is attractive, engaging, and welcoming learning environment. We value offering quality learning programs to expand creativity and innovation. We value preparing our youth to excel socially and personally in life and prepare our future workforces. We value having early learning opportunities for families.



### **Marketing, Communications, & Volunteerism**

We value being a connected and engaging community with a volunteerism spirit that gives back and willing to help our neighbors. We value having streamlined communication to ensure we are all connected. We value having a quality marketing program to support our local businesses to help them grow and thrive.



## Our Grand Community



### A PROFILE OF OUR COMMUNITY TODAY

The Town of Bristol has many assets and features that make it an attractive place for individuals, families, and businesses to call home. The town is positioned off the St. Joseph River that enhances the community's quality of life with picturesque views and recreational opportunities. Throughout the year, residents can enjoy the several community parks, town events, and festivals and discover all that Bristol has to offer. The town also is home to many manufacturing industries that contributes to economic development opportunities in Elkhart County. Bristol's assets and features will continue to play a vital role in attracting and retaining residents and businesses. More people are valuing and choosing to live in a community that supports a lifestyle and quality of life that appeals to them rather than the type of jobs available in that area. Although the Town of Bristol is home to many manufacturing companies and does well attracting new manufacturers and working with existing businesses to expand their operations, the Town needs to strategically diversify its industrial mix to enhance its competitiveness and economic resilience. While the Town has many assets and features that can appeal to prospective residents and businesses, the Town must hold onto its values of having quality parks, homes, and jobs to enhance its attractiveness and resilience.





## DOWNTOWN



Bristol's downtown has been a long-standing community asset as being one of the first areas platted in the incorporation of the town limits. Bristol's downtown has a mixture of development patterns and uses with Division Street (SR 15 & SR 120) and SR 15 serving as the main intersection. The scale of buildings in the downtown range from single-story to three-story buildings occupied by local businesses. The St. Joseph River borders north downtown that adds appealing recreational opportunities to the community and visitors.

The types of uses in the downtown range from service stations, professional offices-service based businesses, a local grocer, religious institutions, Town Hall, Bristol Fire and Police stations, Bristol Parks (Hermance, Cummins, and Memorial), Bristol Opera House (Elkhart Civic Theatre), and single-family homes. West of downtown is the Bristol Post Office, Elkhart County Historical Museum, Congdon Park, and Bristol Public Library. Bristol's downtown has the most potential to relish and capitalize the community's historical and charming character to create a vibrant, walkable live-work environment with a denser development pattern to integrate a mixture of housing choices and local businesses that can appeal to many new individuals, families, entrepreneurs, and other local businesses.

Bristol's downtown is an example of a great asset with this potential but needs attention to up the appeal and pedestrian activity level to sustain the local businesses and draw new local businesses. One of the ways the Town can achieve this is through the Bristol on the River - Indiana Main Street Organization. This organization was established to revitalize and enhance Bristol's downtown and preserve and sustain the social, cultural, economic, and historic values.



### ASSETS

- Presence of a local business community.
- Active Indiana Main Street Program - Bristol on the River.
- Presence of Bristol Parks, Bristol Public Library, the Bristol Opera House (Elkhart Civic Theatre), and the Elkhart County Historical Museum.
- Cummins and Memorial Parks serve as the gathering hubs for community events and festivals.



## OPPORTUNITIES



- There are several properties that have been identified for infill redevelopment and could be developed with a mixture of retail businesses and denser housing developments and housing choices.
- The Town Center has generated momentum following the adoption of the 2011 Comprehensive Strategic Plan by creating stakeholder Focus Groups to guide improvement efforts and development recommendations, and the Town would like to see redevelopment efforts first be focused in the Town Center to frame its identity and enhance its vibrancy.
- Coordinate with INDOT to capitalize on the planned infrastructure projects on SR 120/SR 15 to enhance the streetscape and safety of Division Street, and improve the traffic flow.
- Coordinate with INDOT to enhance the promotion and use of the Bristol Bypass as a designated freight truck route to improve pedestrian safety in downtown and reduce traffic congestion.
- Coordinate with the Elkhart County Plan Commission to create development standards for targeted areas such as the downtown to enhance the sense of place to create vibrant, walkable destinations.
- Elkhart County is working on installing their dark fiber optic infrastructure in Bristol that will support attracting and retaining new businesses and jobs.



## CHALLENGES

- Lack of a shared vision or identity of downtown.
- Need for additional retail and service businesses to offer appealing shopping and dining opportunities to compliment existing uses such as the Bristol Opera House, local eateries, and local businesses, and employees.
- Enhance the marketing and support of the local-small businesses to grow and thrive.
- Traffic congestion and heavy truck traffic in downtown on SR 120/ SR 15 (Vistula Street) is difficult and unsafe for pedestrians to cross and unsafe bicycle route.
- No mid-block crossings on SR 120/SR 15 (Vistula Street).
- Parking in downtown needs to be studied to evaluate the usage and demand.
- Cost-burden to protect and restore downtown historical buildings.
- The downtown buildings and streetscape (accent lighting, seating, planters, and street trees) needs to be enhanced for visual appeal.
- Enhance the access and recreational use of the St. Joseph River.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Bristol has become a welcoming and attractive place for employers to want to “do business” and call Bristol home. The majority of Bristol’s built environment consists of large-scale manufacturing businesses and is reflective of Bristol’s identity that has shaped how the community has been developed for decades. Several major global exporting industries are headquartered or have plant facilities located in Bristol that include Monogram Foods, Thor Industries, Utilimaster, and many more manufacturers that call Bristol home. The Town also is home to successful entrepreneurs like the Robert Weed Corporation, formerly Robert Weed Plywood Corporation, who started their company in Bristol in the 1960s and has remained and expanded its operations in 2007 and 2008. However, the current population that lives in Bristol is only 1,686 compared to the 3,600 workers who commute to Bristol daily for work. While it is great that the Town has an abundance of jobs, however, it challenges the Town to not be heavily reliant on a major employer or a single industry to withstand economic hardships. The Town needs to explore ways to diversify its industrial mix and partner with the Elkhart County Economic Development Corporation to attract jobs in emerging high-growth industries of advanced manufacturing, technology, and health to continue its economic competitiveness and resilience.



## ASSETS

- Successful business community - major employers and entrepreneurs.
- Presence of local small business community.
- Coordination with the Elkhart County Economic Development Corporation on business development initiatives to attract and retain businesses, and support local businesses to grow and have long-term stability.
- Strong local tax base provides opportunities for the Town to invest in capital improvements and have commitments for local match for grant opportunities.
- Bristol’s quality parks and outdoor recreational opportunities appeals to new families, individuals, and businesses.





## OPPORTUNITIES

- Elkhart County is working on installing their dark fiber optic infrastructure along major corridors to better serve its communities like the Town of Bristol and increase private investment for economic growth.
- Existing businesses expanding their facilities.
- Coordination with INDOT to capitalize on the planned infrastructure project to improve SR 120 in downtown.
- Several properties in key areas off SR 15 may provide economic development opportunities to attract new industries, commercial businesses, and new housing.
- Planned extension of the third phase of the Bristol bypass road provides economic development opportunities.



## CHALLENGES

- Lack of a shared vision and limited communication of the Town's vision to Town officials, Town Boards, key stakeholders, and its residents.
- Need for a utility extension plan and fiscal impact analysis to advise the Town on best approach to extend the municipal boundaries and the feasibility to extend public infrastructure systems to support future economic and community development opportunities.
- Ensure the Town has competitive incentives to attract and retain businesses and increase support to small businesses to help them grow and thrive.
- The Town's major industry sector focuses heavily on manufacturing and needs to encourage diversifying its industrial mix to include jobs in emerging high growing industries in technology, innovation, and health to remain economically competitive and resilient.
- Need to ensure major centers of the Town are connected through proper transitions in land uses, the character of developments are attractive, appealing streetscapes, and vibrant centers.
- Need to preserve Bristol's sense of place and small-town values while allowing modest and sustainable future growth.
- The existing downtown footprint restricts new development and the existing development pattern along SR 15 will be difficult to modify to create appealing centers and diversify the land use mix.
- Need to balance the land use mix to include new housing developments that are affordable and with a diversity in choices.





The framework of the community is shaped by the provision of a street network and utility infrastructure systems. Bristol has three major road corridors of SR 120, SR 15, and the I-80/I-90 Toll Road, and one rail line called the Grand Elk Railroad. The presence of these systems in Bristol has and continues to catalyze economic development (attracting large-scale corporations and manufacturers to the community). These manufacturers are drawn to Bristol for ease of freight movement to regional markets and hubs with convenient access to the I-80/I-90 Toll Road, US 20, and regional rail corridor.

These major roads also provide future tourism opportunities for the Town to complement existing popular places of the Bristol Opera House and Parks. This presents opportunities for the Town to capitalize on the tourism value by developing vibrant and attractive places around the SR 15 and Toll Road interchange, the SR 15 and Industrial Drive intersection, as well as the downtown that could appeal to the thousands of daily travels on these roads. Another catalyst for economic development in Bristol is the Town manages and operates its public utility service to its businesses and residents for drinking water and wastewater. The provision of these services adds to the appeal and value to do business and live in Bristol.



## ASSETS

- Town offers quality public services managing its streets, water and wastewater services, and police protection.
- Presence of major transportation routes of SR 120, SR 15, and I-80/I-90 Toll Road provide economic development opportunities.

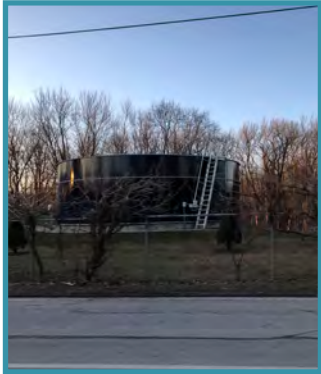


## OPPORTUNITIES

- Elkhart County is working on installing their dark fiber optic infrastructure along major corridors to better serve its communities like the Town of Bristol and increase private investment for economic growth.
- Collaborate with INDOT to capitalize on planned transportation project to improve SR 120 in downtown.
- Partner with INDOT to coordinate planned infrastructure improvements with constructing the third phase of the bypass road, and future phases, as well as extension of utilities to serve future developments that may impact state owned roads.
- INDOT's Community Crossings Program provides tremendous opportunities to properly maintain local streets and improve road conditions, where needed.
- Elkhart County is planning for a regional trail connection that would connect the City of Elkhart, Bristol, and Bristol.



## CHALLENGES



- Traffic congestion and heavy truck traffic in downtown on SR 120/SR 15 (Vistula Street) is difficult and unsafe for pedestrians to cross.
- Need to improve the existing pedestrian crossings at the two intersections in downtown with high-visible marked crossings.
- No mid-block crossings on SR 120/SR 15 (Vistula Street) in downtown to enhance the safety of pedestrians crossing the street.
- Difficult and unsafe to navigate through Town on major roads by bicycle
- Upgrades are needed to the Town’s water and wastewater infrastructure systems to adequately serve its customers and support future development.
- Limited coordination has been done between the Town and Elkhart County to identify an appropriate location for the proposed regional trail in Bristol.



## PARKS & RECREATION

Although Bristol’s population represents more workers than residents, there are many great assets and features that make Bristol a charming and appealing community to live in. Bristol has four distinct public parks, a county park, a state-protected preserve, an IDNR public boat launch, and a public golf course, all with varying amenities to enjoy year-round and by all types of users. The Town of Bristol has a four-member Park Board that manages the parks and recreational amenities and programs within the corporate limits. The park grounds are maintained by the Town’s Public Works Department but currently are done by one individual from this department. The Bristol Park Board at one time offered a summer learning program but suspended the program in 2018 due to limited participation and the unprecedented flooding event that nearly covered the Hermance Park pavilion.



An overview of Bristol’s parks and recreational opportunities are provided below.



### HERMANCE PARK

Hermance Park, known by locals as the “River & Pavilion Park” was the Town’s first park in 1959, positioned on the St. Joseph River. This park features a pavilion available to rent to hold group events up to 150 people and has a fully functional kitchen. Hermance Park also has a small-scale playground area and fishing pier. However, the more common use of the park is the Hermance Boat Launch - an IDNR owned and maintained public launch site. Water sports enthusiasts from all parts of the region come to Bristol to take advantage of the St. Joseph River to boat, kayak, canoe, and fish. The convenient access to the St. Joseph River draws thousands of visitors to Bristol to enjoy the recreational use of the river. Located on 3.5 acres, behind the Elkhart County Historical Museum,



## CUMMINS PARK

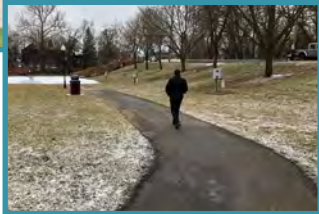
Cummins Park is known as the “Sports & Splash Pad Park and is the second town park built in 1976. It was named in honor of long-time resident and former Bristol Fire Chief, Cloyce Cummins. This park caters to sports enthusiasts with two tennis courts, a full-size basketball court, and an outdoor fitness area. The Bristol Park Board will be installing pickleball courts in the near future. Cummins Park also features a 0.2 asphalt walking trail that loops around the park and the popular splash pad complete with six sprayers. A unique feature is the Indiana Heritage Cathcart Cemetery. This historical cemetery contains the graves of two of Bristol’s early pioneers, the Cathcart’s and the Nicholson’s, who served in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812.



## CONGDON PARK

Congdon Park is the Town’s third built park, named after the Congdon family and is known as the “Family & Events Park.” It is the Town’s largest parkland with 5-acres of open space and is the location for the Town’s popular community events and festivals such as the Bristol Homecoming Festival, Pay-It-Forward, Second Chance Dog Rescue, Movies in the Park, car shows, and others.

Park users can take advantage of the large open space to enjoy scenic views of the Park and the St. Joseph River. Congdon Park features a wooden bandshell-style gazebo capable of hosting weddings and other family parties up to 50 people and a playground area that includes a Karsyn Bell pirate ship. Other park features include a 0.25-mile asphalt trail that loops around the perimeter, a fishing pier, a wooden overlook bay, and the stairwell off Division Street.



## MEMORIAL PARK

Located at the busiest intersection in downtown of West Vistula Street (SR 120) and SR 15, this 0.28-acre urban park is the Town’s fourth and smallest park. Known as the “Community Events Park” for being the designated location for many of the Town’s smaller events and special community presentations. Amenities include an electronic messaging sign, a gazebo with a swing, benches, walkways, and a water fountain. The park received its name to honor long-time residents of Bristol. One honoree is a teacher at the former Bristol High School, Tommy Thompson. Another historical feature is the commemorative plaque (part of the Indiana Historical Markers tour) regarding a court case of an Underground Railroad incident in Bristol.





## BONEYVILLE MILL COUNTY PARK

The Bonneyville Mill County Park is one of the County's premier parks and regional tourist attractions that draws thousands of users from all over the world to the Bristol community a year. Bonneyville Mill County Park is located 3-miles outside of downtown Bristol off County Road 131. The Elkhart County Parks Department maintains the 222-acre park that features rolling hills, woodlands, open space meadows, and marshes. The Park also features the historic water-powered grist mill used in the 1800s, seven miles of hiking trails, and six miles of mountain bike trails that cater to different skill levels. Bonneyville Mill County Park is a state-designated wildlife viewing area. Winter enthusiasts can enjoy cross-country skiing at Bonneyville Mill County Park one of the most popular cross-country ski areas in the region. The Park also features seven park shelters of varying capacities from 35 to 150.



## LIEBER NATURE PRESERVE

The Lieber Nature Preserve, also known as "Pipewort Pond Nature Preserve," is a 135-acre state-protected nature preserve located off County Road 23 in Bristol north of the Indiana Toll Road. The Preserve features a cranberry bog, wildlife viewing, boardwalk, and a variety of Indiana's endangered and threatened plant species. The Preserve also features a nature study and a 1.5-mile hiking trail that loops around the native prairie habitat. Lieber Nature Preserve is an attractive site to view herons, ducks, and shorebirds.







## ASSETS

- Establishment of a Park Board to oversee the Town’s park and recreational amenities and programs.
- The Town has an updated 5-Year Parks Master Plan that outlines the major needs and strategic direction to enhance Bristol’s parks, recreational amenities, and education programs.
- Presence of scenic preserves and wildlife areas in Lieber Nature Preserve.
- Presence of Bonneyville Mill Park draws thousands of park users to Bristol throughout the year.
- IDNR public boat launch in Hermance Park draws thousands of users to Bristol to enjoy the scenic St. Joseph River.



## OPPORTUNITIES

- The Town has great opportunities to capitalize on the tourism value who travel to Bristol to enjoy the use of the St. Joseph River and visit Bonneyville Mill Park and Lieber Nature Preserve.
- The Town recently updated their 5-Year Parks Master Plan that sought public input on their aspirations and improvements to Bristol’s parks and brainstormed ways that reimagined the activities that could be offered for a new Summer Program. The Park Board will also look to add new environmental learning programs to teach residents on the natural habitats, wildlife, and native plant species in Bristol.
- The Town will be conducting a study of Hermance Park to evaluate the best use of the park space and ways to mitigate impacts of floods.
- Strong community and Town Government support to invest in enhancing Bristol’s parks, increase staff to better manage the maintenance of its parks, and implement the Bristol 5-Year Parks Master Plan.





## CHALLENGES

- Limited budget for the Bristol Park Board to implement the Parks Master Plan and properly maintain its parks and recreational amenities and reliance on securing additional funding sources to make improvements.
- Hermance and Congdon Park are frequently prone to flood during heavy rainfalls limiting the use of the parks following flood events.
- Ensuring proper communication and awareness between the Park Board and Town Council with annual goals and programmed improvements.
- No official Park Department and current maintenance is done by one staff member with primary responsibilities to the Town's Public Works Department.
- Ensuring community support and participation to reinstall and sustain the summer program.
- Overgrown brush along the riverbank in Congdon Park limits the use of the St. Joseph River.
- Ensuring amenities and playgrounds in Bristol parks are updated to be ADA accessible.





## HOUSING

The Town of Bristol has built up its community in a manner that has provided more job opportunities than residential homes. While Bristol is a charming community with appealing assets and recreational opportunities, the primary draw has been towards attracting large-scale manufacturers to the community. This direction has been great for the Town to build up its local tax base to have a higher revenue flow; however, there needs to be a balance to encourage the working population to live in the community they work in to have a stronger community foundation. With evaluating the Town's housing supply the primary type of housing in Bristol is single-family homes that have large square footage. There are limited options available in the existing residential areas with smaller footprint homes for the aging population to have a smaller area to maintain, and young professionals and families who may be entering in the housing market and have a limited budget.

The Town of Bristol's housing composition must have better integration of a range of housing choices as these populations mentioned are increasing and demonstrate a demand to live in a more vibrant, dense urban setting with little yard maintenance while also having affordable options. They also look to live in homes that are within walking distance of amenities and services. The Town needs to explore opportunities to create mixed-use developments that individuals can live and access amenities and services within a couple of blocks from their homes. The Town should also explore

how they can create mixed-income neighborhoods with a range of housing choices and price ranges to appeal to all income needs to have quality and affordable places to live.

As Bristol experiences changes in demographics and growth, be it in population or jobs, ensuring Bristol has an adequate supply of housing for all types of residents will be crucial in maintaining Bristol's quality of life. The Town of Bristol will have to consider where new housing should locate while maintaining a proper balance with current development, and how to preserve and maintain the existing housing stock. Housing is linked to other elements like population (identifying changes in households and establishing their needs), land use (evaluate its fiscal impacts to develop on undeveloped lands or infill on underutilized lands), and community facilities (does the neighborhood have access to the Town's utility system and assets).





## ASSETS

- Bristol has quality parks and river access to enjoy during all seasons.
- Bristol has quality community protection services to ensure resident's safety.
- Bristol has other community facilities like the Elkhart County Historical Museum, Elkhart Civic Theatre, and the Bristol Public Library that adds to the quality of life for Bristol residents.



## OPPORTUNITIES

- Several properties in downtown and emerging employment centers off SR 15 may provide opportunities for new housing developments with diversity in the style, density, and price points.



## CHALLENGES

- Need to expand its housing choices to include affordable options and multi-family units.
- Encourage property owners to develop a sense of community pride and ownership to maintain their properties to enhance the appeal of the community's image.
- Without expanding its corporate limits the Town has limited properties available for new housing developments and will need to coordinate with developers who may be interested in redeveloping the potential properties in downtown to include housing in the mix.



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES & EVENTS

There are several community facilities and events Bristol residents and visitors can take advantage of and enjoy for entertainment. One of the many draws to Bristol is the quality facilities and Town festivals and events. The most popular event is the Bristol Homecoming Festival that draws thousands of residents and visitors. This has a tremendous tourism impact on Bristol's local economy. Other popular events are held during fall and winter seasonal occasions such as the Halloween Party, Santa Claus Lane, and the tree lighting ceremony.

In addition to Town hosted events, there are many events put on by the local neighborhoods and Latino communities that add to the community's quality of life and celebrate diverse cultures.

In an ever-changing world that constantly searches to obtain the next latest and greatest thing, the Town needs to constantly be prepared to adapt and ensure its community provides quality places, services, and amenities to attract and retain not only employers but residents as well. While the Town does have a lot of great features and assets, the Town needs to hold to its values and make the local commitments to maintain and enhance the quality and the attractiveness of these features and assets. The following outlines the assets that make up the Town's community facilities and events.

### ELKHART COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM & GENEALOGICAL LIBRARY

The Elkhart County Historic Museum is located in downtown Bristol and resides in the former location for the Bristol High School. The Historic Museum is free to the public that sees over 6,000 visitors annually and offers publications, research opportunities, learning programs, and exhibits that feature over 30,000 artifacts and over 100,000 documents highlighting over 20,000 years of Elkhart County's history. The Historic Museum is also one of the many locations along the Elkhart County Heritage Trail in Elkhart County that features a quilt garden. Garden designs change annually and resemble a quilt-theme patch.

The Elkhart County Historic Museum is also the location for the former location for the original Bristol High School. The Bristol High School is listed on the National Register of Historical Places. The former Bristol High School was active in the early and mid-20th Century.





## BRISTOL PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Bristol Public Library is located in downtown Bristol off SR 120/ Vistula Street. The library serves residents living in Washington Township in Elkhart County. The library has over 41,000 volumes in rotation and features wireless internet, computer labs, audiobooks, and movies. The library offers many learning programs for children of all ages that include a book club, an arts and crafts group, and a writer’s group. The library also has a meeting room for organizations to host events. The Bristol Public Library is a community asset allows residents to find jobs, explore and research endless topics, and provides a sense of place to gather and share stories.



## BRISTOL OPERA HOUSE

This historic opera house has been running for over 100 years and is located in downtown Bristol. The Elkhart Civic Theatre owns and maintains the Opera House and features year-round productions that include dramas, comedy skits, musicals, and special performances. The Bristol Opera House has a seating capacity of 300 people.



## BRISTOL FESTIVALS & EVENTS

**Bristol Homecoming** – Bristol Homecoming is a three-day community event held in July in Congdon Park and is known as one of the longest-running festivals in Indiana, since 1883. Features include a parade, carnival rides, food, arts and crafts, nomination of a Homecoming Queen and the Persons of the Year Award, pie-throwing contest, and concludes with a firework display over the St. Joseph River. This event annually draws 7,000 to 10,000 attendees.

**Halloween Party** – The Town of Bristol hosts a Halloween party that sees nearly 5,000 attendees annually. Features include a haunted house and haunted hayrides, a costume contest, a candy giveaway, food, and music.

**Tree Light Ceremony** – This is a newer event that has seen over 150 community residents. The lighting ceremony occurs at the Bristol Fire Department located at the corner of Washington Street and Elkhart Street. Additional features include meeting Santa Claus, writing letters to Santa Claus, performance from the Elkhart High School Choir, arts and crafts.

**Santa Claus Lane** – Santa Claus Lane began in December 2019 with Christmas decorations along Elkhart Street in downtown Bristol to encourage holiday spirit and pride in the community. Decorations included lollipops on street lamp posts and snowflakes in the street trees.





## ASSETS

- Presence of great community facilities such as the Elkhart Historical Museum, Bristol Public Library, and Bristol Opera House that add to the residents quality of life.
- The St. Joseph River has been a longstanding community asset to offer scenic views and be a destination place for river enthusiasts to boat and/or fish.
- Quality Bristol Parks to host unique events tailored to the parks amenities and features.
- Active community organizations like the Bristol on the River focuses on revitalizing downtown Bristol as a vibrant and thriving destination place.



## OPPORTUNITIES

- The Town has a great opportunity to capitalize on the tourism value with the thousands of residents and visitors who attend Bristol's festival and events.
- The large open space in Congdon Park is the designated area for the Town to host large community events like the Bristol Homecoming Festival and has room to grow and enhance events.
- Congdon Park is positioned next to the St. Joseph River that has opportunities to create new events that focuses on utilizing the river.
- Bristol on the River can secure grant resources to achieve its vision of downtown.



## CHALLENGES

- Popular community festivals and events like the Bristol Homecoming Festival are organized and managed by their own individual committee with limited budgets. A limited budget makes it difficult to upgrade features or amenities that need improvement such as the electrical equipment in Congdon Park.
- Congdon Park has electrical hookups to hold live music performances; however, the system was originally built not with the intended vision or capacity to accurately support large-scale end users.
- The County has discussed the idea of relocating the Historical Museum to another community in Elkhart County to increase its attraction by creating a bigger facility to offer new exhibits. However, the Museum has been located in the original Town high school as a means to preserve the historical value of the facility. Relocating the Museum presents financial challenges for the Town to maintain this historical facility.



# Our Grand Future



## A DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR BRISTOL

Our grand vision is to retain our small-town charm and rural character while creating attractive and vibrant activity centers. Our vision statement describes the place we would like to become and we as a community is committed to seeing this vision a reality.

Our grand vision is illustrated in the Future Development Concept Map that shows how we imagine where new development and redevelopment should occur. Therefore, to realize the vision, implementation will require coordination between the Town, community leaders, regional organizations, advocacy groups, and residents. The Future Development Concept Map is intended to be a reference for Town officials and Elkhart County planners to communicate our vision to developers to ensure their proposed site plans achieve the vision. Additionally, monitoring and tracking the progress of the implementation of our vision will show measurable results.

Developed through the public input survey and a series of mapping exercises with the Steering Committee, the Future Land Use illustrates a preferred growth concept that depicts where the Town would like to see growth and the desired manner to accommodate housing, jobs, shopping, and dining establishments, and public infrastructure over the next 10 years.



*“Our GRAND Hometown of Bristol is a vibrant, growing, and safe place to call home, where neighbors are connected, caring, and welcoming to all, with high-quality features and amenities to enjoy in all seasons, and a resilient and thriving business community.”*



The future development concept was developed collaboratively by members of the Steering Committee. They were each asked to create their future development concept considering various infill and growth strategies. When MACOG overlaid each concept, they were clear areas of agreement and some areas with various possible opportunities. The Steering Committee worked to clearly define these areas to create a clear vision for future development.

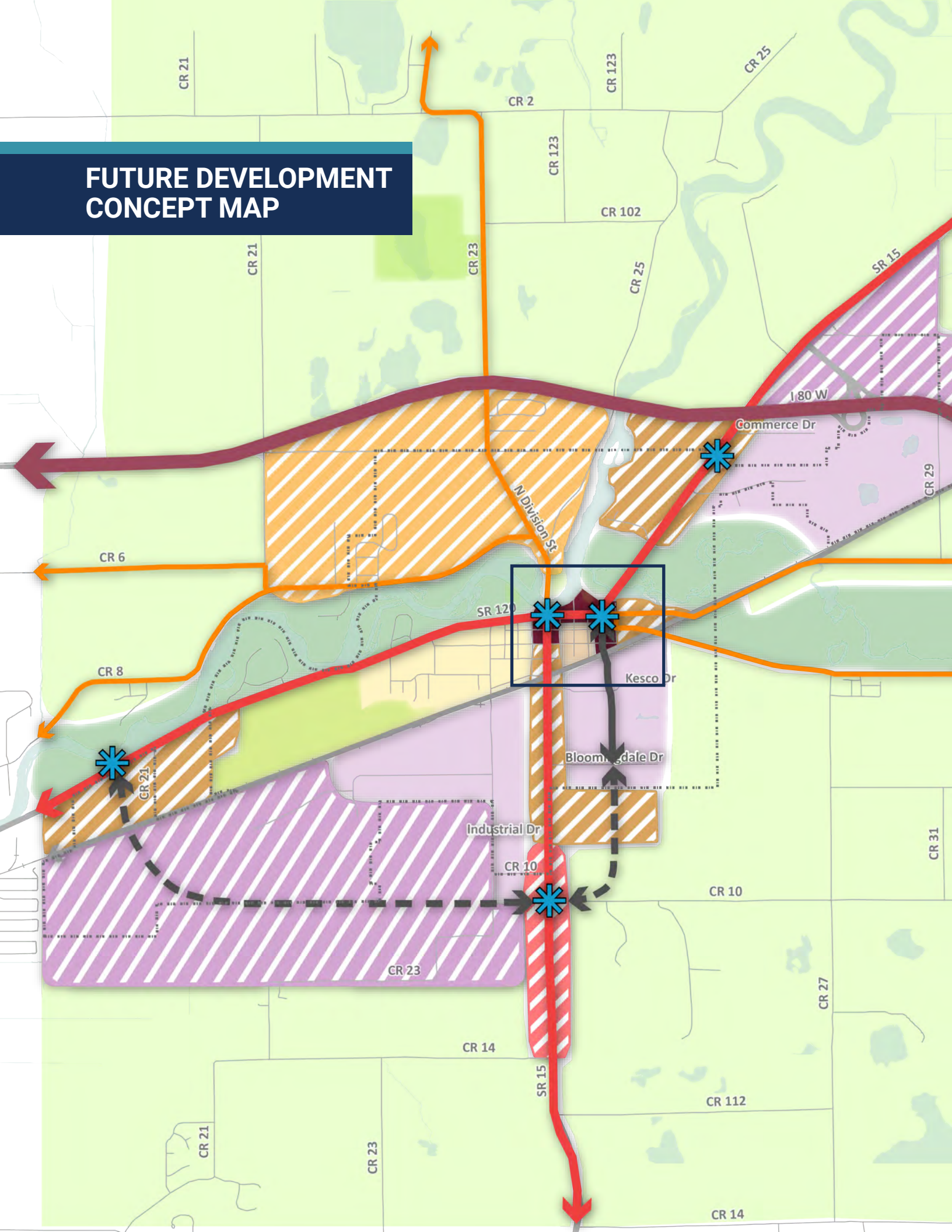
The Future Development Concept Map is framed into nine character areas to help the Town and its partners focus on the quality and the character of the preferred types of development, provide general guidance for future planning decisions while allowing zoning to implement the vision at the parcel level.

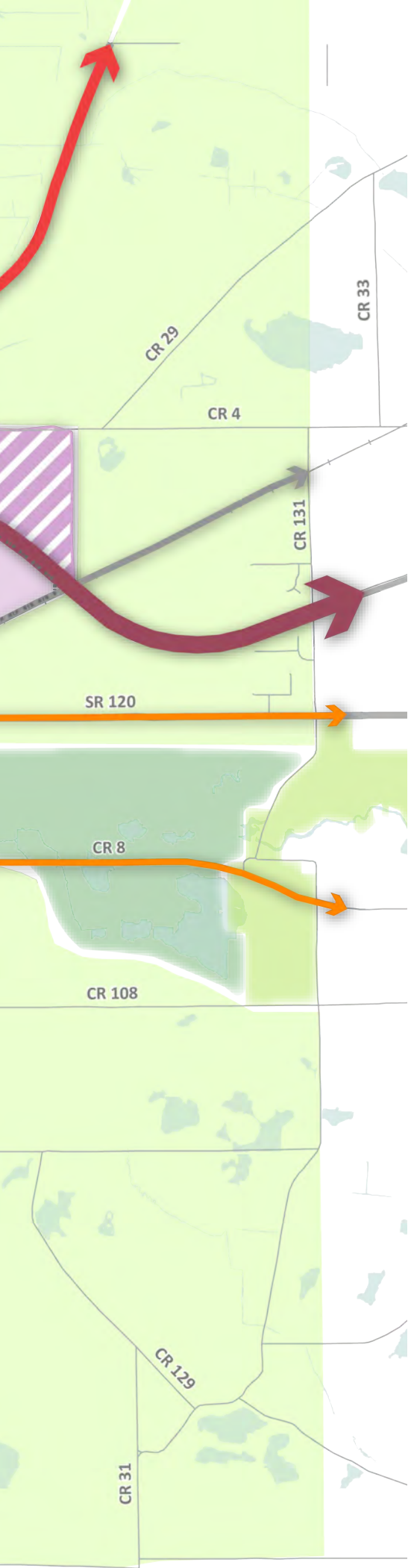
These character areas establish a framework to retain Bristol's small-town charm and character encourage walkable mixed-use developments to occur in the Downtown District and along the major thoroughfares of SR 120 and SR 15, appropriately expand its employment centers and residential areas, and preserve natural features and the rural farmlands and open spaces. Specific action strategies are organized by the core values that support the vision of the nine character areas. A complete list of the strategies is located in the Appendix. Descriptions of the nine character areas are defined on the subsequent pages following the Future Development Concept Map.

### **The Future Development Character Areas include:**

- **Downtown**
- **Employment Centers**
- **Community Commercial**
- **Transitional Mixed-Use**
- **Mixed Residential**
- **Neighborhood Preservation**
- **Parks & Recreation**
- **Rural Management**
- **Gateways**

# FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT MAP





### Character Areas

- Employment Center
- Community Commercial
- Gateways
- Transitional Mixed-Use
- Mixed Residential
- Local Road Corridor

### Existing Features

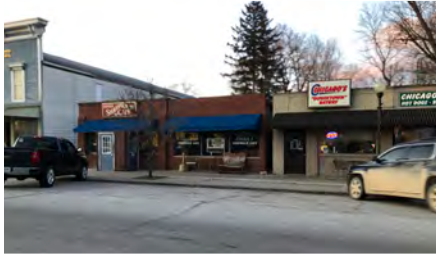
- Employment Center
- Downtown District
- Transitional Mixed Use
- Neighborhood Preservation
- Interstate Road Corridor
- Arterial Road Corridor
- Collector Road Corridor
- Floodway Conservation
- Parks
- Rural Management
- Town of Bristol
- Local Road Corridor
- Railroad Corridor
- Other Local Roads

# DOWNTOWN INSET





### DOWNTOWN DISTRICT



The setting and character of the area that became the founding grounds of Bristol's downtown has and will continue to appeal to prospective residents and businesses. Bristol's downtown is a historical asset that should not be forgotten but brought to the forefront to be a complimenting selling feature to economic development. While economic development is a sustaining factor that builds up the Town's capital budget to have the financial means to improve its public infrastructure or have the means to put up a substantial amount as a local commitment to acquire grant resources; it is just as vital to take that revenue and use it to reinvest in historical assets like the downtown that started it all. Without a vibrant and thriving downtown, a community struggles to remain alive. If there's no place for locals to go shopping, dine, acquire services, play, or work in the community they live in then there is no support to the local economy. Bristol's downtown is that backbone that needs better support and attention.

Bristol is committed to bring new life to its downtown and be an appealing place to live, work, play, shop, and dine. The Town desires for its downtown to be a thriving and vibrant place, re-imagined as a mixed-use district with an integration of a range of housing choices and styles of living units, retail establishments, local professional services, and parks. A place imagined with a vibrant "main street" and active neighborhood streets that offer unique spaces to gather with friends and families to share stories, build memories, relish the moments that shaped our lives, while imagining new hopes and dreams of what could be. This is our grand downtown!

The built environment will retain its current form along Vistula Street while the surrounding areas south of Vistula Street are imagined to have a development pattern that focuses on bringing activity to the street front that feeds into Bristol's main street. Buildings are imagined to be occupied with a mixture of neighborhood-scale retail establishments and diversity in the types of residential homes. This will expand retail and service businesses into the neighborhood to make it convenient and accessible from a resident's home. Building fronts on the street are imagined to be inviting and active places to encourage interaction with one another.

The character of the streets is imagined to be lined with trees to enhance the appeal of the street, with ample street lighting and places to sit and gather.





VALUE #1

### Quality Places & Attractions

- Plan for sustainable and modest growth
- Enhance the sense of place by creating vibrant, walkable destinations
- Organize various events and festivals that may include art shows, craft fairs, a farmers market, food trucks, movies-in-the-park, and live-music performances
- Maintain high-quality public safety services (Police, Fire and EMS)

VALUE #2

### Quality Parks & Outdoor Recreation

- Enhance the accessibility and recreational use of the St. Joseph River
- Upgrade park and recreational facilities and amenities to be appealing and accessible for all user needs

VALUE #3

### Connectivity & Accessibility

- Promote Elkhart County's dark fiber (high-speed internet service) to Bristols employers to support economic development and to residential customers to enhance the Towns quality of life
- Coordinate with the Town of Middlebury and Elkhart County to plan and construct a regional trail connection
- Improve the traffic flow and reduce congestion on SR 15 and SR 120
- Study the downtown parking needs on SR 120
- Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users

VALUE #4

### Quality Housing & Neighborhoods

- Provide diverse and affordable housing options
- Ensure quality housing development for new neighborhoods

## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES (cont.)

### VALUE #5

#### Diverse Employment Opportunities to Enhance Resiliency

- Increase the number of local businesses and small-scale retail spaces to provide additional shopping, dining, and service opportunities
- Actively work with small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow and thrive by making it easy to do business in Bristol

### VALUE #7

#### Marketing, Communications, & Volunteerism

- Enhance community involvement and volunteerism to help foster a sense of community pride and ownership
- Enhance the communication and promotion of community events, festivals, and Bristol Parks
- Actively promote and market Bristol's small businesses to help them grow, thrive, and have long-term success
- Encourage and maintain the communication of the Town's vision between Town Council, Town Boards, Town Staff, developers, Elkhart County, Bristol residents, and community organizations



## EMPLOYMENT CENTERS



Bristol is home to many successful manufacturing industries and entrepreneurs that adds to the attractiveness of doing business in Bristol. Although Bristol appears as a “small-town” in terms of the land size and population, Bristol offers a thriving and growing business climate with being home to many exporting manufacturing industries like Thor Industries, Monogram Foods, Utilimaster, and Robert Week Corporation to name a few. Development patterns have catered in building large manufacturing facilities south of downtown off SR 15 and around the new bypass road between Bloomingdale Drive and SR 120. The Town plans to continue to promote these areas to support constructing large-scale manufacturing facilities while expanding to the west of SR 15 ultimately extending Industrial Drive to



SR 120. The Town is also exploring opportunities to develop the I-80/I-90 and SR 15 interchange to have a mixture of industrial and commercial uses. New commercial development could serve regional-scale commercial uses to support the tourism and retail industries. Bristol’s employment centers will support the expansion and upgrading of its utility systems to adequately support the growing needs of business users and maximize the use of the available capacity and existing infrastructure systems. Additionally, strategies focus on creating a marketing package to aid in business retention and expansion, support entrepreneurs in business startups, and provision of working spaces.

## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES

### VALUE #3

### Connectivity & Accessibility

- Promote Elkhart County’s dark fiber (high-speed internet service) to Bristols employers to support economic development and to residential customers to enhance the Towns quality of life
- Upgrade the Town’s water and wastewater systems to adequately serve its existing and future customers
- Improve the traffic flow and congestion on SR 15 and SR 120

## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES (cont.)

#5

VALUE

### Diverse Employment Opportunities to Enhance Resiliency

- Diversify the industry sectors to ensure Bristol and Elkhart County's job market is resilient through an economic crisis
- Increase the attraction of advance manufacturing and knowledge-based jobs in innovation and technology
- Actively work with small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow and thrive by making it easy to do business in Bristol
- Increase the number of local businesses and small-scale retail spaces to provide additional shopping, dining, and service opportunities

VALUE #6

### Quality Education

- Create a Secondary Alternative Pathways program by partnering with Horizon Education Alliance and local employers to establish accredited apprenticeship and internship opportunities to train the emerging young workforce

VALUE #7

### Marketing, Communications, & Volunteerism

- Actively promote and market Bristol's small businesses to help them grow, thrive, and have long-term success





## COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL



The Community Commercial character area is imagined to serve the day-to-day retail and service needs of Bristol's residents, visitors, and employees. The building scale is imagined as single to two-story buildings with a style that reflects Bristol's small-town charm. This character area should develop with small-scale site designs with connections to adjoining properties internally with limited access roads onto SR 15 to minimize traffic congestion and maintain a proper flow of traffic on SR 15. Surface parking lots should be oriented in the rear of the buildings with building entrances facing SR 15. Sidewalks on new developments should be provided to encourage pedestrian access and connections between properties. Site designs should also provide attractive landscape designs with a diversity of plant species to enhance the appeal and reduce major impacts from invading pests. Examples of desirable uses could include professional offices, general retail stores, restaurants, coffee shops to name a few.

## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES

### VALUE #1

#### Quality places & attractions

- Plan for sustainable and modest growth
- Enhance the sense of place by creating vibrant, walkable destinations
- Maintain high-quality public safety services (Police, Fire and EMS)



### VALUE #3

#### Connectivity & Accessibility

- Promote Elkhart County's dark fiber (high-speed internet service) to Bristol's employers to support economic development and to residential customers to enhance the Town's quality of life
- Upgrade the Town's water and wastewater systems to adequately serve its existing and future customers
- Improve the traffic flow and congestion on SR 15 and SR 120
- Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users



## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES (cont.)

### VALUE #5

### Diverse Employment Opportunities to Enhance Resiliency

- Increase the number of local businesses and small-scale retail spaces to provide additional shopping, dining, and service opportunities
- Actively work with small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow and thrive by making it easy to do business in Bristol

### TRANSITIONAL MIXED-USE

The Transitional Mixed-Use character areas are imagined to provide a unique and inviting transition in scale and development patterns between the Gateways, Downtown District, Community Commercial areas, and the Employment Centers along SR 120 and SR 15. The building scale should be one to two-story buildings to reflect the context of Bristol's small-town character. Smaller-scale buildings

will provide for a more inviting and safer feel for pedestrians. The character of new buildings should reflect place-making components with buildings oriented towards the street, built-up or close to the sidewalk, and surface parking lots located in the rear of buildings to encourage interaction and activity at building fronts.

The character of new developments are imagined to be vibrant, walkable mixed-use places with diversity in housing options and price-points, neighborhood-scale retail and service businesses, and professional offices. The street design of SR 15 is reimagined to have traffic-calming measures such as on-street parking, bike lanes, street furniture, and landscape elements to reduce vehicular speeds to enhance the safety for pedestrians and motorists. Restaurants could have outdoor seating to add to the character of the area.



VALUE #1

**Quality Places & Attractions**

- Plan for sustainable and modest growth
- Enhance the sense of place by creating vibrant, walkable destinations
- Organize various events and festivals that may include art shows, craft fairs, a farmer’s market, food trucks, movies-in-the-park, and live-music performances
- Maintain high-quality public safety services (Police, Fire and EMS)

VALUE #3

**Connectivity & Accessibility**

- Promote Elkhart County’s dark fiber (high-speed internet service) to Bristols employers to support economic development and to residential customers to enhance the Towns quality of life
- Improve the traffic flow and reduce congestion on SR 15 and SR 120
- Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users

VALUE #4

**Quality Housing & Neighborhoods**

- Provide diverse and affordable housing options
- Ensure quality housing development for new neighborhoods



## MIXED RESIDENTIAL



The Mixed Residential character area reflects the need to accommodate new housing development to support future growth and balance the supply of jobs to homes. The Town imagines new housing supply to be diverse in style, price range, and type to provide a range of options for all income levels and housing needs.

The Town imagines new housing options to be a mix of home values to provide quality living units at affordable prices for individuals and families. New housing development should be targeted in the identified “Mixed Residential” character area on the Future Development Concept Map, Transitional Mixed-Use areas, Gateways, and the Downtown District. Redevelopment plans in the

Downtown District should consider integrating new homes with a range in density (scale) and affordability. Integrating new housing development in these areas will enhance the vibrancy of these places by offering additional styles of residential homes and units in a denser urban-neighborhood setting.

Bristol understands the need to offer a range of affordable housing options to accommodate first-time homebuyers and older populations who may want to downsize and continue to reside in Bristol. The Town also imagines new residential developments that offer a range of pedestrian and bicycle connections to adjacent uses such as the Bristol Elementary School, parks, restaurants, offices, and other places of employment. Connections could be made with the provision of sidewalks and bicycle facilities such as bike lanes or trails to encourage residents to commute by walking or biking for their shorter destination trips within the community.

## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES

### VALUE #1

#### Quality Places & Attractions

- Plan for sustainable and modest growth
- Enhance the sense of place by creating vibrant, walkable destinations
- Maintain high-quality public safety services (Police, Fire and EMS)

## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES (cont.)

#3

VALUE

### Connectivity & Accessibility

- Upgrade park and recreational facilities and amenities to be appealing and accessible for all user needs
- Upgrade the Town's water and wastewater systems to adequately serve its existing and future customers
- Improve the traffic flow and reduce congestion on SR 15 and SR 120
- Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users

#4

VALUE

### Quality Housing & Neighborhoods

- Provide diverse and affordable housing options
- Ensure quality housing development for new neighborhoods



## NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION

The Neighborhood Preservation character area represents Bristol's original neighborhoods and the Town's desire to preserve their character. This character area reflects the homes and the mix of uses integrated within the neighborhood to the west of SR 15 and south of SR 120. The Neighborhood Preservation represents the Town's original development pattern following its incorporation as a Town. Detached single-family homes are the most predominant land use with a few multi-family units that border Raber Golf Course. Other neighborhood-scale uses were integrated to support the needs of the residents living in this area. Such uses include Cummins Park, Bristol Elementary School, Bristol Public Library, Bristol's local Postal Office, various religious institutions, and the former Bristol High School (now the location of the Elkhart County History Museum).

The single-family homes were built with small setbacks from the street with retention of a percentage of the tree canopy. The original street design included sidewalks to safely access the nearby public facilities. Bristol imagines Neighborhood Preservation involve reinvestment in older homes that have fallen into disrepair to enhance the appeal of the neighborhood and be an encouragement for property owners to take pride in maintaining their homes. Reinvestment will increase the property values and protect the character of the neighborhood. Any new development adjacent to this area should provide an appropriate transition in scale and use.

## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES

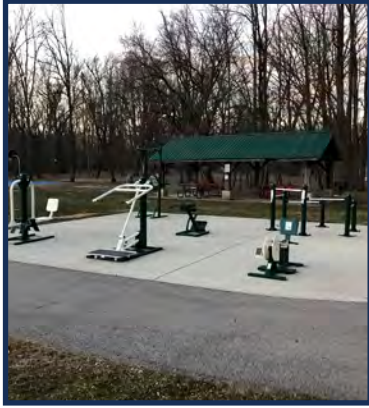
### VALUE #4

#### Quality Housing & Neighborhoods

- Preserve the existing residential character

## PARKS & RECREATION

Bristol has several amenities that uniquely captures and capitalizes on the scenic landscapes and environmental assets of the community. These include Bristol's parks and outdoor recreational amenities.



The Parks and Recreation character areas reflect the locations of Bristol's existing parks and recreational amenities. The Town of Bristol values the provision of public green spaces and is committed to investing its resources to ensure these amenities are maintained to high quality. Bristol is fortunate to have a unique asset of the St. Joseph River that provides a range of opportunities to draw residents and visitors to enjoy the river. Whether it is boating of any kind, teaching children about the various plants and species along or in the river, fishing, or simply relaxing on a bench and enjoying the scenic views. Bristol imagines this valuable water asset and its floodway to be protected from impacts of future development while clearing overgrown embankments in Congdon Park to provide additional access to launch canoes and kayaks.



The Town recently updated its 5-Year Parks Master Plan to guide investments to improve its parks and recreational amenities and establish new environmental education and fitness programs. Bristol imagines its parks to have scenic landscapes, accessible playgrounds and facilities, quality equipment and ball courts, and a dedicated department to effectively maintain parks and recreational facilities. The Bristol Park Board would also like to increase their efforts on community engagement to share their vision of park improvements, floodway conservation, and ways the community can volunteer and give back to the community.

## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES

### VALUE #2

### Quality Parks & Outdoor Recreation

- Enhance the accessibility and recreational use of the St. Joseph River
- Establish a proactive management and maintenance schedule of Bristol Parks
- Upgrade park and recreational facilities and amenities to be appealing and accessible for all user needs
- Evaluate the best use of the parks that experience frequent flooding and mitigate the impacts



## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES (cont.)

### VALUE #3

#### Connectivity & Accessibility

- Upgrade park and recreational facilities and amenities to be appealing and accessible for all user needs
- Coordinate with the Town of Middlebury and Elkhart County to plan and construct a regional trail connection
- Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users

### VALUE #6

#### Quality Education

- Partner with the Elkhart Civic Theatre to create an Arts Education program
- Offer year-round education programs and activities for school age children
- Restructure the Bristol Summer Program

### VALUE #7

#### Marketing, Communications, & Volunteerism

- Enhance community involvement and volunteerism to help foster a sense of community pride and ownership
- Enhance the communication and promotion of community events, festivals, and Bristol Parks
- Encourage and maintain the communication of the Town's vision between Town Council, Town Boards, Town Staff, developers, Elkhart County, Bristol residents, and community organizations





## RURAL MANAGEMENT



The surrounding land to the Bristol community is imagined to retain its rural scenic character and is designated as the Rural Management character area. While the Town does want to accommodate future growth it does not want to lose the surrounding rural landscapes to retain its small-town charm. New development should first be directed in targeted areas of the Downtown District, Transitional Mixed-Use areas, Community Commercial, Employment Centers, and Gateways to preserve the rural farmlands, residential homes, and open spaces. The primary uses in the Rural Management character area should be farmlands to allow crop production and raising livestock and rural single-family homes. Although isolated rural residential properties exist, non-agriculture uses should be limited in scale and compatible with agricultural uses. This area should preserve open space and environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, Town regulated drains, and the St. Joseph River and the Little Elkhart River floodplains.

## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES

### VALUE #1

#### Quality Places & Attractions

- Plan for sustainable and modest growth
- Enhance the sense of place by creating vibrant, walkable destinations
- Maintain high-quality public safety services (Police, Fire and EMS)

### VALUE #3

#### Connectivity & Accessibility

- Promote Elkhart County's dark fiber (high-speed internet service) to Bristols employers to support economic development and to residential customers to enhance the Towns quality of life
- Coordinate with the Town of Middlebury and Elkhart County to plan and construct a regional trail connection
- Upgrade the Town's water and wastewater systems to adequately serve its existing and future customers
- Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users

### VALUE #4

#### Quality Housing & Neighborhoods

- Preserve the existing residential character

## GATEWAYS



The Gateway character areas are identified at the entry-points into Bristol. These areas include the entry routes on I-80/I-90 Toll Road, SR 120, SR 15, and CR 8. These interstate and state routes are vital for economic development and support Bristol's major employers and small businesses. They are also vital for residents and visitors to access its community parks and the St. Joseph River. It is imperative that the Town build attractive entrances not only from a landscape perspective but with attractive buildings so these entrances are intriguing and inviting destination places. The Town imagines these areas as a live-work environment to allow new residential and employment opportunities to be integrated with site designs.

Employers and/or entrepreneurs could locate in these places to diversify the regional job market and capitalize on the convenient access to I-80/I-90, SR 120, and SR 15. The types of employment establishments at these Gateways could include light manufacturing centers, flex space buildings, corporate offices, professional offices, and even retail. These areas are imagined to compliment the incoming character areas of the Community Commercial, Transitional Mixed-Use areas, and the Employment Centers.

Residential development could also be encouraged in a denser mixed-use setting as it traverses into the Transitional Mixed-Use areas. Homes could support a mixture of market-rate and affordable units. Street design should accommodate for users to have safe and accessible options to walk or bike for their shorter commute trips around Bristol. Additionally, site designs should support an attractive and safe pedestrian environment with connections between the sidewalk and front door of the buildings.

## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES

### VALUE #1

#### Quality Places & Attractions

- Plan for sustainable and modest growth
- Enhance the sense of place by creating vibrant, walkable destinations
- Maintain high-quality public safety services (Police, Fire and EMS)

## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES (cont.)

#3

VALUE

### Connectivity & Accessibility

- Promote Elkhart County's dark fiber (high-speed internet service) to Bristol's employers to support economic development and to residential customers to enhance the Town's quality of life
- Coordinate with the Town of Middlebury and Elkhart County to plan and construct a regional trail connection
- Upgrade the Town's water and wastewater systems to adequately serve its existing and future customers
- Enhance the safety and efficiency of streets for all users

VALUE #4

### Quality Housing & Neighborhoods

- Provide diverse and affordable housing options
- Ensure quality housing development for new neighborhoods

#5

VALUE

### Diverse Employment Opportunities to Enhance Resiliency

- Diversify the industry sectors to ensure Bristol and Elkhart County's job market is resilient through an economic crisis
- Increase the attraction of advanced manufacturing and knowledge-based jobs in innovation and technology
- Actively work with small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow and thrive by making it easy to do business in Bristol
- Increase the number of local businesses and small-scale retail spaces to provide additional shopping, dining, and service opportunities

## COMMUNITY-WIDE STRATEGIES

In addition to the character areas illustrated on the Future Development Concept Map, other strategies were identified from the Steering Committee and the public that address community-wide issues and would not be applicable to put on a map as they are not directly tied to a character area. These are strategies that will bring transformation from a community-wide level, broader than within a specific character area, for the Town to enhance their services and programs to a higher quality.

## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES

### VALUE #1

#### Quality Places & Attractions

- Explore the feasibility to construct an event center within the Bristol community

### VALUE #2

#### Quality Parks & Outdoor Recreation

- Establish a proactive management and maintenance schedule of Bristol Parks
- Evaluate the best use of the parks that experience frequent flooding and mitigate the impacts

### VALUE #3

#### Connectivity & Accessibility

- Upgrade the Town's water and wastewater systems to adequately serve its existing and future customers

## CORE VALUES & ACTION STRATEGIES (cont.)

### VALUE #7

#### Marketing, Communications, & Volunteerism

- Enhance community involvement and volunteerism to help foster a sense of community pride and ownership
- Enhance the communication and promotion of community events, festivals, and Bristol Parks
- Encourage and maintain the communication of the Town's vision between Town Council, Town Boards, Town Staff, developers, Elkhart County, Bristol residents, and community organizations
- Actively promote and market Bristol's small businesses to help them grow, thrive, and have long-term success

### VALUE #6

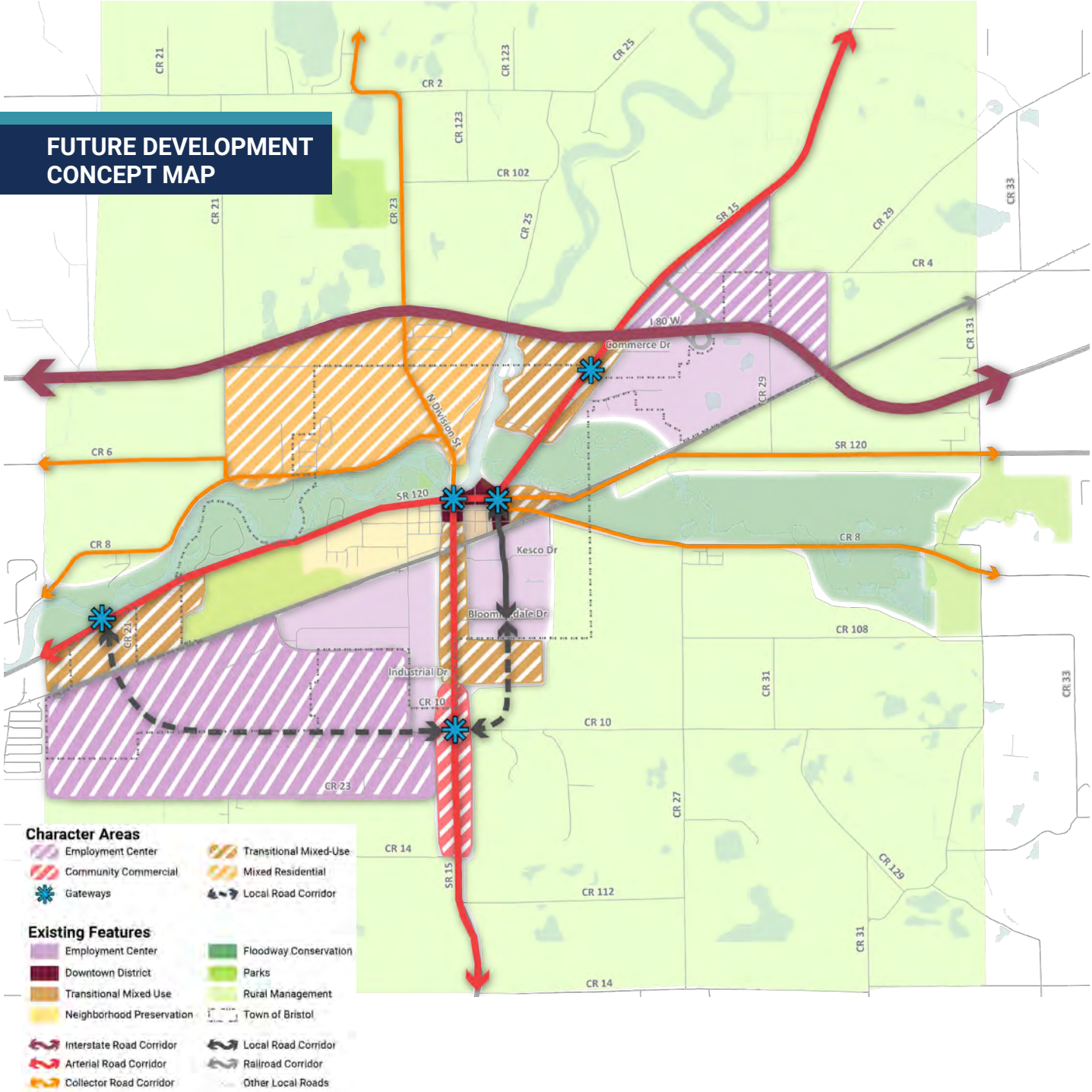
#### Quality Education

- Establish a partnership with local school districts to enhance the attractiveness and increase the student population of Bristol Elementary School
- Create a Secondary Alternative Pathways program by partnering with Horizon Education Alliance and local employers to establish accredited apprenticeship and internship opportunities to train the emerging young workforce
- Partner with the Elkhart Civic Theatre to create an Arts Education program
- Offer year-round education programs and activities for school age children
- Restructure the Bristol Summer Program
- Establish "lasting" partnerships with community entities and organizations



# TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS

The Future Development Concept Map also illustrates the Town’s existing and future conceptual transportation plan to enhance the mobility and accessibility between the land use character areas. Having an efficient and accessible transportation system contributes to the Town’s overall quality of life.



## FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION CORRIDORS

The level of street accessibility, the character of the road, traffic volumes, and travel speeds are key elements in assigning a road's functional classification. The following classification system is recommended for the Town of Bristol, illustrated in the Future Development Concept Map.

**Interstate Corridor** - Interstates are high capacity roadways with the primary purpose of connecting travelers to larger municipalities. I-80/I-90 Toll Road serves as the east-west interstate route connecting travelers to larger cities such as South Bend, Gary, and further west to Chicago and Fort Wayne to the east. The Town imagines capitalizing on the interstate corridor by proposing future development to occur in the Employment Center and Transitional Mixed-Use areas. Development may include new large-scale manufacturing industries, flex office spaces, retail, hotel, restaurants, and higher density residential units.

**Arterial Corridor** - Similar to the interstate corridor, the arterial corridor is intended to carry a higher frequency of travelers through communities and to higher capacity regional roadways like I-80/I-90 Toll Road or US 20. Speed limits can range from 35 mph in urban areas to 55 mph in rural areas. SR 120 and SR 15 are Bristol's two arterial corridors and serve as gateways into Town. These corridors should include gateway features such as entry signs, landscaping, and lighting to enhance the sense of place and have attractive site designs to appeal to prospective residents, visitors, and businesses. The Town imagines new development support a mixed-use setting with the integration of retail establishments, professional offices, and a range of housing options and density in its Downtown District and Transitional Mixed-Use areas. The Town also imagines new larger-scale retail businesses to locate in the Community Commercial character area and a range of large-scale manufacturing industries that offers jobs in innovation and technology located in the Employment Centers.

**Collector Corridor** - Collector roadways provide access between higher capacity roadways and local roads. Speed limits range from 25 mph to 35 mph. Collector roads serve as major links to land uses such as schools, parks, employment centers, and commercial areas. Street design should accommodate a safe bicycle and pedestrian environment and include landscaping to add to the aesthetic value. It is proposed to change the local road classification of Bristol's bypass of Pearl Street and Ponderosa Drive to a major collector to adequately serve the major employers, be a designated truck route to reduce truck traffic in downtown. As new development occurs in the employment center west of SR 15, the Town imagines extending Industrial Drive to SR 120 and should also be reclassified as a major collector to provide continuous access between SR 120 and SR 15.

**Local Road** - All other roadways in Bristol are classified as local roads. Local roads provide direct access to collectors and adjacent land uses, and are mostly located within the Neighborhood Preservation, Downtown District, Transitional Mixed-Use, Employment Centers, and the Rural Management character areas. Local roads generally are permitted to have on-street parking, lower speed limits, and should accommodate for a safe bicycle and pedestrian environment to expand mobility options and recreation.



# Measuring our Success

## OUR GRAND ACTION PROGRAM

Our grand Action Program lists the priority action strategies we will first focus on implementing to begin achieving our vision. Our core values and action strategies are the frameworks for seeing the vision implemented. The core values serve as the basis that articulate the characteristics, aspirations, and social attributes the community desires, and the strategies transform the “built environment” to see the vision built up to reality. The Steering Committee identified seven core values to guide future design and development concepts, new policies, and programs for Bristol and frames the strategies.

The seven core values are **Quality Places & Attractions, Quality Parks & Outdoor Recreation, Connectivity & Accessibility, Quality Housing & Neighborhoods, Diverse Employment Opportunities to Enhance Resiliency, Quality Education, and Marketing, Communication, & Volunteerism.**

The formation of the strategies was done through a series of workshops with brainstorming sessions between the Steering Committee and MACOG. Then prioritization of the entire list of strategies was done by the Steering Committee that involved three rounds of voting using an online platform called Dotstorming. There was a total of 32 strategies, divided evenly into two dashboards. Each of the strategies was then listed on a Dotstorming voting card.



The first two rounds had Committee members vote on their own from their computers to eliminate bias and were given six votes to select the six strategies they thought should be a high priority. The results were tallied and summarized, and the strategies that received the most votes were put onto another Dotstorming dashboard for one last priority voting round. Committee members were given a total of three votes to vote on their own again indicating what they thought should be the top highest priorities.

The following is our grand Priority Action Program that aligns the priority strategies with the core value it reinforces. The top highest priorities are indicated by the green circle and the other priority strategies are indicated with a blue circle. Residents had opportunity to vote on these priorities as what they would like to see the Town begin implementing in the next two years upon plan adoption.

A complete list of the strategies and public votes are provided in the Appendix.

## PRIORITY ACTION PROGRAM

- 1** **Connectivity & Accessibility**  
Improve the traffic flow and reduce congestion on SR 15 and SR 120.
- 2** **Diverse Employment Opportunities to Enhance Resiliency**  
Increase the number of local businesses and small-scale retail spaces to provide additional shopping, dining, and service opportunities.
- 3** **Marketing, Communications, & Volunteerism**  
Enhance community involvement and volunteerism to help foster a sense of community pride and ownership.
- 4** **Diverse Employment Opportunities to Enhance Resiliency**  
Diversify the industry sectors to ensure Bristol and Elkhart County's job market is resilient through an economic crisis.

# PRIORITY ACTION PROGRAM

5

**Connectivity & Accessibility**

Promote Elkhart County's dark fiber (high-speed internet service) to Bristol employers to support economic development and to residential customers to enhance the quality of life.

6

**Quality Housing & Neighborhoods**

Provide diverse and affordable housing options.

7

**Quality Education**

Establish a partnership with local school districts to enhance the attractiveness and increase the student population of Bristol Elementary School.

8

**Quality Places & Attractions**

Enhance the sense of place by creating vibrant, walkable destinations.

9

**Quality Places & Attractions**

Maintain high-quality public safety services (Police, Fire and EMS).

10

**Marketing, Communications, & Volunteerism**

Encourage and maintain the communication of the Town's vision between Town Council, Town Boards, Town Staff, Committees, Bristol Residents, and community organizations.

11

**Quality Places & Attractions**

Organize various events and festivals that may include art shows, craft fairs, a farmers market, food trucks, movies-in-the-park, and live music performances.

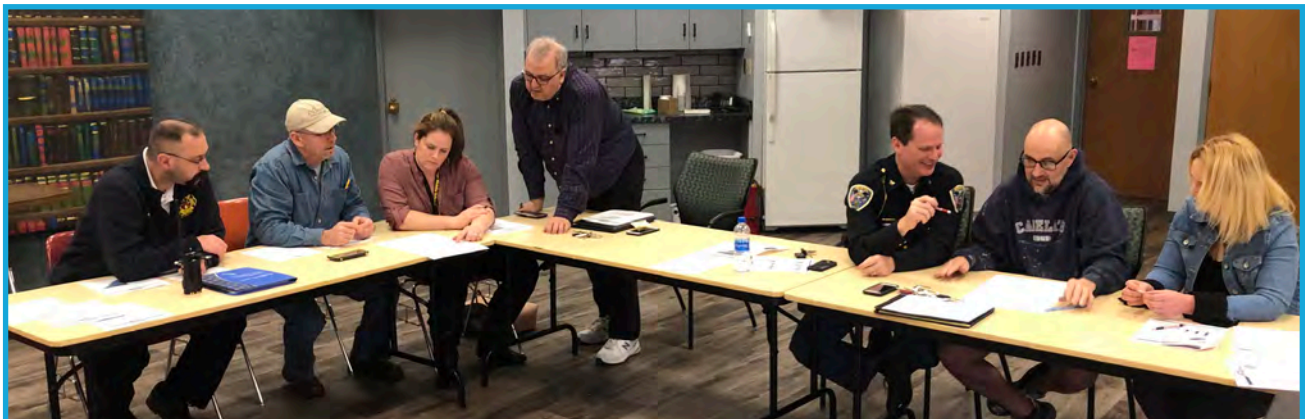
## EVALUATING OUR ACTION PROGRAM

Regular evaluation and monitoring of the Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan, in particular, the Priority Action Program, will be a key component for an actionable plan. If the plan is to be a valuable resource to the Town, the Town should establish a method to measure the successes and challenges in achieving the vision and implementing the Priority Action Program. Continual monitoring of the progress of the Action Program will keep key decision-makers such as the Town Council, Town staff, Elkhart County Planning Commission, community organizations, and the public informed about the Program's effectiveness. Additionally, monitoring the Program will help identify what aspects of the action strategies are working and areas that need to be improved or modified. This contributes to the comprehensive plan being a living document, as the Town can review and update the Plan every five years to stay current with changing community needs and resources that come available.

### Performance Evaluation Program

One suggested method to evaluate and monitor the progress of the Action Program is to set up a Performance Evaluation Program that establishes milestones and/or project deadlines to see a project through completion. It is recommended that project development be monitored and evaluated every five years, concluding each year with an annual progress report. The progress report may include an assessment of the strategies as to how they are achieving the Town's vision and goals, identify aspects of the project that are working well and aspects that are not working well, and strategize ways to improve those aspects that are not working well.

The performance evaluation program could be presented to the Bristol Town Council as an annual update with additional advisement from the Elkhart County Planning Commission. Using an evaluation program like what is suggested, will help keep the Town aware of how to respond to the arising issues or community needs and aspirations over the next 10 years.



## **GUIDANCE ON IMPLEMENTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan serves as the policy document to guide growth and development over the planning horizon to 2030. It sets a general framework for local decision-making and provides direction for land use planning and zoning efforts, budgeting priorities, and coordination with other public and private organizations. This chapter outlines the roles for the Town of Bristol and supporting community organizations and entities, as well as tools and potential funding sources to implement the action strategies and build the vision into reality.

### **Role of the Town Government**

The comprehensive plan should be used daily by the Town Manager, Town Council, and the Elkhart County Planning Commission to review and evaluate site plan proposals to ensure they are consistent with Bristol's vision, prioritize capital expenditures on public infrastructure, and guide community and economic development. Town Council should refer to the Plan when approving development proposals and budgeting of its general fund.

### **Maintain Open Dialogue with Community**

The Bristol community was involved through the entire planning process in the development of this Plan, and community engagement should not stop there. Maintaining an open dialogue and consistently encouraging community involvement after the Plan is adopted is vital for successful implementation. The Town should be at the forefront of actively communicating the Town's vision and action strategies to its residents, business leaders, private investors, Town boards, committees, and community organizations to foster a sense of pride and unity to achieve the vision. Simple procedures to communicate with the greater community could be to make sure the Plan is accessible online; hard copies are available at the municipal building or library; routinely update the Town's website; regularly inform the public through the newsletter of development and policy changes; as well as seek input when evaluating the progress of implementing the action strategies.

## **IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS**

### **Zoning Ordinance**

The purpose of a zoning ordinance is to govern the subdividing of lands, regulate the uses on the land in terms of scale, intensity, and appearance, and implement the land use policies from the comprehensive plan. Likewise, the zoning map and regulations should reflect the vision of the future land use map. Zoning is an important regulatory tool for implementing the Town's vision by establishing the types of uses to be allowed on specific properties and prescribe the character and intensity of permitted development. It is one of the Plan Commission's primary responsibilities to oversee the Town's various development ordinances and ensure they are concurrent with the vision of the Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

While the comprehensive plan is a guiding policy document for growth and development in the community and setting guidelines for the quality, character, and intensity of new development over a long-term, the zoning ordinance operates at a parcel level dealing with development daily to ensure the vision of the comprehensive plan is carried out. However, the comprehensive plan and zoning do not always operate harmoniously as they are accompanied by constant changes in the real estate market, community desires, and/or local decision-makers.

Areas to review and make improvements, if necessary, include modifying the zoning map and district standards to better reflect the future land use map; revise the plan development process to allow additional flexibility in regards to housing density and mixed-use developments; monitor impacts on stormwater management and use of best management practices (BMPs); requirements for developers in land dedications and exactions; and, define the type and scale of new development to require a traffic impact study.

## **Capital Improvement Plan**

Like the Zoning Ordinance, the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) or the Town's general obligation fund is another implementation tool in carrying out the Plan's action strategies. The Town uses the CIP to plan, budget, and finance the purchase and/or construction of capital improvement projects within 10 years. Eligible projects include constructing large capital infrastructures such as roads or utilities, Town facilities, and parks, equipment, or other fixed assets. All projects should then be reviewed, prioritized, and programmed with cost estimates and funding mechanisms, into the Town's capital budget for each fiscal year. A capital budget is the Town's annual budget that lists projects to be implemented in the current fiscal year. Therefore, the CIP is updated annually to reflect shifting priorities, emerging issues, changes in technology, and alterations from projected revenue. The CIP allows the Town to weigh project costs and benefits, and analyze the fiscal impacts to prioritize for the most beneficial public improvements while staying within budget constraints.

It is important to note that projects listed in the CIP are not guaranteed to make it into the annual capital budget. Therefore, the Town should analyze all of the projects included in the CIP each year during an update. Additionally, the review of the Comprehensive Plan update should correspond with the preparation of the Town's annual capital budget and CIP. This ensures resources are aligned with proposed changes in the upcoming fiscal year.

## TOWN REVENUE SOURCES

Many of the action strategies in the comprehensive plan can be implemented through administrative decision-making or Town funded programs, details provided below. However, others may require outside assistance, in which case the Town should proactively search for external grant opportunities.

Below are the several revenue sources the Town of Bristol can use to finance capital improvement projects.

### General Fund

The Town's General Fund accounts for the revenue collected from all Town enacted funding sources including property taxes, utility fees, and any permits. The General Fund pays for personnel and department operations, with a small percentage available for capital improvements. The amount used for capital improvements is set by Town Council before the adoption of the annual capital budget.

### Land Exactions

An Impact fee is one land exaction tool the Town could use to implement public infrastructure and facilities. Impact fees are intended to require developers to pay a fee, before acquiring building permits, to help offset the cost impacts from the new development for the Town to efficiently serve the community for public safety, utility services, parks, and transportation. These fees are established based on the capital and operation effects of new development. Currently, the Town does not have an impact fee policy but could coordinate with the Elkhart County Planning Department to review and determine the feasibility to enact such a fee.

Fee-in-Lieu's is another land exaction tool to implement public infrastructure and facilities. They operate differently than impact fees in that they are not based on the impacts of development but the requirement for developers to construct public infrastructure or facilities to serve the area. Fees can be used as subject to final site plan approval, and the Town may work with a developer to pay a fee-in-lieu of constructing the public infrastructure or facility so long as the infrastructure or facility is proportionate and reasonably tied to the development area. Example fee-in-lieu's can be applied for constructing bicycle and pedestrian facilities like sidewalks or trails, and parklands.



## **Economic Development Income Tax (EDIT)**

The Economic Development Income Tax (EDIT), also known as the County Economic Development Income Tax (CEDIT) is an optional tax available to all counties in Indiana. Revenue is divided among the county, cities, and towns, and must be used for economic development or public infrastructure projects. Elkhart County has adopted CEDIT. The Town may use their apportionment as a local match for federal and state projects.

## **Wheel Tax (Local Option Highway User Tax)**

The Local Option Highway User Tax is available to all counties. Elkhart County has been collecting a Wheel Tax since 2004. Distributions are made to the cities and towns as well as the counties. The Town may use their apportionment as a local match for federal and state projects.

## **Motor Vehicle Highway Account (MVHA)**

MVHA revenue is an account of the General Fund of the State of Indiana, which, by statute, is credited with the collection of the first six cents of the motor fuel and fuel use taxes, plus the statutory fees for motor vehicle registration and operation. The State collects these highway user taxes and apportions them back to the local municipalities for administration. The MVHA is the principal source of revenue for the overall operation of street and highway departments. MVHAs uses include the purchase of materials, labor costs, and/or equipment purchases required in the maintenance and construction of streets and roads. The Town may use their apportionment as a local match for federal and state projects.

## **Public-Private Partnerships**

A public-private partnership (PPP) is a business relationship between a private-sector company and a government agency to complete public projects. PPPs can be used to finance, build, and operate capital projects. The Town could collaborate with the Elkhart County Economic Development Corporation to explore opportunities to market vacant properties that have a good potential to be redeveloped or re-purposed for economic development activities like attracting new businesses, create business incubator spaces, and workforce development.

## **POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

There are several federal and state grant opportunities available the Town of Bristol and its Focus Groups could pursue as they work on implementing the Action Program to help offset project development costs. These potential funding opportunities will help the Town to enhance its public utility systems, parks, trails, recreational amenities, local streets, community development initiatives, and economic development initiatives. The following are some potential grant opportunities the Town could pursue.

## Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) administers the federal transportation program. The Town of Bristol can apply for federal funds through a regular call for projects. The Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) can assist the Town in planning and applying for transportation funding through INDOT and other state programs.

## INDOT's Community Crossings Match Grant Program

On March 23, 2016, Indiana Governor, Mike Pence, signed House Bill 1001 and Senate Bill 67 into law, which made available additional funding to incentivize local governments to begin inventorying, assessing, and improving their community assets of local roads and bridges. In April 2017, Governor Eric Holcomb signed House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1002 into law, continuing the Community Crossings Match Grant (CCMG) fund by committing to invest hundreds of millions of dollars for local road and bridge projects. Unlike the 2016 legislation, communities such as Bristol with a population of less than 10,000 are required to submit eligible projects at a 25 percent match rather than 50 percent. Eligible projects for the Town include preventative maintenance, road rehabilitation, or road reconstruction. Bristol has regularly applied for CCMG and has been successful to receive an award from each call, receiving nearly \$4 million that has improved over 10 miles of its local roads. Without the financial assistance from CCMG, these improvements would have taken longer to complete.

## Economic Development Administration Public Works & Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs

EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs provide communities with resources to address their various economic needs. EDA supports infrastructure and economic development projects that lead to job creation and retention, an increase in private investment, advances innovation, enhances manufacturing capacities, and workforce development. More information is provided on the EDA's funding opportunities webpage.





## **Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) Programs**

OCRA oversees the allocation of federal CDBG funds for community development projects to eligible entities including the planning and construction of public facilities and Main Street revitalization. Under the Public Facilities Program, a community can apply for up to a grant award of \$500,000 and requires a local match of 10 percent of the total project cost.

## **OCRA Quick Impact Placebased (QuIP) Grant**

QuIP is designed to fund small-scale projects that make a quick community enhancement and transformation of underutilized spaces to spark community conversation and creativity. This grant encourages the establishment and strengthening of partnerships between the Town, residents, community groups and organizations, and businesses. Grants requests must be between \$2,500 and \$5,000 and have a local match of either cash, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both.

## **Indiana Housing Community Development Authority (IHCDA) Programs**

IHCDA seeks to assist communities to create high-quality hometowns that are safe, affordable, and quality housing options. IHCDA promotes, finances, and supports a broad range of housing solutions, from temporary shelters to homeownership assistance. IHCDA partners with housing developers, lenders, investors, and nonprofit organizations to use their financing resources to serve low and moderate-income earners.

## **IHCDA Patronicity CreatINg Places Grant**

The CreatINg Places grant is a crowdsource funding mechanism that communities can apply and submit a project campaign that seeks public donations. IHCDA will match the dollars raised for successful campaigns up to \$50,000.

## **United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides a Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program to rural communities with no more than 20,000 residents to aid in constructing or improving essential community facilities such as hospitals, health clinics, schools, public safety buildings, community centers, museums, local food systems, and other community-based initiatives. More details on how to acquire the Rural Development Community Facilities Grant is available on the USDA's Rural Development website.

## United States Fire Administration

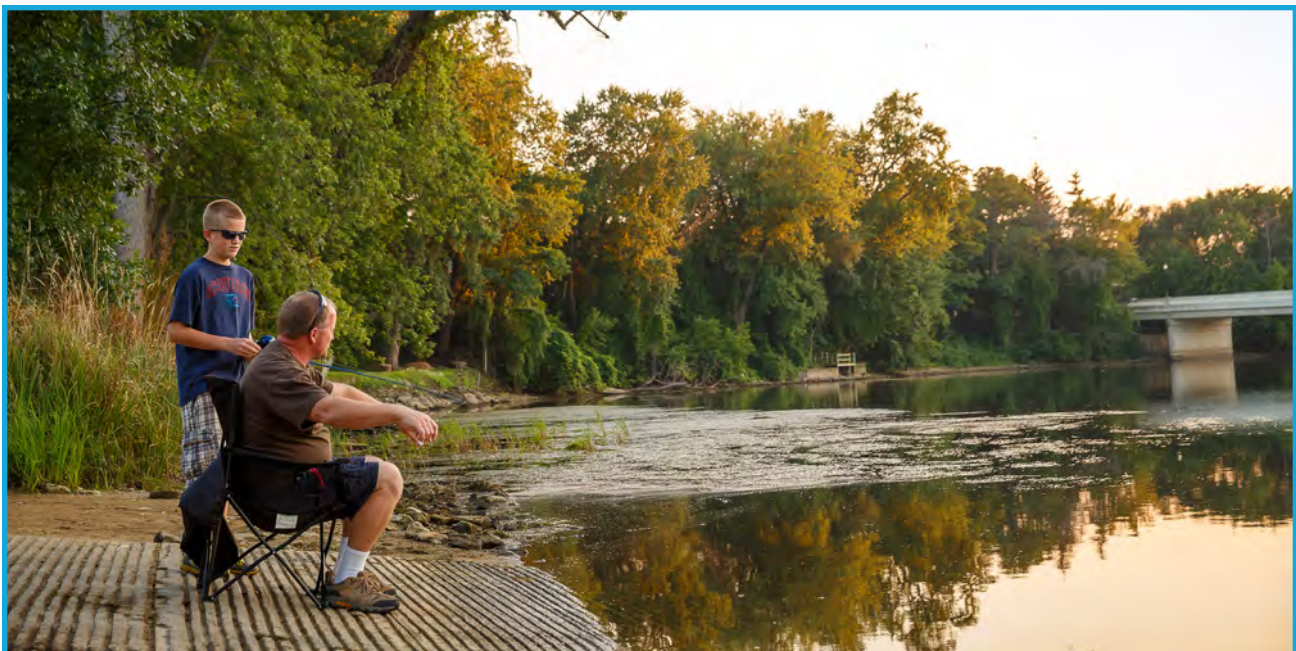
The United States Fire Administration (USFA) offers several fire service grants the Bristol Township Fire and EMS Department could pursue to offset costs for equipment, staffing, and fire prevention measures. One grant program Bristol may be eligible for is the Assistance to Firefighters used to purchase equipment, protective gear, and vehicles as well as training initiatives.

## Indiana Department of Natural Resources

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) offers several community facilities grants such as Fire Management and Recreational Trails Program. Fire Management grants is a 50/50 match that helps volunteer fire departments purchase vehicles and equipment. The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a state match grant to aid local communities in land acquisition and/or developing multi-use trails. The RTP reimburses a local community up to 80 percent of the project expenses upon project approval. More details on these programs are located on the Indiana Department of Natural Resources website.

## Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is available for local communities who have a state-approved Park and Recreation Board and Five-Year Parks Master Plan. The LWCF is a state match grant that provides 50 percent of the costs for land acquisition and/or development of parks and recreational facilities upon project approval. More details on the LWCF are located on the Indiana Department of Natural Resources website.





## Appendix - Public Input



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

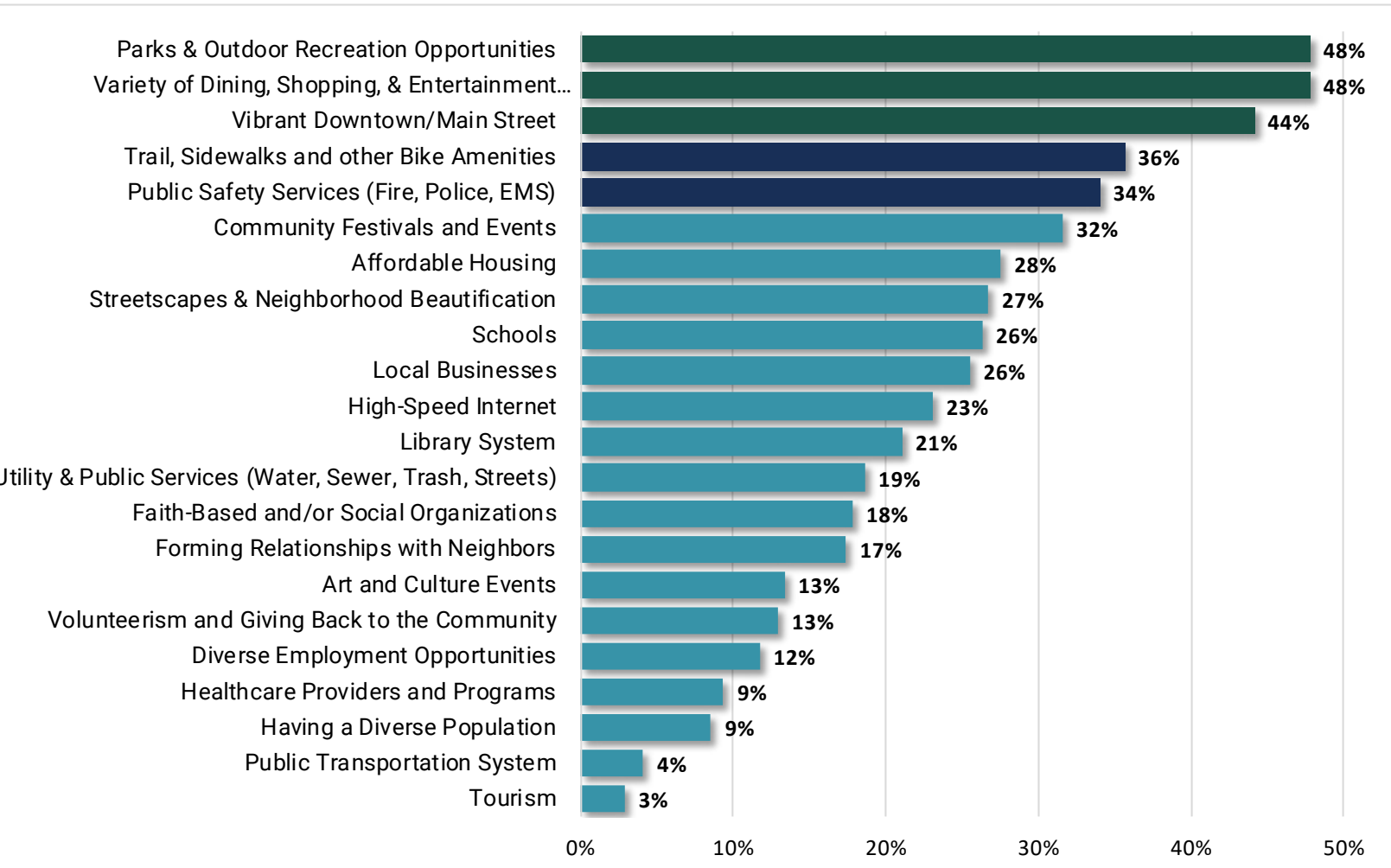
The planning process was designed to engage residents of the Bristol community in developing a vision for the Town's future, identify the building blocks the Town values the most, identify the major opportunities and challenges, and action strategies to guide land development and establishing programs or services. Additionally, the process was built on the foundation of community involvement through multiple facets that sought input from key stakeholders including Town officials and staff, residents, employers and their employees, and other community organizations. These efforts are outlined on the subsequent pages beginning with the summary of the survey results followed by a summary of the public comments received during the 30-day public comment period.

## PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY RESULTS

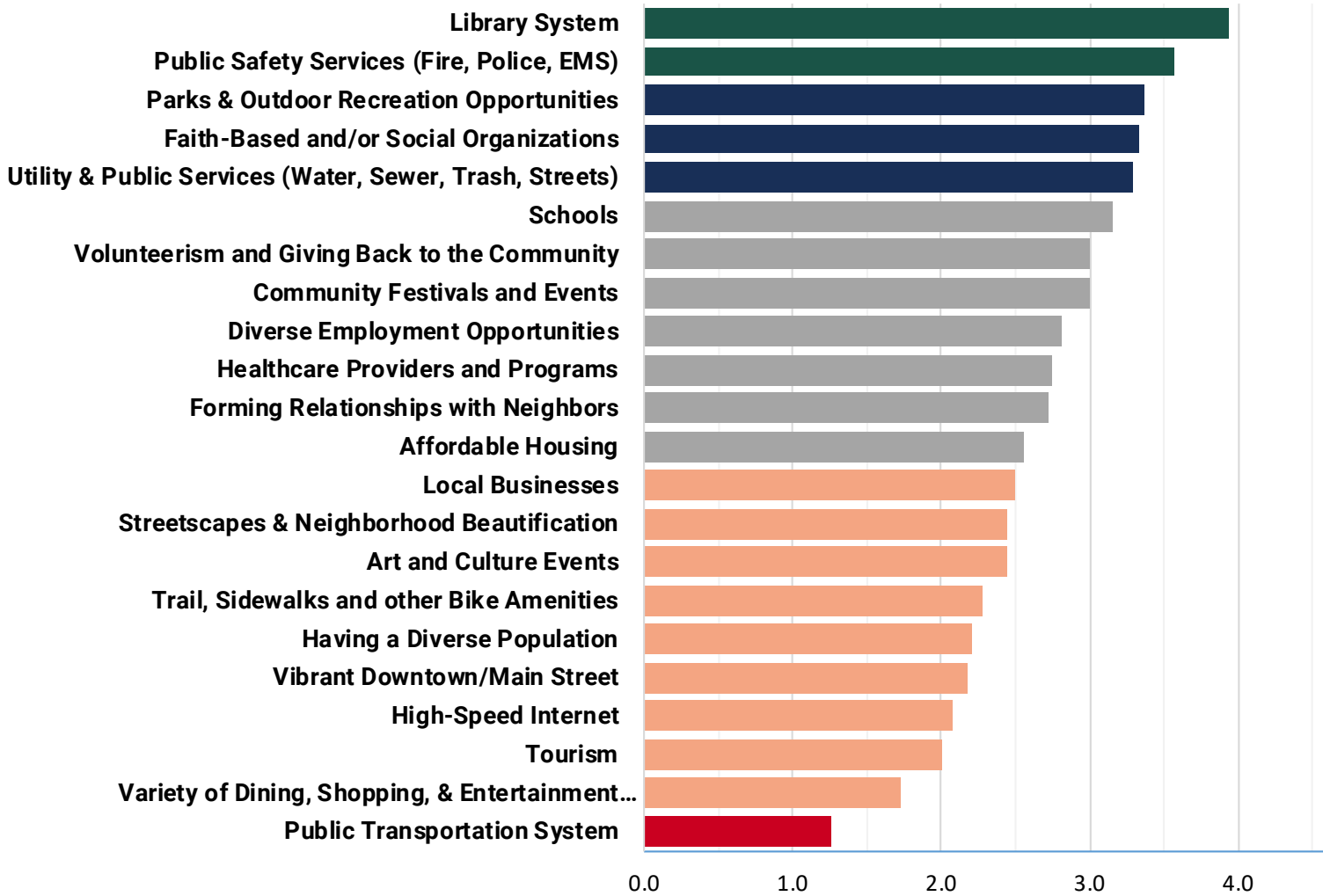
The Town issued a public input survey in January 2020 that was available online as well as paper copies were available at the Town Fire Department and Bristol Public Library. We received input from 250 residents and workers, representing 20 percent of Bristol’s population! Participants shared their vision of their ideal hometown, how Bristol rates to their vision, what they like and dislike about Bristol.

The first two questions asked participants to select five features of their grand hometown and rate how well the Town of Bristol provides those features. The goal of these questions was to find common themes that community residents aspire to live in and then develop a list of Core Values that are shared among them. The breakdown of their responses are provided in the charts below and on the next page.

### Top Features of their Grand Hometown



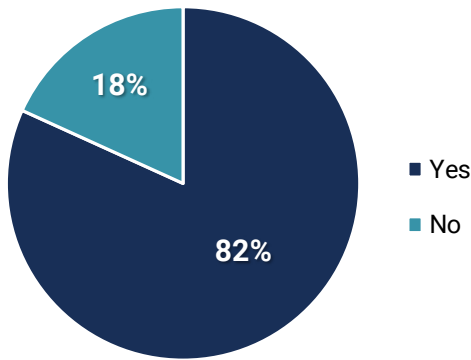
## Average Rating for Town of Bristol



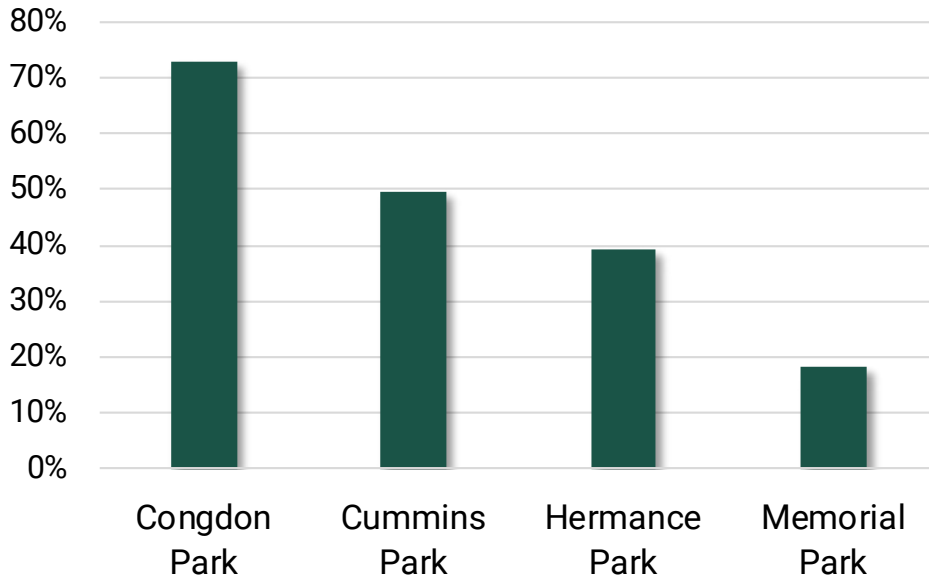
## GRAND VISION OF BRISTOL PARKS

The next six (6) questions asked participants to share their grand vision of Bristol's parks to gauge how often people visit, the frequency of use of facilities, rating of its parks, and improvements they would like to see added in the parks and recreation system. A summary of the results for those questions are provided below and on the subsequent pages.

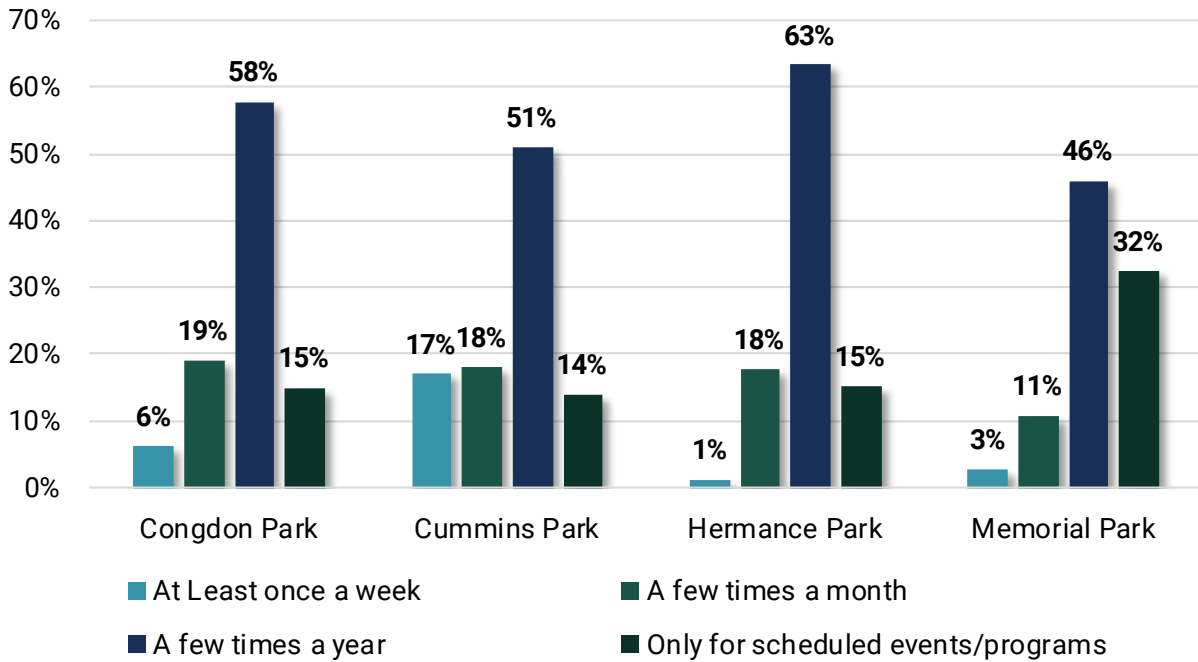
### 1. Do you visit at least one of the Town of Bristol's Parks?



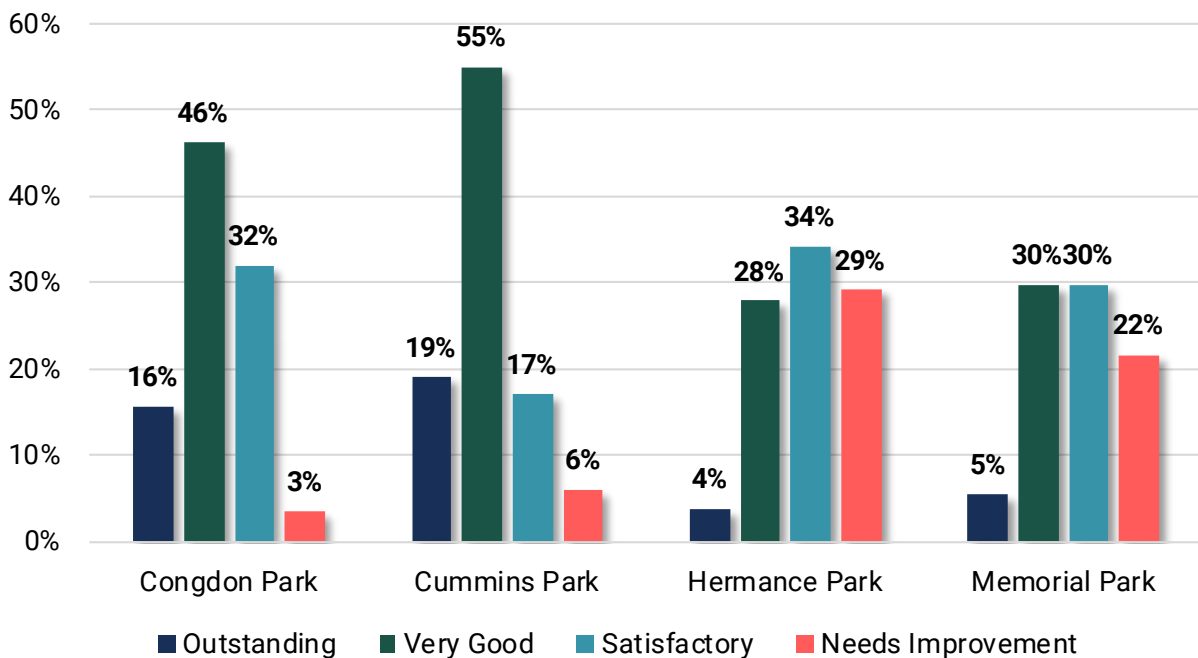
### 2. Which parks do you visit?



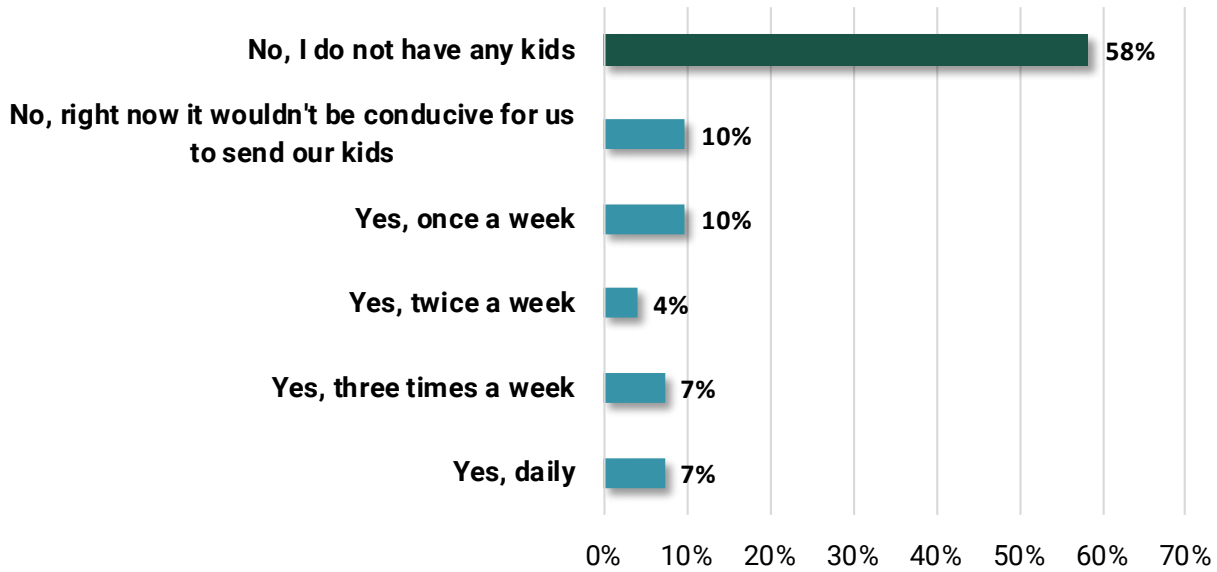
## 2a. Visit Frequency



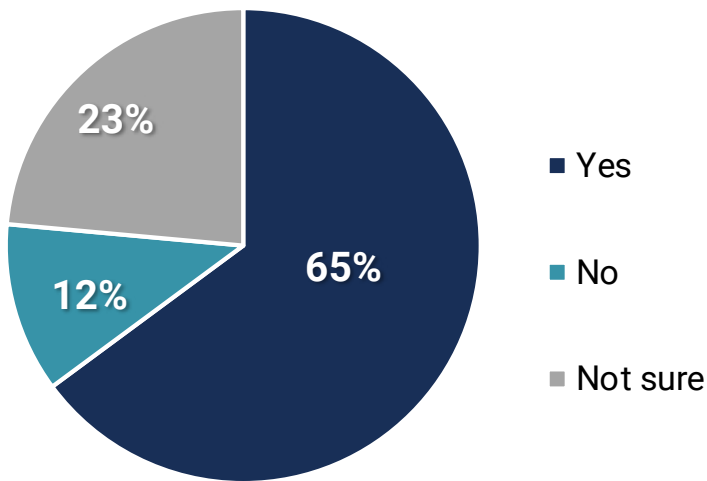
## 2b. Park Rating



**3. If the Town had a summer program, would you send your kids and how frequently would you want activities programmed?**

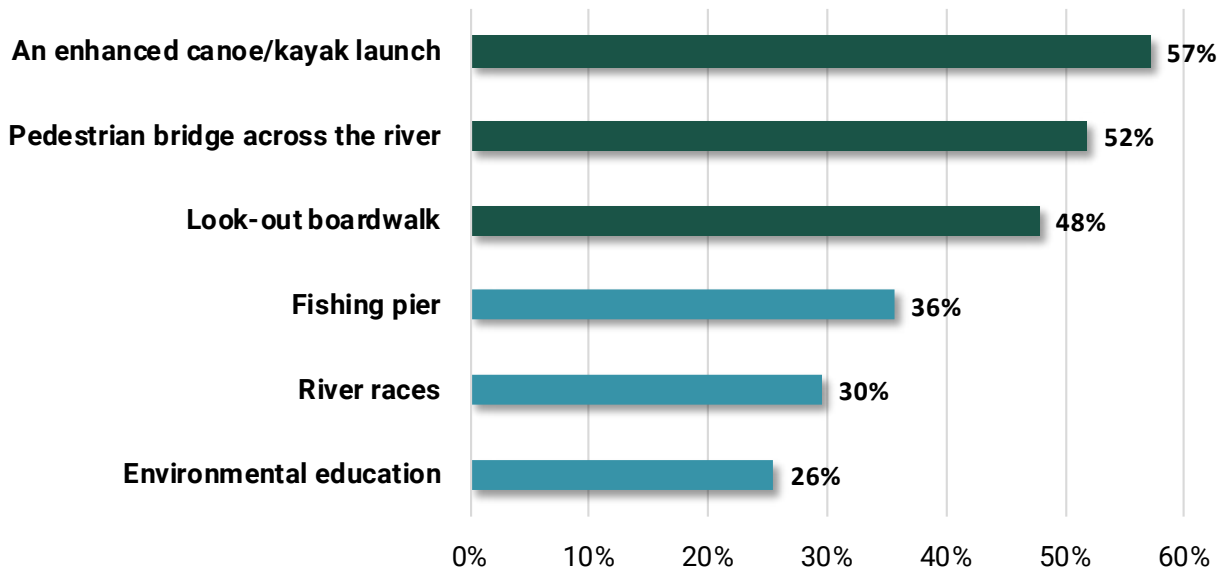


**4. Would you take advantage of the river if there was improved access?**

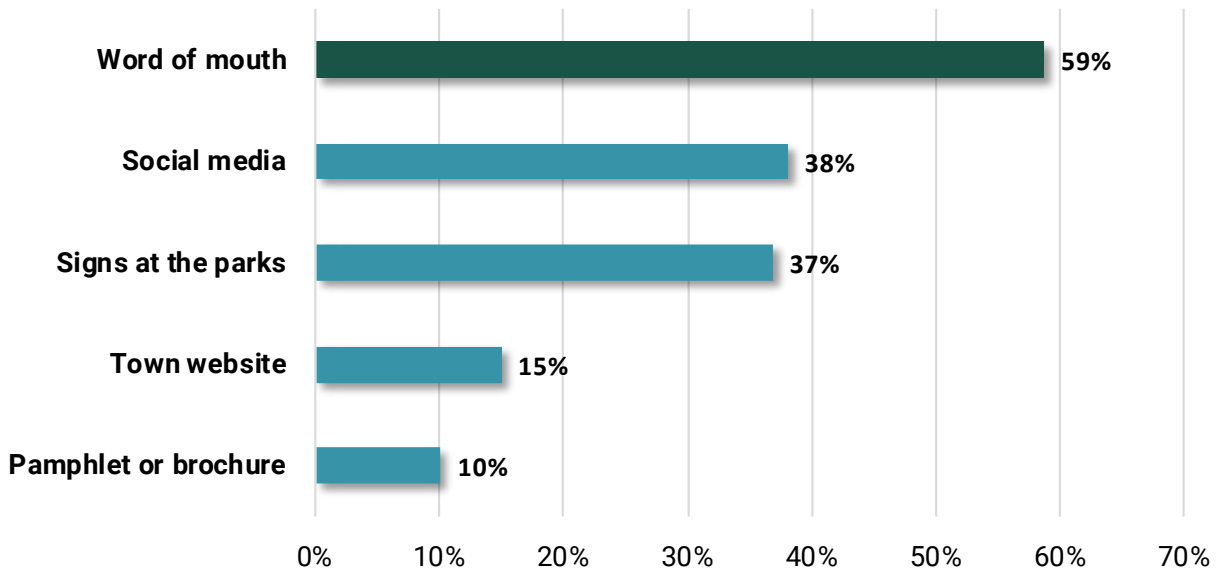




**5. What features would you like to see the Town provide to enjoy the river?**



**6. How do you get your information about the parks?**



## **PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE**

The Town held an open house on February 26, 2020 at the Bristol Public Library to provide an opportunity for residents to share their GRAND VISION of Bristol, aspirations for what they would like to see built or added in Bristol, and identify the likely barriers preventing those aspirations from being achieved today. Approximately 30 residents attended the open house.

Notices of the open house were advertised on the Town of Bristol and Bristol Parks Facebook pages, flyers were posted at downtown businesses, as well as broadcasted on the Horizonte Radio Program. The Town Manager and MACOG were featured on the radio program in effort to engage and encourage participation from the Latino community who represent approximately 8 percent of Bristol residents, not including the Latino community who commute to Bristol for work. A translator also attended the open house to provide translation service for limited English speaking participants.

There were six stations for participants to provide their input. The first four stations were dedicated to a Bristol Park that asked attendees to write down new amenities they would like to see added to the park and existing park features that need to improve/enhance. A summary of those improvements are provided below.

### **COMMON NEW AMENITIES & PARK IMPROVEMENTS:**

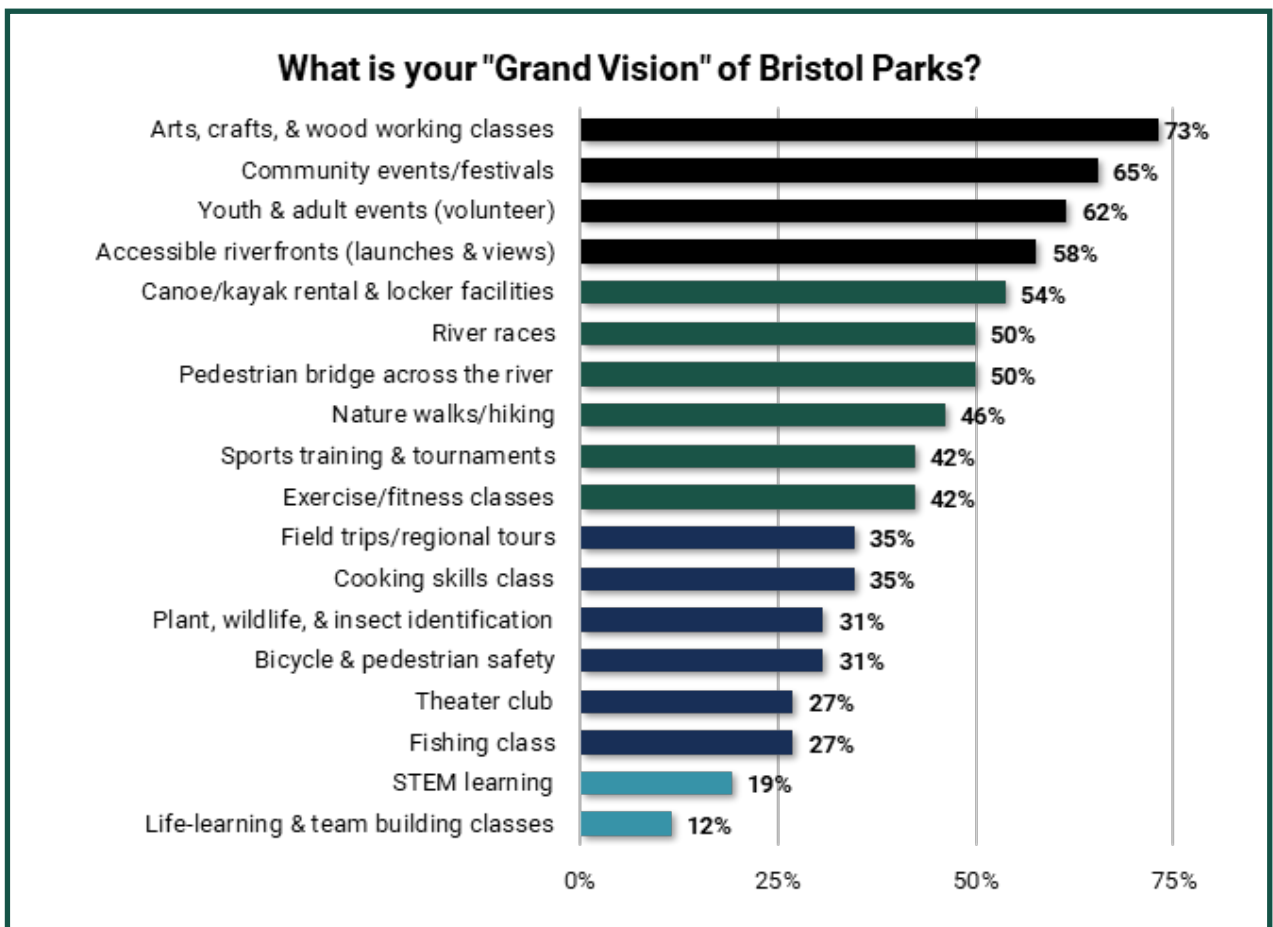
#### **NEW AMENITIES:**

- **Bee or bird garden**
- **Environmental education such as wetlands, bird habitats, insects**
- **Movie in the Park**
- **Music on the River**
- **Permanent restroom facilities**
- **Expansion of playground equipment**

## IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PARK FEATURES:

- Increase river access with canoe/kayak launches
- Removal of overgrown vegetation
- Addition of pickleball
- Landscaping and decorative lighting
- ADA accessible equipment and playgrounds

The fifth station used feedback frames for participants to indicate their support for potentially new park programs and activities. Participants were asked to slide one token per 18 slots – programs and activities. The proposed programs and activities were identified from the Park Board members and the community's response to a public input survey question that asked what type of programs they would like to see Bristol Parks provide for the community. Participants were asked to drop one token per slot and could vote for their support for as many of the 18 programs or activities as they wished. The chart below summarizes the public's support for the new programs or activities they would like to see Bristol Parks provide.



The top four programs or activities the 26 participants would like to see Bristol Parks provide were:

- Arts, crafts, and wood working classes (73%),
- Community events/festivals (65%),
- Youth and adult events-volunteer opportunities (62%)
- Accessible riverfronts-launches and views (58%)

The sixth station asked participants to indicate what they would like to see in Bristol in 2030. Participants wrote down one thing they would like to see in Bristol as the “WOW” and one thing that is preventing it from happening today as the “NOW.” Below are the common themes participants stated as their “WOW” and “NOW.”

#### COMMON THEMES:

- Variety of quality restaurants or sit down establishments (coffee shop/bakery) in Town/downtown – 5 people
- Vibrant “Main Street” & Decorate for Holidays – 3 people
- Event center – 2 people
- Food trucks in Town or Parks – 2 people
- All other responses were (bike trail, SR 15/Vistula intersection, access to river from Main Street, update fire hydrants, Redbox, pharmacy, and a general store) – 7 people

## PUBLIC COMMENTS ON DRAFT PLAN

Lastly, the Town held a 30-day public comment period from May 3, 2021 to June 3, 2021. The project team created a plan website called, [www.bristolindiana2030.com](http://www.bristolindiana2030.com) to give a central location for residents to review highlights of the planning process, access the draft Plan, participate in online interactive activities, and submit their comments using the form on the website. Below summarizes the comments received from the online activities and through the online form.

### ONLINE INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES

Two activities were posted on the project website to seek residents input on the priority action program, mentioned on pages 57 and 58. Residents were asked to vote on what they wanted to see as the Town's short-term priorities that should begin implementation in the next two (2) years and indicate their level of support of the Future Development Concept Map as shown on pages 34 and 35. The top priorities residents voted on are outlined below.

### TOP SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES:

1. **7 votes - Increase the number of local businesses and small-scale retail spaces to provide additional shopping, dining, and service opportunities.**
2. **5 votes - Enhance the sense of place by creating vibrant, walkable destinations.**
3. **4 votes - Organize various events and festivals that may include art shows, craft fairs, a farmers market, food trucks, movies-in-the-park, and live music performances.**
4. **4 votes - Enhance community involvement and volunteerism to help foster a sense of community pride and ownership.**
5. 3 votes - Encourage and maintain the communication of the Towns 2030 vision between the Town Council, Town Boards, Town Staff, Committees, and Bristol residents.
6. 1 vote - Diversify the industry sectors to ensure Bristol and Elkhart County's job market is resilient through an economic crisis.
7. 1 vote - Establish a partnership with local school districts to enhance the attractiveness and increase the student population of Bristol Elementary School.
8. 0 votes - Provide diverse and affordable housing options.
9. 0 votes - Promote Elkhart County's dark fiber (high-speed internet service) to Bristol employers to support economic development and to residential customers to enhance the quality of life.
10. 0 votes - Improve the traffic flow and reduce congestion on SR 15 and SR 120.
11. 0 votes - Maintain high-quality public safety services (Police, Fire, and EMS).

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT MAP LIKES:

- 1 person liked Cummins Park.
- 1 person liked the Rural Management character area (south of CR 8, east of SR 15, and north of CR 14).
- 1 person liked the Downtown District character area.

## Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan Public Comments

Date	Submission	Public Comments	Response
5/11/2021	Public Input Session	A participant wanted to know if the Town has a local news media.	A committee member shared that the Town does have the Bristol Sun and it is managed by a local resident.
		A participant asked is the goal of this Plan to control zoning.	MACOG shared that the intent of the Future Development Concept Map is to be a graphical representation of the town's vision on where development should occur and the character. This vision map is to inform Zoning decisions when reviewing developer's site plan proposals and when making recommendations to the local Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Commission.
		A participant asked would it be possible to have "no trucks" on SR 120 between CR 17 and SR 15.	Town staff and present council members shared that the challenge with restricting truck traffic on SR 120 is the road is owned by the state DOT.

## Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan Public Comments

Date	Submission	Public Comments	Response
5/19/2021	Online Form	<p>“I have read the Comprehensive Plan and is a wonderful, exciting plan for Bristol.</p> <p>My suggestion and concern is our downtown curbs and sidewalks need to be kept clean. If each merchant would care for their area, what an improvement it would be.... no cigarette butts, papers and trash, in general.</p> <p>Our downtown is quaint and nicely decorated seasonally, with flags, flowers, and fall decors. It would be much more appealing to have the same area groomed.</p> <p>Thank you for all the work you do!”</p>	No response was requested.
5/26/2021	Public Input Session	<p>A comment was shared by a homeowner off SR 120 who wanted to know the intent of proposing a future by-pass extension up the west-side of town and into SR 120. Her home would be directly in front of this new intersection and doesn't want to see the character of the area change because of the new road/ intersection and doesn't want to see an increase in traffic volumes. It was suggested if the Town could consider making the west-side extension out to CR 17 instead.</p>	<p>Town staff and present council members shared the progress that has been made with the proposed by-pass project. This is a visual representation of what the Town would like to do but the alignment will still need to be determined later in the future.</p>

## Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan Public Comments

Date	Submission	Public Comments	Response
5/26/2021	Public Input Session	A downtown business owner stated they like the idea of the vision for downtown but wanted to know what this would do to parking and suggested the Town install additional parking facilities.	MACOG shared that there are strategies related to parking noted in the entire list of action strategies in the appendix of the plan. Town staff followed up by sharing the Town is exploring opportunities to create new parking facilities right now.





## Appendix - Action Program

### ACTION PROGRAM

The following Action Program consists of the complete list of strategies identified by the Steering Committee and previously introduced in Chapter 4, page 57 of the Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

The Action Program provides the priority level, the responsible entity for implementing the strategy, the timeframe, and is organized by the core values. Prioritization was first done by the Steering Committee to ensure the priorities would be realistic for implementation and supportive by the Town of Bristol and a final review was done by the community residents to help narrow down the focus of the top priorities the Town should first implement in the next five years to see vibrant transformation of Bristol.

## Quality Places & Attractions

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<b>Enhance the sense of place by creating vibrant, walkable destinations</b>	Review existing zoning ordinance pertaining to Bristol to make recommendations of amending the text to reflect Bristol's future land use plan	Short term	Town Manager, Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, and Elkhart County Planning & Zoning
	Create sub-area standards or design standards relevant to specific targeted development areas such as downtown, employment centers, major transportation corridors, and gateways as identified in the future land use character map to guide developers with their site plan proposals to ensure site designs are reflective of the Town's vision	Short term	Town Manager, Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, and Elkhart County Planning & Zoning
	Identify targeted infill opportunities in downtown and future developable areas	Short term	Town Manager, Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, and Elkhart County Planning & Zoning
	Promote mixed-use style development in targeted development areas to support vibrant and walkable places by having quality dining, shopping, and other retail establishments	Long term	Town Manager, Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, and Elkhart County Planning & Zoning
	Direct prospective developers to first consider redeveloping infill opportunities in targeted development areas to maximize infrastructure capacities	Long term	Town Manager, Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, and Elkhart County Planning & Zoning
	Install new landscaping and planters, outdoor dining seating, accent lighting, and public art in downtown and in targeted development areas	Long term	Town Manager, Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, and Elkhart County Planning & Zoning

## Quality Places & Attractions

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<b>Plan for sustainable and modest growth</b>	Develop annexation and utility services policies to support future development in targeted growth areas	Short term	Town Manager, Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, Elkhart County EDC, and Elkhart County Planning & Zoning
	Establish a vision for the north SR 15 corridor and I-80/I-90 interchange	Long term	Town Manager, Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, Elkhart County EDC, and Elkhart County Planning & Zoning
<b>Organize various events and festivals that may include art shows, craft fairs, a farmer's market, food trucks, movies-in-the-park, and live-music performances</b>	Reduce traffic congestion through downtown to be able to host events on "Main Street" (SR 120)	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Council, INDOT, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, Bristol Park Board, and Elkhart Civic Theatre
	Partner with the Elkhart Civic Theatre to expand arts activities in Bristol	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Council, INDOT, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, Bristol Park Board, and Elkhart Civic Theatre
	Create a "School of the Arts" through the Elkhart Civic Theatre	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Council, INDOT, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, Bristol Park Board, and Elkhart Civic Theatre
	Promote visual & audio art festivals and events	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Council, INDOT, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, Bristol Park Board, and Elkhart Civic Theatre
<b>Maintain high-quality public safety services (Police, Fire and EMS)</b>	Proactively recruit and retain police officers to increase the Bristol Police Department's capacity and ability to efficiently respond to calls	Mid to Long term	Town Council, Bristol Police Department, Bristol Volunteer Fire Department, and Town Manager
	Increase the capabilities of first responders to attend training opportunities to enhance their skill-levels	Mid to Long term	Town Council, Bristol Police Department, Bristol Volunteer Fire Department, and Town Manager

## Quality Places & Attractions

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<p><b>Organize various events and festivals that may include art shows, craft fairs, a farmer's market, food trucks, movies-in-the-park, and live-music performances</b></p>	<p>Explore opportunities to redevelop vacant or under-utilized properties within the town limits to be an event center</p>	<p>Long-term</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, and Bristol Redevelopment Commission</p>

## Quality Parks & Outdoor Recreation

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<b>Enhance the accessibility and recreational use of the St. Joseph River</b>	Enhance the riverbanks at parks to install new canoe/kayak launches	Short term	Town Manager, Bristol Park Board, and IDNR
	Create a center to support a canoe/kayak rental system and locker facilities in Hermance Park	Short term	Town Manager, Bristol Park Board, and IDNR
<b>Establish a proactive management and maintenance schedule of Bristol Parks</b>	Create a new Town position to oversee the management and maintenance of the parks	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Council, and Bristol Park Board
	Develop a Parks Asset Management Plan that coordinates improvements between Town Departments and Park Board	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Council, and Bristol Park Board
	Establish a landscape maintenance program that evaluates the removal of dead or decaying tree canopies, removal of overgrown brush along the riverbanks, replantings of dead plants, and an annual planting schedule	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Council, and Bristol Park Board
	Install an in-ground sprinkler system at all parks	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Council, and Bristol Park Board
<b>Evaluate the best use of the parks that experience frequent flooding and mitigate the impacts</b>	Conduct a multi-year plan development to study the best use for Hermance Park	Long term	Town Manager, Bristol Park Board, and IDNR

## Quality Parks & Outdoor Recreation

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<b>Upgrade park and recreational facilities and amenities to be appealing and accessible for all user needs</b>	Install new landscaping, seating, lighting, art and decorations, informational boards, and permanent restroom facilities	Short to Mid term	Town Manager and Bristol Park Board
	Add pickleball courts in Cummins Park and disc golf course in Congdon Park	Short to Mid term	Town Manager and Bristol Park Board
	Resurface ball courts in Cummins Park	Short to Mid term	Town Manager and Bristol Park Board
	Enhance the splash pad features and install shade sails over seating areas in Cummins Park	Short to Mid term	Town Manager and Bristol Park Board
	Expand the outdoor gym space in Cummins Park to have a climbing wall and organized fitness and aerobic classes such as yoga, cardio drumming, and pilates	Short to Mid term	Town Manager and Bristol Park Board
	Improve the electrical system to better accommodate for festivals and events in Congdon Park	Short to Mid term	Town Manager and Bristol Park Board
	Expand the playground equipment to be accessible for toddler-aged children and ADA	Short to Mid term	Town Manager and Bristol Park Board
	Upgrade the pavilions in Congdon and Hermance Parks	Short to Mid term	Town Manager and Bristol Park Board
	Replace the wooden stairwell and fishing platform in Congdon Park	Short to Mid term	Town Manager and Bristol Park Board

## Connectivity & Accessibility

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<b>Promote Elkhart County's dark fiber (high-speed internet service) to Bristol's employers to support economic development and to residential customers to enhance the Town's quality of life</b>	Elkhart County constructed the dark fiber backbone	Short term	Elkhart County, Town Manager, Town Council, Private Enterprises, and Service Providers
	Partner with Elkhart County to incentive and encourage high-end user customers such as industrial and commercial businesses and residential areas at all pricing levels to sign up for service	Short term	Elkhart County, Town Manager, Town Council, Private Enterprises, and Internet Service Providers
	Partner with Elkhart County to maximize the use of the Elkhart County fiber infrastructure to minimize the Town of needing to invest in developing additional fiber infrastructure to adequately provide service to customers within the town limits	Short term	Elkhart County, Town Manager, Town Council, Private Enterprises, and Internet Service Providers
	Encourage and support private enterprises, internet service providers, small businesses, and private residences to utilize the Elkhart County fiber wherever possible	Short term	Elkhart County, Town Manager, Town Council, Private Enterprises, and Internet Service Providers
<b>Upgrade the Town's water and wastewater systems to adequately serve its existing and future customers</b>	Construct a new water tower	Short-term	Town Manager, Town Council, and Bristol Redevelopment Commission
	Loop the water and sewer systems at the north Industrial Park	Short-term	Town Manager, Town Council, and Bristol Redevelopment Commission
<b>Study the downtown parking needs on SR 120</b>	Conduct a parking study to analyze the downtown parking conditions and deficiencies and develop strategies that enhances the parking system, recommends suitable types of parking, and enhances parking facilities.	Short term	Town Manager, Town Council, and INDOT

## Connectivity & Accessibility

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<b>Develop a regional trail connection to nearby communities in Elkhart County</b>	Establish a collaborative partnership with IDNR, INDOT, Elkhart County, and the Town of Middlebury to develop a regional trail connection to the Pumpkinvine Trail in Middlebury	Short term	Town Council, Town Manager, Town of Middlebury Town Manager, Elkhart County, INDOT, and IDNR
	Conduct a preliminary engineering study and cost analysis	Short to Mid term	Town Council, Town Manager, Town of Middlebury Town Manager, Elkhart County, and INDOT
	Partner with Elkhart County, INDOT, and property owners to acquire the needed rights-of-way and/or easements	Mid term	Town Council, Town Manager, Town of Middlebury Town Manager, Elkhart County, and INDOT
<b>Improve the traffic flow and reduce congestion on SR 15 and SR 120</b>	Evaluate the best alignment and road design for the remaining phases of the Bristol by-pass road to reduce heavy-truck traffic through downtown and to improve the safety for all users	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Council, and INDOT
<b>Enhance the safety and efficiency of Bristol's streets for all users</b>	Install high-visible marked crossings and audible crossing signals on SR 120 and SR 15	Short to Mid-term	Town Manager, Town Council, and INDOT
	Coordinate with INDOT on streetscape enhancements for planned roadway projects on state-owned roads such as SR 120 and SR 15 to minimize redundancy of road construction and to reduce fiscal impacts	Short to Mid-term	Town Manager, Town Council, and INDOT
	Study the feasibility to install a median pedestrian refuge along SR 120	Short to Mid-term	Town Manager, Town Council, and INDOT
	Improve sidewalks and curb ramps and eliminate gaps in the sidewalk network	Short to Mid-term	Town Manager, Town Council, and INDOT



## Quality Housing and Neighborhoods

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<b>Preserve the existing residential character</b>	Develop a property maintenance ordinance/neighborhood preservation ordinance	Short-term	Town Manager, Town Council, & Elkhart County Planning & Zoning
<b>Ensure quality housing development for new neighborhoods</b>	Encourage housing developers to include open spaces or pocket parks in new subdivisions	Short-term	Town Manager, Town Council, & Elkhart County Planning & Zoning
	Revise the subdivision control ordinance to require pedestrian connectivity throughout the site design to include sidewalks or trails, and open spaces	Short-term	Town Manager, Town Council, & Elkhart County Planning & Zoning
	Develop and adopt design standards that are specific for the implementation of the vision for new residential units (i.e. integrating a mixture of housing types of housing and affordability in site plans)	Short-term	Town Manager, Town Council, & Elkhart County Planning & Zoning

## Quality Housing and Neighborhoods

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<b>Provide diverse and affordable housing options</b>	Explore the feasibility to create a Young Family-Focused Housing Subsidy Program	Mid to Long term	Town Manager, Town Council, and Bristol Redevelopment Commission
	Explore the feasibility to create an "Entry-level/First-time Homebuyer Housing Subsidy Program	Mid to Long term	Town Manager, Town Council, and Bristol Redevelopment Commission
	Research and provide appropriate incentives to housing developers to construct denser residential units in targeted infill and redevelopment areas	Mid to Long term	Town Manager, Town Council, and Bristol Redevelopment Commission
	Incentivize housing developers to purchase property lots that have potential for new housing	Mid to Long term	Town Manager, Town Council, and Bristol Redevelopment Commission
	Explore opportunities for infill housing development in downtown	Mid to Long term	Town Manager, Town Council, and Bristol Redevelopment Commission
	Diversify the Town's housing choices to provide alternative housing options for all needs and incomes such as senior housing, multi-family units, smaller single-family units, and starter homes	Mid to Long term	Town Manager, Town Council, and Bristol Redevelopment Commission

## Diverse Employment Opportunities to Enhance Resiliency

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<b>Increase the attraction of knowledge-based jobs</b>	Establish partnerships with the Horizon Education Alliance, major University's and College's, and the Elkhart County Career Center to offer workforce trainings and development	Short term	Bristol Redevelopment Commission, Elkhart Community Schools, HEA, Higher learning institutions, and Elkhart County EDC
	Recruit Trade Professions (Unions) to train young adults and those entering the workforce	Short term	Bristol Redevelopment Commission, Elkhart Community Schools, HEA, Higher learning institutions, and Elkhart County EDC
<b>Increase the number of local businesses and small-scale retail spaces to provide additional shopping, dining, and service opportunities</b>	Develop and maintain a database inventorying a list of available properties for sale for redevelopment/adaptive re-use of vacant sites and buildings for economic development and to increase retail space	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, and Elkhart County EDC
	Explore opportunities of available and vacant building spaces to be repurposed for new retailers, restaurants, or other local service businesses	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, and Elkhart County EDC
	Explore the feasibility to expand the "Downtown" central business district to include adjacent side streets to expand new economic development	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, and Elkhart County EDC
<b>Diversify the industry sectors to ensure Bristol and Elkhart County's job market is resilient through an economic crisis</b>	Increase technology-based businesses and services	Long term	Town Manager, Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, and Elkhart County EDC
	Continue to attract and incentivize diversification within the manufacturing industry	Long term	Town Manager, Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, and Elkhart County EDC

## Diverse Employment Opportunities to Enhance Resiliency

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<b>Actively work with small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow and thrive by making it easy to do business in Bristol</b>	Partner with existing businesses to offer low-interest loans through the Bristol Redevelopment Commission	Long term	Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, and Elkhart County EDC
	Create a co-marketing initiative to promote local businesses in downtown	Long term	Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, and Elkhart County EDC
	Explore opportunities to develop business incubator spaces in downtown and other targeted development areas	Long term	Town Council, Bristol Redevelopment Commission, and Elkhart County EDC

# Marketing, Communications, & Volunteerism

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<b>Enhance community involvement and volunteerism to help foster a sense of community pride and ownership</b>	Develop a volunteer database to encourage participation from the community to instill community pride and ownership	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Bristol Park Board, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, and the Bristol Sun
	Partner with local churches to host and/or volunteers for community events	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Bristol Park Board, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, and the Bristol Sun
	Partner with Elkhart Community Schools to create opportunities for youth involvement	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Bristol Park Board, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, and the Bristol Sun
	Identify opportunities where students can be involved in marketing the Bristol community by working with Bristol Town Council, Bristol Park Board, Bristol Public Library, and social media	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Bristol Park Board, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, and the Bristol Sun
	Foster building relationships with your neighbors to have a unified community support and pride for one another	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Bristol Park Board, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, and the Bristol Sun
	Establish community champions to implement the Vibrant Communities Action Agenda	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Bristol Park Board, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, and the Bristol Sun
	Proactively work with property owners to encourage and invest in property maintenance	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Bristol Park Board, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, and the Bristol Sun
<b>Actively promote and help small businesses grow and thrive in Bristol</b>	Partner with the Elkhart County EDC to create a marketing program and incentives for new retail development in key targeted development areas such as downtown	Short to Mid term	Town Council, Town Manager, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, and Elkhart County EDC

## Marketing, Communications, & Volunteerism

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<b>Enhance the communication and promotion of community events, festivals, and Bristol Parks</b>	Enhance the Town's website by adding an event page, "Downtown" page, and a "Downtown Merchant's" page	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Clerk-Treasurer, Bristol Park Board, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, and the Bristol Sun
	Market downtown Bristol by creating a "Downtown" page on the Town's website	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Clerk-Treasurer, Bristol Park Board, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, and the Bristol Sun
	Distribute a regularly scheduled event newsletter	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Clerk-Treasurer, Bristol Park Board, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, and the Bristol Sun
	Use the Town's messaging board in Memorial Park and Facebook pages to announce community events and promotions of local businesses	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Clerk-Treasurer, Bristol Park Board, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, and the Bristol Sun
	Partner with the Bristol on the River Main Street, Bristol Park Board, and the Bristol Sun to help market community events and distribute event publications	Short to Mid term	Town Manager, Town Clerk-Treasurer, Bristol Park Board, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, and the Bristol Sun
<b>Encourage and maintain the communication of the Town's vision between Town government boards, committees, residents, and organizations</b>	Integrate the Future Land Use Character Map and goals in Town planning processes and communication is cohesively shared amongst Town Boards, Staff, and Committees	Short term and Ongoing	Town Council, Town Manager, Bristol Park Board, Bristol on the River Main Street Organization, and Elkhart County Planning & Zoning

## Quality Education

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<b>Restructure the Bristol Summer Program</b>	Create a new summer program that offers a range of education programs and physical activity	Short term	Bristol Park Board & Town Manager
<b>Establish “lasting” partnerships with community entities and organizations</b>	Establish a regular joint School District and Town meeting to ensure both entities share the same vision	Short term	Town Manager, Elkhart Community Schools, & Organizational Leaders
	Expand network opportunities and establish partnerships with local churches, service clubs, community organizations, the Town of Middlebury, and local businesses	Short term	Town Manager, Elkhart Community Schools, & Organizational Leaders
<b>Establish a partnership with local school districts to enhance the attractiveness and increase the student population of Bristol Elementary School</b>	Explore the feasibility to redistrict into Middlebury Community Schools	Short term	Town Manager, Elkhart Community Schools, and Middlebury Community Schools
	Petition showing an interest redistrict	Short term	Town Manager, Elkhart Community Schools, and Middlebury Community Schools
	Bring petition to each School Board	Short term	Town Manager, Elkhart Community Schools, and Middlebury Community Schools
	Consult Legal Counsel	Short term	Town Manager, Elkhart Community Schools, and Middlebury Community Schools
<b>Create a Secondary Alternative Pathways program</b>	Work with Horizon Education Alliance to build partnerships with local employers to offer apprenticeships and/or internships	Short to Mid term	Horizon Education Alliance and Town Manager

## Quality Education

Goals	Action Strategies	Time Frame Short term < 5 years Mid term 5-8 years Long term >8-10 years	Responsibility
<b>Partner with the Elkhart Civic Theatre to create an Arts Education program</b>	Partner with local schools to expand the current art education programs with the Elkhart Civic Theatre	Short to Mid term	Elkhart Civic Theatre and Elkhart Community Schools
	Explore to create a arts educator position/director with the Theatre to expand program capacities	Short to Mid term	Elkhart Civic Theatre and Elkhart Community Schools
<b>Offer year-round education programs and activities for school-age children</b>	Partner with the Bristol Public Library to continue their reading and other educational programs	Mid term	Town Manager, Elkhart Community Schools, Bristol Park Board, and Bristol Public Library
	Partner with the Bristol Park Board to create environmental education programs	Mid term	Town Manager, Elkhart Community Schools, Bristol Park Board, and Bristol Public Library
	Partner with Elkhart Community Schools to offer education programs to be hosted at Bristol Parks	Mid term	Town Manager, Elkhart Community Schools, Bristol Park Board, and Bristol Public Library





## Our Grand Community



### A PROFILE OF OUR COMMUNITY TODAY

In Bristol we take pride in protecting the beauty of our natural landscapes and features and relish these assets that has attracted residents and businesses for so many years. From the picturesque St. Joseph River to the rolling meadows and farmlands. We are a charming and welcoming community for you to call home. While we may be small geographically, we have a growing local economy from being a business friendly community to help our employers and local businesses remain in Bristol to grow and thrive.

As a community, we are committed to ensure our grand hometown is appealing, attractive, competitive, and affordable for everyone to have an opportunity to make the decision to call Bristol home. Analyzing Middlebury's existing conditions will help identify gaps, opportunities, and challenges facing the town for future growth and development. Through a detailed look at the town as it exists today, we can make decisions to build upon what we getting right and improve where we are falling short. To understand where we are going, it is important to understand where we are today. This community profile outlines where Bristol is today for its trends in demographics, housing, and economics. Information included in this profile was gathered using U.S. Census data, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance.

## Overview

The Town of Bristol has many assets and features that make it an attractive place for individuals, families, and businesses to call home. The town is positioned off the St. Joseph River that enhances the community's quality of life with picturesque views and recreational opportunities. Throughout the year, residents can enjoy the several community parks, town events, and festivals and discover all that Bristol has to offer. The intent of this profile is to capture Bristol's historical and current changes in its demographics and housing to provide the framework in identifying Bristol's needs for its current and future residents. Demographics have impacts on other community elements like housing (understanding its household characteristics), land use (properly plan where new development will locate), and community facilities (ensure its public infrastructure systems and facilities can accommodate future residents and businesses).

## Setting

### Bristol's Regional Context

The Town of Bristol is located approximately 30 miles east of the City of South Bend and approximately 10 miles north of the City of Goshen. Bristol is conveniently located off the Indiana Toll Road (I-80/I90), SR 15, and SR 120, and less than 4 miles to US 20.

The presence of these systems in Bristol has and continues to catalyze economic development (attracting large-scale corporations and manufacturers to the community) to support freight movement. Additionally, presence of these assets presents opportunities for the Town to capitalize the tourism value by developing vibrant and attractive places in Bristol.



# Demographic Trends

## OCRA'S Community Vitality Indicators

OCRA lists five characteristics or Community Vitality Indicators that gauges communities, like Bristol, to develop a preliminary understanding of the Town's vibrancy. The five indicators examine the Town of Bristol's trends in Population, Educational Attainment Rate, Public School Enrollment, the Town's Net Assessed Value, and the Per Capita Income. Additionally, these indicators will serve as a catalyst for the Town and its partners to develop strategies that will attract businesses and residents. The Net Assessed Value and Per Capita Income indicators are discussed in the Economic Development section of this appendix.

## Population Change

The Population Growth Indicator present the direction of necessary services and real estate demand based on growing or declining population. In addition to the Decennial Census, the U.S. Census provides annual population estimates through their Population Estimates Program (PEP). The PEP better reflects past trends and leads to a more accurate estimate than the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year population estimate. Therefore, the PEP estimate was only used to provide the trend in population, and the 2018 ACS 5-year estimate was used for all other existing condition data in this report.

Between 2000 and 2010, Bristol experienced nearly a 16 percent growth in the total population. Since the 2010 Census, Bristol's population has steadily increased and grew nearly six (6) percent. See the trend in population in the table below.

In addition, the Washington Township and Elkhart County continued to increase in population. From 2010 to 2018, the Washington Township's population increased by four (4) percent and Elkhart County's population increased by three (3) percent. See the population trend in the table below.

Bristol Population Trend											
Decennial Census				Annual Estimates							
	1990	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Bristol</b>	1,133	1,382	1,602	1,610	1,619	1,631	1,645	1,661	1,668	1,678	1,686
<b>Washington Township</b>	5,136	7,019	6,945	7,004	6,996	6,988	7,012	7,064	7,108	7,214	7,269
<b>Elkhart County</b>	156,198	182,791	197,559	198,267	198,980	200,231	201,476	203,024	203,652	204,310	205,560



## Educational Attainment

The Educational Attainment Rate indicator can guide the Town and Elkhart County on how to best provide for workforce development programs and diversify its industry sectors. Further, this indicator gives an idea of the characteristics of the Town's workforce and should be examined with the types of industries and jobs the Town is trying to attract and retain.

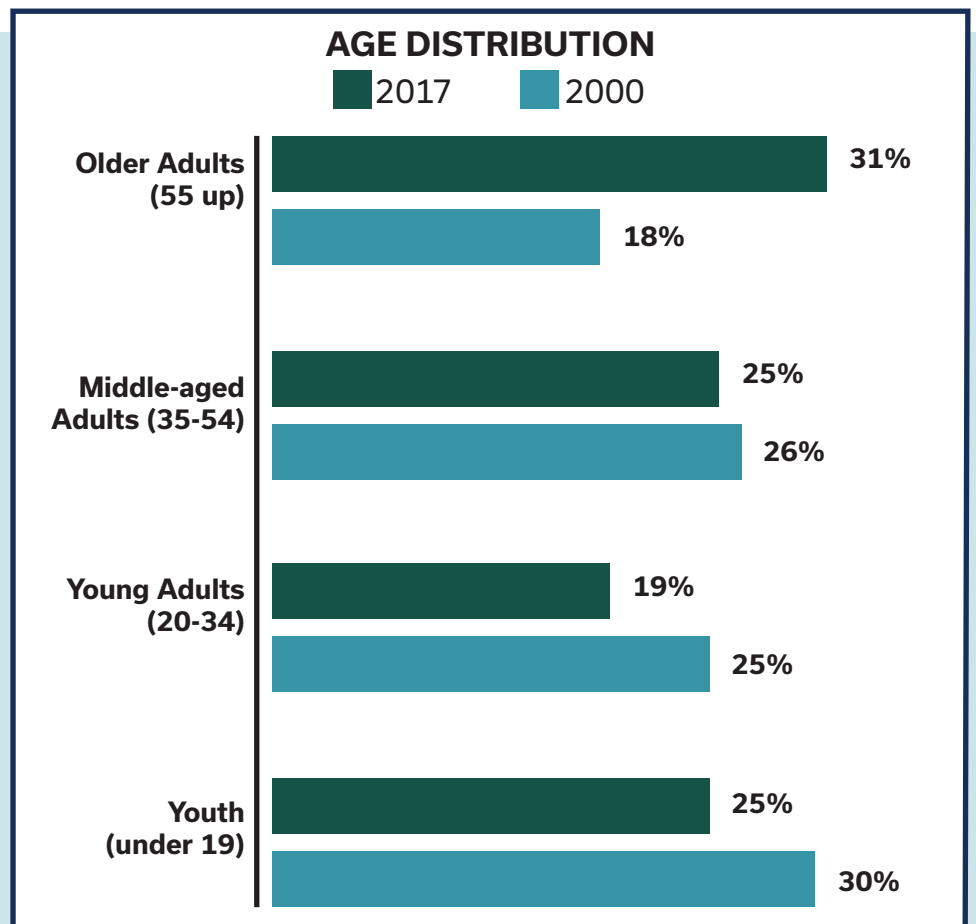
From 2000 to 2017, the percent of high school graduates has decreased minimally by 1.6 percent. Bristol holds the highest percentage of individuals who are high school graduates or higher at 89.3 percent. The Township shows estimated potential to approach the state average (24.6 percent) for bachelor's degree or higher in 2017, with a projected 22.9 percent. Both the statistics for high school graduates and bachelor-degree holders are higher in Washington Township than in Elkhart County as a whole.

Bristol has the highest percentages of individuals ages 25 years and older with some college experience or an associate's degree (24.7 percent) in comparison to the Township and county.

## Age Distribution

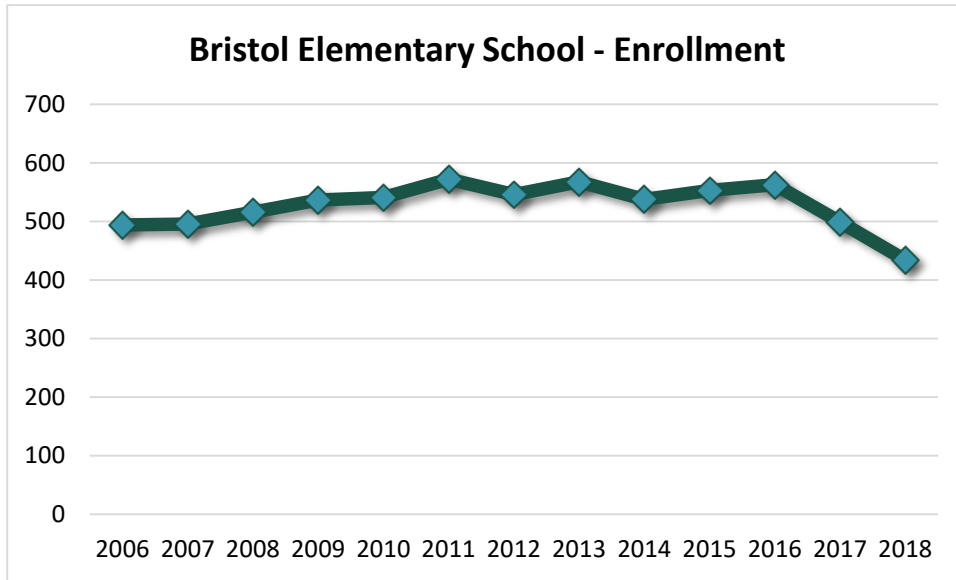
Trends show that Bristol's population is getting older, which could be a sign of its tight-knit community – people want to stay in the area as they age. Looking at different age cohorts, there was a significant 146.8 percent increase in the age group of 60 to 64-year-olds from 2000 to 2017.

The median age in Bristol has increased since 2000 (31.2 years) to 2017 (42.5) by 36.2 percent. Like Bristol, Elkhart County and the Washington Township's median age has increased during this time, but at much subtler rates.



## School Enrollment

The Bristol Elementary School population has decreased slightly over the last 12 years. School enrollment increased from 494 students in 2006 to 434 in 2018. Peak enrollment came in 2011 with 572 students enrolled at Bristol Elementary School.



## Population Projections

Looking at the Town's population trend over the last 7 years, as previously shown, the population has been slowly increasing at a rate of about 11 people annually. If the Town continues at this growth rate, by 2020 the population will increase by 25 people (1,711 total population) and by 2030 the population will increase by 133 people (1,819 total population). A higher growth rate may occur in which case the Town's population could reach 1,822 residents by 2020 and 2,042 residents by 2030.

The Town does have a lot of strengths and community assets that could influence a higher, steadier population growth. In addition, the Town's location makes it an excellent bedroom community for residents who want to live in a charming small town yet close to larger municipalities. With a continued growth in population, it is imperative the Town plan for this growth and ensure its parks and recreational facilities are of high quality.

## Race and Ethnicity

The Town of Bristol, Washington Township, as well as Elkhart County's population has been classified as predominately White over the last decade. Bristol's African American population, though, saw a small incline from 2010 to 2017, while its Asian population decreased very minimally. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander and American Indian and Alaska Native populations remained virtually the same from 2010 to 2017 (the only change being a decline to 0.0 percent from 0.7 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native populations since 2010; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders are unknown to Bristol at this point).

On average, Elkhart's demographics, while similar to Bristol's, do have a higher percentage of individuals classified as Black or African American or reporting as "Some other race" from years 2000 to 2017. Bristol's White population (to date) is 91.5 percent while Elkhart County's is 87.6 percent, and Bristol's Black and African American population is 3 percent while Elkhart County's is 5.5 percent.

The Hispanic population in Bristol represents approximately 8 percent of the community residents that had a 23 percent increase between 2000 and 2017.

**HISPANIC  
POPULATION  
REPRESENTS  
~8% OF  
BRISTOL  
RESIDENTS**

## Disability

Bristol has 14.2 percent of its population classified as disabled (higher rate than Washington Township and Elkhart County), and of those classified as disabled, 4.8 percent are 65 years or older.

## Poverty

Bristol's poverty rate (based on population for whom poverty status is determined) increased from 5.9 percent in 2000 to 10.2 percent in 2012 and again to 15.1 percent in 2017. Of the 15.1 percent, children under the age of 18 had the highest percentage increase at 28.1 percent. Bristol's poverty rate is higher than both Washington Township's (10.4 percent) Elkhart County's (13.8 percent) but near the state's which is 14.6 percent.

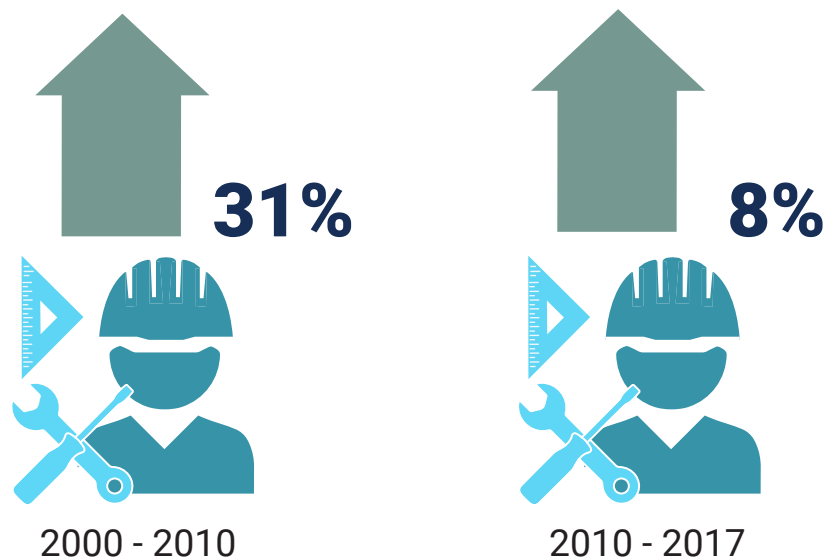
## Housing Trends

As Bristol experiences changes in demographics and growth, be it in population or jobs, ensuring Bristol has adequate supply of housing for all types of residents will be crucial in maintaining Bristol's quality of life. The Town of Bristol will have to consider where new housing should locate, while maintaining a proper balance with current development, and how to preserve and maintain the existing housing stock. Housing is linked to other elements like population (identifying changes in households and establishing their needs), land use (evaluate its fiscal impacts to develop on undeveloped lands or infill on underutilized lands), and community facilities (does the neighborhood have access to the Town's utility system and assets).

## Housing Conditions

### Construction Activity

According to the 2017 US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimate, the number of housing units in Bristol increased by 31.8 percent from 2000 to 2010 and increased again by 8.8 percent from 2010 to 2017. Home construction in Bristol saw the greatest activity in the early 2000s. Approximately 127 homes were constructed between 2000 and 2019. Between 2010 and 2013, activity occurred at a slower pace, which may have been attributed to the economic recession. Most of Bristol's housing stock (79 percent) was built prior to 2000 and 20 percent was constructed between 2000 and 2017.



### Housing Types

According to the 2017 ACS 5-year estimates, the majority of units (79.3 percent) are single-family detached. Less than two (2) percent of housing is single-family attached, majority of these homes likely reflecting condominiums. 3.4 percent of Bristol's housing stock is multi-family housing with three or four units. The Town does have approximately seven (7) percent with 10 or more units.

### Housing Occupancy Status

The percentage of occupied housing units in Bristol decreased from 96.4 percent in 2000 to 82.5 percent in 2010 but increased again by 2.3 percent in 2017. Similarly, occupancy trends in Elkhart County reflect the Town's, decreasing from 94.8 percent in 2000 to 90.3 percent in 2010 with a slight increase (1.4 percent) in 2017. The vacancy rate in the Town of Bristol increased 4.7 percent between 2000 (3.6 percent) and 2017 (15.2 percent). Vacancy rates in the Washington Township area increased approximately 4.7 percent from 6.7 percent in 2000 to 11.4 percent in 2017.

### Housing Tenure

The percentage of owner-occupied housing units increased 7 percent from 57.9 percent in 2000 to 65.1 percent in 2017. Alternatively, the percentage of renter-occupied housing units decreased 7.2 percent from 42.1 percent in 2000 to 34.9 percent in 2017. The Washington Township has seen an opposite trend in its housing tenure with a decrease by 4.1 percent in the percentage of owner-occupied housing units and a 4.1 percent increase in renter-occupied housing units. Homeowner vacancy rates in Bristol increased by 1.5 percent from 1.3 percent in 2000 to 2.7 percent 2010. The rental vacancy rate increased substantially by 25.2 percent from 3.4 percent in 2000 to 28.6 percent in 2010. However, in 2017, the Town was recorded have a 14.7 percent vacancy rate for both renters and 7.5 percent homeowners.

## Household Characteristics

### Average Household Size

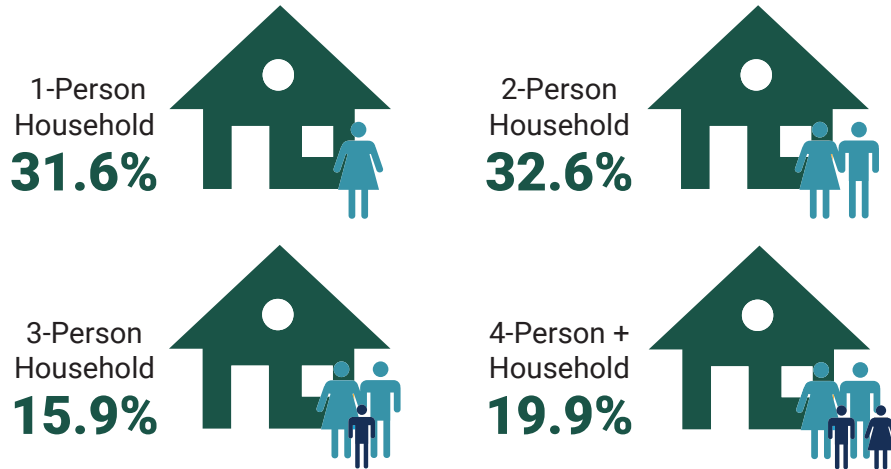
The average household size in Bristol has declined only slightly since 2000. The Town's average household size was 2.56 in 2000 and declined to 2.47 in 2017. This is lower than the national average (2.64) and state average (2.55).

### Households by Type

According to the 2017 ACS 5-year estimates, approximately 64 percent of occupied housing units are occupied by one (1) or two (2) people (31.6 percent 1-person and 32.6 percent 2-person). The number of non-family households grew over 7 percent from 31.7 percent in 2000 to 38.8 percent in 2017. The percentage of families with children decreased by 4 percent from 29.6 percent in 2000 to



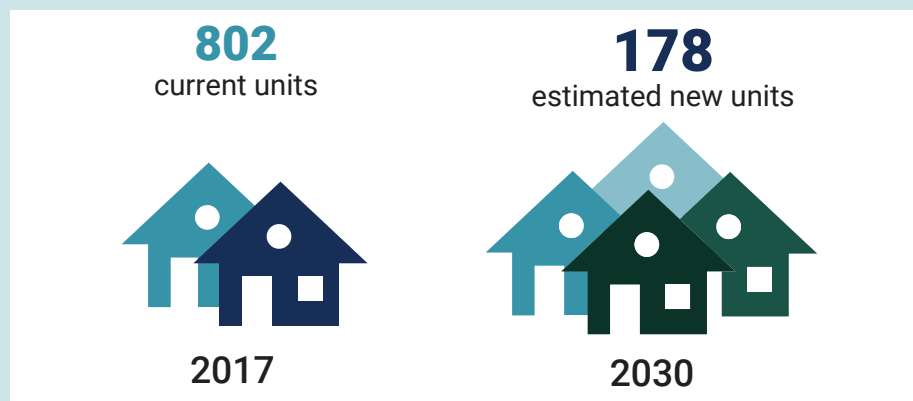
25.6 percent in 2016. The percentage of families with no children, however, increased by four (4) percent from 70.4 percent in 2000 to 74.4 percent in 2017.



## Housing Projection

Examining the Town’s population trend since 2010, as shown in the Population Trend table in the Demographic section, the population has been moderately increasing at a rate of 11 people annually. If the Town’s population continues at this rate, by 2030, Bristol’s population could increase by 133 new residents. That means the Town would need to consider of providing approximately 54 new housing units. If a higher growth rate were to occur (22 people annually), by 2030, Bristol would need 178 new housing units.

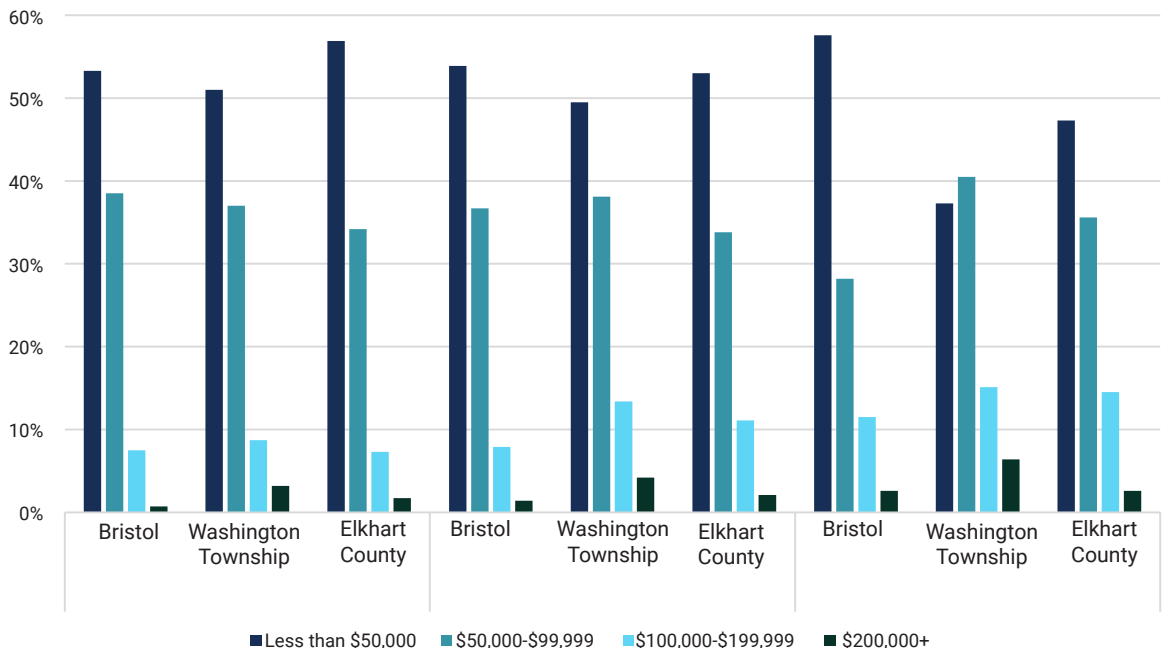
### Projected New Units



## Household Income

Household Income is an indicator of economic health in an area or population, and is the total income of all persons living in a household over the age of 15. Although the majority of households in Bristol earn less than \$50,000, the share of earnings in the same cohort has been increasing since 2000. Households earning between \$50,000 and \$99,999 in the Town have steadily been declining but there was a slight upturn for households in the Washington Township between 2000 and 2017. The share of households earning between \$100,000 and \$199,999 increased notably in Bristol, the Washington Township, and Elkhart County. Similarly, households earning \$200,000 or more increased by nearly two (2) percent in Bristol between 2000 and 2017, and increased by over three (3) percent in the Washington Township. Median Household Income is a factor that helps in determining an area's quality of life and shows the stability of a real estate market. Bristol's median household income grew only one percent from \$46,136 in 2000 to \$46,368 in 2017 (after 2000 this value plummeted to \$42,875 in 2010). The Washington Township grew 39 percent from \$48,141 in 2000 to \$66,683 in 2017. The Township's median household income is higher than Elkhart County's (\$52,449) and the state (\$52,182).

Drops in income can be a potential cause for a rise in the poverty rate. Bristol's poverty rate increased by over nine (9) percent from 5.9 percent in 2000 to 15.1 percent in 2017. This is higher than Washington Township's (10.4 percent) and Elkhart County's (13.8 percent).



# Housing Costs

## Housing Costs

The cost of housing in Bristol is rising. The median home value for owner-occupied housing units in Bristol in 2017 was estimated at \$139,400, up 16.8 percent since 2000. The median home value in the Washington Township in 2017 was estimated at \$154,000, up 8.5 percent since 2000. The median home value in Bristol is higher than Elkhart County's (\$130,800) and the State's (\$130,200), but lower than the National median value (\$193,500).

Owner and Renter Housing Costs – Majority of homeowners (26.9 percent) pay monthly mortgages between \$1,000 and \$1,499, with the median mortgage payment at \$856. Only 8.6 percent of homeowners in Bristol pay over \$1,500 for their monthly mortgage. Most rent payments are between \$500 and \$799. The median monthly housing cost for renters is \$718.

Most home mortgage payments for homeowners (21.6 percent) in the Washington Township are between \$1,000 and \$1,499 and 19.6 percent of homeowners pay between \$500 and \$799. 14.9 percent of homeowners in the Washington Township pay over \$1,500 for their monthly mortgage. Most renters in the Township (58.3 percent) pay between \$500 and \$799.

## Housing Affordability

In order to determine housing affordability in Bristol, we need to consider the percentage breakdown of household income. If costs exceed 30 percent of income, households are considered cost-burden. In 2017, approximately 31 percent of households in Bristol are considered housing cost-burden. In the Washington Township, 16.2 percent of households and 5.4 percent of households are considered housing cost-burden. Likely barriers in Bristol include the lack of affordable housing options such as starter homes.



## Economic Factors

Economic development is a key component to aid communities in improving their economic, political, and social well-being of its residents. More and more communities realize that to have successful economic development and growth, strategies should not just focus on attracting businesses but people as well. That includes both the quality of life and the business recruitment aspects. This section summarizes the key findings related to Bristol's economic factors, trends, and will help frame the challenges and needs. While Bristol is capable of handling economic growth, the challenge will be to explore creative ways to diversify its job market to ensure Bristol's local economy is resilient to unforeseen economic downturns.

## Employment Trends

### Labor Force

Labor force refers to the number of persons actively employed and those unemployed who are looking for employment. Since 2000, Bristol's labor force has grown from 758 persons to 869 persons, an increase of 14.6 percent. This growth is likely supported by the number of major corporations located in Bristol. This is different from the trend for the Washington Township, which saw less than one (1) percent increase in its labor force from 2000 to 2017. Elkhart County's labor force grew 3.7 percent between 2000 and 2017. All in all Bristol's labor force is growing at a higher level than the county as whole.

### Unemployment

Bristol's unemployment rate has remained lower than that of the state's unemployment rate between 2010 and 2017. Between 2010 and 2017, the unemployment rate increased from 4.4 percent in 2010 to 6.4 percent in 2017.

### Major Employers & Industries

According to the US Census Bureau, the top three (3) industry sectors over the last six years have consistently been educational services, and health care and social assistance; manufacturing; and retail trade. In 2017, forty-three (43.3) percent of total job sectors were manufacturing with nineteen (19.1) percent being educational services, and health care and social assistance; and nine (9.1) percent being retail trade. This is comparable to Elkhart County as the three (3) top industry sectors over the last six years have also consistently been the same as Bristol's. In 2017 in Elkhart County, thirty-seven (36.5) percent of total job sectors were manufacturing, seventeen (17.3) percent were educational services, and healthcare and social assistance; and over ten (10.5) percent were retail trade. The County's arts and entertainment sector only make up eight (7.9) percent.

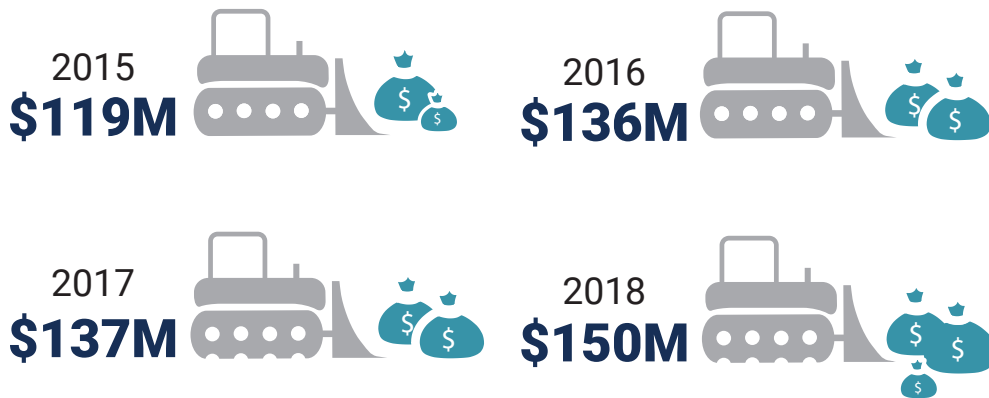
### Largest Employers

- Robert Weed Corp.
- Utilimaster
- Fabric Services
- Satellite Industries
- Monogram Foods
- Hi-Tec Housing, Inc

# OCRA's Community Vitality Indicators

## Net Assessed Valuation

Examining Bristol's net assessed value can give an indication of the construction activity in Bristol, which correlates to the Town's budget for capital expenditures, and the Town's demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses. The Town's assessed value has increased approximately 16 percent from \$137 million in 2012 to \$159 million in 2019. Elkhart also saw a 16.6 percent increase from 2016 to 2019, with a respective \$8 billion and \$9 billion.



## Per Capita Income

Bristol's per capita income level can measure the access to high-quality living-wage jobs for resident's ability to have a higher disposable income after paying bills. This gauges the health of the local economy to support local businesses. Bristol's per capita income increased 13 percent from \$20,373 in 2000 to \$22,935 in 2010 and experienced an 18 percent growth to \$27,031 in 2017. The Town's Per Capita Income is higher than Elkhart County's (\$23,817) and very close to the State's (\$27,305).







