DOWNTOWN BLUFFTON INDIANA

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN

Bluffton NOW!

New. Old. Wonderful.

WELCOME TO THE PARLOR CITY

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INTRODUCTION

For over 100 years, the city of Bluffton has provided quality, affordable living standards for its citizens and has been the backbone of success for the American economy due to its honest, hard-working residents who have not only built their lives here but have built a city that continues to thrive today through ingenuity, hard-work and a love for their neighbors, friends and community. Bluffton, like many of its peers, is a community that has seen difficult times and yet through it all, has continued to press on and rise up from difficult situations. In times of struggle and hardship the citizens of Bluffton have always banded together, working as a team to get the necessary things done to ensure their city remains as strong and vibrant as before.

It is our hope today that the citizens of Bluffton will band together once again as we all look to rejuvenate and revitalize Bluffton's city-center. The city's center is an important part of Bluffton's history and cultural fabric but it also serves as the city's government and economic center as hundreds of people arrive daily to work, conduct business and to socialize. Admittedly, Bluffton's city-center has fallen on hard times over the past two decades. Seeing many of its vendors and establishments depart for other opportunities, however even today there remains a core group of businesses in the city-center that continue to serve the needs of Bluffton residents.

Bluffton NOW! is committed to joining these devoted individuals and businesses in recapturing the vibrancy and economic power that Bluffton's city-center once possessed. Bluffton NOW! welcomes help from all citizens of all ages and from all walks of life to join us in this grand endeavor as we once again band together to achieve a common goal of making Bluffton a great place to live both now and in the future. Together we can once again create a hustling, bustling downtown environment that attracts new and exciting businesses and retains talented students, professionals, entrepreneurs and families here in our community.

The following strategic investment plan has been created to help provide vision, guidance and a long-term approach to properly revitalizing Bluffton's city-center. This strategic plan provides discussion about Bluffton's needs, wants and concerns and aims to provide actionable steps to address and solve these identified needs, wants and concerns.
Great things are happening in Bluffton! We hope you are as excited as we are about the amazing things that are going to happen in Bluffton as we move forward.

Thank you for your support!

The Bluffton NOW! Team

ABOUT US

Bluffton, Indiana

The name "Bluffton" was derived from the site of the town - on the bluffs, south of the Wabash River. Because Bluffton was one of the first Indiana cities to have a large percentage of paved streets, it was long ago called "The Parlor City". The beautiful tress overhanging wide and spacious streets, with the many well kept homes and fine lawns, have helped to make this an ideal Hoosier city. Many of the prominent businesses in Bluffton can trace their origin back to pioneer times exemplifying their permanence and solidarity. Today, Bluffton serves as the county seat for Wells County.

ABOUT US

Bluffton NOW!

Bluffton NOW! is a community organization devoted to revitalization and long-term growth of Bluffton's downtown sector (city-center). We believe that in-order for a community to continue to thrive and grow it must actively attract and retain talented individuals. In order to achieve this growth, Bluffton NOW! is focused on creating a city atmosphere and vibe that attracts new business and a talented workforce, and retains the successful businesses, entrepreneurs, professionals, and families already living in our community.

Vision for the Future
The vision for Bluffton NOW! is to "promote a fun and vibrant community where people want to live, work and play."

Mission for Success
Bluffton NOW!'s mission is to be the catalyst to energize Bluffton by envisioning ideas and goals, and by engaging and empowering citizens to facilitate an active, vibrant, and attractive community.

Main Street Indiana
Bluffton was accredited by the Office of Rural and Community Affairs in 2015 as an Indiana Main Street community. We operate by the Main Street four point approach: Promotion, Design, Economic Restructuring and Organization. Our organization is run by four committees committed to these four areas.

MARKET POTENTIAL

REASON 1

We invite you to take advantage of the potential market offerings that are available in our community.

Top 15 Categories	Total Potential
Other General Merchandise Stores	$3,511,371
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	$2,621,219
Electronics & Appliance Stores	$2,160,153
Other Miscellaneous Stores Retailers	$1,651,372
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instrument Stores	$1,532,983
Clothing Stores	$911,110
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	$856,603
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	$855,851
Lawn & Garden Equipment & Supply Stores	$795,183
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	$625,655
Shoe Stores	$461,698
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	$398,907
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	$385,304
Direct Selling Establishments	$350,256
Special Food Services	$255,255

Bluffton at a Glance

Total Population
9,969

Median Income
$38,590

Per Capita Income
$20,082

Bachelor's Degree
16.3%

Growth Factor
0.7%

Key Preferences (Taken from Ring Study 2014 provided by Berkshire-Hathaway)			
Restaurant & Dining	**1 mile**	**3 mile**	**5 mile**
Visited family restaurant/steakhouse in last 6 mos	73.0%	74.7%	75.4%
Visited family restaurant/steak house 4+ times/mo	29.2%	30.4%	30.1%
Went to fast food/drive-in in last 6 mos	91.7%	91.7%	91.9%
Went to fast food/drive-in 9+ times/mo	41.3%	40.8%	40.6%
Retail Goods and Services			
Bought men's clothing in last 12 months	46.7%	48.8%	0.497
Bought women's clothing in last 12 months	45.5%	45.1%	0.452
Bought clothing for child <13 yrs in last 6 months	26.9%	25.9%	0.263
Used beef (fresh/frozen) in last 6 months	73.8%	74.8%	75.1%
Used fish/seafood (fresh/frozen)in last 6 months	52.1%	54.4%	54.7%
Used organic food in last 6 months	14.9%	15.4%	15.3%
Entertainment			
Attended a movie in last 6 months	57.2%	56.7%	56.8%
Went to a live theater in last 12 months	9.3%	10.4%	10.7%
Went to a bar/night club in last 12 months	18.9%	17.9%	17.9%

MARKET POTENTIAL

REASON 1

Bluffton High School Students Survey Highlights

Bluffton High School students completed a survey put on by the market and entrepreneur class in support of Bluffton NOW! Here are some highlights from their survey.

66% of the students stated that entertainment was must important thing they would like to see come to Bluffton.
(Movie theatre was top response.)

49% of students stated that restaurants are the reason for visiting downtown.

70% of students would like to see new businesses come to downtown .

73% of students stated that “there is nothing to do” being the number one reason for not visiting downtown.

95% of students would attend a downtown event like a seasonal event, concert or festival.

54% of students stated that they would most likely look for new downtown information on social media.
(Instagram was the top vote getter.)

54% of students stated that entertainment should be the focus of any proposed riverfront development project.

Total Respondents
333

Gender Break Down
46.6% Male
53.4% Female

Age Break Down
0.9% - 13
15.6% - 14
26.8% - 15
26.2% - 16
22.4% - 17
8.1% - 18+

MARKET POTENTIAL

REASON 1

Community Survey Highlights

Bluffton NOW! completed a community wide survey regarding downtown Bluffton. Here are some of the highlights from the survey.

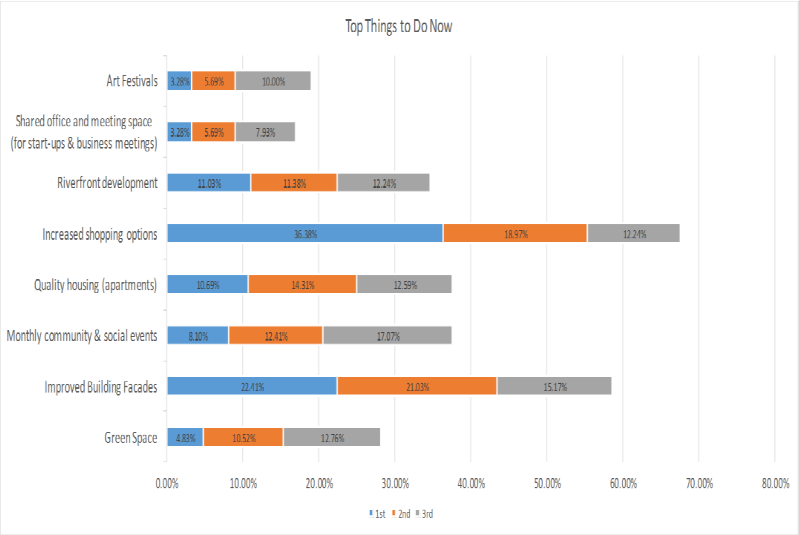
The results show that the perception of downtown Bluffton is average to below average in appearance, average to below average in parking, average to good in lighting, average to good in safety and average to good in cleanliness.

73% of respondents visit downtown Bluffton on a monthly basis. (Other, banking, shopping, visiting the courthouse, and dining are the main reasons for the visits.)

37% of respondents stated that they would potentially move to downtown Bluffton if there were more upscale apartments, followed by **30%** who are looking for remodeled homes.

52% of respondents stated that they would prefer to shop in downtown for Fresh Market items.

Increased shopping options and improved building facades top the list of things to do now. See chart



Total Respondents
702

Gender Break Down
31% Male
69% Female

Age Break Down
0% - under 18
12% - 18 to 24
24% - 25 to 34
17% - 35 to 44
18% - 45 to 54
20% - 55 to 65
8% - 65 to 74
1% - over 75

Income Break Down
8% - Less than $25K
24% - $25K – $49,999
29% - $50K – $74,999
19% - $75K – $99,999
10% - $100K – $124,999
4% - $125K – $149,999
2% - $150K – $174,999
0% - $175K – $199,999
4% - More than $200K

COMMUNITY ASSETS

REASON 2

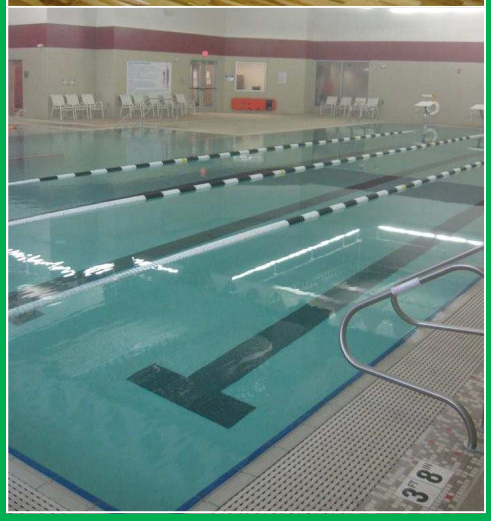
Bluffton is home to a number of key community assets that have laid the groundwork for success and quality of life for its citizens.

Bluffton Parks and Recreation (12 local parks with pool & splash pad)

The Bluffton Parks & Recreation Department offers more than 125 programs and events during a calendar year. There are a wide-range of recreational opportunities for all ages. The majority of them are free and the others are offered for a low cost. There are triathlons, 5K races, mud runs, dances, princess tea parties, concerts, movies, block parties, sports and so much more!

Caylor-Nickel Foundation Family YMCA

Opened in January of 2015 and situated on 30 acres on the north side of Bluffton, the Caylor-Nickel Foundation Family YMCA (C-NFF Y) is the culmination of a broad collaboration of foundations, corporations, companies, and individuals who contributed over $7M to provide Wells County with a 46,000 sq. ft. building dedicated to the spiritual, physical, and mental well-being of the community. As part of the Greater Fort Wayne Y, the facility includes a multi-use pool (a gift of Pretzels, Inc.) that provides swim lessons, aqua aerobic classes, and provides a fun play space for younger children. The 5k sq. ft. Wellness Center (a gift of Bluffton Regional Medical Center) is equipped with excellent fitness equipment, including a large number of adaptive pieces for members with physical disabilities. Add a large double gymnasium, aerobics and cycling rooms, free child watch for members, and it is easy to see that the C-NFF YMCA provides a great variety of opportunities that allow members to invest in their health or enjoy recreation with friends or family.

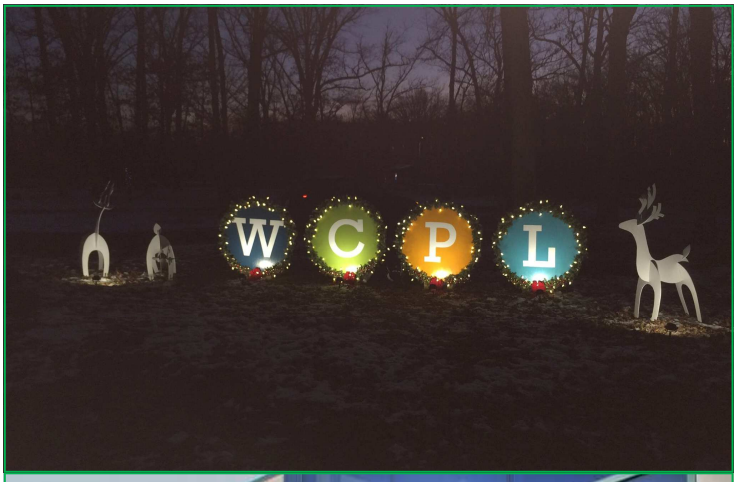


COMMUNITY ASSETS

REASON 2

Wells County Public Library (WCPL)

The main branch of the Wells County Public Library is located in downtown Bluffton. The 40,000 square foot facility offers 100,000 items, meeting rooms, a full schedule of program for infants through seniors, a wide range of digital resources, and an extensive local history collection. The library prides itself on being an active community partner and a warm and inviting community center.



COMMUNITY ASSETS

REASON 2

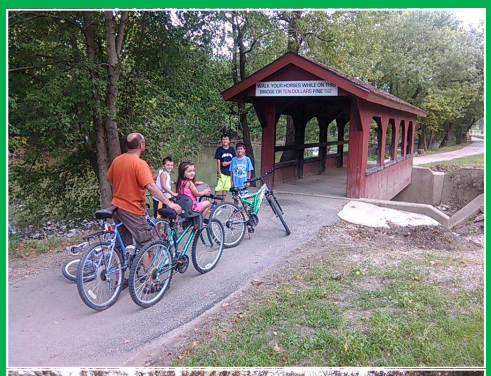
Rivergreenway

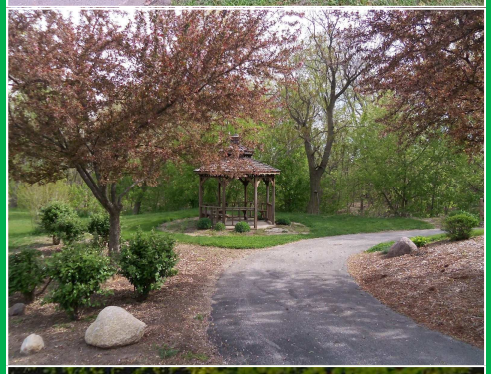
Rivergreenway Trail Corridor is a paved walking and bicycling trail starting at the east end of East Wabash Street, in the heart of Bluffton, and then running southeast on the banks of the Wabash River on River Road to the White Bridge, a distance of 2 1/4 miles. The state has extended the trail eastward from the bridge, connecting it into Ouabache State Park, where it links into an extensive park trail. The total trail from Bluffton to and through much of the state park is close to 5 miles. Future plans are to continue the Rivergreenway Trail westward to Markle. Rivergreenway Trail features include a boating access site in the east end of the trail near the White Bridge, a replica historic covered bridge and designated parking lots along the trail. No horses or motorized vehicles are allowed on the trail.

Ouabache State Park

Ouabache State Park is a 1,104 acre park located just five miles east of downtown Bluffton. Ouabache (pronounced “Wabash”), named by the French after the Indian word o-ba-chee, takes its name after the river that forms the southwest boundary for the park.

Within the park, Kunkel Lake offers excellent fishing, and during the summer months, a naturalist can provide information about the natural wonders of the park. A lodge recreation building is ideal for special gatherings and is now available all year. The park is working on updating its baseball diamond that will have a brand new infield this Spring. Ouabache is also excited about the construction of its brand new bocce ball set to open in 2016, which will be the first of its kind in State Parks. The park also features several picnic and playground areas, trails, a bicycle path that connects from the park to downtown Bluffton, tennis courts, an outdoor swimming pool, and a 124-site campground. Information provided by IDNR.





COMMUNITY ASSETS

REASON 2

The Wells County Arts, Commerce & Visitor's Center

The Arts, Commerce & Visitors Center is a picturesque site on the bluff of the Wabash River and is the perfect setting to host parties, wedding receptions, gatherings, business meetings, seminars or any event. The Wells County Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development, along with the Wells County Visitors Center is a one stop for new and existing businesses, residents and visitors to Wells County, Indiana. Additionally located inside this magnificent building is the Creative Arts Council which operates a gallery that features eight or more art exhibits per year, as well as a School of Ballet and Block Box Theatre.

Kehoe Park Amphitheater

Kehoe Park is about 2 acres in size and located in the central part of Bluffton along the Wabash River, just west of the Ind. 1N-Ind. 124 juncture. Facilities include a lighted amphitheater (outdoor theatre), a pavilion (gazebo) with picnic tables and a restrooms building. This is the site of the summer concert series and free Friday movies in July.

Creative Arts Council of Wells County

For over 40 years, the Creative Arts Council has been providing arts-related programming to Bluffton and Wells County. Recognized and supported by the Indiana Arts Commission and a member of Arts United, Creative Arts' mission is to encourage, present, and promote the arts for the benefit of each individual in the community. In addition to a variety of classes and special events, Creative Arts offers a School of Ballet, an Art Gallery, and is home to Wells Community Theater. Creative Arts regularly presents art exhibits in its free, public gallery, and features a summer concert series called Jazz on the Patio. The Creative Arts Council also is a partner with the Wells Community Boys & Girls Club performing dance and drama outreach programs. As a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, the Creative Arts Council relies on corporate community support and individual memberships.

Bluffton Regional Medical Center (Lutheran Health Network)

Bluffton Regional Medical Center, Bluffton, Ind., is located just 30 minutes south of Fort Wayne, Ind. This 79-bed acute care facility is a member of the Lutheran Health Network. Bluffton Regional provides medical, surgical and pediatric care, inpatient and outpatient surgery, intensive care, continuing care, emergency services, rehabilitation services and a full range of digital diagnostic services. All inpatient areas of the facility have had full renovations including updated infrastructure and treatments. The most recent renovation at BRMC involved a $3 million investment to complete The Women's Center, the hospital's obstetrical services unit that can accommodate up to 12 newborns. Surgeons find the equipment they need as well as an excellent nursing staff both within the OR and in all of the patient units. Our unique multispecialty physician history lends a tertiary feel to the facility with all the comforts and conveniences of a hometown hospital.

Bluffton Regional Medical Center is a member of The Lutheran Health Network, whose members are owned by subsidiaries of Community Health Systems, a taxpaying, integrated healthcare delivery system and one of the largest employers in the region. LHN encompasses eight separately licensed hospitals and nearly 1,000 licensed beds. The foundation of LHN is a strong team consisting of more than 7,000 associates. Each network entity offers a wide range

Lutheran Health Network continues to provide patients with extensive access to specialized care through its hospitals, patient care centers and physician practices. The strength of Lutheran Health Network allows it to recruit highly skilled physicians, innovate with the newest technology and participate in clinical research. These attributes enable it to sustain and grow its spectrum of services, and most importantly, deliver the choice, support, care and patient experience that have long been its hallmark.

COMMUNITY ASSETS

REASON 2

‘A’ Rated Public School Systems

Bluffton Harrison Metropolitan School District

The Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District (BHMSD) was organized in 1882. The school district is comprised of Harrison Township that includes a majority of the city of Bluffton, a portion of the town of Poneto, and the town of Vera Cruz. The school system serves students from all areas school districts and includes one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. Students at BHMSD are immersed in a multi-faceted learning environment striving to maximize student potential in all areas.

Northern Wells Community Schools

Northern Wells Community Schools is a special place which aims to equip students to maximize their present and future success. It is small enough to know everyone’s name, but large enough to offer students an academic program that will give them the skills they need to be successful. Staff members are committed to helping all students succeed. On a daily basis they demonstrate their willingness to go “the extra mile” to do what’s right for students.

Southern Wells Community Schools

Southern Wells Community School Corporation is composed of Southern Wells Elementary School, grades K-6; and Southern Wells Jr/Sr High School, grades 7-12; and serves over 850 students. Our students consistently bring positive recognition to our schools and community through their many academic and extra-curricular achievements. Our administrators, faculty and staff are highly qualified and constantly strive to meet the challenges of local, state and federal curricular expectations.

The Wells County 4-H Park

The Wells County 4-H Park is located at the south edge of Bluffton one State Road 1. The 40 acre park is host to a variety of community events and activities throughout the year that include the annual 4-H Fair in July and the Wheels of Yesteryear Antique Power Show in August.

In addition, the park is a popular location for several regional horse and livestock shows, a rodeo, Medieval Reenactors weekend, a horse pull, antique tractor pulls, a truck/tractor pull and several camping organizations.

The large Wells County Community Center located at the 4-H Park hosts the annual Senior Citizen Expo, the High School Career Expo and numerous banquets, community fundraisers and other meetings. For more information about the Wells County 4-H Park visit www.wells4h.com call 260-824-1689 or stop by 1240 4-H Park Road, Bluffton.

COMMUNITY ASSETS

REASON 2

The Wells County Foundation Inc.

The Wells County Foundation, Inc. is a public, tax-exempt, philanthropic organization. The Foundation inspires people to make charitable gifts that improve the quality of life for people in Wells County.

The Foundation is a philanthropic catalyst for Wells County. Active as a visionary convener, the Foundation provides leadership to strategically respond to current, ongoing and emerging issues locally.

Charitable gifts made not *to*, but *through* the community foundation improve the quality of life for deserving men, women and children in Wells County. Gifts of cash, stock, real estate, life insurance or from IRA accounts help donors fulfill their dreams of doing good . . . and giving back.

The Foundation responds to emerging and ongoing community issues. Income from endowment funds is distributed to local students via scholarships and to local not-for-profit organizations via grants. The Foundation distributed in excess of $800,000 in grants and scholarship awards in 2015.

From the roots which were embedded in the Foundation more than 50 years ago and the continued support of our donors and volunteers today, the Foundation continues to grow and flourish, thereby improving the quality of life in Wells County.

REVITALIZATION IN ACTION

REASON 3

There is a wave of revitalization going on in downtown Bluffton that is being spearheaded by the grassroots efforts of Bluffton NOW!.

Public Outreach

Bluffton NOW! has engaged the community in an all inclusive outreach campaign.

- Community meetings with multiple interest groups.
- Meetings with key elected officials.
- Mailings to downtown tenants and land owners.
- Electronic Surveys for the general community
- Individual meetings with tenants and land owners.
- Conducting a class with local high school students.
- High school student surveys.
- Meetings with surrounding communities regarding there downtown revitalization experiences.

Team Approach

Bluffton NOW! has teamed up with multiple groups to add depth to its abilities.

- Joined the Indiana Main Street Program.
- Active participant with the Northeast Indiana Regional Cities Initiative.
- Joined with local businesses to create incentive packages.
- Joined with City Council to create grant funding and incentive packages.
- Joined with Bluffton High School to create a marketing plan for downtown Bluffton.

REVITALIZATION IN ACTION

REASON 3

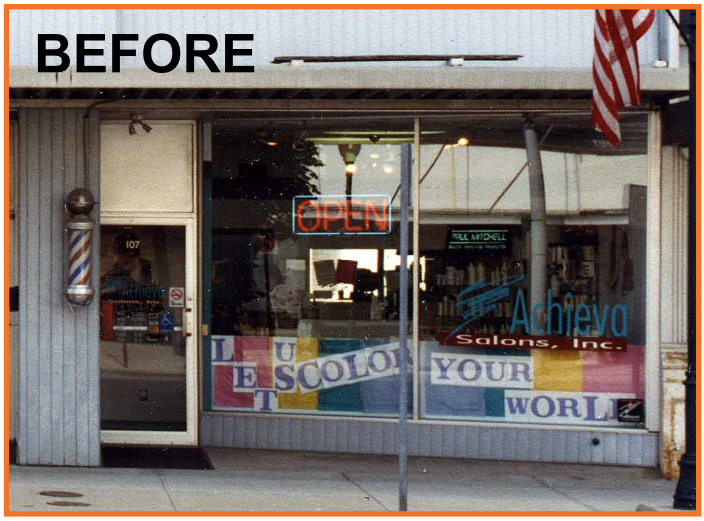
Current Revitalization Efforts

This is a list of our revitalization efforts that have been completed, in process or are ongoing.

TIGER TANK
DREAM BIG, GET REWARDED.

Tiger Tank is a program based on the popular TV show Shark Tank. The initial project was to find a tenant for a vacant storefront area within our public library located in downtown Bluffton. Bluffton NOW! put together a prize package valued at $40,000.00 that included locally provided financial, legal and technical resources for the winner of the competition. The judges picked the business "RE:" as the winner. "RE:" is a unique business that incorporated a furniture repurposing business and a soda shop. "RE:" opened for business in November of 2015. Bluffton NOW! is in the process for searching for the future location for the next Tiger Tank contest.

The **Community Re-Investment Program (CRP)** is joint initiative between Bluffton NOW! and the City of Bluffton to provide a grant incentive to improve the downtown buildings. In 2015 the City of Bluffton offered $100,000.00 to act as matching dollars for private property owners to use to better realize there structural improvement goals. Seven downtown building projects were benefited by the first year of the program. The City of Bluffton has approved $150,000.00 for 2016 and Bluffton NOW! has added a emphasis on improving the lighting in downtown Bluffton by providing a 75% reimbursement for all exterior LED lighting improvements. The program is looking into the possibility of interacting with the Northeast Indiana Regional Cities Initiative to create even more funding opportunities in the near future. With improved lighting, downtown customers, tenants and visitors will feel better about visiting Bluffton's downtown during evening hours and after dark.



Current Revitalization Efforts (Continued)

The **Interurban Trail** project is a 2 mile trail extension for the established river greenway. The extension would provide trail connectivity from Wal-Mart / Lowes on the north side of the City to the Ouabache State Park on the east side of City, while creating downtown Bluffton as a prime trail destination. This trail would also act as the south portion of the planned 80 plus mile multi-jurisdictional State Visionary Trail that will connect Ouabache State Park to Pokagon State Park. This project will act as a key component in making downtown Bluffton more pedestrian and bike friendly as well as improving its status as a commerce and activity destination.

Project should commence in summer of 2016.

Future Revitalization Efforts

This is a list of our future revitalization efforts.

Market Street Plaza

The **Market Street Plaza** project is a restoration, recreation, and connectivity project that will act as a catalyst to bring people to downtown Bluffton. The plaza will be located on a vacant lot and a neighboring lot located directly west of the Wells County Courthouse. The design will play on and include improvements to the existing courthouse plaza. The Plaza would be used to house downtown events such as a farmers market, parks department events, community gatherings as well as act as a natural gathering area. The development of the plaza will increase foot traffic to the core of Bluffton's downtown which will create business opportunities for neighboring property owners. This project fits the mold that Bluffton NOW! is focusing on which is to increase the foot traffic in downtown and then allow entrepreneurs to use this opportunity to create sustainable business plans to service these potential customers.

Estimated Price Tag - $650,000.00

Future Revitalization Efforts (Continued)

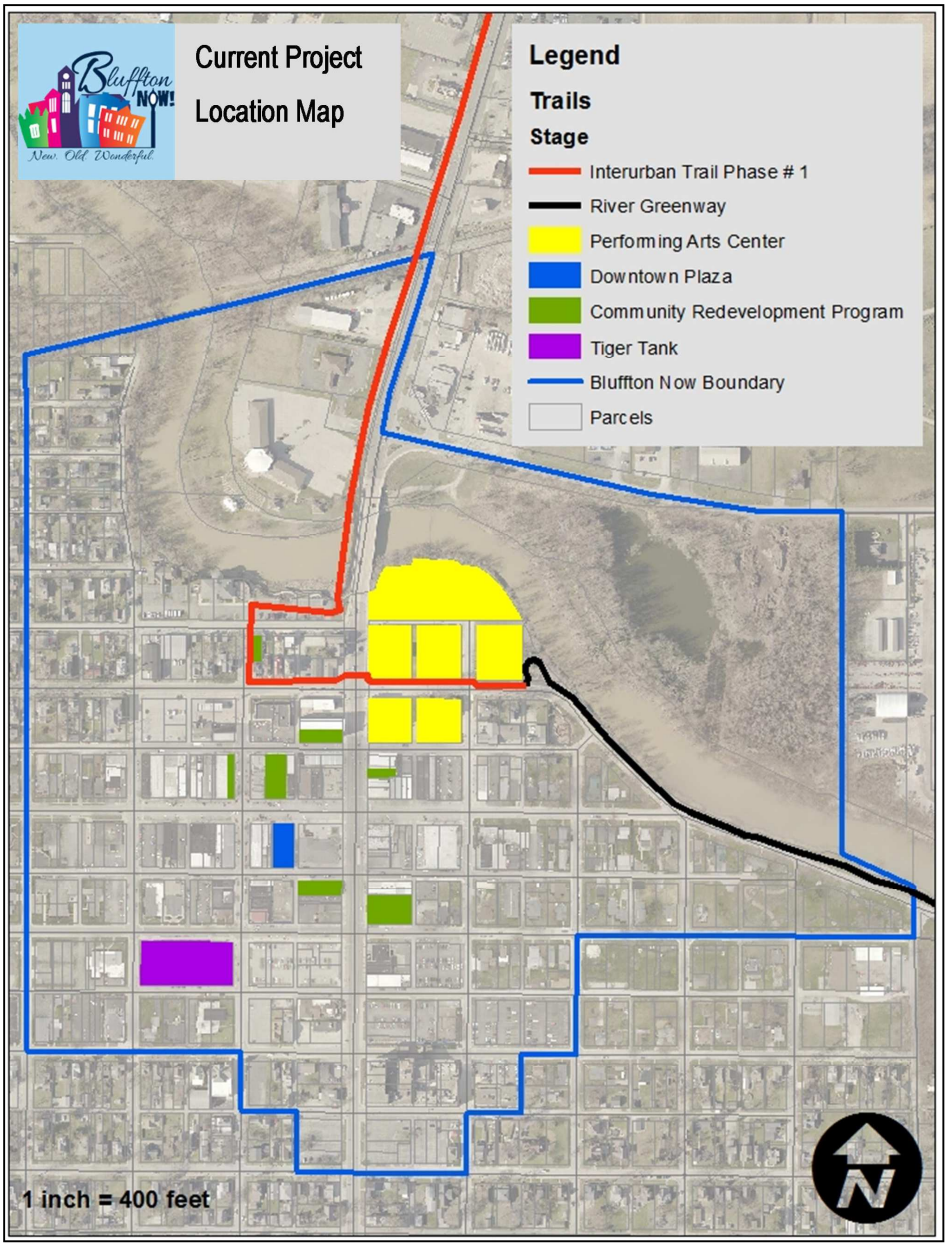
The **Wells County Performing Arts Center** project will act as a major attractor to bring people to downtown Bluffton. The center will act as a location for people to experience the performing arts in a wide range of genres. It will allow for local artist to learn, practice and perform. It will also allow for national acts to come to Bluffton. The facility will also be set up to act as a movie theatre. The Center will be one of the key pieces towards retaining our young talent. The project may entail other subsidiary uses like a restaurant and possibly even action sports complex. At this moment the project's goal is to try to encompass as many activity gaps in Bluffton as possible. Foremost the project would bring people into downtown, which will exponential expand the potential commercial opportunities for existing and potential downtown businesses.

Estimated Price Tag - $20,000,000.00

Where is Revitalization Occurring Downtown?

Bluffton NOW! has a project completed or started in 12% of the 425 properties located within their focus area.

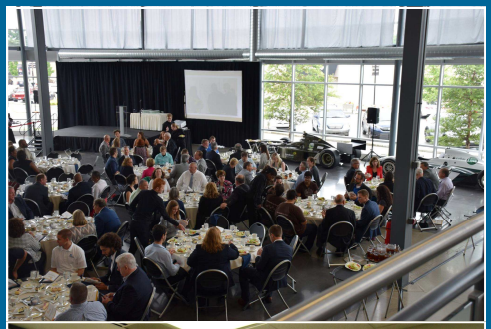
The current projects focus on creating focal points in downtown. The Downtown Plaza is located within a central downtown block. The performance arts center is located on the river front directly east of the preexisting arts and commerce building. Tiger tank occurred in the Wells County Public Library filing a vacancy in one of downtowns top destination centers.



BUSINESS INCENTIVES

REASON 4

There are a wide variety of incentives to operate a business in downtown Bluffton. This is a list of a few of the available incentives to help bring your dream into a reality.



Indiana Small Business Development Center

Business Advisors meet once a month at the Wells County Chamber of Commerce building with entrepreneurs. Most of the funding comes through tax revenues and there is a low to no cost for one-on-one consulting.

Products and solutions offered by ISBDC:

No Cost, One-on-One Business Consulting
ISBDC Business Advisors will evaluate your business from top to bottom or target specific areas to help find efficiencies. Whether you are in the startup, growth, or mature business stage our trained Advisors will help you start stronger, grow faster, and work smarter.

Strategic Planning: provides clients with tangible plans they can start implementing immediately. ISBDC Business Advisors will help you and your team develop goals, strategies, and tactics to reach your company vision.

Financial Understanding & Growing Your Bottom Line: develop a better understanding of what your financial statements are telling you about the health of your business. The ISBDC will assist in developing a plan to generate a greater net income while strengthening operations.

BUSINESS INCENTIVES

REASON 4

Products and solutions offered by ISBDC: (Cont.)

Industry Research Reports and Prospect Lists: learn what you need to know about your industry including market trends, best practices, current market conditions, industry leaders, and upcoming industry-specific technology.

Market Research Reports: choose from an array of reports that will enable any business to understand their market and provide them with goods and services through their preferred media.

Business Planning Research: the ISBDC offers SmallBizNavigator, on online planning tool, which includes feasibility, business, and marketing plan templates to help you create a detailed map for your business. The ISBDC, in partnership with Fifth Third Bank, also offers SmallBizU, which teaches entrepreneurs money, marketing, and management through the delivery of 20 core courses online.

USDA Rural Development
Committed to the future of rural communities.

USDA Loan
The Wells County Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund is a county-wide program available to new or existing businesses committed to Wells County. This fund has been made available through a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Traditionally, revolving loan funds are combined with private commercial loans to provide minimum gap financing, or the portion of the project financing required to complement the conventional funding resources.

BUSINESS INCENTIVES

REASON 4

The USDA loan program will target:

1. Existing small businesses currently located in Wells County which are interested in expanding and improving their enterprises;
2. Existing small businesses currently located outside Wells County which are interested in relocating to Wells County; and,
3. New small businesses which are interested in establishing themselves in Wells County.

Other criteria, application and requirements must be met. Interested applicants must contact Wells County Economic Development for consideration.

Wells County Leadership Academy
The Wells County Leadership Academy offers participants solutions to the fast-paced ever-changing needs of business and industry in the 21st Century. Providing a leadership training program for your employees.

Community Reinvestment Program
See Revitalization in Action
Applications are available through Bluffton NOW!

Tiger Tank
See Revitalization in Action

Community Development Corporation
The Community Development Corporation of Northeast Indiana (CDC) is a City of Fort Wayne sponsored 501 c (6) not for profit business development organization. Mission to stimulate economic growth and prosperity throughout the communities serve the state of Indiana by providing alternative financing options to new and existing small business owners.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

REASON 5

Downtown Bluffton has several ongoing and one time events that provide activities for the community. These activities help create additional opportunities for area businesses to benefit from the added foot traffic through out the year. This list is just a sampling of the events held throughout the year.

Chilly Chili

Lend Me a Tenor

Bike Bluffton

Chicks Run 5K

Bubble Dash Kids Run

FEBRUARY

Chilly Chili Run

A fun opportunity to compete a winter run and then warm up with some delicious chili.

MARCH

Wells County Theatre ~ Lend Me a Tenor

The Wells County Theatre is putting on a local performance of Lend Me A Tenor at the Arts, Commerce & Visitors Centre. This a great opportunity to see our local performance talent.

APRIL

Spring Gala

A dinner and fundraiser to help support a variety of arts related programming in the community. It showcases local live music, theater and ballet.

MAY

Bike Bluffton

An opportunity to bike around Bluffton with a 25 mile or family friendly 6 mile option.

JUNE

Chicks Run 5K

A fun run / walk for all women including a diva photo stop, refreshments and awards.

Bubble Dash Kids Run and Foam Party

A fun run for kids ages 3-7 . The run ends at a foaming splash pad at Pickett's Run park.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

JUNE (Cont.)

Jazz on the Patio
A fun social evening including live Jazz performance and food At the Arts, Commerce & Visitor's Centre.

Touch a Truck & Children's Garage Sale
An opportunity to let children experience what big trucks are really like. Everything from fire trucks to farm equipment will be at the Washington Commons Parking Lot for their enjoyment. The event also includes a children's themed garage sale.

William Wells Speaker & Mini Taste of Wells Co.
Opportunity to learn about our county's namesake from an author and enjoy a small sampling of local food.

Bluffton Rough & Muddy 5K & Soggy Jog
A 5K mud and obstacle run for adults as well as a children's version to provide a fun filled opportunity for the entire family at the water filtration plant.

Wells County Historical Society Ice Cream Social
A time to enjoy some ice cream and support the Wells County Historical Society at the Historical Museum.

JULY

Kehoe Park Summer Concert Series (July - August)
Outdoor evening concert series at Kehoe Park that are free to the public. Concerts are at 7pm on Sunday night.

Movie's at Kehoe Park
Outdoor evening family movies at Kehoe Park that are free to the public. Movies start at dusk (8:45 pm).

Rock on the Patio
A fun social evening including a live Rock performance and food At the Arts, Commerce & Visitor's Centre.

Bluffton Rough & Muddy 5K

Kehoe Park Summer Concert Series

Movie's at Kehoe Park

COMMUNITY EVENTS

REASON 5

AUGUST

Jazz on the Patio
A fun social evening including live Jazz performance and food At the Arts, Commerce & Visitor's Centre.

Downtown Walking Tour
An joint venture by the Wells County Historical Society and the Wells County Public Library to provide a guided walking tour of downtown Bluffton including some rarely seen behind the scenes experiences.

First Annual Bluffton Craft Beer Festival
Come down to the river and support Bluffton NOW!'s first annual fundraiser. There will be an opportunity to enjoy the up in coming Indiana craft beer scene as well as local food vendors and live entertainment.

SEPTEMBER

Bicentennial Torch Relay
On September 30 the bicentennial torch will travel through Wells County on its way to the statehouse as part of the statewide celebration.

42nd Annual Parlor City Trot
One of the state's finest half marathons.

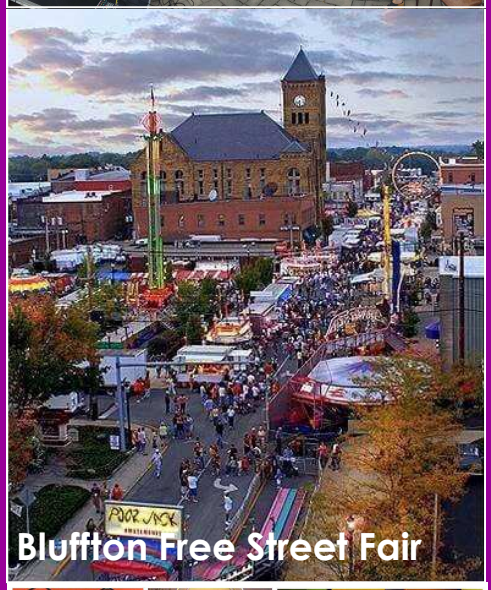
Bluffton Free Street Fair
Every year our city center is virtually shut down to host the century old festival. Come enjoy games, rides, food, entertainment and much more.

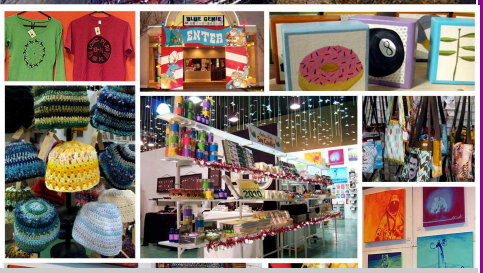
Harvest Hustle 5K
An opportunity to participate in a scenic run and enjoy the fall weather.

Bluffton Parks and Recreation Art Bazaar
A chance to find items from area artists that you and your family will be sure to love.

Jazz on the Patio

Jazz on the Patio


Bluffton Free Street Fair


Bluffton Parks and Rec Art Bazaar

COMMUNITY EVENTS

REASON 5

OCTOBER

Children's Book Festival
Bring your children to the Wells County Public Library to enjoy a children's themed book festival. It will include live music and a chance to hear from an area author and meet up with some costumed book characters.

Zombie 5K
Come enjoy an after dark 5K, dress up and prepare for plenty of spooky creatures to pop up during the night. A joint venture between the Bluffton Parks Department and the Ouabache State Park.

Boo N Bluffton
Come bring your kids to enjoy a spooky themed trick or treat with several downtown businesses.

NOVEMBER

Downtown Bluffton Bicentennial Bash
On December 11, come join us as the entire downtown celebrates Indiana's official 200th birthday party. Come enjoy our downtown businesses as well as bicentennial themed events. The Wells County Public Library will also be also be creating a 2016 time capsule that will not be opened for 50 years!

Winter Wonderland
Bring the kids to see Santa, play games and jump in a bouncy house at the Bluffton City Gym.

December Dash
Come enjoy a cool run in the beautiful December weather.

Zombie 5K

Boo N Bluffton

Winter Wonderland

December Dash

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Please contact the following individuals with questions related to working, living or investing in Bluffton, Indiana.

Bluffton NOW!
Nick Huffman, Co-Chairman
260-827-8255

Preston Kaehr, Co-Chairman
260-415-7832
blufftonnow@gmail.com
www.blufftonnow.org

City of Bluffton
Mayor Ted Ellis
mayor@ci.bluffton.in.us
260-824-1520
www.blufftonindiana.net

Wells County Chamber of Commerce
Erin Prible, Executive Director
eprible@wellscoc.com
260-824-0510
www.wellscoc.com

Wells County Economic Development
Chad Kline, Executive Director
ckline@wellsedc.com
260-824-0510
www.wellsedc.com

Join us and help revitalize downtown Bluffton NOW!

Web Site: www.blufftonnow.org
Email: blufftonnow@gmail.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/blufftonnow
Twitter: www.twitter.com/bluffton_now