

8. Economic Development

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Economic Development Vision

In 2035, Evansville's economy is thriving. Commercial and industrial development is supported by quality infrastructure, including the railroad. The renovated historic downtown accommodates a variety of businesses and residential choices. Expanded tourism and marketing related to trail development and the City's history have supported development in the downtown. Economic development is in harmony with the City's natural environment and residential areas. Employment opportunities for City residents are available both within the City and in nearby communities accessible via USH 14, STH 213/59 with support of transit options.

Policies

The goals and objectives needed to expand the economic base are provided at the end of this chapter.. The location for new business development is illustrated on the Future Land Use Map in Chapter 10. Policies supporting economic development goals are provided below:

- **Create new opportunities by providing assistance to persons and organizations interested in developing new or expanding existing businesses in the City.**
- **Continue to utilize the City's Capital Improvement Program to anticipate future budget expenses and support quality City infrastructure investments that are necessary for economic development.**
- **Promote a strong downtown business district by incentivizing mixed-use and mixed income infill development in and near the downtown to increase the density of potential customers within walking distance of the downtown.**
- **Encourage new commercial development at identified Traditional Neighborhood Activity Center nodes to meet the increased demand for goods and services from the increasing population.**
- **Use the Historic District and associated ordinances and design standards to enhance the attractiveness of the downtown.**
- **Plan for industrial traffic movement to minimize conflicts between industrial businesses and residents.**
- **Require pedestrian improvements and landscaping to screen parking in highway oriented commercial, regional and walkable business districts.**
- **Maximize the City's financial health by supporting city adopted fiscal policies, such as keeping a minimum of 50% allowable debt capacity in reserve.**
- **Leverage existing transportation assets.**
- **Enhance quality of life through sustainable and environmentally friendly economic development practices.**
- **Foster a diverse local economy that recruits new businesses that utilize Evansville's strengths.**
- **Shorten the application and review time for a new businesses to start-up in the downtown.**
- **Encourage street life in the downtown district by promoting areas for outdoor dining and retail sales.**

Introduction

The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to promote the stabilization, retention and expansion of the economic base, and quality employment opportunities. Evansville defines Economic Development as a focus on healthy growth by attracting and retaining a broad range of businesses, organizations and visitors to the Evansville market with agreed upon strategic objectives that serve social common good, support financial well-being, and preserve the environment. To address this requirement, this chapter includes:

- Highlights of the labor force information;
- An assessment of strengths and challenges with respect to attracting and retaining business and industry;
- A list of economic development oriented organizations and programs at the city, county, regional, state and federal levels;
- Economic development opportunities;
- An overview of programs that deal with environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses.

Of the 14 state comprehensive planning goals, those listed below relate specifically to planning for Evansville's economic development:

- Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures.
- Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.
- Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.
- Building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.
- Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses.
- Promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional and local levels.

Economic Development Framework

Labor Force and Economic Base

Some highlights about the Evansville labor force and economic base are provided below:

- City workers are very mobile. Residents take advantage of Evansville's highway access to commute to nearby employment centers, particularly Madison and elsewhere in Dane County, and to a lesser extent, Janesville and Beloit.
- Evansville has a higher percentage of its residents with bachelor or advanced degrees than Rock County, but lower than Wisconsin. Evansville has a higher percentage of residents with associate degrees than the average percentage for Rock County, Dane County and Wisconsin.
- Median age of Evansville residents is 35.2, lower than Rock County and the state of Wisconsin.
- Evansville has a slightly lower participation rate (75.7%) than the Town of Union (79.3%) but higher than other surrounding towns (Magnolia = 61.2%, Porter = 64.7%, and Center = 68.8%). However, Evansville has a higher participation rate than Rock County as a whole (66.6%).
- Median annual earnings in Rock County were 96% of the average state earnings from 2009 to 2013. Median annual earnings paid in Dane County were 110% of the Median state earnings. Median annual earnings paid to Evansville residents are approximately 109% of the state average.

Participation Rate

describes the relationship between the labor force and population. Participation Rate is the percent of residents over the age of 16 that are working or looking for work in a community.

Income vs. Earnings

Income is the total amount of money a household receives from all sources, while earnings are individual wages and salary from a job.

- Similar to the national situation, the median earnings for working Evansville women are lower than working Evansville men, with median earning for women approximately 73% of median earnings for men.

Table 8.1 below provides a breakdown of employment as reported by Evansville residents in the 2013 American Community Survey. Please note that this table shows the numbers of Evansville residents employed in particular industry sectors, regardless of the geographic locations of their workplaces. This table does not provide any information about the numbers of people who work in particular sectors in Evansville. Additionally, due to Evansville's small size, many of the figures have a large margin of error, ranging from 22% to 177%. Unfortunately, this causes the data for Evansville to be potentially inaccurate. However, data at larger scales - County, State, and National - is useful to compare to gain understanding of the broader economic conditions.

	United States	Midwest	Wisconsin	Dane County	Rock County	Evansville¹
Employed population (16+)	141,864,697	31,509,365	2,839,636	279,118	74,771	2,696
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1.9%	2.0%	2.5%	1.3%	1.8%	0.6%
Construction	6.2%	5.5%	5.3%	4.2%	5.8%	5.8%
Manufacturing	10.5%	14.6%	18.2%	9.1%	20.6%	13.5%
Wholesale trade	2.8%	2.8%	2.7%	2.4%	3.9%	2.9%
Retail trade	11.6%	11.5%	11.4%	9.9%	12.4%	10.5%
Transportation and warehousing	4.1%	4.1%	3.6%	2.1%	4.2%	5.5%
Utilities	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	1.0%	0.5%
Information	2.2%	1.9%	1.7%	2.6%	1.9%	3.6%
Finance and insurance	4.8%	5.1%	5.1%	7.1%	3.4%	8.2%
Real estate and rental and leasing	1.9%	1.5%	1.1%	1.6%	1.0%	0.3%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	6.5%	5.3%	4.5%	9.3%	3.0%	6.2%
Management of companies and enterprises	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Administrative and support and waste management services	4.2%	3.7%	3.4%	3.0%	3.0%	2.7%
Educational services	9.5%	9.4%	8.6%	13.7%	8.7%	7.9%
Health care and social assistance	13.7%	14.5%	14.5%	14.7%	13.5%	16.8%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	2.1%	1.9%	1.8%	1.9%	1.3%	1.1%
Accommodation and food services	7.2%	6.9%	6.8%	7.0%	7.4%	5.2%
Other services, except public administration	5.0%	4.6%	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%	2.9%
Public administration	5.0%	3.9%	3.6%	5.1%	3.0%	5.9%
Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey						

¹ Margins of error for Evansville data ranges from 22% to 177%.

Strengths and Challenges of The City of Evansville's Economic Climate

The City of Evansville has both advantages and challenges when seeking to attract potential businesses and industry. A highlight of the economic climate can be found in the table below:

Table 8.2: Highlight of Evansville's Economic Climate	
Strengths	Challenges
High quality of life for residents.	Lack of variety of businesses to meet people's everyday needs.
A municipal electric utility that offers substantially lower rates over the long term than large, for profit electric companies.	Perceived telecommunication limitations.
A great location between two metropolitan areas.	Residents of the City of Evansville are very mobile and can easily drive to nearby communities to purchase services and products.
Young, educated local workforce.	Over half of Evansville households have at least one member who works outside of Rock County.
Full time police department.	The fire district has only volunteer firefighters.
Safe community atmosphere.	High housing prices relative to other Rock County communities.
Historic character.	Poor utilization of downtown parking.
One-stop contact for planning, permitting, and zoning.	Limited available sites for light industry.
Generally, high household and family income levels compared to state averages.	Local businesses do not have hours that meet the needs of the large number of residents who work outside of the community.
Access to rail infrastructure.	Underutilized segments of rail infrastructure.
High income relative to Rock County.	Perceived high property taxes.
Properties with USH 14 frontage.	Poor proximity to major highways or interstates.
High quality, progressive school district.	
Lower housing and living costs in comparison with Dane County.	
Efforts to showcase alternative energy technologies.	

Current Business Inventory

There are five primary business environments in the City of Evansville: downtown, the Water Street industrial development area, the east side development area, neighborhood business development, and USH 14. Additionally, tourism, which is discussed later in this chapter, brings a significant amount of business into Evansville. What follows is a profile of each of these business environments.

Downtown Evansville is the historic heart of the community. It extends along Main Street between First Street and Union Street. Streetscaping improvements have been completed to enhance the historic character of the area. This included improvements to the street surface, sidewalks, signage, building facades, lighting, and plantings. Additional streetscaping could further enhance the user



FIGURE 8A: VIEW OF DOWNTOWN EVANSVILLE BUSINESSES.

experience of the downtown, including curb bump outs to ease pedestrian crossings and additional landscaping. Future efforts should include the promotion of higher density residential development in and adjacent to the downtown to provide a concentrated local customer base and the addition of public gathering spaces to facilitate social interactions and provide an area for events within the downtown. These improvements are important to create a pleasant and unique experience, which is important to incentivize shoppers to visit the downtown.

The Water Street Industrial Development Area is a 60-acre development located south of USH 14 on the southeast side of the City. This area includes large and small industrial uses. The majority of the land in this area has been developed, and the City has seen a shortage of light industrial space in recent years. One of the priorities of the future land use map is the designation of areas that can accommodate further light industrial development within the future boundaries of the City.



FIGURE 8B: IMAGE OF WATER STREET INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AREA.

The East Side Development Area is located along USH 14 between CTH M and Weary Road. This area is differentiated from development along the USH 14 corridor (described below) because the focus of development is a mix of commercial and industrial. This area has additional sewer capacity to serve larger industrial businesses and freight rail access along the southern portion of the area. This area could accommodate a variety of unique development proposals with a mix of uses.

US Highway 14 has several businesses located along the route in Evansville. Highway 14 receives a large amount of through traffic. Most of the uses along this corridor are highway-oriented commercial establishments. The area where these businesses are located may experience development pressure from commercial establishments seeking larger parcels than those currently available downtown.

Neighborhood Business Development is located within existing neighborhoods. These include convenience stores, dental offices, and home occupations. These businesses provide common goods and services to nearby residents, improving the walkability of the neighborhoods in which they are located.

Regional Employment and Economic Forecasts²

Overall employment is expected to increase over the planning horizon of this document. Historically, Rock County has had a stable local economy with employment rates that were comparable to state and national figures. Demographic factors are a key driving force in these long-term projections. The growth rates of the population and changes in its composition have considerable impacts on the labor force, the unemployment rate, housing demand, and other spending categories.

Wisconsin's population is expected to increase by 800,000 people between 2010 and 2040. The working age population is expected to decline slightly after 2020, while elderly populations will grow significantly. This may lead to increased burdens on social services with a smaller percentage of the population in the workforce.

Overall employment in the state is expected to increase 7% between 2012 and 2022, with goods producing industries increasing 3.8% and service providing industries increasing 8.3%. In the Southwest Workforce Development

² Much of the information in this section was taken from the Wisconsin Long Term Industry Employment Projections 2012-2022 (August 2014) and the Wisconsin Long Term Projections 2010-2020: Southwest Workforce Development Areas (October 2013) released by the Office of Economic Advisors in the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development.

Area, in which Rock County is included, employment is expected to increase 11.2% between 2010 and 2020, with goods producing industries increasing 8.75% and services providing industries increasing 12.3%.

In summary, the United States, Wisconsin and Rock County are expected to post slower economic growth over the near future than that which occurred through the 1990s and early 2000s. However, as demonstrated by commuting data and surveys, Evansville has strong economic ties to Dane County, which is expected to add approximately 119,000 residents between 2010 and 2040, and approximately 120,000 new jobs by 2035. Dane County's employment growth has outpaced its labor force growth, resulting in more workers commuting into Dane County from surrounding counties. This trend is expected to continue into the future.

For the City of Evansville, these indicators are important because they may impact the quality of life for residents living in the City. Furthermore, these key economic indicators provide a gauge for the City's ability to support additional commercial and industrial development over the next 20 years.

Desired Business and Industry

The City seeks new business development that enhances the quality of life and capitalizes on the varied and highly qualified work force. Businesses and industries that locate in the City should:

- Provide high quality employment opportunities that pay a living wage.
- Be environmentally friendly.
- Fit into the community aesthetically, respecting the historic and natural character.
- Contribute positively to the quality of life of Evansville's residents.
- Enhance the existing mix of businesses by promoting synergies and business clusters.
- Contribute to a diverse and resilient local economy.

The City would like to target the following types of development:

Expansion and Retention of Existing Businesses

Existing businesses should continue to be encouraged to remain in Evansville. Coordination with the Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations to work with and frequently meet with business owners should continue.

Agriculture and Biotech Companies

Given Evansville's rural location between major metropolitan areas, businesses that serve agricultural uses can capitalize on the agricultural land around Evansville. Numerous agriculture-related businesses already exist in Evansville, demonstrating an opportunity for complementary businesses. Examples of these include processing facilities and agriculture supporting biotech facilities.

Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurial businesses can take many forms, including microbreweries, custom furniture, retail establishments, technology start-ups and many others. Thriving entrepreneurship will lead to a diverse economy that provides economic resilience and an active and vibrant business environment. An existing example in Evansville is a hops analysis lab that analyzes the properties of hops for breweries across the country.

Professional, Educational and Technical Companies

Many communities across Wisconsin share the desire to attract professional, educational and technical companies, such as software consulting firms and software developers, because businesses like these don't rely as heavily on proximity to major roadways and rail lines. A current example in Evansville is XRG Analytics, an international renewable energy consulting business. To be successful at attracting these types of companies, the City of Evansville will need to promote its central location and the numerous factors that contribute to the City's quality of life. For example, the City needs to make potential new businesses aware of the high-quality educational experience available to students enrolled in the Evansville Community School District. The Wisconsin Department

of Public Instruction's District Report Card for the Evansville Community School District demonstrates that the school district exceeds performance expectations for a variety of metrics. (Student achievement, student achievement growth, progress in closing performance gaps between subgroups, postsecondary readiness, test participation rates, absenteeism rates, and dropout rates.) Additional characteristics, which should be promoted to attract professional, educational and technical companies, are Evansville's low median age (similar to that of Dane County), and close proximity to the cultural amenities in Madison, while having a considerably lower cost of living.

Additional Local Retail Choices

To be successful, these ventures will require a unique merchandise selection based on local market demand. Otherwise, potential customers will continue to patronize choices available in nearby communities, including "big box" discount retail stores. Since families and homeowners dominate the local market, potential businesses may include bookstores, music stores, furniture stores, craft/quilt shops, hardware stores, clothing, household goods, etc.

The *Allen Creek & North Union Street Redevelopment Master Plan* identified population thresholds for various types of businesses, which can be used to identify potential business opportunities in the area. To expand the potential customer base, local retail establishments will also need to adapt their strategies to accommodate the large number of residents that leave Evansville during the day, market to surrounding communities and capitalize on the potential the internet provides.

Service Businesses

Service businesses (e.g. restaurants, coffee shops, ice cream parlors, grocery stores, and real estate office development) are also desired in the downtown and along USH 14. These businesses, like retail choices, should seek to capitalize on the local family market and high percentage of homeowners. Potential businesses might include food (i.e. bakery, winery, and pizzeria), movie theaters, accounting and insurance services, interior decorators, and the like. Bed and breakfast establishments are also desired to meet the growing need for local accommodations and to serve non-motorized tourists using regional trails, and scenic county and town roads.

Expanded Industrial Development

Industries are desired to provide quality jobs to local residents. Ideally, industries would capitalize on the City's central location, high quality of life, agriculturally oriented surroundings, skilled workers, and access to the railroad.

Home Occupations

Home occupations are desired in the City. Home occupations often allow professionals to provide services using the internet. Home occupations can also provide a way for entrepreneurs to start a business without making large initial capital investments that are sometimes needed to secure a space.

Neighborhood Commercial Development

Within new residential subdivisions, the potential exists to establish areas for neighborhood commercial development (e.g. daycare centers, convenience stores, dentist offices, etc.) that would contribute to the creation of walkable neighborhoods as discussed in the Transportation Element. These types of businesses already exist in many of the established areas of the City.

Construction and Skilled Trades

Additional opportunities exist in the skilled trades, such as electrical and plumbing. Residential development is strong in the City of Evansville. As such, it continues to provide an increasing share of the area's tax base and has the potential to be a major source of employment.

Economic Development Opportunities

Use of supporting goals, objectives and policies provided in this chapter will help the City to capitalize on these opportunities.

Collaborations between the City of Evansville and Local Businesses

Opportunities were identified in the 2008 *Evansville Economic Development Plan* and the 2012 *Retail Market Analysis* for additional collaboration between the City and local businesses. The City created the Community Development Director position to streamline planning and economic development. With stronger working relationships and open communication, local businesses will better understand local regulations, programs, and plans. Improved communication should result in businesses that seek to partner with the City in its growth and development pursuits.

Regional Economic Development Partnership

Since the City resides between two metropolitan statistical areas, its economy is dependent upon the ebbs and flows of the region. While statistically there are more synergies between the City and the Madison MSA, there are other factors that create alignment with the Janesville-Beloit MSA as well. Therefore, it is prudent and strategic for the City to have active partnerships with the economic and workforce providers that represent both regions, respectively.

The two main organizations providing these services within the Janesville-Beloit MSA include the Rock County Development Agency and the Southwest Workforce Development Board. Meanwhile, the counterparts operating within the Madison MSA include the Madison Regional Economic Partnership (MadREP) and the South Central Workforce Development Board. To augment these regional connections, the City should continually collaborate with local organizations to ensure consistency with respect to harmonizing local alignment as it pertains to economic and workforce development issues.

Tourism

The City recognizes that tourism is an economic driver for the community as well as validation of the quality of life and resources that exist here. The Evansville Tourism Commission identifies tourism opportunities and administers the annual expenditures of tourism dollars.

A new opportunity to encourage tourism is the development of the Ice Age Trail through Evansville. In November 2014, the National Park Service indicated that one of the two proposed routes for the trail will lead through Evansville. The final determination of the Ice Age Trail route through the western half of Rock County will be announced in early 2016. The development of the trail presents an entrepreneurial opportunity for businesses that cater to hikers, cyclists, birders and others who enjoy the trail. Continued enhancements to the downtown and future traditional neighborhood activity centers should be pursued. These enhancements can include encouraging outdoor sales and sidewalk cafes.

Expansion of the Downtown District

Implementing the *Allen Creek & North Union Street Redevelopment Master Plan* to expand Evansville's downtown further east would provide economic development potential to the City of Evansville. In order to implement this plan the zoning code must be amended to allow the types of development that are recommended in the plan. There are a number of recent developments that provide huge opportunities towards the implementation of this plan, including future post office relocation and expansion, City acquisition of the old Bauer Haus property on East Main Street along Allen Creek, and the potential for the Ice Age Trail to run through Evansville.

Special Projects

The relocation of the Evansville Post Office in 2017 provides an opportunity to secure an anchor tenant in a new mixed use building to catalyze redevelopment. This building should be located in the expansion area of the downtown, mentioned above. The City is committed to keeping the Post Office within the downtown to maintain the walkability of the downtown district, which is an asset to Evansville. The City-owned Bauer Haus property at 155 E Main Street provides opportunities to improve the transportation network downtown, provide public space for

activities, to establish a trail along Allen Creek, and to influence desired business development in the downtown expansion area. The Ice Age Trail corridor locating through Evansville offers enormous tourism potential, as well as quality of life and property value improvements for Evansville residents.

Design Standards Ordinance

Evansville's historic downtown is a true community focal point that is important to the residents of the community. To maintain the integrity of this area, Evansville has design standards for non-residential property in the B-2 (central business) district in addition to the basic zoning of a property. However, the design standards do not provide specifics for lighting and façade improvements. Rather, the ordinance includes provisions for building form, including setback, height, mass, horizontal rhythms and vertical rhythms (which generally require that new development be modeled after existing development in the immediate vicinity and conform to the general design theme of the downtown area). The ordinance states that the Plan Commission will determine if new structures, building additions, building alterations, and restoration or rehabilitation correspond to the general design theme of the downtown.

To be more effective, the ordinance must provide illustrations to clarify important design considerations. Likewise, specific information related to signage, lighting, building materials, and landscaping standards should be included to more clearly define what is acceptable and avoid potential inconsistency in the basis of Plan Commission decisions over time.

Any changes to the design standards ordinance must be developed with local business owners and interest groups (e.g. Evansville Historic Preservation Commission, Economic Development Committee and Chamber of Commerce). Updating this ordinance needs to be a near-term priority in order ensure any redevelopment that occurs fits in with the future vision of the Downtown.

Financing for Business Improvements

Evansville has a facade improvement grant program. This program should be continually evaluated to assure it is fulfilling the needs of businesses. To provide additional financial support for business improvements, it is recommended that the City and local banks provide financing for general building improvements for businesses and the replacement of nonconforming business signs. Specifically, the City and local banks should seek to establish a low- or no-interest loan program for facade improvements. The City should also consider financial incentives to encourage continued infill, increase of density and expansion of the downtown. Modernizing the existing revolving loan fund (RLF) application would make that loan program more useful and relevant to businesses.

Industrial Development

The location of a railroad line through Evansville provides opportunities for industrial businesses that could utilize the railroad to reduce shipping costs. The City should participate in or lead efforts to open the northern portion of the rail line between Evansville and Oregon to provide a more direct route to Madison. To promote the incubation of start-ups the city should encourage construction of small scale industrial buildings in areas identified on the future land use map.

Environmentally contaminated sites

Redevelopment efforts can sometimes encounter the challenge of potentially contaminated properties, which are commonly referred to as brownfield sites. Brownfield sites vary in size, location, age, and past use. The term "brownfield" was first used to distinguish developed land from unused suburban and rural land, referred to as "greenfield" sites. A brownfield site can be a former corner gas station or an empty manufacturing plant. These sites pose a number of problems for communities, including:

- Neighborhood deterioration and community blight
- Potential harm to human health and the environment
- Reduced tax revenue and economic growth
- Attraction for vandalism, open dumping and other illegal activity

The WDNR Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System on the Web is available at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Brownfields/clean.html>. This database tracks identified sites from first reporting through closure or no further action. Records are kept in perpetuity regardless of whether or not contamination was actually found, the size of the incidence, and whether or not the site has been cleaned.

Numerous programs have been created to encourage brownfield redevelopment including grants, loans, and tax incentives. Evansville will encourage residents and landowners to pursue the clean up and redevelopment of any contaminated or brownfield site. Likewise, to minimize future environmental impacts, the City will encourage environmentally friendly business development that is properly permitted and regulated to protect the City's natural environment.

Tools to promote economic development

The City of Evansville has many unique opportunities, existing plans, and partner organizations that can be of great assistance to future economic development needs.

Residential Development

As identified in the *Retail Market Analysis: City of Evansville, WI*, the vibrancy and attractiveness of its downtown is vital to display the health of a city. Compact residential development is needed to support local retail and employment. Businesses also need a quality local workforce. It is essential for there to be adequate and diverse housing to accommodate a diverse workforce.

Recommendations from Other Plans and Reports

Recommendations included in these plans should be implemented in conjunction with this comprehensive plan to ensure that the economic development opportunities desired are being realized. This will require coordination with utilities and community facilities, and transportation improvements identified in previous chapters. The recommendations should be reviewed every five years to measure progress and identify additional objectives.

2006 Civi Tek Consulting Commercial Development Design Standards

This report recommended design standards for commercial development, including standards for large format retail stores, franchise design, building design, signage, landscaping, outdoor lighting, and parking. The report also delineated recommended urban design overlay zoning districts to enhance the appearance of Evansville's gateways and other high profile commercial areas.

Some of the recommendations have been implemented, such as the large format retail standards. However, the majority of the recommendations from this report have not yet been implemented. The City should implement any additional recommendations from this report, such as maximum parking requirements, bicycle parking minimum requirements, the adoption of urban design overlay districts, and a revision of the parking standards.

2007 R.A. Smith & Associates Allen Creek & North Union Street Redevelopment Plan

The *Allen Creek & North Union Street Redevelopment Master Plan* was adopted by the City in 2007 to promote and guide redevelopment with the goal of expanding Evansville's downtown to include the areas around Allen Creek and North Union Street.

The Union Street area is an older industrial district, located in a high traffic area that has a number of large buildings and lots. Drainage is a problem due to the location of the parcels between Allen Creek to the west and a wetland to the east. Expanding the downtown area will allow the City to improve the public space within the downtown, and may incentivize people travelling through Evansville to stop in the downtown. It will also provide a more attractive corridor through the City, improving its image. For example, new commercial buildings along Union Street could have dual frontages facing both the street and a potential bicycle and pedestrian path along Allen Creek. This path might someday be extended beyond the south edge of the City to connect with the Ice Age Trail and other regional trails described in the Transportation Element.

The plan provides recommendations for future commercial, residential, and light industrial development within the redevelopment area. These recommendations utilize Allen Creek and associated wetlands as recreational and open space assets, rather than viewing them as hindrances to development. The plan also identifies design guidelines for new commercial buildings, streetscapes, parking lots, and public spaces to maximize the effectiveness of the redevelopment and enhance the downtown environment.

2008 Whalen & Associates Evansville Economic Development Plan

This plan was completed in 2008. The plan identified developing five key strategic areas of the City's economic development:

- Workforce development
- Downtown revitalization
- Business, community and government relations,
- Marketing, and
- The entrepreneurial environment.

2012 Ady Voltedge Retail Market Analysis

Ady Voltedge, a national economic development consulting firm, completed a retail market analysis in 2012. Some key recommendations that the City can act on include:

- Refine a cohesive vision for the downtown shopping area.
- Describe a cohesive vision for the east side shopping area.
- Identify and act on areas of shared needs among business owners – activities that would provide benefits to individual business owners as well as to the shopping areas as a whole.
- Work to increase the awareness and interest in local shops among area residents.

The City should seek to implement the recommendations in the *Retail Market Analysis*, as well as ensure that the analysis is available to the business community.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) allows communities to undertake a public project to stimulate beneficial development or redevelopment that would not otherwise occur. It is a mechanism for financing local economic development projects in underdeveloped and blighted areas. Taxes generated by the increased property values pay for public improvements and development assistance.

Tax Increment Districts (TIDs)

Tax increment Districts (TIDs) are used for a variety of purposes and can promote a variety of economic growth. The City has had eight (8) TIDs in total with four (4) currently active as of 2015. The four (4) active districts themselves represent a diversity of economic development and opportunity:

- TID 5 was established as a redevelopment district. This district was used to improve the downtown area, preserve many historic buildings and offer incentives to strengthen the business community in the downtown. Funding was used primarily for infrastructure including stormwater management, a new bridge, sewer improvements, water main replacement, sidewalks, and beautification of the area as well as providing direct incentives for 11 businesses.
- TID 6 was established to accommodate a combination of new commercial and industrial development. TID 6 generates revenue to pay for major City infrastructure that was installed along County Road M. This capital improvement opened a large parcel for future development for light industrial and commercial development along USH 14 and County Road M.

- TID 7 was established with the intention of creating light and heavy industrial development that may make use of the rail or the improved roadway that creates a short connection to USH 14. TID 7 and TID 6 share the same capital improvement project that improved County Road M to carry heavy traffic and provides new water and sewer capacity designed for large industry.
- TID 8 was created to expand our ability to provide long term health care to our residents, create jobs and add property value to the community. This district is isolated to the Heights at the Evansville Manor project and was completed with the aid of TIF funding.

All future TID creations will be carefully considered and are not automatic. The City must consider the “but-for” standard of “without TIF funding the project would not be feasible,” as well as meeting the needs of the community. Prior to consideration, the growth associated with TIF funding should also meet the goals of this comprehensive plan.

General Procedure for Establishing a Tax Increment Finance District (TID)

The City defines a TID. It may range in size from a single block to the entire Downtown.

1. Tax assessments for the district are frozen at their current value.
2. The City, through its tax-increment finance authority, can pay for land acquisition, installation of capital improvements in the district (e.g. streets, lighting, landscaping, etc.) or developer agreements to make it more desirable to developers.
3. When development occurs, the improved value of the district increases. While the TIF district is in effect, the additional tax revenues go to the pay for the debt used to finance improvements in the TID.

More information about establishing a TIF is available in Wis. Stats. Ch. 66.1105(5)(g).

Importance of City’s Financial Strength

Many of City assisted or public-private partnership projects may require City borrowing for either incentives or infrastructure installation. The City is obligated to always consider the “but-for” factor in all TIF agreements or projects. Additional considerations are made when determining the type of incentive offered such as the borrowing capacity of the City.

Positive bond ratings on borrowed funds lead to lower interest loans which leads to more opportunities to work with developers. Economic diversity with a City’s strong financial position leads to better bond ratings, leading to better lending options, leading to more opportunities to assist developers in creating a diverse economy. The four (4) current TIDs represent a diversity in development with a mix of health care, redevelopment of an area supporting many small businesses, new commercial development and manufacturing.

Marketing

Evansville has a web page available at www.ci.evansville.wi.gov. The City uses this site as a marketing tool by providing information about community services, programs, organizations and businesses. Preliminary work on an overhaul of the website is underway. The site includes important contacts like the Community Development Director, Economic Development Committee and Chamber of Commerce and Tourism. This type of information is a valuable resource for marketing to professionals seeking development locations. As web marketing materials are updated, coordinated marketing materials should be developed in print format. An economic development video that will inform site selectors, developers and businesses about Evansville is also upcoming. This video should coordinate with web and printed materials.

Programs and Organization Assistance

Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

Through its CIP, the City is able to responsibly plan for future improvements that may generate additional development in Evansville. Additional information about the Capital Improvements Plan is provided in the Utilities and Community Facilities Element.

Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)

The Revolving Loan Fund is provided by the City and maintained by the Evansville Economic Development Committee. The fund is intended to provide low-cost business loans that require repayment. It is designed to facilitate business development projects within the City of Evansville that create investment and employment opportunities, including projects seeking to establish a new operation or expand an existing business in the Evansville area. The application and loan requirements should be updated and modernized to meet the needs of current and upcoming businesses.

Building Facade Improvement Grant (BIG)

The Building Improvement Grant is a matching grant available from the City and maintained by the Economic Development Committee to assist property owners and lessees in making exterior renovations, including entrances, facades, and signs. This program should continue to be promoted and opportunities to expand it should be investigated.

Evansville Area Inventors and Entrepreneurs Club (I&E)

The Evansville Area Inventors and Entrepreneurs Club creates opportunities for inventors, entrepreneurs, investors, artists and like-minded individuals to come together to learn, network, share resources and inspire each other. The Club meets regularly and is open to the public.

Women Encouraging Evansville Entrepreneurs (WE3)

This group of business owners and managers network, share tips and ideas, and collaborate to improve business for all members.

Evansville Redevelopment Authority

In 2004, the City created the Evansville Redevelopment Authority to administer the downtown tax increment district. The Authority already has awarded grants and forgivable loans to redevelop properties and retain businesses in and around downtown Evansville. The Authority welcomes proposals from private investors for public participation in private redevelopment projects within or near the downtown tax incremental district. The Authority is particularly interested in assisting private redevelopment projects that include a substantial condominium or apartment housing component to increase population density in and around downtown Evansville.

Evansville Economic Development Committee and Subcommittees

The City of Evansville Economic Development Committee is the lead agency in the City to assist business and industry in locating in the area. Confidential assistance is available for businesses and industries seeking information on site locations, financing, utility rates, taxes, labor availability and wage rates, housing and other resources available to business and industry in the Evansville area. An outcome of the 2008 City Economic Development Plan was creation of the Community Development Director to coordinate and enhance economic development, providing businesses with "one-stop" communication for planning and economic development. In June of 2015, the Economic Development Committee approved the creation of an ad hoc subcommittee for entrepreneurship. This subcommittee will assess ways and tools needed to help entrepreneurs be successful.

Evansville Tourism Commission

In 2008 the Common Council approved implementation of a 7% room tax. All revenues, by law, are dedicated to tourism and marketing. The Evansville Tourism Commission identifies tourism opportunities and administers the annual expenditures of tourism dollars.

Evansville Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

The mission of the Chamber of Commerce is to provide support to local commerce and industry and to assist in the growth, development and recruitment of business enterprises. The Chamber of Commerce provides programs and events that not only support their members as business owners, but also benefits the Evansville community as a whole.

Evansville Community Partnership

The Evansville Community Partnership is a not-for-profit community group with a mission of involving all community members. They serve as a catalyst and participate in creating a unique, thriving, and prosperous community. The group works together and supports one another by planning and setting goals, solving problems, resolving conflicts, pursuing opportunities, and promoting our community to citizens and the outside world. Some projects include hosting fun family events and beautification projects.

Local Financial Institutions

A number of local, full-service financial institutions serve the City and are active lenders with experience in development refinancing.

Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLG)

This United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program provides zero interest loans or grants to rural economic development projects through local utility organizations. Examples of eligible projects are business incubators, community development assistance to job creation or enhancement, facilities and equipment for economic development training and education, start-up costs, and business expansions.

WPPI Energy

As a member-owner of WPPI Energy, Evansville Water and Light and its customers are eligible for a number of energy programs and incentives, such as Focus on Energy which provides numerous programs to improve energy and water efficiency assistance to both commercial and residential properties. This includes new construction design assistance, energy saving product installations and energy assessments.

Madison Region Economic Partnership (MadRep)

MadRep is an economic development partnership that serves Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Rock, and Sauk Counties. They market the region for new businesses and assist municipalities in economic development.

Rock County Planning and Development Agency

The Rock County Planning and Development Agency provides economic development consultative services for public and private sector clients. These services include, but are not limited to: property acquisition and development; infrastructure development and financing; community advertising and marketing; general community/economic development planning assistance; infrastructure and workforce program design and implementation; and liaison-related duties for the county, region and state. The Agency also serves as the county's primary data collection and dissemination clearinghouse. In addition to these activities, the Agency is the central contact for the following countywide economic, tourism and workforce development related initiatives: Rock County Development Alliance (www.RockCountyAlliance.com); Rock County 5.0 (www.RockCounty5.com), Rock County Tourism (www.RockCounty.org), Inspire Rock County (www.InspireRockCounty.org) and Consider Rock County (www.ConsiderRockCounty.com).

Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB)

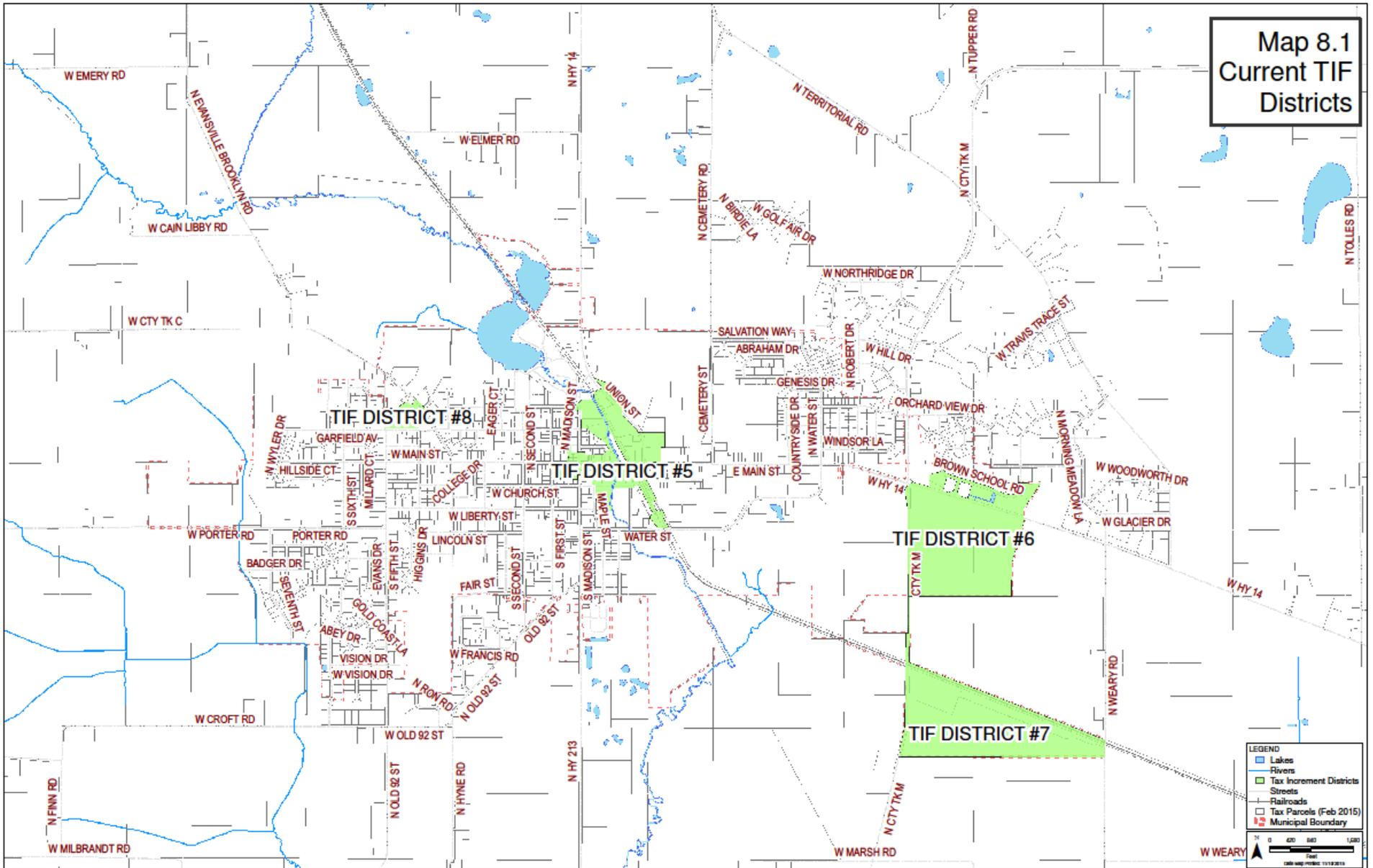
The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's (WEDC) Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB) Program allows all Wisconsin cities, villages and towns to support industrial development through the sale of tax-exempt bonds. The proceeds from the bond sale are loaned to businesses to finance capital investment projects at, primarily, manufacturing facilities. Even though IRBs are municipal bonds, they are not backed by the general obligation tax revenue of the municipality. The company or business that will use the facilities provides the interest and principal payments on the loan. For more information on the Industrial Revenue Bond Program, see the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation website at: <http://inwisconsin.com/>.

Additional State Agencies/Programs

- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation – <http://inwisconsin.com/>: This department is the state's primary agency for delivery of integrated services to businesses.
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation – www.dot.state.wi.us: The Office of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Programs encourages firms owned by disadvantaged individuals to participate in all federal and state transportation facility contracts.
- WisDOT Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA) – This program is designed to attract and retain businesses in Wisconsin through road, rail, harbor, and airport projects.
- WisDOT Freight Railroad Infrastructure Improvement Program (FRIP) and Freight Rail Preservation Program (FRPP) – These programs provide assistance in preserving or enhancing freight rail infrastructure.
- Department of Workforce Development – www.dwd.state.wi.us: This department builds and strengthens Wisconsin's workforce by providing job services, training and employment assistance, and helping employers find necessary workers.
- Wisconsin Small Business Development Centers – <http://www.wisconsinbdc.org/about>: These centers help ensure the state's economic health and stability. They offer formative business education, counseling, and technology training.

Federal Agencies/Programs

- US Department of Agriculture Rural Development Administration – www.rd.usda.gov
- US Small Business Administration – www.sba.gov: provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run and grow their businesses.
- US Department of Commerce – www.commerce.gov
- US Department of Transportation – www.dot.gov



Economic Development Goals and Objectives

These economic development goals and objectives serve as a way to put the vision statement into action, through a series of to dos. Below are Goals and objectives for the Economic Development Chapter:

Economic Development Goal #1			
Expand economic development opportunities to “grow” and diversify the local economy and improve the City’s quality of life.			
Supporting Objectives	Champion or Partner	Potential Funding Source	Milestone Date
1. Redevelop and use the Evansville Web Page as an economic marketing tool.	City staff, EDC, Common Council	City budget	2016 and Continuously
2. Develop and make available a guide for local businesses. Include criteria for site development and information about any necessary zoning approvals.	Community Development Director	City budget	2016
3. Make a copy of this Comprehensive Plan and an executive summary of this plan available to local realtors.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
4. Coordinate with other local rural communities and local, county and state organizations to expand regional economic development opportunities.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
5. Attract new businesses through advertising, assisting business prospects through the City approval process, developing and distributing a written community profile, inventorying sites and buildings, and developing a marketing video.	EDC, Community Development Director	City budget	Continuous
6. Determine suitable sites for new and redeveloped commercial and industrial space for new businesses.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
7. Encourage Developers of new residential subdivisions to include sites for walkable neighborhood commercial development. Investigate new opportunities for such development on the West side.	EDC, Plan Commission, Community Development Director		Continuous
8. Study the findings of the Economic Development Committee and Chamber of Commerce Collaboration Strategies and the Evansville Economic Development Plan.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous

9. Seek grants to identify and clean-up brownfield sites to create opportunities for redevelopment.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
10. Identify other sources for low interest loans to assist businesses.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
11. Provide strategic tax increment assistance to retain businesses and attract new mixed use commercial and residential development.	EDC, Community Development Director, Common Council		Continuous
12. Update ordinances to streamline approval process. Investigate temporary conditional use permits to reduce time for new businesses to open.	EDC, Community Development Director		2018
13. Coordinate with area banks to establish a participation loan fund for business improvements.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
14. Implement action items from the Ady Voltedge Retail Market Analysis.	EDC, Community Development Director	City budget	Continuous

Economic Development Goal #2

Develop and maintain a physical, cultural, educational, and recreational environment in the City that is conducive to business and residential development.

Supporting Objectives	Champion/ Partner	Potential Funding Source	Milestone Date
1. Ensure proper design for entrances to and exits from commercial establishments so as to promote traffic and pedestrian safety.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
2. Update performance standards as needed (e.g., signage, noise, lighting, vibration).	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
3. Evaluate and monitor the level of competitive offerings for Internet access and other telecommunication services needed by businesses and whether service providers are offering services to meet those needs at a price existing businesses are willing to pay.	EDC, Community Development Dire EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous

4. Coordinate with educational and community institutions including: the Evansville Community School District, Evansville Community Theater, Eager Free Public Library, church and civic organizations to market the City's network of cultural and educational amenities.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
5. Investigate opportunities to coordinate with the Wisconsin Alliance for Arts Education, Humanities Council, and other arts organizations to expand local arts opportunities.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
6. Implement the adopted Park and Outdoor Recreation Plan 2013-2018.	EDC, Community Development Director	City budget	Continuous
7. Develop trail/bicycle way/sidewalk connections between downtown Evansville, city parks and to recreation facilities beyond Evansville (e.g. Ice Age National Scenic Trail, Evansville Country Club and Rock County Park Facilities).	EDC, Community Development Director	City budget	2018
8. Consider the establishment of impact fees to finance needed capital improvements.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous

Economic Development Goal #3

Revitalize the downtown to enhance its historic charm, mix of businesses, walkable amenities, and tourist potential.

Supporting Objectives	Champion or Partner	Potential Funding Source	Milestone Date
1. Provide financing and marketing to assist façade improvement projects.	EDC, Community Development Director	City budget	Continuous
2. Incorporate design standards into the ordinance for the B-2 district to support the historic character of the downtown.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
3. Support the historic design/character by investing in and maintaining needed lighting, signage, pedestrian amenities, plantings and other improvements identified in the streetscape plan.	EDC, Community Development Director	City budget	Continuous

4. Support development proposals that provide a mix of uses in the downtown, including residential, retail, and service establishments.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
5. Implement the adopted Allen Creek and North Union Street Redevelopment Master Plan.	EDC, Community Development Director	City budget	Continuous
6. Monitor the need for parking and explore methods to improve parking availability without using up developable land.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
7. Work with the business community to explore the establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID)	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
8. Implement strategies from the Evansville Tourism Assessment	EDC, Community Development Director, Tourism Commission	City budget	Continuous
9. Seek opportunities to increase residential densities near the downtown to increase the viability of downtown businesses.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous

Economic Development Goal #4

Improve communication and coordination with local businesses to support the retention and expansion of local businesses.

Supporting Objectives	Champion or Partner	Potential Funding Source	Milestone Date
1. Visit existing local businesses to understand opportunities and challenges they face.	EDC, Community Development Director		Annually
2. Guide and mentor businesses about financing opportunities and the City permitting process	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
3. Support a diversified economy	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
4. Identify leakages in the supply chain of local industries, and work to bring those leakages into the local economy.	EDC, Community Development Director		2017

5. Promote attributes of workforce and city's demographics (workforce is highly educated and younger)	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
Economic Development Goal #5			
Enhance environmental, economic, and social goals through sustainable economic development.			
Supporting Objectives	Champion or Partner	Potential Funding Source	Milestone Date
1. Encourage greater onsite stormwater management practices, such as green roofs, to reduce runoff.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
2. Promote the consumption of local foods (through methods such as farmers markets, community gardens and community supported agriculture (CSA)).	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
3. Educate business on sustainable practices to ensure the long term health of the Evansville Community.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
4. Identify obstacles to sustainable business practices, such as excessive minimum parking requirements.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
5. Support Ecological bio-diversity through continued and expanded certifications (e.g. Green Tier Legacy, Bird City, Tree City).	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
6. Encourage the reuse, retrofit, or redevelopment of existing structures.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
7. Pursue place-based economic development to attract businesses and workforce that are tied to the community.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
8. Encourage partnership with local utilities to conserve energy and reduce energy costs	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous

Economic Development Goal #6			
Promote Entrepreneurship			
Supporting Objectives	Champion or Partner	Potential Funding Source	Milestone Date
1. Identify opportunities to connect the local economy to entrepreneurship tools.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
2. Seek opportunities to partner with trade schools, the middle school, high school, businesses and organizations to ensure entrepreneurs have the skills needed to succeed.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous
3. Nurture the spirit of entrepreneurship to expand the diversity of local businesses.	EDC, Community Development Director		Continuous